

ROAD SCHOLAR[®]

Hike and Snorkel to Find the Mystery of the Maya in Guatemala and Belize Final Information Packet



Program # 20813

May 8 - 17, 2023

ROAD SCHOLAR

Elderhostel, Inc.

11 Avenue de Lafayette
Boston, MA 02111-1746
(617) 426-7788 tel
www.road scholar.org

Dear Road Scholar Participant,

The time is drawing near for your Road Scholar educational program to begin! We want to make sure you have all the information you need to get the most out of your experience, so please be sure to carefully read all the materials we have sent you.

In this final information packet packet you will find:

- Group Arrival and Departure Instructions
- Emergency Contacts and Procedures
- Staff Biographies
- Accommodation Schedule (with site telephone numbers)
- Travel Advice
- Final Day-by-Day Itinerary

We make every effort to ensure that all program details are up-to-date. In the event of any major changes, we'll do our best to alert you. For less significant changes, we'll update you at orientation.

Please refer to your first information packet for a suggested packing list and details on practical matters, such as local currency, time and weather.

If any of your travel arrangements have been booked through Road Scholar Travel Services, we will send you your final confirmation approximately three weeks prior to departure. Until then, if you have questions about your travel arrangements you may contact Road Scholar Travel Services toll free at 800-241-1404. For any questions regarding the educational program, registration, insurance or payments, please contact Road Scholar Participant Services toll free at 877-426-8056.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Your Friends at Road Scholar

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

If you have not completed the required your "Personal Information" and "Your Preferences" forms online, you must do so now. Please visit "My Account" at www.road scholar.org to get started. Once completed, you only have to review and update your information for future Road Scholar programs.

As you prepare for your program we highly recommend you review the sections in the first Information Packet concerning travel health and safety and risks. We recommend that all participants consult with their physician and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Department of State regarding their health condition and recommendations specific to the countries they will visit before departure. While Road Scholar cannot guarantee your health, safety or welfare at any time, you can minimize your risk by making sure you are in good health and capable of participating fully in the program, maintaining necessary vaccinations, including seasonal influenza vaccination, and by taking simple precautions prior to departure and once on the program. Your well-being is our top priority. Please visit www.road scholar.org for the latest information on health and safety precautions and requirements.

If you have not yet told us about any special needs you may have, or if there have been any recent medical or physical developments that may affect your program experience, please give us a call.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

An International Vaccination Certificate must be presented as proof of yellow fever vaccination by travelers arriving from at-risk locations on the World Health Organization's list [www.who.int/publications/m/item/countries-with-risk-of-yellow-fever-transmission-and-countries-requiring-yellow-fever-vaccination-\(november-2022\)](http://www.who.int/publications/m/item/countries-with-risk-of-yellow-fever-transmission-and-countries-requiring-yellow-fever-vaccination-(november-2022))

Please note that travelers arriving directly from the US or Canada (without en-route travel to at-risk areas) are not required to be vaccinated. Additional resources about vaccination requirements and suggestions, health advisories, and country-specific recommendations can be found by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Persons who cannot receive the vaccination for medical reasons should obtain a medical waiver from a Certified Yellow Fever Vaccine Provider such as their local health department. The waiver must be dated and printed/written on letterhead stationary; it must also include the center's official yellow fever vaccination stamp and the attending clinician's signature.

All U.S. citizens require a passport that is valid a minimum of 6 months after their return date to the U.S.. If you must apply for a new passport, plan to allow 6 to 8 weeks for this process. We recommend that you bring along a photocopy of the first page of your passport (the page that has your photograph and information); in the event that your passport is lost or stolen, a copy of it will be of great assistance.

Travel Visa

A travel visa for U.S. citizens is not required for this program.

Non-U.S. citizens should check entry and visa requirements.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE INSTRUCTIONS

This information replaces all other communications you have received from Holbrook Travel, Inc..

START OF PROGRAM

Monday, May 8, 2023: 3:00 p.m. hotel check-in; 6:00 p.m. Orientation and 7:00 p.m. Welcome Dinner

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers - from the arrival airport to the first site on the group arrival date, and from the last site to the departure airport on the group departure date - are included in your cost if you have booked your airfare through Road Scholar.

Participants who purchased their airfare through Road Scholar and are arriving early are eligible for the group transfer from the airport on arrival day. Participants need to notify Road Scholar no later than 30 days prior to departure by calling (800)-454-5768, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. ET.

ARRIVAL:

Arrival Airport: Belize City, Belize (BZE)

Upon arrival in Belize City's international airport proceed through Immigration, Baggage Claim and Customs before exiting the secured area of the airport. The Road Scholar representative will be waiting outside the exit door with a Road Scholar sign (does not apply to independently arranged flights or Road Scholar flights that deviate from the published program dates). If your flight is delayed, please refer to the list of Emergency Contacts in your materials and call the program provider. If you are on a Road Scholar flight, arrangements will be made to either hold the transfer or schedule a separate transfer.

For participants NOT taking the group transfer:

Directions from the airport to the Black Orchid Resort

Independent travelers and those deviating from the program dates are responsible for arranging their own transfers. Please see the options below.

Taxi transportation is available at the Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (BZE) in Belize City. Participants can hire a Taxi in the arrivals hall and are encouraged to set the fare price beforehand. We suggest reconfirming the price of the ride with your driver before getting into the taxi. Please select a regulated taxi service. Please ask for help at the airport information desk if you require assistance.

