Tour Code
BR1

ADVENTURESABROAD

BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro, Iguacu Falls, the Amazon & Pantanal

15 days

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Day 1 Arrive in Manaus

We arrive in Manaus, where the dark Rio Negro meets the muddy Solimões to form the mighty Amazon. This metropolis of two million grew from a Portuguese fort built in 1669, transforming during the rubber boom into the "Paris of the Tropics."

Standing 1,500 kilometers from the Atlantic, we're at the threshold of Amazonia—covering more than half of Brazil's territory yet home to only seven percent of its people. The Amazon River stretches 6,440 kilometers, carrying water equivalent to eleven Mississippi Rivers, while its basin generates twenty percent of the world's oxygen.

For early arrivals, we explore the Teatro Amazonas, a neo-classical opera house embodying rubber barons' extravagant dreams. Built in the 1880s with Italian marble, French chandeliers, English ironwork, and Scottish timber, this temple to European refinement still hosts the annual Opera Festival, its gold-leafed dome gleaming above the jungle canopy.

Overnight in Manaus.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Manaus - Amazon: Amazon Exploration

Today we transfer from Manaus to our Amazon lodge. This transfer may be by road, by boat or a combination of both.

The rainforest thrives in perpetual humidity from over 2,000 millimeters of annual rainfall, creating a closed-loop system where trees recycle their own moisture—ninety percent of rain originally evaporated from the forest itself. This creates conditions unchanged since the age of dinosaurs.

Using our lodge as base camp, we explore waterways and forest corridors by boat and foot. The Amazon's wildlife reveals itself to patient observers: brilliant macaws and toucans, three-toed sloths moving with geological slowness, and pink-hued boto river dolphins whose intelligence has inspired countless indigenous legends.

* NOTE: Our activities in the Amazon will vary depending upon seasonality, weather, and other considerations, at the discretion of your Tour Leader and local Amazon guides. There is a luggage weight limit of 10kg per person, so YOU WILL NEED TO BRING AN OVERNIGHT BAG. Anything that exceeds this can be left in Manaus free of charge.

Overnight at an Amazon lodge.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 3 Amazon: Bird Watching, Forest Walks & Village Visits

We rise before dawn for nature's greatest symphony—the Amazon's morning chorus. As darkness retreats, the forest awakens in waves: first tinamous and partridges, then parrots and macaws building to a crescendo as hundreds of species announce the new day.

The Amazon's seasonal rhythms create dramatically different experiences. During December-to-May floods, rising waters transform the forest floor into an aquatic wonderland with comfortable 25C days and pleasant 15C nights. The dry season brings higher temperatures reaching 35C but concentrates wildlife around remaining water sources.

Paradoxically, the rainy season offers exceptional wildlife viewing. Many plants flower and fruit during these months, attracting birds and primates to water's edge where we observe them easily. Spectacular thunderstorms create their own drama, with lightning illuminating the canopy.

Evening ventures into the forest's nocturnal realm reveal an entirely different Amazon: nighthawks echoing through trees, flashlights

revealing ruby caiman eyes, and nocturnal mammals navigating arboreal highways.

Overnight at an Amazon lodge.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 4 Amazon - Manaus - Fly to Brasilia

We farewell the Amazon this morning, carrying memories of the world's greatest wilderness. Our afternoon flight transports us to Brasília, Brazil's purpose-built capital and one of the 20th century's most ambitious urban experiments.

The idea of moving Brazil's capital inland emerged in the early 19th century, inspired by a Salesian priest's vision. For nearly 150 years this remained a dream—until President Juscelino Kubitschek made it reality in the late 1950s. In less than four years, his government carved a modern metropolis from cerrado savanna, creating a city designed to pull Brazil's focus from its colonial coastal orientation toward the promise of its vast interior.

As we settle into accommodations, we're surrounded by architectural legacy representing not just administrative convenience, but a fundamental reimagining of Brazilian identity.

Overnight in Brasilia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Brasilia: City Tour

Today we explore Brasília, a UNESCO World Heritage site representing the world's largest example of 20th-century city planning. Architect Oscar Niemeyer and urban planner Lúcio Costa created more than a capital—they designed Brazil's future, built from scratch in the nation's heartland.

