



SIXTH  
presbyterian CHURCH

## Nicaragua Mission Trip 2017

Thank you for your interest in mission! Sixth Presbyterian Church has been visiting the community of El Porvenir (The Future) in Leon, Nicaragua, for nearly 10 years. El Porvenir is a cooperative of organic, fair trade coffee farmers. About 42 families live on the farm and work the land. The partnership we have built with El Porvenir has allowed us to develop life-long relationships, learn about the Nicaraguan culture, the history of the United States' involvement in Central America and explore our own faith and our own call as followers of Christ.

We are excited to be planning a trip for this summer. While we do not have specific dates for the trip, we are planning an 8-day trip between June 17 and July 2. We will know the exact dates as soon as we purchase the airfare.

While at El Porvenir, our main goal is to build relationships with the community and learn about the challenges faced by people who live in extreme poverty. This will be facilitated through art, music and sharing of the everyday activities of people in the community.

Please read carefully the Nicaragua Mission Trip packet while considering your participation. Please pay particular attention to pages 14-16 and 20-21 which contain information on preparing for the trip, passport requirements, immunizations, and our mission trip policies. We ask that all participants be over the age of 13 (unless participating with a parent or guardian) and have previous travel experience.

***Please note that passports must be valid for six months after our return date in order to enter Nicaragua. Passport renewals and new passport applications can take eight to ten weeks to process.***

### **Cost of the Trip:**

We are estimating the cost of the trip at around \$2,000 per person. This amount will include airfare, meals, travel costs while in Nicaragua, and travel insurance. Please see the Nicaragua Mission Trip packet for additional information about spending money needed.

### **Fundraising**

We will be launching an online fundraising campaign to help reduce the cost of the trip. All donations raised through the online campaign will be divided equally among trip participants. We hope to launch the site by the end of February and accept contributions through the end of April. At which point, we will evaluate the need for further fundraisers.

### **To register for the trip:**

**Please complete and submit the Personal Information Form from the Nicaragua Mission Trip Packet (pages 22 and 23) along with a deposit of \$500 by Jan. 15 to Jenny Newman in the church office.** If you would like to send this by mail the church address is:

Attn: Jenny Newman  
Sixth Presbyterian Church  
1688 Murray Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

This deposit is non-refundable once the airline tickets have been secured.

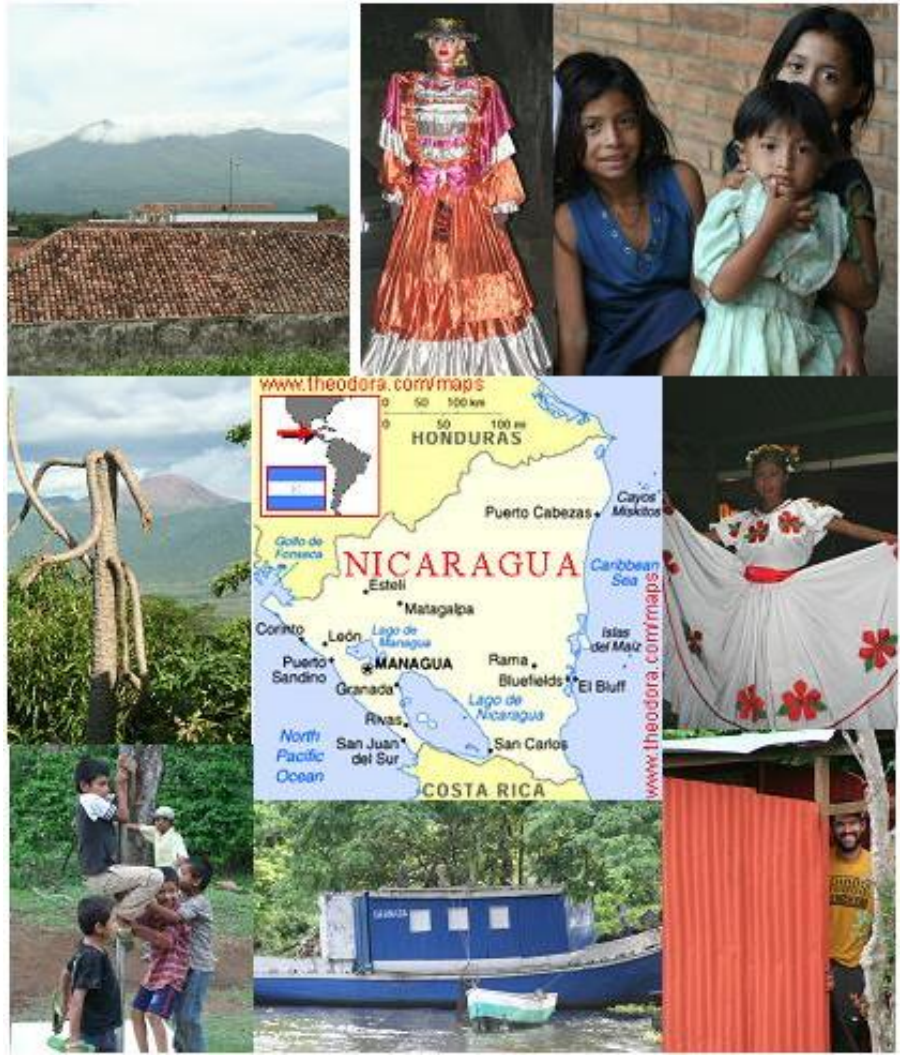
**Addition questions? Please contact Sara Berg, Chris Berg, or Jenny Newman.**

Jenny Newman (412) 720-6392 [Jennyrunew@gmail.com](mailto:Jennyrunew@gmail.com)  
Sara Berg (412) 352-1036 [Saracuadraberg@gmail.com](mailto:Saracuadraberg@gmail.com)  
Chris Berg (412) 352-1036 [christopher.charles.berg@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.charles.berg@gmail.com)

# Sixth Presbyterian Church

## Mission Trip

# Summer 2017



1688 Murray Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15217  
T 412-421-2752  
F 412-421-2784  
E [office@sixthchurch.org](mailto:office@sixthchurch.org)

This manual contains information that will help you gain a better understanding of the history, people and culture of Nicaragua. Additionally, it will provide you with some helpful information regarding packing, health and safety issues, and general guidelines you need to be mindful of in order to make this trip a positive experience. You will also find an application form and the release forms that need to be completed as requirements for participation. Please familiarize yourself with the information included in this manual, as it is imperative that you be prepared for this important trip.

