Entry Requirements to El Salvador and the U.S.

Thinking of coming to El Salvador or returning to the United States for the holidays? If you are a U.S. citizen traveling to El Salvador or returning to the U.S., please be aware that there have been several recent policy changes and that these policies may further change.

Visit our website for current information on entry and exit requirements for each country, COVID-19 testing in El Salvador, and vaccinations and healthcare resources in El Salvador.

**Click here to find the latest entry and exit requirements**

This will avoid unexpected restrictions or delays when trying to enter either country.

Remember that the U.S. Embassy cannot facilitate entry of passengers who arrive without the correct test or vaccination documentation.
Social Security Administration Live Event

From January 24th to 28th, 2022, representatives of the Social Security Administration office in Costa Rica visited El Salvador to provide SSA services to U.S. citizens in-country. During their visit, they hosted a Facebook live event to answer general questions on SSA benefits and requirements. They also were able to have face-to-face interviews with beneficiaries in need of critical services like applying for benefits or obtaining social security numbers for the first time.

If you are currently living abroad and have inquiries about any services from the Social Security Administration, please contact the Federal Benefits Unit located at the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica. The U.S. Embassy in San Salvador is not authorized to receive any social security applications.

You may contact the Federal Benefits Unit in the U.S. Embassy in San Jose, Costa Rica at: FBU.CostaRica@ssa.gov

Please keep in mind that every time you send an email you must include the following information:

- Full name
- Social security number
- Two phone numbers (including country code) where they can reach you during the day
- Short description of your inquiry

You should expect an answer in the following 15 working days. It is not usually necessary for you to travel to Costa Rica; almost every process can be done online. For more information, visit their website: https://cr.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/social-security/
Return to the United States with Your Expired U.S. Passport

Effective May 25, 2021, if you are overseas and your U.S. passport expired on or after January 1, 2020, you may be able to use your expired passport to return directly to the United States until June 30, 2022.

You qualify for this exception if all of the following are true:

- You are a U.S. citizen.
- You are currently abroad seeking direct return to the United States.
- You are flying directly to the United States, a United States territory, or have only short-term transit ("connecting flights") through a foreign country on your direct return to the United States or to a United States Territory.
- Your expired passport was originally valid for 10 years (5 years if you were issued that passport while you were 15 years of age or younger);
- Your expired passport is undamaged;
- Your expired passport is unaltered;
- Your expired passport is in your possession.

Our Services

Notarial Services at the U.S. Embassy

Visit our updated webpage for new instructions on how to schedule a notarial appointment. Please see below for information on what notarial services we are and are not able to provide, and how to properly present a notarial document.

Consular officers at the U.S. Embassy:

- Serve as public notaries or notarial officers for documents that will **ONLY be used in the United States**.
- Do not serve as lawyers and will not review documents for content or accuracy.
- Have the responsibility to read and understand the document to be signed and question the applicant about their comprehension of the document.
- May ask the applicant to reschedule the appointment if the applicant cannot provide an accurate explanation of what the document being signed is or if it is not complete.
- Cannot recommend or suggest alternative ways of preparation to a document

Documents must:

- Be complete, with all the fields of the document filled in and in order by page numbers.
- Not be signed, this will be performed in front of the consular officer.
- Have current dates.
- If the document requires witnesses, the applicant must provide the witnesses and they must bring valid government-issued ID.

Consular seals and stamps cost **$50 per signature**. Visit our notarial webpage for more information at [https://sv.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/notaries-public/](https://sv.usembassy.gov/u-s-citizen-services/notaries-public/)
Our Services

Renew Your Adult U.S. Passport through Cargo Expreso and Pay for It Online

The Embassy is offering adult passport renewal by mail through a local courier service, Cargo Expreso, to qualified applicants. We encourage all qualified applicants to use this service and avoid long delays in scheduling an appointment and inconvenient travel to the Embassy.

