



Adventure tours that delve deeper

The Bolivia family trip

TRIP LENGTH: 10 days

STARTS: Cochabamba

ENDS: La Paz

Our Bolivia family trip takes you from the temperate central valley, through the amazing wildlife of the Amazon, to the heights of La Paz, one of the world's most scenic and bizarre cities.

You'll meet dinosaurs and monkeys, ride planes, cable cars, jet skis, and boats, explore vibrant markets and forgotten villages, and experience Bolivia's culture up close.

Like all our family trips, it's designed for gradual acclimatization, with plenty of downtime, total flexibility from day to day, and a specialist family guide with you every step of the way.

Day 1 Welcome to Cochabamba

Your trip starts at 1pm when your guide will pick you up and take you for a delicious local lunch. You'll spend the afternoon exploring Cochabamba's historic center, and taking a fun cable car ride up to the Cristo de Concordia, where you'll experience the first of the many incredible views over Andean cities that characterize this trip.

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel in downtown Cochabamba

Meals: Lunch and dinner included

Day 2 The high valley that time forgot

We'll spend today in the Andes of popular imagination - an isolated place, far from the hectic modern world, where life is lived at a gentle pace and at the same time rugged in many ways. We find families who visit Bolivia are keen to expose their kids to other ways of life, and exploring the sleepy villages and farming countryside Valle Alto is the perfect way to do it.

We'll meet locals and try their various food specialties in the village of Tarata, and the specks on the map of Punata and Arani. Along the way we'll ride in a boat, check out the local ceramics, and visit a medieval castle that's currently under construction by the local priest and his family!

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel in downtown Cochabamba

Meals: All meals included

Day 3 Dinosauars and family fun!

Bolivia is a world center of dinosaur discoveries, as we'll learn today at Sacaba Prehistoric Park, where dinosaur fans of all ages will drool over the many, massive scale models of dinosaurs, mammoths, sabre tooth tigers and more, while little ones have a great time on the dinosaur-themed rides.

Later we'll head to the Parque de la Familia, where kids will enjoy many different ways to get wet, and everyone will be blown away by the sound, light and water show that kicks off when the sun sets.

Accommodation: Comfortable hotel in downtown Cochabamba

Meals: All meals included

We'll spend the next four days in the depths of the Bolivian Amazon. Our jumping-off point, Rurrenabaque, offers access to two different ecosystems – the pampas and the jungle. Explore one in depth or get a taste of both – the choice is yours!

The pampa is a wetland. Here we get around on the river, where the animals come to drink, and where vegetation is less thick, making for incredible wildlife viewing. If seeing animals up close is your priority, choose the pampas.

Our jungle experience takes us to Madidi National Park, one of the most biodiverse protected areas on Earth, also rich with wildlife, as well as jungle sounds and smells.

We also offer a combination of the two areas, which involves six hours of travel between the two.

DAYS 4 to 7 OPTION A: THE PAMPAS

Day 4 Welcome to the wetlands!

This morning we fly into Rurrenabaque, then head by car (three hours) straight to Caracoles ecolodge, our base for the next three nights as we explore the wildlife-rich pampas region in depth.

In the afternoon we take our first boat trip on the Rio Yacuma. The waters and banks of this river – which feeds into the mighty Amazon – provide habitat for caimans, anacondas, turtles, capybaras, several different monkey species, and birds so colorful they make flamingos look as though they're not really trying!

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 5 River dwellers from piranhas to pink dolphins

Anacondas and alligators are our aims this morning as we take a hike on the pampas... The seasons, the weather and other factors determine what we find, and the pampas usually delivers some surprises. After lunch and some hammock time we head back to the river and go fishing for piranhas, those formidable fauna with the toothy reputation!

If you prefer your aquatic life less ferocious, we've got you covered – the Rio Yacuma is home to pods of pink dolphins, and with luck we'll have the opportunity to swim with them. After dinner we'll spot alligators and caimans by torchlight as we take a walk near the lodge.

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 6 Monkey magic and a fishy feast

This morning's boat ride takes us to a special spot on the Rio Yacuma where if conditions are right we'll see large numbers of squirrel monkeys and possibly other monkey species as well – this region is home to four in total.

