



# RE/MAX VIP

Relocation Guide

*Everything you need  
to know about Belize  
From starting a business  
to health care*

## BELIZE GUIDE

THE A-Z OF

BELIZE RELOCATION

## RETIRE TO PARADISE

GET TO KNOW

BEAUTIFUL BELIZE

# 5

BELIZEAN

ECOSYSTEMS

*What makes Belize  
such an exciting place?*



REMAXVIPBELIZE



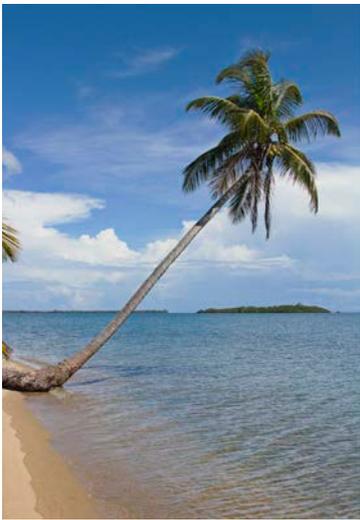
REMAXVIPBELIZE



REMAXVIPBELIZE

ESCAPE TODAY.

Revised Edition, Feb 2020



### ABOUT BELIZE

- 04 Why Belize?**  
Nature's best kept secret
- 05 History**  
Mayan, Spanish and British history
- 05 Geography**  
Location and features
- 06 Climate**  
Variations in weather patterns
- 09 People and Culture**  
The friendliest people on earth

### GETTING TO AND AROUND

- 11 Arriving**  
Entry requirements and roads
- 12 Getting Around**  
Local bus routes and highways

### ECOSYSTEMS

- 14 The 5 Ecosystems**  
Diversity within a 2 hour drive

### ACTIVITIES

- 16 Watersports**  
Diving and kiteboarding
- 17 More Activities**  
Belize has something for everyone

### BUSINESS IN BELIZE

- 18 Starting Up**  
Various business incentives for newcomers
- 19 Procedures**  
Detailed list of requirements

## REAL ESTATE

### 20 **Buying Process**

Buying property 101

### 21 **Procedures**

Step by Step guide to a great deal

### 21 **Legal Fees**

Stamp duty and taxes

## RETIREMENT IN BELIZE

### 22 **Qualified Retirement Program**

What is the QRP?

### 23 **The Advantages**

Why should I apply for the QRP?

### 25 **Escape Today**

An opportunity to retire in the Caribbean

### 26 **Health Insurance**

Get insured in Belize



# FROM THE EDITOR

Five years ago, I started writing this relocation guide with the hope of helping North American expats make an informed decision on their retirement plans. The original guide was published in 2013, and through the years it made it into different households in different countries, spreading the word about beautiful Belize. Half a decade later, our team has met and helped families from every corner of the world start new lives in this beautiful country we call home.

With online searches for “Belize Retirement” and “Belize Real Estate” being at the highest point ever, it seemed appropriate to revise this manual and update our information on Belize. It is our delight to share all the research and photos taken by our team to Remax VIP subscribers all over the world.

We hope this relocation guide helps you make an informed decision, whether you’re reading it to find retirement ideas, vacation plans or to escape your country for some time.

