

📍 EXPERIENCE · CÁCERES → PORTO JOFRE · 8 DAYS ABOARD

Through the Heart of the Pantanal

An expedition cruise through the land of the jaguar.

Everyone else drives to the jaguars. You cross the entire wetland to reach them, by ship, through a roadless west that even seasoned Pantanal travelers never see. Private cabin, your own safari boat, and a river that is more or less yours for a week.

Follow the river



WHERE

Western Pantanal, Mato Grosso



GETTING THERE

Private transfer from Cuiabá to Cáceres



ABOARD

Private cabin, seven nights on the water



HOW LONG

8 days, Cáceres to Porto Jofre

DAY 1 · AT THE QUAY

Cáceres

DAY 2 · DOWNSTREAM

Rio Paraguai

DAY 3 · DOWNSTREAM

Taiamã

DAY 4 · DOWNSTREAM

The channels

Almost everyone drives to the jaguars. This crosses the wetland to reach them.

Almost everyone who comes to see jaguars flies into the northern Pantanal and drives the Transpantaneira to Porto Jofre. This journey does something almost no one does. It travels the whole western Pantanal by boat, a vast and roadless corner of the wetland that even seasoned Pantanal travelers rarely reach and that tourism has barely touched.

Your home for the week is a small, comfortable expedition ship. It carries you slowly down the Rio Paraguai and back up the Rio Cuiabá, with a private safari boat that peels off into the narrow side channels where the wildlife actually lives. You wake up somewhere different every morning, deep inside protected areas that most visitors will never see, and you have all of it, the jaguars, the giant otters, the sunsets, more or less to yourself.

Along the way you tie up at a traditional river settlement with indigenous roots, one of the last of its kind in the Pantanal, and share a little of a way of life that is quietly disappearing. Take the itinerary below as a guide. The route can run in either direction depending on the season and the water, and we shape every day around the animals and around you.

8 days

SEVEN NIGHTS ABOARD, CÁCERES TO PORTO JOFRE

3

PROTECTED AREAS CROSSED: TAIAMÃ, PANTANAL MATOGROSSENSE, ENCONTRO DAS ÁGUAS

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ROADS IN THE WESTERN PANTANAL. THE RIVER IS THE ONLY WAY THROUGH

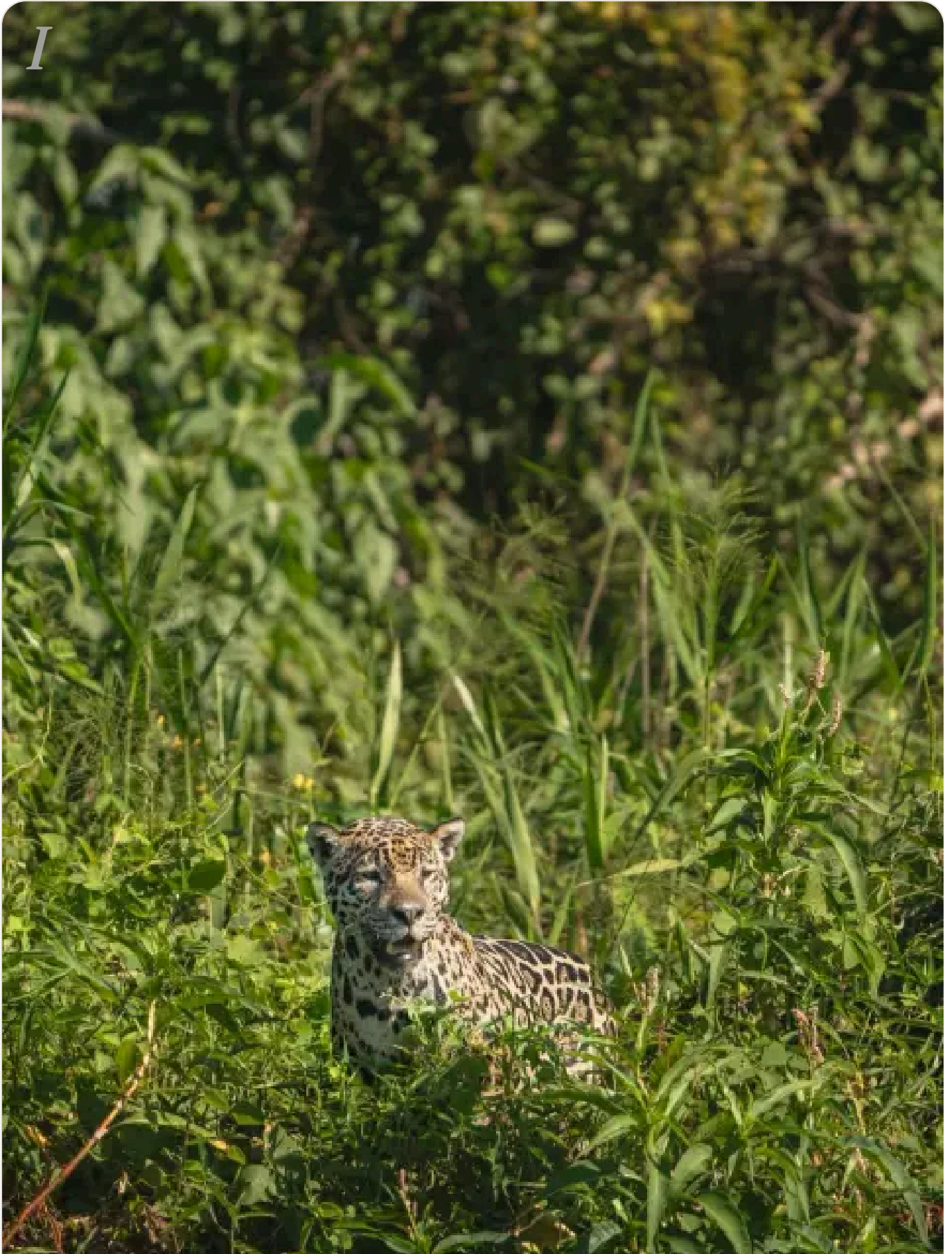
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RIVERS, RUN END TO END: DOWN THE PARAGUAI, UP THE CUIABÁ

