

Unearth Nicaragua: Students Learn About Food Security & Sustainable Agriculture

GENERAL PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Unearth the World's partner in Nicaragua promotes food security and sustainable living systems on the Island of Ometepe through permaculture design, agroforestry, research, education, and community collaboration. They educate and expose local people (and visitors) to the possibilities of food production through a model permaculture farm. The project's goals are to demonstrate and offer diversified agricultural technologies to expand cropping options that have both higher market values and promote food security. Since the farm's inception in 2001, this project has offered permaculture workshops to over 180 attendees. They have shared 150,000 seeds for improved nutrition and provided over 21,000 trees. These efforts have impacted 40,000 people. Additionally, a children's nutritional program addressing deficiencies allows 70 children to have a daily serving of fresh milk, eggs, multivitamins, tooth brushing and sanitation education.

Volunteer groups play an integral role in advancing the mission of this farm. Students live and work on the farm with local people and have opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange. Each day includes hands-on service work from 7 am – 12 noon. Volunteers carry out a variety of tasks on the farm according to current needs. The type of work depends on the season and the particular needs of the farm, but may consist of planting trees, harvesting fruit/vegetables, working on the garden or in the nursery, building terraces, digging swales, weeding, animal husbandry, organic fertilizing and pest control, building raised beds or watering plants and natural building projects. Afternoons (from 1:30 – 4:30 pm) are split between education workshops and hand-on service at the local community center.

EXAMPLE 8-DAY ITINERARY:

Day 1

Pick-up at Managua airport and private transfer to hotel in Granada for the night.

Day 2

Travel to Ometepe. Settle into accommodations and receive detailed health, safety and site orientation. Dinner on-site and choice of educational activity. (List of possible workshops/activities provided at end of itinerary).

Day 3

Morning volunteer work on the farm. Breakfast. Continue work until lunch. Lunch. Afternoon tour of the farm and surrounding area. Dinner on-site. Evening educational film and discussion: "*Where does our food come from?*"

Day 4

Morning volunteer work on the farm. Breakfast. Continue work until lunch. Lunch. Afternoon introductory course to permaculture design. Dinner at local home.

Day 5

Morning volunteer work on the farm. Breakfast. Continue work until lunch. Afternoon skill building workshop (See list below), or additional farm work. Dinner. Evening session: "*Service-learning: What is service?*"

Day 6

Morning volunteer work on the farm. Breakfast. Continue work until lunch. Lunch. Additional work on the farm. Dinner. Evening downtime.

Day 7

Morning volunteer work on the farm. Free time until lunch. Structured reflection and journaling. Afternoon beach excursion. Dinner in town. Movie night.

Day 8

Breakfast at the farm. Travel back to Managua airport for departing flights.

LIST OF OPTIONAL WORKSHOPS & ACTIVITIES:

- Introduction to Permaculture: Receive a mini introduction to Permaculture Design. Using the farm as a learning tool you will discuss the ethics, principles and methodologies of permaculture and how they can be used to create more sustainable, dynamic, and resilient systems.
- Chocolate Making Workshop: An afternoon workshop on the farm where you learn about the historical significance of cacao, tour different varieties of cacao plants on the farm, and make our own hand-made chocolate from organic cacao seeds grown right on the island.
- Natural Medicine Workshop: An informative workshop conducted on the farm where students learn about making medicine from plants. Students make their own tinctures, try some of our homemade tinctures and salves, and leave knowing how to make their own tinctures at home.
- Appropriate Technology: Learn about, tour, and experience different technologies we incorporate here on the farm. From solar electricity and drying to water systems and hand powered food processing you'll get an understanding of how one can get the most done with the least embodied energy.
- Earthen Building Workshop: Learn the fundamentals of working with earth and the possibilities that lie within. This is a classroom based and hands on experience, wall systems, plasters, and finishes will be explained. You will learn how to make various mixes of earth. Very hands on.
- Fermentation Workshop: A hands-on introduction to basic fermentation. Students learn about different types of fermentation for different purposes, and make a kimchi or a kefir out of fruits and vegetables grown on the Bona Fide Farm.
- Basket Making Workshop: Learn how to weave your own basket from locally sourced materials. Taught in town by a local master artisan, Don Fidel.

INCLUSIONS:

Pre-trip training (Unearth the World's 5-part Global service-learning curriculum)
Pre-trip logistical support
All accommodations (Managua and Granada hotels and farm dorm)
All in-country transportation
All meals
Volunteer projects and intentional cultural exchange
Educational activities and workshops led by on-site instructor
Post-trip support/coaching (led by Unearth the World)