

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EAU CLAIRE

# Study Abroad

## Faculty-Led Immersion



**BELIZE**  
**BIOLOGY 320**  
**WINTERIM 2018**

*Program Guide*

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**CONGRATULATIONS** on being accepted to the UW-Eau Claire study abroad program in Belize during Winterim 2018. Living and studying in a foreign culture is both an exciting and a challenging experience. Past participants of study abroad report that the many advantages of international study include:

*Building upon foreign language skills*  
*Gaining new perspectives on a chosen academic field*  
*Increasing understanding of different cultures*  
*Enhancing personal development*  
*Developing new perspectives on U.S. culture*  
*Gaining self-confidence and independence*  
*Learning skills for the future international job market*

It is up to you to determine how you can best benefit from these possible advantages. This is your adventure! This program guide is to be used together with the Faculty-Led Study Abroad Handbook. The Handbook has information that is valid for all faculty-led immersion programs. This guide will provide you with specific information for the **Belize** program. It is designed to complement the Handbook, study abroad orientation and your individual pre-departure preparations.

Please realize that, although this guide contains all of the information available at the time of printing, it is impossible for any single resource to answer all of your questions. We strongly encourage you to contact your faculty leaders with your specific questions.

Basic questions only you can answer include:

- 1) What are YOUR goals for this experience? Common objectives of students studying abroad include advancement in future profession; desire to gain fluency in a second language; wish to expand personal and academic horizons; need for a change; wish to challenge oneself with immersion in a new culture.
- 2) Given the way the program is set up, how can you best prepare to meet your goals? For example, if one of your goals is truly being immersed in local culture, yet you are going with a group of UW-Eau Claire students, how can you ensure that you do not spend too much time with other U.S. Americans?

*The information in this guide was current at the time of printing, but changes may occur at any time.*

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## *The Program Goals*

This is a 2-week, hands-on, experiential course designed to expose students to the ecology, cultural geography and history of Belize. The course curriculum is comprised of active learning experiences that allow students to learn about the country's biological legacy and diverse peoples, with particular focus on aquatic ecosystems and Mayan culture and history.

The course has the following learning objectives:

- Understand key concepts in tropical and aquatic ecology, learn about common organisms that inhabit Belizean ecosystems, and the conservation challenges facing these ecosystems
- Learn about the different peoples and cultural influences that have shaped Belize, the country's recent and ancient history, and the region's Mayan heritage
- Learn about the role of NGO's and foreign investment in shaping conservation efforts and government policy in Belize, and how the nation's political institutions function or fail
- Develop skills necessary for meeting the social, mental and physical challenges of being an effective member of a learning community during a study aboard experience.

## *The Location and Activities*

Belize is a country located on the eastern coast of Central America. With a total population of about 385,000 people, Belize has a diverse culture and history that reflect its rich history. English is the official language of Belize, but

much of the population is bilingual and Spanish is the second most common language spoken.

The course curriculum is designed to be experiential, with active learning experiences that allow students to witness the biological and cultural diversity of Belize. Experiences include: overnight canoe trip on the Sebum River to sample aquatic organisms with a local scientist to learn about human impacts on tropical river ecosystems, guided tours to the famous archaeological sites of Caracol and the Actun Tunichil Muknal Cave, a home stay with indigenous Mayan families in San José village to promote an appreciation of cultural and socio-economic diversity, a tour of organic cacao groves and processing methods in San José, studying reef ecology at the Tobacco Caye, and a visit to the Smithsonian Institution's Western Caribbean Marine Research Station to meet with scientists and their students to learn about the ongoing research being conducted there, and multiple snorkeling experiences in the South Water Caye and Hol Chan marine reserves. A day-long service-learning project will benefit a local Belizean community.

## *Tentative Program Calendar*

- **January 5:** Depart the U.S., arrival and orientation at Monkey Bay
- **January 6:** Canoe trip on Sibun River
- **January 7:** Cave tour
- **January 8:** tour to Caracol Archaeological site
- **January 9:** travel to Punta Gorda, afternoon free
- **January 10-11:** Homestay at Mayan San Jose Village
- **January 12:** Visit Tobacco Caye Marine Station, snorkeling activity
- **January 13:** Lecture about reef ecology and boat excursion, visit Smithsonian's



Western Caribbean Marine Research Station

- **January 14:** Marine Conservation presentation, snorkelling
- **January 15:** Service learning project
- **January 16:** Visit to Caye Caulker, snorkelling
- **January 17:** depart for U.S.

