



BRAZIL GENERAL INFORMATION



The outrageously patterned Sunbittern is often seen on our Brazil birding tours (photo Ricardo Boschetti).

Brazil is one of the greatest countries in the world for birding and wildlife. It's the third most bird diverse country on the planet - only surpassed by Peru and Colombia - with no less than 1,860 species and an incredible 238 endemics, distributed all across the country. Brazil occupies a vast diversity of habitats, from the Atlantic rainforest to the endless savanna plains of the famous Cerrado, to the Amazon rainforest and the Pantanal, the largest wetlands in the world.

We invite you to travel with us, to experience an unparalleled birding experience and vacation in Brazil.

PASSPORT AND VISA

To enter Brazil a passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Brazil is required. We recommend your passport having a few blank pages as some countries require a full page for the stamp in your passport. Please also bring a few photocopies of your passport and details of your consular representation in Brazil. Brazil has a reciprocity visa policy, which means that citizens of countries that require visas for Brazilian citizens, will need a visa to travel to Brazil. Please check with your consular representative whether you require a visa to visit Brazil.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly encourage you to purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance in case you have to cancel, due to illness or for any other reason, since tour payments are non-refundable as per our terms and conditions. **We advise you to get a plan that covers all of your medical care and evacuation back to your country of residence.**

CRIME

The Brazilian countryside is considered safe in all areas that we visit, and you will find that Brazilians everywhere are friendly and helpful. Big cities such as Sao Paulo, however, suffer the same problems as large cities anywhere, and you should take precautions to safeguard personal belongings such as money, passports, and optical equipment. Avoid walking at night in large cities without informing your tour leader, and don't walk around big cities displaying binoculars and expensive cameras. Rio de Janeiro could potentially be risky if you don't know your way around.

HEALTH, VACCINATIONS, AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please refer to the Center for Disease Control website for health advice (including malaria and vaccination advice). Please also consult your physician or your local travel clinic for recommendations. While not a requirement for entry into Brazil, unless you are arriving from an infected area in another country, a yellow fever vaccination is a good idea for most people traveling to third world or tropical countries, and the vaccination is now valid for life.

Brazil has recently experienced an outbreak of Dengue fever, mostly confined to the huge states along the Atlantic coast. We recommend using insect repellents, long-sleeved shirts and trousers to help reduce insect bites. To date, we have not experienced any Dengue problems during or after our tours.

Diarrhea is always a tricky hazard when traveling in South America. Even though many travelers escape untouched, we ask you to consult your doctor and bring some medicine to treat diarrhea, such as Imodium or Ciprofloxacin. We recommend drinking only bottled water and not eating in street shops when you are unsure of the hygiene standard. As always, please follow your tour leader's advice.

We take responsibility for selecting the places where we eat meals and the food we prepare in the field. We ask you to clean your hands using hand sanitizer. Please note that the likely dramatic change from your normal diet may result in some mild stomach or digestive abnormalities that disappear within a short time. Only when this problem is followed by nausea and/or even fever, may there be a real diarrhea problem. Again, please ask your doctor what they recommend is best for you. Please let us know about any medical conditions that you may have, such as diabetes, asthma, allergies, heart conditions or knee problems, also including any phobias or anything else you think we should know. We would like to know this information to take care of you and to suggest what is best for you so you can have an enjoyable trip.

INSECTS AND PLANTS

Insects should not be a big problem over most of our route, but we recommend that you wear loose-fitting long pants and long-sleeved shirts and keep insect repellent handy. Spraying your feet, socks, shoes, and the lower portion of your pants with insect repellent will help reduce any problems with chiggers. Chiggers are burrowing mites that occur in hot areas throughout the Americas. They occur on grass and, although they do not spread any kind of disease, their bites produce long-term itching as an allergic reaction. Additionally, there are about 20 toxic plants spread throughout Brazil, and it is common during our tours to come across some of these plants in the Atlantic Forest. Please avoid touching plants along forest trails and follow your leader's advice.

FOOD AND WATER

Most of our meals in Brazil are served buffet style and each of them offers a selection of tasty fresh and cooked vegetables, carbohydrates and fillers including manioc/casaba derivative, products like pasta and rice, legumes like beans, and meat such as chicken, beef and deep-fried fish. Buffets include dessert but do not include drinks of any kind. On occasion some lodges may offer an a la carte option. Please consult the Brazil tour-specific information documents for more information about tour meal descriptions.

Bottled water is included during the trip, and you can fill your own bottles anytime you need, including while out birding or to take back to your room overnight. The lodges don't necessarily provide water to fill bottles. **Drinks, including soft drinks, fruit juices, alcoholic beverages, and bottled water (from restaurants) are not included in the tour price.**

CURRENCY

We recommend carrying US dollars. Please do not bring US dollar bills that are damaged in any way (broken tips and edges, ink marks, pieces of tape, etc.). Most institutions and people do not accept US dollars that show this kind of damage. We cannot spend birding time looking for

exchange institutions or commercial shops, unless near to our hotels. We recommend exchanging some US dollars or Euros at airports on arrival.

