

### 3. THE NORTH REGION

Also called the Amazon Region, the North Region comprises the states of Amazonas, Para, Amapa, Roraima, Acre, Rondonia and Tocantins – 45,25% of Brazil's total area - with 10,146 million inhabitants, 7% of the country's total. The North region's main features are:

- \* The Amazon jungle, the world's largest and most magnificent forest.
- \* The Amazon River, the world's first in water volume and second in extension, 6.577 km (4.087 mi) long, running 3.615 km (2.246 mi) in Brazilian land, and which daily flow is said to be enough to supply a city the size of New York for ten years. It extends from the Peruvian Andes all the way to the Atlantic Coast of Brazil. But in Brazil its stretch between the Peruvian border and Manaus is called Solimoes, and only the part between Manaus (where Solimoes meets the Negro River) and Belem is called Amazon River.
- \* The Amazon hydrographical basin, the globe's largest and most extensive, displaying 10 of the world's 20 largest rivers, and accounting for one fifth of the planet's fresh water.
- \* Anavilhanas, the biggest fluvial archipelago in the world, a biologists' paradise.
- \* Marajo, the largest river-sea island in the planet, bigger than several European countries, on the mouth of the Amazon River.
- \* The "meeting of the waters" where the black waters of the Negro River meet the muddy waters of Solimoes River to form the mighty Amazon, running side by side for miles and miles without mixing.
- \* Infinite variety of trees and plants, among which some wonders like the giant water lily "Victoria Regia" and 200-foot-tall trees.
- \* Around 1.500 species of birds. More than 2.000 different species of fish, from the Pirarucu, largest freshwater fish in the world, to the feared Piranha, besides other forms of water life like forest, along river sides and in the region's few cities; naive, reserved, shy, yet very hospitable.
- \* Indian tribes, protected by the Brazilian Government, some of them living in reserved areas.
- \* Rich folklore originated on the Indian cultures and also influenced by African and Portuguese cultures brought by the Brazilian North eastern immigrants.
- \* Indigenous craftsmanship of great artistic richness.
- \* Healthy and delicious cuisine, originated in the Indians' culinary art, with a strength on fish dishes; delicious exquisite fruit, the basis of an amazing variety of exotic ice-creams, sherbets, desserts and juices.
- \* Wide lodging options, from tropical-rustic jungle lodges to 5-star hotels and resorts.
- \* Infinite tourist possibilities as fishing, bird watching, wild life sighting, alligator spotting, jungle trekking and river cruises.

The North region's main cities are Manaus and Belem, which are also the gateways to the region, linked to the main capitals in Brazil by regular flights, and to North America by weekly flights. The river ports of Manaus and Santarem and the sea-port of Belem are the major ones in the region. Due to long distances and poor road conditions, it is not recommendable to travel to Manaus and Belem by land.

### 3.1. MANAUS



The capital of Amazonas State and the hub of the whole Amazon Region lie on the Negro River, 6 km (4 mi) far from the point where the Negro meets the Solimoes River to form the Brazilian Amazon River. The city underwent a great development in the 2nd half of the 19th century when it became rubber boomtown, in part because of the invention of the process of vulcanization. Swiftly transformed into a European-like capital, it was the first Brazilian city to have trolley buses and the second to have electric illumination on the streets.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Manaus rubber market collapsed and the city declined into poverty. Nowadays Manaus is a busy commercial center, after having been transformed into a Free Trade Zone in 1966.

### Manaus - Excursions

#### **Historical City Tour of Manaus** (approx. 4 hours)

Depart from your Hotel to see the old part of Manaus, remembering the rubber boom of the turn of the last century like São Sebastião Square, first stop with opportunity for photos at the 19th century Palácio Rio Negro built to be the private residence of a German rubber baron and now the official residence of the Governor. Proceed as far as the floating Harbor, which was built by the English in 1903 keeping in mind the annual rise and fall of the Rio Negro, the Customs House, pre-fabricated in Liverpool (England) and shipped to Manaus most of one hundred years ago, the clock tower (called little Big Ben), Matriz Square and the Cathedral. Walk through the Municipal Market, the art nouveau building will be under renovation until June 2012 however, all the stores have moved to the market located in front of the building. The highlight of the tour will be a visit to the lavish Opera House built almost entirely of European material during the rubber boom and inaugurated in 1896.

*The Opera House is open from Tuesday to Saturday between 09:00 -17:00h and on Sunday and Holidays from 09:00h to 14:00h. It is closed on Mondays.*

*German-speaking guides are available upon request.*

*The floating harbor is currently under renovations.*

#### **Half Day Cruise to the Meeting of the Waters** (4 hours)

Leaving from the floating dock, cruise down the Rio Negro River and pass by the busy harbor of Manaus where large ships load and unload as well as the Educandos hillside with wooden houses built on stilts, while watching the daily life of the people who live on the riverside. From there, head to the Meeting of the Waters to admire the meeting of the black waters of the Rio Negro with the light brown waters of the Solimões, giving birth to the mighty Amazon

River. For miles and miles these waters flow side by side without mixing. Visit the January Lake, an Ecological Park located between the two rivers and have the opportunity to see the giant Amazonian Water lilies "Vitória Régia" and back by boat to Manaus. Private roundtrip transfer to hotel included. When clients are guests of the Tropical Hotel, they embark and disembark the riverboat at the hotel's pier.

**Manaus flora & fauna** (approx. 3,5 hours)

Depart from your hotel to visit the Bosque da Ciência - INPA (Amazonas National Research Institute), where the guide will take to a trail in the forest, explaining about trees, insects and also a little about the local researches. Among them is the project to preserve the Peixe boi (*Trichechus inunguis*). The Bosque da Ciência, is an ecological park inaugurated in 1995, in celebration of 40 years of INPA foundation. There, it is possible to observe some animals that live freely in the park, as well as the vegetation including fruit, medicinal and regional trees like Mahogany. Visit also the Army Zoo with where more than 76 species of Amazonian animals are held in nicely and clean surrounding, rounded by preserved forest with structure able to shelter animals from local fauna with care of the veterinary.

*Not available on Mondays.*

**Meeting of the Waters Tour with lunch** (approx. 8 hours)

Leaving from the floating dock, cruise down the Rio Negro River and pass by the busy harbor of Manaus where large ships load and unload as well as the Educandos hillside with wooden houses built on stilts, while watching the daily life of the people who live on the riverside. From there, head to the Meeting of the Waters to admire the meeting of the black waters of the Rio Negro with the light brown waters of the Solimões, giving birth to the mighty Amazon River. For miles and miles these waters flow side by side without mixing. Visit the January Lake, an Ecological Park located between the two rivers and have the opportunity to see the giant Amazonian Water lilies "Vitória Régia". A buffet lunch is included at the floating restaurant of January Lake. The highlight of the day will be a canoe ride through the narrow channels (called igarapés) and flooded forest (igapós) of the Tropical Amazonian rainforest. Go back by boat to Manaus. Private roundtrip transfer to hotel included. When clients are guest of the Tropical Hotel, they embark and disembark the riverboat at the hotel's pier.