

Welcome to Roatan Backpackers' Hostel! We hope you'll have a wonderful stay with us. Please don't hesitate to let us know if there's anything missing, or needs fixing. A staff introduction is below. Our office is not staffed after hours, but Nagelle lives on property directly above the office if urgent assistance is needed. The hostel phone and whatsapp number is **+504-9714-0413** or email is **roatanhostel@gmail.com**



Mel James- owner, with Bandit the dog



Belkis- 2nd in command



Roxy- guest service staff



Nagelle- guest service staff



Volunteer helpers



Osman- handyman extraordinaire!

Here's an intro to our team! Mel is the owner of the hostel. She's been on the island for 23 years, originally as a scuba instructor, and she started her dream of the hostel 11 years ago. She's a single mom of 2 teenage boys who have recently moved to Canada for a few years, so she's sometimes away with them. Mel speaks fluent English, Spanish and French. She usually lives on property in the white house at the back left, called the casita grande. The hostel also has a new puppy who is growing at a crazy rate, named Bandit.

Belkis has been with the hostel for several years. She started as a housekeeper and making breakfasts at the restaurant, and now knows all aspects of the business. Belkis is in charge anytime that Mel is away. Belkis also has a side business of renting scooters, so if you'd like to rent out a scooter during your stay, just speak with her.

Helping out in the office and around the hostel as needed, we have our two part-time staff, Roxy and Nagelle. Nagelle lives on property, and is the after-hours contact when Mel is away. Belkis is a Spanish speaker, but understands English, and Roxy and Nagelle are both English speaking, but are also fluent in Spanish. We also have a volunteer program, so we usually have a few travelers from various parts of the world that are staying for a month or so and helping out around the hostel with cleaning, gardening, painting: wherever needed. If being a hostel volunteer is of interest to you, send us an email.

Maintenance is constant in the tropics, and it seems like there's always something that needs either a repair or improvement. Fortunately, we have our skilled handyman Osman, who comes by as needed to keep things running smoothly.



**Upper: lofts**  
**Lower: 4 bed dorm,**  
**2 bed dorm,**  
**communal kitchen**

**Upper: apt for 6**  
**Mid: restaurant**  
**Lower: 1 bed apt**  
**and studio apartment**

**Casita**

**Casita  
grande**

**Cando  
jr #1**

**Cando**

**Cando jr  
#2**

## Hostel Layout

The front orange building upper level has 2 single loft rooms, a double loft room, and a bathroom that these rooms share, as well as a sitting area and porch. The main level has the front porch, communal kitchen and 4 bed dorm at the front, and laundry room (staff access only) and 2 bed dorm at the back.

The main cream coloured building has a one-bedroom apartment to the right of the office, and the studio apt to the left of the office. On the next level, there is the restaurant access through the back of the property, as well as a staff apartment. On the upper floor, with the balcony overlooking the pool, there is a private double room with private bathroom, which for groups can optionally be connected to the neighbouring penthouse apartment that sleeps 6,

After leaving the pool deck and continuing on to the garden pergola area, the casita is on the left, a small house which can sleep 1-4 people and has its own kitchen, followed by the casita grande, which can also sleep 1-4 people and has a kitchen. There is a set of outdoor stairs between the casitas, leading down to a private double room underneath the casita, and two single rooms underneath the casita grande. Directly across from the casitas is the cando, which is a full apartment constructed from a 40 foot shipping container. Next to the cando are the two cando juniors, which are each a double bedroom and bathroom, constructed from 20 foot shipping containers.

# Hostel Amenities



**Our pool** is a favourite hangout spot for many of our guests. There is an outdoor shower and foot rinse, as well as lounge chairs. This area is NON-SMOKING, please respect this designation. The pool is open until 8pm, at which time chemical treatments are sometimes applied. Guests are asked to rinse prior to entering the pool. Children under 10 should be accompanied by an adult. Jumping, splashing, diving and running on the deck area are not permitted. Please keep glass containers away from the pool. Food should not be consumed in or immediate next to the pool.



**The garden pergola**, located between the casitas and the candos at the back of the property, and connecting from the pool deck area, is a tranquil spot to relax. It has a patio table and chairs if you'd like to dine outside, as well as a couple lounge chairs and hammocks. If the hammocks aren't out, please check with the office. This is a designated NON-SMOKING area. Quiet times between 10pm to 7am are requested in all common areas, out of consideration to other guests.



