



**NPH USA**

Raising Children. Supporting Families.  
Transforming Lives.



# VISITOR'S GUIDE: NPH NICARAGUA

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# Country Overview

Google

Guide Sources: The CIA World Factbook, Lonely Planet.com, UNICEF, U.S. Department of State

Nicaragua borders both the Caribbean Sea and the North Pacific Ocean.

Area: 49,998 square miles – slightly smaller than the state of New York

Population: 6,359,689 (2023 estimate)

Languages: Spanish, English and indigenous languages on Atlantic Coast

40% of the population has no access to health care.

## Climate/Environment

- Interior is covered in mountains surrounded by both Atlantic and Pacific coasts
- Mostly tropical in the lowlands while there is cooler weather in the highlands
- Susceptible to earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides and hurricanes
- Environmental issues include deforestation, soil erosion and water pollution

## A Brief History

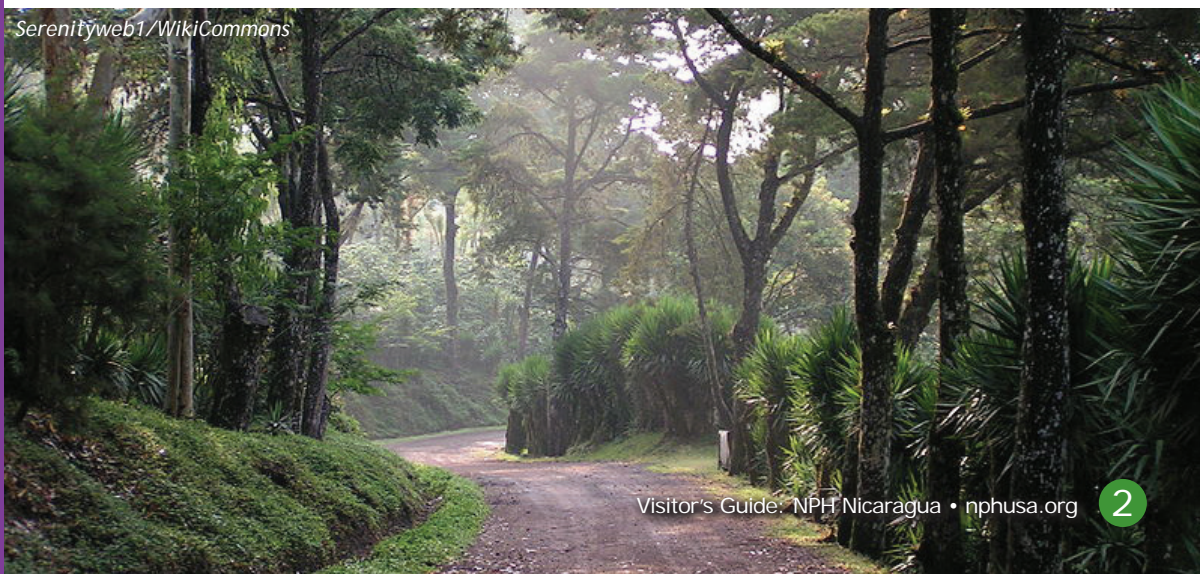
Since the arrival of the Europeans in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and especially over the past 100 years, Nicaraguans have endured civil wars, brutal dictatorships, struggle and hardship. Even after the country won independence from Spain in 1821, a power vacuum led to civil war. For decades there was struggle between conservatives and liberals, and with U.S. involvement, many liberal rebels were put down. By the 1920s, resistance had been mostly quelled, the U.S. detracted its presence and the Somoza family dictatorship began its domination, which would last for more than 50 years. It was finally uprooted in 1979 by the Sadinista revolution.

