Brazil

Northeast Endemics (Relaxed)



Lear's Macaws by Lev Frid

Northeast Brazil is a land of outstanding contrast: from gorgeous white-sand beaches, to arid, cactus-topped plateaus, and the humid montane slopes in between. This region has all the beauty and diversity that any birder could ever hope for. Perhaps what this area is best known for, however, is the stunning array of beautiful endemics that flourish in the diverse habitats of Ceara, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Bahia and Espiritu Santo. Our tour explores several key sites in this fascinating region and offers an impressive bird list that includes the sought after Lear's (Indigo) Macaw and the striking Araripe Manakin.

We begin in the state of Ceara, visiting Serra de Baturite for Grey-breasted Parakeet and Ceara Gnateater, before heading to Quixada for the rarely recorded Pygmy Nightjar and White-browed Guan. Chapada do Araripe puts us in position for the recently described Araripe Manakin and other superb species such as White-browed Antpitta in advance of our visit to Canudos for the Critically Endangered Lear's Macaw.

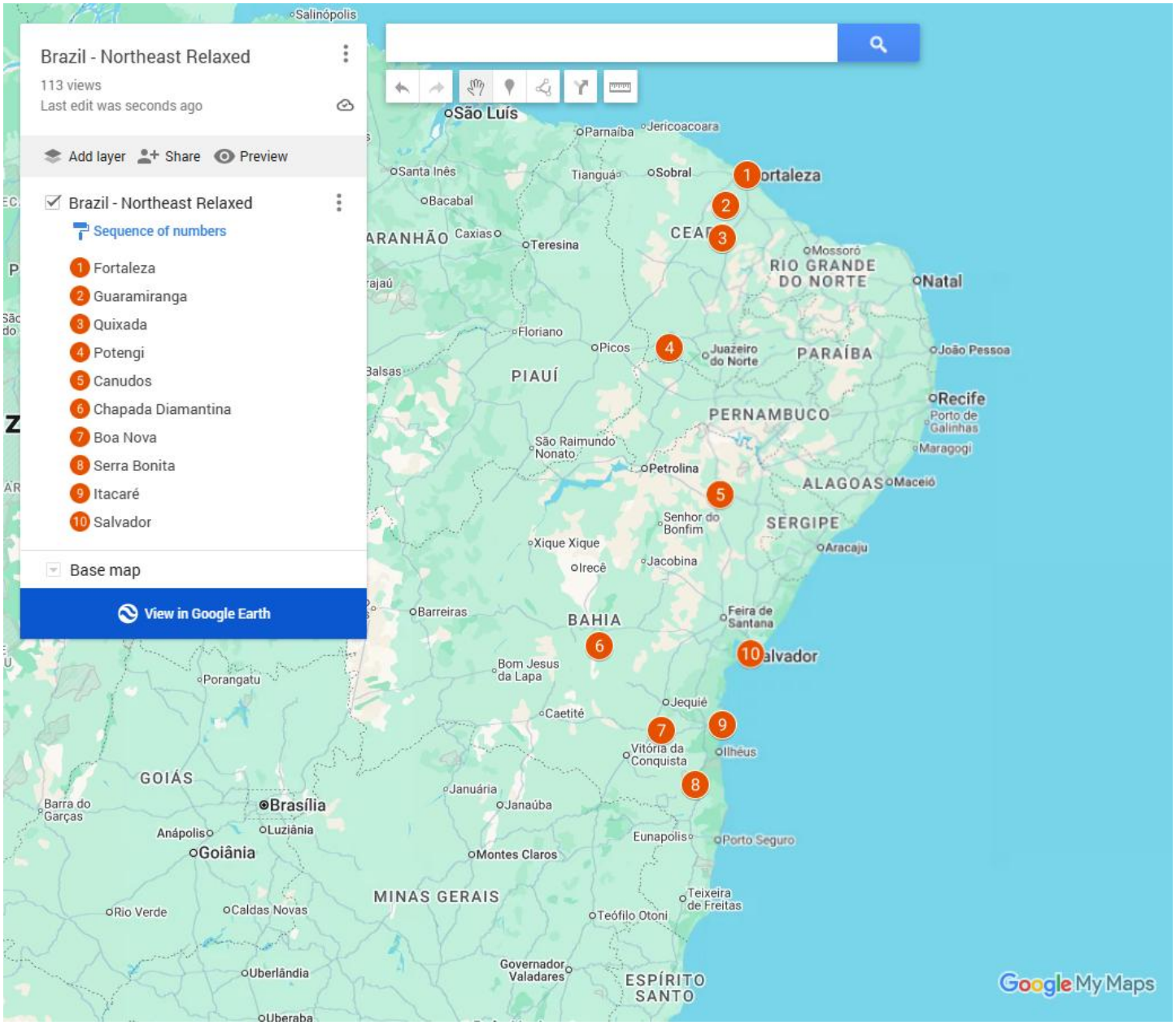
The next featured location is one of the best birding sites in Brazil, Chapada Diamantina. Hailed as perhaps the most breathtakingly beautiful of all Brazilian National Parks, it hosts several localised endemics including Hooded Visorbearer, the recently described Sincorá Antwren and Grey-backed Tachuri.