We begin at Dom Bosco's Church, where modest exterior conceals walls of stained glass in twelve shades of blue creating an ethereal sanctuary. The central chandelier of 7,400 Murano glass pieces transforms this space into a constellation of light.

From the 224-meter Central TV Tower, Brasília's famous airplane-like layout spreads below—the "fuselage" containing government buildings along the Monumental Axis, with residential "wings" extending north and south. This reveals the city's careful geometry: wide boulevards designed for the automobile age and green spaces separating functions.

At the Juscelino Kubitschek Memorial, we encounter the human story behind this concrete miracle. JK promised "fifty years of progress in five" and delivered on that audacious pledge.

Niemeyer's Cathedral demonstrates how modernist architecture inspires spiritual awe. Sixteen curved concrete columns reach skyward like praying hands, supporting stained glass that floods the interior with blue, green, and white light.

Our exploration culminates at Three Powers Square, symbolic heart of Brazilian democracy, where the three government branches occupy buildings embodying their functions.

Overnight in Brasilia.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Brasilia - Fly to Campo Grande - Pantanal

We fly to Campo Grande, gateway to the Pantanal—South America's greatest wildlife sanctuary and the world's largest tropical wetland. Our destination is Pousada Aguape, situated 160 kilometers from the city on a working ranch established 155 years ago.

The Aguape Ranch embodies the Pantanal's evolution from wilderness to sustainable coexistence between human activity and natural systems. Traditional cattle ranching shares the landscape with conservation projects, including efforts to protect the magnificent Hyacinth Macaw—the world's largest flying parrot.

This vast wetland owes its extraordinary biodiversity to unmatched habitat diversity. Seasonal floods create a mosaic of environments supporting more than 80 mammal species, 50 reptile species, and 375 bird species. Remarkably, none are endemic—instead, species from surrounding ecosystems converge here during seasonal cycles, creating the continent's greatest wildlife concentration. Among residents are thirteen endangered species, including the elusive jaguar, giant otters, and giant anteaters.

This afternoon's open-vehicle safari introduces us to this natural theater. We traverse palm forests and savannas where giant anteaters lumber through grass, armadillos trundle across paths, and overhead spectacular birds include the massive Jabiru Stork, endangered Hyacinth Macaw, and Plumbeous Ibis.

Overnight in Pantanal region.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Pantanal Exploration

Today we immerse in the Pantanal's seasonal rhythms; our early-November visit falls in the transition between seasons, when the first rains begin to green the plains and wildlife still gathers at dwindling waterholes.

We begin with walking safari through lush riverside forests along the Aquidauana River. These gallery forests exist as green corridors through open grasslands, their dense canopies providing refuge for monkeys, birds, and countless creatures. The forest floor reveals intricate relationships sustaining this ecosystem: strangler figs, termite mounds serving as apartment complexes, and endless cycles of decay and renewal.

As afternoon heat builds, we retreat before venturing out during cooler evening hours. Our night game drive reveals nocturnal residents: owls calling from hidden perches, caimans patrolling waterways, and capybaras--the world's largest rodents—emerging to graze in moonlight.

The Pantanal's reputation rests on more than statistics. This freshwater wetland functions as a vast biological pump, seasonal flooding creating conditions that concentrate and disperse wildlife in predictable patterns--an ecosystem where patient observers witness fundamental life processes.

Overnight in the Pantanal region.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 8 Pantanal: Full Day Touring

Today's exploration focuses on the Pantanal's most impressive residents—spectacled caimans ruling these waterways. These crocodilian survivors can reach three meters in length, their powerful jaws crushing turtle shells, perfectly adapted for aquatic ambush hunting. Once threatened by hide hunters, nearly ten million now inhabit the Pantanal's waters.

Our boat safari along the Aquidauana River reveals extraordinary complexity. The waterway serves as a liquid highway, its banks lined with species found nowhere else in such concentration. Capuchin monkeys chatter in riverside trees while red howler monkeys announce territorial claims with calls carrying for miles. The river teems with life: piranha schools create silver flashes, kingfishers dive like feathered arrows, while toucans add exotic colour to the green tapestry.

This afternoon offers the quintessential Pantanal experience—exploring on horseback, the traditional navigation method. Pantaneiro cowboys developed techniques for working cattle in landscapes that flood and dry in endless cycles. For visitors, horseback riding provides access to areas unreachable by vehicle, following game trails through palm groves where giant anteaters dig for termites and capybara families gather at water holes. From horseback, we gain different perspective on the Pantanal's scale, moving quietly through landscapes where jaguars hunt and anacondas bask.

