



2017 Visitor Guide

The Amistad Experience

A visit to Amistad Mission in Bolivia is as different as any travel experience you might have, encompassing renewal and transformation, an increased appreciation for gifts personally received, and a strengthened faith.



The impact of the experience may vary. Some will find the joy and innocence of the children of Villa Amistad, our Children's Village, filling them with a sense of purpose and renewal that will last a lifetime. Some will find the quiet solitude and massive grandeur of Aramasí to be God's chapel for a contemplative time of introspection, away from the hustle and busyness of life in the U.S. Others encounter transformation from a visit to Amistad for Families, our program to strengthen vulnerable families who are at risk of abandoning their children to orphanages. The exposure to a developing country will be educational for many, making one aware of the severe problems that exist and the difficulties of life experienced by most of the world's population.

As a shared experience, the journey can bring a family or group more tightly together, while creating fellowship with people whose daily lives are much different than our own. The trip is also an excellent experience for youth to mature in their faith under the leadership of capable, experienced youth leaders.

God's vision for Amistad Mission continues to unfold, and we invite you to help us make that vision a reality. If you have any questions, or would like information on planning a trip, please contact our Executive Director, Chris King, at cell phone 615-406-3070 and email cking@amistadmission.org.

Your Itinerary

Chris King, our Executive Director, works with each group to develop an itinerary that meets its needs. Activities will include building relationships with the children and communities at Villa Amistad, Aramasí and Amistad for Families, as well as exploring parts of the city of Cochabamba and the Bolivian culture. We encourage groups to reflect on these transformational experiences and their significance for personal growth.

About Bolivia

Bolivia, a landlocked republic in west-central South America, is bordered by Brazil to the northeast, Argentina and Paraguay to the south, and Chile and Peru to the west. Two ranges of the rugged Andes Mountains dominate the western third of the country. The eastern two-thirds of Bolivia include the lowland plains of the Amazon Basin, gently rolling hills, and a dense tropical forest. The lowlands have a hot and humid environment, while the mountains feature a cooler, arid climate. Bolivia's economy is driven by the sectors of natural gas, mining and agriculture. Exports include: natural gas, petroleum, zinc, gold and soybeans. The U.S. Geological Service estimates Bolivia to have at least half of the world's lithium reserves in El Salar de Uyuni.

Nearly 70% of the country's population is indigenous Amerindian, including the Quechuas, Aymaras, and Guaraní (Bolivian Census, 2012). Spanish and several dozen indigenous languages are the official languages of Bolivia. Of the indigenous languages, Quechua and Aymara are the most widely spoken.

Travel

Visa Requirement for Bolivia

U.S. citizens entering Bolivia are required to have a tourist visa issued by the Bolivian government. The visa may be obtained upon arrival to immigration at the La Paz or Santa Cruz airport. Bolivian tourist visas are valid for ten years from the date of issuance. The cost for the ten-year tourist visa is \$160 U.S. dollars. Visitors are encouraged to bring the exact amount of the visa cost. The fee must be paid in cash, and several series of \$100 bills are not accepted, so please bring denominations no greater than \$50 to purchase the visa. It is also important that the bills do not have **any** tears. In addition to the visa fee, the applicant must present:

- Recent 5x5 [cm] color photograph without glasses (passport size photo)
- Visa application, which Amistad will email to you (must be printed out)
- Passport with a validity of at least 6 months after your scheduled return from Bolivia
- Letter of invitation, which Amistad will provide to your group leader
- Round trip ticket or itinerary (must be printed out)
- Hotel accommodations, if staying overnight in La Paz or Santa Cruz (must be printed out)

Flights

From Miami, direct service to La Paz (LPB) or Santa Cruz (VVI) is provided by American Airlines. There is one flight every day leaving Miami around 10:20 p.m. and arriving to La Paz at 5:00 a.m., or to Santa Cruz at 7:30 a.m. By flying through Santa Cruz (located in the low plains of Bolivia), one will avoid the shock of stepping into the La Paz airport of El Alto at 13,500 feet. If you do go through La Paz, breath deeply, walk slowly and avoid carrying heavy baggage. Porters and carts are available and may be tipped in U.S. dollars. You may also want to bring an altitude sickness medication, like Diamox, if you plan to disembark in La Paz. The Santa Cruz airport is at less than 1,000 feet.

