Bolivia

Comprehensive



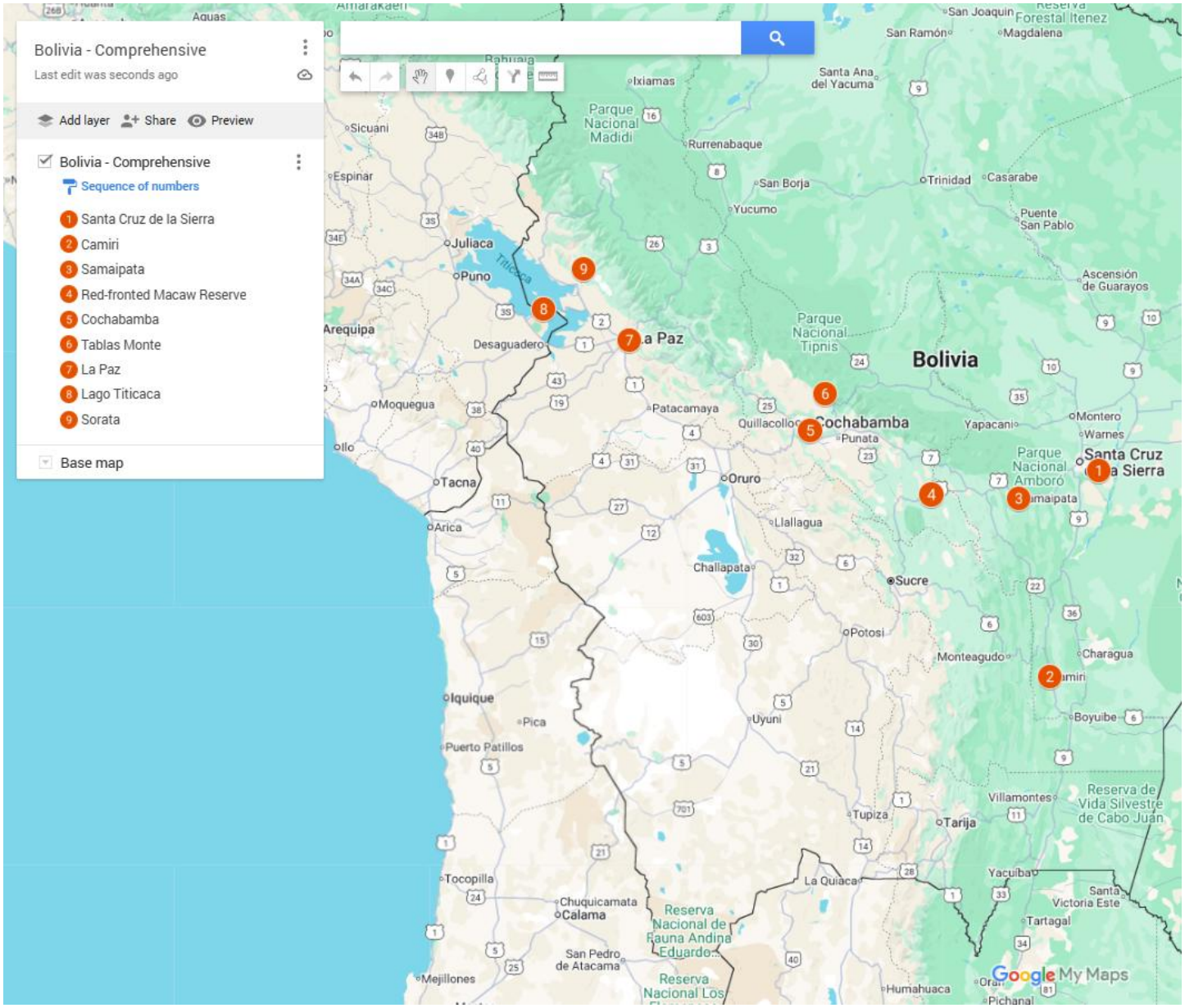
Cochabamba Mountain Finch by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Bolivia has a very distinctive allure. It does not have the longest list of birds, nor does it have the best infrastructure or accommodations of any South American country. However, Bolivia has more intrigue and potential than any other South American country. Bolivia has more barely accessed natural areas, more varied habitats yet to be explored, and more opportunity for visiting birders to contribute to the base of knowledge that is only very recently, and very slowly, being expanded by researchers and travelling birders alike.

