

# QTRAVEL

TRAVEL AND TOURISM MAGAZINE / Nº49



SAN SALVADOR  
SUCHITOTO  
TAZUMAL AP  
CIHUATÁN AP  
JOYA DE CERÉN AP

CERRO VERDE NP  
EL BOQUERÓN NP  
PLAYA EL TUNGO  
COATEPEQUE LAKE  
WALTER THILO DEININGER PARK

# EL SALVADOR

THE EMERGING DESTINATION OF CENTRAL AMERICA





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THAT SEEK THEIR OWN AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES



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El Salvador, in the heart of Central America, has been emerging in recent years as an attractive and safe tourist destination. Recent social changes and improvements in security have transformed El Salvador into an accessible destination, allowing travelers to explore its wonders in a safe and enriching way.

such as its national parks with lush forests and great natural diversity, as well as archaeological sites like **Joya de Cerén** and **Tazumal**, which feature surprisingly well-preserved Mayan structures. Its beaches, especially **El Tunco**, are ideal for surfing, and colonial towns like **Suchitoto** captivate visitors.

The country is known for its natural and cultural wealth, offering tourist attractions

*David Bigorra*

**QTRAVEL**

Nº 49 - Era III - Year XVII

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ISSN: 1887-410X

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An aerial night photograph of a city, likely San Salvador, El Salvador. The sky is a deep twilight blue with some clouds. The city lights are visible, with a prominent modern building in the center illuminated with warm, golden-yellow lights. The building has a curved, multi-story facade with a grid-like pattern of windows. To the right, a large, classical-style building with a dome is also illuminated. The overall scene is a vibrant display of urban architecture at night.

# El Salvador

## THE EMERGING DESTINATION OF

# Central America

Text by David Bigorra - photographs by Daniel Herrera and David Bigorra



**EL SALVADOR IS POSITIONING ITSELF AS A TOP TOURIST DESTINATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA, IDEAL FOR THOSE SEEKING AUTHENTIC AND VARIED EXPERIENCES. ON THE ONE HAND, ITS NATIONAL PARKS OFFER LUSH TROPICAL FORESTS AND A DIVERSE ARRAY OF WILDLIFE. HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS WILL ENJOY SITES LIKE JOYA DE CERÉN AND TAZUMAL, WHICH FEATURE WELL-PRESERVED MAYAN STRUCTURES. ADDITIONALLY, IT BOASTS BEAUTIFUL BEACHES, ESPECIALLY EL TUNCO, WHICH IS A PARADISE FOR SURFERS. WE MUST NOT FORGET THE CHARMING COLONIAL TOWNS LIKE SUCHITOTO, WHICH OFFER A RICH HERITAGE TO VISITORS. WE ALSO CANNOT OVERLOOK ITS IMPRESSIVE CHAIN OF VOLCANOES, MAKING EL SALVADOR A STANDOUT DESTINATION FOR GEOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURERS ALIKE.**







Foto: Ministerio de Turismo de El Salvador

Night view of the illuminated buildings of the National Palace with the Metropolitan Cathedral in the background.

## CENTER OF SAN SALVADOR

The historic center of **San Salvador** stands as the cultural and social hub of the country, where history, architecture, and everyday life blend into a vibrant tapestry. In recent years, this area has witnessed remarkable revitalization, driven by political transformations that have reshaped its streets and squares. This renaissance has turned the historic center into an

irresistible destination for both locals and tourists.

The streets are now paved and adorned with gardens and green spaces, inviting visitors to stroll and enjoy them in a safe environment. The central square, the iconic **Plaza Barrios**, has been restored and renovated, equipped with new urban furniture, making it an ideal meeting point for cultural activities and community





Plaza Barrios is the main square of San Salvador's historic center and the heart of the city.

events that are now organized there.

Thanks to the efforts of the government and the community, the area has seen a near-zero reduction in violence and crime, allowing both Salvadorans and tourists to feel comfortable exploring the area at any time of the day. Walking through the historic center has become a lively and dynamic experience. Visitors can explore important monuments

and historic buildings, such as the **Metropolitan Cathedral**, the **National Theater**, and the **National Palace**, which bear witness to the country's rich past. Furthermore, the art galleries, boutiques, and cafés that have flourished in the area offer a perfect blend of culture and gastronomy. Local markets are also a major attraction, where crafts and typical products can be found, reflecting Salvadoran identity..





The National Palace, alongside the Cathedral, dominates Plaza de Gerardo Barrios.

### **PLAZA DE GERARDO BARRIOS: THE HEART OF SAN SALVADOR**

**Plaza de Gerardo Barrios**, located in the historic center, is an iconic space that invites visitors to immerse themselves in the history and culture of the country. Named in honor of **President Gerardo Barrios**, this plaza is a popular meeting point, surrounded by important buildings and monuments that reflect the architectural richness of the Salvadoran capital.

At the center of the plaza stands an imposing **equestrian statue of Gerardo Barrios**, paying tribute to his legacy. The sculpture, surrounded by well-maintained gardens and benches, provides an ideal spot to relax and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere. The plaza is a dynamic and welcoming space where both locals and tourists gather day and night to participate in cultural activities, events, and festivities throughout the year.





The National Palace, next to the Cathedral, preside over the Plaza de Gerardo Barrios.

**Plaza de Gerardo Barrios** is flanked by significant buildings, such as the **National Theater**, a neoclassical architectural gem, and the National Palace, a symbol of the country's political history. The proximity of these buildings allows visitors to explore El Salvador's rich cultural heritage and enjoy guided tours that recount the fascinating history of the plaza and its surroundings, including its most significant historical events.

Moreover, the plaza is an excellent starting point for discovering other nearby tourist attractions, such as the great **Metropolitan Cathedral** and **Cuscatlán Park**, where art exhibitions and live music can be enjoyed. The numerous cafés and restaurants lining the lively plaza offer a variety of dining options, from traditional Salvadoran dishes to international cuisine, creating a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere for visitors.





Exterior of the Metropolitan Cathedral of San Salvador.

## **METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL OF SAN SALVADOR: A SYMBOL OF FAITH AND HOPE**

The **Metropolitan Cathedral of San Salvador** is one of the main architectural and cultural icons of the Salvadoran capital. Located in the heart of the historic center, this imposing cathedral, built in the 18th century, stands as a testament to the country's religious heritage. Its neoclassical style, with majestic columns and an ornate facade,

attracts both local and foreign visitors who seek to admire its beauty and historical significance.

The interior of the cathedral is equally impressive, featuring high vaulted ceilings and decorations that reflect the richness of the Catholic tradition in **El Salvador**. Visitors can admire beautiful stained glass windows that illuminate the space with vibrant colors, as well as various works of religious art.