## ACADEMICS

### *Program Prerequisites*

To participate in this program, you must **be in good academic standing and have the minimum 2.5 GPA required.** We will check grades at the end of the fall semester prior to departure. If you are on probation, we will need to check with the faculty leader to see if you will be allowed to participate. If you have been suspended, you will not be allowed to participate in the program.

### *Pre-departure Orientation & Academic Planning*

Attendance at the October 7<sup>th</sup> study abroad orientation plus 3-4 course preparation sessions during fall semester of 2017 are required. Times and days will be announced by your Faculty/staff Leaders. You will be doing some reading, research, and preparing throughout fall semester.

Upon successful completion of the program, you will earn 3 credits of **BIOL 320: Studies in Tropical Environments.**

**For students in catalog years through 2015-16,** the course fulfills GE-II and 3 credits of Foreign Culture upon successful program completion (*students earning a B.A., B.F.A. or B.M degree in the College of Arts & Sciences*

*cannot use study abroad to fulfill their foreign language/foreign culture requirement. See the university catalog for details).* **For students in catalog years 2016-17 and later,** the course fulfills the Responsibility Outcome 2 (R2): Global Perspectives requirement upon completion of all course assignments.

### *Credits and Grades*

Credits earned abroad on this program are considered UW-Eau Claire resident credits. The class you take abroad will count towards the total credits needed for graduation, **and the grade will be figured into your GPA.** The UW-Eau Claire Faculty Leader will issue grades for the course using the usual UW-Eau Claire A-F grading scale. Grades are not available until late February after you have submitted your final assignment.

### *Class Attendance*

Class attendance and participation in fall preparation meetings, in program lectures, and while on excursions in Belize are required of all students. The coursework in Belize will be experiential and hands-on, comprising lectures from local partners and experts, visits and excursions to local sites, and group discussions. **You are expected to actively participate in all activities on the itinerary.**

## MONEY MATTERS

*Information about how payments are made, when they are due, withdrawal/refund deadlines, financial aid, scholarships, and budgeting is in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### *Undergraduate Costs Paid to UWEC*

UG tuition/fees (WI res, 3 credits)	\$1102
Program Fee	\$2200

Application Fee	\$30
<b>Total Program Costs:</b>	<b>\$3332</b>
Duxbury Scholarship (only BIO majors) -	\$1000
<u>FLIIE Program Subsidy</u>	<u>-\$1000</u>
<b>Total Payment to UWEC</b>	<b>\$2332</b>
<b>Total Payment to UWEC (BIO majors)</b>	<b>\$1332</b>

### **Additional Costs**

Passport/photos	\$135
Additional Meals	\$150
Personal Expenses	\$100
<u>Estimated Round-Trip Airfare</u>	<u>included</u>
<b>Total Additional Costs</b>	<b>\$385</b>

**UG Total Costs** **\$2,717**

**UG Total Costs (BIO majors)** **\$1,717**

*Minnesota residents may apply for reciprocity, non-residents will pay non-resident tuition.*

### **FLIIE Funding**

This program is supported by Blugold Commitment FLIIE Funding for undergraduate UWEC students. While students are encouraged to participate in multiple high-impact immersion programs, each student is eligible to receive BCDT funding for only one FLIIE experience. Blugold Commitment funding is not able to cover the costs of tuition, but will include \$1000/student towards the program fee in 2018.

### **Program Fee: What does it cover?**

- Roundtrip airfare from MSP airport
- Housing throughout the program in shared rooms and homestays
- All program lectures, activities, and excursions in the itinerary
- Most meals during the program
- In-country transportation

**Not included:** the cost of a passport, some meals, laundry, personal expenses

### **Souvenirs & Independent Travel**

The amount of personal funds to cover souvenirs and personal travel will vary based on your shopping habits, off-program entertainment, personal spending habits, etc. We do not expect you will spend a lot on personal travel as you have limited opportunities to travel during the program due to a full calendar.

