The Best of Brazil
Family Adventure:

Rio, Salvador, and the Amazon

December 18, 2011 to December 30, 2011
The Best of Brazil Family Adventure: Rio, Salvador, and the Amazon

ITINERARY

Sunday, December 18
USA/RIO DE JANEIRO
We depart on an overnight flight to São Paulo with a connection to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Overnight flight (Meals aloft)

Monday, December 19
RIO DE JANEIRO
Upon arrival in Rio this morning, we’ll transfer to our hotel. An afternoon city tour will introduce us to this colorful capital city, once a Portuguese outpost on the edge of the New World and now a thriving major metropolis. We’ll drive along the world-famous beaches of Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon, circling the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon and proceeding to the Maracanã, one of the world’s largest stadiums. Lunch will be on the beach at Barril 1800, an Ipanema landmark. After lunch we’ll visit the famed Sugar Loaf Mountain which affords spectacular views of the city and its bays. We’ll gather this evening for a festive welcome dinner and reception. Sheraton Rio (L, D)

Tuesday, December 20
RIO DE JANEIRO
This morning we’ll depart on a train ride through a lush forest to Corcovado to see Rio’s most famous landmark, the Christ the Redeemer statue. We continue to the Botanical Garden to view its 6,000 species of tropical and subtropical plants and trees. From the Botanical garden we go to beach at Prainha to relax and have lunch overlooking the beach and ocean. Dinner is on our own this evening. Sheraton Rio (B, L)

Wednesday, December 21
RIO DE JANEIRO
This morning we’ll explore Rio’s historical downtown, including the baroque São Bento Monastery, the modern Metropolitan Cathedral and Praça XV de Novembro, where Brazil declared its independence from Portugal. After lunch at the historical Confeitaria Colombo, we’ll embark on a schooner for a cruise around Guanabara Bay, providing a panorama of many of Rio’s islands, beaches and neighborhoods. From the boat we’ll
have wonderful views of Sugar Loaf Mountain, the Nossa Senhora da Boa Viagem church, the Museum of Contemporary Art, designed by Oscar Niemeyer, and the impressive Rio-Niteroi Bridge. Enjoy dinner at Porcão Rios, a Brazilian-style churrascaria (barbeque). Sheraton Rio (B, L, D)

**Thursday, December 22**
**RIO DE JANEIRO/ SALVADOR/PRAIA DO FORTE**

After an early breakfast we depart on a morning flight to Salvador, the capital of Bahia, and for over 200 years (until 1763) the capital of Brazil. Here African and Brazilian cultures blend in music, dance, dress, food, and folklore, making this colonial city “the Soul of Brazil.” We will transfer to our hotel on the beautiful coastal region of Bahia near Praia do Forte. This is one of the most beautiful coastal regions in Brazil where ecological reserves adjoin white sand beaches surrounded by natural Atlantic forests, coral reefs, lagoons and lush tropical gardens and enormous coconut groves. Iberostar Bahia Praia do Forte (B, L, D)

**Friday, December 23**
**PRAIA DO FORTE**

Today we’ll visit the renowned Tamar Sea Turtle Project during the spawning season to learn about the conservation of sea turtles. After visit to the Tamar Project we will explore beaches surrounded by reefs, forming natural pools of stone, and look for tropical fishes and other marine life. Iberostar Bahia Praia do Forte (B, L, D)

**Saturday, December 24**
**SALVADOR**

Salvador is the city with the country’s oldest churches, its most important colonial architecture, and its largest collection of sacred art. Today explore this fascinating city and learn about its history, architecture, and the deep African influence. We’ll visit the famous Bonfim Church, the Lacera Elevator, a landmark of the city, and the São Francisco Church, the most ornate church in the Americas. Thereafter, we’ll explore Salvador’s museums and art galleries, including a visit to the excellent Afro-Brazilian Museum, which has a fine collection of Orixás (deities) and ceremonial art and clothing. Iberostar Bahia Praia do Forte (B, L, D)
Sunday, December 25
SALVADOR/MANAUS

This morning we’ll tour the Pelourinho or Old Town, a UNESCO treasure boasting the largest and best-preserved complex of colonial architecture in the Americas. We’ll have the remainder of the afternoon at leisure before departing on our flight to Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas and gateway to the upper Amazon. Upon our arrival in Manaus this evening, we’ll transfer to our hotel for a late lunch. *Tropical Hotel Manaus (B, L)*

Monday, December 26
MANAUS/IBEROSTAR GRAND AMAZON

We’ll begin our exploration of Manaus this morning with a visit the National Amazonian Research Institute, where we will meet with scientists to learn about their research and see a collection of manatees, fresh water dolphins, and other species. From here we will continue to the Natural History Museum which features exhibits of the fresh water fish of the Amazon, some as large as two meters long. After lunch we’ll visit the opulent *Teatro Amazonas* Opera House with its unusual mixture of art nouveau, neoclassical, and Baroque architecture. In the late afternoon we’ll embark on the Iberostar Grand Amazon, a luxury ship which will be our home for the next four nights as we cruise along the Rio Negro. This evening we’ll gather for a Captain’s welcome dinner and cocktail party. *Iberostar Grand Amazon (B, L, D)*

