

# BOLIVIA

## LA PAZ DEPARTMENT

GENERAL DATA - LOCATION AND LIMITS - ECONOMY - CITY OF LA PAZ - CITIES AND VILLAGES.

### **GENERAL DATA OF LA PAZ DEPARTMENT**

**Capital:** city of La Paz (Murillo province), founded in 1548 by Captain Alonso de Mendoza, with the name of Nuestra Señora de La Paz. Height: 3,632 meters above sea level (Plaza Murillo).

**Area:** 133,985 km<sup>2</sup> (12.2% the total territory of Bolivia).

**Population:** 2,706,351 inhabitants (Census 2012).

**Population density (inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>):** 20.20 (Census 2012).

**Average annual growth rate of population (2001-2012):** 1.26% (Census 2012).

**Geographical coordinates:** 16° 29' S - 68° 08' O.

**Languages:** Spanish, Aymara.



## DEPARTMENT OF LA PAZ IS DIVIDED INTO 20 PROVINCES

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Province</i>	<i>Capital</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Population</i>
1	Aroma	Sica Sica	4,510 km <sup>2</sup> (3.37%)	3.7%
2	Bautista Saavedra	Charazani	2,525 km <sup>2</sup> (1.88%)	0.5%
3	Abel Iturralde	Ixiamas	42,815 km <sup>2</sup> (31.96%)	0.5%
4	Caranavi	Caranavi	3,400 km <sup>2</sup> (2.54%)	2.1%
5	Eliodoro Camacho	Puerto Acosta	2,080 km <sup>2</sup> (1.55%)	2.2%
6	Franz Tamayo	Apolo	15,900 km <sup>2</sup> (11.87%)	0.7%
7	Gualberto Villarroel	San Pedro de Curahuara	1,935 km <sup>2</sup> (1.44%)	0.7%
8	Ingavi	Viacha	5,410 km <sup>2</sup> (4.04%)	3.9%
9	Inquisivi	Inquisivi	6,430 km <sup>2</sup> (4.80%)	2.2%
10	José Manuel Pando	Santiago de Machaca	1,976 km <sup>2</sup> (1.47%)	0.3%
11	Larecaja	Sorata	8,110 km <sup>2</sup> (6.05%)	2.5%
12	José Ramón Loayza	Luribay	3,370 km <sup>2</sup> (2.52%)	1.8%
13	Los Andes	Pucarani	1,658 km <sup>2</sup> (1.24%)	2.7%
14	Manco Kapac	Copacabana	367 km <sup>2</sup> (0.27%)	0.9%
15	Ildefonso de Muñecas	Chuma	4,965 km <sup>2</sup> (3.71%)	1.1%
16	Nor Yungas	Coroico	1,720 km <sup>2</sup> (1.28%)	1.0%
17	Omasuyos	Achacachi	2,065 km <sup>2</sup> (1.54%)	3.4%
18	Provincia de Pacajes	Coro Coro	10,584 km <sup>2</sup> (7.90%)	1.9%
19	Pedro Domingo Murillo	Palca	4,705 km <sup>2</sup> (3.51%)	65.3%
20	Sud Yungas	Chulumani	5,770 km <sup>2</sup> (4.31%)	2.6%
---	Lake Titicaca	---	3,690 km <sup>2</sup> (2.75%)	---

## **LOCATION AND LIMITS OF DEPARTMENT OF LA PAZ**

The Department of La Paz is located in northwest of Bolivia.

Limits:

North with the Pando department;

South with the Oruro department;

To the east with the Beni department and Cochabamba department;

West with the countries of Peru and Chile.

# MAP OF LA PAZ DEPARTMENT





## ***ECONOMY OF LA PAZ DEPARTMENT***

The department of La Paz has great natural resources. Different ecological zones give rich variety of agricultural and livestock production.

**Mining.** Has important mineral resources such as gold, tin, antimony, tungsten, lead, silver, marble, gypsum...

**Agriculture.** In the highlands produce potatoes, quinoa, oca, beans, cañahua, peas, barley, cultivated grasses and oats... In the areas of valleys produce variety of fruits such as grapes, peaches, plums and all sorts of vegetables. In the area of Yungas produce citrus, coffee, peanuts, cassava, maize, coca...

