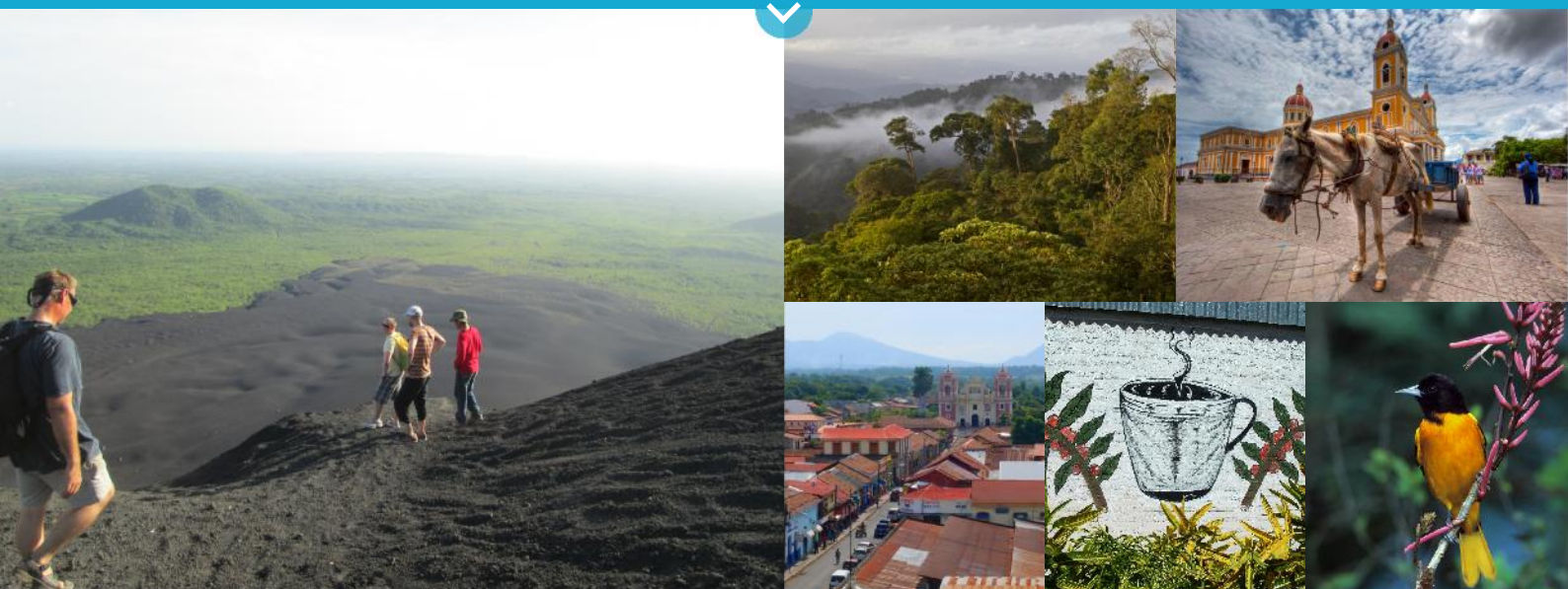


Nicaragua

Black Sand Volcano Expedition



This three week expedition is a fantastic introduction to the vibrant culture and dramatic scenery of a beautiful, yet little visited part, of Central America. With smoking volcanoes, lush forests, idyllic islands and UNESCO World Heritage sites, this expedition is incredibly diverse and a wonderful opportunity to get to know the locals of this friendly country. We spend time on two different volunteer projects, working along side the locals. With the political problems of the past long put to bed, Nicaragua is a safe and beautiful country where the culture remains vibrantly authentic. Not yet on the main stream tourist bucket lists, this expedition is a great insight into an undiscovered destination.



Recommended itinerary:

Day 1: Depart UK, arrive Nicaragua: Depart the UK and fly to Nicaragua with a change of planes en-route. Bienvenidos! On arrival day at Managua International Airport, our expedition leader (guide) will give you a warm welcoming and you will be transfer to Managua city.

Day 2: Transfer from Managua to Leon city. Telica sunset volcano tour hike: Today our driver and guide take the group to Leon City, a journey of around 1 hour and 40 minutes. Telica Volcano is one of the most active volcanoes in Nicaragua. There are many footpaths that branch off in all directions which makes route finding confusing. Staying on the trail without a guide would be difficult, but our expert leaders, born and brought up in the country, know this place like the back of their hand. This is a challenging uphill climb. The farmers' fields gives way to jungle which engulfs the trail. The higher elevation offers views of the surrounding farming communities and amazing views of the volcanoes San Cristóbal, Cerro Negro, Momotombo, and the Las Pilas-El Hoyo complex. The trail flattens and the jungle opens up. Views of Volcan Telica's billowing smoke can be seen. There is a flat, cleared area about 1000 ft. / 300 m east of the crater – the perfect spot for a rest and time to take in the view. From here, there is a path that leads to the northeast rim of the crater. We will proceed with caution and peer over the edge into the mouth of the crater. The views of the lava are much more impressive at night when the lava glows red. This elevated ridge is a great vantage point to watch the sunset.

