

WALKING BRAZIL - 2009

Adventure

Walking Adventures International plans and guides walking adventures that combine international travel with walking. Our itineraries blend historic, cultural, and scenic highlights of the regions we're traveling through with walks in the area. Our trips are fast-paced; they are designed as overview tours to expose travelers to as much of the region's significant highlights as we can manage, and still maintain a reasonable daily schedule. Even though most walkers find it easy and natural to enjoy our style of travel, we want to ensure that we've afforded every opportunity for travelers to know what to expect, in advance! Listed below are a series of questions and answers to help you develop accurate expectations of this Adventure and make plans to maximize your enjoyment. Please feel free to call us with any additional questions you have.

Questions & Answers

Q: Do you have more detailed information than is available in the Adventure brochure?

- A: About four weeks before departure, a final packet will be mailed to each participant. This packet will include:
- * Hotel listing (including address and phone information of all hotels)
 - * Traveler List
 - * Daily schedule
 - * Adventure t-shirt & nametag
 - * Adventure map
 - * Reusable luggage tags for first-time travelers

Q: Do I need a passport or visa?

- A: **Brazil is one of an increasing number of countries that requires a passport that does not expire for at least 6 months from the date you enter the country.** A passport can usually be obtained by applying at your town's main post office. It generally takes at least six weeks to process, however, so don't delay!

A Tourist Visa is also required to enter Brazil. You will need to apply for and receive this visa before departure from Miami. WAI will supply you with information on how to obtain this important travel document.

IMPORTANT: Please make a copy of your passport and birth certificate and keep them in your luggage separate from where you keep your passport. In case your passport gets lost, having these copies really speeds up the replacement process.

Q: Do you have any suggestions to help with flights to Brazil?

- A: **As you know, because the internal flights within Brazil are somewhat complicated, we have arranged a group flight departing from Miami, Florida, for this Adventure. So far, all travelers have opted in on the group flights. We have an arrangement with Debbi Custer, a travel agent who is familiar with the *Walking Brazil* Adventure and is handling the group air arrangements. Debbi would also be happy to help you make your connecting flight arrangements to Miami. Debbi can be reached at (888) 276-0925 –OR– (503) 231-9507 and email: debbi@wtpdx.com.**

Other options for booking the flight to Miami include using your own travel agent, or AAA if you are a member, or booking online. If you have access to the Internet, we've discovered several web sites that may be helpful in finding the best fares. To start your planning, www.kayak.com is a good site on which to find flights that are available on the days of travel. For the best fares, we've found it's better to go to the web site of the specific airline serving your home and destination. Often you can leave your e-mail address, and they'll contact you when they have specials flying to cities that interest you most. There are also sites that offer tour planning services and claim to find all the sales and specials. Sites to check out include:

Airline sites:

www.continental.com
www.southwest.com
www.united.com
www.aa.com (American)
www.alaskaair.com
www.usairways.com
www.delta.com

Planning sites:

www.kayak.com
www.travelocity.com
www.expedia.com
www.orbitz.com
www.onetravel.com
www.bestfares.com
www.priceline.com
www.qix.com

ARRIVING IN MIAMI: Because our flight departs Miami early on the morning of June 11, **you will need to arrive in Miami at least by June 10.** WAI has booked a block of rooms in Miami at the Holiday Inn Express for the night of June 10. Please contact Amanda at our office to let her know if you would like to take advantage of this reservation.

A word (or two) on jet lag: Much has been theorized about the best way to fight jet lag. One small booklet we've added to our library is *Jet Smart* by Diana Fairechild. An oversimplified summary of her book would suggest that you:

- 1) eat as little as possible while in transit, avoid alcoholic beverages, and eat high carbohydrate foods if you must eat,
- 2) get up and walk around the plane when you can,
- 3) do isometric exercises (flex and relax your muscles) occasionally during the flight,
- 4) adjust your sleep schedule to the local time as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT: We particularly recommend no's. 2 and 3. Over the years, we've had several travelers who have

experienced circulation problems during the Adventure due to the long flight.

Q: What type of hotels will we be in?

A: We will be housed in a variety of accommodations that match the diverse nature of our surroundings. In the Amazon rainforest and the Pantanal wetlands, we will be in rustic but comfortable lodges. Lodges will be full service facilities with all meals on-site. In the cities, we will be in good quality, tourist class, 3-star or better accommodations. In Paraty, we will stay in delightful bungalows set amongst gardens just off one of the rivers that feed into Paraty Bay.

Because we are in natural settings for several nights, we strongly recommend a penlight or small flashlight in case the path to your lodge is poorly lit.

