

Brazil: Rio de Janeiro, Amazon

8 days

Tour Description

Larger than the United States, Brazil takes up nearly fifty percent of the South American continent. It has a rich cultural history that both blends and contrasts with its neighbors. The Portuguese explorers influence combined with the native Indians and African slaves to give it the diversity you see today. Rio de Janeiro is unlike any metropolis, sandwiched between tropical beaches and stunning mountains. There is never a dull moment in the city of sizzling Samba that exemplifies their zest for life.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, the Amazon is one the greatest natural wonders and the largest tropical rainforests in the world, spreading over 6 countries. The cultural variations here are as interesting as the fragile ecosystem. A constant cycle of rainfall and evaporation keeps the temperature regulated. Wild animals such as the nocturnal jaguar, butterflies such as the prized Urania and birds such as the scarlet macaw thrive in this lush jungle. Accommodations and river boats can be as civilized or as rustic as you wish, providing the opportunity to stay as close to nature as possible.

Highlights

- ❖ See the statue on top of Corcovado, Christ, the Redeemer, overlooking the city
- ❖ Cable car ride to the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain
- ❖ Bay Cruise to a tropical island
- ❖ Trek along the edge of powerful Iguazu Falls, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ❖ Exotic Samba dinner show
- ❖ Amazon Cruise and jungle survival experience

Sample Tour Itinerary

Rio de Janeiro – 4 nights

Day 1: Arrive Rio de Janeiro

Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport by our local representative who will escort you to your hotel via private coach. Welcome to the **Wonderful City** as locals like to call it. Rio is nestled between the mountains and the sea. Its magnificent shoreline includes charming bays and beautiful beaches, dotted with islands up and down the coast.

Day 2: Half-day Tour Corcovado

We'll take an amazing morning tour to Corcovado. After a beautiful scenic drive along Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon, we arrive at the bottom of the Corcovado hill where we will board a comfortable cog train to climb through the Tijuca rainforest to the top of the mountain. Here stands the imposing statue of Christ, the Redeemer, overlooking the city. From the top, discover why Rio is known as the **Marvelous City**. Take the rest of the afternoon to explore this magical city or join the locals on Ipanema or Copacabana beaches.

Day 3: Half-day City Tour and Sugar Loaf Mountain

Today we'll have a panoramic tour to downtown Rio. Stop at the Metropolitan Cathedral which stands like a pyramid 300 feet high. Stroll through traditional Cinelandia Square. Finally, we'll head to Urca to visit the world famous Sugar Loaf Mountain, symbol of the city, located in the middle of the Guanabara Bay. Two cable car rides whisk you to the top to enjoy one of the most breathtaking views of the city from over 1100 feet in elevation. Your afternoon is free to enjoy the sights and sounds of this vibrant city.

Day 4: Full-day Tropical Island Tour / Dinner Show

Board a sleek schooner or a fast cruiser and sit back to admire the coastline as we cruise into Sepetiba Bay or Guanabara Bay. Munch on tropical fruit as you spot dolphins, giant king-fishers, turtles and sting-rays. We'll stop for a swim, and then spend some time on one of the lovely beaches. Be as active or relaxed as you wish.

Dinner Show

Join in the fun tonight at a colorful samba extravaganza. Carnival has its origins in this glittering dance style with its exotic costumes. Feel the rhythm of the dancers and musicians in this spectacular show while you dine on a sumptuous dinner.

Amazon – 3 nights

Day 5 Flight to Manaus

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Manaus in the heart of the Amazon. This city is the gateway to the surrounding rivers and rain forests of the jungle. Staying in Eco Lodges is a great way to immerse into the jungle. Temperatures during the rainy season (Dec-May) are generally around the mid-80s and a bit warmer during the dry season. Rainfall here is half what it is further east in the Andean region. Wild life viewing is usually best in the cooler months of March . June in this region.

Day 6 Amazon Cruise

Your tour boat leaves from Manaus to see the unusual phenomenon called the Meeting of the Waters. The black waters of the Negro River meet the white waters of the Solimoes River flowing side by side without mixing for several miles. At this point it's considered the Amazon River. Continue sailing up the Rio Negro to the January Ecological Park where the famous Vitoria Regia (Giant Lily pads) can be found. In the wet season, we'll take a motorized canoe through creeks that connect the two rivers. During the dry season, when the water is too low, you'll explore this region on foot instead. Enjoy lunch at a floating restaurant followed by a visit to the indigenous artisan fair.

Day 7: Jungle Survival and Nocturnal Float Trip

Hike through the jungle for approximately two hours, learning how to construct traps and how to recognize medicinal and fruit-bearing plants. Then hop into the canoe to complete the journey on water. You have the option of swimming or visiting an indigenous village to learn their traditions.

This evening you'll experience the Amazon at night. Embark by boat through the Rios Solimoes and Amazonas forest with specialized guides. Using lanterns to spot the nocturnal wild animals, you will likely see many alligators!

Day 8: Depart

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to Rio de Janeiro to connect to your flight home.

Inclusions

- Accommodations: Rio de Janeiro 4 nights, Amazon 3 nights
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily. Lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary