

# LA PAZ to LA PAZ (11 days) Bolivia Encompassed



**COUNTRIES VISITED: BOLIVIA**

## **INCLUDES**

- All accommodation - simple hotels & guesthouses and 2 nights basic on the Salt Flats
- Airport transfers
- All local transport
- Domestic flight from La Paz to Sucre
- Night bus from Uyuni to La Paz
- Orientation tour in La Paz, Sucre and Potosi
- La Paz city tour
- Gold Museum - La Paz
- Moon Valley - La Paz
- 3 day Salt Flats and Altiplano 4x4 excursion, meals & guide
- Inca Huasi Island entrance
- Red Lagoon National Park entrance
- The Mint - Potosi
- Cretaceous Park Fee - Sucre
- Liberty House Museum - Sucre
- Textile Museum - Sucre
- Meals as per itinerary - approx. 45%

- Services of local Oasis Tour Leader
- Entrance fees to sites visited in the itinerary

## EXCLUDES

- Visas
- International Flights
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- Travel Insurance
- Airport Taxes
- Drinks, snacks and personal expenses
- Optional Excursions & Entrance Fees (eg. Potosi Silver Mines)
- Tips

## TRIP ITINERARY

### DAYS 1 ARRIVE IN LA PAZ

Arrive in La Paz city (3,600 ms / 11,800 ft), and you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Our Tour Leader will brief you on the tour in the evening, so the rest of the day is yours to get over your flight and to acclimatize to the altitude. *(No meals included)*

Overnight: Hotel Berlina (or similar)

### DAYS 2 LA PAZ TOUR

We take a tour of the city (approx. 4 hours). **La Paz** is like no other city you will have visited, with its stunning setting in a valley, surrounded by **6000m peaks**! The streets are narrow and winding, full of brightly dressed Andeans selling their wares. Our tour takes in the atmosphere and we'll learn a lot about Andean Culture; passing through interesting neighbourhoods we visit the main sights such as **Murillo Square** and Cathedral, Congress and Government Palace (built in 1800s), The **Incan Gold Museum**, **Valley of the Moon** and the famous **Witches Market**. Finally we drive to **Killi Killi lookout point** to enjoy a 360 degree view of the city.

We have the rest of the day at leisure to wander or find a Huari (local beer). *(Breakfast)*

Overnight: Hotel Berlina (or similar)

### DAYS 3 FLY TO SUCRE AND TOUR THE CITY

This morning we will transfer to the airport for a short domestic flight to one of Bolivia's most beautiful cities, **Sucre**.

Sucre is known as '**The 4 Names City**' because of its long and varied history - Charkas (its Indian name), La plata (The Silver), Ciudad Blanca (White City) and Sucre (Sugar in French). The city, at a lower altitude of 2,800m above sea level, enjoys a warmer and greener climate than La Paz, and it invites you to enjoy wandering its charming streets and its interesting attractions. After we check into our hotel, we head to the beautiful Main Square which features several historically important buildings including the Governor Building, the main Cathedral, and the **Liberty's House**, where Bolivia was created a new free Republic in 1825. We'll continue to explore the city and learn more about the country's history, including a visit to **Bolivia's most beautiful and historical cemetery** where several ex-presidents of Bolivia are buried. *(Breakfast)*

Overnight: Hostal Sucre (or similar)

## DAYS 4 SUCRE

We'll explore Sucre a bit more today, starting this morning by walking to La Recoleta lookout point to enjoy good views over the city. Next we'll visit **ASUR, Bolivia's best Textile Museum**, where some of the most precious and colourful pre-Incan textiles are kept (some are at least 1500 years old).

Later, we'll drive towards **The Cretaceous Park**, where we learn about the thousands of remarkable dinosaur footprints discovered here, including the largest ever found - the Titanosaur weighed over 70 tonnes!

The afternoon is free to explore Sucre a little more. (Breakfast)

Overnight: Hostal Sucre (or similar)

## DAYS 5 SUCRE TO POTOSI

We leave Sucre behind this morning, and take the road to **Potosi**, enjoying the beautiful mountain views and bouncy gravel roads along the way! Potosi, at over 4,000m above sea level, is one of the highest cities in the world, and during the Spanish colonial period was a vital source of silver and other minerals for the whole empire. It is estimated that in the sixteenth century, 60% of all the silver mined in the whole world came from Potosi. Today it is a small, bustling Bolivian city, but its mining heritage and the continued importance of this industry to the area can be seen everywhere. There is almost a church on every block, some with very impressive interiors, but one to check out is **San Francisco** where you can view the city from the roof.

After checking in to our hotel, we'll visit the impressive **Museum of the Mint House**, which tells the history of the silver mined here and how thousands of silver coins were produced and shipped to Spain in Colonial times. (Breakfast)

Overnight: Hotel Tukos (or similar)

## DAYS 6 FREE TIME IN POTOSI. DRIVE TO UYUNI

This morning is free to explore Potosi further. One option available locally is to become a trainee miner and get into the famous **Rich Silver Mountain**. To learn and understand more about the history of Potosi and the silver mining, you are provided with miner's equipment (helmet, flashlight, miner suit, and boots) provided by local Operators in town. If you take this optional tour, you can also visit the **Miner's Market** where you can buy some little presents for the miners who still work in the mountain: this can be a soft drink, some coca leaves, some cigars, and dynamite. Yes, dynamite! This is probably the world's only open market where you can buy dynamite on the streets. You cannot bring it home as a souvenir though! Note - Health and safety in the mines are not to western standards and we recommend reading up on them before making a decision about whether to visit or not.

