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BFREE

2026 BELIZE VISITOR GUIDE

ABOUT BFREE

The Belize Foundation for Research and Environmental Education (BFREE) is a US-registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1995 with the primary mission of preserving the tropical rainforests of Belize. To achieve this goal, BFREE acquired 1,153 acres of forested land and established a privately protected area and biological field station strategically located at the foothills of the Maya Mountains. The BFREE property borders four national parks and is at the gateway to the Bladen Nature Reserve, the crown jewel of Belize's protected areas system.

BFREE's mission is "to conserve the biodiversity and cultural heritage of Belize." As the only field station in this biologically significant area, we seek to achieve our conservation mission through research and environmental education programs. We provide logistical support and facilities to visiting scientists and students, promote and facilitate research and conservation of tropical forests, develop and implement environmental education programs for students from Belize and other countries, and enhance alternative livelihoods for local community members. For nearly thirty years, BFREE has hosted Field Courses and visitors just like you.



ABOUT THE BFREE FIELD STATION

BFREE borders four protected areas: including the Bladen Nature Reserve, Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Deep River Forest Reserve, and Maya Mountain Forest Reserve - all are part of the larger Maya Mountain block of 14 protected areas covering over 1.5 million acres of continuous tropical forest. The land sits about 60 meters above sea level on a rich alluvial soil matrix. Habitat types include various tropical forest types and aquatic systems, including marshes, streams, ponds, and the Bladen River. The average tree canopy height is about 25 meters, with emergent trees reaching 45-50 meters. The average rainfall is 140 inches per year. Wildlife is abundant, and it is not unusual to view a troop of Howler monkeys, a Harpy eagle, or a flock of Scarlet macaws from the dining room.

Facilities

Approximately 40 acres of the land is under some type of development, including the field station facilities, a 25-acre cacao agroforestry farm, a 2-acre organic orchard, and an extensive trail network. Facilities include the Hammock, a dormitory-style building with six private rooms that sleeps 24, three private cabins, kitchen & dining room, staff housing, Science Lab, Hicatee Conservation and Research Center (HCRC), office, Chocolate Lab, BFREE Library and Classroom (projector available), herbarium, workshop, composting bathroom facilities, hot/cold showers, helicopter landing site, and a canopy observation tower.

Cabins

Three private cabins are nestled comfortably in the forests and though very private, are centrally located. Each cabin is furnished with two handcrafted hardwood beds, a desk and chair, and a wardrobe. Cabins are equipped with a fan, light, sink and outlets. Guests are provided with pillows, linens, and a blanket.

The Hammock

The Hammock was built in 2020 with six private rooms and a wrap-around veranda. Guests are provided with pillows, linens, and a blanket. Each room has a ceiling fan, lights, outlets and a sink. Outdoor showers are available a few steps away, and a four-stall composting bathroom is close by.

Composting Toilets

Designed and constructed at BFREE, composting toilets are situated throughout the property. Using no water, these environmentally friendly facilities conserve water and produce compost for the BFREE orchards.

Power

BFREE is powered by solar electricity. Outlets are available in each cabin, at the Hammock, and in the dining room and BFREE classroom.

Internet & Phone

BFREE has limited internet service that we reserve for office use. Cell signal is available in some locations on the property. We recommend buying data to use during your visit. *The BFREE office phone may be used in case of an emergency.*

Meals

- Meals are prepared by our onsite chef and are served at set times: Breakfast - 7:30 AM, Lunch - Noon, Dinner - 6:30 PM

Dietary Restrictions / Allergies

Please note any dietary restrictions on your Health & Contact form. With advance notice, we will do our best to accommodate your dietary needs.

