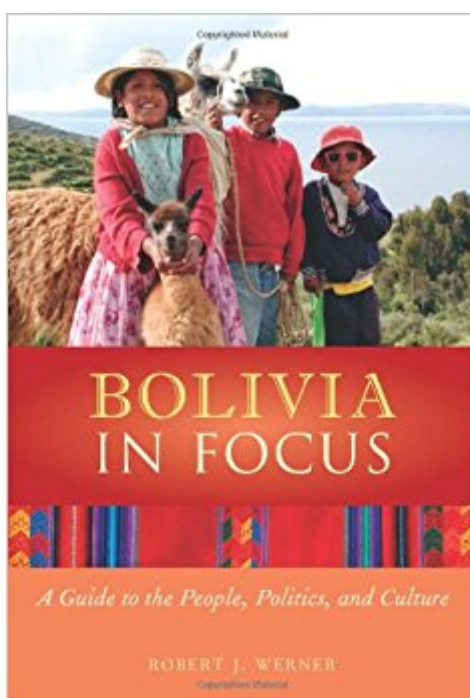


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Bolivia In Focus: A Guide To The People, Politics, And Culture (In Focus Guides) (The In Focus Guides)



Synopsis

This land of colorful cultures and stunning landscapes offers the curious visitor and student an unending stream of extraordinary things. From a fantastic archeological record to llama fetuses in the Witch's Market, from the coca story to the hemisphere's first indigenous president, the history and cultures of Bolivia is an eye-opening experience. But behind its breathtaking scenery and welcoming culture lies a more complex country facing serious political instability and environmental threat. Bolivia in Focus helps the traveler who aspires to be well-informed to understand the wider picture and build up an overall knowledge of the country. It also gives the reader a thought-provoking introduction to the sources of tension in Bolivia, the poorest country in South America, and the people's struggle for social justice that has been missing since the arrival of colonialism five hundred years ago. Bolivia in Focus is an authoritative and up-to-date guide to this captivating country. It explores the land and people, history, economy, politics, society, culture and religion, and includes the author's tips on must-see landmarks and historical sites and how to get the most out of a brief visit.

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Robert Werner teaches geography at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. His goal as a writer is to bring insight to places in the world by synthesizing academically informed knowledge with personal experience.

Robert Werner's book is wonderful. "Bolivia in Focus" is written in a style that is immensely readable, yet reflects Werner's deep understanding and appreciation of the material and his enthusiasm for sharing it. The book covers a range of topics, from Bolivia's beautiful Incan past and vast natural resources to its checkered politics and heated indigenous struggles. The topics provide the reader with a broad introduction to Bolivia, setting the stage and offering resources for further research or extended travel to the country. The book is required reading for anyone planning a trip to Bolivia, or simply interested in an in-depth but enjoyable introduction to this resilient South American country.

For a small book, it packs a lot of information that helps the reader gain an understanding of the history of Bolivia and a feeling for the population. Nothing can take the place of in-depth study and actually living in the country, but this comes close for a short book.

The book was a well written and straightforward account of Bolivia past and present. It helped to understand questions that I had after visiting Bolivia and being unable to find a book written in English about the country while there. I had no problem finding such a book about Peru when there on the same trip.

An excellent, useful and concise guide to the history, politics and peoples of Bolivia. Reading this before and during your travels in Bolivia will greatly enhance your understanding of this fascinating and unpretentious country. The style is factual but quite readable and well-organized. The appendices are also very helpful. This is far more useful than a standard travel guide.

love it

It took so long to be delivered, it arrived after we left for our trip. After reading it when I got home, I found the general information of interest, but not enough specifics about places to visit, etc.

A gloss-over of Bolivia's people and many cultures. While it does briefly discuss the geographical, topographical and, to a tiny degree, the ideological differences between Western Andean and Eastern Tropical Bolivia, the great majority of the book is about Western Bolivia, including most of the photos. Example: "there is little to do north and east of Santa Cruz..." made my jaw drop. Perhaps the author has never explored the many non-Jesuit towns, numerous tourist attractions

and untold numbers of ecotours and natural areas in Eastern and Northern Santa Cruz, not to mention the hundreds of attractions, tours, towns, and natural sights in Bolivia's second largest department, Beni... but not having seen them does not mean they don't exist. In his defense, it's understandable. No Bolivian government to date has made any effort to ensure this vast region is known either. Like Bolivian governments of past and present, the author does Bolivia as a whole no justice by over-simplifying and minimizing the importance of Bolivia's fastest growing (and largest) city (Santa Cruz de la Sierra) and 2 largest departments (Santa Cruz and Beni). Santa Cruz alone provides nearly 40% of the country's gross national product and produces 64% of the country's food. Bolivia is typically described as an Andean country and its indigenous people are also primarily described as Andean. Bolivia has 36 native cultures, each with their own language and territories. Over 30 of them are native to northern, eastern and southern Bolivia and have few similarities with the Aymara or Quechua who have been publicized for decades. Economically Eastern Bolivia was abandoned and ignored for nearly 500 years during which all the wealth of the country was invested in developing the Andean and central cities, especially La Paz and Cochabamba. It should not surprise anyone that Eastern Bolivia has a completely different economic and political ideology and market focus: the people of Eastern Bolivia have had to develop their region of the country (and have transformed it into the economic engine of the nation) through their own nearly unassisted efforts, entrepreneurship and creativity, private and personal funding, and a great deal of foreign investment with little to no investment of public funds by the government until just the past 20-30 years. This, not race or culture, is the primary basis for the political differences between the two regions. I expected a book called "Bolivia in Focus: A guide to Bolivia's people..." to focus on ALL of Bolivia's people. However, I give this book 2 stars for at least mentioning the two sides of Bolivia. Most don't even bother.

I found this short book to be an enlightening read. It presents Bolivia as an historically misgoverned nation and victim of the world economy. It is also strongly anti-American in its description of American policy regarding Bolivia. It is sympathetic to the current populist government. I read it more for the political content than anything else. Consult other reviews for a fuller picture.

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