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Chicabrava Surf Camp: The Ultimate Girls' Getaway

by Photo TravelingMom



Chicabrava Group in front of Surf House

Chicabrava is an all-girl surf retreat based in San Juan del Sur, a quaint fishing village on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua. Between their two property locations, Surf House or Cloud Farm, they offer a variety of week-long surf/travel packages for women of all ages and experience levels, including a special 40s+ package – perfect for bucket-listers who always wanted to learn how to surf. Of course, there are many places around the world that one can learn to surf, so what makes Chicabrava so different?

Disclosure:
All or part of this trip was provided free or at a reduced cost for review purposes. But the opinions are solely that of the writer.
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San Juan del Sur Sunset

- **Location**: Southern Nicaragua benefits from year-round offshore winds due to the large inland lakes, creating perfectly groomed waves and ideal surf conditions all day long. Although reputed as one of the world's best surf destinations, it remains pristine and un-crowded, and there are several types of beaches and breaks in the area with wide open waves enough for all. Coming from southern California, a totally empty beach with a perfect break was a dream come true and worth the airfare alone.
- **Instruction**: Chicabrava camps are small, with a maximum of 3 surfers per instructor (more often just 2), and a maximum group size of 10 (at the Surf House) or 16 (at the Cloud Farm). We had 3 instructors for our group of 5 chicas! Instruction is personalized and goal-oriented no matter what level, and the instructors provide a supportive, safe, and empowering environment to learn and to progress. Sessions are taped with video and photo feedback, a real valuable learning tool and something not usually offered elsewhere. For myself, an intermediate level surfer, watching the tape and seeing (not just hearing) what I needed to do differently made all the difference.



Chicabrava Founder Ashley Blaylock (left) & chicas enjoying a night out in San Juan del Sur

- **Atmosphere and Camaraderie**: Bringing together women in a positive and healthy environment allows for mutual support and inspiration, overcoming challenges, and a bonding experience that builds character and forges new friendships. The staff do a remarkable job of treating everyone equally, like they are spending the week with their best friends. As the oldest in my group, I never once felt like age was a barrier, to surfing, or to fitting in. We were all "sisters of the surf," and I enjoyed hanging with my new sisters as much as I did the surfing. Coming from a chick who's always hung out and surfed with the guys, that says a lot.

So which location to choose, Surf House or Cloud Farm? Each property has an entirely different feel, so here's what you need to know to pick the right one:



Common Room at Surf House



Bedroom at Surf House

Surf House: Steps away from the bay, the Surf House is ideally situated within walking distance to all the restaurants and bars San Juan del Sur has to offer, many of them beachfront with live music or outdoor surf movies. It can be noisy – bring earplugs, or plan to dance til you drop enjoying the vibrant bar scene. Alternatively, relax in the common room and watch a surf movie, read, or surf the internet with free, albeit slow, wi-fi. The rooms are clean and comfortable, with air-conditioning, powerstrips, and tons of closet space. Expect 2-3 chicas sharing a room (some with bunk beds), and shared bathrooms/showers. The casual, backpacker-hostel vibe is dissipated when a fresh, healthy, delicious breakfast is served each morning and you return in the afternoon to discover your bed's been made and bathroom cleaned. Plus, it's beyond budget range for most hostellers, at $1090/week per person shared, $1690/week single. Price includes airport transfers and transporation, breakfast daily, all surf instruction and equipment, 2 yoga sessions, and a 1-hour massage.



Master Bedroom at Cloud Farm Villa



Cloud Farm Luxury Villa

Cloud Farm: Located on a remote private reserve, the Cloud Farm is an all-inclusive luxury villa set in nature, where you truly feel you are getting away from it all. The villa houses up to 8 chicas in spacious shared rooms, with a dedicated chef and housekeeper, a private pool, hammocks, and idyllic views of San Juan del Sur. All 3 included meals per day are prepared by a chef using organic vegetables and fruits from the on-site garden. The vibe is definitely one of a quiet luxury vacation rental, offering tranquility, pampering, and peace, with wi-fi and satellite tv should you desire connection with the outside world. It takes a bit longer on a bumpy road to get to and from the beaches and the town, but staying here is a breath of fresh mountain air, and worth the journey. Rates for the all-inclusive luxury are $1700/week per person shared, $2400/week single. Price includes airport transfers and transporation, 3 daily meals prepared by Chicabrava's local chef, all surf instruction and equipment, 3 yoga sessions, a 1-hour massage, and a half-day surfing panga excursion.

So how best to experience Chicabrava? There are many different reasons we choose how, why, and with whom we travel. Chicabrava works well for most every occasion, so here are a few scenarios:

Girls' Getaway: *Bring it on, girlfriends!* This could be a bachelorette party, a special birthday, or a reunion of high school friends. A minimum of 8 chicas will get you exclusive run of either property, with exclusive surf instruction and sessions. Surf House is the best choice for party occasions, given proximity to bars and things to do out on the town.

Moms' Getaway: *Moms who surf are cool!* You know you've earned it, and all you can dream about is a week away from being called "Mom" and taking care of everyone else. Take time to take care of yourself. Escape, unwind, put your feet up, relax, and check out. Reclaim your spirit and empower yourself in new ways. Let someone else do the planning and cooking and looking after you while you discover and overcome the challenges of learning to surf in a supportive and healthy environment. Cloud Farm it is.

Solo Getaway: *You Only Live Once!* For the independent, adventurous traveler, or the hard-working career woman looking to escape the work routine and trade in the business suit for board shorts, Chicabrava Surf Camp is the ideal destination. Have you always wanted to learn to surf in a supportive and fun-loving environment? Are you ready to go for it, but you don't want to be the only one? Thanks to the fantastic instructors and staff, and the genuine camaraderie that ensues, you'll emerge from your solo getaway re-vitalized, with new friends, new memories, and one more item checked off the bucket list. Surf House or Cloud Farm, either way.

40s + Getaway: *Do It Now!* Hands down, Cloud Farm will be most comfortable, no matter how young at heart. However, it's possible to do a 40's + group at the Surf House as well, so age is hardly the determining factor. In fact, out on the waves, age has nothing to do with ability to surf, learn, or succeed. 50th, 60th or 70th birthday? No worries, Chicacbrava has seen and taught it all, you won't be the first!

In any case, if you book with a friend, you'll both receive $100 off, and 10% off for booking back-to-back weeks. At Cloud Farm, a 10% discount is offered for groups of 6 or more.

Chicabrava is so much more than a Surf Camp – it is a lifestyle, a spirit, an attitude. It is a journey of facing challenges, conquering fears, and embracing life through self-empowerment and inspiration. Surfing contributes to both physical and spiritual well-being, with no bias of age or body type. There's really no reason not to try it. Each chica starts in a different place and comes away with something personal and unique to them, their own victory story, their own chicabrava moment. It's the ultimate environment to both learn and succeed…and to be empowered. That's what Chicabrava is all about.



Empowered Surfing with Chicabrava

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