

THE CAYES

AMBERGRIS CAYE

BACALAR CHICO • HOL CHAN • SAN PEDRO

Laid-back Temptation Island
launches a thousand
water sports adventures.

An astute traveler coined a saying for this laid-back hideaway, “No shoes, no shirt, no problem,” and the motto stuck. Although it offers the most resorts, best variety of restaurants, funkier shops, and liveliest bars, Ambergris Caye remains light years away. Explore the fabulous reef. Pet a graceful stingray. Land a fisherman’s trophy. Or just lounge by the brilliant turquoise sea.

Narrow Bacalar Chico channel, dug by ancient Mayas, separates this largest, most popular of Belize’s 200 cayes from Mexico. Known as la Isla Bonita, meaning “beautiful island” (from the Madonna song), Ambergris retains its Caribbean charm. San Pedro Town blends Caribbean with a touch of Mexico and a dash of Old Key West. Tiki bars and seaside restaurants dot the waterfront, shaded by palms. Sandy streets lead to small hotels, guesthouses, shops, eateries, and watering holes. Thatch-roof structures — some brightly painted; others aged by weather — seem to spring from the pages of a Hemingway novel. Home to 10,000 residents, slender Ambergris Caye stretches 25 miles north to south, its eastern beach just a half mile from the magnificent Belize Barrier Reef. Healthy stands of mangrove along the western shore provide a nurturing home for wildlife.

Getting to Ambergris — just 36 miles north of Belize City — is part of the fun adventure, by boat or plane. Water taxis depart seven times daily from Belize City’s marine terminal, arriving at the caye 90 minutes later. Hourly commuter flights to Ambergris take just 15-20 minutes and US\$30 from Belize City’s municipal airstrip (\$54 from the international airport). They take off more than 40 times per day. Enroute, watch for the white line offshore that separates brilliant turquoise from royal blue. That line marks the famous reef.

Sometimes the airstrip feels like a downtown street party, with flights buzzing right into the center of San Pedro. Excited visitors disembark within 40 feet of the

town's main street. Some even walk to their resorts. In fact, nearly everything is walking distance. Forget rental cars. Besides walking, people get around Ambergris Caye by golf cart (US\$00/ day) or bicycle (\$00/ day). A taxi ride just about anywhere in town costs US\$5 or less. Barrier Reef Drive (Front Street, near the sea), Pescador Drive (Middle Street), and Angel Coral Drive (Back Street, along the lagoon) run north and south, parallel to the beach.

If San Pedro seems sleepy, the north end of Ambergris would cure insomnia. Sparsely dotted with tranquil beachfront houses, condos, resorts, and restaurants, the only sounds generally heard include softly breaking waves, dreamy exotic birds, and occasionally startled iguanas. Take a bike or golf cart (gasoline-powered, not electric) as far as the waterway that cuts across the caye. Then pay US\$5 (round-trip), get on the ferry, and witness the burly "driver" pull the ferry across the cut by hand. The rock road up north can punish the rear end, so many people just take a faster, easier water taxi. Call the restaurant or resort to send one.

Mayas, Mexicans, buccaneers, and seafarers wove the colorful history of Ambergris Caye. Perhaps 10,000 Maya lived here once, their influence still visible. Whalers came after the Maya and named the caye Ambergris, after a waxy cholesterol substance from the intestines of sperm whales, used as a fixative in perfumes. After the whalers, came the buccaneers, explorers, and coconut planters. San Pedro Town — named for Saint Peter, patron saint of fishermen — sprung up in the mid-1800s as a refuge for mestizos (mixed Spanish and Maya) fleeing the Yucatan's War of Caste. In the late 1800s the Englishman James Hume Blake bought the island for US\$625 at a bankruptcy auction and turned it into a coconut plantation. Residents returned to fishing after the coconut business cracked. Today, boats full of happy vacationers ply these waters, making tourism the island's most important industry.

What makes this place so special? Perhaps it is barefootedness. The sandy unpaved roads encourage everyone to break free and go barefoot, or else learn the literal meaning of "having sand in your shoes." This genuine old-Caribbean island offers sand instead of asphalt, tropical resorts instead of high-rise hotels, and golf carts instead of cars — the kind of getaway place many vacationers really want, especially families with kids. But besides the sun, sand, and sea, many come for romance. Each year more couples come to celebrate one-of-a-kind seaside weddings, honeymoons, and anniversaries — easy to arrange, perfectly romantic, and affordable. Because it offers so much to do, Ambergris attracts more repeat guests

than other destinations. Quiz them, and enjoy their great stories about Belize's leading island retreat.