# So we're going to Nicaragua...

## ...Here are some things you should know.

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*Nicaragua is a country with an extensive history, much of which involves corruption, war, and the United States. This history has landed Nicaragua where it is today, the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere where the people endure many political, social, and economic struggles. The following information will help you to familiarize yourself with the country, culture and people of Nicaragua. Reading this information will help you to prepare for our trip and allow you to have a richer experience while there.*

### Nicaragua Fast Facts

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<b>Official Name:</b>	República de Nicaragua
<b>Capital:</b>	Managua
<b>Independence:</b>	15 September 1821 (from Spain)
<b>Population:</b>	6.08 million (Jan. 2016)
<b>Area:</b>	129,494 square km (roughly the size of New York State, largest country in Central America)
<b>Currency:</b>	Córdoba (28 córdobas = 1 US\$)
<b>General Social Statistics:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Over half of the population is under 25 years of age.</li><li>- 46.2% of the population lives in poverty, 20% in extreme poverty (80% of the poor live in rural communities)</li><li>- Women head 34% of urban homes and 17% of rural homes.</li><li>- 32% of homes in Managua have no electricity, in the Atlantic Coast regions 17%</li><li>- Nicaragua has the highest tax rates in Central America (including a 15% sales tax)</li><li>- 14% of children between the ages of 5-14 have to work.</li></ul>
<b>Climate:</b>	tropical in lowlands, cooler in highlands
<b>Median Age:</b>	23.7
<b>Ethnic groups:</b>	Mestizo 69%, white 17%, black 9%, Amerindian 5%
<b>Religion:</b>	Roman Catholic 58.5%, Evangelical 21.6%, Moravian 1.6%, Jehovah's Witness .9%, other 1.7%, none 15.7%
<b>Language:</b>	Spanish 97.5%, Miskito 1.7%, other .8%
<b>Literacy:</b>	78% (Total number of people 15 years of age and older who know how to read and write)
<b>Foreign Debt:</b>	\$7.79 billion
<b>GDP comp sector:</b>	agriculture 17.3%, industry 25.8%, services 56.8%
<b>Agriculture:</b>	coffee, bananas, sugarcane, cotton, rice, corn, tobacco, sesame, soy, beans
<b>Military:</b>	Army (Navy, Air Force), 17 years for voluntary service
<b>Suffrage:</b>	16 years old, universal

**\* Facts from: World Bank, UNICEF, and Witness for Peace**

## Past Presidents:

- Daniel Ortega - FSLN 1984-1990
- Violeta Chamorro - UNO 1990-1996
- Arnaldo Alemán - PLC 1996-2001
- Enrique Bolaños - APRE 2001-2007
- Daniel Ortega - FSLN 2012-2016

## People you should know, names you will hear.

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**Anastasio Somoza García:** After a coup, he ruled for 20 years of the 40 year



Somoza Dynasty, before he was assassinated and his two sons took over consecutively. As a ruler, he had little care for the poor and social programs in general. He appropriated the best lands and commerce for himself and his family. He was a loyal ally of the United States government and reaped the benefits personally. After Somoza's assassination in 1956, power went to his sons Louis, and Anastasio, known as 'Tachito,' in that order. The Somoza family owned roughly one half of the country's resources.



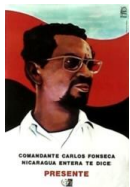
**Augusto César Sandino:** In 1927 led guerillas against the US occupation of Nicaragua. He organized the Sandinista rebels against the U.S. Marine occupation in an effort for a nationalist Nicaragua. He later included the unification of Latin America as part of his *lucha* (struggle). He was assassinated in 1934 on order from Anastasio Somoza García while leaving negotiations of a ceasefire. He is regarded as Nicaragua's most heroic national figure.



**Rubén Darío:** The world famous Nicaraguan poet that Nicaraguans hail and name many festivals, streets, parks, and buildings after. He is also known the world over as The Father of Modernism. Some of his well-known works include: *Azul* (Blue), and *Cantos de Vida y Esperanza* (Songs of Life and Hope).



**Sandinistas (FSLN):** Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) is a political party named for Augusto Cesar Sandino. They overthrew Tachito Somoza and declared triumph on July 19, 1979. They experimented with social and economic reforms despite resistance from US backed Contra Rebels.



**Carlos Fonseca:** Prominent student leader who founded the FSLN party in 1961. The group campaigned, protested, and waged guerilla war against Tachito Somoza, under constant threat of harassment, exile, torture, and death. Fonseca was captured, tortured, and killed in 1976.





**Contras:** Consisted of a group of Anti-Sandinistas and ex-National Guardsmen who fought against the Sandinistas in the 80s. The Contras were funded by the United States, primarily the Reagan Administration, who supplied over \$400 million dollars over the course of the war.



**Daniel Ortega:** Current President as of January 2007. Head of the FSLN, also headed the ruling junta in 1979, and was democratically elected in 1984. Referred to by his first name, Daniel has reinitiated a less dramatic Sandinista government, however, still claims a priority for the poor of Nicaragua. So far Daniel has made true on his campaign promises to lower the salaries of government officials, including the president and vice president, as well as filling half of the government positions with women. He has also made it illegal to charge for public education and made initiative to nationalize electric and health systems. After years of fighting for equality, he is now one of the richest people in the country.

## The History...

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The earliest evidence of humans in Nicaragua is the Acahualinca footprints found in Managua from 10,000 years ago. For thousands of years, numerous tribes, nomads and farmers were able to live peacefully together on the lands now called Nicaragua. Columbus arrived in 1502 claiming the Caribbean Coast for Spain, and in 1522 the land was named after the head, Chief Nicarao, who was ruling part of the area at the time.

The country has been enduring centuries of turmoil and unrest. Before the Spanish came, it had been home to several indigenous peoples. The Spanish sold hundreds of thousands of indigenous Nicaraguans into slavery in Peru's silver mines and into Panama and massacred thousands more. A population of approximately 2 million indigenous people was reduced to 8,000 in only 35 years under Spanish rule.

Through the 19th century there was constant conflict between the two main political parties, the Liberals, who claimed León, and the Conservatives, who were centered in Granada. The Liberals took desperate measures in 1855, inviting filibuster William Walker from Tennessee to help. He brought in troops and quickly took Granada, but didn't stop there. He named himself president of Nicaragua, declared English the official language, and initiated slavery to put himself in favor with the US southern states. Soon he announced his plans to conquer the rest of Central America, but he didn't accomplish his goal before he was captured and killed in 1860 in Honduras. The Conservatives regained power and moved the capital from León to Managua, a neutral city that is geographically the halfway point between León and Granada.

Things were more or less calm for 50 years, until 1912 when the US sent Marines in to occupy the country when the bickering between the two parties became too loud. In the name of 'protecting American lives and property,' the Marines stayed until 1925 installing and ousting presidents at will. Only two years later, in 1927, the Marines returned, but this time they were

met with resistance from Augusto Cesar Sandino. With support from neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives, Sandino rounded up the first guerilla troops in the Americas and fought for six years against the US occupation. The Marines left in 1935, but left behind the US trained National Guard under the command of Anastasio Somoza Garcia. A US withdrawal convinced Sandino to hold his horses (literally) for long enough to engage in peace talks instigated by Somoza. After leaving a negotiation meeting, troops ordered by Somoza ambushed and killed Sandino.

Anastasio Somoza ruled the country for the next 20 years, whether directly or through figurehead presidents. During this time he appropriated Nicaragua's prime property and commercial interests for himself and his family. Meanwhile, his government made no effort to provide the poor majority with health care, clean water, electricity, or education.

