

## Cultural Immersion Nicaraguan Holiday

February 4-11, 2012

From Granada, the oldest continually inhabited Spanish colonial city in the Americas, to international award winning ecolodge Finca Esperanza Verde on top of a mountain in the Nicaraguan highlands

Trip sponsored by Sister Communities of San Ramón, Nicaragua

Trip leaders: Dr. Kirk Childers, [kirkchilders@gmail.com](mailto:kirkchilders@gmail.com),

<http://www.fincaesperanzaverde.org>.

\$1,250 includes all lodging, activities, in-country travel and most meals

Day 1 – Arrive Managua airport where you are met by a driver and chartered bus. Lunch in Catarina overlooking crater lake. Visit fascinating sights on way to Granada: pottery studios in San Juan del Oriente famous for pre-Colombian style pottery, Mombacho Volcano hike or zip line Canopy Tour (price not included). Settle into our rooms at Hotel Plaza Colon on the Central Plaza. <http://www.hotelplazacoln.com/>. Take a walk around historic Granada or lounge in hotel pool. Dinner at a local eatery.

Day 2 – Casual boat trip to the small islands in Lake Cocibolca. Afternoon tour of Granada, visit world's smallest cigar factory.

Day 3 – Visit bustling Granada Market. Visit Chocolate Factory Museum. Take your swim suits. Enjoy Granada's vibrant night life.

Day 4 – Depart for award winning Finca Esperanza Verde Ecolodge (FEV), Best ecolodge in Nicaragua-2004. Virgin Holidays-Best small hotel for Responsible Tourism-2007) with view across the Dariense Mountains. Lunch at FEV. Observe life of organic coffee farm. Pick coffee. Enjoy your first spectacular sunset and dinner. Local staff introduce themselves and welcome group.

Day 5 –Early morning bird hike. Invite group of kids to FEV for a morning of activities planned by the group. Hike to see birds, waterfall, medicinal plants, orchids and butterflies. Lecture about the life cycle of butterflies in our butterfly conservatory. Talk by staff about impact FEV has had on their lives. Make tortillas and roast coffee the campesino way in FEV's traditional kitchen. Talk by FEV manager, Alex van der Zee Arias on progress renewable energy is making in Nicaragua.

Day 6 – Early morning bird hike. Observe processing of coffee beans in FEV's wet mill. Nature hike with naturalist guides. Pass by La Chispa Elementary School built with income from tourism. (10% of income from ecotours funds a similar project each year.) Visit a coffee farm and meet the farmer and his family. Coffee cupping (tasting). Return to FEV for hike or relaxing in one of the many hammocks and rocking chairs. Local folk musicians perform around the campfire. Neighboring children roast marshmallows.

Day 7 - Early morning bird hike. Breakfast. Visit town of San Ramón to experience many fascinating activities planned by residents including a traditional cooking class, jewelry making workshop, craft sale, local history talk by town leader and hand made paper demonstration. The doctors will spend the morning treating children in Los Pipitos Center for Handicapped Children.

Day 8 - Depart FEV for Managua. You may choose to extend your trip by visiting other places of interest. Ask for suggestions.

\*\*\*Lodging at FEV is in 7 person cabins. There are also 3 double rooms. Transportation while at FEV is in the back of a pick up truck. Transportation from FEV to Managua is via public bus.