

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR**  
**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**  
**FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



**THEME:**

TOURIST SERVICE: OUR ROOTS TRAVEL AGENCY

SERVICIO TURISTICO: AGENCIA DE VIAJES NUESTRAS RAÍCES

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## **Abstract**

The present document presents Our Roots Travel Agency. Its main purpose is to offer unique traveling experiences with a main focus in cultural and rural tourism, an experience that not only connects foreigners with the most real cultural experience that El Salvador can offer, but also connect our people with other people willing to live life as they do and respect their own way of doing it. The agency was created after the observation of the limitations in tourism that offer the same way of doing tourism, but this way is more organic, natural. We focus on relationships, we believe in connecting people through culture, respect and tourism. The aspiration of the agency is to promote strong and lasting relationships, ease the understanding of cultural traditions and create an environment where everyone can enjoy every little detail of the beauty of El Salvador.

To gain a clearer understanding of the importance of tourism and its impact, research was conducted on its origins at the global level, followed by an analysis of how it has evolved over time in El Salvador. Additionally, the study highlighted the value of the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. The agency then outlined the key principles it will adopt to align tourism with sustainable development strategies, emphasizing environmental and community respect, the economy, social and environmental sustainability, and the preservation of cultural identity.

Finally, the values, mission and responsibilities of the agency will not just include our clients but also the country committing to offer genuine cultural experiences to have a better definition of the identity and the impact that it can generate in tourism of El Salvador.

## **Introduction**

Community-based tourism offers visitors authentic experiences while promoting local empowerment and the preservation of cultural identity (*Goodwin, H. 2017*).

Our Roots Travel Agency is a tourism initiative dedicated to redefining the traditional concept of travel by offering experiences that foster genuine cultural immersion and meaningful human connection. The agency's primary objective is to design and promote tours that go beyond conventional tourist attractions, allowing visitors to engage with the cultural, historical, and natural richness of El Salvador in an authentic and profound manner.

Through its programs, Our Roots seeks to highlight the essence of Salvadoran identity by emphasizing respect for local traditions, appreciation of natural resources, and active participation in community life. Each itinerary is carefully structured to honor the nation's cultural heritage, from the warmth of towns that preserve centuries-old customs to the splendor of landscapes that reflect the country's history and resilience.

Travelers are invited to explore artisan markets that showcase the creativity of local craftsmanship, to enjoy traditional cuisine prepared with ancestral recipes, and to interact with communities that proudly maintain their cultural authenticity. These experiences not only enrich the visitor's understanding of Salvadoran life but also contribute to the economic and social development of the host communities.

Furthermore, the agency's mission extends beyond tourism. Our Roots aims to promote responsible and sustainable travel practices that encourage cultural respect, environmental awareness, and equitable benefit-sharing between travelers and local populations. By fostering these values, the agency aspires to create transformative experiences that inspire appreciation, empathy, and a long-lasting connection between people and places.

In essence, Our Roots Travel Agency represents a model of tourism that combines cultural preservation, community engagement, and educational value. Each journey becomes an opportunity for personal growth, intercultural understanding, and celebration of the rich heritage that defines El Salvador; transforming every trip into a sincere tribute to our roots.



# Chapter I

## Profile of a Tourist Product or Service

## **Objectives**

### **General Objective:**

To design travelers with authentic, immersive cultural experiences in El Salvador by connecting them with local families, fostering meaningful connections, and promoting responsible tourism.

### **Specific Objective:**

To establish and maintain partnerships with Salvadorian families who are eager to share their daily lives, traditions, and hospitality with travelers.

To design and offer culturally rich activities and experiences such as local cooking, traditional crafts, and community events that allow travelers to deeply engage with Salvadorian culture.

To promote sustainable tourism practices that ensure mutual benefit for both travelers and host communities, supporting local economies and preserving cultural heritage.

## **Justification**

Our roots travel agency project is driven by the need to transform the traditional travel experience into one that fosters genuine cultural exchange, deeper understanding, and positive impact. In an era where tourism often risks becoming superficial and commercialized, this project offers an alternative: authentic immersion into local Salvadorian life.

By connecting travelers with local families, the project promotes meaningful interactions, allowing visitors to experience El Salvador's traditions, customs, and daily life firsthand. This not only enriches the traveler's experience but also generates direct economic benefits for host families and communities, helping to preserve cultural heritage and promote sustainable tourism practices.

Furthermore, the project addresses the growing global demand for responsible travel by offering an approach that values respect, reciprocity, and cultural sensitivity. It aspires to build bridges between people, foster mutual understanding, and create unforgettable memories, all while contributing to the sustainable development of local communities.

## **Product General Description**

At Our roots travel agency, we believe travel is more than just visiting new places; it's about truly experiencing them. We want to connect you with the heart of each destination by offering authentic, immersive experiences with local families. Stay in real Salvadorian homes, share meals, and engage in daily life, so you can discover El Salvador's rich culture from the inside out. Whether you're exploring vibrant traditions, savoring home cooked dishes, or learning the local way of life, we offer a unique opportunity to live like a local and create unforgettable memories.

At Our roots travel agency, our mission is to offer travelers an authentic and immersive cultural experience by connecting them directly with local families. We provide the opportunity to live and travel like a local, fostering meaningful connections and a deeper understanding of El Salvador's rich heritage. Through genuine homestays and personal interactions, we aim to create unforgettable memories and promote sustainable, responsible tourism that benefits both visitors and communities.

Our vision is to be the leading agency in transformative travel experiences that empower travelers to engage with the world through local perspectives. We aspire to build a global network of travelers and hosts who share a passion for cultural exchange, making the world feel more connected and creating a positive impact on the communities we visit. By staying true to the spirit of authenticity, we aim to inspire a new way of traveling, one where cultural immersion and meaningful connections are at the heart of every journey.

## **Our Services**

At our roots travel agency, we curate an extraordinary 2-week travel experience that allows you to truly immerse yourself in the heart of El Salvador's culture. Our journey is designed to go beyond typical sightseeing and offer a deeper, more meaningful connection to the country and its people. Here's how we create a one-of-a-kind adventure for you:

### **Week 1: Immersion into Tradition and Community**

#### *Day 1-2: Arrival & Welcome*

Your adventure begins with a warm welcome from a local family. You'll be hosted in a cozy Salvadorian home, where you'll settle in and get to know your hosts. Enjoy a traditional meal and take part in a cultural introduction, learning about local customs, history, and the essence of Salvadorian life.

#### *Day 3-5: Explore the Culture*

During the first few days, you'll dive deep into the culture with guided tours led by local experts. Visit artisanal workshops where you can witness traditional crafts, such as weaving, pottery, and painting. Participating in cooking classes, learning to make local dishes like pupusas and tamales. Every evening, return to your host family for a home-cooked meal and share stories, enriching your travel experience.

#### *Day 6-7: Nature & Adventure*

Venture into the stunning landscapes of El Salvador, including its volcanic lakes, lush rainforests, and breathtaking beaches. Whether hiking up a volcano, visiting hidden waterfalls, or exploring nature reserves, you'll connect with the environment in a way that many tourists never experience. Enjoy a family-style picnic on the beach or in the mountains, and bond with your hosts over shared adventures.

### **Week 2: Deeper Connections & Personal Experiences**

#### *Day 8-10: Learning from the Locals*

During this week, we take immersion to the next level. You'll spend time participating in local community projects, whether it's helping at a community center, joining a farm-to-table initiative, or supporting environmental conservation efforts. You'll learn firsthand about the values and daily lives of Salvadorians while making a positive impact.

*Day 11-12: Artistic Exploration & Creativity*

Tap into your artistic side with creative workshops led by local artisans and musicians. Try your hand at traditional Salvadorian painting, photography, or music. You'll have the chance to take home your own handmade creations as souvenirs, and you may even find inspiration for your own travel stories and memories.

*Day 13-14: Reflection & Farewell*

As your journey nears its end, take time to reflect on the incredible experiences and personal connections you've made. You'll have an intimate farewell dinner with your host family, sharing your favorite moments from the trip. Before you leave, we'll provide you with a beautifully crafted travel journal to document your journey so the memories you've made can last a lifetime.

Through this unique two-week journey, Our Roots Travel Agency provides not just a vacation, but a truly transformative experience that allows you to connect with El Salvador on a personal and authentic level. By living with locals, you'll leave with more than just souvenirs you'll leave with unforgettable memories and a deeper appreciation of the culture.

## **Product Description**

At Our Roots Travel Agency, we specialize in crafting a personalized, immersive travel journey that allows you to experience El Salvador like never before. Over two weeks, we combine cultural immersion, adventure, and local experiences to ensure you create unforgettable memories. Here's a more specific look at our services:

### **1. Customized Travel Packages**

We tailor each trip to meet your unique interests and needs. Whether you're passionate about culture, adventure, or local experiences, our customized travel packages are designed to give you the most authentic Salvadorian journey. We take the time to understand what you want from your travels and create a personalized itinerary that includes the best of what El Salvador has to offer.

### **2. Flight and Accommodation Booking Based on Host Families**

Your adventure starts as soon as you arrive. We handle all the logistics, including flight bookings and secure accommodation with local host families. By staying with a local family, you'll experience the culture from the inside, enjoy home-cooked meals, and truly live like a Salvadorian. This homestay arrangement provides you with an authentic, personalized experience that no hotel can offer.

### **3. Group Tours and Cultural Experiences**

Our group tours focus on the cultural essence of El Salvador. Guided by locals, you'll explore the rich history, vibrant traditions, and unique craftsmanship of the country. From visiting artisan workshops to touring historic towns and learning about Salvadorian festivals, every activity is designed to give you a deep, immersive connection to the culture. We ensure you leave with an understanding of what makes El Salvador so special.

### **4. Adventure and Local Experiences**

We take you beyond the typical tourist path, offering thrilling adventures and local experiences. Whether it's hiking up a volcano, surfing on the Pacific coast, or exploring hidden waterfalls, our activities are crafted to give you a true taste of Salvadorian nature and adventure. Additionally, we organize local experiences such as visiting farms, joining community projects, and participating in traditional cooking classes, allowing you to get hands-on with the culture.

Through these services, Our Roots Travel Agency offers a 2-week journey that's fully tailored to your interests, immersing you in the culture, adventure, and warmth of El Salvador. Whether you're exploring local markets, sharing stories with your host family, or hiking through stunning landscapes, we guarantee an unforgettable travel experience like no other. Here are some of the most popular destinations in El Salvador for a truly local experience, where you can connect with the culture, people, and natural beauty of the country:

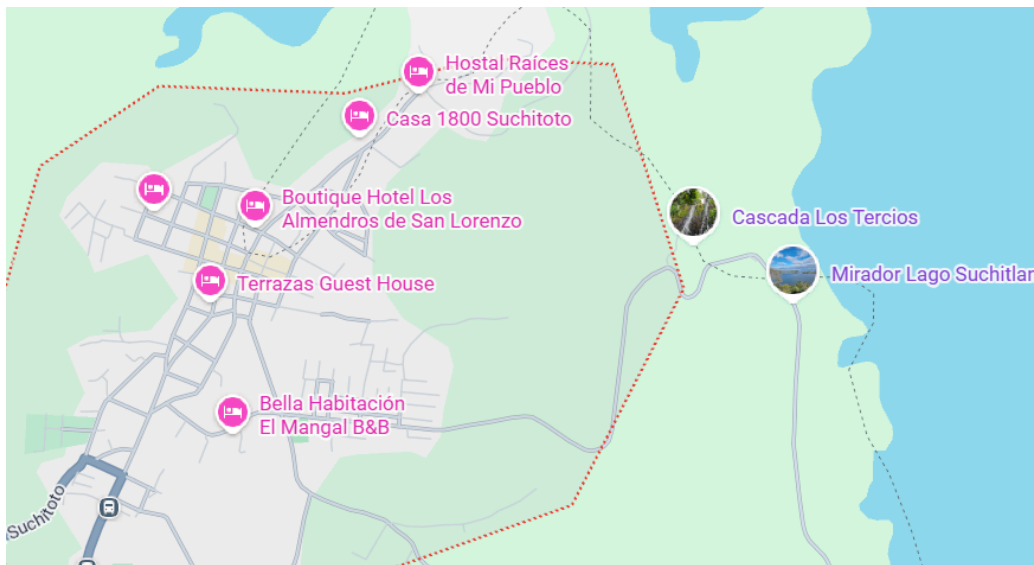
### **1. Suchitoto**

Suchitoto is a charming colonial town known for its cobblestone streets, vibrant art scene, and rich cultural heritage. This town offers a deeper look into Salvadoran traditions, with local artisans showcasing their crafts and the chance to learn about indigenous history. Staying with a host family here will let you experience traditional festivals, local music, and the warm community atmosphere.

