



Nicaragua

Nicaragua Family Holiday

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



ITINERARY

NICARAGUA: FAMILY ADVENTURE

12 DAYS • 11 NIGHTS

Managua – León – Volcano Cerro Negro – Matagalpa Region – Bosawas Biosphere Reserve – Masaya – Laguna de Apoyo – Granada – National Reserve Mombacho Volcano – Lake of Nicaragua – San Jorge – Mayogalpa – Ometepe Island – San Juan

HIGHLIGHTS

- Volcano board down a volcano
- Cool off in the green hills of the north
- Hike the vast jungle reserves of Bosawas
- Discover the colonial cities of León and Granada

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Family Adventure
Tour Start	Managua
Tour End	Managua
Accommodation	Hotel & Eco-Lodge
Included Meals	10 Breakfasts, 1 lunch, 3 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium

A UNIQUE FAMILY ADVENTURE



A fantastic action packed adventure that allows you to see the very best of Nicaragua. Volcanoes, a jungle river, rolling hills, colonial cities, and these ingredients provide for an unforgettable holiday in one of Central America's most diverse, friendly and beautiful countries.

NICARAGUA, *an overview*

Made up of majestic mountains, farms, wetlands crammed with wildlife and deserted jungle-clad beaches, Nicaragua, known as the land of the lakes and rumbling volcanoes offers some extraordinary landscapes and is a colonial splendour. The irresistible understated charm and beauty of Nicaragua is often overshadowed by its famous Central America counterparts. However it's thriving natural beauty rivals that of Costa Rica, minus the crowds; Nicaragua remains one of the largest yet lesser visited nations within Central America and is delightfully situated under the tourist radar. Nicaragua's untamed outdoors is a biodiversity hotspot, featuring remote indigenous communities, overgrown ruins and untouched rainforests. It's tropical, with both rich history and an exotic Latin culture which the friendly local love to share. The country overcame its unfortunate past of civil and political unrest & natural disasters and has remained peaceful for 30 years. Bursting with uninterrupted nature and landscapes, Nicaragua's little-visited rainforests, valleys, beaches and islands are brimming with wildlife, including Howler Monkeys, Jaguars and Sloths, as well as a multitude of tropical birds. There is an impressive choice of dramatic volcanoes to climb/admire, the rugged pacific coast and white sandy Caribbean beaches to roam and charming colonial cities to be experienced.

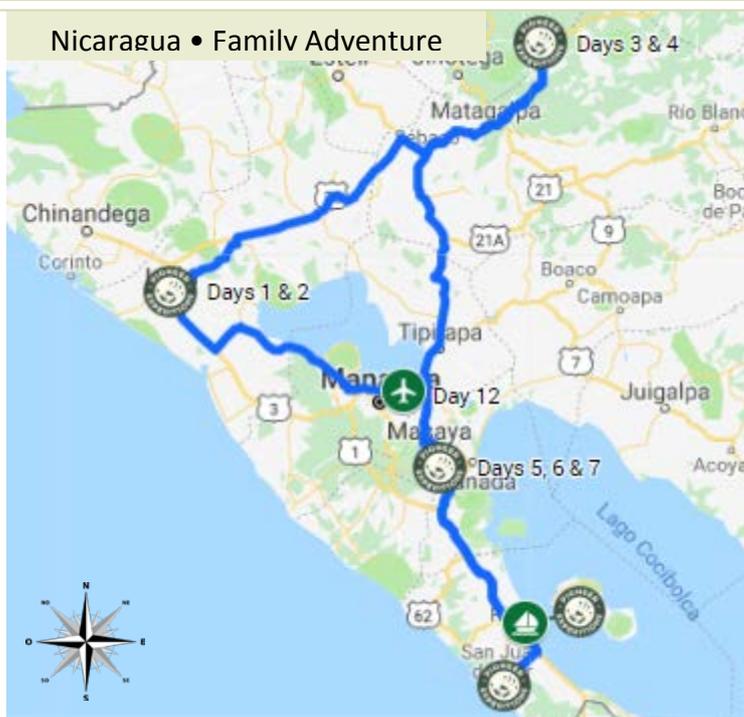
WHY PIONEER EXPEDITIONS?

