

On the Road



REGIS ST LOUIS *Coordinating Author*

Researching Rio de Janeiro during Carnaval (p77) has its perks. That's me as a pirate marching along with the Caprichosos de Pilares samba school during our celebratory dance through the Sambódromo.



GARY CHANDLER That's me on a huge sand bar in the Rio Tapajós, one of countless beaches that emerge during the Amazon's dry season. You can't swim at most river beaches because of stingrays (aka 'wish you-were-dead fish' because of their sting), but it's still great to relax on the sand after a long hot day in the forest.



GREGOR CLARK Unexpected surprises lurk around every corner in Brazil. En route to the historical town of Biribiri (the true aim of this excursion), we stopped spontaneously at a roadside waterfall. Next thing I knew my friends were motioning me over to see these cliff paintings. We finally reached Biribiri at sunset.



AIMÉE DOWL Brazil is well known as a wildlife wonderland and an easy place to make friends. On this day at the Parque de Aves near Foz do Iguaçu (p329), I got to appreciate both.



BRIDGET GLEESON Arriving in Maceió, I was surrounded by skyscrapers and traffic, so I was relieved when I first laid eyes on the colorful old-fashioned *jangadas* (sailboat of the Northeast) sailing out to the coral reef (p508). I waded into the water and hopped onto one; 10 minutes later I was floating blissfully in the clear green sea.



ROBERT LANDON I love to fly into São Paulo and look out on the vast forest of high-rise buildings spreading to every horizon. But this trip, I also fell for Jardim Botânico (p291), the city's under-appreciated botanical gardens. They offer a delightfully leafy, impeccably tended respite from the urban chaos.



KEVIN RAUB There is no rest for the wicked while on a Lonely Planet research sojourn – we're even on the clock underwater! This is Buraco das Cabras, a dive site in Fernando de Noronha (p541), taken on the last dive of my advanced scuba course. I'm attempting to interview one of these cute little xiras, but they were fiercely tight-lipped and quicker than greased lightning! Passed my course, though.



PAUL SMITH I am standing in one of the exact centers of South America in Parque Nacional da Chapada dos Guimarães (p409). If you think that South America can only have one exact center then you're almost certainly right, but tell that to the residents of Cuiabá who insist the Centro Geodésico is located there!

Destination Brazil

One of the world's most captivating places, Brazil is South America's giant, a dazzling country of powdery white-sand beaches, pristine rain forests and wild, rhythm-filled metropolises. Brazil's attractions extend from enchanting, frozen-in-time colonial towns to dramatic landscapes of red-rock canyons, thundering waterfalls and idyllic tropical islands. Add to that, Brazil's biodiversity: legendary in scope, its diverse ecosystems boast the greatest collection of plant and animal species found anywhere on earth.

Brazil offers big adventures for travelers with budgets large and small. There's horseback riding in the Pantanal, kayaking flooded forests in the Amazon, ascending rocky cliff tops to breathtaking views, whale-watching off the coast, surfing stellar breaks off palm-fringed beaches and snorkeling crystal-clear rivers or coastal reefs – all part of the great Brazilian experience. No less entrancing is the prospect of doing nothing, aside from sinking into warm sands and soaking up a glorious stretch of beach, caipirinha – Brazil's national cocktail – in hand.

Brazil's most famous celebration, Carnaval, storms through the country's cities and towns with hip-shaking samba and *frevo*, dazzling costumes and carefree joie de vivre, but Brazilians hardly regulate their passion for revelry to a few weeks of the year. Wherever there's music, that carefree lust for life tends to appear – whether dancing with Cariocas at Rio's atmospheric samba clubs or following powerful drumbeats through the streets of Salvador. There's the dancehall *forró* of the Northeast, twirling *carimbó* of the Amazon, scratch-skilled DJs of São Paulo and an endless variety of regional sounds that extends from the back-country *sertanejo* to reggae-loving Maranhão.

With so much going for them, it's no wonder that Brazilians say 'Deus e Brasileiro' (God is Brazilian). How else to explain the treasure chest of natural and cultural riches sprinkled all across the country? Pride in the great national bounty has only grown in recent years, during an unprecedented period of prosperity. GDP growth is way up – averaging 5% annually since 2000. Inflation – that beast that long crippled Brazil's economy – appears at last tamed. According to the government, some 19 million Brazilians have risen into the middle class during this period. Low unemployment levels, record numbers of new jobs and widespread growth across diverse sectors of the economy show that Brazil is at last living up to its promise, made back in the mid-20th century, to be 'the great land of the future'.

Many Brazilians – and international observers alike – credit former President Lula with the success of their nation. The son of a poor, illiterate peasant family from Brazil's drought-prone Northeast, Luiz Inácio 'Lula' da Silva seemed an unlikely candidate for Brazil's highest office. He had worked as a shoeshine boy, peanut seller and a mechanic before finding his calling as a trade-union leader and activist; his popularity and later political success helped him become Brazil's first president with working-class roots.

'The most popular politician on earth,' as US President Obama joshingly described Lula in 2009, certainly left office as one of Brazil's most popular elected officials. During his two-term administration, Lula guided Brazil onto the world stage, helping the nation win the rights to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup, and played a key role in securing the 2016 Summer Olympics for Rio. His diplomacy extended beyond sports – negotiating with Turkey, for example, a nuclear-fuel swap deal for Iran.

