



## An Afro-Caribbean “World Heritage Culture”

I KNEW VERY LITTLE about the Garifuna people, history, or culture before traveling to Honduras. This Afro-Caribbean culture and its people can be found along the northern coast of Honduras and in the Honduran Bay Islands in the Caribbean Sea. A cultural blend of African music, dance, and tradition, combine with Caribbean industry, cuisine, and lifestyle, to create what the United Nations has classified as a “World Heritage Culture.”

Much of my time in Honduras was spent along the northern coast, as well as in the Cayos Cochinos, or Hog Islands. One island in this chain, Chachuate, was of particular interest as a permanent Garifuna fishing village located approximately 30 kilometers off the coast of the mainland. Fishing is the traditional industry for the Garifuna, although tourism is becoming a major source of income as well. Even the children on Chachuate were aware of the emerging tourism trade, and were fast to sell their hand-made shell jewelry to tourists.

Today poor education and limited health-care are challenges faced by the Garifuna. Yet this is a population rich in culture and identity, warm and hospitable regardless of the poverty in which they live. My experience among the Garifuna was raw and uncensored, and I continue to reflect on my time in Honduras. Although sacred, cultural preservation is increasingly volatile in an ever-globalizing world.

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**YOU'RE INVITED!** We invite you to submit your photos along with a brief (approximately 200 words) description of why these images are important in your understanding of a person, place, idea, or incident from your experiences in international education. The photos could be of a simple moment on your home campus involving international students, a major event in an exotic location, or anything in between. The editors of *IE* will run selections on this page throughout the year. Please contact us for submission details at [elainal@nafsa.org](mailto:elainal@nafsa.org).