The Sandinistas inherited a country in shambles. Poverty, homelessness, illiteracy and staggeringly inadequate health care were just a few of the widespread problems. Some 50,000

people had been killed in the revolutionary struggle and 150,000 were made refugees. This, compounded with the fact that Nicaraguan aid to leftist rebels in El Salvador caused the U.S. to sponsor anti-Sandinista contra guerrillas through much of the 1980s, inevitably created further turmoil for Nicaragua for the years to come. 1990 brought the first free elections for Nicaragua.

Nicaragua has a great socio-economic division. A small number of the rich controls most of the wealth while the majority of people are immersed in poverty. The government is often corrupt and the criminal enterprises seem to be on the rise. Many children are orphaned, abandoned or neglected and live a life of malnutrition, begging, stealing, prostitution, and early pregnancies.

Serenityweb1/WikiCommons

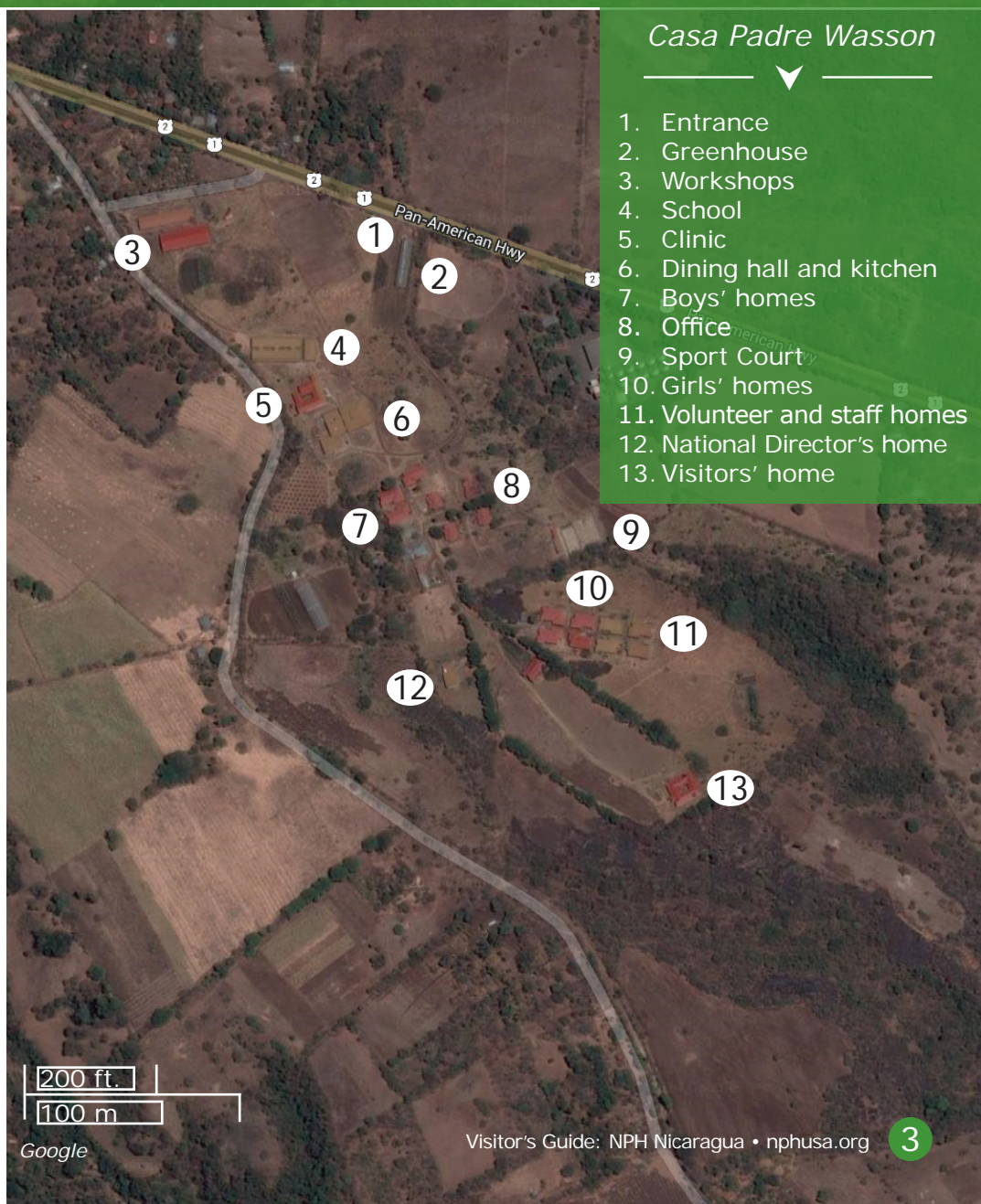






# The NPH Home

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH, Spanish for "Our Little Brothers and Sisters") Nicaragua opened in 1994. *Casa Padre Wasson* is located on rolling hills of picturesque farmland about 45 minutes from the capital, Managua. More than 140 children live in the 16 family-style homes, complete with a porches, courtyards and cement pathways throughout the property. An additional 200 children from the community attend the NPH school, and/or receive ongoing support.







# Daily Life

## Highlights

- A folkloric dance and music group performs locally and in the U.S.
- The farms have a variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as chickens, cows, fish and pigs.
- The wastewater treatment system works without electricity or chemicals and the treated water can be used for irrigation of green areas, gardens and agricultural programs.
- The Samaritan Project at Casa Samaritano on Ometepe Island and at Casa Padre Wasson provides occupational and physical therapy, medical and psychological care, food baskets and more for special needs children in the community.
- The vocational workshops offer certification in shoe-making, sewing, residential electricity, welding, computers, and English.
- In 2018, a tutoring program was developed for community students who could not travel to school because of civil unrest.

