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## The belize collection

Expats bird watching in the Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve.The various options outlined previously for Residency and Retirement in Belize have their pluses and minuses. The main advantages and disadvantages are for you the potential visitor, immigrant or prospective expat to weigh. This country can be a great place to retire or live in but it may not be for everyone. Take a look at our article Top Ten Reasons To Live Or Retire In Belize. We now outline some of the pros and cons of achieving residency in Belize.Tourist CardPros: No commitment, no financial requirement, flexibility, little red tape.Cons: No tax advantages, no official status, inconvenience of having to renew periodically, monthly fee of US\$25. to \$50. per person to extend, possibility rules may change, can't work for pay in the country. If you work on the sly, you are an easy target for extortion, by the authorities. A jealous fellow expat will also be happy to turn you in.Qualified Retired Persons Incentive ProgramPros: Quick approval, application through the Belize Tourism Board rather than Immigration Department, some residency rights (except voting), tax-free entry of household effects, car, boat and airplane, only have to live in country for one month a year.Cons: Must deposit US\$24,000 a year in a local bank, somewhat costly application process, can't work for pay in Belize, must be 45 or over, still have to pay tourist exit taxes when leaving the country.Does not earn points if you want to achieve permanent residency later. Most retirement experts dismiss the Belize Qualified Retired Persons Incentive Program as a convoluted money-making scheme for the government and bureaucrats. Other countries such as Costa Rica, Panama and Nicaragua offer much better terms. But there is a work around.Forget about financial privacy. The government requires that all Qualified Retired Persons submit a yearly bank statement showing compliance with the financial requirements of the program. Most retirement experts regard this as intrusive. Reports are that the program is increasingly being used to facilitate select Belizean-Americans to return to Belize. These individuals, having pre-existing nationality, are able to work making the program very attractive for them, but not for the expats the QRP was originally designed for.Some canny immigrants use the QRP primarily as a way of moving their household effects, vehicles and boats into the country tax-free, including several years worth of expensive linens, clothes and spare parts. Then after a reasonable time, they abandon their QRP status and apply for permanent residency.Permanent ResidencyPros: Full residency rights (except voting in national elections - but you can vote in municipal elections), can work, open to anyone regardless of age, one-time tax-free entry of household effects.Cons: Year-long residency before applying, more red tape, costly application process, and some people are turned down for minor details; you can bring in household goods but NOT a car, boat or airplane free of duty.In addition to these programs, full citizenship in Belize is a possibility for those living here over a certain period. To acquire citizenship, applicants must have been a resident or have permanent residency status for a minimum of five years. Applicants for citizenship need to provide essentially the same supporting documentation as those applying for permanent residency. Applicants also must demonstrate a knowledge of Belizean history. Since most of Belizean history was written by the occupying British over a the past two centuries, reading a couple of books with test answers will suffice.Living As An Expat in Belizelf you're looking for a place to live or to retire that's just like back home, only better; for a United States or a Canada on the cheap; for Florida with ruins, reefs and rum, you may get a rude awakening when you move here. Because Belize isn't just like the U.S. or Canada. It does have world-class rum at economical prices, awe-inspiring ruins, hot women and music, the beautiful Caribbean sea and much more.But the rules are different. The people who make and enforce the rules are different. Sometimes there are no rules. Sometimes there is a set of rules for you, and a different one for everyone else. Just about every expat resident of Belize has some story to tell about problems he or she faced in adjusting to life in Belize - or, in not adjusting. Let's look at some of the differences, and what they mean to you as a potential resident or retiree.First, Belize is