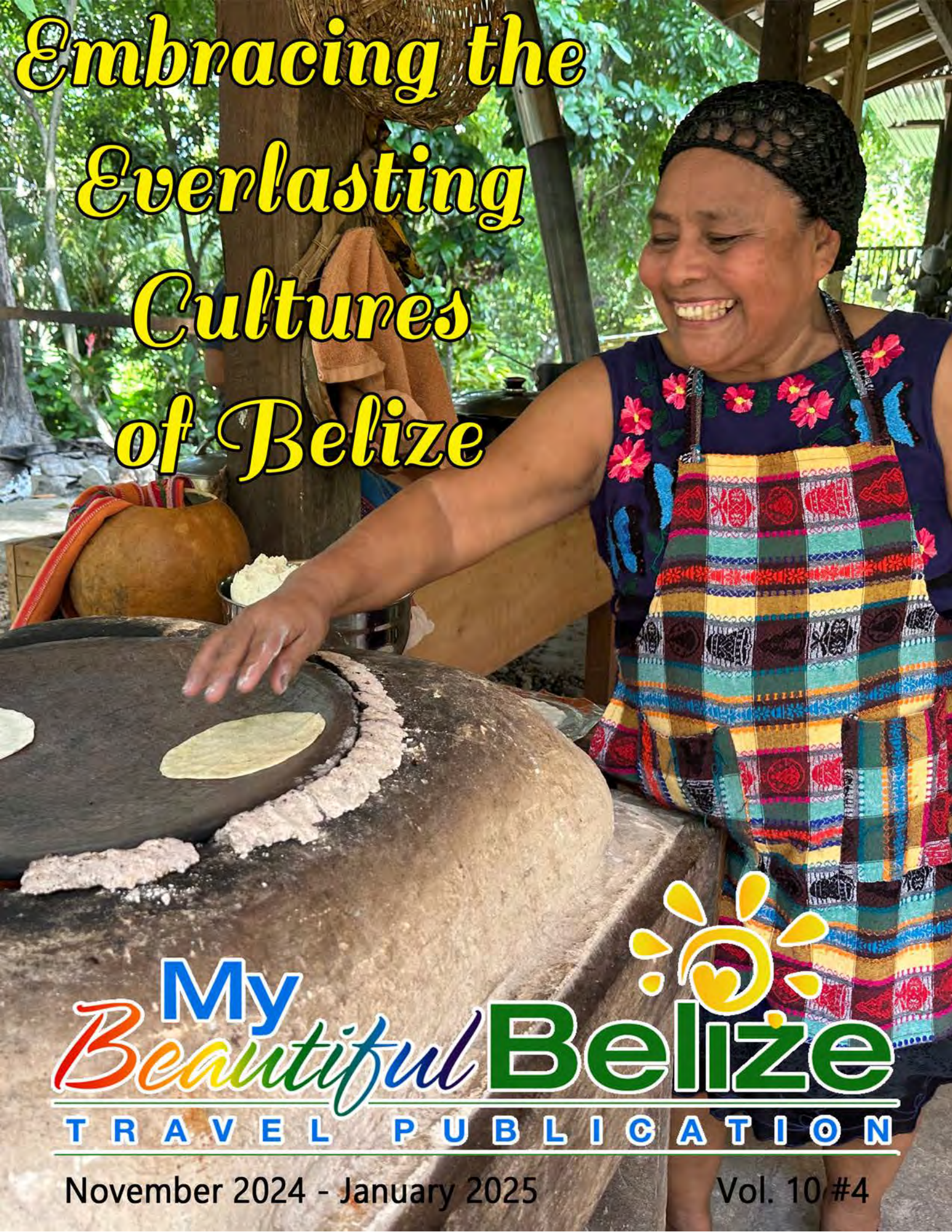


Embracing the Everlasting Cultures of Belize



My
Beautiful **Belize**
TRAVEL PUBLICATION

November 2024 - January 2025

Vol. 10 #4

From the Editor: Tamara Sniffin

As we put the finishing touches on the November issue of My Beautiful Belize, I wondered, "Are we writing about food or our colorful culture?" I now realize that neither can be one without the other. Meals prepared from the heart are synonymous with love and tradition. It's a delicious gesture of sustenance while taming the appetite. Even the camaraderie of a shared meal is a ritual etched in stone. I chuckle at my image of dinner shared by cavemen, huddled around a fire, savoring roasted meat from a recent kill, grunting in appreciation and smiling in fellowship.

