

Mission Impossible in El Salvador

WHY GO: Near the border of Guatemala, the mountain hamlet of Tacuba is the essence of *tranquilo*, its quiet punctuated by yodeling roosters and street parties celebrating indigenous Pipil traditions. Fringed by coffee plantations, this mellow village sits at the northern boundary of Parque Nacional El Imposible. Here, travelers will find hiking, biking, and bird-watching in one of the most biodiverse forests in El Salvador.

The organization that manages El Imposible, SalvaNATURA, offers guided tours, a visitors center, and five hillside cabanas at the park's southern entrance, San Benito. Or, from Tacuba's Parque Central, follow the signs uphill to Hostal Mama y Papa to meet up with Manolo González of Impossible Tours, famous for knowing every ocelot track in the forest.

With González in the lead, scout one of the park's 286 bird species, swing Tarzan-style from a jungle vine, or jump into a waterfall-fed pool. "I show visitors the true El Salvador," González says with well-earned bravado.

After sweating it out in the mountains, bunk



Three of the nearly 300 bird species in El Salvador's Parque Nacional El Imposible (clockwise from top): the emerald toucanet, the golden-fronted woodpecker, and the emerald-chinned hummingbird.



down at the hostel, González's family home. Here you'll enjoy home-cooked meals and the best *frijoles* in town, accompanied by guitar ballads played by González and his father. Guarded by a white goose, the house is strung with hammocks around a citrus-filled courtyard.

During your stay, stroll through Tacuba's cobblestone streets to admire the ruins of a colonial-era church, one of the oldest Spanish cathedrals in

Central America before the earthquake in 1773 took its toll. Don't leave town without sampling *pupusas*, cornmeal patties stuffed with such ingredients as cheese, pork, or beans. Finding Tacuba's best *pupusería* is easy—just look for the crowds of locals waiting on plastic stools outside the Templo Evangélico del Príncipe de Paz, just off Tacuba's main drag. Mission complete. —Mary Winston Nicklin



DOCUMENTARY FILM

Encounters South African International Film Festival

August 12-29 // Cape Town, South Africa

At a theater complex along Cape Town's marina, attend world premieres of documentaries from South Africa and the rest of the world. In a country where funding for feature films is scarce, documentaries offer a more affordable way to bring local stories to the screen. In the past 11 years, the festival has shown 224 South African documentaries and the organization has commissioned more than 40 South African films. The program's public events include Q&A sessions with visiting directors. encounters.co.za

DANCE

El Festival y Mundial de Baile

Aug 13-31 // Buenos Aires, Argentina

Buenos Aires fills with the passionate sounds of accordions and violins during the city's Festival y Mundial de Baile (Dance Festival and World Championship), the international tango competition. Invented by European immigrants in the late 19th century, tango is in the midst of a modern revival. In addition to watching the professional competitions, festival-goers can attend dance demonstrations, concerts, art exhibits, and film screenings. Take one of the classes and then head for a *milonga* (tango dance hall) to practice your *ochos* (figure eight patterns) and *giros* (turns). tangobuenosaires.gov.ar

SPORTS

Kiteival

Aug 14-22 // Mauritius

Kitesurfers catch waves and air at the annual Kiteival competition off the eastern and southern coasts of Mauritius. At this low-key event, organizers invite amateurs to share the lagoons with invited pros, such as guest star and champion kitesurfer Andre Phillip. Participants face off in races and freestyle competitions. Minimum requirements to enter include an ability to stay upwind, an understanding of the rules of right of way, and a good sense of humor. Hit the water or watch the neon-colored action from the shore. kiteivalmauritius.com