**El Salvador Facts and Culture**

* [Food and Recipes:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipes.htm) It is polite for guests to try some of every dish that is served. Leaving a little food on the... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipes.htm)
* [Family:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/family.htm) Family structure and its traditions are different for people living in the city and for peopleliving in towns, or in... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/family.htm)
* [Fashion:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/fashion.htm) Climate in El Salvador is tropical, and that dictates the type of clothes worn by its inhabitants. In urban areas,... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/fashion.htm)
* [Visiting:](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/visiting.htm) When a friend or relative is invited over to someone's house, it is customary for the person being invited to... [More](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/visiting.htm)

**El Salvador Facts**

El Salvador stats

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital | San Salvador |
| Government Type | republic |
| Currency | USD |
| Population | 6,108,590 |
| Total Area | 8,124 Square Miles 21,041 Square Kilometers |
| Location | Central America, bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and Honduras |
| Language | Spanish, Nahua (among some Amerindians) |

Map of El Salvador



**El Salvador Geography**

**Terrain and geography**

El Salvador, with an area of 8,260 square miles, is the smallest independent state in Central America. El Salvador is rectangular in shape, 60 miles wide and 160 miles long.

El Salvador has 350 rivers. The largest, the Rio Lempa, flows 150 miles from northern to central El Salvador, forming one of the most important Pacific watersheds in Latin America. It is El Salvador's only navigable river.

The land is 90% volcanic in origin, and many places still bear the scars. The country’'s topography is rough and irregular from continuous volcanic activity, accounting for El Salvador’s rich soil. Two volcanic mountain ranges, a central one parallel to the Pacific and a northern one along the border with Honduras, run across almost the entire length of the country. The two ranges divide El Salvador into three distinct and progressively higher zones. The plains along the Pacific Ocean are at sea level; the central plateau is 2,000 feet above sea level; and the northern highlands rise more than 3,000 feet. Although the central plateau represents only 25% of the total area, it contains the heaviest concentration of population and the largest cities.

**Geography - note**

smallest Central American country and only one without a coastline on Caribbean Sea

**El Salvador Geography**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Geographic Location | Central America |
| Total Area | 8,124 Square Miles 21,041 Square Kilometers |
| Land Area | 8,000 Square Miles 20,721 Square Kilometers |
| Water Area | 124 Square Miles 320 Square Kilometers |
| Land Boundaries | 339 Miles 545 Kilometers |
| Irrigated Land | 174 Square Miles 450 Square Kilometers |
| Border Countries | Guatemala 203 km, Honduras 342 km |
| Coastline | 191 Miles 307 Kilometers |
| Geographic Coordinates | 13 50 N, 88 55 W |
| Terrain | mostly mountains with narrow coastal belt and central plateau |
| Highest Point | 2,730 Meters |
| Highest Point Location | Cerro El Pital 2,730 m |
| Lowest Point Location | Pacific Ocean 0 m |
| Natural Resources | hydropower, geothermal power, petroleum, arable land |
| Daylight saving time | none scheduled |

**El Salvador Weather and Climate**

**Climate and Weather**

El Salvador's tropical climate has pronounced wet and dry seasons. The dry season, \*quot;verano" or summer, from December to April is dusty, especially in rural areas. The hottest months of the year, March and April, immediately precede the rainy season, "invierno" (winter). During the May-November rainy season, mornings are usually clear, with heavy rains in early evening and at night. Thunder and strong winds occasionally accompany the rain, and some June and September mornings are overcast. Occasional 2- to 3-day rainy spells occur. The average annual rainfall is 66 inches.

The three geographic zones have distinct climatic characteristics. The narrow coastal belt is a hot tropical savanna with lush vegetation and temperatures that average 80°F. The central highlands, where San Salvador lies, are slightly cooler, with an average temperature of 73°F. San Salvadorâ€™s temperatures range from 50°F to 90°F throughout the year. Incoming polar air infrequently causes cold nights and even frost. The highlands in the extreme north of El Salvador are consistently cool.

Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have littered El Salvadorâ€™s history. Earthquakes ranging from 6.5 to 7.9 on the Richter Scale have struck the country at least 15 times since 1700. The most serious recent earthquakes occurred on January 13 and February 13, 2001. Although damage in San Salvador was slight, schools, hospitals, businesses, and public buildings throughout the country were damaged or destroyed. These two powerful quakes resulted in 1,300 deaths and left more than one million homeless. Infrastructure damages are estimated at $1.6 billion, or 12% of the country's GDP.

Of the volcanoes located within the metropolitan area of San Salvador, Volcano San Salvador erupted last in 1917 and Volcano Ilopango in 1879.

Although hurricanes do not usually threaten El Salvador directly, strong Caribbean storms can generate heavy winds and rains. Hurricane Mitch hit El Salvador in November 1998, generating extreme rainfall which caused widespread flooding.

**El Salvador Environmental Issues**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Climate | El Salvador's tropical climate has pronounced wet and dry seasons. The dry season, \*quot;verano" or summer, from December to April is dusty, especially in rural areas. The hottest months of the year, March and April, immediately precede the rainy season, "invierno" (winter). During the May-November rainy season, mornings are usually clear, with heavy rains in early evening and at night. Thunder and strong winds occasionally accompany the rain, and some June and September mornings are overcast. Occasional 2- to 3-day rainy spells occur. The average annual rainfall is 66 inches.  The three geographic zones have distinct climatic characteristics. The narrow coastal belt is a hot tropical savanna with lush vegetation and temperatures that average 80°F. The central highlands, where San Salvador lies, are slightly cooler, with an average temperature of 73°F. San Salvadorâ€™s temperatures range from 50°F to 90°F throughout the year. Incoming polar air infrequently causes cold nights and even frost. The highlands in the extreme north of El Salvador are consistently cool.  Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have littered El Salvadorâ€™s history. Earthquakes ranging from 6.5 to 7.9 on the Richter Scale have struck the country at least 15 times since 1700. The most serious recent earthquakes occurred on January 13 and February 13, 2001. Although damage in San Salvador was slight, schools, hospitals, businesses, and public buildings throughout the country were damaged or destroyed. These two powerful quakes resulted in 1,300 deaths and left more than one million homeless. Infrastructure damages are estimated at $1.6 billion, or 12% of the country's GDP.  Of the volcanoes located within the metropolitan area of San Salvador, Volcano San Salvador erupted last in 1917 and Volcano Ilopango in 1879.  Although hurricanes do not usually threaten El Salvador directly, strong Caribbean storms can generate heavy winds and rains. Hurricane Mitch hit El Salvador in November 1998, generating extreme rainfall which caused widespread flooding. |
| Terrain | mostly mountains with narrow coastal belt and central plateau |
| Natural Resources | hydropower, geothermal power, petroleum, arable land |
| Natural Hazards | known as the Land of Volcanoes; frequent and sometimes very destructive earthquakes and volcanic activity; extremely susceptible to hurricanes |
| Irrigated Land | 174 Square Miles 450 Square Kilometers |
| Environmental Issues | deforestation; soil erosion; water pollution; contamination of soils from disposal of toxic wastes |
| Environment - International Agreements | party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Ozone Layer Protection, Wetlands   signed, but not ratified: Law of the Sea |

**El Salvador Population Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Population | 6,108,590 |
| Population Growth Rate | 0.29% |
| Urban Population | 64.8% |
| Population in Major Urban Areas | SAN SALVADOR (capital) 1.605 million |
| Nationality Noun | Salvadoran(s) |
| Nationality Adjective | Salvadoran |
| Ethnic Groups | mestizo 90%, Amerindian 1%, white 9% |
| Languages | Spanish, Nahua (among some Amerindians) |
| Rate of Urbanization- annual rate of change | 1.35% |

**El Salvador Medical Information**

There are few private and no public hospitals with an environment that would be acceptable to visiting U.S. citizens. The Embassy recommends that these hospitals be used only for emergency care to stabilize a condition prior to returning to the United States for definitive evaluation and treatment. Private hospitals and physicians expect up-front payment (cash or, for hospitals, credit card) for all bills as there are no hospitals or medical offices who will bill U.S. insurance companies.  
  
Priority Ambulance (011-503-2264-7911) is the only private ambulance service with a fleet of vehicles in San Salvador that has trained personnel and medical equipment to manage emergencies. The response time is often less than ideal because of the heavy traffic in San Salvador. Therefore, whenever possible, people should transport themselves directly to the hospital by private vehicle.   
  
Pharmacies are plentiful, but not all medicines found in the United States are available in El Salvador. Medicines often have a different brand name and are frequently more expensive than in the United States. We recommend that U.S. citizens traveling to El Salvador carry an adequate supply of any medication they require in its original container, which should be clearly labeled. A copy of the prescription from your doctor will be helpful in the event that it is requested by immigration or customs authorities.  
  
No specific vaccinations are required for entry into El Salvador from the United States. Travelers coming from countries where yellow fever is endemic must have had a yellow fever vaccination in order to enter the country. For more information, visit El Salvador’s Immigration web site.  
  
You can find detailed information on vaccinations and other health precautions on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the World Health Organization (WHO) website, which contains additional health information for travelers, including detailed country-specific health information.  
  
