

Brazil

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rio de Janeiro** – watch the people-parade on lovely Ipanema beach, explore bohemian Santa Teresa and find your groove at wild samba clubs in Lapa (p280)
- **Salvador** – spend your days strolling colorful Pelourinho and your nights dancing to seriously addictive beats in the steamy capital of Afro-Brazilian culture (p339)
- **Ouro Preto** – wander the cobblestone streets in search of haunted churches and rare *cachaças* (sugarcane rums) in one of South America's most beautiful colonial towns (p310)
- **Pantanal** – get a taste of the wildlife, from monkeys and macaws to caiman and capybaras, in this incredibly biodiverse region (p332)
- **Off the beaten track** – visit the white-sand beaches of Caribbean-esque Alter do Chão, deep in the heart of the Amazon (p387)
- **Best journey** – roll past sand dunes and splash through creeks, ducking palms as the untouched landscape unfolds around you, on the epic 4WD journey from Tutoia to Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses (p373)

FAST FACTS

- **Area:** 8,456,510 sq km (about the size of the continental United States)
- **Best bargain:** people-watching on the beach (never a cover charge, always fun)
- **Best street snack:** *agua de coco* (coconut water)
- **Budget:** US\$35-45 a day
- **Capital:** Brasília
- **Costs:** double room in a comfy *pousada* (hotel) US\$30, bus ride from Rio to Ouro Preto US\$13
- **Country code:** ☎ 55
- **Famous for:** Carnival, the Amazon, music, soccer, beaches
- **Languages:** Portuguese and 180 indigenous languages
- **Money:** US\$1 = 2.2 reais
- **Phrases:** *legal*, *bacana* (cool), *repugnante* (disgusting), *feita* (party)
- **Population:** 188 million
- **Time:** GMT minus 3hr to minus 5hr, depending on the region
- **Tipping:** 10% in restaurants, often included
- **Visas:** many nationalities require visas (US\$40-100), which must be arranged in advance (p407)



TRAVEL HINTS

Eat well (and cheaply) at Brazil's many per-kilo restaurants. School yourself in the varieties of Brazilian buses (p279).

OVERLAND ROUTES

Brazil's many border crossings include Oiapoque (French Guiana); Bonfim (Guyana); Boa Vista (Venezuela); Tabatinga (Colombia and Peru); Brasília, Guajará-Mirim, Cáceres and Corumbá (Bolivia); Ponta Porã (Paraguay); Foz do Iguaçu (Paraguay and Argentina); Chuí (Uruguay).

Sprawling across half of South America, Brazil has captivated travelers for at least 500 years. Powdery white-sand beaches, lined with palm trees and fronting a deep blue Atlantic, stretch for more than 7000km. Dotted this coastline are tropical islands, music-filled metropolises and enchanting colonial towns. Inland, Brazil offers dazzling sights of a different flavor: majestic waterfalls, red-rock canyons, and crystal-clear rivers – all just a small part of the natural beauty. Its larger and more famous attractions are the Amazon and the Pantanal, the pair hosting some of the greatest biodiversity on the planet. Wildlife-watching is simply astounding here, as is the opportunity for adventure – though you needn't go to the jungle to find it. Kayaking, rafting, trekking, snorkeling and surfing are just a few ways to spend a sun-drenched afternoon in nearly any region in Brazil.

Some of the world's most exciting cities lie inside of Brazil's borders, and travelers need not come to Carnival to experience the music, dance and revelry that pack so many calendar nights. Given the country's innumerable charms, the only drawback to traveling in Brazil is a logistical (and financial) one: you simply won't want to leave.

CURRENT EVENTS

As Brazil welcomed the world to the 2007 Pan-American Games in Rio de Janeiro, the country had much to celebrate. Its economy, the world's eighth largest, was booming. In fact, before 2006 Brazil paid off its debts to the UN, the IMF and the Paris Club *ahead* of schedule. Brazil, the buzzword of foreign investors, seemed more stable than ever, and in trade talks with both the US and other developing nations, the country was clearly carving a new place for itself in the world. In terms of energy, Brazil produces enough oil to meet over 90% of its needs, and as gasoline prices reach staggering heights, many Brazilian motorists run their cars on the less-polluting lower-cost alternative of plant-derived alcohol.

Despite its successes, Brazil has serious problems, with a long list of woes. Millions of Brazilians still live in abject poverty. Meanwhile, crime continues to flare throughout the country, even as the divide between rich and poor remains absurd: 1% of citizens own half the land. Whether the government can address these seemingly relentless problems will play no small role in Brazil's future in years to come.

HISTORY

The Tribal Peoples

Little is known of Brazil's first inhabitants, but from the few fragments left behind (mostly pottery, trash mounds and skeletons), archeologists estimate that the first humans may have arrived 50,000 years ago, predating any other estimates in the whole American continent.

The population at the time of the Portuguese landing in 1500 is also a mystery,

and estimates range from two to six million. There were likely over 1000 tribes living as nomadic hunter-gatherers or in more settled, agricultural societies. Life was punctuated by frequent tribal warfare and at times, captured enemies were ceremonially killed and eaten after battle.

When the Portuguese first arrived, they had little interest in the natives, who were viewed as a Stone-Age people; and the heavily forested land offered nothing for the European market. All that changed when Portuguese merchants expressed interest in the red dye from brazilwood (which later gave the colony its name), and slowly colonists arrived to harvest the land.

The natural choice for the work, of course, was the Indians. Initially the natives welcomed the strange, smelly foreigners and offered them their labor, their food and their women in exchange for the awe-inspiring metal tools and the fascinating Portuguese liquor. But soon the newcomers abused the Indians' customs, took their best land, and ultimately enslaved them.

The Indians fought back and won many battles, but the tides were against them. When colonists discovered that sugarcane grew well in the colony, the Indians' labor was more valuable than ever and soon the sale of Indian slaves became Brazil's second-largest commercial enterprise. It was an industry dominated by *bandeirantes*, brutal men who hunted the Indians in the interior and captured or killed them. Their exploits, more than any treaty, secured the huge interior of South America for Portuguese Brazil.

Jesuit priests went to great lengths to protect the Indians, a few even arming them and



fighting alongside them against *bandeirante* incursions. But they were too weak to stymie the attacks (and the Jesuits were later expelled from Brazil in 1759). Indians who didn't die at the hands of the colonists often died from introduced European diseases.

The Africans

During the 17th century African slaves replaced Indian prisoners on the plantations. From 1550 until 1888 about 3.5 million slaves were shipped to Brazil – almost 40% of the total that came to the New World. The Africans were considered better workers and were less vulnerable to European diseases, but they resisted slavery strongly. *Quilombos*, communities of runaway slaves, formed throughout the colonial period. They ranged from *mocambos*, small groups hidden in the forests, to the great republic of Palmares, which survived much of the 17th century. Led by the African king Zumbi, Palmares had 20,000 residents at its height.

More than 700 villages that formed as *quilombos* remain in Brazil today, their growth only stopped by abolition itself, in 1888.

Those who survived life on the plantation sought solace in their African religion and culture through song and dance. The slaves were given perfunctory instruction in Catholicism and a syncretic religion rapidly emerged (see Religion p272). Spiritual elements from many African tribes, such as the Yorubá, were preserved and made palatable to slave masters by adopting a facade of Catholic saints. Such were the roots of modern Candomblé and Macumba, prohibited by law until recently.

Life on the plantations was miserable, but an even worse fate awaited many slaves. In the 1690s gold was discovered in present day Minas Gerais, and soon the rush was on. Wild boomtowns like Vila Rica de Ouro Preto (Rich Town of Black Gold) sprang up in the mountain valleys. Immigrants flooded the territory, and countless slaves were brought from Africa to dig and die in Minas.

The Portuguese

For years, the ruling powers of Portugal viewed the colony of Brazil as little more than a moneymaking enterprise. That attitude changed, however, when Napoleon marched on Lisbon in 1807. The prince regent (later known as Dom João VI) immediately transferred his court to Brazil. He stayed on

even after Napoleon's Waterloo in 1815, and when he became king in 1816 he declared Rio de Janeiro the capital of a united kingdom of Brazil and Portugal, making Brazil the only New World colony to serve as the seat of a European monarch. In 1821, Dom João finally returned to Portugal, leaving his son Pedro in Brazil as regent.

The following year the Portuguese parliament attempted to return Brazil to colonial status. According to legend Pedro responded by pulling out his sword and shouting out '*Independência ou morte!*' (Independence or death), crowning himself Emperor Dom Pedro I. Portugal was too weak to fight its favorite colony, so Brazil attained independence without bloodshed.

Dom Pedro I ruled for nine years. He scandalized the country by siring a string of illegitimate children, and was finally forced to abdicate in favor of his five-year-old son, Dom Pedro II. Until the future emperor reached adolescence, Brazil suffered a period of civil war. In 1840 Dom Pedro II ascended the throne with overwhelming public support. During his 50-year reign he nurtured an increasingly powerful parliamentary system, went to war with Paraguay, meddled in Argentine and Uruguayan affairs, encouraged mass immigration, abolished slavery and ultimately forged a state that would do away with the monarchy forever.

The Brazilians

During the 19th century coffee replaced sugar as Brazil's primary export, at one time supplying three-quarters of world demand. With mechanization and the building of Brazil's first railroads, profits soared and the coffee barons gained enormous influence.

In 1889 a coffee-backed military coup toppled the antiquated empire, sending the emperor into exile. The new Brazilian Republic adopted a constitution modeled on the USA's, and for nearly 40 years Brazil was governed by a series of military and civilian presidents through which the armed forces effectively ruled the country.

One of the first challenges to the new republic came from a small religious community in the northeast. An itinerant holy man named Antônio Conselheiro had wandered for years through poverty-stricken backlands, prophesying the appearance of the Antichrist and the end of the world. He railed against

the new government and in 1893 gathered his followers in the settlement of Canudos. Suspecting a plot to return Brazil to the Portuguese monarchy, the government attempted to subdue the rebels. It succeeded only on the fourth try, in the end killing every man, woman and child and burning the town to the ground.

Coffee remained king until the market collapsed during the global economic crisis of 1929. The weakened planters of São Paulo, who controlled the government, and an opposition alliance formed with the support of nationalist military officers. When their presidential candidate, Getúlio Vargas, lost the 1930 elections, the military seized power and handed him the reins.

Vargas proved a gifted maneuverer, and dominated the political scene for 20 years. At times his regime was inspired by the Italian and Portuguese fascist states of Mussolini and Salazar: he banned political parties, imprisoned opponents and censored the press. He remained in and out of the political scene until 1954, when the military called for him to step down. Vargas responded by writing a letter to the people of Brazil, then shooting himself in the heart.

Juscelino Kubitschek, the first of Brazil's big spenders, was elected president in 1956. His motto was '50 years' progress in five.' His critics responded with '40 years of inflation in four.' The critics were closer to the mark, owing to the huge debt Kubitschek incurred during the construction of Brasília. By the early 1960s, inflation gripped the Brazilian economy, and Castro's victory in Cuba had spread fears of communism. Brazil's fragile democracy was crushed in 1964 when the military overthrew the government.

Brazil remained under the repressive military regime for almost 20 years. Throughout much of this time the economy grew substantially, at times borrowing heavily from international banks. But it exacted a heavy toll on the country. Ignored social problems grew dire. Millions came to the cities, and *favelas* (shantytowns) spread at exponential rates.

Recent Events

November 1989 saw the first presidential election by popular vote in nearly 30 years. Voters elected Fernando Collor de Mello over the socialist Luíz da Silva ('Lula'). Collor promised to fight corruption and reduce inflation,

but in 1992 he was removed from office on charges of corruption – accused of heading a group that siphoned more than US\$1 billion from the economy.

Itamar Franco replaced Collor and introduced a new currency, the *real*, which sparked an economic boom. Franco's finance minister, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, later won a landslide presidential victory riding the *real's* success.

Cardoso presided through the mid-1990s over a growing economy and record foreign investment, and small efforts were made toward education, land reform and antipoverty measures. But by the end of Cardoso's office, the problems facing the country were considerable.

Corruption and violent crime was rife. In the late 1990s murders were running at 700 a month in greater São Paulo, making it (along with Rio de Janeiro) among the most violent cities on earth. Fifty million Brazilians lived in serious poverty.

Given the numbers, it's not surprising that sooner or later a presidential candidate would campaign solely on a platform of social reform. In 2002 Lula, running for the fourth time, won the presidency. From a humble working-class background, Lula rose to become a trade unionist and a strike leader in the early 1980s. He later founded the Workers Party (PT), a magnet for his many followers seeking social reform.

His accession initially alarmed investors, who had envisioned a left-leaning renegade running the economy amok. In fact, he surprised friends and foes alike with one of the most financially prudent administrations in years, while still addressing Brazil's egregious social problems. Lula's antipoverty program of Fome Zero (Zero Hunger) collapsed under poor management, though its successor Bolsa Família (Family Purse) did bring hardship relief to more than eight million people. Lula has made employment a top priority, and an estimated three million jobs were added under his watch. Lula also raised the minimum wage by 25%, which had an immediate impact on many working families.

Unfortunately, Lula's administration had some setbacks, including a wide-reaching corruption scandal. The most serious allegation (with one official caught on videotape): monthly bribes (of up to US\$12,000) were paid to lawmakers by PT (Lula's party) so that

they would vote in line with PT initiatives. A huge shake-up in the government followed, with a number of PT members resigning in disgrace. The scandal never quite touched Lula, who apologized to the country and repeatedly claimed his innocence. Lula remains popular despite the scandal, and he continues to champion an optimistic future for Brazil.

THE CULTURE

The National Psyche

Despite the country's social and economic woes, Brazilians take much pride in their country. The gorgeous landscape is a favorite topic, and although every Brazilian has a different notion of where to find paradise on earth, it will almost certainly be located within the country's borders. Soccer is another source of pride – less the national pastime than a countrywide narcotic to which every Brazilian seems to be addicted.

Famed for their Carnaval, Brazilians love to celebrate, and parties happen year-round. But it isn't all samba and beaches in the land of the tropics. At times, Brazilians suffer from *saudade*, a nostalgic, often deeply melancholic longing for something. The idea appears in many works by Jobim, Moraes and other great songwriters, and it manifests itself in many forms – from the dull ache of homesickness to the deep regret over past mistakes.

When Brazilians aren't dancing the samba or drowning in sorrow, they're often helping each other out. Kindness is both commonplace and expected, and even a casual introduction can lead to deeper friendships. This altruism comes in handy in a country noted for its bureaucracy and long lines. There's the official way of doing things, then there's the *jeitinho*, or the little way around it, and a little kindness – and a few friends – can go a long way. One need only have patience, something Brazilians seem to have no shortage of.

Lifestyle

Although Brazil has the world's eighth-largest economy, with abundant resources and developed infrastructure, the living standard varies wildly. Brazil has one of the world's widest income gaps between rich and poor.

Since the mass urban migration in the mid-19th century, the poorest have lived in *favelas* that surround every city. Many dwellings consist of little more than a few boards pounded together, and access to clean water,

sewage and healthcare are luxuries few *favelas* enjoy. Drug lords rule the streets, and crime is rampant.

The rich often live just a stone's throw away, sometimes separated by nothing more than a highway. Many live in modern fortresses, with security walls and armed guards, enjoying a lifestyle not unlike the upper classes in Europe and America.

Carnaval brings the two together – albeit in different ways. The *favelas* take center stage, parading through the streets, while the rich enjoy the spectacle; and everyone racks up a few sins before Lent brings it all to a close.

Population

In Brazil the diversity of the landscape matches that of the people inhabiting it. Officially 55% of the population is white, 6% black, 38% mixed and 1% other, but the numbers little represent the many shades and types of Brazil's rich melting pot. Indians, Portuguese, Africans (brought to Brazil as slaves) and their mixed-blood offspring made up the population until the late 19th century. Since then there have been waves of immigration by Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Japanese, Russians, Lebanese and others.

Immigration is only part of the picture when considering Brazil's diversity. Brazilians are more prone to mention regional types when speaking of the racial collage. *Caboclos*, who are descendants of the Indians, live along the rivers in the Amazon region and keep alive the traditions and stories of their ancestors. *Gaúchos* (herdsmen) populate Rio Grande do Sul, speak a Spanish-inflected Portuguese and can't quite shake the reputation for being rough-edged cowboys. By contrast, *baianos*, descendants of the first Africans in Brazil, are stereotyped for being the most extroverted and celebratory of Brazilians. And let's not forget *cariocas* (residents of Rio), *paulistanos* (who inhabit Rio's rival city, São Paulo), *mineiros* (who come from the colonial towns of Minas Gerais), and *sertanejos* (denizens of the drought-stricken *sertão*). These groups represent but a handful of the many types that make up the Brazilian soul.

SPORTS

Futebol (soccer) is a national passion. Most people acknowledge that Brazilians play the world's most creative, artistic and thrilling style of football, and Brazil is the only country

to have won five World Cups (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994 and 2002). Games are an intense spectacle – one of the most colorful pageants you're likely to see. Tickets typically cost between US\$3 and US\$10. The season goes on nearly all year, with the national championship running from late July to mid-December. Local newspapers as well as the daily *Jornal dos Sports* and the website www.netgol.com list upcoming games. Major clubs include Botafogo, Flamengo, Fluminense and Vasco da Gama (all of Rio de Janeiro); Corinthians, Palmeiras and São Paulo (all of São Paulo); and Bahia (of Salvador), Sport (of Recife) and Cruzeiro (of Belo Horizonte).

RELIGION

Brazil is officially a Catholic country, but embraces diversity and syncretism. Without much difficulty you can find churchgoing Catholics who attend spiritualist gatherings or appeal for help at a *terreiro* (the house of an Afro-Brazilian religious group).

Brazil's principal religious roots comprise the animism of the indigenous people, Catholicism and African religions introduced by slaves. The latest arrival is evangelical Christianity, which is spreading all over Brazil, especially in poorer areas.

The Afro-Brazilian religions emerged when the colonists prohibited slaves from practicing their native religions. Not so easily deterred, the slaves simply gave Catholic names to their African gods and continued to worship them. The most orthodox of the religions is Candomblé. Rituals take place in the Yoruba language in a *casa de santo or terreiro*, directed by a *pai de santo* or *mãe de santo* (literally, 'a saint's father or mother' – the Candomblé priests).

Candomblé gods are known as *orixás* and each person is believed to be protected by one of them. In Bahia and Rio, followers of Afro-Brazilian cults turn out in huge numbers to attend festivals at the year's end – especially those held during the night of 31 December and on New Year's Day. Millions of Brazilians go to the beach at this time to pay homage to *Iemanjá*, the sea goddess, whose alter ego is the Virgin Mary.

ARTS

Brazilian culture has been shaped by the Portuguese, who gave the country its language and religion, and also by the indigenous population, immigrants and Africans.

The influence of the latter is particularly strong, especially in the northeast where African religion, music and cuisine have all profoundly influenced Brazilian identity.

Architecture

Brazil's most impressive colonial architecture dazzles visitors in cities like Salvador, Olinda, São Luís, Ouro Preto, Diamantina and Tiradentes. Over the centuries, the names of two architects stand out: Aleijadinho, the genius of 18th-century baroque in Minas Gerais mining towns (he was also a master sculptor; see p313) and Oscar Niemeyer, the 20th-century modernist-functionalist who was chief architect for the new capital, Brasília, in the 1950s and designed many other striking buildings around the country.

Visual Arts

The photographer Sebastião Salgado is Brazil's best-known contemporary artist outside the country. Noted for his masterful use of light, Salgado has earned international acclaim for his highly evocative black-and-white photographs of migrant workers and others on the margins of society.

The best-known Brazilian painter is Cândido Portinari (1903–62) who early in his career made a decision to paint only Brazil and its people. He was strongly influenced by Mexican muralists like Diego Rivera.

Cinema

Brazil's large film industry has produced a number of good films over the years. One of the most recent hits is the 2005 *Dois Filhos do Francisco* (*The Two Sons of Francisco*), based on the true story of two brothers who rise from poverty to become successful country musicians.

For a trip back to 1930s Rio, check out *Madame Satã* (2002). Rio's gritty red-light district at the time is the setting for the true story of Madame Satã (aka João Francisco dos Santos), the troubled but good-hearted transvestite, singer, *capoeira* master and symbol of Lapa's midcentury bohemianism.

One of Brazil's top directors, Fernando Meirelles, earned his credibility with *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*), which showed the brutality of a Rio *favela*. Following his success with *Cidade de Deus*, Meirelles went Hollywood with *Constant Gardener* (2004), an intriguing conspiracy film shot in Africa.

Eu, Tu, Eles (*Me, You, Them*, 2000), Andrucha Waddington's social comedy about a Northeasterner with three husbands, has beautiful cinematography and a score by Gilberto Gil.

Walter Salles, one of Brazil's best-known directors, won much acclaim (and an Oscar) for *Central do Brasil* (*Central Station*; 1998), the story of a lonely woman accompanying a young homeless boy in search of his father.

Salles' latest foray is his bio-epic *Diários de Motocicleta* (*The Motorcycle Diaries*, 2004), portraying the historic journey of Che Guevara and Alberto Granada across South America.

For a taste of the dictatorship days see Bruno Barreto's *O Que É Isso Companheiro* (released as *Four Days in September* in the US, 1998), based on the 1969 kidnapping of the US ambassador to Brazil by leftist guerrillas.

Another milestone in Brazilian cinema is the visceral film *Pixote* (1981), which shows life through the eyes of a street kid in Rio. When it was released, it was a damning indictment of Brazilian society.

Carlos Diegues' *Bye Bye Brasil* (1980) chronicles the adventures of a theater troupe as they tour the entire country. It charts the profound changes in Brazilian society of the second half of the 20th century.

One of the old classics is *Orfeu Negro* (*Black Orpheus*), Marcel Camus' 1959 film. Set during Carnival, it opened the world's ears to bossa nova by way of the Jobim and Bonfá soundtrack.

Literature

Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis (1839–1908), the son of a freed slave, is one of Brazil's early great writers. Assis had a great sense of humor and an insightful – though cynical – take on human affairs. His major novels were *Quincas Borba*, *The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas* and *Dom Casmurro*.

Jorge Amado (1912–2001), Brazil's most celebrated contemporary writer, wrote brilliantly clever portraits of the people and places of Bahia, notably *Gabriela*, *Clove and Cinnamon* and *Dona Flor and her Two Husbands*.

Paulo Coelho is Latin America's second-most-read novelist (after Gabriel García Márquez). His new-age fables *The Alchemist* and *The Pilgrimage* launched his career in the mid-1990s.

Chico Buarque, better known for songwriting, has written several books. *Budapest*, his

best and most recent novel, is an imaginative portrait of both his hometown of Rio de Janeiro and Budapest.

Music & Dance

Music is as integral to Brazilians as sleeping and eating.

Samba, a Brazilian institution, has strong African influences and is intimately linked to Carnival. The most popular form of samba today is *pagode*, a relaxed, informal genre whose leading exponents include singers Beth Carvalho, Jorge Aragão and Zeca Pagodinho.

Bossa nova, another Brazilian trademark, arose in the 1950s, and gained the world's attention in the classic *The Girl from Ipanema*, composed by Antônio Carlos Jobim and Vinícius de Moraes. Bossa nova's founding father, guitarist João Gilberto, still performs, as does his daughter Bebel Gilberto who has sparked renewed interest in the genre, combining smooth bossa sounds with electronic grooves.

Tropicalismo, which burst onto the scene in the late 1960s, mixed varied Brazilian musical styles with North American rock and pop. Leading figures such as Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso are still very much around. Gil, in fact, is Brazil's Minister of Culture. Another brilliant songwriter not to overlook is Chico Buarque, recently nominated Brazil's musician of the century by the weekly journal *Isto É*.

The nebulous term *Música Popular Brasileira* (MPB) covers a range of styles from original bossa nova-influenced works to some sickly pop. MPB first emerged in the 1970s under talented musicians like Edu Lobo, Milton Nascimento, Elis Regina, Djavan and dozens of others.

Jorge Benjor is another singer whose early career in the 1960s has survived up to the present. Known for writing addictive rhythms, Benjor uses African beats and elements of funk, samba and blues in his eclectic songs.

The list of emerging talents gets longer each day, but Brazilian hip-hop is reaching its stride with talented musicians like Marcelo D2 (formerly of Planet Hemp) impressing audiences with albums like *A Procura da Batida Perfeita* (2005). Seu Jorge, who starred in *Cidade de Deus*, has also earned accolades for the release of *Cru* (2005), an inventive hip-hop album with politically charged beats.

Brazilian rock (pronounced 'hock') is also popular. Groups and artists such as Zeca Baleiro, Kid Abelha, Ed Motta, the punk-driven Legião Urbana and the reggae-based Skank are worth a listen.

Wherever you go in Brazil you'll also hear regional musical styles. The most widely known is *farró* (foh-hoh), a lively, syncopated northeastern music, which mixes *zabumba* (an African drum) beats with accordion sounds. Stars of this style include Luiz Gonzaga, Jackson do Pandeiro and São Paulo *farró* group Falamansa. *Axé* is a label for the samba-pop-rock-reggae-funk-Caribbean fusion music that emerged from Salvador in the 1990s, popularized especially by the flamboyant Daniela Mercury. In the Amazon, you'll encounter the rhythms of *carimbo*, along with the sensual dance that accompanies it.

ENVIRONMENT

The Land

The world's fifth-largest country after Russia, Canada, China and the USA, Brazil borders every other South American country except Chile and Ecuador. Its 8.5 million sq km area covers almost half the continent.

Brazil has four primary geographic regions: the coastal band, the Planalto Brasileiro, the Amazon Basin and the Paraná-Paraguai Basin.

The narrow, 7400km-long coastal band lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the coastal mountain ranges. From the border with Uruguay to Bahia state, steep mountains often come right down to the coast. North of Bahia, the coastal lands are flatter.

The Planalto Brasileiro (Brazilian Plateau) extends over most of Brazil's interior south of the Amazon Basin. It's sliced by several large rivers and punctuated by mountain ranges reaching no more than 3000m.

The thinly populated Amazon Basin, composing 42% of Brazil, is fed by waters from the Planalto Brasileiro to its south, the Andes to the west and the Guyana shield to the north. In the west the basin is 1300km wide; in the east, between the Guyana shield and the *planalto*, it narrows to 100km. More than half the 6275km of the Rio Amazonas lies in Peru, where its source is found. The Amazon and its 1100 tributaries contain an estimated 20% of the world's freshwater. Pico da Neblina (3014m) on the Venezuelan border is the highest peak in Brazil.

The Paraná-Paraguai Basin, in the south of Brazil, extends into neighboring Paraguay and Argentina and includes the large wetland area known as the Pantanal.

Wildlife

Brazil has more known species of plants (55,000), freshwater fish (3000) and mammals (520 plus) than any other country in the world. It ranks third for birds (1622) and fifth for reptiles (468). Many species live in the Amazon rainforest, which occupies 3.6 million sq km in Brazil and 2.4 million sq km in neighboring countries. It's the world's largest tropical forest and most biologically diverse ecosystem, with 20% of the world's bird and plant species and 10% of its mammals.

Other Brazilian species are widely distributed around the country. For example the biggest Brazilian cat, the jaguar, is found in Amazon and Atlantic rainforests, the *cerrado* (savanna) and the Pantanal.

Many other Brazilian mammals are found over a broad range of habitats, including five other big cats (puma, ocelot, margay, oncilla and jaguarundi); the giant anteater; several varieties of sloths (best seen in Amazonia) and armadillos; 75 primate species, including several types of howler and capuchin monkey, the squirrel monkey (Amazonia's most common primate) and around 20 small species of marmosets and tamarin; the furry, long-nosed coati (a type of raccoon); the giant river otter; the maned wolf; the tapir; peccaries (like wild boar); marsh and pampas deer; the capybara (the world's largest rodent at 1m in length); the pink dolphin, often glimpsed in the Amazon and its tributaries; and the Amazon manatee, an even larger river dweller.

Birds form a major proportion of the wildlife you'll see. The biggest is the flightless, 1.4m-high rhea, found in the *cerrado* and Pantanal. The brilliantly colored parrots, macaws, toucans and trogons come in dozens of species. In Amazonia or the Pantanal you may well see scarlet macaws and, if you're lucky, blue-and-yellow ones. Unfortunately, the macaws' beautiful plumage makes them a major target for poachers.

In Amazonia or the Pantanal you can't miss the alligators. One of Brazil's five species, the black caiman, grows up to 6m long. Other aquatic life in the Amazon includes the *pirarucú*, which grows 3m long. Its red and silvery-brown scale patterns are reminiscent

of Chinese paintings. The infamous piranha comes in about 50 species, found in the basins of Amazon, Orinoco, Paraguai or São Francisco rivers or rivers of the Guianas. Only a handful of species pose a risk, and confirmed accounts of human fatalities caused by piranhas are *extremely* rare.

National Parks

Over 350 areas are protected as national parks, state parks or extractive reserves. Good parks for observing fauna, flora and/or dramatic landscapes:

Parque Nacional da Chapada Diamantina (p347) Rivers, waterfalls, caves and swimming holes make for excellent trekking in this mountainous region in the northeast.

Parque Nacional da Chapada dos Guimarães (p336) On a rocky plateau northeast of Cuiabá, this canyon park features breathtaking views and impressive rock formations.

Parque Nacional da Chapada dos Veadeiros (p332) 200km north of Brasília, among waterfalls and natural swimming holes, this hilly national park features an array of rare flora and fauna.

Parque Nacional da Serra dos Órgãos (p298) Set in the mountainous terrain in the southeast, this park is a mecca for rock climbers and mountaineers.

Parque Nacional de Aparados da Serra (p323) Famous for its narrow canyon with 700m escarpments, this park in the southeast features hiking trails with excellent overlooks.

Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses (p377) Spectacular beaches, mangroves, dunes and lagoons comprise the landscape of this park in the northeast.

Reserva de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Mamirauá (p393) Deep in Amazonia, the wildlife viewing is spectacular at this tropical rainforest reserve north of Manaus.

Environmental Issues

Sadly, Brazil is as renowned for its forests as it is for destroying them. At last count more than one-fifth of the Brazilian Amazon rainforest had been completely destroyed. All its major ecosystems are threatened and more than 70 mammals are endangered.

Although deforestation has slowed in recent years, the forest is still on a fast track to oblivion (*only* 9000 sq km of forest was chopped down in 2005 compared to 18,000 sq km the year before). In 2005, the Amazon also suffered its worst drought in 100 years. River levels dropped dramatically, killing off fish and stranding boats and whole villages. The drought also caused major forest fires, destroyed crops and wreaked economic havoc.

Some scientists attribute this catastrophic drought to global warming and suggest dire environmental problems like these will occur more frequently as surface and sea-level temperatures around the world continue to rise.

Brazil first began chopping down the forest on a grand scale in the 1970s when the government cleared roads through the jungle in order to give drought-stricken northeasterners a chance to better their lives on newly created cropland of Amazonia. Along with the new arrivals came loggers and cattle ranchers, both of whom further cleared the forests. The few settlers that remained (most gave up and moved to the *favelas* of Amazonia's growing cities) widely employed slash-and-burn agriculture with devastating consequences.

The government continues development projects in the Amazon, although the protests have become more vocal in recent years. In 2005 a Roman Catholic Bishop went on a hunger strike to protest the government's US\$2 billion plan to divert water from the São Francisco River to help big agricultural businesses. President Lula declared a temporary halt to the project and agreed to open dialogue about the controversial project.

Deforestation has led to some unexpected consequences. Dozens of people have died from rabid vampire bats in the Amazon, with thousands more treated for rabies. Some experts blame these attacks on the forest's destruction. As the bats' natural habitat is destroyed, the bats are forced into more populated areas.

TRANSPORTATION

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Brazil has several gateway airports and shares a border with every country in South America except Chile and Ecuador.

Air

The busiest international airports are Aeroporto Galeão (formally known as Aeroporto Internacional Antônio Carlos Jobim) in Rio de Janeiro (p280) and São Paulo's Aeroporto Guarulhos (p304). Brazil's bankrupt main carrier, **Varig** (www.varig.com), was still operating at the time of research, though it was continuing to cancel flights, sometimes with little advance notice. Varig flies into Brazil from 11 South American cities. Better deals, however, are usually found on Gol Airlines

(www.voegol.com.br), which flies to six other South American cities.

For student fares, try the **Student Travel Bureau** (STB; Map p286; ☎ 0xx21-2512-8577; www.stb.com.br; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 550, Ipanema, Rio), which has some 30 branches around the country. **Andes Sol** (☎ 0xx21-2275-4370; Av NS de Copacabana 209, Rio) arranges economical itineraries.

A Brazilian website to search for cheap flights is www.viajo.com.br.

ARGENTINA

Round-trip flights from Buenos Aires to Rio or São Paulo are available on Varig, Gol or Aerolíneas Argentinas. Other flights from Buenos Aires go to Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Florianópolis and Puerto Iguazú in Argentina, a short cross-border hop from Foz do Iguaçu.

BOLIVIA

Gol flies from Santa Cruz to Campo Grande (and onto São Paulo). Varig, TAM and Lloyd Aéreo Boliviano (LAB) fly from Santa Cruz to São Paulo. LAB also flies from Santa Cruz and Cochabamba to Manaus.

Inside Bolivia, Aerosur and Aerocon fly from other Bolivian cities to Cobija, Guayaramerin and Puerto Suárez, across the border from the Brazilian towns of Brasiléia, Guajará-Mirim and Corumbá respectively.

CHILE

Varig, TAM and LanChile fly from Santiago to Rio and São Paulo.

COLOMBIA

AeroRepública flies from Bogotá to Leticia, from where you can walk, taxi or take a *combi* (minibus) across the border into Tabatinga, Brazil. A Rio-Bogotá round-trip flight on Varig or Avianca is costly.

ECUADOR

Flights from Quito or Guayaquil to São Paulo are pricey, and none are direct.

DEPARTURE TAX

The international departure tax from Brazil is a hefty US\$36, which is usually included in the price of your ticket. If not, you must pay it in cash (either in US dollars or reais) at the airport before departure – so remember to keep that amount in reserve.

THE GUIANAS

Meta, a Brazilian regional airline, flies from Georgetown (Guyana), Paramaribo (Suriname) and Cayenne (French Guiana) to Belém and Boa Vista. French Guiana carrier Air Caraïbes also flies between Belém and Cayenne. Puma, a Brazilian carrier, flies from Macapá to Oiapoque, just across the border from St Georges, French Guiana.

PARAGUAY

Varig flies between Asunción and Rio or São Paulo. Gol flies from Asunción to Curitiba. You can also fly from Asunción to Ciudad del Este, a short cross-border hop from Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil.

PERU

Varig flies from Lima to Rio or São Paulo. From Iquitos, Peru, Peruvian airliner Aviaselva flies to Leticia, Colombia on the Brazil–Peru–Colombia triple frontier.

URUGUAY

Varig and Pluna fly from Montevideo to Rio and São Paulo. Gol flies from Montevideo to Porto Alegre.

VENEZUELA

A Varig round-trip flight from Caracas to Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo is costly.

Boat

From Trinidad in Bolivia, boats take about five days to sail down the Río Mamoré to Guayaramerín (Bolivia), opposite Guajará-Mirim (Brazil).

From Peru fast passenger boats make the 400km trip along the Rio Amazonas between Iquitos (Peru) and Tabatinga (Brazil) in eight to 10 hours. From Tabatinga you can continue to Manaus and Belém.

Bus**ARGENTINA**

The main crossing used by travelers is Puerto Iguazú–Foz do Iguaçu, a 20-hour bus ride from Buenos Aires. Further south, you can cross from between Uruguaiana (Brazil) and Paso de los Libres (Argentina), which is also served by Buenos Aires buses. Other crossings are at San Javier–Porto Xavier and Santo Tomé–São Borja on the Rio Uruguai.

Direct buses run between Buenos Aires and Porto Alegre (US\$64, 20 hours) and Rio

de Janeiro (US\$141, 42 hours). Other destinations include Florianópolis, Curitiba and São Paulo.

BOLIVIA

Brazil's longest border runs through remote wetlands and forests, and is much used by smugglers.

The busiest crossing is between Quijarro (Bolivia) and Corumbá (Brazil), which is a good access point for the Pantanal. Quijarro has a daily train link with Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Corumbá has bus connections with Bonito, Campo Grande, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and southern Brazil.

Cáceres, in Mato Grosso (Brazil) has a daily bus link with Santa Cruz (Bolivia) via the Bolivian border town of San Matías.

Guajará-Mirim (Brazil) is a short river crossing from Guayaramerín (Bolivia). Both towns have bus links into their respective countries, but from late December to late February rains can make the northern Bolivian roads very difficult.

Brasiléia (Brazil), a 4½-hour bus ride from Rio Branco, stands opposite Cobija (Bolivia), which has bus connections into Bolivia. This route is less direct than the Guayaramerín–Guajará-Mirim option, and Bolivian buses confront the same wet-season difficulties.

CHILE

Although there is no border with Chile, direct buses run between Santiago and Brazilian cities, such as Porto Alegre (US\$116, 36 hours), Curitiba, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (US\$130, 62 hours).

COLOMBIA

Leticia, on the Rio Amazonas in far southeast Colombia, is contiguous with Tabatinga (Brazil). You can cross the border on foot, *combi* or taxi, but river and air are the only ways out of either town.

FRENCH GUIANA

The Brazilian town of Oiapoque, a rugged 560km bus ride (or a quick flight) from Macapá, stands across the Rio Oiapoque from St Georges (French Guiana). A newly opened road connects St Georges to the French Guiana capital, Cayenne, with minibuses shuttling between the two. (Get there early in the morning to catch one.) Another option is to fly directly from Belém to Cayenne, which if booked early

enough can often be cheaper than ground transportation (see p276).

GUYANA

Lethem (southwest Guyana) is a short boat ride from Bonfim (Roraima, Brazil), a two-hour bus ride from Boa Vista.

PARAGUAY

The two major border crossings are Ciudad del Este–Foz do Iguazu and Pedro Juan Caballero–Ponta Porã. The latter gives access to the Pantanal. Direct buses run between Asunción and Brazilian cities such as Curitiba (US\$40, 18 hours), São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (US\$69, 28 hours).

PERU

The only land access to Peru is via Iñapari, a five-hour minibus or truck ride north of Puerto Maldonado (Peru). This route is only open during the dry season. You wade across the Rio Acre between Iñapari and the small Brazilian town of Assis Brasil, a three- to four-hour bus or 4WD trip from Brasília.

SURINAME

Overland travel between Suriname and Brazil involves first passing through either French Guiana or Guyana.

URUGUAY

The crossing most used by travelers is at Chuy (Uruguay)–Chuí (Brazil). Other crossings are Río Branco–Jaguarão, Isidoro Nobliá–Aceguá, Rivera–Santana do Livramento, Artigas–Quaraí and Bella Unión–Barra do Quaraí. Buses run between Montevideo and Brazilian cities such as Porto Alegre (US\$58, 12 hours), Florianópolis, Curitiba, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (US\$130, 39 hours).

VENEZUELA

Paved roads run from northern Venezuela to Boa Vista and Manaus, crossing the border at Santa Elena de Uairén–Pacaraíma. Buses run to Manaus from as far away as Puerto La Cruz on Venezuela's coast (US\$80, 33 hours).

GETTING AROUND

Air

DOMESTIC AIR SERVICES

Brazil's major national carriers are Varig, TAM and Gol. At least one of these serves every major city.

A host of other airlines serves Brazil, including Fly, Trip, Penta, TAVAJ, Rico and Meta.

In general, Gol is the cheapest of the airlines, though smaller regional carriers sometimes offer good deals. Airline tickets can be purchased at any travel agent. Travelers with American Express cards can also buy Gol tickets online – otherwise you'll have to pay in cash at a travel agency.

Overall Brazilian airlines operate efficiently, but schedules can change and it's wise to reconfirm your flights. Most airlines have national telephone numbers for reservations and confirmations:

Fly (☎ 0300-313-1323; www.voefly.com.br)

Gol (☎ 0300-789-2121; www.voegol.com.br)

TAM (☎ 0800-570-5700; www.tam.com.br)

Trip (☎ 0300-789-8747; www.airtrip.com.br)

Varig (☎ 0800-701-2670; www.varig.com.br)

In order to secure a seat, book as far ahead as possible during busy seasons (Christmas to Carnival, Holy Week and Easter, July and August). At other times, you can buy tickets for same-day flights, with no added cost.

Embarkation tax on domestic flights ranges from US\$3 at minor airports to US\$8 at major ones. If it isn't already included in the price of your ticket, you have to pay it in cash (reais only) at check-in.

AIR PASSES

If you're combining travels in Brazil with other countries in southern South America, it's worth looking into the Mercosur Airpass (see above).

For flights solely within Brazil, Varig and TAM both offer a Brazil Airpass, which gives you four flights anywhere within the country starting at US\$499. Up to four further flights can usually be added for US\$120 each. All flights must be completed within 21 days. Given the astronomical prices of flights, the Airpass can be an excellent investment.

A few provisos: the Brazil Airpass must be purchased outside Brazil and to do so you need an international round-trip ticket to Brazil. You have to book your airpass itinerary at the time you buy it, and there are usually penalties for changing reservations. You're not allowed to visit the same city twice.

Varig Airpasses cost more (US\$692 for up to five flights) if you don't fly to Brazil on Varig or another Star Alliance airline (see

www.staralliance.com). With TAM Airpasses, you must fly into Brazil on TAM, or else the Airpass costs US\$572 (four flights).

Boat

The Amazon region is one of the last great bastions of river travel in the world. The Rio Negro, the Rio Solomões and the Rio Madeira are the highways of Amazonia, and you can travel thousands of kilometers along these waterways (which combine to form the mighty Rio Amazonas), exploring the vast Amazon Basin traveling to or from Peru or Bolivia. Travel may be slow and dull along the river (with distances measured in days rather than kilometers), but it is cheap.

For more information, see the boxed text, p379.

Bus

Buses are the backbone of long-distance transportation in Brazil, and are generally reliable and frequent. Unfortunately, bus ticket prices in Brazil are among the highest in South America, with *comun* (economy class) fares averaging US\$4 per hour.

Road quality varies from well-paved roads in the south to decent highways along the coast to ravaged, pockmarked terrain in the northeast interior.

There are three main classes of long-distance buses. The cheapest, *comum*, is fairly comfortable with reclining seats and usually a toilet. The *executivo* provides roomier seats, costs about 25% more and makes fewer stops. The more luxurious *Leitos* can cost twice as much as *comum* and have spacious, fully reclining seats with pillows, air-conditioning and sometimes an attendant serving sandwiches and drinks. Overnight buses, regardless of the class, often make fewer stops.

Most cities have one central bus terminal (*rodoviária*, pronounced 'hoe-doe-vee-ah-rhee-ya'), often located on the outskirts of town. Usually you can simply show up at the station and buy a ticket for the next bus out, but on weekends and holidays (particularly from December to February) it's a good idea to book ahead.

Car

Brazilian roads can be dangerous, especially busy highways such as the Rio to São Paulo corridor. There are tens of thousands of motor-vehicle fatalities every year. Driving

at night is particularly hazardous because other drivers are more likely to be drunk and road hazards are less visible. Another peril is the police, who rarely lack reasons to impose fines.

All that said, driving can be a convenient if somewhat expensive way to get around Brazil. A small four-seat rental car costs around US\$35 to US\$60 a day with unlimited kilometers (US\$60 to US\$80 with air-con) and basic insurance. Ordinary gasoline costs around US\$1.20 a liter. Familiar multinationals dominate the car-rental business and getting a car is safe and easy if you have a driver's license, credit card and passport and are over the minimum age (25 with most firms, 21 with others). You should also carry an international driver's license.

Hitching

Hitchhiking in Brazil, with the possible exception of the Pantanal and other areas where it's commonplace among locals, is difficult. The best way to hitch is to ask drivers when they're not in their vehicles – for example, by waiting at a gas station or a truck stop. But even this can be difficult. The Portuguese for 'lift' is *carona*.

Local Transport

BUS

Local bus services are frequent and cheap, with extensive routes. Many buses list their destinations in bold letters on the front, making it easier to identify the one you need. Drivers don't usually stop unless someone flags them.

Typically, you enter the bus at the front and exit from the rear. The price is displayed near the money collector, who sits at a turnstile and provides change for the fare (usually about US\$1). You'll have difficulty getting a bulky backpack through the narrow turnstile. Avoid riding the bus after 11pm and at peak (read packed) times: noon to 2pm and 4pm to 6pm in most areas, and keep a watchful eye for pickpockets and thieves.

TAXI

City taxis aren't cheap, though they are quite useful for avoiding potentially dangerous walks and late-night bus rides, or if your baggage is too bulky for public transport. Most meters start around US\$2 and rise by US\$1 or so per kilometer (prices increase at night

and on Sunday). Make sure the driver turns on the meter when you get in. Sometimes the fare is fixed – typically on trips between the airport and the city center.

If possible, orient yourself before taking a taxi, and keep a map handy in case you find yourself being taken on a wild detour. As elsewhere in the world, don't get into a taxi with more than one person.

The worst place to get a cab is where the tourists are. Don't get one near one of the expensive hotels.

TRAIN

There are very few passenger trains in service. One remaining line well worth riding runs from Curitiba to Paranaguá, descending the coastal mountain range (p318).

RIO DE JANEIRO

 0xx21 / pop 6.2 million

Known as the *cidade maravilhosa* (marvelous city), Rio occupies one of the most spectacular settings on the planet. Gorgeous mountains, white-sand beaches and verdant rainforests fronting deep blue sea have enchanted visitors for centuries, and there are dozens of ways to fall in love – aside from simply people-watching in Ipanema. You can surf great breaks off Prainha, hike through Tijuca's rainforests, sail across Guanabara or rock-climb the face of Pão de Açúcar. By nightfall samba, that incredibly seductive sound, fills the streets and *cariocas* follow the beat to the dance halls, bars, and open-air cafés proliferating Rio.

While Rio has its share of serious problems, there are plenty of residents – expats included – who wouldn't dream of living anywhere else. Keep that in mind when booking your return flight.

HISTORY

The city earned its name from early Portuguese explorers, who entered the huge bay (Baía de Guanabara) in January 1502, and believing it a river, named it Rio de Janeiro (January River). The French were actually the first settlers along the bay, establishing the colony of Antarctic France in 1555. The Portuguese, fearing that the French would take over, gave them the boot in 1567 and remained from then on. Thanks to sugar plantations and the slave trade their new colony

developed into an important settlement, and grew substantially during the Minas Gerais gold rush of the 18th century. In 1763, with a population of 50,000, Rio replaced Salvador as the colonial capital. By 1900, after a coffee boom, heavy immigration from Europe and internal migration by ex-slaves, Rio had 800,000 inhabitants.

The 1920s to 1950s were Rio's golden age, when it became an exotic destination for international high society. Unfortunately the days of wine and roses didn't last. By the time the capital was moved to Brasília in 1960, Rio was already grappling with problems that would continue for the next half-century. Immigrants poured into *favelas* from poverty-stricken areas of the country, swelling the number of urban poor. The 'Cidade Maravilhosa' by the 1990s was better known as the '*cidade partida*' (the divided city), a term reflecting the widening chasm between rich and poor.

Despite its problems the city has had its share of successes, hosting the Pan Am games in 2007. Rio was also the launchpad for the Favela-Bairro project, which has brought to the *favelas* better access to sanitation, health clinics and public transportation. Meanwhile, urban renewal and gentrification continues in Centro, Lapa, Santa Teresa and parts of the Zona Sul.

ORIENTATION

The city can be divided into two zones: the *zona norte* (north zone), consisting of industrial, working-class neighborhoods, and the *zona sul* (south zone), full of middle- and upper-class neighborhoods and well-known beaches. Centro, Rio's business district and the site of its first settlement, marks the boundary between the two, and a number of the important museums and colonial buildings are there.

The parts of Rio you are most likely to explore stretch along the shore of the Baía de Guanabara and the Atlantic Ocean. South from Centro are the neighborhoods of Lapa, Glória, Catete, Flamengo, Botafogo and Urca dominated by the peak of Pão de Açúcar (Sugar Loaf). Further south are Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon.

Other areas of interest include the colonial hilltop neighborhood of Santa Teresa overlooking Centro, and the looming statue of Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer), atop Corcovado.



DON'T MISS...

- sunsets on Ipanema
- samba clubs in Lapa
- the view from Pão de Açúcar
- a stroll through Santa Teresa
- the funicular ride to Cristo Redentor
- football madness at Maracanã

Aside from the bus station, Maracanã football stadium and the international airport, most travelers have few reasons to visit the *zona norte*.

Quatro Rodas produces an excellent city map, available at any kiosk. Lonely Planet also produces a city map, and Riotur, the city's tourist information center, provides free street maps.

INFORMATION**Bookstores**

Livraria Letras & Expressões (Map p286; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 276, Ipanema) An Ipanema favorite with English-language newspapers and magazines, and a good café.

Nova Livraria Leonardo da Vinci (Map p284; Edifício Marquês de Herval; Av Rio Branco 185, Centro) Rio's largest bookstore, with a good collection of books in English, including travel guides.

Cultural Centers

Centro Cultural do Banco do Brasil (Map p284; Rua Primeiro do Março 66; www.cccb.com.br; admission free; ☎ Tue-Sun) With exhibition halls, a cinema and performance space, the Centro Cultural has ongoing music and dance programs.

Emergency

Tourist Police (Map p286; ☎ 3399-7170; Av Afrânio de Melo Franco 119, Leblon; ☎ 24hr) If you have the misfortune to be robbed you can report it to the tourist police, who can provide you with a police form to give to your insurance company.

