**Honduras** was already occupied by many indigenous peoples when the Spanish arrived in the 16th century. The western-central part of [Honduras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honduras) was inhabited by the [Lencas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lencas" \o "Lencas), the central north coast by the [Tol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jicaque_people" \o "Jicaque people), the area east and west of [Trujillo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trujillo,_Honduras) by the [Pech (or Paya)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pech_people" \o "Pech people), the [Maya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_civilization) and [Sumo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumo_people). These autonomous groups maintained commercial relationships with each other and with other populations as distant as [Panama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Panama) and [Mexico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Mexico).

By the time the Spanish came to Honduras, the once great city-state of Copán was overrun by the jungle, and the surviving [Ch’orti'](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ch%27orti%27_people" \o "Ch'orti' people) were isolated from their Choltian linguistic peers to the west. The non-Maya [Lencas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lenca_people" \o "Lenca people) were then dominant in western Honduras, creating several villages in the valleys. The Lenca people was the biggest and most well organizaed society in terms of military organization by the time of the conquest at the early XVI century.