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## WILD STAYS

WHETHER YOU WANT TO SPOT DOLPHINS, BIRDS OR BIG CATS, THESE LODGES OFFER COMPLETE IMMERSION IN NATURE

## **Araras Eco Lodge**

Go for: Macaws

The northern Pantanal is a birdwatcher's paradise, its skies a kaleidoscope of brightbeaked toucans, pink-feathered spoonbills and hyacinth macaws — the symbol of Araras Eco Lodge. They can be seen here, along with snuffling anteaters, capuchin monkeys and countless other critters, on wildlife walks, drives and horse rides through the Pantanal, the world's largest tropical wetland. After a day's adventures, the lodge makes for a relaxing sanctuary, surrounded by forest two hours' drive south of the city of Cuiabá. Rooms have a rustic yet luxurious feel with wood-panelled ceilings and hammocks on the terrace. There's also an outdoor pool, and hearty soul food is served at long communal tables.

How to do it: From R\$2,412 (£330) per person, full board. araraslodge.com.br

## **Uakari Lodge**

Go for: River dolphins

The remarkable Uakari Lodge is a collection of comfortable wooden villas, connected by walkways and perched on wooden stilts on the Japurá River, close to where it joins the Amazon. It's the only floating hotel in Brazil's biodiverse Mamirauá Reserve, with some of the proceeds and the majority of employment opportunities going to support local Indigenous communities. River canoe trips from the lodge head out into the wilderness to spot rare creatures like the bald uakari monkey, vast shoals of toothed piranhas and the beautiful but endangered Amazon river dolphin, notable for its ethereal pink colour and feared as a shapeshifting trickster spirit in local Amazonian folklore.

**How to do it:** Three nights from R\$4,610 (£631) per person, full board, including activities. uakarilodge.com.br

## **Casa Caiman**

Go for: Big cats

Close to Brazil's border with Bolivia and Paraguay in the Pantanal lies the Caiman private reserve, some 200sq miles of pristine tropical wetland that's home to the luxurious Casa Caiman. Game drives here enable you to spot wildlife such as jaguars, ocelots and tapirs, among dozens of other species, and the lodge is deeply involved with conservation projects like the Tamanduá Institute, which protects anteaters, sloths and armadillos. Back at the hotel, the suites and villas have all the style and comfort of a five-star hotel, with cheetah-print throws and a hammock-lined outdoor pool. Evenings are passed with drinks and storytelling around the firepit, which glows beneath the bright stars.

How to do it: From R\$3,911 (£536) per person, full board, including activities.

caiman.com.br DS