
Dates and events



- c. 1000 AD** Aymara empire of Tiawanaku at its height
- c. 1200** Collapse of Tiawanaku empire
- 1200–1450** Aymara kingdoms
- 1450** Inca invasion
- 1532** Spanish conquest of Andes begins
- 1538** Discovery of silver in Potosí
- 1781–83** Rebellion of Tupaj Katari and Tupaj Amaru threatens Spanish control of Alto Peru
- 1809** Revolt against the Spanish, La Paz
- 1825** Independence, 6 August
- 1879–83** War of the Pacific. Chile takes coastal provinces and Bolivia loses outlet to the sea
- 1884–98** Silver-mining oligarchy rules through the Conservative Party

1898–99 Liberal Party comes to power; rise of tin mining

1899 Federal War

1932–35 Chaco War; Bolivia defeated by Paraguay

1942 Massacre at Catavi mine kills more than 40 people

1943–46 Military-MNR reformist government

1946–52 Extreme right-wing rule

1952 Revolution: MNR brought to power by mass uprising; foundation of the COB; universal suffrage; nationalisation of major mines

1953 Agrarian Reform

1956 IMF 'stabilisation' plan

1964–78 Military rule

1967 New Constitution (still in use)

1970 Teoponte guerrilla force defeated. Juan José Torres takes power.

1971 Hugo Banzer leads military coup

1974 Banzer consolidates his power

1978–82 Political chaos; three general elections; various military coups

1980 'Narco-coup' by García Meza and Arce Gómez

1982–85 Siles Zuazo (*Unión Democrática y Popular*) President

1985 World-record hyperinflation (22,000 per cent per annum)

1985–89 Paz Estenssoro (MNR) President

1985 Decree 21,060; new economic neo-liberal policy

1986 'March for Life' of sacked State miners ends in defeat

1987 First municipal elections since 1949; start of US involvement in 'war against drugs'

1988 Law 1008 criminalises minor drugs-related offences; founding of CONDEPA (*Conciencia de Patria*) and UCS (*Unión Cívica Solidaridad*) political parties

1989–93 Paz Zamora (MIR) President

1989 MIR/ADN Patriotic Accord: an alliance of old enemies, ex-dictator General Hugo Banzer and Jaime Paz Zamora of the Revolutionary Left

1990 First March for Territory, Dignity, and Life by lowland indigenous people

1992 Free-trade zone at Ilo (Pacific Coast) instituted

1993 Sánchez de Lozada (MNR) President

1994 Bolivian Constitution declares that the country is 'multi-ethnic and pluricultural', recognising Quechua, Aymara, and Guaraní as official languages; constitutional reform, including Popular Participation Law

1995 Education Reform (begun in previous government); Capitalisation Law (privatisation of many State enterprises)

1996 New Land Reform Law (INRA); massacre of miners in Amayapampa and Capacirca

1997 Banzer (ADN) President; first distribution of Bonosol (benefit for over-65s arising from privatisation)

2000 Two major popular uprisings (April and September) bring country to halt

2001 Zero Coca (government's plan to end coca-growing in Chapare) 'achieved'.

< Wrought-iron gates at the Palacio del Gobierno, Sucre

> Harvesting potatoes in Sección Vacas, Cochabamba



Facts and figures

Land area

1.1 million sq km (approximately twice the size of Spain)

Population

8,324,699 (projected 2000–01);
current growth rate: 2.3 per cent

Main towns

La Paz (capital) 1,004,440;
Santa Cruz (1,034,070);
Cochabamba (616,220); El Alto (568,919);
Potosí (162, 212)

Average life expectancy

64 years; average across Latin America: 69

Infant mortality

66 deaths per 1000 births (1997–2000):
the highest in Latin America

Health services

3.2 qualified doctors per 10,000 inhabitants

Adult illiteracy

male 12 per cent, female 28 per cent
(population over 15 years of age, 1992)

Primary-school attendance

boys: 19 per cent, girls: 9 per cent (1999)

Currency

One *Boliviano* (Bs) = 100 *centavos*.
Average exchange rate in 2000: Bs 6.18 = US\$1;
Bs 9.4 = £1

Gross Domestic Product per capita

US\$970 (1997)

Major economic activities

manufacture (16% of GDP); agriculture (14%);
mining (11%) (2000)

Inflation

3.41 per cent (average in 2000)

External debt

US\$4.035 billion (nominal at 31/03/2001)

Principal exports (2000):

manufactured goods:
US\$712m; minerals (tin, zinc,
silver, tungsten, gold):
US\$£260m; hydrocarbons
(natural gas, petroleum):
US\$158m; agricultural
products: US\$112m

UNDP Human

Development Index ranking

114 (out of 174 in the
year 2000)

(Source: Instituto Nacional
de Estadística, Banco Central
de Bolivia)



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Websites

<http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/sa/bolivia/>
A useful compendium of links related to Bolivia, including news and organisations

<http://www.cedla.org/>
CEDLA, an Oxfam partner, is a centre for social research on contemporary Bolivian issues.

<http://www.tni.org/drugs/index.htm>
Drugs and Democracy project, including Acción Andina

<http://idh.pnud.bo>
UNDP in Bolivia

<http://www.noticias.nl/bca/links/linksframe.html>
Bolivia Information Centre, Antwerp, Belgium (in Spanish and English)

<http://www.boliviaweb.com/index.htm>
Bolivian portals with many links

<http://www.eclac.cl/>
CEPAL/ECLAC, The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; for information on economic issues

<http://www.cedib.org>
Electronic news bulletins from CEDIB, Centre for Information and Documentation of Bolivia, Cochabamba

Oxfam in Bolivia

From its office in La Paz, Oxfam GB works with some of the poorest people in Bolivia, helping them to improve the quality and conditions of their lives. Working in a country of such immense ethnic and natural diversity is very challenging, but it presents opportunities to support dynamic and creative programmes in both rural and urban contexts.

In recent years Oxfam has supported a range of locally managed initiatives which have two main aims: to achieve sustainable livelihoods for impoverished communities, and to support their claims to equality before the law and a voice in public debate. In the east of Bolivia, in the Department of Santa Cruz, Oxfam supports a Leadership Training Programme for indigenous peoples living in the Amazon region. This is designed to help them to defend and exercise their civil and political rights, protect their natural resources, and achieve legal title to their Community Territories. In the west, in the Departments of Oruro and La Paz, Oxfam supports a programme designed to improve production and strengthen local organisations, empowering the traditional authority structures and promoting the role of Aymara women within local government.

Oxfam's urban programme is based in El Alto, Bolivia's poorest and fastest-growing city, which has a high level of migration from the countryside. It investigates the working conditions and employment opportunities of young people who are trying to survive in the city, and supports neighbourhood associations by offering leadership training for women and men who are struggling to achieve more just and dignified living conditions for their communities.

In addition to its long-term development work, Oxfam organises programmes of emergency relief in response to natural catastrophes, such as floods and drought caused by the climatic phenomenon known as the El Niño Southern Oscillation effect.

Complementing the work of community development and humanitarian aid in times of crisis, local staff collaborate with the Washington office of Oxfam International in a programme of advocacy which aims to ensure that poor people benefit from debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative promoted by the World Bank and IMF; and they support civil-society monitoring of the Bolivian Poverty Reduction Strategy process.

Oxfam plays an important role in Bolivia, but more crucial than its funds is its commitment to a people who remain strong in the face of adversity, and steadfast in their struggle for a better world.

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