—Chris Appelbe

### **Editor In Chief**

Chris Appelbe,  
chris@remaxvipbelize.com

### **Associate Editor**

Alison Appelbe ,  
aappelbe@telus.net

### **Contributing Writer**

Ricardo Martinez,  
info@riikc.com

### **Contributing Editor**

Sonia Alvarez  
sonia@remaxvipbelize.com

### **Art Director, Photography & Graphic Artist**

Ricardo Martinez  
info@riikc.com



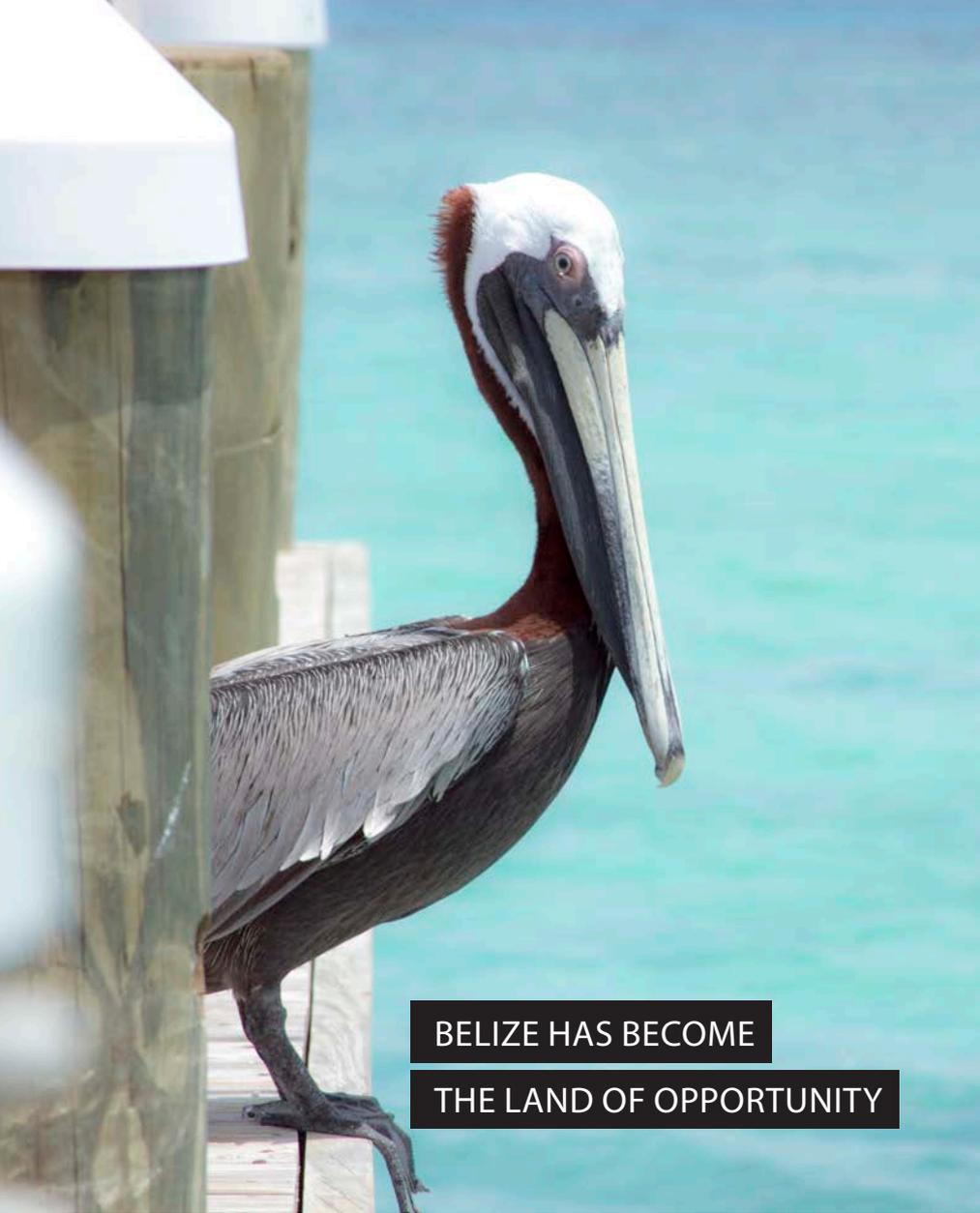
# ABOUT BELIZE

Bordering Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the south and west, Belize is about the size of Massachusetts- 386km long (184mi) by 100km from east to west (60mi).

## **Why Belize?**

With five incredible eco systems within a two hour drive, Belize has been one of nature's best kept secrets. An obscure English colony which, until recently, has been popular mainly with niche markets such as divers and birdwatchers. With a stable political and economic climate under democratic rule, Belize is now becoming the land of opportunity.

Belize is currently experiencing the early stages of a land rush by investors, developers and people looking to improve the quality of their lives. It is estimated that over 24 million baby boomers will retire to Central America in the next 20 years. Belize's proximity, language, government, natural beauty and climate make it one of the premiere real estate opportunities on the planet.



**BELIZE HAS BECOME  
THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY**



**Capital:**

Belmopan  
17°15'N 88°46'W

**Official Language:**

English

**Government:**

Unitary Parliamentary  
Constitutional Monarchy

**Ethnic Groups:**

- 50.0% Mestizo
- 21.0% Kriol
- 10.0% Mayan
- 6.0% multi-ethnic
- 4.5% Garinagu
- 3.6% German (Mennonite)
- 2.1% East Indians
- 1.9% other

**Population(2017):**

374,651

**Belize History**

The earliest known settlement in Belize has been estimated at 2400 B.C. by the Mayans. The Spanish first landed on these shores in 1508. The 17th century marked the golden age of piracy and the cayes (islands) off the coast were a haven for British pirates, called Baymen, looting Spanish ships carrying logwood and slaves. Many pirates decided cutting logwood would be as profitable as stealing it and settled in present day Belize where Spain exercised little control. In 1862 England gained control and it became British Honduras. Belize was declared an independent nation state within the British Commonwealth in 1981. Today it

has a Parliamentary system and is one of the top off shore banking centres in the hemisphere. It is the only English speaking country in Central America and a member of the Caribbean community CARICOM.