We'll then leave Potosi and the Rich Mountain behind and travel by bus to Uyuni. This is a beautiful journey with some great views of the Andes and the altiplano, with occasional glimpses of the surprising wildlife with not only llamas and alpacas and vicunas, but hopefully also some Andean Ostrich. We arrive in Uyuni in the evening and transfer straight to our hotel. (Breakfast)

Overnight: Tambo Aymara hotel (or similar)

## DAYS 7 UYUNI TO SAN JUAN VILLAGE

Today marks the start of our three-day expedition to explore the Salt Flats and stunning **lakes, deserts and volcanoes**. The **Salar de Uyuni** is the world's largest salt flats and one of the most incredible natural sights to be found anywhere in Latin America, or even the whole world and this three-day tour allows us to fully explore them and the surrounding areas.

After breakfast we board our **4x4 Land Cruisers** and drive to the eerie but evocative **Train Cemetery**. Here lie old abandoned steam locomotives, pristinely preserved in the dry climate and dating back to

Bolivia's booming gold and tin mining days.

Next we visit **Colchani village** and look at the traditional salt bagging process - you can even buy yourself a small ornament made of salt gathered from the Salar!

Once we get out on to the flats, you realise quite how vast the area is, and our guide will explain some of the weird and wonderful geological facts as we head out in to their heart to visit **Inca Huasi Island**.

We have time to walk to the top of the island, passing **giant cactus**, and enjoy the spectacular view of the beautiful **Tunupa Volcano (5300m)** and the 10,000 square kilometres of Salt Flats that now surround you! After lunch we head for **San Juan Village**, where we visit a Pre Inca Cemetery, a small museum and we stay overnight in basic accommodation. *(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

Overnight: Basic accommodation

## DAYS 8 SAN JUAN VILLAGE TO RED LAGOON

We continue driving south on our way to the little Chiguana Salt Flat. Huge volcanoes as high as 5850m above sea level surround us as we take our time, stopping for photos at a lookout point and finally reaching **Canapa Lagoon at a height of 4130m**. From here we can see **pink flamingos, an unexpected and incongruous sight amongst the barren altiplano**, and many other species of bird.

**Hedionda (Stinky) Lagoon** is our next stop, although we may make it a quick one as it certainly lives up to its name, due to the high sulphur content!

Passing scenic lagoons, we drive up towards the amazing **Siloli Desert**, crossing altitudes of almost 4600m, to see the incredible natural rock formations eroded by the powerful winds.

We end our day at the **Red Lagoon**, a breathtaking 40 square kilometre area which has been declared a Wildlife Sanctuary and is home to three endemic species of Andean Flamingo. We stay close to the shores of the lagoon in **Wayllajara Village** in basic accommodation. *(Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

Overnight: Basic accommodation

## DAYS 9 WAYLLAJARA VILLAGE TO UYUNI

Today we have an early start to catch the first rays of sun on the **Sol de Manana Volcano Crater**. The route takes us to **almost 5000m above sea level** at one point! Beautiful steam geysers and colourful boiling volcanic mud pools await us at the top and we'll be staggered by the extraordinary power of the earth which has been partially harnessed to generate electricity.

We enjoy breakfast on the banks of **Challviri Lagoon** where those of us that want to can enjoy a hot spring!

Passing through the barren volcanic environment of **Dali's Desert**, so-called as the landscapes are reminiscent of the famous artist's surreal works, we are presented with fantastic photo opportunities as we approach the southwest tip of Bolivia and at the foot of **Licancabur Volcano (5900m)**, where we also see the breathtaking **Green Lagoon**. From here we head back to Red Lagoon and take another route back to Uyuni via **Rock Valley**, stopping off in some small villages along the way.

We return to Uyuni in time for dinner, where there is hopefully still time to visit the highest pizza restaurant in the world before we head to the bus station to catch our ride back to La Paz. *(Breakfast and Lunch)*

Overnight: Overnight bus

## DAYS 10 ARRIVE IN LA PAZ. CABLE CAR TRIP, FREE TIME

We arrive back in La Paz in the morning and transfer to our hotel to shower, rest and have breakfast

before we head out for a city tour taking the famous **cable car** up to **El Alto** and explore the markets and enjoy great views over the city. Instead you may wish to take a day tour to **Chacaltaya** to see the towering **Huayna Potosi** mountain. For outdoor lovers, La Paz is also a great base for **mountain-biking or hiking**. It is also possible to take a day trip west to Tiahuanaco, a pre-Colombian archaeological UNESCO World Heritage site. *(Breakfast)*

Overnight: Hotel Berlina (or similar)

## DAYS 11 LA PAZ. DEPARTURE AIRPORT TRANSFER

The tour ends after breakfast and your time is free until your included departure airport transfer. There is safe luggage storage at the hotel if your flight departs after the check-out time (12:00). La Paz is a great city for either staying around a bit longer, further travels in South America, or returning home. If you would like extra time in the city we can book post-trip accommodation for you. *(Breakfast)*

## ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TRIP

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### ARRIVAL & ACCOMMODATION

**Trip Joining Point:** Estrella Andina - La Paz

**Start Time Day 1:** 18:00

**Address:** No. 716 Illampu St., La Paz

**Website:** [www.estrellaandina.com](http://www.estrellaandina.com)

**Email:** [juapame\\_2000@hotmail.com](mailto:juapame_2000@hotmail.com)

All prices listed are approximate and subject to limited availability.