We have options after lunch: you might like to take a walk in the Pampas and spot more monkeys, or try your hand at fishing. Piranhas are only one of the species here that make good eating; others include blanquillo and benton. Want to cook your catch at the lodge? We'll have the frying pan ready!

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 7 Wildlife watching on horseback

Giddy up! Straight after breakfast we're heading out on horseback, a traditional form of transport around here. Being on horseback offers a whole new perspective on the local wildlife and is a great way to see birds in particular (that's straight from the horse's mouth). Macaws, hoatzins and parrots are some of our favorites but the bird list is different on every trip. After lunch we return by car to Rurrenabaque at around 5pm.

Spend the evening exploring the vibrant town, or just enjoying the pool at our hotel!

Accommodation: Three-star hotel in Rurrenabaque

Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

DAYS 4 to 7 OPTION B: THE JUNGLE

Day 4 Welcome to the jungle!

This morning we fly to the jungle outpost of Rurrenabaque to begin our adventure. From here we embark on a boat for the trip along the Rio Beni (three hours) to Madidi National Park, one of the most biodiverse parks in the world. Our base for the next three nights, Tacuaral ecolodge, is located right beside the Rio Tuichi.

After lunch we'll head out with our guide on our first forest walk. The area is home to four different species of monkeys, as well as deer, peccaries, capybaras, and a huge number of bird species. After dinner, we'll take a night walk to appreciate the sounds of the forest at night.

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 5 Jungle birds, river swimming, and delicious fish

This morning's destination, Caquiawara, is a natural salt lick, and if you think that sounds delicious, wait till you see what it does for parrots and macaws. From our vantage point this morning we'll have a spectacular view of these colorful birds eating the nutrient-rich earth – many of our guests take more photos here than anywhere else on the trip!

After lunch we'll head out by boat again to try our luck at fishing – either in the Rio Tuichi or in a lagoon in the forest, depending on the conditions. Surubí, black-spotted catfish, white pacú, mamuri, striped surubí and sábalo are all popular for eating, and if you'd like to cook your catch, the lodge staff will be happy to help. Or, there's time for a relaxing dip in the river before we regroup for dinner.

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 6 Tall trees and rainforest crafts

We head out on an early morning jungle hike today (optional – teenagers may prefer to sleep in!), penetrating deeper into the rainforest to learn more about its ecology and about different species of trees used for timber. We'll collect some seeds for making jewelry and other crafts back at the lodge.

You might fancy a nap after lunch, and we allow plenty of time for hammock-lounging this afternoon, along with a refreshing swim in the river, and/or a guided hike along an interpretive trail in an area popular with birds and animals.

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 7 The people of Madidi

After an early breakfast, we take a boat up Rio Beni to visit some of the Indigenous communities within Madidi National Park. Learn about traditional ways of life in the rainforest and gain a new appreciation of the ways the environment supports life here. We return to the lodge for lunch, then farewell our home of the past three days and head back to Rurrenabaque, arriving around 5pm.

Accommodation: Three-star hotel in Rurrenabaque

Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

DAYS 4 to 7 OPTION C: BOTH PAMPAS AND JUNGLE

Day 4 Descent to the Amazon

This morning we fly from La Paz to Rurrenabaque. It's only a short flight (45 minutes) but it sure punches above its weight in scenic terms, with gobsmacking views of the Cordillera Real and the Amazon jungle. Next we'll take a three-hour boat ride along the Rio Bení to our ecolodge set in one of the most biodiverse protected areas in the world, and our home for the next two nights.

This afternoon we'll enjoy a guided hike along a rainforest trail that offers the chance to see monkeys, deer, peccaries, capybaras and birds, depending on the season. And after dinner we'll take another walk - this time by torchlight for a whole new perspective on this incredible national park.

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 5 Birdwatcher's paradise

Boats are the main form of transport around here, and after breakfast we take to the water again – this time up the Tuichi River to Caquiawara, a clay cliff where macaws and parrots nest and feed, and an observation deck offers incredible photo opportunities. Enjoy lunch back at the lodge, and then we've got a cruisy afternoon in store – some cool swimming, some sport fishing, or some hammock lounging if that's more your speed.

