

Guide to Activities at La Mariposa

We offer a variety of activities to be enjoyed during your stay. These activities include afternoon activities and Saturday trips scheduled on a monthly cycle. We also organize additional trips based on incoming requests from our guests, and we are more than happy to assist you in whatever way we can with organizing travel to destinations further afield. We also offer Sunday horse-back riding and a guided garden tour on La Mariposa grounds.

Our activities programme is designed to help you continue to practice your Spanish and learn more about Nicaragua. We have incorporated a unique mixture of charlas (discussions), local outings by foot or horseback, as well as visits further away using our faithful microbus and camioneta or sometimes by public transport. We take full advantage of the amazing central location of La Mariposa - less than an hour from Managua (and the airport), Laguna de Apoyo, the town of Masaya, Masaya volcano, San Juan del Oriente, and Catarina. Slightly further out include attractions such as Granada, León, Playa la Boquita, and Volcán Mombacho. Our local Pueblos Blancos (White Villages) - La Concha, San Marcos, Masatepe, Jinotepe, Diriamba, and Diria are delightful, laid back little places which we visit to shop, go to an internet café or to just chill out with a beer.

This guide provides basic information about the activities offered at La Mariposa. All activities require that you sign up before hand. Although the sign up sheet is not binding, we appreciate a certain level of commitment to the activity once you have signed up. This allows us to plan out various aspects of the activity, especially with respect transportation. This guide is intended to give a brief overview, so if you want more in depth knowledge of the places we visit, do take a look at one of our many guidebooks in our library.

A couple of notes on costs:

- If you are paying for a package that includes afternoon activities, this means that you are not expected to pay for the services of our drivers/guides/transportation. You pay for your entrance fees and any food/drink consumed outside of La Mariposa.
- Please note that we do not charge for Saturday day trips, but we do ask for a contribution for the gasoline (and/or transportation costs) and the meals for your guide/driver. This cost usually works out at between \$4 and \$6 per person - but naturally, the smaller the group, the greater the cost! You also cover your costs for the day (for example, lunch, drinks, entrance fees, boat trips, etc...). We suggest an *estimated* amount for each trip.
- If you are here for less than a month and wish to do an afternoon, evening or day trip which is not scheduled during your time at La

Mariposa, we can organize this at extra cost. A half day/evening trip is \$10 per person, for day trips \$15. Minimum 3 students. Remember that you must still cover all of your own expenses in addition to this small fee.

- **Please be advised that all the costs listed in this guide are a rough estimate, so do take care to always bring a little bit extra, just in case!**

Please note that we do our best to deliver the programme but for all sorts of reasons e.g. the weather, we cannot offer guarantees! We may also have to vary the time of departure occasionally.

A couple of notes on what to bring:

- The rainy season runs roughly from mid-May to mid November, where you can almost always expect it to rain at some point.... Do take care to bring appropriate rain gear (umbrella, jacket), especially since most activities involve spending quite a bit of time outside.
- For most activities its best to wear comfortable walking shoes. A walking stick can also be useful on hikes which involve slippery slopes (eg Volcán Masaya).
- Managua, Granada, and Masaya can all be considerably warmer than San Juan de la Concepción, while León is swelteringly hot. Dress appropriately and wear plenty of sunscreen!



Colonial City and Las Isletas

Our day trip to Granada offers a guided tour of the city's most interesting cultural and historical places. The tour highlights include el cementario, la Fortaleza de la Polvora, Doña Elba's cigar factory, La Iglesia de la Merced, and el Antiguo Convento San Fransisco. In the afternoon, we offer the opportunity to explore Las Isletas by lancha (boat). Formed by a massive eruption of Volcán Mombacho, Las Isletas are an archipeleago of islands in Lago Cocibolca near the shores of Granada. Some of the islands are inhabited while others are preserved in their natural splendour.

Departure: 8:00am

Return: 6:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!) p/p:

- Entrance fees, lunch, drinks, contribution to gasoline & driver/guide expenses: \$25
- Las Isletas boat tour (optional, minimum 3 students): \$20
- Souvenir possibilities!





Colonial City and Barrio Subtiava

Our Saturday day trip to León takes you to the city's most interesting sites. Our departure time is bright and early as we stop at a local restaurant to have breakfast on the road. We tour the largest cathedral in Central America, La Catedral de León, taking in its cultural and architectural extravagance. We take a guided walk of the city centre, where we encounter León's numerous political murals, and visit one of the city's best art museums, el Centro de Arte Fundación Ortiz-Gurdián. We end the day stopping over in barrio Subtiava to see Las Ruínas de Veracruz and also a local workshop where they produce sculptures carved out of wood.

Departure: 6:30am

Return: 6:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!) p/p:

- Entrance fees, breakfast, lunch, drinks, contribution to gasoline & driver/guide expenses: \$20
- Souvenir possibilities!