Tuberculosis is an increasingly serious health concern in El Salvador. For further information, please consult the CDC’s information on Tuberculosis.  
  
Tap water is not safe to drink in El Salvador, and the Embassy advises official visitors and personnel to use either bottled water or to disinfect tap water using the guidelines suggested at the CDC website.

**El Salvador Health Information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Health Expenditures (% of GDP) | 6.8% |
| Death Rate/1,000 population | 5.65 |
| Obesity- adult prevalence rate | 25.8% |
| Hospital Bed Density/1,000 population | 1 |
| Physicians Density/1,000 population | 1.6 |
| Infant Mortality Rate/1,000 population | 19.05 |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Female/1,000 population | 16.87 |
| Infant Mortality Rate- Male/1,000 population | 21.12 |
| Underweight - percent of children under five years | 6.6% |
| Total Fertility Rate | 1.99 |
| Contraceptive prevalance rate (female 15-49) | 72.5% |
| Contraceptive Prevalence - note | note: percent of women aged 15-44 |
| Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births | 81 |
| HIV Adult Prevalence Rate | 0.8% |
| HIV Aids Deaths | 1,000 |
| HIV Aids People Living With | 34,000 |
| Drinking Water Source: unimproved | 9.9% |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of rural population improved | 81% |
| Drinking Water Source - percent of urban population improved | 95% |
| Sanitation Facility Access: unimproved | 29.5% |
| Sanitation Facility Access - percent of urban population improved | 79.5% |
| Sanitation Facitlity Access - percent of rural population improved | 53.4% |
| Major Infectious Diseases - degree of risk | high |
| Food or Waterborne Disease (s) | bacterial and protozoal diarrhea |
| Vectorborne Disease (s) | dengue fever |

**El Salvador Crime**

**Crime Information**

The Department of State considers El Salvador a critical crime threat country which means that conditions exist such that a continuous serious threat for crime, forced entries, and assaults on residents are common. In 2011, El Salvador had the second highest murder rate in the world, at 71 per 100,000 people (by comparison, the murder rate in Massachusetts, with a similar geographical area and population, was 2.6 per 100,000). In 2012, a truce between El Salvador’s two principal street gangs may have contributed to a decline in the homicide rate. According to Salvadoran police statistics, the number of murders for 2012 decreased by 41% from 2011. However, the sustainability of the decline is unclear. In addition, the number of reported robberies, assaults, rapes, and missing persons showed significant increases in 2012, and most of these crimes go unsolved.   
  
U.S. citizens do not appear to be targeted based on their nationality. However, 26 U.S. citizens have been murdered in El Salvador since January 2010. During the same time period, 274 U.S. citizens reported having their passports stolen. Armed robberies of climbers and hikers in El Salvador’s national parks is common, and the Embassy strongly recommends engaging the services of a local guide certified by the national or local tourist authority when hiking in back country areas, even within the national parks. In 2000, the National Civilian Police (PNC) established a special tourist police force (POLITUR) to provide security and assistance to tourists, as well as protection for the cultural heritage of El Salvador. It has officers located in 19 tourist destinations.  
  
A majority of serious crimes in El Salvador are never solved; only 6 of the 26 murders of U.S. citizens since January 2010 have resulted in convictions. El Salvador’s current conviction rate for all crimes is five percent. The Government of El Salvador lacks sufficient resources to properly investigate and prosecute cases and to deter violent crime. While several of the PNC’s investigative units have shown great promise, routine street level patrol techniques, anti-gang, and crime suppression efforts are limited. Equipment shortages (particularly radios, vehicles, and fuel) further limit their ability to deter or respond to crimes effectively.  
  
Transnational criminal organizations conduct narcotics, arms trafficking, and other unlawful activities throughout the country and use violence to control drug trafficking routes and carry out other criminal activity. Other criminals, acting both individually and in gangs, commit crimes such as murder-for-hire, carjacking, extortion, armed robbery, rape, and other aggravated assaults. According to Salvadoran government figures, out of a population of roughly six million people, there are some 40,000 known gang members from several gangs including the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and Eighteenth Street (M18) gangs. Gang members are quick to engage in violence if confronted.  
  
Extortion is a particularly serious and common crime in El Salvador. Many extortion attempts are no more than random cold calls that originate from imprisoned gang members using cellular telephones, and the subsequent threats against the victim are made through social engineering and/or through information obtained about the victim’s family. U.S. citizens who are visiting El Salvador for extended periods may be at higher risk for extortion demands. While reported rates of extortion have dropped in the last two years, recent reports show that there is an increase in the level of violence associated with extortion cases, including media reports of extortion victims and witnesses being killed. Many extortion cases are not reported for fear of reprisal and lack of faith in the ability of the government to protect the victims. Criminals have ready access to firearms and shootouts are not uncommon. Foreigners, however, may not carry guns even for their own protection without first obtaining firearms licenses from the Salvadoran government. Failure to do so will result in the detention of the bearer and confiscation of the firearm, even if it is licensed in the United States.  
  
Travelers should remain in groups and avoid remote or isolated locations in order to minimize their vulnerability. Travelers should also avoid displaying or carrying valuables in public places. Passports and other important documents should not be left in private vehicles. Armed assaults and carjackings take place both in San Salvador and in the interior of the country, but are especially frequent on roads outside the capital where police patrols are scarce. Criminals have been known to follow travelers from the El Salvador International Airport to private residences or secluded stretches of road where they carry out assaults and robberies. Armed robbers are known to shoot if the vehicle does not come to a stop. Criminals often become violent quickly, especially when victims fail to cooperate immediately in surrendering valuables. Frequently, victims who argue with assailants or refuse to give up their valuables are shot. Kidnapping for ransom continues to occur, but has decreased in frequency since 2001. U.S. citizens in El Salvador should exercise caution at all times and practice good personal security procedures throughout their stay.  
  
Armed holdups of vehicles traveling on El Salvador's roads are common, and we encourage U.S. citizens to remain aware of their surroundings. The U.S. Embassy warns its personnel to drive with their doors locked and windows raised, to avoid travel outside of major metropolitan areas after dark, and to avoid travel on unpaved roads at all times because of criminal assaults and lack of police and road service facilities. Travelers with conspicuous amounts of luggage, late-model cars, or foreign license plates are particularly vulnerable to crime, even in the capital.  
  
Travel on public transportation, especially buses, both within and outside the capital, is risky and not recommended. The Embassy advises official visitors and personnel to avoid using mini-buses and regular buses and to use only radio-dispatched taxis or those stationed in front of major hotels.  
  
U.S. citizens using banking services should be vigilant while conducting their financial exchanges either inside local banks or at automated teller machines (ATMs). There have been several reports of armed robberies in which victims appear to have been followed from the bank after completing their transactions. U.S. citizens have also been victimized at well known restaurants, hotels, and retailers within San Salvador. The Embassy has noticed a recent trend in credit card cloning and similar fraud. Credit card fraud can be difficult to recover from and can adversely affect your credit score and financial health. Using a credit card is safer than using an ATM card or Debit card to pay. With ATM or Debit cards, the money is transferred out of the account at the very moment of the transaction, and it is usually not recoverable or contestable.   
  
For your security we recommend the following to avoid becoming a victim of credit card fraud: notify the card issuer of your travel plans, check your statements frequently, limit the number of credit cards you have and/or carry with you, limit the locations that you regularly use your card(s), maintain direct visual contact with their credit cards at all times, and shred all receipts. If you become a victim of credit card fraud, contact your bank’s fraud hotline and cancel your card immediately. They will ask you for information and will usually then send you an affidavit to sign, affirming you did not make the charges.   
  
Don’t buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal in the United States, if you purchase them, you may also be breaking the local law.

**El Salvador Penalties for Crime**

**Criminal Penalties**

While you are traveling in El Salvador, you are subject to its laws even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different than our own. In some places, you may be taken in for questioning for not having your passport with you. In other places, driving under the influence could land you immediately in jail. These criminal penalties will vary from country to country. There are also some things that might be legal in the country you visit, but are still illegal in the United States, and you can be prosecuted under U.S. law. For example, buying pirated goods, engaging in sexual conduct with children, or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime prosecutable in the United States. If you break local laws in El Salvador, your U.S. passport won’t help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It’s very important to know what’s legal and what’s not where you are going.  
  
Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating El Salvador’s laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested, or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in El Salvador are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Prison and detention center conditions are harsh and dangerous. Overcrowding constitutes a serious threat to prisoners’ health and lives. In many facilities, provisions for sanitation, potable water, ventilation, temperature control, and lighting are inadequate or nonexistent.  
  
While some countries automatically notify the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate if a U.S. citizen is detained or arrested, that might not always be the case. To ensure the United States is aware of your circumstances, request that police and prison officials notify the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate as soon as you are arrested or detained overseas.  
  
Guns: El Salvador has strict laws requiring a locally obtained license to possess or carry a firearm in the country. The Embassy strongly advises persons without a Salvadoran firearms license not to bring guns into the country or use a firearm while in El Salvador. The Embassy cannot intervene in the judicial process when a U.S. citizen is charged with a firearms or any other type of violation. Convictions for possessing an unlicensed firearm can carry a prison sentence of three to five years.

