



Hello from the Team at Turtle Casa!

We are excited about your upcoming visit to Roatan and want to share quite a bit of information to help you prepare for your trip!

BEFORE YOUR TRIP

SIX MONTHS VALIDITY ON PASSPORTS: Please be certain all guests will have at least six months validity on their passports beyond your travel dates. Honduras is one of a few countries that will allow three, but some airlines will not. This is not a fun problem for guests to fix at the last minute (but has happened twice recently).

ONLINE CUSTOMS FORM/PRE-CHECK: Please Note that travel warnings for Honduras very rarely, if ever, apply in the Bay Islands, but entry and Custom restrictions are the same. Please see the Travel Requirement page of our website at www.turtlecasaroatan.com/travel-requirements for helpful information on completing the required Customs form (though they do not always ask for it). As of June 1, 2024 paper forms are no longer allowed and it is MUCH easier to fill out the form prior to arrival, as WIFI is often spotty at the airport. Also, save your baggage claim tags! They're serious about them at RTB.

RENTAL CAR/VAN, TAXI OR DRIVER: They all work! We always suggest a rental car or van for adventurous spirits, but there's something to be said for hiring a Driver, as well! Local taxis are plentiful on Roatan and can save money for a longer stay, but they are riskier and involve some walking back & forth from the main road. We've had larger groups love the flexibility of a 15-passenger van from Ramirez. Rental cars run the gamut from very inexpensive to pricey. We have personally been enjoying renting from Racing Rent a Car (link to their site is on our Thing to Do page)

WHAT TO PACK: Roatan is very casual!! Pack light. There aren't many places you won't feel perfectly comfortable in a pair of shorts and a t-shirt. A light rain jacket may be a good idea between October and March.

WHATSAPP: We strongly encourage guests to download WhatsApp from the App store or Google Play and get accustomed to it before arriving in Roatan. Feel free to send Marnie a message (+1.808.639.6848). It is an internet-based messaging, calling and video-chatting app that is used extensively here and most of Central America. Many businesses don't have any other form of communication yet are highly responsive on WhatsApp! We think you'll love it (and it's easy to use). All communication with our Housekeeper and Handyman is handled through WhatsApp, so you'll want to have it ready, just in case!

GOOGLE MAPS: It is also very advantageous to download and use Google Maps in Roatan (Apple Maps does not function great here). ***Downloading the actual island map to your phone allows you to use it offline*** if you don't have access to data while traveling. If you need help getting this accomplished a quick internet search for "Download a Google Map to My (type of phone)" should do the trick!

CONCIERGE & CHEF SERVICES

DETOUR ROATAN: If "one-stop", "simple" and "great customer service" speak to you, we highly recommend Detour Roatan for Concierge Service. Jamie & Jason will take great care of you!! Their website is www.DetourRoatan.com, but feel free to reach out by email at detourroatan@gmail.com or by text/call at (813) 648-4719. You will often save a little money by booking activities yourself, but having a concierge working with you makes life a little easier and vacations a bit sweeter!

CHEF SERVICES: We have had many guests request chef services and all have been very happy booking directly with Chef Jennie. BOOK EARLY, as she fills up fast! Reach her at +504 3312-5550 (great time to start using WhatsApp), jenmann1991@gmail.com or at her Facebook page Roatan Chef Service @Jenniechefservice

ARRIVING IN ROATAN

CUSTOMS: Your first stop at the airport is Customs. Lines can be long (especially on Saturdays). See here: www.TurtleCasaRoatan.com/travel-requirements for link to the form and helpful tips for completing it. Porters are ready and willing to help you with heavy luggage, if needed, and work only for tips. You will need to tell them where you are staying. "Turtle Casa in Sandy Bay" is usually good enough, but our full address would include East Sandy Bay Beach Road (no numbers in Roatan)

CURRENCY: Although many people are accustomed to using their credit cards for most of their vacation expenses, you'll find on Roatan that many merchants/restaurants don't accept credit cards or charge a fee if they do. PayPal and Zelle are becoming popular options, but many are still Cash Only. You can use US dollars just about anywhere, but please **remember that your US bills will have to be crisp, unmarked, and untruncated, or they won't be accepted!** Small bills are much easier to exchange than larger bills so plan accordingly when getting cash for your trip. \$20's work great (unless you're going to Guanaja). ATM's, which respond with Lempira, are found conveniently at Eldon's in Coxen Hole, as well as the Gas Station in West End. Current exchange rate is about 26.5 L to \$1 US.

