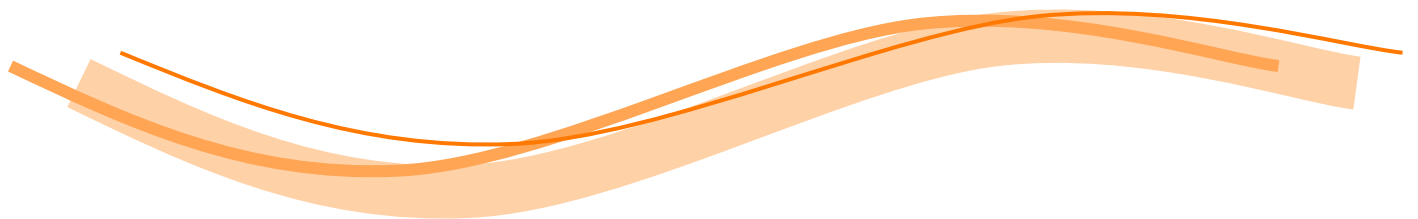




NICARAGUA & NOLITOURS





NICARAGUA	<p>Nicaragua is right in the middle of Central America, just north of Costa Rica, with coastlines on both the Caribbean and the Pacific. Unspoiled, uncommon, unforgettable – Nicaragua offers something for everyone from exhilarating activities to luxurious relaxation.</p> <p>There is unique culture, colonial cities, wildlife and nature – plus surf, sand and sun. But with all this adventure you can still relax in a luxury four star all inclusive resort in Nicaragua. The Barcelo Montelimar Beach Resort from Nolitours has 3 a la carte restaurants, a casino, disco, beauty salon and more!</p> <p>Take an excursion from The Barcelo Montelimar Beach to Granada, which is the oldest city in Central America to remain on its original site. Granada was named after the ancient Spanish city in Andalucia that has the same name. Nicaragua's most colorful city, Granada has charming red-tiled roofs, grand cathedrals, breezy lake shore – and a drowsy lifestyle that dates back to the days of the Spanish.</p> <p>Situated on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, the city was founded in 1524 and is now considered a showcase of Nicaragua's Spanish Colonial treasures - with 17th century churches, flower-filled courtyards, impressive museums, European cuisine and historic buildings.</p> <p>Visit Granada for its authentic colonial history and the handicraft market. Then imagine climbing the nearby active Cerro Negro Volcano – at the summit you can take in the view of its two craters and the mountains beyond. And adrenalin junkies can sandboard or slide down the volcano on the way back! Picture yourself cruising through the 365 island archipelago of Lake Nicaragua – the “isletas” of the archipelago were formed when the Mombacho Volcano erupted 20,000 years ago.</p>
Location	<p>Nicaragua is in Central America and is bordered by Costa Rica to the south and by Honduras to the north. Its west coast is bounded by the Pacific Ocean and its east coast by the Caribbean Sea. Nicaragua is 130,668 sq. km. which makes it slightly larger than the state of New York. Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America.</p>
Geography	<p>The extensive Atlantic coastal plain rises to the central interior mountains, which drop off to a narrow Pacific coastal plain interrupted by volcanoes. Highest elevation: Mogotón 2,107 m. (6,912 ft.). Nicaragua claims the largest expanse of tropical rainforest north of the Amazon, covering much of the northern and eastern regions. The mountains and the western part of the country are somewhat more arid. There are many lakes and rivers accounting for some 9,240 sq. km. of the country's total surface area. Lake Nicaragua, Central America's largest, covers more than 8,000 sq. km., while Lake Managua reaches more than 1,000 sq. km.</p>

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Name	The name "Nicaragua" was coined by Spanish colonists based on the name Nicarao, chief of the most populous indigenous tribe
Population	Nicaragua's population of 5.7 million is concentrated mostly in the western regions of the country. The largest ethnic population is mestizo, or mixed European and indigenous, with smaller groups of whites, blacks of Jamaican origin, and other indigenous minorities. The culture of Nicaragua reflects the mixed Ibero-European and Indian ancestry of the majority of its people.
Language	Spanish is the official language and is spoken by the vast majority of Nicaraguans. English and indigenous languages are used along the Caribbean coast and in parts of the Atlantic coastal plain. Many Nicaraguans also speak some English.
Currency	Córdoba (C) . Exchange rate: Approximately 24 per Canadian dollar (Dec 20013). Most establishments will accept payment in US dollars. Major credit cards are typically accepted in hotels, restaurants, and stores in both urban and tourist areas. Currency exchange can be transacted at most banks and hotels. The Córdoba is sometimes also referred to as the Peso. Most establishments also accept payment in US dollars.
Tipping	Airport/hotel baggage handlers: \$1 per bag is acceptable. For restaurants and other services, 10-15% of value of service is customary but not obligatory.
Government	Unitary presidential constitutional republic – the current President is Daniel Ortega
Documentation	All visitors need a passport valid for at least six months to enter Nicaragua. Upon arrival, Canadian citizens receive a 30-day or 90-day visa automatically.
Time zone	Central Time Zone, one hour behind Montreal and Toronto
Health	Contaminated water and food, as well as mosquitoes, are the usual sources of discomfort in Nicaragua. Always be careful about what you eat and insist on bottled water. As for those pesky mosquitoes, a good repellent with DEET should be enough to keep off bugs that bear unwanted gifts such as dengue fever and malaria.
Safety	According to statistics by Interpol and the United Nations, Nicaragua is one of the safest countries in the Americas, and the safest, after Costa Rica, in Central America.

CLIMATE	
General climate	Tropical in the lowlands, cooler in the highlands. Temperatures vary from 27-32°C during the rainy season from May to October, and from 30-35°C during the dry season from November to April. The climate in the western region of the country between the lakes and the Pacific Ocean is dry and has little precipitation. The eastern part is hot, humid and rainy.

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Today's weather	Today (7 Dec 2013) is 31C and sunny.
Best time to visit	In the winter months when the Nicaragua weather is warm, sunny and dry...in stark contrast to the Canadian cold!

GETTING THERE	
Flying time	Air Transat flights are 5 hours from Montreal to Nicaragua
Cities	<p>Managua is the capital and the nation's largest city, with a population of 1,500,000. Other important cities include: León, Granada, Jinotega, Matagalpa, Chinandega, and Masaya.</p> <p>Steeped in a history of turmoil, Managua is today a city in transition. With a population of more than 1.5 million, Managua remains the nation's economic, political, academic and transportation hub. It is also the entry and starting point for visitors discovering the rest of the country. Travelers can easily take day trips to a number of nearby attractions, including Masaya Volcanic National Park, which offers a breathtaking perspective of the still-active crater; the relaxing beach resort of Montelimar; the 162-hectare private nature reserve of Montibelli; the craft markets of Masaya; and the historic city of Granada.</p> <p>You can see Managua's small cadre of attractions in half a day, but if you're here on a weekend, consider staying to sample the vibrant nightlife. Managua offers several of its own attractions, including the restored Palacio Nacional de la Cultura (National Palace of Culture) and some of the best restaurants in the country.</p> <p>Colonial cities such as León and Granada are more pedestrian-friendly than Managua. Visitors can see all the main sights on foot</p>
Distances	The resort on the coast is 75 kms from the capital city of Managua.
Taxis	Taxis are plentiful and relatively inexpensive throughout the country. It is advisable to use officially registered taxis, which have red license plates (the numbers should be legible), or licensed tour guides.
Car Rental	Major rental car companies are located at the airport and in other locations. Visitors can use their driver's license for thirty days after entering the country.
Buses	Inter-city buses are both plentiful and cheap.

