



discovering BOLIVA

Though rich in mineral and energy resources, Bolivia is one of South America's poorest countries, with about 60 percent of the population mired in poverty. Landlocked Bolivia is the highest and most isolated country in South America. Nicknamed the "Rooftop of the World" because of its high elevation in the Andes Mountains, Bolivia has a landscape of snow-topped mountain peaks and broad, windswept plateaus.

Bolivia has the largest proportion of indigenous people, who make up around two-thirds of the population. Although Native Americans make up the majority of the country's population, a small Spanish elite has traditionally dominated the political and economic life of the country and held most of the wealth. The minerals of the Andes were long the source of this wealth, but so are petroleum and natural gas. Coca leaves, the source of the drug cocaine, also is an important export.

The official capital of Bolivia is Sucre; however, La Paz is the administrative capital and seat of government. At an altitude of about 11,900 feet, La Paz is the highest capital in the world.

The country can be divided into three topographical zones:

- The Altiplano, which is a high plateau that crosses the country from the northwest to the southwest and splits the Andes into two mountain chains or cordilleras. The plateau cradles the highest navigable lake in the world called Lake Titicaca.

Note: Recognizing that information on Bolivia is readily available on the Internet, we encourage you to learn as much as you can about the political background, history, geography, economics and culture of this amazing country. This document provides a general overview, with some specific information that will help short-term teams appreciate Bolivia even more and understand our work. Going to Bolivia as part of a short-term team is different from a leisure trip or traveling for business. The information provided here can help you prepare for a potentially life-changing experience. Sources used for some country facts include CIA: The World Factbook and BBC News.

- The Yungas, which are made up of sharply tilted mountain valleys that separate the higher plateau from the lowland plains.
- The Llanos, which is the lowland plain in the southern region and is also a highly developed agricultural region, in addition to having Bolivia's major deposits of oil, natural gas and iron ore.

Majority of Bolivians are Roman Catholic (95 percent). Protestant denominations (5 percent) are expanding strongly.

Ethnic distribution is roughly 60 percent indigenous, 30 percent European, and 10 percent other. There are more than three dozen indigenous groups, of which the Quechua (2.5 million), Aymara (2 million), Chiquitano (180,000) and Guarani (125,000) are the largest. The great majority of European descendants are of Spanish origin.

Bolivia is one of only three countries in Latin America whose largest population segment is comprised of Amerindians – the other two countries being Guatemala and Peru.

QUICK FACTS

Full Name: Plurinational State of Bolivia

Head of State: President *Evo Morales*

Population: 10.4 million (UN, 2010)

Capital: Sucre (official), La Paz (administrative)

Largest City: Santa Cruz

Area: 1.1 million sq km (424, 164 sq miles)

Major Languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara, Guarani

Major Religion: Roman Catholic

Literacy Rate: 80 percent

Life Expectancy: 65 years (men), 69 years (women) (UN)

Monetary Currency: Boliviano

GDP Per Capita: \$4,800 (2010 est.)



WEATHER

Bolivia lies in the Southern Hemisphere. Winter runs from May to October, and summer goes from November to April. It is generally dry in the winter and wet in the summer. Temperatures can drop quite low in the mornings and evenings, but afternoons can get surprisingly warm.

PASSPORT/VISA

To enter and depart Bolivia, you are required to have a U.S. passport valid for at least six months from the date of your proposed entry into Bolivia.

If you are a U.S. citizen seeking to enter Bolivia as a tourist, you must have an entry visa. You can apply for a Bolivian tourist visa by mail or in person at Bolivian consulates in the U.S., as well as at Bolivian ports of entry, such as at Bolivia's international airports. Bolivian tourist visas are valid for five years from the date of issuance and allow the bearer to enter the country three times in a year for a cumulative stay of not more than 90 days. The tourist visa costs \$135.00. You can pay the \$135.00 fee in by money order. If you choose to apply for your visa upon your arrival to Bolivia, you must pay this fee in cash to immigration authorities. In addition to the \$135.00 fee, you must present a visa application form with a 4x4 color photograph, a passport with a validity of not less than six months and an International Vaccination Certificate for yellow fever.

For the most current visa information, visit the Embassy of Bolivia website.



VACCINATION INFORMATION

In addition to applying for a passport, you will also need to research vaccination requirements for your trip well in advance as some vaccinations take time or need to be given in a series to be effective. The best advice regarding vaccinations and any other medications can only come from a qualified physician. We suggest you also inquire about altitude sickness medication. Please make an appointment with your family doctor and share with him/her where you are going, how long you will be there and what activities you will be participating in. In

consultation with your doctor, you can decide which vaccinations and/or medications will be best for you.

