



Ceará, Piauí & Maranhão

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Casa Zulu (p547)
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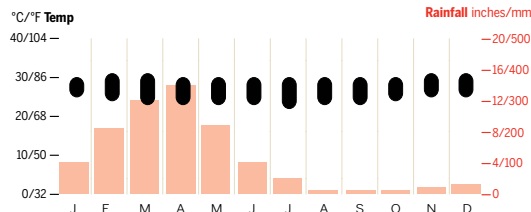
Why Go?

These three Northeastern states stretch along Brazil's only north-facing coast and back deep into the arid interior. The main draw for visitors are the beaches of Ceará, arrayed for hundreds of glorious kilometers either side of Fortaleza, the state's fun-loving biggest city. These are some of the very best beaches in Brazil, some supporting growing resort towns, others at most a small, traditional fishing village. The hip travelers' hangout Jericoacoara, uniquely located inside a dune-swept national park, is the jewel in Ceará's gorgeous coastline.

An adventurous coastal route leads west from Jericoacoara to the scenic, wildlife-rich Delta do Parnaíba and the vast expanse of high dunes and clear lagoons known as the Lençóis Maranhenses, one of Brazil's highlights. The beauty of the Lençóis will floor you. Further west still lie two of Brazil's most picturesque, intriguing colonial gems: half-decayed, half-restored São Luís, with its markedly Afro-Brazilian culture, and its perfect sleepy neighbor Alcântara.

When to Go

Fortaleza



Jun São Luís erupts with color, music and dance in its Bumba Meu Boi festival.

Jul & Aug The Lençóis Maranhenses are at their most spectacular.

Jul–Jan Constant strong breezes make the coast one of the world's premier kitesurfing destinations.

Ceará, Piauí & Maranhão Highlights

- 1 Surfing, chilling, partying and staring at spectacular sunsets in the magical and cinematic village of **Jericoacoara** (p547).
- 2 Dipping into pristine lagoons between endless dunes in Maranhão's surreal **Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses** (p565).
- 3 Enjoying the quirky combo of colonial heritage and Afro-Brazilian culture in **São Luís** (p557).
- 4 Stepping back in time at the charmingly crumbling colonial town of **Alcântara** (p563).
- 5 Having a long, palm-lined curve of beach almost to yourself at **Icarai de Amontada** (p546).
- 6 Discovering the restaurants, nightlife and beach scene of **Fortaleza** (p534).
- 7 Kitesurfing (p548) or wind-surfing some of the world's best breezes almost anywhere along the coast.