**The front porch** is the social hub of the hostel. It is also our only designated smoking area on property. Use of marijuana (and all other drugs) is prohibited anywhere on property.

The front porch is located at the very front of the hostel property, at the orange building. There are storm tarps that can be unrolled on rainy days. The front porch is located right next to the communal kitchen. Due to Covid biosecurity restrictions, only 1 set of guests can access the kitchen at a time. If you would like to use the communal kitchen, there is a key sign out, and all surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized after using.

# Hostel Amenities



**The Lizard Lounge** is a secret gem that sometimes guests don't discover until near the end of their stay. Accessed by the stairs just next to the outdoor shower on the pool deck, the airy lizard lounge has a small view of the sea, and is also great for checking out the stars at night, as well as for practicing yoga. This is a designated NON-SMOKING area. You are welcome to enjoy the lizard lounge late at night, but ask that you keep conversation levels low to respect the hostel quiet hours between 10pm and 7am.



**The restaurant, Mel's Diner** (named for Melinda, from the US, who is leasing the space) is located at the back of the hostel, just before the pool, and has delicious food at affordable pricing. Restaurant hours and menu varies depending on the season. We recommend contacting Melinda at [melsdinnerroatan@gmail.com](mailto:melsdinnerroatan@gmail.com) for information on current hours, menu and pricing. The restaurant sometimes hosts special events such as paint night, games night and movie night, and is where the book exchange and board games are located.



**The center yard and fire pit** are located just in front of the office. If you'd like to have a fire one night while you're here, just ask. Hammocks for this area are available by request through the office. Most of the laundry lines are for hostel use, however the line closest to the walkway is for guest use, if you have a wet towel or swimsuit, or have handwashed a few items.

# Services

**Same-day laundry service:** \$8 per load. Inform the hostel by whatsapp or email prior to 10am that you have laundry that you would like picked up

**Snorkel gear rental:** \$5/day. Available through the office

**Purified water:** \$3 for a 5 gallon (20 litre) jug. Inquire through the office

**Car rental:** \$45/24 hours, dropped off and picked up at the hostel. Can be booked through the office.

**Airport transfers:** \$15 for 1-2 people, \$20 for 3 people. Can be booked through the office

**Internet:** no charge for hostel guests. Depending on the router, try the passport wittyshrub037 (Netgear) or cashewlily (hostelrouter). Please note that internet services are not comparable to developed countries. Please do not stream (eg Netflix, youtube), as this will slow down the usage for everyone.

# Important Info

NO TOILET PAPER IN THE TOILETS– never! Please. We are on septic system, only human waste should go in the toilet (no toilet paper, no paper towel, no wipes, no tampons, no condoms)

Power outages are fairly common (at least once a week) and sometimes last several hours. Our solar landscape lights come on even when the power is off.

Electricity rates are exceedingly high here. Please turn off fans and lights when you go out. For rooms with optional a/c, a \$10/day surcharge applies if you would like to use the a/c. Please let the office know you'll be using it, and turn off when you are out.

Garbage: please separate any compostable material (fruit/vegetable waste) and leave outside of your apartment door for collection. Recycling can be placed in the bins outside of your apartment. Garbage can be taken in a tied bag and placed in the blue garbage receptacles by the lattice fencing. There is no fixed garbage collection day/time, so take your garbage out whenever needed.

Smoking is not permitted in any accommodations or on any accommodation balconies or porches. The only permitted smoking area on property is the front porch of the orange building

# Safety and Security Information

Roatan is a fun place to visit, most people are friendly and welcoming, so it's easy to let down your guard. Crime does happen here- it's important to be prudent and make wise choices to try to avoid an unpleasant situation.

HOSTEL: For the security and comfort of our guests, hostel amenities are only for registered hostel guests . If you would like to invite someone onto the property, they must be checked in to the office with government photo ID, no exceptions., and additional charges may apply, as pricing of rooms is based on occupancy. If it is after hours, the office is closed and you cannot register your guest, they are not permitted to come on to the property.

ROATAN: In general, it is best to avoid walking around after dark if there is no other foot traffic around. If you will be visiting the night life in West End and returning late in the evening, flag the taxi in a well-lit, populated area, and ask the driver to drop you off right at the gate of the hostel.

