



TOUR INFORMATION FOR BRAZIL: Bahia region

These notes are designed to help you prepare fully for the tour. Please read carefully.

ENTERING BRAZIL: United Kingdom citizens will need a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry into Brazil. A visa is not required when entering Brazil as a tourist. Citizens of other countries should consult their nearest Brazilian consulate for entry requirements. Please remember that any tourist card you receive on your flight to Brazil must be kept in your passport at all times, and usually has to be surrendered upon departure.

It is always a good idea to take a photocopy of your passport and air ticket with you when travelling abroad. They can prove invaluable in helping you get replacements if your originals are lost or stolen. Obviously you should keep the photocopies in a separate bag to the originals.

INTRODUCTORY MEETING: This tour begins upon your arrival in the afternoon of Day 1 in Salvador de Bahia. There will be a short introductory meeting at the first night's hotel.

END OF TOUR: The tour will end at 2 p.m. at the Porto Seguro airport after a farewell lunch. Please make sure all departing flights leave after 4 p.m. that day. People finding earlier flights can be dropped at the airport earlier than noon, but will then skip farewell lunch.

CURRENCY: The local currency is the Brazilian real. As the tour price includes all travel, hotel and main meal costs, you need only bring enough money to cover items of a personal nature such as laundry, drinks, postcards, souvenirs, etc. ATMs are available at the São Paulo airport if you wish to obtain some reals, but we suggest you bring some US dollars in cash as well. For any major items of expenditure, such as books or souvenirs, payment by credit card is recommended. Visa, Mastercard and American Express are all widely accepted.

LANGUAGE: Portuguese is spoken throughout Brazil. Some of the larger hotels have one or more employees who speak some English. Our leader will speak Portuguese so there will be no need for you to speak or understand the language. However, understanding a few basic words may add interest to your trip, so you might wish to consider bringing a small English-Portuguese dictionary or phrasebook with you.

CLIMATE: We'll be in Bahia at the very start of the rainy season, when song activity peaks. This usually means a good chance of an afternoon or evening rain or two, but it probably won't rain most days; having a poncho or travel umbrella in your daypack is recommended, but trails will not be muddy enough to warrant rubber boots. As we'll be at lower elevations during the entire tour, it will be hot in the sun, with daily highs usually in the upper 80's F (30 °C). Night and early morning can be cool (around 50°F; 10°C).

ALTITUDE: Locations visited during this tour are at low elevations, from sea level to about 4,000 feet.

PACE OF TOUR: As on most of our Neotropical tours, we have only 12 hours of sunlight for birding, and because Bahia is quite far east in the country, sunrise is around 05:00. We will therefore be making early starts most days (04:30-05:00) so as to be out in the field for the first few hours of the day when birds are most active. We will normally have very early breakfasts at our lodging before birding, rather than come back for a later breakfast.

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There will be occasional optional owling excursions before or after dinner, and these will of course be longer days. Although we walk at a slow to moderate pace, we will bird for hours at a time on most mornings. Be aware that you may not be able to return to the lodge or vehicle on your own if you become tired. Other than on traveling days, we will return each day to our accommodation for lunch, venturing out into the field again in mid-afternoon. Participants should be able to walk at a slow to moderate pace for four to five hours at a time with frequent long stops (the longest trail is about 3 km), and a small travel stool is handy for those who find standing for long periods especially tiring. Most trails are flat and well-maintained but may have numerous exposed roots and rocks. The trail to Morro do Pai Inacio is steep and rocky and only the fittest of us will be able to enjoy the view at the top, while most of the group will probably just hike the lower, easier part of the trail – enough to see most of the interesting birds there.

HEALTH: It is essential that you contact your own doctor to obtain the latest information on the region you are visiting. Please contact your doctor well in advance of your tour's departure as some medication must be initiated weeks before the period of possible exposure.

It is recommended that all travelers should be up to date on routine vaccinations. It is further recommended that most travelers have protection against Hepatitis A and Typhoid.

The areas we will visit free of Malaria. Yellow Fever vaccination is recommended but is not required to enter Brazil unless you have been to any of several South American, Central American, or African countries in the past 90 days.

Many potential health problems can be prevented by adequate protection against insects. Even when mosquitoes may be sparse, biting gnats and chiggers can still be a nuisance. To be protected, bring plenty of spray repellent and wear long sleeves and trousers when in the field. We recommend using insect repellents with a concentration of DEET.

Anyone who is unusually sensitive to insect bites and stings (ants, wasps) should consider bringing an antihistamine such as Benadryl; ask your doctor for more information. Although pharmacies in Brazil are excellent and well-supplied they will be difficult to visit during this tour's schedule, so bring enough medication to last the whole trip. A first-aid kit will be available at all times.