I love tastebud traveling. Until you relish meals that marry the culture, you really haven't experienced the heritage. From the ceremony of the feast to the history behind the menu, these are the ingredients of generations and the nourishment of a people. Even better is meeting the masters behind the meal, learning how generations pass down cherished



recipes and the reverence of their preservation.

While traveling in Belize, delectable foods await you. From Garifuna to Mestizo to Maya and more, be sure your palate has the pleasure of discovering My Beautiful Belize.



Welcome Message
Gualberto "Wally" Nuñez
San Pedro Town Mayor

Welcome to the beautiful island of Ambergris Caye! Whether you're joining us for the first time or returning for another unforgettable experience, we are delighted to have you here. Our island is not just a destination— it's a community rich in nature, history, and culture.

Ambergris Caye is a place where diverse cultures converge. This November, we proudly celebrate Garifuna Settlement Day, honoring the vibrant Garifuna culture and its contributions to our island's heritage. This celebration reflects our deep appreciation for diversity as we embrace and celebrate the various cultures that make up our community. We invite you to join in the festivities and experience first-hand the warmth of our island.

As we approach the joyous Christmas season, we also encourage you to explore San Pedro's many attractions, meet our people, and take in the spirit of the holidays. Our community thrives on its connections, and we believe in caring for one another—something you'll feel in the welcoming embrace of our island. This is the perfect time to savor the flavors of Belizean cuisine, immerse yourself in our slice of paradise, and take home memories that will last a lifetime.

The San Pedro Town Council remains committed to making our island an even more enjoyable and accessible place for residents and visitors alike. We are connecting neighborhoods with upgrades to our municipal infrastructure and improved access to all who visit. Every moment you spend adds to our story, and we're grateful to be a part of your Belize adventure.

Whether you're exploring our vibrant coral reefs or strolling through our charming town, we invite you to become part of our community. Thank you for choosing Ambergris Caye, and we wish you a memorable and joyful visit this season and beyond.



For detailed stories and many more beautiful images, visit www.mybeautifulbelize.com
Published by The San Pedro Sun LTD.
Managing Editor Tamara Sniffin

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About the Cover:

The lovely Mama Nila at Upe Nai serves a warm smile with her piping hot corn tortillas made fresh on the comal. Read more about Upe Nai on Page 3

Trier, Germany



Where do you Read



Carrie and Paul Guschewsky from Lander, Wyoming, USA, read *My Beautiful Belize* before the Electoral Palace (Kurfürstliches Palais) in Trier, Germany. The palace was the residence of the Archbishops and Electors of Trier from the 16th century until the late 18th century. It now houses various federal government offices and often hosts classical music concerts.

While vacationing in **Italy**, Melanie Paz, from San Pedro Town, Ambergris Caye, Belize, reads *My Beautiful Belize* while enjoying **Lake Como**. The lake is the third largest in Italy, and as a tourist destination, it is popular for its landscapes, wildlife, and spas.

Lake Como, Italy



Have a great picture reading this publication? Send it to us at hello@mybeautifulbelize.com to be featured!

Upe Nai Cultural Center – A “Dream” Come True

Authentic local food, Maya cooking classes, Manakin Birding Trail

For many cultures, Sunday family dinners are a tradition. It is a time set aside for loved ones, shared over favorite meals usually crafted by family matriarchs. For many Belizeans, this tradition holds true. What started as the usual family dinner on Sundays at the home of Philip and Leonila (Nila) Mai, Yucatec Mayas who live east of the picturesque San Antonio Village in the Cayo District, evolved into a culinary and cultural destination after the community gravitated to their authentic, fire-hearth cooking. As daughter Stephanie Martinez explained, “My lovely mama dreamed about this place called Upe Nai (a dream come true in Yucatec Mayan).