Overnight in the Pantanal region.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 9 Pantanal - Campo Grande - Fly to Rio de Janeiro

We farewell the Pantanal and fly via Campo Grande to Rio de Janeiro, the Cidade Maravilhosa—Marvelous City embodying Brazil's passion, creativity, and joie de vivre. As our aircraft approaches this urban masterpiece, we witness one of the world's great urban settings: seven million Cariocas compressed between ocean and escarpment.

Rio exists in perpetual celebration, where life revolves around pleasures pursued with unmatched intensity: the cult of body beautiful practiced on world-famous beaches, infectious samba rhythms pulsing through neighborhoods, national football obsession uniting all social classes, and convivial consumption of ice-cold cerveja and potent cachaça lubricating legendary social life.

The Carioca spirit transforms everyday activities into opportunities for joy and connection. Here, everything culminates in samba—football matches, weddings, work celebrations, political demonstrations, and beach days. This represents more than festivity; it embodies a fundamental life approach prioritizing romance, music, dance, and conversation above material accumulation.

If flight schedules permit, we begin exploration immediately, eager to experience this urban phenomenon that has captured imaginations worldwide..

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Rio de Janeiro City Touring & Christ the Redeemer

Today we discover why Rio earned its nickname—surely one of the most dramatically situated urban centers on the planet. Built almost entirely along beaches and bays with forest-clad mountains as backdrop, Rio demonstrates how geography shapes a city's soul. The Serra da Carioca divides Rio into zona norte (working-class neighborhoods climbing hillsides) and zona sul (affluent districts stretching along beaches). These steep mountains create a natural amphitheater framing urban life.

Corcovado Mountain provides perfect vantage point for understanding Rio's geography. We ascend via electric cog railway through Tijuca Forest—the world's largest urban rainforest, replanted after 19th-century coffee cultivation nearly destroyed the original ecosystem.

At the summit, Cristo Redentor spreads his arms over Guanabara Bay and Sugar Loaf Mountain. This Art Deco masterpiece required transporting 635 tons of soapstone up the mountainside. His left arm points toward zona norte's sprawl, while his right embraces zona sul's golden beaches—Copacabana, Ipanema, and Leblon.

We explore Rio's historic center, where colonial origins remain visible. The Theatro Municipal represents Belle Époque aspirations, while the Metropolitan Cathedral demonstrates bold modernist architecture accommodating 20,000 worshipers.

The afternoon brings us to legendary beaches functioning as the city's living room, where social hierarchies dissolve in democratic pleasure of sun, sand, and sea.

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Leisure Time & Copacabana Beach

After yesterday's intensity, we embrace Rio's most essential activity—relaxation, Carioca-style. Our morning stroll along 4.5-kilometer Copacabana Beach introduces us to daily life rhythms in this beach-obsessed metropolis. Here we practice Portuguese with simple exchanges: "Tudo bem?" (Everything okay?) "Tudo bom!" (Everything's great!)—phrases capturing the Carioca philosophy of finding joy in simple moments and human connection. The beach serves as Rio's great social equalizer.

Copacabana's famous mosaic sidewalks by Roberto Burle Marx create flowing patterns mirroring ocean waves. The beachfront buzzes with activity: coconut vendors with practiced machete strokes, fitness enthusiasts maintaining beach bodies, and families gathering under colorful umbrellas.

Free time allows independent exploration of neighborhoods revealing Rio's diverse personality. Santa Teresa maintains bohemian atmosphere with narrow cobblestone streets and spectacular bay views. Ipanema offers sophisticated shopping and sidewalk cafés perfecting people-watching.

Alternatively, discover Rio's Botanical Gardens displaying more than 6,500 tropical plant species, including the famous imperial palm avenue planted in 1842. Rio's infectious energy and stunning scenery create lasting experiences.

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Rio de Janeiro: City Touring, Sugarloaf Mountain & Free Time

Today we complete our Rio experience with two adventures revealing different city aspects.

