

"Green luscious grounds, vibrant blooming flowers, and endless water what more can you ask for during spring break. Belize is not only beautiful but traveling there for your study abroad will give you unforgettable memories. Throughout the time of the in-class you will not only become prepared for your trip but you will also be challenged in the way you may perceive the world. Belize allowed me to become culturally sound in my views on life. After much anticipation we started our journey to Belize. After landing in Belize we then got on another much smaller plane with only 10 seats to travel from location to location where we finally arrived at our destination. After a long day of travel we arrived at the Cotton Tree Lodge where we were greeted with beautiful scenery, four course meals by a gourmet chef, and authentic lodging. Many sites were to be seen throughout the trip from hearing/ learning all about the cacao bean to the many other adventures. The first day was spent traveling around the small city of Punta Gorda you are able to start to grasp Belizean's lifestyles. Meeting the ladies that contribute to Maya Bags was a treat in of itself, but getting a soccer game going with their kids made it that much more fun. Each night at Cotton Tree Lodge we would make our way down to the river/creek where we swam, khaki, used the rope swing, and played tilt a raft. The next day was filled with knowledge and wisdom bestowed upon us by Aldapalo Pop who showed us his cacao farm. His farm was planted on a hill with beautiful creeks throughout. After the tour we were able to meet his family for lunch. The day wasn't over yet, next was a tour of the Mayan ruins. Our night hike was a great end to the night, weren't lucky enough to see any animals though. Our next day's adventure consisted of cave swimming which was not only gorgeous hike there but also an amazing first time experience. We couldn't end the day without seeing Ixcacao which was a family owned cacao business. Some of the nights we would listen to various guests after supper which includes Mountain Cacao and also Sustainable Harvest. This day we put our working gloves on and got to work with Sustainable Harvest. We started by planting around 100 coconut trees for one family and also making a cement/sand mixture floor for pigs for another family. It felt very fulfilling giving back. Being our last day at the lodge we took a boat tour on the creek sunset style. The next adventure began with traveling back to Belize City where we went to the Belize Zoo. We were all very excited to be there because we read a book about it in class. We continued on to our next flight to Blue Tang Inn which brought us to a small island of Belize. Our next day was spent teach at Holy Cross School which was fun but also a challenge to get them interested in what we were teaching. We couldn't have a day without seeing another cacao place it definitely had a more high class feel to it. After each day you were able to explore with a group to see the island. Started the day snorkeling after the first round I got motion sick and missed the next two stops. I missed holding sharks. I personally was sad about that but everyone else had so much fun. The rest of the day was free, went exploring, shopping, and eating. Nice way to end the trip. Signing up to be a part of this experience will give you memories you will take with you for the rest of your life." – Bridget (2014 trip)