

Amistad Mission Visitor Guide

Mission Statement

Amistad Mission is a Christian partnership between North Americans and Bolivians that exists to:

- *Meet the medical, nutritional, educational, public health, and spiritual needs of the Quechua natives in rural Aramasi and the surrounding region;*
- *Raise orphaned and abandoned Bolivian Children—from childhood, through the teen-age years, to adulthood – in a Christian family/community environment at La Villa Amistad in the City of Cochabamba;*
- *Forge friendships between North Americans and Bolivians responding to the call of Christ to serve the poor, specifically those of Bolivia.*

The Amistad Experience

A visit to the 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 quiet solitude and massive grandeur of Aramasi to be God's chapel for a contemplative time of introspection, away from the hustle and elbowing of our world. Some will find the joy and innocence of the children of our orphanage filling them with a sense of purpose and renewal that will last a lifetime. The exposure to a developing country will be an education to some, 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 and offers the opportunity to enter into fellowship with people who live a life so different from ours. 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. Contact us today, make a pilgrimage to Amistad, and become a part of history in the making. If you have any questions, or would like information on planning a trip, please contact our US Executive Director, Amy Thompson at telephone 713-802-2086 and email athompson@amistadmission.org.

Your Itinerary

Amy Thompson, our Executive Director, works with each group to develop itinerary that meets their needs. Activities will include not only experiencing the work of the Mission in the Children's Villa, our orphanage, and Aramasi where our clinic, day care and community development projects are located, but also various aspects of the city of Cochabamba and the Bolivian culture. Each group is also encouraged to reflect on these experiences and their significance for personal spiritual growth through discussions about Bolivian history, culture, religion, and the social situation.

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. Between the ranges lies a high plateau that contains the Uyuni salt bed, the largest concentration of salt in the world. 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. Natural resources include gold, silver, tin, zinc, iron, oil, natural gas, timber, and hydropower.

More than half of the country's population is indigenous Amerindian, including the Quechuas, Aymaras, and Guarini. The majority of Caucasian Bolivians, who make up 15 percent of the population, are of Spanish descent. Mestizos (a mixture of Caucasian and Amerindian) represent 30 percent of inhabitants. Spanish is the official language of the country and is spoken by more than 80 percent of the people. The Aymara and Quechua languages are widely spoken.

Although the government has vowed to reduce the economic inequality, many health issues related to poverty still remain. Access to health services among indigenous groups is limited. Six percent of Bolivian children do not live to see their fifth birthday — the second-highest rate in South America. Malnutrition rates are also high, resulting in approximately 27 percent of children exhibiting stunted growth. The United Nations estimates that while there is enough food in to feed the entire population, many of the rural, indigenous poor, still suffer from hunger.

Travel

Visa Requirement for Bolivia

U.S. citizens entering Bolivia are required to have a visa issued by the Bolivian government. Bolivian tourist visas are valid for five years from the date of issuance and allow the bearer to enter the country three times in a year for a cumulative stay of not more than ninety days. The cost of the tourist visa is \$135 U.S. dollars. The fee can be paid in cash, by deposit to the Bolivian Consulate's bank account or by money order. Tourists applying for their visas upon arrival in Bolivia must pay this fee in cash to immigration authorities. In addition to the \$135 fee and visa application, the applicant must present:

- Recent 4x4 [cm] color photograph without glasses
- Passport with a validity of not less than 6 months
- Letter of invitation which Amistad will provide
- Round trip ticket or itinerary
- Economic solvency (credit card, cash or a current bank statement)
- Photocopy of International Vaccination Certificate for Yellow Fever

Flights

From Miami, direct service to La Paz or Santa Cruz is provided by American Airlines and Aerosur. There are some day time flights although most are overnight, leaving Miami around 11:00 p.m. and arriving early the next morning. By flying through Santa Cruz (located in the low plains of Bolivia) one will avoid the shock of stepping into the rarefied air of La Paz at 13,500 feet. If you do go through La Paz, breath deeply, walk slowly and avoid carrying baggage if possible. The flying times between La Paz and Cochabamba and Santa Cruz and Cochabamba are thirty-five and forty-five minutes, respectively.

