

# Brazil – Amazon Wildlife Cruise

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

### Outline itinerary

- |                |                                    |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Day 1</b>   | Depart London                      |
| <b>Day 2</b>   | Arrive Manaus and begin cruise     |
| <b>Day 3</b>   | Anavilhanas Archipelago            |
| <b>Day 4/6</b> | Jaú National Park                  |
| <b>Day 7/8</b> | Anavilhanas Archipelago            |
| <b>Day 9</b>   | Disembark in Manaus and fly London |
| <b>Day 10</b>  | Arrive London                      |

### Departs

June to August

### Dates and Prices

See website (tour code BRA07) or brochure

### Grading

A. Mainly motorised canoe safaris with some gentle walking

### Focus

Birds, mammals, other wildlife and local culture.

### Highlights

- Over 400 mammal species & 1,300 bird species occur in the Amazon!
- Explore the Anavilhanas Archipelago National Park in small motorised canoes
- Both Pink and Grey River Dolphins, Golden-faced Saki & Golden-backed Uakari, Jaú National Park
- Night-time cruises to spotlight for nocturnal wildlife



Squirrel Monkey, Pink River Dolphin, Iracema



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## Introduction

The Amazon. The very name conjures up images of endless tropical wilderness and of lost worlds awaiting discovery by intrepid explorers. The Amazon basin is vast, covering an area as large as the lower 48 states of the USA, and, even today, 78% is still covered in lush rainforest.

A staggering 10% of all species known to science occur here, amongst them over 400 species of mammal and an incredible 1,300 bird species! To actually see any of this natural abundance is, however, an altogether different matter, and the unfortunate reality of many Amazon cruises is that very little wildlife is actually seen ... until now, that is! Through a combination of field research and analysis of academic studies undertaken in the region, Naturetrek has pioneered a new wildlife cruise which maximises our chances of encountering some of the Amazon's most prized fauna.



On this 7 night cruise, we will depart Manaus and journey up the Rio Negro, exploring the tributaries and visiting two of Brazil's finest Amazonian National Parks; the Anavilhanas Archipelago and the Jaú National Park.

## Itinerary

Please note that the following itinerary should be treated as a guide only, not an exact programme. Flexibility is the key to all wildlife cruises and our exact route and programme will depend on weather conditions, wildlife encounters, the experience of the tour leader and the advice of the ship's captain and crew.

### Day 1

### Depart London

We leave London Heathrow on a scheduled service flight to São Paulo in Brazil.

### Day 2

### Arrive Manaus and board Iracema

Following an early morning arrival in São Paulo, we will board a domestic onward flight to Manaus. From here, we will transfer south, passing the world-famous 'Teatro Amazonas' Opera House, before arriving at the downtown Port of Manaus where we board the delightful 30-metre Iracema, our accommodation for the next 7 nights.

Once on board the vessel, we will enjoy lunch, followed by a short lecture from the tour leader providing an overview of the expedition itinerary. After setting sail for approximately 20 minutes, we will reach the 'Meeting of the Waters', a phenomenon where two titan tributaries of the Amazon



Meeting of the Waters'

River, the light-coloured Rio Solimões and the darker Rio Negro, converge to form a remarkable bi-coloured stretch of water that flows for several miles before the waters mix to become one colour.

Leaving this unique aquatic spectacle behind, we will cruise

upstream towards a lake to view the magnificent Giant Amazon Water Lilies. Exploring the lake's surroundings on wooden walkways, we can also hope to see the primitive Hoatzin and our first two primate species, Squirrel Monkey and White-fronted Capuchin. We will then continue upriver towards Acajatuba Bay where will anchor in the early hours.

## Day 3

## Anavilhanas Archipelago

Awakening to the sights and sounds of the Amazonian dawn we will enjoy an early breakfast before venturing out in motorised canoes to explore the network of narrow river channels that line the margins of the Rio Negro. Whilst the vegetation is dense and the birding challenging, the water's edge offers easier pickings and we can hope to see Ringed, American Pygmy, Amazon and Green-and-Rufous Kingfishers, whilst Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns. The area is also home to several pods of habituated Pink River Dolphins that if encountered, will often swim in and receive fish, providing fantastic photographic opportunities.

