

Honduras

Geography

Location: Middle America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Guatemala and Nicaragua and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between El Salvador and Nicaragua

Area:

total area: 112,090 sq km

land area: 111,890 sq km

Land boundaries: total 1,520 km, Guatemala 256 km, El Salvador 342 km, Nicaragua 922 km

Coastline: 820 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: natural extension of territory or to 200 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: subtropical in lowlands, temperate in mountains

Terrain: mostly mountains in interior, narrow coastal plains

Natural resources: timber, gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, iron ore, antimony, coal, fish

Land use:

arable land: 14%

permanent crops: 2%

meadows and pastures: 30%

forest and woodland: 34%

other: 20%

Irrigated land: 900 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: urban population expanding; deforestation results from logging and the clearing of land for agricultural purposes; further land degradation and soil erosion hastened by uncontrolled development and improper land use practices such as farming of marginal lands; mining activities polluting Lago de Yojoa (the

country's largest source of freshwater) with heavy metals as well as several rivers and streams
natural hazards: frequent, but generally mild, earthquakes;
damaging hurricanes and floods along Caribbean coast

People

Population: 5,459,743 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 43% (female 1,159,846; male 1,201,927)

15-64 years: 53% (female 1,468,950; male 1,444,959)

65 years and over: 4% (female 95,361; male 88,700) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.66% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 34.12 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -1.56 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 43.4 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 68.04 years

male: 65.64 years

female: 70.55 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.55 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Honduran(s)

adjective: Honduran

Ethnic divisions: mestizo (mixed Indian and European) 90%, Indian 7%, black 2%, white 1%

Religions: Roman Catholic 97%, Protestant minority

Languages: Spanish, Indian dialects

Literacy: total population: 73%

male: 76%

female: 71%

Labor force: 1.3 million

by occupation: agriculture 62%, services 20%, manufacturing 9%,
construction 3%, other 6% (1985)

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Honduras

conventional short form: Honduras

local long form: Republica de Honduras

local short form: Honduras

Capital: Tegucigalpa

Independence: 15 September 1821 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 15 September (1821)

Constitution: 11 January 1982, effective 20 January 1982

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal and compulsory

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of blue (top), white, and blue with five blue five-pointed stars arranged in an X pattern centered in the white band; the stars represent the members of the former Federal Republic of Central America - Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua; similar to the flag of El Salvador, which features a round emblem encircled by the words REPUBLICA DE EL SALVADOR EN LA AMERICA CENTRAL centered in the white band; also similar to the flag of Nicaragua, which features a triangle encircled by the word REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA on top and AMERICA CENTRAL on the bottom, centered in the white band

Economy

Overview: Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Many basic problems face the economy, including rapid population growth, high unemployment, inflation, a lack of basic services, a large and inefficient public sector, and the dependence of the export sector mostly on coffee and bananas, which are subject to sharp price fluctuations.

Industries: agricultural processing (sugar and coffee), textiles, clothing, wood products

Agriculture: most important sector, accounting for 28% of GDP, more than 60% of the labor force, and two-thirds of exports; principal products include bananas, coffee, timber, beef, citrus fruit, shrimp; importer of wheat

Illicit drugs: transshipment point for narcotics; illicit producer of cannabis, cultivated on small plots and used principally for local consumption

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 785 km

Highways:
total: 8,950 km

Inland waterways: 465 km navigable by small craft

Ports: La Ceiba, Puerto Castilla, Puerto Cortes, San Lorenzo, Tela,
Puerto Lempira

Airports:
total: 159

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy (includes Marines), Air Force, Public
Security Forces (FUSEP)