We then head towards the coast and Boa Nova. Located in the southwest of Bahia state where the Montane Atlantic forests meet Caatinga, this diverse location hosts over 430 bird species. Here we shall search diligently

for the Bahia Spinetail and Pin-tailed Manakin. We spend some time in the delightful Serra Bonita Reserve, host to Pink-legged Graveteiro, Bahia Tyrannulet and Crescent-chested Puffbird before taking in the coastal lowlands of Porto Seguro where targets include White-winged Cotinga, Bahia Antwren, Ochre-marked Parakeet, Red-browed Amazon and the rare Banded Cotinga.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Fortaleza, transfer to Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturite)**
Day 2	**Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturite)**
Day 3	**Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturite) to Quixada**
Day 4	**Quixada to Potengi**
Day 5	**Potengi area to Canudos (Chapada do Araripe)**
Day 6	**Canudos to Chapada Diamantina**
Days 7 & 8	**Chapada Diamantina**
Day 9	**Chapada Diamantina to Boa Nova**
Days 10 & 11	**Boa Nova**
Day 12	**Boa Nova to Serra Bonita**
Day 13	**Serra Bonita**
Day 14	**Serra Bonita to Itacaré**
Day 15	**Itacaré**
Day 16	**Itacaré to Salvador & final departures**


Brazil - Northeast Relaxed
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Sequence of numbers
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8 Serra Bonita
9 Itacaré
10 Salvador
Base map
View in Google Earth
São Luís
Parnaíba
Jericoacoara
Santa Inês
Tianguá
Sobral
Bacabal
Caxias
Teresina
CEARÁ
Mossoró
RIO GRANDE DO NORTE
Natal
Floriano
Picos
Juazeiro do Norte
PARAÍBA
João Pessoa
PIAUÍ
Balsas
PERNAMBUCO
Recife
Porto de Galinhas
Maragogi
São Raimundo Nonato
Petrolina
ALAGOAS
Maceió
Senhor do Bonfim
SERGIPE
Aracaju
Xique Xique
Irecê
Jacobina
Barreiras
BAHIA
Feira de Santana
Bom Jesus da Lapa
Porangatu
Jequié
Caetité
Vitória da Conquista
Ilhéus
GOIÁS
Barra do Garças
Brasília
Anápolis
Luziânia
Goiânia
Januária
Janaúba
Eunapolis
Porto Seguro
Montes Claros
MINAS GERAIS
Rio Verde
Caldas Novas
Teófilo Otoni
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ESPÍRITO SANTO
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Birding sites in detail



Grey-breasted Parakeet by Forrest Rowland

Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturité). The Baturité Mountain Range is host to several habitats, from humid forested slopes, deciduous forest and xeric caatinga in the lower-lying areas. The semi-humid, evergreen woodland is laden with birds, so we can expect to get cracking right from the get-go. Of prime importance is the Critically Endangered, Grey-breasted Parakeet and recently elevated, endemic Ceara Gnateater.