Three protected areas, one passage

Most Pantanal trips visit one reserve. This one sails through three, and the ship is what makes that possible: no road connects them, so the only way to string them together is to keep going downstream.

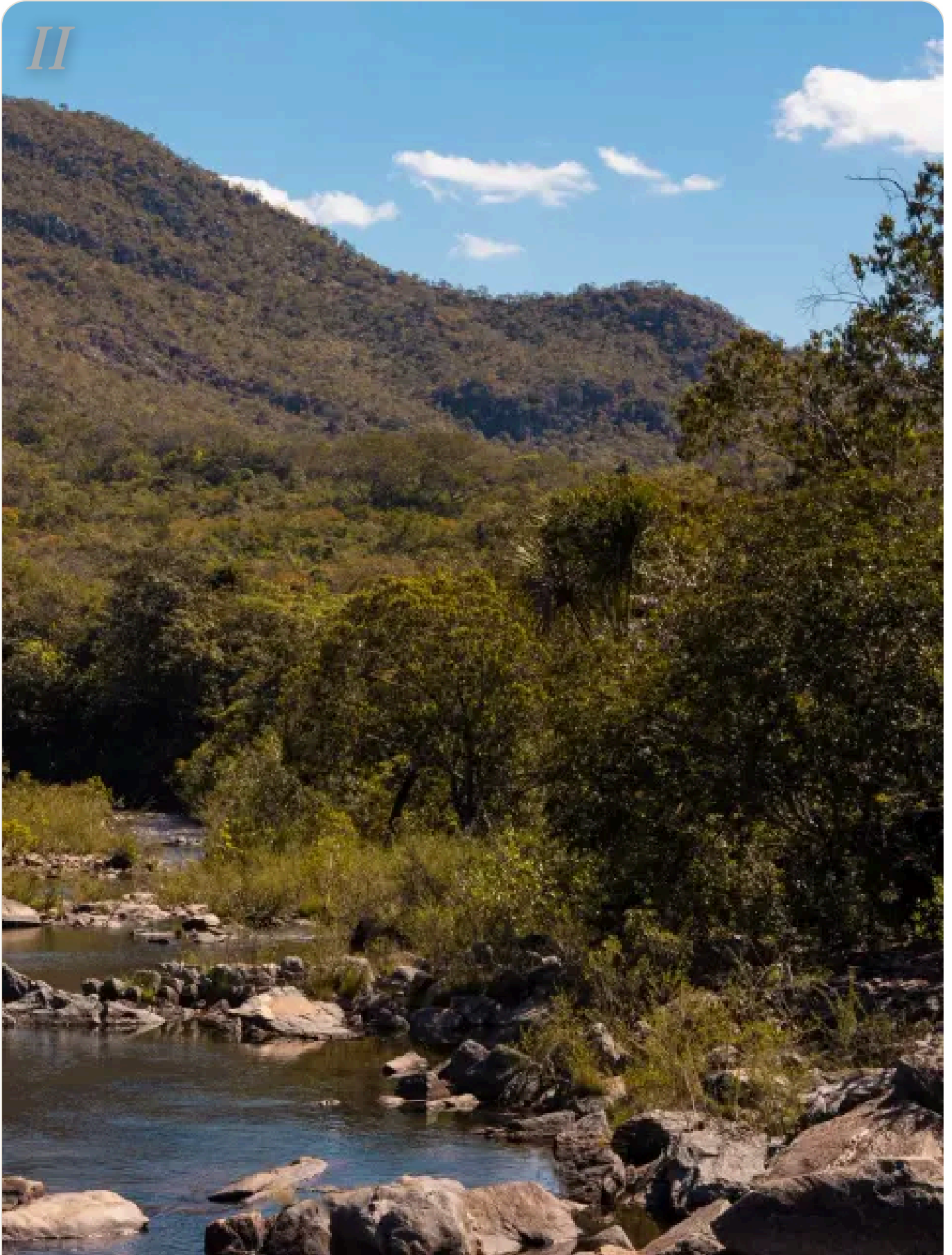
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DAYS 2 AND 3

