

EXPLORE!



Family Active Nicaragua

15 days

Nicaragua - Trip code FNI

Family Active Nicaragua

From zip-wiring through tree-top canopies to climbing an active volcano, Nicaragua is a wonderful destination for a family adventure. We search for crocodiles in mangrove-lined forests, track monkeys in Chocoyero El Brujo National Park and kayak on Lake Nicaragua. We also visit a local kids charity, surf some waves and stay on a volcanic island before relaxing on the golden beaches of the Caribbean Sea.

Trip highlights

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**12 - 18**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Managua

We join the tour in Managua



Accommodation: Las Mercedes Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive to Leon via the Reserve Juan Venado; afternoon boat tour

Leaving Managua behind, we head first to Mirador Tiscapa, which overlooks a volcanic crater lake that is more than 10,000 years old. Before the revolution, the hill was home to the old presidential palace and it provides some superb views down across the city. We follow the Pacific coast to our lunch stop and continue on to the Natural Reserve Isla Juan Venado, located just to the south of the golden beaches of Las Peñitas. A boat trip takes us out to the island reserve, a haven for caymans, iguanas, crocodiles and birds. It is also a favoured nesting area for the Olive Ridley sea turtles, which come here between August and December each year to lay their eggs. We drive in the afternoon to the old colonial capital of Leon, which lies in the shadow of the Cordillera de los Maribios Mountains.



Accommodation: La Posada del Doctor (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 3 - Morning climb on an active volcano and then visit San Jacinto fumaroles

After breakfast this morning we climb the youngest volcano in Central America, the basal-tic cinder cone of Cerro Negro (Black Hill). Occupying part of the Cordillera de los Maribios mountain range to the east of the city, it rises to a height of 728 metres. We climb its gravelly slopes to the summit allowing views of the stunning panoramas across the surrounding landscapes. On the descent you can run, jump or roll down the sandy ash! Returning to León there will then be time for a short siesta, before visiting the Volcanic fumaroles at San Jacinto.



Accommodation: La Posada del Doctor (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive to Playa Los Cardones with afternoon surfing lesson

We will start this morning with a visit to CIMAC - an educational park where we can see the four ecosystems of Nicaragua. We follow this visit with a short tour of the city. Still considered the intellectual centre of Nicaragua, the old buildings, with their wrought iron balconies and the arched colonnades along with narrow streets, all give the city a certain elegant serenity that seems to be frozen in time. The city's huge cathedral is believed to be the largest in Central America and a climb up to its roof affords some spectacular views across the city and out towards the volcanoes in the distance. We also visit the entertaining and illuminating Museum of Legends and Traditions located in a once infamous prison, today the cells are occupied with mannequins that illustrate some 14 different myths and legends. After this we will continue to Playa Los Cardones. Arriving around midday we check into our lodge, after which the rest of the afternoon is free to enjoy some included surfing lessons with a qualified instructor. The area of water closest to the lodge is ideal for those with little or no experience of surfing and each lesson last about an hour, with children between 6 and 11 being given individual instruction.



Accommodation: Los Cardones Ecolodge (or similar)



Simple Lodge



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 5 - Visit a school in At Playa Los Cardones

After breakfast we pay a visit to a local school and meet the local children to learn how they live - education in Nicaragua is free, with elementary education also being compulsory, although it is difficult to enforce in the rural communities as many children have to work. Please note: this activity will not be possible during their school holidays, which run from the beginning of December until the end of January. Back at our lodge, we visit a turtle hatchery, where we may be lucky enough to watch a baby turtle being born. These shores are a haven for Olive Ridley turtles, who come here every year to nest along the Pacific coastline. The rest of the afternoon is free to hit the beach again, or perhaps enjoy some more surfing (optional).



Accommodation: Los Cardones Ecolodge (or similar)



Simple Lodge




Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner


DAY 6 - Drive to San Jorge, ferry to Ometepe Island

We head inland this morning towards the expansive shores of Lake Nicaragua and the island of Ometepe. We drive to the town of Rivas for lunch, we then continue the short distance to San Jorge, where we take the ferry across to the island. Ometepe is made up of two volcanoes connected by an isthmus - its name comes from the Nahuatl language and means 'two hills'. The perfect cone of the Concepción volcano soars from the depths of Lake Nicaragua to 1610m, only just dwarfing the neighbouring Maderas volcano at 1394m. On arrival to the island we transfer to Charco Verde for the next two nights. We take the time to stop off at some famous pre-Colombian petroglyphs that were left behind by the island's previous inhabitants countless centuries ago.