In 1956, Nicaraguan poet Rigoberto López Pérez disguised himself as a waiter and shot the dictator at a diplomatic party, before he himself died in a hail of bullets. Luis Somoza, the older son of Somoza, assumed the presidency until his death in 1957, when Anastasio 'Tachito' Somoza, his younger brother, inherited the rule. The youngest Somoza proved to be the most ruthless and made it a habit to harass, capture, exile, torture and kill members of the developing FSLN.

After the earthquake in 1972, the wealthy class began to turn against him, when he pocketed the majority of relief money pouring into the country. People of all classes began to believe that peace would only come with the dictator's removal. The Sandinistas began to gain underground support among the wealthy elite and middle class as well as the working class.

In 1978, the Sandinistas took over the National Palace in Managua, where they held the 1,000-member National Assembly hostage. They demanded a huge ransom and the publication and broadcast of their political program. Somoza had little choice but to comply, but refused to step down and instigated an arbitrary bombing of Nicaraguan cities. Events culminated on July 19, 1979, when the FSLN marched triumphantly into Managua, two days after Somoza fled to Miami in US provided planes, taking with him his father's coffin and the national treasury.

The United Nations claims that \$480 million worth of damage was done during the insurrection and the FSLN was left with a shattered country plagued with malnutrition and disease. Over 50,000 Nicaraguans were killed and 600,000 were left homeless.

The period of Sandinista rule, 1979-1990, is known as the Revolution. This was a period in Nicaraguan history filled with controversy and paradox. While the FSLN had some successes and great ideals to bring about positive change in Nicaragua, they were also fraught with corruption and deceit. One of the initial successes of the FSLN was the literacy campaign. The goal was to create a literate electorate able to make informed choices at elections. Over 100,000 Nicaraguan urban youth flooded the countryside and in a period of six months, taught half a million people basic reading skills. This brought the national illiteracy rate down from over 50% to just below 12%. At the same time, the general educational system was halted to the rest of the population. The goal was for the students who were enrolled in formal education to provide education to those who did not have educational resources available.

There was significant support and success for the Sandinistas at the time of the Revolution, but soon it began to fall under attack from the Contras, a group of ex-National Guard, Somoza supporters and ex-revolutionaries financially backed by the Reagan administration (read more in Nicaraguan and US relations). Some of these attacks were fuelled by the Sandinista's Marxist/Leninist ideals, in which they hoped to defeat the middle class and hand the wealth to the poor. The US, under Ronald Reagan's rule, viewed the Sandinista's actions as communist threats. Reagan's reaction was particularly due to the support provided to the Sandinistas by Cuban president Fidel Castro and by the Sandinistas' close military relations with the Soviets and Cubans. Additionally, the Reagan administration hoped to protect U.S. business interests in the country, which it claimed were threatened by the policies of the Sandinista government.

As the decade wore on and the Contra attacks intensified, Sandinista popularity began to wane. As a result of embargoes there were major food shortages from which everybody suffered, peasants and upper class. Instead of money, campesinos, poor rural farmers, were paid in food or other goods for their coffee after the Sandinistas nationalized all coffee exportation. Because of this, many rural Nicaraguans turned against the FSLN and joined the Contras and the draft.

In 1990 the second set of elections under the FSLN government ended in a shock for the Sandinista government, when Violeta Chormorro was elected Nicaragua's newest president. She was left a country torn by war and over \$10 billion in debt. Doña Violeta struggled to mend the broken pieces of the country with what many referred to as her matronly instinct.

In 1996, Alemán and the PLC (Constitutionalist Liberal Party), which was also Somoza's party, came to power. Six years later he left, after embezzling approximately \$110 million from the people of Nicaragua. Much of this money came from Hurricane Mitch relief. Transparency International, a British based anti-corruption lobby group, has ranked Alemán as the world's ninth most corrupt leader in history. In January of 1999, his conviction was overturned by the Nicaraguan Supreme Court. He has since ran for the presidency in the elections of 2006 and 2012.

Enrique Bolaños, vice president of Aleman, was elected in 2002 under criticism from all sides for his ties with the corrupt Alemán and the US. After being kicked out of the PLC under the influence of Alemán, he formed his own party, called APRE (Alliance for the Republic). Bolaños is remembered as a completely ineffectual president who accomplished very little during his term.

In 2006 Daniel Ortega was elected back into the presidency. He took a different approach to his campaign. Symbolically softening the traditional Sandinista colors of black and red, to pink and turquoise, he also softened his socialist agenda. Many in Nicaragua are excited to have a left wing party back in power, which will include the nationalization of more social programs and better relations with other Latin American countries (Hugo Chavez and ALBA). However, the excitement is somewhat clouded by the controversy surrounding Daniel which includes a power sharing agreement made between he and Aleman called *El Pacto* and charges of sexual abuse by his step-daughter. Ortega ran for President again in 2012, and successfully changed the

Nicaraguan constitution to give more powers to the President and extend the terms of presidency. His term expires in 2016.

## Nicaraguan and US Relations.

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The US and Nicaragua began close relations in the early 20th century when the US sent the Marines occupations. They became quite chummy under the Somoza Dynasty. The Somoza's were supported by five Democratic and three republican US administrations. The US was allowed to use Nicaragua as staging grounds for CIA invasions into Guatemala and the Bay of Pigs into Cuba, and Nicaragua contributed small forces to participate in the US occupation of the Dominican Republic in 1965, as well as troops to fight in both Korea and Vietnam. In exchange for the support, the US gave millions of dollars of aid to Nicaragua for social and economic projects, however, there is ample evidence that Somoza and accomplices were stealing much of the aid. The US also offered military support and by the end of the Somoza era the National Guard was the most heavily US trained military establishment in Latin America.

When the Sandinistas came to power in 1979, the US offered a timid hand of friendship in the form of diplomatic recognition and emergency relief aid. However, the CIA still sent DC-8 jets disguised with Red Cross stripes to evacuate Somoza's officer corps to Miami. When Reagan came into office, he cut off all aid and claimed (with little evidence) that Nicaragua was the main source of arms for the rebel movement in El Salvador. Reagan immediately terminated the remaining balance of a \$75 million loan to Nicaragua.

Increasingly unhappy with the socialist FSLN, the US began to harass Nicaragua through indirect military pressure in Honduras and intensive espionage of Nicaragua. Other Central America countries were pressured to isolate Nicaragua diplomatically, through military threats and offers of large amounts of US aid.

In 1982, Reagan gave the CIA \$19.8 million to enlarge and support an exile army of anti-Sandinista counterrevolutionaries, which consisted mainly of former National Guard officers, who later became known as Contras. In May 1985, the US successfully embargoed trade with Nicaragua, immediately followed with a campaign led by the Reagan administration to discredit and defame the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

After the Iran-Contra scandal in 1986, the Reagan Administration pressed the Contras to intensify their offensive in Nicaragua, bringing the war to a destructive peak in 1987. In 1989 the death toll for the entire war was over 200,000 Nicaraguans, (1/10 the population) and direct US aid to the Contras totaled over \$400 million.

