

**8 - 7**  
Days Nights

**CODE**

PSALMAB

**OPERATES**

Package may start any day except Friday. Joya de Cerén is closed on Monday.

**SERVICE**

Private services (Vehicle and driver)

**DIFFICULTY**

Easy

**LODGING**

- 2 nights in San Salvador City.
- 2 nights in Flower Route.
- 2 nights in Suchitoto.
- 1 night in La Unión.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Make your own Pupusas (Traditional Salvadoran food).
- Share with a group of local tour guides sponsored by our nonprofit organization, Share Smiles.
- Walk the charming towns in the Flower Route.
- Pick up coffee with locals (if in season) and learn about the coffee process at a mill tour.
- Walk to the edge of the crater of San Salvador Volcano.
- Visit Joya de Cerén, a World Heritage Archaeological Site.
- Walk the cobblestone streets of Suchitoto Colonial Town.
- Dye your own scarf with indigo: a Mayan natural colorant.
- Learn about Criollo Cacao considered of the highest quality in the world.
- Release a baby Sea Turtle into the Pacific Ocean.
- Visit a rural school and enjoy quality time with local children.



# El Salvador, Beautiful and Meaningful

Break piñatas with local children! A wonderful trip that combines the beauties of El Salvador with the meaningful experience of sharing time with local communities through our own nonprofit organization. Volcano craters, archaeological sites, a kid's smile, coffee plantations, colonial towns, sharing experiences with local guides ... In this package you will enjoy exploring El Salvador while at the same time, support the work done by our local non-profit organization, Share Smiles, which supports ecological projects such as sea turtle conservation programs and educational projects at rural schools.

## GENERAL ITINERARY

- Day 1:** Arrival to El Salvador International Airport. Transfer to San Salvador. Night in San Salvador.
- Day 2:** Volcanoes National Park. Time with local children. Make Pupusas. Share time with local Tour Guides (Share Smiles). Transfer to Flower Route. Night in Flower Route. (B, L)
- Day 3:** Gordinflonas Archaeological site. Coffee experience. Free time in town. Night in Flower Route. (B, L)
- Day 4:** San Salvador Volcano (Boquerón). Corn tour and tortillas workshop. Joya de Cerén archaeological site. Transfer to Suchitoto. Night in Suchitoto. (B, L)
- Day 5:** Indigo Workshop. Lunch with local traditional dance group. Free afternoon. Night in Suchitoto. (B, L)
- Day 6:** Transfer to Eastern El Salvador. Monkey and Cacao tour. Boat tour in Jiquilisco Bay. Night in La Unión. (B, L)
- Day 7:** Rural school visit. Sea turtle tour. Transfer San Salvador. Night in San Salvador. (B, L)
- Day 8:** Transfer to airport for return flight. (B)

## INCLUDES

- Private vehicle and driver for transfers and tours.
- 2 nights in San Salvador City, 2 nights in Flower Route, 2 nights in Suchitoto, 1 night in La Unión.
- All breakfast (7) and lunches (6).
- Private English speaking guide for all trip.
- All Activities and entrances as stated on detailed itinerary: Volcanoes National Park, Pupusa Workshop, Share Smiles' Activities, Las Gordinflonas Archaeological Site, Coffee Tour, San Salvador Volcano (Boquerón), Corn Tour and Tortilla Workshop, Joya de Cerén Archaeological Site, City Tour Suchitoto, Indigo Workshop, Cacao and Monkey Tour, Boat Tour at Jiquilisco Bay, Rural School Visit, Turtle Conservation Activity.
- All local taxes and fees are included.
- Fee to support local nonprofit organization, Share Smiles.

## DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Dinners, tips for Guide and Driver, personal expenses, travel Insurance, international flights, airport taxes and services not specifically mentioned.



## SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

- All general conditions apply.
- We may change itinerary due to weather or situations beyond our control.
- Holidays and festivity periods may carry additional surcharges, payment requirements and cancellation penalties. Sites such as: museums, archaeological sites, restaurants, and shopping centers may be limited or not available during holidays or special events.
- If program starts on Friday, we might change itinerary since Joya de Ceren is closed on Mondays.
- Indigo process is seasonal: June to November. But Indigo workshop (dye) can be done all year
- Coffee season for picking: Late November to Early March.
- Coffee Mill tour may be done all year: From December to May you will be able to see it operating.
- Cacao tour is available only from Monday to Friday before noon.
- We reserve the right to cancel boat tour due to weather conditions.
- Sea Turtle program is seasonal (AUGUST – JANUARY) and it is not guaranteed since it depends on nature.
- Cancellation Policy: After 21 days before arrival, no refund.
- \* Some services/activities apply for groups only (16+ PAX): Tours given by the owners of the properties or experts, special lunch with group animation, Indigo workshop at Los Nacimientos. If not a group, the tour will be provided by the regular local guide.
- Also for groups, special arrangements may be done in Suchitoto where hotels are small and offer different types of rooms.
- Transportation: 2PAX: Car/Sedan 4-8PAX: HIACE type VAN 10-16PAX: COASTER, 18-20/18PAX: MINIBUS 22+PAX: BUS
- For a more comprehensive sea turtle tour, an extra night is recommended. Night at Puerto Barillas. This sea turtle tour includes searching for sea turtles within the bay, capturing one and witness scientific studies performed on them and then release it back into the ocean with the objective of improving their protection and conservation.

## HOTELS

### San Salvador:

- Barceló or similar.
- Hotel Mirador Plaza or similar.
- Hotel Villa Terra or similar.

### La Unión:

- Comfort Inn Hotel.

### Flower Route:

- Casa de Graciela/Misión de Ángeles or similar
- Finca El Carmen/Santa Leticia or similar
- Alicante or similar

### Suchitoto:

- Los Almendros Suite Room.
- Los Almendros Double Room.
- El Tejado.



## DETAILED ITINERARY:

### DAY 1: TRANSFER TO SAN SALVADOR

Arrival to El Salvador International Airport. Transfer to San Salvador hotel.

**Lodging in San Salvador.**

### DAY 2: VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK – FLOWER ROUTE (B, L)

Today we will visit Volcanoes National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, where three amazing volcanoes (Izalco Volcano, Santa Ana Volcano and Cerro Verde) embrace beautiful Coatepeque Lake which fills a crater of another volcano. Izalco Volcano is one of the youngest volcanoes in America given that it was born in the 1700's, whereas Santa Ana Volcano is thousands of years old. Izalco Volcano was known as the "Lighthouse of the Pacific" since its lava guided the ships on the Pacific Ocean Coast. No lava is currently flowing, but both volcanoes are still active since constant fumaroles are present. In Cerro Verde, located in the middle of the other two volcanoes, we will walk around its extinct crater providing breathtaking views of Izalco and Santa Ana Volcanoes, Coatepeque Lake and the Pacific Ocean.

Here we will enjoy of a traditional world-famous dish: Pupusas... and you will learn how to make your own! We will also Share (break a piñata for example) with local children, as well as with a group of local tour guides who are also sponsored by our nonprofit organization, Share Smiles.

In the afternoon we will continue to the Flower Route.

