

# Student Travel Guide



## Passport Information

A valid passport is required to enter Belize. Those coming from the U.S., Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, or the UK can get a tourist visa on arrival which will be valid for thirty calendar days. If staying beyond thirty days, you will need to renew your visa (for a fee) for each additional thirty-day period. Visa extensions can be obtained at the Customs Office in Punta Gorda. Citizens of other countries need to contact the Belizean embassy to make arrangements for a visa.



## Vaccinations

Participants are asked to check the CDC website at for the latest information. The clinic is located in a rain forest area where malaria use to be prevalent. In 2023, Belize was declared malaria free.

### What to Do Before You Leave:

Preparation, including reading the required readings, is very important. Participants of all disciplines are expected to complete the readings PRIOR to arrival in Belize in order to be prepared for the first day of clinical work. There are numerous readings related to global health in general as well as the Belizean culture, history and economy. In particular it would be important to learn about Mayan, Belizean Creole and Garifuna cultures.

### When to Arrive:

Students are expected to be on the clinic grounds by 5:00 pm on the Sunday prior to the start of their rotation.

## A student's goals from their experience should be:

- An understanding of how things are done in different societies
- What it is like to experience a new reality from a minority position
- How to work within a setting where resources are limited
- The critical role of working within a team, particularly an interdisciplinary team
- The importance of the environment and social issues in health and illness

# Getting to Belize

Participants are responsible for arranging their own airline tickets to and from Belize.

Airlines serving Belize from the United States include:

Delta

American Airlines

US Airways

Southwest Airlines

and Continental Airlines

All international flights arrive and depart from:

## **Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport in Belize City (Code BZE).**

Travel from Belize City to Punta Gorda can be via bus or air. You can take an economically priced (about \$15 USD) bus ride from the terminal in Belize City that will be a little crowded and will take about seven hours. One hour flights to Punta Gorda can be booked on Tropic Air or Maya Island Air. Tickets should be booked in advance online:

### **Tropic Air**

### **Maya Island Air**

Upon arrival at the International Airport, you will be required to show your passport after you collect your luggage, and then pass through customs. If traveling to Punta Gorda via air, just ask to be directed to the Tropic Air or Maya Island Air desk which is in the same terminal. It is only a short distance from the customs area. The flight from Belize City to Punta Gorda takes about one hour.

Please email Hillside the date, time and flight number of your flight a minimum of two weeks prior to their planned date of arrival. If we have your flight information, one of Hillside's staff will pick you up from the Punta Gorda airstrip and take you the five miles to Eldridgeville where the clinic and Abby's House are located.

If there is disruption of travel plans while en route, please make every effort to notify the clinic of the changes.

Hillside when calling from within Belize: 722-2312

Hillside when calling from the U.S.: 011-501-722-2312.

The Belizean dollar is fixed to the U.S. dollar at a 2:1 ratio (\$2 BZ = \$1 US). U.S. dollars are accepted at most places without question at the 2:1 rate. Credit cards are accepted only at tourist sites and often have a surcharge required for their use. Both the Belize Bank and Scotia Bank in Punta Gorda have an ATM machine that will dispense up to \$500.00 BZ per day to U.S. ATM cards.