



# South America on a shoestring



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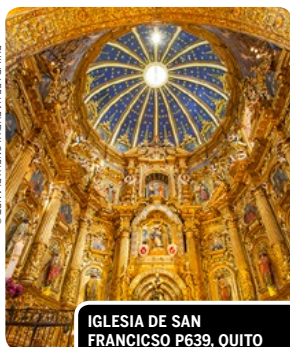
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# Itineraries



4-6  
MONTHS

## The Big Loop

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.

Start off in **Buenos Aires**. Spend several days exploring the mesmerizing Argentine capital. Go west to **Bariloche** for spectacular scenery then head to Chile's verdant Lakes District at **Puerto Varas**. Continue north to **Santiago**, then cross back into Argentina to **Córdoba** and gorgeous **Salta** before re-entering Chile at the 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 at ancient **Cuzco** and **Machu Picchu** before going to **Lima** and on to Ecuador.

From **Guayaquil**, fly to the **Galápagos Islands**. Back on the mainland, visit colonial **Cuenca** and historic **Quito**. Pass into Colombia to the lush **Zona Cafetera** and bustling **Medellín**, then go to **Cartagena** for Caribbean allure. See beautiful **Parque Nacional Natural Tayrona** and relax in **Mérida**, Venezuela, before visiting **Salto Ángel**. Cross into Brazil and onto **Manaus** for a jungle trip. Afterwards fly down to **Rio de Janeiro** for beaches and nightlife. Visit thundering **Iguazú Falls** and return to Buenos Aires.

2  
MONTHS

## Andean High

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 the 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.



## Deep South

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 outstanding rafting. Take the scenic Carretera Austral to **Coyhaique** and on to **Lago General Carrera**, and visit the caves of **Capilla de Mármol**. Head to 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 **Glaciér Perito Moreno** near El Calafate.

Cross back into Chile at Puerto Natales 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 edge-of-the-earth **Ushuaia**.

Travel 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**.





## Sailing the Mighty Amazon

This tough but rewarding journey travels the length of the fabled Amazon, taking in wildlife-watching, historic cities and beautiful river beaches.

Start in **Pucallpa**, Peru (a flight or 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 reach the wildlife-rich **Reserva Nacional Pacaya-Samiria**.

Afterwards, spend a day exploring the bustling city of **Iquitos**. From here, get a boat to the triborder 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.

From here, cross over to **Ilha de Marajó**, a massive river island dotted with friendly towns, wandering buffaloes and pleasant beaches.



## Atlantic Coast

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**. Follow Uruguay's coastline north through glitzy **Punta del Este**, dune-fringed **Cabo Polonio** and the laid-back beach town of **Punta del Diablo**.

Make your way to **Florianópolis**, gateway to secluded beaches and stunning scenery, then head up to the scenic colonial town of **Paraty**, and rainforest-covered **Ilha Grande**.

Continue to **Rio de Janeiro** for pretty beaches, lush scenery and samba-fueled nightlife. 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 **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 colonial **Alcântara**.

## South America: Off the Beaten Track

0 0 1,000 km  
0 0 500 miles

### POPAYÁN

This lively university town has lovely colonial architecture, grand museums and a celebrated (but affordable) food scene. It's also near the indigenous market town of Silvia. (p608)

### LOS LAGOS

In a little-visited wilderness in Bolivia's north, you'll find a series of striking natural lakes amid rainforest. Come here by bus July to November, and charter a plane at other times. (p262)