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	The country offers great variety in terms of accommodations, from all-inclusive resorts on the Pacific coast to authentic Spanish colonial houses in Granada. The northern highlands and the lake islands offer rustic working farms with lots of personality but little in modern amenities.
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	Nicaragua is a very child friendly destination and you will find locals love children. Kids themselves will love the expansive beaches on the Pacific Ocean and all the childrens activities at the Barcelo Montelimar Resort.
Teens	Active teens will love all the soft adventure opportunities here. Learning to surf, ziplining though the jungle canopy, climbing a volcano and boarding down its slopes, fishing, sailing and more.
Romance	There are countless possibilities for the romantically inclined here. Star watching on the beach is one: for some reason I don't understand, 86 of the 88 constellations are visible from Nicaragua!
Honeymoons & Weddings	The Barcelo Montelimar Resort offers wedding and honeymoon packages – ask your travel agent to coordinate this with the resort team.
Seniors	<p>Granada is the oldest city in Central America to remain on its original site and is a popular destination for older travellers. The most colourful and comfortable of Nicaragua's cities, Granada has been charming travellers with its red-tiled roofs, grand cathedrals, breezy lakeshore, and drowsy lifestyle since the days of the Spanish, who used the city as their first Atlantic port (via Lake Cocibolca and the Río San Juan). Just 45kms from Managua on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, this fascinating and colorful city was founded in 1524 and is now considered a showcase of Nicaragua's Spanish Colonial treasures. Seventeenth century churches, courtyards filled with flowers, impressive museums, European cuisine and historic buildings converted to boutique hotels distinguish Granada as one of the fastest-growing tourism centers in the country. Travellers shouldn't miss the opportunity to kayak and explore the nearby "isletas," a 365-island archipelago formed in Lake Nicaragua when the Mombacho Volcano erupted 20,000 years ago.</p> <p>Granada has always been important politically for Nicaragua, and it is the home of many of the country's economic and political elite. Most travellers eschew Managua and flock to Granada because of its charm and lethargic pace, making it their base for further exploration. Some decide to stay, as evidenced by the many real estate offices that have sprung up over the last decade.</p> <p>Granada is pleasant to explore by foot or old-fashioned horse carriage. Nights, the sky fills with stars and the neighbors come out to chitchat on their front stoops; inside even the most nondescript colonial facade is an open, private courtyard designed to capture the evening breeze. Granada's restaurants are varied and high quality, offering something for just about everybody. Granada lacks the five-star luxury or business hotels of the capital and coast but instead offers a wide selection of small, charming guesthouses, bed-and-breakfasts, and colonial lodges</p>

UNIQUES	Nicaragua is officially one of the world's top ten "Happiest Countries".
Surprising	With 24 volcanoes and countless lakes, rivers, and lagoons, Nicaragua

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	<p>is known as the “Land of Lakes and Volcanoes.” Only in Nicaragua can you navigate through rivers and lakes from the Caribbean to the Pacific, because here the waters of the Río San Juan meet Lake Nicaragua. With a wide assortment of landscapes and habitats that allow for many different types of vegetation and animal species to flourish, Nicaragua is proud of its tremendous ecological diversity offering more than 70 unique eco-systems. In Nicaragua you will discover 7% of the world’s bio-diversity and learn why Nicaragua is considered “the second lung of the Americas.”</p>
History	<p>The western region of the country was colonized by Spain, where the east was once a British region with a culture similar to that of the Caribbean nations. Examples through history include the fight led by the “general of the people” Augusto C. Sandino against the intervention of the United States in 1927, and the Sandinista People’s Revolution against the Somoza dictatorship, which led the way to democracy and solidarity in Nicaragua. Today the country is a democracy, with elections and a government dedicated to social justice and peace.</p> <p>Greytown on the Caribbean coast served as a hub along the Central American route to the California Gold Rush. In the 1850’s, gold-seekers looking for a faster route to California than across North America by stage coach, would take a Clipper ship from New York to Greytown, then board a boat up the San Juan River and cross Lake Nicaragua. From the western shore of Lake Nicaragua they would go by mule the few kilometers to San Juan del Sur, a port on Nicaragua’s Pacific Coast. There, Clipper ships would be waiting to take them north to San Francisco and the gold fields of the Sierras. In Greytown, you can also see the remains of an unsuccessful attempt to build an inter-ocean canal, long before the Panama Canal was constructed. In addition, the Laguna Azul (Blue Lagoon), surrounding trails, and local cemetery are all fascinating nearby attractions to explore.</p>
Books	<p>The Country Under My Skin: A Memoir of Love and War (Anchor) is by one of Nicaragua's best-known writers and poets, Giaconda Belli, and covers her experience as a woman and Sandinista during the revolution. The Jaguar Smile (Random House), by Salman Rushdie, gives a poetic and humorous account of a trip he made to Nicaragua in 1986 to experience the revolution firsthand. Blood of Brothers (Putnam), by New York Times journalist Stephen Kinser, is generally regarded as the best and most evenhanded chronicle of modern Nicaragua.</p>
1000 Places to see before you die	<p>The Corn Islands – the Caribbean of yesteryear off the eastern coast. Granada – colonial grandeur on a great lake</p>
Must Sees	<p>Climbing the Cerro Negro is not like climbing any other volcano in Nicaragua. The volcano is only 400 meters high, but the ascent is steep and tough. There is no paved trail, merely a natural path along a rim that leads to the top. The ascent takes about one hour to the top, and</p>

