



# HIGH ANDES BOLIVIA



22 May – 4 June 2023

Bolivia is a country of extremes from its steamy tropical forests of the Amazon Basin, to the out-of-this-world scenes of the Altiplano and rugged peaks of the snow-capped Andes, from the narrow twisting roads of the Yungas Range to the endless salt flats of the Salar de Uyuni.

Bolivia is the highest nation in the western hemisphere; contrasts are many and striking. Despite being one of the poorest countries in the world, it is one of the richest when it comes to impressive landscapes, centuries old cultural heritage, and colourfully dressed indigenous people. Experience Bolivia: its people, the landscapes, the history & the culture.

## Highlights Include...

**The Death Road** – Fog, landslides, cascades, and cliffs that drop more than 600 meters (2,000 feet) make this road an adventure to travel! Many crosses stand as memorials to those who have perished there.

**Salar De Uyuni** – Measuring 12,106 sq km the salar de Uyuni is the world's largest salt flat. Sitting at an elevation of 3653m. visiting this huge expanse of white is a memorable experience.

**Potosi** –Originally a small pre-Hispanic-period hamlet perched at an altitude of 4,000 m in the icy solitude of the Bolivian Andes, Potosí was the major colonial-era supplier of silver for Spain and it helped make Spain the global superpower of that era. The whole industrial production chain from the mines to the Royal Mint has been conserved.

**Sucre** – Founded by the Spanish in the first half of the 16th century. Its many well-preserved 16th-century religious buildings, such as San Lázaro, San Francisco and Santo Domingo, illustrate the blending of local architectural traditions with styles imported from Europe.

## **22 May\* Day 1. (Monday)**

### **ARRIVAL DAY IN COCHABAMBA**

On your arrival at the airport in Cochabamba make your own way to our hotel. (Prior to the tour commencement we will send more detailed information about the tour including the hotel name and address.)

Cochabamba lies in a fertile green bowl set in a landscape of fields and low hills. Nicknamed the "Culinary capitol of Bolivia", it is rumored to offer the best international cuisine, Bolivian cuisine and street food in Bolivia. Towering over the city is the statue of Cristo de la Concordia, just a bit higher and larger than the one in Rio de Janeiro, which makes it the largest Jesus Christ statue in South America (and second largest in the world).

At our Welcome Dinner meet the rest of your travel buddies and we will go over some of the tour basics.

### ***Overnight in Cochabamba Hotel (Dinner)***

**\*N.B.** *If you are arriving a day or two earlier than the tour start date please let us know. We can arrange additional accommodation for you, if required, at the same hotel so you do not have to move.*



## **23 May Day 2. (Tuesday) COCHABAMBA TO QUIME 315KM**

Straight after breakfast we will have a riders' briefing in preparation for getting on the road. Our first adventure challenge is getting out of this busy city. Before we know it we will be climbing the first of many passes that we traverse today at more than 4,000 meters above sea level. Today there will be a number of opportunities to take in the majestic beauty of the snow-capped Andes Mountains. The final pass today is also the highest at over 4,700 meters and from here we descend down into Quime through a steep and stunning, almost eerie, glacial valley. Watch out for the herds of llama (pronounced Yah-mah in Bolivia) that are often grazing freely up here.

***Overnight in Quime. Simple local hotel accommodation. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)***



### 24 May Day 3. (Wednesday) QUIME TO CHULUMANI 195KM

Today we pick up where we left off yesterday and continue our descent. There are no sealed roads it's all gravel today as we ride towards the Amazon Basin. Our journey today is a roller coaster of sorts as we ascend and descend many valleys, plenty of which have steep drop offs! Breathtaking views of sheer cliffs, mountains and valleys are on offer. We will stop somewhere suitable for a picnic lunch. Our hotel tonight has a swimming pool, and a cold beer awaits us after a full day of riding!

