

Espírito Santo



One of the best reasons to come to Espírito Santo is that so few other tourists will be joining you. Often completely ignored by foreigners due to its lack of high-profile attractions, the state nonetheless has several hidden treasures. It's an enjoyable place to mingle with Brazilians without the hype and higher prices of neighboring Rio and Bahia states.

In the north of the state is the idyllic little hideaway of Itaúnas, a tiny beach town literally buried in the sand dunes. Its attractions include the tranquil beauty of its natural setting and the frenzied nightlife that unfolds every summer when it converts itself overnight into the *forró* capital of Brazil.

South along the coast, the beaches are more developed for family-style tourism, making them very popular with visitors from the neighboring state of Minas Gerais. Here you'll find low-key beach resorts interspersed with fishing villages, plenty of good restaurants and the happy summertime buzz of Brazilian social life.

Inland, Espírito Santo's mountains form an exquisite patchwork of jungled greenery and domed rocky outcroppings, the most dramatic of which is Pedra Azul, a bare mountain crag preserved in a state park less than 100km west of Vitória.

Even without all these scenic attractions, it would be worth visiting Espírito Santo just to eat. Seafood here is fresh and abundant, and local specialties such as *moqueca* and *torta capixaba* are famous throughout Brazil.

HIGHLIGHTS

- See the sun rise over the dunes after dancing all night to *forró* (popular music of the Northeast) in **Itaúnas** (p226)
- Enjoy **moqueca capixaba** (p228), Espírito Santo's tantalizingly tasty seafood stew, up and down the coast from Vitória to Ubu
- Hold on to that rope as you scale the steep granite face of **Pedra Azul** (p230)
- Watch a baby turtle make its way to the sea in **Parque Estadual de Itaúnas** (p225).
- Eat strudel and sip hot chocolate by the fire in the German-style mountain town of **Domingos Martins** (p230)



■ POPULATION: 15 MILLION

■ AREA: 43,910 SQ KM

History

Colonized in the 16th century, Espírito Santo became an armed region to prevent gold from being smuggled out of Minas Gerais state. Coffee plantations, the prime source of income up until the 1960s, have since been superseded by mining and shipping. The capital city, Vitória, serves as headquarters to Garoto, Brazil's famous (and delicious) chocolate, as well as several chemical and agribusiness concerns.

Climate

Not quite as searingly hot as equatorial Bahia, Espírito Santo can nonetheless get quite uncomfortable in the summer months, especially along the damp, low-lying seaboard. In the mountainous interior, daytime temperatures are pleasantly warm year-round, but can drop surprisingly close to 0°C (32°F) on winter nights. Rains are common, especially in the north, but rarely last long.

State Parks

Espírito Santo has several lovely state parks. Up near the border with Bahia, the vast dune- and lagoonscape of Parque Estadual de Itaúnas includes many kilometers of undeveloped beaches where sea turtles come ashore to lay their eggs. In the western mountains near Minas Gerais, the dramatic soaring granite outcrop of Pedra Azul forms the centerpiece of Parque Estadual da Pedra Azul. South of Vitória, the coastal lagoons and *restinga* (zone of low trees and shrubs that thrive in sandy, nutrient-poor soil) of Parque Estadual Paulo César Vinha demonstrate the potential for habitat preservation even at the edge of a major urban area.

Getting There & Around

Vitória is the biggest city in Espírito Santo and as such boasts a domestic and international airport. Air service is offered to all major cities throughout Brazil and the rest of South America. A well-run bus service connects Vitória to Rio, São Paulo and other neighboring cities throughout Minas Gerais, as well as Bahia to the north. Regular buses also run up and down Espírito Santo's coastline.

VITÓRIA

☎ 0xx27 / pop 271,000

Vitória doesn't have much to show from its colonial past and is often dismissed as being



aesthetically unappealing (despite having a lush backdrop of mountains rushing down to meet sandy beaches that's vaguely reminiscent of Rio). Export coffee and timber pass through Vitória's harbor, and the port at nearby Tubarão is the outlet for millions of tons of iron ore. But that doesn't mean Vitória is devoid of all charm. Local residents, known as Capixabas, are warm and friendly, and the city has a flourishing economy, which translates into many bars, universities, nightclubs, restaurants and hotels.

Orientation

The remnants of old Vitória, built on an island just off the coast, are connected to the mainland via a series of bridges. The city's best beaches are Canto and Camburi to the north, and the renowned Praia da Costa to the south in Vila Velha. The teeming, modern **bus station** (☎ 3222 3366; Ilha do Príncipe) is located in the center of the old town (don't let the name fool you – it's not a separate island). Trains coming from Belo Horizonte (see p240) arrive at **Estação**

Ferrovária Pedro Nolasco (☎ 3226 4169), 1km west of the bus station in the mainland district of Cariacaca.

Information

ATMs for several banks are clustered together inside the bus station.

Bradesco (Av Jerônimo Monteiro 400) In the city center.

Main post office (Av Jerônimo Monteiro 310)

Net.Point Lan House (☎ 3222 2933; Av República; per hr R\$2.50; ☎ 9am-9pm) Offers internet and Skype access directly across from Parque Moscoso.

Tourist booths bus station (☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat); airport (☎ 3327 2031; ☎ 6am-midnight daily) There's a branch located opposite track 10 at the bus station and one in the airport arrivals area.

