

Brazil Pantanal: Jaguars! & More ... With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures



July 15 – 24, 2017

With Atlantic Forest Extension

July 11 – 15 &

Maned Wolf Caraça Extension

July 24 – 28

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Naturalist Journeys, LLC



Brazil's Pantanal: A place of superlatives. Home to the world's largest fresh-water wetlands, the Pantanal is ten-times the size of the Everglades, draining into a single channel: the Paraguay River. We venture deep into this world-class wildlife hotspot on a long road that bisects the Transpantaneira wilderness, in search of an adventure that can't be missed.

In this famed region, we discover wildlife thriving in a mix of savanna, forest, and wetland habitats. Even a relaxed day can yield more than 100 species of birds and dozens of mammals — Capybara, the world's largest rodent, are everywhere!



Brazilian Tapir, Maned Wolf, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and yes, Jaguar (we saw four on our 2016 trip!), are five of many incredible mammals we seek, while Harpy Eagle, Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, and Helmeted Manakin top the list of impressive bird sightings. The rare Green Anaconda, the world's largest snake, may be a lucky find, while the small crocodilian Yacaré can be seen by the thousands. For many, it is the sheer number and variety of species that leaves the most

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lasting impression.

Charming (and working) cattle ranches provide our accommodations, each with its own impressive and distinctive wildlife community. Lazy afternoons invite photographers to wander between shade circles of the ranch trees for rare time with Hyacinth Macaw and other species.

Tour Highlights

- Try for South America's "Big Five" of mammals: Brazilian Tapir, Maned Wolf, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and Jaguar
- Witness the "Big Five" of birds: Harpy Eagle, Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, and Helmeted Manakin. Add Southern Screamer, Sunbittern, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and so many more!
- Explore the Transpantaneira wilderness road on safari-like excursions
- Find five species of kingfisher
- Enjoy local cuisine and hospitality at fazendas (working cattle ranches) at several stages along the road
- Boat the Cuiabá River for an excellent chance at a Jaguar sighting
- See water birds in mass congregation — like those of the Everglades, but magnified!
- Support the Pantanal Wildlife Center with your visit
- Find at least four species of monkeys and several hundred species of birds
- Scan for night birds under intense southern sky constellations
- Experience a magical ritual at Santuário do Caraça, as priests set out scraps for the rare Maned Wolf
- Mix nature with culture on a final day visit to Ouro Preto, a spectacular World Heritage Site city

Tour Summary

9-Night / 10-Day Wildlife & Birding Safari with host Greg Smith and expert guide Xavier Muñoz
\$4690* from São Paulo **Enjoy a \$100 discount if you book both the pre- and post-tour extensions!*
Arrival airport is Guarulhos International (GRU), departure airport for main tour is Marechal Rondon International Airport (CGB) in Cuiaba, departure airport for post-tour extension is Tancredo Neves International Airport (CNF) in Belo Horizontes

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Itinerary

Sat., July 15

Arrival to São Paulo, Brazil

Arrive today in São Paulo, Brazil, at Guarulhos International Airport (GRU). No activities are planned for today so you can rest up from your travels. The transfer to our hotel is included; our hotel is about twenty minutes away and we can organize an early check-in as an option for those that need it.

This evening we enjoy a welcome dinner — a chance to meet your guides and traveling companions, and learn more about our coming adventure. Those on our highly-recommended pre-trip to the Atlantic Forest will be returning to join you. We invite you to sample Brazil's national cocktail, the caipirinha, made with cachaça (sugarcane liquor), sugar, and lime. We predict this may be the first of many.

Accommodations at Hotel Matiz Guarulhos (L,D)

*Note: Most flights from the USA originate Friday, July 14 to meet this arrival date.