Taiamã

An ecological station, the strictest protection Brazilian law offers, and by common consent one of the finest places on Earth to watch wild jaguars. There is nothing out here but water and forest, which is exactly why the cats are.



DAY 5

Serra do Amolar

The Pantanal is famously flat, and then it is not. Rugged hills rise straight out of the floodplain above the vast Baía da Gaíba, and the climb into them buys you the one thing the wetland never gives you at water level: a horizon.

III



DAYS 7 AND 8

Encontro das Águas

The most famous jaguar sanctuary in the world, where the cats live at one of the highest densities recorded anywhere. You arrive from the wild side, by water, after a week of having the river to yourselves, rather than driving in with everyone else.

Eight days, two rivers, one wetland

A sample rhythm, not a timetable. The route can run in either direction depending on the season and the water, and every day bends around the animals.



1 DAY 1 · CÁCERES · AT THE QUAY

Welcome aboard

The last town on the river

We collect you in Cuiabá, at the airport or your hotel, and drive you roughly three hours west to Cáceres, the old river port on the Rio Paraguai, with a lunch stop along the way. Your expedition ship is waiting. After a welcome drink you settle into your private cabin, and if there is time we wander the colonial center of town before a first dinner together and a look at the days ahead.

Cáceres is where the map stops being useful. Downstream of here the western Pantanal has no roads at all, so the river becomes the only way in and the ship becomes the only address you have for a week. Unpack properly, because you will not be moving rooms again. In very dry years we simply drive a little further into the wetland to a navigable mooring, a beautiful route along the Serra das Araras that often brings early wildlife.