**Wood.** In the tropical plains region (north part of La Paz department) thrive high quality pasture and tree species (fine woods) such as mara or mahogany, sangre de toro, moradillo, laurel...

**Livestock.** In highland involved in breeding of llamas, alpacas and vicunas in large quantities and both wool and meat are absorbed for industrial and food consumption. Also highlands are populated by large herds of sheep. The region of Apollo, has excellent weather conditions and natural pasture, is suitable for breeding and fattening of cattle, sheep and horses. The northern plains of La Paz department have large herds of cattle and horses.

**Fisheries.** Fishing takes place on Titicaca Lake (salmon trout and creole) and on rivers of La Paz department (pacú, blanquillo, bagre, sábalo, surubí...).

The city of La Paz is characterized by having a large part of economic activities of Bolivia. The largest industries are textiles beverages, clothing, tobacco, chemicals, nonmetallic minerals and engineering industries.

## ***CITY OF LA PAZ***

Señora de La Paz is the administrative capital of Bolivia, as well as the departmental capital of La Paz Department, and the second largest city (in population) only after Santa Cruz de la Sierra. It is located in the western part of the country on the department of the same name. It is located at an elevation of 3,660 meters above sea level, making it the world's highest "de facto" capital city, or administrative capital. The official capital of Bolivia is Sucre and it is the seat of Justice, La Paz has more government departments, hence the

"de facto" qualifier. The city seats in a "bowl" surrounded by the high mountains of the altiplano. As it grows, La Paz climbs the hills, resulting in varying elevations from 3,000 meters to 4,100 meters. Overlooking the city is towering triple-peaked Illimani, which is always snow-covered and can be seen from several spots of the city, including from the neighbor city, El Alto.

**HISTORY OF LA PAZ.** The La Paz city has founded in 1548 by the Spanish conquistadors at the site of the Native American settlement, Laja, the full name of the city was originally Nuestra Señora de La Paz. The name commemorated the restoration of peace following the insurrection of Gonzalo Pizarro and fellow conquistadors four years earlier against Blasco Núñez Vela, the first viceroy of Peru. The city was later moved to its present location in the valley of Chuquiago Marka.

Control over the former Inca lands had been entrusted to Pedro de la Gasca by the Spanish king (and Holy Roman Emperor) Emperor Charles V. Gasca commanded Alonso de Mendoza to found a new city commemorating the end of the civil wars in Peru; the city of La Paz was founded on October 20, 1548.

In 1549, "Juan Gutierrez Paniagua" was commanded to design an urban plan that would designate sites for public areas, plazas, official buildings, and a cathedral. La Plaza de los Españoles, which is known today as the Plaza Murillo, was chosen as the location for government buildings as well as the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Spain controlled La Paz with a firm grip and the Spanish king had the last word in all matters political. In 1781, for a total of six months, a group of Aymara people laid siege to La Paz. Under the leadership of Tupac Katari, they destroyed churches and government property. Thirty years later Indians laid a two-month siege on La Paz - where and when the legend of the Ekeko is set. In 1809, the struggle for independence from the Spanish rule brought uprisings against the royalist forces. It was on July 16, 1809 that "Pedro Domingo Murillo" famously said that the Bolivian revolution was igniting a lamp that nobody would be able to turn-off. This formally marked the beginning of the Liberation of South America from Spain. Pedro Domingo Murillo was hanged at the Plaza de los Españoles that night, but his name would be eternally remembered in the name of the plaza, and he would be remembered as the voice of revolution across South America.

In 1825, after the decisive victory of the republicans at Ayacucho over the Spanish army in the course of the Spanish American wars of independence, the city's full name was changed to La Paz de Ayacucho (meaning The Peace of Ayacucho).

In 1840, Bolivia started exporting more than it imported, allowing the government to engage in infrastructural investments with the surplus funds. This led to a growth of La Paz as the financial, commercial, and political capital of the area. "With new urban classes emerging, and new capital to spend, there was both increased demands for foodstuffs production and an aggressive class of urban-based capitalists willing to engage in agricultural production"(Klien 1993). However, at this time La Paz was virtually isolated from the rest of the world due to the poor roads and lack of rail lines leading over the harsh Altiplano to ports in Peru and Chile. Contact between La Paz and the eastern part of the country, surrounded by rainforest, was even more difficult.