Accommodation: Hotel Charco Verde (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner


DAY 7 - On Ometepe Island - visit Charco Verde farm and swim

This morning we start our day with a short walk from Charco Verde around the Lagoon. On the walk we will hopefully get the opportunity to see some reserves bird life such as the great egret, cormorants, woodpeckers and night herons. Following this we will transfer to the foot of the Maderas volcano to Finca Magdalena, where we will have a brief stop at the famous pre-Colombian petroglyphs that were left behind by the island's previous inhabitants countless centuries ago a popular place known for its organic farming processes. Finca Magdalena, is home to the Cooperativa Carlos Díaz Cajina, an agricultural cooperative, which consists of 24 members and their families all living and working close by and one of the residence will show us how the local produce is made including organic coffee, beans and vegetables. After this visit we will head to Playa Santo Domingo where we will have lunch before heading to 'Ojo de Agua' a natural water pool where we can swim and relax for the rest of the afternoon.



Accommodation: Hotel Charco Verde (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner


DAY 8 - Drive to Granada via the Mombacho Volcano and a canopy tour on zip-wire


Heading back to the ferry port on the outskirts of San Jose del Sur, we cross back to the mainland this morning, from where we drive to the Mombacho Volcano, one of the most distinctive landmarks anywhere in the country. We drive to the top, snaking our way up a steep slope and past fields of coffee plants as we make our way up in to the cloud forest. The views from up here can be spectacular and we might even catch a glimpse of Granada and Las Isletas far below. After learning something about the unique flora and fauna of the cloud forest you have a chance to glide through the lush forest on a canopy tour, zipping through the trees on a wire harness as the base of the volcanic craters. After this adrenaline filled adventure we then journey north, towards the lovely city of Granada.



Accommodation: Paraiso Granada (or similar)

 Standard Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 9 - Discover Granada by horse cart and visit Masaya market plus see a volcano

Atmospheric Granada is a colonial gem, situated at the foot of Mombacho volcano on the north-west shore of Lake Nicaragua. Founded in 1524, it was the first colonial city in Nicaragua and its magnificent setting, set off by baroque and renaissance buildings, is a pure visual delight. We plan a city tour on foot this morning and by traditional horse carriage, visiting some of the city's most beautiful colonial buildings and learning more of its fascinating history. Granada is the perfect city to explore on foot, wandering the narrow lanes and alleyways and discovering its hidden delights amongst the lush greenery and historic buildings. After lunch we visit the popular Masaya market, a major centre for arts and crafts, where you can throw yourself into the hustle and bustle and barter from everything from baskets and pottery to jewellery and leather work. Later we visit the tranquil setting of the Masaya Volcano National Park, where you can peer into the bowels of this smoking, belching giant before returning to Granada for our second evening.



Accommodation: Paraiso Granada (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 10 - Cycle to Puerto Asese and kayak around Las Isletas

Puerto Asese lies just 6 kilometres from Granada, making it an ideal destination this morning to head to on bikes. From here we take to the waters of Lake Nicaragua in kayaks, spending the morning paddling through some of the myriad of islands and inlets that pepper this coastline. Beautifully lush, these 365 tropical islets that occupy this vast expanse of water are a magnet for the local birdlife and we'll have time to linger and enjoy this most tranquil of settings before taking lunch on one of the islands. On our return to Granada we will visit the Chocolate Museum in Granada where we can see some of the famous cacao beans being turned into a range of organic chocolate. The Museum is located in a wonderful 5-patio mansion in the historic centre. You will participate in a workshop where you will learn the history of the Cacao bean and its use as well as all the processes required to make chocolate from the fermented organic cacao beans. You will learn how to roast, winnow and grind the beans as well as how to refine chocolate liquor. Finally you will have the opportunity to mould your own handmade Nicaraguan chocolate bar that you can take home with you.



Accommodation: Paraiso Granada (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 11 - Fly to the Caribbean and Corn Island

Transferring to Managua Airport this morning we fly east, across rainforests and the Caribbean to the remote landscapes of Corn Island. On arrival we will check in to our hotel, after which the rest of the day is free to enjoy at your leisure. Corn Island is blessed with three miles of white sandy beach and its crystal clear waters present a slice of turquoise paradise, so we can recommend an afternoon dip in the Caribbean. Please note that there is a weight limit of 11kg per person on the flight to Corn Island and you can leave any excess luggage on the mainland where you can collect it on your return.