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	<p>although it requires some effort, the superb views are rewarding. The absence of trees provides fantastic scenery, and upon reaching the top, visitors have a 360-degree view of the area.</p> <p>One of the volcano's slopes is too steep to climb, but consequently, it is great for a fast descent! Instead of large rocks, this side has volcanic sand, providing a great surface for running downhill. This thrilling experience takes less than ten minutes before reaching the bottom, but for the less athletic hikers it is also possible to walk more slowly, while enjoying the superb views. Alternatively, experienced snow- or sandboarders can use a wooden board to go downhill, much like snowboarding down a mountain, but without snow!</p> <p>Bigfoot Hostel, 505-917-8832; www.bigfootnicaragua.com , runs boarding tours Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. The price is \$28, including \$5 park admission. Dorm rooms at the hostel cost \$6 a night; there are also four double rooms for \$13, and a room for four is \$28. Va Pues Tours (505-315-4099; www.vapues.com ; \$33 a person) and Tierra Tours (505-315-4278; www.tierratour.com ; \$28 or \$30) also run sandboarding tours to Cerro Negro.</p>
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SPORTS ACTIVITIES	<p>Baseball is the most popular sport played in Nicaragua. Baseball was introduced to Nicaragua at different years during the 19th century. There are five teams that compete among themselves: Indios del Boer (Managua), Chinandega, Tiburones (Sharks) of Granada, León and Masaya. Players from these teams comprise the national team when Nicaragua competes internationally. The country has had its share of MLB players (including current San Diego Padres Short Stop Everth Cabrera, Boston Red Sox pitcher Vicente Padilla, but the most notable is Dennis Martínez, who was the first baseball player from Nicaragua to play in Major League Baseball.</p> <p>Boxing is the second most popular sport in Nicaragua</p>
Golf	<p>The best golf course in Nicaragua is the 18-hole Nejapa Country Club near Sabana Grande (tel. 504/2266-9652).</p>
Fishing	<p>Sport fishing is truly one of Nicaragua's greatest draws. With two oceans, gigantic lakes, multiple rivers and inviting lagoons, Nicaragua has something different to offer every fishing enthusiast.</p> <p>The International Sports Fishing Tournament takes place each September on the San Juan River and on Ometepe Island, recognized as the world's 10th largest island to be located in a freshwater lake. In addition, the first International Fishing Tournament took place May 2005 in the lush Solentiname archipelago near the Río San Juan Region. Still undiscovered, over-fishing has not plagued Nicaragua as it has other nations, and so most bodies of water in and around the country still teem with sea life.</p> <p>Anglers can battle Blue, Black, or Striped Marlin on a Pacific excursion or look on in amazement while reeling in a 100-pound giant</p>

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	<p>tarpon on the San Juan River. Lake Nicaragua (the second largest lake in Latin America) is considered one of the most interesting freshwater fishing spots in the world with bull sharks, “róbalos”, 30-pound snook and mammoth tarpon. Popular fishing outfitters include http://www.nicaraguafishing.com for Rio San Juan, Surfari Charters www.surfaricharters.com</p>
Horse riding	<p>Although there is quite a horsey sub-culture in Nicaragua, it can be challenging to find a stables that facilitates riding for vacationers. Your best bet is to stay at a hotel or lodge that conducts its own four-legged excursions. Montecristo River Lodge on the Río San Juan in southeastern Nicaragua is one good option. Another good place for some time in the saddle is the Tisey Reserve, close to Estelí</p>
Hiking	<p>Exploring the natural beauty of Nicaragua is something that should not be done in haste, so hiking provides a perfect pace to soak in every last sight, sound, and smell.</p> <p>The Mombacho Volcano Natural Reserve has multiple trails with specialized guides to help point out native vegetation, including hundreds of species of orchids.</p> <p>For the more adventurous, Nicaragua also has many active volcanoes which can be hiked, climbed and even skied. Situated in the northern, more temperate region of the country is Selva Negra, one of several coffee plantations in the area, where one can explore untouched rainforests while learning about the coffee-growing process.</p> <p>For a more rigorous yet breathtaking outing, climb the two large volcanoes of Ometepe Island: Concepcion and Maderas. Maderas features petroglyphs, waterfalls, and a beautiful lagoon in the volcano’s crater. Momotombo, one of the most challenging climbs in the country, provides spectacular panoramic views of its surroundings. Visit www.selvanegra.com , www.mombacho.org for more information on hiking and other adventure excursions in Nicaragua.</p>
Cycling	<p>Challenging roads and rugged landscape make both countries perfect for mountain biking, though rental bikes are limited to a handful of areas, and there are few specialist outfitters or tour agencies. If you are on a long-distance cycle trip, bring spare equipment, as bike stores are few and far between. San Juan del Sur has several hostels and restaurants that rent mountain bikes for use on the dirt roads that stretch up and down the coast. Isla de Ometepe provides an excellent 35km circuit around Volcán Maderas. You can rent bikes on the island at Hotel Finca Playa Venecia and Hotel Finca Santo Domingo. Another good route in Nicaragua is through the mountain towns of Los Pueblos Blancos, close to Masaya.</p>
Diving	<p>Whether snorkeling in the warm, transparent waters of the Caribbean near Corn Island, the deep, blue Pacific off San Juan del Sur, or the freshwater crater lake of the Apoyo Volcano, Nicaragua offers a variety of remarkable snorkeling and diving venues. The waters surrounding</p>

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	<p>Corn Island and Little Corn Island off the eastern coast of the country, shelter pristine reefs that harbor a vast diversity of both sea life and coral. Giant grouper, eagle rays, nurse sharks, sea turtles and enormous schools of African pompano are abundant in these rainbow-blue waters. Several tour operators and hotels offer excursions. Visit www.divelittlecorn.net for information on diving Nicaragua's Caribbean coast.</p> <p>Pacific diving, which is for seasoned divers, showcases larger species, including formidable parrot fish, snappers and surgeonfish, moray eels, and depending on the season, dolphins.</p>
Surfing	<p>The beaches of Nicaragua, especially those on the country's Pacific coast, are known for impressive surf and unexploited beauty. The most popular destination for surfers from around the world is a 60kms stretch of beaches called San Juan del Sur. This region, located on the southwest coast of the country, was a stop on Quicksilver's The Crossing in 2003, a worldwide quest in search of "the perfect wave." Maderas, a secluded beach beloved by locals and visitors alike, is one of the surfing community's best-kept secrets. For information on local hot spots and some general information about surfing and traveling in Nicaragua, visit www.nicasurf.com and www.surfnicaragua.com</p>
Ziplining and Canopy Tours	<p>Nicaragua's unspoiled rainforests are home to 7% of the planet's biodiversity. A great way to observe this abundant flora and fauna is with a canopy tour. Visitors traverse between varying platforms ranging from 10 to 100 feet in the air, using high-climbing techniques and equipment. It offers an escape from the "real world" atop treetop perches surrounded by vistas of Nicaragua's majestic volcanoes and a melodious symphony presented by native jungle birds.</p> <p>Mombotour offers such a tour from the Mombacho Volcano (located 16kms south of Granada), which culminates with a 70-foot rappel from a 250 year-old Ceibon tree. Canopy adventures can be experienced around the country in a variety of environments and settings, whether taking an exhilarating ride through rainforests, coasting over lakes, rivers, lagoons or flying high above coffee plantations. With all tours, whether wildlife watching or adrenaline-pumping adventure, safety is always a priority. Guides are well trained and equipment is maintained to stringent standards. www.canopytour.com ; www.vianica.com .</p>

CULTURE	
Arts	<p>Less than an hour south of the capital, Masaya and the dozens of villages that comprise the Pueblos Blancos are known for their residents' artistry. You will find artisans, metalworkers, leatherworkers, carpenters, painters, and musicians. In fact, no other region of Nicaragua is as blessed with a sense of artistry and creativity as Masaya and the surrounding villages, called the Pueblos Blancos. Many of the handicrafts found in markets throughout the country are</p>