Bright interior of the Cathedral.

One of the most significant aspects of the **Metropolitan Cathedral** is its **crypt**, where the **bishop Saint Óscar Arnulfo Romero** is buried. Known for his defense of human rights and his commitment to the marginalized, Romero was assassinated in 1980 while celebrating a mass, an event that shocked the entire world. His legacy has transcended time, making him a symbol of the struggle for justice and peace in **El Salvador**.

**The crypt**, located beneath the cathedral, is a place of reflection and homage. Visitors can pay tribute to **Saint Óscar Romero**, whose teachings and values continue to inspire many people around the world today.

**The crypt** features a simple yet spacious design that invites visitors to meditate, where offerings and mementos left by the faithful in honor of his figure can be found. In addition





Crypt of Bishop Romero and Main Facade

to its spiritual significance, the **Metropolitan Cathedral** and the **crypt of Saint Romero** serve as a focal point for religious tourism in **El Salvador**.

During guided tours, visitors can learn more about the history of the cathedral as well as the impact of Romero on Salvadoran society, marking a turning point in the country's history and leaving a deep and indelible mark on the collective consciousness of El Salvador.







Exterior View of the New National Library Located in the Heart of San Salvador

## NATIONAL LIBRARY OF EL SALVADOR

The new **National Library of El Salvador**, inaugurated in 2023, represents a cultural and educational milestone for the country. Located in the heart of the capital, this modern facility offers spacious reading areas, cutting-edge technology, and a vast collection of books and digital resources. The library is not only a center of knowledge but also a space for inclusion and community,

promoting access to education and culture for all Salvadorans.

Additionally, it hosts exhibitions, workshops, and cultural activities, becoming a meeting point for writers, researchers, and students. With its contemporary and functional design, the library symbolizes El Salvador's commitment to intellectual and cultural development, reflecting a vision of future progress for the coming generations.





National Theatre of San Salvador from Morazán Square.

### **NATIONAL THEATER OF SAN SALVADOR**

The **National Theater of San Salvador** is one of the most important architectural gems in **El Salvador** and a symbol of the country's cultural life. Inaugurated in 1979, this impressive neoclassical building, located in the heart of the city, combines elegance and functionality, making it a landmark for culture enthusiasts.

The theater is notable for its ornate façade

and majestic interiors. Upon entering, visitors are welcomed by a stunning lobby adorned with frescoes and chandeliers that evoke the grandeur of past eras.

The main auditorium, with a capacity of over 1,200 people, offers exceptional acoustics and an intimate atmosphere that enhances the experience of performances.

The **National Theater** hosts a variety of





Spectacular view of the interior of the National Theatre.

cultural events, including plays, concerts, dance performances, and classical and popular music presentations, making it a vibrant space that celebrates the creativity and artistic talent of **El Salvador**.

The theater also offers guided tours that allow visitors to explore its history and architecture. During these tours, guests can discover details about the building's construction and anecdotes about the numerous productions that

have taken place on its stage over the years. The surroundings of the **National Theater** are also appealing, with nearby plazas and cafés inviting visitors to enjoy a moment of relaxation before or after a show.

Its proximity to other cultural points of interest, such as **Plaza de Gerardo Barrios** and the **Metropolitan Cathedral**, makes a visit to the theater part of a broader tourist experience in the historic center.





Garden of Fernando Llorca's workshop.

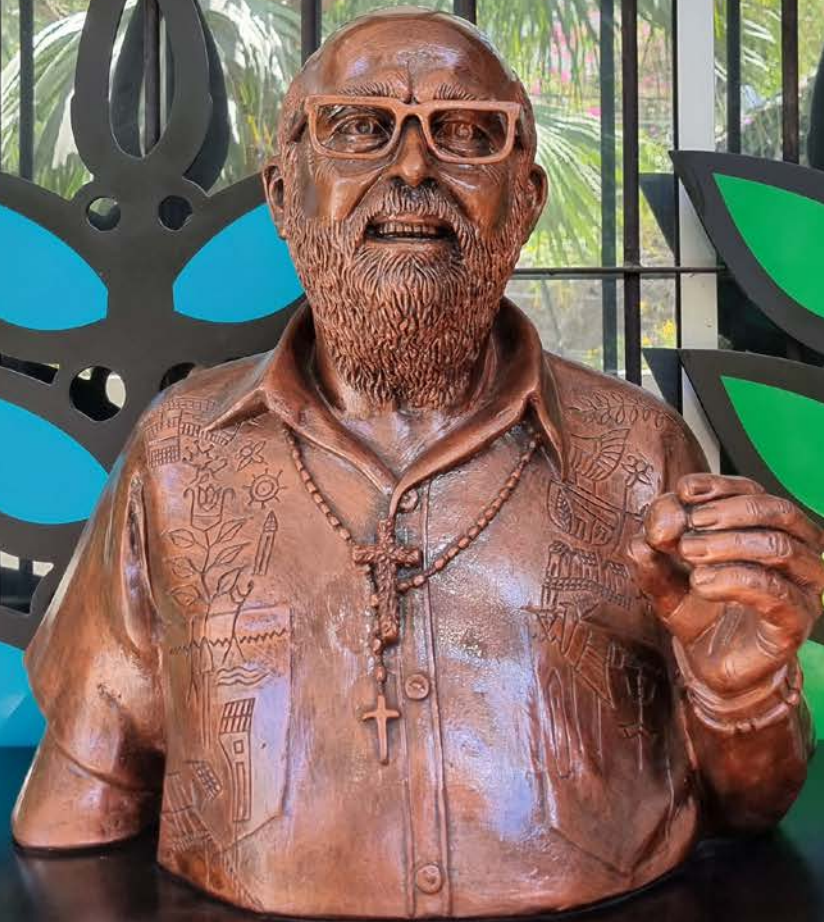
### **FERNANDO LLORCA WORKSHOP**

Located in the picturesque town of La Palma, the workshop of artist **Fernando Llorca** is a cultural meeting point that celebrates the work of the renowned Salvadoran artist. **Fernando Llorca** is widely known for his distinctive style that merges indigenous heritage with the rich popular culture of **El Salvador**, creating vibrant pieces that convey the profound essence of his land.

The workshop is not only an exhibition space but also a store where visitors can appreciate and purchase a variety of Llorca's works, including paintings, ceramics, and crafts. The artist's colorful creations, characterized by their organic shapes and motifs representing El Salvador's flora and fauna, have gained recognition both nationally and internationally. His artistic legacy not only enriches the local culture but also inspires new generations of artists.



BUST OF FERNANDO LLORT AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE WORKSHOP



En homenaje a nuestro fundador  
fernando llort choussy  
(1911-2018) QEPD

“ Amo y siento los colores por que  
Ellos me transmiten la vida  
que procede de la Luz ”





Inside Fernando Llorca's workshop.