### **Program Refunds from UW-Eau Claire**

The \$30 application fee is non-refundable. **The withdrawal deadline for the program is October 1. No refunds are available after October 1, and if you withdraw after October 1, you will still be required to pay all program costs and any funds already committed on your behalf, up to the full program cost.** All withdrawals must be in writing.

Undergraduate students who withdraw will lose their FLIIE funding. As such, they will be expected to pay ALL non-refundable program costs paid to UW-Eau Claire. A student who withdraws after the refund deadline would be responsible for paying the \$2200 estimated cost, which is the true cost of the program without the FLIIE subsidy. FLIIE program support is based on student enrollment and can only benefit students actually participating in program.

### **Currency Exchange**

The currency of Belize is the Belize dollar. As of August 2017, the exchange rate was 2.06 Belize dollars to the U.S. dollar. You can find current exchange rates at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

### **Credit Cards**

In addition to the information on credit cards in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should be aware that **credit cards are not as widely**

accepted in Belize as they are in the U.S. Only major stores, tourist hotels, and travel agencies usually take them.

### **ATMs: Credit/Debit Card Use**

24-hour ATMs are plentiful in the large towns in the itinerary. The most commonly accepted U.S. cards are Visa and MasterCard. You can also draw cash as soon as you land at the airport. You should compare the international transaction fee charged by your bank; the fee can range from 1-3%.



## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

*Additional information on these issues, as well as information on CISI insurance, is included in the Health Issues and Safety Abroad sections of your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### **Immunizations**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that travelers to Belize discuss several vaccinations with a doctor at least 4-6 weeks prior to travel. Per the CDC, all routine vaccinations should be up to date prior to travel to any location. The CDC recommends that most travelers to Belize receive the following vaccines due to risk associated with contaminated water and food:

- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid

For a full list of immunizations suggested, please visit the [CDC page for Belize](#).

UW-Eau Claire's Student Health Services offers some routine immunizations (IG, tetanus, Hepatitis B, etc.) and health education on international travel for a small fee. Tel. (715) 836-5360.

Often, your health insurance will cover the cost of immunizations. **If your immunizations are not covered by your health insurance and you receive financial aid, you may want to meet with the Office of Financial Aid to inquire if these can be added to your total financial aid budget.**

### **Malaria**

According to the CDC, the risk of malaria is present throughout the country, but possesses a low risk to travelers. Learn more about this recommendation [here](#).

You should discuss your malaria prevention strategy with your doctor. The decision about what you will do about malaria is one you must make yourself. If you decide to take anti-malaria medication, follow the instructions from your

physician carefully. Many anti-malaria medications can have serious side-effects. Remember that malaria is rarely acquired if you've taken the proper precautions. The best way to avoid malaria is to avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes!

**To minimize mosquito bites:**

- Cover up with clothing. Wear garments with a high neckline (or a bandana around the neck), long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent (such as Off Deep Woods) on exposed skin AND permethrin, an insecticide, on clothing.
- Avoid shiny jewelry and perfumed cosmetics, as they attract mosquitos.
- If travelling on your own, choose accommodations with tidy grounds and air conditioning or with windows having well-fitting screens. Use mosquito netting elsewhere.
- Avoid local preventatives. Many are unproven, such as mosquito coils or Avon Skin-So-Soft. While these are popular folklore insect repellents in the U.S., they perform poorly in scientific studies.

**If you become ill:**

Early treatment is essential if you do contract malaria. Consider any flu-like illness with fever in a malarial area to be malaria until proven otherwise.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever and chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches, and dizziness. See a physician promptly! Delay in seeking medical care and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications. Malaria can occur as early as six days to several months after being bitten by an infected mosquito.

Inform your physician of recent travel if you have flu-like symptoms after returning home.