GROCERIES: We recommend that you stop at Eldon's grocery store in Coxen Hole on your way to the house from the airport to get groceries; it's right on the way. You'll find when you arrive that you'll be happy you have food and drink in the house so you can settle in comfortably without having to go out again. After a long day of traveling, you'll appreciate this tip! If you take a taxi, the driver will take you to Eldon's and wait while you do your shopping (usually they will charge \$10 extra for this service). If you rent a car, just ask for directions to Eldon's when you pick up your car (It is right on the way to Turtle Casa, a little under a mile from the airport, above the Food Court). You can also buy beer/wine/liquor there.

The house will have basics available like salt, pepper and olive oil, and will have some non-perishable spices for your use. Please don't count on condiments, though. You should plan to purchase these items when you shop - just like staying at any hotel/time-share with a kitchen.

There is also a newer grocery store just around the corner from Turtle Casa on the main road going towards West End. It is not marked like a grocery store but is called Ramirez, is on the left side of the road, on the corner of the entrance of the Colonia and is gold and blue in color, with security fencing all

around it. It is a medium-sized grocery, but many products are displayed in Spanish only, and is not as complete in selection as Eldon's.

ARRIVING AT TURTLE CASA, A FEW HOUSE RULES, AND GETTING ORIENTED

DRINKING WATER: Turtle Casa's tap water is from our own well and is filtered, but untreated. It is quite safe for cleaning and bathing, but you should only drink and cook with purified water. We provide this for your convenience. Should you need to refill the 5-gallon water jugs during your stay (spares are under the kitchen sinks or nearby cabinet, and in the garage), there is a little store a short walk to the back of the house (maybe 100 yards). Go out the gate to your right and immediately turn left. Look up the road and you'll see the blue water jugs out front of a small storefront. They will exchange your empty jugs for a couple of dollars. There is also a short video on "how to change a water bottle" on our website page <https://turtlecasaroatan.com/helpful-info>.

AIR CONDITIONING: For your comfort, all our units have A/C. **We just ask that you be conscientious about its usage as electricity is VERY expensive on the island, with monthly charges often reaching \$2,000 or more!** Please make sure when running the A/C that all the windows and doors are closed. Also, **please turn the A/C off when you'll be out!** It won't take long to cool down when you return, and you'll be helping us and the environment greatly (Roatan's electricity is powered with diesel fuel and now some natural gas and solar). Many properties charge a fee for the use of A/C. We don't want to do this, but instead ask for your conscientious and conservative usage. We set the A/C at 25C when we use them, which is usually quite comfortable for sleeping. Also, we just enjoy having the windows open most of the morning and leave the AC off.

PLUMBING/SEPTIC SYSTEM: Our Island ecosystem and septic system at Turtle Casa is very sensitive. **PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE don't put anything in the toilet, except toilet paper.** Many locations do not allow toilet paper into the system (they're THAT sensitive). We understand that this is a challenge for most Western Tourists and have tried hard to not place this restriction on the house. Unfortunately, we have still had multiple problems with tampons and such, requiring extensive down-time and expense. We ask that **NOTHING OTHER THAN TOILET PAPER** enter they system to respect this highly sensitive environment and to also ensure that you don't have a messy problem during your vacation - particularly when there is a full house. Please be sure to share this information with your whole party and thank you so much for adhering to this request.

SMOKING: Please don't smoke inside. You're welcome to smoke on the decks and patio. And please be mindful of your butts!

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS: As a Vacation rental property, we want to keep track of household items to make sure that if something is lost, broken, or stolen we know about it and can make sure it is replaced so that our future guests aren't inconvenienced. After you check out, you will be responsible for any missing items and replacement cost will be deducted from your deposit. Don't be concerned, a broken glass or plate is not going to be billed. Mostly we are only concerned with larger damage or missing items. PLEASE HELP US GET ITEMS BACK TO THE FLOOR THEY CAME FROM if you are renting multiple floors. This is a BIG challenge for our housekeepers and we'd hate to have a single-suite rental not have an important item.

BUGS!: Being a tropical rainforest climate, Roatan has its share of insects. Sand flies are probably the most common irritant. Although some areas are worse than others, they will find you just about anywhere on the Island. It's always the worst when there is no breeze. Some people aren't bothered too much while others can be quite sensitive. We recommend using an insect repellent when you go outside. Getting bit and having a bad reaction is a terrible way to start a vacation! Products containing DEET work well, but it's a toxic chemical to people and sea life. We have provided a lovely local Insect Repellant that works very well (in refillable bottles) called Aegis for your use while at Turtle Casa.

If you know that you are highly sensitive to sand fly bites, there are many discussions about this on the Facebook page that is highly used by tourists, with all kinds of tips: **Roatan Travel Q & A Group**

MEDICAL NEEDS: For urgent medical care, there are two options close by. The closest and most equipped facility for an emergency is the clinic at Anthony's key, where there is an emergency physician on hand. There is also a new UNIMED 24 Hour Emergency Care Clinic at Coconut Tree Plaza, just before you reach the roundabout in West End. COVID testing is available there, as well.

LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD, NEIGHBORS, ACCESS ROAD: Turtle Casa is not located in a touristy area, but rather is in a traditional local neighborhood. The locals are very friendly, humble, and kind. They are also generally poor, and their homes reflect this economic reality. This is their home, and we share this beautiful area with them. We have found over the years that being friendly and greeting people with a smile is all that's needed to have them welcome you to their Island. In the years we've owned Turtle Casa since 2006, we have never had any issues with crime or theft (aside from one of our own guests, whose relatives decided to take quite a bit, hence the deposit). However, we do take precautions with security (locked gates, etc.) and remind our guests to be mindful of their belongings.

The neighbors on both sides of Turtle Casa are from the US and will also welcome you to the Island. In respect for them (particularly Tim, owner of Ruthless Roatan next door), we ask that you be mindful of noise and conduct yourselves as you would in your own home.

As of January 1, 2025, our road is paved! This is a BIG improvement over the bumpy dirt road we've had since the home was built. **Paving is complete on the Eastern entrance** (the route you will receive in your check-in information, fastest way from airport). The western entrance is still being determined as to how it will be completed, across some lower beach areas.

GREAT THINGS TO DO RIGHT AT TURTLE CASA

Without a doubt, the best activities to enjoy while at Turtle Casa are those you can do without having to get in a car! For just this reason our home is ideal for Diving, Snorkeling, Kayaking and Fishing! The best part is that all these activities can be done right from our dock!

- **DIVING:** We highly recommend Sandy Bay Divers! They will pick you up by car or by boat and return you home free of charge! Our guests find this to be a huge benefit when they stay at Turtle Casa. Our website, www.TurtleCasa.com, is a wealth of knowledge regarding things to do, and the three closest dive shops are highlighted there: www.turtlecasaroatan.com/things-to-do
- **KAYAKING:** We have 3 Kayaks (2 singles and 1 double) and 4 paddles conveniently located on our dock for your use. With a ramp to get them in and out of the ocean, going kayaking is a great way to get wet! You'll want to spend some time paddling the waters in front of Turtle Casa. There is a helpful video for getting the double kayak out of the shed (there's a little trick) toward the middle of this page: www.turtlecasaroatan.com/helpful-info
- **SNORKELING:** We have beautiful reef snorkeling right offshore. Although it's possible to swim to the reef from the end of the dock, we recommend taking the kayaks and tying them off to a buoy near the reef, or simply "dragging them along" with you. The best spot for snorkeling is a Roatan favorite dive site - Spooky Channel. You can spot it from the decks of the house. It's a round white buoy (at the time of this writing) to the east and a little north of the house, directly outside of an orange-colored round house. Please be sure to tie the kayaks securely (there is a loop at the end of the ropes, that is easy to use, slip-knot fashion). From the buoy just snorkel

out to the reef and enjoy. We've seen an abundance of sea life here and always spend time doing this when we're at Turtle Casa. Also, make sure you feel comfortable getting back into the kayak before getting into deep water. And be careful not to lose anything you have in the kayak if it tips! If it doesn't float it may be a new part of the sea bottom.

- **SWIMMING:** The water in front of Turtle Casa is shallow, squishy and pretty silty as seasonal runoff from the mountains behind us brings down soil into the water. We are within the boundaries of the Roatan Marine Park, which means that we also cannot remove sea grass. Besides, it's healthy for the sea and it's marine life! For this reason, swimming is best off the end of the dock or at the two beautiful swim beaches of West End (Half Moon Bay) or West Bay. There are steps to get into and out of the water. When you want to get wet, we highly suggest taking the kayaks out and spending time in the ocean snorkeling! This is what Roatan (and Turtle Casa) is exceptional for!!
- **DEEP SEA FISHING, FLY FISHING AND SNORKELING TOURS:** There's no better location on the Island for these activities than ***Ruthless Roatan Charters***. The best part is that it's run by our next-door neighbor Tim, who's operation is based on our shared dock. Visit their website to see all the excursions offered. *If you think your group would be interested in any of Tim's excursions, we highly recommend you contact him well before your travel dates. We've had quite a few guests disappointed to arrive and try to book a trip, only to find that he's full.* www.ruthlessroatancharters.com If your interest is primarily Fly Fishing you can also try Greg Baldwin who runs ***Fly Fish Roatan***. Greg will also pick you up for your Fly Fishing excursion right from the end of the dock. You can find more info at: www.flyfishroatan.com

For lots more information on Things to Do, with links to each location, please see our website: www.TurtleCasa.com

We hope this information helps to make your stay at Turtle Casa as easy and enjoyable as possible. We welcome you to our home and wish you a fantastic Holiday!