**El Salvador Life Expectancy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Life Expectancy At Birth | 73 Years |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Female | 77 Years |
| Life Expectancy At Birth- Male | 70 Years |
| Median Age (female) | 26 Years |
| Median Age (male) | 23 Years |
| Median Age | 25 Years |

**El Salvador Language**

Spanish is the official language, although Nahua and other Native American languages are spoken by many. English is often spoken among the educated.

**El Salvador Literacy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Predominant Language | Spanish, Nahua (among some Amerindians) |
| Literacy Definition | age 10 and over can read and write |
| Literacy Female | 79.6% |
| Literacy Male | 82.8% |
| Literacy Total | 81.1% |

**El Salvador Education**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Education Expenditures - percent of GDP | 3.4% |
| Literacy - female | 79.6% |
| Literacy - male | 82.8% |
| Literacy - total population | 81.1% |
| Literacy Definition | age 10 and over can read and write |
| School Life Expectancy - female | 12 Years |
| School Life Expectancy - male | 12 Years |
| Total School Life Expectancy - (primary to tertiary) |  |

**El Salvador Government**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Capital Name | San Salvador |
| Country Name | El Salvador |
| Local - Long | Republica de El Salvador |
| Full Country Name | Republic of El Salvador |
| Local - Short | El Salvador |
| Government Type | republic |
| Capital - geographic coordinate | 13 42 N, 89 12 W |
| Daylight Savings Time | none scheduled |
| National Holiday | Independence Day, 15 September (1821) |
| Constitution | 20 December 1983 |
| Legal System | civil law system with minor common law influence; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court |
| Suffrage | 18 years of age; universal |

**El Salvador Government and Politics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Government Executive Branch | chief of state: President Salvador SANCHEZ CEREN (since 1 June 2014); Vice President Salvador Oscar ORTIZ (since 1 June 2014); note - the president is both chief of state and head of government   head of government: President Salvador SANCHEZ CEREN (since 1 June 2014); Vice President Salvador Oscar ORTIZ (since 1 June 2014)   cabinet: Council of Ministers selected by the president   elections: president and vice president elected on the same ticket by popular vote for a single five-year term; election last held on 2 February 2014, with a runoff on 9 March 2014 (next to be held in February 2019)   election results: percent of vote - Salvador SANCHEZ CEREN elected president; first-round results - Salvador SANCHEZ CEREN 48.9%, Norman QUIJANO 39%, Antonio SACA 11.4%; second-round results - Salvador SANCHEZ CEREN 50.11%, Norman QUIJANO 49.89% |
| Legislative Branch | unicameral Legislative Assembly or Asamblea Legislativa (84 seats; members elected by direct, popular vote to serve three-year terms)  elections: last held on 11 March 2012 (next to be held on NA 2015)  election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - ARENA 33, FMLN 31, GANA 11, CN 7, PES 1, PCD 1 |
| Judicial Branch | Supreme Court or Corte Suprema (15 judges are selected by the Legislative Assembly; the 15 judges are assigned to four Supreme Court chambers - constitutional, civil, penal, and administrative conflict) |
| Regions or States | 14 departments (departamentos, singular - departamento); Ahuachapan, Cabanas, Chalatenango, Cuscatlan, La Libertad, La Paz, La Union, Morazan, San Miguel, San Salvador, San Vicente, Santa Ana, Sonsonate, Usulutan |
| Political Parties and Leaders | Democratic Change (Cambio Democratico) or PCD; Democratic Convergence or CD [Oscar KATTAN] (formerly United Democratic Center or CDU); Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front or FMLN [Medardo GONZALEZ]; Great Alliance for National Unity or GANA [Andres ROVIRA]; National Conciliation or CN [Ciro CRUZ ZEPEDA] (formerly the National Conciliation Party or PCN); Nationalist Republican Alliance or ARENA [Alfredo CRISTIANI]; Party of Hope or PES [Rodolfo PARKER] (formerly the Christian Democratic Party or PDC) |
| International Organization Participation | BCIE, CACM, CD, CELAC, FAO, G-11, G-77, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO (correspondent), ITSO, ITU, ITUC, LAES, LAIA (observer), MIGA, MINURSO, NAM (observer), OAS, OPANAL, OPCW, PCA, SICA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNIFIL, Union Latina, UNMIL, UNMISS, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO |
| Politicial Pressure Groups and Leaders | labor organizations - Electrical Industry Union of El Salvador or SIES; Federation of the Construction Industry, Similar Transport and other activities, or FESINCONTRANS; National Confederation of Salvadoran Workers or CNTS; National Union of Salvadoran Workers or UNTS; Port Industry Union of El Salvador or SIPES; Salvadoran Union of Ex-Petrolleros and Peasant Workers or USEPOC; Salvadoran Workers Central or CTS; Workers Union of Electrical Corporation or STCEL; business organizations - National Association of Small Enterprise or ANEP; Salvadoran Assembly Industry Association or ASIC; Salvadoran Industrial Association or ASI |

**El Salvador Economy Data**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| GDP - Gross Domestic Product | $47,470,000,000 (USD) |
| GDP - official exchange rate | $24,670,000,000 (USD) |
| GDP - real growth rate | 1.6% |
| GDP Per Capita | $7,500.00 (USD) |
| GDP by Sector- agriculture | 10.3% |
| GDP by Sector- Industry | 29.5% |
| GDP by Sector- services | 60.1% |
| Population Below Poverty Line | 37.8% |
| Inflation Rate | 0.8% |
| Labor Force | 2,940,000 |
| Labor Force By Occupation- agriculture | 21% |
| Labor Force By Occupation- industry | 20% |
| Labor Force By Occupation- services | 58% |
| Unemployment Rate | 7% |
| Unemployment - note | data are official rates; but the economy has much underemployment |
| Fiscal Year | calendar year |
| Annual Budget | $3,894,000,000 (USD) |
| Budget Surplus or Deficit - percent of GDP | -4% |
| Public Debt (% of GDP) | 45.8% |
| Taxes and other revenues - percent of GDP | 19% |
| Major Industries | food processing, beverages, petroleum, chemicals, fertilizer, textiles, furniture, light metals |
| Industrial Growth Rate | 0.9% |
| Agriculture Products | coffee, sugar, corn, rice, beans, oilseed, cotton, sorghum; shrimp; beef, dairy products |
| Currency Code | US dollar (USD) |
| Child Labor - % of children ages 5-14 | 4% |
| Child Labor - # of children ages 5-14 | 179,303 |
| Child Labor - note | note: data represents children ages 5-17 |
| Commercial Bank Prime Lending Rate | 5.6% |

**El Salvador Economy**

**Economic Overview**

With the adoption of the US dollar as its currency, El Salvador has lost control over monetary policy and must concentrate on maintaining a disciplined fiscal policy. GDP per capita is roughly only half that of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, and the distribution of income is highly unequal. The trade deficit has been offset by annual remittances of almost $2 billion from Salvadorans living abroad and external aid. The government is striving to open new export markets, encourage foreign investment, modernize the tax and healthcare systems, and stimulate the sluggish economy.

**El Salvador Exports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Exports | $4,377,000,000 (USD) |
| Major Exports | offshore assembly exports, coffee, sugar, shrimp, textiles, chemicals, electricity |
| Top Export Partners | US 62.9%, Guatemala 11.9%, Honduras 6.8%, Nicaragua 4.4% |

**El Salvador Imports**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Imports | $7,980,000,000 (USD) |
| Major Imports | raw materials, consumer goods, capital goods, fuels, foodstuffs, petroleum, electricity |
| Top Import Partners | US 38.2%, Guatemala 9.9%, Mexico 6.1% |

**El Salvador Flag Description**

three equal horizontal bands of blue (top), white, and blue with the national coat of arms centered in the white band; the coat of arms features a round emblem encircled by the words REPUBLICA DE EL SALVADOR EN LA AMERICA CENTRAL; similar to the flag of Nicaragua, which has a different coat of arms centered in the white band - it features a triangle encircled by the words REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA on top and AMERICA CENTRAL on the bottom; also similar to the flag of Honduras, which has five blue stars arranged in an X pattern centered in the white band. The Masonic triangle represents the 3 branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial. The volcanoes stand for the 5 nations of Central America. Within the triangle are symbols of liberty (a Phrygian cap), the ideals of the people (golden rays), and peace (rainbow).