### PENÍNSULA DE PARIA

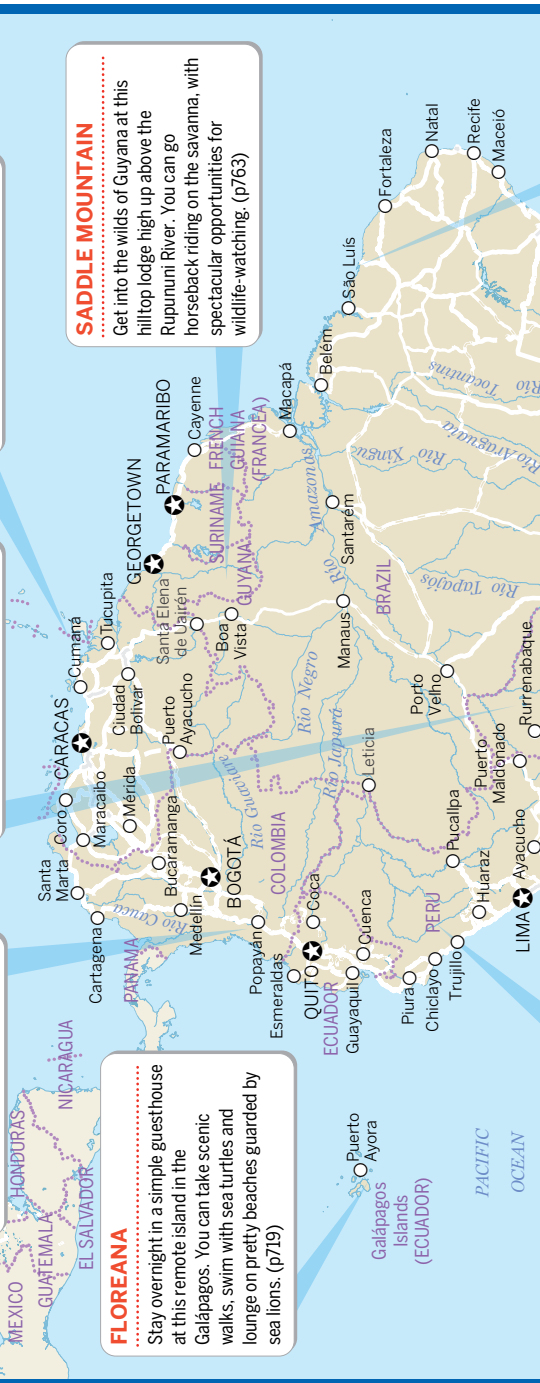
The rainforest comes right to the edge of the sea on this magnificent, little-explored peninsula on the Caribbean coast. Among its other charms are Venezuela's prettiest beaches. (p999)

### FLOREANA

Stay overnight in a simple guesthouse at this remote island in the Galápagos. You can take scenic walks, swim with sea turtles and lounge on pretty beaches guarded by sea lions. (p719)

### SADDLE MOUNTAIN

Get into the wilds of Guyana at this hilltop lodge high up above the Rupununi River. You can go horseback riding on the savanna, with spectacular opportunities for wildlife-watching. (p763)





### KUÉLAP

Escape the Machu Picchu crowds at this stunning pre-Columbian citadel in the north of Peru. You can make the most of the experience by overnighting at one of the basic guesthouses here. (p890)

### THE CHACO

Paraguay's wild, dusty west teems with animal life. You can camp out under star-filled skies and spend your days spying macaws, otters, tapirs and countless other creatures. (p789)

### PATAGONIA NATIONAL PARK

This gem of restored grasslands, rushing rivers and snowbound peaks is home to guanacos, flamingos, foxes and pumas, and has great infrastructure for camping and hiking. (p512)

### PARQUE NACIONAL DOS LENÇÓIS MARANHENSES

Come between March and September to see this landscape at its most dramatic, when crystal-clear freshwater lagoons fill the hollows between high, undulating dunes. (p386)

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/Subte station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

*Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book*



**Lucas Vidgen**

[Argentina \(Northeast Argentina, Northwest Argentina, Atlantic Coast, Central Argentina, The Lake District\)](#) Lucas first visited Argentina in 2001 and was captivated by the country's wide open spaces and cosmopolitan cities. The huge amount of quality beef and wine didn't go unnoticed, either. Lucas has contributed to a variety of Latin American Lonely Planet titles, including various editions of the *Argentina* and *South America* books. He currently divides his time

between his hometown of Melbourne, Australia, and his adopted mountain home in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

**Alex Egerton**

**Colombia** A journalist by trade, Alex has worked in Latin America for more than a decade, regularly wandering the back roads from Mexico to Argentina. He is currently based in southern Colombia where he travels extensively and writes about the country for a variety of media. When not on the road researching guidebooks, you'll find him hiking around the remote landscapes of the upper Amazon, Chocó and southern mountains or working on his *tejo* technique closer to home.

**Brian Kluepfel**

**Bolivia** Brian lived in La Paz at the cusp of the 21st century, working for the late, great *Bolivian Times*. He's since returned to interview musicians for a proposed book, *The Charango Road*, and contributed cultural materials to Lonely Planet's 2006 *Bolivia* guide. His favorite tasks this time were being compelled to watch gorgeous birds in the Amazon, being force-fed delicious *sonsos* against his will, walking down the Prado at rush hour and running off the side of a mountain in La

Paz (with a paraglider attached).