She loves to cook, so we encouraged her to continue cooking the recipes she got from her mom, and now she is passing them on to me. I love learning from her, and she is happy that out of three sisters, I am the only one doing what she loves: cooking. Our goal is to keep the authentic traditional recipes and pass them on to other generations to come.”

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The roadside Upe Nai is nestled within lush jungle foliage under a covered, open-air dining area. The smoky aroma of burning wood, grilled meat, and tortillas hot off the comal permeates the ambiance, and the décor is splashed with bright Maya fabrics that cover the tables topped with vases of pink and white ginger blossoms. One side of the dining room is rowed with tables and fire hearths where bubbling caldrons of Caldo de Gallina, a very hearty chicken soup thick with locally sourced vegetables and spices, and Escabeche, a Mestizo

Continued on Page 4

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Dreaming at Upe Nai

Continued from Page 3



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onion soup with chicken and dotted with floating orange habanero peppers. Thin pork steaks sizzle in preparation of Poc Chuc, a signature Yucatec Maya dish, prepared in citrus marinade and grilled to perfection. The warm staff is equally colorful while Mama Nila beams from ear to ear as she flips handmade corn tortillas on the hot comal. Ms. Stehanie introduces us to the meal choices, letting us taste the soups as she drops a splash of deliciousness into our clean palms to slurp up. The bursts of flavors complicate picking which one will be lunch; it's all so good! Daily specials can also include pork pibil, tamales, tacos, and vegetarian options.

Sometimes, there are no words to describe the subtle seduction of culinary magic. Spiced with the warmth of smoky fire and laced with their secret ingredient, "LOVE," as Ms. Stephanie says, the meals are tremendously satisfying and flavorful. Not that it needs it, but their marinated red onion and diced habanero sauce adds a spicy kick! Refreshing iced all-spice or sorrel tea follows as the perfect thirst quencher.

Why not learn how to make your favorite dish? The lovely ladies at Upe Nai offer a half-day cooking class. The experience includes understanding the ancestors' way of preparing things from scratch, such as planting, shelling, cleaning, cooking, and grinding corn into masa. Masa is used in different ways, including making tortillas, salutes, Atole, tamales, and more. Participants then get to eat their culinary creations for lunch! It is recommended that you reserve your class two days in advance.

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Continued on Page 6

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Dreaming at Upe Nai

Continued from Page 4



Not only is Upe Nai a culinary retreat, but the area also includes the Manakin Birding Trail. Established by Roni Martinez, one of Belize's leading bird guides, who happens to be Stephanie's lucky husband, the trail boasts more than 260 species of birds. A perfect day would be exploring the trail and then taming your hunger with a scrumptious lunch.

To learn more about Upe Nai, place orders, or make reservations, please visit their Facebook page, e-mail upe.nai.belize@gmail.com, call 501 600-3447, or message them on WhatsApp at 638-7046.

Written by Tamara Sniffin

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Discover the rich history of the island

Did you know that it is estimated that more indigenous Maya lived on Ambergris Caye than our current population of 20,000 people? Can you imagine the island dotted with thatched huts, salt processing sites, and coasts bustling with fishermen and dugout canoes laden with goods to trade? How about the day, decades later, when our Caribbean waters brought Spanish explorers and pirates to our beaches? All this, along with the fascinating historical timeline of Ambergris Caye, comes to life when you explore the Eco-Museum.

Founded by a lover of culture and local historian extraordinaire Mito Paz, this collection of island history is curated within an acre of landscaped trails that chronicle the island's history. In tours guided by Paz, visitors are immersed in a sense of re-living the past, where artifacts, displays, and interpretive signage transport you back in time.



explore the Ambergris Caye Eco-Museum

The trail begins with the ancient Maya, the island's first known inhabitants, with archaeological evidence dating to the Late Preclassic period, over 2,000 years ago. Along the way, their lifestyle is explored through a series of exhibits, where we learn about them as fishermen, traders, salt makers, hunters, and farmers and some of the gods they worshipped, Chaac Uayab Xoc, the Maya god of fishing and fishermen, and Ek Chuaj, the god of commerce and cocoa.



