

# BRAZIL: SOUTHWEST AMAZON & PIRA AÇU LODGE



14 – 27 JUNE 2026



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Day	Date	Itinerary	Accommodation
Day 1	<b>14 June</b>	Arrivals in Porto Velho	Slaviero Porto Velho or similar
Day 2	<b>15 June</b>	Birding east & west bank of the Madeira river	Slaviero Porto Velho or similar
Day 3	<b>16 June</b>	Birding east & west bank of the Madeira river	Hotel Fama in Jaci-Paraná
Day 4	<b>17 June</b>	Birding west bank of Madeira river to Humaitá	Humaitá Quality Hotel
Day 5	<b>18 June</b>	Birding west bank of Madeira river around Humaitá	Humaitá Quality Hotel
Day 6	<b>19 June</b>	Travel to Pira Açu Lodge	Pira Açu Lodge
Day 7	<b>20 June</b>	Pira Açu Lodge	Pira Açu Lodge
Day 8	<b>21 June</b>	Pira Açu Lodge	Pira Açu Lodge
Day 9	<b>22 June</b>	Pira Açu Lodge	Pira Açu Lodge
Day 10	<b>23 June</b>	Pira Açu Lodge	Pira Açu Lodge
Day 11	<b>24 June</b>	Pira Açu Lodge	Pira Açu Lodge
Day 12	<b>25 June</b>	Travel from PiraAçu to Humaitá	Humaitá Quality Hotel
Day 14	<b>26 June</b>	Birding near Humaitá and return to Porto Velho	Slaviero Porto Velho or similar
Day 15	<b>27 June</b>	Departures	<i>End of tour</i>

**TOUR ITINERARY**

**June 14<sup>th</sup> (Day 1): Arrivals in Porto Velho**

Arrival in Porto Velho. You will be met at the airport for the transfer to a comfortable hotel with all modern conveniences in Porto Velho, the capital of the state of Rondônia. Depending on arrival schedules, there may be time for a bit of birding in the afternoon near Porto Velho.

*Night in Porto Velho*

**June 15<sup>th</sup> (Day 2): Birding east and west bank of the Madeira river**

Porto Velho sits on the east bank of the mighty Madeira river, a major tributary of the Amazon formed by the confluence of the Madre de Dios and Mamoré rivers. The wide Madeira is an important barrier to the distribution of Amazonian forest birds, with significant species turnover from as one crosses from one bank to the other. We begin the tour with two days birding out of Porto Velho, visiting sites on both banks of the Madeira.

On the west bank we bird tall forests and sandy belt *campinarana* forests, focusing on the birds of the Inambari area of endemism of the west Amazon. First and foremost amongst these are a quintet of recently described species: Campina Jay, Western Striolated Puffbird, Inambari Woodcreeper, Inambari Gnatcatcher, and Predicted Antwren. Other species we hope to find include White-bellied Parrot, Bonaparte's Parakeet, Curl-crested Aracari, Ivory-billed Aracari, Brown-banded Puffbird, Bar-bellied Woodcreeper, White-throated Antbird, Hairy-crested Antbird, Black Antbird, Humaitá Antbird, Undulated Antshrike, and Red-billed Pied Tanager.

The forest on the east bank of the Madeira near Porto Velho is patchier and more disturbed, but we will visit one or two sites to search for Amazonian Pygmy-Owl, Broad-billed Motmot, Eastern Striolated Puffbird, Gould's Toucanet, Dusky-headed Parakeet, Elegant Woodcreeper, Dusky-capped Woodcreeper, Rondonia Warbling-Antbird, Blackish Antbird and the rare Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher. We also have a remote chance at finding either Rondonia Bushbird or Black-bellied Gnatcatcher, two rare and elusive denizens of the darkest corners of the understorey in bamboo thickets and vine tangles.

*Night in Porto Velho*

### **June 16<sup>th</sup> (Day 3): Birding east and west bank of the Madeira river**

We have another full day to bird out of Porto Velho. Most of our birding in this area takes place on quiet dirt tracks through a mosaic of forest and non-forest habitats. Ongoing habitat clearance in the region means that birding sites change over time. We visit the region in the first month of the dry season, thus avoiding the forest fires that inevitably affect certain areas later in the year. However, this also means that some of the tracks might still be muddy, possibly affecting our access to certain birding sites. Tonight we stay in a little hotel in the small town of Jaci-Paraná, about 1 hour southwest of Porto Velho.