TRANSLATE

[http://www.microsofttranslator.com/static/217311/img/binglogo_dark.png](http://www.bing.com/translator)

El Salvador flag



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Anthem History | The National Anthem of El Salvador was commonly adopted as the National Song on September 15, 1879 but did not have official recognition until December 11, 1953 The Official National Anthem was composed and written by the artist Juan Aberle and by General Juan José Cañas. It was composed by recommendation of President Dr. Rafael Zaldívar and was sung for the first time on September 15, 1879 at the prior National Palace by children and young students from government and private schools of the capital city |
| Anthem Lyrics English | Let us salute the motherland,  Proud to be called her children.  To her well-being let us swear  Boldly and unceasingly to devote our lives.  (repeat)  Devote our lives! (repeat 4 times)  Of peace enjoyed in perfect happiness,  El Salvador has always nobly dreamed.  To achieve this has been her eternal proposition,  To keep it, her greatest glory.  With inviolable faith, she eagerly follows  The way of progress  In order to fulfil her high destiny  And achieve a happy future.  A stern barrier protects her  Against the clash of vile disloyalty,  Ever since the day when her lofty banner,  In letters of blood, wrote "Freedom",  Wrote "Freedom", wrote "Freedom".  CHORUS  Freedom is her dogma and her guide;  A thousand times she has defended it,  And as many times has she repelled  The hateful power of atrocious tyranny.  Her history has been bloody and sad,  Yet at the same time sublime and brilliant,  A source of legitimate glory   And a great lesson in Spartan pride.  Her innate bravery shall not waver:  In every man there is an immortal hero  Who knows how to maintain the level  Of the proverbial valour of old.  CHORUS  All are self-denying and faithful  To the tradition of warlike ardour  With which they have always reaped fame  By saving the motherland's honour.  To respect the rights of others  And base her actions on right and justice  Is for her, without infamous intrigue,  The constant and most firm ambition.  And in following this line she persists,  Dedicating her tenacious efforts  In giving hard battle for battle;  Her happiness is found in peace.  CHORUS |

**El Salvador Interesting Facts**

* Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero gained enormous popularity in El Salvador as an outspoken leader in human rights. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980. The well-known film, Romero (1988), dramatizes his life.
* Coffee beans are initially green and take up to seven months to mature to their red shade. They turn brown only after roasting.
* During Good Friday, city streets are close and street artists create religious scenes using dyed sawdust, colored salt and flowers.
* During the civil war, some schools in El Salvador were run by volunteers. Many teachers were persecuted and killed just for being members of a teachers’ union.
* El Salvador honors teachers on Teachers' Day (June 22), which is a national holiday.
* El Salvador is the most densely populated country in Central America, with an average of over 290 persons per square kilometer; by contrast, Canada's population density is less than three persons per square kilometer.
* El Salvador’s tropical vegetation includes more than 200 species of orchids, which bloom between February and April.
* In mica, a form of tag, children play with an imaginary object (the mica) that has to be passed on to another player, who then becomes “it.”
* May 3 marks the beginning of the rainy season and Dia de la Cruz, the festival that mixes Christianity with indigenous fertility rites. People plant a cross in their yard and decorate it with flowers, fruits and garlands in hopes of a good growing season and good luck.
* One-third of Salvadorans live in San Salvador. Because of poor economic conditions, many rural parents must leave their children to the care of grandparents in order to search for work in the city.
* Salvadoran sorpresas (surprises) are miniature scenes painted inside small round shells the size of a walnut. Often the outside of the shell is painted to resemble a nut, egg or round fruit. Inside is a detailed picture of village life.
* Some Salvadorans seek the advice of curanderos, who practice the Indian tradition of brujería (natural healing) and are believed to possess mystical powers. Curanderos may perform rituals or prescribe natural remedies of spices and herbal teas.
* Some shops, mostly in small towns, close for people to have lunch.
* The figure of Santa Ursula, the patron saint of the village of Jocalapa El Salvador, was originally discovered in a nearby cave along the water. Villagers built a shrine to the saint overlooking the ocean.
* The government, in cooperation with the University of El Salvador, recently established a school devoted to the preservation of the indigenous languages.
* The Montecristo Nature Reserve in northern El Salvador is a breeding ground for the quetzal, a bird with brilliant plumage and a long tail.
* The most widely known archeological site in El Salvador is the ruins of El Tazumal, located near Santa Ana in western El Salvador. Featuring a central pyramid, Tozumal was first settled by the Mayans in 5000 BC, and the current ruins were built in stages from 500 to 900 AD by the Pipil people. The main pyramid is 23 meters high.
* The name El Salvador means “the savior.”
* The national Caritas organization, administered by the Catholic Church, distributes food donations from the United States and administers other local assistance programs.
* When a child loses a tooth they put the tooth under their pillow. The father says that during the night a rabbit will come. It will take the tooth and leave some money.

**El Salvador Lost Tooth Traditions**

They put the tooth under their pillow. The father says that during the night a rabbit will come. It will take the tooth and leave some money.

**History of El Salvador**

*Pedro de Alvarado, Spanish conqueror of El Salvador*

THE HISTORY OF EL SALVADOR revolves around one central issue-- land. In this, the smallest country in Central America, land always has been a scarce commodity whose importance has been amplified by the comparative absence of precious metals or lucrative mineral deposits. Agriculture defined the economic life of the country well before the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors in the early 1500s, and, despite some modest advances in industrial capacity, agriculture has continued to dominate the nation’s wealth, social structure, and political dynamics.

The unequal distribution of land in El Salvador can be traced directly to the Spanish colonial system, under which land title was vested in the crown. Those select individuals granted control of specified areas acted, at least in theory, only as stewards over the lands and peoples under their control. Although private property rights eventually were established, the functional structure put in place by the Spanish was perpetuated well into the twentieth century by the landed oligarchy, with the assistance of the military.

Although the indigenous, or Indian, population gradually was diminished through disease and abuse and eventually subsumed into a growing mestizo (mixed Caucasian and Indian) population, its position at the base of society was assumed by the rural lower class. Until the mid-twentieth century, the patterns of landownership and income distribution ran unrelentingly against this segment of the population. As elsewhere in Latin America, those with more got more, those with less got less. Under the model of monoculture export that came to prevail in El Salvador, the concentration of land into large units, or haciendas, made for greater overall efficiency of production. The other side of the economic coin, however, was engraved with images of worsening poverty, deprivation, illiteracy, and disease as the singleminded pursuit of wealth by a minuscule percentage of the population denied the vast majority of Salvadorans access to more than a subsistence level of income.

Although slow to develop, the political ramifications of this process of skewed distribution were inevitable. Unfortunately for the marginalized campesinos (farmers or farm laborers), however, the landowners were prepared to protect their gains by force against any effort to improve the lot of the lower class. A rural uprising in 1833, led by Indian leader Anastasio Aquino, was put down by forces hired by the landowners. A century later, another insurrection, this time led by the Marxist Agustin Farabundo Marti, provoked a now-legendary reprisal known as *la matanza* (the massacre). The troops that carried out this action, in which by some estimates as many as 30,000 Salvadorans were killed, belonged to the Salvadoran armed forces. Institutionalized and nominally independent from the landed oligarchy, the armed forces proceeded from that point to assume control of the political process in El Salvador.

The Salvadoran officer corps was not altogether unsympathetic to popular sentiment for reform of the oligarchic system. In the Salvadoran political equation, however, the economic elite’s resistance to change remained a given. Therefore, efforts by the military to institute gradual, guided reforms--land reform chief among them--repeatedly ran into the brick wall of elite opposition and influence. It was not until 1980, when the officer corps allied itself publicly with the middle-class Christian Democratic Party, that substantive reform appeared achievable. By that time, however, El Salvador stood on the threshold of a major civil conflict between government forces backed by the United States and guerrillas supported by Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Soviet Union. This conflict catapulted the country’s internal conflicts onto the world stage. The future course of reform in El Salvador was thus uncertain, as the nation entered the 1980s burdened with the legacies of economic and social inequality and political exclusion of the middle and lower classes by the elite.

**El Salvador History Timeline**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| El Salvador Year in History | El Salvador Timeline |
| 1524 | **Pedro de Alvarado conquers El Salvador.** He claims the land for Spain. |
| 1540 | **Indigenous resistance is crushed.** El Salvador becomes a Spanish colony. |
| 1823 | **El Salvador becomes part of the United Provinces of Central America.** The UCPA also includes Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. |
| 1840 | **El Salvador becomes fully independent.** The United Provinces of Central America are dissolved. |
| 1969 | **El Salvador fights a brief war with Honduras.** Thousands of Salvadoran illegal immigrants are evicted from Honduras, El Salvador retaliates. |
| 1977 | **Anti-government guerrilla activities intensify.** Reports of increased human rights violations by government troops and death squads; General Carlos Romero is elected president. |
| 1977 | **Jesuit priest Rutilio Grande, S.J. is assassinated by a death squad.** |
| 1980 | **Archbishop Oscar Romero is assassinated.** He is killed at the Chapel of the Divina Providencia while celebrating mass. |
| 1980 | **Archbishop Romero writes a letter to US President Carter.** He writes "Please don't send any military, economic or diplomatic aid to this government or there will be a blood bath in my country." Carter ignores his plea. |
| 1980 | **FMLN is formed in opposition to the government.** Naming itself after the 1930's revolutionary leader, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) is formed. |
| 1980 | **Romero calls soldiers to obey higher law of God and not kill their brothers and sisters.** |
| 1980 | **Sumpul River Massacre.** Six hundred campesiños die. US Ambassador Robert White denies that the killings had occurred. |
| 1981 | **France and Mexico recognize the FMLN.** The United States continues to assist the Salvadoran government, whose army continues to back right-wing death squads. |
| 1984 | **Duarte wins presidential election.** |
| 1986 | **Duarte begins quest for negotiated settlement with FMLN.** |
| 1989 | **FMLN attacks intensify.** Another ARENA candidate, Alfredo Cristiani, is voted president in elections widely believed to have been rigged. |
| 1991 | **FMLN recognized as a political party.** Government and FMLN agree to a UN-sponsored peace accord. |
| 1993 | **The UN-sponsored Truth Commission publishes a report.** The report details human rights violations during the war. Salvadoran legislature declares amnesty for those implicated by commission in human rights atrocities. |
| 1994 | **ARENA candidate Armando Calderón Sol is elected president.** |
| 1997 | **FMLN makes progress in parliamentary elections.** Leftist Hector Silva elected mayor of San Salvador |
| 1998 | **Hurricane Mitch.** One of the deadliest and most powerful tropical cyclones ever, it batters Central America, killing over 18,000 people. In El Salvador, 374 died and 55,864 were displaced. |
| 2000 | **Human rights workers express concerns over increasing US military presence.** The United States continue the 'war on drugs.' |
| 2001 | **Massive earthquakes hit El Salvador.** 1,200 people are killed and another one million are rendered homeless. |
| 2004 | **El Salvador is the first country to ratify CAFTA.** CAFTA is a free-trade agreement with the US, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic. |
| 2005 | **OAS human rights court votes to re-open an investigation.** In 1981, hundreds of peasant farmers in the village of El Mozote had been massacred, often regarded as one of the worst atrocities of the civil war. |

