



The Ministry of Paul & Thania Heier and Chris Rozycki in Central America

## TRAVEL GUIDE

### NICARAGUA AND COSTA RICA

**Immunizations:** Please check with your local health department, the U.S. Embassy website for immunization information in Nicaragua and/or Costa Rica. Long-term volunteers will need a minimum of six months to receive all of their shots. Short-terms can work with their sponsor or leader to determine what shots will be needed.

**Health Issues:** Traveling in Costa Rica is much like traveling in a rural part of the U.S. Various services and facilities are available for health care. Nicaragua is a challenged developing country that lack infrastructure, organization, and in many parts of the country healthcare is lacking. Advanced life-support systems are not widely available nor is emergency care in much of the country. It is imperative that you be in good physical condition and that you understand the risks involved with traveling to Nicaragua. Many travelers struggle with parasites or food poisoning. You can discuss this issue with your physician before coming. Also, parasite medication is widely and cheaply available in Nicaragua. Physicians are available. They do not have the resources or the specialized training that North American physicians have.

**Hydration:** Each person coming to Nicaragua is expected to bring powdered Gatorade. You will need to have enough for your entire stay. It is generally very, very hot in Nicaragua so hydration is especially important.

**Food:** We do not recommend that you eat snacks or meals being sold by street vendors. Although you may see one of the missionaries eating or drinking a fresh juice from a street vendor, it is not recommended especially for short-term volunteers. Please drink only bottled, sealed water and juices.

**Personal Safety:** Nicaragua maintains its reputation as a fairly safe place to travel. You will be working and visiting neighborhoods and people that are extraordinarily poor. Please do NOT bring jewelry or wear flashy clothes. Please follow the instructions of your missionaries and translators at all times. Do NOT bring large amounts of cash or give cash to anyone. Stay in your assigned group and never go off by yourself. We have not had problems with personal safety in the past and we don't want to have problems in the future.

**Translators:** Translators are provided for your convenience. It is difficult to find enough of them to help you. Please do NOT give them money or agree to buy anything for them. They are compensated for their time and are treated very fairly. Occasionally, one will use the opportunity to work with you as an opportunity to take advantage of the situation.

**Passport:** You must have a valid passport. If it is within six months of expiration you must renew it before leaving the U.S. There is a \$5 to 8 entrance tax and a \$32 departure tax unless you are departing on Tica Bus.

**Clothing:** Khaki pants, cool shirts, and tennis shoes are the normal attire for short-term teams. Be sure to bring a swimming suit, shampoo, soap, toilet paper, a towel, and anything else that you will need to wear or groom yourself. Ladies may want to bring a skirt for church which is the customary dress. You can bring shorts, but they cannot be worn to church or church functions (sorry, this is a Central American thing!).

**Airline:** Please read the airline's online policy on luggage and carry-ons. Occasionally we need you to bring supplies or materials with you. Please check with us before packing. Also, be sure to arrive at least three hours before the scheduled departure of your flight. Be careful about scheduling connecting flights as many flights to Latin America run behind. If you need help with your ticketing, please let us know.

**Personal Conduct:** Please remember that we want to honor God in all that we do. You do not have to be a Christian to participate in the trip. Kindness, morality, and a desire to serve are key traits in having a successful trip. Please bring a Bible with you on the trip and be prepared to grow spiritually.

**Travel or Traveler's Insurance:** These types of insurances are available and are highly recommended. You can find information online from a variety of insurance companies.

**Culture:** Nicaragua and Costa Rica have distinct cultures. In Nicaragua a country type of Spanish is spoken which can be a little difficult to understand. Nicaraguans have many of their own words and tend to have certain specialized customs. Costa Ricans are more used to Americans. They speak clearer Spanish and are quite courteous. They do, however, speak very quickly. You will enjoy learning a little Spanish and participating in Latin American culture.