Through the 90's the US continued to back corrupt political leaders that led Nicaragua further into debt and away from economic and social stability. More recently, the instigation of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) has created more strife between the US and Nicaragua.



Supporters of CAFTA claim that new markets will be opened to US manufacturers, while helping Central American nations modernize their economies, create worker rights protections that will enforce and improve labor laws and improve environmental standards.

The opposition claims that CAFTA causes local businesses to be crowded out and Central American consumers will be forced into US product dependency. Economist Joseph Stiglitz, who supports free trade, argues that CAFTA will increase poverty because it prematurely opens markets to the US agriculture goods which are subsidized, making local farmers unable to compete with imports, and the nations in question do not have the ability or resources to burden this change. He also argues that the agreements were made from unequal negotiating positions and therefore do not result in free-trade agreements.

CAFTA was signed into effect May 28, 2004. In Nicaragua, its effects can be seen through changes in labor laws, sweatshops, and the privatization of education, health, water, etc.

## Effects of Debt... Oppression

- 20-25% of children under 5 are malnourished.  
**60% of children under 2 are affected by anemia due to malnutrition.**
- 253,000 children seek work, the majority quit school
- **1/5 of the people have no access to health care**
- **34% of population is illiterate**
- 74% of people have limited access to drinking water or electricity.
- **US:** 2.7 doctors/ 1000 people, \$5,000 person/year
- **Nicaragua:** 0.6 doctors/1000 people, \$24 person/year

## Current Economic Situation:

...Runner up for the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere...

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Nicaragua's national debt is \$6.5 billion. That means each Nicaraguan owes about US\$1400. Now consider that the gross national income per capita in Nicaragua is US\$910. The external debt is suffocating the country and its people. This is because debt payment is prioritized above individual needs. On average, the Nicaraguan government spends 25% of its annual budget on debt payments, but only 14% on health care and 11% on education.

## Where did the debt come from!?

It all started with oil (as usual) back in the 70s. The prices were driven up and Latin America could not export enough to finance imports, which created huge trade deficits. OPEC then raised the prices of oil which brought a flood of money to industrialized countries, who then turned around and offered these 'petro' dollars as low interest loans to struggling countries like Nicaragua. But none of the beneficiaries paid attention to see that the majority of this money went straight into the corrupt pockets of Somoza, not towards the development of Nicaragua.

Simultaneously, developed nations began to cut back on foreign aid to poor countries. As a result, the countries of Latin America quintupled their long term borrowing in the 70s. In the early 80s, the prices for agricultural goods collapsed which further devastated the region. It was right about this time that the US decided to raise interest rates from 8% to 20%, leading the way for the other developed nations to follow, which they did. Nicaragua was forced to borrow more money simply to pay the increased interest on their debt. There was also the financial burden of the war draining the economy during the 80s.

There were attempts to alleviate debt in the 90s and moves were made towards privatization. This way the government could use its money for chipping away at that debt, rather than things like clean water and education. Now, Nicaragua has paid its original debt several times over but is caught up in the cycle of borrowing more simply to pay the accumulated interest. Meanwhile, health, education, and environmental protection have been left secondary, leaving diminishing hope for a future generation able to advance the country economically.

### What to look forward to...

#### -U.S. Public School Buses...

Bus co-ops buy retired US school buses for personalized public transportation.

#### -No street names...

directions are given as references to the location of well-known buildings and statues, or where they used to be, "*Donde fue Vicky's una cuadra abajo.*"

#### -Very few skyscrapers, or any view of the skyline...

After the earthquake in '72 Managua was built sprawling and more or less one level. More recently, taller buildings are being built. It is, however, a very green city with many trees.

## Getting to know Nicaragua.

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### Food.

Most Nicaraguans exist on the staple food, *gallo pinto*, red beans and rice, which is often eaten three times a day. Several other foods you will be likely to come across are *maduro*, deep fried plantain, which offers a sticky sweetness as opposed to its greener cousin *platano verde*, which is

the less ripe, boiled version. You will also run across a common version of farmer's cheese, here it is called *cuajada* and is often served along side your *gallo pinto*. Nicaragua, too, has its version of tortilla, corn based and thicker than the flour based Mamacita's you buy in the States. Because of its cost, meat is a rarity, but don't be shocked to eat the family chicken.

The drinks are more likely to impress. Filled with sugar and *rico*, *refresco* offers a variety of local fruits pulverized into a drinkable fashion, and accompanies most meals. There is also *cacao* which is a cocoa bean based drink. *Pinolillo* is the national drink made of milled corn and cocoa. If all else fails, there is certain to be an Eskimo man on every corner, ringing his bells and announcing the arrival of ice cream, an international treat.

## MANAGUA....where the streets have no name.

Ah, Managua. Described in one (highly unrecommended) guidebook as 'grimier than grimy, uglier than ugly, and hotter than hell,' Managua is a city that has done little to sell out to tourism and the business of impressing rich gringos.

The capital city of over one million sprawls out in many directions. After the city center was destroyed in the earthquake in 1972, there was little enthusiasm or money (included in what Somoza stole) applied towards rebuilding or replacing it. Therefore, you are left with a city that can appear to an outsider as a bit confusing. Development proceeded haphazardly without a commercial center and houses sit in the backyard of a brand new American style shopping center, while horses graze in the grassy areas between the road near the old city center, and all of this without the aid of street names to help navigate the chaos. But before you conjure too many images of livestock on the loose, Managua has remained the commercial center of Nicaragua and has continued to grow, however irregularly, especially along the southwestern side. There are cyber cafes, several malls, many restaurants, and bars for drinking and clubbing.

To find the charm in Managua it is necessary to do a little exploring. Universities such as the UCA offer a hip insight to Nicaraguan urban youth and culture, which is residual of the strong student movements that took place in the 70s and 80s. Several parks are scattered throughout Managua, including Malecón, which is on the shore of Lake Managua and the Sunday afternoon hangout for many Nicaraguan families. There is also Parque Tiscapa which has a nice view of the city and is the home to the giant silhouette of Sandino visible from many parts of the city.

## A Day in the Life

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### Family:

In Nicaragua the bonds of a family are very strong. But if you try to actually figure out how everyone in a house is related, good luck. It is not unusual to find many generations extended in all directions living under the same roof, or very near each other.

Children, more specifically girls, are expected to participate in helping around the house early on and in many cases are compelled to leave school in order to sell water or tortillas on the street in order to help support their family.

Family loyalty is also obvious in the amount of remittances that are sent back to Nicaragua yearly, totaling over US\$800 million dollars and supporting 700,000 to 900,000 Nicaraguans.

## Women:

Women have played a vital role in the shaping of Nicaragua. Prominent members of the revolution, women were the champions of many progressive rights in the 80s. An example of this is the election of Violeta Chamorro as president in 1990. Despite their accomplishments, women still struggle for their place in today's society.

Women constitute half of the population, produce 40% of the national wealth and perform 50% of the work in the industry, communication and service sectors. Still, they earn 30% less than men and own less than 10% of the land.

