

PANTANAL

— PHOTO TOURS —

Pantanal Travel Arrangements



TOURIST VISA AND PASSPORTS

Currently Brazil requires a tourist visa (aka visit visa) from very few countries, and it should not be a problem for any traveler from the countries that normally comes to our tours.

- Afghanistan
- Bangladesh
- China
- Cuba
- Egypt
- Taiwan, among others.

If you are from these countries mentioned above, you **need** a visa to enter Brazil.

The visa is **NOT** required for most other countries, including most of Europe, South, Central and North America.

For the complete list of countries and requirements, [click here](#).

Besides the visa for the cases mentioned above, all tourists entering the country will need a passport valid for a minimum period of 6 months from the date of entry into Brazil. Your passport will be your ID while in Brazil and necessary to board domestic flights, for example.

VERY IMPORTANT



Make at least one copy of your passport and put in on a different bag, if you lose the original one, having a copy will make things easier.





LUGGAGE CONSIDERATIONS

All our domestic commercial flights are on jets such as Boeing 737, Airbus A320 and Embraer E190. We include 1 checked bag per person. Commercial domestic flights in Brazil have the following basic requirements:

- Max 23kg (50lbs) checked bag.
- Max 10kg to 15kg (22 to 33lbs) hand luggage + 1 camera/notebook or small bag*.

** The hand luggage rules can change from airline to airline. When we buy the air tickets we always book better categories that allows for more weight and potentially more space. That being said, it's very rare for them to weight the hand luggage, and even if they do and it's overweight but you show them it's fragile camera equipment, they let it go (at least they have never held it and made we check it).*

In case the airline charges any overweight fee (for the hand luggage or main luggage), this is not included on the tour price and should be paid by the client during check-in.

VERY IMPORTANT

Keep the hand luggage within the maximum dimensions though, which is the same as most other countries:



LUGGAGE CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMPLETE PANTANAL TRIPS

On our Complete Pantanal trips, and any other custom trip involving flights in small chartered planes, we ask clients to bring lighter weight luggage. If possible, try to keep the main bag under 18kg (39 lbs) + camera gear. Also, please avoid hard shell bags and be sensitive on the amount of camera gear to bring.

Most people end up bringing a lot of clothing and equipment that they never use. All of the hotels we use offer laundry service. Please refer to our checklists for guidance.

The chartered planes we use on the Complete Pantanal trips are often of the models Cessna 206, Piper Seneca or similar, and they have limited space for bags. We can't use larger planes due to airstrip size limitations.



INTERNATIONAL AIR TICKETS

All of our trips in Brazil starts and ends in **São Paulo Int'l Airport (GRU)**, also known as **Guarulhos Int'l Airport**.

Consider buying your international air tickets a lot of time ahead and always arrive a day before the trip starts and depart a day after it ends. The reason for this is that a flight delay or change may cause you to lose your domestic flight to the Pantanal or elsewhere, causing major problems - not to mention having to buy a very expensive ticket on the spot for the next flight.

Departing a day later is also a very good idea due to flight changes that sometimes happens on domestic flights, which may make your international connection on the same day impossible. This is actually now a condition on our contract and booking your flight on the same day the trip ends means you are solely responsible for any flight changes that may occur.

On our website we have a list of recommended hotels near the airport: [List of hotels](#)

Meeting instructions

You will be contacted before your trip with more detailed meeting instructions, but generally, if you didn't opt for an optional pre tour to the Atlantic Rainforest and we don't meet at the hotel near the airport, we will meet in front of the domestic check-in in São Paulo Int'l Airport (GRU), depending on what airline we will be using. We use one these three: Latam, Azul or Gol.

Latam: Terminal 2, Check-In E.

Gol: Terminal 2, Check-in B.

Azul: Terminal 1.



PANTANAL TOUR GUIDELINES

TROPICAL DISEASES

Malaria is extremely rare in the Pantanal, so there is nothing to worry about that, and there's no need to take malaria prophylaxis medicine. In all those years we have never even heard about any case of malaria in the Pantanal. The same can't be said about our trips to the Amazon, where - while extremely rare - malaria is present.

There is a very small risk of **yellow fever**, but most of our clients already have this vaccine (required for African trips), and it can be valid for lifetime or ten years, depending on the type. We recommend it, but it's not officially required in Brazil.

Dengue is also a very small risk and is actually a bigger risk in urban areas. While there is no vaccine for dengue, basic care with mosquito repellent should be enough. Vaccinations, CPR testing and all other travel or medically related arrangements are the responsibility of the participant.

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COVID-19

Brazil does not require any Covid-19 vaccination certificates or negative exams anymore.

Any changes or updated information will be on this page:
[Covid-19 travel to Brazil and Chile](#)



Mosquito Repellents

The Pantanal, especially during the dry season, can have a surprisingly small amount of mosquitoes, but you still want to be ready for those situations where mosquitoes are present. Bring an effective mosquito repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or another recommended active ingredient to protect yourself from mosquitoes.

PANTANAL TOUR GUIDELINES

MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

Terminal 2 is a large terminal, so we meet roughly under the big signs of check-in B or E (pictured), depending on airline.

Terminal 1 is a smaller terminal operated only by Azul Airlines and detailed meeting place will be sent before the trip.

If you are joining our optional pre tours we will pick you up at your hotel of choice near the airport or at the airport, if you arrive on the same morning. If picking you up at the airport we meet at the Starbuck's Coffee on the international disembark of Terminal 3, right after you leave the duana/customs, to your right side.



Normally we create a temporary WhatsApp group to pass details before the trip, solve any questions and what not. It's also useful during the tour for quick communication at the hotels. After the trip we delete the group. Of course this is not mandatory, but if you have WhatsApp it can be useful.