Room Type	Price	Description
Single en-suite	US\$40.00	Per Room
Twin/Double en-suite	US\$50.00	Per Room
Triple en-suite	US\$65.00	Per Room

**The trip starts from Estrella Andina at approximately 6pm on the evening of Day 1 of your trip.**

Situated in the heart of La Paz, you are only walking distance from the main sights and attractions. The airport is approximately 40 mins in a taxi (depending on traffic). The rooms are clean, with brightly painted murals on the walls. Each room has it's own private bathroom, cable TV and there is also free Internet access and WiFi available. The staff are extremely friendly and helpful.

### PRE-TRIP ACCOMMODATION:

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You can pre-book accommodation and airport transfers through us. We will require your flight number, arrival time, and arrival date so please ensure this information is forwarded to us as soon as you have booked your flight. Please book this service as soon as you have booked your flight and no later than 6 weeks prior to departure, after which a late booking fee may apply. If you have booked through a travel agent, please contact them to request pre-trip accommodation and airport transfers.

Double, twin, and triple rooms will be provided subject to availability, where requested. However when not available we may need to book other rooming arrangements, and will fit these as closely as possible to your request. Those travelling solo will be put in shared rooms to reduce the costs to them, which may be twin/triple shares with other Oasis Overland travellers. Single rooms may be available in some cities for solo travellers, and we will arrange this for you on request, subject to availability.

If you are arriving early in the morning and you would like to check in immediately, you may have to reserve your room for the previous night to ensure direct check in, otherwise you may have to wait until normal check in times (usually 1pm to 2pm).

Accommodation costs for additional nights are payable direct to the Estrella Andina on arrival in Boliviano or \$US.

### **AIRPORT TRANSFERS:**

**Airport Transfers are included** in the cost of your adventure (provided you request these via the UK office or your account six weeks before your departure).

On arrival at La Paz airport, you will be met by a local representative who will take you to the group joining Hotel. The driver will have your name on a sign with Oasis Overland.

### **PRE-DEPARTURE MEETING**

Day 1 of your trip is an arrivals day, there will be a pre-departure meeting in the starting hotel this evening, usually around 6:00pm. There will be a notice in reception advising the exact time and here your crew will explain how the day to day running of the trip works. Your Tour Leader will **collect your Local Payment** money as well as a photocopy of your **passport information page, insurance policy details** with policy number and confirmation that the duration will cover you for the entire trip and a **24-hour emergency assistance** telephone number. It is essential that you attend this meeting - please let the UK office or your tour leader know if you are unable to do so.

### **POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION AND AIRPORT TRANSFERS**

Post-trip accommodation & airport transfers can be arranged with your tour leader during the trip or directly with the hotel on arrival. The return airport transfer is not included and is at your own expense. We regret these services cannot be arranged via the Oasis office before departure.

### **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

Normally our trips start in the evening of day 1 with a pre-departure meeting (you will be given exact details on when and where to meet either on collection from the airport or it will be clearly noted in the reception of our joining hotel). Please check the start time of your trip in the Accommodation Information section and allow extra time for your arrival wherever possible.

We recommend allowing an extra day post trip for any itineraries that include an internal flight or a jungle option, to allow for flight delays. You may also wish to allow some extra time to explore your arrival and departure cities

There are many online flight search engines such as [www.skyscanner.net](http://www.skyscanner.net) or [www.ebookers.co.uk](http://www.ebookers.co.uk), flights can also be booked direct with airline websites or through travel agencies. Please inform us of your flight details through your online account, as airport transfers can be arranged for various trips.

**One way ticket:** If you intend to travel on a one way ticket to meet up with one of our trips, without

possessing an onward flight ticket - we recommend that you have a copy of your payment confirmation/receipt (that you will be sent at time of your balance payment) available at immigration to assist easy entry.

**Departure Taxes:** Please check with your Travel Agent or Airline if your flight ticket already includes a departure tax payment out of the country. If it does not - please budget for approx US\$30 to \$70 USD - to be paid in US\$ only.

## PASSPORTS

Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months AFTER your trip finishes. This is a general requirement for all of the countries we travel to on our trips.

If you have dual nationality you can only use one passport for the entire trip. It is your responsibility to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require.

Please bring 2 photocopies of your passport details to give to your tour leader.

As a guideline, you will need at least 1 blank page per country in your passport, (for the 31 weeks Trans South America, you should allow at least 13 blank pages).

**Inca Trail Trek** - you will need to provide your passport details to apply for your Inca trail trekking permit, please enter these correctly on your booking form. If you are intending on renewing your passport then please let us know at the point of booking. In order to trek you will need to be in possession of both your passport and your permit - and the passport details have to match otherwise the permit issuing authorities will not let you trek.

## VISAS

The information below is to be used only as a guide and may change without prior notice. It is advisable to contact the relevant embassy in plenty of time before the trip departs to check the current visa requirements. It is **your responsibility** to ensure you have all the relevant visas you require.