a country with a population hardly bigger than a small city in the U.S. Even including recent illegal and uncounted immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, the population of the entire country is only about 400,000.Most expats seeking retirement or residency are middle-class North Americans, from a society still run by white middle-class North Americans. Belize, on the other hand, is a truly multi-cultural society, with Latinos, Creoles, Mestizos, Maya, Garifuna, Asians, and what in the rest of Latin America would be called Gringos, living together in complex and changing relationships. Living together in probably more harmony than anyone has a right to expect.In several areas, Creoles (African descent) dominate - especially in the bureaucracy and security services; increasingly, in other areas Latino Belizeans and immigrants dominate. One thing is for certain, though: In this mix, North Americans and Europeans have very limited power. Money talks in Belize, of course, as it does everywhere. Most of Belize's tourism industry is owned by foreign interests. But much of its industry, banking and agriculture is controlled by multinational companies or by a few wealthy, well-connected Belizean families.In Belize, culture shock is sometimes masked by the surface familiarity. Most Belizeans speak English, albeit a different English. They watch American television. They drive big American or Japanese cars. They even accept U.S. currency. But, underneath the surface sameness, Belize is different, a collection of differences. Cases in point: The ancient Mayan view of time, cyclical and recurring, and even the Mayan view today, are grossly different from the linear way urban North Americans view time.The emerging Latino majority in Belize has social, religious and political views that are quite different from the views of the average North American, or, even of the typical Belizean Creole. In many cases, family connections and relationships are more important here than they are in the U.S. or Canada. Time is less important. Not wanting to disappoint, locals may say "maybe" when "no" would be more accurate. Otherwise honest men may take money under the table for getting things moving. Values North Americans take for granted, such as "work hard and get ahead," do not apply in Belize in the same way. Physical labor, especially agricultural work and service work, because of the heritage of slavery and colonialism, is viewed as demeaning among the Creole ethnic group, reason why they gravitate to and permeate the government bureaucracy.- Source Lan SluderAnother Way For Full Residency and Citizenship in BelizeMay September romance wedding western Belize.Like most countries, full and practically Free Citizenship is available to those who marry a national. While this of course is not possible for those already married, for the single person this can be an attractive option.To get married in Belize, an expat must obtain a marriage license from the Ministry of the Attorney General. This is a relatively simple process and costs but U.S. \$25.00 The country has many eligible women (and men) who may be interested in marrying an expat in hopes of a better life. After one year of marriage, the expat can apply for Citizenship Via Marriage. If there is an issue from the marriage (child) the process is further cemented. Home Our Governance Juan Antonio Briceño, affectionately known as Johnny Briceño (born July 17, 1960), is the fifth Belizean politician to serve as the Prime Minister of Belize. He served as leader of the People's United Party (PUP) and the Leader of the Opposition, from 2008 to 2011. Previously, he was Deputy Prime Minister from 1998 to 2007. On February 8, 2016, Briceño again became Leader of the Opposition in Belize. Read More Hon. Carolyn Trench-Sanford President Hon. Eamon Courtenay People's United Party, (PUP) Leader of Government Business Hon. Isabel Bennett People's United Party (PUP) Hon. Erica Jang People's United Party (PUP) Hon. Christopher Coye People's United Party (PUP) Hon. Collier Montego People's United Party (PUP) Hon. Bevinton Cal People's United Party (PUP) Hon. Michael Peyrefitte United Democratic Party (UDP) Hon. Aldo Salazar United Democratic Party (UDP) Hon. Sheena Pitts United Democratic Party (UDP) Hon. Kevin Herrera Chamber of Commerce Representative Hon. Bishop Moses Benguche Belize Council of Churches and Evangelical Association of Churches Representative Hon. Elena Smith Labour and Civil Society Representative Hon. Osmany Salas NGO Community Representative All Cabinet Members, with the exception of the Attorney General, form the Assembly. Sir