

Brazil's Pantanal

The Iconic Big Five

August 8 to 25, 2026



Jaguar

SAFARI OVERVIEW

Embark on this **Pantanal Big Five** Safari, a once-in-a-lifetime wildlife adventure in the **world's largest tropical wetland**, where you'll track jaguars, **giant otters**, **giant anteaters**, ocelots, and **South American tapirs** in their natural habitats. This expertly guided expedition takes you deep into the **northern and southern Pantanal**, exploring remote regions by **boat**, safari vehicle, and on foot to maximize your chances of incredible **wildlife encounters**. Stay in **top-rated eco-lodges**, cruise the legendary **Cuiabá River** in search of **jaguars**, and work alongside renowned **conservation** researchers for exclusive insights into the Pantanal's unique ecosystem. Perfect for **wildlife photographers**, **nature lovers**, and **adventure seekers**, this immersive safari offers the best opportunity to witness **rare and elusive species** in their natural environment. Book your Pantanal **safari tour** today and experience the ultimate South American wildlife adventure!

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Jaguar Safaris on the Cuiabá River:** Cruise through prime **jaguar territory** with the best chances of sightings.
- **Exclusive Nocturnal Wildlife Viewing:** Search for **ocelots**, tapirs, anteaters, and **caimans** after dark.
- **Immersive Conservation Experience:** Join researchers studying local wildlife and **habitat preservation**.
- **Diverse Birdlife:** Spot Hyacinth Macaws, **Jabiru Storks**, toucans, and more along the **Transpantaneira Highway**.
- **Expert-Led Adventure:** Led by seasoned **naturalists** and Pantanal **specialists** for unparalleled insights.

LEADER: Rafael Andrade.

DAYS: 18, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: \$15,500 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for three internal flights), singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Aug 8	Arrival in São Paulo. Land in Brazil and meet your group for a welcome dinner.	Hotel Panamby Guarulhos, Guarulhos	D
Aug 9	Fly to Cuiabá & Drive the Transpantaneira. Travel to the northern Pantanal and settle into Araras Eco Lodge.	Araras Eco Lodge, Northern Pantanal	B, D
Aug 10	Explore Araras Wetlands. Enjoy safaris and birdwatching in this wildlife-rich region.		B, L, D
Aug 11	Scenic Drive to Porto Jofre. Morning game drive at Araras, then travel deeper into the Pantanal, stopping for wildlife along the way.	Hotel Pantanal Norte, Porto Jofre	B, L, D
Aug 12–15	Jaguar Tracking on the Cuiabá River. Boat safaris to observe jaguars, giant otters, monkeys, and birds.		B, L, D
Aug 16	Fly to Southern Pantanal. Morning boat ride then depart by charter flight to the secluded Pousada Aguapé.	Pousada Aguapé Lodge, Southern Pantanal	B, L, D
Aug 17	Conservation & Wildlife Studies. Join local researchers and explore diverse habitats.		B, L, D
Aug 18	Travel to Fazenda San Francisco. Observe unique ecosystems on a scenic drive.	Fazenda San Francisco, Southern Pantanal	B, L, D
Aug 19	Nocturnal Wildlife Safari. Spot anteaters, ocelots, and rare mammals on night drives.		B, L, D
Aug 20	Travel to Caiman Lodge. Search for wildlife in the morning then transfer to one of the Pantanal's premier wildlife lodges.	Caiman Lodge, Southern Pantanal	B, L, D
Aug 21–22	Wildlife Safaris at Caiman Lodge. Explore pristine habitats and search for elusive predators and giant anteaters.		B, L, D
Aug 23	Final Safari & Transfer to Campo Grande. Enjoy a last morning game drive before traveling to the city.	Hotel Deville Prime, Campo Grande	B, L, D
Aug 24	Return to São Paulo & Depart. Fly back to São Paulo to connect with your international flights home.		B
Aug 25	Arrive Home.		

LEADER

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. One leader with an assistant guide/driver will provide a range of expertise for your trip.