The above paragraph says nothing of the endless, impressive, awe-inspiring backdrops against which a birding adventure in Bolivia plays out. Towering peaks soaring tens-of-thousands of feet high, canyons plunging thousands of feet deep, and the largest inland lake in all of South America (home to the most influential native culture on the continent), are daily landscapes one enjoys during a tour through the heart of the Bolivian Andes. Dry Chaco forests, swampy Pampas grasslands, unique Chiquitania woodland, endemic-rich arid Andean valleys, and the bird-rich Yungas right up to scree slopes and bufedal wetlands at 15,000 feet are just some of the habitats in which we spend valuable time. To comprehensively bird the best that Bolivia has to offer we explore some of the most diverse, spectacular species and scenery, as well as being, by default, utterly immersed in truly remote, intact, Andean culture. Birding in Bolivia isn't just a trip; it's a unique, total experience.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Santa Cruz de la Sierra**
Day 2	**Santa Cruz Botanical Gardens & Viru Viru Airport grasslands**
Day 3	**Lomas de Arena to Camiri**
Day 4	**Birding the Chaco**
Day 5	**Camiri to Santa Cruz de la Sierra**
Day 6	**Lago Volcan & Samaipata to Red-fronted Macaw Reserve**
Day 7	**Red-fronted Macaw & Bolivia Earthcreeper search**
Day 8	**Serrania de Siberia area**
Day 9	**Serrania de Siberia to Cochabamba**
Day 10	**Cochabamba - Polylepis Forest & Cerro Tunari**
Days 11 & 12	**Tablas Monte & surrounds**
Day 13	**Miguelito area to Cochabamba**
Day 14	**Laguna Alalay, flight from Cochabamba to La Paz, transfer to Lake Titicaca**
Day 15	**Sorata to La Paz & final departure**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Bolivia - Comprehensive
Sequence of numbers
1 Santa Cruz de la Sierra
2 Camiri
3 Samaipata
4 Red-fronted Macaw Reserve
5 Cochabamba
6 Tablas Monte
7 La Paz
8 Lago Titicaca
9 Sorata
Base map
Bolivia
La Paz
Cochabamba
Santa Cruz
Oruro
Sucre
Tarija
Iquique
Arica
Tacna
Arequipa
Juliaca
Puno
Desaguadero
Moquegua
Patacamaya
Quillacollo
Punata
Yapacani
Montero
Warnes
Llallagua
Challapata
Potosi
Monteagudo
Charagua
Boyuibe
Uyuni
Tupiza
Villamontes
Yacuiba
La Quiaca
Tartagal
Humahuaca
Pichanal
Tocopilla
Chuquicamata
Calama
San Pedro de Atacama
Mejillones
Puerto Patillos
Pica
Sicuani
Espinar
Ixiamas
Rurrenabaque
San Borja
Yucumo
Trinidad
Casarabe
Puente San Pablo
Ascensión de Guarayos
Santa Ana del Yacuma
San Ramón
San Joaquin
Magdalena
Parque Nacional Madidi
Parque Nacional Tipnis
Parque Nacional Amboró
Reserva Nacional de Fauna Andina Eduardo
Reserva Nacional Los
Reserva de Vida Silvestre de Cabo Juan
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Birding sites in detail



Chaco Owl by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Santa Cruz Botanical Gardens. One of Bolivia's best-known birding sites: the Santa Cruz Botanical Gardens.