Washcloths are not used in Brazil and you will likely not find them provided in the hotels. If this bathroom accessory is important to you, add it to your packing list. Note that in most cases, sewage systems are not able to handle toilet paper. If a waste basket is placed next to the toilet, that is an indication that the paper should go there and not in the toilet.

When making reservations, we request as many non-smoking rooms as possible. Non-smoking rooms are not always available, but due to standards of cleanliness, we have seldom had complaints in this regard from prior travelers.

Q: What will our walks be like?

A: Walks will provide an insightful blend of rural and nature venues along with city sightseeing. We have been promised IVV stamps for all walks in Brazil and are still in the process of requesting a stamp for the Argentina walk at Iguacu Falls.

All walks will be conducted as guided walks with the assistance of local tour guides. Our Amazon rainforest walk will be lead by naturalist guides on a route determined by them in conjunction with your WAI guide. Walk routes in Manaus, Paraty, and Iguacu Falls were set up by WAI guides on a planning trip with the help of local guides. The walk in Rio de Janeiro will be lead by members of Anda Brazil, the volkssport walking club that is providing sanctions for all events. We are excited to be walking with Anda Brazil and are thankful for their cooperation in approving the rest of our walks in Brazil.

Using the American Volkssport Association's (AVA) difficulty rating system of 1 to 5, with 1 representing flat, smooth walk routes and 5 representing very difficult hikes, **these walks are rated between 1 and 3**, as listed in the Adventure brochure. Here is the description of ratings used by the AVA:

1. An easy walk on pavement or well-maintained trail with no significant hills. Probably suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.
2. A moderately easy walk, may be on pavement or on trails. No significant difficulty with hills. May not be suitable for wheelchairs and strollers.
3. A moderate walk in any setting with some difficult terrain, one or two substantial hills and/or steps. Strollers and

wheelchairs questionable.

4. A more difficult walk. Most likely in a natural setting with poorly maintained paths and steeper or hilly inclines. Not likely to be wheelchair or stroller accessible. Participants with certain health problems should take caution.
5. A very difficult walk. All in rough fields or woods. Many steep hills or high altitude trails, or very rough uneven terrain, steep or unstable inclines. Not suitable for any person who is not in good health.

If you are walking for IVV credit, you may use the same event and distance books for this Adventure that you use here in the States. We will have a supply of extra event and distance books along if your books get filled up en route.

In planning the program, we allow 3 to 3¼ hours to complete a standard 10 km (6.2 mile) walk. **In the case of nature/jungle walks, we will take longer to navigate the jungle terrain and stop to enjoy special opportunities to see unique flora and fauna. Of course, none of the walks are mandatory.** If you need to take a day off, or don't feel like doing the entire walk, just let your WAI guide know and he'll help you make plans to do a partial walk or find some other interesting things to do.

Carrying a water bottle on the walks is highly recommended. Walking boots with good ankle support are strongly advised for our jungle/nature walks. If you often use a walking stick at home, we would advise that you also make plans to have your walking stick with you in Brazil.

Q: Will the walks be sanctioned volkswalks?

A: As mentioned above, we expect IVV stamps for all walks in Brazil and have requested a stamp for our Iguacu Falls walk in Argentina.

Q: What is a volkswalk?

A: Volkssport is a club activity that began in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 1968. There are four primary activities: walking, biking, swimming, and cross country skiing. Walking is, by far, the most popular and well developed. A volkswalk is walked at a steady pace through a scenic and/or historic area over a pre-marked route (usually 10 km, which is 6.2 miles). Normally, it is hosted by a local group of volunteer club members. It is noncompetitive, and aims to involve people of all ages. Everyone who participates is declared a WINNER! Presently, there are walks in all 50 states and more than 30 countries worldwide.

Q: What type of footwear should I bring?

A: Two pairs of walking shoes or boots are recommended. The first pair often gets wet or muddy and needs a day off. The increase in the number of light-weight hiking boots is making them a more attractive and practical option. **We believe a quality pair of lightweight hiking boots is a good investment for a traveling walker and a necessary part of this Adventure.**

Q: Is the water drinkable in the countries we're visiting? Are there any health precautions I should take?

A: Do NOT drink water from the tap in Brazil. Water that is served for meals has been purified and is safe to drink.