***Zika Virus***

The Zika Virus is a risk in Belize, and is spread mostly by the bite of an infected mosquito. There is no current vaccine or medicine for Zika, and therefore ALL travelers should follow steps to prevent mosquito bites during *and* after their travel. The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, headache, joint pain, red eyes, and muscle pains. These symptoms can last for several days to a week. However, many infected people won't have symptoms at all, or have only mild symptoms.

In particular, the CDC recommends that pregnant women should not travel to Belize because Zika infection during pregnancy could cause serious birth defects. Partners of pregnant women and couples planning pregnancy should know possible risks to pregnancy and take preventive steps.

***Common Health Problems***

The most common health problems for U.S. Americans in Central America are intestinal upsets. They usually occur as a result of the change in diet, the different meal schedule, and organisms unfamiliar to your system.

A very common ailment is traveler's diarrhea. It can largely be avoided by being careful about where and what you eat, and avoiding dairy products if they are not pasteurized. If you do come down with it, the following suggestions will help speed recovery and guide your decision to seek formal care:

1. It will usually run its course in three to five days. The worst symptoms usually



occur the first day. Bed rest may help relieve cramps.

2. The main risk of the illness is dehydration. Be sure to maintain fluid intake. An excellent source of fluid replacement is ORS or Oralte, a prepackaged liquid sold in many countries. If unavailable, the following recipe will provide similar value: one liter carbonated water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda (not baking powder), 4 tbsps. sugar.
3. An over-the-counter medicine like Pepto Bismol may help relieve nausea and vomiting.
4. See your physician prior to departing for Belize regarding the possibility of bringing along anti-diarrheal medication such as Levaquin or Cipro.

**If nausea and vomiting persist for more than 24 hours, if you develop a fever over 101 degrees F, or if you develop severe abdominal pain, a physician should be contacted immediately.**

### **Water**

In Belize, **tap water is considered unsafe unless you are informed otherwise.** You should drink bottled or boiled water at all times. Brush your teeth with bottled or boiled water, also.

Carbonated bottled water, soft drinks, hot tea, and coffee are usually safe. Be sure to wipe off the top of a bottle before drinking out of it, or ask for a straw. By making sure that you are drinking uncontaminated water, you can reduce your exposure to many diseases such as infectious hepatitis, cholera, diarrhea and dysentery. Where water is contaminated, ice is also contaminated—you may wish to learn to order drinks without ice. In general, stay away from any bottled water

where the plastic of the bottle is not strong or clear, as this may mean the bottle was reused.

Sometimes during the program, bottled water will be provided, but you will be expected to purchase bottled water on some days. Homestay families will provide clean water, whether bottled or boiled. Traveler's diarrhea can often lead to dehydration. Dehydration can also lead to constipation. Make sure to stay hydrated during the program especially if you are losing liquids through illness or increased perspiration.

### **Other Keys to Staying Healthy**

- Other than malaria, bugs (mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas) can cause a number of diseases, so you should take general precautions such as covering exposed skin, using insect repellent, and sleeping with a bed net if necessary.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap.
- Keep away from animals such as stray dogs, as they may carry rabies.
- If you are buying food from street vendors, stick to breads or fruits that you peel yourself. (The knives used might be dirty.) Fruits that cannot be peeled, fruit juices diluted with water, raw vegetables and salads that have not been washed with disinfected water should be avoided.
- In addition to bringing anti-diarrheal medication, some students experience the opposite effect. It is a good idea to bring along fiber snacks or constipation medication.

### **Medical Facilities**

There are medical facilities in all cities where we are traveling, so medical care will always be within 15-30 minutes. This program works with knowledgeable in-country partners for all parts

of the itinerary, and they can help recommend quality doctors or hospitals near all the locations you visit.

### **Alcohol & Drugs**

**Alcohol:** The legal drinking age for alcohol consumption is 18 years old in Belize. However, if you are of age to drink, it is recommended that you take precautions to be safe while drinking – such as never leaving your drink unattended, ordering drinks containing ice cubes, or accepting drinks from strangers.

**Drugs:** Marijuana and other ‘recreational’ drugs can be available in Belize, and are **highly illegal**. Courts treat possession of cannabis as severely as possession of heroin. Be aware that the police target foreign drug users in bribe scams. Remember, you will be subject to Belizean laws, not U.S. laws while in Belize.

