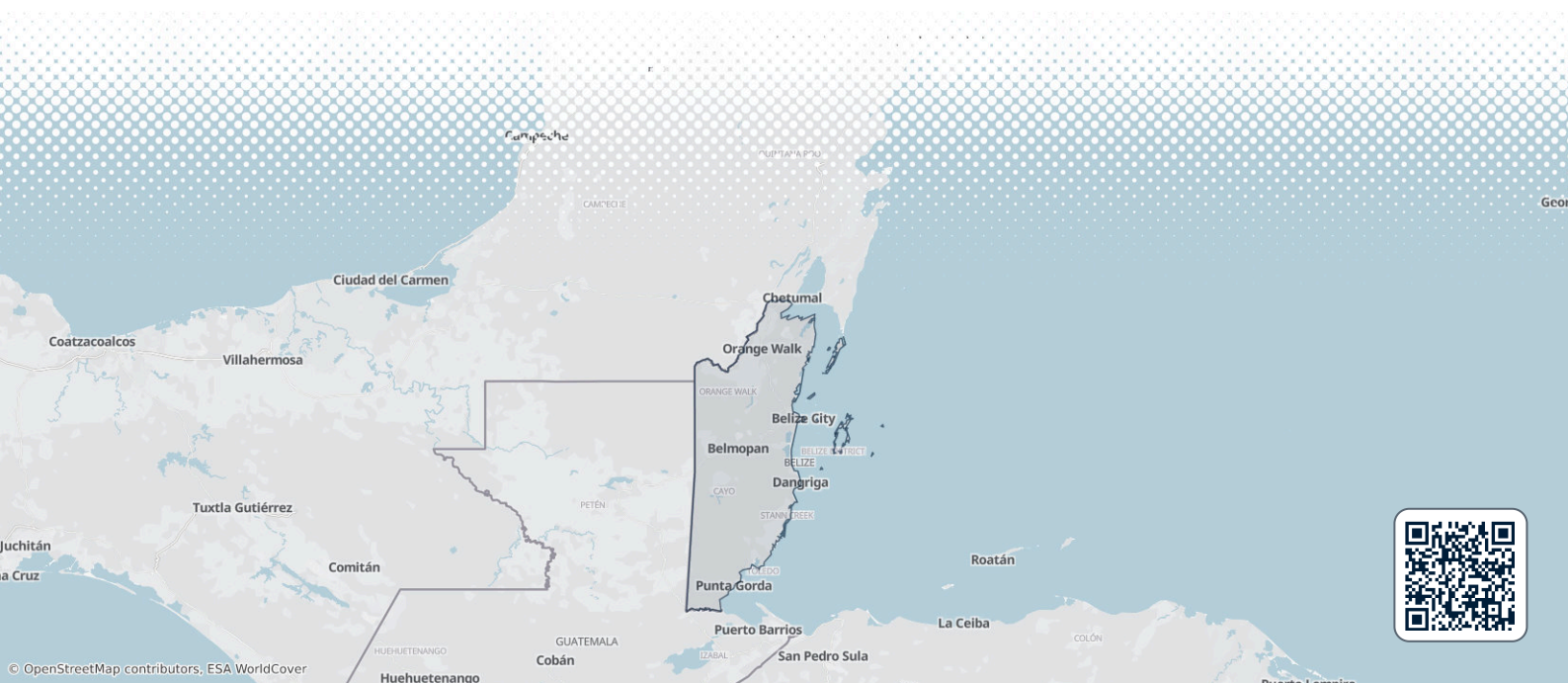




Belize

TRAVEL GUIDE



Overview

Belize is Central America's odd one out: **the only English-speaking country in the region**, with a population under half a million spread across jungle, savanna, and hundreds of small islands. Spanish, Belizean Kriol, and several Maya languages are also spoken every day, and the culture blends Maya, Mestizo, Creole, and Garifuna traditions rather than following one national style.

Most trips split between two very different sides of the country. Inland, the Cayo District and the north hold rainforest, cave systems, and Maya cities such as [Caracol](#) and [Xunantunich](#). Along the coast, the Belize Barrier Reef, the largest reef system in the Western Hemisphere, shelters the [Great Blue Hole](#) and hundreds of low-lying cayes suited to diving, snorkeling, and slow island life. Belize works best for travelers who want nature and adventure over big cities or nightlife, and who don't mind covering long distances between the two.

