

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES**



TOPIC

**TOURIST PRODUCT DESIGNED FOR THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF
STRAWBERRY-BASED BEVERAGES**

PRESENTED BY

ELSY MARGARITA BELTRÁN MARTÍNEZ (BM16046)

YOSELYN IVETH GRANDE GARCÍA (GG18062)

MARGARITA GUADALUPE RIVERA HENRÍQUEZ (RH18067)

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LICENCIADO MIGUEL ÁNGEL CARRANZA CAMPOS, MSE

GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS

**UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, DR. FABIO CASTILLO FIGUEROA, SAN SALVADOR
CENTRO, EL SALVADOR, CENTRAL AMERICA, OCTOBER 20TH, 2024**

AUTHORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

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INTERIM COORDINATOR OF THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

LICENCIADO MIGUEL ÁNGEL CARRANZA CAMPOS, MSE

GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS

LICENCIADA FRANCISCA AGUILLÓN RIVERA

SPECIALIZATION PROFESSOR

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Abstract

The present study explores the design and implementation of a tourism product titled "Straw Fresh," a strawberry-based sparkling beverage, specifically developed for the Ichanmichen Water Park in El Salvador. This innovative product integrates local natural resources, cultural identity, and sustainable practices to enhance the visitor experience while promoting environmental conservation. The initiative seeks to strengthen the tourism sector in El Salvador by introducing a gastronomic offering that combines the natural sweetness of locally sourced strawberries with the refreshing effervescence of sparkling water. The product design incorporates accessibility, affordability, and sustainability as core values, aiming to minimize environmental impact through biodegradable packaging and eco-friendly production methods. In addition, Straw Fresh contributes to the cultural heritage of the region by blending traditional Salvadoran elements with contemporary gastronomic trends. This product aligns with global initiatives such as the Global Plastic Tourism Initiative and the One Planet Sustainable Tourism Program, ensuring a harmonious balance between enjoyment and conservation. Through this study, a comprehensive vision for the creation of sustainable tourism products is offered, highlighting the importance of integrating local resources, cultural identity, and ecological practices to ensure memorable and responsible tourism experiences.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, strawberry-based beverage, Ichanmichen Water Park, cultural identity, biodiversity, environmental conservation, Salvadoran gastronomy, biodegradable packaging.

Introduction

As defined by UN Tourism (n.d.), a tourism product is "a combination of tangible and intangible elements, such as natural, cultural and man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services and activities around a specific center of interest which represents the core of the destination marketing mix and creates an overall visitor experience including emotional aspects for the potential customers. A tourism product is priced and sold through distribution channels and it has a life-cycle."

With the idea of presenting an innovative tourism product that promotes tourism in El Salvador and incorporates sustainable practices, the current team came up with the idea of creating Straw Fresh. A local business that offers the market a refreshing drink with a natural touch of strawberries, which in addition to being a gastronomic delight, and refresh the palate of visitors to the enchanting Ichamichen Water Park, would promote the conservation of wildlife and cultural treasures of the water park. With the introduction of this innovative beverage, it is aimed to enrich the tourist attraction of the Ichamichen Water Park, fostering a deeper connection between visitors and the stunning natural environment of El Salvador. This project symbolizes a harmonious blend of enjoyment and conservation, ensuring that the unique charm of Ichamichen can be appreciated for generations to come.

The first chapter of this project includes background and highly important information such as the objectives that will guide this project, the justification that explains the importance and legacy of this idea, the description of the tourism product that addresses points such as the name of the product, the location and the attributes of the product. The following is the typology of tourism, which explains the type of tourism

to which this product applies. The last point is the application of the strategy for sustainability, where the sustainable strategies that the project intends to follow are developed.

CHAPTER I:

TOURIST PRODUCT PROFILE

1.1 Objectives

General objective:

Introduce a new gastronomic delight to visitors of Ichanmichen Water Park by offering a refreshing sparkling drink, infused with locally sourced strawberries.

Specific objectives:

- Offer a unique and enjoyable drinking experience at a reasonable price, ensuring accessibility to all customers, while targeting adult consumers.
- Create a product committed to sustainability, prioritizing ecological practices in its production and packaging to minimize environmental impact and promote responsible consumption.

1.2 Justification

Proposing to the market an innovative drink, with an organic and refreshing touch to be consumed in an environment of pools and fun, was the main idea for creating Straw Fresh. This tourism product idea aims to add to the overall experience of visiting the Ichanmichen Water Park, located in the municipality of Zacatecoluca, by combining a sparkling beverage and natural strawberries that offer a refreshing and revitalizing drink option for guests, especially in the hot climate of El Salvador.

The introduction of Straw Fresh in El Salvador, specifically within the water park premises, is a significant and noteworthy development. This innovative product, with its exotic, refined, and natural flavors, is paving the way for differentiation in the gastronomic establishments of the country. The strategic location of Ichanmichen Water Park provides the ideal setting for the introduction of Straw Fresh's refreshing and natural products. This promising formula is expected to deliver a holistic visitor experience, increase park differentiation from its competitors, strengthen cultural bonds, and promote environmental sustainability.

The presence of this product at Ichanmichen Water Park is intended to create a truly memorable and enjoyable experience for visitors in several ways, including cultural appreciation, environmental stewardship, innovation, and community engagement. The Straw Fresh team strives to ensure that all visitors enjoy a unique and refreshing beverage, made with locally sourced strawberries, at a reasonable price. In addition, it is committed to minimizing environmental impact by applying sustainable practices in matters of production and packaging. Introducing this innovative product will undoubtedly transform the identity of the water park and influence, creating a fun,

refreshing, and enjoyable experience for all visitors. With a holistic approach that prioritizes eco-friendly practices and customer satisfaction, Straw Fresh is about to set an example for sustainable tourism practices in El Salvador, setting the bar high for the industry.

1.3 Description of the tourist product

1.3.1 Name of the tourist product

The present tourist product is denominated as Straw Fresh.

The name evokes the sweet taste of strawberries, paired perfectly with the effervescent freshness of sparkling water. The drink is a must-try for anyone looking for a refreshing and revitalizing experience on a hot day. This product not only offers a refreshing and sweet experience to consumers, but also a high level of accessibility and considerable value for money, as well as its commitment to

minimizing environmental and water pollution through the use of biodegradable packaging.

The motto of this product is Sweet and Pop, which captures the essence of this gastronomic proposal and which is a perfect combination of the natural sweetness of strawberries cultivated in El Salvador and the effervescent freshness of mineral water, as it is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1:

Logo



Note. Image provided by team members, Logo created for the tourist product.

1.3.2 Location

Straw Fresh is a product found primarily at the facilities of the Ichanmichen Water Park, based in the municipality of Zacatecoluca. As represented in Figure 2, the product has strategically created profiles on popular social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to attract local and

foreign visitors. By promoting not only its delicious drinks, but also the various attractions of the water park, it guarantees a fun-filled experience for all visitors.

Figure 2:

Location



Note. Image provided by team members, image displaying the location of the product.

1.4 Product attributes

The main attributes that shape Straw Fresh are accessibility, hygiene, and quality standards.

1.4.1 Accessibility

In finance terms, Straw Fresh aspires to be a star product. To achieve this, the menu of this establishment will have an affordable price range, not only to provide cost benefits to customers but at the same time, enhance the brand image and positioning.

1.4.2 Hygiene

According to the safety specialist, at St. Bernard's Health Institute (n.d.),¹ it is essential to give products the right handling to achieve positive results such as "satisfied customers, a good reputation, and loyal customers." Straw Fresh wants to show the world that it is a product to which customers feel comfortable and confident that it meets sanitary standards. As the British Columbia Campus (2015)² suggested, sanitation standards must meet requirements such as "workplace sanitization, dishwashing procedures, and personal hygiene." And as represented in Figure 3, Straw Fresh aims to offer such requirements to its customers as well.

1.4.3 Quality

When it comes to quality, Straw Fresh wants to provide its customers with a beverage that has been created with carefully selected and fresh ingredients, to enhance and ensure the refreshing and rejuvenating experience that this product already promises. This includes adding a variety of the best quality sparkling waters on the market, as well as the freshest and juiciest strawberries. Also, ensuring that all our products are properly sanitized and within the expiration date.

¹ Sourced from St. Bernards Health & Safety Institute. (n.d.). St. Bernard's Health and Safety Institute. St. Bernard's Health and Safety Institute. <https://healthandsafety.com.mt/>

² Committee, B. C. A. (2015, 15 mayo). Workplace sanitation. Pressbooks. <https://opentextbc.ca/foodsafety/chapter/workplace-sanitation/>

1.5 Tourism typology

1.5.1 Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism is a type of tourism that aims to achieve balanced development while benefiting all stakeholders, including vulnerable groups. This approach generates income, creates jobs, and supports the conservation and revitalization of natural ecosystems. It prioritizes sustainable tourism practices, which are essential for creating a positive impact on society while minimizing any negative effects of tourism (MITUR, n.d.).³

This matter has also become highly relevant to the UN Tourism (n.d.),⁴ to

the extent of stressing that, “sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices

Figure 3:
Sustainable tourism



Note. Image provided by team members, image showing sustainable practices at Ichanmichen Water Park.

³ Sourced from MITUR. (n.d.). Turismo y desarrollo sostenible Política Nacional de Turismo de El Salvador. Ministerio de Turismo de El Salvador. (n.d.). El Salvador Travel. El Salvador Travel. <https://elsalvador.travel/destination/ichanmichen/>

⁴ Sourced from Sustainable development. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>

amongst them.” This is the vision that Straw Fresh wants to pursue, and as exemplified in Figure 3, the business is aware of the damage that plastic and water pollution can cause. It is desired to leave a positive mark in contributing to the improvement of the environment, as well as sensitize visitors and consumers about the importance of preserving the wildlife that adorns the magical water park of Ichanmichen. For these reasons, the present business will invite its consumers to enjoy their soft drinks responsibly, which means that it is not allowed to leave their empty containers around the area, let alone, let them come into contact with the pools or the natural water channels. It is also forbidden to burn garbage in the green area of the water park, as this could cause a fire.

1.5.2 Gastronomy tourism

The UN Tourism (n.d.)⁵ also addresses the subject of gastronomy tourism, the organization defines it as “a type of tourism activity which is characterized by the experience of the visitor linked with food and related products and activities while traveling.” Straw Fresh is highly identified with this type of tourism as it offers a gastronomic delight of beverages quite different from those offered in the country; by

⁵ Sourced from Gastronomy and wine tourism. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/gastronomy-wine-tourism>
Global Tourism Plastics Initiative | UN Tourism. (n.d.).

including a unique fusion of flavors, this beverage stand aims to add a refreshing and sweet touch to the enjoyment of the Ichanmichen Water Park experience. When visitors look back on their vacation, they often recall the delicious food they tasted and the unique experiences they had while enjoying it. This is why gastronomy tourism has become such a popular trend, as it allows visitors to immerse themselves in the local culture and taste the flavors of the region. As illustrated in Figure 5, by offering a one-of-a-kind beverage, Straw Fresh provides visitors with a memorable gastronomic experience that will leave a lasting impression, whether enjoyed on a hot day by the pool or as a refreshing break from exploring the park.

Figure 4:

Gastronomy tourism



Note. Image provided by team members, image displaying gastronomic tourism at Ichanmichen Water Park.

