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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES



TOURIST SERVICE SALVADORAN IDENTITY CULTURAL TOURS
SERVICIO TURÍSTICO IDENTIDAD SALVADOREÑA Y TOURS CULTURALES

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Abstract

This academic project presents the design of a virtual tourism service called *Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours*, focused on promoting educational and cultural tourism in the Historic Center of San Salvador. The proposal aims to highlight Salvadoran identity, cultural heritage, and historical significance through guided tours designed for students, educational institutions, and national and international tourists interested in learning-based travel experiences. The study analyzes the theoretical foundations of tourism, its historical development in El Salvador, and the importance of sustainable tourism as a tool for social, cultural, and economic development. Additionally, it examines the role of entrepreneurship in tourism services and its contribution to local development. The project includes a detailed description of the tourist route, itinerary, service attributes, target market, and sustainability strategies. Through this proposal, the study seeks to encourage cultural awareness, strengthen national identity, and promote responsible tourism practices while offering an innovative educational tourism alternative that supports the preservation of the country's cultural heritage.

Keywords: educational tourism, cultural tourism, Salvadoran identity, sustainable tourism, entrepreneurship, Historic Center of San Salvador

Resumen

Este proyecto académico presenta el diseño de un servicio de turismo virtual denominado « *Servicio Turístico Identidad Salvadoreña Y Tours Culturales* », centrado en la promoción del turismo educativo y cultural en el centro histórico de San Salvador. La propuesta tiene como objetivo destacar la identidad salvadoreña, el patrimonio cultural y la importancia

histórica a través de visitas guiadas diseñadas para estudiantes, instituciones educativas y turistas nacionales e internacionales interesados en experiencias de viaje basadas en el aprendizaje. El estudio analiza los fundamentos teóricos del turismo, su desarrollo histórico en El Salvador y la importancia del turismo sostenible como herramienta para el desarrollo social, cultural y económico. Además, examina el papel del emprendimiento en los servicios turísticos y su contribución al desarrollo local. El proyecto incluye una descripción detallada de la ruta turística, el itinerario, las características de los servicios, el mercado objetivo y las estrategias de sostenibilidad. A través de esta propuesta, el estudio busca fomentar la conciencia cultural, fortalecer la identidad nacional y promover prácticas turísticas responsables, al tiempo que ofrece una alternativa innovadora de turismo educativo que apoya la preservación del patrimonio cultural del país.

Palabras clave: turismo educativo, turismo cultural, identidad salvadoreña, turismo sostenible, emprendimiento, Centro Histórico de San Salvador.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is defined as the social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that arises when people move from their everyday space to another place, whether for personal, professional, or even business reasons (Turismo, O., s.f.).

Tourism has become a source of economic income, in which many people try to offer different tourist services to which national and international people are often attracted, thus generating a monetary income for the country and, at the same time, being a source of employment. This project seeks to promote educational tourism in El Salvador, with the aim of offering meaningful experiences that encourage knowledge, appreciation of historical and cultural heritage, and respect for the country's natural resources, including lesser-known sites that hold high heritage value.

Chapter I of this work consists of the objectives, both general and specific. It also includes the justification, which explains the importance of our tourism service and the main reason why an educational tourism service is an excellent option for academic tourists and students who wish to have an enriching experience based on knowledge of the history, culture, and nature of the area. Next, the name of our service is presented, along with the available contact methods, which are managed virtually through digital platforms. The educational route, service attributes, and the type of tourism offered are also explained.

Finally, it details how various strategies for human development and sustainability will be applied within the framework of our tourism activities.

CHAPTER I:
TOURIST SERVICE PROFILE

Objectives

General objective

Offer educational tourism experiences aimed at academic institutions with the purpose of fostering knowledge and appreciation of the history, culture, and natural resources of El Salvador, including little-known sites with significant heritage value.

Specific objectives

- Design educational tourism itineraries that integrate historical, cultural, and environmental content tailored to the educational levels of participating institutions.
- Establish partnerships with local communities and heritage experts to promote little-known sites of high cultural and natural value
- Create tourist routes where participants can dynamically appreciate the contrast between the cultural and historical aspects of the historic center and its current modern features.

JUSTIFICATION

Given the recent renovation of the historic center and the priority focus given to this area of the country, the successful implementation of tour operator focused on this territory could be a viable alternative in every sense, encompassing both the historic and modern areas currently being promoted, even taking advantage of new projects currently underway.

Therefore, for all of this and other opportunities that will be covered later, this project can be considered of great importance to all those currently visiting the capital.

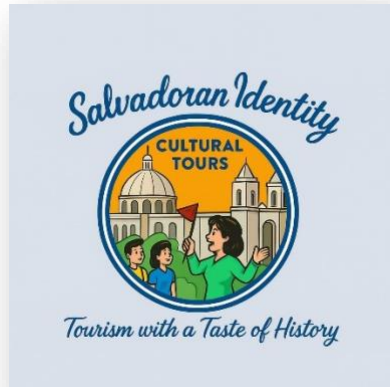
Educational tourism responds to the growing need for meaningful experiences that combine learning with the discovery of the country's cultural and natural heritage. This modality allows both students and academic tourists to engage with the history, culture, and environmental resources of El Salvador in an experiential and transformative way.

For this reason, the main objective of our service has been chosen as the development of educational routes that promote the appreciation of El Salvador's heritage. Through these experiences, we seek to foster a deeper connection with the country's historical, cultural, and natural sites, especially those that are lesser-known but hold high heritage value.

The objective of this service is to offer educational tours specially designed for academic institutions, incorporating historical, cultural, and environmental content appropriate to each educational level. At the same time, it aims to involve local communities and heritage experts, which strengthens the sense of belonging and sustainable development in each visited area. Finally, this service represents an opportunity to diversify the country's tourism offerings, promote the knowledge and conservation of El Salvador's

heritage, raise environmental awareness, and contribute to the economic, educational, and cultural development of the communities involved.

Description of the Tourist Service



Salvadoran identity cultural tours is a virtual tour operator that offers clients various tours around the historic center of San Salvador, showcasing both the told and untold history of the capital. Founded in 2025 by entrepreneurs Katheryn Alfaro, María Magdalena Guevara, and Joyce Velasco—who also work as certified tour guides—the company organizes separate groups to show national and international tourists,

as well as students interested in the history of these sites, the different stages the capital of El Salvador has endured. Some tours focus on important sites such as the Cathedral of San Salvador, which is known for its magnificent construction. In 1951, the cathedral suffered a devastating fire that destroyed many religious treasures and left a deep sorrow among the Salvadoran population. Although such stories are rarely remembered due to their lack of appeal, Salvadoran identity cultural tours aims to keep them alive as they form the foundation on which the city stands today. The company's purpose is to remind new generations and show foreigners that El Salvador was built gradually, and that every step must be remembered— since those who do not know their history are condemned to repeat it.

Location: Salvadoran identity cultural tours does not have a physical office, as it operates virtually. We believe this mode of operation makes it easier to connect with our clients from

anywhere. Our tours mainly take place in the Historic Center of San Salvador, El Salvador, an area that includes iconic sites such as the Metropolitan Cathedral, Plaza Libertad, the National Theater, and other important historical landmarks within the downtown district of the capital.

Clients can learn about and book our services through our social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, where we also share historical content and detailed information about the different routes we offer.



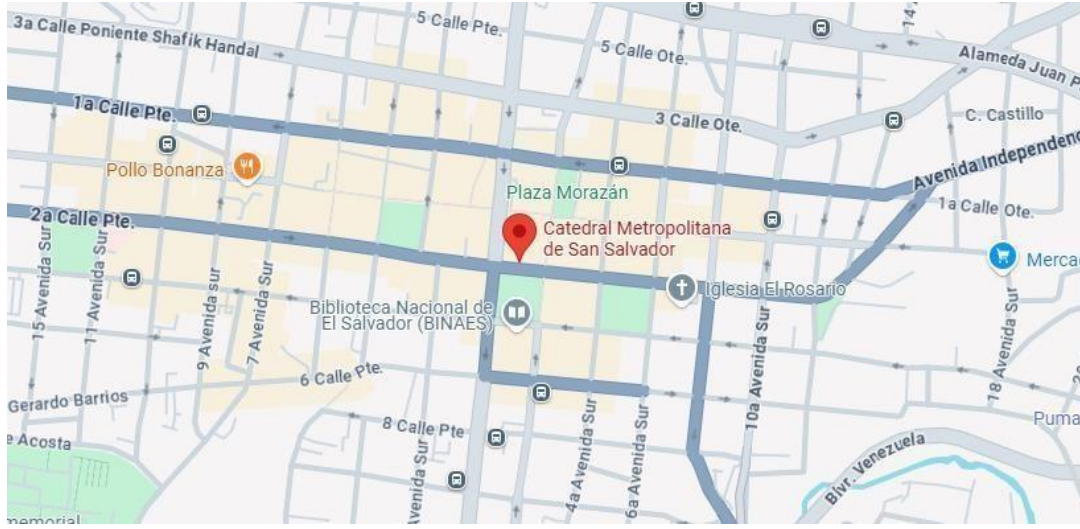
Photo taken from the Wikipedia.org page: “Panoramic view of the Historic Center of San Salvador”.

