

# Bolivia

## Language, culture and voluntary work programme

This programme combines Spanish lessons and voluntary work in social institutions and national parks.

Volunteering offers a unique opportunity to experience the country, culture and population from the inside while doing a meaningful job. Volunteers must be independent, open minded, a minimum of 18 years old. You can of course choose to follow Spanish lessons without volunteering.

### The country

Bolivia is located at the center of the Andes Mountains and borders Peru, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. It is the highest and most isolated of the Andean nations. There are still areas almost untouched by the western lifestyle. Because of its size – twice that of Spain – nearly every possible climate and terrain is represented, from snow-capped peaks over 21,000 feet to the semi-tropical lowlands and steaming jungles of the Bolivian Amazon basin.

Unfortunately, the country became landlocked in 1880 when it lost its coastline to Chile in the Pacific War. Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable inland lake in the world, compensates for this loss with its crystal blue water and hand-made boats sailing between lake islands dotted with pre-Colombian ruins.

### Religion

Although 95% of the Bolivian people profess to be Roman Catholic, more than half the population clings to traditional Indian values and beliefs.

Visitors will meet wonderful people and lifestyles full of intriguing doctrines, rites and superstitions.

Bolivia is also one of the best places on the continent to see South American wildlife including the rare spectacled bear, jaguar, llama, anteater, chinchilla and condor.

### Sucre

In 1987 Sucre was designated by UNESCO as "Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad", a World Heritage site.

The town is known as "The White City" due to its numerous colonial buildings, all of which are painted white and topped with shiny red tile roofs. Sucre is a relatively small city with about 130,000 inhabitants.

Sucre is one of Bolivia's most important university towns, known as the centre of learning and progressive thought. Sucre and the nearby villages have a sizable indigenous population who maintain their customs and colourful dress. Locals and visitors alike are attracted to the markets where food, textiles and other products are sold after lengthy discussions of price.

Low prices on domestic flights make Sucre a good base for exploring of the rest of Bolivia.

### The international language school

The school lies right in the heart of Sucre, only a few blocks from the city centre. There are seven classrooms, kitchen and video lounge in a 2-story building with colonial balconies, an interior patio, a small area reserved for sunning, entertainment room and a beautiful cafeteria, "El Café Quito".

The school has a capacity for 40 students. About half come from Europe and half from North America.

All teachers are carefully chosen for qualifications and experience teaching Spanish as a foreign language. Some have Ph.D. or Masters Degrees in Spanish and literature, history or Latin American culture. They renew their teaching skills with special courses every year.

Students have classes 4 hours a day, from 8.00 to 12.30.

Each lesson lasts 60 minutes. Four is the maximum number of students in a class and average class size is 2.

The school in Bolivia is one of 3 internationally recognized schools under the same leadership. The 2 other schools are in Ecuador and Peru. You can switch from the one to the other at any time. After your study course in one of the 3 countries you can choose to volunteer in Bolivia, Ecuador or Peru.

Please contact [info@exis.dk](mailto:info@exis.dk) for information about the voluntary work programmes in Ecuador and Peru.

### The first days

You will be met in the airport on arrival and driven to your host family. Your family will take you to school the first day and you will be welcomed with an orientation about the school, your stay with your host family and Bolivian culture. You will also be shown around town.

There is no regular teaching on the first Monday. After a placement test and a talk with the school's student counselor you will be placed

in a class at exactly your level of skill in Spanish and the language lessons begin.



### Activities

Organized activities or tours are offered 2 or 3 times a week. The school organizes both short tours around Sucre and excursions to areas outside of town. The longer tours cost ½210-25 US dollars per person and usually include bus transportation, meals and more.

There are also activities at the school, such as short lectures, tourist information, parties, cooking classes, card games, Spanish language videos and more.

Note: You may have to pay a small fee for bus tickets, entrance to museums, dance lessons and such.

### Course start

A new course starts every Monday all year round with arrival at your host family's home Sunday. The school is closed from the 17<sup>th</sup> of December till the first week in January.

There are no classes on the following dates:

- ✚ 1<sup>st</sup> May: the international workers' day
- ✚ 24-26<sup>th</sup> May: Celebration of Bolivian Independence Day
- ✚ 8<sup>th</sup> September: Our Lady of Guadalupe

## Host families

During the language course you will live with a Bolivian host family. Families belong to Bolivia's middle class, but do not expect a living standard comparable to the European middle class. You will have your own room, unless you ask for something else. You will normally share the bathroom with the rest of the family. Family homes are located in neighbourhoods usually no more than a 20 to 30 minute walk from school. Most live only 5 to 15 minutes away.

