



Preparing for Your Nicaragua Service Program

Fabretto 



GET READY!

Welcome to Fabretto! We’re glad that you’ve decided to take the opportunity to join a service program to Nicaragua. For many of our volunteers, their program to Nicaragua is a life-changing event that alters their perspective on service, poverty, and global development.

This pre-program toolkit was designed by Fabretto staff members to provide an overview on how to plan and prepare for your service program and make your experience as meaningful as possible. We look forward to welcoming you to Nicaragua soon!

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SAMPLE ITINERARY

Group:
Number of People: 16 students + 3 chaperones + 1 Fabretto coordinator (20 people)
Dates: July 24-July 31, 2016

Sunday, July 24

11:22AM Arrive in Managua Flight UA 1432
12:00PM Lunch at Don Parrillon and history talk with Joe Connelly
1:30PM Travel to Cusmapa
6:30PM Arrive in Cusmapa
7PM Dinner
Overnight: Fabretto Casa Loyola

Monday, July 25

7AM Breakfast and pack lunch
8AM Overview of the week, Intro to Fabretto
9-12PM Work on Service Project
Lunch La Casona
1-4PM Work on Service Project/ Activities with students
5:30PM Sunset at Lookout Point
6:30PM Dinner
Overnight: Fabretto Casa Loyola

Tuesday, July 26

7AM Breakfast
9AM-12PM Work on Service Project
Lunch La Casona
1-4PM Work on Service Project/Activities with students
5PM Learn to make Tortillas at Doña Maria’s House
6:30PM Dinner
Overnight: Fabretto Casa Loyola

Wednesday, July 27

7AM Breakfast
9AM-12PM Work on Service Project
Lunch La Casona
1-4PM Work on Service Project/Activities with students
5:30PM Visit Basket and Jewelry Cooperative
7PM Dinner
Overnight: Fabretto Casa Loyola

Thursday, July 28

7AM	Breakfast
8:30-12:00PM	Work on Service project
Lunch	Packed lunch at school
1-4PM	Activities with students
6PM	Mass in Cusmapa/Go to lookout point
7PM	Dinner
Overnight:	Fabretto Casa Loyola

Friday, July 29

7AM	Breakfast & pack lunches
9-11AM	Work on Service Project
11AM-12PM	Pack the van, prepare for departure
12PM	Leave for Granada
6PM	Check-in at Backpacker’s Inn
7PM	Dinner at Zajuan in Granada
Overnight:	Backpacker’s Inn,

Saturday, July 30

8:00AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Depart for Ziplining
9:30-10:30AM	Ziplining at Mombacho
10:30-11AM	Travel to Laguna de Apoyo. Lunch, time to swim or kayak
2:30-5:30 PM	Relax and swim in Laguna de Apoyo
5:30-6:00 PM	Travel to Granada, check in to hotel
7:00 PM	Dinner in Granada
Overnight:	Hotel Backpacker’s Inn,

Sunday, July 31

7AM	Breakfast in Hotel (Have bags ready to load onto bus)
8:00-9:00AM	Mass in Granada
9-10:30AM	Drive to Airport (leave from Church)
10:30AM	Arrive and check-in at airport
12:22PM	Depart Nicaragua Flight UA 1433

PROJECT LOCATIONS

The school year in Nicaragua starts in February and ends in November. Many students help their parents during the December-January harvest.

Cusmapa



A rural Education Center with programs serving approximately 2,300 students (at primary and secondary schools in the greater area), offering the following facilities and programs:

- Education Center with computer lab, library, and school garden
- Early stimulation program
- Early and primary education enrichment program
- Food security and nutrition program
- Technical and vocational skills program
- Community development and parent/teacher training
- Rural secondary education program (SAT)

Estelí



An urban Education Center and community school, which together serve approximately 2,200 students through the following programs:

- Education Center with computer lab, library, and school garden
- Early and primary school education enrichment program
- Food security and nutrition program
- Vocational education program
- Primary school in La Cruz, Estelí’s trash dump community

Acahualinca



An urban Education Center serving roughly 1,200 students, offering the following facilities and programs:

- Education Center with computer lab and library
- School gardens at local primary schools
- Food security and nutrition program
- Primary education enrichment program
- Vocational education program
- Internship program
- Community development & parent/teacher training
- Nica HOPE jewelery cooperative

Las Sabanas • Quebrada Honda



A rural Education Center from which Fabretto supports over 1,000 students at the center and in nearby public schools with the following programs:

- Education Center with computer lab, library, and school garden
- Early stimulation program
- Early and primary education programs
- Food security and nutrition program
- Community development and parent/teacher training
- Rural Secondary Education program (SAT) and student cooperative

San Isidro de Bolas



A peri-urban Education Center outside the capital city, Managua, that supports approximately 800 students through the following programs:

- Education Center with computer lab, library, and school garden
- Primary education enrichment program
- Food security & nutrition program
- Community development and parent/teacher training
- Rural Secondary Education program (SAT)

Somoto



A peri-urban Education Center serving approximately 2,000 students, offering the following facilities and programs:

- Education Center with computer lab, library, and garden
- Early & primary education enrichment program
- Food security & nutrition program
- Vocational education program
- Community development & parent/teacher training
- Rural Secondary Education program (SAT)
- Formal preschool & primary education program at Education Center

Ocotal



A peri-urban Education Center serving over 1,600 students, offering the following facilities and programs:

- Education Center with computer lab, library, and garden
- Early & primary education programs
- Food security and nutrition program
- Vocational education program
- Community development & parent/teacher training

San Juan de Oriente



In 2015, Fabretto began supporting the only municipal library in San Juan de Oriente, Masaya. This year, a new library was built thanks to Fabretto and supporters such as La Vida Education, Elite SEM, and the friends and family of Zachary Ciperski. This new building has become the newest Fabretto Education Center, benefiting close to 200 children and youth from this town with Early and Primary Education Programs.

- Library
- Early & primary education programs
- Community development & parent/teacher training

PLAN & MEET

Whether you're meeting the members of your group for the first time or you're long-time friends, **meeting regularly before your program to Nicaragua** is an essential part of a successful service experience.

We recommend that you plan to meet at least three times with your whole team before your program and at least twice after coming home.

1. Introductions, Expectations, & Logistics

- Icebreaker Activities (page 9).
- Open Discussion: Divide into groups and discuss expectations (page 9).
- Timeline: Discuss the Timeline and establish deadlines.

2. Nicaragua: History & Current Events

Before your service program, meet with your group to learn more about Nicaragua. See [General Information Packet](#) for:

- Country Profile
- A Brief History
- Nicaragua Timeline
- Famous Figures in Nicaraguan History
- Current Events

3. Itinerary & Fundraising

Itinerary: Go over dates and vote on tourist activities (page 3).

Fundraising: Use the [Fabretto Fundraising Toolkit](#) to discuss:

- Brainstorm ideas for fundraising
- Appoint fundraising leaders
- Fundraising Goal
- Set dates for fundraising activities
- Item Donations: sports equipment, school supplies, clothes, shoes

Download our

Planning Checklist



"Going to Nicaragua, we met some of the bravest individuals ever and it truly affected each and every member of my group's lives."

--Canterbury School
Student 2014



ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES

2 Truths and a Lie: Everyone has to go around the circle and tell 2 truths and 1 lie about themselves. The rest of the circle has to guess which is the lie.

Great Wind Blows: One person stands in the middle of a circle of chairs. The person in the middle starts off by saying "Great wind blows for everyone who..." and then says any characteristic that is true for them. All players that share that characteristic must stand and find a new seat at least 2 chairs away from theirs. If a player is unable to find a vacant chair, they become the person in the middle.

Speed Dating: Have everyone pair off. Set a timer so they have one minute to ask each other questions before they have to switch partners, etc.

Candy Introductions: Pick a candy that has different colors (example- skittles or M&Ms). Assign each color a different question. For example, red is favorite hobby and blue is favorite country visited. Each person receives four pieces of candy and answers accordingly.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Divide into groups of 4-5 people. Assign each table a question to discuss and allow participants to talk amongst themselves. Switch tables after 5 minutes.

Possible Questions:

What does a successful program look like?
What does it mean to help people?

Why are you going on the program?
What do you anticipate to be the biggest challenge?
Why is service important to you?
What do you think Nicaragua is like?
Temperature, language, religion, nature, culture, infrastructure, etc.

EXPLORE NICARAGUA

With your team, choose your preferred excursion(s) for your week in Nicaragua. Tourist activities can be done either before or after completing your project.