#### *Local experience highlights:*

- Visit the nearby Cozalapa Lake for boat rides and bird watching.
- Attend local art workshops or experience traditional dances like the cumbia.
- Explore the town's historic churches and colonial architecture.

Figure 1.1: Location of Suchitoto, El Salvador



Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application

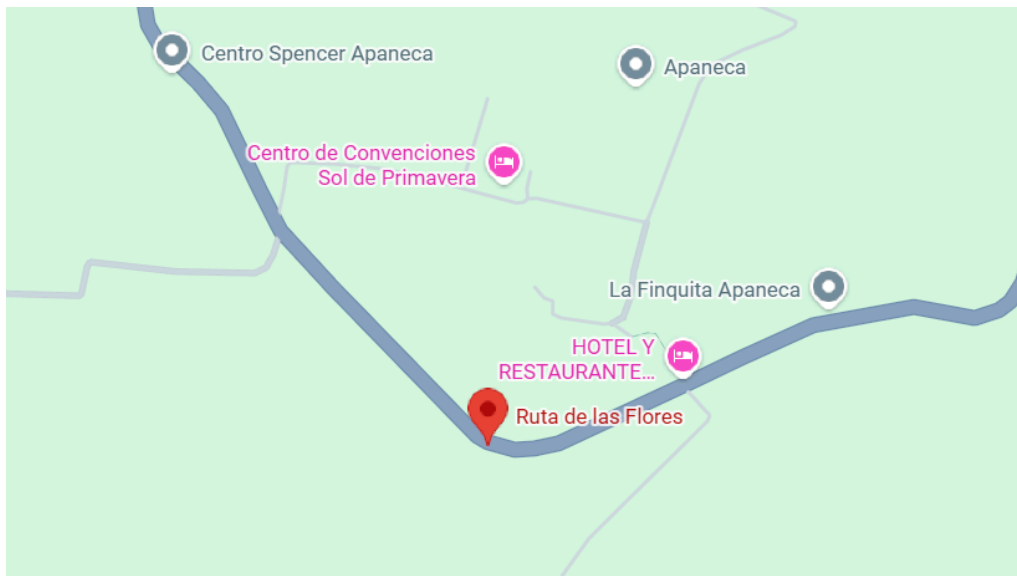
## 2. La Ruta de Las Flores

This scenic route, winding through the mountains and coffee plantations, is perfect for those wanting to experience rural life in El Salvador. The towns along the route, like Juayúa, Apaneca, and Ataco, are known for their lush landscapes, colorful murals, and vibrant markets. Staying with host families here gives you a chance to experience rural Salvadoran hospitality, as well as discover the local coffee culture and cuisine.

*Local experience highlights:*

- Participate in a coffee tour and learn the process from bean to cup.
- Enjoy traditional dishes like yuca con chicharrón or pupusas made by local families.
- Explore waterfalls and hike through the region's lush forests.

Figure 1.2: Location of Ruta de las Flores, El Salvador



Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application

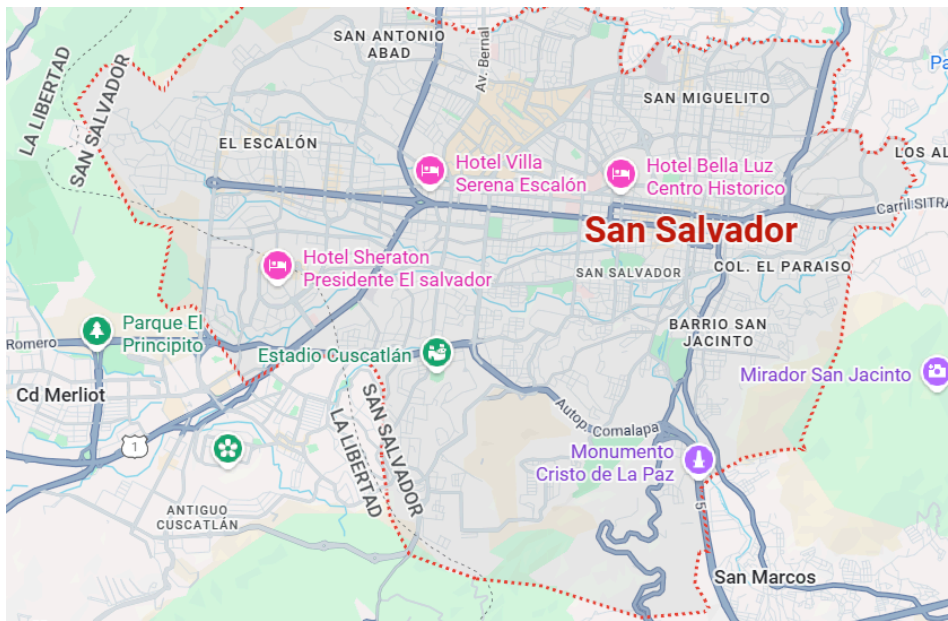
### 3. San Salvador

The capital city offers a vibrant mix of culture, history, and modern Salvadoran life. From its bustling markets to historical landmarks, San Salvador is a city that balances both old traditions and contemporary energy. Staying with a host family here can provide insights into local customs, everyday life, and the rich history of the Salvadoran people.

*Local experience highlights:*

- Visit Teatro Nacional to experience local theater performances or music events.
- Explore the local markets, like Mercado de Artesanías, to discover crafts and handmade goods.
- Visit the Jardín Botánico La Laguna for a peaceful escape into nature within the city.

Figure 1.3: Location Of San Salvador, El Salvador



Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application

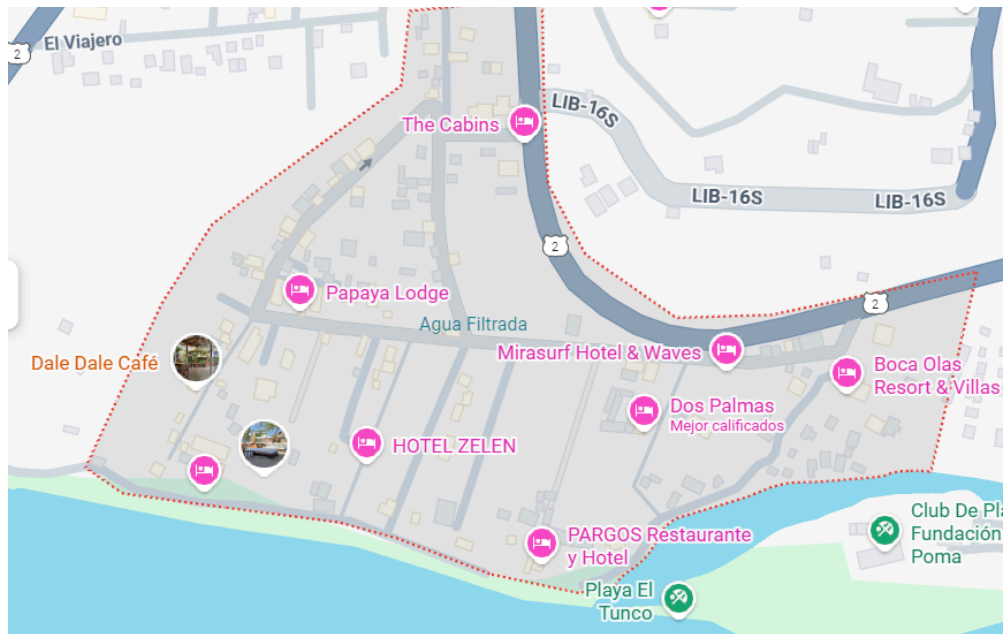
#### 4. El Tunco

El Tunco is a small beach village popular with surfers, but it also offers a glimpse into coastal Salvadoran life. Staying with a local family here will allow you to experience the laid-back, beach-town atmosphere while discovering local seafood dishes and customs. El Tunco is perfect for those seeking a combination of adventure and cultural immersion.

*Local experience highlights:*

- Learn to surf with local surf instructors.
- Enjoy freshly caught seafood at local beachside restaurants.
- Experience the vibrant surf culture through interactions with locals and surfers from around the world.

Figure 1.4: Location of El Tunco, El Salvador



Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application

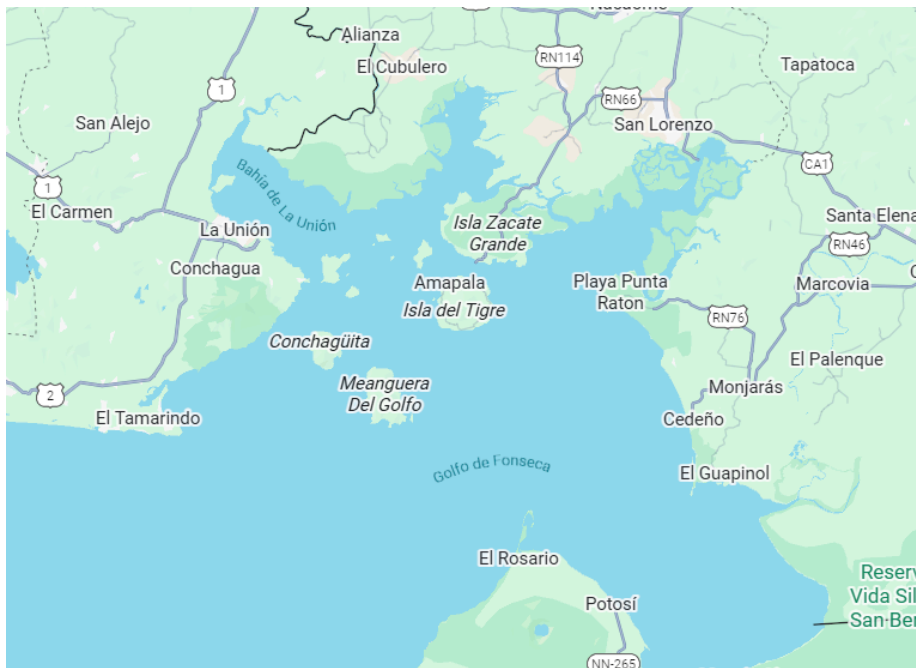
## 5. Conchagua y El Golfo de Fonseca

Conchagua is a tranquil coastal town offering an authentic look at life by the sea. Known for its Gulf of Fonseca views, fishing communities, and warm hospitality, it's a place where you can spend time with local fishermen and learn about their way of life. Staying with a family here offers a truly off-the-beaten-path experience, away from the usual tourist crowds.

*Local experience highlights:*

- Go on fishing trips with local fishermen and learn their craft.
- Visit Iglesia de Conchagua, a local church where you can interact with the community.
- Spend time on less-visited beaches and enjoy the calm and peaceful surroundings.

