**Nicaragua Information**

**Location:** Central America. Nicaragua is bordered on the north and northwest by Honduras, on the east by the Caribbean Sea, on the south by Costa Rica, and on the southwest by the Pacific Ocean. The capital and largest city is Managua.

**Population:** 2010 est. pop. 5,995,900. Managua 1,875,000. Puerto Cabezas 27,000

**Land and People:** There are four main geographic areas. The northwestern highlands have peaks as high as 8,000 ft (2,440m). On the Caribbean is the torrid [Mosquito Coast](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0834180.html), with the historic port of [Bluefields](http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/world/A0807982.html). This region is home to the Miskito people, who were given limited autonomy by the government in 1987. A lowland belt running northwest to southeast contains lakes Managua and Nicaragua. The fourth region is a narrow volcanic belt squeezed between the lakes and the Pacific; in this region the productive wealth and the population (largely of Spanish and indigenous descent) are concentrated.

**Government:** Nicaragua is governed under the constitution of 1987 as amended. Executive power is held by the president, who is both head of state and head of government. The president is popularly elected for five years and may not serve consecutive terms. Members of the unicameral 92-seat National Assembly are also elected for five years. The country is divided administratively into 15 departments and two autonomous regions.

## Economy: Agriculture has always been important, but services now employ a larger percentage of the workforce and represent a much greater percentage of the gross domestic product. The chief commercial crops are coffee, bananas, cotton, sugarcane, and rice. Industries include food processing and the manufacture of chemicals, machinery and metal products, textiles, clothing, and footwear. There is also petroleum refining. Coffee, beef, seafood, tobacco, sugar, gold, and peanuts are the largest exports. Consumer goods, machinery and equipment, raw materials, and petroleum products are imported. The United States, El Salvador, and Costa Rica are the largest trading partners.

## Currency: The Nicaraguan monetary unit is the cordoba. Current exchange rate is 27 cordobas to 1 US dollar. The US dollar is also accepted a most hotels and restaurants.

**Time Zone**: Nicaragua is on the same time as Central Standard Time (Houston) in USA. During daylight savings time in the US, Nicaragua is effectively on Mountain Standard Time (Denver).

**Climate**: Temperature’s will range between 85 – 95 degrees with 75% humidity. It will rain most days.

**Religion** – Predominantly Roman Catholic with Protestant churches growing in most of the country. Religious freedom and religious tolerance is promoted by both the Nicaraguan government and the constitution.

**Language:** Spanish is the official language; indigenous languages and English are also spoken.