Some hotels offer an airport shuttle service which is complimentary or available at an additional cost. Please check the accommodation section of your program materials for more information and contact the hotel directly to make a reservation if applicable/appropriate.

If you prefer to schedule a private transfer, please contact 1-800-866-7111 or email roadscholarprograms@holbrooktravel.com for additional information.

IMPORTANT: We have made every effort to ensure that the details in this section are correct as of the date of printing. However, we encourage you to inquire at an information desk should you have any questions.

END OF PROGRAM

Wednesday, May 17, 2023: Program concludes with an internal flight from Dangriga to Belize City.

DEPARTURE:

This program will conclude with a morning flight from Dangriga to Belize City's international airport, followed by afternoon connecting flights to the U.S.

The Belizean international airport departure tax is included in the cost of the Road Scholar international airline tickets.

Participants who have not purchased airfare through Road Scholar are responsible for making their own transfer arrangements to the first site at the beginning of the program, as well as from the last site at the end of the program. The Information Packet Road Scholar sends in advance of the program includes details needed to make your transfer arrangements. If you wish to purchase airfare through Road Scholar, please call (800) 241-1404.

Please note: In the unlikely event Road Scholar must make changes to the program's arrival or departure details, we will notify all participants as soon as possible. Participants who have purchased Road Scholar airfare are protected against airline change fees; however, anyone who has not purchased Road Scholar airfare will be required to make their own adjustments and may incur fees imposed by the airline.

For participants NOT taking the group transfer:

Getting from The Colonial at Jaguar Reef to the airport

This program will conclude with a morning flight from Dangriga to Belize City's international airport, followed by afternoon connecting flights to the U.S.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS AT ROAD SCHOLAR

While en route to your program, Road Scholar Travel Services is available to offer guidance with air travel emergencies, which include unanticipated flight delays or cancellations.

If your flight is delayed or you miss your flight, please call Road Scholar Travel Services at 802-254-7190. You may need to leave a callback number. The emergency line is only for participants who made their travel arrangements with Road Scholar Travel Services. Please also alert your Group Leader of any flight changes.

Road Scholar is not responsible for flights delayed or cancelled or additional expenses incurred before joining the program. Please call us for travel emergencies or if you need guidance rebooking a flight if the airline is not able to satisfactorily help you.

Emergency contact numbers are only to be used in case of an emergency, and Program Staff Members should only be contacted during your program.

Samantha Angba Site Coordinator

This is the emergency contact number for the local Road Scholar site coordinator in Belize. If calling from within Belize, it isn't necessary to dial the "501" country code.

We suggest adding this information to your cell phone contacts and/or keeping a printed copy of the Road Scholar emergency numbers together with your travel documents.

Cell Phone: +5016333070

Phone: +5018243070

Holbrook Travel (24 hr) Program Provider Emergency Contact

Please let us know if you experience a travel delay on the way to your program that will change your flight arrival information for same-day transfers or delay your arrival beyond the program start date. As a Program Provider, we depend on you to keep us apprised of circumstances affecting your travels as we are unable to access or change your airline reservations for this program.

When calling after hours, please listen carefully to the recorded instructions. There will be an option to "press 2" to be connected to an emergency answering service. The answering service will help you to connect with Holbrook's on-call staff. Emails and voice mail are not monitored after hours and should only be used for non-emergency matters.

In addition to keeping a printed copy of the Road Scholar emergency numbers with your passport, we also suggest temporarily storing it on your cell phone for easy access while traveling. This contact can be left with family, caregivers, or anyone else who might need to reach you due to an emergency while you are away on this program.

Phone: 352-377-7111

PROGRAM NOTES

Final Instructions

Please refer to the last few pages of this program booklet to find the final packing list and other important instructions on how to prepare for your program.

Water

We do not recommend drinking the tap water in Guatemala or Belize; however, it is safe to brush one's teeth with this water.

For participants' well-being, individual bottles of purified water will be distributed to participants each day during the program.

Pack Extra Prescription Medications

Please consider packing an extra supply (we suggest enough for an additional 7-10 days) of your prescription medications as you prepare for your program. This precaution will serve you well in the event you experience travel delays due to COVID-19 quarantine, airline schedule changes, or other unexpected events.

Outdoor Activities in the Tropics

Tropical climates can pose a special challenge for participants not accustomed to warm weather and high humidity. Dehydration and overheating is always a concern when exercising outdoors in hot weather, but there are some easy steps participants can take to help prevent this.

Prior to each activity consider:

- *Drinking plenty of water an hour before spending time doing outdoor activities.
- *Wearing a hat to shade the head, face, and neck.
- *Applying sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors.
- *Wearing loose, cool fabrics.
- *Bringing a drink bottle with icy water during outdoor activities and drinking often.

CPAP Machines

If you plan to travel with a CPAP machine, please take a moment to add that information to the "Health and Safety" section of your Road Scholar My Account page.

We suggest packing a small bottle of distilled water in your checked luggage so you can use your machine when you first arrive in country. Distilled water is sold at most pharmacies in Belize and your Group Leader will be available to help you purchase more as needed.

Please remember to bring a battery pack and/or any necessary cables to power your equipment during the program.