**El Salvador Holidays and Events**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Display Date | Title |
| January 1st | **New Years Day** National Holiday. This day it is customary for some families and friends to wake up very early and go to the beach. Some other families prefer to wake up very late, because the day after the end-of-the-year celebration took place, and it ended up very late at nigh |
| Fabruary 14th | **Saint Valentine's Day** Saint Valentine's Day (known as the "day of love and friendship" in Spanish): This is not a holiday, but on this day, it is customary for young people to interchange gifts and greeting cards, but only among female friends, and between boys and girls. Couples of all ages celebrate this day too interchanging gifts and greeting cards, but they also go out and have a romantic dinner. |
| Varies: March - April | **Holy Week** The dates that encompasses this week may vary every year, because they are set according to Catholic Church guidelines, but generally it occurs somewhere between March and April. During the Holy Week, every day has a special name. It starts with "Domingo de Ramos" (Palm Sunday), and then the name of all the weekdays are preceded with the adjective "santo" (holy), like "Lunes Santo" (holy Monday), etc. Good Thursday is "Jueves Santo" and Good Friday is "Viernes Santo". Easter Saturday is known as "Sabado de Gloria" (Saturday of glory), and Easter Sunday is called "Domingo de Resureccion" (Sunday of resurrection). Government employees are give the whole week as holiday, but employees from private companies take only from Good Thursday through Easter Sunday as holidays. During this week, a representative percentage of the Catholic population goes to church to attend the special services, and also go to the several processions that take place. It is customary for the parishioners to prepare religious drawings on the street with salt and colored sawdust, called "alfombras" (carpets), through the entire route that the processions will pass. Protestants do not observe any special cults, rituals or ceremonies during this week. On Easter Friday, a lot of families and friends choose to go to the beach. |
| May 1st | **Labor Day** Labor Day: National holiday. Generally, people stay home this day to rest. Others, people belonging to unions, social or civil organizations, use this day to conduct marches in the street to protest against government policies, or to express their demands. |
| May 3rd | **"Dia de la Cruz"** "Dia de la Cruz" (day of the cross): Not a holiday, but a day on which it is accustomed to make a cross of two sticks of the Jiote tree, and drive it into the ground in the front or back yard of homes, and later decorate it with seasonal fruits like bananas, jocotes, and mangoes, and colorful strips made of paper and plastic. This is a tradition that announces the beginning of the winter season, and it is also to remember fertility of the Earth. This is a custom that is becoming less |
| May 10th | **Mother's Day** Mother's Day: Holiday for schools and some government institutions. On this day, generally sons and daughters of all ages give gifts to their mothers, or take them out for lunch or dinner. |
| June 17th | **Father's Day** Father's Day: Holiday for schools and some government institutions. On this day, generally sons and daughters of all ages give gifts to their mothers, or take them out for lunch or dinner. |
| June 22nd | **Teacher's Day** Teacher's Day: Holiday for schools. Kids accustom to give gifts to their teachers one day before or after this day. Teachers get together and go out to trips, or to eat. |
| August 6th | **Patron Saint's Day**  Patron Saint's Day of the capital city, San Salvador: National holiday. This celebration is in honor of "Divino Salvador del Mundo" (divine world's savior), and a Catholic procession is carried on this day. In San Salvador, the celebration encompasses from August 3, to August 6, though only August 3, 5, and 6 are holidays for people working in San Salvador city. Students in San Salvador are usually given as a holiday the whole week that encloses August 3 through 6. During the whole month, people can go to the fairs that are established for this celebration, which offer to the public traditional food, candies, crafts, goods, shows, and fairground rides for kids and adults.  Typical candies and snacks common on these days are "dulce de leche" ("candy made of milk", or caramelized condensed milk), "elotes locos" ("crazy corncobs", a boiled corncob spread with mustard, Worcester sauce, ketchup, mayonnaise, and scratched hard cheese, with a stick in its core to use it as a handle), and "churros espanoles" ("Spanish churros", a type of elongated and cylindrically shaped pastry). Besides this celebration, every municipality celebrates their own Patron Saint's Day, and the activities and traditions are similar to the ones described, though each town might add some variations according to the local customs.  The two biggest cities besides the capital, San Miguel and Santa Ana, celebrate two of the most popular fairs held outside San Salvador. The “Carnaval de San Miguel” (Saint Michael's Carnival), celebrated in San Miguel the last weekend of every November, offers additionally to the fairs, a big party, where several national and international artists and bands perform all night the last day of the carnival. The Patron Saint’s Day in honor of "Senora Santa Ana" (Saint Anna, the mother of Virgin Mary, according to Christian tradition), is celebrated in Santa Ana, and besides the traditional fair, if offers a popular cattle show, and a book fair. |
| September 15th | **Independence Day** Independence Day: National holiday. This is the commemoration of the independence of El Salvador from Spain, event that took place on September 15, 1821. The main activity that is carried out that day on each municipality is a civic parade, where students from most of the schools and their school bands march in the streets. One of the main attractions in the parades is the performance of the "cachiporristas", a kind of female cheerleaders that march and do juggling with a stick in their hands. |
| October 10th | **Children's Day** Children's Day: Not a holiday, but a day where children are celebrated with a "pinata" at school, and gifts at home. Pinatas in El Salvador are made of newspaper sheets glued to a wired structure, and decorated with paper of different colors, to resemble any of the well-known cartoons of the time. Pinatas are stuffed with candies, and kids hit the pinata by turns with a stick, in order to release and take the candies. Pinatas are common in birthday parties for kids, along with clowns, games, a cake and gifts. |
| October 12th | **"Dia de la Raza"** "Dia de la Raza" (day of the race), Columbus Day: This is not a holiday, but it is taught at school as a day to remember the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1942. |
| November 2nd | **"Dia de Los Santos Difuntos"** "Dia de Los Santos Difuntos" ("day of the holy defunct"), All Soul's Day: National holiday. This day it is customary for people to visit the cemetery to decorate the tombs of departed family members, with natural and artificial flowers made of paper coated with candle wax and tinged with different colors. |
| Novermber 5th | **"Dia del Primer Grito de Independencia"** "Dia del Primer Grito de Independencia" (day of the first proclamation of independence attempt): This is not a holiday, but it is taught at school as a day to remember the first proclamation of independence attempt of the country from Spain. |
| December 24th | **Christmas Eve**  Holiday for students and for government employees; half-holiday for private companies. This is, by far, the most celebrated holiday of the year. Starting around December 1st, a Christmas tree is customarily arranged at homes, and it is put away until January 6 of the next year. These trees are usually made of plastic, and the two more common variants are in green, simulating the leaves of a pine, or in silver, with little strips of shinny papers in the branches instead of leaves. The tree is decorated with Christmas balls and lights, and on its base, it is common to put the gifts that the family will give to each other on Christmas Eve at midnight, and to arrange a Nativity scene, without the figure of Jesus the baby, though these traditions are becoming less common nowadays.  At night, Catholics go to a special mass, and Protestants celebrate a special cult, to commemorate the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. In the past, this mass was celebrated at midnight, and was called "misa de gallo" ("mass of rooster", midnight mass), but nowadays, the mass is held earlier at night. Families get reunited to hold a special dinner, wearing new clothes. Kids accustom to light firecrackers, and, to a lesser extent, fireworks. A special and big firecracker or firework is reserved to be exploded at midnight. But this tradition of kids using firecrackers has cost hundreds of burned children over the years, so it is decreasing nowadays, due to several public campaigns and civil initiatives warning the parents of the dangers of this practice. There are currently some law initiatives in progress to control or prohibit the use of firecrackers among kids.  At midnight, the baby Jesus is placed on the Nativity scene at the base of the Christmas tree. Protestant families accustom to pray at this moment. Then, the family gives to each other the gifts found on the base of the Christmas tree, and open them. After midnight, a party at home might follow, with friends and family coming to visit, teenagers visit each other's homes, or go to a party at one of their friend's home, where they dance, chat, eat and drink. |
| December 25th | **Christmas Day** The Christmas season begins with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception followed by the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th which celebrates the appearance of the Virgin Mary to the Indian Juan Deigo, believed to occurred in 1531. These festivities include fireworks, dances and soccer tournaments. *Las Posadas* (The Lodgings) is celebrated on Christmas Eve. Christmas Day activities include church services and beach activities.  Christmas trees, poinsettias, and *Presbres* (Nativity Scenes) are the most common decorations. Children receive gifts from Santa Claus, who places them under the Christmas tree or under the children’s beds.  Christmas Eve dinner features tamales, turkey, chicken, pork, rice, green vegetables, and assorted deserts and liquors. |
| December 31st | **End of the Year** This is the second most celebrated holiday besides Christmas Eve, and it is a holiday for students and government employees, and half-holiday for private companies. As for Christmas Eve, families get reunited to hold a special dinner, wearing new clothes. The same comments apply here regarding firecrackers and fireworks. There are also a special mass for Catholics and a special cult for Protestants in the afternoon or early at night. At midnight, everybody hog each other to celebrate the coming New Year. After midnight, party, friends visiting each other, as for Christmas Eve |