Tourist route

Our tours take place mainly in the Historic Center of San Salvador, focusing on iconic sites such as the Metropolitan Cathedral, Plaza Libertad and the National Theater, among other important historical landmarks. During the tours, we make planned stops at local markets and craft stalls, giving tourists the opportunity to buy products directly from local vendors. This not only enriches the cultural experience but also supports the economy of the historic district and its small businesses.

The meeting point is flexible and coordinated virtually according to each client's needs, ensuring easy access for both national and international tourists. The tours are led by our certified experts, who share not only well-known stories but also lesser-known accounts about the rich history of the city. The route is designed to offer a meaningful connection with San Salvador's heritage, while promoting sustainable tourism that benefits the local community.





Map location taken from Google Maps: "Catedral Metropolitana de San Salvador and its surroundings.

Itinerary: San Salvador Historic Center Experience

Operator: Salvadoran identity cultural tours

Tour Type: Cultural & Heritage

Walking Tour Duration: Approx. 3.5 to 4 hours

Availability: Daily (with prior reservation) Group Size: 2 to 15 people

Language: Spanish / English/ French

Meeting Point: Coordinated virtually according to client's convenience

Guide: Certified local guide

Sample Itinerary

08:45 a.m. – Welcome & Orientation

Meeting with the guide at the pre-arranged location. Quick introduction, safety recommendations, and overview of the route.

09:00 a.m. – Visit to the Metropolitan Cathedral

Learn about the Cathedral's architecture, its role in El Salvador's history.

09:30 a.m. – Stop at Plaza Libertad

Explore one of the city's most symbolic spaces, its monuments, and the history behind the square.

10:00 a.m. – Guided Walk to the National Theater

Exterior and interior visit (subject to access), with commentary on its neoclassical design and cultural legacy.

10:45 a.m. – Visit to Local Markets and Craft Stalls

Stop at a nearby artisan area or traditional market. Tourists can interact with local vendors and purchase handmade products. This supports the local economy and adds an authentic cultural touch.

11:30 a.m. – Hidden Stories & Urban Art Tour

Walk through lesser-known alleys and murals while listening to lesser-known stories from the guide.

12:15 p.m. – End of Tour & Recommendations

Closing at a local café or shaded plaza with optional drink/snack (not included). The guide offers suggestions for lunch spots, museums, or other places nearby for those who wish to continue exploring on their own



Service Attributes

Salvadoran identity cultural tours stand out mainly for offering educational guided tours in the historic center of San Salvador, aimed at students, as well as national and international tourists interested in learning both the well-known and hidden history of the capital. Our service is designed for school groups at various educational levels and for academic tourists ranging in age from 6 to 60 years old.

Committed to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, we provide educational materials and eco-friendly brochures, avoiding the use of plastics and disposable materials during the visits. In addition, we have certified guides who offer detailed and group-adapted information, ensuring a rich and educational experience.

During the tours, we include spaces for interactive activities and educational talks about the importance of preserving historical and cultural heritage, as well as respecting El Salvador's environmental resources. To support understanding for foreign visitors, interpreters in English and French are available upon request, ensuring an accessible and inclusive experience for everyone.

Some attributes that distinguish our service are:

Stick to the itinerary:

During the trip, tourists enjoy a pleasant atmosphere, and a planned itinerary is essential to enjoy the different sites in the historic center. Each site offers specific activities and entry times, so it's important to have a prepared itinerary.

- **Safety and reliability:**

Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours will offer security throughout the trip. The country's newly established security has made tourism much more viable. Therefore, Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours will strengthen security so that our tourists have the confidence to see, touch, and express their feelings, of course with all due respect for Salvadoran culture.

- **Service Availability:**

Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours will offer a comprehensive service to tourists: service hours, itineraries, and tour routes will be provided. During peak tourist season, spots will be available to reserve the service on a specific day. These types of events will be promoted on our social media channels, which will provide complete and reliable information.

- **Efficient logistics management:**

By promoting our company's services, we are ready to offer you the full service and coordinate the best experience. We will offer transportation to reach the historic center. We will also send you, via social media, the itinerary chosen by tourists so you can coordinate with your hotels. We will also offer short excursions to other sites outside the historic center as an extra service for your enjoyment.

- **Legality and Certifications:**

To offer a complete and safe service, Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours has

legal certifications from the Ministry of Tourism, endorsing it as a solid company. The staff, especially the tour guides, who founded the company, are also certified as qualified guides by the Salvadoran government and have French and English language degrees with a specialty in tourism. The team is highly trained to offer the best experience to our foreign and national tourists.

Typology of the service

Salvadoran identity cultural tours are focused on educational tourism, which aims to offer meaningful experiences that combine learning with the discovery of El Salvador's cultural and natural heritage, thus promoting the appreciation and preservation of these resources.

In addition, we believe it will be more appealing to students, as well as national and international tourists who are looking for an enriching and different experience one that brings them closer to the country's history and culture in an immersive and responsible way.

According to the World Tourism Organization (OMT, 2023), educational tourism 'aims to promote knowledge and the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, while improving the well-being of local communities. In other words, educational tourism involves activities designed to respect and value the historical and environmental context, fostering a deep connection with the places visited.

The historic center of San Salvador is a place full of history, with monuments and iconic sites that reflect the different stages the capital has gone through. Emphasis is placed on the importance of preserving these spaces as a fundamental part of national

identity, as this heritage is a key attraction for tourists and students interested in discovering the cultural and natural richness of our country.



Application of strategy for human development and sustainability

According to various studies on cultural tourism, the preservation of historical and cultural heritage is fundamental for the sustainable development of tourism, as it promotes local identity and contributes to the social and economic well-being of communities. (Source: Central American Institute of Cultural Tourism, 2023)

Our company, Salvadoran identity cultural tours, aims to incorporate strategies that create a positive impact not only on our visitors but also to promote a service that supports the conservation of historical heritage and the social and economic development of El Salvador. Therefore, three key strategies were considered for human development and sustainability:

Heritage Preservation:

Salvadoran identity cultural tours is committed to raising awareness among our clients about the importance of conserving the historic sites in downtown San Salvador, such as the Cathedral and other iconic places. This involves preventing damage to the structures, fostering respect for cultural assets, and promoting care for the urban environment during the tours. Additionally, we provide educational materials that inform about the history and significance of these sites, organizing talks and interactive activities that strengthen awareness about the importance of cultural heritage.

Social Awareness:

Social development is a priority for our company. Therefore, we promote the inclusion of school groups and tourists of various ages, encouraging learning and respect for Salvadoran history and culture. Likewise, we seek to generate decent jobs for local guides, supporting the economy and well-being of communities connected to cultural tourism.

Economic and Environmental Sustainability:

Salvadoran identity cultural tours are committed to responsible tourism that minimizes environmental impact in the historic center. To achieve this, we promote the use of recyclable and eco- friendly materials during visits, avoid the use of disposable plastics, and encourage practices that contribute to the cleanliness and preservation of public spaces. In this way, we ensure that cultural tourism develops sustainably, benefiting both visitors and the local community as well as the historic heritage.

CHAPTER II

“ELEMENTS FOR THE DESIGN OF THE TOURISM PRODUCT”

2.1 TOURISM HISTORY AROUND THE WORLD



Tourism, or in this case, the origin of tourism itself, emerged in the 19th century as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, with trips primarily intended for leisure, rest, culture, health, business, or family relationships.

In the early 1930s, Arthur Bormann, one of the first theorists of the German School of Tourism Studies, defined tourism as the set of trips made for pleasure, business, and other similar reasons, during which the absence from one's usual residence is temporary. Trips made to travel to a workplace are not considered tourism. According to the UNWTO, a visitor (domestic, inbound, or outbound) is classified as a tourist (or overnight visitor) if their trip includes an overnight stay, or as a day visitor (or day tripper) otherwise. That is, a day tripper is a person who visits a destination but does not spend the night there.

Pioneering tourism theorists Walter Hunziker and Kurt Krapf stated in 1942 that "Tourism is the set of relationships and phenomena produced by the movement and stay of people away from their homes, as long as such movement and stay are not motivated by profit." Both Hunziker and Krapf came from the St. Gallen School (Switzerland), which proposed the idea of studying tourism as a mechanism centered on the socioeconomic reproduction of a society. Tourist consumption reflects the cultural values of a society.

