

Cultural Immersion Ecotour to San Ramón, Nicaragua
Tropical adventure in the cool, green mountains of the Nicaraguan highlands
February 12-19, 2012

Trip sponsored by Sister Communities of San Ramón, Nicaragua

Trip leader: Sally Poland, sally@sapoland.com, 919 828-2607

\$945 includes all in-country meals, lodging, activities and transportation by chartered bus,
back of a pick up truck, and by public bus

Each day at FEV 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. 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. Visit fair trade certified coffee farms and meet farm families (with Larry's Beans).

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 rural schools partnered with Raleigh chapter of SCSRN and the Yarger family: El Bosque and San Roque. Arrive in San Ramón and meet your guesthouse family. Two guests stay with each family. Visit Caritas, Catholic Relief Services in Matagalpa. Traditional dance performance by young children (7:30 pm).

Day 6 –Visit Catholic Church and church-supported preschool. 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 – Visit Los Pipitos Center for Handicapped Children. Hike to a rural community. Learn about San Ramon's urban water project built 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). Play chess and other games at the library (4 pm). Good bye send off 6 pm.

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