Relative Humidity & Heat Exhaustion

Perspiration is the body's way of lowering its temperature by transferring heat into the air through evaporation. However, this cooling effect becomes less effective when the humidity in the air is already at a high level. When the air is already heavy with moisture, evaporation slows down and makes us feel hotter, tired, and even out of breath. Staying hydrated, wearing moisture-wicking fabrics and avoiding sunburns/direct sun are important steps to help prevent heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

PROGRAM STAFF AND INSTRUCTORS

Israel Canto

Group Leader

Israel Canto was raised in a Mayan village in the Cayo District of Belize. In high school, he worked in small hotels near his hometown and found he enjoyed interacting with visitors. In 1995, he completed his guide training and certification and has worked as an expedition leader ever since. Israel continues to expand his knowledge and expertise through travel and continuing education courses. He is fluent in Yucatec Maya, English and Spanish, and enjoys birding and snorkeling in his free time.

ACCOMMODATION SCHEDULE

Dates	Location	Accommodation
Days 1 - 2 May 8 - 9, 2023	Belize City	Black Orchid Resort 2 Dawson Lane, Burrell Boom Village Burrell Boom, Belize +5012259158 info@blackorchidresort.com Web: www.blackorchidresort.com/
Days 3 - 4 May 10 - 11, 2023	Tikal/Peten Region	Hotel Villa Maya Calle Litoral de Lago, Zona 0 Santa Elena, Guatemala +502 7931 8350 Web: villasdeguatemala.com/en/villa-maya
Days 5 - 6 May 12 - 13, 2023	Cayo District	Jaguar Creek Mile 42, Hummingbird Highway Belmopan, Cayo District Belize +501 610 2034 Web: www.jaguarcreek.org/accommodations /
Days 7 - 9 May 14 - 16, 2023	False Sittee Point	The Colonial at Jaguar Reef 101 A Sittee River Road Stann Creek District, Hopkins Belize +501-5337040 Web: www.thebelizecollection.com/the-colonial/

TRAVEL ADVICE

Airline Luggage Regulations

Please be aware that many airlines impose strict weight limits on luggage. Please consult Road Scholar Travel Services or your travel agency for luggage regulations and penalties on specific airlines.

Airport Check-In

- Arrive at the airport a minimum of 2 hours before scheduled flight departure for domestic flights (3 hours for international flights).
- Under FAA rules, all airline passengers are limited to what items they can carry on board. Please check with your airline to avoid unpleasant surprises.
- Make sure that you have your passport, visas and other required travel documents (tickets, e-ticket, itinerary, ticket confirmation number) with you.
- Individuals without a ticket or boarding pass will not be allowed beyond the security checkpoint.

What should I take in my carry-on baggage?

When packing your carry-on baggage, keep in mind that this will be all you have for a day or two if your luggage is lost. Therefore, you should take essential and valuable items. We recommend packing the following items in your carry-on luggage:

- Your tickets, any visas you may need, and any other tickets or vouchers you will need for further travel after your program is over
- Your passport and a photocopy for added security. (Carry your photocopies separately from the originals.)
- Your personal health insurance information
- Your prescription medicine(s) with copies of prescription(s)
- Reusable water bottle to refill during travel and throughout the program
- A change of clothing
- Your camera
- Something to snack on, if it helps you during travel
- Road Scholar emergency contact information, accommodation details including name and address, as well as arrival and transfer information.

All rules and practices regarding security, carry-ons, and other airline/airport practices are subject to change without notice. It is best to call Road Scholar Travel Services, your airline, or check with the airport just before departure for the latest updates.

Travel Advisories

For the most current aviation update and travel advisory information, you can visit the Federal Aviation Administration at www.faa.gov, the U.S. Department of Transportation at www.dot.gov, the Transportation Security Administration at www.tsa.gov, or check with the individual airlines for their current policies.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency. Enrollment is voluntary and costs nothing, but it should be a part of your travel planning and security. To enroll visit <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Some Advice About Shopping

No matter where you are in the world, shopping is an optional free-time activity and not part of the Road Scholar program. For participants who wish to buy souvenirs, handicrafts, or expensive items such as cameras, jewelry, paintings, perfume, rugs, etc., we offer the following advice for your benefit and greater enjoyment of the program.

- Neither the Group Leader nor other Road Scholar program staff is permitted to lead shopping expeditions. If you have a particular request, a member of the staff may be able to suggest known shops or vendors, but this should never be taken as encouragement to make purchases or endorsement of the value, quality, or authenticity of particular items.
- Neither Road Scholar nor the Program Provider organization has partnerships or other relationships with vendors of any kind. We do not request, receive or accept commissions from vendors, nor do we act as guarantors, agents, or expeditors for merchandise to be shipped later. Please do not ask the Group Leader or other staff to assist you in this regard.
- When and if you visit local factories, galleries, handicraft shops, or other establishments as part of the program it is for the educational value involved. You are always free to make - or not make - purchases as you like.
- Road Scholar groups should never be subjected to a high-pressure “sales pitch.” If you encounter such a situation, please notify Road Scholar.
- If you do choose to purchase souvenirs or crafts, please remember to shop local! Purchasing from local stores and artisans will contribute to the community you are visiting. Your Group Leader can help provide suggestions.

Most of all, if you choose to purchase art, handicrafts, or other items, we hope it will be as a wonderful reminder of your program experience.

Preventive Measures to Avoid Illness

Here is guidance from the Centers for Disease Control on how to avoid contracting and spreading an illness.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

For those looking for additional resources on this topic, we recommend trusted sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.

Other Health Requirements

Belize and Guatemala no longer require COVID-19 testing and/or proof of vaccination for entry. Face masks are recommended, but not required in public spaces and transportation.

All routine vaccinations (e.g., tetanus, hepatitis A, flu shots, etc.) should be kept up-to-date as a matter of good health practice; especially if you plan to travel internationally. In preparation for your program, you should check health and travel advisories that affect your itinerary. Information from organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and the U.S. Dept. of State can help you plan ahead.