## Fees for Language course

Weeks	Price	Weeks	Price
2	499	8	1 856
3	725	9	2 083
4	952	10	2 309
5	1 178	11	2 535
6	1 404	12	2 761
7	1 630		

Please contact [info@exis.dk](mailto:info@exis.dk) for information about prices for longer language study.

## All prices include

- ✚ Airport pick-up on arrival.
- ✚ Intensive language lessons with well-trained, competent and very motivated teachers.
- ✚ Accommodation with carefully chosen Bolivian host families and half-board (breakfast and lunch) plus laundry service once a week.
- ✚ Books and teaching material.
- ✚ Initial test and weekly evaluation.
- ✚ A certificate and level assessment at the end of the course.
- ✚ Excursions and special activities at cost price.
- ✚ Mail, e-mail, safe keeping for baggage and valuables.

## Spanish and voluntary work

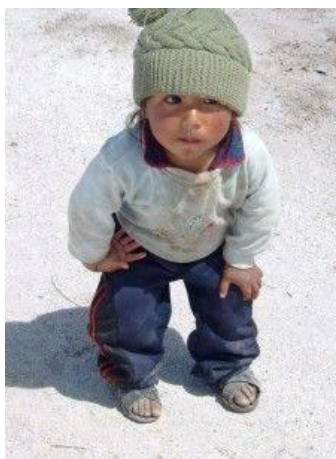
You can combine a language course in Bolivia with several types of voluntary work, just as with EXIS' programmes in Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador and Guatemala. You can choose to work at a hospital, nursing home, orphanage, with the handicapped or in a national park. Work is organized in cooperation with the school and local organizations and institutions.

The language and voluntary work programme consists of a minimum 2 weeks intensive language lessons was described

above, followed by volunteer work lasting 4-24 weeks. Four weeks Spanish lessons are compulsory for beginners before starting volunteer work.

During your stay at the school the school coordinator will further introduce you to the different possibilities for volunteer work.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in the volunteer work program, independent and outgoing, with a real desire to volunteer. The work demands flexibility, maturity, initiative and energy.



## Examples of volunteer work

The following are examples of volunteer projects. Please note that the descriptions are general because the individual institutions have different needs, just as the volunteers have different interests and qualifications.

### Women's prison San Roque

Work with mothers and small children who live inside this women's prison, and also with their older children who come to visit them over the weekends. Creative volunteers are needed here to teach or help with handicrafts, draw, sing and entertain the children or teach English.

### Nursery home for poor children

This is a day-care centre open Monday through Friday. There are 30 children whose mothers are prostitutes, victims of domestic violence or very poor. These children would normally be home alone, locked in while their mothers work. They are now in the care of the centre and receive breakfast and lunch. The children are from one to 6 years old. You will work directly with the children and the educators, and take part in all the activities; help the children to paint, draw, cut paper, sing and dance, teach them numbers and colours and especially play with them. The home needs games, colouring books, paints, coloured pencils, paper and especially educational materials. They also welcome powdered milk, clothes, shoes or toiletries such as shampoo, soap, body cream, etc. The centre closes during summer holiday, from mid-December until mid-February.

### Center with after school activities

This center offers free education to children age 6 to 16, living on the outskirts of Sucre. Their Indian parents have moved from the countryside, hoping for a better life in the city. Most parents survive by selling groceries at the marketplaces of Sucre.

About 40 children visit the centre every morning, in the afternoon and evening go to 100.

The center advises the older children about their future educational possibilities or teaches them a trade. There is medical assistance, food and leisure for them all. Volunteers can teach English, geography, mathematics and history and/or assist the staff with cooking, cleaning up the kitchen, painting the building or helping out with leisure activities like sports. This center also closes from the middle of December to the middle of February.

### Culture foundation center

The objectives of this foundation are to develop reading skills from early childhood, make libraries more accessible and provide books to hospitals, prisons and marginal neighborhoods, organize book fairs and other events. The foundation has a Story House, to introduce reading to children and help them meet each other across social barriers and a library open to both students and professionals. Technical workshops are common spaces for young people who want to learn a trade.

Volunteer activities in the various projects could be:

- ✚ workshops in arts and crafts or ecological awareness for children 4 to 14
- ✚ help in the library
- ✚ homework help for students 7 to 18, especially math, social sciences, natural sciences and language
- ✚ design posters and pamphlets, write newsletters
- ✚ help in workshops with f.ex. furniture production
- ✚ help in cafeteria.

