BELIZE

INTRODUCTION
Belize was the site of several Mayan city states until their decline at the end of the first millennium A.D. It formally became the colony of British Honduras in 1862. Territorial disputes between the UK and Guatemala delayed the independence of Belize until 1981.

GOVERNMENT
Chief of State
Queen ELIZABETH II represented by Governor General Froyla TZALAM
Head of Government
Prime Minister Juan Antonio BRICENO
Government Type
parliamentary democracy (National Assembly) under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm
Capital
Belmopan
Legislature
bicameral National Assembly consists of the Senate (13 seats) and the House of Representatives (31 seats)

GEOGRAPHY
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

ECONOMY
Economic Overview
tourism- and agriculture-driven economy initially hard hit by COVID-19; ongoing export recovery, especially fruits and sugar demand surges; investing towards a “blue economy”; central bank offering USD-denominated treasury notes; high mobility across borders
GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) $40.3 billion (2020 est.)
GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) $6,100 (2020 est.)
Industries - garment production, food processing, tourism, construction, oil
Agricultural products - sugarcane, oranges, bananas, maize, poultry, rice, sorghum, papayas, grapefruit, soybeans
Exports $710 million (2020 est.)
raw sugar, bananas, fruit juice, fish products, crude petroleum (2019)
partners: UK 27%, US 24%, Spain 6%, Jamaica 5%, Ireland 5% (2019)
Imports $900 million (2020 est.)
refined petroleum, cigarettes, recreational boats, natural gas, cars (2019)
partners: US 36%, China 13%, Mexico 12%, Guatemala 10% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY
Population
412,390 (2022 est.)
Population Growth
1.64% (2022 est.)
Ethnicity
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.)
Language
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.)
Religion
Roman Catholic 40.1%, Protestant 31.5%, Jehovah’s Witness 1.7%, other 10.5%, unspecified 0.6%, none 15.5% (2010 est.)
as of April 2022