*Night in Jaci-Paraná*

### **June 17<sup>th</sup> (Day 4): River islands and travel to Humaitá**

This morning we travel a short distance upriver on the Rio Madeira to bird a large river island near Jaci-Paraná to look for river and island specialties such as Orinoco Goose, Black-and-white Antbird, Olive-spotted Hummingbird, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Parker's and White-bellied Spinetails, Brownish Elaenia, Riverside Tyrant, along with more widespread species typical of riverine habitats like Hoatzin, Pied Plover, Horned Screamer, Black Skimmer, Yellow-browed Sparrow and more. In the afternoon we drive back through Porto Velho and on toward Humaitá, birding in the afternoon in open savanna habitats where we may find White-eared Puffbird, Long-tailed Ground-Dove, Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, and perhaps Plumbeous and Dark-throated Seedeaters.

*Night in Humaitá*

### **June 18<sup>th</sup> (Day 5): Birding west bank of the Madeira around Humaitá**

We have a full day to bird around Humaitá, a pleasant Amazonian town on the west bank of the Madeira river. In the morning we'll head for an area of swampy *terra firme* forest with many small palms in the understorey to look for Rio Madeira Stipplethroat, Undulated Antshrike, Humaitá Antbird, Reddish-winged Bare-eye, Blue-cheeked Jacamar and Bar-bellied Woodcreeper. We will visit a couple of other sites in the region to try to track down rarities such as Fulvous-chinned Nunlet, Citron-bellied Attila, Inambari Gnatcatcher, and we have another chance for Campina (Azure-naped) Jay here, too.

*Night in Humaitá*

### **June 19<sup>th</sup> (Day 6): Varzea forest near Humaitá and travel to Pira Açu Lodge**

A morning visit to seasonally flooded varzeas on the east bank of the Madeira river is always very birdy, and

just from the edges of the Transamazonica highway we can find Horned Screamer, Slate-coloured Hawk, Festive Parrot, Zimmer's Woodcreeper, Leaden Antwren, the *obidensis* spp. of Plain Softtail, Masked Crimson-Tanager and more. By mid-morning we shall be driving east on the Transamazonica, traversing a vast area of forest before we reach the small frontier town of Santo Antonio de Matupi, often simply referred to as "KM 180", where we have lunch. We then drive another 120 kilometres to the banks of the Aripuanã river, where we are met by boats to take us upriver to Pira Açu Lodge, a journey that will take approximately 2 hours. We arrive to the lodge at the very end of a long day.

*Night at Pira Açu Lodge.*

### **June 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> (Days 7 – 11): Pira Açu Lodge**

We have five full days to explore the area surrounding PiraAçu. Once the realm of rubber tappers during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the middle reaches of the Aripuanã river are still flanked today by an endless carpet of pristine Amazon rainforest. Nowadays a few descendants of those rubber tappers still live in the region, subsisting on hunting, fishing, gathering Brazil nuts, and tapping the copaiba tree (*Copaifera langsdorffii*) for its essential oil. PiraAçu Lodge was built to cater to sport fishermen, but the lodge is surrounded by many square kilometres of unbroken rainforest, home to some of the least known birds of the Amazon. Since the first birders started to visit the lodge in 2020, in excess of 450 species have been encountered at PiraAçu, including some fantastic rarities such as Rondonia Bushbird, Nocturnal Curassow, Rufous, Long-tailed and White-winged Potoos, Crimson Topaz, Fiery-tailed Awlbill, Dark-winged Trumpeter, Zigzag Heron, White-browed Hawk, Pavonine Quetzal, Cryptic Forest-Falcon, Rufous-necked Puffbird, Black-girdled Barbet, Pearly Antshrike, Banded Antbird, Striated Antbird, White-breasted Antbird, Pale-faced Bare-eye, Alta Floresta Antpitta, Tapajos Antpitta, Rusty-belted Tapaculo, Hoffmann's Woodcreeper, Crimson Fruitcrow, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher, Chico's Tyrannulet, Klages's Gnatcatcher, Musician Wren, Tooth-billed Wren, Red-and-black Grosbeak and Dotted Tanager.

During our days at the lodge we will mostly spend our time birding on trails in primary *terra firme* forest; some trails cross deep ravines and stream beds and accordingly have a few steep sections. We shall also bird a trail up to a hilltop with stunted *campinarana* forest with a different set of birds. We will bird by boat up and down four different rivers: the wide Aripuanã and Guariba rivers, and the narrower Paxiuba and Buiucu rivers. Trails on the Guariba and Paxiuba access stands of bamboo where we'll search for the Rondonia Bushbird, one of the Amazon's rarest and least-known antbirds. The accommodations at the lodge are rustic but the en-suite cabins have 24-hour electricity, hot showers, a screened veranda, and air-conditioning. The food is both copious and delicious.

