



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Table of contents

	<i>Page Number</i>
❖ Welcome.....	3
➤ ISLA Mission	
➤ ISLA Vision	
➤ ISLA Values	
❖ History of ISLA.....	4
❖ Nicaragua and Jalapa Statistics.....	5
➤ General	
➤ Demographics	
➤ Economy	
➤ Information about Jalapa	
❖ ISLA Volunteer Code of Conduct.....	6
❖ ISLA Volunteer Policies	7
➤ Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities.....	7
➤ Representation of ISLA.....	8
➤ Confidentiality.....	8
➤ Dress Code.....	8
➤ Health Screening/Certificate of Ability.....	8
➤ Extended Stays.....	8
➤ Personal Gifts.....	8
➤ Local Workers.....	9
➤ Medical Assistance.....	9
➤ Conflict Resolution Procedure.....	10
❖ Travel Information.....	11
➤ Air Travel to Managua, Nicaragua.....	11
➤ Packing Information.....	12
➤ Bus Ride to Jalapa.....	12
➤ Medical Information.....	12-13
➤ Food and Water.....	14
➤ Accommodation.....	14-15
➤ Daily Schedule.....	15
➤ Things to do in Jalapa.....	16
➤ Miscellaneous Information.....	17
➤ End of Trip.....	18
❖ Closing Thoughts.....	19
❖ Appendix A – Packing List.....	20-21
❖ Appendix B – Reading Suggestions.....	22
❖ Appendix C – Websites.....	23

Welcome

Thank you for volunteering for one of our expeditions to Nicaragua. Our trips provide a unique opportunity to make connections with the people of Nicaragua and become part of their community. At the end of the trip we hope you will find that you got more from your time and energy than you gave.

We designed this handbook to make your trip with ISLA as stress free as possible. It outlines our mission, vision, and values plus some practical items such as what to expect, packing suggestions and other information that we hope you will find helpful. So please take some time prior to departure to read this handbook.

We also appreciate any ideas on how to this could serve you better.

As you think about the work you will do, here is a thought to keep in mind

“I cannot do everything, but still I can do something;
And because I can not do everything
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”

Edward Everett Hale

ISLA Mission

Partnering with communities in Latin America, through health, education and construction programs.

ISLA Vision

Our vision is to empower Jalapa, Nicaragua to become a more resourceful, hopeful and self-sustaining community, aided in part by ISLA's medical, education and construction programs.

ISLA, supported by loyal volunteers, professional staff and a systematic fundraising program, will have expanded its work to other parts of Nicaragua, using Jalapa as a base and model. ISLA will be respected among NGOs operating in Latin America for its success in working collaboratively with local communities and in giving US volunteers a fulfilling and educational experience that informs their activities at home.

ISLA Values

1. Work in partnership with local citizens and organizations to undertake projects of the most benefit to their communities.
2. Value each human being we meet and serve.
3. Serve all persons regardless of race, creed, and social or economic status placing particular emphasis on serving the poorest and neediest.
4. Enrich spiritual experience as we work, play, and grow together.

5. Demonstrate that people of various denominational and faith perspectives can work together as volunteers to bring healing and hope.

History of ISLA

- ISLA began working in Nicaragua in 1992
- Most of our work has been in the community of Jalapa, NS.
- The first medical team came to Nicaragua in 1995.
- ISLA was legally formed as a non-profit corporation in the United States in September 1999. Prior to that, the program was run under the United Methodist Volunteers in Missions (VIM) program.
- We received Nicaraguan NGO status in September, 2004
- All of our work in Nicaragua has been funded through private donations – from our volunteers and others interested in furthering our work in Nicaragua and private foundations.
- ISLA has not received any governmental funds.
- Between 4 and 5 ISLA teams visit Jalapa each year.
- Over 500 different volunteers have been part of our teams. Approximately 50% have volunteered multiple times.
- In addition to serving Jalapa, ISLA has worked in Acahualinca, Managua with the women's health center (1998) and in Honduras.

