

Nicaragua International Choral Workshop (NICW) February 2025



Introduction

Join an international singing expedition to one of Central America's most beautiful regions this winter.

The Nicaragua International Choral Workshop will visit historic regions in southwestern Nicaragua, immersing participants in Latin American culture in a setting backdropped by extraordinary natural beauty and a near-perfect climate. Sing, perform, and develop your voice with other adventurous choristers while exploring an unspoiled tropical paradise.

Singing engagements/residencies are booked in the colonial city of Granada on the shore of Lake Nicaragua, and in San Juan del Sur (SJDS), the rustic and enchanting tourism mecca for surfers, yogis, and artists, nestled between coastal foothills on the shore of the Pacific Ocean.



Tour Overview

Dates: February 1 - 17, 2025 (16 nights/days)

Primary Destinations: Cities of San Juan Del Sur (SJDS), Granada, and Rivas in Nicaragua

Cost: 3,500 USD (HST included)

Registration Deadline: October 15, 2024

Included: flights, accommodations, ground travel, 50% of meals, musical activities, select excursions.

Musical Performances: in churches, schools and historic sites in SJDS, Rivas, and Granada.

Repertoire: The musical repertoire will be set based on enrollment, but will feature a cappella and piano-accompanied selections from the sacred and popular traditions tailored to the specific voices of the group. Requests are welcome.

Optional Complementary Activities: visit world-class beaches, take a surfing lesson, hike to SJDS's famous Cristo statue, enjoy a private catamaran coastal boat cruise, shop and sightsee in Granada, visit a live volcano crater, birdwatch and kayak the shoreline of Lake Nicaragua, and more.

Itinerary

Feb 1: 7 AM Depart from YOW / 3 PM arrival in SJDS, Nicaragua
Feb 2: Free day
Feb 3/4: AM rehearsal / Free PM
Feb 5: AM rehearsal / **7PM Concert in SJDS**
Feb 6: Free day / Optional Day trip to Ometepe Island
Feb 7: AM rehearsal / **7PM Concert in Rivas**
Feb 8: Bus to Granada / Free PM
Feb 9: Free day / Sunday Mass / Granada Island Boat Cruise
Feb 10: AM rehearsal / **Evening Concert in Granada 1** (Capilla Maria Auxiliadora)
Feb 11: AM rehearsal / Free PM
Feb 12: AM rehearsal / **Evening Concert in Granada 2** (Iglesia la Merced)
Feb 13: Return to SJDS / Free day
Feb 14: Hike to Cristo Statue / **Peña Rota documentary recording session**
Feb 15: Free Day / NICW Talent Show
Feb 16: **Sunday Mass** / PM Catamaran Cruise
Feb 17: 9 AM Depart SJDS / 1 PM fly home

Tour Details

GENERAL

The second annual NICW offers participants a unique experience of musical and cultural exchange. Riffing on conventional 'international choral tour' models that follow well-worn paths through Europe, the NICW '25 will return to one of Central America's most beautiful regions to engage in an exchange of musical traditions that will leave lasting memories for all.

The NICW is for experienced choral singers with a background in church, school, or community choirs interested in deepening their musical skills and broadening horizons. They should be comfortable singing and performing in a warm climate and possess a keen sense of adventure.



NICW repertoire – because we will be performing primarily in Roman Catholic Churches – will favor sacred choral music compatible with RC and Latin American cultural sensibilities, with titles confirmed as participants register. Inquire for details.

PRE-TOUR MUSICAL PREPARATION

A set of pre-tour training sessions will be held in Ottawa in November, December and January in order for participants to fully learn the music before departing for Nicaragua. The schedule for these will be set in the early fall, involving roughly 10 sessions and culminating in a pre-tour concert.

TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

NICW Flights (with Air Canada) are being handled by Uniglobe CBO Travel, in Ottawa. Ground transportation in Nicaragua will be arranged by Golden Tours Nicaragua.

Accommodations will be arranged in centrally-located hotels that support easy walking access to shopping, dining, and nightlife in Granada and SJDS.

Standard tour accommodations are double rooms, assigned to participants in pairs on the basis of gender. Upgrades to single rooms – and economy/dorm options – are available upon request at additional cost.

The NICW fee covers 50% of meals, including all (16) breakfasts and half of tour (8) dinners. Beyond this, dining in both SJDS and Granada is easy and fun with numerous options and price points available.



EXCURSIONS & ACTIVITIES

NICW group excursions are coordinated by Golden Tours Nicaragua, whose English-speaking guides are deeply versed in local history, geography, zoology, botany, and culture, and offer a truly authentic immersive experience.

Excursions are scheduled during the free times in the itinerary above. They include beach days at world-class coastal beaches (e.g., Playa Hermosa, the filming location of the 21st and 22nd seasons of Survivor), boat tours (an 'Island tour' in Granada and a private catamaran tour up the coast from SJDS), a volcano hike (see real lava!), a day trip to the incomparable Ometepe Island, and more.

The NICW offers a perfect balance of group activity and personal time for participants to use as they desire. We want you to both enjoy the itinerary we have crafted and make the experience your own.



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REGISTRATION DEADLINES & CANCELATION POLICY

To register and confirm a place, participants must pay a \$500 USD deposit and then establish a payment plan to pay the balance in full (total \$3,500 USD) prior to departure. The deadline to register and pay the deposit for the NICW is October 15, 2024. The preferred payment method is e-Transfer.

The workshop requires a minimum of 16 participants to proceed. If there is insufficient enrollment to run the workshop by the registration deadline of October 15, 2024, full refunds will be issued.

The cancellation policy allows for people to withdraw, less a \$250 admin fee, until flight arrangements are finalized (on December 1), after which the airfare portion of their fee will also be non-refundable.

There are a maximum of 24 places available.

Non-singing accompanying companions (spouse/partner/friend) may join the tour – as space permits – for a cost of \$3,000 - \$3,500 USD, depending on accommodation arrangements requested.



MISCELLANY

SJDS and Granada both have superb spas, gyms, and wellness centers where you can have a massage or do some yoga, and most operators speak English. There are dental and chiropractic clinics that cater to tourists and the expat community. Both cities have modern hospitals, emergency rooms, doctors, and pharmacies. Essential medical care in Nicaragua is free, including for tourists.

Nicaragua is a world-leading producer of coffee, cigars, rum, and cocoa. There are several places to tour production plants, learn about these traditional industries, and sample wares.

Nicaraguans will eagerly converse with visitors, but many of them don't speak English, meaning this will be a great chance to dust off your Spanish.

Commodities and services are affordably priced, even in touristy spots. Local cuisine infuses traditional Nicaraguan dishes (enjoy superb quality meat and seafood in particular) with standard international fare, accommodating a range of tastes. Granada in particular has a thriving culinary scene that feels perfectly balanced with colorful colonial architecture.

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Nicaragua is abundantly safe, in particular for visitors in its main centers who are warmly welcomed by locals everywhere. Still flying somewhat 'under the radar' as an international tourism destination, the country has a rustic and easy-going feel, as a place where people rise and fall with the sun, stop for chickens and horses crossing the road, and are hospitable to a fault.

There is a thriving expat community of people – including an abundance of Canadians - who've permanently relocated to the country to enjoy its wonderful climate and atmosphere. We encourage you to read accounts of travelers online; there are numerous current and recent blogs describing the Nicaraguan travel experience.