## Responsibility

Responsibility is one of the most important values that NPH tries to instill in their children. This is why each child is expected to not only be responsible for him or herself, but to contribute to the family. This includes traditional chores such as washing clothes, cleaning, and serving food.

Each child also has additional responsibilities after school and during the weekends. Some work in the gardens, while others care for the grounds and clean common areas. Everyone knows how much effort goes into caring for their home and all the people who live there.

Every child at NPH Nicaragua is asked to do two years of service: one after 9th grade and another after 11th grade.

## Typical Day at Casa Padre Wasson

- 5:30 a.m. Wake up
- 5:30 - 7:15 a.m. Get dressed, chores, breakfast
- 7:15 a.m. Walk to school
- 7:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Classes and workshops
- 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Lunch together in *Ranchon* or in workshops
- 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. Classes and workshops
- 5:00 p.m. Chores, homework, and free time
- 6:00 p.m. Dinner
- 6:30 - 9:00 p.m. Homework, free time
- 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. Bedtime (depending on age group)

## Godchildren

If you sponsor a child at NPH Nicaragua, arrangements will be made for him/her to spend time with you during your visit. Please contact your regional office if you are interested in becoming a Godparent.

National Director Marlon Velasquez is an *hermano mayor* ("older brother"), who was raised at NPH Honduras.



# Travel Tips



## Time Zone

Central Standard Time  
UTC/GMT -6 hours



When traveling abroad, we recommend enrolling in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). This free service helps the U.S. government know where citizens are, so they can notify and assist them in case of emergency. To enroll, visit <http://step.state.gov/step>



The goal of the trip is to have fun, experience the culture of Nicaragua and meet the inspiring children of NPH. Each traveler has so much to share with this great family and so much to learn. We hope that each visitor grows from their interactions with the children we support, just as your visit helps them to do the same.

## Entry Requirements

A valid U.S. passport is required to enter Nicaragua. While a visa is not required, your passport must remain valid until your return date and you must purchase a tourist card for \$10 and pay a \$2 migration processing fee (both in cash) upon arrival. Tourist cards are typically issued for 90 days.