Figure 1.5: Location of El Golfo de Fonseca



Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application

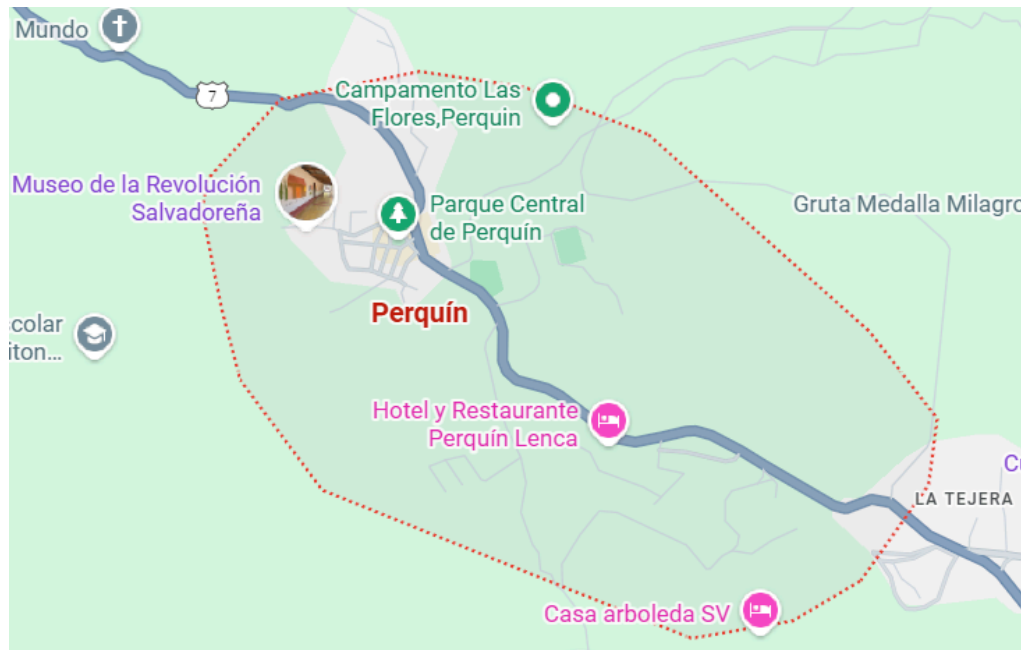
## 6. Perquín y El Mozote

For history buffs, Perquín and El Mozote offer a poignant look into El Salvador's civil war history. The area is also known for its beautiful natural surroundings, with forests and rivers that offer outdoor adventures. Staying with a local family here will give you the chance to hear personal stories and gain a deeper understanding of the country's past.

*Local experience highlights:*

- Visit the Museo de la Revolución in Perquín for an in-depth look at the Salvadoran civil war.
- Hike through the Bosque El Imposible, one of the most biodiverse forests in Central America.
- Visit the El Mozote Memorial, where the Salvadoran civil war's impact on local communities is remembered.

Figure 1.6: Location of Perquin, El Salvador



Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application

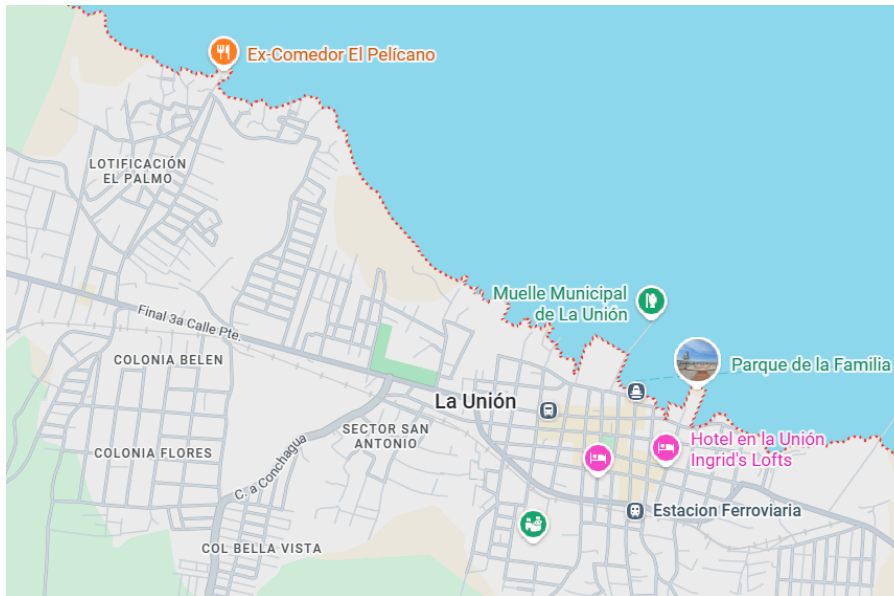
## 7. La Unión

La Unión is a port city located on the Gulf of Fonseca, known for its stunning landscapes, including volcanic islands and crystal-clear waters. It's a great place to experience local coastal culture and get involved in community life. Staying with a family here lets you engage in the local fishing economy and enjoy the beach while learning about the everyday lives of Salvadorans who live by the sea.

*Local experience highlights:*

- Visit Isla Meanguera and learn about local traditions of island life.
- Experience the vibrant local fishing culture firsthand and see how locals work together to support each other's businesses.
- Enjoy seafood prepared by your host family or at local restaurants with stunning views of the ocean.

Figure 1.7: Location of La Union, El Salvador



*Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application*

These destinations offer the perfect blend of local culture, nature, and authentic experiences that will make your trip to El Salvador unforgettable. By staying with host families and participating in these local activities, you'll walk away with a deeper understanding of the country and its people.

All these destinations will depend where the host family is located, we have host families all around the country, mostly and focused on rural areas.

In this immersive travel experience with Our Roots Travel Agency you'll have the opportunity to explore El Salvador in various unique ways. Here are the different types of travel experiences you can expect to enjoy, each designed to give you a deeper connection to the culture, nature, and people of the country:

### **1. Cultural Tourism**

This experience allows you to dive deep into the heart of Salvadoran culture. You'll be staying with local host families who will introduce you to the daily rhythms of Salvadorian life.

***Activities:***

- Participate in traditional cooking classes with your host family, learning to make dishes like pupusas and tamales.
- Explore local festivals, music performances, and dances like the cumbia.
- Visit artisan workshops to see handmade crafts such as woven textiles and pottery.
- Attend local community events and learn firsthand about Salvadoran traditions and customs.

**2. Adventure and Nature Tourism**

El Salvador is home to diverse landscapes, from lush forests to beautiful beaches and towering volcanoes. This type of travel is perfect for nature lovers and adventurers who want to experience the country's stunning outdoors.

***Activities:***

- Hike up active volcanoes such as Ilamatepeq or San Vicente for breathtaking views.
- Go surfing at world-renowned beaches like El Tunco or El Zonte.
- Explore hidden waterfalls and lush rainforests on guided eco-tours.
- Take boat trips on volcanic lakes like Lake Coatepeque or explore the Gulf of Fonseca by sea.

**3. Historical and Educational Tourism**

For those who wish to understand the rich history of El Salvador, this experience will focus on visiting historically significant sites and engaging in conversations with local people to learn about the country's past.

***Activities:***

- Tour El Mozote, a village with deep historical significance from the Salvadoran civil war.

- Visit museums, such as the Museo de la Revolución in Perquín, and engage with locals who lived through the war to hear their personal stories.
- Explore ancient Mayan ruins like Tazumal and Joya de Cerén, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Discover the heritage of Salvadoran indigenous communities and learn about their traditions and struggles.

#### **4. Rural Tourism**

This form of travel focuses on direct interaction with local communities and contributing to community development. It's perfect for travelers who want to make a positive impact while enjoying the beauty of El Salvador.

##### ***Activities:***

- Volunteer with local projects such as education programs, environmental conservation, or community development.
- Stay in rural areas where you'll support sustainable farming practices and learn about agricultural life.
- Participate in community workshops to promote local crafts and products, helping artisans showcase their work to the world.
- Spend time with local families and help in daily activities, from cooking to farming, gaining insight into their way of life.

#### **5. Gastronomy Tourism**

For food lovers, this experience is focused on exploring the flavors of El Salvador, from street food to home-cooked meals, and understanding the culture behind Salvadoran cuisine.

##### ***Activities:***

- Take part in cooking classes where you'll prepare traditional Salvadoran dishes like pupusas, yuca con chicharrón, y sopa de frijoles.
- Explore local markets, such as Mercado Central in San Salvador, and taste fresh produce, spices, and local snacks.
- Enjoy family-style meals prepared by your host family, experiencing authentic, home-cooked Salvadoran food.
- Visit farms and learn about local agriculture, including coffee and cacao production.

Each of these travel types is designed to give you a deep, authentic connection to El Salvador, whether you're diving into its rich culture, exploring its stunning nature, or learning from its warm and welcoming people. No matter which experiences you choose, you'll leave with lasting memories and a deeper understanding of this beautiful country.

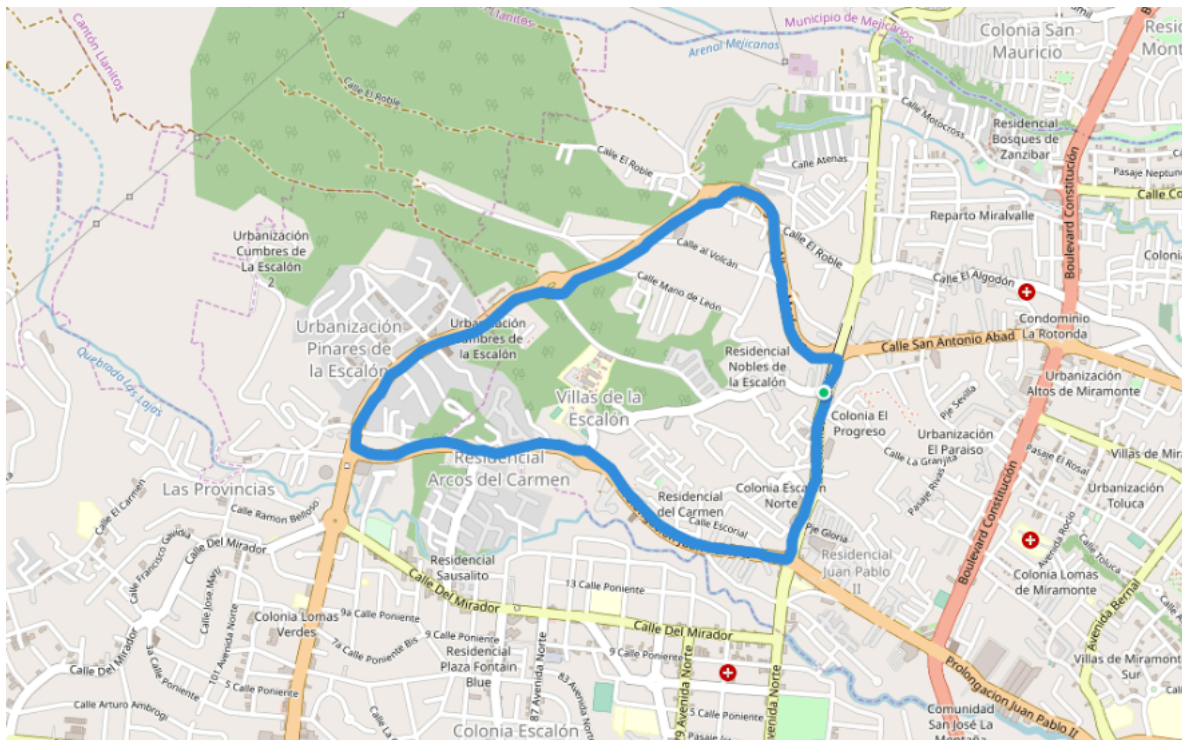
## Location

The location of a service is very important, which is why we offer a strategic location specifically in the central zone of our country. Our offices will be in the department of San Salvador in El Salvador specifically in the Escalon neighborhood. Being in the central zone gives us closer access to the different districts of the country.

Prime Location: Escalón neighborhood is in the upper area of San Salvador, offering easy access to major thoroughfares and connections to the rest of the city, commercial and tourist environment, close proximity to potential customers, proximity to key point and ease of access and transportation

The location allows for easy access to customers. Furthermore, its connection to main streets and avenues allows for quick commutes to nearby airports or tourist destinations.

*Figure 1.8: Location of La Escalon, San Salvador, El Salvador*



*Note: Map Obtained from Google Maps Application*

## **Product Attributes**

### **Authenticity and Connection to Roots**

- Experiences designed to highlight Salvadoran identity and traditions.
- Tours of towns and communities that preserve their cultural essence.
- Direct interaction with local artisans, farmers, and families.

### **Sustainable and Responsible Tourism**

- Support for local businesses and fair trade.
- Respect for the environment and the conservation of natural spaces.
- Promotion of tourism practices that benefit communities.

### **Unique and Personalized Experiences**

- Itineraries tailored to each traveler's interests.
- Group and individual travel options for a more intimate experience.
- Special activities such as hiking, cultural photography, and participation in local festivals.

