

Bolivia: Illimani & Huayna Potosi; Sajama extension

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Dear Prospective Bolivia Team Member:

Thank you for your interest in our IMG climbing program in Bolivia. For 2009 we will again climb three great peaks in Cordillera Real: Pequeño Alpamayo (17,482'), Huayna Potosi (19,974') and Illimani (21,200'). For those with extra time that wish to take advantage of their acclimatization at the end of trip, the climb of Bolivia's highest peak Sajama (21,486') is available. The Bolivia program is led by Carlos Escobar, an Everest summiter, IFMGA certified guide, and one of the most experienced Bolivian climbers, along with one of our IMG senior guides.

We had a great trip to Bolivia in 2007 with successful summits of all these peaks. The political unrest of the last couple years has calmed down and we now feel that Bolivia is a gain a great place for climbing!

Bolivia's mountain scenery is spectacular, Indians colorful, and ruins thought-provoking. It has been called the Tibet of the New World. And like Tibet it has a grand history of civilization. Ruins of the prominent Inca and Amayra Peoples still stand, and many still live by the lessons in farming and ranching developed and taught by their ancestors hundreds of years ago.

This country also seems to be the land of the "highest," claiming the highest commercial airport, highest capital city, highest ski resort, and the highest navigable lake in all the world! At an altitude of 11,900 feet La Paz nests in a gigantic bowl 1600 feet below El Alto, the city's international airport. The mountains of the Cordillera Real (Royal Range) rise sharply towards the sky in the background and are as striking as any to be found in South America.

“He treated us with respect as climbers... I honestly believe you have one of the best guiding outfits...”

—Joe C.

“IMG is really a class act. This became very evident after seeing other expeditions and how they lived and went about their climb...”

—Gary G.

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at:
www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml

Bolivia: Just The Facts

Summits:

Huayna Potosi: 19,974' • 6094m
Illimani: 21,200' • 6460m
Sajama: 21,486' • 6530m

Set Your GPS for Bolivia:

17°00' S 65° 00' W

Size Matters:

Bolivia is slightly less than three times the size of Montana. At 11,900' La Paz is the world's highest capitol city. Bolivia also has the highest commercial airport (El Alto, at 12,500'), the highest ski resort and highest navigable lake (Lake Titicaca, at 11,463').

Don't Trip:

If someone falls into Lake Titicaca, it is traditional not to rescue them but to let them drown as an offering to the Earth Goddess Pachamama. Legend has it that the first Inca rose from the lake's depths.

The Locals:

The Bolivian Andes are thought to have been civilized for over 21,000 years. Almost half of Bolivia's population is Indian, still living in very traditional communities. The Chipayas Indians still live in their traditional mud igloos and retain their ancient language. On the shores of Lake Titicaca, the Floating Islands of the Uro Indians are home to 600 families living as they did six centuries ago.

Nothing Says You're Sorry Like...:

Families in La Paz bury a llama fetus beneath their houses to apologize to the spirits for desecrating the land

Maybe, Maybe Not:

In a Bolivian one-mule village, legendary outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid supposedly met their demise at the hands of the Bolivian Army in 1908.

Getting off the plane at 13,000' will be a bit of a shock as you start hauling your duffels around the airport. You will quickly be reminded that you are at altitude. One of the most critical factors determining our success in the mountains of Bolivia will be our ability to acclimate well. And with this in mind, we have designed a 20-day program in an effort to give every member of the team the BEST possible chance to summit Illimani by acclimatizing well and preparing on several smaller climbs. Many groups elect to climb Illimani in a much shorter time span, jeopardizing their chances for success on the mountain. We've decided that Illimani requires a more expedition-style approach. Many teams simply tack Illimani onto another program in hopes that some team members will still have enough left to somehow manage a summit. Illimani is more deserving. Within our 20-day program we provide extra days for acclimatization and mountaineering instruction. We also place an additional camp at 16,100 feet. Most groups do not consider this option and their summit results speak for themselves. The mountain is high and deserves our respect. Acclimatization will be of paramount importance and concern. Every effort will be made to give all team members time to achieve this goal.