One of the realities of foreign travel is that we encounter different bugs and bacteria than we do here at home. Another reality is that group travel involves sharing a lot of things — including germs. As a result, cold nasties can quickly travel through the bus looking for weak immune systems to attack. There are several supplements and behaviors that can make a significant difference in your ability to resist these bugs and preserve a healthy Adventure, including the following:

- * Use Vitamin C, Echinacea, or grapefruit seed extract beginning a week before the trip and during the trip to boost your immune system (Check with your doctor for possible allergies to Echinacea.).
- * Maintain the use of a good multi-vitamin both before and during the trip.
- * Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently (carrying a waterless hand cleaner is highly recommended).
- * If/when you cough, cover your mouth as completely as possible to avoid the spread of germs in consideration of fellow travelers.
- * Avoid touching your face and rubbing your eyes.
- * Be sensitive to your health and particularly your need for rest. Guard against fatigue by monitoring your participation in trip activities and allowing yourself necessary “down time.”

Q: What shots are recommended?

A: We are not qualified to give medical advice. You will need to consult a medical professional. In general, travel health clinics are more reliable sources of information in this matter than general practitioners and the Center for Disease Control. You can find travel health clinics in the yellow pages or online. Two examples are: www.ushealthworks.com and www.passporthealthusa.com. Remember to take your Adventure brochure with you so you can show the medical staff where we are traveling.

In preparation for laying this trip out, however, we visited a travel clinic in the Portland, Oregon, area and this is what we were told:

- Vaccinations that are usually recommended include yellow fever vaccinations (good for 10 years), malaria for the Amazon area only, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and the more common immunizations against measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), and tetanus-diphtheria. Your doctor may recommend others depending upon your health history and age.
- Dengue fever can be a problem in some urban areas of Brazil. There are no vaccines against dengue fever, so mosquito bite prevention is the best approach.
- In addition to wearing clothing that covers as much of your skin as possible, a triple layer of mosquito and tick (not disease-carrying) protection is advised:
 - 1) Use anti-malarial medications as prescribed by a doctor or nurse;
 - 2) Use an insect repellent containing 30-35% Deet (higher concentrations provide no additional benefit and can be harmful to your

skin); and

3) **Spray your outer clothing with Permethrin, a treatment that repels insects and lasts up to 6 weeks. We recommend that you apply Permethrin to several garments that you intend to wear for the walks, then keep other parts of your travel wardrobe Permethrin-free for non-walk days and evenings.**

- **There are several different anti-malarial medications. Ask your doctor which is best for you.**

Q: How many people do you accept on an Adventure?

A: The *Walking Brazil Adventure* will have around 20 walkers. Normally, WAI closes an Adventure at 30 travelers, so there is still room for a few more travelers to share this special South American experience!

Q: What is the average age of your groups?

A: Most of our travelers fall between 50 and 70 years of age. This seems to be the age bracket that has the time and means to travel. However, we always have travelers that fall outside that range, from the 20's up into the 80's. Walkers are characteristically great traveling companions — positive, cheerful, and appreciative of the opportunity to see the world.

Q: What is the split between men and women?

A: One of the realities of life is that there are more women on the planet than men. Another is that they tend to outlive their spouses. As a result, we do have more women on the trips than men. The percentage of women on the trip can run anywhere from 60 to 80%. We have quite a few couples, a lot of women traveling together or singly, and the occasional single male traveler. We like to see this ratio as even as possible and are always looking for a few more good men!

Q: What if I don't have a roommate?

A: It's always best to register for the trip with your own roommate. Though we cannot guarantee a roommate, we do offer to help match travelers up with others needing roommates. We provide contact information for potential roommates and allow travelers to contact each other and make their own decisions.

Q: What will the motorcoaches be like?

A: We will be traveling in several different coaches of various sizes, but will not be spending a significant amount of time on the bus. Because we are not on the bus for any significant periods of time, do not expect that the coach will be equipped with a toilet. We will also dispense with the seat rotation system normally used on our longer bus ride programs. We do ask that you “rotate” on a voluntary basis so that everyone gets a chance to be near the front of the bus.

Q: How much money should I take along?

A: The Brazilian currency is the Real. The rate of exchange at the time of this printing is about \$1 = 2.35 Real.

Over the past few years, ATM's have become the most practical means of managing cash needs when traveling. Use of ATM's in Brazil was not as hassle

free as in the USA; still, we suggest a strategy that relies partially on ATM's as follows:

Plan A: Bring along a supply of US dollars that will meet your expected needs with an additional cushion for emergencies. Keep those dollars in reserve as much as possible and use the ATM's as much as possible. ATM's generally give the best exchange rates. If/when you can't find ATM's when you need them, use your US dollars and exchange them at hotels or exchange offices. Do NOT use airport exchange offices unless absolutely necessary. Rates are poor and transaction fees of \$5 to \$10 are often charged. Hotel rates are not great, but if you are only using the hotel to "tide you over" until you can find an ATM, the exchange rate difference will not amount to much on the small amount you are exchanging.