Money & payments

Currency

 CURRENCY

Bz\$

BZD

 1 BZD

0.4434 EUR

1 EUR = 2.255 BZD

 1 BZD

0.4972 USD

1 USD = 2.011 BZD

 Cards accepted in major venues

Belize dollars and US dollars circulate side by side at a fixed rate, so prices are often quoted in either and both are accepted almost everywhere. Card acceptance is good in hotels, restaurants, and shops in the main tourist areas, but carry cash for local buses, markets, small guesthouses, and rural villages. ATMs are common in Belize City, Belmopan, and the larger towns, but scarce on smaller cayes and in the south, so withdraw before heading to Caye Caulker, [Placencia Peninsula](#), or Toledo District.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

 Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel, room for two	100 – 300 Bz\$ €44 – €133
 Dinner (mid-range restaurant) sit-down restaurant meal	20 – 50 Bz\$ €9 – €22
 Inexpensive meal local eatery or market stall	10 – 16 Bz\$ €4 – €7
 Local beer	4 – 8 Bz\$ €2 – €4
 Coffee	4 – 7 Bz\$ €2 – €3
 Water bottled water, 500ml	2 – 4 Bz\$ €1 – €2
 Transit ticket intercity bus fare, distance-dependent	4 – 12 Bz\$ €2 – €5
 Taxi (per km) town taxis usually charge flat zone fares, not metered per km	3 – 5 Bz\$ €1 – €2

Tipping

Restaurant 10-15 %	Expected
Tour guide tipped separately, per day	Expected
Taxi round up	Optional
Bar round up	Optional

Tipping in Belize follows US-style habits more than Latin American norms. In restaurants, 10 to 15 percent is standard unless a service charge already appears on the bill, so check before tipping twice. Tour guides, boat captains, and drivers on cave, reef, or jungle tours are usually tipped separately and rely on it as a real part of their income.

Electricity

Belize runs on **110 V at 60 Hz** and uses American-style flat two- and three-pin outlets, matching the United States and its Central American neighbors rather than Britain, despite its history as a British colony. Travelers from the UK, Europe, or Australia need a plug adapter and, for anything without dual-voltage support, a voltage converter too; visitors from North America usually need nothing at all.

⚡ ELECTRICITY



Type A

⚡ 110 V · 60 Hz

⚡ ELECTRICITY



Type B

Language

English is the official language and the one used in schools, government, and business, so menus, signage, and directions are never a problem. Spanish is common in the north and west, near the borders with Mexico and Guatemala, and Belizean Kriol is what most Belizeans actually speak with each other day to day. Kriol conversation can be hard for visitors to follow at first, but almost everyone switches easily to standard English when talking with a traveler.

Staying connected

Prepaid SIM cards from the two national carriers are sold at their shops in Belize City and Belmopan, and at some airport counters, and generally require only a passport for registration. Coverage is strong along the coast and main highways but drops off quickly in the rainforest interior and around some of the smaller cayes, so don't count on a signal at a remote jungle lodge or on the water between islands.

Safety & emergencies

Belize is generally safe for tourists who stick to well-traveled areas and common sense: watch belongings on buses and in busy markets, agree on taxi fares before getting in, and avoid walking alone at night in Belize City outside the main tourist zones. Petty theft is the most common issue travelers report; violent crime against tourists is rare but does happen, mostly in parts of Belize City that visitors have little reason to enter.

Emergency numbers

* GENERAL EMERGENCY

911

+ POLICE

90

+ AMBULANCE

90

+ FIRE BRIGADE

90

Health

Tap water is treated in Belize City and the larger towns and is generally used by locals without issue, but many visitors stick to bottled or filtered water, especially on the cayes and in rural areas where the supply is less consistent. Pharmacies are easy to find in every town, though smaller islands and villages may have only a basic stock, so bring any regular medication with you. No vaccinations are mandatory for entry, but check current recommendations for hepatitis A, typhoid, and routine boosters with a travel clinic before the trip, and consider antimalarials if visiting remote areas near the Guatemalan border.

Visas & entry

Citizens of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and most Commonwealth and Caribbean countries can enter Belize without a visa for stays of up to 30 days, which can usually be extended at a local immigration office. Visitors from countries without visa-free access need to arrange a visa in advance through a Belizean embassy or consulate.

Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

Belizeans are generally relaxed and informal, and greetings matter: a friendly "good morning" or "good afternoon" before getting to business, even with a shopkeeper or driver, goes a long way. Dress is casual almost everywhere, though modest clothing is appreciated at churches and in smaller inland villages. Bargaining is not the norm in shops or restaurants, though a little negotiation is common and expected for informal tours, taxis without a meter, and souvenirs bought directly from a craftsman. Ask before photographing people, especially in Maya and Garifuna villages, where some communities prefer not to be treated as a photo opportunity.

Holidays & opening hours

Public holidays are widely observed, and many shops, banks, and government offices close for the day, though restaurants and tourist services in the main destinations usually stay open. Independence Day (September 21st) and the Garifuna Settlement Day celebrations in Dangriga and Punta Gorda are among the liveliest and draw crowds, so book accommodation early if traveling then. Regular business hours tend to be relaxed, with many small shops and offices closing for an hour around midday and most things winding down by early evening outside of restaurants and bars.

