

CHECKLIST FOR TRAVEL / VACATIONING in NICARAGUA

FLYING TO NICARAGUA DIRECTLY FROM THE USA / CANADA/ OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD:

1. The Augusto C. Sandino International Airport is located in the capital city of Managua. The commercial airlines currently flying into Managua are [Avianca](#), [Copa Airlines](#), and Aeromexico. The most common flight paths to Managua are via Miami, San Salvador, and Panamá with Avianca and Copa Airlines. **** As of June 16th, VACCINATED TRAVELERS are NOT required to have a PCR test. Proof of vaccination must be shown.** Travelers arriving in Nicaragua must present a digital or physical full COVID vaccination certificate, showing that they received all required doses of a COVID vaccine approved by the WHO or registered in Nicaragua: Sputnik V, Sputnik Light, Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Covishield, Soberana 02, Abdala, Janssen from Johnson & Johnson, Sinopharm, and Coviran. The government of Nicaragua will consider a traveler to be fully vaccinated when they have received at least two doses, including a mix of two different accepted vaccines, with the exception of Janssen from Johnson & Johnson and Sputnik Light, for which the application of one dose is considered complete. 14 days after the last shot is when one is considered fully vaccinated. Please see the [Ministry of Tourism webpage](#) for more information about current entry requirements.
2. **UNVACCINATED travelers, including Nicaragua Citizens and foreign tourists, MUST present a negative COVID-PCR test at the airport taken a maximum of 72 hours prior to entry.** If you are traveling from Asia, Africa, and Oceania, the test must be taken a maximum of 96 hours prior to your arrival in Nicaragua.
3. **The COVID-19 test results will need to be sent via e-mail to the airline prior to the date of travel. The testing times are monitored very closely by the airline and the airport.** It is important to follow the instructions and guidelines provided by your airline regarding testing requirements and scheduling. In addition to the COVID PCR test, a [health-form](#) issued by the Nicaraguan Ministry of the Interior should be downloaded, filled out, and emailed back to solicitudes@migob.gob.ni a minimum of 7 days before travel. **It is very important that the contact information be filled out with the name of the person or the place you are staying and a Nicaraguan contact number.**

4. Once you land in Nicaragua, the customs agents will ask for the destination or address where you are staying and how long you will be in Nicaragua. They will also ask for a local phone number. The Ministry of Health personnel routinely calls people while they are in Nicaragua and ask if they are feeling OK or experiencing any COVID-like symptoms. Once you exit the immigration section you can proceed to the x-ray machine. Then exit the airport.

Traveling To Nicaragua by Land From Costa Rica

1. The other option for traveling to Nicaragua is to either fly into San Jose, Costa Rica and take a short flight to Liberia, Costa Rica, and travel across the border to Nicaragua. The [Daniel Oduber International Airport](#) is approximately 88 kilometers and one hour and twenty minutes from the Peñas Blancas border crossing into Nicaragua.

2. Or, there are more than one dozen airlines flying into Liberia including [JetBlue](#), [Southwest Airlines](#), [United Airlines](#), [American Airlines](#), and [KLM](#) just to name a few from the USA. As of [April 1, 2022](#), Costa Rica no longer requires travelers landing in Costa Rica to have a digital health pass and unvaccinated visitors will no longer be required to purchase a travel insurance policy.

3. For those unvaccinated travelers, it is important to note when landing in Costa Rica, you must still have a PCR test taken a maximum of 72 hours prior to entry into Nicaragua. The first stop when you get off the plane in Costa Rica will be immigration. Tell them you are in transit to Nicaragua and you will not have to pay the tourist tax. If in transit, you will be required to exit the country the same day. Also when you tell them you are traveling to Nicaragua, they will ask to see a copy of your PCR test. It is strongly suggested to take the test before arriving into Costa Rica. After making it successfully through immigration, collecting your bags, and going through the x-ray station you will exit the airport.

4. Once you get to the border, you will proceed to the Costa Rican Immigration building. If you got the transit stamp at the airport in Liberia, then you will not be required to pay the exit tax. Inside the Costa Rica immigration building, they will ask to see your COVID test again. They will stamp your passport and send you on your way to Nicaragua. Exit the building and pass through one more checkpoint where they will just ensure you have the exit stamp. Then you will walk to

Nicaragua.



