

Code BXGA1 **Gran Aventura 1**

## Tour Dossier Introduction

**Dossier Last Updated:** 13-01-2015

**Tour Code:** BXGA1

**Duration:** 198 nights / 199 days

**Joining City:** Quito

**Departure City:** Quito

**Nearest Joining International Airport:** Quito Mariscal Sucre Intl Airport (UIO)

**Nearest Departing International Airport:** Quito Mariscal Sucre Intl Airport (UIO)

Please check this document just before departing in case of last minute changes to your tour.

## Tour Documents

 PDF Document  Web Page

 [Optional Excursions in South America](#)

 [Argentina Dossier](#)

 [Peru Dossier](#)

 [Bolivia Dossier](#)

 [Brazil Dossier](#)

 [Chile Dossier](#)

 [Colombia Dossier](#)

 [Ecuador Dossier](#)

 [Venezuela Dossier](#)

## What's Included

- 92 nights in hotels, hostels & guesthouses, 94 nights camping, 5 nights in a Hammock
- 92 breakfasts, 120 lunches, 87 dinners
- Travel by **Tucan Travel Expedition Vehicle**, taxi, on foot
- Tucan Travel tour leader, Tucan Travel driver

## What's not Included

- Accommodation in Rio during Carnival. This is available at an extra cost.
- Sleeping bag & sleeping mat
- Local payment
- International flights and departure taxes
- Domestic flight taxes if applicable

- Tips on included excursions, visas, travel insurance, personal items and single rooms.
- Airport transfers and pre and post tour accommodation
- Spending money – budget for meals, snacks, drinks, limited souvenirs, laundry, tips and any extras
- Optional excursions - Please see our optional excursions guide on the dossier page for a comprehensive list of optional activities and excursions available on this tour.

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 to 1 - Arrive Quito

The first day of your tour is simply an arrival day with no pre-organised activities. In order to allow time to relax and see some of the sights you may wish to add pre tour accommodation. On arrival please ask at the reception for information on when the pre departure meeting will be held.

Quito, Ecuador is the second-highest capital city in the world at 2,850 metres above sea level. It was founded in 1534 by the Spanish prior to which it was an Inca stronghold. It is situated in a hollow at the base of the live volcano Pichincha and the whole length of the city can be seen from atop Panecillo hill where the enormous statue of the Virgin of Quito stands. The city has two main sections, the old and the new city. The latter is the main commercial area and has all the good restaurants and bars, whereas the old city is the colonial sector with steep calles, busy plazas and local markets.

UNESCO has listed Quito as having the largest best-preserved, and least-altered historic centre in Latin America. Along with Krakow, Quito was the first city inscribed onto the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1978. Some churches you might like to visit are the Cathedral of Quito, Church of the Society of Jesus (La Compañía), Church and Convent of St. Francis (San Francisco) and Basílica del Voto Nacional.

**Optional Excursions:** Teleferico sky tram to Volcan Pichincha – US\$4-7 + taxi fare • Museo Solar Inti Nan – US\$3 + transport • Walking tour ~~thru~~ old town (3 hours) – US\$10 • Plaza de la Independencia – free, US\$1 to enter cathedral • Museo de la Ciudad – US\$3

### Day 2 to 2 - Otavalo

After stopping at the equator for photos and souvenirs, we move onto the famous Otavalo market which is located north of Quito. It's a wonderful place to shop for all kinds of handicrafts and to take really good photographs. The indigenous Otavalo locals, who come from their villages to sell livestock, produce and textiles, are all distinct in appearance. The men wear calf-length white trousers and sandals and have their long hair braided, while the women wear white frilly blouses, black skirts and have gold coloured jewellery twirled around their necks.

**Included Excursions:** Otavalo Market

### Day 3 to 3 - Popayán

Exuding old-world colonial charm and elegance, Popayán is often referred to as the 'white city' due to its chalk-white façades adorned with columns, domes and archways. Popoyán has one of the best preserved colonial town centres in all of Latin America and you can wander its tranquil streets discovering its mansions, churches, schools and monasteries, with the snow-capped Puracé volcano visible in the distance.

### Day 4 to 5 - San Agustin

This UNESCO site is the location of the largest group of religious monuments and megalithic sculptures in South America, and was once home to a thriving pre-Colombian civilisation. Very little is known about the people of San Agustin as they had disappeared before Europeans arrived and had no written language. This makes the stone sculptures they left dotted in this lush, mountainous landscape all the more mysterious and you could spend hours or even days exploring the hundreds of statues, ceremonial sites and burial mounds trying to unlock the secrets of the past!

**Optional Excursions:** San Agustin Archaeological Park – US\$12 entry/US\$45 English speaking guide • Horse riding (4-5 hours) – US\$20 + US\$30 ~~tr~~ guide • Rafting – US\$25

### Day 6 to 7 - Tierradentro

Tierradentro is a remote and otherworldly place surrounded by oft-misty hills blanketed in verdant foliage. With its name literally translating to 'land within't is little wonder this area is most famous for its elaborate painted underground burial chambers carved out of the soft volcanic rock that makes up the landscape. Another pre-Colombian people of which very little is known, these vast underground tombs are shrouded in mystery and intrigue. Take a guided tour of the site, or visit the museum and enjoy the sites.

**Optional Excursions:** Archaeological Park and Tierradentro Museum – US\$12 • Walks and hikes – free

### Day 8 to 9 - Popoyán

We return to the colonial splendour of Popayán. Declared Colombia's gastronomic capital in 2005 by UNESCO, you may want to try some of the local

restaurants where traditional methods of food preparation have been passed down through many generations to offer the most traditional and delicious Colombian dishes in the country. You can also hike in the nearby Puracé National Natural Park, a geothermal wonderland of hot springs, waterfalls and an inactive volcano, or you can hire a bike and explore the beautiful areas around the city.

#### Day 10 to 11 - Zona Cafetera

These emerald-green, terraced slopes are where almost half the country's coffee is produced. The combination of lush hills framed by snow-capped peaks is an intoxicating brew making this is great location to explore by foot. Discover misty cloudforest, towering palm tree groves and pre-Columbian ruins while keeping an eye out for orchids and heliconias as well as a variety of fauna that calls the valley home including native deer, eagles and puma.

Our base Salento is in the heart of coffee country and is one of the region's earliest settlements. The town's isolated **paisa** community keep a very similar lifestyle to the journeymen that arrived in the mid-1800s, still speaking a particular style of Spanish and can often be seen clad in cowboy hats and traditional Colombian ponchos. The town is charming and the views from the main plaza are breath-taking.

**Optional Excursions:** Walk to Ville de Cocora (7 hours approx.) – free or US\$40 for group guide • Coffee tour – US\$5 + transport

#### Day 12 to 13 - Bogotá

Colombia's capital and the fourth-largest city in South America, Bogotá is a town that is on the up. Considered one of the continent's cultural pulse points, there are excellent museums, elegant churches and various cultural events to be discovered. The nightlife is also often highly recommended and you can dance the night away to salsa and merengue music at one of the city's nightclubs, although it is important to remain vigilant as petty crime can be an issue.

Explore La Candelaria, the city's historic area where most of the museums, churches and colonial buildings are found. The focal point of the area is the Plaza Bolivar, the city's main square where a stature of Simon Bolivar can be found. Surrounding this central point are the Archbishop's Palace, the Sacred Chapel and Cathedral, Town Hall and Capitolio Nacional. Other points of interest in the area include the Gold Museum, Casa de la Moneda and Museo Donacion Botero art collection.

**Optional Excursions:** Gold Museum – US\$2 • Cerro de Monserrat, the cable car to Monserrat for views of the city – US\$9

#### Day 14 to 14 - Villa de Leyva

Step back in time in Villa de Leyva, where the Colombian Government has declared the town a national monument ensuring it retains its colonial charm and cobbled alleyways. The centre is dominated by the expansive 400-year-old Plaza Principal, considered the largest square in the country. Its central fountain provides portable water for the townspeople and at one end is Iglesia Parroquial, the main church and enduring symbol of the village. The town also has numerous museums, historical houses, churches and a convent.

From Villa de Leyva it is possible to arrange day trips to the surrounding area to see Museo El Fósil – a museum housing an impressive 20m Kronosaurus fossil, monasteries and nearby waterfalls, or you can just wander the town and soak up the serene atmosphere.

**Optional Excursions:** Day tour (6-7 hours) by jeep to locations surrounding Villa de Leyva – US\$80

#### Day 15 to 17 - San Gil

Adrenaline sport junkies are well taken care of in San Gil, with white water rafting, paragliding, horse riding and bungee jumping as just a few of the many activities on offer. If heart-pumping outdoor pursuits are not your scene, you can take a day trip to the quaint colonial town of Barichara or if culinary adventure is more your thing you can try the regional speciality, **hormigas culonas**, or fat bottom ants. In a tradition dating back 500 years, the indigenous Guane people of the area cultivate ants for their aphrodisiac and healing properties. Bon appetit!

**Optional Excursions:** Shuttle to Barichara, a pretty village and national monument – US\$2 • White water rafting – US\$22 • Chicamocha Canyon US\$23 • Caving – US\$22 • Bungee jumping – US\$27

#### Day 18 to 18 - En route

Heading out of San Gil after an action packed few days, we begin the drive to Cartagena. While not the greatest distance, the winding roads of Colombia make this a fascinating driving day as we pass beautiful landscapes. Tonight we camp en route with limited to no facilities with our exact location depending on travel times.

#### Day 19 to 21 - Cartagena

We arrive at Colombia's vibrant Caribbean coast to the lively city of Cartagena. The pull of the warm coastal climate and the pulsating rhythm of salsa have drawn well-heeled travellers to this spot for many years. Soak in the atmosphere in one of Cartagena's open air cafés or a dance the night away in the city's discos or in a **chiva** (also known by some as a "booze bus") making frequent stops at discos and local street performers.

Cartagena is a good place for walking and exploring the historic walled district feels like you have stepped back in time with 300-year-old colonial buildings, cobbled alleys, massive churches and bougainvillea-draped balconies. The extensive fortifications of this walled city were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984 and it's easy to get swept away in the enigmatic character of this old military seaport.

Outside the city walls, the Fort of San Felipe de Barajas is considered an impressive engineering feat of Spain's military in South America. You can explore the tunnels and underground galleries or enjoy the views of Cartagena from its walls. If Cartagena gets a bit much it is possible to take a boat trip out to the famous Rosario Islands for a relaxing day on the water. Near Cartagena is the Volcán de Lodo El Totumo, a mud volcano where you can relax and wallow in the mud, which is believed to be a good treatment for the skin.

**Optional Excursions:** City tour – US\$50 including entrance fees to San Felipe Castle, La Popa and the Gold Museum • Totumo Volcano – US\$26  
Chiva party (3 hours), includes drinks on the bus – US\$20

### Day 22 to 24 - Palomino

A laid-back village on the Caribbean coast, Palomino is a great place to relax and enjoy the pristine white beaches. You can also take a day trip into Tayrona National Park, where lush jungle runs right down to the sandy shoreline and pre-Columbian ruins lay hidden amongst the forest. Tayrona is home to many mammals, among them howling monkeys, pumas, deer and bats. It also shelters hundreds of species of bird including the endangered Andean condor and reptiles such as iguanas.

**Optional Excursions:** Tayrona National Park entry – US\$20

### Day 25 to 25 - Cabimas

We cross the border into Venezuela, stopping at Cabimas for the night, a small city located on the banks of Lake Maracaibo. En route from Cabimas to our next destination, Mérida, it is possible to arrange an overnight excursion to see the spectacular natural phenomenon of the Catatumbo Lightning. Originating from a mass of storm clouds at an altitude of 5km above sea level, this atmospheric phenomenon occurs between 140 and 160 nights a year, for around 10 hours a day. The frequent, powerful flashes of lightning over the relatively small area where the Catatumbo River empties into Lake Maracaibo is considered to be the world's largest single generator of tropospheric ozone.

