

THE OFFICIAL

# NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Bolivia 



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ProjectsAbroad

# ONGOING PROJECTS

Feel, live and discover the other face of Bolivia



Drums and trumpets can still be heard around the corner. It's a celebration day in Bolivia. Students, professionals, traders, unions and all sorts of people are taking to the streets today in a civic parade to commemorate another year of Independence in Bolivia. This time it's impossible to miss the small details here and there that give away the strong indigenous presence in this land. Indigenous colorful flags known as whiphalas are being waved alongside the traditional red, yellow and green Bolivian flag. There are some people wearing traditional costumes as well. Wherever you turn you can see bowler hats, pleated skirts, long braids, coppery faces and broad smiles.

This country takes your breath away with the wide range of cultural diversity that it has. You can see, smell, taste and embrace such diversity everywhere you go. There are 36 indigenous groups co-existing here and each of them has their own language, traditions, music and outfits striving to stand out in this kaleidoscope of sensations. Perhaps it would be fair to say that you get to see these details more clearly on a day on which it seems that the whole of Bolivia has taken to the streets, but there are hints of this diversity everywhere and every day.



When you hop on a bus, you can overhear chit-chats in native languages. When you travel, you get to see it too. If you go towards the west, you meet the Andean face of Bolivia through the Aymara people and if you stay in Cochabamba, where our office in Bolivia is located, you have a good chance of coming across the Quechua people. Do you remember hearing about Incas from the history books? These people are their descendants. However if you go towards the east, to the jungles of Bolivia, which cover almost more than the half of the country, you have Chiriguano, Yuracaré and Guarani people.

If you are not into travelling, you can find a first-hand source of information in the Bolivian host families. Host mums, for example, introduce volunteers to a daily sensory experience through the meals in which



To picture them, imagine lively, energetic moves and well-choreographed dance steps that leave you out of breath, like the ultimate work-out session. You must get fit to follow their pace. No wonder the biggest dance festival in the country, Carnaval de Oruro, is considered to be a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. The combination between music, dance and traditional costumes is amazing.

I suppose I could go on and on with this, talk about the paintings of Mamani Mamani, the new architectural current of cholets, or meditate about the profound implications of the indigenous philosophy of *vivir bien* (living well), instead I invite you to see and discover this for yourself.

What are you waiting for?

**Mariel Torrez**  
Communications Officer, Bolivia



traditional dishes gain relevance, thanks to the clash between indigenous roots and colonial Spanish flavors tasted in them.

Stews, soups, beverages and sauces such as the humble K'alapurca (a corn soup heated by placing a hot rock in the bowl), the creamy peanut soup, the thick api (sweet corn gruel), or the enormously popular llajua (chili, tomatoes and aromatic herbs sauce) are dishes that tell a story that can be traced back centuries.

Finally, there is always the Bolivian that will invite you to join in a traditional dance or to listen to a local tune. Music volunteers learn to play traditional musical instruments as soon as they get off the plane in order to be able to sing along with the children they work with. Charangos, quenás, zampoñas, bombos are first on the list of musical instruments to be learned as are dances such as cueca, diablada, morenada and thinku.



# PHOTOS PAGE

## Civic Parade in Bolivia

Some days ago we celebrated another year of Independence in Bolivia with civic parades all over our country. Anyone who makes a special contribution to society was there, including volunteers. Tunari Centre, our co-partner in the Equine Therapy program, participated on the parade, so volunteers got the chance to ride the children they work with on the horses that day. Suffice to say that the public applauded them all the way.

Way to go guys!





## Urkupiña's Festivity

The celebration days continue in Bolivia through August. This time we make a stop to commemorate Urkupiña, a religious festivity that combines a pilgrimage and a dance parade in a three day celebration to showcase the believers' gratitude to Urkupiña's Virgin for all the favours received.

We took our volunteers in destination to see the dance parade and they were surprised by the vibrant and colourful cultural diversity of our country.

Enjoy the pictures!