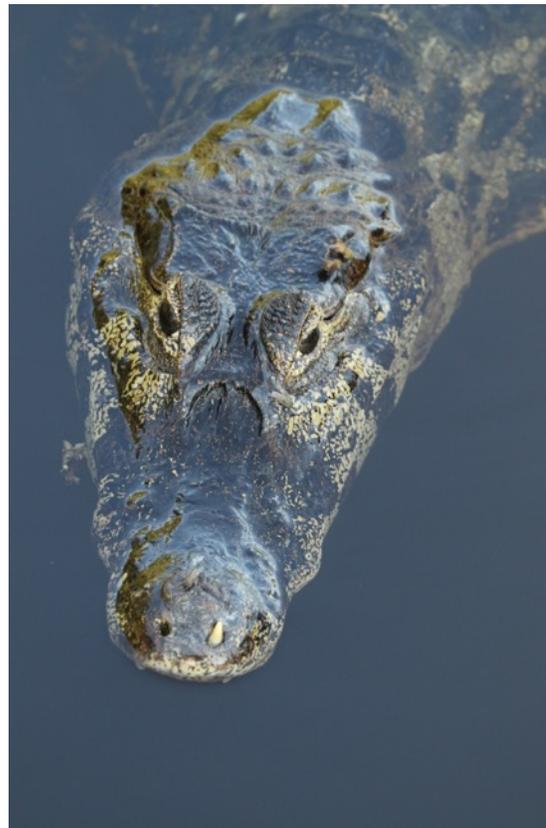
Sun., July 16 Flight to Cuiabá / Transpantaneira Adventure Begins!

After an early domestic flight to Cuiabá (about 2 hours), we begin our Pantanal adventure!

Driving south, we reach the famed Pantanal via a paved road to Poconé. En route we have lunch in a typical Churrasqueria, and enjoy simple Brazilian-style cuisine.

From here, we travel the dirt Transpantaneira Road, perhaps only rivaled by Tanzania's Serengeti road for spotting wildlife.

Our destination tonight is Pousada Piuval. Along the way, we might see Ringed Kingfisher, Red-crested Cardinal, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Toco Toucan, Jabiru, Limpkin, our first of many Capybaras, Yacaré Caiman, and more.



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Pousada Piuval is located just 10km from Poconé. This is the first lodge on the Transpantaneira. It is small, about twenty rooms, and part of a large (7,000ha), family-run ranch. After check in, we can stretch our legs on a short walk. There is a lovely pool if anyone wants to cool off with a swim.
Accommodations at Pousada Piuval (B,L,D)

Mon., July 17 Birding & Wildlife Spotting on the Transpantaneira / Drive to Pousada Alegre

After some morning wildlife viewing at the ranch, we depart down the Transpantaneira, keeping an eye out for Red Brocket Deer, Marsh Deer, Crab-eating Fox, Greater Rhea, Chestnut-bellied Guan, Bare-faced Curassow, and a mix of wading birds. Although only about an hour and a half to Pouso Alegre, a huge fazenda (cattle ranch) known for excellent wildlife, it always takes longer — so many wildlife stops! Bridges are hotspots from which we can view the presence of a huge food supply; Green Kingfisher, Great Egret, Cocoi Heron, both Bare-faced and Green Ibises, and White-lored Spinetail are just a few species we may see.

We pass through scattered palm woodlands, cerrado scrub, and seasonally-flooded grasslands reminiscent of the Everglades. Roadside ponds and canals are filled with waders: Roseate Spoonbill, Plumbeous Ibis, Limpkin, cormorants, herons, kingfishers, and their predator, Yacaré Caiman. July water conditions concentrate the fish for foraging waders like Jabiru and Maguari Stork.



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Pousada Alegre is lovely, with palms that attract several resident pairs of Hyacinth Macaw. The open savanna is edged by evergreen and semi-deciduous woodlands. Once settled, we enjoy trails and drives from the lodge for chances at rare Giant Armadillo, along with Black-tailed Marmoset, Black and Gold Howler Monkey, Southern Tamandua, and Giant Anteater. Among the snakes at Pousada Alegre is one of the greatest of them all, the Yellow Anaconda. The fazenda is also home to 13 parrot species, seven owls, 11 woodpeckers, and 16 hummingbirds. A highlight is the brilliant blue Hyacinth Macaw that roosts within earshot of the lodge — what a thrill!

At the ranch house, Brown Capuchins may join the various parrots and Monk and Yellow-chevroned Parakeets working over ripe mango trees. Long-tailed Ground Dove feed just outside the gate and Ferruginous Pygmy Owl call from the mango trees at dusk.

Relax at the ranch tonight and enjoy Brazilian barbecue. *Accommodations at Pousada Alegre (B,L,D)*



Tues., July 18 Full Day at Fazenda Pousada Alegre / Night Excursion / Optional Horseback Riding

Awaken early to a chorus of birds and Black-and-Gold Howler Monkeys roaring in the distance. Listen for Undulated Tinamou and witness the magic of a Pantanal sunrise. It is fun to watch the cowboys bring in horses for the day's work.