Friendly, personal resort service also explains why visitors keep coming back. Check any online message board: visitors feel welcome in this island's 1,100 rooms, which come in all shapes, sizes, and budgets. Camp inexpensively on the beach, or snuggle in the lap of luxury on your own private island. Choose from wood and thatch cabanas cooled by paddle-wheel fans, luxury villas well air conditioned, brightly painted small hotels, or seaside condos with yacht-club amenities.

Blossoming construction creates more upscale condo options each year, both north and south of San Pedro. As evidence, witness the lavish Grand Colony developments at the south end and seaside Las Terrazas at the north end. Indulgent new resort properties on the north end include Azul, offering private villas with world-class amenities, and Sueno del Mar, a special dive and ocean resort on 10 acres of beachfront.

Budget rooms in town start at US\$40. Lavish villas go for US\$1,400. Of all the tempting islands in the world, Ambergris Caye can make anyone's Caribbean dreams become reality.

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

If water is the goal, then this is the place. Jump in. Get wet. The Belize Barrier Reef, clearly visible from shore, opens a hatch to the fascinating world below. Before the noise of the day begins, stand on any eastern pier and listen to the surf break over the reef — the longest, most prolific ridge of coral in the Western Hemisphere. Perfect for water sports enthusiasts, three quarters of all Belize visitors snorkel the reef; one quarter scuba dive over it; and another quarter fish. Snorkeling and fishing make two activities that kids can enjoy too.

On sunny days, a dozen dive boats, run by professional tour operators, lead giddy divers to these wondrous mountains of coral — experiences they never forget. Walls, grottos, and canyons teem with alien marine life.

Don't leave Ambergris Caye without snorkeling or diving the popular Hol Chan Marine Reserve. That's an order. There could be no better introduction to the reef than this five-square-mile underwater park, just four miles and 15 minutes southeast of San Pedro. As stingrays glide right under the boat, imagine jumping into a giant natural aquarium of vibrant parrotfish, purple and yellow royal fairy

basslets, groupers, snappers, barracudas, even green moray eels. In depths of just 10-35 feet, visitors admire delicate sea fans, iridescent sponges, and thick brain, staghorn, and star corals, all glowing with color. Attentive guides point out the varied marine life and offer helpful hints on how to defog a mask and where to look for best views.

Enjoy the park, but listen to the guide when he says: Never touch, bump, or stand on the corals. One careless contact can kill them, damage the delicate ecosystem, and hurt the swimmer. Stay far enough to avoid accidents. Stand only on the sand. To help protect the park, Belize charges an entry fee of US\$10.

Usually combined with a Hol Chan trip, Shark Ray Alley thrills even the most experienced snorkelers. Swim with nurse sharks and stingrays in water just 6-8 feet. Touch the smooth skin on their powerful bodies — an experience not soon forgotten. Horse-eyed jacks, blue tangs, gray snappers, and triggerfish gather here as well.

Inside the protective reef, Mexico Rocks, a beautiful snorkeling area 15 minutes north of San Pedro, features excellent visibility, shallow water, even a cave. Inhabitants include horse-eye jacks, Nassau groupers, lobsters, barracudas, sand sharks, and spider crabs. Watch tiny blue tropical fish with neon spots dart between the branches of coral colonies, grazing for food. At Tres Cocos, a site often combined on the same tour, rich orange elkhorn corals seem to vibrate as busy coral polyps build their colonies. A half-day of snorkeling — either morning, best for viewing marine life, or afternoon — averages US\$40 with equipment.

Swallow Caye is a natural habitat for the West Indian Manatee. Some tours combine manatee watching with snorkeling at Goff's Caye and Coral Gardens.

Dozens of dive sites around Belize feature stunning underwater landscapes. An advantage of launching from Ambergris Caye, however is quick access to the reef — as little as seven minutes. Dive one great site in the morning; come back to shore for lunch; then take off in another direction in the afternoon or evening. Popular sites near Ambergris include Cypress Tunnels at Hol Chan, Tacklebox, Tres Cocos, and Victoria Tunnels.

Scuba instruction regularly takes place at Hol Chan (Maya for “little channel”) because of its shallow waters and controlled conditions. Excursions to the outer cayses — easily arranged — include the celebrated Blue Hole, Lighthouse Reef Atoll (check out the Aquarium of Long Caye), and Turneffe Islands Atoll. Licensed dive

professionals on the caye include Ambergris Divers Belize, Amigos del Mar, Aqua Dives, Blue Hole Dive Center, Bottom Time Divers, and Karibbean Water Sports. They help with dive and snorkel trips, lessons, and underwater video. Many resorts also have dive operators and make attractive packages.

