

[00:00:03.140] - Speaker 1

Shane, thanks again for checking in from Belize. It's summertime down there in beautiful Belize. What does that mean for you, and what does that mean for Belize in general?

[00:00:19.300] - Speaker 2

It means a couple of things. First of all, it's what we would call the slow season here from a tourist point of view. So there's fewer people around, which is nice from the personal side, meaning there's fewer people around. But now it's great from the owner tourist business side because that means there's fewer people around.

[00:00:40.730] - Speaker 1

Right. A mixed blessing.

[00:00:42.880] - Speaker 2

Yes, it is. But probably the biggest thing is it is hot. And contrary to popular beliefs, you would think rainy season would be the cooler season of the year, but it actually is not here in Belize. So when we hit kind of that June through November hurricane, it's also hurricane season, but it's also rainy season in Belize. And for us, rain is like, we'll get five or 10 minutes of rain, and then we'll get sunshine, which just means humidity. Right. Because it's like dumps an inch of rain in five minutes, and then the sun comes out and sucks it all back up in the atmosphere. And then we just, it's humid. So an 89 degree temperature feels like 105 when you add in the humidity. And so the good thing is, where we're at in Placencia, we normally have sea breeze, which helps kind of keep it a little bit cooler. But yeah, fewer people, a lot more humidity. It's like if you're looking to come down here, this is the time to come, because the accommodations, if you contact the place you're going to stay directly, they might even give you a discount just because they're looking for people to come stay with them.

[00:01:55.540] - Speaker 2

Same thing with tours. You might even get tours a little bit cheaper this time of year just because they're looking to pay their bills.

[00:02:01.390] - Speaker 1

Right. They need bodies. And of course, it's lobster season, right?

[00:02:07.000] - Speaker 2

Oh, yeah. It opens July 1 with, I would say fanfare, but there really isn't much. Everyone just knows. So everyone runs to their favorite spot to get their lobster, which for me is at the Barefoot Beach Bar here in Placencia. They have a lobster grilled cheese that I think is just the best invention ever.

[00:02:30.030] - Speaker 1

Well, explain that. What's lobster grilled? Like a grilled cheese sandwich?

[00:02:34.750] - Speaker 2

Yeah. So it's two thick cut pieces of bread with cheese and lobster melted together between the pieces of bread. I mean, it's super simple, but so good.

[00:02:48.900] - Speaker 1

Sounds wonderful, yeah.

[00:02:50.760] - Speaker 2

And then this weekend lobster fest starts. So we have, I guess, a three night, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night...it goes for three days, let's just put it that way, of celebrating lobster season opening here in Placencia. They also do one on Caye Caulker, and they also do one in San Pedro every year as well. So it's another great reason to come down here in the summer if you want to attend lobster fest, which is lots of eating, lots of drinking, and lots of music going on 'til early morning hours.

[00:03:23.940] - Speaker 1

And all of that with the ocean right there, in case you get overheated, you can jump in and cool off.

[00:03:30.260] - Speaker 2

Yeah, exactly.

[00:03:31.490] - Speaker 1

Sounds great. I noticed in the notes that you provided for our talk today that there's a healthcare update, and this applies to Placencia where you are, right?

[00:03:41.880] - Speaker 2

Yeah, and a little bit wider than us. And so I think Belize is pretty well-known in healthcare. We don't get a very good grade when it comes to healthcare here. What I always tell people is if you need something done, your best, more complicated procedure maybe is the best way to put it, your best bet is going to be

there Mexico, Guatemala, or go back to where you came from to get it done. But I will say this, though, the government has been making attempts and strides towards improving the healthcare here in Belize. And one of the things that they've done is they started putting down what they call polyclinics in larger population areas. And these aren't quite hospitals. They don't have everything a hospital would have, but have kind of the base services that you might need whether you're visiting or living in the area. And so they started what was supposed to be done by the end of 2022, the Placencia Polyclinic. They ran a little bit of engineering issue with the building, had to go back and fix that. But now there's actually a building there. You can kind of see the shape of it, see what they're doing.

[00:04:53.360] - Speaker 2

So we're pretty excited because that'll give us more extended services. They're even have like a trauma room in there. There's going to be an ambulance attached to it, things that we haven't really had in Placencia. And so it's great to see that the current government is kind of investing in and trying to move the healthcare part portion of Belize forward, which is yeah, I'm super excited about that.

[00:05:17.350] - Speaker 1

Very cool. And I don't know if you guys dive at all or not, but Susan and I used to dive. Is there a barometric chamber anywhere near Placencia now, or are there plants?

[00:05:28.130] - Speaker 2

Not that I'm aware of.

[00:05:41.520] - Speaker 2

And I think what's held it back is having the place to put it. I think maybe with the polyclinic there now, that might be something that if we raised the funds for it and brought it in, that we'd have a place to put it so that could be operated. I think the closest one is in San Pedro right now.

[00:06:00.010] - Speaker 1

San Pedro. That's what I thought. So you've got summer, you've got lobster, you've got a polyclinic going up, and it's easier now to get your stuff brought in from Amazon than before, which is in everybody's top 10 list.