Internet Access

Youth hostels and larger hotels provide internet access, as do the following:

Central Fone Centro (Map p284; basement level, Av Rio Branco 156); Ipanema (Map p286; loja B, Rua Vinícius de Moraes 129)

Eurogames (Map pp288–9; Rua Correia Dutra 39B, Catete)

Tele Rede (Map p284; Av NS de Copacabana 209A, Copacabana)

Internet Resources

www.ipanema.com This colorful website provides an excellent introduction to the city.

www.riodejaneiro-turismo.com.br Riotur's comprehensive website, with a useful events calendar.

GETTING INTO TOWN

Rio's Galeão international airport (GIG) is 15km north of the city center on Ilha do Governador. Santos Dumont airport, used by some domestic flights, is by the bay in the city center, 1km east of Cinelândia metro station.

Real Auto Bus (☎ 0800-240-850) operates safe air-con buses from the international airport to Novo Rio bus station, Av Rio Branco (Centro), Santos Dumont airport, southward through Glória, Flamengo and Botafogo and along the beaches of Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon to Barra da Tijuca (and vice-versa). The buses (US\$3) run every 30 minutes from 5:20am to 12:10am, and will stop wherever you ask. You can transfer to the metro at Carioca station.

Heading to the airports, you can catch the Real bus from in front of the major hotels along the main beaches, but you have to look alive and flag them down.

Taxis from the international airport may try to rip you off. The safest course, a radio taxi for which you pay a set fare at the airport, is also the most expensive. A yellow-and-blue common (*comum*) taxi should cost around US\$30 to Ipanema. A radio taxi costs about US\$45.

If you arrive in Rio by bus, it's a good idea to take a taxi to your hotel, or at least to the general area you want to stay. **Rodoviária Novo Rio** (☎ 2291-5151; Av Francisco Bicalho), the bus station, is in a seedy area – and traveling on local buses with all your belongings is a little risky. A small booth near the Riotur desk on the 1st floor of the bus station organizes the yellow cabs in the rank out front. Sample fares are US\$12 to the international airport and US\$10 to Copacabana or Ipanema.

Local buses, should you decide to take them, leave from stops outside the station. For Copacabana, the best are buses 127, 128 and 136; for Ipanema, buses 128 and 172. For the budget hotels in Catete and Glória, take bus 136 or 172.

Medical Services

Cardio Trauma Ipanema (Map p286; ☎ 2287-2322; Rua Farme de Amoedo 88) Has a 24-hour emergency room.
Hospital Ipanema (Map p286; ☎ 3111-2300; Rua Antônio Parreiras 67, Ipanema)

Money

Be cautious when carrying money in the city center and take nothing of value to the beach.

ATMs for most card networks are widely available. Try Banco do Brasil, Bradesco, Citibank and HSBC when using a debit or credit card. The international airport has Banco do Brasil machines on the 3rd floor and currency-exchange booths on the **arrivals floor** (🕒 6:30am-11pm).

Banco do Brasil Centro (Map p284; Rua Senador Dantas 105); Copacabana (Map p292; Av Nossa Senhora de Copacabana 594); International airport (Map p281; Terminal 1, 3rd fl)

Citibank Centro (Map p284; Rua da Assembléia 100); Ipanema (Map p286; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 459A)

HSBC (Map p284; Av Rio Branco 108, Centro)

For exchanging cash, *casas de cambio* (exchange places) cluster behind the Copacabana Palace Hotel in Copacabana and along Rua Visconde da Pirajá near Praça General Osório in Ipanema. In Centro, exchange offices are on Av Rio Branco, just north of Av Presidente Vargas.

Casa Aliança (Map p284; Rua Miguel Couto 35C, Centro)

Casa Universal (Map p292; Av NS de Copacabana 371, Copacabana)

Post

Correios (post offices) are prevalent throughout Rio.

Central post office (Map p284; Rua Primeiro de Março 64, Centro). Mail addressed to Posta-Restante, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, ends up here.

Post office Botafogo (Map pp288–9; Praia de Botafogo 324); Copacabana (Map pp288–9; Av Nossa Senhora de Copacabana 540); Ipanema (Map p286; Rua Prudente de Moraes 147)

Telephone

For international calls try the following:

Central Fone Centro (Map p284; basement level, Av Rio Branco 156); Ipanema (Map p286; loja B, Rua Vinicius de Moraes 129)

Locutório (Map pp288-9; Av Nossa Senhora de Copacabana 1171)

Tele Rede (Map pp288-9; Av Nossa Senhora de Copacabana 209)

Tourist Information

Alô Rio (☎ 0800-707-1808; 🕒 9am-6pm)

English-speaking receptionists provide toll-free assistance.

Riotur Centro (Map p284; ☎ 2542-8080; Rua da Assembléia 10, 9th fl; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri); bus station (Map pp288-9; Rodoviária Novo Rio; 🕒 6am-midnight); Copacabana (Map p292; Av Princesa Isabel 183; 🕒 8am-8pm); international airport (Map p281; 🕒 5am-11pm) The very useful city tourism bureau has loads of info and can phone around to make you a hotel reservation.

Travel Agencies

Andes Sol (Map p292; ☎ 2275-4370; andessol@uol.com.br;

Av Nossa Senhora de Copacabana 209) A multilingual agency that can arrange discounted flights and find budget lodging in Rio.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Like other metropolitan destinations, Rio has its share of crime and violence. But if you travel sensibly when visiting the city, you will likely suffer nothing worse than a few bad hangovers. All the same, theft is not uncommon, but you can take precautions to minimize the risks.

Buses are well-known targets for thieves. Avoid taking them after dark, and keep an eye out while aboard. Take taxis at night to avoid walking along empty streets and beaches. That holds especially true for Centro, which you should avoid on weekends when it's deserted and dangerous.

The beaches are also targets for thieves. Don't taking anything valuable to the beach, and always stay alert – especially during holidays (such as Carnival) when the sands get fearfully crowded.

Get in the habit of carrying small bills separate from your wallet so you don't have to flash a wad when paying for things. Maracanã football stadium is worth a visit, but take only spending money for the day and avoid the crowded sections. Don't wander into the *favelas* unless going with a knowledgeable guide.

If you have the misfortune of being robbed, hand over the goods. Thieves are only too willing to use their weapons if given provocation. It's sensible to carry a fat wad of singles to hand over in case of a robbery.

See p400 for other tips on how to avoid becoming a victim.

CENTRO, LAPA, GLÓRIA & SANTA TERESA



A

B

C

D

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- Banco do Brasil.....2 B4
- Bradesco ATM.....3 B4
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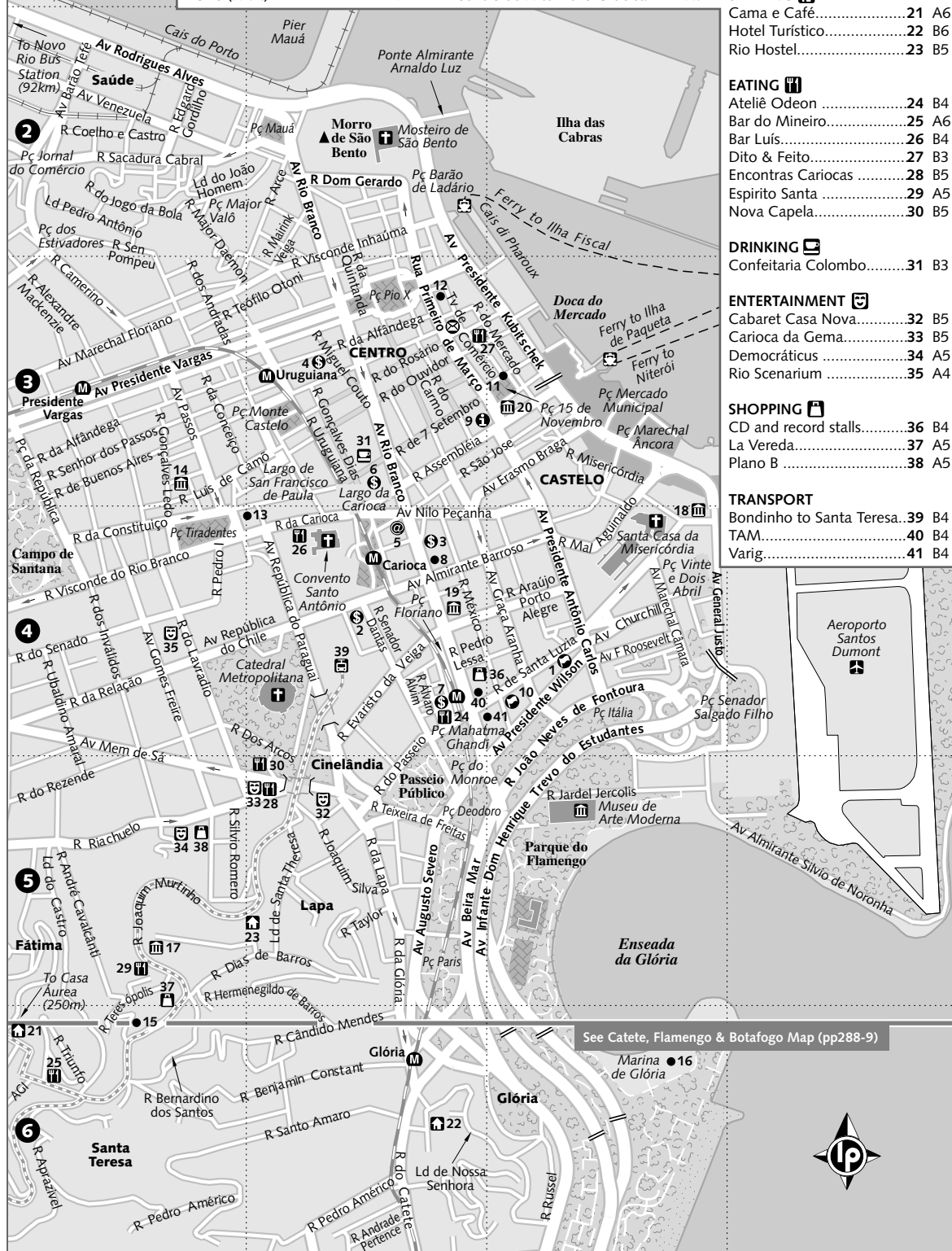
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See Catete, Flamengo & Botafogo Map (pp288-9)

BRAZIL

SIGHTS

In addition to sand, sky and sea, Rio has dozens of other attractions: historic neighborhoods, colorful museums, colonial churches, picturesque gardens and some spectacular overlooks.

Ipanema & Leblon

Boasting a magnificent beach and pleasant tree-lined streets, Ipanema and Leblon (Map p286) are Rio's loveliest destinations and the favored residence for young, beautiful (and wealthy) *cariocas*. Microcultures dominate the beach: Posto 9, off Rua Vinícius de Moraes, is the gathering spot for the beauty crowd; nearby, in front of Farme de Amoedo, is the gay section; Posto 11 in Leblon attracts families.

Arpoador, between Ipanema and Copacabana, is a popular surf spot. All along the beach the waves can get big, and the undertow is strong – swim only where the locals do.

You'll find good views over the beach at Mirante do Leblon, just west of the sands.

Copacabana & Leme

The gorgeous curving beach of Copacabana (Map p292) stretches 4.5km from end to end, and pulses with an energy unknown elsewhere. Dozens of restaurants and bars line Av Atlântica, facing the sea, with tourists, prostitutes and *favela* kids all a part of the wild people-parade.

When you visit Copacabana, take only the essentials with you, and don't ever walk on the beach at night. Take care on weekends, when few locals are around.

Santa Teresa

Set on a hill overlooking the city, Santa Teresa (Map p284), with its cobbled streets and aging mansions, retains the charm of days past. Currently the residence of a new generation of artists and bohemians, Santa Teresa has colorful restaurants and bars and a lively weekend scene around Largo do Guimarães and Largo das Neves.

Museu Chácara do Céu (Map p284; Rua Murinho Nobre 93; admission US\$2, Sun free; ☎ noon-5pm Wed-Mon) is a delightful art and antiques museum in a former industrialist's mansion with beautiful gardens and great views.

To reach Santa Teresa, take the **bondinho** (streetcar; Map p284; tickets US\$0.50) from the station on Rua Professor Lélio Gama, behind Petrobras.

On weekends take a taxi to the tram station, as robberies have occurred on neighboring streets.

Urca & Botafogo

The peaceful streets of Urca (Map pp288-9) offer a welcome escape from the urban bustle. Good places for strolling are along the seawall facing Corcovado, the interior streets and the nature trail **Trilha Claudio Coutinho** (Map pp288-9; ☎ 8am-6pm).

Pão de Açúcar (Sugar Loaf; Map pp288-9; admission US\$12; ☎ 8am-10pm), Rio's iconic 396m mountain, offers fabulous views over the city. Sunset on a clear day is the most spectacular time to go. To reach the summit you can go by cable car, changing lines at Morro da Urca (215m); you can also climb up (p287). To get there take an 'Urca' bus (bus 107 from Centro or Flamengo, bus 500, 511 or 512 from the *zona sul*).

West of Urca is the youthful neighborhood of Botafogo, where the **Museu do Índio** (Map pp288-9; Rua das Palmeiras 55; admission US\$2; ☎ 9am-5:30pm Tue-Fri, 1-5pm Sat & Sun) has curious multimedia expositions on Brazil's northern tribes.

Cosme Velho

Atop the 710m-high peak known as Corcovado (Hunchback), the looming statue of **Cristo Redentor** (Christ the Redeemer; Map p281) offers similarly fantastic views over Rio. You can go by taxi, but the best way to reach the summit is by **cog train** (round trip US\$12; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm), which leaves from Rua Cosme Velho 513. To reach the train, take a taxi or a 'Rua Cosme Velho' bus (180, 184, 583 and 584). Choose a clear day to visit.

Centro

Rio's bustling commercial district has many remnants of its once-magnificent past. Looming baroque churches, wide plazas and cobblestone streets lie scattered throughout the district. For more on this area, see Walking Tour (p290).

Hosting some of Rio's best exhibitions is the **Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil** (p282). Occupying the former 18th-century colonial arsenal, the large **Museu Histórico Nacional** (Map p284; ☎ 2550-9224; www.museuhistoriconacional.com.br; off Av General Justo near Praça Marechal Âncora; admission US\$2.50; ☎ 10am-5:30pm Tue-Fri, 2-6pm Sat & Sun) contains thousands of historic relics relating to the history of Brazil, from its founding to its early days as a republic.

BRAZIL

800 m
0 0.5 miles

IPANEMA, LEBLON & GÁVEA

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3	D3
4	F3
5	E3
6	F3
7	F3
8	E3
9	C3

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50	D3
51	F3
52	D3
53	E3

TRANSPORT

54	E3
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15	E3
16	D3
17	E3
18	E3
19	F3
20	E3
21	D3

SLEEPING

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36	E3
38	E3
41	E3
48	E3
49	E3

The avant-garde **Centro de Arte Hélio Oiticica** (Map p284; ☎ 2242-1012; Rua Luis de Camões 68; admission free; 🕒 11am-7pm Tue-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun) hosts good contemporary shows in a 19th-century neoclassical building.

The small **Museu Nacional de Belas Artes** (Map p284; Av Rio Branco 199; admission US\$5, free Sun; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 2-6pm Sat & Sun) houses fine art from the 17th to the 20th century, including Brazilian classics like Cândido Portinari's *Café*.

Catete & Flamengo

South of Centro, these working class neighborhoods have several worthwhile sights.

The **Museu da República** (Map pp288-9; Rua do Catete 153; admission US\$3, free Wed; 🕒 noon-5pm Tue-Fri, 2-6pm Sat & Sun) occupies the beautiful 19th-century Palácio do Catete, which served as Brazil's presidential palace until 1954. It houses a collection of artifacts from the republican period and the eerily preserved room where President Getúlio Vargas killed himself.

Next door, the small **Museu Folclórico Edson Carneiro** (Map pp288-9; Rua do Catete 181, Catete; admission US\$2; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Fri, 3-6pm Sat & Sun) displays Brazilian folk art with an emphasis on Bahian artists.

Behind both museums is the **Parque do Catete**, the former palace grounds containing a pleasant outdoor café and a small pond.

One of Rio's best new additions, the **Centro Cultural Telemar** (Map pp288-9; ☎ 3131-6060; www.centroculturaltelemar.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Dois de Dezembro 63, Flamengo; admission free; 🕒 11am-8pm Tue-Sun) has contemporary multimedia installations and occasional concerts.

Jardim Botânico & Lagoa

This verdant **Botanical Gardens** (Map p281; Rua Jardim Botânico 920; admission US\$1.50; 🕒 8am-5pm), with over 5000 varieties of plants, is quiet and serene on weekdays and fills with families and music on weekends. An outdoor café overlooks the gardens in back. To get there take a 'Jardim Botânico' bus, or any other bus marked 'via Jóquei.'

Just north of Ipanema stretches the **Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas** (Map p286), a picturesque saltwater lagoon ringed with a walking-biking trail (rent bikes at Parque Brigadeiro Faria Lima). The lakeside kiosks are a scenic spot for an outdoor meal, with live music on week-end nights.

Parque Nacional da Tijuca

Lush trails through tropical rainforest lie just 15 minutes from concrete Copacabana. The 120 sq km refuge of the **Parque Nacional da Tijuca** (Map p281; 🕒 7am-sunset), a remnant of the Atlantic rainforest, has excellently marked trails over small peaks and past waterfalls. Maps are available at the crafts shop inside the entrance.

It's best to go by car, but if you can't, catch bus 221, 233 or 234 or take the metro to Saens Peña, then catch a bus going to Barra da Tijuca and get off at Alta da Boa Vista, the small suburb close to the park entrance.

ACTIVITIES

Rio's lush mountains and glimmering coastline just cry out for attention, and there are hundreds of ways to experience their magic on a sun-drenched afternoon.

Climbing

Animus Kon-Tikis (☎ 2295-0086; www.animuskontikis.com.br; rock climbs/hikes US\$55/23) offers highly rewarding climbs up the face of Pão de Açúcar.

Hang-Gliding

The fantastic hang glide off 510m Pedra Bonita, one of the giant granite slabs towering over the city, is a highlight of any trip to Brazil. Many pilots offer tandem flights (from around US\$80 including transportation), but reputable picks include **Just Fly** (☎ 2268-0565; www.justfly.com.br), **SuperFly** (☎ 3322-2286) and **Tandem Fly** (☎ 2422-6371; www.riotandemfly.com.br).

Bay Cruises

Macuco Rio (Map p284; ☎ 2205-0390; www.macucorio.com.br in Portuguese; Marina da Glória; boat tours US\$35-45) offers two daily tours (at 10am and 2pm) in a high-velocity boat to either the pristine Cagarras Archipelago, or historic sites along the bay.

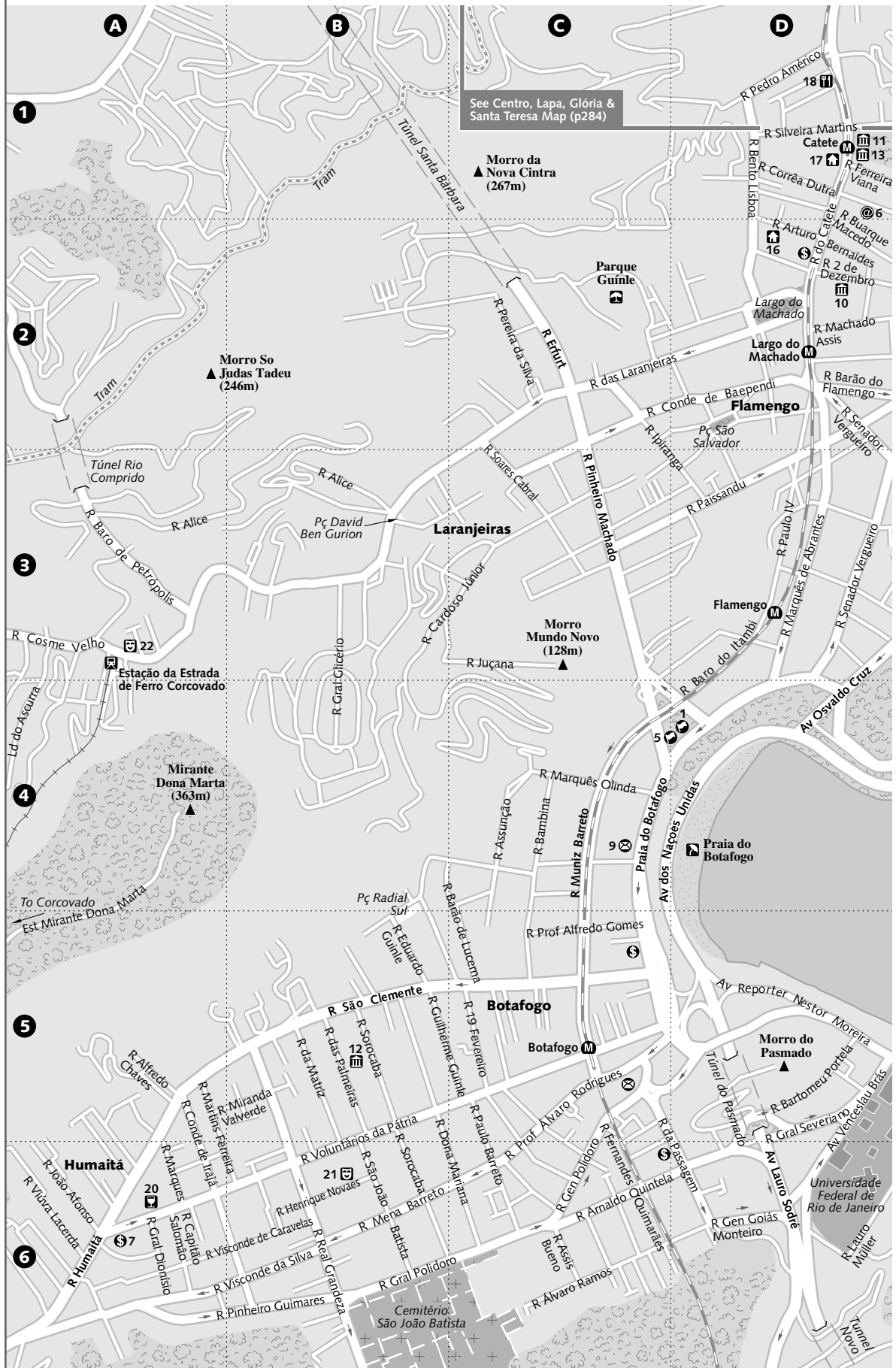
Saveiros Tours (Map p284; ☎ 2225-6064; www.saveiros.com.br; Marina da Glória, Glória; cruise US\$14; 🕒 9:30-11:30am) runs two-hour cruises in the bay in large schooners.

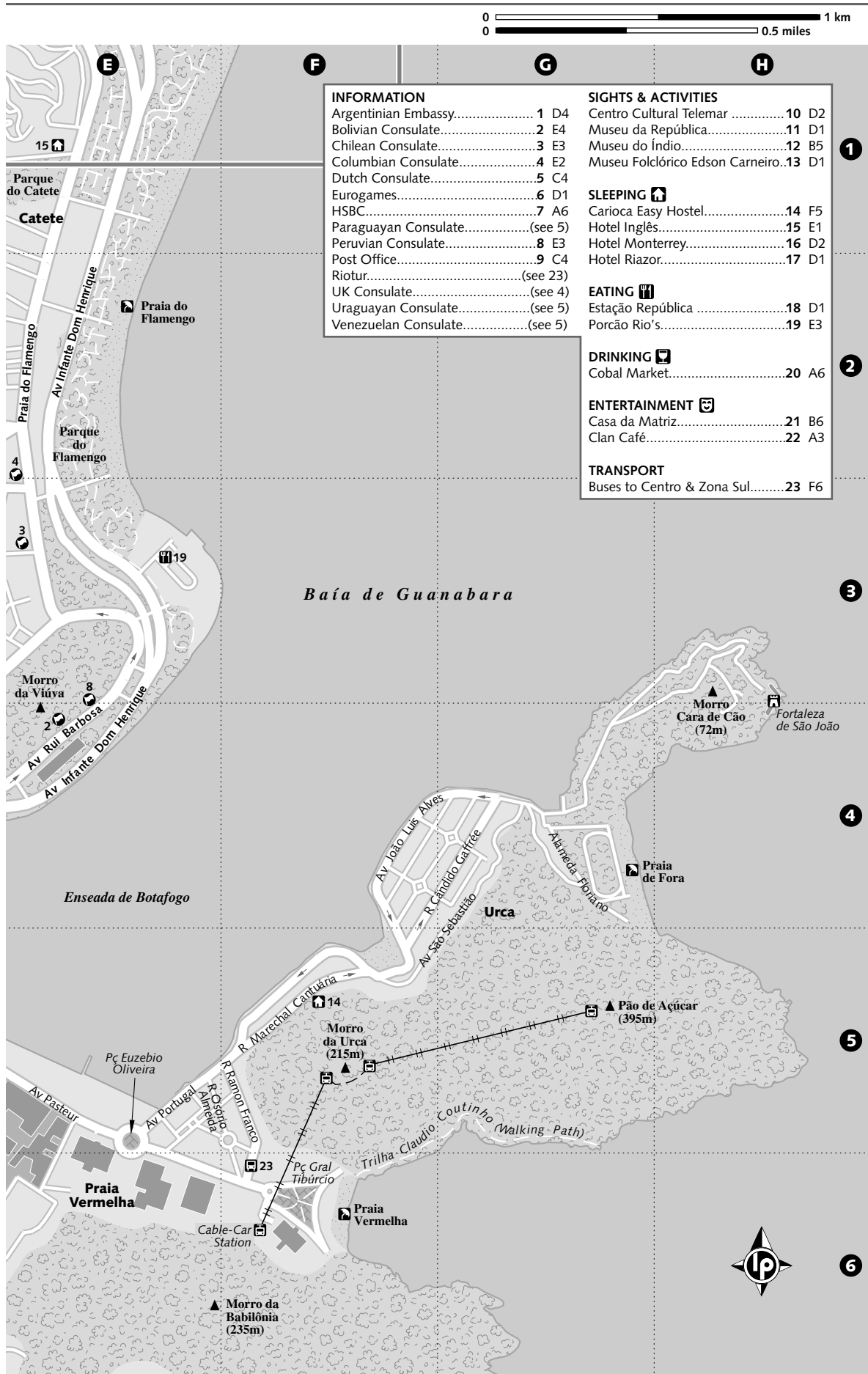
Dance Classes

Centro Cultural Carioca (Map p284; ☎ 2252-6468; www.centroculturalcarioca.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Sete de Setembro, Centro; 🕒 11am-8pm Mon-Fri) offers one-hour classes in samba and ballroom, which meet twice a week (US\$40 to US\$60 for six-week course).

CATETE, FLAMENGO & BOTAFOGO

BRAZIL





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BRAZIL

WALKING TOUR

Although lacking the sensual charms of the beaches in the *zona sul*, central Rio's rich history makes for some fascinating exploring. The heart of Rio today is Praça Floriano in Cinelândia. At lunchtime and after work, samba music and political debate fills the air as *cariocas* gather in the open-air cafés here. Just north looms the **Teatro Municipal (1)**, which hosts Rio's best dance and theater. It's modeled on the Paris Opera.

From Praça Floriano leave its northwest corner and walk along pedestrian-only Av 13 de Maio. Cross Av Almirante Borroso and you're in the Largo da Carioca. Up on the hill is the restored **Convento de Santo Antônio (2)**, whose eponymous statue is an object of great devotion to many *cariocas* in search of a husband.

From the convent, you'll notice the **Petrobras (3)** building (rather like the old Rubik's cube) and the ultramodern **Catedral Metropolitana (4)**. Nearby you can take the *bondinho* (US50¢) up to Santa Teresa (p285).

Not far from the cathedral, you'll find old shops along 19th-century Rua da Carioca. Stop at **Bar Luís (5)**; p294), a Rio institution with

good food and beer. At the end of the block you'll emerge into bustling **Praça Tiradentes (6)**, once a fabulous part of the city. Stop in to see what's on at the **Centro Cultural Carioca (7)**; Rua do Teatro 37), a restored theater hosting good samba bands. Nearby is the atmospheric Portuguese reading room **Real Gabinete Português de Leitura (8)**; Rua Luís de Camões 30; ☎ 9am-6pm). A little further west is **Campo de Santana (9)**, a park where Emperor Dom Pedro I declared Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822.

Back near Av Rio Branco, hit the elegant coffeehouse **Confeitaria Colombo (10)**; Rua Gonçalves Dias 30) for good espresso and decadent desserts. Afterwards, cross Av Rio Branco and continue along Rua 7 de Setembro into **Praça 15 de Novembro (11)**. Beside this square stands the **Paço Imperial (12)**; admission free; ☎ noon-6:30pm Tue-Sun), formerly the royal palace and seat of government. Today it houses temporary exhibits, a cinema and several restaurants. Just north is **Arco de Teles (13)**, an arch formed by part of an old aqueduct. Walking through into Travessa de Comércio, you'll find outdoor bars, restaurants and intriguing storefronts.

From Praça 15 de Novembro, you can stroll over to the waterfront, where frequent ferries leave to Niterói, on the east side of the Baía de Guanabara.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

One of the world's biggest and wildest parties, **Carnaval** in all its colorful, hedonistic bacchanalia is virtually synonymous with Rio. Although Carnaval is ostensibly just five days

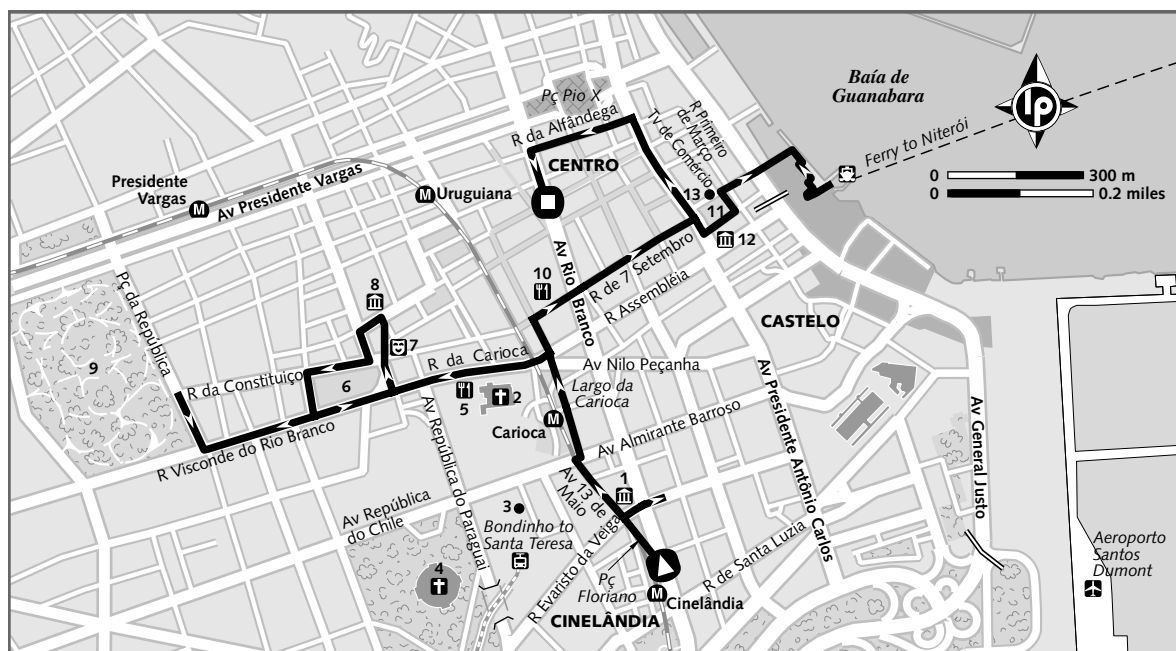
WALK FACTS

Start Praça Floriano

Finish Niterói

Distance 3.5km

Duration three hours



of revelry (Friday to Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday), *cariocas* begin partying months in advance. The parade through the *sambódromo*, featuring elaborate floats flanked by thousands of pounding drummers and twirling dancers, is the culmination of the festivities, though the real action is at the parties about town.

Nightclubs and bars throw special costumed events. There are also free live concerts throughout the city (Largo do Machado, Arcos do Lapa, Praça General Osório), while those seeking a bit of decadence can head to various balls about town. *Bandas*, also called *blocos*, are one of the best ways to celebrate *carioca* style. These consist of a procession of drummers and vocalists followed by anyone who wants to dance through the streets of Rio. Check *Veja's* 'Rio' insert or Riotur for times and locations. *Blocos* in Santa Teresa and Ipanema are highly recommended.

The spectacular main parade takes place in the **sambódromo** (Rua Marques do Sapuçaí) near Praça Onze metro station. Before an exuberant crowd of some 30,000, each of 14 samba schools has its hour to dazzle the audience. Top schools compete on Carnival Sunday and Monday (February 3 and 4 in 2008; February 22 and 23 in 2009; February 14 and 15 in 2010). The safest way of reaching the *sambódromo* is by taxi or metro, which runs round the clock during Carnival.

For information on buying *sambódromo* tickets at official prices (around US\$60), stop by Riotur or visit the comprehensive Carnival site (www.rio-carnival.net). By Carnival weekend most tickets are sold out, leaving you to the mercy of the scalpers (they'll find you), or to simply show up at the *sambódromo* around midnight, three or four hours into the show, when you can get grandstand tickets from US\$15 to US\$50, depending on the location.

If you fancy really getting into the swing of Carnival, it's not hard to join an *escola de samba* and take part in the parades yourself.

Keep in mind that Carnival is costly: room rates triple and quadruple; and some thieves keep in the spirit of things by robbing in costume.

SLEEPING

Dozens of hostels have opened in recent years, making Rio an increasingly popular backpacker destination.

From December to February reservations are wise and they're absolutely essential around New Year's Eve and Carnaval.

Ipanema & Leblon

Ipanema Wave Hostel (Map p286; ☎ 2227-6458; wavehostel@yahoo.com.br; Rua Barão da Torre 175 No 5, Ipanema; dm US\$16) Popular with a youthful, laid-back crowd, the Wave Hostel has wood floors and well-maintained common areas. It's located on a pretty Ipanema street, next door to several other hostels.

Lighthouse Hostel (Map p286; ☎ 2522-1353; www.thelighthouse.com.br; Rua Barão da Torre 175, No 20, Ipanema; dm/d US\$18/55) Next door to the Ipanema Wave, this friendly, small-scale hostel has attractive rooms, and it's a good place to meet other travelers and get the latest surf report.

Ipanema Beach House (Map p286; ☎ 3202-2693; www.ipanemahouse.com; Rua Barão da Torre 485, Ipanema; dm/d US\$18/55; 📶 🚿) One of Rio's loveliest hostels, this converted two-story house has six- and nine-bed dorms (in three-tiered bunk beds), several private rooms, spacious indoor and outdoor lounge space, a small bar and a beautiful pool.

Che Lagarto (www.chelagarto.com) Ipanema (Map p286; ☎ 2512-8076; Rua Paul Redfern 48; dm/d US\$20/60); Copacabana (Map p292; ☎ 2256-2778; Rua Anita Garibaldi 87; dm with/without YHA card US\$15/18, d US\$46) This popular budget five-story hostel attracts travelers who want to be close to Ipanema beach. It has basic rooms and not much common space, aside from the pricey bar on the 1st floor. The Copacabana branch has a bit more of a party vibe.

Margarida's Pousada (Map p286; ☎ 2239-1840; margaridacaneiro@hotmail.com; Rua Barão da Torre 600, Ipanema; s/d/apt from US\$37/55/115; 🚿) This well-located guesthouse has cozy rooms in a small two-story house, with a private apartment for rent nearby.

Hotel Vermont (Map p286; ☎ 2522-0057; vermont@uol.com.br; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 254, Ipanema; s/d from US\$57/78; 🚿) It's all about location if you stay at this aging high-rise two blocks from the beach. The rooms are indeed shabby, with tile floors, elderly bathrooms and poor lighting.

Hotel San Marco (Map p286; ☎ 2540-5032; www.sanmarcohotel.net; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 524, Ipanema; s/d US\$65/70; 🚿) You'll find similar qualities to the Vermont here.

Ipanema Sweet (Map p286; ☎ 2551-0488; soniacordeiro@globo.com; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 161, Ipanema; apt from US\$95; 🚿 🚿) Modern, furnished apartments

with kitchen, lounge and balcony (no view) are a good value here. Two pools, sauna and laundry.

Copacabana & Leme

Copacabana Praia Hostel (Map p292; ☎ 2547-5422; Rua Tenente Marones de Gusmão 85, Copacabana; dm/s/d US\$12/32/46, apt US\$46) Overlooking a small park on a tranquil street, this unsigned hostel gathers its share of budget travelers with some of Copacabana's cheapest beds. Simple furnished apartments available.

Rio Backpackers (Map p292; ☎ 2236-3803; www.rio-backpackers.com.br; Travessa Santa Leocádia 38, Copacabana; dm/d US\$14/41) Young backpackers flock to this popular hostel in Copacabana. The rooms are small but clean and nicely maintained,

and the house has choice spots to meet other travelers. The young Brazilian owners are huge partiers.

Hotel Toledo (Map p292; ☎ 2257-1990; fax 2257-1931; Rua Domingos Ferreira 71, Copacabana; minis/s/d US\$32/55/67) A block from the beach, the Toledo offers low prices for its outdated but clean rooms. The Toledo also has some coffin-sized singles (minis).

Pousada Girassol (Map p292; ☎ 2549-8344; www.girassolpousada.com.br; Travessa Angrense 25A, Copacabana; s/d/tr US\$44/55/64) One of two small *pousadas* just off busy Av NS de Copacabana, Girassol, has simple en suite rooms with wood floors and adequate ventilation.

Hotel Santa Clara (Map p292; ☎ 2256-2650; www.hotelsantaclara.com.br; Rua Décio Vilares 316, Copacabana;

BRAZIL

COPACABANA & LEME

ATLANTIC OCEAN

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Pousada Girassol.....	17 A2
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Rio Backpackers.....	19 A2

s/d from US\$55/60) One of Copacabana's most peaceful streets hides this decent three-story hotel. Upstairs rooms are best, with wood floors, shutters and a balcony.

Residencial Apartt (Map p292; ☎ 2522-1722; www.apartt.com.br; Rua Francisco Otaviano 42, Copacabana; d from US\$63; 🏠) One of Rio's cheapest all-suites hotel, this charmless place has basic one-bedroom apartments with small kitchen units, a gloomy lounge room and a bedroom with better natural lighting.

Santa Teresa

Rio Hostel (Map p284; ☎ 3852-0827; www.riohostel.com; Rua Joaquim Murtinho; dm/d from US\$16/50; 🏠) This beautiful, welcoming hostel is ideally placed for exploring Rio's most bohemian neighborhood. Ample lounge space and lively evening gatherings on the poolside patio.

Casa Áurea (Map p284; ☎ 2242-5830; www.casaurea.com.br; Rua Áurea 80, Santa Teresa; d US\$36-55) This handsome two-story guesthouse has decent rooms facing a courtyard garden. It's within a short walking distance to the *bonde* (tram).

Cama e Café (Map p284; ☎ 2221-7635; www.camaecafe.com; Rua Pascoal Carlos Magno 5, Santa Teresa; d from US\$45) This B&B network links travelers with local residents who rent spare rooms in their homes. Accommodations range from modest to lavish; check website for listings.

Botafogo & Urca

Carioca Easy Hostel (Map pp288-9; ☎ 2295-7805; www.cariocahostel.com.br; Rua Marechal Cantuária 168, Urca; dm/d US\$18/50; 🏠) Against the backdrop of Sugar Loaf, this tiny hostel has clean-swept dorm rooms and sunny lounge space with a tiny swimming pool in back. It's a short bus ride (bus 511 or 512) to Copacabana.

Glória, Catete & Flamengo

Hotel Riazor (Map pp288-9; ☎ 2225-0121; hotelriazor1@hotmail.com; Rua do Catete 160, Catete; s/d US\$21/28; 🏠) The colonial facade of the Riazor hides battered quarters. The equation here is simple: bed, bathroom, TV, and door by which to exit and explore the city.

Hotel Turístico (Map p284; ☎ 2557-7698; Ladeira da Glória 30; s/d US\$25/30) On a quiet street up from Glória metro station, the Turístico offers spartan accommodations. Rooms range from cheery to grim.

Other Catete cheapies:

Hotel Monterrey (Map pp288-9; ☎ 2265-9899; Rua Arturo Bernardes 39, Catete; s/d US\$24/32)

Hotel Inglês (Map pp288-9; ☎ 2558-3052; www.hotelingles.com.br; Rua Silveira Martins 20; s/d US\$25/32)

EATING

Rio has a wealth of dining options, though not always at low prices. The best places for cheap dining are self-serve lunch buffets and juice bars, which you'll find all over the city. For fancier fare, Leblon has the best options, particularly along restaurant-packed Rua Dias Ferreira. Other possibilities are the open-air restaurants on the eastern and western edge of the lake (Lagoa) and along Rua Joaquim Murtinho in Santa Teresa.

Ipanema & Leblon

Delírio Tropical (Map p286; Rua Garcia D'Ávila 48, Ipanema; salads US\$4-6; 🕒 8am-9pm) Famed for its delicious salads, the airy Delírio Tropical serves many varieties along with soups and hot dishes (veggie burgers, grilled salmon).

Chaika (Map p286; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 321; lunch specials US\$4; 🕒 9am-1am) This low-key eatery serves hamburgers, pastries and sodas up front, with more substantial offerings in back.

Bibi Crepes (Map p286; Rua Cupertino Durão 81, Leblon; crepes US\$5-8; 🕒 noon-1am) Serves a variety of tasty sweet and savory crepes.

Fontes (Map p286; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 605D; mains around US\$5) A good vegetarian option.

New Natural (Map p286; Rua Barão da Torre 167; lunch specials US\$6; 🕒 7am-11pm) Featuring an excellent vegetarian lunch buffet, this travelers' favorite has fresh soups, rice, veggies and beans.

Vegetariano Social Club (Map p286; Rua Conde Bernadotte 26L, Leblon; mains around US\$8; 🕒 noon-5:30pm) This zenlike spot serves a mean tofu *feijoada* on Saturdays.

Zazá Bistro Tropical (Map p286; Rua Joana Angélica 40, Ipanema; mains US\$14-22; 🕒 dinner) For a splurge, treat yourself to Zazá, a handsomely converted house in Ipanema with French-colonial decor and inventive seafood dishes. Check out the upstairs lounge, where you can dine among throw pillows and candlelight.

Casa da Feijoada (Map p286; Rua Prudente de Moraes 10B, Ipanema; feijoada US\$17) Rio's signature black bean and salted pork dish is served with panache here daily.

Zona Sul supermarket (Map p286; Rua Gomes Carneiro 29) A good place to assemble cheap meals.

Copacabana & Leme

Yonza (Map p292; Rua Miguel Lemos 21B, Copacabana; crepes US\$4-7; 🕒 10am-midnight Tue-Fri, 6pm-midnight Sat & Sun)

Surfboards and Japanese animé set the scene at this inexpensive creperie near the beach. Expect filling crepes and a young crowd.

Temperarte (Map p292; Av NS de Copacabana 266, Copacabana; per kg US\$9; ☺ lunch Mon-Sat) This pay-by-weight restaurant has an admirable selection of salads, roast meats and vegetables.

Bakers (Map p292; Rua Santa Clara 86B; sandwiches US\$3-6; ☺ 9am-8pm) Good place for flaky croissants, strudels and coffee. Deli sandwiches are also a good value.

Quick Galetos (Map p292; Rua Duvivier 28A; meals US\$4-6) Inexpensive fresh-roasted chicken.

Cervantes (Map p292; Av Prado Junior 335B; sandwiches from US\$6) A Copacabana institution, Cervantes is famous for its filet mignon-and-pineapple sandwiches and ice-cold *chope* (draft beer) on tap. Around the corner (Rua Barato Ribeiro 7), Cervantes' stand-up *boteco* (neighborhood bar) serves tasty bites in a hurry.

Churrascaria Monchique (Map p292; Av NS de Copacabana 796A; all-you-can-eat US\$6.50; ☺ lunch) This inexpensive *churrascaria* serves good roasted meats, with an extensive salad bar and buffet.

Kilograma (Map p292; Av Nossa Senhora de Copacabana 1144; per kg US\$14) This is an excellent self-serve restaurant with salads, meats, seafood and desserts.

Amir (Map p292; Rua Ronald de Carvalho 55C; mains US\$10-14) This cozy Middle-Eastern restaurant serves tasty platters of hummus, *koftas*, falafel and other authentic fare.

Centro

Dito & Feito (Map p284; Rua do Mercado 19; meals US\$7-12; ☺ lunch Mon-Fri) In an atmospheric 19th-century mansion, this place serves a popular weekday lunch buffet.

Ateliê Odeon (Map p284; Praça Floriano; mains US\$8-12; ☺ closed Sat & Sun) One of several lively Brazilian restaurants with open-air seating on the Praça Floriano.

Bar Luís (Map p284; Rua da Carioca 39; mains US\$9-15; ☺ closed Sun) A Rio institution since 1887, Bar Luís serves filling portions of German food and Rio's best dark beer.

Lapa & Santa Teresa

Encontras Cariocas (Map p284; Av Mem de Sá 77, Lapa; pizzas US\$6-16; ☺ dinner Wed-Sun) An atmospheric pizzeria in the heart of music-filled Lapa.

Bar do Mineiro (Map p284; Rua Paschoal Carlos Magno 99, Santa Teresa; mains US\$8-15; ☺ closed Mon) This old-school restaurant is a Santa Teresa favorite, with a menu of traditional Minas dishes like

carne seca (dried meat with spices), *lingüiça* (pork sausage) and Saturday *feijoada*.

Nova Capela (Map p284; Av Mem de Sá 96; mains from US\$9) Serving traditional Portuguese cuisine, old-fashioned Nova Capela attracts a garrulous crowd. The *cabrito* (goat) is tops.

Espirito Santa (Map p284; Rua Almirante Alexandrino 264, Santa Teresa; mains US\$9-18; ☺ closed Mon) In a beautifully restored building, Espirito Santa has excellent Amazonian dishes that can be enjoyed on a back terrace with sweeping views.

Glória, Catete & Flamengo

Estação República (Map pp288-9; Rua do Catete 104, Catete; plates US\$5-10; ☺ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat, 11am-11pm Sun) This is a popular, inexpensive self-serve restaurant.

Porcão Rio's (Map pp288-9; Av Infante Dom Henrique-Aterro; all-you-can-eat US\$28) Inside Parque do Flamengo, this is one of Rio's best all-you-can-eat *churrascarias* with delectable grilled meats and views of Pão de Açúcar.

DRINKING

Few cities can rival the dynamism of Rio's nightlife. Samba clubs, jazz bars, open-air cafés, lounges and night clubs are just one part of the scene, while the *boteco* is practically a *carioca* institution. If you can read a bit of Portuguese, there are many good sources of information: Veja Rio insert in *Veja* magazine, Thursday and Friday editions of *O Globo* and *Jornal do Brasil* and the Rio Festa website (www.riofesta.com.br).

Cafés & Juice Bars

Rio's numerous juice bars are a great spot to sample savory concoctions of the tropics. For coffee culture and people-watching, head to the sidewalk cafés scattered about Ipanema and Leblon.

Polis Sucos (Map p286; Rua Maria Quitéria 70; ☺ 7am-midnight) A top juice bar.

Caféina (Map p286; Rua Farma de Amoedo 43; sandwiches US\$4-7) This attractive café makes a fine spot for espresso while the city strolls by.

Confeitaria Colombo (Map p284; Rua Gonçalves Dias 34) Stained-glass windows and polished brocade provide the setting for java and desserts.

For more café culture:

Armazém do Café (Map p286; Rua Rita Ludolf 87B, Leblon)

Ateliê Culinário (Map p286; Rua Dias Ferreira 45, Leblon)

BAR-HOPPING 101

When it comes to bars, nearly every neighborhood in Rio has its drinking clusters. While Ipanema has scattered options, Leblon has many choices along the western end of Av General San Martin. Near Lagoa, a youthful population fills the bars around JJ Seabra, and there's almost always a fun crowd packing the bars facing Praça Santos Dumont. The lakeside kiosks (in Parque Brigadeiro Faria Lima) are a favorite date place, with live music in the open air. Copacabana's Av Atlântica packs many sidewalk bars and restaurants, but the strip gets seedy after dark. Botafogo has authentic *carioca* bars, particularly around Rua Visconde de Caravelas and in the Cobal market. In Centro the atmospheric Travessa do Comércio is recommended for weekday evening drinks. Lapa's liveliest street is Av Mem de Sá, which is lined with samba clubs. In Santa Teresa you'll find colorful bars around Largo do Guimarães and Largo das Neves.

Bars

Empório (Map p286; Rua Maria Quitéria 37, Ipanema)

A young mix of *cariocas* and gringos stirs things up over cheap cocktails at this battered Ipanema favorite.

Devassa (Map p286; Rua General San Martin 1241, Leblon) Serving perhaps Rio's best beer, Devassa is a lively choice. MPB bands add to the festive atmosphere.

Bar D'Hotel (Map p286; Marina All Suites, Av Delfim Moreira 696 2nd fl, Leblon) One of Leblon's most stylish bars is a magnet for the beauty crowd.

Shenanigan's (Map p286; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 112A, Ipanema) Overlooking the Praça General Osorio, this Irish pub attracts a mix of stylish Cariocas and sunburnt gringos.

Caneco 70 (Map p286; Av Delfim Moreira 1026, Leblon) Traditional after-beach hangout facing the shore.

Garota de Ipanema (Map p286; Rua Vinicius de Moraes 49) Plenty of tourists pack this bar, but it would be a sin not to mention the place where Jobim and Vinicius penned the famed song 'Girl from Ipanema'.

Guapo Loco (Map p286; Rua Rainha Guilhermina 48, Leblon) This colorful Mexican restaurant and bar is one of Leblon's rowdiest bars; tequila is the drink of choice.