The cool misty mountains will bring some relief from the heat of the lowlands and a reasonably early start will see us birding along an excellent, wide cobblestone pathway. While we shall be being paying special attention to finding Grey-breasted Parakeet or Ceara Gnateater, we can expect to be inundated with many other species of interest including Ochraceous Piculet, Ruby-topaz and Swallow-tailed Hummingbirds, Planalto Hermit, Southern White-fringed Antwren and Short-tailed Antthrush. Also worth noting is that many of the birds we will see here are isolated, sub-specific forms that are likely to attain full-species status in the near future. These include Gould's Toucanet, the stunning Band-tailed Manakin, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Red-necked Tanager and the rare Spot-winged Wood Quail.

Quixada. This area is characterized by granite inselbergs or monolitos. Typically very hot and dry, it hosts the sought-after Pygmy Nightjar, which roosts and breeds among the rocks, cacti and terrestrial bromeliads.

We will use the cool morning hours to bird around Quixada for our first Caatinga endemics such as Caatinga Cachalote, White-naped Jay, Ochre-backed Woodpecker, Barred Antshrike (often split as Caatinga Barred Antshrike) and Caatinga Puffbird. Other more widespread species that we may find include Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and Blue-winged Parrotlot. We will also keep our eyes open for the rare White-browed Guan in this area.



Ceara Gnateater by Stephan Lorenz

Potengi. The famous Potengi area is in the heart of the Caatinga zone and will provide us a serious selection of the region's specials. Some of the more sought-after species for this portion of our tour include the magnificent Great Xenops, localised endemic White-browed Antpitta, Rusty-margined Guan, Rufous and Scissor-tailed Nightjars, Least Nighthawk, Burrowing Owl, scarce endemic



Araripe Manakin by Lev Frid

Broad-tipped Hermit, Spotted Piculet, smart Silvery-cheeked and Planalto Slaty Antshrikes, Stripe-backed Antbird, Caatinga and Black-bellied Antwrens, Sooty-fronted and unique Red-shouldered Spinetails, Ash-throated Casiornis, nomadic Scarlet-throated Tanager, Grey Elaenia, Lesser Wagtail-Tyrants, and Ultramarine Grosbeak – to name just some of the more special species!

We will have some time to enjoy the feeders that attract a wide variety of visitors including Campo Troupial, Solitary Black Cacique, Grey Pileated Finch and White-throated Seedeater amongst many others.

Chapada do Araripe area. The famous Chapada do Araripe is located on a plateau in the south of the state of Ceará. Roadside wetland birding en route is usually productive, and in the past has held Masked Duck, Brazilian Teal, White-cheeked Pintail, Snail Kite, Savanna Hawk, Limpkin, Yellowish Pipit and both Chestnut-capped and White-browed Blackbirds.

However, our primary effort will be centred on one, legendary bird, the Araripe Manakin! This stunning species was described to science as recently as 1996 and with luck we'll hopefully see several individuals of this truly magnificent creature! There are several springs in the foothills, and the associated moist forest is the specific habitat for our primary target while other species we will look out for include endemic Tawny Piculet, Planalto and Reddish Hermits, Flavescent Warbler and Moustached Wren

Lear's Macaw Reserve (Canudos). The Lear's Macaw Reserve is to be found near to the town of Canudos. We'll spend time birding the Caatinga near the reserve for Red-shouldered Spinetail, the local sub-species of Lesser and Greater Wagtail-Tyrants, Least Nighthawk, Blue-crowned Parakeet, Spotted Piculet, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, Black-bellied Antwren, Stripe-backed Antbird, Ash-throated Casiornis, White-throated Seedeater and Red-cowled Cardinal.



Hooded Visorbearer by Dušan Brinkhuizen

To really appreciate Lear's Macaw, the second legendary bird of the tour, we shall head out whilst it is still dark. Soon after the break of dawn, we can expect to be treated to the morning flight of several Lear's Macaw, departing their roosts, as they set off to their preferred foraging sites. Little else can compare to viewing one of the world's rarest (numbers were as low as just 42 individuals in the 80's) and most spectacular macaws flocking to the trees around us! We will also easily understand the adopted name of Indigo Macaw, as we view



Horned Sungem by Dubi Shapiro

these beautiful birds at our leisure. After absorbing as much as we can of this fine species, which few of us will ever see in the wild again – we shall return to our lodge for a delicious breakfast.

