

# A DICTIONARY OF BELIZE ENGLISH



**[DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT]**

Roger Blench  
Kay Williamson Educational Foundation  
8, Guest Road  
Cambridge CB1 2AL  
United Kingdom  
Voice/ Ans (00-44)-(0)1223-560687  
Mobile worldwide (00-44)-(0)7847-495590  
E-mail [rogerblench@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rogerblench@yahoo.co.uk)  
<http://www.rogerblench.info/RBOP.htm>

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### **Preface**

This dictionary of Belize English was stimulated by my work on variant English in Nigeria and Ghana. I am not a Belize old hand, but I was struck soon after arrival by the amount of undocumented forms in everyday speech. This dictionary is an attempt to capture these combined with checking previous claims for Belizean forms. In its present form, this dictionary is very much a first attempt, intended for circulation to interested parties, not for publication. Needless to say, the author would be grateful for all additions and corrections.

Roger Blench  
Friday, 15 March 2013

## Introduction

Belize, former British Honduras, has a distinctive form of English, spoken and to a lesser extent written. This is related to, but different from Belizean Creole [Krio] spoken by the descendants of African populations brought here as part of the slave trade. This English has never been properly documented, although a number of websites list individual local words. Belize was a British colony until 1982, and official English is strongly related to British bureaucratese [alcohol is 'intoxicating liquors' and so on]. Government offices continue to spell following British conventions ['labour' not 'labor']. Commercial English, on the other hand, is almost wholly American, and labels and notices in supermarkets follow American conventions. Newspapers are highly inconsistent, following the conventions of the writer. Spoken English, on the other hand, has its roots in creole, and both the lexicon and syntactic constructions often follow creole. Indeed it could be argued that spoken English is simply a register of creole, relexified and restructured through contact with mainstream English.

An interesting question is whether Belizean English constitutes a unity. The Garifuna people, who live in a series of villages along the coast in the southeast are of African origin, but speak an Arawakan language, due to their complex history. Their home area is in Honduras/Nicaragua, although they have long been settled in other countries along the coast. Despite their Amerindian language, their culture is reminiscent of their African origins, especially their music, which has recently won international acclaim. Their English includes distinctive borrowings which are not found elsewhere in the country, for example *ruguma* for 'cassava strainer', instead of *wowla*. Even less well-known is the English of Gale's point, a community of Maroons, apparently of direct African descent, rather than indirect as in the case of the Krio. Some distinctive words, such as *gombe* for 'drum' point to a Bantu source area, but no other evidence is available. As a consequence, it is better to treat Belizean English as having regional dialects, according to the first language of the speakers.

It is somewhat surprising that no attempt has been made to document Belizean English as a whole. Individual words have been discussed, particularly on websites. Belizean creole has been the subject of limited academic research. Nonetheless, I believe this is the first attempt to construct a lexical list for Belizean English. These notes are intended to raise some issues on sources, interpretation and the definition of Belize English.

## Creole [Krio] and Belizean English as registers of the same language

It is not uncommon to hear it argued, as elsewhere in the world that Creole is a 'different language'. There have been some attempts to formalise the spelling, mostly among Belize City elites, who largely speak English. Regarded purely in dialectal terms this is simply not true, as the Creole and Belizean English share almost all their lexicon and grammar. A much better way to understand the relationship is to treat them as registers of one another. It is not uncommon to hear speakers, uncertain of the language preferences of someone they do not know, to repeat a sentence twice, in Creole and Belizean English.

## Publications on Belizean Creole

Visitors to Belize can purchase small books purportedly providing a guide to Belizean Creole. Notices in visitor centres also often have posters giving sample sentences in Creole. However, for the most part these are highly unreliable, as they are usually respelt English and do not use actual Creole syntax. Similarly the website of the Krio Association engages in this type of unconscious upgrading. The sociolinguistics of this are complex, but it suggests that high-register speakers, who almost certainly speak Belizean English on a daily basis, want to manufacture a Creole which is both different visually, but virtually the same syntactically.

## Sources

One of the most difficult issues in lexicography is documenting usages in a semi-written language. If dictionaries of indigenous languages are prepared they usually depend entirely on oral sources and thus no specific justification is given for entries. However, Belize English is sometimes written, especially in newspapers and magazines, and thus has some sort of orthographic tradition. Nonetheless, many of the most picturesque expressions are strictly oral and must still be captured in the present document. I have therefore

used newspaper, notices and overheard speech as sources. Example sentences not specifically sourced should be treated as based on the author's or his correspondents' experiences.

### **Idiosyncratic usages**

Apart from standard expressions, some English usages have been appropriated for idiosyncratic use. For example, the 'Vital Statistics Unit' in Belize City is not concerned with the chest measurements of women, but rather with the details of births and deaths.

### **Ethnobiology**

By far the largest proportion of the vocabulary which is distinctive comes from the fields of biology and food. Belize would have presented the earliest settlers with a profusion of unknown plant species, as well as newly introduced plants which were spread around the world in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Names for these were borrowed from indigenous languages, adapted from English or had African names re-applied to them. Some names are whimsical inventions, such as 'night and day' or 'give and take'. Many of these appear to be widespread in the Caribbean, but the fauna and flora of the islands is very depauperate compared with the mainland, so new names had to be invented or adopted. The references provide a list of guides used to identify local names. I have tried to provide useful information about the plants as well as the main uses, medical or otherwise. Images are either photographs taken by the author or from Creative Commons sources on the web.

### **Where do words come from?**

One of the most challenging aspects of developing a dictionary of this type is to identify the sources of words. There are many possible donor languages and searching through a large number of dictionaries in the hope of identifying resemblances is time-consuming. Fortunately, some of this work has already been undertaken, indirectly in the case of the DJE, or in the case of Miskito by Holm (1977). There are, however, a number of spurious etymologies, based on rather tenuous similarities identified in earlier sources, and these are questioned here.

### **Borrowings from indigenous regional languages**

The most important source of borrowings from regional languages is not from Mayan, as might be expected, but from the Misumalpan languages, notably Miskito. Holm (1977) is the main study of this topic and almost all the Miskito etymologies in this document are a consequence of his study.

### **Borrowings from African languages**

Apart from the Maroons, borrowings from African languages are mainly via Jamaican English and almost all terms here seem to occur elsewhere in the Caribbean. The Dictionary of Jamaican English (DJE) by Cassidy & Le Page (1967) is an excellent and comprehensive source on these words, although some of the etymologies in African languages could do with updating. Some suggestions are made here. The main sources for Yoruba are Abraham (1958), for Ewe, Rongier (1995), for Ga, Kropp-Dakubu (1999), for Hausa (Abraham 1962) and for Twi, Christaller (1933).

### **Borrowings from regional Spanish**

Spanish has evolved in Central America, both by adapting mainstream Spanish terms and by borrowing from indigenous languages. Words from local Spanish have then diffused into Belizean English. This is particularly true in the area of snack foods, where Hispanic speakers dominate the trade and kiosks selling *panades*, *tamales*, *salbutes* and so on are common.

### **Is Belizean English a tone language?**

African languages are all tonal, and it has often been claimed that at least some features of tone languages have carried over into Caribbean English. Tone-languages require systematic minimal pairs and neither Belizean Creole nor Belizean English pass this test. Nonetheless, there are some words which are not 'correctly' pronounced unless the relative pitch heights are accurate. This suggests that the original in the source language had contrastive tone. I have marked the pronunciation in an IPA-like transcription in square brackets in the definition column with appropriate tone-marks. However, the following example is apparently borrowed from English;

sote conj. [sòtě] until, up to

This requires further research.

### Not confirmed

Some of the sources I have consulted, especially online, claim words and meanings I have not been able to confirm, and these are marked in the text.




### Parts of Speech



The following table shows the abbreviations used in Column 2 of the dictionary. Some of these assignments should be regarded as highly provisional.