Insect repellent will provide adequate protection. Many brands use diethyltoluamide (DEET) which, while providing the best protection, can be corrosive and therefore require care when using. There are many 'natural' and less-harmful repellents available from various camping supply stores.

We do not often encounter snakes and take time to observe them whenever possible; most are not venomous, and venomous ones are not aggressive; we'll always be within driving distance of medical assistance in the case of an emergency. In any event, a small torch or headlamp is a necessity for navigating the paths between your room and dining areas at each lodge in the evenings.

One can never completely escape the risk of parasites or fungal infections. We avoid tap water but filtered and bottled water are readily available. Gastrointestinal problems are always a possibility while traveling; you may want to bring Imodium or some other reliable anti-diarrhea medication. Finally, you may wish to bring a broad-spectrum antibiotic in case of stubborn bacterial infections.

For further information on health advice refer to the Medical Advisory Services for Travellers Abroad website www.masta-travel-health.com

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ACCOMMODATION: We'll be staying in good quality hotels in Salvador, Lençóis and Porto Seguro. Hotels in Lençóis, Mucugê and Boa Nova are more simples but very nice options near our birding locations. In Serra Bonita we are staying in a family run lodge, where rooms and food is simple but with a wonderful view on the forest from your room terrace, excellent feeders and wonderful forest all around the lodge. All rooms will have a private shower and toilet. AC is available everywhere but at Serra Bonita (where the nights are cool and AC will not be needed).

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Laundry services are available at most of our hotels.

ELECTRICITY: Electricity varies in different parts of Brazil, usually being 110 volt and sometimes 220 volt. Outlets accept parallel prongs (without ground) in some places, but most of the places only accept rounded prongs with an excentred ground. You may find the following website helpful: <http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>.

FOOD: The food is varied and scrumptious throughout, typically served buffet style. A green salad (often with locally grown greens), rice, and beans are standard fare, and the main dishes, sides, and desserts vary continually.

Our tours are all-inclusive and no refunds can be issued for any tour meals participants choose to miss. While we will try to do all we can to accommodate the requirements of all participants, please note that we cannot guarantee all causes of food allergies can be avoided at every destination. Many restaurants offer set menus and are unable to accommodate all special requests within a group. Thus, participants with significant food allergies or special dietary needs should bring appropriate foods with them for those times when their needs can, regrettably, not be accommodated.

Our tours are carefully scheduled to insure the best possible birding experience and although the leaders will do all they can to make sure the group eats at a reasonable time, sometimes early or late lunches and/or evening meals cannot be avoided. Any participants who need to eat at specific times may need to bring supplemental food with them.

DRINKS: Bottled water, a soft drink or a beer (or wine if appropriate) are provided at meals, as is coffee or tea. In addition, we keep a supply of bottled water on the tour vehicles. Bottled or filtered water may also be provided in some of the rooms where we stay. As it can get hot and dry, we recommend you bring a large, good quality water bottle and keep this topped up.

INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONE ACCESS: WiFi will be available at all our hotels, though sometimes slow.

CLOTHING: Comfortable field clothes and shoes are essential. Please avoid bright whites and loud colours for your field clothing.

Short-sleeved shirts	Sun hat
Comfortable, sturdy footwear for trail walking	Shorts
Light shoes/sandals (for around the hotels)	
Long-sleeved shirts (recommended for protection from sun and insects)	
Long trousers for the field, preferably in a breathable, quick-drying fabric	
Folding umbrella and/or durable poncho (very useful in case of a tropical downpour)	

Note: We recommend not wearing clothing in the field that reflects ultraviolet light, including bright white and fluorescent (or "neon") colours. Birds can see near-UV light, and since shy birds are sensitive to our movements, such bright colours will be accentuated. Normal reds, yellows, oranges, blues, and greens are fine.

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MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: Please bring the following:

Notebook and pencil	Alarm clock
Torch or Head torch plus spare batteries	Sunscreen
Small day pack/rucksack	Compact umbrella
Insect repellent	Water bottle
Ear plugs (if you are a light sleeper)	Pocket knife
Rubber flipflops for showers	Wrist watch
Wash cloth (not provided by some hotels)	Travel clothesline
Small, collapsible travel stool	Cool-water laundry soap
Small overnight bag	Personal medication
Plastic bags (rain protection for optical equipment)	

Optional: Telescope and tripod (recommended if you have them), spare binoculars and spare spectacles (in case of loss or damage), field guide, swimwear. A telescope and tripod would be an advantage where we do a lot of open habitat birding. Elsewhere we spend much of our time in forest so unless you are particularly fond of using a telescope, one would be less useful here.

