



# PROJECT DOSSIER

## ***BOLIVIA & THE AMAZONAS***

LA PAZ to LA PAZ

21 days

2,500 kms (approx.)

### **Bolivia**

#### **Itinerary Guideline**

- Day 1:** In La Paz. Steep back streets & Indian markets of the old city.
- Day 2:** The Bolivian Andes & the 3800 Altiplano, shores of Lago Poopo, second only in size to Titicaca.
- Day 3:** Onto the vast Salar de Uyuni, a salt lake set high in the Andes.
- Day 4:** The cactus studded islands and salt mines of the salar, to Uyuni.
- Day 5:** Volcanic highlands of the Cordillera de Chichas to the thermal springs and pools of Tarapaya.
- Day 6:** To Potosi at 4,000 m. 18th century colonial mansions, plazas & cathedrals below Cerro Rico, the rich hill that once yielded all of Spain's silver.
- Day 7:** Visit the tunnels & workings of a Potosi tin mine.
- Day 8:** High Andean passes & remote Indian villages of the Cordillera central.
- Day 9:** Tarabuco Indian Sunday market, to Sucre.
- Day 10:** In Sucre, 450 year old city, and Bolivia's official capital.
- Day 11:** In Sucre. 450 year old city, still official capital, & beautifully preserved by its



- isolation. 17<sup>th</sup> century cathedral, museums.
- Day 12:** Sucre to Tortora. Mountain tracks & backroads to forgotten colonial village to Cochabamba in the warm, fertile foothills of the eastern Andes.
- Day 13:** In Cochabamba. Mansions & markets, whitewashed churches & faded colonial glory.
- Day 14:** Drive from the hills to the Amazonas lowlands, to Villa Tunari & the Chapare River, guacharo bird caves; the stream & natural pools at El Puente Lodge.
- Days 15 - 19:** Drive to Puerto San Francisco on Isidoro River. By riverboat & motorised canoe along the rivers of the Llanos de Mojos in the upper Amazon. To the jungles, wildlife and Indian communities of the remote Isidoro



National Reserve. Then the river trails, lakes & grasslands of the Monte to Trinidad.

**Day 20:** In Trinidad.

**Day 21:** Fly from Trinidad to La Paz . Early afternoon arrival, end arrangements.

## **Highlights & Route**

### **ANDES**

Dominated by the snow peaks of Mt. Illimani, La Paz hangs to canyon slopes below the Altiplano rim. At 3,550 m this is the world's highest unofficial capital. The Spanish chose this site in 1548 for its protection from the bone chilling winds. Government, business and shopping areas cluster along the Choqueyapu River, vying with elegant residential districts for flat ground. Above, in the winding terraced streets of the old city, vendors sell spiced foods and fresh contraband, woodcarvings, alpaca rugs and devil masks, herbal potions and the ingredients of witchcraft's recipes.

South of La Paz the great Andean Altiplano is stark. It is a land of shimmering salt flats and distant peaks, fresh-water lakes, volcanoes and geysers. Spain found its greatest riches of silver here in ancient Inca mine workings. Thousands of tons were excavated and shipped home. To finance the Armada & the expanding influence of the church, and in turn to build the amazing palaces, cathedrals and plazas of Sucre, Potosí & Cochabamba. Amazing cities of the mountains that, due to their isolation and inaccessibility, remain little changed. Beyond in the seemingly harsh countryside the population is predominantly Indian. Their scattered communities are low and huddled against the elements. But their ways and outlook, their farms, festivals, markets, dress and brilliance tell another story. Oruro looks to a resilient future in its tin, silver & tungsten mining. This entire region of Bolivia went into quiet decline, a suspended animation of the centuries after the main silver lodes were worked out by the Spaniards. They ignored the tin, and the minerals of 20th century significance lay undiscovered until a few decades ago.

Lake Poopo stretches 160 kms across the Altiplano, second only to Titicaca. Sections of its wild shoreline are designated bird sanctuaries, little known & little visited by other than its natural inhabitants. A series of thermal springs at Tarapaya boil from the slopes around a small crater lake that maintains a constant 30°C temperature. An idyllic high altitude bath house.

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Potosí was founded by the Spanish in 1545. Ancient Inca mine workings beneath the hill of Cerro Ricco revealed untold wealth & prospects in silver. This was El Dorado, of a different colour.

Narrow winding streets, ornate mansions & heraldry, baroque cathedrals, coin dies and silver presses reflect the glory of a distant heyday. Tin mines on the edge of town are insight into methods of a century ago. The shallow water of Uyuni Salt Lake stretches to unbelievable horizons, an unbalancing mirrored surface of water & sky, studded by ghostly mirages of cactus studded islands.

Across volcano highlands to isolated valleys and llama pastures. To Indian villages, the colour and barter of traditional weekly fairs. Bolivia's capital, Sucre, was founded in 1538. It saw the peak of Spanish power, and witnessed the declaration of Independence in 1825. Sucre retains a royal and courtly charm, its central buildings & squares still in their original white and terracotta colours.

### **AMAZON**

Cochabamba is on the warm eastern slopes of the Andes, a different climate and the country's main fruit & grain producing valleys. Drive from Cochabamba to Villa Tunari. Sudden change from the Andes to the thick tropical jungles that make up three quarters of Bolivia, a region of missionaries & Amazon tribes, rubber tappers, cocaine processing - and all the problems of balancing development with natural balance. By river boat & motorised canoe for 6 days (5 nights) onto the water-ways of the Llanos de Mojos, camping each night on the banks with our guides. To Indian villages and the wildlife of the upper Amazon - alligator & stingray, wild pig, jungle cats, the flash and screech of the forest canopy.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

### **GROUP SIZE**

23 max. including Encounter staff. Plus local guides on jungle river project.