Luggage

American Airlines and Aerosur currently allows 2 bags to be checked, each no more than 62 inches (calculated as length + width + depth) and weighing no more than 50 pounds. You are also allowed one carry on item plus a purse or small bag. The carry on item can be no larger than 45 inches and weigh no more than 40 pounds. If you are traveling on a different airline, you will want to check with your airline regarding their luggage specifications. You may consider including a backpack of some sort as one of your carry on items to have available if you plan on doing day trips or excursions in Bolivia.

Arriving in Bolivia

After clearing immigration and customs at the Cochabamba airport, an Amistad representative will greet and take you to the Amistad Guest House, La Morada, overlooking the city of Cochabamba.

Accommodations

La Morada, "The Dwelling Place," accommodates 11 guests in private rooms, and as many as 17 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 hand laundry area. La Morada offers hospitality to approximately 100 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/ day or \$525 per week for adults and \$50/ 350 per week for students. This price includes room and board, transportation in Cochabamba and to Aramasi, and a Spanish speaking guide furnished by Amistad. This fee should be paid to our U.S. office at 55 Scott Street, Buford, GA 30518, before you begin your trip. We also ask that you leave an appropriate gratuity with the staff at La Morada. The amount is discretionary and should be appropriate to any special requests you may make.

Long Distance Phone Calls and Internet Access

There is a phone at La Morada (direct dial from the US is 011-591-4-429-5140. However, rates will be much better if you have a phone card or code from your carrier; check with your carrier to get information. Mobile phones with a GSM 1900 band will work in all places except Aramasi.

There is a computer with internet access available at La Morada, although access can be slow. Two internet cafes are located within walking distance and your guide can direct you to their locations when you arrive.

Other Expenses

Extra trips to the countryside, going out to eat, and shopping are all personal, extra expenses. Bolivia offers a wide variety of local handicrafts, weavings, jewelry, sweaters, etc. Visitors often report spending \$20 to \$300 on these and other items. You will need to save \$30 per person for the departure tax at the airport.

Electrical Current

Electricity in Bolivia is 230 Volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. If you travel to Bolivia with a device that does not accept 230 Volts at 50 Hertz, you will need a voltage converter. There are three main types of voltage converter. Resistor-network converters will usually be advertised as supporting something like 50-1600 Watts. They are light-weight and support high-wattage electrical appliances like hair dryers and irons. However, they can only be used for short periods of time and are not ideal for digital devices.

Transformers will have a much lower maximum Watt rating, usually 50 or 100. Transformers can often be used continuously and provide better electricity for low wattage appliances like battery chargers, radios, laptop computers, cameras, mp3 players and camcorders. However, they are heavy because they contain large iron rods and lots of copper wire.

Health Considerations

Anyone receiving medical treatment, under a doctor's care, or over 65 years of age must present to Amistad a written physician's statement for permission to travel.

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 and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-394-8747 (1-877-FYI-TRIP) or <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>. Please note that the Yellow Fever vaccination is required for entry into Bolivia.

Additionally the Center for Disease Control recommends that you get the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus (good for 10 years)
- Oral Typhoid (good for 5 years)
- Hepatitis A (need a booster 6 months after initial vaccination, then good for 10-25 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 no prescription requirement in Bolivia for many medicines, so if you need or forget some medication, it is probably available locally without a prescription, but may be expensive.

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 Aramasi 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, the nights are generally cool and the days warm, which is why Cochabamba is called the city of eternal springtime. Bolivian winter (June to August) is the dry season, with little rain, low humidity and dusty conditions. The temperature ranges from nightly lows of 30° to daytime highs of 80°. A sweater or sweatshirt and light jacket are recommended. 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 have sunscreen, a good hat, and sun-glasses as well as skin moisturizer, lip balm, and bottled water. Bolivian summer (December to February) is the rainy season with frequent showers. Cloudy rainy days are cool with highs of 70° and sunny days are warm with high of 85° - 90°. Nightly lows are 60°-65°, so a light jacket or sweater is recommended. Spring and fall are generally very pleasant with warm temperatures and slight chances of rain. Bolivians generally wear long pants and the women wear skirts that are below the knee but shorts are becoming more acceptable.

