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# Tour Notes

**Pantanal Explorer**

**Tour Duration – 11 Days**



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●○○○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●●●

**Tour Pace - Moderate**

## Tour Highlights

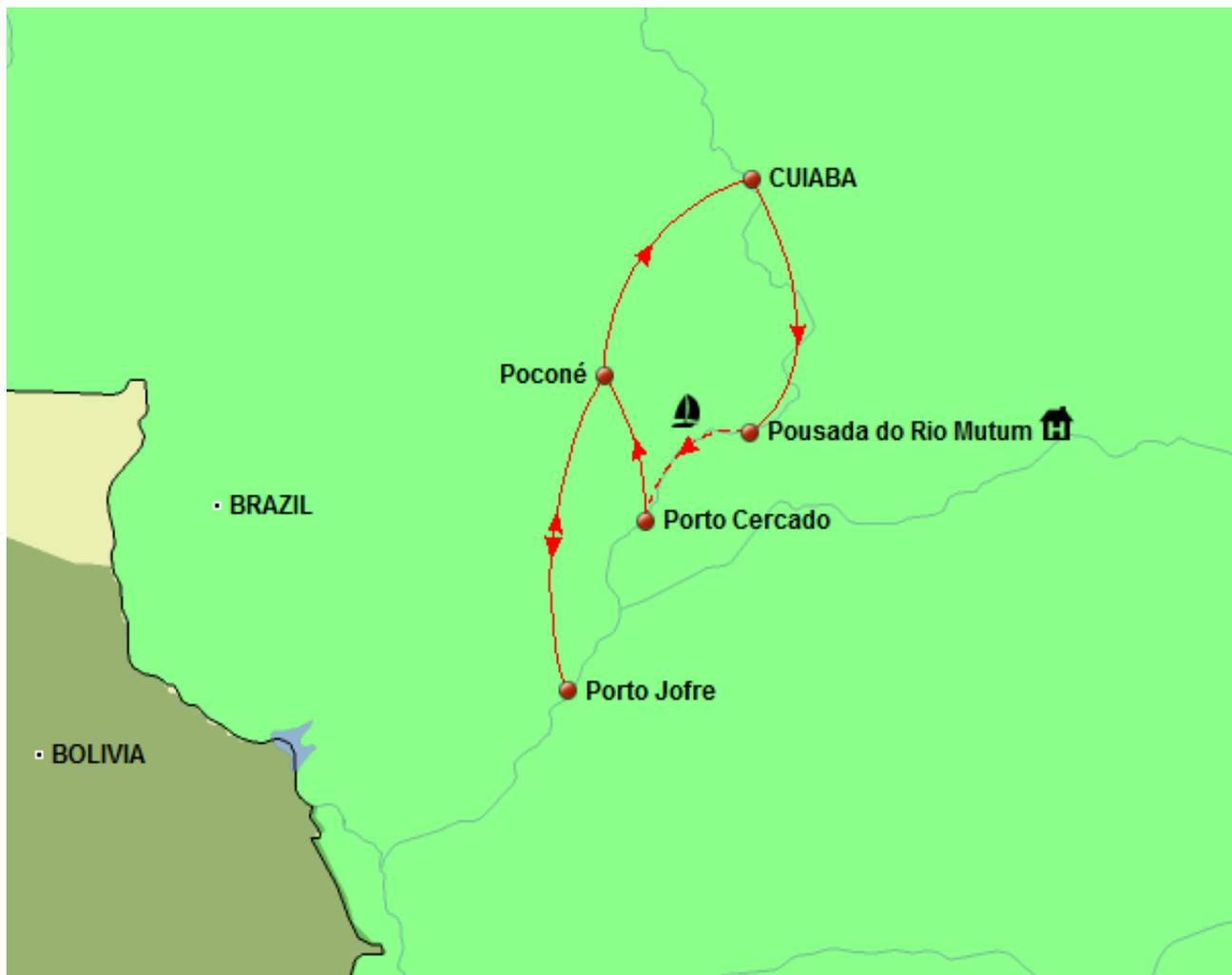
- ✓ Exploring two different sections of the Northern Pantanal region
- ✓ Excellent chances of seeing the majestic Jaguar
- ✓ Observe amazing biodiversity at a leisurely pace
- ✓ Wildlife excursions will be both land based and water based