DAY TRIPS



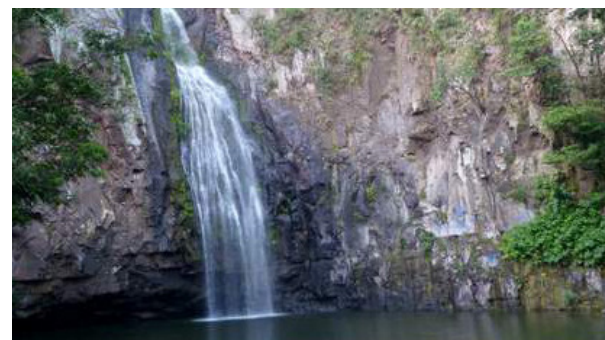
Laguna de Apoyo is located right outside Granada and about 45 minutes from Managua. It's a huge freshwater lagoon that was created by a volcano nearby. You can spend the day hanging out at one of the waterfront restaurants eating, playing in the water or relaxing.



Somoto Canyon is located about 20 minutes from Fabretto's Center in Somoto. Strap on a lifejacket and cruise down this freshwater canyon. Includes hiking, rafting and cliff jumping. This is a good option to do on the way down from Cusmapa.



Leon is Nicaragua's second colonial city located about 1.5 hours northwest of Managua. Enjoy walking around this beautiful city filled with cathedrals and museums. You can also spend the day at a nearby beach or if you're more adventurous, you can go "volcano boarding."



Tisey Reserve & Estanzuela Falls offer hiking at the national park located right outside of Esteli. You can swim and jump from the waterfall Estanzuela. For cultural activities, there is a cheese factory nearby, where you can take a tour and taste the cheese.



Granada is Nicaragua's oldest colonial city and one of the most popular Fabretto excursions. It is about 1 hour south of Managua. You can walk around the town, take an island boat tour on Lake Nicaragua or spend the afternoon swimming on an island. You can also hike and go ziplining at nearby Mombacho volcano.

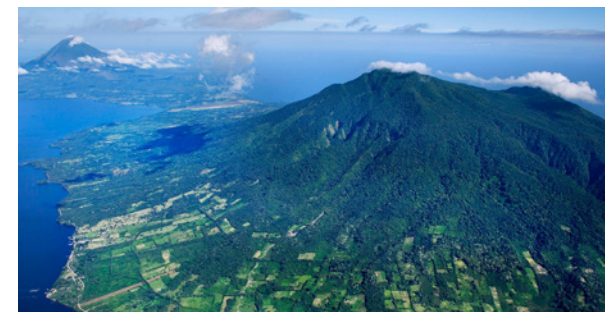


Masaya is a town just twenty minutes from Managua on the way to Granada. You can stop to see one of Nicaragua's active volcanoes, Masaya Volcano, and visit the Masaya Market for good souvenir shopping.



Pochomil Beach is a beautiful beach on the Pacific Ocean just a 30-minute ride from Managua. There are many hotels to choose from to relax, enjoy the water, and eat great seafood.

WEEKEND TRIPS: NATURE



Ometepe Island is located about 3 hours from Managua. In order to get to the island, which is located in the middle of Lake Nicaragua, you must take a bus and a ferry. This unique island is formed from two volcanoes.

Spend the weekend hiking up one of the volcanoes, biking around the island, swimming in natural springs or hitting the waves and enjoying the beautiful sunsets.



Selva Negra is located 15 minutes from the town of Matagalpa in northern Nicaragua.

Selva Negra is a private eco-lodge where you can spend the day touring the organic coffee farms, hiking in the Black Forest, having lunch overlooking the lake, and horseback riding through the flora and fauna. You can also go into Matagalpa to enjoy local restaurants and bars or go hiking.

WEEKEND TRIPS: BEACHES



San Juan del Sur is located about 2.5 hours south of Managua. It is the biggest beach town in Nicaragua and is a surfer favorite. Spend the weekend swimming in the ocean, sailing, horseback riding on the beach, hiking and enjoying the exciting nightlife.



Playa Gigante is a beach located about 3 hours south of Managua. It has been ranked as one of the 10 most beautiful beaches in the world right on the Pacific Ocean. Enjoy the peaceful oceanfront and delicious restaurants.



Barcelo Montelimar is an all-inclusive beach resort about an hour west of Managua on the Pacific coast. This resort is complete with pools, beaches and restaurants. After a long work week it's nice to relax by the water.

FUNDRAISING

We encourage all groups to fundraise for their service projects. For fundraising information and tips, please refer to our Fabretto Fundraising Toolkit. If you have any questions or need support, please contact us.

Fundraising Toolkit



GIFT DONATIONS

Please confirm gift donations with the Fabretto Volunteer Coordinator before you arrive so we can notify the Education Center and make advance plans. Fabretto will also be able to advice you of any needed instructions while flying and checking with customs.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is Nicaraguan culture like?