Marine enthusiasts who prefer to stay dry can witness the panoramic undersea show through a glass-bottom boat ride. Or, catch a sunset cruise aboard Belize Water Sports' 65-foot catamaran *Lady Sharon*, a way to see the island while partying the night away to live entertainment — also available for charters and trips to Turneffe Islands Atoll.

Try renting a parasail, hobie cat, sailboat, windsurfer, or jet ski. Or, take a sailing excursion to nearby Caye Caulker for the day. Boats leave in the morning, stop for some snorkeling along the way, and return in the afternoon. Water taxis also allow quick, easy day trips to Caye Caulker.

By chartering a boat, adventurers can explore coasts and cayes on their own schedules. Optional captains, crews, and provisions can be arranged easily. TMM Bareboat Vacations equips argonauts with fully equipped well-maintained catamarans. Its fleet of mostly sailing vessels includes a muscular new 43-foot powercat.

Ambergris Caye, a renowned fishing destination, tests the luck and skill of amateurs, professionals, adults, and children. Few come home empty-handed. Boats and guides queue along the seafront, profering full- and half-day charters. Boats range from small skiffs to well-appointed yachts. Some fly fish the flats; others ply the reefs. They charge around US\$175 for a half day or \$225 for a full day. Deep-sea adventures include refreshments and equipment around US\$375 for a half day or \$600 for a full day, lunch included.

Things to see and do include mainland tours — great for the family and easy to arrange from Ambergris Caye. Cruise the New River to the ruins at Lamanai. Trek to the site of Altun Ha. Costs range from US\$75 to \$135. Another popular inland tour combines leisurely cave tubing and the charming Belize Zoo for US\$150. These tours return to the caye in time for dinner. Local resorts and tour companies like Amigo Travel, Karibbean Water Sports, Searious Adventures, and Tanisha Eco Tours will make arrangements.

About 90 minutes north of San Pedro, Boca Bacalar Chico National Park and Marine Reserve protects mangroves, manatees, turtles, crocodiles, birds, and several

awesome snorkeling sites. Park entrance is US\$2.50 and tours start at \$75. Bird Caye is another good place to see colorful and exotic birds.

Have some fun scouting Ambergris Caye on a golf cart or bicycle. Plenty of places rent them. Moncho's, near the airstrip, maintains reliable carts. Renters must be 18 and carry a valid driver's license. Remember Front Street goes north; Middle Street goes south; and Back Street goes both ways. Front Street goes pedestrian on weekends and holidays, closed to cars, carts, and bicycles from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and certain holidays. Lock golf carts when unattended, especially at night.

While activities seem endless, so are ways to goof off. Lounge in a hammock stretched between some palm trees; sample a cool drink at a seaside bar; or read a good book while lying on the beach.

SHOPPING

Pick up T-shirts, swimwear, hats, sunglasses, carvings, pottery, *jippi jappa* baskets, and hammocks at gift shops along Front and Middle streets. Many will ship goodies. Disposable underwater cameras and laminated charts of the fishes make practical purchases for underwater trips. Unique Belizean-made products include Mayan Secrets' great-smelling soaps, lotions, and oils, derived from the rainforest.

New stores include Emerald Mine, on Barrier Reef Drive, which markets Colombian emeralds in 18k gold; Ambergris Jade & Maya History Museum, on Barrier Reef Drive, displays Maya flint, jade, and pottery, and sells lovely jade jewelry; and Orange Gallery, with slate carvings and other Belizean crafts, on Coconut Drive south of town. Weekend nights, Front Street closes to traffic and vendors set up stands to pitch souvenirs, jewelry, and a variety of local edibles.

DINING

Ambergris Caye may lavish the widest variety, most creative, trendiest dining in all Belize. Gourmands enjoy fresh seafood — emphasis on fresh — at restaurants everywhere, with seasonal lobster at the top of a culinary hit parade. Ceviche, in which citric juice does the cooking, comes as diced lobster, shrimp, or conch, mixed in a salsa of onions, peppers, oil, and spices. Great local beers include Belikin, Belikin Light, and Belikin Stout.

Besides Belizean, plenty of international cuisines — Brazilian, Chinese, French, Italian, Lebanese, Mexican, Thai, Spanish, even sushi — make for diverse dining.