Rafael Andrade

Rafael studied Environmental Management, specializing in Tourism, the Environment, and Social Responsibility. He began his work as a naturalist guide in 2013 throughout the Amazon and Pantanal, later becoming the head of guides for the Pantanal's Caiman Lodge. He enjoys sharing his knowledge and passion for nature and wildlife with travelers while also integrating the local communities and the importance of respecting the environment.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Aug 8 ~ Travel to São Paulo, Brazil

Arrive in **São Paulo, Brazil**, for an overnight stay and a welcome dinner before your group flight to Cuiabá the following morning.

Aug 9 ~ Fly to Cuiabá then drive south to Araras

Transfer to the São Paulo Airport for the **group flight to Cuiabá**, the vibrant gateway to northern Mato Grosso. Upon arrival, embark on a scenic drive through 56 miles of the breathtaking Cerrado region, known as the Brazilian savanna, en route to the charming town of Poconé. Continue your adventure by traveling 26 miles south to the iconic **Transpantaneira Highway** – a legendary gravel road stretching 93 miles through the heart of the **Pantanal**, the world's largest tropical wetland. Head south along the Transpantaneira to reach your destination of Araras.

Aug 10 ~ Explore Araras

Immerse yourself in the natural beauty of Araras Eco Lodge, spanning an impressive 7,413 hectares of diverse habitats, including wetland, forest, and savannah. Explore the lodge grounds and elevated boardwalks to spot incredible birdlife, such as **Cinereous-breasted Spinetails** and **Mato Grosso Antbirds**, thriving in the lush woodlands. Venture east of the Transpantaneira Highway into the expansive dry grasslands, where you'll have exceptional opportunities to observe both lesser and giant anteaters in their natural environment. After a delicious dinner, embark on an exhilarating night drive – the optimal time to encounter the elusive **tamandua** (lesser anteater) and, with some luck, a **South American tapir**.



Giant Anteater
© Grace Chen

Aug 11 ~ Morning safari then drive to Porto Jofre

Kickstart your day with an exhilarating early morning safari at Araras Eco Lodge before journeying south along the Transpantaneira Highway to the **Cuiabá River in Porto Jofre**. Along this **legendary route**, water accumulates beside the highway, attracting an impressive array of wildlife. Take advantage of scenic stops to stretch your legs, capture breathtaking photographs, and immerse yourself in the beauty of the Pantanal.

Spot the majestic **Jabiru Stork**, a towering five-foot-tall emblem of the Pantanal, and the stunning **Hyacinth Macaw**, the world's largest parrot, often seen around lodges as they feast on palm seeds. As you traverse the lush landscapes, keep an eye out for two species of brocket deer, along with pampas and marsh deer, roaming the tall grasslands.



Jabiru Storks
© Grace Chen

Aug 12–15 ~ Search the Rio Cuiabá surroundings by boat

The **Rio Cuiabá** offers some of the **best opportunities** to **spot jaguars in the wild**. **Protected** in this region, these **magnificent jaguars** have grown accustomed to the presence of boats filled with **eager wildlife photographers**. You'll travel in **nimble boats**, perfectly suited to navigate the river's winding tributaries, where jaguars may be **resting along the banks** or **stealthily hunting**.

Each day, enjoy **private boat excursions** in the cooler hours of the morning and late afternoon when wildlife is most active. Beyond the **stunning birdlife**, keep watch for **fascinating mammals** like **black-striped tufted capuchins**, **crab-eating foxes**, **South American tapirs**, and the **elusive ocelot**. The Pantanal's waterways are also home to an **incredible array of reptiles**, from hundreds of **Yacaré caimans** to **green iguanas**, and if luck is on your side, the **rarely seen yellow anaconda**.



Jaguar
© Grace Chen

Aug 16 ~ Fly from Porto Jofre to Pousada Aguapé

Take a final morning **boat excursion** before your charter flight to **Pousada Aguapé**, a remote eco-ranch rich in biodiversity.