At least six weeks prior to departure, make arrangements to see your physician or the travel nurse at your local public health clinic to determine what vaccinations are appropriate based on your medical history and travel itinerary. Information can be obtained by visiting the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/travel or by calling 800-CDC-INFO. Some vaccinations do not offer immediate protection and require days or weeks to take full effect; therefore, do not leave your doctor's appointment and vaccinations to the last minute.

The rigors of travel and changes in diet can sometimes disrupt sensitive digestive systems. Past participants have suggested taking probiotic supplements to help maintain digestive health during travel.

When you leave your hotel room/cabin for any length of time, please use the safety deposit box (if available) to secure your valuables and lock the rest of your items inside your suitcase/s. Leaving your belongings out in the open, spread about your room, makes it tempting and easy for someone to quickly pocket items. Use TSA approved locks when securing your luggage.

If you have a smart phone, we would like to remind you not to leave it unattended during your travels. Smart phones—even older models—can fetch very high prices overseas and there is a growing global market for stolen phones.

Since laptops and cameras oftentimes don't fit into the small safety deposit boxes, check if your hotel/cruise vessel has a safe at the front desk where you can store larger valuables (get a receipt). Other options include using safety devices such as laptop security locks, Ipad cases with cable locks and steel mesh cabling that can be wrapped around backpacks/bags and then secured via a steel cable to an immovable object (much like a bicycle chain/cable). Although these gadgets aren't full proof, they will make your items harder to steal and less appealing for someone looking for a quick grab-and-dash. If none of these options are available, we suggest you store your valuables in your locked suitcase when you leave your accommodation.

Changes to Your Program

While we make every effort to ensure the accuracy of our published materials, programs are typically advertised more than a year prior to their start date. As a result, some program activities, schedules, accommodations, personnel, and other logistics occasionally change due to local conditions or circumstances. Should a major change occur, we will make every effort to alert you. For less significant changes, we will update you during orientation. Thank you for your understanding.

FINAL DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Please be aware that program activities and scheduled times could change due to local circumstances. In the event of major changes, we will alert you as quickly as possible. Less significant changes will be communicated during orientation. Thank you for your understanding.

Day 1: Arrive Belize City, Check-in, Orientation, Welcome Dinner **Monday, May 08**

Arrive To: Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport (BZE) in Belize City, 9 miles from the city center. Refer to your personal air itinerary for specific flight information.

Afternoon: We will arrive at the hotel in the afternoon. After we check in, we'll take some time to freshen up and rest before Orientation.

Orientation: The Group Leader will greet everyone and lead introductions. We will review the up-to-date program schedule, discuss roles and responsibilities, logistics, safety guidelines, emergency procedures, and answer questions.< br> Transfers to and from program activities will be by air conditioned bus, unless specified otherwise.< br>

Meals on our program feature local cuisine. In many cases, they will be plated and served set meals; in others, we will have buffets with multiple options. Beverages include coffee, tea, water; other beverages are usually available for purchase.< br>

Periods in the daily schedule designated as "Free time" and "At leisure" offer opportunities to do what you like and make your experience even more meaningful and memorable according to your personal preferences. The Group Leader will be happy to offer suggestions.< br>

Program activities, schedules, personnel, and indicated distances or times may change due to local circumstances/conditions. In the event of changes, we will alert you as quickly as possible. Thank you for your understanding.

Dinner: At the hotel restaurant, we will enjoy a plated welcome dinner with fish, pork, or chicken options, with rice, salad, and vegetable sides. Coffee, tea, water included.

Evening: At leisure.

Note: Hotel check-in from 3:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m. Orientation followed by Welcome Dinner. Participants must book flights that arrive into Belize City, Belize no later than 4:30 p.m. on this day if they plan on attending the program orientation. See your program's travel details regarding transfers.

Accommodations: Black Orchid Resort

Meals Included: Dinner

Day 2: Boat Ride on the New River, Exploring the Lamanai Ruins **Tuesday, May 09**

Breakfast: At the hotel restaurant, we will enjoy a breakfast buffet with fruits, cereal, different type of eggs, and local food plus coffee, tea, water, juice.

Morning: We will transfer to the New River dock and embark on a scenic boat ride of about 31 miles upstream to the Mayan ruins at Lamanai. While navigating the calm waters of the New River, we'll try to find and identify some of the many bird species found in the area, including black-collared hawks, mangrove swallows, olive-throated parakeets, and American pygmy kingfishers, to name a few. If lucky, we may even catch a glimpse of the rarely seen Jabiru Stork! As we get close-up views of mangroves and virgin forests flanking the narrow waterway, let's try to spot the colorful orchids that grow along the river banks.

We'll disembark at Lamanai for a walking exploration of the more than 50 impressive structures found at the archaeological reserve. This large Mayan ceremonial center is set in a tropical forest on the banks of the New River Lagoon in the north central region of Belize. Some of the site's highlights include the Jaguar Temple, the High Temple, and the Mask Temple. A beautiful panoramic view of the lagoon and surrounding jungle can be seen from the top of the High Temple. It is believed that the ancient center was occupied during more than 3,200 years, and as recently as in the 18th century.

Lunch: At the ruins, we will enjoy a lunch of local creole food like Belizean chicken, rice and salad.

Afternoon: We'll continue exploring the archaeological complex. In addition to protecting many fascinating Maya buildings, the reserve at Lamanai provides shelter to a large number of animals. Visitors are sometimes caught off-guard as the rainforest comes alive with the loud, guttural calls of howler monkeys perched high in the forest. Other animals occasionally spotted at the site include agoutis, jaguarundis, woodpeckers, toucans, aracari, trogons, and armadillos.