### **Kindergarten 1.**

This kindergarten is located close to downtown Sucre. The centre currently serves 320 children, ages 4 – 5 from poor Indian families. The 8 teachers prepare the children for primary school. The kindergarten functions as a safe haven for these vulnerable children. There is a great need for volunteer help. Pencils, colored marking pens or art pencils, storybooks, notebooks and other educational materials are very welcome. Volunteers work from 8 to 12.

### **Kindergarten 2.**

This public kindergarten is 10 minutes walk from the language school. Most of the children are indigenous and from very poor families who live on the outskirts of Sucre. There are about 170 children of 4 or 5 years old in 3 first grades and two second grades taught by only 6 teachers. A 4-week stay is minimum. Volunteer tasks are also the same as above and the same sort of gifts are of course always welcome.

### **Kindergarten for handicapped children**

The only kindergarten in Sucre that accepts handicapped children. Volunteer tasks will reflect this. You will help the staff and entertain the children.

### **Adult Psychiatric Hospital**

This hospital offers excellent opportunities to gain experience for all those interested in the field of medicine. There are approx. 400 patients and a team of doctors, nurses, assistants, psychologists, therapists, physiotherapists and Bolivian medical students.

Everything in this hospital is very clean and organized. Volunteers work mainly with patients, talking with them, helping with exercises, practicing sports, etc. There is a section for elderly patients who need help with wheelchairs, reading newspapers, eating and personal hygiene.

### **Hospital/orphanage for handicapped children**

This hospital is run by priests. There are about 170 physically and mentally handicapped children age 1 to 17 staying here. They all come from poor families in rural areas. The children cannot live in normal orphanages because of their handicaps. Volunteers help with physical therapy, play and participate in sports activities, or accompany the children on outings. The home also 2 horses for physical therapy and volunteers who can ride are very welcome. Besides this there is a need for help with homework and other activities at the home. Working hours are morning or afternoon.

### **Adoption center**

This is a home for children between 0 and 6 years old, all waiting to be adopted. The home has a good reputation and is mainly run by nuns. The home is close to the city centre, about 10 minutes from the language school. Volunteers take care of the children, feed them, play with them and do creative activities. It is important that you like children, are energetic and ready to give these children the love and attention they lack. You may occasionally have to work during weekends.

### **Daycare center**

This day care center is located in a rural area very close to Sucre. The center was created as a safe haven for children under six years. The center's budget is too low to cover basic requirements, such as maintenance, infrastructure, play-

grounds and equipment. The children come from poor families who have moved from the country to the city in search of better living conditions. Their mothers make souvenirs, which are sold in rural markets and the fathers do any manual work in the city or have emigrated to Argentina in search of work. The center is open Monday to Friday from 7:30 until about 15:30. The children get 2 meals and a tea snack in the afternoon, and are well cared for and protected. At present there are 25 children from 0 to 6 years old, divided into three groups. Three indigenous women from a rural village take care of the children, feed and entertain them. They get a small salary from the government for their services.

Volunteers work with the staff, doing any odd tasks and creating activities for the children, such as painting, drawing and cutting paper, singing and dancing; also teach them numbers and colors, help them eat.

### **Hogar Mallorca**

Misk'I Wasi (a Quechua phrase meaning "Sweet Home") was founded in 2005. It is now called Mallorca Home and is a haven for working children and teenagers who, for whatever reason, live in the streets. About 65 boys and young men between the ages of 6 and 17 stay here, get a bed and healthy food as well as a chance to go to school. Many work as mechanical assistants, sell newspapers, wash cars, shine shoes and sell bread. The home provides school supplies but the boys must buy their own toothpaste and brush, soap, shampoo and toilet paper with the goal of teaching them the value of money. The boys must also keep their rooms clean and neat so they learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. The home generates income to improve the lives of residents through donations and a small bakery, "Delicious Bread." The

boys take turns selling and promoting the product. As a volunteer you can help the boys with homework and with their personal hygiene. Volunteers can also teach them how to play a musical instrument or to play sports (soccer, basketball, etc.), help with cleaning chores, or help in the bakery and selling the bread.

This work place is close to the language school and volunteer accommodations.

### **Refuge for wild animals**

This is a non-profit organization caring for wild animals that have been in captivity and returning them to their natural habitat. Machia National Park was developed on 36 hectares of land donated by the Bolivian government, near the town of Villa Tunari, 4 hours from Cochabamba on the road to Santa Cruz. It is now a protected area where volunteers from all over the world care for the animals.

Volunteer tasks include care and feeding of the animals, helping to build houses for volunteers and cages for the animals, making trails, producing and setting up signs in the park and more. The park currently has 1 house equipped with the necessities for volunteers. The shared bathroom has only cold water because the area is very warm and there is a kitchen where vo-



Volunteers prepare their own meals. There is a small town near the park where you can buy fruit and vegetables, water and other basics.