Abbreviation	Full form	Explanation
a.	Adjective	Describes a noun
a.p.	Adjectival phrase	Describes a noun
adv.	Adverb	Qualifies a verb
adv.p.	Adverbial phrase	Qualifies a verb
cond.	Conditional	Expresses the relation between two events
conj.	Conjunction	A word used to join two or more nouns, verbs or clauses
dem.	Demonstrative	Words used to point out something. 'this', 'that' etc.
excl.	Exclamation	Greetings or expressions that do not form part of an ordinary sentence
excl.p.	Exclamatory phrase	Fixed phrases that form sentences indicating a single idea
int.	Interrogative	Question words
n.	Noun	Refers to things, objects etc.
n.p.	Noun phrase	Phrase where a head-noun is joined to other words to form an expression
num.	Numeral	Number
part.	Particle	Short words added to complete the sentence
p.n.	Proper Name	A name of a person or object; always capitalised
p.u.t.	Pre-utterance tag	A tag or exclamation used prior to an utterance to indicate the underlying sense of the utterance
prep.	Preposition	A word positioning nouns or verbs in time or space
pron.	Pronoun	A word that stands for a noun
sal.	Salutation	A word or phrase that stands alone as a greeting or introduces a dialogue
s.t.	Sentence tag	A word or clause standing at the end of a sentence, that intensifies the meaning in some way but is unnecessary to the syntax.
v.	Verb	Expresses action
v.a.	Verbal auxiliary	An inflected verb that co-occurs with an uninflected main verb
v.c.	Verbal complement	Additional word or words found in phrasal verbs [???
v.i.	Intransitive Verb	A verb with no object
v.n.	Verbal Noun	A noun formed directly from a verb to express a state of being [only one type; what of agentives?]
v.p.	Verb phrase	A phrase where a head-noun is joined to other words to form an expression [head-noun or verb?]
v.t.	Transitive verb	A verb with an object




## Abbreviations




arch.	archaic	masc.	masculine
AE	American English	n.	noun
BE	British English	neg.	negative
der.	derogatory	over.	overused
dial.	dialect	pl.	plural
e.g.	for example	prov.	proverb
euph.	euphemism	refl.	reflexive
fem.	feminine	s.	singular
hum.	humorous	sc. sl.	schoolboy slang
id.	ideophone	Sp.	Spanish
ins.	insulting	SE	Standard English
joc.	jocular	t.	transitive
lit.	literally	TE	Tropical English
		v.	verb
		WAE	West African English



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Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>A.</b>			
a	conj.	of	common Caribbean usage <i>Ministry a Works</i>
Agayuma	p.n.	water-spirit like a will o' the wisp or jack o' lantern. A flame that appears in marshes and leads people astray.	< Garifuna
alanía	n.	drink of grated cassava	< Garifuna
alcalde	n.	leader of Mayan community	< Spanish
alligator fish	n.	fish sp., top minnow, <i>Belonesox belizanus</i>	
altamesa	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
amapola,	n.	silk cotton tree, shaving brush tree	< Central American Spanish
amopolla		<i>Pseudobombax ellipticum</i> , used for firewood and carving	
anansi	n.	spider, but also a lead character in folktales. Characterised as a trickster, and also a way to refer to someone who is sly or tricky.	< Akan. cf. <i>hanansi</i>
antelope	n.	red brocket deer	
apasote	n.	herb sp. wormseed, Jesuit's tea, Mexican tea, paico, Herba Sancti Mariæ, <i>Dysphania ambrosioides</i> , used to flavour food.	also epazote. < Nahuatl <i>epazōtl</i> . 
apple	n.	small, finger-sized banana. Not eaten by everyone.	
banana			
areba, ereba	n.	Round flat bread made from grated cassava which has been repeatedly pressed to remove the juice. For meal preparation, slices are typically soaked in coconut milk and then fried. Served with fried fish.	< Central American Spanish <i>aripa</i> . cf. <i>bami</i>

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
axe-master	n.	tree sp. <i>Caesalpinia gaumeri</i>	
<b>B.</b>			
baaka	n.	catfish sp.	
baboon	n.p.	howler monkey, <i>Alouatta pigra</i>	cf. black monkey
baboon cap	n.	herb sp. <i>Couepia dodecandra</i>	
backabush	n.	rural area	< English 'back of the bush'
backabush people	n.	people who think or act as if they were in a rural area	
Backside!	excl.	Exclamation of surprise used euphemistically in place of stronger swearwords.	
badword!	excl.	swearword substitute	
bagga head	n.p.	Person addicted to cocaine or crack.	Not confirmed
bagjuice	n.	Commercially produced drinks or juice packaged in plastic bags.	
balls	n.p.	tight trousers	
chokers			
bali	p.n.	Informal title used for greeting among male friends.	Also used for bell-boy who carries bags in a hotel, so perhaps < English <i>valet</i>
balsam wood	n.	tree sp. <i>Myroxylon</i> spp. The bark has medical uses	
bambam	n.	food made with cassava	reduplicated form of <i>bami</i> (q.v.)
bamboo chicken	n.p.	iguana. Probably humorous and not much used.	
bami,	n.	cassava bread	< Ga <i>bàmi</i> cassava variety. cf. areba
bammy			
bandoo	n.	plastic or metal band to keep the hair in place	



Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
bank	n.p.	area where loggers first landed and cleared for settlement. Now incorporated in the names of several old settlements on the Belize River. Also a type of seamount where fish aggregate to breed.	
baracuta	n.	medicinal plant	
wisp			
barba jolote	n.	large tree sp. <i>Cojoba arborea</i> or <i>Pitecolobium arboretum</i> . The wood of this tree resembles that of the mahogany, however, it is heavier and probably superior in strength. For this reason, as well as its high resistance to fungal and insect attack, it is suitable for cabinets, interior trim, dugout canoes, and posts. Locally, it has been used for tanning. The red pods it bears resemble a turkey's wattle.	< Spanish 
barsley	n.	medicinal plant	? < English <i>parsley</i>
bash	n.	party, celebration	< English
bashment	n.	party, celebration	
basket tie-tie	n.	vinaceous palm, <i>Desmoncus schippii</i> , used to make baskets	Also <i>tie-tie</i> , basket whist. 
bat	n.	moth [in contrast to rat-bat]	Also in Jamaica [DJE]
batalas	n.	small, black biting fly	
batton breed	n.	Someone with nappy hair that does not grow.	
batty	n.	buttocks	< English 'buttocks, bottom' Also in Jamaica [DJE]
batty boy	n.p.	male homosexual, gay person	cf. batty man
batty man	n.p.	male homosexual, gay person	cf. batty boy. Also in Jamaica [DJE]
bay snook	n.	fish sp. <i>Petenia splendida</i>	
beans and rice	n.p.	beans and rice cooked separately but served together. ≠ rice and beans (q.v.)	
bederug	excl.	Garifuna expletive meaning, 'your	< Garifuna

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
		arse'. Used at the end of sentences to discredit someone.	
Belize	p.n.	name of the country, or may refer to Belize City	< name <i>Wallace</i> or Mayan <i>baliz</i> 'muddy water' or French <i>balise</i>
bembey	n.	person who is a boss, very self-confident, arrogant	
bilam, billum	n.	small river fish, <i>Astyana fasciatus</i> , used to bait hooks	< Miskito <i>bilam</i> . 'sardine' in local English
			
billbird	n.	toucan. There are two species in Belize	
			
			
billy webb	n.	medicinal herb, <i>Acosmium panamensis</i>	
bime	n.	Garifuna sweet sticky rice	< Garifuna
blackface	n.	dark-skinned person	
blackberry	n.	shrub sp. <i>Eugenia sp.</i> The fruits are eaten raw or made into a popular wine. Sometimes mistakenly called 'black cherry'.	