Nicaragua and Jalapa Statistics

General

- Largest republic in Central America
- Poorest country in Central America
- Third poorest country in this hemisphere (after Haiti and Guatemala)
- About the size of Iowa
- Located between Honduras on the north and Costa Rica on the south

Demographics

- Population Demographics:
 - 0 - 18 years 53%
 - 19 years and older 47%
- Life expectancy: 70 years
- Literacy rate: 67 % over age 15, in rural areas 54%
- Fertility rate: 2.7 children born/woman
- Birth rate: 24.1 births/1,000 population
- Death rate: 4.4 deaths/1,000 population
- Infant Mortality rate (rate at which babies die before first birthday):
27% deaths/1,000 live births
- Children less than 5 yrs mortality rate: 37%
- Compared to US: 6.9 deaths/1,000 live births

Economy

- Average monthly income: \$10 - 40
- Physicians in Jalapa: \$100/month
- Pediatric Cardiologists: \$200/month

Information about Jalapa

- Population: Community and surrounding area approx 30,000
- Economy: Very poor area of Nicaragua
- Agriculture: Tobacco and coffee
- Health Care:
 - One public hospital with approx 20 inpatient beds, Surgical suite and Emergency room
 - Public clinic with approx 10 consultation rooms
 - Private Clinics: ProFamilia and other private clinics
 - Public pharmacy and many privately owned pharmacies
- Community services: Cruz Roja, OYANKA woman's shelter, PIEAT, Radio station

Volunteer Code of Conduct

- I will respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all ISLA staff and volunteers, recognizing that people's values, beliefs, customs and strengths differ.
- I will respect and uphold the rights and dignity of all residents of the communities and countries where ISLA serves, recognizing that people's values, beliefs, customs and strengths differ.
- I will work cooperatively with ISLA staff and volunteers in the U.S. and in the country of service.
- I will work cooperatively with residents of the communities and countries we serve.
- I will perform all tasks related to ISLA in an ethical manner.
- I will abide by all ISLA policies and procedures.
- I will refrain from using my ISLA volunteer status for personal gain or to promote, or appear to promote, a particular political opinion.
- I will follow the ISLA Conflict Resolution Procedure any time there is a dispute with ISLA staff or volunteers.
- If I use alcohol or tobacco while volunteering with ISLA, it will be with discretion and in moderation. ISLA's Team Leader is not authorized to utilize ISLA funds to purchase alcohol for anyone.
- I will abstain from any illegal drug use. I will not intentionally violate any law of the community or country where I am volunteering.
- I will not have any contact of a sexual nature with any local person in the community or country where I am volunteering. Sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Such behavior will be grounds for immediate suspension from the trip and return to the U.S. at the participant's cost.

Volunteer Policies

Purpose of Volunteer Policies

The purpose of the policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement and management efforts. The policies are intended for internal management guidance only, and do not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The ISLA Board of Directors reserves the right to change any aspects of any policies at any time and, upon communication of said changes in writing to volunteers, ISLA expects adherence to those changes. Alterations to or exceptions from these policies may only be granted by the Board of Directors, and must be obtained in advance and in writing before the situation to which they apply. Matters in areas not specifically covered by these policies shall be decided by the Board of Directors.

Scope of the Volunteer Policies

Unless specifically stated, the policies apply to all volunteers in all ISLA programs and projects and to all sites of operation of the organization.

Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of his or her volunteer duties performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the organization. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the organization prior to the performance of the task. Unless specifically stated, volunteers shall not be considered as employees of the organization.

Service at the Discretion of ISLA

ISLA welcomes and accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of ISLA. Volunteers agree that the Board of Directors of ISLA may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate a volunteer's relationship with ISLA. Similarly, a volunteer may, at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate his/her relationship with ISLA.

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to ISLA. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation and the right to recognition for work done.

In return, Volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals and procedures of ISLA.

Representation of ISLA

Volunteers must not take any action or make any statement that significantly affects or obligates ISLA and/or its staff or volunteers without prior approval. Prior to any such action or statement, an ISLA volunteer must seek consultation and approval from the appropriate Program Director and the Board of Directors. These actions may include, but are not limited to, statements to the press, commitments for or proposals for collaborations or joint initiatives or new program projects and any agreement involving contractual or other financial obligations.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving with ISLA.

Dress Code

As representatives of ISLA, volunteers and staff are responsible for presenting a good image when in the community being served. Dress should be appropriate for the culture, conditions and performance of duties.

Health Screening/Certificate of Ability

If there are physical requirements necessary for the performance of a volunteer task, a screening process may be required to ascertain the ability of the volunteer to safely perform that task. A potential volunteer who indicates that he or she is under the care of a health care provider for either physical or psychological treatment may be asked to present a letter from the provider answering questions about the potential volunteer's ability to safely travel and perform volunteer tasks.

Extended Stays

If an ISLA volunteer wishes to extend an ISLA trip by arriving early or staying longer, or wishes to make an independent trip to a community ISLA serves, and will be doing ISLA work and representing ISLA during that time, the volunteer must obtain prior approval from the appropriate Program Director and the Board of Directors. A written proposal outlining the goals and objectives of the extended stay, the implementation plan and budget must be presented, along with the Program Director's written approval, to the Board of Directors at least 45 days prior to the trip. Following the trip, the volunteer must present a written report, containing an evaluation by the appropriate Program Director, to the Board of Directors.

