

BIG FIVE
TOURS & EXPEDITIONS



Republic of
HONDURAS
Travel Guide

The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions, and answers to some of the most frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.

Be sure to check the selected reading list for more information.

“Good company in a journey makes the way seem shorter”.
Walton, Izaak

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Elevation: 3260 feet

Latitude: 14 03N

Longitude: 087 13W

Average Temperature

F°	Jan.	Feb.	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	69	70	73	75	76	74	73	74	74	72	70	69

Average Rainfall in Inches

inches	Jan.	Feb.	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.3	6	6.3	3.2	3.5	7.3	5.3	1.5	0.5

CLIMATE

The climate of Honduras is tropical but is tempered by the higher elevations of the interior. The low-lying coastal regions, however, are warmer, and the humidity is oppressive. The dry season prevails from November to May; the average annual rainfall ranges from 1,000 mm (40 in) in some mountain valleys to 2,500 mm (100 in) along the northern coast. On the Caribbean coast it rains practically all the time and floods can occur on the north coast, impeding travel. April is the month of real heat, especially outside the mountainous area of the capital.

HONDURAS CUSTOMS

The following items are duty-free for passengers 18 years and older: 200 cigarettes, 100 cigars, or 454 grams of tobacco, 2 bottles of alcoholic beverages, a reasonable amount of perfume for personal use, gifts equaling up to a total of US\$1000

U.S. CUSTOMS

Your personal exemption is \$800. There are also limits on the amount of alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products you may include in your duty-free personal exemption. Regulations frequently change. For current information and list of restricted / banned items, please contact your nearest Customs office, write the U.S. Customs Service at Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044., or visit the Customs & Border Protection website at www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml.

PASSPORTS / VISAS

Passports: For international travel, a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from date of departure, containing **at least** two blank pages is necessary.

Visas: U.S. and Canadian citizens do not require visas in advance. Citizens from other countries, consult the nearest Honduras consulate.

Important: Please look at your passport prior to travel to insure that:

- 1) Your passport is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

Please note: Pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.

TIME ZONE & FLIGHTS

Honduras is GMT / UTC minus 6 hours.

Flying time would depend on where you are coming from in the U.S. As an example, if flying from Miami, Florida or Houston, Texas to Tegucigalpa or San Pedro Sula, the flight is approximately 2 hours.

ELECTRICITY & MEASUREMENTS

110V and 220V - A voltage converter along with two and three prong adaptors will be necessary for US made appliances.

1 inch = 25.417 millimeters; 1 foot = 0.305 meters;
1 mile = 1.609 kilometers; 1 acre = 0.405 hectare.
1 gallon = 4.546 liters; 1 pound = 454 grams.

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE

Currency: Lempira (La) = 100 centavos. Notes are in denominations of La500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 & 1. Coins are in denominations of 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 centavos. A *real* is one-eighth of a Lempira, and is used colloquially, though there is no such coin.

Exchange: Sterling cannot normally be exchanged, except at branches of Lloyds Bank; visitors should therefore take US Dollars.

Credit & debit cards: MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and Visa are accepted. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travelers' checks: To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take travelers' checks in US Dollars.

Currency restrictions: There are no restrictions on the import and export of local or foreign currency, but it is advisable to declare US Dollars.

Banking hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1500 (some banks open until 1800). Some branches open Sat 0900-1200.

LUGGAGE

Traveling light is always the first and best rule! We recommend passengers limit their luggage to one medium-sized soft bag per person or two small duffle bags. In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Generally speaking, from the US, economy class passengers are allowed to check in two (2) normal size pieces of luggage (each piece measuring no more than about 62 linear inches, which means length plus width plus height), and not exceeding 70 pounds per bag.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions apply for charter flights. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

Most airlines now allow only one carry-on bag in addition to one personal item such as a laptop or handbag. Most bags within the 22 x 14 x 9 (or, a total of 45 linear inches) size restriction will be considered legal carry-on size by major

domestic U.S. airlines. Many US airlines check-in desks have sizing boxes within which your bag must fit. Obviously, no knives or cutting instruments are allowed in carry-on baggage.

All luggage should have identification inside as well as secure baggage tags on the outside.

Please note that the US National Transportation and Safety Board now suggests that you do not lock your checked luggage. If a screener has to open your bag, the locks may have to be broken. This applies to flights within the US and international flights originating in the US. This, however, does not address other international travel issues. We suggest that you lock your luggage and bring a couple of spare locks in the event one or more are cut off. But the choice is up to each individual traveler to make.

