

# The Honeymoon Project

The definitive guide to all things honeymoon



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## Real honeymoon: Janelle and Ryan's Honduras adventure

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*I love sharing real honeymoons on The Honeymoon Project; it's a fascinating insight into the many different honeymoons that other people choose, and a great way to pick up tips for places to visit and hotels to stay at. Today's real honeymoon is no exception - Janelle, a marketing executive at Brightidea, and her husband Ryan had a fabulous, adventurous honeymoon to Honduras; I especially love that Janelle is so honest about their disappointment at one of the hotels they'd chosen for their honeymoon, and how, rather than stick it out, they decided to seek out somewhere better that would make their honeymoon ultimately more enjoyable. Over to Janelle:*

For our summer honeymoon, we were looking for a lot of things: luxury, adventure, romance, seclusion, not to mention finding somewhere that wouldn't be too crowded, too expensive or with bad weather. Our goal was to find a destination that would give us an authentic experience, combined with lots of relaxation and diverse scenery: Honduras fit the bill perfectly.

A still relatively well-kept secret from mainstream vacationers, Honduras is rich with both diversity of terrain and cultural offerings. It offers unparalleled access to the Caribbean, rainforests, and historical treasures like the Mayan ruins in Copán, the people are warm and welcoming, and it was only a six-hour flight from our home in California. We spent thirteen days (twelve nights) in Honduras, during which time we visited Pico Bonito (rainforest), Copán (colonial town and ruins) and Roatán (Caribbean island).

### Pico Bonito



We flew from Los Angeles to La Cebia on TACA Airlines, from where it's just a quick fifteen-minute drive down a windy dirt road to Pico Bonito, a national park on the north coast of Honduras, which is popular for its insane variety of birds, a few mysterious jaguars, and a host of outdoor activities. We stayed at the Lodge at Pico Bonito, which is located at the base of a large peak, and bills itself as a luxury eco-lodge. The lush, secluded estate is surrounded by hiking trails and has around twenty private bungalows (complete with air-conditioning), a beautiful main lodge and a pool. The grounds are pristine, and the veranda in the main lodge is perfect for

lounging with an unobstructed view of the peak and birds - unsurprisingly, it's a very popular destination for birdwatchers. The restaurant served up some great dishes; our favourites included the freshly baked rolls, chocolate fillet medallions, and shrimp cocktail.

Adventure was something we sought throughout our honeymoon. Rafting was one thing we had to try so we planned a guided rafting trip down Rio Congrejal in the Pico Bonito Forest - Omega Tours offered two private guides for us novice rafters. We also did a lot of hiking, some on our own and with a guide. One trail, literally right outside our cabin, was the Mermaid Trail to Las Pilas swimming hole, where we enjoyed a dip in a freshwater river pool on the Rio Coloradito. Our biggest feat, though we made barely more than a dent in the side of Pico, was an amazing guided three-and-a-half-hour hike to the Unbelievable Falls.



### About The Honeymoon Project

The Honeymoon Project is your dedicated guide to all things honeymoon - whether you're looking for a two-week beachside trip with nothing more strenuous than ordering another glass of champagne, ideas for getting off the beaten track, or help finding that perfect romantic hideaway.

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As much as adventure was a must, relaxation was still op of our list – this was our honeymoon, after all. The lodge offered massages and, while there is no full spa, you can get an hour massage in a private cabin, at a very good price.

## Copán



Copán is nestled in hills of a large, vast valley; it's hard to get to – we took a thirty-minute flight to San Pedro Sula, then a three-and-a-half-hour drive to Copán. It really is a hidden gem – once you're there, you can very much feel the past centuries around you, and it's obvious why the Mayans, as far back as 400 AD, chose to settle here and build a great city. While in Copán, you must go to [Hacienda San Lucas](#) for a candlelit dinner; situated just ten minutes outside of town, you can also stay here, but we opted for the easy access at [Hotel Marina Copán](#) over seclusion.

There are a lot of opportunities for adventure while visiting Copán. On our way into Copán, we stopped by a local coffee company, Welchez, where the beans are hand-picked. They do full coffee farm tours as well, and this is a must-stop if you love coffee. We also spent time in the colonial town of Copán, with its cobbled streets, which was great for shopping, food, nightlife and meeting friendly locals. One afternoon, we treated ourselves to a private horseback ride through the surrounding valleys.

Our tour guide, [Miguel Andres Raymundo](#), really listened when I said I was interested in local art. He located and arranged a private viewing with Sacbe, a local painter who also runs a painting school, from whom we bought a beautiful portrait of a traditional Mayan woman. Even with all this adventure and variety of activities, the definite highlight of our visit was still touring the famous historic Mayan Copán Ruins, which are absolutely not to be missed.

## Roatán

The beautiful island of Roatán is just a twenty-minute flight from La Cebia airport. We started off staying at [Media Luna](#), an all-inclusive, brand new HM Resort on the east side of the island, which features modern decor and beautiful bungalows. But it's new, and, at the time of our honeymoon in July 2011, was partly under construction. Media Luna is far from West End (the island's main town) and the whole all-inclusive experience didn't suit us – the food was sub-par and we were disappointed by the lack of upgraded premium spirits available and not being able to choose from an a la carte menu, so we sought local advice to find somewhere better to stay. We were pointed towards a boutique waterfront hotel, [Blue Bahia](#), located on the east side of the island, which offered no frills but large rooms and the all-important air-conditioning. The location was great and we took advantage of walking to and from Blue Bahia to West End, for a healthy hour-long walk each day.



We were happy to find that the beach grill at the Blue Bahia is reason alone to visit – ribs and brisket are smoked on site every other day and only the freshest seafood is served. There's plenty of other good eating options nearby, including Imperial, which serves fantastic brick-oven pizza (better than most I've had in New York City!), and Gio's Seafood Restaurant, where we headed on our last night for some fabulous crab.

Roatán is an island famed for diving, but we aren't certified and didn't want to take any tests while on vacation (ok, we were a little lazy); that said, we found that there were plenty of other options to stay active and enjoy the islands amazing reefs and preserved ocean ecosystem. While we were at Media Luna, we joined a diving trip, in order to go snorkelling. This included a stop at the unforgettable [Cayos Chocinos](#) – an island that is less than a mile wide and long, which shelters an indigenous culture that settled here 170 years ago and still boasts no electricity. While visiting we enjoyed a delicious homemade meal of fried fish caught by locals, fried plantains



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and dirty rice. (If you visit, be sure to bring money because the local women's hand-made gifts are far better than anything you can find in West End.) During the trip we also saw whales, dolphins and, for a brief time, started chasing tuna to seek out leopard sharks. The Blue Bahia also had a dive shop (as most hotels do on the island) and we caught a few smaller two-hour trips with divers to reef spots a little further out. It's possible to snorkel from most points on the island – just rent a pair of fins and goggles and swim out!



We were warned but didn't experience any hiccups with airline travel until going home – our flight with TACA Airlines was cancelled only thirty minutes before we were scheduled to leave and the airline put us on a seemingly one-way bus to Fantasy Island resort. The one night delay was no fantasy, I can assure you. Funny thing, if it hadn't been for our unexpected extended stay, we would have never seen a monkey, which conveniently popped up right next to us while we ate breakfast with our fellow delayed travelers. A nice surprise to a seemingly inconvenient extended stay!

All photos courtesy of [Janelle Noble](#)



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