

HONDURAS & NICARAGUA - JICARO & MORGAN'S ROCK



TRIP CODE

NITSJMR

DURATION

9 Days

LOCATIONS

Nicaragua



INTRODUCTION

Nicaragua is a land of lakes and volcanoes interspersed with pristine jungle, isolated Pacific beaches and fascinating colonial towns. Staying in beautiful eco lodges, this tour introduces you to some of the highlights of this captivating country. Discover colonial Granada, Masaya Lagoon and Volcano and Mumbacho Volcano before relaxing in a jungle hideaway with picturesque beachfront at San Juan del Sur on the Pacific coast. A perfect blend of sightseeing and relaxation.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Granada

On arrival you will be met and transferred from the International Airport to Granada, accompanied by a bilingual guide. Granada was founded in 1524 and is the oldest European settlement in the Americas. Situated on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, it is the oldest colonial city in Nicaragua and its streets are lined with beautiful pastel coloured colonial buildings. Jicaro Island is a small island (isleta), just a few minutes boat ride from Granada. This private island getaway has spectacular views of the Mombacho Volcano and the other islands of the archipelago. Dinner is included at the lodge.



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DAY 2: Granada City Tour, Masaya Volcano, Artisan Market

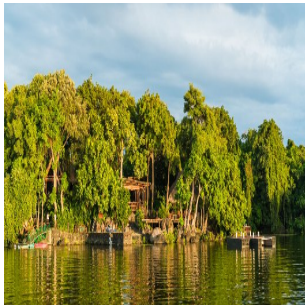
Today you will be taken on a private tour of Granada and the Masaya Volcano. We walk around Granada’s main square and admire La Merced church, the famed convent of San Francisco where you have the opportunity to see the mysterious stone idols, as well as an impressive collection of pre-Columbian sculptures. There are good views of the town from the bell tower of La Merced. We then visit Nicaragua’s first and largest national park, Masaya Volcano National Park that was established in 1979. The park includes a beautiful volcanic lake known as “Masaya Lagoon”. On arrival, we will see how the area has been shaped by the various volcanic activities. A short distance from the park’s entrance is the Environmental Interpretation Centre. The museum houses a model of the park as well as paintings by Nicaraguan artists that depict the history of the volcano. The centre also provides information on tectonic plates and the volcanic regions of the planet. We will learn about the flora and fauna of this wildlife refuge before continuing our trip to the summit of the volcano by vehicle. Here we view the Santiago crater, active since 1946 and constantly emitting sulphur dioxide gas. We then head out to visit the Masaya arts and crafts market that features local ceramics, hammocks, wood and leather souvenirs. At the end of the tour we return to Jicaro Island. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



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DAY 3: Jicaro Island - Day 3 & 4

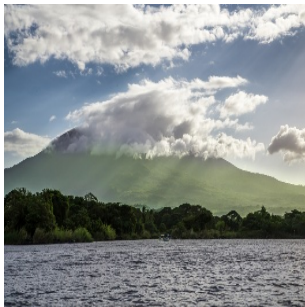
The next 2 days are at leisure for you to relax on the island or book activities directly at the lodge. The lodge is the perfect base from which to explore Granada Isletas, Lake Nicaragua and other attractions. The tours offer varied activities that range from easy to more challenging, with options to explore the nature and culture of Nicaragua. All tours are accompanied by a private guide. The lodge also offers sustainability tours that give you an insight into the workings of an eco lodge. If you prefer to relax, then Jicaro Eco Lodge has a wellness centre that looks out over Lake Nicaragua and offers a range of massage and spa treatments. There is also a yoga deck overlooking the lake. Breakfast, lunch and dinner included.



