

# Welcome to Brazil

*Tropical islands, lush rainforests, marvelous cities and picture-perfect beaches set the scene for the great Brazilian adventure.*

## Landscapes & Biodiversity

One of the world's most captivating places, Brazil is a country of powdery white-sand beaches, verdant rainforests and wild, rhythm-filled metropolises. Brazil's attractions extend from frozen-in-time colonial towns to otherworldly landscapes of red-rock canyons, thundering waterfalls and coral-fringed 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. There are countless places where you can spot iconic species in Brazil, including toucans, scarlet macaws, howler monkeys, capybaras, pink dolphins, sea turtles and thousands of other living species.

## The Rhythms of Brazil

Wherever there's music, that carefree Brazilian lust for life tends to appear – whether dancing with *cariocas* (residents of Rio) at Rio's atmospheric samba clubs or following powerful drumbeats through the streets of Salvador. There's the dance-hall *farró* music of the Northeast, twirling *carimbó* music of the Amazon, scratch-skilled DJs of São Paulo and an endless variety of regional sounds that extend from the twangy country music of the sunbaked Sertanejo, to the hard-edged reggae of Maranhão.

## Joie de Vivre

Brazil's most famous celebration, Carnival, storms through the country's cities and towns with hip-shaking samba and *frevó* (music and dance style), dazzling costumes and parties that last until sunup, but Brazilians hardly limit their revelry to a few weeks of the year. *Festas* (festivals) happen throughout the year, and provide a window into Brazil's incredible diversity. The streets are carpeted with flowers during Ouro Preto's Semana Santa (Holy Week), while in the north, Bumba Meu Boi blends indigenous, African and Portuguese folklore. For a taste of the Old World, hit Blumenau's beer- and schnitzel-loving Oktoberfest, the largest outside of Germany. Several cities, such as Recife, Fortaleza and Natal, even host Carnival at other times of year.

## Days of Adventure

Brazil offers big adventures for travelers with budgets large and small. There's horseback riding and wildlife watching in the Pantanal, kayaking flooded forests in the Amazon, ascending rocky clifftops to panoramic views, whale watching off the coast, surfing stellar breaks off palm-fringed beaches and snorkeling crystal-clear rivers or coastal reefs – all are part of the great Brazilian experience.



## Why I Love Brazil

By Regis St Louis, Writer

The music, the beaches, the wildlife, and most importantly the people: it's hard not to fall for Brazil. Rio de Janeiro is one of my favorite cities: I never tire of watching the sunset from Arpoador, chasing the samba scene in Lapa or wandering the village-like streets of Santa Teresa. But Rio is just the beginning, and in Brazil there really is no end. I have fond memories spotting wildlife (especially in the Pantanal and the Amazon), making friends in small towns and finding incredible musicians in unlikely places. There's really no other country that offers so much.

**For more about our writers, see page 736**