

# News Releases from around the World.

**CNNMoney**



**New York Times**

**"Belize Real Investment Return Potential"**

**Shelter Offshore Publication**

**Global Property Guide**

**International Living**

**EscapeArtist**



**Monday, Dec. 3, 2007**

*Read more about Belize in International Living Postcards--your daily escape*

Tourism in Belize is up. Cruise ship tourism is way up (300% in five years). If these figures are any indication, this tiny tropical paradise could be on its way to becoming the next hot destination for explorers, expats, retirees, and investors.

From its Caribbean shores to its jungle interior, Belize has great natural beauty--blue water, deserted beaches, and inland retreats, where you can explore Mayan ruins, tall waterfalls, rainforests, and rivers. Until recently, Belize was rarely mentioned in the international media...but the European press is starting to take note.

Europeans don't much visit Belize...but this is set to change.

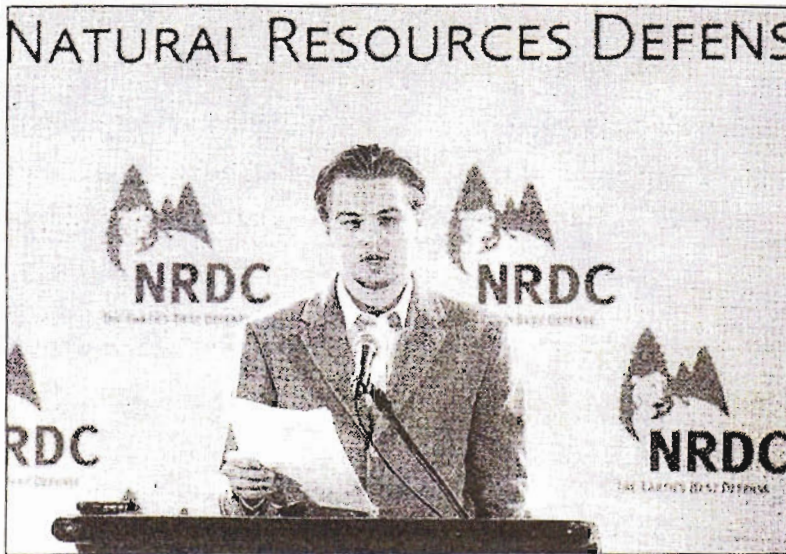
The government of this tiny English-speaking Caribbean haven is actively encouraging more tourists and there are rumors that direct flights from Europe and Canada will connect to Belize City by late 2008 (right now Europeans and Canadians must fly via the States). With these new flights, little Belize will be opened up to a whole new type of real estate buyer--the European.

Europeans, especially the Irish and the Brits, like to invest in overseas real estate--a trend that has increased over the past 10 years. Europe's largest low-cost airline, Ryanair, has expanded its European routes every year since its inception in 1985. Ryanair operates 516 routes across 26 countries from 23 bases. Wherever Ryanair flies, the Irish and Brits have been following.

Vacationers find a new destination and decide it would be a great place for a vacation home. With the influx of this foreign demand, prices subsequently take off. This is what's known as "The Ryanair effect," and real estate markets all over Europe have already experienced this.

But what if the Brits, Irish, and other Europeans now want to expand their real estate portfolios beyond European borders? We think they'll head to the Americas, and drive up prices in places like Belize. Property prices in Belize are still reasonable.

Laura Sheridan  
Managing Editor, *International Living*



Actor Leonardo DiCaprio, who urged the public to 'adopt an environmental lifestyle' as part of a National Resources Defense Council news conference, is hands-on with the building of an eco-friendly Four Seasons resort in Belize.

DAMIAN DOVARGANES  
2003 Associated Press  
file photo

LIZ SMITH

## DiCaprio to build 'green hotel'

**LEONARDO DICAPRIO**, the movie star who stays as "green" as he can, has just closed a deal with the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

Leo owns acres of land in Belize, in the Caribbean. And after much negotiation DiCaprio and the hotel group will join to create a "green hotel." Groundbreaking comes next year, **and he** is said to be hands on and seriously involved in all eco-matters to ensure the environmental friendliness of this spot in paradise.



## Shelter Offshore Publications Says:

### Property in Belize Real Investment Return Potential

Published on 05 November 2007 at 01:48 pm

Filed under: [Home](#) » [Property Abroad](#) » [Property in Belize](#) » Property in Belize Real Investment Return Potential

**Whilst many established property markets in countries all over the world are experiencing a slowdown as of late and even outright stagnation in some cases, new markets are emerging to take their place.**

From Morocco to Cape Verde, real estate investors are finding growing property markets in locations few would have thought of only a few years ago. One such destination that really appears to be a rising star is the Central American country of Belize and with property in Belize you can access real investment return potential.

This commonwealth nation is half a world away from Britain, but that doesn't mean British and even Irish and European investors aren't starting to flock there. With healthy property value increases already a reality, a growing tourist market and even celebrity attention all shining in Belize's favor, the Caribbean nation is rather attractive right now.

In this article we'll take a closer look at Belize and its growing property market. Whilst prices run the gamut from incredibly affordable to extremely high, buyers are finding their investments are growing at a very pleasing pace.

According to Canada.com, real estate experts are predicting very healthy growth in terms of property appreciation levels. Interior locations should see a rise of about 15% per annum. Coastal and tourist destinations are likely to see growth of up to 30% per annum. With the country heavily targeting North American and European retirees, along with tourists, its potential is very much in the spotlight right now. Already a favorite stop for cruise ships and holidaymakers, Belize's tourist trade is estimated by the World Travel & Tourism Council to grow by about 3.8% per annum between 2008 and 2017.

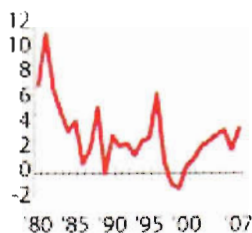
The country offers special incentives to retirees who choose to buy and move there. Its taxes are also considered quite attractive to Brits, as is the exchange rate, which is about 4 to 1 in favor of the pound. Belize does not have a capital gains tax, or an inheritance tax. Property taxes run as low as 1% of market value.

# PER GLOBAL PROPERTY GUIDE

## Belize: Price History

### House Prices Spiraling!

Inflation Rate (%)

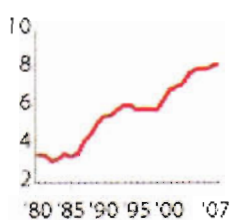


Belize has attracted US real estate buyers for a quarter of a century. Ambergris Caye, the country's exclusive high-end area, is a particular focus of attention.

Belize prides itself on being the seat of Mayan civilization, with well-preserved archeological sites throughout the country, such as Lamanai and Xunantunich, which are easily accessible to tourists.

It is also an ecological paradise, to which tourists flock each year to marvel at the pristine beaches and virgin forests, with the second largest reef barrier in the world, including the Blue Hole, which can be seen even from outer space. Numerous varieties of wildlife shelter in the inlands. Bird watching, nature trailing, and water sports are popular in Belize.

GDP/cap\*

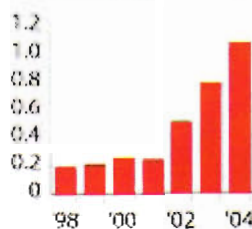


"Especially in the last five years it has gone crazy," says Claudio Azueta of [Southwind Properties](#), which specializes in properties in Ambergris Caye, the country's exclusive high-end area. "Four or five years ago the price for a frontage foot was US\$1,000-US\$1,500.

\*1,000 Belize Dollar

"But we have gotten to US\$4,000 per frontage foot and we have people listing at US\$5,000."

Tourist Arrivals (millions)



Prices in Ambergris Caye tend to be expressed in frontage feet, and the price is not very much affected by the property's 'depth' i.e., whether it is 100x100 feet, or 100x400 feet. This does not apply to town-centre areas of San Pedro, which now fetch US\$15,000 per square foot, up from US\$5,000 per foot 20 years ago.

#### Small-scale developers

Who are the buyers? Mostly small-scale developers, according to Azueta, a condominium developer. "People buy a 100 frontage foot lot for US\$300,000, and then they build on it. For instance in Mata Grande 100 frontage feet costs US\$300,000-US\$400,000, then you build a 2,000 square foot house for US\$200,000, i.e. there is an all-in cost of US\$500,000."