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History progresses along the trail, transitioning from the Maya to the Spanish conquest of the Americas, to the days of the Baymen and pirates, and the mid-1880s when the Blake/Andrade family settled on the island. The logging and chicle (chewing gum) industry follows, and we learn about the coconut plantations that started on the island in the late 1800s. The economy of Ambergris Caye shifted from coconuts to fishing, beginning in the late 1940s and now to modern-day tourism. Other exhibits display the origin of the island's name, "AMBERGRIS," the interesting Talking Cross (La Cruz Parlante), the Maya Cross (Maaya Katab Che'), and more.

The trail is not only an enchanting outdoor museum but also an opportunity to learn about the lush (and endangered) Littoral Forest and the local creatures such as the Yucatan Jay and Yucatan Squirrel. But the fun doesn't end there! The Eco Museum offers a variety of educational activities, such as authentic traditional Maya food cooked on an open-fire hearth (fogón), hands-on coconut husking and coconut oil-making, preparing traditional local meals, arts and crafts using coconut shells, and learning about Maya herbal medicine, to name a few.

The Eco Museum is a registered charity that helps to bring the history of Belize and Ambergris Caye alive. Visitors, school trips, educational workshops, and groups are welcome to visit the Eco Museum BY RESERVATION ONLY. Your small donation to the registered Non-profit Organization Green Reef Environmental Institute helps support the museum.



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Written by Tamara Sniffin

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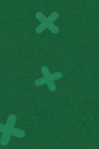
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Friday night BINGO at the San Pedro Lions Den

Friday night bingo at the San Pedro Lion's Den is the heart of community fun on Ambergris Caye. It is always thoroughly enjoyed and is highly recommended to visitors of La Isla Bonita who want to be part of a local, family-oriented tradition.

During the evening, you can enjoy yummy finger foods like wings, cheese dip, chipotle dip, garnaches, and cupcakes to help the club raise funds. The Lion's Den also has a full bar for those who want to enjoy a cold Belikin beer or cocktail. Bingo starts around 7PM, with each game costing \$2BZ, with a middle and final game costing \$5. Depending on the size of the crowd, each game can garner up to \$100 or more, with the \$5 games adding up to as much as \$400! It is fun and easy and a great activity to enjoy with friends or as a family.

Profits from bingo go to various community causes, including childhood cancer, hunger, vision, diabetes, disaster relief, the environment, youth, and humanitarian efforts.

This year, the San Pedro Lion's Club is celebrating its 49th year of community service! Their Den is located on the northern end of Barrier Reef Drive in the heart of San Pedro Town.

Follow their Facebook page at @San Pedro Lions Club, Belize (<https://shorturl.at/inRgA>).




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North Ambergris Caye



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Important Information

AA Meetings: Monday – Saturday, 6PM, #5 Boca Del Rio. 226-2020. Every Tuesday & Friday, 12 noon at the Catholic parish hall. Front street, 630-0752.

ACES Wildlife Rescue: Don't take matters into your own hands. Call 623-7920 for wildlife conflicts and rescue.

Al-Anon Meetings: Wednesdays, 5:30PM, SP Catholic Church Hall islabonitaalanon@yahoo.com

Ambergris Caye Masonic Lodge: ambergriscayemasoniclodge@gmail.com 672-2265

Belize Hotel Association: 223-0669, bha@btl.net

Belize Tourism Board: 227-2419

Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA): 227-5717

Dr. Otto Rodriguez San Pedro Poly-Clinic II: 226-2536

Emergency Veterinarian care: 610-3647

Hope Haven: 226-2333

Island Emergency Services: Certified medical emergency service. Call 615-2998

Narcotics Anonymous: By request at 623-0316.

