

Bolivia

Information for applicants

Bolivia

Situated in the heart of South America, the landlocked nation of Bolivia is surrounded by Brazil to the north and east, Paraguay and Argentina to the south, and Chile and Peru to the west. Covering an area of 1,098,581 km², it is around three times the size of Germany, yet at 9.8 inhabitants per km² (and a total population of around 11 million), its population density is extremely low. The capital city is Sucre, though the seat of government is La Paz.

Climate and sights

The country can be divided into three major topographical regions: the Andean highlands with the Andean Plateau and the Andes mountains; the interandean valleys and the Yungas, and the north-eastern lowlands, which account for around two thirds of Bolivia's land area. The major differences in altitude give rise to a wide range of climate zones. The rainy season (summer) in La Paz runs from October/November to April/May. Daily mean temperatures can reach between 18°C and 20°C during this period, while differences between daytime and night-time temperatures are small. Rainfall is often prolonged and heavy, usually involving showers and plenty of sunshine in between. The dry season (winter), which lasts from April/May until October/November, is characterised by dry, desert-like air, little rainfall and extreme fluctuations in temperature. Simultaneous daytime temperatures of up to 40°C in the sun and between 8°C and 10°C in the shade have been recorded.

Medical care

Medical care in La Paz could generally be classified as good. However, any major surgery you require should be carried out abroad.

Like La Paz, many of Bolivia's other popular tourist regions are located at extreme altitudes. In order to avoid altitude sickness, or *sorocho* as it is also known, you should take it easy and avoid strenuous physical activity for your first couple of days at altitude. Drink in moderation (e.g. coca tea (*mate de coca*)), avoid rich foods and excessive eating and do not smoke or drink alcohol. The symptoms of altitude sickness usually only develop several hours after reaching altitude. It is advisable to take altitude sickness tablets (*sorocho* pills) or aspirin for mild symptoms. This medication can also be taken as a preventative measure several hours before reaching altitude.

Accommodation and quality of life

La Paz offers an adequate range of accommodation (furnished or unfurnished), with monthly rents usually ranging from USD 600 to USD 2,000, depending on location and features (furnished/unfurnished). Those renting houses can expect to pay rents of between USD 1,200 and USD 2,000 per month.

Shops and services

European families can enjoy a good quality of life in La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. There are no supply shortages in the country. Supermarkets (the most prominent ones being *Ketal*, *Gava* and *Hipermaxi*) stock a number of items imported from the United States and Europe, which are priced accordingly. All in all, the prices in regular stores are relatively high for individuals with an average Bolivian income, but low in most cases compared with prices in

Europe and the majority of the South American countries bordering Bolivia.

Accompanying partners and children

Accompanying partners are only permitted to work for Bolivian or international organisations if they give up their (co-)seconded status. Their employer must arrange a work permit.

The German School in La Paz offers a German- and a Spanish-language qualification pathway, with students able to take the German *Abitur* as well as obtain the Bolivian high-school-leaving certificate (*bachillerato*). The academic year generally begins during the first week of February and ends in the last week of November. The German School in La Paz also runs a pre-school-style kindergarten for children from four years of age onwards (cut-off date is 31 December).

There are also a number of high-quality Bolivian kindergartens (nurseries or guarderías), which take children under four from 1.5 years of age upwards.

Good to know

The common television standard in Bolivia is NTSC (US standard). As such, it is not possible to use TV and video equipment brought over from Germany (PAL, SECAM). If you do wish to play videos that you have brought with you, then it is advisable to purchase multi-system (PAL, SECAM, NTSC, etc.) TV and video devices locally, as they are far cheaper in Bolivia than in Germany.

Find out more

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