Belize City, Belize

A tender port with big days out: ruins, river caves and reef islands, all a long ride from the Tourism Village.

Facts checked on 26 October 2026

I haven't been ashore in Belize yet, so this guide is built the way I'd want one built for me: from the Belize Tourism Board, the Central Bank, the cruise lines and the US and UK government travel advice, with every price dated. I also checked the question everybody asks: has the new docking pier finally opened? It hasn't, so plan on a tender.

THE QUICK TAKE

- **Tender port.** Ships anchor offshore, and a ride of about **15 minutes** brings you to the Fort Street Tourism Village.
- **No new pier yet.** The old Stake Bank project is now called **Olo Caye**, with island construction expected to finish in **early 2028**.
- Money is easy: **BZ$2 = US$1**, fixed. English is the official language.
- The big days out (cave tubing, Maya ruins, the cayes) are **long trips** by road or boat. Watch the tender schedule.
- Stay on the **north side** of Haulover Creek. The State Department rates Southside Belize City Level 3.
- Belize stays on Central time all year: **two hours behind Eastern in summer, one in winter**. Go by ship time.

Belize City at a glance

Getting ashore	**Tender.** Ships anchor offshore, and tenders land at the Fort Street Tourism Village. The ride takes about 15 minutes.
Ship to town	The Tourism Village sits at the edge of the Fort George district. The city center and the Swing Bridge are a walk away.
Currency	Belize dollar, fixed at **BZ$2 = US$1** since 1976. ATMs in the village give out both currencies. Change usually comes in Belize dollars.
Language	English is the official language, the only Central American country where it is.
Time zone	Central Standard Time all year, with no daylight saving: **two hours behind Eastern in summer, one hour behind in winter**. Be back for the last tender by **ship time**.
Taxis	Use licensed taxis with **green plates**. No official fare list is published, so ask the fare first and pay cash.
Emergency	911 or 90
Drones	Bringing in recreational drones is currently prohibited, says the State Department.

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Cruise tourism
Belize Tourism Board

Belize travel advisory
US State Department

Altun Ha cruise ship visits
NICH Belize

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Map of the area



Everything starts at the Tourism Village; the big sights are long rides inland or out to the cayes.

From the ship to shore

The tender

Belize City has no cruise pier. The coast is too shallow, so ships anchor out at sea and small tender boats bring you to the **Fort Street Tourism Village**. The Belize Tourism Board puts the ride at about **15 minutes** and reminds you to note your ship's name and the day's last tender time before you leave the ship.

The Fort Street Tourism Village

The Tourism Board describes it as an open-air mini-mall with courtyards, snack bars, duty-free shops, restaurants and, often, live music. The Board also runs an information desk in the main concourse, and licensed tour operators have booths here. Cruise Hive (November 2024) adds wheelchair-accessible restrooms, shaded waiting areas and ATMs that give out both Belize and US dollars.

What about the new docking pier?

People have been promising Belize a cruise pier for years. Here's where it stands in October 2026. The Stake Bank project, later branded Port Coral, went into receivership in March 2024, and the government then moved to take over the land. In April 2026 it was relaunched as **Olo Caye**, a plan for two piers off Belize City, with island construction expected to finish in **early 2028**. I found nothing showing any new Belize City pier in use for 2026, so **plan on a tender**. Norwegian's private Harvest Caye, far to the south, is a separate port only for Norwegian guests.

At the Belize City cruise port: what's there

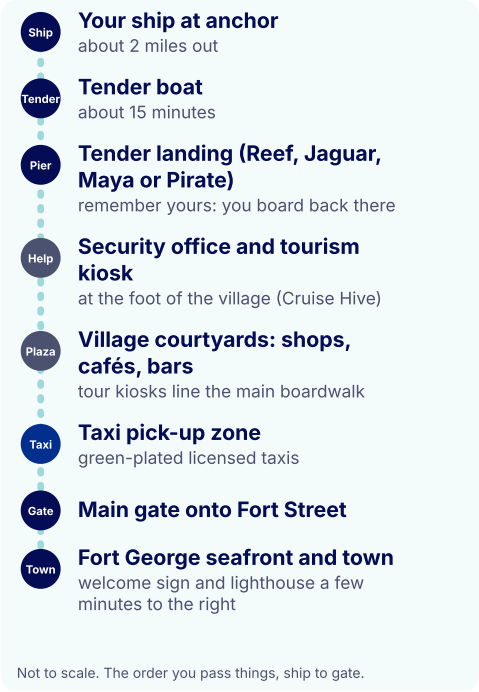
Port facts checked on 30 October 2026. Shops, prices and opening hours change, so check on the day.