### Visas must be paid for in USD cash ONLY.

On arrival to countries in South America, you will be given an 'Immigration card'. It is important that you keep this with your passport during your entire stay in the particular country as it is needed for departure. Failure to produce this immigration slip can result in a fine.

**Transiting via the USA** - Travellers who are flying to South America via the US will require either a US visa or for certain nationalities an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to take advantage of the visa waiver programme. These can be processed and paid for [here](#).

If you have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia or Yemen since March 2011 you will not qualify for the ESTA and must apply for a visa.

It is very important you establish your ESTA eligibility and have the correct documentation before departing, as if you do not have the right authorisation upon checking in at the airport you may not be permitted to travel.

For more information on other nationalities & visas checkout [www.projectvisa.com](http://www.projectvisa.com)

## Bolivia

Passport Holders from UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and most EU countries will not require a visa to enter Bolivia.

**American passport holders** will require a visa to enter Bolivia, you can purchase these upon arrival for approximately US\$160. You will need 2 passport-sized photographs (3cm x 4cm), a colour photocopy of the passport information page, a copy of your yellow fever certificate, paper copy of your trip booking

confirmation and your most recent 3 months bank statements.

You can apply for your visa in advance if you wish but please check how long it is valid for you to enter Bolivia. Valid for entry is different for the length of stay allowed. For example, if your visa is valid for entry for 30 days from the date of issue and you're starting your trip in Cartagena, your visa will expire before reaching Bolivia.

Travellers joining one of our **Regional Explorers in Peru and Bolivia** may wish to obtain this visa in advance.

Passport Holders from other countries, will need to check the current visa requirements with the relevant consulate, and whether you need to obtain the visa in advance.

## VACCINATIONS AND HEALTH

It is possible that you may require some vaccinations for your trip, depending on the areas that you are visiting. As we are not medically trained, we are unable to give detailed advice on vaccination requirements, so please use the information below as a guide only. We have worked closely with **Nomad Travel Clinics** for many years and they offer Oasis travellers a **10% discount** on vaccinations, anti-malarial drugs, first aid items, clothing and equipment, just enter discount code OASIS1000 at [www.nomadtravel.co.uk](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk). Alternatively you can check out the [fit for travel website](#) for more travel health information or consult a reputable travel clinic or your GP for information and advice. We suggest that you allow at least 8 weeks to get all your vaccinations.

**Yellow Fever** - Being vaccinated against Yellow Fever and having a valid certificate and a photocopy is deemed compulsory in some countries we visit, especially at certain borders and are needed if you are entering from an infected country. You can view a list of countries requiring a certificate through the World Health organisation [http://www.who.int/ith/ITH\\_country\\_list.pdf](http://www.who.int/ith/ITH_country_list.pdf)

**Rabies** - Vaccinations are regularly advised for many countries that we travel through - especially if time and money are not a deterrent.

**Malaria** - In some of the areas we visit there is a risk of contracting Malaria. You must be aware that whatever malaria prophylactics you are taking, they only offer partial protection. They must be coupled with your own physical efforts against being bitten - which is the best prevention. Malaria-carrying mosquitoes come out at sunset so from this time you should wear long sleeves and trousers. Exposed skin, especially ankles, should have insect repellent containing 'Deet' applied to them. Your crew will advise on where the worst affected areas are on the trip. There are a number of prophylactic malaria treatments on the market & requirements change. It is also wise to take a sample of whichever prophylactic you choose, a few weeks before you leave. This way you may determine early on if you have any adverse reactions so you can change the regimen if necessary. Please consult a reputable travel clinic or GP for advice. For more information visit [www.nomadtravel.co.uk](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk) or [www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk)

Medical advice should be taken particularly if you are visiting the jungle in either Ecuador or Peru, the Brazilian Pantanal or Iguazu Falls in either Argentina or Brazil as part of your trip.

**Altitude sickness** - This is caused by thin air (due to lack of oxygen) and can affect anyone arriving at high altitude (above 3000mtrs). The symptoms are headaches, dizziness, shortage of breath and possibly nausea. To avoid this or alleviate the symptoms make a point to acclimatize by arriving into a high altitude destination a few days early and make sure you do not over exert yourself, rest for a few hours, avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, large meals and drink plenty of water.

As we are travelling mostly by land (as opposed to flying into a high altitude location) we should acclimatise gradually, and so avoid 'soroche', mountain sickness.

**Dengue** - Unlike the malaria mosquito, which bites at night, the dengue carrying mosquito bites during the day. Some areas we travel to do have occasional outbreaks & it is therefore advised that you take care not to be bitten during the day as well as at night. There is no vaccine available.

**Health** - To join our trips you should be in good general health. Your medical insurance company must be

told if you have any pre-existing medical condition / allergy or if you are on any regular medication, otherwise you may not be covered under your policies for these. Our crew will need to know of any medication or conditions you may have. For general health advice log onto [www.nathnac.org/travel/](http://www.nathnac.org/travel/)

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is a compulsory requirement that you have adequate travel insurance before you join any Oasis Trip & at the very least are insured for all necessary medical & repatriation costs incurred.

You will be asked to provide the following details in [My Oasis Account](#) if you have not already done so: travel insurance name, insurance policy number & insurance emergency telephone number. You will also be required to give a copy of your policy with this information to your Tour Leader on arrival with confirmation that the policy duration is sufficient to cover you for the entire duration of your trip. It is also wise to leave a copy of your insurance policy with a friend or relative for safe keeping.