**Optional Excursions:** Overnight excursion to see the Catatumbo Lightning phenomenon

### Day 26 to 29 - Mérida

Sitting in the Chama River valley within sight of Venezuela's highest mountain peaks, Mérida is a charming mountain town with views of the surrounding Andes. Its location makes it a great base for all manner of outdoor pursuits from canyoneering to horse riding.

The town has a wealth of colonial architecture and culture. It is also home to one of Venezuela's most prestigious universities and has a lively student and traveller community with plenty of restaurants, bars and internet cafes. The city's main attraction is the Teleférico, the longest and highest cable car in the world which takes you high into the Andes although the cable car is frequently closed for maintenance.

From Mérida it is possible to arrange an overnight excursion to see the spectacular natural phenomenon of the Catatumbo Lightning. Originating from a mass of storm clouds at an altitude of 5km above sea level, this atmospheric phenomenon occurs between 140 and 160 nights a year, for around 10 hours a day. The frequent, powerful flashes of lightning over the relatively small area where the Catatumbo River empties into Lake Maracaibo is considered to be the world's largest single generator of tropospheric ozone.

**Optional Excursions:** Walking tour – free • Paragliding – US\$40 • Hop on Hop off bus/tram tour – US\$20 bus/US\$15 tram • Overnight excursion to see the Catatumbo Lightning phenomenon

### Day 30 to 32 - Barinas

From Barinas we can explore Los Llanos which translates to mean 'the plains', a vast tropical grassland savannah that spans parts of Colombia and Venezuela. Los Llanos takes up nearly one third of Venezuela's land area and provides some of the best wildlife-viewing opportunities on the continent. Common species include capybara, the world's largest rodent and alligator. It is also possible to see river dolphins, jaguar, puma, anteaters, anacondas, turtles, giant river otters as well as many species of birds.

Los Llanos' human residents, the Llaneros, are herders and much like the old Wild West they are well known for their horsemanship and skills as cowboys. Many work on the large cattle ranches in the region and the culture has its own distinct music including the joropo, a Llanero dance which has become the national dance of Venezuela.

You can take safaris out onto the plains looking out for capybara, caiman, jaguars, anteaters and the rare Orinoco Crocodile. In the evenings, dance the joropo to music traditional of the area.

**Optional Excursions:** Los Llanos excursions – prices vary

### Day 33 to 34 - Choroni

Choroni is a small beach town that acts as a gateway to the nearby Henri Pittier National Park. Renowned for its amazing bird-watching opportunities, there are over 500 species of birds that can be found here, while some of the parks beaches are so remote, they can only be reached by boat.

### Day 35 to 36 - Caracas

Venezuela's capital and urban hub, Caracas is a busy city with an excellent culinary and cultural scene. Its most famous native was Simón Bolívar who played a key role in the liberation of Latin America from the Spanish Empire, earning him the title *El Libertador*.

Geographically, Caracas is located in a valley overlooked by a steep mountain range that separates the city from the Caribbean Sea, referred to as the lung of Caracas due to its abundance of vegetation. Its location ensures it has one the most pleasant climates of all South America's cities.

El Centro offers some excellent museums and restaurants and is also the location of Plaza Bolívar, the city's main square. From here you can visit Museo Caracas, found in the City Hall located on the southern edge of the square, the Caracas Cathedral and Museo Bolivariano which contains relics and portraits of Venezuela's national hero. Travel within the city can be done using the city's modern, efficient and cheap metro system, which goes from our hotel area into the city centre in minutes.

**Optional Excursions:** City tour – US\$45

### Day 37 to 37 - Santa Fe

We continue to the coast, to the quaint beachside village of Santa Fe where you can swim or kayak from the shore. Dolphin sightings in this area occur year round and the nearby Mochima National Park is protected for its biodiversity which includes five different species of dolphin, several species of turtle and many marine birds and reptiles. A popular excursion is to take a boat to Margarita Island. With over fifty beaches on the island, you can find your own quiet spot or enjoy the duty-free port.

### Day 38 to 41 - Ciudad Bolívar

Ciudad Bolívar is located on the Orinoco River. The town was once called Angostura and is where Angostura Bitters originate. It is also where Simón Bolívar was declared President of Gran Colombia. The city has a well preserved historic centre with original colonial buildings around the Plaza Bolívar.

Ciudad Bolívar is a popular base for excursions to the famous Angel Falls located in Canaima National Park. At a height of 979 metres (3212 feet), Angel Falls are the world's highest falls and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The falls are named after an American pilot, Jimmy Angel, who was the first person to fly over them in 1937.

From here we will have the choice to take an optional excursion out to the falls. We will fly out to Canaima, with a flight over of the falls to get a bird's eye view.

You can then choose to spend the day visiting sites in Canaima National Park, or stay overnight and take an excursion to the falls by dug-out canoe and foot. These options are dependent on the season and weather conditions.

Canaima National Park has an abundance of delightful waterfalls, lagoons and flat-topped mountains called tepuyes. Throughout the park you can see many local Pemón settlements in this sparsely populated land, which covers an area of 30,000 square kilometres. You will never forget the beauty of this 'lost world' region.

If you do not wish to travel out to Angel falls on the optional excursion you can enjoy some free time in Ciudad Bolívar with accommodation included.

**Optional Excursion:** 3-day/2 night Angel Falls tour including flight to Angel Falls and tour of Canaima National Park, including guide, boat trip to falls and meals – US\$380 plus a US\$10 park entrance fee

### Day 42 to 43 - En route

As we head south towards Brazil, the landscape of Venezuela turns to savannah. Dotted with hundreds of mountains, the whole region is known as La Gran Sabana. This area was totally inaccessible until the 1970s when a road was built. It was finally completed in 1990 and is now one of the best roads in the country. We spend the night near Salto de Karma, camping en route as we cross in to Brazil. We spend another night camping en route near Boa Vista as we head towards Manaus.

### Day 44 to 50 - Manaus

The jungle city of Manaus used to be the world's largest supplier of rubber. During that heady era the famous Teatro Amazonas (opera house) was built

and completed in 1896. You have a couple of days to explore Manaus before there is the option to join an exciting three-day excursion deep into the jungle by boat or dugout canoe in search of caiman, fresh water dolphins, jaguar and many other creatures in this threatened rainforest. (If you choose not to take the jungle excursion, you will have extra free time in Manaus).

The local guide on this trip will give you an in-depth view of the past and present day lives of the indigenous Amazonian people. He or she will also explain the importance of manioc (a root vegetable which must be processed to remove the cyanide) to the indigenous economy and diet as well as explaining the uses of numerous other jungle plants. You will also go to the meeting point of the black waters of the Rio Negro and the yellow-brown waters of the Solimões River, where they run side by side for several kilometres, providing an excellent photo opportunity. Returning to Manaus, you have a couple of days to finish sightseeing. A visit to the fascinating waterside markets is highly recommended.

**Optional Excursions:** 3 night/4 day Amazon Jungle tour – R\$880 (approx US\$410)

#### Day 51 to 55 - Amazon Ferry

From Manaus we cruise down the world's longest river, the Amazon, which flows for 6,200 kilometres. We travel by riverboat into the jungle for five days, totalling 1,368 kilometres.

At the start of this adventure the river is wide at around eight kilometers and as we travel downriver, it gets progressively narrower. This is a great opportunity to relax, read books and enjoy incredible sunsets before arriving in Belem with new Brazilian friends and fond memories of the mighty Amazon.

Accommodation on the riverboat is in hammocks for four or five nights (depending on the river current) and usually, each boat has a bar and restaurant onboard. Note that this is the only way to get from Manaus to Belem unless you fly and our Tucan Travel vehicle will also travel by boat.

#### Day 56 to 57 - Belém

Belém, referred to by locals as 'Para', is located in the northern part of Brazil on the banks of the Amazon estuary being the gateway to the Amazon with a busy port. The city has fascinating waterfront markets, the Theatre of Peace (one of the largest theatres in Brazil), the excellent Goeldi Museum which houses a zoo, and there are many stalls in the markets for cheap and tasty meals. Another interesting spot to visit is the Bosque Rodrigo Alves, a public garden with many species of native flora as well as a small collection of animals.

#### Day 58 to 58 - En route

We continue our trek through Brazil now making our way towards Sete Cidades National Park. This is quite a drive and we will stop overnight to camp en route close to Bom Jardim. Travelling times will determine where we stop.

#### Day 59 to 59 - Sete Cidades NP

About half a day's drive brings us to the Sete Cidades National Park. We camp inside the park which contains mysterious rock formations over 190 million years old, caverns and natural swimming pools. Sete Cidades National Park was named after the 'seven cities' its rock formations are said to resemble.

**Included Excursions:** Sete Cidades National Park entry

#### Day 60 to 60 - Ubajara NP

Our next stop is Ubajara National Park famous for its caves, forest scenery and waterfalls.

**Included Excursions:** Ubajara National Park entry fee

#### Day 61 to 62 - Jericoacoara

We spend two nights in Jericoacoara, known locally as Jeri, where all main streets are sand and lead to the beach. We'll spend a couple of days here enjoying the unhurried lifestyle, amongst beautiful beaches and rustic wooden buildings surrounded by plants and flowers. You can try your hand at more active options such as windsurfing and kitesurfing, take some capoeira lessons, join a dunebuggy ride to a local freshwater lagoon, go horseback riding or just relax in the sun at the beach.

#### Day 63 to 65 - Canoa Quebrada

The state of Rio Grande do Norte is famous for its beautiful beaches and Canoa Quebrada is a fishing village built on a sand dune with long deserted beaches ideal for relaxation and swimming. For the more active there are two exciting optional activities: sandboarding down the dunes or horse riding along them. We spend three nights here and there many bars and restaurants to keep you busy, the nightlife is not to be missed.

**Optional Excursions:** Dune buggy ride – US\$40 • Quad biking on the sand dunes – US\$45

### Day 66 to 67 - Praia da Pipa

As we work our way down the coast we will take another break with a stopover in Praia da Pipa, one of Brazil's most famous beaches. The area offers some decent surfing options, crystal-clear waters with the chance to see dolphins, fine white sands and some reasonable restaurants. A great time to soak up some sun and relax.

### Day 68 to 69 - Olinda

Continuing south along the coast our next exciting destination is the old colonial town of Olinda, which has a variety of historic churches, convents and monasteries, dating back to 1537. Nearby is Recife, a city built on three islands and joined by a series of bridges. Here an old prison has been converted into a cultural centre, which is not only impressive and interesting, but also houses some unique shops. If you want to see how the other half live in Brazil, then you can visit the rich seaside suburb of Boa Viagem.

### Day 70 to 71 - Maceio

Further down the coast we come to Maceio, where you have the opportunity to hire jangadas (typical Brazilian sailing boats). The boatmen can take you out to a natural reef swimming pool about two kilometres from the shore, where you can order cocktails and crayfish from nearby boats.

**Optional Excursions:** Jaganda boat trip – US\$10

### Day 72 to 74 - Salvador

Continuing up the coast we head for Salvador. We enter the city by ferry over the Bay of All Saints to the capital city of the state of Bahia. The centre of Salvador has many historical colonial buildings and dates back to 1549. It was the original Brazilian capital until 1763. It is situated on the bay of Todos os Santos, the largest bay on the Brazilian coast which has 38 islands, some of which can be visited by ferry on an optional excursion. There are also enormous elevators going from the upper to the lower city, where the docks are situated. It is in this area, just outside Mercado Modelo, where we can find the Bahians practising the foot fighting sport of Capoeira, which was originally brought to Brazil by Angolan slaves. Another key feature of Bahian life is the Afro-Brazilian religion of candomblé and you may be able to see one of their amazing ceremonies, alternatively, in the evening we can enjoy the traditional music of the area with its strong emphasis on percussion.

