



Bolivia

Planning a trip to Bolivia? Then you should talk to us... We know this country exceptionally well. We offer independent expert advice and the ability to deliver top quality itineraries with the best tour operators that are exceptional value for money. Arranging your travel through The Specialist Travel Consultancy also reduces the time you have to spend researching and planning your trip. And our service is completely free!

Contact us to discuss your travel requirements on **0845 838 7667** or for more information on the service we offer please visit our website: www.thestc.co.uk

We arrange tailor made trips:

- Cultural tours
- Walking & trekking
- Geography & Biology tours
- Spanish Schools
- Link school visits
- Adventure Travel & Expeditions

Facts & Highlights

Full Name: The Republic of Bolivia

Area: 1.28 million sq km (425,000 sq ml)

Population: 9 million (est. 2004)

Legal Capital: Sucre (pop: 132,000)

Political Capital: La Paz (pop: 1.5m)

People: Indigenous (45%), Mestizo (37%), European/White (15%), other 3%

Language(s): Spanish, Quechua, Aymara (all official) and a number of minor indigenous languages

Religion(s): Roman Catholic (95%), Protestant (Evangelical Methodist)(5%)

Currency: Boliviano (tied to US\$)

Government: Democracy, elections held every five years

Electricity: 220/230 volts (La Paz 215v) AC, 50Hz

Time: GMT – 4 hours



Lake Titicaca: Visit the highest navigable lake in the world, and "Isla del Sol", the birth place of the Inca Empire.

Salt Lakes & Volcanoes: Get off the beaten track in the dramatic South West of the country with its snow capped volcanoes, giant salt lakes and out of this world vistas.

Quechua & Aymara Indians: Meet the indigenous communities that bring colour and life to the harsh Altiplano.

Sucre: Visit this delightful colonial city complete with shady boulevards.

The Amazon: Experience the narrow waterways and extraordinary wildlife of Bolivia's remote northern frontier.

The Andes: Experience the high life amongst 6,000m peaks and remote mountain passes on a spectacular trek.

Bolivia may be smaller, poorer and less well known than its neighbours, but it is a country full of surprises and the guardian of some of the most spectacular scenery on earth.

You should be under no illusion, with a poor infrastructure and a harsh geographical environment, travel in land-locked Bolivia is a good deal tougher than some other parts of South America. However, don't let this deter you. In terms of true adventure, Bolivia does not disappoint. Seeing a fraction of the number of visitors that neighbouring Peru sees, Bolivia offers a more remote feel which, when combined with its cultural (it has the highest proportion of indigenous people of any Latin American country) and geographical marvels, provides for an excellent destination for a school expedition or adventure tour.

On arrival, take a deep breath - the highest capital in the world, La Paz, is spectacularly situated in a dusty river valley at an altitude of 3632m. Behind it looms the 6548m snow capped peak of Illimani, ever watchful over the bustling and chaotic city. Only a few hours drive north west from La Paz lie the southern shores of Lake Titicaca and the town of Copacabana. Here, you can visit the "Isla del Sol" (Island of the Sun), reputed to be the place where the first Inca leader was born.

Looking north east from the lake, you see the endless snow capped peaks of the Andes - it's an impressive sight. The Andes here offer some of the best

trekking in all of South America, with excellent routes in the Cordillera Real and Cordillera Apolobamba. Trekking in the Bolivian Andes is characterised by spectacular views, high passes, remote valleys and isolated communities living off the harsh environment. You will encounter few, if any, other groups.

Head some 500 or so miles north and you come to the upper reaches of the Amazon and rich, virgin rainforest. Huge national parks such as Madidi and also the Beni Biosphere Reserve have amongst the highest species diversity to be found anywhere on earth. Jungle walks, river journeys, wildlife watching and encounters with indigenous tribes are all on the menu.

At the other end of the country, south west Bolivia is home to the Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt lake on the planet, measuring some 10,500 square km - so vast it can be seen from space. A visit here is to experience a surreal landscape that is at times eerie and of another world. Head further into this isolated region and the salt lakes give way to snow capped volcanoes, geysers, boiling mud, strange rock formations and green and red lakes. The area is undoubtedly a highlight of any visit to Bolivia .

All this, combined with excellent project possibilities and the ability to link easily to the wonders of southern Peru or northern Chile mean that Bolivia is an ideal destination for a school looking for a challenging adventure. Contact us to discuss your requirements in detail.

The Salar de Uyuni



Suggested Itineraries

3 Weeks

DAY 1/2 Depart UK, arrive La Paz.