Traditionally, women manage the household. In times of economic need they are given a double burden. While their partners and husbands are unable to find appropriate work for men, women are forced to supplement the family income by taking in laundry, selling food on the streets, or getting a job at a *maquila* (sweatshop). While many men feel it is socially unacceptable to work many of these alternative jobs, such as cleaning houses or selling food, women are forced to fill these roles and feed their families. Women are obligated to work outside the home, while at the same time struggling to care for their family within.

## Education:

Most schools in Nicaragua are crowded so they run shifts, 7:30-12 and 1-5:30 pm. Previously, most children had to pay a monthly tuition (around \$2), which prevented many children from attending school. President Ortega has made it illegal to charge tuition for classes in public school, and made uniforms optional, although families are still expected to pay for books (\$15 yearly) and all school materials. There are still many children unable to attend school because of the cost and the fact that their families need them to work. Those who don't attend school are often expected to work to help supplement their families' income.

## Health:

The total health expenditure per capita is \$24/year, while the gross national income per capita is \$910 per year. That means that people who on average are making only \$910/year must spend almost 23% of it in health services, if they can get any at all.

The infant mortality rate in Nicaragua is 28%, while the life expectancy is only 63.1 for women and 59.7 for men. Secondary health care such as dentistry and optometry are virtually nonexistent for the majority of Nicaraguans. With the majority of the population working in the informal sector, health insurance is a luxury that most Nicaraguans will never know.

Women who choose to give birth in a medical center are given none of the familiar comforts of the US, ie., sheets, water, window. They are given a bare bed and a time limit after the baby is born before they must clear out.

## Employment:

The minimum wage established by the Nicaraguan government is \$104 per month, however, many people are paid less than this. Three quarters of the population lives on less than \$2 per day and one half live on less than \$1 per day.

The extreme economic situation has drawn the attention of many companies from the US, Taiwan, Korea and Europe, who set up manufacturing areas known as free trade zones. In January 2016, the minimum wage in the free trade zones was \$171. However, often these workers are forced to work at least 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and are even watched and timed for restroom breaks. Not surprisingly, the burnout is tremendous. Still, those who work in the free trade zones are considered lucky, because those who are left are forced to find jobs in the informal sector of the economy, washing windshields, selling tortillas on the sidewalk, water on the street, or working as a day laborer in construction. This means no insurance, no salary, and no job security. In Nicaragua, 65% of the population works in the informal sector.

## Useful Things

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### Local Vocabulary:

Here are some words you are likely to hear or use while in Nicaragua:

*Chocho!:* Cool, wow

*Chapas:* earrings

*Chele/a:* a non-offensive way to refer to North Americans or pale skinned Nicaraguans.

*Chinelas:* flip flops, sandals

*Dale pues:* Okay, I agree, let's do that. Good conversation finisher

*Guaro:* general term for booze or alcoholic beverages

*Gringo/a:* Another way to remind you that you are foreign. Not offensive here.

*Hombre:* used as an expression like Americans use *man*, *si hombre!*, *yeah man!*

*No hay falla:* No problem (no problema)

*Panza:* more informal name for stomach, belly

*Peso:* no, it's not Mexico, but Nicas refer to córdobas as pesos, ex. *Esto vale cinco pesos.*

*Pinche:* cheap

*Va pues:* Okay then, see you, I agree, or whatever

### Body Language:

Nicaraguans have a very rich vocabulary of signs and gestures. Here are some of the most common:

**Nose Scrunch:** similar to a face in the US made when there is a foul smell, signifies, *What?*

*What do you want? Or What do you mean?*

**Lip Point:** perhaps the most distracting gesture to accustom oneself to, Nicaraguans pucker their lips in the direction of what they are referring to. The trick is, most people don't stop talking to point.

**Finger Wag:** a side to side wagging of index finger increases a simple verbal *no*, to a very serious no.

**Downward Wave:** can sometimes be mistaken as a shadow puppet show, this means *Come here*.

**Wrist Snap:** Done with the tips of thumb and middle finger joined while the index finger dangles loosely, while the wrist is given several quick flicks. The snapping noise serves to emphasize whatever is being said, can also mean "Harsh" or to say "Woowee, that's good!" This is a good one to practice, because even the 2-year-olds are well honed on their snapping skills.

## Recommended:

### Reading, Watching, Listening

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#### Reading:

Forrest D Colburn, My Car in Managua

Gioconda Belli, The Country under my Skin and The Inhabited Woman

Joan Kruckewitt, The Death of Ben Linder: The Story of a North American in Sandinista Nicaragua

Jennifer Atlee-Loudon, Red Thread: A Spiritual Journal of Accompaniment, Trauma and Healing

Margaret Randall, Sandino's Daughters: Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle

Peter Rosset and John Vandermeer, The Nicaragua Reader: Documents of a Revolution Under Fire

Thomas Walker, Nicaragua: Living in the Shadow of the Eagle

#### Watching:

Carla's Song (1996)

The World is Watching, First Run/Icarus Films, directed by Peter Raymont

The World Stopped Watching, (2003) First Run/Icarus Films, directed by Peter Raymont

#### Listening:

Radio Nicaragua: [www.radionicaragua.com.ni/](http://www.radionicaragua.com.ni/)

Radio Pirata, Managua: <http://pirata.tk/>

U2, Where the streets have no name



# PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP:

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This trip will be challenging, but also (we hope) engaging, rewarding, and fulfilling. To prepare yourselves for the challenge and to get the most out of the experience, it's important that you pay attention to the policies and guidelines we've set up here.

## Passports and Visas

U.S. citizens travelling to Nicaragua do not require a travel visa; however, all travelers entering Nicaragua need to be aware of certain travel restrictions. Most importantly, Nicaragua may refuse entry to any traveler whose passport expires within **six (6) months** of their arrival. Due to recent changes in travel restrictions and security policies, passport renewals and new passport applications can take eight to ten (8-10) weeks or longer. Please be sure to check your passports' expiration dates, and leave enough time to renew them if necessary.

## Medical and Health Info

We will do everything possible to make sure that everyone remains healthy during our trip, but you should be aware that travel to Nicaragua does require some special health considerations. You will need to have up-to-date immunizations and possibly also medications to bring with you. Leave yourself enough time before your trip (preferably four-six weeks) to visit your local physician and/or health center.

## Special Health Considerations

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The following summary\* is to acquaint you with the general health considerations of travel to Nicaragua and the preventative measures which are recommended to help reduce the chance of illness or injury during the trip. Please read this information carefully and plan to receive the appropriate immunizations and malaria medication prior to your departure. All individuals who participate on a trip are strongly encouraged to seek the advice of a physician or other expert in the field of travel medicine in preparation for the trip.

While in Nicaragua, you may be exposed to potentially harmful diseases from a number of sources including: insects, contaminated food and water, or close contact with infected people. Using a combination of pre-travel immunizations, prophylactic medication against malaria, personal protective measures, and common sense will greatly minimize the risk of becoming ill during or after travel to Nicaragua.

# Immunizations

Please consult with the local health department, as they have the most up-to-date information on immunizations recommended for travel to different countries. We recommend that you get all the recommended immunizations. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends immunizations against the following diseases for a short-term (less than one month), rural travel in Nicaragua.