[00:06:18.060] - Speaker 2

Yeah, it's funny because every time I talk to people who don't live in an expat kind of scenario like we do, they're like, how do you get stuff? And I'm like, Amazon. They're like, really? You have two options. Amazon can ship to Belize if you just put your address in. There's lots of issues in figuring that out. Customs is going to be more expensive. Shipping is going to be more expensive. It's probably not going

to come to your door like you're accustomed to. And so there's been a crop of services that have popped up over the last several years to kind of bridge that gap. And one of the better ones I found is a company called Belizean Queen. So essentially, you order your stuff from Amazon and you ship it to their address in Houston. And talking to them every day, they get pallets of stuff from Amazon that are being brought into them on behalf of somebody in Belize somewhere. Then about every two weeks, they combine everything, which is what's great about their service, is they take all the air out of the Amazon boxes and they consolidate it down into the smallest possible box that they can put everything in.

[00:07:25.760] - Speaker 2

Then they put everyone's orders into a shipping container and send it to Belize. And so they take care of the query and the customs, the shipping and everything. And you're sharing the cost of all this with everybody in the box. And then when it gets here, they separate it all back out, put it on a truck, and actually deliver it to your house or wherever you tell them to bring it. Kind of door to door. Well, Amazon to door service, I guess, like you'd be used to. It takes anywhere between two and four weeks before you get your stuff.

[00:07:57.960] - Speaker 1

But it does get there.

[00:07:58.810] - Speaker 2

We've gotten into, oh yeah, you just get into a routine of, like, I need something from Amazon, I just go order it. And then it will just show up eventually. So we call it Christmas. About every two weeks on a Friday or Saturday, they show up with my box and it's like, oh, it's Amazon Christmas Day. And so it's been really good and I've worked it out now I've done, I think, ten or twelve shipments with them. They've not lost anything yet. Knock on wood. And it cost me, on average, just under 15%. So if I buy an item on Amazon for \$100, it cost me \$115. The extra \$15 is the shipping, the customs, the taxes, everything on top of it. That's a really good rate.

[00:08:45.420] - Speaker 1

That's all taken care of by the company that brings it down. You don't have to mess with any of that stuff.

[00:08:49.630] - Speaker 2

No, don't have to know anything about any of that.

[00:08:52.220] - Speaker 1

No brainer. Sounds great. Sounds great.

[00:08:56.540] - Speaker 2

It's a great thing. Yeah.

[00:08:57.950] - Speaker 1

You're paying with Belize dollars, which have always been pegged to the U.S. dollar, two for one. Has that ever changed?

[00:09:03.990] - Speaker 2

Not that I'm aware of, no. I mean, you buy from Amazon technically in U.S. dollars using your U.S. credit card, but still 15%. The big thing goes shopping from Amazon from here are you get choice. So if I want green rope, I can get green rope, not just white that the local store has and a little bit better quality of product because you have Amazon reviews. So that kind of helps, you know. Okay, this product is what I'm looking for. It's got good reviews here. You get one white rope, and you don't know who made it or if it's any good or if it fell off a truck somewhere. And so it just gives you more control over what product you're buying.

[00:09:54.720] - Speaker 1

Right. And because you don't have to worry about the exchange rate, you don't have to worry about things like Mexico is going through right now with I mean, the peso used to be such a great deal, and that's not really the case anymore if you're going to Mexico with dollars anymore, is it?

[00:10:12.420] - Speaker 2

Yeah, I mean, I was just there actually over the weekend. I want to say it was it's 17 pesos to the dollar.

[00:10:19.200] - Speaker 1

Yeah.

[00:10:20.440] - Speaker 2

I think traditionally it used to be a lot higher, right?

[00:10:21.750] - Speaker 1

Down from the mid 20s. Yeah.

[00:10:25.160] - Speaker 2

And so you've lost some of your buying power in Mexico from a U.S. dollar? Yeah, I think the fixed exchange rate here in Belize doesn't get the credit it should when thinking about places to move to as an expat. Just the fact that it's super simple. I can use my U.S. dollars just in transactions here. I don't have to exchange it to Belize dollars. And then the banks just started taking U.S. dollars. There's no exchange rate. So they used to hit you for quarter point or something like that every time you would exchange cash with them. Now they just take the cash and give you two for one on it. So it's even gotten easier than it was.

[00:11:08.350] - Speaker 1

Very cool. Shane, brilliant. Even though it's summer there, you're making me want to visit again. We always had a good time in Belize. Does it make any difference? I mean, you're running the business there in Placencia, and as you say, not having as many bodies is a mixed blessing. But if I called you up, like, tomorrow and said, "Hey, I'm coming down," can you give me a deal?

[00:11:34.620] - Speaker 2

I'd probably be able to find something for you for sure. Our place doesn't have anywhere to stay unless you want to put a tent on the beach, because we're just a day use space. But I know plenty of people that probably would be like, yeah, sure, we'll take him.

[00:11:51.460] - Speaker 1

Shane thanks, man. I appreciate it. Always good talking to you. And keep us posted on anything that happens there, and we'll catch up with you next time, okay?

[00:12:00.470] - Speaker 2

All right. Thanks, Dan.

[00:12:01.870] - Speaker 1

Thanks, man.