CHICABRAVA

Empowering Women One Wave at a Time









about CHICABRAVA

The brainchild of Founder Ashley Blaylock, CHICABRAVA was conceptualized in 2003 after the Houston native first visited the pristine beaches of Nicaragua. Although initially drawn to the waves of the uncharted town of San Juan del Sur, she soon recognized the potential of changing lives through surfing.

At the time, she was 23 years old and enrolled in law school but was overcome by a greater passion to open a surf camp exclusively for women. After becoming an attorney in 2005, Ashley moved to San Juan del Sur where she divided her time between selling real estate and surfing in preparation for her business venture.

As one of the few female surfers in the area, Ashley soon gained a reputation as, “Chica Brava” (brave girl), which would later become the company’s namesake.

By the Spring of 2008, Ashley officially opened the doors to CHICABRAVA and has since hosted hundreds of women at this life-changing camp. Catering to females 20 to 50+ years of age, the camp offers several surf packages including week long courses for all levels.

A six-time National Surf Champion, Ashley has applied her skills to the development of CHICABRAVA surf lessons. Daily courses feature in-water training, video feedback and surf theory mentored by certified instructors. Each provides hands-on coaching and tailored sessions to suit every need.

CHICABRAVA is about empowering women, one wave at a time.

founder
ashley blaylock

As the founder of CHICABRAVA, Ashley Blaylock was born and raised in Houston where she grew up in a family of eight children. Despite their close-knit connection, Ashley traded in her secure career as a Texas attorney to live and surf in Nicaragua.

After several visits to San Juan del Sur in 2003, Ashley decided to make Nicaragua her permanent home. Following a brief stint as a real estate agent, Ashley followed her dream to open an all-girls surf camp.

Today she is the proud owner of CHICABRAVA surf camp, where she empowers hundreds of women through the sport of surfing. When not managing CHICABRAVA, she can be found surfing local breaks. Ashley is six-time National Surf Champion in the women's division and was ranked 4th over all in Central America for 2007.

Her passion for surfing has taken her to the Mentawai Islands, Bali, Spain, Mexico, Hawaii, California, and across Central America. Residing full time in Nicaragua, Ashley remains a licensed attorney in the State of Texas. In promotion of her work, she has been featured on Fox 26 and Great Day Houston, as well as in dozens of international publications including The Houston Chronicle.

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eat
sleep
Surf
play
relax
empower

eat

Week-long packages include three daily meals prepared by CHICABRAVA's local chef. With an emphasis on healthy living, they offer local and organic foods, including fruit and vegetables grown on their private farm. Catering to health-conscious diners, all meals are prepared using free-range chicken and grass fed beef. Fresh milk comes "straight from the cow" and is served with the farm's own organic coffee. The private chef also offers a vegetarian and vegan menu and can adapt recipes for those with specialized diets. Three daily meals are offered exclusively for guests staying at the Cloud Farm. Guests staying at the Surf House receive breakfast daily.



sleep

Discounts available for groups of six or more.
$100 discount for signing up with a friend.

Rates:
http://www.chicabrava.com/surf-camps/pricing/

The Cloud Farm is CHICABRAVA's original luxury retreat offering a perfect escape in nature. Set on 500-acres of private reserve, the villa overlooks San Juan del Sur with stunning views of the bay below. Located 1,200 feet above sea level, it is substantially cooler than properties you'd find elsewhere. The land is also home to organic gardens and a fruit orchard where most of the ingredients for meals are grown.

Between surf sessions, guests can relax in one of many hammocks or take a dip in the private pool. This secluded haven is ideal for guests who long for nature and tranquility, yet still want to be close to all the action. The entire villa can accommodate up to eight guests.

Seven nights: From $1,900 person/shared room
If desired, private rooms are available at an additional cost.

The Surf House is located in the town of San Juan del Sur and is ideal for the budget-conscious traveler who wants to be in the heart of all the action. Just steps from the water, the property is designed with local flavor in mind, with terracotta tile floors, brightly colored walls, paintings by local artists and plenty of hammocks for relaxing. The open-air lounge is perfect for curling up with a book or taking a snooze after a morning surf session. All four rooms have a/c and shared or private bath, making this the property of choice for those who want to be near the shops, bars and restaurants.