National Aids Commission Island Committee (NACIC): HIV Testing/ Treatment/ Stigma and Discrimination and Pre and Post Test Counseling. 650-7021.

Rotary Club of Ambergris Caye: Join Rotary at our weekly meetings Wednesdays at noon at THE FACTORY. Find us on Facebook!

RRR Response: Emergency response team Call 627-1117

Saga Society: A non-profit "humane society" to address the stray cat and dog population in San Pedro. Phone 226-3266.

San Pedro Police Department: 206-2022

San Pedro Fire Department: 206-2372

San Pedro Tourist Guide Association: 226-2391

SP Post Office: 206-2260.

SP Town Library: 206-2028



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The Palmilla Restaurant at Victoria House - Romantic and comfortable ambiance, serving a unique mix of island seafood and continental cuisine. Admiral Nelson Bar is beachside-casual, offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner with magnificent views. Reservations recommended: 226-2067



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Intimate Dining at Victoria House Resort & Spa

Sometimes, dinner is more than a meal; it is the stage set for a night to be remembered.

Be it a family gathering for a special occasion or an intimate celebration of food and love entwined in romance, every ingredient is essential. From the setting, décor, music, and ambiance to the seduction of sweet and savory bites of food paired with flawless libations and wine, the exquisite dance is timeless perfection. The Victoria House Resort and Spa on Ambergris Caye has elevated this experience to its award-winning level.



Their signature style is ever present, from casual meals at the beachside Admiral Nelson’s Bar to classy dining at Palmilla Restaurant. With impeccable attention to detail, it is no surprise that they have mastered the private dining experience, from candlelight beachside seating surrounded by twinkling lights and tiki torches to their over-the-water gazebo. Within this intimate setting, soft white curtains frame starlit night and moon glow, with warm ocean breezes awakening your senses. This is where wedding proposals are made, anniversaries are celebrated, another year of life is honored, and lifetime memories are anchored.

Our unforgettable evening at the pier gazebo starts with the lovely Ashley, who graciously attends to our every need. We began our meal with warm artisan bread with garlic-parsley butter and indulged in an Aperol Spritz and a tasty Bikini Martini, a delectable combination of coconut rum, vodka, pineapple juice, and lime. Two different appetizers, selected by the chef, followed. The Scallop Aguachile was subtly sweet and tangy, with carrot leche de tigre, tomato, cilantro, avocado, and grilled pineapple. At the same time, the Conch Aguachile was vibrant in a beet marinade with cucumbers, cilantro, tomatoes, and jalapenos. Both are served with house-made corn and crispy cassava chips. In anticipation of our main course, we refrained from devouring them both!

Our plat du jour includes a thick beef tenderloin steak grilled to a perfect medium rare, served with a creamy parmesan/truffle oil potato purée, wine au jus, and broiled mushrooms with broccoli. We also indulge in a beautifully plated dish of house-made ravioli stuffed with cheeses, spinach, grilled onions, and creamy mushroom



sauce adorned with succulent grilled shrimp. We savor each bite, and a glass of prosecco perfects the marriage of flavors. As if we were not well satiated, dessert was next on the menu, and the chef's choice was impeccable. Delightfully light and creamy, the Piña Colada Panna Cotta is my favorite type of dessert. Rich coconut/pineapple pudding, roasted pineapple, coconut, and mint compote are light on the palate and have the ideal level of sweetness and texture. Even the divine Pear and Dulce de Leche Donuts master the balanced flavors of brioche stuffed with sweet dulce de leche, cinnamon/cardamom sugar dusting, pear sauce, and crisp pear fresco with vanilla gelato. Perfecto!

Be it a private beach setting for a couple or small group, to an intimate dinner in the seclusion of the thatched pier pavilion, the talented staff at Victoria House will create a magical evening not to be forgotten. For more information or to make a reservation, please visit their website at <https://www.victoria-house.com>.