Items to pack:

- Socks
- Underwear
- Shirts
- Pants (shorts are ok weather permitting)
- Shoes
 - sturdy walking shoes or boots
 - 1 or more casual
 - flip-flops for La Morada shower facility

- Light jacket or sweater
- Hat
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries
- Personal medications
- Sunscreen
- Lip balm or chap stick (with sunscreen)
- Eye drops (high altitude/dry air)
- Lotion (high altitude/dry air)
- Hand sanitizer (Purell or other alcohol based)
- Camera/film (charger for digital camera)
- Electric Converter (220v/50hz)
- Journal or notepad and pens
- Bible
- Travel alarm
- Flashlight (especially for Aramasi)
- Passport (plus a photo copy)
- Immunization record
- Money (\$200) - will need to pay for the visa and departure tax at airports
- Credit card (Visa or MasterCard)
- Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)

Currency

The local currency is referred to as the Peso-Boliviano (Bs) and is valued at approximately 6.9\$ to the US dollar. It is best not to buy Bolivian currency before arriving due to unfavorable exchange rates. US dollars are easily exchanged or taken in payment except for one dollar bills sometimes. Also, bills with the slightest tears in their edges or otherwise mutilated are considered non-negotiable, so bring newer, crisper currency. Most credit cards and ATM cards work well, although there is no American Express office in Cochabamba. Amex Travelers checks are difficult to negotiate.

Communications with Amistad

To receive the Amistad Mission newsletter, electronic communications or other general correspondence or to receive more information on any Amistad programs, schedule a visit with your group or church, you may contact the Amistad Mission office at 55 Scott Street, Buford, Georgia. Our Executive Director Amy Thompson lives in Houston, Texas and may be contacted directly by telephone at 713-802-2086 or by athompson@amistadmission.org. You may find Amistad's website at www.amistadmission.org.

Amistad Mission Forms

Following please find the forms Amistad asks each person traveling to Bolivia to complete:

1. Participant Information Form – To be sent to group leader
2. Agreement and Release by Participant and Parent – To be sent to group leader
3. Health History Form (2 pages) – To be sent to group leader
4. Visa Form – To be taken by the visitor to Bolivia

2. Amistad Mission Agreement and Release by Participant and Parent

I, _____ (hereinafter sometimes called "Participant") do hereby specifically request that I be allowed to participate in the Retreat and Volunteer Programs sponsored by *Amistad Mission*.

I will, as requested, secure all of the required inoculations prior to my departure date, as well as required passport and/or visas incidental to foreign travel.

I agree at all times to abide and be bound by the promulgated rules and regulations for the conduct of Participants in the Retreat Program and the Volunteer Program, and I further agree that if, at any time, the Director or other expressly authorized staff member should determine that my personal conduct has discredited the status or reputation of *Amistad*, I will voluntarily return to the United States when directed to do so.

I further represent that I have fully advised *Amistad* as to all factors relating to my medical history, and my health and I further agree that if any substantial change should occur therein prior to my departure for Retreat and Volunteer Program locations, I will inform *Amistad*. In no event shall *Amistad* be responsible for any medical care or hospitalization incurred while in Bolivia, in transit, or after my return to the United States.

The parent(s) and/or guardian(s) of the above named minor Participant, sign below to evidence their consent to the participation of the above named Participant in the Retreat and Volunteer Programs and their specific request of and to *Amistad* that said above named minor Participant be permitted to participate in said program; and to further evidence their agreement to and guarantee of the undertakings hereinabove set forth.

Lastly, all of the undersigned jointly and severally, and the below named parent(s) or guardian(s), as the next of kin to the above named minor Participant, in consideration for the acceptance by *Amistad* of Participant in the Training and Field Program, join herein and so hereby release, acquit and discharge *Amistad*, its staff, officers and Trustees, and all the co-participants, physicians, sponsors, and adult participants in said program, of any and all claims, causes of action or damages whatsoever, in any way arising out of or in any manner connected with and participation in said program, any inoculations or medical treatment or any medical treatment rendered to said Participant in event of need; and such parent(s) or guardian(s) do hereby agree to indemnify the said beneficiaries of this release against any claim by the undersigned Participant based in whole or in part upon his or her minority.

Signed this ____ day of _____, 20____

(Participant's Signature)

(Parent/ Guardian Signature if participant is a minor) (Parent/ Guardian Signature if participant is a minor)

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO GROUP LEADER.

3. Amistad Mission Health History Form

(All information contained herein is confidential and to be shared with medical personnel only as required)

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
(Please print name)

Address: _____

Male () Female () Weight _____ Height _____

NOTE: All Amistad volunteers are required to carry medical insurance coverage.