Despite the odd scandal associated with his party PT (Workers' Party), Lula enjoyed stratospheric approval ratings (80% in early 2010). Critics,

FAST FACTS

Population: 201 million

Annual population growth: 1.17%

Life expectancy at birth: 69 years (men), 76 years (women)

GDP: R\$3.69 trillion

Inflation rate: 4.2%

Number of free condoms distributed annually: 500 million

Monthly minimum wage: R\$510

Infant mortality per 1000 live births: 22 (USA: 6)

Unemployment: 7.3% (USA: 10%)

Adult literacy: 88.6%

'Brazilian ethanol... (eight times more efficient than fuel made from US corn) provides 40% of the country's fuel'

however, say that much of the success stems from the prudent economic policies – including the creation of Brazil's now rock-solid currency, the real – by his predecessor, Henrique Cardoso.

The enormous growth in agribusiness has played a substantive role in the economy. (Brazil is the world's largest exporter of beef and the largest producer of coffee, oranges and sugarcane; and it's among the top three global producers for soy and corn.) China's continued growth, and more importantly, its demand for Brazilian commodities, has also been a factor.

Rising oil prices and a growing acceptance of human-produced climate change has made plant-based biofuel an important topic around the globe. In Brazil, biofuel's success is a result of three decades of effort and billions spent on incentives. Brazilian ethanol, made from energy-efficient sugarcane (eight times more efficient than fuel made from US corn), provides 40% of the country's fuel. The success of Brazil's ethanol program is increasingly seen as a model for other countries.

Energy remains a hot topic in Brazil – particularly since the discovery, between 2007 and 2010, of vast oil reserves stretching more than 800km offshore. Estimates show these oil fields could be among the largest on earth, and they could potentially transform the nation into one of the world's top energy exporters. Brazil is also a major producer of hydroelectric power (the massive Itaipu dam alone provides 20% of Brazil's energy supply and 94% of Paraguay's), and privatization has led to improvements in the grid. Electricity rationing, not uncommon at the turn of the millennium, seems largely a thing of the past. Dozens of new hydroelectric projects are in the works including Brazil's newest but controversial Belo Monte dam in the Amazon.

The boom in industry and Brazil's ongoing development hasn't been good news for everyone. As chief stewards of the largest rain forest on the planet, Brazil has worried environmentalists with projects such as the Belo Monte dam, which will permanently flood 450 sq km of Amazonian forest to create it. Cash-cow crops such as soy and sugarcane continue to bring destruction to old-growth forests. Some innovative green solutions, however, are gaining traction – including the possibility of paying landowners not to cut down their trees.

For most Brazilians, deforestation takes a backseat to the more apparent social ills of violence and poverty, afflicting so many parts of the nation. Lula's antipoverty measures did help many of the worst-off. His *Bolsa Família* (family grant) program brought hardship relief to some 12 million families (more than 40 million Brazilians), though critics say it does little to redress the underlying roots of poverty.

The proliferation of favelas (shantytowns) still looms large in the national consciousness, though even there change has come. Lula's enormous Growth Acceleration Program (PAC), which earmarked billions of reais for infrastructure, has brought improvements – running water, sanitation, roads and housing – to some of Brazil's poorest favelas. At the same time, 'pacification' programs are attempting to drive out drug traffickers and replace them with a police presence and a permanent sense of security inside these struggling communities.

How all of this plays out will undoubtedly be very different at the dawn of 2011, when a new president takes power. He or she has very big shoes to fill.

Getting Started

Before you go to Brazil, find out whether you need a visa. Many nationalities require them, including citizens from the USA, Canada and Australia. See p712 for more details.

If you're going to Carnaval in Rio, Salvador or Olinda, secure hotel reservations as far in advance as possible. That also holds true for Rio's Reveillon (New Year's Eve) or if you're hitting other major festivals (p28); bookings are often easily done over the internet. During the busy summer season (December to March), it's also wise to book ahead.

Brazil is a large country, with vast distances between destinations. If you plan to visit a number of regions, consider purchasing a Brazil Airpass (p719), which allows you between four and nine in-country flights at a set rate. These tickets must be purchased outside the country.

WHEN TO GO

There is never really a bad time to visit Brazil, but whether you want to party like a rock star or escape the masses may help deciding when to go. Brazil's high season coincides with the northern-hemisphere winter, running from December to March. This is when the country fills with both foreign visitors and vacationing Brazilian families (school holidays run from mid-December to Carnaval, usually in February). Hotel rooms cost about 30% higher at this time and you'll face more crowds, though this is also the most festive time in Brazil. Brazil's low season runs from May to September. With the exception of July, which is also a school-holiday month, this is the cheapest and least-crowded time to visit the country – though it can be deserted in some resort areas and cold in the South.

Depending on where you go, weather may be a significant factor in your travel plans. In Rio the humidity can be high in summer, with temperatures hovering around 28°C (82°F), but can often reach 35°C (95°F) or higher. Rainfall is another factor, with October to January being the wettest months. In winter Rio temperatures hover around 23°C (73°F), with a mix of both rainy and superb days.

On the Northeast coast, from Bahia to Maranhão, temperatures are a bit warmer year-round than in Rio – with days reaching 31°C (88°F) – but due to a wonderful tropical breeze and less humidity, it's rarely stifling. The rainy

See Climate Charts (p701) for more information.

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT...

- Getting your visa, if you need one (p712).
- Learning a few Portuguese words and phrases (p741).
- An appetite for steak, seafood, caipirinhas, *agua de côco* (coconut water) and fresh tropical fruits (p85).
- A yellow-fever vaccine (p728), if planning a trip to the Amazon. You may want to take medication against malaria as well (p726).
- A waterproof jacket.
- A strong insect repellent (p730).
- Binoculars for wildlife watching.
- Travel insurance (p705).
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat.

HOW MUCH?

