

# Landlocked Countries: Bolivia

by Geir Sør-Reime

Bolivia was proclaimed as a republic August 6, 1825, after a period of wars with the Spanish lasting 16 years. In 1909 and 1910, this 16-year struggle was commemorated on a set of eight stamps.



Bolivia 1909 1809 revolution—the start of the independence war (Sc. 78-81)



Bolivia 1909 war of independence—  
(Sc. 82-89—not all 8 are illustrated here)

The centenary of the Republic was celebrated with a set of eight 1925 stamps, the 150th anniversary with two sets of stamps, and the 169th anniversary in



Bolivia 1910 war of independence—additional designs  
(Sc. 92-94)

Bolivia 1975 150 years republic: Arms of the departments/regions (Sc. 566-68, C336-41), shown Sc. 566, C41, see also next column



Bolivia 1995 169 years republic—also remembering the Chaco peace treaty with Paraguay (Sc. 941)

1994 on a 1995 stamp.



Bolivia 1975 150 years republic: presidents and statesmen of Bolivia (Sc. 569-75, C346-53). shown Sc. 569, 575

In 2008, the May 25, 1809, revolt that started the struggle for independence was remembered with four stamps.



Bolivia 2008 200 years 1809 revolution, Sc. 1380, 1383



Bolivia 2009 200 years 1809 revolution, c. 1399

In 2009, a stamp was issued for the 1809 first successes in the struggle, and in 2010, the bicentenary of de facto independence was celebrated with two stamps.



Bolivia 2010 200 years de facto independence, Sc. 1438, 1445



1867 5¢ yellow green Condor, Sc. 1

Bolivia 1968 100 years first stamps—Sc. 515-17, C295-97 (shown Sc. 515, which pictures a stamp not listed in Scott, footnoted as prepared under an 1863 contract that was rescinded.



Bolivia issued its first stamps in 1867, but here we will focus on the stamps issued after 1879 when the country effectively became landlocked.

The centenary of Bolivian stamps in 1967 was celebrated with 1968 stamps, the 150th anniversary of Bolivia's first stamps was celebrated on a 2017 stamp showing one of the 1867 stamps (see page 2). This



Left, Bolivia 2017 150 years first stamps;  
right, re-issue with new postal operator logo

stamp and several others were re-issued in 2018-19 with the logo of the new postal operator added.

Bolivia today has an area of 424,164 square miles and a population of around 12 million. It is a multiethnic state, and in 2009, the official name of the country was altered to the Plurinational State of Bolivia to reflect its multi-ethnicity. From 2010, Bolivian stamps display the new official name.

The country is named after Simón Bolívar, a leader in the wars of independence for the Spanish colonies in South America, and the first President of Bolivia (1825-26).

He has been commemorated on several Bolivian stamps. In 1897, 1909, and 1913 his portrait appeared on definitive stamps issued those years. In 1974 he was depicted on horseback on a stamp commemorating the 150th anniversary of one of the battles leading to national independence, and in 1975 he was included in a series of stamps featuring portraits of the Presidents of Bolivia. This stamp was also used for two of the souvenir sheets of 1980 for the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. The stamp was also issued in a souvenir sheet, and this was overprinted in 1981 for the 150th anniversary of his death,

In 1976 he was depicted together with the Bolivian independence hero Antonio de Sucre on a stamp for the extraordinary world congress of the Bolivarian Societies.

In 1982 a single stamp commemorated the bicentenary of his birth (1983), and two 1984 stamps commemorated the same.

Simón Bolívar as Liberator was also honored on two 2013 stamps.



Left to right, top row first: Bolivia 1897 Bolívar—  
Sc. 53; Bolivia 1913 Bolívar—Sc. 109; Bolivia  
1974 Bolívar—Sc. 562;  
Bolivia 1984  
Bolívar—Sc.  
692-93; Bo-  
livia 1974  
Bolívar—Sc.  
562



Originally, the country had a coastline facing the Pacific Ocean, but during the War of the Pacific 1879-83, Bolivia had to cede the coast with



1979 Saltpetre War—loss of the coastal region—cancels of Antofagasta,  
La Chimba, Mejillones, Sc. 630-32



Wikipedia Map shows land losses to surrounding nations, including 1904 ceding of land to Chile, which turned Bolivia into a landlocked country.



Bolivia 1979 100 years  
Saltpetre War—loss of the  
coastal region, left to right,  
top row first: view of An-  
tofagasta, Map of Antofa-  
gasta province, Arms of  
the Province, Woman in  
chains, Eduardo Abaroa,  
(Sc. 633-37)

the port of Antofagasta and large areas rich in saltpetre to Chile in 1904 and had been a landlocked country since 1879.

In 1979, the centenary of this ‘saltpetre war’ was the theme of a series of eight stamps. One of these showed the provincial arms of Bolivia’s former coastal region, others showed postal markings from former Bolivian towns, and a map of Bolivia with the coastal region. In 2005, the role of the Bolivian navy in the war was the subject of a single stamp.