**Geography**

Belize is located on the Caribbean coast of northern Central America. It shares a border on the north with the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, on the west with the Guatemalan department of Peten, and on the south with the Guatemalan department of Izabal.

Belize is home to the second largest barrier reef in the world.



Belize covers 22,960 square kilometers, an area slightly larger than El Salvador or Massachusetts. The abundance of lagoons along the coasts and in the northern interior reduce the actual land area to 21,400 square km.

Belize is shaped like a rectangle that extends about 280 kilometers north-south and about 100 kilometers east-west, with a total land boundary length of 516 kilometers. The undulating courses of two rivers, the Hondo and the Sarstoon, define much of the course of the country's northern and southern boundaries. The western border follows no natural features and runs north-south through lowland forest and highland plateau. The north of Belize consists mostly of flat, swampy coastal plains, in places heavily forested. The flora is highly diverse considering the small geographical area. The south contains the low moun-

tain range of the Maya mountains. The highest point in Belize is Doyle's Delight at 3,688 ft. (1,124m)

The Caribbean Coast is lined with a coral reef and some 450 islets and islands known as cayes (pronounced "keys"). They total about 690 square kilometers and form the approximately 200 mile (322 km) long Belize Barrier Reef, the longest in the Western hemisphere and the second longest in the world after the Great Barrier Reef. Three of the four coral atolls in the Western Hemisphere are also located off the coast of Belize. 38% of Belize and its cayes are protected.

### **Climate**

Belize has a tropical climate with pronounced wet and dry seasons, although there are significant variations in weather patterns by region. Temperatures vary according to eleva-



*The southern U.S.  
is three times  
more likely to be  
hit by a hurricane  
than Belize*

tion, proximity to the coast and the moderating effects of the northeast trade winds of the Caribbean. Average temperatures in the coastal regions range from 24 ° C in January to 27 ° C in July. Temperatures are slightly higher inland, except for the southern highland plateaus, such as the Mountain Pine Ridge, where it is noticeably cooler year round. Overall, the seasons are marked more by differences in humidity and rainfall than in temperature. Belize weather can easily be compared to that in South Florida, average rainfall varies considerably, ranging from 1,350 millimeters in the extreme south to less than 500 millimeters to the north. The dry season is shorter in the south, normally only lasting from February to April. A shorter, less rainy period, known locally as the “little dry”, usually occurs in late July or August, after the initial onset of the rainy season. According to the most recent vegetation surveys, about

sixty percent of Belize is forested, with only about twenty percent of the country’s land subject to human uses (such as agricultural land and human settlements).

Adding to Belize’s biodiversity are extensive savannah, scrubland and wetland regions, as a result both marine and terrestrial ecosystems are blessed with a host of flora and fauna.

Currently, about 60% of the country’s electricity is generated through hydro or biomass, with the rest provided by fossil fuel plants. All of this, thanks to the commitment of the Belizean government to achieve a 100% renewable energy goal, with a projected 90% completion rate by 2033.



*Because of its  
diversity there is  
little racial tension in  
Belize.  
Belizeans are some  
of the friendliest  
people  
on the planet.*





# PEOPLE AND CULTURE

A CROSS-POLLINATION

OF CULTURES

LIVING IN HARMONY

The first time you pass a Belizean – on foot, bike, or in a car – they’ll say “hi” or wave. Always. When the Placencia Road was paved in 2009, the workers waved at every car that passed – for more than a year. Many people consider Belize the friendliest place on the globe. Belize values its rural roots.

Belizeans are never in a hurry, and rarely busy. This is the Caribbean. *Carpe Diem*. Relax and enjoy.

Foreigners come to love the slow pace. Even Belize’s national animal, the Baird’s tapir, takes it easy. This mountain cow-like creature likes nothing better than to swim and wallow, with its head just above water—especially during the long, warm nights. As for Belize’s national bird, the brightly colored Keel Billed Toucan, it prefers to nest in holes in trees. It then uses its great, canoe-shaped bill, with serrated edges, to cut and eat fruit. What a life.



*All visitors traveling  
to Belize require a  
valid passport.  
Upon entry a 30 day  
tourist visa is granted.  
This visa can be  
renewed for \$25US*

# GETTING TO AND AROUND

Many people still choose to drive from the US to Belize. From the Texas border the trip is approximately 3000 km (1,864 miles). When driving through Mexico it is a good idea to stay on major freeways and travel by day. A dependable car, protective insurance and determination will assure your arrival. In order for visitors to drive into Belize from Guatemala or Mexico, a temporary importation permit must be requested at entry. Permits are valid for a month and can be extended by applying to the customs department. To get a permit, one must present travel documents and identification, proof of ownership, proof of insurance or any car rental documents.