- **Hepatitis A and B:** a viral infection of the liver that may be transmitted by water or food contaminated by human waste or directly between people. Hepatitis A vaccine can provide protection at least two weeks prior to travel. Hepatitis B must be taken in two separate doses, with the first one six months prior to travel (preferably).
- **Typhoid:** a bacterial illness that may be transmitted by food or water contaminated by human waste and directly between people. Typhoid vaccine can provide protection three weeks prior to travel.
- Boosters of **tetanus-diphtheria, measles, mumps, and rubella.** (Please check with your Dr. if you need this booster)
- **Malaria** is a parasite that is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes. These mosquitoes bite from dusk to dawn. Malaria can be a very serious illness and if left untreated can cause severe complications, including coma and death. It is very important to take an appropriate anti-malarial medicine to help prevent infection if bitten by a mosquito carrying malaria. Anti-malarial medications are taken before, during, and after travel to regions where transmission is possible. With the appropriate use of anti-malarial medications and personal protective measures to avoid mosquito bites, infection is unlikely. The CDC recommends chloroquine phosphate (ARALEN) 500mg for the prevention of malaria in Nicaragua. This medication should be taken one week before arrival in Nicaragua; weekly while in Nicaragua, and for four weeks after departing from Nicaragua.

# Protocol for Health Emergencies

This protocol is designed to provide guidelines for dealing with health emergencies during our journey. Each health emergency is different; no protocol can provide solutions to every problem that may arise during the course of our trip. Whenever possible, decisions regarding treatment should be made with the best interest of the patient and the partnership in mind.

1. Pre-existing medical conditions must be identified on the application for travel.
2. All participants must obtain a doctor's approval for travel, at the applicant's expense.
3. All applications will be reviewed in order to determine the feasibility of travel for those with pre-existing medical conditions.
4. All participants must provide evidence of holding health insurance that is applicable in international travel.
5. Participants must sign a medical waiver indicating that they are traveling at their own risk, that they have no known medical conditions that are not identified on the application, and that medical care is their own financial responsibility.

6. If a health emergency occurs while traveling to Nicaragua, a decision to seek professional medical attention will be made by the leaders of the group.
7. Trip leaders will make all necessary decisions concerning notification of family members of the traveler's medical condition.
8. In treating the patient, the goals will be to:
  - a. Make the patient comfortable
  - b. Prepare the patient to rejoin the group or to return to the United States
  - c. Treat presenting symptoms with a short term therapy
9. In treating the patient, the goals will not be to:
  - a. Engage in long-term treatment of illness
  - b. Seek out or treat pre-existing medical conditions
  - c. Engage in extensive testing

**Personal Protective Measures** are simple measures that will greatly reduce your chance of exposure to food and water-borne illness, disease carrying insects (including malaria infected mosquitoes), and injuries. These measures are very important because immunizations may not offer 100% protection against specific diseases.

- Water should be boiled, bottled (commercially), or purified.
- Avoid ice, salads, uncooked vegetables, and dairy products.
- Foods containing meat, vegetables and rice should be eaten hot.
- Peel fruit immediately before eating (avoid pre-sliced and prepared fruit salads).
- Avoid getting bitten by mosquitoes, flies, fleas, ticks, and lice. There are many diseases (most are extremely rare in travelers) that can be transmitted by insects. Wear appropriate clothing, use insect repellents containing DEET (20-35%), and sleep in screened-off rooms or use mosquito netting.
- Avoid swimming in all fresh-water lakes, streams, and ponds. Swim only in well maintained, chlorinated swimming pools and non-polluted ocean beaches.
- HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, and other blood borne diseases are transmissible through sexual contact, infected blood products, and contaminated needles/medical equipment. In Central America sexual transmission accounts for the majority of cases of HIV and Hepatitis B. Transmission **is not** possible through casual contact, air, food, water, or insects.
- Animals should not be approached or handled. Rabies is common in domestic and some wild animals. Report any bites or licks from an animal immediately to a trip leader.

If you have any questions regarding this health information, you may contact the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for a more detailed summary of health risks and disease prevention for Central America. CDC voice/fax travel information is available at (404) 639-3311 or (800) 311-3435. Request document #220160 (Central America). You can also find current traveler information on the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

The Allegheny County Health Department can provide you with more information regarding recommended travel immunizations as well as affordable immunizations.

# Packing Guide

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1. **Critical - PASSPORT** (valid for at least six months after departure)
  - a. Photocopy of passport, to be kept in a separate area in case we lose it (would save lots of time if needing to replace it.)
  - b. Group leaders will keep everyone's passports during our trip.
2. **Bring a carry-on bag with enough essentials for 2-3 days in case there are delays in retrieving baggage. This can happen—be prepared!** Pack no more than you can carry and use canvas or nylon duffel bags rather than hard luggage. Please only bring a total of a carry-on bag and one checked duffle bag. Checked bags must be 50lbs per bag or less and no more than 62 linear inches (length + height + width). Bags over 50lbs will be charged an additional fee. For carry-on purposes watch your liquid containers. Clear containers, 3 oz limit, packed in a clear zip lock bag. A small collapsible bag can be put into your duffle bag to bring home souvenirs.
3. **Sleeping**
  - **Light** sleeping bag for extra comfort while sleeping on cots.
  - Small camping pillow.
  - If you're not bringing a sleeping bag, a light blanket would be useful.
  - Mosquito net (we will provide these)
4. **Clothing** (As estimated for a 8-10 day trip)
  - 2 pairs of jeans or light weight work pants
  - 1-2 shirts
  - Light weight sweater or jacket
  - 3-4 quick dry T-shirts (no spaghetti straps or tank tops)
  - Cotton socks/underwear
  - Flip-flops or sandals for the shower
  - 1-2 pairs of shorts (above the knee – not shorter)
  - Raingear (Poncho)
  - Swimsuit (ONE PIECE ONLY)
  - Work or Hiking boots (comfortable)
  - One dressier outfit – NO mini skirts
5. **Personal effects**
  - Flashlight/headlamp with extra batteries
  - Simple, inexpensive camera with Batteries
  - Hat(s) and /or Bandana(s)
  - Light towel and washcloth
  - Journal and pens
  - Sunscreen/lotion
  - Antibacterial handi-wipes
  - Toiletries and small mirror

- Hand sanitizer
- Tampons or sanitary napkins (if needed)
- Sunglasses
- Hair and body soap
- Insect repellent (w/ 20-35% DEET)
- Ear Plugs (You will need these for sleeping)
- Water bottle (please write your name on it)
- Pictures of you, your family, your town, etc
- Laundry bag
- Corrective vision wearers should bring an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses/case/solution
- Spanish/English Dictionary
- Money belt
- Two or three small plastic bags (such as grocery bags)
- Deck of cards
- Protein bars or energy bars
- Required prescription medications (we'll bring over the counter medications in our First Aid kit)
- If you have severe allergies that require an epi-pen, make sure to bring it with you
- 2 or 3 large zip-top bags

### **Cameras, CD players, MP3 players, cell phones, jewelry, etc**

Though bringing a CD player, MP3 player, expensive camera, cell phone or some other item may seem like a basic essential when traveling, we encourage you to only bring items that you cannot live without! We cannot guarantee that your items will be safe. We ask you to be aware of the wealth that you both represent and bring with you and pack simply. Please do not bring anything that will be sorely missed. If you lose something of value, you will be solely responsible for the item lost.