**Lodging at Flower Route.**

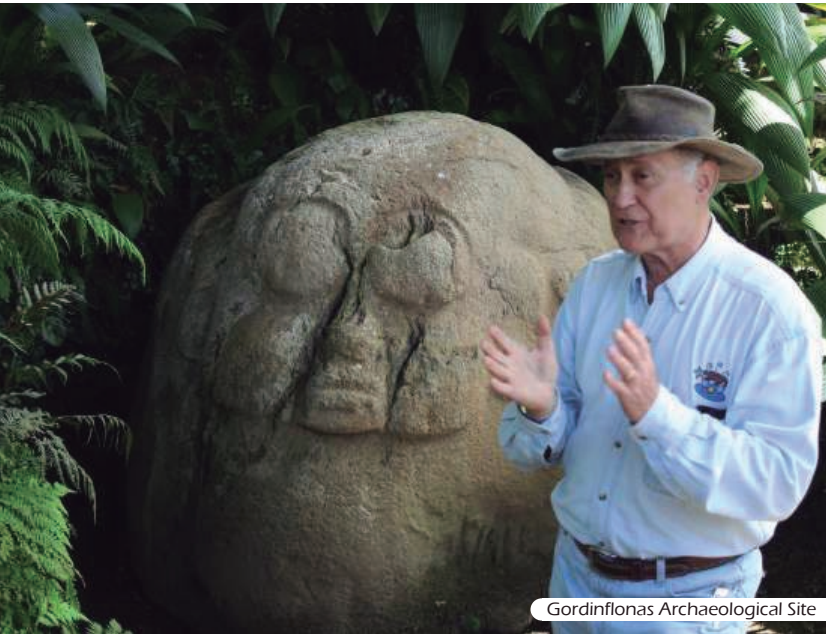


Volcanoes National Park



Coatepeque Lake





Gordiflonas Archaeological Site

### DAY 3: GORDIFLONAS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE - COFFEE TOUR - FLOWER ROUTE. (B, L)

The Flower Route is a coffee plantation area in Western El Salvador that has four main towns: Nahuizalco, Juayua, Apaneca and Ataco. The region offers amazing views of mountains and volcanoes offering crafts, coffee tours, charming towns, markets, and adventure options.

Today we will start our day by visiting what may very well be the origin of the Mayan Civilization: Santa Leticia archaeological site, which goes back 600 years B.C. The most significant aspects of this area are three monuments called "gordiflonas" or "potbellies" which resemble the face and body of a woman. The smallest one weighs 14,000 pounds and the biggest one weighs 21,000 pounds.

Then we will visit a coffee plantation where, during coffee season (Dec - Mar), you will be able to collect coffee along with the locals. After this experience, a guided tour will explain each step of the coffee process at the "beneficio" (mill). Then, you will participate in a table of coffee cupping; and you will learn the basics of this important profession. At the end of the tour you will enjoy a delicious cup of coffee, prepared with the "Chorreador" method. After lunch, enjoy free afternoon to explore the charming towns.

Return to hotel.

Lodging at Flower Route.



Coffee Plantation



## DAY 4: BOQUERÓN VOLCANO- JOYA DE CERÉN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE – SUCHITOTO COLONIAL TOWN (B, L)

El Salvador is the country with more volcanoes per square kilometers in the world. This is because there are many volcanoes in a very small country (20,000 square kilometers). Today we will visit El Boquerón which is the name of the crater of San Salvador's Volcano. Locals say that it has this name because the crater resembles a big mouth (Boquerón = Big Mouth). At approximately 1,700 meters above sea level, it provides a cool climate in between 15 – 23 °C. We will be able to walk to the edge of the crater and admire its beauty. Then we will enjoy lunch in a charming restaurant with amazing views; where the owner is the great grand daughter of Mr. Álvarez, who established the first coffee mill in El Salvador. We will also see the original machinery that was used, plus enjoy a Corn tour where we will make our own tortillas.

Then we will continue to the archaeological site of Joya de Cerén, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1993. This agricultural community was buried by the ashes of Volcano Caldera back in 600 AD for which it is also known as the “Pompeii of the Americas”, even though no bodies were found, a sign that its inhabitants received prompt warning of the eruption. Thanks to the excellent preservation, this site allows us to witness the everyday lives of the Mesoamerican agricultures of such time period; we can witness their homes, beds, crop fields and even saunas. This makes it a unique place within the Mayan World. There is also a comprehensive museum on site where you can see the oldest cacao seeds known in the world. An archaeologist will join us for this experience.

