2026 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.

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 Christian 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 works with each group to develop a personalized 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 mineral fuels, mining, and agriculture. Bolivia's most valuable exports include (monetary percentage of exports in 2023, according to Bolivia's National Statistics Institute): precious stones and metals (24%); ores, slag, and ash (23%); mineral fuels and oils (20%), and prepared animal fodder (9%). El Salar de Uyuni in southwestern Bolivia is the world's largest salt flat and contains one of Earth's largest lithium reserves.

The Wildlife Conservation Society recognizes Parque Nacional Madidi, located in the Northwest region of the Department of La Paz, as the most bio-diverse natural area in the world. It is home to over 8,000 species of plants and animals.

According to the 2024 Bolivian Census, nearly 39% of the country's population of 11.3 million people is indigenous Amerindian, including the Quechua, Aymara, and Guaraní. Spanish and several dozen indigenous languages are the official languages of Bolivia. Of the indigenous languages, Quechua and Aymara are the most widely spoken.

Amistad works exclusively in Cochabamba (Department pop. 2 million; City pop. 661,000). Known as The City of Eternal Spring, Cochabamba is in the heart of Bolivia. At an elevation of 9,000 feet and surrounded by the Tunari Mountains (part of the Andes Mountain range), Cochabamba offers perhaps the most pleasant climate in Bolivia. Cochabamba is home to Cristo de la Concordia, completed in 1994 and the world's second-tallest statue of Christ without a crown (see Christ the King, Poland). Without considering pedestals, the tallest statue is Christ the Protector in Encantado, Brazil, completed in 2022.

Travel

Requirements for Entry to Bolivia

U.S. citizens entering Bolivia **are no longer required** to have a tourist visa issued by the Bolivian government. However, it is necessary to bring the following documents to pass through Immigration in Bolivia:

- Passport with a validity of at least 6 months after your scheduled return from Bolivia
- Photocopy of your passport

- Round trip ticket or itinerary **(each traveler must have print out)**
- One-night hotel reservation in Santa Cruz or Cochabamba **(each traveler must have <u>their name on print out</u>)**

Flights

BoA (Boliviana de Aviación) is our most widely used international carrier. It offers overnight international flights from Miami to Cochabamba (with a brief layover in Santa Cruz). These flights depart Miami at 11:00 p.m. and arrive in Cochabamba at 8:15 a.m. On the return leg, BoA departs Cochabamba at 8:30 p.m. (with a layover in Santa Cruz) and arrives in Miami at 6:00 a.m. the next day.

You can book your international flights on BoA Airlines at www.boa.bo. If you are flying Economy, choose the cheapest option listed (as more costly Economy options do not provide additional perks). You will not be able to choose your seat assignments until approximately one month before departure. To do so, you will need to call BoA Airlines (Miami) at 305-591-3217. If you are flying Business Class on BoA Airlines, you can only book your tickets by calling the listed number, as there is no option for Business online.

United Airlines (including Copa Airlines, its Star Alliance member) is also used by some groups. Visitors travel on United or its affiliates from their city of origin to Santa Cruz, Bolivia (VVI), via Houston, TX and Panamá City, Panamá. The recommended flight schedule lands in Santa Cruz at approximately 9:30 p.m., necessitating a hotel stay there (Sun Hotel is recommended), before flying to Cochabamba the following morning.

For flights from Santa Cruz to Cochabamba, you will take BoA Airlines. There are three or four morning flight from Santa Cruz to Cochabamba (duration of 45 minutes), the first of which departs at 5:50 a.m. Flights between these cities are inexpensive and can be booked through BoA's website at www.boa.bo. Again, choose the cheapest option.

For your return trip home, the last BoA flight from Cochabamba to Santa Cruz departs at approx. 10:00 p.m. (duration of 45 minutes). Copa Airlines typically departs from Santa Cruz between 12:45-1:40 a.m. (en route to Panamá City, before flying to a U.S. city).

Luggage

For international flights to and from Miami, BoA Airlines allows two free checked bags weighing no more than 50 pounds each. You are also allowed one carry on item plus a purse or small bag. When you check your bags in Miami, you will reclaim them in Santa Cruz, pass through Customs, and hand them back to a BoA Airlines official in the same room as Customs, who will check them on to Cochabamba. You do not need to take them back to the BoA Airlines ticket counter, and you will already have your boarding pass to Cochabamba.

