



BRAZILIAN SAVANNA

THE BIOME OF DIVERSITY

THE CRADLE OF WATERS

Due to its altitude, the Brazilian Savanna acts as a natural sponge, with an intricate network of rivers, streams, and underground aquifers. The presence of springs and waterways is striking, shaping landscapes of great beauty. These environments sustain extremely diverse aquatic life, ranging from fish and amphibians to countless invertebrates. Many of these ecosystems are home to endemic species that exist nowhere else on the planet.





The Tocantins River, about 2,640 km long, rises in the Serra Dourada, in Goiás, and runs through several states until it flows into the Maranhense Gulf. The Araguaia River, approximately 2,115 km long, originates in the Central Plateau and meanders through Mato Grosso and Goiás before converging with the Tocantins.



THE GREEN HEART OF BRAZIL

The following examples reveal the striking diversity of ecosystems within the Brazilian Savanna and its vital importance: both for the region and far beyond it.



Rocky Fields: found atop mountains and plateaus above 900 meters, these ecosystems feature rocky outcrops and diverse vegetation, with endemic species such as orchids, bromeliads, and cacti. They act as natural water recharge areas and help conserve the soil, sustaining rivers and springs.



Gallery Forests: occurring along waterways, they are composed of dense, leafy trees that create favorable microclimates. They provide shelter and food for numerous animal species and protect watercourses from erosion.



Mountains and Ranges: formed by chains of hills covered with the characteristic vegetation of the Brazilian Savanna, these areas shape the landscape and host a wide variety of species adapted to altitude and rugged terrain.



Grasslands: flat expanses with more fertile soils and greater water availability, dominated by grasses and herbaceous plants that provide shelter and food for birds, rodents, and insects.



Veredas (Wetlands): seasonally flooded areas with vegetation adapted to water, such as palm trees, buriti palms, and aquatic grasses. They are essential for biodiversity, serving as habitats for waterbirds, reptiles, and mammals, while also contributing to aquifer recharge and the region's hydrological balance.



Dense Savanna Forests: forested formations found in more fertile soils with greater water availability. They host a wide variety of tree species, many of them endemic, reinforcing ecological connectivity and the genetic diversity of the biome.



Plateaus and Highlands: flat-topped uplands with steep slopes, formed by layers of sedimentary rock. Among the highest points of the Brazilian Savanna, they feature characteristic vegetation with grasses and shrubs adapted to the soil and climate conditions of these areas.



Lagoons and Streams: intermittent bodies of water, more common during the rainy season. These environments serve as habitats for different species of fish, amphibians, and waterbirds.



Transitional Wetlands: intermediate ecosystems between the humid veredas and the drier areas of the Brazilian Savanna, with mixed vegetation composed of species adapted both to seasonal flooding and to more arid conditions.



CHAPADA DOS VEADEIROS: NATIONAL PARK AND PROTECTED ENVIRONMENTAL AREA



The Chapada dos Veadeiros National Park stands out for its unique beauty and the diversity of landscapes it encompasses. Within its territory lies rich wildlife and lush flora, making the Park a refuge for endangered species, a center of biodiversity, and a model of responsible ecotourism. Those who walk its trails and witness its imposing waterfalls experience firsthand the power of nature and connect with one of Brazil's most precious ecosystems.

Covering around 240,000 hectares, the Park was established in 1961 and is now recognized as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site. Its management seeks to balance public visitation with environmental preservation, always emphasizing education and scientific research.

On May 7, 2001, the Pouso Alto Environmental Protection Area (APA) was created to surround the Park, covering approximately 872,000 hectares. Its mission is to promote the region's ecological development while protecting its flora, fauna, water sources, geology, and landscape. Together, these areas form a vast ecological refuge where environmental protection is intertwined with human care and the balanced use of natural resources.



THE FLORA OF THE BRAZILIAN SAVANNA

Over 12,000 plant species have been recorded in the Brazilian Savanna, many of them found nowhere else on Earth. This remarkable uniqueness reflects the region's long evolutionary history as a true center of plant development.

Its vegetation shows extraordinary adaptations to withstand extreme conditions: drought resistance, fire tolerance, and the ability to regenerate quickly after disturbance. These traits make the biome a natural laboratory for ecological studies, offering valuable insights into adaptation and management strategies that can inspire conservation efforts in diverse regions.

Among the many species unique to the Brazilian Savanna, a few have become enduring symbols of its landscape and culture:



Pequi (*Caryocar brasiliense*): regarded as one of the icons of the Brazilian Savanna, the pequi tree is known for its spiky yellow fruits. It serves as an essential food source for many animal species, including birds and mammals, and holds a central place in regional cuisine. Dishes such as arroz com pequi (rice with pequi) and frango com pequi (chicken with pequi) are local traditions that make this fruit a cultural emblem.



Buriti (*Mauritia flexuosa*): a palm tree characteristic of the Brazilian Savanna, commonly found in wetlands such as veredas and marshes. Its fruits are rich in vitamin C and carotenoids and are traditionally used in juices, sweets, and liqueurs. Buriti oil, known for its moisturizing and nourishing properties, is widely used in the cosmetics industry.