We believe that your safety and holiday enjoyment are very important. It is a mistake to think that "it will never happen to me". It is also very important that you are covered for all the activities that you may wish to undertake while on our trip. It is extremely important that you check the full extent of your cover related to 24 hour Medical Emergency Assistance. In the event of you needing medical treatment you want to know that you have the best cover available to you. Your policy should include adequate Medical Emergency and Repatriation cover as well as Cancellation, Baggage and Personal Liability cover. You need to be aware of EXACTLY what activities your policy covers you for. Please note that skiing is not usually covered in most insurance policies.

We offer tailor made Overland Adventure Travel Insurance that covers most of the adventure and sporting activities on our trips.

For further information on the insurance we offer, the activities covered and costs, check out the [Travel Insurance](#) section of our website. You can purchase our insurance by logging into [My Oasis Account](#) and click 'Buy Insurance' or through the following [link](#).

## MONEY, BUDGETS AND LP

### Local Payment (LP)

LP is part of your overall trip payment and is the most cost effective and practical way to get hard currency to South America to pay for a variety of your day to day local costs (i.e. all meals prepared by the group, hostel/hotel fees, gas, and certain activities listed on the trip page) which cannot be pre-paid from the UK. It is a guaranteed amount, set before your trip departs, and unlike 'group kitty' systems we will not ask you to contribute more once the trip is underway.

**Please note:** Your LP is payable to your Tour Leader on the morning of departure in US\$ Dollars CASH ONLY. Make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and we will therefore be unable to accept them either. Please do not bring all of your Local Payment in US\$100 notes and also make sure that they are post 2013 and do not have a serial number starting with CB.

### How to bring your currency?

Past Oasis travellers have fed back that they have felt, as a general rule it is best to bring your money in a combination of cash US dollars, pre-paid travel currency cards and debit/credit cards.

**Make sure that all your notes are in good condition. Old, torn or marked notes are often refused by the banks and shops. Please ensure your notes are dated post 2013** and do not have a serial number starting with CB. When buying US Dollars before you travel it is best to ask for clean notes with no tears or markings. It can be difficult using US\$100 bills in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia so if possible, bring US\$50 bills for these countries. Some travellers worry about carrying so much cash with them, however all Oasis Overland trucks are equipped with an onboard safe for the security of your money and passport. Please also remember that Visas, where required, need to be paid for in US dollars cash only.

## **Spending Money**

From past trips and traveller feedback US\$150 to US\$200 per week should cover costs such as some meals out (on average 50% of meals on the trip are supplied), soft drinks and beers, email & communications, souvenirs and other general spending. Personal spending habits & budgets differ greatly from person to person. Budget on visa costs and optional activities separately (see visa section above & optional excursions page) & allow extra for your Local Payment contribution. There is often a departure tax payable in the airport, so allow up to US\$50 for this.

## **Changing money**

Change your money only at banks, hotels, airports or forex bureaus. It is illegal to change money on the street, as these people will normally be opportunistic thieves or undercover police. Your crew will advise you where & when you can change money & with what means. It is also a good idea to have a small CASH emergency fund, to allow for the unexpected.

## **Credit & Debit Cards**

If you are intending using your credit or debit card, we suggest taking more than one card with you as you may find that your card is not accepted in the first ATM you try. For credit and debit cards Visa is best. Mastercard and American Express are generally not accepted throughout South America. We recommend that you inform your bank that you will be using your card abroad to avoid it being blocked.

## **Pre-Paid Travel Currency Cards**

These cards are similar to normal Credit and Debit cards but they can be pre loaded with cash before you travel with a set amount allowing you to withdraw this cash using the card at normal ATMs. It is a more secure way to access cash on your trip, but again do not rely on these as your sole means of funds on a trip - (please refer to the ATM section). Several banks and companies now offer these cards, but be sure to look into the rates for withdrawing cash when making your decision. When using these cards abroad you will use them to withdraw the local currency from an ATM and not the currency that you loaded onto the card.

## **ATMs**

These are available in most major cities along our route and allow you to withdraw local currency only. We discourage you from relying on your ATM card as a primary source of funds in case it is lost/stolen/ swallowed, or the machine isn't working. In some destinations we probably won't even see a bank or ATM for days on end. Even where do find them, they cannot always be relied upon - things change, and ATMs don't always work! Besides memorising your PIN, it is also important to be aware of your daily withdrawal limit and bank withdrawal costs.

## **Tipping**

Tipping in South America is customary and often expected, and local attitudes towards tipping are different to what we are used to in the West. It is often more than a reward for services well done but as wages are extremely low, it is an accepted means of supplementing an income. As a general rule, tipping around 10% of the total bill in restaurants is a good guide, and the same amounts usually apply for activities and excursions.

Because it can be difficult to know what to tip, and as it has such importance in some areas both economically and culturally, there may be times and activities for which your crew will make it clear what level of tipping is 'customary/expected'. They may also be quite enthusiastic or assertive in encouraging you to take account of these suggestions. This is motivated by the knowledge of how important tipping can be, and the offence or confusion that can be caused when local people are tipped poorly. In the end, tipping remains at the discretion of the individual, but our crew will continue to advise on normal rates, and we would ask you to carefully consider the economic or personal impact of being seen to 'under tip'. We know that many who travel with us are on a tight budget, but ask you to remember that those we work with locally may also face financial hardship, and also work very hard to try to give you unrivalled service/experiences.

As a very rough guide, we would suggest that you budget for an amount equal to 10% of the local payment for your trip, plus 10% of the cost of any of the listed optional excursions that you wish to do. The amounts you end up tipping may vary from a rigid 10%, but hopefully this will help you budget in general.

On the Inca Trail, your crew will advise you what the expected tipping amounts are before the trek. It may seem unusual to be asked to tip before receiving a service, but the tips are a crucial part of the income for the guides, cooks and porters, and it is important that this gets shared out equally and fairly between them, so you can expect your Oasis Tour Leader to take an active role in ensuring it is done in the correct manner. The tips are usually spread out by the Tour Leader and then given to the travellers to hand out on the last day of the trek.

In the past we have been asked by travellers about tipping your Oasis Crew. If you choose to do this, it would be budgeted separately from the above. Our guys work very hard at making your trip a great travel experience. Working overseas can often be challenging and they are pretty much on call for you 24 hours a day, so it's appreciated as a thank you for hard work and good service, but of course not mandatory. Our suggestion is to budget around US\$1, per person, per day.

## CLIMATE

The climate in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador is varied, from hot and humid in the Amazon Jungle, to cold nights at altitude on the Inca Trail. It is best to prepare for a variety of weather conditions, as it can be quite unpredictable!

Peru has three different climates: the coastal area is an arid desert climate, the Andes have a sub-tropical weather system and can vary according to the altitude, and the Amazon rainforest is tropical. Year-round, the coastal area gets hot during the day and cooler at night; rainfall is rare. During the winter months of April to November the coastline, including Lima, is usually covered by a near-permanent mist, though inland this burns off to allow the sun to break through and hotter conditions. In the Andes, during the European summer months of June to August it is generally warm and pleasant during the day and cold at night, again with little rain. November to April are the rainy season with tropical afternoon showers and higher temperatures. In the Amazon Jungle tropical showers are common on most days in the afternoon, and it is hot and humid year-round.

In Bolivia similar to Peru you will also experience the sub-tropical weather system which will vary according to the altitude, and the Amazon rainforest is tropical.

Quito in Ecuador enjoys a year-round spring-like climate. The Galapagos is generally dry and bright from June to December, with some afternoon shower being drawn from the south, while the months from January to May tend to be more tropical, with more cloud and heavier showers and generally warmer temperatures.

## WHAT TO TAKE

The less you take the less you have to pack, wash & lug home & you can always pick up extras along the way. Most people make the mistake of bringing too much gear. Clothes washing or laundry facilities will be available at least once a week. You will be travelling in the heat & camping in the cold, so bring clothes for all climates; rough stuff is best. Pack according to season: use the climate guide above (remember, nights are cold in deserts and the mountains). Make sure that you bring your gear in a 70 - 90 L rucksack or holdall - suitcases are not suitable.

### Equipment

- Sleeping Bag - 4 season bag, (can be hired locally where required - subject to availability, but most people prefer

### Toiletries - Most available to buy on trip

- Soap, shampoo, toothbrush/paste, antibacterial hand wash, lip balm &

to bring their own) & sleep sheet

- Small day-pack or small bag to carry daily items
- Soft rucksack, holdall or suitcase
- Water bottle - for personal use - we recommend Water-to-Go (see below Responsible Travel)

moisturiser

- Sun block 35 + after sun, hat & sun glasses
- Tampons (can buy in most places)
- Contraception

### Clothes

- One pair of trainers or boots
- Sandals/flip flops/jandals/thongs
- Underwear/socks
- T shirts/shirts
- Shorts/swimwear
- Jeans/trousers/jog pants/leggings
- Skirt or dress
- Sweat shirt/jumper
- Jacket/fleece & waterproof jacket

### Personal Effects

- Camera with protective case, spare batteries, film/memory card
- Torch and spare batteries (head torch is best)
- Travel adaptor plug/charger (for cameras and mobile phone batteries)
- Money belt
- Personal stereo - iPod/MP3 etc
- Towel and/or sarong

### Recommended Medical Kit List

- Antiseptic ointment/Antihistamine cream & tablets
- Nurofen or equivalent pain-killer
- Eye-drops/bath
- Anti-diarrhoea treatment
- A couple of bandages (elasticated & triangular)
- Medication for personal allergies/asthma etc
- Insect repellent containing Deet
- Re-hydration sachets/vitamin tablets
- Assorted plasters
- Some suitable antibiotics as recommended by your doctor for infected cuts or to treat severe dysentery

**Please note that in the winter months (June-August) it can be very cold, especially at altitude, so we would recommend that you bring extra layers or be prepared to purchase some when you are in Peru & Bolivia.**

We advise you to bring a small personal medical kit for general everyday use, as well as any personal over-the-counter medicines that you may wish to keep with you. Our Tour Leaders are familiar with the nearest pharmacies, doctors and hospitals throughout the trip if you need to seek medical attention. It will be your own responsibility to carry your medical kit on included excursions and optional activities as some local operators may not have medical kits to hand.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

**Cameras (incl. Digital & Video Cameras)** - An easy to use 'point and press' will get you some good photos. For memorable shots, it may be worthwhile investing in an SLR camera, but be sure to get some practice in before the trip! Most towns and cities have internet cafes where you can download onto CD/internet sites - but don't rely on it.