**Optional Excursions:** Walking tour – free • Historic centre of Pelourinho – free • Folklore show – US\$15

### Day 75 to 76 - Itacaré

In the cocoa zone of Brazil, Itacaré has beautiful beaches to be relaxed on as we head towards Rio de Janeiro. The laidback atmosphere and pristine coast has made this town a magnet for travellers and surfers for many years and you'll find plenty of restaurant options as well as the chance to surf or enjoy some of the many outdoor activities.

### Day 77 to 78 - Porto Seguro

The beautiful coastal town of Porto Seguro has miles of palm fringed beaches and bars, which are great places to sample delicious fresh fruit juices, or the Brazilian national cocktail of caiparinha (be careful of this one though!). Just north of here is where the Portuguese, led by Pedro Alvares Cabral, first landed in 1500 and a cross marks the site. There is plenty of typical Bahian food available in Porto Seguro and you may want to try the delicious moqueca, a hot spicy seafood casserole.

### Day 79 to 79 - En route

As we make our way south towards Rio de Janeiro, we cover great distances. Tonight we camp en route with our exact location depending on travel times.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

### Day 80 to 81 - Ouro Prêto

Ouro Prêto is a fabulous city located deep in the valley of Minas Gerais' mountains. The city was part of what was once a mining region. Founded in 1711 it is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and National Historic Monument due to its outstanding Baroque architecture.

### Day 82 to 82 - Tiradentes

One of the best colonial towns in Brazil, its 300 year old buildings and churches offer charm and create atmosphere. You can trek through the Serra da São José mountains or take carriage tours of the town



## Day 83 to 88 - Rio de Janeiro

Rio de Janeiro, or more commonly known as Rio, is the second largest city in Brazil and arguably one of the most beautiful cities of the world.

The city has so much to offer from its natural sites to its famous landmarks including Pão de Açúcar (Sugarloaf Mountain) and Corcovado with its famous 'Cristo Redentor' (Christ the Redeemer statue) - both of which offer great views over the city. You of course have to visit the famous beaches of Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon. And of course, if you are in Rio around February/March time, get ready for the world's biggest party, the Rio Carnival!

Please note that the four nights spent during Rio Carnival are **not** included in the tour price and it is essential to pre-book accommodation. We offer a **Group Tour Extension Package** allowing you to continue your adventure with your tour group.

Rio Carnival is Rio de Janeiro's busiest time, as tourists and locals flock to the streets and celebrate until the early morning. Elaborate and beautiful costumes are worn, parades fill the streets and the city prepares for the main event held at the Sambadrome.

During this period, Rio's hotels increase their prices and it may be challenging to find hotels at reasonable prices at the last minute. We block book hotels, well in advance but still recommend booking in as advance as possible. By purchasing Rio Carnivals Group Package, you also get a ticket to the Sambadrome.

**Optional Excursions:** Half day favela tour – US\$35 • Hang gliding - US\$160 • Full day city tour - US\$75 • Maracana Stadium Football Match (transport and guide) – US\$15 or Maracana Stadium tour – US\$100

## Day 89 to 91 - Parati

On the Costa Verde we arrive at Parati, a preserved Portuguese colonial town (1500-1822). The town is renowned for its historic town centre, the coast and mountains in the region. Parati was also a major port for the exportation of gold and coffee during the 17th and 19th centuries respectively and recommended excursions include a sailing schooner cruise around the bays, rainforest treks and walking the gold trail.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Six Hour Drive

**Optional Excursions:** Parati boat cruise – US\$40

## Day 92 to 93 - Enroute

We continue our trip making our way towards the Pantanal. During the drive you will get some idea of the size of Brazil as it will be two days driving inland from the coast. We will camp en route to break up the journey with travel times determining the locations.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

## Day 94 to 96 - Pantanal (optional excursion)

Our next stop is the Pantanal Wildlife Reserve, a massive wetland. One of the unusual things about the Pantanal is that there are also many farms in the area and the animals from these farms live quite comfortably with the other wildlife in the region. Wild animals include birds, capybara, howler monkeys, pumas, jaguars, ocelots, coatis, yellow anacondas, marsh deer, caiman, tapir and many more. The Pantanal is excellent for wildlife watching as the region is more open and flat than a jungle setting.

The Tucan Travel expedition vehicle will stop on the outskirts of the Pantanal Wildlife Reserve, giving you the flexibility to choose different ways of visiting the Wildlife Reserve on optional excursions or not at all, if you so wish.

Each excursion into the Pantanal will vary slightly but most people choose to spend three nights exploring the vast region, searching for the elusive jaguar and anteater, camping on the wetlands. From walking tours to horseback riding, your days will be spent enjoying the scenery while nights are spent around the camp-fire with a beer in hand. Other, shorter excursions into the Pantanal can also be arranged with your tour leader.

**Optional Excursions:** 3-day Pantanal excursion (all meals and accommodation, a walking tour, horseback ride, piranha fishing, boat tour, night walk & jeep safari included) – US\$150

## Day 97 to 99 - Bonito

Bonito is renowned for the unbelievable blue of its rivers and cave lakes. The waters are filtered through the enormous quantity of limestone in the ground and the impurities are deposited at the bottom of the river bed making the rivers appear some of the clearest in the world.

We have time here to take in some great optional activities which include cave and river snorkelling, rainforest walks and wildlife spotting.

**Optional Excursions:** Rio Prata snorkelling – US\$75 • Rio Mimosa waterfall tour – US\$51 • Abismo de Anhumas underground lake rapel and scuba US\$325 • Blue Lake Cave – US\$18 • Rio Sucuri Snorkelling – US\$70 • Balneario do Sol – US\$15



### Day 100 to 100 - Enroute

We hit the road making our way south. It is a long drive and we will stop for one night en route to break up the journey.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

### Day 101 to 102 - Foz do Iguazu

Next we arrive at the little Brazilian town of Foz do Iguazu (Iguazu Falls), where some 275 separate waterfalls cascade over a two-and-a-half-kilometre wide cliff face. We first visit the stunning falls from the Brazilian side which offers panoramic views of the numerous waterfalls on the Argentine side.

For a bird's eye view over the entire falls you can take an optional scenic helicopter ride. There is also an excellent bird park nearby and you can visit the world's largest hydroelectric dam at Itaipu where videos show the environmental planning behind the dam project. If you're keeping a keen eye on your country tally you can pop into neighbouring Paraguay by public bus (you don't even have to get your passport stamped) for a bit of shopping in Ciudad del Esté.

**Optional Excursions:** Helicopter ride – US\$120 • Bird Park – US\$14 • National Park entry – US\$20 • Rafain Show – US\$50 • Itaipu Dam – US\$25

### Day 103 to 104 - Puerto Iguazú

We then cross over to Argentina to spend time in Puerto Iguazú. Here we visit the falls from the Argentinian side where you can walk through rainforest and along boardwalks directly above the falls and you will also find the famous Garganta del Diablo, Spanish for "Devil's Throat", where fourteen waterfalls drop with such force that there is always a massive cloud of spray overhead. If you feel like cooling down, take a zodiac boat ride up the river and under the falls – a fun way to get a different perspective of these impressive falls. Tonight, visit some of the town's bars and clubs close to our hostel.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Two Hour Drive

**Optional Excursions:** Iguazú Falls National Park entry – US\$25 • Jungle 4WD and boat trips – US\$12-60

### Day 105 to 105 - En route

We make our way to San Ignacio Miní where we will find some of the best kept Jesuit ruins in the region. You will have the chance to visit the site. Founded in 1632, San Ignacio Miní was one of the many missions settled by the Jesuits in the Americas during the Spanish colonial period. San Ignacio Miní is one of the five Jesuit missions of the Guaranis that were inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984. The ruins are one of the best preserved among the several built in a territory today belonging to Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, and one of the most visited due to its accessibility.

**Optional Excursions:** Mountain bike rental – US\$12 • Guided jeep excursion and trekking – US\$25

### Day 106 to 109 - Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is a beautiful city with lovely green parks, plazas and wide boulevards. Our hostel is an excellent location, within walking distance to many of the city's highlights and close to transport links to the rest of the city. The balcony of the presidential palace the Casa Rosada (Pink Palace) is where Eva Perón made many of her speeches and is also the place where Madonna sang, "Don't cry for me Argentina" in the film Evita. Across the Plaza de Mayo you will also find the Cabildo (the old town hall) the Palacio Municipal (City Hall) and the cathedral. Every Thursday afternoon in this plaza the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" march in remembrance of their family members who disappeared in the 1970s when the country was under military rule. There are many excellent restaurants in the Puerto Madero area and it is well worth a visit to the port of La Boca for its colourful buildings and cultural history. In nearby San Telmo, the bohemian area, there is a fascinating antique market every Sunday. The Recoleta Cemetery, almost like an enclosed city of its own, is where Eva Peron and many other rich and famous Argentines are buried - well worth a visit. The reputation of Buenos Aires' nightlife is not overstated as there are many nightclubs, bars, restaurants and cinemas open until all hours. For a great evening out, you may want to see a tango show in the city where the dance originated, and you shouldn't leave Buenos Aires before trying one of the best steaks you'll find in the world!

**Optional Excursions:** Tango show & dinner – US\$90 • Hop on/hop off bus – US\$20 • Explore La Boca and San Telmo artistic neighbourhoods – free • Tigre Delta day trip, exploring the elegant neighbourhood by train and catamaran – US\$22 • Football match including transfers and guide – from US\$80 • Buenos Aires city tour – US\$20

### Day 110 to 110 - En route

Heading south towards Patagonia, we camp en route.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

### Day 111 to 112 - Puerto Madryn

As we continue on we eventually come to the Welsh community of Puerto Madryn, where in 1865 1,500 Welsh immigrants arrived from the Clipper Mimososa and named the natural port 'Port Madryn' then settled and founded the town.

From here we can visit the nearby Valdés Peninsula. The Valdés peninsula is renowned for its wildlife and you will hopefully see penguins, sea lions, elephant seals, armadillos, guanacos, rheas, southern right whales, killer whales, Patagonian hares and a great variety of seabirds.

**Optional Excursions:** Valdés Peninsula National Park – entry US\$15 / group guide US\$100 • Whale watching – US\$70

#### Day 113 to 114 - En route

After crossing the Colorado River, we leave Patagonia and drive across the windswept 'pampas' where cattle graze and enormous fields of sunflowers sway in the wind (the oil from which is a large export for Argentina). Travel times will determine where we camp for the next two nights.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

#### Day 115 to 117 - Ushuaia

We arrive into Ushuaia, the world's most southerly town. Here you can take an excursion on the Beagle Channel to visit the Isla de los Lobos (Sea Lion Island) where you will see colonies of sea lions and aquatic birds and, with a bit of luck, maybe a whale. You also have the option to visit the Tierra del Fuego (Land of Fire) National Park where there are various trails along the coast and the surrounding snow-covered peaks. The park is also home to a large population of beaver (introduced by the Canadians), the world's most southerly train and it is also where the exhaustive Pan-American Highway ends at the Lapataia bay, 17,848 kilometres from its start in Alaska.