### Jungle experience

This foundation needs people who are interested in ecology, enjoy simple living and working with volunteers from many different countries.

A small indigenous community of 235 inhabitants still lives in the Amazon rain forest on the banks of the Beni River, at the edge of the [Madidi National park](#), best known as one of earth's greatest habitats of different species. The inhabitants of the village have built an amazing Eco-lodge with the support of international NGOs, a 15-minute walk from the village. The Eco-lodge is owned and operated by the people of [San Miguel del Bala](#). The 7 comfortable cabins are spread around the forest and all have electricity after dark, bathroom and a little terrace. There is also a small restaurant and a traditional roundhouse with a shop selling local handicrafts, a bar and an exhibition about Tacana culture, ancient hunting techniques, production of natural medicine from plants and ecological processes.

As a volunteer you can teach English to adults or children, enabling them to communicate with tourists. You will also process sugar cane juice, maintain paths, register animal, bird and plant species. If you have special skills you will be able to plan your own projects in cooperation with the park staff. You will visit the inhabitants in their cottages made of palm fronds and bamboo, learn traditional Indian cooking, fishing and hunting methods. In recent years the inhabitants have trained as cooks, artisans and guides for trekking tours through the jungle.

When there are tourists you will live, work and get international food with meat dishes at the Eco-lodge. In the absence of tourists, you will either be accommodated with other volunteers in a dormitory, or live with a host family in a cottage with shared bathroom. You will get 3 meals a day, mainly tropical fruits like bananas, papaya, pineapple, also fresh fish, mandioca or yucca, corn, rice and very little meat. The families eat and serve what they can grow, hunt or fish.



The San Miguel area is warm and humid, but in the winter months of June and July the cold Arctic

wind, the Surazo, blows in from the south.

There are 2 seasons, the rainy season from December to April and the dry season from May to November. There is no electricity or telephone service in the village. You will find telephone, an internet café and ATM cash machines in Rurrenabaque.

Transport to the village will be organised by the school coordinator, while you follow Spanish lessons in Sucre. A village member will pick you up at a local airport and the last part of your trip will be by boat, 40 minutes upstream from [Rurrenabaque](#).

### Note

Due to limited space on all the projects, the final decision about your work placement will be made with the coordinator. Due to "summer holiday" from the end of December until the start of February, no teaching related placements are available for volunteers during this period.

The program fee includes a sponsorship fee of 60 US dollars, so each participant in volunteer work is also a personal sponsor for the institution or project chosen.

### Accommodation

Accommodation during Spanish lessons is with host families, with half board (see page 3). Volunteers can choose to stay on with their host family during volunteering, or stay in a self-catering apartment. This apartment for volunteers has 3 bedrooms, shared bathroom and kitchen, living and dining room with cable TV. The cost of accommodation in the apartment is lower than with host families, as food is not included. There is a small patio and a large garden. Bedding and towels will be changed once a week, although cleaning is not included. Alcohol, parties and overnight guests will not be tolerated.

**For accommodation in national parks, see description of the national park and Jungle Experience volunteer possibilities.**

### Fees in Euro

Spanish lessons with private accommodation, single room and half board.

Lessons	Weeks	Fee in Euros
20	2+4	1150
20	2+8	1513
20	4+4	1461
20	4+8	1824
20	6+4	1772
20	6+8	2135

Spanish lessons with private accommodation and half board, and apartment during work.

20	2+4	987
20	2+8	1187
20	4+4	1298
20	4+8	1498
20	6+4	1609
20	6+8	1809

Spanish lessons with private accommodation and half board, and work in National Park.

20	2+4	1037
20	2+8	1287
20	4+4	1348
20	4+8	1598
20	6+4	1659
20	6+8	1909

Spanish lessons with private accommodation and half board, and work in Jungle Experience.

20	2+4	1144
20	2+8	1502
20	4+4	1455
20	4+8	1813
20	6+4	1766
20	6+8	2124

## Fees include

- ✚ Intensive language lessons with well-trained, competent and very motivated teachers.
- ✚ Accommodation during language course is with carefully chosen Bolivian host families and includes breakfast, lunch and laundry once a week. During social work accommodation is either with host families as during language course, or in an apartment for volunteers with access to kitchen. In national park accommodation as described.
- ✚ Welcome orientation and Sucre city tour.
- ✚ Books and teaching material.
- ✚ Placement test on arrival.
- ✚ A certificate and level assessment at the end of the course.
- ✚ Airport pick-up on arrival.
- ✚ Volunteer work mediation by the work coordinator.
- ✚ Assistance during your volunteer work.
- ✚ Plane ticket La Paz – Rurrenabaque – La Paz for work in the Jungle Experience.

