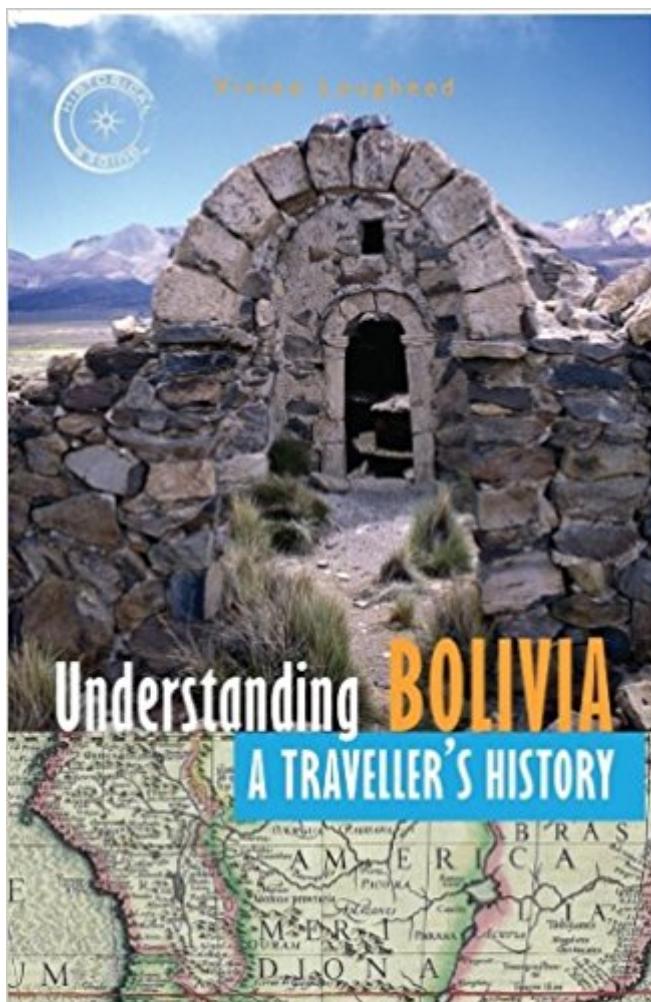


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Understanding Bolivia: A Traveller's History (Historical Guides Series)



Synopsis

Bolivia is an isolated, land-locked, sparsely populated country--a land that has jungle, snow covered mountain peaks and every ecological niche in between. Within the country's borders are the world's most dangerous roads, highest navigable lake, richest silver mine and largest salt lake. Understanding Bolivia is a traveller's history that reveals the backbone of local cultures from the Tihuanacans and Inca to present day Aymara and Quechua. The book describes what made Bolivia the second poorest country in the Americas and how it disposed of almost 200 presidents in the same number of years. It shows an indigenous, rural economy struggling inventively and sometimes successfully with the global economy--McDonald's (three outlets!) gave up on Bolivia, much better and cheaper food being available from salteÃ ÄjÃ a stands. Bolivians successfully fought American corporate control of their water and gas supplies. The book is also a history of travellers. Some, like Colonel Percy Fawcett and his quest for the lost mines of the Muribeco, come to Bolivia with impossible dreams. A magnet for adventureseekers, the country's isolation has also attracted those on the run--the "Butcher of Leon" Klaus Barbie, revolutionist Che Guevara and bank robbers Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid all sought haven in Bolivia. Understanding Bolivia takes over where the rest of the guidebooks end, offering visitors and armchair travellers a fascinating story of rich cultures and colourful characters in a land of extremes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born in Winnipeg in 1943, Vivien Lougheed was raised by her Polish grandparents who instilled

within her a desire for adventure. From her home base of Prince George she has travelled extensively throughout British Columbia, China, Pakistan, the Mediterranean, Central and South America, Africa, the Himalayas of Tibet and Nepal. In her first book, Central America by Chickenbus (1986), she all but coined the term that is now synonymous with local transportation and travelling on the cheap. Since then she has written more than ten books including Kluane National ParkHiking Guide, Forbidden Mountains, TungstenJohn, (co-written with her husband) and From the Chilcotin to the Chilkoot: Selected Hikes of Northern BC

This book is a treasure, so much more than just another travel guide. The information that you might find in other travel guides in short sidebars and notes (those bits that most of us find so fascinating) becomes the focus of the author's work. Bolivia has a rich history and culture, dating back over 2,600 years. The book takes us from ancient times to the modern day, chronicling events and traditions and economic and political changes along the way. Lougheed doesn't shy away from a story. Weak leaders, revolution and the "war on drugs" are covered, as are human rights issues and the working conditions of silver miners today. You get a sense, though, that the author has a deep affection for the country and the people and this comes through, in the stories and in the beautiful photographs that add so much to the book. I understand that the publisher, Harbour House, will be publishing more "Understanding..." books (the first, I believe, was Understanding Belize, and this is the second). Well done! Travellers and armchair travellers will approve. This is what travel writing should be.

Want a grand dose of culture? One doesn't have to go much further than Bolivia. "Understanding Bolivia: A Traveler's History" explores Bolivia's rich history of cowboys, religion, carnivals, silver mines, ancient American history, and that's just the beginning. With a special look at adventurers who have traveled through Bolivia through the years, "Understanding Bolivia" is a must for anyone interested in the country or planning a visit.

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