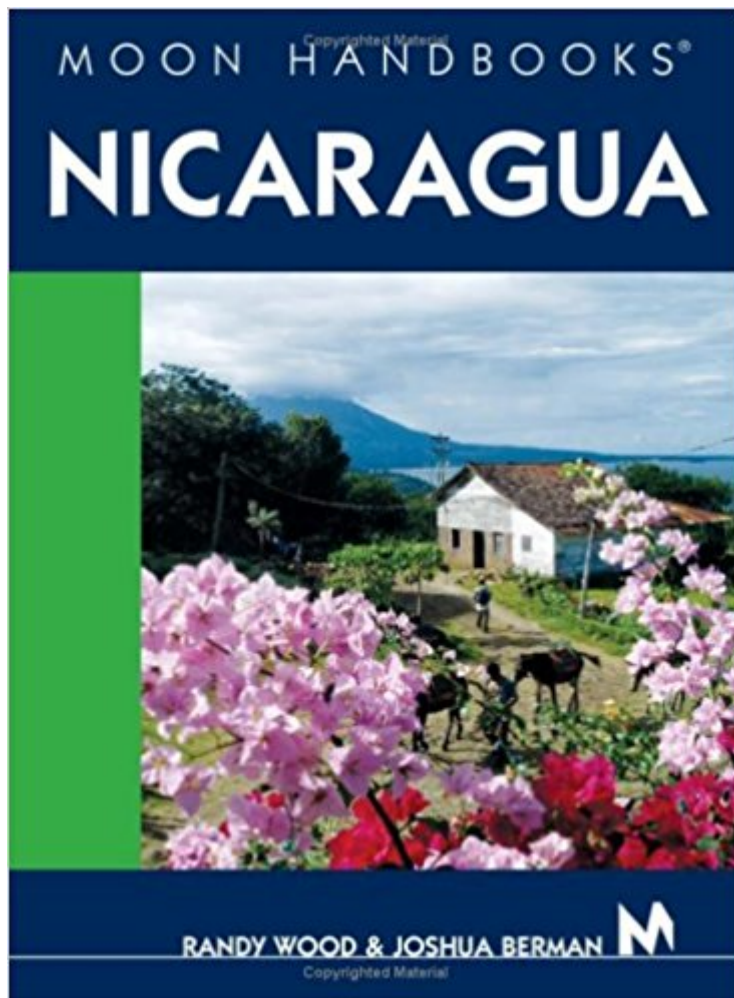


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Moon Handbooks Nicaragua



Synopsis

From hanging out on the Pacific beaches of San Juan del Sur and Las Peñas and shopping for crafts in Masaya to catching up on the ever-evolving nightlife of Managua, Moon Handbooks Nicaragua is the guide to the best the country has to offer, both on and off the beaten path. Practical information includes suggested travel strategies and lists of must-see sights, plus essentials on dining, transportation, and accommodations for a range of budgets. Complete with details for volunteering and studying Spanish, hiking more than a dozen volcanoes, or strolling down the old colonial streets of Granada and León, Moon Handbooks Nicaragua gives travelers the tools they need to create a more personal and memorable experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Moon Handbooks exude a road-wise, close-to-the-ground authority. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I'm giving this book five stars because, despite the few shortcomings, you really couldn't expect anything better. Nothing is perfect, right? I've been in Nica. for two months and will be here another month and use the book all the time. This book covers every conceivable place you might want to travel in Nicaragua. While this 2002 edition is very slightly out of date (for instance, some places listed have closed, there are many more internet cafes now, etc.), I understand that an updated edition will be coming out in Fall 2005. The authors outline great places to eat (and a good selection

