

Nicaragua International Choral Workshop (NICW) February 2024



Introduction

Chart a new course by joining this original international singing expedition to one of North America's most beautiful regions this winter.

The Nicaragua International Choral Workshop (NICW) will visit historic regions in Nicaragua, immersing participants in Latin-American culture in a setting backdropped by extraordinary natural beauty and in a near-perfect climate. Sing, perform and develop your voice with other adventuresome choristers while exploring an unspoilt 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, yogies, and artists, nestled between coastal foothills on the shore of the Pacific Ocean.

Tour Overview

Dates: February 10 - 26, 2024 (16 nights/days)

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

Cost: 4,250.00 CAN\$ (HST included)

Registration Deadline: October 15, 2023

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

Musical Performances: in churches, schools and historic sites in SJDS 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 geared to the specific voices of the group. Requests are welcome

Optional Activities: visit world-class beaches, take a surfing lesson, hike to SJDS's famous Christo statue, enjoy a private catamaran coast boat cruise, shop and site-see in Granada, visit a live volcano crater, and release sea turtles from a protected hatchery, and more.



Itinerary

February 10: 7AM Depart from YOW / 3PM arrival in SJDS, Nicaragua
February 12-16: morning rehearsal / PM free
February 16: 7PM “Coffee house” at Tostaderia Café, SJDS
February 17: 8AM bus to Granada (2-hour commute) / PM free
February 18: Brunch in Granada / PM free
February 19: morning and afternoon rehearsals / evening free
February 20: morning rehearsal / 7PM Concert 1: Chapel Maria Auxiladora
February 21: morning rehearsal / 7PM Concert 2: Iglesia de la Merced
February 22: 8AM bus to SJDS / PM free
February 23: morning rehearsal / PM free
February 24: morning rehearsal / 7PM Concert 3: San Juan Bautista
February 25: Sunday Service in SJDS (singing hymns with local choir) / 1 PM Catamaran Cruise
February 26: 9AM Depart SJDS, fly home

Tour Details

GENERAL

The NICW offers participants a wholly unique experience of musical and cultural exchange. Riffing on conventional ‘international choral tour’ models that follow well-worn paths through Europe or the West Indies, the NICW will chart a new path to places you probably never thought you’d visit, where we’re confident you will quickly feel at home, to engage in a sharing of musical traditions that will leave lasting memories for all involved.

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

NICW repertoire – because we will be performing primarily in Roman Catholic Churches – will favour sacred choral music compatible with RC and Latin American cultural sensibilities in mind, with titles confirmed as participants register. Once the balance of voices is known, we’ll finalize a music list of about an hour’s length that is varied and enjoyable and that will be appreciated by our hosts, singing in Latin, English, Spanish and French. We’re open to requests; you can mention those when you inquire.

A set of pre-tour training sessions will be held/offered in Ottawa in November, December and January in order for participants to learn the music before departing for the NICW. The schedule for these will be set in the early fall, and involve about 10 sessions. The pre-tour training sessions are included in the NICW price.

TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

NICW Flights are being handled by Uniglobe CBO Travel. Ground bus Travel will be arranged through Indian’s Face Travels & Tours, a local Nicaraguan company.

Accommodations will be 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 by request.

The NICW fee covers 50% of meals, including breakfast and lunch near the beginning of the tour and on occasions when dining as a group facilitates group movement. Beyond this dining in both SJDS and Granada is easy with numerous options and price points. You can even buy groceries and prepare your own food in hotel common areas.



EXCURSIONS & ACTIVITIES

Group excursions and tours – all optional - are offered during the ‘free’ times in the itinerary above.

Excursions include beach days at world-class coastal beaches (ex. 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 visit to a protected coastal turtle hatchery, and more.

There are myriad other activities for people to do on their own or in small groups (see ‘miscellany’ below. 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. Limiting the tour to only two locations – SJDS and Granada – will enable you to feel at home before you leave.

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REGISTRATION DEADLINES & CANCELATION POLICY

To register and confirm a place, participants must pay a \$500 deposit and then establish a payment plan to pay the balance in full (total \$4,250) prior to departure. The deadline to register and pay the deposit for the NICW is October 15, 2023.

The preferred payment method is Etransfer to OttawaChoralWorkshops@gmail.com.

The workshop requires a minimum of 16 participants to proceed. If there is insufficient enrolment to run the workshop by the registration deadline of October 15, 2023, full refunds will be issued in time for you to book another winter getaway.

The cancellation policy allows for people to withdraw, less a \$150 admin fee, until flights are confirmed and purchased (in early December), after which the airfare portion of their fee will also be non-refundable.

There are a maximum of 20 places available.

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



another day in paradise

MISCELLANY

SJDS and Granada both have superb spas, gyms and wellness centres where you can get a massage, work out, 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 is free, including for tourists.

Nicaragua is a well-known producer of 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, and many of them don't speak English, meaning this will be a great chance to dust off your Spanish.

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

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

There is a thriving expat community of people who've permanently relocated to the country to enjoy its wonderful atmosphere and easy going feel. We encourage you to read accounts of travelers online, there are numerous blogs by recent travelers.

