

## Learning Abroad at Mayatan Exit Interview: Natasha

*We're always learning. Please answer the following questions as fully as you can so that we can make sure that everyone has a terrific time when they study abroad at Mayatan. Thanks!*

1. What was the best part of your experience at Mayatan and in Copán? What made it great? Is there one moment, person, or activity you will always remember?

I loved being part of the community in the school and in Copán. Everyone was so welcoming and kind that I ended up feeling really comfortable. My host family took me in and treated me just like another member. I specifically will always remember the first grade class, I had a great time working with Miss Amy and it was fantastic bonding with the kids. When they started getting used to me and asking me for help it felt great.

In general it was a great chance to use my spanish and learn about a different culture. It was a true cultural interchange and the experience showed me more options for future endeavors. After this I can seriously consider teaching abroad for a year or so.

2. How would you describe your homestay experience to a friend?

My homestay was fantastic. I am an only child from a fairly small family and it was amazing being part of a family so much larger than my own. My host mother treated me with so much kindness (much like my own mother would treat a guest). My host sister and I hit it off and I spent a great deal of time hanging out with her and her cousins who lived nearby. I was fairly lucky because I lived in a very central area of town so there was always a lot going on right on my doorstep.

Also, the food was fantastic. I loved it all, everyday.

3. How would you describe your experience at Mayatan during the school day?

I got the chance to work in number of different grade levels and subjects which was really interesting. All of the kids were really welcoming from first grade to 11th. Everything was very relaxed, so I had some free time, but I could also jump in and help any teacher that needed it that day. I really enjoyed getting a lot of variety because I went from singing songs in first grade to discussing socrates in 11th grade philosophy. I really enjoyed it all.

Also, the cafeteria food was really really good.

4. What could have been done to give you a better experience? Was there anything in your homestay or at school that we could have changed or addressed but didn't?

I don't think I would have changed anything about my experience. I only would have wanted to stay longer.

5. If you had to change one thing and keep one thing exactly the same about the program, what would they be? Why?

I am having a very difficult time coming up with things to change. I felt so well taken care of by my family and Mr. Tommy that I have barely anything to complain about. Perhaps I would encourage more interaction between the volunteers and the students their age? I was lucky enough to hit it off with my host sister and the people I met in her grade were all very kind and welcoming. I have a feeling that if I had stayed a bit longer that would have happened naturally.

I would definitely keep the option to take spanish classes open. It was really helpful to have that formal instruction in the classroom as well as the ability to practice what I learned with actual native speakers.

6. Did you visit any other towns or tourist attractions or do any activities here? If so, which ones? Any impressions?

My host aunt, cousins and I rode horses up to La Pintada. It was a beautiful view and totally worth the time. I ended up buying a ton of corn husk dolls from one of my fifth graders who lives up there.

Las Ruinas are a must-see. It gives you a lot of insight into the culture of the area and it's just really cool to climb around and explore.

I went with the first grade class to the Bird Park. I am personally not a huge fan of birds but it was really fun to go through the beautiful forest and check out all the different birds. They really are pretty and its always interesting to hear the sounds they make. They even take out the birds and put them on your shoulders, which is a cool experience.

Casa Quiniche is a fun childrens' museum that gives insight into Mayan culture. I liked it because it was interactive and I liked learning more about the culture.

In the old high school right off the Parque there is this small display of historical photos of Copán. Again, it's a fun way to learn about the history of the town.

I was lucky because my second day was the celebration for Día de los Muertos. I got to go to the cemetery with my family and see the graves all decorated and explore the town gathering with food and marimbas.

7. Do you like the school and its mission? Why or why not?

I think what Mayatan is doing for the area is fantastic, especially with the large scholarship program. A whole new world of opportunities opens up to people who are bilingual and these kids are going to have a huge advantage in whatever they choose to do.

**Rate the following from 1 (lowest/worst) to 5 (highest/best)**

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. Homestay friendliness<br>(5)                                                           | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |     |
| 2. Homestay cleanliness/comfort<br>(5)-- 6 if that were possible                          | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |     |
| 3. Homestay food<br>(5) Super delicious all the time. I miss the food so much.            | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |     |
| 4. Homestay brother/sister helpfulness<br>(5) always, she was fantastic                   | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |     |
| 5. Welcoming atmosphere at school<br>everyone (students and teachers) was super welcoming | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |
| 6. Lead teacher friendliness/helpfulness                                                  | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |
| 7. Sense of purpose at school                                                             | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |
| 8. The kids                                                                               | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |
| 9. Copán as a place to visit<br>I plan on returning as soon as I can                      | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |
| 10. Fun outside of school                                                                 | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |
| 11. Spanish lessons                                                                       | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | (5) |

**Please circle your answer**

12. Would you recommend this program to a friend or classmate? (Yes) /No
13. Was the workload too heavy? Yes/(No) Too light? Yes/ (No)