Colville Norbert Young OUR 1981 CONSTITUTION provides for a Governor-General who must be a citizen of Belize and who is appointed by the Queen to be her representative in Belize. Go to Judiciary Website for More Info This is a revised edition of the law, prepared by the Law Revision Commissioner under the authority of the Law Revision Act, Chapter 3 of the Laws of Belize, Revised Edition 1980 - 1990. Belize has two levels of government: a state government and a single-tier local government. Over the last five years, local councils have been formally established and the trend has been towards greater decentralization and autonomy. The Objective of "A Framework for Voter Education" is to provide a resource for organizations or individuals who wish to educate Belizeans on the rights and responsibilities of Electors, as well as those desirous of developing curricula in civics. It consists of a collection of salient, topical areas for voter education. Ministries To complement the popular articles: the top luxury Belize resorts, the leading Belizean jungle lodges, the best all-inclusive resorts in Belize, and the finest Belize treehouse getaways, I've created a list of my favorite beach resorts in Belize. At first, I did not want to write another article that includes my top Belize hotel picks since I've already done this in previous posts. However, I realized that many travelers are only interested in visiting beach destinations, and therefore, a one-stop article featuring the best Belize beach resorts would be helpful. Without further ado, here are the top 10 beach resorts in Belize: 1. Victoria House Resort Victoria House is one of my favorite resorts in Ambergris Caye. This beautiful British colonial-style resort is located in South Ambergris Caye, which is a short distance from the island's town: San Pedro. As one of the oldest and most popular beach hotels in Belize, Victoria House has earned its reputation for luxurious accommodations and world-class service. I am particularly fond of their swimming pool that complements their beachfront and their restaurant which is one of the best restaurants in San Pedro. Insider Tip: If you are a fan of pop culture and VH1 TV shows, you will know that Gene Simmons and Shannon Tweed rekindled their love here. 2. Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort Hamanasi Adventure and Dive Resort is known for world-class scuba diving and fishing adventures, however, one thing that sets this resort apart from many other Belize beach resorts is its unique location in Hopkins. Hopkins is a small village that is the ideal hub for travelers interested in experiencing the Garifuna culture. Additionally, the coastal location of Hopkins facilitates easy trips to Mayan temples, caves, and many other eco-adventures in Belize. Insider Tip: The treehouses at Hamanasi offer an awesome rainforest feeling while being beachside. 3. Ramon's Village Resort Inspired by Tahitian cottages, Ramon's Village Resort brings some of the unique aesthetics of Bora Bora to the island of Ambergris Caye. The resort is located in downtown San Pedro but its beachside thatched cabanas, which are surrounded by a tropical garden and swimming pools, provide a sanctuary for guests. Ramon's Village is one of the oldest and most popular resorts in San Pedro and it's named after one of its founders, an island local who pioneered beach vacations in Belize. Insider Tip: Ramon's Village has one of the best beaches in Ambergris Caye. 4. Robert's Grove Beach Resort Robert's Grove is located in beautiful Placencia Village. Placencia is located on an 18-mile peninsula in Southern Belize where you can find the best beaches in Belize. This beachfront resort is only a few minutes away from the downtown core of Placencia, however, staying there makes it seem as if you're miles away from any town. The property is tranquil and serene and it is a great place to come on a honeymoon or family vacation. Insider Tip: Their landscaping is immaculate and they may have the best flower gardens in Placencia. 