Bolivia 2005 navy's role in  
Saltpetre War—Sc. 1247

Left, Bolivia 2012 coastal  
claim; right, Bolivia 2017 A  
Sea for Bolivia—with 2018  
overprint by the new postal operator, stamp refers to the  
International Court's decision that it has competence to  
judge in the case

In 2012, Bolivia issued a stamp for its attempts to regain sovereignty over the coastal region through the International Court in the Hague. In 2017, a single stamp came with the message ‘A Sea for Bolivia’, marking that the International

Court had decided to hear the case and underlining Bolivia's claim for the littoral region. Already in 2015, the International Court of Justice found that Chile had no legal obligation to negotiate with Bolivia, but the Court asked them to find a peaceful solution to allow Bolivian access to the sea.

Through treaties with Peru and Argentina, Bolivia has access to a special economic zone in Ilo, Peru since 1992, and a Bolivian Free Port in Rosario, Argentine since 1964. The latter gives direct access to the Atlantic Ocean through the Paraná River.



Above, Peru 1992 Ilo agreement with Bolivia (Sc. 1018); Bolivia 1992 Ilo agreement with Peru (Sc. 842-43)

The 1992 agreement with Peru for Ilo was celebrated on three 1992 stamps. Peru issued a single stamp for the agreement.

In addition to the territorial losses to Chile, Bolivia has also lost inland territories, in 1867 and 1903 during the so-called Rubber War, it ceded Acre to Brazil, in 1893 it ceded territory to Argentina, and in 1938 it lost great parts of the Gran Chaco region to Paraguay. The 25th anniversary of the Chaco Peace Treaty was commemorated on a 1966 overprint on a 1955 stamp. The 56th anniversary of this was remembered on a 1991 stamp.



The 1902 battle for Acre between Brazil and Bolivia was commemorated on two Bolivian 2003 stamps.

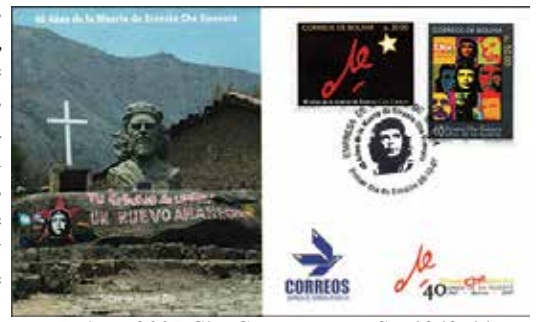
Before Bolivia gave up Acre, the local population wanted a union with Brazil, and in July 1899, an independent State of Acre was proclaimed. This independence attempt ended March 1900. The authorities there had sent out a decree that postage stamps would be issued, but none has ever been recorded. However, there were further short-lived attempts to establish an Acre state, and it appears that one of these ordered a stamp and a few copies of this exist.



Bolivia 2003 Battle for Acre 100 years—Sc. 1205a-b; right, Acre 1900 state

Wolfgang Baldus in 2004 published a small book entitled 'The Postage Stamps of the Independent State of Acre' where he tells the story of the state and the stamps in detail.

The famous revolutionary, Ernesto Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia in 1967, but in 2007, two stamps remembering the 40th anniversary of his death were issued.



Bolivia 2007 Che Guevara a-c—Sc. 1343-44

In fact, Bolivian stamps from 1897 and onwards have in periods been dominated by military and political leaders, since the 1920s very often the sitting president, and the many so-called revolutions, very often another name for a military coup, like the 1930 revolution, celebrated on a 1931 triangular stamp, the 1943 revolution, celebrated with four 1944 and two 1945 stamps, the so-called popular revolution of 1946, celebrated on a set of 11 stamps in 1947.



Top: Bolivia 1931 military junta—Sc. 205;

Middle row: Bolivia 1944 1943 revolution—Sc. 305; Bolivia 1945 1943 revolution—Sc. 306



Bottom: Bolivia 1947 1946 revolution—Sc. 318-23, C 113-17 (both designs shown)



There were also stamps for democratic developments, like the 1950 stamp for the first anniversary of the ending of a state of civil war and proclaiming, "Triumph for Democracy", and the 1952 Revolution which instated a civilian



socialist-orientated government, and 13 stamps were issued for the first anniversary in 1953.



The government nationalized the mining industry, the oil industry and introduced an agrarian reform, all of which was also commemorated with stamps. It also tried to support the indigenous peoples of the country and in 1954 hosted an American congress for indigenous peoples.



Top left: Bolivia 1953 nationalization of the mining industry—Sc. 376-77;  
top right: Bolivia 1955 nationalization of the oil industry—  
Sc. 388-92, C182-86 (both designs shown);

The 10th anniversary of the 1952 revolution was celebrated on six 1963 stamps showing some of the reforms of the government: nationalization of the oil industry, agrarian reform, educational reform, democratization, nationalization of the mining industry.



