SPT — Health and Vaccinations for South America

October 2026

Read this first

This sheet tells you what to talk about with your doctor or a travel clinic before your trip. It is not medical advice, and your clinic makes the final call. Book that visit at least six weeks before you leave, because some vaccines need more than one dose.

For most travelers, on every SPT trip

- **Routine vaccines** up to date: measles-mumps-rubella, tetanus-diphtheria, polio, and whatever else your doctor recommends for your age.
- **Hepatitis A:** recommended for most travelers to all our countries except Chile, where it depends on your activities.
- **Typhoid:** recommended for most travelers to Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, and for some travelers to Ecuador, Argentina and Chile.

For some travelers, depending on your trip

Rabies, hepatitis B, dengue and chikungunya. Your clinic decides based on where you go and what you'll do.

Yellow fever: the one that depends on where you go

Country	Vaccine recommended	Not needed
Bolivia	Below 2,300 m/7,550 ft east of the Andes: all of Beni, Pando and Santa Cruz, plus the lowlands of La Paz department (Rurrenabaque and Madidi)	La Paz city, the Altiplano, Salar de Uyuni
Peru	Amazon regions, including Madre de Dios (Tambopata) and Loreto	Lima, Cusco city, Machu Picchu, the Inca Trail, the Cordillera Huayhuash
Ecuador	Amazon provinces below 2,300 m/7,550 ft, and Esmeraldas	Quito, Guayaquil, the highlands, the Galápagos
Colombia	Areas below 2,300 m/7,550 ft, including the coffee region	Bogotá. Generally not needed for Medellín, Cartagena, Cali, Barranquilla only
Argentina	Misiones (Iguazú Falls) and Corrientes	Everywhere else, including Salta, the Puna and Patagonia
Chile	No yellow fever risk	—

Three things to know:

- **Crossing borders:** Bolivia's rules require proof of yellow fever vaccination for travelers aged 1 or older arriving from a country with yellow fever risk, which includes Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Brazil. If your trip combines Peru and Bolivia, ask your clinic about this.
- **Outbreaks in 2026:** yellow fever cases have been reported in Colombia (mostly Tolima), Peru (Madre de Dios), Bolivia and Ecuador. Colombia may check vaccination cards at airports and bus terminals.
- **Age 60 and older:** the vaccine carries more risk of side effects. Talk it through carefully with your clinic.

If you get the vaccine, carry the yellow International Certificate of Vaccination with your passport.

Malaria

- **No risk:** Argentina (declared malaria-free by the WHO in 2019), the Galápagos, and anywhere above 2,500 m/8,200 ft in Bolivia, including La Paz and Uyuni.

- **Low risk:** the Amazon lowlands of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia.

Health agencies differ on whether low-risk areas call for malaria pills. Ask your travel clinic, and tell them exactly where you'll be.

Mosquitoes: your best protection

Dengue is surging across the region in 2026, and there are ongoing outbreaks of Oropouche, chikungunya and Zika. No pill prevents these, so avoiding bites is the protection that works:

- use repellent with DEET or picaridin
- wear long sleeves and pants at dawn and dusk
- treat clothing with permethrin

If you are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, talk to your doctor about Zika before you travel.

Altitude

See our High Altitude Information page and sheet.

Before you go

- Pack prescription medicines in their original containers, with a copy of the prescriptions.
- Travel insurance and medical evacuation coverage are required on every SPT trip. See our insurance page.

Sources: UK National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) country pages, checked October 2026. US travelers: CDC Travelers' Health, wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel.

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Everyone's safety is the goal.