

The Country of Lakes and Volcanoes

Proposal of Group Travel for the Dianova Network

Nicaragua: colonial history, culture, nature and the Caribbean

11 DAYS/10 NIGHTS: INCLUDE MANAGUA, GRANADA, MATAGALPA (COFFEE ROUTE), RÍO SAN JUAN, EL CASTILLO, RESERVA INDIO MAÍZ AND LAGUNA DE PERLAS (PEARL LAGOON), VISITING CAYOS PERLAS AND ITS MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Dianova and Rutas Escondidas invite you to discover Nicaragua in a sustainable and responsible fashion, while promoting local participation and sustainable, human development as a key element of a balanced touristic development



Nicaragua



VOYAGER, CAN YOU SEE
THE COUNTRY'S DOORS WIDE OPEN?
THE WHOLE COUNTRY IS AN IMMENSE HOME
DON'T WORRY, THIS IS THE RIGHT AIRPORT,
COME IN, JUST COME IN! NOW YOU'RE IN
NICARAGUA

"Noticias para viajeros"
Julio Cortázar



dianova | 
learn | grow | achieve



RUTAS
escondidas





Situated between two oceans and covered with lakes and volcanoes, Nicaragua is a peaceful and warm country where history, nature and poetry meet. In Nicaragua, nature is powerful in a country that is diversified, in elements, colors and contrasts.

- Green for its exuberant, enormous biodiversity – the country has the largest, best preserved areas of rainforest and lowland ecosystems in all Central America.
- Blue for its crystal-clear lakes and beaches – the country has 305 km of coastline on the Pacific Ocean and 450 km on the Atlantic-Caribbean coast. Between both coasts lay the beautiful Lake Managua (Xolotlán), and its 1,053 sq. km and Lake Nicaragua (Cocibolca), with 8,138 sq. km.
- Red, for the fire of its 25 volcanoes, among which 6 are still active.

Nicaragua is a multicultural country. The relics of its colonial era in the Northern, Central and Pacific regions mingle with the populations that dwell on the Atlantic Coast and belong to the ethnic groups of Garífuna, Miskitos, Creoles, Rama, Sumu and Mestizos.

It results in a indigenous, exotic and Caribbean-like world view with European, African and local influences that make of Nicaragua a very exciting country.

In addition, according to the Nicaraguan Council of Spanish Residents, "Nicaragua is considered one of the most secure countries in all Central America".

Nicaragua is primarily an agricultural country which produces basic cereals and livestock, especially in the beef sector, with an important production of meat and dairy products. Productivity levels remain low however and producers get very few benefits from their production.

In recent years, local high-quality coffees have gained international recognition. In addition, fishing activities have increased significantly, especially shrimp production.

Some Relevant Information

- Volcanic and tropical country, it has two large lakes: lake Nicaragua and lake Managua
- The capital is Managua and Spanish the official language (in the Caribbean region, most people speak English in addition to local tongues)
- The country's area is 129,424 Sq. Km (7.7 % water)
- 5.5 million inhabitants
- The official currency is the Cordoba. 1 Cordoba = 0,037 USD (March, 2015)
- The rain season runs from May to October and summer from November to April
- The country's primary economic activity is based on agriculture and livestock farming: coffee, tobacco, cotton, sugar cane (rum), beans, bananas and livestock

Day 1. Arrival in Nicaragua

Reception at the airport in **Managua**. Transfer to the city. Arrival at the Hotel Europeo. Session welcome at the hotel. Free time for dinner.

Accommodation at Hotel Europeo.



THE EUROPEO HOTEL IS MANAGED BY THE DIANOVA NICARAGUA FOUNDATION. ITS MISSION IS « TO PROVIDE CLIENT-FOCUSED, QUALITY HOTEL SERVICES WHILE FOSTERING SOCIAL PROGRESS »

THE PROFITS OF THE EUROPEO HOTEL ARE ALLOCATED TO THE DIANOVA FOUNDATION'S SOCIAL PROJECTS



Day 2. Granada

Breakfast at hotel, transfer to **Granada** and tour of the city of Granada, one of the most prominent colonial cities in Central America. Granada's innumerable and colorful monuments are worth visiting, including the **Cathedral**, **Columbus Park**, la **Casa de los Tres Mundos**, **La Merced Church**, the **Convent of San Francisco**, among other attractions. Free time for lunch.

Boat tour to the **Isletas de Granada**. It is a set of 365 small volcanic islands located in the **Cocibolca Lake**. Free time for dinner and accommodation in Granada.



