

## Brazil Special Adventure and Honeymoon (Premium) Dossier

Brazil is an astonishing mixture of experiences – the perfect combination of adventure and sensuality, discovery and romanticism. From the vast and mysterious Amazon rainforest to the urban bustle of Rio de Janeiro, set in one of the world's loveliest locations, this exotic mixture of cultures and races is uniquely seductive.

### Highlights

- Vibrant nightlife of Rio de Janeiro
- Colonial beauty of Paraty
- The magnificent Iguazu Falls
- Pristine beaches of Buzios



# Factfile

**Transfers** - Arrival and departure transfers to airports.

**Escorted Tours by English-speaking guide.** Transfers with driver. Services of local representatives in Rio and Iguazu, and local guides at selected sites.

**Transport** Private air-conditioned car for transfers.

**Activities** Extensive walking at sites, guided tour of Iguazu Falls, schooner cruise in Paraty.

**Accommodation** 5 nights superior hotels, 3 nights colonial hotels, 4 nights boutique beach hotel.

**Meals** As per itinerary.

B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner.

**Entrance Fees** Included for all sites listed as part of the itinerary.

## Itinerary

### DAY 1 - Rio de Janeiro

Arrival transfer to your hotel in Ipanema, on the seafront of Rio's most famous beach.

Upon arrival at Rio International Airport (Antonio Carlos Jobin or Galeao) please look for our representative who will be holding a sign with your name or The Imaginative Traveller on it. He should be waiting for you in the Arrivals Hall (i.e. after exiting the Immigration and Customs area).

#### Rio de Janeiro

Sprawled beneath the outspread arms of Christ the Redeemer, Rio de Janeiro has one of the most beautiful settings of any city in the world. Discovered by Portuguese navigator Goncalo Coelho on 1st January 1502, it was named Rio de Janeiro after the month in which it was founded. Picturesquely set against the dramatic backdrop of precipitous, forest-covered mountains and ridges of bare rock, overlooking the glistening azure expanse of the Atlantic, Rio stretches along the south-western shore of the Baia de Guanabara. Boasting one of the healthiest climates in the tropics and some of the finest beaches in the world at Copacabana and Ipanema, Rio is a city dedicated to leisure. The city is famed for the Carnival, held on the Friday before Ash Wednesday, when the streets explode into life, heaving with dancers clad in the skimpiest of costumes, parading around Rio to the refrain of sultry samba music.

Divided between Zone Norte and Zone Sul, Rio has some of the finest examples of colonial architecture and cultural artefacts remaining anywhere in the world. Scattered along the Praca 15 de Novembro are Rio's greatest concentration of historical buildings, with the remnants of the original port still standing at its seaward end. In the hilly suburbs south-west of the centre, Santa Teresa is the Montmartre of Rio de Janeiro, with something of a bohemian atmosphere. Here artists and intellectuals gather in the terraced cafés and bars that line the narrow, winding streets. The area is full of restaurants with live music, and there are spectacular views across the city from the Parque das Ruínas, a former mansion that is now a cultural centre.

#### Praia Ipanema

The Praia Ipanema is ideally located literally a stone's throw from one of the most beautiful beaches in Rio, with fabulous views out over the ocean and towards the mountains. Nearby there are a huge number of shops, restaurants and bars at which you can sample Rio's famous nightlife!

### DAY 2 TO DAY 3 - Rio de Janeiro

Two full days in Rio, the beating heart of Brazil. Against a stunning backdrop of lush green mountains, spectacular beaches and turquoise sea, the city is awake 24 hours a day and the buzz is tangible. There are endless options – visit the landmarks that has made this beautiful city internationally famous: the enormous statue of Christ the Redeemer and the famous Sugar Loaf Mountain; enjoy the sun on Ipanema or Copacabana beach, dance till dawn in one of the many nightclubs or explore the historic centre. (B)

## DAY 4 - PARATY

Drive south to the colonial gem of Paraty, a charming town by the sea and main port for exporting gold and coffee until the 19th century. (B)

Approx. 4 - 4.5 hours driving.

