

Learning Abroad at Mayatan



High school students (ages 14+) and recent graduates can have the adventure of a lifetime and make a difference in the world by spending a few weeks at Mayatan Bilingual School. We offer an authentic experience volunteering in classrooms, studying Spanish, and learning local culture by living with a host family. It is sure to be the learning experience of a lifetime, and prior Spanish language skills are not required.

Mayatan is a non-profit, independent PK-12th grade school founded by Honduran mothers in 1991. It is ideally located in Copán Ruinas, a charming tourist town in the western highlands of Honduras, about 6 miles from the Guatemalan border. We follow a U.S. academic schedule, from late-August to mid-June.

Copán is the site of famous UNESCO World Heritage Mayan ruins, which draw visitors from around the world. It is a small town of adobe houses and cobblestone streets set amid dramatic mountains. In addition to the ruins, the area is full of coffee plantations, corn and bean fields, and ways of life quite different from what you'd find in the United States.



Mayatan Bilingual School is staffed by 22 foreign volunteers, who teach core academic subjects entirely in English, and 18 Hondurans, who teach in Spanish. We have 300 students from all social backgrounds, from the poorest Hondurans of indigenous descent who live in mud houses in remote mountain villages to wealthy students who live in town.

Some 45% of Mayatan students receive scholarships from the Mayatan Foundation and sponsors in Honduras, the United States, Canada, and Europe. In addition to enriching our campus by providing our students with English-speaking visitors their own age, Learning Abroad at Mayatan helps build the future of our community: all proceeds from the program are directed to our scholarship program.

Learning Abroad at Mayatan Costs 2011-2012		
	Without Spanish lessons	With Spanish lessons (15 hrs/week, 3 hrs/day)
2 weeks	\$ 1,680.00	\$ 1,890.00
3 weeks	\$ 2,115.00	\$ 2,430.00
4 weeks	\$ 2,650.00	\$ 3,070.00

* Contact info@mayatanfoundation.org for information about stays longer than 4 weeks.

The Learning Abroad at Mayatan program includes the following:

- Private pickup and drop off at the San Pedro Sula, Honduras (SAP) Airport
- Home stay with a Mayatan family including meals and laundry
- (Optional) 15 hours/week of one-on-one Spanish lessons at a language school
- A guided visit to the Mayan Archaeological Park in Copán
- One weekly activity. There are a wide variety of natural and cultural options in and around Copán, including horseback riding, the Macaw Mountain Bird Park, a trip to a coffee plantation, canopy tours, hot springs, waterfalls, pottery in a remote mountain town, and a visit to a Maya Ch’orti village to meet the children (including some Mayatan students!).
- Lunch and a snack at school daily
- Daily transport to and from school and Spanish lessons via bus/taxi/host family
- 3 Mayatan shirts for uniform. Students must bring their own khaki pants or skirts and dress shoes.
- Support from the Mayatan Bilingual School staff before and during the trip. We have staff who know the area well and are fluent in English and Spanish to help you with your plans.

Learning Abroad students are responsible for providing their own:

- Airfare
- Medical insurance
- Travel insurance



Home Stay with a Mayatan family

You will live with a local family that is involved with the school. Living standards in Honduras may be different from those in the United States, but you are likely to stay with a family from the Honduran middle class. Whatever their resources, the family will provide a safe, clean, comfortable place for you to live and sleep. We will do our best to put you in a house with students your age.

The home stay will include all meals with the exception of lunch during the school day. You will participate in family life and you will be expected to follow house rules like any other guest, though you are likely to develop a special relationship with your host mother, father, sisters, brothers, and extended family.

Volunteering and Learning at Mayatan

Your days at Mayatan will be varied, but you will be assigned a project, usually assisting a younger class, based on your specific skills and interests. If you are interested, you may be called upon to present about your life in your hometown or a subject in which you are particularly skilled. You will also be asked to assist students one-on-one with their English. Learning Abroad participants may also choose to sit in on classes in English at their grade level for part of the day in addition to volunteering.

You will come to school from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. if you are not studying Spanish, with the exception of days on which special activities or family activities may cut your school day short. If you are studying Spanish, your school day will be from 7 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

We will certify community service credit for every school hour you volunteer. Except for rare cases in which students fully enroll at Mayatan, we cannot guarantee any academic credit for the experience. Credit transfers are up to your school at home, so check with them.

While at Mayatan, you will be supervised by and work closely with the Mayatan administrative staff and teachers, and you will be given a taste of different aspects of school life. We can tailor your experience to you.