Drink Café (Map p286; Parque dos Patins, Av Borges de Medeiros, Lagoa; live music charge US\$2) One of a handful of lively open-air restaurants along the lake.

Hipódromo (Map p286; Praça Santos Dumont 108, Gávea) In an area referred to as Baixo Gávea, Hipódromo attracts a young college-age crowd. The best nights are Monday, Thursday and Sunday.

Sindicato Do Chopp (Map p292) Copacabana Av Atlântica 3806; Leme (Av Atlântica 514) These open-air bars overlook the wide avenue with the beach in the background.

ENTERTAINMENT**Live Music**

Cover charge typically ranges from US\$5 to US\$10.

Carioca Da Gema (Map p284; Av Mem de Sá 79, Lapa) One of numerous samba clubs on this street, Carioca da Gema is a small, warmly lit setting for catching some of the city's best samba bands. A festive crowd fills the dance floor.

Democráticus (Map p284; Rua do Riachuelo 91, Lapa; ☎ Wed-Sun) This charming classic has an enormous dance floor and excellent samba bands. If you come to just one *gafieira* (samba club), Democráticus is a good choice.

Rio Scenarium (Map p284; www.rioscenarium.com.br in Portuguese; Rua do Lavradio 20, Lapa; ☎ closed Sun & Mon) One of Lapa's cinematic nightspots, Río Scenarium has three floors, each lavishly decorated with antiques. Balconies overlook the 1st-floor stage, with dancers keeping time to the jazz-infused samba, *choro* or *pagode*.

Clan Café (Map p292; Rua Cosme Velho 564, Cosme Velho; ☎ from 6pm Tue-Sat) This fairly unmarked bar has a large, open-air patio and excellent, low-key live samba, MPB and jazz. Bands start around 9pm.

Bip Bip (Map p286; Rua Almirante Gonçalves 50, Copacabana; admission free; ☎ 6:30pm-1am) One of the hidden gems among the cognoscenti, Bip Bip is a simple storefront with great informal music. Current schedule is samba on Sundays, *chorinho* on Tuesdays, and bossa nova Wednesdays. The music begins around 8pm.

Esch Café (Map p286; Rua Dias Ferreira 78, Leblon) Esch pedals Cuban cigars and live jazz amid a dark wood interior.

Allegro Bistro Musical (Map p292; www.modernsound.com.br; Rua Barata Ribeiro 502, Copacabana; admission free; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 8pm Sat) This small café inside Modern Sound (p296) is a great spot for hearing free live bands playing most nights.

Nightclubs

Nothing happens before midnight. Cover charges range from US\$5 to US\$15, and women generally pay less than men.

Casa da Matriz (Map pp288-9; <http://casadamatriz.com.br>; Rua Henrique Novaes 107, Botafogo) This avant-garde space in Botafogo has numerous little rooms to explore – lounge, screening room, dance floors – in an old two-story mansion.

00 (Zero Zero; Planetário da Gávea, Av Padre Leonel Franca 240, Gávea; ☎ Fri-Sun) Housed in Gávea's planetarium, 00 is a restaurant by day and sleek lounge by night. Good DJs and excellent rotating parties attract mixed dance-happy crowds.

Baronneti (Map p286; Rua Barão da Torre 354, Ipanema; ☎ Tue-Sun) A young, well-heeled crowd descends on this Ipanema nightclub.

Fosfobox (Map p292; Rua Siqueira Campos 143, Copacabana; ☎ Wed-Sun) Hidden under a shopping center, this subterranean club has DJs spinning everything from Funk to Glam Rock.

Melt (Map p286; Rua Rita Ludolf 47, Leblon) This upscale Leblon destination has an upstairs dance floor and a slinky lounge down below.

Samba Schools

In September, the big Carnival schools open their rehearsals to the public. These are lively but informal affairs where you can dance, drink and join the party. The schools are in dodgy neighborhoods, so it's best not to go alone. Most hostels organize outings if you want to hook up with a group. Check with Riotur for schedules and locations. The best ones for tourists:

Mangueira (☎ 2567-4637; Rua Visconde de Niterói 1072, Mangueira; ☎ classes 7pm Sat)

Salgueiro (☎ 2238-5564; Rua Silva Teles 104, Andaraí; ☎ classes 10pm Sat)

Sports

Maracanã (Map p281; Rua Professor Eurico Rabelo e Av Maracanã) Rio's enormous shrine to football hosts some of the world's most exciting matches, with fan behavior no less colorful. Games take place year-round and can happen any day of the week. Rio's big clubs are Flamengo, Fluminense, Vasco da Gama and Botafogo.

To get to the stadium take the metro to Maracanã station then walk along Av Osvaldo Aranha. The safest seats are on the lower level *cadeira*, where the overhead covering protects you from descending objects like dead chickens and urine-filled bottles (no joke!). The ticket price is US\$7 for most games.

SHOPPING Markets

Feira do Nordeste (Map p281; Pavilhão de São Cristóvão near the Quinta da Boa Vista; ☎ Fri-Sun) Northeastern in character with lots of food, drink and live music, this fair is well worth a visit.

Hippie Fair (Map p286; Praça General Osório; ☎ 9am-6pm Sun) An Ipanema favorite with good souvenirs and Bahian food.

You can also purchase Brazilian handicrafts at the following:

Brasil & Cia (Map p286; Rua Maria Quitéria 27, Ipanema)

Empório Brasil (store 108, Rua Visconde de Pirajá 595, Ipanema)

La Vereda (Map p284; Rua Almirante Alexandrino 428, Santa Teresa)

Music

On weekdays along Rua Pedro Lessa (Map p284) vendors sell CDs and records, which range from American indie rock to Brazilian funk.

Modern Sound (Map p292; www.modernsound.com.br; Rua Barata Ribeiro 502D) Rio's biggest music store.

GAY & LESBIAN RIO

Rio's gay community is neither out nor flamboyant most of the year, except at Carnival. On the beaches, you'll find gay-friendly drink stands across from the Copacabana Palace Hotel in Copacabana and opposite Rua Farne de Amoedo (Rio's gayest street) in Ipanema.

Le Boy (Map p292; Rua Raul Pompéia 94) One of Rio's best (and largest) gay clubs. DJs spin house and drum 'n' bass on weekends. Drag shows are the fare during the week.

Bar Bofetada (Map p286; Rua Farne do Amoedo 87A) Though not exclusively a gay bar, gay couples are part of the mix at this lively spot.

Cabaret Casa Nova (Map p284; Av Mem de Sá 25, Lapa; ☎ Fri-Sat) One of Rio's oldest gay clubs featuring a good mixed crowd, drag queens and slightly trashy music.

Casa da Lua (Map p286; Rua Barão da Torre 240A, Ipanema) This lesbian bar is in a leafy party of Ipanema and serves great drinks.

Other places you can expand your music collection:

Musicale Copacabana (Av NS de Copacabana 1103C); Ipanema (Map p286; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 483)

Plano B (Map p284; Rua Francisco Muratori 2A, Lapa)

Toca do Vinícius (Map p286; Rua Vinícius de Moraes 129, Ipanema)

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Most flights depart from Aeroporto Galeão (also called Aeroporto Antônio Carlos Jobim), 15km north of the center. Shuttle flights to/from São Paulo, and some flights for other nearby cities, use Aeroporto Santos Dumont in the city center. Also see Getting Into Town (p282).

Gol tickets can be purchased in cash at any travel agency. Many international airlines have offices on or near Av Rio Branco, Centro.

Brazil's principal airlines have the following offices in the city:

TAM (Map p284; ☎ 2524-1717; Av Rio Branco 245, Centro)

Varig Centro (Map p284; ☎ 2534-0333; Av Rio Branco 277); Copacabana (Map p284; ☎ 2541-6343; Rua Rodolfo Dantas 16); Ipanema (Map p286; ☎ 2523-0040; Rua Visconde de Pirajá 351)

Bus

Buses leave from the **Rodoviária Novo Rio** (Map p281; ☎ 2291-5151; Av Francisco Bicalho) about 2km northwest of Centro. Several buses depart daily to most major destinations, but it's a good idea to buy tickets in advance. Excellent buses leave Novo Rio every 15 minutes or so for São Paulo (US\$15, six hours). Approximate traveling times and fares to sample destinations:

Destination	Duration (hr)	Cost (US\$)
Asunción (Paraguay)	30	85
Belém	52	140
Belo Horizonte	7	20
Buenos Aires (Argentina)	46	138
Florianópolis	18	78
Foz do Iguaçu	22	50
Ouro Preto	7	22
Paraty	4	18
Petrópolis	1	6
Porto Alegre	26	90
Porto Velho	54	138
Recife	42	90
Salvador	26	74
Santiago (Chile)	60	160

GETTING AROUND

Bus

Rio buses are frequent and cheap, and because Rio is long and narrow it's easy to get the right bus and usually no big deal if you're on the wrong one. Nine out of 10 buses going south from the center will go to Copacabana, and vice versa. The buses are, however, often crowded, stuck in traffic, and driven by raving maniacs. They're also the site of many of the city's robberies, and it's not wise to ride late at night.

Metro

Rio's two-line subway system is an excellent way to get around some parts of the city. It's open daily from 6am to 11pm (US\$1).

Taxi

Rio's taxis are useful late at night and when you're carrying valuables. The flat rate is US\$2, plus around US75¢ per kilometer – slightly more at night and on Sundays. **Radio-taxis** (☎ 2260-2022) is 30% more expensive than others, but safer.

THE SOUTHEAST

Although most visitors have a hard time tearing themselves away from Rio's many charms, some spectacular destinations are less than a day's travel from the *cidade maravilhosa*. Gorgeous beaches lie all along the coast, with the Costa Verde (Green Coast, south of Rio) boasting the rainforest-covered island of Ilha Grande and the elegant colonial town of Paraty. In the opposite direction, along the Costa do Sol (Sun Coast) you'll find the laid-back surfing town of Saquarema, the more upscale beaches and nightlife of Búzios and the white sands of Arraial do Cabo.

Those who've had enough of pretty tropical beaches (as if!), should head to the hills. The picture-perfect town of Petrópolis and the nearby peaks of Serra dos Órgãos are just a short bus ride from Rio, while Minas Gerais, further north, offers grand visions of Brazil's colonial era in towns like Ouro Preto, Tiradentes and Diamantina.

Rio-lovers aside, South America's cultural capital is in fact São Paulo, where you'll find the best assortment of museums, nightclubs and restaurants – the latter owing much to the city's incredibly diverse population.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Rio de Janeiro is the major gateway to the coastal regions, though if coming from the south or west you can reach the Costa Verde via São Paulo. Belo Horizonte, Brazil's third-largest city, is the gateway to the old gold-mining towns in Minas Gerais.

Numerous flights connect the three major cities of the Southeast – Belo Horizonte, Rio and São Paulo – with plenty of bus links covering Southeastern destinations. Ilha Grande is reached by ferry from Angra dos Reis or Mangaratiba (p302).

PETRÓPOLIS

☎ 0xx24 / pop 290,000

Once the summer home of the Portuguese imperial family, Petrópolis has some striking vestiges of the past, including a former palace and a cathedral set against the mountain scenery. While traffic can be pretty heavy in the city, the historic center has pleasant manicured parks and peaceful, tree-lined lanes.

Pick up a map at the tourist office on Praça da Liberdade, which is a leisurely stroll to many sites in town. **Trekking Petrópolis** (☎ 2235-7607; www.rioserra.com.br/trekking), based out of Pousada 14bis, offers hiking, rafting and biking excursions in the area.

The city's top attraction is the **Museu Imperial** (Rua da Imperatriz 220; admission US\$4; ☎ 11am-5:30pm Tue-Sun), which exhibits royal finery in the former palace of Dom Pedro II. Nearby is the 19th-century **Catedral São Pedro de Alcântara** (Rua Sao Pedro de Alcântara 60; ☎ 8am-noon & 2-6pm), housing the tombs of Brazil's last emperor, Dom Pedro II, and his wife and daughter. South of the Praça da Liberdade, the **Casa de Santos Dumont** (Rua do Encanto 22; admission US\$1.50; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) is the small but fascinating former home of Brazil's father of aviation.

Pousada 14 Bis (☎ 2231-0946; www.pousada14bis.com.br; Rua Buenos Aires 192; d from US\$35) is an idyllic guesthouse with wood floors and a garden out back. It's on a quiet street, 10 minutes' walk from the Museu Imperial. Nearby, **Comércio** (☎ 2242-3500; Rua Dr Porciúncula 55; s/d without bathroom US\$13/24, s/d with bathroom US\$17/32) has basic but clean rooms. Adjoining the Plaza Dom Pedro II, **Casa D'Angelo** (Rua do Imperador 700; mains from US\$4) is an atmospheric café and restaurant with pastries and affordable *pratos executivos* (set lunches). **Luigi** (Praça da Liberdade 185; mains US\$8-13) serves traditional Italian cuisine in an old house facing the main square.

Buses run from Rio to Petrópolis every half hour from 5am to 10pm (US\$6, one hour). The bus station is located in Bingen, 10km from town. From there, take bus 100 or bus 10 (US\$1).

TERESÓPOLIS & PARQUE NACIONAL DA SERRA DOS ÓRGÃOS

☎ 0xx21 / pop 125,000

Framed by mountain scenery, Teresópolis is well positioned for excursions into the lush-capped peaks of the Parque Nacional da Serra dos Órgãos. Trekking, climbing and rafting are the best ways to experience the park's trails, rivers and waterfalls. Some 96km north of Rio, Teresópolis itself is modern, prosperous and dull.

Information

The Parque Nacional da Serra dos Órgãos visitor center is not far up from the park's entrance.

Tourist office (☎ 2742-3352; Praça Olímpica; ☎ 8am-6pm) In central Teresópolis.

Sights & Activities

About 5km south of Teresópolis is the main entrance to the **Parque Nacional da Serra dos Órgãos** (☎ 2642-1070; Hwy BR-116; admission US\$3; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sun).

The best walking trail is the **Trilha Pedra do Sino** (admission US\$6), which takes about eight hours round trip. It's also possible to walk over the forested mountains to Petrópolis. Most trails are unmarked but it's easy and inexpensive to hire a guide at the national park visitor center.

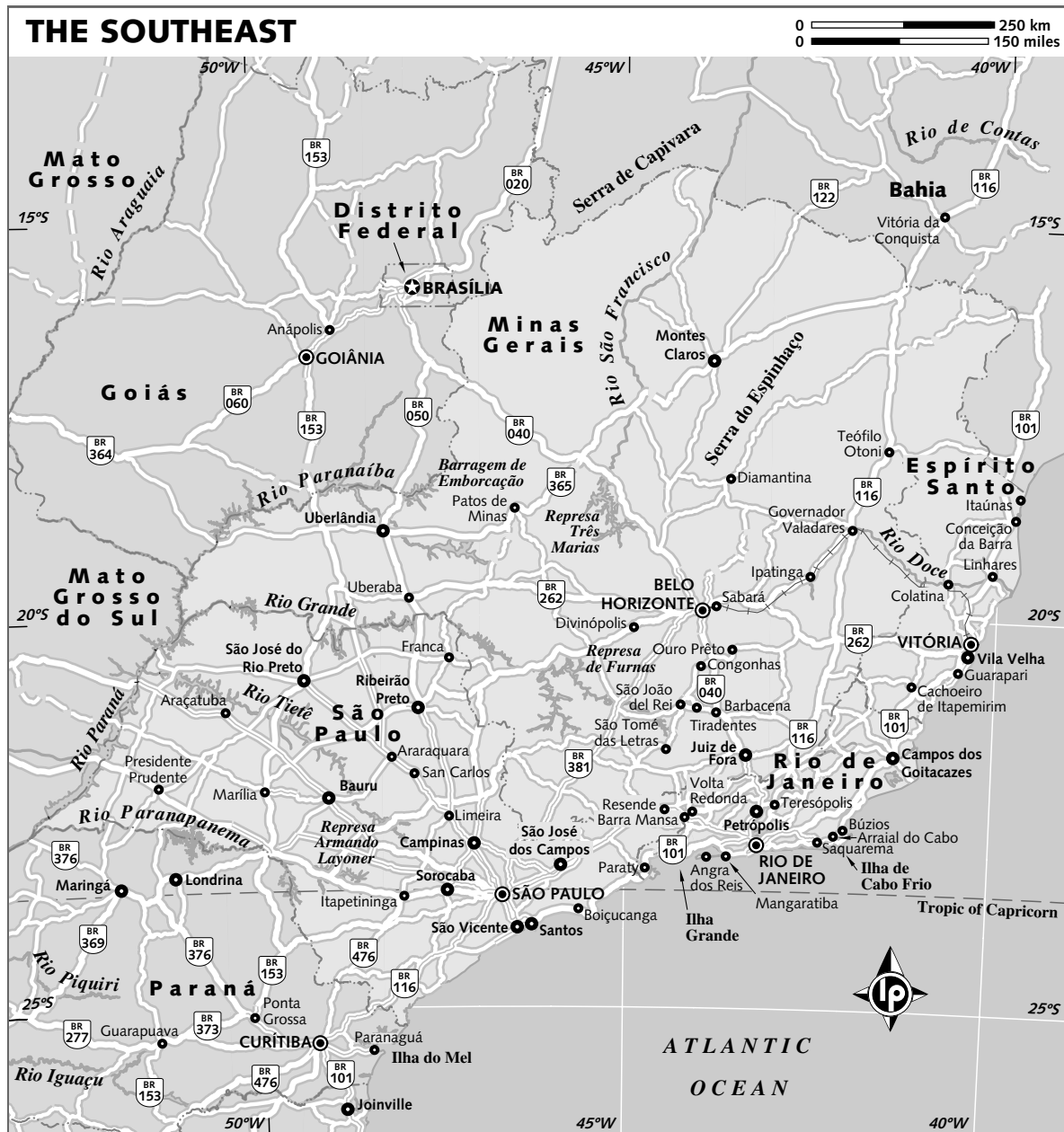
One group that arranges a wide variety of hikes, long treks and rafting and rappelling excursions is **Grupo Maverick** (☎ 2237-3529; www.grupomaverick.com.br).

Sleeping & Eating

Camping Quinta da Barra (☎ 2643-1050; www.campingquintadabarra.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Antônio Maria, Quinta da Barra; camping per person US\$6). This campsite is located a few kilometers outside of Teresópolis, off the road to Petrópolis.

Hostel Recanto do Lord (☎ 2742-5586; www.teresopolishotel.com.br; Rua Luiza Pereira Soares 109; dm/d/tr with YHI card US\$7/20/27; dm/d/tr without YHI card US\$ 10/27/37) Pleasant rooms and a welcoming atmosphere; 2km northwest of the bus station.

Hotel Comary (☎ 9221-9147; s/d US\$15/30) Next to a bakery, Comary has basic but clean-swept



rooms. Other cheap digs are a block away on Rua Delfim Moreira.

Várzea Palace Hotel (☎ 2742-0878; Rua Prefeito Sebastião Teixeira 41/55; s/d US\$30/44, with shared bathroom US\$15/22) In a grand old white building, this faded classic has OK rooms in a great location just off the church Igreja Matriz.

Pousada Refúgio do Parque (☎ 9221-9147; s/d US\$15/30) Two kilometers inside the national park, this basic lodge and restaurant has simple quarters and filling meals. Reserve rooms well in advance.

Sand's (Av Almirante Lúcio Meira; lunch US\$4-8) Near the bus station, this spot has a cheap self-serve lunch spread.

Cheiro de Mato (Rua Delfim Moreira 140; mains US\$6-10) A decent vegetarian restaurant.

Getting There & Around

Buses run between Rio and Teresópolis every half hour from 5am to 10pm (US\$8, 1½ hours). From Teresópolis, daily buses run every 1½ hours to Petrópolis. To get to the national park's main entrance from central Teresópolis, take the hourly 'Soberbo' bus (US\$1), or the more frequent 'Alto' bus to the Praçinha do Alto, then walk a short way south to the entrance.

SAQUAREMA

☎ 0xx22 / pop 46,000

Boasting lovely beaches and a laid-back aesthetic, Saquarema, 100km east of Rio de Janeiro, has long been a favorite with the surfing crowd and its well-tanned admirers.

This former fishing village is a relaxing place to enjoy the coast, with low-key bars and restaurants and a lively weekend crowd.

Information

Lakes Shopping, a tiny little mall located on the road to Praia Itaúna, has an ATM and several eateries.

Banco do Brasil (Av Saquarema 539) Offers cash advances on credit cards.

Secretaria de Turismo (☎ 2651-4112; Rua Coronel Madureira 88; 🕒 9am-8pm Mon-Fri) Friendly and useful.

Sights & Activities

The main beach in town, **Praia da Vila**, has inviting sands, with food and drink stands lining the shore. Beaches to the west are **Boqueirão** (3km), **Barra Nova** (8km) and **Jaconé** (10km), all of which are reachable by local buses. East of town is **Praia Itaúna** (3km), probably Saquarema's most beautiful beach and its best surf spot (US\$5 by taxi from the center). Saquarema's picturesque whitewashed church, NS de Nazaré, stands on a hill overlooking town and attracts thousands of pilgrims on the Nazaré feast day (September 7).

For board hire or lessons, visit the **Saquarema Surf School** (☎ 9903-6619) on Praia Itaúna.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Saquarema (☎ 2651-2275; hostelsaquarema@saquarema.com.br; Praça Oscar de Macedo Soares 128; s/d from US\$20/30) Next to the main square in the center of town (where the bus stops), this basic hotel has small, worn rooms, the best of which have balconies facing the plaza.

Pousada da Titia (☎ 2651-2058; Av Salgado Filho 744; s/d/tr US\$22/25/33) One of half a dozen guesthouses facing Praia da Vila, this one has simply furnished rooms with tile floors.

Itaúna Inn (☎ 2651-1257; www.itaunainn.saquarema.com.br; Av Oceânica 1764; s/d/tr US\$36/48/63; 🚰 🗺) Facing Itaúna beach, this popular guesthouse has comfortable rooms with an idyllic backyard for enjoying the ocean views. Transportation to/from bus station with advance notice.

Restaurante Marisco (Praça Oscar de Macedo Soares 197; meals US\$4-7) Just opposite the bus stop in Saquarema, this place has inexpensive self-serve food and outdoor seating.

Crepe e Cia (Av Nazareth 160; crepes from US\$4) Serves delicious crepes in a charming setting, one block back from Praia da Vila.

Getting There & Around

The bus stop in Saquarema is on the main central *praça*. From Rio to Saquarema, buses leave at least hourly from 6:30am to 8pm (US\$9, two hours).

ARRAIAL DO CABO

☎ 0xx22 / pop 35,000

Blessed with powdery-white sand dunes and some of Rio state's loveliest beaches, Arraial do Cabo has all the natural beauty of Búzios with half the fuss. Lying 45km east of Saquarema, the town still retains a welcoming working-class demeanor. Crowds descend on the beaches during summer months, so avoid holiday weekends if possible.

Sights & Activities

Today Praia dos Anjos has beautiful turquoise water but too much boat traffic for comfortable swimming. A better choice is Praia do Forno to the northeast, reachable by a 1km walking trail over a steep hill adjoining Anjos. Other good beaches within walking distance of town are Prainha to the north and Praia Grande to the west.

The unspoiled Ilha de Cabo Frio is reachable by boat from Praia dos Anjos. Praia do Farol, on the protected side of the island, is a gorgeous beach with fine white sand. The Gruta Azul (Blue Cavern) on the southwest side of the island is another beautiful spot. Be alert, though: the entrance to the cavern is submerged at high tide. Numerous agencies offer crowded package tours to these spots. **Gruta Azul** (☎ 2622-1033; www.grutaazul.com.br) runs boat trips for around US\$10 per person.

Arraial do Cabo has some good diving sites. Try operators like **Acqua World** (☎ 2622-2217; www.acquaworld.com.br; Praça da Bandeira 23).

Sleeping & Eating

Camping Club do Brasil (☎ 9821 3105; Av da Liberdade 171; campsites per person US\$9) This small, shady campground is near Praia dos Anjos.

Marino dos Anjos Albergue (☎ 2622-4060; Rua Bernardo Lens 145; www.marinadosanjos.com.br; dm/d with YHI card US\$15/45, dm/d without YHI card US\$21/49) This hostel has small, zenlike rooms with a friendly communal atmosphere. It's one block from Praia dos Anjos. Bike and canoe rental are available.

Porto dos Anjos (☎ 2622-1629; pousadaportodosanjos@ig.com.br; Av Luis Correa 8; s/d US\$25/40) This aging *pousada* on Praia dos Anjos has simple rooms

with sea views. Fishing and diving trips are offered.

Hotel Praia Grande (☎ 2622-1369; Rua Dom Pedro 41; s/d US\$25/40; 🏠) Two blocks from the bus station, this hotel has clean, sizable rooms.

Casa de Vovó (Rua Nilo Peçanha; meals US\$4-7) For fine *comida caseira* (home cooking), try this self-serve spot on the main street leading to Praia dos Anjos.

Chatô do Monde (Rua Santa Cruz 2; mains from US\$8) A few blocks from Praia dos Anjos, this place serves a many dishes, from pizzas to pricier seafood.

Só Frutas (Rua Dom Pedro 58) Cool down at this self-serve ice-cream parlor.

Getting There & Away

Buses run about hourly from Rio to Arraial, from 5am to midnight (US\$11, three hours). The bus station is on Rua Nilo Peçanha, a 10-minute walk to Praia dos Anjos (or a 20-minute walk to Praia Grande).

BÚZIOS

☎ 0xx22 / pop 22,200

A fabled destination among well-to-do *cariocas*, Búzios is one of Brazil's best-known beach resorts. Anchored on a peninsula and ringed by 17 pretty beaches, Búzios has striking natural scenery and a mix of eye-catching bars, restaurants and boutiques, along with the beautiful people that frequent them. Lying some 150km east of Rio, Búzios was a simple fishing village until the early 1960s, when it was 'discovered' by Brigitte Bardot, sealing its fate as Brazil's St Tropez. While plenty of Brazilians love this place, there are many who wouldn't set foot here. During the summer prices are high and crowds are abundant. At other times, Búzios retains some of its old-fashioned appeal.

Orientation & Information

Búzios, aka Armação dos Búzios, is one of three settlements on the peninsula. It lies between Ossos, on the peninsula's tip, and hectic Manguinhos, on the isthmus. Búzios' main street is Rua das Pedras, where you'll find many *pousadas*, restaurants, bars and internet cafés. Praia Rosa, a fourth settlement, lies northwest along the coast.

Malizia Tour (☎ 2623-1226; Shopping Praia do Canto, loja 16, Rua das Pedras) changes money. On nearby Praça Santos Dumont you'll find an ATM, as well as a **tourist information booth** (☎ 2623-2099; Praça Santos Dumont, Armação).

Sights & Activities

In general, the southern beaches are trickier to get to, but are prettier and have better surf. Geribá and Ferradurinha (Little Horseshoe), south of Manguinhos, are beautiful beaches with good waves, but the Búzios Beach Club has built condos here. Next on the coast is Ferradura, large enough for windsurfing. Praia Olho de Boi (Bull's Eye Beach), at the eastern tip of the peninsula, is a pocket-sized beach reached by a little trail from the long, clean Praia Brava. Near the northern tip of the promontory, João Fernandinho, João Fernandes and the topless Azedinha and Azeda are all good for snorkeling. Praia da Tartaruga is quiet and pretty.

Tour Shop (☎ 2623-4733; www.tourshop.com.br; Orla Bardot 550; 3hr trips US\$30) offers excursions by glass-bottomed catamaran past beaches and several islands.

Sleeping

Budget lodging is scarce in Búzios, particularly during the summer.

Country Camping Club (☎ 2629-1122; www.buzioscamping.com.br; Rua Maria Joaquina 895; per person US\$9; 🏠) Located in Praia Rosa, this campground has extensive facilities, but it's a bit out of the way.

Albergue de Juventude Praia dos Amores (☎ 2623-2422; www.alberguedebuzios.com.br; Av Bento Ribeiro 92; dm without/with air-con US\$17/14; 🏠) Some 20 minutes' walk from Praia da Tartaruga, this youth hostel faces a busy road and the dorms are tight, but it's otherwise a good choice.

Pousada Mandala (☎ 2623-4013; Rua Manoel de Carvalho 223; s/d from US\$30/45; 🏠) Passing through the lush garden courtyard, you'll find another good-value *pousada* with small but nicely decorated en suite rooms, some with tiny balconies.

Portal das Palmeiras (☎ 2623-2677; Rua César Augusto São Luiz 11; d from US\$35) This friendly *pousada* is a good value for its tidy, colorful en suite rooms. It's 50m from Rua das Pedras.

Zen-do (☎ 2623-1542; Rua João Fernandes 60; s/d from US\$42/47) This charming guesthouse in Ossos lets just three rooms (book early) in a peaceful setting. Handsome garden in back.

Eating & Drinking

Brava, Ferradura and João Fernandes beaches have simple thatched-roof fish and beer restaurants. You'll find dozens of other drinking spots all along Rua das Pedras.

Bistrô da Baiana (Rua Manoel de Carvalho 223; acarajé US\$3.50) Good snack spot for *acarajé*, *moqueca* and other Bahian delights.

Jamaica (Av José Bento Ribeiro Dantas 1289; mains US\$3.50-6) This low-key eatery in Ossos is a local favorite for filling fish and meat dishes.

Restaurante Boom (Rua Turíbio de Farias 110; buffet per kg US\$10) Excellent and varied buffet in airy surroundings.

Restaurante David (Rua Turíbio de Farias 260; mains for two US\$30) One of Búzios' most traditional seafood restaurants, this one serves big dishes for two in a casual indoor-outdoor setting.

Privilège (Orla Bardot 510; admission from US\$12; ☎ Thu-Sat) Head to this sleek nightclub for house music among the A-list crowd.

Getting There & Away

Seven buses run daily from Rio to Búzios (US\$9, three hours). Municipal buses run between Cabo Frio and Búzios (Ossos), a 50-minute, 20km trip.

Getting Around

Queen Lory (☎ 2623-1179; www.queenlory.com.br; Orla Bardot 710) makes daily trips by schooner out to Ilha Feia, and to Tartaruga and João Fernandinho beaches (from US\$20 for two hours). You can rent bicycles and buggies at **Búzios Dacar** (☎ 2623-4018; Rua Manoel de Carvalho 248; bike/buggy per 24hr US\$12/60).

ILHA GRANDE

☎ 0xx24 / pop 3600

Ilha Grande (Big Island) has dazzled visitors for centuries. Some 150km southwest of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's third-largest island has tropical scenery and gorgeous beaches. Its hillsides are covered in lush forests, important remnants of the rapidly disappearing Mata Atlântica ecosystem.

There are no banks and no cars on Ilha Grande, so get cash before you relax. For island info check www.ilhagrande.com.br. Just off the dock, there is a small tourist booth where you can pick up an island map.

Sights & Activities

The main settlement is Vila do Abraão, from where you can hike to other beaches around the island. It's a 2½-hour walk to stunning Lopes Mendes beach, and a three-hour hike to Dois Rios, which also has a lovely beach just beyond the ruins of the old prison. There's also Bico do Papagaio (Parrot's Beak), the

highest point on the island at 982m (reached in three hours, guide recommended). As elsewhere, be smart: don't hike alone, and be mindful of poisonous snakes in the forests.

You can hire kayaks and arrange excursions at **Sudoeste SW Turismo** (☎ 3365-1175; www.sudoestesw.com.br; Rua da Praia 647). For diving, contact **Elite Dive Center** (☎ 9999-9789; www.elitedivecenter.com.br; Travessa Buganville).

Sleeping & Eating

Emilia's Eco-Camping (☎ 3361-5059; Rua Amancio de Souza 18; per person US\$6; ☎) One of several campsites scattered around Abraão, this one has excellent amenities including table tennis.

Aquário (☎ 3361-5405; aquario@ilhagrande.com; dm/d US\$20/50) Offering small, basic rooms facing the sea, Aquário is the most popular choice among backpackers. There's a natural swimming pool and lively evening BBQs. To arrive, take a left from the dock and head 1km along the beach.

Pousada Praia D'Azul (☎ 3361-5091; www.praia-dazul.com.br in Portuguese; Rua da Igreja; d from US\$48; ☎ ☎) This newly renovated hotel has small but comfortable rooms that overlook a swimming pool.

O Pescador (☎ 3361-5114; opescadordailha@uol.com.br; Rua da Praia; d from US\$50; ☎) Cozily furnished rooms and a charming restaurant make a fine combination at this lovely beach-facing guesthouse.

Manaola Creperia (Rua da Praia; mains US\$4-6; ☎ 3-11pm) One street back from the beach, this outdoor café serves sweet and savory crepes, juices and huge bowls of *açaí* (a berrylike fruit, frozen and ground up) with granola.

Banana Blu (Rua da Praia 661; mains US\$8-14) This well-appointed restaurant facing the beach serves excellent seafood, risottos and grilled meats.

Other good seafood restaurants include **Corsário Negro** (Rua Alice Kury 90; mains for 2 US\$20-30) and the gardenlike **Tropicana** (Rua da Praia 28; mains from US\$8).

Getting There & Away

To reach the island catch a Conerj ferry to Abraão from Mangaratiba or Angra dos Reis on the mainland. Ferries leave Mangaratiba at 8am and return at 5.30pm. From Angra dos Reis, boats depart at 3:30pm Monday to Friday and 1.30pm on Saturday, Sunday and holidays; they return from Abraão at 10am daily. The 1½-hour ride costs US\$2.50 Monday to Friday,

and US\$6 Saturday and Sunday. Costa Verde buses depart Rio every 45 minutes to Angra (US\$10). Five daily buses from Rio go to Mangaratiba (US\$7.50). Catch the earliest (5.30am) to make the ferry. Eight daily buses connect Angra with Paraty (US\$2, two hours).

PARATY

☎ 0xx24 / pop 33,000

The colonial town of Paraty is one of the gems of Rio state. Picturesque old churches and brightly hued stone buildings line the cobbled streets, with verdant mountains and deep blue sea adding yet more color to the historic city. On summer weekends Paraty's plazas, sidewalk cafés and open-air restaurants come to life with live music. Paraty is crowded from Christmas to Carnaval and most weekends, but at other times is delightfully quiet.

Formerly a region populated by Guianá Indians, Paraty first emerged as a European settlement when Portuguese from São Vicente arrived in the 16th century. Paraty's boom time began in the 17th century when gold was discovered in Minas Gerais, and the port became an important link in shipping the riches back to Portugal.

Information

Atrium (Rua da Lapa s/n) Changes cash and traveler's checks.

Centro de Informações Turísticas (☎ 3371-1897/1222; Av Roberto Silveira; ☎ 9am-9pm) Has good town info.

Sights & Activities

Paraty's newest attraction is the small **Casa da Cultura** (☎ 3371-2325; Rua Dona Geralda 177; admission US\$6; ☎ 10am-6:30pm Sun, Mon & Wed, 1-9:30pm Fri & Sat), which has a fascinating permanent exhibition that includes interviews with and stories from local residents (audio and video) in both English and Portuguese.

Paraty's 18th-century prosperity is reflected in its beautiful old homes and churches. Three main churches served separate races. The 1725 **Igreja NS do Rosário e São Benedito dos Homens Pretos** (Rua Rua Samuel Costa & Rua do Comércio; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-noon & 1.30-5pm Tue-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun) was built by and for slaves. The 1722 **Igreja de Santa Rita dos Pardos Libertos** (Praça Santa Rita; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-noon & 1.30-3pm Wed-Sun) was the church for freed *mulattos*. The 1800 **Capela de NS das Dores** (Rua Dr Pereira & Rua Fresca; ☎ closed) was the church of the colonial white elite.

Forte Defensor Perpétuo is on Morro da Vila Velha, a hill 20 minutes' walk north of town. It was built in 1703 to defend gold in transit from pirate attacks.

If you're interested in hiking, ask at the tourist office for information on the **Gold Trail**, a partially cobbled mountain road once used by miners.

BEACHES

Paraty's biggest draw is its astounding assortment of 65 islands and 300 beaches nearby. The first beach you reach heading a few minutes' north of town is **Praia do Pontal**, the town's beach. Its sands aren't the most enticing, but the *barracas* (food stalls) backing it make a nice pit stop. Another 10 minutes' walk further and on the side of the hill is the small, hidden **Praia do Forte**. **Praia do Jabaquara**, 2km past Praia do Pontal, is a spacious beach with great views, a small restaurant and a good campground. About an hour from Paraty by boat are the **Vermelha** and **Lulas** beaches, both to the northeast, and Saco, to the east. These beaches are small and idyllic; most have *barracas* serving beer and fish and, at most, a handful of beachgoers. **Praia de Parati-Mirim**, 27km east of Parati, is hard to beat for accessibility, cost and beauty, and it has *barracas* and houses to rent. You can get there by municipal bus (US\$1, 40 minutes) from Paraty bus station, with six daily buses.

To visit the less accessible beaches, many tourists take one of the schooners from the docks. Tickets cost US\$15 per person. The boats make three beach stops of about 45 minutes each. An alternative is to hire one of the many small motorboats at the port. For US\$15 per hour, the skipper will take you where you want to go.

Sleeping

Book ahead if you're coming from December to February. Once you hit the cobblestones, prices rise substantially.

Casa do Rio Hostel (☎ 3371-2223; www.paratyhostel.com; Rua Antônio Vidal 120; dm with/without YHI card US\$12/14) A 10-minute walk from the old town and across the river, this hostel provides cozy lodging with a garden in back and kitchen access. The owner rents bikes, kayaks and horses and can arrange excursions.

Casa da Colônia (☎ 3371-2343; Rua Marechal Deodoro s/n; dm/d US\$19/38) Although it's 100m outside of the old town, this guesthouse has abundant colonial charm. Kitchen access.

Pousada do Sono (☎ 3371-1649; pousadadosono@paraty.info.com.br; Rua João Luís do Rosário s/n; d from US\$20) A few minutes' walk from the old town, this basic place offers small, straightforward rooms at good prices.

Hotel Solar dos Gerânios (☎ /fax 3371-1550; Praça da Matriz 2; s/d from US\$22/34) Overlooking the Praça da Matriz, this colonial hotel features rooms that range from charming to rustic. Some have balconies.

Pouso Familiar (☎ 3371-1475; Largo do Rosário 7; d from US\$30) This guesthouse has four pleasantly furnished rooms (one with a kitchenette unit) and a relaxing backyard patio in a great location in the colonial part of town.

Flor do Mar (☎ 3371-1674; www.pousadaflordomar.com.br; Rua Fresca 257; d from US\$30) Another charmer in the old part of town, this guesthouse has cheery rooms with nice touches. Prices rise substantially on weekends.

Estalagem Colonial (☎ 3371-1626; estalagemcolonial@yahoo.com.br; Praça da Matriz 9; d without/with bathroom US\$45/60) This lavish colonial inn sits in the heart of the old quarters. Rooms are beautifully decorated with antiques and lots of wood details, and top-floor windows have mountain views.

Eating & Drinking

Sabor da Terra (Rua Roberto Silveira 80; per kg US\$8) To beat the inflated prices in the old part of town, try this self-serve. Other inexpensive pay-by-weight restaurants are along Av Roberto Silveira.

O Café (Rua da Lapa 237; meals US\$3-6) In the old town, this laid-back place serves sandwiches, coffee and lighter meals in a garden setting.

Punto di Vino (Rua Marechal Deodoro 129; mains from US\$7) This handsomely decorated Italian restaurant has tasty pizzas and pastas. Live music adds to the romance.

Paraty 33 (☎ 3371-7311; Paraty 33, Rua Maria Jacomé de Mello) A popular restaurant-bar with live music in the same area.

Entertainment

Expect cover charges of US\$3 to US\$5 at live-music venues. Young locals avoid the tourist crush by gathering on the far side of the historic district, on Rua da Cadeia near the beach.

Other places to enjoy cocktails and bossa nova are **Café Paraty** (Rua do Comércio 253) and **Margarida Café** (Praça do Chafariz).

Getting There & Away

The bus station is on Rua Jango Pádua, 500m west of the old town. Eight daily buses run to/from Rio (US\$18, four hours) and four to/from São Paulo (US\$24, six hours).

SÃO PAULO

☎ 0xx11 / pop 11 million

One of the world's biggest metropolises, São Paulo looms large over South America. While the city lacks the natural beauty of Rio, Sampa – as it's affectionately called by locals – has much going for it. This is, after all, the cultural capital of Brazil, with a dizzying array of attractions including first-rate museums, nightly concerts, experimental theater and dance. The nightclubs, bars and restaurants are among the best on the continent. *Paulistanos* (inhabitants of the city) believe in working hard and playing harder, and despite constantly complaining about street violence, clogged highways and pollution, most wouldn't dream of living anywhere else.

Though founded in 1554 by Jesuits, São Paulo remained a colonial backwater for much of its history. It wasn't until the late 19th century that it began to emerge from the shadows, and the 20th century brought an explosion of immigrants from all over the world to work on the railroads, in the factories and in the fields. By the 1950s São Paulo took the lead as the country's industrial and commercial center. The result of the flood of immigrants is clear: the city of 17 million (metropolitan) is Brazil's most culturally diverse destination. For the wanderer, a stroll through Sampa's neighborhoods is a window into the shops and restaurants of the world.

Orientation

The key downtown squares are Praça da Sé, with the Sé *metrô* interchange station, and Praça da República, with República *metrô* station. In ethnic terms, the Liberdade area, just south of Praça da Sé, is the Asian neighborhood. Bela Vista (also called Bixiga), to the southwest, is Italian. A large Arab community is based around Rua 25 de Março, northeast of Praça da Sé.

Av Paulista, running southeast to northwest a kilometer or two southwest of downtown and accessible by *metrô*, is an avenue of skyscrapers. South of this avenue is Cerqueira César and Jardim Paulista, which harbors many upscale restaurants and boutiques.

GETTING INTO TOWN

A taxi from Aeroporto Congonhas to the center costs about US\$20. For buses (one hour), walk out of the terminal and then to your right, where you'll see a busy street with a pedestrian overpass. Head to the overpass but don't cross; you should see a crowd of people waiting for the buses along the street, or ask for the bus to Terminal Bandeiras. The last bus departs at around 1am.

From a stop just in front of the arrivals terminal at Aeroporto Guarulhos, executive buses (www.airportbusservice.com.br) run to Av Paulista, Praça da República, Terminal Tietê bus station and Congonhas airport every 30 to 40 minutes (US\$12). The same buses will also take you out to the airport from these places. A taxi from Aeroporto Guarulhos to the center costs about US\$35.

Further south is Vila Olímpia, the nightlife district.

Information

EMERGENCY

Deatur (☎ 3214-0209; Av São Luís 91; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) A special tourist police force.

INTERNET ACCESS

Lig Center (Rua 7 de Abril 253, Centro; per hr US\$2; 🕒 8am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat) One of several internet cafés along this Centro street.

Lan House (Rua Barão de Iguape 7, Liberdade; per hr US\$2; 🕒 8am-11pm) A good choice in Liberdade.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Einstein Hospital (☎ 3747-1233; Av Albert Einstein 627, Morumbi) One of the best hospitals in Latin America. It's in the southwestern corner of the city (catch bus 7241 to Jardim Colombo from Rua Xavier de Toledo).

MONEY

Except on weekends, changing money is easy. Many travel agencies and exchange offices around the city offer good rates, but avoid the smaller ones downtown – some are illegal and will rip you off.

Action Cambio (Shopping Light, Loja 130A; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat)

Citibank (Av Paulista 1111) One of many banks with international ATMs on this street.

POST

Post office (Rua Líbero Badaró, Centro) The main branch.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Located at strategic points around the city, the Centrais de Informação Turística (CIT) booths are helpful.

CIT OLIDA (☎ 6224-0615; www.cidadedesaopaulo.com; Av São João 465, Centro; 🕒 9am-6pm) Near Praça da República; the most helpful for non-Portuguese speakers. Other booths are on Av Paulista near MASP (Museu de Arte

de São Paulo), as well as in Ibirapuera Park, Terminals 1 and 2 at the airport, and in the Tietê bus station.

Dangers & Annoyances

Crime is a serious issue in São Paulo. Be especially careful in the center at night and on weekends (when fewer people are about). Watch out for pickpockets on buses and at Praça da Sé. For drivers, be aware that car-jackings and red-light robberies are not uncommon; in fact it's legal to just slow down at red lights late at night. If there's no traffic, continue without stopping.

Sights & Activities

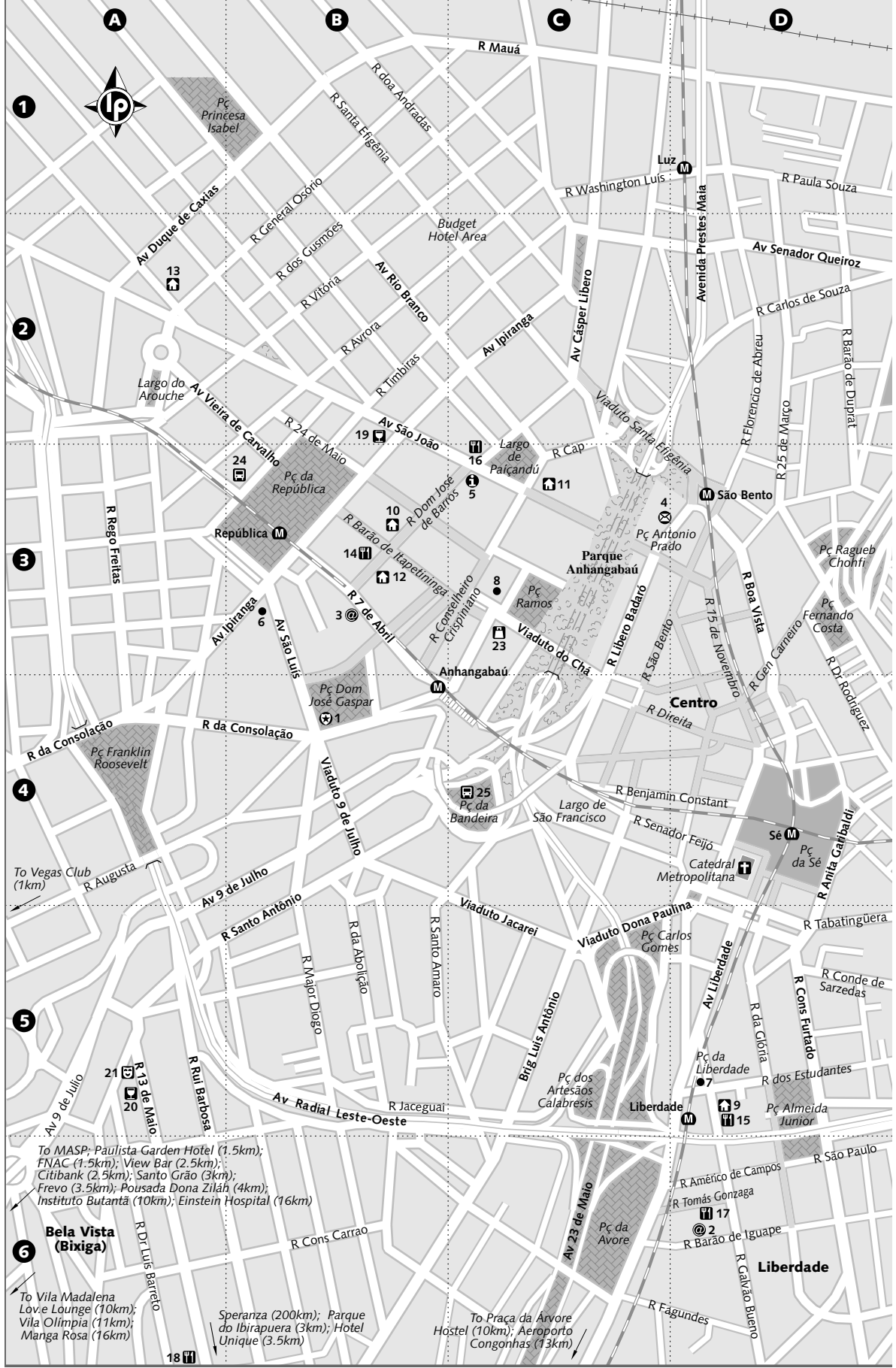
Fascinating neighborhood strolls are found in Liberdade, Sampa's Japan town (and home to other Asian communities). On Sunday stop in the lively **street market** (fresh *gyoza*, or dumplings, on hand) at Praça da Liberdade. For a taste of Italy visit **Bela Vista**, about 1km west of there. Rua 13 de Maio is the main street, and it's packed with old-world restaurants, antique shops and a few bars on the north end.

The atmospheric old center of São Paulo lies between Praça da Sé, Luz metrô station and Praça da República (which also has a lively Sunday market). The city's pride is the baroque-cum-art nouveau **Teatro Municipal** just west of Viaduto do Chá. Another beloved landmark is the 41-story **Edifício Itália** (cnr Av São Luís & Av Ipiranga; admission free) which has a restaurant-piano bar-viewing terrace at the top.

