“All you’ve got to do is decide to go and the hardest part is over. So go!”
TONY WHEELER, COFOUNDER – LONELY PLANET

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YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT
Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip.

Welcome to South America.............. 2
Map........................................... 4
15 Top Experiences............... 6
Need to Know................................. 14
If You Like........................................ 16
Month by Month...................... 19
Itineraries.......................... 23
Countries at a Glance................. 32

SURVIVAL GUIDE
VITAL PRACTICAL INFORMATION TO HELP YOU HAVE A SMOOTH TRIP
Directory......................... 1048
Transportation.................... 1058
Health............................................. 1066
Language.......................... 1071
Index.......................... 1087
Map Legend................................. 1109

Health

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARGENTINA</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUENOS AIRES</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHEAST ARGENTINA</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Nacional Iguazú</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHWEST ARGENTINA</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salta</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebrada de Humahuaca</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATLANTIC COAST</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL ARGENTINA</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendoza</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE LAKE DISTRICT</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bariloche</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATAGONIA</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Chaltén</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Nacional Los Glaciares</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIERRA DEL FUEGO</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAND ARGENTINA</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVIVAL GUIDE</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOLIVIA</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA PAZ</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiwanaku</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAKE TITICACA</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CORDILLERAS &amp; THE YUNGAS</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHERN ALTIPLANO</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oruro</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uyuni</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarija</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL HIGHLANDS</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sucre</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potosí</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SOUTHEAST</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE AMAZON BASIN</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Nacional Madidi</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rurrenabaque</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAND BOLIVIA</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVIVAL GUIDE</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIO DE JANEIRO</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SOUTHEAST</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraty</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Paulo</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ouro Preto</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiradentes</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE SOUTH</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilha de Santa Catarina</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foz do Iguaçu</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CENTRAL WEST</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brasília</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pantanal</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonito</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NORTHEAST</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE NORTH</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazon Jungle</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAND BRAZIL</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVIVAL GUIDE</td>
<td>398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILE</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANTIAGO</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valparaiso</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN CHILE</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Pedro de Atacama</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iquique</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDDLE CHILE</td>
<td>465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE LAKES DISTRICT</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILOÉ</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Nacional Chiloé</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN PATAGONIA</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futaleufú</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHERN PATAGONIA</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Nacional Torres del Paine</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIERRA DEL FUEGO</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAPA NUI (EASTER ISLAND)</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAND CHILE</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVIVAL GUIDE</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLOMBIA</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOGOTÁ</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH OF BOGOTÁ</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CARIBBEAN COAST</td>
<td>554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Tayrona</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciudad Perdida</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartagena</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN ANDRÉS &amp; PROVIDENCIA</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHWEST COLOMBIA</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medellin</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTHWEST COLOMBIA</td>
<td>591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cali</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Agustín</td>
<td>601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMAZON BASIN</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAND COLOMBIA</td>
<td>611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURVIVAL GUIDE</td>
<td>617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECUADOR</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUITO</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitad del Mundo</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN HIGHLANDS</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindo</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otavalo</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL HIGHLANDS</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parque Nacional Cotopaxi</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Quilotoa Loop</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baños</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
- Cuenca
- THE ORIENTE
- PACIFIC COAST & LOWLANDS
- Montañita
- Guayaquil
- GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS
- UNDERSTAND ECUADOR
- SOUTHERN PARAGUAY
- Encarnación
- Parque Nacional San Rafael
- EASTERN PARAGUAY
- NORTHERN PARAGUAY
- Concepción
- Bahía Negra & the Paraguayan Pantanal
- THE CHACO
- The Mennonite Colonies
- UNDERSTAND PARAGUAY
- Survival Guide

### PERU
- LIMA
- SOUTH COAST
- Nazca
- AREQUIPA & CANYON COUNTRY
- LAKE TITICACA
- CUZCO & THE SACRED VALLEY
- Machu Picchu
- CENTRAL HIGHLANDS
- NORTH COAST
- HUARAZ & THE CORDILLERAS
- NORTHERN HIGHLANDS
- Kuélap
- AMAZON BASIN
- UNDERSTAND PERU
- Survival Guide

### VENEZUELA
- CARACAS
- Archipélago Los Roques
- THE NORTHWEST
- THE ANDES
- Mérida
- THE NORTHEAST
- Cueva del Guácharo
- ISLA DE MARGARITA
- GUAYANA
- Ciudad Bolívar
- Salto Ángel (Angel Falls)
- Canaima
- GRAN SABANA
- Roraima
- Santa Elena de Uairén
- AMAZONAS
- Puerto Ayacucho
- UNDERSTAND VENEZUELA