Belize City is a tender port: the ship anchors out at sea and a boat ride of about 15 minutes brings you to the Fort Street Tourism Village. The village itself is a compact, flat, open-air mini-mall of courtyards, bars, cafés and duty-free shops, so a gentle day at the port is perfectly doable. I haven't been ashore here yet; this is the day I'd plan from the Belize Tourism Board's own pages, with the tender line as the real hurdle.

Port map: this port doesn't publish a map of its own that we could find, so we drew the simple walk below from the port's and cruise lines' own descriptions.

From the ship: Fort Street Tourism Village (tender landing)

Ships anchor about 2 miles offshore (Cruise Hive) and tenders take about 15 minutes (Belize Tourism Board). Four tender landing areas, named Reef, Jaguar, Maya and Pirate (Adventour Begins, 2025), lead into the village. No docking pier; the Olo Caye pier project is not expected before 2028.



Our own simple drawing, not the port's map.

Free things to do inside the port

Free Wi-Fi Free — Cruise Hive (November 2024) says Wi-Fi is free but somewhat spotty; Adventour Begins (2025) says it's in several of the village restaurants and bars.
Tourism Village

Passport stamp Free — Free souvenir passport stamps for cruise passengers, reported by Cruise Hive (November 2024).
Security office at the foot of the village

Live local music Free — The Belize Tourism Board says there is often live local entertainment; GPSmyCity mentions musicians, drummers and dance groups in the plazas on busy days.
Village courtyards

Belize welcome sign and Baron Bliss Lighthouse Free — Photo spots a few minutes' walk to the right along Fort Street from the main gate (Adventour Begins, 2025).
Just outside the gate

Shaded seating Free — Shaded seating for waiting on tenders, per Cruise Hive (November 2024).
Near the tender landings

Pools and beaches

No beach or pool at the port — Nothing official describes a beach or pool at the Tourism Village; a beach day means a boat to a caye.

Food and drink

The Wet Lizard — Fried seafood and sides (Cruise Hive, 2024); near the terminal.
Tourism Village area

Martha's Café — Locally grown coffee (Cruise Hive, 2024).
Tourism Village

MOHO Chocolate shop and snack bar — Ice cream and local chocolate (Cruise Hive, 2024).
Tourism Village

Baymen's Tavern — Bar-restaurant near the terminal, listed by Adventour Begins (2025).
Near the terminal

Other restaurants and bars — Cruise Hive (2024) counts four local-cuisine restaurants and three permanent bars, one a sports bar. The Tourism Board mentions snack bars and Caribbean and international food.
Village courtyards

Shopping

Gift shops and vendor stands — Over 30, with handmade souvenirs such as hot sauce and local rum (Cruise Hive, 2024).
Village courtyards

Duty-free shop — Alcohol, perfume, sunglasses and designer goods (Cruise Hive, 2024); the Tourism Board also describes duty-free shopping.
Tourism Village

Named stores — Adventour Begins (2025) lists Diamonds International, Cariloha, Del Sol, Pirana Joe, Jungle Gift Shop and Moho Chocolate.
Tourism Village

Restrooms, Wi-Fi, money and help

Belize Tourism Board information desk Free — In the main concourse, per the Tourism Board.
Main concourse

ATMs — Several ATMs dispense both Belize and US dollars (Cruise Hive, 2024). The Belize dollar is fixed at BZ$2 = US$1, and change usually comes in Belize dollars.
Tourism Village

Restrooms Free — Cruise Hive (2024) calls them clean and modern, with wheelchair-accessible facilities.
Tourism Village
Access: Accessible restrooms reported by Cruise Hive.