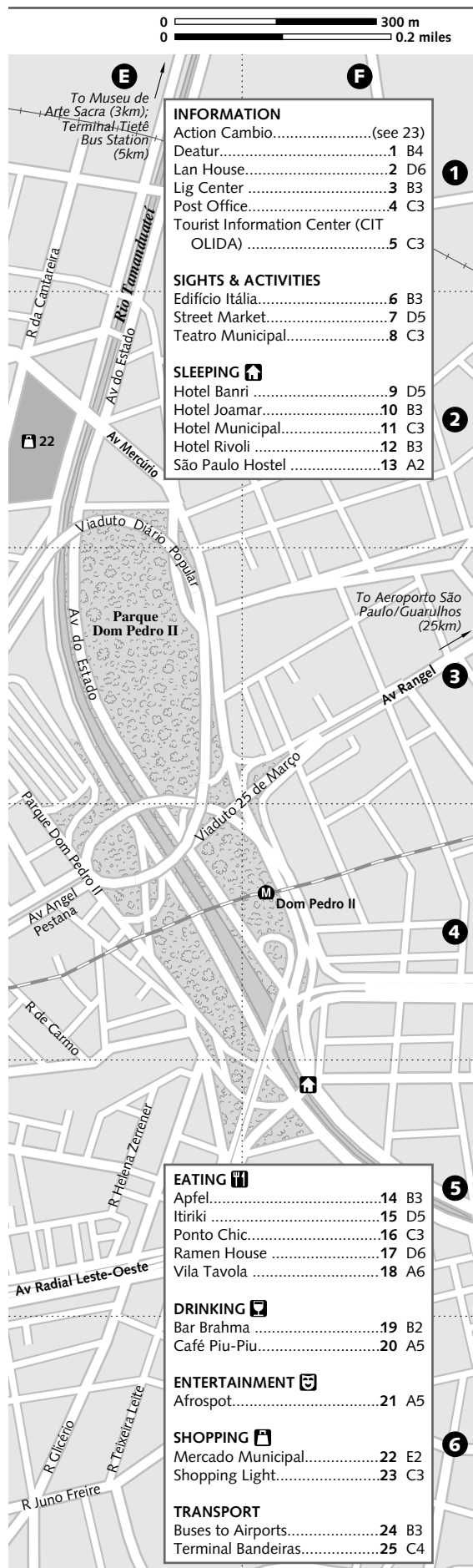
Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP; ☎ 3283-2585; www.masp.art.br; Av Paulista 1578; adult/student US\$5/2.50; 🕒 11am-5pm Tue-Sun) has Latin America's best collection of Western art, with over 5000 pieces. Highlights include the works by the great Brazilian artist Cândido Portinari and many French impressionist paintings. *Metrô* stop is Trianon-Masp.

The large **Parque do Ibirapuera**, 4km from the city, contains several museums, monuments and attractions, notably the **Museu de Arte**

CENTRAL SÃO PAULO



BRAZIL



Moderna (☎ 5549 9688; admission US\$3; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue, Wed & Fri-Sun, to 10pm Thu) with a huge collection of art from 1930 to 1970. Take bus 5121 'Santo Amaro' from Praça da República.

The **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Av Tiradentes 676; adult/student US\$2/1; 🕒 11am-7pm Tue-Sun) is the best of Brazil's many museums of religious art. *Metrô* stop is Tiradentes.

The **Instituto Butantã** (☎ 3726-7222; Av Vital Brasil 1500; admission free; 🕒 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun), one of São Paulo's most popular attractions, is a snake farm with over 1000 serpents, from which it milks venom for the production of vaccines and antivenins.

Sleeping

The areas surrounding the Estação da Luz train station and central downtown are rife with crime, prostitution, and extremely cheap hotels. If you stay here, use extreme caution and don't walk around at night.

Praça da Árvore Hostel (☎ 5071-5148; www.spalbergue.com.br; Rua Pageú 266; dm with/without YHI card from US\$10/12; 🚽 🚿) Farther south of the city center, but somewhat closer to the nightlife districts, this hostel has tidy four-bed, eight-bed and 10-bed dorms. There's a lively community atmosphere. It's a few minutes' walk from Praça da Árvore *metrô* station.

São Paulo Hostel (☎ 3333-0844; www.hostel.com.br; Rua Barão de Campinas 94, Centro; dm with/without YHI card from US\$12/13; 🚽 🚿) Near the Praça da República, this popular hostel has decent four- and seven-bed dorms as well as en suite doubles.

Hotel Municipal (☎ 3228-7833; Av São João 354; s/d/tr US\$16/21/30) This atmospheric old place has fairly worn but sizable rooms with wood floors and huge ceilings.

Hotel Rivoli (☎ 3231-5633; hotelrivoli@uol.com.br; Rua Dom José de Barros 28; s/d from US\$18/23) This elderly, not-quite-classic hotel has wood floors, tiny bathrooms and sizable windows. En suite rooms cost a few dollars more.

Hotel Joamar (☎ 3221-3611; www.hoteljoamar.com.br; Rua Dom Jose de Barros 187; s/d/tr US\$19/24/33) On a pedestrian street near Praça da República, this small guesthouse has clean and tidy rooms that could use a bit more light.

Hotel Banri (☎ 3207-8877; Rua Galvão Bueno 209; s/d from US\$25/32; 🚽 🚿) One of many Asian-owned hotels in Liberdade, this one is a particularly good value. Its recently renovated rooms have parquet floors, decent lighting and modern bathrooms.

Paulista Garden Hotel (☎ 3885-1362; www.paulistagardenhotel.com.br; Alameda Lorena 21; s/d/tr US\$35/40/55; 🚶 🚶) In a good location near Parque Ibirapuera, the Paulista has fairly spacious rooms with blue carpeting, colorful duvets and sizable windows.

Pousada Dona Ziláh (☎ 3062-1444; www.zilah.com; Alameda Franca 1621; s/d/tr US\$45/55/65; 🚶) This charming guesthouse lies on the edge of the upscale Jardim Paulista neighborhood. Its rooms are simple and tidy and face around a small courtyard.

Eating

Eating is a much-loved activity in Sampa, with almost every imaginable type of cuisine on offer.

Frevo (Rua Oscar Freire 603; mains US\$5-12) In restaurant-packed Jardim Paulista, Frevo is an inexpensive diner serving grilled sandwiches and simple bites to a largely neighborhood crowd.

Ponto Chic (Largo do Paissandu 27; mains US\$6-10; 🚶 closed Sun) Several blocks from Praça da República, informal Ponto Chic serves tasty sandwiches, including famous *bauru*, made with beef and melted cheese on French bread.

Apfel (Rua Dom José de Barros 99; plates from US\$6; 🚶 11am-3pm Mon-Fri) This pleasant self-serve lunch place serves vegetarian cuisine at good prices. It's on a busy pedestrian street in Centro.

Santo Grão (Rua Oscar Freire 413) This stylish indoor-outdoor café is a good pit stop for cappuccino, desserts and satisfying bistro fare.

Ramen House (Rua Tomaz Gonzaga 75; noodle soup US\$6) This simple noodle restaurant serves affordable ramen bowls to its mostly Asian customers. Other good Japanese restaurants are along this street.

Vila Tavola (Rua 13 de Maio 848; lunch buffet US\$7) One of many Italian restaurants on this street, Vila Tavola is a spacious and inviting place with a filling all-you-can-eat buffet (pastas, polenta, risotto and the like). Dinner is à la carte.

Speranza (Rua 13 de Maio 1004; pizzas from US\$9) One of the best pizzerias in town with plenty of Italian ambience, as you'd expect in Bela Vista.

Itriki (Rua Galvão Bueno 159; per kg US\$12; 🚶 11am-4pm) In Liberdade, this popular Asian self-serve restaurant serves a variety of Japanese and Chinese specialties, with many vegetarian options.

Drinking

Bar Brahma (Av São João 677; 🚶 11am-midnight) Near the Praça República, this is the city's oldest

drinking establishment, with antique surroundings and a sometimes-fun after-work crowd.

Café Piu-Piu (Rua 13 de Maio 134) One of half a dozen good-looking bars along Rua 13 de Maio in Bela Vista.

Hotel Unique (Av Brigadeiro Luís Antônio 4700) For a bit of decadence head to the top floor bar and restaurant of this chic hotel. You'll find outdoor seating, gorgeous views of the city and potent (but pricey) cocktails.

View Bar (www.theviewbar.com.br; 30th fl, Al Santos 981, Cerqueira César) You'll also find views and style here.

Entertainment

São Paulo's relentless clubbing nightlife rivals the excitement of New York's (and costs almost the same, too). For the latest check www.baladas.com.br, www.obaodba.com.br, www.guiasp.com.br and guiadasemana.com.br (all in Portuguese).

The hottest district for clubbing is Vila Olímpia. Most places open from Thursday to Saturday nights from midnight onward. Expect cover charges of US\$10 and up.

Vegas Club (www.vegasclub.com.br; Rua Augusta 765; 🚶 Tue-Sat) In Consolação, Vegas is the hit club of the moment, with a fun, eclectic crowd who come for the nights of house, hip-hop and *baile* funk.

Lov.e Lounge (Rua Pequetita 189) This very popular Vila Olímpia place opens its doors to straight and gay alike (depending on the night) for its dance fests.

Manga Rosa (Av Luís Carlos Berrini 1754) A bit farther out in Brooklin Paulista, this is another favorite nightclub among dance fiends (particularly trance-lovers).

Afropspot (Rua Treize de Maio 48, Bela Vista) For a smaller, more intimate space, visit this creative DJ's favorite in Bela Vista.

Shopping

Shopping Light (Rua Coronel Xavier de Toledo 23, Centro) For a taste of mall culture visit Shopping Light, with shops and restaurants across from the Teatro Municipal.

FNAC (www.fnac.com.br; Av Paulista 901) Music-lovers shouldn't skip FNAC, which has an excellent selection of CDs and books; occasionally, there's a free concert inside.

One kilometer southwest of FNAC is Jardim Paulista, a neighborhood packed with Sampa's best boutiques. Good streets for wandering

are Rua Oscar Freire, Haddock Lobo and Alameda Lorena.

Mercado Municipal (Rua da Cantareira 306, Centro; ☎ 6am-4pm Mon-Sat) One of Brazil's best fruit and vegetable markets.

Lively Sunday markets:

MASP (Av Paulista 1578; ☎ 9am-5pm) Antiques; below MASP.

Praça da Liberdade (☎ 8am-2pm) Food and Asian wares.

Praça da República (☎ 8am-2pm) Handicrafts.

Getting There & Away

AIR

São Paulo is the Brazilian hub for many international airlines and thus the first stop for many travelers. Most major airlines have offices on Av São Luís, near Praça da República. Before buying a domestic ticket, check which of the city's airports the flight departs from.

Aeroporto Guarulhos (☎ 6445-2945), the international airport, is 30km east of the center. Flights to Rio (Santos Dumont airport) depart every half hour (or less) from **Aeroporto Congonhas** (☎ 5090-9000), 14km south of the center.

BUS

The enormous **Terminal Tietê bus station** (☎ 3235-0322), with buses to destinations throughout Brazil, is adjacent to Tietê *metrô* station. International buses from here go to Buenos Aires (US\$125, 36 hours), Santiago do Chile (US\$120, 56 hours) and Asunción (US\$50, 20 hours). Frequent buses go to Rio de Janeiro (US\$22, six hours). Other destinations within Brazil include Brasília (US\$37, 14 hours), Belo Horizonte (US\$21, eight hours), Foz do Iguaçu (US\$40, 15 hours), Cuiabá (US\$40, 23 hours), Salvador (US\$68, 32 hours), Curitiba (US\$15, six hours) and Florianópolis (US\$30, 12 hours). A tip for people coming into the city: try to pick buses that won't arrive during early morning or late afternoon – traffic jams are enormous at those times.

Getting Around

Buses are slow, crowded during rush hours and not too safe. The main transfer points are Praça da República and the bustling Terminal Bandeiras. The tourist booths are excellent sources of bus information.

You can reach many places on the excellent *metrô*, São Paulo's subway system. A combination of *metrô* and walking is the best way to see the city. The *metrô* is cheap, safe,

fast and runs from 5am to midnight. A single ride costs US\$1.

BELO HORIZONTE

☎ 0xx31 / pop 2.4 million

The third-largest city in Brazil, Belo Horizonte is a rapidly growing industrial giant with soaring skyscrapers that blot out the surrounding mountains. Most travelers only come to the sprawling capital of Minas Gerais en route to the colonial towns of Ouro Preto or Diamantina.

Information

Belo Horizonte has its share of crime. Pay close attention to your surroundings in the crowded area around the bus station and don't wander late at night.

Belotur (☎ 3277-7666; www.belo Horizonte.mg.gov.br; Av Afonso Pena 1055; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) Belotur, the municipal tourist organization, publishes an excellent monthly guide in Portuguese, English and Spanish. There are booths at the bus station, Bahia Shopping (Rua da Bahia, 1022), and the city's two airports.

Centro de Cultura Belo Horizonte (Rua da Bahia 1149; per hr US\$3) Internet access.

Nascente Turismo (Rua Rio de Janeiro 1314) A convenient currency-exchange place.

Sights

If you have time to spare head for the **Parque Municipal**, a sea of green 10 minutes' walk southeast of the bus station along Av Afonso Pena, and visit the park's **Palácio das Artes** (Av Afonso Pena 1537; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat, 2-10pm Sun), an art gallery and performing-arts center.

Sleeping

Albergue de Juventude Chalé Mineiro (☎ 3467-1576; www.chalemineirohostel.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Santa Luzia 288; dm with/without YHI card US\$7/10, s/d with bathroom US\$15/22; ☎ ☎) This popular YHI hostel has good dorm rooms, and a garden with pool. Reserve ahead. It's about 2km east of the Parque Municipal. Take the *metrô* to Santa Teresa station, from which you cross a pedestrian bridge to Rua Santa Luzia.

Pousadinha Mineira (☎ 3446-2911; Rua Araxá 514; s/d US\$11/22) Very bare-bones accommodations. From the bus station, follow Av Santos Dumont to Rua Rio de Janeiro, turn left and go up a couple of blocks to Av do Contorno. Cross it and follow Rua Varginha a few blocks to Rua Araxá.

Eating & Drinking

Lanchonetes (stand-up snack bars) and fast-food places cluster around Praça Sete, on Av Afonso Pena, 400m southeast of the bus station. The neighborhood of Savassi has many top restaurants.

Padaria Zona Sul (Av Paraná 163; dishes US\$3) Just southwest of the bus station, this place has super roast chickens.

Naturalis (Rua Tome de Souza 689; dishes US\$5) Terrific vegetarian lunch specials are served here.

Cafe com Letras (Rua Antônio Albuquerque 785) This stylish spot is the setting for a glass of wine or a snack.

Rococo (Afonso Pena 941) Before and after shows, local musicians and music-lovers alike gather at Rococo.

Shopping Cidade (Rua Rio de Janeiro) and **Bahia Shopping** (Rua da Bahia 1022) both have food courts.

Getting There & Away

Belo's two airports have flights to just about anywhere in Brazil. Most airlines use Aeroporto Confins, 40km north of the city, but some use Aeroporto da Pampulha, 7km north of the center.

The **bus station** (Praça da Rodoviária) is in the north of the city center, near the north end of Av Afonso Pena. Buses will take you to Rio (US\$20, seven hours), São Paulo (US\$25, 9½ hours), Brasília (US\$44, 12 hours) and Salvador (US\$78, about 22 hours). There are 17 daily departures for Ouro Prêto (US\$8, 2¾ hours), six to Diamantina (US\$27, 5½ hours) and seven to São João del Rei (US\$14, 3½ hours).

OURO PRÊTO

☎ 0xx31 / pop 69,000

Set amid splendid mountain scenery, Ouro Prêto is one of one of Brazil's most beautifully preserved colonial towns. Exploring its hilly, cobbled streets is like journeying back into the 18th century, when its baroque churches and picturesque plazas were the crown jewel of the Minas Gerais gold-mining towns.

Vila Rica de Ouro Prêto (Rich Town of Black Gold), as it was originally known, was founded in 1711 amid the western hemisphere's richest gold deposits. During the height of the rush (when 110,000 people lived in Ouro Prêto), slaves in Minas Gerais were digging up half the gold produced in the world.

When the boom tapered off toward the end of the 18th century, the miners found it in-

creasingly difficult to pay the taxes demanded by Portugal, and in 1789 the poet-dentist Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (nicknamed Tiradentes, 'Tooth-Puller') and others hatched a famous revolutionary plot called the Inconfidência Mineira. The rebellion was crushed in its early stages and Tiradentes was executed. His name, however, lives on as one of Brazil's earliest patriots.

Orientation

Ouro Prêto is divided into two parishes. Standing looking south in Praça Tiradentes, the central square, facing the Museu da Inconfidência, the parish of Pilar is to the right (west), the parish of Antônio Dias to the left (east).

Information

Unfortunately the town can be a bit seedy at night, particularly around the bus station. Anyone lodging near there should absolutely not walk around after dark.

It's difficult to change traveler's checks in Ouro Prêto, but most jewelry stores will change cash dollars.

Associação de Guias (☎ 3559-3269; Praça Tiradentes 41; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 5pm Sun) A useful and friendly source of information. A leaflet gives the opening hours of all the sights. You can hire official guides here.

Banco do Brasil (Rua São José 195)

Cyberhouse (Rua Bobadela 109; per hr US\$3) One of several internet cafés on this street.

HSBC (Praça Tiradentes) A convenient ATM.

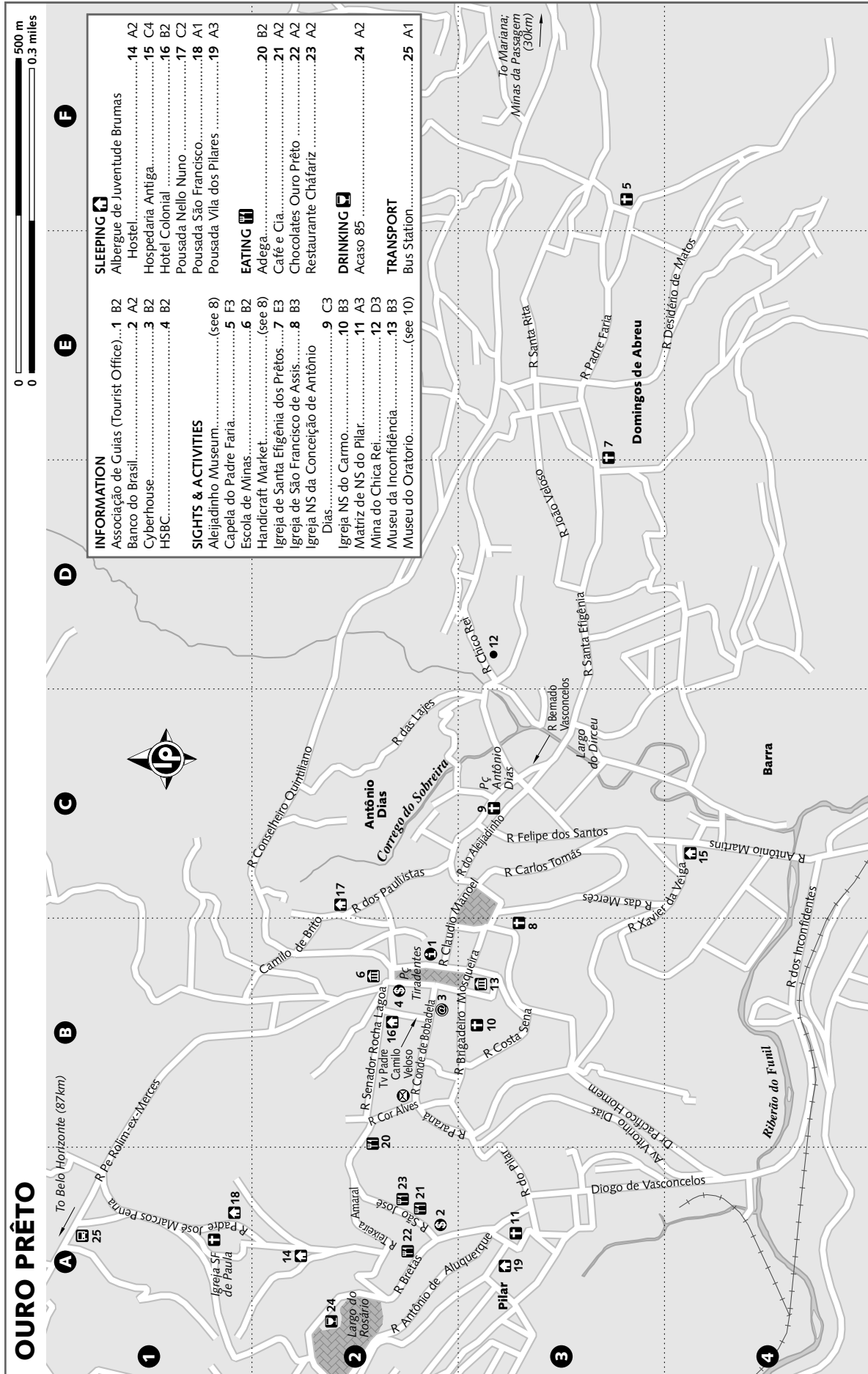
Sights & Activities

Almost all the museums and churches close on Monday and most close for lunch (noon to 1.30pm). Most sites charge admission of around US\$1 to US\$3, but in some cases a ticket to one gives free entrance to another.

Ideally, start out at about 7:30am from Praça Tiradentes and walk along Rua das Lajes for a panoramic morning view. In the east of town, the **Capela do Padre Faria** (Rua da Padre Faria s/n; ☎ 8am-4.30pm) is one of Ouro Prêto's oldest chapels (1701-04) and among the richest in gold and artwork.

Descending back toward town, you'll come to the **Igreja de Santa Efigênia dos Prêtos** (Rua Santa Efigênia s/n; ☎ 8am-4.30pm), built between 1742 and 1749 by and for the black slave community. This is Ouro Prêto's poorest church in terms of gold, and its richest in artwork.

The **Igreja NS da Conceição de Antônio Dias** (Rua da Conceição s/n; ☎ 8am-4.30pm) was designed by



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Igreja NS da Conceição de Antônio Dias ... 9 C3	Igreja NS do Carmo ... 10 B3	DRINKING	Acaso 85 ... 24 A2
Matriz de NS do Pilar ... 11 A3	Mina do Chica Rei ... 12 D3	TRANSPORT	Bus Station ... 25 A1
Museu da Inconfidência ... 13 B3	Museu do Oratório ... (see 10)		

BRAZIL

Aleijadinho's father, Manuel Francisco Lisboa, and built between 1727 and 1770. Aleijadinho is buried near the altar of Boa Morte. Nearby is the **Mina do Chico Rei** (Rua Dom Silvério 108; ☎ 8am-5.30pm). This mine was owned by Chico-Rei, an African tribal king enslaved at Ouro Prêto, who bought his own freedom and then that of his entire tribe. Gold from here financed the building of the Igreja de Santa Efigênia dos Prêtos. A guided tour is included in the admission price, allowing a look at the cold, crumbling passageways.

The **Igreja de São Francisco de Assis** (Rua do Ouvidor aka Rua Cláudio Manoel), two blocks east of Praça Tiradentes, is the most important piece of Brazilian colonial art after the *Prophets* in Congonhas (opposite). Its entire exterior was carved by Aleijadinho and the inside was painted by his long-term partner, Manuel da Costa Ataíde. A **handicraft market** (☎ 8am-4pm) faces the church.

On Praça Tiradentes, the **Museu da Inconfidência** contains documents of the Inconfidência Mineira, Tiradentes' tomb, torture instruments and important works by Ataíde and Aleijadinho. The **Escola de Minas** (Praça Tiradentes) in the old governor's palace has a very fine museum with displays on metals and mineralogy.

The **Igreja NS do Carmo** (Rua Brigadeiro Mosqueira), southwest of Praça Tiradentes, was built as a group effort by the most important artists of the area. Built between 1766 and 1772, its facade is by Aleijadinho. The **Museu do Oratório**, next door, has a fabulous, well-displayed collection of oratories (niches containing saints' images to ward off evil spirits).

Further southwest, the **Matriz de NS do Pilar** (Rua Brigador Mosqueira Castilho Barbosa s/n, in Praça Monsenhor João Castilho Barbosa) boasts 434kg of gold and silver in its ornamentation and is one of Brazil's finest showcases of artwork.

Sleeping

Albergue de Juventude Brumas Hostel (☎ 3551-2944; www.brumashostel.com.br; Rua Padre José Marcos Penna 68; dm/d from US\$10/25; 📶) This welcoming, multilingual hostel has clean rooms with great views and kitchen access. It's approximately 150m downhill from the bus station, near Igreja São Francisco.

Pousada São Francisco (☎ 3551-3456; Rua Padre José Marcos Penna 202; dm/s/d US\$10/25/30) A short walk from the bus station, this friendly place has pretty rooms and dotting staff. If you arrive on

a late bus, call to announce your arrival and someone will pop over to walk you back.

Hospedaria Antiga (☎ 3551-2203; www.antiga.com.br; Rua Xavier da Veiga 01; s/d from US\$15/30) A bit of a walk from the center, this colonial guesthouse has good-value rooms, with large windows and polished wood floors.

Pousada Vila dos Pilares (☎ 3551-1324; Praça Mons João Castilho Barbosa 19; s/d US\$17/34) About 50m from the church Matriz NS do Pilar, this old rambling guesthouse has clean, simple rooms with wood floors and aging bathrooms.

Pousada Nello Nuno (☎ 3551-3375; www.pousadanelonuno.com; Rua Camilo de Brito 59; s/d/tr from US\$27/40/50) A few blocks northeast of Praça Tiradentes, this lovely *pousada* has lots of colonial charm, with artwork on the walls of the comfy rooms and other unique touches.

Hotel Colonial (☎ 3551-3133; www.hotelcolonial.com.br; Travessa Padre Camilo Veloso 26; s/d US\$35/45) One block from Praça Tiradentes, this charming guesthouse has cozy rooms amid a beautifully maintained 19th-century building.

Eating & Drinking

Many restaurants line Rua Direita and Rua São José. The typical Minas dish is *tutu a mineira*, a somewhat puréed black-bean *feijoada*.

Adega (Rua Teixeira Amaral 24; per kg US\$10) This delightful self-serve restaurant is a good place to sample Minas Gerais dishes. Inspiring views from upstairs.

Café e Cia (Rua São José 187; per kg US\$11) This casual self-serve has a small but fresh selection and is a favorite with the student crowd.

Chocolates Ouro Prêto (Rua Getúlio Vargas 99; snacks US\$2; ☎ 10am-2am) This quaint café and dessert shop serves tortes with chicken or hearts of palm, as well as chocolate treats.

Restaurante Cháfariz (Rua São José 167; all-you-can-eat buffet US\$13) The city's best buffet offers a mouth-watering assortment of *cozinha mineira*, with a free shot of *cachaça* to aid digestion.

Acaso 85 (Largo do Rosário 85) This restaurant and Scotch bar has atmosphere in spades – stone walls and narrow passageways lend a medieval feel.

Getting There & Away

The **bus station** (Rua Rolimex-Merces) is 500m northwest of Praça Tiradentes (catch a 'Circular' bus to/from the plaza). Numerous daily buses run between Belo Horizonte and Ouro Prêto (US\$8, 2¾ hours). During peak periods, buy your tickets a day in advance. From Ouro

Prêto one overnight bus goes to Rio (US\$22, seven hours), and there are two daily buses to São Paulo (US\$30, 11 hours).

CONGONHAS

☎ 0xx31 / pop 45,000

This small town, 72km south of Belo Horizonte, would attract few visitors if not for the *Basilica do Bom Jesus de Matosinhos* and, more importantly, its magnificently carved sculptures. Aleijadinho's 12 **Prophets** are among Brazil's most famed works of art. Art-lovers and admirers of the mystifying artist should definitely make the Congonhas detour.

The **tourism office** (☎ 3731-1300; 🕒 8am-6pm), located on the way into town, can advise about city events and give directions to the camping ground outside of town.

Congonhas' Jubileu do Senhor Bom Jesus do Matosinhos, held from September 7 to 14, is one of Brazil's biggest religious festivals, bringing 600,000 pilgrims each year.

Dos Profetas (☎ 3731-1352; www.hoteldosprofetas.com.br; Av Júlia Kubitschek 54; d from US\$30), a petite hotel in the center of town, has clean rooms with dark wood furnishings. It's a 15-minute, mostly uphill walk to the *Prophets*.

The atmospheric **Colonial Hotel** (☎ 3731-1834; Praça da Basílica 76; d from US\$35) and restaurant has huge hallways and immensely high ceilings, and it's right across the street from the *Prophets*.

Six daily buses run from Belo Horizonte to Congonhas (US\$5, 1¼ hours). Seven daily buses connect Congonhas with São João del

Rei (US\$7, two hours). Getting to/from Ouro Prêto is difficult. You must first catch a bus to *Conselheiro Lafaiete* (US\$2, 30 minutes, many buses), and then catch one of three to five daily buses to Ouro Prêto (US\$6 2½ hours). Local buses run between Congonhas bus station and the *Basílica* (US\$1, 15 minutes), 1.5km away.

SÃO JOÃO DEL REI

☎ 0xx32 / pop 82,000

This bustling, working-class city attracts fewer visitors than nearby Tiradentes, owing to São João's smaller, busier historic center. In its defense, there are some lovely colonial-era streets and churches here, the locals are friendly and proud of their city, and there's much authentic energy to the city compared to picture-perfect Tiradentes.

Like other Minas gold-rush towns, São João del Rei was founded in the 1800s; it lies 182km south of Belo Horizonte.

Information

Tourist office (☎ 3372-7338; Praça Frei Orlando 90; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Opposite São Francisco de Assis.

Sights & Activities

The following churches and museums open from 9am to 5pm, Tuesday to Sunday, but close for lunch.

The baroque **Igreja de São Francisco de Assis** (Rua Padre José Maria Xavier; admission US\$0¢), built in 1774 and overlooking a palm-lined plaza, was Aleijadinho's first complete project. Though much of his plan was not realized, the exterior, with an Aleijadinho sculpture of the Virgin and several angels, is one of the finest in Minas. The **Igreja de NS do Carmo** (Rua Getúlio Vargas), begun in 1732, was also designed by Aleijadinho. In the second sacristy is a famous unfinished sculpture of Christ.

The **Catedral de NS do Pilar** (Largo do Rosário) was built in 1719 to honor the patron saint and protector of slaves. It has exuberant gold altars and fine Portuguese tiles.

The **Museu Regional do Sphan** (Rua Marechal Deodoro, 12; admission US\$1) has a small but impressive art collection from the city's churches.

The **Maria Fumaça** (steam train; São João station; one way/round trip US\$8/12; 🕒 Sat, Sun & holidays) is pulled by 19th-century locomotives, and chugs along a picturesque 13km track from São João to Tiradentes. It's a great half-hour ride. It departs São João at 10am and 3pm and returns at 1pm and 5pm. Train tickets include admission

ALEIJADINHO

Aleijadinho (Antônio Francisco Lisboa, 1730–1814), son of a Portuguese architect and an African slave, lost the use of his hands and legs at the age of 30 but, with a hammer and chisel strapped to his arms, he advanced art in Brazil from the excesses of baroque to a finer, more graceful rococo. This Brazilian Michelangelo sculpted the **12 Old Testament Prophets**, his masterworks, at the **Basilica do Bom Jesus de Matosinhos** in Congonhas between 1800 and 1805. Aleijadinho was also responsible for the six chapels here and their wooden statues representing the Passion of Christ, which together are just as impressive as the *Prophets*.

to the very interesting Railway Museum, or **Museu Ferroviário** (São João station; admission to museum alone US\$1.50).

Sleeping

Pousada São Benedito (☎ 3371-7447; Rua Marechal Deodoro 254; s/d with shared bathroom US\$10/20) This friendly place feels more like a large home than a *pousada*. Cozy rooms.

Hotel Provincia de Orense (☎ 3371-7960; Rua Marechal Deodoro 131; s/d/tr US\$20/34/45) Tucked away on a cobblestone street in a good part of town, the Orense has spacious, modern rooms.

Hotel Brasil (☎ 3371-2804; Av Presidente Tancredo Neves 395; d with/without bathroom US\$25/15) Large but shabby rooms are on offer at Hotel Brasil. There are, however, nice views of the river, and it's in a convenient location.

Eating & Drinking

Restaurante Rex (Rua Marechal Deodoro 124; per kg US\$5; ☎ 11am-4pm) This quaint, inexpensive spot serves tasty Mineiro cuisine in what can be a slightly overpriced part of town.

Chafariz (Rua Quintino Bocáiuva 100; per kg US\$8; ☎ lunch) Chafariz, just behind the train station, is everybody's favorite, with many regional dishes, particularly *feijoadas*.

Cabana do Zotti (Av Tiradentes 805; ☎ 9pm-late) This popular bar packs crowds, with dancing later in the night.

Del Castro (Alto da 8 de Dezembro s/n; admission US\$2; ☎ 9pm-6am Fri & Sat) A popular weekend spot.

Point 84 (Rua Kleber Figueiras 84; ☎ 7pm-5am Thu-Sun) A good live-music spot.

Getting There & Around

Four direct daily buses run to São João from Rio de Janeiro (US\$22, 5½ hours). Seven daily buses run from São João to Belo Horizonte (US\$14, 3½ hours) via Congonhas (US\$8, two hours). For Ouro Preto, catch the São Paulo-Mariana bus departing twice daily (US\$15, four hours).

Yellow buses run to the town center from São João's bus station on Rua Cristóvão Colombo (US50¢, 10 minutes). From the center to the bus station, buses go from the small bus stop in front of the train station.

TIRADENTES

☎ 0xx32 / pop 6400

One of the prettiest villages in Minas Gerais, Tiradentes has plenty of charm – from its peaceful, cobbled streets to its mountain vis-

tas, with a wandering river trickling through town. Its lovely setting is no secret, however, so be mindful of the weekend crowds. Tiradentes was named for the martyred hero of the Inconfidência Mineira (see p310), who was born at a nearby farm.

Information

Bradesco ATM (Rua Gabriel Passos 43)

Internet café (Rua Cadeia 30; per hr US\$3; ☎ 9am-7pm) Near Igreja NS Rosário dos Pretos.

Secretária de Turismo (☎ 3355-1212; Rua Resende Costa 71; ☎ 9am-5pm) Facing the tree-lined Largo das Forras, this place has maps and info.

Sights & Activities

The town's colonial buildings run up a hillside, where they culminate in the beautiful 1710 **Igreja Matriz de Santo Antônio** (Rua Padre Toledo s/n; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-5pm); it has a facade by Aleijadinho and an all-gold interior rich in Old Testament symbolism.

Built by slaves, the **Igreja Nossa Senhora Rosário dos Pretos** (Rua Direita s/n; admission US50¢; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), is Tiradentes' oldest church, dating from 1708; it contains several images of black saints. The **Museu do Padre Toledo** (Rua Padre Toledo 190; admission US\$1.50; ☎ 9am-4:30pm Thu-Tue) is the former mansion of another hero of the Inconfidência, and is full of antiques and 18th-century curios.

At the foot of the Serra de São José is a 1km-wide band of protected Atlantic rainforest, with several **hiking** trails. The most popular leads to the Mãe d'Água spring, reached by a 25-minute walk from the Chafariz de São José fountain in town. Other walks include the two-hour Caminho do Mangue, which heads up the Serra from the west side of town, and A Calçada, a stretch of the old road between Ouro Preto and Rio de Janeiro. Locals advise against trekking alone; don't carry valuables. For guides (from US\$15 per walk) ask at the tourist office or the adventure outfit **Caminhos e Trilhos** (☎ 3355-2477; caminhostrilhaturismo@yahoo.com.br; Rua Antônio Teixeira de Carvalho 120), a 10-minute walk south of the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating

Prices can double on weekends.

Hotel do Hespagnol (☎ 3355-1560; Rua dos Inconfidentes 479; s/d US\$15/30) This budget hotel has spacious rooms that are a bit bare and short on light. Some rooms, however, have French doors onto tiny balconies – a good value.

Pousada Tiradentes (☎ 3355-1232; Rua São Francisco de Paula 41; s/d US\$22/36) Next to the bus station, this aging place has basic rooms with large windows and well-maintained bathrooms.

Pousada do Laurito (☎ 3355-1268; Rua Direita 187; d with/without bathroom US\$35/25) Rooms at this converted residence are fairly plain with linoleum floors and high ceilings, but the owner is a friendly old soul.

Pousada da Bia (☎ 3355-1173; www.pousadadabia.com.br; Rua Frederico Ozanan 330; d from US\$40; 🚽) This delightful guesthouse has simple, clean-swept rooms set around a grassy courtyard and swimming pool.

Restaurante Padre Toledo (Rua Direita 250; mains around US\$14) This longtime favorite prepares good Mineira cuisine. An inexpensive bakery (open 6am to 9pm) is next door.

Maria Luiza (Largo do Ó 13; snacks US\$3-5) For sandwiches, soups, teas and coffee, grab a seat at one of the sidewalk tables at this quaint café.

Bar do Celso (Largo das Forras 80A; meals US\$9) One of several restaurants scattered around the plaza Largo das Forras, this one has a small selection of Mineira dishes at reasonable prices.

Pasta & Cia (Rua Frederico Ozanan 327; pastas US\$8-11; 🕒 closed Tue) This handsome place serves good Italian-style cooking.

Getting There & Around

The best approach to Tiradentes is the wonderful train trip from São João del Rei (see p313), but buses (US\$2.50, 20 minutes) also come and go between the two towns approximately every 90 minutes.

DIAMANTINA

☎ 0xx38 / pop 45,000

Way up in the mountains, Diamantina is strikingly beautiful but rarely visited, with a different feel from other colonial Minas towns. Unlike the lush southern part of the state, the mountains here are desolate, with craggy, windswept peaks. The town is still a functioning diamond-mining town, though its well-preserved center has changed little in 200 years, largely due to its isolation. The bus trip from Belo Horizonte (300km south) is arduous but rewarding, with gorgeous panoramas along the way.

Information

Banco do Brasil (main square) Has a Visa/Plus ATM.

Casa de Cultura (☎ 3531-1636; Praça Antônio Eulálio)

Try the office on the 3rd floor for tourist information.

Municipal tourist office (☎ 3531-1857; Praça

Monsenhor Neves 44) Hands out a guide and map in Portuguese.

Sights & Activities

Most places close for lunch (noon to 2pm).

The **Igreja de NS do Carmo** (Rua do Carmo s/n; admission US\$1.50; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, to noon Sun), built in 1760-65, is the town's most opulent church. The tower was built at the rear lest the bells awaken Chica da Silva, the famous mistress and ex-slave of diamond contractor João Fernandes de Oliveira. Oliveira's mansion on Praça Lobo de Mesquita, known as the Casa de Chica da Silva, shows their extravagant lifestyle.

The **Museu do Diamante** (Rua Direita 14; admission US\$1; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, to noon Sun) is actually inside the house of Padre Rolim, one of the Inconfidentes. It houses furniture, instruments of torture and other relics of the good old diamond days.

The Saturday **food & craft market** (Centro Cultural David Ribeiro, Praça Barão Guaicuí; 🕒 9am-6pm), with live music, is an interesting occasion. The Centro has a small museum with fascinating old photos.

Juscelino Kubitschek, the 1960s Brazilian president who founded Brasília, was born in Diamantina. The small **Casa de Juscelino Kubitschek** (Rua São Francisco 241; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, to 2pm Sun) reflects his simple upbringing.

While you're here, walk a couple of kilometers down the **Caminho dos Escravos** (built by slaves) to the **Serra da Jacuba**.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel JK (☎ 3531-1142; Largo Dom João 135; s/d US\$8/15) This good budget option has basic but clean rooms; it's directly across from the bus station. Other budget hotels are nearby.

Chalé Pousada (☎ 3531 1246; Rua Macau de Baixo 52; s/d from US\$15/25) An attractive old guesthouse.

Pousada Gameleira (☎ 3531-1900; Rua do Rosário 209; s/d US\$15/30) A quaint but inexpensive choice in the old part of town, with some rooms facing the Igreja de NS do Rosário.

Restaurante Grupiaria (Rua Campos Carvalho 12; per kg US\$12) This popular place serves tasty *mineiro* dishes.

Apocalipse (Praça Barão Guaicuí; lunch from US\$6) Enjoy a hearty lunch at this self-serve restaurant opposite the Mercado Municipal.

Getting There & Away

Six daily buses run from Belo Horizonte (US\$27, 5½ hours).

THE SOUTH

Spectacular white-sand beaches, pristine subtropical islands and the thunderous roar of the Iguazu waterfalls are a few of the attractions of Brazil's affluent south. There's also great whale-watching, surfing and a fascinating train journey over the mountains. While often given short shrift by first-time visitors, this region offers a radically different version of what it means to be Brazilian. Here *gaúchos* (cowboys) still cling to the cowboy lifestyle on the wide plains bordering Argentina and Uruguay, and the influence from millions of German, Italian, Swiss and Eastern European settlers is evident in the Old World feel of inland and coastal villages (not to mention the blond hair and blue eyes).

The south comprises three states: Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. The climate is generally subtropical, but snow is not uncommon in the interior highlands in winter.

BRAZIL

GETTING THERE & AWAY

If you're flying in, the major gateways are Curitiba, Florianópolis, Porto Alegre and Iguazu, which borders both Argentina and Paraguay. All of these cities have good bus connections to São Paulo.

GETTING AROUND

Short flights and longer bus journeys connect the four major cities of the South. If you're heading to Ilha do Mel, you can catch a bus (or the scenic train) from Curitiba to Paranaguá, from which several daily boats go to the island. There are more frequent boat departures from Pontal do Sul, also reached by bus from Curitiba (p302).

CURITIBA

☎ 0xx41 / pop 1.7 million

Known for its ecofriendly design, Curitiba is one of Brazil's urban success stories, with pleasant parks, well-preserved historic buildings, little traffic congestion and a large university population. Paraná's capital is a good place for a pit stop, but there's not much to hold your attention beyond a few days.

Information

There's a tourist information booth at the airport.

Cybernet XV (Rua das Flores 106; per hr US\$3;

☎ 9.30am-midnight Mon-Sat) Internet access.

Paraná Turismo (Loja 18, Rua 24 Horas) A helpful information booth in the narrow 24-hour pedestrian mall.

Sights & Activities

Strolling is one of the best ways to enjoy the city. The cobbled historic quarter around **Largo da Ordem** has beautifully restored buildings, art galleries, bars and restaurants, with live music after dark. Nearby, the pretty **Rua das Flores** is lined with shops, restaurants and colorful flowers. For more greenery, visit the **Passeio Público** (Av Presidente Carlos Cavalcanti; ☎ Tue-Sun), a small park with shady walks and a lake. Curitiba's attractions outside the center – including botanical gardens, tree-filled parks and the Oscar Niemeyer museum – are accessible via the **Linha Turismo Bus** (see Getting Around, p319).

Sleeping

There are plenty of cheap hotels across from the bus station.

Cervantes Hotel (☎ 3222-9593; www.cervanteshotel.cjb.net; Rua Alfredo Bufen 66; s/d US\$15/22) In a good location, this bare-bones hotel has clean rooms with carpeting and old bathrooms. Lacy curtains add a homey touch.

Hotel Maia (☎ 3264-1684; Av Presidente Afonso Carmo 355; s/d US\$15/30) If you're arriving late or leaving early, the clean and secure Maia is across from the bus station.

Palace Hotel (☎ 3222-6414; Rua Barão do Rio Branco 62; s/d US\$17/26) Near Rua das Flores, the Palace is good value, with wood floors, big old-fashioned windows and good natural lighting in its rooms.

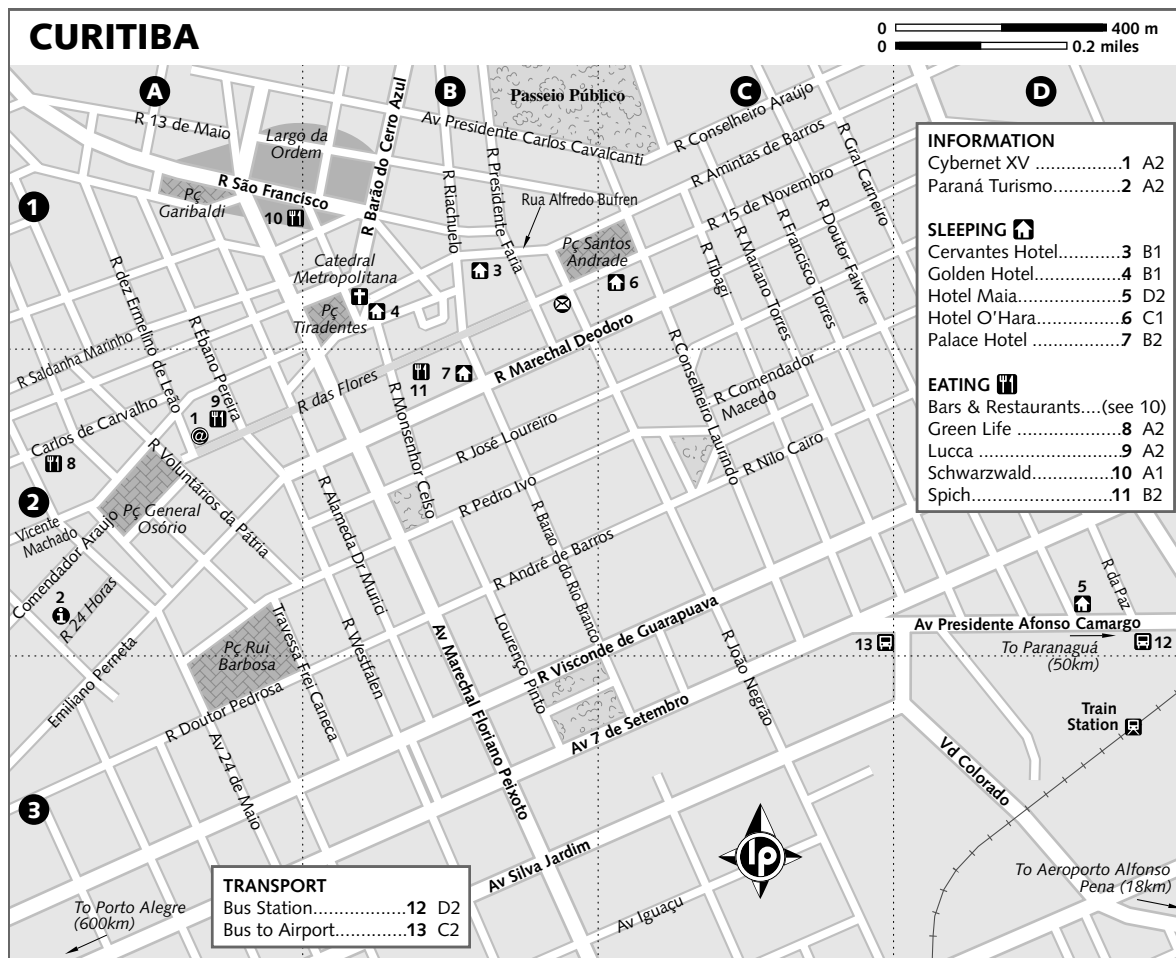
Golden Hotel (☎ 3323-3603; www.goldenhotelpr.com.br; Rua Tobias de Macado 26; s/d US\$17/30) A basic but decent choice in the center, the Golden Hotel has small narrow rooms with wood floors. The tiny balconies are nice, as are the upper-floor views of the cathedral.

Hotel O'Hara (☎ 3232-6044; Rua XV de Novembro 770; s/d from US\$25/35) Overlooking Praça Santos Andrade, O'Hara has small, comfortable rooms with modern bathrooms.

Eating

Bars and restaurants abound around Largo da Ordem.

Spich (Rua das Flores 420; buffet US\$2; ☎ lunch Mon-Sat) This popular lunch buffet has fresh food at good prices. It's on the 2nd floor of the Shop das Fábricas.



BRAZIL

Green Life (Rua Carlos de Carvalho 271; buffet US\$5; ☺ lunch) Most of the ingredients at this all-organic vegetarian restaurant come from the owners' own farm.

Lucca (Rua Ébano Pereira 19; mains US\$5-7; ☺ 9.30am-6.30pm) This handsome café off Rua das Flores serves inexpensive lunch plates as well as pastas, *panini* and quiche, plus frothy cappuccinos.

Schwarzwald (Rua Claudino dos Santos 63; mains from US\$7) One of many atmospheric options on Largo da Ordem, Schwarzwald serves filling plates of wurst and other German fare along with cold draft beer.

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are flights from Curitiba to São Paulo and other major cities in the south.

BUS

Frequent buses run to São Paulo (US\$20, 6½ hours), Rio de Janeiro (US\$32, 12 hours), Foz do Iguaçu (US\$30, 10 hours) and all major cities to the south. If you miss the train to Paranaguá, there are plenty of buses.

Direct buses run to Asunción (US\$40, 18 hours), Buenos Aires (US\$66, 28 hours) and Santiago (US\$120, 52 hours).

TRAIN

The railway from Curitiba (altitude 900m) to the port of Paranaguá is the most exciting in Brazil, with sublime panoramas.

There are two methods of travel: the *trem* (regular train) and the *litorina* (tourist train). The *trem* leaves Curitiba at 8.15am daily, though it goes only as far as Morretes on Monday to Friday, arriving at 11.15am (and returning at 3pm). On weekends and holidays it goes all the way to Paranaguá, arriving around 1.15pm (and returning at 2pm). One-way tourist-class tickets cost US\$22. Sit on the left side for the best views.

The air-conditioned *litorina* leaves Curitiba at 9.15am on weekends, starting back from Morretes at 2.30pm. One-way tickets are a pricey US\$50.

Schedules change frequently so check in advance by calling ☎ 3323-4007 or logging on to www.serraverdeexpress.com.br. On weekends it's wise to buy tickets in advance.

Getting Around

Alfonso Pena airport is 18km from the city (US\$25 by taxi). An Aeroporto–Centro bus leaves every 20 minutes (US\$1) from Av Presidente Afonso Camargo. A classier silver shuttle bus ('Aeroporto Executivo'; US\$3) goes direct every 20 minutes to the center making only select stops, including the bus station, Praça Tiradentes and Rua 24 Horas.

The white Linha Turismo bus is a great way to see the sights that lie outside Curitiba's downtown. It starts from Praça Tiradentes every half hour from 9am to 5.30pm Tuesday to Sunday. You can get off the bus at any of the 25 attractions and hop on the next one. It costs US\$7.50 for four tickets.

