CAPSULE HISTORY TIMELINES- Cozumel, Belize & Costa Rica ©Dr John Freedman



A CAPSULE HISTORY OF COZUMEL

60MYA	Cozumel island formed by tectonic uplift of limestone
1500BC	Olmecs (may) have visited the island, used as a shrine to the goddess of fertility, Ix-Chel
100BC	First Maya arrive – and thrive – on the island, which retains its pre-eminence as a shrine to Ix-Chel
600-1000AD	Shrine towns built & expanded, population grows, key pilgrimage & trading center
1518	Spanish arrive, with smallpox; Mayan population ~20,000 at time of Spanish arrival.
1519	Hernan Cortez stops in on his way to Vera Cruz; the Mayans are hospitable.
1570	Census records 372 Maya remaining - due to smallpox devastation
1600s	Pirates devastate coastal settlements; the island depopulates in the 1700s
1800s	The island repopulates as a Mayan refugee center and also as a center of the *chicle* trade
1861	Abe Lincoln seeks to purchase the island for relocation of freed slaves – Mexico rejects the idea
1924	The Grand Hotel opens for chewing gum magnates and the age of tourism begins
1960s	Jacques Cousteau puts Cozumel on the map; Diving and cruising tourism take off.
Today	Population > 100K. 5 million visitors and 1000 cruise ship visits per year!

A CAPSULE HISTORY OF BELIZE

1500BC	First evidence of Olmecs in the area of Belize
100 BC	First Maya arrive – and thrive.
950 AD	Peak of the Classic Maya Period
1502	Columbus may have sailed the coast on his 4th voyage; Spain claims the area but it is largely ignored
1600s	British 'Baymen' and their African slaves begin logging; Spain objects (forcibly)
1763	Spain concedes to England the right to log only, but no sovereignty. Conflict persists
1786	The Treaty of London reconfirms the Baymen's right to log – only. Conflict persists.
1796	The British defeat Spanish forces at the Battle of St. George's Cay, ending Spanish hegemony.
1821	Newly independent Mexico claims the territory – but relinquishes the claim 5 yrs later
1833	Slavery is abolished (in British Empire)
1862	The area is formally established as the Colony of British Honduras. Oligarchic rule prevails.
1847-1901	Refugees of the Yucatan Caste Wars enter the area.
1930s on	Political will toward social justice emerges
1940s	De-colonization proceeds, slowly
1961	Hurricane Hattie destroys 75% of homes in Belize City
1964	The colony is granted self-government, not independence
1970	The new planned city of Belmopan replaces Belize City as the capital
1973	The colony symbolically changes its name to Belize
1981	The colony is granted full INDEPENDENCE as the sovereign nation of Belize
2021	Guatemala continues to dispute centuries-old territorial claims

A CAPSULE HISTORY OF COSTA RICA

10,000BC	First evidence of paleo-indigenous hunter-gather cultures
700 CE	Diqui culture predominates, agrarian with metallurgy
1502	Columbus lands off the Costa Rican coast on his 4th voyage; his forces overwhelm the local population
1524	First Spanish colony in Costa Rica, which is part of New Spain
1500s	Indigenous population decreased from 120,000 to 10,000, primarily by European diseases
1600s	Costa Rica, the southern tier of the Captaincy of Guatemala in New Spain, is largely neglected
1779	Coffee is introduced and heavily promoted - it will change everything, sparking growth and development
1821	New Spain wins independence – Costa Rica part of Mexico? Guatemala? New Granada (Colombia/Panama)?
1823	Costa Rica joins the ill-fated Federal Republic of Central America
1838	Costa Rican becomes an independent sovereign nation
1856	Mercenary adventurer William Walker invades and is defeated by combined Central American forces
1869	Democracy is established
1917-19	Brief period of dictatorship under Federico Grandos
1948	Civil War after a contested Presidential election → new democratic constitution, abolition of military
1970s	Costa Rican economy begins long transformation from agrarian-based to manufacturing & tourism