### **Sexual Harassment & Assault**

**Harassment:** Sexual harassment is commonplace in Belize. Female travelers have reported everything from staring, lewd and suggestive comments to catcalls, and groping. Often these incidents occur in crowded areas such as market places, bus/train stations, and public streets. Women travelers in Belize are advised to respect local dress codes and customs as a way to minimize harassment. When in doubt, dress more conservatively than you ordinarily would while in Eau Claire.

**Assault:** Crimes against women including rape are reported in Belize, thus women should maintain stringent security precautions. Suggestions include:

- Avoid public transport after dark without the company of known and trusted companions.
- Avoid isolated areas any time of day.

- Keep your hotel room number confidential.
- Lock your hotel room and use deadlocks/door chains while in your room.
- Hire only reliable cars and drivers. Avoid traveling alone in cabs at night.
- Keep conversations with unknown men short—getting involved in conversations can be interpreted as a sign of sexual interest.
- Have someone else join you on excursions

### **More Info on Health & Safety in Belize**

Detailed information on crime, road safety, drug penalties, and terrorist activity in Belize is included in the [State Department Consular Information Sheet](#). It is highly recommended that you read through that information carefully before traveling to Belize.

### **Emergency Contacts**

General emergency procedures are described in the *Study Abroad Handbook*, and faculty/staff leaders and local partners are available if difficulties arise. You will receive an emergency contact card; be sure to keep it in your wallet at all times. The information is also on the **Contact Names & Addresses** page of this guide.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS**

### **Passport**

*General passport information is included in your Study Abroad Handbook.*

### **Visa**

A visa is official permission to visit a country and is granted by the government of that country.

**U.S. citizens do not need a visa to enter Belize if staying for less than 30 days.** If you are an international student or citizen of another

country, please check with your local government about if a visa is needed to enter.

## PACKING TIPS

*In addition to the general packing information in your Study Abroad Handbook, you should know the following about Belize.*

### Weather

This program includes travel to different climates in Belize. While many of our days will be spent on the coast, in or near to the ocean, it is still humid and hot. Be sure to have sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses. Days can be sunny and hot or overcast and a little breezy. The average daily high in January is 81° F, but it often feels hotter because of the high humidity. Fortunately, there is usually a nice breeze near the ocean. Rain showers may occur, but typically do not linger. Rain gear is not necessary, although a light rain coat proved handy last year for the open boat ride back from Tobacco Caye (there was a lot of spray).

While doing the Mayan homestay, we will be at a higher elevation. Here the days can be sunny, hot and humid, but as soon as the sun goes down it cools off and nights can get chilly. You may want to sleep with your winter hat and jacket (or hoodie), wear long pants and warm socks. If you chill easily, you may wish to bring a small, lightweight blanket.

### Clothing

You don't need a lot of clothes in Belize. Lightweight cotton or breathable synthetic fabrics are best. Bring clothing that is hand-washable, dries quickly, and does not wrinkle easily. Casual clothing, including shorts, is acceptable in most places, including in town. Fairly modest clothing is appropriate in the

Mayan village of San Jose where we have our homestay. Nights and early mornings can be cool, especially in San Jose, so a pair of long pants and a long sleeve shirt or light jacket is useful. Most people find that a pair of sturdy sandals or tennis shoes and a pair of flip flops will do for footwear.

In choosing clothing to bring, be conservative. and do not wear revealing clothing. Young women in Belize wear jeans, jeggings, shorts, skirts (sometime quite short), and dresses. And while they may reveal, you should not.



### Luggage

The best advice is to *travel light*. You don't need a lot of clothes in Belize, so you won't need a big suitcase! Usually, a medium duffle or travel pack, supplemented with a day-pack is quite sufficient. Space for luggage on the bus is somewhat limited, so big conventional suitcases can be awkward. Also, keep in mind that there is no "luggage handling service." Everyone will be responsible for schlepping their own gear!

### Packing List

The packing list that follows includes items suggested by past participants in the program. Bring clothing that is made of breathable

synthetic fabrics, hand-washable, dries quickly, and does not wrinkle easily.