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	Masayan: handwoven hammocks, terra cotta pottery, musical instruments, and more
Music	<p>Nicaragua is a country keen on their music and dance, a product of the different heritage and cultures from before. It is as if each region gave birth to a different music and dance, yet still come together to mesh perfectly creating this one cultural identity.</p> <p>Pacific – A mixture of the indigenous and Spanish culture resulting in a wide range of diverse music and dance with flutes and drums accompanied by dancers in Spanish garb demonstrating the duality of cultures.</p> <p>Masaya – Here the cultural feature is referred to in the Latin American term ‘mestizaje’, a mixture of culture. Dances are expressed with soft movements as guitars strum lightly in the background with the national folklore instrument, the wooden marimaba, painting the picture of a dance between man and woman.</p> <p>North/Central – The European heritage brought by the Spanish and German descendants is prominently displayed in this region. Dances known as the ‘polcas’ and ‘mazurcas’</p> <p>Caribbean – Though the African culture plays an integral role in this region, influencing both the music and dance, the contribution of the native indigenous tribes cannot be forgotten. The dance of choice is the ‘palo de mayo’, crafted in Bluefields, an energetic dance which highlights the role of the body with sensual movements.</p>
Museums	<p>Centro de Arte Fundación Ortiz-Gurdián (León): This extensive gallery has easily the best art collection in Nicaragua. Two beautifully restored town houses hold a dazzling selection of paintings and sculptures ranging from 16th-century Cuzco School portraits to modern Nicaraguan installations. You'll also find some out-of-place surprises such as works by Rembrandt, Picasso, and Miro.</p> <p>Museo Nacional (Managua): Located in the deserted and dilapidated city center, the Museo Nacional is a hidden gem with high colonial features, a giant courtyard, and an inner gallery. Besides the usual pre-Colombian collections of flint and ceramic urns, there are some very enlightening display boards with a wealth of information about Nicaraguan food, drink, folklore, and music.</p> <p>Antiguo Convento San Francisco (Granada): Though the Antiguo Convento San Francisco has a remarkable collection of pre-Columbian statues, it's not the only attraction in this beautiful city. One great way to see all the sites, including the Antiguo Convento, is to take a horse-and-carriage ride through Granada's charming cobbled streets.</p> <p>Dedicated to the memory of the famous Nicaraguan poet, the Jose Coronel Urtecho Cultural Center is located in San Carlos' central</p>

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	<p>park, and is a great educational resource on the history, flora, and fauna of the San Juan River. The center is built within the walls of a Spanish colonial fortress turned prison, turned police station. Now it has been completely remodeled to become one of the main attractions of San Carlos, housing the city library and meeting hall for concerts and other cultural events.</p>
Festivals	<p>Each community's annual fiestas patronales revolve around the local saint's birthday, but the actual party may extend days or even weeks before and after. The events are associated with special masses, processions, alcohol, dancing, carnivals, show horses, contests, and more alcohol.</p> <p>Year-round weekly events include the following: Thursdays in Masaya are Jueves de Verbena, Fridays in Granada are Noches de Serenata, and Sundays in León are Tertulias Leónesas. Semana Santa (Easter Week) is a particularly big deal — everyone parties like rock stars at the beach and prices skyrocket across the board.</p> <p>Week before Easter: Holy Week Celebration Semana Santa – A festive Nicaraguan celebration that takes place during Holy Week. People participate in processions that are inspired by biblical passages. Popular celebratory traditions include “the donkey procession,” on Palm Sunday; a procession of pilgrim carts that come from all parts of Nicaragua and gather in Granada; San Lazaro's pet dog blessing in Masaya; and San Juan del Sur's beach party celebration.</p> <p>Christmas – The climax of the Nicaraguan Christmas celebration is Christmas Eve at midnight. The holiday is a family celebration in which many Nicaraguans decorate their houses with lights, nativity scenes and pine trees. Traditions include fireworks, firecrackers and Christmas hugs at midnight.</p> <p>New Year's Eve – A festive evening where family and friends congregate to celebrate the upcoming new year. A special dinner is held at midnight. Traditions include "burning the old year away" by constructing something that is burned at midnight, fireworks, firecrackers and hugging one another into the new year.</p>

ATTRACTIONS	
Beaches	<p>Playa Madera: A lovely, dark beach with big waves and some good snorkeling opportunities is 30 minutes north of the seaside town of San Juan del Sur. Popular with surfers and sunset watchers alike, this breezy stretch of sand has some excellent accommodations close by.</p> <p>Picnic Beach: This is the perfect beach: a long white strand lapped by gentle turquoise waters on the unspoiled Caribbean Corn Islands.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Birds</p> <p>Due to the diverse ecological regions, a multitude of bird species can be found throughout Nicaragua. More than 700 species exist within the country; some permanently within the country while others are</p>

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seasonal, escaping the winter blast. Though the countryside offers some of the better birding opportunities, such feathered friends as the hummingbirds and motmot can be spotted throughout the urban cities. With all shapes and sizes, Nicaragua is a birder watchers haven.

Mammals

Known more for its smaller mammals, Nicaragua is home to a wide variety of mammals. Though the smaller mammals can be difficult to spot at times, common sightings include the **Howler Monkey**, sloths, ant-eaters and more. Desire something bigger, head to the sea to spot the largest mammals on earth – whales. The Pacific Coast of Nicaragua offers unforgettable glances of these large, elegant mammals migrating from north to south. During the dry season, a boat tour can often include observing these migrations.

Marine Life

With the abundant waterways, Nicaragua offers a wealth of sea life. Some of the most fascinating attractions include the underwater treasures of the reefs. The crystal clear waters of the Caribbean Sea offers rich, colourful reefs with some of the most spectacular underwater creatures gliding in and out. Keep an eye out for sharks, sting rays and barracudas. At one point the bull shark was the most famed resident of Lake Nicaragua. Though normally found in salt-water, here in Nicaragua they adapted to the fresh water after swimming up the San Juan River and expanding their area to the fresh water lake. Another spectacular sight is the **sea turtles**. Though many turtle populations have decreased, many still take refuge in the Nicaraguan waters. Roughly **between August and January**, witness the nesting rituals on one of the many beaches within Nicaragua, as they lay their eggs in the sand. Certain beaches attract thousands of nesting turtles, climbing the sands to deposit their eggs. This nesting experience can only be topped by the hatching of the eggs, as the baby turtles are welcomed into this paradise and crawl to the ocean. An unforgettable experience!

Reptiles

Nicaragua is crawling and with many four-legged friends. A variety of lizard species are among the most frequently spotted reptiles. The Green Iguanas can be found sunning throughout Nicaragua, on streets, rocks and rooftops. The Black Iguanas, though smaller in size, transform from green to brown as they age, a unique process. Asian House Geckos are commonly found in houses feeding on insects. With the ability to walk on walls and ceilings, they appear at night to hunt. Though little in size, their bark is worse than their bite as they are able to produce a loud, bird-like sound which may confuse travelers at first.



Parks

There are almost **80 protected areas** in the country, encompassing 2 million hectares. They come in the form of national parks, reserves, and privately owned wildlife refuges. Many are protected in name only, as the government's park-management body, MARENA (www.marena.gob.ni), is underfunded. Below are some of the best and most interesting places.

Greenfields Nature Reserve -- A private wildlife refuge near the Caribbean port of Bluefields and tantalizingly close to the Pearl Lagoon and the enchanting desert islands known as the Pearl Cays. The reserve can be toured on a day trip from the city, or you can stay at the reserve's lodge.