Public holidays

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Jan 15	George Price Day
May 1	Labour Day
Aug 1	Emancipation Day
Sep 10	Saint George's Caye Day
Sep 21	Independence Day
Nov 19	Garifuna Settlement Day
Dec 25	Christmas Day
Dec 26	Boxing Day
movable — Mar/Apr	Easter Monday
movable — Mar/Apr	Easter Sunday
movable — Mar/Apr	Good Friday
movable — Mar/Apr	Holy Saturday
movable — Mar	National Heroes and Benefactors Day

Getting around

- **By bus:** Frequent, inexpensive coach services connect Belize City, Belmopan, San Ignacio, and the north along the main highways, running on repurposed US school buses on local routes and more comfortable coaches on longer hauls. Service south to Dangriga and Punta Gorda is less frequent.
- **By air:** Domestic flights connect Belize City's municipal airport with Ambergris Caye, Caye Caulker, Placencia, Dangriga, and Punta Gorda in well under an hour, and are worth the cost for reaching the cayes or the south quickly instead of a half-day bus and boat combination.
- **By boat:** Water taxis are the standard way to reach [Ambergris Caye](#) and [Caye Caulker](#) from Belize City, and are faster and often cheaper than flying for these two islands.

Renting a car makes sense for exploring Cayo District's Maya sites and nature reserves at your own pace, but is unnecessary if you're mainly island-hopping along the coast.

Driving

- **Speed limits:** Roads are signed in miles per hour: expect around 25 to 40 mph (40 to 65 km/h) in towns and villages, and up to 55 mph (90 km/h) on the open highway.
- **Road conditions:** The main highways are paved and in reasonable shape, but secondary and village roads are often unpaved, potholed, or impassable after heavy rain. Avoid driving after dark outside towns: roads are unlit, and livestock, cyclists, and potholes are hard to see in time.
- **Tolls:** There are no toll roads or highway vignettes in Belize.
- **Parking:** Street parking is common and usually free in smaller towns; Belize City has some paid lots and metered areas near the center.
- **Fuel:** Stations are attended, not self-service, and sell "Premium" and "Regular" gasoline alongside diesel; card payment is widely available at stations in towns, but carry cash for rural pumps.

A valid foreign driver's license is accepted for tourists for up to 90 days, so an International Driving Permit is a helpful backup but not strictly required for most trips.

 URBAN 40 km/h	 RURAL 90 km/h	 PETROL Premium, Regular	 DIESEL Diesel
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 Drive on the right

 No motorway vignette needed

 No toll roads or highway vignettes in Belize.

Food & drink

Belizean food reflects the country's mix of cultures more than any single national cuisine. Breakfast often means fry jacks (fried dough) with refried beans and eggs, while lunch and dinner center on rice and beans cooked in coconut milk alongside stewed chicken, pork, or fish, plus a side of potato or macaroni salad. Garnaches and salbutes, both fried corn tortillas piled with toppings, are a common snack, alongside Belizean tamales wrapped in banana leaf.

On the coast, especially around Dangriga and Punta Gorda, Garifuna cooking adds dishes like hudut, a mashed plantain and fish stew in coconut broth, and cassava-based sides. Marie Sharp's hot sauce, made in the Stann Creek Valley, appears on nearly every table and is a popular souvenir. Belikin is the national beer, and cashew wine and rum are made locally; fresh fruit juices and Belizean-style ginger beer are common non-alcoholic options. Small local eateries, often called "restaurants" whatever their size, and market stalls are the everyday way most Belizeans eat out, rather than formal sit-down dining.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Fry Jack

Fried dough served with refried beans and eggs.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Garnaches

Fried corn tortillas topped with refried beans, cheese, and onion.

Salbutes

Fried corn tortillas topped with shredded chicken, lettuce, tomato, and avocado.

DRINKS

Belikin

Belize's national beer.

Belizean Ginger Beer

Locally made spiced ginger drink, often non-alcoholic.

SIGNATURE DISHES

Rice and Beans

Rice and beans cooked in coconut milk, served with stewed chicken, pork, or fish.

Belizean Tamales

Corn masa tamales filled with meat, wrapped and steamed in banana leaf.

Hudut

Garifuna dish of mashed plantain served with fish cooked in coconut broth.

