



Nicaragua

## Grand and Gracious NICARAGUA



**Date** Mar 30-Apr 9, 2017  
**Duration** 11 days  
**Comfort Level** ●●○○○  
**Activity Level** ●○○○○  
**Group Size** 2

**Best Time To Visit**

J F M A M J J A S O N D

## nature, history, culture and cuisine of highlands, islands and haciendas

Enjoy an in-depth exploration of the most distinctive and memorable features of Nicaragua from rich coffee country and iconic volcanoes to graceful Granada, Las Isletas and Lago Nicaragua. This is an exciting time to visit Nicaragua. You will enjoy a pervasive, natural, quiet civility. Very friendly locals and your hosts are delighted and proud that visitors are discovering Nicaragua's great natural features and cultural harmony. Some people say little-visited, long-overlooked Nicaragua is like Costa Rica of 30 years ago (only better)! There is a growing commitment to preservation of the country's diverse and rich natural environments, and an eco-sensibility that is manifesting itself accommodations, cultural projects and in other fields. While many come for the nature and the outdoor recreation, perhaps one of the best kept secrets is the Nicaraguans' love of poetry, pottery and painting. Your accommodations are comfortable, intimate, and deeply-imbedded in the nature and culture of your locations. Inviting, safe and friendly paths lead you deep into a welcoming destination.

## day 1 - thu mar 30 - managua arrival

Arrive at the international airport in Managua, where you will be met by your guide and transferred to your convenient wi-fi equipped hotel. (Aeromexico 650 arriving at 11:55 am) Rest of the afternoon is at leisure.

**Meals:** None

**Lodging:** Camino Real



*Nicaragua's national bird is the turquoise-browed mot mot*

## day 2 - fri mar 31 - managua / leon

North of Managua is the colonial city of Leon. Known for cultural and historical sites, enjoy a nice walking tour this afternoon. With an authentic atmosphere, you'll be able to easily connect with the locals as you explore the narrow colonial streets and architecture, art galleries, museums, restaurants and cafés.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Lodging:** Hotel El Convento

## day 3 - sat apr 1 - juan venado island nature reserve

Juan Venado Natural Reserve is an impressive mangrove sanctuary, and a well kept secret among tourists. Situated 25 minutes from the Colonial city of Leon this area is well-known as a vital coastal wetland region and includes known turtle nesting grounds, a bird nesting region and a nature rich region of the Nicaragua. Separating the coast from the island is an ecologically important mangrove forest or swamp. This marvelous biological zone provides the ideal home for an abundance of animal life - particularly marine creatures. The edge of the Juan Venado Island that faces into the Pacific Ocean possesses a fine estuary and is also a vital nesting site for Olive Ridley sea turtles. These amazing reptiles come to the small island every year between August and December to lay their eggs. The estuary of Isla Juan Venado is itself home to a diversity of organisms including water birds, Caymans, crocodiles, iguanas, crustaceans and more. Bird watching enthusiasts will find the island a real treat as it is home to 106 bird species. Isla Juan Venado Nature Reserve has no people residing in it, so you are guaranteed complete peace and tranquility in beautiful natural surroundings. We will transfer you from your hotel in León to the Pacific bay of Las Peñitas where you will board a motorboat towards the island. Lined with mangrove forest between the island and coast, our captain will find the perfect route through the curvy waterway to the secluded Pacific beach side of the island. Here we will take you for a walk and if you like, have a refreshing dive into the Pacific Ocean (so don't forget your

swimming suit!).

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Lodging:** Hotel El Convento

#### day 4 - sun apr 2 - matagalpa

After breakfast, you will head for the cool hills of Matagalpa. Matagalpa was once an indigenous village that was referred to as "the pearl of the north." Situated in a narrow valley in the green mountainous north of Nicaragua, it forms the heart of the Nicaraguan coffee production and has a fresh climate that most Nicaraguans characterize as "cold."

The Spaniards arrived in Matagalpa in 1528 in search of a water passage to the Caribbean Sea. In 1840, gold was discovered in the region, attracting Spaniards, Mestizos, Germans, Americans, and British to the region.

The city of Matagalpa and the surrounding area has always played a significant role in Nicaraguan history, but above all, the region has a lot to offer those who love being in touch with nature, enjoying vast landscapes, and spectacular flora and fauna. You can expect beautiful lodges, hiking and nature, organic and fair trade coffee farms, and genuine interaction with local communities.