Admission to samba club in Rio R\$20

Two-hour flight from Rio to Salvador (one way) R\$300-440

Double room in a comfy pousada near the beach in Bahia R\$160

Eleven-hour bus ride from São Paulo to Florianópolis R\$84-112

Four-day excursion in the Pantanal R\$800

For more price information, see the Lonely Planet Index on the inside front cover.

season runs from about mid-December to July, though even then you'll encounter gorgeous days.

The Amazon region (the North) is one of the world's rainiest places and rainfall occurs most frequently from December to May, making travel exceedingly difficult at this time. The rest of the year the region still receives plenty of rain, though showers tend to last only an hour or two.

The Pantanal also has rainy and dry seasons; try to go during the dry season (mid-April to late September). The rest of the year, the wetlands receive tremendous rainfall, washing out roads and making travel a formidable challenge.

The South has the most extreme temperature changes, and during the winter months (June to August), Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná and São Paulo have temperatures between 13°C (55.4°F) and 18°C (64.4°F). In some towns, the occasional snowfall is even possible. As elsewhere along the coast, summer is quite hot, and you'll have lots of company on the beach.

COSTS & MONEY

Brazil, with its booming economy and strong real, is one of Latin America's most expensive countries. Travelers who have visited the country in years past will notice a substantial increase in the costs of food, lodging and just about everything else (but the beach is still free).

How much to budget depends on where you stay and how much ground you plan to cover. Some cities, such as Rio, have grown particularly pricey since 2005. Rural and less-visited destinations are often significantly cheaper. Bus travel costs about R\$8 (US\$4.60) per hour of distance covered. Flights,

TRAVELING RESPONSIBLY

Since our inception in 1973, Lonely Planet has encouraged our readers to tread lightly, travel responsibly and enjoy the serendipitous magic independent travel affords. International travel is growing at a jaw-dropping rate, and we still firmly believe in the benefits it can bring – but, as always, we encourage you to consider the impact your visit will have on both the global environment and the local economies, cultures and ecosystems.

Sustainable travel is possible within Brazil, but with the increasing use of 'eco' splashed about, it can be hard to separate the green from the greedy (see p766) for tips on finding ecofriendly hotels). With a little research – and a healthy sense of adventure – your trip can have a positive impact on the local economy while not damaging the environment.

For more detailed information on the wider environmental issues facing Brazil, and how these are being tackled, see p120.

Getting There & Away

By necessity, most people fly into Brazil. To combat the heavy environmental costs associated with air travel, consider offsetting your carbon emissions (p717). Once in Brazil, flights will prove tempting if you're traveling great distances, but there are other options, including riverboats in the Amazon, buses and even a few rare train lines.

Slow Travel

Slow travel is getting back to basics. Skip the long plane journey in favor of traveling locally, focusing your trip on a region in Brazil such as Bahia or Maranhão. You can always come back and cover another part of the country. And once you get to where you are going, hike, bike and paddle your way to that off-track destination. We're not saying that you should never take planes, taxis or buses. When necessary, take that bus or taxi ride. It directly benefits the Brazilian economy, so you'll know your carbon footprint is going directly toward putting dinner on the plates of locals. You can also take an organized tour (p120) based on sustainable itineraries, or you can volunteer your time (p713).

which sometimes run fare specials, might not cost much more for long hauls. Decent accommodations and particularly rental cars (which cost about R\$100 per day) can quickly eat up a budget.

If you're frugal, you can travel on about R\$100 (US\$60) a day – paying around R\$40 for accommodations, R\$30 for food and drink, plus bus travel, admission to sights and the occasional entertainment activity. If you just stay in hostels and plan to lie on a beach, eating rice, beans and cheap lunch specials every day, you may scrape by on R\$75 a day.

If you stay in reasonably comfortable hotels, eat in nicer restaurants, go out most nights and book the occasional flight or guided excursion, you'll probably spend upwards of R\$250 a day (more if traveling solo). If staying overnight at very comfortable guesthouses in resort areas, eat at the best restaurants and not stint on excursions or nightlife can easily spend upwards of R\$500 a day.

Lastly, during the December-to-February holiday season, lodging costs are higher than at other times of the year. During Carnival accommodations prices double or triple (and four-night minimum stays are typically required), but a month or so afterwards, the prices drop to low-season rates. Another thing to remember: resort areas near major cities – such as Búzios near Rio and Morro de São Paulo near Salvador – are often packed on summer weekends. There will be fewer crowds – and sometimes lower prices – if you visit during the week.

Brazil is fair value for solo travelers, as long as you don't mind staying in hostels. Otherwise, a single room generally costs about 75% of the price of a double room.

Accommodations & Food

Your tourist dollar can go a long way to supporting Brazilians if you choose your accommodations carefully. Stay clear of chain hotels and all-inclusive resorts in Brazil's larger cities and beach towns. These places are often owned by foreign investors who take all the profits out of the country. You're much better off staying in family-run pousadas (guesthouses), where your money will remain in the hands of the local people.

In terms of food, Brazil requires some tough choices to be made. Although Brazilian beef is top notch, the explosion of cattle farming continues to fuel the destruction of the Amazon's rain forest, with old-growth forests cleared to make way for pastures. A growing number of cafés and restaurants serve organic and vegetarian fare, and we've included these options where available. Also avoid major fast-food chains, as these have played a significant role in fueling the country's deforestation.

Responsible Travel Organizations

Brazil has no certification system to identify the 'green-ness' of accommodations and tour operators. However, there is one national organization, **Abeta** (www.abeta.com.br), which is a collection of adventure and ecotourism operators, who maintain certain guidelines for safety and promote sustainable initiatives. Visit its website for a list of its 200-plus members. Environmentally responsible organizations working in Brazil include the following:

- **Rainforest Alliance** (www.rainforestalliance.org)
- **ResponsibleTravel.com** (www.responsibletravel.com)
- **Sustainable Travel International** (www.sustainabletravelinternational.org)

For a list of sustainable businesses and organizations (including tour operators, restaurants and accommodations) in Brazil, see p766.