of places to eat, including attention to vegetarian concerns), places to sleep ranging from cheap cheap hostels to higher-end hotels. (However, note that this book is not meant for resort-hoppers. If you have lots and lots of money and want to stay at the best places in all of Nica and eat at fancy restaurants and aren't terribly interested in the life of the Nicaraguan people and just want a typical beach vacation, this probably will not be of help to you. That is not to say that this is for people who completely want to "rough it" but this is not geared toward the high-end crowd.) The book covers discos and bars for most cities where such things are present, and caters equally to the hiker/adventurer type and people (like me) who are not into hiking around volcanoes. Plenty of info on museums, attractions, ruins, and festivals. Includes information about bus stations and getting from city to city, although some are out of date so always double check. I was also happy that the authors took into account the Nicaraguan people and customs and advocate (although not in a preachy way) ecologically and ethically responsible tourism. The shortcomings of the book are that sometimes the authors make things sound a little better or more exciting or more beautiful than they actually are. I noticed another reviewer mentioned this as well, so it isn't just me. Another thing, although I am sure it is the interest of space, is that some places don't have directions or "addresses" (that is, the Nica equivalent of addresses). This is fine in a smaller town where you can just ask, but in bigger places, like Managua, neither your taxi driver nor a person on the street and maybe not even the tourism office (if it is open) will necessarily know the location of a small bookstore or cafe that the authors list. Personally, I could have stood for less info on the flora and fauna and ecological stuff, which I think maybe is not a huge interest to all readers, and that space could have been used for more details on the cities and locations. And just a small pet peeve, the one paragraph dedicated to liberation theology showed little understanding as to what the movement was and is about. However, don't take these few criticisms to mean that the book isn't great and well worth your money. I will buy the new edition just to read it, even though I won't be living in Nicaragua anymore when it comes out.

We have a home in Nicaragua, and I have visited there once. I found that there was not a lot of information widely available on "things to do in Nicaragua". We are planning a second trip there in November, and I wanted to be more informed this trip. I purchased this guide, and I think it is great. There is lots of information organized by location, and it is organized well. I would recommend this guide for those wanting to travel to Nica, or even if you just want to learn more.

This is a very good book. I've had other travel books on Nicaragua and Central America and this is,

by far, the best. I also found it to be very accurate. I was quite surprised. Outstanding.

Joshua Berman & Randy Wood have not left a pueblo unexplored nor a beach missed. IF you are going visit only Nicaragua, this is the guide to take with you. If, perchance, you will visit other countries as well, then my first choice is "Footprint's Central America Handbook" Every city, town and beach I visited in Nicaragua was covered. I found their recommendations for accommodations, food and other service in the guide to be "right on". In our technology connected world the authors have the web addresses and/or email addresses for most hotels (not the hostels). Great. Very important for those planning to study Spanish in Nicaragua, this guide has a great rundown of most of the schools in various cities. This section is a must read before selecting a school (I speak from experience). I do need to point out the poetic license that is taken by the authors. The authors describing place with magniloquent words, that when the guide is held up to the reality of the place it is not half as wonderful as they say. Their writing on Leon is a great example. They write that being in Leon can give you an "exotic feeling" like the "one gets by walking down the cobble stone streets by colonial buildings". If and when you visit Leon you will be there a long, long time looking for that feeling and that street of cobbled stones. Maybe they meant "asphalt streets with pot holes". Although the guide is copyrighted 2003 I found that information regarding new hotels, restaurants and bars stopped at or around 2000. However, the authors introduction section (economy, government etc.) is through 2001. Do note, the upper priced hotels (over \$100) only get the mention of their name. And how do you make a very good guide - GREAT!? Well, more maps and better maps, especially of Managua, would be a great place to start. The guide has information about many sites of interest with corresponding maps to help you navigate. Also, there is NO section that recommends books or videos. There is no list of foreign embassies to help a traveler locate their embassy in Managua. Finally, the crime is rising in Managua, but only in Managua, and the guide does not address this. These things said, I still strongly recommend this book. This guide and the excellent 'In Focus - Nicaragua' (see my review) should be in your hand before you go.

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