### **Expert guides with in-depth knowledge**

- Accompanied by guides passionate about Salvadoran history and culture.
- Narratives enriched with historical facts and interesting facts about each destination.
- Advice to discover little-explored places with great cultural value.

### **Safety and comfort**

- Reliable transportation with options for different types of travelers.
- Lodging in authentic accommodations that reflect the local essence.
- Personalized attention to ensure an unforgettable experience.

## **Tourism Typology**

In this project, our travel agency focuses on various types of tourism that highlight Salvadoran authenticity and roots. Here are some of the main ones:

- **Cultural Tourism**

Exploration of El Salvador's traditions, customs, and artistic expressions. These include visits to indigenous communities, artisan markets, and local festivals to immerse yourself in the country's cultural identity

- **Rural and Community Tourism**

Focus on interaction with local communities, promoting sustainable development. These include stays in rural family homes, tours of agroecological farms, and participation in community activities.

- **Historical Tourism**

Visits to sites that tell the story of El Salvador, from pre-Columbian ruins like Joya de Cerén to emblematic sites from the colonial era and the armed conflict.

- **Nature Tourism and Ecotourism**

Experiences in natural spaces such as national parks, ecological reserves, and beaches. It focuses on respect for the environment and connecting with Salvadoran biodiversity through hiking, wildlife watching, and conservation activities.

- **Festival and Celebration Tourism**

Immerse yourself in the country's popular festivals, such as patron saint festivals, the Day of the Cross, and Holy Week, allowing travelers to experience Salvadoran traditions from the inside.

- **Gastronomy tourism**

This type of cuisine allows travelers to enjoy dishes prepared with family recipes passed down from generation to generation, made with fresh ingredients and a unique touch

of home cooking. This not only highlights Salvadoran culinary identity but also strengthens the connection with local communities and the history behind each dish.

- *Authentic flavors:* Tourists will be able to enjoy dishes such as pupusas, corn atol, tamales pisques, and riguas, all prepared using traditional methods.
- *Inviting environments:* Instead of commercial restaurants, travelers will be able to dine in family kitchens, community dining rooms, or small local businesses, where the atmosphere is warm and homey.
- *Cultural interaction:* The meal will be an opportunity for visitors to meet the people who prepare the food, hear stories about the recipes, and understand the importance of each dish in Salvadoran daily life.
- *Local Ingredients:* Products will be fresh and locally sourced, promoting the economy of farmers and small businesses.

This initiative not only guarantees a deeper and more meaningful experience but also contributes to preserving culinary traditions and strengthening responsible tourism.

## **Application of Strategy for Human Development and Sustainability**

- **Environmental Responsibility**

Our Roots, we recognize the importance of protecting the natural environment as part of responsible tourism. Our travel experiences are designed to minimize environmental impact by encouraging eco-conscious choices from both travelers and hosts. We promote the use of local resources and reduce waste by avoiding single-use plastics and supporting home-cooked meals made with regional ingredients. We also encourage travelers to respect the natural surroundings, such as forests, rivers, and wildlife, by following local environmental guidelines. Whenever possible, we partner with communities that are engaged in eco-friendly practices like composting, organic farming, and water conservation. Our goal is to foster environmental awareness while helping to preserve El Salvador's natural beauty for future generations.

- **Cultural Preservation**

Our commitment to cultural preservation is at the heart of everything we do. Our Roots gives travelers the opportunity to engage directly with Salvadorian traditions, languages, and ways of life. By staying with local families, visitors are immersed in authentic cultural experiences such as traditional cooking, folklore, crafts, and regional festivals. These experiences not only enrich the traveler's journey but also help preserve and pass down cultural knowledge that might otherwise be lost. We work with communities to ensure that all cultural sharing is respectful and consensual, and we actively promote pride in cultural heritage among both hosts and guests. This mutual respect strengthens identity and reinforces the value of local customs in a globalized world.

- **Economic Sustainability**

Our Roots is dedicated to ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism reach the communities who host our travelers. A core element of our model is direct financial support

to host families, who receive fair compensation for their time, hospitality, and resources. This creates reliable income streams that help improve quality of life, support education, and fund small local projects. We prioritize long-term relationships with hosts and invest in community training programs that build capacity in tourism management, hospitality, and cultural interpretation. By supporting local economies in a sustainable and equitable way, we empower communities to thrive without becoming dependent on mass tourism or external aid. This model strengthens the economic fabric of rural and underrepresented regions while ensuring the experiences remain genuine and community led.

## **Global Warming**

(United Nations Development Program, n.d) Said that Global warming is one of the greatest challenges humanity faces, with impacts felt even in the most remote villages and natural landscapes. Rising temperatures, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss also affect El Salvador's rural communities and ecosystems. The tourism industry must take responsibility and become a positive force for the planet.

At Our Roots, we are passionate about connecting travelers with the authentic rural life of El Salvador, while protecting the environment and supporting local communities. We proudly align our work with the United Nations Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially:

- SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- SDG 13: Climate Action
- SDG 15: Life on Land

### **Our Commitment Against Global Warming:**

#### *1. Low-Carbon Rural Travel*

We design rural tourism experiences with minimal environmental impact:

- We encourage slow travel and the use of eco-friendly transportation.
- We avoid mass tourism hotspots and promote small-scale, community-based travel.
- We offset the carbon footprint of each trip through local reforestation projects in El Salvador.

#### *2. Sustainable Rural Stays*

We partner with rural lodges, eco-cabins, and family-run farms that:

- Use renewable energy (such as solar panels).
- Practice water conservation and organic farming.

→ Support biodiversity and protect local ecosystems.

### 3. *Education & Nature Experiences*

Our tours include activities that raise awareness of global warming and nature conservation:

→ Visits to protected areas and community forests.

→ Workshops on sustainable farming and agroecology.

→ Opportunities to plant trees and participate in local environmental projects.

### 4. *Empowering Rural Communities*

We ensure that tourism directly benefits rural families:

→ We work with cooperatives and artisans.

→ We promote traditional knowledge and sustainable practices.

→ We foster partnerships that build community resilience to climate change.

### 5. *Respect for Nature*

We follow and promote "Leave No Trace" principles. Every traveler is guided on how to reduce their impact and support El Salvador's natural heritage.

Aligned with Agenda 2030:

As the UN Agenda 2030 urges in SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), *Our Roots* believe rural tourism can be a powerful tool to fight climate change. We offer authentic experiences that connect people with nature, foster respect for the environment, and contribute to the sustainability of rural communities in El Salvador.

### **Our Promise:**

Traveling with Our Roots means being part of the solution. Together with our travelers and our rural partners, we aim to protect the rich natural and cultural heritage of El Salvador, and contribute to a greener, fairer world.

## Chapter II

# Elements for the design of a tourist product or service

## History of Tourism

- *Tourism in Ancient Egypt*

The history of tourism began to take shape in ancient Egypt, around 2700 BC, when pharaohs and nobility undertook trips both for religious devotion and pleasure. These early tourists visited temples and monuments not only to pay homage to the gods but also to demonstrate their status and power. Trips to sites like the Pyramids of Giza or the Temple of Karnak required significant planning and resources, making tourism accessible only to the elite. This early phenomenon is a crucial example in the history and evolution of tourism (Draven,2024).

- *Pilgrimages in Ancient Greece*

History of tourism around the world. Its global evolution. Studying Tourism on (2024) that related that in ancient Greece, tourism manifested itself in various forms, especially through religious pilgrimages and sporting events. The Olympic Games, which began in 776 BC, attracted people from all over Greece and beyond. Attending these events was not only an opportunity to watch athletic competitions but also to participate in religious and social activities. The Greeks also traveled to sacred sites such as Delphi, home of the famous oracle, and Epidauros, known for its theater and sanctuary of Asclepius, the god of medicine. These practices show how tourism was deeply intertwined with culture and religion, forming an integral part of the history of tourism around the world (Draven,2024).

- *Travel and Leisure in Ancient Rome*

As the same study (Draven, 2024). History of tourism around the world. Its global evolution. Studying Tourism in (2024) mentioned that the Romans took the concept of tourism to new heights thanks to their vast road network and territorial dominance. Roman baths, theaters, and amphitheaters became popular leisure destinations. Citizens from different parts of the empire traveled to Rome to enjoy its impressive structures and public

events. Furthermore, summer villas located in places like Pompeii and Herculaneum offered an escape from the urban bustle. These practices reflect the importance of tourism in everyday life and its influence on the history of global tourism.

Roman mobility also facilitated cultural and economic exchange, two fundamental aspects of the development of tourism. Trade and military travel helped spread customs, products, and knowledge throughout the empire. This network of exchanges is a testament to how interconnected tourism and trade were in ancient times.

- *The Silk Road and Tourism in Asia*

In Asia, during the Han Dynasty in China (approximately 200 BC), tourism also played a crucial role. The Silk Road, one of the most iconic trade routes in history, not only facilitated the trade of goods but also cultural and religious exchange. Travelers along this route visited cities, markets, and monasteries, contributing to the region's rich history and tourism. Buddhism, which spread along the Silk Road, encouraged pilgrimages to sacred sites in India, China, and other countries, creating a type of religious tourism that endures to this day in the history of tourism around the world. It's global evolution. Studying Tourism on (Draven, 2024).

- *Tourism in Other Ancient Civilizations*

Other ancient civilizations also contributed to the history of global tourism. In Mesopotamia, ziggurats and temples attracted pilgrims and merchants. In Persia, royal gardens and impressive architecture such as Persepolis became destinations for nobility and diplomats from other lands. In the Americas, the Mayan and Inca civilizations also showed signs of primitive tourism, with routes and ceremonial centers that drew people from different regions.

The history of tourism in ancient times shows us that the desire to travel and explore is as old as human civilization itself. From the voyages of the Egyptian pharaohs to Greek

pilgrimages and Roman and Asian trade routes, tourism has been a constant in the human quest for knowledge, trade, and devotion. These early steps in the history of tourism laid the groundwork for the more complex and organized forms of tourism that would emerge in later eras.

## **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 (Jose Matias Delgado, n.d).

In 1946, the National Department of Tourism was created as a section 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 (Jose Matias Delgado, n.d).

The factors that influenced El Salvador's greater emphasis on tourism since the 1960s included 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 small extent, took place.

Thus, in 1961, the Salvadoran Tourism Institute (ISTU) was created as a government agency managing tourism. Its main responsibilities were:

1. Development of projects for the promotion and development of the tourism industry.
2. Regulation of tourism businesses.
3. Management of tourism assets.
4. Submission of regular reports on the sector's performance.

Beginning in 1968, there is greater evidence about tourism in El Salvador. The ISTU (National Institute of Statistics and Censuses) 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 (Jose Matias Delgado, n.d).

The development of tourism in El Salvador in the 1970s was driven by the construction of hotels such as Camino Real, the Ritz, Alameda, and 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.

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 in El Salvador. The boom remained stable until the end of the 1970s. However, the start of the war marked the decline of what seemed like a profitable new sector for El Salvador, dropping below 100,000 tourists. The numbers indicate that the country had regressed 15 years by the end of the 1970s (Jose Matias Delgado, n.d).

During the period from 1979 to 1990, the flow of visitors to the country remained constant; the majority were foreign journalists or non-governmental institutions working with Salvadoran society (Jose Matias Delgado, n.d).

## Natural Resources In El Salvador

**Lago de Suchitlan:** Gaceta Suchitoto. The lake of Suchitlán, the most important lake in terms of both its size and its intrinsic value. With a water surface of 135 square kilometers, it is home to thousands of migratory birds and offers significant opportunities for productive and recreational activities, in addition to its well-known scenic value (Gaceta Suuchitoto, 2017).

*Figure 2.1: Lago de Suchitoto, Suchitoto, El Salvador*



*Note. Figure obtained from Gaceta Suchitoto. (2017, agosto 18). Hablemos del patrimonio natural de Suchitoto. Gaceta Suchitoto.*

**Cerro de Guazapa:** Guazapa Hill, at 1,400 meters above sea level, is a place of cultural and natural wealth linked to the armed conflict of the 1980s, preserving vestiges such as trenches, armadillos, and tombs. There are also traces of indigo mills. Its ecosystem is home to an estimated 200 plant species and 27 species of birds, mammals, and reptiles, as well as streams and waterfalls. The hill also features several community initiatives, including ecotourism and hiking projects (Gaceta Suuchitoto, 2017).

