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GET READY FOR BOLIVIA



The Local
Experience Curator

KUODA

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KUODA TIPS

Preparing for Your Trip & Answers to Other Frequently Asked Question

We are so delighted that you've decided to travel with us and we can't wait to host you in beautiful Bolivia! In order to help you pack and prepare, we've put together this list of helpful tips. If you have any additional questions, don't hesitate to contact your Travel Designer. See you soon!

- Your Kuoda Team

Entry and Exit Requirements

To enter Bolivia

Visa Requirements:

Any traveler who wishes to enter Bolivia must apply for a tourist visa. Contact the Bolivian embassy in your country or request it at the airport or land border the day you arrive in Bolivia. The visa has a duration of 10 years from the date of issue and allows the bearer a stay of up to ninety (90) calendar days. The documentation listed below is required:

- A 6-month validity remaining on the passport
- 2 copies of the passport information page
- 2 passport photos
- Evidence of a hotel reservation
- Detailed printed itinerary of your time in Bolivia
- Exit ticket out of Bolivia
- Photocopy of bank statement
- Special immigration form.
- Pay US \$160 per person, in cash.

Very important: The payment for the visa has to be in cash, and the bills must be in perfect condition. Old, torn, or marked notes will not be accepted by officials.

It is the personal responsibility of each passenger to ensure that they have all the correct documentation to present for their visa application. Border officials are strict.

COVID Restrictions:

Travelers must present one of the following to enter the country:

- Complete vaccination Schedule (14 days after the last doses) or
- Negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test (for persons older than 5 years) taken maximum 72 hours prior to embarkation, or
- Negative COVID-19 nasal antigen test (for persons older than 5 years) taken maximum 48 hours prior to embarkation)

All COVID-19 vaccines are accepted, regardless of the laboratory of origin.

The use of masks and disinfectant alcohol may still be required in certain establishments at their own discretion, so we recommend carrying a KN-95 mask.

Packing

Weather and Activities Considerations

Weather in Bolivia varies greatly by region and season, so dressing for success (and comfort) means packing layers!

- The Altiplano Area: Mid-April through October is considered the dry season, which means hot dry days (temperatures in the 70s) and cold, cold nights, with temperatures close to freezing.

Even during the day, if you step out of the sun, the mountain air can chill, so be sure to always have a layer. Jackets, gloves, and hats are not inappropriate during this time, though there are great woolen goods to purchase in Bolivia! November through March/April is the rainy season, with heavy rain in January and February. Generally, the mornings are clear, with rain in the afternoons and temperatures are a bit warmer than they are in the dry season.

If you plan to partake in outdoor activities (trekking, rafting, jungle hikes, etc.), you'll need to pack appropriate gear. Otherwise, you'll be packing to accommodate the weather and sightseeing. Comfortable walking shoes are a must!

Fashion and Dress Codes in Bolivia

Overall, Bolivia is a much more casual place than other international locations – you won't encounter many dress codes during your trip. La Paz is fairly casual, but you won't want to be in your hiking clothes all of the time, so it may be wise to pack a comfortable sightseeing and strolling outfit. Your flashy jewelry should be left at home, as it is a draw for pickpockets.

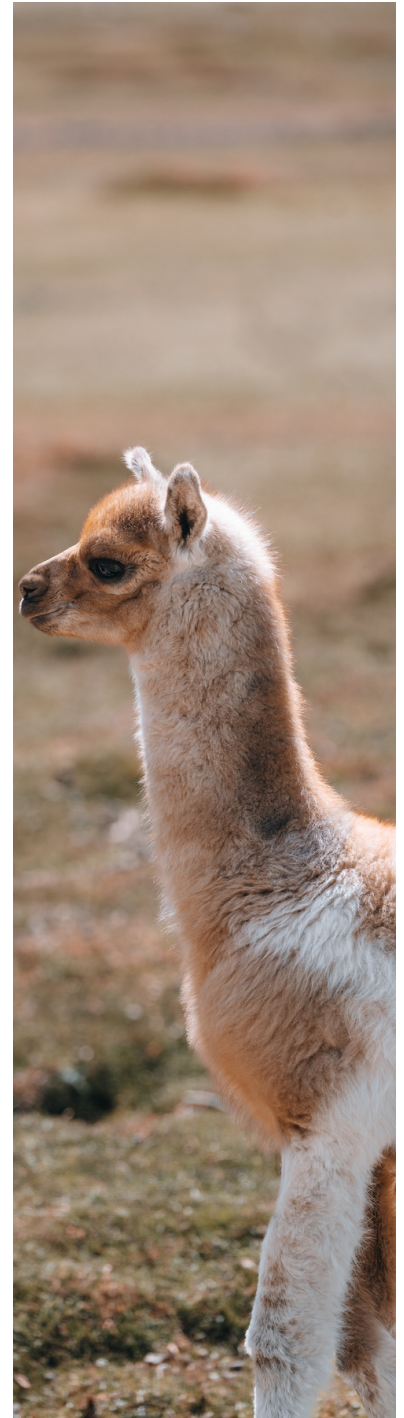
Baggage Size and Weight Restrictions

Please triple-check luggage restrictions for international flights secured on your own. You will likely want to pack for greater restrictions on domestic flights and ground transportation within Bolivia, which means packing a bit lighter and bringing something that can serve as an overnight bag if you don't want to be subject to extra baggage fees on your domestic flights.