Tuesday, December 27
NOVO ARIAO/LAGO ARACARI

We arrive in Novo Airao this morning. After breakfast we’ll embark on a motor launch trip along the Trincher Igarapé (Creek) in hopes of seeing the *Botos*, the friendly, intelligent pink river dolphins. After lunch onboard we’ll venture to Lago Aracari where our photo excursion will reveal the abundance of wildlife in the region. After dinner this evening, we’ll have the opportunity to accompany the onboard naturalist on a caiman spotting cruise. *Iberostar Grand Amazona (B, L, D)*

Wednesday, December 28
RIVER PUDUARI/ATURIA IGARAPE

In the early morning we’ll enjoy bird watching at Rio Puduari before breakfast. Thereafter, we’ll board the small launch boats for a jungle trek along the River Puduari, where we will see many species of trees, plants, exotic birds, animals and insects. After re-boarding the vessel, we’ll have lunch as we cruise toward Ilha de Jacare. This afternoon’s photo safari in the Aturia Igarape will further our education of the Amazon flora and fauna. This evening we’ll dine on board the Iberostar as we depart for Rio Cuieiras. *Iberostar Grand Amazona (B, L, D)*
Thursday, December 29  
**RIVER CUIERIRAS/PRAIA GRANDE**

After breakfast onboard we’ll arrive to Río Cuieiras. We’ll go ashore this morning to learn more about the Amazon Rainforest and its inhabitants. From here we’ll visit the local Cambebas Community before re-boarding the vessel for lunch. Our journey continues to Praia Grande where we will take a small launch boat cruise through Igarapé do Pato. We’ll have the remainder of the afternoon at leisure at Praia Grande. This evening we’ll enjoy a farewell dinner followed by an onboard folklore show. *Iberostar Grand Amazona (B, L, D)*

Friday, December 30  
**DISEMBARK/MANAUS/USA**

We’ll gather on the deck bright and early this morning to observe the phenomenon known as “encontro das aguas”, or the meeting of the waters, as the black waters of the Rio Negro and the muddy waters of the river Solimões merge to form the main Amazon River. We’ll disembark in Manaus after breakfast and will immediately transfer to the airport for our flight back to the USA and connecting flights home. *Meals aloft (B)*
ACCOMMODATIONS

Sheraton Rio Hotel
Located in an oasis of lush tropical vegetation, above a sandy beach and the azure waters of the Atlantic Ocean lies the Sheraton Rio Hotel & Resort. This hotel enjoys an enviable reputation as the resort and beachfront hotel with the largest leisure area and recreational facilities. Discover sweeping views of the famous Leblon and Ipanema beaches from a guestroom balcony, featured in each of our 559 guest rooms. Or sample a wide variety of tasty menus in the dining and entertainment venues, including three restaurants, pool snack bar, and a lobby bar with nightly entertainment. From the tennis courts to the multi-function court, temperature-controlled swimming pools, complete spa, and health club, guests will find plenty of ways to stay active.

Iberostar Bahia Praia do Forte
The Iberostar Praia do Forte was built in 2008. This 5-star hotel is the perfect setting for families to enjoy the wide-ranging culinary, sporting, wellness and leisure opportunities on offer here. The wonderful vacation facilities provided by the Iberostar Praia do Forte are enhanced by its position right on the endless beach of Praia do Forte, its stretches of fine white sand blending into the ocean blue and the lush vegetation which serves as the hotel's backdrop.

Tropical Hotel Manaus
The luxurious Tropical Hotel Manaus is one of the world’s most unique resorts, situated on the Rio Negro, the enormous black water tributary of the Amazon. Surrounded by tropical gardens, this 5-star hotel features 588 well-appointed and spacious bedrooms and suites, all with a wide range of facilities.

Iberostar Grand Amazon
A 5-star vessel built specifically to travel on the Amazon River, the Iberostar Grand Amazon comes equipped with all the facilities needed for comfortable cruising. With 74 comfortable cabins, the vessel also has two swimming pools, a Jacuzzi and fitness centre for recreation, plus amenities such as a laundry service, valet, drugstore, internet access and an on-site paramedic. The bar on the Sun Deck serves sunrise breakfast and drinks at sunset to classical music. Passengers can also enjoy drinks under the spectacular stars of the dark Amazon night. The two restaurants serve buffet meals with a selection of Brazilian and international dishes, including many delicious Amazon River fish and exotic tropical fruits. Entertainment and lectures are held in the spacious ballroom. All beverages on board are complimentary.