HEALTH CONDITIONS

Pantanal trips are considered, in general, as an easy trip as far as physical requirements. There's no difficult hikes or trails, although you must have conditions to carry your own equipment and easily get on and off a boat, for example.

Also, the Pantanal, specially later in the season, can get very hot and this may be an issue for more sensitive people. Midday temperatures can get to 42C (107F), although we don't do any activities when it's this hot, we will still find situations where the heat will be very strong.

FOOD

Any restrictions of a dietary nature must be made known to us well before departure. All the lodges offer a variety of food options on every meal, for example: different kinds of meat (chicken, fish, pork and beef), pastas, rice and beans, vegetables, potatoes, salads, etc.

SMOKING

It is forbidden to smoke during most situations during our tours, and that includes all situations indoors, in vehicles and also in boats or any other activity with the group outdoors.

VERY IMPORTANT

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CLOTHING

Pack lightweight, breathable clothing suitable for the tropical climate. Prefer long-sleeved shirts and long pants to protect yourself from sunburn and mosquito bites. Light-colored clothing is recommended to deter mosquitoes. Don't forget a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and comfortable walking shoes or boots.

We highly recommend that you check this link:

[Pantanal clothing checklist](#)

WEATHER

The Pantanal normally has a hot climate. The dry season typically lasts from June to October, with lower chances of rain and higher wildlife concentrations. Some strong cold fronts can reach the region during the early season though, and temperatures can drop to 10°C (50°F). Rain showers are more expected from mid-September onwards.

Further information on our blog: [Pantanal seasons](#)

VERY IMPORTANT

*Most people are afraid about animals, but **in the Pantanal the main threat is actually the sun.** Use sun protection all the time, stay hydrated, and apply sunscreen regularly to protect yourself.*

***The Pantanal can be very cold during cold fronts,** so it's important to bring good warm clothes, especially early in the season.*

PORTO JOFRE CONSIDERATIONS

Porto Jofre is the best area in the world for jaguar observation, the variety of habitats and the sheer number of jaguars make it very special. Being so it's natural that it attracts a lot of photographers. While during our tours we have total freedom to explore remote areas with fewer boats, it's inevitable that sometimes we will be with many other boats during a jaguar sighting. The texts below offer some insights and instructions for those situations.

- a) Good practices in the boat:
 - We should do what we expect of others, that includes, for example, staying seated and getting up only if there's no one behind you on another boat, so you won't block their vision.
 - Keep your voice down. While jaguars don't necessarily care about that, it's a bit unpolite to speak loud during wildlife observations.
- b) Patience: memorable wildlife moments normally only come with patience. That means sometimes having to wait for a couple hours or more – it usually pays off, but the results are not guaranteed.
- c) Boat positioning: boats don't function like a car, they are subject to the river currents, wind and other factors. It's impossible to immediately stop a boat, so we always ask that if you want to stop to photograph something, that you see and ask in advance. Your boat driver is extremely experienced and knows the needs of photographers, and he will always do his best to put you in the best position.
- d) Bring rain protection to the boat even on bright sunny days. Weather can change quickly.
- e) We provide personal umbrellas/sun shades for sun protection. They work much better than rooftops, but you should know how and when to use it. As always be aware of your surroundings.
- f) Boat speed: the boats we use are very fast and we can go full speed for a jaguar sighting. In this situation it's important to hold on to your belongings and to keep your bag closed.
- g) Toilet stops: we spend many hours on the river, so it's natural that we have to do a few toilet stops. The rivers don't have any structure to stop, so we go the old natural way – in the bush.
- h) Life vests: By law it's required to use life vests at all times, except when we are stopped, for example when we are photographing something.
- i) Seat choice: the boats used are spacious and stable, but we expect of the clients common sense in alternating seat positioning in the boat.



We understand that on the heat of the moment you may forget some of these recommendations. Your guide will always be paying attention though, so please don't mind if he remembers you. You would expect that from other guides in other boats.

Photography equipment

Consider bringing the following gear: a camera with a versatile zoom lens or a good prime lens, extra batteries, memory cards, lens cleaning equipment, and a waterproof bag to protect your equipment from potential rain or water splashes.

Much detailed information on our blog: [Equipment to bring to the Pantanal](#)

Safety

The lodges we visit and other places we go during the tours are safe from a criminal point of view. Of course, in airports and other urban areas, always pay attention to your belongings.

Tipping

Tips are expected in a few situations during our tours, such as:

- Boat drivers, car or van drivers, local guides and Hotel staff (for this there is usually a tip box)

Tips at restaurants are included on the bill as 10%, paying it is optional, of course. If you don't want to pay the tip at restaurants you must inform, because it's already included on the final price.

Normally local money (Real - singular; Reais - plural) is better for tipping, but it can also be in Dollars or Euros.

We are now including tips for the staff on all our trip prices. Check if tips are already included or not in your trip. If they are not and you wish to include it, please contact us and we can include that for your final payment, if you wish. We will then take care of all the tipping for the personnel working for us during the trips.

We understand tipping is personal and the amount given, if anything at all, is up to each person. Please feel free to ask this to your guide during the tour. Below are a few rough suggestions of what we would consider an "average" tip, per person, per day of work for group tours. Please note that for custom tours or small groups, these amounts per person are expected to be higher.

Boat driver: BRL 100

Car or van driver: BRL 30

Local guides: BRL 70

Hotel staff: difficult to say per day, as it depends on number of people and the degree of attention given to the group specially or just as part of their daily routines with the hotel, but roughly around BRL 20.

