

Discover Santa Cruz and the Samaipata fort, La Paz and the rugged beauty of the Southern Bolivian Andes, with the remote colored lagoons and the magnificent Salar de Uyuni
Live the past wonders of Potosí, the Imperial City, and of Sucre, the White City

BOLIVIA HIGH-ALTITUDE ADVENTURES, THE ORIENTE AND HISTORICAL CITIES

12 DAYS – Santa Cruz to La Paz

HIGHLIGHTS

ITINERARY

- Day 1 - arrive at Santa Cruz
- Day 2 – Santa Cruz, Samaipata
- Day 3 - Samaipata
- Day 4 - fly to Sucre, Sucre
- Day 5 - Sucre, transfer to Potosí
- Day 6 - Potosí, transfer to Uyuni
- Day 7 - Salar de Uyuni, Incahuasi Isle
- Day 8 - Red Lagoon, volcanoes
- Day 9 - Green Lagoon, Colored Lagoons, Uyuni
- Day 10 - fly to La Paz, La Paz
- Day 11- Titicaca Lake
- Day 12 - La Paz, departure

*An injection of adrenaline in this tour.
A mix of city tours and high-altitude wilderness adventure, plus a touch of tropical nature.*

See Santa Cruz and the Samaipata fort, La Paz (the “marvellous city”), Potosí (the “imperial city”) and Sucre (the “white city”, one of the finest examples of colonial architecture in South America).

Explore the magnificence of nature in the high Andes: the blinding whiteness of the Salar de Uyuni, the surprising colors of lagoons surrounded by mountains and desert, home to flocks of pink flamingoes; the calmness and vastness of Lake Titicaca.



DAY 1 – SANTA CRUZ

Arrive in La Paz at any time, hotel check-in and free time to look around. We will have a group welcome meeting to review the trip's itinerary and provide last-minute details and updates.

