

Trogon Journey

The best of Brazil

Brazil and Buenos Aires

Introduction

Our Trogon Journey explores the extraordinary vivacity and variety of Latin America's largest country – Brazil. From the African drumbeats of Salvador in the northeast, to the raw power of the mighty Iguassú Falls in the south, we travel through a tropical melting pot of races and cultures, before finishing the tour in Argentina's cosmopolitan capital – Buenos Aires. Rio de Janeiro, with its exotic urban beach life, and the luscious Amazon jungle are both renowned for their beauty, but it is perhaps the exuberance of the people, music and incredible atmosphere that will make your holiday a revelation.

Trip Profile

Transport: five flights (longest seven hours), five road journeys (longest six hours), boat transport in Amazonia.

Accommodation: Comfortable, simple hotels (with private bathroom). Lodges in the Pantanal and in the Amazon are more basic and may have communal facilities.

Meals: Breakfast daily, full board in Pantanal and Amazon lodges.

Included Excursions: Sugar Loaf Mountain in Rio, full programme of excursions in Pantanal and Amazon, Iguassú Falls, walking tour of Buenos Aires.

Summary of nights : 21 days, 18 nights: Rio 2, Salvador 2, Lencois 3, Salvador 1, Manaus 1, Amazon Lodge 1, Manaus 1, Campo Grande 1, Pantanal 2, Iguassú 2, Buenos Aires 2.

Detailed itinerary

Day 1, Wed:

Fly from the UK to **Rio de Janeiro**, arriving the following morning.

Days 2-3, Thur- Fri:

Clients arriving on the group flight will be met at the airport in Rio by the tour leader. All other flights arriving the same day will have transfers provided by our local representatives. Nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and rugged forested mountains, Rio de Janeiro is a captivating and vibrant city. We have two days to explore. Our hotel is located in Copacabana – one of the most densely populated areas in the world, where the residents spend as much time as possible on the famous beach, honing their football and volleyball skills and topping up their tans.

Our trip to **Sugar Loaf Mountain** by cable car is perhaps best appreciated in the late afternoon when the breathtaking view of the city's lush mountains, inlets and white sand beaches is intensified in the late evening sun. A steep funicular railway through tropical Tijuca National Park, the largest urban forest in the world, makes an optional trip to **Corcovado Mountain** topped by its emblematic Christ the Redeemer statue.

Days 4-5, Sat-Sun:

Fly north to **Salvador**. The capital of Bahia encompasses a rich colonial past, city beaches and a strong African influence imported by the slaves brought in to work in the plantations. Vibrating to the sound of drumming bands and the whirling of capoeira dancers, this city's atmosphere is clearly dominated by music and religion. It has more churches than any other in Brazil, one for every day of the year, and has spawned a multitude of famous Brazilian authors, singers and composers. The picturesque district of Pelourinho, the old slave market, lies at the heart of Salvador. Recently renovated, its white houses with colourful doors and window frames are now being turned into shops, bars and restaurants.

Days 6-8, Mon-Wed:

Drive into the interior to **Lencois**. This picturesque little town lies within the Chapada Diamantina, a National Park with tabletop mountains, foaming waterfalls and crystalline streams. Diamond prospectors founded the settlement itself in the nineteenth century. Colourful colonial houses hark back to that time but the town's economy has long-since turned to coffee cultivation and tourism. There are optional hikes into the surrounding National Park, along narrow paths with magnificent views over swathes of unsullied forest, disturbed only by tinkling streams and boulder-strewn valleys. On the Wednesday evening we take an overnight bus back to Salvador.

Day 9, Thur:

Arrive in **Salvador** early in the morning. Rest of the day at leisure.

Day 10, Fri:

Fly via Brasilia to **Manaus** in Amazonia. These days Manaus is a bustling, lively place, its grand buildings the faded vestiges of its extraordinary history, during which it became one of the wealthiest cities on the continent. During the rubber boom of the late 1800s and early 1900s thousands of Europeans flocked through Manaus to the Amazon. Despite the horrendous hardships, many fortunes were made and many lost. Eiffel designed the opulent Opera house and market. Eventually an English botanist managed to smuggle some rubber seeds back to Kew, which led eventually to the large-scale cultivation of cheap rubber in Malaysia, and the end of the South American rubber boom. The market is also a fascinating place to visit, with the hustle and bustle of vendors selling brightly coloured exotic river fish. Watch out for natural health remedies and cures for all sorts of afflictions.

Day 11, Sat:

At Manaus the kilometre-wide river hosts the confluence of the treacle-dark waters of the Rio Negro and the creamier **Amazon**. We take a boat out to the “meeting of the waters” and then continue upstream, transferring to a motorised canoe when the tributary river becomes too small for our traditional Amazonian riverboat. Accommodation in the jungle is basic with dormitory style sleeping areas and shared facilities. Trips offered include piranha fishing, caiman spotting by night, monkey observation and short treks through the jungle, during which the complex world of the rainforest ecosystem is explained to us.

Day 12, Sun:

Return to **Manaus**.

Day 13, Mon:

Walking tour of the city including a visit to the Opera House. Fly to Campo Grande, the gateway to the wildlife haven of the Pantanal.