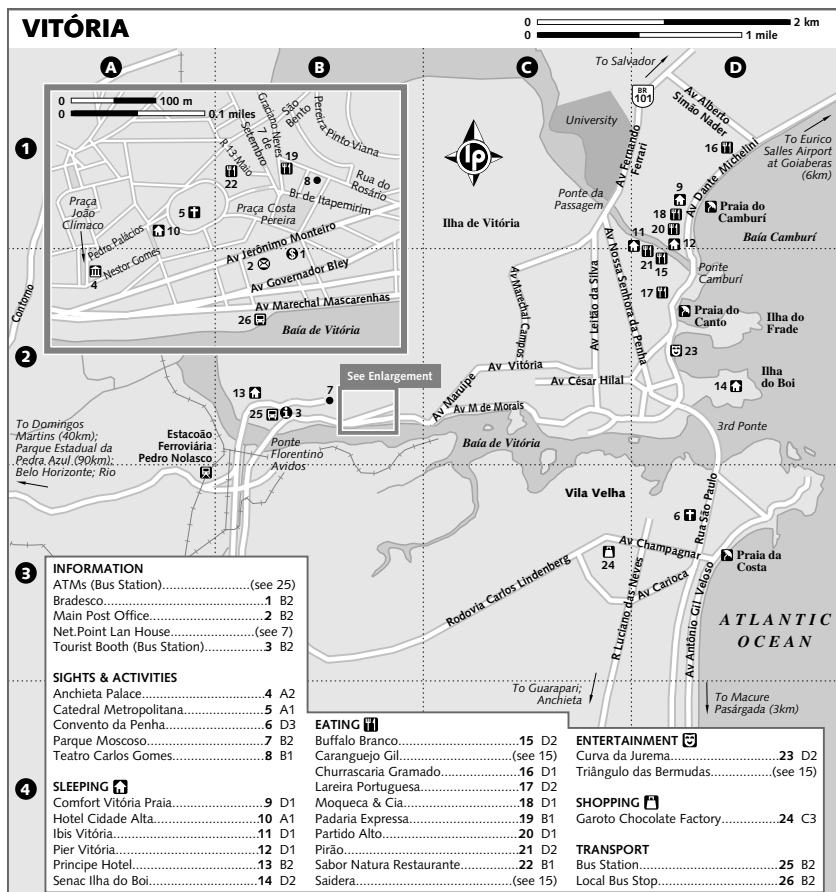
Sights

CITY CENTER

The yellow **Anchieta Palace** (Praça João Climaco) is a 16th-century former Jesuit college and church. It's now the seat of state government, and the only part you can enter is the **tomb of Padre José de Anchieta** (admission free), 1534-97, the cofounder of São Paulo and an early missionary who was hailed as the 'Apostle of Brazil.'

Close by is the **Catedral Metropolitana**, with its neo-Gothic exterior and interesting stained-glass windows.

Teatro Carlos Gomes (Praça Costa Pereira) is a replica of La Scala in Milan. It stages national-caliber theatre and dance productions at very reasonable prices. Check with the tourist office to see what's currently playing.



Capixabas like to walk and relax in the leafy **Parque Moscoso** (Av Cleto Nunes), just west of the city center.

VILA VELHA

Across the river and south of Vitória sits Vila Velha, the first place in Espírito Santo to be colonized. Don't miss seeing the **Convento da Penha**, atop the densely forested 154m Morro da Penha. The panoramic city views are magnificent and the chapel (founded in 1558) isn't too bad either. It's a major pilgrimage destination – around Easter expect massive crowds all paying homage to NS da Penha, some climbing the hill on their knees.

BEACHES

Praia do Camburi, a 5km stretch of beach, is punctuated by kiosks, restaurants, nightspots and midrange hotels. Don't swim near the bridge – it's polluted there.

Praia da Costa in Vila Velha is the city's nicest beach. It has fewer hotels and restaurants than Camburi, but you can swim and bodysurf. Keep a close eye on the horizon – huge supertankers often pop up with surprising speed!

Sleeping

BUDGET

Hotel Cidade Alta (☎ 3223 0653; Rua Dionizio Rosendo 213; s/d/tr R\$20/30/40) A decent hotel with affordable beds, the Cidade Alta is directly across from the cathedral in the so-called 'historic district.'

Príncipe Hotel (☎ 3322 2799; hotelp@terra.com.br; Av Dario L Souza 120; s/d/tr/q R\$36/56/84/105) Ugly as sin but extremely convenient, the Príncipe is a clean, well-run budget hotel just steps from the bus station.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

our pick Ibis Vitória (☎ 2104 4850; www.accorhotels.com.br; Rua João da Cruz 385, Praia do Canto; s/d R\$99/119) One of the best values in town, this chain hotel sits right at the edge of the Triângulo das Bermudas, Vitória's nightlife hub, and is only a few blocks from Praia do Canto.

Pier Vitória (☎ 3434 0000; www.piervitoriahotel.com.br; Av Dante Michelini 321; s/d R\$179/199) Geared toward business travelers, the Pier Vitória is conveniently located on Camburi beach, only 10 minutes from the airport.

Mercuré Pasárgada (☎ 3399 6500; www.accorhotels.com.br; Av Antônio Gil Veloso 1856; s/d R\$190/218) Right on the Praia da Costa waterfront in Vila Velha, this hotel feels like a splurge despite

its moderate price tag. It's got spacious, airy rooms and is supremely comfortable.

Comfort Vitória Praia (☎ 3041 9500; www.atlantica-hotels.com.br; Av Dante Michelini 1057; s/d R\$210/230) Also on Camburi beach, this place is as comfortable as the name implies, despite its bland exterior.

Senac Ilha do Boi (☎ 3345 0111; www.hotelilhadoboi.com.br; Rua Braúlio Macedo 417; s/d standard R\$265/300, luxury R\$290/330; ☎ ☎ ☎) For a real night of luxury, this is an excellent choice. It's located on top of a hill with fabulous views of the surrounding bay. The service is impeccable and the amenities delightful, especially the saunas.