On an optional early morning walk, we scan for Southern Caracara, Guiara Cuckoo, Turquoise-fronted Parrot, Buff-bellied Hermit, White Woodpecker, Gray-crested Cacholote, Greater Thornbird, Cattle Tyrant, Vermilion Flycatcher, White-rumped Monjito, and Campo Oriole.



After breakfast, we venture out on an open safari truck, enjoying the property and amazing savanna. Immerse yourself in the local activities of cattle ranching and ecotourism while cowboys help us spot wildlife. Frisky calves play in the fields while wide-spreading jacaranda trees decorate tree islands with purple blossoms.

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Some may wish to alternately venture out by horseback, a great way to experience ranch life.

In the cool afternoon, after lunch and a siesta (developing a rhythm here ...) we look for Brown Capuchin Monkey and birds like Purplish Jay, Red-billed Scythebill, Toco Toucan, Bare-faced Curasow, Yellow-billed Cardinal, Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Nanday Parakeet, Blue-crowned Trogon, and three types of spintail: White-lored, Cinereous-breasted, and Chotoy. The day is full of action, with new things to see and admire.

After dinner we may venture out for the first of our evening spotlighting adventures, with hopes of seeing Crab-eating Fox, Crab-eating Raccoon, cats such as Puma or Ocelot, Giant Anteater, and Tapir. We should also spot several night birds including Paraque, and Band-tailed and Lesser Nightjars.

Accommodations at Pousada Alegre (B,L,D)

Wed., July 19

Drive to Porto Jofre / Jaguar Boat Excursion

We enjoy wildlife walks again this morning before moving on to the end of the road at Porto Jofre.

Along the way, working the road between ponds and scattered palm woodlands, we search for more birds and mammals that we have not seen yet. This lower part of the Pantanal has excellent wildlife, but many travelers do not reach this remote area. Here we try for Great-rufous Woodcreeper, Orange-



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backed Troupial, Spotted Rail, Pearly-vented Tody Tyrant, Great Antshrike, and others. We stay alert, perhaps finding a huge Yellow Anaconda, a troop of Coatimundi, or foraging Agouti.

We cover another 110km en route to Porto Jofre, a little town on the Cuiabá River. From here, we travel for the next two days in a lovely houseboat. Rooms are air-conditioned, with private bath. This “floating hotel” takes us to where the wildlife has been spotted.

We check into our cabins, have dinner, then have a briefing on safety and wildlife we hope to see. If skies are clear, star viewing is impressive — you can see the Southern Cross! *Accommodations in private cabins on a floating houseboat hotel! (B,L,D)*

Thurs., July 20

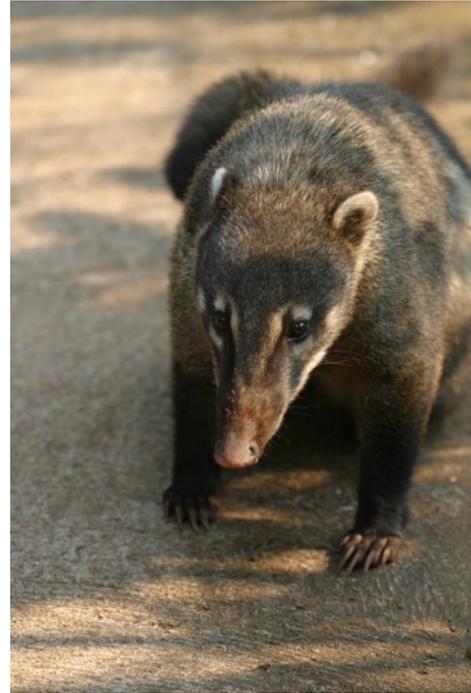
Full Day Looking for Jaguar, Jabiru & More / Jaguar Boat Excursion

Awake on the river to a host of sounds and the sight of macaws and more flying overhead. We use smaller speedboats to spend the day searching for the iconic Jaguar, known for their affinity to water. They are good swimmers, and often lay down along the shore after a swim. Chances are good that we see at least one individual, male or female — perhaps even together!

We lunch on board, take a short siesta (yes, love that AC ...) and try for a Jaguar again in the afternoon. Wildlife is plentiful in this remote part of the Pantanal, so once we accomplish the main task (a Jaguar, of course) we have time to admire other species like Giant Otter, Black Skimmer, Pied Plover, Southern Screamer, and Yacaré Caiman. We also visit little streams for skulkers like Pygmy Kingfisher and Sungrebe.

