

El Salvador: “The Savior”

Overview: Economic precariousness, government corruption, crime, violence, and—increasingly—climate change are all driving migration from El Salvador and other Northern Triangle countries. The smallest country in Central America, El Salvador ranks third in population (6.5 million) among the six Central American countries. It is the most densely populated country with a total area of 21,040 square km, **which makes it about the size of Massachusetts.** (WB) Capital: San Salvador, President: Nayib Bukele; Currency: US Dollar & Bitcoin; Population: 6,528,135 as of July 2021 estimate.

Language: The official language of El Salvador is Spanish, but Nawan is also used among Ameridians.



COMMON PHRASES in Spanish

Hello – Holà

Welcome – Bienvenido

How are you? – Cómo estás?

What’s your name? – Cual es tu nombre/ Cómo te llamas?

Thank you – Gracias/ Muchas gracias

Reply to thank you – De nada/ No hay de qué

Goodbye – Adiós

Facts:

- **Greetings:** It is important to note that in most Latino countries, strangers will greet people in a very affectionate way. Example: It is common for people to hug each other, to kiss on the cheek, and also to use phrases such as, “Holà mi amor” (Hello my love), or “Muchas gracias mi reina” (Thank you so much my queen) even when a person has no intimacy with the other one. It is a cultural aspect and a very normal one for El Salvadorians.
- **Food:** El Salvador’s cuisine is most popular for its “Pupusas”, which are basically stuffed tortillas. They are inexpensive and can be eaten at any time of the day. El Salvadoran soups are also very well-known. One of them is the “Sopa de Mondongo” made of cow’s feet, tripe, and tendons, and comes mixed with spices, corn, cassava, and veggies. Last but not least, is the “Churrasco” or barbecue, which is basically made of grilled meat served with fried beans and plantain. (Chefs Pencil)
- **Religion:** Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 36%, other 2%, none 12% (2014 estimate).

Suggested Activities:

- **El Salvadorian Cuisine** is a very strong and important aspect for El Salvador nationals. It is always nice to find familiar foods in a new place. For a Salvadorian family, teach them where they can buy ingredients for pupusas. Ingredients: Made from **masa dough**, the base for tortillas, tamales and other Latin cooking staples, pupusas are thick corn cakes filled with a variety of ingredients such as pork, chicken, cheese or beans. For certain, they are always served with curtido, a wonderfully crunchy and tangy cabbage slaw, and a simple red salsa.
- **Go Fishing!** Fishing practices in El Salvador are different than the ones in the U.S. Many U.S. residents/citizens go fishing for fun and it is a great opportunity for El Salvadoran refugees to have a good time with newly made American friends. More than teaching catch-and-release fishing, during these events allow volunteers to serve as cultural mentors about America’s democracy and way of life.
- **Grocery Shopping:** A useful and educational about food stamps usage and money management for refugees is to go to a supermarket with an American friend. Families learn English words for grocery items

but also to better understand how to wisely use money in America. Market Latina, **Located in:** [Fiesta Plaza](#) 233 NE 28th St, Fort Worth, TX 76164.

- **Church community:** Eighty Five percent of World Populations have spiritual connections with churches, mosques etc. Speaking the same language, sharing the same culture, helping families find these connection points can assist them in integration, job searches and assistance with the American School System. See also: See <https://www.churchfinder.com/churches/tx/fort-worth/hispanic-spanish>.
- **Soccer:** World Relief has children's soccer teams that meet regularly. Contact Jtparsons@wr.org
- **English as a Second Language:** World Relief has ESL classes Tuesdays and Thursdays at the clubhouse on Monarch Pass Apartment Complex. (Contact cluol@wr.org).
- **Other children's programs** are operating in the World Relief Clubhouse. (Contact cluol@wr.org).

Current Events

- **Acts of Corruption:** The United States Announced actions against seven Central American Officials for Undermining Democracy and Obstructing Investigations into Acts of Corruption. The El Salvador Magistrates cited, undermined democratic processes or institutions by approving a controversial interpretation of the Constitution which authorized re-election of the President. This despite an express prohibition in the Constitution forbidding consecutive terms of the Presidency. (U.S. State Dept.)
- **Migrants and Refugees:** Unprecedented displacement takes place in Central America as the number of people seeking international protection rises and access to asylum and territory is being limited through troubling new border restrictions. Gillian Triggs, the UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection said she had seen "the tremendous strain the region is under because of the increasing flows of refugees and migrants." (UNHCR 2021)
- **Humanitarian Initiatives:** The Red Cross has been providing training for children in schools in case natural disaster happens. Children receive training about first aid procedures, emergent exit procedures and other activities that teach them how to act before natural disaster events. El Salvador is the smallest and most crowded country of Central America, and it finds itself in the Pacific Ring Fire, which renders it very susceptible to volcanos and tropical storms. (Red Cross)

Sources for further study: World Relief <https://worldrelief.org/blog-four-ways-we-can-improve-our-immigration-system/>; Cruz Roja (Red Cross) <https://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja/nosotros/noticias-y-eventos/articulos-de-noticias/2019/el-salvador-ninos-heroes-practican-habilidades-en-caso-de-desastre.html>; U.S. State Dept. <https://www.state.gov/united-states-announces-actions-against-seven-central-american-officials-for-undermining-democracy-and-obstructing-investigations-into-acts-of-corruption/>; UN <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1099052>; Chef's Pencil <https://www.chefspencil.com/exploring-salvadoran-cuisine/>; WB <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/elsalvador/overview#1>; <https://www.allaboutcuisines.com/grocery-shops/el-salvador/in/united-states>; USDS <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-el-salvador/>; USIP <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/pwks38.pdf>

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