

EXPLORE!

SOLO OFFER

Bolivia Photography Adventure
12 days

Bolivia - Trip code BPH



Bolivia Photography Adventure

Bolivia has to be one of the most stunningly beautiful countries in Latin America - a country full of epic scenery, fascinating indigenous cultures, and wild and remote landscapes unlike anything you'll see elsewhere. The salt flats of Uyuni are perhaps the most dazzling, but Lake Titicaca's expanse of blue encircling the rugged rocks of the Sun Island, and Sajama's snow-capped volcanoes popping out of the vast wilderness of the altiplano are just two of the other grand vistas on offer in this brilliant country. Travelling mainly in 4WD vehicles, the best way to capture Bolivia has to be through the camera lens. On this trip we are accompanied by our photographer James Bruncker, one of Explore's ex-Tour Leaders who fell in love with the country and has now become a Bolivian national, living in La Paz. There could be no one more suited to helping you get the perfect photographs of this impressive destination.

There's no need to be a pro with a camera on this trip - even if you're not a photography enthusiast there will be a local Explore Leader on the trip to get you out into the spectacular scenery. The great photos are just a bonus!

Trip highlights

- ★ **La Paz** - Get a different perspective on this chaotic city, as a working shoe shiner guides you through the neighbourhoods and markets
- ★ **Lake Titicaca** - Stay in an eco-lodge on the Island of the Sun, and hike to Inca ruins that provide a stunning foreground to the sparkling blue lake
- ★ **Sajama National Park** - Visit the Andean wonderland of snow-capped volcanoes, bubbling hot springs, grazing llamas and alpacas and ancient burial towers
- ★ **Salt Flats** - See how Uyuni's ethereal salt flats change through the different light and top it off by sleeping in a hotel made out of salt
- ★ **James Bruncker** - Our resident Bolivian photography expert will help you capture this truly exceptional experience

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

8 - 12

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in La Paz

Customers who have booked their own flights will arrive and check-in at the first night's accommodation in La Paz. Customers who have booked flights through Explore will spend the first night of the trip on an overnight flight.



Accommodation: Hotel Rosario (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Free morning; afternoon walk of the city

This morning sees the arrival of any customers who have booked flights through Explore. After a free morning to relax and catch up on sleep, this afternoon we will take a leisurely walking tour of the bowl-shaped 'city that touches the sky', with the downtown area located at around 3600m altitude. Luckily our walk is all downhill! This is a walking tour with a difference, as we are joined by two of the city's shoe shiners to take us through the popular local neighbourhoods and markets of La Paz, including the popular 'Belen dining room' where rows of food stalls sell lunches very cheaply to the working population in the area. It provides a fascinating look at this mad city, outside of the usual tourist routes. Our Explore Leader will be on hand to translate from Spanish.



Accommodation: Hotel Rosario (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 3 - Free morning; afternoon hike in Palca Canyon

Our centrally located hotel is an excellent point from which to explore La Paz's downtown area on our free morning, including the Witches Market, the beautifully decorated San Francisco Church, or to discover the Pre-Columbian artefacts in the Museo de Oro. We're waiting for the good light in the afternoon to set off to the atmospherically named Valley of the Spirits, around 1 hour to the southeast of La Paz city. From our stopping point we set off on a 3 hour hike into Palca Canyon. It starts off with a roughly 5km downhill across farmland paths, descending into the canyon as its gothic spires and rugged rock formations rise above us, some almost 200 metres tall. The roughly 3km long rocky path winds and twists through the canyon floor, as the silence echoes around us, before arriving into the village of Palca, which lies below the impressive Mt Illimani, offering spectacular sunset shots over the canyon before our return to La Paz.



Accommodation: Hotel Rosario (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 4 - Drive and boat to the Island of the Sun, Lake Titicaca

From La Paz we head towards the deep blue waters of Lake Titicaca. At 3810m it is the highest navigable lake in the world and its sacred waters have long been a site of religious ritual and devotion for the Aymara and Quechua populations that make the lake their home. Our journey takes us to the town of Copacabana, a place of mystic reverence since the times of the Tiahuanaco, and now a pilgrimage site for many Christians. We explore the Virgen Morena and its church before boarding our boat to the Island of the Sun, landing in Huacani port. Here we are treated to a typical 'aptapi' - a traditional indigenous lunch usually involving potatoes, corn, lima beans, trout or chicken, cooked up and served on a communal table. After lunch we jump back onto the boat where we land at the Pilkokaina Ruins and walk up to our incredibly situated eco-lodge, where we will be spending the night. You will be carrying an overnight bag with you on this walk and we will have the assistance of mules or donkeys. In order to not overload the animals, we will bring only what is necessary for one night and leave any extra luggage in Copacabana. If you have expensive photography equipment we do recommend that you bring it with you.