#### Clothing:

- 3-4 pairs of shorts
- 2 pairs of light pants or long shorts (1 pair leggings for women - optional)
- 1-2 pair of quick dry pants for hiking or working in the jungle
- 1 pair of work pants (which will get dirty during the service learning project)
- 3-5 short sleeved shirts (including some for working, a couple of these can be tanks)
- 1 sweatshirts or light jacket
- 1-2 swimsuits/swim trunks (& cover-up that is light and quick drying – not cotton)
- 1-4 pairs of socks (Smartwool recommended).
- 1-2 pair of throw-away socks. (Stocking feet are required for the ATM Cave tour, and wearing socks with flippers helps you avoid blisters).
- An old T-short or quick dry shirt (with sleeves) to wear while snorkeling so your back and shoulders don't burn.

#### Foot wear:

- 1 pair of sandals (preferably with back straps for swimming, walking on dry land, walking through streams)
- 1-2 pairs of tennis/good walking shoes (will get dirty &/or wet)



#### Additional items:

- 2 lightweight towels (1 for bathing, 1 for the beach)
- Inexpensive camera
- Pepto Bismol, Imodium, Tylenol, Cold meds/cough drops/tissues, constipation medications (Program coordinators will bring a first-aid kit; however, you know yourself best, so bring things you think you'll need)
- Aloe (especially if you sunburn easily).
- Prescription meds to last the entire trip plus a few extra in case of travel delays (**always put in carry-on bags, NOT in checked luggage**)
- Personal toiletry articles (Ditch the make-up.)
- Hand sanitizer and/or disposable wipes
- Mosquito repellant (with DEET)
- Sunscreen (minimum 15 SPF)
- Snorkel gear (mask, snorkel & fins optional. These are available at no cost when we are at Tobacco Caye Marine Station or for rent at Caye Caulker)
- Personal water bottle.

#### Things NOT to bring:

- Hair dryers or curling/flat irons
- Laptop computers
- Anything of value (jewelry, expensive watches, etc.)



## Money

The BZ\$ is tied to the US\$ at a rate of 2 BZ\$ to 1 US\$, so any shopkeeper or other business will readily accept US\$ in payment. Students on previous trips have brought \$150 - \$250. Since most costs are covered by the course, you only need enough for souvenirs, snacks, and any alcoholic beverages that you might want to responsibly drink. While it is possible to use credit cards in some places, most do not. Bring spending money in small denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10 and \$20. Keep in mind that you will usually receive change in BZ\$, not US\$.



## Electricity

The standard electric current in Belize is 120 volts, same as the United States so you will not need any adapters. The only electronics you'll need to bring is your phone or camera for taking pictures.

# GETTING TO BELIZE

## Travel Arrangements

The group will travel together from Minneapolis airport to Belize City on Friday, January 5, 2018. The flight departs Minneapolis airport at 7:30am and all students must be at the airport at least 2.5 hours prior for the international flight check-in.

- United #6281 depart Minneapolis MSP 7:30am, arrive Houston IAH 10:35am
- United #1569 depart Houston IAH 12:05pm, arrive Belize City BZE 2:33pm

The group will fly home together, departing Belize City on Wednesday, January 17 and arriving in Minneapolis at 10:45pm. You must make your own arrangements to travel to your home city or back to Eau Claire campus upon arrival.

- United #1570 depart Belize City BZE 3:33pm, arrive Houston IAH 6:13pm
- United #878 depart Houston IAH 7:50pm, arrive Minneapolis MSP 10:45pm

# WHAT TO EXPECT

## Housing

We will be staying mostly in hotels and during our time in Belize and you will be sharing a room with the other UW-Eau Claire students. Accommodations are basic, bathrooms are shared, and WiFi is usually -- but not always -- available at the places we stay. Be advised that the internet connection is often slow and not secure. For two nights you will be staying with Mayan host families. Housing in the village is **very** basic compared to what you are used to in the United States. Host families typically don't have plumbing, nor electricity. There is no cell or internet service in the village.

