

ADVANTAGE

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Malaysia In Slow Motion
Singapore to Malaysia aboard the
Eastern & Oriental Express

From ERJ to EMBJ
Embraer celebrates 25 years
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The New Custodians
Next-gen winemakers on heritage,
legacy and reshaping wine's future



WORDS Nora Walsh. IMAGES © Erick Chévez Rivera.

WAVES OF CHANGE

El Salvador is rapidly transforming from a country once plagued by conflict and violence into a rising Central American destination, propelled by improved security, foreign investment and its pristine natural assets

“What makes El Salvador such an interesting destination is its diversity of tourism offerings within such a small country,” said Rodrigo Moreno, Co-owner of Salvadorean Tours, a local family run company based in San Salvador. “We are known as the 45-minute country, where you can travel with ease and combine several attractions in the same day—Mayan sites, beaches, volcanoes, lakes, nature reserves, and Spanish colonial towns.”

Moreno’s family also owns Casa 1800, a collection of boutique hotels rooted in gastronomy. “We focus on opening properties in beautiful destinations underscored by nature, culture and history,” he explained. “For our guests, we always include a specialty local coffee, a national dish such as *pupusas* (stuffed tortillas), and a dessert you’ll only taste here in El Salvador. It’s the little details that add up to a memorable experience.”

Opposite: Fringed by black sand and a vibrant beachfront community, Al Suave House is a haven of complete tranquility

This page: The charming town of El Zonte is known for its glassy breaks and warm Pacific swells, which offer a sublime, uncrowded surf experience





EMBRAER TIP

Depart for San Salvador aboard the **Phenom 100EX**. With efficient climb rates and capable hot-and-high performance, it delivers a smooth, direct start to your Central American adventure. Its generous baggage compartment makes it easy to bring everything you need—even a surfboard—for El Zonte's waves.

Urban Escape in San Salvador

In the capital, Il Buongustaio is a historic residence reborn as a six-room boutique hideaway. Its spacious rooms are flooded with natural light that illuminates crisp linens, bold artwork, and patios spilling into lush gardens. The adjoining Italian restaurant remains a city institution—two decades on, it still draws San Salvador's stylish set for lamb lasagna, seafood risotto and Italian wines supped alongside airy arches that frame the grassy courtyard.

Downtown, a renaissance is reshaping the skyline. The new National Library of El Salvador (BINAES)—a striking glass-and-steel gift from China—anchors the city center with seven tech-forward floors. Outside, the restored Plaza Gerardo Barrios gleams with leafy promenades and spotlit fountains, while the reimagined San Miguelito Market brings a cosmopolitan edge—its soaring glass and exposed steel beams are more reminiscent of London than Central America. For greater context, private tours with bilingual Guide Dave Méndez weave together the city's past, present and future through its food, architecture and culture. “The president wants El Salvador to be the Singapore of the Americas,” Méndez noted, citing multimillion-dollar projects including a new stadium, airport, monorail, cable cars, and a rail line.

Beyond the city, Suchitoto offers a colonial-styled time capsule of cobblestoned streets, whitewashed churches and candy-colored facades. Lunch at Casa 1800 Suchitoto comes with traditional Salvadoran dishes and the requisite photo opportunity in its terrace rocking chair overlooking Lake Suchitlán. History buffs can explore the Mayan pyramids of San Andrés and nearby Joya de Cerén—often called the “Pompeii of the Americas”—a UNESCO World Heritage site of a remarkably preserved farming village buried in volcanic ash some 1,400 years ago.



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Beach Break in El Zonte

In El Zonte, a laidback surf town with world-class waves, Al Suave House feels like an architect's opus sculpted into the shoreline. Designed with pavilions that undulate like waves, the airy five-bedroom villa is hewn from pine, stone and sliding glass walls that dissolve the boundary between indoors and out. At its heart, a river-like pool snakes toward the ocean, pulling the eye—and the breeze—straight through the house. Mornings begin with attendants opening the glass walls to sunlight and salt air, while a private chef prepares breakfast in a state-of-the-art kitchen. A cushion-strewn netting hangs above the ground floor in the library, perfect for curling up with a book or listening to a soundtrack, while the hammock-slung meditation room above the kitchen offers front-row views of surfers carving up barrels. New wellness amenities—an open-air yoga shala, cedar sauna and cold plunge—are complemented by a functional health practitioner available for consultations. "The idea was always to let it grow organically," said Owner Matthew Schapiro. "It's about creating a place where people can really reset."

On the same street, Puro Surf Academy offers surf lessons where beginners and pros alike hone their skills through daily surf sessions, surf-skating and video reviews that break down technique frame-by-frame. Fuel up after a day in the ocean with what's arguably the best dining scene in the country. Highlights include elevated Latin food and drink at Roka; native flavors at Palo Verde's Nan Tal restaurant; palapa elegance at Corvana; ocean-view dining at Garten Restaurant; and a convivial low-key vibe at Canegue and Low Tide.

Road Trip the Flower Route

El Salvador's Ruta de las Flores is a 22-mile stretch of winding road through the country's western highlands, named for the wild blooms that brighten its hillsides. Beyond the scenery, it's a cultural corridor linking some of the country's most colorful towns. The route begins in Nahuizalco, where a bustling market brims with an abundance of fresh produce, proudly Indigenous vendors and artisanal handicrafts. From there, the road leads to Juayúa, famed for its weekend food festival and a network of

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nearby waterfalls. Further along, Ataco captures the heart with its cobblestoned streets, colonial churches and walls splashed with vibrant murals. The town flourishes year-round with cultural festivals, and local life unfolds daily in its renovated plaza, where locals welcome travelers with characteristic warmth. Overnight at Casa 1800 Ataco, set in a beautifully preserved colonial home with whitewashed adobe walls, red-tiled roofs and arched verandas framing panoramic mountain views.

Among Mighty Volcanoes

Santa Ana is El Salvador's adventure capital, anchored by Cerro Verde National Park, a cloud forest with three majestic volcanoes. The most iconic trek is up Izalco Volcano, a moderate hike that rewards with views into a turquoise crater lagoon and wide-frame vistas of volcanic peaks and Lake Coatepeque. Afterward, retreat to Casa 1800 Cerro Verde, a modern lodge inside the park, for an in-suite massage, hearty post-hike fare and well-mixed cocktails.

"Now that El Salvador is opening up to the world, I finally see the country growing, enhancing service levels, and helping our communities generate new economic growth that is only possible through tourism," said Moreno. ↗

Opposite: El Salvador's majestic volcanoes command the horizon, their silent grandeur a timeless reminder of the nation's volcanic soul

This page: Across El Salvador, vibrant traditions, handcrafted artistry and warm communities weave together a rich cultural tapestry