By late afternoon we return to our welcoming houseboat. We celebrate our sightings with caipirinhas before dinner! *Accommodations in private cabins on a floating houseboat hotel! (B,L,D)*

Fri., July 21 Wildlife & Birding on the Lower Transpantaneira



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After two days immersed in the wildest part of the Pantanal, we return north, retracing our route. We are not in a hurry though, and work in more detail some of the areas we previously traveled.

Perhaps we find a troop of Black-and-Gold Howler Monkeys, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Snail Kite, Rusty-backed Antwren, Common Tody Flycatcher, White-browed Blackbird, and others species as we drive to our next lodge, Pousada Vitoria. We watch for Cream-colored Woodpecker, Ashy-headed Greenlet, Short-crested Flycatcher, Mato Grosso Antbird, Great Antshrike, and Purple-throated Euphonia. Near water we find Whistling and Capped Herons, Pygmy and Ringed Kingfishers, Sunbittern, Black-collared and Great Black Hawks, and Rusty-backed Spinetail.

Once we arrive at Pantanal Wildlife Centre (Fazenda Santa Tereza), we settle in and check the feeders for brilliant-colored Troupials, Palm, Silver, and Sayaca Tanagers, and Red-crested Cardinal. After dinner we take a night safari looking for mammals, Rufous and Little Nightjars, and owls. We keep our fingers crossed for Great Potoo.

Accommodations at the Pantanal Wildlife Centre (Fazenda Santa Tereza), Rio Claro (B,L,D)

Sat., July 22 Pixaim River Area Wildlife & Birding

It's another morning for gazing at the sunrise while sipping good Brazilian coffee. Today we spend time close to the lodge and also take a small boat ride on the Rio Claro or Pixaim River to spot secretive species like Agami and Zig-Zag Heron. This is a good spot for Giant Otters and, with luck and some searching, a Tapir.

The landscapes are unique and make for great pictures. We look for Black-capped Donacobious, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Little Blue Heron, and other species like some very impressive iguanas. We then return for lunch, a siesta, and a walk in Gallery Forest habitat looking for special birds like Helmeted Manakin, Mato Grosso Antbird, Band-tailed Antbird, Black-hooded Tanager, Blue-crowned Trogon, and more.

Dinner finds us sampling authentic Grosso cuisine, including legendary piranha and local beef.

Accommodations at the Pantanal Wildlife Centre (Fazenda Santa Tereza), Rio Claro (B,L,D)

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Sun., July 23 Return to Cuiabá / Observation Tower

We have a last morning to enjoy the Pantanal and visit one of the local observation towers for close views of Jabiru nests, perhaps the most iconic bird of the Pantanal. Monk Parakeet attend these nests, and here we learn more about their symbiotic relationship.

We make our way back to Cuiabá; the paved road is perhaps a welcome sight as we bid adieu to the Pantanal. Our plan is to have a final dinner and overnight in Cuiabá so those with international flights can go out the following day at a time convenient to match up to that flight out. Those on the extension may overnight in Cuiabá or in Belo Horizonte, making the flight in the late-afternoon, depending on that flight schedule.

Accommodations at the Slaviero Hotel, Cuiabá or equivalent in Belo Horizonte for those on the extension. (B,L,D)

Mon., July 24

Main Tour Departures / Maned Wolf Extension

Those leaving today take flights from Cuiabá to make International flights from São Paulo.

Pre-Tour Atlantic Forest Extension



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One of the most beautiful birding sites in the Atlantic Forest is Itatiaia National Park, located just 250 kilometers from São Paulo and is home to one of the largest altitudinal differences of any birding site in Brazil, ranging from humid Atlantic Forest at 300 meters, up to the “campos de altitude” at 2,800 meters.

Itatiaia was Brazil’s first national park and shelters an incredible variety of birds, including Black Hawk-eagle, Dusky-legged Guan, Slaty-breasted Wood-Rail, Giant Snipe, White-throated Hummingbird, Brazilian Ruby, Frilled Coquette, Black-breasted Plover-Crest, Saffron Toucanet, Yellow-fronted and Robust Woodpeckers, Wing-banded Hornero, White-browed Foliage-gleaner, Itatiaia Thistletail, Speckle-breasted Antpitta, Giant and Large-tailed Antshrikes, White-bibbed and Rufous-tailed Antbirds, Fork-tailed Pygmy-tyrant, Southern Antpipit, Velvety Black-tyrant, Pin-tailed Manakin, Eastern Slaty Thrush, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Black-and-Gold Cotinga, Brassy-breasted and Gilt-edged Tanagers, and Sharpbill.