1.5.3 Nature tourism

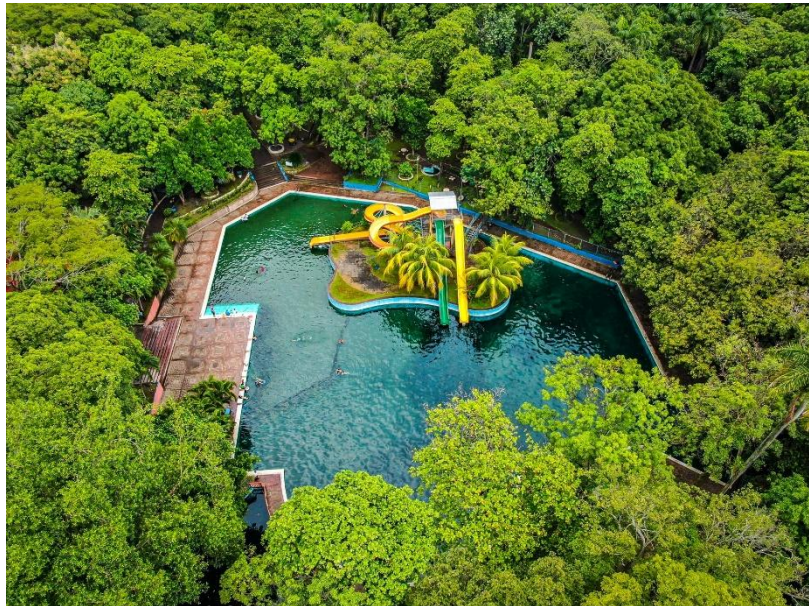
Or widely known as ecotourism, the online blog dedicated to environmental awareness, Treehugger (2022)⁶, explains that this type of tourism “is about more than

⁶ Sourced from Gallagher, K. (2022, December 13). What is ecotourism? Definition, examples, and pros and cons. Treehugger. <https://www.treehugger.com/what-is-ecotourism-definition-examples-5181259>

simply visiting natural attractions or natural places; it's about doing so in a responsible and sustainable manner.”

The UN Tourism (n.d.)⁷ has also commented on ecotourism and stated that in order to be considered as such, this type of tourism must contain characteristics such as “all nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural

Figure 5:
Nature tourism



Note. By El Salvador Travel (n.d.), image displaying the nature surrounding the Ichanmichen Water Park.
<https://elsalvador.travel/destination/ichanmichen/es/>

areas, it contains educational and interpretation features, and it minimizes negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.”

Putting all these ideas together, this tourism approach aims to allow visitors to explore the wilderness while educating them on how to protect it, and Straw Fresh also fulfills the same approach. As shown in Figure 5, because of its location at Ichanmichen Water Park, the enterprise feels a great responsibility to care for the natural life of the park. By including this strategy in this business profile, the staff of Straw Fresh would be

⁷ Sourced from Ecotourism and Protected areas | UN Tourism. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/ecotourism-and-protected-areas>

committing not only to protect the natural attractions of the water park, but also to encourage and recommend their consumers to preserve these natural and cultural treasures.

1.6 Application of strategy for sustainability

1.6.1 Global Tourism Plastics Initiative

Straw Fresh understands the harmful impact of plastic on the environment. The United Nations (2023)⁸ states that “plastic does not biodegrade. It can take up to 1,000 years to break down, so when it is discarded, it builds up in the environment until it reaches a crisis point. This pollution chokes marine wildlife, damages soil and poisons groundwater, and can cause serious health impacts.” For these reasons, Straw Fresh is committed to reducing this environmental issue by using biodegradable packaging in its strategies.

The use of biodegradable packaging is crucial not only for the preservation of the planet, but also for raising awareness in Salvadoran culture about protecting the natural environment around the Ichanmichen Water Park, which is the place where this environmentally friendly beverage will be launched. Ichanmichen, whose name in Nahuat means *The Cave of the Little Fish*, consists of five ponds and two natural water channels, making it an ideal destination for a family weekend getaway. Due to its natural attractions, Straw Fresh strives to make visitors aware of the importance of

⁸ Sourced from Understanding plastic pollution and its impact on lives. (2023, June 7). Africa Renewal. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2023/understanding-plastic-pollution-and-its-impact-lives#:~:text=Unlike%20other%20materials%2C%20plastic%20does,can%20cause%20serious%20health%20impacts.>

using the facilities responsibly, keeping the recreational area clean, and avoiding water pollution with the products of the business.

According to the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative, driven by the UN Tourism (n.d.),⁹ there are some crucial commitments that global and local businesses must be willing to meet, including “eliminate problematic or unnecessary plastic packaging and items, take action to increase the amount of recycled content across all plastic packaging and items used, collaborate and invest to increase the recycling and composting rates for plastics, and

Figure 6:

Global Tourism Plastics Initiative



Note. Image provided by team members, image illustrating the biodegradable packaging used by Straw Fresh.

report publicly and annually on progress made towards these targets.” As a local business emerging in El Salvador, Straw Fresh is excited to provide a product that not only stands out in its originality, but also helps preserve the unique nature of this beautiful country. Under this vision, and as demonstrated in Figure 6, the current business is committed to reducing plastic waste from its packaging, using 15% less plastic, contributing to a 45% reduction in carbon emissions. In addition, it feels a strong responsibility to raise awareness among visitors to the water park about the potential

⁹ Sourced from Global Tourism Plastics Initiative | UN Tourism. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/global-tourism-plastics-initiative>

harm caused by disposing of products in the water and leaving empty containers in green areas, thus contributing to boosting sustainable tourism.

1.6.2 One Planet

The One Planet Sustainable Tourism Programme helps make tourism more sustainable by promoting practices that reduce harm to the environment, such as using circular economy principles. This helps to address issues like climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. The goal is to create a tourism industry that is more environmentally friendly and resilient (UN Tourism, n.d.).¹⁰

Figure 7:
One Planet



Note. Image provided by team members, image illustrating the signs placed by Straw Fresh at Ichanmichen Water Park.

This Programme is a team effort that helps people work together to achieve common goals. They focus on three main areas, such as accelerating climate action in tourism, which consists of creating climate action plans that businesses can use to reduce their impact on the environment by measuring, reducing, and renewing their resources. Building a circular economy of plastics in tourism which pretends to help the

¹⁰ Sourced from One planet. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/one-planet>

tourism industry and prepare it for the upcoming global agreement on plastic pollution, particularly in oceans, and finally transforming food value chains in tourism, focusing on promoting sustainable food systems by adopting food waste reduction strategies (UN Tourism, n.d.).¹¹

Straw Fresh is a business that intends to play in favor of the environmental conservation team, considering that it is located in an area surrounded by a variety of wildlife and that is perceived as a cultural treasure. Applying what is suggested by The One Planet Programme, this enterprise wants to encourage its visitors to keep all areas of the water park clean, free of plastics, and polluting substances; especially the natural water channels where different species of fish abound, and that are intended to be preserved. As exemplified in Figure 7, to implement this, signs will be placed around the Straw Fresh beverage stand to inform visitors of the above and to warn them that feeding the fish in the various ponds and natural waterways is prohibited at all times.

1.6.3 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is a term used to describe the enormous variety of life on Earth. It can be used more specifically to refer to all species in a region or ecosystem. Biodiversity refers to all living things, including plants, bacteria, animals, and humans. In order to preserve, protect, and promote the care of biodiversity in Ichanmichen Water Park, it has been decided to make all local and foreign tourists aware of the importance of caring for the nature of the Ichanmichen area, including plants, animals, water, other human beings, ecosystems.

¹¹ One planet. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/one-planet>

Due to the nature of the products, Straw Fresh is committed to take certain measures to protect the diversity of the water park, as well as to guide consumers to protect Ichanmichen from contamination, since this place has several water springs that must be preserved. In addition, the natural pools are full of fish, as this is their habitat, so it is necessary to keep these species safe. In addition to having biodegradable packaging and as illustrated in Figure 8, Straw Fresh will post signs throughout the water park reminding consumers not to throw the products anywhere on the grounds, especially near or inside the pools. Bringing products into the pools, as they may spill, will result in severe water contamination and extreme poisoning of the species that inhabit the natural water pools. As an additional strategy, Straw Fresh will install its own branded trash cans to indicate to visitors where to dispose of their empty containers.

Figure 8:
Biodiversity



Note. Image provided by team members, image illustrating the signs and trash cans placed by Straw Fresh at Ichanmichen Water Park.

**CHAPTER II:
ELEMENTS FOR THE DESIGN OF A
TOURISM PRODUCT OR SERVICE**

2.1 History of Tourism

2.1.2 A definition of tourism

Before delving into the rich history of tourism, it is important to understand its nature. Under the definition provided by UN Tourism (n.d.),¹² "Tourism is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or

Figure 9:
Tourism



Note. By Thakur, M. (2024, August 14), image in reference of tourism. <https://www.educba.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-tourism/>

business/professional purposes." While this definition encapsulates the main aspects of tourism, it is worth exploring some more in-depth aspects of this phenomenon. These include temporality, which refers to the fact that tourism occurs within a limited time frame, ranging from a few hours to weeks, months, or even years. The diversity aspect encompasses the wide range of activities that tourism offers, including cultural visits, extreme sports, gastronomic experiences, and business tourism. Additionally, services such as accommodation, transportation, and food are integral to the definition of tourism, acknowledging the economic and environmental impact that generates

¹² Sourced from Glossary of tourism terms | UNWTO. (n.d.). <https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>

employment and promotes a sustainable approach to this phenomenon (Cortes, D. 2023).¹³

2.1.3 Origins of tourism

Tourism transformed into what is now recognized in the 21st century but was born in the 19th century, when the Industrial Revolution occurred. The introduction of the railroad, steam engine, automobile, and airplane has made significant contributions that have shaped the history of tourism. Thanks to these advancements, tourism has emerged as one of the most significant economic sectors in the world economy after centuries of historical evolution (Morales, F. C. 2024).¹⁴

2.1.4 Tourism in the Ancient Ages

While tourism is believed to have originated in the 19th century, it has actually been present since ancient times. It was in the Ancient Ages that the Roman Empire designed and built infrastructures to promote transportation between the different territories owned by the empire. The Roman roads, of which there are still large remains, were considered the first roads in history, on which the Romans traveled from one place to another. Tourism was also developed in classical Greece. The travel and movement of people between the different cities that conformed the Greek territory

¹³ Sourced from Cortes, D. (2023, April 27). ¿Qué es el turismo? | 2024. Maestrías Y MBA. <https://www.cesuma.mx/blog/que-es-el-turismo.html#:~:text=El%20turismo%20es%20una%20actividad,%2C%20de%20negocios%2C%20entre%20otras.>

¹⁴ Sourced from Morales, F. C. (2024, January 8). Historia del turismo. Economipedia. <https://economipedia.com/definiciones/historia-del-turismo.html>

represented a faithful image of what is known today as tourism. The Olympic Games, for instance, held in the city of Olympia, attracted numerous citizens from various parts of the Greek territory, leading to thousands of people traveling to the town to attend the event. The expansion of Rome and Greece led to the development of

infrastructures to improve

connections between these territories. This was achieved through the construction of Roman roads and the maritime infrastructure promoted by the Greeks, which facilitated transportation and migration between different regions (Morales, F. C. 2024).¹⁵

2.1.5 Tourism in the Modern Age

During the Modern Age, the history of tourism saw major developments as nation-states emerged and feudalism declined. This period marked a significant growth in the tourism sector, especially with the appearance of inns and hotels. The editor of

Figure 10:
Tourism in old times



Note. By OcioCaballo (2021, January 27), image in reference to the former Olympic Games
<https://www.ociocaballo.com/2020/05/el-caballo-durante-el-imperio-romano-las-primeras-carreras-de-caballos-articulo/>

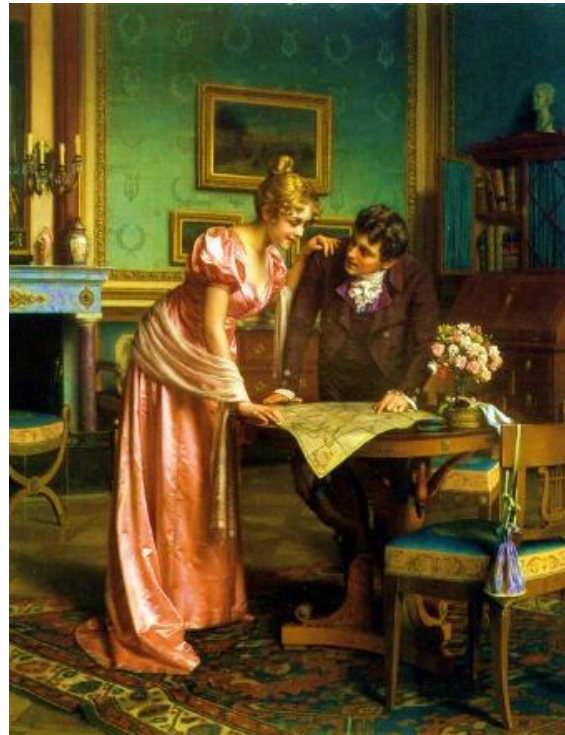
¹⁵ Sourced from Ibid Historia del turismo, 2024. Economipedia. <https://economipedia.com/definiciones/historia-del-turismo.html>

the online magazine Economipedia, Francisco Coll Morales (2024)¹⁶, explains that “these overnight stays allowed excursionists to rest in places other than their place of origin, giving rise to the term “tourist.”