Due to its great birding opportunities and convenience, the botanical gardens are a must on any tour. We have two major target species here in the form of Fawn-breasted Wren and Bolivian Slaty Antshrike, while more typical birds of the garden include a mix of humid and dry forest species such as Blue-crowned Trogon, Purplish and Plush-crested Jay, White-wedged Piculet, Crimson-crested, Golden-green and Little Woodpeckers, Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Blue-crowned, Yellow-chevroned and Green-cheeked Parakeets, Gilded Hummingbird, Yellow-olive Flatbill, Rufous Casiornis, Tropical Parula, Flavescent and Golden-crowned Warblers, Orange-headed and Grey-headed Tanagers, Undulated Tinamou, Olivaceous, Black-banded and Buff-throated Woodcreepers, Variable Oriole and Purple-throated Euphonia.

Viru Viru Airport grasslands. Here we'll seek out several grassland species. The ungrazed grasslands surrounding the airport runway often holds the sought-after Greater Rhea and Red-winged Tinamou. We also have chances for White-bellied Nothura, Long-winged Harrier, Burrowing Owl, Blue-crowned Parakeet, Tawny-bellied and perhaps the scarce Rufous-rumped Seedeater, Black-faced Tanager and Southern Yellowthroat.

Lomas de Arena. Lomas de Arena is an unusual reserve consisting of savannahs, dry forest, marshes, lakes and sand dunes, a typical visit here can produce the sought-after Chaco Puffbird, stunning White Woodpecker, Chalk-browed and White-banded Mockingbirds, Comb Duck, Red-legged Seriema, White-bellied Nothura, Hudson's Black Tyrant, Spectacled Tyrant, Peach-fronted Parakeet, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Rufous-fronted Thornbird, Guira Cuckoo, Burrowing Owl, and many other fun, open country species.

Santa Cruz to Camiri. In the late morning we'll depart Santa Cruz de la Sierra and make our way south to Camiri, Recent improvements to the road network mean that we can make steady progress on asphalted roads. Stops en route may reveal the near endemic Bolivian Slaty Antshrike as well as Green-cheeked Parakeet, Plush-crested Jay, Chaco Chachalaca, Chaco Puffbird, Cinereous Tyrant, White-barred Piculet, Suiriri Flycatcher and White-banded Mockingbird. Depending on weather conditions, small ephemeral pans may turn up White-faced Ibis, Whistling Heron and Rosy-billed Pochard.



Chaco Puffbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

The Chaco. We have time to search the vast Chaco for its many avian denizens. Birding time in the Chaco is realistically split into two small windows; sunup and



Blue-tufted Starthroat by Clayton Burne

the late afternoon. During the middle of the day bird activity ceases and the fierce heat becomes implacable. Thus, at the break of dawn we will be in position for the flurry of early morning activity. Black-legged Seriema perch on exposed stumps to vocalise, flocks of White-fronted Woodpecker perch up on spiny cactus branches, while we can expect to hear the raucous Brown Cacholote and Chaco Chachalaca vocalising. Careful scanning of the brush edges should reveal Crested Hornero and Lark-like Brushrunner, which often forage together. Tyrant flyctachers will also be in evidence, comprising Southern Beardless, White-bellied, Plain and Straneck's Tyrannulets, Suiriri Flycatcher and both Black-crowned and White Monjitas.

Many-colored Chaco Finch and Black-capped Warbling Finch often find spishing irresistible, while Crested Gallito, Chaco Earthcreeper, Short-billed Canastero and Little Thornbird are sure to take much more effort than that. Both Sooty-fronted and Stripe-crowned Spinetails often allow for better views than the rest of their family members, while Blue-tufted Starthroat, Monk and Blue-crowned Parakeets, and a trio of Woodpeckers – Checkered, Golden-green, and White should add some good vibrancy to proceedings. Great Rufous and Narrow-billed Woodcreepers are likely to be found prodding amongst the deeply gnarled bark, and both Glittering-bellied Emerald and Gilded Hummingbird will add another touch of colour to the day. Although highly unlikely, we do have theoretical chances of finding such Chaco megas as Black-bodied Woodpecker and Chaco Owl.