Some resorts and bars even throw fun beach barbecues several times a week. Restaurants and watering holes line the shore and dot the interior from end to end.

The comfortable seaside Celi's Restaurant, at San Pedro Holiday Hotel, offers Belizean cuisine and lobster, stone crabs, and Celi's own special baked fish with cheese. Rice and beans with pork chops makes a hearty lunch. Celi's Deli, across the street, dishes up johnny cakes with cheese, chicken enchiladas, garnaches, and tempting desserts.

Blue Water Grill, behind SunBreeze Hotel, buzzes every night for good reason: island cuisine with an imaginative twist. The menu includes Caribbean-style snook with a spicy black bean sauce, wood-fired pizzas, even sushi. Alfresco dining overlooks the sea from a covered deck. Down the beach a few paces at Ramon's Village, delightful Maya decor greets guests in the dining room, and the beautiful blue Caribbean accompanies them on the veranda.

On Middle Street, Elvi's Kitchen, among the most popular restaurants, complements the food with real tropical ambience, complete with sand floor and large tree in the center of the dining room. Try the key lime pie. Nearby, Caramba, another popular spot, offers comfortable decor, soft lighting, and many great local dishes. Instead of bread, waiters start each meal with bowl of tangy ceviche and a plate of tortilla chips.

At Banyan Bay just south of town, dine seaside with a breeze at the romantic alfresco Rico's Bar & Grill, which tantalizes with Belizean, Mexican, and international lobster and steaks. Try the tortilla soup, lobster burritos, or snook with mustard sauce. Creative dishes by the prize-winning chef at Palmilla Restaurant, at Victoria House south of town, include chimichurri marinated fish filet with orange poblano relish and mashed plantains. Don't miss the molten chocolate dessert. Dine leisurely under the stars, or in air-conditioned comfort amid the most tasteful decor.

On the lagoon side south of town, Casa Picasso, in a Caribbean yellow and blue motif, uses imagination for its pasta, tapas, and starters, including crabmeat marinated with cilantro, chili peppers, and vinaigrette, served over papaya. The bar has been expanded to make more room for sipping the good martinis.

Venture north across the Split to find some of the best and most secluded restaurants. From San Pedro, the water taxi ride adds considerable romance to the experience. The restaurants routinely arrange such transportation; just call.

Capricorn, an intimate dining experience and resort, specializes in seafood, crepes, filet mignon, and pasta entrées. Also open for lunch, the stewed chicken and rice and beans packs a real kick. Pat your brow and take a swig. At Captain Morgan's Buena Vista Restaurant, diners enjoy special presentations such as Belizean Cultural Night, while dining by the sea. Join the in crowd at several trendy new restaurants. Rojo Lounge at Azul Resort accents the tropical, both drinks and food. After a frozen Mojito, sample the plantain-crusting shrimp with papaya-chili sauce. Luna, at Journey's End Resort, serves "palm tree cuisine," a fusion of Central American and Caribbean delicacies. Also at Journey's End, Tamarind Restaurant specializes in fresh seafood and international selections. Other good north-end eateries include Rendezvous, Portifino, and Mambo Café at Mata Chica Resort.

For condo dwellers and others with refrigerators, several supermarkets offer fresh vegetables, fish, and meats. Fine wines and gourmet cheeses can be found at Wine deVine. At several internet cafes, go online for US\$7.50 per hour and get an espresso fix at the same time.

After dinner, take a romantic walk on the beach, swing in a hammock, or dance the night away at the Jaguar's Temple or Barefoot Iguana clubs. Check out Fido's Courtyard, a lively beach bar where anybody who is anybody hangs out. Enjoy some edgy live music at the Tacklebox, out on a breezy pier.

RESORTS & ACCOMMODATIONS

Advertised accommodations are listed here. While this index does not include all properties, more appear in the Belize Tourism Board directory (pages 00-00) and the Belize Tourism Industry Association directory (pages 000-000).

[2,967 words main text, was 3,606 words]

Azul Resort. 226-4012, info@azulbelize.com, www.azulbelize.com. Two private luxury 3,000-square-foot villas on 400 feet of beachfront. A marriage of modern conveniences and style with tropical warmth, Azul combines the best of fine villa living with amenities of a world-class resort. Custom furniture of bamboo and sensuous hardwoods mingle with Viking kitchens, plasma displays, and wireless Macs. Home to Rojo Lounge, serving tropical cuisine.