Isla Juan Venado Wildlife Reserve -- A wetland park on the Pacific coast, west of León, where crocodiles and waterfowl occupy a strip of beach and the myriad waterways of mangrove swamp host turtle nesting sites. The reserve is accessible from Las Peñitas beach and is an excellent 1-day excursion from León.

Playa La Flor Nature Reserve -- A beautiful Pacific beach just south of San Juan del Sur, this is also where you should head for a great nighttime excursion to see spectacular turtle nesting.

Miraflor Nature Reserve -- This lush 6,000-hectare mountain retreat features abundant wildlife and small farms conducting sustainable agriculture. It is easily reached from the highland city of Estelí.

Parque Nacional Archipiélago Zapatera -- A collection of islands famous for its pre-Columbian stone carvings, this park is 2 hours away from Granada on Lake Nicaragua.

Reserva Charco Verde -- A black volcanic beach and bay with a green lagoon that offer excellent opportunities for bird-watching. The tiny reserve is located on the twin volcano island Isla de Ometepe in the southwest of the country.

Refugio de Vida Silvestre Los Guatuzos -- This 440-sq.-km park of lush wetland is located on the southern shores of Lago Nicaragua, close to the grimy town of San Carlos. Lizards dash across the water on their hind legs while caimans, turtles, and iguanas bathe in the sun.

Refugio de Vida Silvestre Río Escalante Chacocente -- This reserve has a long stretch of sand bordered by a tropical dry forest that's teeming with wildlife that includes white-tailed deer, giant iguanas, and nesting turtles. Note, however, that facilities are very basic, and access



	<p>is difficult at this destination, located north of San Juan del Sur.</p> <p>Reserva Biológica Indo-Maíz -- Located along the banks of the broad Río San Juan that drains from Lago Nicaragua to the Atlantic, this mega park holds 300 species of reptiles and amphibians. It is the second-biggest reserve and one of the largest primary rainforests in Central America.</p> <p>Reserva de Biosfera Bosawás -- The largest piece of pristine rainforest north of the Amazon, this is also the most remote and hardest to reach, located in the northeastern Atlantic region.</p> <p>Reserva Tisey -- Situated in the northern highlands, the reserve offers one of the best views in Nicaragua, as well as an ecolodge and hiking trails. Nearby is the 15m-high Salto Estanzuela. Both make a great day trip from Estelí.</p> <p>Volcán Masaya National Park -- There's an access road that leads right up to the gaping crater hole here, and the surrounding 5,000-hectare park has lava fields, bat caves, and a variety of wildlife that includes sulfur-immune parakeets that live in the crater walls. It's possible to visit the park on a day trip from Masaya, Managua, or Granada. The visitor's center has an interesting museum and offers guided tours.</p> <p>Volcán Mombacho Nature Reserve -- The reserve has some beautiful hiking trails and incredible biodiversity, including a cloud forest with orchids and abundant wildlife. There is a biological station that provides lodging, and the park is easily accessible from Granada.</p>
Castles/Forts	<p>The Fortress of the Immaculate Conception was constructed in the late 17th century to protect locals in neighboring Granada from pirate attacks. Today, it is one of the country's main tourist attractions. Spend an hour or two at the Coyotepe fortress near Masaya, where the views are pleasant and the wind takes the edge off the heat.</p>

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>Nicaragua offers a wide variety of shopping options, ranging from local arts and crafts to major shopping centres. Handicrafts and souvenirs may be found at Roberto Huembes Market in Managua, the arts and crafts market in Masaya, as well as in San Juan de Oriente and the Catarina Villages. Shopping centres such as the Galería, Metrocentro, Plaza Inter, Centro Comercial Managua, are located in the capital city. Duty Free shopping is available at airports and borders.</p>
Markets	<p>Most people visit the craft markets of Masaya, city, and volcano in one day, but if you are relying on public transportation, it may take longer.</p>

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	Naturalists more interested in the volcano can just as easily spend a long day on hiking trails, in the visitors center, and on guided tours. On any trip to the Masaya craft market, be sure to allow for time to walk to the cliff-top lookout near the baseball stadium (el malecón), where you'll also find the hammock factories.
Nightlife	There is a lively nightlife scene in the capital city of Managua, but for most visitors staying on the beach resorts, the nightlife revolves around the resort entertainment program.
Casinos	The Barceló Montelimar Beach hotel has magnificent casino, where you can have fun playing American roulette with 38 0 and 00 numbers, original American Black Jack 21 or poker on its 6 cards tables, or at one of its 20 fruit machines.

CUISINE	
Food	Rice, beans and corn are staples of Nicaraguan cuisine. Nicaraguan grass-fed beef results in juicy steaks, often cooked over wood-burning grills. Since the country borders on the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, and is home to one of the largest lakes in the Americas, fresh seafood is readily available. Menu prices in Nicaragua are considerably lower than in North America. At the finest restaurants, steaks and seafood are available for under \$15. American food is available at many restaurants. Nicaragua is known for their gallo pinto (fried rice and red beans mixture), nacatamals (pork or chicken tamales) and caballo bayo (a buffet of traditional delicacies to be eaten on homemade tortillas, for special occasions).
Coffee	Some of the world's finest coffee comes from Nicaragua and you can tour the coffee farms in the north of the country. See the "golden grain" processing facilities of historic plantations set amidst the verdant slopes of Matagalpa. Fincas such as Esperanza Verde and Selva Negra have some lovely trails to hike and wildlife to spy upon, as well as some excellent accommodations.
Restaurants	<p>Don Candido (Managua, Nicaragua; tel. 505/2277-2485; www.restaurantedoncandido.com): Carnivores in Nicaragua don't have to go far to try some of Central America's best beef. Twenty five different cuts are served in huge portions at this very agreeable, modern restaurant with wines from all over the world.</p> <p>Santa Lucía Culinary Institute (Managua; tel. 505/2276-2651): Nicaragua's very own celebrity chef, Nelson Porta, runs this excellent restaurant that doubles as a culinary school. Smoked salmon carpaccio, tortilla soup, and lobster cooked in lemon and wine are all served in stylish and modern surroundings.</p> <p>Rotonda Bello Horizonte (Managua, Nicaragua): Do what the locals do and hang out at this busy roundabout, surrounded by late-night fast</p>

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food restaurants, fritangas, and cheap eateries. Baritone mariachis and wandering troubadours serenade you while you munch on pizza, vigorón (yucca and cabbage), or quesillos (burritos with cheese).

Mocha Nana Cafe (Estelí, Nicaragua; tel. 505/2713-3164): This simple but elegant cafe offers the best coffee from the northern highlands. Handsome wooden seats and dark-stained tables with polished wood and light-filled decor lead to a little patio out back with simple garden.

El Colibrí (San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua; tel. 505/8863-8612): Set within a funky clapboard house with a large veranda overlooking a lovely garden, this enchanting restaurant is a piece of art put together from recycled materials. Mosaic-framed mirrors hang between stained-glass lamps and African face masks, while small colored stones hold down your place mats, lest the sea breeze carry them away. The international, mostly organic fare is a work of art, too.