Another way to get to Belize is to take an ADO bus from Mexico which are modern and comfortable. Be sure to pack a sweater, as the air conditioning is set to 11. There is an overnight ADO leaving Cancun nightly with stops in Playa del Carmen, Tulum and Chetumal. All documents are presented to the officers at the Belize border.

## Entry Requirements

All visitors to Belize must present a valid passport before entering the country. Driver's licenses and birth certificates are not considered travel documents and cannot be used to enter the country.

All passports must be valid when enter-

ing the country and until the day of departure. All visitors entering Belize are given a 30 day tourist visa which can be extended every month. Extensions are granted at a cost of US \$25 for the first 6 months, after this period, the fee increases to US \$50.

## Arriving by Air

Travelers will find that flying is one of the most convenient ways to reach Belize. International air service is provided by gateways in Dallas, Houston, Miami, Charlotte, Newark in the United States serviced by Continental and United. Flying from Mexico and San Salvador is also an option with flights by TACA and Tropic Air.

## Arriving by Ship

Maritime ports of entry are: Belize City, Corozal, Dangriga, Big Creek, San Pedro and Punta Gorda. You are required to report your entry to the police or immigration authorities as soon as possible after entering Belizean territory. Small, regularly scheduled water taxis travel between Punta Gorda in the southern district of Toledo and Puerto Barrios in eastern Guatemala. There is also a fast ferry from San Pedro to Chetumal which operates daily.



Most visitors travel to Belize by air, but you can also get here by road or boat.

## Getting Around

Traveling within Belize is safe, fast and easy. Planes and buses transport passengers throughout the country daily and a number of agencies have vehicles available for rent. A list of reliable rental companies is available on the last pages of this guide.

## Inland by Air

The most time efficient option for traveling within Belize is by plane. Regularly scheduled flights cover the country and provide passengers with a vantage point that leaves many wishing that the flight times were not so quick.

## Driving in Belize

Driving in Belize is relatively easy and safe. Besides the highways, the rest of the roads are one or two lanes and are unpaved but, with little traffic. If trying to reach remote or off-the-main-road destinations, it is recommended to drive in a 4WD vehicle. Driving requires a valid driver's license from your home country. There are occasional police check points usually near major towns that may require you to stop and provide legal documents, as well as proof of your liability insurance. Plenty of gas stations are located near the larger towns and mechanics can be found in Belize City, Belmopan, San Ignacio and Orange Walk. Traffic is very light on the highways and slower vehicles should cause no problems. Apply caution when approaching roads that may seem impassable. Always carry water, a spare tire and at least a half-tank of gas before venturing out for a long or unpredictable drive.

## Bicycle

Bicycles have grown in popularity but motorcycles and mopeds are scarce, though with the price of gas nearing US\$5 a gallon, small scooters and motorcycles are becoming more popular. Mountain Biking has become more and more popular with many jungle trails to explore.

## Highways

Belize has four major asphalt-paved two-lane roads: the Northern Highway between Belize City and Mexico (130 kilometers), Hummingbird Highway from Belmopan to Dangriga (88 kilometers), Southern Highway from Dangriga to Punta Gorda, and Western Highway from Belize City to San Ignacio. (119 kilo-

meters). Most maps also display Old Northern Highway which provides access to Altun Ha. This road is single lane and paved in places, but deteriorates dramatically immediately north from the access road to the ruins.

There is also the Coastal Highway, also known as "Manatee Highway" or "the shortcut", which joins the Western Highway west of Belize City with the Stann Creek Valley near Dangriga. This highway is all gravel and may wash out in heavy rains. It's a good idea to stick to the major highways that are in good condition year-round.

## Taxis

Taxis are unmetered, with fare schedules varying by city. Fares for travel outside the cities are based on the distance covered. Because taxis are unmetered, discussing the fare with the driver first is recommended. Typical rates within Belize City are US\$2.50-5. Taxi fare from the international airport to the center of Belize City is fixed at US\$25 for up to four persons.



## Inland by Bus

In Belize City, buses arrive at and depart from the Novelto Bus Terminal, which is .4 Miles west of the Swing Bridge. There are two types of bus service, the regular which stops for passengers en route, and the express service which stops only at main towns. Buses in Belize operate daily. The buses are old Bluebird school buses, not air-conditioned and not well equipped to handle luggage. The least expensive way to get around Belize on a day to day basis is by bus. Buses are the primary mode of transportation for most Belizeans, routes run on regular schedules and travel to each town and districts several times daily. Tickets can be bought ahead of time at bus terminals. However, the most common way of catching a bus is by flagging it down the road.



*A departure fee is charged  
to all non-Belizeans upon  
leaving the country:  
By air: US \$ 35  
by land: US \$ 18.75  
by sea: US \$ 3.75*



# ECOSYSTEMS IN BELIZE

Experience five different eco systems within a two hour drive.

1.