TRAVEL LITERATURE

Brazil on the Rise, by Larry Rohter (2010), paints an insightful portrait of the nation's politics and culture, detailing the great changes that have transformed Brazil into a rising superpower. Rohter served as the *New York Times* bureau chief in Rio for 14 years.

The Lost City of Z: A Tale of Deadly Obsession in the Amazon, by David Grann (2009), relates the final journey in 1925 of Percy Fawcett, one of the last great Victorian adventurers on his quest to find the lost city of El Dorado deep in the Amazon. Grann's retraces Fawcett's journey, creating a page-turner that is equal parts adventure story, biography and travelogue.

Don't Sleep, There are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle, by Daniel Everett (2008), is an engrossing story about Everett's many years living and studying the extraordinary Pirahã people in the Amazon, and the profound influence they had on his own life.

A Death in Brazil, by Peter Robb, is a fascinating travelogue published in 2004. Robb, who spent 20 years in Brazil, explores four centuries of Brazilian history, while detailing his own modern-day travels, creating a compelling portrait of the country.

Travelers' Tales Brazil, edited by Scott Doggett and Annette Haddad, is a fine anthology of tales of travel and life in Brazil. The excellent 2nd edition (2004) includes contributions from writers such as Diane Ackerman, Joe Kane, Petru Popescu and Alma Guillermoprieto.

How to Be a Carioca, by Priscilla Ann Goslin, is highly recommended for anyone planning to spend time in Rio. Her tongue-in-cheek descriptions of the Carioca (residents of Rio) lifestyle are spot on. Don't miss the hilarious 'essential vocabulary' section for mastering the local lingo.

The Capital of Hope: Brasília and Its People, by Alex Shoumatoff, is an engaging portrait of Brasília, informed by the author's interviews with government workers and the capital's first settlers.

Peter Fleming's *Brazilian Adventure* is about the young journalist's expedition into Mato Grosso in the 1930s – a wild region then – in search of vanished explorer Colonel Fawcett. What Fleming found is less important than the telling, written with wry humor.

For a fascinating journey from the Andes through Brazil and on to the Atlantic Ocean in the 19th century, read *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon*, by William Lewis Herndon. This recently republished volume is a vivid account of the people and local cultures Herndon encountered, along with observations of the plants, animals and geography of the Brazilian landscape.

After serving as US president, winning the Nobel Peace Prize and surviving an assassin's bullet, Theodore Roosevelt explored parts of Brazil and wrote the great adventure story *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*.

Although not specifically about Brazil, Redmond O'Hanlon's hilarious *In Trouble Again: A Journey Between the Orinoco and the Amazon* tells of his fretful journey through Latin America.

Also not solely about Brazil is Peter Matthiessen's *The Cloud Forest*, a captivating account of a 30,000km journey across the South American wilderness from the Amazon to Tierra del Fuego.

Moritz Thomsen's *The Saddest Pleasure: A Journey on Two Rivers* is an engaging book about the author's experiences in South America, including journeys through Brazil and along the Amazon.

Running the Amazon, by Joe Kane, is the story of the 10 men and one woman who, in 1986, became the first expedition to cover the entire length of the Amazon River, from the Andes to the Atlantic, on foot and in rafts and kayaks.

'David Grann retraces Fawcett's journey, creating a page-turner that is equal parts adventure story, biography and travelogue.'

TOP 10



FESTIVALS & EVENTS

- 1 Carnaval, Shrove Tuesday and the days preceding it, February or March, Rio de Janeiro (p77), Salvador (p80) or Olinda (p83)
- 2 Semana Santa (Holy Week), March or April, Ouro Preto (p246) or Cidade de Goiás (p393)
- 3 Festa do Divino Espírito Santo (p394), 50 days after Easter, Pirenópolis
- 4 Boi-Bumbá (p660), late June, Parintins
- 5 Bumba Meu Boi (p594), late June to second week of August, São Luís
- 6 Festa da NS de Boa Morte (p461), mid-August, Cachoeira
- 7 Folclore Nordestino (p534), late August, Olinda
- 8 Círio de Nazaré (p611), second Sunday in October, Belém
- 9 Oktoberfest (p349), mid-October, Blumenau
- 10 Reveillon and Festa de Iemanjá (p159), December 31, Rio de Janeiro

FILMS & DOCUMENTARIES

- 1 *Orfeu Negro* (1959)
- 2 *Pagador de Promessas* (1962)
- 3 *Dona Flor & Seus Dois Maridos* (1976)
- 4 *Bye Bye Brasil* (1980)
- 5 *Pixote* (1981)
- 6 *Central do Brasil* (1998)
- 7 *Madame Satã* (2002)
- 8 *Cidade de Deus* (City of God; 2002)
- 9 *House of Sand* (2006)
- 10 *Tropa de Elite* (2007)

MUSIC ALBUMS

- 1 *A Tábuia de Esmeralda*, Jorge Ben
- 2 *Alfagamabetizado*, Carlinhos Brown
- 3 *Chega de Saudade*, João Gilberto
- 4 *Construção*, Chico Buarque
- 5 *Bossa Negra*, Elza Soares
- 6 *Clube da Esquina*, Milton Nascimento
- 7 *Elis & Tom*, Elis Reginas and Antonio Carlos (Tom) Jobim
- 8 *Refazenda*, Gilberto Gil
- 9 *Samba Meu*, Maria Rita
- 10 *Tropicália: Ou Panis Et Circensis*, Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil et al

INTERNET RESOURCES

Brazilian Embassy in London (www.brazil.org.uk) Excellent country lowdown, with links to dozens of local tourism sites in Brazil.