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## Tour Map – Brazil - Pantanal Explorer



### Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of comfortable hotels/lodges and comfortable cabins on a boat  
**Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary  
**Group Size:** Minimum 2 - Maximum of 10 clients  
**Start Point:** Cuiabá  
**End Point:** Cuiabá  
**Transport:** Van for transfers, open safari truck and boats for excursions  
**Country Visited:** Brazil





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### **Brazil - Pantanal Explorer**

Pantanal' comes from the Portuguese word for swamp, and this biodiversity hotspot covers a huge area of swampland, grasslands and thick forest as large as a small European country. Travel with us and discover the incredibly rich biodiversity of the Pantanal region of Brazil. On this intimate tour with a maximum group size of only 10, we will explore in depth through land and water-based excursions staying in two different areas of the Northern Pantanal. After leaving Cuiabá, our first destination is the Pousada do Rio Mutum, an attractive eco-lodge boasting a lovely setting with a high focus on sustainability. Here we will enjoy walks, canoeing and horse-riding (all suitable for beginners) as well as exploring by jeep. The second half of the trip is where turn our attention to searching for the magnificent Jaguar as we navigate the winding and shimmering channels, using our comfortable expedition boat as base. For the wildlife enthusiast, this is an adventure not to be missed.

### **Tour itinerary notes**

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

### **Tour Guide**

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. You will be accompanied by a local guide from Day 2 to Day 10 of the tour. Airport transfers may not be operated by a guide but by driver only. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

## *Itinerary*

### **Day 1 - Arrive Cuiabá**

On arrival at Cuiabá airport you will be transferred to the hotel with the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight Deville Prime Cuiabá or similar – No meals or guided services.

### **Day 2 - Cuiabá – Pousada do Rio Mutum (approx. Driving time is 2.5 hours)**

This morning you will meet your local guide and after breakfast, transfer through the Pantanal region by car to Pousada do Rio Mutum, passing through the small town of Santo Antonio do Leverger and the villages of Porto de Fora, and Mimoso. On the way to the lodge, we will look out for birds, small animals, and taking note of the landscape, and the typical buildings of the inhabitants of the Pantanal. Following arrival at the lodge, enjoy a welcome drink, followed by check-in, lunch and a lecture as an introduction to the Pantanal region, with presentation of cartographic maps and satellite images. Later, take a short walk to observe the various species of birds and other animals that inhabit the private area of the lodge. The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure and this evening a tasty piranha broth will be served followed by typical dishes from the region. (BLD)

### **Pousada do Rio Mutum Lodge**

This Pousada is situated in one of the most beautiful regions of the Pantanal swamp region, 140 kilometres from Cuiaba (a 2.5-hour drive, partly via a dirt track).



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It consists of 22 fully air-conditioned chalets, each with a spacious bedroom, private bathroom and veranda which looks out on to a woodland park home to a huge variety of wildlife, flora and fauna. The Pousada has a restaurant that serves a varied regional buffet as well as a bar, swimming pool and souvenir shop. For the offered excursions there are Jeeps for going on safari, and canoes and motorboats for trips out along the river- the Pousada even runs a trip through the woodland on horseback.

### **Sustainability at Pousada do Rio Mutum Lodge**

Sustainability is a key focus. Guests are encouraged to minimize their use of water, reuse towels, and sort their litter into the separate bins provided by the Pousada to reduce their impact on the environment. As well as this, the Pousada has a modern ecological sewage treatment system and solar powered water heating facilities; Rio Mutum is also investing in the construction of the Associação Comunitária Cuiabá-Mirim, a local community centre which aims to offer courses and activities that will facilitate greater cultural and intellectual development in the area, and promote an exchange of experiences between locals and visitors.