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
blackbird	n.	great-tailed grackle, <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	
black monkey	n.p.	howler monkey, <i>Alouatta pigra</i>	cf. baboon 
blogo	n.	plantain type. Many people don't eat them except when ripe.	
blue	v.	to wash clothes using old-fashioned starch cubes	
bluing	n.	old-fashioned starch	
boga	excl.	[bɔga] affectionate but negative way of referring to s.o.	< English bugger. <i>The old boga!</i>
boil	n.	boiling-point	<i>The issue had nearly reached boil</i>
boil-up	n.p.	dish of boiled ground foods, such as cassava, cocoa, sweet potatoes, ripe plantains, boil cake, and boiled fish or pigtail	
bokatora	n.	slider turtle, <i>Trachemys scripta</i>	
bolo	n.	penis	also <i>tilly, toto</i> . ? cf. Hausa buru
bonefish	n.	fish sp., <i>Albula vulpes</i>	
bonghead	n.	s.o. who is addicted to marijuana.	
booby bird	n.	bird sp.	
bookut	n.	tree sp. see <i>bukut</i>	
botase	n.	small catfish	
box	v.	To strike the face with the open palm. The strike is made with a slapping motion as opposed to a jabbing motion.	Survives in English expression 'to box the ears'
braalee	n.	brother-in-law	
bram	n., v.	dance party or festival, traditionally held at Christmas; dance done at parties; song sung at parties; to engage in dance party activities	? < American English <i>prom</i>
braps	adv.	immediately, straight away	Not confirmed
bread	n.	vagina	cf. cocoa, hotbox, poke
breeze	v.	to allow to blow away in the breeze	<i>Continue breezing the rice</i>

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
bribri	n.	when winnowing ice-cream bean, pacay, guama, <i>Inga feuilleei</i> . Tree with large edible pods.	< Miskito <i>bribri</i> . Also <i>tamatama</i>
broomweed	n.	medicinal plant sp. <i>Sida acuta</i>	
brukdon	n.	[brukdɔn] folk music played for amusement, esp. by Mr Peters	< breakdown an English folk dance
bukut	n.	tree sp. <i>Cassia grandis</i>	
bullbat	n.	nightjar, Caprimulgidae spp.	
bullhoof	n.	large tree sp. <i>Drypetes brownii</i> .	
bundiga	n.	dish made from plantains and fish	< Garifuna
bur-vine	n.	vine sp., <i>Tribulus terrestris</i> [?]	
Buru	p.n.	costumed dance	cf. Jankunu
bush dog	n.	tayra, <i>Eira barbara</i> or grison, <i>Galictis vittata</i>	
bush rabbit	n.p.	agouti, <i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>	
buttersea	n.	fish sp.	
fish			

## C.




cabbage bark		tree sp. <i>Andira inermis</i> . It has bright purple flowers which only bloom once every two years. The wood is used for skids, bridges, and house frames.	
cobia, cabio	n.	marine fish sp. <i>Rachycentron canadum</i>	
calabash	n.	tree sp. <i>Crescentia cujete</i> . Not the same as the gourd, <i>Lagenaria siceraria</i>	
calaloo, kalalu	n.	chaya, <i>Cnidoscolus aconitifolius</i> , a green leafy vegetable used to make a thick spicy soup-like dish. Elsewhere in the Caribbean, the vegetable is usually amaranth or dasheen leaves.	< Jamaican English
callipever	n.	fish sp.	
capnet	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
carnally known	a.p.	implies that a girl has had sex	<i>the girl had been carnally known.</i> Amandala 20.1.13
cat's claw	n.	vine sp. <i>Macfadyena unguis-cati</i> .	Name also used in Barbados.
caye	n.	[kii] island off the coast	< Spanish
cedar	n.	medicinal plant	
cerasee	n.	balsam apple, <i>Momordica charantia</i> or <i>M. balsamina</i> . A vine bearing a small lumpy skinned yellow or orange fruit. The fruit has red, sticky, sweet seeds inside. The leaves are used as a laxative.	= sorosi, surasee. Corresponds to Trinidadian <i>cerasse</i> .



Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
chachalaca	n.	bird sp.	
Charley Price	n.	very large rat, thought to have been brought to Jamaica by Sir Charles Price, an 18th century planter and Speaker of the House of Assembly in Jamaica. Not the house rat, probably the Norwegian rat.	
china root	n.	medicinal plant sp., <i>Smilax china</i>	
cherna	n.	jewfish, giant grouper, <i>Epinephelus itajara</i>	
chicharon	n.	food	
chichi	n.	person who is always weeping	
chichi man	n.	male homosexual	< Jamaican English. cf. <i>sisi</i>
chickenweed	n.	medicinal plant sp. <i>Portulaca quadrifida</i>	
chicle	n.	sap from the sapodilla tree, <i>Manilkara chicle</i> , which was originally the basis of chewing gum, and was a major industry in Belize until the 1940s. Individuals who collected the sap were <i>chicleros</i> .	
chimole	n.	blackened chicken soup served over rice	< Mexican Spanish
chinch	a.	tiny, a small amount	< Old English <i>chinch</i> 'a stingy person'
chiny	n.	Generic term for East Asian person	< China
cinnamon	n.	medicinal plant	
cissim	n.	medicinal plant	
Cho!	excl.	exclamation of disgust, annoyance	< Ewe <i>tsó</i> 'exclamation of surprise'
chocking	v.n.	driving	<i>East Indians like chocking</i>
chook	v.	to prick, inject	also African English
cochineal	n.	medicinal plant	
cockspur	n.	tree sp. <i>Acacia cornigera</i> . It has a symbiotic relationship with a species of ant (genus <i>Pseudomyrmex</i> ) that lives in its thorns. The ants protect the tree from plants, which may grow near its trunk or leaves high in the canopy, and they emerge from the thorns to attack other insects, humans and animals that come in contact with the tree. It has been used as traditional medicine for relief of mucous congestion for infants. Babies are given water containing the ants (once they've been squeezed and strained). Snake doctors use the bark and root to slow down snake venom from entering the bloodstream; acne and other skin conditions can be bathed with water in which the thorns have been boiled.	= bullhorn acacia
coco	n.	cocoyam, taro. <i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	< West African
coco plum	n.	Fruit of <i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i> , a shrub or bushy tree, rarely 10 metres tall. In	This name also used in Jamaica



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Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
		late summer it bears fruit in clusters.	
cocoa	n.	vagina	cf. bread, hotbox, poke
cohune	n.	cohune palm and fruit, <i>Attalea cohune</i> . An oil is made from the nut. The corozol palm is the oldest known domesticate in the New World.	< Miskito <i>ohom</i> , <i>uhum</i> , <i>ohung</i> . rain tree, American oil palm, corozo palm or manaca palm
comadre	n.	godmother of a child, but also a sort of guardian who takes the young person to confirmation and marriage	
compadre	n.	godfather of a child	
contrayerba	n.	medicinal plant, <i>Dorstenia contrayerba</i>	
coolie	n.	A person of East Indian ancestry. Most Caribbeans East Indian descent trace their roots back to indentured workers.	
copache	n.	medicinal plant sp., <i>Hintonia latiflora</i>	
copna		tree sp., <i>Erythrina fusca</i> . Found throughout the Community Baboon Sanctuary and the lower Belize valley. It flowers in the dry season, with large orange and pink flowers. Despite the spines on the trunk and branches, the flowers are sought after by the howler monkeys. The orchard oriole is a chief pollinator of the Copna.	
corn	v.	to ?	corned fish only survives in BE as corned beef
cotton tree	n.	? = silk cotton tree	
cow foot	n.	cow leg used in making soup	cf. West African 'cow leg soup'
cow foot leaf	n.	medicinal plant sp., <i>Bauhinia forficata</i>	
coxspur	n.	= cockspur	
craboo, kraabu	n.	tree sp., <i>Byrsonima crassifolia</i> , and its fruit. The yellow berries are collected, sold fresh or made into a sticky version with sugar and ginger.	cf. <i>muréi</i> , <i>nance</i> . < Miskito <i>krabo</i>
cramati	n.	[kramati] medicinal plant	
creole bread	n.	bread with coconut in it	
cribo	n.	snake sp. Applied to: <i>Spilotes pullatus mexianus</i> , <i>Stenorrhina degenhardtii</i> , <i>S. f. freminvillei</i>	
crocodile	n.	alligator, crocodile.	
cry	v.	to complain	<i>See that man, crying again on television last night!</i>
culantro	n.	herb sp. <i>Eryngium foetidum</i> . There are two varieties of this herb, one is commonly found in waste land, the other is cultivated.	
cuss ... up	v.p.	to insult, abuse, give a dressing down	< English <i>curse</i> . <i>The Minister cussed me up</i>
cut eye	v.p.	gesture of contempt, deliberately closing the eyes while turning the head away from somebody	< English <i>cut</i> + <i>eye</i> . Putting the meaning of those two words together for the same gesture is common through West and Central Africa