One of the most appealing features of the **Fernando Llorca Workshop** is the opportunity it provides for visiting groups to participate in pottery activities. These sessions allow participants to explore their creativity under the guidance of experts, learning traditional pottery techniques that have been passed down through the years. This hands-on experience is ideal for those seeking a deeper immersion into Salvadoran culture and Llorca's work.



In addition to the activities, the workshop also offers a tour of Fernando Llorca's life and work, providing a broader understanding of his impact on culture. Through exhibitions and storytelling, visitors can appreciate how Llorca's art has influenced the development of the country's artistic identity.





MULTICOLOR CERAMIC PIECE WITH TRADITIONAL SALVADORAN BIRD BY FERNANDO LLORT





Partial view of the cone of the San Salvador volcano seen from the observation platform.

## **EL BOQUERÓN NATIONAL PARK**

**El Boquerón National Park**, located just 30 minutes from **San Salvador**, is an ideal destination for nature and adventure lovers. This park is famous for its impressive volcano, known as **San Salvador Volcano**, which stands at 1,913 meters high. Its proximity to the capital makes it a perfect spot for day trips, where visitors can enjoy a fresh and relaxing environment away from the urban hustle and bustle.

The main attraction of **El Boquerón** is the volcano's crater, formed by historical eruptions that shaped this stunning natural landscape. The massive caldera, approximately 5 kilometers in diameter, offers spectacular panoramic views.

From the observation points, tourists can admire the grandeur of the crater as well as the lush vegetation surrounding it, which consists of pine forests and a variety of flora and fauna. Photography





**NEW SUSPENDED GLASS PLATFORM ALLOWS BETTER  
OBSERVATION OF THE SAN SALVADOR VOLCANO CRATER**





New glass platform suspended over the crater rim.

enthusiasts will have the opportunity to capture stunning images of this volcanic landscape.

One of the park's recent highlights is the newly inaugurated glass platform, which allows visitors to enjoy a unique observation experience.

This platform, suspended over the edge of the crater, provides an impressive perspective and an adrenaline rush

while surrounded by volcanic scenery. From there, visitors can appreciate the beautiful views of the surroundings and take unforgettable photos while experiencing the sensation of being suspended in the air. The platform also offers a clear view of the deep crater, enhancing the excitement of the visit.

The park features a well-marked network of scenic trails that invite hiking at various difficulty levels. Walking along





**DETAIL OF THE CENTER OF THE CRATER OF THE SAN SALVADOR VOLCANO**





Spectacular view of San Salvador, Lake Llopango and the 2,182-meter San Vicente volcano.

these beautiful paths is a rewarding experience, as visitors can observe the area's rich biodiversity, including colorful birds, butterflies, and other fascinating wildlife that inhabit the volcano's diverse ecosystem.

The variety of available routes allows visitors to choose a hike that perfectly suits their personal preferences, whether it's a short and easy trail or a longer, more challenging route.

Visitors will also find rest areas and picnic spots in the midst of nature. The cool climate and the sound of birds create an ideal environment for relaxation and enjoying a day outdoors.

Additionally, the park organizes engaging educational and guided activities for those who wish to learn more about the geology, history, and biodiversity of the area, further enriching the overall visitor experience.





**ABOVE: A QUIET AND SIMPLE ASCENT TRAIL TAKES US TO THE OBSERVATION PLATFORM.**

**LOWER: BEFORE THE ASCENT, THE EL BOQUERÓN NATIONAL PARK HAS A VOLCANO INTERPRETATION CENTRE.**

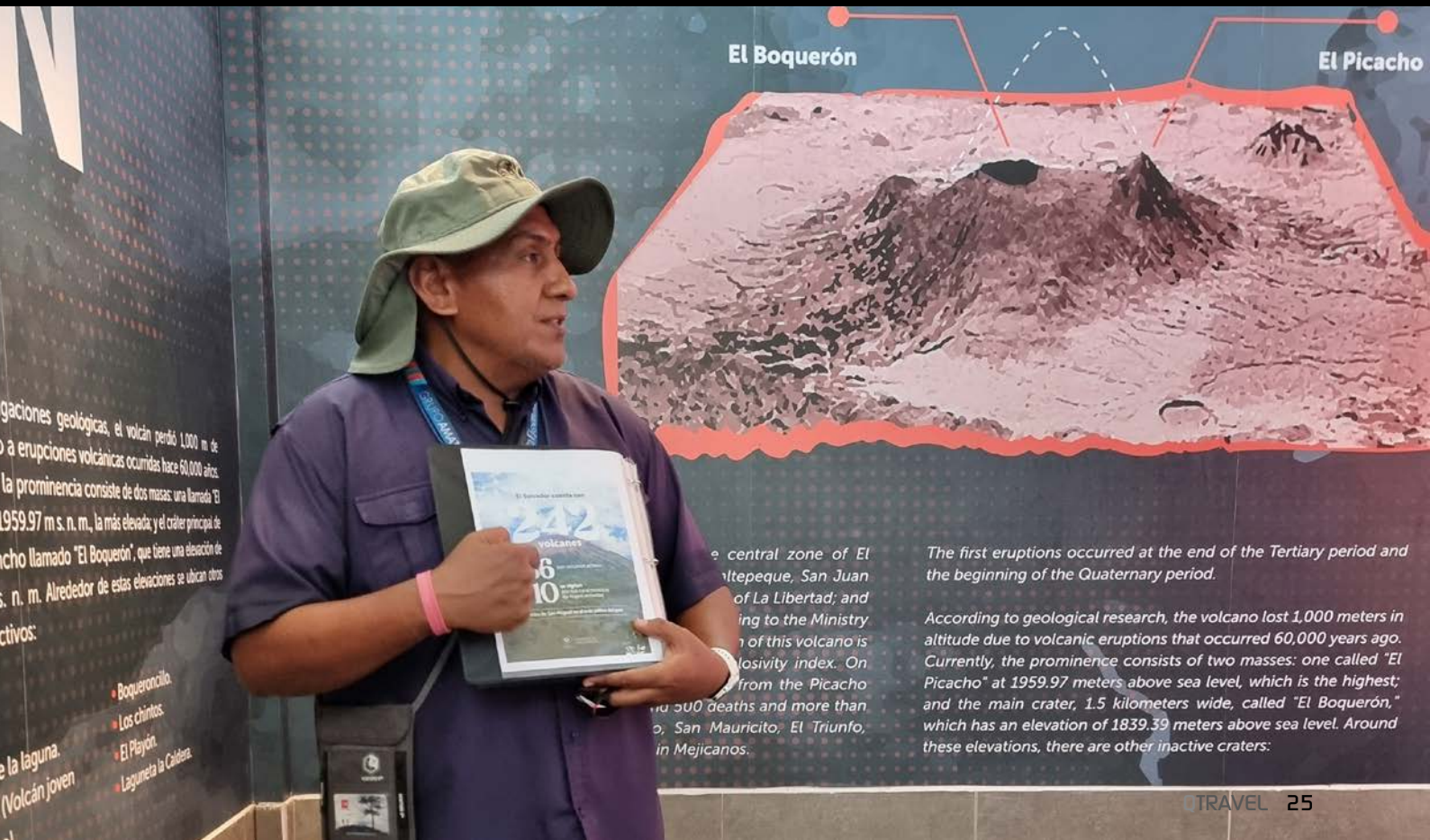






Photo: Ministerio de Turismo de El Salvador

Aerial view of the colonial town of Suchitoto at sunset.