"The drive is to sell units and to have rental properties for travelers and vacationers," says Azueta. Developers build multi-housing units like Belize Beach Resorts, which sits on a 245 foot x 600 foot lot and has 60 condos.

"The original prices six years ago were US\$130,000 to US\$160,000, now they are US\$220,000." Such developments are being encouraged by an increase in tourism even beyond the main November to June season. "Lately we have had a pretty good slow season," says Azueta.



# NEWS RELEASE



InternationalLiving.com ■

## Many Reasons to Live in Belize

Belize sets itself apart from its neighbors in several ways-not least of which is the fact that the population living in Belize speaks English. It makes living and doing business in Belize easy. What's more, Belize is a small, peaceful country where you can beat the bureaucratic beasts by simply walking into the Minister of So-and-So's office and sitting down to talk things out.

Belize, in many ways, is like a big small town. Its far-thinking banking laws have given the nation a distinct advantage when it comes to banking privacy. In an age when the accounts in other jurisdictions are under attack, those in Belize remain secure...no mean feat.

And Belize's retiree program offers attractive incentives to foreigners looking to live in Belize-particularly those who are already planning to declare their permanent residency outside the United States.

Plus, Belize is just plain beautiful. From its Caribbean shores to its jungle interior, this nation has great natural beauty to recommend it-blue water and deserted beaches, inland retreats where jaguar and scarlet macaw still live in their natural habitats.

While it's true that Belize is not the most affordable place to buy property, this country offers economic stability, ease of living, and a cost of living that, while not dirt-cheap, is nevertheless a good value when you compare it to that of other Caribbean retreats.

## Cost of Living in Belize

Belize is not the most affordable place to settle in Central America. You'll likely find prices for some items to be more than what you're used to paying in the United States...but then discover that many services actually cost less.

Monthly living expenses in Belize vary widely, but \$3,000 a month is more than adequate for most couples. The more you entertain and travel, of course, the more your costs will climb. It is possible, however, for a couple to live on considerably less than \$3,000. Bear in mind that prices are generally higher in places like Ambergris Caye or Placencia. Ambergris is an island-and that means everything is imported. You'll pay extra for that transport cost.

On the other hand, if you decide to live in the north of Belize in Corozal and can take advantage of easy shopping trips to nearby Mexico, you can enjoy all the benefits of English speaking Belize...but buy your goods for less just across the border.

### **Eat as the locals do when you live in Belize**

Food prices vary greatly from place to place, but savvy expats living in Belize know how to cut costs and eat better than most Americans do. Dinner, including food and beverages, can cost \$45 a person at an expensive restaurant. But by seeking the advice from local residents, especially expats who know the restaurant scene, you can dine on tropical lobster for less than half that amount.

Or you can order Belizean food and cut costs even more. Sandwiches typically cost less than two dollars, and beer and coffee are about one dollar. On the other hand, a medium-quality bottle of red wine is likely to be about \$15.

Visitors and newcomers should be aware that the cost of food varies drastically from one area of Belize to another and sometimes even within the same town.

### **Other costs when you live in Belize**

Garbage removal: About \$10 a month.

Property maintenance: Yard-workers usually charge \$15 to \$20 a day. Because bushes grow fast in the tropics, some housing developments provide a service to keep property cleared. In Consejo Shores, for example, the fee is \$120 per year. The typical salary for housekeepers in Belize is \$15 day, and if you need a caretaker to look after the house while you're away, figure on \$50 to \$100 a month.

Cars and gasoline: In Belize, you can buy a fairly good used vehicle for about \$3,000 to \$4,000, not much more than you might pay in the U.S. Gasoline, however, is costly. The recent price was about \$5.50 a gallon, but black-market fuel, known as "bucket gas," costs about \$3 a gallon. But be careful: Many sellers of bucket gas are known to give buyers significantly less than a full gallon.

Water: In most parts of Belize, \$15 to \$20 will cover the monthly water bill.

Electricity: Belize Electricity Limited (BEL) is the only commercial provider of electricity, although many houses and condominiums have their own generators.

