

# Belize before and after independence

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Belize has evolved since its official declaration of Independence from the United Kingdom in 1981. Before independence Belize-British Honduras-was a country that was part of an Empire; that was under the rule of Her Majesty, Queen ElizabethII. However because of the British strategy of acquiring territories such as Belize, The United Kingdom would feed on Belize's resources, and manipulate the country. This strategy left Belize crippled and underdeveloped. Prior to its Independence Belize had poor standards of living, poorly equipped schools, and below par social life.

However infrastructural and technological changes have proved to be the catalyst that have improved how people live, learn at school, and their social lives. Standards of living in Belize have changed drastically over the years compared to the years before independence. The standards of living before independence were very low, almostpovertylevel if you may say so. People still relied on what was available to them in order to try to live a prosperous life. Because of the nature of British Honduras- Belize- at that time development in the country was little or very slow.

Most people lived in very poorly constructed houses, with no heed to appearance or color . They were either made of bush sticks or board cabins, that offered no real protection from the weather and its elements. Modern furnished houses were few at that time; only necessities were most commonly found in houses such as a bed or sleeping mat and a seating room area. With a very basic kitchen most commonly found outside of the house fuelled by wood. Plumbing in those days was also very basic with mostly only cold water.

Diet also differs from that of today. The years before independence food was mostly, food that was grown in backyard gardens by people; markets were unusual. Most common foods in those times were mostly beans, sweet potato, cassava, potatoes, yams, and poultry raised in back yards such as chickens and ducks. On the contrary modern day Belize has been revolutionized country with improvements in standards of living. Houses these days are those of character and distinction.

The inside of the houses is planned to detail with bedrooms with comfortable bedding, wardrobes and painted with its own unique colors, bathrooms with showers with hot water, lounges indoor kitchens and quality appliances that make almost every chore in the house a mere walk over. Most houses are now built from concrete, given a pitch of modern strong roofing, sparkling windows, astounding colors according to fondness and even a well trimmed garden to finish of the look. Even though Wood cabins exist today are well built with quality and attention to the exterior is immaculate. The even have glass windows, doors and even electricity!

The diet of most people have most definitely changed too in Belize years after independence, fine dining areas are available for people to go to and eat, there are more markets available in the cities to buy fresh produce of either fruits or vegetables. If they do not want to eat out, people now have the luxury of cooking quality food at home in the privacy of their own kitchens, products such as canned food or quick foods are now very common in Belize, with products such as Ramen and " Mac & Cheese", having a very supported market of mostly students or people who feel like cooking up quick meals.

Education was very different in Belize during the era before independence was announced. Children attended poorly constructed schools that did not offer an adequate environment for the learners. School had poor seating, poor or no lighting, if it was too hot in class then the only thing to do was open the windows, and most children went to school without the appropriate such as books and pencils in order to do the job with the right tools. Uniforms hardly existed in those times, they were—children—allowed to put on casual clothes to take to school.

Teaching subjects such as History material was also that of a controversial nature, because they were mostly taught about the history of Europe and little about Belize itself and its surroundings such as Central America, The Caribbean and The Americas. Technology in the schools was under developed technology such as computers fans and so on in schools were only available in the better schools. On the other hand after independence the government has made improving education a necessity rather than priority. Children of today's Belize enjoy a good education system that has evolved over the years.

Most schools are constructed with concrete and high grade materials with most schools adopting their own unique colors that represent them as a school, with well groomed gardens. Students are now provided with chairs that have been designed with ergonomics and aesthetics in mind, not only to they get a good chair to sit on, but it is good looking too! Lighting in the classrooms has been improved, and when it's hot the entire teacher has to say “ put on the fans, or get the remote and out on the air conditioner”.

Saying that most children do not have any supplies to take to school these days would be out of line, because most children carry good bags they like, they have most of the books they need to obtain the best chance of passing at school, and most importantly most if not all schools these days in Belize wear unique uniforms that represent the school as a brand and are easily distinguished by a badge that they wear, that identifies which school they come from.

Teaching methods have also changed with the emphasis of teaching to be that of Belize, The Caribbean, The Americas and the rest of the world, which has been made easier by the use of technology such as computer that has improved current affairs of the children in Belize, especially with the introduction of the World Wide Web. Social Life in Belize pre independence is not one that most people who would want to live through, because socially compared to today's hustle and bustle.

Before independence the societal life of most people consisted of mainly socializing around canteens or friends houses to drink homemade alcohol, such as chicha, because company brewed alcohol was not that affordable, and were not that popular. For those who did not fancy alcoholic beverage, options were limited to mostly natural juices and coconut water, because products such as Coca-Cola were not cheap, or readily available. Clubs and Discotheques were not of high quality and importance as they are today, and fashion sense was not as it is today.

Then again after independence Belize turned to their true Caribbean culture of sing and dance, with clubs that provide high quality music and alcoholic beverages that differ from Rum, Brandy, Gin and Lagers such as Belikin

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beers, Lighthouse lager and other beverages that differ to many tastes of people. For now alcoholic drinkers they can enjoy the good company of music and dance in clubs, with their options not just limited to natural juices, but to more choice is now available Company brands such as Coca-Cola provide a wide variety of fizzy drinks, for those seeking energy boosting drinks have choices such as Full Throttle and Red Bull.

All in all the two periods between before and after independence are very different, with today being a more developed country than it was then. Never the less Belize is pretty much a country that has not fully developed yet, and I strongly believe if Belize had stayed under the rule of the Queen, it would have been better of country.