## **SUCHITOTO: THE COLONIAL CHARM**

**Suchitoto**, one of the most beautiful colonial towns in **El Salvador**, is an excellent destination for those looking to immerse themselves in the country's rich colonial history.

Founded in the 18th century, this charming town is known for its well-preserved colonial architecture, cobblestone streets, and vibrant artistic atmosphere. Every

corner of Suchitoto tells a story, making it an ideal place to explore and enjoy its unique ambiance.

The cobblestone streets of **Suchitoto** are a delight for the senses. Strolling along them feels like traveling back in time; the colorful walls of the houses and the flowers adorning the façades create a picturesque and inviting environment. Each step reveals corners filled with history and charm, perfect for leisurely exploration at your own pace.





**MAGNIFICENT FACADE OF SANTA LUCIA CATHEDRAL IN SUCHITOTO AT SUNSET**





One of the most typical handcraft shops in Suchitoto is “Casa de la Abuela”.

One of the main attractions in the charming town is the **Cathedral of Santa Lucia**, a majestic building dating back to 1850. This impressive structure, which stands out from afar with its stunning neoclassical facade and beautiful main altar, is a symbol of the rich spirituality of the people of **Suchitoto**. Visitors can admire its remarkable architecture and participate in the vibrant masses and festivities held throughout the year.

Another point of interest is the **Municipal Market**, a vibrant place where fresh produce, local handcrafts, and typical delicacies can be found. Here, visitors can immerse themselves in the local culture while savoring traditional dishes such as the renowned pupusas, and especially enjoy the friendliness of the vendors, who proudly offer their products to foreigners with warm smiles. They take great pride in welcoming visitors.





**THE STREETS OF SUCHITOTO PRESERVE THEIR ORIGINAL COBBLE STONES AND THEIR TRADITIONAL COLONIAL FACADES WITH BARRED WINDOWS WITH POTS FILLED WITH FLOWERS**





The Spanish urban planning of Suchitoto, which dates back to 1528, is surprising.

The main square, surrounded by trees and benches, is the heart of Suchitoto, where everything happens and a place of passage wherever you go. Here, visitors can relax, engage in pleasant conversations with locals, or attend cultural events that frequently take place, especially on weekends. The square is an ideal spot to observe the daily life of the residents, the hustle and bustle, and to appreciate the unique architecture that surrounds it.

Lastly, the San Juan de Suchitoto River Port, located on the banks of the Lempa River, is not to be missed. This picturesque port offers activities such as boat rides, where visitors can explore the natural beauty of the area and observe the wildlife inhabiting the river. From here, one can enjoy panoramic views of the surrounding vegetation and the landscape of the region, making this place an ideal spot to relax and enjoy nature.





**ALL THE STREETS IN THE DELIMITED HISTORIC CENTER OF SUCHITOTO ARE PAVED AND PRESERVE THE ORIGINAL LAYOUT OF THE RECTANGULAR STREETS**





If there is one image that makes Casa 1800 recognizable, it is its wooden platform overlooking the Lempa River.

### **CASA 1800 SUCHITOTO**

Located on one of Suchitoto's traditionally colonial streets, **Casa 1800** is an architectural gem that combines history, comfort, and a spectacular natural setting. This exceptional boutique hotel, housed in a historic colonial home, offers a unique experience for those looking to explore the scenic beauty of the area, becoming a tourist attraction in its own right.

The facade of **Casa 1800** stands out with its elegant colonial design, featuring adobe walls and wooden balconies that evoke the essence of the 19th century. Upon entering, visitors are welcomed by a warm and inviting atmosphere where history merges with modern comfort. The well-maintained surroundings and the ambiance created inside are particularly striking. Each room has been thoughtfully decorated, preserving original elements that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the region.





Photo Casa 1800 Suchitoto



Photo Casa 1800 Suchitoto

Patio that gives access to the rooms of the colonial accommodation Casa 1800.

One of the highlights of **Casa 1800** is its privileged location, which offers stunning views of the Lempa River. From the hotel's balconies and terraces, guests can enjoy captivating landscapes where the river winds through lush green hills, creating a perfect scene for relaxation and contemplation of nature. The view transforms throughout the day, from the soft tones of dawn to the vibrant colors of sunset, providing a breathtaking visual spectacle.

The serene and picturesque environment of Suchitoto beautifully complements the unforgettable experience at **Casa 1800**. This charming town, known for its rich history and vibrant artistic scene, warmly invites visitors to explore its cobblestone streets, art galleries, and lively plazas. After a day of exciting exploration, returning to **Casa 1800** is a true delight, where the tranquility and beauty of the stunning surroundings offer a perfect refuge.





Cerro Verde observation point at sunrise.

## **CERRO VERDE NATIONAL PARK**

**Cerro Verde National Park**, located in the Apaneca-Illamatepeq mountain range, is one of the most impressive destinations in El Salvador. This park is renowned for its lush landscapes, rich biodiversity, and, above all, for housing three majestic volcanoes: **Izalco Volcano**, **Cerro Verde Volcano**, and **San Salvador Volcano**. Spanning approximately 2,000 hectares, the park offers a wide variety of

activities for nature lovers, adventurers, and photographers.

One of the main attractions of the park is its majestic volcanoes. From its viewpoints, visitors can admire the imposing **Izalco Volcano**, known as the *“Lighthouse of the Pacific”* due to its historical volcanic activity. This volcano, which first erupted in 1770, is a symbol of Salvadoran geology and offers the opportunity for excursions to its slopes,





Detail of the cone of the Izalco Volcano.

where its formations and breathtaking landscape can be observed.

Another notable volcano is the **San Salvador Volcano**. While not located within the park, trails from here lead to its summit, offering panoramic views that encompass much of the country and, on clear days, even the Pacific Ocean. The journey is a unique experience, surrounded by pine forests and a variety of exotic birds.

