

Center for Global Education (CGE)
Travel Seminar Program Planning Checklist
El Salvador

Mission of CGE:

The mission of the Center for Global Education (CGE) at Augsburg College is to provide cross-cultural educational opportunities in order to foster critical analysis of local and global conditions so that personal and systemic change takes place, leading to a more just and sustainable world.

Pedagogy of CGE:

The pedagogy of CGE is rooted in experiential education and Freirian theory. Our travel seminar programs are organized to give participants the opportunity to learn through experience, and then reflect upon and analyze these experiences. The basic principles of CGE educational philosophy include process (learning how to learn), community (learning in the context of community), content (engaging students holistically), critical analysis (reflecting), and action (encouraging students to be agents of change.)

CGE in El Salvador

CGE has a permanent staff member in El Salvador, Cesar Acevedo, and several long-time consultants. We do not own any other facilities. We utilize local guesthouses for housing for both our short-term programs and our Central America semester students, who spend 4 weeks in El Salvador.

Programming at CGE El Salvador:

In light of our mission, all travel seminars include the following components: country orientation, including history and economy; health, safety, and cross-cultural adaptation; analysis/reflection every 2-3 days; and re-entry discussion before returning home. Programming is planned to include dialogue with leaders at both government and local levels, plus visits, activities and speakers based on your themes and goals. Possibilities:

Central America themes/topics:

- | | | |
|---|------------------|---|
| ▪ globalization | ▪ U.S. relations | ▪ ecotourism |
| ▪ trade & Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) | ▪ poverty | ▪ education |
| ▪ women/gender issues | ▪ human rights | ▪ health |
| ▪ environment | ▪ fair trade | ▪ liberation theology, base Christian communities |
| ▪ sustainable development | ▪ migration | |

Additional, specific El Salvador themes/topics:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ civil war | ▪ 2001 earthquakes & reconstruction |
| ▪ peace & reconciliation | ▪ logging and deforestation |
| ▪ remembering Archbishop Romero | ▪ coffee industry |

Program Planning

You will be working directly with our field staff on your program. In order to help us to plan activities, visits and travel that support the goals of your travel seminar, please complete the following checklist with as much detail as possible. The map on the reverse side will help orient you to the geography of the region, and to the location of possible visits.



Map No. 3903 Rev. 3 UNITED NATIONS
May 2004

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

El Salvador Checklist:

All of our trips are customized to your interests. Visits are grouped by theme or topic area. Recommended visits for general interest trips are indicated with an asterisk (*). We recommend 2 visits per full program day. This is just a sample of the visits that can be arranged! **Check one or more circles** for the MAIN focus of your trip. **Mark any of the boxes** for your visits - 1 for a priority visit and 2 for a preferred visit. Please leave blank the visits that hold limited interest.

Women's Issues

- Visit indigenous organizations
- Meet with reps from the women's movement
- Visit a widow organization*
- Meet with reps of emerging women's organizations
- Meet with indigenous women leaders

History/Politics

- Meet with leaders of the major political parties
- Visit the Congress
- Meet with local government authorities
- Discuss historical memory and reconciliation
- Briefing at the U.S. Embassy; discuss U.S. relations*
- Meet with representatives of Salvadoran military
- Discuss Civil War and the post-war period

Agriculture, Sustainable Development

- Field trip to a cooperative or private farm
- Visit a coffee plantation*
- Discuss eco-tourism
- Meet with indigenous people's associations to discuss land issues
- Meet with Ministry of the Environment
- Visit CESTA Appropriate Technology project
- Visit UNES Ecological Organization

Health

- Visit a women's clinic
- Visit a hospital
- Visit Pan-American Health Organization
- Visit a nursing school
- Visit with a midwife
- Meet with non-governmental organizations working on HIV/AIDS *
- Visit a practitioner of medicinal plants

Education

- Visit primary or secondary schools
- Meet with teachers and trade unions *
- Visit an NGO working on popular education
- Visit National or Central American University
- Meet organization working on children's rights
- Dialogue with university students

Indigenous Issues/Rights

- Visit a marketplace and indigenous artisan projects*
- Discuss the peace accords and indigenous identity
- Discuss Salvadoran culture and spirituality
- Observe traditional weaving in a women's coop
- Visit an indigenous community

Human Rights

- Visit with groups involved in children's rights
- Visit with groups involved in land issues
- Visit a massacre or martyr site
- Dialogue with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church about human rights issues
- Visit a marginalized urban neighborhood and talk to residents about social justice concerns*

Religion

- Worship in a local church: _____
- Meet with Christian Base Communities
- Meet with indigenous people's associations and religious leaders to discuss state-church relations & the role of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church
- Visit the site of Archbishop Romero's assassination*
- Participate in a discussion on Liberation Theology
- Visit with faith-based NGO's working on development

Globalization and Trade

- Presentation on the El Salvador economy *
- Discuss CAFTA with government officials and opposition grassroots movements
- Visit a women's sewing cooperative
- Meet with representatives from World Bank, IMF
- Discuss emigration issues
- Discuss debt and poverty reduction with
- Meet with a member of the business sector

Other Options

- Visit to Pacific Coast, lakes and volcanoes
- Visit a craft market
- Experience folk music
- Homestay
- Spanish language training

Key Cities and Destinations:

- ◇ **Comunidad Nueva Esperanza (New Hope):** A repatriated community of 400 ex-refugees returned to Usulután, El Salvador in 1991. This is a very successful agricultural cooperative having over 400 manzanas (roughly 700 acres) of land and a highly organized participatory democracy. All members of the community have free schooling and health care. The community established an Office for Human Rights, a place where they can document, monitor and denounce any reported human rights abuses. Regular festivals provide a stage for young people's theatre, song and dance groups, maintaining traditions and developing new works which reflect social, political and economic realities of the Salvador. In 1995, Nueva Esperanza was given an award from the United Nations as one of the top 50 model communities in the world. Nueva Esperanza Community is composed of over five hundred people, forming a total of 150 families.