See the Index for a full list of destinations covered in this book.
**South America**

### Top Experiences

- **Cartagena**
  A salsa-loving, colonial beauty (p565)

- **Otavalo Market**
  Vast Andean handicrafts market (p652)

- **Machu Picchu**
  The ancient Inca citadel (p857)

- **Lake Titicaca**
  Island hopping and indigenous cultures (p192)

- **Angel Falls**
  Dramatic falls amid thick jungle (p1021)

- **Central Suriname Nature Reserve**
  Treks in rainforest (p927)

- **The Amazon**
  The fabled rainforest (p385)
Paul Smith
Paraguay 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 the globe in search of wildlife, eventually settling in Paraguay in 2004. While researching this edition Paul came face to face with a jaguar in the Pantanal, witnessed a coup d’état, was re-impressed by the power of water at the Itaipú Dam and learned about Jesuit cosmology.

Lucas Vidgen
Argentina, Uruguay Lucas was born in Australia but has been wandering around Latin America ever since he saved up the money for his first airfare. He’s lived in Quito and Buenos Aires and came very close to renting an apartment in Montevideo. Lucas has contributed to a range of Lonely Planet titles, including various editions of the Argentina and South America guides. He currently lives in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, where he publishes – and occasionally works on – XelaWho magazine (www.xelawho.com).
Gregor Clark
Brazil A South American travel addict since 1990, Gregor Clark has traveled everywhere from Caracas to Tierra del Fuego, from the Galápagos to Machu Picchu to Easter Island. But Brazil remains his favorite country of all, thanks to the warmth, exuberance and graciousness of its people. Peak experiences on this trip included discovering Caraíva and Alter do Chão, returning to Jericoacoara and Lençóis, and finally reaching the Lençóis Maranhenses (a longstanding dream). Gregor contributes regularly to Lonely Planet’s Brazil and Argentina guides.

Alex Egerton
Colombia A journalist by trade, Alex has been coming to Colombia for 15 years since falling in love with the country while on a mad six-week dash from Venezuela to Mexico. During that time he has learned to love aguardiente, climbed several of the country’s majestic peaks and became a big fan of tejo, but he still can’t dance salsa. When not on the road, Alex splits his time between Medellín and rural Nicaragua.

Bridget Gleeson
Chile Based in Buenos Aires, Bridget was just starting out as a travel writer when her sister fell in love with a Chilean. She’s been crossing the Andes ever since to visit the Santiago branch of the family, learning how to mix the perfect pisco sour and prepare a proper ceviche along the way. She writes about Latin American food, wine and travel for Lonely Planet, Budget Travel, Afar, Jetsetter and BBC Travel. Follow her adventures at www.bridgetgleeson.com.

Beth Kohn
Venezuela An aficionada of Latin American rhythms and culture since her Miami childhood, Beth has claimed the window seat on buses throughout the Spanish-speaking world. During her third Lonely Planet sojourn to Venezuela, she was shooed out of the construction site of the new Simón Bolívar Mausoleum, just missed seeing a presidential candidate, and clocked untold hours crisscrossing the country in rattletrap porotos. A resident of San Francisco, she’s coauthored almost 20 books for Lonely Planet, including the California, Mexico and Yosemite, Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks guides. You can see more of her writing and photography at www.bethkohn.com.

Carolyn McCarthy
Peru Carolyn had her first major encounter with cumbia and palm reading on an early trip to Peru. For this trip, she sampled hundreds of Peruvian delicacies, climbed Huayna Picchu and checked into one medical clinic. Some of her other Lonely Planet titles include Argentina, Panama, Yellowstone & Grand Teton National Parks, USA and Trekking in the Patagonian Andes. Among other publications, she has written for National Geographic, Outside and Boston Globe. You can follow her Americas blog at www.carolynswildblueyonder.blogspot.com.

Kevin Raub
Brazil Kevin grew up in Atlanta and started his career as a music journalist in New York, working for Men’s Journal and Rolling Stone magazines. He ditched the rock ’n roll lifestyle for travel writing and moved to Brazil. Ever since, he’s suffered from Bland Brazilian Beer Disease. Then he met the South. From Blumenau’s German-influenced microbreweries to Porto Alegre’s Dirty Old Man, Brazil’s best boutique beer bar, he found cerveja salvation in the Brazilian south. This is Kevin’s 22nd Lonely Planet guide. Find him at www.kevinraub.net.
OUR STORY
A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that’s all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they’d sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony’s belief that ‘a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse’.