It's very important that we give ourselves a couple of days to adjust accordingly to the altitude. There is plenty to do and see while in La Paz so this acclimatization period should prove painless and, in the long run, very rewarding. An afternoon will be spent introducing you to the unique city of La Paz. We'll spend time wandering through colorful outdoor markets where the local people sell everything from fruit and vegetables to antiques and musical instruments. If you like, you can even outfit yourself with a few charms from the Witches Market, "guaranteed" to bring you health, wealth, and happiness.

We will also take a short day trip outside of La Paz to see the Tiahuanaco ruins, dated 1600 BC, and said to be among the most important archeological finds in South America and one of the most advanced civilizations to exist on the continent. It remains somewhat of a mystery, having vanished from the face of the earth, leaving many questions and few answers. Much of Tiahuanaco remains beneath the ground as Bolivia very simply doesn't have the funds to operate a full-scale archeological dig. Certainly, many of its secrets still lie buried beneath the earth's surface.

Our visit to Bolivia wouldn't be complete without a trip to Lake Titicaca. We'll lunch on freshly caught trout and charter a small boat to take us out to the Island of Suriki where we will visit the Amayra Indians who helped Thor Heyerdahl build the famous reed boats Ra II and Tigris for his exploratory expeditions. Our overnights will be at Copacabana, a beautiful lakeside resort.

Throughout our sightseeing in La Paz we will become very familiar with Illimani. It is massive. Sitting just outside the city, it dominates the entire skyline with its 21,200 feet. After three days in La Paz everyone should be well adjusted to 11,900 feet and feel ready to take the next step. We'll load up the trucks and drive out of town and into the mountains of the Cordillera Real. Our journey will lead us through an incredible landscape and small Bolivian towns. Our drive will take us literally to the end of the road to a small village in the heart of Bolivia. We'll be the center of attention for the folks who live there with our small mountain of gear. They are fun-loving people and very curious about us, the mountain climbers from the north. We can have great fun mingling with the locals as we prepare our gear for the mountain.

For acclimatization and training, we'll climb to the summit of Pequeño Alpamayo (17,482') and then tackle Huayna Potosi (19,974'), a very rewarding climb and one of the most beautiful mountains on the continent. The climb normally requires the use of fixed lines and running belays, as well as solid basic snow and ice climb skills. It's a great warm up for Illimani! After our ascent we'll return to La Paz for a good meal and a night at the hotel.

Our trip to Illimani begins with a drive east from La Paz, over a 16,500' pass. At the village we'll load the bulk of the gear onto a few pack animals and begin our hike into base camp at about 15,000 feet. The next day, we'll hike from base camp to our high camp, Nido de Condores (the Condor's Nest) perched at 18,000 feet. The route from base camp will take us onto a rock ridge and involves some very minor rock scrambling.

Following our hike up to Nido de Condores we have an option of climbing to the summit the very next day, or waiting until the day after. This decision will be based upon the weather, route conditions, and team strength. From Nido de Condores we will have a fantastic view of the entire Cordillera Real to the north. And, Sajama, Bolivia's highest mountain, will be visible far off to the west near the border of Chile.

With the setting sun the lights of La Paz will begin to burn brightly and flicker in the distance below. Lake Titicaca glistens in the distance, and as the Andean night drapes Illimani in darkness, the Southern Cross gradually reveals itself. It's quite a spectacular sight!

The summit climb will take us out of the high camp via a narrow snow ridge, presenting some exposed climbing. We normally find ourselves using running belays and fixed lines at this point to safeguard the team. This technique will be covered prior to our pre-dawn departure for the summit so don't worry if you're a little rusty. Many of you may be familiar with this practice, but it's always good to review it together so that we're all on the same page the day of the climb. And, if you're completely unfamiliar with this type of protection, it's simple and you'll be able to pick it up very quickly. We'll continue climbing over a series of ramps involving standard glacier travel with the exception of a few short steep stretches. After several hours of climbing our goal will have come in sight at last. We'll climb one final ramp up onto a classic finish along the very narrow ridge leading to the summit of Illimani.

Following our ascent of Illimani we will return to La Paz and catch our flights home. Often times our flight will take us just over the shoulder of Illimani, rewarding us with a spectacular final view of this great mountain and the surrounding countryside.

