

YORK COLLEGE GOES TO BOLIVIA

14 days

Itinerary downloaded on: February 22, 2024

Day 1: **ARRIVAL IN LA PAZ, BOLIVIA**

Today we arrive in the city of La Paz, one of the world's highest major cities, located at 3686 m (12,090 ft) above sea level. La Paz is situated in a bowl-shaped canyon in the Cordillera Real (Royal Range) of the Andes. As one travels across the Altiplano, the ground suddenly drops away 400 m (1,312 ft) to reveal the city hidden in a bowl in the mountains.

Overnight in La Paz.

Included meals: Dinner, if required.

Day 2: **LA PAZ: CITY TOUR**

La Paz is rightfully famous for its mountain setting; indeed the mountains surrounding La Paz soar to an average of 5500m (18,040 ft) above sea level. The most spectacular views of the city come on a clear evening when one can see the twinkling lights of the city stretching up the hillsides, under the snow-capped triple peak of Mount Illimani at 6402 m (21,000 ft).

We are picked up at our hotel and first visit Jaen Colonial Street, which is one of the most well- preserved colonial streets of the city. Our tour continues to Plaza Murillo where the Cathedral, the Government Palace and the National Congress buildings are located. After, walk through Witches Market, which provides a fascinating window on the secretive world of Andean mysticism. Later, visit Rodriguez Market, the largest food market in La Paz. The variety of the products are as colorful as the outfits of the local women who sell them.

A must in La Paz is certainly taking a ride in a Cable Car to enjoy fantastic views and to finish the tour visit the spectacular Moon Valley, which features bizarre geological formations.

Overnight in La Paz.

Included meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 3: **FROM LA PAZ: LAKE TITICACA & COPACABANA**

This morning we transfer from La Paz to the Copacabana Sanctuary, where we have a guided visit to the main sanctuary and pilgrimage center of Bolivia, including the Basilica where the Copacabana's Virgin, patron saint of Bolivians. Every year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims travel from distinct parts of Bolivia and other Latin American countries to take part in religious festivals in Copacabana.

Next we board a catamaran cruise and enjoy a lunch on board while sailing to Isla de Sol (Sun Island), the birthplace of the Inca Empire.

This is the most important of the thirty-six islands in the lake. Lake Titicaca, South America's largest lake, straddles the Bolivia-Peru border and is said to be the highest navigable body of water in the world at an altitude of 3810 m (12,497 ft). Lake Titicaca was once much larger than the 8560 sq kilometres (3,305 square mi) it occupies today; indeed the great city of Tiahuanaco was built at the

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edge of the lake, but today it is more than 25 km (15 mi) from the lake! This reduction in the lake size has had a tremendous effect on the climate of the Altiplano region over the past 1,000 years and has made this cradle of cultures able to support far fewer people today.

Overnight Isla del Sol.

Included meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 4: ISLA DEL SOL - INTI WATA - LA PAZ

After breakfast we walk for about 45 minutes to visit the visit to the Inti Wata Cultural Complex, the main private tourist attraction in Bolivia, which only tourists who visit the island aboard catamarans have access. This attraction includes the Ekako Underground Museum, a showcase of archeological treasures; the Titicaca Reed Shipbuilders display, a handicraft center, the Intica Lounge, and a botanical garden of Inca agriculture and a variety of Andean camelids.

Later we return to the catamaran to enjoy lunch on board as we return to Copacabana and our land transfer back to La Paz.

Overnight in La Paz.

Included meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 5: LA PAZ - DRIVE TO UYUNI

Today we travel by private transfer south to Uyuni town with a stop for lunch en route, arriving in the afternoon. In the environs of Uyuni we will experience the highest and largest salar (salt lake) in the world (10000 sq km), surrounded by an impressive otherworldly landscape. After dinner you can stroll in the surroundings of the hotel and enjoy the stars in the unpolluted and cloudless skies.

Overnight in Uyuni.

Included meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 6: SALAR DE UYUNI

Today we head out for a full-day excursion at and around the Uyuni Salt Flats.

We visit the Train Cemetery in Uyuni and then continue to Colchani to see the artisans working on iodized salt. Visit to Incahuasi Island, located in the heart of the salt flat and the biggest of a group of islands that represents an isolated ecosystem. The island is populated with giant cacti species that measure up to 12 meters high (26.25 feet), providing an impressive overview.

As our visit coincides with the dry season (April to November), the salt flat surface provides the opportunity to play with photography and the salar's unique perspective.

Tonight's hotel is a regular facility with rooms, beds, a lobby and a dining room. Only one thing sets this hotel apart -- it's entirely made of

salt! (please don't lick the walls).

Overnight in Colchani

Included meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 7: COLCHANI - COQUESA MUMMIES - UYUNI

Today's 4x4 excursion takes us to the north side of Uyuni Salt Flat, where we take a look the Coquesa Mummies, human archeological remains in a little cave near Tunupa Volcano. Ceramic, gold and copper artifacts, and articles of clothing have been discovered at some of the sites, indicating the presence of an advanced but little-known culture. Unfortunately, the sites' remoteness has left them vulnerable to amateur treasure hunters who have plundered several items of archaeological value.

After a picnic lunch, we continue to Chiquini, a sub-aquatic cave that pre-dates the formation of the glaciers, caused by volcanic eruptions when the salt lake was still filled with water. Inside you can see silhouettes of magma that solidified when it hit the water.

We finish our day back in Uyuni for dinner and overnight.

Overnight in Uyuni.