Personal gifts

Personal gifts to individuals, groups or organizations in communities that ISLA serves are strongly discouraged. ISLA is committed to offering programs that benefit the community. Personal or individual gifts by definition do not benefit the whole community and in some situations can be detrimental to building and sustaining relationships. Volunteers are sharing their skills, time energy and friendship, all special gifts. If volunteers would like to contribute something in addition they can donate to or raise money for a specific ISLA program.

Local Workers

Hiring of local community members for projects shall be arranged only by the Nicaraguan Program Coordinator or by the Team Leader on a given trip. Hiring of persons under the age of 18 is not permitted and is in violation of Nicaragua's Child Labor Laws. Team Leaders will be provided with compensation guidelines prior to trips and are expected to follow the guidelines.

Medical Assistance

All medical assistance, including, but not limited to, medicine, equipment, financing of procedures or therapy, will go through the Medical Program Director, and the Board of Directors. No volunteer shall provide assistance to an individual, but bring his/her request(s) to the Medical Program Director.

Travel Deviations

Volunteers who choose to deviate from ISLA's scheduled itinerary are responsible for making their own arrangements and paying for the part that is changed. ISLA will not adjust trip fees for any of these deviations from the itinerary.

Conflict Resolution Policy

Conflicts arise in any situation where people work together. The effective and disciplined resolution of conflict within an organization is essential in order that the organization operate efficiently and effectively. The following procedure for handling conflicts has been developed to that end, in a fair and equitable process. The goal is to arrive at a resolution that enables all those involved in a dispute to continue their relationship with one another and with ISLA.

If an ISLA volunteer or staff member has a conflict with another volunteer or staff member, the following steps should be taken:

- Discuss the problem with the person with whom you have the conflict. Involve the ISLA Program Director most closely connected to the problem in this discussion if appropriate and possible.
- If the problem is not resolved, bring the conflict to the Volunteer Management Committee and the Executive Committee of ISLA. Present a written description of the conflict with as much documentation as possible to any member of the committee. Confidentiality will be respected.
- The Executive Committee and the Volunteer Management Committee will listen to both sides and present a proposal for resolution. The resolution will be communicated in a timely manner to all involved. A report will be submitted to the Board of Directors.
- In the case that the complaint is with a member or members of the Executive Committee, the concern should be brought with written documentation to a member of the Board who will present the conflict to the Board of Directors.

Travel Information

Please read through this carefully before the orientation and then reread a few days before traveling.

Airline Travel to Managua

1. Minneapolis airport
 - a. You must be at the airport at least 2-3 hours before the flight, we will tell you the time and place to meet at the airport.
 - b. Don't forget to bring your passport to the airport.
 - c. All tickets are E-Tickets
 - d. If you received an ISLA trunk or suitcase at the trip orientation, please don't forget to bring it to the airport.
 - e. If you were not given an ISLA trunk or suitcase at the trip orientation, you may be given one at the airport.
 - f. You will check in both your personal and ISLA luggage, ISLA will pay for any charges for the second piece of luggage.
 - g. Remember each piece of checked luggage must weight 50 pounds or less.
 - h. Follow the US airline regulations regarding carry-on items and restrictions.
 - i. After checking in, go through security and met at the departure gate.
 - j. After a short meeting you are free to move around the terminal.
 - k. Be sure to be back at the boarding gate no later than 45 minutes before the departure time.
2. Connecting Airport (Houston or Atlanta)
 - a. Go directly to the gate for Managua after arrival.
 - b. If there is sufficient time between flights, you can get something to eat and stretch you legs. Be back at the gate 45 minutes before departure.
 - c. At the departure gate for Managua, we may meet additional team members flying from other locations; take a moment to introduce yourselves to each other.
3. Managua Airport
 - a. Go through immigration individually.
 - b. Once through Immigration, go to baggage claim.
 - c. Each team member is responsible for claiming their personal luggage as well as their assigned ISLA luggage. Luggage carts are available at no charge.
 - d. Once all the luggage has been collected, the team proceeds as a group through customs. Some pieces of luggage maybe inspected.
 - e. After clearing customs the team will take luggage outside to be loaded on to a rented bus or hotel shuttle van.
 - f. Be very careful when you go outside!
 - 1) Do not give money or anything to anyone.
 - 2) Do not exchange money.
 - g. Someone will be assigned to watch the carry-ons while the rest of the team loads the bus or shuttle van.