Brazzil (www.brazzil.com) In-depth articles on the country's politics, economy, literature, arts and culture.

Gringoes (www.gringoes.com) Articles written by anglophones living in Brazil.

Hip Guide to Brazil (www.brazilmax.com) Guide to Brazilian culture and society; good, selective articles and links.

Lonely Planet (www.lonelyplanet.com) Summaries on Brazil travel, the popular Thorn Tree bulletin board, online accommodation booking and links to other resources.

Terra Brasil (<http://vidaeestilo.terra.com.br/turismo>) Portuguese-language travel site with useful information on cities, beaches, ecotourism and more.

Events Calendar

Home to the world's best street parties, Brazil has much more up its sleeve than just Carnaval. Lively festivals and events happen throughout the year, all across the country. More festivals are described in the destination chapters.

JANUARY

LAVAGEM DO BONFIM 2nd Thu in Jan
In Salvador, this equal-parts Catholic and Candomblé fest features a ritual washing of the church steps followed by all-night music and dancing (p448).

SOMMERFEST mid-Jan–mid-Feb
Blumenau's German-themed Oktoberfest is so popular that they also throw another version of it in mid summer (p350).

FEBRUARY–MARCH

FESTA DE IEMANJÁ Feb 2
On Praia Rio Vermelho in Salvador, Candomblé groups pay homage to the *orixá* Iemanjá, goddess of the sea and fertility, followed by a lively street party (p448).

CARNAVAL 5 days preceding Ash Wednesday
The famous bacchanalian event happens nationwide in February or March and is liveliest in Rio, Salvador and Olinda, with parades, costumes and round-the-clock merrymaking (p76).

APRIL–MAY

SEMANA SANTA Week preceding Easter
In Ouro Preto, Holy Week is a colorful event of processions and streets 'painted' with flowers (p247). Other well-known Holy Weeks happen in Congonhas (p253) and Cidade de Goiás (p393).

FESTA DO DIVINO ESPÍRITO SANTO 50 days after Easter
Popularly known as Cavalhadas, this old-fashioned folk festival in Pirenópolis comprises medieval tour-

naments, dances and festivities, including mock battles between Moors and Christians (p394).

JUNE

SÃO PAULO PRIDE early Jun
It's official, São Paulo throws the largest gay pride parade on earth, attracting more than three million people to this massive parade (p294).

RIO DAS OSTRAS JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL early Jun
Located 170km east of Rio, Rio das Ostras boasts one of Brazil's best jazz and blues fests amid a lovely tropical beach setting.

BUMBA MEU BOI Jun 13-30
Maranhão's magnificent mythic bull festival has African, Indian and Portuguese roots and features singing, dancing, poetry and countless ox costumes (p565).

BOI-BUMBÁ last Fri, Sat & Sun of Jun
In Parintins in the Amazon, this popular traditional folk festival recounts the death and resurrection of an ox, with music and dancing (p660).

JULY–AUGUST

FEST ITÁLIA mid-Jul
Italians have made many cultural contributions to the south, including this vibrant Blumenau fest featuring a week of wine, pasta and music (p350).

FESTIVAL LITERÁRIA INTERNACIONAL DE PARATI early Aug
This important literary festival brings together celebrated authors from around the world, plus film screenings, exhibitions and musical performances (p193).

FOLCLORE NORDESTINO late Aug
Olinda's highly recommended fest celebrates music and folklore from across the Northeast (p534).

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER

RIO INTERNATIONAL

FILM FESTIVAL late Sep-early Oct
Rio's international film festival – Latin America's biggest – features more than 200 films from all over the world, shown at some 35 theaters (p159).

BIENAL DE SÃO PAULO

Oct-Dec
This major art event occurs in even-numbered years (next in 2012 and 2014) and showcases the work of over 120 artists from around the globe (p287).

CÍRIO DE NAZARÉ

2nd Sun in Oct
Belém's enormous annual event brings one million to the streets to take part in the procession of one of Brazil's most important icons (p611).

OKTOBERFEST

mid-Oct
This beer-drinking extravaganza in Blumenau is the best place to connect to southern Brazil's German roots (p349).

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER

MACEIÓ FEST

3rd week of Nov
Maceió's biggest bash of the year is much like Carnaval, with street parades, outlandish costumes, bars that are open 24 hours and a general joie de vivre among the populace, but is held in November (p508). At this time, the locals head to the beaches.

CARNATAL

1st week of Dec
The country's biggest 'off-season Carnaval' is this Salvador-style festival held in Natal in December. It features raucous street parties and pumping *trios elétricos* (bands playing atop mobile speaker-trucks; p556).

REVEILLON

Dec 31
Some two million revelers, dressed in white, pack the sands of Copacabana Beach in Rio, where music concerts and fireworks ring in the New Year (p159).

Itineraries

CLASSIC ROUTES

RIO & THE SOUTHEAST

Three Weeks

Gorgeous beaches, rain-forest-covered islands and colonial towns are just some of the things you'll experience on a trip around the Southeast.

Spend a few days discovering **Rio** (p124) and its beaches, restaurants and incredible music scene before heading to **Ilha Grande** (p186), an island blanketed by rain forest and ringed by beaches. Next is **Paraty** (p191), a beautifully preserved colonial town. **Ilhabela** (p307) is another car-free island of beaches, forests and waterfalls. Stop in **São Paulo** (p277) for high culture, including the nation's best museums and restaurants. Then take in a bit of friendly Mineira hospitality, good restaurants and a burgeoning arts scene in **Belo Horizonte** (p234).

