

# HONDURAS TRIP COUNTRY GUIDE

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# PURPOSE OF THE COUNTRY GUIDE

## Welcome

### ¡Bienvenidos a Honduras! Welcome to Honduras!

We look forward to welcoming you on an unforgettable journey to the stunning Caribbean coasts of Guanaja and Santa Fe in Honduras. With its natural beauty, diverse wildlife, rich culture, and warm people, Honduras dazzles those who experience its life above and below the water.

Guanaja is the most remote Bay Island (43 miles off Honduras's north coast), known as the "Green Island" for its lush and mountainous vegetation and "The Venice of Honduras" for its meandering waterways. The island has internationally significant wetlands, and its clear waters and extensive Mesoamerican Barrier reef system support spectacular underwater biodiversity.

On Honduras's north coast, stretching nearly 200 miles along the Caribbean's azure fringes, the coastal sierras of Santa Fe municipality offer calm waters and unique Garifuna culture and nature.

Honduras translates as 'great depths'—and we guarantee that through the lens of Rare's coastal fisheries program, Fish Forever, you will explore and experience the great depths of this Caribbean paradise.

Wishing you a safe and inspiring journey!

## About the Guide

This Honduras Country Guide offers practical and helpful information for your journey.

The guide includes information on passports and visas, health and safety considerations, communication tips, cultural guidelines, and more. Note that your [Online Trip Portal](#) contains any tailored information related to your trip, such as inclusions and exclusions, staff contact numbers, flight recommendations, etc.

Don't hesitate to contact an Elevate Destinations staff member with questions or concerns.

# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

## Passport

Please make sure your passport is current and **valid for at least 6 months beyond your trip departure date (through at least November 3, 2023)**. Your passport should have at least 2 blank pages for the entry and exit stamps, or more if you are visiting several countries on this trip. Please note that the last two amendment pages are not acceptable for visas and immigration stamps.

You must renew your passport if you are out of visa pages—the State Department no longer provides additional pages. If necessary, please renew your passport immediately. We also recommend travelers scan and email a copy of their passport to themselves as a backup.

For help renewing your passport, we recommend A1 Passport and Visa Services in Washington, D.C., for their excellent customer service: [info@a1passportvisa.com](mailto:info@a1passportvisa.com). Let them know you are working with Elevate Destinations on your travel arrangements.

## Visa

Travelers with a United States passport do not need a visa to visit Honduras for Tourism under 90 days. If you are not a U.S. Citizen, please contact [yumi@elevatedestinations.com](mailto:yumi@elevatedestinations.com) for assistance with visas.

## Travel Insurance

Rare is providing basic medical coverage for all travelers through GeoBlue. Please find the supporting documents below:

- [Certificate of Coverage](#)
- [Member Guide](#)

If you are extending your travel beyond the trip dates, we encourage you to consider additional travel insurance.

Elevate Destinations strongly recommends that travelers purchase insurance with Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) level coverage. While not required, CFAR provides more robust coverage for unexpected trip cancellations or delays. Please note that all CFAR insurance policies are time sensitive and require purchase within 1 to 21 days of paying for your trip.

Below are two insurance brokers recommended by Elevate Destinations:

1. **Yonder Insurance**— You may purchase travel insurance through our partners at Yonder Travel Insurance. Email [hello@insureyonder.com](mailto:hello@insureyonder.com) or call 855-358-6433 (Monday- Friday, 8:30 AM– 5:00 PM CT).

2. **Travel Insurance Center**— Dan Drennen is Elevate Destinations' travel representative. To inquire with Dan about the insurance policies he offers, you may reach him by email at [dan@travelinsurancecenter.com](mailto:dan@travelinsurancecenter.com) or call 1-866-979-6753 (extension 3621).

## Covid Protocols for Travel

**Covid Vaccinations:** To participate on this trip, you must be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 and up to date with any additional doses of the vaccine you may be eligible for. In many cases, this means you must be boosted before travel. Travelers are not eligible for a refund for failure to get vaccinated or boosted prior to departure.

