

# Belize

*Joined the Commonwealth 1981 - visited by the Queen in 1994*



**Belize is a small  
Central American  
nation bordering the  
Caribbean**

Pop: (2011) 318,000

Capital: Belmopan

Area: 22,965 sq km

Belize has a sub-tropical climate though it is cooler at higher altitudes. Its location means it is very susceptible to hurricanes. The eastern coast is mainly flat with lagoons and mangrove swamps. For up to 32 km out to sea the water is only 5m deep, protected by a barrier reef 297 km long. Inside this lie many tiny coral islands (cays). The interior is mountainous with Victoria Peak rising to 1,122m.

Forests cover 61% of the land area it being rainforest lower down rising to pine and cedar forests higher up. Belize has a strong tradition of conservation with over 18 national parks and reserves, including the world's only jaguar preserve. Tourism is a significant earner though cash crops such as sugar, bananas, citrus fruit and timber are important. Seafood and fish products are also exported.



*A resident of the Cockscomb  
Basin Wildlife Sanctuary and  
Jaguar Preserve*