



Fastest way to get wet™

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## El Salvador

The top 17 surf breaks in El Salvador.

Described in detail including access and how to get there.

Plus a journal, partial travel checklist and two full color maps of the country.

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# SurfMaps

Fastest way to get wet™  
Northern El Salvador



1 -- Barra de Santiago

2 ----- Los Cobanos

3 ----- Mizata

4 ----- Kilometer 59 & 61

5 ----- El Zonte

6 ----- El Zunzal

7 ----- La Bocana

8 ----- Punta Comasagua

9 ----- Playa Conchalio

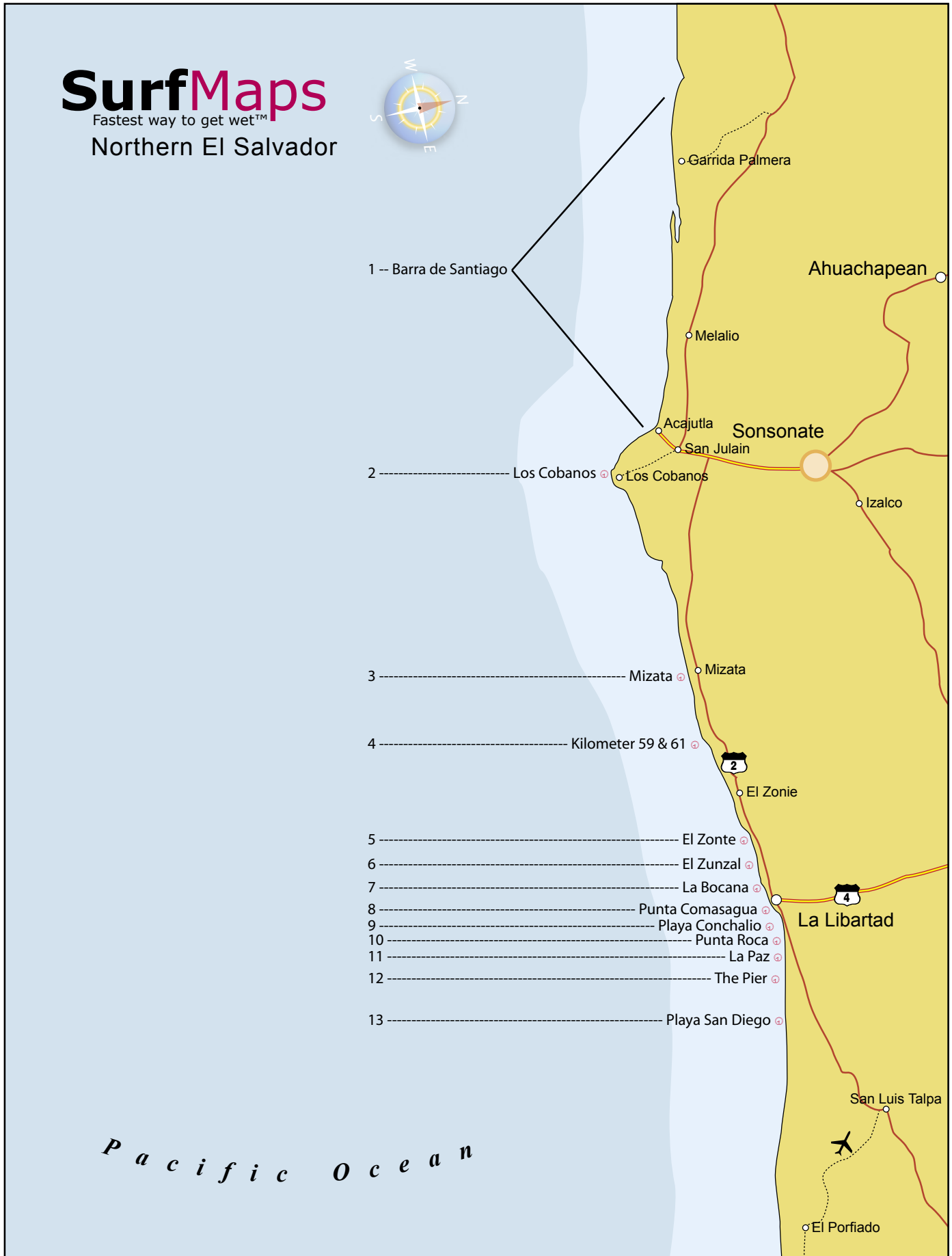
10 ----- Punta Roca

11 ----- La Paz

12 ----- The Pier

13 ----- Playa San Diego

*P a c i f i c O c e a n*



El Salvador's surf is divided into two fairly distinct regions – the La Libertad area and the Wild East. At least 11 high-quality surf spots lie within an hour's drive or bus ride from La Libertad, including point and reef breaks, beach breaks and the country's sole legitimate left. La Libertad is approximately a 30 to 45-minute taxi ride from the airport. Because of their proximity to the capital, these breaks tend to get relatively crowded on the weekends. On weekdays, it's not uncommon to surf the majority of these surf spots, with the exception of La Punta Roca, all by yourself.

The Wild East, on the other hand, is rarely if ever crowded due to its distance of about three hours from the capital. Located in the El Cuco region of El Salvador, the Wild East was also home to some of the bloodiest fighting during the country's 12-year civil war. Although some seven point breaks are said to exist in this area, 3 main spots are commonly surfed. Again, few surfers venture to this section of coastline despite the end of the civil war and the return of something resembling democracy this is not a happy place. On the extreme opposite end of the country, near the western border, there are a couple of other seldom surfed breaks worth checking out if you find yourself close by. This region is more popular with divers than surfers.

1. La Barra de Santiago, a rivermouth that occasionally produces good surf and surrounding coast with a variety of beach breaks. This stretch of coast caters to fishermen and divers, but quality, uncrowded waves may still be found by the adventurous type.

2. Los Cobanos: A variety of beach breaks strung along the coast from Acajutla.

3. Mizata: is another right point about an hour west of La Libertad. There are usually waves breaking over Mizata's reef no matter what the swell is doing elsewhere, but is recommended at lower tide.