Eating

Make sure you try the regional specialty known as *moqueca capixaba*, a savory mixture of local seafood stewed in an earthenware casserole dish.

BUDGET & MIDRANGE

Sabor Natura Restaurante (Rua 13 de Maio 85; per kg R\$12.90; ☎ 11am–3pm Mon–Thu, to 2:30pm Fri) A veggie-friendly self-serve place downtown that's very popular with students.

Padaria Expressa (☎ 3223 1091; Rua Graciano Neves 22; per kg R\$12.95; ☎ 11am–7pm) Just off Praça Costa Pereira, this is an excellent place to stock up on bread, cheese and snacks.

Saidera (☎ 3235 2687; Rua João da Cruz 241, Praia do Canto; drinks & snacks from R\$13; ☎ 6pm–midnight Mon–Tue, 6pm–2am Wed–Fri, noon–2am Sat & Sun) The outdoor terrace here is packed every night with revelers enjoying the cornucopia of drinks and snacks.

Caranguejo Gil (Rua João da Cruz 80; meals R\$20; ☎ 11–1am) As the name implies, you'll find plenty of *caranguejo* (crab) along with other local seafood at this restaurant opposite Bufalo Branco in the festive Triângulo area.

Partido Alto (☎ 3227 4086; Av Dante Michelini 797, Praia do Camburi; meals from R\$20; ☎ 11am–midnight) Another highly recommended seafood place on Camburi beach.

Churrascaria Gramado (☎ 3225 1311; Av Rosendo Serapião Souza 43; meals from R\$22; ☎ 11am–3pm & 6:30–10:30pm Mon–Sat, 11am–4pm Sun) Meat lovers with big appetites will love this place, the best *churrascaria* (restaurant featuring barbecued meat) in the city.

Moqueca & Cia (☎ 3227 6899; Av Dante Michelini 977, Praia do Camburi; meals R\$24; ☎ noon–midnight) Another great place for traditional *capixaba* seafood dishes.

Buffalo Branco (☎ 3227 2933; Rua Joaquim Lírio 723; meals from R\$25; ☎ 5pm-midnight Sun-Tue, to 1am Wed-Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat) This is one of the hottest eateries in town. It serves varied meat and seafood dishes, including the house special, Espeto Buffalo Branco (1kg of tri-tip beef with rice, beans, fried potatoes and garlic bread).

TOP END

Lareira Portuguesa (☎ 3345 0331; Av Saturnino de Brito 260, Praia do Canto; mains from R\$25; ☎ 11:30am-3pm & 6:30-11pm Mon-Sat, 11:30am-4pm Sun) A gorgeous garden and beautiful Portuguese tiles make this a very sexy and sophisticated location. Delicious fish dishes form the backbone of the menu, but there are also risottos and inventive desserts. A particular standout main is the *bacalhau à lareira* (cod deep fried with a crushed-almond coating).

our pick Pirão (☎ 3227 1165; Rua Joaquim Lírio 753, Praia do Canto; meals from R\$30; ☎ 11am-3pm & 6:30-11pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat-Mon) With award-winning *moquecas* and *tortas capixabas*, Pirão has earned a reputation as one of the city's best restaurants over the past 25 years. On Friday it serves a delicious regional specialty – grouper prepared with *banana da terra* (plantain).

Entertainment

Capixabas like the nightlife – check out the Triângulo das Bermudas, a neighborhood packed with bars, eateries and nightclubs centered on the intersection of Ruas Joaquim Lírio and João da Cruz. Hip crowds also gather at Curva da Jurema, populated by shacks that serve snacks and food into the wee hours.

Shopping

Garoto chocolate factory store (☎ 3320 1522; Praça Meyerfreund 1) Visit the factory store, where the best chocolate in Brazil is really fresh. It's off Rodovia Carlos Lindenberg in Vila Velha – take bus 500 from the city center.

Getting There & Away

Buses leave Vitória for Belo Horizonte (R\$60, eight hours, seven daily), Ouro Preto (R\$51, eight hours, direct bus at 9pm), Porto Seguro (R\$65, 10, twice daily at 2pm and 9pm) and Rio (R\$56, eight hours, seven daily from 10am to 10:50pm).

There's also one daily train from Vitória to Belo Horizonte (see p240) in Minas Gerais state.

Flights leave regularly for Belém, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio, Salvador and São Paulo.

Getting Around

Eurico Salles airport (☎ 3235 6300) is 10km north-east of the city center, in Goiabeiras. Take local bus 212 marked '*aeroporto/rodoviária*' to and from the center (R\$1.70). Taxis from the airport into town cost about R\$20.

Local buses (R\$1.70) run from the various stops outside the bus station; the route is written on the side of each bus. For the center, catch any bus that goes along Av Vitória and get off after you pass the yellow Anchieta Palace on your left. For Praia do Camburi, catch any bus that goes along Av Dante Michelini. For Praia do Canto and Triângulo das Bermudas, take any bus that goes along Av Saturnino de Brito. To Vila Velha and Praia da Costa catch the all-yellow Transcol bus 500 or any bus marked Praia da Costa.

THE COAST

ITAÚNAS

☎ 0xx27 / pop 2500

Surrounded by a majestic state reserve and encroaching sand dunes, Itaúnas masquerades as a sleepy fishing village eight months a year. However, from early December through early March, and again in July, it's a party-mad town filled with young students who come for the lively *forró* dance parties as much as for the beautiful surroundings.

Itaúnas is one of those rare places that manages to retain a delightful 'end of the road' feel despite the intermittent barrage of tourists. In recent years, the number of pousadas (guesthouses) has increased from just a handful to well over 50, yet locals and outsiders still seem to mix with ease. Many visitors fall under the town's easygoing spell and end up staying longer than they expected.

