



Brazil's Grand Savannahs The Pantanal, Rio and Iguazú Falls

October 12 – 23, 2008

\$5,500 per person, double occupancy for land and air from St. Louis, price includes trip protection insurance.

Single supplement \$700

ITINERARY

Sunday & Monday, October 12 & 13
St. Louis / Sao Paulo / Iguazú Falls

Tuesday, October 14
Iguazú Falls

Wednesday, October 15
Iguazú Falls / Pantanal

Thursday – Saturday, October 16 – 18
Pantanal

Sunday, October 19
Pantanal / Rio de Janeiro

Monday, October 20
Rio de Janeiro

Tuesday, October 21
Poço das Antas Biological Reserve

**Wednesday & Thursday
October 22 – 23**
Rio de Janeiro / St. Louis

Team up with the Saint Louis Zoo and Green Planet Expeditions for a unique adventure to one of South America's best wildlife Meccas – The Pantanal. The Pantanal is not as well known as Brazil's Amazon Rainforest, but it is a better place to spot and watch wildlife. If you are interested in wildlife photography, you won't want to miss this great trip. The natural beauty of Iguazú Falls, one of the world's most spectacular waterfalls, starts off the adventure.



This adventure has been specially designed to minimize travel time while allowing you to visit three natural areas in Brazil as well as to enjoy the sights and sounds of Rio de Janeiro and its beaches. Four nights in the finest lodge in the Pantanal will allow you to explore the surrounding environs by vehicle, horse, canoe and on foot. Refúgio Ecológico Caiman is listed in the book *1,000 Places to See Before You Die* by Patricia Schultz. Expect to see a wide variety of birds and mammals including toucans, herons, parakeets, jacanas and kingfishers, capybara, anteaters, capuchin and howler monkeys. You may even see a jaguar.

This is the first time the Saint Louis Zoo has had an opportunity to visit the imperiled Atlantic coastal forest where some of Brazil's most endangered primates, tamarins, live. Zoos across the U.S. have been involved in the successful reintroduction of the golden lion tamarin, a conservation success story that took years to plan and execute.

Escorted by Martha Weber, DVM.

For more information, contact Altair Travel at (314) 968-9600.



OCTOBER 12 & 13

ST. LOUIS / SAO PAULO / IGUAZÚ FALLS

The group meets in St. Louis and flies overnight to Sao Paulo, Brazil. We will then transfer to our flight to Iguazú Falls where we will be met by our local guide and transfer to our hotel, the Tropical das Cataratas Hotel. The four-star Tropical das Cataratas Hotel, built in an original Colonial architectural style, is located on the Brazilian side of the falls, and is the only hotel located inside Iguazú Falls National Park. Amenities include beautiful grounds, indoor and outdoor restaurants, several bars, a large pool and shops. After checking in, we will depart for a tour of the Brazilian side of the falls, a short walk from the hotel and have our welcome dinner at the hotel meals aloft, D

OCTOBER 14

IGUAZÚ FALLS

Today you will spend the entire day exploring the Argentinean side of Iguazú Falls. One of the seven wonders of the natural world, the Iguazú Falls are located in the Iguazú National Park, at the border of Brazil and Argentina. The horseshoe-shaped falls stretch for 2,700 meters between the two countries and are over 72 meters high. The actual number of falls varies between 150 and 300, depending on the time of year and the flow of the river. The view will overwhelm and fascinate you as you take in this incredible panorama. On a Macuco Safari tour, the open vehicle will allow an unobstructed view of the scenery and wildlife. In specially

constructed inflatable bi-motor boats you will travel up-river, facing the rapids at a speed that permits the appreciation of the scenery. Waterfall showers, rainbows, blue sky, mist and water in profusion, punctuate the river trip that has the area of the falls baptized “The Three Musketeers” as its high point. There the captain will maneuver the boat to provide the passengers with a quick and refreshing shower. Overnight will be at the Tropical das Cataratas Hotel B/L/D

OCTOBER 15

IGUAZÚ FALLS / PANTANAL

Today will be an adventurous day, beginning after breakfast with our flight to Campo Grande where we will be met and then transferred to the Refúgio Ecológico Caiman in the heart of the Pantanal. During the transfer there will be a light box lunch on the bus as we make our way to the Pantanal. The Pantanal of Southern Mato Grosso, approximately 140 miles west of Campo Grande, has a diverse landscape of savannah lowlands, seasonal wetlands and rich forested areas.

The Refúgio Ecológico Caiman, founded in 1987 on a cattle farm called Estância Caiman, encompasses the 53,000 square hectares which was at one time Miranda Estância, a traditional farm of the region, founded by English investors in 1912. It is the headquarters of three recently completed projects dealing with ecotourism, extensive cattle raising research and preservation of the environment.

All of these activities are set in a classic ranch infrastructure built during 88 years of ongoing investment B/L/D

Accommodations

The Caiman Ranch is the most luxurious lodge in the Pantanal. It is comprised of one main lodge and three additional lodges situated at strategic points about the ranch, each with its own infrastructure and architectural style, blending in with its distinctive surroundings. The food and service are outstanding and the air-conditioned rooms and the pools, positively luxurious.