To better familiarize yourself with travel health, please visit the Center for Disease Control's website at www.cdc.gov/travel prior to your visit with your doctor.

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is currently required for entry into Bolivia. Yellow fever vaccinations are given at local government health departments and special travel health clinics. For information about how to receive the yellow fever vaccination, please visit www.cdc.gov.

LUGGAGE

Luggage should be limited to one checked bag and the allowed carry-on for each team member. While most airlines will allow two checked bags, large amounts of luggage are difficult to transport while in-country. Any extra bags should be used to transport ministry supplies. Please refer to your teams training materials for a packing list.

CULTURAL TIPS

In addition to learning a few words in the native language, paying attention to a few cultural clues can help you build a foundation for a wonderful cross-cultural friendship. These tips are like a map for you during your time in Bolivia. They will not give you the answers to all situations, but they may help you understand why people behave the way they do.

- The extended family is very important. Grandparents often live with the family, and cousins are important friends. Many Bolivians do not have strong friendships outside of the family and it can be difficult for them to make friends with foreigners because they don't know how to do it. They don't move around to different towns like North Americans do, so they're not used to welcoming newcomer to their cliques.
- Lunch is the big meal of the day. It's usually expected that people eat at home with their families unless they work too far from home to get back for lunch. Consider it an honor if someone invites you to come home with them for lunch.
- Machismo: With married couples, it is not permissible for a woman to socialize without her husband. Even attending a Bible study may be prohibited if the husband cannot come. Husbands usually keep their own social calendar, but they expect their wives to ask permission if they want to do anything not related to their housework.



- Bolivia is a land of contrasts. The mountain people are shepherds and farmers and they wear wool clothing year-round because it is always cool. Just an hour away, people wear shorts and light clothing and suffer from hot, sultry weather most of the time. Perhaps this is the basis for much of the social conflicts. Bolivians have such different outlooks and needs, but most – except the few elite – share a life of stark poverty.
- Be above reproach when interacting with a person of the opposite sex. This applies to both a Bolivian community member and your American teammate.

CLOTHING

Our dress code is a sign of respect for the people you will be working with, as well as to convey a conservative Christian lifestyle. Wearing appropriate clothing will open the door for establishing good relationships with the community members. While in the community and during tourism days, team members should wear long pants and loose-fitting T-shirts. (Capri pants are okay only on tourism days.) If the team is attending a church service, women should wear long skirts and loose-fitting blouses, and men should wear long pants and collared shirts. Except when in the hotel, team members should always wear close-toed shoes. A general rule of thumb for Bolivia is “dress in layers,” as the temperatures can vary greatly during the day. It can get quite cold in the morning and evening.

Out of respect for cultural sensitivity, we request your cooperation in submitting to FH’s policy in regard to piercings, tattoos and radical haircuts. For more details about this topic, please talk to your team leader.

ELECTRONICS

You may bring cameras (disposable, standard or digital), iPods, cell phones and other small electronic devices; however, you assume all risks of damage, loss or theft of your belongings. Keep in mind that you will be kept quite busy, and there will not be a lot of time to

Please do not bring the following:

- Shorts
- Tight or revealing clothing (pants, jeans and shirts)
- Low-cut shirts (scoop neck or V-neck)
- Tank tops
- Excessively low-rise jeans or excessively baggy pants
- Shirts that reveal the midriff
- Clothing that has inappropriate or questionable words or pictures
- Clothing with rips, holes or stains

We also request your cooperation in submitting to FH staff in regards to piercings, tattoos and radical haircuts.

use many electronic devices. Also, electricity may not always be available to recharge electronic equipment, including cameras and camcorders. Please bring extra batteries. When in public, don't display expensive electronic items or any items that may just appear expensive.



PHOTO POLICY

All photos or videos should be taken with utmost discretion. Upon arrival in the country, your Team Coordinator will explain the country's photo policy. Some considerations:

- Make sure the focus is on relationships and the ministry, not pictures.
 - When possible, ask before taking pictures.
 - Designate a photographer. Rather than taking the same picture on 12 different cameras, take the picture with one or two cameras and share when you get back.
- Be sure that any picture you take conveys dignity for the person in the picture. If you will not remember the names of the people in the story or the significance of the photo, re-consider the need for taking a photo.

FOOD

Your Team Coordinator will have arranged breakfast, lunch and dinner for your team. You will have the opportunity to sample a variety of food while in Bolivia, both traditional dishes and some American favorites. While some dishes may be unfamiliar, please come with an open mind and be willing to try new foods prepared for you. There will be plenty of food provided; however, there may not always be a lot of variety. You are welcome to bring additional food for between-meals snacks.