Plan B: Purchase the foreign currency you expect to need for the entire trip here at home before leaving. The exchange rate at home is generally not as good as in-country. However, the hassle factor will be lower. You'll have your money before you go and will not be in search of ATM's along the route. Bring an additional \$200—\$300 cash as reserve.

Cash Needed:

Most meals are included in this Adventure. Including the *Iguaçu Extension*, you will need to purchase 10 additional meals, assuming that you eat lunch each day. A budget of \$20 per day should be ample for essentials, a total of \$340. However, we suggest that you pad this amount and bring at least \$500 (1175 Brazilian Real) or more to cover unexpected contingencies.

As always, store this money, and any debit or credit cards, in more than one place to minimize the risk of loss. As noted below, Brazil struggles with petty crime, so we need to place an even greater importance upon safeguards such as money belts and discreet handling of currency in public places.

Q: What type of clothing is appropriate?

A: Casual tourist attire will be the norm for the entire trip. Most of the time, we will be dressed in our walking clothes. Our own strategy is to take two or three pairs of quick-dry pants with zip-off legs along with several quick-dry t-shirts and nylon or tri-blend travel shirts. We supplement this with a quality set of breathable raingear (e.g. Goretex) which we also wear for warmth when the temperatures are a bit cool. Additionally, we also take along a light jacket and/or silk or high performance fabric undershirts to use as additional layers. In any case, we have found that packing lightweight layers of clothing is the most practical strategy.

You may wish to bring along a set of casual non-walking clothes (slacks or nice jeans for the men and a skirt or dress for the ladies) for the odd occasion when you feel like wearing something other than walking attire or the couple of evenings when we have special dinners.

Weather:

Weather varies quite a bit on this Adventure. We will be traveling from around 3 degrees south of the equator in the Amazon Rain Forest to 22 degrees

south at Iguaçu Falls. In general, expect warm temperatures (with high humidity in the Amazon), though temperatures in the morning at Iguaçu Falls can be downright chilly. As always, be prepared for rain. Here are the average high and low temperatures in Fahrenheit over the past few years.

	<u>High</u>	<u>Low</u>
Amazon	86	76
Pantanal	87	68
Rio de Janeiro	78	68
Iguaçu Falls	72	50

Other Important Information

MEALS:

All breakfasts, many lunches, and all but a couple of dinners on flying days are included in the trip price. One of the delights of this trip will be experiencing the wide variety of delicious cuisine in the various regions we are visiting.

CALLING/MAILING HOME:

Calling home from overseas can be complicated. Internet cafes and business centers in our Rio and Iguaçu Falls hotels are usually a more practical way to stay in touch with loved ones back home. We found calling home particularly challenging on this Adventure due to the amount of time we were in rather remote areas. In case of emergency, advise your family to contact the emergency numbers listed on the Hotel List you will receive in the Final Mailing.

LAUNDRY:

It is highly unlikely that you will find self-service laundry facilities in any of the places we visit. Some of our hotels will have laundry service available for a fee, which can be quite substantial. We have two laundry strategies: 1) pack a few feet of clothes line and do your laundry in your room, or 2) pack tightly and bring enough essentials so that you don't need to do laundry until you return home. This Adventure will require a greater number of "wardrobe changes" than usual during the day due to the warmer weather, and the dirt and mud we will sometimes navigate through in the fascinating natural areas we are exploring (*Free tip—don't bring white walking shoes!*). Because of the luggage restrictions mentioned below, we highly recommend option 1) — travel light and do your laundry in your room.

ELECTRICITY:

Household current in Brazil varies widely between 110 and 220 volts. Hotels will often have plugs with both types of currents. Cell phones, cameras, and laptops often have charges that can handle the full range of currents; check the fine print on your charger to see what it is rated for. Wall outlets may be designed to accept either the 2 flat American-style plug-ins (without the 3rd grounding pin) or the European-style round 2-prong plug-ins. If you have an appliance with three prongs (1 for ground) bring along an adapter from a hardware store converting it to 2 flat prongs.

TIME ZONES:

We will be traveling in two different time zones. Manaus in the Amazon, our first stop, is the same as Eastern

Daylight Time in the USA. Rio de Janeiro is one hour earlier than Eastern Daylight Time.



"Come walk with me!"

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INTERNATIONAL

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