We'll transfer back to Belize City by boat and bus to return to the hotel.

Dinner: Hotel restaurant plated meal.

Evening: At leisure. Prepare luggage for check out the following morning.

Note: This is a very full day. Activities include boat and bus transfers and considerable walking in potentially hot/humid conditions. From the hotel to the boat dock is about 52 miles, 1-1.5 hours. The scenic boat ride to Lamanai is about 31 miles, approximately 1 hour.

*Accommodations: Black Orchid Resort
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 3: Belize Zoo, Transfer to Guatemala, Ixpanpajul Nature Park Wednesday, May 10

Breakfast: Hotel restaurant buffet.

Morning: After check out, we'll board our bus and head in a southwesterly direction in preparation for our field trip to the Belize Zoo. Upon arrival we'll accompany our Group Leader on a walking exploration of the zoo and its education center, located on 29 acres of tropical savanna. The Belize Zoo was founded in 1983 as a safe haven for rescued animals representing more than 40 different species native to Belize.

Afterwards, we'll begin our transfer to the Peten region in Guatemala, with a brief stop at the Belize/Guatemala border for an examination of group documentation.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in San Ignacio, we'll enjoy a plated meal based on beef or chicken with rice and vegetables, with vegetarian options available; coffee, tea, water included.

Afternoon: We'll continue our transfer to Flores, in the Peten region of Guatemala. En route, we'll stop at Ixpanpajul Nature Park for an expert-led forest walk on trails and hanging bridges.

The Ixpanpajul Natural Park covers an area of 9 square kilometers and has more than 200 species of trees, 150 plus species of birds and about 40 species of mammals. A walking trail with six hanging bridges provides multiple angles from which to observe and admire the park's abundant flora and fauna. We'll learn about the layers of a tropical forest while walking on trails and hanging bridges that eventually lead to the summit of Miramás Hill and its rewarding views of Lake Peten Itza.

We'll then transfer to the hotel for check-in.

Dinner: At the hotel restaurant, we will enjoy a meal, plus coffee, tea, water.

Evening: At leisure.

Note:

Total driving today approximately 4 hours. Sloped terrain with several stairs of varying heights in Ixpanpajul and hanging bridges are demanding. Rocks are slippery during the rainy season. Please wear good walking shoes and you may also opt for a walking stick to assist with balance.

*Accommodations: Hotel Villa Maya
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**Day 4: Tikal Ruins, Views of Lake Peten Itza
Thursday, May 11**

Breakfast: At the hotel restaurant, we will enjoy a meal with coffee, tea, water included.

- Morning:** After breakfast, we'll transfer to the ruins at Tikal with our Group Leader and local expert. This site, with its massive temples rising above the rainforest canopy, conjures images of an Indiana Jones adventure. Once swallowed by the rainforest, Tikal is one of the largest excavated Mayan sites, with more than 4,000 structures. It also features some of the tallest temples in the Mayan world. An impressive network of causeways, aqueducts and canals, which not only served as an irrigation system but also provided drinking water for the city, are displays of some masterful engineering. Underground tunnels and new structures are still being discovered and excavated.
- Lunch:** At a local restaurant, we will enjoy a plated barbecue meal with rice, vegetables, and fruits, plus coffee, tea, water.
- Afternoon:** We'll learn more about Tikal and its mysteries as we continue our visit after lunch.

Afterwards, we'll transfer back for a late afternoon arrival to the hotel.
- Dinner:** Hotel restaurant.
- Evening:** At leisure. Prepare luggage for our check out tomorrow morning.

Note: Tikal activities include climbing steep stone and wooden staircases, and walking on irregular forest trails. Participants should wear sturdy walking shoes with good rubber tread, lightweight pants and t-shirt that are comfortable and allow freedom of movement. Also bring insect repellent/sunscreen. See packing list for more handy items.

*Accommodations: Hotel Villa Maya
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 5: Yaxha National Park & Ruins

Friday, May 12

- Breakfast:** Hotel restaurant.
- Morning:** Today we'll enjoy a field trip to Yaxha National Park, located approximately 45 miles from Flores. The Yaxha ruins are part of the Maya Biosphere Reserve along with the sites of Nakum and El Naranjo. Findings indicate that the city was occupied throughout the pre-classic and post-classic periods and that it was allied to Tikal. Yaxha has more than 500 buildings, including a twin pyramid complex not seen anywhere else save in Tikal.
- Lunch:** At a local restaurant, we will enjoy a plated meal, plus coffee, tea, water; other beverages available for purchase.
- Afternoon:** We'll begin our transfer to the Cayo District in Belize with a stop at the Guatemala/Belize border for inspection of travel documentation.

Late-afternoon arrival at the lodge. Check into rooms and freshen up before dinner.
- Dinner:** At the lodge restaurant, we will enjoy a plated meal with coffee, tea, water, local juice included; other beverages available for purchase.

Evening: At leisure.

Note: The drive to Yaxha is about 1 hour, to Belize about 2 hours. The terrain is flat, paths of dirt and grass. No handrails to climb temples. 2 hour loop walk at Yaxha.

*Accommodations: Jaguar Creek
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**Day 6: Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave Adventure, Free Time
Saturday, May 13**

Breakfast: At the lodge restaurant, we will enjoy a meal with eggs, toast, ham or bacon, and fruits, plus coffee, tea, water, juice included.