## Tropical Rain Forest

Much of Belize is still unexploited wilderness. More than half of the country consists of subtropical rainforest or jungle with over 75% under government protection. All this unspoiled wilderness has led to the growth of ecotourism, which is now the nation's second largest source of revenue. The Belize rainforest is home to an incredible variety of wildlife including wildcats such as the elusive jaguar, ocelot and puma. Tapirs, crocodiles, howler monkeys and armadillos also live in this ecosystem. The jungle is also home to countless Mayan cities and caves, most of which are undiscovered.

2.

## Coral Reef

The Belize barrier reef is home to a large diversity of plants and animals, it is estimated that only 10% of these species have been discovered. A World Heritage Site, the reef is a series of coral structures that span 300 kilometers in length. Astonishingly beautiful, this ecosystem is diverse and balanced. It is Belize's top tourist destination, popular for scuba diving and snorkeling. The reef is home to more than 500 species of fish, 36 soft coral species, 70 hard coral species and hundreds of invertebrates.

BOASTING FIVE

DIFFERENT ECOSYSTEMS

BELIZE HAS BECOME

THE CAPITAL

OF ECO-TOURISM

3.

### Savannah

The savannas of Belize occupy about 10% of the country's land area, providing distinctive landscapes of ecological value. This ecosystem is mostly present in the northern part of the country. Tropical savannahs are dominated by grasses, sedges, shrubs, trees and palms. It is an ecosystem also known as "pine ridge" as the pine trees are the most obvious large tree visible. The coarse soil is made up of hard quartz and shallow gravel. At first glance the savannah appears to have no wildlife roaming around, however, the most frequently seen mammal is the Belizean gray fox who feeds on small mammals and insects. At nights, armadillos roam the land and pumas are the dominant predator.



4.

### Rivers

Belize has approximately 27 major rivers with tributaries that encompass 4 separate watersheds. These rivers carry crystal clear rainwater containing plantmatter and energy from the rainforests to the mangroves and eventually to the sea. They are also the source of hundreds of beautiful waterfalls. Many rivers run through caves and offer spectacular cave tubing experiences. Other activities include kayaking, fishing and whitewater rafting.



5.

### Mangroves

Growing in seawater, mangroves are unique trees that purify water from pollutants, prevent erosion and provide shelter to countless species of fish, reptiles, birds and mammals. During hurricanes, mangroves dissipate wave energy. 34 percent of Belize's coastline is mangroves which provide a beautiful backdrop for many activities, such as kayaking and fishing.





# ACTIVITIES NEVER STOP

BELIZE HAS SOMETHING  
FOR EVERYONE

No country has as many world-class outdoor activities in such a small area.

Belize is a great destination for travelers looking for outdoor activities and adventure. From diving on the reef to exploring the ancient Mayan cave system, one visit to Belize is never enough.

## **Diving and Snorkeling**

Named one of the seven underwater wonders of the world and most amazing place on the planet by Discovery Channel, the Belize barrier reef is one of the world's premier diving destinations. There are many places to dive and snorkel all along Belize's territory and include the

cayes, the atolls, various spots on the reef and the mainland. Water visibility generally reaches 100+ feet. The water temperature stays close to 27 °C (81 °F) all year long and the barrier reef makes for calm water almost year round.

## **Canoeing / Kayaking**

Breathtaking views and nature trails are plentiful in Belize. With abundant water sources, canoeing and kayaking are very common and rewarding activities. Dozens of streams cut through the Belizean shallow soils and create cascading waterfalls and

refreshing natural pools. The riverbanks are heavily forested and limestone rocks protrude along the rivers. Many tropical fish, turtles and river otters share these rivers with kayak aficionados. Swimming and swinging from vines are the best way to escape the tropical heat.

## **Windsurfing / Kiteboarding**

The cayes and islands that surround Belize are perfect places to enjoy wind sports. It is not unusual for newcomers to pick up a new skill. Quiet waters can also provide a perfect opportunity for beginners to



take their first lessons. For the more experienced kilters there are several wave sites and access to the swells on the outer reef. It is not unusual to be chased by dolphins.

### **Birdwatching**

In Belize you have the opportunity to observe hundreds of different birds. It is possible to spot over 100 in just a couple of days. Belize has recorded more than 540 species within its borders. Because of its small population and lack of industry, much of the country has remained undisturbed. On various islands you will find reserves for birds such as the reserve for the black catbird on Caye Caulker and a bird sanctuary on Man-of-War Caye where you will find pelicans, frigate birds and brown bobbies.

### **Caving**

Belize has an extensive cave system. These limestone caves are home to countless mayan archeological sites. Although most caves have not been thoroughly explored yet and because

of their isolation you will find natural splendors, pottery and abundant species of animals such as blind white crayfish. Rio Frió, St. Herman's and Barton Creek Cave are some of the caves that are accessible and waiting to be explored. Many caves are closed to public exploration because most have archaeological significance.