Pioneer Expeditions are one of the few specialists that really *do* off the beaten track and unique adventures. The team have a real passion for wildlife and adventure travel which we love to share with our clients. We delight in searching the world for new destinations, new experiences and creating the most incredible adventures.

We like to introduce our clients to unique, the different, and the incredible. Whether it is through wildlife tracking, sea kayaking, snorkelling, trekking, rafting, cycling or observing wildlife in its natural environment, we want to give you the real Pioneer experience.

From the moment you choose to travel with Pioneer Expeditions until you return back home, you are supported by our dedicated team. We listen to what you want and can create an itinerary around your specific needs, working with your budget and with a commitment to responsible travel.

ITINERARY



DAY 1: MANAGUA & LEÓN

Upon arrival at Managua airport, you will be welcomed by your driver before enjoying a private transfer to León. You will stay at Hotel San Juan de Leon, right in the city center of Spanish-colonial León. For the parents a good opportunity to enjoy your first Flor de Caña (Nicaraguan rum) or local beer (Toña or Victoria) in one of the nice bars situated in the popular night-time area.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
0



Distance:
Approx. 1 Hour



Activity:
Transfer & Tour

DAY 2: HIKING AT THE VOLCANO CERRO NEGRO

To help you stretch your legs after your flight to Nicaragua, today you'll start off with a challenging hike to the top of the most active volcano in Nicaragua, the Cerro Negro. The hike to the top takes approximately 1 hour, during which you will climb right to the top of this impressive volcano (675 m), through a 'moon landscape' completely covered with black volcanic debris, left behind from previous eruptions. Going down the slopes is even more exciting: we highly recommend using a sandboard or, if you prefer, you can just walk (in a ski like pattern) right down the steep slope. You will return to your hotel (so you can take a necessary shower).

After lunch a local guide will pick you up for a city walking tour. You will learn about the city's impressive history and visit several of the numerous Spanish-colonial churches. A climb to the top of the largest cathedral of Central-America is also scheduled as well as a visit to the museum of modern arts Ortíz Gurdían. Or if you prefer, you can visit the Pacific beach. Suyapa Beach Club is famous for its fresh fish dishes. We recommend you dine in one of the nice local restaurants – the Nicaraguans are very friendly people, and this is a great way to really experience Nicaragua. In the evenings, local people (together with a few tourists) love to gather often supported by live music from talented local musicians.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Approx. 3 hours



Activity:
Hike

DAY 3: DISCOVERING THE MATAGALPA REGION

Today you pack your bags to head on to the mountainous north (east) of Nicaragua, to the Matagalpa region. Here you will stay at La Sombra Ecolodge, a nature lover's paradise. Situated just outside of Bosawas, the largest natural reserve in Central-America, guests of the lodge get a chance to unwind and relax.

The lodge itself is three-stories high and bears resemblance to 'mountain Hütten' commonly found in the European Alps. Hammocks line the balcony, providing a great spot to view the mist covered forest and relax to the sounds of nature. At night, temperatures tend to decrease quite a bit making a bonfire a great way to end the night. Guests have the opportunity to take guided hikes through the coffee plantation, forest, and waterfalls surrounding the ecolodge. The lodge also produces its own coffee, and coffee tours can be arranged for those who are interested in learning more about the process. All meals are prepared by the staff at the time you prefer to eat and the hospitality is very genuine.



Overnight:
Eco- Lodge



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Various Transport



Activity:
Transfer

DAY 4: EXPLORING THE BOSAWAS BIOSPHERE RESERVE

This morning you will wake up and – within a few steps – can spot the slow moving sloths high up in the trees. After early breakfast you will enter and explore the Bosawas Biosphere Reserve, in 1997 designated as a UNESCO biosphere reserve. At approximately 20,000 km² (2 million hectares) in size, the reserve (i.e. nucleus plus buffer zone) comprises about 15% of the nation's total land area making it the second largest rainforest in the Western Hemisphere, after the



Amazon in Brazil. Bosawás is largely unexplored, and is extremely rich in biodiversity. Your professional guide will give you a glimpse of the richness of the flora and fauna in this 1-day hike.