**Cerro Verde National Park** is also known for its diverse hiking trails, ranging from gentle walks to more challenging treks. The well-marked trails allow exploration of the area's rich biodiversity, where it is common to spot species such as hummingbirds, macaws, and deer.

Additionally, the cool and pleasant climate of the area, ranging between 15 and 25 degrees Celsius, provides a perfect escape from the coastal heat.





The summit of the Izalco Volcano is always smoking. It is most visible in the early morning.

The park's viewpoints are ideal for enjoying a picnic or simply relaxing while taking in the breathtaking majesty of the natural surroundings.

One of the great advantages of **Cerro Verde National Park** is the availability of charming hotels located at the summit, offering spectacular views of the park and its majestic volcanoes. These accommodations are designed to provide comfort, tranquility, and

a unique experience amidst nature. Staying overnight in these hotels allows guests to enjoy an impressive night landscape, where the starry sky and the sounds of nature create a magical, serene atmosphere. Waking up to the stunning view of the sunrise over the beautiful volcanoes is an unforgettable experience not to be missed. Additionally, these hotels often feature amenities such as guided tours, local cuisine, and cozy lounges to enhance your stay.





**STAYING IN CERRO VERDE ALLOWS YOU TO ENJOY THE SKY AND THE VOLCANO IN A DIFFERENT WAY**





Panoramic view of Lake Coatepeque where the magnitude of the volcanic caldera can be observed.

## COATEEQUE LAKE

**Lake Coatepeque**, located in the beautiful department of Santa Ana, is of volcanic origin and was formed thousands of years ago following a series of eruptions that created a large volcanic caldera measuring about 26 square kilometers. With an average depth of 115 meters and stunning turquoise waters, the lake is a popular destination for both tourists and locals alike.

Surrounded by majestic mountains and lush vegetation, **Lake Coatepeque** offers a variety of exciting recreational activities. Visitors can enjoy thrilling water sports such as kayaking, paddleboarding, swimming, and diving. Additionally, the lake is renowned for its excellent opportunities for sport fishing, particularly for species such as guapote and mojarra.

On the picturesque shores of the lake,





The shore of Lake Coatepeque is full of restaurants and piers.

numerous restaurants and cafés serve delicious typical Salvadoran dishes, along with cozy cabins and hotels for those wishing to extend their stay. The area also features several scenic hiking trails that allow exploration of the natural surroundings and provide breathtaking panoramic views of the lake and its vicinity.

At certain times of the year, the lake experiences a fascinating phenomenon known as “color change,” where its waters

take on an intense blue or emerald green hue, adding a special allure to this already captivating destination.

This place is not only a natural treasure but also a vibrant center for relaxation and entertainment that attracts visitors from around the world. Its stunning scenic beauty, combined with the numerous activities available, makes **Lake Coatepeque** a must-visit destination on our journey through the country.



**LAKE COATEPEQUE WAS FORMED IN THE CRATER OF A VOLCANIC CALDERA, THE RESULT OF A SERIES OF ERUPTIONS THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO. THE CALDERA, WITH A DIAMETER OF ABOUT 6 KILOMETERS, CONTAINS WATERS THAT REACH DEPTHS OF UP TO 115 METERS. THIS VOLCANIC ORIGIN NOT ONLY ENDOWS THE LAKE WITH UNIQUE BEAUTY, FEATURING CRYSTAL-CLEAR BLUE-GREEN WATERS, BUT ALSO PRESENTS INTRIGUING GEOLOGY WITH FORMATIONS OF LAVA AND IGNEOUS ROCKS.**











Detailed view of the archaeological excavations at Cerén.

## **JOYA DE CERÉN: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURE**

**Joya de Cerén**, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993, is a unique archaeological site in El Salvador. It offers visitors the opportunity to experience the daily life of an ancient Maya community. Known as the “Pompeii of the Americas” due to its excellent state of preservation after the eruption of the Loma Caldera volcano in the 6th century AD, **Joya de**

**Cerén** represents a Maya agricultural village buried by the volcanic eruption.

Unlike other ceremonial Maya sites, **Joya de Cerén** provides an intimate glimpse into the daily lives of its inhabitants, revealing their agricultural, architectural, and social practices. This site is crucial for understanding and studying the interaction of the Maya civilization with its natural environment and its adaptation to environmental conditions.

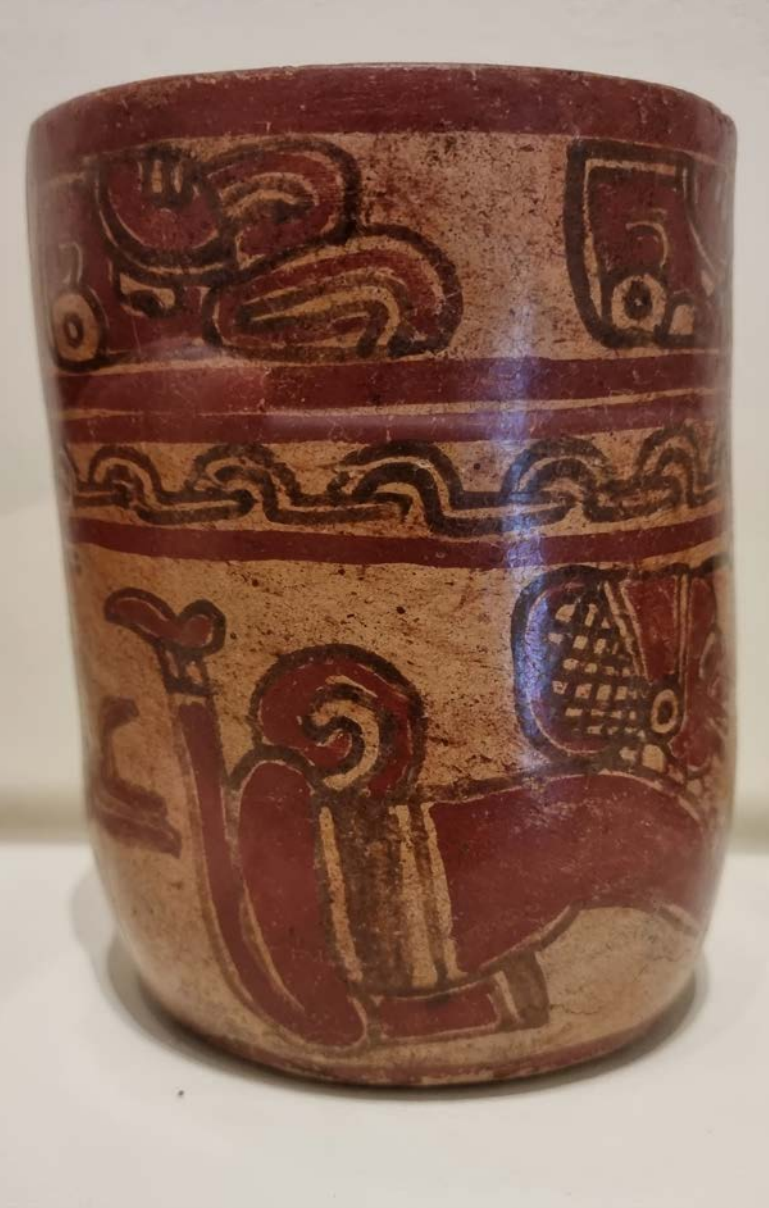




**ABOVE: REMAINS OF THE HOUSE OF THE ELDER. BELOW: ONE OF THE INTACT STRUCTURES THAT WAS BURIED BY THE ASH OF THE VOLCANO SEVERAL METERS UNDER THE GROUND.**







Priceless pieces from the ancient Mayans who lived in the "Joya de Cerén" site.

