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)

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.)

as of October 2021