

Bolivia

Medical Summary

The health risk information presented here is summarized from Shoreland Travax[®], a decision-support tool used by health care providers to perform a detailed health risk analysis based on specific locations, individual travel styles, and traveler risk behaviors. Travax provides practitioners current, independently researched malaria risk and prevention recommendations in a map-based format that goes beyond the annual WHO and US CDC statements included here. Not included here are current reports from Travax of disease outbreaks or environmental events that may pose elevated risks to travelers' health and safety. The Providers section of this site offers a directory of health care providers who utilize Shoreland Travax for travel health counseling. Learn more about the detailed reports and maps available from these practitioners (includes links to samples).

General Information

Bolivia is a developing nation classified as lower middle income. Located in central South America (south of Brazil and north of Paraguay), the climate classifications range from dry summer to humid equatorial (long dry season), with cooler temperatures in some high-altitude areas.

Vaccinations

Yellow Fever

An official yellow fever vaccination certificate may be required depending on your itinerary. Vaccination is usually recommended if you'll be traveling in areas where there is risk of yellow fever transmission.

- **Requirement:** A certificate proving yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers aged ≥ 1 year coming from countries with risk of YF transmission. This does not apply to airport transit stops (no exit through immigration checkpoint) in risk countries.
- **Official Status:** listed by WHO as a country where YF transmission risk is present.

Other Vaccines

Depending on your itinerary, your personal risk factors, and the length of your visit, your health care provider may offer you vaccination against COVID-19, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, rabies, or typhoid fever. Routine immunizations, such as those that prevent tetanus/diphtheria or "childhood" diseases, should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Malaria

The following is current information as reported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

WHO—*International Travel and Health* (current online update, Country List)

(2021) Malaria risk due almost exclusively to *P. vivax* (99.9%) exists throughout the year in the entire country below 2500 m. The risk of malaria is highest in the northern departments of Beni and Pando, especially in the localities of Riberalta, Guayaramerín and Sena.

- Recommended prevention in risk areas: **B** - Risk of *P. vivax* malaria only. Mosquito bite prevention plus chloroquine chemoprophylaxis.^a

^aAlternatively, for travel to rural areas with low risk of malaria infection, mosquito bite prevention can be combined with stand-by emergency treatment (SBET).

WHO Country List footnote: When available, the date of the most recent update or confirmation is indicated in parentheses in the country list. If no date is indicated, the most recent update or confirmation was provided before 2013.

CDC—*Health Information for International Travel* (current online edition)

Areas with malaria: All areas < 2,500 m (8,202 ft). None in the city of La Paz (see Map 3-18).

- Drug resistance³ : Chloroquine.

- Malaria species: *P. vivax* 93%, *P. falciparum* 7%.
 - Recommended chemoprophylaxis: Atovaquone-proguanil, doxycycline, mefloquine, primaquine,⁴ or tafenoquine.⁴
- ³ Refers to *P. falciparum* malaria unless otherwise noted.
- ⁴ Primaquine and tafenoquine can cause hemolytic anemia in people with G6PD deficiency. Patients must be screened for G6PD deficiency before starting primaquine or tafenoquine. See *Tafenoquine Approved for Malaria Prophylaxis and Treatment* for more information.

Other Concerns

Travelers' Diarrhea

High risk exists throughout the country, with moderate risk in deluxe accommodations. Community sanitation and food safety measures are generally inadequate. Some itineraries (e.g., remote destinations, austere accommodations) and activities (e.g., ecotourism, eating street or local-market food) further increase risk.

Travelers should observe food and beverage precautions, which reduce the likelihood of illness.

Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and, if risk is moderate to high, an antibiotic to add if diarrhea is severe. Consult a knowledgeable health care provider regarding which antibiotic is appropriate for you and most effective for your destination.

Other Food-Borne Illnesses

Precautions to prevent brucellosis may be needed.

Insect- and Arthropod-Borne Diseases

Chagas' disease (American trypanosomiasis), chikungunya, dengue, leishmaniasis, mayaro virus, West Nile virus, Zika may pose a risk. Personal protective measures are important.