Returning to the boat in the mid-morning, we will begin cruising further upstream into the Anavilhanas Archipelago, a complex maze of ribbon-like forested islands that crisscross the 20km-wide Rio Negro. Occupying an area of over 300,000 hectares, which includes over 400 river islands, Anavilhanas is the world's largest freshwater archipelago and a haven for birdlife. After enjoying a delicious lunch we



Agami Heron

will take to the water again in small motorised canoes and navigate our way through the maze of waterways and uninhabited islands, hoping to find such species as the stunning Agami Heron, the localised Festive Parrot and the bizarre-looking Amazonian Umbrellabird.



As dusk approaches, flocks of Band-tailed Nighthawks emerge and descend on the river in search of flying insects, whilst Ladder-tailed Nightjars sally out from low bushes. High above, fast flying bat-like Short-tailed Nighthawks hunt over the forested river islands and as dusk falls we shall spotlight for species such as Spectacled, Crested and Black-banded Owl, Great and Common Potoo, and Brown-throated Sloth.

We will cruise still further north through the night, arriving at the Mouth of the Jaú River in the early hours.

## Day 4 – 6

## Jaú National Park

Over the course of the next 3 days we will venture deep into the heart of the remote and little explored, 2.3 million hectare, Jaú National Park, the largest accessible forest reserve in South America. Home to an incredible array of species, including over 14 species of primate, we have an excellent chance of encountering Squirrel and Red Howler Monkeys, Golden-faced Saki and with luck the stunning Golden-backed Uakari. The birding here is challenging but



King Vulture

with perseverance we can hope to encounter a tantalising variety of species including several species of colourful macaw, Great Jacamar, Guianan Toucanet and, with luck, a King Vulture or the elusive Harpy Eagle. As we make our way down river, we should encounter Plumbeous Kite, Swallow-winged Puffbird and Black Caracara perched on the riverine vegetation.

In the canopy above we can hope to see Orange-cheeked Parrot, Maroon-tailed Parakeet and the unusual looking Black-headed Parrot, whilst highlights of the understory include stunning Black-throated and Blue-crowned Trogons and Ivory-billed Araçari. Whilst exploring the forest trails, we will hope for a chance encounter with a mixed-species feeding flock, comprising a fantastic array of antshrikes, antwrens, woodcreepers and spinetails.



Pink River Dolphin

The river itself, the life source for this region, holds an incredible variety of fish species that subsequently support a number of aquatic predators such as Grey and Pink River Dolphins, Spectacled Caiman and Giant River Otters. Though difficult to predict their movements we will be hoping for a chance encounter with any one of these species.

During our time in Jaú National Park we will head out at first light, where the forest will be alive with the sounds of Red Howler Monkeys and birds, such as the Screaming Piha, Crested and Green Oropendola and Long-billed Woodcreeper. We will also venture out in the late afternoon by canoe, where we may see Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Squirrel Cuckoo and White-throated Toucan, followed by a glorious sunset, before retreating to the 'Iracema' for sundowners and dinner.

We also plan to undertake several cruises after dark, giving us the opportunity to spotlight for the creatures of the night. It is at this time that the rainforest is truly buzzing with activity and we will immerse ourselves in the sights and sounds of the forest after dark.

Exclusive to Naturetrek, we will also benefit from the expert guidance of Eduardo Elízio de Souza ("Sibá"), a local parabiologist, stationed in Jaú National Park specifically to help research the wildlife of the area and assist us in our quest to unravel the secrets of the Amazon. In the lead up to our cruise, Sibá will survey the area, identifying the fruiting trees that are likely to attract the attention of the area's wildlife and allowing us to target the most productive spots during our visit.