In 1898, La Paz was made the de facto seat of the national government, with Sucre remaining the nominal historical as well as judiciary capital. This change reflected the shift of the Bolivian economy away from the largely exhausted silver mines of Potosí to the exploitation of tin near Oruro, and resulting shifts in the distribution of economic and political power among various national elites.

In 1900, construction began on the international railroad network linking La Paz to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, thus solidifying the future role of La Paz as a primate city. At this period in time, the Bolivian government spent an annual spending of USD 5,986,384.

In 1921, the first oil company came to Bolivia. Bolivia was found to have great reservoirs of oil, in addition to all the precious minerals.

In 1952, the great national revolution when the revolutionaries won the rights for the indigenous people. Their biggest accomplishment was agrarian land reform, which allowed peasants to have freedom from the obligations of working on the elite-owned land, diffusing the long-established hacienda system. This in turn sparked a great growth spurt in the city, as many working-class and poor migrated to urban areas.

In 1964, military revolution, with the help of the United States that established the dictatorial rule that would remain until 1980. The last dictator was General Hugo Banzer. He held elections in 1980, although, suspiciously, Banzer's candidate won and was president until the year 1982.

In 2009, La Paz City met the Bicentenary, celebrating in Plaza Villarroel and in the Stadium the 1809 revolution.

**GEOGRAPHY OF LA PAZ.** La Paz is built in a canyon created by the Choqueyapu River (now mostly built over), which runs northwest to southeast. The city's main thoroughfare, which



roughly follows the river, changes names over its length, but the central tree-lined section running through the downtown core is called the Prado.

La Paz is located in the valleys of the Andes, and is closer to the Eastern split of the Altiplano region. Therefore, it is closer to the famous mountains such as the Illimani (guardian of La Paz), Huayna Potosi, Mururata, and Illampu. On the Western side of the Altiplano divide, about an hour to the West of the La Paz, is the site of the tallest mountain in Bolivia and 9th tallest mountain in the Andes, the Sajama Volcano. In July 1994, an earthquake rated at 8.2 struck just 200 miles north of La Paz, the largest earthquake since the Sumbawa earthquake of 1977. Part of the water supply is derived from glaciers, which are becoming a less reliable source of water.

The geography of La Paz (in particular the altitude) reflects society: the lower areas of the city are the more affluent areas. While many middle-class residents live in high-rise condos near the center, the houses of the truly affluent are located in the lower neighborhoods southwest of the Prado. And looking up from the center, the surrounding hills are plastered with makeshift brick houses of those of less economically fortunate.

**CLIMATE OF LA PAZ.** Owing to the altitude of the city, temperatures are consistently cool throughout the year, though the diurnal temperature variation is typically large. The city has a relatively dry climate, with rainfall occurring mainly in the slightly warmer months of November to March. The sun passes directly overhead in late October and mid-February.

**Tourism.** La Paz is an important cultural center of Bolivia. The city hosts several cathedrals belonging to the colonial times, such as the San Francisco Cathedral and the Metropolitan Cathedral, this last one located on Murillo Square, which is also home of the political and administrative power of the country. Hundreds of different museums can be found across the city, the most notable ones on Jaén Street, which street design has been preserved from the Spanish days and is home of 10 different museums.

### **MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL CENTERS IN THE CITY OF LA PAZ:**

**House of Pedro Domingo Murillo.** Once the house of Pedro Domingo Murillo, martyr of the independence revolution of 1809 his house has been preserved and is now a museum. The house displays a collection of furniture, textiles, and art from colonial times.

**Folkloric Museum (museo costumbrista).** Displays ceramic dolls wearing traditional customs that show how life was in the early 1800s. Also on display are photos of old La Paz.

**National Museum of Archeology (Museo Nacional de Arqueología).** Depicts a collection of artifacts of the Tiwanaku culture.

**Litoral's Museum (Museo del Litoral).** Displays objects from the 1879 war in which Bolivia lost its seacoast to Chile.

**Museum of Gold (Museo del Oro).** Depicts pre-Conquest works made of gold, silver and copper.

**Ethnography and Folklore Museum (Museo de Etnografía y Folklore).** Placed in a house built in the late 1700s, it exhibits customs and art of two ethnic groups: Chipayas and Ayoreos.