Belize – Plan Your Trip

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the app

Where to explore

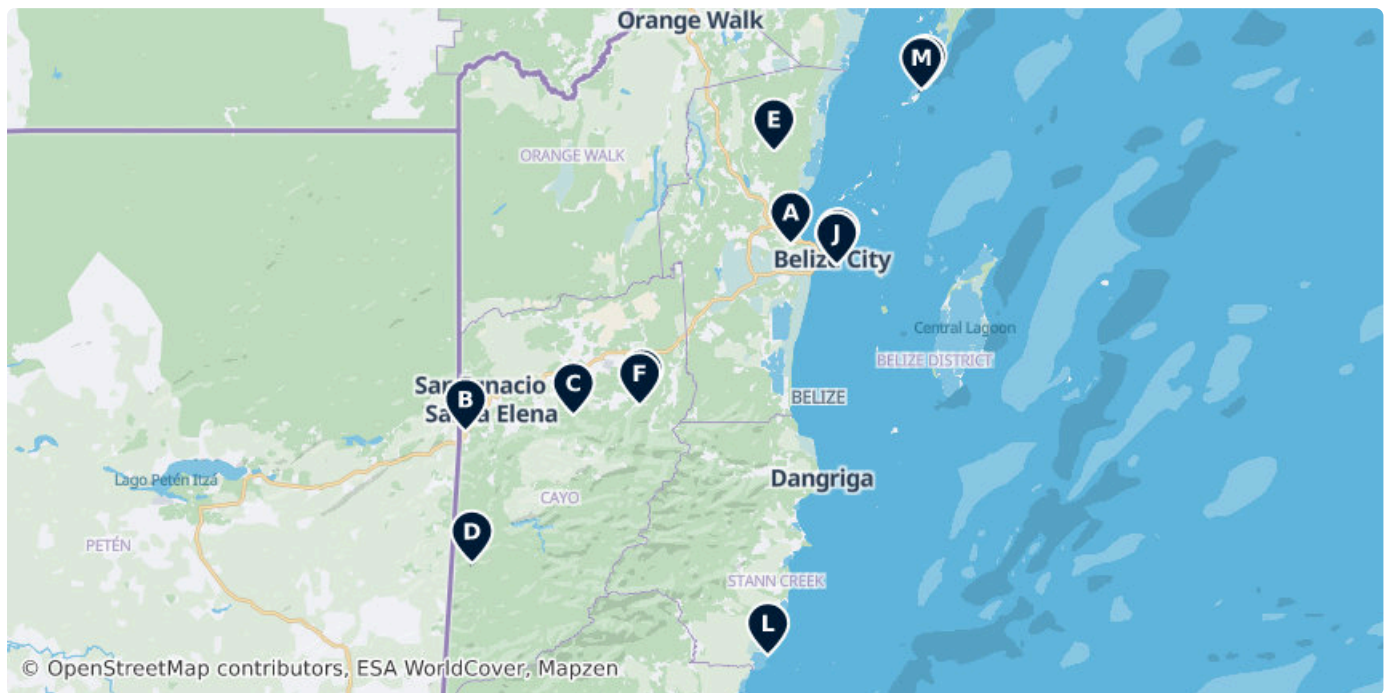
Belize City, the country's largest city and main port of entry, is more a gateway than a destination in itself, with most visitors passing through on the way to the coast or the interior. Inland, the twin towns of San Ignacio and Santa Elena in Cayo District are the base for visiting [Actun Tunichil Muknal Natural](#)

[Monument](#), [Xunantunich](#), and the forested hills of [Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve](#). [Belmopan](#), the small, purpose-built capital, is worth a stop mainly for government business rather than sightseeing.

Along the coast, [Ambergris Caye](#) is Belize's most developed island, with the widest choice of dive shops, restaurants, and hotels, while [Caye Caulker](#) keeps a quieter, car-free pace nearby. Farther south, the Garifuna town of [Dangriga](#) and the laid-back [Placencia Peninsula](#) give access to southern reef sites and the [Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary](#). Toledo District, around the town of Punta Gorda, sees far fewer visitors and offers a slower introduction to Maya and Garifuna village life, plus access to inland sites like [Lubaantun](#) and [Nim Li Punit](#). Birdwatchers should also consider [Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary](#), an easy day trip north of Belize City.

Belize Essentials: Maya Ruins, Reefs, and Jungles

Belize's landscape is defined by its ancient Maya heritage and diverse ecosystems. This selection features the archaeological sites of Xunantunich, Caracol, and Altun Ha, alongside the Actun Tunichil Muknal cave, a significant site for Maya ceremonial history. Natural landmarks include St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park and the hiking trails of the inland Blue Hole. In Belize City, colonial history is preserved at St. John's Cathedral and the Museum of Belize. Efficient transit via Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport and the San Pedro Belize Express ferry facilitates travel between the mainland and the cayes.

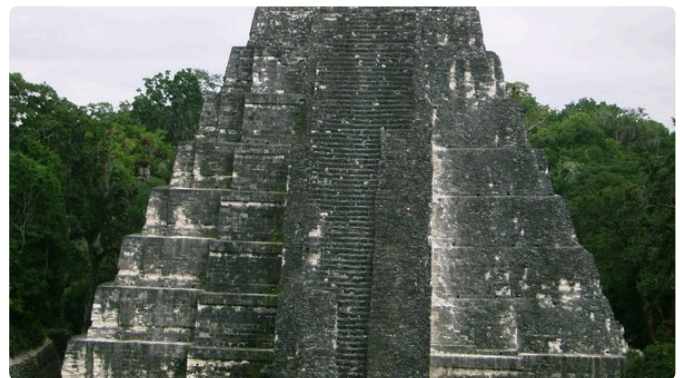


A Philip S. W. Goldson International Airport

The primary international gateway to Belize, located in Ladyville, approximately 10 miles from Belize City. It serves as the main hub for international arrivals and domestic connections to the cayes and southern districts.