**El Salvador Meals and Food**

Recipes from El Salvador

* [Arroz Con Leche (Rice Pudding) - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipe/arroz-con-leche-%28rice-pudding%29.htm)
* [Arroz con Leche (Rice Pudding) - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipe/arroz-con-leche-%28rice-pudding%29.htm)
* [El Salvadorian Chicken - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipe/el-salvadorian-chicken.htm)
* [Pupusas (Thick Corn Tortillas Stuffed with Meat and Cheese) - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipe/pupusas-%28thick-corn-tortillas-stuffed-with-meat-and-cheese%29.htm)
* [Quesadilla Salvadoreno - Dessert](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipe/quesadilla-salvadoreno.htm)
* [Red Kidney Bean Soup - Main Dish](http://www.countryreports.org/country/ElSalvador/recipe/red-kidney-bean-soup.htm)

**El Salvador Recipes and Diet**

El Salvador food and meal customs

**Diet**

The national dish in El Salvador is the "pupusa". A pupusa is a stuffed grilled tortilla. This tortilla is about 8 centimeters in diameter and half centimeter thick, and is made of dough, which can be prepared of mashed corn or rice. Common stuffing is cheese, or a combination of cheese with mashed pork cracklings, and/or mashed beans. Some other stuffing includes cheese with "loroco", mashed hard squash, and cheese with mashed hard squash. Pupusas are usually eaten for dinner, or for breakfast, and they are an inexpensive type of meal that families used to eat on weekends to escape out of the  
routine of the week, either in a traditional restaurant called "pupuseria", or at home.

Another traditional dish is the tamale, which is prepared by boiling or steaming a stuffed rectangular volume of dough, of around 10x5x3 centimeters, wrapped in leaves. There are at least four types of tamales, and they differ on the cereal that the dough is made of, the stuffing, and the type of leafs used to wrap it. The most common one is just called tamale,  
or "tamale of salt" in some regions, and their dough is made of corn. These types of tamales can be stuffed with chopped chicken, pork, duck (not too common) or chipilin, and  
are wrapped in corn leaves. If this tamale is stuffed with mashed beans instead, it is called "tamale pisque", which is served with tomatoesâ€™ sauce. If the traditional tamale is mixed  
with sugar during its preparation, and also stuffed with raisins, it is called "tamale of sugar". Another type of tamale is called "tamale of corn", whose dough is made of young corn, has no stuffing, is wrapped with corncob leaves, and is served with sour cream.

Typical options for breakfast are cereal with milk (most common among kids), tamales, pupusas, or a dish of eggs, beans, cheese, plantain, and one or two tortillas or bread. Coffee is common for breakfast. The eggs can be scrambled or fried. Beans can be mashed and fried, soupy, or mixed with rice, in which case they are called "casamiento" (wedding, as an analogy for the colors of the beans and the rice with the groom and the bride). Cheese for breakfast could be one slice of soft-unripened cheese, or a type of local hard cheese. Plantain could be served as fried and sliced, or chopped and parboiled.

The typical lunch includes rice, chicken, beef or fish, fresh salad, one or two tortillas, and a soft drink.

For dinner, families usually prepare at home a dish similar to the breakfast that might include eggs, beans, cheese and plantain. Pupusas or tamales are other options for dinner.

Common afternoon snacks are pastries with coffee.

**Meals**

It is polite for guests to try some of every dish that is served. Leaving a little food on the plate is considered good manners. Guests compliment the host or hostess on the meal, something which assures the hosts that the guests feel welcome.

Food in El Salvador

[](http://d2z7bzwflv7old.cloudfront.net/cdn_image/maxW_1200/images/photos/es/papusas.jpg)

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**El Salvador Languages**

**Languages**

Spanish, Nahua (among some Amerindians)

Spanish is the official language, although Nahua and other Native American languages are spoken by many. English is often spoken among the educated.

**Language Translations:**

**Greetings in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you speak English? | Habla usted ingles? |
| Do you speak Spanish? | Habla usted espanol? |
| Excuse me | Dispenseme |
| Fine / Good | Bien |
| Good afternoon | Buenas tardes |
| Good evening | Buenas tardes |
| Good morning | Buenos diás |
| Good night | Buenas noches |
| Goodbye | Adios |
| Happy New Year! | ¡Felíz año nuevo! |
| Hello | ¡Hóla! |
| How are you? | Como esta usted? |
| I'm pleased to meet you | Encantado de conocerle |
| Merry Christmas | Feliz Navidad |
| Please | Por favor |
| See you later | Hasta luego |
| Thank you | Gracias |
| Welcome | Bienvenido |
| What is your name? | Como se llama? / Deme su nombre |
| Yes / No | Si / No |

**Days in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sunday | Domingo |
| Monday | Lunes |
| Tuesday | Martes |
| Wednesday | Miercoles |
| Thursday | Jueves |
| Friday | Viernes |
| Saturday | Sabado |

**Months in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| January | Enero |
| February | Febrero |
| March | marzo |
| April | Abril |
| May | Mayo |
| June | Junio |
| July | Julio |
| August | Agosto |
| September | Septiembre |
| October | Octubre |
| November | Noviembre |
| December | Diciembre |

**Colors in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Black | Negro |
| Blue | Azul |
| Green | Verde |
| Orange | Anaranjado |
| Pink | Rosado |
| Red | Rojo |
| White | Blanco |
| Yellow | Amarillo |

**Numbers in Spanish**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| One | Uno |
| Two | Dos |
| Three | Tres |
| Four | Cuatro |
| Five | Cinco |
| Six | Seis |
| Seven | Siete |
| Eight | Ocho |
| Nine | Nueve |
| Ten | Diez |
| Fifty | Cincuenta |
| one Hundred | Cien |
| One Thousand | mil |

**El Salvador Clothing and Fashion**

Climate in El Salvador is tropical, and that dictates the type of clothes worn by its inhabitants. In urban areas, typical outfit for male young adults is jeans and camp shirts, polo shirts, or T-shirts, plus loafers, brogues, deck shoes or tennis for casual needs. For the office, they turn to pleated pants and button-down shirts, with or without a tie, and dress shoes.

Dressing behavior for women varies depending on fashion. There is a marked influence from the American styles in this respect. Jeans are common in the female population, but they also wear a variety of other type of clothes like short and long skirts, shorts, casual and cocktail dresses, dress pants, among others. Young women also wear casual shirts and tops, career shirts, dressy shirts and blouses. Currently, the most common type of  
shoes that women wear are sandals, but they also use platform shoes, boots, ankle boots, tennis, May Jane shoes, mule shoes, wedge shoes, open toe shoes and pumps. For the working environment, women generally wear working suits, with a combination of pants or skirts, career shirts, and blazers.

In El Salvador, students in all public and most private schools wear uniforms during school time, but for the rest of the day, dressing habits for boys and girls vary depending on current trends. Nowadays, boys wear tight jeans and tight button-down long-sleeve shirts, or long-sleeve T-shirts, and tennis. The previous generation, though, had the opposite trend, consisting of loose pants, and loose shirts. Young girls usually wear miniskirts, tops or strap blouses, and sandals. Male kids wear jeans, stamped T-shirts and tennis. Female kids wear jeans, tops and sandals but also shorts and spandex pants and shorts with long T-shirts, with colorful short socks and tennis.

Male babies are dressed with diapers and little T-shirts, while female babies usually are dressed with little dresses.

Old male adults generally wear the clothes that were common when they where young adults, like old fashioned suits consisting of pants, button-down long-sleeve shirts and jackets, but also tennis and maybe a hat. Old female adults usually wear old fashioned dresses or suits consisting of pants, button-down long-sleeve shirts and blazers, and low heels.

