



Nicaragua

CAPITAL

—

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

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CURRENCY

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Guide version: V2 draft**Disclaimer**

This Country Guide reflects information believed to be correct at the time of publication. Regulations, procedures and charges are subject to change. IAM does not accept liability for errors, omissions, inaccuracies or misinterpretations in this guide. The information provided should not be considered as having been provided or sanctioned by the customs authorities of the country or territory concerned.

Overview

Customs Clearance

Clearance times (approximate, working days): Standard household goods: 4 to 5 weeks; Diplomatic shipments: 4 to 5 weeks; Law 535 (process started before arrival): 2 to 3 weeks; (started after arrival): 4 to 5 weeks; Law 694 (INTUR paperwork complete before arrival): 1 to 2 weeks; Travel Regimen: 1 to 2 weeks; Re-importation: 2 months or more

Documents

Required Documents

- **Copy of passport (main pages and page showing date of last entry into Nicaragua)**
- **Original packing list (new items must be indicated; handwritten lists are not accepted; must be in Spanish or English)**
- **Original Bill of Lading (OBL) / Air Waybill (AWB) / Inland Letter**

- Copy of constitution deed
- Copy of power of attorney
- Copy of the ID card of the legal representative
- Original company RUC identification card
- Original IVA (VAT) registration certificate
- Original certificate of economic activity confirming importation is one of the enterprise's listed activities
- Note: if the employer is already enrolled with Customs, copies of the above are sufficient

For diplomats

- Original tax exoneration document
- Original OBL / AWB / Inland Letter
- Packing list
- Passport copy

For returning Nicaraguan citizens -- Law 822 (Tax Law), Article 287, Numeral 70

- Letter from the Nicaraguan Consulate at the country of origin certifying the years of residence abroad
- Migratory certification from the Migration Office in Nicaragua
- Original tax exoneration document
- Original OBL / AWB / Inland Letter
- Packing list
- Passport copy (main pages and page with last entry date)

For rented or retired residents -- Law 694 (Tourist Incentive Law)

- Resolution from INTUR (Instituto Nicaragüense de Turismo) approving the benefit
- Original tax exoneration document
- Original OBL / AWB / Inland Letter
- Packing list
- Passport copy

For the Travel Regimen

- **Original passport**
- **OBL / AWB / Inland Letter**

Household Goods — Specific Information

All shipments must be received, unloaded, and inspected by Customs at a fiscal warehouse, except for diplomatic shipments. If Customs authorises container delivery, the container will be escorted by a Customs inspector to the client's residence rather than unloaded at the warehouse.

Diplomatic shipments are exempt from random selection and Customs inspection if reciprocity exists between countries, but are subject to inspection and fumigation by the Ministry of Agriculture at the port of entry. Domiciliary delivery to a diplomatic residence requires a formal request to Customs and may incur overtime charges to Customs and agent personnel, as well as possible demurrage from the shipping line.

The number of items or packages declared on the shipping document must exactly match the count on the packing list. Any discrepancy results in a fine of USD 100 billed to the destination agent. If Customs finds items inside boxes that are not listed on the packing list, a fine of USD 100 plus double the applicable taxes may be levied. All appliances and electronic devices must be listed with brand, model, serial number, and country of origin.

Pre-alert and document timing: The pre-alert must be sent to the destination agent by email or fax at least 15 days before shipment arrival. The draft OBL/AWB/Inland Letter must be sent for the agent's approval before it is finalised and printed. Original documentation must be received by the destination agent at least 10 days before the shipment arrives at port to avoid demurrage and storage charges.

Best ports of entry: Corinto (Pacific Coast, main seaport), Rama (Atlantic Coast), Limón (Costa Rica), and Cortés (Honduras) for land/transit routes.

Re-importation: Goods previously exported from Nicaragua may be re-imported free of taxes if the re-importation declaration is presented within 3 years of the definitive export date and the goods have not been transformed. A detailed inventory is essential. Any additional items not included in the original export will be taxed. The re-importation process involves exhaustive review to match exported and imported items and can take 2 months or more.

Prohibited / Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

The following items are prohibited from import into Nicaragua:

- Drugs and narcotics
- Toluene (industrial glue / solvent)
- Chemical products (hazardous chemicals without authorisation)
- Corrosives and flammables (without authorisation)
- Pornographic or subversive materials
- Endangered species and products derived from CITES-listed fauna and flora *(CITES)*

Restricted / Dutiable Items

The following items require special permission or permits before import:

- Food items
- Alcohol
- Gas tanks
- Fire extinguishers
- Medications
- Weapons, including collections (permission from the Nicaraguan Embassy or Consulate in the country of origin must be obtained before shipping)
- Telecommunications equipment (cellular phones, telephones, signal receivers and transmitters, and similar devices)
- Products of animal or vegetable origin
- Gunpowder and firearms

Vehicles

Vehicle Documents

- **Original vehicle title (US-titled vehicles: original US title required)**
- **Vehicle registration**

- **Original purchase invoice or sales contract**
- **Original Bill of Lading / AWB / Inland Letter**
- **Passport copy**
- **Original tax exoneration document (if applicable)**
- **INTUR resolution approving the benefit (for Law 694 rented/retired resident applicants)**

Specific Information

All documents must be in the name of the owner or the authorised party. The destination agent's responsibility ends when the owner collects the vehicle from the bonded warehouse.