### **Pantanal**

The Pantanal straddles the borders of Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia and is the world's largest wetland region. Its plains and low scrubby forests are home to over 1000 species of bird and 300 different mammals, including tapirs, anteaters, Jabiru storks and the striking Hyacinth macaw. Concentrating on the incredibly rich northern Pantanal, we divide our time between an eco-friendly lodge and also aboard a boat, journeying deep into the Pantanal in search of the jaguar, the largest and most elusive feline in the Americas. These solitary predators, as well as being formidable opponents on land, are strong swimmers and are known to frequent the waterways we will explore.

### **Day 3 - Pantanal exploration**

After breakfast, enjoy an ecological walk, the duration will be approximately 3 hours, to explore the unique nature, passing through wooded areas, forests and open fields in search of birds, mammals, reptiles, plants and other components of the Pantanal ecosystem. Return for lunch. This afternoon take a boat ride on the Mutum River, a duration of approximately 3 hours. In these winding waterways, besides the vegetation, we hope to observe giant otters (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) rays (*Iymma Taeniura*) and schools of small fish. In addition, we will be looking out for the many possible bird species on the banks. Return to the lodge for dinner. After dinner, we head out night spotlighting by jeep or boat, for approximately 2 hours, exploring the surroundings in search of nocturnal creatures thriving in this wetland environment.

**Please Note:** *The walk is of an easy grade but you must be well protected against the sun and heat. Please wear wide brimmed hat and light loose clothes. The pace will be very leisurely as you will be stopping frequently when observing flora and fauna.*

### **Day 4 - Pantanal Exploration**

After breakfast, take a boat ride, a duration of approximately 3 hours, visiting a fishing village on the banks of Rio Cuiabá. This village named Cuiabá Mirim is a lovely spot marked by its simplicity and the spontaneity of its inhabitants. It is possible to interact with the native people, who exist by way of fishing and subsistence agriculture, and to appreciate their customs and peaceful coexistence with their immediate environment. This afternoon, enjoy a land safari by jeep to a village named Capoeirinha, around 15 km's from the lodge. This activity will last approximately 3 hours. During this time our focus will be to search for one of the bird species most threatened with extinction in the Pantanal: the hyacinth macaw (*Anodorhynchus hyacinthinus*). By late afternoon, we return hoping to spot mammals and other animals on the way. Return to the lodge for dinner. (BLD)



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### Day 5 - Pantanal Exploration

An early start at 4:30 a.m. for a magical sunrise experience. We take to the waterways for some leisurely and very easy paddling (that can be enjoyed by all abilities) in canoes for about 1.5 hours in order to appreciate the dazzling spectacle of the awakening of nature in the Pantanal. Return to the lodge for breakfast. After breakfast for those that wish there will be a horseback riding tour (this is beginner level and no experience necessary), duration of up to 3 hours, to a typical farm on the border of Sia Mariana Bay. This path is excellent for observing local flora and fauna throughout the year. Return to the lodge for lunch and then this afternoon enjoy a 3 hour cruise down the Mutum River up to the Sia Mariana bay (8 km extension in the North/South direction). During this time, we will explore the banks of the bay and the channel connecting both the Sia Mariana bay and Chacororé bay. Throughout the year, one can observe different species of birds, reptiles and other animals. Stop for sunset and piranha fishing\*. On the way back to the lodge look out for nocturnal species as we spotlight in search for animals. (BLD)

\* The piranha fishing occurs in the months of February to September. In the period from October 1 to January 31, it is prohibited to fish in rivers, lakes and bays of Mato Grosso, because it is the breeding period.

**Note:** For clients that do not wish to canoe or horse ride alternative activities can be arranged but the guide will stay with the main group.

