



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Summer 2006**

**PACK YOUR BAGS TWICE FOR  
DIVING REEFS AND DISCOVERING RUINS**

*Anthony's Key Resort offers archeological tours to Copan, dolphin encounters, diving and more on Honduras adventure vacations.*

ROATAN, BAY ISLANDS OF HONDURAS – Swim past a dolphin inside a natural lagoon, dive among reef fishes darting in and out of multihued coral reef, then pack your overnight bag for a trip to another world where shamans played ball to appease the gods.

Before, during or after an adventure dive vacation at Anthony's Key Resort on Roatan, Bay Islands, guests can take an overnight excursion to mainland Honduras to tour Copan Ruins, horseback ride to fertility sites, soak in hot springs and visit coffee plantations.

Highlights of the Copan Ruins include some of the most well-preserved remains of the Mayan world discovered in underground tunnels and the largest Mayan text carved into the 66-step hieroglyphic stairway, which traces the lineage and accomplishments of the last six kings.

The overnight excursion package includes a 3-hour land transfer from San Pedro Sula in an air-conditioned vehicle, lunch, entrance fees to ruins and Museum of Mayan Sculpture, one night accommodations in the town of Copan Ruins, breakfast in Copan, a professional bilingual guide and taxes for \$320 per person based on double occupancy, 2-3 people: \$210 / person or 4-5 people: \$165 / person. Additional nights (including breakfast) can be arranged (\$47 per person, based on double occupancy). Optional activities include: hot springs (\$50), horseback riding (\$35) and coffee plantation tours (\$15).

Other overnight excursions include trips to: Pico Bonito National Park, San Pedro Sula (city and plantation tour), Lake Yojoa or Lancetilla Botanical Gardens and Tela Beaches.

Copan, know during its time as "Xukpi," was the cultural center of the Mayan civilization that spanned southeast Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and part of El Salvador during 400-800 A.D. Often referred to as the Athens of the Mesoamerica, hieroglyphics, astronomy, mathematics, ornate sculpture and agriculture thrived in Copan, a settlement of roughly 20,000 people on the fertile banks of the Copan River.

On a walking tour of the ruins, visitors will see remnants of the ball court, hieroglyphic stairway, plaza containing intricately sculpted steleas, altars, acropolis (home to kings) and Sepulturas (the nearby residential site of common Mayans).

The ball court was not a playground but a ceremonial site for a ritualistic ball game played by rulers or shamans using only their elbows and hips. During times of drought, poor crops or war, rulers or shamans would honor the gods by playing the ball game, sacrificing a human (usually a prisoner of war) or spilling his own blood onto a fire to release the god, which they believed was the smoke.

Steleas, rounded carvings nine to 15 feet tall, depict rulers on a rounded face and tell the story of their reign on the flatter backside.

"Copan has high quality Steleas with almost a 3D impression," said Gilberto Arita, former guide and owner of Mayan Caribbean Travel. "After the thirteenth ruler, you can see dramatic changes. They have a much better finish and include details of beards and moustaches."

Other optional activities include a visit to Agua Calientes to soak in natural or pool hot springs and tours of numerous coffee fincas, or "plantations," in the hills, which will be busy harvesting and drying beans November through March.

Visitors can also tour the country side by horseback to visit the San Lucas Hacienda, an old farm now turned restaurant that serves local meals. Along the way, there is a stop at the Mayan fertility site, Los Sapos ("the frogs"), where Mayan woman came to give birth surrounded by stone-carved fertility statues of frogs.

Anthony's Key Resort is a diving mecca, located on the English-speaking Caribbean island of Roatan, a three-hour flight from Houston or Miami. Roughly 96 per cent of all species found anywhere in the Caribbean can be found off Roatan, a palm fringed islet forming part of the second largest barrier reef system in the world.

Divers can choose from 35 dive sites, 5-30 minutes away, all in waters averaging 80 degree or better with 80-100 feet visibility. Eleven custom dive boats are available to leave three times daily for reef, wall, wreck dives and two weekly night dives. Outer island excursion day trips are also available.

For non-divers, there are dolphin encounters and educational demonstrations, snorkel trips, horseback riding, kayaking and loafing on the beach.

Beyond the world-class dive sites, Roatan has much to offer above the surface of the ocean. Canopy tours rush visitors through the treetops, swaying over the island peaks, and down the steep slopes to Tabyana Beach. If high altitude and high speed are too much of a rush, there are horses to ride on the beaches, kayaks to paddle around its shores, fish to be caught on the flats and dolphins to play with in the surf. Visitors can also arrange to hike in a cloud forest at Pico Bonito National Park.

Anthony's Key Resort has been family-owned and operated for 30 years with the key philosophy being the customer comes first. The PADI Gold Palm 5-Star Instructor Development Center has the best diving fleet in the Caribbean and an on-site medical facility, including a hyperbaric chamber. The renowned all-inclusive resort offers the least expensive diver training and certification in the Caribbean.

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