Belize (17.53913, -88.30427)

pgiabelize.com



B Xunantunich

Xunantunich is an Ancient Maya archaeological site in western Belize, about 70 miles west of Belize City, in the Cayo District.

San Jose Succotz, Belize (17.08389, -89.13389)

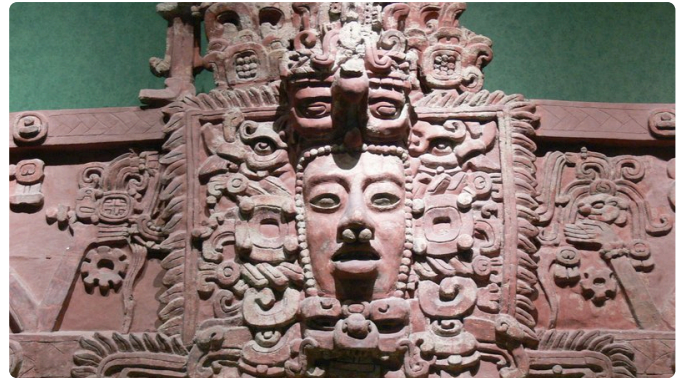




C Actun Tunichil Muknal Natural Monument

Actun Tunichil Muknal, also known locally as ATM, is a cave in Belize, near San Ignacio, Cayo District, notable as a Maya archaeological...

Belize (17.12320, -88.85908)



D Caracol

Caracol is a large ancient Maya archaeological site, located in what is now the Cayo District of Belize.

Belize (16.76179, -89.11777)



E Altún Ha

Altun Ha is the name given to the ruins of an ancient Mayan city in Belize, located in the Belize District about 50 kilometres north of...

Belize (17.76467, -88.34706)



F St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park

St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park is a national park located just off the Hummingbird Highway in Cayo District of Belize, near Belmopan,...

Belize (17.14744, -88.69006)



G The Blue Hole

A natural turquoise cenote located within St. Herman's Blue Hole National Park. Formed by the collapse of an underground limestone cave, the site features a swimming area and surrounding hiking trails through the jungle.

Hummingbird Highway, Belize (17.15701, -88.68315)



H St. John's Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Baptist is an Anglican cathedral church, located in Belize City, Belize.

(Unnamed Road), Belize City, Belize (17.48869, -88.18793)



I Museum of Belize

The Museum of Belize is an art and history museum in Belize City, Belize.

Gabourel Lane 1062, Belize City (17.49808, -88.18348)

nichbelize.org/mob/the-museum-of-beliz... , +501 227 0518



J House of Culture

The finest colonial structure in Belize City, Government House is said to have been built to plans by the illustrious British architect Sir...

(Unnamed Road), Belize City, Belize (17.48854, -88.18713)

+501 027 3050



K San Pedro Belize Express

A major water taxi terminal providing daily scheduled ferry services between Belize City, Caye Caulker, and San Pedro on Ambergris Caye.

(Unnamed Road), San Pedro, Belize (17.91919, -87.96082)



L Placencia Airport

Placencia Airport is an airport that serves Placencia, Belize. It has a paved strip and crosses the peninsula from East to West.As of...

Placencia Road, Placencia, Belize (16.53687, -88.36258)



