



Rio Grande do Sul

POP 10.7 MILLION

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Valle Rustico (p322)
- ➔ Belle du Valais (p325)
- ➔ Mamma Gema (p322)
- ➔ Atelier das Massas (p318)
- ➔ Per Voi (p325)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Parador Casa da Montanha (p329)
- ➔ Pousada Borghetto Sant'Anna (p321)
- ➔ Jardim Secreto Pousada (p325)
- ➔ Vila Ecológica (p328)
- ➔ Hostel Britanico (p324)

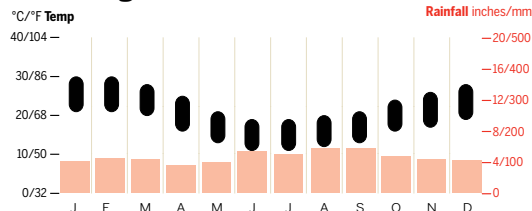
Why Go?

From the jaw-dropping forest-covered canyons of the national parks near Cambará do Sul, and cascading river valleys near cozy Brazilian alpine villages like Gramado, to the stunning Vale dos Vinhedos, where Italian-descended vintners produce wines to rival those of Chile and Argentina, the Rio Grande do Sul defies notions of typical Brazil.

Brazil's southernmost state is its most culturally distinct, home to an independently minded population steeped in cattle herding and cowboy culture. *Gaúchos*, as residents of Rio Grande do Sul are known, are a fiercely proud and traditional lot. In the countryside, it is not unusual to see old-timers sporting wide-brimmed hats and other traditional dress. Grilled meat, or *churrasco*, is still the state's favorite food, and everywhere – even in the cosmopolitan capital of Porto Alegre – locals suck down *chimarrão*, the distinctive, traditional tea made from the *maté* plant.

When to Go

Porto Alegre



Jan–Mar Hot days and cool nights during harvest season in the Vale dos Vinhedos.

May–Oct Prices are higher, but you *might* see Brazilian snow in Cambará do Sul.

Jun, Jul & Dec Gramado is in Alpine Wonderland mode for Christmas, then again in winter.

History

Living on land long disputed by the Spanish and Portuguese, the people of Rio Grande do Sul used the conflict to create an identity distinct from the rest of Brazil. The region even declared its independence during the ill-fated Guerra dos Farrapos, a decade-long civil war ending in 1845. A wave of immigrants, mostly German, Italian and Swiss,

began arriving in the late 19th century, reinforcing the region's cultural differences.

Getting There & Around

Porto Alegre is the state's transportation hub, with air and bus services to every major city nationwide. Excellent roads and efficient regional bus service make traveling relatively easy, with most long-distance routes originating in Porto Alegre.



Rio Grande do Sul Highlights

1 Peering over the edge of the Cãion da Fortaleza in **Parque Nacional da Serra Geral** (p328).

2 Tasting your way through the New World's emerging wine region in the gorgeous **Vale dos Vinhedos** (p326).

3 Wandering the stunning grounds of the ruined Jesuit

mission at **São Miguel das Missões** (p319).

4 Looking skyward in wonder while tackling the stunning Trilha do Rio do Boi through **Parque Nacional de Aparados da Serra** (p328).

5 Exploring the Swiss mountain village of **Gramado** (p323), where fondue flows freely

throughout a gorgeous Brazilian winterscape.

6 Learning to sip *gaúcho* tea with a *chimarrão* mestre in **Porto Alegre** (p322).

7 Holing up in splurge-worthy tented luxury at the gorgeous **Parador Casa da Montanha** (p329).