Days 14-15, Tues-Wed:

We continue by minibus into the **Pantanal**, a region of wetlands the size of France. This is one of the best places in South America to see wildlife. The Pantanal is like a modern Wild West, with vast uninhabited areas where gauchos drive herds of cattle across ranches the size of a British county. Without the dense vegetation of a rainforest to obscure the view, you are likely to enjoy sightings of a large variety of fauna such as flocks of giant storks, egrets, parakeets and the stunning rose-coloured spoonbill. Toucans, capybaras (at up to 45 kilos, the world's largest rodent), armadillos, anteaters and deer are frequently spotted, and on a couple of occasions our group have been lucky enough to spot wildcats and anacondas. The wildlife you will see depends on the season, temperature and just plain luck. We will be treated to boat trips, pick-up rides, river swims and fishing. Accommodation at the lodge is gratifyingly comfortable, with good facilities.

Days 16-17, Thur-Fri:

Fly to the **Iguassú Falls**. Situated where the borders of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay converge, the town of Foz do Iguacu is our base for two nights. The falls are two and a half kilometres wide and 60m high. The statistics however do not capture their sheer majesty. At the tumultuous Devil's Throat they are powerful and awe-inspiring, throwing columns of vapour high into the sky as thousands of gallons of water crash on to the rocks below. Elsewhere the streams ebb and flow through the rainforest, and we may be lucky enough to spot brightly coloured toucans in the foliage above. From the Brazilian side there is a broad panoramic view of the falls, whereas on the Argentine side a series of walkways takes us above, below and even behind them.

Days 18-19, Sat- Sun:

Fly south to **Buenos Aires**, an elegant cosmopolitan city where the history of European immigration is reflected in its superb architecture. On our walking tour we visit the traditional immigrants' enclave of La Boca, with its multicoloured buildings, and the bohemian district of San Telmo, where quaint old houses are interspersed with antique shops, tango bars and restaurants. The smart Recoleta district has a distinctly Parisian atmosphere, where elderly women with layers of make up and towering hairstyles sip their afternoon tea in the many ornate salons.

Day 20, Mon:

UK clients return, arriving **day 21, Tue.**

Included in the Journey cost:

- All land and domestic air transport.
- Services of Journey Latin America tour leader.
- Accommodation.
- The following excursions: Sugar Loaf Mountain, Rio, full programme of excursions in the Pantanal and the Amazon, Iguassú Falls, walking tour of Buenos Aires.
- Breakfast daily.

Where a local company organises an optional excursion it does so as a principal and not as an agent of Journey Latin America.

Not included in the Journey cost:

- Optional excursions.
- International flights
- Meals other than specified above.
- Tips.
- Airport taxes.

A budget of \$45 per day should be sufficient to cover your meals, drinks, airport tax and tips. If you plan to do all optional excursions you will need approximately \$250-300 extra.

Accommodation

We should emphasise that on our Journeys the standard of accommodation varies. We aim to keep the price competitive while assuring basic comforts. Hotels / hostels are comfortable and charming in some places but elsewhere they are purely functional. All hotels are clean and almost all will have a private bathroom with hot water. For those who prefer more luxurious comfort we would redirect you to the **Classic Tours** or **Bespoke** brochures.

Climate

In tropical Rio, December to March are the hottest and most humid months (up to 40°C); rain falls in the form of heavy tropical showers. From June to September temperatures are more moderate (23-30 °C), there is plenty of sunshine but cold fronts can usher in periods of up to several days of cloud and drizzle. Salvador has a tropical climate tempered by sea breezes. The Amazon is moderately hot all year around, humid and subjected to tropical downpours. The hot, rainy season in the Pantanal is December to March, when much of the wetlands is under water and many excursions made by boat. It can be cool there at night in June and July. Iguassú is also hot and humid at this time. In Buenos Aires, temperatures can be cool (5 to 15°C) between May and September with periods of both sunshine and rain. Spring (October/November) temperatures are usually between 15-25°C, with January and February bringing the hottest weather (around 30°C).

Money

Money should be taken in the form of US\$ cash .We recommend as much as your insurance will cover you for. If you have a Visa or Mastercard with a PIN number you will find ATMs are now widely available in Latin America, although facilities are limited in smaller towns and more remote areas. In Brazil the currency is the “*real*”, in Argentina it is the “*peso argentino*”.

Clothing and special equipment

For day-to-day use you should take loose-fitting, breathable clothes. Comfortable shoes are particularly important, and sandals are useful. A sun hat, sun block and sunglasses are essential. A light fleece for cool nights and a light gore-tex jacket or umbrella is also recommended.

You may also need some smarter clothes for nights out in upmarket restaurants or nightclubs. You should bring a bathing costume, towel, insect repellent and a torch. (Towels will be supplied in hotels for bathroom use). In the Amazon, loose-fitting light trousers and long-sleeved shirts are recommended for protection against mosquitoes. Also take binoculars and fast camera film (400 ASA) or spare memory card.

Vaccinations

Preventative inoculations are recommended against the following: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. ***You will also need a yellow fever vaccination and corroborative certificate.*** You should also consult your GP for advice on malaria tablets for the Pantanal and the Amazon

Visas

Holders of full British passports do not require visas for either of the countries visited. Other nationalities should refer to our Briefing Dossier and check with the relevant consulates.

Airport taxes

In Argentina the international departure tax is approximately \$18, this is paid locally in Argentinean pesos or US dollars. Some domestic airport taxes will be payable on departure.