

Country Handbook: Honduras



Introduction

Travelling to see the work of Compassion and our local church partners firsthand is an unforgettable experience. On this trip, you'll see for yourself how children are known, loved and protected by their church communities and are being released from poverty in Jesus' name.

This Country Handbook is designed to start preparing you for your trip to Honduras. Please read it before you depart, and we'd also recommend that you keep it handy for easy reference.

We pray that God will bless your time in Honduras!



Country Information



Located in the heart of Central America, Honduras captivates with its abundant natural beauty and rich cultural significance. Named by Christopher Columbus after the Spanish word for 'great depths' this country boasts the second largest coral reef in the world after the Great Barrier Reef. Local families are tight-knit, and extended family members often live in the same house. Honduras also has a youthful population, with 50 per cent of Hondurans under the age of 25.

Main languages:

Spanish

Climate:

Mostly tropical

Main religions:

Roman Catholic (34%),
Protestant (48%)

Currency:

Honduran Lempira (HNL)



Compassion in Honduras

Compassion has been working to release children from poverty in Jesus' name in Honduras since 1974. 48 per cent of people live below the national poverty line.

Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program is tailored to be age-appropriate for each child.

Children **AGED 1 TO 3** receive home-based care.

Children and youth **AGED 3 TO 14** attend their local Compassion centre for six hours each week, outside of school hours.

Students **AGED 15 AND OLDER** attend the centre for four hours a week over two days.



For more information on Honduras, scan the QR code or visit: compassion.com.au/where-we-work/honduras

Compassion assisted children in Honduras typically attend program activities at their local child development centres. Here is an example of what a typical program day looks like:

Devotional time - Children learn to pray.

Spiritual lessons - Children sing songs and learn Bible stories.

Social-emotional lessons - Children learn conflict resolution skills and how to develop healthy self-esteem and a godly character. Children often come from challenging home environments and are taught social and personal skills.

Lunch and social time - The majority of children do not have adequate nutrition in their homes and schools do not provide meals. Compassion centres at local churches aim to provide children with extra nutrition each time they attend the centre. Children experiencing malnutrition often receive extra food rations. Snacks usually consist of fruit, cereal and milk. Meals usually include meat, cereals, vegetables and fruit.

Health lessons - Children learn practical health and hygiene tips.

Letter writing and career planning - Older children work with local staff to identify their strengths and interests and set goals for their future.

In addition, children are invited to participate in sporting tournaments, retreats, camps and educational visits. Older students are offered a variety of vocational skills workshops, such as welding, beauty, sports, baking, music, and computing. Parents and caregivers are offered parenting classes.

Cultural Considerations



Clothing

- Generally, dress standards in Honduras are casual, though people may take pride in their appearance.
- **Men:** Loose trousers or shirts are suitable.
- **Women:** Please dress casually and modestly, avoiding shorts or skirts above the knee and tight-fitting clothing.
- It is best to wear closed-in shoes when visiting local church partners or children.

Greetings

- Hondurans are warm and welcoming people. A simple greeting, such as 'Buenos días', will go a long way.
- The standard greeting in Honduras is a handshake upon introduction and departure.
- Among educated people, when two women greet each other or when a man greets a woman, they clasp their right hands and press their cheeks together or give a light kiss on the cheek.
- In rural areas, people say 'goodbye' to anyone they pass—including strangers, and they have a habit of shaking hands softly.
- Family is a wonderful topic of conversation among Hondurans, especially with those you have just met. What someone does for a living is considered less important than how someone's family is.

Security

- Please ask permission before you photograph any local people. This can include photos taken from a moving vehicle, so be sure to check with your driver or Trips and Visits Specialist first.

Emergency contact information:

Local emergency number: 195

Compassion Honduras office: 011-504-2232-0751

Australian Embassy, Mexico: +52-55-11012200

Australia does not have an embassy in Honduras. Instead, travelling Australians can obtain full consular assistance from the nearest Australian Embassy in Mexico.

Body language

- Hondurans generally do not leave as much personal space as Australians and may stand close, even touching, when talking to another person. Try to avoid backing away as this may be interpreted as offensive.
- It is considered polite to maintain eye contact during conversations, as it signifies interest in what the other person is saying.
- Please refrain from pointing at objects or people with your finger as this is considered rude. Hondurans purse their lips and nod their head in the general direction of the object they are referring to.

Eating and drinking

- Honduran cuisine is a fusion of indigenous Lenca, Spanish, Caribbean and African dishes. The food culture is community-focused, with families and friends often gathering for meals and celebrations, and many traditions are tied to their culinary practices.
- A common Honduran dish is the baleada: a flour tortilla topped in a variety of fillings and folded over. Some common toppings include scrambled eggs, cheese, cream or sour cream, refried beans, meat and avocado.
- Coffee is a national beverage and is consumed throughout the country. Licuado, a blended milk and fruit shake, is a common refreshing drink.
- Honduran food etiquette is relatively informal. It's common for meals to be shared 'family-style', with dishes placed in the centre of the table for everyone to share.

Language

Useful Spanish phrases:

Hello: Hola

Goodbye: Adios

Please: Por favor

Excuse me: Perdon

Yes: Si

No: No

How are you? Como estás?

I don't understand: No entiendo

I'm sorry: Lo lamento

Good morning: Buenos días

Good night: Buenas noches

Thank you: Muchas gracias



Key Challenges and Prayer Points

Just under half the population of Honduras lives in poverty, and it has the second-highest extreme poverty rate in Latin America and the Caribbean. This country has been ransacked by violence, gang rule and inequality for many generations, and is one of the most unstable countries for children to live in, especially for girls. Honduran children living in poverty face many challenges, with malnutrition and food insecurity at the forefront. Children are also highly vulnerable to coercion or threats to join gangs. Please pray for children living in these tumultuous circumstances and pray for local churches across the country as they work hard to protect these vulnerable children.

Honduras is afflicted by one of the worst rates of inequality in the world, with a stark division between rich and poor. This country also has the world's highest homicide rate. Located in the drug trafficking corridor between South America and Mexico, Honduras is rife with violence fuelled by the cocaine trade, which has worsened due to its political situation. Pray for our local Compassion staff members and church workers as they help release children from poverty amid challenging circumstances.



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