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NATURETOURS.COM UPGRADES AMAZON VESSEL *TUCANO*

By Anne Kalosh.

Naturetours.com, a small ship expedition company that sails further in to the Amazon than any other line, relaunched its 18-passenger *Tucano* following an extensive refit. The work enhanced the accommodations and public spaces while keeping *Tucano* one of the most sustainable ships around. The company also tweaked its excursion program to enable greater customization.

Tucano underwent a four-week refit at a shipyard in Manaus, Brazil, its homeport. Naturetours.com CEO Mark Baker wanted to make the vessel more comfortable and elegant. The main salon and dining room were rebuilt, and walls of windows were replaced with glass panels that open by gliding into pockets, ensuring abundant interior light while also staying true to the company's mission of sustainability.



*Tucano's main salon and dining room now sport a more elegant look. * Photo: Naturetours.com*

The nine outside cabins—consisting of five large double, two single and two double-berth rooms—were refinished and redecorated with new fixtures and furniture, yielding a classic yacht look with polished brass and highly varnished solid wood panels.

New artwork, including many original pieces commissioned for the vessel, were placed in the cabins, where amenities were upgraded to L'Occitane toiletries and 700-thread-count Egyptian cotton woven by Brazil's premier luxury manufacturer, Artelassé.



*Tucano's shaded top deck is ideal for wildlife-viewing. * Photo: Naturetours.com*

A significant portion of the energy used on board *Tucano* is generated by solar panels. This heats water for showers, provides galley refrigeration and ice-making, and powers the launches. Naturetours.com recently received the Latin American Travel Association Achievement Award for most sustainable tour operator. The company has also eliminated on-board plastic and now provides free, reusable aluminum water bottles. In a programming change, travelers can choose to experience the rainforest at a leisurely expedition pace focused on the observations of the naturalist guides, or more rigorously with hikes deep into the forest and kayaking in remote streams. Which type of excursion they pick is up to them each day.



*Passengers can explore on guided nature walks or more rigorous kayaking and hiking excursions. * Photo: Naturetours.com*

Naturetours.com voyages explore deep into a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Central Amazon Conservation Complex, in the least inhabited major river system of the Amazon basin, the Rio Negro. This offers one of the Amazon's most varied environments: high forest with towering trees, eerie flooded forests that stretch for miles upon miles of dark still water, grasslands where crocodiles rest in the day and, at a certain times of year, beautiful deserted beaches stretching as far as the eye can see.

Tucano sails four-night "Amazon Odyssey" and more intensive six-night "Voyage to the Heart of the Amazon" itineraries from Manaus year-round.

Naturetours.com is based in Jamestown, Rhode Island, with offices in Manaus.

➤ ➤ Read QuirkyCruise Contributor [David Cogswell's article](#) about his recent Amazon cruise aboard Tucano.