Banyan Bay. 866-466-2179, 226-3739, banyanbay@btl.net, www.banyanbay.com. 42 luxury suites in a tropical hotel on the beach. Suites have two bedrooms, two baths, Jacuzzis, kitchens, dining/living rooms, AC, cable TV, and phones. Enjoy Rico's Bar & Grill, dive shop, resort-size pool, tours, and excursions. Major credit cards, traveler's checks accepted.

Blue Reef Island Resort. 866-825-8500, 226-4674, www.blureefresort.com. Grand Mediterranean residences featuring luxurious one- and two-bedroom beachfront units. Lavish and stylish with an Old World feel, this secluded retreat of gracious living awaits eight miles north of San Pedro Airport. Experience world-class dining by visiting chefs; restaurants nearby. Diving, fishing, adventure tours, birding, kayaking, and golf.

Blue Tang Inn. 866-337-8203, 226-2326, info@bluetanginn.com, www.bluetanginn.com. 14 suites. Inviting beachfront inn north of downtown San Pedro, each suite includes kitchen and AC. Relaxing pool, third-floor sundeck with scenic views of the reef, friendly staff eager to arrange diving, snorkeling, fishing, kayaking, and inland tours. Guest computer, wireless internet, and TV upon request.

Capricorn Resort. 226-2809, capricorn@btl.net, www.capicornresort.net. Beachfront AC cabanas in the north end with specialty restaurant, outside dining, gourmet food, bar, and private dock. Timeless ambience, impeccable service, and new beachfront palapas. Diving, snorkeling, fishing, and tours.

Captain Morgan's Retreat. 888-653-9090, 226-2207, contact@captainmorgans.com, www.captainmorgans.com. 13 thatched *casitas* and 14 delightful villas on 1,200 feet of sandy beach, three miles north of San Pedro, 10 minutes by boat. A range of AC accommodations with vibrant colors and spectacular views of the Caribbean. Buena Vista Restaurant, two bars (including swim-up), two swimming pools, spa, and convenience store. Daily dive, snorkeling, and Maya ruin trips.

Caribe Island Resort. 866-578-6386, 226-4091, frontdesk@circondos.com, www.circondos.com. 16 units south of San Pedro. Quiet and spacious. One, two, or three bedrooms with AC, cable TV, telephone, and kitchen. Chef, swimming pool, beach bar, wedding coordinator, and babysitting on site. Free shuttle service to town. Free bicycles and volleyball. Tours arranged.

Cayo Espanto. 888-666-4282, 226-2473, info@aprivateisland.com, www.aprivateisland.com. 4 premium seafront villas and two bungalows, all on a four-acre private island. For the discriminating few who demand the best in life. Villas have a private seafront infinity pool, dock, alfresco shower, AC, and ceiling fans. Personal butler. Gourmet cuisine by chefs with wide repertoire of classic and modern styles. Pedal boats, kayaks, and sailboats. Fishing, diving, snorkeling, golf, and ruin tours.

Changes in Latitude. 800-631-9834, 226-2986, latitudesbelize@yahoo.com, www.ambergriscaye.com/latitudes. 6 rooms with private baths. San Pedro's only bed and breakfast, 150 feet from the Caribbean and a 10-minute walk south of town, five rooms have a double bed and one has two singles. AC, ceiling fans, full breakfast daily. Swimming, snorkeling, and sunning. Adventures arranged.

El Pescador Resorts. 800-242-2017, 226-2398, alisa@elpescador.com, www.elpescador.com. 12-room lodge, eight three-bedroom villas, and one suite. Colonial-style seaside fishing lodge at Bahia del Punta, specializing in light tackle, salt water, and fly fishing. Ocean-view rooms and villas have private baths, AC, and fans. Luxurious villas, great for families, offer laundry rooms and full kitchens. Swimming pool, family-style restaurant, and fly shop. Complimentary kayaks and bicycles. Tours arranged for fishing, diving, snorkeling, caves, Maya sites. Fishing and scuba instructors.

Journey's End. 800-460-5665, 226-2173, info@journeysendresort.com, www.journeysendresort.com. 48 guest accommodations including cabanas, rooms, suites, and villa, on 50 acres of beachfront. AC, mini-refrigerators, coffee makers, clock-radios, and hair dryers. Olympic-size swimming pool, lighted tennis court, five-star PADI dive shop, and training facilities. Two restaurants (including Luna) and bar/grill. Beach, fishing, snorkeling, swimming, and tours. Summer family, diving, fishing packages.