PARANAGUÁ

☎ 0xx41 / pop 140,000

Most visitors to this sleepy riverside town are coming and going in a hurry. Paranaguá, after all, is both the terminus of the scenic train ride from Curitiba and the embarkation of boat trips to idyllic Ilha do Mel. Although it has an active port you wouldn't know it, strolling the old colonial waterfront. Colorful but now faded public buildings and churches create a feeling of tropical decadence – just the right ambience for an afternoon's exploration.

The main **tourist office** (☎ 3422-6882; Rua General Carneiro; ☹ 8am–6pm), along the waterfront, is very helpful.

Pousada Itiberê (☎ 3423-2485; Rua Heitor Ariento 142; s/d US\$10/17), a secure cheapie on the waterfront, has basic but clean *quartos* (rooms with shared bathroom).

In a restored colonial building, **Hotel Ponderosa** (☎ 3423-2464; Rua Prescilinio Corrêa 68; s/d US\$10/20) has good-value en suite rooms.

Barreado (meat stew cooked in a clay pot) is the region's culinary treat. Try it at the inexpensive **Mercado Municipal do Café** (Rua General Carneiro) on the waterfront.

Out-of-town buses leave from the bus station on the waterfront. There are frequent buses to Curitiba (US\$5.50, 1½ hours). For details on the train ride to/from Curitiba, see opposite.

ILHA DO MEL

☎ 0xx41 / pop 1200

The state's most enchanting getaway is this oddly shaped island at the mouth of the Baía da Paranaguá. Here you'll find excellent beaches, good surfing waves and scenic

coastal walks. Traffic consists only of boats and surfboard-carrying Brazilians as cars are not allowed on the island. A young party crowd descends from January to Carnival, and over Easter. Otherwise it's a tranquil, relatively isolated place.

Sights & Activities

Ilha do Mel consists of two parts joined by the beach at Nova Brasília. The larger, northern part is mostly an ecological station, little visited except for Praia da Fortaleza, where an 18th-century fort still stands, and a little farther Praia Ponta do Bicho.

For fine views, visit the Farol das Conchas (Conchas Lighthouse), east of Nova Brasília. The best beaches are east-facing Praia da Fora, Praia do Miguel and Praia Ponta do Bicho. It's a 2½-hour walk along the coast from Nova Brasília to Encantadas.

Sleeping & Eating

Rooms are harder to find on summer weekends and other peak times, but you can always pitch a tent or sling a hammock in Nova Brasília (around US\$4 per person).

The biggest concentration of *pousadas* is at Praia do Farol, along the track to the right from Nova Brasília.

Smaller Encantadas, in the southwest of the island, feels crowded on summer weekends. For inexpensive seafood, try the Fim do Trilha restaurant complex (mains US\$3.50 to US\$10) facing Praia da Fora. On Friday and Saturday nights you'll find some live music and probably a beach party.

Hostel Zorro (☎ 3426-9052; www.hostelzorro.com.br; dm/d from US\$9/25) This popular hostel facing the beach has decent all-wooden rooms. There's a communal kitchen and outdoor lounge area.

Pousada Caminho do Farol (☎ 3426-8153; www.pousadatropical.com; dm US\$10) This pleasant but rustic place 200m from the Nova Brasília dock has en suite rooms with tile floors and fans.

Pousadinha (☎ 3426-8026; <http://pousadinha.com.br>; s/d from US\$12/20) About 100m from the Nova Brasília dock, this popular budget place has a handful of decent rooms.

Sonho de Verão (☎ 3426-9048; sonho-deverao@uol.com.br; s/d from US\$12/25) On the main path in town, this place has rustic but nicely decorated en suite rooms and use of a kitchen.

Grajagan Surf Resort (☎ 3426-80433; www.grajagan.com.br; dm/d/camping US\$20/60/6) A few steps from

Praia Grande, this handsome *pousada* has comfortable rooms, each with a veranda and sea-facing hammock. Good outdoor restaurant and bar.

Pousada Girassol (☎ 3426-8006; heliodasilva@onda.com.br; d US\$25) Close to Pousadinha, this friendly guesthouse has cozy en suite rooms.

Toca do Abutre (mains US\$6-13) This Nova Brasília surf bar–seafood restaurant has live music some nights.

Getting There & Away

Three boats daily go first to Nova Brasília then Encantadas from the jetty opposite the tourist office in Paranaguá (US\$6, two hours). Boats currently depart Paranaguá at 8.30am, 1.30pm and 4.30pm; they return from Nova Brasília at the same times.

Alternatively, you could take a bus to Pontal do Sul, on the mainland opposite Encantadas, and from there take a boat for the 4km crossing to Encantadas (US\$5, 30 to 40 minutes). In high season, boats leave at least hourly from 8am to 5pm.

ILHA DE SANTA CATARINA

☎ 0xx48 / pop 388,000 including Florianópolis

Ilha de Santa Catarina has a remarkably varied landscape, with mountains covered by Mata Atlântica (Atlantic rainforest), pristine lakes, tranquil pine forests and sand dunes large enough to surf down. The beaches are the real attraction here, with a beautifully diverse landscape – from remote forest-backed sands to wild, rugged shoreline sprinkled with surfers and sun worshippers.

Santa Catarina's allure, however, is no secret, and crowds from all over Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay pack the beaches from December to February.

While the northern half of the island is heavily developed, the south remains fairly untouched. Old fishing villages dot the coastline, with oyster farms and old Azorean settlements along the west coast. Hiking trails (notably from Pântano do Sul) go over the lush peaks to empty, unspoiled beaches. There's also a lake (Lagoa do Peri), which is smaller and more peaceful than Lagoa da Conceição in the north.

Activities

For a short kayaking or sailing trip across **Lagoa do Peri**, contact **Vicente** (☎ 3389-5366; vicente@barcomania.com.br; per person US\$25), who

takes no more than four passengers and speaks mostly Portuguese. For trips on **Lagoa da Conceição**, you can catch one of the regularly scheduled water taxis (US\$2) next to the bridge in the middle of the town Centro da Lagoa. Boat tours to beautiful, undeveloped **Ilha do Campeche**, off the island's east coast (US\$15), are another option: you can check out ancient inscriptions and snorkel in pretty lagoons. Call or visit **Scuna Sul** (☎ 3225-1806), which departs from a green jut of land at the southern end of Praia da Armação. Boats leave from here typically at 9am or 10am most days (US\$17).

Sleeping & Eating

Keep an eye out for signs advertising '*se aluga quarto/apartamento*'. There are many places to camp. Heading from north to south, these are our picks.

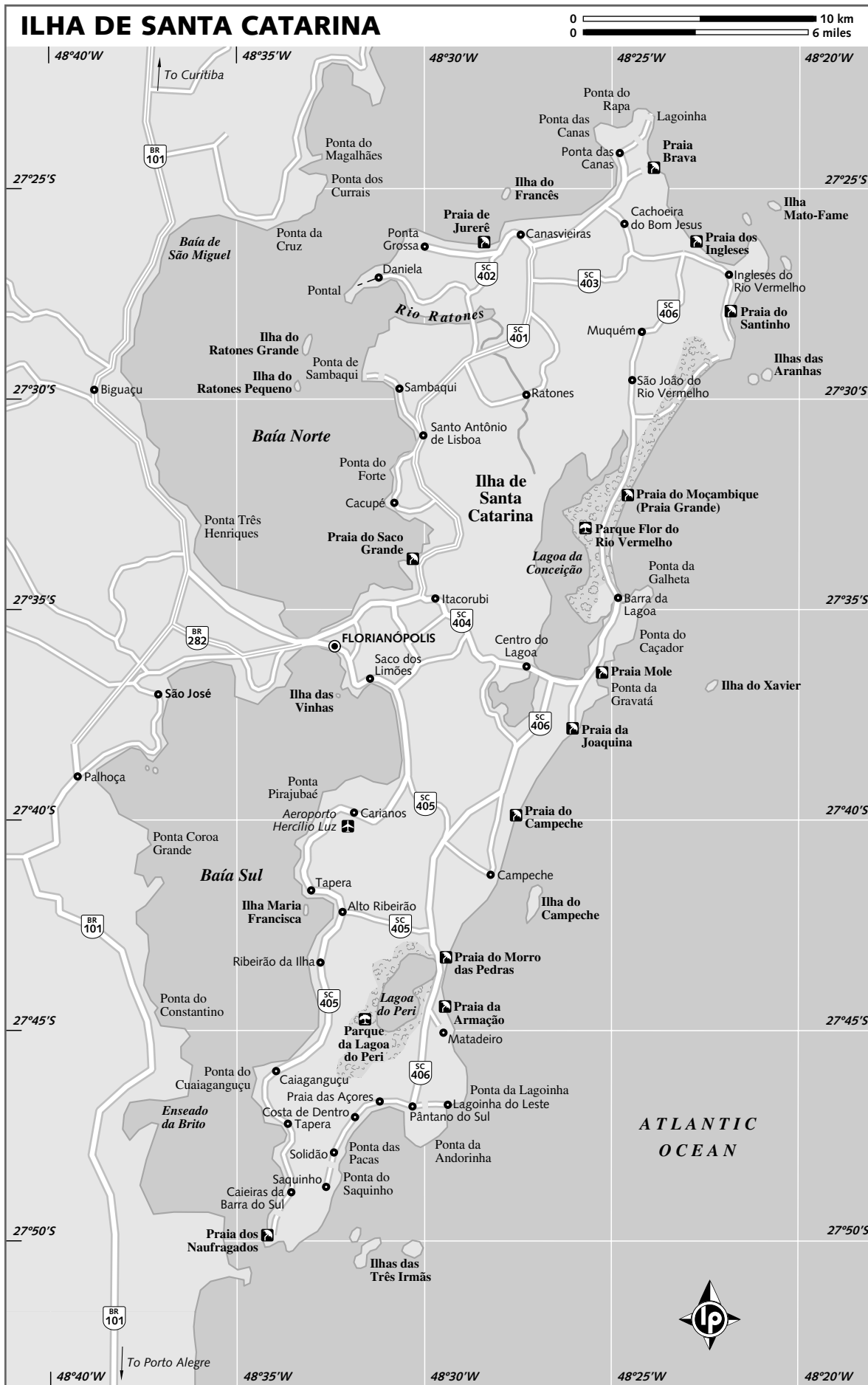
Praia do Moçambique is a stunning 14km-long beach hidden from the road by a pine forest. At its northern end is the **Pousada Rio Vermelho** (☎ 3296-1337; www.riovermelhopousada.com.br; Rodovia João Gualberto Soares 8479; ste/chalet from US\$46/52; 🚻 🚿). Located in São João de Rio Vermelho, this is a great option with large grounds, a pool and easy beach access. Accommodations are in beautifully furnished suites or in attractive chalets with kitchens.

About 2km south of there is a **campground** (☎ 3269-9984; Rodovia João Gualberto Soares s/n; per person US\$7), just a short stroll to the beach.

Continuing south you'll reach Praia da Joaquina, whose huge dunes are visible for kilometers. You can rent sand boards (US\$5 per hour) to surf the dunes. On the beach are several hotels, including the **Joaquim Beach Hotel** (☎ 3232-5059; www.joaquinabeachhotel.com.br; s/d from US\$25/30; 🚻 🚿), with pleasant rooms, some with ocean views.

The incredibly busy town bordering Lagoa do Conceição is called Centro da Lagoa and it has numerous *pousadas*, most of which are overpriced. An exception is **Pousada Dona Zilma** (☎ 3232-5161; Rua Prefeito Acácio Garibaldi São Thiago 279; s/d from US\$13/25), a family-run guesthouse with comfortable *apartamentos*. It's one block from the lake, about 1km east of the bridge.

On the southern end of the island you'll find Praia da Armação, a surfer favorite. Among several inexpensive guesthouses is **Pousada Pires** (☎ 3237-5161; www.pousadapires.cjb.net;



Rua Prefeito Acácio Garibaldi São Thiago 279; s/d from US\$13/25), which is a friendly place offering simple rooms with kitchens. It's on the town's main street, 50m from the beach.

Further south, Pântano do Sul is an old fishing village, with a few simple restaurants. **Pousada do Pescador** (☎ 3237-7122; www.pousadadopesador.com.br; Rua Manoel Vidal 257; s/d from US\$30/40) has nice chalets in a garden setting one block from the beach. On the main road 2km past the village you will arrive at the unpaved Rua Rosália P Ferreira. About 1km down the road is **Albergue do Pirata** (☎ 3389-2727; dm US\$8), an HI youth hostel. Rooms are spartan but the owners are friendly, and it's Catarina's cheapest place.

Continuing on the same road 2km, and you reach **Pousada Sítio dos Tucanos** (☎ 3237-5084; www.pousadasitiodostucanos.com; Estrada Rosália Ferreira 2776; s/d low season US\$40/50; s/d high season US\$55/72; 🚗). This splendidly situated guesthouse offers sweeping views down to the ocean. Rooms are rustic but elegant, most with balconies that open onto a gurgling mountain stream. If coming by bus, call ahead to be picked up at the nearest bus stop.

FLORIANÓPOLIS

☎ 0xx48 / pop 388,000

Gateway to Ilha de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis has two distinct sides to its character: the mainland industrial zone and its historic, more laid-back half – lying across the bridge on the western edge of Ilha de Santa Catarina. Although the town has pretty features that invite exploration, most travelers head straight for the eastern half of the island.

Orientation & Information

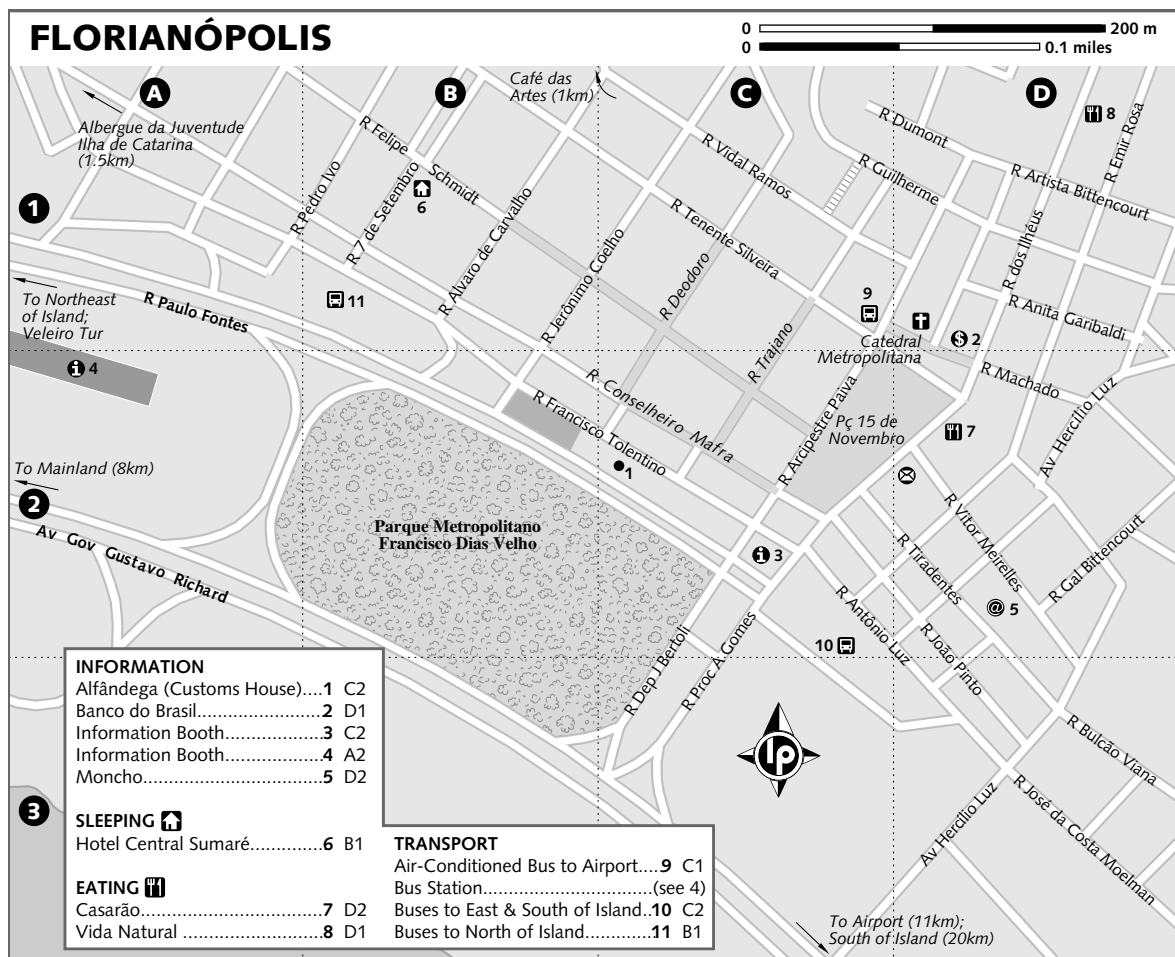
The island half of Florianópolis contains the majority of the city's sights, scattered about a pretty, colonial centre. The bus station lies a few blocks west of Praça XV de Novembro, which is the heart of the old quarters. The more upscale neighborhood of Beira-Mar lies about 2km north of there, and overlooks the bay.

There's an active street black market for cash dollars on the Rua Felipe Schmidt pedestrian block.

Banco do Brasil (Praça 15 de Novembro, 20) Has ATMs.

Moncho (Rua Tiradentes 181; per hr US\$2; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Cheap internet access.

BRAZIL



Information booths bus station (☎ 3228-1095; Rua Paulo Fontes); town (☎ 3223-4997; Praça Fernando Machado) For town and island information. The town branch is a few steps south of Praça XV de Novembro.

Sleeping & Eating

The liveliest drinking spots are along the bay-facing Beira-Mar Norte, about 1.5km north of Praça XV.

Albergue da Juventude Ilha de Catarina (☎ 3225-3781; www.floripahostel.com.br; Rua Duarte Schutel 227; dm/d from US\$10/22) In town, this very welcoming HI hostel is a 10-minute walk from the bus station.

Hotel Central Sumaré (☎ 3222-5359; Rua Felipe Schmidt 423; s/d US\$27/39, s/d with shared bathroom US\$17/30) This simple hotel has small but quaint rooms with wood floors.

Casarão (Praça 15 de Novembro 320; per kg US\$9; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat) Housed in an old colonial building on the main square, Casarão has a good lunch buffet and evening à la carte.

Café das Artes (Rua Esteves Júnior 734; sandwiches US\$2-4; ☎ 11:30am-11pm Mon-Sat, 4-11pm Sun) This artsy, upscale café in the Beira-Mar Norte neighborhood sells sandwiches, good coffee and baked goods.

Vida Natural (Rua Visconde de Ouro Preto 298; buffet US\$4.50; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri) This all-vegetarian joint spreads a large and appetizing buffet in a colonial setting.

Getting There & Away

From here there are daily flights to São Paulo and Porto Alegre, and connections to most other cities. Long-distance buses link Florianópolis with Torres (US\$15, four hours) Porto Alegre (US\$25, 6½ hours), Curitiba (US\$17, 4½ hours), São Paulo (US\$38, 12 hours), Rio de Janeiro (US\$78, 18 hours), Foz do Iguaçu (US\$45, 14 hours), Buenos Aires (US\$90, 25 hours) and Montevideo (US\$95, 18 hours).

Getting Around

The airport is 12km south of Florianópolis. To get there, you can take a taxi (US\$16), Corredor Sudoeste local buses from the bus station (US\$1), or you could travel by air-con Corredor Sudoeste bus (US\$2.50) from the stop next to the cathedral on Praça 15 de Novembro.

Local buses and yellow minibuses (which take surfboards) serve all the beaches. Buses

for the east and south of the island (including Lagoa da Conceição) leave from the local bus terminal in town on Rua Antônio Luz. Buses for the north leave from the local bus terminal on Rua Francisco Tolentino, close to the main bus station.

The island is a good place to rent a car. **Yes Rent a Car** (☎ 3236-0229) generally offers the best rates (from US\$37 a day). It has an office at the airport, but will deliver a car to any hotel on the island.

TORRES

☎ 0xx51 / 34,000

Fine beaches, beautiful rock formations and good surrounding country for walks make the small town of Torres a great pit stop while traversing the coast. Located 205km northeast of Porto Alegre, Torres has numerous surfing competitions throughout the year. The nearby **Ilha dos Lobos**, a rocky island about 2km out to sea, is home to sea lions in the winter months. The town gets packed on summer weekends.

Stop in the **tourist office** (☎ 3626-1937; cnr Av Barão do Rio Branco & Rua General Osório) for a map and a list of guesthouses. **Hotel Medusa** (☎ 3664-2378; Rua Benjamin Constant 828; s/d US\$14/19) is a friendly, family-owned place with basic, inexpensive rooms. The attractive **Pousada da Prainha** (☎ 3626-2454; www.pousadadaprainha.com.br; Rua Alferes Feirreira Porto 138; s/d US\$20/30, high-season d US\$50) has comfy rooms one block from the beach. You can camp at **Camping Beira Mar** (☎ 9129-7868; Rua Alexandrino de Alencar 5551).

Bom Gosto (Av Barão do Rio Branco 242) is a delicious *churrascaria* and **Doce Art** (Av Silva Jardim 295) has good espresso and baked delights.

Buses run to/from Porto Alegre (US\$15, 4½ hours, 10 daily) and Florianópolis (US\$15, five hours, three daily).

PARQUE NACIONAL DE APARADOS DA SERRA

☎ 0xx54

This magnificent **national park** (admission US\$3; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed-Sun) is 70km northeast of São Francisco de Paula and 18km from Cambará do Sul. The big attraction is the **Cânion do Itaim-bezinho**, a fantastic narrow canyon with sheer escarpments of 600m to 720m. Two waterfalls drop into this deep incision.

The Parque Nacional de Aparados da Serra **visitors center** (☎ 3251-1277) has maps, a café and guides for Trilha Cotovelo. Guides can also

be hired through **Acontur** (☎ 3251-1320; Cambará do Sul), the local guide association.

There are three hiking trails in the park: **Trilha do Vértice** (2km each way) and **Trilha Cotovelo** (2½ hours return) go to waterfalls and offer canyon vistas; **Trilha do Rio do Boi**, best approached from Praia Grande, east of the national park, follows the base of the canyon for 7km. It's for experienced hikers and is closed during the rainy season. A guide is highly recommended.

Cambará do Sul has small *pousadas* and many families rent rooms in their houses.

Close to the bus station, the busy guest-house **Pousada Itaimbeleza** (☎ 3251-1367; Rua Dona Ursula; s/d US\$15/30) has basic rooms popular with backpackers.

Two kilometers from town on the road to Ouro Verde, **Pousada Corucacas** (☎ 3251-1123; www.guiateln.net.com.br/pousadacorucacas; s/d US\$30/60) has horseback riding and fishing. Price includes breakfast and dinner.

One daily bus from Porto Alegre goes to São Francisco de Paula and Cambará do Sul (US\$12, six hours). Buy tickets the night before. From Torres on the coast, one daily bus runs to Praia Grande and Cambará do Sul.

No buses go to the park itself. Your best bet is to arrange a taxi or minivan (round trip US\$30).

CANELA

☎ 0xx54

North of Porto Alegre is the Serra Gaúcha, a popular area for walking. The bus ride from the city is beautiful, as are the mountain resorts of Canela and pricier Gramado. In winter there are occasional snowfalls and in spring the hills are blanketed with flowers.

Canela's **tourist office** (☎ 3282-1287; www.canela.com.br; Lago da Fama 227) in the center of town provides maps and information.

Sights

Nine kilometers north from Canela, the major attraction of **Parque Estadual do Caracol** (admission US\$2.50; ☎ 8:30am-5:30pm) is the spectacular Cascata do Caracol, a 130m waterfall. The Linha Turística bus runs there from the tourist office every two hours from Tuesday to Sunday.

Parque da Ferradura (admission US\$3; ☎ 9am-5:30pm) is a 6km hike from the Parque do Caracol entrance. It's a stunning 420m horse-shoe-shaped canyon with three lookouts along well-marked trails.

Activities

Adventure tourism – rock climbing, rappelling, rafting, mountain biking, bungee jumping – is big business here. Ask at the tourist office, or the agencies **Atitude** (☎ 3282-6305; Av Osvaldo Avanha 391) or **JM Rafting** (☎ 3282-1255; Av Osvaldo Aranha 1038).

Sleeping & Eating

All the restaurants are on or just off the main street, Av Osvaldo Aranha.

Pousada do Viajante (☎ 3282-2017; Rua Ernesto Urban 132; dm/d US\$15/30) Next to the bus station, this great, inviting HI youth hostel has tidy rooms.

Hotel Bela Vista (☎ 3282-1327; www.canela.tur.br/hotelbelavista.htm; Av Osvaldo Aranha 160; s/d from US\$15/30) In the center of town, this place is a good value for its clean, simple *quartos*.

Churrascaria Espelho Gaúcho (☎ 3282-4348; Rua Baden Powell 50; mains US\$8) A great *churrascaria* with an all-the-meat-you-can-eat option.

Getting There & Around

Frequent buses run to/from Porto Alegre (US\$9, 2½ hours) via Gramado. There are also buses to São Francisco de Paula (US\$3, one hour), from where you can connect to Cambará do Sul to get to the Parque Nacional de Aparados da Serra.

PORTO ALEGRE

☎ 0xx51 / pop 1.4 million

Though not the most beautiful destination, the flourishing port town of Porto Alegre is a good introduction to progressive Rio Grande do Sul. Built on the banks of the Rio Guaíba, this lively, modern city has a well-preserved neoclassical downtown, with handsome plazas, fascinating museums and cultural centers and a vibrant arts and music scene.

Information

Citibank (Rua 7 de Setembro 722) Has ATMs.

Cyber Zone (Rua Dr Flores 386; per hr US\$2; ☎ 9am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5.30pm Sat) A stylish internet café.

PronTur (Av Borges de Medeiros 445) Exchanges cash and traveler's checks.

Tourist office (Mercado Público, Praça 15 de Novembro; ☎ 9am-6pm) Helpful office; also at the airport.

Sights

The 1869 **Mercado Público** (Public Market) and the adjacent Praça 15 de Novembro constitute the city's heart. Shops in the market sell the

gaúchos' unique tea-drinking equipment, the *cuia* (gourd) and *bomba* (silver straw) as well as *mate* (the powdery tea). The interesting **Museu Histórico Júlio de Castilhos** (Rua Duque de Caxias 1231; admission US\$2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) contains diverse objects related to Rio Grande do Sul's history, such as special moustache cups. The **Museu de Arte do Rio Grande do Sul** (Praça da Alfândega; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) has a good collection of *gaúcho* art. Near Lake Guáiba is the Usina do Gasômetro, an abandoned thermoelectric station that's been turned into a showcase for visual art, dance and film.

The **Casa da Cultura Mario Quintana** (☎ 3221-7147; Rua dos Andradas 736) hosts theater, concerts and art exhibitions; it also has a popular cinema and an outdoor 7th-floor café with live music (from 7pm).

Sleeping

Marechal Hotel (☎ 3228-3076; www.hotelmarechal.com.br; Rua Andrade Neves 123; s/d US\$8/15, s/d with bathroom US\$14/18) This budget hotel has worn rooms with old wood floors and tall ceilings. The price and hospitable owners make it a decent choice.

Hotel Palácio (☎ 3225-3467; Rua Vigário José Inácio 644; s/d US\$15/24, with bathroom US\$20/32) This friendly place has simple, carpeted rooms with lime green walls, fluorescent lights (yikes) and old wooden furnishings.

Hotel Ritz (☎ 3225-0693; Av André da Rocha 225; s/d US\$16/23, s/d with bathroom US\$20/30) This welcoming place has basic but cheery rooms with tile floors and sizable windows. It features a small patio and hotel guests can use the kitchen.

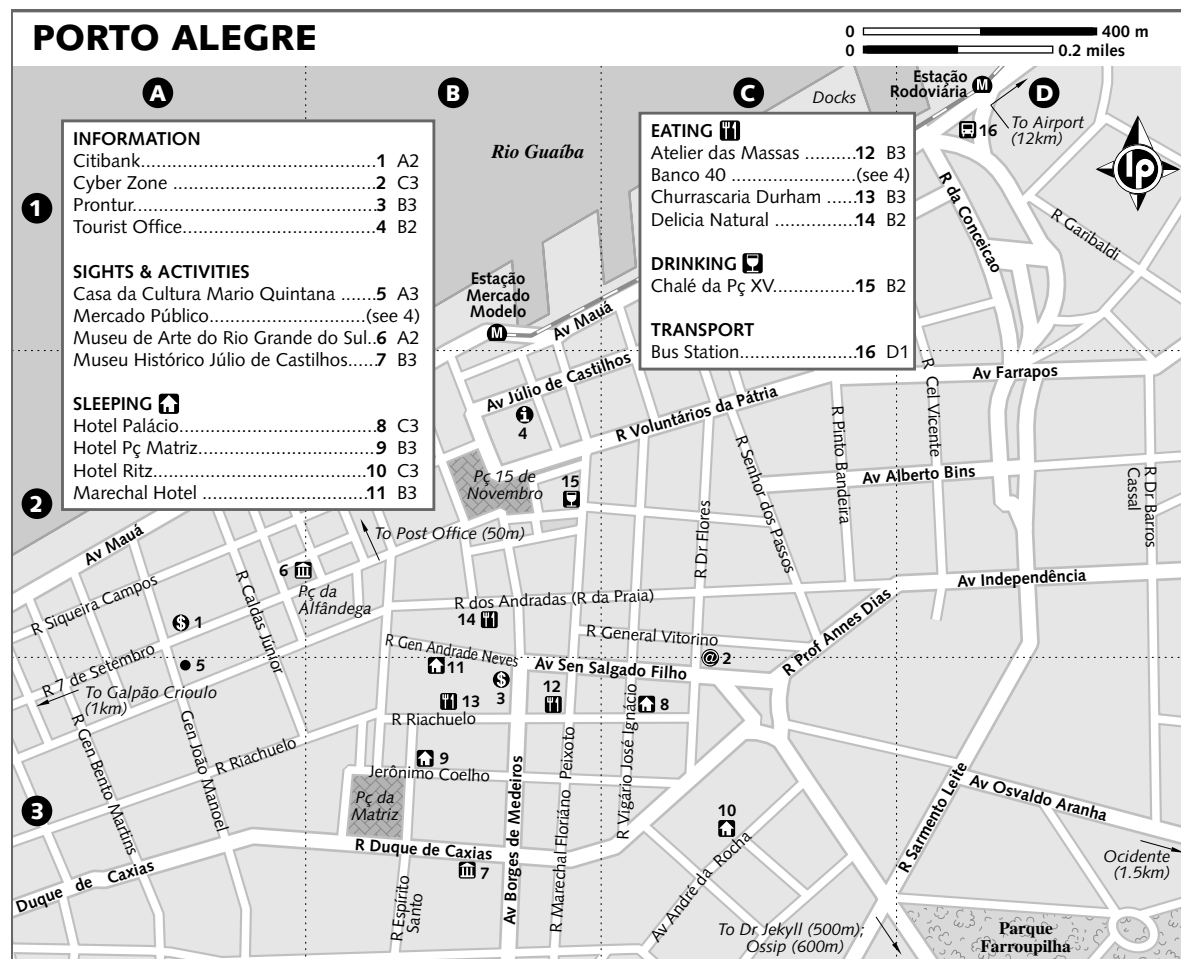
Hotel Praça Matriz (☎ 3225-5772; Largo João Amorim de Albuquerque 72; s/d US\$17/25) Housed in a neo-classical mansion, this aging hotel has basic rooms, some with French doors opening onto Praça da Matriz.

Eating

The Mercado Público has a central food hall, with good choices like Banco 40, serving tasty homemade ice cream.

There's an assortment of bars in Cidade Baixa, about 2km south of the old center (a US\$3 taxi ride).

Delicia Natural (Rua dos Andradas 1325 2nd fl; all-you-can-eat buffet US\$5; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri) A lunchtime



BRAZIL

favorite, Delicia has an extremely fresh, vegetarian-friendly buffet.

Churrascaria Durham (Rua Riachuelo 1300; fixed-price buffet US\$6) A standard *churrascaria* with all-you-can-eat beef, chicken and pork straight off the grill.

Atelier das Massas (Rua Riachuelo 1482; mains US\$6-10; ☎ closed Sun) Modern, downtown joint with good pasta and original paintings on the walls.

Galpão Crioulo (Parque Maurício Sirotsky Sobrinho; all-you-can-eat buffet US\$20) This high-end choice is the city's best *churrascaria*, with over 20 different grilled cuts and an extensive buffet.

Drinking

Chalé da Praça XV (Praça 15 de Novembro) An *alegrense* tradition is having a late-afternoon beer at this place, built in 1885.

Dr Jekyll (Travessa do Carmo 76; ☎ 11pm-dawn Mon-Sat) Cidade Baixa's best late-night watering hole with live music (alternative rock) some nights.

Ossip (☎ 3224-2422; Rua da República 677) In Cidade Baixa, another colorful drinking spot.

Ocidente (Av Osvaldo Aranha 960) A good bar for dancing, 2km east of downtown.

Getting There & Away

The busy bus station at Largo Vespasiano Julio Veppo has separate terminals for destinations in and outside Rio Grande do Sul. International buses run to Montevideo (US\$62, 12 hours) and Buenos Aires (US\$84, 20 hours). Other buses go to Foz do Iguaçu (US\$41, 15 hours), Florianópolis (US\$17, seven hours), Curitiba (US\$30, 11 hours) and Rio de Janeiro (US\$70, 24 hours).

Getting Around

Porto Alegre has a one-line *metrô*. The most useful stations are Estação Mercado Modelo (by the port), Estação Rodoviária (the next stop) and the airport (three stops beyond). A ride costs US\$1.

JESUIT MISSIONS

In the early 17th century Jesuit missionaries established a series of Indian missions in a region straddling northeast Argentina, southeast Paraguay and neighboring bits of Brazil. Between 1631 and 1638, after devastating attacks by slaving expeditions from São Paulo and hostile Indians, activity was concentrated in 30 more easily defensible missions. These became centers of culture as well as religion –

in effect a nation within the colonies, considered by some scholars an island of utopian progress and socialism, which at its height in the 1720s had over 150,000 Guarani Indian inhabitants.

Seven of the now-ruined missions lie in the northwest of Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul state, eight are in Paraguay and 15 in Argentina.

Orientation & Information

The town of Santo Ângelo is the main jumping-off point for the various Brazilian missions, and has a **tourist office** (☎ 0xx55-3381-1294; www.missoesturismo.com.br).

The most interesting and intact of the missions is **São Miguel das Missões** (admission US\$4, evening sound-&-light show US\$2.50), 53km southwest, reachable by four daily buses. See the Argentina (p88) and Paraguay (p808) chapters for information on missions in those countries.

Sleeping & Eating

Santo Ângelo's cheapies are on or near Praça Rio Branco.

Pousada das Missões (☎ 0xx55-3381-1202; www.albergues.com.br/saomiguel; dm/s/d US\$15/22/33) A pleasant HI hostel right next to São Miguel mission.

Hotel Barichello (☎ 0xx55-3381-1327; Av Borges do Canto 1559; s/d US\$22/34) Also in São Miguel, this hotel has a good *churrascaria* on-site.

Hotel Comércio (☎ 0xx55-3312-2542; Av Brasil 1178; r US\$30) Has nice amenities for a reasonable price.

Getting There & Away

There are eight daily buses from Porto Alegre to Santo Ângelo (US\$30, 7½ hours).

It's possible to enter Argentina by crossing the Rio Uruguai from Porto Xavier to San Javier, or from São Borja to Santo Tomé, or at Uruguaiana, 180km south of São Borja (with buses to Buenos Aires). But if you're heading for the Argentine missions, more frequent buses (seven daily) depart from Puerto Iguazú (across the border from Foz do Iguaçu) for San Ignacio Mini (US\$24, five hours). For the Paraguayan missions, daily buses go to Encarnación from Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, also opposite Foz do Iguaçu.

FOZ DO IGUAÇU

☎ 0xx45 / pop 295,000

The stupendous roar of 275 waterfalls crashing 80m into the Rio Iguaçu seems to create a low-level buzz of excitement all over the small

town of Foz, even though the famed Cataratas are 20km southeast of the city center. Even on the hottest afternoon, nature's relentless churning power is present. Apart from the waterfalls, which should be visited on both sides, you can dip into the forests of Paraguay and check out Itaipu dam, one of the largest hydroelectric power plants in the world.

Information

Along Av Brasil there are many banks and exchange houses. It's not safe to walk near the riverfront at any time; robberies are fairly common along the bridge to Ciudad del Este in Paraguay.

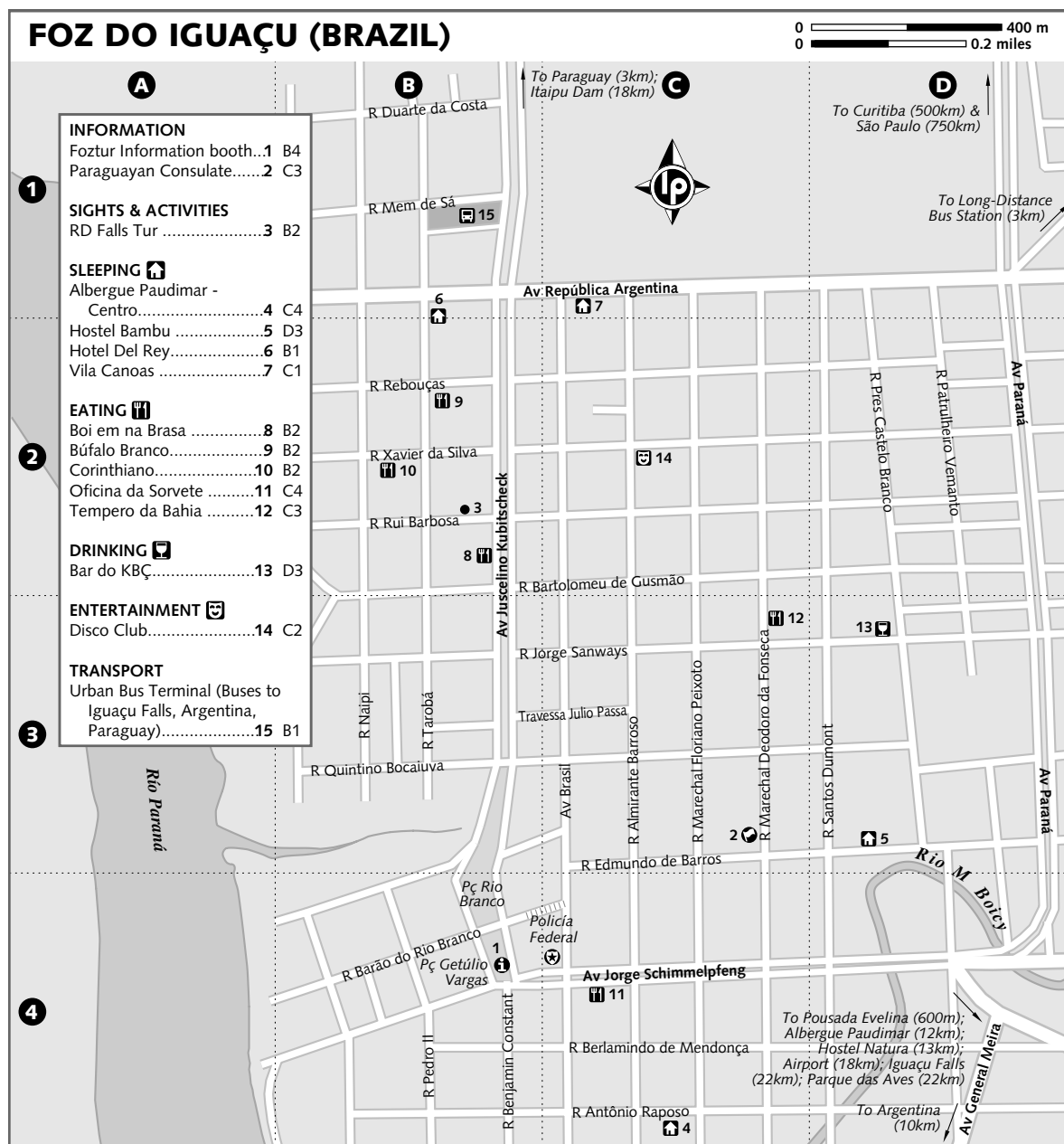
Foztur information booth (☎ 0800-451516; www.iguassu.tur.br) airport (🕒 noon-last plane); Central (Av

Jorge Schimmelpfeng); local & long-distance bus stations (🕒 7am-6.30pm) Provides maps and detailed info about the area.

Sights & Activities

To see the falls properly, you must visit both sides – Brazil gives the grand overview and Argentina (p90) the closer look. The **Brazilian side** (admission US\$10; 🕒 9am-5pm) has far fewer attractions than the Argentine side; and the costs are higher here if you want to arrange an under-the-falls boat trip. But there are some adventures unique to this side, including combination kayaking-hiking trips and rafting trips offered by **Macuco Safari** (www.macucosafari.com.br).

Five minutes' walk from the waterfalls entrance is the worthwhile **Parque das Aves** (Bird



Park; www.parquedasaves; admission US\$8; ☎ 8.30am-5.30pm), a five-hectare park where you can see some 800 different bird species. Pay in US dollars to avoid bad exchange rates.

If you're not heading onto Paraguay, it's well worth doing a day trip across the river from Iguaçu. **RD Falls Tur** (☎ 3574-4157; www.rdfallstur.gov.br; Hotel San Remo, Rua Xavier da Silva 563) offers excursions there, as well as rappelling, rafting and other adventure trips around the region. If you're headed east after Iguaçu, ask about the trips to Prudentópolis.

For a splurge, **Helisul** (☎ 3529-7474; www.helisul.com; flights US\$60), based inside the park, runs 10-minute helicopter flights over the falls.

North of town, the **Itaipu dam** (☎ 3520-6985; www.itaipu.gov.br; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Sat) is another jaw-dropping attraction, especially when learning how much was destroyed to create it (indigenous villages, 700 sq km of forest and a set of waterfalls to rival Iguaçu's). It's free to tour the grounds.

Sleeping

Albergue Paudimar (☎ 3529-6061; www.paudimar.com.br; Av das Cataratas; dm with/without YHI card US\$8/11; ☎ ☎) Foz's popular youth hostel, 12km from town on the way to the falls, is more like a miniresort, with a swimming pool, bar, cheap meals and internet access.

Centro (☎ 3028-5503; www.paudimarfalls.com.br; Rua Antônio Raposo 820; dm with/without YHI card US\$8/11; ☎ ☎ ☎) A much smaller, simpler hostel run by Albergue Paudimar.

Hostel Natura (☎ 9116-0979; hostelnatura@hotmail.com; Alameda Buri 333; camping/dm around US\$10/17; ☎ ☎) The newest hostel in Foz is on a gorgeous piece of land, amid two small lakes and lush scenery. The rooms themselves are pleasant and tidy, and there's ample outdoor lounge space and a pool. It's 13km from town on the way to the falls (same turnoff as Paudimar).

Hostel Bambu (☎ 3523-3646; www.hostelbambu.com; Rua Edmundo de Barros 621; dm/d/tr US\$11/27/32) This welcoming new hostel attracts a laid-back crowd. The rooms are small but cozy, and there's ample lounge space and an outdoor patio. Kitchen available. The owner offers a wide range of excursions.

Vila Canoas (☎ 3523-8797; www.hotelvillacanoas.com.br; Av República Argentina 926; s/d/q from US\$17/22/24; ☎ ☎) This friendly hotel has a range of rooms, from simple fan-cooled quads to more stylish and colorful doubles with air conditioning. The travel agency here is an excellent place to ar-

range excursions, including trips to Paraguay and inexpensive transport to the Argentine side of the falls.

Pousada Evelina (☎ 3574-3817; www.pousadaevelina.com.br; Rua Irlan Kalichewski 171; s/d/tr from US\$22/30/37; ☎ ☎ ☎) Nicely designed rooms are one of the big attractions at Pousada Evelina, and you'll also find a refreshing pool and cozy lounge areas.

Hotel Del Rey (☎ 3523-2027; www.hoteldelreyfoz.com.br; Rua Tarobá 1020; s/d/tr US\$25/40/45; ☎ ☎ ☎) Del Rey is a friendly place with spacious, comfortable rooms and a good buffet breakfast.

Eating & Drinking

There's lots of both going on in Foz, especially along Av Jorge Schimmelpfeng at night.

Oficina da Sorvete (Av Jorge Schimmelpfeng 244; mains from US\$4) In addition to refreshing ice cream, this pleasant café serves tasty baguette sandwiches, salads and lunch specials at excellent prices.

Corinthiano (Rua Xavier da Silva 392; lunch buffet US\$3) This local favorite spreads a lunch buffet of hearty home cooking at excellent prices.

Boi em na Brasa (Av Juscelino Kubitschek & Rua Bartolomeu de Gusmão; BBQ US\$7.50) This all-you-can-eat *churrascaria* serves good cuts of meat at very reasonable prices.

Tempero da Bahia (Rua Marechal Deodoro 1228; mains for 2 US\$20-27; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat) This handsome restaurant serves excellent *moqueca* and other Bahian fare, with live bossa nova from 8pm onward.

Búfalo Branco (Rua Rebouças 530; BBQ US\$15) For more upscale meat-eating.

Bar do KBÇ (Rua Pres Castelo Branco & Rua Jorge Sanways) Across from the university, the sidewalk tables at this simple bar get packed with a lively student crowd on weeknights.

Disco Club (www.discoclub.com.br; Rua Almirante Barroso 2006) One of Foz's best and longest-running dance clubs is located inside the Hotel Internacional Foz.

Getting There & Away

There are frequent flights from Foz to Asunción, Rio, São Paulo and Curitiba. Buses go to Asunción (US\$8, three daily), Curitiba (US\$30, 9½ hours, 14 daily), São Paulo (US\$40, 16 hours, six daily), Rio (US\$50, 22 hours, four daily) and Campo Grande (US\$32, 16 hours, two daily).

Getting Around

To get to the airport, 16km from the center, catch bus 120 'P Nacional' (US\$1, 30 minutes)

GETTING TO ARGENTINA & PARAGUAY

Americans and several other nationalities need a visa to enter Paraguay. Get this in advance. Most nationalities can enter Argentina without a visa, but double-check before you arrive.

To Ciudad del Este, Paraguay: it's inadvisable to walk across the bridge because of robberies. Take a bus or taxi. At the immigration posts, be sure to request your (Brazilian) exit and (Paraguayan) entry stamp. This may not happen automatically. From the border post, you can catch the next bus to Ciudad del Este (buses don't wait for travelers to complete their proceedings) or grab a taxi. For information on entering Brazil from Paraguay, see p810.

For crossing to Puerto Iguazú, Argentina: again, you'll have to request your exit and entry stamps, and local bus drivers won't stop at the Brazilian border unless you ask. They probably won't wait around either border while you finish formalities, but you can always grab the next bus. Many hotels and hostels have private vans that ferry passengers to and from the falls (for around US\$20) in Argentina to avoid hassle. This will definitely save you time (but again, tell your driver to stop at the Brazil border). Both borders are open 24 hours, but bus service ends around 7pm. For information on entering Brazil from Argentina, see p91.

from any stop on Av Juscelino Kubitschek after Rua Barbosa. A taxi is around US\$18.

Going from the bus station (6km out) into town, catch any 'TTU' bus (US\$1), which will drop you at the local terminal. A taxi costs US\$5.50.

The Parque Nacional bus 400 (US\$1) runs to the Brazilian side of the waterfalls from the urban bus terminal on Av Juscelino Kubitschek, every half hour until midnight, daily except Monday morning.

For the Argentine side of the falls, catch a Puerto Iguazú bus (US\$2) in front of the urban bus terminal or any stop along Av Juscelino Kubitschek. They pass about every 10 minutes (every 50 minutes on Sunday) until 7pm. At Puerto Iguazú bus station, transfer to a bus to the falls (p89).

Buses run every 10 minutes (30 minutes on Sunday) to Ciudad del Este from the army base opposite the urban bus terminal in Foz.

THE CENTRAL WEST

One of the most important wetland systems on the planet, the Pantanal is the star attraction of the Central West. Its meandering rivers, savannas and forests harbor one of the densest concentrations of plant and animal life in the New World. Wildlife-lovers simply shouldn't miss this place. Other attractions in the Central West include dramatic *chapadas* (tablelands), which rise like brilliant red giants from the dark green *cerrado*. Breathtaking panoramas, spectacular waterfalls and picturesque swimming holes are all part of the

equation, along with some unusual wildlife sharing the terrain.

In the southwest corner of the region, Bonito is another natural attraction inviting plenty of adventure. Here you can snorkel down crystal-clear rivers teeming with fish, rapel into the Abyss (one of Bonito's caverns) or raft along forest-lined rapids. Those with a taste for the surreal should consider visiting Brazil's master-planned capital Brasília; while tiny colonial Goiás Velho offers more old-world delights.