### **Fishing**

A big part of Belize's tourism industry is fishing, for Belizean waters are teeming with gamefish. Although, many Belizeans rely heavily on fishing for subsistence and primary income, the lack of sophisticated commercial fishing has left the fish reserves virtually unchanged. Anglers all over the world gather in Belize for fishing tournaments such as the Placencia Grand Slam, where fishermen land a permit, a tarpon and a bonefish in the same day. The coastal flats in Belize are a

great place for fly-fishing.

### **Sailing**

Thanks to the Mesoamerican reef, the coastal waters of Belize are extremely calm and shallow. Although this limits access to larger ships, it is a paradise for smaller vessels and sailboats. Catamarans are very popular in Belize and there are several yacht charter companies that offer 1-7 day full-service caye excursions (island excursions). The tradewinds are consistent throughout the year, often reaching 25 knots.

Not enough activities? How about horseback riding, parasailing, white water rafting, cave tubing, jungle hiking, diving off waterfalls or simply enjoying a local rum-infused drink with fresh fruit?





# STARTING A BUSINESS

EXPLORE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES

FOR ENTREPRENEURS

If you're planning to set up a business in Belize, one of the first things you need to do is look into Belize's various investment incentives. In recent years, the government of Belize has worked hard to attract foreign investment. Tourism has exploded and, now draws international attention. BELTRAIDE (Belize Trade and Investment Development Service) is a governmental organization designed to encourage and facilitate investment in all businesses as they set up in Belize. Some sectors such as fishing, sugar cane and retail industries are reserved for Belizeans. However, any business that benefits the economy and creates jobs for Belizeans is eligible to apply for various investment incentives. Beltraide offers tax holidays and duty exemptions for the first years of operation. The four most popular incentives are:

**Fiscal Incentives Act** - Duty exemptions for up to 15 years and tax holidays are granted to encourage investment. Duty exemptions apply to supplies like building materials, office equipment, agricultural machinery, utility and transport vehicles.

**Export Processing Zones (EPZ)** - Areas of Belize where businesses are exempt from import and export duty, as well as most taxes. Focused on promoting the export of manufactured goods.

**Commercial Free Zones (CFZ)** - Areas of Belize where businesses are exempt from various duties, as well as many taxes, with fewer government restrictions. Focused on various activities like manufacturing, packaging, warehousing and distribution of goods and services.

**International Business Companies (IBC)** - These are basically offshore companies. IBC's are not permitted to own

land or conduct business in Belize, but aren't subject to Belizean taxes as well as many other requirements for Belizean companies.

Starting a company in Belize is easy. Corporations in Belize are known as Limited liability companies and can be formed by anyone, tourists included. Two directors are required to start a business, and the Belize government allows 100% foreign ownership of a company. The procedures required to start a company are listed below:

Procedure	Time to Complete
Conduct a name search at the Companies' Registry	1 day
Register company statutes and memorandum and articles of association at the Companies' Registry	2 days
Submit application to City Council for a trade license	1 day
Receive inspection from City Council inspector	20 days
Pay for the trade license at the City Council	1 day (simultaneous with procedure 4)
Make a company seal	2 days
Register the company for business tax at the income tax department	10 days
Register the company for general sales tax (GST) at the GST office	2-3 weeks (simultaneous with procedure 7)
Register the employees with the Social Security Board	2 days (simultaneous with procedure 7)

## Taxes

Fiscal year begins on April 1st in Belize. All individuals, partnerships, corporations or self employed persons who are operating or conducting a business in Belize are required to pay business tax, which ranges from 0.75 percent to 25 percent depending on the industry. Business tax is paid on total revenues without any deductions for expenses such as property taxes, insurance, rental costs and so forth. Business tax payments are made monthly, due on the 15th day of the following month. Some businesses and business activities qualify for tax breaks and tax exemptions in Belize, such as credit unions and charitable institutions.



For more information on the steps needed to set up a company in Belize, please visit:

[www.wbconsulting.org](http://www.wbconsulting.org)

*The government of Belize has gone to great lengths to attract foreign investment.*



# REAL ESTATE IN BELIZE

THERE ARE NO RESTRICTIONS

ON FOREIGN NATIONALS OWNING PROPERTY IN BELIZE

**T**he process of buying property in Belize is relatively simple and similar to that of the UK, Ireland, the US or Canada. The official language in Belize is English, thus cutting out many of the biggest problems faced by overseas property buyers caused by a lack of understanding and the difficulties of translation.

Belize also operates politically as a member of the British Commonwealth, and as a former British colony has based its legal and land ownership legislation on the model of English law. This makes the process easy and trouble-free for foreign buyers.