Head to exquisite **Ouro Preto** (p242), **Diamantina** (p261) and **Tiradentes** (p257), some of Brazil's finest colonial gems. Visit the hiker's paradise of **Parque Nacional de Caparaó** (p271); further east, relish the dramatic beauty (and natural pools) of **Pedra Azul** (p231) state park. Afterwards, continue to the coast, for wave-frolicking and feasting on *moqueca* (seafood stew) in relaxed **Guarapari** (p227). Further south are equally stunning beaches, including chic **Búzios** (p214), lovely but less glitzy **Arraial do Cabo** (p211) and surf-loving **Squarema** (p210).

On the way back to Rio, detour north to **Petrópolis** (p202), a cool mountain retreat. Great hiking is nearby at **Parque Nacional da Serra dos Órgãos** (p207).

This 2300km trip begins and ends in Rio de Janeiro. The circular route passes through picturesque coastal towns, beach-lovers' getaways, surfing spots, idyllic islands, magnificent gold-mining towns and South America's largest metropolis.



BEST OF BRAZIL

Three Months

On this epic trip you'll experience the rhythm-infused towns of the Northeast, the jungles of the Amazon and the biodiversity of the Pantanal, with beaches, tropical islands and historic towns thrown into the mix.

From **São Paulo** (p277), head east to Rio, stopping at glorious beaches such as **Ubatuba** (p304), **Trindade** (p197) and **Paraty-Mirim** (p197). Spend a couple of days in fabulous **Rio** (p124).

From there head north, via bus or plane to **Salvador** (p437), the country's Afro-Brazilian gem. Further up the coast visit pretty **Olinda** (p532), then catch a flight from **Recife** (p521) to the spectacular archipelago of **Fernando de Noronha** (p539).

Back on the mainland, travel north, stopping in the backpackers' paradise of **Jericoacoara** (p578) en route to the surreal dunes in the **Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses** (p597), a stark contrast to the colonial beauty of **Alcântara** (p596). To the west lies **Belém** (p606), a culturally rich city near the lush island of **Ilha de Marajó** (p620). Catch a boat up the Amazon (or fly) to **Manaus** (p644), where you can arrange jungle trips.

From Manaus, fly to **Brasília** (p377) to take in its stunning architecture, then visit **Parque Nacional da Chapada dos Veadeiros** (p399). Next head to Cuiabá, gateway to both the breathtaking canyons of **Chapada dos Guimarães** (p409) and the fantastic wildlife watching in the **Pantanal** (p413). Head south via Campo Grande (another Pantanal gateway) to **Bonito** (p428) for crystal-clear rivers, lush forests and caves. Continue south to the awe-inspiring **Iguaçu Falls** (p328). Before completing the circle, explore the secluded beaches and charming Germanic towns around **Florianópolis** (p339).



This 12,500km (!) reveals Brazil in all her captivating complexity from wild nights to wildlife with a survey of pristine islands, storybook towns, steamy jungles and more. To really do Brazil justice, you'll need at least six months.

BAHIA & THE NORTHEAST

Six Weeks

Those looking for the soul of Brazil would do well to focus on the Northeast. A confluence of music, history and culture amid spectacular natural scenery makes for an unforgettable journey.

Begin south of Porto Seguro in the pretty towns of **Arraial d'Ajuda** (p484) and **Trancoso** (p486), both blessed with great guesthouses and restaurants, a laid-back nightlife and access to endless walks on the beach. Contine north to **Itacaré** (p473), a lively town with great surf. Then head on to rhythm-filled **Salvador** (p437), Bahia's most vibrant and colorful city. From there, catch a boat to **Morro de São Paulo** (p467), an island with enchanting beaches and a laid-back vibe.

Detour west to **Parque Nacional da Chapada Diamantina** (p496) for crisp mountain streams, panoramic views and an endless network of trails. Back on the coast, **Olinda** (p532) is one of Brazil's best-preserved colonial cities. From Olinda's buzzing neighbor **Recife** (p521), fly out to **Fernando de Noronha** (p539), an exquisite archipelago of rich marine life and splendid beaches.

Returning to the mainland, visit beautiful and laid-back **Praia da Pipa** (p560), then hit the spectacular coastline stretching from **Natal** (p553) to **Jericoacoara** (p578), including the **Genipabu Dunes** (p555). West of Jericoacoara, **Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses** (p597) is a striking landscape of dunes, lagoons and beaches. The final stops are reggae-charged **São Luís** (p589) and the untouristy colonial gem of **Alcântara** (p596).

This 4500km trip takes you from gorgeous tropical beaches to culturally rich colonial cities. Porto Seguro, with its many flight connections, is a good gateway. Those with extra time can easily spend three or more months exploring this vibrant region.



ROADS LESS TRAVELED

WATERWAYS OF THE AMAZON

Six Weeks

Few places ignite the imagination like the Amazon. The largest forest on the planet has astounding plant and animal life. Surprising to many visitors, these wetlands also contain historic cities, beautiful river beaches and one of the most important archaeological sites in South America.

Begin in **Belém** (p606), a culturally rich city at the mouth of the great river. From here explore the forest-covered island of **Ilha de Marajó** (p620) or head northeast to **Algodão** (p618), a rustic fishing hamlet in a splendid setting.

