

The next two days were spent canoeing through ancient Mayan caves, zip lining, and enjoying lots of fresh vegetables. Gaia's on-site farm gives you easy access to the freshest produce, all used in their dishes and collected daily.

Did I feel spoiled? Yes. Especially as my driver pulled up to collect me and take me shopping in San Ignacio. He told me there are not many specialty shops in Belize but that he knew a tiny place that sold Mayan essential oils. It's all about the small details. We continued onto San Ignacio's charming landing strip, where I would be jumping on a plane to San Pedro and then a boat to Ambergris Caye, where the stunning Matachica was waiting for me.

**Matachica** resort and spa is situated on the heart of Ambergris Caye, easily accessible by boat. From the distance you can spot the clutch of bright palapas and cabanas scattered in the sand. There, I was also greeted with a cocktail as the friendly staff took my luggage over to my room, turned on the AC, and lit up incense. A colorful hammock outside my door was luring me toward my Zen retreat, yet the sound of crashing waves and the daybeds on the pier lured me to a perfect day in paradise and a tan.



Looking at my surroundings was inspiring and very romantic—maybe too romantic for someone traveling alone. I then decided to go snorkeling at Hol Chan, where romance was limited to a pair of nearly extinct dancing fish.

Returning to my Zen cabana at sunset via speedboat made me feel like life was being very kind to me, and as a result I decided to celebrate and join the honeymooners at the bar.

Matachica's bartenders are local island boys, keen to give you the best recommendations—recommendations so good that I ended up getting on another boat to go try street Salvadorian pupusas. It was all very *unbelizable*. I returned to my room that night more grateful than usual and with so much new knowledge that I couldn't sleep. The rose petals in my bed were also too cute to be moved, so I went out to my hammock and slept under the moonlight.

*Text by Jade Moyano*