



NICARAGUA



INTRODUCTION

The Pacific coast of Nicaragua was settled as a Spanish colony from Panama in the early 16th century. Independence from Spain was declared in 1821 and the country became an independent republic in 1838. Democratic institutions have weakened as the president has garnered full control over all branches of government.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Jose Daniel ORTEGA Saavedra

Head of Government

President Jose Daniel ORTEGA Saavedra

Government Type

presidential republic

Capital

Managua

Legislature

unicameral National Assembly or Asamblea Nacional (92 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 130,370 sq km
Land: 119,990 sq km
Water: 10,380 sq km

Climate

Tropical in lowlands, cooler in highlands

Natural Resources

gold, silver, copper, tungsten, lead, zinc, timber, fish

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

low-income Central American economy; until 2018, nearly 20 years of sustained GDP growth; recent struggles due to COVID-19, political instability, and hurricanes; significant remittances; increasing poverty and food scarcity since 2005; sanctions limit investment

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$34.98 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$5,300 (2020 est.)

Industries - food processing, chemicals, machinery and metal products, knit and woven apparel, petroleum refining and distribution, beverages, footwear, wood, electric wire harness manufacturing, mining

Agricultural products - sugarcane, milk, rice, maize, plantains, groundnuts, cassava, beans, coffee, poultry

Exports \$5.34 billion (2020 est.)

clothing, apparel, gold, insulated wiring, coffee, beef (2019)

partners: US 60%, El Salvador 5%, Mexico 5% (2019)

Imports \$5.94 billion (2020 est.)

refined petroleum, clothing, apparel, crude petroleum, packaged medicines, insulated wiring (2019)

partners: US 27%, Mexico 12%, China 11%, Guatemala 9%, Costa Rica 7%, El Salvador 6%, Honduras 6% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

6.2 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

0.93% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Mestizo (mixed Amerindian and White) 69%, White 17%, Black 9%, Amerindian 5%

Language

Spanish (official) 95.3%, Miskito 2.2%, Mestizo of the Caribbean coast 2%, other 0.5%

note: English and indigenous languages found on the Caribbean coast (2005 est.)

Religion

Roman Catholic 50%, Evangelical 33.2%, other 2.9%, none 0.7%, unspecified 13.2% (2017 est.)

