

Honduras: At a Glimpse



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Honduras: At a glimpse

- **CAPITAL:** Tegucigalpa
- **FLAG:** The national flag consists of a white horizontal stripe between two blue horizontal stripes, with five blue stars on the white stripe representing the five members of the former union of Central American provinces.
- **MONETARY UNIT:** The lempira (L), is a paper currency of 100 centavos. There are coins of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 centavos, and notes of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 lempiras. L1=\$0.04549USD (or \$1 = L.22.98 as of 2015.)
- **WEIGHTS AND MEASURES:** The metric system is the legal standard; some old Spanish measures are still used.
- **HOLIDAYS:**
 - New Year's Day, 1 January
 - Day of the Americas, 14 April
 - Labor Day, 1 May
 - Independence Day, 15 September
 - Birthday of Francisco Morazán, 3 October
 - Columbus Day, 12 October
 - Honduran Armed Forces Day, 21 October
 - Christmas, 25 December
 - Religious holidays include Holy Week
- **TIME:** Central Standard Time



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About 725 bird species call Honduras home. The native birds of the region include tanagers, orioles, herons, macaws, toucans, quetzals, motmots, parrots, ibis, terns and kingfishers. The Honduran Emerald is found in the dry forest area of the Olanchito province. Honduras's national bird is the scarlet macaw, which inhabits the Olancho, Rio Patuca and Mosquitia regions of the country.



Geographic Location and Extent

Situated in Central America, Honduras has a total area of 112,090 sq km (43,278 sq mi), with a length of 663 km (412 mi) and 317 km (19 mi). Comparatively, the area occupied by Honduras is slightly larger than the state of Tennessee. It is bounded on the n and e by the Caribbean Sea, on the s by Nicaragua and the Gulf of Fonseca, on the sw by El Salvador, and on the w by Guatemala, with a total boundary length of 2,340 km (1,454 mi), of which 820 km (509 mi) is coastline.

Under the terms of an arbitration award made by Alfonso XIII of Spain in 1906, Honduras received a portion of the Mosquito Coast, or La Mosquitia, north and west of the Coco (Segovia) River. This is now the area of the Lost “City of the Monkey God”, The White City. Citing Honduras's failure to integrate the territory, Nicaragua renewed its claim to the entire Mosquito Coast in the 1950s and brought the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In February 1957, Honduras created the new Department of Gracias a Dios, made up of the former Mosquitia territory. The ICJ determined in 1960 that Nicaragua was obligated to accept the 1906 arbitration ruling concerning that country's boundary with Honduras. The judges ruled, by a vote of 14–1, that once a valid arbitration award was made in an international dispute, it became effective, and remained so, despite any lapse of time in carrying it out.

The two tiny Swan Islands (Islas del Cisne), half way from the Point of Castilla Peninsula and Jamaica in the Caribbean Sea, were officially ceded by the United States to Honduras on 20 November 1971. For administrative purposes, they are included under the Department of Islas de la Bahía, whose capital is Roatán on Roatán Island. The Swan Islands had been effectively held by the United States, which asserted a claim in 1863 to exploit guano, and had housed a weather station and an aviation post. The was also a strategic US military base to fight the Sandinistas.

The capital city of Honduras, Tegucigalpa, is located in the south central part of the country.

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EDUCATION

Public education is free and compulsory for six years (ages 6 to 12). After these six years of primary education, students take three years of lower secondary school and two years of upper secondary school. In the upper level, students choose between literary or scientific tracks. Students may also choose to attend a three-year technical school at the upper level. The academic year runs from February to November.

In 2001, about 21% of children between the ages of four and six were enrolled in some type of preschool program. It is estimated that about 79% of all students complete their primary education. The student-to-teacher ratio for primary school was at about 34:1 in 2003. As of 1998, there were 169,430 students enrolled in secondary schools.

The major university is the National Autonomous University of Honduras, founded at Tegucigalpa in 1847, with branches at San Pedro Sula and La Ceiba. There are several other universities, as well as technical and agricultural schools. In 2001, about 15% of the tertiary age population were enrolled in some type of higher education program. The adult literacy rate for 2004 was estimated at about 80%.

As of 2003, public expenditure on education was estimated at 4% of GDP.

LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS

Although the National Archive and Library of Honduras was established in 1880 to conserve and maintain the records of the republic, no great attention has been shown to government documents and other records in modern times. The National Archive and Library (40,000 volumes) includes land titles dating from 1580, historical documents dating from the 17th century, a newspaper collection from 1880 onward, a civil registry, and a collection of laws since 1880. The Ministry of Education has charge of the National Archive, as well as of other libraries and museums. The National University's library in Tegucigalpa contains over 200,000 volumes.

In Tegucigalpa, the National Museum exhibits historical and archeological works and the Miguel Paz Baraona Historical Museum highlights the personal effects of the national hero as well as the country's history. Also in Tegucigalpa are the National Art Gallery, the Museum of Natural History, and the Museum of Military History. The Museum of Anthropology in San Pedro Sula covers regional history from 1500 bc to present day and houses an impressive collection of Mayan artifacts. The Mayan Museum of Sculpture is in Copan. A Colonial Museum in Comayagua contains a collection of religious art and artifacts.



BANCO ATLANTIDA
desde 1913



Banco de Occidente. S.A.

Banks in Trujillo are as follows:

Banco Atlantida, Banco Occidente. 25 Minutes away from Trujillo in Tocoa there is Banca Azteca, Banco Sicohsa, Banco Bamer, Banco De Lo Trabajadores and Dacredito.

Banking hours are between 8AM to 4PM Monday to Friday. Saturday 8AM to 12:00PM Sundays closed.

There are ATM Machines in Trujillo and in Tocoa. Most local stores will be happy to exchange your US Dollars.

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ETHNIC GROUPS

The vast majority (90%) of the Honduran people are mestizo, a mixture of European and Amerindian.

About 7% of the population is purely Amerindian, the largest proportion being in the Copán area near the Guatemalan border.

Africans, about 2% of the population, live mostly along the north coast.

About 1% of the population is European, chiefly of Spanish origin.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Traditionally, the Honduran attitude toward foreign enterprise has been favorable.

Foreign capital is treated in the same way as domestic capital; however, firms in the distribution, health services, telecommunications, fishing and hunting, mining, insurance and financial services, or lumber business must have 51% Honduran ownership.

Honduran economic development has been powerfully influenced by foreign investment in agriculture, industry, commerce, and other economic sectors.

CUSTOMS AND DUTIES

Most imports from outside the CACM are subject to a common external tariff (CET) ranging from 0–20%. Duties are levied ad valorem over the cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value of goods.

Honduras also imposes a sales tax (12% on most goods, 15% for alcohol and tobacco) and consumption tax on selected imports: 20% on alcoholic beverages, 35% on motor vehicles, and 55% on cigarettes.

Capital goods are admitted at a tariff rate of only 1%.

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TAXATION

Personal income in Honduras is taxed according to a progressive schedule with rates running from 10–25%. In 2001, the personal exemption level equaled six times the average income in Honduras whereas the threshold for the 25% bracket was 36 times the average income (down from over 100 times the average in 1997).

Social security taxes are also collected. No distinction is made for tax purposes between individuals and businesses.

Agricultural activities and industries classified as "basic" receive favorable depreciation rates. The corporate tax rate is 25%, with a 5% solidarity tax added. Profits from branch operations are taxed at 15%. The main indirect tax is a value-added tax (VAT) with a standard rate of 12%. An increased rate of 15% is applied to some items. Excise taxes are imposed mainly on beer and cigarettes, but also on imported matches, soft drinks, imported sugar, and new motor vehicles.

New industries are exempted from income and production taxes and import duties for up to 10 years.

District and municipal governments obtain their revenues from taxes on amusements and livestock consumption, and from permits, licenses, registrations, certifications, storage charges, transfers of real estate, and fines.

INSURANCE

The oldest insurance company in Honduras is Honduras Savings (Ahorro Hondureño), established in 1917.

Five other companies deal with life insurance and other types of policies. The number and the role of foreign companies in the insurance sector have decreased because of government incentives to domestic underwriters.

In 2002, direct premiums written totaled \$190 million, of which the largest portion, \$142 million, was nonlife premiums.

In 2003, the top nonlife insurer was Ahorro, with gross written nonlife premiums of \$19.3 million.