If you are heading to the beach, avoid leaving your belongings unsupervised (including your clothes), as things sometimes disappear from the beach. If you are going snorkeling in Sandy Bay, to the west of Anthony's Key you can ask one of the restaurants to leave your clothes there, and if going nearby, you can leave them on the lower porch of the octagonal light blue house that belongs to our friend Peggy. If you are going to the beach in West End or West Bay, ask someone nearby to keep an eye on your things if you're headed in to snorkel.

ATMs in West End have had ongoing problems with card skimming. There is an ATM at the PetroSun gas station just outside of West End, or many ATMs to choose from in Coxen Hole (ATMS at an actual bank are the most reliable and least likely to be tampered with).

# Our Neighbourhood



The cut-through to the closest water access is right across the main road, then just a little to the right, next to Sonrise Calvary Chapel. It's just a few minutes to walk down to the water— the beach isn't very pretty, but there's wonderful snorkeling about a 400 meter swim out. If you make a right once you've just through all the way to the beach road, there's a shop called Elizabeth's, and a great little place to eat right next to it.

Ramirez Supermarket is a well-stocked grocery store a 3 min walk from the hostel, just turn right on the main road, and it'll be on your right at the entrance to the Colonia (many inexpensive eateries in the Colonia)

Just past the grocery store on the opposite side of the road is Pirates Deñ restaurant, and Cafe 314. . There are also a few restaurant choice located in the other direction in Sandy Bay (turning left on the main road once leaving the hostel), about 10-15 min past Anthony's Key Resort.

Clinica Esperanza is an excellent, non-profit health care clinic, offering affordable medical and dental care . Open Mon-Friday, 7am to 5pm. The cost is very low and do not cover the operating costs of the clinic, donations are greatly appreciated.

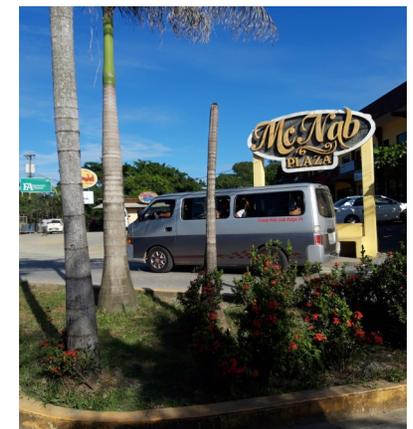
The Carambola Botanical Gardens is a 5-10 min walk from the hostel. Just turn left on the main road, and then it'll be on your left hand side, after Clinica Esperanza, and just across the street from Anthony's Key Resort (where the dolphins are)

# Getting Around



If you'll be using public transportation to get around the island, there are either buses (also called 'collectivos'), as well as a shared taxi service (taxi colectivo). There are several different bus and taxi routes. One bus runs between West End and Coxen Hole via Sandy Bay. To get the bus, just go to the correct side of the road for the direction that you want to travel, and then wave your hand as it is passing. There is normally a driver and a fare collector, and the fare is paid at the end of your ride. Sandy Bay to West End is around 25 lemp, and about the same from Sandy Bay to Coxen Hole. In a collective taxi, the rate is slightly higher (35 L to West End, 40 L to Coxen Hole, pricing per person), but it also goes faster and isn't quite as crowded. The airport is located just past Coxen Hole, so it is not on this route— you'll have to switch buses, or pay a bit more for the taxi driver to continue the rest of the way there. From Coxen Hole, the next bus route runs all the way east to Oakridge (the collective taxi route ends in French Harbour), or there is a separate route the coes along the south west shore to Flowers Bay. There isn't reliable public transportation by road continuing on from West End or Flowers Bay to West Bay, however from West End, you can take a water taxi over (cost approx. \$5 per person). There isn't any reliable public transportation by road going east of Oakridge to Camp Bay, though a limited service of water taxi from Punta Gorda to Camp Bay may be possible. There is also a road that branches off the main road just east of Sandy Bay, through Corozal and by Palmetto and the brewery, but there is not reliable public transportation to go in this direction.

If you would like your own transportation, a scooter is \$25-\$30 per day, and a car rental is around \$45/day.