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Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>D</b>			
damsel	n.	caimito, <i>Chrysophyllum caimito</i> . Round fruit about the size of a tennis ball with a glossy leathery green or purple skin. The purple and white milky flesh forms a star pattern. The fruit is sweet and eaten raw.	prob. error for English 'damson' 
dancehall	n.	Fast paced style of reggae music where DJs sing or rap over danceable music and rhythms. The lyrics tend to be more sexual and violent than other forms of reggae music.	
danto	n.	Baird's tapir, <i>Tapirus bairdii</i> . See under mountain cow	also mountain cow, <i>tzimin</i>
deer	n.	white-tailed deer, <i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>	
deer eyes	n.	small sea bean, <i>Mucuna</i> spp. When rubbed vigorously against a hard surface it becomes warm. Children often harass one another by touching them with the heated beans.	
di	def.	the	
dilly	a. n.	armadillo. There are two species in Belize, <i>Cabassosus centralis</i> and <i>Dasypus novemcinctus</i>	also hamadilly
doctor fly	n.	biting fly sp., <i>Diachlorus ferrugatus</i>	cf. also pin wing. Common US name 'yellow fly' < English though perhaps via Miskito <i>dori</i> .
dory	n.	canoe made from a single tree-trunk and formerly used for transport between logging camps on the Belize river. The dory is a small, shallow-draft boat. It is usually lightweight with high sides, a flat bottom and sharp bows. Also the name of small canoes carried out on long fishing expeditions at sea.	
double snake	n.	shovel-toothed snake, <i>Scaphiodontophis annulatus</i>	

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
drunk	v.	to make s.o. drunk	<i>He drunks them and then they vote for him</i>
dryback	n.	person deprived of sex	
ducunu, dukunu	n.	food made from steamed maize mash wrapped in a leaf	< Twi <i>ɔ-dɔ́kóno</i> 'boiled maize bread'
duki	n.	chart with a picture of a skeleton which is numbered used for interpreting dreams by lottery ticket buyers	?< Spanish <i>duque</i> 'duke' or Miskito <i>duki</i> , <i>dukia</i> 'property, affair'
dumbcane	n.	herb sp. <i>Dieffenbachia seguina</i> ,	
dungdung	n.	[dʊŋdʊŋ] double-headed drum played in Gales Point	< Yoruba <i>dundun</i>
dutty	a.	[dɔti] applied to anything suggestive or sexual	<English <i>dirty</i>
dutty wine	n.p.	[dɔti wayn] A <i>wine</i> or dance involving simultaneous and coordinated movements of the hips, knees and head.	

## E.

ebolite	n.	tree sp., <i>Ethroxylon areolatum</i> .	Recorded as <i>eboe light</i> in Jamaican English [DJE]. Formerly used to make torches
egg fruit	n.	canistel tree, <i>Pouteria campechiana</i> . Bright yellow ovoid fruit with a pointed tip. It is related to the sapodilla and is edible.	
elemuy	n.	medicinal bark, <i>Malmea depressa</i>	= stone bark
escabeche, escovitch	n.	Cooking technique where meat or fish is fried, then soaked in a pickling sauce made from vinegar, pimento, onions, pepper.	< Spanish 'pickled'
eye water	n.p.	tears	English <i>eye + water</i> . The collocation may be African in origin.

## F.

FBI	acr.	Flat Batty Indian i.e. Mayan Indian
fezi, faysi	a.	impudent, brazen
firehearth	n.	cooking on an open fire

17-18th century English. *He is fezi*



fish serreh	n.p.	dish
foolish	n.	foolish thing or person

*Look at those foolishnesses in Belize City!*



Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
fry	a.	placed before any fried food	<i>fry fish</i>
fry beans	n.p.	cooked beans pounded into a mush	
fry jack	n.p.	triangular, deep-fried crispy pastry	
fuckery	n.	nonsense, foolishness.	
fuddlefish	n.	herb sp. used to poison fish	


## G.


gangbanger	n.	gangster	≠ collective rape
ganja	n.	marijuana	< Hindi originally, but probably via Jamaica
garnaches	n.	crispy tortillas served with beans and rice on top	< Mexican Spanish
garlin	n.	cattle egret, <i>Bubulcus</i> . This species was brought over from West Africa.	
georgie bull	n.	northern jacana, <i>Jacana spinosa</i>	
gibnut, gibnat	n.	paca, small rodent, <i>Cuniculus paca</i> , much favoured for food	cf. royal rat. < Miskito <i>ibina</i>



give and take	n.p.	palm sp. <i>Chrysophila argentea</i>	
golden plum	n.	ambarella, <i>Spondia dulcis</i> . An edible fruit growing on large trees up to 30m. The fruits have thick, sometimes leathery skin and fibrous or hairy seeds. While unripe, the flesh is crisp and firm with an acid taste. As it ripens, it turns yellow, becomes soft and develops a sweet taste and fragrant smell. Both ripe and unripe fruits can be eaten raw. It is also often prepared by juicing, stewing with ginger and sugar, pickling with peppers and spices, or made into chow. Introduced into the Caribbean from Polynesia in 1782.	
goma 1.	n.	hangover	
goma 2.	n.	chewing-gum	< English
gombe	n.	goat-skin drum played with the hands typical of the Maroons of Gale's Point	< Bantu language
grine	n.	Sexually suggestive dance or wine where the participants make significant physical contact	< English <i>grind</i> , also in Black American English
ground	n.p.	generic for domestic tubes, such as	

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
foods		yams, sweet potatoes	
ground itch	n.	fungal infection on feet	
ground mole	n.	hispid gopher, <i>Orthogeomys hispidus</i>	
guacho	n.	medicinal plant	
guanacaste	n.	large tree sp. <i>Enterolobium cyclocarpum</i> . The Guanacaste is a fast-growing species and one of the largest trees found in Central America. It can reach a total height of over 130 feet, 30 to 40 feet of which is straight trunk that may have a diameter in excess of six feet. The tree has a large, flat, wide spreading crown, pale green leaves and small white flowers. The seed pods are broad, flat, shiny dark brown, three to four inches across, and coiled into almost a complete circle, somewhat resembling a human ear. This may account for one of the names given to the tree - "monkey's ear tree". Cattle feed on the leaves, flowers and pods. Tubroos is a favourite timber for the dugout canoes that Belizeans call doreys. The wood is not readily attacked by pinworms. Feeding troughs and mortars for hulling rice are also made from the tubroos tree.	Also tubroos, monkey's ear tree
guinea hen	n.	medicinal plant sp., <i>Petiveria alliacea</i>	This name also used in Jamaica
guinep	n.	Ovoid green fruit that grows in bunches on trees up to 30m high. The fruit typically ripens during the summer. The fruit has a tight, thin but rigid skin. The tart or sweet pulp of the fruit covers a large seed. The pulp is usually a cream or orange colour.	= kenep
gumbolimbo	n.	tree sp. <i>Bursera simaruba</i> . Gumbolimbo is often found growing near the poisonwood tree, and its bark is a cure for the effects of poisonwood sap.	

