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Hacienda San Lucas—Copán, Honduras

Copán Ruinas, Copán, Honduras

Nestled in the hills close to the Guatemalan border in Honduras, Hacienda San Lucas is the best choice near Copán, an enchanting delight fusing Maya tradition with romantic luxury.

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The famous Maya ruins of Copán are what bring visitors and tourists to this part of Honduras. Indeed, the ruins are worth a look, but they are only the start. The vibrant beauty of the area surrounding Copán Ruinas comes from the indigenous communities, bountiful scenery, wildlife, and the rustic hideaway of Hacienda San Lucas.

Hacienda San Lucas is a hundred year-old property that has been owned by the same family for generations. The current owner, Flavia Cueva, converted the charming hacienda into an eco-lodge seven years ago. The rooms, found in simple lodges, are anything but plain inside. Mood lighting and candles create a perfectly romantic but homey ambience, whilst comfortable beds with indigenous-spun bed covers adorn the rooms. Nights can be chilly in the mountainous region, so hot-water baths are the ultimate respite to fresh and exhilarating days. Don't come here for amenities though: there are no TVs, radios, air conditioning, or other gadgets. Revel in the sounds of nature.

The lodging is cosy, informal and totally agreeable to nature lovers who want peaceful days walking in the hills. The evening cuisine however, attracts a very different crowd. So popular is the restaurant that would-be diners must book in advance, despite the rural location. After picturesque sunsets and nightfall, Hacienda San Lucas is lit only by candles, creating a bewitching setting surrounded by tropical forest and

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Mayan artefacts. The cuisine ably matches up to the flawless backdrop and rivals first-class restaurants across the globe.

There are very few Maya people still surviving in their indigenous communities in most of Central America, but Hacienda San Lucas employs Maya individuals from one of the remaining tribes just next door to the 300-acre property. The result in the kitchen is a fabulous combination of indigenous foods and haute cuisine recipes. Five-course meals coupled with South American wines make for the best evening many will experience during their stay in Honduras.

Evening meals are enjoyed on the serene outdoor terrace which undoubtedly boasts the best views in the region. Nightcaps can be enjoyed in the charming bar, which adjoins a rustic kitchen where guests can watch the Mayan staff roll tortillas, or join in if they wish. Down-to-earth, homespun service is what Hacienda San Lucas exhibits and the staff are all thrilled to sit down with you and help you make plans for your holiday. Betty, who is in charge of the kitchen, is more than happy to lend the tour-guiding services of her father, who is also Hacienda San Lucas' night watchman! Indeed, the grounds of Hacienda San Lucas have a number of 'untouched' Maya ruins that are as impressive to discover as the tourist park of Copán Ruinas itself.

The rural location, rustic charm and outstanding cuisine and service is what makes Hacienda San Lucas such an exquisite delight in Honduras, where it is often difficult to find the levels of luxury and attentiveness that Western guests are accustomed to. The retreat in the hills is gracefully stunning and an undeniable 'must' for any visitor to Copán.

Web Address: www.haciendasanlucas.com

Total Number of Rooms: 8

Published rates: \$85 to \$150 BB

Review by **Sasha Arms**.

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