



**BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA: THE PANTANAL, CERRADO, AND
IGUAZU FALLS**

20 SEPTEMBER – 05 OCTOBER 2024

17 SEPTEMBER – 02 OCTOBER 2025



Jaguar is a top target of this fantastic tour. (Photo: Ricardo Boschetti)

This tour will surely rank as one of your neotropical wildlife trips of a lifetime! Our Brazil and Argentina itinerary will allow you to explore three fascinating ecosystems in these huge and highly diverse countries: the Pantanal, Cerrado and the Atlantic Forest in the impressive Iguazu Falls. It is important to note that while we are in the Pantanal, we will spend a full morning and afternoon on a boat safari along the Cuiabá River concentrating on finding the world's third-largest feline, the elusive and charismatic **Jaguar**!

We will embark on our birding and mammal adventure by exploring the Pantanal, a vast, seasonally flooded wetland, renowned for its incredible concentrations of birds at the end of the dry season. We schedule this tour during this season, when the fish trapped in the shrinking pools of water attract hordes of herons, egrets, storks, and other wetland species. The star of these huge concentrations is the massive **Jabiru**, towering over a diverse collection of shorter South American waterbirds, such as **Sunbittern**, **Plumbeous**, **Bare-faced**, **Green**, and **Buff-necked Ibises**, **Grey-cowled Wood Rail** and **Southern Screamer**. There is normally a large diversity of raptors around too, with **Snail Kite**, **Black-collared**, **Savannah** and **Crane Hawks** regularly encountered. Our river trips provide the opportunity to look for species such as **Capped Heron**, **Sungrebe**, the striking **Agami Heron**, **Anhinga** and a plethora of kingfishers including **Green**, **Amazon**, **Ringed**, **American Pygmy** and **Green-and-rufous**. Other target species include **Band-tailed Antbird** and, with some luck, the seldom-seen **Zigzag Heron**. These boat trips also provide the best chances to see Endangered (IUCN) **Giant (River) Otters**, the largest otter in the world and one of the 'Big Five' South American mammals. This is also the best place on the planet for seeing **Jaguar** and during the dry season sightings are almost guaranteed. This humongous cat shines brightly as a star of the show on this tour.



Hyacinth Macaws are always a fan-favorite in the Pantanal (photo Ricardo Boschetti)

The Pantanal is not only rich in water-associated avifauna; we will also bird its large grasslands, gallery river forests, marshes, and plains for species such as **Chotoy, Rusty-backed, and White-lored Spinetails, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Greater Thornbird, Masked Gnatcatcher, Flavescent Warbler**, the incredible **Helmeted Manakin, White and Pale-crested Woodpeckers** and **Mato Grosso Antbird**.

This region is simply a paradise for parrot-lovers, with standout species including the iconic and threatened **Hyacinth Macaw**, the largest flying species of parrot in the world and one of Brazil's great conservation success stories. Other parrot species likely to be seen in the Pantanal include the likes of **Golden-collared Macaw, Blue-crowned, Peach-fronted, White-eyed, Nanday, and Yellow-chevroned Parakeets, Orange-winged and Turquoise-fronted Amazons and Scaly-headed Parrot**.

In addition to birds, many mammal species call the Pantanal home. It is perhaps South America's greatest wildlife refuge and we should get daily sightings of **Capybara** (the largest rodent in the world), primates such as **Black-tailed Marmoset, Bearded Capuchin and Black-and-gold Howler Monkeys**. With luck, we might encounter **Marsh Deer, Crab-eating Raccoon, South American Coati, Yellow Armadillo, Lowland (Brazilian) Tapir** and **Giant Anteater**.

The Cerrado, a highly threatened mosaic of dry woodland, gallery forest, and grassland, is home to its own unique set of special birds, including **White-eared Puffbird, Collared Crescentchest, Chapada Flycatcher, Crested Black Tyrant, Coal-crested Finch, Red-shouldered Macaw and White-rumped Tanager**. We explore this fascinating biome via the scenic Chapada dos Guimarães National Park, a landscape studded with beautiful rock formations and adorned with cascading waterfalls. The gallery forest in Chapada dos Guimarães can provide species such as **Brown Jacamar, Saffron-billed Sparrow, Whooping Motmot, Pheasant Cuckoo** and the secretive **Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper**.