Tues., July 11 Arrival in São Paulo

You arrive today in São Paulo for our Atlantic Forest pre-tour extension. After gathering your bags and going through customs we drive to our hotel to rest up from the long flight and get to know the others in the group.

Accommodations in São Paulo (D)

Wed., July 12 Trihla dos Tucanos / Itatiaia National Park

We depart our hotel this morning to drive to Trihla dos Tucanos, a lovely garden where we have the chance to admire a few Atlantic endemics like Red-necked Tanager, Saffron Toucanet, Green-headed Tanager, Sombre Hummingbird, and others. We visited last year and marveled at all we saw; the Saffron Toucanet was featured on our [2017 catalog cover](#). We enjoy our lunch here, and then if we can rip ourselves away mid-afternoon, we drive on another 2.5 hours to Itatiaia National Park where we enjoy dinner.

Accommodations at Hotel do Ype (B,L,D)

Thurs., July 13 & Fri., July 14 Itatiaia National Park

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We enjoy the next two days birding around the lodge and on the park's trails near the lodge. This is a combination of road birding, feeder time, and garden birding. There are an incredible number of birds here, with excellent birding near our hotels. We can hope to see Dusky-legged Guan, Red-breasted Toucan, Saffron Toucanet, Pallid Spinetail, Gray-capped Tyrannulet, and Swallow-tailed Cotinga. Hummingbird feeders near the hotels attract stunning Frilled Coquette and more.

There are a few trails that give us access into the park. The best is the Tres Picos Trail, which provides access to the forest interior where good birds are found. One possibility is the Slaty Bristlefront, a tapaculo that is always hard to see. Other good birds here include White-collared Foliage-gleaner, Black-billed Scythebill, White-bearded Antshrike, Rufous Gnateater, Fork-tailed Tody-Tyrant, Large-headed Flatbill, and Brown Tanager. The secretive Such's Antthrush is also found in the forest, but is difficult to see.

Accommodations at Hotel do Ype and Hotel Simon, respectively (B,L,D)

Sat., July 15 Itatiaia National Park

This morning we enjoy an early breakfast, then drive to the Agulhas Negras road into the highlands on the far side of the park. This road gives us access to higher elevation habitat where some specialty birds are found. Notable among these are White-rumped Hawk, Rufous-thighed Hawk, Araucaria Tit-Spinetail, Itatiaia Thistletail, Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-tailed Antbird, Black-and-gold Cotinga, Black-capped Piprites, Brown-breasted Bamboo Tyrant, Shear-tailed Gray Tyrant, Diademed Tanager, Gray-throated Warbling-Finch, and Bay-chested Warbling-Finch.

After we finish birding here, we drive back to São Paulo where we meet up with our companions, overnight before the start of our main trip (and in-country flight) to the Pantanal!

Accommodations at Hotel Matiz Guarulhos (B,L,D)

Post-Tour Maned Wolf Extension

Mon., July 24

Extension Flight to Belo Horizonte / Minas Gerais

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We either make the flight from Cuiabá to Belo Horizonte the afternoon of the July 23, or the morning of the July 24, pending the airline schedule. Either way, this night is covered for you. Our destination for the extension is the Santuário do Caraça, an hour and a half east of Belo Horizonte, located in an 11,000+-hectare reserve that holds amazing flora and fauna, unique to the Atlantic Forest.

The sanctuary was founded in 1774 as a “House of Holidays” for pilgrims and visitors looking to convert and change their lives. It was reinvented as an inn in the 1970s and now has simple accommodations, as well as entry into the adjoining reserve. It is a fabulous landscape and hiking trails abound! It is also bird-rich, with a number of Atlantic Forest species mingling with those of the mountain location.



Our goal in part is to see the Maned Wolf, South America’s largest and one of its few rare wild canines. An after-dinner ritual is pure magic as a priest sets out a ceremonial plate of scraps for the wolves. All are silent in anticipation as one of these beautiful creatures quietly grabs a quick meal, then retreats into the night.

Accommodations at the Caraça Sanctuary (B,L,D)

Tues., July 25

Full Day at Santuário Caraça / Atlantic Forest Birding & Maned Wolf

This morning we venture out in search of new birds: Velvety Black Tyrant, Swallow-tailed Cotinga, White-bellied Warbler, Brassy-breasted Tanager, and others. This is a very different habitat to explore and our guide shares information about the local geology and plant life.

This evening is reserved for time with the Maned Wolf again, a very special creature!