*Nights at PiraAçu Lodge*

### **June 25<sup>th</sup> (Day 12): Travel from Pira Açu to Humaitá**

We depart early this morning, traveling downriver on the Aripuanã and re-tracing our steps to return to Humaitá. One or two opportunistic stops along the route will target two endemics we are not likely to have seen yet, both recently described to science, the Aripuanã Antwren and Manicoré Warbling-Antbird. We expect to reach Humaitá in time to catch a late afternoon ferry across the Madeira, arriving in time to catch the arrival of Short-tailed Parrots to their night roosts in mango trees in town near our hotel.

*Night in Humaitá*

### **June 26<sup>th</sup> (Day 13): Savannas between Humaitá and Porto Velho**

An early start today sees us driving before dawn to an area of native grasslands about halfway between Humaitá and Porto Velho. These enclaves of *cerrado*-like grasslands are distributed patchily in the southern Amazon, and they host a very different avifauna from what we will have encountered thus far on the trip.

One of the major targets here is the elusive Ocellated Crane, which is always difficult to see but is rather abundant here, meaning we should have plenty of individuals to work on during the first couple of hours of the day. Other grassland birds to expect this morning include Black-masked Finch, Sharp-tailed Tyrant, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Swallow-tailed Hummingbird, Peach-fronted Parakeet, White-rumped Tanager, and Plumbeous and Dark-throated Seed eaters. Seasonally flooded areas in the savannas often have Jabiru, and we have a chance for Azure Gallinule and Ash-throated Crane. In the afternoon we drive to Porto Velho, perhaps visiting a site for Manu Antbird on the way.

*Night in Porto Velho*

### **June 27<sup>th</sup> (Day 14): Departures**

Departures from Porto Velho to Brasilia or São Paulo to connect with outbound international flights. Please check with us before booking your international flight, as there are a limited number of flights out of Porto Velho.

*End of tour.*

### **PRICES**

**6pax=\$7,000/person**

**7pax=\$6,500/person**

**8 pax=\$6,200/person**

**Single Supplement = \$650/person**

## TOUR INFORMATION

### Included in the tour:

- Accommodation from the night of June 14<sup>th</sup> to the night of June 26<sup>th</sup>;
- Meals from dinner June 14<sup>th</sup> to breakfast on June 27<sup>th</sup>;
- Safe drinking water everywhere;
- Soft drinks or juices (where available) with meals included throughout the trip;
- Tour leader and translation services from June 14<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>;
- All boat trips, birding outings and entrance fees;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- A bound bird list to keep track of your records.

### Not included:

- International flights and flights as far as Manaus;
- Snacks (if you have a favorite snack, you might want to bring some with you);
- Additional drinks (alcohol) apart from those included.
- Travel insurance (**highly recommended**);
- Tips to local ground staff;
- Extras at hotels and elsewhere such as laundry service (though see the Laundry section for further information), telephone calls, and personal items;
- Excess baggage charges;
- Medical fees;
- Expenses that could arise due to circumstances beyond Agami Nature Tours' control (weather, flight delays/cancellations, COVID-19 testing and quarantine, lost luggage, road closures, etc).

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

A valid passport is required for entry into Brazil. It must be valid for the entire duration of your visit to Brazil.

**As of 10 April 2025, citizens of the United States of America, Canada, and Australia are required to obtain visas before arriving in Brazil.** The application process is entirely online and visitors may elect to apply for the visa themselves using the official website (<https://brazil.vfsevisa.com/>), or use a third-party visa agency. Visa are usually valid for 10 years, and a visitor may stay up to 90 days in any given calendar year. Visitors from the U.K, European Union countries, South American countries, Mexico, and South Africa are not required to obtain visas to enter Brazil as a tourist. However, **we strongly advise that you always check with the Brazilian consulate in your country in advance of a trip** as the requirements may change without notice.

By law you are required to carry your passport with you at all times. It is a good idea to make a photocopy of your passport photo pages and visa page, and to keep the copy in a different place from the passport during the tour. Passports are always required when checking into hotels, even when we provide all of the necessary details to the hotels prior to arrival.



## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

*Always consult with a qualified travel doctor prior to visiting a foreign country, particularly a tropical country such as Brazil.*

**Malaria is endemic to some areas we will visit during this tour, particularly around Humaitá.** Anti-malaria medication is recommended – please consult a travel doctor regarding the appropriate prophylactic drugs.

A current Yellow Fever vaccination is useful, as occasional outbreaks in remote areas of the country happen from time to time. The shot is valid for at least 10 years, and your clinic/travel doctor should give you a stamped and dated card that serves as proof of vaccination.