Chapada Diamantina. Amidst a stark, beautiful landscape, we will encounter more amazing species including the gorgeous Hooded Visorbearer, chances for Horned Sungem and the recently described Sincora Antwren. Other highlights of the area include the feisty Grey-backed Tachuri, unforgettable Great Xenops, shy Sao Francisco Sparrow, White-eared Puffbird, Stripe-tailed Yellow-Finch, rarely seen Broad-tipped Hermit, Collared Crescentchest, Velvety Black Tyrant and Serra Finch.

Birding the caatinga and cerrado habitats nearby should turn up Cactus Parakeet, Scaly-headed Parrot, Scissor-tailed, Little and Rufous Nightjars, uncommon and nomadic Stripe-breasted Starthroat, Blue-crowned and Surucua Trogons, Red-billed Scythebill, Caatinga Cacholote, Stripe-backed Antbird, Black-capped, Caatinga, Black-bellied, and Rusty-backed Antwrens, White-shouldered Fire-eye, and many tanagers including Cinnamon, Shrike-like and the vibrant Scarlet-throated Tanager.

Boa Nova. Located in the southwest of Bahia state, it is here that the montane Atlantic Forests meet the Caatinga. The region is home to over 430 species of bird including the restricted Slender Antbird and Narrow-billed Antwren, both confined to a small area of eastern Brazil.

Boa Nova has long been regarded as one of the best birding areas in this vast country. Being situated on the cusp of both and the drier interior forest, this area not only allows easy access to numerous habitat types but hosts an avifauna particular to this mountain range. We will spend time scouring the accessible forests and prime habitats spared from human disturbance. The forests are prime locations for finding localised endemics such as Bahia Tyrannulet, Striated Softtail and Bahia Spinetail.



Gilt-edged Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

This is however Antbird heaven, and we have plenty members of the family to search for here including Silvery-cheeked, Rufous-winged, Cinereous and Tufted Antshrikes, Narrow-billed Antwren, rarely recorded Rio de Janeiro, Slender, Ferruginous, Ochre-rumped and Scaled Antbirds.

We also hope to encounter Blue-winged Macaw, Scale-throated Hermit, Frilled



Blue-winged Macaws by Bobby Wilcox

Coquette, Yellow-eared Woodpecker, Pallid Spinetail, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Black-billed Scythebill, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Pin-tailed & Blue Manakins, Gilt-edged and Rufous-headed Tanagers, Cinnamon-vented Piha, Sharpbill and, with a lot of luck, Swallow-tailed Cotinga!

Serra Bonita. This montane paradise is one of the few, easily accessible, cloud forests in the region. After arriving in Serra Bonita, we will transfer to 4x4 vehicles for the ride (roughly one hour) up to our jungle lodge. We don't need to move all that much, as the hummingbird and fruit feeders will keep us royally entertained with Sombre Hummingbird, Black Jacobin, Scale-throated Hermit and sometimes even the scarce Brazilian Ruby making an appearance. Other species that we should also see include Maroon-bellied Parakeet, Orange-bellied Euphonia and Red-necked, Green-headed, Brazilian, Golden-chevroned and Azure-shouldered Tanagers squabbling at the fruit feeders.

With a bird list including fantastic and rare species such as Pink-legged Gravateiro, Star-throated and Salvadori's Antwrens, Bahia Tyrannulet and the stunning Blue Manakin, we will seamlessly pass a day birding this beautiful preserve.

Forays around the lodge and deeper into the surrounding forests are liable to turn up many of the aforementioned attractions, while we may also find the rare Atlantic race of Rufous-brown Solitaire (soon to be split), stunning Kinglet Manakin, Spot-backed Antshrike, Spot-billed Toucanet, the still undescribed 'Serra do Lontras' Treehunter, Crescent-chested Puffbird, Rufous-headed Tanager, Grey-headed Attila and East Brazilian Pygmy Owl. Overhead, several raptors may make an appearance, with the likes of Black and Black-and-white Hawk-Eagles, Mantled Hawk and King Vulture all being distinct possibilities.