5. The first stop in Nicaragua will be the health building. The Health Window is where you present your Covid Test when you are traveling to Nicaragua by land. It is a little window in front of the immigration building.

6. There are no vaccine requirements or mandates to enter Nicaragua. The unvaccinated traveler must have taken the COVID test no more than 72 hours before entry. At the health building, they will ask to see a copy of our PCR test results and give you a small piece of white paper. Next, proceed inside the immigration building.

7. Once inside there is another window immediately to the left to pay a \$1 municipal fee. Then line up in one of the immigration lines to get a passport stamp to enter Nicaragua. The immigration agent will ask for the white paper from the health window. The agent will also ask where you are staying. **Make sure to have the complete name, address, and phone number of the accommodations (very important).** A copy of the reservation is helpful. Know the local phone number because The Ministry of Health personnel routinely call

people while they are in Nicaragua and ask if they are feeling OK or experiencing any COVID-like symptoms.



Immigration Building in Nicaragua after you pass through the Costa Rican Border.

8. There is a \$12 U.S. entry fee for Nicaragua. The customs agent will ask for this after he completes the paperwork. Next, proceed to the x-ray machine with your bags and then exit the building. Once outside there will be one additional checkpoint at the end of the parking area where the passport will be checked again for the entry stamp. After this you are free..Welcome to Nicaragua.

9. To exit Nicaragua on land, there is a \$1US fee to enter the building (??) and a \$4 US fee to exit the country. You will need exact change (dollar bills, two separate procedures).

Transportation from Liberia or Managua to the Nicaraguan town of your choice or Playa Tesoro:

From Liberia: Our team has secured reliable, safe, and friendly drivers that will drive you from the Liberia airport to the Nicaraguan border (a Costa Rican driver) and another driver (Nicaraguan) will pick you up on the Nicaraguan side. If landing by air into the Managua airport, our Nicaraguan driver will pick you up and take you to Playa Tesoro (or the other towns in Nicaragua) for a reasonable fee.

Checklist of things to take or have with you while in Nicaragua:
The rainy season is from June to October. The dry season is from November to May.

1. Insect repellent
2. Umbrella and/or rain gear during the rainy season
3. Comfortable, casual clothes that can dry easily
4. Comfortable, durable walking shoes (water resistant for the rainy season)
5. Sun hat
6. Sunscreen
7. Fly swatter
8. Reusable water bottles
9. Reusable shopping bags

Accommodation in and around Playa Tesoro:

Rachel and Matt are our Canadian contacts in Tesoro that have made Nicaragua their permanent home. Rachel can set up accommodations in the homes that are available very close to the property we will be building on.

<https://saltescapes.com/properties/>

Leon rentals:

<https://www.sublet.com/apartments-for-rent/leon>

<https://www.vrbo.com/vacation-rentals/central-america/nicaragua/leon>

Getting to know Nicaragua:

<https://www.visitnicaragua.com/rutas-turisticas-de-nicaragua/#>

Things to do in the closest town to Tesoro, Leon:

<https://www.dreambigtravelfarblog.com/blog/things-to-do-in-leon-nicaragua>

12 Top Things To Do In Leon (Nicaragua)

1. Street Art Of The Revolution

Leon is home to the revolution that has shaped Nicaragua into what we know it as today, so it's very significant. You can experience a little of this by checking out the famous street art of the revolution. This is one of the most iconic things to do in Leon.

2. Take A Free Walking Tour And Explore The Town

A great way to learn about the revolution of Nicaragua and see some of the great sights is to take a free walking tour (also a good option if you are on a tight budget). Some tours guides will be multilingual, others not.

If you don't speak Spanish, you can also take a walking tour organised by a tour company too!

Walking tours provide a good chance to ask all the questions you've been wondering about Leon and Nicaragua in general.

3. Visit The Largest Cathedral In Central America

The largest cathedral in Central America is located in Leon, it's pure white and quite beautiful! It's situated in the central plaza and is a wonderful focal point. Its proper name is Cathedral-Basilica of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. You can actually climb to the top and see surroundings views for \$2.

If you want to get some cool pics, you can get them here as it's not usually busy. Inside of the cathedral is also beautiful!