**Optional Excursions:** Beagle Channel Cruise – US\$60 • Tierra del Fuego National Park entry – US\$17 • Scenic flight from – US\$36-86 • End of the world train US\$35 + US\$15 park entry • Museum at the End of the World – US\$4 • Maritime Museum & Ushuaia Prison – US\$8

#### Day 118 to 118 - En route

We begin our journey north heading towards the stunning Torres del Paine National Park. On the way we free camp.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

#### Day 119 to 123 - Torres del Paine National Park

On to the incredible Torres del Paine National Park, named after the massive granite towers that rise above the earth. The scenery is amazing with snow-capped peaks, glaciers, beautiful lakes and valleys. Some of the varied and amazing creatures you might spot include Andean condors, guanacos (a relative of the llama) and rhea (a type of emu) to name but a few. You have plenty of time to trek the main trails in the park to see the famous Torres (towers) and both the Francés and Grey Glaciers. You will also have the chance to travel by ferry across Lake Pehoé to wonder at this unbelievable panorama.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Seven Hours

**Optional Excursions:** Torres del Paine National Park entry fee – US\$32 • Horse riding – US\$40 • Kayaking (either between icebergs or down one of the major rivers) – US\$100 • Grey Glacier Boat Ride – US\$100 • Catamaran ride in Torres del Paine NP (return trip) - CLP24000

#### Day 124 to 125 - El Calafate

On the north-eastern edge of Lake Argentino, we reach the pleasant town of El Calafate. This is our base for visiting the Moreno Glacier, 80 kilometres away. The glacier is one of the few in the world that is still advancing. It is continuously moving at a rate of 1.5 metres per day and when you get close enough to the face you can hear cracking and creaking and see large lumps of ice crash into the lake below. With a height of around 60 metres, a width of five kilometres at its face and made up of various hues of blue, white and grey, it is an awesome sight.

**Optional Excursions:** Boat trip to the Perito Moreno Glacier - ARS180 • Regional Museum of El Calafate – free • Boat trip on Lago Argentino US\$15 Reserva Municipal Laguna Nimez, bird sanctuary – small entry fee • Perito Moreno Glacier Tour – US\$42 + US\$26 national park entry fee

#### Day 126 to 127 - El Chaltén

We continue to El Chaltén with the picturesque Fitzroy National Park nearby where you can enjoy some of Argentina's most scenic hiking. The park is at the foot of the Fitzroy Massif which has spectacular jagged snow-capped peaks. Depending on your budget, you can take a day's trek to - and on - the wonderful Viedma Glacier - reputedly the best ice-trekking in the country. Or walk to the Capri Lagoon or a variety of other free walks available in this stunning national park.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Four Hours

**Optional Excursions:**

Fly-fishing – from US\$108 • Horse riding – from US\$55 • Hiking • Ice trekking – from US\$55

### Day 128 to 128 - Perito Moreno

Travelling through a dry windswept expanse, we leave Patagonia. There are some long drives but some spectacular scenery. We will stop en route depending on travel times, and camp for the evening.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

### Day 129 to 131 - Bariloche

Crossing the Andes and heading down into Argentina we make our way through stunning scenery of the Argentine Lake District passing Lago Espejo (Mirror Lake). Further south we reach the resort town of San Carlos de Bariloche on the shores of Lake Nahuel Huapi. This town is a famous winter ski resort, but it also has plenty to offer during other seasons. Built by Swiss and German immigrants in the alpine style, here you will find Swiss-style chalets, numerous chocolate shops and St. Bernard dogs with brandy barrels around their necks. There are excellent optional opportunities to take in the breathtaking views from the cable car, also the chance for some hiking or cycling.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

**Optional Excursions:** Museo de la Patagonia – US\$2.50 donation • Cerro Catedral ski lifts – from US\$20 • Mountain bike hire – US\$12 • ~~Chico~~, a 60km circuit of nearby attractions which can be completed by local bus

### Day 132 to 134 - Pucón

Driving through the Lake District of Chile we reach the picturesque town of Pucón, a small resort on Lake Villarrica below the perfect cone-shaped Villarrica volcano. The whole area is surrounded by lakes, mountains, forests, rivers and waterfalls and we have two free days to take advantage of the activities on offer such as volcano treks, white water rafting, horse riding, mountain biking and water sports.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Full Day Drive

**Optional Excursions:** Villarrica volcano climb – US\$100 • Horse riding half/full day – US\$40/60 • Rafting – US\$40-\$60 • Hot springs entry US\$20 (plus transport) • Hydrospeed – US\$50 • Zip Lining – US\$36 • Skydiving – US\$350 • Dog sledding • Huerguehue National Park – US\$60 + US\$10 entrance

### Day 135 to 137 - Santiago

Pedro de Valdivia established Santiago in 1541 but, except for Santa Lucia hill where the original fortress was constructed, not much remains of its original glory. The hill offers good views of the city below, but for even better photo opportunities take a funicular railway to the top of San Cristobal where the Statue of the Virgin overlooks the capital and the distant Andes. At the viewing area there are wine-tasting facilities and a couple of brilliantly located swimming pools. In the Plaza Constitucion at the Palacio de la Moneda you can see the changing of the guard or you can take an optional excursion to the port of Valparaiso and the resort of Viña del Mar. Santiago is a very clean modern city with fountains, parks and buildings and of course, excellent nightlife.

**Optional Excursions:** Santiago city tour – US\$25 • Vineyard tours approximately – US\$50

### Day 138 to 140 - Mendoza

Now we hit the wine producing heartland of Argentina making our way past the vast vineyards to Mendoza.

Mendoza is the location where General José de San Martín organised the army with which he liberated Chile and Peru from Spanish rule in 1818. Unfortunately, few historic buildings remain after an earthquake devastated the city in 1861. However, the city was rebuilt with broader tree-lined streets and beautiful large green plazas, irrigated by a network of 500 kilometres of water channels, fuelling Mendoza's reputation as an oasis of the region. There are great photo opportunities from the top of the hill "Cerro de la Gloria" at Parque San Martín, where you can also visit the local zoo. Beyond their limits you'll have the chance to get wet and wild on a white water rafting excursion, or try out your rope skills on a rappelling option. For a more chilled experience you could hire bikes and take the 'Ruta de los Vinos' (wine route), visiting ancient cellars and tasting excellent local wines at your leisure.

**Optional Excursions:** White water rafting – from US\$40 • Wine/bodega tours • Wine & bike tour – US\$70 • Paragliding – US\$90 • Parque San Martin – free

### Day 141 to 142 - Cordoba

Cordoba is a busy modern industrial city near the geographical centre of Argentina in the foothills of the Sierras Chicas mountains. Established in 1573, Córdoba boasts the country's oldest university and a young, dynamic student population. During the day you can visit an array of richly decorated churches, including Argentina's oldest cathedral and the Manzana Jesuitica (Jesuit Block) which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

### Day 143 to 143 - Catamarca

We continue our way to San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, more commonly known as Catamarca. The city offers both natural and cultural attractions and offers many activities such as hiking, mountain-bike rides and horse riding. We have a night here before we hit the road again.

### Day 144 to 144 - Cafayate

Just outside of Salta, the rugged landscape gives way to lush farmlands where you may catch a glimpse of traditional subsistence farmers at work. Stunning multi-coloured sedimentary rock formations offer beautiful photo opportunities near Cafayate. For an adrenaline rush you can hire mountain bikes for a couple of hours of thrilling descents or take a quad bike tour to explore less challenging terrain. For a more peaceful excursion you can tour the local wineries or stretch your legs on a trek, taking in beautiful local flora and fauna, as well as an impressive series of cascadas (waterfalls).

### Day 145 to 147 - Salta

We carry on to the north of Argentina and the striking city of Salta in the Lerma Valley at the foothills of the Andes, established in 1582. Salta has many old colonial buildings, a cathedral with ancient statues of the Cristo del Milagro (Miracle of Christ) and the Virgin Mary, which were brought over from Spain in 1592. A variety of excursions await you here including rafting and mountain biking although the most popular is horseriding through the valley and working up an appetite before enjoying a huge Argentinian barbecue with plenty of local wine to wash it down.

**Optional Excursions:** Full day rafting with BBQ lunch – US\$60 • Horse riding at ranch with BBQ lunch – US\$70

### Day 148 to 148 - Tupiza

Next we arrive in Tupiza where we will take a rest before we hit the roads of Bolivia. Legend has it that Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid met their end at the hands of the Bolivian army near Tupiza, concluding their notorious string of bank raids.

### Day 149 to 151 - Uyuni

Travelling on we head north to the desolate town of Uyuni, to visit what is claimed to be the largest salt flat in the world, the brilliantly white and vast Salar de Uyuni. We will have an overnight stay in Uyuni, and you will have the opportunity to take an excursion onto the salt flats in four-wheel-drive vehicles, stopping off at places such as Fish Island (season dependent) where there are great views of the surrounding lake, and where giant cacti and llama provide perfect photo opportunities. The fantastic contrast of the brilliant blue sky (weather permitting of course) and the pure white of the salt flats is surreal. This area proves to be a very popular place for some creative photo opportunities.

**Optional Excursions:** Full day Salar de Uyuni tour – approx US\$55

### Day 152 to 153 - Sucre

Continuing through Bolivia, we make our way to Sucre, the official capital of Bolivia even though the governing of the country actually takes place in La Paz. Sucre is a small attractive city where, by law, all the buildings are painted white. The city is a UNESCO World Heritage site thanks to its well-conserved downtown with buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries. Nestled at the foot of the twin hills of Churuquilla and Sika Sika, Sucre is the gateway to numerous small villages that date from the colonial era.

### Day 154 to 155 - Potosí

Winding our way along the dusty roads of Bolivia, which are some of the most rugged in South America, we head through the vividly coloured rock formations and giant cacti to our next stop Potosí, the highest city of its size on Earth at 4,070 metres, with a population of 110,000 people. The history of Potosí, its fame and splendour, as well as its tragedy and horror, is closely linked to silver. The city was founded in 1545 soon after the discovery of silver in a nearby hill, the Cerro Rico (or Rich Hill). The veins proved to be so prolific that they quickly became known as the world's richest source of the precious metal. Silver from Potosí underwrote the Spanish economy, particularly its monarchy's extravagance, for over two centuries. Millions of indigenous people, and later, African slaves, were made to work in the mines where conditions were so appalling and dangerous that miners died in horrific numbers, either in accidents or from silicosis pneumonia. During the three centuries of colonial rule, it is estimated that eight million Africans and locals died in the Potosí mines. Reminders of the grand colonial city are still evident in the narrow streets, formal balconied mansions and ornate churches. We offer you the opportunity to visit one of the mines (optional) where you will learn from first-hand experience some of the hardship that miners still suffer. You soon realise that the mines are worked today in much the same way as they were under Spanish rule.

**Optional Excursions:** Potosí Mine tour – US\$15 • City tour – US\$13 • Hot springs – US\$11

### Day 156 to 158 - La Paz

La Paz is built in the basin of a spectacular ancient crater caused by a meteorite, with the snow-capped Illimani in the background. At an altitude of 3,660

metres, the city is said to host the highest football stadium in the world.

The city has colourful indigenous street markets including the 'witches market' where women in flared skirts sell, amongst other things, dead cats and llama foetuses which are placed under new buildings in a bid to keep evil spirits away. The main square, Plaza Murillo, is where many years ago a president of the republic was lynched from a lamppost. La Paz is one of the best places to see a traditional peña show of Andean music and dance where local musicians play their time-honoured instruments such as zampoñas (pipes) and charangos (ukulele).

There are plenty of excursions available in La Paz. Check out the Moon Valley with its strange rock formations shaped by the weather. Another fantastic excursion is to Coroico, the gateway to the Bolivian jungle region and a great place to see sub-tropical vegetation and plants. En-route you will cross a 5,000 metre high pass before descending to 1,300 metres on narrow mountain roads bordered by sheer drops. The excursion to Coroico can also be done by mountain bike, as it is downhill nearly all the way and very exhilarating, but beware, colloquially known as 'Death Road', it is not at all for the fainthearted and great care must be taken!