La Casita (Estelí, Nicaragua; tel. 505/2713-4917): At this part-farmhouse restaurant and part-coffeehouse, you can enjoy great local coffee, fresh bread, cheeses, and yogurt in a garden by a beautiful stream with relaxing music in the background. Also on sale are local crafts and herbal medicines.

La Perrera Restaurant (Jinotega, Nicaragua; tel. 505/8432-7423): The road between Matagalpa and Jinotega is one of the most beautiful rides in Nicaragua. Enjoy the view from this hacienda-style restaurant that sits on the side of the mountain road. The menu includes beef, chicken, and seafood, and between courses, you can wander through the outside patio and up into the garden nursery.

Restaurante La Perla (León, Nicaragua; tel. 505/2311-3125; www.laperlaleon.com): This restaurant's elegant white facade and tall, enchanting ceilings are enough to give you an appetite for Nicaraguan and international cuisine. Paintings by some of the country's greatest artists hang on the walls, and the large salon is framed by handsome mahogany doors. On the menu are Caesar salad, filet mignon, and fresh crab caught the same day from the nearby Poneloya beach. Finish the evening with a coffee from beans grown by the owners on the side of a volcano or a cocktail in the adjoining Canal Bar.

MORE INFO	
Brochures	Ask your travel agent for the Transat Holidays Sun Collection 2013-2014 and Nolitours Sun 2013-2014 brochure and go to www.transatholidays.com and www.Nolitours.com
Website	www.visitnicaragua.us

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	<p>Connect with Nicaragua on facebook: https://www.facebook.com/visitnicaragua</p>
HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER	<p>Book a Nolitours all-inclusive trip to the Barcelo Montelimar Beach Resort. This 4 star hotel is rated as a “Fab Find” – which means that the experts at Nolitours believe that it brings together all the ingredients for a great vacation, plus 3kms of white sand beach.</p> <p>The hotel is beachfront on the Pacific Ocean, approximately 65kms from Managua and offers 293 rooms in seventy-five villas and three 4-storey buildings. There are 3 à la carte restaurants (Seafood, Japanese and Nicaraguan) and the hotel has everything you could wish for with pools, a beauty salon, whirlpool, gym, disco and casino. For the kids there is a kid’s pool area and a Kids Club (ages 4-10 years).</p>
Location	<p>The resort is approximately 65 km from Managua and 75 km from the airport and is beachfront on the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>This resort is not recommended for people with restricted mobility.</p>
Facilities	<p>After an exciting day packed with activities and having enjoyed sunbathing, the Barceló Montelimar Beach hotel will have a rest and relaxation area prepared with a jacuzzi and Turkish bath.</p> <p>Casino Disco Gift shop Gym WiFi</p>
Accommodation	<p>There are 293 rooms and 75 villas in three 4-storey buildings</p> <p>Air-conditioning 1 king-size or 2 double beds Full bathroom Hairdryer, Iron and Ironing board TV, Radio/alarm clock Coffee-maker Mini-bar In-room safe Balcony Occupancy up to 4 persons (max. adults: 3 / max. children: 2)</p>
Activities	<p>Daily activities program and nightly entertainment</p> <p>Horseback riding nearby Mini-golf Ping-pong Pool tables Archery Basketball Boogie boards Golf course nearby Tennis</p>

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	Volleyball
Families	Kids' club (ages 4 to 10) Babysitting Children's pool
Restaurants	Buffet restaurant: Océano À la carte restaurants: Seafood Japanese La Casona (Nicaraguan food) Other restaurant: Carey (snack-bar) 2 à la carte dinners/week (reservations required) Unlimited domestic drinks (house wine included) Mini-bar restocked daily (water, soft drinks and beer)

AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER	Air Transat
Flight details	Nolitours flies to Nicaragua between December 17, 2013 and March 17, 2013.

CURRENT DEALS	Nolitours departing Montreal Jan 13, 2014 for 7 nights all inclusive at the Montelimar resort: \$1089 taxes included
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NOLITOURS AND NICARAGUA	<p>Nolitours specializes in unique destinations in South and Central America – and they are the only mainstream tour operator to offer vacations to the fascinating destination of Nicaragua.</p> <p>Nolitours flies to Nicaragua between December 17, 2013 and March 17, 2013.</p> <p>Book a Nolitours all-inclusive trip to the Barcelo Montelimar Beach Resort. This 4 star hotel is rated as a “Fab Find” – which means that the experts at Nolitours believe that it brings together all the ingredients for a great vacation.</p> <p>Ask your travel agent for the Transat Holidays Sun Collection 2013-2014 and Nolitours Sun 2013-2014 brochure and go to www.transatholidays.com and www.Nolitours.com</p>
Transat Collections	<p>Everyone has slightly different priorities when choosing their holiday resort. If you are travelling with young kids, for instance, you will be looking for different facilities to a couple looking for a luxurious escape.....The experts at Transat Holidays have made it easy for you to find the perfect vacation that’s right for you by creating the Transat “Collections”.</p> <p>Each Collection is made up of resorts in different destinations across</p>

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the Transat program – but all the resorts have features in common that make them a great choice for, for example, families or golfers. Here is an overview of what each Transat Collection* has to offer.

Distinction Collection

Resorts in the Transat Holidays “Distinction Collection” offer extra inclusions and privileges. So you know this is going to be a bit more of a special vacation. Resorts are chosen for this Collection that are on stunning beaches with beautiful surroundings and that offer attentive service, superb facilities and spacious accommodation. Distinction Collection resorts come with a long list of inclusions:

- Direct transfers between the airport and the hotel (no stopping at other hotels on the way)
- Free WiFi in the lobby
- Welcome cocktail and cold towel in the lobby upon arrival
- Beach towels, bathrobes and slippers in room upon arrival
- Bottle of wine or local specialty in room upon arrival
- Unlimited select international brand drinks
- Mini-bar, restocked daily
- Concierge and turn-down service
- A minimum of 3 guaranteed reservations for à la carte dinners
- Golf or Spa discounts
- Free safety deposit box

Here are just two examples of Distinction Collection Resorts:
Grand Bahia Principe La Romana Royal Garden, La Romana,
Dominican Republic

Grand Bahia Principe Punta Cana Royal Golden, Punta Cana,
Dominican Republic

Experience Collection

The “**Experience Collection**” brings unique ways to immerse yourself in the local culture. An Experience Collection “Duo” combines two different destinations in one vacation – for instance you could spend part of your vacation soaking up the sun on a beautiful beach, paired with exploring the cultural and historic attractions of a town or city.

Or book an Experience Collection “**Escapade**” for a two day adventure with one night away from your resort. Stay in authentic accommodation such as a traditional hotel, a hacienda or an ecolodge and explore the local towns, restaurants, wildlife and scenery.

