



Tarpon and friends in Nicaragua!!

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[Nicaragua](#) was never on my list of must see places, but now that I've been, I think it should be on everyone's wish list! I just got back from fishing in Nica and the trip far exceeded my expectations.

Lauren (my guest for this show and Tarpon connoisseur), Craig (my producer), Darryl (my camera guy) and I met up in Miami and flew to Managua, Nicaragua's capital. From there we took a small plane (Cesna Caravan) to San Carlos, a small town where Nicaragua Lake meets the San Juan River. We then took a small boat to our first fishing lodge – [La Esquina del Lago](#), which means "corner of the lake". This place is the real deal – a small, intimate lodge, raised just above water on stilts and touching 2 rivers (San Juan and Rio Frio) and the lake. We stayed there that night, enjoyed the sunset, feasted on local Nicaraguan food, then got ourselves ready for an early morning wake up.



We headed down river (towards Costa Rica) and immediately got into fishing mode. This trip was all about trolling plugs for Tarpon so we enjoyed our new surroundings as we waited for rolling Tarpon and our lines to start buzzing. Rio San Juan is incredible and so interesting because people actually live right along the river, so it turned out to be a fishing trip as well as a real cultural experience.

By about 10 a.m. we still hadn't hooked up yet, so we docked our boats and were welcomed into a local's home for breakfast. The mother of the house cooked us a traditional Nicaraguan meal – in her own home!! – you really can't get a more authentic experience than that. A lot of it consisted of rice, beans and eggs and it was absolutely delicious.

We spent the rest of the trip trolling for Tarpon, while staying at [Hotel Sabalos](#), another low key, but amazing lodge right in the heart of the San Juan river. I fought a Tarpon (estimated at somewhere between 120 – 150 lbs) for a good 75 minutes. I reeled the big guy right to the boat and the guide grabbed hold of the leader, at which point, the leader broke. We didn't get a chance to take any stills but we definitely got some footage!! My Tarpon was a lively one and jumped in the air a good 10-15 times...so much action, so much fun.



At one point, Lauren was fighting a Tarpon and we happened to be right in front of a town called El Castillo. As she's reeling in her Tarpon, cannons are going off to mark a 5 day celebration in town. Seriously, soooo cool. Once again, we docked our boats, and visited this cute little town and enjoyed a true Nicaraguan experience – we ate delicious fish, visited with locals and enjoyed the company of a ton of farm animals. At one point, the Nica cowboys were herding cattle across the same river we were fishing.

From the moment we landed in Managua, to the time we said our goodbyes in San Carlos and El Castillo, the entire Hookin' Up crew was in awe of all the awesomeness that we experienced...and we only scratched the surface. We had a jam-packed trip while staying in land the entire time. Next time I plan on visiting the Pacific side, as well as making time inland to hang with my new Nica friends.

<http://www.visitnicaragua.com/>