



Please see the **NOTICE ON PROGRAM UPDATES** at the bottom of this sample itinerary for details on program changes.



BELIZE: Marine & Manatee Conservation

Engage in conservation and community development work to protect manatees and other sealife that make Belize unique

OVERVIEW

On this program, you will take in the wonders of Corozal Bay, home to one of Belize's largest populations of Antillean manatees. Work alongside rangers, scientists, and local fishermen to protect this natural habitat through mangrove restoration, beach clean-ups, and conservation initiatives with local children. Learn how waterways can be protected and conserved through governmental, organizational, and community action. Revel in the natural beauty of Belize as you explore a pristine Caye and snorkel in turquoise waters. Feel the adventure in the air as you embark on ziplining and cave tubing. In just a short time, Belize will feel like a home away from home!

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

14-Day Program

June 28 – July 11, 2024

July 14 – July 27, 2024

July 30 - August 12, 2024

Tuition: \$5,299

Service Hours: 30

Max Group Size: 24

Age Range: 14-18

Student-to-Staff Ratio: 6-to-1

Airport: BZE

HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Restore mangroves, clean up local beaches where sea turtles nest, and engage local students in conservation education.
- ★ Embark on an overnight excursion to Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve
- ★ Get your hands dirty as you shadow local fishermen to harvest from traditional fishing traps and fillet your own fish
- ★ Snorkel in turquoise waters
- ★ River tube and zipline through Belize's lush rainforest
- ★ Visit a manatee rescue center and meet the passionate scientists working to rehabilitate manatees back into the wild

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Work alongside a non-profit committed to protecting the Corozal Bay Wildlife Sanctuary through marine research, surveillance, conservation education, and community development initiatives. Accompany rangers as they monitor the 178,000-acre Corozal Bay by boat and track marine life in the wild. Get your hands dirty as you transplant mangrove seeds and restore forests essential to the coast's protection and biodiversity. Connect with locals through beach and trail clean-ups and facilitate a conservation day camp for primary school students. Learn how to identify migratory species and contribute to long-term conservation research.



SAMPLE ITINERARY: DAILY BREAKDOWN

The actual schedule of activities will vary by program session. The information detailed here is typical for what you can expect to experience; however, service work and activities vary depending upon the needs of our local community partners, various celebrations and customs, and the weather and specific needs of the student group.



DAY 1: WELCOME TO BELIZE!

Touch down near Belize City, and GLA staff will greet you upon your arrival. Our group will drive 3½ hours to our Home Base, located on the Northern Coast in the small fishing village of Sarteneja. Home Base is a family-run hotel near the ocean. Tonight, we'll unpack, eat a hearty meal, and rest after a long travel day.

DAY 2: ORIENTATION, MAYAN RUINS & RIVER TOUR

To kick off our first full day together in Belize, staff will lead a program orientation to cover the expectations of GLA and our hosts. In the afternoon, we'll head to the coastal *Cerros* archaeological site, once home to Mayan farmers, fishermen, and traders. Explore the complex and learn a little about the Mayan civilization that previously occupied parts of present-day Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.



From Cerros, we'll go to the heart of Corozal Bay where the river meets the ocean. If lucky, we'll make our way up the New River through brackish water and mangrove forests to spot migratory birds and crocodiles! Here, we'll learn about the identification and counting methods rangers use to track local and migratory species.

After dinner, we'll break out into mentor groups to reflect on the day and the program ahead.

DAY 3: MANGROVE SEED PREPARATION & PLANTING

Mangroves play a significant role in the coastal ecosystem– preventing coastline erosion, providing storm surge protection, contributing to water quality, and serving as a shallow breeding ground for sea life. Today, we'll be working to restore a mangrove forest near Sarteneja village.

In the morning, we'll receive a presentation from an SACD Staff Member and mangrove enthusiast about the importance of mangroves and a tutorial on how to prepare seedlings.

After lunch, prepare to get your hands dirty as you prepare the mangrove seedlings. Later, transport them to a nearby coastal area – Warrie Bight – to plant alongside trained professionals. Once done, we'll play a game of volleyball before returning to Home Base for a leadership activity.



DAYS 4 & 5: MANATEE RESCUE CENTER & COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP

Over the next two days, we'll give back to the Sarteneja village through a community-wide clean-up. Break out into smaller groups and head to the main public areas to pick up trash and debris.

We'll also visit a Manatee Rescue Center. While you won't be cuddling up to our gentle manatee residents (they prefer their space!), you will be an integral part of our daily operations. Returning to the Home Base, prepare for a conservation-focused debate with your program mates.



DAY 6: KIDS CONSERVATION CAMP

Get ready for a jam-packed day with local kids! Our group will be in charge of creating and carrying out a fun and educational day for students, so put on your thinking cap and come prepared with some games and activities that will be impactful for kids. Lead students through an eco-friendly arts and crafts project, or take them on a school-wide scavenger hunt! In the afternoon, you will have some free time before dinner. Walk to a local store for a snack or swim with your friends and staff. We'll meet back at the Home Base for a hearty meal and then engage in a leadership activity before bed.