Crater Lake

Laguna de Apoyo is Nicaragua's most beautiful and enjoyable swimming hole. Volcán Apoyo is said to have imploded 20 000 years ago from an enormous eruption. Its crater subsequently filled with rain and ground water over thousands of years to form what is now the lagoon. The crater's ridges have become lush with vegetation and full of wildlife. Activities that are possible with our day trip include swimming, kayaking, walking and hiking, and, of course, just relaxing lakeside. We spend the day at hotels San Simian or Crater's Edge, where we enjoy all of their great facilities.

Departure: 9:00am

Return: 4:00-5:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!) p/p:

- Entrance fee & hotel facilities, lunch, drinks, contribution to gasoline & driver food expenses: \$25
- Guided hike: \$15.00 p/grp of 8 (optional, available at Craters' edge)

If you intend to hike make sure to bring repellent and good hiking shoes!





La Boquita

Saturday Activity

The Beach

Just a little under an hour away from La Mariposa, the small fishing village of La Boquita lies on the beautiful Pacific coast. This day trip is pretty simple – relax and enjoy the sandy shores of La Boquita. Take a walk down the beach to watch the fishing boats brave the ocean’s swells. The beach has a number of hotels and restaurants that line the coast, and is a very tranquil laid back place to spend the day.

Departure: 9:00am

Return: 4:00-5:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!) p/p:

- Entrance fee, lunch, drinks, contribution to gasoline and drivers’ lunch: \$25

Note: how much you spend at La Boquita is entirely dependent on what you eat and drink, meals are on the expensive side.





Nature Reserve

Volcán Mombacho is one of Nicaragua's most well kept protected areas, home to a spectacular diversity of flora and fauna. Although the volcano is still considered active, all of its craters are covered with dense cloud forest vegetation. The trip starts at the reserve's parking lot where we take a truck up to the Biological Center located at an elevation of 1150m. We get an introduction to the Biological Centre and a briefing on the natural history of Mombacho. You can spend the rest of the day exploring two trails on your own before heading back to the centre for a late lunch.

Departure: 8:30am

Return: 4:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!) p/p:

- Entrance fee, lunch, drink, contribution to gasoline & driver's lunch: \$25
- Bilingual guide: \$20 per/group of up to 5 people

Mombacho can get quite windy & cool. Do take care to bring a sweater/jacket.



Afternoon Activities

Finca de Piña en San Ignacio

We visit a local pineapple farm in the community of San Ignacio not far from San Juan de la Concepción. Don Wilbur gives a tour of his pineapple farm, informing us about the agricultural process, and allows us to sample delicious pineapples from his farm. We also get a look at the owner's personal fruit and herb garden.



Departure: 2:00pm

Return: 5:30pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Optional tip: \$1-2

Volcán Masaya

Masaya is one of Nicaragua's most active volcanoes, erupting last in April 2001. The park has over 20km of hiking trails, and a very informative visitors' centre. We walk along the trails to check out the volcano's three craters just before the sun goes down when lighting is ideal for picture-taking. We also explore two caves after nightfall - where you will surely see hundreds of bats!



Costs (mas o menos!):

- Entrance fee, snacks, optional tip: \$15

Take care to bring appropriate walking/hiking shoes and drinking water! A headlamp is also useful.

Departure: 3:00pm

Return: 8:00pm

San Juan del Oriente y Diria

San Juan del Oriente and Diria are two of our local Pueblo Blancos (White Villages). Los Pueblos Blancos are famous for their artisanal products, and this afternoon activity gives you a look at how some of these products are made. We visit artisans workshops for ceramic pottery, weaved baskets, and volcanic stone sculptures. We end the trip by having a drink and taking in the view of Laguna de Apoyo at a Mirador (lookout) in Diria.

Departure: 1:00pm

Return: 5:30pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Drink, optional tip: \$5
- Souvenir opportunities!



Masatepe y Catarina

Masatepe and Catarina are two of our local Pueblo Blancos (White Villages). Masatepe is known for its furniture products, so we get a tutorial on furniture building at one of the local furniture shops. Just outside of Masatepe we stop at Doña Aura's medicinal plant garden, where we have the opportunity to learn about natural health products. We end our afternoon tour by visiting Catarina, which has arguably one of the best Miradores (lookouts) in Nicaragua. We take in the incredible view with a drink at a local restaurant.

Departure: 1:00pm

Return: 5:30pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Drink, mirador entrance fee: \$5
- Shopping opportunities - natural products from Doña Aura and, of course, souvenirs!

El Chocoyero

Despite its small size, Chocoyero boasts an amazing variety of flora and fauna. The reserve is most famous for its large population of chocoyos (green parakeets native to Nicaragua) that nest at a waterfall inside the reserve. This afternoon activity takes us through some of the reserve's shorter trails to admire the semi-humid tropical forest and the many birds and animals that live within it.