### Day 6 - Pousada do Rio Mutum – Porto Jofre (Approx. driving time 4.5 hours)

After breakfast, check out and then transfer by boat to Porto Cercado (approx. 3 h) with a photo stop at Ninhal Porto da Fazenda, home to the nests of over 1000 birds of different species (great white egrets, jabiru storks, American wood storks, cocoi herons, etc.). We then transfer by air-conditioned vehicle to Porto Jofre (approx. 4.5 h, 40 km paved road + 147 km unpaved road), stopping for lunch along the way. Later we board our home for the next 4 nights, to begin the next part of this enthralling wildlife adventure. This evening, the boat will navigate up the Cuiabá River for approx. 1.5 hours to reach the location where the first jaguar spotting opportunities of this trip will take place. Overnight on board. (BLD)

### Days 7 to 9 - Pantanal Exploration by boat

For the next 3 days you will enjoy two boat tours (before and after lunch, respectively) in search of the legendary jaguar and other magnificent species such as giant river otters, caimans, and capybaras, on the rivers Cuiabá, Piquiri, Três Irmãos and also some of the smaller creeks. All meals are served on the boat. Overnight on board. (BLD)

**Note:** The boat excursions are usually from 7 – 11am and from 2pm – 6pm so a total of 8 hours per day.

### Rio Mutum boat

The comfortable boat by Rio Mutum is anchored in a strategic area of Porto Jofre, a primary place to spot jaguars and other species of animals that inhabit the Pantanal. The boat offers 8 double cabins with single box beds, air conditioning, TV and private bathroom. The restaurant serves regional food and the panoramic deck is the best area for a barbecue. The tours for wildlife spotting are done every day in speed boats with 90HP engines and capacity for 9 passengers each.

### Day 10 - Porto Jofre – Cuiabá (Approx. driving time is 5 hours)

After breakfast, check out and transfer back to Cuiabá via Poconé, an overall journey time of around 5 hours. On arrival the rest of the day is at leisure with no excursions arranged. Overnight Deville Prime Cuiabá or similar (B)

### Day 11 - Departure from Cuiabá

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B)



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Please note that onward extension can be arranged throughout Brazil to places such as Amazonas region, Iguazu Falls, or city breaks to Rio de Janeiro or Sao Paolo. Please contact us for details.

## Tour Inclusions / Exclusions

### Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers  
All accommodation as per the itinerary  
Accompanying local naturalist guide  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

### Excluded:

International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Visas  
Drinks  
Any personal expenses

## Important Information

### Foreign Travel Advice Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to the parts of Brazil that we travel to on this tour. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

### Accommodation and Meals

#### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.





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### Accommodation Rating

Accommodation on this tour is of a simple but comfortable standard and rooms will have air conditioning at the lodge and on the boat. Please see the itinerary for the description of the accommodation in the Pantanal.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

### Food & Drink

Brazilians usually eat two hot meals a day, with lunch (*almoço*) being the largest. Dinner (*jantar*) is usually a little lighter. In smaller towns and villages employees have a 2-hour break for lunch. In bigger cities lunchtime is shorter, but is never less than 1 hour. In Brazil the so-called self-service restaurants (*comida a kilo* or *peso*) are very popular. People put food on their plate from an extensive buffet, put the plate on a scale at the end and pay a fixed rate per kilogram. In restaurants, dishes are often supposed to be shared - i.e. they serve more than 1 person. It is always good to check whether a meal serves 1 or 2 people. The more upscale restaurants serve dishes for 1 person only. Each region in Brazil has its own specialties: among the most famous are the cuisine from Bahia (with its *moquecas*), from Minas Gerais, the many fresh water fish specialties from the Amazon, and the barbecue restaurants which can be found all across Brazil and that work according to the *rodízio* ("all you can eat") system, serving up many different kinds of meat straight from the barbeque to your table. Also famous in Brazil are its many tropical fruits that are made into juices and cocktails as well as being served in meals. *Petiscos*, little bar snacks that accompany drinks, are very popular in Brazil as well. Service is usually included in the bill (10%); otherwise, it is customary to leave a tip.

