

Session 4

Celebrating my Country



Are you proud of where you live? If you were hosting a visitor from another country who had never been here before, what would you want to show them? What would you recommend they do, or eat, or experience to give them a taste of the UK? What's iconic about the UK, and what are the stereotypes that really are not true?

Nicaragua is a tourist destination. People come to see the architecture in the cities, the beautiful lakes, the beaches, the nature reserves and wildlife, the volcanoes and to take part in activities such as hiking, climbing, camping, and swimming in the crater lakes.

Activity

Do some research into holidays in Nicaragua. If you were planning a trip there, what would you want to see or do?



Nicaragua is a very diverse country, with people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and the culture is very varied. People tend to have a strong sense of community, and there is a strong culture of hospitality, especially in the smaller towns and villages. Most people speak Spanish, although many indigenous languages and dialects are also spoken. The most popular sport in the country is baseball, but football and boxing are also popular.

Activity

What you can find out about these famous Nicaraguans: José 'Chepito' Areas, Roman 'Chocolatito' González, Barbara Carrera, Bianca Pérez-Mora Macías, Rene Francisco Sotomayor?

However, celebrating a country is not just about what makes it popular for tourists, or about celebrity and fame. It is also about the lives of ordinary people, the way they live and the work they do. Let's hear from some of them.

Fatima Ismael, CEO of Soppexcca, based in Jinotega

Despite the fact that we are in a depression of the economy, the young people still have the energy, and this is what you are seeing, and it's the response of our work. When we started, we tried to wake up the hope in the rural population. At the beginning, we had to do some psychological work as they were depressed. Despite the problems and the price of the coffee being so low, I can see the brightness in their eyes for the hope they have to work.

Arlen Joel Lopez Pineda is a young honey farmer, aged 25, who lives near Jinotega

We started with four young farmers in 2014, with Soppexcca support, for a project specifically for young people, who are family members of farmers. I had seen beekeeping before, so when Soppexcca contacted us with the idea of the beekeeping project, I said yes. The next year, we had good honey production. The next year, more farmers joined us, and we helped train them. From 20 hives in the community, it went to 50. We add extra value by having different size jars. We also make honey products that helps coughs, shampoo, and honey chocolate, creamy honey mixed with chocolate and peanuts. In the future, we want to grow and have our own trademark, and a certificate of hygiene from the government. We can then start selling in supermarkets.



Juan Alberto Zelaya Castillo is diversifying his farm from just growing coffee to growing cocoa

I've tasted the chocolate, they gave a bar and said, it's from your cocoa plantation. It was nice, very good, tasty and have a good aroma. I thought, I'm tasting the flavours of my land!

Heydi Espino is a 26 year old chocolatier

I never expected to work in chocolate. This is a unique experience and there are only two little manufacturers in Nicaragua, so I feel pleased. One unique thing about this factory, it is owned by young farmers, not foreigners. The one thing we're working on is that Nicaraguans are only used to chocolate that's sweet with lots of milk, so we are working to tell our customers to eat a good, good quality chocolate. Normally, Nicaraguans think that foreign chocolate is better than the chocolate made here. We are enhancing the cultivation of cocoa and for the customer to have a healthier product. I know it's hard to convince a person, but in the long term we'll achieve it.



Try some torrijas with honey

Whisk together 4 large eggs, 1 tsp ground cinnamon, 65g icing sugar, 1 tsp vanilla extract, 1 tsp rum flavouring, ¼ tsp salt then add 60ml milk, 240ml double cream and whisk again. Set aside at room temperature. Cut slices of slightly stale bread (a more solid bread is good) into 2cm by 10cm strips, and heat 2 tbsp unsalted butter in a pan for a couple of minutes. Quickly dip the bread in the batter for a few seconds, then brown it in the pan for about 1-2 minutes per side until golden brown. Sprinkle with a little icing sugar, and top with Nicaraguan honey.

Game Scrub Baseball

While you may not have enough space or players for a proper game of baseball, scrub baseball is a simplified version without teams. Players take it in turns to bat, the order being decided by who calls out 'scrub 1' then 'scrub 2' and so on the fastest. The other players are the fielders. The hitter tries to run to as many of four bases as possible and, hopefully, make a home run before the fielders catch the ball and touch the hitter or the base they are running to with it, or the hit ball goes straight into a fielder's hands. They are also out if they miss three bowled balls in a row.

Make a difference

Many Nicaraguan farmers are diversifying their farms, and one way they do this is by keeping bees, and harvesting the honey. However, we know that bees are endangered in many countries, as insecticides that kill them are used, and much of their habitat is being destroyed. Find out more about what you can do to help bees, from building a bee hotel or planting bee-friendly flowers <https://bit.ly/2QyyspG>, to campaigning for insecticides to be banned. Buy organic honey whenever you buy it, and maybe try not to buy it too often – just as a treat.



Bible link Ecclesiastes 3:9-14 (NIRV)

What do workers get for their hard work? I've seen the heavy load God has put on human beings. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also given people a sense of who he is. But they can't completely understand what God has done from beginning to end. People should be happy and do good while they live. I know there's nothing better for them to do than that. Each of them should eat and drink. People should be satisfied with all their hard work. That is God's gift to them. I know that everything God does will last forever. Nothing can be added to it. And nothing can be taken from it. God does that so people will have respect for him.

Discussion Yolanda Gonzalez said, 'I am a Christian. God came here to help us, and the mission of a true Christian is to serve. If someone comes here, I will support them and if you have faith in God, everything is going to be alright. I live along with God.' If we believe that God wants us to be happy and do good and be satisfied with all our hard work, how should this make a difference in the way we live our lives?

Prayer

Write a short prayer praising God for creation, and making a promise about one positive change you will make in your life to be happy, do good and be satisfied with your hard work.