It is always wise to keep your basic shots such as tetanus, polio, and diphtheria up to date. Some travelers choose to receive vaccinations against Hepatitis A and B, though the risk of contracting either disease is minimal.

As of 23 May 2023, Brazil **no longer requires that visitors present proof of vaccination against Covid-19**, or a negative Covid-19 test.

All participants are urged to ensure they are covered with comprehensive travel insurance for the duration of the tour. We ask that you provide your policy number and insurer's contact information together with the participant details form sent to each member of the group separately. There are parallel health providers in Brazil, with a public option and a private option. The public option is woefully underfunded and overcrowded, and any treatment or procedures required during the tour will be sought at private hospitals with all costs covered by the client. Given the remote areas we visit, a policy with emergency evacuation is highly recommended.

## CURRENCY

Brazil's national currency is the Real. The colourful banknotes each have a creature from the Brazilian fauna and come in denominations of: R\$2, R\$5, R\$10, R\$20, R\$50, R\$100 and R\$200. As of late April 2025, the exchange rate against the U.S. Dollar was ~ BRL : USD = 5.6 : 1.

The Real is the only widely accepted currency in Brazil. The easiest way to obtain local currency is to use a debit or credit card at an automated bank machine linked to the Cirrus/Mastercard or Visa/Plus networks; most banks charge a nominal fee for these transactions. Otherwise you may want to change money at a foreign exchange kiosk in the airport where you arrive to Brazil. **The airport in Porto Velho does not have a foreign exchange desk.**

Credit cards are widely accepted in hotels, restaurants, and shops. Visa and Mastercard are the most popular cards. Traveler's cheques are nearly impossible to use these days in Brazil.

## CLOTHING

Dress casually and pack lightly. The climate in the Amazon is quite hot and humid so warm weather clothing is a must. In general, light weight, fast-drying clothing is preferable. Avoid brightly-coloured or white clothing when birding on forest trails. During the evenings it may be cooler, but still quite warm and humid. During the southern winter months of May – August, cold fronts regularly bring cooler weather to Rondônia and Amazonas states, so please bring at least one warmer sweater or light jacket. Bring rain gear (umbrella or rain jacket / poncho) with you and carry it at all times during the trip – June marks the beginning of the

dry season, but rain is still possible at any time anywhere during this tour.

Comfortable hiking boot or shoes are adequate for most terrain on this tour, but you may want to bring a pair of rubber boots or waterproof footwear covers such as “Neos”. Some trails will be muddy or perhaps partially flooded in places. It is also a good idea to bring a pair of light footwear such as sandals or tennis shoes to wear in the evenings and during travel days.

Long sleeves and trousers are best for forest trails. We are likely to encounter mosquitoes throughout the trip, and we may encounter ticks and chiggers in the understorey on forest trails. If you suffer allergic reactions to chigger bites, you may wish to consider pre-treating your field clothes with an insecticide such as Permethrin to help limit exposure. Wearing rubber boots in the field also helps reduce contact with ticks and chiggers.

## **WEATHER**

Expect hot and humid weather throughout the trip. Daytime highs can be expected to be in the 30 – 35°C range. During the southern winter months of June – August, cold fronts regularly bring cooler weather to Rondonia and Acre states, and during such events temperatures may drop into the 15 – 20°C range. Rain can be expected at any time, and we advise that you always take adequate rain gear with you whenever we go out in the field. This includes plastic bags or covers for your equipment and packs.

## **BAGGAGE**

We ask that all participants limit baggage to one suitcase and one carry-on bag as vehicles or boats may have limited space. A waterproof cover for your hand luggage could be useful for boat travel to and from PiraAçu Lodge, although we will be carrying large plastic bags and/or tarps to cover baggage.

## **ELECTRIC CURRENT**

Electric current in Brazil is not standardized and will be either 110V or 220V in the lodges. Electrical outlets are Type N (<https://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/n/>). Three-prong plugs may need a three-to-two prong adapter for use in some outlets in Brazil. A universal adapter is an essential piece of kit to include in your packing.



## **LAUNDRY**

Laundry services are available or can be arranged informally at most sites that we visit for multiple nights. Let your guide know in advance that you would like to have laundry done, and he can organize the specifics. PiraAçu Lodge offers a complimentary laundry service, and laundry can be turned in on a daily basis, though expect it to be returned the following day in most cases.