HEALTH

Visitors should be in generally good health. It is strongly recommended that you consult with your personal physician about any shots or boosters recommended, depending on your personal health profile. You can get a general antibiotic from your doctor to treat the most common complaints: travelers' diarrhea and upset stomach.

General Recommendations:

- Do not drink tap water at all.
- Do not drink your beverages with ice.
- Always drink bottled mineral water and soft drinks (diet soft drinks are not always available).
- Avoid any raw foods while traveling in the continent, except in recommended restaurants and hotels, where you may do so if you wish. Always choose cooked food.
- If you wear prescription glasses or contact lenses, it is advisable to bring an extra pair and cleaning fluid.
- In places of altitudes above 8,000 feet, you may suffer digestive problems, light dizziness or headache. We recommend that you only eat light foods the first day or two, and avoid alcohol.
- Sudden dietary changes, from your daily consumption at home to exotic dishes, especially on the first day or two, may result in digestive problems, often leading to headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Please be careful.

Note: If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip. Also, ask your doctor for a note detailing the drugs you are taking. For inspections done at Customs, keep all medications in their original containers.

Medical Care: Honduras' medical care varies greatly in its quality. Although doctors are generally well trained, support staff and facilities are not up to western standards. Facilities for advanced surgical procedures are not available. The islands of Roatan, Utila, and Guanaja do not have a general surgery hospital. There is a decompression chamber on Roatan for divers. Approved medical facilities can be found in: Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, Matagalpa, and Comayagua.

CLOTHING

Conservative casual wear is widely acceptable with dress tending to be less conservative in coastal areas. Beachwear and shorts should not be worn away from the beach or poolside. Some dining rooms require men to wear a jacket.

FOOD & DRINK

All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should first be boiled or otherwise sterilized. Milk is NOT pasteurized in rural areas and should be boiled. Powdered or tinned milk is available

and is advised, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water. Avoid dairy products that are likely to have been made from milk that was not boiled. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably served hot. Pork, salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

Local Dishes: There is a wide variety of restaurants and bars in Tegucigalpa and the main cities. Typical dishes include *curiles* (seafood), *tortillas*, *frijoles*, *enchiladas*, *tamales de elote* (corn tamales), *nacatamales*, *tapado*, *yuca con chicharron* and *mondongo*. In the coastal region, dishes such as salad are prepared with a variety of tropical fruits including mangos, papayas, pineapples, avocados and bananas. Recently, major cities have been seen an increase in fast food chains such as McDonalds, Burger King and Pizza Hut.

TIPPING

In places where tourism has left its mark, tipping is more common, usually anything from a little loose change up to 10% of the bill. In hotels, cafeterias and restaurants 10% of the bill is customary where service is not included. Porters and cab drivers should be tipped when helping with the luggage (La0.50 to La1). Hotels, travel agencies and tour operators charge an extra 4% for their services.

Your professional, licensed guide and driver, who accompany you, work very hard. They ensure that you receive the best BIG FIVE service, tour quality, and satisfaction. If you wish to reward them for their work, we suggest the following:

- \$5-\$10 per person per day for services rendered by any licensed guide/naturalist.
- \$2-\$4 per person per day for services rendered by driver.

Tipping is solely at your discretion.

SMOKING

We suggest that passengers refrain from smoking in public areas, sightseeing vehicles, and when aboard any cruise vessel while in the cabins, the dining area, or community areas. There are designated areas for smoking on cruise vessels. Please dispose of cigarette butts in the appropriate receptacles / ashtrays. Do not throw cigarette butts on the ground or overboard.

NATIONAL SYMBOLS OF HONDURAS

Flower: Orchid (*brassavola digbiana*) The rose was the originally the country's flower, but in 1969 given the fact the rose is not native to Honduras, the orchid was chosen to replace it. The orchid is found throughout Honduras in forested areas. The orchid represents beauty, vigor and distinctiveness.

Tree - Pine (*pinus oocarpa*) The pine tree was declared a national symbol to help foster national pride and to assist in forest conservation and management. The pine is abundant in all regions of Honduras and its products are used in many ways.

Animal - White-tail Deer (*odocoileus virginianus*) Declared a national symbol to help protect and raise awareness of Honduras unique and rich fauna. The White-tailed Deer is found throughout Honduras in mountainous and forested areas.