Surrounded by Atlantic Forest and bordering Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, Iguazú Falls is one of the great natural wonders of the world as the Iguazú River tumbles over the edge of the Parana Plateau. It is often considered the world's most spectacular waterfall. Ever since the Spaniards discovered these falls in the 16th century, they have not ceased to impress travelers from all over the world, and a visit here can be considered a once in a lifetime trip — one of the highlights of South America. The falls span over 1.6 miles (2.6 km) and are comprised of over 275 distinct falls, forming a breathtaking sight. Perhaps the most impressive is the U-shaped Devil's Throat which is 250 feet (82 meter) high, 450 feet (150 m) wide and 2,100 feet (700 m) long; this is the truly iconic waterfall of the park, immortalized in the iconic 1986 movie *The Mission*.

Even though the waterfalls are shared by Brazil and Argentina, we advise spending the bulk of the time on the Argentinian side, which is where we focus during this tour, using a super easy border crossing. The birding is best on this side with better trail facilities.

During this part of the tour, we will have adequate time to admire the waterfalls as well as to look for the area's special birds. Target species include the impressive **Great Dusky Swift**, which roost on the waterfall cliffs, **Red-rumped Cacique, Toco Toucan, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Blond-crested and Yellow-fronted Woodpeckers, Ochre-collared Piculet, Blue (Swallow-tailed) Manakin, Southern Antpipit, Eared Pygmy Tyrant, Chestnut-bellied Euphonia, Green-headed Tanager, Streak-capped Antwren, Surucua Trogon, Rufous-capped Motmot, Greenish Schiffornis, Rufous Gnateater, Dusky-tailed Antbird**, and the most-wanted **Black-fronted Piping Guan**.



*Piuval Lodge is a great place to see **Giant Anteater** (photo Ricardo Boschetti)*

Itinerary (16 days/15 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Cuiabá and transfer to the hotel

After your arrival at Marechal Rondón international airport (CGB) in Várzea Grande Cuiabá, you will be met by our staff and transferred to your comfortable hotel outside the airport.

Overnight: Hotel Amazon Aeroporto Cuiabá

Day 2. Transfer to Chapada dos Guimarães

We shall leave the hotel after breakfast to head towards the buffer zone of the Chapada dos Guimarães National Park. We will spend the whole morning looking for species such as **Red-and-green** and **Blue-winged Macaws**, **Peach-fronted Parakeet**, **Cliff**, **Boat-billed** and **Chapada Flycatchers**, **Toco Toucan**, **Burnished-buff Tanager**, **Chalk-browed Mockingbird**, **White-lined Tanager**, and even **Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl**

After an enjoyable lunch in town, we will drive towards our accommodation, Pousada do Parque Lodge. Although basic, the lodge has a lot of charm and is the only facility within the park. We will be thrilled with the birding opportunities this place offers, with species such as **Planalto Hermit**, **Swallow-tailed Hummingbird**, **Red Pileated Finch**, **Chopi Blackbird**, **Flavescent Warbler**, and a good number of woodpeckers such as **Campo Flicker**, **Pale-crested**, **Little**, **Yellow-tufted**, **Lineated**, and **Green-barred Woodpeckers**. The park also offers good numbers

of night birds such as **Nacunda Nighthawk**, **Common Potoo**, **Scissor-tailed**, **Parauque**, **Little** and **Rufous Nightjars**.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque

Day 3. Birding Agua Fria, Vale Benção and Pousada do Parque

Today we will bird the open fragments of the Cerrado outside of the park consisting of grasslands and cacti habitat as they offer chances for several new species. We will spend the first few hours of the morning looking for targets such as **White-rumped** and **White-banded Tanagers**, **Rusty-backed** and **Large-billed Antwrens**, **Collared Crescentchest**, **Pheasant Cuckoo**, **Amazonian Motmot**, **Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper**, **Brown Jacamar**, **White-eared Puffbird**, **Lettered Aracari**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, and **Black-fronted Nunbird**. In the afternoon we would enjoy birding the lodge grounds looking for any species we may have missed on the previous day.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque



Greater Rhea is commonly seen in the Pantanal and the Cerrado.