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 6 Travel to the rainforest

We'll get an early start this morning for our three-hour boat ride back to Rurrenabaque, where we'll switch to a van for the three-hour trip to our Santa Rosa del Yacuma and Caracoles ecolodge. After lunch, the Rio Yacuma awaits, and we board a boat to spot pink dolphins, capybaras, turtles, black caimans, monkeys and loads of bird species.

We'll take a similar boat trip again after dinner, but in the dark it's a wholly different experience. Sit still and listen to the sounds of the Pampas, and to spot caiman eyes with the help of a flashlight – spooky!

Accommodation: Rustic ecolodge

Meals: All meals included

Day 7 Monkeying around

Cue the black-capped squirrel monkeys! If we're lucky, these cute little creatures will be in top form and 'performing' during our last boat trip this morning. This monkey is native to the upper Amazon basin in Bolivia western Brazil and eastern Peru, and lives in female-dominated troops of 45 to 75 monkeys.

When we've had our fill of monkey antics, it's back to the lodge for lunch and some final photos of this extraordinary region. We get back to civilization, aka Rurrenabaque, in time for dinner.

Accommodation: Three-star hotel in Rurrenabaque

Meals: Breakfast and lunch included

Day 8 Witches, bats and bowler hats!

This morning we'll fly to La Paz - welcome to the world's highest capital city! At 11,975 feet (3,650m) above sea level, La Paz is breathtaking in more ways than one. Kids who are new to this kind of altitude often find it fun to push their limits by running up and down the stairs! But for the adults, we've built in plenty of rest stops today.

We'll get oriented in the old town and check out the clock that runs backwards in keeping with indigenous beliefs, and the palaces, plazas and street markets where ancient and modern collide.

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After lunch we hop on our broomsticks and head to the witches' market, where you can have your fortune told and stock up on dried snakes, mysterious powders and mystical trinkets. (Did somebody say dried llama foetus?)

Need a change of pace after the hocus-pocus? Options today include the Museum of Musical Instruments – always a favorite with kids, who will have the chance to try playing traditional Bolivian instruments. Then there's the Museum of Ethnography and Folklore, where the collection of ritualistic masks is truly eye-popping.

Accommodation: Four-star hotel in La Paz

Meals: All meals included

Day 9 To the moon and back

Today we head a little higher, into the hills above La Paz, to visit the Valle de la Luna (Valley of the Moon). Astronaut Neil Armstrong himself is said to have likened this bizarre landscape to the moon. The clay formations are other-worldly and we'll have the chance to walk through them and see them up close.

Lunch could be at any of our favorite local cafes and restaurants, but we always find it hard to go past the salteña, Bolivia's national dish – it's an empanada but not as you know it. Bite into one and you'll see what we mean.

La Paz boasts the largest cable car system in the world – the locals use it for mass transit like other cities use buses! We'll hop aboard for the ride to El Alto to see the bold, bright creations of Bolivia's most famous architect, Freddy Mamani. If a gingerbread house, a Vegas casino, and Willy Wonka's chocolate factory produced offspring, this style might be the result.

Accommodation: Four star hotel in La Paz

Meals: All meals included

Day 10 Adiós, Bolivia

You can book your flight home for any time today - we'll get you to the airport on time. If you're off to explore more of South America, let us know - Bolivia isn't the only place we love to share with families!

Meals: Breakfast included

What's included

- All accommodation (*based on twin-share. Single supplement available for US\$800*)
- All transportation, including airport transfers at start and end of trip
- Flight from Cochabamba to Rurrenabaque, and from Rurrenabaque to La Paz
- All attractions and activities specified in itinerary
- Dedicated guides
- Meals as specified in the itinerary (*that is, all meals except dinner on day 7*)
- Clean, safe drinking water throughout the trip

What's not included

- Alcoholic beverages
- Laundry and room service
- Tips for guides and drivers

Accommodations

Accommodations throughout our Bolivia family trip are lovingly chosen for families, and are of four-star level in La Paz and Cochabamba. In Rurrenabaque, three-star with swimming pool is our best option. In the jungle and pampa we stay in airy bungalows at a remote lodge in an environment where the climate, vegetation and insects make maintaining a pristine environment simply impossible. Conditions are quite basic here - it's all part of the experience and is well worth it! As an added bonus, there is no internet here, so everyone can switch off their devices and enjoy some family time!