Overnight:
Ecolodge



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Approx. 5 Hours



Activity:
Hiking

DAY 5: MASAYA

Today you will head to Masaya, the city of folklore. Just before arriving in Masaya, you can drive up to the crater of the Masaya volcano which is still very active. From the rim you can look right into the smokey crater, although the volcanic gasses are not very recommendable to breath in! With some luck you will see chocoyos, small green parakeets, that nest in the crater. After a walk around the area, you will have a chance to stop in Masaya and check out their local handicrafts they make there - such as traditional hammocks, ceramics, etc. a good spot to buy some souvenirs. You will then head to the crater of the Laguna de Apoyo, with a huge crater lake with unique flora and fauna. Tonight you will stay at Pajaro Azul (or similar), right at the lakeside and can kayak or swim to refresh from the trip



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Approx. 2 Hours



Activity:
Kayak or swim

DAY 6: HIKING AT THE NATURAL RESERVE OF LAGUNA DE APOYO & TRANSFER TO GRANADA

This morning you will get a chance to relax at the lakeside veranda before setting off for a hike through the natural reserve of Laguna de Apoyo. You will climb all the way up from the crater lake to the Mirador La Catarina. Howler monkeys can be spotted or at least heard and bird wildlife is abundant. After reaching the top, a good meal will be served while enjoying the great views over the enormous crater lake with a diameter of 6 kilometers! From here a transfer will bring you to Granada, the colonial pearl of Nicaragua! Built in 1524, it is the oldest city on mainland Central America built by the Spanish colonists and with its beautiful city centre still almost intact. Walking along the boulevard (La Calzada) you will certainly find a nice restaurant where you can dine deliciously for very reasonable prices. Especially recommendable are Don Luca (Italian) and Coyote Bar & Grill, situated near to each other at the Calzada.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 5 Hours



Activity:
Hiking

DAY 7: BOAT TRIP ON THE LAKE OF NICARAGUA IN THE MORNING & FREE AFTERNOON

After breakfast your guide will accompany you to the borders of the Lake of Nicaragua, where you will start a boat trip to explore the numerous islands situated in the lake, probably once created by an eruption of the nearby Mombacho volcano. The flora and fauna you will encounter is simply impressive. After returning to the shore you will have the afternoon to yourself.

Interesting optional tours are (for example):

- City tour Granada (by mountain bike) Your guide will escort you along the city highlights in this 2-hour city bike tour. You will visit the San Francisco Church as well as the San Francisco Convent, built in 1529. Nowadays functioning as a museum, the Convent has an impressive collection of pre-Columbian art. The beautiful La Merced church can be climbed right to the top of the bell tower and demonstrates spectacular views over the city, Lake Nicaragua, and Volcán Mombacho. Next stop is La Polvora Fortress where you learn about its history and walk through its immaculate courtyard. Finish your tour in the oldest part of the city where you visit the Xalteva Church and the old city walls.
- On top of the Mombacho volcano You will drive to the top of the Mombacho volcano (1150 meters), completely covered with cloud forest. The Mombacho is a dormant volcano with a wide variety of vegetation, bird wildlife (173 species), reptiles (36 species), amphibians (10 species), mammals (47 species) and several endemic butterflies. After visiting the scientific station you can explore this impressive volcano during an easy walk to a



spectacular viewpoint with great views over Granada, Las Isletas, Laguna de Apoyo and Masaya Volcano. If you wish a little more action, consider the treetop canopy tour on the slopes of the Mombacho with 17 platforms.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Approx.. 6 hours



Activity:
Boat trip

DAY 8: SAN JORGE, OMETEPE ISLAND & MOYOGALPA

Today you head for the little harbour of San Jorge, and on to Ometepe, situated right in the Lake of Nicaragua. The island was created by eruptions of the two volcanoes present on each side of the island, one still active (the Concepción volcano) and the other dormant (the Madéras volcano). From Moyogalpa, the little harbour town on the island, you will be transferred to your hotel Charco Verde, situated directly at the lakeside of one of the biggest fresh-water lakes of the world. The hotel offers horse riding and rental of kayaks and mountain bikes. Excellent meals are being served at the hotel restaurant.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Approx. 4 Hours.