Tourism experienced an increasing trend during the Modern Age, especially leisure tourism, which offered opportunities for entertainment, relaxation, and recreation. Thanks to the fact that the interwar period did not occur until the contemporary age, citizens migrated more frequently from one territory to another, a time when the British began to promote trends such as the “Grand Tour”. Francisco Coll Morales (2024)¹⁷ indicates that this was “a route that young British aristocrats traveled through Europe in order to become cultured and complete their education in subjects such as art, languages, and commerce.” According to Abel G.M. (2022),¹⁸ a history journalist for National Geographic, a Grand Tour consisted on “a trip around the Old Continent to get to know other countries, come into contact

Figure 11:

Tourism in the modern times



Note. By G.M. (2022), image of a couple planning their Grand Tour
https://historia.nationalgeographic.com.es/a/grand-tour-erasmus-siglo-xvii_17581

¹⁶ Sourced from Ibid Historia del turismo, 2024. Historia del turismo. Economipedia.
<https://economipedia.com/definiciones/historia-del-turismo.html>

¹⁷ Ibid Historia del turismo, 2024. Historia del turismo. Economipedia. <https://economipedia.com/definiciones/historia-del-turismo.html>

¹⁸ GM, A. (2022, January 22). El Grand Tour, el “Erasmus” del siglo XVII. historia.nationalgeographic.com.es.
https://historia.nationalgeographic.com.es/a/grand-tour-erasmus-siglo-xvii_17581

with the great cultures of the past and, in general, become what we would call “people of the world”.

2.1.6 Contemporary Age

During the Contemporary Age, there was a great momentum in the economy and people started to earn more money in different parts of Europe. The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain and quickly spread to Belgium and other parts of Europe. This helped the middle class grow stronger

and gave people more money to spend on travel and recreational activities. Also, the colonies became vital economic players and started trading directly with other places. Because of this, many people moved to the United States, so they had to create regulations on who could enter the country. With better transportation, the number of people traveling for leisure increased enormously. It was also in this period that the invention of the steam engine by James Watt revolutionized transportation by facilitating the widespread expansion of railroads globally. As a result, countries worldwide invested substantially in developing infrastructure to connect their rail networks,

Figure 12:
Tourism nowadays



Note. By Halliday, B. (2024, February 5), image in reference to tourism in the Contemporary Age
<https://toursScanner.com/blog/best-tourist-attractions-in-london/>

promoting increased international travel and trade. This growth not only contributed to economic expansion, but also led to the professionalization of the tourism sector, which played a vital role in driving overall economic growth (Morales, F. C. 2024).¹⁹

The tourism industry began to grow when new forms of travel appeared, such as cars, airplanes, and large ships. This made tourism one of the main sectors of the economy. After a brief slowdown between the two world wars, tourism began to grow again after World War II. This led to a huge increase in tourism, known as the “tourist boom”. The tourism industry received a strong boost from international stability, cooperation, and Peace Agreements, such as the Bretton Woods Agreements. In the 21st century, tourism became the second most important part of the world economy, with a large impact on the total world economic output, with more than 10% (Morales, F. C. 2024).²⁰

2.2 History of tourism in El Salvador

To embark on the discussion of this topic is to address the entire narrative of El Salvador. To provide some context about this, El Salvador has been a country affected by the consequences of the Civil War, dealing with problems related to governance and security, earning the country a bad reputation in the eyes of the rest of the world. However, it is only in recent years that this reputation has changed radically and El Salvador is now on the list of destinations to visit for many tourists worldwide.

¹⁹ Sourced from Ibid Historia del turismo, 2024. Economipedia. <https://economipedia.com/definiciones/historia-del-turismo.html>

²⁰ Sourced from Ibid Historia del turismo, 2024. <https://economipedia.com/definiciones/historia-del-turismo.html>

2.2.1 The Origins

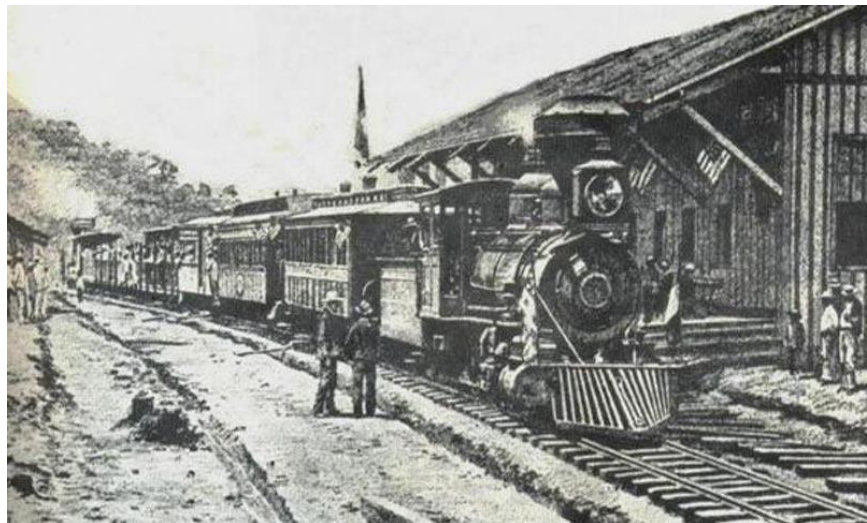
Regarding its origins, tourism in El Salvador emerged in the 19th century, with the construction of railroad lines throughout the country, which allowed the massive mobilization of the Salvadoran population to different places. Yet, it was in the third decade of the 20th

century, that the current authorities decisively addressed the issue of tourism. García Moran, et al. (2012) explain that during the administration of Dr. Alfonso Quiñones Molina, the government of El Salvador created the First Board for the Promotion of Tourism and Agricultural and Industrial Propaganda to promote the progress of the country, its historical sites, and culture (p. 19).²¹

It is since 1930, that the country experienced significant advances in the field of tourism. According to García Moran, et al. (2012), it was in 1930 that the country experienced significant advances in tourism. According to García Moran, et al. (2012) in

Figure 12:

The origin of tourism in El Salvador



Note. By Orellana, J., & Orellana, J. (2023, September 17), image in reference to the origins of tourism in El Salvador <https://www.elsalvador.com/fotogalerias/noticias-fotogalerias/imagenes-antano-estaciones-tren-el-salvador/1089072/2023/>

²¹ GARCÍA MORAN, D. M., PIMENTEL QUINTANILLA, L. E., & SÁNCHEZ ALFARO, J. H. (2012). "PLAN ESTRATÉGICO DE PROMOCIÓN TURÍSTICA RURAL, PARA EL CRECIMIENTO y DESARROLLO DE CASCADAS EL ESCUCO, SANTO DOMINGO DE GUZMÁN DEPARTAMENTO DE SONSONATE." [Tesis]. Universidad de El Salvador.

1930, the National Tourism Board was created by Decree Number 135, as an intermediary between the Government and the Departmental Road Boards. Nine years later, in 1939, in each of the 14 departments of the Republic, the Board of Ornamentation of Roads, Spas and Public Gardens was created. Then, in 1945, the 6 Progress and Tourism Boards were founded, in charge of supervising all aspects related to material progress for the benefit of tourism. Recognizing that tourism was an excellent driver of development, the government and private enterprise joined forces in 1947 to create the General Council of Tourism with the status of public service. It was based on the belief that the State was responsible for promoting the material and cultural development of the

country. A further significant progress was made in 1947, with the creation of the General Board of Tourism, which initiated the establishment

of a network of Turicentros throughout

the country. This initiative was intended to offer healthy leisure opportunities to Salvadoran families. (p. 20).²²

Thanks to these previously established foundations and alliances, the Salvadoran Institute of Tourism (ISTU) was created under the Ministry of Economy. It was entrusted

Figure 13:

Salvadoran Institute of Tourism, ISTU



Note. By Instituto Salvadoreño de Turismo. (n.d.), ISTU's new logo <https://istu.gob.sv/>

²² Ibid, PLAN ESTRATÉGICO DE PROMOCIÓN TURÍSTICA RURAL, PARA EL CRECIMIENTO y DESARROLLO DE CASCADAS EL ESCUCO, SANTO DOMINGO DE GUZMÁN DEPARTAMENTO DE SONSONATE, 2021. P.20

with functions such as the promotion of tourism in El Salvador, the regulation of tourism companies, the supervision of tourism operations, the administration of tourism resources, and the preservation of tourist areas. This made 1978 the main boom year for tourism. Several key factors were identified in that year, such as:

- A positioning strategy for El Salvador was established and marketing approaches were proposed to initiate the inclusion of the country on the international tourism map.
- A plan was proposed to promote the development of the coastal zone, taking the Jaltepeque Estuary on the Costa del Sol as the main area.

But all this collapsed in 1979 when a crisis occurred due to the accentuation of socio-political problems and a climate of violence that led to the explosion of war a year later. The international press portrayed El Salvador as a dangerous country for tourists, which generated a change of image abroad, and also, reduced the affluence of travelers (García Moran, et al. 2012, p. 21).²³

Figure 14:
Civil War in El Salvador



Note. By Spotlight. (2021, January 19), Photograph of the Civil War guerrillas in El Salvador.
<https://www.lapatilla.com/2021/01/19/victimas-de-guerra-salvadorena-pidieron-atencion-y-respeto-al-pacto-de-paz/>

²³ ²³ Ibid, PLAN ESTRATÉGICO DE PROMOCIÓN TURÍSTICA RURAL, PARA EL CRECIMIENTO y DESARROLLO DE CASCADAS EL ESCUCO, SANTO DOMINGO DE GUZMÁN DEPARTAMENTO DE SONSONATE, 2021. P.21

2.2.3 The present

The tourism situation in El Salvador has undergone a significant transformation after emerging from an extensive Civil War and concluding it with the Peace Agreements of 1992. Despite immense difficulties, El Salvador now enjoys a positive reputation worldwide.

