

The Caribbean: Providence Island Heritage Archaeology

Program Information

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

What are the average weather conditions during the time of the field school? (average temperature, humidity levels, amount of rain, wind, variation between day and night, etc.)

Archaeological fieldwork involves physical work outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different from those you experience in your home, dorms, or college town. This program operates in a typical tropical Caribbean environment and archaeology requires a lot of outside manual labor, so remember to drink water frequently and pace yourself. During the day, temperatures in the shade fluctuate between 75°-80° F. However, under the sun they may reach 80°-90° with high humidity. You should plan to dress accordingly, wear a wide-brimmed hat, and use sunscreen of at least 50 SPF. Additionally, you should bring a large water bottle (or have multiple, smaller bottles) so that you always have at least 48 ounces of water with you when you are going to be outside doing fieldwork.

Please describe the site(s) where the students will work, for example, outside and/or inside; in a city, town or rural area; shady or sunny, etc.

Students will be working at a variety of sites during the day, depending where they are assigned; from outdoors in full sun, to shady outdoor sites, to outside porches (artifact identification and ethnography), to inside peoples' homes. The island is very small so sites would generally be considered semi-rural and/or small town commercial and residential areas.

Are there special features of the program site, for example, nearby important cultural areas, ambiance or scenery, interaction with staff, access to unique infrastructure, techniques or objects?

Students will take a boat tour around the islands and also attend cultural events at different sites; e.g. beaches, in-town, at personal properties/homes, etc. The islands are very small, so the whole of this location is considered a cultural space. It is a Caribbean island so it is hard to find a place without incredible ambiance and sea and mountain views! Students will interact with staff throughout each day, be trained in various archaeological, survey, and ethnographic techniques, and handle a variety of artifacts.

Will there be other people onsite with the field school or working in the same area? For example, other researchers, staff, or community volunteers?

The field school has a staff of between 4 and 6 people. One main director, 2 co-directors, and 1-3 specialists (e.g. linguists, filmmakers, survey specialists), who will be on site for all or part of the field research season and will assist in data collection and training students in their particular specialties.

What does an average week look like (working times, lecture/discussion times, free time, weekends)?

Also see the course syllabus for a day to day breakdown of working times, lecture discussion times, free time, and weekends

During most weekday mornings and afternoons, student and faculty teams will perform variable types of exploratory survey and excavate artifacts from various sites around the Islands, work in the Project field laboratory processing artifacts (washing, photographing, and analysis), and conduct ethnographic interviews with Native Raizal. Monday-Thursday we will be working for around 4 hours in the mornings and around 4 hours in the afternoons (after a lunch/rest period) with faculty lectures and Raizal guest speakers in the early evenings prior to being off for dinner and free time.

On the weekends, students have a lot of time off (all day on most Fridays and 1/2 days on Saturdays and Sundays) to explore the Islands and take part in leisure activities like hiking, snorkeling, SCUBA, horseback riding, and going to public events like concerts and festivals.

What are the options for students to access money? Are there ATMs nearby? Should students plan to bring a certain amount of cash?

While not all establishments on Providence Island take credit or debit cards (so you should always be ready to pay in cash), most do, including Posada Enilda where we will be staying. Credit cards and debit cards need to have a chip, but other than the chip requirement, you should have no issues paying for purchases or getting cash out of an ATM. Make sure to let your bank or credit card company know that you will be traveling to Colombia before you leave.

PLEASE NOTE: There are only two ATMs on the Islands (for close to 6,000 people), which frequently run out of money, so it would be prudent to arrive with enough Colombian cash for 1 or 2 weeks of personal spending. You can request Colombian currency from your bank prior to leaving or most international airports have a currency exchange you can utilize as well. Make sure to check your airport's website to determine if you can exchange currency at the airport.

ACTIVITY LEVEL & ACCESSIBILITY

Please provide information about the physical requirements of the program.

Archaeology involves moderately strenuous activities over 4-5 hours at a time. For example, digging, lifting, bending, kneeling, crouching, walking on uneven terrain for up to three miles (although most times you would not be traversing more than a mile), and carrying a variety of objects weighing between 10-50 pounds for up to four hours at a time.

Please comment how accessible your site is for people with mobility challenges. Would someone using a wheelchair be able to participate? Someone who uses crutches or other assistive walking devices?

While walking with a cane or crutches is feasible on the islands, it is a very small, rural location that does not have much assistive infrastructure other than governmental sites and clinics, so wheel-chair access is, unfortunately, largely unavailable.

PROGRAM COUNTRY & CULTURAL INFORMATION

What do you love about the country and area you work in? What do you think students will be most excited to discover?