BRASÍLIA

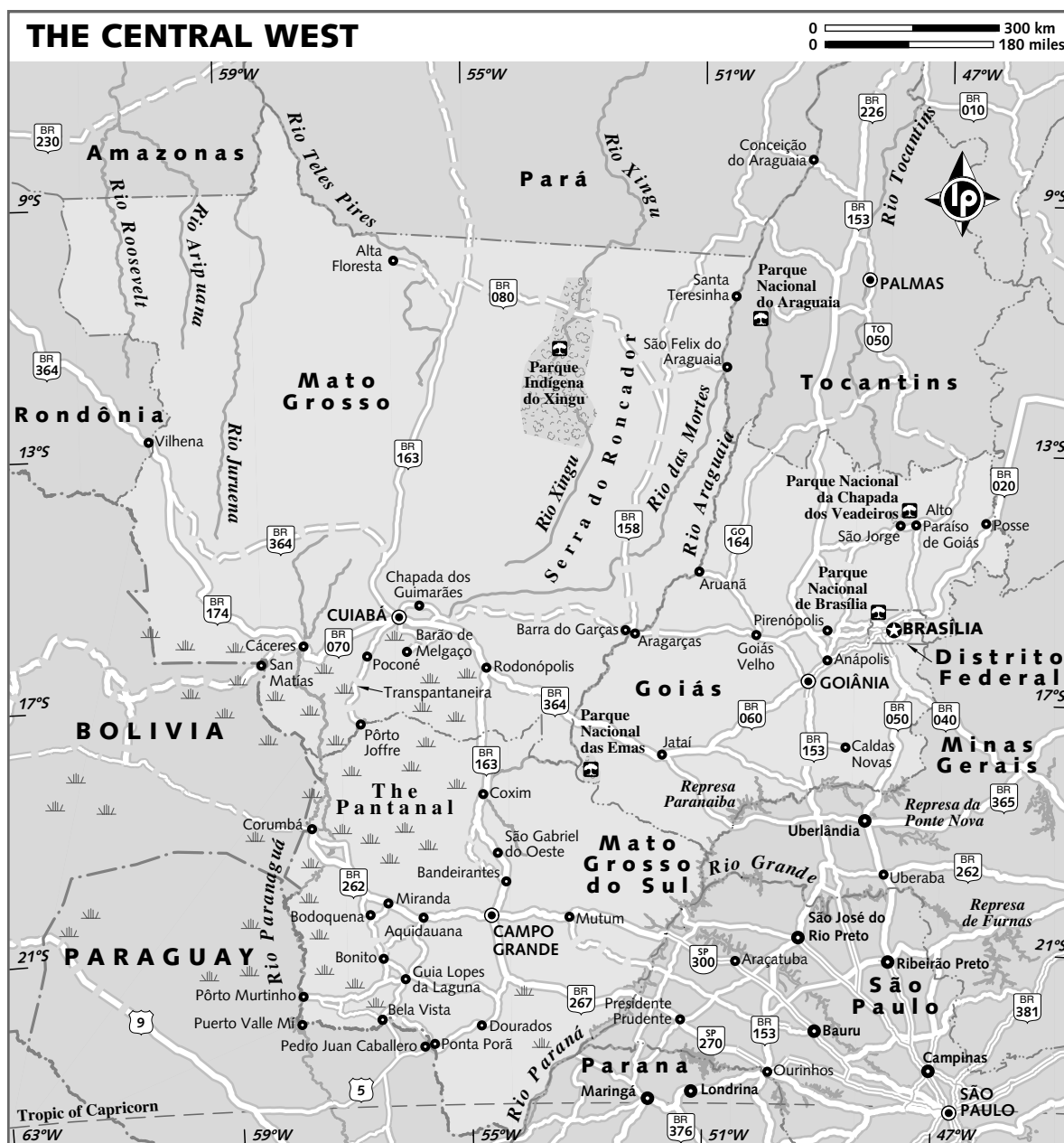
☎ 0xx61 / pop 2.3 million

A vision of the future, circa 1960, Brasília is a monument to architectural design and urban planning. Built from nothing in about three years, Brasília replaced Rio de Janeiro as Brazil's capital in 1960 and today it's one of Brazil's most rapidly growing cities. Its chief creators were President Juscelino Kubitschek, architect Oscar Niemeyer, urban planner Lucio Costa and landscape architect Burle Marx.

While Brasília has a fine assortment of bars and restaurants, with abundant nightlife and cultural attractions, much of the activity is in the *asas* (wings), far from the concrete jungle of the downtown; and you really need a car to make the most of this widely spread city.

Orientation

The central area is shaped like an airplane and it's divided into Asa Norte (North Wing) and Asa Sul (South Wing). The government buildings and monuments are located in the fuselage, along the Eixo Monumental.



BRAZIL

Information

Banks with exchange facilities are in the Setor Bancário Sul (SBS, Banking Sector South) and Setor Bancário Norte (SBN, Banking Sector North), both close to the local bus station.

Airport tourist office (☎ 364-9135; 🕒 7am-11pm)
The best place for information. Staff can organize hotel discounts. There is also an information booth at the TV Tower.

Sights & Activities

Brasília's major edifices are mostly spread along a 5km stretch of the Eixo Monumental and are listed in northwest-southeast order here. To visit them you can rent a car or combine buses from the local bus station (buses

104 and 108 are the most useful) with some long walks. You can also book guided tours of the city (US\$30) at any travel agency: several are inside the **Hotel Nacional** (SHS Quadra 1 Bloco A).

Start at the **Memorial JK** (admission US\$2; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), which houses the tomb of President Kubitschek and has exhibits on Brasília's construction. Then head to the observation deck of the **TV Tower** (🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, 2-6pm Mon). About 1km southwest along Via W3 Sul, off the Eixo Monumental, is the **Santuário Dom Bosco** (🕒 8am-6pm), a church with very beautiful blue stained-glass windows.

The **Catedral Metropolitana** (🕒 8am-5pm), with its curved columns, stained glass and haunting statues of the four evangelists, is worth

seeing too. The most interesting government buildings, the **Palácio do Itamaraty**, **Palácio da Justiça** and **Palácio do Congresso**, are in the 'cock-pit' of the airplane ground-plan.

Sleeping

Good budget accommodations are hard to find, though many midrange and high-end hotels slash their prices on weekends. The most inexpensive places to stay are on or near Via W3 Sul, 1km or 2km southwest of the Eixo Monumental, but these aren't the cleanest or safest places to stay.

Taxi drivers often tell tourists to stay in hotels outside the city center – usually the suburbs of Taguatinga or Núcleo Bandeirante. There are some decent options there, but be careful in Núcleo, which has a lot of *favelas*.

Cury's Solar (☎ 3244-1899; Quadra 707, Bloco I, Casa 15; s/d US\$15/30) If you don't mind a little crowding, this is a good option. It's clean, family-run, very safe, and guests are welcome to use the kitchen and washer-dryer.

Pensão da Zenilda (☎ 3224-7532; Quadra 704, Bloco Q, Casa 29; s/d US\$15/30) An apartment with rooms to let. It sleeps five and has kitchen and laundry facilities for guest use.

Casablanca (☎ 3228-8273; www.casablancabrasilia.com.br; SHN Quadra 3, Bloco A; s/d US\$60/75; 🚽) Close to the TV Tower, this friendly hotel has comfortable rooms with good weekend discounts.

Eating & Drinking

A good selection of restaurants is clustered in SCLS 405. Here you'll find Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Tex-Mex, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Thai and vegetarian eateries. It's packed on weekends.

Bar Beirute (SCLS Quadra 109, Bloco A, Lojas 2/4) An institution in Brasília with Middle East-themed dishes, and outdoor tables under trees. It's a lively bar later in the evening.

Gate's Pub (SCLS Quadra 403, Bloco B, Loja 34; cover US\$10; 🍷 9pm-3am Tue-Sun) One of the city's best music venues, with rock, reggae or funk bands most nights, followed by dance music.

Locals flock to these air-conditioned shopping malls to chow down. All have small cafés and food courts with a decent variety:

Conjunto Nacional (Asa Norte, SCN)

Pátio Brasil (Asa Sul, W3, SCS)

Pier 21 (Setor de Clubes Esportivos Sul) The pick of the bunch.

Shopping Brasília (Asa Norte, SCN QD 5, lote 2)

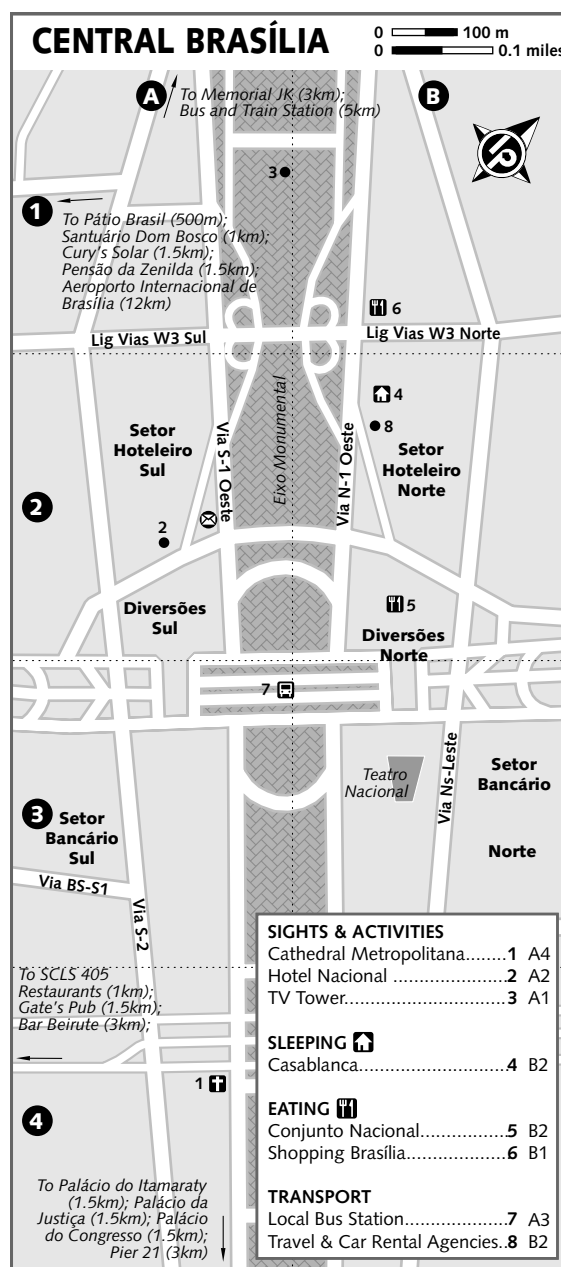
Getting There & Away

There are numerous flights to almost anywhere in Brazil.

From *Rodoferroviária* (the giant long-distance bus and train station), 5km northwest of the center along the Eixo Monumental, daily buses go almost everywhere, including Goiânia (US\$10, three hours), Rio (US\$78, 17 hours), Salvador (US\$85, 24 hours), Cuiabá (US\$40, 18 hours) and Belém (US\$113, 34 hours).

Getting Around

The airport is 12km south of the center. From the local bus station, take bus 102 (US\$2, 40 minutes) or minibus 30 (US\$2, 25 minutes). A taxi from the airport to the center costs US\$15 through the tourist office.



Take bus 131 from the local bus station to the long-distance bus and train station.

There are car-rental agencies at the airport, the Hotel Nacional Brasília and the Hotel Garvey Park.

PARQUE NACIONAL DA CHAPADA DOS VEADEIROS

Just over 220km north of Brasília, this spectacular park showcases the unique landscape and flora of high-altitude *cerrado*. Big skies, hills rising like waves from the plains, scenic waterfalls and natural swimming pools make for a sublime landscape. Wildlife you're likely to see includes maned wolves, giant anteaters and 7ft-tall rheas.

Information

Tourist office (☎ 0xx62-3446-1159; Ave Ari Valadão; ☏ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun) This excellent office is 200m from the bus station in Alto Paraíso de Goiás town, southeast of the park.

Sights & Activities

The lunar landscape and otherworldly atmosphere of the **Vale da Lua** (Moon Valley; admission US\$3) make it the most unusual sight in the area. It's around 5km east of São Jorge on a well-marked walking trail, and it's outside the national park, so you're not obliged to go with a guide.

Visitors to the national park itself must go with an accredited guide (from US\$15 to US\$30). You can organize this at the park entrance or at most hotels in São Jorge. Main attractions include the canyons (**Cânion I** and **Cânion II**) along the Rio Preto, the waterfalls (**Salto do Rio Preto I & II**; 80m and 120m, respectively), and **Morro da Baleia**, a humpback hill with a 2.5km trail to the top.

Sleeping & Eating

The former crystal mining hamlet of São Jorge, 40km west, and 2km from the national park entrance, is the best place to stay. There are plenty of campgrounds (camp-sites US\$5 per person), mostly backyards, in São Jorge.

Pousada Trilha Violeta (☎ 0xx61-9985-6544; s/d US\$35/45) This friendly place has large rooms set around a garden.

Pousada Água de Esperança (☎ 0xx61-9971-6314; s/d US\$35/45) This place has comfortable rooms in a wood building and a balcony strung with hammocks.

Villa São Jorge (pizzas US\$9-14) A laid-back, outdoor restaurant and bar with tasty pizzas.

Getting There & Away

There are daily buses connecting Alto Paraíso de Goiás with Brasília (US\$15, 3½ hours), Goiânia (US\$24, six hours), and for Palmas (Tocantins, US\$26, seven hours). The Palmas bus goes via Natividade. One daily bus goes from Alto Paraíso de Goiás to São Jorge (US\$3, one hour).

GOIÂNIA

☎ 0xx62 / pop 1.2 million

The capital of the state of Goiás, 205km southwest of Brasília, Goiânia is of little interest except as a staging post for the state's historic towns or national parks.

Ask for discounts at all hotels on weekends. Centrally located **Goiânia Palace** (☎ 3224-4874; Av Anhanguera 5195; s/d from US\$20/30) is among the best budget options in town. The homey **Príncipe Hotel** (☎ 3224-0085; Av Anhanguera 2936; s/d US\$22/44) is another good deal.

A good per-kilo lunch spot is the central **Argu's** (Rua 4 No 811; per kg US\$7).

Varig, TAM and Gol all fly to Goiânia. Buses leave regularly for Brasília (US\$12, three hours), Cuiabá (US\$40, 13 hours) and Goiás Velho (US\$12, three hours).

GOIÁS VELHO

☎ 0xx62 / pop 27,000

As dusk falls in this little town 145km northwest of Goiânia and the churches light their bell towers, a palpable quiet settles over the village and – except for the black jungle mountains silhouetted against the darkening sky – one might almost be in 18th-century Portugal. Goiás Velho is among the most picturesque of the Central West's colonial towns.

Book ahead if you're arriving on a weekend or during Holy Week.

In a good central location, colonial guest-house **Pousada do Sol** (☎ 3371-1717; Rua Dr Americano do Brasil 17; s/d US\$15/28) has simple rooms with good top-floor views.

Pousada Casa do Ponte (☎ 3371-4467; Rua Moretti Foggia s/n; s/d US\$25/45) is a '50s-style hotel with clean rooms, close to the town center.

THE PANTANAL

This vast natural paradise is Brazil's major ecological attraction and offers a density of exotic wildlife found nowhere else in South

America. During the rainy season (October to March), the Rio Paraguai and lesser rivers of the Pantanal inundate much of this low-lying region, creating *cordilheiras* (patches of dry land where animals cluster). The waters rise as much as 3m above low-water levels around March in the northern Pantanal and in June in the south. This seasonal flooding has severely limited human occupation of the area but it provides an enormously rich feeding ground for wildlife. The waters teem with fish; birds fly in flocks of thousands and gather in enormous rookeries.

Altogether the Pantanal supports 650 bird species and 80 mammal species, including jaguars, ocelots, pumas, maned wolf, deer, anteaters, armadillos, howler and capuchin monkeys and tapirs. The most visible mammal is the capybara, the world's largest rodent, often seen in family groups or even large herds. And you can't miss the alligators, which, despite poaching, still number somewhere between 10 and 35 million.

Orientation & Information

The Pantanal covers some 230,000 sq km (89,000 sq miles) and stretches into Paraguay and Bolivia, although the lion's share is Brazil's. Much of this territory is only accessible by boat or on foot. It's muggy at the best of times, and in the summer the heat and mosquitoes are truly awesome. Stock up on sunscreen and bug repellent, because you won't find any here.

Bringing tourists into the Pantanal is now a big business, and seemingly overnight the three cities that serve as jumping-off points to the region have been flooded with tour operators – some of dubious repute. Whether you arrive in Cuiabá, Corumbá, or Campo Grande you can expect to be approached by a guide fairly rapidly. Some of these individuals are simply opportunists looking to make a buck out of Brazil's ecotourism, but there are still a few old-timers working to protect the environment while sharing its tremendous diversity with visitors. It can be hard to tell the good from the bad, but here are some suggestions to ensure you have a safe and enjoyable trip:

- Resist making a snap decision, especially if you've just come off an overnight bus.
- Go to the local tourism office. Most can't give independent advice because they're government funded, but they do keep

complaints books that you're free to peruse. There's a lot to be gleaned from other travelers' experiences.'

- Remember that the owner or salesperson is not always your guide, and it's the guide you're going to be with in the wilderness for three to five days. Ask to meet your guide if possible.
- Try to get things in writing and don't hand over your cash to any go-betweens.
- Compare your options. Most operators work out of the local bus station or airport, so it's easy to shop around.

There's no obligation to go with a tour operator. You can drive or hitchhike across the Transpantaneira road that starts in the northwest (Mato Grosso state), or the Estrada Parque that loops around the south (Mato Grosso do Sul).

The Transpantaneira is generally considered the best road for hitching or driving. It heads 145km south from Poconé, south of Cuiabá. You'll see wildlife even without a guide.

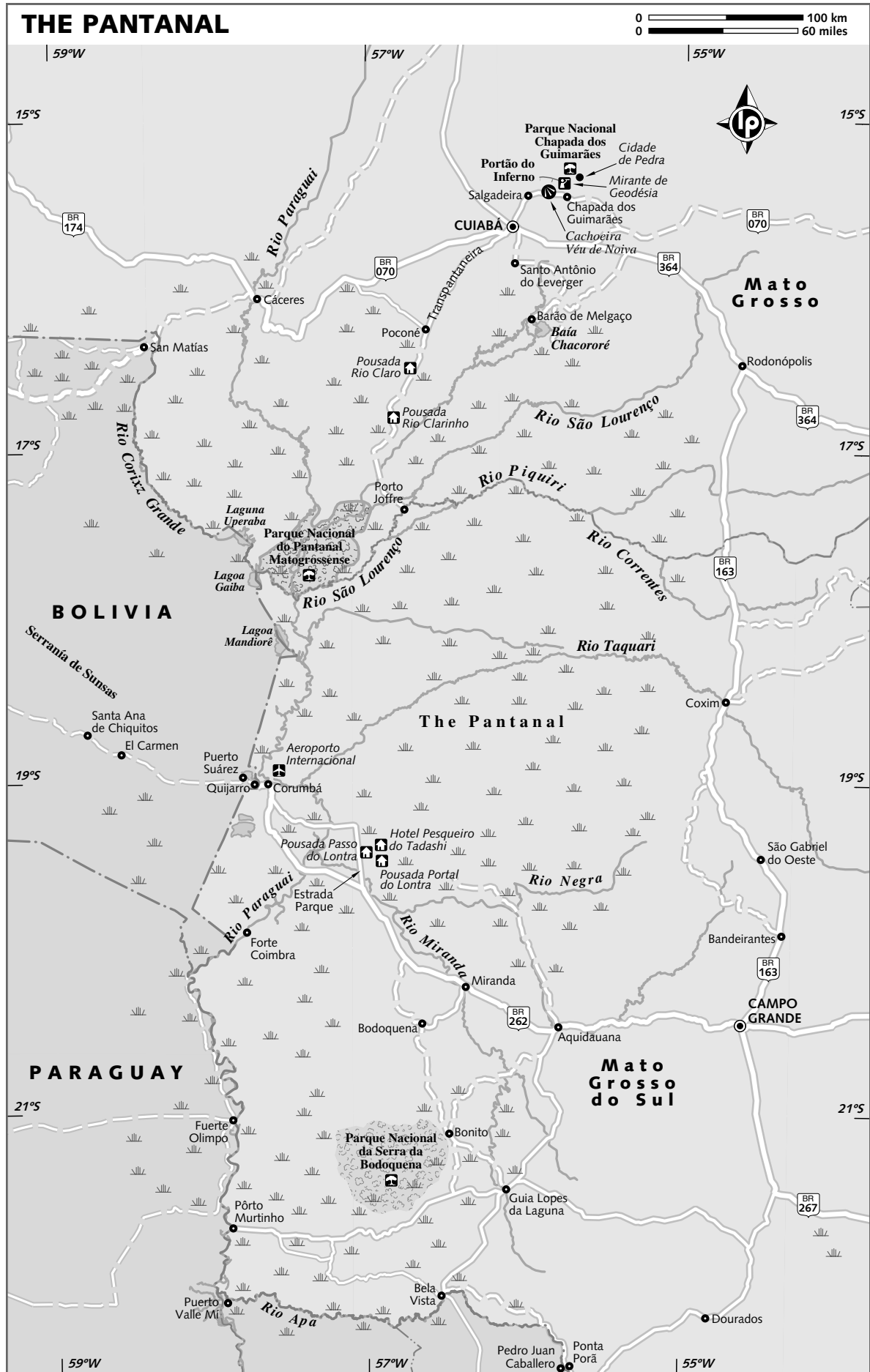
Tours

Ecological Expeditions (☎ 0xx67-3782-3504; pantanaltrekking.com; Rua Joaquim Nabuco 185; per 3 days US\$160) In Campo Grande, this well-organized operation has an office just opposite the bus station. Its three-night/four-day packages attract heaps of budget travelers who are looking for wildlife, but don't mind the big group-party atmosphere. Free nights in the Campo Grande hostel help sweeten the deal.

Joel Souza Ecoverde Wildlife Safari Tours (Map p335; ☎ 0xx65-3624-1386; Pousada Ecoverde, Cuiabá; per day US\$60) Operating from Cuiabá, this outfit offers bird-watching and nature tours, including accommodations on farms, meals, hikes and boat rides. Contact Joel at Pousada Ecoverde (p335). He speaks English, German and Spanish, and the tours are excellent.

Munir Nasr's Natureco (Map p335; ☎ 0xx65-3321-1001; www.natureco.com.br; Rua Benedito Leite 570, Cuiabá; from US\$120 a day) Another highly recommended Cuiabá guide who organizes all-inclusive tours into the Pantanal.

Pantanal Discovery (☎ 0xx67-3383-9791; www.gilspantanaldiscovery.com.br; Campo Grande; per 3 days US\$175) On the ground floor of the Campo Grande bus station, Pantanal Discovery offers three-night/four-day packages, and it generally receives favorable reviews. Package includes bus fare to the pickup point (Buraco da Piranha) at the entrance to Estrada Parque, meals and accommodations at the rustic Portal do Lontra lodge.



BRAZIL

Sleeping & Eating

TRANSPANTANEIRA

There are quite a lot of accommodations on and off the road.

Pousada Rio Clarinho (☎ 0xx65-9977-8966; Transpantaneira Km 42; per person incl full board US\$45) This charmingly rustic *fazenda* (large farm) offers boat and horse rides. The food is authentic Pantanal; check out the old-time kitchen and the wood-fired stove. Cheerful and friendly.

Pousada Rio Claro (☎ 0xx65-3345-2249; Transpantaneira Km 45; per person incl full board US\$75) Another good-value *pousada* offering all-inclusive stays (meals, excursions, lodging).

SOUTHERN PANTANAL

Pousada Portal do Lontra (☎ 0xx67-3231-6136; per person incl meals US\$25) Another classic Pantanal wood-on-stilt structure, with lots of wildlife around. It's well worn but highly recommended. Activities cost extra.

Hotel Pesqueiro do Tadashi (☎ 0xx67-3231-9400; per person incl meals US\$50; ☎ Feb-Oct) Friendly, clean and very comfortable *pesqueiro* (fishing lodge) on the riverbank close to the bridge. Highly recommended and good value.

Pousada Passo do Lontra (☎ 0xx67-231-6569; www.passodolontra.com.br; campsites per person US\$4, r per person incl meals US\$75, chalets US\$120; ☎) A comfortable place that offers horseback rides and walking, but the main focus is the river safaris.

CUIABÁ

☎ 0xx61 / pop 525,000

The capital of Mato Grosso state, Cuiabá is a lively frontier boomtown and a good starting point for visiting the Pantanal or the Chapada dos Guimarães, the geological center of South America.

Banco do Brasil (Rua Getúlio Vargas 915) has ATMs. Internet access is at **Point One** (Av Mato Grosso 96A; per hr US\$2; ☎ 8:30am-midnight Mon-Sat, 1pm-1am Sun).

The **Museu do Índio** (☎ 3615-8489; Av Fernando Correia da Costa; ☎ 8-11am & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 8-11am Sat) is worth a visit for its exhibits on Xavante, Bororo and Karajá tribes. Catch bus 406 on Av Tenente Coronel Duarte heading for the university.

Sleeping

Pousada Ecoverde (☎ 0xx65-3624-1386; Rua Pedro Celestino 391; s/d/tr US\$8/11/15) Very good value, if a little rustic. There's a delightful courtyard and garden, and laundry facilities are available. Free transport from bus station or airport if you call in advance.

Portal do Pantanal Youth Hostel (☎ 0xx65-624-8999; www.portaldopantanal.com.br; Av Isaac Póvoas 655; dm US\$10) Offers basic accommodations. Laundry and kitchen facilities are available to guests for a small fee.

Hotel Samara (☎ 0xx65-3322-6001; Rua Joaquim Murtinho 270; s/d US\$12/24) Offers basic, boxy rooms at low prices.

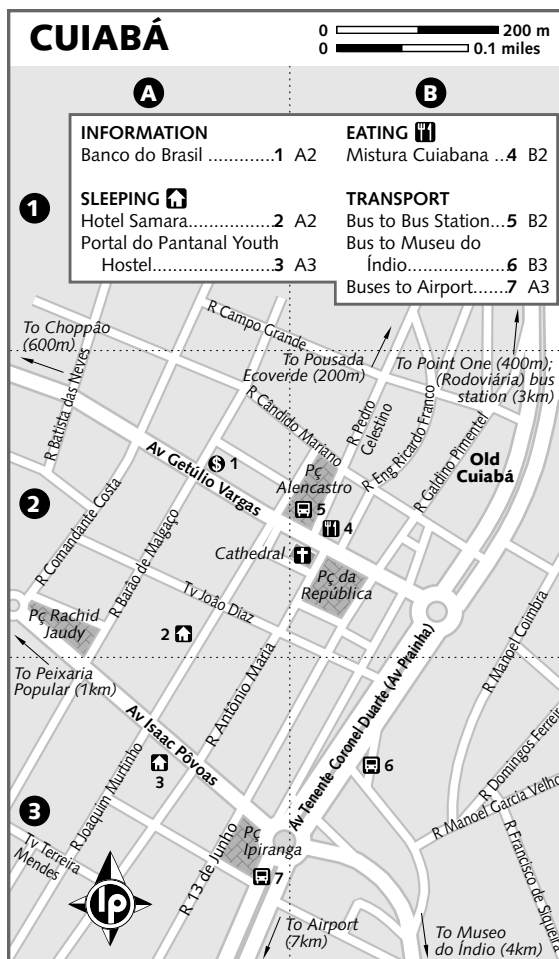
Eating & Drinking

The center is almost deserted (and not safe) at night, but there are good restaurants nearby on Av Getúlio Vargas.

Mistura Cuiabana (☎ 624-1127; cnr Rua Padre Celestino & Rua Candido Mariano; meals per kg US\$4; ☎ 11am-2pm Mon-Fri) A good cheap lunch spot right in the center.

Choppão (Av Getulio Vargas s/n; meals for 2 US\$15) This is a classic Cuiabá eatery serving obscenely large meals of meat or fish; and you can drink the coldest *chope* (draft beer) in town.

Peixaria Popular (Av São Sebastião 2324; dishes US\$8-18; ☎ 11am-midnight Mon-Sat) Outside of the center, this award-winning restaurant serves delectable plates of fish.



Getting There & Away

Varig, TAM and Gol connect Cuiabá with many Brazilian cities, with the notable omission of Corumbá.

The bus station is 3km north of the center on the Chapada dos Guimarães highway. Destinations include Cáceres (US\$13, 3½ hours, six buses daily), Porto Velho (US\$66, 24 hours, several daily), Goiânia (US\$40, 13 hours, frequently), Brasília (US\$52, 20 hours, one bus in the morning and one at night) and Campo Grande (US\$36, 10 hours, eight daily).

Car-rental agencies just outside the airport grounds tend to be cheaper than those inside. The best vehicles for the Transpantaneira are a VW Golf or Fiat Uno.

Getting Around

The airport is in Varzea Grande, 7km south of the center. The 'Rodoviaria/Marajoara,' '24 de Dezembro' and 'Pireneus' buses, from opposite the Las Velas Hotel near the airport, go to the center. Buses from the center to the airport depart from the east side of Praça Ipiranga.

'Centro' buses from inside the bus station go to Praça Alencastro. More frequent 'Centro' buses from outside the bus station will drop you along Av Isaac Póvoas.

AROUND CUIABÁ

Parque Nacional da Chapada dos Guimarães

This rocky plateau beginning approximately 60km northeast of Cuiabá is a beautiful region reminiscent of the American Southwest. Its three exceptional sights are the 60m falls **Cachoeira Vêu de Noiva**, the **Mirante de Geodésia** lookout (South America's geographical center), and the **Cidade de Pedra** (Stone City). You can reach all three by car, or the first two by a combination of bus and walking. If you come for just one day, go to **Vêu de Noiva**, where you can do a day hike following a well-signed path to six other waterfalls. There's also a restaurant serving excellent *pintado* (catfish).

The small, charming town of Chapada dos Guimarães has a **Secretaria de Turismo** (☎ 0xx65-3301-2045; Av Perimental s/n), where you can pick up a map.

Buses leave Cuiabá for Chapada dos Guimarães town hourly (US\$3.50, one hour). The bus station is two blocks from the main plaza (Praça Dom Wunibaldo).

A few blocks from the plaza, **Hotel São José** (☎ 0xx65-3301-2479; Rua Vereador José de Souza 50; s/d US\$7.50/15) has basic rooms at low prices. Facing Chapada town's main plaza, the **Pousada Bom Jardim** (☎ 0xx65-3301-1244; Praça Dom Wunibaldo; s/d from US\$12/25) has decent rooms; the best are cheery and bright. Restaurants cluster around Praça Dom Wunibaldo.

Cáceres

☎ 0xx65 / pop 67,000

This relaxed town on the Rio Paraguai 215km west of Cuiabá is 115km from the Bolivian border town of San Matías.

Capri Hotel (☎ 3223-1711; Rua Getúlio Vargas 99; s/d US\$9/18), near the bus station, has basic but clean rooms and a few spacious *apartamentos*. Closer to the river and center, **Rio Hotel** (☎ 3223-3084; Praça Major João Carlos; s/d US\$18/30) is a good option.

A bus leaves Cáceres daily for San Matías and Santa Cruz, Bolivia (US\$36, 24 hours). You can get a Brazilian exit stamp from Cáceres' Polícia Federal, 4km from the center on Av Getúlio Vargas (US\$12 round trip by taxi).

Poconé

☎ 0xx65 / pop 23,000

Poconé, lying 100km southwest of Cuiabá, is the gateway to the most rugged part of the Transpantaneira. From here, the 'highway' becomes little more than a pockmarked dirt track as it heads south into the Pantanal, terminating at Porto Jofre.

The best places to stay, especially if you're trying to organize a lift down the Transpantaneira, are a couple of kilometers out of town near the beginning of the road. **Pousada Pantaneira** (☎ 3345-1630; s/d US\$13/26) has grim rooms, but its restaurant's *rodízio* (all-you-can-eat) is pretty good.

Six daily buses run from Cuiabá to Poconé (US\$8, 2½ hours).

CAMPO GRANDE

☎ 0xx67 / pop 735,000

The lively capital of Mato Grosso do Sul state is a major gateway to the Pantanal.

The **tourist office** (☎ 3324-5830; Av Afonso Pena & Av Nordeste; ☎ 8am-7pm Tue-Sat, 9am-noon Sun), three blocks from the bus station, has friendly staff and an extensive database on Mato Grosso do Sul. It does its best to give independent advice.

Sleeping & Eating

The following inexpensive hotels are clustered around the bus station, which is safe during the day, and less so at night.

Campo Grande Youth Hostel (☎ 3382-3504; www.pantanal trekking.com; Rua Joaquim Nabuco 185; s/d/tr/q US\$12/17/22/25; 📶 🚰) Opposite the bus station, the youth hostel has small rooms and a refreshing pool. Pantanal excursions available.

Hotel Cash (☎ 3382-0217; Rua Barão do Rio Branco 342; s/d/tr/q with fan US\$12/17/22/30; d with air-con US\$22; 🚰) Offers tidy but basic rooms at good prices.

Turis Hotel (☎ 3382-7688; Rua Alan Kardec 200; s/d with fan US\$12/22, with air-con US\$16/25; 🚰) This place has small, fairly new rooms with tile floors and decent natural light.

Hotel Iguaçu (☎ 3322-4621; www.hoteliguacu.com.br; Rua Dom Aquino 761; s/d US\$30/35; 🚰) Opposite the bus station, this popular and friendly place has pleasant rooms with wood floors (some have balconies).

Galpão Gaúcho (Av Alan Kardec 209; meals US\$7; 🍽️ lunch) One block west of the bus station, this inexpensive *churrascaria* has decent roasted meats and a small buffet.

Fontebella (Av Afonso Pena 2535; pizzas US\$5-10) One kilometer east of the bus station, this charming place serves ice cream by day and pizzas by night.

Casa do Peixe (Rua Dr João Rosa Pires 1030; buffet US\$15) Serves a decadent all-you-can-eat seafood buffet in a casual, air-conditioned environment. It's one block south and four blocks west of the bus station.

Getting There & Away

Varig, TAM and Gol provide daily flights to/from São Paulo, Cuiabá, Rio and Brasília.

Eight daily buses run to Corumbá (US\$32, six daily): the four direct services take around six hours, but if you want to get off at Estrada Parque take a nondirect one. Other daily serv-

ices include Cuiabá (US\$32, 10 hours), Bonito (US\$21, five hours), Ponta Porã (US\$23, five hours), São Paulo (US\$60, 12 hours) and Foz do Iguaçu (US\$36, 16 hours).

Getting Around

Buses to the center (7km) go from the stop on the main road outside the airport. To get from the center to the airport, take the Indubrasil bus.

CORUMBÁ

☎ 0xx67 / pop 88,000

On the Rio Paraguai, this port is a gateway to both the Pantanal and to Bolivia, which is only 15 minutes away. At night the river sunsets are beautiful, and although the city has a reputation for poaching and drug trafficking, travelers are generally left alone.

ATMs are at **HSBC** (Rua Delamare 1067). Many shopkeepers on Rua 13 de Junho exchange Bolivian, Brazilian and US money.

Sematur (☎ 3231-7336; Rua Manoel Cavassa 275) can provide a list of Pantanal guides, tour companies, hotels and boat trips.

Among the cheapies, **Hotel Nelly** (☎ 3231-6001; Rua Delamare 902; s/d US\$6/10) is a good choice with simple rooms with shared bathrooms.

Hotel Laura Vicuña (☎ 3231-5874; Rua Cuiabá 775; s/d US\$15/30, s/d with bathroom US\$18/28) is a clean, comfortable hotel in a quiet spot near the center.

Churrascaria e Restaurante Rodeio (Rua 13 de Junho 760; per kg US\$8), the snazziest per-kilo lunch spot, has dozens of salad dishes and plenty of tasty meat as well.

Nine daily buses go to Campo Grande (US\$24, six hours if direct). A bus to Bonito (US\$22, seven hours) leaves at 2pm.

From the bus stop outside Corumbá bus station, the Cristo Redentur bus (US\$1) runs to the local bus terminal on Rua 13 de Junho.

GETTING TO BOLIVIA

The Fronteira–Corumbá bus (US\$1, every 30 minutes) from Praça Independência on Rua Dom Aquino goes to the Bolivian border. A motorcycle taxi is US\$2, and a taxi costs US\$6.

All Brazilian border formalities must be completed in Corumbá with the Poláia Federal (Praça República 51). If you're just crossing into Bolivia for a few hours to buy train tickets, you don't need a Brazilian exit stamp.

Money changers at the frontier accept US, Brazilian and Bolivian cash.

The Bolivian border town of Quijarro is little more than a collection of shacks. Taxis run the 4km between the border and Quijarro train station for around US\$8 (*mototaxis* cost US\$4). See the Bolivia chapter (p246) for details of the train trip between Quijarro and Santa Cruz.

You can take a motorcycle taxi (US\$2) from the local bus station if your luggage is light. A taxi costs around US\$7.

BONITO

☎ 0xx67 / pop 18,000

Amid spectacular natural wonders, Bonito is a small, charming town in southwest Mato Grosso do Sul that is enjoying the ecotourism boom. Most travelers come here to snorkel down crystal-clear rivers, but there are dozens of other ways to enjoy the scenery, from rappelling and rafting to horseback riding and bird-watching. Despite its popularity, the town is still a great place to kick back outside peak holiday periods (December to February).

Only local travel agencies are authorized to hire guides to the area's attractions, so you're obliged to book tours through them. The main street is lined with agencies, all charging the same. The better ones include **Muito Bonito Turismo** (☎ 255-1645; Rua Coronel Pilad Rebua 1448) and **Ygarapé Tour** (☎ 255-1733; Rua Coronel Pilad Rebua 1853). River-trip prices include snorkel gear but don't include transportation, so try tacking onto a group that has already organized transport.

One of the best rivers for snorkeling is the **Rio da Prata** (5hr trip incl lunch US\$46), some 50km from Bonito; the trip includes a short hike through rainforest, followed by a 3km swim among 30 varieties of fish while floating gently downstream. There's also the crystal-clear **Rio Sucuri** (3hr trip US\$37) 20km from Bonito and the **Aquário Natural Baía Bonita** (3hr trip US\$37), 7km from Bonito.

The **Gruta do Lago Azul** (half-day excursion US\$12), 20km from Bonito, is a large cave, with a luminous underground lake and stalactites. The **Balneário Municipal** (admission US\$5), 7km from Bonito, is a natural swimming pool with lots of fish (and no guide needed, easily reached by mototaxi or by bicycle). The **Abismo de Anhumas** (full-day excursion including rappelling and snorkeling US\$120), 22km from Bonito, is a 72m abyss with an underground lake and incredible stalactites.

Sleeping

It's sensible to book in advance, particularly on weekends.

HI hostel Albergue da Juventude do Ecoturismo (☎ 3255-1462; www.ajbonito.com.br; Rua Lúcio Borralho 716; dm with/without YHI card US\$12/15; 📺 📶) The lively hostel has tidy rooms set around a swimming pool. The large covered patio is a good place to

meet other travelers over the nightly BBQs. It's 1.5km from the center. Excursions available.

Pousada Sucuri (☎ 3255-1420; Rua 2 de Outubro 840; s/d US\$15/20; 📺 📶) Just off the main street, this laid-back *pousada* has pleasant en suite rooms, friendly staff and free internet.

Pousada Muito Bonito (☎ 3255-1645; contato@muito bonito.com.br; Rua Coronel Pilad Rebua 1448; s/d US\$15/30; 📺) In town, this well-located *pousada* has lovely en suite rooms and an inviting courtyard. Excursions available.

Eating

O Casarão (Rua Coronel Pilad Rebua 1843; per kg US\$6) A popular per-kilo seafood restaurant.

Restaurante da Vovó (Rua Felinto Muller; per kg US\$8) Serves excellent per-kilo regional food.

Cantinho do Peixe (Rua 31 de Março 1918; mains from US\$10) One of the best places in town to try fresh *pintado* and other Bonito specialties.

Taboa Bar (Rua Coronel Pilad Rebua 1841) In the heart of the main street, this lively indoor-outdoor bar is an excellent spot for a drink. Live music on weekends.

Getting There & Away

Three daily buses connect Campo Grande and Bonito (US\$21, five hours). Buses leave for Ponta Porã (US\$16, six hours) at 12:10pm (except Sunday) and for Corumbá (US\$21, seven hours) at 6am (except Sunday).

PONTA PORÃ

☎ 0xx67 / pop 66,000

Ponta Porã is a border town divided from the Paraguayan town of Pedro Juan Caballero by Av Internacional. For information on Pedro Juan Caballero, see the Paraguay chapter.

For Brazilian entry/exit stamps, go to the **Polícia Federal** (☎ 3431-1428; Av Presidente Vargas; 🕒 8am-5pm), near the Paraguayan consulate. Paraguay now requires entry visas from US citizens, which can be obtained at the same consulate.

Sleeping & Eating

This area is heavily patrolled by Brazilian and Paraguayan authorities. Drug trafficking is on the rise and it's a good idea to limit your nighttime activities.

Hotel Internacional (☎ 3431-1243; Av Internacional 2604; s/d US\$13/25) A safe, inexpensive option.

Choppão (Rua Marechal Floriano 1877; mains US\$8) A popular spot with an extensive menu of meat, fish and pasta.

Getting There & Around

From the bus station in Ponta Porã (about 4km from the center), frequent buses go to Campo Grande (US\$16, 5½ hours). There's one bus to Corumba via Bonito. If you're coming into town from the Brazilian side, the bus can drop you at the local bus terminal on Av Internacional, near the hotels.

THE NORTHEAST

Year-round warmth, physical beauty and sensual culture rich in folkloric traditions make Brazil's Northeast a true tropical paradise.

More than 2000km of fertile coastline is studded with idyllic white-sand beaches, pockets of lush rainforest, sand dunes and coral reefs. A spectrum of natural environments creates the perfect backdrop for a wide variety of outdoor activities.

The Portuguese settled these lands first, so they breathe history. The colonial centers of Salvador, Olinda and São Luís are packed with beautifully restored and satisfyingly decaying architecture.

This is arguably Brazil's most fascinating and culturally rich region. Lively festivals, myriad music and dance styles and exotic cuisine loaded with seafood draw crowds. Magical beach villages with beautiful scenery and hip party scenes also delight.

Life is simple and slow-paced in the Northeast's agricultural interior and coastal fishing villages. People here face massive social problems, including poverty caused by underemployment and a decaying education system, housing shortages and an absence of basic services such as sanitation, which causes high infant mortality rates. Inland people often live in extreme poverty, especially in the more northerly states. Though many leave the region seeking better opportunities, Northeasterners are extremely proud of their land's beautiful human and physical geography.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

The Northeast's major airports – Salvador, Recife and Fortaleza – usually have the lowest fares. Flying into/out of Porto Seguro is a good option if looking to skip Espírito Santo. In the Northeast there is always transport from where you are to where you're going whether a bus, taxi, collective taxi, van (called *van*, *kombi* or *besta*) or moto-taxi.

SALVADOR

☎ 0xx71 / pop 2.4 million

Salvador da Bahia is one of Brazil's brightest gems. Known as the African soul of Brazil, it is its darkest city in terms of skin color and the hottest in terms of culture. Here African slave descendants preserved their culture more than anywhere else in the New World, successfully transforming them into thriving culinary, religious, musical, dance and martial-arts traditions. Salvador is famous for combining all of these sacred and secular elements in wild popular festivals. Its vibrant historic center, packed with renovated colonial architecture, has become somewhat of a tourist mecca.

Orientation

For Barra and Cidade Alta, cross the footbridge from the bus station (8km from the center) to Shopping Iguatemi and catch the air-con Praça da Sé minibus (US\$2.25). Catch the same bus from the airport (over 30km from the center). For a cheaper ride, there are city bus terminals in front of both the bus station and the airport. For Barra catch a Barra 1, Vale dos Rios or STIEP R3 bus, for Cidade Alta, catch a Praça da Sé bus.

Salvador sits on a peninsula at the mouth of the Baía de Todos os Santos. The city center is on the bay side and is divided by a steep bluff into two parts: the Cidade Baixa (Lower City), containing the commercial center and port, and Cidade Alta (Upper City), containing the Pelourinho. The Pelô is the center of Salvador's history, tourism and nightlife. Gritty commercial areas (Cidade Baixa and the stretch between Praça da Sé and Praça Campo Grande) are noisy by day and deserted by night and on Sundays. South, at the tip of the peninsula, is the affluent Barra district (the Porto da Barra waterfront is a little seedy). Beachside residential neighborhoods stretch northeast along the coast, with Rio Vermelho and Itapuã being the most interesting for visitors.

Information

EMERGENCY

Deltur (☎ 3322-1168; Cruzeiro de São Francisco 14, Pelourinho)

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés cluster in the Pelô and around Porto da Barra.

Sé internet (Praça da Sé 3, Pelourinho; per hr US\$1) One-hour intervals only.

MONEY

Money changers along Cruzeiro de São Francisco change traveler's checks and cash. There are major bank ATMs at the bus station, airport, Shopping Barra and Shopping Iguatemi, or at the following:

Banco do Brasil (Cruzeiro de São Francisco 11, Pelourinho)
Bradesco (Praça Municipal)

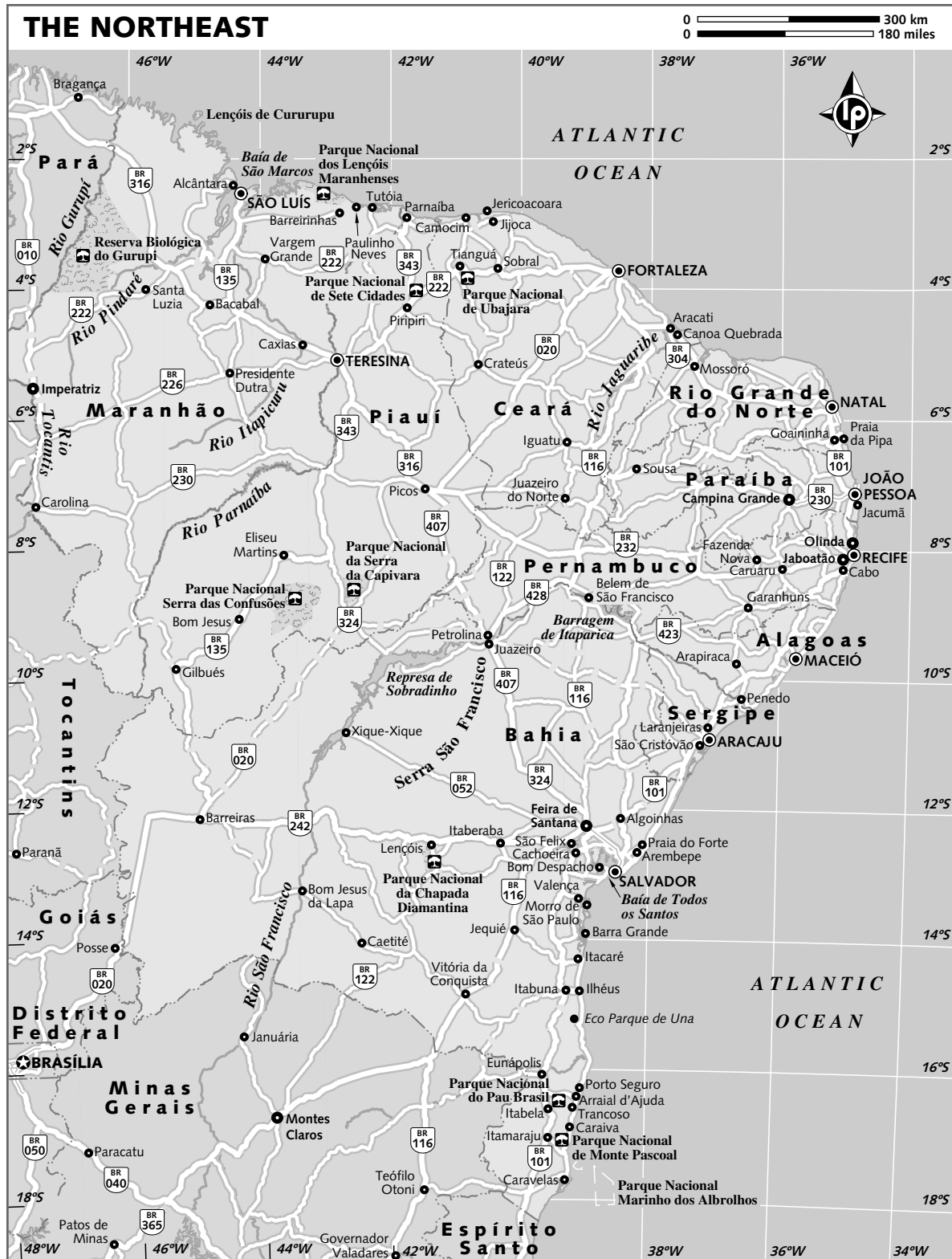
POST

Central post office (Praça da Inglaterra, Cidade Baixa)
Post office (Cruzeiro de São Francisco, Pelourinho)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Bahiatursa Airport (☎ 3204-1244/1444); bus station (☎ 3450-3871); Mercado Modelo (☎ 3241-0242);

BRAZIL



Pelourinho (☎ 3321-2463/2133; Rua Francisco Muniz Barreto 12) Multilingual.

Emtursa (☎ 3321-3127/2697; Praça Municipal) Multilingual.

Dangers & Annoyances

If you're going to be pickpocketed or mugged in Brazil, Salvador is likely to be the place. This shouldn't prevent you from visiting, but this is a good city in which to play it safe, especially at night. Avoid empty areas. Travelers report 'feeling like a protected species' in the Pelô, but wandering off the beaten path there has proven to be unsafe. The stretch from the Largo do Pelourinho north to Santo Antônio has a reputation for nighttime muggings – take a taxi.

Women will attract annoying attention from men, especially in the Pelourinho. The best tactic is to simply ignore them. Throwing out the word *respeito* (respect) usually does wonders.

Sights

PELOURINHO

The *many* churches in the historical center and the Forte de Santo Antônio are connected by a network of underground tunnels that feeds to the port. Supposedly the tunnels were constructed for defensive purposes. While wandering around notice the schools, galleries and cultural centers that pack the historical center – the Pelô is not just for tourists.

