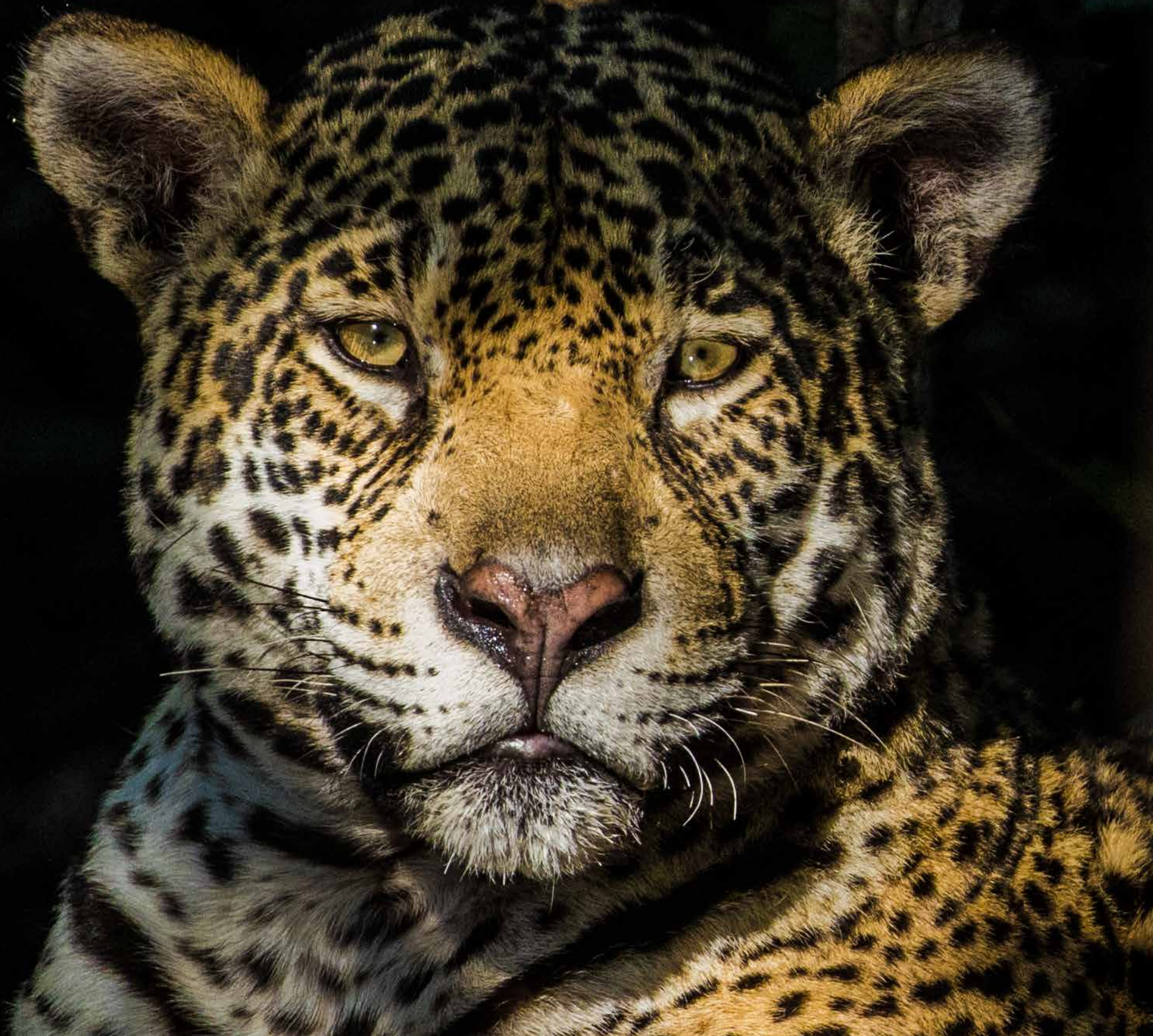


NEOTROPICAL[®]

NATURE & BIRDING TRIPS



**BRAZIL'S PANTANAL
BIRDS, MAMMALS AND MORE...**

SAMPLE ITINERARY 11D/10N



PANTANAL BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

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 are everywhere! Brazilian Tapir, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and yes, Jaguar (we saw many on our past trips!), are five of many incredible mammals we seek, while Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, Red Legged Seriema, and Helmeted Manakin top the list of impressive bird sightings. Rare Green Anaconda, the world's largest snake, may be a lucky find, while the small crocodylian Yacaré can be seen by hundreds. For many, it is the sheer number and variety of species that leaves the most lasting impression.

