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- SITE GUIDE
- READER INFORMATION
- EVENTS AFLOAT
- CRUISE BOOKS & TRAVEL GEAR
- DOWNLOADABLE PHOTOS
- FEEDBACK
- LINKS
- CONTACT US
- HOME

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Banana Coast Landing: New Port Slated for Honduras

**Banana Coast Landing:  
Moving Ahead with New Honduran Cruise Port**



*(Christopher Columbus landed at the Bay of Trujillo on his fourth and final voyage to the New World. By 2012, cruise ships may bring cruisers to this mainland Honduras destination.)*

By Susan J. Young

If strolling through a banana grove, enjoying banana ice cream, watching a banana boat carry Dole fruit to a commercial port dock, or sipping on a banana pina colada sound fun, cruisers will soon enjoy a cruise destination that celebrates those "banana-ana" activities and more.

By 2012, cruise ships departing southern U.S. ports will have a new port of call -- Banana Coast Landing at Trujillo, Honduras.

In learning about the potential for this new port at Cruise Shipping Miami a few weeks ago, we were excited to hear about what's planned for the \$20 million project, the first major cruise port on the Honduran mainland.

**Banana Coast Draws**

When completed, Banana Coast Landing in Trujillo will include a dock that can accommodate two post-Panamax ships (ships too large to fit through the Panama Canal).

While no cruise line has committed as yet to visiting Banana Coast Landing, the planned port has enticing potential that likely will draw consideration from major cruise lines.

First, the port setting is spectacular, say the developers. After looking at photos of Trujillo and its seaside location online, we'd have to agree.

A curved bay with white sandy beach gives way to the Colonial port city, which, in turn, lies in the shadow of a 4,052-foot-high mountain.

Second, Trujillo drips with history. Explorer Christopher Columbus landed at this spot in 1502 on his fourth and final voyage to the New World.

Spanish conquistadors followed and settled the area in 1525. Later, the city was an



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important port for shipping silver and gold mined in the interior of the Honduras.



Top Colonial draws are the Santa Barbara Fort (*shown in the photo above\**) and cannons overlooking the Bay of Trujillo; approximately 50 percent of the original fortress survives for visitors to explore.

Remote Trujillo was a favorite target of pirates. Those visiting the city will hear tales of buccaneers and pirates.

In fact, William Walker, considered the last of the pirate adventurers, was captured in the city.

He was shot by a firing squad in 1860 and is buried in a local cemetery, which also is the final resting place for some members of the Dole family. The cemetery is open for touring.



(Trujillo is a Colonial-era city with picturesque city squares, such as the one shown above. \*)

Other city sites that cruisers may wish to visit?

Many buildings in town were built by the French or Spanish and have Colonial era architecture. Cruisers might explore historic churches as well as the former embassy consulate buildings of France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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(Shown above, San Juan Baptista is one of Trujillo's historic churches. \*

To get a sense of Trujillo as a sleepy backwater city of the late 1800s, read a copy of O'Henry's "Cabbages and Kings."

The author, whose real name was William Sydney Porter, was on the run from embezzlement charges in Texas in 1896 and ended up in both Trujillo and Roatan. Settings in the book reflect his stay in Honduras.

While the city boasts a colorful history, it's in need of sprucing up, say developers. But it appears the Honduran government has moved the Trujillo project to a fast track.

"Development of a new cruise destination at Trujillo has been an ambition for many years," said Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo, president of Honduras, in a press release. "The government of Honduras plans to support the project with investment to help get one of our fantastic colonial cities ready for cruise tourism."

**Cultural Snapshot**

The port project will include a new "transportation hub" so motorcoaches, vans and cars have a spot to pick up cruisers interested in shore trips.

Nature lovers will find a wealth of options. The region is filled with hot springs, waterfalls, caves and jungles.



Birders will flock to the close-by Guaimoreto Lagoon Nature Reserve – a lovely birding area.

Snorkeling and scuba diving will allow cruisers to view and, in some cases, interact with the local marine life -- as with the girl and the starfish at left. \*

Cruise passengers might also meet and learn about the culture of native Garifuna, Miskito and Pech residents, some living in coastal fishing villages.

But for those who simply want to kick back and relax, the beach is at the end of the cruise pier. It's a very convenient option for families.

In addition, for those cruisers interested in a "snapshot" of Honduran culture and life, Banana Coast Landing also will have a new cultural park similar to the type of experience cruisers now encounter at Discover Mexico on Cozumel.

The Banana Coast Landing cultural park will include four areas that focus on heritage, nature, rivers and wildlife.

Here cruisers will view native plants, birds and wildlife (such as the ocelot shown at right\*), as well as farm animals, a banana grove, and cultural demonstrations.

And, of course, the new port will give shopaholics a chance to browse and buy in 50,000-square-feet of new retail space.

**Port Developers**



- > Caribbean Ports: Playa del Carmen/Cozumel, Mexico
- > Caribbean Ports: St. Lucia
- > Caribbean Ports: Cartagena/Santa Marta, Colombia
- > Panama Canal



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The Banana Coast Landing project is being moved forward via Grande Trujillo Autoridad, a partnership between the city, an investment group and strategic consultant Global Destinations Development of Miami.



Beyond the cruise port, the developer is constructing a new residential area with private homes. Work has already begun on that portion of the project.

When will the new cruise facilities begin to welcome large ships? It looks as though 2012 will be the earliest that large ships will potentially call at Trujillo.

But developers hope to attract some smaller lines in 2011, thus gaining some experience in handling cruisers – but on a smaller scale. Stay tuned for more details on timing!

### For More Information

Want to learn a bit more about the history, culture and sights of Trujillo. Here are a few resources we discovered online:

[Honduras Institute of Tourism](#) (official government site for tourism):

[Trujillo, Honduras Information](#)

[Travel Guide of Honduras](#)

[Trujillo Honduras Pages](#)

[Frommers - Trujillo information](#)

[Honduras.com](#)



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