Nicaraguan culture is very much focused on the family and community. Religion is also very important. 60% of the population identify as Catholic, although Evangelicism has been rapidly growing. Hospitality is a huge part of the culture, as well as the rich history that Nicaraguans carry on through music and folkloric dance. The typical Nicaraguan meal is rice and beans, cheese, fresh fruit juice, and a tortilla.

Is it safe in Nicaragua?

Nicaragua is a developing country steeped in tradition, rich in culture, and filled with treasures to discover. However, as with any developing country, you should be aware of situations that, while unlikely, may arise. Most common is petty crime and theft; travelers need to be aware of and take responsibility for these type of security risks by not walking at night in the bigger cities, always traveling in pairs or threes, keeping money and other valuables in a money belt (if not at home/the hotel), and knowing where they are at all times. Rural areas are generally very calm, but as with any city, particularly in the developing world, you must use common sense. It is not recommended to wear expensive jewelry, carry a lot of money or credit cards, or carry large purses, wallets, bags or cameras in public or crowded areas. When visiting Fabretto centers, rural schools or any private homes, visitors should not leave valuable items unattended. That said, we will usually be traveling as a group, accompanied by local staff, and will only be using private transportation, so the risk of theft is very minimal during a Fabretto Service Group Program.

What to expect

- Food: If you are located in Cusmapa for your project you will be eating meals made by the house caretaker, Nora. Most of the food is purchased in Managua before the program and brought up with the group, and can include the following:
- Breakfast: Cereal, pancakes, bread/toast, pineapple and watermelon, coffee, and juice.
 - Lunch: Sandwiches prepared by program participants (ham, cheese, peanut butter and jelly), chips, and cookies
 - Dinner: Nica food night (rice and beans, fried plantain, cheese), tacos, spaghetti, Chinese rice and vegetables, barbeque (hamburgers and hotdogs) and tostones.
 - We can take care of most special food requirements, but please let us know ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements.

Water: It is strongly suggested that visitors only drink bottled water throughout the duration of their time in Nicaragua. Though the local people drink water from the faucets and the water in Managua is highly-chlorinated (so most bacteria is eliminated), your stomach might not be used to the water and in order to avoid any travel sickness, it is best not to drink it. When dining out, be sure to drink only bottled water and take caution to only use purified ice cubes. When brushing your teeth in rural communities it is not recommended to use the tap water. Bottled/ filtered water will be available during your stay.

Bathrooms: While on the road, we will stop at gas stations as necessary for participants to use the bathroom. Your accommodations will have bathrooms, but make sure not to flush the toilet paper down the drain! There will be a waste basket next to the toilet. While at the work site or other community visits, there will mostly likely be latrines for participants to use.

Internet

At our Cusmapa guest house there is no access to internet. If chaperones need to check email or update parents, they can use the internet at the Education Center. The majority of hotels we stay have free wifi for guests. Although it can be slow!

How the locals live

Most families in the countryside work with agriculture. A lot of the families Fabretto works with survive on less than \$2 a day, so the living conditions and realities can be harsh. Their basic food supply consists of beans, rice, tortillas, and many people like to drink coffee as well. Most students go to school Monday through Friday, however in many rural areas some students only go to classes on Saturday. Some students live in such rural areas that their only opportunity is to go to school on a Saturday. Many of these students can walk two to three hours to get to school or around 3 kilometers, just one way! The students not only have their studies to worry about but also have responsibilities to help their families maintain the household.

What should I wear while on the program?

Nicaraguans dress relatively conservatively, so it's important to keep that in mind while packing. While working, wear close-toed shoes and clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Look to the packing list for more details, just know that you will probably get a little dirty and dusty while working!

Accommodations

Fabretto has one volunteer group service home in Cusmapa. If your project is located in Cusmapa this is where you will be staying. This guest house has four bedrooms with bunk beds for participants, and bathrooms and showers for use. There is a community space for eating and relaxing, and a nice patio outside. If you are located at one of Fabretto's other Education Centers the volunteer coordinator will be arranging hotel stays at trusted establishments.

Transportation in Nicaragua

How will we get around? What is safe to take? While on the Fabretto Volunteer Service Program, you will travel on a private bus from a trusted transportation company. The bus will be with us through the entirety of your program so you will have transportation in case of an emergency.

Spanish speaking

It is a great idea to push yourself and your group members to use and practice Spanish.. Community members really appreciate the effort made by visitors, even if it's just saying hi. If your group has a high level of Spanish speaking skills and the group program leader would like to set guidelines for only speaking Spanish, you are welcome to do that with your group. A **vast majority** of people you will meet only speak Spanish!

