

Support for Saint Lucia to Implement the Gender-Responsive National Strategy for the Development of the Four Priority Services Sub-Sectors

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Market Pointer – Exporting “Creative” Services to Belize

Demand

The ITC data for *Belize* is available only until 2017 for Audiovisual and related services and it is up to date for Other personal, cultural, and recreational services. The 2017 data for Belize’s Audiovisual and related services \$14,000 USD of imports, significantly larger than the 2015 value of \$4,000. In the absence of numbers for 2016, the average annual growth was about 125%. Other personal, cultural, and recreational services imports increased significantly from \$798,000 in 2018 to \$1,467,000 in 2019 or by 83.8%. Even then, these numbers may underestimate the size of the import demand in Belize given the large number of festivals and social events that take place annually.

The Central American coastal country of Belize is known for its rich Latin heritage, gorgeous Caribbean Sea shorelines, and, of course, a number of unique festivals, events, and celebrations throughout the year in addition to the global celebrations of Christmas and New Year's Eve. Two of the major festivals are the Belize Carnival known as Fiesta de Carnaval held the week before Lent in February and the Deer Dance Festival in August. Other events include: Baron Bliss Day; Easter in Belize; Belize Lobster Festivals (June & July); Benque Viejo Del Carmen; San Pedro International Costa Maya Festival (August); St. George’s Caye

Day (September 10); Belize Independence Day (September 21); and Garifuna Settlement Day (November 19). Below is some more detailed information for some of these events.¹

Fiesta de Carnaval, or the Belize Carnival, is held the week before Lent begins. The most boisterous celebrations erupt in San Pedro, on Ambergris Caye, and feature a traditional flour fight. Other features of this loud celebration include singing, dancing, parades, a painting competition, and special group dances called *comparas*. This presents opportunities for Saint Lucian entertainment artistes.²

Easter in Belize is a weeklong holiday where visitors can expect nationwide shutdowns as Belizeans attend religious services and take family trips from Good Friday through Easter Monday. Many towns and cities across Belize feature special reenactments of the crucifixion, the most famous and colorful of which takes place in the town of Benque Viejo del Carmen in western Belize. Additionally, a cross-country cycling expedition is held over Easter week each year.³

Belize Lobster Festivals are an opportunity for showcasing creative skills. Lobster season starts in mid-June with *San Pedro Lobsterfest*, the newest addition to the Belize Lobsterfest roster; then comes *Placencia Lobsterfest* in the south held the last weekend of June. Last is *Caye Caulker Lobsterfest* in early July.⁴

Benque Viejo Del Carmen is held in the Belize and Guatemala border town of Benque Viejo Del Carmen, the Fiesta includes a lively carnival and other attractions. This multi-day celebration is commonly known as "Benque" and typically begins on July 1 with a series of religious celebrations called *Las Aboradas* followed by 15 days of carnival rides, pageants, parades, live music, and a firework show to close out the festivities on July 16. This presents opportunities for Saint Lucian entertainment artistes.⁵

The *Costa Maya Festival in San Pedro*, Ambergris Caye, is a five-day long Belize event that unites music, dance, cuisine, and other cultural celebrations from the five "Mundo Maya" countries: Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. This presents opportunities for Saint Lucian entertainment artistes.⁶

Garifuna Settlement Day celebrates the 1832 arrival of the Garinagu people in Dangriga, Belize by featuring a variety of live punta music. It offers opportunities for Saint Lucian entertainment artistes

¹ <https://www.tripsavvy.com/belize-events-and-festivals-1490273>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Market entry requirements

All visitors must have a passport to enter Belize and their passports must be valid for no less than six months after the intended period of stay. Saint Lucian passport holders do not require a tourist visa to enter Belize and to perform at these events.