*Figure 2.2: Cerro de Guazapa, San Salvador, El Salvador.*



*Note. Figure obtained from Gaceta Suchitoto. (2017, agosto 18). Hablemos del patrimonio natural de Suchitoto. Gaceta Suchitoto.*

**Rio de Quezalapa:** The Quezalapa River, which rises in Tejutepeque and flows into Lake Suchitlán, flows through the cantons of Caulote, Pepelshtenango, and Tenango. Its channel and clear waters make it a scenic route.

*Figure 2.3: Rio de Quezalapa, Cusclan, El Salvador*



*Note. Figure obtained from Gaceta Suchitoto. (2017, agosto 18). Hablemos del patrimonio natural de Suchitoto. Gaceta Suchitoto.*

**Los Tercios:** Los Tercios, a 12-meter waterfall in a stream that is a tributary of the Lempa River. This is one of the most popular tourist attractions.

*Figure 2.4: Lempa River, El Salvador*



*Note. Figure obtained from Gaceta Suchitoto. (2017, agosto 18). Hablemos del patrimonio natural de Suchitoto. Gaceta Suchitoto.*

**Jardín botánico:** The Botanical Garden is located right on what was once a volcanic crater that erupted more than 2,200 years ago. Over time, a lagoon formed at the bottom. Following the San José earthquake of March 19, 1873, its level dropped considerably. The small bodies of water had to be drained to reclaim the soil for sugarcane planting, followed by the development of a dairy industry (Asociación Jardín Botánico La Laguna. (n.d.)

By 1912, the lagoon's drying process had been completed, giving way to an intense process of industrialization. Within this area was the home of the Deininger family, who were nature lovers and had a hobby of collecting plants from all over the world to decorate their garden. Years later, they decided to donate it and convert it into a botanical garden (Asociación Jardín Botánico La Laguna. (n.d.). Thus, on July 13, 1976, the La Laguna Botanical Garden Association was legally established as a private, non-political, non-profit, and non-religious entity. To date, the Association is responsible for its conservation and administration. Its new bylaws and Executive Agreement No. 111 were approved and

published in Official Gazette No. 122, Volume 360, on July 3, 2003, and it was opened to the public on December 22, 1978 (Asociación Jardín Botánico La Laguna. (n.d.)

*Figure 2.5: Jardín Botánico, La Libertad, El Salvador*



*Note. Figure obtained from Asociación Jardín Botánico La Laguna. (n.d.).*

**Parque Arqueológico San Andrés:** San Andrés is an archaeological site located in the Zapotitán Valley, just five kilometers from Joya de Cerén, in the department of La Libertad. The site includes an acropolis, an architectural space where activities were restricted to a special group of people, possibly directed by the ruling elite. The acropolis was constructed by raising the ground level between structures 1, 2, 3, and 4 using adobe bricks during the height of San Andrés's power in the Late Classic period. (Ministerio de Cultura de El Salvador, (n.d).

*Figure 2.6: San Andrés Archaeological park, La Libertad, El Salvador.*



*Note. Figure obtained from Ministerio de Cultura de El Salvador. (n.d.). Parque Arqueológico San Andrés.*

**Parque de Aventura Walter Thilo Deininger Surf City:** This park is located 39 kilometers from San Salvador, in the Hacienda San Diego Canton, at Km. 55, Carretera Litoral, La Libertad. It covers 1,047 acres of land donated by philanthropist Walter Thilo Deininger. It is within 21 kilometers of a tourist zone of national interest, which is being developed through the Surf City strategy to transform public spaces for tourism (Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo. (n.d).

Due to its forest reserve, with a wide diversity of flora and fauna, it is one of the most important natural spaces in the country, becoming a protected natural area; a biological island where remnants of El Salvador's primary vegetation can be found. It contains three types of forest: gallery forest, dry forest, deciduous forest, and secondary forest.

*Figure 2.7: Walter Thilo Deininger Surf City Adventure Park, La Libertad, El Salvador.*



*Note. Figure obtained from Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo. (n.d.). Parque de Aventuras Surf City Walter Thilo Deininger. Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo.*

**Los Chorros:** Located 18 kilometers west of San Salvador, this important tourist attraction, a water and ecological sanctuary, opened its doors to the public in 1957 as a tribute to the founder of El Salvador's Recreational Center System (Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo. (n.d). the illustrious poet Raúl Contreras. It was closed for almost seven years due to the 2001 earthquakes but reopened on March 13, 2008.

Expanding 12 blocks, Los Chorros Water Park boasts unique natural beauty. Its name comes from the numerous springs created by rainwater seepage into the San Salvador Volcano. It offers four completely natural pools (Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo. (n.d).

*Figure 2.8: Los Chorros, San Salvador, El Salvador.*



*Note. Figure obtained from Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo. (n.d.). Parque Recreativo Los Chorros. Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo.*

**Parque Nacional El Imposible:** located in the west of the country, in the department of Ahuachapán, between the municipalities of San Francisco Menéndez and Tacuba, on the slopes of the Sierra de Apaneca Ilamatepec (El Salvador Viajar, (2022).

*Figure 2.9: Parque Nacional El Imposible, Ahuachapan, El Salvador.*



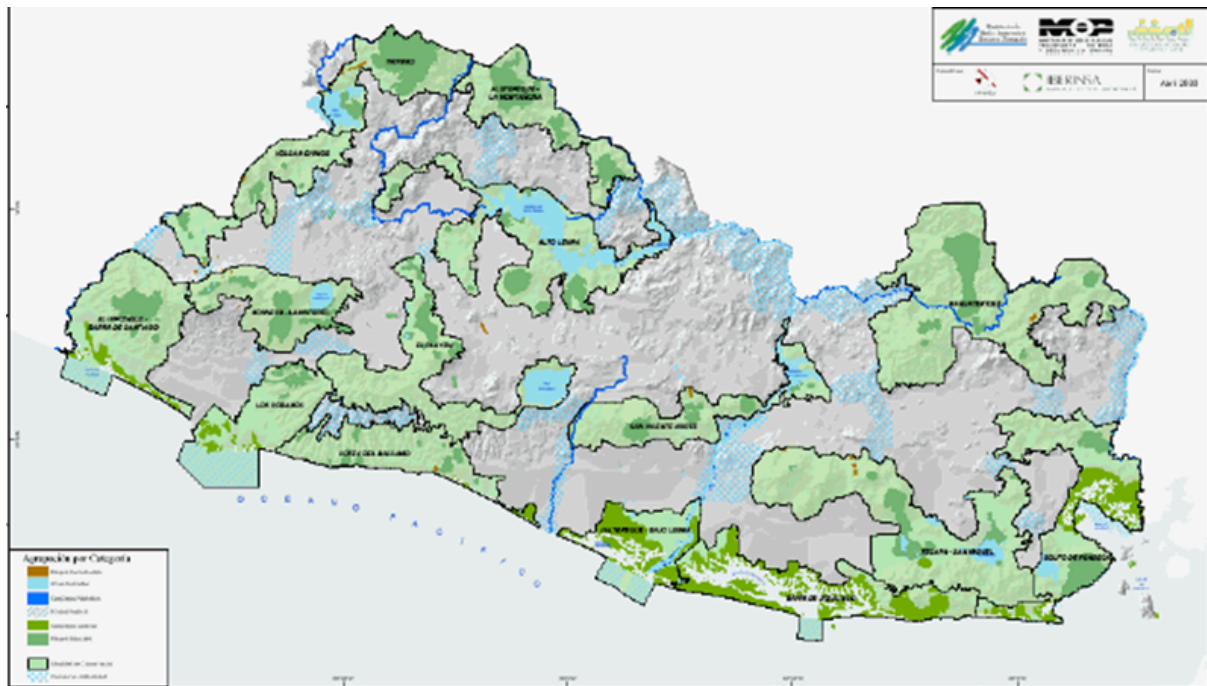
*Note. Figure obtained from El Salvador Viajar. (2022, enero 27). Parque Nacional El Imposible: Qué ver y hacer.*

## Types of Soil in El Salvador

The study of soils in El Salvador said that one of El Salvador's characteristics is its soil, as agriculture is very common in this country. Soils are distinguished by their fertility, their properties, and their response to different natural factors. There are five soil types in El Salvador, each with distinct characteristics (Tipos de suelos en El Salvador, (n.d).

- **Alluvial soils and Andisols** in El Salvador, Alluvial soils are the result of materials transported by rivers or lakes that are deposited on the country's coasts or in its valleys. Given their properties, these soils provide high agricultural production (Tipos de suelos en El Salvador, (n.d).
- **Andisol soils** are formed from the remains of ash produced by volcanoes. This soil, like alluvial soils, is good for agricultural activities, primarily for the cultivation of coffee and sugarcane (Tipos de suelos en El Salvador, (n.d).
- **Grumosal soils** and red latosols in El Salvador, Grumosal soils are gray in color and composed of a type of clay that swells when exposed to moisture and cracks when heated. This is why these soils are not suitable for growing crops (Tipos de suelos en El Salvador, (n.d).
- **Red latosol soils** are composed of reddish clay. They are usually found in the upper reaches of mountains and hills. This soil is characterized by its firmness and structure.
- **Regosol soils** in El Salvador, this soil is characterized by its sandy texture. The thickness of the soil depends on the depth of the soil. It has a high content of organic matter. They are found in desert areas, mountains, and the dry tropics. Regosol soils are not particularly suitable for agricultural use because they do not retain moisture well. However, they can be very useful for planting cereals (Tipos de suelos en El Salvador, (n.d).

Figure 2.10: General map of Types of soils in El Salvador



Note. Figure obtained from *Tipos de suelos en El Salvador*

## Cultural Identity and Intangible Tourism Resources

- **Salvadorian festivities, celebrations and syncretism.**

El Salvador Holidays and Celebrations include events such as Holy Week, the Day of the Cross, the July festivities, the August festival, the Nejapa Balls of Fire, All Souls Day, the National Pupusa Day, the San Miguel carnival, Independence Day, and Christmas. The following holidays and traditional celebrations include paid holidays and some festive days well-known among the population, which may seem like a Salvadoran holiday (Eddie Galdamez, 2025).

*Table 2.1. Explanation of Salvadorian festivities and celebrations.*

Date and Celebration	Description
January 1: New Year's Day	Salvadorans start the year the right way by having New Year's Day be a national holiday. On January 1, all government offices and most regular businesses closed, and many Salvadorans spend this day at the beaches, rivers, water parks, or other popular tourist spots.
January 6: Holy Kings or Three Wise Men Day	The holy kings or Three Wise Men Day is a religious celebration that gets full display in Salvadoran catholic churches and individual homes. It is believed that on this day, the three wise kings (Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar) presented baby Jesus with symbolic gifts of wealth, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<p>January 16: National Day of the Victims of the Armed Conflict</p>	<p>This day celebrates the end of the Salvadoran Civil War. On January 16, 1992, the Salvadoran government and the FMLN guerillas signed the peace accords in Mexico, ending the brutal armed conflict. However, in 2022, the Salvadoran legislature decided to change the focus of this day's celebrations to "National Day of the Victims of the Armed Conflict" and not the signing of the peace accords.</p>
<p>March 5: Ash Wednesday</p>	<p>Ash Wednesday is a religious day celebrated on Wednesday, seven weeks before Easter. For Catholics, it is a day of fasting, abstinence, prayer, and confession. During this day's mass, the traditional imposition of ashes is carried out on the faithful; it represents the first day of Lent and the start of approximately 6 weeks of fasting and penance.</p>
<p>March 8: Women's Day</p>	<p>Women's Day is not a public holiday; it is an observed holiday only. On this day, organizations that fight for the freedom and rights of women have activities or marches.</p>
<p>March 24: Saint Oscar Romero Day</p>	<p>On March 24, the Salvadoran Church and Salvadorans remember the anniversary of the death of Saint Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador. Romero was assassinated on March 24, 1980, while celebrating Holy Mass by pro-government military forces.</p>