Customs and security office — At the foot of the village where tenders arrive (Cruise Hive, 2024).
By the tender landings

BTB Cruise App Free — The Tourism Board's free app and web version show the day's cruise calls, changes and cancellations, and key contacts.
Your phone

Getting out of the port

Licensed taxis

About $10–30 one way in the city (reported 2024)
— Green licence plates, not metered; agree the fare first and pay cash. Cruise Hive (2024) reports $10–30 one way within the city and $15–30 to the airport.
Taxi pick-up zone in the village
Access: Ask whether the fare is per person or per car.

Tour kiosks — Licensed operators' offices and kiosks line the main boardwalk; meet pre-booked tours here or book on the spot (Cruise Hive, 2024). Guides must carry a licence and photo ID (Tourism Board).
Main boardwalk

City tours by trolley, carriage or van — The Tourism Board lists half-day city tours on foot, by air-conditioned van, open-air trolley train or horse-drawn carriage. No prices published.
From the Tourism Village
Access: The gentlest way to see the city.

Water taxi to Caye Caulker and San Pedro — Adventour Begins (2025) says the Belize Water Taxi Terminal is about 10 minutes' walk from the village; about 45 minutes to Caye Caulker and 1.5 hours to San Pedro, roughly hourly. Cruise Hive (2024) reports a round trip of about $15.
About 10 minutes' walk from the village · about 10 min walk from the ship
Access: A boat on top of a tender: a long day for anyone unsteady.

Museum of Belize — About 10 minutes' walk (Adventour Begins, 2025).
Outside the gate · about 10 min walk from the ship

Swing Bridge and Southside Free — The Swing Bridge crosses Haulover Creek. The State Department rates Southside Belize City Level 3, so stay on the north side.
Outside the gate

A whole day without leaving the port

If I were spending the day at the port here, I'd take an early tender, note which of the four landing areas I came in at, and pick up the day's last-tender time at the Tourism Board desk. Then a slow wander round the courtyards, coffee at Martha's, a chocolate stop at MOHO, and a few minutes up Fort Street for a photo at the welcome sign and lighthouse. Lunch at one of the village restaurants with some live music, a little shopping, and back in the tender line in good time, because on a busy day the line is the longest part of the afternoon.

At the port with a cane, walker or wheelchair

- This is a tender port. MSC says its tenders may not suit guests with disabilities, reduced mobility or balance problems. Whether wheelchairs and scooters go on the tender depends on your line and the sea; ask your cruise line before you sail.
- Once ashore, Adventour Begins (2025) calls the port area flat and wheelchair accessible, and Cruise Hive (2024) reports accessible restrooms and shaded seating for the tender wait.
- Four tender landings serve one village; you return from the one you arrived at, so note its name (Reef, Jaguar, Maya or Pirate).
- No wheelchair rental, ramps or beach access are published. A van, trolley or carriage city tour is the gentlest way to see the city.

More on cruising with mobility & health needs. Rules differ by cruise line, so check with yours.

Questions about the port

Is Belize City a tender port?

Yes. Ships anchor offshore and tenders take about 15 minutes to the Fort Street Tourism Village. The planned Olo Caye pier is not expected before 2028.

What is there to do at the Belize cruise port?

The Tourism Village has more than 30 gift shops and stands, duty-free shopping, cafés, bars, live music and free Wi-Fi. The welcome sign, lighthouse and Museum of Belize are a short walk away.

Do ATMs at the Belize cruise port give US dollars?

Cruise Hive reports that several ATMs in the Tourism Village dispense both Belize and US dollars. The rate is fixed at BZ$2 to US$1.

