

St. Somewhere Times

Arrival and our first days in Honduras

The Flight: a Bit Scary for Most of Us!

First of all, "US" includes the 20 import teachers that came to Honduras from all over the United States. Although we were scattered across the country, we united in Houston, TX and flew into San Pedro on two different flights. However, the passengers of one flight had doubts that they would make their arrival. As the seatbelt light came on, the plane rollercoasted through the air. Initial response- "I think we're going to die". Upon arrival, we still had 20 teachers!

Customs were a breeze! Without delay, Debbie Thompson and Don Hooper, our new Principals, were there to collect us. They zoomed us through customs like we were going to an afternoon matinee.

The BUS!

Guillermo, our bus driver extraordinaire, made his first appearance upon picking us up at the airport. It was straight from the airport to our new site of employment. That was the first of thousands of bus rides Guillermo will provide for us. With no personal transportation, Guillermo will be our new best bud. Every good bus driver needs some shades, so Bill (being the nice guy he is) gave Guillermo an awesome pair of sunglasses to protect his eyes from the Honduran sun! Thanks, Bill!

Putting Out the Welcome Mat...

Our first day in San Pedro Sula was very exciting. The bus dropped us each off at our new homes and gave us a few hours to settle in, get to know our new roommates, and unpack the meager amount of belongings we were allowed to bring.

Later, the bus made it's rounds and took us to a local restaurant for a welcome meal sponsored and paid for by the PTA. We were quick to learn that roaming mariachi bands do NOT play for free. They play one song as a teaser and then move on to the next bar if no one flashes money.

Check out the welcome buffet in the picture section. Couldn't tell you what the food I ate was called, but it was delicious. Let's just say the word of the year is "Salva Vida" (the name of a local beer, of course!).

There is a big cinema on the top floor and the token food court on the first floor. Eating out is cheap but shopping is not. The best way to shop is to go to the markets and barter/haggle for whatever you need. However, open markets are more dangerous and few people will speak English. With limited skills in Spanish, the mall is a safety net.

THE ROYAL TREATMENT!

With all the dirty work (paperwork, orientation, and well, you get the idea) out of the way, we were on our way to the beach. One of the PTA families (anonymity is important) hosted *A Day in the Sun* at their beach house. Guillermo drove us about an hour outside of SPS to the coast. Their immense hospitality really can't be expressed in words, so we won't even try. Once again, the pictures tell their own story. Unfortunately, a few teachers shipwrecked in the paddle boat just 20 meters (everyone in the world uses the metric system) off the shore. Luckily, no one was hurt, but the cargo (a fishing pole) was lost at sea. The next step was setting up a search party of about fifteen. After two hours of searching, the dedicated searchers returned to the beach empty handed. (Maybe some free tutoring will make up for the lost rod and reel.)

I know of at least twenty teachers that would gladly tutor this family's kids on weekends at the beach house.

A few random thoughts:

I wake up to the chirping of Geckos every morning.

Most of us shower three times a day and still stink.

I look forward to cold showers to cool off from the heat.

A dollar is worth 15.5 Lempiras right now.

Everywhere you look there are security guards with guns.

Can you say Bottled Water, Pepto Bismal, and Humidity?

Our school campus is impressive.

We all take a lot more trips to the bathroom.

Hondurans are some of the nicest people you will ever meet!

Most of us do not have phones. Some do.