Packing List

1. Refer to Appendix A for suggested items to pack
2. ***Follow the TSA guidelines regarding carry on items – see Appendix A***
3. Going to Nicaragua, you may only have access to your carry-on luggage in Managua and until we get to Jalapa so pack accordingly.
4. You will want clothes that are cool and comfortable for the ride to Jalapa.
5. Leave all expensive or good jewelry and clothes at home. Do not wear jewelry that dangles or can be grabbed.

Bus ride to Jalapa

1. ISLA rents a school bus for our trip to Jalapa.
2. You may want to bring a small pack or fanny pack for items such as Purell, hand wipes, Kleenex, money, water, cameras, and snacks for the bus.
3. People often bring snacks/candy to share on the bus rides.
4. We stop several times on the way to Jalapa for breaks and lunch.
5. It is a long ride to Jalapa so take this as an opportunity to get to know the rest of your team.

Medical Information

1. Medical Preparations
 - a. We strongly recommend that you talk with your physician about medical preparations as soon as possible. It is your decision, in consultation with your physician, as to what shots you get and what medications you take.
 - b. The following are the vaccinations we recommend:
 - 1) Hepatitis A & B. These are both series. Check with your physician as soon as possible about starting these series if you have not had them.
 - 2) Tetanus. Be up to date on this.
 - 3) MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) indicated for those born in 1957 or later without history of disease or of 2 adequate doses of live vaccine at any time in their life.
 - 4) Varicella (chicken pox) indicated for those born after 1979 unless adequate vaccine history (2 lifetime doses) or proof of illness.
 - 5) Pneumococcal indicated for those over 65 and those with chronic disease.
 - 6) Influenza. The flu is transmitted year round in the tropics; all travelers are at an increased risk. Recommended for all persons over 50; anyone with chronic disease or immunocompromising condition; and pregnant women.
 - c. Malaria prevention
 - 1) Dose 500 mg chloroquine phosphate, (also known as aralen), one pill per week. Start one week before travel, weekly during travel, and weekly for four weeks after return. This is not a chloroquine resistant area.
 - 2) Some people have reactions to this pill in the form of diarrhea or stomach cramps, so we recommend not taking it on a day you have to fly. You need to remember to bring the appropriate number of pills on the trip to take one per week. Please check with your physician about this before using it.

2. TB testing

- a. This is a test to consider getting 6 months post trip. There are active TB cases at the hospital in Jalapa. While these patients are quarantined, we cannot guarantee that you have no contact with them. We have never had a problem with anyone from our teams contacting TB, but we recommend this as a precaution.
- 3. Specific Health Issues During the Trip
 - a. Diarrhea:
 - 1) Many folks get a little of this. Much is due to the difference of foods and not actual sickness. We have freshly prepared juices at nearly every meal. We also eat a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables. Watch how much you are eating and the mix of foods that you are eating.
 - 2) If you are having diarrhea, start by using Pepto-Bismol, preventatively. Take two pills before each meal and see if this helps.
 - 3) If the diarrhea worsens but you do not feel sick, you may want to try something like Immodium after a day. However, please be careful with this.
 - 4) If you continue to worsen or you are feeling sick with bad cramping, please check with the assigned medical team leader. It is important that diarrheal illnesses do not go through the entire team.
 - b. Hand washing:
 - 1) **Wash hands before all meals and every time before putting any food in your mouth. We also recommend washing your hands after holding hands with the kids.**
 - 2) Wipes with alcohol work very well for cleaning your hands. (i.e. Wet Ones small travel packs).
 - 3) The best and most effective product is Purell hand purifier. This can be purchased in small travel size bottles that will fit in your pocket or larger squirt sized bottles.
 - 4) We ask that each volunteer bring a pump bottle of Purell to place on the dinner tables at the hotel.
- 4. Insect and animals
 - a. You most likely will not see dangerous bugs or animals in Jalapa.
 - b. It is a good practice, however, to check your shoes before putting them on and your bed before getting into it as bugs do like warm and dark places.
 - c. Please do not pet stray dogs or cats. There are a lot around Jalapa and there is not a rabies vaccination program in Jalapa.
 - d. There are not a lot of mosquitoes in Jalapa proper. The teams that go into the mountains may experience more mosquitoes. Due to the presence of dengue fever in the municipality, we recommend using repellent with DEET. Some windows in the hotel do not have screening since this is not widely used in rural Nicaragua.
 - e. Always wear shoes or sandals – **DO NOT WALK ANYWHERE IN BAREFEET.**

5. Prescription meds

- a. If you are on a prescription medication we advise that you carry this with you in the original bottle or it may be confiscated by security in the airports. You may or may not be able to get the medications in Nicaragua so plan to have a sufficient amount. Bring a copy of each prescription along for airport security staff; place in a clear zip lock bag with your medications.
- b. Please check the current Transportation Security Administration (TSA) regulation regarding prescription medications in carry on bags.