Spanish Language Study

Whether you are an advanced speaker or a complete novice, hone your Spanish skills by immersing yourself in the language. Learning Abroad participants can choose to take one-on-one lessons from an experienced teacher at a language school in Copán Ruinas. They will study 3 hours a day in the afternoon, and they will keep practicing their Spanish in their home stay and with kids at school and around town.



Life in Copán Ruinas

Copán is a blend of Central American and international, rural and cosmopolitan, old fashioned and modern. Here, traditional and globally-connected ways of life mingle: craftsmen and farmers peddle their wares to local businessmen and foreign visitors. Spanish is the main language, though some speak Mayan languages and others may speak English, such as our students. Some outlying communities are barely connected to the wider world (a trip to the market in Copán Ruinas may be a big excursion, taking several hours on foot!), but we boast a range of restaurants, hotels, and tourist attractions run by Hondurans and expatriates.

Although the town center and Mayatan have widespread WiFi internet, you only have to walk three blocks from the center of town to find yourself in a bucolic landscape of dirt roads, farms with horses and cattle, fruit trees, and mud and thatch buildings.

You should not drink the tap water and the electricity frequently goes out, but just about everyone seems to have a cellphone, which works no matter what. Pay as you go phones cost \$20 and up, and calls from them to the U.S. are 12¢ a minute. Even when the power is out those hotels and cafes with generators still provide internet access so you can keep in touch via email or voice and video chat services. There are four banks in town and three ATMs that accept foreign cards.

Honduran food staples are corn meal tortillas, large wheat tortillas called baleadas, beans, salty cheese, cream, rice, squash, fruits and vegetables, eggs, and grilled meats. Hondurans also drink plenty of juice, soda, coffee, and delicious smoothies, called licuados. There are no chain restaurants here, though your host family may eat foods like cereal, pasta, and hamburgers.

Copanecos are accustomed to seeing tourists, but when you travel off the main routes, they will be very interested in you and curious to know where you come from, what you are doing in Copán, and what you think of their town and country. They are generally very welcoming and good natured, especially to visitors who are staying for more than just the ruins.

The natural splendor and history of Copán will astound you, and the cultural differences and similarities, from cuisine to the customs of daily life, will be exciting new experiences that you will carry with you for the rest of your life.



Safety and Security

Your safety and security are of the utmost importance to us. More than anything, we want you to have a happy, healthy experience of a lifetime here, as nearly all of our visitors do.

Learning Abroad students will have many adventures, but you will also be expected to follow the rules here, including local and U.S. laws, for your own safety and security. Your host family will have house rules that you will be expected to follow, and alcohol (except for visitors over 21 years of age) and drug use are strictly prohibited. Curfew for Learning Abroad students is 10 p.m. on weekdays and 11 p.m. on weekends.

While Central America is more dangerous than most wealthy countries, Copán is a relatively safe town—it is used to hosting tourists of all ages and nationalities, and it is small enough that everyone knows and looks out for each other. Because the town's relative prosperity relies upon tourism, there are rarely problems with tourists here. However, for your own safety you should never be out without a member of your host family or a school employee, and all activities such as excursions will be supervised group activities.

There are tourist police in town especially trained to work on safety and security for international visitors, and there are several doctors, health clinics, and well-stocked pharmacies in town. In the event of an emergency, there are hospitals in Chiquimula (Guatemala, about an hour away) and in nearby cities. Mayatan staff would assist with transportation and medical arrangements in the event of an emergency, but all Learning Abroad participants must have their

own medical insurance and travel insurance that covers emergency evacuation to the United States. Check with your insurance provider.

Contact Us

If you would like to participate in the Learning Abroad program, please contact **David W. Harrington**, Fundraising Director at info@mayatanfoundation.org or call him internationally at the office +(504) 2651-4149 or on his cellphone +(504) 9524-0328. If you are writing, please indicate how long and when you would like to come to Mayatan. Please note that we are closed from mid-June to mid-August as well as from mid-December to about January 5.

Copán is such a small town that there are no street numbers here. Mail usually takes 3 weeks or longer to arrive from the United States. Mayatan's mailing address is:

Mayatan Bilingual School
Via Sesesmil
Copán Ruinas, Copán
Honduras, Central America

Payment

To send payment only for Learning Abroad at Mayatan, please write a check to *Fundación Mayatan* and mail it to the following forwarding address. Send checks at least 6 weeks prior to arrival, and notify the school by e-mail when the check is sent, as it will take 2 weeks to arrive:

Juan Angel Welchez
MC Tours Honduras
IMC SAP Dept. 147
P.O. Box 523900
Miami, FL 33152-3900

ATTN: Mayatan

Visit www.mayatanfoundation.org for more information about the school and the foundation.