Ipê (*Tabebuia* spp.): ornamental trees celebrated for their vibrant blooms in shades of pink, purple, and yellow. Some species are endemic to the Brazilian Savanna and play an important role in maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem stability. Beyond their beauty, ipê trees are valued in traditional medicine, used to treat inflammation and respiratory conditions.



THE FAUNA OF THE BRAZILIAN SAVANNA

Among the open fields, forests, and wetlands of the Brazilian Savanna, countless species have adapted to its rhythms and extremes. Mammals like the maned wolf, giant anteater, giant armadillo, and pampas deer roam its landscapes in search of food and shelter.

The birdlife is equally remarkable: more than 800 species have been recorded, including birds of prey like the roadside hawk and the carcará, as well as a wide range of parrots and macaws. Reptiles such as snakes and amphibians like tree frogs are also common in the biome, along with a vast diversity of insects that complete this intricate web of life.



Mammals of the Brazilian Savanna:

Maned wolf, giant anteater, giant armadillo, and pampas deer, along with several endemic and endangered species.



Birdlife of the Brazilian Savanna:

Over 800 recorded species, including the roadside hawk, carcará, blue macaw, and turquoise-fronted parrot.



Reptiles and Amphibians:

A wide variety of snakes, frogs, and tree frogs; species such as the rattlesnake and jararaca help regulate rodent populations.



Insects of the Brazilian Savanna:

Great diversity of butterflies, beetles, and ants; leaf-cutting ants, such as saúvas and cortadeiras, stand out for their complex social organization and ecological impact.



CRYSTALS AND ROCKS: BEAUTIES OF THE SAVANNA

The Brazilian Savanna also stands out for its geological formations and crystals, which enhance the beauty and uniqueness of its landscapes. Among them are quartzite, quartz, amethyst, and limestone.

Quartzite, a metamorphic rock composed mainly of quartz, displays a wide variety of colors and patterns, giving the biome its diverse topography. Quartz appears in veins and geodes, ranging in tone from transparent to opaque. Amethyst, a variation of quartz, is notable for its distinctive violet hue, found in several areas of the Brazilian Savanna. Limestone, a sedimentary rock formed from calcite, is common in karst formations such as caves and caverns, striking geological features of the region.