According to Papaleo (2024), a journalist for the renowned international news network DW, reports that “the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has placed El Salvador in fourth place worldwide in 2023, and first place in Latin America in terms of the increase in international visitors

Figure 15:

Tourism in El Salvador today



Note. By Diario El Salvador (2023), Photograph of the progress in tourism in El Salvador.

https://diarioelsalvador.com/gobierno-amplia-los-permisos-generales-de-turismo-en-el-salvador-hasta-en-180-dias/316217/#google_vignette

compared to 2019, surpassing Colombia and the Dominican Republic.”²⁴

Referring to this emerging reputation of the country in terms of tourism, it is due to the current administration of the Government of El Salvador that several strategies to improve infrastructure and rejuvenate important tourist destinations have been implemented. One notable achievement is the restoration of the Historic Center of El

²⁴ Papaleo, C. (2024, February 1). Volver al paraíso: el turismo repunta en El Salvador. dw.com. <https://www.dw.com/es/volver-al-para%C3%ADso-el-turismo-repunta-en-el-salvador/a-68148153#:~:text=La%20Organizaci%C3%B3n%20Mundial%20del%20Turismo,a%20Colombia%20y%20a%20Rep%C3%ABlica%20Dominicana.>

Salvador. In addition, initiatives such as Surf City have been introduced to improve the coastal areas of the country and attract investment. El Salvador has successfully hosted surfing competitions, establishing itself as a preferred destination for surfers from around the world. The recent launch of the National Tourism Plan 2030 provides a series of strategies for the next decade to strengthen the tourism sector as a key driver of the socio-economic growth of the country. Marketing initiatives have played a significant role in the expansion of the sector and are an essential part of the actions described in the 2030 Plan. Through this innovative vision, the development of tourism in El Salvador would raise its international profile, attract investment, create employment opportunities, and contribute to the overall economy (Greenbook, n.d.).²⁵

Beyond any doubt, El Salvador has risen to become a country of renown and an example for other nations, revealing itself as the paradise that it truly is.

2.3 Natural resources in the destination area

2.3.1 About the destination area

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this project is intended to be carried out in the department of La Paz, specifically in the municipality of Zacatecoluca, in the facilities of the Ichanmichen Water Park.

²⁵ The evolution of tourism in El Salvador: Strategies, challenges, and economic impact. (n.d.). Greenbook. <https://www.greenbook.org/insights/focus-on-latam/the-evolution-of-tourism-in-el-salvador-strategies-challenges-and-economic-impact>

La Paz is abundant in natural resources, which can be found across its various municipalities. For instance, the Jaltepeque Estuary located in La Costa del Sol, has a variety of marine and coastal ecosystems such as mangrove forests, freshwater lagoons, and rivers. These ecosystems shelter a diverse range of coastal birds and marine mollusks that hide among the mangrove roots.

The richness of its ecosystems hosts a high diversity of fauna, including some endangered species, such as cedar and mahogany. This salt forest is located between the departments of La Paz and San Vicente and spans 28 kilometers. It provides shelter to marine species as well as resident and migratory coastal birds. The estuary has two mouths known as Cordoncillo and Tasajera. The mangrove forest plays a crucial role in mitigating the effects of climate change, controlling flooding, and filtering river currents (Diplomática, 2023).²⁶

Figure 16:
Map of La Paz, El Salvador



Note. By Wiki, F. (2021, November 8), map of La Paz
https://www.familysearch.org/es/wiki/La_Paz,_El_Salvador_-_Genealog%C3%ADa

²⁶ Diplomática, R. (2023, April 24). Costa del Sol de El Salvador. Raia Diplomática. <https://raiadiplomatica.info/2023/04/26/costa-del-sol-de-el-salvador/>

Figure 17:

La Costa del Sol, La Paz



Note. By Turicentro Costa Del Sol, San Luis La Herradura, La Paz, El Salvador | Todoturismo.Sv, (n.d.), Costa del Sol, La Paz
<https://www.todoturismo.sv/listing/turicentro-costa-del-sol-la-paz-el-salvador.html>

Another of its natural resources is the aforementioned Costa del Sol. This beach is 15 kilometers long, and in terms of surfing, it is characterized by the sandbanks that form throughout the breaker zone; which generate fast waves, breaking both right and left. The best time of the year to surf in Costa del Sol is from November to January, when the swells of the South Pacific Ocean are not so big and powerful, which allows the wave to break with less speed and more smoothly, ideal for beginners in the practice of this exciting

sport. This beach is surrounded by the immense Jaltepeque Estuary, populated by mangroves, ideal for SUP (paddle surfing), canoeing, sailing, fishing, and skiing, or to rent a small boat and take a nice ride (Ministerio de Turismo de El Salvador, n.d.).²⁷

The following natural resource is Santa Clara Regional Park. It is an impressive natural resource located in the Nuevo Eden canton, municipality of San Luis Talpa, covering an extensive 977-hectare area. The park boasts a diverse range of vegetation,

²⁷ Ministerio de Turismo de El Salvador. (n.d.). Costa del Sol. El Salvador Travel. <https://elsalvador.travel/destination/costa-del-sol/>

including grasses like zacate, mozote, and beach bell; mangrove trees such as madresal and sincahuite; and palm varieties like papaturro, hat palm, and coyol.

Additionally, the park is adorned with towering trees reaching up to 40 meters in height, such as white conacaste, cedar, jocote jobo, and huiscoyol. The park is also a flourishing habitat for a variety of wildlife, including deer, coyotes, rabbits, cusucos,

skunks, sparrow hawks, quails, collared toucans, ticks, masacuatas, lizards, and a diverse range of fish

species like chimbolos, curbinas, chimberas, macarelas, and others. Because of its rich flora and fauna, the park was declared a protected area in 1992. Other ecological reserves in La Paz include the Escuintla, El Astillero, El Pinche forests, Tasajera Island, La Calzada lagoon, and El Pimental beach (Unknown, 2017b).²⁸

Figure 18:

Santa Clara Regional Park, La Paz



Note. By Unknown. (2017a), Santa Clara Regional Park, La Paz
<http://naturalezanacional.blogspot.com/2017/10/en-la-paz-encontramos-encontramos-los.html>

2.3.2 Straw Fresh based on a natural resource

Straw Fresh was created to introduce an innovative product that captures the freshness and natural essence of Ichamichen Water Park. Since the Straw Fresh

²⁸ Unknown. (2017b, October 30). Turismo en El Salvador. <https://turismojosue.blogspot.com/>

beverage stand is located in this natural jewel, this is the natural resource that represents this tourist product.

According to the ISTU (2024),²⁹ “the Ichanmichen Water Park, whose name in Nahuatl means “Abode of the Little Fish” or “The Cave of the Little Fish”, is located 52 kilometers from the city of San Salvador. This paradisiacal place was donated to the State by Mr. Antonio Avendaño Osorio and Mr. Antonio Domínguez, owners of the haciendas where the park is currently located, during the period of Mr. Raúl Contreras at the head of the National Tourism Directorate, being inaugurated in 1952.”

The place has an area of 43 blocks of land and has the pool stages “Zona popular”, “Zona familiar” and “Zona la fuente”, with two pools for children and five ponds; as well as two water source canals, a 6.50 meters high slide, and two free-fall slides. As part of the mythological attractions, Ichanmichen has fountains of crystalline water such as the pools of “El Cipitío”, “La Ciguanaba”, “La Fuente de Xochitl”, “El

Figure 19:

Ichanmichen Water Park, La Paz



Note. By El Salvador Travel (n.d.), Ichanmichen Water Park, La Paz
<https://elsalvador.travel/destination/ichanmichen/>

²⁹ ISTU (2024a, February 8). Parque Recreativo Ichanmichen. Instituto Salvadoreño De Turismo. <https://istu.gob.sv/blog/2020/09/25/parque-recreativo-ichanmichen/>

rincón de la Valentina” and “El acuario de la Sirena”, all surrounded by abundant vegetation (ISTU, 2024).³⁰

Figure 20:

Ichanmichen Water Park, La Paz



Note. By ISTU (2024), Ichanmichen Water Park, La Paz
<https://istu.gob.sv/blog/2020/09/25/parque-recreativo-ichanmichen/>

Ichanmichen also preserves remains of the hacienda where it was settled, so today visitors can see some cedars, conacaste, and migratory birds. It is part of the National System of Tourist Centers and National Parks of El Salvador. The soil of the water park is of volcanic origin, allowing for the existence of springs, in addition to the waters provided by the Sapuyo, Jalteva, Suchimalaco, Ichanmichen, and Cantarrana rivers. The park features 12 swimming pools, six picnic areas, eight

cabins, a restaurant, and parking for 300 vehicles (Unknown. 2017a).³¹

Starw Fresh is dedicated to providing a refreshing beverage to its customers while also promoting a deep respect for nature and culture. The company encourages its customers and visitors to appreciate and conserve the natural wonder of Cave of the Little Fish.

³⁰ ISTU (2024a, February 8). Parque Recreativo Ichanmichen. Instituto Salvadoreño De Turismo. <https://istu.gob.sv/blog/2020/09/25/parque-recreativo-ichanmichen/>

³¹ Unknown. (2017a). La Naturaleza en La Paz. La Naturaleza Salvadoreña. <http://naturalezanacional.blogspot.com/2017/10/en-la-paz-encontramos-encontramos-los.html>

2.4 Cultural Identity

Under the terms of World Vision Latin America and the Caribbean, (2023),³² cultural identity is defined as “the set of cultural manifestations that unite a social group. Thus, it implies that certain people can generate a feeling of belonging to a group, based on shared interests. And this is essential to foster the union of people.”

Figure 21:

Salvadorian Cultural Identity



Note. By Díaz, J. C. D. (2022), image in reference to Salvadorian cultural identity <https://diarioelsalvador.com/el-ballet-folklorico-nacional-se-presentara-en-gotera/262656/>

Countries often form identities based on different aspects of local culture. However, there are identities that go beyond geographical boundaries, allowing humans to feel part of something bigger through various cross-cutting elements. Having a community identity of this type involves considering elements such as language, religion, ethnicities, social classes, customs, values, etc (World Vision América Latina y el Caribe, 2023).³³

³² World Vision América Latina y el Caribe. (2023). Identidad cultural, ¿qué es y por qué es algo tan relevante? World Vision América Latina Y El Caribe. <https://worldvisionamericalatina.org/identidad-cultural-que-es/>

³³ Ibid Identidad cultural, ¿qué es y por qué es algo tan relevante?, 2023. <https://worldvisionamericalatina.org/identidad-cultural-que-es/>

The beverage to be launched embodies the cultural essence of its origin. Situated in the Inchanmichen Water Park, Straw Fresh not only incorporates Salvadoran ingredients but also proudly reflects its deep-rooted heritage. The strong commitment of the brand to preserving its cultural identity drives it to safeguard the natural resources of its location and advocate the conservation of the rich culture of the country.

Figure 22:

Tourist resources in El Salvador



Note. By (TOURISM IN EL SALVADOR, 2019), image in reference to Salvadorian tourist resources <https://elsalvadortruths.home.blog/el-salvador-is-facing-a-challenge-in-reference-to-the-low-tourism-in-the-country/>

2.4.1 Tourist Resources

As stated by Cortes, D. (2023a),³⁴ tourist resources “are everything that contributes to its development: mountains and seas, forests and lakes, historical monuments and cultural objects. Tourist resources are specific objects and features of the environment (natural, climatic, historical, socio-cultural, etc.), which are (or can be) of interest to tourists and can induce them to travel.”