Black-legged Seriema by Stephan Lorenz



Black-capped Warbling Finch by Clayton Burne

Depending on our success, we may decide to head over to a nearby patch of foothill woodland. Possible species here include Cream-backed Woodpecker, Military Macaw, Solitary Eagle and Andean Condor, while more regular species include Ochre-faced Tody-Tyrant, Ocellated Piculet, Dusky-legged Guan, White-banded Mockingbird, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Red Pileated Finch, Golden-billed Saltator and Stripe-backed Antbird.

Lago Volcan. We'll make our first birding stop near Lago Volcan, perfectly situated for a suite of interesting species. Birding the forest patches, we shall search for Ocellated Piculet, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, Moustached Wren and the difficult Slaty Gnateater. Working our way along the entrance road, through bamboo-laden foothill forest, we could find Black-capped Antwren, Rough-legged Tyrannulet, Moss-backed Sparrow and Black-goggled Tanager as well having a slight chance for the rarely seen Bolivian Recurvebill.

Samaipata. As the day heats up, we shall bird our way up the dry inter-Andean valley to Samaipata. As is typical in the Andes, we will cross several strata of avifauna as we change altitude. Though these xeric environs hold fewer overall species than the wetter slopes, endemism is much higher.

Some of the many gems we may find today include Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Ringed and Black-capped Warbling Finch, Giant and Variable Antshrike, Huayco Tinamou, Dusky-legged Guan, Andean Condor, Planalto Hermit, White-bellied Hummingbird, Ocellated Piculet, Mitred Parakeet, Moustached Wren and Masked Gnatcatcher. We also have our first chance to see one of Neotropics most widely recognized and desired hummingbirds, the Red-tailed Comet.



Chaco Earthcreeper by Glen Valentine



Black-throated Thistletail by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Red-fronted Macaw Reserve. In the morning our main focus is the spectacular Red-fronted Macaw, a Bolivian endemic of which fewer than 1000 persist in the wild. Cliff Parakeet essentially occupies the exact same habitat and range as the macaws, and we can expect to see them together on the cliff faces opposite our accommodation. A number of other valuable species exist in this xerophytic habitat including White-tipped Plantcutter, Black-chested Buzzard Eagle, Black-and-chestnut and Ringed Warbling Finches, Band-tailed Sierra Finch, White-bellied Tyrannulet, the lovely Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Chaco Puffbird, Striped Woodpecker, Sooty-fronted Spinetail, both White-fronted and Green-barred Woodpeckers, Yellow-browed Tyrant, Grey-crested Finch, Ultramarine Grosbeak and the sometimes-tricky endemic, Bolivian Blackbird.

Tambo. The Tambo areas is host to spectacularly scenic cactus-studded scrub and forests, immense waterfalls, and deep-plunging canyons characteristic of the region. As the road winds through steep gully's, we shall stop and search for highly sought after, endemic Bolivian Earthcreeper. With a little luck, we should be able to get great views of these normally responsive birds.

Serrania de Siberia area. This is the best site in the country to access south Bolivian upper Yungas Forest. The word 'Yungas' is a Bolivian term applied to an array of mid- and upper-elevation forests, ranging from subtropical to temperate in affinity. Each elevation has its own unique flora and fauna, host not only to the majority of Bolivia's prized endemic birds, but some fine mammals to boot.

Serrania de Siberia is one of Bolivia's best birding assets for a good reason. As the old main highway (remember, most of these are merely widened, graded, dirt roads with little traffic) ascends beyond Comarapa, up through the dry valley habitats towards Cochabamba, a full day's drive away, crossing the Serrania de Siberia. This high mountain range captures what moisture there is in the atmosphere, allowing lush high-elevation southern Yungas forests to thrive on its steep slopes. Access, in the form of side roads and tiny footpaths, is plentiful, though often not needed as birding the main road can be outstanding.