For flights from La Paz or Santa Cruz to Cochabamba, BOA Airlines is recommended. Flights between these cities are inexpensive and can be booked through their website at www.boa.bo. The flying times between La Paz and Cochabamba and Santa Cruz and Cochabamba are thirty-five and forty-five minutes, respectively. BOA Airlines also offers international flights from Miami to Cochabamba.

Luggage

American Airlines, our most widely used international carrier, currently allows 2 bags to be checked, each weighing no more than 50 pounds (not to incur excess weight fees). American Airlines charges no fee for the first and second checked bag. A third checked bag, free of charge, is permitted only for business class passengers (check current AA bag fees before trip). BOA Airlines, our preferred Bolivian air carrier, domestically allows for 44 pounds, with a fee of \$1 for each additional 2.2 pounds. You are also allowed one carry on item plus a purse or small bag. If you are traveling on a different airline, you will want to check with your airline regarding their luggage specifications.

Arriving in Bolivia

Upon arrival to Bolivia, you will go through Immigration and purchase the tourist visa (or have your passport stamped, if you already have it). You will receive a green form on the plane to fill out for Immigration. The official will give you back the bottom part of the green form. **Keep this green form to present to Immigration upon leaving the country.**

After claiming your bags (**keep your bag tags to leave baggage claim in all Bolivian airports**) at the Cochabamba airport, an Amistad representative will greet and take you to the Amistad Guest House, La Morada, overlooking the city of Cochabamba at 9,000 feet.

Accommodations

La Morada, "The Dwelling Place," accommodates 10 guests in private rooms, and as many as 14 with sharing. Bathing facilities are shared. There is a small chapel ideal for personal reflection or group worship. There is also a small living room, a dining room, a kitchen and a washing machine. Towels, linens and hair dryers are provided for guests. La Morada offers hospitality to approximately 85 North American visitors each year.

Room and Board

Visitors to Amistad Mission are asked to cover the expenses of being hosted. The charge is currently \$75/night for adults and \$50/night for youth. This price includes room and board, transportation in Cochabamba and to Aramasí, driver, and a Spanish-speaking guide furnished by Amistad. Before you begin your trip, please send a check for this expense made payable to Amistad Mission to our U.S. accounting office at:

Amistad Mission
P.O. Box 23030
Nashville, TN 37202

We also ask that your group consider leaving a modest gratuity with La Morada's caretaker, Esperanza Solíz, the guide and the driver (a suggestion would be for the group as a whole to leave a total of \$75 - \$100 for each of these three staff members).

Long Distance Phone Calls and Internet Access

There is a phone at La Morada. However, calls are only available to calling cards and incoming calls. An Internet cafe is located within a block from La Morada, and your guide can direct you to its location when you arrive. Check rates for your cell phone carrier's international call and/or data plans. There is no Wi-Fi access at La Morada. Limited Wi-Fi is available at Villa Amistad.

Emergency Contact Numbers in Bolivia

Friends and family can reach our guests in Bolivia at the following numbers:

Villa Amistad Office: (011) 591-4-430-0007
La Morada, Retreat House: (011) 591-4-445-6308
Lila Ewel, Bolivian Director: (011) 591-7-221-7704

Other Expenses

Taking the children on outings, eating out and shopping are all personal, extra expenses. Bolivia offers a wide variety of local handicrafts, weavings, jewelry, sweaters, etc. Visitors often report spending \$75 to \$300 on these and other items and outings.

Electrical Current

Electricity in Bolivia is 220 Volts. If you travel to Bolivia with a device that does not accept 220 Volts, you will need a voltage converter. Otherwise, you will only need an adapter and not a converter. Bolivian outlets have two rounded side-by-side holes. It is wise to bring adapters for computer and other electronic devices, such as phones, cameras, and tablets. Most modern electronic devices accept up to 240 Volts, so be sure to check your chargers before traveling to Bolivia. There are hair dryers available at La Morada, and visitors should not bring their own.