Morning: After breakfast, we'll drive to the starting point for our exploration of Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave. This arduous, rewarding activity will begin with 45 minutes of hiking that includes river crossings and wading in knee-high water. Once at the cave entrance, we will swim through the opening and start a 3.5-hour journey in the cave. This activity will require endurance, strength, agility and balance.

The "ATM Cave," Actun Tunichil Muknal, is an important archaeological wonder of the Mayan world. This living museum full of important artifacts is a fragile system which requires strict instruction for the preservation of this site and for the safety of all participants.

Lunch: On site, we will enjoy a self-serve meal; select from a variety of ingredients to create your own kind of burrito.

Afternoon: We will return to the lodge.

Free Time. Take this opportunity for personal independent exploration to see and do what interests you most. Please refer to the list of Free Time Opportunities. The Group Leader will be happy to offer suggestions.

Dinner: Lodge restaurant plated meal.

Evening: At leisure.

Note: 1 hour drive to cave. Walk/hike about 45 minutes to river. Wear a bathing suit under comfortable, older clothing, closed-toe shoes, and old socks that can get wet and dirty. Arrive at cave entrance after 45-minute jungle hike, swim a short distance through the mouth of the cave to enter site. Cave floor is mostly wet and rocky. Some wading in ankle-to-shoulder-deep water required. In fragile sections, participants will need to remove shoes so as not to damage the cave floor and/or artifacts.

*Accommodations: Jaguar Creek
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**Day 7: Black Hole Hiking & Rappelling Adventure
Sunday, May 14**

Breakfast: Lodge restaurant meal.

Morning: After check out, we will start the day with a transfer to Cave Branch for a full day of hiking and rappelling activities at Black Hole. Upon arrival at Cave Branch, we'll take part in an instructional session before driving to the base camp and starting our 1.5-hour hike. The hike comes to an end at the hilltop at the edge of an enormous sink hole. After donning harnesses and receiving the necessary instructions, we'll rappel into the 300-foot sink hole. Once at the forested bottom, we can reward our efforts with a well-deserved break for lunch.

Those who do not wish to take part in the Black Hole hike/rappelling will have the option to participate in a moderately strenuous river cave expedition. The cave activity begins with a 15 minute drive to a drop off point at the river's edge. Sit in a rubber inner tube and float through the entrance to the cave. Continue floating through the dark chambers, enjoying views of the sparkling mineral formations overhead with the aid of headlamps. Once the water becomes too shallow, put aside the inner tubes and set off on foot. The cave floor is rocky and wet and at times it will be necessary to climb over rocky formations.

Lunch: On site, we will enjoy a meal of self-prepared burritos with many options for ingredients.

Afternoon: We'll continue to explore the sink-hole floor as we make our way back to the camp site. The hike takes approximately 45 minutes. Once at the camp site, we will have the opportunity to clean up before we begin our transfer drive to the Caribbean coast.

We will arrive at the lodge by late afternoon for check-in.

Dinner: At the lodge restaurant, we will enjoy a plated meal with coffee, tea, water, local juice included; other beverages available for purchase.

Evening: At leisure.

Note: Driving total approximately 3 hours. Black Hole activities require a high level of physical fitness. 2 hour uphill hikes on dirt trails, repelling 300 feet into a sink hole, rock climbing and ladder climbing. Weather is usually hot, sunny and humid and trails can become muddy when there is rain. Participants should wear sturdy walking shoes with rubber tread, lightweight pants, t-shirt that allows freedom of movement. Also bring insect repellent/sunscreen. See packing list for more handy items.

Accommodations: The Colonial at Jaguar Reef

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8: South Water Caye Marine Reserve, Free Time

Monday, May 15

Breakfast: At the lodge, we will enjoy a meal with coffee, tea, water included.

Morning: We'll board a boat from the lodge's docks and enjoy a 45-minute ride out to South Water Caye Marine Reserve. The morning will be spent snorkeling around reef patches.

We'll then return to the lodge.

Lunch: At the lodge, we will enjoy a meal with coffee, tea, water included.

Afternoon: Free time to enjoy the lodge's facilities or explore local sites. The coastal fishing village of Hopkins is located about one mile from the lodge. It is mostly populated by Garifunas and has a few interesting shops and restaurants where one can experience the local culture.

Dinner: At the lodge, we will enjoy a meal with coffee, tea, water included.

Evening: At leisure.

Note: Boat ride is approximately 45 minutes to the snorkeling site. Snorkeling equipment will be provided on-site.

*Accommodations: The Colonial at Jaguar Reef
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**Day 9: Return to South Water Caye Marine Reserve, Free Time
Tuesday, May 16**

Breakfast: Lodge restaurant.

Morning: We'll board a boat from the lodge's docks and enjoy a 45-minute ride out to South Water Caye Marine Reserve. The morning will be spent snorkeling around reef patches we didn't explore the day before.

We'll take a boat ride back to the lodge for lunch.

Lunch: Lodge restaurant.

Afternoon: Free time to enjoy the lodge's facilities or explore local sites.

Dinner: At the lodge, we'll talk about our week with new friends during a farewell dinner of off-menu options or buffet selections including fish, beet, chicken and vegetarian dishes. Coffee, tea, water and one glass of wine included.

Evening: At leisure.

Note: Boat ride is approximately 45 minutes to the snorkeling site. Snorkeling equipment will be provided on-site.

*Accommodations: The Colonial at Jaguar Reef
Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**Day 10: Transfer to Belize City, Program Concludes
Wednesday, May 17**

Depart From: Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport (BZE), Belize City, Belize. Refer to your personal air itinerary for specific flight information.