Where the port facts come from: Belize Tourism Board: Cruise (30 October 2026); Belize Tourism Board: Licensing, cruise (30 October 2026); Belize

Tourism Board: BTB launches cruise ship app (2017) (30 October 2026); Cruise Hive: Belize cruise port guide (November 2024) (30 October 2026); Adventour Begins: Belize cruise port guide (December 2025) (30 October 2026); GPSmyCity: Fort Street Tourism Village (30 October 2026); MSC Cruises: Belize City (26 October 2026); US State Department: Belize travel advisory (26 October 2026); San Pedro Sun: Stake Bank relaunched as Olo Caye (April 2026) (26 October 2026)

How I'd spend the day

If walking is hard

First, decide whether the tender is right for you (see the mobility section). If you go ashore, I'd stay in and around the Tourism Village and the Fort George seafront, or book a gentle city tour by van, open-air trolley or horse-drawn carriage. The Tourism Board lists all three. That gets you the Swing Bridge, the cathedral and the museum without the long walks.

Beach day

Belize City has no beach worth the name, so a beach day means a boat. A ship's tour or a licensed operator's trip to Goff's Caye, a tiny sand island on the reef, or to Caye Caulker gives you sand and snorkeling. Book something that guarantees you'll be back for the tenders. **see Belize City cruise Goff's Caye snorkel on Viator**

See the country

Belize is famous for cave tubing and the Maya ruins. Carnival's cave tubing tour runs about **5.5 hours**, with a drive of about **75 minutes** each way. The Altun Ha ruins are 31 miles north. With travel times like these, a tour that guarantees your return is the safe choice. **see Belize City cave tubing Altun Ha cruise excursion on Viator**

Getting around

Taxis

Licensed taxis have **green license plates**. Both the Tourism Board and Britain's travel advice say to use only those. No official fare sheet is published. Ask the fare before you get in, ask whether it's per person or per car, and plan to pay in cash. The State Department adds that US driver's licenses are accepted only for the first 3 months and that you should avoid driving between towns after dark.

Walking

Rough Guides calls the center compact and walkable by day. Stay north of Haulover Creek, keep valuables out of sight, and take a taxi for anything longer.

Boats to the cayes

Water taxis run to Caye Caulker and Ambergris Caye. It's a long round trip for one port day, so I'd only do it on an organized tour timed to the tenders.

What to see

Museum of Belize

The museum fills the old colonial jail, built between 1854 and 1857, which held prisoners until 1993. Upstairs are Maya ceramics and a replica of the jade head from Altun Ha. Rough Guides lists admission at **BZ$10** (US$5), open Monday to Thursday 8:30 to 5 and Friday 8:30 to 4:30. Check before you go, as I couldn't find these on an official page.

The Swing Bridge

It crosses Haulover Creek in the middle of town and is said to be the last hand-operated swing bridge in the Americas. These days it only swings open on request.

Fort George Lighthouse and Memorial Park

Right by the Tourism Village: the lighthouse marks the tomb of Baron Bliss, a benefactor to the country, and the seafront park beside it honors Belizeans who died in the world wars. It's flat, close and free.

Altun Ha

Belize's heritage agency (NICH) puts these Maya ruins **31 miles** from Belize City on the Old Northern Highway, open daily 8 to 5. Tickets run **$10 to $20** depending on age and residency. The site warns of rugged ground and asks visitors to use the handrails and stay on the marked trails. (Checked 26 October 2026.)

Cave tubing

You float through river caves on an inner tube. Carnival's version is **$89.99 per adult**, about 5.5 hours long, with a 25-minute walk to the cave and about a mile over uneven ground in all. It says plainly that it isn't suitable for guests using canes, walkers or wheelchairs (checked 26 October 2026).

Beaches and cayes, ranked for a cruise day

1. **Goff's Caye**, a little sand island out on the reef, reached by boat tour. It's the classic Belize-from-a-ship beach day: snorkeling right off the sand and very little shade. Climbing in and out of the boat is the hard part.

2. **Caye Caulker**, a relaxed island village reached by water taxi or tour. It's a lovely spot, but the boat ride takes a big bite out of a tender day.
3. **Cucumber Beach** (Old Belize), on the mainland just outside the city. The Tourism Board lists it on half-day city tours. I couldn't find official entry prices.