Bolivia 1963 1952 revolution 10 years—Sc. 472-74, C251-53



Above, Bolivia 1973 industrial develop-  
ments—Sc. 554-57, C324-25;  
right, Bolivia 1972 Hugo Banzer—Sc. 539

This government was overthrown by military leaders in 1964, and in 1971, the officer Hugo Banzer became president and held that office until 1978. He appeared on a 1972 stamp promoting his efforts to boost the economy, also reflected on a 1973 series showing industrial developments.

Between 1978 and 1980 there was an unstable political situation in Bolivia until 1982 when a civilian president was installed. The Bolivian stamps more and more became thematic and fewer had political or military subjects.

In 2006, Juan Evo Morales Ayma was installed as a democratic elected



Bolivia 2006 Morales—Sc. 1261-63

President and three stamps commemorated this event. He was installed for his second period in 2010 and two stamps were issued for that event. In 2014 he appears together with former President Hugo Chávez Frías (1953-2013) on a stamp issued for the 60th birth anniversary of Chávez. Morales was forced to resign in 2019.



Left, Bolivia 2010 Morales (Sc. 1419)  
Right, Bolivia 2014 Morales and Chavez (Sc. 1594)



Bolivia 1916 pictorials—Sc. III // 116

Landscapes and the built heritage appeared for the first time on the 1916 pictorial definitive, and from 1997 there were series of stamps featuring views of the nine regions or departments of Bolivia. A similar series was issued in 2007 with sights of all regions.

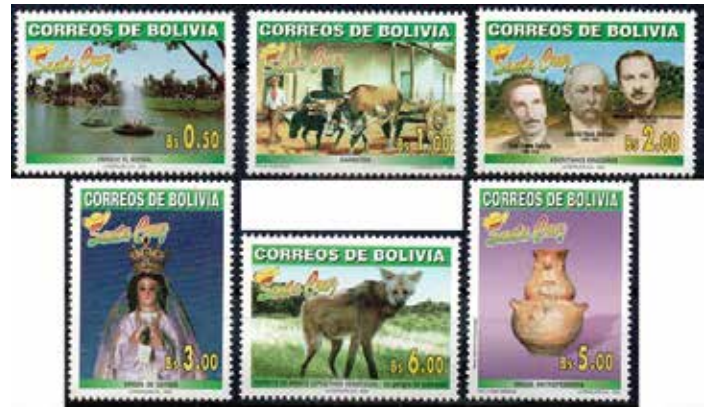


Bolivia 1997 tourism in Oruro—Sc. 983-88



Bolivia 1997 tourism in Tarija—Sc. 995-1000

Bolivia 1998 tourism in Beni—Sc. 1033-38



Bolivia 2000 tourism in Santa Cruz—Sc. 1114-19



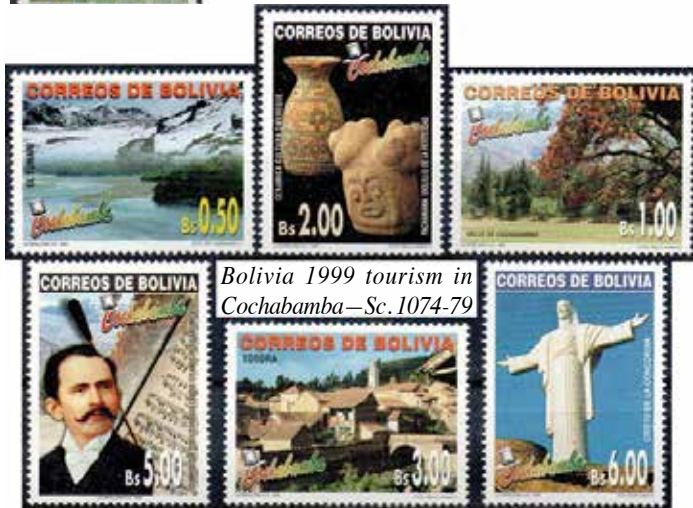
Bolivia 1998 tourism in Pando—Sc. 1039-44



Bolivia 1960 tourism—Sc. 414-17, C208-11  
Both designs shown, Sc. 441, C211

Tourism has become an important industry of Bolivia, and the first stamp issue that promoted tourism was issued in 1960.

During 2010-15 several stamp series featured the folklore of Bolivia, including traditional carnival dances, and 2015-16 there were also stamp issued focusing on tourism attractions in the country.



Bolivia 1999 tourism in Cochabamba—Sc. 1074-79



Bolivia 2010 dance masks



Bolivia 1999 tourism in Potosi—Sc. 1080-85



Bolivia 2012 traditional dances



Bolivia 2013 carnival of Oruro



Bolivia 2013 folk dances



Bolivia 2015 carnival dances



Bolivia 2015 tourism



Bolivia 2022 Multicultural Christmas

During 2018-22 only earlier stamps overprinted with the logo of the new postal operator, Agencia Boliviana de Correos, were issued, the first new issue of the new operator was the 2022 Pluricultural Christmas stamp.



Bolivia 2016 tourism



Bolivia 2018 new postal service operator



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