Phone: A standard phone costs \$56 to install, plus a deposit of \$75. The basic monthly fee is \$13.50, but international rates are high and Belize Telephone Ltd. is the only provider. It costs 70 cents a minute to phone the U.S. during the day and 49 cents in the evening. The respective rates are \$1.10 and 77 cents to Canada and \$1.50 and \$1.05 to Western Europe.

# NEWS RELEASE



InternationalLiving.com ■

## Enjoy a Retirement in Belize

The QRP Program for those who want to retire in Belize

Belize's low cost of living is enough to make it one of the world's great retirement havens. But the country has gone a step further. It also offers incentives to expatriates who want to retire in Belize.

Called the Retirement Persons Program, the plan is just one of the ways that Belize lets you keep more of your assets. Better still, you don't actually have to be retired or even of retirement age. To take advantage of the inducements, you must simply be aged 45 or older, have a monthly income of at least \$2,000, and comply with several other minor requirements. And, almost incredibly, you must live in Belize for only one month a year!

To qualify for the QRP (Qualified Retired Person) program you must:

-Be 45 years old or older. You can also include your spouse and dependents under the age of 18 in the program (or under the age of 23 if the children are in college).

-Submit an application along with the following documents:

- 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 and stating that you don't have a criminal record
- 4) A copy of each page (including blank ones) in your passport. Retain a notary public to certify the copy with his 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 or 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.

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 and, often more importantly, run interference with the bureaucracy.

# NEWS RELEASE



InternationalLiving.com ■

## The \$500 Million Carnival...and You're Invited

*International Living* Postcards--your daily escape

Paris, France

Dear *International Living* Reader,

Tourism in Belize is booming. If recent figures are any indication; this tiny tropical paradise could be on its way to becoming the next Cancun. Between 2003 and 2004 (the most recent year for which complete figures are available), cruise visits to this country increased by a full 55.1%--as opposed to just 13.1%, for example, for the same period in the Bahamas.



Kathleen Peddicord

The cruise industry is impressed with what Belize has to offer, and the Carnival Corporation has just finalized an agreement to build a new cruise port in the Port Loyola area of Belize City. Costing US\$50 million, it will be the largest cruise port Carnival has built anywhere in the world and is expected to generate more than a billion Belize dollars (US\$500 million) in revenue over the first 20 years of the agreement.

I'm not surprised by Carnival's enthusiasm--and not just because of my longtime love affair with Belize. As *Moon Handbooks* recently pointed out, "Belize is the only county within the Caribbean to experience consistent increases in overall tourist arrivals since 1998--including post-9/11, a period that devastated other tourism-dependent areas."

In addition, I've just learned that *Fodor's*, the world's largest publisher of English-language travel guides, is scheduled to produce its first-ever guidebook devoted entirely to Belize.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Peddicord  
Publisher, *International Living*

P.S. We're on the case. As longtime fans, we're thrilled to have reason to return our attentions to this little nation on the Caribbean Sea. Look for news of a new *International Living* Local Office, to be opened soon within these borders.

## **Advantages of the QRP for your Belize retirement**

-You pay no Belizean tax on that income-earned or passive. So you won't be taxed twice on money you're bringing into the country. This means you can still work-just as long as you work from Belize without also generating income within the country. Today, with new telephone and Internet technology it's easy for "retirees" to direct their foreign business activities and operations from within Belize and still maintain tax-free status.

-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, light aircraft, or 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.

-While as a Qualified Retired Person (QRP) you have permanent residency in Belize, for purposes related to international financial services, you're considered a non-resident. That means that you can take advantage of all the offshore banking advantages of Belize while living there "on shore."

## **Residency and Citizenship in Belize**

### **Belize Residency for investors and others**

Until a few years ago, Belize offered an "economic citizenship" program that cost \$65,000, in exchange for many advantages, including a passport for you and your family members, plus full citizenship except for the right to vote. The program was suspended in 2002.

Today, many expats apply for permanent residency in Belize, which makes it easier to travel in and out of the country and to deal with bureaucracy when you're in it-when getting a driver's license, for instance. You must live in Belize for one year to be granted permanent residency. To do this, enter the country on a tourist visa, apply for residency and then renew your tourist visa every 30 to 90 days until residency is granted.