Health/Medical Insurance Provider: _____

Name of Insured: _____

Policy #: _____ Group #: _____

Does your health/medical insurance provide for international coverage? _____

Physicians Name: _____ Telephone #: _____

Section A: Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. You may use the back of the page if necessary.

1. Do you currently have or have you had in the past year any medical illness? If yes, please describe.

2. Do you have any chronic medical conditions? If yes, please explain.

3. Do you take medications regularly? If yes, please list all medications and the reason the medication was prescribed.

4. Do you have any allergies to medications? If yes, please explain.

5. Have you been treated or hospitalized for a mental or emotional condition in the last five years? If yes, please explain.

6. Is there anything else you feel your tour leader should be aware of regarding your health?

I certify all information I have supplied in this health history is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

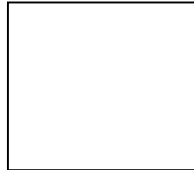
NOTE: *Because of the widespread prevalence of certain diseases overseas, many individuals may need updates on polio, tetanus, and measles vaccines.*

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO GROUP LEADER.



Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Cultos de Bolivia
 Viceministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Cultos
 Dirección General de Régimen Consular
 www. rree.gov.bo

Ministerio de Gobierno
 Viceministerio de Régimen Interior
 Dirección Nacional de Migración
 Avenida Camacho No. 1614
 Tel/Fax (591-2) 2110960



No. _____

DECLARACIÓN JURADA DE SOLICITUD DE VISA SWORN STATEMENT FOR VISA APPLICATION

NOTA: No está permitido el cambio de status migratorio en Bolivia
NOTE: It is not allowed to change migratory status while in Bolivia

TIPO DE VISA REQUERIDA/TYPE OF VISA REQUESTED:

TURISTA/TOURIST OBJETO DETERMINADO/SPECIFIC PURPOSE
 ESTUDIANTE/STUDENT EN TRANSITO/ TRANSIT

1. Apellidos/Surnames:	Primer nombre/First name:	Segundo nombre/Middle name:
Lugar y fecha de nacimiento Place and date of birth:	Nacionalidad/Nationality:	Estado civil/Marital status: Casado(a)/Married..... Soltero(a)/Single..... Viudo(a)/Widowed..... Separado/Separated..... Divorciado(a)/Divorced.....
(Opcional) Carnet de identidad/ (Optional) National Identification Number:	Ocupación actual/Present occupation: 	
Clase y número de pasaporte/Passport type and number:	Fecha de emisión/Issuing date:.....	
Lugar de emisión/Place of issuance:	Fecha de expiración/Expiration date:.....	
Ciudad/City:		
País/Country:		
Teléfono de su residencia/Home phone number:		
Teléfono donde trabaja/Work phone number:		
Teléfono Celular/Mobile:.....		
Buscapersona/Beeper number:		

Dirección electrónica/Email address:	
Solicitó visa anteriormente?/Have you applied before for a visa?: Si/Yes No	
Dónde?/Where?..... Fecha/Date:.....	Cuánto tiempo desea permanecer en Bolivia?/How long do you intend to stay in Bolivia?
Qué lugar le gustaría visitar?/Which place would you like to visit?:	Tiene familiares en Bolivia?/Do you have relatives in Bolivia?: Si/Yes No
.....	Nombre completo/Full name:.....
.....	Dirección/ address:.....
.....	Ciudad/City:.....
.....	Teléfono/Telephone:.....

(Opcional) Persona(s) de contacto en caso de emergencia/(Optional) In case of emergency, contact:

2. Nombre completo/Full name: Nombre completo/Full name: Fecha de nacimiento/Date of birth: Dirección donde vive/Home address: Calle/Street address: Estado o Departamento/State or Province: Código Postal/Postal Code: País/Country:		Dirección donde trabaja/Work address:..... Calle/Street address:..... Ciudad/City:..... Estado o Departamento/State or Province:..... Código Postal/Postal Code:..... País/Country:..... Teléfono/Telephone number:.....	
3. Medio de Transporte/ Transportation: Aéreo/Plane Terrestre/Bus-Train-Others		Ruta/Route:..... Fecha de Retorno/Date of return:.....	
Lugar de presentación de la solicitud Place of application:	Día/Day	Mes/Month	Año/Year

Firma del solicitante
Applicant's Signature

Firma de la autoridad consular
Consul's Signature