3 Fly to Sucre; explore city.

4 Tarabuco market.

5 Drive to Potosi; visit Cerro Rico silver mine.

6/9 4WD expedition to Salar de Uyuni, Fish Island, Lagunas Colorada & Verde; overnight bus to La Paz.

10/11 La Paz; optional mountain biking, visit Chacaltaya.

12 Copacabana; Lake Titicaca, Sun island

13 Rest day, optional walks or visit beach.

14 Continue north to Cordillera Real and commence trek.

15/18 trekking in Cordillera Real.

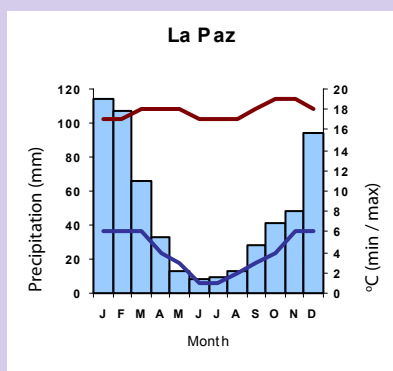
19 return to La Paz.

20/21 Overnight flight, return to UK.

Geography & Climate

Geographically, Bolivia is a land of extremes. The country is dominated by the twin spines of the Andes with their 6,000m plus peaks and the unforgiving high Altiplano that lies between the two ranges. Averaging 3,300m above sea level, the Altiplano is the highest plateau on earth outside of Tibet and home to Lake Titicaca, the largest salt lakes in the world and much of the population including the Political Capital, La Paz. North east of the Andes lies the Amazon rainforest. Some 3,500 miles from the mouth of the river the dense jungle and narrow tributaries offer some of the best wildlife watching in South America, while to the west lies the Atacama desert and the driest region on earth.

Bolivia is at its best between early June and late September. During this time the weather in the Andes is characterised by clear blue skies and sunshine and the days are warm, despite the altitude. However, the nights are cold, with temperatures frequently dropping to near freezing. The main rainy season runs from November to April bringing clouds and drizzle to the mountains and significant rainfall to the jungle.



1 Month

1 Fly London/La Paz.

2 Acclimatisation day, city tour.

3 Drive north to Andean Village of Sorata.

4 Commence trek.

5/12 On trek, views of many 5000m and some 6000m peaks.

13 complete trek, drive to Copacabana, Lake Titicaca.

14 Rest day.

15 Visit Isla del Sol, easy day walks.

16 Return to La Paz.

17/21 community project in local school

22 Fly Rurrenabeque (Amazon).

23 By motor-canoe to eco-lodge in Madidi National Park.

24/26 In Madidi NP; jungle explorations; return to Rurrenabeque.

27 Fly La Paz.

28 Depart La Paz.

29 Arrive UK.

National Holidays

Jan 1 - New Year's Day.

Feb 1: Fiesta de la Virgen de Candelaria

Holy Week - March / April: (full day on Good Friday).

Corps Christi - Date varies.

May 1 - Labour Day.

Aug 6 - Independence Day.

Nov 1 - All Saints' Day.

Dec 25 - Christmas Day.

Festivals

February and March is Carnival time, often characterised by water fights; and foreigners make for popular targets!

June: Corpus Christi in Potosí, Sucre and Copacabana. Gran Poder is La Paz biggest party, held also at the beginning of June.

31 July - San Ignacio de Moxos This is one of the most important festivals in the Beni (Amazonia)

15 Aug - Virgen Urkupaña. The greatest religious celebration in Cochabamba department is held in Quillacollo. Hundreds of other festivals are held across the country the same day.



28 August - San Austin. An eight day festival in Toledo, 40 km from Oruro (south of La Paz).

Price Guide

Prices vary enormously depending on the length and style of trip required, as well as the number of participants involved and date of departure. A 2 week trip to Bolivia starts from around £2,300 per person including international flights. An extended month long expedition is likely to cost in the region of £3,000 to £3,500 depending on the regions visited, nature of the community project and various other factors.

Regulations & Red Tape

A full passport, valid for **1 year** after your return date, is required for travel to Bolivia. British passport holders do not currently need a visa for stays of up to 30 days in length (extendable to 90 days). However, travellers must be in possession of a return air ticket, and if entering Bolivia overland from another South American country a yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required.

Useful Addresses

Embassy and Consulate of the Republic of Bolivia

106 Eaton Square, London SW1W 9AD

Tel: 0207 235 4248.

Web: www.embassyofbolivia.co.uk

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1730

More Information

To discuss the travel possibilities that Bolivia offers in greater detail, and to get free, impartial advice on suitable tour operators please contact:

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