John Greif II Airport

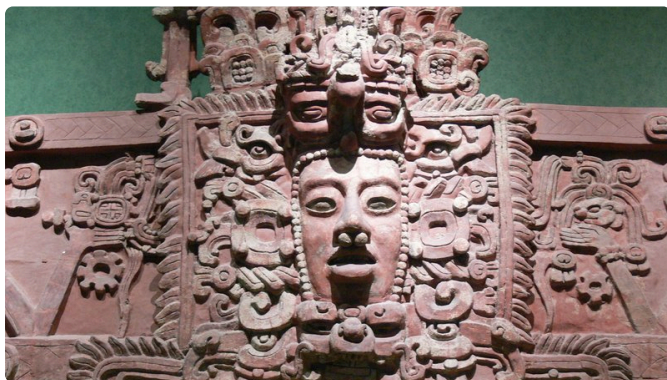
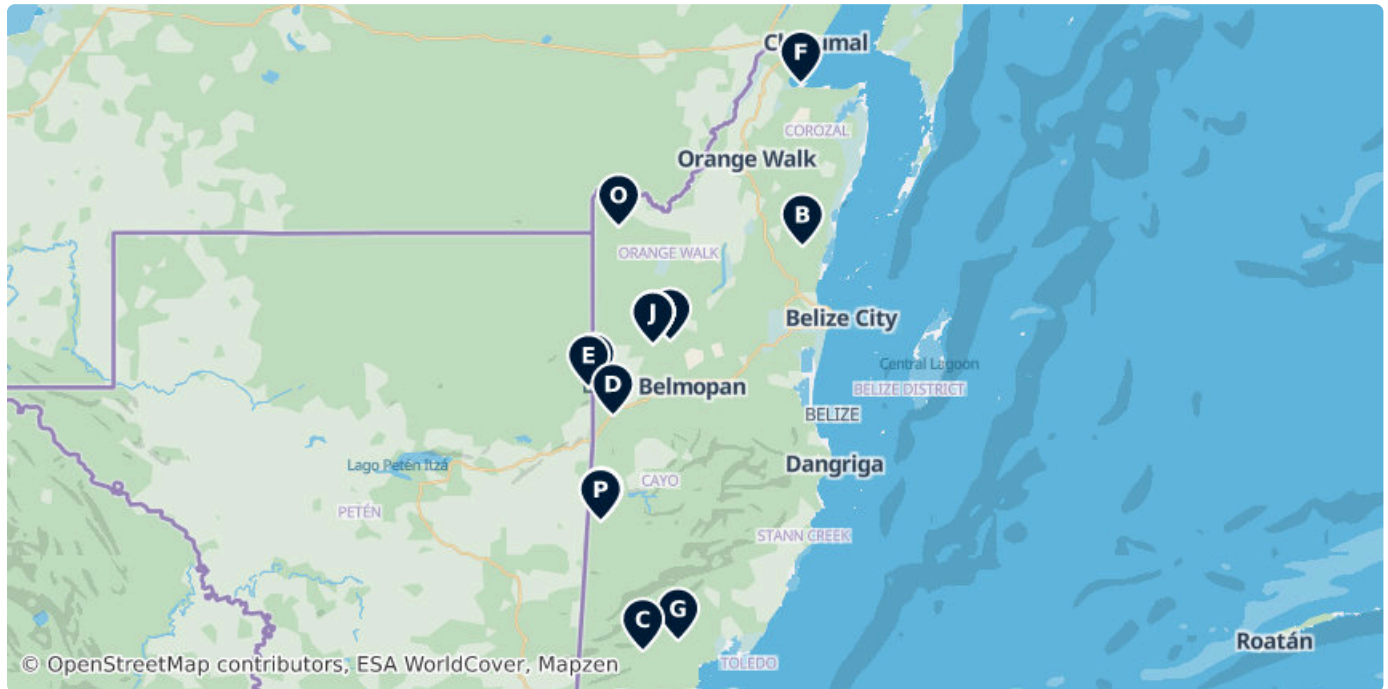
John Greif II Airport is an airport that serves San Pedro and Ambergris Caye, Belize.



Belize (17.91442, -87.97032)

Belizean Archaeological Wonders

This collection highlights the diverse architectural and ceremonial landscape of the ancient Maya across Belize. It features major urban centers like Caracol, home to the massive Caana pyramid, and Altun Ha, a significant trading hub near the coast. The list encompasses specialized sites such as Nim Li Punit, noted for its extensive collection of carved stelae, and the unique mortarless masonry of Lubaantun. From the hilltop palaces of Cahal Pech to the sacred ceremonial pools of Cara Blanca, these sites offer insight into Maya history from the Preclassic to Postclassic periods.



A Caracol

Caracol is a large ancient Maya archaeological site, located in what is now the Cayo District of Belize.

Belize (16.76179, -89.11777)



B Altún Ha

Altun Ha is the name given to the ruins of an ancient Mayan city in Belize, located in the Belize District about 50 kilometres north of...

Belize (17.76467, -88.34706)

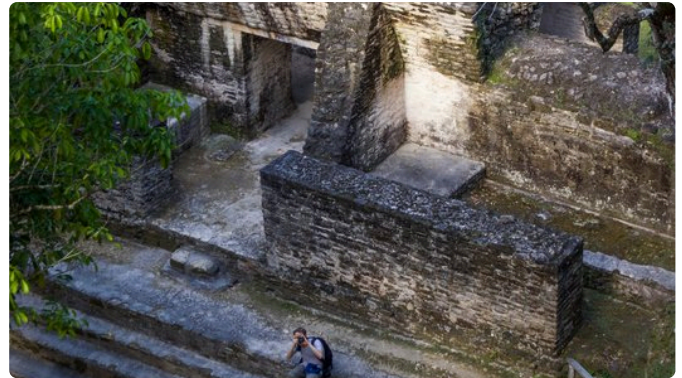




C Lubaantun

Lubaantun is a pre-Columbian ruined city of the Maya civilization in southern Belize, Central America.