Day 4. Birding Pousada do Parque and visit Veú de Noiva (bridal veil waterfalls)

We shall explore the lodge grounds and the areas outside looking for further species such as **Red-winged Tinamou**, **Greater Rhea**, **Burrowing Owl**, **Southern Lapwing** perhaps our first **Red-legged Seriema**, **Masked Tityra**, **Rufous Casiornis**, **Large Elaenia**, **Picazuro** and **Scaled Pigeons**, **Swallow Tanager**, **Purplish Jay**, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**, **Band-tailed Manakin**, and the endemic **Crested Black-Tyrant**

From the waterfalls stakeout it is possible to see **Red-and-green Macaws**, **White-eyed Parakeets**, **White-collared Swifts**, and with luck **Blue-winged Macaw** and **Great Dusky Swift**. After this, we will return to the lodge and spend our last evening there. The park is home to the seldom seen **Maned Wolf**, one of the rarest mammals in South America. Even though we consider our expectations very low, we have been lucky in the past with few sightings in the park. Today it is more likely to see the **Hoary Fox**.

Overnight: Pousada do Parque

Day 5. Transfer to Pantanal

We shall have one last morning in the Chapada area where we would try for the **Helmeted Manakin** plus other birds we might have missed on previous days. Later we shall start our drive towards Pocone in the Pantanal. During the drive is possible to find species such as **Greater Rhea**, **Red-legged Seriema**, **Crested Caracara**, **Toco Toucan**, **Cattle Tyrant**, and **White-tailed Hawk**.



Sunbittern is on of the Neotropics most wanted birds (photo Ricardo Boschetti)

We shall arrive to Piuval Lodge where we will be greeted with our first Pantanal species by the entrance such as **Southern Screamer**, **Plumbeous** and **Buff-necked Ibises**, **Black-bellied Whistling Duck**, **Whistling Heron**, **Guira Cuckoo**, **Limpkin**, **Jabiru**, **Cocoi Heron**, **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Crane Hawk**, and **Brown-chested Martin**, among many others. In the evening we shall switch into 4x4 vehicles to do our first night safari drive looking for some of the mammals which inhabit the Pantanal. We will have our first chances for **Lowland Tapir** (largest South

American mammal), **Crab-eating Fox** and with luck the **Giant Anteater**. After the excursion we will return to the lodge for some well deserved rest.

Overnight: Piuval Lodge

Day 6. Pousada Piuval Lodge

We shall spend the full day exploring Pousada Piuval. Our first activity will be a predawn search to look for the **Giant Anteater** if we haven't seen it yet. Later we will explore the expansive areas of the huge property to look for **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, **Greater Thornbird**, **Chaco Chachalaca**, **White-throated Piping-Guan**, **Bare-faced Curassow**, **Picui Ground-Dove**, **Grey-cowled Wood-Rail**, **Sunbittern**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Turquoise-fronted Amazon**, **Red-billed Scythebill**, **White-lored Spinetail**, **Orange-backed Troupial**, and **Greyish Baywing**.

The star of the day will be the **Hyacinth Macaw**, an icon of the Pantanal and one of the last strongholds for this species. The lodge area offers good chances for **Black-fronted Capuchin** and **Silvery Marmoset**.

We will have a break after lunch and spend the rest of the afternoon birding around the lodge. In the evening we will have a second 4x4 safari drive hoping to encounter more fascinating wildlife.

Overnight: Piuval Lodge



A feast for the eyes in the Pantanal (photo Ricardo Boschetti)

Day 7. Transfer to Hotel Mato Grosso and birding the Transpantainera

After a last try for the **Giant Anteater**, we will leave the lodge and head to the famous Transpantainera road. We shall find species such as **Black-collared**

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Hawk, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, Yellow-billed Cardinal, Golden-collared Macaw, Monk Parakeet, Amazon, Ringed and Green Kingfishers, and Yellow-chinned Spinetail.

