

# Flamingos & Floating Islands, Bolivia

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## Meta description

See sacred Inca ruins, fascinating museums, lively markets, red flamingos, a vast lake and the surreal landscape of the Salar de Uyuni on this trip to Bolivia.

## Single line for homepage

Explore Bolivia's fascinating landscape, sacred Inca ruins and intriguing wildlife on this action-packed trip.

## Summary

Experience ancient cultures, memorising landscapes and unusual wildlife on this incredible trip to Bolivia, the heart of South America. You'll visit the bustling cities of Santa Cruz, Sucre, and Potosi where you'll explore their rich cultural heritage, visit vibrant markets, watch how traditional handicrafts are made, and see the birthplace of Bolivian independence.

Along the way, we'll show you some of Bolivia's most awe-inspiring landscapes including the otherworldly environment of the Salar de Uyuni, the dramatic Eduardo Avaroa Reserve where you'll see red and pink flamingos on a vivid red lagoon, and the vast shimmering blue of Lake Titicaca. You'll also have time to relax on Sun Island, cradle of the Inca civilisation, and spend a few nights in a hotel made entirely from salt.

## Highlights

- Explore the surreal landscape of the Salar de Uyuni
- Visit sacred Inca ruins on serene islands
- Gaze at the vast azure-blue waters of Lake Titicaca
- Stay in a hotel made entirely from salt
- See flocks of pink flamingos on a red lagoon
- Peruse fascinating museums and lively markets

## Itinerary section

### Day 1-2 | Resort: Santa Cruz | Type: City

After an overnight flight via Madrid, you'll be whisked to the Cosmopolitano Hotel Boutique in the historical centre of Santa Cruz, arriving at 4am. You'll be able to check in straightaway, catch up with some sleep, and refresh yourself ready for the first day of your Bolivian adventure.

On the afternoon of day 2, we've arranged for a private tour to show you the highlights of Santa Cruz, Bolivia's largest city. We'll take you to Plaza 24 de Septiembre, the main square and a bustling hive of activity. Dating back almost 500 years, this old square was restored to its former glory in 2005 and is home to a number of beautiful historic houses and the cathedral, Basilica de San Lorenzo. Here you can see the Sacred Art Museum and climb to the top of the

clock tower for panoramic views over the city. Other highlights include the Artecampo, where you can peruse locally made handicrafts in a traditional house, and the El Abasto Indian market.

#### **Day 3-4 | Resort: Sucre | Type: City**

The next stage of your journey takes you back to Santa Cruz airport for the two-hour flight to Sucre, where you'll be staying at Mi Pueblo Samary Hotel Boutique. The rest of the day, you're free to wander around this UNESCO World Heritage Site, Bolivia's official capital and its most beautiful city.

The following day, we'll take you on a half-day tour of Sucre. You'll visit the Museum of Indigenous Arts, where locals produce, exhibit and sell traditional arts and textiles, before heading to the La Recoleta. Once a church and convent, this beautiful building is now a museum containing some of the city's most important religious artefacts. The gardens are home to an ancient cedar tree dating back over 1,500 years, and there are magnificent views over the city. Finally, you'll visit the most important house in Bolivia, the House of Liberty, where Simon Bolivar signed the declaration of independence.

#### **Day 5 | Resort: Potosi | Type: City/Tour**

On day 5, you're off to Potosi, one of the highest cities in the world at almost 4,100 metres. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is home to Cerro Rico, or Rich Mountain, the world's largest source of silver. The silver brought riches and heartache to the city, with thousands of indigenous people and African slaves brought here to work in brutal conditions down the mines.

You'll visit the National Mint, where silver coins were produced in colonial times, before heading to the Santa Teresa Museum, a working convent with some impressive religious artefacts. Finally, you'll have time to wander round the atmospheric colonial streets, before heading to your hotel, the opulent Parador Santa Maria La Real, where you can relax in the spa or enjoy rooftop views over the city.

#### **Day 6 | Resort: Uyuni | Type: Tour**

On day 6, you'll have a private transfer to Uyuni, where you'll check into the Hotel de Sal Luna Salada, a hotel made entirely from salt on the edge of the world's largest salt flats. Here you can relax and enjoy sweeping views over this otherworldly landscape.