Bird- Scarlet Macaw, Declared a national symbol in 1993, to help protect and raise awareness of Honduras unique and rich birdlife. The Scarlet Macaw is a rare bird that is only found in vast remote areas of tropical rainforest such as the Olancho, Rio Patuca and Mosquitia regions.

COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone: IDD is available. Country code: 504. Outgoing international code: 00.

Mobile telephone: No GSM network exists at present.

Fax: Empresa Hondureña de Telecomunicaciones (*HONDUTEL*) offers a service.

Internet: E-mail can be accessed in Internet cafes in major towns.

Telegram: Ordinary and letter telegrams (minimum 22 words) may be sent.

Post: Airmail to Western Europe takes between 4 and 7 days. Post office hours: Mon-Sat 0800-1200 and 1400-1800.

SAFETY

Common-sense safety precautions you normally observe should be followed when traveling to minimize the risk of personal injury or property loss. Leave jewelry at home! Don't put valuables or prescription drugs in checked luggage. Carry them with you. Carry passports, exchange vouchers, itinerary, air tickets, traveler's checks, visas and permits, and insurance policies with you in your carry-on baggage. Never leave an unlocked suitcase in a hotel room. Never leave suitcases unattended in airports or train stations. Do not leave cash, travelers' checks, airline tickets, etc., in an unattended room, even in a locked suitcase – keep them with you or in hotel safe. Do not carry large amounts of currency or valuables. Do not accept food or drink from a stranger.

Women should also chain-lock their door when they are in their hotel room. Everyone should be alert in crowds for pickpockets. Wear a money belt. Women should keep their purses close to their body and securely closed. Be careful when you use your credit cards for payment. Make certain that the card isn't used to make an impression on more than one credit card charge form.

It is not suggested to walk after 9pm in the downtown streets of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. We would recommend that you take a taxi to and from restaurants after this time.

Carry Your Passport. Please ensure that you carry your passport or tourist card at all times. Never go anywhere (not even the Post Office) without your passport or tourist card. Should you ever be asked, you should be able to present your identification, your passport, tourist card, or visa. Not having it with you could mean a trip to the Police Station.

Pamphlets addressing safety issues abroad are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, or Bureau of Consular Affairs' home page: <http://travel.state.gov>.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1	New Year's Day
Apr 14.....	Day of the Americas
Apr 8.....	Maundy Thursday
Apr 9.....	Good Friday
May 01.....	Labor Day
Sep 15.....	National Day
Oct 03.....	Morazán Day
Oct 12.....	Columbus Day
Oct 21.....	Armed Forces Day
Dec 25.....	Christmas

PHOTOGRAPHY

Always ask permission before taking anyone's picture.

Remember that photography is **not** permitted in airports or at sensitive military sites, including some bridges, and at some religious sites and events. Respect local traditions, customs, values and sentiments to help them protect local cultures and maintain local pride. Carry some change for people who demand money for the privilege of taking their picture. If someone asks you to send a copy of the photo, don't say yes unless you intend to keep that promise.

Equipment: Bring cameras and lenses you are comfortable using. If you get new equipment before you go, do so as far in advance as possible. Shoot and develop at least a dozen rolls before departure to work out problems. And, don't forget your camera operation manual, filters, and a flash unit. Cameras should be packed with good cushioning. The roads are sometimes rough, and constant vibration can do damage. Keep your camera with you as much as possible.

Make sure you have lens caps for all your lenses. Clean equipment frequently. Bring a blower brush and lens-cleaning tissues.

Lenses: A combination of fixed and/or zoom lenses with focal lengths from 28 mm to 200 mm is a good for general travel photography, although you can take excellent photographs with only a 50 mm lens. Zoom lenses such as 35-80mm, 70-210 mm, or 100-300 mm will help you capture the sights in a variety of different settings. A macro lens is helpful for shooting close-ups, but a good set of extension tubes will work very well. A 2x converter is also a handy. Point and shoot cameras are nice for a group or indoor shots, but leave something to be desired when photographing scenics, close-ups, or animals. Bring a small cleaning kit and blower brush to keep equipment clean.

Film: Bring whatever you need with you. Film is generally more expensive abroad and it may be hard to locate. Even those not all that interested in photography will probably shoot a couple of 36-exposure rolls per day, and enthusiastic shooters will easily double or triple that amount. Be sure film is fresh and, when possible, keep it refrigerated. A film speed of ASA/ISO 64 is an excellent choice for color slide film. Use this speed when possible rather than higher speed films. There is a noticeable difference in quality that it is worth the extra effort to keep your camera steady at a somewhat slower shutter speed than you would otherwise use. For color prints, there are several good choices, including Kodak and Fuji films (ASA/ISO 100 & 200) for daylight photography, ASA/ISO 400 & 1000 are good for lower light and nighttime situations.