OCTOBER 16 – 18

PANTANAL

Over the next three days you have the opportunity to explore the Pantanal’s ecosystems and wildlife by participating in many activities offered by the staff in the refuge. Day excursions from the Caiman Ranch will provide a variety of opportunities by which you can immerse yourself in the Pantanal. Below is a description B/L/D Daily

PHOTO SAFARI

Traveling in an open vehicle is the best way to reach places far from the farm. Crossing fields and stretches of jungle, our tour broadens opportunities to observe and photograph the wildlife. At night, with flashlights, you will “night spot” nocturnal animals, such as alligators, capybaras, anteaters and small wolves.

CANOE TOUR

While at the Refuge you will have the chance to canoe on the lakes within the ranch and observe mammals such as capybaras and monkeys on the shoreline. Among the birds that commonly inhabit the area, there are cormorants, anhinga, skimmers, egrets, toucans, herons, parakeets, jacanas and kingfishers. With luck, you might even see capuchin and howler monkeys.



TOUR ON HORSEBACK

Horses are also a good way to explore the Pantanal, because they allow for visits to areas which are inaccessible by other means, like local flooded areas, where the water is too deep for motorized vehicles or too shallow for other boats. The horses in the Pantanal are raised in the region and are stout, strong and have water-resistant skin, and are adapted to crossing long distances of flooded fields. Because these horses are trained for inexperienced riders, it is easy for everyone to observe different environments in the Pantanal, from the flooded fields to the open vegetation. Before each tour basic instructions are given about how to get along with the horses, how to ride, the risks and care involved, etc. The horseback riding usually lasts three hours, with shorter trails of about one hour for those who wish.

WALKS

Walking at your own pace on trails through heavy bush makes it easy to observe forest vegetation and the animals that live there such as “coatis” (raccoon-like mammals) and monkeys. Approximately 12 different hikes offered on different days assure the plenty of animals in each area. The trails traverse vegetation that is typical of the Pantanal, such as long grass and coppice, as well as transition areas such as the open pastures. These walking trails allow visitors to get to know an even larger variety of animals and plants in the region. Hikes leave from the hotel, or are part of a photo safari. The Farm Tour Walk is taken from the headquarters of the lodge and involves a visit to the stable, the workers’ quarters and the headquarters of Blue Macaw Project.



OCTOBER 19 PANTANAL / RIO DE JANEIRO

After breakfast you will transfer back to Campo Grande for your flight to Rio. The local guide will meet us and bring us to our hotel, the Ipanema Plaza Hotel which is located in the most charming district in the heart of Rio’s south zone by the famous Ipanema beach. Many nice shops are just at the doorstep of the hotel. The Ipanema Plaza Hotel offers all the services of a deluxe hotel including spacious air-conditioned rooms, restaurant with the best in modern cuisine, a rooftop swimming pool with a panoramic view, dry and steam saunas and a fitness center. Individualized service is a plus that has been mastered by the dedicated hotel staff. You will have time for a walk on the beach or just to relax before meeting

for dinner at Mio’s, one of the local restaurants. Overnight will be at Hotel Ipanema Plaza B/L/D

OCTOBER 20 RIO DE JANEIRO

This morning you will head for a half-day tour of Corcovado, the famous Christ Statue which overlooks the city. On the way you will stop at the Hippe Market, a popular open air market known for its handcrafts and homemade goods. You will sample some of the fine seafood Rio has to offer with lunch at the Azul Marinho. In the afternoon you have free time to explore on your own, or you may take an optional tours arranged for you at an additional cost. In the evening you will dine in a truly one-of-a-kind experience, at Marius Restaurant. Overnight will be at the Hotel Ipanema Plaza B/L/D

OCTOBER 21 POÇO DAS ANTAS BIOLOGICAL RESERVE

After breakfast you will travel into the nearby hills, away from the bustle of Rio de Janeiro, to the place where the Golden Lion Tamarin Association works to reintroduce that species as well as some other species of animals into their natural habitat, by preserving and reforesting the area. The program began in the early 1970s as a collaboration between the United States National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution, IBAMA, the Brazilian Environment Bureau and the Centro de Primatologia do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



The Atlantic Forest extends along the Brazilian coastline, from the north to the extreme south. In the time of the early explorers, it covered more than 140,000 sq. miles (350,000 sq. km). Today, less than 5% of the original forest remains and less than 10% is protected in national parks, biological reserves, ecological stations, state parks or private reserves. You will stop at a private wildlife sanctuary where you will enjoy a traditional farm buffet. These private reserves act as a buffer zone between the Reserve and the surrounding areas. We will return to our hotel for dinner. Overnight will be at the Hotel Ipanema Plaza B/L/D

OCTOBER 22

RIO DE JANEIRO / FLIGHT HOME

After breakfast you will have one last chance for a walk on the beach or a last minute shopping spree. You will have your Farewell Lunch en-route to the airport for your flight home..... B/L/D
Additional Meals Aloft

OCTOBER 23

ARRIVE HOME

Trip Price includes:

- International air from St. Louis and all flights and land travel within Brazil
- All accommodations
- All meals from lunch on day two through lunch on last day in Rio
- All permits and park fees
- Local English-speaking guides in the Pantanal, Rio and Iguazú Falls
- Travel insurance

Trip Price excludes:

- Items of a personal nature (i.e. alcoholic beverages, phone calls, laundry, etc.)
- Airport taxes
- Passport and VISA fees
- Gratuities to guides and drivers

Physical Activities

Moderate

On this trip we anticipate a fair number of our activities will be vehicle based. However, other activities will be based on foot, where short walks and medium hikes are involved. We stress that guests are not required to participate in all activities.

