



Santa Catarina

POP 6.25 MILLION

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

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- Quinta do Bucanero (p307)
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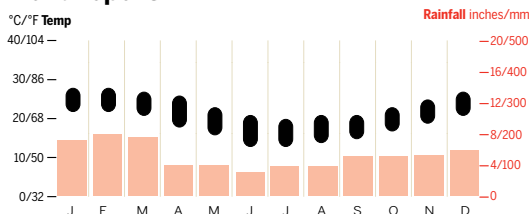
Why Go?

Life's a beach. At least in sunny Santa Catarina, which boasts 560km of spectacular coastline. If you like your beach deserted, there is a spot of sand for you in the south of Ilha de Santa Catarina. If you prefer a party scene, head further north on that same island. If you're all about big surf, it's up in Guarda do Embaú and Praia do Rosa, two absolutely stunning surf villages south of Florianópolis.

Sun and sand aside, the inland regions are also where Santa Catarina exhibits the profound influence of its German ancestry, most evident during Oktoberfest, Blumenau's huge festival for folk dancing, accordion playing and beer drinking (mostly beer drinking). But the Alpine architecture and fresh-brewed beer are here to enjoy year-round.

Like the other southern states, Santa Catarina enjoys some of Brazil's highest standards of living, with sound infrastructure and a blonde-haired, blue-eyed population that often feels more European than latin.

When to Go Florianopolis



Jan, Feb & Oct Whether Sommerfest or Oktoberfest, Blumenau is awash in beer and brat.

Mar & Apr Post-Carnaval, the sun still shines in Florianópolis.

Jun & Jul Join the Brazilian celebration of winter kitsch in Santa Catarina's Serra Geral.

History

In the 1820s, an independent Brazil realized the importance of this region on the frontier between the Spanish and Portuguese Americas. The emperor invited German-speaking immigrants to develop the land and serve as a buffer against Spanish insurgency. The German immigrants – and Italians who followed – never adopted the plantation culture of the Northeast. Instead, the economy was based on family-owned farms, a legacy that lives on in the region's egalitarian politics and equitable distribution of income.

i Getting There & Around

Florianópolis is the state's transportation hub, with direct bus and air services to every major city in Brazil. Joinville also has direct air services to São Paulo, with connections to other major cities. Most destinations within Santa Catarina are accessible from Florianópolis by bus service, which is extensive and dependable.

ILHA DE SANTA CATARINA

Ilha de Santa Catarina has a vibrant and varied coastline, from the calm, crowded bays of the north, to the wild, cliff-hugging beaches of the south. But it's not just the beaches that make this island so enchanting. A forest of protected pines shelters the east coast, while the dunes near Praia da Joaquina create a lunar landscape. The spine of mountains, luxuriant with the Mata Atlântica (Atlantic rainforest), drops precipitously down to the lovely Lagoa da Conceição.

Though technically speaking, the whole island is Florianópolis, it's downtown Floripa, known as Centro, that is the political capital of Santa Catarina, the cultural capital of southern Brazil and the gateway to the rest of the island. The island's *bairros* (districts) can feel like completely different towns with their own distinct personalities and infrastructure.



Santa Catarina Highlights

- 1** Sun, surf and snorkel around the wild sands of beautiful **Ilha de Santa Catarina** (p285).
- 2** Suck up the sophisticated surfer atmosphere in stunning **Praia da Rosa** (p306).
- 3** Drink your way through Santa Catarina's rich beer culture in the **Vale Europeu** (p304).
- 4** Join the parade of surfers and sun worshipers wading through the Rio da Madre to the stunning beach at **Guarda do Embaú** (p305).
- 5** Say *Prost!* to the world's third-largest Oktoberfest in **Blumenau** (p298).
- 6** Snorkel in the crystalline waters off **Ilha do Campeche** (p294).
- 7** Bounce about the lovely beach trifecta of **Porto Belo**, **Bombas** and **Bombinhas** (p307).
- 8** Beach-hop via the fun-packed Parque Unipraias in **Balneário Camboriú** (p302).