

São Paulo State



It is hard to speak of São Paulo state without using superlatives. The region is home to Brazil's largest industrial output, its largest (and most ethnically diverse) population, the richest of its rich, its biggest stock exchange, its busiest port, its finest museums, its worst traffic and its vastest slums. Paulistas, as residents of São Paulo state are known, take pride in their ascendancy, sometimes irking residents of other states in the process, particularly their tetchy neighbors in Rio. But that, to a good Paulista, only proves the point. Everyone's just envious, you see.

With Rio's economic star in eclipse in recent decades (the 2016 Olympics and discovery of oil may change that) and Brasília limited to governmental functions, the sprawling city of São Paulo in many ways serves as the country's de facto capital – commercially, financially, industrially and culturally. If you're doing business in Brazil, this is where you're likely to end up. But there has also been an explosion of interest among sophisticated travelers who are catching wind of the city's extraordinary restaurants, art scene and nightlife.

Still, there are good reasons to escape the clutches of the state's main city. Just beyond the jungle-draped coastal mountains lie some of southern Brazil's finest beaches. The mountainous stretch of coast around Ubatuba is particularly winning. Inland, the area around Campos do Jordão delivers the stunning vistas – and chilly air – of the Serra da Mantiqueira, whose green peaks reach more than 2500m. Further afield, Iporanga sits amid one of the least disturbed areas of Brazilian Atlantic Forest, while the nearby state park boasts hundreds of cataloged caves, making it Brazil's Capital das Grutas (Cave Capital).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Gape at the sheer size of São Paulo city from the art-deco heights of the **Banespa building** (p283)
- Stalk the rich at their preferred eateries and watering holes in São Paulo city's leafy **Jardins district** (p297)
- Determine which of **São Paulo city's legendary nightclubs** (p299) best cater to your unique nightlife needs
- Seek out wild, deserted beaches where mountains meet sea just north of **Ubatuba** (p304)
- Hike amid the green peaks of the **Serra da Mantiqueira** (p313), known as 'Brazil's Switzerland'



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 11

■ POPULATION: 41.4 MILLION

■ AREA: 248,800 SQ KM