It is helpful to set up a numbering system for your film, marking each roll with masking tape and numbers or letters, before leaving home. This way you can code the rolls of film and where they were shot. It's quite a job to sort through hundreds of pictures with no clue where or when they were taken.

X-rays are cumulative, and today's more powerful machines will ruin undeveloped film. Avoid airport x-ray machines whenever possible, and request a hand search of your film only. Requests are honored most of the time at US airports (allow a little extra time), but not necessarily in other countries. **Lead bags for film are available for purchase and are well worth the small investment.** Even those are not guaranteed to protect film, but they do help. Never leave film in your camera when you are traveling through airports as the camera will be x-rayed and/or opened for inspection.

Video: If you are planning to shoot video on a safari, be sure to bring plenty of tape and batteries with you. Videotape is not affected by airport x-rays; only magnetic fields or prolonged exposure to heat will damage videotape. Your battery charger should be capable of automatically adjusting to 240 volts.

Batteries: Put fresh photo-quality batteries in your camera and other electric equipment before you leave and bring at least two sets of spare batteries with you. Your camera will be useless without them. Batteries tend to be expensive and hard to find.

SHOPPING

Honduras produces a number of typical handicrafts, including woodcarving and wooden musical instruments, woven junco basketry, seed necklaces, embroidery and textile arts, leather goods and ceramics. Colorful woven baskets and hats are the specialty at Santa Barbara. Brightly painted ceramics (especially depicting roosters) are for sale along the road from El Amatillo to Nacaome. Ceramics are also a specialty of the Lenca people of western Honduras. Paintings of typical mountain villages, with cobblestone lanes winding among houses with white adobe walls and red tile roofs can be found in many places, including Tegucigalpa, Valle de Angeles and San Pedro Sula. All of these things can be found not only in the places they're made, but also in Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Tobacco is grown in Honduras, and Honduran cigars are said to be some of the finest. Danf has several cigar factories where you can buy good hand-rolled cigars. In Santa Rosa de Copain, the La Flor de Copan cigar factory also makes excellent hand-rolled cigars. Ask for a free tour to see the cigars being made.

Honduras is gaining a reputation for its mahogany and cedar wood carvings (the small chests are especially beautiful) and for its primitive paintings of mountain villages. (The beauty of the paintings is often enhanced by hand-carved mahogany frames.) In the gift shop at the Copan ruins, you'll find small stone replicas of stelae, carved in stone that are well done. You can also purchase jade jewelry, statues and other carvings that local artists have faithfully reproduced from artifacts recovered by archaeologists. **Shopping hours:** Mon-Fri 0800-1200 and 1330-1800, Sat 0800-1700.

A 12 percent value added tax ("ISV") is added to all retail items except medicine. Some luxury goods have a higher tax.

GEOGRAPHY

Honduras is the knee of Central America, bordered to the south by Nicaragua and El Salvador and to the west by Guatemala. It has a 644km (399mi) long Caribbean coast and a 124km (77mi) pipsqueak of a Pacific coast. The Caribbean Bay Islands and, further northeast, the distant Swan Islands are both part of Honduran territory.

Three-quarters of the country is composed of rugged hills and mountains, ranging from 300 to nearly 2850m (984 to 9348ft) in height. Lowlands are found only along the coasts and in major river valleys. Deforestation is occurring at a rate of 3000 sq km (1170 sq mi) a year, which, if continued, will turn the country into a treeless desert within the next 20 years. However, there are still largely untouched areas, especially in the Mosquitia region. Fauna includes jaguars, armadillos, wild pigs, monkeys and alligators and abundant bird life such as toucans, herons and kingfishers.

Tegucigalpa: The capital of Honduras is a busy, noisy city nestled into a bowl-shaped valley nearly 1000m (3280ft) above sea level. It has a fresh and pleasant climate, and the surrounding ring of mountains is covered in pine trees. The name Tegucigalpa means 'silver hill' or 'silver mountain' in the local dialect, and it was bestowed when the Spanish founded the city as a mining center in 1578. Fortunately, the locals call the city Tegus for short, saving foreigners the embarrassment of mispronouncing the full name. Tegucigalpa became the capital in 1880, and in 1938 the nearby settlement of Comayagüela was incorporated into the city.

