



B R A Z I L

AMAZON RAINFOREST CRUISE ABOARD THE M/Y TUCANO



- DURATION:** 10 days / 9 nights
- SEASON:** March through December
- DEPARTURES:** All M/Y Tucano departures are guaranteed, with a maximum of 18 participants
- TRIP RATING:** Easy/Moderate 7-day River Cruise & Nature Tour, Grade (I) - This activity-oriented soft adventure includes informative day hikes on unmaintained forest trails, sightseeing excursions in motorized canoes, easy kayaking and walking tours (average duration of these activities is 2-4 hours).
- 2016 DATES:** On request any week during the season for a minimum of 4 participants and subject to availability.

INTRODUCTION:

The Amazon, the world's mightiest river, is a tale of exploration, beckoning adventurers since Francisco de Orellana first sailed its length to the Atlantic Ocean in 1542. The Amazon basin creates the earth's largest tropical forest (2.3 million square miles) holding a promise for the planet's future in its abundant wildlife and natural resources. One thousand miles from its mouth, the Amazon River is still almost 7 miles wide near Manaus, Brazil! This exciting natural history expedition-style cruise was specifically designed to provide a comfortable, yet comprehensive introduction to the fascinating tropical forests of Amazonia.

The Brazilian Amazon covers a landscape of over 1.3 million square miles, approximately the size of the continental US. This expansive floodplain, while still housing several small cities, is almost entirely covered with primary tropical forest. Within this vast watershed is the Rio Negro, a river draining over 300,000 square miles, or 10% of the entire Amazon basin! By the time this river flows southeast from its Andean headwaters in the Colombian foothills for 1,020 miles to its confluence with the Amazon River, it has over 3 times the volume of the Mississippi. The Rio Negro is the second largest river in the world, behind only the Amazon River.

Beginning in Manaus, we become acquainted with this historic city and tour the Opera House and Indian Museum. Our river journey navigates the Rio Negro upstream as far as the Rio Jauaperi before finishing on the Amazon River itself. The tributaries along our route are home to the fascinating varzea forest where fish swim among tree branches during flood cycles. It is important to travel the tributaries of the Amazon because decades of settlement have altered the natural ecosystems along the banks of the main Amazon River. We have a greater opportunity to witness abundant wildlife in the tributaries, with our rainforest explorations taking through some of the least inhabited places on the planet.

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DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY:

DAY 01 (THU): USA

Depart the US on an overnight flight to Manaus, capital of the Brazilian Amazonas state.

DAY 02 (FRI): MANAUS

Arriving at the **Manaus** airport this morning, clear customs and drive by private vehicle to the elegant **Tropical Hotel**, the most comfortable eco-resort in town. After time to relax and rest after the flight, join your local guide for a tour of this booming city of 2 million people. The city's opulence during the rubber-boom days is superbly reflected in the classic facade of the *Teatro Amazonas* Opera House which opened in 1897. Another stop includes the Indian Museum with exhibits of artifacts, costumes and weapons from the region's indigenous tribes. Lunch is included, dinner is on your own to try the hotel's Karu restaurant, serving grilled meats and local fresh fish. (L)

DAY 03 (SAT): MANAUS / TUCANO CRUISE

Early this morning we walk to the riverside dock near the hotel to board the Amazon expedition boat M/Y Tucano. After settling into our cabins we depart upstream on the Rio Negro. We cruise among the islands of the **Anavilhanas archipelago**, established as a reserve to protect the world's largest chain of river islands, where Jacques Cousteau spent months studying Amazonian flora and fauna. The islands are connected by a myriad of wildlife-rich lagoons, channels and *igarapé* creeks (natural canals between river islands), where birdwatching and wildlife viewing are at their best. From the observation deck we scan the magnificent tangle of vegetation at the water's edge. Around midday, our guides discuss the fascinating rainforest creatures we may observe on the trip. By mid-afternoon we are beyond settlement, entering the jungle wilderness where both shores are covered by dense rainforest. The top Observation Deck is a great place to keep an eye out for wildlife. We may spot pink river dolphins and a large collection of exotic birds among sweeping forest vistas. In the late afternoon, we explore a small stream by skiff, looking for wildlife while enjoying a swim in the refreshing water. (B,L,D)

DAY 04 (SUN): TUCANO CRUISE

Early morning skiff ride to explore the rainforest along the water's edge. We should hear and perhaps see howler monkeys along with a morning serenade of toucans. After breakfast, enjoy a forest walk to begin understanding the Amazon's ecology. Around midday return to the vessel for a swim and lunch. In the late afternoon, we will search for wildlife by skiff and listen to the sunset chorus of birds and frogs. (B,L,D)

DAY 05 (MON): TUCANO CRUISE

Early exploration while life in the forest wakens. This is a good time to observe monkeys starting their day. We return for breakfast followed by either a skiff excursion or guided hike through the forest to learn about the variety of flora, such as *Carapanauba*, whose bitter bark is used by natives as a cure for fever (or when mixed with other herbs, as a natural contraceptive). The canopy of the rainforest can reach 150 feet in height, although some individual trees, known as emergents, break through the canopy and may grow up to 200 feet! The Tucano travels during the middle of the day, stopping in the afternoons for an excursion. Following dinner, we can take a skiff trip in search of *jacaré* alligators with our guide, possibly catching a small one to have a close-up look before releasing it back to its home among the reeds. After dark, marvel at the night sky crowded with stars. (B,L,D)

DAY 06 (TUE): JAUAPERI RIVER

After our two morning excursions, we navigate along the heavily forested shore, scouting for wildlife. There may be a stop to visit a settler's farmstead carved out of the forest. The simplistic thatched huts and kindness of the locals disguise an amazingly complex way of life. The warmth of our reception is based on a centuries-old tradition of hospitality. Visits with families, deep in the forest, are often high points of the trip. In the early afternoon we approach an extraordinary river called the **Rio Jauaperi**. This is the varzea forest, home to unique animals found only in this rare environment. Weather permitting, we will take a night excursion to observe nocturnal creatures. (B,L,D)

DAY 07 (WED): RIO NEGRO RIVER

Rising before dawn, a spectacular sunrise can be enjoyed from the boat's upper deck. We marvel at the raucous noises as the Amazon comes to life. We will explore according to the weather and water depth in areas rarely visited by anyone else, finding a new collection of rainforest habitats. We scout for wildlife in our skiffs or walk in the forest. Species

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observed here include jacanas, ibis, parrots, doves, black-collared hawks, and swallows (30 different species of swallows are often observed during the cruise). Tonight the M/Y Tucano goes downstream to arrive by morning near the confluence with the Amazon River. Gliding through the starry darkness, we can enjoy cocktail hour on the top deck with hors d'oeuvres and a taste of Brazil's national drink, the *Caipirinha*. (B,L,D)

DAY 08 (THU): JANAUARI PARK

This morning we arrive to the **Janauari Ecological Lake Park**. Exploring by skiff, notice how the thick brown water of the Amazon flows swiftly through the forest. This area is teeming with life! We observe the giant Victoria Regia water lilies, whose leaves can reach up to 4 feet in diameter (best observed during high water January-August). Small, motorized canoes take us through the *igarapés* watching for birds or monkeys while enjoying beautiful reflections of the trees and vines in the dark waters of the *igapó* flooded forest. During lunch we travel to the **Meeting of the Waters**, a distinct, several mile long demarcation zone where the world's two largest rivers, the Amazon and the Negro, join in a turbulent maelstrom. Here the dark water of the Negro runs beside the opaque brown water of the Amazon. An afternoon excursion lets us find hidden streams home to more of the Amazon's beautiful and bizarre creatures. Tonight we'll enjoy a farewell dinner while returning to port in **Manaus** and spend a final night on board. (B,L,D)

DAY 09 (FRI): MANAUS

After breakfast, disembark the Tucano at approx. 8:00am and check-in to the familiar **Tropical Hotel**. Later, join your guide for a visit of the colorful Municipal market (open mornings only) and the downtown craft fair. Return to the hotel in the early afternoon with the rest of the day at leisure for shopping or personal explorations. A delicious local style farewell dinner caps the end of our voyage when we say goodbye to your guide and new friends. (B,D)

DAY 10 (SAT): USA

Transfer from the hotel to the airport this morning and check-in for the return flight home. (B)

NOTES ON THE ITINERARY: Although we do our best to adhere to the schedule listed above, the day-by-day activities are subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control including group pace and interest, weather, trail and/or river conditions or flight schedules. Although bird and wildlife viewing will be vigorously pursued, spotting specific species or certain numbers of creatures cannot be guaranteed.