The Belizean dollar is officially pegged to the US dollar at a rate of two to one, giving the market stability from the fluctuations of the currency market to a certain extent. The same notes of caution should be highlighted when buying property in Belize as in any other country. Always use an attorney and a realtor you feel comfortable with. Realtors in Belize are not licensed, so choose a realtor who has a real estate background and a good code of ethics.

The internet gives a reasonable cross section of available

properties, but the **good deals rarely make it online.**

## The Buying Process

The process of buying titled property in Belize takes somewhere between 30 and 90 days. Once an offer has been made and formally accepted, a deposit must be paid into an escrow account as both parties sign a formal sales agreement, followed by a period to allow for the relevant due diligence to be completed (e.g. Title Search). Once due diligence is completed and satisfied, funds are transferred out of escrow, transfer documents are lodged with the government, and a new title is issued.

Much of Belize is still owned by the Crown (government) and has been leased to Belizeans, be very careful in dealing with this type of land.

Belize real estate is still very affordable. Beachfront prices range from \$1000 USD to \$4000 USD per linear foot, about one third the Caribbean average. This means you can get a piece of beachfront paradise for under \$200,000 US Dollars! For buyers looking for the serenity of the rainforest, acreage can be found for as little as



\$2000 USD an acre.

The taxes in place for buying a property in Belize are small compared to other countries in the region. Transfer or stamp tax is due only on properties valued at more than US\$10,000, and at a rate of five percent above this price. The starting price for a brand-new luxury condominium in the top new development starts under \$200,000's.

Legal fees should come to somewhere around two percent of the purchase cost and there is a nominal fee of up to US\$700 for the Agreement of Sale.

Stamp duty is 8% and is paid by the buyer on all real estate purchases. Running costs of property in Belize are also low, with property tax levied under 1 percent of the property values.

*Any questions?  
To speak to a local  
Canadian realtor  
please contact us at:*

[info@remaxvipbelize.com](mailto:info@remaxvipbelize.com)





BELIZE'S LOW COST  
OF LIVING MAKES IT  
ONE OF THE WORLD'S  
GREATEST  
RETIREMENT HAVENS

# RETIREMENT PROGRAM

Named #2 best retirement haven by International Living Magazine, Belize has gone to great lengths to attract foreign retirees, such as the **Qualified Retirement program**. This program has incentives that allow you to import your household items and vehicles duty-free. A QRP also pays no tax on foreign-earned income. To qualify, one must simply be aged 45 years or older, have a monthly income of at least \$2,000 US dollars and comply with several other minor requirements. Incredibly, you must also live in Belize for a minimum of one month out of the year.

## To qualify for the QRP you must:

Be 45 years or older, you can also include your spouse and dependents under the age of 18 in the program.

Submit an application along with:

1. Birth certificate.
2. Marriage certificate.
3. A police record from your most recent place of residence, issued within a month prior to the application.
4. A copy of each page (including blank ones) in your passport. Retain a notary public to certify the copy with his or her seal and

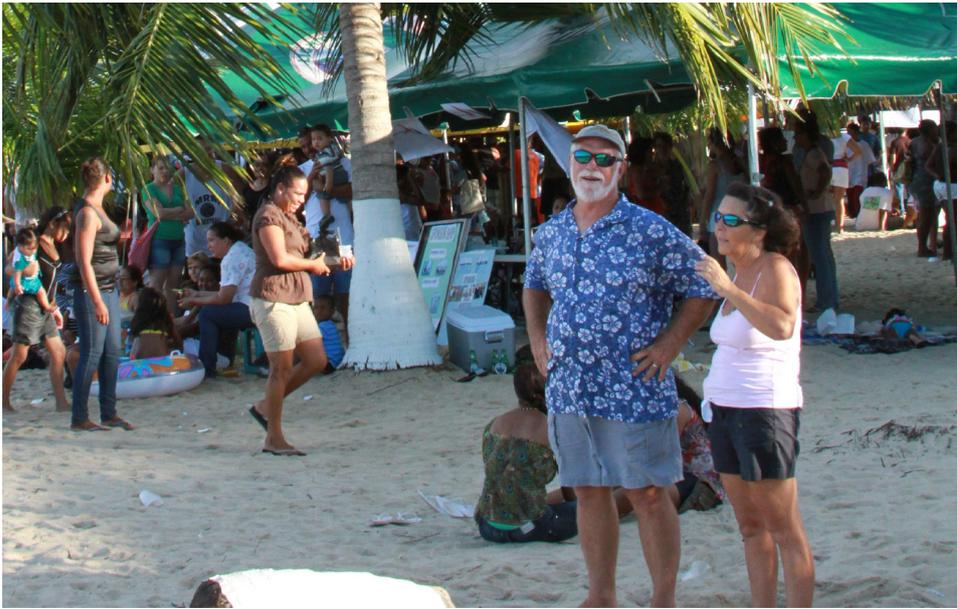
mark how many pages are in the passport, the passport number, and your name.