Vaccinations

The following immunizations are recommended by the Center for Disease Control for travel to Cochabamba. For updated information check with your local health department or the Center for Disease Control's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-394-8747 or <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. The Center for Disease Control recommends the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus (good for 10 years)
- Typhoid (Oral pills good for 5 years, injectable vaccination good for 2 years)
- Hepatitis A (need a booster 6 months after initial vaccination, then good for 15-25 years)

Medical Attention and Medication

Should you need medical attention, there are fine doctors and clinics in Cochabamba. We, of course, recommend that visitors bring any prescribed medication they are currently taking, including any allergy medicine that you might need. There is not a prescription requirement in Bolivia for many medicines, so if you need or forget some medication, it is probably available locally without a prescription.

Food and Water

A concern when one visits South America is the possibility of gastro-intestinal problems. This is a risk. The food at La Morada and Aramasí are carefully prepared with North American stomachs in mind and bottled water is provided. It is important to be careful of airport food, soft drinks chilled with ice cubes that may come from non-potable water, and any food sold on the streets.

What to Pack

Because of the high altitude, but relative closeness to the equator, nights are generally cool and the days warm, which is why Cochabamba is called the City of Eternal Spring. Bolivian winter (June to August) is the dry season, with little rain, low humidity and dusty conditions. The temperature ranges from nightly lows of 40° to daytime highs of 75°.

Bolivian summer (late November to March) is the rainy season with intermittent showers. The temperature is still pleasant with highs around 75°-85° and nightly lows around 50°-60°. A rain jacket is recommended for travel this time of year.

September-October and April-May are generally very pleasant with little chance of rain. Layers are the most convenient way to dress for the wide range of temperature changes. It is important to remember that the sun is intense. When you are outside, be sure to wear sunscreen, a good hat, and sunglasses. Bolivian men wear long pants and the women wear skirts that are below the knee, but shorts are acceptable for U.S. visitors.

Items to pack:

- Socks
- Underwear
- Shirts
- Pants (shorts are ok, but not commonly worn)
- Shoes
 - sturdy walking shoes
 - flip-flops for La Morada shower facility
- Light jacket or sweater
- Rain jacket (if traveling between November and March)
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries
- Personal medications
- Sunscreen
- Lip balm or chap stick (with sunscreen)
- Eye drops (high altitude/dry air)
- Lotion (high altitude/dry air)
- Pepto-Bismol
- Hand sanitizer
- Camera (charger for digital camera)
- Electric Adapter and/or Converter (220v/50hz)
- Journal or notepad and pens
- Bible
- Travel alarm
- Flashlight (especially for Aramasí)
- Passport (plus a photo copy)
- Money (at least \$160 in crisp bills) - will need to pay for the visa
- ATM Card (particularly if it does not charge international fees)
- Credit card (be sure to notify them of your international travel dates)
- Ear plugs
- Passport Photo (for visa)

Gifts from Visitors

We request that all gifts, letters, pictures and items for the children or staff be brought to the Villa Amistad office, so that we can register the items and ensure that children respond to mail from their friends in the U.S. Groups typically take all of the items to the office on the first morning at Villa Amistad and are usually able to personally deliver gifts from prayer friends within a day or two.

Currency

The local currency is the Boliviano (Bs) and is valued at approximately 6.90 to the US dollar. US dollars are easily exchanged in the airports and on the streets of Cochabamba for the local currency (Bolivianos). Also, US bills with the slightest tears in their edges may be considered non-negotiable, so bring newer, crisp currency. It is easy to withdraw money in Bolivianos at ATM machines in the airport (check your bank's international rates) or around the city. Almost all of the restaurants and hotels (**not the Bolivian marketplaces**) on your trip will accept credit cards.

Communications with Amistad

To learn more about Amistad Mission or to schedule a visit with your group or church, you may contact Chris King, who lives in Nashville, Tennessee. He may be reached directly by phone at 615-406-3070 or by email cking@amistadmission.org.

You may find Amistad's website at www.amistadmission.org.