Upon visiting Joya de Cerén, we will find well-preserved structures such as residences, grain storage facilities, and communal spaces. The excavations have revealed tools, cooking utensils, and remnants of crops, allowing us to imagine the lives of its inhabitants. Among the most notable buildings are:

***The House of the Elders:*** A circular structure that beautifully exemplifies traditional Maya domestic architecture.

***The House of Flowers:*** Named for the frescoes on its walls, it showcases Maya artistic skill.

***The Storage Facilities:*** Spaces for agricultural products that provide insight into the community's economy and organization.

Before visiting the archaeological site, it is recommended to stop by the museum, which houses a collection of artifacts from the excavations and offers historical and cultural context about the village.



**MOST OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS ARE PROTECTED FROM THE OUTSIDE ENVIRONMENT BY A LARGE STRUCTURE.**







Central pyramid of the Tazumal Archaeological Park.

## **TAZUMAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK**

The Tazumal Archaeological Park is a historically and culturally significant site located in Chalchuapa, in the department of Santa Ana. This site offers a detailed insight into the **Maya civilization** that flourished in the region, featuring well-preserved structures and ruins from different pre-Columbian periods.

Tazumal means *“pyramid (or place)*

*where victims are burned”* in the indigenous Nahuatl language, part of the Uto-Aztecan linguistic family. This archaeological site, which is part of the Mesoamerican area, demonstrates the influence of **Maya culture in El Salvador**. The occupation of Tazumal dates back to the Preclassic period (approximately 500 B.C.), reached its peak during the Classic period (250-900 A.D.), and continued to be inhabited until the Postclassic period (900-1200 A.D.).





**IT IS AMAZING TO OBSERVE THE ADVANCED CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES THAT THE INHABITANTS OF TAZUMAL HAD, WHERE STONE WAS THEIR MAIN MATERIAL.**





Although the pyramids appear to be small, once you are inside them, you can see their magnitude.

One of the most notable places in Tazumal is the main pyramid, the largest and best-preserved structure at the site. This restored pyramid was used for religious ceremonies and administrative functions. It includes terraces and platforms that impress with their size and architecture, showcasing the ingenuity of the Maya civilization. It is an excellent example of monumental Maya architecture, displaying influences from both local and broader Maya regions. The pyramid also

provides insights into ritual practices and political power in Tazumal.

The **Ceremonial Plaza** is another prominent area, used by the ancient Maya for rituals and religious ceremonies. This plaza attests to the importance of ceremonial practices in their daily lives.

Like other Maya sites, **Tazumal** features a ball court, a common characteristic in Maya and Mesoamerican cities.





**CEREMONIAL CENTERS ALWAYS HAD SHELVES FOR RITUALS**





It is impressive to be able to explore every corner of Tazumal and admire its complex structures.

In Tazumal, the ball court is well-preserved and displays the typical features of these structures, including the court markers. The ball game had ritual and political significance.

Another defined area is the residential complex. This area includes several impressive residential structures that would have been inhabited by the site's elite. Built with durable stone, they exhibit advanced urban planning and provide

valuable information about the daily life, social organization, and residential practices of its inhabitants.

Although there is no clearly identified structure as an astronomical observatory, researchers suggest that certain architectural alignments and discovered artifacts may have served for important astronomical observations, which were fundamental to Maya culture.





**A LARGE STAIRCASE GIVES ACCESS TO THE TOP OF THE GREAT PYRAMID**





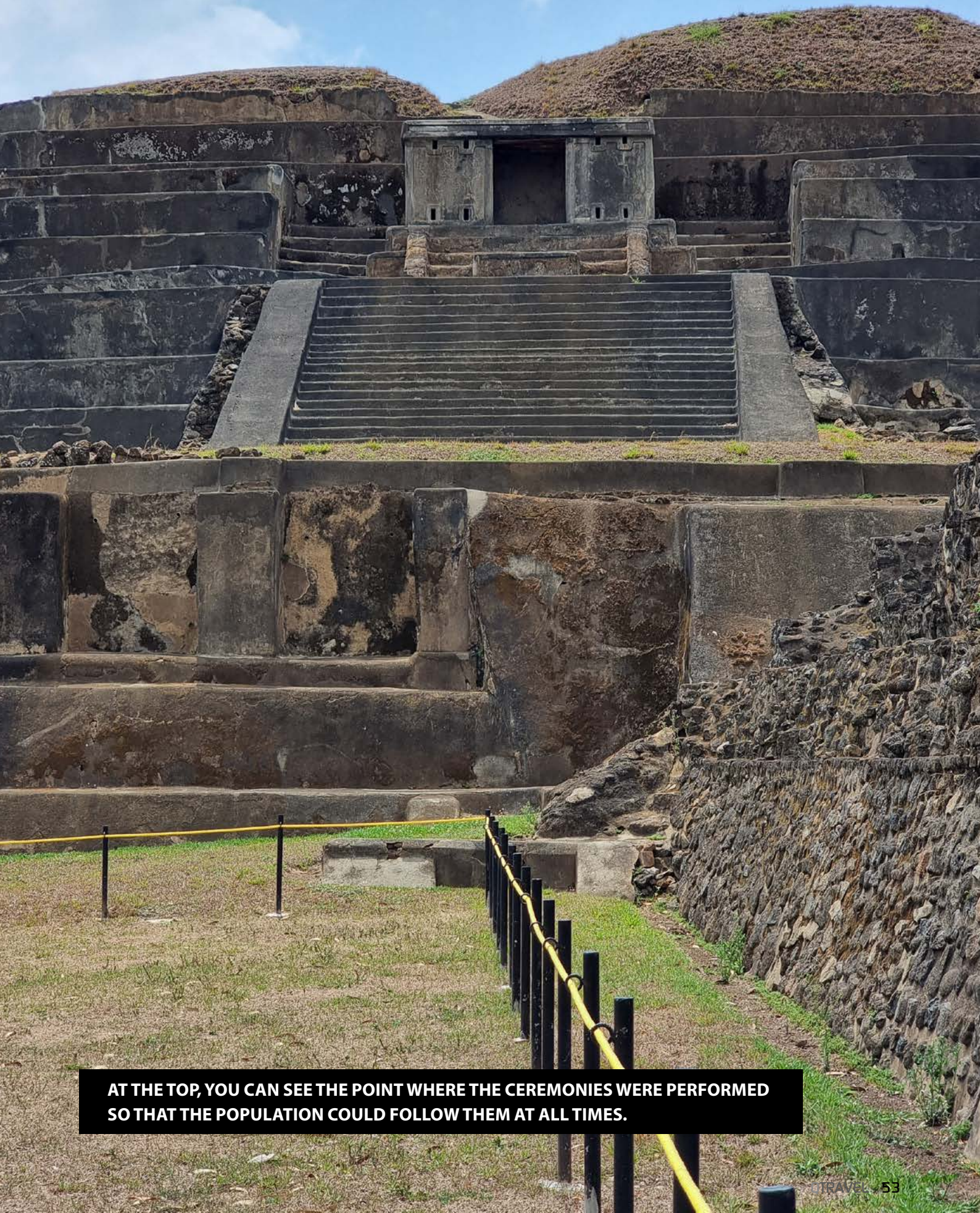
The passage of time has covered part of the archaeological site with native vegetation.