The first modern tourist trip, as we know it today, was organized by Thomas Cook in 1841. He chartered a train to take 500 people to an anti-alcohol conference in Loughborough, England. Although this trip was a one-time event, Cook saw the potential of package tours and founded a travel agency, the first in history, Thomas Cook & Son.

The development of tourism:



- Antiquity:

Travel existed in ancient times for religious reasons (pilgrimages, temples) or commercial reasons (trade routes, Olympic Games in Greece).

- Middle Ages:

The crusades and pilgrimages, such as the one to Mecca, also encouraged travel.

- Modern Age:

The appearance of inns and hotels in the 17th century marked a breakthrough, but the real revolution came with industrialization and the railroad in the 19th century.

- 20th and 21st centuries:

The arrival of automobiles, airplanes, and large ships, along with telecommunications, further boosted tourism, turning it into a global industry.

Tourism has become one of the main activities of our economy. And, in addition to being a very important factor in it, providing jobs for millions of people (directly or indirectly) and generating significant economic revenues each year, it has crept into most homes as another form of leisure activity. Something that has always been linked to our history.

2.2 HISTORY OF TOURISM IN EL SALVADOR



The first initiative to promote tourism in El Salvador took place in 1924, under the administration of President Alfonso Quiñónez Molina, with the creation of the Tourism and Agricultural and Industrial Promotion Board, which aimed to promote domestic and international tourism. In 1946, the National Department of Tourism was established as a branch of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The 1960s were seen as the modern era of tourism development in El Salvador; tourism was systematically considered, and several official bodies were created to promote it. The context in which tourism took off during this decade was one of relative economic prosperity for the country. The factors that influenced El Salvador's greater consideration of tourism beginning in the 1960s were the modernization of transportation, the

expansion of the road infrastructure, and the increase in flights to El Salvador with the construction of the Ilopango International Airport. Furthermore, the emergence of so-called mass tourism, which also reached Central America to a minimal extent, took place. Thus, in 1961, the Salvadoran Tourism Institute (ISTU) was created as a government agency managing tourism. Its main responsibilities were:

- Development of projects for the promotion and development of the tourism industry.
- Regulation of tourism companies.
- Management of tourism assets.
- Presentation of regular reports on the sector's performance.



Beginning in 1968, there was greater evidence of tourism in El Salvador, as the ISTU began publishing statistical bulletins indicating the number of tourists entering the country. It could be said that demand was accentuated in three main markets: the regional market, the United States, and Mexico. However, tourism declined in 1969 due to the war between El Salvador and Honduras, affecting regional stability. The development of tourism in El Salvador in the 1970s was driven by the construction of hotels such as the Camino Real, the Ritz, the

Alameda, and the Terraza in San Salvador, the Hotel de Montaña in El Cerro Verde, and hotels in the Jaltepeque Estuary (Pacific Paradise and the Izalco Cabaña Club) in the interior of the country. Similarly, construction began on the Tesoro Beach Hotel (Jaltepeque Estuary), which is well-known and visited today. Currently, all hotels are open except the Ritz. In 1975, the number of tourists increased by more than 200,000, reaching a total of 300,000. This increase coincided with the Miss Universe pageant that year in El Salvador. The boom remained stable until the late 1970s. However, the outbreak of the war marked the decline of what seemed like a profitable new sector for El Salvador, dropping below 100,000 tourists. The figures indicate that the country had regressed 15 years by the late 1970s. During the period from 1979 to 1990, the flow of visitors to the country remained constant; the majority were foreign journalists or nongovernmental institutions working with Salvadoran society.

- **Tourism during the armed conflict (1980-1992)**

Violence erased El Salvador from the international tourism map. In the US market, for example, in addition to warnings against traveling to the country, entry visa applications were subject to strict screening to prevent the entry of sympathizers of leftist movements.

Thus, the prospects for tourism development were nil, and the construction of tourism infrastructure stalled. The only foreign visitors were linked to the armed conflict: military advisors, people with leftist tendencies, officials from international organizations, journalists, or those curious about the war situation. The hotel industry, in particular, was affected in the early years of the armed conflict, but its situation subsequently improved, showing acceptable occupancy levels due to the shortage of rooms in the capital to accommodate the aforementioned people. A special case was the Camino Real Hotel, which was considered the safest hotel and

benefited greatly from being chosen by the International Press as its base of operations. In 1991, with the presence of the United Nations in the country, the number of visitors increased from about 125,000 to nearly 200,000. In 1992, the imminent signing of the Peace Accords prompted a slow recovery in the sector, until a year later it reached a record number of more than 300,000 visitors—the highest number of tourists the country had received in 25 years. After a slight decline in the following two years, tourism has since increased, reaching almost 800,000 tourists in 2000. In 2001, the number of visitors totaled 734,627 (almost 60,000 fewer than in 2000), but it is worth remembering that the earthquakes of January and February influenced a notable drop in the flow of travelers to El Salvador. 6 Tourism in El Salvador experienced a year of recovery in 2002, when there was a 29.4% increase in the number of visitors and a 45.6% increase in the amount of foreign currency generated for the country. According to data from the Salvadoran Tourism Corporation (CORSATUR), 950,597 people entered the country as tourists in 2002, which is 216,000 more than the previous year. Guatemalans accounted for 40% of the country's tourism visitors in 2002, followed by citizens of the United States, representing 18%. Net totals included 377,329 Guatemalans and 167,765 Americans. Honduras accounted for 137,156 visitors (14% of the total), while Nicaragua accounted for 119,323 (13%). The four aforementioned countries accounted for 85% of the country's tourists in 2002. Guatemala not only attracted the largest number of tourists to our nation but also increased its percentage share of the tourism market the most, rising from 377,329 people the previous year to 285,749 in 2001. This represents a 32% increase in the flow of Guatemalans to El Salvador, with an additional 103,786 "chapines" (local Guatemalans) in 2002. Over the past five years, CORSATUR has been promoting Rural and Cultural Tourism, allowing visitors to explore archaeological sites and colonial towns, and, in rural areas, witness the processing and cultivation of agricultural

products. Another area of promotion is adventure and ecological tourism. To this end, the country will exploit its national parks and volcanoes.

- **Key aspects of tourism growth:**

- **Increased visitors:**

El Salvador has experienced steady growth in the number of international tourists, with 17% more visitors in 2024 than the previous year.

- **Destination diversification:**

The country has attracted a broader audience beyond surfers, including tourists interested in culture, nature, and adventure, reports La Prensa Gráfica.

- **Revenue growth:**

Tourism revenue has increased significantly, surpassing \$3 billion in 2023 and 2024. -

- **Focus on security:**

The government has implemented measures to improve security and has received the highest travel safety rating from the United States, according to Central Law.

- **Tourism development:**

Policies are being implemented to develop tourism, including the development of the Pacific coastal area, the promotion of water sports, and adventure tourism, according to DW.

- **Popular destinations:**

Pacific beaches, such as La Libertad, are a magnet for tourists, especially surfers, according to InvestinElSalvador.

- Cultural and natural attractions:

Visitors also enjoy volcanoes, archaeological sites such as Joya de Cerén and San Andrés, and artisanal cities such as Suchitoto and La Palma. •

Current situation of tourism in el salvador



Tourism in El Salvador is experiencing historic growth, with a 17% increase in international visitors in 2024, reaching 3.9 million. This increase has led to a significant rise in tourism revenue, surpassing \$3 billion in 2023 and 2024, according to the newspaper [elmundo.sv](#). Authorities expect to surpass these figures in 2025, with projections of receiving 4.2 million tourists, according to the Ministry of Tourism of El Salvador.

The history of tourism in El Salvador is a journey marked by periods of institutional momentum, economic boom, devastating conflicts, and a progressive revitalization driven by peace, culture, nature, and modernization. Today, the country is consolidating its position as a rising destination, thanks to its natural and cultural wealth, international events, and renewed security.

NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE DESTINATION ZONES

Natural resources play a very important role in tourism in our country, as tourism is mostly developed within the environment of the destination. The Historic Center of San Salvador is rich in cultural and urban resources, including historic buildings, plazas, and architectural landmarks, as well as green spaces that provide visitors with areas for relaxation and learning. These urban and natural resources make the area unique and of high tourist potential. (Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo, 2023).



<https://share.google/Z1MsZu5HhKWdHCPIZ>

Among the places that stand out most in the tourist field in San Salvador, we have the Historic Center, where visitors can enjoy unique architectural landmarks and experience the rich cultural and historical heritage of the city.

The Historic Center of San Salvador is of transcendental importance, as it houses the most relevant monuments in the capital, such as the Metropolitan Cathedral, the National Palace, the

National Theater, and the Church of El Rosario. These sites are not only remarkable for their architecture but also for their historical and social value (Municipality of San Salvador, 2023).

In addition, tourists can explore squares and streets full of history, such as Liberty Plaza, participate in cultural events, and observe public art that reflects the identity of El Salvador (Historic Center of San Salvador, n.d.).

Moreover, the Historic Center preserves cultural heritage through museums, local traditions, and spaces that show the life of the city from past to present. It is considered the historical and cultural heart of San Salvador, and for years, work has been carried out to maintain and restore its architectural and cultural treasures in coordination with the Municipality of San Salvador and the Ministry of Culture (Ministry of Culture, 2022).

Similarly, visitors can enjoy local gastronomy and products in the surrounding streets, connecting history and culture with daily life and local traditions, making the Historic Center a complete and attractive tourist destination (Tourism of El Salvador, n.d.).

Regarding soil types, the Historic Center mainly consists of urban consolidated soil, including paved streets and plazas, historical construction soil around monuments, and small green spaces such as gardens and parks that add to the cultural landscape.



Source: Urban Consolidated Soil in the Historic Center of San Salvador. The picture was obtained from the web

Fuente: El Salvador Travel, 2024. Jardín Centroamérica “El Diario de Hoy,” on October 17, 2024.

CULTURAL IDENTITY, INTANGIBLE TOURISM RESOURCES: FESTIVITIES, CELEBRATIONS AND SYNCRETISMS



Date	Celebration
August 6th	Celebration of the Divine Savior of the World (<i>Día del Divino Salvador del Mundo</i>), the patron of San Salvador, with religious and civic festivities.
December 12th	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, celebrated in different parishes of the capital.
Holy Week (March/April, movable date)	Traditional religious processions starting from the Metropolitan Cathedral.

September 15th	Independence Day parades and civic acts in the Historic Center.
Date	Celebration
June (movable date)	Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Cathedral and surrounding parishes.
May 3rd	Celebration of the Holy Cros, with altars decorated in different parts of the city.
November 2nd	Day of the Dead, with visits and masses held in cemeteries and churches.

2.4.1 GASTRONOMY



The Historic Center of San Salvador offers a variety of typical Salvadoran foods and snacks that visitors can enjoy during the tour.

Here is a list of the most common foods available in this area:

- Pupusas (Corn dough stuffed with cheese, beans, pork, or loroco, often served with tomato sauce and curtido (pickled cabbage))
- Tamales (Corn dough with a filling of meat or vegetables, sometimes sweet with raisins)
- Sopa de Pata (Traditional Salvadoran tripe soup, made with beef feet, corn, vegetables, and spices)
- Atol de Elote (Traditional hot drink made from corn and sugar, sometimes flavored with cinnamon)
- Yuca Frita with Crispy Pork (Fried cassava served with crispy pork, often accompanied by pickled cabbage and tomato sauce)
- Local Coffee & Pastries (Cafés in the Historic Center offer Salvadoran coffee, accompanied by sweet breads, pastries, and other traditional desserts).

2.4.2 LEGENDS



The Historic Center of San Salvador is rich in stories and legends that reflect the city's culture and history. Among the most renowned are The Cathedral Bell, The Plazuela Ghost, The Ghost House of Santa Lucía, and The Treasure of La Merced Convent.

The Cathedral Bell

During the construction of the Metropolitan Cathedral, a large bell was hidden to protect it from thieves and invaders. Later, residents reported hearing its faint ringing at night, even though no one had touched it. According to the legend, those who hear the bell are blessed and guided during difficult times, whereas those who disrespect the cathedral may face misfortune.

The Plazuela Ghost

In the small plaza of the Historic Center, it is said that a mysterious spirit wanders at night, guarding the old buildings and streets. Additionally, pedestrians sometimes notice a dark figure that vanishes when approached. Locals believe that anyone who disrespects the plaza may become lost or encounter strange events until they learn to value the area's history and culture.

The Ghost House of Santa Lucía

On Santa Lucía Street stands an old colonial house once inhabited by a wealthy family in the 19th century. The youngest daughter, María Teresa, died tragically inside the house. Since then, neighbors claim to see her figure walking through the halls, lighting and extinguishing candles, and whispering old melodies. Many believe that her spirit continues to protect the house and warns anyone attempting to steal or damage the property.

The Treasure of La Merced Convent

During colonial times, monks from La Merced Convent hid a treasure in secret passages to protect it from invaders. Moreover, the legend states that anyone attempting to find it without

respect is pursued by mysterious shadows moving through the convent halls. On stormy nights, witnesses report hearing footsteps and dragging chains, which serve as a reminder of the convent's history and the monks' devotion.

2.5 PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Sustainable tourism seeks to meet the needs of tourists and host communities while protecting natural, cultural, and economic resources for future generations. This involves planning, managing, and developing tourism activities that reduce environmental, social, and cultural impacts, ensuring long-term benefits for all involved.

The fundamental principles of sustainable tourism include the following:

Environmental Conservation

Sustainable tourism should minimize negative impacts on ecosystems. This includes protecting flora and fauna, using water and energy responsibly, and managing waste.

Recommended practices: Avoid the use of single-use plastics. Walk only on marked trails. Participate in cleanup or reforestation programs.

Benefits: Preservation of biodiversity. Improved tourist experience by enjoying intact natural environments.



Benefits for the Local Community

Sustainable tourism generates direct and indirect economic opportunities for local communities, strengthening their development and well-being.

Practical examples: Hiring local guides. Buying handmade products and typical foods. Promoting community-managed accommodations. Positive impact: Reduction of local poverty. Preservation of cultural traditions and ancestral knowledge.



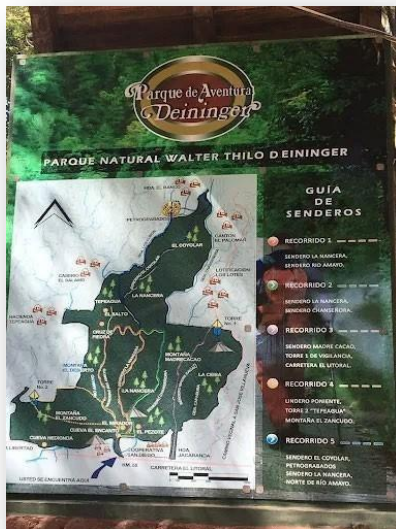
Respect for Culture and Traditions

Respectful interactions with host communities are essential. Tourism should not alter customs or cause the loss of cultural identity. Good practices: Participate in festivals in a respectful manner. Dress appropriately according to local customs. Learn basic phrases in the local language.



Responsible Planning

Tourism planning ensures sustainable development, preventing destination overload and resource degradation. Examples: Regulating visitor numbers in natural parks. Signposting protected areas. Conservation programs funded by tourism revenue.



Education and Awareness

It is essential to educate tourists and operators about the impacts of their actions. This includes workshops, informational guides, and educational activities. Suggested practices: Participate in conservation workshops. Learn about local flora and fauna before your visit. Promote environmental education on social media.



In conclusion, sustainable tourism not only protects natural and cultural resources, but also promotes the economic and social development of local communities. Adopting these

principles ensures that future generations will be able to enjoy tourist destinations, preserving their richness and authenticity.

2.5 STRATEGIC PLAN: QUALITY CONTROL, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Strategic plan: action, quality control, and customer satisfaction

The strategic plan of the tour operator, which focuses on offering tours of the historic center of San Salvador, aims to establish guidelines that ensure service quality and visitor satisfaction. This plan not only allows for the proper organization of activities, but also contributes to positioning the company in the tourism market through differentiated and authentic experiences.

Firstly, the action plan focuses on innovating the tours, integrating historical, cultural, and gastronomic aspects that allow visitors to enjoy a comprehensive experience. The ongoing training of tour guides in customer service, language skills, and historical narration is essential to guarantee a professional and attractive service. Likewise, the aim is to strengthen relationships with local businesses and restaurants so that visitors can enjoy the cultural and gastronomic richness of the area. These actions are complemented by the development of promotional material, both physical and digital, which promotes the tourism product.

In terms of quality control, mechanisms are established to ensure compliance with service standards. Punctuality, clarity of information provided, and safety conditions during tours are essential indicators. To this end, satisfaction surveys are conducted, guide performance is

regularly monitored, and protocols are in place to deal with unforeseen events, ensuring a reliable and high-quality experience.

Finally, customer satisfaction is at the heart of the plan. This is achieved through personalized attention, friendly service, and the creation of authentic experiences that connect visitors with the history and culture of the place. Positive perceptions of the service are measured through surveys, analysis of comments on digital platforms, and the implementation of a complaints and suggestions system that allows for continuous improvement.