Meals included: N/A

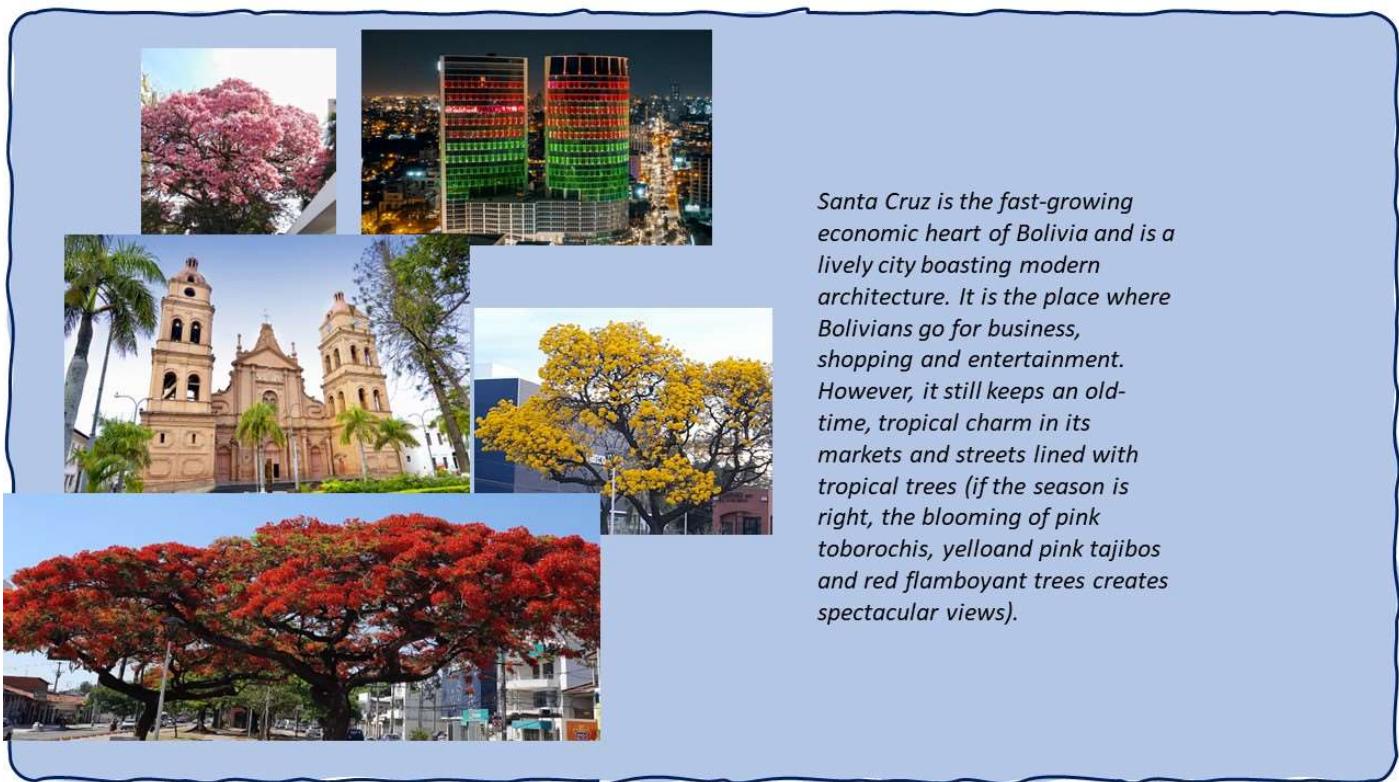
Transportation: N/A

Lodging: Three-star hotel in Santa Cruz (night of day 1)

DAY 2 – SANTA CRUZ, SAMAIIPATA

Visit Santa Cruz in the morning: downtown with its cathedral, coffee shops and cultural events, a street market and then the trendiest and most contemporary part of the liveliest and thriving city of Bolivia, the capital of the Oriente (Bolivia's eastern region).

In the afternoon, head south for an approximately 2 ½ drive that will bring you from the plains of Santa Cruz to the 1,600 mt high town of Samaipata. We will drive along the ancient route to Cochabamba and will be able to see valleys covered in a lush tropical forest and colorful rock formations bordering the Amborò National Park.



Santa Cruz is the fast-growing economic heart of Bolivia and is a lively city boasting modern architecture. It is the place where Bolivians go for business, shopping and entertainment. However, it still keeps an old-time, tropical charm in its markets and streets lined with tropical trees (if the season is right, the blooming of pink toborochis, yellow and pink tajibos and red flamboyant trees creates spectacular views).

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in Santa Cruz), lunch

Transportation: Private car

Lodging: Three-star hotel in Samaipata



DAY 3 – SAMAIPATA, SANTA CRUZ

Visit Samaipata's colonial downtown and market and then the Samaipata Fort which displays what is considered the largest sculpted rock in the world. Back to Santa Cruz later in the afternoon.



Located a few kms from the town of Samaipata, the Fort is one of Bolivia's main attractions and a UNESCO World Heritage site. This archeological site includes ruins from three civilizations (Inca, Chané, and Spanish), whose highlight is a large rock saddle almost completely covered with carvings of both Inca and pre-Inca origin. The journey from Santa Cruz offer plenty of scenic views of hills. Rocks and woods from the Amboró Reserve and is a pleasure in itself



Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel Samaipata), lunch
Transportation: Private car
Lodging: Three-star hotel Santa Cruz



DAY 4 – SUCRE

Hop on a morning flight to Sucre, the constitutional capital of Bolivia, and transfer to our downtown hotel. After settling down and lunch, enjoy a city tour of the colonial old town (a UNESCO world heritage) which will include the historical colonial downtown with its main monuments, such as the San Felipe Neri church (with a nice scenic walk on the rooftop) and the Casa de la Libertad (where the first act of independence of Bolivia was signed). Then the city market and a walk up to the Recoleta square, from where we can view the whole city and its surrounding. The rest of the afternoon – if any spare time is left – is free for you to roam this beautiful city. If we don't make it in time to see everything, we will have some time to catch up the following day.