All vehicles are subject to import taxes unless the importer qualifies for a tax exoneration.

Customs clearance takes approximately 4 to 5 weeks (working days).

Age restriction: Nicaraguan law prohibits the import of vehicles older than 10 years from the date of manufacture. Exceptions:

- Returning Nicaraguan citizens who have been outside the country for at least 1 year before their final return
- Vehicles donated to Fire Brigades, the Nicaraguan Red Cross, churches, religious denominations, and legally registered foundations
- Classic or historical vehicles
- Used vehicles imported by an intermediary or end user for selective cargo or collective passenger transport

7-year limit for Law 535 and Law 694 beneficiaries: Returning Nicaraguans using the Law 535 or Law 694 tax exoneration, and rented or retired residents who obtained residency under Law 694 with tax exemption, cannot import vehicles older than 7 years from the date of manufacture.

Pets

Requirements

- **Air Waybill / Bill of Lading**
- **Invoice for customs purposes**
- **Original certificate of vaccines**

- **Letter from the veterinarian at origin certifying the animal is healthy**
- **IPSA (Instituto de Protección y Sanidad Agropecuaria) importation fee, paid at the airport or port of entry**
- **Tax payment at point of entry**

Specific Information

A tax payment and an IPSA importation fee are required at the airport or port of entry. Contact the destination agent for current fee amounts and any additional species-specific requirements, as regulations may vary for birds, reptiles, and other animals.

Consignment Instructions

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea / road shipments.

Consignee presence: The consignee (owner of the goods) must be present in Nicaragua before the shipment arrives. Customs clearance cannot begin without all required documentation, and any delays caused by missing documents will result in demurrage, storage, and abandonment charges billed directly to the shipper or the client.

Pre-alert timeline: Pre-alert by email or fax to the destination agent at least 15 days before arrival. Draft OBL/AWB/Inland Letter must be approved by the agent before finalisation. Original documents must arrive at least 10 days before the shipment.

Packing list standards: All packing lists must be typed (not handwritten), in Spanish or English, with full item descriptions including brand, model, serial number, and country of origin for appliances and electronics. The item and package count must match the shipping document exactly. Contents of each box must be listed. Inconsistencies trigger fines and delays.

Employer consignment: When the owner is moving to work for a legal company in Nicaragua, consigning the shipment to the employer can save approximately 14.5% in taxes. Confirm this arrangement in advance with the destination agent and ensure all employer documents are ready.

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- Travel Regimen: 1 to 2 weeks
- Re-importation: 2 months or more

Cultural & Other Information

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America by land area, bordered by Honduras to the north, Costa Rica to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Caribbean Sea to the east. The capital and largest city is Managua. Spanish is the official language. The population is approximately 7 million. Nicaragua is a republic with a presidential system; since 2007, the government has been led by President Daniel Ortega and the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front). The country has experienced increasing political repression and international isolation since 2018, with significant emigration of the professional class and reduced foreign investment.

Business is conducted in Spanish. The Nicaraguan cordoba (NIO) is the currency; many transactions in the international trade and professional relocation sectors are conducted in US dollars. The government and regulatory environment can be unpredictable; movers are advised to confirm all procedures with the destination agent shortly before any shipment.

Reference Links

- [OpenFactBook — Nicaragua](#)
- [Wikipedia — Nicaragua](#)
- [DGA — Dirección General de Servicios Aduaneros \(Customs\)](#)
- [IPSA — Instituto de Protección y Sanidad Agropecuaria \(Animal Import Authority\)](#)
- [FIDI Import Customs Guide — Nicaragua \(July 2025\)](#)

Quick Links & Resources

- [Find Movers in Nicaragua \(IAMX\)](#)
<https://iamovers.mobilityex.com/index.html#/search?loc=Nicaragua&lat=12.8654&lng=-85.2072&range=50&assocs=800&fvw=c&ctry=Nicaragua>
- [Foreign Embassies in Nicaragua](#)
<https://www.embassypages.com/nicaragua>
- [Nicaragua's Embassies Abroad](#)
<https://www.cancilleria.gob.ni>