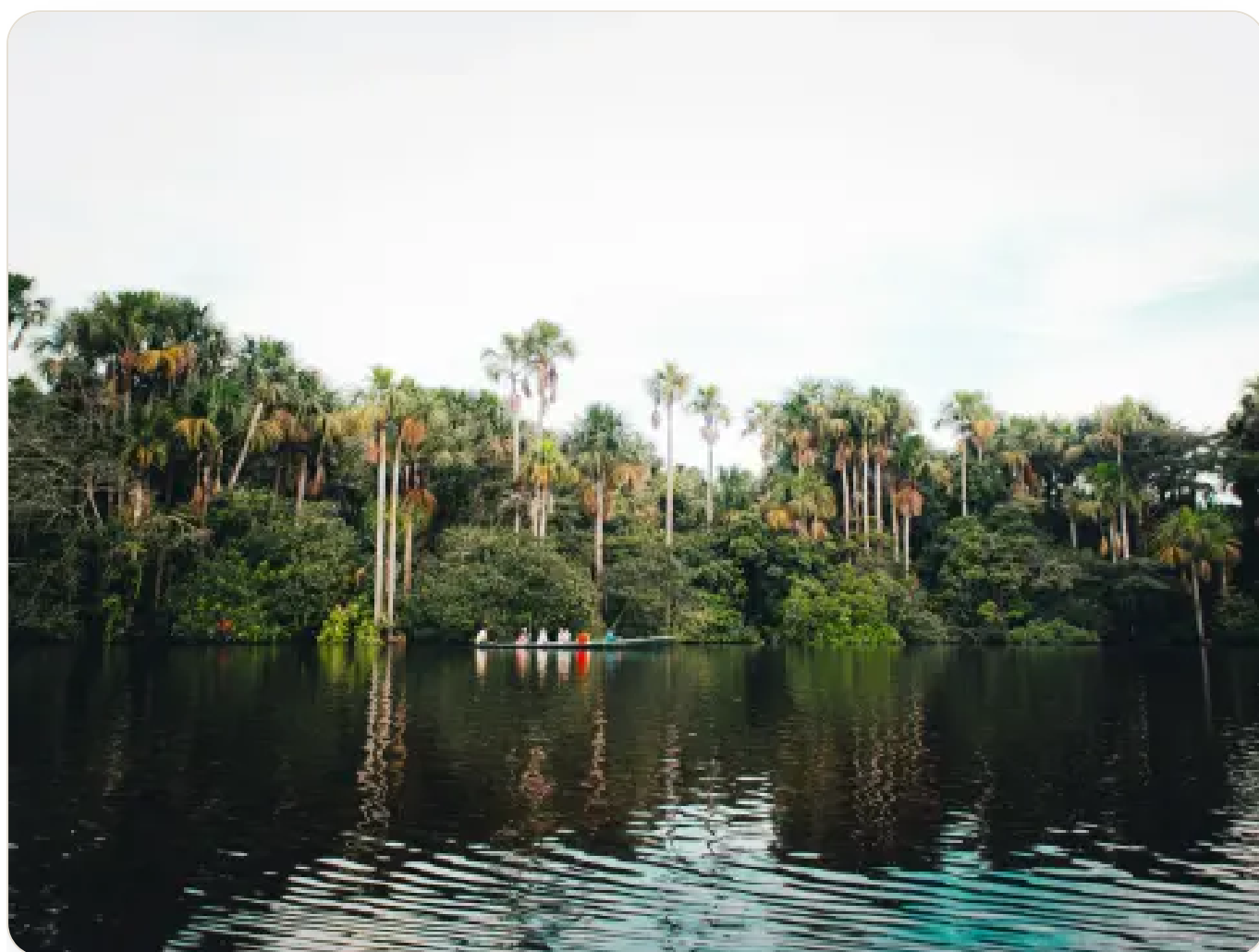
Private transfer from Cuiabá

Embarkation

Colonial river port

 OVERNIGHT · Your private cabin aboard, for all seven nights

 MEALS · Dinner



2 DAY 2 · RIO PARAGUAI · DOWNSTREAM

Casting off

The river takes over

Early in the morning we lift anchor and begin the descent of the Rio Paraguai. Breakfast is served on deck as the river landscape drifts by, and the first capybaras, herons and caimans appear along the banks. We slip into the side channels with the safari boat to look for jaguars and giant otters, and pass quiet reminders of the past: a colonial border marker set between the old Spanish and Portuguese empires, and the jungle-swallowed ruins of a nineteenth century cattle estate.

This is the day the trip explains itself. The ship moves at the speed of the water and never in a hurry, so the wildlife stops being an event you drive to and becomes the view from breakfast. The safari boat is the other half of the arrangement: shallow, fast and small enough to turn into channels the ship could never enter, which is where the animals actually are. As the light softens we return to the ship for your first river sunset.

Breakfast on deck

Safari boat channels

Colonial border marker

First river sunset

 **OVERNIGHT** · Private cabin aboard

 **MEALS** · Breakfast, lunch, dinner



Jaguar territory

A full day inside the strictest reserve there is

Today belongs to one of the wildest places on the continent. We spend the day on the water inside the Taiamã Ecological Station, a strictly protected reserve and one of the finest places on Earth to watch wild jaguars. Gliding along hidden channels and still lagoons, we keep watch for jaguars resting on the banks, giant otters at play, toucans overhead and caimans warming in the sun.

