



# **BELIZE: MARINE, WILDLIFE & MANATEE CONSERVATION**

**14-DAY PROGRAM**

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Restore mangroves, clean up local beaches where sea turtles nest, and engage local students in conservation education.
- Embark on an overnight excursion to Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve
- Get your hands dirty as you shadow local fishermen to harvest from traditional fishing traps and fillet your own fish
- Snorkel in turquoise waters
- River tube and zipline through Belize's lush rainforest
- Visit a manatee rescue center and meet the passionate scientists working to rehabilitate manatees back into the wild

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

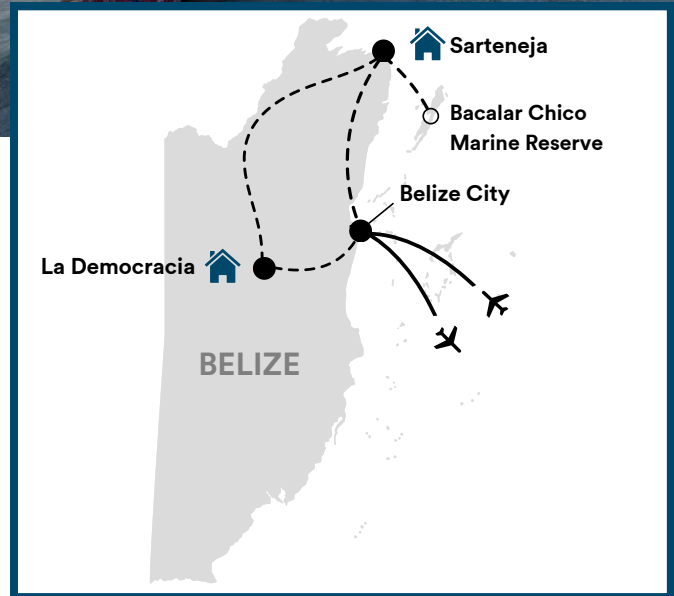
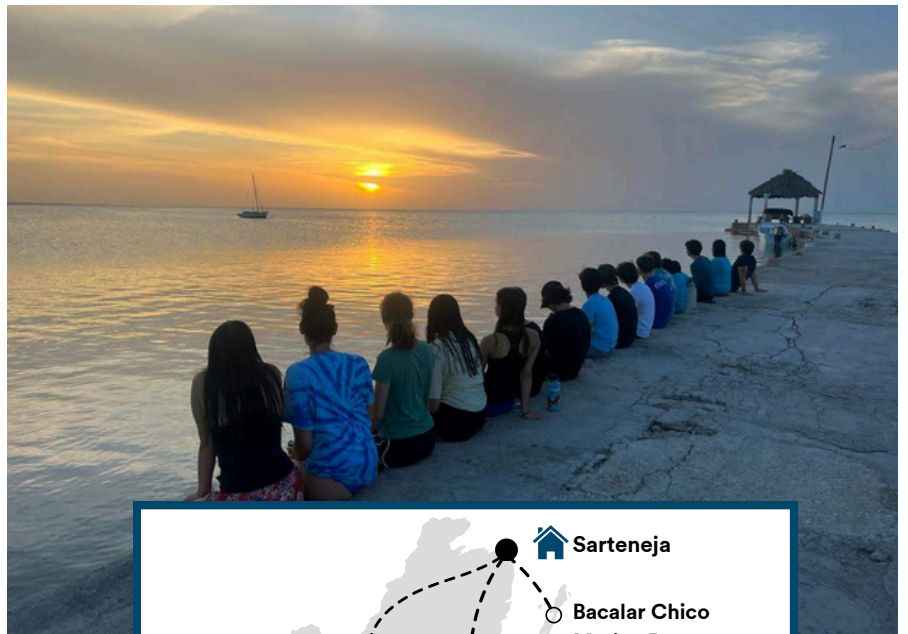
- Medium

## **2025 PROGRAM DATES**

- June 10 – June 23
- July 14 – July 27
- July 31 – August 13

## **GET IN TOUCH!**

experiencegla.com  
+1 858-771-0645  
@GLAteens



*Engage in conservation and community development work to protect manatees and other wildlife that make Belize unique.*

## **OVERVIEW**

On this program, you'll experience the beauty of Corozal Bay, home to one of Belize's largest populations of Antillean manatees. You'll work alongside rangers, scientists, and local fishermen to protect this vital ecosystem through mangrove restoration, beach clean-ups, and wildlife conservation initiatives. Engage in hands-on efforts to beautify and maintain the natural landscape, while also learning about the intersection of land and marine conservation.