#### **Day 7 | Resort: Ojo de Perdiz | Type: Activity & Adventure**

After breakfast, we'll take you south of the salt flats to the Eduardo Avaroa Reserve. This ethereal landscape is brimming with colourful lagoons, hissing geysers, hot springs, rocky outcrops, and bubbling volcanoes.

You'll visit the Laguna Colorada, whose waters are stained shades of red thanks to its high mineral content. Here you can see three different species of flamingos, their pink plumage a vivid contrast to the vibrant red waters. Next we'll take you to the Sol de Manana geysers, where red rocks and boiling mud will make you

think you've landed on Mars. Other highlights include Laguna Verde, with its emerald-green waters, and the famous stone tree, a rock formation that's been moulded by the winds to look like a tree. Along the way, keep your eyes peeled for rare Andean wildlife, including the Andean fox, herds of vicunas (small South American camelids) and cute viscachas (members of the chinchilla family).

You'll bed down for the night at the Ojo de Perdiz Hotel.

### **Day 8-9 | Resort: Uyuni | Type: Tour/Activity & Adventure**

On day 8, you'll head back to Uyuni, via the Siloli Desert, the world's highest desert at 4,550 metres. Here you'll explore bizarre rock formations made from petrified lava flows that have been eroded by the wind, and see more colourful lagoons. Along the way, enjoy a picnic lunch in the barren landscape.

After another night in the salt hotel, you'll visit the Salar de Uyuni on day 9. Spanning an area of over 12,000 square kilometres, this flat landscape stretches as far as the eye can see, marked by geometric shapes in the dry season, when the surface is hard and crusty, and covered in a thin layer of water during wet season, when the horizon disappears and the distant mountains seem to float in the air. You'll visit the Isla Incahuasi, a hilly outcrop in the middle of the salt lake that's covered in cacti, enjoy a picnic lunch, and have plenty of time to play with perspective and take some surreal photos.

Later that day, you'll wander through the small village of Tahua at the foot of the Tunupa Volcano, held sacred by the indigenous communities, and hike to the Coquesa Cave, home to a family of mummies dating back over 1,200 years.

### **Day 10 | Resort: La Paz | Type: City**

On day 10, you'll fly to La Paz where you'll overnight at La Casona Hotel Boutique.

### **Day 11-12 | Resort: Sun Island | Type: Tour / Activity & Adventure**

On day 11, it's time for a change of pace after all that exploring. You'll travel to Copacabana on the shores of Lake Titicaca where you'll board a hydrofoil to the Isla del Sol, Sun Island, birthplace of the Inca sun goddess. This serene, sacred island is free from motorised vehicles and fringed with sandy beaches. Here, you'll visit the Temple of the Sun and Inca palace at Pilcocaina, and enjoy a llama trek to your hotel, Posada del Inca eco-lodge.

The rest of your time on Sun Island, you're free to explore. You can hike the island for magnificent views over the shimmering blue of Lake Titicaca, explore more Inca ruins, or simply laze on the beaches. Top off your evening with a sundowner while watching sunset over the lake.

### **Day 13-14 | Resort: La Paz | Type: City**

After a leisurely breakfast and relaxing morning, you'll meet your guide at noon to explore the Inca grand stairs and drink from the sacred fountain, believed to be the source of eternal youth. After lunch at the Uma Kollu Archaeological

Restaurant (payable locally), you'll visit the small handicraft market, then it's time to bid farewell to Sun Island.

After stopping at the Isla de la Luna, Moon Island, where you'll take in the Temple of the Moon, Inak Uyu, you'll reach the shores of Copacabana. This charming town is home to the most important Catholic shrine in Bolivia, the Indian Dark Virgin, which you'll visit before beginning your trip back to La Paz.

En route, you'll call into the Andean Roots Eco Village at Huatajata, where you can visit the small Altiplano Museum, shop at the handicrafts village, see how the mud igloos were built, and meet herds of Andean llamas and alpacas.

Then you can sit back and enjoy the snowy peaks of the Andes from the comfort of your vehicle as you travel to La Paz. Overnight in La Casona Hotel Boutique, before heading home on day 14, bursting with great memories from your Bolivian adventures.