

Belize Maya

There are three Maya groups present in Belize, namely the Yucatec, Mopan and Kekchi Maya.

The Yucatec originated from Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico and came to Belize in the mid-nineteenth century running from the Guerra de Castes (Castes War).

They now reside in the Corozal, Orange Walk, and Cayo Districts.

Today the Yucatec Maya have exchanged their spoken language for English and Spanish.

The Mopan Maya, who were fleeing taxation and forced labor, came to Belize in 1886 from the Peten region of Guatemala. Settlements can be found in San Antonio Village (Toledo District) and other villages in the Cayo District.

Kekchi Maya came to Belize in the 1870's, running from enslavement by the German coffee growers in Verapaz, Guatemala. They settled in the lowland area along rivers and streams, forming small isolated villages throughout Toledo.

Because of their isolation, the Kekchi have become the most self reliant ethnic groups in Belize. They are also peaceful people known for their cooperative practices in farming and cultural development.