Seven nights: From $1,290 person/shared room
If desired, private rooms are available at an additional cost.







surf

With 300+ days of offshore wind and uncrowded waters, nearly everyday is ideal for surfing in San Juan del Sur.

Beginner:

At CHICABRAVA, guests learn all the basics about water safety, how to pop-up on a board, wave formation, paddling techniques, catching waves, and the proper stance for riding waves. The primary focus of the beginner package is to make every novice surfer feel comfortable in the water.

Intermediate:

For those who are familiar with the basics, the intermediate course offers instruction on wave selection, timing, and “angling” down the line of the wave. Since intermediate surfers already know how to catch a wave, more time is dedicated to perfecting technique, style, and how to properly tackle larger waves. In this phase, surfers will master the skill of duck-diving and can “graduate” to a shorter board if desired.

Advanced:

For experienced surfers, CHICABRAVA has specialty tours to world-class breaks, many accessible only by 4x4 or boat. Daily surf sessions take place at a variety of breaks, ranging from heavy barreling beach breaks to waves peeling over a perfectly formed reef. Since surfers in this category are already familiar with the ins and outs of surfing, there is minimal instruction if desired. Photo/video feedback is also provided. This allows advanced surfers to spend more time perfecting their skills at various locations throughout Nicaragua.

40+ Package:

The 40+ Package offers an alternative for the mature female traveler who prefers a bit of pampering while away from home. Designed for all-level surfers, this package pays close attention to the needs of the 40+ age bracket, both in and out of the water. “The 40+” includes gourmet cuisine, massages, yoga, and plenty of relaxation. Set exclusively in a 500-acre reserve, the private villa serves as luxury lodging for guests, where the key focus is comfort and indulgence. In addition to solo travelers, groups of women traveling together often select this option since the Cloud Forest villa can accommodate up to eight guests. This package is also offered at the Surf House location.

Week-long enrollment includes:

- Seven nights shared accommodations
- Ground transportation
- 3 meals per day at Cloud Farm
- Breakfast only at Surf House
- Six days of expert surfing instruction
- Six days of surf theory taught in classroom setting
- Individualized surf-goal setting and check-in
- Daily filming of surf sessions and video analysis
- Daily use of surfboards and equipment
- Daily transportation to surf spots by 4×4 and boat
- Daily full-time hosting and activity coordinating
- Two guided nights out “on the town”
- Three yoga sessions
- One 1-hour massage
- Sightseeing trip through Granada upon arrival (scheduled shuttle only)
- Photo sessions with professional surf photographer and option to purchase hi-res photo CD ($40) or add in-water shots/video ($60)
- CHICABRAVA tote bag, water bottle, stickers, surf shop discount



play

CHICABRAVA is not just about surfing. Their staff also offers horseback riding tours of their private farm. Here guests will learn the basics of organic farming and can even pick fruit from the orchard, milk a cow or collect eggs from the chicken coop. The tour includes a visit to the onsite carpentry shop where most of CHICABRAVA's furniture is made by hand. During the two-hour tour, guests will catch glimpses of Volcano Maderas and Concepción jetting from Lake Nicaragua in the distance. (Cost $20/person)

There is plenty of shopping to be done in San Juan del Sur. Local stores offer everything from beachwear and tee-shirts to crafts and jewelry. Guests don't have to look very far for a good bargain. CHICABRAVA has its own beach-front surf shop offering just about everything for a day at the beach. In addition to CHICABRAVA's own line of merchandise, also available are surfboards and clothing from leading brands like Billabong, Roxy, and RipCurl.

Despite its size, the town of San Juan del Sur has a nightlife that knows how to party. Here guests can enjoy dancing, live music and Latin discos. Local beer and rum will cost around $2 per drink.