### Paraty

Paraty (or Parati) is located on the Costa Verde, a lush, green corridor that runs along the coastline of the state of Rio de Janeiro. As a preserved Portuguese colonial and Brazilian Imperial (1822-1889) town Paraty has some of the finest collections of classical 18th century Portuguese colonial architecture. In recent years it has become a popular tourist destination, renowned for its beauty, magnificent coastline and beautiful mountainous backdrop. As the area is surrounded by many Nature Parks, including Serra da Bocaina National Park, and Serra do Mar State Park there is a great deal to see and do here. Sea breezes alleviate the heat and afternoon rains are common during the summer, which helps to provide a welcome break from the intense Brazilian heat.

### Pousada do Sandi

Located in the heart of the old centre of Paraty, Pousada do Sandi is housed in a beautiful colonial mansion dating back to the 18th century. Now converted to a luxury boutique hotel, the traditionally styled spacious rooms are delightful and offer views over the old city. There are also a number of comfortable, light and airy common areas where you can relax.

## DAY 5 - PARATY

Today you will take a trip in a schooner around the bay stopping for a swim at beautiful beaches. (BL)

### Schooner Excursion

Paraty is surrounded by more than 65 islands of unique beauty, each covered with lush vegetation and surrounded by crystal clear waters and an abundance of aquatic life. You will enjoy a cruise amongst these islands, stopping every so often for a swim and the opportunity to snorkel (masks and snorkels are provided). Lunch is also provided on board and the excursion lasts approximately 5 hours.

## DAY 6 - PARATY

A full free day to enjoy this pleasant town and the natural wonders that surround it. You can explore the delightful Portuguese architecture, or hike the Gold Trail, a partly cobbled trail through the mountains built by slaves in the 18th century to bring gold down to the port. (B)

### The Gold Trail

In the early 1700's Paraty became a major gold shipping port, after the discovery of the world's richest gold mines in the mountains of Minas Gerais. Gold would be transported over mountains to Paraty and then shipped to Portugal. The ensuing gold rush led to the construction of the Gold Trail, a 1,200 kilometer road, which connected Paraty to Diamantina via Ouro Preto and Tiradentes. This road was used to transport gold to Paraty, as well as supplies, miners and African slaves over the mountains to and from the gold mining areas. Two substantial sections of the Caminho do Ouro have been excavated near Paraty and are now a popular tourist destination for hiking. The Gold Trail eventually fell into disuse because pirate attacks on the gold laden ships meant a safer, overland route from Minas Gerais to Rio de Janeiro was created and was in use until the gold finally ran out in the late 1700s.

## DAY 7 - SAO PAULO - IGUAZU

In the morning you will be transferred to Sao Paulo airport to board your flight to Foz de Iguazu. (B)

## DAY 8 - IGUAZU FALLS

The majestic Iguazu Falls, on the border between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina, make for one of the most awe-inspiring natural wonders in the world. Situated in the middle of the rainforest, some 275 individual cascades plummet over the cliffs and into the gorge below. Early in the morning you drive into Argentina to visit the Argentinean side of the falls with your guide. Upon return to Brazil, you visit the Brazilian side of the falls. (BL)

### **Iguazu Falls**

Straddling the border between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina, the waterfalls and cataracts at Iguazu Falls stretch for 4km where the Rio Iguazu tumbles over a succession of gorges. Opinion is divided as to which side offers the best views, depending largely on the nationality of the person you ask. Meaning 'great water' in Guarani, the Iguazu Falls were declared a UNESCO Natural Heritage of Mankind Site in 1986. The mist produced from the tons of cascading water has created a lush rainforest with an abundance of tropical vegetation. Orchids, bromeliads, begonias, ferns, bamboo and palms flank the trails, and wildlife includes red brocket deer, tegu lizard, and five species of toucan. There are over 100 species of butterfly here, including the electric blue morpho. According to local folklore, the gorge is said to have been made by an angry god after a tribesman stole a virgin, but upon seeing the love they shared, the god calmed the waters and surrounded the falls with beautiful flora and fauna.

### **Bourbon Cataratas**

The Bourbon Cataratas is conveniently located close to the Iguazu Falls and is the ideal base from which to explore the area. Excellent food is available at the various restaurants and there is a large swimming pool where you can cool off.