OUR WRITERS

Regis St Louis
Coordinating Author, Ecuador After his first trip to the Andes in 1999, Regis returned home, sold all his belongings and set off on a classic journey across Latin America. Since then, he’s returned numerous times, logging thousands of miles on dodgy jungle and mountain roads. On his most recent trip he swam with sea lions in the Galápagos, cycled the scenic Baños-to-Puyo highway and thrashed a rental car on the back roads of Cotopaxi. Regis is the coordinating author of Lonely Planet’s Ecuador and Brazil guides, and he has contributed to more than three dozen Lonely Planet titles. He lives in New York City.

Sandra Bao
Argentina Sandra is a Chinese-American born in Argentina who has traveled to around 60 countries – but now calls the beautiful Pacific Northwest home. She’s still proud to be a porteñía, however, and regularly returns to Argentina to investigate what the wildly fluctuating peso is doing. As well as writing sections of the Argentina chapter, over the last decade Sandra has contributed to a couple dozen Lonely Planet titles.

Greg Benchwick
Bolivia Greg started his career in journalism as the managing editor of the world-famous Bolivian Times, covering everything from the war on drugs to human-rights abuses and the state of affairs in Bolivia’s numerous bars and discotecas. Since then he’s written dozens of guidebooks on countries throughout Latin America, interviewed Bolivian campesinos and políticos for the UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development, and continued on a path toward happiness and nonstop adventure.

Celeste Brash
French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname This was Celeste’s second trip to the Guianas and she’s determined there will be a third. The down-to-earth adventure and rugged warmth remind her of her ex-home on an atoll in French Polynesia where she lived for 15 years. She currently resides in Portland, Oregon, and writes lots of other Lonely Planet guides (around 40 so far) as well as articles for publications ranging from Islands Magazine to the LA Times. Find her on the web at www.celestebrash.com.

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Itineraries

The Big Loop »
Andean High »
Deep South »
Sailing the Mighty Amazon »
Atlantic Coast »

Pelourinho, the historic center of Salvador, Brazil (p337)
The Big Loop

Four to Six Months
This classic South American journey takes in some of the continent’s most famous sites, including Andean peaks, Amazonian rainforest, Machu Picchu, Iguazú Falls and the Galápagos Islands. The journey begins and ends in Buenos Aires.

» Start off in Buenos Aires. Spend several days exploring the mesmerizing Argentine capital.

» Go east to Bariloche for spectacular scenery then north to historic Córdoba and gorgeous Salta before crossing over to Chile’s desert oasis of San Pedro de Atacama.

» Head into Bolivia to experience the surreal Salar de Uyuni.

» Continue to La Paz and on to Peru via Lake Titicaca.

» Linger in ancient Cuzco and at mystical Machu Picchu before going to Lima and on to Ecuador.

» From Guayaquil, fly to the otherworldly Galápagos Islands.

» Back on the mainland, visit colonial Cuenca and historic Quito.

» Pass into Colombia to see the spectacular Zona Cafetera and bustling Medellín, then go to Cartagena to chill out on the Caribbean.

» See beautiful Parque Nacional Tayrona and then hang out for a couple of days in Mérida, Venezuela, before visiting Salto Ángel.

» Cross into Brazil and onto Manaus for a jungle trip before flying down to Rio de Janeiro for beaches and nightlife.

» Visit thundering Iguazú Falls before returning to Buenos Aires.
Andean High

Two Months
For rugged adventure, unparalleled alpine vistas, rich indigenous cultures and colorful market towns journey down the Andes from Colombia to Argentina. Along the way, you’ll pass through colonial towns, cloud forests and surreal desert landscapes.

» Fly into Bogotá, taking in the old historic center and lively nightlife.
» Continue south to San Agustín to explore pre-Columbian ruins, and on to Parque Nacional Puracé, for Andean treks.
» Then go to Pasto and on to the beautifully set Laguna de la Cocha.
» Cross into Ecuador and visit Otavalo, for markets and day trips to alpine lakes.
» Head west to Mindo for misty cloud-forest adventures.
» Continue south through Quito and on to Volcán Cotopaxi, for hikes and majestic scenery.
» Visit colonial Cuenca, relax in laid-back Vilcabamba, then continue into Peru and down to Huaraz for trekking in the Cordillera Blanca.

» Spend a few days in Cuzco, then hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu.
» Head across shimmering Lake Titicaca into Bolivia for more hiking in the Cordillera Real.
» Continue south to the Salar de Uyuni, before crossing to Argentina by way of the spectacular Quebrada de Humahuaca.
» Continue into Argentina toward enchanting Mendoza, near massive Cerro Aconcagua, the western hemisphere’s highest peak.