The park also features an informative archaeological museum that houses numerous artifacts discovered at the site. These artifacts offer a unique perspective on the daily life, beliefs, and traditions of the ancient Maya civilization that once inhabited the region.

The **Tazumal Archaeological Park** is a remarkable historical and cultural treasure for El Salvador. The preservation and restoration of the site

allow visitors to deeply appreciate the greatness of the Maya civilization and its enduring influence in this region. Its impressive structures and artifacts provide a fascinating window into the past, enabling visitors and scholars to understand the rich heritage of the Maya civilization. Each area offers a crucial piece of the puzzle, helping archaeologists reconstruct the lives, beliefs, and skills of the ancient inhabitants of Tazumal.





**AT THE TOP, YOU CAN SEE THE POINT WHERE THE CEREMONIES WERE PERFORMED SO THAT THE POPULATION COULD FOLLOW THEM AT ALL TIMES.**





The Central Plaza is presided over by the pyramid called "Structure P7".

## **CIHUATÁN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK**

The **Cihuatán Archaeological Park** is one of the most significant archaeological sites in the country, located in the San Salvador department, near the municipality of Aguilares. This site offers a glimpse into the pre-Hispanic life and culture of the region, with evidence of occupation dating back to the Early Postclassic period (900-1200 A.D.). **Cihuatán** is known for its large structures and urban planning, which

demonstrate a high level of organization and cultural development.

The name "*Cihuatán*" comes from Nahuatl and means "*Place of the Woman*" or "*City of Women.*" It is believed that this site was an important ceremonial, administrative, and residential center. Its foundation is associated with the post-Maya peoples who settled in the region after the collapse of the great Maya cities of the Late Classic period.





The remains of some of the structures of the Acropolis are still visible.

The **Acropolis of Cihuatán** is one of the most prominent structures at the site. Situated in an elevated position, **the Acropolis** includes several platforms and structures that likely served as residences and temples for the ruling elite. The location and design of **the Acropolis** reflect the importance of social hierarchy and political power in **Cihuatán**.

The **Central Plaza (Plaza Sol)** is a spacious open area surrounded by significant

structures. This plaza would have been the heart of public and ceremonial life in **Cihuatán**, used for large events, markets, and religious ceremonies. Its size and design suggest careful urban planning.

Like other significant Mesoamerican sites, **Cihuatán** features a ball court, which was an integral part of ceremonial and social life. The ancient ball game had deep religious and political implications, and the presence





Side of the pyramid still not fully excavated.

of a well-preserved court in **Cihuatán** underscores its cultural importance and historical significance.

The so-called “**Structure P-7**” is one of the most imposing ancient pyramids at the site. Although it has not been completely excavated, it is believed that this pyramid served as an important ceremonial center. Its impressive size and design reflect the architectural influences of other cultures.

In addition to the ceremonial structures, **Cihuatán** contains numerous well-preserved residential buildings that provide valuable insight into the daily lives of its inhabitants. These structures include patios, platforms, and staircases adorned with intricate reliefs and sculptures, varying in size and complexity, which suggest a society with clear social stratification. They also exhibit a high level of artistic detail and the importance of decoration in Maya architecture at **Cihuatán**.





Remains of the Temple of the Idols with the northern Ball Game area.

This archaeological park is crucial for understanding the rich pre-Hispanic history of **El Salvador** and the Mesoamerican region. The preservation of its structures and artifacts allows both visitors and scholars to explore the complexities of a civilization that played a significant role in regional history. The site has been equipped with well-maintained pathways and informative signage, facilitating exploration and understanding for all visitors.

Furthermore, **Cihuatán** is a captivating place of interest not only for archaeologists and history students but also for curious tourists who wish to learn more about El Salvador's rich cultural heritage. From its impressive **Acropolis area** to the vibrant **Central Plaza** and the intriguing **Ball Game zone**, every corner of **Cihuatán** narrates a part of the story of its ancient inhabitants, showcasing a fascinating and complex past.





Reception and interpretation centre of Walter Thilo Deininger Park.

## **PARQUE WALTER THILO DEININGER: A NATURAL OASIS IN EL SALVADOR**

If you are a lover of nature and adventure, the **Walter Thilo Deininger Park** is a unique and original place that you cannot miss. Located in the heart of the La Libertad department, just 40 kilometers southwest of **San Salvador** and near the vibrant city of La Libertad, this park is a refuge of biodiversity that invites you to explore its wonders.

Named in honor of **Walter Thilo Deininger**, a German philanthropist who dreamed of conserving the natural environment he was passionate about, this park was inaugurated in 1980 and spans an impressive 732 hectares of dry tropical forest. Managed by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, it is a true ecological treasure and natural reserve that promises adventures and learning opportunities for all who visit.





Aerial trails between trees and zip lines are activities highly appreciated by visitors.

Some of the highlighted activities you can enjoy include:

- **Hiking:** With a network of trails that delve into various ecosystems, the park offers you the opportunity to discover its unique flora and fauna. From gentle walks for beginners to challenging routes for the more experienced, there is a trail for every level. The paths that lead to the viewpoints overlooking the beaches are particularly interesting.