The city is divided by the Río Choluteca. On the east side is Tegucigalpa, with the city center and more affluent districts; across the river is Comayagüela, a poorer, dirtier market area with lots of long-distance bus stations and cheap hotels. It is cleaner, safer and more pleasant to stay in Tegucigalpa, although popular wisdom says it's cheaper in Comayagüela. If you do stay in Comayagüela, it's very dangerous to walk through the market area at night. The main area for budget accommodations in Tegucigalpa is a few blocks east of the Parque Central; in Comayagüela, the best cheap hotels are around the El Rey and Aurora bus stations, between 8a and 9a Calles. Most of the good restaurants are on the Tegucigalpa side of the river, but Comayagüela has plenty of cheap Chinese restaurants. In Tegucigalpa, Boulevard Morazán and Avenida Juan Pablo II are the main nightlife areas.

TRAVEL ETIQUETTE

You are guaranteed to come up against cultural differences while in Honduras. People of different cultures think and act differently than we do. Attitudes toward time, business, and politics are governed by traditions and philosophies quite different from Western ideas, some of which are very old. But experiencing different cultures is what international travel is all about.

When traveling, approach people as you would at home -- with an attitude of respect. When visiting national parks, we ask that you please abide by all regulations. This is for your safety as well as the safety of the animals and the habitat. Be considerate of the environment- never litter.

A journey to an exotic country is a spiritually enriching and emotionally stimulating experience. This kind of travel necessitates that travelers be good-natured realists as well as romantics, who can appreciate the very differences they encounter. Travelers who possess positive attitudes and eagerness to learn make for a more enjoyable travel experience for everyone. Please demonstrate common courtesy to insure the trip's success.

ECONOMY

Honduras, one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere with an extraordinarily unequal distribution of income, is banking on expanded trade privileges under the Enhanced Caribbean Basin Initiative and on debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. While the country has met most of its macroeconomic targets, it failed to meet the IMF's goals to liberalize its energy and telecommunications sectors. Growth remains dependent on the status of the US economy, its major trading partner, on commodity prices, particularly coffee, and on containment of the recent rise in crime.

HISTORY

There is evidence of Maya settlement since at least 1000 BC at Copán in western Honduras, but like other Maya city-states this was abandoned mysteriously around 900 AD. Columbus set foot on the American mainland for the first time at Trujillo in northern Honduras in 1502 and named the country after the deep water off the Caribbean coast ('Honduras' means depths). The Spanish settled in Trujillo in 1525, but soon became interested in colonizing the cooler highlands. They established a capital at Comayagua in central Honduras in 1537, and this remained the political and religious center of the country for 350 years, until Tegucigalpa became the capital in 1880.

The Indians resisted Spanish colonialism, and, by some accounts, almost managed to drive the colonizers from the mainland. The chief of the Lenca tribe, Lempira, led 30,000 Indians against the Spanish, but was treacherously murdered at peace talks in 1538, and by the following year resistance was crushed. Gold and silver were discovered near Tegucigalpa in

1570, attracting British and Dutch pirates to the Trujillo area. Around 1600, the Spanish estimated that Roatán was home to 5000 British buccaneers. Trujillo was sacked in 1643 by Dutch pirates and was not resettled by the Spanish until 1787.

While Spain concentrated its energies on the interior, the British were attracted to the Caribbean coast by stands of mahogany and brought black settlers from Jamaica and other West Indian islands to harvest the timber. Following an appeal by chiefs of the Miskito Indians, a British protectorate was declared over the entire coastal region extending from Honduras into Nicaragua. This lasted until 1859, when the area was relinquished to Honduras.

Independence from Spain was granted in 1821. Honduras briefly became part of independent Mexico, but then joined the Central American Federation. Conflicts between conservatives and liberals led to a break from the union, and Honduras declared independence as a separate nation in 1838. Since then, power has alternated between two political factions and a succession of military regimes. There have been hundreds of coups, rebellions, electoral 'irregularities' and Machiavellian manipulations since independence. The most infamous was the incursion by North American filibuster William Walker in 1860, whose ill-fated attempt to take over Central America ended with defeat in Trujillo.

Where William Walker failed to gain control of Honduras for the USA, US fruit companies succeeded. Around the end of the 19th century, land on Honduras' fertile north coast was purchased by US companies on generous terms, in order to ship bananas to the southern USA. Three US companies (Standard Fruit, Cuyamel Fruit and United Fruit) eventually owned 75% of all Honduran banana groves. Bananas accounted for 66% of all Honduran exports in 1913, making the companies extremely powerful players in Honduran politics. Each company allied themselves with domestic political factions, and the rivalries between the three US fruit companies shaped Honduran politics in the first half of the 20th century.