GRANADA IS A CITY MADE FOR
SAUNTERING AND WANDERING AMONG ITS
COBBLE-STONED, MEANDERING STREETS

Day 3. Granada - Masaya - Managua

Breakfast at hotel and transfer to Managua. Although not the country's largest, the **Masaya Volcano** is a must-see, for it is one of the most iconic site in Central America.



And the city of **Masaya** is known as the capital of Nicaraguan folklore; it is also one of Nicaragua's largest cities, also known as the '**City of Flowers**', for its well-groomed gardens and the custom of the people to ornate their houses with flowers.



Arrival in Managua. City tour by the city of Managua

It is the capital of Nicaragua; it is surrounded by Lake **Managua**, Xolotlán in the local language, and many lagoons. Managua is not the main goal of those wishing to know Nicaragua; it is still a scenic and attractive city, with interesting architecture enhanced with green spaces. Proportionally, Managua is the greenest city in the Americas.



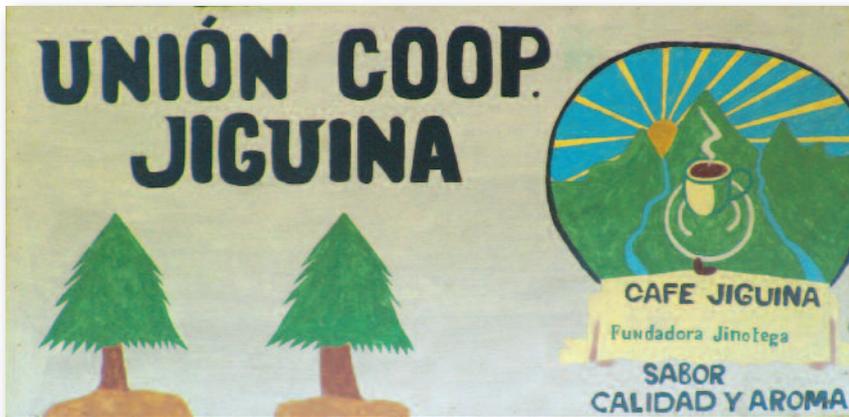
AMUSING DETAIL, MANAGUA'S STREETS BEAR NO NAME. THE ORIENTATION SYSTEM IS BASED UPON THE LOCATION OF KNOWN REFERENCES SUCH AS RETAIL OUTLETS OR ADMINISTRATION SERVICES (NEXT TO INTUR INSURANCES, NEXT TO "LA RACACHACA", ETC.) IN ADDITION, THOSE REFERENCES HAPPEN TO HAVE DISAPPEARED OVER TIME (NEXT TO WHERE "LA VIDA" DRUGSTORE OR WHERE THE VICKY USED TO BE, ETC.).

Managua's **historical center** was all but wiped out by the earthquake of 1972. A number of buildings have resisted; they are those that Rutas Escondidas propose to visit in a city tour where we will be able to enjoy the city's most interesting architecture and viewpoints, such as the **Old Cathedral**, the **Palace of Culture**, Rubén Darío **National Theatre**, **Xolotlán lake**, and **Tiscapa Laguna**, among many others.

Free time for lunch

Free time for dinner - accommodation at the Europeo Hotel

Day 4. Managua - Matagalpa: the Coffee Route



NICARAGUAN COFFEE IS RENOWNED INTERNATIONALLY AMONG COFFEE-LOVERS. COFFEE PRODUCTION CAN BE FOUND IN THE COUNTRY'S NORTHERN REGIONS, BETWEEN NUEVA SEGOVIA, MATAGALPA AND JINOTEGA



Breakfast in Managua, departure to **Matagalpa**, **la Fundadora Mountains** and **la Jigüina Cooperative**

We propose to start our journey with a very nice route, in the middle of a wooded area, in the fresh climate of **La Fundadora Mountains** which sprawl from **Matagalpa** to the 'City of Mists', **Jinotega**, both important coffee producers. The whole journey is considered an essential axis of the country's coffee production.

In the meantime we will visit **la Jigüina**, a cooperative which harvests coffee beans at the core of **la Fundadora Mountains**, next to the Jigüina river. We will observe the production of coffee and we will be free to ask questions about the process of coffee production, processing and marketing.

As mentioned on the labels of the **Jigüina coffee**: "Growing introduced in mid-nineteenth century by the working hands of men and women united in cooperatives"

Day 5. Matagalpa - San Juan River: San Carlos - El Castillo

Breakfast at La Fundadora and transfer to **San Carlos**. Free time for lunch. Transfer by boat on the San Juan river to **El Castillo**, a beautiful little village of colorful containing the **Fortress of the Immaculate Conception**.

