

# Tourism in belize



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Tourism in Belize Belize is one of the countries located on the Caribbean. It is bordered by Mexico to the north and North West and Guatemala to the West and south. Belize also borders the Caribbean Sea to the east, with a coastline measuring 386 km. The country has a land area covering 22, 966 square kilometers according to CIA (para 5). The country's natural resources include timber, arable land potential, fish and hydropower. The majority of the country's population is made up of Afro-Caribbean people who are mainly concentrated at the coastal region and native Mayas in the inland. There are also a number of German speaking Mennonites in the country.

Belize's economy is small, relatively unstable and controlled by private owners. The economy relies mainly on agriculture, tourism, construction and more recently the petroleum sectors. The monarchy's export product is mainly sugar, its main trading partners including the United States, Central America, the European Union and Mexico (Sutherland 260).

Tourism is the main economic mainstay of Belize. Agriculture is also a major economic sector that contributes a considerably high GDP to the country's economy. In 2007 alone, the sector contributed to about 20% of the country's GDP and over 26% of the country's jobs (CIA 2010). The agricultural sector is characterized by mass production of bananas and sugar cane. At the beginning of the country's independence, the tourism sector was shaky due to unease on the political scene. However, as the situation improved, the sector became stronger and manageable. During the 1990s and early 2000s, the sector was very successful. The trend might have continued had it not been for the economic crisis that shook the world in 2008. Belize boasts some world class attractions which include green jungles full of thousands of exotic flora and fauna species, attractive reefs on the <https://assignbuster.com/tourism-in-belize/>

Caribbean Sea coast and several Mayan ruins. The constitutional monarchy offers a whole range of tourist attractions that include wildlife, scuba diving, helicopter touring and about 127 offshore Cayes.

The future looks bright though, since the economy has started to pick up. Tourism arrivals which had been dampened by the global recession, especially in the US, have shown slow signs of recovery. Although these arrivals are way below the arrivals reported before 2008, all indications show that the sector will fully recover in a few years. This will greatly influence and improve real GDP growth in the coming years. The attractiveness of a place for tourist and other economic activities depends much on its security. In terms of security the country remains attractive even to the most timid of tourists.

The government of Belize controls most of the tourism industry in the country through the ministry of tourism. The Belize Tourism board is responsible for planning and implementing tourism programs. The board, in 1998, created the Blackstone Report. This was a tourism strategy program that was meant to help develop tourism in Belize. Following the implementation of this program, the tourism sector was able to achieve major gains, in terms of tourist arrival and world rankings. Belize is ranked as one of the world's top ten adventure travel destinations according to Sutherland (256). In a bid to improve the tourist sector, the Belize Tourism Board has come up with a three year action plan that is expected to sponsor massive changes in the tourism sector (Belize Tourism para 3).

From humble beginnings at the time of independence, tourism in Belize has grown to be one of the country's economic pillars according to Duffy (552). The industry has played a major role in creating jobs indirectly and directly

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to the country's mostly unemployed population. Major players in this industry include airlines, hotels and restaurants. The country's tourism destinations are spread across the country both on land and in sea. In spite of its growing fame as a tourist destination, the country's infrastructure is considered underdeveloped by international standards.

With globalization taking a serious toll on the country, the lives of people have greatly been impacted in various ways. The interaction between natives and tourists have for example seen a cultural changes take root. A lot of products from international markets have found their way in the country, serving both locals and tourists in various ways. Owing to the existence of several jobs in the tourism sector, the standard of living of the population of Belize has continued to improve over time. The youths of the country have been the main beneficiaries of the tourism industry as they engage in selling various products that are needed by visitors or work in resorts that host them.

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