PACKING GUIDE



The following list is suggested for 2 days:

ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES:

- Flashlights and/or headlamp along with extra batteries
- Towel
- Insect repellent
- Reusable water bottle
- Toiletry kit: Include all of the items that you would normally use; please bring biodegradable soap and shampoo
- Small day pack or backpack for daytime excursions
- Personal first aid supplies
- Ziplocs or dry bag (for keeping items clean and dry)

CLOTHING ESSENTIALS:

- loose lightweight, quick-dry LONG-sleeved shirts
- lightweight loose LONG pants.
- lightweight cotton t-shirts
- Swimsuit
- Sweatshirt or jacket for cool nights
- Footwear - 1 pair of crocs or slippers & 1 pair of comfortable closed toe shoes or rubber boots (already broken in)

TRAVEL PAPERWORK:

- Contact form
- Waiver and Release form

OPTIONAL:

- Camera and Binoculars
- Sunglasses, polarized lenses are best
- Books, crosswords, small games to play at night
- Earplugs for better sleeping
- Hat

The packing list is a guideline to help prepare you for your trip to BFREE. We recommend leaving any non-essential items at home. As a basic rule, if you cannot get along without it, bring a spare or maybe two. This applies to contact lenses and glasses, flashlights, and personal medications.

Luggage

Pack as light as possible and be sure you can carry your own luggage without assistance in one load.

Clothing

The best, safest defense against insects and the elements is to cover up with long sleeves, long socks, and long pants. Bring clothing that is practical, comfortable, and socially appropriate. Pack lightweight, partially synthetic fabrics that are easy to wash and quick to dry. Denim jeans and other thick materials do not dry well in humid weather. For hiking and field activities, bring clothing that can get wet and muddy.

Footwear

Footwear should be comfortable, already broken in, and suited to the terrain. We recommend a pair of lightweight hiking boots or rubber boots (muck boots). Remember to include a pair of water shoes or sandals that can get wet.

Linens

BFREE provides bed sheets and blankets. Guests must pack their own towels.



FIELD STATION POLICIES

RESPECT NATURE & BFREE GROUNDS:

- No molesting, harming, or killing of any wildlife (including venomous snakes)
- No chopping brush or marking trees with machetes or other tools
- Apply bug spray away from other people and outside of buildings
- Do not swim alone or at night
- Flagging should be removed, and borrowed field equipment returned immediately upon completion of projects
- Campfires are permitted in designated fire pit with permission from BFREE staff
- No smoking in any BFREE buildings
- Pets are not allowed
- Check your surrounding before sitting on a log or on the ground
- Look out for holes when walking - especially on leaf littered trails or in the cacao farm

HEALTH & SAFETY:

- Inform BFREE staff of medical conditions or allergies immediately upon arrival
- Stay hydrated by carrying a water bottle at all times
- Report injuries or illness to BFREE staff and the group leader immediately
- Carry and use flashlights when walking around from twilight to sunrise

TRAILS:

- Travel in pairs and inform BFREE staff before hiking and approximate time of return
- Do not litter. Pick up trash along trails and dispose of it properly
- Always stay on trails or make sure there is someone to guide you back to trail if you need to go off trail

THE HAMMOCK & CABIN RULES:

- Leave shoes outside the building
- Keep doors closed, turn lights and fans off when not in use
- Keep food and perishables in a sealed container
- 9 p.m. is quiet time—please turn off the music and talk softly in all buildings
- Dispose of food waste in compost piles
- Hang wet clothes on designated clothes lines, not on railings

ALCOHOL:

- Beer & cokes are available for sale in limited supply at the Cool Spot from 5-6 daily
- Visitors may not bring outside alcohol to the BFREE field station
- Do not offer BFREE staff alcohol; we adhere to a strict no-drinking policy

CONTACT INFO

FIELD STATION

Mailing Address:

PO BOX 129
Punta Gorda, Belize,
Central America

LOCATION:

Mile Marker 58 Southern Highway
Toledo, Belize, Central America
contact@bfreebz.org
www.bfreebz.org

US OFFICE

Mailing Address:

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Gainesville, FL 32606

INSTAGRAM:

@BFREEBZ

FACEBOOK:

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