*Local buses are normally vans, like the one pictured above, and are not any specific colour.*

# Points of Interest



**West Bay** is the most famous beach on the island, and is located about a 10 km drive from the hostel. The easiest way to get there is to take a bus or taxi to West End, and then a water taxi from there, but if you rent a car, you can drive the whole way. The beach is public access, however resorts and restaurants usually charge if you want to use their chairs. Dining is typically pricier in West Bay, however Totally Tacos (located next to the West Bay Mall) has very reasonable pricing and offers a discount with the hostel VIP card. Beachers is right on the water, has ok pricing, and will let you use their chairs as long as you consume something. There's great snorkeling from West Bay, very close to the shore if you go to the south-most part of the beach.



**West End** is located 4 km west of Sandy Bay, and is a touristy hub lined with bars, restaurants, souvenir stores and dive shops, including Eco Divers, which offers hostel guests an incredible discount. Easily accessed by bus or taxi. Good, not as pricey food options in West End include Rotisserie Chicken, Cannibal Café, and various street vendors. Popular spots for a drink are Sundowners (particularly around 4-6pm), The Blue Marlin, and The Booty Bar, but there are plenty of others to choose from. There is a Mares store as well as a Cressi store if you want to purchase any diving or snorkel gear.



**Sandy Bay** is a rather long, stretched out community, generally divided into the section that is west of Anthony's Key, and the section that is east of Anthony's Key, with a stretch of beach on each of these sections. Sandy Bay is a mix of residential and businesses, including the Mayan Jungle Zipline (hostel guests get a discount), several dive shops, the Carambola Botanical Gardens, several restaurants including Papa Bones Pizza, The Sunken Fish, The Beach Grill, Dragonfly Sushi. Sandy Bay as a well stocked grocery store, Ramirez, which also sells a selection of wines and alcohol. There are quite a few comedores, which are little local eateries that sell inexpensive local food. There's great snorkeling off of either beach area in Sandy Bay, about a 400 meter swim from shore.



**Coxen Hole** is a little gritty feeling, but is an essential area of the island, home to many government offices including immigration (if you need to apply for a visa extension), City Hall, and the land registry, as well as many banks and multiple grocery stores and hardware stores. It is also the location of one of the cruise ship ports (Port of Roatan), and as such, there are many small vendors plying souvenirs. If you're looking for a colourful mercado area, you might be a bit disappointed in what you find, but there is a market area that has fruit and vegetable stalls, and you can often find people with coolers selling fresh-frozen seafood. Coxen Hole is the terminal point for all the bus routes, and is also the location of the Utila ferry terminal.



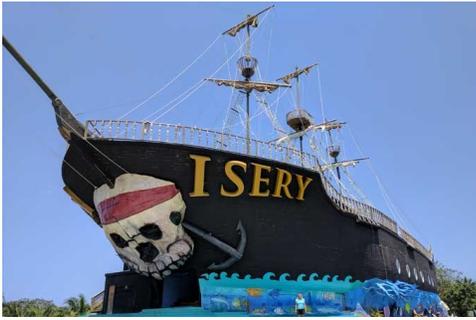
**The road from Coxen Hole to Flowers Bay** has the famous ROATAN sign that you can pose next to. You'll also pass the cameo factory on this road, as well as a few restaurants, including Glo's, which is well known for its seafood. This road passes the Port of Roatan, so on cruise ship days, it can be quite congested, but if you are traveling by car, you can continue onwards, where the road connects to the turn off looping to the West Bay turnoff, or to West End and returning to Sandy Bay.



**French Harbour** doesn't have too many points of interest, but it does have the MegaPlaza Mall right on the main road (more of a plaza than a mall), which includes a huge used clothing store called Megapaca, as well as an Espresso Americano coffee shop, as well as several other shops and restaurants, banks, a private hospital and some UHT university facilities. French Harbour also has a cool spot called the Buccaneer, a restaurant and beer garden with swim area and hammocks over the water (there is an admission cost of \$5 per person to use the water area, even if you are consuming at the restaurant or beer garden).



**French Cay** is just a couple minutes past French Harbour, and is a small community that includes the Arch Iguana Farm, Daniel Johnson's Monkey and Sloth Hangout, and 21 Dragonflies, where a friendly local family will show you the steps of making chocolate. There are also 2 private cays a short boat ride away from the community, Big French Key and Little French Cay, which are tourist venues that have a day fee to access their facilities.



**The pirate ship Isery** is a popular photo opportunity along the main road close to Punta Gorda. Originally constructed as a night club, shortly after it was built, the Argentinian owner was arrested by the US DEA for laundering money for a Mexican drug cartel. The property was seized by the Honduran authorities and remained empty for several years, but has now been rented out and is apparently back in business as a night club.



