

Annual Holidays

January 1 - New Year's Day  
March 9 - Baron Bliss Day  
April 5 - Good Friday  
April 6 - Holy Saturday  
April 7 - Easter Sunday  
April 8 - Easter Monday  
May 1 - Labour Day  
May 24 - Commonwealth Day  
September 10 - St. George's Caye Day  
September 21 - Independence Day  
October 12 - Columbus Day  
November 19 - Garifuna Settlement Day  
December 25 - Christmas  
December 26 - Boxing Day

**JANUARY**

New Years Day - January 1 - Public and bank holiday.

**FEBRUARY**

Fiesta De Carnaval - Annual event held one week prior to Lent. Groups compete in comparsas (special dances). The event is held to flourish traditions in the area.

International Bill Fish Tournament - Sponsored by the Belize Game Fish Association. A prize of BZ\$50,000.00 is presented to the person who catches over 500 pounds!

San Pedro Carnaval - San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye. Carnival of comparsas competitions and slapstick fun with paint, flour, lipstick and powder used to tease passersby.

**MARCH**

Baron Bliss Day - March 9 - Celebration of Baron Bliss, a great benefactor of Belize. Harbour races are held in front of the Baron Bliss Lighthouse where he is buried. Horse and bicycle

races are also held.

## **APRIL**

Good Friday - April 5 - Public and bank Holiday - Special Catholic services are held this day which includes a procession carrying a cross through town.

Holy Saturday - April 6 - Public and bank holiday. The annual Cross-country bicycle race is held on this day. The course extends from Belize City to San Ignacio, Cayo District and back to Belize City, a total distance of 144 miles.

Easter Sunday - April 7 - Public and bank holiday.

Easter Monday - April 8 - Horse and bicycle races held in Belize City

San Jose Succotz Fiesta - Local fair celebrating the patron saint of the town. Marimba music, rides, food, entertainment.

## **MAY**

Labor Day - May 1 - Public and bank holiday.

Commonwealth Day - May 24 - Public and bank holiday celebrating the Queen of England's birthday.

Cashew Festival - Annual festival held in the Crooked Tree Village. This celebration is in honor of the harvesting of the cashew fruit and seed. There is live punta music, cashew wine, freshly roasted cashew seeds, food and folklore stories.

Cayo Expo - A miniature version of the Agriculture and Trade Show is held in San Ignacio.

Toledo Festival of Arts - Week-long festival in which school children depict various ethnic groups in the district through plays, music, dance, arts, and crafts.

Coconut Festival - Held in Caye Caulker, this festival includes coconut games and competitions, a parade with prizes for the best float, food and dancing.

### **JUNE**

Agriculture and Trade Show - Bi-annual show held in the nation's capital of Belmopan. Goods, wares, and products are showcased at this weekend long show to the Belizean people. Livestock show and trade also takes place the week prior and during this event.

Dia de San Pedro - Held in San Pedro the three day festival honours the patron saint of the town, St. Peter. During this time boats and fishermen are blessed. A jump-up is held with live music including a Marimba band.

### **JULY**

Benque Viejo del Carmen Fiesta - Local fair honoring the town's patron saint. This festival includes 9 days of prayer.

BETEX 96 (Belize Tourism Expo) - This will be Belize's first trade show. The theme will be "The Ecological Destination of the 21st Century."

### **AUGUST**

International Sea & Air Festival - San Pedro. Festival includes food, music, and dance from Belize, Mexico and neighboring countries.

Deer Dance Festival - Held in San Antonio (Toledo District) this week-long celebration includes

historical reenactments including hand made costumes, arts and crafts, food, music and dance.

### **SEPTEMBER**

St. George's Caye Day - September 10 - Public and bank holiday. Festival held in honor of the Battle of St. George's Caye where the Spanish were driven from the area for good in 1798. Street festivals are held nation wide which include food, live music, and a reenactment on the actual site.

Independence Day - September 21 - Public and bank holiday. Numerous cultural, religious, and sporting events are held from the beginning of September up to Independence Day including the Queen of the Bay and Miss Belize beauty pageants as well as the Festival Grand Market in Belize City.

On the night of the 20th a flag raising ceremony takes place at midnight to bring in the 21st. On the 21st a parade is held with local bands playing on the beds of trucks followed by people dancing, locally known as jump-up. After the parade a street festival takes place where the two main streets in Belize City are completely blocked off and live bands perform. There is traditional Belizean cuisine, music, dance and cultural displays.

Mexican National Day - Held in the northern towns of Orange Walk and Corozal because of their Mexican influence, the towns people cross over into Mexico and visit with family and friends across the border.

### **OCTOBER**

Columbus Day - October 12 - Public and bank holiday. Regatta and horse racing in Belize City.

Belikin Spectacular - Billfish tournament with spectacular prizes. Sponsored by the Belize Game Fish Association.

Hike & Bike for the Rain Forest - A two-day cross-country run and mountain bike race. Local and international athletes compete throughout the Cayo area to benefit the rain forest.

Pan American Day - Orange Walk and Corozal. A celebration of Mestizo culture with fiestas and beauty pageants.

Tourism Week - Activities to promote tourism such as a raffle drawing for a local to win a vacation to tour Belize.

## **NOVEMBER**

Garifuna Settlement Day - November 19 - Public and bank holiday. Festival to mark the arrival of the first Garifuna to Belize in 1832. Most activities take place in the southern region, mainly Dangriga which has the largest population of Garifuna people in Belize. There is traditional Garifuna and Belizean food, live punta music, games, and Jonkunu Dancers.

Stann Creek Agricultural Fair - Showcase of locally grown fruits and vegetables including a live stock show.

## **DECEMBER**

Christmas Day - December 25 - Public and bank holiday

Boxing Day - December 26 - Taken from the British, this holiday was originally a British custom. There are dances and horse races.