Lunch comes with us on the boat, because there is nowhere out here but wilderness, and that is exactly the point. A full day in a place like this rearranges your expectations: the first sighting is a shock, the third is a conversation, and by dusk you are reading the bank the way your guide does, watching for the shapes that do not belong to the shadows. Giant otters are the loudest thing in the reserve and worth the day on their own.

Full day on the water

Taiamã Ecological Station

Picnic lunch aboard the skiff

Giant otters

 OVERNIGHT · Private cabin aboard

 MEALS · Breakfast, lunch, dinner



4 DAY 4 · THE CHANNELS · DOWNSTREAM

Deeper in

A gentler rhythm, and the sun deck

A gentler rhythm today. In the cool of the early morning we head out again by safari boat through small channels and hidden lagoons, watching for capybaras, herons, caimans and, with a little luck, a jaguar resting in the reeds. The soft first light turns the water to color.

After lunch the afternoon is yours: read on the sun deck, or try the local art of piranha fishing while the ship carries on quietly toward new country, further into the untouched heart of the Pantanal. Days like this are not filler. An expedition week needs one afternoon where nothing is scheduled and the wetland simply moves past you, and most travelers end up naming it as the one they remember.

Early morning safari

Piranha fishing

Free afternoon on deck

 OVERNIGHT · Private cabin aboard

 MEALS · Breakfast, lunch, dinner



5 DAY 5 · BAÍA DA GAÍVA · DOWNSTREAM

Mountains and neighbors

Hills in a flat country, and the people who live under them

We reach one of the most beautiful stretches of the whole Pantanal: the vast Baía da Gaíba, a great lake ringed by the rugged hills of the Serra do Amolar. Depending on the water and your mood, the day can hold a hike into the Serra for a panorama over the endless floodplains, and a wildlife outing into the Pantanal Matogrossense National Park.

Then comes the trip's cultural heart, a visit to a traditional river settlement with indigenous roots. Meeting the Guató and the ribeirinho families who still live by the water, on their own terms, is the kind of encounter that has almost vanished from the Pantanal. It happens by invitation, at their pace, and it is a conversation rather than a performance. In the evening the sky fills with more stars than you thought possible.

Serra do Amolar hike

Pantanal Matogrossense National Park

Guató river community

Night sky

 OVERNIGHT · Private cabin aboard



6 DAY 6 · RIO CUIABÁ · THE TURN EAST

Upstream

The ship changes rivers

After a last early outing in the national park we say goodbye to this pristine corner. The ship turns eastward, leaving the Rio Paraguai for the narrower Rio Cuiabá, and heads upstream toward Porto Jofre, the place everyone calls the gateway to the jaguars.

The change of river is easy to feel from the deck. The Paraguai is broad and unhurried; the Cuiabá closes in, the banks come nearer, and the birdlife along the edges is suddenly at reading distance. The afternoon is free to enjoy the slow pleasure of life aboard: the shifting banks, birds along the shore, the quiet as civilization falls away behind you. Another glowing sunset closes the day.

