

CONDUCTING BUSINESS WITH PEOPLE FROM



NICARAGUA



Greetings



Nicaraguans are expressive. They often greet each other with kisses, although men usually prefer hugs or handshakes. Only children, family members, and close friends address each other by their first names. When a person has a title, it is important to use it along with the surname.

Conversation



Baseball is a national passion. Dennis Martinez is popularly regarded as a national hero. There is some awakened interest in conversation, but it is not a hot topic yet. Politics has a wide divergence in viewpoints. Music and dancing are very popular; informal family gatherings with guitars are still common.

Gestures



Making a fist with a thumb between the index and middle fingers is considered obscene. The “come here” gesture is done with the palm down, making a scooping gesture with the fingers or the entire hand. You will see people waving good-bye as is done in the U.S., palm facing out, or with palm facing in. Do not photograph individuals or religious ceremonies without prior approval; some people object to having their picture taken.

Business Attire



Businessmen should wear a conservative dark suit and tie, although a jacket is not required in the hottest season; women should wear a dress or skirt and blouse. Women in pants or revealing clothing are very uncommon and may offend some people.

Hierarchy/Family



Nicaragua is a patriarchal society, in which women are widely considered subordinate to men. In recent years the position of women has advanced politically while the tradition of machismo is largely unchanged.

Manners



While greetings are warm, in the street pushing and shoving is normal.

Cognitive Styles



Although the population is quite diverse, the Nicaraguans have a strongly independent heritage, with a reputation for disrespect for authority and a strong sense of justice. The ability to say one thing and think something different has been described as a “nica” trait and is celebrated in the folk character El Gueguense, a quick-witted, sharp-tongued and cunning trickster.

Currency



Unit of currency is the Cordoba.

Ethnic Make-Up



Mestizo (descendants of the Colonial Spanish and Indigeous Indians) are the majority. The rest are Indians and Creole.

Language



The official language is Spanish. English is often spoken along the Atlantic coast. A number of Indian languages are also spoken.

Religion



There is no official religion. About 85% of the population belongs to the Roman Catholic church; however, the majority hardly ever attends church. The remainder of the population belongs to various Protestant denominations.