

Spanish Project

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Nicaragua, or the Republic of Nicaragua, is a country in Central America, situated between Honduras and Costa Rica. Bordered on the left and right the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, it spans approximately 50,000 square miles – this makes it a little bit smaller than the state of New York, and the largest country in Central America. The current primary spoken language is Spanish; 98% of the almost 5,570,200 inhabitants speak this language; about 67.5% of the population can read and write. 6.9% of the inhabitants are unemployed. Most of the people in Nicaragua, in terms of religion, are Roman Catholic. As for the racial standing of Nicaragua, among the people, 69 % are Mestizo (half European, half Amerindian), 17% are Caucasian, 9% are African, and 5% are Amerindian.

The flag of Nicaragua is composed of three horizontal bands (blue, white, blue) with a national coat of arms centered in the white band. The coat of arms is a triangle circled with the words “Republica de Nicaragua” on the top and “America Central” on the bottom.

Nicaragua is hot and humid, with an average temperature of 82 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. Humidity averages at 75%. The highlands are a little bit cooler than the lowlands. The middle of Nicaragua is mountainous – in fact, none of Nicaragua is below sea level at all; the highest point is Mogoton, at about 2,436 meters above sea level. The Pacific side of the country has several volcanoes. There are two main seasons, a rainy season and a dry season. The rainy season lasts from May to mid-November, and the dry season fills in the other months. Nicaragua is susceptible to earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, and hurricanes.

Nicaragua is a republic, and has been since the election of Violeta Chamorro in 1990. It declared independence from Spain in 1821 and was officially independent in 1850. The current president is Enrique Bolaños Geyer. Anybody 16 years of age or older can vote. The capital of Nicaragua is Managua, which is also the largest city in the country.

As concerning current events, Nicaragua is holding elections in November. The left-wing Sandinista National Liberation Front political party (FSLN) has contracted alliances with several political forces it has been fighting for decades. Some feel that this move could turn out to be a bad move.

Economically, Nicaragua is very active and changing, rapidly gaining importance. It is an under-developed country, but the government has been trying hard to improve and expand the economy. The main sector of economic activity is in agriculture, but much is expected from the emerging sectors of energy generation, tourism, exports, mining, construction, and consumer goods. Another reason for its quick growth is its membership in the Central American Common Market since 1999: this is a union of Central American countries that has no tariffs, borders, or barriers. Nevertheless, Nicaragua remains one of the poorest Central American countries, with high debt and widespread unemployment. The main exports of Nicaragua are coffee, seafood, beef, sugar, industrial goods, gold, bananas, and sesame. Their form of currency is the Nicaraguan Cordoba Oro, equivalent to a little more than 5 cents in American money.

There are several natural resources that can be found in Nicaragua: gold, silver, copper, tungsten, lead, zinc, timber, and fish. About 1.82% of the land has permanent crops.

Business conventions, from an American point of view, are less formal. Punctuality is not always observed. The business lunch time is between noon and 2:00. Private businesses and government offices generally close for the week before Easter Sunday, and between Christmas and New Year's.

There are a wide variety of sports played in Nicaragua. The national sport is baseball. Because of the long stretches of water on both sides (about 565 miles of coastline), all kinds of water sports are common and popular. Sport fishing has become increasingly popular in recent years; many companies have been formed for fishing tours and activities. The Tarpon and the Silver King are the most-sought fish in Nicaragua – they leave the sea for rivers and lakes in late spring and in October.

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