



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day Seven – The Bolivian Border

Border crossing day, time to vacate Peru and make the crossing into Bolivia. It's that simple, just drive across an imaginary line and you're there. Yeah right, if only. The first week of this rally has made it very clear that nothing is simple, and as if there hadn't been enough curve balls thrown already, a strike by the border staff had meant that we would need to cross at the main border with all the other traffic, rather than the quiet country frontier that we should have been using.

But then of course the border force had been on strike, it's in vogue at the minute, the latest big thing, in fact perhaps I'll down tools in a few days' time and give it a go myself, perhaps somewhere around Mendoza, I've heard it's nice at this time of year.

Before the border though there came the run out of Puno in the morning rush hour, an experience that would awaken even the sleepest of daybreak commuters. It's no place for shrinking violets and instead rewards some aggressive and inventive driving. See a gap and go for it, leave a gap and it will be filled, leave your manners at home, there is no place for them here. Watch that Mototaxi peeling across every lane of traffic in front of you and be ready for the local taxis to stop without warning and in any lane to grab a passing fare. See that three-lane junction? Well, guess what, it's about to become one lane and if you're in the wrong lane in a minute you will be heading into oncoming traffic. But that's fine, in fact that's normal, they drive where they want here and dodging traffic from all directions is just part of the experience. Stop lights seem to be about the only thing that people really take seriously around here, well, relatively, but keep your eyes peeled for them as the paint marking the intersections has seen better days. Come to that, so has the surface of the roads, but once you've made it through the video game driving experience that is the Puno rush hour the reward is a drive along the shores of the gorgeous Lake Titicaca.

Naturally after so much excitement a rest might be called for, but don't worry, it's the border next and so there is plenty of time to contemplate your morning so far. Nothing is done in a rush here, or in any sort of order, but patience is your friend. Time passes at a standstill as the minutes turn into hours and the afternoon ebbs away in front of your eyes. It doesn't pay to watch the clock though and it isn't uncommon to see people examining their watches as the hands appear to begin to move backwards instead of forwards. What day is it? It was Friday when we got here, it might be Saturday now or perhaps even Thursday. Who knows. For an event that is governed by close adherence to the clock it is difficult to let go of the shackles of time and just relax and let the process work itself out.

Best to not get too wound up, after all the clock isn't and neither is the border force, coiled springs they ain't, but eventually we will get through and then there is the excitement of Bolivia to come, which according to those that have been there is a whole different experience. The evasive driving skills picked up in Peru will probably come in handy and the roads will likely become even rougher. There are some long days ahead as we forge a path to Argentina, and no doubt everyone is looking forward to getting some solid rallying under their belts. It's going to be a blast as we chase down the next border crossing, come on Bolivia, I can't wait to see what you've got for us.

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