
Belize Culture - Maya, Creole, Garifuna, Mestizo



For generations, the English-speaking people of Belize have been committed to preserving the country's unique atmosphere and charm, while welcoming visitors with open arms as if they had lived here all their lives. One of the most endearing aspects of the Belizean people is their ability to achieve a very real and intimate connection with visitors from any country and every walk of life. The warm and friendly welcome you'll receive in Belize combined with the breathtaking adventures you'll experience will stir your soul, expand your mind and forever change your life. More than a vacation, Belize is a state of being. It is a place where your senses come alive and you find yourself not just living, but savoring every moment.

The Belizean people are comprised of a harmonious combination of Maya, Mestizo, Creole, Garifuna, East Indian, Mennonite, Arab and Chinese, as well as a number of European, American and other expatriates, a combination which has resulted in one of the happiest and most peaceful countries in the region and a widespread reputation as one of the friendliest tourist destinations in the world!

English remains the official language in Belize, but the most diverse language in Belize is Kriol (Belizean Creole), with other cultural languages spoken such as Garifuna, Mandarin, Spanish and Maya dialects of Kekchi, Mopan and Yucatec. Click [here](#) for more information about the [Maya of Belize](#)

, [history and culture](#)

Belize Maya Archeological Sites

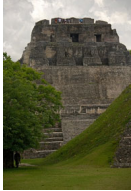
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Lubaantun, Place of Fallen Stones

The unique temples of Lubaantun were built entirely without the aid of mortar— each stone carefully measured and cut to fit the adjoining one. Situated above a tributary to the Columbia River, Lubaantun lies near the Maya village of San Pedro Columbia in the Toledo District, 13

miles from Punta Gorda Town. Consisting of fourteen major structures, grouped around five main plazas, Lubaantun was built in the Late Classic period and is the largest ceremonial center in southern Belize.

Nim Li Punit, Big Hat



Nim Li Punit inherited its name from a carving on the longest of the site's twenty–six stelae (an upright stone or slab with an inscribed or sculptured surface). Situated near the village of Indian Creek in the Toledo district, this site is well known for the number of stelae discovered here. The longest stela is carved with a figure wearing a large headdress and at a length of some 30 feet is the longest discovered in Belize and one of the tallest in the Maya world.

Xunantunich, Maiden of the Rock

Xunantunich sits atop a hill overlooking the Mopan River and the Cayo District. Xunantunich was a major ceremonial site, built on a natural limestone ridge during the Classic Period. The site is composed of six major plazas with more than twenty–five temples and palaces. "El Castillo" (the Castle), the largest pyramid at 130 feet above the plaza, has such carved friezes on the east and west sides. The frieze on the east has been preserved and covered with a fiberglass replica of the central mask representing the sun god flanked by the moon, Venus, and different days. On a clear day you can also see across into nearby Guatemala, and over towards Caracol in the Mountain Pine Ridge Reserve.

Garifuna

Every year on November 19, Garifuna Settlement day is observed which marks the arrival of the Garifuna people in Belizean territory in 1802. The holiday was created by Thomas Vincent Ramos, a Belizean civil rights activist and is celebrated for a whole week with major festivities that include parades, live music, drumming, dancing, prayers and pageantry in Garifuna communities.

Here are 6 things to know about the Garifuna people of Belize:



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