

**A history of violence a future unknown
El Salvador then and now**

REGISTRATION # 201508

"Not only know thyself. Know where you have been. Know where you are going. Know the place of 'all knowing'. Know the present moment."



I was born April 28 1985 in a small farming town in El Salvador amidst a ruthless civil war that claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people. Although I don't remember much of my life in El Salvador, I know that like many Salvadorans the civil war changed our lives forever.

In 1989 my family and I took a chance and immigrated to the United States. It's been 26 years since we left our country. Many of us including myself haven't looked back.

People live in the present. They plan for and worry about the future. History, however, is the study of the past. To study one's own history is to better understand oneself. If we can understand where we come from we can better understand where we are headed.



Roots of the conflict

Since the Spanish conquest in the 16th century, a single resource, land, has dominated El Salvador. Independence only shifted control from the Spanish to Salvadorans of European ancestry. Indigenous people, comprising 95% percent of the population, were reduced to virtual serfdom, while a small minority of landholders ruled through a long series of military dictatorships. It is along these fault lines that cycles of violence have erupted throughout El Salvador's troubled history.

1932 LA MATANZA

**“To be Salvadoran, means knowing that something tremendous happened in late January 1932.”
- Historian Hector Irujo**

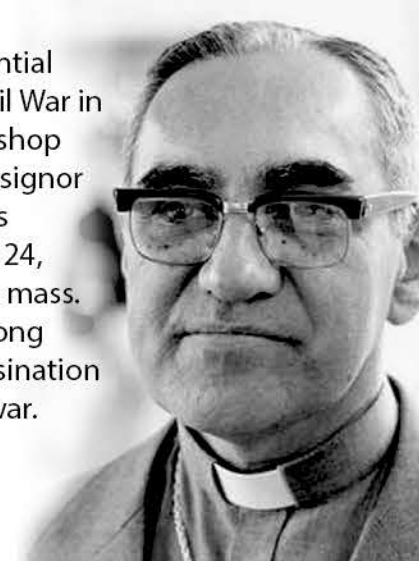
As the struggle between classes continued, in 1932 Augustin Farabundo Martí formed the Central American Socialist Party and led peasants and indigenous people against the government. In response, the government supported military death squads which killed anyone who may have been supporting the uprising. The killing became known as La Matanza. Claiming the lives of anywhere between 10,000 and 40,000 peasants and civilians.





CIVIL WAR

One of the most influential persons during the Civil War in El Salvador was Archbishop and social activist Monsignor Oscar Romero who was assassinated on March 24, 1980 while celebrating mass. Many believe that, among other factors, his assassination led to a full scale civil war.



In September 1980, the five major leftist revolutionary organizations merged to form the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). The FMLN fielded a guerrilla army to oppose government and right-wing paramilitary forces. The war between government, guerrilla and paramilitary forces continued to produce systematic human rights violations, subjecting civilians to torture, mutilation, forced disappearance, extra judicial killing and mass rape. The civil war lasted 12 years.