Written by Tamara Sniffin

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The Isieni Dolls:

Spreading Love for the Garifuna Culture

The Garifuna culture is one of the most vibrant in Belize. It is characterized by a deep appreciation for music and dance and a strong commitment to preserving its heritage. The Garinagu celebrate their authenticity daily, sharing rhythms from their drums, showcasing the movements of Jankuno, and offering delicious traditional cuisine, all while proudly presenting their rich heritage to the world.

Emily Ramirez, a young advocate for Garifuna artistry, was born and raised in Peini, Punta Gorda. As a dedicated community member, she serves as both a teacher and the principal at St. Joseph Anglican Preschool. She is passionate about reading, drawing, sewing, gardening, and music.

Emily aims to preserve and promote her culture in an ever-changing society through a family-run gift shop. "In 2016, my family and I recognized the need to represent Garifuna culture in Punta Gorda's tourism sector, so we founded the town's first Garifuna gift shop, The Isieni Project Gift Shop, located on Victoria Street," she explains. The shop showcases various Garifuna-themed gift items, with a special focus on their original handmade Isieni Dolls, which have been cherished since their debut in 2014.

According to Emily, the Isieni Project Gift Shop is a labor of love, as the name suggests. "Isieni" means "love" in Garifuna, reflecting their dedication to celebrating Garifuna culture. Among its offerings, the shop proudly features its signature product: the original Isieni Doll. These beautifully crafted dolls represent the brown skin tones of the Garifuna people and are dressed in vibrant replicas of traditional attire. In addition to the Isieni Dolls, they provide Garifuna clothing in various sizes, allowing everyone to embrace and showcase their rich heritage.

To Emily, the Isieni Dolls are more than just dolls. They are a way to spread love and celebrate the beauty of Garifuna culture around the world. Inspired by characters from her book, "Garawoun: Magic Drums," which she wrote in 2013 and published in 2016, these dolls serve as a vibrant connection to our heritage. "We believe that by recognizing the beauty of Garifuna children depicted in art, literature, and the Isieni Dolls, our children can experience positive growth and a deeper appreciation for their culture," says Emily. The Isieni Dolls, with their cultural significance and educational value, are a unique way to learn about and celebrate the Garifuna culture.

The Isieni Project Gift Shop warmly invites everyone, regardless of age or background, to celebrate and embrace Garifuna culture. Whether through the simple act of cherishing a doll, enjoying the rhythmic beat of a drum, or appreciating the vibrant beauty of traditional attire, there's something for everyone here. "Our Isieni Dolls and Garifuna clothing offer children and adults alike a meaningful introduction to the richness of our heritage. We are thrilled to continue sharing our unique Isieni Dolls and spreading the love for Garifuna culture throughout Belize and beyond."

To learn more about Emily, the Isieni Project Gift Shop, and the Isieni Dolls, visit their Facebook page: [ThelsieniProject](#), or contact her via WhatsApp at +501-631-6330.

Better yet, plan a visit to the Isieni Project Gift Shop in Punta Gorda to experience the vibrant Garifuna culture firsthand.

Written by Janelle Gonzalez



Las Posadas: A Cultural Christmas Journey

There are many ways to celebrate the Christmas holidays, ranging from warm family gatherings to attending religious Mass. From decorating our homes to planning a big family dinner, the entire month of December comes alive with Christmas cheer. Our cultural backgrounds often influence how we observe these festivities. Growing up in Northern Belize, in a predominantly Mestizo community, I found Christmas particularly special, as it is a celebration deeply rooted in Catholic and cultural traditions.

One of the more traditional events leading up to Christmas is Las Posadas.