Tourist resources include beautiful landscapes, architectural monuments, clean air, entertainment options, and the hospitality of local people. Recreational geography defines these resources as natural

³⁴ Cortes, D. (2023a, April 26). Clasificación de los recursos turísticos | 2024. Maestrías Y MBA. <https://www.cesuma.mx/blog/clasificacion-de-los-recursos-turisticos.html>

or human-made elements with recreational value for organizing human recreation, health improvement, or cultural enrichment. They are classified into three categories:

- Natural tourist resources, such as climate, relief, landscapes, hydrological features, forests, parks, beach areas, protected areas, and natural monuments.
- Historical and cultural resources, including architectural structures, palaces, fortresses, museums, sculptures, historical sites, and works of art.
- Socioeconomic or infrastructure resources, like hotels, restaurants, excursion offices, campsites, spas, and entertainment complexes (Cortes, D. 2023a).³⁵

Figure 23:

Intangible tourist resources



To this list of

characteristics is added

intangibility. Tourism

products have both tangible

and intangible components. Tangible attributes include elements such as facilities,

equipment, and furnishings. On the other hand, intangible attributes encompass

services, customer service, ambiance, and charm of both the rooms and the rest of the

Note. By Gómez (2024), image representing the warm hospitality of Salvadorans <https://diarioelsalvador.com/personal-de-turismo-da-la-bienvenida-a-visitantes-en-el-aeropuerto-internacional/480461/>

³⁵ Ibid Clasificación de los recursos turísticos, 2024. <https://www.cesuma.mx/blog/clasificacion-de-los-recursos-turisticos.html>

facilities. These elements are influenced by the curiosity of the tourist, the desire to travel, and the consumption of the product occurs at a specific date for travel, making it non-immediate after acquisition (Monografías Plus. n.d.).³⁶

Straw Fresh plays a vital role as a tourism resource by attracting visitors to the Ichamichen Water Park and enticing them to enjoy its beverages. With its irresistible gastronomic delights, Straw Fresh not only attracts both local and foreign visitors to dip into the pools of the water park, but also invites them to do so while enjoying its refreshing strawberry drinks. In addition, Straw Fresh contributes significantly to the intangible and cultural aspects of tourism by promoting the water park and offering visitors a premium service to enjoy the opportunity to connect with the natural beauty of

Figure 24:

Festivals and celebrations of El Salvador



Note. Alcaldía de San Salvador. (2018), image displaying festivals in El Salvador
https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=2359515140731764&set=pcb.2359519694064642&locale=es_LA

the region while immersing themselves in the distinctive legends of El Salvador.

2.4.2 Festivals and Celebrations in El Salvador

According to Lorenz. C. (n.d.), the term festival refers “to those acts or cultural events in which human beings prepare to celebrate, thank, commemorate or honor certain circumstances. It is considered cultural

³⁶ Los tipos de características del producto turístico | Monografías Plus. (n.d.).
<https://www.monografias.com/docs/Los-tipos-de-caracteristicas-del-producto-turistico-F3AAB3K699CP>

since festivities always have to do with the way in which each society understands the world.”³⁷

In the other hand, in concordance with Fingermann, H. (2015),³⁸ “a celebration is a remembrance of an important, positive date that represents a social value that deserves to be externalized through various expressions that show its importance.”

The festivals and celebrations in El Salvador enable people to understand its culture and discover the national soul. They transmit joy, sadness, desires, hopes, and religious feelings. The traditions of El Salvador are based on gastronomy, music, folkloric dances, patron saint festivities, typical costumes, and more (EcuRed, n.d.).³⁹

Especially in the municipality of Zacatecoluca, La Paz, the Mango Festival stands out. Organized by the Ministry of Tourism, this event is held at the Ichanmiche n Water Park, where different cooks exhibit and offer their products made with the delicious

Figure 25:

Mango Festival at Ichanmichen Water Park



Note. By Monge and Monge (2023), Mango Festival, La Paz
<https://www.elsalvador.com/entretenimiento/turismo/mango-el-salvador-celebrara-festival-expo-2023/1049026/2023/>

³⁷ Lorenz., C. (n.d.). Definición de Festividad. Significado.com. Retrieved November 10, 2010, from <https://significado.com/festividad/>

³⁸ Fingermann, H. (13 de marzo de 2015). Concepto de celebración. Deconceptos.com. <https://deconceptos.com/ciencias-sociales/celebracion>

³⁹ EcuRed. (n.d.). Fiestas Tradicionales del Salvador - EcuRed. https://www.ecured.cu/Fiestas_Tradicionales_del_Salvador

tropical fruit. Among the delicious treats prepared with this seasonal fruit are shrimp ceviche, empanadas, rice, mango ice cream, desserts, tartlets and sandwiches with mango pickle, to name a few. And, of course, the star product, one of the most popular among tourists: mango en flor. (Monge & Monge, 2024).⁴⁰

This festival is directly related to Straw Fresh, as it is celebrated right in the place where the enterprise is located. It is certainly beneficial for Straw Fresh, as it will gain recognition from local and foreign customers who usually attend this festival.

2.4.3 Syncretism

In the words of the encyclopedia Etecé, Equipo editorial (2023),⁴¹ syncretism is a “cultural process in which two traditions, religious doctrines and even linguistic practices intermingle, reconciling their different contents. It generally takes place in terms of fusion and assimilation, thus

Figure 25:
Syncretism in El Salvador



Note. By Ávila. (2023), Carnival of San Miguel. Example of syncretism
https://diarioelsalvador.com/san-miguel-cierra-sus-fiestas-patronales-con-el-gran-carnaval/432105/#google_vignette

⁴⁰ Monge, O., & Monge, O. (2024, April 25). “Expo Mango 2024”, una fiesta de puro sabor. Noticias De El Salvador - Noticias De El Salvador, Noticias Internacionales, Salvadoreños Por El Mundo, Economía, Negocios, Política, Deportes, Entretenimiento, Tecnología, Turismo, Tendencias, Fotos, Videos, Redes Sociales. <https://www.elsalvador.com/entretenimiento/turismo/expo-mango-2024-fieta-sabor-ichanmichen-istu/1138456/2024/>

⁴¹ Equipo editorial, Etecé. (2023, January 24). Sincretismo: concepto, tipos, características y ejemplos. Enciclopedia Humanidades. <https://humanidades.com/sincretismo/>

obtaining a totally new cultural product, although with more or less evident signs of the initial ones.”

Syncretism is a usual and fundamental mechanism in the constitution of human cultures. It has occurred throughout history in various fields, generally between cultures or civilizations forced geographically or historically to coexist for a long time. In the case of conquered peoples, their culture is not totally replaced by that of the conquerors, but assimilated. This means that part of it survives within the dominant culture, changing it forever (Equipo editorial, Etecé, 2023).⁴²

In regards to this tourist product, it offers a delightful fusion of cultures, featuring an Italian-inspired beverage that has been infused with a Salvadoran twist by

Figure 26:

Gastronomy of El Salvador



Note. By Spanish-Elzonte (2022), Pupusas
<https://sayzonte.com/popular-food-in-el-salvador/>

incorporating locally sourced strawberries into its creation.

2.4.4 Gastronomy

Despite being the smallest country in Central America, its gastronomic culture is extensive. Gastronomy plays a transformative role, boosting local customs and promoting sustainable development.

Ingredients such as corn, cassava,

⁴² Ibid Sincretismo: concepto, tipos, características y ejemplos. Enciclopedia Humanidades, 2023.
<https://humanidades.com/sincretismo/>

beans, among others, are included in your meals. Its most representative dish is pupusas, but there are also dishes such as fried cassava, atoles, elotes locos, seafood, Indian chicken soup, empanadas, etc. However, each department or municipality has foods and drinks that are typical of each region, as is the case of the department of La Paz, specifically in Zacatecoluca, where one of its most popular foods are tamales pisques, and orange atol as a drink.

Figure 27:

Traditional drink of Zacatecoluca, La Paz



Note. By Smucker´S (2022), Orange atol <https://www.kiwilimon.com/receta/bebidas/bebidas-calientes/atole/atole-de-naranja>

As for the locals of the department, they express that the process of making orange atol begins by taking the rice to the mill. Then the oranges are peeled and the juice is extracted. Once the rice horchata is ready, it is strained and put on the fire. The orange juice is applied little by little, then the sugar, milk, a little vanilla, and a pinch of salt are added. In 15 minutes, and without stopping stirring, the atol is ready to serve (Rodríguez, A. 2020).⁴³

⁴³ Rodríguez, A. (2020, December 2). El atol de naranja, tradición culinaria. La Prensa Gráfica. <https://www.laprensagrafica.com/elsalvador/El-atol-de-naranja-tradicion-culinaria-20201202-0045.html>

Figure 28:

Gastronomy of Zacatecoluca, La Paz



Note. By Ragoonanan, N. (2022), Tamales Pisques <https://www.196flavors.com/es/tamales-pisques/>

2.4.5 Gastronomy at Zacatecoluca, La Paz

Despite the diverse list of traditional dishes and beverages offered by Salvadoran gastronomy, for Zacatecoluca there is one in particular that is its favorite. It is the tamales pisques

Tamales pisques are a variety of tamales that are distinguished by their flavor and their unique filling. They are prepared with corn dough, greaves, rice, chickpeas and tomato sauce. This

combination of ingredients creates an incredibly tasty flavor that makes tamales pisques a beloved dish in Zacatecoluca.

The history of Zacatecoluca's cuisine dates back to pre-Columbian times, when the region's indigenous populations farmed and consumed ingredients such as corn, beans, cassava, and cocoa. With the arrival of the Spanish colonizers in the 16th century, there was an exchange of ingredients and culinary techniques. The Spanish introduced ingredients such as pork, beef, rice and various spices. These ingredients were fused with local products to create a blend of unique flavors that characterizes the cuisine of Zacatecoluca (Typical Meals of Zacatecoluca, n.d.).⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Comidas típicas de Zacatecoluca. (n.d.). ElSalvadorDescubre. Retrieved Agosto 23, 2024, from <https://elsalvadordescubre.com/comidas-tipicas/comidas-tipicas-de-usulutlan/>

These are some of the dishes that can be found in Zacatecoluca, where Straw Fresh will be promoted. Straw Fresh adapts its beverage based on the identity and traditions of the region, such as the creation of drinks with natural fruits. There is a long list of beverages that are consumed in the Zacatecoluca area, now Straw Fresh will be added to that list.

2.4.6 Legends and Stories of Ichanmichen

Straw Fresh is not only located in a Salvadoran natural gem, but also in a cultural treasure where the mythology of the country is present. Within the facilities of the water park there is a pool in memory of one of the most famous legends of El Salvador, which is El Cipitío.

Figure 29:

Legends of Ichanmichen Water Park



2.4.7 The legend of the Cipitío

According to Salvadoran mythology, the Cipitío, also known as Cipitillo, was the son of the Siguanaba, who was originally known as Sihuehuet (Beautiful

Woman). Legend has it that this woman had a relationship with the Sun god, from which the Cipitío was born. However, the woman unfaithfully betrayed the Sun god, with the Morning Star god, so the god Tlaloc (the god of gods) condemned both the mother and

Note. By Revista Comunica. (2022), The Cipitío, mythological character
<https://comunica.edu.sv/2022/02/04/nombran-a-rolando-menendez-castro-hijo-meritissimo-de-el-salvador/>

the child: The mother was condemned to be a wandering woman and the child to never grow and be preserved forever at the age of ten. La Siguanaba is also another popular legend in El Salvador. This woman wanders the rivers and appears to men as a beautiful woman, but then when they approach her and see her face to face, she becomes an ugly woman who can even drive them crazy forever. The Cipitío was cursed to stay as a child forever, even if centuries pass. They say that some years ago, when our grandparents were young, it was more common to find the footprints of a child in the ashes of the wood in the kitchen, anyone could think that it is a mischief, but...maybe it was not, Cipitío loves to eat a lot of ash and wallow in it. The Cipitío that is sometimes known as Cipitín, is characterized by being small and also belly has a huge hat on his head and it is said that his feet have them upside down, so when people try to follow him they get lost in his footprints

They also say that he has magical powers to go from one place to another. He is a harmless character, who does not hurt anyone, but who does bother with his jokes and mocking laughter. His spirit is mocking, he hides in the bushes on the banks of rivers and streams to wait for the beautiful girls who come to wash or bathe there. When he sees them, he gives them compliments and throws flowers and pebbles at them, but they cannot see him. In fact, it is said that only children can see him. They say that when Cipitío chases a girl it is difficult for him to get away from her, the solution to keep him away is for the girl to eat inside a toilet, sitting in the cupboard. This is because Cipitío hates bad habits and therefore moves away quickly (SallyMar, 2020).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ SallyMar. (2020, May 14). Mitos y leyendas Chapter 1 - Mitología Salvadoreña: El cipitio. WebNovel. https://www.webnovel.com/book/mitos-y-leyendas_16937536505823105/mitolog%C3%ADa-salvadore%C3%B1a-el-cipitio_45466875529850457

2.4.8 The Cipitío at Ichanmichen

In the beautiful Ichanmichen Water Park, in Zacatecoluca, Straw Fresh will be offering its products. The park features a special attraction called the Cipitío Pool, which enchants visitors of all ages. This magical spot creates a refreshing swimming area and also connects visitors to Salvadoran mythology. The pool is adorned with sculptures and decorations depicting the Cipitío and other elements of Salvadoran folklore, creating a captivating atmosphere that encourages visitors to explore these fascinating stories.