**Optional Excursions:** Red Caps walking tours – free (tips appreciated) • Death Road Mountain Biking – US\$110

### Day 159 to 161 - Puno & Lake Titicaca

Leaving La Paz, we head past the pre-Inca ruins of Tiahuanaco, which date back to 1,600 BC, where we have the opportunity to look around. The site has the famous Gate of the Sun, the Acapana Pyramid with six magnetic pillars and an underground temple.

Continuing across the Altiplano (high plane) and crossing into Peru we stop at the border town of Desaguadero where we will change money. From here we drive around the southern end of Lake Titicaca which, at 3,855 metres above sea level, is the highest navigable lake in the world. Driving into Puno we hope to arrive in time to visit the colourful markets.

From Puno you have the chance to take an excursion to the islands of Amantaní and Taquile. On Amantaní we arrange home-stay accommodation with local Quechua families and you will have the chance to eat with the family, perhaps enjoy a party and dancing and maybe play football with the local children. The next morning you'll visit Taquile Island where the people live in simple adobe huts. You will also visit the astounding floating reed islands in the Bay of Puno, to see the first-hand the indigenous Uros' way of life and ride in a traditional reed boat. Continuing back to Puno, you'll arrive in time to visit the colourful markets. That night back in Puno, you can try some of the local dishes; guinea pig, llama or some of the trout or kingfish from the lake and maybe check out some of the nightlife.

Should you choose to not visit the islands of Lake Titicaca you will have time to relax in Puno.

**Optional Excursions:** Lake Titicaca & Uros Islands overnight excursion – US\$45 + lunch US\$8

### Day 162 to 162 - Cuzco

The landscape gradually becomes greener as we get closer to the former Inca capital of Cuzco, which means 'Navel of the Earth' in the Inca language of Quechua. This enchanting city has a mostly indigenous population of around 275,000 and is centred on the Plaza de Armas, which is dominated by the cathedral and La Compañía de Jesus church. Nowadays, Cuzco is also legendary for its party atmosphere and brilliant nightlife and is jam-packed with arcades housing many fine restaurants, bars and shops.

Cuzco is our base for the next eight days for some really special optional excursions, including the challenging four-day Inca Trail trek and Jungle excursion both of which **must** be requested at the time of booking your tour. We have plenty of time here to squeeze in both of these excursions and more, or if you prefer, to relax and absorb the great atmosphere of such a cultural and friendly place.

Some of the optional excursions available include full-day trip through the Sacred Valley of the Incas which visits the Pisac ruins perched on a hill high in the mountains and the famous local market of the same name, in the valley below. This is a great place to buy textiles, pottery and jewellery, not to mention the delicious empanadas (pasties) at the famous bakery. After spending time here, we move down the valley to the temple fortress of Ollantaytambo, with its enormous terraces climbing up the hillside (you'll need your visitor's ticket again).

**Optional Excursions:** Cuzco Visitor Ticket, this gives access to most museums and monuments – US\$45 • Salt Terraces Maras Moray – US\$30 • Inca Bridges US\$25/hr • City tour – US\$25

### Day 163 to 165 - Optional Amazon Jungle

Covering the greatest area of South America, the Amazon Jungle is a must see part of your trip. If you wish to take part in this excursion, please inform your reservations consultant at the time of booking as this excursion has to be arranged in advance.

You will take a quick flight from Cuzco, deep in to the jungle to Puerto Maldonado where you will board canoes to take you further in to the canopy. Checking in to your jungle hut, it is not long before you are out exploring the trails with a trained guide. Your guide will help you identify some species endemic to the jungle with Peru's Amazon Jungle being home to some of the most diverse wildlife. You will journey out to Monkey Island where monkeys

are rescued and rehabilitated, cared for by the jungle lodge. You will also have a chance to swim in nearby lakes.

**Optional Excursions:** Amazon Jungle excursion – US\$699 or equivalent in your currency (must be booked in advance)

### Day 166 to 168 - Optional Inca Trail Trek

If you have chosen to hike the Inca Trail you will cross spectacular passes and visit more Inca ruins en route to the Lost City of the Incas, Machu Picchu. A local guide will lead this expedition and there will be cooks and porters to carry the main equipment, leaving you with just a small daypack. The trek begins after a short bus journey and the first day is a relatively easy four-and-a-half hour, 13-kilometre walk which will get you limbered up for the highest pass at Warmiwañusca (4,200 metres) that you will reach before lunchtime on the second day (Warmiwañusca translates as “Dead Woman’s Pass”) During the second day you will cover approximately nine kilometres in about five to seven hours and after the high pass it’s all down hill as the trail winds its way down old Inca stairs to our campsite. On the third day we pass the ruins of Runkurakay, Sayacmarca and Phuyupatamarca, walking approximately 15 kilometres in seven hours. On the last morning, after an overnight stop at Wiñay-Wayna, you will rise early for the final walk to Machu Picchu and greet daybreak over the famous “Sun Gate”. There will then be time to explore on your own or simply take in the magnificence of the place after your guided tour.

The Lost City of Machu Picchu was originally completely self-contained, surrounded by agricultural terraces sufficient to feed the population, and watered by natural springs. Located high above the fast flowing Urubamba River, the cloud shrouded ruins have palaces, baths, temples, storage rooms and some 150 houses, all in such a remarkable state of preservation that will simply take your breath away.

The ruins were only uncovered by the outside world in 1911, when American explorer Hiram Bingham found them while looking for another ‘lost city’ called Vilcabamba. Due to their isolation many of the buildings are still relatively intact and you can’t help but admire Huayna Picchu or ‘Young Mountain’ (Machu Picchu means ‘Old Mountain’), which towers above the ruins. After spending most of the day at Machu Picchu you have the chance to soak your tired muscles in the hot springs at Aguas Calientes or meander through the markets before returning to Cuzco by train.

Due to a limited number of people being allowed on the trail a day, permits are limited and can sell out far in advance. If you wish to book the Inca Trail, please provide your Reservations Agent with your passport details by email as soon as possible so that we can secure your permit. Without your passport details, we are unable to arrange your Inca Trail Trek. Please [click here](#) for more information.

For information on the Lares Trek, [click here](#).

**Optional Excursions:** Inca Trail trek or Lares Valley trek • Train to Machu Picchu overnight excursion – US\$379 (these activities must be booked in advance, please check prices with a member of our team)

### Day 169 to 170 - Cuzco

After an action packed few days, return to Cuzco for the night and celebrate reaching Machu Picchu.

### Day 171 to 173 - Arequipa

Arequipa is located 2,380 metres above sea level and dominated by the conical snow-capped El Misti volcano. Although an earthquake in 2001 damaged the cathedral, it has not diminished any of the splendour of this charming square. One of the ‘must see’ attractions here is the vast Santa Catalina Convent (optional), a maze of cobbled streets, cloisters and other decorative buildings, it has only been open to the public since 1970 and it is certainly well worth visiting.

Another popular attraction is the acclaimed ‘Museo Santuarios Andinas’, where you can see well preserved mummies including the famous ‘Ice Princess Juanita’ - a young Inca maiden who was sacrificed some 500 years ago atop the Nevado Ampato volcano. You can enjoy a free day in Arequipa to explore these sights, and more, at our own leisure.

**Optional Excursions:** City tour – US\$12 • Monastery of Santa Catalina – US\$15 • Museo Santuarios Andinas, where you can see the frozen Inca ice mummy princess ‘Juanita’ – US\$8 • Plaza de Armas and churches – free

From Arequipa you have the option for an overnight visit to the Colca Canyon. Twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, it is the world’s second deepest. On the way to the canyon, we stop at Chivay where you can dip your toes in some hot springs. We spend the night in a lodge nearby, reaching the canyon the following morning. From the lookout point at Cruz del Condor you can see the river flowing 1,200 metres below and from this vantage point have a good chance of seeing condors as they soar out of the canyon on the hot thermal currents.

If you choose not to travel out to the Colca Canyon you can while away your time in Arequipa.

**Optional Excursions:** Colca Canyon overnight excursion – US\$60 + \$27 park entrance • City tour – US\$12 • Monastery of Santa Catalina – US\$15 • Museo Santuarios Andinas, where you can see the frozen Inca ice mummy princess ‘Juanita’ – US\$8 • Plaza de Armas and churches – free



### Day 174 to 174 - Puerto Inca

Heading down from the Andes we make our way to the coast to Puerto Inca, the Inca's original fishing port, which was only rediscovered in the 1950's. Tonight we camp by the beach just down from the actual ruins.

### Day 175 to 175 - Nazca

We head north on the Pan American highway to Nazca, and on our way we will visit the bizarre Chauchilla Cemetery where you'll see ancient mummies that still have skin and hair intact after thousands of years.

Nazca is renowned for the mysterious parallel lines and geometrical figures etched into the desert floor. Here you can take a flight in a light aircraft to see the 'monkey', 'hummingbird', 'condor', 'spider' and even what appears to be a spaceman. There are many more designs to be seen on this 30-minute flight. To this day no one is entirely sure why they are there.

**Optional Excursions:** Scenic flight over Nazca Lines – US\$110 + S/25 tax • Planetarium show & lecture – US\$20 • Chauchilla Cemetery – US\$15

### Day 176 to 176 - Huacachina

Continuing up the coast, we stopover at spectacular Huacachina, a desert oasis surrounded by massive sand-dunes. You'll have the option to do an overnight excursion into the desert, sleeping under the stars. This also incorporates the chance to take an awesome ride in dune-buggies down the dunes is an unreal way to spend the afternoon and night. This excursion ends with a delicious barbecue and pisco sours, the recipe for a good time on the sand dunes!

**Optional Excursions:** Overnight dune buggy trip – US\$55 (overnight) US\$18 (two hours)

### Day 177 to 179 - Lima

Lima was founded by the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro in 1535, after he eradicated the Incas and made the city his capital. Now the fifth largest city in Latin America, Lima is home to around one-third of the country's population.

The Historic centre of Lima is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the city has many fine colonial buildings and some of the best museums in South America including the Gold Museum, Museum of the Inquisition and the Catacombs below the San Francisco Church. Peru's capital has plenty to offer and many of the sights, including the city's two main squares the Plaza de Armas and Plaza San Martin, are within easy walking distance of your hotel.

Lima offers an ample range of restaurants and bars where local as well as international cuisine is served – the city is known as the gastronomic capital of the Americas. A nice spot to head out at night for a meal is Miraflores on the coast.

**Optional Excursions:** Museum Inquisition – free • Monastery and Catacombs – US\$3 guided tour • Plaza San Martin, one of the largest and most impressive squares • Paragliding – US\$60

### Day 180 to 182 - Huaraz

As we head north up Peru's Pacific Coast we stop at Paramonga, where we explore a ruined temple by the side of the highway. We then head inland until we hit the Cordillera Blanca mountains and the small town of Huaraz. The town is at an altitude of 3,052 metres and is located close to Peru's highest peak Huascarán (6,768 metres). Huaraz is renowned for its trekking, climbing and spectacular scenery. We have plenty of time to enjoy the beauty of this place with some great optional excursions to keep us busy.

