

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of El Salvador  
**CAPITAL:** San Salvador  
**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Multiparty Republic  
**AREA:** 21,476 Sq Km (8,292 Sq Mi)  
**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION** 6,435,600

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** El Salvador is located on the west coast of Central America. It is bound by Honduras to the north, Guatemala to the northwest, the Gulf of Fonseca to the southeast and the Pacific Ocean to the south. The country is divided by the Coastal and Cordillera Apeneca Mountain Ranges running east to west. Additionally, the country is divided into three topographical regions. (1.) The southern coastal plain which is a tropical flat coastal belt. (2.) The northern lowlands which are formed by the valleys of the Lempa River and Sierra Madre. (3.) The central plateau which is interspersed by mountains, volcanoes and valleys. El Salvador is located in a very unstable geological zone and is subject to frequent earthquakes. Nearly 150 rivers flow across the country to the Pacific Ocean and it has three lakes, Lake Guija, Lake Coatepeque and Lake Ilopango. Major Cities (pop. est.); San Salvador 422,600, Soyapango 251,800, Santa Ana 202,300, San Miguel 182,800, Mejicanos 145,000 (1992). Land Use; forested 5%, pastures 30%, agricultural-cultivated 35%, other 30% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** El Salvador has a tropical climate that is characterized by warm temperatures during the day and cool nights, except for the coastal plain. There are two distinct seasons, a dry season from November to April with light rainfall and a wet season from May to November when heavy rainfall occurs. Rainfall is heaviest along the coast whilst the interior regions remain relatively dry. Average monthly precipitation during the wet season is 260 mm (10 inches). Average temperature ranges in San Salvador are from 22 degrees Celsius (72 degrees Fahrenheit) to 24 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Mestizos who are of mixed Spanish and AmerIndian descent and account for 90% of the population. AmerIndians account for 5% while another 5% are Whites mainly Spanish. The two major AmerIndian groups are the Pipil and Lenca. Other ethnic alien groups include the Lebanese, Swiss, Turks, Syrians, Germans and Chinese.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 256 persons per sq km (664 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 44.4% urban, 55.6% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 49.0% male, 51.0% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 58.0 years male, 67.0 years female (1989). Age Breakdown; 44% under 15, 28% 15 to 29, 13% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 5% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and

over (1990). Birth Rate; 33.0 per 1,000 (1989). Death Rate; 8.0 per 1,000 (1989). Increase Rate; 25.0 per 1,000 (1989). Infant Mortality Rate; 57.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

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**RELIGIONS:** Mostly Christians with around 93% of the population Roman Catholic while other religious minorities include Protestants, Pentecosts and Jews.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Spanish which is spoken by nearly all of the population. The only AmerIndian language spoken is Pipil.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 10 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 30.2%, primary 60.7%, secondary 6.9%, higher 2.3% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 73.0% (1990).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1956 Lemus won the presidency in a disputed election and in 1960 a military coup ousted him. A Junta then ruled the country until 1961 when it was ousted by another Junta. In 1962 a new constitution was adopted and in 1969 Honduran land reform laws forced many Salvadorans living in Honduras to give up their land. These laws created tensions and a longstanding border dispute between El Salvador and Honduras resulted in a four day war. In 1972 widespread protests broke out after accusations of massive electoral fraud, which also led to the formation of many popular organizations and guerrilla groups. In 1977 amongst further allegations of electoral fraud, Gen. Carlos Humberto Romero became President. In 1979 army reformist officers removed Romero from office and replaced him with a Junta consisting of two army officers and three civilians. With the level of political violence in El Salvador increasing the Junta appointed Jose Napoleon Duarte as President in Dec. 1980. In the same year El Salvador and Honduras signed an agreement to end their border dispute and in Jan. 1981 a civil war erupted between government troops and leftist rebel guerrilla forces. In 1984 Duarte was reelected President and in 1986 an earthquake struck San Salvador causing around 1,020 deaths as well as widespread property damage. In Mar. 1989 Alfredo Cristiani was elected President and unlike his predecessor, he took a hard line with the rebel guerrilla groups supporting a military solution. In Nov. 1989 a massive military offensive was launched, after negotiations broke down, resulting in the deaths or injury of around 2,000 people. In early 1991 the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Movement (FMLN) shot down a helicopter killing three US military advisors. In March 1991 elections resulted in the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA) winning 39 seats, followed by the PDC with 26 and the CD 8 seats. In April 1991 the outgoing Legislative Assembly agreed on a set of reforms that would strengthen civilian control over the armed forces, create a civilian police force separate to the Army, remove judicial control from the ruling party and improve the electoral process. Under UN mediation Pres. Christani and the FMLN signed a agreement in Sept. 1991 planned to end the civil war and reform the military. In the same month Col. Guillermo Alfredo