*Overnight in Chulumani at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



## 25 May Day 4. (Thursday) CHULUMANI TO COROICO 100KM

Not a long day of riding today but plenty of sights and again all on unsealed roads (until we get to the outskirts of our destination. Lots of sheer drop offs feature again. There is plenty of breathtaking scenery – best to stop for a really good look (or photos, you’ll need to keep your eyes on the road as it gets pretty narrow in places. Coca plantations are in evidence on the sides of some of the hills. Although some coca grown in Bolivia will end up as the end product cocaine, coca leaves are also used a lot by Bolivian locals as a medicine and mild stimulant. Coca leaf tea is often recommended to help deal with mild symptoms of altitude. Our overnight destination is Coroico, a lively tourist town. You may notice some locals here look a bit different to other Bolivians you have seen with darker skin and curly or frizzy hair. These locals are descendants of the African slaves brought to Bolivia by the Spanish. We should arrive around 1.00pm – leaving time to take a stroll around Coroico as it is a pretty town.

*Overnight Coroico at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



## 26 May Day 5. (Friday) COROICO TO LA PAZ 105KM

From Coroico it’s all up hill as we embark onto the infamous “Death Road” with its many twists, sheer drop-offs and spectacular views. If time allows those who are keen can try out one of the world’s longest zip-lines (aka -flying fox) prior to our journey up the Death Road. Officially named North Yungas Road the Death Road is so called because until 1994 nearly 300 drivers died here each year.

After we reach the highway we continue climbing up to the summit pass (La Cumbre) which sits at an elevation of 4,700 meters – it is ALWAYS very cold up here, so we recommend that you have on hand another layer for this stretch of road. From there we descend into the city of La Paz, one of Bolivia’s capital cities, with its vibrant mix of Aymara, Quechua, and Spanish cultures. La Paz was established as the seat of government for the legislative and executive branches, while Sucre retained the seat of the judicial branch of the Bolivian government. To this day, Sucre remains the only official capital of Bolivia, but La Paz is considered by many as the de facto capital.

*Overnight in La Paz at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**27 May Day 6. (Saturday) LA PAZ TO ORURO 225KM**

After climbing up out of La Paz through fairly hectic city traffic it is then an easy ride on sealed roads cruising along the Altiplano (High Plains) region. Our destination is the city of Oruro (Hispanicized spelling) or Uru Uru is one of the largest cities in Bolivia. Oruro is a mineral rich city – mining in the region contributed to its wealth and size and is at an elevation of 3800 meters above sea level. The city has a technical university (est.1892), several colonial churches, and a refinery that processes much of the country's tin. The hub of Bolivia's railway system, Oruro is connected by train to the cities of Uyuni and Tupiza, as well as to Argentina and Chile. It can get quite cold at night – fortunately our hotel has heaters in the rooms.

*Overnight in Oruro at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**28 May Day 7. (Sunday) ORURO TO COLCHANI 300KM**

Leaving Oruro we head south, along the way expect to see plenty of wildlife, namely Llama, Alpaca and the occasional Vicuña. It's a long(ish) day in the saddle but the roads are in good shape, so we'll make good time. As we near our destination we will get our first glimpse of the world's largest salt flats. Finish the day watching the sun set over the Salar de Uyuni from our hotel made from salt bricks.

*Overnight in Colchani Salt Hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



**29 May Day 8. (Monday) COLCHANI TO UYUNI 150KM**

Out the hotel door and immediately onto the salt flats. Too easy! A sight to behold, the Salar de Uyuni is the world's largest salt flat and measures 12,106 sq. km. Beneath the surface, massive lithium deposits should fuel Bolivia's economy for the next 100 years. We follow the Dakar Rally route across the salt to "Isla Incahuasi," (Cactus Island) the only island on the salt lake with ancient cactus plants, some over 500 years old. To cap off an amazing day, we will visit the train cemetery. Uyuni was once an important transportation hub. With the collapse of mining in 1940 the trains were abandoned exactly where they still stand today.

*Overnight in Uyuni at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



### **30 May Day 9. (Tuesday) UYUNI TO POTOSI 205KM**

Leaving the salt flats we climb higher heading to the imperial city of Potosí, capital of 17th century Spanish America. The whole city is an architectural treasure listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Although floods and an occasional earthquake have taken their toll, Potosí retains its colonial charm. Narrow, sometimes winding streets originate in the central plaza, around which are grouped the main governmental buildings and the cathedral.

At over 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) it sits in the shadow of El Cerro Rico, the huge dome that once held the richest silver mines in the history of the New World. Potosí is one of the highest cities in the world.