Members who wish to take advantage of their acclimatization and climb Bolivia's highest mountain, Sajama (21,486') can do so on a supplemental basis. The cost for this additional five days of climbing will be dependent on the number of participants. From La Paz the team travels across the Altiplano to Sajama Village, where we hire mules to assist the team to Base Camp. The next day is the move to High Camp, followed by Summit Day and a return to Base Camp. The last day starts at Base Camp and ends back in La Paz. This is a terrific climb for people already well acclimatized from the earlier climbs.

2009 DATES: Huayna Potosi and Illimani: Friday August 2 - Wednesday August 21 (USA to USA)
Sajama Extension: approximately 5 more days, price TBD

LANDCOST: \$3,900 US single supplement \$250
Sajama climb: priced on custom basis, depending on number of climbers

Costs included: Guides, porters, group equipment (kitchen, tents, etc.), all climbing permit fees, airport transfers, ground transportation and lodging starting with your arrival in La Paz until our return to La Paz. Welcome Dinner and continental breakfasts in La Paz are included.

Costs not included: International airfare to/from Bolivia, taxis, food and lodging should you arrive in La Paz early, alcoholic beverages during the trip, personal shopping and snacks. (Once you've decided to go, we'll put you in touch with the team's travel agent to coordinate your flights). Lunch and dinner in La Paz not included except for Welcome Dinner.

Immunizations

The following may be recommended for travel to Bolivia. Consult a travel clinic, and check out the Center for Disease Control Website at www.cdc.gov

- Tetanus-Diphtheria, Polio, MMR: You should already have these. Do you need a booster?
- Meningitis, Hepatitis A and B: Recommended. Ask your physician/travel clinic for advice.
- Yellow Fever: Recommended, you may need to show your shot record with the Yellow Fever endorsement.
- Cholera: Not a very effective vaccine. Ask your physician/travel clinic for advice.
- Rabies and Typhoid: Not a bad idea to be on the safe side, the new vaccines are easy.
- Malaria: We are above the Malaria zone on the mountain, but bring long sleeves and bug juice for evenings in cities, chemoprophylaxis is especially a good idea if you plan to travel to lower elevations in Bolivia.

BOLIVIA Equipment List

- BOOTS: Plastic double boots with liner for high altitude & cold
- SOCKS: Three complete changes; wool or other material adequate for cold weather
- GAITORS: Make sure they fit your double boots
- 12 POINT CRAMPONS: Adjusted to fit your boots, step-in models are much easier to work with
- HIKING BOOTS: For approach to Base Camp; should be well broken in before the climb
- LONG UNDERWEAR BOTTOMS: Mid to expedition weight polypro, capilene, etc.
- LONG PANTS: Wool or pile
- RAIN/WIND PANTS: Gore-Tex, coated nylon, or adequate substitute; with full length leg zippers
- HIKING SHORTS: Optional
- LONG UNDERWEAR TOP: Polypro, wool, etc.; mid to expedition weight
- INTERMEDIATE UPPER LAYER: Light wool or pile sweater or vest
- PILE COAT/HEAVY WOOL SWEATER: Must fit comfortably over intermediate layer
- RAIN/WIND COAT: Gore-Tex, etc.; must fit over pile coat
- INSULATED PARKA: Down or synthetic with hood; large enough to fit over all layers
- LIGHT COTTON SHIRT/ T-SHIRT
- HAT: Wool or pile
- NECK GAITOR OR BALACLAVA
- BASEBALL CAP OR SUN VISOR
- HEADLAMP: With at least 2 extra sets of batteries and one extra bulb
- GLOVES: Wool or ski
- MITTENS: Wool, pile, or down
- MITTEN SHELLS: Need to fit over wool (not necessary for down mittens)
- SUNGLASSES: With side shields
- SUN CREAM: At least SPF 15, one 4 oz. Bottle
- LIP BALM: With sunscreen
- WATER BOTTLES: Two plastic quart-size bottles and wide-mouthed (easier to fill)
- INSULATED WATER BOTTLE COVERS
- PACK: Large (4000 cubic inches = 65 liters);
- SLEEPING BAG: Synthetic or down; rated 0 to minus 20 degrees F
- SLEEPING PAD: Therm-A-Rest or closed cell foam
- TOILET PAPER AND LIGHTER: At least two rolls sealed in zip-lock bags
- BOWL, CUP, SPOON
- TOOTH BRUSH & TOOTH PASTE
- GARBAGE BAGS: Two garbage can size for miscellaneous uses
- WATER PURIFICATION: Potable Aqua tablets are the most convenient
- PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT: Moleskin, aspirin, personal medications, Band-Aids, adhesive tape, etc.
- ICE AXE: 70 cm for average height climber
- CLIMBING SEAT HARNESS
- LOCKING CARABINERS (3)
- REGULAR CARABINERS (4)
- BELAY DEVICE
- RAPPEL DEVICE
- ASCENDERS: complete with webbing
- RESCUE PULLEY
- SKI POLES: (collapsible are most convenient)
- SUPPLEMENTAL LUNCH FOOD for the summit days
- ICE HAMMER (optional tool for ice climbing)
- OPTIONAL GEAR: Ear plugs (aid sleeping in big city hotels, on the airplane, in wind beaten tents, etc.); Walkman; Journal; Ski goggles; Camera; Paperback; Sandals or light running shoes; Bandanna; Pocketknife, Hand towel; Duffel bag with a lock, Down booties; Throat lozenges, Bag of your favorite "munchies", Baby wipes