- ✚ Access to the school's activity program during language course.
- ✚ Free use of all school facilities during language course.
- ✚ Free access to e-mail during language course.
- ✚ Fantastic service and atmosphere!

If you follow Spanish lessons in Ecuador or Peru before volunteering in Bolivia, you should expect a fee for accommodation and 115 Euro for job mediation and the individual sponsor amount.

You can enrol by mailing the enrolment form to: [info@exis.org](mailto:info@exis.org)

Please add a CV/resumé and a personal letter of motivation explaining why you are interested in working as a volunteer and stating any previous experience.

If you decide to extend your voluntary work period after arrival you can pay for extra food and accommodation directly to the coordinator at school.

## Bienvenido a Bolivia



## Enrolment form Bolivia

Please fill out in Spanish or English and mail to [info@exis.dk](mailto:info@exis.dk)



First name

---

Last name

---

Full address

---

Telephone

---

E-mail

---

Nationality

---

Occupation

---

Education

---

Birth date

---

How long have you studied Spanish?

Years

Months

---

Knowledge of other languages?

Years

Months

---

When can you start?

---

Length of course       2 weeks     4 weeks     6 weeks     8 weeks     10 weeks

Length of voluntary work     4 weeks     6 weeks     8 weeks     12 weeks     16 weeks

### Please give 3 priorities

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Womens prison San Roque               | <input type="radio"/> Adult psychiatric hospital                  |
| <input type="radio"/> Nursery home for poor children        | <input type="radio"/> Hospital/orphanage for handicapped children |
| <input type="radio"/> Center with after school activities   | <input type="radio"/> Orphanage for babies                        |
| <input type="radio"/> Culture foundation center             | <input type="radio"/> Day-care center                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Kindergarten 1.                       | <input type="radio"/> Hogar Mallorca                              |
| <input type="radio"/> Kindergarten 2.                       | <input type="radio"/> Refuge for wild animals                     |
| <input type="radio"/> Kindergarten for handicapped children | <input type="radio"/> Jungle experience                           |

Which accommodation do you prefer during voluntary work?     Family     Apartment

Do you smoke       Yes       No

Name, address, telephone of parents in case of emergency

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Where did you find EXIS?

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I have read, understood and accept the general conditions and information

For voluntary work enrolments, please add a letter of motivation explaining why you are interested in volunteering and stating any previous experience.

EXIS ApS • Slotsalléen 20, Troense • 5700 Svendborg • Danmark • E-mail: [info@exis.org](mailto:info@exis.org) • [www.exis.org](http://www.exis.org)

CVR-nr: 12886675

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## General information

### Visa

Upon arrival at La Paz airport, you will receive a tourist visa for 3 months. If you wish to stay longer in Bolivia it is possible to extend your visa. The school coordinator will help you with the formalities.

### Vaccinations

Make sure your vaccinations are up to date. For more information on which vaccinations could be necessary please contact your family doctor or insurance company. For volunteers working in the Jungle Experience a yellow fever vaccine is required. We also recommend malaria pills and vitamin B12. (It works as an excellent natural mosquito repellent).

### Work permit

No work permit is required as your volunteer work is considered a cultural exchange.

### Insurance

European health insurances do not give coverage outside Europe. Make sure that you take out a private insurance.

### Travel expenses

Travel expenses are not included in the price.

As it often is very difficult to get a flight connection from La Paz to Sucre without an overnight stay we recommend the "La Paz travel pack", organized by the school. This service package includes:

- ✚ Airport pick up in La Paz by an English speaking person.
- ✚ Booking of a hotel room.
- ✚ Booking of plane to Sucre with departure the next day.
- ✚ 24 hours mobile phone service to an English speaking person, in case of delayed arrival in La Paz.
- ✚ 10 % reduction on hotel and flight prices.
- ✚ Package price is 250 USD (subject to change)

### Payment conditions

Upon receipt of your enrolment form, EXIS will send you a confirmation and invoice. A deposit of 200 € is to be paid upon receipt of this confirmation. The remaining amount is to be paid six weeks prior to your arrival in Bolivia. If you enrol less than six weeks before arrival, the entire program price will be payable upon enrolment.

### Cancellation

If you cancel your application before receiving information about your host family, EXIS will refund your deposit minus a deduction of 200 € for administration.

If your application is cancelled after receiving the address of your host family your deposit will not be refunded whilst the balance will be refunded in full. After arrival in Bolivia, there is no cancellation possibility, and no refunds are made.

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