There's no beach to walk to from the Tourism Village. Every beach option in Belize means a boat or a van.

Where to eat and what to try

- **Rice and beans** with stewed chicken, the everyday Belizean plate.
- **Fry jacks** (puffy fried dough), **panades** and **garnaches**, which are small fried snacks.
- The **Tourism Village** has local restaurants, snack bars and a chocolate shop, all handy for the tender line.
- **Belikin**, the national beer, is everywhere. The legal drinking age is 18, and drinking from an open container in public is illegal.

Money, language and local rules

- **Money:** the Belize dollar has been fixed at two to one US dollar since 11 May 1976. US cash is easy to spend, and change usually comes in Belize dollars. The ATMs in the village give out both currencies.
- **Language:** English is the official language.
- **Licensed guides only:** by law, tour guides and operators must carry a valid license and photo ID. Ask to see them.
- **No drones:** the State Department says bringing in recreational drones is currently prohibited.
- **Drugs:** all drugs are illegal, including medical marijuana bought legally in the US.
- **Open containers:** drinking in public or from an open container in a vehicle is illegal.
- **Camouflage:** I couldn't confirm a Belize ban on camouflage clothing on any official page. It's banned in several other Caribbean ports, though, so I'd simply leave it home.
- **Ship time:** Belize never changes its clocks. The last tender goes by the ship's clock, not your phone's.

What the videos don't show you

- **The tender eats your day.** Lines first thing in the morning and before the last boat can add a lot of waiting to the 15-minute ride.
- **The good stuff is far away.** Cave tubing is about 75 minutes each way by road, and the ruins and cayes take an hour or more too. Independent trips leave very little margin.
- **Vendors and hustlers.** Rough Guides warns of overpriced souvenirs near the village and persistent street sellers on North Front Street.
- **Crime in parts of the city.** The State Department rates Belize Level 2 overall but Southside Belize City Level 3. A state of emergency covered parts of the city in May 2026 and had ended by 12 June.
- **Limited medical care.** Serious cases are usually flown to the US at your own expense. Travel insurance with evacuation cover is worth having.
- **The pier everyone talks about doesn't exist yet.** Old articles promised a 2019, 2022 or 2023 opening. The current target is early 2028.

With a cane, walker or wheelchair

This is a **tender port**, and that's the big question for us. MSC says plainly that its tenders may not be suitable for people with disabilities, reduced mobility or balance problems. Stepping between a moving ship and a moving boat is the hard part, and whether wheelchairs and scooters can go on the tender depends on your line and the sea that day. Ask your cruise line before you sail, not on the morning of the port day.

Once ashore, the Tourism Village is flat, with shaded waiting areas and, according to Cruise Hive, wheelchair-accessible restrooms. Beyond the village, the Tourism Board doesn't publish accessibility information. The big excursions are tough. Carnival's cave tubing says it isn't suitable for canes, walkers or wheelchairs, and Altun Ha warns of rugged ground. A van or carriage city tour is the gentlest way to see Belize City.

See Mobility & Health Needs for how tender ports work and what to ask, and check with your cruise line about tender access for your device.

The biggest mistake

Treating Belize like a docked port. Booking a long independent day of cave tubing, ruins or a caye on your

own means two tender lines, long drives and no one holding the ship if you're late. Pick one big thing, book it so the operator guarantees your return, and be in the tender line well before the last boat leaves by ship time.

Belize FAQs

Is Belize City a tender port?

Yes. The water off Belize City is too shallow for big ships, so they anchor offshore and small boats carry you to the Fort Street Tourism Village. The Belize Tourism Board puts the ride at about 15 minutes.

Has Belize opened a new cruise ship pier?

Not as of October 2026. The Stake Bank project, later called Port Coral, stalled and went into receivership in 2024. In April 2026 it was relaunched as Olo Caye, with island construction expected to finish in early 2028. Until then, you tender.

Can you walk around Belize City from the cruise port?

Yes, around the Fort George area and the city center in daylight. Rough Guides calls the center compact and walkable. The US State Department rates Southside Belize City, south of Haulover Creek, Level 3, so stay north of the creek.

