



Northern Cayes

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Turneffe Atoll	119
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Best Places to Stay

- » Caribbean Villas Hotel & Bird Sanctuary, San Pedro (p95)
- » Ak'bol Yoga Retreat, Ambergris Caye (p97)
- » Barefoot Beach Belize, Caye Caulker (p114)
- » Sea Dreams Hotel, Caye Caulker (p112)

Best Places to Eat

- » Sandro, Caye Caulker (p116)
- » Lazy Croc, Ambergris Caye (p100)
- » Hidden Treasure, San Pedro (p100)
- » Amor Y Café, Caye Caulker (p116)

Why Go?

Daydream a little. Conjure up your ultimate tropical island fantasy. With over 100 enticing isles and two amazing atolls, chances are that one of the northern cayes can make this dream a reality.

If you imagined stringing up a hammock on a deserted beach, there is an outer atoll with your name on it. Pining to be pampered? You can choose from an ever-growing glut of ritzy resorts on Ambergris Caye. San Pedro is prime for dancing the night away to a reggae beat, while Caye Caulker moves at a slower pace.

But the islands are only the beginning: the Northern Cayes' richest resource lies below the surface of the sea. Only a few miles offshore, the barrier reef runs for 80 miles, offering unparalleled opportunities to explore canyons and coral, to face off with nurse sharks and stingrays, and to swim with schools of fish painted every color of the palette.

When to Go

During the peak tourist season – from December to April – prices for accommodations are significantly higher – sometimes by as much as 50%. The trade-off is that the weather is predictably warm and wonderful. If you happen to find yourselves on the cayes during the hot summer months, you can enjoy the opening of lobster season, which is celebrated with much fanfare on Ambergris and Caye Caulker. In August, San Pedro is the site of Belize's biggest street festival, the International Costa Maya Festival.



Northern Cayes Highlights

- 1 Cycling up the sandy coast of the **North Island** (p89) on Ambergris Caye and stopping for a refreshing watermelon juice at the **Palapa Bar** (p102)
- 2 Being surrounded by nurse sharks and stingrays at **Shark Ray Alley** (p91)
- 3 Watching the sun set and feeding the tarpons at San Pedro's **Sunset Restaurant** (p99)
- 4 Kayaking to investigate the birdlife at the **Caye Caulker Forest Reserve** (p108)
- 5 Catching sight of a West Indian manatee frolicking in the shallow waters off **Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary** (p109)
- 6 Cruising out to Lighthouse Reef to descend into the darkness of the **Blue Hole Natural Monument** (p121) and spying on the rare red-footed booby at **Half Moon Caye** (p122)