

Bolivia

Geography

Location: Central South America, southwest of Brazil.

Map references: South America.

Area:

total area: 1,098,580 sq km.

land area: 1,084,390 sq km.

Land boundaries: total 6,743 km, Argentina 832 km, Brazil 3,400 km, Chile 861 km, Paraguay 750 km, Peru 900 km.

Coastline: 0 km (landlocked).

Climate: varies with altitude; humid and tropical to cold and semiarid.

Terrain: rugged Andes Mountains with a highland plateau (Altiplano), hills, lowland plains of the Amazon Basin.

Natural resources: tin, natural gas, petroleum, zinc, tungsten, antimony, silver, iron, lead, gold, timber.

Land use:

arable land: 3%.

permanent crops: 0%.

meadows and pastures: 25%.

forest and woodland: 52%.

other: 20%.

Irrigated land: 1,650 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: the clearing of land for agricultural purposes and the international demand for tropical timber are contributing to deforestation; soil erosion from overgrazing and poor cultivation methods (including slash-and-burn agriculture); desertification; loss of biodiversity; industrial pollution of water supplies used for drinking and irrigation

natural hazards: cold, thin air of high plateau is obstacle to efficient fuel combustion, as well as to physical activity by those unaccustomed to it from birth; flooding in the northeast (March to April).

Note: landlocked; shares control of Lago Titicaca, world's highest navigable lake (elevation 3,805 m), with Peru.

People

Population: 7,896,254 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 39% (female 1,542,931; male 1,565,624)

15-64 years: 57% (female 2,276,308; male 2,188,100)

65 years and over: 4% (female 174,419; male 148,872) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.25% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 31.61 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 8.12 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -1.01 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 70.6 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 63.85 years
male: 61.39 years
female: 66.43 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 4.1 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Bolivian(s)

adjective: Bolivian

Ethnic divisions: Quechua 30%, Aymara 25%, mestizo (mixed European and Indian ancestry) 25%-30%, European 5%-15%

Religions: Roman Catholic 95%, Protestant (Evangelical Methodist)

Languages: Spanish (official), Quechua (official), Aymara (official)

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1992)

total population: 80%

male: 88%

female: 72%

Labour force: 3.54 million

by occupation: agriculture NA, services and utilities 20%,
manufacturing, mining and construction 7% (1993)

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Bolivia.

conventional short form: Bolivia.

local long form: Republica de Bolivia.

local short form: Bolivia.

Type: republic

Capital: La Paz (seat of government); Sucre (legal capital and seat of judiciary)

Administrative divisions: 9 departments (departamentos, singular - departamento); Chuquisaca, Cochabamba, Beni, La Paz, Oruro, Pando, Potosi, Santa Cruz, Tarija

Independence: 6 August 1825 (from Spain)

National holiday: Independence Day, 6 August (1825)

Constitution: 2 February 1967

Legal system: based on Spanish law and Code Napoleon; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age, universal and compulsory (married); 21 years of age, universal and compulsory (single)

Flag: three equal horizontal bands of red (top), yellow, and green with the coat of arms centered on the yellow band; similar to the flag of Ghana, which has a large black five-pointed star centered in the yellow band

Economy

Overview: With its long history of semifeudal social controls, dependence on volatile prices for its mineral exports, and bouts of hyperinflation, Bolivia has remained one of the poorest and least developed Latin American countries.

Industries: mining, smelting, petroleum, food and beverage, tobacco, handicrafts, clothing; illicit drug industry reportedly produces 15% of its revenues

Agriculture: accounts for about 21% of GDP (including forestry and fisheries); principal commodities - coffee, coca, cotton, corn, sugarcane, rice, potatoes, timber; self-sufficient in food

Illicit drugs: world's second-largest producer of coca (after Peru) with an estimated 48,100 hectares under cultivation in 1994; voluntary and forced eradication programs unable to prevent production from rising to 89,800 metric tons in 1994 from 84,400 tons in 1993; government considers all but 12,000 hectares illicit; intermediate coca products and cocaine exported to or through Colombia and Brazil to the US and other international drug markets; alternative crop program aims to reduce illicit coca cultivation

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 3,684 km (single track)

Highways:

total: 42,815 km

Inland waterways: 10,000 km of commercially navigable waterways

Pipelines: crude oil 1,800 km; petroleum products 580 km; natural gas 1,495 km

Ports: none; however, Bolivia has free port privileges in the maritime ports of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Paraguay

Airports:

total: 1,382

Defence Forces

Branches: Army (Ejercito Boliviano), Navy (Fuerza Naval Boliviana, includes Marines), Air Force (Fuerza Aerea Boliviana), National Police Force (Policia Nacional de Bolivia)