Zoom through the rain forest past monkeys and sloths at San Juan del Sur's very own Zip Line Canopy Tour. (Cost $35/person. 2 hr tour)

Tour rural Nicaragua on horseback with CHICABRAVA's partners at Rancho Chilamate, located in the nearby town of Escamequita. The three-hour trip includes a ride through the local barrio, down riverbeds, across fields and along the open beach. (Cost $65/person)

Half or full day sailing adventures are available with Pelican Eyes Resort. Set sail with their 41-ft sailboat and enjoy breathtaking views of Nicaragua's open blue waters. The tour includes appetizers and beverages. (Cost half day- $60; full day- $90/person + tax and tip)

Additional activities, such as sailing, catamaran tour, canopy tour, horseback riding, extra massages, and more can be arranged for an additional cost. Please check out other package add-ons such as Spanish and volunteering on our "Pricing & Add-ons" tab. http://www.chicabrava.com/surf-camps/pricing/

Surf + Volunteer programs are a great way to give back to the community. Donate time at San Juan del Sur Biblioteca, Barrio Planta Project or raise awareness about human trafficking through Camp Bella.

CHICABRAVA's Surf + Wellness includes three organic meals daily, six days of surf instruction, one massage, daily yoga, and a daily exercise routine. Partake in hiking, stand up paddling, and learn about holistic healing foods, treatments and more.

With Surf + Adventure, guests can trade in three surfing days for three day trips to surrounding towns to experience hiking and sightseeing. Wander up volcanoes, visit ancient churches, experience culture in Granada, shop in the Masaya leather markets, lounge in a freshwater lagoon and much more.

With Surf + Custom, CHICABARAVA can organize specialized packages for bachelorette parties, mother-daughter weeks, coed group camps, couples escapes, and family camps.





relax

All guests of CHICABRAVA are invited to experience a complimentary one-hour full body massage by a licensed massage therapist. CHICABRAVA also offers yoga classes as a valuable tool to improve surfing through increased flexibility and core stabilization. Enjoy three weekly classes for camps at the Cloud Farm and two classes for camps at the Surf House. All yoga classes at CHICABRAVA are exclusively provided through Zen Yoga Nicaragua.

www.zenyoganicaragua.com



empower

CHICABRAVA fosters an atmosphere of camaraderie and empowerment where women can be challenged in a positive and healthy environment. The supportive staff helps inspire women to overcome limitations, conquer fears and flourish through the process of surfing. CHICABRAVA bridges likeminded individuals together by forging new and lasting friendships through the experience of traveling in a new and beautiful land.

"CHICABRAVA has a special knack for creating a safe, beautiful, and powerful environment that I have never experienced before, but will change the way I feel forever. I am thankful for their work and commitment to celebrating brave women."

Savannah Verde – Jackson Hole, Wyoming

q & a with ashley blaylock:

Attorney-turned-surfer girl, Ashley Blaylock recently sat down to discuss her life since becoming the owner of Nicaragua's first female surf camp. As reigning national surf champion, the young entrepreneur has managed to fast track her way to the top more quickly than almost any other business owner in San Juan del Sur. Ashley shares how she balances her life in and out of the water, as a surfer, lawyer, traveler and business owner, with a special place in her heart for Nicaragua's people, countryside and waves.

Q: What first brought you to Nicaragua in 2003?
A: While I was studying to be an attorney in Texas, I traveled on a study abroad program in Costa Rica. One student invited me to go along on a surf trip to Nicaragua for one week before our program began. Immediately I fell in love with the place.

Q: At what point did you start to think about moving to Nicaragua?
A: Within the first few days of my first trip, I knew I wanted to move to Nicaragua. I surfed with the locals nearly everyday and admired their genuine hospitality and openness. It was just a matter of figuring out how I was going to make Nicaragua my home.

Q: How long have you been surfing?
A: Since 1999. My brother always surfed, but I never braved the waves much as a child. I think as women, we often doubt ourselves when we see men doing things we would like to do, but we don't believe we can. When I went to college, I had a roommate who surfed, and I thought, "If she can, then so can I." She gave me support and encouraged me to take up the sport. But it wasn't until I moved to Nicaragua that I really honed my skills as a surfer.