Bolivian Earthcreeper by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Mixed-species flocks are plentiful, hosting several rarely seen species including Blue-capped Puffleg and Violet-throated Starfrontlet. The tricky Black-winged Parrot is sometimes picked up in flight, while we can look forward to perched views of Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Light-crowned Spinetail, Buff-banded and Tawny-rumped Tyrannulets,



Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager by Bobby Wilcox

Pale-legged Warbler, Brown-capped and Spectacled Whitestarts, Superciliaried Hemispingus, Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager, Blue-backed Conebill and Bolivian Brushfinch. Future 'armchair' ticks are practically assured with the obviously unique *argentines* subspecies of Common Bush Tanager, the distinct *discolor* subspecies of Pearled Treerunner and even the odd-sounding form of Blue-winged Mountain Tanager all being rather common here. In fact, there are so many distinct taxa in Bolivia, with so little current research, that one can only hazard a guess as to the overall number of possible new species.

In the afternoon, we'll likely bird our way down the drier slopes in search of targets like Spot-breasted Thornbird, Bolivian, Rufous-sided and Ringed Warbling Finches, Fulvous-headed Brushfinch, Red-tailed Comet, White-winged Black Tyrant and the elusive Olive-crowned Crescentchest.

Serrania de Siberia to Cochabamba. We'll explore the treeline habitats on our drive, which might yield endemics such as Black-throated Thistletail, Black-hooded Sunbeam and Grey-bellied Flowerpiercer. The scarce Yungas Pygmy Owl is one of the prize birds we also might run into.

Cochabamba - Polylepis Forest. We will depart early this morning to visit high-elevation scrub and Polylepis forest patches above the city of Cochabamba. The endemic Cochabamba Mountain Finch is one of our principal targets of the morning, a chunky and attractive species with a highly localized distribution. While not particularly large or contiguous, the Polylepis forest abounds with incredible species including Red-tailed Comet, Wedge-tailed Hillstar, Giant Hummingbird, Giant Conebill, Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager, Bolivian Warbling Finch, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Maquis Canastero, Brown-capped and Tawny Tit-Spinetails, D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, and many others.

Cerro Tunari. At Cerro Tunari we'll bird for upper elevational specialities such as the rare Boulder Finch and target anything that we might have missed thus far such as Wedge-tailed Hillstar and Fulvous-headed Brushfinch.

Tablas Monte. We have time to lap up the many species to be found around Tablas Monte and Corani Dam area. The route will provide us excellent access to a variety of habitats, from treeline scrub and upper subtropical forests home to Hooded Mountain Toucan, Stripe-faced Wood Quail, Black-throated Thistletail, Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager, Rufous-faced and Bolivian Antpittas, Andean Guan, Trilling Tapaculo, Light-crowned Spinetail, Rufous-bellied Bush Tyrant, White-browed Conebill, Plushcap, Moustached Flowerpiercer, Bolivian Tyrannulet,



Bolivian Brushfinch by Clayton Burne



Hooded Mountain Toucan by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Scaled Metaltail, and the endemic Black-hooded Sunbeam, through to the middle-elevation cloud forest haunts of both Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Bolivian Brushfinch, Black-winged Parrot, Band-tailed and Barred Fruiteaters, and Bar-bellied Woodpecker.

Miguelito area. We'll spend time birding the mid-elevation Yungas Forest near the small village of Miguelito. Here several colourful and interesting species are to be found including Yungas Manakin, Versicolored Barbet, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, and a multitude of tanagers such as Blue-browed, Straw-backed, Beryl-spangled, Golden-naped, Golden, and Orange-eared. We can expect to hear the liquid calls of White-eared Solitaire whilst sifting through forest tangles for Yungas Tody-Tyrant, Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer, Upland Antshrike, Unadorned Flycatcher and Bolivian Tapaculo.