## Vaccinations

Before traveling to Nicaragua, please consult your physician and visit [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

## Transportation

- For group trips organized by NPH USA, transportation will be provided by NPH.
- Do NOT hitchhike under any circumstances.

## Accommodations

Lodging varies depending on trip package. See specific trip information or consult the coordinator for details.

## Food

While at NPH facilities, we will eat just like the children and staff at specific mealtimes:

- Breakfast: 5:30 a.m.
- Lunch: 1:30 p.m.
- Dinner: 6:30 p.m.

Food at NPH is NEVER wasted. If you are unsure you will like what is being served, ask for only "un poquito" (a little), and if you cannot finish, please offer it to one of the kids.



Please read NPH International's Visitor Policy and Guidelines, sign the form and return it to your trip coordinator.

While on day trips, we will eat in restaurants where we are sure that food will be prepared safely.

All visitors are welcome to bring additional snacks to share. Be sure to bring things that can withstand hot and humid conditions and preferably are individually wrapped.

## Water

**DRINK BOTTLED WATER ONLY.** This cannot be stressed enough.

## Bathroom Etiquette

It is not possible to flush toilet paper in most Latin American countries due to the poor plumbing systems. Toilet paper and all sanitary products must be thrown in small waste baskets next to the toilet. **DO NOT flush toilet paper or sanitary products while visiting the NPH home.**

Bring travel toilet paper, or a small packet of facial tissues on day trips. Tissue is not always available in public bathrooms.

## Electricity

Electrical outlets are the same as the U.S.: 120 volt, 60 hertz, so no adapters are needed. You should expect power outages, which are common in Latin America.



## Travel Tips *(continued)*

### E-mail & Phones

There are nearby Internet cafés for e-mail and phone calls.

### Clothing

Comfortable, broken-in walking shoes are a must! The days are warm, so light clothing – shorts, slacks, cotton T-shirts, sandals and/or running shoes – is appropriate.

Keep in mind to dress conservatively and in a tidy manner. Please do not wear anything torn, too short or provocative. If you have any piercings other than ears, please take them out during your visit. If you have any tattoos, please keep them covered. These can be associated with gang activity and we do not want the children to have a negative impression of you.

### Currency and Credit Cards

Nicaragua's currency is the córdoba (C\$), sometimes called a "peso" or "real" by locals, or a "cord" by expats. Córdobas come in coins of C\$0.25, C\$0.50, C\$1 and C\$5, and bills of C\$10, C\$20, C\$50, C\$100 and C\$500. U.S. dollars are accepted almost everywhere, however, córdobas are usually easier to use. Always keep at least 200 córdoba on you, preferably in smaller bills, just in case.

Most major credit cards are widely accepted throughout Nicaragua. However, please remember that fraud is increasing all over the world, so you should be cautious.

### Tipping

For airport/hotel baggage handlers, \$1 U.S. per bag is acceptable. For restaurants and other services, 10-15% of value of service is customary, but not obligatory. NPH drivers, guides or other helpers never need to be tipped. However, if on a full day trip, the group will be expected to provide lunch.

### Safety

Outside the gates of NPH, we recommend that you never go alone anywhere. Be vigilant in regards to your surroundings. While at the home, we will be in a very safe and controlled environment. However, it is important to remember to watch your personal property. Our children have all come from very different backgrounds and while NPH tries to help them realize that they are safe now, many of them are still in survival mode. They are not malicious, but for many, taking is the only way they survived.

### Departure

There is a \$42 departure tax. Many airlines include it the price of the ticket. If the tax is not included, payment can be made at the airline counter upon departure.



See page 9 for emergency contact information.



PLEASE DO NOT give children your address, e-mail or phone number even if you are their sponsor.

