Corocora Camp in Casanare, Colombia

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Irave





25 South American escapes

Explore Patagonia in a 4x4 or take a wildlife cruise down the Amazon. Jeremy Lazell has the best escapes to start planning now

1 Five-country bonanza

First time to South America? This grand tour is an upmarket group trip that ticks off five countries in 18 days, that ticks off five countries in To any staying mainly in four-star hotels. Starting in Lima, you will fly to Cusco to explore the Sacred Valley and Macnu Picchu, then drive across a 14,000ft Andean pass into Bolivia. Here you'll cruise Lake Titicaca by catamaran, visit the world's highest capital, La Paz, then fly to Buenos Aires Machu Picchu, then drive across a Then it's on via Montevideo to Iguazu Falls, finishing with caipirinhas in Rio de Janeiro.

Is Nineteen nights' B&B from E4,875pp, including flights and some meals. Various departures from April to November 2021 (vjv.com)

2 Party like a Brazilian

You won't find it in any brochures, but the annual Festa de Sao Bras is a mesmerising, 24-hour sambathon, held on the Unesco-protected village square in the off-beat Bahia beach resort of Trancoso. Make your base Uxua Casa, love child of a creative director at Diesel who upcycled nine dilapidated cabins into diapicated cabins into a chichi, art-filled hotel. It has a shack-chic spa and thatched beach bar — the perfect fournight finale to this ten-day tour that also visits Iguazu Falls and Rio. Details Eleven nights' B&B from £5.995pp, including flights

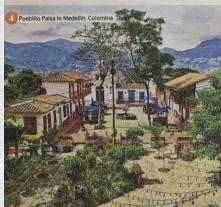
3 Argentina's Route 66 America's Wild West never died, they

The beach bar at Uxua

Casa in Trancoso, Brazil

say, it just moved to northern rgentina. On this one-week, self-drive loop from Salta, you will see exactly why. Following in the tyre treads of Che Guevara, whose journey down Ruta 40 was immortalised in the 2004 ilm The Motorcycle Diaries, you will drive through one-horse towns and cactus-studded plains. passing burnished ochre hills and lonely whitewashed churches straight out of a spaghetti western. Travelling by 4x4, you'll stop at community-run lodges and one of the world's highest wineries, with three nights in Buenos Aires

36 Travel South America



4,995pp, including flights and

4 Cultural Colombia

Ten years ago you wouldn't have visited Medellin without a Kevlar vest, but Colombia's one-time cartel capital is now a poster boy of urban regeneratio with buzzing barrios, graffiti tours and a vibrant arts and foodie scene. Medellin is just one of the stops on he Chachalaca: Colombia's Colonial and Coffee Culture group tour, which tarts in Bogota and also visits coffee tations and colonial Villa de Leyva ou will go down a centuries-old salt nine, up a 650ft mini Sugarloaf and inish with three nights on the coast n Cartagena, Colombia's colourful

aribbean queen. 4,389pp, including flights. Departs on March 7 and October 24, 2021

5 Live like a gaucho

Stay on a 6,500-acre cattle farm in the Sierras Chicas, riding across the olling Argentinian grasslands north of Cordoba. It's owned and run by Anglo-Argentinians whose family have farmed this land for four generations, and this trip is based on a l6th-century anch house, Estancia Los Potreros, with even simple, elegant rooms and a fun dine-together house-party vibe. Guests of all abilities ride as much or as little as they like (poolside hammocks and green awns cry out for days off) and can help gauchos to count cattle and bring in oung horses from hills frequented y pumas. Details Nine nights' full board from

2,801pp, including flights

Play Attenborough n the Amazon

Reached only after three hours by oat through a foreverness of Amazon rainforest roughly the size of Austria, Tambopata Research Centre n Peru is where the BBC filmed nacaws for David Attenborough's recent eries, Seven Worlds, One Planet. It's proper scientific research base, so ou end up drinking pisco sours with ntomology professors after night walks,

but it also has a stylish tourist wing, with rooms open to the chatter of howler monkeys and parrots from the surrounding forest. It's a stunning of Cusco, the Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu.

Eight miles from Machu Picchu, Skylodge is the most exhilarating hotel in South America. It's made up of three Perspex pods that cling to the cliffs 1,200ft over the Sacred Valley. You reach Skylodge by a 90-minute via ferrata ascent, and guests return to the valley floor by zip wire. In other words, adventurephobes need a walking tour of Cusco's colonial highlights and — non-negotiable in these parts — a visit to Machu Picchu. Details Fourteen nights' B&B from £4,100pp, including flights and Skylodge eals (scottdunn.com)

Learn to tango in the place where it first stamped its heels on this Ultimate Tango Holiday to Buenos Aires. Born in the brothels and bars along the River Plate, the dance still pulses through the city's streets, so on this dedicated tango week you will have lessons by day — classes are at the topin Galeria Guemes. ils Nine nights' B&B from £1,999pp, including flights

over, the action-packed Adventure in

(children £2,449pp), including flights. Departs on April 4, July 31 or August Moai on Easter Island, Chile 21 2021 (familiesworldwide.com

10 Go on a family adventure in Ecuador

Guinea-pig kebabs, alpaca spotting, a canoe safari through the Amazon this eye-popping group family trip is one long TikTok opportunity. Ecuador Volcanoes and Jungle begins in Quito, features a journey by rail to the
Equator (one-foot-in-each-hemisphere selfies mandatory), then on via the Papallacta hot springs to a rainforest lodge, where children can learn to fire blowpipes between river safaris. At the Avenue of Volcanoes you will hike into a crater and spend a night in a village home. Kayaking, rafting and mountain biking can be added.

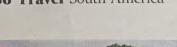
Details Fifteen nights' B&B from

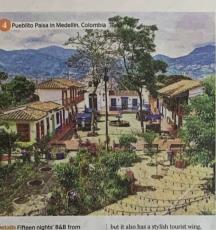
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£2,500pp (children £2,050pp). including flights and some

11 Track down jaguars in Brazil

The Pantanal is the world's biggest wetland a Britain-sized mosaic of lakes and marshes, rivers and canals sheltering tapirs and giant anteaters river otters and more than 650 bird species, as well as the highest concentration of crocodiles on the planet. Not only that, but it is more open than the Amazon and therefore the best place to spot — and photograph — jaguars. This Wildlife of the Pantanal group trip stays at three lodges, including Jaguar Retreat,





three-night add-on to this exploration

Details Eleven nights from £3,116pp, including flights and most meals (journeylatinamerica.co.uk)

7 Kip on a Peruvian cliff

not apply for this trip, which also includes sections of the Lares trek,

8 Tango in Buenos Aires

lessons by day — classes are at the top-end DNI studio in a historic building in the Almagro district — then strut your stuff in milongas (dance halls) by night. You will see street tango in Calle Florida and watch the legendary Carlos Gardel show in the ornate belle époque theatre

9 Take the kids to Machu Picchu

A six-hour trek along the last seven miles of the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu is the standout selfie opportunity on this family group to but the whole trip is Insta gold. Aimed at families with children aged II and

the Andes also includes a visit to a llama sanctuary, biking along the Urubamba River to Pisac's colourful The Foreign Office currently advises against all non-essential travel.

Sunday market, a spectacular journey by train down the Sacred Valley from

paddleboarding on the Huaypo lagoon at the foot of the snowcapped Andes.

Is Nine nights' B&B from £2,699pp

Machu Picchu to Cusco, and

Salar de Talar, in Chile's Atacama Desert

All the trips listed here

dates given where

applicable

are for 2021, with specific