Avoid eating foods that have not been provided or approved by Food for the Hungry staff. Eating something from a local vendor or street market could lead to sickness. If you have any food allergies or special dietary needs, please communicate those to FH/US ahead of time. Our field staff will need time to arrange other options for you.

Your Team Coordinator will also have a supply of bottled water for your team. Drink bottled water only. Also use it to brush your teeth and take medicines. If you are served ice in a drink, please verify that the water is okay by consulting with your Team Coordinator.

TRANSPORTATION

Your Team Coordinator will have arranged transportation the entire time your team is serving with Food for the Hungry. Because of the distance from the main city of La Paz and where FH/Bolivia works, an in-country flight is required to reach the community where you'll be serving. Upon arrival, you'll travel in a van around the community. Generally, FH teams do not use public transportation.

Driving in Bolivia may be a new experience for you. The roads are likely to be bumpy and winding. You may feel that the vehicle you are in is uncomfortably close to the vehicle or pedestrian beside it. Streets

Typical foods in Bolivia

- ✓ Potatoes (more than 200 varieties)
- ✓ Rice
- ✓ Corn
- ✓ Pork



may seem overwhelmingly crowded. Traffic signs may not always be followed. Remember that you are in good hands. Your driver is a professional and used to the traffic conditions. Keep your hands, feet and belongings inside the vehicle at all times. If you experience carsickness, sit in the front or take an appropriate medicine for motion sickness.

COMMUNICATION

You will likely be without telephone and/or e-mail access during your time in Bolivia. While these services may be readily available, especially in major cities, your schedule will be packed with activities. This will help you to focus your energy and attention on the transformative work of the Lord and to help maintain a cohesive group dynamic.

We encourage you to leave your cell phone at home and inform your family and friends that you will be unavailable until you return to the States.

If there is an emergency in the country or community where you are serving, your Team Coordinator will contact your family and appropriate people at your home church. Before you leave the U.S. you will be given a U.S. phone number and other details, which you will pass on to your family and close friends. If there is an emergency in the U.S. while you're on the field, your family member or friend may call that number. Your Field Liaison will assess the call and facilitate communication with you or the field staff as necessary.

MONEY

While with Food for the Hungry, all transportation, food, lodging and water are covered by FH. You will only need money for souvenirs and shopping that you will do in-country and while traveling. A suggested

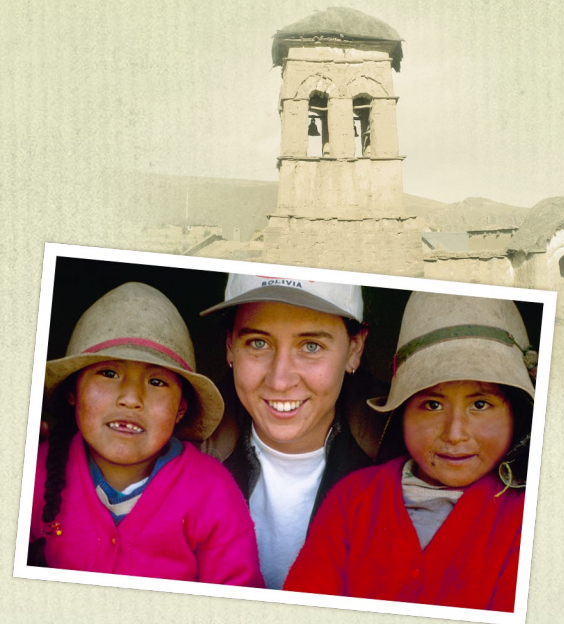
amount for this purpose is \$100 to \$200. It is advisable to bring cash as U.S. dollars are widely accepted at currency exchange locations. FH/Bolivia staff will assist you with exchanging money. Bring bills no larger than \$20 and be sure that the bills are crisp and new (no more than 5 years old) to ensure acceptance. Traveler's checks can be used, but they can only be exchanged in limited locations and extra fees always apply.

FH/BOLIVIA

Food for the Hungry began to work in Bolivia in 1978 through our child development program. By the grace of

God, we continue to serve on many long-term projects to help Bolivian families and communities build a healthy environment for their children and a sustainable future.

Child Development: With funding through child sponsorship, impoverished children in Bolivia can have access to education and educational supplies, medical care, skills development, and events and activities designed to help them know and embrace the love of God. Through the child development program,



parents of sponsored children learn the importance of education for the future of their children. FH also provides training in parenting skills, sustainable livelihood, and proper health and nutrition for their family. Moreover, families are given the opportunity to know God and discover the hope that a relationship with Jesus Christ brings.