The islands' natural landscapes are captivating...from its crystal-clear turquoise waters and lush green hills to its vibrant coral reefs teeming with marine life. Beyond its stunning landscapes, it is impossible not to appreciate the Islands' deep historical roots, shaped by the Raizal people whose cultural heritage is woven into every aspect of life that we, as visitors, are able to experience through Native traditions like sampling local cuisine, viewing unique vernacular architecture, and participating in traditional leisure and celebratory activities, such as horse and cat-boat racing at the beach and attending a Rondón; an all-day meal event where we take part in everything from food preparation and cooking, to visiting with our resident collaborators, to eating the delicious fruits of our labor in the afternoon!. The strong sense of Raizal community and pride in their heritage make the Islands not just a place to study and do research, but a place of inspiration and deep personal connection.

How large is the community where students will be staying? Will students have opportunities to interact casually with local residents? Please describe.

The Islands are home to a close-knit, vibrant community of approximately 5,800 people, offering students countless opportunities for meaningful interactions with local residents. Whether through casual conversations while shopping in neighborhood stores, enjoying everything from street food to fine dining at local eateries, or simply relaxing on the beach alongside islanders, students will find themselves immersed in daily life. During our fieldwork, community members often stop by to observe and engage with our work, sparking insightful exchanges about history, heritage, and archaeology. The warmth and hospitality of the Raizal people create an inviting atmosphere where students can foster genuine connections that enrich both research and personal experiences.

Primary languages spoken by people in the area:

Three main languages are spoken on the Islands: English, Spanish, and English Criol. While having some knowledge of Spanish is useful because there are Native Raizal who mostly speak only Spanish and some signage is in Spanish, you will be able to communicate easily with anyone on-site using English only.

Are there cultural aspects that students should be aware of before they come, particularly behaviors that could be offensive or misinterpreted (for example, eye contact, dress, gestures)?

Please also see the PROGRAM ETIQUETTE & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY and STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT sections in the course syllabus

Raizal culture is not essentially different from any other...be kind and ask nicely if you need something, clean up after yourself, keep the noise down after 10:00pm, and be exceptionally nice to elders! But, one note of importance...while bathing suits are acceptable at the beach, students should not wear that type of clothing for shopping or attending cultural or formal events. Dressing temperature-appropriate is fine, but leave the bathing suits for the beach!

What cultural enrichment opportunities are students likely to have outside of the program? For example, are there museums, parks, coffee shops in the area, or will there be festivals or events nearby during the program period?

Both outside of the program and as part of the program, students will have abundant opportunities for cultural enrichment on the Islands, where the Raizal community actively preserves and celebrates its unique heritage. Beyond our fieldwork, students can explore historical sites that highlight the Islands' colonial past, maritime history, and Afro-Caribbean roots. The Islands' vibrant culinary scene offers another layer of cultural immersion, from savoring traditional Raizal dishes at family-run eateries to engaging with local vendors at small markets. Leisure activities such as beachside horse racing, a beloved community tradition, provide insight into the Islands' social life. Additionally, students will have the chance to experience local festivals featuring music, dance, and storytelling that reflect Raizal language, dance, art, and multi-cultural influences. The warm and welcoming nature of the Raizal people ensures that cultural exchange happens organically, whether through casual conversations at a café or community gatherings that invite participation in Island traditions.

Will students have opportunities to explore other areas of the country? If so, what options are available to them (such as available transportation or unscheduled time for exploration).

While students may plan to travel to other sites or countries before or after the program (and many do!), we will not be traveling as a group during the field school to any sites off of the Islands.

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

Please describe student accommodations, including the type of accommodation (tent, hostel, hotel, etc.) and a brief description of the accommodation itself, including number of students to a room or tent, access to toilets and showers, and common areas.

Students and faculty will be housed at Posada Enilda Bed and Breakfast (www.hotelposadaenilda.com) located on the southwest of the Island in an area called Bottom House. Students do not need to reserve their own rooms; this will already be taken care of before you arrive. Posada Enilda is a fully modern facility with comfortable outdoor seating areas, shared dining room, and other amenities, such as air-conditioning, in-room safes, and personal refrigerators, and is extremely comfortable. The husband-and-wife owners are excited about hosting the students and we have enjoyed our stays in past years, immensely. Security cameras monitor the grounds and the main gate is locked at night. Old Providence is a safe island, with little serious crime.



Please describe how/how often students can do laundry.

Laundry services are also offered at the Posada for a small fee per load; bring your laundry bag to the kitchen in the morning and your clothes will be back within 2-3 days.

How are room assignments made? If rooms are assigned according to gender, how will you assign rooms for non-binary, trans and queer students?

Rooms are assigned upon your arrival, and you will be randomly assigned one to two roommates; but you may absolutely switch roommates, if needed. You will want to be in a room with someone who has similar sleep/wake patterns and downtime activities (do you like to nap or read, or do you like to talk/listen to music/hang out, etc?). Take the first day to get to know your colleagues, and then work out room groupings that will best suit your individual (and thus, the group's) needs.