Visit of the Castle and Fortress. Free time for dinner. Accommodation in El Castillo.



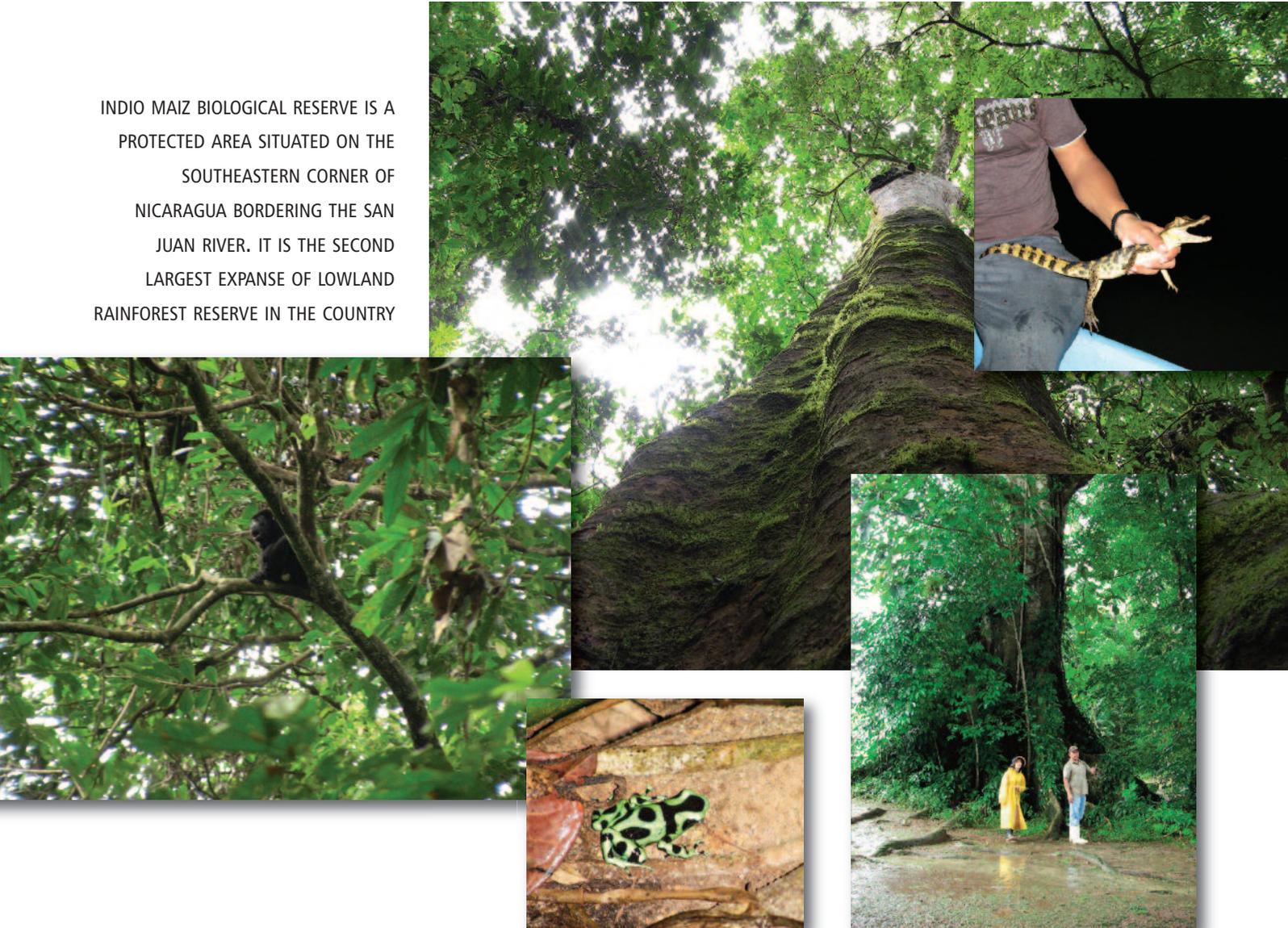
THE RIO SAN JUAN IS A 200 KM RIVER THAT FLOWS EAST OUT OF LAKE NICARAGUA INTO THE CARIBBEAN SEA. A LARGE SECTION OF THE BORDER WITH COSTA RICA RUNS ON THE SOUTHERN BANK OF THE RIVER



THE FORTRESS OF THE
IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Day 6. El Castillo - Río Bartola - Indio Maíz Biological Reserve

INDIO MAIZ BIOLOGICAL RESERVE IS A PROTECTED AREA SITUATED ON THE SOUTHEASTERN CORNER OF NICARAGUA BORDERING THE SAN JUAN RIVER. IT IS THE SECOND LARGEST EXPANSE OF LOWLAND RAINFOREST RESERVE IN THE COUNTRY



Breakfast at the hotel. Boat ride to the Bartola River and **Indio Maiz Biological Reserve** where the biological corridor of the San Juan river, declared a World Biosphere Reserve, begins.