Food and Water

1. Water
 - a. Drink and use **only** bottled water at all times, including brushing teeth.
 - b. Do not use ice unless you ask about it first. Make sure that the ice is made from bottled water, not just purified water (there is a difference in Nicaragua).
 - c. Bring a refillable water bottle with you. In Jalapa at the hotel we get big bottles of water that you can use to fill your own water bottles.
 - d. It is very hot and dry in Jalapa and dehydration sneaks up on you. We recommend that you drink 2 liters of water a day to prevent any problems. This is especially important for those working outdoors all day.
2. Food
 - a. The food prepared for us in Jalapa is safe. We have trained the cooks at the hotel about proper food preparation and storage.
 - 1) There will always be a vegetarian dish available.
 - 2) We eat together in Jalapa at specific times (see Daily schedule)
 - 3) You may wish to bring snacks for between meals although there are many little stores in town that sell things like that.
 - b. Do not eat any fruits or vegetables that are not peeled.
 - c. Be very careful with local foods served outside the ISLA arranged restaurants. The food at the local street stands and many of the restaurants should not be eaten.
 - d. If you are invited out to eat, we recommend that you say you need to eat with the team, but you can stop by later to visit.

Accommodations

1. In Managua upon arrival and departure from Nicaragua.
 - a. We stay at a hotel at the beginning and at the end of the trip.
 - b. You will receive room assignments on the trip.
 - c. When we arrive at the hotel, bring your carry-on into the lobby and wait for the room assignments.
 - d. Once you have your room assignment, put your carry-on in the room and if instructed by the Team Leader, gather for a meeting at the designated location.
 - e. Never leave your room unlocked.
 - f. **Remember** once in Nicaragua, drink and use only bottled water for anything that goes in the mouth (i.e., toothbrush).
 - g. All toilet paper in Nicaragua goes into the basket next to the toilet.

- h. Breakfast is usually served beginning at 6:00 am. The team leader will let you know what time the team will leave for Jalapa the next day. Please come to breakfast packed and ready to leave. The teams usually leave for Jalapa around **8:00AM or 8:30AM** sharp.
 - i. The food and water served in this restaurant is safe.
2. Hotel in Jalapa
- a. Unless a private room has been requested, you will share a room with one or two other persons. Couples have their own rooms.
 - b. The rooms have locks, but only one key. So, please do not lose your key.
 - c. Rooms have a shower, toilet, & sink.
 - d. Some of the showers are heated. You may want to share your shower with another room if theirs is not heated.
 - e. **Always** put the toilet paper in the basket beside the toilet. The piping and septic systems are not designed to handle toilet paper in Nicaragua.
 - f. If you leave your key on the front desk in the morning, they will clean your room. If you do not want your room cleaned but the waste basket needs to be emptied, place it outside your door in the morning.
 - g. All passports, plane tickets, and group valuables will be locked in a trunk in the trip leader's room.
 - 1) The trip leader's room will be locked at all times.
 - 2) If you would like to keep your extra money or valuables in the locked trunk, please bring an envelope or money holder along with your name on to put them in.

Daily Schedule

1. The daily schedule is subject to change so the operative word is FLEXIBLE.
2. Meal times:
 - a. Breakfast 7:00 AM
 - b. Lunch 12:15 PM
 - c. Dinner 6:15 PM
3. Work times:
 - a. Medical:
 - 1) start to see patients at 8:30am so be to the hospital to set up at 8:00am
 - 2) Generally work until noon and return to work at 1:30pm.
 - 3) Try to end the day by 5:00pm
 - b. Construction: The Construction team leader will inform you of the work schedule.
4. Evenings:

After the evening devotion/reflections/announcements, you are free to relax and explore Jalapa.

 - a. There is an ice cream store in town that is safe.
 - b. There are two internet cafes in Jalapa that cost about 20-25cordova/hour which is equivalent to \$1.50-2.50.
 - c. Feel free to stay at the hotel and relax.