Starting on December 16th, the Catholic communities in Northern and Western Belize observe Las Posadas, which reenacts Mary and Joseph's search for lodging in Bethlehem. Over nine nights, this heartfelt tradition unfolds with prayers, hymns, and the warm hospitality of the neighborhood. A young couple carries statues representing Mary and Joseph each night as they visit different homes, asking for "posadas," or lodging. Accompanying them is a procession of *rezadoras* (women who lead prayers, often with



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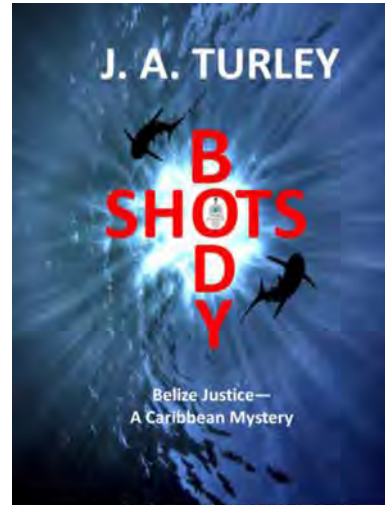
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While deep in the Belize Barrier Reef, a diver photographs sharks feeding on a dead body. He's compelled to learn who died and how. Local police use his best photo to identify the victim, but details in other photos force him to discount the who, where, and how of the case—and lead him to exhume a truth more brutal than the sharks.

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a strong emphasis on the importance of family and community) and cantadoras (women singing hymns, often about the birth of Jesus and the joy of Christmas).

At each home, the group outside sings to request shelter, while those inside initially refuse them. Traditionally, lodging is offered at the third house. The host family receives the statues, and after reciting prayers, they provide treats such as *maja blanca* (a rice porridge), *conservas* (fruit preserves), and *horchata* to those accompanying the procession. As children, this was the night's highlight, filled with anticipation and joy as we waited for the treats and the next house to visit.

On the final night, December 24th, the pastors (shepherds) present gifts to baby Jesus in the manger, completing the nativity scene.

Las Posadas is a beautiful celebration of our local cultures and reminds us of the meaning of Christmas and the importance of giving and sharing.

Yes, Wee taak Kriol eena Bileez / Yes, we talk Kriol in Belize

Although English is the official language of Belize (thanks to British settlers and colonization in the 1800s) and is used in public education, government, and most media outlets, the country's default language in many households is Kriol (Creole). Belize Kriol specifically developed when enslaved West Africans were subjected to English-speaking owners; as a result, these people were forced to create a dialect using English as a base language. The Kriol culture remains a staple of Belize.

If English is your first language, you'll be surprised that you can usually decipher the meaning when pronouncing written Krio phonetically. Such as **Gud Maanin/Heloa/Maanin:** Good Morning and **Aftanoon-** Good Afternoon. Want to know more? Here are a few ways to familiarize yourself with our local language while having fun!

Chree Fon Wayz Fi Laan Kriol / Three fun ways to learn Kriol

Kuchriments: A Bileez Kriol fusion weh bring langwij, pipl and kolcha tuggeda (A Belize Kriol fusion where we bring language, people, and culture together).



Belizean Andrea Rodriguez and her husband founded Kuchriments, a Kriol take on the word 'accoutrements', meaning odds and ends and personal accessories. Using a standardized method of spelling Kriol, Andrea found creative ways to share traditional expressions in stylish and fun ways. From a monthly calendar (2025 coming soon) featuring Kriol expressions, translated and explained in English, to a Kriol word search book, scripture cards, tote bags, coffee mugs, and more, all are adorned with charming Kriol sentiments. Her WhatsApp catalog lists all items at <https://wa.me/c/5016348107>, and orders are shipped internationally. She also features a Kriol "Word of the Day" on her Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/kuchriments>. For more information, visit her FB page, @kuchriments on Instagram, or email kuchrimentsbz@gmail.com.



The late Leela Vernon was awarded the title "Queen of Brukdawn," by the Order of the British Empire for her contributions to preserving the Kriol culture and music.



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"Weh Yuh Di Seh?" Card Game / What do you say?

Created by Destiny Wagner, Miss Earth 2021

Launched in late 2022, the game is designed to celebrate the Belizean Kriol language and culture, featuring humorous phrases and expressions. It was inspired by family game nights during the pandemic and aims to foster civic pride among Belizeans. The game allows players to select cards responding to prompts, with the dealer choosing the funniest answer. Wagner emphasizes the importance of celebrating Belizean diversity and creativity through this game.