Permitted baggage on domestic flights (you'll have all your luggage):

- LATAM: Checked bags are one piece of 50 lbs. (23 kg) and carry-on is 17.6 lbs. (8kg)
- Amazonas: Checked bags are 44 lbs. (20kg) and carry-on is 11 lbs. (5kg)
- Boliviana de Aviación (BoA): Checked bags are one (1) piece of 44 lbs. (20kg) and carry-on is 11 lbs. (5kg)

Allowances depend on the category of ticket bought, so please check carefully before your travels. Trips to the jungle may require further weight restrictions. Lodges there often have weight limits for luggage that you can take on the boat to your destination; typically this is between 10 and 15kgs per person (each lodge defines the weight). If you have more than the allowance, the remainder of your belongings will be securely stored at your lodge's local office until you return.





Suggested Packing List

Our team's experience says, the lighter the better. This of course is quite difficult, given the varied climates of Bolivia. The great thing is that you can have laundry done in your hotel or in town within 24 hours. So, here is our suggested packing list:

General list:

- Passport and flight tickets; after you've been given your tourist ticket by Bolivian customs, you'll need to have this and your passport at most hotels and attractions, including on treks
- *We recommend also bringing an extra photocopy of your passport, kept in a secure location separate
- from the original.
- Secure day bag with enough space for camera gear, water bottle/s, poncho and snacks (pack toilet paper in your day bag as many bathrooms don't have it).
- Lightweight poncho or waterproof jacket
- Lightweight trousers
- T-shirts and long-sleeved shirts
- Underwear, of course
- Long underwear (if you are visiting the Andes April-October and tend to get cold easily)
- Fleece jacket
- Hat or cap to protect from the sun
- Comfortable walking/hiking boots with good ankle support
- Sun lotion (high factor), lip salve and sunglasses
- Basic first aid kit
- Sanitizing hand gel (good to keep in your day pack)
- Basic toiletries (though most of your hotels will provide shampoos and soaps)
- Secure money belt or pouch
- Camera, battery charger, spare battery and plenty of memory cards
- Plastic sandals
- Swimming suit
- Good quality locks for luggage
- Converter, since electricity is 220 volts

When trekking, add:

- Hiking backpack for your day-to-day supplies on the trail
- Waterproof hiking boots/shoes
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries
- Insect repellent
- Hat, gloves and warmer clothing for cold nights
- Ziploc plastic bags to protect clothes and cameras from damp
- Optional: Sleeping bags and walking sticks as they can be rented

When traveling to the jungle, add:

- Backpack, sturdy duffel bag or easily managed suitcase for your allowance.
- Binoculars
- Long pants and long sleeve shirt made from a light breathable material
- Good water-resistant trekking shoes
- Raingear and light rain clothes
- Insect repellent with DEET (diethyl-meta-toluamide)
- Flashlight or headlamp with extra batteries
- Ziploc plastic bags, these will help protect spare batteries or equipment from humidity.

Voltage

Voltage, Sockets and Plugs

Electricity in Bolivia is 220 volts, alternating at 60 cycles per second. If you travel to Bolivia with a device that does not accept 220 volts at 60 hertz, you will need a voltage converter. Check your devices for what voltages they are compatible with. Many laptops, cellphone chargers, tablets and e-readers have dual voltage, so you won't need a converter.

Money and Budgeting

Exchanging Money and Using ATMs

The official currency of Bolivia is the Peso Boliviano (Bs.). One boliviano is equal to 100 centavos. Notes can be found in denominations of: Bs200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins come in denominations of Bs5, 2 and 1 as well as 50, 20 and 10 centavos. For current information on exchange rates, please visit: www.xe.com

- We recommend changing money at Casas de Cambio (money-changing booths) or banks whenever possible. Note that dollar bills with rips or tears will often be denied or exchanged at a significant lower rate. It is best to bring new bills from your bank. It is better to not change money at the airport where the rates are not as favorable. \$1 bills are usually exchanged for around two-thirds of the going rate, so try to avoid using these where possible.
- You can use your ATM card at banks.
- Credit cards are accepted in the bigger cities but bring cash for small towns or pueblos and local markets.

Tipping

It is not necessary to tip everywhere, but here are some good rules of thumb. For guides and drivers the suggestions are for the total tip from your group, per day. It is best to tip in soles, but dollars will be accepted too.

- Your guide – \$ 20 USD per day (from your whole party, not “per person”)
- Your driver – \$ 10 USD per day (from your whole party, not “per person”)
- Waiting staff at great restaurants – 10% (sometimes service is included in your bill, please check first)
- Bellboys – 5-8 Bolivianos

Budgeting

While most charges are included in your trip cost, you will need a bit of extra cash for:

- Meals not included in your itinerary: there is a variety in price available, but generally, US dollars are worth a bit less than 3 times what they are worth in the U.S. So while a nice main plate in the U.S. might cost \$14-20, a nice meal in Bolivia might be 60-100 Bolivianos (under \$15 USD).
- Souvenirs – absolutely up to you. You can find great little gifts for 10 Bolivianos.
- Taxis or other transport on your free days – this will depend on where you are. Your guides can provide estimates for costs.
- Tipping. We’ve provided more information above.
- Airport taxes. More information below.