## DAY 9 - RIO – BUZIOS

Fly back to Rio. Upon arrival, transfer to Buzios, one of the hidden jewels of the Brazilian coast. (B)

### **Buzios**

The elegant resort of Buzios was little more than a fishing village in beautiful surroundings until it was discovered by Brigitte Bardot in 1964, leading to the town being coined 'Brazil's St Tropez'. Indeed the surrounding landscape seems more South of France than South America. In the main settlement of Armacao narrow cobbled streets are overlooked by Portuguese colonial villas and there are a variety of restaurants and cafés to choose from. There are several beautiful beaches nearby - 27 in all - easily accessible on foot. The clearest water for snorkelling is said to be off the beaches of Azeda and Azedinha, to the north of Armacao. The best restaurants are in the centre of Armacao along the Rua das Pedras, with many specialising in seafood. The town has a thriving nightlife which starts late and carries on till dawn.

Approx. 2.5 – 3 hours driving

## DAY 10 TO DAY 12 - Buzios

Standing on a peninsula, Buzios is surrounded by twenty two beaches of rare beauty, and is the perfect place to relax sipping caipirinhas or to experience as much adventure and nightlife as you want. (B)

### **Pousada Casas Brancas**

Pousada Casas Brancas is a hip and charming boutique hotel nestled in the hills overlooking the stunning bay of Buzios. The Pousada boasts elegant Mediterranean architecture, attentive staff and a refined and laid-back atmosphere.

## DAY 13 - BUZIOS – RIO

Transfer to Rio airport in time for your international flight. (B)

## Itinerary Notes

Why not extend your trip with an extension to the Amazon? Ask your travel consultant for details.

## Supplementary Information

### Staffing

Throughout the tour you will be provided with all the assistance that you will need. You will have the services of a qualified guide at Iguazu, on the schooner trip from Paraty and in the Amazon. All transfers will be with an English speaking driver / guide (except Paraty to Sao Paulo, which will be with a Portuguese speaking driver).

### Hotels

We have selected some of the finest hotels that Brazil has to offer so that you can be confident that you will experience the highest level of comfort possible. Whilst each hotel retains its own character, they all offer superb service and cuisine.

All of the hotels that we have listed in the itinerary will be booked subject to availability. If we are unable to secure a booking at the selected hotel we will suggest a suitable alternative; however please be aware that some of the places that we visit have only a limited selection of accommodation and the alternative may not be of equivalent standard. Where this is the case, we may be able to offer a small discount off the cost of the trip to reflect the lower standard. Please discuss this with your travel consultant at the time of booking, if appropriate.

### Standard or Premium?

It is possible to upgrade this tour so that you will stay in deluxe rooms at each hotel.

### Local Transport

#### Taxis

Taxis are often the best way to get around within a city. Taxis are metered with two different rates – the second, more expensive one, covers trips after 8pm, on Sundays and public holidays, and certain destinations such as the airport or bus station. In smaller towns and rural areas there is often no meter so it's best to agree a fare in advance.

#### Buses

Buses in cities can get very crowded. You enter at the back and pass through a turnstile where you pay the fare, which is not normally more than 50c. We do not recommend that you use buses after dark.

#### Metro

Rio de Janeiro has a good metro system, offering one of the safest and most comfortable ways to get about. Tickets can be bought as single or return and are available in sets of 10 as well.

#### Visas

Currently citizens from most Western European countries including the UK and Ireland can visit Brazil for up to 90 days without a visa. Australian, New Zealand, USA and Canadian citizens will need to obtain a visa valid for arrival in Brazil within 90 days of issue. However, the situation does change periodically, so you should always check with your local Brazilian embassy. You will need to show a passport that is valid for at least six months, and an onward flight ticket, or proof that you have funds to purchase one. You are required to fill in an entry card on arrival and a carbon copy of this will be stapled to your passport. Do not lose this as you may be fined on departure if you do not present it. You will also need the original yellow copy of your international yellow fever certificate to obtain your visa (if required) and to enter the country.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of the correct visas for your holiday and onward travel. The Imaginative Traveller cannot accept responsibility for anyone who is refused entry to a country because they lack the correct documentation.

For the latest information for your nationality you should contact your local Brazilian Embassy or Consulate.

