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Thursday, 01 September 2016

Heavenly Hamanasi in Belize

Written by Jill Weinlen

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Charles Darwin described the country Belize in his 1842 book, Coral Reefs of the World, as 'the most remarkable reef in the West Indies.'

Snorkel and diving enthusiasts appreciate the 1,000 different live species, with 500 types of fish and 100 different varieties of coral. Belize has the South Water Caye Marine Reef, the second largest barrier reef in the world. Stepping into the pleasant 83 degree water, the visibility is at least 100 feet.



Belize borders Guatemala, Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. This Northern Hemisphere diving area has atolls and hundreds of mangroves and coral sand islands. It's home to one of the world's largest populations of threatened West Indian manatees, endangered sharks and marine turtles.

When two American divers and nature enthusiasts traveled to Belize in 2000, they fell in love with the beauty of the beach town, Hopkins. They enjoyed meeting the people in this English-speaking nation. Belize is a melting pot of Creoles, Mayas, Mestizos, East Indians, Chinese, Mennonites, North Americans, Europeans and Central Americans.

The couple from Virginia bought some land in Hopkins and built a luxury 23-room resort. Later they added some tree houses, raised 12 feet of the ground in the jungle. They hired a talented group of staff members and opened their resort to guide guests on adventures throughout Belize that include hiking, exploring caves, swimming in waterfalls, learning about the Mayan culture, snorkeling and diving in the unique Blue Hole.

Staying at the Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort, I learned that this eco-friendly resort is committed to making a change to protect Belize by implementing a daily reduce, reuse and recycle program. When guests enter their beach front room or tree-house suite, they receive stainless steel water bottles as welcome gifts. Guests are encouraged to re-fill their bottles with purified water from the room and take the bottles on daily adventure tours. Snorkel and dive boats have an igloo filled with purified cold water, as do the travel vans taking guests to hiking destinations, exploring caves and learning about Mayan history. There are no empty plastic water bottles littering the ground.

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