Activity:
Transfer

DAY 9: OMETEPE ISLAND

A day at leisure – you can decide what to do today. The most exciting thing to do on Ometepe really is climbing one of the two volcanoes. These are not easy and will take you all day, so if you are looking for a less intensive option, why not:

- Hike to San Ramón waterfall (altitude 50 m) (½ day) From the forested foot of the southern slope of the Maderas volcano you will hike for about 2 hours to reach the waterfall, where you can cool off a little from the effort in a small bathing area and feel the force of the water falling down on you, especially in the rainy season. The hike is not very hard, but temperatures and humidity can be high and can toughen the climb. Even in dry season the waterfall offers an impressive sight. Be sure to bring water, swimming gear (underneath your regular clothes) and at least one big bottle of water + good shoes of course, preferably hiking shoes.
- Ometepe Island tour (½ day) Natural marvels and pre-Columbian relics: on this island tour highlights will be visited starting at Charco Verde lagoon, a mystic place with abundant flora and fauna and the home of the legend "Chico Largo". Next stop is Finca Magdalena, a community farm which is the starting point for climbing the Madras volcano and is situated right at the foot. In the area around the finca several rock carvings (petro glyphs) can be found. Your guide will show you around and tell you all about the island's history. Then on to the Ojo de Agua, a water source not too far from the lake, near the terrific beach of Santo Domingo with views towards both volcanoes. If you take your swimming gear, you should enjoy a quick dive in the fresh water! In Altagracia you will visit an interesting Pre Columbian museum with some well-conserved indigenous statues and ceramics. At the end of the tour you will return to hotel Charco Verde.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 10: TRANSFER TO MANAGUA

After breakfast you will head back to mainland Nicaragua for a through transfer to the Pacific coast to enjoy a magnificent stay in the lazy beach town San Juan del Sur. The west coast of Nicaragua is one of the most beautiful areas of Central America, and is especially popular with surfers.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
Approx. 2 hours.



Activity:
Transfer



DAY 11: SAN JUAN DEL SUR

Enjoy the marvelous surroundings: you can surf, dive, snorkel, sail or explore the bays nearby. If you are lucky you can arrive in the sea turtle season and can watch the breeding of these impressive mammals from close by.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 12: TRANSFER MANAGUA & FLIGHT HOME

Today you have direct private transfer to Managua international Airport. We hope – but are pretty sure – that you have enjoyed Nicaragua!



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Flight Home

ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

Subject to availability

Hotel San Juan de Leon

Guia Leonesa de León

<https://www.gualeonesa.com/perfil.php?l=54>



Sabalos Eco-lodge

Boca de Sabalos

<http://www.sabaloslodge.com/en-gb>



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

INCLUDED

- ☉ Stay at hotels as mentioned or similar
- ☉ Breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D) as mentioned
- ☉ Touring: Cerro Negro hike, city tour/beach visit, Bosawas day tour, Masaya volcano & city centre, crater hike Laguna de Apoyo, Isletas boat trip. All under professional guidance of a professional local guide (who speaks English).
- ☉ Entrance fees during tours mentioned
- ☉ Transfers overland (air-conditioned) and aquatic
- ☉ IVA (BTW) + tourism taxes

NOT INCLUDED

- International flights & airport taxes
- Meals other than mentioned
- Immigration fees
- Personal expenses
- Items of a personal nature such as liquor, laundry, mail, phone calls and cables
- Optional tours/activities
- Tips

WHEN TO GO

Nicaragua is a destination that can be enjoyed almost year-round, with two seasons: the summer is the Central American high season, which tends to be dry, from December to April and the winter, when most of the rain falls, which lasts from May to November, within only September and October to be avoided. The Central American high season (late November to mid-March) sees floods of tourists for the weather. The summer enjoys many sunny days and warm sunshine in the majority of the country and the wet season officially begins at the end of May, but it is still possible to enjoy the country's many beautiful attractions with minimal disruption right through until the end of August.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ACTIVITY DURATION 2 – 5 hours of activities per day

SEASON January- December

BEST TIME TO GO Nov- May

GROUP SIZE A Family of 4

DIFFICULTY LEVEL Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Medium' level (2 – 5 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness

EXPEDITION SCHEDULE This is run as a private trip and the price is based on a family of 4. We are able to suit your dates and requirements. We can also tailor the trip to suit.



THE PIONEER BOOKING PROCESS

Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website www.pioneerexpeditions.com to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

1. Contact us -

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

2. Leave everything to us -

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

3. Wait for your adventure to begin -

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