Laguna Alalay. Depending on our flight times, we may spend time at Laguna Alalay, where our attention will initially be drawn to a host of waterbird targets such as Silvery and White-tufted Grebes, Puna Ibis, Puna Teal, and Red Shoveler, before turning to the surrounding scrub and forest patches for White-tipped Plantcutter, Grey-crested Finch and Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, among others.

Lake Titicaca. We'll visit various viewpoints and open-terrain sites around the shores of the Lake Titicaca. Our primary reason for being here is to see the Titicaca Grebe (also known as Titicaca Flightless or Short-winged Grebe), which we have a very good possibility of seeing. There will also be a supporting cast of other commoner waterfowl, wildfowl, and shorebirds. However, there are some fine passerines to be found in the surrounding altiplano as well, including Black Siskin, Wren-like Rushbird, Cream-winged Cinclodes, Cinereous Conebill, White-winged Black Tyrant, Spot-billed Ground Tyrant, Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Peruvian and Ash-breasted Sierra Finches and Andean Swallow, all of which are possible in the area.



Black-winged Ground Dove by Clayton Burne

Sorata area. We will venture to the Sorata area in search of Berlepsch's Canastero, a highly range-restricted endemic. The drive to Sorata is again great for altiplano birds, as well as waterbirds with Puna Teal, Andean Ibis, Andean Lapwing, Aplomado Falcon and several species of miners, and ground tyrants often encountered. The habitat around Sorata is typical dry Andean scrub,



Titicaca Grebe by Dušan Brinkhuizen

with another set of possible new species for the tour including Huayco and Ornate Tinamous, Black-winged and Golden-spotted Ground Doves, Scribble-tailed Canastero, White-winged Black Tyrant, Golden-billed Saltator and Yellow-bellied Siskin.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Not suitable for anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Bird density of some target species can be low, which may require repeat & dedicated efforts to locate.
Accommodation		Basic to comfortable. Some accommodation at high altitude (La Paz = 3 625m, Lake Titicaca = 3 812m)
Walking / Trails		Mostly roadside birding. Great variance in altitude (max 4 150m at El Alto to min 400m in Santa Cruz de la Sierra)
Vehicles / Roads		Winding roads in mountainous terrain, dirt roads that can be very muddy or bumpy.
Photography		Worthwhile. No dedicated hides, some feeders.
Annoyances		Expect rain, cold temperatures on the altiplano (from freezing wind & possibility of snow) to very hot in the Chaco, humid in lowlands, biting insects.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 15;
- All lodgings;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- This tour requires a very good level of fitness, and participants should be in good general health. Much of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- This tour is not suitable for general bird enthusiasts or dedicated photographers.
- This tour is not suitable for anyone with serious physical limitations.
- In some areas, it may be very hot, especially in the humid lowlands. We will thus make good use of early morning starts to avoid, as far as possible, birding in the middle of the day.
- In the lowlands, humidity will be high and potentially uncomfortable.
- As we will also spend much time at higher altitudes, it is important to expect cool to cold mornings as well as high levels of Ultraviolet light.

- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kgs (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kgs (18lb) for hand luggage.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of an average to good standard and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from basic to comfortable. There is no camping on this trip.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour will begin in Santa Cruz de la Sierra on day 1 with a welcome dinner and conclude in the late afternoon of day 15 in La Paz.

The extension will depart La Paz early on day 1 (day 17 of the main tour) and conclude in La Paz in the late afternoon of day 6. We strongly recommend you only schedule your return international flights for the next day to avoid complications if the return journey from Charazani is unduly delayed.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Viru Viru International Airport, Santa Cruz de la Sierra (IATA: VVI) & El Alto International Airport, La Paz (IATA: LPB) are the main ports of entry and departure for this tour.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.