# Tourism Sector in El Salvador

The tourism industry in El Salvador is a thriving sector of the economy, with a representation of around 8% of the Salvadoran GDP according to data from the third quarter of 2022. With its diverse range of attractions, the country has been successful in drawing an increasing number of visitors. The measures implemented by the Government of El Salvador, led by President Nayib Bukele, boosted the tourism sector through investment in public infrastructure, the development of the coastal zone with the project of Surf City, and a considerable improvement in public security. Only in 2022, 2.5 million of tourists visited El Salvador, which represented around 96% of the pre-pandemic number. However, the spending of these tourists increased by 50% in relation to 2019 generating more than $2,646 million for El Salvador’s economy.[[1]](#footnote-2) This translated in a jobs’ growth of 11.7% from 2021 to 2022 in the industry which highlights its resiliency and potential.

El Salvador's rich cultural activities are a substantial pull for tourists. The colorful and vibrant traditional festivals, such as the August Festivities in honor of the “Divino Salvador del Mundo”, and the Holy Week processions in April, provide an immersive cultural experience. Moreover, the artisanal towns of Ilobasco and La Palma offer a glimpse into the country’s creative heritage, with their locally crafted ceramics and hand-painted items. These are just few examples of the cultural heritage of a country that in its 21,041 km2 is rich of contrasts and variety, with traditions that have developed according to the conditions of the mountains in the west region, the modern lifestyle of the capital San Salvador, the heat and plains of the east region, and a Pacific’s coast that spans throughout the whole side of the Country and contains some of the best spots to practice surf in the World. The latter is the reason why El Salvador has lately been the host of international surf tournaments which can be checked in the following link: https://surfcityelsalvador.sv/.

The archaeological heritage of El Salvador is another remarkable attraction. The pre-Columbian Mayan site of Joya de Cerén, a UNESCO World Heritage Site often referred to as the "Pompeii of the Americas," gives visitors a unique view of life in an ancient farming community. Tazumal and San Andrés are other significant archaeological sites that captivate with their grand structures and informative museums.

The natural beauty of El Salvador is genuinely breathtaking. The country is known for its stunning volcanoes, such as the Santa Ana Volcano and Izalco Volcano, which offer adventurous hikes and stunning views. The beautiful beaches, like El Tunco and Costa del Sol, are famous for surfing and relaxation. The country's biodiversity is also showcased in its numerous national parks, including El Imposible and Montecristo Cloud Forest.

Safety improvements have been a key factor in boosting tourism. The government has implemented strategies like increased police presence in tourist areas and surveillance systems, which have resulted in a substantial decrease in crime rates. These measures have allowed tourists to feel safer while exploring the nation's numerous attractions.

El Salvador's gastronomy is a feast for the senses. Traditional dishes like pupusas (stuffed corn tortillas), yuca frita (fried cassava), and panes rellenos (stuffed bread) are some examples that give visitors a taste of the country’s delicious cuisine.

The hospitality sector in El Salvador has seen considerable growth, with a wide range of accommodations available to suit every traveler's needs. From luxury resorts and boutique hotels in the city to eco-lodges and beachfront villas, the country offers a plethora of choices for a comfortable stay. Hence, the annual growth rate of the accommodation and food services activities’ industry over the past 5 years has been 3.7%, according to the GDP data published by the Central Bank of El Salvador.

Therefore, our country is waiting to be discovered by the Finnish tourism industry as it will be the perfect spot for Finland’s tourists who are looking for new adventures in a country with rich cultural heritage, stunning natural landscapes, improved safety measures, enticing cuisine, and excellent hospitality which will make El Salvador an increasingly popular tourist destination for the Scandinavian market.

1. https://www.mitur.gob.sv/el-salvador-acelera-la-recuperacion-del-turismo-y-sobrepasa-meta-de-visitantes-y-divisas-al-cierre-2022/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)