

## **BELIZE FACTS AND FIGURES**

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### **SECTION: PART II: THE PEOPLE OF BELIZE AND THEIR HISTORY/THE CREOLES**

#### **The Creoles (Kriols)**

The Creole culture of Belize developed as the British and African cultures mixed over the generations. During the colonial period, the Creoles were the majority in Belize. After Independence, many Creoles have emigrated to the USA and the population has not grown as much as the Mestizos within Belize.

Belize's Creole culture started with the sexual coercion and exploitation of African women by European slave owners. Over time, a distinct culture that embraced both African and European progenitors developed.

The center of Creole culture lies in Belize City as it has since the late 1700s. Apart from the traditional home of Belize City, distinctly Creole villages include Flowers Bank, More Tomorrow and Crooked Tree. At these locations, the Creole culture persists with many culinary traditions, festivals and music.

The food in these villages is often Rice and Beans with meats such as Hicatee, Gibnut or deer which are hunted from nearby rivers or forests. Traditional Creole food also includes cowfoot soup, crab soup, stewed fish, and the well appreciated boil-up.

Creole music includes the Brukdown which was kept alive by Mr. Peter's Boom and Chime band. Modern Creole musicians include Bredda David and Leila Vernon.

Creole festivals include the Sambai fertility dance held during the Easter full moon at Gales Point Manatee and the Christmas Bram between December 24 and 26 each year. Creoles also celebrate the plaiting of the Maypole in villages and offering Harvest at their churches in the months of October and November.



**Gombay drums used by the Creole culture.**

Traditional Creole womens' attire includes cotton blouses and long colorful skirts. Men wear elaborately dyed traditional shirts.

The Creole population was the numerical majority during the colonial period but this group now represents 21% of the population.