**Photography** - Be aware of your surroundings when taking photographs and filming. Some locations will be sensitive or have local laws banning photography. For example it is usually forbidden to use cameras at borders or around government buildings, military installations, bridges and airports or to take photos of local officials. If you do take photos or film where it is not permitted you may find yourself being questioned by irate officials who may decide to confiscate your camera or instruct you to delete all the images/footage on your device. If in doubt ask for permission, or if there is no-one to ask use some common sense.

**Drones** - As the use of drones becomes more common, countries throughout the world are gradually updating their laws and restrictions on usage. The specific regulations will vary from one country to another, so do check the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice for the latest information. As with cameras, use your common sense if you do use a drone and avoid operation in sensitive areas. If you plan to bring a drone on your trip with us please contact us first to ensure there will be a suitable place to store

it while on your trip.

**Electrical charging & power supply** - It may be difficult to find a power source for charging at times, so a spare battery is a must. Log onto [www.whatplug.net](http://www.whatplug.net) for information regarding the different electrical plugs and voltage used in each country.

## CONTACTING HOME

The internet and WiFi are readily available in almost every town and city you will visit; most hotels and hostels will have free WiFi as will many bars and cafes. Do bear in mind that the connections can be unreliable and will not always be as fast as you are used to at home. If a lot of people try to use the internet at the same time the speed will be slower still, especially if trying to make Skype calls or upload photos/videos. During periods of the trip where we are camping, internet will be less common.

Some travellers choose to take an unlocked mobile phone with them and buy local SIM cards in each country, allowing them to use mobile data. If you particularly want or need regular internet access this may be a good option. Telephone calls can be expensive usually £1 to £5 for a three minute call.

**Online Diaries** - A great variety of free "travel blogs" are now available online, they are a good way of keeping relatives and friend up to date with what you are doing and a good place to upload photos, collecting messages as well as keeping a record for yourself.

## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

### Before you go

- Remove unnecessary packaging before you go - waste disposal facilities are often stretched or non-existent in the places we visit. To avoid unnecessary pollution of local water supplies take environmentally friendly toiletries with you.
- Why not invest in a wind-up or solar-powered torch or media player before you travel or at least rechargeable batteries.
- Learn some of the local language and read up on the local history/culture before you go. You'll get so much more out of your trip.
- Why not pack some pens/pencils exercise books in your rucksack and they can be donated to a local school or project while you're away. You can also purchase these items cheaply, locally which will help local businesses.
- Take a sturdy water bottle with you from home that you can re-use throughout your trip. We carry large quantities of purified water with us on our Expedition vehicles and it is much better for the environment if you drink this, rather than purchase bottled water along the way. (It also saves you money).
- Water-to-Go: Oasis Overland have partnered with Water-to-Go to help reduce the number of plastic water bottles consumed during a trip. Water-to-Go is a filtration system that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants including viruses, bacteria, chemicals and heavy metals from any non-salt water source. Click [here](#) and enter the code OASIS15 to purchase your [Water-to-Go](#) products at 15% discount. Water-to-Go will then donate a further 15% to Oasis Overland Charity projects.

### While you're travelling

From experience gained in running trips, we have developed our own practical and manageable environmental policy which all of our crew practice on the trips we operate, and they will share this information with you at the start of your trip. We welcome your input on this, plus any new ideas you may have, to improve our existing procedures. As a guide here's a few tips to bear in mind.

- Don't waste water. It is a scarce resource in many of the places our trips visit. On all our Ultimate and Overland Expeditions we carry large quantities of purified water with us. We encourage you to refill your own water bottles from this supply, rather than purchase bottled water along the way-much more environmentally friendly and saves you money.
- Never buy endangered species or endangered habitat products. Apart from the fact of it being illegal it

also encourages the trade to continue.

- Look after and preserve the areas we visit. Be careful about stepping on coral reefs or trekking on undesignated tracks.
- Buy locally made crafts and products helping to support the local economy.
- Don't feel when bargaining that you have to get the cheapest price possible just for the sake of it. Pay what the item is worth to you & don't worry about what someone else has paid.
- Try the local food and drinks - this will help to support local farmers and food sellers. Sitting in a local cafe is also a great way to meet local people.
- Dispose of litter appropriately on your trip. This includes cigarette butts. Not only does litter look unsightly it can be lethal to wildlife.
- Where any toilet facilities exist, however unsavoury they might seem to you, they should be used. Where they do not, always bury your waste and make sure it is never near (at least 30m) a water source.
- When game viewing do not encourage your guides to get too close to the wildlife so that their natural behaviour is impeded.
- Respect local customs, traditions and beliefs of the people in the different regions that you travel through.
- Do not take photos of people, ritual events or special places unless you have asked first. Dress appropriately according to local codes and show respect around religious festivals.
- Recycling is almost non-existent in many of the areas and countries we visit - we do the best we can with limited resources & space on our vehicles.
- For books dedicated to travelling more responsibly & ethically see: [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

**Community Projects** - Oasis are active in raising awareness and providing support to a number of projects and local schools where we believe we can make a positive difference. More information on the [projects we support](#).