- ◇ **Suchitoto:** Set amid beautiful rolling countryside near the site of a pre-Columbian Pipil town, Suchitoto lies on a small ridge above the southern edge of Lago (lake) de Suchitlán. The town's height of glory came when the original Villa San Salvador was located near here in 1528. In the many years since the capital was relocated, life has generally been quiet, except during the 1980s, when the area became the scene of bitter fighting as the army struggled to dislodge the FMLN guerrillas from their mountain strongholds in the area. The roads up and around Cerro Guazapo still bear the crumbling remains of the trenches and dugouts used by both sides, now quietly submerged beneath green vegetation.

Today, Suchitoto (the Nahuatl name means "city of birds and flowers") is experiencing a renaissance, having been designated a national site of cultural heritage in 1997. It's a small town which boasts some of the finest remaining examples of colonial architecture in the country, with low, red-tiled adobe houses stretching along the town's streets. In the center, is the whitewashed Iglesia (church) Santa Lucía, now being slowly but extensively restored. The Teatro de las Ruinas is currently under reconstruction but is planned to host music, dance and cultural events when it opens again shortly.

- ◇ **Ciudad Barrios, San Miguel:** About 80 miles from San Salvador is the bustling city of San Miguel. Sitting at the foot of the prodigious Volcán Chaparrastique, the city is the expanding commercial hub for the east of the country. San Miguel really comes alive in November for the Fiestas Novembrinas (November Fiestas), particularly during Carnival on the 29th - the largest carnival in Central America (so they say). The music, fireworks and street dancing represent the climax to two months of celebrations for the festival of Nuestra Señora de la Paz, the city's patroness.

The neighboring community of Ciudad Barrios is the home of Monseñor Oscar Romero. Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez was born in Ciudad Barrios, El Salvador, on August 15, 1917. His father, the town postmaster and telegraph operator, apprenticed him to a carpenter when he was 13, but the younger Romero felt a vocation for the Roman Catholic priesthood and left home the following year to enter the seminary. He studied in San Salvador and in Rome and was ordained in 1942. Romero spent the first two and half decades of his ministerial career as a parish priest and diocesan secretary in San Miguel. In 1970 he became auxiliary bishop of San Salvador and served in that position until 1974 when the Vatican named him Bishop of the see of Santiago de María, a poor, rural diocese which included his boyhood hometown. In 1977 he returned to the capital to succeed San Salvador's aged metropolitan archbishop, Luis Chávez y González, who had retired after nearly 40 years in office.

- ◇ **Perquín:** A small and, given its history, surprisingly friendly mountain town, set in the middle of glorious walking countryside. During the war the town was the FMLN headquarters, from where they broadcast to the nation on the (literally) underground station Radio Venceremos ("We Will Triumph"). Attempts by the army to dislodge the guerrillas mostly failed, leaving the town badly damaged and deserted. Today, the "town that refused to die" has repaired most of its buildings, although the scars of war are evident everywhere, and nearly everyone has a horrendous tale to tell. Even so, there is today a sense of optimism and a determination to rebuild the community.

Perquín's main draw is the moving Museo de la Revolución Salvadoreña, set up by ex-guerrillas in the wake of the 1992 peace accords. The curators traveled throughout the country collecting photographs and personal effects of those who died during the fighting. There is a succinct summary of the process leading to the beginning of the armed struggle; displays of arms and weaponry confiscated from the army and weapons – including missile launchers, bombs, guns and grenades – disabled after the signing of the peace accords; and examples of international propaganda aimed at bringing the events in El Salvador to the world's attention. Outside is the bomb crater left by a 1981 explosion and a mock-up of a guerrilla camp. Behind the museum you can see the remains of the helicopter that was carrying Domingo Monterrosa (architect of the El Mozote massacre) when it was shot down by the FMLN in 1984. The most moving exhibits are perhaps the anonymous transcripts of witnesses of the massacre, and drawings by refugee schoolchildren, depicting events as they saw them. A separate room contains the transmitting equipment and studio used by Radio Venceremos. Using subterranean sound rooms to evade detection, the station broadcast every afternoon throughout the war on a number of frequencies, transmitting the guerrillas' view of events, as well as interviews and music.

- ◇ **Ruinas de Tazumal:** The Mayan ruins of Tazumal, considered the most important and best preserved in El Salvador, are in the town of Chalchuapa. In the Quiché language the name Tazumal means "pyramid where the victims were burned". The excavated ruins on display here are only one part of a zone covering 4 square miles, much of it buried under the town. Archaeologists estimate that the first settlements in the area were around 5000 BC. The excavated structures date from a period spanning over 1000 years. The artifacts found at Tazumal provide evidence of ancient and active trade between Tazumal and places as far away as Panama and Mexico. Chalchuapa is 47 miles northwest of San Salvador, is about a two hour ride by bus.
- ◇ **Northern El Salvador:** The districts of Chalatenango and Morazán were the principal areas of warfare between the government army and the FMLN guerrillas. The people who fled the area during the war have now returned, and a visit here provides a fascinating opportunity to witness the process of regeneration. La Palma, a victim of FMLN during the war, is known for its wooden handicrafts, flowering plants, storming rivers and beautiful mountain scenery. Perquín, then FMLN headquarters, now houses the poignant Museo de la Revolución Salvadoreña, containing stories, photos, posters, and weapons of the war.