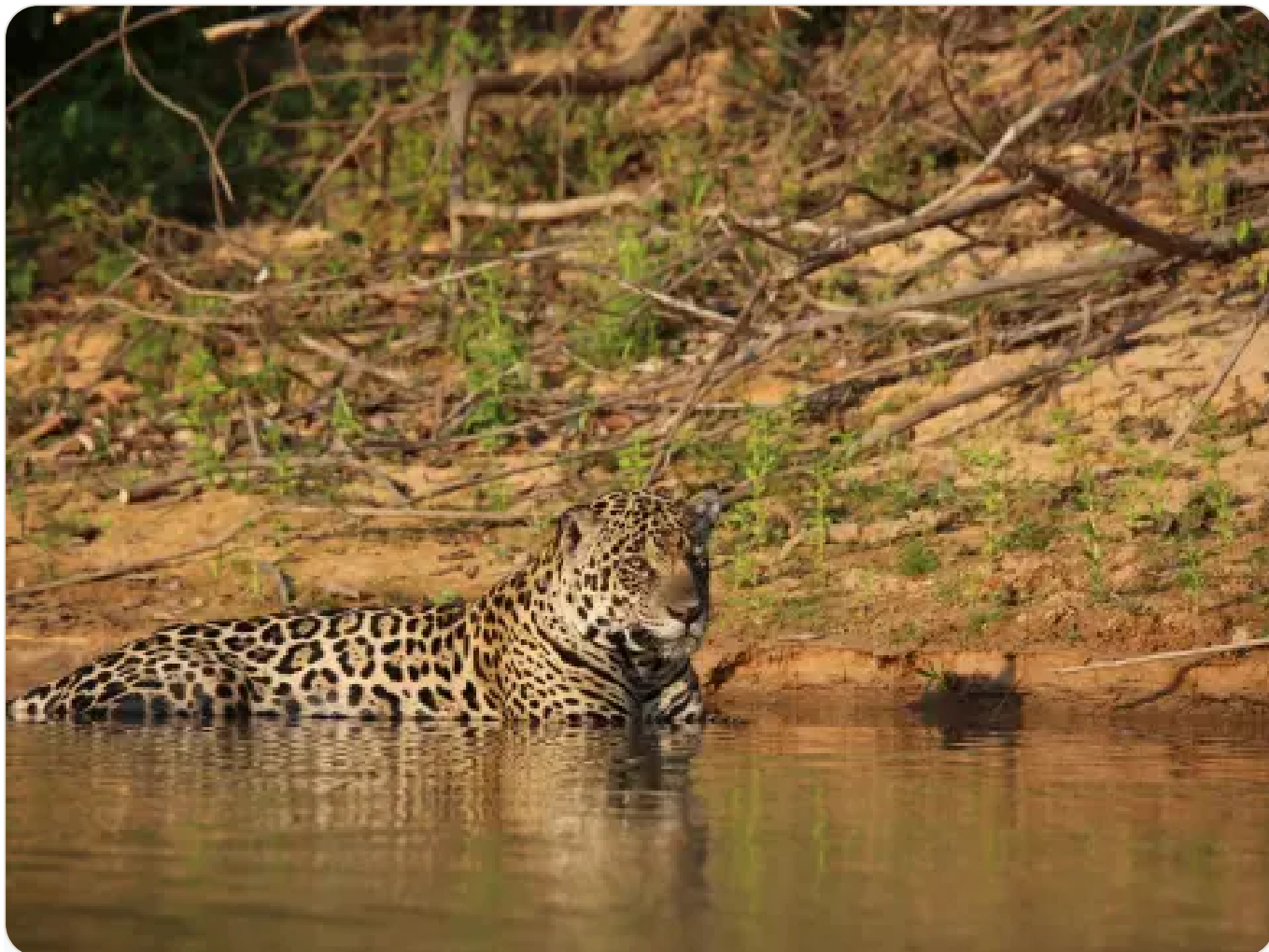
Last national park outing

The turn onto the Rio Cuiabá

Slow afternoon aboard

 OVERNIGHT · Private cabin aboard

 MEALS · Breakfast, lunch, dinner



7 DAY 7 · PORTO JOFRE · UPSTREAM

The famous water

The most famous jaguar water in the world

Before sunrise the engines start and we make our approach to Porto Jofre and the Encontro das Águas State Park, the most famous jaguar sanctuary in the world. The morning is free to rest or try some sport fishing on the São Lourenço river. After lunch we transfer to the fast safari boat and push deep into the maze of waterways, where jaguars live at one of the highest densities anywhere. With luck you watch them swim, hunt or doze on the banks.

Most people who see these cats fly in and drive the Transpantaneira to reach this exact water. You arrive at it from the other side, at the end of a week in which the river was yours, which

changes what the place feels like. Back aboard, we raise a caipirinha to an extraordinary week and a farewell dinner.

Encontro das Águas State Park

Highest jaguar density anywhere

Sport fishing option

Farewell dinner

 OVERNIGHT · Private cabin aboard

 MEALS · Breakfast, lunch, dinner



8 DAY 8 · TRANSPANTANEIRA · BY ROAD

The long way home

One last sunrise, then the road on stilts

For the early risers there is one last sunrise safari into the Encontro das Águas, when the soft dawn light often brings the finest scenes of all, a jaguar on the move, otters gliding through still

water. After a final hearty breakfast we disembark and drive the legendary Transpantaneira back toward Cuiabá, that raised dirt road across hundreds of little wooden bridges.

The drive is not a transfer, it is the last game drive of the trip, and the Transpantaneira is generous. We stay in safari mode the whole way, stopping for hyacinth macaws, tapirs, jabirus and perhaps one last jaguar, and reach Cuiabá by afternoon for your flight or the next chapter of your Brazil.