Drinking policy

The drinking age in Nicaragua is 18+. It is up to the school/organization/group to administer a drinking policy while in Nicaragua. Once your policy is confirmed please pass this information along to your Fabretto volunteer coordinator. It is up to the Group Leader to administer the rules while in Nicaragua and use the Fabretto Program Leader as support.

Emergency/Evacuation policy

Fabretto Evacuation Policy

Contact Erika (Volunteer Coordinator) or Carlos (Nicaragua Development Director) at volunteer@fabretto.org. Participant will be accompanied by their group leader, the volunteer coordinator, or a Fabretto staff/volunteer. The Fabretto offices and their parents will be contacted immediately.

Money and local currency

The currency used in Nicaragua is cordobas. In 2015 the exchange rate was estimated at 27.5 cordobas to one US dollar; however this can vary slightly depending on the day. You can exchange money when you arrive in Nicaragua but most of the places we will be traveling will accept US dollars. Please check exchange rates before you arrive so you are aware.

Medical

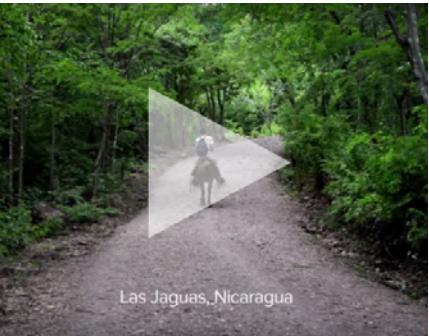
Vaccines: While no vaccinations are required for entry into Nicaragua, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, and Typhoid Fever vaccinations are often recommended. According to the CDC, there is risk of malaria in Nicaragua, but not in the areas where you will be traveling. Please check the CDC website for country-specific health advisories at www.cdc.gov/travel.

Prescriptions: If you take prescription medications, please make sure to bring enough to last during your time overseas. Carry prescription drugs in their original labeled containers. If you wear glasses or contacts, we recommend that you bring both and an extra pair of contacts.

Insurance: It is very important to have health and accident insurance while you are abroad, as well as coverage for emergency evacuation. Find out if your current insurance plan will apply while you are abroad. You may want to explore the possibilities of baggage and flight insurance as well. Additionally, please enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program with the U.S. State Department, so that the U.S. Embassy can assist you in the event of an emergency. To enroll, please visit <http://step.state.gov>.

VIDEOS

Don't forget to check out these short videos on youtube to see a glance into the life of some Fabretto students, as well as videos on past service programs!



Chico's Story



Early Childhood Education



Wilber's Journey

PACKING LIST

To prepare you for your journey to Nicaragua, we have compiled a packing list of suggested items. Please note that these items are not mandatory, but highly recommended to improve your visit with Fabretto. This list does not include items you may need for any program extensions to visit other parts of Nicaragua.

Local Weather

Days in Managua, Somoto, and Estelí will be warm to hot. Up in the mountains in Cusmapa and Ocotal, it is very windy and can get quite chilly in the evenings. Average temperature in Managua is 82° F, with highs over 90° F, and a minimum temperature of 74° F. Average temperature in Cusmapa is 70° F, with a maximum temperature of approximately 80° F, and a minimum temperature of 60° F.

Documents

Passport, important medical documents, photocopy of passport, Fabretto packet and evacuation policy.

Personal care items

- Toiletries to cover all basic needs
- Necessary prescription medication— Please keep in correctly labeled containers, so your medicine won't be mistaken for illegal drugs.
- Prescription Eyewear— glasses and contacts. We recommend that you bring both an extra pair of contacts and your glasses.
- Basic first aid items; allergy pills, tums, pepto bismal, ibuprofen, band aids, hand sanitizer, etc.

Clothing

- One set of footwear suitable for rougher terrain—sneakers or light hiking boots/shoes
- Second set of comfortable footwear (Sandals and/or Tennis Shoes)
- Casual and comfortable attire for both men and women
- Sufficient undergarments, socks, etc. for duration of stay with Fabretto (limited access to laundry)
- Jacket or sweater
- Warm, comfortable sleepwear
- Sunglasses and/or brimmed hat

Other

- Head-lamp or battery-operated flashlight
- A raincoat/windbreaker w/ hood or poncho
- Mosquito repellent (recommended with Deet): 1 per person
- Sunscreen
- Leisure reading and/or music player (bring it fully charged!)

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