**Barba Azul Nature Reserve**

**Asociación Armonía**

Asociación Armonía is the leading non-profit bird conservation NGO of Bolivia, whose mission is to protect the most threatened Avifauna through education, improved livelihood, scientific research and reserve creation.

Armonía works on 14 conservation programs all over Bolivia that combines environmental protection with improved livelihood. Through land protection, more than 11,150 ha of Endangered ecosystems with their interdependent animal and plant life have been safeguarded. Check out the Armonía website for further information on our projects: [www.armoniabolivia.org](http://www.armoniabolivia.org)

**Barba Azul Nature Reserve**

One of our main projects is the Barba Azul Nature Reserve, the only private reserve protecting the Endangered Beni savanna ecosystem. This hyper-seasonal savanna eco-region, combined with raised forest islands, is characterized by 8 months of flooding followed by a severe dry period. It is the habitat of the endemic and Critically Endangered Blue-throated Macaw (*Ara glaucogularis)*.

Between 200 and 250 individuals are left in the wild, of which up to 100 forage at Barba Azul, making this reserve population the stronghold for the species. Not only is it important for the macaws, but Barba Azul also provides refuge for many other threatened birds, mammals and plants.
Barba Azul Nature Reserve

**Highlights of Barba Azul**

During the dry season from **May until the end of October**, Blue-throated Macaws can be seen in high numbers at Barba Azul Nature Reserve. Groups between 30 and 70 can regularly be seen mixed with the more common and abundant Blue-and-yellow Macaw. Mixed flocks of hundreds of Macaws can be observed flying to their roosting sites in the late afternoon.

The reserve is home to 288 bird species (**E-Bird hotspot**), with the record of 132 birds seen in a single day. The tall grasses of the reserve protect rare savanna species, like the Cock-tailed Tyrant, Sharp-tailed Tyrant and Black-masked Finch, as well as abundant populations of the Near Threatened Orinoco Goose, Buff-breasted Sandpiper and Greater Rhea.

The reserve is also a safe haven for Jaguars, Pumas, Maned Wolves, Ocelots, Giant Anteaters and Black Howler Monkeys to name just a few of the impressive mammal species that are found here. **Mornings at Barba Azul are usually highlighted with the incredible wake-up calls from the Black Howler Monkeys, making it a true wild experience.**

![Image of Barba Azul Nature Reserve]
Barba Azul Nature Reserve

**Location**

Barba Azul Nature Reserve is located in the heart of the Beni Department in Bolivia and encompasses 11,000 ha (27,180 acres). Barba Azul sustains a large variety of savanna, cerrado, gallery forest, palm forest island, marsh and river habitat.

![Map of Barba Azul Nature Reserve](image)

**Weather conditions**

The wet season is from November until May (flooding can continue until July). During this period the savanna habitat will be flooded and you can expect rain at least once every two days. This is also part of the southern summer and day temperatures can reach 35 degrees Celsius (95 Fahrenheit). The dry season is from May until November with cooler temperatures depending on cold fronts. Overall average day temperatures are around 28-30 degrees Celsius (82-86 Fahrenheit).
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Activities

Birdwatching
Barba Azul is home to 288 confirmed bird species of which many can easily be spotted and photographed. Early morning birding is advised as forest, savanna and cerrado birds are mainly active in the morning. Water and marsh birds can be observed throughout the day (see annex 1 for trails at Barba Azul).

Boat and canoe trips
Water and marsh wildlife is best observed from the water. Barba Azul Nature Reserve has a 5 person boat with a silent outboard motor to enjoy the amazing wildlife from the water. We also have 2 canoes so visitors can enjoy silent paddling along the borders of the river Omi themselves.

Horseback riding
The extended savanna and cerrado habitat can also be explored through horseback riding. Four beautiful and tame horses will ensure an amazing Beni outdoor experience.

Guided trip
The local Barba Azul ranger (Spanish speaking only) will guide you to the most beautiful areas of the reserve to ensure the full wildlife experience that Barba Azul has to offer. Professional English speaking bird guides can be arranged through Armonía, though additional costs have to be taken into account.
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Accommodation

Rustic Cabins
Barba Azul has 4 small rustic cabins with two beds and a private bathroom overlooking the stunning river Omi with a high abundance of marsh and water birds and the natural wake-up call from Black Howler Monkeys. The total capacity for visitors at the cabins is 8 people divided over 4 cabins.

Barba Azul Field Station
The field station has the capacity for 8 people in 4 shared bedrooms with 2 shared bathrooms. The field station is mainly used by Armonía staff and visiting researchers & students who execute their investigations at Barba Azul, though can be used by tourists when arriving in large groups.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner is served in the field station at any hour of preference. In coordination with the field house manager early morning breakfast can be arranged.

Hammocks are available in the field station to relax after a long day of hiking and wildlife watching. Also alcoholic beverages are served with additional costs.
Barba Azul Nature Reserve

Package for visiting Barba Azul Nature Reserve

The package for visiting Barba Azul Nature Reserve is **450 USD** per person for a **3 night/4 day stay**. Additional nights are **150 USD** per person per night. Visitors that are keen on photography are advised to stay **4 nights** to fully enjoy and explore the wide variety of wildlife at Barba Azul.

The package **includes** overnight stay at the cabins (or field station if preferred), 3 meals a day, boat rides over the river Omi and horseback riding. These prices **don’t include** transportation to and from the reserve, alcoholic beverages and laundry.

**Alcoholic beverages**
The following alcoholic beverages can be purchased at Barba Azul:
- Beer: 20 Bs. (3 USD)
- Local red wine: 50 Bs. (7.2 USD)
- Local white wine: 50 Bs. (7.2 USD)

**Laundry service**
Laundry service can be provided and has to be coordinated with the field house manager. No fixed prices are charged though a minimum of 50 Bol. (7.2 USD) is requested.

**Local transportation to and from Barba Azul Nature Reserve**
Local transportation to and from the reserve has to be arranged with local air charters as Barba Azul Nature Reserve is best reached through air. Flights can be arranged from Trinidad or Rurrenabaque and prices range around **1,400USD** return flight for a **5 person charter** with a maximum of **500 kilo capacity**. Flights from Trinidad take approximately 45 minutes.

There is also the possibility to fly from Santa Ana de Yacuma to Barba Azul Nature Reserve for a **600USD** return flight for a **5 person charter** with a maximum of **500 kilo capacity**.
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For your information

When to visit
The best time to visit Barba Azul is in the dry season from May until the end of September to see the Macaws in high numbers. Outside this season the Macaws will migrate to their breeding grounds though a wide variety of other wildlife is abundant.

Be aware
You will be in a hot tropical climate where you can expect many bugs and critters like mosquitos, ticks, spiders and chiggers. This is to warn you as some people can react strongly and even be allergic to insect bites. Make sure you bring repellent and anti-histamines to be prepared for sudden and unexpected physical reactions. It is also advisable to wear long trousers and long sleeves to prevent extensive bites.

Hiking in savanna and cerrado habitat can be difficult as there is little shade to protect you from the sun. Make sure you come well prepared with sunscreen, hats and other measures to protect you from the heat.
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Contact details

Reservations have to be made through the main Asociación Armonía office in Santa Cruz through e-mail or phone.

Main office: Asociación Armonía
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Local contact person

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Annex 1: Trail map Barba Azul

Trail map with all the trail systems Barba Azul Nature Reserve has to offer to see the highlight bird species. Orange square represent de field station with associated cabins and the orange rectangle the Barba Azul airstrip.