Discover how waterways and habitats can be safeguarded through governmental, organizational, and community collaboration. Immerse yourself in Belize's stunning surroundings as you explore a pristine Caye and snorkel in its crystal-clear waters. Adventure awaits with activities like ziplining and cave tubing, making Belize your unforgettable home away from home!





## **ITINERARY**

*Actual schedule of activities will vary by program session. The information detailed here is typical for what you can expect to experience; however, service work and activities vary depending upon the needs of our local community partners, various celebrations and customs, as well as the weather and specific needs of the student group.*

### **DAY 1: WELCOME TO BELIZE!**

Touch down near Belize City, and GLA staff will greet you upon your arrival. Our group will drive to our Home Base, located on the Northern Coast in the small fishing village of Sarteneja. Home Base is a family-run hotel near the ocean. Tonight, we'll unpack, eat a hearty meal, and rest after a long travel day.

### **DAY 2: ORIENTATION & RIVER TOUR**

To kick off our first full day in Belize, we'll start with a program orientation led by staff to set expectations for GLA and our local hosts. In the afternoon, we'll head to the heart of Corozal Bay, where the river meets the ocean. As we travel up the New River through brackish waters and mangrove forests, keep an eye out for migratory birds and, if we're lucky, crocodiles!

Along the way, you'll learn about the vital role mangroves play in maintaining healthy coastal ecosystems. After cooling off with a swim test at a local spot, we'll return to Home Base to enjoy a hearty meal before winding down the day with dinner and reflection in mentor groups.

### **DAY 3: MANGROVE SEED PREPARATION & PLANTING**

Mangroves are vital to the coastal ecosystem—they help prevent erosion, protect against storms, improve water quality, and provide habitats for sea life. Today, we'll work on restoring a mangrove forest near Sarteneja village.

In the morning, an SACD staff member will give a presentation on why mangroves matter and teach us how to prepare seedlings.

After lunch, we'll roll up our sleeves to get the seedlings ready at a nearby preserve. Once we've finished, we'll unwind with a game of volleyball before heading back to Home Base for a leadership activity.

### **DAY 4: SEA KELP COLLECTION & MANATEE RESCUE CENTER**

Today, we'll focus on two key conservation activities. In the morning, we'll head to the bay to collect sea kelp, which will help feed the manatees at a local rescue center.

In the afternoon, we'll visit the Manatee Rescue Center for a tour and presentation. While you won't be interacting directly with the manatees, you'll learn about their rehabilitation and the important work being done to protect these gentle creatures. Afterward, we'll return to Home Base to reflect on the day's work and prepare for tomorrow's activities.





## **DAY 5: FISHERMEN TOUR & LIONFISH SOUVENIR MAKING**

Today, we'll get an inside look at Sarteneja's fishing industry. Early in the morning, we'll meet local fishermen at the pier and head out on private boats to see heart-shaped fishing traps that have been used for generations. You'll even have a chance to help harvest a trap before returning to shore. Afterward, we'll visit the fishermen's homes to learn how to fillet fish and enjoy a seafood lunch while hearing about life in Belize.

In the afternoon, we'll meet local women entrepreneurs who turn invasive lionfish fins into beautiful jewelry and souvenirs. You'll learn about their efforts to protect the Caribbean Sea and create your own unique piece to take home.

After dinner, we'll engage in a debate exploring key issues in Belize: how to balance preserving cultural traditions, encouraging tourism, and promoting a sustainable local economy.



## **DAY 6: COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP**

Today, we'll roll up our sleeves and get to work cleaning up public spaces in Sarteneja. We'll collect bottles, cans, and plastics from common areas and may even help with a local beautification project. In the afternoon, we'll start planning activities for our conservation camp with local kids, which kicks off tomorrow. Be ready to share your ideas for fun icebreakers and conservation-themed games!

## **DAY 7: KIDS CONSERVATION CAMP**

Get ready for a jam-packed day with local kids! Our group will be in charge of creating and carrying out a fun and educational day for students, so put on your thinking cap and come prepared with some games and activities that will be impactful for kids. Lead students through an eco-friendly arts and crafts project, or take them on a school-wide scavenger hunt! In the afternoon, you will have some free time before dinner. Walk to a local store for a snack or swim with your friends and staff. We'll meet back at the Home Base for a hearty meal and then engage in a leadership activity before bed.