## Entry Requirements

For entry into Honduras, the following is **required**:

- **COVID-19 Vaccination:** Fully vaccinated travelers must provide proof that they have completed a full course of vaccination against COVID-19 at least 14 days before boarding. Proof must be presented in the form of the original vaccination card (2 doses of most vaccines; 1 dose of Johnson & Johnson).
- **Pre-Check Form:** Travelers must fill out a [pre-check form](#) before traveling to Honduras. Travelers must register with an email account and complete the form. After completing the form, travelers will receive a confirmation in their inbox, which must be present before boarding.
- **Yellow Fever:** Honduras requires travelers to be vaccinated for yellow fever if arriving from or traveling to a country with a risk of yellow fever virus transmission. If you are coming from the United States, you **do not need** to show proof of yellow fever vaccination. If you are arriving from a country other than the U.S., please check the [CDC Web Page for Yellow Fever](#) to see list of countries with risk of yellow fever transmission to see if your departure destination is on the list.

## Health Considerations

Prior to travel, Elevate Destinations and Rare strongly recommend that you consult your physician regarding recommended immunizations for your time in Honduras. Given that we are not a licensed Health Care provider, we cannot advise travelers on which immunizations they may need. We recommend that all travelers do the following:

- Visit the [CDC Website for Honduras](#) to view recommended vaccines and medicines, travel health notices for the region, and other tips for staying healthy and safe.
- Consult with a travel clinic or your primary care physician regarding immunizations or other precautions you may need to take in order to participate in this journey. You will need to do this well in advance of your trip as some vaccinations require time to take effect, and you may need to allow time between a series of shots.
- Check that your health insurance covers you in Honduras. Please read the Health Insurance policy provided by Rare during the trip linked below to determine if you would like to purchase additional medical insurance.

**Physical Requirements:** Elevate Destinations recommends that travelers have a moderate level of fitness and agility. Travelers on this trip should be able to:

- Walk confidently on uneven surfaces,
- Climb sets of stairs without assistance,
- Keep pace with an active group of travelers,
- Spend time outside in warm, humid weather,
- Ride comfortably in a boat in the open ocean for up to 90 minutes and in a vehicle on bumpy roads, and
- Keep a flexible and positive attitude in the case of sudden changes to the itinerary or weather – expect the unexpected!

## Safety Recommendations

Your guide will give you current briefings on safety while in-country, but here are some basic ground rules for safety while traveling:

- Keep all valuables in the hotel safe.
- Avoid flashing money. Be mindful of your belongings at all times. Keep bags in front of you in crowds, and on your lap when at restaurants.
- Pay attention: avoid walking around with your smartphone in hand.
- Be vigilant when crossing roads.
- Stick with the group.
- Always make sure that others know of your whereabouts and movements. If you leave the hotel, make sure someone knows your destination and your estimated return time.
- Avoid street protests or large gatherings.
- Do not wear expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry while traveling.
- Let a staff person or your guide know if you have any safety concerns.
- Always wear sun protection in the form of lotion, a hat and/or a scarf to cover your shoulders, especially during the peak of the day.
- Rare and Elevate are also equipped with safety and security plans in the event of emergencies, developed by our security consultants.

## Communications

The country code for Honduras is +504.

**To call from the U.S. to Honduras, or from a U.S. based cell phone:** first, **dial** 011 (the U.S. exit code): next, **dial 504**, the country code for **Honduras**. Then **dial** the 8-digit phone number that starts with a 2 for landlines and usually 9 for cell phones.

**International Calls:** If you are in Honduras and trying to reach a number in the U.S., dial:

00 - 1 - Area Code - Land Phone Number

00 - 1 - 10 Digit Mobile Number

**Wifi:** Wifi will be available in many places you visit in Honduras. However, speed, bandwidth, and availability may fluctuate and be significantly compromised in small towns and on the Guanaja cays.

**Staying connected:** Here are the most common methods for making local/international calls:

- **Smart Phone apps:** Apps like WhatsApp and Viber (calls can be made using Wifi).