*Overnight in Potosi at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

### **31 May Day 10. (Wednesday) POTOSI TO SUCRE 160KM**

In the morning there's the option to visit the National Mint Museum. We will have brunch/lunch in Potosí. It's an invigorating cruise over the mountain highway before descending into the city of Sucre, Bolivia's judicial capital. It's also known as "la ciudad blanca" (the white city) for the whitewashed walls of its pristine old city center. Its many churches and mansions from the 17th and 18th centuries still adorn the downtown streets.

*Overnight in Sucre at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

### **01 June Day 11. (Thursday) SUCRE**

A free day in this delightful city. There's plenty to do, and see, if you wish or just relax, have a sleep in and chill out. A great opportunity to catch up with laundry. Sucre has a reputation for great food and there is a large selection of restaurants, bars and shops. If you are interested we can point you in the right direction to book a city walking tour or if you prefer something more strenuous – a guided hike into the nearby hills to check out evidence of the dinosaurs that once roamed this region. There's plenty to keep you occupied.

*Overnight in Sucre at a hotel. (Breakfast)*

## 02 June Day 12. (Friday) SUCRE TO LA HIGUERA 285KM

It's a long day today but well worth it. Today we take the back roads to La Higuera, the lonely village where the revolutionary Che Guevara was executed by the Bolivian Army (under instruction from the CIA) in 1967. The road to La Higuera is a pilgrimage of sorts for the more adventuresome historians and admirers of el Che. On the way, we'll pass through the small town of Villa Serrano to admire what the town boasts as the world's largest charango (a small stringed musical instrument of Andean origin that resembles a guitar). The enthusiasm of the guide who shows us his town's famous exhibit adds to the whole experience! While the first part of the day is on tarseal later it's all gravel again. Plenty of narrow twisting roads to keep you focused today – make sure you stop and admire the landscape too though. Reaching La Higuera in the evening we stay at the rustic Casa del Telegrafista, once home to the telegraph operator that informed the authorities of el Che's presence. This area is remote, and we will need to share bathroom facilities here due to the very limited accommodation options.

*Overnight in La Higuera at rustic and historic homestay. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



## 03 June Day 13. (Saturday) LA HIGUERA TO SANTA CRUZ 265KM

After a wonderful breakfast we visit the memorial room in the schoolhouse where el Che (Che Guevara) was held. Today's route takes us through the mountains of Vallegrande and down the old highway. Enjoy your last day on the bike soaking up the Bolivian landscapes and a culture so different from our own. By late afternoon we'll arrive at our comfy hotel in Santa Cruz. Enjoy our final group dinner to celebrate the completion of our Bolivia High Andes adventure.

*Overnight in Santa Cruz at a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

04 June Day 14. (Sunday) DEPARTURE DAY

Time to catch your flight home. If time allows you may choose to do some sightseeing in Santa Cruz, last minute shopping or sampling some of the local cuisine.

*(Breakfast)*

N.B. If you wish to stay a night or two longer, or you require a late checkout, please ask us to arrange this for you – it is less confusing for everyone if we do it for you.

*^We reserve the right to alter the itinerary if required for timing or safety reasons^*





## What is included

13 night's accommodation based on sharing Twin/Double.

Breakfast every day

Lunch and Dinner daily during tour except one lunch in Sucre as per itinerary

Motorcycle hire or seat in support vehicle.

We are riding Kawasaki KLR650 motorcycles – fitted with super comfy Sargent Seats

Fuel for your motorcycle

Accompanying tour support vehicle

Tour personally guided by Angela and Mike

### **Excluded Services:**

International flights

Domestic flights

Airport Transfers

Excluded meals as per the itinerary

**TOUR COST:** Twin share, per person

Please note: Prices may be subject to change.

RIDER NZ9985

PILLION ON MOTORBIKE NZ7975

PASSENGER IN TOUR VEHICLE NZ7975

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT/OWN ROOM\* +NZ799

(\*may not be available at La Higuera due to limited accommodation options)

SELF DRIVE 4WD – contact us for a price.

DEPOSIT NZ2000 PER PERSON

Deposit details for New Zealand residents

Kiwibank Account details

Name: By The Backroads Ltd

Number: 38 9023 0063240 01

Customers outside New Zealand please email us [adventure@bythebackroads.com](mailto:adventure@bythebackroads.com) for details

