

Adventure Aquarium presents:

Exploring HONDURAS

with Dr. Michael Grassman – May 01 – 11, 2009



A vibrant underwater world appears as schools of purple and yellow fairy basslets undulate against the whip coral and seaweed. Honduras's magnificent reef is just one of many magical places at your fingertips in this adventure. Hands-on learning introduces whale sharks, Mayan temples and hieroglyphs, as well as the colorful culture of this Central American nation. On this 11-day adventure, you will uncover a world of legend as you venture through Honduras-where a magnificent reef hugs the Bay Islands, and breath-taking rainforests conceal Mayan ruins. Discuss Mayan history in Copan, and examine the nearby ruins. Field lectures focus on Mayan hieroglyphics and art, and you'll survey additional artifacts at the local museum. You'll have a cooking demonstration, enjoy dinner at a local family's hacienda; and discuss the significance the stars and night sky have in Mayan culture.



Itinerary Highlights

- Explore the world famous **Mayan ruins of Copán**
- Learn about the **Mayan people** - past and present and enjoy a lecture by **Prof. David Sedat**
- Learn about the **history of cacao** and its importance in the Maya world.
- Visit the port town of La Ceiba
- Explore the plants and wildlife at the **Lancetilla Botanical Gardens and Experimental Station**
- Enjoy the thrill of **rafting**, on **Cangrejal River**.
- **Snorkel** the beautiful **Utila Cayes** in search of **whale sharks**
- Work with **Whale Shark & Oceanic Research Center** to learn more about whale sharks
- Enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore **Honduras** and get a **one year membership** to **Adventure Aquarium**, while doing it!

Land Cost: \$2705

Please note: This price is based on a minimum of 7 participants. International air is additional to the price.

To register please visit

www.holbrooktravel.com/AdventureAquarium



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May 1 San Pedro Sula Gran Hotel Sula
Upon arrival to San Pedro Sula International Airport, you will meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. Before dinner you will have an orientation to the program and to Honduras by your guide. Meals included: **D**

May 2 Copan Marina Copan
Today you will enjoy a visit to Guamilito market, where you will be served a breakfast buffet at La Plazita restaurant, conveniently located in front of the market. Then you will have time to visit this local & tourist market, a great place to see the process of making corn tortillas (a must in all Honduras meals). From the market, you will depart to the museum in town. This is a perfect introduction to learn the history of Honduras. You will enjoy a local lunch and around 02:00 p.m transfer to Copan. Upon arrival check-in to your hotel. Before dinner you will enjoy a lecture given by an archeologist on the Mayas of Copan. Meals included: **BLD**

May 3 Copan Marina Copan
After breakfast, you will have a walking tour of the main archaeological site, including the acropolis, the ball court, the hieroglyphic stairway and the great plaza of the Stelaes as well as of the new majestic museum of Mayan sculpture, acclaimed by experts as unique in the Mayan world. A masterpiece within the museum is the exact size replica of the famed Rosa Lila temple, discovered in 1989 perfectly preserved underground. You will enjoy lunch at the site's cafeteria and return to hotel in the afternoon. Remainder of the day at leisure. Dinner at a local restaurant. Meals included: **BLD**

May 4 Copan Marina Copan
After breakfast visit the Archaeological Museum in town. This will be a perfect compliment to what you have seen on the main site itself, and then your guide will take you to the residential zone of Las Sepulturas, which used to be an elite neighborhood for the Mayas. In the afternoon you will visit the Macaw Mountain Bird Park & Nature Reserve; this place is an innovative tropical bird reserve in western Honduras that cares for rescued and endangered birds of the American tropics. Here you will learn about and interact with the intelligent, colorful birds of Central America. Return to hotel late in the afternoon; enjoy dinner around the pool, with an empanada making demonstration. Meals included: **BLD**

May 5 La Ceiba Hotel La Quinta
After an early breakfast transfer to La Ceiba. It will be a long ride, but with many interesting stops along the way, such as the Imapro mahogany factory, specializing in the art of woodcarving. Throughout the year Imapro's products such as doors, chests and screens have reached international recognition because of their detailed work and colorful themes. Afterwards you will continue your trip to the Lancetilla Botanical Garden, which is the second largest tropical botanical garden in the world. It was established in 1926 as an experimental site by the Tela railroad company. The park boasts a very large variety of plants from the Central American region as well as from other tropical lands from throughout our planet. A large number of tropical birds have made the garden their home, due to the many fruit trees that abound here. From here it's only a short one hour travel to La Ceiba, and you will check-in at the hotel. Evening at leisure to enjoy the pool and rest from the trip. Meals included: **BLD**

May 6 La Ceiba Hotel La Quinta
After an early breakfast, you will visit the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Refuge. The area forms a triangle encompassed by the Cuero and Salado Rivers, as well as the coast, has an extension of 13,255 hectares, and was designated a protected area in 1986 because of its endangered manatee population, as well as the complex series of saltwater and freshwater wetlands it contains. Getting there is also fun since you will ride from your hotel to the entrance of the park with your vehicle, but from here you will enter the park through the old railroad car (called burra) until you reach the Visitors Center. From here you will take a boat through the water canals, enjoy a fresh fish lunch at the site and then return to La Ceiba in the afternoon. If time is available you will do a sightseeing tour in the afternoon of La Ceiba. Tonight you will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. Meals included: **BLD**

May 7 Utila Mango Inn
This morning enjoy a rafting tour through the Cangrejal River. This river offers class II, III and IV rapids, all within a short 45 minute drive from downtown La Ceiba. In addition to the exciting rapids, the Pico Bonito National Park, which features more than 7 different ecosystems because of its changing altitudes, has its eastern border with the river, offering you an insight to the ever so lush green forests of Honduras. Enjoy a picnic lunch at the river and around 02:00p.m transfer to the dock in order to catch the ferry at 4:00pm to Utila, arrival would be around 5:30pm and you will head directly to your lodge. Tonight enjoy a lecture: Whale Sharks of Utila provided by the W.S.O.R.C (Whale Shark & Oceanic Research Center). Meals included: **BLD**

May 8-10 Utila Mango Inn
Over the next 3 days you will work with W.S.O.R.C on the Whale Shark Program. You will have breakfast at Utila Lodge between 7:00 and 8:00 AM. Each morning, you will have a different theory session that will last about 3 hours. The three session topics will be:

1. This session will headline what W.S.O.R.C is currently doing and the relationship with the Honduran government and world wide relations, whale shark biology, research and its value to ecotourism. Complete review and understanding of whale shark encounter guidelines and policy as described by W.S.O.R.C and the Honduran government.
2. This session will continue with whale shark biology, methods of tagging for whale shark, tracking with emphasis on photo tagging and introduction to i3s photo recognition program, genetic sampling theory and how the samples are processed and instruction on plankton sampling.
3. This session will examine data and collection methods, uploading of photos utilizing i3s software and microscopic evaluation of sample collected on the previous afternoon whale shark encounter.

Lunch will be at a local restaurant.

In the afternoons you will enjoy a non-invasive whale shark snorkel encounter. During the snorkeling sessions, you will practice the techniques learned in the morning sessions. The rest of the afternoon will be free. Dinner will be on your own to enjoy the different flavors offered by the island on all three nights. Meals included: **BL**

May 11 San Pedro Sula – Farewell!
After breakfast you will be transferred to the Utila airstrip for your flight back to San Pedro Sula. Upon arrival you will connect with your international flight home. Meals included: **B**

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