**If you have questions,
PLEASE don't hesitate to
call. It is very important
that we approach the
climb well prepared.**

BOLIVIA 2008: Illimani & Huayna Potosi Itinerary

Day	Date	Itinerary
Day 1	Aug 2	Leave USA via Miami.
Day 2	Aug 3	Arrive Bolivia in morning, transfer to Hotel in Las Paz 11,900'. Take it "easy" on first day in La Paz. Welcome dinner at hotel.
Day 3	Aug 4	City Tour, visit local markets, second night in La Paz.
Day 4	Aug 5	Visit Lake Titicaca, 12,400' / Acclimatization Hiking. Overnight at Copacabana.
Day 5	Aug 6	Boat ride to Island of the Sun, visit pre-Inca ruins. Second night at Copacabana.
Day 6	Aug 7	Move to Condoriri National Park spend one night in Tambo Condoriri, a really nice hut just inside the entrance of the Park.
Day 7	Aug 8	Hiking to Condoriri base camp. We establish base camp by Lago Condoriri, a splendid alpine lake sitting in a huge amphitheatre of impressive peaks. Prepare for climbing and review mountaineering techniques.
Day 8	Aug 9	Glacier training and review the use of fixed rope and running protection.
Day 9	Aug 10	After an early morning departure, we rope up and ascend the beautiful pyramid of Pequeño Alpamayo (17,482').
Day 10	Aug 11	Move to Huayna Potosi Base Camp.
Day 11	Aug 12	Hike to Huayna Potosi High Camp (known as Campamento Argentino at 17,880').
Day 12	Aug 13	Summit day Huayna Potosi 19,974'
Day 13	Aug 14	Pack up, return to La Paz.
Day 14	Aug 15	Contingency day or rest day in La Paz.
Day 15	Aug 16	Drive east from La Paz, via 16,500' pass, to reach Illimani Base Camp.
Day 16	Aug 17	Establish Illimani High Camp, 18,000'.
Day 17	Aug 18	Summit Illimani, 21,200'.
Day 18	Aug 19	Contingency day.
Day 19	Aug 20	Return to La Paz. Depart in evening, arrive home next day.

Sajama Extension

Day 20	Aug 21	Rest and Relaxation Day
Day 21	Aug 22	La Paz - Sajama Base Camp
Day 22	Aug 23	Sajama BC - Sajama High Camp
Day 23	Aug 24	Sajama High Camp - summit day - return to BC
Day 24	Aug 25	Sajama BC - La Paz
Day 25	Aug 26	Return home

“I left the mountain without a doubt that we chose and were with the best organization and people on the hill...”

—Jeff

For more comments from IMG climbers, please see our website at: www.mountainguides.com/comments.shtml
