

Nicaragua

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and US CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Nicaragua is a developing nation classified as lower middle income. Located in Central America along both the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean (north of Costa Rica and south of Honduras), the climate is extremely diverse with classifications that range from humid equatorial (long dry season) in the west to humid equatorial (no dry season) in the east, with cooler temperatures in some high-altitude areas.

Vaccinations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in Nicaragua, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- *Requirement:* A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This does not apply to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) in risk countries.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against COVID-19, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2018) Malaria risk due to *P. vivax* (79.2%) and *P. falciparum* (20.8%) exists throughout the year in a number of municipalities, mainly in Región Autónoma del Atlántico Norte, with sporadic transmission also reported in Boaca, Chinandega, Jinotega, León and Matagalpa. Cases are reported from other municipalities in the central and western departments but the risk in these areas is considered to be very low or negligible. Risk due to *P. falciparum* is high mainly in Región Autónoma del Atlántico Norte, specifically in the municipalities of Rosita, Siuna, Bonanza, Puerto Cabezas and Waspán. No chloroquine-resistant *P. falciparum* reported.

- Recommended prevention in *P. vivax* risk areas: **B** – Risk of *P. vivax* malaria only. Mosquito bite prevention plus chloroquine chemoprophylaxis. ^a
- Recommended prevention in *P. falciparum* risk areas: **C** – Risk of *P. falciparum* malaria, in combination with reported chloroquine and sulfadoxine–pyrimethamine resistance. Mosquito bite prevention plus atovaquone–proguanil or doxycycline or mefloquine chemoprophylaxis (select according to reported side effects and contraindications) ^a

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—Health Information for International Travel (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Present in Región Autónoma Atlántico Norte (RAAN) and Región Autónoma Atlántico Sur (RAAS). Rare cases in Boaco, Chinandega, Esteli, Jinotega, Leon, Matagalpa, and Nueva Segovia. No malaria in the city of Managua (see Map 2-20).

- Drug resistance³ : None.
- Malaria species: *P. vivax* 90%, *P. falciparum* 10%.
- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Región Autónoma Atlántico Norte (RAAN) and Región Autónoma Atlántico Sur (RAAS): Atovaquone-proguanil, chloroquine, doxycycline, mefloquine, or tafenoquine.⁴ Other Areas with malaria: None (practice mosquito avoidance).

³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Community sanitation and food safety measures are generally inadequate. Some itineraries (e.g., remote destinations, austere accommodations) and activities (e.g., ecotourism, eating street or local-market food) further increase risk.

Travelers should observe food and beverage precautions, which reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chagas' disease (American trypanosomiasis), chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include anthrax disease, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, melioidosis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the US Department of State (DOS), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to the arbitrary enforcement of laws, the risk of wrongful detention, and limited health care availability, US (DOS) advises reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to this country. UK (FCO), Canada (GAC), and Australia (DFAT) have no current warnings.

Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, home robbery, sexual assault, gang-related violence, and murder) and moderate risk of petty crime exist throughout the country, especially in Managua (particularly in Mercado Oriental and in and around public transportation terminals), Granada (Granada Department), San Juan del Sur (Rivas Department), and on Little Corn Island.

Express kidnappings to force cash withdrawals at ATMs occur throughout the country.

Scams involving the use of distraction techniques to commit robbery (including puncturing tires and posing as a helpful passerby) and false identity (such as criminals posing as tour guides) have been reported.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations occur throughout the country and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Water Safety

Hazardous water conditions (including currents, tides, and undertows) may occur, especially along the Pacific coast. Heed posted warnings, and avoid beaches that are not patrolled. Do not swim alone or after dark, and do not walk on any beach after dark.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI, and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Transportation Safety

National incidence data on traffic-related injury or death are not available.

Natural Disasters

The hurricane season is from June through November. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Nicaragua

- United States: [+505] 2252-7100; ni.usembassy.gov
- Canada: [+505] 2268-0433; travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/nicaragua
- United Kingdom: U.K. does not have an embassy or consulate in Nicaragua.
- Australia: [+505] 2298-5300

Nicaragua's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: [+1] 202-939-6531
- In Canada: Nicaragua does not have an embassy or consulate in Canada.
- In the U.K.: [+44] 020-7938-2373
- In Australia: [+61] 0431-600-104

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing may be required to obtain a work or residence visa.

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