Accommodation: Ecolodge La Estancia (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 5 - Scenic hike from Inca ruins across the island

The Isla del Sol is the largest of the islands that lie dotted around this spectacular lake, lying just off the Copacabana Peninsula. The island is covered with nearly 200 archaeological sites that attest to the importance placed on this site by the ancient Incas. This morning we take a boat north, towards the labyrinthine Inca ruins of Chincana. At Chincana we find a meandering network of rooms and passageways that link together around a sacred rock. From the ruins, we make the most of the scenery by taking a 3 hour walk back to the ecolodge, across undulating ground and stony paths. Photo opportunities are plentiful and as always James will be on hand to help us make the most of them.

As of October 2017, strikes are occurring on Sun Island which means that we are unable to visit the northern part of the Island where the ruins of La Chincana are. Local information tells us that they hope to have resolved the situation by the 2018 departures of this trip. However, if this is not the case then there will be alternative hikes on the island to ensure that you can make the most of the spectacular scenery.



Accommodation: Ecolodge La Estancia (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Boat to the Island of the Moon; return to La Paz by bus and cable car

Walking down to the pier this morning we take a boat across to the neighbouring Island of the Moon to visit its ruins. After a short visit, we return to Copacabana by boat, and then by bus to La Paz, a 4 hour journey. On arrival into El Alto, a city in itself just to the north of La Paz, we will get off the bus and take two cable cars down to the hotel - a quicker and more scenic way to arrive!



Accommodation: Hotel Rosario (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 7 - 4WD journey to Sajama National Park; photos on the wetlands

We have an early start today as we jump into 4WD vehicles, heading south out of La Paz, crossing the highlands and the waters of the Desaguadero River. After approximately two hours we visit the old adobe church of the village of Curahuara de Carangas (which the Lonely Planet terms 'the Sistine Chapel of the Altiplano'!). Luck permitting, the church should be open for us to see the 17th-century murals that depict typical mestizo themes - a mixture of Spanish Catholic and indigenous cultures - including the three kings visiting Jesus with their llama train. Situated in the middle of nowhere, the remoteness will become a theme over the next

few days - the landscapes in this area are fantastic. We'll be stopping on our drive to explore valleys of rocks with great formations caused by wind erosion, as well as some ancient burial towers, or Chullpas, found en route. We continue to the National Park (at approximately 4200m altitude) and our simple accommodation to check-in, before heading out again in the afternoon. We enjoy a hike in the surroundings of the National Park to see the wetlands formed by water coming off the glaciers, ideal for raising llama, alpaca and vicuna, which are plentiful on the shrub of the altiplano. The conical volcano of Sajama is ever present, looming in the background and adding some grandeur to our pictures.



Accommodation: Ecolodge Tomarapi (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Andean flamingos on the Laguna Saquewa; drive to hot springs

Starting off at the Macaya church, we head to the Lauca River where we find some 20 pre-Hispanic burial towers, each decorated with a striking geometric pattern that looks quite incongruous against the sparse background. It's a shot of civilisation in the wilderness. We then head to the Laguna Saquewa in our vehicles, where Andean flamingos roam, before visiting the naturally occurring hot springs where we can take a dip whilst taking in the magnificent views of Mt Sajama.



Accommodation: Ecolodge Tomarapi (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - Head to Tahua at the base of the Tunupa volcano

We have a long day of driving today, as we have an 8 hour journey from Sajama to the small village of Tahua, situated at the north of the Uyuni Salt Flat and beneath the Volcano Tunupa. En route there are many stopping points for photos, one of which is at the Coipasa Salt Lake - Bolivia's largest salt flat after Uyuni, where thousands of flamingos have inhabited the shores. Despite the proximity to Uyuni and the salt flats, the whole area from Sajama to Tahua is quite free of tourists, and it is surrounded by impressive mountain scenes. There are some small communities to discover en route. We plan to arrive at Tahua in time to see the sun set.



Accommodation: Hotel Tayka de Sal (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Explore the magnificent Uyuni salt flats; sunrise on the Incahuasi island

Exploring Bolivia's immense, other-worldly salt-flats is an unforgettable and surreal experience. We'll be aiming to get to Incahuasi Island, in the centre of the flats, to capture the sunrise as it appears over the mountains in the distance. Once the sun has risen, we'll explore the island a little - the cacti here have been here for millennia, and the tallest towers 9 metres above the floor of the plains. Heading down back to our 4x4s, we drive onto the blinding-white plains where the sky seems to almost disappear into the land. There will be several stops on the salt lake - the flat light in the middle of the day has an interesting effect on perspective, which sometimes the guides like to play around with. It can be cheesy but makes a memorable photo. We'll arrive at our hotel this afternoon - impressively located right on the edge of Uyuni's salt flat, and even more impressively, made completely out of salt, right down to the llama sculptures in the hallways! We will be doing a night photography session on the flats this evening, hopefully with maximum starlight!