Sunrise safari

Disembarkation

The Transpantaneira in safari mode

Cuiabá by afternoon

 MEALS · Breakfast

UM DIA A BORDO

A day aboard

A river day does not run on a schedule of sights. It runs on the light, and the animals keep the same hours you end up keeping.

05:00

Coffee at the rail

The generator hum, a flask of coffee, and mist coming off water the color of tea. Nobody speaks much before the skiff goes down.

05:45

The morning skiff

Into the side channels in the cool hours, when the cats move and the birds are loudest. This is the outing that finds jaguars.

09:30

Breakfast on deck

Back aboard, hungry, with banks still going past. Breakfast is served in the open air while the ship carries on downstream.

What comes with the cabin



A private guide who speaks English

Your own naturalist guide accompanies you from Cuiabá and back, with deep knowledge of the Pantanal, its wildlife and its people, and an eye trained to find what you came to see.



Every transfer, door to deck

Pickup and drop-off in Cuiabá, the road transfer to the river, and all movement by ship and safari boat during the week. You are met the moment you land.



Seven nights aboard the ship

A private cabin with its own bathroom and Starlink internet, on a small, well-equipped expedition vessel built for comfort in the most remote corners of the wetland.



Full board on the water

Freshly prepared breakfast, lunch and dinner every day, cooked on board with regional ingredients, plus the picnic lunches that go out with you on the long safari days.



All excursions and park fees

Every safari, hike and community visit in the itinerary, with the private safari boat, all entrance fees and your guide throughout. No surprises later.



Round-the-clock support

Full emergency cover on board, reachable around the clock, with direct links to local medical networks and evacuation options should they ever be needed.

Not included: flights, drinks beyond those at meals, and personal extras. No hidden lines, ever.

Honest answers first

How is the western Pantanal different from Porto Jofre?

+

How big is the ship and how many guests are aboard?

+

When is the best time to travel for jaguars?

+

Is the visit to the river community respectful?

+

Will we actually see a jaguar?

+

How much of the day is spent on small boats, and is that hard going?

+

WHY IT WORKS

Vazante

Pantaneiros have a word for the season this journey is built on: vazante, the long ebb after the floods, when the water pulls back into the channels and takes every living thing with it. It is the reason the jaguars come to the bank, the reason the otters are loud, and the reason a boat is the right way to see any of it.

Eight days, three protected areas, one river system crossed end to end, and a week in which the wildest water in South America was more or less yours. Tell us your dates and we will hold you a cabin, be honest about the season, and shape the days around what you most want to see.

The Pantanal on the map

This journey runs through the central-west of Brazil, deep in Mato Grosso: west from Cuiabá to the river port of Cáceres, then down the roadless western Pantanal to Porto Jofre and back out along the Transpantaneira.

REGION

Western Pantanal, Mato Grosso

BEST SEASON

Jun–Oct dry season, prime jaguar time

KNOWN FOR

Expedition ship · roadless wetland

IDEAL FOR

Wildlife lovers, photographers, couples



[View the Central-West on the interactive map](#) →

Best: July

8 days. Outside the best window it can still run, but the reasons to go are weaker; ask us before booking flights.

See what else is in season →

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Best — The one or two peak months

Good — A real recommendation

Trade-offs — Workable, with a catch

Click a month to see everything in season across Brazil then.

CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

Where to go next

The places we most love to combine with the Pantanal, woven into one private, tailor-made journey.

Pantanal

📍 Mato Grosso, Brazil

The one place on earth where you can plan to see a jaguar.

Foz do Iguaçu

📍 Paraná, Brazil

Two hundred and seventy-five waterfalls, in two countries.

Rio de Janeiro

📍 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The Marvelous City, Privately

FREE · 29 PAGES

FREE GUIDE

Beginner's Guide to Brazil

A free 29-page guide to everything a first-time visitor should know before landing: visas, safety, money, getting around, where to go, and what to eat.

The guide lands in your inbox right away. After that it's about one email a month: seasonal timing notes, places worth knowing about, and nothing else. Unsubscribe in one click.

START PLANNING

Thinking about the Pantanal by river?

Send a rough idea and you'll hear back within one business day. From one person, who lives in Brazil, and who will tell you honestly whether we're the right fit.