Here are two examples of Experience Collection Resorts:
Bahia Principe San Juan Club Golden, Puerto Plata, Dominican



Republic

Grand Bahia Principe Akumal Royal Garden, Riviera Maya, Mexico

Luxury Collection

For the ultimate pampering and indulgence - check out the “Luxury Collection”. Transat’s Luxury Collection represents a world of upscale 5 star resorts offering tranquility and privilege in intimate settings. Expect elegant accommodations, picture-perfect beaches, outstanding service, gourmet cuisine and world class spas. Luxury Collection resorts come with all these inclusions:

- Free access to VIP airport lounge (where available)
- Private transfers between the airport and the hotel
- Free WiFi
- Luxurious accommodation with whirlpool or hydromassage bathtub
- Welcome bottle of champagne and fruit platter in room upon arrival
- Beach towels, bathrobes and slippers in room upon arrival
- Coffee maker with quality local coffee
- VIP room amenities
- 24 hr room service
- Concierge or butler service
- Waiter service at pool and beach
- Unlimited à la carte gourmet dining with fine wines
- Unlimited premium brand drinks
- Access to the spa facilities
- Complimentary upgrade to Option Plus (Air Transat) and CanJet Select (CanJet)

Here are just two examples of Luxury Collection Resorts:

Luxury Bahia Principe Cayo Levantado Don Pablo Collection, Samana, Dominican Republic

Paradisus Princesa del Mar Royal Service, Varadero, Cuba

Family Collection

“Family Collection” resorts are perfect for kids. These resorts are carefully chosen by the experts at Transat Holidays because they have extensive family-friendly facilities, lots of activities for young and old – plus they are great value and offer kid’s discounts. With a Family Collection Resort you can expect:

- Children stay and eat free (up to 2 children/family)
- Most resorts are less than 1hr from the airport, so no long transfers
- Spacious resorts with several pools, including one for kids
- Double, triple and quad adjoining rooms
- Priority check in at the hotel
- Children’s’ entertainment



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kid's Club and Mini Disco - Kid's Menu - Free excursion for 1 child under 12 in every family per stay - Plus enjoy Family air services on your flight with dedicated check in, family pre boarding, priority baggage handling, free seat selection for kids, priority meal service, stroller service at Canadian airports and onboard kid's surprises <p>Here are just two examples of Family Collection Resorts: Ocean Turquesa, Riviera Maya, Mexico Iberostar Playa Alameda, Varadero, Cuba</p> <p>Golf Collection</p> <p>If golf is a big part of your vacation experience – look no further than the Transat Golf Collection for golf friendly resorts offering accessible golf and everything from golf packages to discounts and green fees. Plus your golf clubs travel for free when you book a Transat Holidays package!</p> <p>Here are just two examples of Golf Collection resorts: Grand Bahia Principe Coba Royal Garden, Riviera Maya, Mexico Sandals Grande Riviera Beach and Villa Golf Resort, Jamaica</p>
Option Flex	<p>For even more peace of mind – consider Option Flex from Transat Holidays and Nolitours. For only \$49 at the time of booking, should anything unexpected happen, Option Flex has you covered. You can change your departure date, destination or hotel up to 3 hours before departure. You can transfer your vacation package to a friend or family member up to 7 days before departure. Or you can cancel your trip and get a full refund.</p>
Transat Background	<p>For over 25 years, Transat Holidays has been offering a large selection of vacation options in Europe, Florida and the south, as well as cruises. In addition to more than 200 south hotels available in the form of all-inclusive packages, Transat also offers a wide range of flights, packages, tours and à la carte products in some 30 European destinations. Their packages are flexible and tailored to stays of varying lengths. Their employees aim to exceed vacationers' expectations in order to maintain their position as a market leader here in Canada. They see their role as turning holiday dreams into reality: making the vacation experience of their guests one of the most memorable ever.</p> <p>Transat offer flights from East to West and all in between, such as Hamilton, Thunder Bay, Ottawa and from the West Coast.</p>
Awards	<p>Agent's Choice Awards: For the fifth consecutive year, Transat Holidays was named Wholesaler of the Year by travel agents in 2012.</p>
Brochures	<p>Transat Holidays Sun 2013-2014 and Nolitours Sun 2013-2014 brochures are available at your local travel agent and cover vacations through to October 2014.</p>

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	<p>Also newly released are:</p> <p>Transat Holidays Florida</p> <p>Transat Holidays Cruise</p> <p>Transat Discoveries</p>
Air Transat's New Comfort Zone	<p>With so many new comfort features, you're on vacation the minute you take your seat. Air Transat is giving their fleet a full makeover. Starting in 2012, one by one, the planes and passengers are soaring to new heights in design and comfort. They are rolling out the new cabins over the next two years. For a glimpse of what it all looks like:</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBse6WOCd70</p>
Air Transat Kids Club	<p>To ensure that your family vacations are fun and unforgettable from beginning to end, Air Transat has created Kids Club so that young passengers can really enjoy themselves whilst onboard an Air Transat flight. It is designed to make air travel a fun experience for young travellers (and for their parents!). Even before the doors of the plane are closed following boarding, every child receives a small bag containing all sorts of surprises and games. The more fun they have, the easier the flight. Furthermore, children who are members of Air Transat Kids Club enjoy certain exclusive privileges.</p> <p>Members of the Air Transat Kids Club will enjoy several benefits that the whole family can share. You can check in at a special "Air Transat Kids Club Members" counter. Thanks to these special counters located in major Canadian airports where Air Transat flies, checking-in is quicker than before. At check-in, special tags will be placed on your baggage; as a result, your baggage gets priority treatment.</p>
Air Transat Upgrades	<p>Air Transat has added more legroom on all their aircraft, making the journey to and from your destination even more comfortable. They have also introduced a new Economy Class meal service on sun destination flights. Passengers flying south will now be welcomed onboard with a glass of champagne, while early morning passengers will be greeted with a mimosa.</p> <p>The meal service has also been improved. The airline will now offer passengers a more complete meal tray, including a choice of two hot meals, a complimentary glass of wine and dessert.</p>
Best Leisure Airline	<p>Air Transat was named World's Best Leisure Airline at the Skytrax annual World Airline Awards, held at the 2012 Farnborough International Airshow, near London in the UK.</p> <p>Distinctions were based on a survey measuring the satisfaction of more than 18 million customers. Conducted over a 10-month period, this survey included over 200 airlines that were rated on 38 different aspects of the passenger experience. The study analyzed customer satisfaction for the Airline Passenger Experience, from check-in to boarding, onboard seat comfort, cabin cleanliness, food and beverages, onboard entertainment, and service of staff.</p> <p>In the past five years, Air Transat has gained other recognitions as a</p>