Keep your belongings neat and out of the way. Be aware that **it is never proper to entertain guests, regardless of their gender, in your sleeping areas.**

## Meals

Belizean cuisine is an amalgamation of all the many ethnicities that comprise the nation of Belize. Breakfast may include flour tortillas or fry jacks (deep-fried dough) that are often homemade. Fry jacks are sometimes eaten with cheese, refried beans, various forms of eggs or cereal. Local fruits are commonly served and there will typically be milk, coffee and tea. Midday meals and dinners may include rice and beans, tamales, panades (fried meat pies), soup, stewed chicken, and salad or coleslaw. During our stay on Tobacco Caye we will likely have fish or seafood.



## Water

Freshwater is a precious resource in Central America. Make sure your showers are short, both to conserve water and to keep the bathroom as free as possible. Be advised, *hot water and modern plumbing is not to be expected everywhere we go or stay.*

### Drinking water:

We have not had problems with bad water in the past, but water-borne disease is always a possibility in developing countries. **Make sure any water you drink is clean and potable.** If unsure, ask.

### Hydration:

In the heat of the tropics, it is important to keep yourself well hydrated by drinking lots of water. Bottled water is widely available, but it is a good idea to also carry your own water bottle, that way you can fill up from a bulk source of purified water when available, and help reduce number of plastic bottles entering the environment.

## Belizean Time

In U.S. culture we tend to be ruled by our appointment books. Time is measured differently in Belize. There is a sense that what you are doing at the present is important, particularly if you are spending time with a person, and that things planned for later will be taken care of later. In Belize, it is not unusual for things to happen a half hour later than planned. Be patient and all will be well.

**Note:** The more relaxed time concept **does not apply** in academic situations, such as class meetings, taking transportation or mealtimes. In these situations, punctuality is expected.

## Telephone Information

From the U.S. to Belize: To call someone in Belize, you must first dial **011**, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial **501** (the country code for Belize), then the rest of the local number.

From Belize to the USA: To call someone in the States, you must first dial **011**, which is the international dialing code. Next, you dial **1** (the country code for the USA), then the area code and the local number.

If you are using a cell phone app through a WiFi connection, such as Skype, Viber, or Whats App, you simply dial as you ordinarily would

# HOMESTAY

## *The Mayan Village*

All students will stay for two nights with a Mayan family in the village of San Jose. The village is small, but spread out, so not all students will be within easy walking distance of one another. Our partners in Belize arrange accommodations with volunteer host families. In general, groups of 3-4 students are placed with one family. The cost of the room and three meals a day is included in the price of your program.



## *Your Host Family*

Our partners in Belize screen families to ensure that they have a genuine interest in participating in the homestay program. Realize that it can be challenging for families to host students. They need to adjust their schedules and habits to accommodate guests, and there are real costs associated with hosting. Even though it means a temporary disruption to their family life, your host family will welcome you into their home, and will receive monetary compensation for hosting you. So accept their hospitality, enjoy their company, learn from them, and share of

yourself. It is a win-win for all involved. Keep in mind that any relationship is a two-way street. It is as much your responsibility to fit into the family as it is their responsibility to include you in their daily life.



## *Food*

Your family will feed you, but you are certainly encouraged to help with food preparation. Making tortillas is fun and provides some comic relief for the women and girls who make the meals. Meals are mostly comprised of local foods such as rice and beans, eggs, chicken, tortillas, and perhaps locally grown vegetables.

# CONTACT NAMES & ADDRESSES

GENERAL UW-EAU CLAIRE & CISI CONTACT INFORMATION IS IN YOUR STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

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## **UW-Eau Claire After Hours Numbers**

(715)839-4972 or (715)577-9045

In an after-hours emergency, please call University Police at (715) 577-9045. Calls can be made to this number 24 hours a day. You may get an answering machine; however, an officer is alerted as soon as you have left your message. Be sure to give the officer the phone number you can be reached at, as well as what type of assistance you require.

## **U.S. EMBASSY IN BELIZE**

[U.S. Embassy Belmopan](#)

Floral Park Road

Belmopan, Cayo, Belize

Phone: (501) 822-4011

[ACSBelize@state.gov](mailto:ACSBelize@state.gov) or 822-4011 x4201