



Bahia

POP 15 MILLION

Includes ➔

Salvador	399
Recôncavo	422
Cachoeira & São Félix	422
Praia do Forte	428
Morro de São Paulo	431
Itacaré	437
Ilhéus	440
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Feira de Santana	457
Lençóis	457
Parque Nacional da Chapada Diamantina	462

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Rabanete (p452)
- ➔ Caranguejo de Sergipe (p416)
- ➔ Lampião (p462)
- ➔ Restaurante do Senac (p415)
- ➔ Paraíso Tropical (p416)

Best Beaches

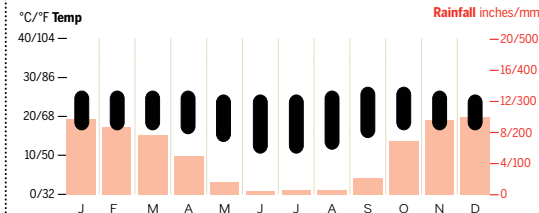
- ➔ Trancoso (p451)
- ➔ Morro de São Paulo (p431)
- ➔ Itacaré (p437)
- ➔ Praia do Espelho (p452)
- ➔ Arraial d'Ajuda (p449)

Why Go?

Africa meets South America in the staggeringly beautiful northeastern state of Bahia. The heady blend of two seemingly disparate cultures – classic Portuguese architecture and African drum beats, Catholic churches and Candomblé (Afro-Brazilian religion) – is unique, and for most travelers, truly intoxicating. Bahia's centerpiece is Salvador, a jewel-box colonial city with gilded churches, cobblestone streets, lively festivals, powerful percussion reverberating off old stone walls and capoeiristas battling against the backdrops of 16th-century buildings. The Afro-Brazilian capital is especially traveler-friendly these days: Salvador underwent a minor face lift before serving as a World Cup host city in 2014. Beyond the city limits, Bahia awaits with more than 900km of coastline, World Heritage-listed sites, deserted beaches and paradisaical islands. In the south, idyllic coastal villages attract vacationers and divers, while inland, the spectacular Parque Nacional da Chapada Diamantina features waterfalls and quiet hiking paths waiting to be explored.

When to Go

Salvador



Dec–Mar Crowds, higher prices and packed pousadas (guesthouses) in Salvador for February's Carnival.

Apr–Sep Lovely warm weather, occasional rainy days. Festas juninas in the second half of June.

Oct & Nov Minimal crowds and summery weather.

History

Prior to the Portuguese arrival, the region known today as Bahia had a wide variety of ethnic groups scattered inland and along the coast, speaking dozens of languages. Many of the tribes were wiped out by the

Portuguese, though some – like the Pataxó – are still around today. The indigenous tribes practiced some form of agriculture, raising manioc, sweet potatoes and maize, and practiced hunting and fishing, while gathering fruits from the forests. Little else is



Bahia Highlights

- 1 Following the sounds of the famous Olodum drum corps in **Salvador** (p399), Latin America's inspiring Afro-Brazilian capital.
- 2 Hiking to natural waterslides in the magnificent **Parque Nacional da Chapada Diamantina** (p462).
- 3 Zooming around the island villages of **Morro de São Paulo** (p431) and

- Boipeba** (p434) on a speedboat tour.
- 4 Traveling over dirt roads to beautiful **Taipú de Fora** (p436) beach on the Peninsula de Maraú.
- 5 Lingering over alfresco meals and coastal strolls in **Arraial d'Ajuda** (p449).
- 6 Watching tiny sea turtles hatch on the sand in **Praia do Forte** (p428).

- 7 Catching a wave or taking a capoeira lesson on the sand in surfer-happy **Itacaré** (p437).
- 8 Tracing the footsteps of Brazil's literary great, Jorge Amado, in **Ilhéus** (p440).
- 9 Diving beneath the deep in the remote **Parque Nacional Marinho de Abrolhos** (p456).