Accommodation: Paraiso Club Beach (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - On Corn Island; swimming and relaxing

Lying 70 km off Nicaragua's mainland, Corn Island was once a British Protectorate and English is still widely spoken amongst the local people. Completely different from anywhere else in Nicaragua, the Caribbean islands and coast are largely inhabited by a mix of Creole people of mixed black heritage and Spanish speaking Mestizos, making it a fascinating mix of cultures and traditions. With two days to explore and play, the island is very much yours to enjoy.



Accommodation: Paraiso Club Beach (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - On Corn Island with time to relax on the sandy beaches

You can take a walk around the island, sit under a coconut palm tree or snorkel amongst tropical fish on the reef. Nearby Little Corn Island and its palm fringed beach is easily accessible by boat, so why not take a trip across to explore. In the evenings you can try some fresh lobster or prawns at one of the local restaurants and just sit back and enjoy the laid-back charm of the Caribbean.



Accommodation: Paraiso Club Beach (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Fly to Managua with afternoon visit a Natural Reserve

This morning we take the flight back to Managua, and spend the afternoon visiting the Chocoyo-El Brujo Natural Reserve - a protected area where we will hopefully have a chance to see monkeys and several species of birds. These dry tropical forests are home to monkey and a vast array of birds, including the wonderfully brilliant green parakeets. Later this afternoon we drive to our hotel close to the airport.



Accommodation: Las Mercedes Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 15 - Tour ends Managua

Our tour ends this morning in Managua.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Family information

Average Age: As a guide we have identified the actual average age of the children who have travelled on this trip over the the last 5 years, to help you decide whether it's the right one for your family. The average age on this trip is 13 years old, this trip is suitable for children of all ages.

Triple rooms: This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Minimum age

7



Why book this trip

Nicaragua offers an amazing and unusual family destination that you will remember for a long time. Lots of activities and adventures, coupled with wildlife exploration, this family adventure is a good choice for those who enjoy discovering new destinations.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 14
Lunch: 8
Dinner: 4



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Boat
Ferry



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver
Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

12 nights standard hotel
2 nights simple lodge

Trip information

Country information

Holidays to Nicaragua

Climate

Tropical, with little seasonal variation in temperature. The heavy rainy season is May to October but it can rain at any time along the Caribbean coast of Rio San Juan. There are 3 main climactic zones, the hot tropical lowlands and the cooler hill region, which has a larger range of daily temperature.

Time difference to GMT

-6

Plugs

2 Pin Flat

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Spanish

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Playa Los Cardones - Stand up paddling US\$23; Boogie boarding US\$6 for ½ day ; Bike hire US\$ 41 Corn Island - Half day snorkel US\$30; Trip to Little Corn Island inc. snorkel US\$95 Please make sure you have cash prior to your visit to Corn Island as there are no reliable ATMs on the island

Clothing

Around Managua you will need loose-fitting comfortable, hot-weather clothes (100% cotton is recommended). You should bring lightweight long trousers and a lightweight long-sleeved shirt to wear in the jungle to protect against insects. Also pack a fleece for evenings in the jungle. Bring a waterproof jacket as it can rain at any time in the rainforest area. Don't forget your swimming costume.

Footwear

Lightweight walking boots plus comfortable trainers and sandals for travelling and relaxing. Water sandals may be useful.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunhat, sunscreen, sun hat and insect repellent. A torch (preferably a head torch), mask and snorkel and perhaps a lycra vest or top for surfing. Also you may wish to consider bringing pens, markers, notebooks or simple English books and games for the school visit. An umbrella and light waterproof may also be useful.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 25 for tipping. 10% is expected and often added in restaurants.

International Departure Taxes

There is an entry tax to Nicaragua of 10USD

Country Information

Holidays to Nicaragua

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price
£10.00 - 12.00

Beer price
£2

Water price
£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Cordoba

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange. USD can be used in some places in Nicaragua.

Where To Exchange
Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability
Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance
Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques
Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Boat, Ferry

Family swimming

Most of the hotels have pools and there is the opportunity to swim in the rivers, lakes and sea

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Nicaragua: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure. USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding. You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit) For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html> Canada: An electronic travel authorisation (ETA) is required by British citizens transiting via Canada. For more information see the official Canadian government website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp> Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully

protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

Holidays to Nicaragua

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against typhoid, infectious hepatitis and polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. All travellers coming to Nicaragua from the following countries (even if only in transit) must present an international certificate of vaccination: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Panamá, Paraguay and Venezuela. From the African Continent, all countries are included except Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Sao Tomé and Príncipe and Somalia. This list is regularly updated please check NaTHNaC for the most up to date list. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
