

## Belize Travel Story – December 8, 2010

This was our first trip to Belize. It is an exotic country dominated by its beaches and reefs on the one hand and its lively jungles on the other. We had long wanted to visit Belize, and our 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on December 8<sup>th</sup>, gave us the excuse.

Formerly known as British Honduras, Belize is a Central American nation occupying the same amount of land as New Jersey. However, the entire population of Belize is equivalent to that of Newark, NJ, only 300,000 people. Belize is just below Cancun and it borders Guatemala on the west and Mexico on the northwest. Its 240 mile shoreline is the Caribbean Sea, and straight east is Jamaica.

What impressed us most about the people in Belize is their friendliness. They seemed happy, courteous, and generous. Most of the Belize speak English fairly well, so it is easy to interact with them. We found the prices to be about the same as the States, but the average income is \$9,000, which is much higher than Guatemala but lower than Mexico and Costa Rica.

Belize ethnic groups form the core of the Belize culture. Half of Belize is Creole, but these people speak English-Creole rather than French-Creole. English-Creole is spoken so fast with dialect that we could not understand it. Nearly half of the people are Mestizo (of mixed Mayan and European descent) and another 10% are Mayan. A fourth racial group, the Garifunas, are a fusion of Africans from Honduras formerly known as the Black Caribe. Finally, the German Mennonites constitute a large racial group who do most of the farming in Belize.

You can also find them on the following pages in more or less the order in which we took them. We recommend Belize very highly for any kind of vacation.

Ron & Nancy

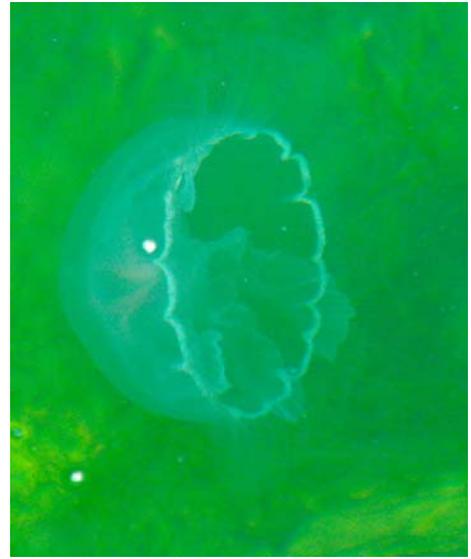
. Like 99% of the tourists, rather than stay in Belize City, which is unimpressive, upon arrival we immediately took a 12-seater baby plane south to Placencia, a long, narrow peninsula with a lagoon on one side and ocean on the other. We stayed at the Inn at Robert's Grove, one of the nicer but inexpensive resorts in Placencia. Wikipedia has a photo of our Inn at the head of its article on [Placencia](#). The small resort was unlike anything we had encountered in Mexico—it was quiet, peaceful, and not a single craft-vender came walking along the beach.

We discovered that only about 6 of 50 rooms were occupied, which represents the huge hit that the Belize economy has suffered since the recession in the United States. Normally, the resort hotel would have been sold out this time of year. Tourism has dropped by about 75% since the recession started 2 years ago.

We were in Belize for only two full days, but boy were they full. The first day we took a small boat tour of the Monkey River jungle. On that trip, we photographed dozens of diverse animals, birds, and flowers. On the second full day, we took a boat tour to the private island of Ranguana, which was about 15 miles east, almost to the edge of the big barrier reef, the second biggest reef. At the tiny one acre island, we went snorkeling and took pictures of the birds who hung out in the trees. There were many interesting objects to shoot by camera, I have divided our pictures into three groups on the web; you can find them at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ron-anderson/>



Landing at Placencia in Tiny Place



Jelly Fish



Placencia Peninsula, Belize



View from Inn at Robert's Grove



Typical Belize House



Great Heron



tiger striped heron



smallest kingfisher



very blue heron



Howler Monkey Roaring



Yellow Stripped Heron



Turtles Sunning in Monkey River



Placencia Beach



Inn at Robert's Grove in Placencia



Mangrove Islands



mangroves on lagoon at Placencia



Dolphins on Lagoon



Dugout Canoe at Monkey River Village



Crocodile



flowers of provision tree



flowers of provision tree



tiny proboscis bats



Rubber Plants growing an inch per hour



Igunana



Aninga Drying Wings



giant ceiba tree



Turtles Sunning in Monkey River



Boy Line-Fishing at Monkey River Village



baby raccoons in lagoon



Belize Dec. 8-11, 2010



Ranguana Island Headquarters



Live Star Fish



Ranguana Island for Snorkling



Nancy Relaxing in Belize



Morning Sun on Pier at Robert's Grove



Aszlias and Fountain at Robert's Grove



Yellow Hibiscus



Yellow Hibiscus



Red Hibiscus