Accommodations at the Caraça Sanctuary (B,L,D)



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Wed., July 26

Full Day at Santuário Caraça / Savanna Species & Maned Wolf

We spend the day exploring Parque Natural do Caraça, where the cerrado (savanna) transitions into Mata Atlântica (Atlantic rain forest). Isolated from the rest of the world by a mountain ridge, the former monastery is nestled in a bowl-shaped valley, with side creeks forming waterfalls and natural swimming holes; the hillsides are lined with hiking trails. It's easy to see why people first came here seeking change and renewal. We find both new species and a special landscape.

The evening provides you a final opportunity to watch for the Maned Wolf before we enjoy our farewell party.

Accommodations at the Caraça Sanctuary (B,L,D)

Thurs., July 27

Ouro Preto World Heritage Site City Visit / Belo Horizonte

Ouro Preto, meaning "Black Gold," was the hub for Brazil's 18th Century gold rush. But as the gold dwindled, so did Ouro Preto's population. Because of the town's isolated location, the economy stayed stagnant, which in turn kept the original architecture well-preserved.

We arrive and follow the city's original winding road, surrounded by stunning Baroque architecture. The symbolic center of a Brazilian independence movement in the late 1700s, the city was home to many exceptional Baroque artists and architects including Aleijadinho, best known for his Church of São Francisco of Assisi in town. We spend the day meandering in this lovely town, enjoy the evening there.

Accommodations at Hotel Confins in Belo Horizonte (B,L,D)

Fri., July 28

Flight from Belo Horizonte / Connect to International Flights

Today we depart for the Belo Horizonte airport, from which you can connect to International flights, or even catch direct flights from here back to the USA. Please plan these for Noon onwards. Most flights for the USA depart from São Paulo in the evening, arriving back in the USA on Saturday, July 29. If you need to overnight in either Belo Horizonte or São Paulo to make your flight schedule work, we can make arrangements for you (additional cost)

(B, then meals on flights)

Cost of the Journey

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. Offset your carbon footprint on one of the many online programs. Show us the receipt and we'll take 50% — up to \$50.00 — of your carbon offset fee off your final payment!

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Cost of the Journey

The cost of the 10-day main tour is \$4690 per person, double occupancy, and \$5090 single occupancy. Tour price includes 9 nights' accommodations, all meals as noted in the itinerary, airport transfers, land and boat transportation during the journey, professional guide services, park and other entrance fees, and miscellaneous program expenses. Tour cost does not include airfare to São Paulo and from Cuiaba or your choice of departure airport if you are on the post-tour extension, personal expenses such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar, and gratuities for luggage handling or other services.

Cost of the pre-tour Atlantic Forest extension is \$1095 per person based on double occupancy, and \$1215 single occupancy. Cost of the post-tour Maned Wolf extension is \$1225 per person based on double occupancy, \$1390 single occupancy.

**Note! If you choose to join us on both the pre-tour and post-tour extensions, we would be happy to offer you a \$100 discount per person.*

Travel Information

Airport is Guarulhos International (GRU). For the main tour, plan to arrive at a time convenient for you on July 15. Please plan departures on July 24 that will work with a flight out from Cuiaba — if you must leave early we can look at flying you out the night before. Best if this flight can be in the afternoon or evening to make for a low-stress end to your trip. If you plan to participate on the pre-tour Atlantic forest extension, plan to arrive at a time convenient for you on July 11. On July 28, if you are on the post-extension, you can depart after Noon from Belo Horizontes.

Photo Credits

Jaguar, Xavier Muñoz (XM), Hyacinth Macaws with Chick, XM; Capybara Family, Peg Abbott (PA); Jaguar, PA; Rufous Horneo, PA; Plumbeous Ibis, XM; Yacare Caiman, XM; Storks, Naturalist Journeys Stock (NJS); Giant Anteater, NJS; Monk Parakeets, NJS; Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Mike Boyce; Southern Caracaras, NJS; Pantanal Horseback Ride, NJS; Jaguar, PA; Giant Otter, Bud Ferguson; Coati, NJS; Riverboat, NJS; Macaws in Flight, NJS; Capped Heron, PA; Snail Kite, PA; Pantanal Horses, NJS; Green-headed Tanager, PA; Saffron Toucanet, PA; Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Tom Dove; Hyacinth Macaws, Mark Wetzel; Maned Wolf, XM; Spot-billed Toucanet, PA; Ouro Preto, Wikipedia; Pantanal Storks and Egrets, NJS.



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