In summary, the tour operator's strategic plan articulates action, quality control, and customer satisfaction as pillars that guarantee competitive, responsible, and sustainable service. Thanks to this, not only is tourist loyalty and product recommendation ensured, but it also contributes to local economic development and the preservation of San Salvador's cultural heritage.

Action Plan

Action plan	Responsible	Improvement
Implement efficient customer service through quick responses and automated messages on WhatsApp, social media, and email.	María Magdalena Guevara Chacón: Reservations and Customer Service Coordinator. Responsible for providing clear tour information, answering visitor questions, and managing bookings for tours in the Historic Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special promotions for those who book 15 days in advance (free traditional drink). ● “<i>Discover San Salvador as a Family</i>” package: 10% discount for groups of 4+.
Design thematic cultural experiences that integrate history, gastronomy, and local art for immersive and personalized tours.	Joyce Yessenia Velasco Palacios: Tour Guide and Experience Designer. Responsible for creating and leading tours adapted to visitors’ interests (historic, gastronomic, artistic). Shares cultural knowledge and ensures interactive experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Includes local food tasting in gastronomic tours. ● Option to join an art or history mini-workshop. ● Digital participation certificate and group photo souvenir.
Develop a digital promotion campaign under the slogan “Live the Center, Feel the History.”	Katheryn Esther Alfaro Lemus: Digital Marketing and Communication Coordinator. Responsible for creating visuals, managing social media, and publishing weekly updates with engaging content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly posts with photos, reels, and testimonials. ● Monthly giveaways and interactive polls. ● Use of bright and cheerful tones to reflect local identity.
Establish alliances with local cafés, artisans, and cultural spaces to promote tours through mutual collaborations.	Joyce Yessenia Velasco Palacios: Partnership and Logistics Coordinator. Manages agreements with small local businesses and artisans to create combined offers and cross-promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10% discount when showing a partner’s receipt. ● Inclusion of local crafts in souvenir packages. ● Strengthens community and local economy.
Create short promotional videos and live sessions showing behind-the-scenes moments or interviews with guides and artisans.	Katheryn Esther Alfaro Lemus: Digital Marketing and Communication Coordinator. Produces dynamic videos and manages live streams from key historical sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Live viewers get discount codes. ● Engagement increases with storytelling clips. ● Builds emotional connection with the audience.
Launch a visitor satisfaction survey program at the end of each tour to collect feedback and improve services.	María Magdalena Guevara Chacón: Reservations and Customer Service Coordinator. Supervises post-tour surveys and manages feedback data to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● \$5 coupon or free souvenir for completing the survey. ● Helps identify new visitor interests. ● Strengthens customer loyalty.

	enhance future experiences.	
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Strategic quality plan



CHAPTER III

“Local Development Through a Tourist Product”

- **Profile of the Entrepreneur**

- **Definition of entrepreneur**

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, an entrepreneur is: someone who starts their own business, especially when this involves seeing a new opportunity.

Entrepreneur has been used in English to refer to a kind of businessman since at least the middle of the 18th century, when it appeared in translation of the King of Prussia's instructions for his generals ("... if the country happens not to abound in forage, you must agree with some Entrepreneur for the quantity required."). During the 19th century, it was also used of a go-between or a person who undertakes any kind of activity (as opposed to just a business).

By the early 20th century entrepreneur appears to have taken on the connotation of go-getter when applied to an independent business owner, a quality that may also be found in the phrase entrepreneurial spirit, which began to be used at about the same time.

- **Characteristics and competences**

Multiple factors go into starting a successful business venture, including a strong concept and initial funding. But, perhaps the most important ingredient is the entrepreneur. These are individuals who must transform their ideas into a fully operational business.

In theory, anyone could undertake a project; however, success requires certain personal and professional characteristics. Being an entrepreneur means having a motivation and the resources that it entails.

Below are some of the characteristics and skills an entrepreneur should possess:

1. Curiosity

Successful entrepreneurs have a distinct personality trait that sets them apart from other organizational leaders: a sense of curiosity. An entrepreneur's ability to remain curious allows them to continuously seek new opportunities. Rather than settling for what they think they know, entrepreneurs ask challenging questions and explore different avenues.

2. Willingness to Experiment

Along with curiosity, entrepreneurs require an understanding of structured experimentation, such as design thinking. With each new opportunity, an entrepreneur must run tests to determine if it's worthwhile to pursue.

For example, if you have an idea for a new product or service that fulfills an underserved demand, you'll have to ensure customers are willing to pay for it and it meets their needs. To do so, you'll need to conduct thorough market research and run meaningful tests to validate your idea and determine its potential.

3. Adaptability

Entrepreneurship is an iterative process, and new challenges and opportunities present themselves at every turn. It's nearly impossible to be prepared for every scenario, but successful business leaders must be adaptable.

This is especially true for entrepreneurs who need to evaluate situations and remain flexible to ensure their business keeps moving forward, no matter what unexpected changes occur.

4. Decisiveness

To be successful, an entrepreneur has to make difficult decisions and stand by them. As a leader, they're responsible for guiding the trajectory of their business, including every aspect from funding and strategy to resource allocation.

Being decisive doesn't always mean being correct. Entrepreneurs need the confidence to make challenging decisions and see them through to the end. If the outcome turns out to be less than favorable, the decision to take corrective action is just as important.

5. Self-Awareness

A great entrepreneur is aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Rather than letting shortcomings hold them back, they build well-rounded teams that complement their abilities.

In many cases, it's the entrepreneurial team, rather than an individual, that drives a business venture toward success. When starting your own business, it's critical to surround yourself with teammates who have complementary talents and contribute to a common goal.

6. Risk Tolerance

Entrepreneurship is often associated with risk. While it's true that launching a venture requires an entrepreneur to take risks, they also need to take steps to minimize it.

While many things can go wrong when launching a new venture, many things can go right. According to *Entrepreneurship Essentials*, entrepreneurs who actively manage the relationship between risk and reward position their companies to "benefit from the upside."

Successful entrepreneurs are comfortable with encountering some level of risk to reap the rewards of their efforts; however, their risk tolerance is tightly related to their efforts to mitigate it.

7. Comfort with Failure

In addition to risk-management and calculated decision-making, entrepreneurship requires a certain level of comfort with failure.

The reasons for failure are vast and encompass everything from a lack of business scalability to low product-market fit. While many of these risks can be avoided, some are inevitable.

Despite this, entrepreneurs must prepare themselves for, and be comfortable with, failure. Rather than let fear hold them back, they maintain a positive attitude to allow the possibility of success to propel them forward.

8. Persistence

While many successful entrepreneurs are comfortable with the possibility of failing, it doesn't mean they give up easily. Rather, they see failure as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Throughout the entrepreneurial process, many hypotheses turn out to be wrong, and some ventures fail altogether. Part of what makes an entrepreneur successful is their willingness to learn from mistakes, ask questions, and persist until they reach their goal.

9. Innovative Thinking

Innovation often goes hand-in-hand with entrepreneurship. While innovation in business can be defined as an idea that's both novel and useful, it doesn't always involve creating an

entirely new product or service. Some of the most successful startups have taken existing products or services and drastically improved them to meet the changing needs of the market.

Although innovation doesn't come naturally to every entrepreneur, it's a type of strategic mindset that can be cultivated. By developing your problem-solving skills, you'll be well- equipped to spot innovative opportunities and position your venture for success.

10. Long-Term Focus

Most people associate entrepreneurship with starting a business. While the early stages of launching a venture, such as securing funding, are critical to its success, the process doesn't end once the business is operational.

According to Entrepreneurship Essentials, "it's easy to start a business, but hard to grow a sustainable and substantial one. Some of the greatest opportunities in history were discovered well after a venture launched."

Entrepreneurship is a long-term endeavor, and entrepreneurs must focus on the process from beginning to end to ensure long-term success.

• Types of entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs turn bold ideas into reality. They create jobs and contribute to the economy but there are different types of entrepreneurs, each choosing their own path based on personality, abilities, and surroundings.

The types of entrepreneurs vary depending on background, country, and even sector, but the 5 most common types are:

1. Innovators

Innovators are those who come up with new ideas and turn them into viable businesses. They tend to be passionate and driven.

2. The Hustler Entrepreneur

Hustlers work hard and are willing to get their hands dirty, often starting small with dreams of bigger success.

3. Imitators

Imitators improve upon existing ideas and products, often blending the qualities of innovators and hustlers.

4. Researchers

Researchers analyze ideas thoroughly before acting, relying on data and facts to minimize risk.

5. Buyers

Buyers have the capital to acquire existing businesses, minimizing the risks associated with startups.

