



# São Paulo State

📍 11 / POP 41.2 MILLION

## Includes ➔

São Paulo City.....	219
Paulista Coast.....	255
Ubatuba .....	255
São Sebastião.....	258
Ilhabela .....	259
Iguape & Around.....	262

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Maní (p241)
- ➔ Patuá da Baiana (p244)
- ➔ Mocotó (p245)
- ➔ Cantinho da Lagoa (p257)
- ➔ Marukuthai (p261)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Pousada Picinguaba (p257)
- ➔ Hotel Emiliano (p237)
- ➔ We Hostel Design (p236)
- ➔ Na Mata Suites (p259)
- ➔ Guest Urban (p238)

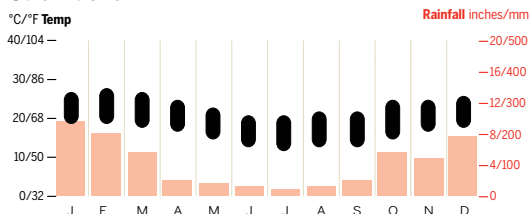
## Why Go?

Speaking of São Paulo state without using superlatives is difficult. The southern hemisphere's largest city! Its finest museums! Its best restaurants! Its worst traffic! (Well, you can't have everything.) São Paulo city – Sampa to locals – serves as Brazil's Boom Town, commercially, financially, industrially and culturally, and an explosion of sophisticated travelers descending on the city's extraordinary restaurants, art galleries, bars and cultural centers has ensured the sprawling city remains a must-stop for urban-addicted sophisticates.

Inland from the cityscape, the Serra da Mantiqueira's 2500m peaks play the novel Alpine-esque getaway role, while Iporanga sits tucked away in pristine Brazilian Atlantic Forest. And out to sea, some of southeastern Brazil's finest beaches cling both to the mountainous stretch of rainforest-backdropped coastline near Ubatuba; and to nearby Ilhabela, which relishes its position as São Paulo's cosmopolitan island escape.

## When to Go

### São Paulo



**Dec–Feb** Tropical downpours be damned, Sampa sizzles in summer nonetheless.

**Mar & Sep** Cooler temps, drier skies and São Paulo's best restaurants on sale for Restaurant Week.

**Jun & Jul** Jackets required in the mountains, but therein lies the novelty.

## **i** Getting There & Around

The state's capital, São Paulo city, is Brazil's principal hub for international travel. Dozens of airlines have direct international services to São Paulo's newly-expanded Guarulhos airport, and there are direct bus services from neighboring countries. The city is also a major center for domestic air travel. The state's highway system is among the best in South America, making driving a good option, though São Paulo city itself can be maddening because of poor signage and horrendous traffic. Alternatively, there are also frequent and good long-distance bus services to destinations across the country.

## SÃO PAULO CITY

☎ 0XX11 / POP 11.3 MILLION (CITY), 19.9 MILLION (METRO) / ELEV 760M

São Paulo is a monster. Enormous, intimidating and, at first glance at least, no great beauty. It's a difficult city for the traveler to master and one that may not seem worth the sweat. Even the most partisan *paulistano* – resident of São Paulo city – will rail about the smog, the traffic, the crumbling sidewalks and the gaping divide between poor and rich.

But in the same breath they'll tell you they'd never live anywhere else. Let them guide you to their favorite haunts and the reason for this will begin to unfold. Maybe they will introduce you to the city's innumerable art-house cinemas and experimental theaters. If they're gourmards, you'll focus on the smart bistros and gourmet restaurants that make the city a world-renowned foodie haven. If they're scenesters, double up on espresso before embarking on a tour of raucous underground bars and the 24/7 clubbing scene. Whatever pleasures you might covet, Sampa – as the city is known – probably has them in spades.

This fertile cultural life is supported by Brazil's biggest and best-educated middle class and further enriched by literally hundreds of distinct ethnic groups – including the largest community of people of Japanese descent outside Japan, the largest population of Italian descendants outside Italy and a significant Arab community fueled mostly by Lebanese and Syrian immigration. There are one million people of German stock, as well, sizable Chinese, Armenian, Lithuanian, Greek, Korean, Polish and Hungarian communities; and, most recently, growing numbers of Peruvians, Bolivians, Haitians and Africans. São Paulo also has the largest openly gay community in Latin America.

An estimated 20 million people live in greater São Paulo, making it the third-largest metropolis on earth. Besides a dizzying avalanche of first-rate museums, cultural centers, experimental theaters and cinemas, Sampa's nightclubs and bars are among the best on the continent (15,000 bars make for one hell of a pub crawl) and its restaurants are among the world's best. Its relentless, round-the-clock pulse – a close cousin of New York or Tokyo – can prove taxing even for the fiercest hipster. Then again, it may just deliver the charge you need to discover one of the world's great cities.

## History

The history of the city of São Paulo largely mirrors that of the state. For the first three centuries after the arrival of Jesuits here in 1554, the city grew only gradually as a posting station for fortune hunters heading for the interior, and growers from nearby sugar plantations.

Upon Brazil's independence in 1822, São Paulo was declared a state capital, a decision that in turn led to the founding of the College of Law – arguably Brazil's first public institution of higher learning. An increasingly important political and intellectual center, the city was soon leading the fight both to end slavery and to found the republic.

The city's fortunes began to rise in the late 19th century when the region's planters began replacing sugar with the world's new, favorite cash crop: coffee. Some of the coffee barons' mansions still line Av Paulista today. The millions of descendants of immigrants who came to work those plantations – especially Italians and Japanese – are another legacy of the coffee boom.

When coffee prices plummeted at the beginning of the 20th century, there was enough capital left over to transform the city into an industrial powerhouse. Factory jobs attracted immigrants from around the world, and the city's population practically doubled every decade between 1920 and 1980. In the 1980s, foreign immigration slowed, but laborers streamed in from the drought-stricken Northeast. Many found work building the city's new skyscrapers. Unfortunately, growth far outpaced investment in the city's infrastructure. Today, serious traffic, crime and pollution still flummox city leaders and remain serious problems, but the dynamism of its culture and economy is still attracting the best and brightest from all over Brazil.