4. Kilometers 59 and 61: Located another 10 to 15 minutes past El Zonte are two more right points, KM 59 and KM 61. Both spots break over a rock bottom and are known to provide long rides with very few if any surfers out in the water. Unfortunately, both spots are most easily accessed through a gated community. If nobody is present to negotiate entrance, as in most foreign countries trespassing is highly discouraged. The waves may be worth a very long walk/paddle out from down the beach.

5. El Zonte: Another popular right point just up the coast from El Zunzal is El Zonte. El Zonte breaks near a very rocky shoreline and sheer cliff. This does not necessarily mean that the wave is treacherous, although it does have some barrel sections. Cheap accommodations and restaurants can be found nearby. El Zonte is approximately 30 minutes west of La Libertad.

6. El Zunzal: On the western side of the pig-shaped rock and up the beach about 100 yards from La Bocana is El Zunzal, another of El Salvador's true gems. To get there simply walk into the town of La Libertad and look for the bus marked El Zunzal above the windshield and jump on when it stops. Then keep your eyes peeled for signs; it's about a 20 to 25-minute ride. Bring some change as the

ride costs about 50 cents. Whereas La Punta gets the most crowded with surfers of high ability, without a doubt El Zunzal tends to pack in the novices, especially those hailing from the capital on weekends. The wave itself, another rock bottomed right, is forgiving, but offers up some of the best hot dogging waves around no matter what the level of the surfer may be. Due to the deep water just off shore, El Zunzal is said to break nearly every day, whether there is swell or not, and can handle any size without closing out. It is also usually more consistent and larger than all other breaks in the area. Definitely check out El Zunzal.

7. La Bocana: If you're in El Salvador and get tired of surfing perfect right points and reefs don't fret, there is at least one genuine left in the country. La Bocana sits just down the beach from El Zunzal, on the other side of a large rock outcropping that locals claim resembles a pig, (which it kind of does). The waves break at the mouth of a river (hence the name) so the takeoff spot tends to shift around, but the wave has a reputation being punchy. Although its not usually hollow, steep walls have been known to peel for over 100 yards when it's on. It's definitely worth a check.

