

BOLIVIA



| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| NAME: | Bolivia (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia) Official legal name: named for liberator of northern South America, Simón Bolívar; name in Quechua: Bulivya Mamallaqta; name in Aymará: Wuliwya Suyu |
| POPULATION: | 11,400,000 (2015) |
| ETHNIC GROUPS: | White (15%; Spanish mostly); Mestizo (23%); Indigenous (62%): Quechua (30%), Aymará 25%, Guaraní (8%) |
| CAPITAL: | La Paz (administrative capital, 2,000,000); Sucre (constitutional capital) |
| INDEPENDENCE DAY: | August 2, 1825 (independence from Spain) |
| LANGUAGES: | 4 official languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymará, Guaraní |
| RELIGION: | Roman Catholic (95%); Protestant (5%). |
| LIFE EXPECTANCY: | Men (64); women (70) |
| LITERACY: | 87% |
| POVERTY: | 60% of the population is below the poverty line. |
| GOVERNMENT: | Democratic republic |
| Legislature: | Plurinational Legislative Assembly (Senate and Chamber of Deputies) |
| President: | Juan Evo Morales |
| MILITARY: | Army (Ejército Boliviano), Navy (Armada Boliviana), Air Force (Fuerza Aérea Boliviana) |
| ECONOMY: | Coca (world's third largest producer and exporter); soybeans, coffee, cotton, corn, sugarcane, rice, |

potatoes, wood, mining, petroleum, tobacco, handicrafts

Bolivia is one of the poorest nations in the world;

64% live below the poverty line.

MONEY: boliviano (BOB) (7.1 = \$1.00 US, 2010)

GEOGRAPHY: Bolivia is bordered, clockwise from north and east, by Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, and Peru; Bolivia has no access to the any ocean. Much of Bolivia is in the Andes mountain chain at a very high elevation. Lake Titicaca is 12,500 ft above sea level; it is the highest commercially navigable lake in the world, and it is the largest lake in South America. The eastern lowlands slope down to the Amazon rainforests.

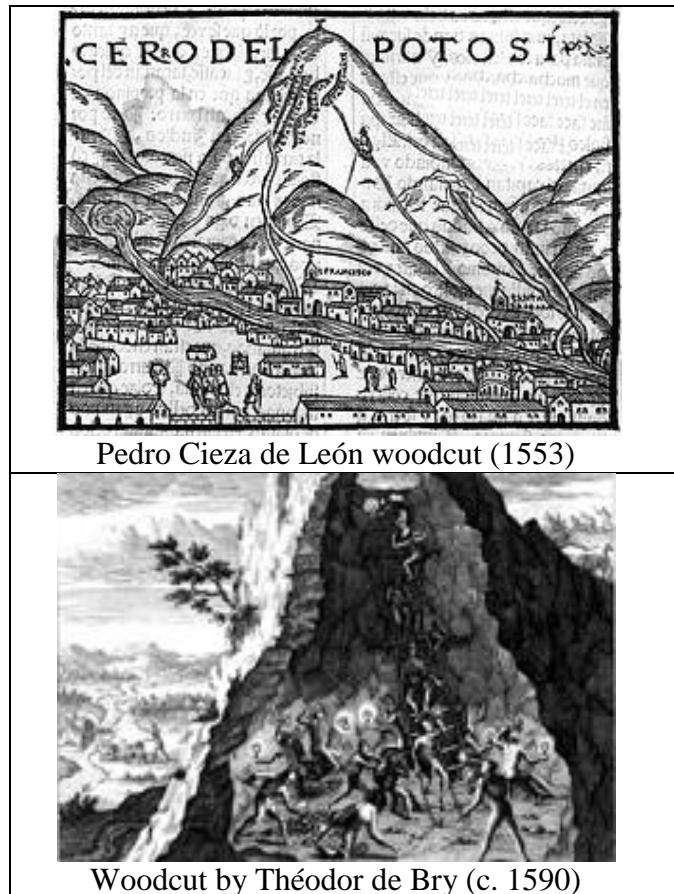
INTERNET CODE: .bo

CALLING CODE: +591

HISTORY:

- 200 BCE-1000 Tiwanaku civilization, with a population up to one million. It was a an agricultural society centered around the village of Tiwanaku in the Titicaca Basin of Bolivia. It used "raised-field" agriculture with irrigated pasture land, terraced fields, and small lake farming (cocha farming).
- 600-950 Tiwanaku was the regional capital of the Tiwanaku (early Aymará) people. The city had a population of between 15,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, and it governed a region that covered modern southern Perú, western Bolivia—and Lake Titicaca that crosses the modern borders—and extreme northern Chile.
- 1000-1400 People in the Beni region of Bolivia "built roads, causeways, canals, dikes, reservoirs, mounds, raised agricultural fields, and possibly ball courts" (Charles C. Mann, *1491*, New York: Knopf, 2005, p. 5). For a map of the Beni region, link to this URL in Maplandia: => [Beni](#).
- 1438-1527 Quechua and Aymará (Tiwanaku) peoples began to come under the dominion of the Inca empire centered in Perú and running along most of the Andes mountain chain.
- 1542 Bolivia was claimed by Spain and was incorporated into the Viceroyalty of Perú. Bolivia proper was called Upper Perú until 1825.
- 1545 Diego Hualpa (llama herder?) accidentally found richest vein of silver in history: 300 ft. long, 13 ft. wide, 300 ft. deep. The native peoples taught the Spanish colonists how to refine such rich silver ore (50%)
- 1546 Potosí (officially: Villa Imperial de Potosí) was founded as a city due to a fabulously rich silver mine. The name became synonymous

with fabulous wealth. In 1611 the population of the new mining city reached 160,000. Today the city of Potosí (13,000 ft elevation) has a population of 15,000. Silver from Bolivia helped fund the Spanish empire's control of its worldwide colonies, its monarchy, and its European expansion and wars. Native Bolivian people constituted the brutal slave-like labor force in the silver mines. The system by which native people were forced to work in the mines was called the *mita*. Two images of the main silver mine called Cerro Rico, which rises above the town/city of Potosí:



Pedro Cieza de León woodcut (1553)

Woodcut by Théodor de Bry (c. 1590)

Charles C. Mann, in his crucial work, 1493 (Knopf, 2011) says this about Bolivian silver: “One account describes how a single shipment of 7,771 bars left the [Potosí] in 1549 ... Each bar was about 99 percent silver and weighed more than eighty pounds. All were stamped with serial numbers by the foundry and marked with the owner’s stamp, the foundry stamp, and the tax man’s stamp. By the time the assayer individually certified its purity with his stamp, the bar looked as if it had been graffiti-tagged by a demented numerologist. Each llama could carry only

three or four bars. ...The shipment required more than two thousand of the beasts. They were watched by more than a thousand Indian guards who in turn were watched by squads of Spanish pistoleros” (148).

- 1556 - 1783 45,000 tons of silver were mined from the mine at Cerro Rico alone in Potosí. In all, Bolivian silver mines during these two centuries yielded over 150,000 tons of silver that flooded the world money markets and was instrumental in spreading the Columbian Exchange because silver became the main currency in Europe, the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and French empires. Furthermore, Spanish silver coins formed the core of the Philippines and China, notably in the Chinese province of Yuegang in Fujian.
- 1825 Bolivia got its independence from Spain due to the military victories by Simón Bolívar.
- 1825 - 1982 During these 157 years Bolivia was ruled by more than 160 presidents or dictators.
- 1836-1839 Bolivia and Perú formed the Peru-Bolivian Confederation, but this confederation collapsed when Argentina and Chile invaded.
- 1879 - 1883 Bolivia became a landlocked country when it lost the Guerra del Pacífico (War of the Pacific) to Chile and Perú.
- 2006 – 2018 Juan Evo Morales elected president. He is an Aymará, the first indigenous ruler ever in Bolivia. The presidential term was only two consecutive terms, but in 2008, the Bolivian constitution was amended to allow more than two consecutive terms; hence, president Morales was re-elected in 2010 and again in 2014.



El presidente de Bolivia, Evo Morales, en octubre (Reuters) from El País, April 4, 2010, p. 8.

2010 Municipal and regional elections: majority of election races won by the MAS; as a result of these election results, President Evo Morales has sufficient political margin of support and momentum in order to enact a sweeping regional redesign to give more autonomy to the regions and to indigenous populations.

PRINCIPAL POLITICAL PARTIES:

Free Bolivia Movement / MBL; Movement Towards Socialism (MAS);
Movement Without Fear (MSM); National Revolutionary Movement
(MNR); National Unity (UN).

MAJOR MEMBERS OF INTELLIGENTSIA:

Writers: Guzmán de Rojas, Arturo Borda, María Luisa Pacheco, Marina
Núñez del Prado