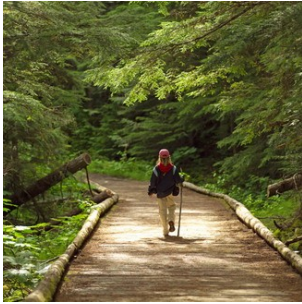


# ECOTOURISM: NOT ONLY IN BELIZE



Traveling remains one of the most rewarding things anyone can ever experience. There are so many amazing places, surprising cultures with varying traditions. There is the miraculous contrast between huge pulsating cities and secluded little villages, civilization and deserted natural wonders. As the tourist industry has been booming all over the world, more and more people are concerned with its impact on the environment. This is why ecotourism is becoming so crucial.

Leaving as few things behind as possible is the number one priority of a devoted ecotourist. The major objective is to appreciate the wonders of nature without altering it to even a slight extent. Belize is one of the countries which is - from an ecotourist's point of view - ideal. Experienced guides take the keen travelers on unbelievable tours through local lush tropical rain forest or quite diverting and elaborate cave system.

Rule number one for all members of each of these expeditions is to follow the strict orders of their guide - what seems not a big deal for an inexperienced tourist may have a deep impact on nature. Touching plants or stepping off the main track could seriously harm the environment. Though this is only the tip of the iceberg.

For example, most hotels, resorts and other accommodations facilities in Belize obtain water for both drinking and washing from tanks that hold rainwater. Tourists are encouraged to use electricity as little as possible (e.g. air conditioning). Also, when on underwater expeditions, while the enthusiastic divers enjoy the richness of local marine life and the purity of the waters, their guides tend to point out signs of careless human contact.

Raising awareness to establish responsible tourism is the number one priority - not only in Belize, where ecotourism is getting big - but anywhere around the globe. After all, nature is threatened all the time and unless we learn how to effectively protect it, we may as well end up losing everything.

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