LEADER'S EQUIPMENT: The leader will provide the following:

Telescope	Basic first aid kit
Reference books and maps	Recording and playback equipment

LUGGAGE: Our Final Information document, which will be sent to you approximately three weeks before departure, will give details about baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour.

If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard 'Samsonite'-type suitcases) as these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour. Please note that on many tours there are no porters to carry your luggage so please ensure that **no bag is so heavy that you are unable to lift and carry it yourself**. As a general rule, in addition to using your luggage labels, it is a good idea to fix identification to the *inside* of each piece of luggage.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Opportunities for scenery and memory shots will be plentiful, but birds are difficult to photograph. Although there will be occasions when bird photography is possible, a birdwatching tour is not normally the best means of pursuing this aim. If you are a serious photographer, please contact us for further information about photographic possibilities. Butterflies are much more approachable, and there will be ample opportunities to document those we see with cameras or video recorders. Several rules of etiquette will be advised (and enforced if necessary) to avoid conflict among photographers and observers. It may be difficult to recharge batteries with limited electricity so be sure to bring enough to last all week and remember to bring as many memory cards as you think you may need. Camera equipment should be packed in moisture- and dust-proof bags, as a precaution.

There will be plenty of opportunities to take photos of birds, mammals and scenery and the leaders will do all they can to accommodate anyone wishing to take photographs. However if you are a serious photographer please bear in mind that this is first and foremost a birdwatching tour. Please do not allow your photographic desires to conflict with other participants' birdwatching activities.

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TRANSPORT: We will use the same minibus during the all tour. We will need to use 4x4 vehicles to reach Serra Bonita lodge. Some roads may be quite bumpy; anyone susceptible to motion sickness should bring an appropriate remedy. The tour includes three very long travelling days, so bring a book or music to enjoy during these drives!

SMOKING: Smoking and vaping is not allowed in the vehicles or when the group is gathered for meals, checklists etc. If you are sharing a room with a non-smoker, please do not smoke in the room. If you smoke in the field, we ask that you do so well away and downwind from the group if possible.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy, as most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be extremely expensive. Please note that Sunbird is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

If you wish, insurance can be arranged by Helen Fisher, Bullerwell Independent Insurance Brokers, 13 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY. Tel: 01234-866964. Please contact Helen for a quote and she will send the schedule directly to you.

TIPPING: All tour-based tips are included in the tour price. These include tips to local guides, drivers, hotel porters, and waiters and waitresses when we have group meals together in restaurants. You only need to pay tips for personal services such as room service or drinks from the bar.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Birds:

Erize, F., J. R. R. Mata and M. Rumboll. 2006. *Birds of South America: Non-Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers*. Princeton. Very helpful with excellent illustrations, and a superbly compact size but uses confusing, antiquated nomenclature and taxonomy.

Ridgely, R. S., Gwynne, J. A., Tudor, G. and M. Argel. 2010. *Birds of Brazil, the Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil*. Wildlife Conservation Society. Excellent plates and updated range maps. But covering only part of the habitats visited during our tour.

Ridgely, R. S., Gwynne, J. A., Tudor, G. and M. Argel. 2016. *Birds of Brazil, the Atlantic Forest of Southeast Brazil*. Wildlife Conservation Society. Excellent plates and updated range maps. But covering only part of the habitats visited during our tour.

Ridgely, R. S. and G. Tudor. 2009. *Field Guide to the Songbirds of South America*. University of Texas Press, Austin. Clearly too big to be considered a field guide, it is still more portable than and does update and picture more species than the large-two volume hard-bound set that was published in the 1990's.

van Perlo, Ber. 2009. *A Field Guide to the Birds of Brazil*. Oxford University Press. A good and exhaustive field guide for the all country. **The currently recommended field guide for the trip.** An eBook form is available but not recommended as the formatting makes it difficult and slow; the newer smartphone app is a big improvement however, and is recommended if you use apps, but it does not include any taxonomic updates.

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Butterflies:

Garwood, Kim, Richard Lehman, Gill Carter and Will Carter. 2007. *Butterflies of Southern Amazonia*. Available at www.neotropicalbutterflies.com, but probably out-of-print.

Mammals:

Emmons, Louise H. and Francois Feer. 1997. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals - A Field Guide*. Second edition. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London. Though out-of-date, a field-guide-sized book with good colour plates. **Recommended.**

NEOTROPICAL BIRD CLUB: Please support this charity which aims to raise money to support conservation projects, encourages an interest in the conservation of birds, and liaises with and promotes the work of existing societies within the region. You will find their contact details and further information about the Club at www.neotropicalbirdclub.org

FINAL INFORMATION: Final information with instructions for meeting the group, hotel addresses etc. and your air tickets will be sent to you about three weeks before the start of the tour. Other news will be communicated as necessary. If you have any questions, please contact us.