### PHYSICAL DEMANDS

13 days spent at altitudes of 3,400-4,500m. Some effects of oxygen deprivation will be felt by all. A wide range of temperatures should be expected.

### THE LOCAL PAYMENT (as in the brochure)

This is the payment made to the Project Leader at the point of departure. This payment must be made paid in US\$ dollars, either in cash notes or recognised Travellers Cheques. This payment completes the total inclusive price of the project. This amount will be utilised by the project Leader to cover a proportion but not all of the 'on the ground' running costs of this project. There are no hidden extra payments.

### INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

Transport (including internal flights Trinidad to La Paz), camping equipment & supplies, food (except as noted under Meals Cooking & Food below), traveller's hotels in La Paz, Potosi, Sucre, Cochabamba & Trinidad, local guides on river project, entrance fees & activities as detailed from morning of Day 1 to evening of Day 21. There are no kitties or similar en route payment funds.

### PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

Local Payment, flights to/from La Paz, transfers to/from airports & airport taxes in connection with international flights, meals in La Paz, Potosi, Sucre, Cochabamba & Trinidad (see Meals, Cooking & Food below). Accommodation in La Paz before Day 1 and on Day 21. Some entry fees to museums and sights (minimal cost). Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature.

### EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard Encounter truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc. Lightweight tents & cooking equipment on jungle river project.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A sleeping bag (4 seasons), a medium-sized, easily portable bag or a backpack and a daypack. Personal clothing and strong footwear. Apart from cold weather gear, no specialised clothing or equipment is necessary. You probably already have most of what is needed. A complete

suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information.

### TRANSPORT

Encounter expedition truck, internal flight or chartered light aircraft Trinidad to La Paz, jungle longboats/motorised canoes on river project (5 days).

### ACCOMMODATION

Traveller's hotels on multi-share basis in La Paz (1 night), Potosi (2 nights), Sucre (2 nights), Cochabamba (2 nights) & Trinidad (2 nights). Otherwise camping throughout. Open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard Encounter truck equipment. Basic camping on jungle river project (4 nights). Accommodation night 21 in La Paz is not included.

### MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfast & evening meals, picnic lunches. Project members involved in daily fresh food shopping & cooking. (Fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, bread, cereals, cheese, preserves, canned & dried goods). Meals on jungle river project prepared by boat staff.

Meals in major centres - La Paz, Potosi, Sucre, Cochabamba & Trinidad: Days spent in these cities relaxing or in individual sightseeing cannot easily revolve around group meals. So meals here are at your own expense. We suggest you allow approx. US\$ 15 per day in these cities, or a total of US\$ 135.

### PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than **6 months** after the end of the project, and which contains not less than **2 blank pages**. Bolivian visa requirements and costs vary according to your nationality and are subject to change. Most nationalities no longer need a visa, but if you do require one it should be obtained before your departure to South America. Encounter or your agent can advise you of up to date visa requirements and costs applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining one.

### INSURANCE

You must have personal Travel Insurance to cover Adventure Travel and it must cover all the aspects described on page 60 of the brochure. Please bring a copy of your policy with you to the pre-departure meeting. If your policy does not cover this minimum level then Encounter will not accept responsibility for the consequences.



### MEDICAL & VACCINATIONS

All vaccination requirements and medical recommendations are detailed in the pre-departure information pack at the time of booking.

### PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

You should allow approximately US\$145 per week to cover personal day to day expenditure en route - drinks, snacks, laundry, souvenirs, some museum entry fees etc. Interesting souvenirs and ethnic crafts can be tempting in Bolivia and their costs are usually very reasonable. Apart from the above, Encounter has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money en route.

### ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

There will be a pre-departure meeting at our La Paz hotel at 0900 hrs on the morning of Day 1. We strongly suggest that you arrive in La Paz at least the day before Day 1 to allow yourself time to rest & acclimatise after your intercontinental flights. There is plenty to see & do if you are arriving earlier: Mineral & Precious Metals museums (Inca artefacts, gold & silver), new city markets - handmade jewellery, textiles, musical instruments, antiques & local items, traditional music & dance at penas throughout city, golf at Mallasilla club - world's highest course.

### LEAVING AT END OF PROJECT

Arrangements end in La Paz the afternoon of Day 21, but flights out should not be attempted this same evening. Any flight out could be taken the following day.

### COMBINATIONS & CONNECTING PROJECTS

'Bolivia & the Amazonas' connects with the 'Peru & the Incas' project from La Paz to Lima (or vice versa) exploring Lake Titicaca, Cuzco, Machu Picchu & the Inca heartland, the Peruvian desert and coastal islands. Together they form the 'Peru & Bolivia' project. You may therefore be travelling with others who are continuing their travels in Bolivia & Peru, or who have already been travelling for 28 days in Peru.

### INTERESTING READING

100 Years of Solitude (Gabriel Garcia Marquez), Streets with no Names (Atlantic Press), The Drunken Forest (Gerald Durrell). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

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### OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Local Payment .....

Return flights.....

Visas.....

Vaccinations.....

Insurance.....

Personal Spending Money.....

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

The information in this dossier has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However, it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Encounter Overland Ltd.