## **DAYS 8-9 BARRIER ISLAND EXPEDITION**

Get ready for an adventure! Pack your overnight clothes and head to the Sarteneja pier, where our boats will be waiting. The ride may be bumpy, but it's well worth it. We're heading to the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its rich biodiversity. Upon arrival, we'll stay in small beachside cabins near a park ranger station. After a tour of the on-site museum and a climb up the observation tower for stunning island views, we'll have lunch before boating through a Mayan canal to snorkel the Bacalar Chico reef, admiring vibrant coral and sea life. In the evening, we'll gather around a campfire for a cookout, complete with marshmallow roasting and Belizean folk tales under the stars.

The next morning, we'll visit a sea turtle nesting beach and work together to remove plastic and debris, helping to preserve this crucial habitat. After cleaning the beach, we'll say goodbye to the rangers and head back to Home Base before sundown. This will be our final night in Sarteneja, so we'll pack up and get ready for the next big adventure!







## **DAY 10: MAYAN RUINS ADVENTURE**

We'll depart early from Sarteneja Village, heading south towards Central Belize. We'll stop at one of Belize's most famous ruins, Altun Ha, a Mayan city occupied for nearly 2000 years! Walk through the archeological complex and visit Altun Ha's impressive temples. Learn about the artifacts that archeologists have found, including an 11-pound carved jade head! After our tour, we'll check out a local artisanal market before continuing our journey. We'll settle into our cabins on a lush wildlife reserve and then have dinner.

## **DAY 11: NATURE RESERVE VISIT & GUEST SPEAKER**

Get ready for a day of exploration as we visit a local nature reserve. In the morning, we'll engage in activities focused on wildlife conservation and habitat preservation. Later, we'll return to Home Base for a satisfying meal before hearing from a guest speaker who is making a significant impact in conservation efforts in Belize and beyond!

## **DAY 12: BELIZE ZOO & SERVICE PROJECT**

Embark on an exciting adventure at the Belize Zoo today, home to over 125 native Belizean animal species! Encounter the vibrant wildlife, from howler monkeys to majestic harpy eagles, during a guided tour through the Zoo grounds. In the afternoon, contribute to a meaningful service project, and later, unwind in the refreshing pool at Home Base. After dinner, join the group for a captivating return to the Belize Zoo, where we'll observe the nocturnal animals that come to life at night.

## **DAY 13: CANOPY ZIPLINING, CAVE TUBING, & FAREWELL DINNER**

Get your adrenaline pumping on a high-adventure zipline tour through the canopy of the Belizean rainforest! Learn about the local flora and fauna as you zip from one tree to the next. After, cool down on a tubing trip that will take you through impressive caves. Chill out and float with friends while learning about the cave formations that make Central Belize unique! In the afternoon, we'll gather for a final leadership activity to reflect on our time in Belize and the lessons we're bringing home. Take some time to pack your bags before our final dinner, where we'll celebrate the memories and friendships we've made in Belize!

## **DAY 14: DEPARTURE DAY**

And just like that, our Belizean adventure ends! Head to the airport today with memories that will last a lifetime and a deeper understanding of community development and marine conservation. Staff will accompany students until they have safely departed for their gates. Safe Travels!

### **NOTICE ON PROGRAM UPDATES**

While this program is being planned for this season, some activities or details may change between now and the program start date. Please note that references from past participants and previously published information may not accurately reflect every aspect of this program. Refer to the sample itinerary above or to the GLA website for the most up-to-date version of program activities, and please note that further updates may be made between now and the program start date.

## **PROGRAM SPECIFICS**

- **Tuition:** \$5,399
- **Service Hours:** 30
- **Ages:** 14 - 18
- **Student-to-Staff Ratio:** 6-to-1
- **Accommodations:** Multiple
- **Arrival and Departure Airport**
  - BZE Arrival, BZE departure



## **GLA HOME BASE**

The Home Base we'll use for Days 1-9 is a locally-run hotel on Belize's Northern coast. Students will dorm in shared, comfortable gender-segregated dorms equipped with AC. Cool down after a hard day's work in the ocean, just a few blocks from Home Base!

The Home Base we'll use for Days 10-14 is located in Central Belize on a lush wildlife reserve. Here, students will dorm in gender-segregated rooms without AC but equipped with fans. Bathrooms will not be ensuite for this part of the trip.

## **GLA HOME BASE OVERVIEW**

- Pool
  - Home Base 1 - Sarteneja: No
  - Home Base 2 - La Democracia: Yes
- Air conditioning
  - Home Base 1 - Sarteneja: Yes
  - Home Base 2 - La Democracia: No
- Remote
  - Home Base 1 - Sarteneja: Yes
  - Home Base 2 - La Democracia: Yes



## **FOOD**

Belizean cuisine has traditional dishes from each ethnic group and region. The GLA cooks at Home Base will provide many options for you to sample! Belizean staples include rice, beans, chicken, seafood, and fresh fruits and vegetables.



