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# Chapter 1

## 26

### 1.1 26.guide

Texified version of data for Belize.

Texified using wfact from

Gerhard Leibrock  
Neuhäuselerstr. 12  
D-66459 Kirkel  
Germany

Tel.: 06849 / 6134  
INTERNET: leibrock@fsinfo.cs.uni-sb.de  
fach5@cipsol.cs.uni-sb.de

Project Gutenberg

P. O. Box 2782

Champaign, IL 61825

When all other email fails try our Michael S. Hart, Executive Director:

hart@vmd.cso.uiuc.edu (internet)    hart@uiucvmd (bitnet)

We would prefer to send you this information by email (Internet, Bitnet, Compuserve, ATTMAIL or MCImail).

Belize

### 1.2 26.guide/Belize

Belize  
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Geography (Belize)  
 People (Belize)  
 Government (Belize)  
 Government (Belize 2. usage)  
 Economy (Belize)  
 Economy (Belize 2. usage)  
 Communications (Belize)  
 Defense Forces (Belize)

### 1.3 26.guide/Geography (Belize)

Geography (Belize)

=====

Location:

Central America, bordering the Caribbean Sea between Guatemala and Mexico

Map references:

Central America and the Caribbean, North America, Standard Time Zones of the World ↩

Area:

total area:

22,960 km<sup>2</sup>

land area:

22,800 km<sup>2</sup>

comparative area:

slightly larger than Massachusetts

Land boundaries:

total 516 km, Guatemala 266 km, Mexico 250 km

Coastline:

386 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea:

12 nm in the north, 3 nm in the south

note:

from the mouth of the Sarstoon River to Ranguana Caye, Belize's territorial sea is 3 miles; according to Belize's Maritime Areas Act, 1992, the purpose of this limitation is to provide a framework for the negotiation of a definitive agreement on territorial differences with Guatemala

International disputes:

border with Guatemala in dispute; negotiations to resolve the dispute have begun

Climate:

tropical; very hot and humid; rainy season (May to February)

Terrain:

flat, swampy coastal plain; low mountains in south

Natural resources: arable land potential, timber, fish

Land use:

arable land:

2%

permanent crops:  
   0%  
 meadows and pastures:  
   2%  
 forest and woodland:  
   44%  
 other:  
   52%  
 Irrigated land:  
   20 km2 (1989 est.)  
 Environment:  
   frequent devastating hurricanes (September to December) and coastal ←  
     flooding  
   (especially in south); deforestation  
 Note:  
   national capital moved 80 km inland from Belize City to Belmopan because of  
   hurricanes; only country in Central America without a coastline on the ←  
     North  
   Pacific Ocean

## 1.4 26.guide/People (Belize)

People (Belize)

=====

Population:  
   203,957 (July 1993 est.)  
 Population growth rate:  
   2.42% (1993 est.)  
 Birth rate:  
   35.75 births/1,000 population (1993 est.)  
 Death rate:  
   6.15 deaths/1,000 population (1993 est.)  
 Net migration rate:  
   -5.44 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1993 est.)  
 Infant mortality rate:  
   36.5 deaths/1,000 live births (1993 est.)  
 Life expectancy at birth:  
   total population:  
     67.85 years  
   male:  
     65.91 years  
   female:  
     69.88 years (1993 est.)  
 Total fertility rate:  
   4.53 children born/woman (1993 est.)  
 Nationality:  
   noun:  
     Belizean(s)  
   adjective:  
     Belizean  
 Ethnic divisions:  
   Mestizo 44%, Creole 30%, Maya 11%, Garifuna 7%, other 8%

**Religions:**

Roman Catholic 62%, Protestant 30% (Anglican 12%, Methodist 6%, Mennonite 4%, Seventh-Day Adventist 3%, Pentecostal 2%, Jehovah's Witnesses 1%, other 2%), none 2%, other 6% (1980)

**Languages:**

English (official), Spanish, Maya, Garifuna (Carib)

**Literacy:**

age 15 and over having ever attended school (1970)

total population:

91%

male:

91%

female:

91%

**Labor force:**

51,500

by occupation:

agriculture 30%, services 16%, government 15.4%, commerce 11.2%, manufacturing 10.3%

note:

shortage of skilled labor and all types of technical personnel (1985)

## 1.5 26.guide/Government (Belize)

### Government (Belize)

=====

**Names:**

conventional long form:

none

conventional short form:

Belize

former:

British Honduras

**Digraph:**

BH

**Type:**

parliamentary democracy

**Capital:**

Belmopan

**Administrative divisions:**

6 districts; Belize, Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Toledo

**Independence:**

21 September 1981 (from UK)

**Constitution:**

21 September 1981

**Legal system:**

English law

**National holiday:**

Independence Day, 21 September

**Political parties and leaders:**

People's United Party (PUP), George PRICE, Florencio MARIN, Said MUSA;

United Democratic Party (UDP), Manuel ESQUIVEL, Dean LINDO, Dean BARROW;

National Alliance for Belizean Rights, leader NA

Other political or pressure groups:

Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR), Assad SHOMAN;

United Workers Front, leader NA

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Elections:

National Assembly:

last held 4 September 1989 (next to be held September 1994); results -

percent of vote by party NA; seats - (28 total) PUP 15, UDP 13; note - in

January 1990 one member expelled from UDP joined PUP, making the seat count

PUP 16, UDP 12

Executive branch:

British monarch, governor general, prime minister, deputy prime minister,

Cabinet

Legislative branch:

bicameral National Assembly consists of an upper house or Senate and a ↔

lower

house or House of Representatives

Judicial branch:

Supreme Court

Leaders:

Chief of State:

Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952), represented by Governor General

Dame Minita Elmira GORDON (since 21 September 1981)

Head of Government:

Prime Minister George Cadle PRICE (since 4 September 1989)

Member of:

ACP, C, CARICOM, CDB, ECLAC, FAO, G-77, GATT, IBRD, ICAO, IDA, IFAD, IFC,

ILO, IMF, IMO, INTERPOL, IOC, IOM (observer), ITU, LORCS, NAM, OAS, UN,

UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WHO, WMO

Diplomatic representation in US:

chief of mission:

Ambassador James V. HYDE

## 1.6 26.guide/Government (Belize 2. usage)

Government (Belize 2. usage)

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chancery:

2535 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone:

(202) 332-9636

US diplomatic representation:

chief of mission:

Ambassador Eugene L. SCASSA

embassy:

Gabourel Lane and Hutson Street, Belize City

mailing address:

P. O. Box 286, Belize City

telephone:

[501] (2) 77161 through 77163



FAX:

[501] (2) 30802

Flag:

blue with a narrow red stripe along the top and the bottom edges; centered is a large white disk bearing the coat of arms; the coat of arms features a shield flanked by two workers in front of a mahogany tree with the related motto SUB UMBRA FLOREO (I Flourish in the Shade) on a scroll at the bottom, all encircled by a green garland

## 1.7 26.guide/Economy (Belize)

Economy (Belize)

=====

Overview:

The economy is based primarily on agriculture, agro-based industry, and merchandising, with tourism and construction assuming increasing importance ←

Agriculture accounts for about 30% of GDP and provides 75% of export earnings, while sugar, the chief crop, accounts for almost 40% of hard currency earnings. The US, Belize's main trading partner, is assisting in efforts to reduce dependency on sugar with an agricultural diversification program.

National product:

GDP - exchange rate conversion - \$373 million (1990 est.)

National product real growth rate:

10% (1990)

National product per capita:

\$1,635 (1990 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

5.5% (1991)

Unemployment rate:

12% (1991 est.)

Budget:

revenues \$126.8 million; expenditures \$123.1 million, including capital expenditures of \$44.8 million (FY91 est.)

Exports:

\$95.6 million (f.o.b., 1991)

commodities:

sugar, citrus, clothing, bananas, fish products, molasses

partners:

US 49%, UK, EC, Mexico (1991)

Imports:

\$194 million (c.i.f., 1991 est.)

commodities:

machinery and transportation equipment, food, manufactured goods, fuels, chemicals, pharmaceuticals

partners:

US 60%, UK, EC, Mexico (1991)

External debt:

\$143.7 million (1991)

Industrial production:

growth rate 3.7% (1990); accounts for 12% of GDP

**Electricity:**

34,532 kW capacity; 90 million kWh produced, 393 kWh per capita (1992)

**Industries:**

garment production, citrus concentrates, sugar refining, rum, beverages, tourism

**Agriculture:**

accounts for 22% of GDP (including fish and forestry); commercial crops include sugarcane, bananas, coca, citrus fruits; expanding output of lumber and cultured shrimp; net importer of basic foods

**Illicit drugs:**

an illicit producer of cannabis for the international drug trade; eradication program cut marijuana production from 200 metric tons in 1987 to about 50 metric tons in 1991; transshipment point for cocaine

**Economic aid:**

US commitments, including Ex-Im (FY70-89), \$104 million; Western (non-US) countries, ODA and OOF bilateral commitments (1970-89), \$215 million

**Currency:**

1 Belizean dollar (Bz\$) = 100 cents

**Exchange rates:**

Belizean dollars (Bz\$) per US\$1 - 2.00 (fixed rate)

## 1.8 26.guide/Economy (Belize 2. usage)

Economy (Belize 2. usage)

=====

**Fiscal year:**

1 April - 31 March

## 1.9 26.guide/Communications (Belize)

Communications (Belize)

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**Highways:**

2,710 km total; 500 km paved, 1,600 km gravel, 300 km improved earth, and 310 km unimproved earth

**Inland waterways:**

825 km river network used by shallow-draft craft; seasonally navigable

**Ports:**

Belize City; additional ports for shallow draught craft include Corozol, Punta Gorda, Big Creek

**Merchant marine:**

4 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 9,768 GRT/12,721 DWT; includes 3 cargo  
,  
1 roll-on/roll-off

**Airports:**

total:  
 42  
 usable:  
 32  
 with permanent-surface runways:  
 3  
 with runways over 3,659 m:  
 0  
 with runways 2,440-3,659 m:  
 1  
 with runways 1,229-2,439 m:  
 2  
 Telecommunications:  
 8,650 telephones; above-average system based on microwave radio relay;  
 broadcast stations - 6 AM, 5 FM, 1 TV, 1 shortwave; 1 Atlantic Ocean  
 INTELSAT earth station

## 1.10 26.guide/Defense Forces (Belize)

Defense Forces (Belize)

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### Branches:

British Forces Belize, Belize Defense Force (including Army, Navy, Air Force, and Volunteer Guard), Belize National Police

### Manpower availability:

males age 15-49 47,135; fit for military service 28,070; reach military age (18) annually 2,066 (1993 est.)

Defense expenditures: exchange rate conversion - \$5.4 million, 2% of GDP ↔ (1992)