Sand dunes once engulfed the original village of Itaúnas, which was set about 1km closer to the ocean than it is now – nowadays the old church tower is buried in sand, indicated only by a small sign. From atop the dunes you have a great view of the Atlantic Ocean and the neighboring Parque Estadual de Itaúnas, with its gorgeous mangrove forest and wetlands.

Orientation & Information

Things are made somewhat confusing by the lack of posted street names in Itaúnas, but a pair of handy maps, on the main square and near the bridge to the dunes, can help you get oriented. Basically, it's a four-road town. Buses stop just a few yards from the village square, and most stores, restaurants and pousadas are concentrated nearby. The main road leading into town loops around the square and back out again. The other roads feed off the main square but don't go far. The beach is 1km from town, across the bridge over the Rio Itaúnas.

There are no banks in Itaúnas.

Positivo.com (☎ 3762 5036; Rua Maria Ortiz Barcelos; per hr R\$3; ☎ 11am-midnight) provides internet access, but beware – the game-playing teenage boys can get pretty rowdy.

Sights & Activities

The 3674-hectare **Parque Estadual de Itaúnas** extends for 25km along the coast and has impressive 20m- to 30m-high sand dunes. The wilderness here is home to monkeys, sloths and *jaguariticas* (wildcats). The park is also a base for the Tamar Project (see the boxed text, p467). From September to March you can accompany local biologists to the beach to observe sea turtles. November and December are the best months to see the females coming onshore to lay eggs, while January and February mark the peak of the hatching season.

The Itaúnas **park office** (☎ 3762 5196; pei@iema.es.gov.br) is in the village next to the bridge over the Rio Itaúnas. It has a souvenir shop, as well as informative displays about the local flora, fauna and culture. There's a trail map posted on the wall, but at the time of writing no such map was available for public distribution.

By far the most popular hike is the 1km **dunes trail** to the nearby beach. From town, simply cross the bridge over the Rio Itaúnas and follow the dirt road until the dunes slope down to meet it, then start climbing. At the crest of the first dune, you'll already have a panoramic view of the ocean, with several beachside *barracas* (stalls) visible straight ahead, and a sign indicating the ruins of the old *igreja* (church) off to the right.

More ambitious hikers can follow the beach 8km north to **Riacho Doce**, a small river that forms the border between Espírito Santo and Bahia. You'll know you've arrived when you see the handpainted sign on the other side 'Sorria – voce está na Bahia!' (Smile, you're in

Bahia!) Riacho Doce has a restaurant serving simple but tasty meals. For the return trip, retrace your steps down the beach (best done at low tide), or hitch a ride in the back of one of the pickup trucks that occasionally drive the 16km road back to town. If school's in session, you can also try hopping one of the three daily school buses back to Itaúnas.

The **Casinha de Aventuras** (☎ 3762 5081; www.casinhadeaventuras.com.br; Rua Paulino Guanandy 13; ☎ 9am-noon year-round, plus 1:30-6:30pm high season), near the bus stop in the center of town, arranges kayaking trips along the Rio Itaúnas, horseback and dune-buggy excursions, bike rentals, and more.

Festivals & Events

In the second half of July, Itaúnas hosts two week-long *forró* festivals, the **Festival de Forró** and **Circuito Nacional de Forró**. Both events draw big-name performers from all over Brazil, and there's music and dancing all day and night.

Sleeping

Camping da Vila (☎ 3964 2462; Rua Honório Pinheiro da Silva s/n; camp site per person R\$10) This place has dozens of grassy, shaded sites.

Pousada Vila Sossego (☎ 3762 5193; itaunasvila.sossego@ig.com.br; Rua Paulino Souza Leite Guanandy; s/d R\$30/60) In a breezy location on a side street, Vila Sossego has a couple of rooms (numbers 7 and 10) with great views of dunes and the river.

Pousada Ponta de Areia (☎ 3762 1644; Rua Manoel Joaquim Junior; s/d R\$35/70) A delightfully simple and welcoming pousada, run by the gracious and well-traveled Bixão.

Pousada do Celsão (☎ 9951 9834; Riacho Doce; r from R\$60) In the little settlement of Riacho Doce on the Bahian border, this is a simple place to get away from it all. Tucked between horse pastures and the beach, it also has an on-site restaurant. Just watch out for the intrepid pet parrot – he'll try to climb in the hammock with you!

Pousada das Araras (☎ 3762 5273; www.pousada.dasaras.tur.br; Rua Manoel Joaquim Junior; s/d from R\$60/80, with air-con R\$100/120; ☎ ☎) This place straddles both sides of the street next door to Ponta de Areia. It's got a fabulous swimming pool, and a nice courtyard garden.

Pousada Zimbaue (☎ 3762 5023; www.guiaitaunas.com.br/zimbaue.htm; Rua Teófilo Cabral da Silva 6; s/d from R\$70/90, with air-con R\$90/120; ☎ ☎) This cheerful pousada just off the main square has clean white sheets and a kitchen for guests' use.

Pousada A Nave (☎ 3762 5102; www.anave.tur.br; Rua Ítalo Vasconcelos; s/d/tr R\$70/100/130) Rustic rooms with carved wooden doors abound at this attractive pousada, which is a labor of love for its sculptor/owner, Júlio. The round, open-sided thatched bar is a great place for a few late-night drinks. The attached camping ground, overlooking a mangrove forest and sand dunes, is also attractive.

Casa da Praia (☎ 3762 5028; www.casada Praia itaunas.com.br; Rua Prof Deolinda Lage; s/d R\$80/120) This is one of Itaúnas' loveliest pousadas, on a back street with a deck overlooking the river. The likeable manager, Lico, takes pride in keeping the grounds and rooms spotless.