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DAY 5: Mombacho Volcano, Morgan’s Rock

After breakfast you will have a private guided transfer from Jicaro Lodge to Morgan’s Rock Eco Lodge, with a walking tour en route along “The Crater Trail” of Mombacho Volcano. Located only 10 km from Granada, Mombacho Volcano is a stratovolcano, 1344m in height. The volcano is not extinct, but there have been no eruptions since 1570. The Mombacho Volcano Nature Reserve is one of 78 protected areas in Nicaragua. The upper regions of the volcano are home to cloud forest that contains flora and fauna endemic to the volcano such as the Mombacho salamander. From the volcano there are great views of Lake Nicaragua and Granada. Our vehicle takes us to the foot of the mountain where we will contact the park rangers and transfer to a 4WD vehicle for the drive to the top. The adventure begins on a paved road that leads through the natural reserve that is rich in biodiversity, surrounded by lush vegetation and with breathtaking views. As we climb towards the summit, we enter the mystical cloud forest. This ecosystem is home to 50 species of mammals including howler monkeys and white-faced monkeys. There are over 170 species of birds found here plus 30 species of reptiles and amphibians and 750 species of plants. The volcano has four craters, and we walk along the 1km Crater Trail that leads through cloud forest to learn about the flora, fauna, the ancient people who lived here and the volcanology of the area. The trail also leads through dwarf forest and past fumaroles, and if the day is clear there are impressive views of Granada, the Isletas of the Asese Peninsula, Laguna de Apoyo and the Masaya Volcano National Park. After the tour we continue on to Morgan’s Rock Eco Lodge in the town of San Juan del Sur. San Juan del Sur lies just north of the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, south of Granada and 2.5 hours from the city of Managua. Morgan’s Rock Eco Lodge is part of a 1,000 hectare reforestation project and an 800 hectare private nature reserve which is one of the last large natural sanctuaries along the Pacific Coast of Central America. The conservation of this area is crucial for maintaining the habitat of the animals that live in this region. During the past five years, almost 1.5 million trees (both hardwood and fruit), have been planted on this land, with the aim of recreating the ecosystem. These reforested lands, together with the nature reserve and the estuary, host a variety of forest animals such as howler monkeys, sloths, white-tipped deer and many birds native to the subtropical region. The beach is a nesting ground for two species of sea turtle. The lodge offers various meal plans that can be selected according to your preferences..



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DAY 6: At Leisure - Day 6 to 8

The following 3 days are at leisure for you to enjoy the beach or maybe book a tour off-site. Tours include Canopy Tour & Rappelling, Turtle Watching at La Flor Nature Reserve and an Ometepe Island Tour, one of the most impressive sights in Nicaragua. Ometepe Island was formed from Concepcion and Maderas volcanoes that emerged from Lake Nicaragua, with lush forest surrounding a lagoon. You may prefer to just relax on the beach or spend some time practicing yoga on the huge open-air platform that overlooks the ocean. Private yoga classes can also be organised.



DAY 9: Departure

Breakfast is included at the lodge, and at the appropriate time you will be taken by private guided transfer from Morgan’s Rock Eco Lodge to the International Airport. Please Note: As the transfer takes approximately 3 hours, we recommend that you book an afternoon flight.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS	
Accommodation	Standard
Inclusions	Private transportation for the entire trip Excursions as specified on the below itinerary Bilingual guide for all the days All breakfast Lunches as specified on the below itinerary 04 Nights at Jicaro Lodge, Granada 04 Nights at Morgans Rock Ecolodge, San Juan del Sur Local taxes
Difficulty Rating	1 (easy)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

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SUSTAINABILITY

Chimu Adventures undertakes a number of sustainability measures within its operations including:

- 1) Only using local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprints. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting.
- 2) Where possible, using locally owned and operated boutique hotels to maximise the return to the local community.
- 3) Chimu's "Pass it on" programme has provided funding to hundreds of local community projects in Latin America. Our aim is to empower local communities, helping them to develop their own infrastructure for the future. Since 2006, we have been working with Kiva (a well-known Non-Governmental Organisation), providing hundreds of loans to local businesses all over South America.
- 4) In our pre tour information we provide a range of tips and advice on how to minimise your impact on both local environments and communities.
- 5) Chimu Adventures' offices also take a number of sustainability measures including carbon offsets for company vehicles and most staff travel. Chimu Adventure's internal processes are also structured to create a paperless office and to reduce waste. There are also internal programmes to help staff minimise their carbon footprint such as our staff bike purchase assistance plan which encourages office staff to commute to work via bicycle. Currently almost half of our office based staff commute to work via bicycle.

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