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>H.</b>			
haka	n.	tayra, <i>Eira Barbara</i> , a member of the weasel family (Mustelidae)	swamp, bush dog
halari	n.	jaguarundi, <i>Herpailurus yagouaroundi</i>	
			
hamadilly	n.	armadillo. see under dilly.	= dilly
Hanansi	p.n.	A lead character in folk tales, depicted as a trickster and cultural hero and based largely on the spider gods of African lore, particularly the Akan.	A variant pronunciation of <i>anansi</i> (q.v.)
hard-time biscuit	n.	hard ships' biscuit, now made commercially	NB also 'cookie' in recent formulations
hikite,	n.	soft-shell turtle, <i>Dermatemys mawei</i>	< Mayan language
hicatee			
hooyu	n.	night bird, variously identified as Pauraque, spot-tailed nightjar, goatsucker, night hawk, Santa Maria bird, whippoorwill, or dwarf owl	< Miskito <i>kuyo</i> , <i>kuyu</i> , <i>kyuyu</i>
horseballs	n.	medium-sized tree sp. <i>Stemmadenia donnell-smithii</i>	
horse eyes	n.	large sea bean, <i>Ormosia</i> spp.	
hotbox	n.	vagina	cf. bread, cocoa, poke
hotlips	n.	herb with bright red flowers, <i>Cephalis</i> sp.	
hudut	n.	dish made from fish and plantain and coconut milk	< Garifuna
hunter	n.	In the period of slave-based logging, the man who went into the forest to identify mahogany and logwood for felling.	also hunter
<b>I.</b>			
Ish Ktabai	p.n.	spirit who is a weeping lady. Appears to men out walking late at night and leads them astray in the forest. She weeps because she drowned her children because her lover did not accept them.	< Maya. cf. Llorona, La Sucia

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>J.</b>			
jack-in-the-bush	n.	medicinal plant sp., <i>Eupatorium odoratum</i>	also <i>xtokoban</i>
jackass bitters	n.	herb sp. <i>Neurolaena lobata</i> . Medicinal herb used to cure fever. The tea can help get rid of intestinal parasites; or be used to bathe wounds or infections. Some people use it as a hair wash to get rid of lice. Boiled and strained leaves can be used as an insecticide for house and garden plants.	
			
jankro	n.	vulture spp. (Cathartidae), 'King Jan Kro' or 'Red Nek Jan Kro' is the King Vulture, 'Dakta Jan Kro' is the Turkey Vulture	? < English <i>carriion crow</i>
Jankunu	p.n.	costume dance, in Belize the costume and dance originate from a comical ridicule of slave masters	cf. <i>buru</i> . ? Said to go back to John Koni, an eighteenth century slave leader. or Hausa? Corresponds to 'John Canoe' in Jamaica and 'Junkanoo' in the Bahamas.
jippi joppa	n.	palm sp. <i>Sabal mexicana</i> , only found in Toledo District. Maya women weave baskets from the leaves. They boil the leaves until just the spine is left. These spines are then dried in the sun. The shoots of jippi joppa are eaten.	
john charles	p.n.	herb used to cure cough. The leaves are boiled in water.	Also known in Jamaica
Joe grind	n.p.	A man who has an affair with another man's woman.	
johnny fidler	n.	fiddler crab sp.	
journey-cake,	n.	bread-like bun with coconut usually eaten at breakfast	? <i>john</i> in naming of things such as <i>jan kro</i> , <i>janny fidla</i>
johnny-cake			
Junkanoo	p.n.	alternative pronunciation of Jankunu	
<b>K.</b>			
kan sham	n.p.	Dessert snack made by shelling dry maize, parching it in a hot pot and then pounding it in a mortar and sifting it until it is similar to sand. Salt or sugar can be added to the mixture and it can be eaten dry or with water.	
kato	n.	big freshwater catfish sp.	
kenep	n.	Ovoid green fruit, see under guinep	= guinep
kimbo	n.	defiant stance with hands on hips	< English <i>akimbo</i>

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
kiskis	n.	tongs made from a twisted vine, use to catch crabs and for handle hot coals in a cooking fire	< Rama <i>kiskis</i>
knit	v.	to weave a fishing net	
konkas	n.	housefly, <i>Musca domestica</i>	< Miskito <i>kin̄kas, kukas</i>
kotobroute	n.	[kɔtobrut] sweet made with sugar and coconut strips	English <i>cut</i> + French <i>brut</i> meaning 'unrefined' and referring to sugar
kraana	n.	grazing fish sp.	? < Miskito
kunjai	n.	dance type	cf. Yoruba <i>konko</i>
kunku	n.	small size or amount	
kwam	n.	crested guan, turkey-like bird, <i>Penelope purpurascens</i>	< Miskito <i>kwamu</i>
kwash, quash	n.	coatimundi, <i>Nasua narica</i>	? Amerindian.


## L.

La Chatona	p.n.	An emblematic figure who appears as a giant puppet in Benque. La Chatona was apparently a rowdy woman who danced and snag at the time of the loggers.
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La Sucia	p.n.	lit. 'dirty woman'. Spirit who is a weeping lady. Appears to men out walking late at night and leads them astray in the forest. She weeps because she drowned her children because her lover did not accept them.	< Maya. cf. Llorona, Ish Ktabai
lab	n.	porridge made with any of a number of ingredients, cassava lab, flour lab, plantain lab	< Yorkshire dialect of British English <i>loblolly</i>
live oak	n.	tree sp. <i>Quercus oleoides</i> . Used for firewood.	
Llorona	p.n.	[yorona] spirit who is a weeping lady. Appears to men out walking late at night and leads them astray in the forest.	< Spanish. cf. Ish Ktabai
lobsterclaws	n.	herb sp. <i>Heliconia rostrata</i> . Has bright yellow bracts with purple flowers.	
loggerhead	n.	snapping turtle	
logwood	n.	tree sp. <i>Haematoxylon campechianum</i> . Formerly heavily exploited to make dyes and ink.	


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Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
long guard	n.	fish sp.	
<b>M.</b>			
machaka	n.	freshwater fish, <i>Brycon guatemalensis</i> , only found in southern Belize	< Garifuna
Madera compé	n.	medicinal plant	
madre cacao	de n.	shrub sp. <i>Gliricidia sepium</i> . Planted to shade the cacao trees on plantations and as live fence posts, but only the male type. The flowers are enjoyed by chachalacas, and are eaten by people as a vegetable. They are often cooked with eggs. Boiled bark soothes irritated eyes. The mashed leaves have been used as a poultice for wounds, boils and nappy rash.	< Spanish
mahogany	n.	large tree sp. <i>Swietenia macrophylla</i> . The national tree of Belize. First used for repairing ships, it was sought after by furniture makers, especially in the European market. Maya use mahogany as a shade tree for corn. There is an irritating oil in its twigs and leaves. When in bloom, individuals who are highly sensitive, may feel nauseous, experience headaches, and a burning rash; particularly on the face. Scratches from branches may blister and become inflamed. The oil has been used as a parasiticide for certain skin conditions, and as a stimulant when taken internally.	
maklala, makala	n.	small lizard, Sp. <i>Lagartillo copetudo</i>	< Miskito <i>mahklala</i>
mammee apple	n.	large tree sp. <i>Pouteria sapota</i> . The fruit is edible and the tree contains a milky latex, which the chicleros used to mix with the latex of the sapodilla to make chicle gum. The bark is used to treat diarrhoea	
mapola		large tree sp. <i>Luebea seemanii</i> commonly found in riverine forests. The light wood is good for making boxes. Small, cream-coloured, fragrant flowers bloom early in the dry season Eaten by the howler monkey.	
mata	n.	wooden mortar used for processing grains	< E.
matchet	n.	machete, bush-knife	Identical form in West Africa
maypole	n.	folk dance of British origin where the	