**The little beachside community of Punta Gorda** is the original landing site of the Garifuna population. There are several restaurants in Punta Gorda that sell Garifuna food such as machuca, and on Sunday afternoons, you can stop by to listen to the drum beats and Garifuna music as some of their community get up to dance the punta, and invite the audience to participate.



**Jonesville and Oakridge** are two neighbouring communities built along the water, with many of the homes on stilts directly over the water. Some of the homes are water-access only, with children going to school by boat. There are mangrove channels that offer protected routes between the communities, and you can pay to go on a boat tour through the mangroves, or get in touch with Kim at The Sail Inn (Jonesville) to rent out kayaks and explore the area on your own. While you're there, stop by the well known Hole in the Wall restaurant (boat access only), or a few of the newer spots like Tricos Bar and Grill (live music on Tuesdays).



**Camp Bay beach**, on the far east side of the island (approximately a 1 1/2 hr drive from the hostel, not accessible by public transportation), is my favourite beach on the island. It is off the beaten path, so you could easily wind up with the entire beach to yourself. Pack a hammock along to hang between the palm trees, and a picnic lunch. Snorkeling is too far out to access easily without a boat, but the beach is great for swimming. If you would rather buy lunch out, you can continue a little further to La Sirena restaurant, or double back to Paya Bay Resort (which also has a clothing optional beach, if that's of interest).

# General Information

**Worship Services:** There are many churches around the island, with services in either English or Spanish, depending on the church. Most of the churches are Protestant (Baptist, Methodist, Church of God and 7th Day Adventist are the most common), but there are also a few Catholic churches as well as a Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall (Coxen Hole). There are no Jewish synagogues or Muslim mosques.

Mel goes to a protestant church in West Bay, if you'd like to go any Sunday.

**Pharmacies and Medical Facilities:** There are multiple pharmacies around the island, including a small one at Anthony's Key Resort, as well as one in West End, and several in Coxen Hole. Many medications do not require a prescription here, and pharmacists are very helpful. If you need to see a doctor, Clinica Esperanza is just a few minutes walk from the hostel, or Anthony's Key Resort also has a doctor who does visits (located in the same spot as the pharmacy and the hyperbaric chamber). Clinica Esperanza also has a dentist, and another dentist is located a 10 min walk to the east at Coral Stone. If you require a hospital visit, the public hospital is in Coxen Hole, and there are also 2 fairly expensive private hospitals, Woods in Coxen Hole, and Cemesa in French Harbour (on the upper floor of the mall). Serious emergencies sometimes require emergency air service to a hospital on the mainland.

**Police:** There are often vehicle checkpoints around the island, where the transit police will stop vehicles in order to check their license and registration. If renting a vehicle, make sure you take your drivers license with you, and ask the rental company where the car registration is kept. Drinking and driving is illegal., and seat belts are required in the front seat. Helmets are required for driver and any passenger on a scooter or motorcycle, and there is a law prohibiting 2 males to ride together on a motorcycle or scooter. If you need urgent police assistance, you can call 911.

**Banking:** US\$ are accepted everywhere (provided the bills are in good condition without any rips, tears or markings, and US coins are not accepted, just bills). Small denominations are best. Some banks will not change US\$ if you don't have an account with them, and the banks that do change currency will need to see your passport. A few banks exchange Euros. Almost all ATMs distribute local currency (lempira), and generally distribute in 500 lemp notes, which can be difficult to break. If you withdraw a slightly lower amount (1900 lemp instead of 2000, for example), you'll get some smaller bills to use. Honduran coins are not used on the island, figures are rounded to the nearest lempira. There are 1, 2 5, 10, 20, 50 , 100 and 500 lempira notes. Other currencies such as Canadian dollars, Belize dollars and Guatemalan quetzals cannot be exchanged.

**Volunteering:** If you'd like to volunteer while you're here, there are several great non-profits that welcome volunteers, including SOL Foundation and Care 4 Communities, which both offer sports and kids programs, as well as the marine park, Clinica Esperanza, and R Church., as well as schools, such as Bay Islands International School. If you'd like to volunteer at the hostel, we usually take on 1-2 volunteers at a time for a minimum of 1 month. Volunteers are provided free shared accommodation, and are expected to help out about 20 hours a week. It is a popular position, and usually needs to be reserved a few months in advance.