Breakfast: Early, at the lodge restaurant.

Morning: After an early check out, we'll drive 45 minutes to the Dangriga airstrip and catch a 30-minute flight to Belize City's Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport. This concludes our program.

If you are returning home, safe travels. If you are staying on independently, have a wonderful time. If you are transferring to another Road Scholar program, detailed instructions are included in your Information Packet for that program.

We hope you enjoy Road Scholar learning adventures and look forward to having you on rewarding programs in the future. Please join our Facebook page and share photos of your program. Visit us at www.facebook.com/rsadventures. Best wishes for all your journeys!

Note: Hotel check-out by 7:50 a.m. The 30-minute flight to Belize City is expected to arrive at Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport at approximately 10:30 a.m. Participants making their own international flight arrangements should book flights departing after 1:00 p.m. to ensure good connection times.

Meals Included: Breakfast

THE ROAD SCHOLAR MISSION

Not-for-profit Road Scholar inspires adults to learn, discover, and travel. Our learning adventures engage expert instructors, provide extraordinary access, and stimulate discourse and friendship among people for whom learning is the adventure of a lifetime.

OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Road Scholar values diversity as a dynamic and integral part of a thriving educational community. We strive to develop dynamic program content and offerings that represent the rich diversity of our society and to foster a welcoming, inclusive and equitable work and learning environment for people of all backgrounds and identities.

FINAL PACKING INFORMATION

Casual, comfortable clothing is recommended. It is best to bring lightweight summer clothing to wear in the warm and humid lowlands of Belize and Guatemala. A lightweight windbreaker or sweatshirt might be needed in case of unexpected cooler weather.

Face masks & hand sanitizer: Although face masks are no longer required, we still recommend wearing one when spending time in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not an option. We ask for your cooperation in following common-sense health practices such as frequently washing/sanitizing hands, covering your mouth when coughing/sneezing, and advising the Group Leader if you feel unwell during your program. Please pack enough masks and sanitizing supplies to last throughout your travels.

COVID-19 home test kit: Please note that COVID-19 home test kits are illegal in Belize per regulation 39 of the Public Health Act - SI#151. Belizean Customs will confiscate any home tests found in the luggage of arriving travelers.

Shirts and Blouses: Dry-weave athletic shirts are a great choice for this program as they are lightweight, wick away perspiration, and dry quickly after being washed. Do not forget to pack a couple of long sleeved shirts for protection against the sun and mosquitoes.

Shorts: Shorts are appropriate attire throughout the program. Please remember to use insect repellent during peak mosquito biting hours.

Trousers: Lightweight, quick-drying athletic slacks or safari pants are acceptable for field trips, but jeans tend to be too heavy/hot. Pants offer additional protection against mosquitoes and chiggers.

Jackets and Sweaters: Bring a lightweight sweatshirt, cardigan, or windbreaker to wear in air conditioned environments or in case of unexpected cooler weather.

Underclothing and socks: You will be walking on forest trails, so you may expect to hike in mud and water on occasion. It is advisable to include extra pairs of socks. Please bring an extra pair of socks for the ATM Cave exploration.

Bathing Suit: Bring one or two bathing suits.

Shoes: Take a pair of walking shoes for cities/non-field wear and a pair of water shoes (e.g., Teva, Keen, etc.) with closed toes for cave activities. A pair of closed toe shoes is also required for the Black Hole drop. For your safety and wellbeing, please DO NOT wear open-toe/heel shoes or athletic sandals during hikes/field trips.

Headgear: A light hat with a wide brim and sunglasses are suggested for sun protection.

Rain gear: A light rain poncho, with a hood, will help to keep you and your gear dry in case of rain.

Snorkeling equipment: Snorkeling equipment will be provided on-site as part of the program. Avid snorkelers are welcome to bring their own mask/snorkel to guarantee a perfect fit. Prescription masks are not available on site. If you require one, please make sure to bring it with you. Wetsuits are not provided.

Book light and small flashlight: Lighting in hotel rooms is not always adequate for reading purposes. LED book lights are compact and help to provide additional lighting for reading and/or writing. A small flashlight is suggested for use on poorly lit lodge paths.

Also suggested: Reef-safe sunscreen, insect repellent, binoculars, reusable sports water bottle, and a backpack to carry essential items (e.g., water bottle, sunscreen, etc.) during program activities. Some travelers have suggested Probiotic supplements as a preventative measure to regulate your digestive system while traveling to new areas.

LUGGAGE LIMITS:

This program includes a flight from Dangriga to Belize City. Each participant will be allowed to bring up to 2 checked bags weighing no more than 35 lbs each and measuring no more than 62 linear inches (with maximum 30 inches in width and 15 inches in height). Participants will also be able to bring 1 carry-on item (purse or backpack) weighing no more than 15 lb. We suggest using a backpack as your carry-on item since it can be used for carrying personal necessities during program activities.

The local airline will apply additional charges to excess/oversized luggage. If space is not available on the aircraft, excess luggage might be shipped on a later flight.

WEATHER:

Belize has a tropical climate with an annual mean of 79°F and humidity at 85%. Coastal areas are hot and humid throughout the year, but nicely tempered by sea breezes. Annual rainfall ranges from 50 inches in the north to 170 inches in the south. The rainy season in most parts of the country usually takes place from June-August/September and the dry season generally runs from February-May.