5. Pelican Reef Villas Resort Awarded one of the best small hotels in Belize by the Belize Tourism Board, Pelican Reef Villas has modern, well-equipped beachfront condos in South Ambergris Caye. The resort is located 15 to 20 minutes away from the hustle and bustle of downtown San Pedro and offers the perfect setting for couples and families. Staying at Pelican Reef Villas is ideal for guests who want to have the option of cooking their own meals in their condo or eating at the onsite restaurant and bar. Insider Tip: Rent a golf cart to have easy access to downtown San Pedro and the many attractions in Ambergris Caye. www.pelicanreefvillas.com 6. Coco Plum Island Resort If you're looking for an all inclusive adults-only resort in Belize, Coco Plum is a great choice. The resort is located off the coast of Dangriga in Southern Belize and offers the perfect island getaway for honeymooners, couples and friends looking for romance or some bonding time together. It consists of a restaurant, bar, and a few beachfront cabanas which makes visitors feel like they're secluded on a small island. Insider Tip: Staying at Coco Plum Cay will give you a glimpse of how Richard Branson must feel, living on a small private island. 7. Mahogany Bay Resort & Beach Club, Curio by Hilton Last year, Mahogany Bay Resort and Beach Club became part of Curio - A Collection by Hilton Worldwide. Located in Ambergris Caye South, it is set up as an exclusive village that offers seclusion to guests but is only 15 minutes by golf cart from the bustling downtown of San Pedro. The resort is the first international luxury hotel chain to enter Belize and since it's inception, it has won the hearts of many. Guests rave about the chic restaurant, private beach, friendly staff, and gorgeously decorated beach cottages and villas that offer a modern take on Belize's British colonial past. Insider Tip: Staying here is perfect for anyone that can afford an uber-luxury beach vacation. www.mahoganybayvillage-hilton.com 8. Chabil Mar Resort If you're really into beachfront villa-style accommodations, Chabil Mar is the ideal place in Placencia. Aside from having beautiful views of the Caribbean Sea, the resort has many amenities and offers guests over 400 feet of private beachfront. Although Chabil Mar is very private, it benefits greatly from being the closest resort to downtown Placencia. This means that guests are always within walking distance from where there's tons of action happening. Insider Tip: Placencia has excellent restaurants and a fun nightlife. If you visit during March to June, you can ask to go swimming with Whale Sharks. 9. The Phoenix Resort The Phoenix Resort is an award-winning beachside resort in downtown San Pedro. It's ideal for travelers seeking to spend a lot of time in the vibrant town of San Pedro yet they want to have the satisfaction of being able to easily find refuge within their nearby hotel. Guests feel right at home with the deluxe condo-style accommodations and a refreshing set of pools. Insider Tip: The Palapa Bar, one of the most popular beach bars in Belize is located less than 5 minutes away. 10. Turtle Inn To top off this list, I'm including Turtle Inn, one of the most famous beach resorts in the world. Turtle Inn is located in Placencia and it's one of Francis Ford Coppola's esteemed Belize resorts. Turtle Inn boasts a beautiful beach setting where guests can enjoy views of the sea or lagoon since the resort sits sandwiched between the Caribbean Sea and the Placencia Lagoon. Insider Tip: Visitors of Turtle Inn also often stay at Francis Ford Coppola's jungle resort: Blancaneaux Lodge. Bonus Tip: Stay at a Belize Jungle Resort Splitting your vacation between the beach and jungle is the perfect way to enjoy the best of Belize. This facilitates easy access to many adventures that can only be done from mainland Belize. Activities such as visiting birding hotspots, exploring the famous ATM cave, cave tubing, ziplining, and horseback riding to famous Maya sites. Jungle resorts that I highly recommend include The Lodge at Chaa Creek in Western Belize, Blancaneaux Lodge in Mountain Pine Ridge, Copal Tree Lodge in Southern Belize, and Chan Chich Lodge in Northern Belize. For a full list of top jungle hotels, visit www.belizeadventure.ca/top-eco-lodges-in-belize. And if you prefer staying high up in the jungle canopy, check out my list of top treehouse resorts. If you enjoyed these picks, please let me know in the comments below! Also, please share this article with your friends and family. Where to Stay in Belize - Top 5 Beach Destinations Ambergris Caye - Belize's largest island and the most popular travel destinationCaye Caulker - Ambergris Caye's smaller, less-visited island that has a laid-back Caribbean vibeHopkins - Charming seaside village that is a cultural hotspot for learning about the Garifuna of BelizePlacencia - Former creole fishing village located on an 18-mile peninsula in Southern BelizeGlover's Reef - Belize's southernmost atoll that is a prime spot for off-the-beaten-path explorersTobacco Caye - Low-key, tiny island, off the coast of Dangriga that is known for cool over-water cabins Pin this! Comments comments

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