

El Salvador

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and US CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

El Salvador is a developing nation classified as lower middle income. Located in Central America along the Pacific Ocean (southwest of Honduras and southeast of Guatemala), the climate is classified as humid equatorial (long dry season).

Vaccinations

Yellow Fever

Although yellow fever does not occur in El Salvador, an official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary.

- *Requirement:*

A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This also applies to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) longer than 12 hours in risk countries.

Supplementary requirement for exit: Salvadoran authorities enforce proof of YF vaccination for residents departing El Salvador for a country with risk of YF transmission. This exit requirement is to supplement El Salvador's existing entry requirement under the International Health Regulations.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against COVID-19, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2021) Very limited malaria risk due almost exclusively to *P. vivax* exists in rural areas prone to migration from Central American countries. Sporadic *P. vivax* malaria cases are reported from specific parts of the country.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **A** - Very limited risk of malaria transmission. Mosquito bite prevention only.

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: Rare cases along Guatemalan border.

- Drug resistance³ : None.
- Malaria species: *P. vivax* 99%, *P. falciparum* < 1%.

- Recommended chemoprophylaxis: None (practice mosquito avoidance).

³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.

⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, including in deluxe accommodations. Community sanitation and food safety measures are generally inadequate. Some itineraries (e.g., remote destinations, austere accommodations) and activities (e.g., ecotourism, eating street or local-market food) further increase risk.

Travelers should observe food and beverage precautions, which reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chagas' disease (American trypanosomiasis), chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, anthrax disease, helminths, leptospirosis, marine hazards, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the US Department of State (DOS), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to crime, US (DOS) and Australia (DFAT) advise reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to this country. UK (FCO) and Canada (GAC) and have no current warnings.

A state of emergency suspending many individual liberties is in place. The state of emergency was declared in response to a spike in gang-related homicides throughout the country. Security operations have taken place across the country, particularly in Soyapango, Ilopango, Mejicanos, San Martín, and San Marcos. Tens of thousands of people with suspected gang ties have been detained. Travelers should maintain a high level of security awareness, carry a fully charged communication device, follow the advice of local authorities, and monitor the situation through local media and embassy communications.

Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery, home invasion, sexual assault, carjacking, gang-related violence, and murder) and high risk of petty crime exist throughout the country, especially in San Salvador (particularly in downtown areas) and other cities (particularly Delgado, Mejicanos, Panchimalco, San Martín, Apopa, Soyapango, San Miguel, Santa Ana, and Ahuachapán); in areas frequented by tourists; on or near public transportation; in airports; on roads outside of major cities after dark; in national parks.

Kidnappings by criminal groups occur throughout the country, especially in San Salvador. Express kidnappings to force cash withdrawals at ATMs may occur throughout the country.

Scams involving ATMs, credit cards, a wide range of financial activities, and false befriending have been reported.

Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations may infrequently occur, especially in San Salvador, and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

Landmines and other unexploded ordnance may be present in rural areas throughout the country, especially in Chalatenango and Morazán departments.

Water Safety

Hazardous water conditions (including currents, tides, and undertows) may occur along the Pacific coast. Heed posted warnings and avoid beaches that are not patrolled. Do not swim alone or after dark and do not walk on any beach after dark.

Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators. Scuba dive only with personnel certified by PADI or NAUI and use equipment only from PADI- or NAUI-certified dive operators.

Transportation Safety

High risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road traffic death rate is 12 to 24 per 100,000 population. The rate is less than 10 in most high-income countries.

Structural standards for vehicles may not meet international standards.

Airline Safety

The US Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The rainy season is from June through November, coinciding with the hurricane season. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur.

Seismic and volcanic activity frequently occur, including in San Salvador.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in El Salvador

- United States: [+503] 2501-2999; sv.usembassy.gov
- Canada: [+503] 2279-4655; www.elsalvador.gc.ca
- United Kingdom: [+503] 2511-5757; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-san-salvador
- Australia: [+503] 2298-9447

El Salvador's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.elsalvador.org
- In Canada: [+1] 613-238-2939
- In the U.K.: [+44] 020-7224-9800
- In Australia: [+61] 02-6232-7222

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing is not required to obtain a tourist, work, or residence visa.

© 2024 Shoreland, Inc. All rights reserved.