

Exploring the Honduran Culture

Background



Honduras is in Central America, bordered by several countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) and water (Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea). Honduras consists mainly of mountains, with narrow coastal plains. Honduras gained independence from Spain in 1821, and its economy is based mostly on agriculture. The country's leading exports are bananas and coffee.

Honduran society is approximately 85% *mestizo* (mixed Spanish and indigenous heritage), 10% white, and 5% *mulato* (mixed indigenous and black). Crime is rampant, and the country has one of the highest national murder rates in the world. Football (soccer) and baseball are popular sports.

Traditions and Customs

Hondurans value family over individual interests. Honduran men tend to be the decision-makers in the family, while women are often responsible for caring for the children and managing the home. Family ties are strong, and many children live at home until they get married. Most prefer an indirect communication style and avoid confrontation. They typically greet one another loudly and often display affection in public. Many practice either Catholicism or Protestantism.

Food and drinks are the center of social gatherings, and many enjoy dancing Punta, a traditional Honduran dance accompanied by singing and drummers. Hondurans consider people more important than schedules, and being late for appointments or social events is a common way of life.



Holidays and Celebrations



Honduras observes several national holidays and celebrations, including Lempira Day on July 20, Children's Day on September 10, Independence Day on September 15, the Day of the Soldier on October 3, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Independence Day features many colorful parades with marching bands and traditional Honduran foods, including beans, tamales, *baleadas* (flour tortillas with red beans and cheese), cassava with *chicharrón* (fried pork skin), and tortillas.

Education and Literacy

Spanish is the country's official language. Several indigenous languages are still spoken by ethnic groups. Eighty percent of the population is literate, and most have completed primary school.



Health Disparities

Diabetes and hypertension affect many adults, and heart disease and strokes are the leading causes of death. With about half the population living in poverty, access to healthcare is limited.

Traditional Food Practices

Honduran cuisine is delicious, colorful, and usually includes corn, beans, rice, tortillas, fresh fruit, and seafood. Hondurans typically eat three meals, which are generally informal and communal. They consider it polite to finish everything on their plate; otherwise, it can imply wastefulness or their dissatisfaction with the meal.

Breakfast (*desayuno*) includes *baleadas*, which are tortillas filled with refried beans, cheese, and sometimes scrambled eggs and avocado, as well as fried plantains that add a sweet and savory balance. Lunch (*almuerzo*) typically includes chicken or beef, rice, beans, and salad or cooked vegetables. Dinner (*cena*) is traditionally a lighter meal, often featuring leftovers, such as rice and beans, tortillas, and a soup or stew. *Sopa de caracol* (conch soup) is an iconic dish on the Caribbean coast. It is prepared with coconut milk, spices, a variety of fresh vegetables, and conch meat (a large sea snail).

Hondurans love coffee, either black or with milk. Other popular drinks include *horchata* (made with rice, cinnamon, cacao, and nutmeg) and *pinol* (made from maize and spices). A popular drink for children is *refresco de ensalada*, a cold fruit drink made with apples, pineapples, and oranges soaked in apple juice or fruit-flavored soda.



Considerations for WIC Educators and Counselors

- Honduran families favor an indirect communication style and avoid confrontation.
- Meals are an important aspect of social life and are often served family-style.
- Hondurans are generally polite and respectful, and it is common for multiple generations to live together in a single household.
- Honduran men are typically the decision-makers for the family, while mothers are responsible for child-rearing and household chores.
- Co-sleeping with infants and children is a common practice.
- Infants are generally fed human milk for the first one to three years.

Note: This is general information for staff about this culture. It does not account for the diversity within the people of this culture and society, and does not imply that this content applies to all people of this culture.

References

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