

Arrival and Departure Requirements

A passport is required with a return ticket. No visa is required from the U.S., U.K., or Canada. Visitors are allowed a one month stay without an extension from the Belize Immigration Department. Any questions can be answered by your local Belizean consulate or embassy. All visitors must pay a departure tax of US\$10.00, a US\$1.25 security tax, and a tourism tax of US\$3.75. This is due when checking in for your departure flight. Amounts of tax are subject to change. Check with your travel agent or airline to find out which taxes are included in the cost of your ticket.

Borders

Belize is bounded by Mexico to the north and Guatemala on the west and south. The beautiful Caribbean Sea lies to the east. Belize boasts the Barrier Reef which is the longest and largest continuous living coral reef in this hemisphere, 185 miles. Belize's land area is 8,867 square miles.

Climate

The climate is sub-tropical with an average temperature of 80 degrees Fahrenheit. The rainy season begins about June and ends in August.

Communications

Direct dial telephone service is available. 800 numbers are not accessible. Facsimilies, telex, television, cable, radio, and Western Union services are available.

Currency

The Belize Dollar is the local currency. One U.S. dollar is worth two Belize dollars (2 to 1). U.S. dollars are accepted as well as credit cards and traveller's checks. When in doubt, just ask.

Customs

U.S. residents returning to the States are permitted a US \$400 duty-free tax exemption. Citizens 21 years or older may take back one quart of alcohol duty-free. You are NOT allowed to take back: pre-Columbian articles, fish, coral, or shells. These items, if found, will be confiscated and you may be prosecuted. Firearms are not permitted to be taken into or out of Belize.

Dress

As Belize has a tropical climate, lightweight clothing is best. When travelling during the rainy season (June - August) a light jacket, long sleeved shirt and long pants may be needed for cooler days. It is advisable to bring along sun screen and insect repellent; they will come in handy.

Electricity

110 volts A.C. 60Hz

Emergency Numbers

911 can be used to contact the local Police Department only. Dial 90 to contact the Fire Department or ambulance service.

Government

Belize is an independent country with a democratically elected government. Belize is a member of the British Commonwealth, the United Nations, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Industries

Belize's main industries are fisheries (including lobster and shrimp), sugar, citrus and bananas. Belize also produces tobacco for local use.

Language

The official language of Belize is English, although Spanish is also found especially in the northern and western districts. An English Creole dialect is spoken most commonly throughout the country.

Marriage Requirements

One must reside in Belize for three days prior to applying for a minister's license to marry. A one day prior notice is needed. Proof of citizenship via certified and notarized birth certificate which includes father's name; if applicable, proof of divorce via original notarized decree/certificate; or for widow or widower, a copy of death certificate. No blood test is required. Parents consent is not necessary if over the age of 18.

Medical Facilities

Each district has its own clinic with the main hospital being the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital in Belize City. There is also private medical care available in Belize City through independent private doctors and private medical groups. Phone listings for all clinics and hospital can be found in the local telephone directory. **Population**

There are approximately 210,000 people living in Belize. The population is comprised of Maya, European, East Indian, Creole (African-European), Mestizo (Spanish-Indian) and Garifuna (African-Indian). **Ports Of Entry**

Aircraft - All planes, private or commercial must be cleared through Philip Goldson International Airport in Belize City.

Boats - All boats, private or commercial, may enter Belize in the following areas: Belize City, Punta Gorda, Big Creek, San Pedro, Dangriga

There is not a Customs Department in San Pedro, therefore the owner of the craft must pay the air fare from Belize City to San Pedro for a customs officer to perform all immigration duties. The police officer who performs the immigration duties will contact the Customs Department. For additional information call VHF channel 16. **Postal Rates (BZ\$)**

To the U.S. - \$0.60 for letters & \$0.30 for postcards

To Europe - \$0.75 for letters & \$0.40 for postcards **Religion**

Most religious denominations are present in Belize including Roman Catholic, Muslim, Protestant, Methodists, Anglican, Jehovah's Witness, and Hinduism to name a few. All churches are open to the public for worship. **Taxes**

There is a 7% hotel tax which goes to the government of Belize. **Tipping**

Tipping is optional. A standard 15% gratuity is acceptable. **Time Zone**

Belize observes Central Standard Time. It does not observe daylight-savings. **Water**

Tap water is potable throughout the mainland. Bottled water should be used for drinking when at the cays. When in doubt bottled water is best.