Other Disease and Health Risks

Additional concerns include air pollution, altitude illness, anthrax disease, hantavirus, helminths, leptospirosis, plague, schistosomiasis, sexually transmitted infections, snakebites, tuberculosis.

Consular Advice

The material below includes information from the US Department of State (DOS), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCO), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), as well as from additional open-source material. Standard safety precautions that apply to all international travel can be found in the Library article Safety and Security.

Consular Travel Advice

Due to crime, US (DOS) advises avoiding travel to Chapare Region and advises reconsidering travel (or avoiding nonessential travel) to Yungas Region. UK (FCO), Canada (GAC), and Australia (DFAT) have no current warnings.

Terrorism Risk

No intrinsic risk of attack by terrorist groups exists, but unforeseen attacks are possible.

Crime

High risk of violent crime (armed robbery and sexual assault) exists throughout the country, especially in areas frequented by tourists (particularly in La Paz) and in Rurrenabaque, Santa Cruz, Coronilla Hill in Cochabamba, on Inca Trails, in clubs and hostels, and on public transportation.

High risk of petty crime exists throughout the country, especially in central La Paz, in areas frequented by tourists, and on public transportation.

Express kidnappings to force cash withdrawals at ATMs occur throughout the country, especially in La Paz and at land border crossings with Argentina, Chile, and Peru (including the towns of Copacabana and Desaguadero).

Scams involving the use of distraction techniques to commit robbery (including squirting substances on victims), false identity (such as criminals posing as police officers), and requests to export parcels that contain hidden narcotics have been reported. Risk exists of robberies and/or assaults occurring after consuming intentionally drugged food or drink; tourists are frequently targeted.

Civil Unrest

Protests and demonstrations frequently occur throughout the country (especially in Oruro, Uyuni, and Santa Cruz, in border areas, and near airports) and have the potential to turn violent without warning. Bystanders are at risk of harm from violence or from the response by authorities. Disruption to transportation, free movement, or the ability to carry out daily activities may occur.

Unsafe Areas

Ethnic tensions may be present on Isla del Sol, Lake Titicaca.

Water Safety

Passenger boats may be unsafe, including small crafts and speedboats. Decline water transportation in vessels that appear overloaded or lack personal flotation devices or life jackets.

Basic safety standards for recreational water activities (including scuba diving, snorkeling, jet-skiing, rafting, kayaking, and tubing) may not be in place. Rent water sports equipment from reputable operators.

Outdoor Safety

Basic safety standards for adventure activities (including jungle expeditions, mountain biking, and salt flat tours in Salar de Uyuni) are often not in place. Travelers should only use reputable adventure-sport operators for activities and equipment rentals.

Transportation Safety

High risk of traffic-related injury or death exists. The road traffic death rate is 12 to 24 per 100,000 population. The rate is less than 10 in most high-income countries.

Speed laws are poorly enforced.

Seat belt laws are poorly enforced.

Drunk driving laws are poorly enforced.

There are no restrictions on mobile phone usage while driving.

Structural standards for vehicles may not meet international standards.

Airline Safety

The US Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the civil aviation authority of this country oversees its air carriers in accordance with minimum international safety standards.

Natural Disasters

The rainy season is from November through March. Floods, mudslides, and landslides may occur, especially in mountainous areas.

Consular Information

Selected Embassies or Consulates in Bolivia

- United States: [+591] 2-216-8000; bo.usembassy.gov
- Canada: [+591] 2-241-5141; travel.gc.ca/assistance/embassies-consulates/bolivia
- United Kingdom: [+591] 2-243-3424; www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-bolivia
- Australia: [+591] 7061-0626

Bolivia's Embassies or Consulates in Selected Countries

- In the U.S.: www.bolivia-usa.org
- In Canada: [+1] 613-236-5730
- In the U.K.: www.bolivianembassy.co.uk
- In Australia: [+02] 9247-4235

Visa/HIV Testing

HIV testing may be required to obtain a work or residence visa.

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