

LA PAZ: THE CITY IN THE CLOUDS



La Paz, the capital of Bolivia is the highest elevated capital city in the world. Its ancient heritage and vibrant character make it one of the most fascinating cities in the entire Andes region and La Paz is indeed a true tourist gem.

A fascinating mix of colors, music and markets, skyscrapers, old cathedrals as well as ancient ruins – that and much more is the **Bolivian capital of La Paz**. This dynamic place is the highest elevated capital city in the world, located in an altitude of 3,660 meters. The architecture is undoubtedly an impressive highlight, though visiting any local markets means an adventure impossible to forget. La Paz was founded in 1548 by Alonso de Mendoza. Its history is much older and goes back to pre-Inca times. In fact, Aymara, an ancient language is still spoken here, along with Spanish and Quechua. Surprisingly, only **60% of Bolivians speak Spanish**, which partially jeopardizes the tourism prospects in this amazing country. On the other hand, hiring a tour guide is a perfect solution to get a qualified interpreter who knows the way around and may spice up the tourist experience of the city.

The markets are a real spectacle here. The Mercade de las Brujas, or **Witches Market**, features a variety of products from goods made by shamans, jewelry, coca leaves or cacti. The coca leave is a big part of local culture, and those who wish to learn more should not forget to visit local Museo de la Coca. Mercado Negro, or **Black Market** is yet another famous market of La Paz.

Plaza Murillo is a charming square dating back to the 16th century. It is surrounded by luxurious hotels and posh restaurants. There are several beautiful buildings in the area, including Palacio de Gobierno (Government Palace), Catedral Metropolitana or Teatro Municipal.

The city is wonderful and locals warm hearted and welcoming. Those who wish to explore the surrounding nature should be aware of the steep peaks, though they are bound to be rewarded by breathtaking views over the Andes' hilltops. The **Tiwanaku Archaeological Site** which pre-dates the Inca development is a definite must-see, especially for those who head for Lake Titicaca as Tiwanaku is on the way.

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