



Belize



Background	Belize was the site of several Mayan city states until their decline at the end of the first millennium A.D. The British and Spanish disputed the region in the 17th and 18th centuries; it formally became the colony of British Honduras in 1862. Territorial disputes between the UK and Guatemala delayed the independence of Belize until 1981. Guatemala refused to recognize the new nation until 1992, and the two countries are still involved in an ongoing border dispute. Tourism has become the mainstay of the economy. Current concerns include the country's heavy foreign debt burden, high crime rates, high unemployment combined with a majority youth population, growing involvement in the Mexican and South American drug trade, and one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Central America.
Capital	name: Belmopan
Government type	parliamentary democracy (National Assembly) under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm
Area	total : 22,966 sq km land: 22,806 sq km water: 160 sq km
Climate	tropical; very hot and humid; rainy season (May to November); dry season (February to May)
Natural resources	arable land potential, timber, fish, hydropower
Population	total: 415,789 (2024 est.)
Population growth rate	1.47% (2024 est.)
Ethnic groups	Mestizo 52.9%, Creole 25.9%, Maya 11.3%, Garifuna 6.1%, East Indian 3.9%, Mennonite 3.6%, White 1.2%, Asian 1%, other 1.2%, unknown 0.3% (2010 est.)
Religions	Roman Catholic 40.1%, Protestant 31.5% (includes Pentecostal 8.4%, Seventh Day Adventist 5.4%, Anglican 4.7%, Mennonite 3.7%, Baptist 3.6%, Methodist 2.9%, Nazarene 2.8%), Jehovah's Witness 1.7%, other 10.5% (includes Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu, Church of Jesus Christ, Muslim, Rastafarian, Salvation Army), unspecified 0.6%, none 15.5% (2010 est.)
Languages	English 62.9% (official), Spanish 56.6%, Creole 44.6%, Maya 10.5%, German 3.2%, Garifuna 2.9%, other 1.8%, unknown 0.5% (2010 est.)
Executive branch	chief of state: King CHARLES III (since 8 September 2022); represented by Governor-General Froyla TZALAM (since 27 May 2021) head of government: Prime Minister John BRICEÑO (since 12 November 2020)
Legislative branch	legislature name: National Assembly

Diplomatic representation in the US	chief of mission: Ambassador Lynn Raymond YOUNG (since 7 July 2021)
Diplomatic representation from the US	chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Chargé d'Affaires Katharine BEAMER (since 23 August 2025)
Economic overview	tourism- and agriculture-driven economy; strong post-pandemic rebound; innovative and ecological bond restructuring that significantly lowered public debt and expanded marine protections; central bank offering USD-denominated treasury notes; high mobility across borders
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$5.538 billion (2024 est.) \$5.12 billion (2023 est.) \$5.062 billion (2022 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$13,300 (2024 est.) \$12,500 (2023 est.) \$12,600 (2022 est.)
Exports	\$1.64 billion (2024 est.) \$1.536 billion (2023 est.) \$1.369 billion (2022 est.)
Exports - partners	USA 22%, UK 14%, Spain 9%, Guatemala 7%, Portugal 5% (2023)
Exports - commodities	raw sugar, bananas, fish, shellfish, refined petroleum (2023)
Imports	\$1.724 billion (2024 est.) \$1.573 billion (2023 est.) \$1.574 billion (2022 est.)
Imports - partners	USA 37%, China 17%, Guatemala 10%, Mexico 8%, Costa Rica 6% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, orthopedic appliances, ships, garments, tobacco (2023)

Population Pyramid