Figure 30:
Cipitío Swimming Pool



Note. By Alcaldía de Zacatecoluca, (2019), The Cipitío, at Ichanmichen Water Park
https://www.facebook.com/alcaldiamunicipaldezacatecoluca/posts/la-novena-edici%C3%B3n-del-festival-de-mango-te-espera-el-domingo-5-de-mayo2019-en-el/2025778477544731/?locale=es_LA

2.4.9 Stories

One of the stories or curious facts about Ichanmichen Water Park, is that its name in Nahuatl has an important meaning, which translates to "The Abode of the Little Fishes" or "The Cave of the Little Fishes." This is because the natural pools and pools of the park are home to many fish. This highlights the commitment of Straw Fresh to preserving the habitat of these thousands of fish, which is one of the most significant characteristics of the brand.

2.5 Principles for Sustainable Tourism

Figure 31:

Sustainable tourism in El Salvador



Note. By (TOURISM IN EL SALVADOR, 2019b), Sustainable tourism at El Salvador
<https://elsalvadortruths.home.blog/el-salvador-is-facing-a-challenge-in-reference-to-the-low-tourism-in-the-country/>

Sustainable tourism is currently gaining strength and gradually becomes an important pillar of the economy of countries that have a tourist vocation, as well as their own human development and society, so it is important to place it in the areas where it directly impacts and thus propose new alternatives to tourism where social,

economic and environmental aspects can be combined to make tourism an activity with much greater projection than it currently has. UNWTO notes that sustainable tourism "caters to the needs of current tourists and host regions, while protecting and fostering opportunities for the future." It is conceived as a way towards the management of all resources, so that they can meet economic, social and aesthetic needs, while respecting cultural integrity, essential ecological processes and biological diversity (Cardoso Jimenez, 2006).⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Cardoso Jimenez, C. (2006, Mayo 11). Turismo Sostenible: una revisión conceptual aplicada. Redalyc. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/1934/193420679001.pdf>

The ideals and principles that constitute sustainability include broad concepts such as intergenerational equity, gender equity, peace, tolerance, poverty reduction, preservation and restoration of the environment, conservation of natural resources, and social justice (Cedex, n.d.).⁴⁷ But according to the analysis offered by López and López (2023),⁴⁸ several noteworthy principles are described, such as:

- Focus on local communities, which essentially means involving local communities in the design and management of the tourism destination. All this in order that the quality of local life is not affected and that opportunities are offered to vulnerable groups, small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs.
- Avoid mass tourism to minimize social and environmental impact. Therefore, sustainable destinations must identify and attract responsible tourism. Educating them in the care of the resource to be used during their visit.
- Protecting a cultural heritage of a country at all costs is the main mission of sustainable tourism. To this end, it is necessary for destinations to treasure their customs, traditions and everything related to their cultural identity, as these are the elements that maintain the authenticity of a destination.
- And what would sustainable tourism be if it did not take care of nature?
Preserving nature is the basis of this type of tourism, therefore, as a principle, every sustainable destination must value the importance of its natural resources,

⁴⁷ Cedex, S. (n.d.). Organización Mundial del Turismo (OMT) - Itinerarios culturales. The Council of Europe. Retrieved August 29, 2024, from <https://www.coe.int/es/web/cultural-routes/world-tourism-organization>

⁴⁸ López, R. G., & López, R. G. (2023, November 23). 10 principios para ser un destino sostenible - Marketing Turístico Digital. Marketing Turístico Digital - Las nuevas tendencias del Marketing Digital incorporadas al sector turístico. <https://marketingturisticodigital.com/destinos-sostenibles/>

not only as a tourist attraction but also to create a healthy society (López & López, 2023).

This enterprise takes into account the principles of sustainable tourism and makes them its own. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Straw Fresh is a start-up that not only aims to promote one more destination in beautiful El Salvador, but is also committed to safeguarding it and reducing its carbon footprint, in order to care for and preserve its surrounding environment for a longer period of time.

2.6 Strategic plan

2.6.1 Strategic plan for quality design

Based on the American Society for Quality (n.d.),⁴⁹ a quality plan or rather, a quality management systems - ISO 9000 “is defined as the international standard that specifies requirements for a quality management system (QMS). Organizations use the standard to demonstrate the ability to consistently provide products and services that meet customer and regulatory requirements.”

The following strategic plan unfolds the strategies Straw Fresh will implement to provide its customers with a quality product and achieve customer loyalty.

⁴⁹ American Society for Quality. (n.d.). What is ISO 9001:2015 – Quality management systems? <https://asq.org/quality-resources/iso-9001>

Figure 32:

Strategic plan for quality design.

Strategic plan for quality design



1. MADE FROM QUALITY INGREDIENTS

As a first strategy, Straw Fresh will offer its customers a product made with quality ingredients. Therefore, it will not only prioritize the use of carefully selected ingredients, but will also give priority to their preservation, since the drink is based on natural ingredients.

2. ORGANIC PACKAGING AND FOOD SAFETY

As a second strategy, Straw Fresh is dedicated to environmental responsibility and has implemented measures such as using containers with 15% less plastic. Additionally, strict sanitation standards are prioritized to ensure the safety and cleanliness of our beverages, establishment, and staff.

3. EFFICIENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

The third strategy emphasizes exceptional customer service, and Straw Fresh is committed to providing top-notch service. It will be staffed with highly qualified bartenders not only to prepare delicious beverages, but also to ensure prompt and polite service to its customers.

4. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Thanks to these three elements, Straw Fresh will seek maximum customer satisfaction. In this fourth strategy, a quality product and service will be offered to meet the needs of the customers in the best possible way.

5. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Straw Fresh is committed to satisfying its customers and protecting the environment. The company will continuously seek to improve its processes and products to better serve its customers and minimize its impact on the environment.

6. CUSTOMER LOYALTY

In this sixth strategy, Straw Fresh will seek to achieve customer loyalty, earning a place in their hearts, which will translate into their preference, thanks to the quality it offers.



Note. Diagram provided by team members, explaining the strategies of the plan for quality and customer loyalty.

2.6.2 Strategic plan for action

This plan outlines the specific actions, responsibilities and improvements that Straw Fresh will implement to distinguish itself from other beverage stands.

Table 1:

Strategic plan of action

Action	Responsibility	Improvement
<p>Straw Fresh staff will organize a brand activation at the Ichanmichen Water Park consisting of dynamic and environmentally friendly activities aimed at promoting the products and reinforcing the brand identity. These dynamics will not only seek to introduce the brand, but also encourage visitors to preserve their environment, which is one of the distinctive features of this new product. Straw Fresh will promote this activity through Facebook.</p>	<p>This action will be in charge of Margarita Rivera, creator and president of the enterprise. Her duties will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicity and event updates on Facebook. • Interacting with customers in brand activation. • Awarding winners. 	<p>One of the activities of this brand activation will consist of offering the first 30 customers a free eco-friendly and aesthetic cup for the purchase of their beverages. This reusable cup can be used for future Straw Fresh purchases, ensuring sustainability and hassle-free enjoyment. Moreover, visitors passing by our beverage stand at the Ichanmichen Water Park, can win appealing prizes including complimentary drinks, and brand merch such as hats and t-shirts through an engaging prize wheel game.</p>
<p>To effectively engage the demographic target, the staff will create captivating content for social media platforms such as Instagram, attracting youth and adults to interact with the brand, learn about it, and purchase the products of the stand.</p>	<p>This action will be in charge of Elsy Beltrán, designer and head of marketing and advertising. Her duties will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation and advertising of content on Instagram. • Crafting special promotions. • Answering customer questions. 	<p>This strategy aims to promote content such as giveaways for the brand's followers to participate in. Three winners of the giveaway will receive coupons for a 10% discount on beverages, available for a month. Additionally, specific activities will be launched, including a promotion to celebrate the brand's anniversary with 50% off beverages during the entire day. The company will also advertise the use of points accumulation in</p>

		<p>apps like Leal, allowing customers to redeem their points for our products completely free of charge.</p>
<p>In order to boost brand awareness, the strategy of Straw Fresh will involve harnessing the power of influencer marketing. The enterprise will enlist well-known Tiktok influencers to craft compelling product reviews and showcase the content to their vast social media audiences. This strategy will be used to spread the brand contact information, such as phone number, email, and address so that more people get to know and consume Straw Fresh products.</p>	<p>This action will be in charge of Yoselyn Grande, brand image and content creator. Her duties will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create appealing content for the brand on TikTok. • Casting influencers. • Assign discount code and authenticate it on-site. 	<p>The brand will establish firm partnerships with influencers to provide them with exclusive brand merchandise and beverages for promotion on their social media channels. Additionally, the company will introduce a limited-time discount code for its products specifically for the influencers' followers. To enjoy the discount, followers can visit the beverage stand, demonstrate their following of the influencer's account, and automatically receive a 10% discount on their drinks. This promotion will be valid for 10 days only.</p>

Note. Table provided by the team members, explaining actions of the strategic plan for brand awareness.

CHAPTER III

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT BY MEANS
OF A TOURISM PRODUCT**

3.1 The profile of an Entrepreneur

3.1.1 What being an Entrepreneur really means

Before delving into the characteristics that an entrepreneur possesses, it is essential to begin by keeping in mind what being an entrepreneur really entails. According to the business magazine Forbes (2023),⁵⁰ “not everyone who dreams of running their own company makes it as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs are a special breed of individuals. Transforming an idea into a robust business requires tremendous vigor, creativity, ambition and focus.” In other words, entrepreneurs are those who often take significant risks in the process of creating a new business. They use their skills, creativity and vision to identify market needs and introduce innovative ideas and solutions. In doing so, they face most of the risks involved in entrepreneurship, but also most of the rewards if their efforts are successful. (Hayes, 2024).⁵¹

As part of what it means to be an entrepreneur, it is worth noting the importance of their role in the economy and society. As TimesPro (2024)⁵² points out, the role of an entrepreneur plays a vital contribution “in shaping societies worldwide, driving innovation, fostering economic growth, creating job opportunities, sparking competition, instigating social change, and empowering individuals to pursue their dreams. Entrepreneurial ventures' impact extends beyond individual businesses; it influences entire communities and economies, leading to transformative outcomes.” Entrepreneurs

⁵⁰ Forbes. (2023). Today's Entrepreneurs Are Successful Because They Think Differently. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/04/24/todays-entrepreneurs-are-successful-because-they-think-differently/>

⁵¹ Hayes, A. (2024, October 3). Entrepreneur: What it means to be one and how to get started. Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/entrepreneur.asp>

⁵² TimesPro. (2024, July). What Is The Importance of Entrepreneurship in Change And Economic Growth? Retrieved October 14, 2024, from <https://timespro.com/blog/what-is-the-importance-of-entrepreneurship-in-change-and-economic-growth>

play a crucial role in various ways. They actively contribute to job creation, which leads to stabilizing the economy of a country by reducing unemployment. Additionally, they foster healthy competition and a diverse marketplace, improving consumer experiences across all sectors. Entrepreneurs also drive social change by identifying social problems and creating innovative solutions through their businesses. At the same time, they promote sustainability, community empowerment, advocacy, awareness, and inspiration for others (TimesPro, 2024).⁵³

This is what it really means to be an entrepreneur. To be an entrepreneur is to offer the world a unique vision of how a problem or need can be solved. Offering this vision can be a challenge, as everything else in life, but the key lies in persistence, determination and, above all, the creativity to succeed.