Departure: 1:00pm

Return: 6:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Entrance fee: \$3

Take care to bring appropriate walking/hiking shoes and drinking water!



Masaya: La Verbena

The city of Masaya is said to be the cultural capital of Nicaragua, and for good reason! La Verbena is a cultural event that happens every Thursday in Masaya and usually includes folkloric performances, live music and typical Nicaraguan foods. Our afternoon starts off with a look at a few different artisanal workshops in Masaya, including wooden jewellery, guitars, hammocks, and leather products. In the evening we catch the show and enjoy dinner in Masaya.

Departure: 3:00pm

Return: 10:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Dinner, drinks, entrance fee: \$20
- Shopping opportunities!

Note: how much you spend at La Verbena is dependent on your choice of food and drink. Also please be advised that we cannot guarantee the quality of the performances.

Masaya: Artesanías/Mercados

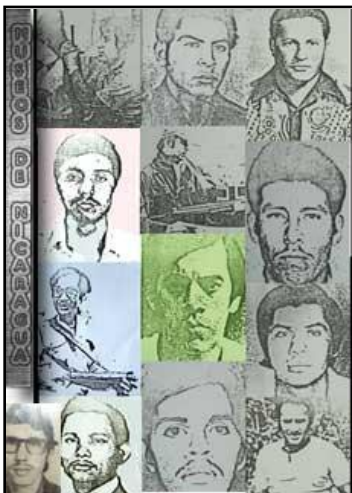
This afternoon trip to Masaya brings you to Masaya's old and new artisans' markets. Here we have a chance to look around and of course, shop! We also visit el Museo y Galería Héroes y Mártires, which pays tribute to many who fought against Somoza's National Guard during the revolution.



Departure: 1:00pm
Return: 5:30pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Museum donation: \$1 or more
- Shopping opportunities!



Managua



Despite its often rough reputation, Nicaragua's capital has numerous places of interest. This afternoon activity is jam packed with the best sites in Managua, including Las Huellas de Acahualínca (ancient footprints), the new boardwalk, Catedral Vieja, La Plaza de la Revolución, La Palacio Nacional and La Loma de Tiscapa (Tiscapa hill).

Departure: 1:00pm
Return: 6:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Entrance fees, drinks, snacks: \$20



Caminata en San Juan

This afternoon activity takes you for a leisurely stroll through San Juan de la Concepción. We visit local artisans, stop in at a school for the disabled, and get the history of our surrounding community. This activity is the perfect way to get to know San Juan better during your stay at La Mariposa.

Departure: 2:00pm

Return: 5:30pm



Escuela de Panamá

Panamá is the poorest part of La Concha. The Panamá primary school services about 200 of the 700 children in the community. With donations from past students, we have built a retaining wall, latrines and a small library. We continue to pay the salary of a teacher to work part-time and place volunteers alongside this teacher. The trip to Panamá School is a chance to see where your income is going. We also stop at Los Amadores, a cooperative where women weave items (purses, baskets, necklaces, etc...) out of recycled paper.

Departure: 10:15am

Return: 12:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- Shopping opportunities at Los Amadores!

Tardes Culturales

Salsa classes (with Bergman) and Nicaraguan cooking (with our kitchen staff) are two cultural activities that we offer in the afternoons at La Mariposa.

Salsa: 1:00pm-3:00pm

Cocina: 1:00-5:00pm



Las Charlas

We offer weekly charlas (discussions) to learn more about Nicaragua here at La Mariposa. Our charlas are headed by members of our staff, given in Spanish with English translations. Every Friday we have a charla on the week's news in Nicaragua. On Wednesdays we have a charla either on the history of Nicaragua (until 1900, 1900-1990, and from 1990 onwards) or on environmental problems affecting Nicaragua (energy, water & trash). All of our charlas take place on Mariposa grounds.

Start: 1:00pm

End: 3:00pm

El Chanchito/Bar Emma

This evening activity takes students out to La Concha to either El Chanchito or Bar Emma for a drink before dinner.

Departure: 5:30pm

Return: 7:00pm

Costs (mas o menos!):

- 20 C (1 bottle of beer), 40 C (1 litre bottle of beer)

Sunday Activities

Salida en Caballo

Every Sunday we offer the opportunity to explore nearby green spaces by horseback. This trip goes up to the ridge overlooking Volcán Masaya where you get stunning views of the surrounding hills and the volcano.

Departure: 9:00am

Return: 12:00pm



Mariposa Garden Tour

Normally on Sundays, Paulette is happy to offer guests a tour of our lovely gardens here at La Mariposa. Do be sure to let Paulette know if you are interested in the garden tour beforehand!

Start: 1pm (flexible)