**Tom Masters**

**Venezuela** Tom has traveled widely in Venezuela since first visiting as a backpacker and was one of the authors on the last Lonely Planet *Venezuela* guide in 2010. Returning for *South America on a shoestring* to update the Venezuela content, Tom found the country as friendly, fun and staggeringly beautiful as ever, despite its poor safety record and myriad economic problems. Tom lives in Berlin and can be found online at [www.tommasters.net](http://www.tommasters.net).

**Carolyn McCarthy**

**Argentina (Esquel, Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego), Chile** Author Carolyn McCarthy has spent over a decade exploring Patagonia, which amounts to many rounds of maté, cracked windshields and altered plans. She specializes in Latin America and the US West, and has contributed to more than 30 titles for Lonely Planet, including *Chile*, *Panama*, *Trekking in the Patagonian Andes*, *Argentina*, *Peru*, *Colombia*, *The Southwest* and US national parks guides. She has written for *Outside*, *BBC Magazine*, *National Geographic* and others. Follow her travels on Instagram @masmerquen and Twitter @RoamingMcC.

**Kevin Raub**

**Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, The Southeast, The South, The Central West)** Kevin Raub 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, where he has now traversed 21 of 26 Brazilian states in pursuit of caipirinha bliss. He was also LP's man on the ground for the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil. This is Kevin's 36th Lonely Planet

guide. Follow him on Twitter (@RaubOnTheRoad).

Read more about Kevin at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/kraub>

**Paul Smith**

**Paraguay** Paraguay is South America's forgotten corner, and after 12 years living here, working as a biologist/travel writer, Paul has a good case for claiming that he knows the ins and outs of the country better than most. Paul has been working for Lonely Planet since 2006, working on numerous guidebooks, especially in South America, a region that he is fascinated by. He lives in Encarnación with his wife, Carol, and son, Shawn, Paraguay's future Lionel Messi.

**Phillip Tang**

**Peru** A degree in Latin America studies brought Phillip Tang to these shores, and over a decade later he still finds himself feeling breathless (only slightly literally) pondering a canyon in Colca or the ocean in Miraflores. He writes about travel on his two loves, Asia and Latin America, and has contributed to Lonely Planet's guides to China, Japan and Mexico, and on Peru elsewhere. Find his Peru Insta-photos from this visit through [philliptang.co.uk](http://philliptang.co.uk).



## 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 Dublin, Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, 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, Plan, Understand, Survival Guide** After Regis' first journey to the Andes in 1999, he returned home, sold all his belongings and set off on a classic journey across South America. Since then, he's returned numerous times, traveling dodgy roads by truck, horse and bicycle; scaling Andean peaks (small ones) and flailing away at Spanish and Portuguese. On his most recent trip he enjoyed biking, kayaking and boating around the Galápagos; he made friends

with local storytellers on enchanting Floreana; and he developed a newfound admiration for the tropically infused city of Guayaquil. Regis is also the coordinating author of Lonely Planet's *Ecuador* and *Brazil* guidebooks, and he has contributed to more than 50 Lonely Planet titles. When not on the road, he lives in New Orleans.



### Sandra Bao

**Argentina (Buenos Aires)** Sandra is a Chinese-American who was born in Argentina and lived there until she was nine. She's traveled to around 60 countries and now lives in the USA's gorgeous Pacific Northwest. She's proud to be a *porteña* and regularly returns to Argentina to investigate what the wildly fluctuating peso is doing, as well as catch up on her steak-eating quota. Over the last 15 years Sandra has contributed to a few dozen Lonely Planet titles.

Read more about Sandra at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/sandrabao>



### Celeste Brash

**Guyana, French Guiana, Suriname** Celeste Brash has written over 50 Lonely Planet guidebooks. Although she specializes in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia titles, these trail-blazing and utterly adventurous Guianas chapters have become some of her all-time favorites to research. When not on the road she's in Portland, Oregon hiking, foraging, dancing and trying to write a book about her five years on a remote coral atoll. Find more about her writing at [www.celestebrash.com](http://www.celestebrash.com).



### Gregor Clark

**Brazil (The Northeast, The North), Uruguay** Over the past 25 years, Gregor has traveled South America from tip to tail, developing a special fondness for Brazil and Uruguay while researching the last three editions of this book. Favorite memories from this trip include spotting wildlife and climbing mountains in Brazil with his two teenage daughters and herding cattle on horseback in Uruguay's vast interior. He has contributed to two dozen other Lonely Planet titles, including

*Brazil, Argentina, France and Italy*. He lives in Vermont (USA).

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OVER MORE  
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