

## Why should you care?

While Belize is better off than some countries, our fish catches have declined in recent decades and most of the large (>40 cm or >15.8 inches) fishes are gone.

The Belize Fisheries Department has implemented seasons and size limits for many commercial species.

Protecting our wild fisheries stocks, rebuilds seafood production, preserves our marine ecosystem, and protects the planet.

## You are what you eat

Mercury is a neurotoxin. It bioaccumulates in fish. Some larger species, like shark, show higher mercury levels. Little mercury testing of fish is done in Belize. Shark is used in local treats like panades. So, always ask what fish you are eating. If you are pregnant, be cautious of your fish consumption.

### Gill netting

Efforts are underway to phase out gillnets. Until then for restrictions as to where they can be placed and mesh size check [www.fisheries.gov.bz](http://www.fisheries.gov.bz). Gill netting causes indiscriminate by-catch that is unsustainable and detrimental to the ecosystem.

## You can make a DIFFERENCE.

If you know the proper seasons for seafood in Belize you are better equipped to make decisions at the restaurant or on your fishing trip.

By ensuring your local guides and restaurants comply with Belize's Fisheries Laws, you are helping to protect commercial seafood species for generations to come.

We are making strides in mariculture options, but they can never replace natural stocks.

[www.fisheries.gov.bz](http://www.fisheries.gov.bz)  
[www.agriculture.gov.bz](http://www.agriculture.gov.bz)  
[www.fragmentsofhope.org](http://www.fragmentsofhope.org)  
[www.healthyreefs.org](http://www.healthyreefs.org)  
<http://www.seafoodwatch.org/>



# SEAFOOD GUIDE *for* BELIZE



Version 2. July 2016

## Complete Ban

- > Coral
- > All Parrot Fish
- > Blue Tang
- > Surgeon Fish
- > Doctor Fish
- > Permit
- > Tarpon
- > Bone Fish
- > Marine Turtle (all species)
- > Whale & Nurse Sharks
- > All Marine Mammals
- > Crocodile
- > Diced conch
- > Diced lobster

## Do not eat during Closed Seasons

\*Seasons may end early if quota is met. Always check local authorities

**Conch\*** (July 1- September 30)  
Shell length >7 inches/Fully clean >2.75 oz./  
Market clean-3.0 oz

**Lobster** (February 15-June 14)  
Cape length >3 inches/Tail weight >4 oz.

**Nassau Grouper** (December 1-March 31)  
Must be 20-30 inches only. Must be landed whole (no fillet)

**Wild Shrimp** (July 14-March 14)  
Available seasonally, farmed shrimp available year round

**Hicatee** (May1-May 31)  
Females must be 15-17 inches. Three per person. Five per vehicle.

**Sea Cucumber** (July 1-December 31)

**West Indian Top Shell** (January 1-September 30)

Diameter > 2.44 inches

**Sharks** (August 1- October 31)  
Must land with fins attached

## Eat Anytime Guilt-Free

### LIONFISH

The lionfish is an invasive species to the Caribbean. It eats our commercial fish, and has no natural predators here; the best control method is to kill and eat it! It is healthy, delicious, and can be eaten whole or fillet. It tastes like grouper or hogfish. It has very venomous spines, but a scissors easily removes them.



[eatdalion.bz](http://eatdalion.bz) - catching and cooking advice.

## Special Laws & Permits

**Fishermen** must have a valid license. Must be Belizean citizen or permanent resident.

**Sea Cucumber** requires special license.

**Sharks** require a special license.

**West Indian Top Shell** requires a special license.

**Fish Fillet** must have skin patch left on 2 inches by 1 inch.

Collection of any seafood using SCUBA is illegal.