Rooms are cleaned by the Posada staff three times a week, but students are required to take steps to ensure proper daily cleaning such as wiping down shared areas (e.g. bathroom, desks, door handles, etc.) and depositing trash in the outside receptacles each time you leave your room.

Are there options for single rooms? Would there be an additional charge (and approximate cost)?

Single rooms are available for an extra (approximately) \$10.00 USD per night which students will pay directly to Posada Enilda prior to checking out, but there are not an infinite number available so those will be assigned in the order in which they are requested. If this is something that you would like to do, please contact Dr. Mayfield as soon as possible so she can make those reservations for you.

Will the program provide meals? If not all meals, please specify which meals students will be responsible for, and what facilities are available for them to get groceries and prepare meals.

Room and board at the Posada includes breakfast, every day, and lunch, Monday through Saturday, which will be served in the dining area at Posada Enilda. *Dinners (and lunches on Sundays) are not provided by the Program*, but there are restaurants accessible via walking or taxi, and food can be ordered and delivered to the Posada. Additionally, grocery stores are available on the Island where students can purchase food; each room has a refrigerator where meal and snack supplies can be stored.

The Project also provides a 'camp' kitchen (e.g. griddle, pots/pans, plates/cups/bowls/silverware etc. that students can use for cooking and eating) and the kitchen at the Posada can be utilized for cooking in the evenings students and faculty, as long as things are kept clean and any supplies used are washed and put back where they were found. Food borne illness will be minimized by drinking only bottled water, which will be provided at the Posada so students can fill their bottles multiple times every day. The owners of the Posada can meet most dietary needs (vegetarians, vegans, and lactose intolerant).

Please describe typical meals that are offered by the program.

Meals served at Posada Enilda (breakfast every day and lunches every day, except for Sundays) are standard fare with a Raizal flair. Students have breakfast choices ranging from fried or scrambled eggs

and toast to oatmeal to breakfast sandwiches. Lunches are the same for everyone -other than for those who have requested vegetarian (dairy ok) or vegan (no dairy)- and include meat, starch, and vegetable components (e.g. hamburger, french fries, and small salad; spaghetti with ground beef; fried chicken with beans & rice and fried plantains; fish with fried breadfruit and cabbage salad; etc.).

VISA AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Indicate the visa requirements, if any, for US citizens. If there is a visa requirement, what type of visa should students apply for?

All U.S. citizens who do not also hold Colombian citizenship must present a valid U.S. passport to enter and depart Colombia. U.S. citizens traveling to Colombia do not need a Colombian visa for a tourist stay of 90 days or less. Citizens of countries other than the United States should check the embassy website page in their home country for specific visa requirements.

Travelers entering Colombia are sometimes asked to present evidence of return or onward travel, usually in the form of a plane ticket. The length of stay granted to travelers is determined by the Colombian immigration officer at the point of entry and will be stamped in your passport. Before the visa expires, travelers may request an extension of up to 90 days.

All persons entering Colombia are assessed a fee of around USD \$40 or its equivalent in Colombian Pesos (COP) in addition to the airfare or boat fare. Where this fee is collected may vary based on the students' point of entry into the country. Students are not assessed this fee when leaving Colombia.

If visa or permit requirements are coordinated by the project director (for example, a research permit), please describe the process, including what documents students will need to provide and deadlines.

The program does not coordinate student visa requirements, but does hold a Colombian research and excavation permit under Dr. Mayfield's name with the Colombian Archaeological Institute (ICANH); a copy of which all program faculty have a copy of at all times. However, students do not need a copy of the permit to enter the country.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Students can fly through Miami, United States; Bogotá, Colombia; or Panama City, Panama. We recommend Panama City because the flights are generally less expensive than going through Miami or Bogotá.

From either Miami, Bogotá, or Panama City students will need to fly to San Andrés Island (Gustavo Rojas Pinilla International Airport - ADZ) in Colombia.

Getting to this point is very straightforward and can be booked through any of the major travel websites.

Students can then either fly to El Embrujo Airport (PVA) or take a boat from San Andrés Island to Providence Island.

- AIR: SATENA (www.satena.com) is the only airline that currently flies to Providence Island; you can either book through their website or on KAYAK.
 - PRO TIP!! Note that you should use the Satena website during what would normally be ‘business hours’ because the website frequently stops working during non-business hours and may not complete your transaction.
- BOAT: Conocemos Navegando (<https://en.conocemosnavegando.com/home>) - sails early in the morning from San Andrés three times a week: Mon, Wed, and Fri. The catamaran departs San Andrés at 8:00am and travel time is ~3.5 hours; return trips to San Andrés depart at 2:30pm.
 - Note that you reserve your seat on the boat through their website and will receive an email confirmation, but you pay once you arrive at the dock, just prior to boarding the boat.
 - PRO TIP!! If you get seasick easily, you should not take the boat. The trip is through open seas (for 3.5 to 5.5 hours) and can be extremely rough, especially if you have never been on a seagoing vessel before.