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
mazapan	n.	participants dance circles that weave strips of brightly coloured cloth around a tall pole. Breadfruit, <i>Artocarpus altilis</i> . Bligh brought the breadfruit to the Caribbean in 1792, but it was not able to replace the plantain as a staple food of the area. The breadfruit grows on Ambergris Caye, but is more common on Caye Caulker. A large tree with a spreading crown. The large fruit is round has a stringy flesh rich in starch and sugars. After three years the tree bears fruit which turns slightly yellow when ripe. The fruit can be eaten boiled, baked, roasted or dried and made into flour.	
meru	n.	grouper,	< Spanish
Mikèés	excl.	Hurry up!	
moal	n.	soft spot on a baby's head, fontanelle	< Fr. I think
moho	n.	tree sp. The bark is used to make twine. Also the name of a river where these trees grow.	
monkey	n.	spider monkey, <i>Ateles geoffroyi</i>	
monkey	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
apple			
monkey	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
fiddle			
monkey's	n.	large tree sp. <i>Enterolobium cyclocarpum</i> . See under guanacaste.	Also tubroos, guanacaste
ear			
mosmos	n.	[məsməs] small freshwater fish sp. similar to those in aquariums	
motmot	n.	trogon	also <i>huthut</i>
mountain	n.	Baird's tapir, <i>Tapirus bairdii</i>	also <i>danto</i> , <i>tzimin</i>
cow			
			
mud eel	n.	fish sp. <i>Synbranchus marmoratus</i>	
mudfish	n.	fish sp. <i>Dormitator maculatus</i>	<i>dormelon</i> in local Spanish
muréi	n.	tree, <i>Byrsonima crassifolia</i> , and its fruit.	< Garifuna. cf. craboo, nance
mutrus,	n.	marine fish sp. Also used in insults, when someone is said to look like a mutrus	
mutruce			


Belize English Dictionary		Roger Blench	Circulation Draft
Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>N.</b>			
nance	n.	tree, <i>Byrsonima crassifolia</i> , and its fruit.	cf. muréi, craboo
nargusta	n.	tree sp. <i>Terminalia amazonia</i> . The bark constantly peels off like the Gumbolimbo, and is thought to be a strategy to prevent damage from heavy epiphytes. The wood is hard and durable. It has been exported for veneers and furniture, and locally used for bridges, railway ties and panelling.	
Nassau bitters	n.	medicinal plant	
nederugo	excl.	Garifuna expression of frustration.	< Garifuna ‘your arse!’. cf. <i>bederugo</i>
negrito	n.	medium-sized tree sp. <i>Simaruba glauca</i> . Negrito is common in broadleaf forests. It has a black fruit in the dry season, March and April, that looks and tastes like an olive. The seed contains an oil used in cooking. The bitterness of its bark protects it from insect attack. The bark and roots contain a powerful astringent, used for diarrhoea, dysentery and internal bleeding. The wood can be used for house frames, broomsticks, matchsticks and boxes.	
nero	n.	chili pepper variety similar to the habanero, corresponding to scotch bonnet	< Spanish <i>habanero</i>
night and day	n.	small scaly fish	
night walker	n.	kinkajou, <i>Potos flavus</i>	
noose	n.	used to catch iguanas	
<b>O.</b>			
obeah man	n.	occultist, sorcerer	< Jamaican English
Old heg	p.n.	Ghost or spirit that lives as an old woman by day, but turns into a blood sucking monster by night. According to some legends, she is able to take off her skin and put it back on.	? < English ‘old hag’. cf. <i>wangla lady</i>
oldwife	n.	marine fish sp.	
out 1.	v.	to put out	<i>That was the first fire I had to out!</i>
out 2.	v.c.	outside, in the sense of out of the community	<i>His wife works out.</i> She goes into town to work.



Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>P.</b>			
palo de hombre	n.	medicinal plant sp. <i>Ptychopetalum olacoides</i> . Said to cure impotence, hence the Spanish name.	< Spanish ‘stick of a man’
pampa	n.	dolphin. Several species, including the bottlenose dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> , spotted dolphin <i>Stenella attenuata</i> .	< Spanish
panades	n.	minced fish wrapped in a fried soft tortilla	< Spanish
panya	n.	Any Hispanic that does not speak Belizean Kriol.	< Spanish
paperflower	n.	vine sp. <i>Bougainvillea</i> sp. Vine introduced from Brazil, often seen climbing up trees, houses or fences.	
papta	n.	palmetto or fan palm, <i>Acoelorrhaphe wrightii</i> . The palmetto is an indicator species of the pine ridge and savanna. During a fire, it catches fire quickly and explodes, shooting flames into the air and spreading the fire. The wood resists rotting, and has been used as fence posts.	< Rama <i>papta</i> . Also Pimenta palm, Paurotis palm, Everglades palm, Madeira palm and Silver saw palmetto
			
parrotfish	n.	freshwater fish sp.	
paspas fly	n.	mosquito	[not confirmed]
pataki	n.	large rectangular basket with double walls. Wide leaves are layered between the walls to make the basket waterproof and able to float.	< Miskito <i>pataki</i>
physic nut	n.	medicinal shrub sp. <i>Jatropha curcas</i> . The nut is used as a laxative.	
pichik	n.	[pɪʃɪk] aracari toucan	cf. billbird
pickny,	n.	child	< West African Pidgin <i>pickin</i> ultimately Portuguese <i>pequeno</i> .
picknie			
pigtail	n.	what it says. A favourite ingredient for boil-up	
pillage	v.	to do s.t. in Garifuna culture	
pin wing	n.	doctor fly, <i>Diachlorus ferrugatus</i>	Common US name ‘yellow fly’
pine gum	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
pine ridge rat	n.	hispid cotton rat, <i>Sigmodon hispidus</i>	
pinkeye	n.	medical condition	
piss-a-bed	n.	herb sp. <i>Senna alata</i> , the wild coffee plant. Remedy for bed-wetting and urinary tract infections	< English. Old English name for the dandelion. = <i>baraja</i>
pitpan	n.	long flat-bottom dugout canoe	< Miskito <i>pitpan</i>
pleco	n.	armoured catfish. An intrusive Amazon species causing problems in Belize waterways	

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
poke	n.	vagina	cf. bread, cocoa, hotbox
pokonoboy	n.	palm sp. <i>Bactris major</i> . This palm was once called 'Pork and dough boy'. Tongs for cooking or removing coals were made from the fire-resistant wood of its trunk. The entire trunk, stem and leaves are covered with sharp spines. It is regarded as a pest, because it forms dense thickets. The fruits are eaten or used to flavour drinks.	
polewood	n.	tree sp. used to make poles for canoeing	
polly	n.	medicinal plant sp. <i>Hamelia coccinea</i>	
redhead			
poor joe	n.	green-backed heron	
porgy	n.	marine fish spp. <i>Archosargus probatocephalus</i>	
possum	n.	opossum spp.	
pot licker	n.p.	mongrel dog	
potato	n.p.	Square cake made from boiled and pounded sweet potato with coconut	
pound			
pothound	n.p.	mongrel dog	
prankish	a.	prone to play practical jokes	[not confirmed]
prickly	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
yellow			
provision	n.	bark of the provision tree. Used to make medicinal tea.	
bark			
provision	n.	fruit of the provision tree. Large, edible	
fruit			
provision	n.	tree sp. <i>Pachira aquatica</i>	
tree			
punta	n., v.	vigorous dance accompanied by drumming and singing, to dance the <i>punta</i> , generally associated with the Garifuna, using turtle shells and drums. The dancers go on tiptoes, hence the Spanish term <i>punta</i> meaning 'point'.	Spanish <i>punta</i>
pupa	n.	father	< papa
pupsy	n.	fish sp. <i>Gambusia</i> sp.	
pussly	n.	herb sp. <i>Portulaca oleracea</i> . medicinal	
puta secco	n.	medicinal plant sp.	also <i>pitaseco</i>
pyampyam	n.	bird sp., the Central American magpie or brown jay ( <i>Psilorhynchus mexicana</i> or <i>morio</i> )	< Miskito <i>piampiam</i> .