3.1.2 The crucial role of Entrepreneurs in Tourism

The influence of entrepreneurs extends beyond the economy and society to involve the tourism sector. In this context, their role is essential not only to create jobs and strengthen the local economy, but also to contribute to cultural enrichment, infrastructure development and rural progress (Rosero, 2023).⁵⁴

The increase in the number of entrepreneurs in the tourism sector is leading to innovation and the development of unique products and services. Consequently, this is

⁵³ Ibid What Is The Importance of Entrepreneurship in Change And Economic Growth? Retrieved October 14, 2024, from <https://timespro.com/blog/what-is-the-importance-of-entrepreneurship-in-change-and-economic-growth>

⁵⁴ Rosero, C. (2023, September 28). Emprender en turismo: qué es y conceptos clave para comenzar tu negocio. Guianza Libre. <https://guianzalibre.com/emprender-en-turismo-que-es-y-conceptos-clave-para-comenzar-tu-negocio/#:~:text=Emprender%20en%20turismo%20es%20un,en%20Guianza%20Libre%2C%20un%20Travelemprendedor!>

essential for the competitiveness of tourism regions and for attracting specific segments of tourists. For example, adventure tourism, ecotourism and gastronomic tourism can emerge from innovative ideas that integrate unique or sustainable activities. For example, guided hiking trails in preserved natural areas, local gastronomic routes or immersive experiences in rural communities. As a result, tourism entrepreneurs play a vital role in promoting sustainable development. As agents of change, they have the ability to incorporate environmental and social initiatives into their businesses, promoting responsible tourism. This involves implementing practices that minimize the carbon footprint of tourism operations and adopting socially responsible practices that respect the natural and cultural environment (Kavya, MB., 2021).⁵⁵

In addition, tourism entrepreneurs not only benefit the economy directly, but also support other industries like agriculture, transportation, and accommodation. This has a positive effect, making tourism a key driver of economic growth. To summarize, entrepreneurs in the tourism industry play a crucial role in making tourism destinations unique, competitive, and sustainable.

3.1.3 Characteristics of an Entrepreneur

Although each person is different and, therefore, each entrepreneur is unique, there are certain characteristics that shape them. Notorious examples of these common

⁵⁵ Kavya, MB. (2021). A Reflection on The Importance of Entrepreneurship in Tourism Development. Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanitie, 8(1). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351338774_A_Reflection_on_The_Importance_of_Entrepreneurship_in_Tourism_Development

characteristics are Steve Jobs and Jeff Bezos, whose passion and vision for their products led them to tremendous success.

- According to BBVA (2023),⁵⁶ one of the crucial characteristics that defines an entrepreneur is passion. It is the driving force that moves an entrepreneur forward every day, fueling his commitment to his projects.
- Another characteristic of entrepreneurs is business acumen. This capacity allows them to anticipate and seize market opportunities before others. They have the ability to forecast upcoming trends that will shape markets. This skill also implies the ability to adapt, pivot, or change course when circumstances demand it.
- Confidence and determination are also essential qualities for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship goes beyond simply starting a business, which carries its own risks. It requires self-confidence to deal with uncertainty and adversity, as well as the determination to persevere and the strength to keep going even when times get tough.
- BBVA (2023), also points out that entrepreneurs are always eager to learn and stay updated, whether it is through updating their academic knowledge, attending conferences, lectures, reading new books, or taking courses, or specialized training. This philosophy is something they are looking forward to passing on to their work teams and those around them on a day-to-day basis.
- In the same spirit, entrepreneurs must be filled with creativity, as it is the driving force that encourages them to create their own company and to innovate with

⁵⁶ BBVA. (2023, November 15). Seis cualidades que necesitas para ser un emprendedor. BBVA NOTICIAS. <https://www.bbva.com/es/innovacion/seis-cualidades-que-necesitas-para-ser-un-emprendedor/>

new market solutions. Creativity means exploring, experimenting and embracing new experiences beyond the comfort zone to discover innovative challenges.

- Lastly, entrepreneurs are fully committed to their projects, often working long hours and facing challenges in balancing work and family life. Their unwavering dedication makes them strong and courageous, enabling them to push forward with their plans despite any obstacles (BBVA, 2023).⁵⁷

3.1.4 Straw Fresh Entrepreneur Characteristics

Like all entrepreneurs, the staff at Straw Fresh possesses characteristics that, taken together, shape what the brand stands for. These are defined in the diagram below:

⁵⁷ Ibid Seis cualidades que necesitas para ser un emprendedor. BBVA NOTICIAS.
<https://www.bbva.com/es/innovacion/seis-cualidades-que-necesitas-para-ser-un-emprendedor/>

Figure 33:

Characteristics that define Straw Fresh



Note. Diagram provided by team members, explaining the entrepreneurial characteristics that define Straw Fresh.

3.1.5 Responsibility of the Entrepreneur

More than being creators of unique solutions and having an essential role in different market sectors, entrepreneurs have certain responsibilities to assume. As Jogiruz (2015) explains, “responsibility is to work so that our actions respect justice, human freedom, ensuring that they do not cause harm.” With this, entrepreneurs assume such responsibilities or commitments to contribute to society and the environment, following a philosophy of sustainability.

It is vital for an entrepreneur to be aware of these responsibilities, which in the business world are known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Based on Reckmann (2024),⁵⁸ Corporate Social Responsibility is defined as “a management concept that describes how a company contributes to the well-being of communities and society through environmental and social measures.” CSR also plays a critical role in shaping how brands are perceived by customers and their target audience. Additionally, it is fundamental in attracting employees and investors who prioritize the CSR goals a company has identified.

3.1.6 Types of Responsibilities

These are some of the responsibilities that entrepreneurs must assume, regardless of the size of their enterprise, according to (Palmer, 2024).⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Reckmann, N. (2024, October 3). What is corporate social responsibility? Business News Daily. <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4679-corporate-social-responsibility.html>

⁵⁹ Palmer, J. (2024, September 13). What is Corporate Social Responsibility? (Explanation + Types). OnBoard Board Management Software | Board Portal | Board Intelligence. <https://www.onboardmeetings.com/blog/corporate-social-responsibility/>

- **Environmental Responsibility**

This responsibility aims to reduce the damage that business operations cause to the planet. This includes reducing carbon emissions and waste, using renewable energy and thinking carefully about the use of resources. It is a key element in caring for the environment, being socially responsible and running a business properly. Enterprises that prioritize environmental conservation reduce energy consumption by using programmable timers for lights and heating, as well as by replacing traditional lights with LED lights. They may also choose to install solar panels. Additionally, they implement recycling and composting programs in the workplace, strictly limit the use of packaging, and opt for environmentally friendly materials.

- **Economic Responsibility**

For a legal entity to embody economic responsibility, it must operate in a way that prioritizes financial sustainability while actively contributing to the economic well-being of other businesses and its community. This often includes donating to local charities, sourcing products and services from local businesses and contributing to economic development initiatives.

- **Philanthropic Responsibility**

Philanthropic responsibility occurs when an organization gives back to the community through charitable campaigns, volunteer services and other community initiatives, which can inspire positive change in education, health care or social welfare. Enterprises can show their commitment to philanthropic

responsibility by creating a corporate foundation or fund, supporting community events and proposals, and supporting employee volunteer programs.

- **Ethical Responsibility**

Corporate ethical responsibility refers to the obligation of an enterprise to conduct its business in a morally sound and principled manner, which involves sticking to ethical standards in decision-making, operations and interactions with stakeholders. This includes treating employees fairly, providing a physically and emotionally safe working environment, respecting confidentiality agreements, maintaining oversight of suppliers and partners, respecting all business-related rules and regulations, and ensuring that business practices are conducted with honesty and an appropriate level of transparency.

As discussed above, micro and medium-sized entrepreneurs must also prioritize the application of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This includes providing a quality work environment for their workers, fostering good relationships with suppliers and customers, engaging in social causes, promoting environmental care, and preserving the environment (Barroso, 2008).⁶⁰

As an emerging start-up enterprise, Straw Fresh joins these voluntary actions in favor of society, assuming environmental responsibility of the green area of Ichanmichen where it is located. It is responsible for adopting sustainable practices that protect the surrounding flora and fauna, as well as educating its customers about the importance of preserving the planet. The brand also takes responsibility for validating its

⁶⁰ Barroso, F. G. (2008). Entrepreneurial Social Responsibility. A study focused in forty enterprises in Mérida, Yucatan. SciELO Analytics. https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0186-10422008000300005

staff and is committed to providing them with a quality work environment and fair rewards for their hard work. In addition, Straw Fresh is engaged in philanthropy and takes on the social responsibility of supporting and donating to organizations dedicated to environmental conservation, such as Fundación Naturaleza and FUNZEL in El Salvador.

3.2 Market Niches

For a product to develop successfully, it must be designed to satisfy certain needs, motivations, and interests of its potential customers. That is why it is indispensable to determine its niche in the market.

A market niche, defined by Flat (2024),⁶¹ “is a segment of consumers who have similar characteristics and whose needs are not satisfied by current market offerings.” However, a niche does not cover the entire market segment; it is a select group of people with more specific and demanding requirements who look for product options that fit their lifestyle.

Establishing a strong market niche is essential to ensure that certain customers prefer to buy from a particular business rather than from the competition. A niche helps to identify the product and brand and ensures that the offering is aligned with the needs of the customers. Additionally, focusing on a smaller audience allows a business to prioritize the quality of its customer service and build enduring relationships. By entering a niche, a business automatically differentiates itself from mass-market companies,

⁶¹ Flat. (2024, March 25). ¿Qué son los nichos de mercado? ESERP Digital Business & Law School. <https://es.eserp.com/articulos/que-son-los-nichos-de-mercado/>

minimizing competition. This means that the business does not have to compete with big brands and can instead focus on offering an exceptional product and service (Schooley, 2023).⁶²

3.2.1 Niche and Segment

When discussing niche, the term "segment" also arises. Although these two terms may seem similar, they are actually different but undoubtedly related. What must be kept in mind is that the niche is derived from the segment. In the words of Virginiaeude (2019),⁶³ a segment refers to "a group of subjects that have identical characteristics in terms of wants, needs, lifestyle or consumption habits, while niche markets are found within each market segment and are a much smaller group of people." One thing that can be useful in differentiating one from another is their size. Niches are much smaller than market segments. For example, within the health food segment, vegans can be considered a niche market, while vegetarians represent another niche. But both vegans and vegetarians are part of a segment of people who share a taste for healthy food (Nardi, 2023).⁶⁴

⁶² Schooley, S. (2023, October 24). How to find your business niche. Business News Daily. https://www-businessnewsdaily-com.translate.goog/6748-business-niche-characteristics.html?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=es&_x_tr_hl=es&_x_tr_pto=sge&_x_tr_hist=true

⁶³ Virginiaeude. (2019, August 13). Noticia de EUDE Business School para la fecha 23/04/2019. Eude Business School. <https://www.eude.es/blog/diferencia-entre-segmentos-y-nichos-de-mercado/>

⁶⁴ Nardi, G. (2023, June 27). ¿Qué es un Nicho de Mercado en Marketing? [Explicación]. Desnudando El Marketing. <https://desnudandoelmarketing.com/nicho-de-mercado/>

3.2.2 Segmentation Elements to Target a Niche

Now that has been discussed what a niche is and also what a segment means, attention should be paid to the elements of a segmentation in order to understand how to target a niche. In the marketing environment, business need to establish a niche to optimize products better and target them to the audience that requires them. In this way, they can also optimize the investment that will be made in advertising to attract this segment.