DAY 7: FISHERMEN TOUR AND LIONFISH SOUVENIR MAKING

Today, we'll receive an insider's view of Sarteneja's fishing industry. Wake up early and head to the main pier to meet several local fishermen. Together, we'll load onto private boats and jet down the coastline to visit several heart-shaped fishing traps used for generations. Listen to the fishermen's stories and try to harvest a fishing trap before heading back to land. With fresh fish in hand, we'll visit the fishermen's homes to master the art of filleting fish and share a seafood lunch. This meal is an excellent time to learn more about daily life in Belize, so come with questions! In the afternoon,





meet a group of inspiring women entrepreneurs using invasive lionfish fins to make beautiful jewelry and souvenirs. Learn about the collective efforts to rid the Caribbean Sea of invasive Lionfish and craft a unique souvenir to take home.

DAY 8: BARRIER ISLAND EXPEDITION

It's time for an adventure! Pack your overnight clothes and head to the Sarteneja pier, where our boats await us. Buckle up because it will be a bumpy ride, but we promise it'll be worth it! Today, we're going to the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve, a UNESCO world heritage site and barrier island known for its unusually high biodiversity. We'll stay in small cabins on the beach next to a park ranger station. Upon arriving, we'll meet friendly park rangers who will give us a tour of the small on-site museum. Climb the nearby observation tower to get a birds-eye view of the beautiful island. After lunch, boat through a man-made Mayan canal to reach the Bacalar Chico reef. Snorkel over beautiful coral and admire the variety of colorful fish and sealife that call this reef home. At night, we'll gather around the campfire for a cookout. Roast marshmallows and listen to Belizean folk stories under a starry night.



DAY 9: SNORKELING & BEACH CLEAN-UP

This morning, we'll head to a part of the island that serves as a nesting ground for sea turtles during certain months of the year. Work together to remove plastic and debris from the beach to clear the area for its most popular residents. Once done, we'll say goodbye to our ranger friends and jump back on our boats, and return to our Home Base before sundown. This will be our last night in Sarteneja, so we'll pack our bags and prepare for a big adventure the following day.



DAY 10: MAYAN RUINS ADVENTURE

We'll depart early from Sarteneja Village, heading south towards Central Belize. We'll stop at one of Belize's most famous ruins, *Altun Ha*, a Mayan city occupied for nearly 2000 years! Walk through the archeological complex and visit Altun Ha's impressive temples. Learn about the artifacts that archeologists have found, including an 11-pound carved jade head! After our tour, we'll check out a local artisanal market before continuing our journey. We'll settle into our cabins on a lush wildlife reserve and then have dinner.



DAY 11: NATURE RESERVE VISIT & GUEST SPEAKER

Embark on a day of immersive exploration as we delve into the heart of conservation at a local nature preserve. In the morning, witness the enchanting world of bird banding, mastering mist nets and fitting Aluminum bands to contribute to vital habitat preservation. Following a late lunch, traverse the reserve, unveiling caves with historical significance and catching glimpses of diverse wildlife captured by trail cameras. Return to Home Base for a satisfying meal before an enlightening presentation by a local legend making a major impact in conservation in Belize and beyond!

DAY 13: BELIZE ZOO & SERVICE PROJECT

Embark on an exciting adventure at the Belize Zoo today, home to over 125 native Belizean animal species! Encounter the vibrant wildlife, from howler monkeys to majestic harpy eagles, during a guided tour through the Zoo grounds. In the afternoon, contribute to a meaningful service





project nearby, and later, unwind in the refreshing pool at Home Base. After a delicious dinner, join the group for a captivating return to the Belize Zoo, where we'll observe the enchanting nocturnal animals that come to life under the moonlit Belizean sky.

DAY 13: CANOPY ZIPLINING, CAVE TUBING, & FAREWELL DINNER

Get your adrenaline pumping on a high-adventure zipline tour through the canopy of the Belizean rainforest! Learn about the local flora and fauna as you zip from one tree to the next. After, cool down on a tubing trip that will take you through impressive caves. Chill out and float with friends while learning about the cave formations that make Central Belize unique! In the afternoon, we'll gather for a final leadership activity to reflect on our time in Belize and the lessons we're bringing home. Take some time to pack your bags before our final dinner, where we'll celebrate the memories and friendships we've made in Belize!

DAY 14: DEPARTURE DAY

And just like that, our Belizean adventure ends! Head to the airport today with memories that will last a lifetime and a deeper understanding of community development and marine conservation. Staff will accompany students until they have safely departed for their gates. Safe Travels!