Do they take US dollars in Belize?

The Belize dollar is fixed at BZ$2 to US$1, and has been since 1976, so prices are easy to convert. ATMs at the Tourism Village give out both currencies. Expect change in Belize dollars.

Is Belize City safe for cruise passengers?

The US State Department rates Belize Level 2, exercise increased caution (issued 12 March 2026), and Southside Belize City Level 3. A state of emergency for parts of the city in May 2026 had ended by 12 June. Stick to the Fort George area, licensed guides, and taxis with green plates.

How long is the tender ride in Belize?

About 15 minutes each way, according to the Belize Tourism Board. Add the wait in line, which is longest first thing in the morning and in the last hour before all aboard.

Where these facts come from

- Belize Tourism Board: cruise tourism (Fort Street Tourism Village) (https://www.belizetourismboard.org/?p=1581) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Belize Tourism Board: cruise licensing (https://belizetourismboard.org/licensing/cruise/) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Belize Tourism Board: Facts About Belize (https://travelbelize.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Facts_About_Belize.pdf) (2024, checked 26 October 2026)
- Central Bank of Belize: 50 years of exchange rate stability (https://www.centralbank.org.bz/detail-pages/news/2026/05/11/belize-commemorates-50-years-of-exchange-rate-stability) (11 May 2026, checked 26 October 2026)
- US State Department: Belize travel advisory (https://travel.state.gov/en/international-travel/travel-advisories/belize.html) (Level 2, issued 12 March 2026, checked 26 October 2026)
- UK Foreign Office: Belize advice update, state of emergency ended (change record) (https://govukdiff.njk.onl/update/2026-06-12T10:40:00+01:00/www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belize) (12 June 2026, checked 26 October 2026)
- UK Foreign Office: Belize travel advice (UK Government Web Archive, May 2026) (https://tnaqa.mirrorweb.com/ukgwa/20260512150515mp_/https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/belize/print) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Prodigy: Belize state of emergency and cruise calls (https://cruiseprodigy.com/pages/news/news-22may2026.html) (22 May 2026, checked 26 October 2026)
- San Pedro Sun: former Stake Bank project relaunched as Olo Caye cruise port (https://www.sanpedrosun.com/business-and-economy/2026/04/15/former-stake-bank-project-relaunched-as-olo-caye-cruise-port/) (15 April 2026, checked 26 October 2026)
- Amandala: Stake Bank receivership and land acquisition (https://amandala.com.bz/news/?p=354653) (1 September 2024, checked 26 October 2026)
- Cruise Hive: Belize cruise port guide (village facilities) (https://www.cruisehive.com/belize-cruise-port/148623) (November 2024, checked 26 October 2026)

- MSC Cruises: Belize City (tender and mobility warning) (https://msccruises.co.uk/cruises/destinations/caribbean-and-antilles/belize/belize-city) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Royal Caribbean: Belize City shore excursions (https://www.royalcaribbean.com/inspire/caribbean-belize-city-belize-shore-excursions) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Carnival: Belize Cave Tubing with Lunch (https://www.carnival.com/shore-excursions/belize/belize-cave-tubing-with-lunch-509063) ($89.99 adult, checked 26 October 2026)
- NICH Belize: Altun Ha (cruise ship) (https://nichbelize.org/?p=6506) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Rough Guides: Belize City Tourism Village, Swing Bridge and Museum of Belize (https://www.roughguides.com/destinations/central-america-and-the-caribbean/belize/belize-city/tourism-village/) (checked 26 October 2026)
- Wikipedia: Museum of Belize (history of the building) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_Belize) (checked 26 October 2026)

Facts checked on 26 October 2026. Ports change their rules and prices, so check before you sail.

About the "I" on this page. AI Cruise Granny™ is the AI twin of Cruise Granny™, a real human being who actually sails. Every experience written here in the first person is hers. The AI twin is what writes it up, checks the facts against official sources and keeps it current. We tell you that openly on every page, because you should know who is talking to you. More about how this works.