Available at select stores across Belize. The game can also be ordered online at <https://seasonedlingogames.com/product/weh-yuh-di-seh/>

Chravl buk eena Kriol ahn English is a travel book in both Kriol and English and contains common phrases used in Belize. Thirty-six short chapters cover a range of topics/scenarios, including Useful Expressions, When You Meet Someone, When You Ask for Help, Numbers, When You Go Shopping, and more; it's fun and useful for Belizeans and visitors. Even if you aren't trying to speak the language, it can help you learn to understand what is being said. All Kriol speak and understand English too. The book was published in 2005 by the Belize Kriol Project and SIL International and is no longer in print. It can be downloaded from the SIL International Language and Culture Archives at <https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/10469> at no cost.



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Spotlight on: Garifuna Settlement Day



"Afeduha waméi wagücha, afareinha waméi wan-chigu - Celebrating the roots of the Garifuna culture!"

Every November 19th, Belize celebrates one of its most vibrant cultural groups, the Garifuna. Garifuna Settlement Day is one of the largest and most celebrated national holidays, heralding the arrival of the Garinagu people to Belize after their exile from St. Vincent in the early 1800s. The Garinagu traveled via dugout canoes and landed on the shores of Southern Belize in places like Dangriga, Hopkins, Seine Bight, and Barranco (Toledo). About seven percent of an estimated 500,000 Garinagu worldwide live in Belize. They are descendants of two ethnic groups, Carib Indians and Black Africans, who lived on the island of St. Vincent.

Their cultural contribution to Belize was recognized in 1977, when under the leadership of the late Premier, the Right Honorable George Price, November 19th was declared a public and bank holiday honoring their arrival to the country. Traditionally, activities commence on November 15th with drumming sessions, and the Yurumein on the 19th is a colorful sunrise re-enactment of the Garinagu people arriving in boats to the shores of Belize in 1832.

This year's Garifuna Celebrations theme is *"Afeduha waméi wagücha, afareinha waméi wan-chigu - Celebrating the roots of the Garifuna culture!"* It highlights traditions and values that have shaped the Garifuna community, emphasizing the vital role of passing down knowledge, values, and experiences to future generations. The week-long celebration includes parades, live music, drumming, dancing, and prayers.

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Calendar of Events

November

Battle of the Drums Food & Fete



November 15th - The opening night of the Battle of the Drums weekend festivities include the Garifuna Song Competition Awards & Concert. Held at the PG Sporting Auditorium on Queen Street, Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District starting at 7PM.

November 16 - 19, Annual Battle of the Drums 2024

- Be prepared for a memorable night in Punta Gorda, as these suspense-filled Garifuna competitions captivate all with sounds and movement. Held at the PG Sporting Auditorium on Queen Street, Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District starting at 8PM.



November 19, Yurumein & Garifuna Mass – The traditional celebration for Garifuna Settlement Day. The main festivities will be held at the St. Peter Claver Catholic Church on 95 Front Street, Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District, starting at 6:30AM. San Pedro Town also hosts festivities starting at the Boca del Rio Bridge at 6AM and finishing at the San Pedro Catholic Church.

December

San Pedro Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony



A celebration ushering in the Christmas season, islanders are treated annually to a cheerful Christmas Tree lighting event. Held at the San Pedro Central Park at 6PM, it is **tentatively** scheduled for **December 1st**.

Placencia Mistletoe Ball



December 14 - The most glamorous holiday party on the Placencia Peninsula. Held at Umaya Resort starting at 7PM.

LoveFM Christmas Parade



December 15 – San Pedro Town ushers in the holiday season with a festive parade through the island's main streets. Starting at the Boca del Rio Park at 6PM.

January

January 1st - Happy New Year! San Pedro's Celebration and Fireworks is a fun way to ring in the New Year, island style. Further details are TBA. Starting at 8PM at the Honorable Louis Sylvestre Sporting Complex.

Krem Radio Annual New Year's Cycling Classic



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