• **Entrepreneur's responsibility**

As a business owner in the dynamic world of entrepreneurship, I understand the immense responsibilities of the title. Being an entrepreneur in the real estate industry adds an extra layer of complexity, given the ever-changing market conditions and the high stakes involved.

Below are some of entrepreneur's responsibilities:

1. Strategic planning and vision

The first and foremost responsibility of a business owner in the real estate industry is to set a clear vision and develop a strategic plan. This involves conducting market research, understanding trends and identifying growth opportunities.

2. Building and nurturing relationships

Real estate is a people-centric industry, and success often depends on the strength of relationships. As a business owner, I recognize the importance of building and nurturing relationships with clients, partners, investors and other stakeholders. This involves effective communication, networking and delivering exceptional customer service. By establishing a reputation for trustworthiness and reliability, I can attract and retain clients, secure repeat business and create a strong referral network.

3. Managing finances and risk

Financial management is a critical responsibility for any business owner and is particularly vital in the real estate industry. As an entrepreneur, I must manage cash flow, allocate resources and make strategic investment decisions. Additionally, I need to assess and mitigate risks associated with property acquisitions, market fluctuations and regulatory changes. By maintaining a robust financial system, conducting thorough due diligence and implementing risk management strategies, I can ensure the long-term financial health of my business.

4. Leading and inspiring teams

A successful business owner understands the significance of effective leadership and team management. Building and inspiring a capable team is essential in the real estate industry, where collaboration and coordination are crucial. This involves hiring and training skilled professionals, fostering a positive work culture and providing clear direction and support. I can harness their expertise and drive collective success by empowering my team members and enabling a collaborative environment.

5. Embracing innovation and technology

In today's digital age, embracing innovation and technology is crucial for success in the real estate industry. As a business owner, I must stay updated with the latest technological advancements and leverage them to streamline processes, enhance customer experiences and gain a competitive edge. This responsibility includes exploring digital marketing strategies, adopting property management software and utilizing virtual reality for property tours. By embracing innovation, I can stay ahead of the curve and adapt to the evolving needs of clients and the industry.

6. Upholding ethical and legal standards

Operating a real estate business is responsible for upholding ethical and legal standards. As an entrepreneur, I must adhere to industry regulations, maintain transparency in transactions, and prioritize the best interests of clients and stakeholders. This involves practicing fair and honest dealings, ensuring compliance with zoning and property laws,

and safeguarding client confidentiality. By demonstrating integrity and professionalism, I can build a solid reputation and earn the trust of clients and the community.

7. Continuous learning and professional development

In the ever-evolving real estate industry, continuous learning and professional development are essential for business owners. I recognize the importance of staying updated with industry trends, attending seminars and obtaining relevant certifications. This responsibility also extends to my team, as I encourage and support their ongoing education and skill enhancement. By investing in knowledge and staying at the forefront of industry advancements, I can provide superior services and maintain a competitive advantage.

8. Social responsibility and community engagement

As a real estate business owner, I am responsible for giving back to the community and contributing to social causes. Engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives benefits the community and enhances my business's reputation. This can involve participating in local community events, supporting charitable organizations or implementing sustainable practices in property development. By prioritizing social responsibility, I can create a positive impact and foster goodwill among clients and the broader community.

• Challenges and opportunities

Entrepreneurship is widely seen as a path to personal freedom, financial success, and the ability to bring innovative ideas to life. With the rise of technology, globalization, and shifting economic landscapes, new entrepreneurs have more opportunities than ever before.

However, along with these opportunities come significant challenges that can make the journey to success daunting. Whether launching a tech startup, a sustainable business, or a creative venture, aspiring entrepreneurs must navigate a landscape that is both exciting and fraught with obstacles.

a) Opportunities for New Entrepreneurs

Access to Technology and Digital Tools

In today's digital age, the barrier to entry for new businesses has been significantly lowered. The availability of cost-effective tools and platforms—such as website builders, social media, cloud storage, and e-commerce platforms—empowers entrepreneurs to start and scale businesses with minimal upfront investment. Digital marketing, data analytics, and customer relationship management (CRM) software also allow entrepreneurs to reach global markets and manage operations efficiently.

For example, platforms like Shopify, WordPress, and Wix enable entrepreneurs to build professional websites with little to no technical expertise. Similarly, digital marketing tools like Google Ads, Facebook, and Instagram provide targeted advertising options that help small businesses compete with larger, established brands.

Global Markets and Connectivity

The internet and advancements in communication technology have created a level playing field, where new entrepreneurs can reach customers across the globe. Platforms like Amazon, eBay, and Etsy allow small businesses to sell products internationally, while social media channels help entrepreneurs build communities and connect with customers worldwide. The rise of remote work and online services has also opened up opportunities to tap into global talent and expand market reach, all without the need for a physical storefront.

For instance, a startup based in a small town can easily gain access to a worldwide audience through digital channels, dramatically expanding its market base compared to previous generations of entrepreneurs who were limited by geography.

Supportive Ecosystems and Networks

Over the past decade, many regions have developed thriving entrepreneurial ecosystems, offering mentorship, funding, and support to new businesses. Venture capital, angel investors, and crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo have provided innovative ways for entrepreneurs to secure the capital needed to get their ideas off the ground. Additionally, business accelerators and incubators, such as Y Combinator and Techstars, offer guidance, resources, and networking opportunities that can help accelerate growth.

Local entrepreneurship hubs, universities, and government programs also foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing, creating a fertile environment for innovation. Networking events, trade shows, and online communities enable entrepreneurs to learn

from one another, share experiences, and find strategic partnerships.

a) Challenges for New Entrepreneurs

Funding and Cash Flow Issues

One of the biggest hurdles for new entrepreneurs is securing the necessary capital to start and grow their businesses. While there are more funding options available than ever before, such as angel investors, venture capital, crowdfunding, and government grants, the competition for these resources is fierce. Many entrepreneurs struggle to find the right investors or to prove the scalability of their businesses to secure funding.

Cash flow management is another critical challenge. Startups often face periods of financial instability, especially when initial expenses exceed income. Without careful planning and budgeting, entrepreneurs can quickly find themselves in a cash crunch, jeopardizing the future of their businesses.

Competition and Market Saturation

The low barrier to entry in many industries means that new entrepreneurs face intense competition from both established companies and other startups. The rapid pace of technological change and shifting consumer preferences mean that a market can quickly become saturated with similar products or services, making differentiation and customer acquisition more difficult.

New entrepreneurs must constantly innovate, refine their offerings, and find unique value propositions to stand out in crowded markets. Effective branding, understanding customer needs, and offering something truly different are essential to gaining a competitive edge.

Time and Resource Constraints

Many new entrepreneurs struggle with limited time and resources, particularly in the early stages of their businesses. Balancing the demands of product development, marketing, sales, and administration can be overwhelming, especially when entrepreneurs are trying to manage all aspects of the business themselves. In the absence of a large team or funding for external help, entrepreneurs may face burnout from the sheer volume of work required.

This challenge is particularly acute in the early stages of business development, when the pressure to build, launch, and establish a customer base is intense. Entrepreneurs must learn to prioritize tasks, delegate where possible, and stay focused on their long-term vision to avoid getting bogged down by short-term hurdles.

• Market niches: Definition

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a niche market is an opportunity to offer a product or service that no other company offers.

A niche market is a very specific segment of consumers who share characteristics and, because of these characteristics, are likely to buy a particular product or service. Therefore, niche markets comprise small, very specific groups within a larger target market that you may want to reach.

Identifying a niche market and learning as much as possible about it allows you to do several things:

1. Develop products and services that meet the unique needs and desires of your niche.

2. Show empathy for your niche through your marketing messages.
3. Build trust in your niche and build loyalty.
4. Compete with larger brands.
5. Become a credible go-to brand for the specific solution you offer and, ultimately, attract more customers.

Importance of Focusing on Niches

In today's competitive and dynamic tourism market, focusing on well-defined niche markets has become an essential strategy for destinations and tourism operators. Niche tourism refers to targeting a specific segment of travelers with particular interests, such as cultural heritage, gastronomy, wellness, or ecotourism. This focus allows for greater differentiation, customer loyalty, and sustainability in both marketing and operations.

Differentiation and Competitive Advantage

Niche tourism allows tourism businesses and destinations to distinguish themselves by offering unique and specialized experiences. Unlike mass tourism, which often results in standardized products, niche markets are based on authenticity, local identity, and cultural depth. These elements create a strong competitive advantage, especially when the travel product is aligned with local heritage and traditions.

As noted by Softrip (2023), tour operators who specialize in niche experiences such as heritage, gastronomy, or spiritual travel tend to attract more engaged tourists and

can charge premium prices for these personalized services.

Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

Travelers in niche markets are typically more motivated, informed, and emotionally invested in their experiences. Cultural tourists, for example, actively seek connection, meaning, and learning. Therefore, niche offerings tend to generate higher satisfaction levels, resulting in greater loyalty and increased word-of-mouth referrals (Boost Brands, 2022).

Targeted and Cost-Efficient Marketing

One of the major advantages of niche tourism is the ability to design highly targeted marketing campaigns. With a clear understanding of the specific audience's preferences and behavior, businesses can craft messages and choose platforms that speak directly to them. This improves the return on investment in marketing efforts and avoids wasting resources on mass, unfocused campaigns (Boost Brands, 2022).

Diversification and Risk Mitigation

Niche markets can help destinations diversify their tourism offerings, avoiding overdependence on mass markets or seasonal flows. In times of crisis, such as pandemics or economic instability, niche segments particularly those based on cultural and local experiences often remain more resilient due to their small scale and deep traveler engagement (The Tourism Institute, 2023).

Sustainable and Community-Based Development

Focusing on cultural and identity-based niches supports the protection of local traditions and the equitable distribution of tourism benefits. When communities are directly involved in providing cultural experiences—such as music, festivals, crafts, or culinary workshops tourism becomes a tool for cultural preservation and inclusive development.

According to The Tourism Institute (2023), niche tourism encourages respectful interaction, enhances heritage conservation, and reduces the negative effects of over-tourism.

Alignment with Global Travel Trends

Global travel trends increasingly show a demand for experiential, immersive, and purpose-driven tourism. Travelers today, especially millennials and Gen Z, seek to explore places in meaningful ways through local storytelling, traditional food, and genuine cultural encounters.

In El Salvador, for instance, digital campaigns promoting authentic cultural tourism have gained traction among European audiences (International Trade Centre, 2023). This shows how niche-focused strategies are not only effective but aligned with broader global patterns.

Economic Value and Local Impact

Niche travelers often generate more value per visit, as they are willing to pay more for quality, authenticity, and exclusivity. Local economies benefit through direct spending on small businesses, artisans, guides, and community-run tourism initiatives.

Recent examples in El Salvador such as birdwatching tours or cultural immersion experiences demonstrate how niche tourism supports entrepreneurship and regional development (Dinero.com.sv, 2023).

Types of Market Niches

Market niches represent specialized segments within a broader market that respond to specific consumer needs, preferences, or values. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), a niche market consists of a clearly defined group of consumers seeking distinct benefits or experiences, often overlooked by mainstream providers. In the tourism industry, niche markets have become essential for differentiation and competitiveness, particularly in destinations seeking to highlight cultural and experiential dimensions (UNWTO, 2018). In the context of tourism, several types of market niches can be identified:

Cultural and Heritage Tourism – Focused on travelers interested in local traditions, history, and identity. This niche values authenticity and knowledge exchange between visitors and communities (Richards, 2018).

Educational Tourism – Designed for students, researchers, or academic groups who combine travel with learning experiences, often involving study visits, workshops, or guided interpretation (Ritchie, 2003).

Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism – Oriented toward travelers who seek nature-based experiences and contribute to environmental conservation and community well-being (UNESCO, 2022).

Creative Tourism – Involves participatory cultural activities such as art, gastronomy, and local crafts, fostering meaningful engagement between visitors and hosts (Richards & Raymond, 2000).

Each type of niche caters to particular motivations, and their effectiveness depends on how well tourism operators understand and serve these motivations. For example, *Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours* belongs primarily to the cultural and educational tourism niches, integrating learning objectives with cultural interpretation. As Morrison (2019) emphasizes, the success of a niche strategy lies in tailoring the experience to the emotional and intellectual expectations of its audience, ensuring authenticity, quality, and social relevance. By identifying and combining these market niches, the tour operator can position itself competitively, attract specific audiences, and promote sustainable tourism that reflects the country's cultural identity and educational value.

Benefits of Niche Marketing

Focusing on niche marketing in the tourism sector delivers multiple advantages. By narrowing the target audience to visitors with specific interests such as those seeking cultural, experiential, or identity-based encounters, businesses and destinations can achieve more sustainable growth, higher satisfaction, and stronger loyalty.

Higher Return on Investment in Marketing

When marketing efforts are aimed at a clearly defined niche, messages and channels can be tailored sharply to that audience. This reduces wasted spending and raises the efficiency of marketing campaigns. According to Boost Brands (2022), niche tourism operators see improved ROI because they address the precise motivations of their target group, enabling more effective customer acquisition strategies.

Stronger Brand Positioning and Awareness

Specializing in a niche allows a tourism product or business to become known as an authority or leading option for certain types of experiences, heritage, identity tours, cultural immersion, etc. As City Nation Place (2023) argues, niche marketing fosters a compelling brand story, which makes communication more resonant and increases brand recognition.

Higher Customer Loyalty and Repeat Visits

Tourists who find an experience closely aligned with their personal values or cultural interests tend to form emotional connections to the destination or operator. They are more likely to return, recommend to others, and engage in positive word-of-mouth. Boost Brands (2022) emphasizes that niche customers often become brand advocates.

Premium Pricing Opportunities

Because visitors to niche tourism experiences often perceive greater value (authenticity, uniqueness, meaningful interaction), they may be willing to pay more than in mass tourism. This allows providers to maintain better margins. The Tourism Institute (2023) notes that niche marketing contributes to higher economic value per tourist, helping destinations balance sustainability with profitability.

Support for Cultural Preservation and Local Communities

Niche tourism, especially cultural identity tours encourage the inclusion and participation of local communities. It helps preserve intangible heritage (traditions, crafts, cuisines, music) because the demand is for authenticity. It also spreads economic benefits more equitably across local suppliers, artisans, guides, and rural areas (The Tourism Institute, 2023; Travel Trade Ready, 2023).

Reduced Environmental and Social Impacts

Since niche tourism tends to attract smaller, more responsible visitor groups, the pressure on natural, cultural, and infrastructural resources may be lower than in mass tourism. This allows for more controlled, sustainable tourism development. The Tourism Institute (2023) suggests that niche marketing helps reduce environmental impact and maintain cultural integrity.

Key Elements for Selecting a Market Niche

Choosing the right niche in tourism requires strategic planning based on a mix of market data, internal capabilities, cultural assets, and sustainability considerations. The following key elements should guide the selection process for a niche, especially when the focus is on identity-based or cultural tours.

Market Demand and Size

The chosen niche must have a sufficient and sustainable demand. Market research should determine if there is a clear segment of travelers interested in the niche offering, such as cultural heritage or identity-based experiences. This includes estimating market size and

analyzing growth trends using reliable sources such as tourism statistics or global reports. A niche that is too small may not be viable, while one that is too broad may become overly competitive (Boost Brands, 2022).

Growth Potential and Alignment with Trends

Emerging global tourism trends increasingly favor experiential, immersive, and authentic travel. Selecting a niche that aligns with these trends can ensure future growth. For example, cultural storytelling, ancestral roots tourism, or community-based experiences are in high demand among travelers seeking deeper meaning in their journeys (Digital Travel Expert, 2023).

Differentiated Value Proposition

The niche should enable you to offer a unique experience that cannot be easily replicated. This includes leveraging the destination's authentic cultural, historical, and intangible heritage such as festivals, traditional cuisine, music, or indigenous practices. Successful niche offerings are rooted in authenticity and specialization, often becoming a core part of the destination's brand identity (Digital Travel Expert, 2023).

Internal Capabilities and Resource Alignment

Your organization's internal resources, human, operational, financial, and digital must match the niche's specific needs. This involves ensuring trained personnel, effective

logistics, and marketing tools are in place. According to Boost Brands (2022), conducting a thorough internal audit is essential before committing to a particular niche market.

Profitability and Price Sensitivity

A viable niche should not only fulfill a cultural or social goal but also support a sustainable business model. Tourists seeking niche experiences are often willing to pay premium prices for authenticity and depth. Evaluating your pricing strategy, cost structure, and willingness-to-pay of your audience is essential to assess long-term profitability (The Tourism Institute, 2023).

Sustainability and Ethical Viability

A niche must align with sustainable tourism principles, especially when dealing with sensitive cultural elements. This includes protecting cultural and natural resources, involving local communities, and avoiding exploitation or commodification of heritage. Niche tourism has the potential to promote equitable development, but only if implemented ethically (The Tourism Institute, 2023).

Competition and Market Saturation

Before entering a niche, it is critical to evaluate the level of competition. A saturated niche may be harder to enter unless the offering is significantly differentiated. Conversely, a niche with no competition could signal an untapped opportunity or a lack of demand.

Identifying gaps or underserved needs is a practical strategy to establish a strong market position (Boost Brands, 2022).