## Day 7

After a final morning's exploration of the area by boat, we will begin our journey back south, retracing our steps and reaching the Anavilhanas National Park by late afternoon. We will have the opportunity to enjoy the area's beautiful scenery and search for any bird species that we may have missed on our journey up, perhaps including a Spangled Cotinga, Caica Parrot, Swallow-tailed Kite or Yellow-tufted Woodpecker. We will also keep a look out for primates, with Brown Bearded Saki and Brown Capuchin possible.

## Anavilhanas Archipelago



Spangled Cotinga

After dinner we continue cruising downstream, mooring up in the southernmost region of the Anavilhanas National Park.

## Day 8

## Anavilhanas Archipelago

This morning we have the opportunity to explore a different area of the Anavilhanas National Park, and our quest for the day is to locate a Wire-tailed Manakin lekking site. These birds are strikingly stunning, and the male birds will perform an elaborate dance routine to impress the females. If we are lucky, we may be fortunate enough to see the males practice and perform their dance moves on their carefully chosen branches.



Wire-tailed Manakin

Bidding farewell to the Archipelago we cruise downstream during the middle of the day to within 2-3 km of an Amazonian Indian village, where we drop anchor for approximately an hour. This stop provides an opportunity to buy souvenirs and spot a few other bird species, such as Chestnut-bellied Seedeater and Turquoise Tanager.



Night Monkey

We shall return to the boat briefly, before dropping anchor again at our captain's house for the final evening. This stop provides us with the best opportunity to see Night Monkeys, and will be a relaxed evening, with the option of using the swimming pool on site. As darkness falls, we will go out with our torches searching for Pink-footed Tarantulas.

We will return to the Iracema for our final dinner together on the Amazon, cruising downstream and reflecting on what has been a remarkable adventure into the heart of the Amazon.

## Day 9

## Manaus

On our final morning, we will visit a village of the Tukano Tribe of North West Amazonia. With traditional houses and residents clothed in traditional dress, this morning's excursion will provide a fascinating insight into Amazonian Indian life and with the aid of an interpreter, we will be able to learn about the beliefs and customs of the indigenous people of the region, as well as enjoying some spectacular ceremonial dancing.

After lunch, we shall disembark the Iracema at Ponta Negra and then transfer to Manaus airport for an afternoon flight to São Paulo and then on to the London.



## Day 10

## In flight

Arrive London.

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### Tour grading

This tour is graded A, mainly consisting of motorised canoe outings. Not much walking is involved, but all walking will be gentle. This tour is suitable for those of all ages and degrees of fitness. The terrain may be rough under foot at times and the climate will be hot and humid but excursions will be conducted at a slow pace.

### Weather

Weather is likely to be hot and humid and there is a possibility of heavy rain at any time, but hopefully not to the extent that it will spoil your enjoyment!

### Food & accommodation included in the price

All food and accommodation is included in the holiday cost, with the exception of meals in Manaus. Accommodation will be onboard the 'Iracema', a comfortable 22-berth river cruiser, which features 11 twin cabins, each with upper and lower berths and private facilities.



### Pre-holiday

It is worth mentioning here that should you want a more relaxed way to begin your holiday you can of course fly out early and we can book a hotel for you. You would fly to Manaus and spend the night there before meeting the rest of the group the following day before boarding. This will mean you will get a good night's sleep before the main tour begins. Please let us know if you would like to do this and we can provide more information and a price.

### Extensions

Should you wish to spend longer in Brazil, you may choose add an extension either to the beginning or end of your main group tour. There are various options including the spectacular Iguazu Falls, Rio De Janeiro, Harpy Eagles of the Southern Amazon or birding the Atlantic Rainforest from Sao Paulo. On the main tour webpage under "tour downloads" there is more information on some of these popular extensions and should you wish to discuss these options the tour's manager Tom Mabbett will be more than happy to help. Please email [tom@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:tom@naturetrek.co.uk) or call 01962 733051.

## How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

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