Day 3: Juan Venado Wildlife Reserve. "La Gigantona" Workshop: We head to the stunning Juan Venado Island situated 1 hour away of Leon city. Juan Venado is a barrier island and measures 22km in length. It stands out as a thin strip near the coast of Nicaragua. It is a wildlife refuge for marine species that migrate in their larvae phase from the ocean to the peaceful and rich waters of the estuary. We head back to Leon city where we have a cultural presentation & workshop about "Las Gigantonas" which is a tradition of Leon city - giant hollow figures several meters tall with a paper maché head and arms, and wood or aluminum frames covered in opulent clothing. The figures are controlled by someone from inside the structure. They move and shake in a dance usually accompanied by a local marching band.

Day 4: Sandboarding at Cerro Negro (The Black Hill). Afternoon Leon city Tour: Climbing Cerro Negro Volcano is an impressive experience. This active volcano (726 meters in altitude) is totally covered with black sand and rocks. Standing on top of this volcano you will have an unforgettable view over the volcanic chain of Central America. We descend the volcano at top speed on sandboards. This afternoon, we have a León city tour will begin at its colonial heart with a visit to the Metropolitan Cathedral, the largest in Central America, and the Main Plaza. During the walking tour you will get to know the historic murals of the city and will understand the role played by León in the social, economic and political development of Nicaragua.

Day 5: Transfer from Leon to Granada city. Walking tour and boat ride: We transfer to Granada city where we have a walking tour to get to know this amazing city. We then continue to Lake Nicaragua for a relaxing boat ride around some of the islands formed by the impressive Mombacho volcano. We have this afternoon to relax.

Culture shock rating:

Physical rating:



Day 6-8: Project days at Eco Escuela: The following 3 days sees the group spend time working on a community project with Eco Escuela, a local education community. Local schools have to deal with serious difficulties, like not having restrooms, no drinkable water, not enough chairs for the children to seat on, lack of educational materials and such like. The group will get involved and work on what is most required by the community at the time of the visit.

Day 9: Ferry to Ometepe Island: This morning we transfer to Rivas to take the regular ferry to Ometepe Island. If the weather allows we can enjoy the panoramic views of the volcanoes (Concepcion & Maderas), which beautify this unique Island. We explore the island and also visit the Charco Verde Nature Reserve.

Day 10: Expedition to San Ramon Waterfall: Today we enjoy the beautiful nature of Ometepe Island. On the slopes of the volcano 600 meters above sea level is a beautiful waterfall, over 145 meters high known as El Salto San Ramon. We travel to the Biological Station San Ramon where a 3 hour walk through the forest takes us to the remarkable waterfall before returning the same way.

Day 11: Excursion to Maderas Volcano Slopes & Petroglyphs path: Today we visit the slopes of Maderas Volcano. Ometepe is famous for its rich pre-Columbian past and belongs to the great rock art areas of the world. Ancient petroglyphs (rock carvings) and stone statues have been found all over the island. The hike takes 3 hours approx., after which, we move to Ojo de Agua - a natural spring just inland from Playa Santo Domingo which has been expanded to make a huge swimming pool of crystal clear water.

Day 12-16: Working & Overnight at La Paloma Community (homestays): For the next 5 days the students work on a social project to help La Paloma community in diverse areas such as community cleanups, help to work in the medical plants garden, agricultural works, painting & building schools in the community, recycling of glass bottle & sharing time with locals.

Day 17: Transfer to San Juan del Sur for surf lessons: Today we leave our friends and families at La Paloma and catch the ferry back to San Jorge where we transfer to San Juan del Sur for some well deserved relaxation on the beach and our surfing lessons.

Day 18: Snorkeling Tour & Visit Aventura Las Nubes Eco Park: After breakfast we head out for a morning of snorkeling before we transfer to Parque Aventura Las Nubes, situated on top of a mountain at the highest point of San Juan del Sur. Here there are spectacular views and the best bird watching sites in the area. Spider Monkeys, White Faced Capuccin monkeys, Howler monkeys, Tucans and Hawks abound on the mountain tropical forest. Surrounded by a tropical forest, we have an exciting day of adventure including a canopy tour on zip lines, Off-road driving, a nature walk and a visit to an Iguanarium. We overnight in San Juan del Sur.

Day 19: Departure day: After breakfast we head north and return to Managua International Airport in time for our return flight.

Day 20: Arrive UK: We arrive home today after an outstanding expedition and a thorough emersion into Central America.

Important information: It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



For more information and a detailed quote, please contact us:
telephone: 01392 660056
email: schools@thestc.co.uk
website: www.thestc.co.uk