Get a hammock and travel by boat up the Amazon River. Stop in **Monte Alegre** (p632) to see ancient rock paintings, the oldest-known human creations in the Amazon. Upstream is **Santarém** (p623), a pleasant city with many nearby attractions. Across the river, **Alenquer** (p632) is near beautiful, rarely visited countryside. Also reachable is the virgin rain forest of the **Floresta Nacional (FLONA) do Tapajós** (p627) and **Alter do Chão** (p629), a picturesque lagoon with white-sand beaches.

Continue upriver to **Manaus** (p644), Amazonia's largest city and its center for arranging jungle trips or visits to the **Reserva Xixuá-Xipará** (p659). You can also travel to **Santa Elena de Uairén** (p674), Venezuela, for treks up **Mt Roraima** (p675). West of Manaus lies the fairly unexplored **Parque Nacional do Jaú** (p659).

You'll see an incredible variety of wildlife at the **Mamirauá Reserve** (p662), outside of **Tefé** (p660). From there, continue by river to **Tabatinga** (p664), and into **Leticia** (p665) in Colombia for excursions into the **Parque Nacional Natural Amacayacu** (p669) or for stays at jungle lodges along the **Rio Javari** (p669).



This 3900km trip begins in Belém, and travels mostly by boat along the world's mightiest river. Several detours include Belém to Ilha de Marajó, and Manaus to Santa Elena de Uairén in Venezuela.

SOUTHWARD BOUND

Three Weeks

One of Brazil's most overlooked regions has gorgeous islands and beaches, unexplored national parks and fascinating towns with largely European roots.

Start in **Foz do Iguaçu** (p328) to gaze at the most impressive waterfalls on the planet. Take short day trips to Argentina and Paraguay to get a taste of lush rain forests before heading east (by overnight bus or quick flight) to **Curitiba** (p316), a cosmopolitan city with an environmentally responsible design. Perhaps visit **Parque Estadual Marumbi** (p322), a paradise for climbers and nature lovers. Next, take the scenic train ride to **Paranaguá** (p323), a sleepy waterfront town that's the jumping-off point to car-free **Ilha do Mel** (p324). The forest-covered island has lovely beaches and low-key guesthouses, and is skirted by some pretty trails.

Next head to **Blumenau** (p348) and nearby **Vale Europeu** (p350), where Pomerode, Timbó and Nova Trento boast Teutonic architecture, blond-haired residents and a local brew more Bavarian than Brazilian. Head back east to the coast to **Porto Belo** (p354), with its picturesque beaches and excellent diving. Continue south to **Ilha de Santa Catarina** (p337), a forest-covered gem of sand dunes, sparkling beaches, pretty lagoons and sleepy fishing villages.

On into Rio Grande do Sul, stretch the dramatic canyon and waterfalls of **Parque Nacional de Aparados da Serra** (p370). Inland, it's worth detouring to the Italian-immigrant town of **Bento Gonçalves** (p364), gateway to the rolling vineyards of the Serra Gaúcho.

Head east to **Santo Ângelo** (p371), which leads on to the Jesuit missions. From there you can visit **São Miguel das Missões** (p372), **São João Batista** (p372) and numerous other holy sites; true grail-seekers can even cross the border into **Paraguay** or **Argentina** (p373) for a look at even more haunting Jesuit missions.

This 1600km trip begins in Foz do Iguaçu and travels through Brazil's southernmost states. Highlights include forested islands, mountainous national parks, Bavarian-style towns, idyllic beaches and historic missions. At trip's end, go to Porto Alegre for a flight to Rio or São Paulo.



TAILORED TRIPS

WATCHING WILDLIFE

Six Weeks

Brazil contains an astounding variety of fauna and flora with incomparable settings for spying wildlife. Winter (June to September) is probably the best time to go. Despite its urban facade, Rio boasts enticing natural attractions such as **Parque Nacional da Tijuca** (p150) home to coatis, ocelots, three-toed sloths and various species of monkeys. Yet more simians (including howler monkeys) can be spotted on **Ilha Grande** (p186).

Sea turtles are making a comeback in Brazil, and you might see hatchlings in places such as **Praia do Forte** (p463) and **Mangue Seco** (p466). Whale-watching is unrivalled in certain parts of Brazil, including the offshore reef of **Parque Nacional Marinho de Abrolhos** (p491) and **Praia do Rosa** (p355), though by far the best place to see aquatic life is **Fernando de Noronha** (p539). **Bonito** (p428), with its crystal-clear rivers, makes for some great snorkeling among river fish, including meter-long catfish. Nearby canyons are home to numerous scarlet macaws.

High on any naturalist's list should be the **Pantanal** (p413), where river otters, caimans, monkeys, jaguars, anacondas and capybara, plus numerous bird species are all part of the mix. The **Amazon region** (p602), of course, has many places to see Brazil's wild side, from spotting river dolphins around **Santarém** (p623) to glimpsing toucans outside of **Manaus** (p644).



AROUND BRAZIL IN 80 MEALS

Four Weeks

Brazil has a long history of immigration and cultural diversity. A way of experiencing this is through its cuisine. Food lovers should linger in **São Paulo** (p296) and sample dishes such as *camarões à paulista* (marinated shrimp). Although Cariocas didn't invent *feijoada* (bean-and-meat stew), they serve it with finesse, making **Rio** (p165) an essential stop (hint, it's served on Saturdays). *Churrascarias* (barbecued-meat restaurants) are widespread in **Porto Alegre** (p362) and other *gaúcho* cities; it's also the place to try *erva mate*, a tealike beverage. Other southern delights are the vineyards near **Bento Gonçalves** (p365) and the German restaurants of **Blumenau** (p350). **Minas Gerais** (p87) has its own cuisine, and **Ouro Preto** (p248) is a good place to try *tutu á mineiro* (mashed black beans and manioc), served with meat dishes. Tasty fish is found in the Central West. Don't miss dourado, pacu or pintado – available in **Bonito** (p431) among other places. The Northeast has many addictive Afro-Brazilian dishes including *moqueca* (spicy fish stew) and *acarajé* (bean-and-shrimp fritters). **Salvador** (p451) is its culinary capital. The Amazon's diversity doesn't end at the waterline. Wonderful dishes such as *tacacá* (a spicy soup) and many delicious fish, including surubim, tambaqui, and the prized tucunaré, warrant the trip to **Belém** (p613).