Aug 17 ~ Search for wildlife at Pousada Aguapé

Located near **Pousada Aguapé**, the **Peccary Project (Projeto Queixada)** is a **groundbreaking conservation initiative** dedicated to protecting the rich biodiversity of the **Pantanal**. Through strong partnerships with the local rural community, this project promotes **sustainable practices** that have significantly contributed to the area's remarkable **wildlife diversity**. During your visit, you'll have the unique opportunity to meet **passionate**

local researchers who will guide you through their ongoing conservation efforts. Learn firsthand about their vital work to protect the **critically endangered, white-lipped peccary** and discover how sustainable ranching practices help maintain the balance of this unique ecosystem.

Aug 18 ~ Morning search for wildlife, then drive to Fazenda San Francisco

Continue your wildlife search before heading to **Fazenda San Francisco**, a renowned **conservation-focused ranch** and **eco-lodge** in the Southern Pantanal.



White-lipped Peccaries
© Grace Chen

Aug 19 ~ Explore the Pantanal around Fazenda San Francisco

At **Fazenda San Francisco**, your chances of spotting iconic wildlife like **giant anteaters** and **ocelots** are unparalleled, with thrilling game drives and night spotting excursions offering prime opportunities. With a bit of



Ocelot
© Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

luck, you may even encounter **jaguar**, **maned wolf**, or **South American tapir**. This remarkable destination spans extensive **native forest, wetlands, and grasslands**, while also functioning as a working ranch with cattle pastures and expansive rice fields. The dedicated owner and staff are **committed to preserving wildlife**, with a special focus on protecting rare mammals. Right around the lodge, you'll find an abundance of **Blue-and-yellow Macaws, parrots, parakeets, toucans, and toucanets**, all well-habituated and perfect for **up-close encounters**. Enjoy **evening and dawn game drives** for the most exciting wildlife action, while taking relaxing breaks on the lodge grounds during the warmer parts of the day.

Aug 20 ~ Fazenda San Francisco game drive, then travel to Caiman Lodge

Enjoy an early morning **game drive** before traveling to the famous **Caiman Lodge**.

Aug 21–22 ~ Explore wildlife around Caiman Lodge
Caiman Lodge, the **best of the best** of nature lodges in **South America**, has charming accommodations, a very experienced friendly staff, delicious food, and very high-quality service. Most importantly, Caiman Lodge is a **wildlife lover's paradise**, making it our absolute favorite spot in the entire region. You have good chances for **locating jaguars**, but the overall wildlife experience while immersed in this beautiful native habitat is the highlight here at Caiman, named for the plethora of **Yacaré caimans** whose glowing



Yacaré Caiman
© Grace Chen

eyes dot the landscape after dark. Caiman Lodge offers exceptional opportunities to encounter **rare and fascinating wildlife**, including **mother giant anteaters** carrying their young, graceful gray brocket deer, pampas deer, two species of **armadillos**, the **elusive tapeti** (Brazilian rabbit), and curious **crab-eating raccoons**. You'll also experience night drives to spot **nocturnal wildlife** in action. Capturing elusive wildlife on camera can be challenging, but with **ample time spent in nature** and the **expert guidance** of the lodge staff, you'll maximize your chances of taking home **spectacular images** from your unforgettable journey.

Aug 23 ~ Morning at Caiman Lodge, then depart to Campo Grande

Spend your final morning at **Caiman Lodge**, capturing stunning images of resident **macaws** and **other wildlife** before departing for **Campo Grande**.

Aug 24 ~ Travel homeward

Fly from **Campo Grande to São Paulo**, where you'll connect with your international flight home.

Aug 25 ~ Arrive Home

Arrive home with **unforgettable memories** and spectacular wildlife photographs from the **ultimate Pantanal safari adventure**.



Hyacinth Macaw
© Grace Chen

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$15,500
Single Supplement	Contact us

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare (except for three internal flights), singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you with a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$500
Final	March 1, 2026	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$150 per person, which can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the cancelled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferrable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- Carbon offsets for the duration of this trip.
- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, and boat trips for all activities unless described as optional.
- Three internal flights.
- Accommodations for the nights of August 8 through August 23.
- Meals from dinner on August 8 through breakfast on August 24, except meals listed as *Not Included* section.
- Bottled water throughout the safari.
- Transfers on August 8 and August 9 via complimentary hotel airport shuttle between Hotel Panamby Guarulhos and the Sao Paulo Airport (GRU), plus transfers on August 24 between Hotel Deville Prime and the Campo Grande Airport.
- Trip Planning Materials – information about entry requirements, flights, packing, gratuities, etc.

