

Seeing with New Eyes

A Nicaraguan Cultural Tour

Exploring Art, Literature, and Our Relationships with Others

A 10-day trip, late July/early August 2018

The work of the poet—and of artists and seekers of many kinds—is inspired by love, imagination, and adventure. It often begins with the phrase, “I don’t know.”

This Nicaraguan cultural tour, for both writers and nonwriters, invites you to experience the inspiration of not knowing—and learning.

- Explore the arts and literature of Nicaragua.
- Engage your imagination and a spirit of adventure.
- Encounter new places and people.
- Discover understandings and relationships that will follow you home.

We will experience Nicaraguan arts, literature, history, music, food, and daily life in the city of León, the nation’s intellectual center. We will reflect on those experiences with daily guided writing and conversation led by author and group facilitator Karen Hering. Together, we will wonder about the many ways the arts help us to understand who we are and provide bridges connecting cultures and people.

This trip is open to all interested and does not require formal writing experience or Spanish language ability.

The trip will be led by PML’s León director, Elizabeth Moreira, and facilitated by author and literary minister Karen Hering. Karen’s literary ministry, rooted at Unity Church—Unitarian in St. Paul, Minnesota, serves people of all religions (and without any religious affiliation) who wish to engage in writing as a spiritual practice and a tool for healing and social action. She is the author of *Writing to Wake the Soul: Opening the Sacred Conversation Within* and has led an earlier literary tour to Nicaragua. (Visit www.karenhering.com for more information.)



Literature & History

- Attend the Festival Azul celebrating Nicaragua’s internationally renowned poet, Rubén Darío. (Read about Darío [here](#).) Includes a cathedral light show.
- Tour Darío’s home and museum.
- Meet local authors to discuss personal expression in a social context.
- Follow local poet Rafael Maireno through a timeline of Nicaragua/U.S. relations.

Music & Theater

- Attend a performance at the León theater.
- Listen to street music or go to a concert.
- Dance at Salsa Night at a local venue.

Arts

- Visit Art Center Fundación Ortiz Gurdíán, one of the most important collections in Central America.
- Explore folk art and stories about Spanish colonists’ oppression of indigenous people at Museum of Legends and Traditions, housed in a former prison.
- Contemplate artistic and political murals throughout León.
- Learn a folklore dance and/or paint in the primitivist style at Xuchialt Art School

Reflection & Writing

- Share in a daily hour of guided writing and conversation to help tap into your experiences.
- Experience several half days of deeper contemplation and writing in a peaceful setting, such as a beach, or the interior patio of a colonial home.

Nature

- Take a boat ride through the Juan Venado Island Reserve, and see mangroves and hundreds of species of birds, mammals, and turtles.
- Climb Cerro Negro Volcano and enjoy a 360-degree view of the landscape and other volcanoes.
- Relax on a Pacific Ocean beach.

Home Life

- Stay with a host family, in the same neighborhood as the rest of the group, to experience daily life.
- Taste typical foods, such as *gallo pinto* and *nacatamal*.
- Engage in games and activities free of language barriers.



This Arts/Literature Trip is Facilitated by Project Minnesota León

Project Minnesota/León (PML) is a non-profit, sister-state organization that has been facilitating group immersion travel to León since 1984. Groups experience Nicaragua in ways a typical tourist visit does not allow. We provide bi-lingual staff to lead the tour, and arrange logistics such as private transportation, meals and home stays. PML offers activities and visits with Nicaraguans to form authentic relationships and better understand Nicaraguan culture. Integrated into our trips, participants will gain an understanding of PML's model of community development process in rural San Carlos.



IS NICARAGUA SAFE?

Nicaragua is a very safe country and does not experience the violence common in other Central American countries. León, in particular, is a safe, lovely city.

HOW MUCH DOES A TRIP COST?

Depending on the size of the group, the cost of this 10-day cultural tour will be approximately \$2,000 per person, *including airfare*.

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Please visit Project Minnesota/León's website at www.mn-leon.org. Or contact Emily Wallace-Jackson, PML Development and Outreach Director, at 612-805-6418 or Emily.mn.leon@gmail.com

You are encouraged to come to our
Informational Meeting

March 11, 2018 at 12:30 pm
Unity Church-Unitarian, [732 Holly Ave.](http://www.unitychurch.org), [St Paul](http://www.unitychurch.org)