Accommodation: Hotel Palacio de Sal (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Full day on the Salt Flats; fly back to La Paz

The salt flats in the wet season are an outstanding sight - at their best, they can be a complete mirror as far as the eye can see, reflecting the clouds and distant mountains so clearly that you feel as if you're walking on the sky. Today we'll have another day to explore and take pictures. We've kept our two days on the salt flats quite flexible due to the water - the wet and dry areas are never the same, so the drivers need to keep themselves updated on where is possible to drive. This evening we'll take a flight back to La Paz for our final evening in Bolivia.



Accommodation: Hotel Rosario (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 12 - Trip ends La Paz

Our trip ends this morning at the hotel in La Paz. If you've booked your flights with Explore, there may be a long wait in the airport in Lima due to the flight timings from La Paz. We've included a city tour in Lima so that you can explore this lively coastal city.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Photography in Bolivia

One important thing to note on this trip, particularly in the cities, is that Andean people are notoriously shy – it can be difficult to take good portrait shots, and in many cases people will actively turn away from cameras. We recommend that travellers respect this and try not to be intrusive with photo-taking in the cities. Luckily you'll have no such reaction from the wildlife - llamas and alpacas are more than happy to pose for you!

5 things you might not know about Bolivia

Product Manager Carmel shares her love of Bolivia and **5 things you might not know** about the country.

Why book this trip

This trip will suit the keen traveller who wants to make the most out of their travel photos. Supported by our expert photographer, you don't need to think about anything else as everything within the itinerary, including almost all meals, is taken care of. This means that the price given is almost all-inclusive. Everything down to the location of hotels has been chosen for its scenic potential, and proximity to Bolivia's epic landscapes.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 10
Lunch: 9
Dinner: 6



Transport

Bus
4WD
Boat
Cable Car



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel
2 nights simple hotel
1 nights premium hotel

Trip information

Country information

Bolivia

Climate

Conditions vary from region to region and with altitude. Bear in mind that at high altitude temperatures can drop dramatically, and conditions can change suddenly. Inland - Hot and humid from October to March (summer). Mild to hot from April to September (winter). Highlands -- All year, sunny days, chilly to cold evenings. Rainy December to March. Mainly dry rest of year best time for mountain travel.

Time difference to GMT

-4

Plugs

3 Pin Flat

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Spanish

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

As everything on this tour is included, there is very little down time for extra excursions!

La Paz - Half day Tiwanaku US\$ 83 (min 3 pers); Half day Chacaltaya Andes Range tour US\$84 (min 2 pers)

Clothing

Temperatures at altitude can drop considerably, particularly at night, and you will certainly need warm clothing for the evenings (particularly for any astrophotography that we may be doing), including thermal underwear, a well-insulated fleece/jacket, a thick sweater and a hat, scarf and gloves. Bring something warm to sleep in. Lightweight raingear is essential at any time of the year. In the days temperatures can be warm, so lighter layers are useful.

Footwear

Comfortable and sturdy walking boots with good ankle support and tread are useful for the walks. Trainers/sandals for relaxing in.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

A sunhat and sunglasses are advisable, as is high factor sunscreen and lipsalve with sun protection, due to the thinness of the atmosphere. A torch will be essential, particularly a head torch, not just for the remote accommodation where power cuts can happen, but also for the sunrise visit to the Incahuasi Island, as you will be walking in the dark. Camera equipment goes without saying - please be aware that you will be hiking in some locations, for example in Palca Canyon and on the Isla del Sol, and this will be at high altitude so be realistic with the equipment that you bring. Spare batteries and memory cards are a good idea. A tripod may also be useful for night photography.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 35 for tipping

Country Information

Bolivia

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£5

Dinner price

£8

Beer price

£1.47

Water price

£0.6

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Boliviano.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash for your tour, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, 4WD, Boat, Cable Car

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Some of the accommodation on this trip is a real highlight. We stay in not one, but two salt hotels. One is the incredible boutique salt hotel near Uyuni, where the domed roof of each room is made from bricks of salt, and salt statues adorn the corridors. The other is at the foot of the Volcano Tunupa, and has a more rustic feel.

You should be prepared for most of the accommodation in Sajama and around the salt flats and lagoons to be more basic - as they are at high altitude often rooms can be cold with temperamental heaters not working, and many of them work off solar power to heat water. These hotels, while sometimes lacking in amenities, make up for it with good service levels, friendly staff and amazing locations.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Bolivia: Visas are not required for UK, New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian citizens. However, US citizens will require a visa. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely to be refused boarding.

You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover.

If you have visited Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel.

Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit)

For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.html>

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Bolivia

Vaccinations

A yellow fever certificate is necessary for passengers visiting the lowlands Bolivia (BA trip). We also recommend protection against typhoid, polio, infectious hepatitis and tetanus. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.