The climate of Guatemala varies from hot coastal plains to cold mountainous regions. Most of the population lives between 3,000 ft and 5,000 ft where there are warm, spring-like days and cool nights (mean daytime temperature, 75°F and mean nighttime, 50-55°F.). The Pacific and Caribbean coasts along with the northern area of the country (e.g., the Petén) are always hot and wet.

SAMPLE TEMPERATURES:

Belize City

Averages	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max. (°F)	80	80	83	85	87	87	86	86	86	84	82	80
Min. (°F)	70	71	74	76	79	79	79	78	77	75	73	71
Rain (in)	4.5	2.6	1.9	1.7	4	8.6	8.1	7	9.5	10	7	6.7
Humidity (a.m.) %	95	95	93	91	91	92	92	94	96	96	96	96
Humidity (p.m.) %	72	71	68	68	69	76	75	74	75	76	74	74

Flores/Tikal

Averages	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max. (°F)	82	85	90	94	94	90	88	89	89	87	84	82
Min. (°F)	65	65	67	70	73	73	72	72	72	71	68	66
Rain (in)	2	1.2	1	1.1	3.1	6.3	5.3	5.4	7.3	6.4	3.9	2.8
Ave % Humidity	82	75	64	58	66	85	85	86	89	91	90	87

Hopkins

Averages	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug.	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Max. (°F)	77	79	81	84	84	84	83	84	84	82	79	78
Min. (°F)	71	72	74	76	77	77	77	77	77	75	73	72
Rain (in)	5	3	2	2	5	11	10	10	10	10	8	5
Ave % Humidity	84	82	81	81	84	87	87	86	87	86	83	85

ADVANTAGES OF USING TREKKING POLES

Poles absorb some of the impact that your body would normally sustain, particularly when going downhill. According to a study in *The Journal of Sports Medicine*, trekking poles can reduce compressive force on the knees by up to 25%. This will free your body from supporting a substantial amount of weight during your hike. You will be using your arms more when walking with poles, thereby distributing your energy usage and increasing your hiking endurance. Here are the main advantages of using trekking poles:

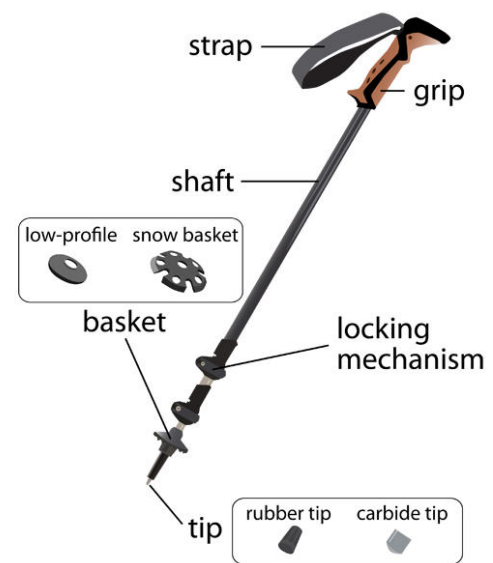
- They provide better balance and footing.
- Especially on downhill hikes, trekking poles decrease the amount of stress on your legs and joints.
- On uphill climbs, poles transfer some of your weight to your arms, back and shoulders, which can reduce leg fatigue and enable you to ascend more rapidly.
- They assist in navigating stream crossings, loose rocks, tree roots and slippery surfaces such as mud, ice and snow more safely.
- They help you to establish a walking cadence or rhythm.

HOW TO HOLD TREKKING POLES

Since wrist straps bear much of the load, it's important to use them correctly. Put your hand up through the bottom of the strap, not down from the top, before grasping the grip. Adjust the strap so it fits snugly around your wrist.

Please note: Rubber tips are required on trekking poles for most archaeological sites and environmentally sensitive areas.

According to TSA regulations, trekking poles must go in checked luggage.



PROPER POLE LENGTH BY TERRAIN



HIKING UPHILL

Shorten the poles by a few inches to increase load-bearing pressure.



GOING DOWNHILL

Lengthen the poles a few inches for better balance and control.



LEVEL GROUND

Your forearms should be parallel to the ground when you're holding the grips and the tips are on the ground.



TRAVERSES

The down-slope pole should be longer than the up-slope pole (or you can simply grab the pole lower if it comes with an extended grip).

SUNSCREEN CHEMICALS AND MARINE LIFE

How sunscreen chemicals enter our environment:



The sunscreen you apply may not stay on your skin.



When we swim or shower, sunscreen may wash off and enter our waterways.



How sunscreen chemicals can affect marine life:



Chemicals in some sunscreens that can harm marine life:

- 3-Benzylidene camphor
- 4-Methylbenzylidene camphor
- Octocrylene
- Benzophenone-1
- Benzophenone-8
- OD-PABA
- nano-Titanium dioxide
- nano-Zinc oxide
- Octinoxate
- Oxybenzone




GREEN ALGAE: Can impair growth and photosynthesis.




CORAL: Accumulates in tissues. Can induce bleaching, damage DNA, deform young and even kill.




MUSSELS: Can induce defects in young.




SEA URCHINS: Can damage immune and reproductive systems, and deform young.




FISH: Can decrease fertility and reproduction, and cause female characteristics in male fish.




DOLPHINS: Can accumulate in tissues and be transferred to young.

Here are a few ways to protect ourselves and marine life:

Consider sunscreen without chemicals that can harm marine life, seek shade between 10 am & 2 pm, and use Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) sunwear.



Seek shade



Umbrella



Sun hat



Sunscreen



UV Sun glasses



Sun shirt



Leggings