Our Sugar Loaf journey requires two cable car rides offering increasingly spectacular perspectives. The first carries us to Urca Hill for close-up Guanabara Bay views and distant Christ statue. The second ascent reaches Sugar Loaf's 400-meter summit where Rio spreads in full glory.
From this perch, we understand why Cariocas consider their city geographically blessed. Copacabana Beach glistens with famous wave-pattern sidewalks, Corcovado dominates the western horizon, while Ipanema and Leblon curve toward distant mountains.

Our afternoon explores Santa Teresa, a hilltop neighborhood preserving Rio's bohemian soul. This artists' quarter occupies slopes with colonial houses that survived development pressure. Today these lanes attract painters, musicians, and writers appreciating village-like atmosphere within the metropolis.

We ride the historic Santa Teresa Tram, beloved since 1877, clattering across the Carioca Aqueduct built in the mid-18th century. This engineering marvel later found new purpose as tram viaduct, creating one of Rio's most photographed landmarks.

Free time allows personal exploration—perhaps strolling beachside avenues, browsing markets, or sitting at sidewalk cafés watching eternal Carioca life while sipping coconut water or strong Brazilian coffee.

Overnight in Rio de Janeiro.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Rio de Janeiro - Fly to Iguacu Falls

This morning's flight transports us from Rio's beaches to one of nature's most overwhelming spectacles—Iguaçu Falls, unquestionably among the world's most spectacular waterfalls. The surrounding subtropical rainforest supports over 2,000 plant species and provides habitat for tapirs, giant anteaters, howler monkeys, and elusive jaguars.

The falls result from Rio Iguaçu's dramatic journey from its source near Curitiba. Beginning at 1,300 meters altitude, the river snakes westward for 1,200 kilometers before reaching this geological fault line. About 15 kilometers before joining the Paraná River, the Iguaçu broadens across basalt plateau, then plunges over 80-meter cliffs in 275 interlinking cataracts extending nearly three kilometers.

During the Jurassic Period, massive volcanic activity covered this region with basalt layers. As lava cooled, fractures filled with softer sediments. The persistent river exploited these weaknesses, gradually cutting deeper gorges. The process continues—these falls migrate upstream at three centimeters yearly as erosion works its magic.

Upon arrival, numerous walkways provide excellent vantage points. At the path's end, a catwalk extends toward the falls, bringing us close enough to feel thunderous power and cooling spray.

Overnight at Iguacu Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 14 Iguacu Falls

Today offers optional exploration of Iguazú Falls from Argentina—a different perspective on this UNESCO World Heritage site voted among the Seven Natural Wonders.* While yesterday provided panoramic overviews, Argentina's trails offer intimate encounters with individual cataracts and the famous Devil's Throat.

The Argentine experience includes upper and lower circuits through Iguazú National Park. The upper path provides stunning panoramic views appreciating the falls' full extent. The lower circuit leads to the base where spray creates permanent rainbows and thunderous roar drowns out voices. Here we understand the Guaraní name "Iguazu"—meaning "big water." For those choosing this excursion, the day offers unforgettable experiences walking among Earth's most imposing natural attractions. The trail system carved through dense Atlantic Forest provides multiple perspectives impossible from Brazil alone.

The combined parks protect 67,620 hectares of Atlantic Forest—one of the world's most threatened ecosystems. This rare subtropical rainforest once covered much of eastern South America. Within this protected area, over 2,000 plant species create habitat for 80 mammal species, 450 bird species, making Iguaçu both geological wonder and biological treasure.
Note: Argentine side visit is optional with additional cost.

* NOTE: This excursion is an OPTIONAL expense; please contact us for the current cost. Please also note that today your Tour Leader may be continuing to the Argentina side with passengers booked on a longer tour option. If this is the case, your day will be unaccompanied and your evening meals will be included at your hotel. Your airport transfer and departure will be managed by our local representative.

Overnight at Iguacu Falls.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 15 Departure

Our Brazilian adventure concludes with departure from Foz do Iguaçu Airport, carrying memories of a country encompassing nearly half of South America's territory and virtually all its natural wonders. From the Amazon's immensity to the Pantanal's wildlife spectacle, from Brasília's modernist ambitions to Rio's infectious joie de vivre, from Iguaçu's thundering waters to countless moments of human connection, Brazil has revealed itself as a land where nature and culture exist in constant, creative tension.

BOA VIAGEM! (Good Journey!)

Included Meal(s): Breakfast