

Greensboro UUs and Friends Cultural Immersion Ecotour to San Ramón, Nicaragua

Tropical adventure in the cool, green mountains of the Nicaraguan highlands

April 8-15, 2012

Trip sponsored by Sister Communities of San Ramón, Nicaragua

Trip leader: Ken Knight <oldpeacenik@gmail.com>

\$930 includes all in-country meals, lodging, activities and transportation

Each day starts with a guided bird hike at 6:15 am for those who are interested.

Day 1 – Arrive Managua airport where you are met by our guide, a driver and chartered bus. Dinner at sunset at award winning Finca Esperanza Verde Ecologe (Best ecolodge in Nicaragua) with view across the Dariense Mountain Range. Local staff introduce themselves and welcome group.

Day 2 –Nature hike to see birds, howler monkeys, sloth, waterfall, medicinal plants, orchids and butterflies. Lecture about the life cycle of butterflies in our butterfly conservatory. Pick coffee under the guidance of FEV's coffee expert. Learn to make tortillas by hand and to roast coffee the campesino way. Local folk musicians perform around the campfire. Neighboring children roast marshmallows.

Day 3 - Nature hike with naturalist guides. Visit La Chispa School built with income from tourism. (10% of income from ecotours funds a similar project each year). Meet teacher and students. Observe parent-run nutrition program. Excursion for a picnic, bird watching, swimming and relaxing. Visit a coffee farm and meet the farmer and his family. Coffee cupping (tasting). Talk about organic coffee farming.

Day 4 –**Activity organized by the group such as art with local school children at the farm's Environmental Education Center.** Start a tropical hardwood tree nursery. Talk – “Sister Communities of San Ramón's Impact on the Local Economy”. Relax in pristine pool at bottom of waterfall. Talk – “Solar energy: a sustainable resource”-observe photovoltaic solar system components as well as mini-hydro electric project which together provide enough renewable energy to power FEV and depulp coffee.

Day 5 –Depart FEV for the town of San Ramón. Visit a rural primary school on the way and distribute notebooks and pencils (Cerro Grande). Arrive in San Ramón and meet your guesthouse family. Two guests stay with each family. Visit town of San Ramón (schools, herbal medicine pharmacy, Los Pipitos (early Wednesday afternoon), library, health center, with Tourist Guide Club of San Ramón. Bird watch with the Little Bird Club (4:30 pm). Traditional dance performance by young children (7:30 pm)

Day 6 –**Explore the town in the morning on your own or with guides. Lunch.** History lecture by member of the community. Tropical seed jewelry making workshop. Learn to make a special dish in Doña Adalila's cooking class. Communal dinner with families. Entertainment by local folk musicians.

Day 7 – Hike to a rural community. Learn about San Ramon's urban water project renovated with support from SCSRN. Bird watch especially the oropendulas flying in and out of their 4 foot hanging nests. Visit craft market where primitive style paintings by local youth are sold (2 pm). Demonstration by Women's Handmade Paper Cooperative (3:30 pm). Play chess and other games at the library (4 pm). Youth Brass Band performance and goodbye send off.

Day 8 – Return to Managua for departure or for a side trip on your own to another part of Nicaragua
<http://www.fincaesperanzaverde.org>.