**Optional Excursions:** Lake 69 excursion – US\$45 • Chavin de Huantur pre-inca temple – US\$18 • Ice climbing at Pastoruri & park entry – US\$50

### Day 183 to 185 - Huanchaco

Continuing north, we stop off at Sechín Alto, another important ruin with temples dating back to 1500 BC, with over 500 carvings gruesomely depicting warriors and their captives. We then arrive at Huanchaco, which is renowned for great beachside seafood restaurants and the reed boats that the fishermen use to ride the huge surf, reputedly, one of the longest left hand breaks in the world (just outside the town). We will have a few days here to make the most of this beachside resort, camping on the beach. Huanchaco is also our base for those who want to check out Chan Chán, the largest mud - city in the world built by Chimú kings and covering 26 square kilometres and the famous Pyramids of the Sun and Moon are also nearby.

We leave the coastal town of Huanchaco, stopping off en route to visit the museum in Lambayeque to see some of the many treasures uncovered from the tomb of the Lord of Sipan (one of Peru's finest museums), the oil derricks in the Sechura Desert and also the attractive oasis town of Piura. We arrive at the beautiful beachside town of Mancora in the late afternoon.

**Optional Excursions:** Chan Chan and the Pyramids of the Sun & Moon – US\$4 entry each + transport & guide • Surf lessons – US\$15 (2 hours)

### Day 186 to 188 - Mancora

We have two full days in Mancora where we can enjoy the sun, surf and relaxation. We stay in a party hostel in this small town and with three nights here, there is plenty of time to recover after one too many pisco sours. Kite surfing is a popular activity to do here.

**Optional Excursions:** Surf lessons (1 hr, 20 min) – US\$18 • Board hire – US\$8 per day

### Day 189 to 190 - Cuenca

Heading to the border of Ecuador, we travel through villages where fishermen work with their small hand nets. We make our way to the old colonial market city of Cuenca, (full name Santa Ana de Los Cuatro Ríos de Cuenca), Ecuador's third largest city, founded in 1557. Visit the historic area, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, between the river Tomebamba and the street Gran Colombia to the north, General Torres to the west, and Hermano Miguel to the east. There are plenty of sites here in the city to fill your time. Cuenca is where the Panama hat originated and you'll have the opportunity to visit one of the factories.

**Optional Excursions:** Catedral Vieja and Catedral Nueva – free • Museo de Arte Moderno – free

### Day 191 to 193 - Rio Verde/Baños

We make our way into the Andes, along the edge of the rainforest where we reach Baños, camping just outside in Rio Verde, a health resort renowned for its hot thermal springs. Besides soaking in the hot pools, there are opportunities for walks or horse riding in the hills, or you can try some of the optional activities that vary from canyoning to bridge swinging or you can relax with a massage or try some salsa lessons.

**Optional Excursions:** Ingapirca Ruins - US\$6 entry + transport • Canyoning – US\$50 • White water rafting – US\$40-75 • Bridge swing/bunjee jump US\$20 Waterfall and volcano viewing • Hot baths – US\$3-4 • Mountain biking – US\$5 (half day)

### Day 194 to 196 - Misahualli

The next three days you can take an optional excursion into the steaming Amazon Jungle staying in thatch-roofed bungalows on the shore of the Arajuno River. The grounds surrounding the cabins have lots of native trees and flowers attracting hummingbirds and toucans.

Your local guide will take you trekking in the jungle, explaining the different birds and the incredible variety of plants and trees and their medicinal value. The terrain is dense jungle and marsh with giant ferns and flowers – a true wilderness.

You'll also have a chance to meet and learn about the communities that live in the jungle which may include a visit to a local shaman, learning about the local crafts such as pottery and weaving, shooting arrows from a blow pipe and learning how they catch animals and fish. For a spot of relaxation enjoy the sounds of the jungle from a hammock back at lodge, or float down the river in an inflatable tube and take a swim to cool off.

If you decide not to do the Amazon Jungle excursion, you can stay on the outskirts of Tena and meet the group at their next destination. Tena is a peaceful city surrounded by wilderness and green hills.

**Approximate Driving Time:** Eight Hour Drive

**Optional Excursions:** Three nights in the Amazon Jungle including local guides and excursions – US\$150

### Day 197 to 197 - Otavalo

We return to Otavalo where you can pick up some last minute souvenirs. Maybe you had your eye on something for the duration of your tour? Now is the time to get it!

### Day 198 to 198 - Quito

Our epic journey ends where it began, in the colonial city of Quito where if you have time you can look at taking a side trip out to the Galapagos Islands, or just take stock of the last seven months and think of all the amazing things you've seen and done. What an adventure!

### Day 199 to 199 - Depart Quito

Your adventure of a lifetime comes to an end today. If you have a late flight or have lengthened your stay by adding post tour accommodation you will have more time to explore the sights.

## Day by Day Itinerary

Day	Activity	Country	Meals
-----	----------	---------	-------

Day 1	Quito	Ecuador	
Day 2	Otavallo		
Day 3	Popayán	Colombia	L
Day 4	San Agustin		LD
Day 5	San Agustin		BLD
Day 6	Tierradentro		BLD
Day 7	Tierradentro		BLD
Day 8	Popayán		BL
Day 9	Popayán		
Day 10	Zona Cafetera		LD
Day 11	Zona Cafetera		BLD
Day 12	Bogotá		BL
Day 13	Bogotá		
Day 14	Villa de Leyva		LD
Day 15	San Gil		BLD
Day 16	San Gil		BLD
Day 17	San Gil		BLD
Day 18	En route		BLD
Day 19	Cartagena		BL
Day 20	Cartagena		
Day 21	Cartagena		
Day 22	Palomino		LD
Day 23	Palomino		BLD
Day 24	Palomino		BLD
Day 25	Cabimas	Venezuela	BL
Day 26	Mérida		L
Day 27	Mérida		
Day 28	Mérida		
Day 29	Mérida		
Day 30	Barinas		L
Day 31	Barinas		

Day 32	Barinas		
Day 33	Choroni		L
Day 34	Choroni		
Day 35	Caracas		L
Day 36	Caracas		
Day 37	Santa Fe		LD
Day 38	Ciudad Bolivar		B
Day 39	Ciudad Bolivar		
Day 40	Ciudad Bolivar		
Day 41	Ciudad Bolivar		
Day 42	Salto Kama (en route)	Brazil	LD
Day 43	En route		BLD
Day 44	Manaus		BL
Day 45	Manaus		
Day 46	Manaus		
Day 47	Manaus		
Day 48	Manaus		
Day 49	Manaus		
Day 50	Manaus		
Day 51	Ferry		
Day 52	Ferry		
Day 53	Ferry		
Day 54	Ferry		
Day 55	Ferry		
Day 56	Belém		
Day 57	Belém		
Day 58	En route		LD
Day 59	Sete Cidades NP		BLD
Day 60	Ubajara NP		BLD
Day 61	Jericoacoara		BL
Day 62	Jericoacoara		BLD

Day 63	Canoa Quebrada		BLD
Day 64	Canoa Quebrada		BLD
Day 65	Canoa Quebrada		BLD
Day 66	Praia da Pipa		BLD
Day 67	Praia da Pipa		BLD
Day 68	Olinda		BL
Day 69	Olinda		
Day 70	Maceio		LD
Day 71	Maceio		BLD
Day 72	Salvador		BL
Day 73	Salvador		
Day 74	Salvador		
Day 75	Itacaré		LD
Day 76	Itacaré		BLD
Day 77	Porto Seguro		BLD
Day 78	Porto Seguro		BLD
Day 79	En route		BLD
Day 80	Ouro Preto		BLD
Day 81	Ouro Preto		BLD
Day 82	Tierradentes		BLD
Day 83	Rio de Janeiro		BL
Day 84	Rio de Janeiro		B
Day 85	Rio de Janeiro		
Day 86	Rio de Janeiro		
Day 87	Rio de Janeiro		
Day 88	Rio de Janeiro		
Day 89	Parati		BLD
Day 90	Parati		BLD
Day 91	Parati		BLD
Day 92	En route		BLD
Day 93	En route		BLD

Day 94	Pantanal		B
Day 95	Pantanal		
Day 96	Pantanal		
Day 97	Bonito		LD
Day 98	Bonito		BLD
Day 99	Bonito		BLD
Day 100	En route		BLD
Day 101	Foz do Iguaçu		BLD
Day 102	Foz do Iguaçu		BLD
Day 103	Puerto Iguazú		B
Day 104	Puerto Iguazú	Argentina	
Day 105	En route		LD
Day 106	Buenos Aires		BL
Day 107	Buenos Aires		
Day 108	Buenos Aires		
Day 109	Buenos Aires		
Day 110	En route		LD
Day 111	Puerto Madryn		BLD
Day 112	Puerto Madryn		BLD
Day 113	En route		BLD
Day 114	En route		BLD
Day 115	Ushuaia		BLD
Day 116	Ushuaia		BLD
Day 117	Ushuaia		BLD
Day 118	En route	Chile	BLD
Day 119	Torres del Paine NP		BLD
Day 120	Torres del Paine NP		BLD
Day 121	Torres del Paine NP		BLD
Day 122	Torres del Paine NP		BLD
Day 123	Torres del Paine NP		BLD
Day 124	El Calafate	Argentina	BL



Day 125	El Calafate		
Day 126	El Chalten		LD
Day 127	El Chalten		BLD
Day 128	Perito Moreno		BLD
Day 129	Bariloche		BLD
Day 130	Bariloche		BLD
Day 131	Bariloche		BLD
Day 132	Pucón	Chile	BLD
Day 133	Pucón		BLD
Day 134	Pucón		BLD
Day 135	Santiago		BL
Day 136	Santiago		
Day 137	Santiago		
Day 138	Mendoza	Argentina	L
Day 139	Mendoza		
Day 140	Mendoza		
Day 141	Cordoba		L
Day 142	Cordoba		
Day 143	Catamarca		LD
Day 144	Cafayate		BLD
Day 145	Salta		BLD
Day 146	Salta		BLD
Day 147	Salta		BLD
Day 148	Tupiza	Bolivia	BL
Day 149	Uyuni		L
Day 150	Uyuni		
Day 151	Uyuni		
Day 152	Sucre		L
Day 153	Sucre		
Day 154	Potosi		L
Day 155	Potosi		

Day 156	La Paz		L
Day 157	La Paz		
Day 158	La Paz		
Day 159	Puno	Peru	L
Day 160	Puno		
Day 161	Puno		
Day 162	Cuzco		L
Day 163	Cuzco		
Day 164	Cuzco		
Day 165	Cuzco		
Day 166	Inca Trail		
Day 167	Inca Trail		
Day 168	Inca Trail		
Day 169	Cuzco		
Day 170	Cuzco		
Day 171	Arequipa		LD
Day 172	Arequipa		BLD
Day 173	Arequipa		BLD
Day 174	Puerto Inca		BLD
Day 175	Nazca		BLD
Day 176	Huacachina		L
Day 177	Lima		L
Day 178	Lima		
Day 179	Lima		
Day 180	Huaraz		L
Day 181	Huaraz		
Day 182	Huaraz		
Day 183	Huanchaco		LD
Day 184	Huanchaco		BLD
Day 185	Huanchaco		BLD
Day 186	Mancora		BL

Day 187	Mancora		B
Day 188	Mancora		B
Day 189	Cuenca	Ecuador	BL
Day 190	Cuenca		
Day 191	Rio Verde		LD
Day 192	Rio Verde		BLD
Day 193	Rio Verde		BLD
Day 194	Misahualli		BL
Day 195	Misahualli		
Day 196	Misahualli		
Day 197	Otavallo		L
Day 198	Quito		
Day 199	Quito		

(B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner included)

For tours that include the option of a single supplement, a ? will indicate in which destinations single rooms are available. The detailed and day by day itineraries above are provided in good faith and it is our intention to adhere to the published route. Changes may be made before or during your tour for operational or safety reasons or to incorporate improvements. Impromptu changes may also occur whilst you are travelling as a result of one-off circumstances such as an excursion being closed on a particular day, weather conditions or transport. Delays are rare but occur occasionally and for this reason and the reasons above this itinerary should be considered as a guide only. Published transport times are approximations and may vary depending on local conditions.