Things to do in Jalapa

1. Explore
 - a. Please be in groups of 3 or more with at least one male in the group when you go out at night
 - b. Always carry a flashlight with you if you go out at night. The streets have a lot of holes and sometimes the streetlights go out.
 - c. Please let someone know if you are going out at night, where you are going and when you expect to be back.
 - d. There is a disco on Friday and/or Saturdays nights. You can go dancing. The music is quite loud and tends to be the more contemporary Latin Rock/Rap type of music.
 - e. You need to be back to the hotel by midnight. If you are out late remember that others will be sleeping so be quiet. If the gate is locked, you can knock on the gatekeeper's window on the side of the hotel.
2. Get to know the town
 - a. The hospital and the hotel are located in one corner of the town. Do take the time to get out and see the rest of the town. Your perspective of Jalapa will be quite limited if you only see the hotel and hospital area.
 - b. Don't hesitate to walk into stores and see what is available.
 - c. Maps will be available in Jalapa to help find your way around. Ask those who have been in Jalapa before to help you. They often have found out lots of interesting things about the community.
 - d. On the Sunday many team members enjoy going to Escambray a mountain village with a waterfall. We drive the group up and then you walk back which takes about 1-2 hours.
 - e. There is also a coffee finca (farm) that we can arrange to visit on Sunday
3. Exercise
 - a. Some team members like to go walking or jogging in the mornings or late afternoons. Also do this in groups of three or more.
 - b. If you go for a walk up the mountains, stay on the paths. This area was heavily land mined during the Contra war. It is doubtful that you would walk on one, but it is wise to stay on the paths. If you are going for a walk in the mountains, please do it early morning rather than late afternoon. It gets dark quickly in Jalapa and we do not want anyone wandering around the mountains in the dark. Always let someone know if you are going walking in the mountains.
4. Shop
 - a. There is a general market in Jalapa which is interesting to visit. It is quite small, but reflective of most small communities.
 - b. You can have boots, shoes, belts, dresses, pants, shirts and jewelry hand made in Jalapa. Usually these are very reasonably priced. Please check the town map or ask your team leader how to get to these shops. If you are going to order something, please do so very early in your stay in order that they will have time to finish your order. We recommend taking a local translator with you so that you are not charged too much.

- c. Hicora, stone, and canvas paintings by local artists are also available. The artists will come to the hotel. You are free to barter with them. Please note that you can also purchase paintings at the market in Managua.
 - d. The women from El Trapiche make pine needle baskets which are unique to this area. They will bring these to the hotel
5. Sports events
- a. Often, there is a soccer or baseball game in town on the weekends. We will let you know when and where if there is one.
 - b. There is also a cultural center that sometimes has activities which you can attend.
6. Local Organizations
- a. There are a variety of groups and organizations in town which you may be able to visit.
 - 1) OYANKA, the women's sexual abuse and domestic violence organization.
 - 2) There are groups working with young girls teaching them how to sew and young boys teaching them how to do woodworking.
 - 3) There is an organization Los Pepitos for children with disabilities.
 - 4) If you have an interest in a particular type of group or activity, please ask your team leader and they will check on it.

Miscellaneous Information

1. Cameras and Videos
- a. You can bring both cameras and camcorders.
 - b. Always ask permission before taking pictures of local people. This is especially true with the police and military personnel.
 - c. We recommend that you put new batteries in your camera before the trip and bring spare batteries. The correct batteries are hard to find in Jalapa. Film is expensive or unavailable, so bring all you will need.
 - d. We try to have a post trip party at which people can see each other's pictures, slides, and videos.
2. Laundry
- a. We will arrange for laundry to be done daily during our time in Jalapa.
 - b. This is included in your fees.
 - c. Please be sure to mark or label your clothes.
 - d. Please make sure all clothes are washable and not valuable. Our clothes are washed on a stone pila and dried in the open air.
 - e. It takes about 2 days to get laundry back, so you will initially need about 5 or 6 days of clothes.
 - f. The medical team will be supplied scrubs to wear for work and these will also be washed with our laundry.