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





TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Try for South America's "Big Five": Brazilian Tapir, Capybara, Giant Anteater, Giant Otter, and Jaguar.
- Witness the "Big Five" of birds: Red Legged Seriema, Greater Rhea, Hyacinth Macaw, Toco Toucan, and Helmeted Manakin. Add Southern Screamer, Sunbittern, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and so many more!
- Explore both sides of the Transpantaneira wilderness — by boat and 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 for Jaguar sighting.
- See water birds in mass congregation — like those on the Everglades, but magnified!
- Find at least three species of monkeys and several hundred species of birds.
- Scan for night birds under intense southern sky constellations; spotlight for mammals, too!
- Enjoy optional fishing at two locations (additional cost for local boat and guide).

TOUR SUMMARY

11-Day / 10 Nights Wildlife & Birding Safari with Santiago Salazar or Neotropical Nature & Birding Trips guide from Brazil. Arrival Airport is Guarulhos International (GRU), Departure Airport is Marechal Rondon International Airport (CGB) in Cuiabá.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival to São Paulo, Brazil

Arrive in São Paulo, Brazil, at Guarulhos International Airport (GRU). No activities are planned for this day so you can rest up from your travels. The transfer to your hotel is included; your hotel is about twenty minutes away and we can organize an early check-in as an option for those that need it (Usually rooms can be available by noon; getting into a room earlier than that requires additional charges. Remember, you have at least 1.5 hours to get luggage and clear immigration and customs; there is a restaurant and public areas at the airport where you can relax if you don't want to pay an early room fee.).

This evening you'll enjoy a welcome dinner the chance to meet your guide 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 this tour. 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 (D,B)





Day 2:

Early Flight to Campo Grande Airport | Explore the South Side of the Pantanal at Mato Grosso do Sul

Today you'll take a morning flight to Campo Grande (1h50 min). From there you'll drive to Aguapé Lodge (around three and a half hours drivetime to cover 195 km aproximately). You'll stop in Aquidauana for lunch in a typical Churrasqueria, and enjoy simple Brazilian-style cuisine. Later, continue to the lodge with stops for mammals and birding on the way there.

Stunning birds that might show up in the way are Hyacinth Macaw, Blue-fronted Parrot, Nanday Parakeet, Toco Toucan, Lineated and White Woodpeckers, Narrow-Billed Woodcreeper, Greater Thornbird, Giant Cowbird, Crested Oropendola, Purplish and Plush-crested Jays, Red-crested Cardinal, and many others.

You then gather with friends for dinner and for those that wish, the daily checklist.

Accommodations at Aguapé Lodge (B,L,D)

PANTANAL BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

Day 3 & 4: Pantanal Safari from Aguapé Lodge

Aguapé offers an excellent environment for birdwatching; a place where over 300 bird species have been recorded and is known as the gateway to the Pantanal. You'll have two full days to explore from the lodge, plus the pathway coming and going.

Interesting bird species are Southern Screamer, Blaze-winged Parakeet, Gilded Hummingbird, Toco Toucan, Pale-crested and White-fronted Woodpecker, Red-billed Scythebill, Campo Flickers, and the Scarlet-headed Blackbird.

Both days, after an early breakfast, you embark on a safari drive with good chances to see the Undulated Tinamou, Capped Heron, Jabiru, Savanna Hawk, Rufescent Tiger Heron, Buff-necked and Plumbeous Ibises, Roseate Spoonbill, Hyacinth and Yellow-collared Macaw, Red-billed Scythebill, Orange-backed Troupial, and many others.