Flexibility and Scalability

Finally, the selected niche should allow for adaptation and future growth. The ability to scale, diversify, or combine the niche with complementary ones (e.g., culture + gastronomy or heritage + nature) increases resilience. Piloting niche offerings on a small scale before full deployment is also recommended as part of a flexible development process (Boost Brands, 2022).

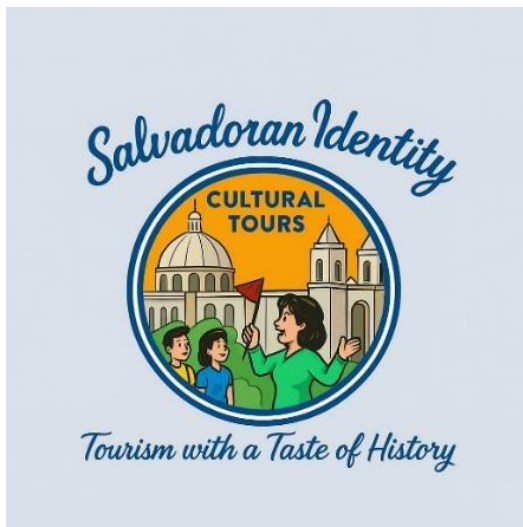
Niche for “Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours”

The niche market for *Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours* focuses on travelers and students interested in experiencing and understanding El Salvador’s cultural and historical identity through guided visits to the Historic Center of San Salvador. This segment includes both national and international visitors who seek authentic, educational, and immersive experiences that go beyond conventional tourism. According to Richards (2018), cultural tourists value learning, emotional connection, and participation in activities that highlight the traditions and heritage of a destination. Therefore, this tour operator aims to provide experiences that foster appreciation for Salvadoran history, art, and social transformation. The target audience primarily consists of young adults, university groups, and cultural travelers motivated by educational purposes and a desire for cultural enrichment. As emphasized by UNWTO (2021), the demand for cultural and creative tourism has grown significantly, driven by travelers who wish to engage with local communities and understand their values and narratives. In this sense, the tours combine academic insights with tourism practices, positioning the product within a specialized niche that integrates both learning and heritage appreciation.

Moreover, the tours highlight emblematic landmarks such as *Iglesia El Rosario*, *Teatro Nacional*, and *Plaza Libertad*, which represent key stages in the nation's historical and artistic evolution. These sites allow visitors to explore the intersection between cultural identity and urban development. As Fernández and Gómez (2020) note, cultural routes that involve storytelling and guided interpretation strengthen visitors' emotional engagement and contribute to the preservation of local identity. Thus, *Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours* not only promotes tourism but also supports educational and cultural continuity.

This niche is characterized by visitors who value authenticity, sustainability, and social responsibility. The tours appeal to travelers interested in responsible tourism practices, aligning with global trends toward meaningful travel experiences (UNESCO, 2022). By emphasizing the unique identity of the Salvadoran people rooted in resilience, creativity, and cultural pride the tour operator contributes to a sustainable tourism model that benefits both visitors and the local community.

Logo



Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours

The logo of our tour operator, Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours, represents the visual essence of our mission and vision as a company dedicated to promoting the historical and cultural heritage of El Salvador. It was designed to reflect our values of identity, education, and hospitality through a symbolic and approachable composition.

The circular shape of the logo represents unity, continuity, and the connection between our people and visitors. The blue border conveys trust, harmony, and professionalism, qualities that define our way of working. Inside the circle, a friendly illustration shows a tour guide leading visitors through emblematic Salvadoran landmarks, such as colonial buildings and cultural monuments. The cartoon style was chosen intentionally to communicate warmth, accessibility, and creativity key elements of our brand personality.

The inclusion of our tourist service name, Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours, within the logo reinforces our identity and coherence. The lettering in cursive form suggests movement and authenticity, symbolizing the dynamic nature of our cultural tours and the passion we bring to each experience. Beneath it, the slogan “Tourism with a Taste of History” expresses our core objective: to create experiences that not only entertain but also teach and inspire appreciation for our country’s history and traditions.

Color plays a central role in the logo’s meaning. The warm tones of yellow and orange evoke the joy, friendliness, and vitality of the Salvadoran people, while the blue hues convey tranquility and reliability. This combination reflects the balance between emotion and professionalism that guides our work as cultural tour operators.

In summary, our logo is more than a visual symbol; it is a representation of who we are and what we stand for. Each element the circle, the characters, the typography, and the colors was carefully designed to communicate our commitment to sharing Salvadoran

identity through responsible and educational tourism. Through this logo, we express our belief that

tourism can be a bridge between cultures and a way to strengthen pride in our national heritage.

Slogan

“Tourism with a Taste of History”

This slogan was chosen because it represents our passion for history and our desire to inspire others through it. Our main goal is to awaken curiosity and appreciation for the cultural richness that surrounds the Historic Center of San Salvador. Each tour is designed not only to showcase the beauty of these places, but also to share the knowledge and passion that make them meaningful.

Through our work, we aim to connect tourists with the soul of our city, its architecture, traditions, and the stories that live within every corner. By understanding the characteristics and historical background of each site, we can transmit that same sense of admiration and respect to visitors.

The phrase “with a taste of history” captures this essence perfectly. It reminds us that tourism is not only about seeing places, but about feeling them, experiencing their past, learning from it, and sharing it with others. In this way, our services seek to inspire visitors and create experiences that go beyond sightseeing, turning each journey into an opportunity to rediscover and celebrate our heritage.

MISSION

To offer unique and memorable tourist experiences, promoting the cultural heritage of the historic center of San Salvador, emphasizing the contrasts this area has experienced in recent years, through quality service, personalized attention, and sustainable practices that contribute to local development and the complete satisfaction of our clients.

VISION

To establish ourselves as the leading tour operator in the historic center of San Salvador, recognized for highlighting the cultural richness and the city's transformation process, offering responsible and sustainable tourism that inspires local pride, promotes heritage preservation, and generates a positive impact on visitors and communities.

VALUES

1. **Commitment to Quality:** We provide high-quality services to ensure the satisfaction of our visitors.
2. **Sustainability:** We encourage responsible practices that contribute to environmental care and the preservation of natural resources.
3. **Culture and Tradition:** We promote and celebrate our rich cultural heritage, bringing tourists closer to our local traditions and customs.
4. **Customer Service:** We are dedicated to offering personalized and friendly service to make our visitors feel at home.
5. **Innovation:** We constantly seek to improve and offer new experiences that exceed our visitors' expectations.

Service Attributes

Salvadoran identity cultural tours stand out mainly for offering educational guided tours in the historic center of San Salvador, aimed at students, as well as national and international tourists interested in learning both the well-known and hidden history of the capital. Our service is designed for school groups at various educational levels and for academic tourists ranging in age from 6 to 60 years old.

Committed to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, we provide educational materials and eco-friendly brochures, avoiding the use of plastics and disposable materials during the visits. In addition, we have certified guides who offer detailed and group-adapted information, ensuring a rich and educational experience.

During the tours, we include spaces for interactive activities and educational talks about the importance of preserving historical and cultural heritage, as well as respecting El Salvador's environmental resources. To support understanding for foreign visitors, interpreters in English and French are available upon request, ensuring an accessible and inclusive experience for everyone

Some attributes that distinguish our service are:

- Stick to the itinerary:

During the trip, tourists enjoy a pleasant atmosphere, and a planned itinerary is essential to enjoy the different sites in the historic center. Each site offers specific activities and entry times, so it's important to have a prepared itinerary.

- Safety and reliability:

Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours will offer security throughout the trip. The country's newly established security has made tourism much more viable. Therefore, Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours will strengthen security so that our tourists have the confidence to see, touch, and express their feelings, of course with all due respect for Salvadoran culture.

- Service Availability:

Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours will offer a comprehensive service to tourists: service hours, itineraries, and tour routes will be provided. During peak tourist season, spots will be available to reserve the service on a specific day. These types of events will be promoted on our social media channels, which will provide complete and reliable information.

- Efficient logistics management:

By promoting our company's services, we are ready to offer you the full service and coordinate the best experience. We will offer transportation to reach the historic center. We will also send you, via social media, the itinerary chosen by tourists so you can coordinate

with your hotels. We will also offer short excursions to other sites outside the historic center as an extra service for your enjoyment.

- Legality and Certifications:

To offer a complete and safe service, Salvadoran Identity Cultural Tours has legal certifications from the Ministry of Tourism, endorsing it as a solid company. The staff, especially the tour guides, who founded the company, are also certified as qualified guides by the Salvadoran government and have French and English language degrees with a specialty in tourism. The team is highly trained to offer the best experience to our foreign and national tourists.

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