Family and the war

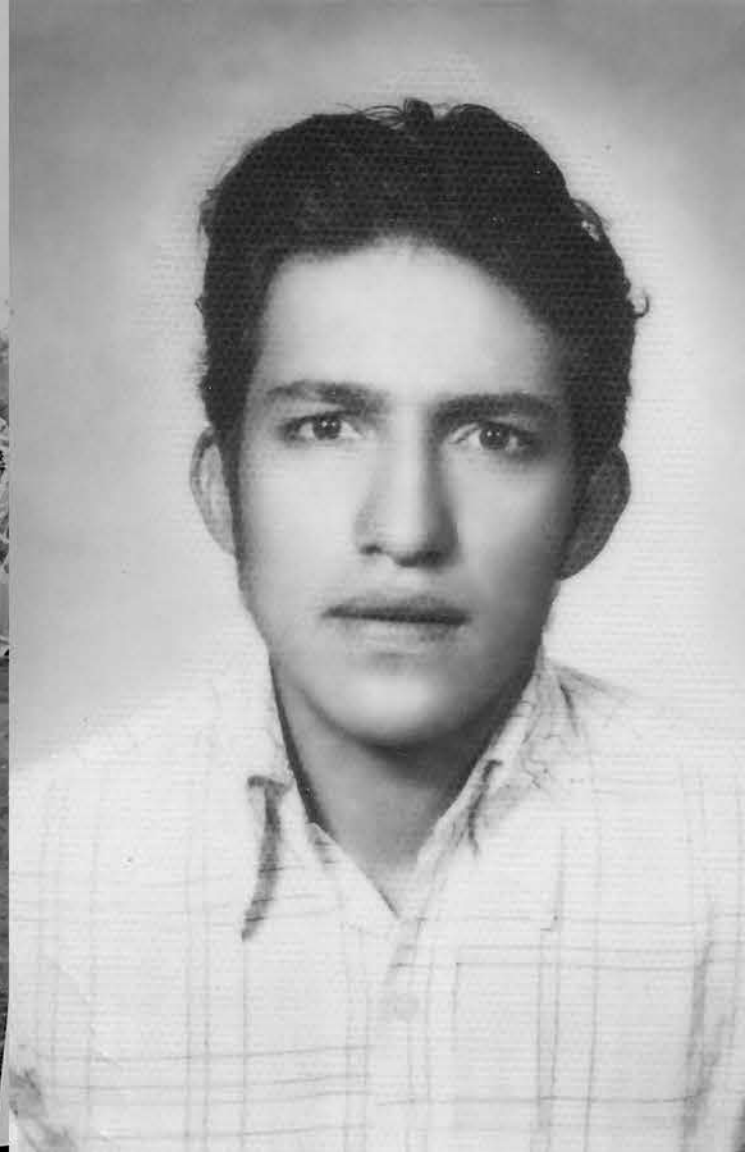
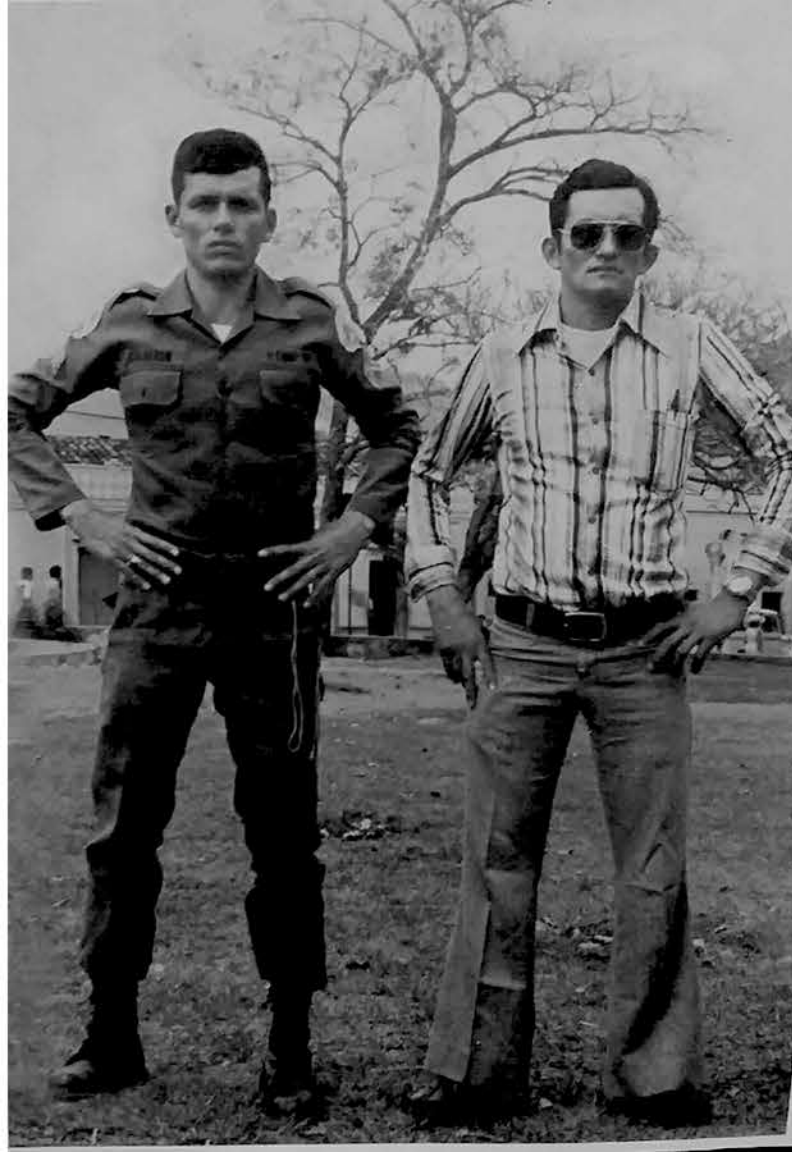
DEATH SQUAD:

An armed group that conducts extra judicial killings or forced disappearances of persons for the purposes of political repression, genocide, or revolutionary terror.

In 1980, as El Salvador's civil war officially began, The government-supported military targeted anyone they suspected of supporting social and economic reform. The military death squads wiped-out entire villages believed to be assisting the guerrilla efforts. More often then not these civilian run death squads use their power as personal Vendettas to eliminate anyone they wished.

In 1980 within the span of a year three of my uncles were brutally murdered by the military run death squads.

Eduardo Calderon, Evelio Calderon, and Chepe Calderon.



PEACE



On January 16, 1992, the signing of the United Nations-brokered Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City ended twenty months of negotiations. As part of the settlement, the Salvadoran government and the FMLN agreed to the establishment of a U.N.-appointed Truth Commission to investigate the abuses committed during the war.

The Chapultepec Peace Accords brought peace to El Salvador in 1992 after more than a decade of civil war. The treaty was negotiated by representatives of the Salvadoran government, the rebel movement FMLN, and political parties, with observers from the Roman Catholic Church and United Nations

“In examining the staggering breadth of the violence that occurred in El Salvador, the Commission was moved by the senselessness of the killings, the brutality with which they were committed, the terror that they created in the people, in other words the madness, or locura, of the war.”

-Reinaldo Figueredo, U.N. Truth Commission

El Salvador Today

El Salvador

Today El Salvador is a mix of tourism, gang violence, natural wonders, deforestation, corruption, hope but most of all perseverance. Although the war is over Salvadorans still face many challenges some stemming from its violent past and others extremely complex and new.