**Museum of Charango (Museo del Charango).** Located in Calle Linares, the museum displays an incredible variety of charangos. Other native instruments are displayed as well.

**Museum of Natural History (Museo de Historia Natural).** Exhibits on Bolivia's paleontology, geology, paleontology, zoology, and botany.

**House Museum of Marina Nuñez del Prado (Casa Museo de Marina Nuñez del Prado).** Displays Quechua and Aymara-theme sculptures by Bolivian artist Marina Nuñez del Prado.

**National Art Museum (Museo Nacional de Arte).** Located in calle Comercio, on a former palace built in 1775, displays works by Melchor Perez de Holguín and Marina Nuñez del Prado, among others.

**Witches Market (Mercado de Brujas).** Merchandise sold here includes herbs, remedies as well as other ingredients used in Aymara traditions.

**Feria de Alasitas.** This fair is celebrated each year on January 24 in honor of a little god of abundance known as Ekeko, which means dwarf in Aymara.

## ***CITIES AND VILLAGES OF LA PAZ DEPARTMENT***

**AYO AYO.** It situated at an altitude of 3,956 meters above the sea level. This is a historical site by excellence. It was the center of some indigenous revolutions planned by native heroes like Tupac Katari. It was the witness of important historical national events. It is also the see of colonial temples. It is interesting to visit here the Caracato Valley and the Urmuri, Collana and Tholar Spas.

**ACHACACHI.** It is a town on the Altiplano plateau in the South American Andes in the La Paz Department in Bolivia. It is the capital of the Omasuyos Province. Achacachi located near to the Titicaca Lake. Achacachi, as an establishment, existed before the arrival of the



Spaniards, as shown by descriptions that were made on "cronicas" and "relaciones" (official papers written by authorities) by royal or ecclesiastical Spanish authorities. Achacachi was the capital of a colla "señorio" called Pacasa, in the "Umasuyus" (from Aymara: "shore side") region. The weather is predominantly cold. The Aymara origin of this town remains in ancient organizations that still are expressed through typical agrarian communities and particular traditions. It is interesting to visit here the snow - capped Illampu peak and the Keka River. The main celebration is the festivity of San Pedro, one of the few pre-Hispanic and folkloric dance and music expressions.

**DESAGUADERO.** It is a town at the Bolivian-Peruvian border situated in the La Paz Department, Ingavi Province, Desaguadero Municipality and Desaguadero Canton. The town is located 86 km from La Paz. It is connected to the location of Desaguadero in Puerto Suarez. It possesses diversity of flora and fauna like flamingos, wild ducks and hawks. At the present time, there are active and good tour services, as well as hotels and restaurants.

**COPACABANA.** The Copacabana Peninsula is situated at an altitude of 3,800 meters above the sea level. Its climate is cold and the temperature oscillates between 9° C and -10° C. The Titicaca Lake is a natural wonder, a source of abundant fish species and it is an important mean of communication by boat as well. It is interesting to visit here the beautiful Sanctuary of Copacabana Basilica (1588), a colonial monument with a Baroque style; as well as the incredible Sun and Moon Islands.

**COROICO.** It is a town in Nor Yungas Province, in the La Paz Department of western Bolivia. From the mid-18th century, the lands in this region came under the control of a few powerful families, the hacendados. These families maintained control of this region until the mid-1950s, when they were overthrown by revolution. After the revolution, agrarian reforms were put in place, dividing the lands up between the national government and the locals. Now, Coroico has a mostly Aymara and Mestizo population. The town has become a major market for the surrounding region. Staple products arrive from La Paz and the surrounding areas to be sold in the colorful markets and stores all days of the week. The region around Coroico has remained a traditional coca growing area and is the smallest of three areas of coca production in Bolivia. Coroico emerald (esmeralda) green surroundings have become a welcoming sight for travelers tired of the harshness of the altiplano. The views of the surrounding hills are lovely, the nearby hiking trails are picturesque, the bars

and restaurants in town are pleasant, and there are some worthwhile excursions. Here in this tropical town, you will find fruit orchards, twittering birds, coca fields, endless greenery, oxygen-rich air, warm weather, and friendly locals. There are also some nice hikes in the area where you could spend a few days in Coroico exploring the area, such as hikes to waterfalls or to rivers. It has an enormous tourist potential, mainly, due to its attractive biodiversity. It is recommendable to visit the Uchumachi and the Vagantes Boulevard. You should also visit the natural ponds and the pre-Columbian trail of Chucura - Apacheta. The main celebration is the festivity of the Virgin of Candelaria that is celebrated on October 20th.