Belize (16.28222, -88.95839)



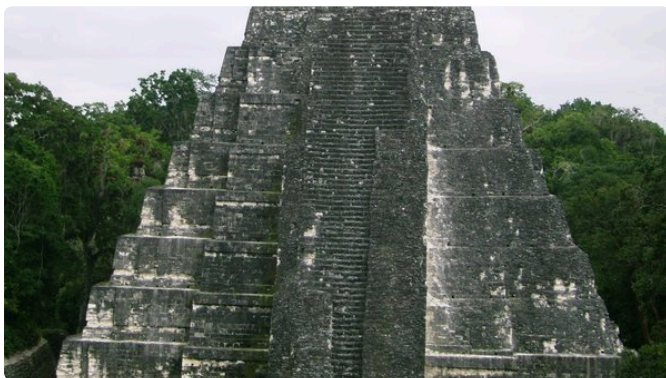
D Cahal Pech Archaeological Reserve

Cahal Pech is a Maya site located near the town of San Ignacio in the Cayo District of Belize.

San Ignacio Town, Belize (17.14555, -89.07334)

Mo-Su

08:00-17:00



E El Pilar

El Pilar is an ancient Maya city center located on the Belize-Guatemala border.

Guatemala (17.25040, -89.16642)



F Cerros

Cerros is an Eastern Lowland Maya archaeological site in northern Belize that functioned from the Late Preclassic to the Postclassic period.

Belize (18.35712, -88.35283)



G Nim Li Punit

Maya site in the Toledo District known for its large collection of carved stelae and its location on a ridge overlooking the coastal plain.

(16.32114, -88.82339)



H Plaza Lec

An architectural group within the El Pilar archaeological reserve, part of a large city center that straddles the Belize-Guatemala border.

(17.25603, -89.14602)



I Cara Blanca Pools

A series of cenotes in the Cayo District where archaeologists discovered submerged Maya ceremonial structures and ritual offerings.

(17.41985, -88.85447)



J M11

Maya structure located within the Valley of Peace archaeological region.

(17.40762, -88.92029)



K M27

Maya structure or mound located in the Valley of Peace region near the Cara Blanca pools.

(17.40959, -88.91764)



L M16

Ancient Maya structure situated in the Valley of Peace area.

(17.40837, -88.91968)



M M29

Maya mound or structure identified during archaeological surveys of the Valley of Peace region.

(17.40892, -88.91802)



N M28

Maya architectural remains located in the central Belize Valley of Peace area.

(17.40921, -88.91797)



O La Milpa

One of the largest Maya sites in Belize, featuring over 20 courtyards, two ball courts, and numerous temples within the Rio Bravo Conservation Area.

Belize (17.83543, -89.05109)



P South Acropolis

A major architectural complex at Caracol consisting of an elevated platform with multiple temples and residential buildings.

(16.75916, -89.12076)



Q Central Acropolis

A central administrative and residential complex at Caracol, featuring several courtyards and palace structures.

(16.76186, -89.11946)



R Barrio Group

An elite residential group within the Caracol archaeological site, organized around a central plaza.

(16.76325, -89.11660)