## Travel Style

This is a Budget Expedition for young people aged 18 to 35 in South America, travelling by custom built vehicle and staying in a mixture of camping, hotels and hostels. There is a maximum of 34 travellers with an average group size of 15-24. Please read the Budget Expeditions travel style dossier to ensure you understand the style of travel you are undertaking: <http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-styles/dossier/budget-expeditions>

## Local Payment

The tour price is divided into a set amount paid in advance and a compulsory local payment which is due to your tour leader in US\$ cash at the group meeting on the first day of your tour. The local payment amount is found on the tour price page and will be printed on your invoice and tour voucher. Our brochures are updated in September/October each year and the local payment you will pay will be cost that is published at the time of your departure. It can be very difficult to obtain US\$ in some South American countries and virtually impossible in others, so we recommend organising your local payment before you arrive for your tour.

In general your local payment will cover:

- Meals while camping and some lunches on travel days on the expedition vehicle
- Campsite fees and cooking gas
- Hotels and hostels when staying in towns/cities (and possibly lodges if bad weather on camping days)
- National park entrance fees when visited in the expedition vehicle

## Rio Carnival

Your tour is scheduled to arrive in Rio de Janeiro in time to enjoy the famed Rio Carnival. During the 4 nights/5 days of Carnival, your accommodation in Rio de Janeiro is NOT included and you have the option to either make your own arrangements, or book one of our Rio Carnival tour extensions. These extensions include your accommodation in designated Tucan Travel hotels as well as your ticket to the Samba parade at Sambadrome (sector 13). Should you choose to add Rio Carnival to your booking, you will stay in the same hotel as your fellow tour participants, enjoy the convenience of a

helpdesk from 9-11 am and 5-7 pm, and attend the parade with your group. Read more about [Rio Carnival](#).

If you wish to make your own arrangements during Carnival, you will rejoin the group after Carnival has finished and continue with your tour.

### Rio Carnival Supplement

If you are in Rio de Janeiro on a group tour or have pre or post accommodation booked in Rio de Janeiro on the Thursday night immediately before or the Tuesday night immediately after the Rio Carnival weekend you will be required to pay a supplement of US\$119 or equivalent per night. This is paid in addition to the cost of your tour, pre or post accommodation or local fund. The supplement is to cover the markedly increased cost of accommodation in Rio de Janeiro at this time.

### Optional Excursions in Cuzco, Peru

Your tour includes time in Cuzco for optional activities which must be booked in advance.

#### 4-day Inca Trail Trek or Train to Machu Picchu

This tour allows time to complete the famous Inca Trail Trek at an additional cost. If you prefer not to complete the multi-day trek and just want to visit Machu Picchu, you have the option to book the train to Machu Picchu instead. The Inca Trail trek is a permit regulated activity which can have limited availability and sometimes sells out months in advance. It is closed in February for maintenance. Permits are booked with your passport details which must be provided to us in writing. We cannot guarantee permit availability until we have received your deposit, passport details in writing and have applied for your permit with the government-run office in Cuzco. You can view current Inca Trail permit availability on our permit calendar:

[www.tucantravel.com/travel-highlights/inca-trail-trek/booking-and-inca-trail-permit](http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-highlights/inca-trail-trek/booking-and-inca-trail-permit).

If permits are not available over your dates we offer an alternative trek called the Lares Trail - [www.tucantravel.com/travel-highlights/lares-trek/lares-trek-overview](http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-highlights/lares-trek/lares-trek-overview). Both treks involve high altitude and require a certain level of fitness. Please check this with your doctor before travel and contact us if you have concerns.

#### Inca Trail Packing List

If you are hiking the Inca or Lares Trail you will need a good warm sleeping bag and ideally a sleep sheet for added warmth and comfort. Sleeping bags can be hired locally for approximately \$10 but we cannot guarantee the quality of these, so we recommend bringing your own if possible. Roll mats are provided on the Inca Trail however for greater comfort and warmth, Thermarest style mattresses can also be hired in Cuzco for US\$10.

Additional advice on packing for the Inca Trail can be found here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/travel-highlights/inca-trail-trek/inca-trail-trek-packing-list>

#### 3-day Amazon Jungle Excursion

Your tour also has time to include an optional visit to the Amazon Jungle. This excursion includes flights into the jungle, sleeping in authentic jungle huts, eating delicious jungle meals and navigating the river by boat with specialist local guides.

### Joining your tour

Your joining location is:

Hotel Majestic  
Mercadillo 366 y Versalles  
Quito,  
Ecuador

Tel: (+593) 2 2543 182

Fax: (+593) 2 2504 207

[info@majesticquito.com](mailto:info@majesticquito.com)

The hotel has safe deposit boxes for your use (you will get an itemised receipt). Please leave all of your important documents, money and travellers cheques here when you go out but remember to carry some form of ID and a photocopy of your passport with you. It is Ecuadorian law that you carry a copy of your passport with you at all times. It is advisable not to wear chains or expensive looking watches or jewellery while in major South American cities. You should also keep your camera concealed when not in use and carry daypacks on your front for extra safety.

#### Arriving in Quito

Quito is located at 2,800 metres above sea level, making it the second highest capital city in the world. You may feel the effects of altitude, which affects all people differently. If you have just arrived it is suggested you take it very easy for the first day and follow the below recommendations:

- Drink plenty of water, around two to two-and-a-half litres per day. Bottled water is available everywhere.
- The affects of alcohol and cigarettes are made considerably worse by the thin air. Try to avoid these in excess for the first few days.
- Take it easy. Walk slowly and avoid sudden movements

On arrival in Quito we recommend you change enough money into the local currency for the first four or five days of your tour. The currency used in Ecuador is the US dollar. These are available from ATMs or with US\$ travellers cheques. Ecuadorian notes tend to be of poor quality and you will have trouble exchanging these if you are travelling outside of Ecuador.

## Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are not included in the tour price and must be booked separately in advance through Tucan Travel. If you have booked an airport/hotel transfer with us, please look out for someone with a sign which has your name, Tucan Travel, or both after exiting the customs hall.

If you have booked an arrival transfer with us and you are going to be delayed by more than two hours, you must advise us of the delay at least six hours before arrival. If we are advised in time, we will make every effort to reschedule your transfer and your driver will be asked to wait for two hours after your new expected arrival time. However, if we are not made aware of any change, the driver will only wait for two hours after the original scheduled arrival time and after this point it will be up to you to arrange transport to your hotel at your own expense. Please contact us on the emergency contact details below if you are likely to be delayed.

## Making your own way

If you would prefer to make your own way to and from your hotel, you will find a 24-hour taxi rank outside the airport. You shouldn't have any problem getting a taxi as they are all metered (yellow taxis) and tend to wait in an orderly line outside the terminal. Unlicensed taxis are also available but you will have to haggle for a good price which can be difficult if you do not speak Spanish. In 2013, Ecuador opened it's new international airport in Quito. The airport is approximately 90 minutes from the city centre (depending on traffic) and the cost of a taxi to our hotel in Quito should be approximately \$25-35. Given the airport's location out of town, please allow plenty of time to arrive at the airport before your departure.

## Pre-Departure Meeting

When you arrive on day one of your trip, you should find some local information at the hotel lobby. Your tour leader will be staying in the hotel and should have put up a welcome note to let you know what room they are in. A pre-departure meeting is usually held in the afternoon or early evening of day one. You will need to bring the following important items to the meeting with your tour leader:

- Your passport, including any necessary visas and at least one photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Vaccination certificates if relevant to any destinations on your tour
- Travel insurance policy and a photocopy to give to your tour leader
- Your travel voucher
- Your local payment in US\$ cash (Budget Expeditions only)

## Missing the tour departure

If you miss the start of your tour, please ask at the reception of the hotel for a message from your tour leader which will give you instructions on how to catch up with the group. Any associated costs will be at your own expense (although, depending on the reason, you may be able to claim these from your travel insurance so ensure you keep all receipts).

If you know in advance that you are unlikely to arrive on time, please contact Tucan Travel immediately so we can inform the tour leader. Tucan Travel cannot be held responsible should your airline/boat/coach be delayed and we are unable to refund any unused portion of your tour.

## Time Keeping

Punctuality is very important and throughout the tour your tour leader will give you the time to meet in reception. Tour leaders will often post notes at reception with meeting times, so remember to always look out for these.

Although rare, delays can occur and we therefore advise you not to arrange your onward travel too close to the end of the tour. We take no responsibility for any missed flights or additional expenses if the group arrives late into the departure city at the end of the tour.

## Emergency Contact Details

In the case of an emergency before you meet your tour leader, please contact Rolf Stanley, Latin American Destination Manager:

Tel: (+51) 984 76 21 64 (phone only)

Email: [sacrew@tucantravel.com](mailto:sacrew@tucantravel.com)

In the unlikely event that you are unable to reach the number above, please contact Keiko on (+51) 984 65 3726

Please note that these numbers are a service for emergency calls only. We respectfully request that you consider the urgency of your enquiry. Non-urgent enquiries should be made during office hours. Please be considerate of time zones.

Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-5.30pm; Saturday 9am-1pm (based in Peru)

## Keeping in Touch

Your tour leader will point out internet cafes in all major cities and towns and Wi-Fi may be available in some hotels. Mobile phones may not work locally depending on your network. If you have an unlocked phone you may be able to purchase a local SIM card. Hotel details, apart from the joining hotel, are not given in advance and are subject to change, so if someone needs to contact you urgently during your tour the best method is to contact our office who can pass a message on to the tour leader.

## Money

For personal spending money you should bring US dollars to use alongside the local currency (where applicable). Some countries do not accept US dollars printed before 2006 and it can be very difficult to obtain US dollars in Brazil. While bank cards provide a very good way to access funds overall, it is not recommended to rely on them as your sole source of funds as cash machines do not always work and may not be available in remote locations. Carry a mix of cards and cash with you, including notes in small denominations.

Your spending money should cover some meals, optional excursions, souvenirs, drinks, laundry, border and airport taxes and any visas obtained locally. We provide guideline prices for optional excursions in the itinerary to help you budget, but ultimately the amount you will need to budget for your trip very much depends on your individual requirements. We recommend bringing extra money to cover emergencies or unexpected situations.

## Tipping

Tipping is a part of the life in South America, but you should not feel obliged or pressured to tip if you have not received good service. A gratuity of 10% of the total bill is recommended in restaurants. Gratuities are usually expected for local guides on included and optional excursions. Tips are also appreciated by Tucan Travel tour leaders at the end of your tour and we recommend an average of \$2-\$4 per person per day for the duration of your tour. This is only if you feel that their service was up to standard and is completely at your own discretion.

## Packing List

The best advice when packing is to travel light and leave space for souvenirs in your bag.

## Luggage

The majority of the time, your luggage will either stay in the overland truck or a few metres away in your tent. However, it is important to remember that in some major cities and towns, you will be staying in hotels and hostels and the overland truck may struggle to get down narrow or busy roads and you may need to walk from the parked truck to your accommodation, potentially down cobbled streets or dirt roads. Space is also an issue on the overland truck and with up to 34 other passengers, it is important to take a versatile and sturdy rucksack that can take wear and tear.

We recommend a frameless backpack or a sports type shoulder bag which fits comfortably on your shoulders, as they are less bulky and easier to handle than rigid suitcases or framed backpacks. Suitcases are not suitable for our tours and are not recommended. Tucan Travel takes no responsibility for damage to your luggage while on tour.

