

# Slightly Twisted Spoons



## What is Slightly Twisted Spoons?

Slightly Twisted Spoons\* is a line of quality wooden kitchen utensils made by a small workshop in Cuajachillo, a village just outside Ciudad Sandino. Three people are currently working in the workshop full time. They are being trained in woodworking skills, industrial machinery and sustainable forestry. Profits from sales of the kitchen utensils are reinvested to help the workshop grow and also to generate funds for other CDCA projects.



The goal of the workshop is to continue producing kitchen utensils, and eventually grow into producing a line of comfortable well-designed wooden furniture for export. Kitchen utensils are a good start-up product for the workshop because although they are time-consuming to make, they are easy to transport and unlike larger pieces of furniture, they are not prone to warping under changing humidity conditions. As the workshop grows, it will be able to create more sustainable employment and training opportunities for others from Ciudad Sandino. With a master carpenter in charge, the workshop currently employs two carpenters-in-training, Yader Rivas and Reynaldo Mayorga, both of whom support young families.



## Promoting Sustainable Forestry

Slightly Twisted Spoons are made from two types of timbers, the Paradise Tree and Royal Mahogany. These are purchased from sustainable sources.



The first source is directly from local folks who grow the common Paradise Tree on their land. They sell the tree standing, and a local tree surgeon cuts it and delivers the lumber to the workshop by ox cart. By monitoring the harvesting practices and offering a better price for the tree than the landowners would get elsewhere, the workshop is encouraging responsible forestry and sustainable cutting practices.

The source for Royal Mahogany is a company that sells Forestry Stewardship Council certified wood. This third party certification verifies that the wood comes from a responsibly managed forest, and the

certification process is very similar to the organic certification process in agriculture, with which the CDCA is very familiar. A responsibly managed forest must maintain a diversity of native species, selectively cut mature trees without over cutting, and must replant. The workshop maintains personal connections with communities in Nicaragua that supply the FSC certified timber.



## Why is protecting Nicaragua's forests important?

Nicaragua has one of the world's only remaining tropical dry forests, and the largest tropical rainforest remaining in Central America. According to the [Nicaragua Network Environmental Committee](#), "compared to neighboring Central American countries, Nicaragua still has extensive areas of rainforest, and supports populations of animals that have largely disappeared or are endangered elsewhere."

Unfortunately, decades of rampant deforestation in Nicaragua have caused countless environmental problems ranging from massive soil erosion and habitat destruction to watershed deterioration. What are the causes of the deforestation? Exploitation by foreign logging companies, the expansion of the "agricultural frontier," and traditional use of firewood for cooking, are the three main culprits. Nicaragua has lost more than half its forest cover since 1950, and many experts believe that if the current rate of deforestation continues, Nicaragua's remaining tropical rainforests will be gone within 10-15 years.

What does this mean for the people of Nicaragua? As the country loses its forests, lands that were before cultivated by peasant farmers have lost their arable layer of soil, causing thousands of families to leave the countryside and move to urban areas. Often these migrants locate their shacks on unstable hillsides. When Hurricane Mitch hit the country in 1998, fatal landslides and flash floods were widespread, making the results of deforestation painfully clear.

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