NOTICE ON PROGRAM UPDATES

Every year brings new and exciting opportunities for experiences we can offer students on our programs. While this program is being planned for 2024, some activities or details may change between now and the program start date. Please note that references from past participants and previously published information may not accurately reflect every aspect of this program. Refer to the sample itinerary above or to the GLA website for the most up-to-date version of program activities, and please note that further updates may be made between now and the program start date.

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO PROGRAM ACTIVITIES DUE TO COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that program activities may change to accommodate potential COVID-19 regulations. In particular, service projects and other activities that typically involve close contact or engagement with local community members may be curbed, altered or skipped depending on staff evaluations on the ground and/or at the discretion of our Executive Director and Director of Program Operations & Risk Management. Every effort will be made to provide an exceptional experience on-location, at whatever level of community interaction is deemed safe at the time.

TRAVELING TO BELIZE

GLA HOME BASE | The Home Base we'll use for Days 1-9 is a locally-run hotel on Belize's Northern coast. Students will dorm with one other roommate in comfortable, gender-segregated rooms equipped with AC and en-suite bathrooms. Cool down after a hard day's work in the ocean, just a few blocks from Home Base! The Home Base we'll use for Days 10-14 is located in Central Belize on a lush wildlife reserve. Here, students will dorm in gender-segregated rooms without AC but equipped with fans. Bathrooms will not be ensuite for this part of the trip.

FOOD | Belizean cuisine has traditional dishes from each ethnic group and region. The GLA cooks at Home Base will provide many options for you to sample! Belizean staples include rice, beans, chicken, seafood, and fresh fruits and vegetables.

CLIMATE | The Northern coast of Belize, where the Home Base is located, has a tropical climate with moderate to hot temperatures. A constant sea breeze keeps the heat and most mosquitoes at bay.

LEADERSHIP

Global Leadership Adventures started as an educational institute, so we continue to think and act like educators—not tour operators—as we deliver life-changing programs. We intentionally weave a leadership curriculum into the daily experience of our programs. Through group discussion, meaningful service, workshops, speakers, and excursions, staff guide students to reflect on program events through the lens of leadership and celebrate outstanding examples of leaders they encounter in the local community. Lending this context to the experience creates opportunities for students to dig deep into their vision, purpose, and knowledge of themselves and the world.

ABOUT GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES

Global Leadership Adventures was founded in 2003 by Fred Swaniker, a native of Ghana, TED Fellow and educational entrepreneur whose work has been praised by Barack Obama. Born as a global extension of the revolutionary African Leadership Academy, Global Leadership Adventures now operates programs centered around leadership, sustainable community service projects, and meaningful travel across Africa, Asia, Europe or the Americas. Through life-changing adventures, we strive to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it.

GLA HAS BEEN FEATURED IN:

The New York Times

 **USA TODAY**

 **NBC NEWS**

The Boston Globe

seventeen

OUR EXPECTATIONS

Be present

Our mission at GLA is “to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it.” To that end, we expect GLA students to maintain high standards of personal behavior and to be open-minded. The culture may be different, sometimes shockingly so. GLA will challenge students as they are expected to work hard and be physically and mentally present for all activities. We also ask students to step back from regular use of technology - particularly smartphones - to maximize their engagement with the program and their fellow participants. Students may get hot, dirty, and bug-bitten along the way, but their contribution can transform the community. The goal is for each student to return home having had a life-changing experience.

No tolerance

GLA has a no-tolerance policy towards drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and disruptive behavior. Those who violate or are suspected of violating this policy will be immediately dismissed from the program at the sole discretion of GLA staff.

Community-Led Experiences

GLA makes every effort to offer thoughtfully crafted programs for teens and young adults. Detailed planning and exhaustive communications with partners are indispensable to our program development process. However, service and activities are occasionally adjusted from session to session due to weather, changing needs of our local community partners, and/or various cultural celebrations and customs. We expect participants to be open-minded and flexible, willing to embrace the experience when plans change. GLA makes every effort to communicate adjustments to students and families with advance notice. We expect you to be open-minded and flexible.

Mentorship

GLA is not a therapy program. Our staff are highly skilled, professional, caring, and fun, but they are not licensed therapists. GLA programs can be physically and emotionally demanding, and applicants should be in good physical and mental health.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Contact Us

Want to learn more about Global Leadership Adventures and our available programs? Our Admissions Team has expertise and insights into our slate of program offerings, and we're happy to answer any questions you might have. We have collectively visited or staffed many of our GLA programs worldwide, and we have advice to share on everything from getting your travel documents together to what a typical day on a program is like. Call us at 1-858-771-0645 any time during office hours for assistance.

Enroll Now

We encourage you to enroll on your 1st choice program as early as possible! In fact, our most popular programs fill early every year, and many students end up putting off the quick and easy application process only to end up on the waiting list. The best way to ensure that you save your spot is to place your deposit and apply early. You can easily enroll online at www.experiencegla.com/enroll.