Not Included

- Carbon offsets for your flights to/from this trip.
- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Extra hotel nights.
- Lunch on August 9.
- Gratuities – tipping is always discretionary. However, it is culturally expected in Brazil to show appreciation for good service. A gratuity of \$525 per participant (about \$35 per participant per day) will be added to your final payment.
- [Emergency evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance](#).
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

[Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris](#)

Email: info@cheesemans.com

WhatsApp: (408) 741-5330

Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

OTHER DETAILS

Climate

The Pantanal can be very hot, from 90 to 100+°F (32 to 38+°C), especially during midday and afternoons. The occasional cold snap may blow through, dropping the temperature to the 60s°F (~15 to 20°C), so layer clothes to manage these changing conditions!

Fitness Level

Most wildlife viewing is done from small boats and vehicles. Walks to search for wildlife are generally less than an hour over relatively flat trails or along gravel roads. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this trip challenging.

Accommodations

All lodges have private baths and air conditioning.

Transportation

You will travel by air-conditioned private bus, boat, and commercial air. Some remote roads in the Pantanal are unpaved, dusty, and bumpy. Some of the drives between regions are long, between one and five hours, but most of these are on paved, modern roads. The boats are comfortable (the seats have backrests) and are easy to get in and out of. Although the boats have limited space, you have room for your daypack and camera gear near your feet and on your lap.

Motion Sickness

Don't let a fear of motion sickness keep you away! Even those who have experienced motion sickness reported that the incredible wildlife and overall experience were well worth the temporary discomfort. If you are susceptible to motion sickness from bumpy roads, small boat rides, or are concerned that you might be, please come prepared! The key to avoiding motion sickness is to act before you experience nausea. Do your own research and consult your doctor before taking any medications. A good night of sleep, eating well, limiting alcohol, and using your favorite seasickness remedy is sufficient for most travelers. Find more information on our [Coping with Seasickness](#) webpage (this information is applicable to any form of motion sickness) and contact us if you have any questions.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Flights you book

- Arrive in São Paulo, Brazil (GRU) by 4:00pm on August 8.
- Depart from São Paulo, Brazil (GRU) after 12:30pm on August 24.

Flights we book

- Three internal flights are included in the trip cost.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- [Ecotourism and Conservation for Brazil](#).
- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral.**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.

FAQS

Should I visit the Pantanal or the Amazon to see wildlife?

While the Amazon is much more famous, the Pantanal is **the best** place to see Brazil's wildlife as it has much greater biodiversity and a higher density of that biodiversity. The Pantanal is the world's largest wetland and therefore attracts many large mammals (**the Big Five**), smaller mammals such as monkeys and capybaras, and many beautiful birds.

When is the best time to go to the Pantanal?

We visit in July through September during the dry season when wildlife tends to concentrate around the ponds left after the wet season's floods. Fields are now dry, enabling us to hike and drive safari-style through them to look for wildlife. It is also warmer during these months, and the coolness of the river entices jaguars to the riverbanks to cool off. July through September are also good months to see plentiful birds.

Am I guaranteed to see the Pantanal's Big Five – jaguar, giant anteater, giant otter, ocelot, and South American tapir?

Our goal is to see the Big Five, but we cannot guarantee that we will see them all as wildlife is wild and unpredictable! But to best meet our goal, we spend the maximum time in nature to greatly increase our chance of seeing the Big Five and lots more.

Why do you spend so much time on rivers in the Pantanal?

During days near the Cuiabá and other rivers, we spend a lot of time in boats, as it is the best way to see jaguars and other wildlife. Wildlife is accustomed to tourist boats and feels safe around them, generally allowing us to approach to watch and photograph them.

Should I worry about seasickness on the Pantanal's rivers?

The rivers in this region are calm and we have never had problems with anyone getting seasick.