According to flight arrival times, the city tour of Manaus on **DAY 02** may be held in the afternoon instead of the morning. Arriving in the morning to Manaus on DAY 02 is recommended. This trip is suitable for physically fit participants accustomed to outdoor activities age 8 and up.

2016 LAND COST: \$5,325 p.p.d. (4-6 participants)
\$5,175 p.p.d. (7-12 participants)
\$2,255 Single Supplement
\$ 355 Single hotels only (if willing to share on the cruise)

p.p.d.= per person based on double or triple occupancy on Yellow (Superior) category cabins.

Pricing is based on the final number of Southwind travelers (there will be other participants aboard the riverboat).

The Single cabins available are on the Green (Standard) category.

The Land Cost of the December holiday departure is an additional \$200 per person.

SERVICES INCLUDED:

- Comprehensive **pre-departure planning packet** and expert travel advice.
- All **in-country transfers** as scheduled (transfers on different days are additional). Ground transportation in spacious and comfortable private vehicles with A/C and professional drivers.
- Local and return flight reconfirmation, **in-country airport check-in and luggage assistance**.
- All **accommodations in first-class (5 star) hotel** as listed (or at similar hotel) on a shared basis with private bath. Double beds for couples (primarily queen or king-sized) can be requested in advance, but cannot be guaranteed, as most hotels offer few rooms with double beds.
- **Riverboat accommodations** in double occupancy with private bathroom on Yellow category cabin (Superior

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category, no bunk beds).

- Single Supplement provides single room accommodations in all hotels and on the cruise on a Green category cabin. Due to the limited number of cabins on the riverboat, single cabins may not be available on specific departures. If you prefer single accommodations, please make your reservation well in advance.
- All **meals** indicated on the itinerary (B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner). **Vegetarian diets accommodated** on request (advance notification required). For other diets, consult your travel specialist before making a reservation.
- All **guided tours and excursions** (as listed or similar) conducted by knowledgeable, English-speaking local guides (includes applicable entrance fees). Optional kayaking is offered during most mornings of the cruise itinerary at no additional cost. Transfers and tours in Manaus are private for Southwind participants only, cruise activities are conducted on a seat-in-boat basis (other travelers on board will join in) by resident, English-speaking guides. Smaller sub-groups are organized for activities.

NOT INCLUDED:

- US domestic, International flights, nor local flights within Brazil (if connecting via Rio or São Paulo)
- Visa for entry to Brazil (approx. \$160 per person plus processing fees)
- Three (3) meals at about \$20-35 each
- Tours or other services not listed on the itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages nor items of a personal nature; such as clothing, equipment, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips to the local staff.
- Expenses incurred in preparing for this trip such as, but not limited to, non-refundable airline tickets nor traveler's insurance, and additional expenses resulting from flight delays, schedule changes, cancellations, or missed connections.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing coverage to protect your trip investment. Travel insurance is important in case of unexpected events prior to departure causing the need to cancel or change your dates. Weather, geologic events, local strikes, personal injury/illness for you, your traveling companion or family members, could require itinerary interruption or changes. Missed connections, delayed arrival, lost/delayed baggage or the need for medical attention or evacuation are also reasons why coverage is important. Southwind offers several plans through Travel Insured International (TII) to fit your budget and coverage amount. We recommend TII's *Worldwide Trip Protector* which offers a good value and **free coverage for kids 17/under traveling with a related adult**. If you, your traveling companion or a family member has a pre-existing medical condition, you can still receive coverage if a recurrence of the condition forces you to cancel your trip (some restrictions apply and plan purchase needs to be done **within 21 days of your deposit date**). **Please call our office for a quote** or to discuss your insurance options. See our [Travel Insurance](#) page to learn more and purchase a plan.