In that same year, the country's leading life insurer was Palic, with gross written life insurance premiums of \$16.5 million.

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MEDIA

The government owns and operates postal, telephone, and telegraph services. Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula are linked by a multiplex radio relay network. The Tropical Radio Co. provides international radiotelegraph and radiotelephone service.

In 2003, there were an estimated 48 mainline telephones for every 1,000 people; about 342,200 people were on a waiting list for telephone service installation. The same year, there were approximately 49 mobile phones in use for every 1,000 people.

As of 1998, Honduras had 241 AM and 53 FM radio stations. In 1997, there were 11 television stations. In 2003, there were an estimated 411 radios and 119 television sets for every 1,000 people. About 21.6 of every 1,000 people were cable subscribers.

Also in 2003, there were 13.6 personal computers for every 1,000 people and 25 of every 1,000 people had access to the Internet. There were 31 secure Internet servers in the country in 2004.

The country's principal newspapers (with 2004 circulation) were El Heraldo (30,000), Tiempo (30,000), and La Tribuna (20,000), all published in Tegucigalpa, and La Prensa (62,000), published in San Pedro Sula. La Tribuna is owned by President Flores.

The constitution provides for freedom of speech and press, and the government is said to generally respect these rights. The media itself, however, is said to be subject to a high degree of politicization and corruption.

The pine tree is native to Honduras and is also known as the national tree of Honduras. Its products are used in a variety of ways and it grows abundantly throughout the country due to the dedicated protection and conservation given to natural resources. The national flower of Honduras is the native orchid. The government makes efforts to protect, conserve and control the commercialization and cultivation of orchids. Fruiting trees are also prevalent in Honduras, including coconut palms, coco plums and almond trees. Mangrove plants including red mangroves, black mangroves and white mangroves also grow in Honduras as well. Other native plants include fig trees, bromeliads and ferns.



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FISHING

There is commercial fishing in Puerto Cortés, and other areas are served by local fishermen. A small local company operates a cannery for the domestic market on the Gulf of Fonseca.

There is a commercial fishing concern on the island of Guanaja, and a large refrigeration-factory ship is engaged in freezing shrimp and lobster near Caratasca. In 2003, the total catch was 30,835 tons.

Shrimp accounted for about 65% of the total catch, taken mostly from southern shrimp farms. Exports of fish products amounted to \$46.3 million in 2003.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Chamber of Commerce and Industries has its headquarters in Tegucigalpa; chambers of commerce also function in San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, and other towns. Business and industry organizations include the Federation of Agricultural Producers and Exporters, the Honduran Manufacturers Association, and the Honduran Association of Sugar Producers. Various professional associations are also active.

The National Federation of University Students of Honduras is an active student movement. Other national youth organizations include scouting and YMCA/YWCA programs. There are several sports associations promoting amateur competition in such pastimes as tennis, football (soccer), badminton, tae kwon do, and baseball. There are also active branches of the Special Olympics. Volunteer service organizations, such as the Lions Clubs International, are present. There are national chapters of the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Caritas, and CARE.

TOURISM, TRAVEL, AND RECREATION

The main tourist attraction is the restoration at Copán, the second-largest city of the ancient Mayan Empire. There are many beaches on the northern and southern coasts where there is vibrant underwater life. Fishing is popular in Trujillo Bay and Lake Yojoa.

A valid passport is needed for entry and all visitors need visas except for nationals of the United States, and of the countries of Central and South America. Evidence of vaccination against yellow fever is required if traveling from an infected country.

Approximately 610,535 tourists visited Honduras in 2003, an 11% increase from 2002. About 57% of the visitors came from Central America. There were 18,590 hotel rooms with 26,897 beds that same year. The average length of stay was estimated at 10 nights. Gross tourism expenditures totaled \$341 million.

In 2004, the US Department of State estimated the cost of staying in Tegucigalpa at \$173 per day. Daily costs in San Pedro Sula were estimated at \$163 in 2002.

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ENVIRONMENT

The major environmental problems are soil erosion and loss of soil fertility (in part because of traditional slash-and-burn cultivation) and rapid depletion of forests for lumber, firewood, and land cultivation. From 1990–95, the annual rate of deforestation was at about 2.34%. In 2000, about 48% of the total land area was forested.

