



FAST FACTS FOR THE SURGICAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WITH
ESPERANÇA, INC.
&
ESPERANZA / BOLIVIA

Bolivia: Bolivia lies in the heart of South America, stretching from the heights of the Andes Mountains to the tropical Amazon River Basin, with a population composed mainly of Native Indian ethnic groups and Mestizos. Bolivia is a developing nation in the lower half of the world's economies and is the poorest country in South America and is landlocked. Spanish is the primary language. For more information about Bolivia, log onto www.lonelyplanet.com and www.state.gov

Tarija: The city of Tarija lies at an altitude of 6,312 feet above sea level. Its weather is mild and pleasant although sometimes winter nights may get slightly cooler. This is the site of Esperanza/Bolivia headquarters (a local non-profit organization with whom we partner). This is also the site of one of the hospitals where we work. The city's population is approximately 100,000. There is an internet café and internet access at the Esperanza offices. There are often festivities in town and a quaint market to wander through. The Esperanza staff is dedicated to making your experience in Tarija a positive one and will plan activities that fill your evenings and expose you to their country.

Flight Information: There are limited flights to Tarija, Bolivia. Travel to Tarija is via Santa Cruz or a combination of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. We do NOT fly into La Paz. The return trip often takes two days, with an overnight in Miami or Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Volunteers are responsible for their own travel expenses, which includes lodging in transit. In order to claim the cost of airline tickets as a donation to Esperança, plans and purchases must be made through Esperança. We do try to use frequent flyer information when possible. Costs vary from \$1100-1700 based on season, carrier, etc.

Passport/Visa: A current, valid passport is required. Passports must have **6 months** of validity from date of entry to Bolivia. A visa is also required. The cost of a visa for a U.S. citizen is \$135, which will be good for multiple entries over a five year period.

Immunizations: Visa applicants must submit an International Vaccination Certificate for yellow fever. No other immunizations are required to travel to Bolivia. Other vaccinations are *recommended*. For more information regarding vaccinations and other health precautions, log onto www.cdc.gov

Hospital in Tarija: The San Juan de Dios Hospital in Tarija is a public facility, with limited resources. It is considered a *Level 1 Facility*, though it is not equipped to handle complex emergencies. It is "adequate" for most purposes. All medical care is substandard outside La Paz. Typically, only General Surgeons will travel to another hospital in addition to San Juan de Dios.

Hospital in San Lucas: Some teams will travel to San Lucas Hospital. The city of San Lucas is approximately an eight-hour trip on a narrow dirt road that coils its way through the Andes Mountains up to an elevation of 10,518 feet above sea level. San Lucas has a population of 3,000 people with another 35,000 in the surrounding communities. The local hospital has 20 beds and a beautiful new

operating room, but is barely equipped with poor lighting.

Hospital in Entre Rios

The population is about 25,000 people with a surrounding community of 19,000.

The city of San Lucas is approximately a three hour trip from Tarija, on a narrow dirt road. The hospital has 14 beds and one operating room, minimal equipment, and no surgeon. We have obtained a dated, but functional anesthesia machine for the hospital. The volunteer teams must take the cautery and occimeter from Tarija when they travel to Entre Ríos. The operating room does not have heating or cooling and the lighting is very poor (bring a head lamp). The operating room is able to handle the surgery program with flexibility in mind. Only certain surgical specialties are needed at this facility. The Entre Ríos Hospital is the most recent addition to our program and has a great need for volunteer surgeons.

Hospital in Camargo

The city of Camargo has a population of 10,538 people with a surrounding community of 14,872.

The city of Camargo is a 5 hour trip from Tarija on a narrow dirt road which winds up through the Andes Mountains to an altitude of 10,170 feet. Esperanza Bolivia has initiated a Surgical Program with Camargo, through an invitation from the Director of the Hospital, Dr. Gustavo Soberon. The Hospital is new and small. It has 30 beds, a basic laboratory and a new, but scarcely equipped, operating room. We have obtained a cautery unit for the Hospital, but the volunteer teams have to take the occimeter when they travel to Camargo. The anaesthesia equipment is dated but functional. The heating and cooling function, but not very well. The lighting is poor (bring a head lamp.) The operating room is able to handle the surgery program with flexibility in mind. Only certain surgical specialties are needed at this facility.

Lodging: The hotels in Bolivia are *modest*. The hotel that accommodates Esperanza volunteers has a laundry facility and cooking facility. Volunteers traveling to San Lucas or Villa Montes will stay at a rooming house with shared lavatories. The voltage in Bolivia is 220V. If you require the use of an outlet, you will need to purchase a convertor, specifically for international travel.

Costs: Esperanza, Inc. pays for your lodging and meal expenses while you are in Bolivia. You are expected to pay for your air travel expenses, hotel costs for layovers, travel or emergency insurance, airport taxes, souvenirs, and other meals during your journey. \$150-\$200 in cash should be ample discretionary funds depending on shopping preferences.

Meals: The food is NOT one of the main reasons to travel to Bolivia. Food and beverage precautions are essential in order to avoid illness. If it is not cooked, bottled, peel-able, don't eat it! It is recommended that volunteers pack intestinal antibacterials.

Water: DON'T DRINK THE WATER! There is plenty of bottled water and it is always accessible.

Weather: Because of extreme geographical variations, Bolivia has a wide range of climatic patterns. Winter runs from May to October and summer from November to April. The most important climatic factor to remember is that it's generally wet in the summer and dry in the winter. Due to the high altitude of the city of San Lucas, the weather is cool all year round. Tarija is well-known for its Mediterranean-like climate. Casual clothes are good and a light jacket is always recommended.

Bolivian People: The people are courteous, warm and fun; they may kiss or hug volunteers upon meeting them. They may also ask volunteers to dance or offer them something to drink at gatherings or festivities. They are very demonstrative in their appreciation of our services.

Mission schedule: We normally send 8-10 surgery teams to Bolivia per year. A team consists of a surgeon, anesthesiologist and one or two operating room nurses/technicians. A typical surgery mission is two weeks (9 surgery days) although we try to accommodate each team's specific needs.

Required Documents: Clear copies of CV/resume (3 pages or less), medical/nursing school diploma, current/valid medical/nursing license, personal health form, and passport face sheet. Completed Esperança liability waiver and photography/correspondence release must be received 1 month prior to mission.

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* If you decide to contact Lupe directly, please cc: Christina Araiza in any correspondence. Thank you.