



“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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PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

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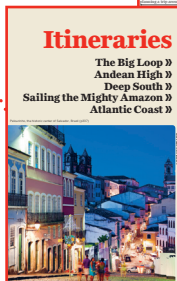
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Festivals & Events
Brazil's carnival is the most famous, but there are many others. In Argentina, the Tango Festival is a must-see. In Chile, the Viña del Mar International Festival of Music is a highlight.

Hiking & Trekking
The Inca Trail to Machu Picchu is the most popular, but there are many other trails. In Argentina, the El Caminito trail is a great option. In Chile, the Torres del Paine circuit is a must-do.

Wildlife
Brazil is home to many species of monkeys and birds. In Argentina, the Patagonian condor is a sight to behold. In Chile, the guanaco is a common sight in the Andes.

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THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

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Carolyn McCarthy, Kevin Raub, Paul Smith, Lucas Vidgen**

➤ **Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favorite places are listed first**

➤ **Look out for these icons:**



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

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A salsa-loving, colonial beauty (p565)

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The ancient Inca citadel (p857)

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Island hopping and indigenous cultures (p192)

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Dramatic falls amid thick jungle (p1021)

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South America

Top Experiences

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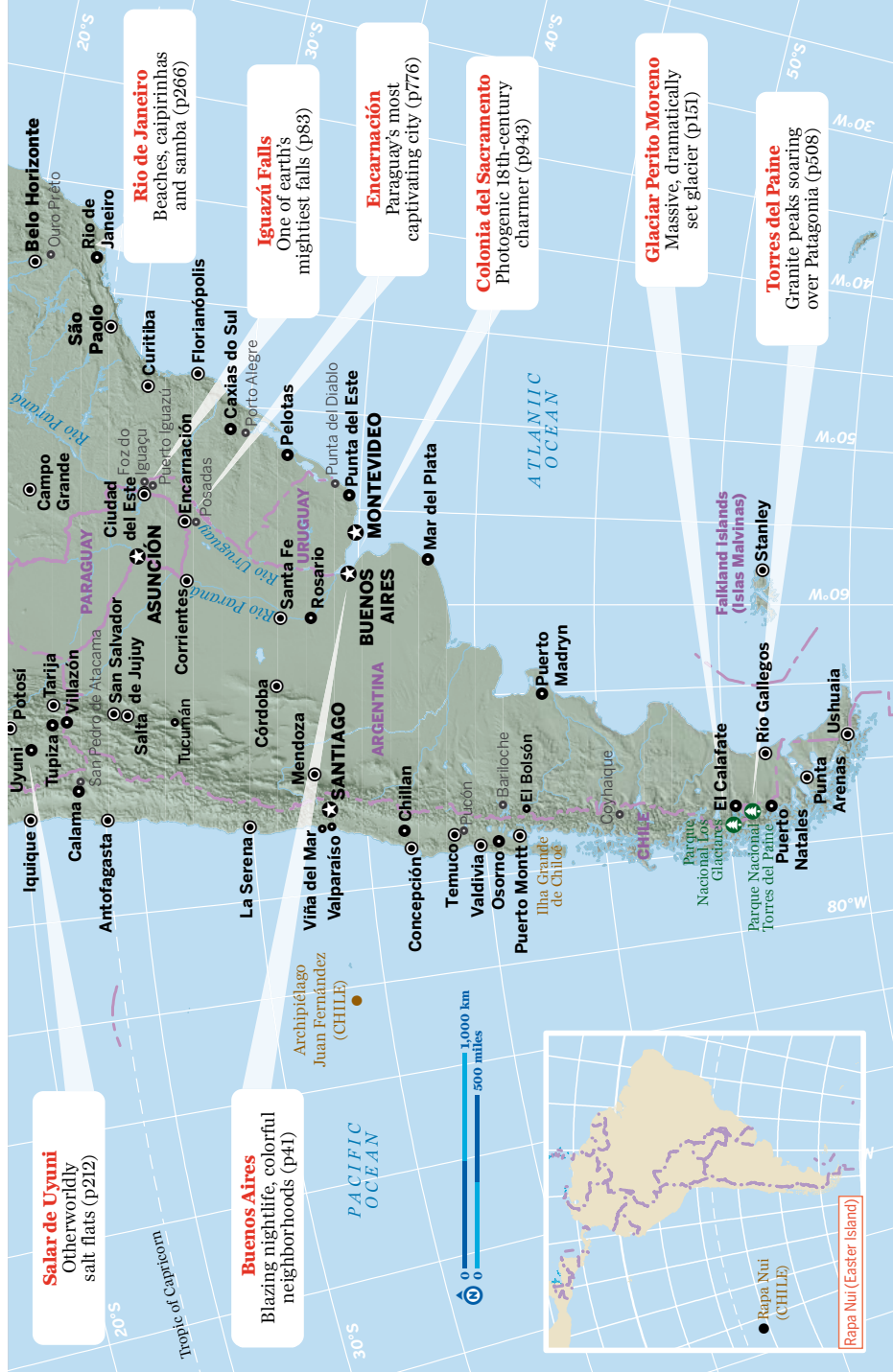
Iguazú Falls
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Massive, dramatically
set glacier (p151)

Torres del Paine
Granite peaks soaring
over Patagonia (p508)



● Rapa Nui (CHILE)
Rapa Nui (Easter Island)



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 Caraiva 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 shoed 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 *por puestos*. 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.

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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.

Read more about Kevin at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/kraub



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 *porteña*, 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.

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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.

Read more about Greg at:
lonelyplanet.com/members/gbenchwick



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

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OVER MORE PAGE WRITERS

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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.



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- » 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**.

Clockwise from top left

1 Children in Cuzco, Peru (p84) 2 Plaza de Armas, Cuzco (p84) 3 Volcán Licancabur, Chile (p45) 4 Quito, Ecuador (p628)

2

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3

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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.



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AEL FASSIO / GETTY IMAGES ©

- » 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 **Otavallo**, 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 Huascarán, Peru (p884)

2



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3



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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.



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DAN FAIRCHILD / GETTY IMAGES ©



- » 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)

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Itineraries

The Big Loop »
Andean High »
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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.



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PAUL EDMONDSON / GETTY IMAGES ©



- » 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.



1

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2

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» 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)

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