Q: At what point did you decide to give up your career as a lawyer?
A: I was still in law school when I discovered Nicaragua, so fortunately I didn't have to give up a practice or leave clients behind. I was single and didn't have kids, so the decision made sense. It wasn't so much about having a "safe" career as it was about following my dream.

Q: What made you decide to open a surf camp for women?
A: During my first summer in Nicaragua, I realized I was one of the few women in the water. So, I got some of the locals girls surfing, and quickly became an ambassador for female surfers in Nicaragua. My goal was to take it to a global level and reach out to women worldwide. The desire to have a camp was born during the early stages, and I was drawn to the fact that surfing really broke down barriers for women. When I surfed, I was pushed by other girls who I surfed with and I think I challenged them as well. This was not so much on a competitive level, but rather on a motivational one to strive for self empowerment.

Q: How difficult was the move from Texas to Nicaragua?
A: Well, I was 25 at the time. The physical move wasn't as difficult as was the cultural one; It was very frustrating at first because of the change of pace. Everything was "Mañana" and it never seemed to be cut and dry. I had to foster patience and meet the culture somewhere in the middle. I always felt as long as we continue to strive for excellence as a company, then I can live with a different way of life.

Q: What makes CHICABRAVA unique?
A: We were the first all-women's surf camp in Nicaragua. Being established has helped us build a solid connection with the community. Our staff is bilingual and experienced. There really is no substitute for time and experience. We have a unique education-based surf program combined with theory, photography and video feedback which most surf camps don't offer. Our location provides the best of both worlds in terms of immersion in a city of fun-loving locals where we are close to empty beaches with consistent off-shore winds, unique to Southern Nicaragua.

Q: How have you contributed to the local community?
A: Our instructors donate their time and the use of our equipment to an after school organization called Barrio La Planta. Through the Fabretto Program, we sell jewelry made by kids living in the city dump. We also volunteer our time through a mobile biblioteca and deliver books to poor communities. Our latest outreach is the CHICABRAVA Bella Charity Camp to raise awareness of Human Trafficking in Nicaragua and host such victims to help change lives. The November 2012 fundraiser brought in thousands of dollars for the cause.



Q: What have been some of the greatest obstacles you have had to face?
A: Power outages and water shortages are always frustrating because they are something I cannot control and you never know when they will occur. Distance and being away from my family can be tough at times, but fortunately Houston is a short flight away. It's all about adjusting to a different lifestyle.

Q: How long did it take before you had built a client base and began to see that CHICABRAVA would actually succeed?
A: From the beginning, I believed in it. I adopted the attitude that it would work and it did.

Q: What are you trying to accomplish with CHICABRAVA?
A: I want to provide the best surfing program in the world for women. Also, I'm hoping that our guests will become better surfers as a result of CHICABRAVA and that they can apply their skills once they are on their own. On an emotional level, CHICABRAVA can be a life changing experience. In addition to having an amazing vacation, I want women to feel empowered, fulfilled, and balanced. Ultimately, it's about self-discovery.

Q: Where do you hope to see CHICABRAVA in five years?
A: I'd like CHICABRAVA to be internationally recognized as the leading name in women's surf camps. We plan to offer international trips to additional locations for repeat clients and help empower more people in the process. Perhaps in the future we will open a US location as well.

Q: What meaning does surfing hold for you and how has it changed your life?
A: Surfing for me is happiness. It challenges me, it gives me health, both physically and mentally, and the opportunity to meet like-minded people and travel to incredible locations.

Q: How would you define surfing to someone who has never tried it?
A: Surfing is the closest thing to flying. You are using your whole body, mind and balance to glide weightlessly over the water. It's incredible.

Q: How do your clients change between the day they arrive and the day they leave?
A: They are more confident when they leave the camp, and in the process, many have worked through some personal issues. Surfing and traveling are both forms of therapy. CHICABRAVA is the perfect outlet for combining those two and for overcoming deep-rooted fears.

Q: Do you have any regrets?
A: No, not a single one. Everything has been spot on.