## SECURITY

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) offer country-specific advice, regarding not only security but also entry regulations, local laws and customs and health. We strongly recommend all travellers visit the FCO website, or the equivalent in their home country, to familiarise themselves with local conditions and issues in the countries they plan to visit before committing to a trip with us. You can view their website [here](#).

If you have any questions at all about the safety or security of your trip, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to discuss your trip in more detail.

**In cities** - All major cities have their share of petty crime (just like our cities) and sensible precautions need to be taken. Wearing expensive looking jewellery or watches and carrying cameras will draw unnecessary attention to you. Leave valuables such as passports and excess money in your hotel safe (we recommend carrying a copy of your passport details page at all times). You may find a simple money belt is more discreet than a bag. Always be aware of your surroundings and when approached by people you do not know, use your common sense. At night in cities it's best to use a taxi, rather than walking around the streets, single women in particular need to be careful and we would suggest that it is safer to be in a group.

Oasis does not take responsibility for clients' personal items and we advise you to not take items of value that are not essential for the journey.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

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### LIFE ON THE ROAD

#### Oasis Tour Leader

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We have one Tour Leader on this trip whose duties are extensive & quite demanding. From organising accommodation, meals, travel arrangements, pre-booking some excursions and guides, to finding the best deals, socializing & making sure all runs as smoothly as possible. While your leader is experienced and knowledgeable about the regions that we travel through they are not tour guides as such. The diversity and extent of the history and cultures in this region is vast. In most historical areas we visit there are trained guides, who offer their services; they have spent many years, and have vast experience at particular sites.

### **Accommodation**

We use a mixture of local hotels and guesthouses along the way using shared rooms (between 2 people of the same sex from your trip) unless you are a couple or you have requested a specific type of room. It must be remembered that the Hotels we use are an integral part of Peru & Bolivia and can suffer from common problems that can affect all levels of hotels such as, electrical failure, plumbing faults and other technical difficulties and hot water may occasionally be temperamental if a lot of people are using the showers at the same time. This is a possibility throughout all classes of hotels. On our **Family Trips** we use shared rooms, usually with parents in one room and children in another, though we can make amendments to this if requested. Large family and interconnected rooms are not very common in South America; most rooms are singles, twins or doubles.

During the four days Inca Trail hike we camp. Tents are provided and sleeping bags can be hired (see Inca Trail section for more information on the various hikes).

### **Transport**

We use a mixture of public / local buses and trains, comfortable overnight sleeper coaches, private charter vehicles, boat and several internal flights (on some trips) between cities, allowing you more time to explore.

### **Meals**

Most breakfasts are included whilst on tour plus many other meals on activities such as the Inca Trek and the Salar de Uyuni. Please check your itinerary for a day by day breakdown. We find that most people appreciate sampling the culinary tastes of South America and class this as one of their favourite pastimes. This is why we do not include every meal - allowing each person the chance to try out some of the local cuisine from markets, restaurants & cafes. At times your Tour Leader may organize a group meal - which is another good way to sample some of the local and international delicacies.

### **Vegetarians / Vegans / Coeliacs / Gluten & Lactose intolerance**

Our Tour Leaders will always do their best to cater for any dietary requirement or intolerance whenever possible. However we do not cater for fussy eaters. It must be remembered that the variety of dishes available may not be the same as available to meat eaters. If there is anything in particular you require in your diet or because of an allergy or would miss from home, it would be best to bring these with you, due to the high cost and scarcity of these specialised and often imported foods.

Remember when eating out in local restaurants & hotels that vegetarianism or food allergies / intolerances, are still not widely known about or understood by many local people. i.e Vegetarians or Vegans will often be offered fish or chicken in error. Most large towns and cities, or areas used to tourists, will often have more choice but please be aware that it will probably not be as varied as you are used to when eating out at home.

### **Distance and Time 'En Route'**

Peru is a large country, and on this trip there is a lot of ground to cover. There are a few long drives, but the transport is clean, comfortable and safe, and we make sure that after a long drive we stay in the same place for a few days, for example in Arequipa and Cusco. We also make comfort stops and stop off at sites of interest along the way, where possible, so you don't feel too rushed, even on travel days.

Optional Excursions are paid for on the day and organised during your trip, so you can decide whilst

travelling which activity you may want to do. Prices listed are only a guide and may be dependant on fluctuating exchange rates and minimum numbers. Please see below for more details.

## OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS

### BOLIVIA

Title	From Price
Potosi Guided Mine Visit	US\$20
Museum & Pre Inca Cemetery - Uyuni Salt Flats	US\$2
Gravity Assisted Mountain Biking, from	US\$115
Flight from Sucre to La Paz, from	US\$80

We feel that having optional excursions gives a greater degree of flexibility and independence to our group members; independence to decide how much your spending budget can afford; flexibility to decide when and what time of day or with whom to visit a particular site, rather than for example, with the whole group at a pre-ordained time. If you decide not to join a popular excursion, you will have free time to relax or wander off to a market, village or beach, depending on where we are.

You pay for the optional excursions to the local operator, ensuring the money stays with that operator in the local community and this ensures as well, that you are paying the true price for any optional excursions you want to do. This also applies to accommodation costs before and after the trip. Please note that the prices of optional excursions quoted are approximate as local prices can and do change. Please see the relevant trip page for the Optional excursions you can do on that trip and a list of prices.

**Notes downloaded on:** 19-08-2025