Health, Safety, and Insurance

Before You Go: Vaccinations, Questions for Your Doctor and Preparing for Altitude

- There are no required vaccinations, but the CDC recommends Hepatitis A and B, Typhoid, and Yellow Fever if you are visiting the jungle – some countries will ask for the yellow fever certificate upon entry after visiting Bolivia, regardless of whether you visit the jungle or not. They also recommend bringing malaria pills if you are visiting the jungle.
- We highly recommend speaking with your health care provider before you leave; it may serve better to speak with a doctor at a travel clinic.
- Those with heart disease, asthma or other respiratory ailments should speak with their doctor prior to heading to La Paz and other high-altitude locations. There is a prescription medication available (Diamox) that can help all travelers adjust to the altitude more smoothly, but some people may be allergic. Again, check with your doctor.
- If you are preparing to trek, you will feel much better if you are physically fit! Good aerobic health will help a great deal!

Before You Go: Travel Insurance

Kuoda does not include travel insurance in our trip prices, but we strongly encourage you to purchase a plan before you travel to Bolivia. This is relatively inexpensive (can be under \$100 USD) and it protects you from sickness abroad and cancellations due to unforeseeable events. If you are trekking, you are required to have insurance coverage. We recommend using www.travelguard.com or you can check a site like www.insuremytrip.com for a list of options.

Food and Water Precautions

While in Bolivia, drink only bottled water. Eat fruit that can be peeled and stay away from lettuce and other uncooked vegetables. Make sure the cooked foods you do eat are well-cooked and that meats are hot. Water cleanliness and sanitation is not all it could be here, so sticking to these rules and eating in reputable restaurants will help to prevent stomach ailments.

Altitude Issues

La Paz is over twice the altitude of Denver. For many people, this high altitude will make itself felt. Common effects are headache, nausea, loss of appetite, trouble with sleep and lack of energy. For most people, keeping hydrated, taking Diamox (check with doctor as mentioned above), avoiding heavy meals and alcohol in the first days, taking it easy and drinking coca tea are sufficient remedies. But, if your symptoms worsen, please contact your Kuoda Team as Acute Mountain Sickness can have more serious consequences.

Safety Tips

Extra caution should be taken in La Paz, where theft is more common. Don't wear flashy jewelry or display expensive electronics. Keep purses and bags close, cab doors locked and cab windows rolled up. Use caution throughout the rest of Bolivia and always be aware of your surroundings. That said, you'll most often be with a guide, who will be on the lookout for you and there's no need to be worried or frightened for that matter!

Staying in Touch

Internet

Most hotels will have Wi-Fi available and your guides will be able to help you find locutorios where you can connect to the Internet, print and even make international phone calls.

Your Mobile Phone

It is possible to use your mobile phone in Bolivia. You'll first need to check with your provider to see if your phone will recognize the local networks. You can then buy a prepaid SIM card from one of the Bolivian telecommunications companies: Tigo, Entel.

Calling Bolivia and Calling Home

The telephone country code for Bolivia is 591. When dialing Bolivia from overseas, dial the country code (591), followed by the regional code minus the initial 0, followed by the number. In order to call home, dial the country code (eg. 001 for United States) then the area code and number.

Arrival and Departure

Upon Arrival

Most flights arrive quite late in the evening or early in the morning. Once you've reclaimed your baggage and cleared customs, you will see our unmistakable board in the arrivals lounge with your names clearly marked. Our La Paz Host will warmly welcome you to Bolivia, assist you with your luggage, and take you to your hotel. Please do not leave the airport terminal building unless you have made contact with him/her. Also ignore the calls from taxi drivers as your private transport has been provided for you.

Airport Taxes

All airport taxes for domestic and international departures and arrivals are now included in flight ticket costs. You will not need to pay additional taxes in Bolivian airports.

When it's Time to Say 'Goodbye'

Your Kuoda Host will bring you to the airport, help you check in and bid you "adios!"

Cultural Considerations

Language

While Bolivian's primary language is Spanish, many people in the Andes speak Quechua and people in the Lake Titicaca region speak Aymara. Luckily you'll be with your English-speaking guide most of the time, so you won't miss a thing.

Cultural Considerations

Travel here requires patience and openness to cultural differences. You will visit diverse and sometimes remote regions. The indigenous people of Bolivia are colorful and photogenic. For example, it is appropriate to ask (hand signals are fine) before taking their picture, as it can sometimes be considered rude to take photos of people without their permission. To travel responsibly does not just mean preserving the environment, but it's about supporting local communities, their customs and traditions and it's also about experiencing a those new cultures, sharing and learning something new.

*“Traveling – It Leaves You Speechless,
Then Turns You Into a Storyteller”*

-Ibn Battuta