If the visa application form requires a contact address in the destination, please give your meeting point hotel: Praia Ipanema Hotel

Av. Vieira Souto, 706  
Ipanema  
Rio de Janeiro RJ  
Brasil cep 22 420-000  
Tel: +55 21 2141 4949

### **Travel Insurance**

Fully Comprehensive travel insurance is compulsory for all travellers. All travellers are advised to take insurance to cover cancellation and curtailment, baggage loss or damage, medical expenses, emergency travel, repatriation and personal accident, before leaving their country. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fully insured to financially safeguard against unforeseen circumstances.

### **Border Taxes**

There is a departure tax of US\$36 on all international flights.

### **Money**

The monetary unit in Brazil is the Real (R\$). 1 Real = 100 centavos.

We recommend that you bring a combination of US\$ cash and cards. Notes should be blemish free. Traveller's cheques should only be brought as an emergency reserve as they are often hard to exchange. There is no restriction on the amount of foreign currency that you may bring into Brazil, provided you declare amounts over R\$10,000. There is often a general lack of small change and we recommend maintaining a supply of small denomination notes and coins. Notes are in denominations of R\$100, 50, 10, 5 and 1.

If you arrive in the evening, it is advisable to get some local currency at the airport as it might be difficult to obtain late at night in the city.

Approximate exchange rates (as at Jan 08) are as follows:

- 1 Pound Sterling = R\$3.5
- 1 US Dollar = R\$1.76
- 1 Euro = R\$2.6

Visit XE.com for the latest rate of exchange.

### **Changing Money, Credit Cards & ATMs**

ATMs are marked Cartao. Visa cards work with Banco do Brasil and Mastercard works in HSBC, Itau and Banco Mercantil. Increasingly Brazilian ATM machines are accepting Cirrus and Maestro cards, particularly Banco de Brasil, but do not rely on your ATM card alone – carry a reserve of cash in case. ATMs only allow withdrawal of US\$15 or equivalent between 10pm and 6am. Many banks close at weekends, although airport banks are usually open 7 days a week. There are two rates of exchange – official - from a bank and turismo - from hotels or travel agencies, which is slightly less.

Although bank cards are often the easiest way to go, there are times where they will not work for you even if your bank at home tells you it will. Do not rely on your card as your only source of money. Always have a few back-ups with you.

### **Tipping**

Tipping is a way of life in Brazil; wages are generally low and are then supplemented by tips. The following guidelines should help you to work out how much to tip, but you should remember that tipping is discretionary. If you have not received a good service, you should not tip whereas if the service has been particularly good, you might want to give more than we suggest.

Waiters can be left 10% of the bill

Porters – US\$2 per bag

Driver – approximately US\$5 per couple per day

Guide – approximately US\$10 per couple per day

Amazon Lodge – US\$10 per person per day

Paraty schooner excursion – US\$5 per couple

### **Voltage & Plug Sockets**

The voltage in Brazil is 110/220.

There are three kinds of electrical sockets;

- European two-pronged variety
- American style with two flat pins and one circular grounding pin
- Japanese style with two parallel flat blades

### **Safety**

Brazil has gained something of a reputation for crime, but it is important to keep a sense of perspective. While some shanty towns or favelas may be dangerous places, they are not generally places that tourists visit. There is some street crime, normally pickpocketing or occasional bag snatching. It is advisable not to wear expensive-looking watches or jewellery and don't leave a wallet in your back pocket or carry loose hanging bags. Keep your camera concealed when not in use. Keep money hidden in a money belt, and a separate amount to pay for things so you do not have to keep opening the money belt.

Remember that most thieves don't use violence but rely on diversionary tactics which can take place at anytime of the day or night. Do not be paranoid, but just be aware of what could happen at all times. Always be vigilant and the chances are that nothing will happen to you. It's generally safer in cities to take a taxi rather than to walk, and at night try to stick to busy, well-lit streets. The safety of our passengers is our number one concern so please take notice of any local advice given by our representative or the hotel.

### **Meals**

Breakfast is provided each day. Lunches and dinners are only included whilst in the Amazon.