Enforcement of antipollution laws has been weak, and Honduras also lacks an integrated economic development and land-use policy. Rivers and streams in Honduras are threatened by pollution from mining chemicals. The nation has 96 cu km of renewable water resources with 91% used in farming activities. About 99% of city dwellers and 82% of people living in rural areas have access to pure drinking water. Air pollution results from a lack of pollution control equipment for industries and automobiles. The Secretariat of Planning, Coordination, and Budget (Secretaría de Planificación, Coordinación, y Presupuesto—SECPLAN), the Ministry of Natural Resources, and several other agencies are vested with environmental responsibilities.

In 2003, 6.4% of the total land area in Honduras was protected. The Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve is a natural UNESCO World Heritage Site and there are six Ramsar wetland sites. According to a 2006 report issued by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), threatened species included 10 types of mammals, 6 species of birds, 10 types of reptiles, 53 species of amphibians, 14 species of fish, 2 species of invertebrates, and 111 species of plants.

MAMMALS

The white-tailed deer resides in the Honduran plains and highly vegetated hill habitats also with other native species. White-tailed deer are herbivores, and their main predators are pumas and jaguars. Other native animals found in the region include the anteater, armadillo, tapir, fox coyote, deer, peccary, pocket gopher, porcupine and various species of monkeys.

Honduras hosts a range of different species of sea turtles, and the hawksbill Can be sighted here.



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POPULATION

The population of Honduras in 2005 was estimated by the United Nations (UN) at 7,212,000, which placed it at number 96 in population among the 193 nations of the world. In 2005, approximately 4% of the population was over 65 years of age, with another 41% of the population under 15 years of age. There were 102 males for every 100 females in the country.

According to the UN, the annual population rate of change for 2005–10 was expected to be 2.8%, a rate the government viewed as too high. Of particular concern was the high rate of adolescent pregnancy, with 50% of the population under 19 years of age. The projected population for the year 2025 was 10,700,000. The population density was 64 per sq km (167 per sq mi), with the majority of the population living in the western portion of the country.

The UN estimated that 47% of the population lived in urban areas in 2005, and that urban areas were growing at an annual rate of 2.99%. The capital city, Tegucigalpa, had a population of 1,007,000 in that year. San Pedro Sula, the second-largest city, had an estimated population of 486,000; La Ceiba, 250,000; and El Progreso, 115,000.

RELIGIONS

The Roman Catholic Church reports a membership that comprises slightly more than 80% of the country's total population. However, according to estimates based on a 2002 poll of citizens 18 or older, only 63% of the population identify themselves as Roman Catholic. Approximately 23% report themselves to be evangelical Christians, and 14% designate themselves as belonging to other religious groups. The remainder were either "others" or provided no answer.

The primary religious groups include Roman Catholics, Jews, Greek Orthodox, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mennonites, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), the Union Church, and about 300 evangelical Protestant churches (including the Abundant Life, Living Love, and the Grand Commission church). There are small numbers of Muslims and Jews.

Religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution of 1982. Though there is no state religion, many consult with the Roman Catholic Church and some Catholic leaders have been appointed to semiofficial commissions on key political and social issues. Certain Christian holidays are celebrated as public holidays.

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FORESTRY

About 48% of Honduras is covered by forests, including stands of longleaf pine and such valuable hardwoods as cedar, ebony, mahogany, and walnut. Total round wood production in 2004 amounted to 9.5 million cu m (335 million cu ft), and forest products exports were valued at \$43.1 million.

The National Corporation for Forestry Development (Corporación Hondureña de Desarrollo Forestal), established in 1974, is charged with the overall preservation, exploitation, and exportation of Honduran forest resources. The privatization of government-owned woodlands is expected to intensify the use of forestry resources.

A restriction on the export of raw wood also is causing growth in the woodworking industry for semi-finished wood products



REPTILES

Some native reptiles in the area include the caiman, crocodile, bushmaster, coral snake, fer-de-lance, horned viper, rattlesnake, whip snake and iguana.

The brown caiman has been placed on the threatened species list due to habitat destruction. It has 74-80 teeth and also can be found in other parts of Central America.

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