Pousada dos Corais (☎ 3762 5200; www.pousadadoscorais.com.br; Rua Maria Ortiz Barcelos 154; s/d/tr R\$80/120/140; ☎ ☎) If you're suffering from the heat, try this friendly pousada with its air-con rooms, comfortable sitting areas and pool.

Eating

There are plenty of inexpensive eateries around Itaúnas. Especially appealing are the half dozen *barracas* out at the beach, serving seafood and beer with ocean views. Note that hours are seasonal and prone to change.

McDunas (☎ 3762 5248; Av Bento Daher; snacks from R\$3; ☎ 11am-midnight) Until the corporate lawyers from McDonald's come knocking, McDunas will continue to display its subtle modification of the golden arches logo. A good place for a snack, serving tasty burgers, juices and other fast food in the heart of town.

Dona Tereza (☎ 3762 5031; Rua Demerval Leite da Silva; meals from R\$9; ☎ 11am-midnight, to 8pm low season) A highly recommended family-run restaurant with pretty etched wooden menus and a breezy outdoor patio. You can eat extremely well here for very little money. From the central square, go one block towards the river.

Dona Pedrolina (☎ 3762 5296; Rua Linoria Lisboa Vasconcelos; meals from R\$9; ☎ 11:30am-late, to 8pm low season) Another excellent family-run place just around the corner from Dona Tereza's. Simple meals of fish, rice and beans are very affordable.

Pizzaria Oasis (☎ 3762 5111; Rua José Basílio dos Santos; meals from R\$9; ☎ 6pm-late daily high season, Sat only low season) A friendly place just across from the main square, with wood-fired pizza, lasagne, and other Italian specialties.

Barraca do Coco (☎ 3762 50424; Praia de Itaúnas; meals from R\$15; ☎ noon-late) Out at the beach, Coco's got seafood, beer and *forró* music from 2pm onwards during the busy season.

Entertainment

During high season the pounding beats of *forró* and *axé* (an Afro-Brazilian pop style incorporating samba, rock, soul and other influences) spill from every open window and doorway in Itaúnas. Things don't really start swinging till after midnight, and the party lasts till dawn. Ask locals to point you toward Buraco do Tatu, Bar Forró and Forró do Coco, festive little shacks that get packed full of dancers. Casa da Praia (see left) also opens up its whole veranda for dancing and gives strong encouragement to beginners.

Getting There & Away

Itaúnas is not exactly a major transport hub. The closest place you can make connections for long-distance buses is in Conceição da Barra, 23km south. From Itaúnas a local bus goes to Conceição (R\$4.70, 40 minutes) at 8am, 1:30pm and 4:30pm daily, returning to Itaúnas at 7am, 12:30pm and 3:30pm. There are extra buses in summer, and on Monday and Friday throughout the year.

From Conceição da Barra to Vitória (R\$34, five hours), Agua Branca runs buses at 6:20am, 2pm and 6pm, returning from Vitória to Conceição at 6:40am, 11:40am and 4pm.

GUARAPARI

☎ 0xx27 / pop 80,000

There are some lovely beaches just waiting to be enjoyed about an hour south of Vitória. This stretch of coast is usually passed over by foreigners, but Guarapari is a favored resort destination for Brazilians and as such retains a relaxed, fun and family-friendly atmosphere. There are 23 beaches in the municipality, each with a lovely mountain backdrop.

Orientation & Information

The center is 500m south of the bus station, across the bridge; the beach is 200m further on. The **tourist office** (☎ 3262 8759; Rua Paulo Soares de Aguiar) has maps and information in Portuguese. There are several banks with ATMs along Rua Joaquim da Silva Lima in the center. Internet places are clustered in the center and along Praia do Morro.

Sights

The best beach is **Praia do Morro**, north of the city (be aware that its so-called 'healing' black monazitic sand is, in fact, said to be radioactive!). Also consider **Praia dos Namo-**

rados (small but surrounded by rocks creating beautiful pools), **Praias Castanheiras** and **Areia Preta** (more radioactive sand but crystal-clear waters), **Praia do Meio**, aka Siribeira (great rock pools with gorgeous snorkeling), **Praia Enseada Azul** (a long stretch with lots of natural beauty) and **Praia dos Padres** (accessible only by trail from Enseada Azul with stunning green waters). At the far southern end of town is **Meaípe**, another good place to spend the night.

Sleeping

Camping Club do Brasil (☎ 3262 1325; Praia de Setiba; per person/tent R\$22/5) This camping spot a few kilometers north of town is just a stone's throw from lovely Setiba beach.

Hotel Guara Pousada (☎ 3262 5210; guarapousada@guaratur.com.br; Av Antonio Guimarães, Quadra 40; s/d R\$28/56) This former hostel has basic rooms, with bathrooms, on large, walled grounds not far from the bus station and the beach. This area is known as Muquiçaba (Mosquito Nest), so bring repellent!

Pousada Enseada Verde (☎ 3272 1376; www.enseadaverde.com.br; Rua Duarte Mattos 27; s/d R\$90/100) A great option down the coast in Meaípe, Pousada Enseada Verde has vibrantly colored rooms not far from the beach.

Hotel Coronado (☎ 3361 0144; www.hotelcoronado.com.br; Av Desembargador Lourival de Almeida 312; s/d from R\$100/120, ocean view r R\$165; ☎ ☎) Directly opposite the point where Praias Castanheiras and Areia Preta meet, this centrally located older hotel has sweeping views of both beaches and the city.