3. Pre-trip planning
 - a. Passports **must be good for 6 months after your return date from Nicaragua**. Please check your passport immediately to determine whether you need to get it renewed prior to your trip.
 - b. We recommend that you read at least one book on the history of Nicaragua. Refer to Attachment B for a list of suggested reading items. Also refer to Attachment C for some web sites on Nicaragua.
 - c. We walk nearly everywhere in Jalapa. If you are not used to walking on a regular basis, we strongly recommend that you do some exercising before the trip.
 - d. Those traveling with youth must have a notarized release from the youth's second parent allowing the child to travel with you. Please check with the ISLA office about the information needed. This information must be notarized and our office can do that for you.
 - e. Each evening after supper, we have a short devotion/reflection time of about 5 to 10 minutes. This is lead by volunteers from the group out of their own faith/spiritual perspective. It is a time to remind ourselves of the sacredness of each human being that we serve, the blessings of life that we have, the responsibilities we have in light of our blessings and gifts, and the call to justice and peace that is embodied in every faith tradition. We recommend that you bring your own reading materials for reflection and devotion. You will see and experience many realities in Nicaragua which will cause you to question and ponder your own life and commitments. Having some good material to read will help you with your own thoughts.
 - f. Bring a notebook or journal to record your experiences, thoughts, and encounters is also helpful.
 - g. Money – The local currency is the Cordoba. US dollars are accepted in Jalapa but only if they are new and unripped bills. It is best to bring only small denomination bills, \$1.00 and \$5.00. You will receive change in Cordoba. You will be responsible for any personal items you purchase, for alcoholic beverages or for any personal side trips.
4. Purchasing items for ISLA while on the trip

If you are sent to buy something for the team, always get a receipt and give it to the team leader. It is helpful if you write in English on the receipt what it was for.

End of Trip

1. Shopping in Managua or Granada
 - a. We may go to one of several markets in the Managua or Granada area on our last day in country.
 - 1) Items at the market include mahogany rocking chairs, hammocks, shirts, T-shirts, dresses, pottery, leather items, sandals, wood puzzles, and small children's toys.
 - 2) **If you are interested in purchasing a rocking chair or hammock, please note:** a rocking chair or hammock counts as a piece of luggage on the flight home. So, your personal luggage must fit inside one of ISLA's

trunks. Sometimes, 2 hammocks can be taped together and checked as one piece of luggage.

- 3) **If you are planning on purchasing one of these, please note:** you should plan to bring several large, extra strong plastic garbage bags and duct tape to wrap them for the flight home. Also, if you are purchasing a chair, you should bring pieces of cardboard to wrap around the chair. This can be done by cutting about 10 pieces of cardboard the size of your suitcase and bring them with you from the US. Some of the stores now can actually shrink-wrap the items you purchase.
- b. Other activities
 - 1) There are a number of excursions that can be done on the last day of the trip. The options will be discussed with you team at orientation.

Closing Thoughts

In all our work, **Safety comes first!!!** Please remind each other of this throughout the trip. Make sure that you know how properly to use a piece of construction equipment before you try to use it. Go slow and think through all of your work. Jalapa is not the place for emergency medical care.

Appendix A - Packing List for Nicaragua

Packing Information

You are allowed to take 2 pieces of checked luggage and 1 carry-on piece. One of your two checked pieces of luggage is to be used for taking ISLA supplies and will be given to you at the airport. Your individual items need to fit into one suitcase and your carry-on. You can pack up to 50 pounds in your suitcase and 40 pounds in your carry-on. The checked pieces have a 62 inch dimension limit. (Dimensions are determined by adding the length plus the height plus the depth - one measurement each.)

Personal Articles

- Towels – bath and hand (towels are provided however they may not be what you are used to using)
- Wash Cloths (wash clothes are not provided by any of the hotels)
- Bed Linens (linens are provided however they may not be what you are used to using)
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Wash-n-Drys (baby wipes work well, but do not have alcohol for cleansing)
- Anti-bacterial hand cleaner (Purell)
- Pepto-Bismol
- Anti-acid
- Diarrhea medicine
- Aspirin/Tylenol/Advil
- Cipro (we will have some for the group)
- Malaria Medicine (start one week and one day before your trip)
- Motion sickness medication (if you need)
- Toilet paper (provided in the hotels but may not be available in other bathrooms)
- Shower shoes or thongs
- Zip-lock bags
- Mosquito repellent
- Suntan lotion
- Drinking bottle
- Earplugs (optional)
- Travel alarm
- Bathroom articles
- Wipes for glasses

Clothing

- Work clothes. We have scrubs for medical people
- Comfortable clothes for traveling and visiting (cotton & washable)
- Sweatshirt/sweater/light jacket for evenings
- Shoes - 2 or 3 pair (work & visiting, all comfortable for walking) (for shining)
- Rain jacket or poncho
- Hat(s)
- Sunglasses
- Gloves for construction
- Swimsuit
- Beach towel