If students need to spend the night on San Andrés we recommend the Hotel Casablanca (www.hotelcasablancasanandres.com), which is located on the beach, but there are many options available at a variety of price points on San Andrés, which can be researched online.

If there are other ways students can get to the program, please describe.

No, the options above are the only ways to access the site.

Where will you meet students? If not at a primary arrival point, like an airport, how should students get to the meeting point?

Program staff will meet students either at the Old Providence Island airport or catamaran seaport as long as they have sent their arrival information to Dr. Mayfield. If we don't know when you are arriving, we won't know when to pick you up :) If this happens, you can grab a taxi at the airport (right outside the door) to Enilda Posada.

If you miss your connection, your flight is delayed, or you are held at the border for health reasons, please call or text Dr. Mayfield (phone/whatsapp 1-312-925-9474) and Posada Enilda as a backup (phone/whatsapp +57 320 8554912) immediately.

If the field site is not close to student accommodations, how will students get there? How long does it take?

The Islands are very small (8.5 sq. miles) so nothing is more than 20 minutes away, although at some sites, group members will need to hike to specific sites from where we park our vehicles, but not more than a few miles at most and more likely less than a mile.

Once arriving on the Islands, all local transportation to and from sites or field school related activities will be provided via program vehicles, including rides to and from the port or airport.

During leisure/down time, students can rent various types of transportation from taxis, to bikes, to motorized vehicles. Students are also given opportunities to go into town with faculty or staff, so they can shop and/or pick up supplies, etc.

Are there any other aspects of the program, site, or location you want students to be aware of before they arrive?

There are some plants that should be avoided, but we will go over those types of specifics during pre-field and arrival orientations.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Required

- personal medication/s (**TAKE WITH YOU ON THE PLANE in case your checked luggage gets lost**)
- work/hiking boots or shoes, preferably with a reinforced toe and anti-slip tread
- raingear (for yourself and for your equipment/tech – it will rain on and off frequently, so be prepared)
- wet shoes (can be worn in damp and beach environments/also for hiking) – NOT just flip flops (something more substantial)
- hat with brim (for rain and sun)
- sunglasses
- long-sleeved shirt (loose fitting)
- swim wear & beach towel (& snorkel gear if you would like!)
- heavy-duty work gloves
- water bottle (bring a large water bottle or a few small ones) – we will have water to fill up your bottles at the Posada and will take some extra water into the field when possible, but you should plan on carrying enough water for about 5 hours outside on any given day. (**you will not be able to find a good water bottle on the Islands, please purchase prior to arriving on site**)
- Marshalltown pointing trowel (4" or 5") (**you will not be able to get a trowel on the Islands, please purchase prior to arriving on site**)
- roll of duct tape (a smaller roll to have whenever you have your backpack with you, which can be used in a variety of situations – you will be glad you have it!)
- sun protection
- insect repellent
- flashlight
- compass (preferably with adjustable declination)
- calculator (stand alone or phone app)
- field backpack (to store your stuff while in the field) (**PRO TIP!! Bring a brightly colored bag so it does not match the ground cover or they can be easy to misplace!**)

- backpack cover (a garbage bag will do)
- extra money for incidentals (**note that you cannot use United States currency on the Islands and you will not be able to find someone to exchange it for you**)
- at least one ‘nicer’ outfit for attending cultural events or more formal dinners...you don’t need anything super fancy, just something that you would not wear to do fieldwork or go to the beach.

Recommended

- get an international phone plan or plan to buy a Colombian SIM card
 - the internet on the Islands can be very slow and many times does not work at all, so having a cell phone-based voice and data plan, or local SIM card, allows for better and more consistent connectivity
- 3-to-2 prong electrical outlet adapters & a surge protector/power strip to attach to it (outlets in the Caribbean are, many times, 2-prong and prone to surges)
- ice tray for in-room refrigerator (not a necessity, but you will be glad you have it)
- toilet paper (we will have access to public bathrooms while in the field, but most of them do not stock toilet paper – you can purchase toilet paper on the Islands and don’t need to carry it from home)
- feminine products (tampons are especially difficult to locate on the Islands)
- drink/electrolyte mix to add to your water bottle during fieldwork

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100043304577122>

YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/@osciapararchaeology4350>

ACADEMIA.EDU: <https://usc.academia.edu/TracieDMayfieldPhD>