Standing at 2,800 mts above sea level in the Eastern Cordillera, Sucre has a cool climate all year-round. Sucre is famous for its white-washed colonial and republican historical downtown, and the combination of pleasant weather and well-preserved colonial atmosphere make it a perfect place to stroll around. Enjoy its monuments, museums, lively markets and hearty street food.

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in La Paz), lunch

Transportation: Commercial flight La Paz to Sucre, transfer from airport on public transportation (bus)

Lodging: Three-star hotel in Sucre



DAY 5 – SUCRE, POTOSÍ

Morning free to continue visiting the attractions of Sucre old town. At noon, we will transfer to Cal Orck'o to view one of the largest and most interesting collections of fossilized dinosaurs' footprints in the world. The mid-day guided tour has ideal sunlight conditions and allows us to walk close to the footprints.

Break for lunch and time for a last-minute stroll downtown before heading on our private bus to Potosí, where we arrive mid-to-late afternoon after a three-hour trip through a beautiful scenic route.



Cal Orck'o ("limestone hill" in Quechua) is an impressive vertical cliff covered with thousands of dinosaurs footprints from several species. A unique experience



Cerro Rico (the "Rich Mountain") imposingly looms over the city of Potosí. It has been calculated that between the 16th and 18th century, some 80% of the world's silver supply came out of the mines dug inside this one mountain

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in Sucre), lunch, dinner
Transportation: Local taxi or microbus to dinosaur's footprints, private bus from Sucre to Potosí
Lodging: Three-star hotel in Potosí



DAY 6 – POTOSÍ, UYUNI

We will spend a busy morning with a slow-paced city tour of Potosí (at 4,000 mt high, no one really wants to run here). Potosí, the “imperial city” is a UNESCO world heritage and intriguing place where an important part of world history was made. We will walk around the historical downtown and its numerous grand churches and palaces, visit the national mint (Casa de la Moneda) that hosts the machinery used to make silver coins, and Santa Teresa monastery. We will also have scenic views of the incredible Cerro Rico and be able to take a glimpse of the chaotic growth of present-day Potosí, and the sharp contrast between past splendor and current reality. In the afternoon, transfer by private bus to Uyuni, the gateway to the immense Uyuni Salt Lake (“Salar de Uyuni”), again on a scenic route filled with geological formations painted in different colors.



Founded in the mid-16th century after the discovery of incredibly rich silver mines inside the Cerro Rico mountain, Potosí rapidly boomed to become one of the largest and richest cities of the world at the time. The silver, extracted and made into coins in the Casa de la Moneda, started then its long journey to Spain, where it basically funded the ascent and expansion of the Spanish Empire in the world. Present-day Potosí keeps traces of the past glory in its historical downtown, with its spectacular churches and monasteries and the one-of-a-kind museum of Casa de la Moneda (the former National Mint), where visitors can see the actual machinery used to mint coins.

Potosí sits in the Andes at above 4,000 mts. We will use our stop here to enjoy its beauties and to complete our acclimatization in view of the following days in the high plateau.

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in Sucre), lunch, dinner

Transportation: Local taxi or microbus to dinosaur's footprints, private bus from Sucre to Potosí

Lodging: Three-star hotel in Potosí



DAY 7 – SALAR DE UYUNI

This is it. Today, we start a three-day immersion in a high-altitude, rugged adventure through some of the most spectacular natural wonders of the planet. No exaggerating... we really are about to visit incredible places! The first day is devoted to the Salar de Uyuni, the largest salt lake in the world and a Unesco World Heritage. We will drive into this white, immense, empty space where the horizon, the sense of distance and proportions get confused. Even our cameras seem unable to sort out what is close and what is far. We will visit the Incahuasi island, in fact a rock formation that seems to emerge from the whiteness like an island. During the day, we will also stop at the salt crossway, the abandoned salt hotel and a ghostly train cemetery.