For international flights to Bolivia, United Airlines allows one free checked bag weighing no more than 50 pounds, and the second checked bag is $100. Please also note that you may be traveling on a regional jet from your originating city, before switching to a larger plane for your international flight. On some of these regional jets (CRJ-700 or ERJ-175, for example), a small personal item that does not fit under your seat will be required to be gate checked at no additional charge.

From Santa Cruz to Cochabamba, 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 using BoA internationally, the weight limit is two bags weighing 50 pounds each. 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 have your passport stamped. After claiming your bags **(keep your bag tags)** at the Cochabamba airport, an Amistad representative will greet and take you to the Amistad Retreat 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 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/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

Tipping

We also ask that your group consider leaving a modest gratuity with La Morada's caretaker (Esperanza Solíz) the guide, and the driver (Jimmy). A suggestion would be for the group as a whole to leave a total of $300 - $400 for **each** of these three staff members.

Internet Access

Check rates for your cell phone carrier's international call and/or data plans. Wi-Fi access at La Morada is very limited, but the Internet is reliably accessed there with a visitor's international data plan. 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 handcrafts, weavings, jewelry, sweaters, etc. Visitors often report spending $75 to $200/visitor 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 not need a converter. Bolivian outlets have two rounded side-by-side holes. Some visitors bring an adapter for computer and other electronic devices, such as phones, cameras, and tablets. However, if you do not, they are easily and cheaply obtained in Cochabamba. 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 <u>should not</u> bring their own.

Vaccinations

The following immunizations are recommended, not required, 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. You do not need any malaria medication.

- Tetanus
- Typhoid
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B

Medical Attention and Medication

Should you need medical attention, there are good 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.

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. It is best not to eat food offered to you in Villa Amistad. Visitors may also benefit from taking fiber supplements and Pepto-Bismol during their stay.

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 35-40° to daytime highs of 80-85°.

Bolivian summer (late November to March) is the rainy season with intermittent showers. The temperature is still pleasant with nightly lows of 50-55° and daytime highs of 80°-85°. 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*:**

- Eye mask (for plane)
- Socks
- Underwear
- Shirts
- Pants (shorts are ok, but be mindful of length)
- Shoes (sturdy walking shoes and 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
- Lotion (high altitude/dry air)
- Pepto-Bismol
- Imodium
- Hand sanitizer
- Phone and charger
- Journal or notepad and pens
- Bible
- Alarm (on watch or phone)
- Flashlight (if going to Aramasí)
- ATM Card (notify your bank of your international travel)
- Credit card (be sure to notify them of your international travel dates)
- Ear plugs (to muffle nighttime ambient noises at La Morada)
- Passport **(plus a photocopy)**
- **Print flight itinerary and hotel reservation**

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 day at Villa Amistad and are usually able to personally deliver gifts from prayer friends within a day.

Currency

The local currency is the boliviano (Bs) and is valued at approximately 8:1 U.S. dollar. U.S. dollars are easily exchanged in the airports and on the streets of Cochabamba for bolivianos. However, **you should bring crisp denominations of $100**, as lower denominations are often rejected. Also, **U.S. bills with the slightest tears in their edges will 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 restaurants and hotels **(not most 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 can visit Amistad's website at www.amistadmission.org.
You can like Amistad's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/amistadmissionbolivia.
You can follow Amistad on Instagram at www.instagram.com/amistadmission.
You can watch videos on our Vimeo page at www.vimeo.com/amistadmission.

Recommended Movies and Books

To understand the political and cultural depth of Bolivia, we suggest the following documentaries and books:

Documentaries
"Our Brand is Crisis" (the documentary, not the Sandra Bullock movie)
"Cocalero"
"The Devil's Miner"
"A Taste of Sky"

"Cocaine Prison"
"The Fight"
"Street Food: Latin America" (Episode 6 on Netflix)
"Most Dangerous Ways to School: Bolivia" (on YouTube)
"Magical Andes" (Episode 3 on Netflix)
"When the Bull Cried"
"Cholitas"

Books
¡Gracias! by Henri Nouwen
Pathways to Union with Jesus by Rev. William Wilson
My Other Country by Jim Shultz
Water for All by Sarah Hines
When Invisible Children Sing by Chi Cheng Huang
Whispering in the Giant's Ear by William Powers

Amistad Mission Forms

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

Chris King
5415 Tennessee Avenue
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: 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 _____ 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 _____, 2026 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 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