You will be the guest on a model coffee farm which also serves as a beautiful ecolodge.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Lodging:** Hotel Selva Negra

#### day 5 - mon apr 3 - peñas blancas massif

You visit the Massif Peñas Blancas today, located at the border between the provinces of Matagalpa and Jinotega, and part of Central America's largest reserve, Bosawas. You will encounter crystal clear rivers, water wells, large and small waterfalls, giant trees, and a wide variety of tropical plants as you make your way through the reserve, while the fog that seems to be everpresent adds mystery to this magical place. The reserve is inhabited by pumas, jaguars, ocelots, wild boars, deer, paca's, sloths, monkeys and birds such as hummingbirds, wranglers and the rare resplendant quetzals.



*Walk the green hills of coffee country*

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Lodging:** Hotel Selva Negra

#### day 6 - tue apr 4 - el chile village

Following breakfast, you will transfer to the indigenous community of El Chile for a tour of the village. El Chile is widely known for its woven crafts the local women produce, including bags, purses and backpacks. After enjoying a little workshop and having lunch with a local family, hike up the El Chile hill for an impressive

panoramic view of the surrounding area.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Lodging:** Hotel Selva Negra

### day 7 - wed apr 5 - matagalpa / masaya volcano / granada

Today you will transfer to Nicaragua's most beautiful city, Granada. Along the way, stop at the Masaya Volcano, located in Nicaragua's first and largest national park. The Masaya Volcano is a shallow shield volcano composed of basaltic lavas and tephra. It is comprised of material that is over 2,500 years old. Also visit the artisan's market.

Continue on to Granada. Granada was founded in 1524 and is believed to be the second oldest city established in mainland Latin America by the Spanish conquest. The city is characterized by its brightly-colored Spanish-colonial architecture.



*Masaya Volcano*

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Lodging:** Hotel Darío

### day 8 - thu apr 6 - granada

After breakfast, your guide introduces you to Granada's architecturally charming and colorful city center, its lakeshore on Lago Nicaragua, and the old town with fortress and ancient city walls. It's hard to imagine a lovelier, more gracious, town. Tour partly by horse-drawn carriage and partly on foot. (The carriages are not an invention to charm tourists, but reflect a traditional mode of transportation in rural Nicaragua.) Visit San Francisco Church and convent, built in 1529, now museums with an impressive collection of pre-Columbian art. At Merced Church, you will have the opportunity to climb to the top of the bell tower and take in spectacular views of the city, Lake Nicaragua, and the Mombacho Volcano.



*Granada offers artistic charm and rich history.*

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Lodging:** Hotel Darío

### day 9 - fri apr 7 - mombacho volcano

Today you'll do some hiking at Mombacho. Situated in a beautiful cloud forest and home to a wide variety of vegetation and wildlife, a visit to Mombacho Volcano is a great way for any nature lover to spend the day. Drive to the top (1150 meters) of the volcano in a 4x4 vehicle. After a quick trip to the scientific station explore this impressive volcano on a guided walk. Wind through the Puma Trail, on one of the most beautiful and challenging hikes of Mombacho Volcano. Rest of the afternoon at leisure.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Lodging:** Hotel Darío

## day 10 - sat apr 8 - las isletas / jicaro island

Today travel by motor launch on Lake Nicaragua through the archipelago known as Las Isletas to your unique small ecolodge. The 365 small volcanic islands, located only 3 kilometers from Granada, were created when Volcano Mombacho erupted approximately 1.5 million years ago. Many of the islands are home to just one or two families who make their living from fishing. Monkey Island is a sanctuary for monkeys previously held as pets but now released back into the wild.

Jicaro Island Ecolodge holds itself to the highest standards of environmental responsibility and also to impeccable standards for client service. The nine guest rooms are set into the landscape with minimum disruption. Private balconies, as well as verandas designed as common space, are perfect for watching the waterbirds, the human activity on the lake, and the magnificent sunsets. Food is wonderfully prepared with locally available ingredients. Guests and staff alike feel privileged to be in this remarkable place.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Lodging:** Jicaro Island Ecolodge



*Comfortable rooms with verandas are up in the treetops, overlooking the lake.*

## day 11 - sun apr 9 - granada / onward

Depart Jicaro by boat. Continue by boat to Granada to transfer to the airport for your homeward flight. (Aeromexico 651 departing Managua at 11:55 am)

**Meals:** Breakfast

*Anticipated itinerary; actual route may vary.*



*The view of Las Isletas from Jicaro*



Below is a summary of our complete **Trip Terms & Conditions**, which explains each of the items below in more detail.