Your holiday is almost an all-inclusive tour, so you will only need money to cover personal expenses such as drinks, laundry services, phone calls from hotels, bar expenses, souvenirs and gifts you want to take home, or any non-mandatory gratuities for exceptional service. Tipping is OK in US\$ and Euros. We will let you know places where you can use your credit card for personal payments.

ATM machines are available in the larger cities and towns. Be aware that credit cards are accepted in most of the areas we will visit during our tour, but not all, especially in remote locations.

ELECTRICITY AND COMMUNICATION

In Brazil, power plugs and sockets (outlets) of type N are used. The standard voltage is 127 / 220 V at a frequency of 60 Hz. A surge protector is strongly recommended. We also recommend bringing more than one universal adaptor to fit your electric devices into all kinds of sockets.

ACCOMMODATION

We always do our best to include the best accommodation available on our tours, to provide our clients with a great holiday. We use accommodation we consider comfortable, however, not luxurious. Our goal is not necessarily to provide fancy boutique accommodation, we would rather choose more basic accommodation when available near to great birding and wildlife areas – in some more remote areas we sometimes have no other options available. If the birding sites are near cities we would rather stay in better accommodation in cities, where possible, but without adding a lot of extra time to our lengthy drives.

Note on bedrooms: The price of our tour is per person sharing a twin bedroom. Most of our clients, even some couples, prefer to have their own bed to ensure a better night's sleep after a long day out birding. The standard matrimonial or double bed in South America is the normal double bed size, which may be too small for some people. Bedrooms with queen/king-size beds are normally more expensive, and we do not include such rooms in the tour price. If you wish to upgrade your room, the hotel will charge the difference directly to you (if there is availability). This surcharge is not included in the tour price.

TOUR VEHICLE AND SEAT ROTATION

For our Brazil birding tours we mostly use vans (Mercedes Sprinters), however we do occasionally switch to 4x4 vehicles when negotiating rougher sections of road.

At Birding Ecotours we employ a seat rotation policy on all of our small-group set departure tours. This ensures that everybody has equal opportunities during the tour. Unfortunately, motion sickness will not excuse you from our seat rotation policy and thus, if you are prone to motion sickness, you should ensure you bring the necessary medication. We also require that you are fit and flexible enough to maneuver yourself to the back of the vehicle. Tour participants should also be mindful of what extra equipment they bring into the general seating area of the vehicle (rather

than the luggage section) and should ensure they do not clog up general thoroughfare or extra seats with camera equipment, tripods, etc. from a comfort and health and safety point of view.

BIRDING ECOTOURS EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Office: Cane +27-72-211-9863, Chris +44-7808-571-444

E-mail: info@birdingecotours.com (which is checked almost daily)

FIELD GUIDES

A Field Guide to the Birds of Brazil (van Perlo, 2009). This is the most up-to-date and complete guide to the birds of [Brazil](#). It's a medium-calibre guide; Brazil, strangely, has never had an absolutely top-class guide, but this one suffices, although the illustrations are not the best. Until this book was published, the bird field guide situation in Brazil was really bad. We recommend this only if you are visiting the Brazilian Amazon and the northeast of the country, as there are better field guides for other parts of Brazil (see below).

Birds of Brazil – The Pantanal & Cerrado of Central Brazil (Gwynne, Ridgely and Tudor, 2010). This must be the best guide if you're doing a birding trip to the [Pantanal](#) or the Cerrado, in either Canastra National Park or Chapada de Guimares. This guide offers excellent plates and distribution maps and is a great source of information. Thankfully, it is relatively lightweight and thus easy to carry in the field.

Birds of Brazil: The Atlantic Forest of Southeast Brazil (Gwynne, Ridgely and Tudor, 2016). This field guide can be considered as the second volume of the previous publication above and follows the same format, with great quality illustrations, maps and information for all the species occurring in the [Atlantic Forest region](#) of Brazil. This guide, together with the 'Birds of Argentina' (below) can be used to travel to [Paraguay](#), which is still lacking a good field guide to the country. We highly recommended this book.

USEFUL APPS AND WEBSITE RESOURCES

[Aves Vox](#) – a good app that enables the downloading of bird songs and calls from the [xeno-canto](#) website onto your cell phone.

[eBird](#) – there is a wealth of information contained on this website and the mobile app is now excellent and useful too. Photo, video, and sound galleries are available for practically every species in the world through The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's [Macaulay Library](#).

[Merlin](#) – an app that can help you identify birds by sight (from photos) and sound (from recordings) and is a useful tool to aid bird identification. The app gets expanded all the time with new data and regional information, so is worth keeping an eye on. We recommend downloading the West Indies pack for this tour.

[IOC World Bird List](#) – this website contains all the latest details on the world of global bird taxonomy. You can read about newly described species, splits (creation of a new species) and lumps (deletion of a species) of existing species, and plenty of other important information.