<p>April 13-20: Easter Week or Holy Week</p>	<p>Holy or Easter week is one of the most celebrated religious traditions of the country. Easter week in El Salvador is a time that Salvadorans use for prayer, reflection, and gratitude. It is also a time to get together with family and friends to enjoy traditional celebrations and other activities.</p>
<p>April 13: Palm Sunday</p>	<p>Palm Sunday is not a public holiday; it is a religious holiday celebrated by Catholics. According to Christian beliefs, Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This day marks the start of Holy Week.</p>
<p>April 17: Maundy Thursday</p>	<p>Maundy Thursday is a religious holiday that memorializes Jesus Christ's institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper; this is described in the Christian scripture. This is a national holiday, and government employees and schools are closed.</p>
<p>April 18: Good Friday</p>	<p>Good Friday is a Salvadoran national holiday. It is a day off for most Salvadorans. On this day, schools, governmental offices, and most businesses are closed. Good Friday is a religious holiday that commemorates Jesus Christ's Passion, crucifixion, and death.</p>

<p>April 19: Holy Saturday</p>	<p>Holy Saturday is a national holiday. Therefore, on this day, schools, the government, and most businesses are closed.</p> <p>Holy Saturday, according to the Christian bible, is the day when Jesus Christ was laid to rest in the tomb after his death.</p>
<p>April 20: Easter Sunday</p>	<p>In El Salvador, Easter Sunday is not a national holiday. Since it falls on Sunday, most businesses follow regular Sunday opening hours. Easter Sunday is one of the most festive days among Salvadoran Christians. It celebrates Jesus Christ's resurrection from death, as written in the bible.</p>
<p>May 1: Labor Day</p>	<p>Yearly on May 1, Salvadoran remember the struggle of the average worker. During this day, union organizations organize marches to emphasize the rights of Salvadoran workers. May 1 is a National Paid holiday.</p>
<p>May 3: Day of the Cross</p>	<p>The Day of the Cross combines Salvadoran religion and indigenous traditions. For some Salvadorans, this day marks the beginning of the rainy season or winter; they use this day to give thanks for the upcoming harvest season. On the other hand, religious people use this day to give thanks and to protect the family from the devil.</p>

<p>May 7: Soldier Day</p>	<p>This day marks the anniversary of the Legion of Liberty; it was created by General Manuel Jose Arce in 1824. Soldier Day commemorates the courage, commitment, and love for the country shown by the men and women who have sworn to defend it. In many cities across the country, you will see parades and special events showing appreciation to all current and previous Salvadoran soldiers.</p>
<p>May 10: Mother's Day</p>	<p>Mother's Day in El Salvador is celebrated yearly on May 10. During this day, people show mothers and mother figures the appreciation they deserve. This is a National Holiday, and government offices, schools, and many businesses are closed.</p>
<p>June 17: Father's Day</p>	<p>Father's Day is a celebration to honor all Salvadoran fathers and father figures across the nation and the world. It is a special day when Salvadorans give thanks and appreciate the effort of fathers, who selfishly try to get a better future for their kids and family.</p>
<p>June 22: Teacher's Day</p>	<p>Salvadorans dedicate teacher's day to the thousands of teachers in the country. These teachers, every day, are responsible for providing the necessary tools to new Salvadoran generations. It is not a national holiday; nonetheless, it is a day off for schools, colleges, and public institutions.</p>

<p>July 17 to 26: The July Festivities in Santa Ana</p>	<p>The July festivities are not one of the National Holidays in El Salvador. Nevertheless, they are included here because of their popularity. They are the patron saint festivities of the city of Santa Ana, which honors its patron saint, our lady of Saint Anne.</p>
<p>August 1 to 6: The August Festivities</p>	<p>The August festivities in El Salvador are some of the most festive days in the nation's capital and the country. These festivities are also called the August vacations. The celebratory days honor the Divine Savior of the World, the patron saint of the nation's capital. Starting on August 1, the city holds special events in different parts of the city, such as parades, live music, fairs, games, and much more. The main religious celebration takes place on August 5th! It is a procession with the image of Jesus Christ that begins in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and ends in the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Divine Savior of the World. Other activities worth exploring during this celebratory time include the post office parade (Desfile de Correos), the election of the Queen of the festivities, and the Commerce parade Only August 6th is a National Holiday; nevertheless, most schools and government offices take most of the week off. During this week, the beaches, lakes, and rivers get crowded with people enjoying the time off.</p>

<p>August 31: Nejapa's Balls of Fire Festival</p>	<p>The Nejapa Balls of Fire Festival is a local tradition unique to Nejapa that involves religion and history. This unique tradition involves two opposing teams throwing balls of fire at each other. On this day, the streets of Nejapa are illuminated with the glow of the impressive Fireballs, an ancestral tradition that for 101 years has brought together thousands of Salvadorans in this picturesque small town.</p>
<p>September 7: El Día de los Farolitos (Lantern Day)</p>	<p>Lantern Day, or El Día de los Farolitos, is a celebration that takes place every year on September 7. These festivities are held in honor of the birth of the Virgin Mary. These celebrations are characterized by being a festivity where the participants illuminate the streets of the municipality with lanterns. Although the tradition of the Los Farolitos Festivities originates from Ahuachapan, the municipalities of Ataco, Apaneca, and San Salvador have also adopted it so that tourists have a variety of options to visit each year on September 7.</p>
<p>September 15: Independence Day</p>	<p>September 15 is Independence Day, a National Holiday in El Salvador; this day marks the commemoration of the freedom and sovereignty of the Republic of El Salvador from Spain obtained in 1821. On this day, all over the country, local educational and government institutions have events and parades to commemorate this day. The most popular event includes marching bands and school cheerleaders (Cachiporristas).</p>

October 1: Children's Day	<p>Children's day is an observed holiday in honor of all Salvadoran children. Also, it is a celebration that seeks to encourage children to strive for much more. On this day, recreational activities are organized to motivate children to enjoy their childhood.</p>
November 2: All Souls Day	<p>All souls day in El Salvador or all saints day is a festive day used to pay respect and remember those relatives and friends who have passed away. On this day, in cemeteries all over the country, you will witness religious events such as mass and other festivities such as Mariachi singing ballads. Thousands of Salvadoran lives have been lost due to the violence the country has endured over the last 30 years. Therefore, plenty of families use this day to remember those loved ones.</p>
November 9: National Pupusa Day	<p>El Salvador has a national pupusa day, which is celebrated on the second Sunday in November. This day is dedicated to enjoying one of the most representative typical dishes of El Salvador, the pupusas. Salvadoran Pupusas are one of the most typical Salvador food the country has. Every year, activities around the country are organized during the second Sunday in November to publicize this delicious dish that is part of national gastronomy.</p>

November 29: The San Miguel Carnival	The San Miguel carnival is a weekend party that includes live music, parades, and dancing. It takes place on the last weekend in November; it is part of the celebrations in honor of the San Miguel patron saint.
December 24: Christmas Eve	In Salvadoran culture, Christmas eve is the most important day of the Christmas season. This is the time when families get together to be with each other and celebrate the holiday. Christmas in El Salvador is pre-eminently a family affair. Generally, the main events, and the main meal, take place on Christmas Eve, usually after 9pm. Salvadorans stay up late, even all night, talking and celebrating with other family members.
December 25: Christmas Day	December 25 is a National Holiday. Now, since in the country the main celebration is on the 24th. The 25th is a day to simply relax and recover from the night before.
December 31: New Year's Eve	New Year's Eve is one of the largest celebrations around the world, El Salvador included. This is not an official holiday; nevertheless, it is a day when most businesses close early or don't open at all.

*Note: Adapted from (Eddie Galdamez, 2025).*

- **Salvadorian gastronomy**

El Salvador Foods. The best traditional Salvadoran foods are Pupusas, Tamales, Yuca Frita con Chicharron, different types of soups, Empanadas, Pastelitos, Quesadillas, Panes con Pollo, and desserts. These typical Salvadoran foods have unique flavors that make them popular with locals and foreigners, (Eddie Galdamez, 2025).

Salvadoran foods are a mixture of Spanish cuisine and foods from native indigenous groups such as Mayan, Xinca, Lenca, Pogoman, Cacaopera, and Pipil, These tasty dishes are served all over the territory, and even though the country is small, different regions offer variations of the same traditional meals; they include appetizers, desserts, and regular meals (Eddie Galdamez, 2025).

### **1. Pupusas**

Pupusa is the national dish of El Salvador; they are hand-made tortillas made of corn or rice flour filled with cheese, pork, beans, or Loroco (a local edible flower). They are topped with homemade Curtido (a sour cabbage salad) and tomato sauce, also known as salsa.

*Figure 2.11: Pupusas*



*Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).*

### **2. Tamales**

Salvadoran tamales are made using corn dough mixed with spices and are filled with chicken, a slice of boiled egg, and tomato-based sauce. It also includes vegetables such as olives, green pepper, or a thin piece of potato. Tamale is the food most Salvadorans make for special events, from funerals to weddings. In El Salvador, you will find different types of Tamales, such as traditional, Pisques, Sugar, and corn tamale.

*Figure 2.12: Tamales*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

### **3. Yuca Frita con Chicharron**

Yuca con chicharron is fried pieces of Yuca root or Cassava, served with chunks of crispy pork meat. The typical dish is topped with cabbage and tomato sauce. Chicharrones are pork belly chunks or deep-fried pork rinds. Yuca Frita is made from a delicious root vegetable similar to Cassava. It is a starchy root, almost like a potato when it comes to texture and taste.

*Figure 2.13: Yuca frita*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025)

### **4. Sopa de Pata**

Sopa de Pata is made with meat from the cow's feet, cooked with vegetables, such as Yuca, corn, plantains, beans, tomatoes, and cabbage. The combination of meat with vegetables, lemon juice, and cilantro adds the perfect zest to this traditional soup. This

soup is a delicacy that is not available all the time, most places that make it will do it on specific days of the week and for lunch. This lunch dish is popular with locals, especially the elderly.

*Figure 2.14: Sopa de pata*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

## **5. Sopa de Res**

Sopa de Res (Beef Soup) is a traditional Salvadoran lunch soup made by cooking large chunks of beef with corn, carrots, yuca, cabbage, plantains, and zucchini. This famous soup is found principally at lunchtime in small food places at the local markets.

*Figure 2.15: Sopa de res*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

## 6. Sopa de Gallina India

Wild chicken soup or Sopa de Gallina India is made using wild or indigenous Indian chicken. The soup is cooked with chopped vegetables, garlic, herbs, and spices. Sopa de Gallina India is a popular lunch dish found in local markets, mainly at lunchtime. Most restaurants only serve it on special occasions or during the weekends.

*Figure 2.16: Sopa de Gallina india*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

## 7. Empanadas de Leche o Frijoles

Empanadas are ground plantain molded into oval balls stuffed with vanilla custard or beans; this sweet food is served with sugar sprinkled on top. Empanadas are served as a dessert or snack, usually with coffee.

*Figure 2.17: Empanadas*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

## 8. Pasteles or Pastelitos

Fried Pasteles or Pastelitos are a popular Salvadoran food eaten mainly as a snack or appetizer. This food is similar to Spanish Tapas from Spain. Each Pastelito is made with corn dough, achiote powder, and other condiments. It is then made into a half-moon shape filled with either meat, vegetables, or a combination. They are then deep-fried and served with tomato sauce and cabbage on the side.

*Figure 2.18: Pastelitos*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

## 9. Quesadillas

Quesadilla is a delicious traditional Salvadoran dessert made with local cheese, butter, eggs, milk, and flour. This food is cooked in an artisanal oven that uses wood. The quesadillas are topped with sesame seeds and usually served with a hot cup of coffee or chocolate. The traditional food is available everywhere, in restaurants, coffee shops, and on the side of the Salvadoran roads.

*Figure 2.19: Quesadillas*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

### **10. Panes Rellenos**

Panes Rellenos are chicken or turkey subs mixed with a tomato-based sauce and spices; it is topped with tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce. Panes Rellenos are also known as Panes Migueleños because they are a characteristic food of the department of San Miguel in the eastern part of the country.

*Figure 2.20: Panes Rellenos*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

### **11. Plátanos con Huevos, Crema y Frijoles.**

Platanos, con Huevos, Crema y Frijoles, or fried plantains with eggs, cream, and beans are the typical Salvadoran breakfast found all over El Salvador. This breakfast dish

includes either Tortillas or bread (Pan Frances). Each location that serves a typical Salvadoran breakfast will offer different variations of scrambled eggs and beans.

