**A brief overview of Honduras**

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GENE 68 – Spanish Culture and Conversation

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February 23, 2021

Honduras, officially known as Republic of Honduras, is a Spanish speaking country located in Central America situated between Guatemala and El Salvador. Its capital is Tegucigalpa, which on its own holds 1.158 million people, containing 11.9% of the country’s total population (9.746million), even though the capital’s area is only 1.34% of the total area of Honduras. There are 3 main physiographic regions in Honduras, each of them having a slightly different climate. The Caribbean lowlands have a tropical wet climate with high temperatures and humidity and recurring rainfall. The Pacific lowlands in contrast have a tropical wet and dry climate with a high temperature but a dry season. Lastly, the interior highlands do not differ much from the Pacific lowlands, also having a dry climate, however, the temperatures can greatly vary as there is a significant difference of elevation throughout the region, the higher the altitude, the lower the temperature can be.

Honduras achieved independence from Spain in the early 19th century, and its economic growth became mainly influenced by its ability to export its products. The currency used is the Honduran lempira, with it value at 1:0.052 Canadian dollar. In simpler terms, 19.10 Honduran lempira would be equivalent to 1 Canadian dollar. Honduras’ economy is mostly based on agriculture, which accounts for 14% of its GDP. Coffee exportation alone counted for 22% of total export revenues. Some other significant exports Honduras is known for are bananas and cultivated shrimps. Honduras also has extensive forests, mines, and mineral resources. Its labor force is distributed amongst agriculture (39.2%), industry (20.9%) and services (38.9%) with its main industries being sugar processing, coffee, woven, cigars, wood products and knit apparel. There is also an unemployment rate of 5.6%, while about 1/3 of people are underemployed.

The name of the country means “depths”, having this name due to Christopher Columbus who on his fourth voyage encountered the deep waters at the edge of the Tinto River off the Mosquito Coast. Spanish has been its main language, originally imposed by the conquistadores, and has been spoken for the past 200+ years. The Honduran flag consists of 5 blue stars on a white stripe surrounded by two blue stripes, all of which have the same dimensions. The white stripe symbolises patriotism and peace, the blue ones represent the Pacific and Caribbean Sea that create the shoreline of Honduras, and the five blue stars represent the five original Central American Provinces: Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Guatemala.

The Honduran culture is expressed through its popular events that draw big local crowds and tourists from around the world. Such artistic events are held on specific days of the year. The most popular dance that the population is proud of, is Punta. The people from which Punta originated call themselves Garinagu and Garifuna. Its Spanish meaning is “from point to point” referring to the tips of one’s toes and the movement from place to place. The dance itself symbolises the struggles felt by the indigenous population’s common heritage, and to highlight their strong sense of endurance. Honduras has countless cultural events in each month of the year, some of the most popular being events like the annual carnival held in La Ciba or the traditional festival “Feria Juniana” hosted in San Pedro Sula. No matter what time of the year, a tourist will always have some events they can attend during their stay.

The country is also known for its multitude of traditional foods which itself is a mix of multiple ancient cultures like Maya, Lenca and Garifuna, while also being impacted by the Spanish invasion and its African and Caribbean influences. Some of the best food you must taste when visiting are the Baleadas and Tamales. The Honduran baleadas are a classic, made up of refried beans, mantequilla, cheese, avocado, scrambled eggs and chorizo or steak, all folded into flour handmade tortillas, they are simply the best delicacy around. Tamales, though vastly different, have their own charm, being shaped and wrapped in plantain leaves, made of corn dough and filled with chicken, pork, and beans. It will leave you breathless with its wonderfully unique taste.

Furthermore, Honduras is always dazzling with its natural beauty and wildlife diversity. Its tourist attractions are known worldwide. As a tourist, you should make sure to visit at least one of these, your satisfaction is guaranteed!

If you love beaches and snorkeling, then the West Bay Beach is made just for you. It is considered the picture-perfect Caribbean destination, having calm and crystal-clear waters with a great variety of water activities such as scuba diving, fishing, snorkeling, and parasailing. Its diversity will satisfy everyone’s desires and procure you lifetime memories. In its surroundings, there are also plenty of shops and restaurants to fit any of your tastes.

Lastly, another amazing tourist attraction, especially though not limited to archeological enthusiasts, is the Copán Ruins Archeological Site. Dating back nearly 2000 years, this Maya city is the most studied in the whole world and a UNESCO world heritage site. It is famous for its stelae and altars scattered through the huge plaza, its ball court, its unique Hieroglyphic Stairway, a temple which holds the longest known Mayan text. It is also home to the Acropolis which contains the carved reliefs of the 16 kings of Copán. Whether just a normal tourist, or a history and culture lover, there is enough uniqueness and diversity to satisfy both.

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