In 1969, Honduras and El Salvador had a brief war known as the Soccer War, which resulted in El Salvadoran troops invading Honduran territory and bombing Honduran airports. The war, which took place during a World Cup qualifying soccer match between the two countries, was sparked by the alleged mistreatment of El Salvadoran immigrants in Honduras. It lasted only 100 hours but soured relations between the two for over a decade.

During the 1980s, Honduras was surrounded by the turmoil in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala and became a haven for Somoza's National Guardsmen (known as Contras) when Sandinistas overthrew the Nicaraguan dictator. Strong US influence, aid and military assistance maintained stability in Honduras throughout this period, as the country became the focus of US policy and strategic operations in the region. Huge sums of money and thousands of US troops were funneled into the country as the US conducted provocative operations to destabilize Nicaragua, using Nicaraguan refugee camps in Honduras as bases for their covert war. The US was also training the Salvadoran military at Salvadoran refugee camps inside Honduras. Public outcry, political instability, the exposé of the Iran-Contra scandal and the knowledge that 12,000 Contras were operating from Honduras, resulted in anti-American demonstrations that drew crowds of 60,000 people in Tegucigalpa. The government finally reexamined its role as a US military base, refused to sign a new military agreement with the US and told the Contras to leave Honduras. With the election of Chamorra as president of Nicaragua in 1990, the Contra War ended and the Contras left Honduras.

Since then, Honduras' problems have been largely economic, with falling exports, a growing foreign debt and a shrinking GNP per capita. Aid from the US has shrunk since Honduras is no longer the linchpin of US Central American

policy. Trade with Europe is now twice that of trade with the US, but Honduras is still vulnerable to volatile price fluctuations of banana and coffee prices. The center-right Liberal Party is headed by President Carlos Flores Facussé who was elected in November 1997. Flores has strong ties to the US and is co-owner of the newspaper *La Tribuna*.

In November 1998, international aid and relief workers poured into Central America to help with the recovery from the devastation left by Hurricane Mitch. Honduras was the hardest hit by Mitch's rampage. The three days of rain that followed Mitch caused landslides and floods that buried towns and destroyed over 100 bridges throughout the country. When the Río Choluteca flooded, it devastated Tegucigalpa, the capital, sweeping things downriver and leaving behind an ocean of mud. By 2000, much of Mitch's mess was cleaned up, but the environmental practices that exacerbated the flooding, such as farming and rapid urban expansion, continue.

DEALING WITH JET LAG

With the joys and adventures of international travel come certain unavoidable inconveniences such as occasional lost luggage or bouts of jet lag. In fact, studies reveal that as much as 90% of long distance travelers experience a degree of jet lag.

Jet lag describes that out-of-sorts feeling associated with long flights, particularly those across time zones. Symptoms and severity vary but may include drowsiness, fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, headaches, insomnia, and swelling of the extremities. The number of time zones crossed affects the severity of jet lag.

The internal body clock follows circadian rhythm, which is controlled by the hypothalamus that processes nerve signals. That clock is designed for regular cycles of light and darkness. Depending on the number of time zones crossed, it may take several days for that rhythm to be restored.

But that is not the only influence. Other factors include cabin pressure, stale air, lack of humidity, and your overall physical condition at the beginning of your trip.

Although jet lag can not be completely avoided, there are some simple things you can do to help minimize its affects.

Consider the following for your next scheduled trip:

- Start your trip rested with a good night's sleep prior to departure.
- Drink plenty of fluids -- water and juices will help you to stay well hydrated. Seasoned travelers recommend you drink eight ounces every hour.
- **Avoid** alcohol and caffeine, however, just before and during flights. Both possess diuretic properties that promote dehydration. Alcohol also causes drowsiness and contributes to sluggish.
- Once comfortably onboard, reset your watch to the time zone to which you are traveling. This small act helps you begin adjusting to your destination's local time.
- As much as possible, create a dark environment on the plane. Bright lights have been shown to have a strong effect on individuals' body clocks. If necessary, try eye shades and earplugs to help block distractions and convince your body that it is nighttime. Closing window shades and turning off overhead lights may also help. Sleep on the plane if your flight has an early morning arrival time.
- Loose-fitting clothing and comfortable shoes will help in the event you experience mild swelling. Experienced travelers often bring lightweight slippers to wear during flights.
- Get adequate rest before starting on your journey to help minimize the amount of catching up you'll have to do when you arrive at the destination. Once home, try to schedule a day of rest before returning to work.