## **PACKING LIST**

- Binoculars and/or scope (leader will carry a scope at all times)
- Insect Repellent (deet-based is the most effective)
- Sunscreen (SPF 40+ is recommended) and lip balm with sunscreen.
- All prescription and other medications in sufficient quantities to last the entire trip, packed in your hand luggage. Also bring a copy of any prescriptions, preferably with the generic names as brand name pharmaceuticals are difficult to source in Brazil.
- Small knapsack or waist pack.



- Small flashlight and spare batteries. We will be doing some birding at night.
- A portable alarm clock or mobile phone with alarm function.
- Small re-sealable plastic bags are useful to store field equipment if we get caught in the rain.
- Personal first aid kit with band aids, aspirin, motion sickness pills, blister pads, anti-itch cream, etc.
- An extra pair of glasses or contact lenses if you are dependent on them.
- Reading and writing materials.
- A photocopy of your passport.

## **SUGGESTED READING**

Birds: There is still no comprehensive field guide up to the standards of the modern field guides available such as Birds of Europe or even the guides for Ecuador and Peru. As such, we recommend use of several resources for pre-trip studying.

**van Perlo, B. A Field Guide to the Birds of Brazil. Oxford University Press, 2009.**

This is the only field guide covering all of Brazil's birds (with the exception of the quirky All the Birds of Brazil by Deodato Souza), and as such is the guide preferred by most birders. It has its limitations, but illustrates most species with reasonable accuracy, has fairly good range maps, and is portable enough to fit into a day pack.

**\* This field guide is available as an app on iTunes for Apple devices.**

**Ridgely, R.S. and G. Tudor. Field Guide to the Songbirds of South America: the Passerines. University of Texas Press, 2009.**

This abridged version of the landmark 2-volume publication The Birds of South America is an invaluable resource for dealing with the confusing furnarids, antbirds, and tyrant-flycatchers that proliferate in South America. Small enough to bring on a trip and leave in the hotel room, the plates and text are unrivalled and the book makes for interesting reading if only for the insights into the life history of many species, obtained during the authors' many years of fieldwork.

**Erize, F., J.R. Mata, and M. Rumboll. Birds of South America, Non-Passerines: Rheas to Woodpeckers. Princeton University Press, 2007.**

A 'pocket'-sized guide to the non-passerines of the entire continent. Taxonomy is fairly conservative, and the tiny maps are of little use, but the drawings are generally OK and this serves as a reasonably useful complement to Ridgely and Tudor.

**Sigrist, T. Aves da Amazônia Brasileira / Birds of Amazonian Brazil. Avis Brasilis, 2008.**

No text, but the plates and range maps are good enough that this publication is worth a look for collectors of bird books and those who are interested in being as prepared as possible for birding in the Amazon.

**Schulenberg, T.S., D.F. Stotz, and D.F. Lane. Birds of Peru. Princeton University Press, 2010.**

Covers most of the birds to be expected in the areas west of Porto Velho, though the taxonomy is gradually falling behind recent changes.

## Mammals:

**Emmons, L.H. Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: a field guide. University of Chicago Press, 1997.**

Widely considered the best mammal book for tropical South America, even though its taxonomy is now out-of-date.

#### Reptiles and amphibians:

**Bartlett, R.D. and P. Bartlett. Reptiles and Amphibians of the Amazon: an Ecotourist's Guide. University Press of Florida, 2003.**

An enthusiastic and engaging treatment of common herpetofauna of the Amazon basin. A good place to start if you are interested in the rich variety of reptiles and amphibians of the Amazon.

#### General:

**Kricher, J. A Neotropical Companion. Princeton University Press, 1997.**

Well-written for the non-academic, this book is the best place to start for anyone interested in beginning to understand the complex ecosystems of the New World tropics.

#### **Mobile Apps:**

We see an increasing number of tech-savvy birders on our tours these days. There are a couple of apps available which are useful for birding in Brazil.

##### **- Merlin** (merlin.allaboutbirds.org)

A powerful app covering all of Brazil's birds, with images, sounds, range maps and descriptions for all species. Free to download and use, but we recommend that you download it at home prior to your trip or you might be frustrated trying to download the massive data package over slow internet in some remote corner of Brazil!

##### **- Birds of Brazil** (iTunes: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/birds-of-brazil/id411679602?mt=8>)

An app for iOS based on the Ber Van Perlo field guide. The app includes all of the images from the book's plates, in addition to the text, range maps, and a selection of photographs and sound recordings for a good percentage of the species covered in the field guide. Quite a useful app if you are trying to travel light, or if you don't want to carry your field guide with you during birding outings.

#### **eBird:**

We enter eBird lists for all of the birding done during our tours. If you use eBird and would like the leader to share checklists with you, all you need to do is let us know! For more information about eBird, please visit [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org).