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FALL 2017

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Belize

RELAX & PLAY
IN PLACENCIA



WORDS BY COURTNEY COX

Central America has emerged in recent years as serious honeymoon competition for big hitters like Mexico and the Caribbean. It has beautiful beaches, friendly people and plenty of sunshine – minus a lot of the touristy kitsch. Belize has long been known throughout the adventure and romance travel-sphere, and for good reason! The country attracts all types of travelers thanks to its varied topography, which includes crystalline cayes and the Cloud Forest of the Maya Mountains. Plus, getting here is a breeze with direct flights into Belize City from eight major U.S. cities including Los Angeles, Newark, Chicago and Miami.

Ambergris Caye is perhaps the most popular destination in Belize, but it's Placencia that has captured our imagination. The peninsula is 16 miles of paradise and a quick 35-minute flight from Belize City via Tropic Air. Placencia Village is beyond stroll-worthy with quaint shops and plenty of laid-back beach bars like the infamous Tippy Tuna. The exchange rate is approximately 2 BZD

to 1 USD, so your money will go far here and, since the official language is English, it will be easy to strike up a conversation with the friendly Belizean local sitting next to you at the bar.

STAY

Naïa Resort and Spa

This Placencia resort boasts 35 gorgeous beach houses, some of which include private pools. They are truly honeymoon-worthy with outdoor showers, serene décor and charismatic local artwork. The beach houses range from studios to three bedrooms, but all come with kitchens that can be pre-stocked upon request.

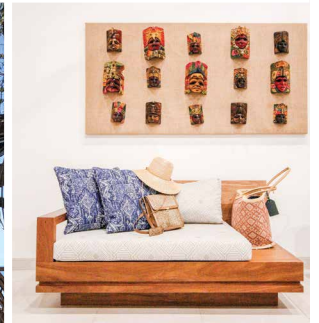
EAT

Rumfish y Vino & Tutti Frutti Gelateria

Located across the street from the local cricket stadium, Rumfish y Vino is a family-owned restaurant that boasts an extensive wine list and is serving up scrumptious Belizean-fusion fare like conch ceviche and red curry snapper. Save room for dessert because the area's best gelato, Tutti Fruttis, is located on the first floor. The quality and taste rivals any Italian gelateria!

Photos courtesy of (top to bottom): Naïa Resort and Spa & Courtney Cox





Ixcacao Chocolate

If you haven't tried Maya Belizean chocolate, then you haven't lived! The ancient Mayans discovered the cacao bean thousands of years ago and Juan Cho and his wife Abelina (a.k.a. The Chocolate Queen) are carrying on the cacao family tradition. Their chocolate is organic and fair trade certified, and each bar is handmade on-site. Book your visit through Taste Belize and enjoy a lunch cooked by the Chocolate Queen herself.

MARRY

Naïa Resort and Spa happily hosts weddings and a buy-out is not only wise, but entirely feasible. There are lots of set-up options throughout the 19-acre property, but we recommend exchanging vows with up to 60 guests at Naïa Spa overlooking the lagoon before moving the party to the 1981 Restaurant for delish, fancy cocktails and good eats.

PLAY

Naïa Spa

Set amongst natural lagoons, cross a series of bridges before entering the spa lobby with the signature Citrus Nectar scent wafting in the air. The 10,000 square-foot spa is the largest



in Placencia and is worthy of a full day of your time. The six bungalow-style treatment rooms were built around the lagoons and offer peaceful, waterfront patios. In addition to a private pool, Naïa Spa also includes a gorgeous Yoga and Movement Studio. Begin your day with a fitness class before enjoying a healthy lunch at the Reflections Spa Café and a series of spa treatments.

Oceanic Options

Belize is a water-lover's paradise with iconic diving opportunities and exten-

sive wildlife. The world's second-largest coral reef runs along the Belizean coast, so pack your snorkel mask and book a boat through Sunny Side Tours. Visit in June and July to swim with whale sharks or December-February to spot an orca. Also, keep your goggles peeled for sea turtles, lionfish, manta rays and dolphins, among endless others.

Whether you're looking to spend your honeymoon basking in your newlywed glow at the spa or submerged in the sea filling your day with adventure, Belize is more than a safe bet. **ido!**

Photos courtesy of (top to bottom, left to right): Alexandra Avila (1st, 2nd & 4th), Courtney Cox (3rd & 5th) & Naïa Resort and Spa (6th)

