

Bolivia independence day

Nation has a wide variety of attractions

Today is the 186th anniversary of the establishment of Bolivia in 1825, after declaring its independence from Spain in 1809.

Born from the revolution impelled by Simon Bolivar, Antonio Jose de Sucre and other national heroes, the country — which has struggled through periods of political instability, dictatorships and economic woes — is now in the midst of a transcendental time under the leadership of Evo Morales, the first indigenous president in Bolivia's history.

President Morales took office in January 2006, shortly after winning the presidential election with 53.7 percent of the vote. His administration is marked by the recovery of state companies, the nationalization of the hydrocarbons sector and invoking the constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. In a referendum in January 2009, the new constitutional draft was approved by over 60 percent of voters and came into effect in February that year. The new constitution increases the rights of indigenous people, promotes decentralization, restricts private land ownership and nationalizes Bolivia's natural resources. A month later, the country changed its official name to the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

In the December 2009 general elections mandated by the new constitution, Morales was



President Evo Morales of Bolivia

re-elected with 64.2 percent of the vote.

The Bolivian population, estimated at 10 million, is multi-ethnic, including native Americans, mestizos, Europeans and Africans. There are three major languages, Spanish, Aymara and Quechua, and more than 30 other indigenous ones are spoken. The large number of different cultures within Bolivia has contributed greatly to widespread diversity in the country's arts, cuisine, literature and music.

Relations with Japan

Japan and Bolivia established diplomatic relations in 1914, which were cut due to World War II, but re-established in 1952.

In 1899, Bolivia experienced the first import of 91 Japanese workers, and ever since, Japanese settlers, mainly through Peru, came to work for rubber

plantations in northwestern Bolivia. Treaties after 1954 led to a number of agricultural settlers from Japan to develop the eastern lowlands in Santa Cruz, where the Okinawa Colony and San Juan de Yapacaní Colony were established.

In 2009, Prince Hitachi and Princess Hanako of the Imperial Family went to Bolivia to join in the celebrations for the 110th anniversary of the Japanese immigration.

Thanks to the contributions of the estimated 13,000 Japanese or Bolivians of Japanese descent active today in the country, and economic cooperation extended to Bolivia by the Japanese government, the two countries have founded a friendly relationship.

In order to further enhance these friendly relations, the government of Japan dispatched an ambassador on a special mission to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Morales, which was held in Bolivia's capital La Paz on Jan. 22, 2010.

Furthermore, President Morales paid two official working visits to Japan later that year, in May and November.

Nature and tourism

Bolivia is a landlocked country located in the heart of South America. It is bordered by Brazil to the north and east, Paraguay to the southeast, Argentina to

the south, Chile to the southwest and Peru to the west.

Its geography is varied, from the peaks of the Andes in the west, to the eastern lowlands situated within the Amazon Basin.

The country's tourist industry has grown gradually since the 1990s, attracting visitors with its natural diversity and cultural heritage.

The following are highlights of some Bolivian tourist destinations:

Known as the Sacred Lake, Lake Titicaca is the highest navigable lake in the world at about 3,800 meters above sea level. It lies on the border with Peru and has a surface area of nearly 8,400 sq. km. It is made up of two basins: the Lago Grande to the north and the smaller Winaymarka to the south.

The Lago Grande is sprinkled with islands where archeological remains have been found, a testament to the domain of the Aymara civilization that once ruled the area.

The Winaymarka has small islands where Aymara people live and work on the land or as fishermen. The Tiwanaku civilization, which predates the Inca Empire that ruled the region, lived around this part of Lake Titicaca.

The Andes Mountains run along the western border of Bolivia and surround Lake Titicaca and the capital La Paz. The

range in Bolivia extends from the Illampu to the Illimani mountains. The height of the peaks exceeds 6,000 meters. The high region of Los Yungas in La Paz is also part of the range.

The area usually receives pleasant weather. Amid this exuberant landscape, picturesque villages are often lively with cultural expressions of dance and music called "saya afroboliviana," executed to the rhythm of drums.

History has left its mark on this region through pre-Colombian Inca roads, such as the Takesi, Choro and Yunga Cruz, which cross the range from one extreme to the other, where the landscape is manifested in all its forms, from seemingly never-ending mountains to waterfalls and fruit trees.

The pre-Colombian Las Lomas, identified as the hills of Amazon culture, rise between the Andes Mountains and the Guapore River. They are artificial hills that serve as hydraulic platforms, built by different civilizations that settled in this region approximately 5,500 years ago. Amazon flora and fauna, in all their magnitude, can be appreciated throughout this area. Besides the beautiful natural surroundings, there are important archaeological zones and unique ethnic settlements.

Located in Potosi in the southwest of Bolivia, the Salar de Uyuni (Uyuni Salt Flat) is the



Mystical and sacred: Lake Titicaca is home to indigenous peoples, who preserve the traditional ways of living. VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, MINISTRY OF CULTURE

largest salt flat in the world, with a surface area of 10,582 sq. km. At a height of around 3,650 meters above sea level, the salt flat has a reserve of 9 million tons of lithium and other minerals, which have given way to the creation of red, green, yellow and blue lagoons.

This arid, volcanic region houses important economic resources amid the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape. There are spectacular geysers, rock formations and volcanic wells, all of which transport visitors to the time of the Earth's creation.

With information provided by the Embassy of Bolivia and the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.



Touching the sky: The peaks of the Andes Mountains that pass through Bolivia rise more than 6,000 meters above sea level. VICE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, MINISTRY OF CULTURE



Congratulations
to the People of
the Plurinational State of Bolivia
on the Occasion of
Their 186th Independence Day

DOWA METALS & MINING CO., LTD.

14-1, Sotokanda 4-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0021, Japan
Tel: 81-3-6847-1200 Fax: 81-3-6847-7022
<http://www.dowa.co.jp/>

Congratulations
to the People of
the Plurinational State of Bolivia
on the Occasion of
Their 186th Independence Day

Honorary Consul General

Hideki Ogawa

Honorary Consulate General of Bolivia in Osaka

Congratulations
to the People of
the Plurinational State of Bolivia
on the Occasion of
Their 186th Independence Day

 **Sumitomo Corporation**