Mato Grosso Hotel is not as comfortable as Piuval but is strategically located at the shores of the Pixaim waters where we will have our first boat trip hoping to find several species of birds including some classic aquatic species, but our main target is the **Zigzag Heron**, one of the rarest and poorly-known birds in the Neotropics. This place has one of the best chances to see this elusive heron. We also have opportunities for **Agami Heron, American Pygmy-Kingfisher, Anhinga, Band-tailed and Rusty-backed Antbirds, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, and Red-crested Cardinal**. We will have our first chance for the **Giant River Otters**. At night we may find a **Crab-eating Raccoon** around the lodge.

Overnight: Hotel Mato Grosso



*The elusive **Agami Heron** can be seen in the Pantanal (photo Ricardo Boschetti)*

Day 8. Birding Mato Grosso Hotel and transfer to Porto Joffre

Today we will have an early start to explore the lodge grasslands and gallery forest looking for species such as **Chestnut-vented Conebill, Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Grey-crested Cachalote, Long-tailed Ground-Dove, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Black-backed Water-Tyrant, Mato Grosso Antbird, Purplish Jay, Variable Oriole, Wattled Jacana, Snail Kite, and Marsh Deer**. After this, we will leave the lodge and drive along the road passing through several water ponds full of birds, **Yacare Caimans** and **Capybaras**.

We will arrive at Hotel Pantanal Norte in Porto Joffre and we will spend the afternoon birding along the Transpantainera where we will search for species such as **Least Bittern, Spotted Rail,**

Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Nanday Parakeet, Bare-faced Ibis, Maguari Stork, and with some luck, Undulated Tinamou.

Overnight: Hotel Pantanal Norte

Day 9. Jaguar Safari

Today we will explore the Cuiabá River in the morning looking for **Jaguars**. This is the best place to see Jaguars in the world and our chances are very high to see this mighty animal in the wild. On our boat we will sail different sectors of the river in search of Jaguars. We also have the best chance for **Giant River Otters** on this day. We shall return to the lodge for lunch and after a short break we will go in the river again for a second boat safari expedition focusing all our efforts on this prized target. Along the boat trip is possible to see **Collared and Pied Plovers, Large-billed, Common and Yellow-billed Terns, Black-bellied Whistling Duck and Paraguayan Howler Monkeys**

Overnight Hotel Pantanal Norte



Giant River Otter along the Cuiaba River (photo Ricardo Boschetti)

Day 10. Transfer to Pouso Alegre

We shall break the long drive from Porto Joffre to Cuiaba with a stay at the Pouso Alegre Lodge. This lodge is more rancho hacienda style is not as comfortable as previous lodges but is also located away from the road deep into the woodlands and a night drive offers good chances for mammals. **Lowland Tapirs** are commonly seen here but with a lot of luck we can score **Southern Tamandua, Six-banded Armadillo, Ocelot** and even the rare **Puma** which is very scarce in the

Pantanal and has been photographed here but our expectations should be low with these. The lodge is great for birds with feeders and some old dry deciduous forest which offers birds such as **Planalto Slaty-Antshrike** and **Black-bellied Antwren**.

Overnight: Pouso Alegre Lodge

Day 11. Transfer to Cuiabá airport and fly to Sao Paulo

We shall have our last morning birding around the lodge and along Transpantainera before finally heading back to the Cuiaba airport to connect with our flight to Sao Paulo. After arrival, we will transfer to our hotel for the evening.

Overnight: Sao Paulo, Hampton Inn

Day 12. Arrival at Foz do Iguazú Aiport and transfer to the Argentinean side

This morning we will head back to the Sao Paulo airport and catch a flight to Foz de Iguazú airport in the Brazilian state of Parana. From here we will immediately transfer to Puerto Iguazú on the Argentinean side in the state of Misiones. Crossing the border is relatively easy, usually taking half an hour by car; the two cities are separated by nine miles (15 km).