S Raleigh Group

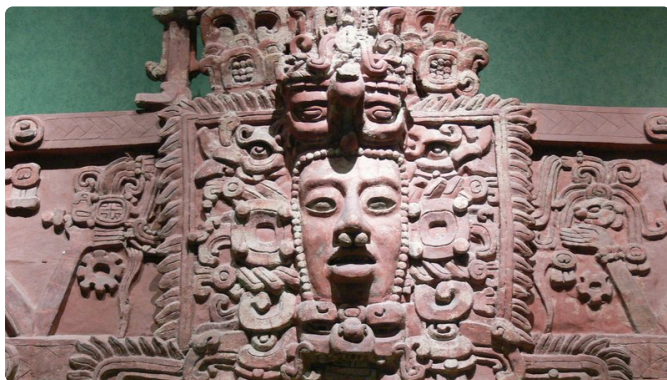
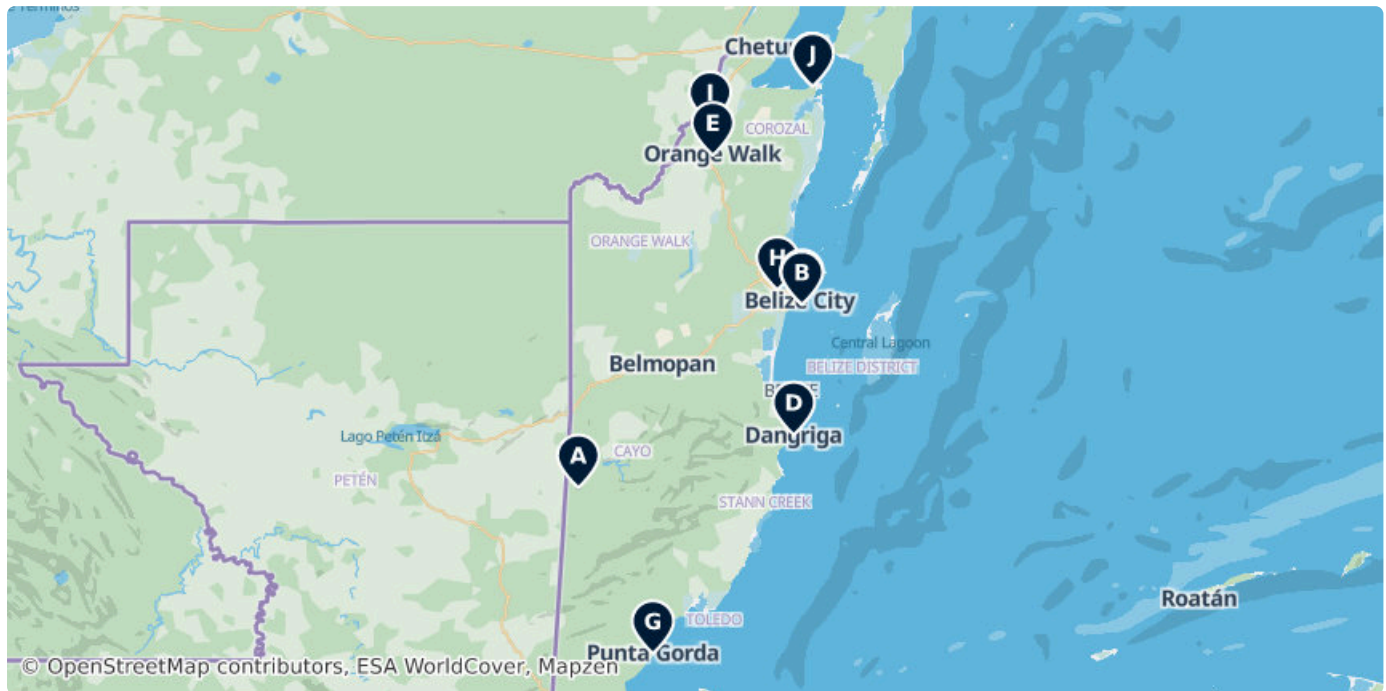
A group of ancient Maya structures located within the urban core of the Caracol archaeological site.

(16.76189, -89.11634)



Significant Religious Sites

Belize's religious landscape spans centuries, from the monumental Maya temples of Caracol to the colonial-era brickwork of St. John's Cathedral. This collection includes the country's oldest Anglican church, built with ship ballast, and the Holy Redeemer Cathedral, which serves as the seat of the Catholic diocese. Beyond the historic landmarks of Belize City, the list highlights community churches in Orange Walk, Dangriga, and Corozal, representing diverse denominations including Seventh-day Adventist, Nazarene, and Jehovah's Witness congregations that shape the spiritual life of local districts.



A Caracol

Caracol is a large ancient Maya archaeological site, located in what is now the Cayo District of Belize.

Belize (16.76179, -89.11777)



B St. John's Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Baptist is an Anglican cathedral church, located in Belize City, Belize.

(Unnamed Road), Belize City, Belize (17.48869, -88.18793)



C Holy Redeemer Cathedral

Built in 1858, this brick cathedral serves as the mother church of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Belize City-Belmopan.

(17.49635, -88.18704)

(+501)227-2122



D Sacred Heart Catholic Church

A Roman Catholic parish in Dangriga serving the local multi-ethnic community.

(16.97213, -88.22241)

catholic.bz, +501 522-2025



E La Inmaculada Catholic Church

A central landmark in Orange Walk Town with historical ties to the region's Mestizo heritage.

(18.07915, -88.55898)

catholic.bz, (322-2043)



F Saint Ignatius Church

A Roman Catholic parish church located on the south side of Belize City.

(17.49180, -88.19165)

catholic.bz, (+501)227-7001



G Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's witnesses

A house of worship for the Jehovah's Witness community in the Toledo District.

Punta Gorda, Belize (16.10088, -88.80802)

jw.org



H Ladyville Seventh Day Adventists

A community church in Ladyville, situated near the Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport.

Northern Highway, Ramon's Village, Belize (17.54699, -88.29021)



I Iglesia Católica de San José

A Catholic church serving the village of San Jose in the Orange Walk District.

(Unnamed Road), San Jose, Belize (18.20019, -88.57000)



J Seventh Day Adventist

A place of worship for the Seventh-day Adventist community in the Corozal District.

(Unnamed Road), Sarteneja, Belize (18.35161, -88.14376)



K La Guadalupana

A Catholic place of worship in the Corozal District dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

(Unnamed Road), Sarteneja, Belize (18.35270, -88.14719)



L Church of the Nazarene

A community church representing the Nazarene denomination in the northern Corozal region.

(Unnamed Road), Sarteneja, Belize (18.35261, -88.14617)



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