After you've visited the cathedral, dine at the restaurant in the plaza which offers great food and drinks (and nice cheap wine!)

Opening hours of the cathedral are 8 am to 12 pm Monday to Saturday and 2pm to 4pm on Sunday.



4. Telica Sunset Volcano Hike

Another day, another volcano! Nicaragua has lots of wonderful volcanoes, and this is another popular choice. You can do this sunset hike in one day, where you leave at 3pm and return at 8pm, or you can camp overnight. I think camping is more exciting! You head up there it's a steep 1 hour ascent, you stop at the top for lunch and you check for lava (it's only visible if it's clear). It's 1000m (3,481 feet).

Then you will be greeted with a stunning sunset followed by a jet black sky with thousands of twinkling stars!

After some dinner and marshmallow roasting, it's time to sleep. You rise at 5 am to catch the sunrise and it's again a memorable experience, unlike anything you will ever see before with the various volcanoes peaking up in front of you. You will probably smell a lot of sulphur (which smells like eggs), since it's active. It's also important to do this hike with a guide, since it is a pretty active volcano. They monitor it and will know if it's going to start spurting rocks out or not (oh yeah, she does that instead of lava!)

****Just a quick note-- this hike can be done in combination with the sand boarding at Cerro Negro, you'll be camping!****
It's about \$50 for the overnight trip and about \$40 for the basic sunset hike.

5. Dine At El Mirador

This restaurant/bar offers a viewpoint and a great sunset spot. The food is cheap and delicious, I had a burger and a sharing platter. The cocktail, wine and beer are all cheap and great! They play loud music and it's always busy (which is a good sign!) It's open late too, which is rare for some restaurants in the area. It's a great place to go with friends for a few drinks, or with your partner for a sunset dinner and to play some cards.

6. Head To The Beach

If you fancy escaping the streets of Leon, then you can easily head to the coast in just 30 minutes.

There are various spots up and down the coast that have lots of great restaurants, places to relax, and places to surf if you wish!

Lots of tour companies also offer day trips and shuttles to and from the beach, but the chicken buses are also a decent and cheap (safe too- at least for me) way to get around.

7. Party, Party, Party!

Leon isn't party central, but there are a lot of great bars to have a few too many drinks, and do a little dance.

- Via Via is the place to be on a Friday as they play live music and serve cheap drinks and good food (I can vouch for great wine)
- El Mirador: This is one of the best places to eat in Leon too btw. Great food at great prices and it's filled with uni students just wanting to have a good time!
- [Bigfoot Hostel](#): If you've been speaking to any backpackers who have been to Leon before, then you'll probably have heard of this hostel. It's reputation is well known.

8. Visit The Contemporary Art Museum

Leon is a city famed for its poets and artists, so it makes perfect sense to visit the museum of contemporary art.

Plus, it's a way to hide from the searing heat (Leon is the second hottest city in Nicaragua), and it's only \$2.

9. Take A Nicaraguan Cooking Class

Nicaraguan cuisine is very BBQ, rice and bean based, but it's got lots of flavour. Why not learn a new skill and new cuisine whilst in Leon.

You can then cook for your family and friends back home and recreate your favourite dishes when you're missing Nicaragua (which you will!)

10. Visit The Museum Of The Revolution

After you've checked out the murals and street art of the Revolution, you can find out more from locals who have experienced it. It's \$2 entrance to the museum and you will see and be given lots of amazing and fascinating information. This is one of the important things to do in Leon!

11. Volcano Boarding Down Cerro Negro

Seriously the BEST thing to do in Leon, Nicaragua. How many people can say they have "surf" down a volcano!? No, not many, and you can be one of them. Here is all you need to know:

- Book through a tour agency, we used Nica Time as they were cheapest at \$21 (plus park entrance fee) and it included video footage and photos of us boarding, and a drink at a bar afterwards! Plus the tour guide is amazing and informative.
- You head to the park in the morning, and you begin to climb. It takes about 1 hour because it's REALLY steep.
- You have to carry your own board up, and this is harder than it sounds.
- You can get help carrying your board by a local guy for about \$4. I ended up paying this halfway up because I am not ashamed to say I was struggling in the heat and my blood sugars!
- Most tours simply ascend and descend, but our tour guide did something extra and took us into the crater which was awesome because we got to see the steam coming out, feel how hot it was and learn more about the volcano!
- Cerro Negro is an active volcano and it's the second youngest volcano in the world
- It's EXTREMELY windy once you reach the top, so be careful
- It's safe, and it looks much worse (steep wise) than it is
- You change into the right clothes, you get gloves, goggles and you should bring an extra t-shirt to cover your face as ash hits up.
- You can control the speed, and stop it mid-way (don't panic)
- You dig your feet into the ground and lean forward to go slow and lean back to go fast. If you want to hit 70 mph, then put your feet up, but do NOT put them back down.
- It's so much fun and when you're doing it, you'll be thinking to yourself "Am I actually sliding down an active volcano?" yes you are.
- Don't forget to pose for your action photo!

- You can wear a GoPro (or [different action camera](#)) too for even more fun.
- There are only 2 places in the world you can volcano board: Nicaragua and Chile!

So, definitely do volcano boarding! It's one of the best things to do in Leon and you'd be silly not too. Ps, you will be finding volcano ash in your hair, body, clothes, everything for days, not matter how much you wash!

12. Climb the Highest Volcano In Nicaragua

Okay, last volcano thing, but I can't help it, Nicaragua has a lot of volcanoes! Leon is home to the highest volcano in the country: San Cristobal. Coming in at a height of 1,745 m (5,725 ft), it's a steep climb and one you should probably have a basic fitness level for.

It takes about 4 hours to hike up and you'll be greeted with stunning views. It's also an active volcano, so expect smelly sulphur again! It's about \$60 for the tour.



Day Trips from Leon

If you're simply on holiday in Leon and don't have the time (or just don't want to) explore the rest of the country, then there are a couple of great day trips you can take from Leon!

The Coast of Las Penitas: Want to relax by the beach and swim in the sea? Then make your way to Las Penitas. It's only 30 minutes from Leon, so you can get a taxi, shuttle, or get the chicken bus to the coast!

It's easy to head here in the morning and chill by the sea, dine at the restaurants and have a few cocktails.

Colonial Granada: When you think of Nicaragua, you often think of Granada and its beautiful colonial buildings, bright colours and volcanoes!

A day trip to Granada is a great choice.

Leave early in the morning (it takes 2.5 hours to get there) and you can explore the town, grab some lunch, enjoy cocktails that cost 70 pence each (I'm not joking), then in the evening you can head up to the Masaya volcano and see REAL LIFE LAVA.

A day trip to remember!

Tour agencies in Leon offer many day trips to Granada. Negotiate a good price.

Getting Around Leon

Nicaragua doesn't have Uber, or ride sharing apps (actually, there is one in Managua the capital), so that means you'll be using bikes, legs and taxis to get around Leon.

Thankfully most of the sights in Leon are within walking distance, and if you're heading somewhere outside of Leon, you'll be most likely on a tour that will have your transport provided.

They use little bikes with seats...like a rickshaw, type of device and they're very cheap to use and get around.

(Tip) if you are getting the Tica bus to Leon, the point where they drop you off is about 10 minutes outside the tourist area, and a rickshaw will cost you around \$3 for 2 people.

Taxis will try to rip you off, so negotiate hard.

Is Nicaragua Safe?

Yes. We are all aware of the political protests and political situation that has been going on in Nicaragua since 2018. However, these protests (Even when they were happening), did not affect tourists.

So it's kind of like me saying, don't go to England because of protests against Brexit. However, the government in Brexit don't kill people for protesting, so ya, no.

But, the protests are not happening (as they have been declared illegal) and Nicaragua continues to be the safest country in Central America.

They people are super friendly, you can use buses, hang around at night and not feel unsafe.

Don't get involved in protests, handle drugs, flash your expensive items, or walk around alone at night (or drunk) and you will be fine!

We didn't have a single issue in Nicaragua, and it's a fantastic country that holds a special place in my heart. It's truly one of the most beautiful countries I have ever visited, and if you decide not to go, then you are seriously missing out!

CAZZY MAGENNIS Recommendations of things to do in Nicaragua during the year. <https://www.visitanicaragua.com/12-lugares-turisticos-de-nicaragua-para-disfrutar-en-2022/>