## **Things to think about...**

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We have a responsibility to be attuned to local habits and customs, and to behave in an appropriate manner. Issues to bear in mind:

- **Daily Schedules.** In most areas outside of Managua, Nicaraguans live by the sun, i.e. they get up very early and go to bed very early. It is imperative that we are conscious of these routines. When we are up later than the community, the group is expected to be quiet.
- **Time.** Nicaraguans do not live by linear time, i.e. strict schedules. In rural areas, the infrastructure is generally non-existent ... making it impossible for local people to rely on communication or transportation systems. For North Americans, this can be frustrating. We ask you to be flexible and patient.
- **Privacy.** Privacy is a challenge when you are on a mission trip. Much of the time, everyone knows when you are going to the bathroom or taking a shower. Furthermore, local children are often omnipresent ... fascinated, curious and excited about the group's presence. They will be close-by from sun-up to sundown. As the week wears on, this can be wearing. Please be tolerant of their presence and conscious of your actions.

- **Religion.** Many, if not most, Nicaraguans consider themselves to be religious, whether Catholic or Protestant (more commonly known as Evangelical in Latin America). We need to demonstrate an open, ecumenical spirit. As a result of the religious frame of reference, certain issues surface repeatedly. First, women are expected to follow a certain dress code -- no “short” shorts or bathing suit tops at any time (except if we go to the beach); and for formal gatherings or worship, a skirt is considered most appropriate. Second, romantic involvement and/or sexual contact are not considered to be casual matters. Particularly in rural areas and small towns, there is no such thing as “dating.” Thus, we will not tolerate romantic involvement or sexual interaction between and among volunteers and/or members of the local community during a trip.
- **Pena.** (“pe- nah”) is a good word to know. The concept behind the word is helpful in understanding people in Nicaragua. It can mean timidity, shyness, or faintheartedness. It means keeping a low profile or wanting to always present your best self. Examples of how Nicaraguans show “pena”:
  - 1) They often ask for time to clean up and change their clothes before their picture is taken.
  - 2) Men would rather not be photographed in flip flops (“chinelas”).
  - 3) A man would never go shirtless or shoeless because it usually indicates that he is drunk.
  - 4) Nicaraguans generally don't shout unless they are playing baseball. They love to laugh, but they laugh best when all are laughing.
  - 5) Women usually will hide their laugh by covering their mouths. They consider laughing as an embarrassing show of emotion.
 Please be conscious of people’s comfort level before taking their picture. It is always appropriate and right to ask permission first.
- **Food.** While at the cooperative, please think before you pile the food on your plate. Take a little and come back for more...or go a little hungry. If you need to have a snack throughout the day, please go to your sleeping quarters and eat your snack privately. Even if you are not fond of the food being served, please be polite and eat what is being served. It is seen as a great insult if you refuse to eat the food being served. 60% of Nicaraguan children don't eat more than twice a day. Be sensitive as you drink a Coke or eat snacks that you’ve brought with you. These are luxuries that usually others in the community where you are staying don’t have. Your plane ticket alone costs the equivalent of the average annual salary in Nicaragua. For a point of reference: you come from a country that spends ten billion dollars a year on pet food. That’s four billion dollars more than the estimated total needed to provide basic education world wide. At the same time, when we are in the city, be careful about what you eat and drink. Try to stay away from fruits or uncooked vegetables (such as salads, unless you know how it’s been prepared). If you are uncertain about something, please ask your trip leaders.
- **Inclusion.** It’s easy to gravitate towards people in your group that you know well or feel comfortable around. However, the goal of this trip is to stretch ourselves... and our capacity for inclusion. You are only in Nicaragua for eight days, so make the most of it. Take time to get to know and bond with Nicaraguans... Be careful not to spend so much time with your group that you leave without making a Nicaraguan friend. Be sure to invite and include your Nicaraguan friends in any games or activities that you do.
- **Language.** Although you are not required to know Spanish to participate in this mission trip, it certainly adds to the richness of one’s experience if you can communicate with the local community more easily. You will wish you knew more Spanish! If you have the time to take a Spanish class or read some beginner textbooks, you won’t be disappointed. Enclosed is an abbreviation of some basic phrases that will come in handy during your visit.

## Spending Money

\$150-200 for Spending Money; **\$10 entry fee** (need in cash in US dollars). Cash is best for your spending money. In the village, \$1 bills can be used, but nothing larger. In the market, \$1, \$5, and \$10 are best. All bills should be in good condition – not ripped, torn or stained. If you want to change dollars into Cordobas, currency will be exchanged for you by the group leaders. Please do not bring travelers’



checks. They can be very problematic. If you choose to bring a credit card, MasterCard or Visa can be used at some locations. Please be aware that international fees will be applied. All money should be kept in money belts under your clothes.

## Mission Trip Policies

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- **Drugs.** Use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated. Individuals found to be using or in possession of drugs will return home.
- **Alcohol.** Alcoholism is a huge societal problem in Nicaragua. Most weekends, you will find the men in each community going to bars to drink until they can't walk. Alcohol consumption can be devastating to families, as the men work to drink, leaving little, if any, money for buying the basic needs. At El Porvenir alcoholism is a big problem. Although they have tried to control the level of consumption while in the community, the men (usually the ones with the addiction) will usually find a way of accessing it, either by going to another community, or talking someone into bringing it to them. Therefore, trip participants will not be allowed to drink while we are at El Porvenir.
- **Unruly behavior.** All volunteers are expected to act with outmost maturity and respect. The Nicaraguan people are extremely humble people, but they do not tolerate out of control or disrespectful behavior.
- **Overall health issues.** All mission trip participants are expected to be in good mental, emotional and physical health. This trip will be challenging for anyone participating, but it will be compromising to anyone having special needs. Please make sure to have all prescription medications with you and take them as recommended during the trip.
- **Gift-giving.** Gift-giving is a universal phenomenon. Because of our relative wealth, it can be a temptation to pass along gifts to individuals within the local community. Nonetheless, **we strongly discourage individual gift-giving** because it can create divisions in the community at large. Our primary purpose is to work on a project that benefits the entire community. Gift giving between individuals ignores the greater community and creates a tension between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Another way to think of it is this: Don't give anything to a Nicaraguan that they cannot give back to you. A story, a song, a game...these are things that can be shared. If you give a gift that cannot be re-paid, you are reminding the community of the difference between our material wealth rather than celebrating our commonalities.
- **Romantic Relationships.** Romantic relationships in Nicaragua are not taken lightly. Dating is a serious matter, usually leading to marriage. Flirting is a common occurrence, but not to be encouraged. During our mission trip, we ask that you are careful about your show of affection toward others. Romantic relationships between mission trip participants and Nicaraguans is not allowed; moreover, we ask that romantic relationships among trip participants be kept at bay during our mission trip.
- **Safety in Numbers.** All group members should be mindful to be with another group member at all times, especially in the evening or when interacting with people outside of our group.
- **Un-foreseen Travel.** In the event that a participant must be sent home early —medical, family emergency or disciplinary action, he/she will be fully responsible for all costs related to changing the return dates of the air fare and/or any hotel and other transportation costs required to deliver you home safely.
- **Trip Cancellation Policy.** The Nicaragua Mission Trip Planning Committee will closely monitor the US State Department advisories, travel warning, and consular information sheets to ensure that we have as much accurate information as possible to make a balanced risk assessment. We will also gather regular up-to-date input from the community of El Porvenir regarding the situation in Nicaragua (whether political or weather related).