Museu Afro-Brasileiro (Terreiro de Jesus; admission US\$2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) has exhibits demonstrating the African roots of Brazilian Candomblé, and a room devoted to gorgeous carved wood panels of the *orixás* (Afro-Brazilian gods). Well-done, thematic displays of old postcards portray, among other things, a visual history of Salvador at the **Museu Tempostal** (Rua Gregório de Mattos 33; admission free; ☎ 1-6pm Tue-Sat).

The church most deserving of your attention is the baroque **Igreja São Francisco** (Cruzeiro de São Francisco; admission US\$1.50, music & light tour US\$2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun), crammed with displays of wealth and splendor. Look for pregnant angels.

An oasis of beauty and tranquility, the **Museu de Arte Sacra da Bahia** (Rua do Sodré 276; admission US\$2; ☎ 11:30am-5:30pm Mon-Fri) has a huge sacred-art collection in a 17th-century convent.

The steep **Largo do Pelourinho** is where slaves were auctioned and publicly beaten on a *pelourinho* (whipping post).

CIDADE BAIXA & BARRA

Solar do Unhão, an 18th-century sugar estate mansion and shipping area on the bay, houses the **Museu de Arte Moderna** (Av Contorno; admission free; ☎ 1-6pm Tue-Sun), and is a cool spot. Take a taxi there from the Mercado Modelo, as it is off bus routes and the walk is desolate and known for muggings.

The waterfront is great for people-watching and walking. View the sunset at Bahia's oldest fort, **Forte de Santo Antônio da Barra** (1598).

ITAPAGIPE PENINSULA

Built in 1745, **Igreja NS do Bonfim** (☎ 7-11am & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) is famous for its power to effect miraculous cures and is *candomblista's* most important Catholic church. Replicas of body parts devotees claim were cured are displayed. To get there, take the 'Bonfim' or 'Ribeira' bus from the base of the Elevador Lacerda.

Activities

Much of Bahian life revolves around the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé. A visit to a *terreiro* promises hours of ritual and possession, and will deepen your understanding of Bahian culture. Wear clean, light-colored clothes (no shorts) and go well fed. The **Federação Baiana do Culto Afro-Brasileiro** (Rua Alfredo de Brito 39) can provide addresses and schedules.

Tour operators out of the Terminal Marítimo Turístico offer fun **boat tours** of the Baía de Todos os Santos, with stops for lunch and swimming at island beaches (per person US\$17.50).

Praia do Porto in Barra is a small, usually packed beach with calm waters. For less crowded beaches and cleaner water, head out to **Piatã** (25km), **Itapoã** (27km) or beyond.

Courses

Associação de Capoeira Mestre Bimba (Rua das Laranjeiras 1, Pelourinho) runs classes in *capoeira* (martial art/dance), *maculelê* (stick fighting), percussion and *berimbau*. It also gives shows (US\$5).

The following offer classes in traditional and contemporary Afro-Brazilian dance, *capoeira* and percussion:

Diáspora Art Center (Largo de São Francisco 21, 3rd fl, Pelourinho)

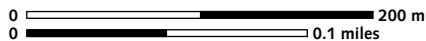
Escola de Dança (Rua da Oração 1, Pelourinho)

Festivals & Events

CARNAVAL

Salvador's Carnival is the second largest in Brazil and, according to young people, the

SALVADOR

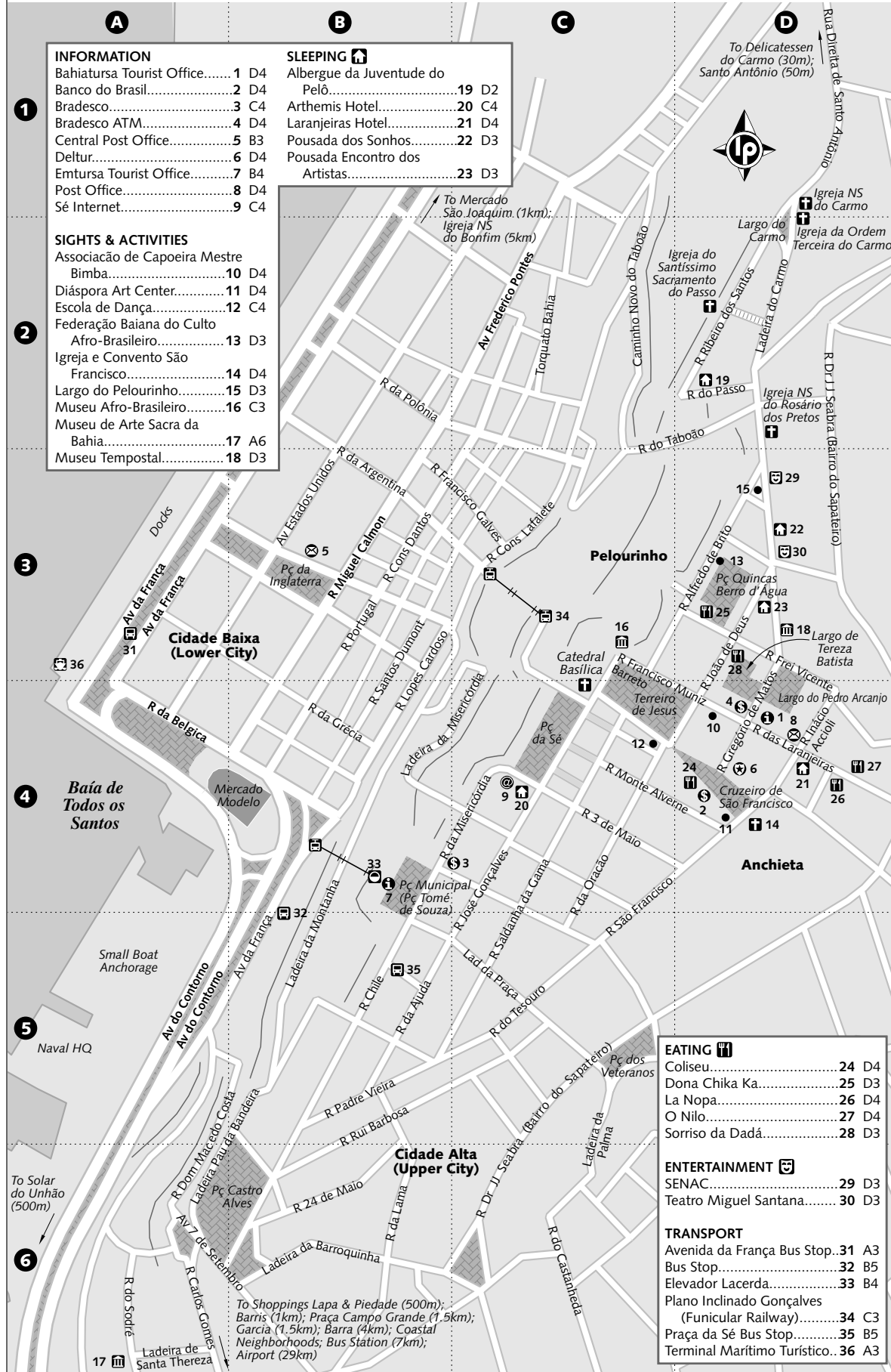


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To Shoppings Lapa & Piedade (500m); Barris (1km); Praça Campo Grande (1.5km); Garcia (1.5km); Barra (4km); Coastal Neighborhoods; Bus Station (7km); Airport (29km)

best. It's characterized by parades of *axé* and *pagode* bands atop creeping *trios-eléctricos* (long trucks of huge speakers). A *trio* or drum corps, together with its followers grouped in a roped-off area around it, form a *bloco*. People pay up to US\$300 for the *abadá* (shirt required for entry to the *bloco*) for a top band, mostly for prestige and the safety of those ropes. Critics of Salvador's Carnival call it segregative, pointing out the obvious class and race separation between those inside and outside of the *blocos*. Choosing to *fazer pipoca* (be popcorn) in the street is still a fine way to spend Carnival.

There are three main Carnival areas: the beachside Barra to Rio Vermelho circuit (most touristy), the narrow Campo Grande to Praça Castro Alves circuit, and the Pelourinho (no *trios* here, mostly concerts and drum corps). Get a schedule of events from Bahiatursa, pick up the *Guia do Ócio* entertainment guide (available in bookstores) or check www.por.taldocarnaval.ba.gov.br.

Safety Tips

Crowds clearing to escape a fight pose the greatest threat during Carnival, so be aware of your surroundings. Police are a noticeable presence. Hands will be all over you, searching your pockets and groping the ladies. Costumes aren't common – shorts (comfortable) and tennis shoes (protective) are the usual uniform. To ensure a trouble-free Carnival, note the following:

- Form small groups and avoid deserted areas.
- Women should not walk alone or wear skirts (hands will be up them in no time).
- Carry only a small amount of money, stashed in your shoe.
- Always leave *any* jewelry, watches, or nice-looking sunglasses behind.
- Don't challenge pickpockets – the ensuing fight isn't worthwhile.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport.

OTHER FESTIVALS

Salvador stages many festivals, particularly in January and February. Check with Bahiatursa for other festival dates.

After Carnival, the largest and most colorful:

Lavagem do Bonfim Second Thursday in January.
Festa de Iemanjá February 2.

Sleeping

Staying in the Pelô (it's packed with improvised hostels) means being in the action, but it can be noisy and/or draining. The area from Praça da Sé continuing past Praça Castro Alves has mostly run-down hotels. Mellow, beachside Barra has easy transport to the Pelô and the conveniences of a residential neighborhood. Reservations are essential for Carnival.

PELOURINHO

Pousada Encontro dos Artistas (☎ 0xx71-3242-7783; www.guiafacilnet.com; pousadaencontrodosartistas@hotmail.com; Rua João de Deus 23; dm/d US\$15/50) The taste in art may be a bit misguided, but the dorm rooms are great and not too loud at this new mid-range hotel.

Laranjeiras Hostel (☎ 3321-1366; www.laranjeiras.hostel.com.br; Rua Inácio Accioli 13; dm/s/d without bathroom US\$16/35/46, s & d US\$60) The highest quality and most attractive hostel in the Pelô, Laranjeiras has dorm rooms with ceilings high enough to allow for three bunks, and good bathrooms. Noisy and busy.

Other recommendations:

Albergue da Juventude do Pelô (☎ 3242-8061; www.alberguedopelo.com.br; Rua Ribeiro dos Santos 3; dm US\$10) Plain hostel.

Pousada dos Sonhos (☎ 3322-9901; www.pousada.dossonhos.com; Rua Gregório de Matos 55; dm/s/d without bathroom US\$12.50/15/25) Friendly and airy.

JUST OUTSIDE THE PELOURINHO

Nega Maluca Guesthouse (☎ 3242-9249; www.nega.maluca.com; Rua dos Marchantes 15, Santo Antônio; dm US\$12) This friendly, super laid-back hostel run by travelers has good dorm rooms just outside the Pelô's noisy zone. Guest-use kitchen and free internet.

Arthemis Hotel (☎ 3322-0724; www.arthemishotel.com.br; Praça da Sé 398, Edifício Themis, 7th fl; s/d US\$17.50/27.50) Artemis has an excellent location and a breakfast veranda with a fantastic view. Rooms are no-frills and the cheapest have cement-block windows.

Pousada do Boqueirão (☎ 3241-2262; www.pousada.boqueirao.com.br; Rua Direita do Santo Antônio 48, Santo Antônio; s/d US\$75/90, without bathroom US\$32.50/42.50) Out of the pricey Santo Antônio *pousadas* in renovated old buildings, do Boqueirão is perhaps the most tasteful and elegant.

BARRA

Albergue Jardim Brasil (☎ 3264-9637/9096; www.pousada.jardimbrasil.com.br; Rua Recife 4, Jardim Brasil; without

breakfast dm/d US\$12/27.50; 🍴) The total lack of hangout space at this plain hostel is redeemed by the surrounding hip bars and restaurants. Guest-use kitchen.

Albergue do Porto (☎ 3264-6600; www.alberguedoport.com.br; Rua Barão de Sergy 197; d with bathroom US\$50, dm/d US\$17.50/45; 🍴) Barra's primo hostel has airy, high-ceilinged dorm rooms, a living room with beanbags, and a guest-use kitchen. Turn-of-the-century building with kindergarten-esque decor.

Pousada Barra Point (☎ 3267-2321; www.pousadabarrapoint.com.br; Rua Comendador Barnardo Catarino 137; dm/s/d US\$17.50/25/40) Converted house. Bargaining required.

Pousada Milagres (☎ 3264-4113; www.pousadamilagres.com; Rua Eng Milton Oliveira 46/210; s/d US\$25/40; 🍴) Finally a supercute *pousada* that's not overpriced! Rooms in this converted 1920s-era house have wood parquet floors, colorful walls and good bathrooms.

Eating

Salvador has some excellent restaurants, and is most known for its African-influenced Bahian cuisine. A street-food staple is *acarajé* (fritters made with brown beans and shrimp fried in *dendê* palm oil). There are usually cover charges for live music.

PELOURINHO

In Cidade Alta, reputable restaurants cluster in the Pelô and up Rua Direita de Santo Antônio.

Mão na Massa (Rua Direita do Santo Antônio 18; 🍴 noon-5pm) This lower-level restaurant has an open-air patio overlooking the bay, and a yummy *prato feito* (plate of the day; US\$3.50 to US\$7.50) with mashed potatoes or pumpkin.

Delicatessen do Carmo (Rua do Carmo 68; per kg US\$7) This small neighborhood store-bakery has a great fresh buffet lunch and an owner who uses terms of endearment with all of her customers.

Coliseu (Cruzeiro de São Francisco, 2nd fl; per kg US\$11.45) The Pelô's largest and best lunch buffet restaurant is a great place to sample regional dishes.

O Nilo (Rua Laranjeiras 44; dishes US\$7-11) Tantalize your taste buds with excellent falafel, hummus, tabuli, babaghanus and other Middle Eastern specialties. Outdoor seating on a choice street.

La Nopa (Rua Santa Isabel 13; dishes US\$7-10) This fine Italian bistro is known for its quality fresh pastas, risottos and meat dishes.

SPLURGE!

Paraíso Tropical (mains US\$17) Rio Vermelho (Rua Feira de Santana 354, Parque Cruz Aguiar, Rio Vermelho); Cabula (Rua Edgar Loureiro 98-B, Cabula) This widely renowned restaurant gives traditional Brazilian dishes a gourmet twist, often using regional fruits and flowers. You'll forget about the slow service after the first bite. The Cabula branch is located on the second left off Rua Nossa Senhora do Resgate.

Pricey but duly famous for traditional Bahian food:

Sorriso da Dadá (Rua Frei Vicente 5) Try the *moqueca de peixe* (fish, tomatoes, bell peppers and onions cooked in spiced coconut cream and *dendê* oil; US\$22.50 for two).

Dona Chika Ka (Rua Frei Vicente 10) The *bobó de camarão* (shrimp in flavored manioc paste) gets rave reviews (US\$22.50 for two).

COASTAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Leave the Pelô! Barra's best food can be found near the lighthouse along Rua Alfonso Celso, Av Almirante Marquez, and in Jardim Brasil. The latter has celebrated sushi, ice cream, crepe and pizza places in a compact area. Rio Vermelho and Itapuã are also good neighborhoods for restaurants.

Acarajé da Dinha (Largo de Santana, Rio Vermelho) Locals line up at this street stall for Salvador's most renowned *acarajé*.

Messa Farta (Rua Almirante Marquez de Leão) At this small neighborhood spot choose between two deals: one go at the buffet (drink included US\$3.30), or per kilo with freshly grilled meats (US\$5.45).

Brasil Legal Churrascaria (Rua Afonso Celso 110; per person US\$4) This all-you-can-eat BBQ restaurant has an excellent spread and gets packed.

Drinking

There's not a day of the week that Salvador isn't singing, dancing or drinking...preferably all at the same time, and preferably outdoors.

PELOURINHO

The Pelourinho's plazas and cobbled streets fill with revelers sharing beer at plastic tables or dancing behind roaming bands of drummers. Tuesday is the big night. The city sponsors free live music in the inner courtyards of the Pelô – Largo de Tereza Batista, Largo de Pedro Ar-

canjo and Praça Quincas Berro d'Água – and on the Terreiro de Jesus. For listings, see the Pelourinho Dia e Noite schedule in Bahiatursa's free publication *BahiaCultural*.

Bar Cruz do Pascoal (Rua Joaquim Távora 2, Santo Antônio) For a quiet beer and a panoramic view, head for the back patio here.

Restaurante Olivier (Rua Direita de Santo Antônio 61, Santo Antônio) Live jazz and bossa nova Thursday through Sunday.

COASTAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Leave the Pelô! Barra's nightlife centers in Jardim Brasil, which has cool open-air bars attracting a hip, mostly affluent crowd. Beer drinking also happens along Alameda Marques de Leão – Habeus Copos has *pagode na mesa* (table samba) on Friday nights.

The Largo de Santana and Largo da Mariquita in bohemian Rio Vermelho pack with people drinking beer and eating *acarajé*. A variety of hip bars surrounds these squares.

World Bar (Rua Dias D'Ávila) This bar attracts a young beach crowd with its live bands.

Mercado do Peixe (Fish Market; Largo da Mariquita) This is *the* after-hours spot for cheap market food and cold beer.

Entertainment

As soon as you arrive, stop at Bahiatursa to find out what's on while you're in town. Its free publication *BahiaCultural* has listings.

FOLKLODIC SHOWS

Salvador is home to world-class choreographers and performers. Shows include displays of *afro* (Afro-Brazilian dance), *samba de roda* (flirtatious samba performed in a circle), dances of the *orixás*, and *maculelê* and *capoeira* that will blow your mind, all to live percussion and vocals.

Balé Folclórico da Bahia (Teatro Miguel Santana, Rua Gregório de Mattos 49; admission US\$10; ☑ shows 8pm Mon & Wed-Sat)

Grupo Folclórico SESC (Arena do Teatro SESC, SENAC, Largo do Pelourinho; admission US\$3.50; ☑ shows 8pm Thu-Sat)

LIVE MUSIC

Many of Salvador's singers, bands and Carnival groups hold weekly *ensaios* (rehearsals; US\$2.50 to US\$20), which are essentially concerts, in the months leading up to Carnival. The brotherhood Filhos de Gandhi is an *afoxé* (group tied to Candomblê traditions)

that has come to represent Salvador itself. Excellent *blocos afros* (groups with powerful drum corps promoting Afro-Brazilian culture) are Ilê Aiyê (the first exclusively black Carnival group), Male Debalê, Cortejo Afro, Dida (exclusively female) and Muzenza. More pop but still with strong percussion sections are Olodum (a Pelourinho institution), Araketu and Timbalada (brainchild of master composer and musician Carlinhos Brown). The queens of Salvador pop music are Margareth Menezes, Ivete Sangalo and Daniela Mercury.

Teatro Castro Alves (Praça Campo Grande). Salvador's finest venue for quality performances. Its Concha Acústica (amphitheater) holds fun weekly shows (US\$1).

DANCE CLUBS

Salvador's dance clubs dot its waterfront, and are mostly frequented by the hip and wealthy.

Tropicana (Av Otávio Mangabeira 4707, Jardim Armação) Has live Brazilian music and a laid-back atmosphere.

Aeroclube (Av Otávio Mangabeira, Boca do Rio) The outdoor mall contains Rock in Rio and Café Cancún. Both have live Brazilian music and attract a pretty young crowd.

Fashion Club (Av Otávio Mangabeira 2471, Jardim dos Namorados) and **Satélite Bar** (Av Otávio Mangabeira 940, Patamares) are upscale electronic-music clubs.

GAY & LESBIAN VENUES

Salvador has a large gay community and a pretty happening gay scene.

Beco dos Artistas (Artist's Alley; Av Cerqueira Lima, Garcia) A meeting point for a really young gay crowd. To find it, walk a few blocks down Rua Leovigildo Filgueiras from the Teatro Castro Alves.

Off (Rua Dias D'Ávila 33, Barra) and **Queens Club** (Rua Teodoro Sampaio 160, Barris) promise long nights of grooving to electronica.

Shopping MALLS

Shopping Iguatemi Salvador's largest mall and right across from the bus station.

Shopping Barra (Av Centenário 2992, Chame-Chame) Larger and fancier than Shopping Lapa and Shopping Piedade.

Shopping Piedade & Shopping Lapa (off Av 7 de Setembro behind Praça da Piedade) Walking distance from the Pelô.

MARKETS

The Mercado São Joaquim is a small city of sketchy waterfront stalls about 3km north of the Mercado Modelo.

Mercado Modelo (🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, to 2pm Sun)

The two-story, enclosed tourist market has dozens of stalls selling local handicrafts. Arriving slave shipments were kept in the watery depths of this 19th-century building – look for the descending staircases on the main floor. *Capoeira* and live music are often performed out back.

Getting There & Away**AIR**

BRA, Gol, Ocean Air, TAM, and Varig operate domestic flights out of Salvador's airport. TAP and Air Europa connect Salvador to Europe.

BUS

Most buses originating in the south go around the Baía de Todos os Santos. Alternately it's possible to catch a ferry to Salvador from Bom Despacho (45 minutes) on Ilha Itaparica.

Destination	Duration (hr)	Cost (US\$)	Frequency
Aracaju	4½	17.50-24.50	10 daily
Belo Horizonte	24	73	daily
Fortaleza	20	94	daily
Ilhéus	8	22-51	5-6 daily
Lençóis	6	18	2 daily
Natal	21	61-82	2 daily
Porto Seguro	11	49-77	2-3 daily
Recife	11	47-65	2 daily
Rio	24-28	107	4 daily
São Paulo	33	105-136	4 daily
Vitória	18	85	1-2 daily

Getting Around

Linking the lower and upper cities in the center are the newly renovated **Elevador Lacerda** (5 centavos; 🕒 24hr), and the more thrilling **Plano Inclinado Gonçalves** (Funicular; 5 centavos; 🕒 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat). When catching the bus, watch out for pricey air-con minibuses.

AREMBEPE

☎ 0xx71

Arembepe's proximity to Salvador and its past fame keep visitors swinging through to check out the *aldeia hippy*, a hippy village that Mick Jagger and Janis Joplin got rolling in the 1960s. The village itself is nothing spe-

cial, so immediately hit the beach and head north. You'll pass the Projeto TAMAR station, and after about 10 minutes you'll see small thatched-roof huts and coconut palms sitting atop a sand dune that shelters the *aldeia hippy*. There's a restaurant nearby for fruit juices and snacks, and the hippies sell handicrafts. Arembepe makes for a good escape.

From Salvador's Lapa bus terminal, catch an Arembepe, Montegordo or Barra do Pojuca bus for Arembepe (US\$1.70, 1¼ hours). Some of these may pass the Terminal da França as well.

PRAIA DO FORTE

☎ 0xx71

Praia do Forte has been intentionally developed into an upmarket ecological beach resort. The result is an attractive, polished yet laid-back holiday village with white fluffy beaches. Surrounding the village are the **Castelo do Garcia d'Ávila** (admission US\$2.50; 🕒 8:30am-6pm) ruins and canoeing, walking and biking possibilities. There are ATMs.

The extremely worthwhile **Projeto TAMAR** (admission US\$3.50; 🕒 9am-6pm) is part of a national project working with local communities to preserve sea-turtle breeding grounds and educate the public about endangered turtles. It has tanks of sea turtles and other sea life.

Pousadas are pricey here but most offer weekday discounts in the low season. **Camping Reserva da Sapiranga** (☎ -3342-2109; www.campingreservadasapiranga.cbj.net; per person US\$6) has shady sites 2km behind town. **Albergue Praia do Forte** (☎ 3676-1094; www.albergue.com.br; Rua da Aurora 3; dm/d US\$11/37.50) has pleasant dorms with tile floors and their own bathrooms, all surrounding a grassy central courtyard. Kitchen use and Projeto Tamar entrance fee are included, and bikes and surfboards are rented.

Buses from Salvador to Praia do Forte (US\$4, one hour and 40 minutes) leave from the Terminal da Calçada in Cidade Baixa (hourly on the hour, 5am to 6pm) or from the bus station (two daily). Buses and *kombis* make the return trip every 40 minutes from 7am to 6:30pm (US\$3.25).

CACHOEIRA & SÃO FÉLIX

☎ 0xx75 / pop 30,350

The sleepy town of Cachoeira has well-maintained colonial architecture strung along the banks of the Rio Paraguaçu, in a face-off

with its neighbor São Félix. Cachoeira is an important center for **Candomblé**, has a wood-sculpting tradition with a heavy African flavor, and makes for a mellow day trip. This is the best place to get a glimpse of the Recôncavo, the green, fertile region surrounding Baía de Todos os Santos, whose sugar and tobacco plantations made it the economic heartland of colonial Brazil.

There is a **tourist office** (Rua Ana Neri 4) and major banks in both towns.

Sights & Activities

Local **Candomblé** groups accept visitors. The tourist office will share what information it has on ceremony times and locations, but unfortunately isn't always kept updated.

The riverfront **Centro Cultural Dannemann** (Av Salvador Pinto 39, São Félix; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sat, gallery only 1-5pm Sun), in addition to first-class contemporary art displays, has a room of women at work rolling cigars, as they have since 1873. The **Museu Hansen Bahia** (Rua 13 de Maio; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, to 2pm Sat & Sun) displays powerful block prints and paintings on the theme of human suffering by a German-Brazilian artist. **Igreja da Ordem Terceira do Carmo** (Rua Inocência Bonaventura) is an ornately gilded church featuring a gallery of suffering Christs with genuine ruby blood. It was closed for renovations at press time.

Festivals & Events

Festa de São João Interior Bahia's largest popular festival, held June 22 to 24.

Festa da NS de Boa Morte The fascinating event falls on the Friday closest to August 15 and lasts for three days: descendants of slaves pay tribute to their liberation with dance and prayer in a mix of Candomblé and Catholicism.

Sleeping & Eating

Pousada do Paraguassú (☎ 3438-3386; www.pousadaparaguassu.com.br; Av Salvador Pinto 1; s/d US\$22.50/32.50; 🍴) Located on the riverfront in São Félix, this modern *pousada* has fine rooms facing a flowery central courtyard.

Pousada do Pai Thomaz (☎ 3425-1288; Rua 25 de Junho 12) Pai Thomaz was under renovation during research, but has historically been a fine budget option. Their main-floor restaurant is laden with local woodcarvings.

Beira Rio (Rua Paulo Filho 19; dishes US\$5-11) Cachoeira's best restaurant has pasta and meat dishes, as well as a fish *prato feito* (US\$3).

Getting There & Away

Daily buses depart from Salvador for Cachoeira/São Félix (US\$3, two hours, hourly from 5:30am to 9:30pm). Hourly return buses can be caught in either town from 4:20am to 6:50pm. You can also continue on to Feira de Santana (US\$2.50, 1½ hours, hourly 5:30am to 6:50pm) to make further connections.

LENÇÓIS

☎ 0xx75 / pop 8900

Lençóis is the prettiest of the old diamond-mining towns in the Chapada Diamantina, a mountainous wooded oasis in the dusty *sertão* (dry interior region). While the town itself is a draw – cobbled streets, brightly painted 19th-century buildings, nestled between lush hills – it is the surrounding area bursting with caves, waterfalls and plateaus promising panoramic views that are the real attraction. Lençóis is the Northeast's outdoor adventure hot spot.

Information

The tourist office is in the back of the market building next to the bridge

Banco do Brasil (Praça Horácio de Mattos) Has ATMs.

Café.com (per hr US\$3) Internet access; in the market building.

Calil Neto (Praça Horácio de Mattos 82; ☎ 5-11pm Mon, 8am-2pm & 5-11pm Tue-Sun) If the tour-company photo albums left you unconvinced, the photo gallery here will leave no question about this area's beauty.

Activities

WALKS & SWIMMING

The following walks are easily taken without a guide. Walk past the bus stop and follow the Rio Lençóis 3km upstream into the Parque Municipal da Muritiba. You'll pass a series of rapids known as **Cachoeira Serrano**, the **Salão de Areias Coloridas** (Room of Colored Sands), where artisans gather material for bottled sand paintings, **Poço Halley** (Halley's Well), **Cachorinha** (Little Waterfall) and finally **Cachoeira da Primavera** (Spring Waterfall). Or follow Rua São Benedito 4km out of town to **Ribeirão do Meio**, a series of swimming holes with a natural waterslide. For more swimming, catch the morning Seabra bus and hop off at Mucugêzinho Bar. About 2km downstream is **Poço do Diabo** (Devil's Well), a swimming hole with a 25m waterfall.

HIKING

To the southwest of Lençóis is **Parque Nacional da Chapada Diamantina**, comprising 1520 sq

km of breathtaking scenery, waterfalls, rivers, monkeys and a lot to interest geologists. The park has little infrastructure (trails are unmarked) and bus services are infrequent, making it difficult to penetrate without a guide. Terrible mishaps with undertrained guides have occurred, so only certified guides (check their photo ID badge) should be used – the **ACVL** (☎ 3334-1425; Rua 10 de Novembro) guide association or local agencies can hook you up with one. Two knowledgeable indigenous English-speaking guides are **Roy Funch** (☎ 3334-1305; royfunch@ligbr.com.br; Rua Pé de Ladeira 212) and **Olivia Taylor** (☎ 3334-1229; oliviadosduendes@zaz.com.br; Rua do Pires), owner of Pousada dos Duendes.

Treks can last anywhere from two to eight days, and usually involve a combination of camping, staying in local homes and *pousadas*. Prices including food run upward from US\$35 per day depending on the trip and the size of the group; transportation and lodging are additional. Necessary gear can be rented from agencies.

Tours

This is not the time to pinch pennies – take a tour. Local tour agencies organize day car trips (including swimming and walking) and hikes for upward from US\$20 per person, not including admission fees if there are any. Agencies mostly pool customers in order to send daily groups out, so it's difficult to customize a trip unless you are a large group. Some standout sights:

Poço Encantado The Lençóis poster child: a cave filled with stunningly beautiful blue water.

Poço Azul Another rainwater-filled cave.

Gruta da Lapa Doce A cave with impressive formations.

Morro do Pai Inácio The most prominent peak in the area affording an awesome view over a plateau-filled valley.

Cachoeira da Fumaça At 420m, Brazil's longest waterfall.

Marimbus A 'mini-Pantanal' microregion, is only worthwhile close to dawn or dusk.

Sleeping

Reservations are required for all major holidays. If you arrive by night bus most *pousadas* allow you to stay the rest of the night, only charging for breakfast.

Pousada & Camping Lumiar (☎ 0xx75-3334-1241; lumiar@sendnet.com.br; Praça do Rosário 70; campsites per person US\$5) Shady campsites in a gorgeous garden. Full kitchen for guest use.

Pousada dos Duendes (☎ 3334-1229; www.pousada-dosduendes.com; Rua do Pires; dm/s/d US\$10/15/25, without bathroom US\$7.50/12.50/20) A relaxed atmosphere, good budget rooms and plenty of open chill space keeps this place full of backpackers. Open group dinners (US\$5, reserve before 5pm, vegetarian/vegan possible) and book exchange offered.

Pousada da Fonte (☎ 3334-1953; www.pousadada-fonte.com; Rua da Muritiba; dm/s/d US\$12.50/15/30) This cozy, five-room *pousada* has the feel of a weekend home. The open-air breakfast and hammock porches are surrounded by quiet forest. Just past Casa de Hélia.

Pousada Casa de Hélia (☎ 3334-1143; www.casade-helia.com.br; Rua da Muritiba; dm/d US\$12.50/35) Spread over a hillside affording views over a green river valley, this backpacker favorite has rooms with stone slab floors and furniture fashioned out of twisted tree branches. Up a dirt road from the bus stop.

Pousada Solar dos Moraes (☎ 3334-1849; Rua Arnulfo Moraes; www.pousadasolardosmoraes.com; s/d US\$15/30) Rooms aren't particularly noteworthy but each has a small veranda and hammock that overlook a green front yard with a humongous *jaca* tree.

Eating

Burritos y Taquitos (Rua São Benedito 58; 3 tacos US\$3.50) Ever thought you'd be downing a tasty Mexican beef burrito or cactus taco in Bahia? Pretty back patio.

Neco's Bar (Rua da Baderna; per person US\$6) Orders must be placed 24 hours in advance at this Lençóis institution offering serious home cooking.

Ristorante Italiano os Artistas da Massa (Rua da Baderna 49; dishes US\$6-9) The plain dining room is redeemed by truly fresh Italian food and quality tunes you pick off the menu.

Bode Grill (Rua 10 de Novembro 26; dishes US\$9-12) This small restaurant behind the bank is known for a *prato feito* (US\$3) filled with homemade goodness.

Cozinha Aberta (Rua da Baderna 111 & Av Rui Barbosa 42; dishes US\$10) Treat yourself to Thai-style chicken in coconut milk or Indian beef-and-vegetable curry at this gourmet bistro following Italian 'Slow Food' principles (everything is as fresh, organic and local as possible).

Getting There & Away

Buses to Salvador (US\$18, six hours) leave daily at 1:15pm and 11:30pm, and at 7:30am

on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. All Salvador buses stop in Feira de Santana (US\$13, 4½ hours), where connections can be made to just about anywhere, but are not always well timed.

MORRO DE SÃO PAULO

☎ 0xx75

For some, this picturesque holiday village has exceeded acceptable limits of touristiness; for others it's Bahia's most fun party town. Morro's charm derives from a few remnants of its colonial past and a unique, isolated geography. A few sand streets, ruled by wheelbarrows and pedestrians, run between three jungle-topped hills. The beaches, with their shallow, warm water, disappear with the tides, liberating you for a hike to the waterfall, a boat trip to quiet **Boipeba**, a trip down the lighthouse **zip line** (per person US\$12.50), or to catch the sunset from the fort.

There is one **ATM** (Segunda Praia). Internet runs at US\$4.50 per hour.

Sleeping

Reservations are required for all major holidays, especially Carnival and *resaca* (five days of post-Carnival hangover). Segunda Praia is where the nightly party is, so don't sleep there!

Pousada dos Passaros (☎ 3652-1102; www.hosteldomorro.com.br; dm/d US\$15/35; 🏠) A social hostel with a green outdoor breakfast area and good dorms. Take first left-hand passageway off Rua da Fonte Grande.

Pousada Passarte (☎ 3652-1030; www.pousadapassarte.com.br; Rua da Biquinha 27; s/d US\$20/30; 🏠) Small, simple rooms that are a good deal in the high season. Quiet location and cute breakfast area.

Pousada Ninho da Águia (☎ 3652-1201; www.ninho-daaguia.com.br; s/d US\$25/35; 🏠) The rooms are well finished and breakfast comes with a spectacular view at this 'Eagle's Nest' near the lighthouse.

Pousada Kanzuá do Marujo (☎ 3483-1152; www.pousadakanzuadomarujo.com.br; Terça Praia; s/d US\$35/40; 🏠) A superbright two-story complex of modern rooms set back from the ocean. Lots of greenery.

Pousada 2000 (☎ 3652-1271; www.pousada2000.com.br; Rua da Biquinha 31; s/d US\$40/50; 🏠) Well designed to take advantage of the sunlight and breeze, these comfy rooms have furniture fashioned out of tree branches.

Eating

Oh Lá Lá! Crepes (Caminho da Praia; dishes US\$3.50-7.50) A tiny place with hip tunes and artsy posters, serving up salads and sweet or savory crepes.

Espaguetaria Strega (Caminho da Praia; pastas US\$5-9) Strega packs with young people slurping down pastas ranging from oil and garlic to shrimp with cheese. The bar has over 40 *cachaça* infusions.

Restaurante Tinharé (Caminho da Praia) The huge portions of the *moqueca de peixe* (US\$7.50) are excellent at this family-run restaurant with clear plastic and fake flowers on every table. Hidden down some stairs.

Ponto de Encontro (Caminho da Praia; mains US\$9) One of the better chic restaurants with creative salads, pastas and meat or veggie plates.

Getting There & Away

The catamaran *Gamboa do Morro* (US\$25 to US\$30, two hours, two to three daily) and the speedboat *Ilha Bela* (US\$27.50, two hours, one to two daily) sail between Morro and Salvador's Terminal Marítimo Turístico (behind the Mercado Modelo). The seas can be rough, so come fairly empty-stomached and focus on a fixed point if things start rocking. If you come by land, catch a bus to Valença where regular boats (US\$2.35, 1½ hours, hourly 6:30am to 5:30pm) or speedboats (US\$5.30, 30 minutes, three daily) head upriver to Morro.

ITACARÉ

☎ 0xx73 / pop 18,100

Itacaré is a quiet, pretty average-looking colonial fishing town at the mouth of the Rio de Contas, long sought out by hippies and surfers mesmerized by wide stretches of virgin Atlantic rainforest, postcard-perfect beaches and reliable surf breaks. Though there is some upmarket tourism a mellow, youthful vibe prevails, and locals and visitors still share the streets. Surfing, reggae and ecotourism, in that order, are main focuses.

There are ATMs and several internet cafés (US\$2.50 per hour).

Activities

Surf lessons and board rental are widely available. Beaches in town are nothing special (but good for surfing), so head out to paradisiacal **Engenhoca**, **Havaizinho** and **Itacarezinho**, 12km south of town. Nearby, just off the highway is **Cachoeira Tijupe** (admission US\$2.25), a wide,

tea-colored waterfall fun for a swim. Idyllic **Prainha** is reachable by trail from the southernmost town beach, Praia do Ribeira. There has been a rash of muggings at and around Itacaré's beaches, so take little money and nothing of value.

Canoe trips upriver, rafting, mountain biking, rappelling and excursions on foot or horseback to local sights can be arranged through local agencies. The principal excursion is up the Peninsula de Maraú to stunning **Praia Taipús de Fora** (US\$21.50). On the trail to Prainha, **Conduru Ecoturismo** (Praça da Bandeira) has a 200m-long, 40m-high **zip line** (US\$7.50) and **tree rope circuit** (US\$25).

Itacaré is known for its **capoeira** (classes available).

Sleeping

Camping Pop (☎ 3251-2305; Praia da Concha; campsites per person US\$7.50) Shady sites, eccentric owners.

Albergue O Pharol (☎ 3251-2527; www.albergueopharol.com.br; Praça Santos Dummont 7; dm/d US\$13.50/38; 🏠) Itacaré's best hostel, Pharol is attractive, clean and superfriendly. Guest-use kitchen and comfy living room.

Pousada Cores do Mar (☎ 3251-3418; www.itacare.com; Praia da Concha; s/d US\$20/25) A row of hammocks and good-value rooms face a garden in this straightforward *pousada*. Run by a cool surfer.

Pousada Itacaré (☎ 3251-3601; pousadaitacare@hotmail.com; Praia da Concha; s/d US\$22.50/30; 🏠) You can hear the ocean from this family-run *pousada* shaded by big trees. The simple rooms have brightly painted walls and tile floors.

Pousada Itaóca (☎ 3251-3382; www.pousadaitaoca.hpg.com.br; Rua Pedro Longo 520, Pituba; s/d US\$25/35; 🏠) The usual recipe of comfortable rooms and hammocks, but with more attractive setting.

Eating

Todas as Luas (Rua Pedro Longo 334; meals US\$1.75-36) Tables pour out onto the street at this open-air pasta (US\$3.50 to US\$6) and pizza (per 10cm US\$1.75 to US\$3.50). Live music.

Terral (Rua Pedro Longo 150) Terral packs with the after-beach crowd seeking home cooked *prato feitos* (US\$4.50 to US\$6) and burgers (US\$2).

Almazen (Rua Pedro Longo 69) This almost-vegetarian restaurant serves sandwiches on homemade bread, homemade yogurt and granola, salads and a delicious vegetarian *prato feito* (US\$6).

Sahara (Rua Pedro Longo; Arab plate US\$5.50) The Arab Plate (homemade pita bread, falafel, hummus, tomato salad and fried potatoes) is mouthwatering at this Israeli-owned cafe at the end of the main drag.

Tia Deth (Av Castro Alves; dishes for 2 US\$12.50-30) Great traditional or Bahian-style seafood and fish served in a colorful dining room or under a huge tree. Economical *prato feitos* (US\$5).

Getting There & Around

To get to Itacaré, you will likely need to connect through Itabuna or Ilhéus. There are buses to Itacaré from Itabuna (US\$5, 2½ hours, hourly 5:30am to 8pm) and Ilhéus (US\$3.50, 1½ hours, hourly 6:20am to 8:40pm).

A local bus provides access to beaches south of town, leaving hourly from in front of the bus station.

ILHÉUS

☎ 0xx73 / pop 221,900

Bright turn-of-the-century architecture and oddly angled streets lend Ilhéus a vibrant and playful air, and make the center a great wander. Ilhéus' fame derives from its history as a prosperous cocoa port, as well as the hometown of Jorge Amado (Brazil's best-known novelist) and the setting of one of his greatest novels (*Gabriela, Cravo e Canela*).

Information

Major banks in the center have ATMs. A tourist-information kiosk lies between the cathedral and the water.

Reality Internet (Rua Dom Eduardo; per hr US\$75¢)

Sights & Activities

The **Igreja de São Jorge** (Praça Rui Barbosa; 🕒 Tue-Sun), built in 1534, is among Brazil's oldest churches. **Casa de Jorge Amado** (Rua Jorge Amado 21; admission US\$0¢; 🕒 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat, 3-5pm Sun) is where the author was raised and wrote his first novel, and will be most interesting to his readers.

Eco Parque de Una (☎ 3633-1121; www.ecoparque.org.br; admission US\$15), 70km south of Ilhéus, offers relatively worthwhile two-hour tours of its Atlantic rainforest reserve, which include rubber tapping, a suspended tree canopy walkway and a swimming pond. It's cheapest to make a direct appointment; local agencies also arrange visits.

The best beaches, such as **Praia dos Milionários**, are to the south.

Sleeping

Pontal – a short bus ride from the center on the other side of the bay – has several modern *pousadas*.

Albergue da Ilha (☎ 3231-8938; Rua General Câmara 31; dm/d US\$10/30) Located in a tall, narrow old building, this clean and funky hostel's best assets are its fantastic kitchen and its

rooftop patio. The hotel has one (six-bed) dorm room.

Pousada Delmar (☎ 3632-8435; mamorim@cepec.gov.br; Rua Castro Alves 322, Pontal; s/d US\$15/20; 🚽) A popular, modern hotel with an open-air breakfast patio.

Pousada Brisa do Mar (☎ 3231-2644/8424; Av 2 de Julho 136; s/d US\$20/25; 🚽) This modern home



BRAZIL

converted into a *pousada* has wood parquet floors and sea views from front rooms, and is a huge step up from the center's options. Desolate stretch to the center's action.

Eating & Drinking

Larika (end of Av Getúlio Vargas, Pontal; hamburgers & sandwiches US\$2; ☎ 6pm-1am Sun-Thu, to dawn Fri & Sat) This popular kiosk serves specialty hamburgers and sandwiches and every imaginable juice combination (US\$1) at bayfront tables.

Barrakítika (Praça Antonio Muniz 39) An informal hangout with outdoor tables at a bend in a quiet street. Live music from Thursday to Saturday.

Sheik (Alto de Oitero) Perched on a hill, chic Sheik has great views and a bar that fills in the late evening. It rounds out a menu of typical dishes with Arab and Japanese food.

Getting There & Away

Buses run to Itacaré (US\$3.50, 1½ hours, 11 daily), Valença (US\$11, five hours, two daily), Salvador (US\$32 to US\$50, seven hours, three daily), Porto Seguro (US\$15, six hours, four daily) and Rio (US\$68 to US\$87, 22 hours, one to seven daily). More frequent connections can be made in Itabuna, 30km inland. Buses to Itabuna leave from the local terminal on Praça Cairu and from outside the bus station (US\$1.35, 40 minutes) every 30 minutes.

PORTO SEGURO

☎ 0xx73 / pop 95,700

For the foreign traveler, the town of Porto Seguro has long lost its true charm to T-shirt shops and trinket stands. For Brazilian middle-class families and high-school groups, it is *the* place to have a fun-in-the-sun package vacation. For both, Porto promises active party scenes day and night and a chance to catch some exceptionally skilled local dancers and *capoeiristas* (those performing *capoeira*, a martial art/dance). Porto is famous for being the officially recognized first Portuguese landfall in Brazil, as well as the birthplace of *lambada*, a dance so sensual it was at one time forbidden.

Information

Avoid the information post at the bus station, as it is unreliable.

Adeltur (☎ 3288-1888; Av 22 de Abril 100, Shopping Av) Changes cash and traveler's checks.

Banco do Brasil (Av 22 de Abril) Has ATMs.

Internet Point (Av dos Navegantes 90; per hr US\$1.50) Offers internet.

Sights & Activities

Motivation is required to climb the stairs to **Cidade Histórica** (one of the earliest European settlements in Brazil). Rewards include a sweeping view, colorful old buildings, and churches dating from early to mid-16th century. Look for *capoeira* demonstrations behind the churches.

The beach is one long bay of calm water, north of town, lined with *barracas* and clubs. **Toa Toa**, **Axé Moi** and **Barramares** are the biggest beach clubs and all have MCs and dancers leading crowds through popular dances. The most beautiful stretch is from Toa Toa north. Take a 'Taperapuã' or 'Rio Doce' bus to the beach, a 'Campinho' or 'Cabrália' to return.

Festivals & Events

Porto Seguro's Carnival lasts an additional three or four days – until the Friday or Saturday after Ash Wednesday – and is a smaller and safer version of Salvador's.

Sleeping

Porto Seguro has as many hotels as Salvador, but reservations should still be made during major holidays. For seriously cheap stays, check out the older *pousadas* on Rua Marechal Deodoro.

Camping Mundaí Praia (☎ 3679-2287; per person US\$7.50; ☎) Opposite the beach, 4km north of town. Plenty of shade.

Pousada Casa Grande (☎ 3268-4422; tanaina.brasil@terra.com.br; Av dos Navegantes 151; s/d US\$10/20) The central location, good rooms and a green inner courtyard have made Casa Grande *the* backpacker *pousada* in Porto. Guest-use kitchen.

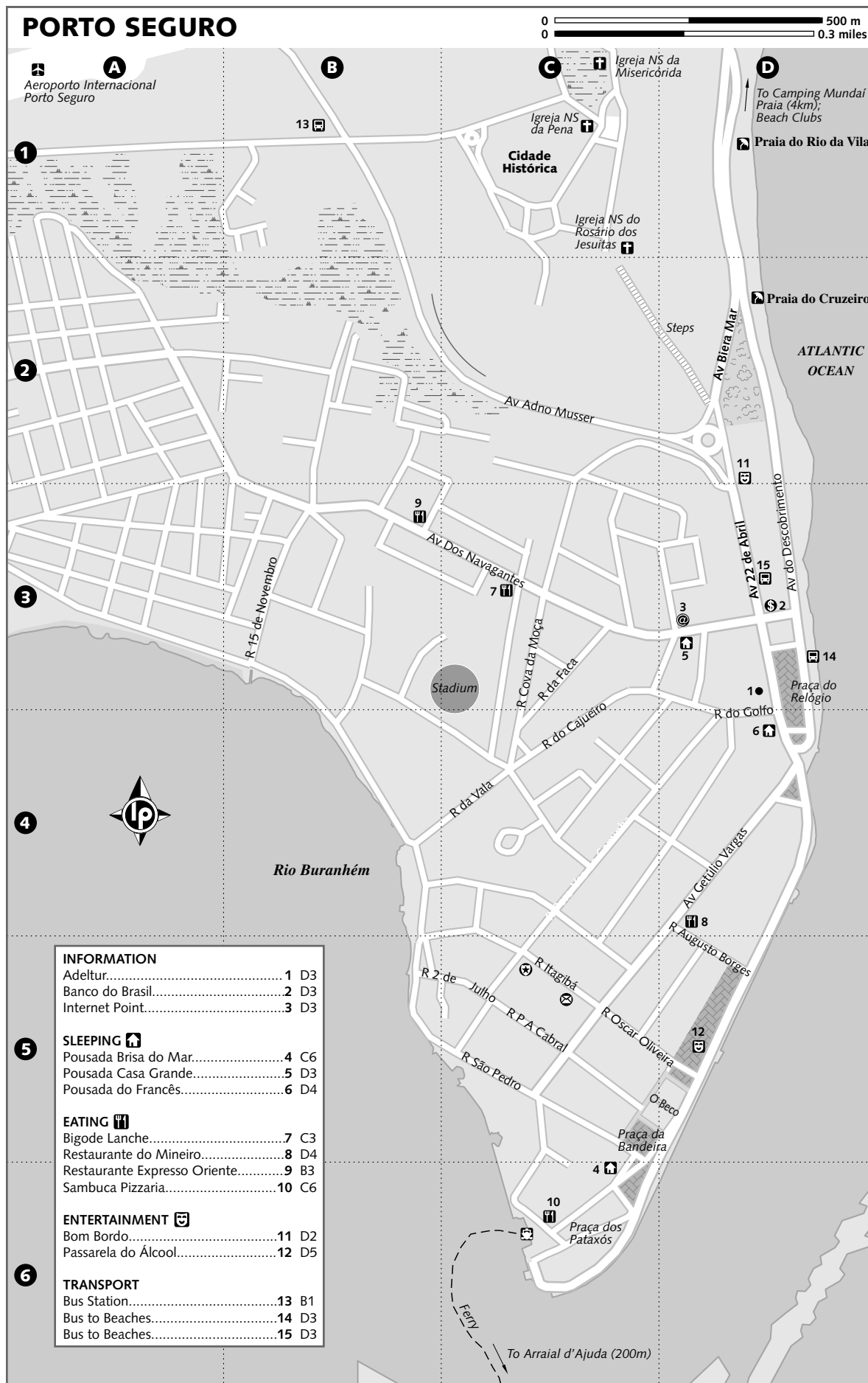
Pousada Brisa do Mar (☎ 3288-2943/1444; www.brisadomarpousada.com.br; Praça Dr Manoel Ribeiro Coelho 188; s/d US\$15/30) A long, narrow house converted into an uninteresting though sparkling clean *pousada*.