- **Get an international calling package:** Setting up international coverage from your cell phone provider is often the simplest and best option to avoid roaming charges.
- **Use a local phone / SIM card:** SIM cards are available for international travelers to make calls within Honduras, as international calls can get expensive. Please be aware of any requirements your phone has to accept the local SIM cards (i.e., size of SIM card, jailbroken, etc.). You must provide a copy of your passport to buy a local SIM card. SIM cards can be tested and purchased at a cell phone store. Prepaid sim cards are available with two major companies: Claro and TIGO. The SIM card balance can be reloaded at small stores, including *pulperias* (kiosks). We do not think this option will be necessary, but if you want assistance purchasing a local SIM, please let your Guide know.

### **Smart Traveler Tip!**

*Rare will enroll all travelers from the USA in the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in case of an emergency. Enrolling in this program has enormous benefits in case of an emergency while abroad:*

- *You will receive information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination.*
- *Enrolling lets the U.S. Embassy in that country know that you are there and helps them contact you in an emergency, whether natural disaster, civil unrest, or family related.*

## **Essential Travel Documents**

We advise you to make photocopies of your important documents and leave a few copies in your luggage, money belt, and with relatives or friends at home. We also suggest you email yourself a scanned copy or take a screenshot or photo of the document and save it in an "Important Travel Documents" folder on your phone's photo app. These steps may help to protect you in case of an emergency.

*These are the documents you should print and keep with you during your travel:*

- A photocopy of your passport
- Covid-19 Vaccination Card
- International flight itinerary or e-tickets
- Pre-Check Form: Travelers must complete the online Honduran [Migration's National Institute Pre-check Form](#) before traveling to Honduras. Travelers must register with an email account and complete the form. After completing the form, travelers will receive a confirmation in their email inbox, which must be present before boarding.

- Travel and medical insurance policy details and 24-hour emergency number
- Details of relatives/friends and your primary care physician to be contacted in an emergency
- Bank and credit card details, camera serial numbers, etc.

## Money

**The Lempira:** The national currency of Honduras is the Lempira (L) (ISO code HNL). Its name commemorates the Cacique Lempira, an indigenous leader of the Lenca ethnic group who defended his territory during the Spanish conquest.

The Lempira comes in the following denominations:

- Banknotes: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500.
- Coins (centavos): 5, 10, 20, 50

The local currency is used in most places, especially smaller stores and markets. Ask for smaller bills when getting cash or change, as some smaller vendors may not carry change for bigger bills. Most of the places we are visiting will accept credit cards, with exception of artisanal vendors. *As a reminder, all tips are pre-paid and included in your trip payment.*

The Lempira can be hard to exchange outside of Honduras, so be prepared to exchange all Lempira before leaving the country. We recommend exchanging Lempiras at the San Pedro Sula airport before your international departure.

As of April 2023, the exchange rate is 1 USD = ~25 Lempiras. To see the current exchange rate, visit <https://www.xe.com/currencyconverter/>.

**USD:** Like almost everywhere in Central America, the U.S. dollar is a second currency, and nearly every business accepts both. The U.S. dollar is the main currency on the Bay Islands because of the frequency of cruises and the many American visitors. It is wise to carry small bills (but not \$20, which can be problematic), especially \$2 bills (they are considered lucky and make a good tip). Bills with tears or defects such as writing or stamping on them will likely not be accepted.

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards (mainly Visa and MasterCard) are accepted in larger establishments and hotels. Cash is more appropriate everywhere else. Most merchants may charge an additional fee for a credit card transaction.

**Cash:** We recommend bringing \$200-\$300 in USD cash for personal spending or emergencies. If you bring USD, your bills should be:

- **New** (printed in the last five years)
- **In pristine condition** (no rips, tears, smudges, markings, creases, etc.)

**ATMs:** Local currency can be obtained with your ATM or debit card. We recommend getting money from an internationally trusted ATM at the airport upon arrival. Be sure to bring cash to the Bay Islands because they do not have many ATMs for personal spending or emergencies.