Salar de Uyuni... Over 10,000 square kilometers of pure white and blue incredible wilderness



Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in Uyuni), lunch, dinner

Transportation: Private 4x4 car

Lodging: Basic hotel in San Juan



DAY 8 – AVAROA NATURAL RESERVE, LAGUNA COLORADA, DESERT ROCK FORMATIONS

The second day of the high-altitude adventure gives us another sequel of natural wonders. We enter the Eduardo Avaroa Reserve (REA) and we border the Ollague volcano, travel through lava formations and the Siloli Desert. We see large flocks of pink flamingoes feeding in mirror-like lagoons and we visit the Laguna Colorada (Red Lagoon) with its incredible colors.



If you thought that after the Salar de Uyuni nothing could surprise you... well, think again. At the border between Bolivia and Chile, the remote Reserve Eduardo Avaroa (REA) hosts immense spaces and unforgettable views and colors.



High altitude (between 4,200 and 5,400 mts) and extreme weather conditions do not discourage a rich and varied fauna. Condors, small nandus, andean foxes, vicuñas occasionally show up, and pink flamingos can be seen in the lagoons.

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in San Juan), lunch, dinner

Transportation: Private 4x4 car

Lodging: Basic hotel in San Juan?



DAY 9 – LAGUNA VERDE, GEYSERS,

Another full day of unique natural sights. We drive to Sol de Manana volcanic fields where we can almost touch active geysers, followed by hot thermal springs. In we visit the Dali Desert, another area packed with spectacular rock formations and finally the Laguna Verde (Green Lagoon). After a long day and countless photo opportunities, we drive back to Uyuni.



The Avaroa Reserve is rich in geothermal and volcanic activities, including active geyser fields.



The high-altitude desert offers spectacular rock formations, some of which recall surreal paintings (Salvador Dalí desert)

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in **xxx**), lunch

Transportation: Private 4x4 car

Lodging: Three-star hotel in Uyuni



DAY 10 – UYUNI, LA PAZ

We fly from Uyuni to La Paz, and we still have time for a guided city tour. After three days spent above 4,000 meters, we are well acclimatized to high altitudes and it will not be a problem to wander through the historical downtown to see Plaza Murillo, the San Francisco cathedral and the witches' market. We will also enjoy great views travelling in La Paz' famous cable cars system.



La Paz: la Ciudad Maravilla (the “Marvellous City”) sits on a canyon, where the High Plateau transitions into the Yungas region. Standing between 3,500 and 4,000 mts, it is one of the highest large cities in the world.



Meals included: Breakfast

Transportation: Flight Uyuni to La Paz, taxi from airport to hotel

Lodging: Three-star hotel in La Paz



DAY 11 – LAKE TITICACA

The last day of our itinerary is again packed with spectacular natural views. We leave La Paz to Lake Titicaca, the cradle of pre-Incan Andean civilizations and the highest navigable lake in the world. We visit San Pedro de Tiquina, on the east side of the lake, and the local totora (lake reeds) craftsmanship workshops on the lake shores. We enjoy views of the Tiquina strait and the snow-capped Cordillera Real. And with all these images in our memory (and cameras), we head back to La Paz.



Lake Titicaca is shared between Bolivia and Perú. Its dark-blue, mostly still deep waters are a sharp contrast with the dry surroundings and the snow-capped Andean peaks in the horizon.



Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in La Paz)
Transportation: Private car to/from Titicaca lake
Lodging: Three-star hotel in La Paz

DAY 12 – LA PAZ

Depart at any time.

Meals included: Breakfast (at hotel in La Paz)
Transportation: public transportation (bus) from hotel to airport
Lodging: N/A