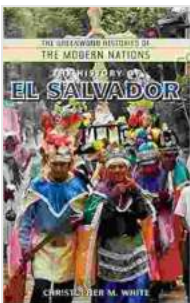


# History of El Salvador

## The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations

El Salvador is a small country in Central America with a rich and complex history. Located on the Pacific coast, El Salvador has been home to a variety of indigenous cultures over the centuries. The country was first settled by the Maya people, who established a number of important cities in the region. In the 16th century, El Salvador was conquered by the Spanish, who established a colony that lasted for over three centuries.

El Salvador gained its independence from Spain in 1821. However, the country's history since then has been marked by a series of political and economic challenges. El Salvador has experienced a number of civil wars, the most recent of which lasted from 1979 to 1992. The country has also been plagued by poverty and inequality.



### History of El Salvador, The (The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations) by Christopher M. White

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In recent years, El Salvador has made progress in overcoming these challenges. The country has adopted a new constitution and held a number

of free and fair elections. The economy has also begun to grow, and poverty has declined. However, El Salvador still faces a number of challenges, including crime, corruption, and violence.

## **Pre-Columbian Era**

The first inhabitants of El Salvador were the Maya people, who arrived in the region around 2000 BC. The Maya established a number of important cities in El Salvador, including San Salvador, the country's capital. The Maya civilization reached its peak in the 9th century AD, but it declined in the 10th century due to a combination of factors, including climate change and warfare.

After the fall of the Maya civilization, El Salvador was inhabited by a number of other indigenous groups, including the Pipil, the Lenca, and the Cacaopera. These groups had a variety of cultures and languages, but they shared a common belief in a supreme being and a pantheon of lesser gods.

## **Spanish Conquest**

In 1524, Spanish conquistadors arrived in El Salvador. The Spanish were led by Pedro de Alvarado, who had already conquered Guatemala. Alvarado quickly defeated the indigenous resistance and established a Spanish colony in El Salvador.

The Spanish colony in El Salvador was part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, which was based in Mexico City. The Spanish ruled El Salvador for over three centuries, during which time they introduced a number of new institutions, including the Catholic Church and the encomienda system.

The encomienda system was a form of forced labor that allowed Spanish colonists to exploit the indigenous population. Under the encomienda system, the Spanish were granted large tracts of land, which they worked with the help of indigenous laborers. The indigenous laborers were forced to work on the encomiendas for little or no pay, and they were often subjected to harsh treatment.

## **Independence**

In 1821, El Salvador gained its independence from Spain. However, the country's independence was short-lived. In 1822, El Salvador joined the United States of Central America, a federation of five Central American states. The United States of Central America collapsed in 1841, and El Salvador became a separate republic.

After independence, El Salvador was ruled by a series of dictators. The most famous of these dictators was Gerardo Barrios, who ruled from 1859 to 1863. Barrios was a progressive leader who introduced a number of reforms, including the abolition of slavery and the establishment of a public education system.

## **Civil War**

In 1979, El Salvador erupted in a civil war. The civil war was fought between the government, which was supported by the United States, and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), a coalition of left-wing guerrilla groups. The civil war lasted for over a decade and resulted in the deaths of over 75,000 people.

The civil war ended in 1992 with the signing of the Peace Accords. The Peace Accords provided for a ceasefire, the demobilization of the FMLN,

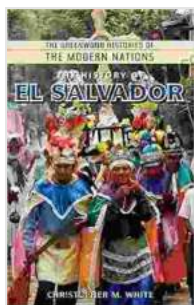
and the creation of a new truth and reconciliation commission. The Peace Accords also led to the establishment of a new democratic government in El Salvador.

## Modern Era

Since the signing of the Peace Accords, El Salvador has made progress in overcoming the challenges of its past. The country has adopted a new constitution and held a number of free and fair elections. The economy has also begun to grow, and poverty has declined. However, El Salvador still faces a number of challenges, including crime, corruption, and violence.

Despite these challenges, El Salvador is a country with a rich history and a bright future. The country has a strong and resilient people who are determined to build a better future for themselves and their children.

El Salvador is a small country with a big history. The country has faced a number of challenges over the centuries, but it has always emerged stronger. Today, El Salvador is a vibrant and dynamic country with a bright future.



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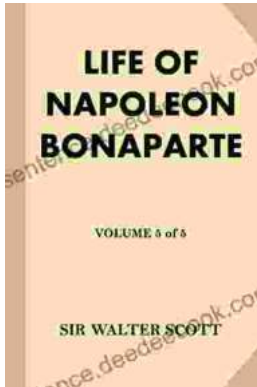
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