

Edificio Mechita, 1<sup>er</sup> piso  
Av. 20 de Octubre, # 2315  
Sopocachi  
La Paz - Bolivia

Tel. (+591)2.242.10.72  
Cel. (+591)701.35.112  
[www.ie-spanishonline.com](http://www.ie-spanishonline.com)  
[www.instituto-exclusivo.com](http://www.instituto-exclusivo.com)  
[info@instituto-exclusivo.com](mailto:info@instituto-exclusivo.com)



# Finding an internship in Bolivia

Do you want to gain  
work experience through  
a placement in Latin  
America?



The **i.e.** can help you find the perfect placement: one that is both enjoyable and beneficial for your future career plans.

## Why go to Bolivia to get work experience?

- ✓ Lots of work options for foreign-educated people in a wide range of fields
- ✓ Relatively low cultural barriers to Bolivian business
- ✓ Bolivian Spanish: a standard dialect that is easy to understand
- ✓ A beautiful and varied country with a wide range of travel options
- ✓ One of the friendliest and safest countries in Latin America

## What type of work experience can I get in Bolivia?

Here are examples of placements that the **i.e.** can help you to arrange:

- ✓ Design: website design, carpentry design, alpaca wool sweater design
- ✓ IT: e.g. hotel reservation system, accounting software development
- ✓ Tourism: e.g. developing new, original adventure products
- ✓ Gastronomy: developing the menu for an exclusive restaurant
- ✓ Spanish as a Second Language: curriculum development
- ✓ Environmental Science: e.g. researching the causes and consequences of pollution in Lake Titicaca, sustainable community-managed water supply, solar-energy installation
- ✓ Economics: research on the use of the internet in the SME sector, research on the development of entrepreneurial opportunities, support for web-based commerce
- ✓ Banking: working for a microfinance institution
- ✓ Psychology: developing study & career choice tests, developing online recruitment services
- ✓ Education: teaching English/Math/Physics/French/German at a public secondary school
- ✓ Graphic design: supporting small businesses in the design of leaflets, brochures and other publications for Western tastes

## What are working conditions like?

In general, working conditions in Bolivia are a little more modest than in Western countries. Offices may be less luxuriously furnished, and, in many cases, one will have to share a computer. All the same, most interns have their own desk and access to office stationery. Most offices have an internet connection, but do not expect it to be available for all staff at all times. (There are numerous cheap internet cafés around town for your private internet needs). It would be useful to bring your own laptop to increase your effectiveness.

## Is there a salary or compensation?

In general, Bolivian companies are not in a position to pay a salary or other compensation. Even Bolivian interns are usually only compensated for their travel costs within the city.

## What does it cost to live in Bolivia?

In a city such as La Paz, accommodation with a host family can cost around 150 USD per month, often with breakfast included. Besides accommodation, most people can live well with another 300 to 400 USD per month. This covers food, entertainment, and even the occasional trip around the country. Bolivia is among the least expensive countries in Latin American, and there are people

who get by on just 100 dollars per month. Having said that, one's budget can vary greatly depending on tastes and lifestyle.

## How long are the internships?

Internships can last from 3 months up to about 1 year. Most people plan to stay for 6 to 8 months to ensure that the work experience is of genuine value for their career. After arriving, many choose to extend their internship by 3 to 6 months. Interns are responsible for confirming visa requirements and limits; for example, as of December 2007 U.S. citizens are eligible for a tourist visa of up to 90 days.

## What medical or insurance precautions should I take?

In general, you should take out travel insurance in your home country before departure. This will cover medical costs that you may incur in Bolivia as well as repatriation in case of severe illness or death. (Please check the conditions of your travel insurance carefully).

Please check out an authoritative web-site on the medical precautions required for Bolivia, such as <http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/destinations/samerica/bolivia.html> and visit a travel clinic or your GP before departure.

Many minor medical issues can be resolved by a pharmacist, who often does not require a prescription. Remember, doctors are prescription-happy in most developing countries and this is certainly the case in Bolivia as well. The **i.e.** has a list of English-speaking qualified doctors.

## Where can I live during my internship?

The **i.e.** has a number of pleasant homestay options listed in the publication "Homestay in La Paz". These homestays are with local families, and in most cases you also have plenty of freedom to come and go as you please.

You could also try to find a private apartment. These generally cost a little more than homestays. An alternative would be to share an apartment with 2 or 3 other people, but this may be complicated to organize straight after you arrive in a new city. Hotels range from about \$6 per night for shared accommodation in a simple hostel to about \$50 for a nice room. The **i.e.** can help you find a suitable hotel to stay at until you move into a homestay or an apartment.

## How will I meet other people?

If you take an intensive Spanish course with the **i.e.**, you will probably meet other people in a situation similar to yours. There are also numerous activities that **i.e.** teachers host or plan (e.g., soccer, salsa) in which you can partake.

## What are working hours in Bolivia?

Most offices in La Paz work from 8:30 or 9:00AM until 12:30 or 13:00PM and from 14:30 until 18:30 PM, Monday to Friday.

## Do I need a work permit?

In general, if you are working for a company without a salary, you are considered a volunteer. In this situation, you can stay in Bolivia for three months on a tourist visa, if you are a resident of the EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or the United States. Please check out the most recent visa rules for your nationality:

[www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Bolivia/Visa](http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Bolivia/Visa)

Particularly for US residents, it is wise to contact the Bolivian consulate to get up to date information. To renew, many people leave the country briefly before the three months are up and re-enter, even on the same day on another 3-month visa (perhaps visiting Peru via Copacabana, 3-4 hours by bus from La Paz). Visitors on a tourist visa are normally not permitted to stay in Bolivia for more than 6 months in any one calendar year. Alternatively, you could obtain a one-year student visa at a local university. **Please note, visa authorities grant visas in a seemingly arbitrary manner and we do not accept any liability for the information we provide here. This information may become outdated at any time, so please seek up to date information.**

## How do I get to Bolivia?

Most people fly straight to La Paz or Santa Cruz, the two international airports. It is more expensive to fly to Bolivia than to several neighboring countries, and you might consider flying into Lima, Peru or Buenos Aires, Argentina and doing the rest of the trip overland (by bus and/or train). Another alternative is to fly to Lima, take a LAN flight from Lima to Puno (Peru), and do the rest by bus (about 5 hours).

## Will I get a certificate for my work and/or my Spanish skills?

The organization you work for will be happy to provide you with a reference (most likely in Spanish) detailing your responsibilities, the work you have done, and the time you were working. The **i.e.** can administer an examination to certify your Spanish level. Alternatively, you may decide to take one of the DELE examinations to receive an internationally-recognized qualification from the Instituto Cervantes and the Ministry of Education in Spain (EU recognized). The **i.e.** can prepare you for the DELE examinations.

## How do I get an internship through i.e.?

Contact us at [info@instituto-exclusivo.com](mailto:info@instituto-exclusivo.com)