To become a resident, you must pay a non-refundable fee of \$600 if you're American or Canadian. Most other nationals pay slightly higher amounts to cover the cost of a return ticket to the country of origin.

A completed application form (downloadable at [www.embassyofbelize.org](http://www.embassyofbelize.org)) should be submitted to the Immigration and Nationality Department, along with two passport photographs (the backs of which are to be signed by you and a Justice of Peace), recent personal bank statements, and current medical and police records.

### **Citizenship in Belize**

To acquire nationality status, you must have a permanent residence, and be a legal resident for a minimum of five years. There is also a provision for the registration of minor children along with the applicant. All necessary evidence should accompany the application to avoid delays.

For more information contact the Immigration and Nationality Department of Belize, tel. (501)822-611; fax (501)233-505, or the Belize Embassy in Washington DC, or your local Consulate in the U.S.

When dealing with the bureaucracy, it's wise to get the advice from an experienced attorney. Those listed below, who deal with QRP applicants, can also assist with the residency process. Questions about permanent residency should be addressed to the Ministry of National Security and Immigration at (501)222-4620.

## News Releases / Retirement

Excerpt from EscapeArtist.com

**The name Emory King** is probably recognized by more people in **Belize**, (and thousands of people abroad), said Musa, the current Prime Minister. King talks about retirement in **Belize**. King said, "**Belize** has a lot to offer the retiree. The retiree has a lot to offer **Belize**. It can be a symbiotic relationship."

Excerpt from CNNMoney.com / January 20, 2007

**Tom Kelly** has been a professional journalist for 33 years. He served the Seattle Times for 20 years, many as Real Estate Editor. Kelly says, "They look at places where they can kick back, take off their shoes and settle in for a long time" Kelly also says one of the top six hottest markets for 2007 will be **Belize**.

### **Boomers buy island life**

By Mike Williams

Excerpt from Palm Beach Post-Cox News Service

Sunday, November 04, 2007

With U.S. real estate prices in a swoon and Florida stung by steep tax hikes and runaway insurance premiums, Americans in growing numbers are shifting their search for sunny second homes overseas, overcoming long-standing fears about investing in foreign countries.

"Prices are rising about 20 percent a year," said Joanne Hammond, a Canadian who traded snowy Toronto for a house overlooking the beach and a RE/MAX real estate franchise in Puerto Plata. "Two years ago most of our customers were Brits and Canadians, but now it's probably 50 percent Americans."

From Mexico's Maya Riviera to **Belize**, Costa Rica and Panama, new developments are sprouting along once deserted stretches of gorgeous shoreline. Around the Caribbean, posh marina for luxury yachts are popping up or expanding, while developers are snapping up parcels for complexes that often include golf courses, condos and luxury hotels.

A few major projects recently announced or underway:

### **Belize**

--Ara Macao, a 1,000-home residential development featuring a golf course and full-service marina.

--Smuggler's Run Plantation: a 1,000-acre project with 1,440 town homes and condos, marina, hotel, retail and golf course.

Excerpt from LonelyPlanet.com



### Introducing Dangriga

Dangriga is the largest town in southern [Belize](#), and the spiritual capital of the country's Garifuna people. Stretching along the coast, Dangriga has a funky vibe about it – tumbledown and mildly untidy – and for this reason it isn't a major stopover point for most tourists. We think this is a shame: despite sharing a similar ramshackle exterior with [Belize City](#), Dangriga exudes little of the larger city's menace. Though a bit rough around the edges (strangers may ask you for money), Dangriga is generally a safe place to explore and has a good deal of cultural cachet with which to entice visitors to stay an extra day. It's a proud, festive town, one that does its best to make the most of its vibrant Garifuna heritage.

The name Dangriga comes from a Garifuna word meaning 'sweet water,' the town's name having been changed from 'Stann Creek Town' in the 1980s. Dangriga is the birthplace of Punta rock (a fusion of acoustic Garifuna and electric instruments), and is home to a number of notable Garifuna artists, artisans and festivals, not to mention [Belize's](#) only Garifuna museum. With good access to both the central cayes and the Southern and Hummingbird Hwys, Dangriga is also an excellent place from which to launch nautical or jungle excursions.