Clockwise from top left
1 Street food in Bogotá, Colombia (p532) 2 Highlands around Mindo, Ecuador (p651) 3 Plaza de Bolívar, Bogotá (p532) 4 Parque Nacional Huascaran, Peru (p884)
Deep South

One to Two Months
Mysterious, windswept, glacier-riddled Patagonia is one of South America’s most magical destinations. Patagonia – and the archipelago of Tierra del Fuego – is best visited November through March, and you can see more for cheaper if you camp.

» Start in the outdoors-loving town of Bariloche. Take in the stunning Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi and Parque Nacional Lanín.

» Head south to Esquel, for a taste of the Old Patagonian Express.

» Travel west into Chile to the Andean hamlet of Futaleufú for some of the continent’s best rafting.

» Take the scenic Carretera Austral to Coyhaique and on to Lago General Carrera, and visit the caves of Capilla de Mármol.

» Head to the windswept Chile Chico, then cross into Argentina to Los Antiguos.

» Bounce down to El Chaltén in spectacular Parque Nacional Los Glaciares, and on to the wondrous Glaciar Perito Moreno near El Calafate.

» Cross back into Chile to hike beneath the granite spires of Torres del Paine.

» Head to Punta Arenas, then south into Argentina’s Tierra del Fuego and bottom out at Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world.

» Work back north along the Atlantic, stopping for penguins in Reserva Provincial Punta Tombo and whales in Reserva Faunística Península Valdés.

» End the trip in Buenos Aires.

Clockwise from top left
1 Parque Nacional Lanín, Argentina (p127) 2 Fitz Roy range, Argentina (p146) 3 Glaciar Perito Moreno, Argentina (p151) 4 Ushuaia, Argentina (p153)
Itineraries

The Big Loop »
Andean High »
Deep South »
Sailing the Mighty Amazon »
Atlantic Coast »

Pelourinho, the historic center of Salvador, Brazil (p337)
Sailing the Mighty Amazon

One to Two Months
The mightiest river on the planet makes a fabled setting for adventure. This tough but rewarding journey travels its length, taking in wildlife-watching, historic cities and beautiful river beaches.

» Start in Pucallpa, Peru (a flight or long bus ride from Lima).
» Before hitting the river, visit nearby Lago Yarinacocha, a lovely oxbow lake ringed by tribal villages.
» From Pucallpa, begin the classic slow riverboat journey north along the Río Ucayali to Lagunas, where you can continue on to the wildlife-rich Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria. Afterwards, spend a day exploring the bustling city of Iquitos.
» From here, get a boat to the tri-border region of Peru, Colombia and Brazil, and take a break in Colombia’s Leticia.

» From Leticia, it’s three more arduous days to the bustling city of Manaus, which is famed for its 19th-century opera house and buzzing markets. This is also a great base for jungle excursions.
» Chug east to Santarém, where you can visit the white-sand beaches of Alter do Chão.
» Another 3½ days further, and you’ll reach culturally rich Belém, a good spot for sampling traditional Amazonian cuisine.
» Cross over to Ilha de Marajó, a massive river island dotted with friendly towns, wandering buffaloes and pleasant beaches.

Above
1 Toucan 2 Canoeing on Rio Solimões, Brazil (p381)
Atlantic Coast

One to Two Months
Colonial towns, Afro-Brazilian culture, gorgeous beaches and buzzing nightlife set the stage for an epic 7400km ramble up the Atlantic coast. Surfing, snorkeling, forest treks and urban exploring are all essential experiences along the way.

» Start off in Argentina, spending a few days taking in the charms of Buenos Aires before ferrying over to historic Montevideo.

» Stop in Uruguay’s pretty beach towns – Punta del Este, La Paloma and Punta del Diablo – en route to Brazil.

» Make your way to Florianópolis, gateway to secluded beaches and stunning scenery, then head up the coast to the scenic colonial town of Paraty, and get your island fix on rainforest-covered Ilha Grande.

» Northeast of there await the pretty beaches, lush scenery and samba-fueled nightlife of Rio de Janeiro.

» Fly to Porto Seguro and continue to Trancoso and Arraial d’Ajuda – both enticing, laid-back towns near cliff-backed beaches.

» Spend a few days in Salvador, Brazil’s mesmerizing Afro-Brazilian gem.

» Further up the coast, visit pretty Olinda, then catch a flight from Recife to the spectacular archipelago of Fernando de Noronha.

» Back on the mainland, travel north, stopping at the backpackers’ paradise of Jericoacoara and the surreal dunes of Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses.

» The final stops are reggae-charged São Luís and untouristy colonial Alcântara.

Above
1 Jericoacoara, Brazil (p365) 2 Festival in Salvador, Brazil (p334)