

## My Brazilian Adventure

As soon as I landed in Brasilia, I was met by the oppressive humidity. It was like nothing I'd ever come across before in my travels and it was made worse by my terrible jet lag. Luckily, I was blessed with a kind taxi driver who understood my state and took me swiftly to my hotel. This was a day stop for me as my real goal was Manaus and then on to the vast and enigmatic Amazon jungle.

As we drove through Brasilia, I understood its reputation as a futuristic city. It was a purpose built capital city and boasts the most amazing structures: the other worldly Cathedral of Brasilia and prodigious Eixo Monumental!

After a refreshing night's sleep, I was ready for the next leg of the journey. The non-eventful 3 hour flight took me to Manaus, the state capital of Amazonas. From here I decided to take a luxury river cruise in the hope of seeing the Amazon pink river dolphin, which was the main goal of the trip. For the first hour I was captivated by all that I saw. My head

felt like it was at a tennis match, flicking from one side of the boat to the other as I spotted: capybara, monkeys, caiman, toucans, parrots, snakes. The thick foliage made it hard to see far in but it felt like we were being watched by a hundred eyes from within! Unfortunately, there was still no sign of the elusive Amazon pink river dolphin. I was becoming disheartened but our guide was optimistic of us seeing one.

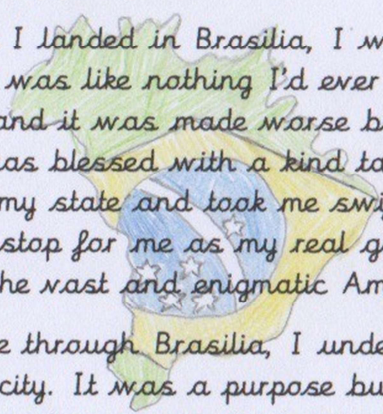
By lunchtime the sun was high in the sky and although the wind from the boat gave some breeze the heat was still intense. We were given the opportunity to fish for our lunch.

To my utter astonishment, I was able to catch a fish. A tambaqui to be precise which is apparently a delicacy! It was cooked right in front of us and it was mouth wateringly delicious.

Refuelled and ready for another stint of animal spotting, we set off down a quieter part of the river with the sound of the jungle filling my head. It was staggering, like nothing you could imagine, a cacophony of sound. This couldn't have been more of a contrast to the city and I couldn't have felt more tranquil. The next thing I knew our guide, Daniel's crooked smile had emerged on his face. He gestured towards the river. We all swivelled around.

"Boto!" he half whispered and half shouted. My heart leapt! This was what I'd been waiting for. These majestic species were totally relaxed around us and seemed to be investigating the boat. They are the largest of the river dolphin species and by far my favourite. I had to stop myself from leaping into the water to get close to them. It's not the dolphins that you have to worry about but the caiman and the red bellied piranhas!

Brazil has so much culture and diversity and offers a unique experience and I have so many memories but the one that will stay with me forever will be meeting the pink river dolphin.



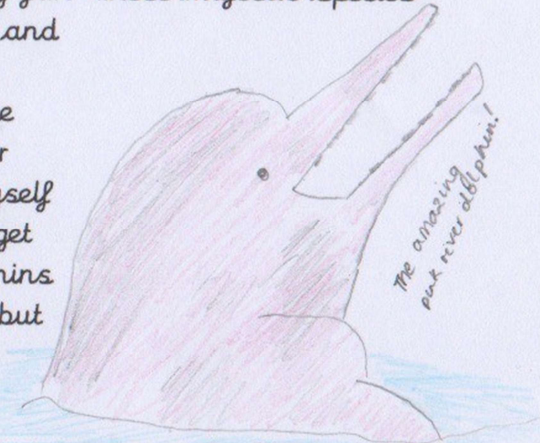
The fish I caught.



We saw beautiful toucans!



Eyes always watching!



The amazing pink river dolphin!