Other Items

- _____ Passport (must have to board the plane)
- _____ Spare passport copy
- _____ Copy of birth certificate (optional)
- _____ Money (traveler's checks not accepted most places)
- _____ Credit Card (Visa or Master Card) (not much opportunity to use)
- _____ Telephone calling card
- _____ Small backpack for traveling
- _____ Fanny pack
- _____ Camera & film
- _____ Flashlight
- _____ Extra batteries
- _____ Notebook
- _____ Pens
- _____ Pocket knife
- _____ Cards or small games for evenings
- _____ Tea/hot chocolate (mint teas are good for queasy stomachs)
- _____ Snacks (for yourself, and to share)
- _____ Food items (tuna, cheese crackers, oatmeal, prunes, etc.) (very optional)
- _____ Reading material
- _____ Devotion/reflection material
- _____ Duct tape, garbage bags & cardboard (if buying chair or hammock)
- _____ Small reading light
- _____ Umbrella

Transportation Security Administration – guidelines for liquids in carry on luggage

3-1-1 for carry-ons = 3 ounce bottle or less; 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. 3 oz. container size is a security measure.

Consolidate bottles into one bag and X-ray separately to speed screening.

Be prepared. Each time TSA searches a carry-on it slows down the line. Practicing 3-1-1 will ensure a faster and easier checkpoint experience.

3-1-1 is for short trips. *If in doubt, put your liquids in checked luggage.*

Declare larger liquids. Prescription medications, baby formula and milk (when traveling with an infant or toddler) are allowed in quantities exceeding three ounces and are not required to be in the zip-top bag. Declare these items for inspection at the checkpoint.

Come early and be patient. Heavy travel volumes and the enhanced security process may mean longer lines at security checkpoints.

TSA working with our partners. TSA works with airlines and airports to anticipate peak traffic and be ready for the traveling public.

Appendix B - Reading Suggestions

Thomas W. Walker. Nicaragua: The Land of Sandino. Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 1991.

Thomas W. Walker, ed. Nicaragua Without Illusions. SR Books: Wilmington, DE, 1997.

Thomas W. Walker & Ariel C. Armony, eds. Repression, Resistance, and Democratic Transition in Central America. Scholarly Resources, 2000.

Kent Norsworthy & Tom Barry. Nicaragua: A Country Guide. The Inter-Hemispheric Resource Center (The Resource Center): Albuquerque, NM, 1991.

Hazel Plunkett. Nicaragua: A Guide to the People, Politics, & Culture (The in Focus Guides). Interlink Publishing Group, 1999.

Edward Marriott. Savage Shore: Life and Death With Nicaragua's Last Shark Hunters. Metropolitan Books, 2000.

John A. Booth and Thomas W. Walker. Understanding Central America. Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 1999.

Tom Barry. Central America Inside Out. Grove Weidenfeld: New York, NY, 1991.

Walter LeFeber. Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, NY, 1994.

Edelberto Torres Rivas. History and Society in Central America. University of Texas Press: Austin, TX, 1993.

Clifford Krauss. Inside Central America. Summit Books: New York, NY, 1991.

Charles D. Brockett. Land, Power, and Poverty: Agrarian Transformation and Political Conflict in Central America. Unwin Hyman: Boston, MA, 1998.

Robert G. Williams. Export Agriculture and the Crisis in Central America. University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, NC, 1986.

Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall. Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, 1991.

Donald E. Schulz and Deborah Sundloff Schulz. The United States and, Honduras, the Crisis in Central America. Westview Press: Boulder, CO, 1994.

Jackie Roddick. The Dance of Millions: Latin America and the Debt Crisis. Latin American Bureau: London, England, 1988.

Appendix C - Web Sites

www.laprensa.com.ni (La Prensa – Nicaragua)

www.laprensahn.com (La Prensa – Honduras)

www.herald.com (Miami Herald – look under Nation/World, then Latin America)

www.iht.com (International Herald Tribune) (search by region)

www.latinworld.com/centro/nicaragua (good information)

www.tsa.gov/travelers (Transportation Security Administration) Things you should know about carry on items and other information

www.state.gov/www/regions/ara/index.html#country (US State Dept information)

www.cia.gov (World Fact Book – excellent statistics section)

www.usembassy.state.gov/posts/nu1/wwwwhcom.html (US Embassy commercial/business)

www.cdc.gov (Center for Disease Control)

lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/nitoc.html (Library of Congress – excellent Book on Nicaragua)
(This book can be read or printed by sections)

www.un.org (United Nations data)

www.lonelyplanet.com (Lonely Planet Travel Guide)

www.guiafacil.com.ni (Commercial tourist information – Spanish)

www.interaction.org (Interaction – relief work information)

www.nws.noaa.gov (US National Weather Service)

www.oanda.com/converter/classic (Currency Converter)