8. Punta Comasagua (San Blas): A rare break on the point at the mouth of the Rio Comasagua. Remember I said "rare".

9. Playa Conchalio: is a mile long stretch of beach break just on the other side of the rocks that make up La Punta. To get there simply head for La Punta on foot and keep walking until you reach a sandy beach. Travel in groups is recommended though, as the short walk does pass some desolate areas. The wave itself can

be extremely hollow, fast and bit on the heavy side. It breaks best in the 2'-4'+ range and during the dry season, when the offshore winds really open up the barrels, making coming out of them much easier. Conchalio is usually surfable even at 1'-2' and thus makes for a good choice when everything else in the area is completely flat.

10. Punta Roca: or simply La Punta, is a short 10-minute walk from the western outskirts of the small town of La Libertad just past the local cemetery. Although a short walk, stories abound of traveling surfers being held up at knife or gunpoint near the dilapidated burial ground, out of sight of the town. The thieves usually take whatever the surfer has, quite often the very trunks off his body and the board under his arm. So, it's not a bad idea to paddle out at La Paz, the innermost break of La Punta, which is still within city limits. If you do decide to paddle out at or near the top of the point, booties are recommended, as the perfectly oval rocks can be extremely slick and difficult to negotiate. Also, a large rock, aka "mama roca" lies just beneath, and sometimes above (at low tide) the water's surface directly in front of the take off spot.

All of this may sound like a bit of a hassle, but the right point at Punta Roca is truly world-class, and probably one of the best, if not the best waves in all of Central America. After a fairly serious takeoff set your feet and get ready to glide like never before. The long, steep walls have been known to peel flawlessly for hundreds of yards, never closing out, regardless of size. The spot can handle up to 15' with ease, and starts break-

ing at about 2' to 3'. Any board built for speed and maneuverability will be perfect for La Punta, especially something slightly more pulled in for the very common barrel sections. It gets crowded from time to time, with locals, expatriates and travelers alike, but well worth the effort it takes to get out there and snag a set wave, you'll be telling your friends about it for years. La Paz: is the extreme inside section of Punta Roca, but is usually considered and surfed as its own separate spot. It breaks directly in front of La Libertad's main beach, and thus tends to be slightly polluted. It can be a fun wave nonetheless, especially for longboarders and beginners. In fact, local Salvadoran kids must first master La Paz before graduating to La Punta. The wave breaks far outside, then reforms and offers up a decent, albeit mushy, section to ride on the inside. It only holds up to about head high, but can be a good alternative to La Punta if the sun is going down or you don't feel like exerting much effort.

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12. The Pier: in La Libertad is fully functional, which makes surfing there a

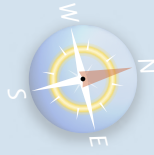
unique experience. A crane atop the pier plucks pangas full of fish from the water and gently sets them back down all day long. The catch is then cleaned and smoked, all on the pier, which means surfing directly below and next to it can be rather foul as diesel fumes (from the machinery) and the stench of fish fill the air. The waves on either side (probably safer to surf on the south side) can be fun though, especially during the dry season when offshore winds groom the racy little peaks. The pier serves as a good alternative to traveling outside of town to search for surf when there is little or none.

13. Playa San Diego: A long series of beach breaks, shifty over a sandy bottom. A variety of breaks, none too demanding. Visible at various points along the road.

It is rumored that even more surf exists further up the coast toward the Guatemalan border.

# SurfMaps

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Southern El Salvador



*P a c i f i c O c e a n*

1 -----No Names Yet

2 -----El Cuco

3 -----Las Tunas



On the opposite end of the country lies the Wild East, as the El Cuco region is commonly referred to. The area is not called wild for nothing, access to the best spots is extremely limited, some can only be reached by boat. The surf however, is of the highest quality and is well worth the extra effort, on top of the three-hour drive from San Salvador.

14. No Name: a series of un named breaks, beach, river mouth and point breaks along this stretch of coast. Let us know what you call them, with a description of the wave and how to get there, and you can claim the name.

15. El Cuco: Six or seven different breaks that have been rarely surfed since the civil war. Punta Floral is the best, a nice right.

16. Las Tunas: More un named beach break. Let us know.



**Notes:**

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**Personal Information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone & email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Contact Information (Embassy, Airline):**

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**Itinerary:**

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**Restaurants:**

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**Places of Interest:**

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**Most Memorable Experience:**

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**Most Interesting Character:**

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