In addition to your main bag, you will need a small daypack for your everyday excursions. Try to keep this bag as light as possible and make sure that all main sections of your bags can be padlocked. This daypack should have enough room to carry food and snacks for long hikes and treks and space to carry belongings for overnight excursions.

## Sleeping Bags and Mats

Sleeping bags and sleeping mats are essential. For all tours through Patagonia and areas of high altitude (such as the Inca Trail) we recommend a four season bag with side zip which can be opened out when you reach warmer weather. If you do not have a four season sleeping bag, you may be able to purchase extra blankets locally. If you are doing an 'Amazonia' Overland Tour, you do not need a thick sleeping bag as the climate will be warmer. However, please be aware that weather can change from region to region and quite suddenly.

Therm-a-rest self inflating mattresses are comfortable and provide protection against the cold ground, while foam roll mats are compact, inexpensive and have similar features. Avoid air mattresses as these can be bulky and puncture easily.

## Clothing and Footwear

We recommend packing lightweight and durable clothes. Nights can be cold at higher altitude (Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador) and in southern Patagonia, so it



is a good idea to bring at least one pair of warm trousers plus several thinner sweaters / fleeces which you can layer. Please avoid military or camouflage-patterned clothing as it can cause problems and in some countries may be illegal.

Good, comfortable walking shoes are essential. These do not need to be expensive boots, but they should have good ankle support and grip, be worn in and ideally waterproof.

Essential items:

- A lightweight water/windproof jacket with hood
- Easy to pack wide-brimmed hat or cap
- Towel - you will need a towel for most overnight excursions
- Swimwear
- Sandals or thongs/jandals/flip flops

Suggested items:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money belt  | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic bags for waterproofing   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses  | <input type="checkbox"/> Inflatable pillow  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small calculator  | <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss army type penknife   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small collapsible umbrella  | <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Universal washbasin plug  | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel plug adaptor with a USB port  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head torch or flashlight  | <input type="checkbox"/> Small sewing kit   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel alarm clock  | <input type="checkbox"/> Insect repellent (DEET 35% min) and bite cream   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm, sun block with high UV factor   | <input type="checkbox"/> Antibacterial hand clensing gel  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wet wipes   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear plugs and sleep mask   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheap plastic watch   | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel sickness tablets  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plenty of spare memory cards for your camera  | <input type="checkbox"/> Spare pair of spectacles or contact lenses and solution  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare rechargeable batteries for camera   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard drive or USB stick to back up your photos   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing materials, address book and diary   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket size phrasebook   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel games, cards and a couple of paperbacks  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pegless washing line & travel laundry detergent (bio-degradable preferable)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper (best to carry a roll with you at all times and/or tissues)  | <input type="checkbox"/> As gifts for local children - pens, coloured pencils, small notepads. To discourage a begging mentality we recommend that you try to give these gifts at schools or childcare centres rather than on the street. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small medical kit with diarrhoea remedy, rehydration salts, antiseptic cream, sterile dressings, plasters, bandages, pain-killers, safety pins etc. |   |

## Laundry

There are usually laundromats or laundry services in or near most of our hotels. Hotel services can be pretty costly however your tour leader will be able to recommend cheaper options. If you wash clothes yourself take care not to be too obvious where you hang them as most hotels do not like guests washing and drying their clothes in the hotel rooms.

## Electricity Supply

The power supply and plug types in South America vary from country to country. The power supply in Peru, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay is 220-240 volts and uses either a typical European rounded two prong plug or North American flat pronged plug (Argentina also sometimes uses a 3-pronged plug such as that used in Australia). In Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela it is 120 volts with North America flat pronged plug. Brazil has both voltages depending on the region and uses a number of different outlets. We recommend bringing a universal plug adaptor with you. You can also charge your iPods, MP3 players, laptops, cameras, etc using power boards aboard the overland truck, while travelling.

## Health, Fitness & Safety

### Vaccinations

It is important to consult your doctor or travel clinic in good time before your tour departs to determine what vaccinations you require. You may need several vaccinations and/or malaria tablets and you should be aware that some inoculations require more than one visit and can take several weeks to

administer. Always carry your International Certificate of Vaccination with your passport.

For areas with malaria, make sure you pack sufficient prophylactics for the duration of your tour and the incubation period after. Some countries prevent entry for travellers without a valid Yellow Fever certificate. This must be acquired before departure and takes ten days for your body to build up a resistance. This certificate must be taken with you on your tour with a photocopy stored somewhere safe.

### Pack a Medical Kit

A medical kit is handy for minor wounds and ailments. In areas with limited or dubious medical facilities, an emergency medical kit containing sterile syringes is also advisable. By law our staff are not allowed to administer first aid or give drugs to travellers, so please be prepared with your own supplies.

If you are taking medication, please ensure you bring an adequate supply and a letter from your doctor to avoid potential issues at border crossings.

### Fitness & Suitability

This is a participatory tour involving camping and with basic facilities at times. Disruptions are likely, and while your tour leader will make every effort to ensure your trip runs smoothly, patience, a sense of humour and willingness to get involved are essential ingredients for a successful and happy overland group.

If you have any pre-existing medical conditions please let us know at the time you book or as early before departure as possible. Depending on the severity of the condition, you may be asked to produce a medical certificate from your doctor approving your participation in this tour. While this would only happen in very exceptional circumstances, if we consider you incapable completing this tour or you have concealed an existing medical condition which is affecting your ability to participate in the tour of Tucan Travel reserve the right to turn you away without reimbursement.

### Safety & Security

South America is generally very safe, even more so in a group. Reasonable precaution is advised; do not bring valuable jewellery or watches (even fakes can catch the eye of a thief), do not walk by yourself at night, heed your tour leader's advice and always keep an eye and a hand on your camera and bags in public places.

### Bathrooms

In some countries it is customary to leave a gratuity of 20-50 cents when using public conveniences. An attendant may collect this or a dish/box will be left out. Our vehicles do not have toilets on board for hygiene and logistical reasons. This may mean roadside toilet stops on travel days and our crew always try and stop in isolated areas with as much privacy as possible if this is necessary. There will be some occasions where free camping is necessary. On these occasions there will not be any facilities available and you will have to use the facilities mother nature provided. On these occasions we recommend wet wipes while your Tour Leader will tell you about environmentally sound 'bush toilet' practises.

### Travel Guides

If you would like to discover more about your destination, including history, geography, climate and language, please have a read of our country travel guides available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/destination-travel-guides/south-america-travel-guides>.

### Documents

#### Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after you have finished your tour with sufficient blank pages for visas and immigration stamps. Photocopy your passport, leaving one copy at home and taking one with you on tour. If you lose your passport while on tour, you will be responsible for any expenses incurred such as extra accommodation and transport while replacing your passport and will not be entitled to a refund of any unused portion of your tour.

#### Tour Documents

Before you depart you will be issued with a voucher for your tour and separate vouchers for any extra services such as airport transfers and pre/post tour accommodation. Please print these out and bring them with you. This dossier is updated regularly, so we recommend checking our website for the latest version just prior to the start of your tour.

#### Final Balance

The balance for your tour is due no later than 60 days prior to the start of your tour and no tour vouchers will be issued until this is received. In addition please send the following details at least 60 days before you depart:

- Passport number, date of issue, date of expiry, nationality and place of issue
- Your full name and date of birth

- Flight arrival details in your starting city
- Special requirements, e.g. special dietary requirements or allergies

Please let us know if you are travelling with another person on the tour but have made separate bookings and we will endeavour to make suitable rooming arrangements.

## Visas

All countries have visa requirements that are subject to change at short notice. A general guideline for visa requirements is available here:

<http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/visa-guide>, but you must check with your local embassy or consulate for the very latest visa requirement information based on your nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have all necessary visas for your tour. If you would like help applying for visas, we have recommended visa agencies on our visa page that we work with regularly.

Important things to check when applying for visas:

- Does the validity of the visa cover the duration of your time spent in the country?
- Do you require a single or multiple entry visa(s) for your tour?
- Are you required to show additional documentation when you arrive in a country? (Examples include proof of onward travel and travel itinerary)

Some visas are only valid for entry within three months of the date of issue which means on some of our longer tours the visa would expire before you are scheduled to enter the country. In these cases you must obtain the relevant visa during your tour. If it is necessary for you to obtain any visas en-route, please contact Tucan Travel or your travel consultant and inform your tour leader at the start of the tour. If you do not have the appropriate visas, Tucan Travel will not reimburse any expenses incurred in acquiring visas or any unused portion of the tour.

It is best to apply for visas in your home country if possible. If applying for visas by post, please allow plenty of time before departure and send your application by registered mail. Postal applications tend to be given a lower priority than in person applications and can take longer to process.

**Special Note:** If you have dual nationality it is advised not to obtain different visas in different passports. Although this may sometimes be cheaper, you may encounter problems at border crossings if your exit stamps from one country are not the same as your visa for the next.

## Travel Insurance Policy

Travel insurance is compulsory for all tours. You must be adequately insured for medical, hospital, baggage and personal expenses, any necessary extra travel (rejoining tour or repatriation) as well as curtailment and cancellation.

We strongly recommend that all clients carry a copy of their full policy document with them at all times, together with any certificate showing the policy number and emergency contact details. Your tour leader will also ask for a photocopy of your insurance document, so please take this to the pre-departure meeting at the start of your tour. You will not be able to commence your tour unless you can provide proof of insurance to your tour leader.

## Document Checklist

- Tour Voucher & Vouchers for extra services
- Passport (with photocopies of information pages and visas)
- Tour Dossier
- Cash & credit/debit cards (best to take a mixture and more than one card in case one does not work)
- Travel Insurance Certificate and photocopy for tour leader
- Travel consultant's phone number and email address
- Proof of onward travel, ie airline ticket

## Optional Excursions

Optional excursions are not operated by Tucan Travel and while every effort is made prices may not be up-to-date and are intended as a general guide to help you budget for your trip. Prices for vehicle-based excursions such as game drives are approximate based on the optimum number of participants and the actual price may vary depending on group size.

Sufficient safety equipment such as helmets and life jackets are sometimes not available and Tucan Travel is unable to provide this equipment. If you intend to participate in an optional excursion you may like to consider bringing your own safety gear.

Excursions are run by a local operator or third party with both Tucan Travel and the Tour Leader acting as a booking agent only. Optional activities are not part of the tour and Tucan Travel's booking conditions do not apply to them. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct travel insurance for the

excursions you intend to take part in and Tucan Travel is not liable for any injuries incurred.

## **Responsible Travel**

We work hard to ensure our tours are sustainably and ethically run. You can read our responsible travel policy and advice on how you can travel responsibly here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/about-us/responsible-travel>.

## **Meet Up**

Our free Meet Up app, available on Facebook, on iTunes and Google Play is an opportunity to chat with others passengers before you depart or keep in touch when you arrive back from tour. Information on the app is available here: <http://www.tucantravel.com/before-you-go/meet-up>

## **Add-ons & Extras**

On many of our Group Tours, we spend one night in our arrival and departure cities. If you want to explore these cities more we can book pre and post tour accommodation, city tours and airport transfers for you. Price information can be found on the price page of each tour. We also have **Add-ons** - short packages that can be booked alongside a tour or on their own and have been carefully designed to ensure you don't miss out on popular highlights.

## **Illegal Drugs**

The possession or use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our tours. When overseas you are subject to local laws and the penalties for breaking these laws can be harsh. In order to safeguard the interests of the group as a whole, our tour leaders have been instructed to insist that any person found with illegal drugs leave the tour immediately – without refund. The tour leader's decision on this matter is final. If you need to carry certain drugs with you for purposes of medication, please inform your tour leader and ensure that you carry a copy of your prescription or letter from your doctor.