#### **Expenses covered**

Normally, our stated land costs include the cost of all guides, leaders, permits obtained after arrival, lodging accommodations, food and entry fees as specified, and all surface transportation associated with the planned itinerary. We do our best to avoid increasing prices after receipt of your deposit, but, rarely, factors beyond our control might require us to change our prices without prior notice, even after you have signed up.

#### **Expenses not covered**

Costs not included in the price may include: meals not indicated as included in itineraries; meals prior to arrival in starting cities; transfers, if not arriving or departing on the scheduled group flights; soft drinks, bottled water, and alcoholic beverages; medical expenses, costs of hospitalization, or evacuation from remote areas; laundry; airport departure taxes not included on your airline ticket; accommodations en route to starting cities; visas; airfares; gratuities; and insurance.

#### **Pricing and Payment**

For most group departures, the booking deposit is \$500 per person per trip, though for some trips it may be more, as noted in the trip description. The minimum booking deposit requirement for custom trips is \$800 per person, and this deposit is non-refundable. A trip-planning fee of \$250 per itinerary is also charged to cover costs of preparing itinerary proposals for custom trips. This fee is credited to the cost of the trip, but is nonrefundable if you do not take the trip. Custom travel during holiday seasons may require a deposit prior to trip confirmation.

For both group departures and custom trips, a second deposit of \$1,000 per person is due 120 days prior to departure or at the time of booking for reservations made fewer than 120 days before departure. The balance as shown on your invoice is due 60 days prior to departure regardless of whether extensions or other arrangements are pending. Late payments may jeopardize confirmation of your itinerary and in some cases may result in additional fees. If we have not received final payment 30 days prior to departure your reservation may be canceled and subject to our Cancellation & Refund Policy stated in the complete **Terms & Conditions**.

We accept payments by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or check drawn on a U.S. bank account. Payment for airfare is required at the time of ticketing. Discounts that may be available for some trips are not available toward bookings made through travel agencies.?

#### **Airfare**

We can help you secure air travel arrangements to correspond with land travel booked through Journeys International. We work with an airfare consolidator to assist in booking the flights that suit your needs. If you decide to make your own flight arrangements, you must provide Journeys International with a complete copy of your itinerary showing departure and arrival flights and times. You should plan to arrange your own air travel if you are using mileage credit or originating outside North America, but please be in touch with our office before you finalize ticketing so that we can help you to coordinate the correct arrival and departure dates and times.

#### **Insurance**

When you make your application, we strongly recommend the purchase of comprehensive **travel insurance** in case of emergency situations. Please contact us for a recommended policy.



#### **Itinerary Change Fee**

There will be a \$40 fee for changes once an itinerary has been confirmed and approved. Additional cancellation penalties or change fees may apply as per our terms and conditions. The passenger is responsible for such fees.

## WHY Journeys?

**We are quite simply the best.** No other company matches our experience, breadth, flexibility and personal service. Our reputation is impeccable.

**We have been an acknowledged innovator in global adventure travel and ecotourism since 1978.** Our itineraries are original, and our trip content is thoughtful, intellectually ambitious, and as adventurous as you like. We are committed to the communities and environments we visit. Our Ecological Code of Ethics serves as a model for others.

**We have won the most prestigious awards in the industry.** Condé Nast selected us for their list of the world's Top Travel Specialists every year since 2003. This year, National Geographic Adventure named us one of the top ten global adventure tour operators.

**Our staff is professional and devoted.** The specialists in Ann Arbor and the guides in the field take pride in 100% client satisfaction. Many remain with us for decades. Journeys founders, Drs. Joan and Will Weber, are active in daily operations.

**We make your travel planning easy.** We offer you the ability to completely customize your trip, according to your interests and abilities. Our knowledgeable specialists are happy to help you select special inclusions and extensions. We'll make your air arrangements or you're free to do your own. We pay attention to detail, and we prepare you well for your trip. We respond promptly to your emails and, if you call us during our business hours, you will be greeted by a person and not a machine.

**We know our destinations well.** We will give you as honest and complete a picture of what you can expect as possible. We don't want to make an easy sale; we want to make an honest one. You will likely find that we under promise and over deliver.

**Our travelers come back again and again.** We have a sophisticated clientele with wide reaching travel goals. Many return to us for five, 10, or more trips.

**We love what we do, and we love sharing our passion with you.**