## Terms to Know



Good morning/afternoon/evening! - ¡Buenos días/tardes/noches!  
See you later! - ¡Hasta luego!  
How are you? - ¿Cómo está?  
Fine, thank you. - Bien, gracias.  
Please - Por favor  
Excuse me - Permiso  
Do you speak English? - ¿Habla inglés?  
Yes - Sí  
No - No  
Thank you - Gracias  
You're welcome - De nada  
How old are you? - ¿Cuántos años tiene?  
How much is this? - ¿Cuánto es?  
More - más  
A little bit - un poquito  
House - casa  
Home - hogar  
School - escuela  
Backpack - mochila  
Office - oficina  
Kitchen - cocina  
Water - agua  
Food - comida  
Rice - arroz  
Beans - frijoles  
Spoon - cuchara  
Fork - tenedor  
Cup - vaso  
Plate - plato



## NPH-Related



*Pequeño/a* - literally "little," but it is the term used for all NPH children  
*Tío/a* - literally aunt or uncle, but at NPH it is a caretaker  
*Fr. Wasson* - Padre Wasson (Founder of NPH)  
*Padrino* - Godfather (Sponsor)  
*Madrina* - Godmother (Sponsor)  
*Ahijdo/a* - Godchild  
*Hermano/a Mayor* - Older brother/sister - the term for a former pequeño/a or graduate of NPH



# Suggested Packing List

## Clothes

- Lightweight travel clothes - there is no laundry facility, but you can hand wash!
- Jeans/shorts/travel pants - your preference
- Comfortable shoes for walking - tennis shoes or something with closed toes
- Poncho/lightweight rain jacket
- "Bug off" clothing - REI or Ex Officio (if sensitive to mosquitoes)
- One "nicer," but still casual outfit

Remember to dress conservatively. No visible undergarments; nothing torn, ripped or too short.

## Toiletries

- Hand sanitizer
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Soap (we recommend a pack of disposable face cloths that have soap in the fibers. They work as soap and a washcloth.)
- Toothbrush/paste
- Deodorant
- Razor
- Earplugs
- Soap for washing clothes (if you want)
- Suntan lotion
- Insect repellent
- Small packet of facial tissues
- Travel toilet paper

## Medicines

- Personal prescriptions (can be hard to get or expensive outside the U.S.)
- Pepto Bismol/Immodium
- Advil/Tylenol/Excedrin
- Cipro/antibiotic for travelers' diarrhea
- Benadryl/Hydrocortisone
- Bandages/Neosporin
- Emergen-C/cough drops

## Personal Items

- Pillow
- Umbrella
- Water bottle
- Camera/Charger
- Fly paper
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight (plus extra batteries)
- Travel alarm clock (if desired)



We often leave pillows, towels, sheets and dinnerware for the home to keep after we leave.

## Snacks/Food

While we encourage everyone to eat the food provided (it is tasty), if you are worried about not liking the food, or getting enough, consider packing some pasta or another substitution for a meal, just in case. In addition, you may also want to bring:

- Granola bars/fruit bars/popcorn/snacks to share
- Gatorade packets (it is easy to get dehydrated)
- Good ground coffee and sugar to share

## Other


- Passport
- Two copies of passport and credit card information: leave one copy at home
- Pictures of your family to show kids (great conversation starters!) and/or postcards

## Do NOT Bring

- Expensive or irreplaceable jewelry or other valuable items
- Flashy gifts







# Gifts

Visitors often ask what items they can bring for the children. Following are some suggestions.

## Clothing and Shoes

- Underwear
- Socks
- Sandals

## Education/Arts & Crafts

- Books in Spanish
- Coloring books
- Colored pencils and crayons
- Glue and tape
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Play dough
- Yarn and pipe cleaners
- Beads
- Stickers

## Toys & Games (for every age group)

- Card games
- Board games
- Jigsaw puzzles (100 pieces max.)
- Marbles

## Sports Equipment

The kids spend most of their time outside, so think of items that require little or no maintenance and can be shared by everyone!