Porto do Sol Guarapari (☎ 3361 1100; www.hotelportodosol.com.br; Av Beira Mar 1; s/d from R\$195/240; ☎ ☎ ☎) Porto do Sol, surrounded by water on three sides, has an unbeatable location between downtown and Praia do Morro. All rooms have panoramic ocean views, with wi-fi, DVD and whirlpool tubs in the deluxe suites. Sea turtles sometimes come up onto the rocks directly below the rooms.

Eating

Up and down all the beaches, but particularly on Praia do Morro, you'll find dozens of *bar-racas* selling inexpensive fresh seafood and regional dishes.

Delícia Mineira (☎ 3361 0506; Rua Joaquim da Silva Lima 393; per kg R\$14.90; ☎ 11am-2:30pm) This downtown self-serve is heavy on the *comida mineira* (the cuisine of Minas Gerais).

Pilão (☎ 3361 6035; Av Maria de Lourdes C Dantas 141; per kg R\$15.90; ☎ 11am-late) Two blocks back from Praia do Morro, this self-serve has excellent food at bargain prices. Wood-fired *mineiro* dishes share the menu with seafood specialties such as *moqueca* and codfish lasagne.

Peixada do Irmão (☎ 3261 0636; Rua Jacinto de Almeida 72; meals R\$15; ☎ 11:30am-midnight) Near the tourist office, this restaurant has a bilingual menu and an excellent reputation for seafood dishes.

ourpick Cantinho do Curuca (☎ 3272 1262; Av Santana 96; meals from R\$19; ☎ 11am-10pm) Few restaurants can boast such a perfect combination of setting, quality and price. The *moqueca* at this beachfront eatery in Meaípe has been voted the best in Brazil multiple times. Grab a table facing the water and enjoy.

Getting There & Away

Buses run between Vitória and Guarapari's **bus station** (☎ 3261 1308; Rua Araxá 50) hourly from 6am to 9pm (R\$7, 1¼ hours). Half-hourly buses also make the 28km trip to Anchieta (R\$4, 40 minutes).

AROUND GUARAPARI

Parque Estadual Paulo César Vinha

Ten kilometers north of Guarapari lies this **state park** (☎ 3242 3665; Hwy ES-060, km37.5; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun), part of Brazil's Atlantic Rain Forest Biosphere Reserve. The park's 1500 hectares shelter a variety of habitats, including dunes, lagoons and coastal *restinga*. The park's lone trail leads 2.5km from park headquarters to **Lagoa de Carais**, a tranquil lagoon teeming with bird life just inland from the beach. Alvorada buses run frequently from Guarapari to the park (R\$1.60, 20 minutes).

ANCHIETA

☎ 0xx28 / pop 19,000

About an hour south of Vitória, Anchieta is one of the oldest settlements in Espírito Santo and, as the name would suggest, contains many relics dedicated to the work of famed 16th-century Jesuit priest José de Anchieta. The beaches aren't as attractive as those leading up to Guarapari (20km to the north) or to neighboring Iriri and Ubu (to the south and north respectively), but this small port town does have its own relaxed appeal – the quiet, rhythmic life of a fishing village is still very much apparent, especially at Praia dos Castelhanos just north of town.

BRAZIL'S BEST MOQUECA

The state of Espírito Santo is renowned throughout Brazil for the quality of its seafood. Topping the list of local culinary specialties is *moqueca capixaba*, a savory stew made from fish, shellfish, tomatoes, peppers and cilantro cooked in a *panela de barro* (earthenware casserole dish). Espírito Santo's *moqueca capixaba* is similar to the *moqueca baiana* so popular in neighboring Bahia, except that it's made without coconut milk.

Wherever you travel in the state, you'll see signs advertising a *melhor moqueca do Brasil* (Brazil's best *moqueca*). But who really makes the best *moqueca*? Visitors to the Vitória region have a golden opportunity to taste-test for themselves. Several award-winning restaurants can be found in a relatively small geographic area here. Three leading contenders are Pirão (p224) in Vitória, which won *Veja* magazine's 2007 'Best Moqueca in Espírito Santo' prize; Cantinho do Curuca (p227) in Meaípe, which has taken four Rodas' 'Best Moqueca in Brazil' honors four years in a row; and Moqueca do Garcia (opposite) in Ubu, which hasn't won any awards lately, but whose 40 years in business and constant lunchtime crowds speak for themselves.

Sights

You'll have no problem locating the **Santuário Nacional Padre Anchieta** (☎ 9am-noon & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun), which dominates the town from its impressive hillside location. A 250-year-old chestnut tree spreads gracefully in front of this striking white church with its bold blue shutters and doors. The complex includes the **Museu Padre Anchieta** (admission R\$1), highlighting the evangelical work of the Jesuit priest José de Anchieta among indigenous peoples. The church walls, built by local Indians and Padre Anchieta, are original. The museum contains relics uncovered during restoration. If you'd rather get your history at the seashore, then stroll to the end of Anchieta beach. Just before the road goes over a small, white, wooden bridge you'll find a gold-colored **statue** of José de Anchieta giving blessings to a Goitacá warrior (see opposite).

Festivals & Events

Devoted followers of Padre Anchieta participate in an annual pilgrimage commemorating his missionary work along the Espírito Santo coast. The popular 100km **Steps of Anchieta** walk along the beach from Vitória to Anchieta takes place in June (exact dates vary each year) and lasts four days. Contact the state tourism office in Vitória for specifics.

Sleeping & Eating

Anchieta doesn't provide many tourist services and several downtown hotels have closed in recent years, so you're better off staying in nearby Iriri or Ubu, or on the coast just north of town.

Pousada Beira Mar (☎ 3536 1256; Rua Marechal Deodoro da Fonseca 86; s/d R\$30/60) If you decide to spend the night in Anchieta, this is your best bet, 100m north of the bus stop. Very basic but reasonable rooms.