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Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>Q.</b>			
quam	n.	Crested Guan, <i>Pava cojolita</i> , a large forest bird which feeds on the seed pods of quamwood.	
quamwood	n.	tree sp. <i>Schizolobium parahybum</i> . In the dry season, bright yellow flowers bloom once the leaves have fallen. Its wood has been used for box and crate-making, as well as for paper pulp.	
<b>R.</b>			
raati	n.	large sea crab sp., <i>Callinectes</i> sp.	< Miskito <i>rahti</i> . Also ratty crab.
ramon	n.	tree sp. <i>Brosimum alicastrum</i> . Locally called breadnut, though not the true Pacific breadnut. Planted by the Maya close to their homesteads.	
ratbat	n.	generic term for small ‘rat-tailed’ bats	Also in Jamaica [DJE]
ratbat tree	n.	tree sp., <i>Terminalia catappa</i> .	Also <i>hammon</i>
rat root	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
ratty crab	n.	large species of sea crab, <i>Callinectes</i> sp.	< Miskito <i>rahti</i> . Also <i>raati</i> .
recado	n.	[rekaado] red, pasty spice made from anatto seeds, <i>Bixa orellana</i>	< Spanish
red tiger	n.	puma, <i>Puma concolor</i>	
			
relleno	n.	[reyeno] chicken soup made with chicken stuffed with ground pork, boiled eggs and seasoned with black recado	< Spanish <i>relleno</i> ‘stuffed’
rhuda	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
rice and beans	n.p.	rice and beans cooked together. ≠ beans and rice (q.v.)	
ridge	n.	forested area, as in ‘pine ridge’ (≠ elevated terrain)	English <i>ridge</i> influenced by Miskito or Sumu <i>asaŋ</i> meaning forested, hilly area
rockfish	n.	fish sp.	
romero	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
rompopo	n.	eggnog-like drink	
royal rat	n.	paca, a mammal. cf. details under gibnut	so named when eaten by the visiting Queen Elizabeth II in 1985.
ruguma	n.	woven filter for cassava	< Garifuna. cf. <i>wowla</i>
rusho	n.	dance style	

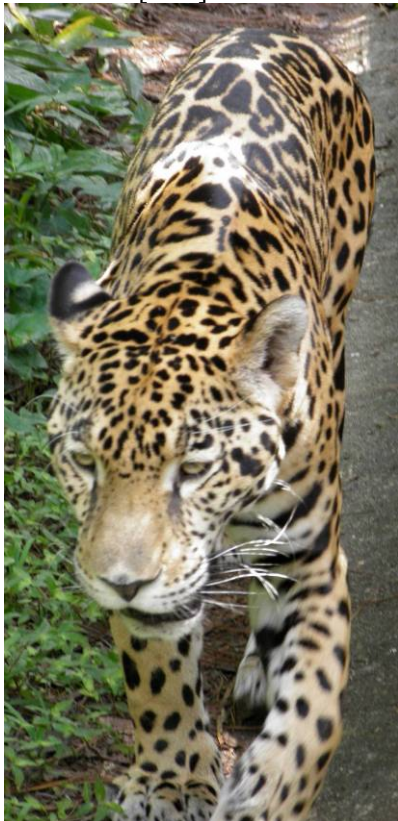


Belize English Dictionary		Roger Blench	Circulation Draft
Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
<b>S.</b>			
salbutes	n.	food type	< Central American Spanish
saltfish	n.	Fish dried and salted for preservation.	This corresponds to stockfish in West Africa and the Portuguese <i>bacalao</i>
saltwater mudfish	n.	fish sp.	
sambai	n.	fertility dance of the Gale's Point Maroons, done during a full moon	< ? West African <i>samba</i>
sandpaper tree	n.	tree sp. <i>Curatella Americana</i> . The seeds can be roasted and eaten, and have been used to flavour chocolate. Charcoal has been made from the wood of this tree.	also <i>yaha</i> .
sandunga	n.	dance, a type of waltz, adopted from Mexico, originally from the Zapotec people	< Zapotec via Spanish. Also <i>zandunga</i>
santamaria	n.	tree sp. <i>Calophyllum antillanum</i> . Its wood was used in shipbuilding.	
santiago	n.	large herb sp. <i>Pothomorphe peltata</i> . This is a herb with large, aromatic heart-shaped leaves. The leaves are used to relieve various body aches and pains. Traditionally, a herbal bath of leaves is taken for rheumatism and arthritis. For stomach aches, headaches, and muscle spasms, a leaf can be heated and applied to the troubled area.	
sardine	n.	small river fish (tetra) used to bait hooks	= <i>bilam</i>
scorpion tail	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
sea egg	n.	West Indian sea urchin, <i>Tripneustes ventricosus</i> .	
sea grape	n.	<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i> . A small green fruit resembling a grape growing close to the sea. Some fruits become tinged with red or purple as they ripen. The Sea Grape is native to the Caribbean region. Some historians believe it was the first plant that Columbus saw when he arrived in the 15th century. It takes on two different forms, depending on the habitat. On open seashores, it is a sprawling shrub. In more protected, dense vegetation, it is a tree which grows up to 35 ft. The grape-like fruits which grow on the female plant are tart but edible. It is made into preserves, syrup and wine. Its strong, heavy wood has only been used as fuel.	
sea pearl	n.	white and purple sea bean, .	




Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
seed	n.	testicles	
sha jikit	n.	biting fly of the Tabanidae, which sucks blood	? < Hausa
shall I baby	n.p.	Another man's child that is passed off deceptively to an unsuspecting man to father as his own.	
sheepshead	n.	marine fish sp. <i>Archosargus probatocephalus</i>	
single bible	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
sisi	n.	male homosexual	< English <i>sissy</i> . cf. also batty boy, chichi man.
sketel	n.	promiscuous woman, prostitute.	skets [unconfirmed] is said to be an equivalent
small tiger cat	n.	margay, <i>Leopardus wiedii</i>	
snakeplant	n.	herb sp. <i>Sansevieria trifasciata</i> . The colour pattern on this stemless plant resembles that of a snake. For snakebite chew on fresh leaves. Rashes and skin sores can be helped by bathing them with water in which the leaves have been boiled. Place leaf juice in water for chickens, which helps prevent diseases.	
snook	n.	fish sp. There is a marine and a freshwater species.	
sorosi	n.	vine sp. <i>Momordica charantia</i> or <i>M. balsamina</i> . with a bumpy, ribbed, yellow-skinned fruit, the fruit has red, sticky, sweet seeds inside, the fruit and leaves are used for a number of folk-medicinal purposes. Also used to make wine.	= cerasee
sote	conj.	[sòtě] until, up to	< English 'so till'. Attested in Jamaica [DJE] and said to derive from Cameroun Pidgin
sour plum	n.	green sour fruit, picked in January	
Spanish shela	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
spice seed	n.	allspice	
spring chicken	n.	marine toad	
stew	a.	placed before the object stewed, such as chicken, fish, pumpkin	<i>stew chicken</i> chicken stew
stinking toe	n.	tree sp. <i>Cassia grandis</i> . A large tree which flowers during the dry season.	Also <i>bukut</i> , <i>beef-feed</i> . The expression is known in the Caribbean [DFE], but appears






Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
		The large podlike fruits are up to a metre long and their smell gives the tree its name. The branches, fruit and leaves have been used in traditional medicine. The juice of its seed pods is used as a tonic drink for fatigue and also applied to the skin to get rid of ringworm and fungus. A leaf tea is used as a blood tonic, and is believed to be good for diabetes.	to apply to a different plant, <i>Hymenaea courbaril</i>
stone bark	n.	medicinal bark, <i>Malmea depressa</i>	= <i>elemuy</i>
stretch-my-guts	n.	sweet like taffy, made from coconut and sugar	
stupes	v.	? to make sucking noise	[not confirmed]
subin	n.	acacia sp.	= cock's spur
suelta con suelda	n.	medicinal plant sp.	< Spanish
supa, soopa	n.	tall palm tree sp., with a starchy orange-coloured fruit ( <i>Culielma utilis</i> or <i>Acromia mexicana</i> )	< Miskito <i>supa</i>
susumba	n.	medicinal plant sp. pea aubergine, <i>Solanum torvum</i>	This name also known in Jamaica [DJE]. DJE says this derives from Ewe <i>susume</i> , but the dictionaries I have consulted give <i>S. torvum</i> as <i>susuruba</i>
			
swanka	n.	small land turtle	
sweet liquorice	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
swordtail	n.	fish sp. <i>Xiphophorus</i> sp.	
<b>T.</b>			
tarpon	n.	large marine fish, <i>Tarpon atlanticus</i>	cf. Miskito <i>tahpam</i>
tablayta	n.	coconut sweet cut into squares	French <i>tablette</i> meaning 'cake, slab (of chocolate)
tamales	n.	food made of chicken and corn meal wrapped in a plantain leaf and boiled	Latin American Spanish <i>tamales</i> < Nahuatl <i>tamalii</i> meaning 'a corn flour dough mixed with meat and peppers wrapped in corn leaves'
tamatama	n.	ice-cream bean, pacay, guama, <i>Inga feuilleei</i> . Tree with large edible pods.	Also <i>bribri</i>
tambran	n.	tamarind, <i>Tamarindus indica</i>	Also in Jamaica [DJE]



Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
taray	n.	medicinal bark	This figure is undoubtedly from Southern Ghanaian folklore. Hence the tata is probably African not Latin American Spanish <i>tata</i> ‘father’ + <i>duende</i> ‘bush spirit’, originally < Miskito <i>duhinduhin</i> .
Tata	p.n.	mythical short man who lives in the bush, his feet are backwards and he has no thumbs. He wears a big hat and he likes to steal horses to ride them.	
Duhende			
tea box	n.	medicinal plant sp.	Also in Jamaica [DJE]
thwart	n.	seat in a dory canoe	
tie-tie	n.	general word for strong, cord	
tiger	n.	jaguar, <i>Panthera onca</i>	
			
tiger cat	n.	ocelot, <i>Leopardus pardalis</i>	
tilly	n.	penis	also <i>bolo</i> , <i>toto</i> . < English <i>thing</i>
ting	n.	girl	
toby full pot	n.p.	great blue heron, <i>Ardea herodias</i>	
			

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
tommy goff	n.	pit viper, <i>Bothrops asper</i>	also yellow jaw. cf. Guatemalan Spanish <i>tomagasse</i> .
			
topnotch chick	n.	grey-necked wood rail, <i>Aramides cajaneus</i>	
			
toto	n.	penis	also <i>bolo</i> , <i>tilly</i> . NB <i>toto</i> is found in Nigerian English for clitoris.
trijolea	n.	medicinal plant sp.	= yama bush
trumpet tree	n.	tree sp., <i>Cecropia peltata</i> . The Maya used the stems to make ceremonial trumpets. This tree has a symbiotic relationship with a species of ant, <i>Azteca</i> sp. which lives in the hollow trunk. The ants are aggressive and will come out and bite anything that touches the tree. The tree grows very fast and it is a gap species, one of the first trees to appear in disturbed forest. The leaves are favourites of the tapir, monkeys and deer. The seeds of the trumpet tree are dispersed by birds and fruit bats and the wind. A tea of the leaves is used for high blood pressure. Indigenous to this region but judged to be a major invasive species elsewhere.	Also with this name in Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados.
			
tuba	n.	river fish sp., <i>Cichlisoma</i> spp.	Miskito <i>tuba</i>
tubroos	n.	large tree sp. <i>Enterolobium cyclocarpum</i> . See under guanacaste.	Also guanacaste, monkey's ear tree
turk	n.	storks (jabiru & wood)	? < English <i>stork</i> .



Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
twelve o'clock	n.	Madagascar periwinkle, <i>Catharanthus roseus</i> . Native to Madagascar but introduced in the Eastern Caribbean. A globally reputed medicinal plant.	 
<b>U.</b>			
<b>V.</b>			
velvet leaf	n.	medicinal plant sp.	
vex, bex	v.c.	angry. the pronunciation with b- is generally found more often in rural areas	<i>I get vex.</i> I got angry. WAE
vining palm	n.	palm sp. used to weave baskets	
<b>W.</b>			
waari, waan	n.	white-lipped peccary, <i>Tayasu pecari</i>	< Miskito <i>wari</i> . Also <i>warree</i>
			
waawa	a.	cowardly, childishy foolish	< Hausa <i>wawa</i> 'foolish'
waha (leaf)	n.	broad-leaf plant, <i>Calathea insignis</i> , whose leaves are used for wrapping and serving food items	< Miskito <i>waha</i>
Waika	p.n.	Creole name for the Miskito Indians, extended to any non-Maya Indian	< Miskito <i>waika</i> 'brother-in-law'

Belize	PoS	Gloss	Etymology
wangla	n.	sesame seed, a sweet made with sesame seeds	Kikongo <i>waangila</i> meaning ‘sesame seed’
Wangla lady	p.n.	Ghost or spirit that lives as an old woman by day. [not confirmed]	cf. Old heg.
warree	n.	peccary.	cf. <i>waari</i>
warree cohune	n.	palm sp., <i>Astrocaryum mexicanum</i> . A small palm tree, found in dense, wet lowland forests. The bark is covered in sharp spines which resemble the bristles of the peccary. The spines quickly break off and become embedded in the skin.	
wash rag	n.	face flannel, washcloth	? by analogy with US ‘washcloth’
water dog	n.	water opossum, <i>Chironectes mimimus</i> or neotropical otter, <i>Lontra longicaudis</i>	
weak belly	n.	diarrhoea or other forms of upset stomach	
weewi, weewee	n.	leaf-cutting ant sp., <i>Atta cephalotea</i>	< Miskito <i>wiwi</i>
white maya	n.	Tree sp., <i>Miconia argentea</i> . A common tree of the savanna and pine ridge areas. The leaves are five-veined with a white underside. The berries, which ripen during the rainy season, attract birds. The berries can be eaten or fermented to make wine.	
wine	n.	dance, particularly one that involves gyrations of the waist, hips and buttocks.	Old English <i>wind</i> meaning ‘to turn this way and that, to wiggle or writhe’. But also Quechua <i>wayno</i> , an important dance type.
windup	n.	vigorous dance, especially with swinging of the hips	< English
wish willy	n.	spine-tailed lizard	
wowla 1.	n.	snake sp., boa constrictor	< Miskito <i>waula</i> ‘boa’.
wowla 2.	n.	long snake-shaped basket used for processing cassava for breadmaking.	= ruguma
water dog	n.p.	neotropical otter, <i>Lutra longicaudis</i> .	Similar forms occur in West Africa, e.g. Hausa <i>karen ruwa</i> . Also Miskito <i>li yula</i> meaning literally ‘water’ + ‘dog’
white grouper	n.p.	bags of cocaine found floating on the reef by fishermen and sold for considerable profit. A modern version of the tale in the Arabian nights. The giant grouper, <i>Epinepheus itanajara</i> , is one of the largest and most profitable species taken by fishermen.	

## X.

xate	n.	[faate] <i>Chamaedorea ernesti-augustii</i> and other <i>Chamaedorea</i> spp.	also fishtail
xatero	n.	[faatero] collector of the leaves of <i>xate</i>	< Guatemalan Spanish

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<b>Y.</b>			
Yard	p.n.	Jamaica	
yama bush	n.	medicinal plant sp.	= trijolea
yampa	n.	yam sp. with purple flesh	
yellow belly	n.	someone with obvious tan lines.	
yellow jaw	n.	pit viper, <i>Bothrops asper</i>	cf. tommy goff
yellowtail	n.	bird sp.	
yemeri	n.	tree sp. <i>Vochysia hondurensis</i> . Yemeri grows best on sandy, clay soils. Its timber is used most often `or dugout canoes, but it also is a good wood for house siding and for boxes.	
yerriso	n.	gossip	< English 'I hear so' <i>Ah yer so</i> . 'I hear such a thing'
<b>Z.</b>			
zinc	n.	[zink] corrugated galvanized metal sheets used for roofing and fences	< <i>zinc</i> (English)

### Some Belizean expressions

'Catch and kill'

Someone who goes after something to exploit it immediately

'Change dog for black monkey'

To exchange one thing for something identical.

'Dog is the only animal which chases you and barks'

Describes an enemy who draws attention to himself

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