

EL SALVADOR - BEACHES & REVOLUTION



The Central American El Salvador is experiencing great developments. Last year it recorded considerable growth in the number of visitors. Also the domestic travel is on the rise as less Salvadorians go abroad on vacation. If they do they usually travel to Guatemala, Honduras or Nicaragua. Salvador's Minister of Tourism says there is a change in the behavior pattern for domestic tourism. Salvadorians nowadays have more opportunities for entertainment at home and also the proximity is important.

Salvadorian tourism is getting more versatile. Tourists may enjoy various events like for example the Consumer Fair, which attracted more than 400,000 visitors this year. The country does not have really interesting archeological sites or trails for eco tourists. However, it has wonderful beaches and it is also an ideal surfing destination. Many foreigners come here to enjoy the vibrant night life. Hotel occupancy rates are close to 81 percent during the holiday period.

Apart from the beaches, mountains and colonial towns there is also something else that lures tourists to this Central American state. It is the history. There was the civil war between the right wing military government and the leftist groups. The conflict took place mainly between 1980 and 1992. Nowadays the civil war relics like combat plans or mountain hideouts serve as tourism attractions. The "guerrilla capital" Perquin, nowadays hosts the "Museum of the Revolution." A visitor may admire cannons, uniforms or pieces of Soviet weaponry that were used in the civil war.

The tourism sector is becoming increasingly important for the country's economy. Last year the industry represented 4.6% of the Salvadorian Gross Domestic Product. The country's government is actively supporting the growth in the industry and also wants it to continue. The officials expect the numbers of visitors to continually grow and they also expect the industry will generate a total of \$987 million this year.

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