Outside of Cuiabá all meals are included on the tour. The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch GBP 10.00

Dinner GBP 10.00

### Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer GBP2.00



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Water GBP 1.00 (500 ml)

### Tipping

Tipping is not mandatory and it is not expected. However for good service tips for your local guide and boat crew will be gratefully accepted. As a guide allow for USD 150 per person for the boat expedition for the crew and the guide.

### Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** ATM facilities will only be found at Cuiabá airport and in Cuiabá itself.

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** Cards are widely accepted in Brazil. Pousada do Rio Mutum accepts cards; the Pantanal expedition boat does not accept cards, as there is no internet on the boat. For this part of the trip, you should bring enough cash for personal expenses.

**Local Currency:** Brazilian Real

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** US Dollar. What usually works best is to validate the bank card for international withdrawals before the trip and get cash out (in BRL) upon arrival.

**Where to Exchange:** There are places to exchange money at the airport and in Cuiabá itself

### Joining your Tour

#### Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights to Cuiabá. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. If you are originating in the UK and Undiscovered Destinations books your flights then your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

#### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

#### Visa Information

British nationals can normally enter Brazil without a visa as a tourist. For further information about visas see the website of the [Brazilian Consulate in London](#). Other nationalities should check with their nearest consulate or embassy.

#### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities.





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In addition certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### **Vaccinations & Protection**

As with travel to most parts of Asia, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

## *Preparing for your tour*

### **Climate**

April and May brings the start of the dry season with June to September being the peak of the dry season, when the water recedes into pools and so acts as a magnet for surrounding wildlife, making them more easily observed. Rainfall starts to build from October with the height of the rainy season usually from December to March. You should be prepared for very hot conditions during the day where temperatures can reach 35 degree Celsius and temperatures can drop markedly. Humidity can also be rather high. Please note that global climate and weather is increasingly difficult to predict so this information should only be used as a guide.

### **Suggested Clothing**

Light clothes in general are the way forward. Lightweight trousers, long sleeved shirts (light fabric/neutral colours), wide brimmed hat, trekking boots, swimming attire. Extra pair of shoes/sandals and waterproof rain coat. Thermal shirts or lightweight jacket for any cool evenings.

When out on the excursions it is essential that you protect yourself from the strong sun and are well hydrated.

### **Green Credentials**

On this tour we use partners and properties that have a high focus on sustainability and protecting the magnificent environment in which they are located. Please see the tour dossier description about the Pousada do Rio Mutum. To avoid excessive single use plastic, whilst you are on tour outside of Cuiaba, you will be able to refill your water bottle from safe water sources.



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### **Wildlife Expectations in the Pantanal**

On this tour you have the opportunity to see some amazing biodiversity. We travel to the places where you have the very best chances of excellent sightings including Jaguars. However these animals are wild and sightings can never be guaranteed. So please enjoy what nature has to offer and keep expectations realistic.

### **Equipment**

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared and to be adequately immunized. A good insect repellent and bite cream is advisable. Suncream/sunblock is a must – please ensure you bring enough as it may not be available locally. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. A torch or head lamp may come in useful in certain areas. Of course as this is a trip with the potential for excellent biodiversity, a good birding/wildlife book of the Pantanal, binoculars, and a camera with a telephoto lens would be recommended. Extra batteries for camera equipment may be useful.

### **Footwear**

For most of this tour, sandals or flip-flop style footwear is adequate. We would recommend that you also bring something sturdier such as trainers or comfortable walking boots/shoes for land based excursions.

### **Luggage on tour**

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

### **Electric Supply & Plugs**

European 2 round pin style is the most common but we recommend taking a travel adaptor.

### **Tour Itinerary Versions**

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes updated 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.