### **Food and Drink**

As a guideline, eating out in a cheap café will cost around R\$15-30 for a main meal, although there are usually a variety of snacks available, such as empadinha, a small pie that comes with various fillings of meat or shrimp. In an expensive restaurant you might pay between R\$40-60. Tipping is always appreciated as wages are very low. All drinks such as water, soft or alcoholic drinks are at your own expense at all times. The following is a guideline for drinks bought in a shop in the street. Prices in restaurants and hotels can sometimes be more than double the prices specified below:

- 1 litre of water: R\$1.20
- Suco (juice): R\$3.00
- Bottle of beer: R\$2.70

### **Food**

Brazilian food is divided into quite distinct regions. In Minas Gerais, Comida Mineira describes the regional cuisine, based mainly on pork and spinach with refried beans. Comida Baiana is from the Salvador coast, and uses a lot of fish, hot peppers and coconut milk. Comida do Sertao comes from the north-east, and features a lot more meat, as well as various beans and tubers grown in the region. Comida Gaucha is found in Rio Grande do Sul, and involves vast quantities of meat grilled on charcoal.

If there is a national dish it is feijoada, a stew of pork and beans garnished with oranges. Otherwise the mainstay is generally beef or chicken with rice and beans. A set meal of this is called prato feito or prato comercial.

Given the climate there is a wide variety of tropical fruits like mango, papaya, passion fruit and other exotic items from the Amazon. These are used as the base for ice cream and the fresh fruit juice known as suco.

### **Drinks**

Coffee is the national drink, served strong and sweet in small cups – ask for cafézinho, as café just refers to coffee beans. Tea is often good, especially cha maté, a strong green tea. Fruit juices called sucos are especially good. A local fizzy drink called guarana is also popular.

Beer is usually of the lager variety – draught beer is called chopp. The main spirit is cachaca, rum made of sugar cane. It can be rough, but there are some smoother brands such as Velho Barreiro and Cachaca 51. The best way to drink it is in a caipirinha, mixed with fresh limes, sugar and crushed ice.

### **Special Dietary Requirements**

#### **Vegetarians**

If you are a strict vegetarian you may experience a distinct lack of variety in the food available, especially in small towns. There are usually good salads on offer, but you might find that you are eating a lot of omelettes and other

egg dishes as well as rice and beans. We will do our best to organise interesting vegetarian alternatives for included meals, but your patience and understanding is requested.

### **Food Allergies**

If you have food allergies or preferences, please make them known to us and we will do our best to ensure that your requirements are met.

## **General information**

### **Communications**

#### **Email**

As with most places around the world, the easiest and cheapest form of communication is via the Internet. You will find Internet cafés in every major town. The average cost is approx. \$1.50-\$3 per hour. Connection is generally slower in the smaller, more remote places. In bigger towns some internet cafés are now starting to offer internet phone calls which are cheaper than phone cards.

#### **Phone**

There are many public phones in Brazil which take phonecards sold by newspaper stands and cafés. A 5 reis card will do several local calls, but for an international one you'll need a higher value card. Long distance calls can also be made from a posto telefonico where you are assigned a booth. The trick with Brazilian phones is persistence. If the tone is engaged, try several times and you will usually get a connection.

#### **Post**

The postal service is generally reliable and stamps are available everywhere, but post office queues can be lengthy.

### **Cameras**

#### **Availability of Film**

35mm 100 ASA film is generally available, but is often of uncertain vintage and is expensive. Anything else is hard to come by, so bring plenty. Small batteries can be difficult to find as well. In the Amazon you may need a faster film such as 400 ASA as it can be surprisingly dark. A polarising filter is a good idea for SLR cameras. Increasing numbers of internet cafes will burn a memory stick from a digital camera to CD.

### **Weather**

The south of Brazil is temperate, with a distinct winter between June and September. Even so, temperatures are cool rather than cold. The climate along the coast is warm and pleasant all year. In Rio and Sao Paulo the rainy season lasts from October to January; further north, it begins around April and lasts for about 3 months. Even in the rainy season the weather is mostly fine with occasional downpours. Summer (December to March) is hot, with top temperatures ranging from 25°C (77°F) to 40°C (104°F). It can also be very humid. Winter temperatures range from around 20°C (68°F) to 30°C (86°F).

### **Suggested Reading**

#### **Guidebooks**

- Lonely Planet Brazil (6th edition, 2006).
- Rough Guide to Brazil.

#### **Background Reading**

- Tristes Tropiques (By Claude Lévi-Strauss) .
- Getting to know Waiwai: An Amazonian Ethnography (By Alan Campbell).

### **Contact Details**

Local Office

Rentamar Turismo

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24hr Emergency Contact

Tel: +51 849 652 116