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SPA 112 – MFG1Y

April 3, 2024

North Carolina and El Salvador Comparison

North Carolina, which is in the southeastern United states and known as the “Tar Heel State” (“What’s a Tar Heel?”) is around 2,600 miles (about 4184.29 km) from El Salvador if you travel by plane. El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America and is known as the Land of Volcanoes (“El Salvador”). Both countries use the US Dollar as their currency.

By looking at jobs, food, economy, and activities of an average family living in North Carolina verses an average family living in El Salvador, we will be able to see similarities and differences in culture and in how they live their lives.

The Tyson family lives in North Carolina, population 10,835,491 as of July 1, 2023 (“Quick Facts North Carolina”). They are a family of four. Mr. And Mrs. Tyson and their two young children live in a two-bedroom apartment which costs about \$1400 per month to rent. (Blake, et al.) Mr. Tyson works as a maintenance mechanic in a local manufacturing plant and earns \$21 per hour or around \$43,600 per year (“Hourly Rate Salary in North Carolina”). He buys gas each week to get to work and the average gas price as of 4/3/2024 is \$3.255 per gallon (“AAA Gas Prices”).

Mrs. Tyson currently stays home with the children because they are not old enough to go to school. In the United States, children can begin school at age 5 and there are also public funded preschool programs for children in low-income families (“What are the U.S. education levels?”). She takes the children to local parks and library programs each week for fun. Today,

they stopped by the grocery store for a few items. Mrs. Tyson buys eggs which cost \$2.06 per dozen (“Great Value Large White Eggs, 12 count”), milk for \$2.52 a gallon (“Great Value Milk Whole Vitamin D Gallon”), and bread \$1.42 (“Great Value White Round Top Bread Loaf, 20 oz.”).

It is Friday night, and the family will go out to dinner tonight and have a popular North Carolina meal of BBQ, which is a real treat for the family (“What Food is North Carolina known for?”). Afterwards, they stop at Krispy Kreme doughnuts for dessert. Krispy Kreme was first opened in Winston-Salem North Carolina and is a delicious treat (Thompson).

Since it is the weekend, they plan to participate in one of their favorite activities which is disc golf. Charlotte, North Carolina is the fourth best metro area for disc golf in the United States and (Williamson) there is a big tournament this weekend. There will be activities for the whole family.

We have met the Tysons from North Carolina and taken a peek into how they live their lives, now let us travel 2,600 miles (about 4184.29 km) away to El Salvador, population 6,602,370 est. 2023 (“Explore All Countries - El Salvador Central America and the Caribbean”) and meet the Ruiz family.

Mr. and Mrs. Ruiz and their two young children live in a three-bedroom apartment just outside of the city which costs them about \$900 per month to rent. (“Cost of Living in El Salvador”) Mr. Ruiz works as a maintenance mechanic in a manufacturing plant and makes around \$6,700 per year (“Average Maintenance Mechanic Salary in El Salvador for 2024”). He buys gas each week and the average gas price is \$1.19 per liter as of April 1, 2024 (“El Salvador Gasoline Prices”). Mr. Ruiz’ brother lives with them in the third bedroom and pays them some money every month to help with rent.

Mrs. Ruiz currently stays home with the children because they are not yet old enough to attend school. Mr. and Mrs. Ruiz will enroll the children in school when they are 7 years old (“What’s education like in El Salvador?”). Mrs. Ruiz watches several other young children in her home while the parents are at work to help supplement their income.

Saturday for the Ruiz family is grocery day, Mrs. Ruiz only needs a few items. She buys milk, which is \$7.29, bread costs \$1.72, and eggs are \$2.24 per dozen (“Cost of Living in El Salvador”). The Ruiz family are all excited because tonight, they will go out to eat dinner. They will be having a very popular dish in the country which is, “Pupusas: Thick corn tortillas stuffed with cheese, meat, squash, and/or other fillings. They are served with a sour sort of cabbage salad and homemade tomato sauce on top. They are classified as El Salvador's national dish.” (Hubbard)

They will get together with their family on Sunday for dessert. “It is common for friends and family to get together at around 5 pm to enjoy each other’s company while they savor a delicious traditional dessert and a good cup of coffee. “(Vallejo) Mrs. Ruiz plans to make Nuégados, or Salvadoran fritters. The fritters are basically fried dough normally made in the shape of balls and coated with cane sugar (itisclaudio); it is a family favorite. The family enjoys talking about the latest soccer game, which is the most popular sport in El Salvador (“El Salvador – Sports and Recreation”), while the kids all play soccer out in the yard.

We have taken a small glimpse into the lives of two families living far from each other and have seen that they both work, care for their children, and want to enjoy time together and eat good food. The families' cost of living is different and so is the pay they receive from working. School begins later for children living in El Salvador than in North Carolina. There are differences in culture between people in North Carolina and El Salvador but at the end of the

day, the families just want to do what they need to do to live their lives and enjoy the people they care about and that is the biggest and most important similarity of all.

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