Benavides Moreno was convicted of ordering the massacre of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter in Nov. 1989. On Jan. 16, 1992 the government and the FMLN signed a peace accord that ended 12 years of civil war that had cost around 80,000 lives, displaced a million people and caused material losses of some \$1 billion. As part of the peace accord a timetable was drafted for the gradual demobilization of the guerrilla forces, the disbandment of the National Guard and Treasury Police, the reduction of the armed forces and political and economic reforms that would include the FMLN members, although delays resulted. On Feb. 20, 1992 the hard-line anti-communist founder and leader of the ARENA, Roberto d'Abuisson who had been linked with many political murders died. On June 30, 1992 the UN mission confirmed that the first 20% of the FMLN forces had been demobilized while under US and UN pressure the government and FMLN forces agreed to a new timetable for demobilization. On Dec. 14, 1992 the demobilization was finally complete with a ceremony the following day in San Salvador marking the end of the civil war. In Mar. 1993 a UN Commission report published the atrocities of the 12-year civil war that found many senior army officers responsible for the murder of thousands of civilians. The commission's report also urged that the officers' be dismissed, be banned from public office for 10 years and prohibited from ever gaining military or security responsibilities. Subsequently the Legislative Assembly passed an amnesty for all of those who had committed crimes during the war which resulted in the UN secretary-general announcing that the government had reneged on the peace-settlement while the US withheld further military aid until the purge of officers had been completed. By the end of June 1993 changes in the high command and in other key posts had been announced. Also in 1993 the political parties had named their candidates to contest the 1994 presidential elections.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Colon (C) divided into 100 Centavos.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$7,233,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,897,000,000 (1993). Imports; C 16,636,000,000 (1993). Exports; C 6,366,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$121,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; C -12,254,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 1,762,002 or 34.4% of total population (1992). Unemployed; 8.1% (1993).

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are CACM countries, the USA, the EU and Japan.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Beans, Cattle, Coffee, Cotton, Maize, Poultry, Rice, Silver, Sorghum, Sugar, Timber.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Agriculture, Chemicals, Electricity, Fishing, Food Processing, Footwear, Forestry, Petroleum Products, Textiles and Clothing.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Chemicals, Clothing, Coffee, Cotton, Sugar, Textile Yarns and Fabrics.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; route length 602 km (374 mi) (1988), passenger-km 6,000,000 (3,728,000 passenger-mi) (1988), cargo ton-km 36,100,000 (24,725,000 short ton-mi) (1988). Roads; length 12,164 km (7,558 mi) (1987). Vehicles; cars 75,000 (1989), trucks and buses 80,000 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 12 (1990), deadweight tonnage 3,220 (1989). Air Transport; passenger-km 1,066,000,000 (662,381,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 4,645,000 (3,181,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 8 with a total circulation of 485,000 (1989). Radio; receivers 2,080,000 (1994). Television; receivers 500,700 (1994). Telephones; units 173,500 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 30,700 (1992) total active duty personnel with 91.2% army, 2.3% navy and 6.5% air force while military expenditure accounts for 1.3% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).