*\*Note: ATMs in remote areas can be finicky and may not work on a given hour or day. We recommend traveling with 2 or 3 crisp \$100 bills stored safely in your carry-on luggage to be exchanged if ATMs won't work.*

### **Smart Traveler Tip!**

*Be sure to notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel plans. If you don't, they may view your activity as fraudulent and put a block on your card.*

## **IN-COUNTRY INFO**

### **Time**

Honduras follows Central Standard Time (GMT-6), and they do not do Daylight Savings Time. So, it is currently 2 hours behind the U.S. East Coast and 1 hour behind the U.S. Central Time Zone.

### **Weather Conditions**

Honduras is hot and humid almost year year-round. Temperatures hover around the 82-90°F (27-32°C) mark all year. The average low hovers around 68-74 F. Temperatures vary by altitude rather than season, making the mountains feel cooler. The Caribbean coast can experience a lot of rain, with the heaviest from September to February. In general, Honduras and its Bay Islands lie a bit off the path of hurricanes, but the country can feel the impact of the edges of hurricanes and tropical storms. Guests might remember that two major tropical storms made landfall in Honduras in late 2020, impacting many Fish Forever communities. Hurricanes are possible from April to October.

### **Smart Traveler Tip!**

*Traveling can be challenging on the body, especially when you are unaccustomed to certain climate conditions. Be sure to pack comfortable clothes that will keep you cool in this hot and humid climate, like cotton, linen, or silk blends, in light colors to reflect the sun. Layers are your friend; you can add or remove light layers like button-down shirts, cardigans, shawls, or a light windbreaker. We also advise packing comfortable shoes for long periods of walking. We don't recommend buying new shoes right before a trip. Always wear sun protection in the form of lotion, a hat, and/or a scarf to cover your shoulders, especially during peak sunshine.*

## Electricity

In Honduras, the standard voltage is 110 V, and the frequency is 60 Hz. You can use your electric appliances in Honduras if your country's standard voltage is 110-127 V (as in the U.S., Canada, and most South American countries).

In Honduras, the power plug sockets are **Type A** (ungrounded) and **Type B** (grounded with extra prong), just like in the United States.

### *Smart Traveler Tip!*

*Consider downloading a conversion app for currency, temperature, time, and distance while traveling. Here are some apps that we like: Units - Free Unit Converter, Converter+, and GlobeConvert.*

## Water & Food Safety

**Purified water** is used in big-city hotels and restaurants, but bottled water is recommended for outlying areas. Don't use the water from the tap unless you are sure it is safe, and only drink ice that is made from purified water. Use bottled water to brush your teeth and drink.

Elevate Destinations encourages travelers to pack a reusable water bottle to fill with clean drinking water and reduce single-waste plastics use. Clean drinking water and soft drinks will be supplied at all meals, and water will be available in the van.

After your stay in Honduras, as with other countries with parasite risks in the water supply, if you have symptoms, it may be worthwhile to consult a doctor regarding anti-parasite medicine.

# CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

## Language

The official language in Honduras is Spanish. English is quite common in the Bay Islands. Although many of the locals you will be interacting with will speak English, it's always considerate and may be helpful to learn a few phrases in Spanish. Below are some examples to get you started:

### Greetings

Hello	Hola
Hi (informal)	Buenas
Good morning	Buenos días
Good evening	Buenas noches
Welcome	Bienvenido
Good night	Buenas noches
Have a good day	Tenga un buen día
Goodbye	Adiós
See you later	Hasta Luego
Please	Por Favor
Thank you	Gracias
You're Welcome	De Nada
Excuse me	Disculpa
I'm sorry	Lo siento

### Essential words

Money	Dinero
Bathroom	Servicio/baño
Bus	Autobús

### Interests and hobbies

What do you like to do?	¿Qué te gusta hacer?
I like/ I don't like	Me gusta / No me gusta
I love...	Me encanta...
I am not interested	No me interesa
I like going diving	Me gusta ir al bucear

### Celebrations and well wishes

Happy birthday	¡Feliz cumpleaños!
Good luck!	¡Buena suerte!
Well done!	¡Bien hecho!
Take care	¡Cuídate!
Congratulations!	¡Felicitaciones!
Cheers!	¡Salud!