Q: Did you ever imagine that you would make it this far?
A: No. I remember the first group of clients that arrived to CHICABRAVA, and at the time I thought, "Wow, I've arrived." Now years later I get so busy, and have to just step back and realize that I own my own business that is growing steadily. Rather than bathe in the limelight of my own success, I just want to focus on it being bigger and better.

Testimonials

"A turnkey trip of a lifetime!"
"CHICABRAVA's Cloud Farm surf camp is a brilliantly designed week that combines adventure travel in a jungle setting, easy to master surf instruction for all levels and ages, yoga and massage sessions perfectly timed to prevent sore muscles, healthy and delicious family style meals, and stunning views from your bedroom window. The CHICABRAVA staff takes care of every detail. All you have to do is book your flight. This was an incredible bonding experience for the 8 guests and 3 instructors, and we were all sad to leave each other on the last day. I can't wait to return for a mother/daughter camp in a few years!"
Laura B - Austin, Texas

"Go as soon as you possibly can!"
"I spent a week at CHICABRAVA Surf Camp this past December, and it was, hands down, one of the best trips I've taken. I was traveling alone, was a bit unsure of what to expect, but I couldn't have asked for a better experience! The Surf House has everything you could need, and more, and is in a great location. The staff is so kind and accommodating! Also, this was my first time surfing in about 10 years, so I was basically a beginner. The surf instructors are extremely knowledgeable, helpful, patient, and very good at working with different skill levels of the other girls and myself. All of us girls had a blast and everyone definitely agreed that we all want to return as soon as possible. I would highly, highly recommend CHICABRAVA to anyone!"
Jess Marie - Houston, TX

"CHICABRAVA Is Fabulous"
"I just returned from the most enjoyable, engaging, expanding trip I've had in years. Celebrating an "important" birthday milestone with my daughter and her friends, we were challenged and pampered all at once. You have to experience it to believe it. And go to the cloud camp for sure, where the accommodations are simple, yet elegant. And the food is naturally delicious. The instructors know their stuff -- and want their guests to learn and have fun. And in addition they are just good people. Bring a group of adventure-loving friends or family -- you won't regret it."
Marj C - Cheshire, CT

"Amazing and I plan to return as soon as possible!"
"CHICABRAVA is an amazing surf school and camp, but beyond that, it's a mindset. The staff and campers during my week were all adventurous, upbeat, and accommodating. The Surf House was welcoming and inviting for relaxing times in between surfing and other adventures. In the house you'll find hammocks to lounge in, a bunch of movies to watch on the common room tv, a fridge, games, and musical instruments to play. My room was perfect with bunk beds to really add to the youthful and fun summer camp feel of the house. Yet it was decorated with thought, paintings on the wall and matching bedspreads. The surf shop in the house was great for providing fun clothes to try on and purchase. Breakfast every morning was served for the group and during this time we would talk about our surfing plan for the day and assess our goals in the water. I loved everything about CHICABRAVA and can't wait to return for more surfing, house fun, and girl adventures."
Dani - Aberdeen, NC

"We absolutely loved it and we will be back. We had so much fun and the surf was great."
"CHICABRAVA was well informed of all the surf spots and when to go. It was tide dependent and they new it all. We were so surfed out by the end of the week. We had the best trip and best surf. The staff was incredible and knowledgeable and went out of their way to satisfy us. This was a great decision and now we have really good friends for life there. Again, the staff was excellent along with the owner. We had a fantastic trip and would suggest CHICABRAVA to all. Thank you for all that you did for us and the lasting memories."
Cathy McCracken - Paia, Hawaii

"Great fun and adventure..."
"CHICABRAVA is one of the highlights of my life!! The whole experience, from pickup at the airport, to being delivered back to airport, was one of extreme fun and camaraderie! Sarah, Kate and Elsi are amazing surf instructors, with the patience to teach everyone how to surf. It was truly a week of encouragement and celebration of accomplishment and the staff at the surf house was great and bent over backwards to help in every way possible, any needs of the girls staying there! I recommend it to anyone that wants to challenge themselves or improve their surfing ability, it's well worth the money and time to travel there. I will go back one day!!!"
Terri B - Lake Havasu City, Arizona