5. Proof of income. This can be in the form of a statement from a pension of an annuity company or from your bank. The statement must show that your income is at least \$2,000 a month or the equivalent of at least \$24,000 a year.

6. Medical certificate stating that you are in good health and not HIV-positive

7. Color photos--four recent front-view and four side-view passport-size photographs of yourself and any dependents who are applying.

8. You must also submit a non-refundable \$100 application fee plus a "program fee" of \$500 for yourself and \$350 for each dependent. If you're accepted into the program, you'll owe an additional \$100. Also figure on \$2,500 to \$5,000 to retain an attorney who can steer you through the application process.



*The Qualified Retirement Program is classed as one of the best in the world for tax breaks*

### **Advantages of the QRP**

Paying no Belizean tax on foreign earned income — you won't be taxed twice on money you're bringing into the country. As a QRP you can import your household goods tax-free up to a total exemption amount of \$15,000. You can also bring in a vehicle tax-free, which can be a car, a light aircraft or a boat. In fact every five years you

can import a new vehicle tax-free as long as you sell the original vehicle outside of Belize.

In many countries you have to make a significant financial commitment in order to qualify for a program that provides financial incentives for living in the country. In Belize, you must simply prove an income of at least \$2,000 a month.

# Now BELIZE

REAL ESTATE



# ESCAPE TODAY

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE

With tensions abound in North America, “Belize real estate” Google searches are at an all time high.

Even before the US presidential election, Belize had long been a destination for North Americans looking to make a change in their everyday lives. With millions of people searching for an escape from hectic city life and tensions abound, it is no wonder Google searches for “**belize retirement**” and “**belize real estate**” are at their highest level ever recorded. With a political shift in the US and Canada it is only a matter of time before Belize experiences a new wave of North American second-home buyers, thrill seekers, and retirees looking for their own piece of paradise at a decent price.

During his first visit to Placencia, Belize in 2001, Raymond

Turner did not expect to become the owner of a beachfront property in Maya Beach. A few weeks after he stepped foot in the Caribbean ocean for the first time, he learned from a local expat a fact that would change his retirement plans that same night. There are two real estate markets in Belize: a market for foreign buyers looking at real estate websites and classified ads in New York City newspapers, and a market for local land buy-

ers. Within 90 days of his first Belizean adventure, and with the help of a local broker, Raymond became the proud owner of his first step to retirement, spending less than \$200,000 USD for his beachfront lot. While prices today are not what they were at the turn of the century, most older Belizeans at some point were lucky enough to be granted land under the condition that the



land was productive. Today, these locals are ready to sell their lands at prices far below the international market. With a decade of experience, Remax VIP has developed relationships with local brokers who can find these bargains and offer them to qualified clients. These deals never make it to property magazines or real estate websites, as they are sold immedi-

ately. Year by year, Belize shatters the myth that owning land in the Caribbean is unaffordable to the average person; With expat communities growing their ranks south of the USA, all eyes are turning to this beautiful country as it becomes a haven for all those seeking to escape life in the city. **Is this the opportunity you've been looking for? Contact our team and let us find the property where the rest of your life becomes the best of your life.**



# HEALTH INSURANCE

Belize has a good and relatively cheap medical system. Minor ailments can be treated in most areas at local doctors and clinics. Belize Medical Associates ([www.belizemedical.com](http://www.belizemedical.com)) or Belize Healthcare Partners can handle more serious health issues at reasonable costs. There is also a choice of several public hospitals in this country, though most expats prefer to visit private clinics.

Many retirees living in Belize purchase Global Health Insurance from US providers that cover evacuation costs to a private clinic in the US/Canada for complicated conditions or accidents.

More information on this type of coverage as well as many other plans can be found at [www.wbconsulting.org](http://www.wbconsulting.org)



# BELIZE OCEAN CLUB

---

## ADVENTURE RESORT

---

**Belize Ocean Club Adventure Resort is situated on the beautiful Maya Beach, just a short journey away from the quaint village of Placencia and all the activities Belize has to offer. This PADI 5-Star Dive Resort is perfectly located for access to both jungle and ocean adventures. Complete your vacation experience by seeing the stunning Belize Barrier Reef, Mayan Mountains or simply lounging by our incredible pool and its tropical swim-up bar. After a day of adventure, live in luxury with a unique all-suite experience. Suites are one or two bedrooms and equipped with oversized private sea-side balconies and spacious en-suite bathrooms, kitchens and living areas. It's the Caribbean resort of your dreams.**

VISIT [WWW.BELIZEOCEANCLUB.COM](http://WWW.BELIZEOCEANCLUB.COM)