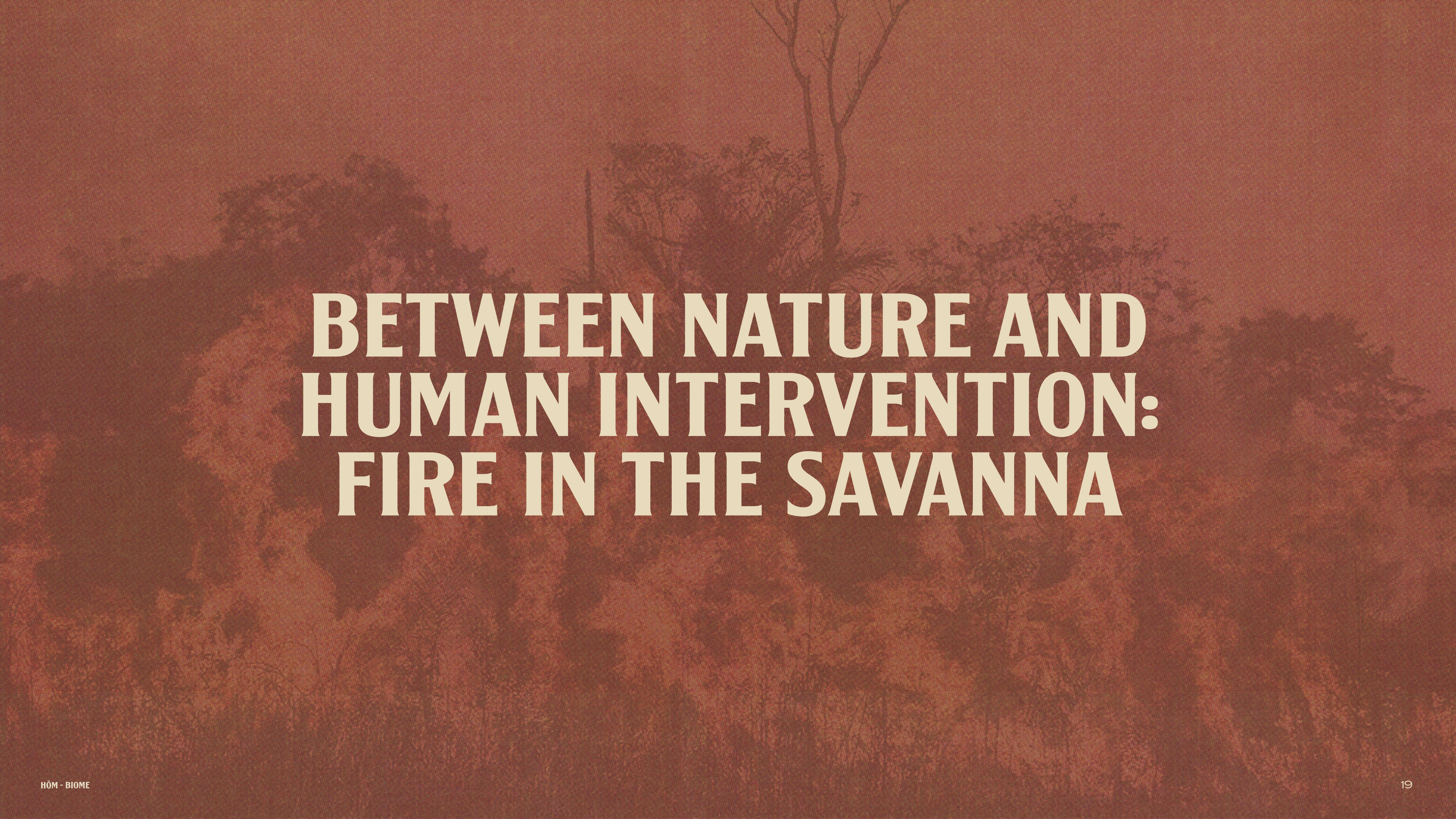
Quartz



Amethyst



Chalky



BETWEEN NATURE AND HUMAN INTERVENTION: FIRE IN THE SAVANNA

Fire in the Brazilian Savanna is a complex and often controversial phenomenon. Historically, it has been part of the biome's natural fire regime, with many native species depending on it to germinate and complete their life cycles. This cycle of burning and regeneration has shaped the Savanna's vegetation for millennia.

However, human activity and climate change have increased the frequency and intensity of wildfires, raising concerns about their impacts on the environment, biodiversity, and local communities.

Several ecological initiatives have been developed in the region to mitigate the negative effects of fire and strengthen environmental conservation. These efforts include fire prevention policies, vegetation and wildlife monitoring, environmental education programs for local communities, and the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous and rural peoples in conservation strategies.

The preservation of native forests, restoration of degraded areas, and adoption of agroecological practices complement ongoing research that guides management and protection strategies, expressing a growing commitment to the preservation and balance of the biome in the face of fire.

A sepia-toned photograph of a person with dark hair sitting on a boat. In the foreground, a small cake sits on a plate on a table. The background shows a body of water with a distant shoreline. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

RESISTANCE, CULTURE, AND LIVING COMMUNITIES



Traditional communities of the Brazilian Savanna include Indigenous groups and local populations whose presence spans many generations. Their cultures are rooted in the land itself: in the cycles, elements, and living patterns that define this environment.

Among them, the Avá-Canoeiro holds a long and complex history. Once nomadic, they moved through vast territories with an intimate understanding of their ecosystems. Their name, meaning "Canoe People," reflects their remarkable ability to craft and navigate canoes that connected them to the rivers and lifeways of the Savanna.

Over time, agricultural expansion and the exploitation of natural resources forced displacement and conflict, leaving deep scars. Much of their population and cultural heritage was lost. Today, the Avá-Canoeiro continue their journey of renewal, restoring ties with ancestral lands, strengthening traditional knowledge, and envisioning a sustainable future grounded in cultural continuity and dignity.



The Kalunga people form one of Brazil's largest surviving quilombola communities, living in the remote landscapes of the Brazilian Savanna, particularly in the Chapada dos Veadeiros region. Descended from those who fled slavery, they have carried forward their own systems of knowledge, self-organization, and coexistence with the land.

Their agriculture follows the rhythms of the biome, their homes are built with local materials, and their food traditions keep ancestral flavors alive. Through festivals, songs, and storytelling, they sustain a culture of resilience: one that continues to affirm life, memory, and the possibility of living in balance with nature.



The rural communities of the region share this attentive relationship with the Brazilian Savanna. They cultivate diverse crops, manage the land responsibly, and sustain an intimate understanding of natural cycles. Their practices help preserve local resources and ecological diversity. In addition to caring for the land, they also safeguard traditions, values, and memories: celebrated through festivals, crafts, and stories passed down from generation to generation.



Gatherings and celebrations that highlight the strength of local communities are also part of life in the Chapada. The Encontro de Culturas (Cultural Gathering), an annual event, brings together Indigenous peoples, quilombola communities, artists, and musicians from across Brazil and abroad. It is a space for the presentation of art, music, and ancestral knowledge, fostering exchange and cultural appreciation.

Another important initiative is the Aldeia Multiétnica (Multiethnic Village), which hosts Indigenous groups from different regions for ceremonies, rituals, dances, and exhibitions. Visitors there encounter stories and practices that reveal the spiritual connections these peoples maintain with their lands and with nature.

The Caçada da Rainha (Queen's Hunt) festival, celebrated in Colinas do Sul and other towns in Goiás, has Portuguese and African roots. Performances, music, and dance narrate the symbolism of liberation, keeping alive a tradition that continues to attract visitors, scholars, and residents, strengthening the region's collective memory.



A BRAZILIAN TREASURE: UNDERSTANDING AND PRESERVING

