

CITY OF THE HOLLY SPIRIT OF ESPARZA COSTA RICA

Carlos Mesen / Costa Rica
Executive Committee of ICOMOS
President / Vice-president /and General Treasurer of ICOMOS Costa Rica

LOCATION

The City of Esparza and the Ports of Caldera and Puntarenas are located in the central pacific coast of Costa Rica and is ones of the oldest city and oldest ports founded in the country, also one of main settlement from where many cultural groups from Europe, Asia, Africa and America had arrived creating a Cultural Route where people has converged distributed and integrated.

The first foundation of the City was done by the Spanish Governor Alonso Anguciana de Gamboa in December 1574 obligating the people to move from a near first foundation call Aranjuez to the new City of the Holy Spirit.

Three years later, in 1577 Don Diego Artieda de Cherinos, originally from Esparza de Salazar in Spain, arrived as the new Governor of Costa Rica, rehabilitates Calderas Port as the main entrance from the sea to the province of Costa Rica and names the City with the name of the Holly Spirit of Esparza.

MAIN HISTORIC ITEMS

From 1574 to 1686 the pirates invade Esparza and the town becomes into chaos, the economy brakes down, and the city gets into serious social problems. Esparza was the main city of Costa Rica in the XVII Century and was the departure point of the Spanish Conquest to colonize the north of the country.

Even today the Port of Caldera is still the main port in the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, it has been renovated for commercial and tourism activities, as well the old XIX railroad that communicates Esparza with Puntarenas the second port and San José the countries capital.

By a law in September 3 of 1879 the name of Esparza is change for Esparta and for almost a hundred years the city was known with this name until May 1974 that the name was changed to Esparza again. Today, Esparza is also known

as “Ciudad Primada” Is the only city in the country that has the same location since it was founded, recently has been award with the blue flag of one of the cleanest cities in Costa Rica.

The distance between Esparza and Cartago that was the ancient Spanish Capital city, in the Central Valley in the middle of the country was a long distance rout from Esparza, but on the way many other towns where founded to make the trip less difficult, specially during the rainy season, even doe there was an important communication between Esparza and the relatively neighbors cities of Leon and Granada in Nicaragua, all this cities together from Cartago up to Nicaragua where unify by the road known as Camino Real.

Today great part of this old colonial road is part of the Inter-American Road, a project designed after the Second World War, and which pretended to unify the road communication between the countries in the American Continent by a road.

During the XIX Century many cultural groups of emigrants arrived to Costa Rica by the Port of Puntarenas. Especially Chinese people and Italians came contracted for different jobs. The first group of Chinese came in 1855 for agricultural jobs and in 1873 another important of Chinese group came to work in the Atlantic railroad construction.

Many of the goodies and contraband also came trough the Port of Caldera near Esparza during the Spanish colony and later during the republican system, Today Caldera and Puntarenas are the main Port in the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica.

The Port of Caldera has renovated the Pacific railroad system today and also has the Inter-American road that runs beside the city of Esparza. The last census done in the year 2000 indicated that the population was 23,963 habitants. The oldest census talks about 679 habitants in 1864.

THE MAIN MONUMENTS

1. -The Municipal Cemetery

2. -The Central Park
3. -The Main Church of The Holy Spirit
4. - Arturo Torres Martinez, High School
5. -The Railroad Station
6. - Cambalache and Miraflores railroad tunnels
7. -The Cultural Center Juan Bautista Matamoros

Mostly important monuments are wood madden or have important structural wood beams, columns and decorations. That is why its conservation becomes more difficult, in our tropical weather conditions.

The Cemetery is highly deteriorated also because the carelessness of the descendants. Esparta cemetery has historic tombs of many immigrants who decided to come to Costa Rica and settle here.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Actually the Environment Ministry has catalogue the Garabito Tivives zone of protection and forest interests.

The North section of the city has a protected forest and the City of Esparza has been award with the Blue Flag given to the cleanest places.

FINAL APPRECIATIONS

Today Esparza has a well-organized population who recognizes the main importance of their city as the oldest one founded in Costa Rica. Also is a population highly attached to its cultural traditions and shared heritage. Many cultural activities are held in Esparza and its surroundings during the summer especially in the months that go from December to March.

Esparza is today an obligated point to stop, when traveling through the Pan-American Road. It was also the same during the Spanish Contact and during the republican period as well. The cultural routs where created for the shortening of distances, but also as I mention at the beginning of this paper, for converged distributed and integrated.

Abstract

Located in the Central Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, at 208m up the sea level the City of Espiritu Santo de Esparza is one of the oldest Cities founded in Costa Rica, December 1574 by Diego Artieda de Chirinos native from Esparza de Salazar, Navarra, Spain who also founds the Port of Caldera.

Inside town the main monuments where the Convent of San Francisco and a small Church that survived up to 1800. Today the Main Church is one of the most important monuments of the city likewise the Cemetery and other symbolic buildings.

Esparza and the Port of Calera where united to the Real Intercontinental Route of Central America who run from the Capital of Costa Rica in the middle of the country to Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala at the North.

Thru the Port of Caldera it was supplied consumer goods, during the Spanish Colonial period and historically this Port is an important meeting points of different cultures (Spaniards, Chinese, Italians) during the Railroad construction in the latest XIX Century.

The main Chinese emigration came to Costa Rica by the Port of Puntarenas near the Port of Caldera and Esparza. the Chinese communities settle in Puntarenas and surroundings are today part of the intangible and crossbreeding heritage of Costa Rica specially all this area.