The Authors



REGIS ST LOUIS

Coordinating Author, Rio de Janeiro City

Regis' longtime admiration for the Cidade Maravilhosa (Marvelous City) of Rio de Janeiro has led to his deep involvement with Brazil, both as a traveler and as a writer. Rio's vibrant music scene, its colorful *botecos* (small open-air bars) and samba clubs, and the alluring energy of the Cariocas are just a few of the reasons why he's returned so often over the past 10 years. Regis speaks both Portuguese and Spanish, and his articles on Brazil and Latin America have appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, the *LA Times* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, among other publications. He is also the coordinating author of Lonely Planet's *Rio de Janeiro* guide and *South America on a shoestring*. He splits his time between New York City and the tropics.



GARY CHANDLER

The Amazon

This was Gary's third time working on the Amazon chapter, and once again the mother of all rivers proved a mother to cover. In all, Gary took nine flights, a half-dozen overnight bus trips and countless boat rides; he made use of four different currencies, adjusted his watch three times and ate pizza with palm hearts on both sides of the equator. He managed to catch only two piranha, a tad shy of his 2007 record of three. Gary studied poetry and ethnic studies at UC Berkeley and has a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University. He currently lives in Colorado, USA, with his wife and fellow author Liza Prado, and their two young children.



GREGOR CLARK

Rio de Janeiro State, Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais

Gregor's passion for all things Brazilian dates back to his first Portuguese class at age 19, where he became enamored of Brazilians' exuberant vocal cadences. (Where else can you call a picnic 'peeky-neeky'?) During his many extended trips to Brazil since 1990, he's fallen in love with countless aspects of the country: the music, the food, the remarkable array of wild and beautiful places; but what always keeps him coming back for more is the warmth, enthusiasm and graciousness of Brazil's people. Gregor has written for Lonely Planet since 2000, contributing to books including those on California, Mexico and Uruguay. He lives with his wife and daughters in Vermont (USA).

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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AIMÉE DOWD

Paraná, Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul

Aimée's first encounter with Brazil was the jungly and remote northern region bordering the Guianas, which she covered for Lonely Planet's *South America on a shoestring*. Research for this edition took her to Brazil's temperate and orderly southeastern corner, where she was caught without a sweater one downright chilly night in the Serra Gaúcha and without an umbrella under the showers of Iguaçu/Iguazú Falls. When she is not covering other South American countries for Lonely Planet, Aimée lives at a cool 2850m in Quito, Ecuador, and works as a freelance travel and culture writer. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Viajes*, *Ms Magazine*, *BBC History* and four Lonely Planet books.



BRIDGET GLEESON

Bahia, Sergipe & Alagoas

A great lover of the sea, coconuts and Jorge Amado, Bridget considered her trip to northeast Brazil a dream assignment – and after two snorkeling injuries and 200 mosquito bites, she still considers it so. Based in Buenos Aires, she's also lived in the Czech Republic and Nicaragua, and she's written about adventures both indoors and out – from camping in Chilean Patagonia and horseback riding in Argentina's lake region to the pleasures of Uruguayan wine and Mexico's boutique hotels. She was the author and a contributing photographer of Lonely Planet's *Buenos Aires Encounter II*; she also writes for *Delta Sky*, AOL Travel, Tablet Hotels and Mr & Mrs Smith.



ROBERT LANDON

São Paulo State

In 2002 Robert went to Brazil for one week, stayed two, returned home only to quit his job and sell all his worldly goods. A month later he was living in Copacabana, where he still lives today with his partner and two cats. Now fluent in Portuguese, he has spent extensive time in both São Paulo and the south of Brazil, as well as in Rio. A graduate of Stanford University and the University of California at Irvine, Robert has been a travel writer for almost 15 years, including a two-year stint in Paris. His work has appeared in *Dwell* magazine, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Miami Herald*, the *Houston Chronicle* and the *San Jose Mercury News*.



KEVIN RAUB

**Pernambuco, Paraíba & Rio Grande do Norte,
Ceará, Piauí & Maranhão**

Kevin Raub grew up in Atlanta, USA, and started his career as a music journalist in New York, working for *Men's Journal* and *Rolling Stone* magazines. The rock-and-roll lifestyle took its toll, so he needed an extended vacation and took up travel writing while ditching the States for Brazil. He lives in São Paulo, but relishes his escapes to the Northeast, where he met his wife and his dream island in Fernando de Noronha. This is his 10th Lonely Planet title.



PAUL SMITH

Brasília, Goiás, Mato Grosso & Mato Grosso do Sul

From an early age, and with a vague and naive ambition to be the next David Attenborough, Paul dreamed of exploring the remotest areas of South America in search of wildlife. After spending two months at the Beni Biological Station as a student that dream started to come true, but with David Attenborough still going strong he changed his career plans, became a travel writer and moved to South America (Paraguay) permanently in 2003. While researching this edition Paul came face to face with a petulant pacu, got to grips with 'logical' addresses in Brasília and learnt that even if cerrado (savanna) fruits don't have English names, they *all* taste good!

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