Included meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 8: DRIVE TO POTOSI - CITY TOUR

Today we have a 4-hour drive to Potosi, briefly celebrated life as one of the richest cities in the world, today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The discovery of ore in silver-rich Cerro Rico ('rich hill') by Indian, Diego Huallpa, in 1544 prompted the foundation of the city of Potosi on April 10th, 1545 at the foot of the hill. At that time more than eighty-six churches were built and the city's population increased to nearly 200,000, making it one of the largest and wealthiest cities in Latin America and in the world. Potosi sits at an altitude of 4090m (13,500 ft) above sea level, and claims to be the highest city in the world. The area is well-known for its cool weather and sometimes even freezing rain!

On arrival we'll visit the city's principal sites, including San Lorenzo Church, where we will appreciate its beautiful façade. We'll admire the exterior of the Arch of Cobija and see the artisans' market in the colonial area of the city.

We'll also visit the Casa Nacional de la Moneda (National Mint), one of two built to mint the silver coins used by the Spanish Empire. This impressive facility operated until 1953, or lasted for 400 years of continuous coinage. Most of the silver shipped through the Spanish Main came from Potosi. According to official records, 45,000 tons of pure silver were mined from Cerro Rico from 1556 to 1783. In Spanish there is still a saying, valer un potosi, "to be worth a potosi" (that is, "a fortune"). One theory holds that the mint mark of Potosi (the letters "PTSI" superimposed on one another) is the origin of the dollar sign.

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Overnight in Potosi.

Included meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 9: DRIVE TO SUCRE - CITY TOURING

This morning we travel by road (3-4 hours) to the attractive city of Sucre. We hope to make a brief stop at a relatively new attraction -- a set of dinosaur tracks (Parque Cretacico), discovered by accident in 1994 in a cement quarry 10 km (6 mi) from the city. The tracks are almost 70-million years old, from the Cretaceous era when a diverse population of dinosaurs were living on and stomping around in, the soft clay shores of a vast ocean inlet which covered large areas of Argentina, coming as far inland as Sucre.

Whether you call it Sucre, La Plata, Charcas, or Ciudad Blanca, the city of Sucre has a rich, varied history and a wealth of historical architecture deserving of its selection as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Sucre shares capital city status with La Paz as the legislative and administrative capital. This is the constitutional capital and home of the Supreme Court; it is also a university city with many cultural attractions. Sucre is also home to a large indigenous population who maintain their traditional clothing and customs and sell their crafts and goods available in the markets.

Upon arrival, we'll tour Sucre, visiting the House of Freedom Historical Museum and the Treasure Museum (Museo del Tesoro), with its displays of precious and semi-precious stones. We also include the Asur Textile Museum and the outer facades of the churches of San Lazaro and Santo Domingo, the main historical monuments and Bolivar Park.

Overnight in Sucre.

Included meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 10: FROM SUCRE: HIKE & VILLAGE VISIT

We have an early start for our full-day excursion from Sucre. Near Chataquila village we have 3-hour walk to admire the stone pictographs from 1,500 to 2,500 years ago. The Frailes Mountain Range features remarkably intense colors that create an amazing landscape.

We continue the tour towards the Maragua Crater where we meet a local guide and have lunch. From here we walk 1-½ hours towards the Nuñumayu to admire a set of preserved dinosaur footprints.

Return to Sucre for overnight.

Included meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 11: FLY TO LA PAZ: FOOD WITH ALTITUDE TOUR

Today we transfer to the airport at Alcantari from where we fly back to La Paz.

This afternoon we embark on a "Food With Altitude Urban Adventure", an experience that will enlighten you to how Bolivia is unique on the world foodie scene, and this culinary tour is out to put Bolivia in the spotlight where it belongs. We will get to taste fresh organic fruits, fish straight from the famous Lake Titicaca, and lots of tasty snacks you've never heard of. This being Bolivia and all, a chocolate stop is also an absolute necessity.

Overnight in La Paz.

Included meals: Breakfast and dinner

Day 12: "DEATH ROAD" MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDE

Don't be put off by the nickname given to this piece of road--a moniker it earned back in the day when vehicles of all sizes used to navigate its hazardous hills and turns. Today it is used primarily for recreation, most notably as an excellent and very exciting and scenic downhill mountain biking experience-of-a-lifetime.

We greet our team of expert guides at a central La Paz location and climb aboard an air-conditioned vehicle for the hour-long ride to La Cumbre, a place whose name translates as 'the summit'. On arrival, disembark and absorb the spectacular surroundings as our guide provides an in-depth safety briefing.

Capture photographs of the low-slung clouds and forest-smothered mountains before jumping onto your bike and embarking on the ride of your life. Begin the ride at wind-swept La Cumbre with a fantastic view of a number of snow-covered peaks, including Huayna Potosi. From here descend rapidly down a twisting road among mountain peaks, grazing llamas and alpacas, and tiny villages.

Stop for refreshments and a rest along the way, all the better to give us time to take in the scenery: towering cliff faces, dramatic drops and ever greener vegetation. After a snack descend further, and after a brief undulating section of road enter the jungle itself and the most challenging section of the ride. This infamous narrow dirt road is cut precariously into the side of the mountain and descends 2000m. With 1000m sheer drops off to our left, hulking rocks and waterfalls to our right, we ride through mist, low cloud and dust.

As passengers are near to the end of the ride it gets progressively hotter and dustier. Arrive to Yolosa and enjoy lunch, spend time relaxing with a cold drink. Return to La Paz with balance of the day free followed by our farewell dinner.

Overnight in La Paz

Included meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 13: LA PAZ - TRANSFER TO AIRPORT

You will have free time in La Paz prior to our transfer to the airport for our homeward flight departing just after midnight.

Included meals: Breakfast

Day 14: DEPARTURE

Early morning departure from La Paz.

BUEN VIAJE!