The Serra Bonita lowlands offer good birding opportunities as well, and we'll take some time to look for the highly localised and threatened White-eared Parakeet while also keeping our eyes open for species such as Channel-billed Toucan, Scaled Antbird, Bright-rumped Attila, Sibilant Sirystes, Bare-throated Bellbird and a unique sub-species of Thrush-like Wren.



Red-necked Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Itacaré. This region of south coast Bahia is rich in endemism and special birds. With a vast area of remnants of lowland forest, some of them in private areas and other protected by the Serra do Conduru State

Park. We will base ourselves in Itacaré, a famous touristic destination with marvellous forest, beaches and waterfalls. From here we will visit Serra do Conduru State Park to the south of Itacaré. This State Park protects more than 9 000 hectares of Atlantic Forest and is one of the most biodiverse areas of this biome, with 458 different tree species per hectare with a high index of endemism. This reflects on the avifauna; a paradise to see manakins and many other interesting birds.

Our main targets of the lowland Atlantic Forest will be Kinglet Manakin, White-crowned Manakin, Blue-backed Manakin, Scaled Antbird, Black-cheeked Gnateater, Band-tailed Antwren, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Great-billed (Margaretta's) Hermit, Turquoise (White-bellied) Tanager, Opal-rumped (Silvery-breasted) Tanager, the nominal race of White-fronted Nunbird and many others.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Suitable for most birding / wildlife interest levels.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Forest birding means some species are difficult to find or visuals aren't always of great quality. Forest edge & caatinga birding is more rewarding.
Accommodation		Mostly comfortable, some lodges are simple, not all lodges have enough rooms for Single rooming.
Walking / Trails		Average walking, mostly on flat ground or roads with variable substrate at times. Some internal forest trails.
Vehicles / Roads		Comfortable vehicles. Several drives, some are long. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas.
Photography		Reasonable to good. Internal forest photography is challenging, several fruit & hummingbird feeders.
Annoyances		Temperatures comfortable in the highlands (can be cool to cold) generally hot & humid in the lowlands.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 16;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers, and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

Our Relaxed series of tours are designed to focus on having an enjoyable holiday with a bird and wildlife focus. Where possible; we have reduced or removed long drives, single night stays and poor/rustic accommodation. We have also sought to reduce or remove difficult hikes, narrow/muddy trails and otherwise oppressive environmental conditions. Early starts and night birding are mostly optional, and we will not spend much time searching for difficult and/or skulking species. These tours are not suitable for hardcore birders and listers, or dedicated photographers.

- We have timed our visit to coincide with the dry season and we can expect the weather conditions to be favourable, mostly dry, and sunny. However, it is generally warm to hot in the interior and can get a little humid

in the lowlands although typically nothing like the Amazon. At higher altitudes, daytime temperatures are pleasant, but it can get quite cold at night or when it rains. On most mornings, we will be up and out early to take advantage of the cooler temperatures and wildlife activity.

- To ensure your comfort and that of your companions, please limit yourself to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel bag (20 kg / 44 lb) and one carry-on bag, as space in the vehicles is limited.
- This Brazil tour does not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health as some of the forest birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time (always at a slow pace).
- Should you have any physical limitations or medical conditions please notify us in advance of departure.
- The vehicles we use are comfortable. We can expect some bumpy roads depending upon local road conditions.
- Accommodation is mostly of a good, comfortable standard but not all lodgings have enough rooms for everyone to always have single accommodations. There will more than likely be a few nights (Potengi and Canudos) where you will have to share with someone else and the single supplement has been calculated accordingly.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour will depart from Aeroporto Internacional Pinto Martins, Fortaleza on the morning of day 1 with a transfer to Guaramiranga (Serra de Baturite). Please do arrive the day before the tour begins. The tour will conclude late morning of day 16 in Salvador.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Aeroporto Internacional Pinto Martins, Fortaleza (IATA: FOR) is the primary port of entry this tour and is well serviced by several airlines. Salvador–Deputado Luís Eduardo Magalhães International Airport, Salvador (IATA: SSA) is the primary port of departure for this tour and is connected to the large international hubs of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.