*Figure 2.21: Plátanos con huevo, frijoles y crema*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

## **12. Salvadoran Enchiladas**

The dough for this food is made with corn dough mixed with achiote powder and other condiments. The dough is flattened like a tortilla and then fried until done. A typical Salvadoran enchilada is topped with bean paste, hard-boiled eggs, sliced tomatoes, avocado, and cabbage. Shredded cheese and other sauces are added to give it a unique taste.

*Figure 2.22: Enchiladas*



Note: From Eddie Galdamez (2025).

### 13. Mariscada

Mariscada is a typical Salvadoran seafood soup common in the coastal areas of El Salvador. This delicious soup has fish, shrimp, squid, crabs, clams, and lobster. A traditional Mariscada is topped with cilantro and chives for extra flavor. Mariscadas is available in a clear broth or made with Salvadoran cream for a creamy look and taste.

*Figure 2.23: Mariscada*



Note: *From Eddie Galdamez (2025).*

- **Legends and tales from El Salvador**

1. **La Siguanaba**

One of the most fascinating figures in Salvadoran folklore is La Siguanaba (also known as La Sihuanaba), a legendary spirit rooted in the traditions of the indigenous Nahua people. Originally called Sihuehuet, meaning “beautiful woman,” she was cursed by the gods for her infidelity and for neglecting her son, El Cipitío. As punishment, she was condemned to wander the earth, luring unsuspecting men with her beauty only to reveal her monstrous true form, often described as having the face of a horse or a skull, when they draw near. Her victims are driven to terror and madness, with some left wandering aimlessly in the

wilderness and others vanishing without a trace. This tale serves as a moral warning against vanity, temptation, and reckless pursuit of desire (*Sian H. 2024*).

## **2. El cipitío**

El Cipitío is a mischievous figure in Salvadoran folklore, often depicted as a man-child who never ages, eternally trapped in the body of a child and known for wearing a large straw hat, laughing uncontrollably, and throwing ash at unsuspecting passersby. Far from being a simple prankster, he is the cursed son of La Siguanaba and a god, condemned to wander endlessly in perpetual youth. His legend carries a moral undertone: a warning against immaturity and irresponsibility, as well as a reflection on the consequences of forbidden love and divine punishment (*Sian H. 2024*).

## **3. La Descarnada**

La Descarnada is a terrifying figure in Salvadoran folklore, often described as a beautiful woman who appears stranded on a lonely road at night, luring unsuspecting drivers, particularly men, into offering her a ride. Once inside the vehicle, her human facade vanishes as she peels away her skin to reveal a gruesome form of exposed muscle and bone, typically before attacking or killing her victim. The legend serves as both a literal warning against picking up strangers on deserted roads and a symbolic caution about the dangers of judging solely by appearances, reminding listeners that beauty can conceal something far more sinister (*Sian H. 2024*).

## **4. El Cadejo**

El Cadejo is a prominent figure in Latin American folklore, embodying the eternal struggle between good and evil through the image of two spectral dogs: one white and one black. The white Cadejo is believed to act as a benevolent protector, guiding travelers safely through the night, while the black Cadejo is a sinister presence said to lead the unwary toward danger, misfortune, or even death. This legend symbolizes the duality of life,

illustrating how every path holds the potential for both protection and peril, and serving as a reminder that personal choices often influence which force light or darkness prevails (*Sian H. 2024*).

### **5. Los Brujos de Izalco**

The witches of Izalco, unlike the stereotypical broomstick-riding spellcasters, are said to wield control over the elements, gathering on mountaintops to summon storms, manipulate winds, and devastate crops or lives at will. According to legend, those who cross them face severe consequences, often in the form of destructive weather. Beyond its supernatural veneer, the tale reflects the fear of unseen forces, whether human influence or the power of nature, and serves as a warning to respect forces beyond one's control (*Sian H. 2024*).

### **6. La Leyenda Del Tabudo**

El Tabudo is described as a tall, hunchbacked figure with a single thick leg and a heavy cane, wandering lonely roads near rivers and lakes during the night. He is believed to appear to those who shirk their duties, such as men neglecting their families to drink or gamble, serving as a spectral reminder of the consequences of irresponsibility. Some view him as the ghost of a man punished for his own misdeeds, doomed to roam eternally to instill fear and encourage moral conduct. (*Sian H. 2024*).

### **7. La Novia Fantasma de San Salvador**

The Phantom Bride is a spectral figure seen wandering the streets of San Salvador in a wedding gown, forever searching for the groom who abandoned her at the altar. Witnesses who encounter her are said to see her beauty transform into a decaying visage, accompanied by a curse of shared heartbreak. The legend symbolizes the destructive power of clinging to grief, anger, or betrayal, warning against becoming trapped in the past. In essence, it is a cautionary tale about letting go of emotional wounds before they consume one's life (*Sian H. 2024*).

## Principles for Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable development represents the transition from today's society to a more environmentally friendly one. With the world facing a potential climate crisis - water shortages, drought, hunger, extreme weather - sustainable development goals are to ensure a commitment and balance between economic growth, preservation of the environment and social well-being (Paul Collins, 2021).

Sustainable development is a necessity today "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" Our Common Future (Gro. Harlem Brundtland, n.d) (Report World Commission on the Environment and Development report, 1987). In other words, it is about exploiting the planet's resources in moderation, without exceeding its capacity for natural renewal (Paul Collins, 2021).

There are 3 pillars of sustainable development:

1. ***Economic sustainability***: which aims to reduce extreme poverty and guarantee fair paid employment for all.
2. ***Environmental sustainability***: which aims to protect the natural balance of the planet, while limiting the impact of human activities on the environment.
3. ***Social sustainability***: which aims to guarantee access to basic resources and services for all.

The concept of sustainable development is very recent. It first appeared in the Brundtland Report established within the framework of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland. The Brundtland report highlighted the negative environmental consequences of economic development and proposed possible solutions to problems arising from globalization and population growth (Paul Collins, 2021).

Thanks to the Brundtland report, sustainable development as a concept was born. A few years later, in 1997, it was at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro where the concept of sustainable development became official.

→ The 2030 agenda for sustainable development

As a new roadmap to achieve sustainable development, in September 2015, the United Nations approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that sets out the Sustainable Development Goals, a series of common goals to protect the planet and guarantee social well-being. By adopting this new strategy, the states committed themselves, over the next fifteen years, to mobilise all the necessary means for its implementation.

→ The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) aims to help implement the Goals.

Then Prime Minister, Theresa May, represented the UK in signing up to the Sustainable Development Goals. She told business leaders in the country that the UK had played a key role in defining the goals and would lead the way in ensuring they are met at home and abroad.

The Sustainable Development Goals, also known as the Global Goals, seek to reconcile economic growth, environmental balance and social progress, ensuring that all people have the same opportunities and can lead a better life without compromising the planet.

1. End poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation

7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

Figure 2.24: Sustainable Development Goals



Note: From (Paul Collins, 2021).

The influence of human activities on the climate to meet these needs is undeniable. If we do not take climate change into account, it will set back the development gains of recent years and prevent further progress (Paul Collins, 2021). Investing in sustainable development helps to tackle climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, initiatives to combat climate change will drive sustainable development.

The contribution to sustainable development begins with an awareness process through the calculation of our personal carbon footprint. This allows us to assess the areas of our lives and consumption habits that are having a negative impact on the environment. When we can see how our habits impact the environment, we can put into place some of the principles of sustainable development in our personal lives and help reduce the carbon footprint (Paul Collins, 2021).

→ Promoting sustainable development: examples

Human beings face various challenges, such as climate change, respect for human rights, hunger, water scarcity, etc. These challenges can only be solved from a global perspective and promoting sustainable development through various initiatives. In order to promote sustainable development and mobilise citizens, many organisations and entities are hosting events or launching new initiatives.

→ European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW)

The European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW) is an annual Europe-wide event. The week aims to promote sustainable development goals through awareness-raising actions and present the 2030 Agenda and its 17 goals (Paul Collins, 2021).

→ European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR)

European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) is an annual initiative to raise awareness about sustainable resource management and waste reduction through awareness actions.

The actions implemented during the week are based on the 3R strategy:

1. Reduce waste
2. Reuse the products
3. Recycle materials.

→ The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Business Certification

The objective of the SDG Business Certification is to raise awareness of the sustainability efforts being carried out by a company, and promoting the incorporation of the 17 ODS in its business strategy.

→ Many companies across the UK have adopted schemes to promote sustainability.

The BBC, PwC, ASDA and GlaxoSmithKline have adopted cycle to work programmes in a bid to reduce dependency on cars and switch to cleaner modes of transport. Other examples of companies making efforts to help meet the SDGs include cutting single-use plastics from their cafes and restaurants, launching social and educational enterprises, and organising events to increase awareness of sustainable food (Paul Collins, 2021).

→ Sustainable development: UK initiatives

Since the UK committed to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 the Government has put in place a number of initiatives to help achieve those targets. As part of the commitments, each nation needs to produce at least one Voluntary National Review (VNR) in which it updates other members on progress made in achieving the goals. In 2019, the UK published its first VNR in which it highlighted progress made in key areas but also identified other areas for improvement (Paul Collins, 2021).

## **Strategic Quality Plan**

The Our Roots Travel Agency project that is based on our study was born from the need to transform the traditional way of traveling, which often consists of visiting places superficially without truly getting to know or understand the culture and daily life of the people who live there. Today, tourism in its most commercial form risks becoming repetitive, mass-oriented, and disconnected from the true essence of each destination. In response, our proposal offers an alternative model: authentic tourism, where every traveler can experience El Salvador from within, as a local rather than merely as an observer.

Our initiative aims to go beyond postcards and photographs. We want our visitors to experience the cultural richness of El Salvador directly, sharing daily life with local families, tasting homemade food, participating in traditions, and learning stories that do not appear in guidebooks. This type of interaction creates genuine human connections, fosters mutual respect, and encourages a deeper understanding of our values, customs, and identity as a people.

At the same time, the project is strongly committed to the economic and social development of host communities. Every traveler who stays in a Salvadoran home, purchases local crafts, or participates in community activities contributes directly to improving family incomes, supporting entrepreneurs, and strengthening cultural pride. This not only generates economic opportunities but also motivates communities to preserve and pass down their cultural heritage with pride.

Moreover, Our Roots responds to a global trend: the growing demand for responsible and sustainable tourism. Today's travelers seek experiences that respect the environment, support local communities, and promote cultural sensitivity. Our model is based on these principles: respect as the foundation of every encounter, exchange as a path to mutual enrichment, and experience as an opportunity for transformation for both visitors and hosts.

In summary, this project is much more than a tourism offer; it is an invitation to join a movement toward more human, conscious, and connected travel. We believe that by bringing together people from different cultures in a space of respect, authenticity, and mutual learning, we not only create unforgettable memories but also plant seeds of understanding and empathy that can help build a more compassionate world.

Figure 2.25: Strategic Quality Plan Graphic



Note: This Graphic was designed and developed by our team.

Table 2.2. It describes the actions, roles and improvements as Our Roots Travel Agency will take to distinguish ourselves from others.