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	<p>result of its numerous environmental initiatives. In 2011, the Company ranked first worldwide in the Atmosfair Airline Index environmental performance indicator, in the long-haul category. Air Transat also obtained the Platinum LEED-EB (existing building) certification for its headquarters, located within the Montreal–Trudeau airport site. Air Transat was recognized as the Best Charter Airline for the fifth consecutive year at the Agents' Choice Awards, which represents the largest sampling of travel agents in Canada. The airline also received the Family Friendly Airline Award, which acknowledges carriers that provide additional services and extra comfort to children & parents.</p>
Transat Compensation Plan	<p>Transat has introduced a new compensation plan for clients affected by an advanced flight schedule change on all South, Florida and Europe flights, packages and cruises. This new policy applies to all bookings made with Transat Holidays.</p> <p>Applicable to schedule changes within 45 days of departure.</p> <p>Schedule change of 3 to 12 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transat will offer a \$50 voucher for future travel. <p>Schedule change of 12 to 24 hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transat will offer a \$75 voucher for future travel. <p>Schedule change of 24 hours or more and cancelled flights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients can cancel their flight and are entitled to a full refund in the event of a schedule change of 24 hours or more. • Transat will offer a \$50 voucher for future travel to clients who cancel. • Transat will offer a \$100 voucher for future travel to clients who accept the date change. • Clients who choose a product at a lower fare will be refunded the price difference, whereas clients who select a product at a higher fare will be required to pay the balance. <p>Schedule change of 3 hours or less</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No compensation will be offered to clients experiencing a schedule change that is delayed or advanced by 3 hours or less.
Transat Club Class	<p>Enjoy exclusive privileges such as complimentary seat selection, wider, more comfortable leather seats, a choice of gourmet meals and fine wines, priority check-in, baggage service and boarding.</p> <p>Club Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Club attendants • Attentive, personalized service • Exclusive, spacious Club cabin <p>Drinks & Snacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome cocktails

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complimentary non-alcoholic drinks, snacks and bar service Club Privileges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased baggage allowance • 40 kg checked/15 kg carry-on • Exclusive, rapid check-in counter in most airports • Priority boarding • Practical travel items (on Europe flights) • Free headsets • Canadian newspapers Comfort & Refinement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider, more comfortable leather seats • More leg room • Complimentary Seat Selection: call 1-877-872-6728 • Choice of gourmet meals • Choice of wine and more
Option Plus	<p>This Economy class option includes many priority privileges and services including priority check-in, priority baggage handling, an extra 10kg baggage allowance and even champagne. Here's what you get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance seat selection on roundtrip flights • Priority check-in at a dedicated counter • Priority baggage handling • Priority boarding • Complete Air Transat travel kit on flights to European destinations • Snacks from the On Board Bistro selection • Alcoholic beverages during drinks service 200ml bottle of champagne (Sun and Europe) • Supplementary baggage allowance up to 10 kg per flight segment • Wine or beer with the meal • Headsets <p>The cost is \$79-\$119 for southbound destinations and \$99-\$209 for European destinations as at November 2013</p>
Transat and Sustainable Tourism	<p>Transat recognizes the prime importance of the environment, host communities, cultural diversity, and their relationships with their employees, customers and partners. Transat is firmly committed to the responsible development of the tourism industry, and has adopted the following definition of sustainable tourism:</p> <p><i>"Sustainable tourism entails respect for nature, as well as for host communities and their values; it combines positive socio-economic benefits for local populations with an enriching experience for travellers."</i></p> <p>The issue of the environment, as far as Transat's own facilities are concerned, is a clear and basic target. Their environment committees have implemented concrete initiatives with regard to recycling, conservation of resources, the disposal of obsolete electronic equipment, and raising employee awareness.</p>

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	<p>Air Transat has begun developing an environmental management system that could lead to an ISO 14001 certification in the future. To find out more, consult the Transat and the Environment sections at their website: http://www.airtransat.ca/en/Info/the-environment-its-everyones-business.aspx?ExitID=69&ContentType=voyageur</p> <p>Eco-responsible certified hotels</p> <p>Transat urges its hotelier partners to excel in social and environmental responsibility, and formally recognizes the efforts of accommodations that commit to certification in this area. Certified establishments must maintain performance levels to continue using such labels. The indicators used vary depending on the certification scheme, but many certification organizations have begun aligning their benchmarks with the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria.</p> <p>To help you make an informed choice when you take your next vacation, Transat list six certifications for hotels and beaches. You can also find certified hotels by searching by destination.</p> <p>Certifications for hotels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biosphere Responsible Tourism 2. Green Globe 3. Green Key 4. ISO 14001 5. Travelife <p>Certification for beaches</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Blue Flag
Gift Certificates	<p>Here's your chance to make a loved one's dream come true. With Transat gift certificates you can offer the gift of travel from packages to car rental. Transat gift certificates are valid on all Air Transat, Nolitours, or Transat Holidays products in their brochures. They can be redeemed at a travel agent's office at the time of reservation. To order your gift certificates call 1-800-322-6649.</p>
2013 Hurricane Policy	<p>Nolitours and Transat Holidays provide you with true peace of mind. Vacationers can travel secure in the knowledge that you will be protected should a hurricane affect your destination city in Florida, Mexico, the Caribbean or Central America. This Nolitours/Transat Holidays policy covers reservations for departures between June 1 and November 30, 2013. If the conditions stipulated in the policy are met, you may choose one of these four options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel at a later date 2. Travel to another destination city 3. Travel to the booked destination city 4. Cancel with a full refund in credit vouchers
Nolizone	<p>Nolitours' lively nolizONE was specifically created for travellers who would like to step outside their resort, meet new people and really get to know their destination. With tons of fun activities throughout the day and</p>

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	<p>night, your biggest dilemma will be deciding what to do next. Introduced in 2011, the It Zone in Puerto Plata was so successful that this concept has been launched in other destinations.</p> <p>Their noliZONE representative will always keep you informed on upcoming activities and events, and you can also visit www.nolizone.nolitours.com to get the latest news and updates on what is going on in the noliZONE.</p>
Social Media	<p>Stay in touch with Transat and Nolitours at their two Facebook sites:</p> <p>http://www.facebook.com/airtransat</p> <p>http://www.facebook.com/nolitours</p>
Groups	<p>Group rates are available – as few as 10 adults make up a group. Talk to your travel agent to check the current details of Transat's group deals.</p>
Transat Discoveries	<p>This is Transat's program to the exotic destination of your dreams! It features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international flights on scheduled airlines like Cathay Pacific, Air France, KLM, South African Airways, Air Canada and LAN - 4 star accommodation (some 3 and 5 star) and transfers - Small-group tour with English-speaking guide - Unique experiences with most meals and excursions included <p>For more information contact your travel agent and view the tour itineraries in the brochure or at www.transatdiscoveries.com</p> <p>Here are some of their destinations they offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beach stays in Thailand and Vietnam - Health retreats in Tunisia and Morocco - Diving in the Red Sea and Galapagos Islands - Overland safaris in Kenya and Tanzania - More options in over 40 countries.
Nolitours Excursions in Nicaragua	<p>Masaya Volcano and Catarina Market</p> <p>After exploring the Masaya Volcanic National Park, visit Catarina for lunch, where you can also admire the beautiful Apoyo Lagoon. Later, enjoy shopping for arts and crafts at the famous Masaya market.</p> <p>Granada and Its Islands</p> <p>Visit the oldest city in America, founded by Spaniards centuries ago. After lunch, embark on a boat tour and discover Granada's archipelago.</p> <p>Cerro Negro</p> <p>Climb this volcano, see the two craters at the summit than walk, sandboard or slide down the slope!</p>
Current Deals Dec 2013	<p>Nolitours departing Montreal Jan 13, 2014 for 7 nights all inclusive at the Montelimar resort: \$1089 taxes included</p>