

El Salvador



Introduction

El Salvador, a population of 5.5 million, is composed of three ethnic groups: Mestizo (a mixture of European and Indian) 89 percent, Amerindian 10 percent, and European 1 percent. During the 1980s, the United States poured \$4 Billion into El Salvador in an effort to support the government and stop the Communist guerrillas. Not only did the rebels survive, but the gap between rich and poor widened.

The official language is Spanish, although many Indians speak Nahua and other native languages. English is understood in tourist centers and by much of the well-educated people. El Salvador has no official religion. Although the Salvadorans have traditionally been Roman Catholic, various Protestant sects have gained ground in recent years and now constitute about 10 percent of the population.

Fun Fact

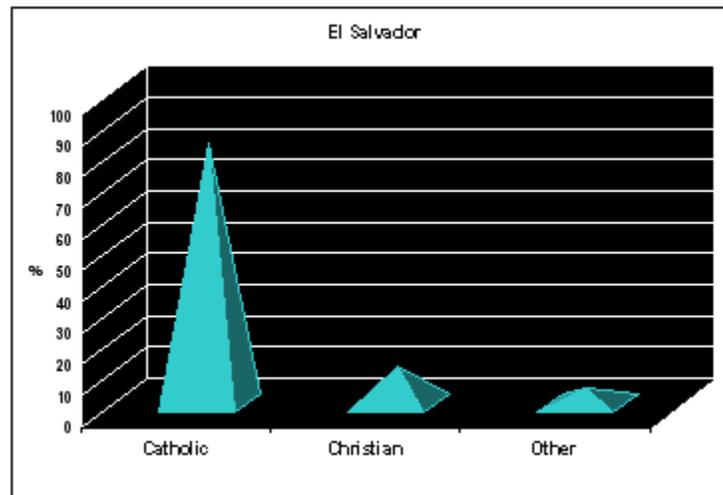
Many business people are now members of religious Neopentecostal groups, which equate wealth with God's favor (hence the poor are being punished by God for their lack of faith).

Geert Hofstede Analysis El Salvador

[Click Here for Geert Hofstede country scores](#)

The Geert Hofstede analysis for El Salvador is similar to its Latin American neighbors. Uncertainty avoidance ranks highest which indicates a high concern for rules, regulations, controls and issues with career security – typically, a society that does not readily accept change and is risk adverse. Individualism ranks lowest which signifies a society of a more collectivist nature and strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. [More Details](#)

Religion in El Salvador



* WORLD FACTBOOK 2002

Appearance

- For business, men should wear a conservative, lightweight suit. Women should wear a blouse and skirt or dress
- Do not point your fingers at anyone
- Good eye contact is important in business situations
- Salvadorans are expressive with both hands and face; this complements their verbal communication
- To beckon someone over, extend the arm and wriggle the fingers with the palm down. Only

summon close friends with this gesture

- Yawning in public is considered rude and should be avoided

Behavior

- Make appointments a month in advance of your trip by telephone or by telex
- Business is done only after a relationship has been established. Spend time forming a friendship before jumping into business discussions
- It is rare to find women in upper levels of business. A visiting business woman should act professionally and convey that she is representing her company, rather than speaking for herself personally
- Business is discussed in an office or over a meal. It is not discussed in the home or around family. If you are invited to a Salvadoran home, this is purely a social function
- The main meal of the day is at noon. This will probably include black beans, tortillas or meat, and fruit and vegetables
- Small gifts often exchanged. If you are invited to a Salvadoran home, it is appropriate to bring a gift of candy or flowers
- Avoid giving white flowers; they are associated with funerals

Communications

- Handshaking is the usual form of greeting; it is typically limp and normally lasts longer than a U.S. handshake
- Some people merely nod when meeting
- While Salvadoran men are willing to shake hands with women, the women must first extend her hand. Foreign men should wait for a Salvadoran woman to extend her hand
- Keep the vocal component of your greeting soft. Many Salvadorans dislike loud persons
- Titles, especially among the elderly, are very important. Address a person directly by using his or her title only. A Ph.D or a physician is called *Doctor*. Teachers prefer the title *Profesor*, engineers go by *Ingeniero*, architects are *Arquitecto*, and lawyers are *Abogado*. Persons who do not have professional titles should be addressed as Mr., Mrs., or Miss, plus their surnames.

In Spanish these are:

- Mr. = *Senor*
- Mrs. = *Senora*
- Miss = *Senorita*

• Most Hispanics have two surnames: one from their father, which is listed first, followed by one from their mother. Only the father's surname is used when addressing someone

• Good conversation topics: history, geography, culture, families

• Bad conversation topics: local politics, religion