

El Salvador History

El Salvador is the smallest and the most densely populated country in Central America. It is bordered on the northeast by Honduras, on the northwest by Guatemala, and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. El Salvador's capital and largest city is San Salvador. As of 2018, the country had a population of approximately 6.42 million.

For centuries El Salvador was inhabited by several Mesoamerican nations, including the Cuzcatlecs, the Lenca and the Maya. In the early 16th century, the Spanish Empire conquered the territory, incorporating it into the Viceroyalty of New Spain ruled from Mexico City. However, the Viceroyalty of Mexico had little or no influence in the daily affairs of the Central American isthmus. In 1609 the area became the Captaincy General of Guatemala until its independence from Spain, which took place in 1821. The area then became part of the First Mexican Empire, then further seceded, as part of the Federal Republic of Central America, in 1823. When the Republic dissolved in 1841, El Salvador became a sovereign nation.



From the late 19th to the mid-20th century, El Salvador endured chronic political and economic instability characterized by coups, revolts, and a succession of authoritarian rulers. Persistent socioeconomic inequality and civil unrest culminated in the devastating Salvadoran Civil War (1979–1992), which was fought between the military-led government and a coalition of left-wing guerrilla groups. The conflict ended with the Chapultepec Peace Accords. This negotiated settlement established a multiparty constitutional republic, which remains in place to this day.



El Salvador's economy has historically been dominated by agriculture, beginning with the indigo plant, the most important crop during the colonial period, and followed thereafter by coffee, which by the early 20th century accounted for 90 percent of export earnings. El Salvador

has since reduced its dependence on coffee and embarked on diversifying the economy by opening trade and financial links and expanding the manufacturing sector. The colón, the official currency of El Salvador since 1892, was replaced by the U.S. dollar in 2001.

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