Pousada do Sol (☎ 3536 1643; www.pousadadosol.com; Av Beira Mar, Guanabara; s/d R\$60/100; ☎) A much more inviting choice 4km north of Anchieta, this pousada sits a few steps from Guanabara Beach, directly across from the Tamar Project turtle research station (below). Bright artsy rooms, some with terraces overlooking the sea, surround a central pool.

Anchieta has several *lanchonetes* (snack bars) near the bus stop.

Getting There & Away

Buses (R\$4, 40 minutes) to Guarapari run every half-hour or so between 5:15am and 9:30pm. To Vitória (R\$10) they run 12 times daily (every one to two hours between 6am and 8:40pm). The **bus station** (☎ 3536 1150; Av Carlos Lindenberg 183) is opposite the waterfront on the main road through town.

AROUND ANCHIETA

Praia da Guanabara Turtle Research Station

Four kilometers north of Anchieta, the Tamar Project (see The Sea Turtles of Tamar boxed text on p467) operates the **Praia da Guanabara Turtle Research Station** (☎ 3536 3547; ☎ 10am-7pm daily Dec-Feb, 9am-noon & 1-6pm Mon-Fri Mar-Nov). At the station site, there is a 2km stretch of protected beach where turtles come onshore to lay their eggs every summer, plus an interesting museum of marine turtle exhibits. Between December and

February, you can arrange to accompany researchers on their regular excursions to observe turtles on the beach. To get here, take any northbound Planeta or Sudeste bus from Anchieta. Ask to be let off at Praia da Guanabara and follow the signs 300m downhill to the beach.

Iriri

☎ 0xx28

This delightful coastal getaway is one of Brazil's best-kept secrets. The town's pretty beach is tucked into a sheltered cove flanked by rocky ledges on either side. Iriri is very popular with Mineiros, who come in droves during the summer months and turn the tiny town into an upbeat, family-focused resort.

SLEEPING & EATING

Hotel Maringá (☎ 3534 1252; www.hotelmaringairiri.com.br; Av Dom Helvecio 665; s/d R\$50/90; ☺) Bland but friendly, the centrally located Maringá, one block back from the beach, is one of Iriri's more affordable choices. There's a self-serve restaurant attached.

Recanto da Pedra (☎ 3534 1599; www.recantodapedra.com.br; Av Beira Mar s/n; s/d R\$85/110) Hands down the best value in town, Recanto da Pedra is picturesquely sited on rocks at the northern end of Iriri beach. Many rooms have terraces with bird's-eye views of the gracefully curving shoreline. The attached restaurant serves excellent food – it's fun to lounge here and watch swimmers popping up out of the water for a quick drink at the bar.

Hotel Pontal das Rochas (☎ 3534 1369; www.pontaldasrochas.com.br; Av Beira Mar s/n; r from R\$211; ☺ ☹ ☹) On the same point as Recanto da

Pedra, this first-rate hotel offers fabulous amenities, including a panoramic restaurant, and a sauna and pool built into the rocks overlooking the water.

Restaurante do Português (☎ 3534 1222; Av Dom Helvecio 558; meals from R\$11; ☹ lunch & dinner) Generous portions of tasty local seafood are served at this unpretentious eatery decorated with pretty blue-and-white tiles half a block from the beach.

Ubu

☎ 0xx28

A sleepy little seaside town 9km north of Anchieta, Ubu has a picturesque waterfront with a cliff at one end and a pretty mermaid statue marking the beach's midpoint. The usual Brazilian hospitality is muted somewhat here by the locals' desire to keep their low-key haven from being overrun by developers (something that can happen all too quickly in Brazil), but as long as you don't talk about buying up huge tracts of land and building superhotels, you will eventually be embraced with customary warmth.

SLEEPING & EATING

Pousada de Ubu (☎ 3536 5112; Praia de Ubu; r from R\$80) This simple pousada is conveniently located just above the mermaid statue in the heart of town.

Pousada Aba Ubu (☎ 3536 5067; www.abaubu.com.br; Rua Manoel Miranda Garcia; d/tr R\$110/130; ☺ ☹ ☹) Just uphill from the beach, the Swiss-run Aba Ubu has a pool, a sauna, a tennis court and nice rooms around a garden.

Moqueca do Garcia (☎ 3536 5050; Av Magno Ribeiro Muqui 17; meals from R\$30) Down by the waterfront,

THE GOITACÁ WARRIORS

Early European explorers reported encounters with the fearsome, long-haired, tall, robust and formidable Goitacá warriors, coastal dwellers of the Rio state-Espírito Santo border region. The tribe had long resisted invasions by rival Tupi nations and, despite the technological advantage of guns, the Europeans found the Goitacá almost impossible to capture. The Goitacá were excellent runners and swimmers, and seemed by all reports to be equally at home on land and in the water. When chased, they were so fast through the waters and jungle that nobody could catch them on foot, on horseback or by boat.

According to legend, a Goitacá could run after a wild deer and capture it with his arms, and could catch a shark using only a piece of wood. (This was accomplished by forcing a stick inside the shark's mouth to stop the jaws from closing, and pulling its guts out by hand until it died.) The Goitacá nation (around 12,000 people), never defeated in battle, was exterminated at the end of the 18th century by an epidemic of smallpox – a disease deliberately introduced by the Portuguese for that very purpose.

the 40-year-old Moqueca do Garcia lives up to its proud reputation as Ubu's best place for top-notch Capixaba cuisine. Don't miss it!