It is also important to comprehend that market segmentation must be carried out before launching a product or service to ensure that it fully meets the needs of the target audience. Without proper segmentation, the service is likely to fail due to lack of a specific audience to target. The more detailed the segmentation to reach the target audience, the more positive the reception of the product or service will be at the time of its launching to the market. (Content, 2022).⁶⁵

Here are some segmentation elements to take into consideration when targeting a niche:

- **Geographic Segmentation**

According to Content (2022),⁶⁶ geographic segmentation refers to the physical location of the target audience. It focuses on where the segment operates and the environment in which it exists. When using this type of segmentation, it is

⁶⁵ Content, R. (2022, April 27). Segmentación de mercados: definición, tipos e importancia. Rock Content - ES. <https://rockcontent.com/es/blog/tipos-de-segmentacion-de-mercados/#:~:text=%C2%BFPor%20qu%C3%A9%20es%20importante%20la,momento%20de%20lanzar%20al%20mercado.>

⁶⁶ Ibid Segmentación de mercados: definición, tipos e importancia. Rock Content - ES. <https://rockcontent.com/es/blog/tipos-de-segmentacion-de-mercados/#:~:text=%C2%BFPor%20qu%C3%A9%20es%20importante%20la,momento%20de%20lanzar%20al%20mercado.>

essential to define the country, city, region, and climate of the target audience's location.

- **Demographic Segmentation**

The author also adds that demographic segmentation is crucial, since it provides information on specific aspects of the audience. Delimiting it leads to the targeting of potential customers. Variables in this segment include age, gender, marital status, profession, educational level, culture, nationality and socioeconomic level.

- **Psychographic Segmentation**

Another segmentation mentioned by Content (2022) is psychographic segmentation. It consists of discovering the personality, lifestyle, values, attitudes, interests and preferences of the potential customer. This makes it possible to adjust the product and service to the expectations of the customer.

- **Behavioral Segmentation**

The author indicates that at this point, the consumption of the audience and usage patterns are analyzed in relation to the promotions. Additionally, factors such as price sensitivity, brand loyalty, and response to the offerings are considered.

- **Product Segmentation**

Finally, Content (2022) points out that product segmentation is crucial as it focuses on specific product characteristics. For example, this includes categories like laptop, computers, shoes for women, and kitchen rugs. The more precise the

product segmentation, the higher the likelihood that the product will reach the intended audience.

3.2.3 Implications for Targeting a Niche

Defining a niche involves several important considerations before launching a product in the market. This process can be challenging, as the product must address the specific needs of potential customers. Therefore, it is essential to thoroughly understand what it means to define a niche.

Wooll (2024)⁶⁷ emphasizes that recognizing one's passions is crucial for building a business, as it helps maintain long-term motivation. A niche should align with personal interests, skills, or knowledge, allowing the business to thrive with genuine enthusiasm and expertise. Consequently, identifying one's strengths and interests is the first step in targeting a niche. This includes understanding the problems and needs that the new business aims to solve. The author also highlights that not everyone will be interested in what one is selling. The key is to identify the right customers instead of trying to reach everyone. Finding individuals who share similar values increases the chances of cultivating loyal customers, which can lead to a profitable business.

Wooll (2024) also suggests experimenting with different ideas until finding the one that best fits a business concept. It's valid to test, adjust strategies, and gather feedback before committing to a niche. In the same manner, a highly recommended approach is to examine what competitors are doing. Researching the actions of others

⁶⁷ Wooll, M. W. (2024, March 6). 10 tips to find your niche and succeed at it. BetterUp. <https://www.betterup.com/blog/how-to-find-your-niche>

in the same field and identifying opportunities to differentiate oneself is essential for gaining recognition in a specific area.

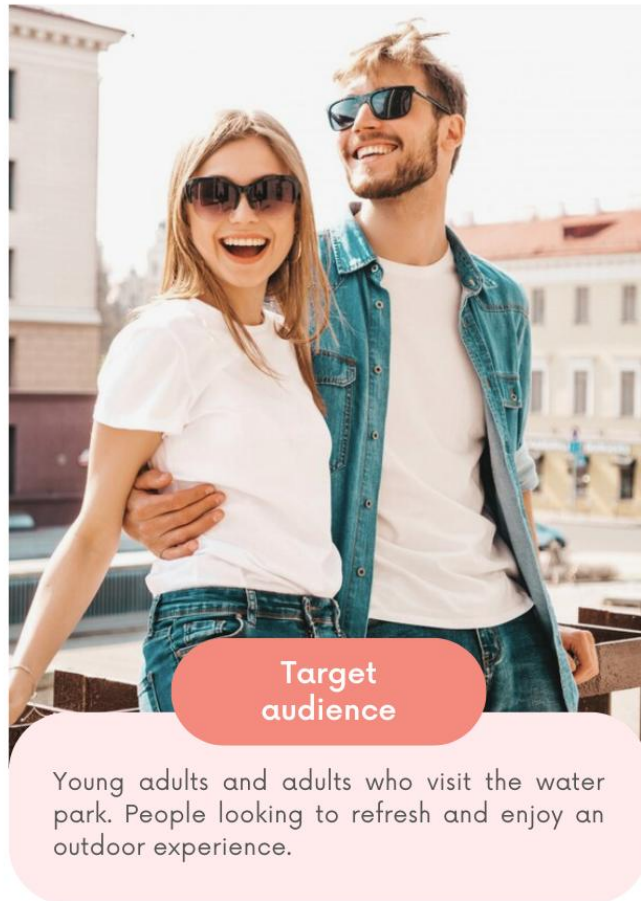
Finally, it is important to reflect on the chosen niche. This means reviewing its profitability and assessing whether the target audience is being reached. Being willing to continually readjust and improve is critical to success.

3.2.4 Niche Profile of Straw Fresh

With the aim of understanding the target audience of Straw Fresh, the team members decided to create a comprehensive profile of the niche of the business. This niche is presented as follows:

Figure 34:

Niche Profile of Straw Fresh



Age range

15 to 45, emphasizing young adults and families looking for refreshing, healthy, and delicious beverages during their leisure time.

Interests

People interested in natural products, healthier than traditional soft drinks. They may be interested in fresh options, with fruity flavors, and be environmentally conscious.

Lifestyle

People interested in natural products, healthier than traditional soft drinks. They may be interested in fresh options, with fruity flavors, and be environmentally conscious.

Consumer behavior

Groups of family and friends, looking to refresh or hydrate after a dip in the pool or after interacting with the games.

Means of marketing

- At the facilities of Ichanmichen Water Park.
- Advertising inside the Water Park.
- Advertising through social media.

Partnerships

- Ichanmichen Water Park.
- Influencers sharing their experience with the product.

Note. Diagram provided by team members, explaining the niche of Straw Fresh.

3.2.5 Business Philosophy

Below, Straw Fresh will present its principles and beliefs, which guide this enterprise as well as its members.

Figure 35:

Business Philosophy



Note. Image provided by team members, created to display the philosophy of the business.

3.2.6 Mission

Offering a unique gastronomic experience that combines the sweetness of strawberries with the bubbly of mineral water. Creating a positive impact on our customers and the environment, inspiring to preserve the ecological and cultural richness of our surroundings.

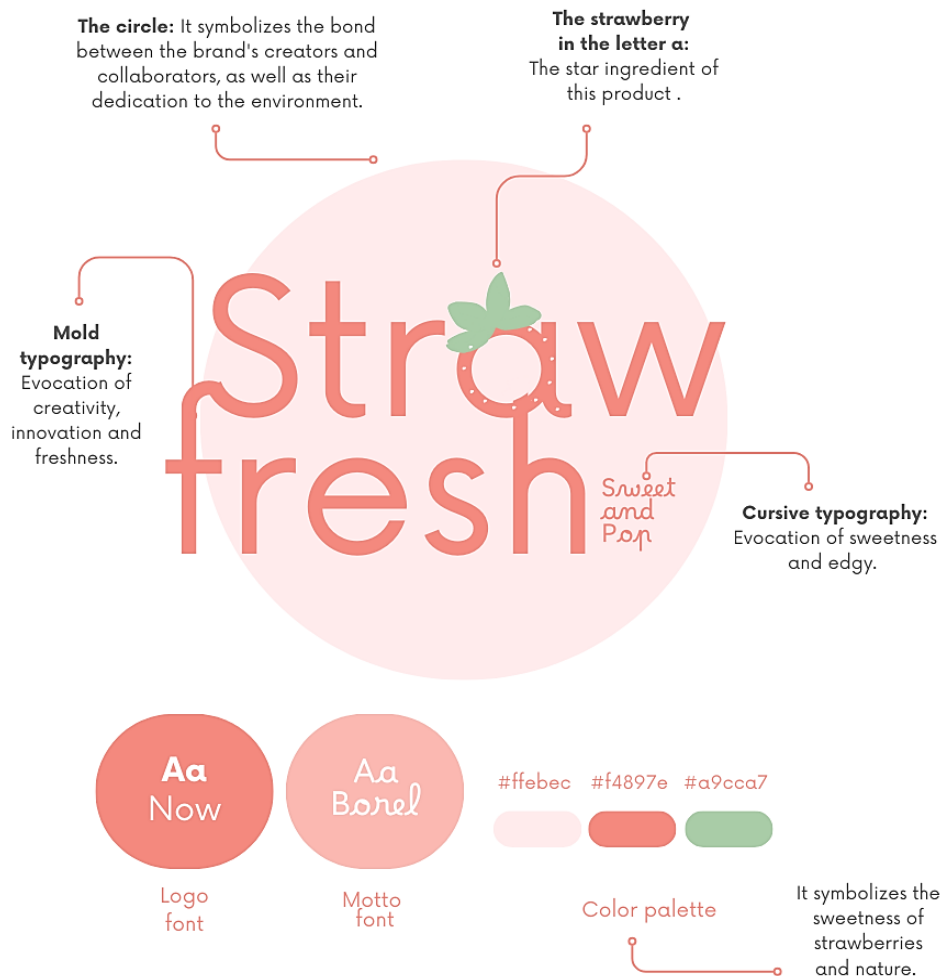
3.2.7 Vision

To be recognized as the benchmark of innovation in sustainable gastronomic experiences within the tourism sector of El Salvador, integrating local products and environmental responsibility in each glass. We aspire to connect our visitors with nature and culture, while providing a refreshing, accessible, and committed to the future of the planet option.

3.2.8 Logo

Figure 36:

Elements of the logo.



Note. Image provided by team members, displaying the Straw Fresh logo elements.

3.2.9 Meaning of the logo

The name of this enterprise evokes the sweet taste of strawberries, paired perfectly with the effervescent freshness of sparkling water. The drink is a must-try for anyone looking for a refreshing and revitalizing experience on a hot day. The name of this product uses the first syllable of the word “strawberry” which is “Straw” and is complemented by the word “Fresh”, alluding to how refreshing a sparkling beverage is in the midst of a fun and pool environment.

3.2.10 Motto

Our motto, Sweet and Pop, captures the essence of our gastronomic proposal: the perfect combination between the natural sweetness of strawberries grown in El Salvador and the effervescent freshness of mineral water. Sweet' reflects the smooth and delicious pleasure of a natural product, while 'Pop' alludes to the refreshing and sparkling touch that makes every sip a vibrant and unique experience. Together, they create an explosion of flavors and sensations that invite you to enjoy an innovative, authentic and, above all, memorable beverage.

3.2.11 Values

- **Sustainability**

We are committed to minimizing our impact on the natural environment, promoting responsible practices and actively contributing to the preservation of the Ichanmichen Water Park and its natural resources.

- **Commitment**

We believe in the importance of supporting local communities, working with Salvadoran producers, and generating employment in the region to promote sustainable economic development.

- **Innovation**

We encourage creativity and innovation by combining the natural and the refreshing in a product that surprises and delights our customers, offering a unique experience of its kind.

- **Wellbeing**

We focus on providing a quality, fresh and healthy experience, ensuring that our products meet high standards, both in taste and in the well-being of those who visit us.

- **Local Authenticity**

We value the use of local ingredients, such as strawberries grown in El Salvador, to offer an authentic experience and connect our visitors with the agricultural and cultural richness of the country.

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