- Although not always feasible, look for opportunities to walk around while in flight. Do simple isometric exercises (contracting and relaxing as many muscle groups as possible) in your seat. These will improve circulation, help promote increased alertness, and reduce chances of swelling.
- If you arrive in the morning, plan to stay awake. If possible, wait until the local bedtime to sleep. Many people swear that this is the key to how quickly they adapt to local conditions. You will sleep better and will be less likely to suffer insomnia than if you nap upon arrival.
- During extended stopovers, showers are sometimes available. Trans-Pacific pilots report that taking a shower in Hawaii helps them recover more quickly from the general effects of jet lag.

SELECTED READING LIST

In addition to the many comprehensive and readily available guides produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor's, Insight, The Rough Guide, and others, here are a few other titles that might interest you. These books may be obtained through most bookstores or online.

HONDURAN SUMMER HONDURAN SPRING

Joel Lee Sherman

When a dog goes bad, it is exterminated...when a man goes bad, they send him to Honduras. Anton Smith is at a crossroads in his life. He journeys to the tropical climate of Honduras to try to find out who he is, why he feels so lost, and what the future holds for him. His search for truth and inner peace takes him from the halls of wealth and privilege to the charred killing fields of the Sandinistas. This is a powerful tale of self-discovery and second chances. It deals with the no-nonsense gusto for independence that defines today's generation of twenty- and thirty-somethings, and their awesome ability to secure their place in the world. Written with remarkable empathy, the story successfully seeks to determine the sometimes all too fine line between responsibility and irresponsibility.

RELIGIOUS NO MORE: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF GRACE AND FREEDOM

Mark D. Baker

Baker suggests that just as car companies test automobiles under severe conditions to uncover weaknesses, North American Christians may detect fallacies in their "gospel" by examining how it plays out under the challenges of poverty, injustice and entrenched religiosity. Baker's test case is drawn from his ten-year missionary experience in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, at churches born out of North American mission work. Baker observes Honduran church life, draws parallels to the dangers of religion in the North American church and mines from Galatians exciting possibilities of robust Christian grace and freedom. The

result is a bracing and refreshing approach to Christian community for laypersons, pastors, missionaries and mission strategists.

HONDURAS ADVENTURES IN NATURE

James D. Gollin

A realistic picture of the adventure travel opportunities in this relatively undiscovered destination. This book brims with opinionated reviews of where to go, what to do, and where to eat and stay. At the same time, it also explains both sides of the country's environmental struggle: how political and economic forces are destroying nature and how local environmental groups are working to build a sustainable society. Gollin mixes praise with criticism while directing you to nature-based activities that are fun and help preserve local rainforests, rivers, and reefs.

HONDURAS

Charles J. Shields, James D. Henderson

Age Range: Young Adult: - Part of the "Discovering Central America" series, this volume is an excellent addition to library collections. Divided into five chapters, information is presented on Honduran geography, history, economy, language, religion and home life. The author does a very good job of relating complex political history in a manner easily understood by students, including an explanation of the term "banana republic" and its origins. Honduras' current challenges are clearly delineated—reliance on bananas and coffee exports that weakens the economy, poverty, and a low literacy rate. Photographs throughout the book are contemporary and range from a glamour shot of the forest to Contra soldiers displaying arms. Each chapter includes a sidebar of facts and interesting information. A host of additional resources is provided in the appendices, including a selection of cultural recipes, a project and report ideas, and a chronology of Honduran history. Also included are a glossary and an index.

SARITA, BE BRAVE

Ruby C. Tolliver

Age Range: 8 to 11 - Twelve-year-old Sara has lost both her grandmother and mother and now her family must leave Honduras for Texas because civil unrest is reaching the mountains where she lives with her father and two siblings. During their six-day trip in an old truck, they are attacked by highway robbers. Well-trained at using a rifle, Sara fights off the intruders. Once they arrive in their new country, her family lives with relatives, where she is resented and made miserable by her American-born cousin. Tolliver enlightens readers with material about the political troubles of Central America and aspects of the child's heritage, such as food, religion, and celebrations. Although sad at times, the story of a young heroine who overcomes loneliness and hardships in a new land is a positive one. It will serve as a good discussion starter on the challenges and hardships immigrants face.