Food Security: Food for the Hungry works to provide communities in developing countries such as Bolivia access to adequate and nutritious food necessary for children and families to live a healthy and productive life. In partnership with local communities and institutions, we help increase food security by training families in agricultural production, natural resource management, soil and water conservation, hygiene and sanitation, and sustainable development.

Economic Development: This outreach helps community leaders and families move from subsistence farming to profitable farming. It also helps entrepreneurs in the communities develop their businesses and provide employment, which encourages the youth to stay in their communities instead of migrating to other towns to find work.

Church Strengthening: Food for the Hungry recognizes the crucial role church leaders play in meeting the spiritual and physical needs of the community. Through the church development program, pastors in Bolivia receive training on spiritual leadership and application of spiritual truths. FH equips them to effectively lead their people to reach out to others and help them embrace God's wonderful plan for their lives.

Health and Sanitation: Food for the Hungry helps communities in Bolivia gain access to health care services and training in health, nutrition and prevention of common diseases. FH trains mothers how to care for their own health, especially when they're pregnant, and the health of their very young children. Awareness about good sanitation significantly improves the health and living conditions of the poor in Bolivia.

Safe water access through deep wells in geographically challenging areas: This project will help provide safe water through construction of deep wells in communities where it is impossible

to build conventional safe water systems. As a result these wells will directly contribute to the reduction of diarrhea in children under 5 years of age.

Natural Resource Management: Often, natural resources are not well managed in Bolivia. To address this problem, Food for the Hungry devised a strategy to help 146 communities become better stewards of their environment. This includes environmental education, creating community-managed conservation areas on public lands, and improving soil and water conservation on private lands. This will help the communities to manage their land so they can farm it better and thus provide better food and income for their families.

Discovering our Dreams (Community Sponsorship): This is a community transformation project for Bolivian children living in the area of Puerto Camacho in the city of El Alto. It is funded by community sponsorship, a pilot initiative. Initially, the project is working directly with 100 children, their families, members of the local church and six church and community leaders. In the future we hope to expand the project to other areas of El Alto. The main objective is to equip the community members to break the poverty cycle through understanding that they are made in God's image, with a purpose and with unique gifts and abilities.

Miscellaneous

Time: EST + 1 hour

Electricity: 230 volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. Outlets in Bolivia generally accept two types of plug:

- Flat bade plug
- Two round pins

If your appliances plug has a different shape, you may need a plug adapter.





PRAYER REQUESTS

Government Leaders

- Pray that God would guide President Juan Evo Morales Aima to lead wisely. A proponent of socialism, Morales also is the leader of Bolivia's *cocalero* movement – a group of coca farmers resistant to the United States' efforts to eliminate coca (used to make cocaine) from the southeastern province of Chapare.
- Pray that the national leaders would lead with wisdom and courage and seek economic equality for those who have long been mired in poverty and marginalized from the political process.

Churches

- Praise God that evangelical Christians are growing in number and strength in Bolivia. Pray for unity among believers and continued commitment to prayer and evangelism.
- Pray that God would meet the needs of the churches in the country. Churches are growing in Bolivia – that's the good news, but with growth comes more needs and challenges. Pray that God would supply all the needs and equip pastors for effective leadership.

Families

- Pray that God would continue to work through education, health care, the church, and government to lift Bolivians out of physical and spiritual poverty.
- Pray that Bolivian families would stay strong against the lure of drug use and drug trafficking. Half of the world's cocaine is produced in Bolivia. It's a big business, and many Bolivians are involved in the trade.
- Pray for Bolivian believers who have been compromised by the drug business, and for those who have resisted and suffered consequences.
- Pray for the children and youth. More than 80 percent of children in Bolivia live in extreme poverty.
- Minor children are forced to work, and thousands are addicted to drugs. Teenagers comprise more than half of the population, and they are growing more distant from the older generation. Pray that the churches and other Christian groups would fight poverty and disciple these young people.

Partners, Projects and People

- Pray for God's protection upon Food for the Hungry staff. Pray for their safety and that they would grow in wisdom and compassion.
- Pray that God would continue to use our child development program in Bolivia to draw the poor and the hurting unto Him. Sponsored children are disciplined and encouraged through Bible study activities and other outreaches, medical checkups, home visits, school supplies provision and prayer.
- Pray that God would increase the effectiveness of our community development initiatives, such as agriculture, natural resources management, education and health care.