Although highly unlikely, there may be certain circumstances which would result in cancellation of the trip. For example, if the US State Department issues a RED alert that includes Central America, the trip participants would be notified of the church's "intent to cancel." A final decision regarding cancellation would be made in consultation with the people of Nicaragua. Other reasons for cancellation may include: natural disaster, dangerous weather conditions, health alerts, lack of participants.

Depending on the timing of such a decision, refunds of deposits and money already paid toward the trip may not be possible, although every effort will be made to provide refunds in the event of cancellation of the trip.

Refunds will not be available to individuals who cancel their own participation in the trip, when the trip goes on as planned.

## What to expect...

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Life in Nicaragua is very different and stressful. Not only will you encounter a whole different language and culture, but you will experience a level of poverty that you have probably never experienced before. At the same time, you will find in Nicaraguans a friendly, likeable people who will open their homes and their hearts to you.

Our main mission will focus on working with a cooperative of coffee farmers, a community of about 48 families. Their community is called El Porvenir (The Future). Our main goal will be to build relationships with the community through art and communal activities. We have had great success in the past with sharing what we know and allowing them to share what they know.

The accommodations are rough. Although we will be sleeping under a roof, we will be in an area open to the outside and we will have to share common sleeping space. We will sleep on cots, and will have to use an outhouse. The community doesn't have any running water or electricity (which will mean having to take cold showers). We will bring bottled water with us for drinking and cooking preparation. The people who will prepare our food are used to cooking for large groups of foreigners, therefore they know of special precautions they need to take in order to ensure safe food handling and cooking.

The area where we will be working is very remote. Getting there is a very long and treacherous journey through very bad roads and dry river beds. We will rent a four wheel drive vehicle to keep at the community with us. Most of our trip will happen on 18 passenger vans or buses. Once we reach a certain point, we will have to travel on a trailer pulled by a tractor. Remote does not necessarily mean quiet... The animals (such as chickens, cows, dogs, etc.) are usually active and loud during the wee hours of the morning. If you are a light sleeper, it might be a good idea for you to bring a pair of ear plugs.

\*Information for this handbook was adapted from the Center for Development in Central America, Bridges to Community, US based nonprofit organizations working in Nicaragua and the Pittsburgh Presbytery's Malawi Partnership Program.



## *Nicaragua Mission Trip Personal Information Form*

1. Official name (as it appears on your passport): \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Preferred nickname: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Home address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Telephone numbers:
  - a. Home: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Work: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Cell: \_\_\_\_\_
4. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are you a member of the Sixth Presbyterian Church?    ☐Yes    ☐No
6. Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Name of spouse/Partner: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Names and ages of children: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Current occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Hobbies/leisure activities: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Three words that best describe you: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Favorites:
  - a. Bible passage(s): \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Hymn or Worship Song: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Health:
  - a. Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Significant past medical history or health concerns: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Physical, emotional, mental conditions/disabilities: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. What do you look forward to most about going to Nicaragua? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. Finish this sentence: "The trip to Nicaragua will be a success for me if ..." \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. Please share with us why you want to go on this trip:

# Health History Form

Please Type or Print Clearly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Passport No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Insurance Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_ ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ EC Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
EC Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ EC Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you have or have you ever had any of the following conditions?:

Condition	Yes	No	Don't Know	Condition	Yes	No	Don't Know
Kidney Disease				Depression			
Frequent Headaches				Mental Illness			
Fainting spells				Heart disease			
Seizures				Diabetes			
Allergies				HIV/Aids			
Tuberculosis				COPD			
High blood pressure				Asthma			
Musculoskeletal disease				Liver Disease			
Stroke				Other			

a. If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Date of last TB skin test (PPD): \_\_\_\_\_

Results: ☐ Negative ☐ Positive

c. If previous TB Positive (PPD), date of last Chest x-ray: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you been vaccinated for:

Disease	Yes	No	Had the Disease
Hepatitis A			
Hepatitis B			
Measles			
Rubella			
Mumps			
Yellow Fever			
Polio			
H1N1			

a. Date of last Tetanus (Td) vaccination: \_\_\_\_\_

3. List all allergies (drugs, latex, foods, animals): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require an epi-pen? ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. List prescription medications you are currently taking: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Hold Harmless, Waiver of Liability and Emergency Medical Care Authorization***

The Sixth Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, PA is sponsoring the 2017 Nicaragua Mission Trip. I,

\_\_\_\_\_, of \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Address

In consideration of the opportunity to participate in this trip, and in consideration of other obligations incurred, hereby agree as follows:

1. I fully understand that I may be traveling or staying in areas of the world that may have unstable political, economic, and security situations where acts of war, potential danger from lack of control over local population, terrorism, or violence could occur at any time.
2. I fully understand that I may encounter difficult climates and living conditions; that risks are present concerning means of travel, food, water, diseases, pests, and poor sanitation and other health-related situations. Medical or emergency medical treatment may be inadequate or not available.
3. I accept and assume all responsibility for my personal actions and any and all risks of property damage or personal injury that occur during or result from my participation, including potential injury while working.
4. With the above in mind, I fully understand and agree that Sixth Presbyterian Church, the Pittsburgh Presbytery, PC (USA), the trip organizers or the community which we are visiting shall not be responsible or liable in any way for any accident, loss, death, injury, or damage to myself or my property in connection with this trip or any portion of the trip. Further, I make this agreement on behalf of my heirs, agents, fiduciaries, successors, and assigns. I waive, knowingly and voluntarily, each and every claim or right of action I have now or may have in the future against the above mentioned entities as related to this trip.
5. I hereby state that I am in good health and have all medications necessary to treat any allergic or chronic conditions, and I am able to administer such medications without assistance. If at any time during the trip I need emergency medical care and am not able to give consent because of my physical or mental condition, I authorize emergency medical care decisions to be made on my behalf, and I specifically release the Sixth Presbyterian Church and its agents, in making those emergency medical care decisions, from any and all liability associated with said decisions.
6. I HAVE READ CAREFULLY, AGREE TO, AND INTEND TO BE LEGALLY BOUND BY ALL TERMS OF THIS HOLD HARMLESS WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE AUTHORIZATION.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_