

What is the origin of the country name Belize?




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Below is a diagram which shows the evolution of the name "Belize" from the original "Wallace."

The Origin Of The Name "Belize"

IN THE 17 CENTURY, PETER WALLACE A DARING SCOTCH BUCCANEER FOUND A RIVER ENTIRELY PROTECTED BY A SERIES OF CAYES AND REEFS AND MADE IT HIS PLACE OF REFUGE FROM THE SPANIARDS.

THE FOLLOWERS OF WALLACE GAVE HIS NAME TO THE RIVER ON WHOSE BANK THEY ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES. DUE TO IMPROPER PRONUNCIATION BY THE SPANIARDS THE NAME WALLACE OR WILLIS DETERIORATED TO WALLIX, VALIS, BALIS, AND FINALLY TO BELIZE IN 1790.

NAMES OF THE RIVER	DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	REFERENCES
<i>Wallix</i>	<p>1790</p> 	<p>1790 MAP DRAWN BY RAFAEL LLOBET SHOWING THE NEW AREA CLEARED IN BELIZE.</p>
<i>Walix</i>	<p>1785</p> 	<p>1785 SPANISH MAP SHOWING THE LOGWOOD AREA OCCUPIED BY THE ENGLISH SETTLERS.</p>
<i>Valiz</i>	<p>1724</p> <p>MEXICO 1017.—EL REY AL MARQUES DE CASAPUERTE, VIRREY DE NUEVA ESPAÑA, EN MADRID A 11-12-724.</p> <p>"...y teniendo noticia al mismo tiempo que en las referidas riberas y contornos del Río de Valiz, próximas a la ciudad de Mérida, capital de la expresada provincia de Yucatán, se hallan hasta el número de 800 ingleses, con armas y orden de ponerse en cualquiera invasión de enemigos..."</p>	<p>1724 REPORT IN MADRID OF THE NUMBER OF ENGLISH SETTLERS.</p>
<i>Valiz</i>	<p>1783</p> 	<p>1783 SPANISH MAP SHOWING "RIO DE VALIZ YNGLES RIVER BELLESE".</p>
<i>Balis</i>	<p>1677</p> <p>The last two rivers to be placed are the Rio de Balis and the Rio de Tipu. These are the Rio Viejo or Old river or Belize river, There are four leagues from here to the Rio de Nitam (4 leg.) There are two leagues from here to the Rio de Balis (2 leg.) After these two leagues one enters into the Rio de Tipu.</p>	<p>1677 COPY OF FRAY JOSEPH DELGADO'S JOURNEY TO BACALAR.</p>
<i>Bullys</i>	<p>1705</p> <p>'a great part drowned'—meaning swampy and low-lying—and adds: 'Sixty leagues from Porto Caballo [now Puerto Cortéz, in Spanish Honduras] lyeth the River of Bullys, where the English for the most part now load their logwood.'</p>	<p>1705 EXTRACTED FROM JOHN FINGAS LETTER TO THE COUNCIL OF TRADE.</p>
<i>Bellese</i>	<p>1720</p> <p>der Tornef to an Anchor, and staid Two or Three Days till the Wind eased, and then plied down for Bellese River, where we arrived in about Four or Five Days more. I soon fold my Cargo to the Logwood-Cutters,</p>	<p>1720 EXTRACTED FROM CAPT. NATHAN URING VOYAGE TO BELIZE.</p>
<i>Belize</i>	<p>1790</p> <p>Alange en Mérida a 8-11-790.</p> <p>"N.º 3.—Copia—River Belize 26th, October 1790—Sir—Thirty eight days have now elapsed since your arrival in this district, as the Officer nominated by his Excellency the Captain General of Yucatan to visit the Es-</p>	<p>1790 EXTRACTED FROM PETER HUNTER'S LETTER TO BALTASAR RODRIGUIS</p>

Here is a 1895 account of how Belize got its name by Father Eugene H Brady April 22, 1895

"Balise" is the French name of a stake driven into the ground to hold a lantern to direct the incoming boats of buccaneers

Another theory is that Wallis gave his own name to Belize. The Spanish had no "w," so they substituted a "v" and since "v" is convertible with "b" it eventually became Balize.

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