In rural areas, men typically wear button-down long-sleeve shirts, casual pants and half boots, while women wear blouses and long skirts with rustic sandals. Boys and girls usually are dressed with the same type of clothes as their parents, but generally wear no shoes, and little kids and babies are naked most of the time. Old male adults in the rural areas generally wear just pants and rustic sandals, with no shirts, while old female adults are dressed no differently from the younger women.

TRANSLATE

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**Dating, Family and Children El Salvador**

**Dating and Marriage**

In past generations, when two young adults, male and female, were attracted to each other, and wanted to make official their relationship, the male visited the home of the female, to talk to her parents, in order to get their consent. The boyfriend was then allowed to start visiting his girlfriend at her home, watched by her parents. If the relationship went along in good terms, after a reasonable length of time, the couple had a formal talk with  
the parents of the girlfriend, to request their consent to get married. If the consent was granted, the couple got married first by civil marriage, and a week later, by church wedding, moment after which the bride used to leave the house of her parents, and went to live with her husband. It was customary for the groom's family to afford the civil marriage, and for the bride's family to afford the church wedding.

Nowadays, these traditions are in progressive decay. Instead for the boyfriend to go and talk with the parents of his girlfriend, the girlfriend talks to her mother privately to let her know about her boyfriend. The mother is then supposed to talk to her husband, to make him accept the relationship. After this private negotiation takes place, the boyfriend is allowed to visit her girlfriend at her home. Then, if the relationship goes along in good terms, after a reasonable length of time, the boyfriend proposes to his girlfriend, gives her an engagement ring, and if the girlfriend accepts, the civil marriage takes place, and a week later, the church wedding. It is no longer a strong tradition for the boyfriend's family to afford the civil marriage, and for the girlfriend's family to afford the civil wedding. Instead, usually both ceremonies are afforded by the boyfriend, or by both boyfriend and girlfriend. An increasing number of couples are opting to get married just by the civil marriage, and not to do the church wedding, while some others do not get married at all,  
and instead live in cohabitation.

The civil marriage ceremony usually takes place in a house or in a reception room. Usually few people are invited; just close family and friends of groom and bride. The ceremony is lead by a public notary. Days or weeks before to the ceremony, a meeting must be held by the notary and the couple, to establish the conditions and options under which the marriage is going to be arranged. On the ceremony itself, one witness is required for the groom, and one for the bride. Groom's witness is usually male, and brideâ€™s witness is  
usually female, but this is not mandatory. The notary conducts the ceremony according to national regulations in this matter, explaining the purpose and importance of the marriage, and the duties and rights of the wife and the husband. To the end of the ceremony, the notary asks the groom and the bride weather they accept to get married, and then they sign the marriage deed, followed by their witnesses signing the deed too. After the  
signatures, the notary declares the couple man and wife, and the newlywed kiss in front of the audience, act to which them respond with an applause. Then, they are congratulated by the public, and the banquet and the music starts.

The church marriage ceremony usually takes place at church, but it can be done also in a reception room, especially in the case of Protestant ceremonies. Instead of a best man and a matron of honor, it is typical that a married couple close to the groom and the bride  
is chosen to act as godparents of the newlyweds, to advise them in life on marriage subjects. They stay next to the couple during the ceremony. They are also responsible of putting and removing the cord that interlaces the couple, and that symbolizes the union  
between them. This is done before and after the ceremony. A kid is there also to be the page boy, and his responsibility is to hold and later give the rings to the couple. Generally, the bridge is dressed in white, and the groom in a dark suit. The groom is supposed to be at the altar waiting for the bride to arrive, and the bride is supposed to be walked to the altar by her father or, in his absence, some other paternal figure, or her mother, while the  
wedding march is played. A baby girl and a baby boy usually are in charge of holding the tail of the dress of the bride while she walks towards the altar.

The ceremony is lead by a priest or a pastor, and its content is similar to the civil marriage ceremony, with the addition that everything is explained based on biblical or doctrinal concepts. The priest or the pastor then asks the groom and the bride if they accept to get married, and then declares them man and wife. After this, the young couple interchanges the wedding rings, and then the bride gives the groom the weeding coins, while states that  
the coins represent the prosperity and the resources of the marriage. The groom receives the wedding coins from the bride, stating that he will take care of them in the benefit of the  
marriage. This act is followed by the newlyweds kissing each other and the audience applauding. Then the priest or the pastor ends the ceremony with a general blessing and the guests come closer to congratulate the young couple. In Catholic ceremonies, the  
wedding may be put in between the mass. Generally, after a church wedding, the guests and the newlyweds go to a reception room to celebrate the weeding party.

Some other traditions related to weddings include separate bachelor's parties for the fiance and the fiancee, the honey moon after the wedding, and one or two wedding tea receptions before the day of the wedding.

**Family and Children**

Family structure and its traditions are different for people living in the city and for peopleliving in towns, or in rural areas.

The basic family structure for people from the cities consists of father, mother, and from one to three sons and daughters. Having a grandfather or a grandmother, but not both, living together with the basic family is common. If both grandparents are alive and relatively independent, they usually live alone in their own house, though their sons and daughters are usually in close contact with them.

There are also a lot of families that miss the father, mainly because he has migrated out of the country to provide financial support, or because he has another home which he considers to be his primary concern. Yet another group of families miss the two parents, maybe because both of them are working abroad to support the financial needs of their children. In this later case, the children usually live with their grandparents, or with an uncle or an aunt. The most popular country for Salvadorans to go to work at is the United States, but there are people from El Salvador working in plenty of other countries around  
the world.

In El Salvador, It is very common for both parents to work in order to supply the required income for the family. Nevertheless, the mother is still considered as the responsible for the caring of the children and the home, but daughters are taught to be independent, to study and pursue a career.

Salvadorans tend to have a dual standard regarding sex education towards their children, because on the one hand, parents want both sons and daughters to get married before starting to be sexually active, but on the other hand, they educate differently their sons and their daughters, because sons are often expected to meet several female partners before getting married, and to be sexually active, while on the contrary, daughters are expected to meet very few partners before getting married, and not to be sexually active but until they get married.

Parents in middle to upper classes expect their sons and daughters to go to school, then to go to the university to get a degree, and then to get married and leave the parental  
home. But in recent years, there has been an increasing tendency for some young male adults after they get a job, to leave the home of their parents earlier and to live alone, becoming sexually active and possibly later to cohabitate with their couple. Some couples also do not get married, but just cohabitate.

Children from lower classes are not always expected to go to school, but rather to learn an occupation, and to work as soon as possible to help with the financial support for the  
parental family. They also usually do not get married, but instead, they get together in cohabitation.

Families in the towns tend to be more numerous than the families in the cities, with the amount of children ranging from two to five. Another difference is in the role taught to the sons and daughters, because the later ones are expected to be dependant, to be focused mainly on the care of the children and the home, and not to work, or to work but in commercial activities done at home, like in meals or "tortillas" preparation, or in a store at  
home, while the male is considered to be the support for the family. And like in the case for the middle and upper classes in the urban areas, people in the towns usually leave the  
parental home until they get married.

Families in rural areas behave very similar to the ones living in towns. For instance, both types of families have numerous children and both have traditional roles for male and female. But they also have some differences. For example, they live together with both the grandparents, and they usually do not get married, but get together in cohabitation.

**El Salvador Gestures and Greetings**

**Greetings**

Male to male greeting usually involves handshaking with the right hand. But, if the two people are close friends or relatives that have not seen each other for a long time, the  
protocol could also include a hug or a half-hug.

Hugs among men are customarily reserved for very close friends or relatives, or for the greeting of a man and a male child which is a relative of a close friend or a relative, or for  
special circumstances, like in funerals or to show some emotional support. The rest of the time, men usually give half-hugs to other men, i.e., one person puts his left arm around the shoulders of the other person, while handshakes him with the right hand at the same time.

Men kissing each other are only seen mainly between father and son, specially, but not only, when the son is still underage, or when the father is elder. This kissing involves closed mouth to cheek or to forehead contact.

Typical verbal formulas accompanying the handshake or the hug vary depending on how close the two man involved are. Two first-time acquaintances would say "Hello, how are you? I'm So-and-so, nice to meet you". Two friends who see each other frequently would say "Hey, what's up?" and two old friends who have not seen each other in a while would say "Hey man, how are you! It has been a while..."

Adult to kid greeting would include expressions from the adult like "Hey champion, how are u doing?", and then, a quick comment to the adult accompanying the kid could follow, like  
"It is incredible how much your kid has grown so far".

The protocol for male to female greeting generally includes a cheek kiss, or a soft handshaking, but that depends on whether the encounter is social or more formal. For instance, a young male would kiss in the cheek to a female friend of his, or to a young female first introduced to him by a mutual friend, or by her boyfriend, but would handshake an older woman, like a professor, or a woman with whom the encounter is supposed to be  
sparsely, like the wife of a coworker.

When kissing the cheek of females, males usually also hold their right hand on the left shoulder of the female. Couples customarily greet with a rapid kiss, with a closed mouth to  
closed mouth contact.

Male adult to female child greeting usually involves no physical contact, and a short sweet expression like "Hello young lady". Verbal formulas accompanying the greeting between a male and a female are similar to the ones described for the male to male case, but the message and the expressions tend to be softer, like when a guy greets a female friend and  
says "Hey, how are you! It is very nice to see you again".