- Balls
- Jump ropes
- Air pumps with extra needles

## Hygiene

- Feminine products
- Shampoo
- Soap
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes (for kids AND adults)

## Health Care

- Vitamins
- Bandages
- Neosporin
- Tylenol

These items are always needed in the clinic. Please contact us if you are interested in donating other medical supplies.

## Other

- Barrettes and hair accessories
- Inexpensive plastic jewelry
- Batteries of various sizes are always needed and easy to transport

## When in doubt . . .

Bring things that NPH needs or wants, and that get depleted. If you are still unsure, ask!



## PLEASE DO NOT

- Bring candy or small items to randomly pass out. This can result in hurt feelings among children who do not receive anything.
- Bring expensive gifts, such as music players, video games or jewelry. This may unintentionally create feelings of jealousy and cause problems for that child.
- Give gifts directly to the children. Give them to the home's Visitor Coordinator or a staff person.
- Give money to anyone at the home. This can cause confusion about how it will be used and will not qualify for a tax deduction under U.S. law. Please make all donations through NPH USA.

### REMEMBER, YOUR VISIT IS A GIFT!

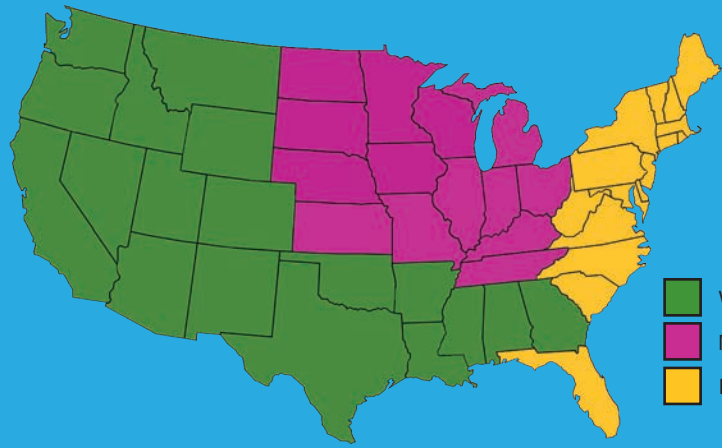
Neither NPH nor NPH USA want the children to associate your visit with material items. The best thing that you can bring is you! All your kind words, thoughts and affection are going to be the most lasting gift. Building relationships is the most valuable thing you can offer!







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West and South  
Midwest  
East

## Contact Information

*We suggest you leave this information as well as your flight and hotel details (if applicable) with your emergency contact.*

### National NPH USA Office

20 North Wacker Drive  
Suite 4000  
Chicago, IL 60606-3193

Phone: 888.201.8880  
info@nphusa.org

NPH USA, Federal Tax ID #65-1229309, is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation that supports the homes, healthcare and educational programs of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos.

### FUNDRAISING AREAS

#### West and South Area

##### Seattle Office

2719 East Madison Street  
Suite 304  
Seattle, WA 98112-4752

Phone 425.646.3935  
infonw@nphusa.org

##### Phoenix Office

5110 North 40th Street  
Suite 248  
Phoenix, AZ 85018-2143

Phone 480.967.9449  
infosw@nphusa.org

#### Midwest Area

##### Minneapolis Office

1400 Van Buren Street NE  
Suite #200-210  
Minneapolis, MN 55413-4605

Phone 651.482.1703  
infoupm@nphusa.org

##### Chicago Office

20 North Wacker Drive  
Suite 4000  
Chicago, IL 60606-3193

Phone 312.386.7499  
infomw@nphusa.org

#### East Area

##### Quincy Office

265 Willard Street  
3rd Floor  
Quincy, MA 02169-1514

Phone 617.206.4940  
infoma-ne@nphusa.org

### NPH Nicaragua Emergency Contact Information

Km 59 1/2 Carretera Panamericana sur  
Contiguo a los Silos de ENABAS  
Santa Teresa, Carazo  
Nicaragua  
Phone: 011.505.888.75637  
e-mail: info.ni@nph.org