ACTION	ROLES	IMPROVEMENTS
<p><b>Personalized multilingual support :</b> We offer support in Spanish, English, and</p>	<p><b>Alexandra Torres: Multilingual Personalized Service.</b> Provide direct assistance to travelers in Spanish, English, and French,</p>	<p><b>“Travel Together, Save Together”</b> A Shared Journey, A Shared Discount</p>

<p>French, adapting our service to the client's language to enhance the international traveler's experience and transform the agency into a more inclusive and professional option.</p>	<p>answering questions by email, social media, phone calls, or in person.</p> <p>Ensure that tour information, policies, and recommendations are available and clear in all three languages.</p> <p>Assist travelers throughout the booking and trip preparation process, offering a friendly and culturally sensitive experience.</p>	<p><b>Description:</b> Offer a \$150 USD discount per person when two or more friends book the same two-week rural tour together. The discount applies to each traveler in the group, encouraging shared travel and helping them save on a long-term experience.</p> <p><b>How it works:</b> Valid for bookings made together or within 48 hours of each other. Minimum stay of 14 days in rural experiences (e.g., host family immersion, cultural workshops, eco-tours)</p> <p>Applies to groups of 2–4 people. Promoted through Instagram, Facebook Ads, travel forums, and partnerships with eco-conscious influencers.</p>
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		<p><b>Why it works:</b> Encourages travelers to invite friends, reducing the hesitation of long-term solo travel</p> <p>Makes extended trips more affordable, especially for students or slow travelers</p> <p>Creates deeper engagement and emotional connection between travelers and the destination</p> <p>Increases customer acquisition through peer influence and shared decision-making</p>
<p><b>Virtual sessions to connect with people:</b></p> <p>Organize monthly social media sessions showcasing destinations, sharing tips, and highlighting topics such as sustainable tourism, local cuisine, and historical</p>	<p><b>Gabriela Alfaro:</b> <i>Virtual Session Organization.</i> Plan and moderate monthly live sessions (via Instagram Live, Facebook Live, or Zoom), in different languages depending on the audience.</p> <p>Invite local hosts, guides, or previous travelers as</p>	<p><b>“Share &amp; Save” Invite a Friend, Earn a Discount</b></p> <p><b>Description:</b> Encourage past or potential travelers to refer friends to your rural tour experiences in El Salvador. When their friend books a tour, both the referrer and the new traveler receive a \$75</p>

<p>monuments to reinforce the agency's commitment to authentic and responsible experiences.</p>	<p>participants to enrich the discussions.</p> <p>Create content for these sessions on topics such as sustainable tourism, Salvadoran culture, gastronomy, practical tips, or testimonials.</p>	<p>USD discount on their next or current booking.</p> <p><b>How it Works:</b></p> <p>For the Referrer (Person who invites): Gets a \$75 credit toward their next tour or an immediate refund if they're already booked Can refer multiple friends and stack credits up to a limit (e.g., max \$225 total) For the Friend (New customer): Gets \$75 off their first two-week tour. Must enter the referrer's unique code or name at the time of booking. Must complete their booking within 7 days of receiving the invite</p> <p><b>Why This Works:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds loyalty among former travelers</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creates organic word-of-mouth marketing</li><li>• Encourages travel in pairs or small groups</li><li>• Helps overcome hesitation in booking long stays alone</li></ul>
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## Chapter III

# Local development through a tourism product or service

## Entrepreneur profile

An entrepreneur is a person who organizes, manages, and directs projects or businesses, assuming financial and personal risks. They are often associated with launching new ideas or products into the market and, in many cases, seek to meet a specific community or public need. Unlike a traditional entrepreneur, who may focus on managing existing businesses, an entrepreneur is characterized by their innovative approach and willingness to take risks in pursuit of a significant economic and social impact (Nueva Escuela Mexicana, n.d).

- **Initiative and proactivity:** They don't wait for opportunities to arrive; they create them and pursue them with determination.
- **Risk-taking ability:** They evaluate scenarios, make bold decisions, and learn from failures.
- **Creativity and innovation:** They propose original solutions and improve existing processes or products.
- **Resilience and perseverance:** They stand firm in the face of obstacles, adapting without losing their way.
- **Strategic vision:** They are clear about their long-term goals and know how to achieve them step by step.

## Tourism entrepreneur profile

A Tourism Entrepreneur is someone who establishes and develops ventures related to the tourism sector. Tourism entrepreneurs are capable of planning a tourism business and generating value for their clients and the community (Emprendedor Eficiente 2025).

Every tourism entrepreneur shares a series of characteristics that allow us to identify them. The main characteristics of a tourism entrepreneur are:

- They create a business that offers a good or service to foreign and local tourists.

- They usually speak several languages, depending on the client's nationality.
- They focus on providing experiences and excellent service.
- They plan the tourism product they will offer.
- They often partner with other entrepreneurs in the tourism sector to complement their venture.
- They seek to be part of the tourism value chain.
- They generate a positive impact on the community.
- They involve the community in their venture.
- They promote new tourist attractions to nationals and foreigners.
- They can develop tourist activities and tours.
- They apply international safety and hygiene standards in their project. Positive reviews on platforms and social media are their greatest asset.
- They operate with permits, certifications, and regulations established by the local government.
- They adhere to the tourism code of ethics.
- To improve their business, they conduct customer satisfaction surveys.
- They stay abreast of new changes and trends in the sector.
- They seek to develop sustainable and innovative tourism ventures.
- They connect economic benefits with sustainability.
- They apply innovation to their projects to offer novel products to customers.
- They adopt international quality standards within the company.

## **Entrepreneur profile Our Roots**

Our Roots is a Salvadoran travel agency that transforms traditional tourism into an intimate, cultural, and human experience. Our goal is for every visitor to experience El Salvador from the inside: its flavors, its rhythms, its stories, and its people.

Our Roots was born from the deep desire to show El Salvador as it is lived: with freshly made pupusas on clay comals, with stories told in the warmth of a hammock, with walks through coffee plantations and warm greetings at every corner. We are more than a travel agency; we are storytellers of everyday life, curators of experiences that celebrate Salvadoran identity, and builders of bridges between cultures.

### **What sets us apart?**

In a world saturated with superficial tourism, Our Roots offers an intimate, human, and transformative alternative. Our tours don't focus on the most photographed places, but rather on the moments that leave a lasting impression: sharing breakfast with a host family, learning to embroider with artisans from Chalatenango, hearing legends from grandparents who still remember war and hope. Each experience is designed so that visitors not only see El Salvador, but also feel it, hear it, taste it, and understand it from within.

### **Experiences we offer**

- Routes with local flavor: Food tours of pupuserías, markets, and family kitchens.
- Community experiences: Stays in rural villages, artisan workshops, and stays with host families.
- Cultural tourism: Tours of historical sites, living legends, and traditional music and dance.
- Community tourism: Stays in rural villages, participation in daily tasks such as making our typical dishes (quesadillas, tamales, pupusas, etc.), and living with local families.

## **Social Impact**

- Generate income for local communities.
- Rescue and spread Salvadoran traditions.
- Foster cultural pride among locals and visitors.
- Create collaborative networks between rural entrepreneurs, artists, and local families.
- Promote responsible practices, minimize environmental impact, and encourage local consumption.

## **Brand Identity**

Our Roots is inspired by the colors of our sunsets, the aroma of freshly roasted coffee, the sound of drums at patron saint festivals, and the warmth of a leisurely shared “buen provecho”. Our image communicates closeness, cultural pride, and joie de vivre.

Our Roots is not just an agency; it is a bridge between cultures, a celebration of everyday life, an invitation to experience El Salvador with all your senses. Every trip tells a story, and every traveler becomes part of it.

## **Market Niche**

A market niche is a specific group of users or consumers, brought together by shared characteristics. It is a defined sector that forms part of a market segment.

Within a market niche, people with similar needs and desires coexist, needs and desires that are not fully satisfied. Therefore, they constitute the target audience for companies or entrepreneurs who aim to meet these requirements with their commercial offerings.

### **Characteristics of a Market Niche**

A market niche can be composed of individuals, organizations, or companies. The number of members is not very large: niches are part of a larger segmentation, which is the market segment (Julian Perez Porto, 2025).

This means that within a market segment, there are several niches. Niches represent opportunities for commercial growth for those operating within the segment because, as already mentioned, the needs of the members (which are similar) are not 100% satisfied.

According to (Julian Perez Porto, 2025) specialists, the desires of those who make up a market niche are specific. These buyers, in turn, are willing to pay a premium for products or services that fulfill their needs and increase their satisfaction.

This disposable income is another important characteristic of a niche market. Therefore, companies targeting this market can invest in adapting their business strategy and achieving profitability through the operations necessary to foster customer satisfaction.

In short: consumers with unique needs that are not being met by the market constitute a niche. These consumers have a high probability of making a purchase and are predisposed to pay whatever it takes to get what they want. There aren't many

companies in a position to satisfy these needs, and they can achieve profitability through operations aimed at this goal (Julian Perez Porto, 2025).

## **Our Roots Market Niche**

Our Roots is positioned within a deeply emotional, cultural, and strategic niche market: experiential cultural tourism in El Salvador, focused on travelers seeking an authentic connection with everyday life, traditions, and the Salvadoran identity. This niche not only responds to a global trend of traveling with purpose, but also aligns with the desire to reconnect with the human, the local, and the meaningful.

### **1. Cultural and Community Tourism**

Our agency specializes in experiences that connect travelers with the Salvadoran identity, its roots, traditions, and communities. This niche focuses on:

- Conscious travelers looking for more than beaches and hotels: they want to understand, learn, and contribute.
- Immersive tourism: village visits, artisan workshops, local celebrations, traditional cuisine.
- Social impact: part of the value of each experience is reinvested in the host communities.

### **2. Emotional and Identity Tourism**

This niche is based on a sense of belonging and emotional reconnection. Our clients travel not only for pleasure, but also for:

- Personal healing: reconnecting with the land of their ancestors.
- Celebrating heritage: rediscovering customs, music, food, and language.
- Personal narratives: each trip becomes a story that honors the past and projects the future.

### **3. Salvadorans living abroad and second generation**

A key segment are Salvadorans living abroad, who want to:

- Reconnect with their family and cultural roots.
- Show others their country of origin with pride and confidence.
- Live authentic experiences not found in conventional tour packages.

## Logo

### Logo: "Our Roots"

The "Our Roots" logo represents the heart of our Salvadoran identity. With a minimalist and modern style, it integrates key elements such as the torogoz, volcanoes, and pupusas, encapsulated in a circular composition that symbolizes unity, continuity, and belonging. The bright colors reflect the joy, diversity, and energy of El Salvador, while the clean and simple design speaks to our essence: authentic, accessible, and deeply connected to our roots.

*Figure 3.1: Our Roots*



*Note: This image was designed and developed by our team.*

## Slogan

### **Slogan: "Connecting with the essence of El Salvador"**

This slogan expresses our mission: to build bridges between Salvadoran culture and those who wish to experience it, share it, or rediscover it. It's not just about showcasing the typical, but about conveying what makes us unique, the warmth of our people, the richness of our traditions, and the pride of belonging. It's an invitation to reconnect with who we are, from the deepest part of ourselves.

*Figure 3.2: Our Roots*



*Note: This image was designed and developed by our team.*

## **Mission and Vision**

### **Mission**

At Our Roots, our mission is to offer travelers an authentic and immersive cultural experience by connecting them directly with local families. We provide the opportunity to live and travel like a local, fostering meaningful connections and a deeper understanding of El Salvador's rich heritage. Through genuine homestays and personal interactions, we aim to create unforgettable memories and promote sustainable, responsible tourism that benefits both visitors and communities.

### **Vision**

Our vision is to be the leading agency in transformative travel experiences that empower travelers to engage with the world through local perspectives. We aspire to build a global network of travelers and hosts who share a passion for cultural exchange, making the world feel more connected and creating a positive impact on the communities we visit. By staying true to the spirit of authenticity, we aim to inspire a new way of traveling, one where cultural immersion and meaningful connections are at the heart of every journey.

## Values

At Our Roots, our work is guided by values that ensure every journey is authentic, respectful, and impactful for both travelers and communities.

- 1. Authenticity:** We commit to offering genuine cultural experiences rooted in real connections with local families, traditions, and ways of life.
- 2. Respect:** We honor the dignity, culture, and traditions of every community we partner with, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation between travelers and hosts.
- 3. Sustainability:** We practice and promote responsible tourism that protects the environment, preserves heritage, and ensures long-term benefits for local communities.
- 4. Community Empowerment:** We prioritize local voices, ensuring that our partnerships uplift families and generate opportunities that strengthen their communities.
- 5. Integrity:** We act with transparency and fairness in all our interactions with travelers, hosts, and partners always staying true to our mission.
- 6. Cultural Exchange:** We believe in the power of sharing stories, traditions, and perspectives, creating bridges of understanding across borders.
- 7. Hospitality with Purpose:** We view every homestay and travel experience as more than tourism, it is a chance to build lasting relationships and create meaningful impact.

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