Then continue to Suchitoto.

**Lodging at Suchitoto.**



View of El Boquerón



Joya de Cerén



El Boquerón

## DAY 5: SUCHITOTO - INDIGO WORKSHOP- SUCHITOTO. (B, L)

Suchitoto town is one of El Salvador's oldest colonial towns. Its name means the place of the Flower Bird. We will walk along the charming cobblestone streets surrounded by lovely old colonial homes. Suchitoto is home to Santa Lucia Church, built in 1853, majestically situated in the town's central square.

We will experience an Indigo Workshop. Indigo is a natural colorant extracted from the Xiquilite plant. It was a very important element for the Mayans since they used it for magical/religious rituals, as a medical plant, for pottery, and for painting. When the Spanish "Conquistadores" arrived to El Salvador in 1524, Indigo became the new source of wealth in the region. Pedro de Alvarado noticed how the Indians used several shades of blue in their clothes, and in 1558, the Habsburg King Charles I ordered the territories of Guatemala and Cuscatlán (El Salvador), to produce indigo for Spain. The commercial route was through Granada, then to Cartagena de Indias from where it travelled to Spain.

In the XVII century, the ounce of indigo was as valuable as gold. El Salvador indigo, has always been recognized as top quality worldwide. We will learn the process of indigo as well as art techniques used on clothing as we experiment in designing our own scarf along with local artisans.

*We will experience this at Los Nacimientos farm, one of two farms in the world with the highest quality certification of organic indigo.*

### Lodging at Suchitoto.



Suchitoto Town



Corn Tour



Indigo workshop



Obraje: Indigo Process

## DAY 6: EASTERN EL SALVADOR – JIQUILISCO BAY – FOREST AND CACAO - LA UNIÓN. (B, L)

Today we will start our trip to Eastern El Salvador. On the way, we will stop in Jiquilisco Bay, a UNESCO Biosphere reserve. It is El Salvador’s largest and most important wetland and the largest mangrove estuarine system in Northern Mesoamerica. It contains mangrove forests, estuaries, sand bars, beaches, 27 islands of varying size, fresh water lagoons and seasonally flooded forests. Its 637 square kilometers, represent a transit point to at least 87 species of migratory birds.

We will walk inside a forest in search of fauna such as birds and monkeys. Then we will continue to a cacao plantation and learn about this crop and how delicious chocolate is produced. A boat ride will be waiting for us so we can enjoy the bay along with its mangroves and volcanoes in the background.

Then continue to La Unión.  
**Lodging at La Unión.**



Monkey Tour



Jiquilisco Bay



Drying cacao seeds



Cacao Fruit



El Icacal Beach

## DAY 7: ICACAL BEACH - SEA TURTLES - RURAL SCHOOL VISIT -- SAN SALVADOR. (B, L)

In the morning we will head to El Icacal beach, considered one of the best beaches in El Salvador. El Salvador only has coasts on the Pacific Ocean, and most of them are of volcanic origin. A small community of about 40 families lives in El Icacal. We will head to a local school and learn how our nonprofit organization is working in order to keep children in school as well as teach them about the importance of protecting the environment. We will also visit a sea turtle nursery where the administrators will provide a general presentation on sea turtles and will explain the whole process on how they are protecting them in El Icacal. Four species of sea turtles nest in El Icacal: Leatherback, Hawksbill, Green and Olive Ridley; all of them considered endangered species. After the explanation, you will participate in the release of sea turtles into the Pacific Ocean. If in season, it is common to release about 100 sea turtles per day. We will then have a boat tour guided by locals through the beautiful mangroves where we will be able to spot several species of birds. Then some free time to enjoy the beach.

Afternoon, return to San Salvador.  
Lodging in San Salvador



Sea Turtle release

## DAY 8: TRANSFER TO AIRPORT FOR DEPARTURE FLIGHT. END OF SERVICES (B)



Rural school welcome