PACKING CHECKLIST

<u>CLOTHING - WOMEN</u>	<u>TOILETRIES</u>	<u>SUNDRIES</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable outfit for air travel	<input type="checkbox"/> Anti-malarial pills	<input type="checkbox"/> Passport
<input type="checkbox"/> Sandals or casual shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins	<input type="checkbox"/> International Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking shoes or tennis shoes	<input type="checkbox"/> Aspirin/Tylenol	<input type="checkbox"/> Vaccinations-Health Card
<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber thongs (shower)	<input type="checkbox"/> Motion sickness pills	<input type="checkbox"/> Airline tickets/vouchers
<input type="checkbox"/> Hat	<input type="checkbox"/> Short-acting sleeping pills	<input type="checkbox"/> Money Pouch
<input type="checkbox"/> Windbreaker or jacket	<input type="checkbox"/> Decongestant	<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Cards
<input type="checkbox"/> Pullover sweater or sweatshirt	<input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotic	<input type="checkbox"/> Travelers Checks
<input type="checkbox"/> Long pants *	<input type="checkbox"/> Lomotil / Pepto-Bismol	<input type="checkbox"/> Small calculator
<input type="checkbox"/> Shorts *	<input type="checkbox"/> Antacid	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses
<input type="checkbox"/> Socks	<input type="checkbox"/> Antibiotic ointment	<input type="checkbox"/> Prescription glasses
<input type="checkbox"/> Short sleeve shirts *	<input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Eyeglass case
<input type="checkbox"/> Long sleeve shirts *	<input type="checkbox"/> Sun screen/Sun block	<input type="checkbox"/> Converter/plug set
<input type="checkbox"/> T-shirts	<input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Alarm Clock
<input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas	<input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo & Conditioner	<input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars
<input type="checkbox"/> Light-weight robe/cover-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medications	<input type="checkbox"/> Small flashlight
<input type="checkbox"/> Swim-suit/cover-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Band-Aids	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewing kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Casual slacks/skirt	<input type="checkbox"/> Deodorant	<input type="checkbox"/> Small scissors
<input type="checkbox"/> Blouses	<input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste & toothbrush	<input type="checkbox"/> Kleenex
<input type="checkbox"/> Belt(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Feminine Hygiene supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Handi-wipes
<input type="checkbox"/> Underwear	<input type="checkbox"/> Dental floss	<input type="checkbox"/> Zip-lock bags
<input type="checkbox"/> Scarves	<input type="checkbox"/> Mouthwash	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel clothes line
<input type="checkbox"/> Costume Jewelry	<input type="checkbox"/> Hairbrush/comb	<input type="checkbox"/> Pillowcase for dirty clothes
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Razor	<input type="checkbox"/> Small notebook or journal
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Q-Tips/cotton balls	<input type="checkbox"/> Pen
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers	<input type="checkbox"/> Deck of cards
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Nail file	<input type="checkbox"/> Books/Magazines
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Tweezers	<input type="checkbox"/> Address book for postcards
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Make-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Photocopy of passport &
<u>CLOTHING - MEN</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hand lotion	<input type="checkbox"/> Airline tickets
<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable outfit for air travel	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hard candy
<input type="checkbox"/> Sandals or casual shoes	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bandana
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking shoes or tennis shoes	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra small, collapsible bag
<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber thongs (showers)	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Neck pillow for airline travel
<input type="checkbox"/> Hat		
<input type="checkbox"/> Windbreaker or jacket	<u>CAMERA EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Pullover sweater or sweatshirt	<input type="checkbox"/> Extra Batteries/Charger	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Long pants *	<input type="checkbox"/> Camera/Lenses	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Shorts *	<input type="checkbox"/> Stick-on labels for film	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Underwear	<input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of film	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Socks	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead Protective Film Bags	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Short sleeve shirts *	<input type="checkbox"/> Camera bag	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Long sleeve shirts *	<input type="checkbox"/> Lens filters	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> T-Shirts	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning Fluid/Tissues	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Pajamas	<input type="checkbox"/> Lens Brush/Puffer	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Light weight robe/cover-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Flash & Flash batteries	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Swim trunks	<input type="checkbox"/> Zip-lock bags	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Casual slacks	<input type="checkbox"/> Camera instruction book	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Shirts	<input type="checkbox"/> Video camera / Charger	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Belt(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Blank Video Tapes	_____

* ***Clothing should be comfortable***

Notes