

# 2025 Belize Winter Session: History, Art, and Culture

SUNY Cortland, Professor Donovan

## Itinerary

Thursday, January 9

International flight to Belize. Drive to San Ignacio. Check in to Chaa Creek and settle in at the Rainforest River Camp. <https://www.chaacreek.com/belize-budget-eco-pods> . Orientation and planning meeting for the week. Dinner at the River Camp

Friday, January 10

Field trip to Xunanchunich in morning. Xunantunich is one of Belize's most easily accessible Maya archaeological sites. <https://belize.com/xunantunich-maya-site-belize/> Lunch in nearby San Jose Succotz, a traditional Maya settlement. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San\\_Jose\\_Succotz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Jose_Succotz) Return to Chaa Creek with optional afternoon activities (bird watching, canoe on Macal River, natural history museum, butterfly farm, horseback riding) Please note some activities charge an extra fee.

Saturday, January 11

Canoe down the Macal River to San Ignacio in morning (approx. 2 hours) <https://www.travelbelize.org/destinations/cayo/san-ignacio/> Experience the local market day, with traditional food and vegetable displays, crafts, fabrics, and spices. Field excursion to Cahal Pech, a Maya archaeological site located near the Town of San Ignacio in the Cayo District of Belize. The site was a palatial, hilltop home for elite Maya families. Cahal Pech is the oldest-known Maya site in the Belize River valley, having been first settled between 1500 and 1000 BC. It is a fascinating example of Pre-classic Maya architecture. Meeting in afternoon with Dr. Awe (if available), former director of the Institute of Archaeology for the National Institute of Culture and History (NICH). <https://www.themayanruinswebsite.com/cahal-pech-1.html>

Sunday, January 12

All day field trip with trained Archaeology guide to Actun Tunichil Muknal. ATM is one of the most impressive and artifact-rich Maya ceremonial caves ever found. Translated as "Cave of the Crystal Sepulchre" ATM in Maya culture was believed to be an entrance to the underworld. This experience requires a 3-mile hike across waist-high streams and moderate climbing inside the cave in order to witness spectacular stalactite formations and ancient ritual spaces filled with pottery and Maya artifacts. It is a rigorous hike both to and inside the cave. <https://belizing.com/ATM-Cave-Belize/>

Monday, January 13

Excursion to San Antonio (40 min). Visit San Antonio Primary School. Work on community service project or classroom volunteer. Visit the San Antonio Women's Cooperative for traditional Belizean lunch. Informal presentation on local history of the Maya settlement, hands-on experience in grinding corn and pottery making. <https://mybeautifulbelize.com/san-antonio-maya-womens-group-making-mark-world/> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/paid-content-interview-timotea-mesh-leader-belizes-first-female-cooperative> Return to Chaa Creek for dinner.

Tuesday, January 14

Early morning guided bird watching tour. Breakfast at the Mariposa. Additional activities (weather dependent) may include chocolate making, horseback riding, botanical garden tour.

Wednesday, January 15

Check out of Chaa Creek. Transportation to the Belize Zoo and Tropical Education Center. The Belize Zoo is an educational facility showing only native bird and animal species of Belize. <https://www.belizezoo.org> Following the Zoo, we will travel to Belize City and take the water taxi to Caye Caulker. Caye Caulker is a small Caribbean Island off the coast of Belize with a Marine Reserve protecting spectacular snorkeling and diving areas. Check into hotel. Dinner and planning meeting in evening. <https://www.belizeadventure.ca/destinations/caye-caulker/>

Thursday, January 16

Breakfast. Snorkeling all day on Barrier Reef (weather permitting). Lunch included. Reflection meeting after dinner. Farewell celebration in evening.

Friday, January 11

Return to Belize City by water taxi. Taxi to International Airport. Return flight to USA.