

El Salvador

Geography

Location: Middle America, bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Guatemala and Honduras

Area:

total area: 21,040 sq km

land area: 20,720 sq km

Land boundaries: total 545 km, Guatemala 203 km, Honduras 342 km

Coastline: 307 km

Maritime claims:

territorial sea: 200 nm

Climate: tropical; rainy season (May to October); dry season (November to April)

Terrain: mostly mountains with narrow coastal belt and central plateau

Natural resources: hydropower, geothermal power, petroleum

Land use:

arable land: 27%

permanent crops: 8%

meadows and pastures: 29%

forest and woodland: 6%

other: 30%

Irrigated land: 1,200 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; soil erosion; water pollution;

contamination of soils from disposal of toxic wastes

natural hazards: known as the Land of Volcanoes; frequent and sometimes very destructive earthquakes and volcanic activity

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

People

Population: 5,870,481 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 40% (female 1,165,152; male 1,200,759)

15-64 years: 56% (female 1,677,958; male 1,602,230)

65 years and over: 4% (female 122,368; male 102,014) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.02% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 32.39 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.19 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -5.96 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 38.9 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 67.5 years

male: 64.89 years

female: 70.23 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.69 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Salvadoran(s)

adjective: Salvadoran

Ethnic divisions: mestizo 94%, Indian 5%, white 1%

Religions: Roman Catholic 75%

note: there is extensive activity by Protestant groups throughout the country

Languages: Spanish, Nahua (among some Indians)

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1990 est.)

total population: 73%

male: 76%

female: 70%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of El Salvador

conventional short form: El Salvador

local long form: Republica de El Salvador

local short form: El Salvador

Capital: San Salvador

Independence: 15 September 1821 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 15 September (1821)

Constitution: 20 December 1983

Legal system: based on civil and Roman law, with traces of common law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: 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

Economy

Industries: food processing, beverages, petroleum, nonmetallic products, tobacco, chemicals, textiles, furniture

Agriculture: accounts for 24% of GDP and 40% of labor force (including fishing and forestry); coffee most important commercial crop; other products - sugarcane, corn, rice, beans, oilseeds, beef, dairy products, shrimp; not self-sufficient in food

Illicit drugs: transshipment point for cocaine; marijuana produced for local consumption

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 602 km

Highways:
total: 10,000 km

Inland waterways: Rio Lempa partially navigable

Ports: Acajutla, Puerto Cutuco, La Libertad, La Union, Puerto El Triunfo

Airports:
total: 106

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force