



Honduras differently with an itinerary co-designed with local communities



To craft an original itinerary for a voyage to Honduras, a still relatively unknown country in Central America, PONANT's teams went on a scouting mission to meet the various local communities and begin to forge lasting ties for the future.



"In just eight days, this itinerary offers an incredibly rich range of experiences. It is without doubt the most varied one we offer in the tropics", stresses José Sarica, PONANT Expedition Experience Director. The programme involves several encounters with local communities, who are *"proud of their culture and eager to share it"*, like the Caracoles people in Bonacca, also known as the Cay, on Guanaja Island, and the Garifuna people from Chachahuate island in the Cayos Cochinos archipelago.

To develop this travel experience, José Sarica, accompanied by Captain Yannick Simon, set off on a scouting trip to Honduras. Faithful to the *Explore to Inspire* philosophy, the team was very keen to build programmes and activities with local communities, while minimising distances to reduce the trip's environmental impact. Unlike neighbouring countries, Honduras has little in the way of tourist infrastructure. The company's pioneering work with local stakeholders aims to inspire the tourism industry across the region. Until now, Cayos Cochinos, La Ceiba and Cuero y Salado have not hosted cruise ships.

Forging ties with local communities



In Guanaja, the team met young people fully engaged in promoting the Caracoles culture. PONANT has given them the opportunity to become guides for the company and designed a bespoke training programme for them.

On Cayo Chachahuate island, the issue of drinking water came up in discussions with the locals and the PONANT Foundation is now working to establish a partnership. It is also supporting communities in Cuero y Salado where schools are in a dilapidated state and sorely lacking in equipment.

“Guests will experience what we did when location scouting. They will be blown away by the seabed and nature in general, I don’t think they will be expecting it to be such a beautiful and moving voyage and to feel so enriched by their meetings with locals”, says José Sarica.

Immersive experience in the heart of lush and protected nature

“This is one of the most all-embracing itineraries that we offer. There are the seabeds of protected coral, crystal clear water, sandy beaches and incredible mangroves which make you think you’re in the Amazon with parrots, toucans, howler monkeys and alligators,” marvels the Expedition Experience Director.



The team went first to the Islas de la Bahía archipelago, in the heart of the world’s second largest coral reef, before heading out to Guanaja, an idyllic island waiting to be discovered with PONANT being the first company to go there. Another notable discovery was meeting the Caracoles people on the miniscule island of Bonacca, also known as the Cay and nicknamed “Venice of the Caribbean”.



José Sarica and Yannick Simon were equally warmly welcomed at La Ceiba, a port city and Honduras’s tourism capital, with its typical architecture. In the background, Pico Bonito peaks at an altitude of 2,435m while the Cangrejal River skirts the east side of the city.

A few kilometres to the west, the Cuero y Salado Wildlife Reserve is home to an extraordinary range of wildlife, ashore and at sea, that can be observed in their natural habitat as if you were in the heart of the Amazon. Here guests can take an unusual ride aboard ‘burras’, motorised vehicles used to transport bananas on rails dating back to the 1900s.

Belize and Honduras: unexpected encounters and nature

Belize City – Belize City, on Le Dumont-d’Urville. 5 sailings from 14 November to 12 December 2023, 8 days – 7 nights.
From €3,590 – [Find more about this voyage](#)

ABOUT PONANT

Explore to Inspire: explore to better understand, learn, share and protect. PONANT has been committed to more responsible tourism, and purposeful voyages of exploration for 35 years. Aboard a fleet of 13 French-flagged small ships, fitted with the latest environmental technologies, the journey of exploration is always elegant, authentic and inspiring. For more information www.ponant.com

Press contacts | Laure Foulatier +33(0)4 88 66 64 38 | Justine Fraticelli +33(0)4 88 91 35 56 | presse@ponant.com

#PONANT

© Photo credits: ©Studio PONANT - Thibault Garnier, ©PONANT – José Sarica