Amistad Mission Forms

Prior to your visit, the following documents **must** be submitted to Amistad Mission's Executive Director at:

Chris King
4208 Colorado Ave.
Nashville, TN 37209

- Participant Information Form
- Agreement, Release and Waiver Liability Form

Amistad Mission Participant Information Form

Participant's Name (please print as stated on passport) _____
(If participant is a minor, please include name and address of parents/ guardians below**)

Dates and name of group with which you will be traveling _____

Participant's Home Address Number & Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Nos.: Home _____ Work _____ Mobile _____

E-mail Address _____

**If Participant is a minor, please provide:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

Address of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Number & Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone of parent(s)/Guardians: Day time _____ Night time _____

In case of Emergency, please notify:

Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Email _____

Address: # and Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: Day time _____ Night time _____ Mobile _____

Participant's Passport # _____ Passport Country of Issue _____

Passport Expiration Date _____

Agreement, Release and Waiver of Liability

This Agreement, Release and Waiver of Liability ("Release") is executed this ____ day of _____, 2017 by _____ ("Participant") in favor of Amistad Mission, Inc, Birmingham, Alabama, a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Alabama ("Amistad"), members of Amistad's Board of Directors and employees of Amistad (collectively, "Amistad Mission").

The Participant freely and voluntarily, without duress, executes this Release and agrees to the following terms and conditions:

1. Travel Requirements

The Participant understands the Pilgrimage will include travel by air to and from the United States and Bolivia, and by bus, van, taxi or auto within Bolivia, and will visit various locations in Bolivia. The Participant acknowledges that he or she has read and understands the materials relating to the Pilgrimage provided with this Release. The Participant agrees to, as requested, secure all of the required inoculations prior to the departure date, as well as required passport.

2. Waiver and Release

The Participant releases and forever discharges and holds harmless Amistad Mission from any and all liability, claims and demands of whatever kind or nature either in law or in equity which arise out of or may hereafter arise out of the undersigned Participant's participation in the Pilgrimage. The Participant understands and acknowledges that this Release discharges Amistad Mission from any liability or claim that the Participant may have against Amistad Mission with respect to any bodily or personal injury, illness, death or property damage or loss that may result from the Participant's participation in the Pilgrimage. The Participant also understands and acknowledges that Amistad Mission does not assume any responsibility or obligation to provide financial assistance or other assistance, including, but not limited to medical, health or disability insurance or coverage in the event of injury, illness, death or property damage or loss on behalf of the Participant.

3. Insurance

The Participant understands that Amistad Mission does not carry or maintain any travel, health, medical or disability insurance coverage that would cover the Participant with respect to the Pilgrimage, and obtaining any such insurance coverage is the sole responsibility of the Participant.

4. Medical Treatment

The Participant releases and forever discharges and holds harmless Amistad Mission from any claim whatsoever that arises or may arise on account of any first aid treatment or other medical services that may be rendered in connection with an emergency during the Pilgrimage.

5. Assumption of Risk

The Participant understands and acknowledges that his or her participation in the Pilgrimage may include activities that may be hazardous to the Participant, including but not limited to local transportation to and from various locations. The Participant expressly and specifically assumes the risk of injury, illness, death or property damage or loss resulting from the Participant's participation in the Pilgrimage.

6. Use of Photos and Video

The Participant understands and acknowledges that any personal photos or video submitted to Amistad Mission may be used in promotional materials, including printed mailings, presentations, and on Amistad Mission's website and social media accounts. The Participant also agrees that any use of personal photos or video taken of the children and youth at Amistad Mission during the Pilgrimage will not identify Bolivian children under the age of 18 by name on social media.

7. Miscellaneous

This Release shall be governed by the laws of the State of Alabama. This Release is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the laws of the State of Alabama. In the event any provision of this Release is held to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity or unenforceability of such provision shall not otherwise affect the remaining provisions of the Release and such provisions shall continue to remain enforceable. This Release shall be binding on the Participant, as well as his or her heirs and personal representatives.

PARTICIPANT:

Printed Name

Parents or Legal Guardians if Participant is less than 18 years of age:

Printed Name

Printed Name