GUATEMALA

HONDURAS



EL SALVADOR

6.1 million Population

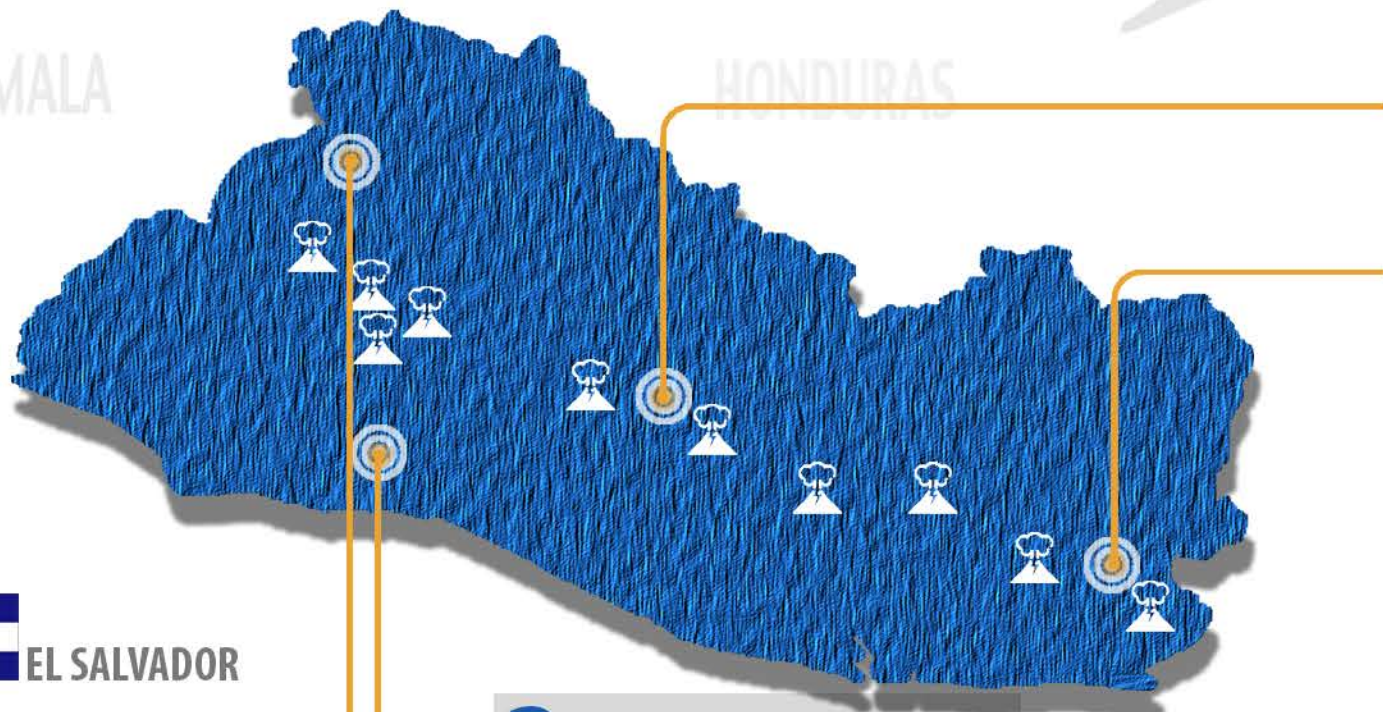
14 provinces

Capital: El Salvador

Currency: Dollar

Language: Spanish

CENTRAL AMERICA



1

SAN SALVADOR
DESTINATION 1

2

SAN MIGUEL
DESTINATION 2

3

LA LIBERTAD
DESTINATION 3

4

SANTA ANA
DESTINATION 4

MY GOAL CONCEPT

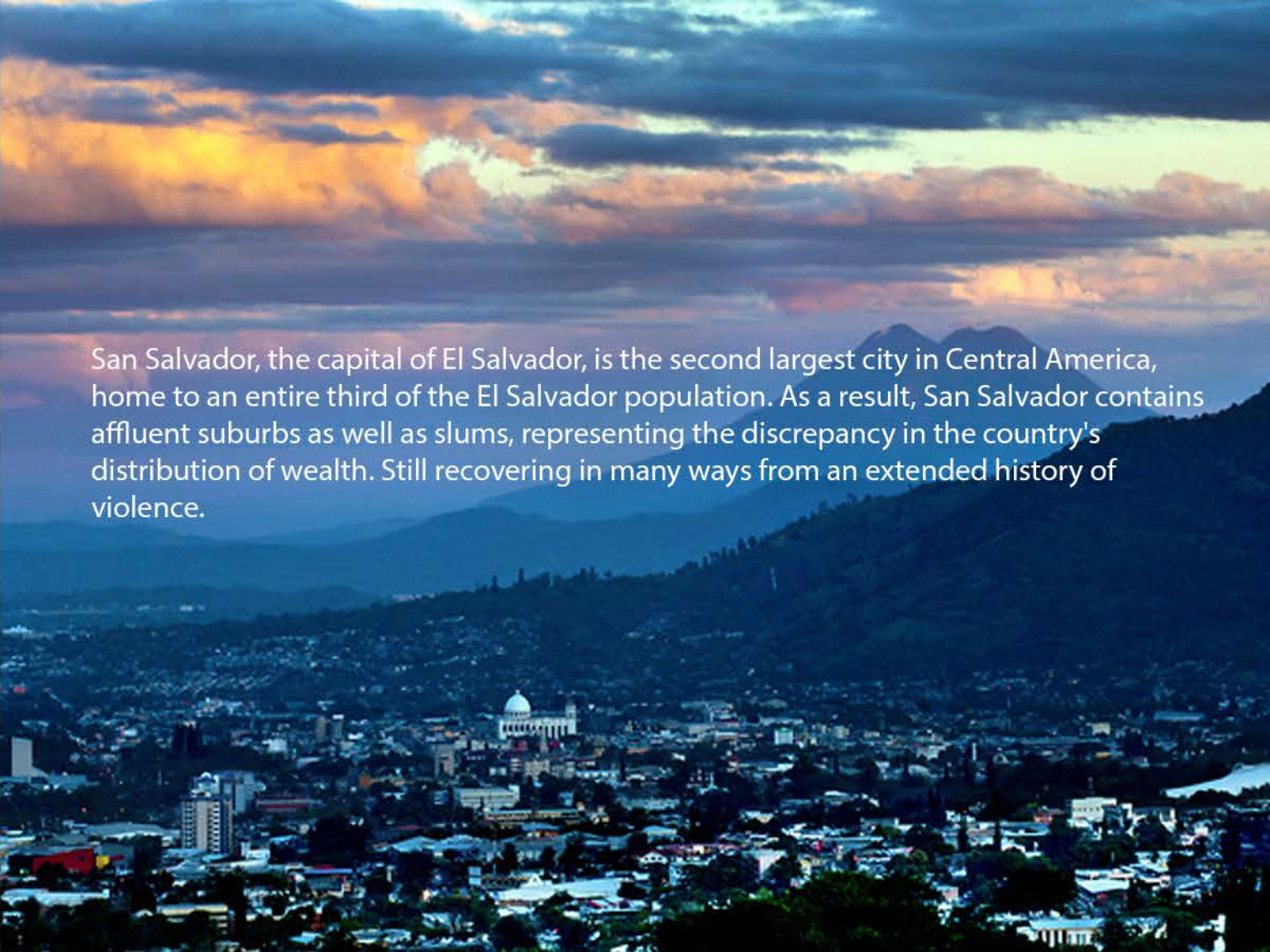
Nearly everyone in El Salvador was touched by the civil war. The city's, it's people, and culture have changed. During my two week trip to el Salvador my goal is to visit four major cities. I will document how the city and it's people have changed over time. How the war has shaped their lives and culture.

I will document my trip through a series of photos, videos and interviews. I will interview family and friends in each destination in order to get their perspective on the past, moving forward after the war and how the country is perceived today.



san salvador

Destination # 1



San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, is the second largest city in Central America, home to an entire third of the El Salvador population. As a result, San Salvador contains affluent suburbs as well as slums, representing the discrepancy in the country's distribution of wealth. Still recovering in many ways from an extended history of violence.

San Miguel

Destination # 2



San Miguel is located in the eastern part of the country. It is the third largest city in El Salvador and center of agriculture and production. It is less cosmopolitan than the capital San Salvador in the West but the surrounding areas of San Miguel are very beautiful with many beaches around the city.

La Libertad

Destination # 3



El Puerto de La Libertad is one of the most popular tourist destinations in El Salvador. La libertad is also known to be surf capital of El Salvador, with surf shops, board rentals and repair shops. As a result surfing in La Libertad has gained much popularity among International surfers over the years.

Santa Ana

Destination # 4



Santa Ana is home to the country's largest coffee plantations. Santa Ana is also the closest thing to a university town outside San Salvador, reflected in the lively nightlife and proud entrepreneurial spirit. The plaza is among the grandest in El Salvador, making it perfect as a departure point for Lago de Coatepeque, the Maya ruins at Tazumal or the Ruta de las Flores.



History is inescapable. It leaves its mark all around us . it has the power to connect and offers answers to present questions. To know ones own history and the rippling effect it may have is powerful.

“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”

-Marcus Garvey