INLAND

DOMINGOS MARTINS

☎ 0xx27 / pop 26,000 / elevation 620m

Tucked into the highlands of the Serra Capixaba, this pretty little German-style town has bracingly cold nights and gorgeous panoramic views of surrounding forests. Also referred to as Campinho by locals, it makes a good base for exploring the nearby streams and mountains.

Sights

Tourist information is available at **Casa da Cultura** (☎ 3268 2550; Av Presidente Vargas 531; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Tue-Sun), opposite the first bus stop in town. The museum upstairs features photos, documents and household objects dating from 1847, when Pomeranians first settled this colony. Check out the old pink gramophone.

Further along the same road you'll find the town's main square, a pretty gathering spot with benches, trees and an old Lutheran church. Flora lovers should definitely head out to the **Reserva Kautsky** (☎ 3268 2300; ☎ by arrangement), run by dedicated botanist Roberto Kautsky, who has cultivated more than 100 species of orchid at his home at the southern end of town (ask anyone) and on his mountainside reserve. He'll drive you, free for the asking, to the reserve in his ancient Jeep and talk your ear off in German, 'bad English' or Portuguese – people come from miles around and it's a great experience.

In the second half of July, the **Festival Internacional de Inverno** is an annual gathering of Brazilian and international musicians who offer daily classes and nightly concerts on Domingos Martins' main square.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel e Restaurante Imperador (☎ 3268 1115; www.hotelimperador.tur.br; Av Senador Jefferson de Aguiar 275; r with breakfast R\$68, s/d with breakfast & lunch R\$98/118; ☎) Directly opposite the Lutheran church on the main square, the Imperador is an older hotel with traditional German architecture, a pool and sauna, and plenty of quirky charm.

Pousada Germânia (☎ 3268 1131; lvc_30@hotmail.com; Rua de Lazer 204; r from R\$70) This sweet little private home looks like it was lifted straight out of the Alps. You'll find it tucked just off the main pedestrian thoroughfare.

Café Expresso Koehler (☎ 3268 3263; Rua de Lazer 54; coffee & strudel R\$6; ☎ 11am-10pm) Homemade strudel, cake, and hot chocolate with whipped cream are the specialties at this lively sidewalk café in the heart of the pedestrian zone.

Restaurante Caminho do Imigrante (Rua de Lazer 155; per kg R\$15.90 ☎ 10:30am-4pm & 6pm-late Sat & Sun, 10:30am-2:30pm Mon-Fri) For a delicious and inexpensive per-kilo buffet, try this place a little further down the pedestrian mall.

Choperia Fritz Frida (☎ 3268 1808; Av Presidente Vargas; mains from R\$15; ☎ 5-10pm) Very popular at dinnertime, this cute half-timbered building on the main square serves pizza, beer and old German favorites.

Getting There & Away

Ten buses daily Monday to Saturday and nine on Sunday make the 42km trip (R\$7, one hour) from Vitória to Domingos Martins' **bus station** (☎ 3268 1243; Rua Bernardino Monteiro). Upon request, any bus between Vitória and Belo Horizonte will stop on the main highway just outside the town entrance gate.

AROUND DOMINGOS MARTINS Parque Estadual da Pedra Azul

Vitória-Belo Horizonte buses also stop at the best reason to come inland: the 500m Pedra Azul, 50km west of Domingos Martins down Hwy BR-262. The dramatic rock, tinted by a bluish moss, forms the centerpiece of **the state park** (☎ 3248 1156; admission R\$10; ☎ 8am-5:30pm). Rangers escort hikers to the rock's nine **natural pools**, a moderately difficult hike affording magnificent views of Pedra Azul and the surrounding forest and farmland. Bring a swimsuit and sturdy shoes – there's a short section where ropes are used to scale a steep rock face. The round trip takes 2½ hours and must be booked in advance; departures are scheduled at 9am and 1:30pm on weekends, or by arrangement during the week. Note that independent climbing and camping are no longer permitted in the park.

Cavalcada Ecológica Pedra Azul (☎ 3248 0054; trail rides from R\$30) leads horseback excursions around the foot of Pedra Azul, on beautiful Fjorde horses from Norway.

SLEEPING & EATING

The area is dotted with fancier resort hotels, many offering full board.

Pousada Peterle (☎ 3248 1243; www.pousadapeterle.com.br; Hwy BR-262, km88; s/d with meals R\$130/170) Two kilometers below the park entrance and opposite a bus stop, Pousada Peterle has attractive log cabins with fireplaces and balconies. The affordably priced snack bar and restaurant below are open to the public.

Pousada Pedra Azul (☎ 3334 2420; www.pousadapedraazul.com.br; Rota do Lagarto, km1.5; r with meals R\$375; 🍷) Set in lovely gardens only 500m from park headquarters, this high-end pousada is one of the region's oldest. The main brick-and-wood building with Alpine-style balconies and pagoda-like roofs was designed by Brazilian architect Zanine. Amenities include a pool, sauna, tennis courts, lake and waterfall.

Guest rooms are spacious, with high ceilings, big tubs and armchairs.

Valsugana (☎ 3248 1126; off Hwy BR-262 at km89.5; mains R\$20; 🍷 11:30am-3:30pm Sat & Sun, 7pm-late Fri & Sat) Hearty Italian fare and spectacular views of Pedra Azul make this one of the area's nicest restaurants. The inventive recipes feature fresh local produce, and the wine list is excellent.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Agua Branca buses pass within 2km of the park entrance. In Vitória, buy a ticket for Fazenda do Estado (R\$14, two hours, eleven daily 5:10am to 6:30pm) and ask to be let off at km88. The km88 bus stop is directly opposite Peterle's pousada and restaurant. From here, it's a 2km uphill walk to the park entrance along a lovely winding cobblestone road, Rota do Lagarto.