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

Available for Day–Tours from Chabil Mar - Can include cave swimming expeditions on the same day! Contact Us

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**

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:

1) In 2001, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the Garifuna language, music and dance as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity. This designation means
important culture that should be preserved, promoted and celebrated.

that it is an

in the Lesser Antilles and were

According to Historians, the Garifuna resisted British and French colonialism

2) defeated by the British in 1796. Because of a violent rebellion on St Vincent, the British moved 5000 Garifuna across
the Caribbean to the Bay Islands off the north of Honduras. From there, they migrated to the Caribbean coasts of Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Belize. By 1802 about 150 Garifuna had settled in Stann Creek (present day Dangriga) area and were engaged in fishing and farming.

3) The Garifuna are resilient people who have survived many years of extreme hardships and are the only black
people in the
Americas to have preserved their native Afro-Caribbean culture due to the fact that their ancestors were never slaves. The Garifuna’s deep sense of kinship and participation in community cultural activities have provided them with a sense of solidarity and cultural identity during times of turmoil.
4) The religion of the Garifuna consists of a mix of Catholicism, African and Indian beliefs. They believe that the departed ancestors mediate between the individual and external world and if a person behaves and performs well, then he will have good fortune. If not, then the harmony that exists in relationships with others and through music, the external world will be disrupted leading to misfortune and illness. Their spiritualism is expressed
dancing and other art forms.

5) The Garifuna foods consist of fish, chicken, cassava, bananas and plantains. One of the staples of the diet is cassava. Cassava is made into bread, a drink, a pudding and even a wine! The cassava bread is served with most meals. The process of making the bread is very labor intensive and takes several days.
Hudut is a very common traditional meal. Hudut consists of fish cooked in a coconut broth (called sere) and served with mashed plantains or yams. Dharasa is the Garifuna version of a tamale made with green bananas. It can be made either sweet or sour. The foods are very labor intensive and used to be cooked over an open fire hearth. Today, stoves save time, but some families still prefer the taste of the fire hearth.
6) The Garifuna flag consists of three horizontal strips of black, white and yellow, in that order, starting from the top.

The flag has been accepted internationally as the flag of the Garifuna Nation and the colors have been used in forums where Garifuna people assert their Garifuna identity.

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