

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR EL SALVADOR

UK and most European Community passport holders can enter El Salvador as tourists or business visitors for up to 90 days without a visa, providing your passport has at least six months validity from the date of travel. Non-European Community citizens should contact the El Salvador Embassy, 8 Dorset Square, London NW1 6PU - Tel: 020 7224 9800.

El Salvador is party to the Central America Border Control Agreement (CA-4). Under the terms of this agreement, British tourists may travel between any of the CA-4 countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) for a period of up to 90 days, without completing entry and exit formalities at border Immigration checkpoints.

TRAVEL AUTHORISATION TO VISIT OR TRANSIT THE UNITED STATES

NB - This does not apply for travel with KLM/Air France via Panama City.

To visit or transit the United States, UK citizens and other Visa Waiver Program travellers are required to apply for and receive an approved travel authorization to board a plane bound for the United States.

The US Department of Homeland Security provides an internet-based **Electronic System for Travel Authorization** (ESTA) to screen Visa Waiver Program applicants (such as UK passport holders) prior to travelling to the United States.

For more information, and to apply for a travel authorisation, please see <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov>
The cost is currently \$14. Do not use any other website as you will be charged far more.

In most instances, you will receive real-time notification of your application to travel to the United States. Applicants denied an ESTA are advised to apply for a visa at the nearest US consulate or embassy.

If you do not have access to the internet or require us to apply on your behalf there is an additional £30 fee.

ALTERNATIVE FLIGHTS

Travelling this distance, you may decide to stop off en-route, eg to visit friends in one or both directions. There are direct flights to San Salvador from Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Mexico City, Miami, New York, San Francisco and Toronto and as well as many cities within Central and South America.

Iberia offers two-stop same-day outbound flights from London Heathrow (Terminal 5) to San Salvador via Madrid and San Jose, Costa Rica or Guatemala City, Guatemala.

If you wish to make your own travel arrangements, you may deduct £600 from the group price.

HEALTH

You should contact your doctor or local practice nurse or a MASTAS travel clinic (www.mastas-travel-clinic.com) to discuss your own particular needs as the following is just an overview.

While there are no required vaccines for El Salvador, it is strongly recommended that you should have or update those for Tetanus, Hepatitis A and Typhoid Fever and that you should consider having/updating those Diphtheria, Hepatitis B, Polio and Tuberculosis (TB).

Although yellow fever is not a disease risk in El Salvador, if travelling there from any country in South America (below the Panama Canal) and some Caribbean countries you will need to present proof of yellow fever vaccination.

There is malaria risk in the rural areas along the borders with Guatemala and Honduras, all other areas are considered very low risk. Antimalarial tablets are not usually recommended. Please consult your own doctor, nurse or clinic specialist about whether you require anti-malarial pills.

It is strongly recommended you take measures to avoid insect bites, including using insect repellent at both day (to avoid day-time biting insects) and night (to avoid night-time biting insects) and particularly when travelling in rural areas. Antimalarial tablets are not usually recommended.

Tap water is not generally safe to drink, but bottled water is widely and cheaply available.

The NHS website travelhealthpro.org contains further advice for El Salvador. Remember you should always discuss your particular needs with your own doctor, nurse or clinic specialist.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance is **not** included in the cost of your holiday/pilgrimage - however it is a requirement of our booking conditions that you obtain adequate travel insurance for your holiday/pilgrimage.

Please remember to bring a copy of your travel insurance policy with you so that you can contact your insurance company in an emergency.

We also advise you to leave a copy of your travel insurance policy (or at least the policy number and emergency contact details) and any other important documents with someone at home in case you lose them abroad. If you do need to make a claim while travelling, it might be easier to ask that person to handle it for you.

Please note that we cannot be held responsible for any inability to make immediate payment of emergency expenses in El Salvador for participants on our holiday/pilgrimages.

WEATHER

From November through April, the northeast trade winds control weather patterns. During these months, air flowing from the Caribbean has had most of the precipitation wrung out of it passing over the mountains in Honduras. By the time this air reaches El Salvador, it is dry, hot, and hazy. This season is known locally as *verano* or summer. November is the start of the dry season.

Temperatures vary little with season; elevation is the primary determinant. The Pacific lowlands are the hottest region, with annual averages ranging from 25°C to 29°C. San Salvador is representative of the central plateau, with an annual average temperature of 23°C and absolute high and low readings of 38°C and 7°C, respectively. Mountain areas are the coolest, with annual averages from 12°C to 23°C and minimum temperatures sometimes approaching freezing.

WHAT TO BRING

While dress is informal on this holiday, you will notice that people generally dress conservatively in El Salvador and that appropriate dress is required for entry into many churches in El Salvador - that is upper legs and shoulders must be covered (so no shorts/miniskirts or tank tops!).

If you like to enjoy the sun, it is useful to carry with you a pair of trousers and/or wrap to slip on when entering churches. Sunglasses are worthwhile if you find yourself distracted by the glare from the sun - also a hat for protection. A pair of comfortable walking shoes or sandals are a must.

If you use an electric shaver or intend bringing other electrical appliances, you will need a American style two-flat pin/blade adaptor. The voltage is 110-115 volts AC (60 Hz) (Note this is different from the UK - so do check that items such as electric shavers are dual voltage).

Please bring your own medicines (eg anti-diarrhea drugs), (DEET-containing) insect repellent and sun lotions etc. Do however resist the temptation to pack too much. One medium suitcase is sufficient, and you are the one who has to carry it!

Due to the unfortunate incidence of petty crime that occurs in El Salvador, you are advised to bring strap-over shoulder bags/duffle bags (instead of handbags) and not to carry wallets in jacket or back trouser pockets, nor bring valued items of jewellery/watches with you. Naturally we hope nothing will occur to upset anyone's visit to El Salvador. Common sense will help you avoid most problems.

Please also bring a photocopy of your passport page to carry around with you, so your own passport can be left locked away at the Centro Loyola for the duration.

CURRENCY

The US Dollar is the official currency in El Salvador. Pounds Sterling cannot be changed anywhere in El Salvador. You are advised to bring a mixture of cash and travellers' cheques in US Dollars. US\$50 and US\$100 notes are generally not accepted in many smaller restaurants, bars and shops.

ATMs allowing withdrawals using debit and credit cards are widely available in El Salvador. You should inform your bank of your travel plans before you travel to avoid your card being blocked.

How much to bring depends partly on how much you can afford and on how much you wish to spend on such things as postcards, stamps, souvenirs, presents, drinks that are not included in the cost of the pilgrimage.