**CORIPATA.** This is a typical region of Los Yungas, its topography is irregular. The standard temperature is 25° C. The Afro-Bolivian population keeps alive the ancient African culture and mixes it with local traditions, the result is a special and original folklore reflected in, for example, the "Saya" a beautiful traditional dance. This region possesses a privileged flora and fauna; the bio-diversity is ideal for developing and promoting the eco-tourism. It is interesting to visit the Peri, Jakchu and Elena rivers. Its main celebration is the festivity of the Virgin of Carmen, which is celebrated on July 16th.

**CHULUMANI.** It is the capital of the Sud Yungas region in Bolivia, situated four hours from city of La Paz. Agriculture dominates the area, which produces bananas, coffee, and coca leaves. Has subtropical climate with warm temperatures and high humidity. Chulumani is also part of the world famous Yungas Road. On the drive to Chulumani one can admire the Castillo de los Patos which is situated beside the Chaco waterfall. A few kilometers away from Chulumani is located the Apa-Apa Ecological Reserve.

**GUANAY.** This population is located to the east of The Andes Mountain Range. It presents series of topographic breakings and diverse ecological floors. This region contains a variety of forests, fauna and flora. This is a prosperous tea and banana-producing center. It is interesting to visit here: the Paitití mount, the colonial temples, the Güasuli canyon and the Tipuani, Sañiri, Achina, Chillapu, Mapiri, Kaka, Sipiapu and Uchipampa rivers.

**PUCARANI.** The topography of the region is formed by low mountains, hills and straight valleys. It is located 4,200 meters above the sea level.

This is a place of abundant natural resources in terms of fauna and flora: condor, foxes, hares, partridges and so on. It also possesses mineral resources as gold and tin.

**PALOS BLANCOS.** The topography of this region presents mountains, plains, colonies in parallel formation and straight valleys. Its climate is normally warm and rainy. This region contains a great diversity of species, in flora and fauna, as well as immense forests. The Mosetenes, a native community, is the most important population in the area. There are also some Aymara and Quechua communities.

**SORATA.** It is a small town in the La Paz Department in the Bolivian Andes, northwest of the city of La Paz and east of Lake Titicaca. It is the seat of the Larecaja Province and the Sorata Municipality. Sorata is located at the base of the mountains Illampu (6,368 m) and Ancohuma (6,427 m) which are the northern anchors of the Cordillera Real. By the most reliable figures, Ancohuma is 11 meters lower than Illimani, near La Paz, but surveys in the area are imperfect, and there is much debate between the citizens of both areas as to which mountain is higher. The standard temperature is 18° C. This Aymara population is well known because of its natural environment and its old colonial farmhouses. Sorata is no longer a major commercial center, as there is now a more direct route to the Yungas from La Paz. The magnificent landscapes present a nice contrast between mountains and valleys. It is interesting to visit here the Inca Trail, the Grottos (Las Grutas) and the San Cristobal, Capinota, Soque, Coco and Tora Rivers. Today it is best known to foreign tourists, trekkers, and climbers, who visit this formerly little-known destination. The main town fiesta is held on September 14.

**SICA SICA.** The topography of the region is formed by ecological floors, plateaus, mountains and valleys. It is situated 4,700 meters above the sea level. Sica Sica is an Aymara population that was also the home of important revolutionary chiefs like Tupac Katari and Pablo Zarate Willca. It is interesting to visit here the Colonial Church (XVII century) and the ecological location of Laka utas (“earth dwellings”). The Lahuachaca fair presents an interesting animal and product exchange. The hot springs of Sica Sica are situated in the zone too.

**VIACHA.** It is a city in Bolivia, situated in the Ingavi Province in the La Paz Department. Viacha lies in the Altiplano 22 km southwest of La Paz. The location of Viacha, which lies close to Lake Titicaca and Tiwanaku, makes it a cultural center for the Irohito-Urus. These



descendants of the Incas have lived in this area for hundreds of years. Sources of income for the city it is cement production and agriculture, mainly consisting of potatoes.

[MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LA PAZ DEPARTMENT.](#)

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