**Last updated:** Feb 17, 2009

**Travelbelize.org**

### Stann Creek

The journey in by road on the Hummingbird Highway, with breathtaking vistas of the rainforests and the Maya Mountains, takes you all the way into culture rich Dangriga, historic home of the Garifuna people. Opportunity for marine adventure abounds with the nearby coral reef, cayes and coastal villages, while the [Cockscomb Basin](#) bears witness to Belize's lush broadleaf tropical forests that are home to countless species of plants and animals. Stann Creek is ideal for its accessibility to a huge variety of Belizean discovery destinations both inland and out in the sparkling blue waters of the Caribbean.

## **Bullet-proof Belize?**

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Jaimie Kanwar

***Properties in Belize are holding their value as the credit-crunch continues to become more severe, claims one expert...***

Les Calvert, director of overseas property portal ***Property Abroad*** said: "While Belize never really became massive news as an emerging market, its emergence, if largely silent was one of the quickest and most profitable of all overseas property markets.

"A luxury 2 bedroom apartment in Belize is now almost £200,000 to buy. We are advertising several 1 bedroom houses, none of them under £200,000 -- in fact one of them is over half a million pounds. But I certainly wouldn't advise anyone to wait and see if prices drop; they won't! And before you know it prices will begin rising rapidly again."

Belize is home to the world's second largest barrier reef and a lush tropical rainforest. It also has a rich diversity of wildlife and a large concentration of Mayan ruins, all of which are making Belize increasingly popular with international tourists.

Mr Calvert added: "All in all, Belize is a fantastic place to buy a property, whether you are buying a holiday home or an investment property".

Source: [www.Property-abroad.com](http://www.Property-abroad.com)

# INTERNATIONAL **LIVING** POSTCARDS



*The English-speaking Caribbean paradise of...Belize..*

## The "Easiest" Country in Central America

International Living Postcards—*your daily escape*  
Wednesday, July 29, 2009

Dear International Living Reader,

Moving and living abroad for any reason is a big decision. Even if you're only thinking about a part-time move, the list of challenges can be long.

But **Belize** is one politically stable little Central American country that strikes a couple of those big challenges right off the list.

Especially for anyone from the U.S., Canada, or the U.K., it's probably one of the easiest places on earth to relocate.

And the fact that it's beautiful and affordable only sweetens the deal.

—Recommended By IL—

Formerly British Honduras, **Belize** is a true Caribbean paradise. And it offers several important pluses for anybody looking to ease into a move abroad.

First, English is the national language. You'll be talking to store keepers, real estate agents, taxi drivers, bank tellers, and waiters in a language you already understand. Even more importantly, any contract you enter into will be written in English. Strike off your to-do list

the challenges of learning a new language and needing multiple versions official documents.

Second, the Belize dollar is pegged to the U.S. dollar at two-to-one, and the U.S. dollar is commonly accepted in Belize. Strike tricky currency conversions, anxiously watching exchange rates, and constant trips to the *casa de cambio* off the list.

Third, the tax situation in Belize is easy to manage. No taxes on foreign-derived income. No capital gains tax. No corporate tax. No inheritance tax. That's easy, isn't it? Strike convoluted foreign tax rules off the list.

Fourth, the population of Belize is a little over 300,000. That's not the population of the largest city in Belize... that's the entire country. And Belize is only 180 miles long and 68 miles wide. So it's easy to find the people, offices and resources you need to get things done. Strike getting lost in the crowd off the list.

Fifth, Belize has the Qualified Retirement Program, and you don't have to be retired to take advantage of it. If you're at least 45 years old and have a monthly income of at least \$2,000 from a pension or annuity (including Social Security), you can qualify. This allows you to bring all your personal goods to Belize tax-free. Strike from the list the maze of customs and duty regulations that exist in most other Central and South American countries.

Last but not least, it's easy to enjoy yourself in Belize. With miles of tropical coastline, the second-longest barrier reef on earth, some of the best diving and snorkeling on the planet, lush forests and mountains, immense natural preserves, vast river and cave systems, and a wealth of important Maya archeological sites, there is always something to do in Belize.

Add it all up, and Belize makes it easier than almost any other country on earth for you to make your move abroad.

Stay happy and healthy,

Dan Prescher  
Publisher, International Living