After lunch back at the lodge, you can enjoy a siesta during the warmest part of the day, and then take another safari drive until the end of the day, returning in the dark with chances to see mammals like the Crab-eating Fox, South American Coati, Capybara, Marsh Deer, Southern Tamandua and night birds such as Common and Great Potoo, Spectacled and Striped Owl, Pauraque and Scissor-tailed Nightjar.

We find this area to be the best place to spot Giant Anteater in the whole region and we make the effort to find them, so keep your fingers crossed!

Each day dinner will be served upon return, and for those that wish, the checklist.

Accommodations at Aguapé Lodge (B,L,D, both days)



PANTANAL BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

Day 5: Buraco das Araras to Campo Grande

After an early breakfast at Aguapé, you'll drive to an amazing destination. Buraco das Araras is a huge sandstone crater, a geological formation resulting from the collapse of boulders creating this enormous cavity of about 500 m in circumference and 100 m deep located in the middle of the cerrado in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. It is home to a wide variety of birds, but especially for the colorful Red-and-Green Macaws, hence the name of the cave. Here you'll have the best opportunities to photograph dozens of this colorful birds at very close range since this species use the crevices and ledges as nesting and roosting sites. After lunch you'll drive back to Campo Grande for a deserved rest.

Accommodations in Campo Grande (B,L,D)



Day 6: Early flight Campo Grande to Cuiaba | Northern Transpantaneira Pousada Piuval

After an early domestic flight to Cuiabá you begin the second (northern) half of your Pantanal adventure!

From here, you travel the famous Transpantaneira Road, perhaps only rivaled by Tanzania's Serengeti road in wildlife spotting.

Your destination today is Pousada Piuval. Along the way, you might see Ringed Kingfisher, Red-crested Cardinal, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Toco Toucan, Jabiru, Limpkin, Capybaras (of course!), Yacaré Caiman, and more.

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-ran ranch. After check in, you can stretch your legs in a short walk. There is a lovely pool if anyone wants to cool off with a swim. Accommodations at Pousada Piuval (B,L,D)

PANTANAL BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

Day 7: Birding & Wildlife Spotting on the Transpantaneira | Drive to Porto Jofre | Jaguar Boat Excursion

After some morning wildlife viewing at Fazenda Piuval, you'll 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. Bridges are hotspots from which you can take advantage of 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 you may see.

You 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. At Porto Jofre, the "end of the road," palms attract several resident pairs of Hyacinth Macaw. From this little town on the Cuiabá River, you board a small boat to reach our lodgings — two nights on a lovely houseboat. Rooms are air-conditioned, with private bath. This "floating hotel" allows you to stay close to where the wildlife has been spotted; you explore from the houseboat each day on smaller boats.

Check into your boat cabins, enjoy dinner, and 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!

Optional fishing is available while you are on the houseboat portion of the tour.

Accommodations in private cabins on a floating houseboat hotel! (B,L,D)



PANTANAL BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

Day 8: Full Day Looking for Jaguar, Jabiru & More

Awake on the river to a host of sounds and the sight of macaws and more flying overhead. You'll 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 for encountering at least one individual, male or female or perhaps even together!

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

By late afternoon you'll return to the welcoming houseboat to celebrate your sightings with caipirinhas before dinner!

Accommodations in private cabins on a floating houseboat hotel! (B,L,D)

Day 9: Wildlife & Birding on the Lower Transpantaneira

After two days immersed in the wildest part of the Pantanal, you return north, retracing your route. There is no hurry to get there though, so you can cover some of the areas you previously traveled in more detail.

Perhaps you'll 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 you drive to your next lodge. Watch for Cream-colored Woodpecker, Ashy-headed Greenlet, Short-crested Flycatcher, Mato Grosso Antbird, Great Antshrike, and Purple-throated Euphonia. Near water you find Whistling and Capped Herons, Pygmy and Ringed Kingfishers, Sunbittern, Black-collared and Great Black Hawks, and Rusty-backed Spinetail.