- **Birdwatching:** If you are truly passionate about ornithology, this beautiful park is the perfect place for you. The rich avifauna includes colorful toucans, majestic motmots, and a variety of raptors, making it a dream destination for avid birdwatchers.

- **Camping:** For a truly immersive and unforgettable experience, the park has designated camping areas where you can sleep comfortably under the stars,





In the middle of a zipline descent in the park's forest.

surrounded by the enchanting sounds of wildlife and the serenity of the forest. It is the perfect way to disconnect and recharge your spirit.

- **Family Picnics:** Share a fun and relaxing day outdoors in the picnic areas, equipped with sturdy tables and grills. Enjoy a delicious lunch surrounded by the natural beauty of the park, creating unforgettable memories with your loved ones and friends.

- **Educational Programs:** Take advantage of guided tours and educational activities that allow you to learn about the park's biodiversity and the importance of conservation. This is perfect for curious travelers of all ages.

With its focus on education, the park fosters awareness about the importance of preserving our ecosystems and promotes sustainable practices that benefit everyone.





Another activity is assisted vertical climbing.

The park allows us to connect with nature, improving both physical and mental health, offering an ideal space to escape the daily hustle and bustle while enjoying outdoor activities.

The park is a key destination for ecotourism in the area, attracting active visitors interested in nature. A visit not only enriches our journey to **El Salvador** but also contributes to the local economy and the conservation of the environment.







View from inside the "El Encanto" cave.

### **VISIT TO THE GREAT CAVE**

The Great Cave, also known as *Cueva El Encanto*, is one of the most fascinating and mysterious attractions in the park. This remarkable cave is a stunning natural geological formation that has captivated the attention of numerous explorers, scientists, and tourists alike due to its impressive structure and the incredible beauty of its surrounding environment. It is a large natural cavity

of volcanic origin, formed by processes of erosion and dissolution of limestone and andesite rocks that are typical of the region.

Its unique structure includes various chambers and corridors that extend approximately 200 meters in length. The walls of the cave are beautifully adorned with stalactites and stalagmites, resulting from the slow precipitation of calcium carbonate. The interior temperature of





The access, although simple, appears inaccessible and very hidden.

the cave remains consistently between 18 and 22 degrees Celsius, creating a unique microclimate that favors the presence of various species of flora and fauna. The cave is also surrounded by dense, lush vegetation, which adds an air of mystery and adventure to its exploration. The entrance to the cave is wide and inviting, allowing easy access for all visitors.

The cave serves as a vital refuge for

a variety of bat species, making it an important ecosystem for studying and understanding local biodiversity. At least five different species of bats have been recorded in this remarkable habitat, which play a crucial role in pollination and insect control in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the presence of colorful lichens and vibrant mosses on the walls of the cave indicates a relatively pure and unpolluted environment, ideal for these species to thrive.





Signs before entering the cave indicate what type of inhabitants we will find.

Access to **Cueva El Encanto** is conveniently available via well-marked trails within the beautiful park. Visitors can enjoy a pleasant hike of approximately 30 minutes from the park's entrance to the captivating cave itself. The cave has become a popular destination for ecotourism, attracting both dedicated researchers and curious tourists who wish to explore its stunning natural beauty and unique geological features.

In addition to its significant natural value, **Cueva El Encanto** holds deep cultural significance for local communities, who consider it a sacred place of connection with nature and their rich heritage. The park offers engaging educational programs about environmental conservation, allowing visitors and school groups to better understand the importance of preserving these fragile ecosystems for future generations.





**THE CENTRAL VAULT OF THE "EL CANTO" CAVE HAS A UNIQUE SPECIAL PLACE THAT INVITES MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**





The town of El Tunco reaches the beach itself, where we find bars and restaurants for surfers.

## **PLAYA EL TUNCO: SURF PARADISE**

If you're looking for a beach getaway that combines breathtaking landscapes, rich culture, and the famous friendly surfing community of El Salvador, **Playa El Tunco** is the perfect place for you. Located on the Pacific coast, just 45 minutes from San Salvador, this small coastal gem has gained popularity among surfers from all over the world due to its perfect waves, surf-oriented infrastructure, and laid-back atmosphere.

With a mix of right and left breaks, the beautiful beach offers ideal conditions for both beginners and experienced surfers alike. The waves are typically consistent throughout the entire year, but they are especially favorable between March and November. If you're new to surfing, don't worry: there are several surf schools where you can take lessons from professional instructors who will help you get up on the board in no time at all.





STREETS OF THE VILLAGE OF "EL TUNCO", WHERE THE INFLUENCE OF THE SURFER CULTURE IS PALPABLE IN EVERY CORNER





Enjoying the waves of El Tunco, internationally recognized by surfers.

**Playa El Tunco** features dark sand formed by the eruption of nearby volcanoes and boasts an impressive landscape where rocky cliffs dramatically meet the ocean. The sunsets are spectacular, transforming the sky into a vibrant palette of colors at the end of each beautiful day. Don't forget to bring your camera to capture those truly magical moments with friends and family.

The **town of El Tunco** is a lively and vibrant place where surf culture

beautifully intertwines with the warmth and friendliness of its people. The streets are dotted with cozy shops, local flavor restaurants, and colorful hostels that create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere for visitors. Enjoy delicious, fresh ceviche or relax with a refreshing tropical cocktail while listening to live music at one of the local bars or cafes.

The surfing community is very tight-knit, creating a welcoming and fun environment





El Tunco beach is characterized by being made of stone of volcanic origin.

for everyone. Here, surfers from all over the world come together to share their stories, make new friends, and enjoy their passion for this exhilarating sport. Moreover, the relaxed atmosphere makes **El Tunco** perfect for those looking to disconnect and enjoy a vacation filled with fun, adventure, and unforgettable experiences.

**El Tunco** is part of a larger area known as **Surf City**, which encompasses several nearby beaches, each with its

own unique charm and fascinating features. From the calm waters of **Playa La Libertad** to the exciting waves of **Playa El Zonte**, **Surf City** is an idyllic destination for passionate surf enthusiasts. Additionally, **Surf City** not only focuses on surfing but also actively promotes ecotourism and sustainability. Here, you will find exciting surf festivals, beach cleanup events, and cultural activities that celebrate El Salvador's rich heritage and vibrant traditions.





# MIRADAS VIAJERAS TV

## MAGAZINE



### EL PRIMER PROGRAMA DE TURISMO DE LA TELEVISIÓN EN ESPAÑA

Dirigido y presentado por Fernando Valmaseda. Dos horas de emociones, de experiencias, de sensaciones y de destinos nacionales e internacionales, de pueblos, gastronomía, escapadas y propuestas, de análisis de la actualidad y de entrevistas a los grandes protagonistas del sector.