The awe-inspiring Iguazu Falls (photo Anne Koke)

We will check in to our comfortable hotel, spend the afternoon birding around the accommodation's grounds, and visit the hummingbird garden, *Jardin de Picaflors*, where we hope to see hummers such as **Black Jacobin**, **Black-throated Mango**, **Glittering-bellied** and **Versicolored Emeralds**, **Scale-throated** and **Planalto Hermits**,

White-throated and Swallow-tailed Hummingbirds, Violet-capped Woodnymph, and Gilded Sapphire. Other birds we might see today include **Ochre-collared Piculet, Chestnut-bellied and Violaceous Euphonia, Green-headed, Ruby-crowned, Sayaca, Black-goggled and Guira Tanagers, Chestnut-eared Aracari, and Plush-crested Jay.**

Overnight: Selva del Laurel Lodge

Day 13. Iguazú falls and Devil's Throat

Today we will have an early start to get inside Iguazú Park and visit the famous Devil's Throat, probably the most spectacular point of all the waterfalls. We shall have time to do the lower and upper trail circuits inside the Argentinean side of the park, allowing you to see the waterfalls from different angles, with abundant photo opportunities throughout. One of the main bird highlights of the day will be the impressive **Great Dusky Swifts** flying around and perching on the vertical cliff faces of the waterfalls.

Overnight: Selva Del Laurel Lodge



*The stunning **Green-headed Tanager** can be found around Iguazu (photo Ricardo Boschetti)*

Days 14-15. Exploring the Iguazú Park surroundings and the Urugua-í Provincial Park

We will spend two full days birding different sectors outside the Iguazú waterfalls. One site we'll visit is the Urugua-í Provincial Park, located 63 miles (100 km) from our hotel; here we will look for the Endangered **Black-fronted Piping Guan**. This bird can be tricky to find in other Atlantic forest areas but in southern Misiones state of Argentina, it is still a reliable bird to find. Other birds we hope to see include **Black-throated Trogon**,

Rufous-capped Motmot, Green-billed Toucan, Yellow-fronted, Blond-crested, Lineated and Robust Woodpeckers. Furthermore, we will also look for **Black-billed Scythebill, Tufted Antshrike, Rufous-winged Antwren, Short-tailed Antthrush,** several woodcreepers such as **White-throated, Olivaceous, Plain-winged and Planalto Woodcreepers.**

The list of targets during these two days is long and include a few skulkers such as **White-eyed, Ochre-breasted and Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners, White-throated Spadebill, Red-crowned Ant Tanager, Eared Pygmy Tyrant, Southern Antpipit, and Plain Antvireo.** Other more obvious (and as usual, beautiful) species that we will be on the lookout for include **Swallow Tanager, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Social and Three-striped Flycatchers, White-winged Swallow, Pale-breasted and White-necked Thrushes, Riverbank Warbler, Chestnut-vented Conebill, Magpie, Chestnut-headed Tanager and White-lined Tanagers, and Blue-naped Chlorophonia.**

Overnight: Selva del Laurel Lodge



Blue Manakin is another highlight from the Atlantic Forest (photo Ricardo Boschetti)

Day 16. Transfer to Brazilian side, visit the waterfalls and fly to Sao Paulo

Today we shall cross the Brazil border again and (if time permits) have a short visit to the Brazilian side of the waterfalls where we can get a different angle of the falls and some birds we might have missed on previous days. You will be transferred to the Foz de Iguazu airport to catch a flight back to Sao Paulo where you will connect with your international flight home.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides. In addition, we

sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 16 days/15 nights

Limit: 6 - 8

Dates: 20 September – 05 October 2024
17 September – 02 October 2025

Start: Foz do Iguazu (2024)
Cuiabá (2025)

End: Cuiabá (2024)
Sao Paulo (2025)

Prices (includes some domestic flights): US\$9,223 per person sharing (2024)
US\$10,350 per person sharing (2025)

Single supplements: US\$840 (2024)
US\$990 (2025)

Price includes:

Meals
Accommodation
Transport
Guiding fees
Domestic flights within the tour

Price excludes:

Flights to the start and end point of the tour
Personal insurance
Alcoholic beverages
Gratuities
Laundry service
Personal expenses such as gifts