### Dealing with problems or asking for help

Can you help me?	¿Puede ayudarme?
Do you speak English?	¿Hablas inglés?
I don't understand	No entiendo
I don't know	No (lo) sé
I don't speak Spanish	No hablo español
I'm lost	Estoy perdido

In addition to Spanish, many indigenous languages are spoken in some small communities. The main indigenous languages are:

- [Garifuna \(Arawakan\)](#) (almost 100,000 speakers in Honduras, including monolinguals)
- [Miskito \(Misumalpan\)](#) (29,000 speakers in Honduras)
- And others with between 500 and 1,000 speakers each: [Mayangna \(Misumalpan\)](#), [Pech/Paya \(Chibchan\)](#), [Tol \(Jicaquean\)](#), [Ch'orti' \(Mayan\)](#)
- The [Lenca](#) people lost all its fluent native speakers in the 20th century but is currently undergoing revival efforts among the members of the ethnic population of about 100,000.

## Human Trafficking in Travel

Elevate Destinations has signed *the Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism* and expects all of its partners to refuse direct and indirect involvement in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. According to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, "a "child" is defined as a person younger than 18 years of age.

We encourage our travelers and suppliers to report the sexual exploitation of children. Even the most minor information can represent the missing piece of an ongoing investigation by law enforcement. If you are uncomfortable leaving your name and contact information, you can report anonymously to law enforcement. You can also email [protect@ecpat.net](mailto:protect@ecpat.net) to report the sexual exploitation of children.

## Responsible Travel Tips

Elevate Destinations takes pride in its leadership in the field of responsible travel. We take care in selecting our local partners who share our environmental and social values. We are avid supporters of locals working in the tourism industry as they are both the most impacted and impactful players at the local level.

The travel included in all Elevate Destination tours is carbon neutral, beginning with the arrival at your destination. We invite you to partner with Rare to offset emissions from your international flights as well. Rare's Climate Culture program will calculate your air travel carbon footprint and send you a secure rare.org link to make a tax-free donation to offset it. Fortuitously, Rare will offset your flights with an amazing Cookstoves Project in Honduras itself! Rare will be in touch to help you process your offset donation prior to the trip.

Here are a few tips that can help enrich your experience as a responsible traveler:

- **Keep an open mind:** Observe local customs and respect traditional cultures and people.
- **Language:** Learn a few basic greetings and "thank you" in the local language.
- **Local economy:** Support locally-owned businesses, restaurants, and other services. Shop from local artisans to promote traditional crafts and encourage contemporary arts.
- **Tipping:** Tipping is generally 10-15% for restaurants and bars in Honduras, however tips are included for all group activities and meals.
- **Respect:** It is important to acknowledge the privacy and dignity of others and ask before photographing or filming people. Ask permission before entering sacred places, homes, or private land, and take heed of local customs (i.e., remove shoes and hats, cover hair with a shawl, etc.). Please ask your Guide if you are unsure; they are there to support your introduction to the culture!
- **Community and environment:** Contribute to organizations that support traditional cultures and protect the natural environment. Keep to designated trails and do not disturb plants, animals, or their natural habitats.
- **Use alternatives to single-use plastics:** Avoid using plastic bags and minimize using other disposables. When traveling in areas away from cities, take out what you take in. Try using a reusable water bottle and treating your drinking water when possible.
- **Animal products:** Avoid purchasing crafts, clothing, furniture, or other products that are derived from members of protected or endangered animal species.

### **Smart Traveler Tip!**

*In travel, especially in remote parts of the world, things happen. Expect the unexpected! Keep an open mind, be flexible, and enjoy the moment. Sometimes the best memories come out of the unplanned.*

*\*Read about Elevate's values & vision, our sustainability commitment, our programs that give back, and more on our [website](#). Our team members are always excited to share more on this topic. We acknowledge that maintaining truly sustainable travel products takes ongoing commitment. We continue to monitor our programs on the ground to improve them, and we welcome your thoughts, feedback, and encouragement!*