



# Northern Cays

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## Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ Robin's Kitchen (p102)

## Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Matachica Beach Resort (p99)
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## Why Go?

Daydream a little. Conjure up your ultimate tropical island fantasy. With more than 100 enticing isles and two amazing atolls, chances are that one of the northern cays 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 cays' 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

- ➔ **Dec–Apr** Peak season; accommodation prices are high but the weather is wonderful.
- ➔ **Jun–Aug** Hot, with fewer tourists; lobster season opens.
- ➔ **Aug** International Costa Maya Festival in San Pedro.

## Northern Cayes Highlights

- 1 Caye Caulker** (p108) Availing yourself of the amazing array of aquatic activities – from kitesurfing and paddleboarding to snorkeling and diving.
- 2 Shark Ray Alley** (p91) Being surrounded by nurse sharks and stingrays.
- 3 San Pedro** (p84) Enjoying a sunset cocktail on the deck of a sailboat cruising offshore.
- 4 Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary** (p108) Catching sight of a West Indian manatee frolicking in the shallow waters.
- 5 Lighthouse Reef** (p124) Descending into the darkness of the Blue Hole Natural Monument.
- 6 Half Moon Caye** (p126) Spying a rare red-footed booby.
- 7 Caye Caulker Forest Reserve** (p109) Kayaking into the wilderness to investigate the impressive birdlife.