M/Y TUCANO: Bright and airy, the Tucano was built in 1997 and has lovely raised wood paneling in the style of the 19th-century steamers that navigated these majestic rivers. The cabins and main salon on this 82' triple-decked riverboat are air-conditioned (the vessel is air-conditioned in the middle of the day and throughout the night), and there is a large observation deck for spotting wildlife or relaxing under a shady canopy. The M/Y Tucano is equipped with 7 kayaks (5 singles and 2 doubles). With a crew of 8, the Tucano accommodates 18 guests in 9 spacious, outside cabins complete with private bathrooms and hot water showers. Electricity by generator is available onboard (110 volt/60 cycle). Meals are served in the comfortable main salon with surrounding windows which allow fantastic views of the forest while dining. There is a library of select books on the Amazon and a fully equipped bar.

FAMILY DEPARTURES: Currently there are no specific Family Departures; although all of our trips are family friendly and when children are present, there will be some additional activities suitable for kids. On any departure children 8 to 12 years of age who share a Yellow category cabin with an adult qualify for a \$2,120 per person discount, subject to availability. Some of the cabins on the M/Y Tucano can accommodate 3 travelers (helpful for families). In cabins #3 and #4, a third narrow bed can be placed between the twin beds. Cabin #0 has a queen size bed and also a single bed. Travelers with triple accommodations pay the same Land Cost as those with double occupancy.

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RIO DE JANEIRO EXTENSION (3 days/2 nights): Travelers with a few extra days might wish to visit one of South America's most vibrant and beautiful cities, Rio de Janeiro. Although it works best following the *Amazon Rainforest Cruise*, the extension may also be added before traveling to Manaus. All extensions require a minimum of 2 participants. There is an additional per person deposit and it must be booked **at least 30 days prior to departure.** Contact Southwind for details.

WEATHER: The central Amazon region is hot and humid. Daytime highs average 85°F during the months of January-May and over 100°F in October and November. Nights typically cool off to 75°F during the early part of the year and may hover around 80°F at other times. September-December tend to be the hottest months (temperatures in the upper 90's to low 100's). Humidity averages 75-85% and is especially high in the forest. On the river, temperatures will typically be 5-10°F cooler and the breeze created by the movement of the boat makes travel pleasant. There is a rainy season from January through May and a drier period June through December, although rain should be expected year-round as the region averages 80"-100" annually or about 7.5" per month. Waters in the rivers and streams rise during the rainy period (30 to 50 feet in many areas) and recede during the dry period (they reach their lowest levels in October, November and early December). Showers are generally very intense with lots of heavy rain and they can occur daily during the rainy season (and sometimes lasting as long as a few days). Showers during the dry season are typically intense but short lived.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE: The Land Cost for this trip DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY FLIGHTS. Round-trip **international** airfare from Miami to Manaus is about \$900-\$1,000 per person, fares from other US gateways are typically higher according to carrier and month of travel. There is daily nonstop service between Miami and Manaus with American (operated by TAM Brazilian Airlines). Alternatively, participants can fly via Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo with United, American or Delta and make a connection to Manaus with TAM. Upon receipt of your deposit, Southwind will send you more information about booking your flights to match your land itinerary.

HOW TO SIGN UP: Submit Southwind's [Trip Reservation Form](#) along with a \$1,500 per person per trip by deposit credit card via our secure [Online Payment Form](#). If you prefer, you can also call us at 1-800-377-9463 to make payment arrangements or send a check. **Your deposit will be charged and your reservation confirmed once we receive your Trip Reservation Form.**

Due to the popularity of the Brazilian rainforest, we recommend making reservations at least 4 months in advance. Once your trip is guaranteed to operate, you will receive a comprehensive pre-departure planning packet.

Land Balance: Final payment is due at 90 days by Visa, Mastercard, Discover, American Express or check. You will receive a trip invoice indicating your balance due. Provided services and space are available, reservations can be accepted up to 30 days before departure.

Cancellation Fees and other policies are outlined under the current [Terms & Conditions](#) on Southwind's website.

www.southwindadventures.com

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