

What It's Like To Visit Honduras Right Now



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Pandemic or no pandemic, telling friends, "I'm taking a vacation to Honduras!" has long been met with quizzical stares. But, at a time when open space and smaller crowds are travel priorities, this less visited, often-misunderstood Central American country has become an ideal destination.

When I traveled here, I found plenty of social distance — plus activities abound. I explored Mayan ruins, wandered a macaw sanctuary, rappelled down waterfalls, and snorkeled the largest barrier reef in the Western Hemisphere.

So, what's it like to visit Honduras these days? Here's a peek at my recent trip.

Do You Need a Covid Test to Visit Honduras?

If you're fully vaccinated, you do not need a Covid-19 test to enter the country. However, if you aren't vaccinated, you will need proof of a negative PCR or antigen test. You'll show either your vaccination card or negative test at the airport in the U.S. and in Honduras.

I flew a redeye on United from Los Angeles to San Pedro Sula (about five hours) and landed at 6:30 a.m. This was the first time I got to flash my vaccine card in an official capacity (very exciting). Plus, I was impressed by how smoothly the process went at Ramón Villeda Morelos International Airport. Staff was on hand to check documents just before passport control, and they were extremely efficient.

What to Do in Honduras Right Now

Depending on where you go in Honduras, you'll find ancient ruins, lush jungles, remote beaches, and coral reefs. During my eight-night trip, I visited three different areas of the country, which made for an action-packed itinerary.

If you want to do the same, but also crave downtime (I would've happily dedicated more time to hanging in hammocks), I'd recommend spreading this out over ten or 12 nights.

Copán

Copán



Mayan ruins and macaws are the big draws in Copán, which is where I started my trip. Plenty of tourists beeline straight to the Bay Islands (yes, the beach is incredibly enticing), but the archaeological sites in western Honduras (about a four-hour drive from San Pedro Sula and right near the Guatemalan border) are must-sees.

[Copán Ruins Archaeological Park](#) is home to more than 4,500 ancient structures—including intricate altars, a nearly 100-foot staircase covered in hieroglyphics (one of the largest single texts in the world), and an 8th-century-era ball court. I spied multiple scarlet macaws at the ruins, then headed to [Macaw Mountain Bird Park and Nature Reserve](#) to see even more.

Roatán

After heading back to San Pedro Sula, I hopped on an easy 35-minute flight to Roatán, the largest of the Bay Islands. Here, diving is all the rage, and travelers come from across the globe to experience the crystal-clear waters and colorful reefs. Sadly, I'm not certified (something I've sworn to rectify before my next Honduras trip!), but I did enjoy blissful swims in West Bay and Paya Bay. I also toured a mangrove forest by boat and spotted schools of striped sergeant major fish in a semi-submarine experience, both offered by [Hyde Tours Roatán](#).

La Ceiba

Back on the mainland, mountainous and lush La Ceiba is Honduras's haven for adventure. Here, hiking, kayaking, rappelling, whitewater rafting are all popular. I traveled by ferry to La Ceiba from Roatán (about a 75-minute journey). This is where I experienced one of the most exhilarating activities of my whole trip: a waterfall rappelling tour with [Las Cascadas Lodge](#). The excursion also included a short hike in Pico Bonito National Park, a series of descents, swimming in natural pools, and a treetop swing.

Before the adrenaline could wear off, I zipped over to [La Moskitia Ecoaventuras](#) to go whitewater rafting along the breathtaking Cangrejal River. And, because La Ceiba is an ideal launch point for visiting Cayos Cochinos (an archipelago that's remote enough to host multiple seasons of international *Survivor*), I hopped back in a boat to spend an afternoon snorkeling the area's legendary reefs.

Where to Stay in Honduras

Copán

Conveniently close to the ruins and Macaw Mountain, [Hotel Yat B'Alam](#) was my home base in Copán. Stays include breakfast in the attached cafe, and you're also within walking distance to the village's various restaurants and shops. Head to [Museo Boutique Casa Maya](#) — which is just around the corner — for jade jewelry, including macaw-shaped earrings (hey, when in Copán!).

Roatán



Courtesy of the property

I could have spent a month at mellow [Paya Bay](#), where cliffside rooms have private balconies right over the sea. Plus, I had the entire beach to myself during the two days I was here. Over on the island's more touristy West End, [Grand Roatán Resort](#) (which will become a Kimpton in 2022) has a buzzier vibe, with its swim-up pool bar and beachside restaurant.

La Ceiba

[La Villa de Soledad](#), a B&B with two of the most hospitable hosts in all of Honduras, made me feel like I was staying with old friends — though you'll still get plenty of privacy. My corner room had two sets of French doors that opened to a serene patio surrounded by jungle. Speaking of serene, I also stayed at [The Lodge & Spa at Pico Bonito](#), where each cabin has a hammock on the porch. The property also has its own hiking trails; meanwhile, the on-site spa is the perfect remedy for adventure-weary muscles.

Where to Eat and Drink in Honduras

Copán

Had I visited [The Tea & Chocolate Place](#) at the end of my trip, I may have bottled their hot chocolate and attempted to bring it home — it's that delicious. However, I did buy a bag of tea and a few chocolate bars to take back with me. [Casa de Todo](#) is another excellent spot for a casual bite — coupled with a bit of shopping. Here, I had fajitas and grabbed a souvenir bag of coffee. Nia Lola hit the spot for dinner and drinks. Their Anafre (a Honduran fondue made with chorizo, beans, and cheese) was the best I had throughout my trip.

Roatán

More than a meal, lunch at Yurumei Sports Bar & Restaurant in Punta Gorda is a chance to experience the culture of the Garifuna people, an Afro-descendant community. I was lucky enough to catch a Garifuna dance performance while I slurped my Machuca, a traditional coconut seafood soup. For dinner, I was blown away by the poolside ambiance at Luna Muna Restaurant inside [Ibagari Boutique Hotel](#).



Luna Maria Restaurant / Courtesy of Ibagari Boutique Hotel

La Ceiba

[Omega Eco Jungle Lodge](#) is a tour operator, hotel, and a lovely place to grab a bite. I stopped in for shrimp wrapped in banana leaves, plus a peek at some of the property's furniture made from recycled materials. My other favorite meal in La Ceiba was at The Lodge & Spa at Pico Bonito. Lobster tail and a round of piña coladas were the ideal rewards for a successful day of rappelling.

How to Get Around Honduras

Driving is tricky in Honduras, as roads are often not maintained. GPS service is spotty, too. Being said, it's best for visitors to hire a driver or tour guide for travel between cities on the mainland. [Maya Temple Tours](#) and [Mesoamérica Travel](#) are both reputable companies. On Roatán, Hyde Tours Roatán will get you around the island.

Additional Tips for Visiting Honduras

As of publication time, all international travelers returning to the U.S. need to show proof of a negative Covid-19 test no more than three days before returning, regardless of vaccination status. Each of the hotels mentioned above can help make arrangements for your rapid test. (I got mine at a clinic in La Ceiba.)

On a totally unrelated note, here's my big tip: buy a piece of Lenca pottery. These ceramics with mesmerizing black-and-white designs are made by hand using techniques that date back to Pre-Hispanic times. I purchased two Lenca vases at the gift shop in the Lodge & Spa at Pico Bonito and regretted not buying more.