



Blue Cave
Bonito, MS

BONITO, MATO GROSSO DO SUL

Situated in the inland state of Mato Grosso do Sul in central-west Brazil, close to waterfalls, caves, forests and stunningly clear rivers and lagoons that are perfect for swimming and snorkelling, the small town of Bonito has established its ecotourism credentials in the last few decades.

A great deal of effort goes into ensuring that visitors have minimal impact on the environment. Usually, tourists are only permitted to visit rivers, lakes, caves and forests if accompanied by guides accredited by local agencies, and there is a maximum number of visitors per day for each attraction.

Climate

The best time to visit Bonito is during the summer months (December-March), when higher rainfall ensures that

the rivers are full and the vegetation lush.

Between June and August the weather is dry and cool, with temperatures frequently falling to below 10 degrees celsius at night.

What to do there

- Swim in the numerous rivers and natural pools. The amazing clarity of the water (due to limestone deposits in the soil) and the abundance of fish mean that snorkelling and scuba diving are very popular activities.
- Go trail-walking in the forests, where you have a good chance of spotting local wildlife such as monkeys, armadillos, toucans and parrots.
- Try your hand at abseiling. There are a numerous rock-faces that are ideal for this activity - trained instructors will guide you down.

There are a wide range of guided excursions on offer, lasting from a couple of hours to a whole day. The longer ones often include both swimming/snorkelling and trail-walking.

The most popular excursions include the following:

- The Sucuri river, renowned for the clarity of its water. On one stretch of the river, 20km from Bonito, it is possible to float or snorkel gently downstream over a distance of 1.5km.
- The Gruta do Lago Azul (see photo above), an enormous cave containing stalagmites, stalactites, and a 200m descent to a bright-blue natural pool.
- The Formosa river, where you can paddle downstream in an inflatable boat, admiring the numerous species of colourful birds in

the thick forest along the riverbanks. Although the emphasis in Bonito is on the great outdoors, the town boasts plenty of bars and restaurants, where fish is a major part of the local cuisine, including local varieties, like the large, mackerel-like *pintado*.

