

# Countries Of The World: El Salvador

By National Geographic Kids, adapted by Newsela staff on 06.05.18

Word Count **484**

Level **400L**



Image 1. The El Boquerón crater just outside of San Salvador City. Photo credit: John Crux Photography via Getty Images.

El Salvador is a small country. It is located in Central America. This country has many mountains. It borders the Pacific Ocean. It also borders Guatemala and Honduras.

El Salvador has many volcanoes. A volcano is an opening in the earth. Hot gas escapes through here. So does burning-hot rock. El Salvador is sometimes called the Land of Volcanoes.

## Nature

# El Salvador



El Salvador has a long coastline. Palm trees and fruit trees grow near the water. Armadillos and snakes live here.

There are several protected areas in El Salvador. One is Montecristo National Park. High in the mountains here is a forest. It is so high up that it reaches the clouds. The forest is foggy and moist. Spider monkeys swing through trees. Jaguars live here, too.

## People And Culture

In recent years, El Salvador has changed a lot. The economy has improved. The economy is how a country makes and spends money. When the economy improves, it usually means life gets better for the people.

Did you know?



El Salvador, a tropical country, has two main seasons. "Verano," or summer, runs through November to April and is cool and dry. "Invierno," or winter, is a rainy season between May and October.

Source: worldtravelguide.net

Today, many people in El Salvador are doing better than they used to. They have more money. However, many others are still poor. Some do not have clean water.

Most Salvadorans are mestizo. That means they are of mixed race. That means they have both Spanish and Native American ancestors. An ancestor is an early relative. A great-great-grandmother is one example of an ancestor. A small number of Salvadorans have only Spanish ancestors.

## Government And Economy

The president is elected by the people. He or she serves for five years. After that, this person cannot run again. The current president is Salvador Sánchez Cerén.

El Salvador's government has created many jobs in recent years. This means more people have a chance to work. However, the country still faces challenges. One of the biggest is poverty. Many people are very poor. Another challenge is natural disasters. Volcanoes and earthquakes cause damage. Fixing it costs money.

## History



The Olmecs were an ancient people. They lived in Mexico. They started trading in El Salvador at least 2,500 years ago. Later, a different group of people settled in El Salvador. They were called the Maya. The Maya began building cities here. Their civilization lasted until the 1500s. That was 500 years ago.

Later, the Spanish took over El Salvador. They forced the native people to become servants. Spain ruled this way for almost 300 years. In the 1800s, El Salvador broke away from Spain. It became a free country.

In 1980, a civil war began in El Salvador. On one side was the government. It was led by the army. On the other side were several rebel groups. They wanted the country to change.

The war lasted 12 years. It ended in 1992. Then the government and the rebel groups signed a treaty. They agreed to make changes to the government.

**Quiz**

- 1 What detail in the text shows that many Salvadorans are mestizo?
- (A) Today, many people in El Salvador are doing better than they used to.
  - (B) That means they have both Spanish and Native American ancestors.
  - (C) A great-great-grandmother is one example of an ancestor.
  - (D) A small number of Salvadorans have only Spanish ancestors.
- 2 What is a reason WHY rebel groups formed in El Salvador?
- (A) They wanted to change the government.
  - (B) They wanted to break away from Spain.
  - (C) They wanted the Olmecs and Mayas to rule.
  - (D) They wanted the country to belong to Spain.
- 3 Look at Map 1. Which question is answered by Map 1?
- (A) How many people now live in San Salvador?
  - (B) What do the colors in the El Salvador flag mean?
  - (C) How many countries does El Salvador border?
  - (D) What does the land look like in El Salvador?
- 4 Look at Image 1 at the beginning of the article.  
What does the image show?
- (A) the long coastline of El Salvador
  - (B) the animals living in El Salvador
  - (C) a volcano that is erupting in El Salvador
  - (D) a crater outside of El Salvador's capital



## Answer Key

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