## **CLIMATE**

The Northern coast of Belize, where our first Home Base is located, has a tropical climate with moderate to hot temperatures. A constant sea breeze keeps the heat and most mosquitoes at bay. Our second Home Base in Central Belize is further inland; you can expect hot and humid days and cooler nights.



## **LEADERSHIP**

Global Leadership Adventures started as an educational institute, so we continue to think and act like educators—not tour operators—as we deliver life-changing programs. We intentionally weave a leadership curriculum into the daily experience on our programs. Through group discussion, meaningful service, workshops, speakers and excursions, staff guide students to reflect on program events through the lens of leadership, and celebrate outstanding examples of leaders they encounter in the local community. Lending this context to the experience creates opportunities for students to dig deep into their vision, purpose and knowledge of themselves and the world.



## **ABOUT GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES**

Global Leadership Adventures was founded in 2003 by Fred Swaniker, a native of Ghana, TED Fellow and educational entrepreneur whose work has been praised by Barack Obama. Born as a global extension of the revolutionary African Leadership Academy, Global Leadership Adventures now operates programs centered around leadership, sustainable community service projects, and meaningful travel across Africa, Asia, Europe or the Americas. Through life-changing adventures, we strive to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it.

## **GLA HAS BEEN FEATURED IN:**

*The New York Times*

● **USA TODAY**

**NBC NEWS**

*The Boston Globe*

*seventeen*







## OUR EXPECTATIONS

**BE PRESENT** | Our mission at GLA is “to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their role in it.” To that end, we expect GLA students to maintain high standards of personal behavior and to be open-minded. The culture may be different, sometimes shockingly so. GLA will challenge students as they are expected to work hard and be present physically and mentally for all activities. We also ask students to take a step back from regular use of technology - particularly their smartphones - so as to maximize their engagement with the program and their fellow participants. Students may get hot, dirty and bug-bitten along the way, but their contribution can transform the community. The goal is for each student to return home having had a life-changing experience.

**NO TOLERANCE** | GLA has a no-tolerance policy towards drugs, alcohol, tobacco and disruptive behavior. Those who violate or are suspected of violating this policy will be immediately dismissed from the program at the sole discretion of GLA staff.

**COMMUNITY-LED EXPERIENCES** | GLA makes every effort to offer thoughtfully crafted programs for teens and young adults. Detailed planning and exhaustive communications with partners are indispensable parts of our program development process. However, occasionally service and activities are adjusted from session to session, due to weather, changing needs of our local community partners and/or various cultural celebrations and customs. We expect participants to be open-minded and flexible, willing to embrace the experience when plans change. GLA makes every effort to communicate adjustments to students and families with advance notice. We expect you to be open-minded and flexible.

**MENTORSHIP** | GLA is not a therapy program. Our staff are highly skilled, professional, caring and fun, but they are not licensed therapists. GLA programs can be physically and emotionally demanding, and applicants should be in good physical and mental health.



## ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

At Global Leadership Adventures, we welcome age-eligible teens who are excited about the opportunity to travel to apply for our programs. To ensure a safe and meaningful experience for everyone in the group, we follow essential eligibility criteria. While our intent is not to be exclusionary, it's important to note that GLA programs are not therapeutic programs and are not able to support struggling teens seeking behavior or mental health outcomes.

Applications are carefully considered and screened to align with these criteria. It is not uncommon for GLA to require supporting documentation or information in the application screening process to confirm eligibility or suitability for program participation. Failure to disclose full medical history may also result in the application not being accepted, additional fees, and/or removal from the program. Please discuss with our team for any further clarification or concerns and visit <https://www.experiencegla.com/policies/essential-eligibility-criteria/> to view the full essential eligibility criteria list.



## WE'RE HERE TO HELP

**CONTACT US** | Want to learn more about Global Leadership Adventures and our available programs? Our Admissions Team has expertise and insights into our slate of program offerings, and we're happy to answer any questions you might have. We have collectively visited or staffed many of our GLA programs around the world, and we have advice to share on everything from getting your travel documents together to what a typical day on a program is like. Call us at 1-858-771-0645 any time during office hours for assistance.

**ENROLL NOW** | We encourage you to enroll on your 1st choice program as early as you can! In fact, our most popular programs fill up early every year, and many students end up putting off the quick and easy application process only to end up on the waiting list. The best way to ensure that you save your spot is to place your deposit and apply early. You can easily enroll online at [www.experiencegla.com/enroll](http://www.experiencegla.com/enroll).