Mata Rocks Resort. 888-628-2757, 226-2336, matarocks@btl.net, www.matarocks.com. 17 AC rooms and junior suites. Feel welcome at this intimate oasis, just steps from the Caribbean, including cable TV, coffee makers, hair dryers, freshwater swimming pool, continental breakfast, and bikes. Dig your toes into sandy beaches. Enjoy a tropical drink at Squirrel's Nest bar. Take a leisurely walk to restaurants, shopping, and nightlife. Diving, snorkeling, and mainland trips.

Mayan Princess. 800-850-4101, 226-2778, mayanprin@btl.net, www.mayanprincesshotel.com. 23 rooms. Caribbean-style hotel with luxury suite and oceanfront rooms on the beach, AC, cable TV, phone, verandah, and kitchens equipped with microwave, stove, and refrigerator. Diving, snorkeling, fishing, and inland tours. Packages include diving with Amigos del Mar, Tropic Air transfer from international airport, and local taxi: Nov. 15 to April 30 from US\$847.

Ramon's Village Resort. 800-MAGIC15, 226-2071, info@ramons.com, www.ramons.com. 61 rooms, refurbished with AC, in palm-thatch cabanas on the beach, surrounded by lush tropical landscaping. Another 10 cute British-colonial cottages across the road. Newly remodeled Mayan restaurant and open-air bar. Room service. New free-form freshwater pool, dive boat, and dive shop. Full-service resort for divers, fishermen, honeymooners, couples, and families. Weddings arranged.

San Pedro Holiday Hotel. 226-2014, holiday@btl.net, www.sanpedroholiday.com. 17 rooms. Full-service beachfront resort in the center of town, overlooking the famous barrier reef. AC, refrigerator, and fans. Celi's Restaurant serves the best Belizean cuisine. Deli, sports bar, dive shop, and gift shop. Beach, boating, fishing, snorkeling, swimming, windsurfing, glass-bottom boat, and Maya ruins tours.

Spindrift Resort Hotel. 226-2174, spindrift@btl.net, www.ambergriscaye.com/spindrift. 24 rooms. Modern three-story beachfront hotel in the center of town. Large AC rooms with balcony overlooking the barrier reef. Four apartments with amenities of home, plus economy rooms with fan. Caliente Restaurant offers Mexican cuisine. Pier Lounge offers a variety of Belizean beverages. Fun "chicken drop" game on Wednesdays. Pier with dive shop.

SunBreeze Hotel. 800-688-0191, 226-2191, destination@sunbreeze.net, www.sunbreeze.net. 42 rooms, including 21 deluxe, 13 standard, and five premium. Cable TV, AC, phone, private bath. Freshwater pool, restaurant, and bar. Gift shop, dive shop, massage studio, and conference room. Golf cart and bicycle rentals. Boating, fishing, snorkeling, swimming, glass-bottom boat, birding, cycling, horseback riding, and Maya ruins tours. Variety of packages available.

Sueno del Mar. 226-4001, info@dreambelize.com, www.dreambelize.com. 72 units. Private residential beachside resort on 10 acres, offering one- and two-bedroom villas, views of the Caribbean (500 yards from the barrier reef), 12 miles from Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Full-service clubhouse with restaurant, lounge, dive shop, and meeting space. Palapa beach bar/grill, freshwater swimming pools, 300-foot pier, and fractional and resort memberships. Available from two months to year-round.

Victoria House. 800-247-5159, 226-2067, info@victoria-house.com, www.victoria-house.com. 35 rooms. Luxurious beachfront resort south of San Pedro, with two-, three-, and five-bedroom villas, thatch-roof *casitas*, and colonial-style plantation rooms. Admiral Nelson's beachfront bar and Restaurant Palmilla. Beautifully manicured grounds, two swimming pools, PADI dive shop and instructor, gift shop, and complimentary bicycles. Diving, snorkeling, fishing, inland excursions, kayaking, windsurfing, parasailing, and day sailing. Full-service on-site wedding coordinator and honeymoon suites.

White Sands Cove. 888-362-2683, 226-3528, whitesandscope@yahoo.com, www.whitesandcove.com. First resort north of the Split, quiet and secluded. Luxurious one- and two- bedroom beachfront condominiums featuring kitchens, AC, ceiling fans, 60-channel satellite TV, and daily maid service. Swimming pool and barbecue to cook your catch. Tour desk offering over 25 island and mainland tours and excursions.

[1,173 words listings, was 1,201 words]