Free time for lunch. Free time for dinner. Night Tour. Accommodation in El Castillo.

The Indio Maiz Biological Reserve measures about 3,180 square kilometers. It is estimated to be home to over 400 species of birds, 200 species of reptiles and 4 species of wild cats. Some of the **mammals** present include pumas, jaguars, armadillos, sloths, raccoons, wild boar and the incredible tame manatees and many other unusual animals. Also present are several different species of **monkey**, most notably the White-headed Capuchin, along with howler and spider monkeys. Among the **reptile family**, brightly colored poison **dart frogs**, tortoises and iguanas are common.

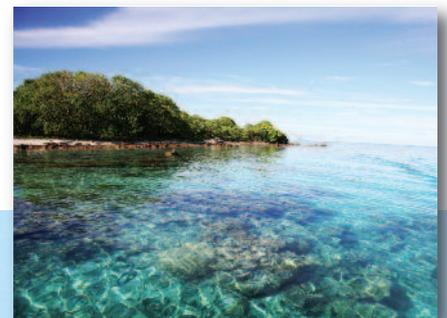
Despite the reserve's hugeness, much of it cannot be explored due to the limitations imposed by the **ministry of Natural Resources** to protect the area. However, two tracts of the forest are accessible and tourists can enjoy the beauty of the natural treasures hidden in this remote corner of Nicaragua.

Day 7. El Castillo - San Carlos - Managua

Breakfast at **El Castillo** and transfer to San Carlos. Lunch at **San Carlos**. Drive to **Managua**. Free time for dinner. Accommodation in Managua at Hotel Europeo.

Day 8. Caribbean Coast - Pearl Lagoon: Multiethnic Communities

Breakfast at the hotel in Managua. Transfer to the airport, flight to **Bluefields**, main city of the South Atlantic Autonomous Region, RAAS and point of entry to the **Caribbean Coast** of Nicaragua.



Arrival in **Bluefields** and boat transfer to **Laguna de Perlas** (Pearl Lagoon), one of the most secretive places in Nicaragua, its enigmatic name evokes a mysterious past, haunted with buccaneers carefully hiding their treasures.

In **Laguna de Perlas**, nature is jungle-like, with a rich diversity of plant and animal life in its tropical moist forest. The lagoon is especially impressive, one of the largest in Central America; it is intertwined with

many rivers, surrounded with mangroves and connected to the **Caribbean Sea**. It is also a multicultural enclave hosting peoples stemming from Nicaragua's Caribbean coast including six different ethnic groups: **Creole, Garifuna, Miskitos** and **Mestizos**. Lunch during tour. Dinner and accommodation at Laguna de Perlas

Day 9. Caribbean Coast: Cayo Perlas

Breakfast in **Laguna de Perlas**. Then, within an hour's sail amid crystal clear waters, we will find **Cayos Perlas**, an archipelago of small islands with white sand beaches, and spectacular seabed in turquoise water. Water sports, snorkeling, watching marine diversity, coral reef systems.

Lunch and free time to continue water sports, swimming or relaxation.
Dinner and camping accommodation



Day 10. Pearl Lagoon - Bluefields - Managua

Breakfast at Cayos Perlas. Transfer to Laguna de Perlas. Refreshments in Laguna de Perlas and transfer to Bluefields. Arrival in Bluefields airport towards Managua. Arrival in Managua. Meeting and farewell dinner and accommodation at the Hotel Europeo.

Day 11. Return Travel

Breakfast at the hotel in Managua. Transfer to the airport. Return to hometown.

Included

Transfer from and to Managua International Airport

Private transportation by car and boat throughout the program

Transfer from Managua to and from local airport

Light aircraft roundtrip Managua - Bluefields

9 hotel nights in double room, breakfast included

Camping accommodation in Cayos Perlas - 1 night

Lunch and dinner in La Fundadora

Lunch and dinner in Laguna de Perlas

Equipment for nautical activities in Cayos Perlas

Scheduled tours, including museums and other activities

Water throughout the stay

Bilingual guides, English/Spanish

Farewell dinner in Managua

Taxe and Insurances

Not included

Flight from city of origin to Managua

Tips & gratuities

Customs paperwork at Managua airport

Local airport taxes

Alcoholic beverages

Any item not specified in «Included»