When two females meet, they usually always kiss each other in one cheek. This kiss typically does not include mouth to cheek contact, but instead, cheek to cheek contact, plus a kiss sound, made by the mouth of the two females. If they are first being introduced, or if they are not close acquaintances, the kiss is preceded by a soft handshake with the right hand. If the two women are close friend or relatives, they add a hug after the kiss. The formulas for the greeting between two women are similar to the ones described for the male to male case, except that these tend to be longer and more expressive.

**Gestures**

It is poor manners to use extensive hand or head gestures in conversation or to express feelings. Yawns should be avoided or covered with the hand. It is not appropriate to point feet or fingers at anyone. Only close friends are beckoned with a hand wave.

**Visiting**

When a friend or relative is invited over to someone's house, it is customary for the person being invited to bring over something to eat, generally a traditional dessert, like  
"quezadilla" (a type of baked bread made of cheese), "reposterÃ­a" (pieces of sweet bakery), a "brazo gitano" (an elongated semi cylindrically shaped piece of cake), or something more conventional like ice cream, or even fruit, like a papaya, a watermelon, several mangoes or lemons, etc.

The adults generally gather together to chat, while they drink coffee accompanied with the bread being brought by the visitors. For this purpose, the living room is barely used.  
Instead, and especially if the visitors are very familiar with the hosts, it is customary to gather in a back or a front deck. Children are served a soft drink, like a soda or a drink  
made of fruit and water. Children from the two families go and separate from the adults to play together.

If the visit is in progress by the time of a main meal, the host invites the visitors to join them for the meal. If the visitors have no intentions to stay for the meal, maybe because lack of closeness, it is accepted for them to politely reject the invitation, but usually this is followed by them leaving the house and ending the visit. This is because it is not considered polite for the hosts to have a main meal while they have guests, if the guests will not join them for that meal.

After a reasonable period of time, the visitors start to try to close the conversation, and prepare to leave. When this happens, the visitors are walked to the door by the hosts,  
when all of them have a last small talk before the visitors leave.

It is not uncommon for the host to give something away to the visitors, like something among the examples of desserts cited before, but different from what the visitors brought.

**Cultural Attributes**

Salvadorans work hard. They are very creative when it comes to finding a way to make money. They do not give up easily when things become difficult. Instead, they fight to find the way, and usually they take refuge in God.

Most of the people are Christian, being the two more predominant religions the Protestantism and the Catholicism.

Faith has been a resource that has helped the people to go through varied tough situations, making them tough as well.

The endurance of the people of El Salvador has been tested many times, the more prominent of which being the twelve years civil war, followed by the several natural disasters that have hit the region, like earthquakes and hurricanes. Unfortunately, when this is combined with the difficult social environment that Salvadorans need to face daily, plagued by economic uncertainty and the physical insecurity  
generated by the crimes committed by the unlawful social groups known locally as "maras", it has made the people to be mildly negative in their expectations.

Salvadorans tend to overestimate the bad things, and to minimize the good ones. Nevertheless, they never give up, and still preserve the human warmth and natural joy that characterize their people.

At first glance, citizens living in the urban areas seem to be self-centered and indifferent to others, but once the ice is broken between two strangers, by means of a natural gesture like a smile, or a casual incident like a belonging being dropped, the Salvadorans let their friendliness to emerge, and within a couple of minutes, the two strangers become acquainted, help each other, and disclose themselves a little.

In the rural areas, people tend to be more open, and show immediately a natural interest to others, to help them, to share with them their own limited resources.

**El Salvador Church and Religion**

El Salvador is a largely Catholic nation, with close to 75 percent of the people belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. About 20 percent practice a variety of other Christian faiths, including a range of Protestant religions.   
  
The country was predominantly Roman Catholic, with a sizable Protestant minority, plus small communities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Hare Krishna, Muslims, and Jews, among others. A very small segment of the population practiced an indigenous religion.   
  
Approximately 57.1 percent of the population was Roman Catholic. Additionally, 21.2 percent were members of Protestant churches. (Among Protestants, informal church estimates suggested approximately 35 percent were Baptists and members of Assemblies of God.) Members of Jehovah's Witnesses accounted for an estimated 1.9 percent of the population, 0.7 percent were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2.3 percent were associated with other churches and religious groups, and 16.8 percent were not affiliated with any church or religion.   
  
The constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice. The Government at all levels sought to protect this right in full and did not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. The constitution states that all persons are equal before the law and prohibits discrimination based on nationality, race, sex, or religion.   
  
The constitution requires the president, cabinet ministers and vice ministers, supreme court justices, judges, governors, attorney general, public defender, and other senior government officials to be laypersons. In addition, the electoral code requires judges of the supreme electoral tribunal and members of municipal councils to be laypersons.   
  
A 1940 law established Holy Week as holidays for public employees, and each year the legislative assembly issues a decree establishing Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday as official holidays for the private sector.   
  
The constitution explicitly recognizes the Roman Catholic Church and grants it legal status. In addition, the law governing nonprofit organizations and foundations states that such groups may register for official status. A religious group is not required to register with the Government but must do so if it wants to incorporate formally. The civil code gives equal status to churches as nonprofit foundations. For formal recognition, they must apply through the Office of the Director General for Nonprofit Associations and Foundations (DGFASFL) within the Ministry of Governance. Each group must present a constitution and bylaws that describe, among other things, the type of organization, location of offices, goals and principles, requirements for membership, type and function of ruling bodies, and assessments or dues. Before the DGFASFL can grant registration to a group, it must determine that the group's constitution and bylaws do not violate the law. Once a group is registered, notice of DGFASFL approval and the group's constitution and bylaws must be published in the official government gazette.   
  
The law for nonprofit organizations and foundations charges the Ministry of Governance with registering, regulating, and overseeing the finances of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), non-Catholic churches, and other religious groups in the country. The law specifically exempts unions, cooperatives, and the Catholic Church.   
  
Regulations implementing the tax law grant tax-exempt status to recognized non-Catholic churches and other religious groups. The regulations also make donations to recognized churches tax-deductible.   
  
Noncitizens seeking actively to promote a church or religion must obtain a special residence visa for religious activities. Visitors to the country are not allowed to proselytize while on a visitor or tourist visa. There were no allegations of difficulties in obtaining visas for religious activities during the period covered by this report.   
  
Public education is secular. Private religious schools operate freely in the country. All private schools, whether religious or secular, must meet the same standards to be approved by the Ministry of Education.   
  
The president attends different religious ceremonies to promote interfaith understanding.

**El Salvador Sport and Recreation**

Football soccer is, by far, the most played sport in the country. It is the unofficial national sport, played by kids and adults, by male and female population, though male players are more common, especially in the adult community. Football games are played daily, from the informal gathering of boys in the neighborhood who play in the street, to local and national tournaments throughout the year. It is common for workers from several companies to join and set teams to play on competitions taking place on weekends.

Another entertaining activity for kids and young adults is video gaming. Nowadays, it is becoming increasingly popular for middle class families to have a video game console as part of the household devices, or a computer that kids use also as a game console. Kids are also into the portable game players' tendency.

On the other hand, outdoor games for kids are becoming less and less common. Previous generations of kids enjoyed playing street games in the neighborhood, like hide-and-seek, tag, and cops and robbers. They also used to play with toys that required some level of physical ability from the kids, like spinning tops, yo-yo, kites, bicycles, skateboards, rollers, marbles, jacks, etc.

The preferred activities that people carry on during vacation may depend on when those vacations take place. Pupils in public schools and those in private but non-bilingual  
institutions are given vacations at the end of the year, from the second half of October, to the first half of January of the following year. So, during this long period of vacation, in  
urban areas, it is customary for parents to send their children to summer lessons, like swimming, languages, football, music, arts, dance and academic reinforcement. Youngsters may get a temporal job like as sellers in stores.

In rural areas, sons are sent to work with their father in farming activities, though this is becoming less common because of the progressive drop of the agriculture in the country  
during the last decade.

Pupils also have vacations for the Holy Week, and for the Patron Saint's Day of their municipality. These one-week vacations are commonly employed to go to the beach, or to  
go hiking and camping. They may also use this time for church activities or to go to the fairs.

Most of the employees in the government and in some private companies get their vacations on fixed periods throughout the year, that is, in Holy Week, Patron Saint's Day of  
their municipality, and Christmas. A high percentage of this part of the population prefers to go to the beach during Holy Week. People from San Salvador may also choose to go to  
the beach on August, when they get some days of vacation because of the celebration of the patron saint of the city.

At the end of the year, several people like to go outside of the country for tourism, but specially to visit the family members or friends that live abroad, being the United States  
their main destination.

Other activities carried on during these periods may be attending religious events, visiting tourist towns, or simply resting at home.

Another group of the workers get their vacations on varied occasions, depending on the  
employee's interests and the company's needs. These periods might not coincide with the common intervals of Holy Week, Patron Saint's Day on August, or Christmas, but the  
activities that they carry on are similar to the ones of the rest of the working population.

**El Salvador Recreation Photos**

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