You **MUST** meet the following criteria to qualify for this method:

- Your current U.S. passport book/card is in your possession;
- You were at least 16 years old when your most recent U.S. passport book/card was issued (10-year validity passport);
- If expired, your most recent U.S. passport book/card cannot have expired more than 5 years ago;
- Your current U.S. passport was issued under your current legal name (no name changes are accepted by mail);
- You can wait up to 3 weeks to receive your new passport (you do not have any emergency travel).

**If you are using the Cargo Expreso service to renew your U.S. adult passport, remember you can pay for your passport online through pay.gov.**

Keep in mind that after successfully paying the fee, you must print out the electronic payment confirmation you receive via email and include it in the package you send us through Cargo Expreso.

To learn more on how to apply through Cargo Expreso, please visit the following link: [HERE](#) and click on the PDF: Adult Passport Renewal by Mail Using Cargo Expreso’s Courier Service
To Remember

New Forms to Renew or Apply for a U.S. Passport

The Department of State has updated the forms used to apply for U.S. passports. As of May 1st, the American Citizen Services Unit will only be able to accept the updated forms to renew or apply for a U.S. passport. If you present an outdated form, you will have to fill out a new one.

To make sure you are using the correct form, please visit the website travel.state.gov. Remember that this website is only for you to fill out and print the form; you cannot submit the form through the website. For instructions and requirements on how to apply for a passport in El Salvador, visit this link.

You can confirm which version of the form you are using by checking the lower left corner of the form. The correct forms for each service are:

- Form DS-11 (version 2022)
- Form DS-82 (version 2022)
- Form DS-64 (version 2022)

What is a Form DS-3053 and When Should I Use It?

Form DS-3053 is a permission statement that authorizes a person to apply for a passport with a minor under the age of 16.

Children under the age of 16 need permission from both parents or legal guardians to be issued a U.S. passport. The parents or legal guardians must appear in person with the child to request a first-time passport or to renew it. If one of the parents or legal guardians cannot come in-person to apply for the child’s passport, they must fill out form DS-3053, and get it notarized. This gives the other parent or legal guardian permission to apply for the passport with the child.

This form should be filled out by the parent who cannot attend the interview and signed in front of a public notary or consular officer. The form requires that the parent show the notary an ID. A clear and legible photocopy of the front and back sides of this ID should be attached to the form. This form is free of charge if notarized at the Embassy.

Note: The original form should be sent to the parent applying with the child. Keep in mind that once the form is signed, it is only valid for 90 days.
El Salvador has beautiful beaches. However, some have very strong rip currents and dangerous water conditions. Please stay safe at the beach and check the current conditions before going into the water.

Be aware of beach warning flags and their meaning:

**BEACH WARNING FLAGS**

- **Green:** Conditions are appropriate for water activities.
- **Red:** High Hazard. Do not enter the water.
- **Yellow:** Exercise Caution. Minimum risk for tourists.
- **Jellyfish:** Present. Presence of jellyfish in the water.
- **Black:** Beach closed. Water and weather conditions are extremely dangerous.
- **Blue:** Quality certified. The beach has the appropriate conditions and services for tourists.

Consult the sea conditions forecast published by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources on their oceanography page:

[https://www.snet.gob.sv/ver/oceanografia](https://www.snet.gob.sv/ver/oceanografia)
Rip Currents

Watch for rip currents! If caught in a rip current:

- Don’t swim against the current
- Swim out of the current and then to shore
- If you can’t escape, float or tread water

If you need help, yell and wave for assistance

The Rain is Coming!

Though the exact dates change every year, El Salvador’s rainy season typically starts in May. El Salvador only has two distinct seasons, rainy and dry. Typically rainy season lasts about 6 months. During rainy season, there is typically rain most days, and although usually the rainfall is moderate, at times it can be strong and accompanied by high winds. This is also the time of year that El Salvador is most prone to flooding.

You can prepare for flooding. Review our Emergency Preparedness Guide on Floods to get ready.
Upcoming Closures

May 1
Labor Day

May 10
Mother’s Day

May 30
Memorial Day

June 17
Father’s Day

June 20
Juneteenth

July 4
Independence Day