Once you arrive at the Mato Grosso Hotel on the Rio Pixiam, you settle in and check the feeders for brilliant-colored troupials, Palm, and Sayaca Tanagers, and Red-crested Cardinal. At this point in your journey you'll have seen numerous mammals and birds, so you can focus our efforts on finding anything missing from your list that you hope to see.

Accommodations at the Mato Grosso Hotel, Rio Pixiam (B,L,D)



PANTANAL BIRDS & MAMMALS AND MORE...

Day 10: Pixaim River Area Wildlife & Birding

It's another morning for gazing at the sunrise while sipping good Brazilian coffee. This morning, pending what you still need to see, you can take a safari drive, or a small boat ride on the 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.

In the afternoon you can enjoy the landscapes and more birds from an observation tower and walk through a trail in a stunning Gallery Forest looking for special birds like Helmeted Manakin, Mato Grosso Antbird, Band-tailed Antbird, Black-hooded Tanager, Blue-crowned Trogon, Rufous-tailed Jacamar and more.

Accommodations at the Mato Grosso Hotel, Pixium River (B,L,D)

Day 11: Wildlife Viewing | Return Drive to Cuiabá

After an early birding activity and breakfast, today you'll make our way back to Cuiabá. The paved road is perhaps a welcome sight as you bid adieu to the marvelous but often dusty Pantanal. Driving back to Cuiabá, the landscapes are iconic and make for great pictures. You'll also look for Black-capped Donacobious, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, Little Blue Heron, and other species along the way. The plan is to arrive in Cuiabá in time for connections to São Paulo for evening flights out. Plan on flights after 6:00PM. For those not finding a good match up, you can return to Guarulhos and overnight near the airport, or simply overnight at a hotel we regularly use in Cuiabá and start fresh the following day.

PRICE PER PERSON: \$ USD 4390 per person

Internal flights included: São Paulo (GRU) - Campo Grande - Cuiabá (CGB)

If needed we can arrange your flight from Cuiabá to São Paulo for USD \$ 120.00

Prices listed in double occupation room.

Single supplement \$620 USD



TRIP CONSIDERATIONS

PLEASE NOTE:

This is a sample itinerary subject to change due to weather conditions, safety, and particular interests of guests. Changes and additions are made in order to maximize your experience and wilderness enjoyment.

OVERVIEW:

Max group size: 8 + Tour leader

Length: 11 days

Starting city: São Paulo

Ending city: Cuiabá

Pace: Moderate

Physical difficulty: Moderate

Focus: Natural history, birding and photography

INCLUDED:

- Private service of a specialized birding & naturalist bilingual guide
- Private transportation
- Accommodation in double or triple occupation. Single room adds a fee
- All meals listed in the itinerary with soft drink or purified water
- Transfers In-Out
- All excursions and activities listed in itinerary
- Entrance fees to all the reserves and activities
- All accommodations listed in the itinerary
- Internal flights São Paulo - Campo Grande - Cuiabá
- Night safaris
- Fluvial transportation

NOT INCLUDED:

- International airfare
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Additional drinks
- Tips
- Any other item not specified

Contact information:

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CLIMATE: This tour takes place during the dry season. Temperatures fluctuate between 60° to 90°F (16° to 32°C), and it is usually very sunny. However, cold fronts are not unusual in the Pantanal this time of year, and the temperature can sometimes drop to around 45°F (7°C) in the early morning. Since part of the time in the Pantanal is spent on fast boats, it is very important to bring cold weather gear. There might be a bit of rain, but it is usually very little, and sometimes none at all.

TIME ZONE: UTC/GMT -3 hours

VISA: Starting on June 17, 2019, tourists from the US, Canada, Australia, and Japan will no longer need visas to visit Brazil. (Citizens of the UK, EU, South Africa, New Zealand, and various other countries were already exempt from tourist visa requirements.)

CUSTOMIZED TOUR

We can easily set up a custom tour to virtually anywhere you can imagine. With a custom tour, you can travel with friends and family on dates that are convenient for your schedule, and the tour will be ran at the pace and difficulty you desire.

We may also be able to arrange a custom extension to the Atlantic Forest or modification of this trip for you upon request.

PLEASE ASK FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND DESTINATIONS.