Pousada do Francês (☎ 3288-2429; www.comvene.zabrazil.com.br; Av 22 de Abril 180; s/d US\$17.50/30; ☎) A beautiful *pousada* with newly reformed rooms facing a lush garden.

Eating

The nicest dinner restaurants cluster around the Passarela do Álcool.

Bigode Lanche (Av dos Navegantes; sandwiches US\$75¢-3.50; ☎ until dawn) Two trailers turn out great



sandwiches and 500mL fresh juices (US\$1) to diners at folding metal tables.

Restaurant do Mineiro (Rua Augusto Borges 102; per person US\$3.40) Not much on ambience, this spot offers all-you-can-eat salad and side dishes and two portions of barbecued meat.

Restaurante Expresso Oriente (Av dos Navegantes 670; per kg US\$8.45) Sushi and some Chinese-inspired dishes round out the decent salad bar and usual fare at this large kilo restaurant.

Sambuca Pizzaria (Praça dos Pataxós; pizzas US\$7-15) Porto's best pizza in a sweet little dining room removed from the Passarela's madness.

Entertainment

Passarela do Álcool (Alcohol Walkway; ☎ nightly). Stands sell fruit cocktails and crafts. There is usually live music and often *capoeira* circles. Roaming ticket vendors will let you know where the party is, often called a *luau* if at the beach clubs. Barramares puts on the best weekly *luau*, which includes *lambada*, *capoeira*, live *axé*, *fórró*, *samba* or *MPB*, and other treats. If the party is up the coast, there are usually courtesy buses from the *trevo* (traffic circle).

Bom Bordo (Av 22 de Abril) Is fun and the only club in town.

Getting There & Around

Varig, TAM, Gol and Ocean Air fly domestically from Porto Seguro's airport, 2km north-east of town.

Frequent buses make the journey to Ilhéus (US\$15, six hours, four daily), Valença (US\$23, 8½ hours, daily), Salvador (US\$48 to US\$76, 11 hours, daily), Vitória (US\$31 to US\$45, 10½ hours, two to three daily), Rio (US\$67 to US\$75, 19 hours, two daily) and São Paulo (US\$82 to US\$105, 26 hours, two daily). Buses go to Eunápolis (US\$3.25, one hour, half-hourly from 5am to 9:40pm) where more frequent connections can be made.

ARRAIAL D'AJUDA

☎ 0xx73 / pop 13,000

An intangible twinkling magic surrounds the pretty village of Arraial d'Ajuda, attracting youthful nouveau hippies of every age. Squat buildings painted bright colors surround a traditional plaza, and stone roads lined with newer *pousadas*, bars and restaurants (some quite slick) carry foot and car traffic down to the beaches. Arraial is a fantastic place to bring your partying to new heights or re-

cuperate from travel exhaustion in tropical beauty.

Orientation & Information

The tree-shaded village sits atop a bluff overlooking built-up Praia Mucugê, but a short walk south brings you to dreamy Praia de Pitinga and other gorgeous beaches beyond.

There is one ATM and several internet cafés.

Activities

Paradise Water Park (☎ 3575-8600; Praia d'Ajuda; adult/child US\$19/10) has water slides, a wave pool and hosts big-name concerts; hours change seasonally. Friendly **Grupo Sul da Bahia** (Rua da Capoeira) offers *lambada* and Afro-Brazilian dance in addition to *capoeira*.

Sleeping

During the low season, midlevel hotels become affordable. The depths of Rua Fábio Messias Nobre (Rua Jatobar) has a history of shady dealings and is best avoided.

Pousada Alto Mar (☎ 3575-1935; www.jungleimersion.pro.br; Rua Bela Vista 114; dm/s/d US\$10/20/25) Human warmth makes up for the simple structure at this funky, pretty cheapie with basic *apartamentos*. Portuguese classes offered, English spoken and internet included. Supersocial.

Pousada República das Bananas (☎ 3575-3336; Rua Santo Antonio; s/d US\$12.50/25; ☎ ☎) Two lines of simple rooms, some with porches and hammocks, stand close together at this backpacker favorite. Near the *capoeira* school – look for directional signs.

Pousada Le Grand Bleu (☎ 3575-1272; www.pousadalegrandbleu.com.br; Rua Beco do Jegue 160; s/d US\$17.50/20; ☎ ☎) An aging but attractive, well-maintained *pousada* with lots of varnished wood inside and out. Two-level rooms have colored-cement floors. Lots of greenery.

Pousada Manga Rosa (☎ 3575-1252/1423; www.pousadamangarosa.com; Rua Fábio Messias Nobre 172; s/d US\$25/30; ☎ ☎) A friendly local family runs this quality *pousada* surrounding its home and a gorgeous green courtyard.

Eating

Vale Verde (entrance to Praia Mucugê; prato feito US\$5) Great beach *prato feito*.

Paulo Pescador (Praça São Braz; dishes US\$6) Its typical Brazilian food is fresh and yummy, with the added benefit of superfriendly service

(some English spoken!) and photographs of every dish.

Restaurante São João (Praça Brigadeiro Eduardo Gomes 41; dishes US\$6; ☎ late) You can't get more old-school typical in Arraial than São João – the entrance crosses the owner's living room. Fantastic Bahian food.

A Portinha (Rua Manoel C. Santiago; per kg US\$10) This is possibly the best per-kilo food in Brazil, with treats like mashed pumpkin and quiches warmed by a wood-fired oven, in addition to a great salad bar.

Aipim (Beco do Jegue; dishes US\$8-19) An open-air restaurant that exudes tropical chic with stylish decor, an illuminated bar and hip lounge tunes, all under a thatched roof. The spot to splash out.

Entertainment

Along the main drag you'll find entertainment venues. The luaus at Cabana Grande, Magnólia (rave-style) and Parracho (tourist-style) are most frequent during the summer and holidays. Ask around for the latest *lambada* and *farró* hot spot. D.O.C. is a great enclosed São Paulo-style club.

Beco das Cores (Estrada do Mucugeã) A small galleria with magical ambience and live music on weekends.

Girasol (Estrada do Mucugeã) Great for people-watching while lounging on colored pillows or playing pool.

Getting There & Away

A passenger and a car ferry run frequently between Porto Seguro and Arraial (US\$1 to Arraial, free return, five minutes) during the day, and hourly on the hour after midnight. From Arraial's dock, jump on a bus or kombi to the center (US\$0.50, 10 minutes). It's also possible to walk the lovely 4km along the beach – not recommended when beaches are empty.

TRANCOSO

☎ 0xx73 / pop 10,000

An eclectic mix of wealthy Brazilians, international ravers and hippies old and young are drawn to this small tropical paradise. The village is perched atop a tall bluff overlooking the ocean, and centers around its **Quadrado**, a wide, grassy, carless central square, host to afternoon *futebol* games. At night everyone turns out to lounge in the outdoor seating of the restaurants that line the Quadrado,

and take in its twinkling lights. The beaches immediately to the south of Trancoso are gorgeous, but don't miss celebrated **Praia do Espelho** (20km south), off the road to Caraíva.

There is an ATM both near the Quadrado and in Supermercado Nogueira on the road into town.

Sleeping & Eating

Most accommodations are pricey. Reservations are a must during January and major holidays. Many of the pricey restaurants on the Quadrado serve a *prato feito* or *prato executivo* (US\$5) if you ask.

Pousada Miramar (☎ 3668-1123/1819; miramartrancoso@hotmail.com; Quadrado; campsites per person US\$6.50) Ocean view camping.

Pousada Cuba (Rua Cuba; s/d US\$12.50/17.50) Dirt paths connect simple cabins perched on a hillside at this happy, tenement-like *pousada*. Follow signs posted near Pousada Quarto Crescente. Communal kitchen available.

Café Esmeralda Albergue (☎ 3668-1527; cafeesmeralda@portonet.com.br; Quadrado; r US\$30, without bathroom US\$20) A Canadian/Argentine couple have a row of simple rooms and a cocoa tree and hammock chill space behind their café. No breakfast.

Pousada Quarto Crescente (☎ 3668-1014; www.quartocrescente.net; Rua Itabela; s/d US\$30/40; ☎) A very sweet, tree-shaded spot with spacious gardens, a well-stocked library (book exchange!), comfortable rooms and a superb breakfast. A short walk from the Quadrado.

Du Blê Noir (Rua do Telégrafo 300; crepes around US\$3) The chocolate and banana crepe is legendary at this crepe stand in a small galleria near the Quadrado. Savory flavors too.

A Portinha (Quadrado; per kg US\$10) This buffet restaurant wins over diners with its wide selection of excellent fresh food and seating under a towering tree.

Silvana & Cia (Quadrado; dishes for 2 US\$20-45) A local family serves up yummy typical meat dishes and Bahian food at tables underneath a gigantic *amendoeira* tree.

Getting There & Away

The 13km walk along the beach from Arraial d'Ajuda at low tide is beautiful. Hourly buses depart from Arraial d'Ajuda's dock and center (US\$2.50, 50 minutes) from 7:15am to 8pm and return from 6am to 8pm. Two daily buses travel between Trancoso and Porto Seguro (US\$3, two hours).

CARAÍVA

☎ 0xx73 / pop 6440

Without electricity, cars, banks or decent phone lines, the village of Caraíva is remote and beautiful, a combination that attracts alternative types looking for a quiet pace of life. This sandy hamlet perches between a mangrove-lined river and a long beach with churning surf. Noisy generators provide electricity and keep the *fórró* hopping on Friday nights. In the low season, Caraíva all but shuts down.

Boat journeys upriver, horseback rides or walks to a Pataxó Indian village and trips to the Parque Nacional de Monte Pascoal are easily organized. A 14km walk north (or hop on a bus) brings you to celebrated **Praia do Espelho**.

Darkness reveals Caraíva's magic, so staying the night is recommended. Simple rooms are available at **Casa da Praia** (☎ 9111-4737; www.caraiva.net/casasdapraia/; s/d US\$15/30) and **Pousada Raiz Forte** (☎ 9991-7391; s/d US\$12.50/25). Mosquito nets are essential. Seek out Cantinho da Duca for an excellent vegetarian *prato feito*.

Buses for Caraíva leave from Arraial d'Ajuda's port and center (US\$5.75, 2½ hours, two to three daily) and Trancoso (US\$5, two hours, two to three daily). For greater connections north or south, head for Itabela (US\$4, two hours, two daily).

ARACAJU

☎ 0xx79 / pop 461,000

Pedestrian malls slow the center to a walking pace in this relaxed, not unattractive city.

Information

Major banks have ATMs on the plazas.

Bureau de Informações Turísticas (☎ 3214-8848;

Praça Olímpio Campos) Dispenses free city maps.

Timer Web Café (Praça Olímpio Campos 700; per hr US\$1.50; ☎) Offers internet until late.

Sights & Activities

Projeto Tamar's small **Oceanário** (aquarium; Av Santos Dumont, Praia de Atalaia; admission US\$3; ☎ 2-8pm) has sea turtles, rays and eels. Flat, muddy-watered city beaches are built up – **Praia Atalaia Nova** on the Ilha de Santa Luzia is nicer.

Though not a tourist draw, Aracaju is a pleasant enough place. A trip to sleepy **Laranjeiras** (23km) and **São Cristóvão** (29km), Sergipe's colonial jewels, is a more interesting way to spend the day.

Sleeping

Hotel Amado (☎ 3211-9937; www.infonet.con.br/hotel/amado; Rua Laranjeiras 532, Centro; s/d US\$15/25; ☎) The center's best budget option, Amado has run-down but clean rooms in an old house converted into a *pousada*. Convenient location.

Pousada Mirante das Águas (☎ 3255-2610; www.mirantedasaguas.com.br; Rua Delmiro Golveia 711, Atalaia; s/d US\$20/25; ☎) This *pousada* has comfortable rooms and an elaborate games-chill area just two blocks from the waterfront. English spoken.

Eating

Restaurants and nightlife concentrate in the city beach neighborhoods, collectively referred to as the *orla* (waterfront).

Bon Appetite (Rua João Pessoa 71175, Centro; per kg US\$7.50) The elaborate buffet has lots of options at this spot popular with the working crowd.

O Miguel (Av Antônio Alves 340, Atalaia Velha; carne do sol for 2 US\$12.50) The local spot for Northeastern specialties like *carne do sol* (sun-dried beef).

New Hakata (Av Beira Mar; per person Wed US\$15; ☎) This large Japanese restaurant has an excellent all-you-can-eat buffet to live jazz every Wednesday.

Getting There & Around

BRA, Gol, Ocean Air, TAM, and Varig operate domestic flights from Aracaju.

The Rodoviária Nova (New Bus Terminal) is 4km east of the center. Frequent buses go to Maceió (US\$10 to US\$16, four hours, four daily), Penedo (US\$8, three hours, daily), Recife (US\$26, 23 hours, daily) and Salvador (US\$17 to US\$25, 4½ hours, 10 daily). City and local buses leave from the **Rodoviária Velha** (Old Bus Terminal; Av Divina Pastora, Centro).

PENEDO

☎ 0xx82 / pop 56,750

Penedo is a riverfront colonial town with a rich collection of beautiful 17th- and 18th-century constructions, including many churches. Attractions include the opportunity to travel the often jade-colored waters of the Rio São Francisco and the bustling markets that crowd downtown streets, especially on Saturday.

Information

Major bank ATMs are along the riverfront.

Tourist office (☎ 3551-2727; Praça Barão de Penedo) Gives out maps and offers one-hour walking tours (Portuguese only).

Sights & Activities

River tours to sand dunes at the rivermouth (US\$10 to US\$15, 2½ hours), passing floating islands and riverfront homes, leave from Piaçabuçu (28km downriver). There is at least one daily departure at 9am; boats have a four-passenger minimum. For a shorter ride, grab a ferry (US\$75¢) to Neópolis, another colonial town, or Carrapicho (Santana do São Francisco), a nearby village noted for its ceramics.

Sleeping & Eating

Pousada Estilo (☎ 3551-2465; Praça Jácome Calheiros 79; US\$12.50/25) A local family rents clean, simple *apartamentos* in its home on a colonial plaza. Second-floor rooms are breezy, and nicer than those in its *pousada* closer to the river.

Pousada Colonial (☎ 3551-2355; Praça 12 de Abril 21; s & d US\$40; 🚽) This restored colonial house on the riverfront has clean, simple rooms with stained-wood floors and antique furniture – some with river views.

Esquina Imperial (Av Floriano Peixoto 61; lunch per kg US\$6) A simple place with a buffet lunch and soups and sandwiches at night.

Forte da Rocheira (Rua da Rocheira 2; dishes US\$12-15) The novel location – fastened to a 17th-century fort's outer wall – and river view compensate for unexciting meat and fish dishes.

Getting There & Away

For Maceió (US\$7.50), take the *pinga BR-101* (BR-101 drip; four hours, one daily), the *expresso litoral* (coastal express; 2½ hours, two daily) or the *pinga litoral* (coastal drip; four hours, four daily) bus. The latter gives a thorough tour of this beautiful coastal stretch. Only one daily bus goes to Aracaju (US\$6.75, three hours) or Salvador (US\$23.50, nine hours). *Topiques* (vans) to Maceió, Piaçabuçu and Aracaju leave frequently (roughly 5am to 4:30pm Monday to Saturday, fewer on Sunday) near the bus station.

MACEIÓ

☎ 0xx82 / pop 796,840

Maceió is a modern city blessed with winning restaurant and nightlife scenes, but its attractive city beachfronts are what really give it an edge. Here vividly green water laps up on sands lined with brightly painted *jangadas* (traditional sailboats), and locals weave their evening walks between thatched-roof restaurants and palm-shaded *futebol* fields. Just an

hour away, **Praia do Gunga** is a work of tropical perfection and reason enough to stop in Maceió. The city's largest festival, Maceió Fest, is a Salvador-style, out-of-season Carnaval in the second week of December.

Information

Aeroturismo (Centro ☎ 3326-2020/2500; Rua Barão do Penedo 61; Shopping Iguatemi ☎ 3357-1184; 🕒 10am-9:30pm Mon-Sat, 3-9:30pm Sun) Changes traveler's checks.

Alsetures (☎ 3315-1603; Av Dr Antônio Gouveia 1143, Pajuçara) Tourist-information office; staffed by teenagers.

Banco do Brasil (Centro Rua João Pessoa; Ponta Verde Av Alvaro Otacílio 2963) Has ATMs on the Pajuçara waterfront.

Monkey internet (Av Eng Mario de Gusmão 513, Ponta Verde; per hr US\$1.50; 🚽) Provides speedy internet until late.

Sights & Activities

High-quality Alagoan folk art is displayed at **Museu Théo Brandão** (Av da Paz 1490; admission US\$1; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun), including festival headpieces weighing up to 35kg. The museum puts on free folkloric presentations in its courtyard on Thursday from 8pm to 10pm.

Praia de Ponta Verde and **Jatiúca** are good city beaches with calm water. **Praia do Francês** (24km) is pretty and lined with beach bars – it is Maceió's major weekend destination and has lots of *pousadas*. Incredibly idyllic **Praia do Gunga** sits across a river from Barra de São Miguel (34km) – get there before 9am for easiest/cheapest transport.

Jangadas sail 2km out to natural pools formed by the reef (US\$6.50) from Praia de Pajuçara. It's a bit overrun.

Sleeping

Beachside Pajuçara is much more tranquil than the center.

Maceió Hotel (☎ 3326-1975; Rua Dr Pontes de Miranda 146; s/d US\$5/10) All are clean and basic, but 2nd-floor rooms have windows.

Mar Amar (☎ 3231-1551; Rua Dr Antônio Pedro de Mendonça 343, Pajuçara; s/d US\$10/20; 🚽) The whole place is a bit banged up, but the small rooms with mismatching furniture are clean.

Albergue Algamar (☎ 3231-2246; Rua Pref Abdon Arroxelas 327, Ponta Verde; dm/s/d US\$16/30/30; 🚽) This large house converted into a hostel has a wide front veranda and a TV room. Private rooms overpriced.

Pousada Glória (☎ 3337-2348; Rua Jangadeiros 1119, Pajuçara; s/d US\$20/25; 🚽) A local family rents these fair-sized rooms above its bakery. The



amiability and good room quality make this the best budget option.

Hotel Praia Bonita (☎ 2121-3700; www.praiaBonita.com.br; Av Dr Antônio Gouveia 943; s/d US\$40/45; 🏠) An attractive two-story hotel on the waterfront, Praia Bonita has an alluring design and tasteful local artwork.

Eating

Pajuçara, Ponta Verde, and Jatiúca's beachfronts are loaded with restaurants, the latter containing the most reputable dinner spots. Clusters of beachfront stands make *beiju de tapioca* (US\$1 to US\$2) by heating manioc flour until it solidifies, folding it in half, and filling it with savory or sweet fillings – super yummy.

For a cheap seafood lunch, locals head for Massagueira (10km south), a fishing village on the southern shore of Lagoa Mundaú with simple waterfront restaurants.

Paraíso Lanches (Av Dr Antônio Gouveia 877, Pajuçara) This simple café serves innovative sandwiches ranging from soy to hamburger (US\$1.75 to US\$4.25), salads (US\$2.50 to US\$5.25), savory whole-wheat pancakes (US\$2.25 to US\$4.50), *açaí* and a huge variety of fresh fruit juices.

Sarah's Esfiha's (Rua Dr Lessa de Azevedo 59, Pajuçara; esfihas US\$75¢) Sarah's is a simple Middle Eastern restaurant that makes *esfihas* (fluffy breads topped or filled) to order, in addition to hummus, tabouleh and all the rest.

Mestre Cuca (Av Dep José Lages 453, Ponta Verde; per kg US\$8) Despite the simple environment, the spread is great and includes lots of salads.

Divina Gula (Rua Eng Paulo B Nogueira 85, Jatiúca; mains US\$6-11) This popular Maceió institution specializes in Minas Gerais and Northeastern dishes, and boasts over 50 different kinds of *cachaça*.

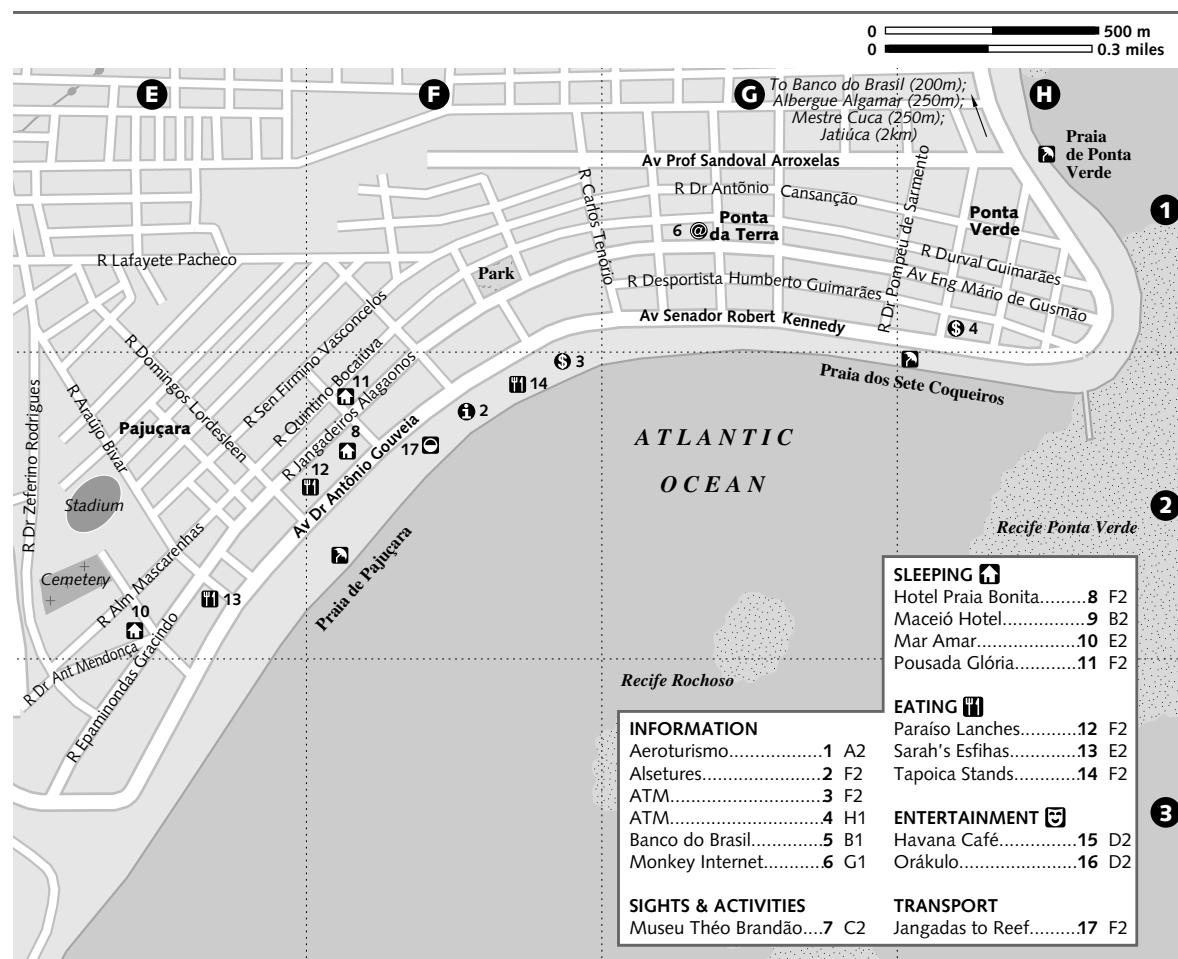
Massarella (Rua José Pontes Magalhães 271, Jatiúca; mains US\$6-12; 🍷) This is the spot for homemade pastas and brick-oven pizzas. Decor consisting of hanging cheese and decorative plates adds authenticity.

Entertainment

Nightlife centers in Stella Maris. The three places following fill every night.

Lampião (Av Álvaro Otacílio, Jatiúca) Offers beachfront *forró*.

Oráculo (Rua Barão de Jaraguá 717, Jaraguá) Popular bar has a different type of live music daily.



BRAZIL

Aquarela (Av Juca Sampaio 1785, Jacintinho) Has live *forró* and *pagode*.

Gay venues like **Havana Café** (Av Com Leão 85, Jaraguá), which is actually pretty mixed, surround Orákulo.

Getting There & Away

BRA, Gol, Ocean Air, TAM and Varig operate domestic flights from Maceió's airport, 25km north of the center.

The bus station is 6km north of the center. Buses head to Recife (US\$14 to US\$21, 3½ hours, 14 daily), Penedo (US\$7.50; *expresso litoral*, 2½ hours, two daily; *pinga litoral*, four hours, four daily; *pinga BR-101*, four hours, one daily), Aracaju (US\$13 to US\$16, four hours, four daily) and Salvador (US\$26 to US\$37, nine hours, four daily).

RECIFE

☎ 0xx81 / pop 2.9 million

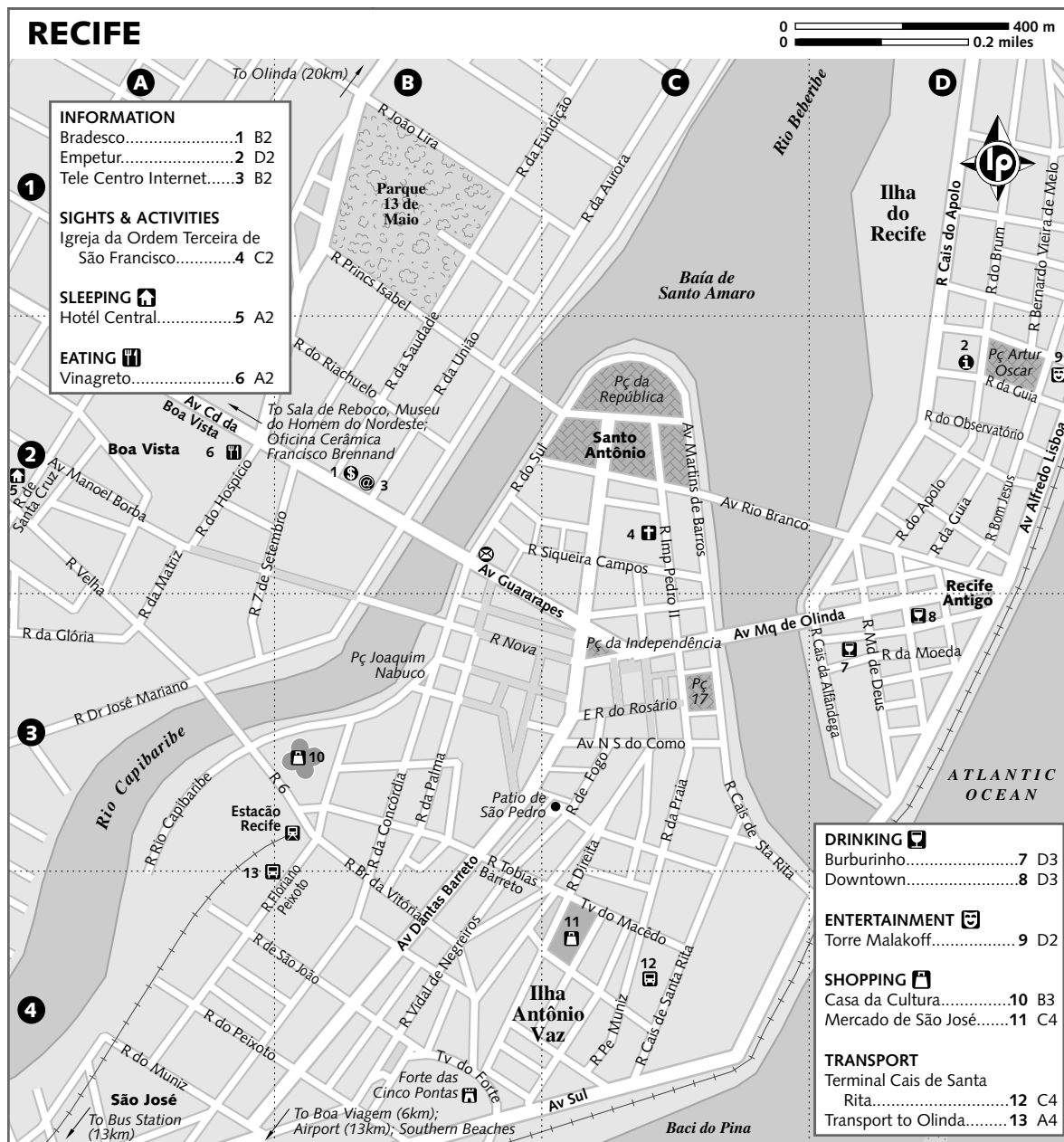
Second only to Salvador in the Northeast, Recife is one of Brazil's cultural hot spots. It is also a major port and urban center, and unfortunately invests very little in its tourism, so an initial reaction to its gritty high-rises

and stinky canals may be disappointment. But with a little persistence and a few good nights out, it's possible to get a glimpse of the local dances, rhythms and nightlife that bring it fame. Recife can be enjoyed through trips from its sister city Olinda, which travelers consistently agree is a more pleasant base.

GETTING INTO TOWN

The Terminal Integrado de Passageiros (TIP), a combined long-distance bus station and metro terminal, is 14km southwest of the center. From the TIP to all Recife and Olinda destinations, catch a metro train (🚇 5am to 11pm) to the Estação Recife stop (US60¢, 25 minutes). For Boa Viagem, catch the 'Setubal (Príncipe)' bus. For Olinda, catch the 'Rio Doce/Princesa Isabel' bus.

From the airport (which lies about 10km south of the center), the Aeroporto bus goes to Boa Viagem and then Av Dantas Barreto in the center. For Olinda, take this bus to Recife's Terminal Cais de Santa Rita, and catch a 'Rio Doce' or 'Pau Amarelo' bus.



BRAZIL

Orientation

Recife's commercial center spreads from Boa Vista, across the Rio Capibaribe, to Santo Antônio. Both are busy during the day and deserted at night and on Sundays. The Ilha do Recife holds the quiet, historical Recife Antigo district. Boa Viagem is an affluent beachside neighborhood 6km south of the center. Its beachfront is divided into three zones called *jardins* (gardens).

Information

Bradesco (Av Guararapes, Boa Vista)
Empetur airport (☎ 3462-4960); Recife Antigo (☎ 3224-2361; Rua Bom Jesus 197); TIP (☎ 3452-2824)
Pl@y (Av Conselheiro Aguiar 2964, Boa Viagem; per hr US\$2.50; ☎) Across from Albergue Maracatus.

Tele Centro Internet (Av Conde da Boa Vista 56, Centro; per hr US\$2)
Tourist Police (☎ 3326-9603; airport)

Sights & Activities

Serpents gape, buttocks bulge, reptiles emerge from their shells and jaws gape skyward at the **Oficina Cerâmica Francisco Brennand** (Várzea; admission US\$2; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Thu, to 4pm Fri). The artist revitalized his family's abandoned factory to produce decorative ceramic tiles and display a seemingly exhaustive exhibition of his peculiar sculptures. A trip out to this forested suburb is a regional highlight, so bring a picnic and hang out on the extensive grounds. Take the UR7-Várzea bus from the main post office downtown on Av Guararapes to the end of the line

(35 minutes). From there, catch a taxi (US\$3) as the several-kilometer walk is unsafe.

The **Museu do Homem do Nordeste** (Av 17 de Agosto 2187, Casa Forte) was closed for renovation at press time; ask Empetur if this excellent anthropological museum has reopened.

Highlights of the old city include the 17th-century **Igreja da Ordem Terceira de São Francisco** (Rua Imperador Pedro II; ☎ 8-11am & 2-5pm Mon-Fri, 8-11:30am Sat), whose Capela Dourada (Golden Chapel) is one of the finest examples of Brazilian baroque.

Few locals actually enter Praia Boa Viagem's waters – you'll find cleaner water further south at **Praia Pedra do Xaréu** (20km) and **Praia Calhetas** (23km).

Festivals & Events

Carnaval Recife holds one of Brazil's most colorful and folkloric Carnivals. The rehearsals and parties in the months leading up to it are a good taste of the actual event. Carnival groups and spectators deck themselves out in elaborate costumes such as *maracatu* (warrior with a huge headpiece and a flower in his mouth), *caboclo* (indigenous-African mix), colonial-era royalty, harlequin, bull and *frevo* (crop tops with ruffled sleeves for both genders and a tiny umbrella), and shimmy for days to frenetic *frevo* and strongly African-influenced *maracatu* beats. Action concentrates in the Centro and in Recife Antigo. Carnival safety tips on p343 also apply here.

Recifolia is an out-of-season, Salvador-style Carnaval, the last week in October.

Sleeping

Boa Viagem is a better area than the Centro.

Hotel Central (☎ /fax 3222-4001; s/d US\$11/19) Bright rooms with high ceilings and the tree-shaded street make this once-grand 1930s hotel a great budget option.

Albergue Maracatus do Recife (☎ 3326-1221; www.geocities.com/alberguemaracatus; Rua Maria Carolina 185, Boa Viagem; dm/s/d US\$12.50/12.50/25; 🍷 🍷) Airy dorm rooms and funky light fixtures await at this hostel installed in a stylish 1970s home. A onetime bedding charge (US\$1.75) is additional. Guest-use kitchen available. Near bus stop 10 on Av Domingos Ferreira.

Boa Viagem Hostel (☎ 3326-9572; www.hostelboa.viagem.com.br; Rua Aviador Severiano Lins 455, Boa Viagem; dm/s/d US\$15/32/32; 🍷) Plain dorm rooms are compensated for by plenty of green outdoor chill space. Near Colégio Boa Viagem.

Pousada Casuarinas (☎ 3325-4708; www.pousada.casuarinas.com.br; Rua Antônio Pedro Figueiredo 151, Boa Viagem; s/d US\$30/41; 🍷) Lots of folk art spices up the modern architecture at this quiet *pousada*

shaded by mango trees. Near the Bompreço supermarket on Av Domingos Ferreira.

Eating

Boa Viagem's restaurants, outside of the Polo Pina area (see below), are scattered. For dinner in the Centro, try the Pátio de São Pedro, a cute colonial courtyard, or Recife Antigo.

Sucão (Rua dos Navegantes 783, Boa Viagem; US\$2.75-6) Try one of 100 types of fresh fruit juices to accompany your sandwich, quiche or salad. Near the Recife Palace.

Vinagreto (Rua do Hospício 203, Centro; per kg US\$8.50; 🍷) Great buffet lunch.

Sabor de Beijo (Av Conselheiro Aguiar 2994, Boa Viagem; per kg US\$9; 🍷) This popular sweet shop has a pretty fancy lunch buffet. Near Albergue Maracatus.

Parraxaxá (Rua Baltazar Pereira 32, Boa Viagem; per kg US\$11) Festive decor and costumed waitstaff spice up your meal at this fun Northeastern-themed restaurant. Near the Conjunto Pernambucano on Av Conselheiro Aguiar.

Drinking

In the Centro, the Patio de São Pedro is a popular hangout, especially on Terça Negra (Black Tuesday), a night of Afro-Brazilian rhythms, or during happy hour.

Boa Viagem attracts Recife's affluent youth. Nightlife concentrates in an area called Polo Pina.

Recife Antigo (aka Polo Bom Jesus) has a few bars with outdoor tables along Rua Bom Jesus that are active during happy hour and Sunday afternoon/evenings.

Burburinho (Rua Tomzinha 106) Packs on Monday, Thursday and Saturday for pop-rock and local bands.

Downtown (Rua Vigário Tenório 105) Has pool tables and a happening dance floor, and plays rock.

Conselheiro (Av Conselheiro Aguiar 793, Boa Viagem) Offers both a sit-down pub with food and a dance floor, and has been rated Recife's best place to flirt (tied with Burburinho).

Musique (Rua Tenente João Cícero 202, Boa Viagem) Has good DJs, or have a drink at A Casa next door.

Boratcho (Av Herculano Bandeira 513, Polo Pina, Boa Viagem) This is a grooving dance club that often plays Recife's own *mangue beat* (modernized *maracatu*).

Sala de Reboco (Rua Gregório Junior 264, Cordeiro) *The spot for forró.*

Entertainment

Pernambuco Cultural (☎ 3268-9299; www.agendapernambucocultural.com.br) Produces excellent cultural shows showcasing Pernambuco's rich array of music and dance. If Maracatu Nação Pernambuco or Toque Leoa (all women) are performing, don't miss them. Torre Malakoff (Rua do Bom Jesus, Recife Antigo) is often the venue.

Shopping

For Pernambuco's traditional handicrafts (ceramic figurines, wood sculptures and leather goods), head for the following.

Casa da Cultura (🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-2pm Sun)

This is housed in a colonial-era prison which functioned until 1979, and often has cultural performances around 3pm on Fridays.

Mercado do São José (🕒 6am-5:30pm Mon-Sat, to noon Sun) Worthwhile market.

Getting There & Around

BRA, Gol, TAM, Ocean Air and Varig operate domestic flights from Recife's airport, 10km south of the center. TAP connects Recife with Europe.

Bus tickets can be purchased at outlets in town or by calling **Disk Rodoviária** (☎ 3452-3990), a bus-ticket delivery service. Buses run to João Pessoa (US\$9, two hours, hourly 5am to 7pm), Natal (US\$16, 4½ hours, nine daily), Fortaleza (US\$43 to US\$76, 12 hours, three daily), Macaíó (US\$13 to US\$20, four hours, 12 to 14 daily), Salvador (US\$40 to US\$50, 11 to 12 hours, two daily) and Rio (US\$123 to US\$134, 42 hours, three daily).

From the center to Boa Viagem, take any bus marked 'Aeroporto', 'Shopping Center', 'Candeias' or 'Piedade' from Av NS do Carmo. To return, take any bus marked 'Dantas Barreto.'

OLINDA

☎ 0xx81 / pop 360,000

Olinda is recognized as Recife's cultural counterpart: a vibrant city with bohemian quarters, art galleries, music in the streets and a celebration always in the works. In the historical center, quiet streets lined with pastel-colored houses and packed with churches overlook the sea. This is one of Brazil's best-preserved colonial cities and, together with Recife, one of its major cultural centers. Despite being a touristy destination Olinda remains charming, friendly and local.

Information

Major banks are located northeast of Praça do Carmo, once Av Marcos Freire turns into Av Getúlio Vargas. Any *kombi* heading in that direction will drop you at the door.

Information post (☎ 3305-1048; Praça do Carmo 100) Free guides available.

Olinda Net Café (Praça do Carmo 5-B; per hr US\$2.50)

Olind@net.com (Rua do Sol; per hr US\$1.50)

Dangers & Annoyances

Crime (mostly petty) does exist in Olinda. Avoid walking alone along deserted streets or carrying valuables at night. The city recommends using only its free yellow-shirted guides to avoid sticky situations involving payment discrepancies.

Sights & Activities

The layout of the historical center's steep streets creates an intuitive walking tour. As you wander, keep an eye out for colorful graffiti pieces with folkloric themes.

The **Museu do Mamulengo** (Rua do Amparo 59) displays wooden hand puppets typical of the northeast. The **Casa dos Bonecos Gigantes** (Rua do Amparo 45) houses giant papier-mâché Carnival puppets weighing up to 13kg. Both were closed for renovation at press time.

The *capoeira* school, **Angola Mãe** (Rua Ilma Cunha 243), welcomes visitors to take classes or watch an open *roda* (circle) at 6pm on Sunday. Go with a respectful attitude and unaccompanied by a guide. Look for a metal gate painted in zebra stripes. Another place to see *capoeira* or local dances is the **Alto da Sé** around 4pm on Sunday.

Churches open for visitation from 8am to 11:30am and 1:30pm to 5pm. The 1582 **Mosteiro de São Bento** (Rua São Bento) has an exceptional carved and gilded wooden main altar to awe even the nonbeliever. The 10:30am Sunday mass includes Gregorian chants.

Though capable of producing interesting exhibits, the most fascinating thing about the **Museu de Arte Contemporânea** (Rua 13 de Maio; admission US\$35; 🕒 9am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Fri, 2-5pm Sat & Sun) is its past as an 18th-century Inquisition jail. Prisoners were kept on the 2nd floor – check out the hole in a wall that extends to the basement (a toilet) and the ominous heavy wooden doors.

The **Museu de Arte Sacra de Pernambuco** (Rua Bispo Coutinho; admission US\$35; 🕒 9am-1pm Mon-Fri) has folkloric representations of Christ in addition to traditional sacred art.

Local buses leave from Praça do Carmo for **Praia do Pau Amarelo** (14km) and **Praia da Maria Farinha** (23km), northern-coast beaches with calm waters. Locals prefer the southern coast.

Festivals & Events

You can get a taste of Carnival on weekends (especially Sunday nights) in the months leading up to it, when *blocos* rehearse in the streets and throughout the historical center. Olinda's festive spirit revives the Friday following Carnival and on March 11th for the city's birthday.

Carnaval Traditional and colorful, and has an intimacy and security not found in big-city Carnivals. Fast and frenetic *frevo* music sets the pace, balanced by the heavy

drumbeats of *maracatu*. Costumed *blocos* and spectators dance through the streets in this highly inclusive, playful and lewd festival. Carnival safety tips on p343 also apply here.

Festival de Folclore Nordestino Showcases dance, music and folklore of the northeast at the end of August. Recommended.

Sleeping

Book well ahead for Carnival, though it can be cheaper to rent a room or house.

Pousada d'Olinda (☎ 3494-2559; www.pousada.dolinda.com.br; Praça João Alfredo 178; dm US\$12.50, s/d US\$25/35; ♿ ♿) Choose between a 12-bed dorm room that gets all the street party noise or a four-bed, tool shed-like setup outback. Private rooms on the 2nd floor are poor, but

OLINDA

0 200 m
0 0.1 miles

AMPARO
Igreja NS do Amparo
Estrada do Bonifácio

ALTO DA SÉ
Igreja NS da Conceição
Igreja da Misericórdia
Rua Bispo Coutinho
Igreja da Sé
Convento São Francisco

AMARO BRANCO
Igreja NS da Graça Seminário de Olinda
Pç Dantas Barreto
Travessa Dantas Barreto

CARMO
Igreja NS do Carmo
Pç da Abolição (Preguiça)
Pç do Carmo

VARADORO
Mercado Eufrásio Barbosa

MILAGRES

ATLANTIC OCEAN
Praia do Carmo

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those out back are an excellent midrange option. The pool and lawn area is pretty and very social.

Albergue de Olinda (☎ 3429-1592; www.alberguedeolinda.com.br; Rua do Sol 233; dm/s/d US\$13/25/30; 🏠) Modern rooms in a historical building are complimented by a nice garden with hammocks and an outdoor kitchen. Traffic noise is constant.

Pousada Alquimia (☎ 3429-1457; Rua Prudente de Morais 292; s/d US\$20/25) Simple rooms are constructed in a block behind the owner's colonial home; breakfast is served in his kitchen.

Pousada Alto Astral (☎ 3439-3453; www.pousadaaltoastral.com.br; Rua 13 de Maio 305; s/d US\$30/40; 🏠) Rooms opening to the leafy garden behind the *pousada* are airy and bright; others are dark. Bargain hard.

Pousada dos Quatro Cantos (☎ 3429-0220; www.pousada4cantos.com.br; Rua Prudente dos Morais 441; s/d without bathroom US\$40/46) The *quartos* in this delightful colonial former weekend home overlook a shaded courtyard.

Eating

Dinner prices run high in the historical center.

Jardins do Mourisco (Av Dr Justino Gonçalves; per kg US\$8) The buffet is good (the desserts are better!) and the gravel courtyard beneath towering, vine-wrapped *jaca* trees is memorable.

Creperia (Praça João Alfredo 168; dishes US\$4-9) Enjoy a sweet or savory crepe in a palm-shaded patio or in the dining room hung with decorative plates and street signs at this charming restaurant.

A Toca da Pizza (Rua do Guadalupe 53; large US\$4.50-7.50) An Italian transplant serves excellent pizzas out of her simple home. Dinner only.

Cantinho da Sé (Ladeira da Sé; mains for two US\$9-12.50) Typical Brazilian meat dishes are complemented by a view over Recife at this unassuming spot.

Oficina do Sabor (Rua do Amparo 335; mains for two US\$14-35) Olinda's nationally known gourmet bistro is small, quaint and has a view over Recife. Stuffed baked pumpkins are the house specialty.

Drinking

Follow a sunset drink at Alto da Sé with dancing at one of the simple spots along unattractive Rua do Sol. Music varies from *forró* and *afoxé* (traditional Afro-Brazilian rhythm) to rock and reggae.

Preto Velho (Alto da Sé 681) Has live *afoxé* (Saturday) and *axé*, *samba* and reggae (Sunday afternoon).

Marola (Travessa Dantas Barreto) Waterfront Marola has live *MPB* nightly and on Sunday afternoons.

Getting There & Around

See the boxed text, p359 for bus information from the airport. Once in Olinda, get off at Praça do Carmo. 'Rio Doce/Piedade' and 'Barra de Jangada/Casa Caiada' buses run between Olinda and Boa Viagem. Any 'Rio Doce', 'Casa Caiada' or 'Jardim Atlantico' bus connects central Recife to Olinda.

CARUARU

☎ 0xx81 / pop 300,000

Modern and without architectural appeal, this inland market city contains unexpected cultural riches. Known as the Capital of *forró*, Caruaru hosts a **forró festival** for the 30 days straight of June. It is also South America's center for ceramic-figurine art, famous for brightly painted little people captured in daily activities.

Off Rua José de Vasconcelos, beneath a tall brick smokestack, the **Museu do Barro** (Patio do Forró; ☎ 8am-5pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun) displays the work of accomplished local clay sculptors, the most famous being Mestre Vitalino. It's worth going to **Alto de Moura**, 6km from the center, where Vitalino lived and worked and where his descendants carry on the tradition. Wednesday and Saturday are big days for the **Feira Livre**, a huge open-air market in the center selling everything imaginable, including figurines and other crafts.

Buses run between Recife and Caruaru every half hour from 5:50am to 8pm (*executivo* US\$9, 1½ hours; *comun* US\$7.25, 2½ hours). The bus station is 3km from the center – ask to be let off near the market.

JACUMÃ

☎ 0xx83 / pop 2000

Jacumã is great for recharging your batteries (naked!) on nearly deserted beaches, with a little weekend *forró* for spice. The village itself, full of Joao Pessoa's weekend homes, is nothing special. The southern beaches, however, with their tall, arid red cliffs, palms and green water, are stunning. Most *pousadas* are located near these beaches – cars are the predominant mode of transport. There are no banks.

Infamous **Praia de Tambaba** (14km) is the northeast's only official, regulated and uncreepy (men unaccompanied by a woman are prohibited) nudist beach. **Praia do Coqueirinho** (8km) and **Praia de Tabatinga** (4km) are equally beautiful.

In the center, **Pousada Beija-Flor** (☎ 3290-1822; Rua Maria Amélia; s/d US\$14/20; 🚽 🚿) has a row of well-put-together rooms with hammocks overlooking the sandy road.

A cool Argentine couple runs pretty **Pousada dos Mundos** (☎ 3290-1460; www.pousadadosmundos.com.ar; Rua dos Juazeiros, Praia de Tabatinga; s/d US\$25/30; 🚽 🚿). Rooms are ample-sized, have attractive wooden furniture and private verandas with hammocks, and are two blocks from the beach. The owners will help resolve transport issues and a local restaurant delivers (all fairly cheap). Call for a ride from the center. English spoken.

Straightforward Kelly Lanches serves pizza, *prato feito* (US\$3) and excellent hamburgers (US85¢ to US\$2). Commar also has a great *prato feito* (US\$3). Both are on the main road in the center.

Traveling north on Hwy BR-101, get off at the Conde/Jacumã turnoff and catch a local bus from there. From João Pessoa, take a 'Jacumã' or 'Conde/Jacumã' (US\$1.75, 1½ hours, every 20 minutes until 9pm) bus, or 'PB-008' (US\$1.25, one hour, every 40 minutes) bus. They depart from the third stop up Rua Cicero Meireles, which runs perpendicular to the front of the bus station. Four daily buses run between João Pessoa and Praia de Tambaba, passing through Jacumã.

JOÃO PESSOA

☎ 0xx83 / pop 600,000

Though not a real tourist draw itself, João Pessoa makes a comfortable (and economical) base from which to check out the stark and beautiful surrounding beaches.

Orientation & Information

In the evening everyone heads for the beachfront promenade where there are thatched-roof stands and restaurants, and bars and clubs nearby. There are major banks in the center and on Av Senador Rui Carneiro in Manaíra.

Gameleira Internet (Av João Maurício 157, Manaíra; per hr US\$1.50) David, the American owner, is a good information source and teaches three-day, Portuguese-for-the-traveler crash courses.

PBTur (☎ 0800-281-9229; Av Almirante Tamandaré 100, Tambaú) Has maps and English-speakers.

Sights & Activities

The worthwhile **Centro Cultural de São Francisco** (admission US\$1.50; 🕒 9am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sun) is a beautiful, architecturally confused religious complex built over three centuries due to interrupting battles with the Dutch and French. Don't miss the floor tiles inlaid with myrrh resin and extremely good popular-art exposition. The **Casa do Artista Popular** (Praça da Independência 56, Centro; 🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) displays local popular artwork in a restored early 20th-century home.

The city beaches are built up but have calm, relatively clean water. The best surrounding beaches are **Praia Campina** (43km), a surf beach, and **Praia do Oiteiro** (40km). It is a gorgeous 15km walk south from Praia Cabo Branco to **Ponta de Seixas**, the easternmost tip of South America.

Sleeping

Tambaú and Manaíra are beachfront and more pleasant than the Centro.

Pousada Arco Íris (☎ 3241-8086; Rua Visconde de Pelotas 20, Centro; s/d US\$7.50/14; 🚽 🚿) A clean, basic option a few blocks up from the lake.

Hotel Mar Azul (☎ 3226-2660; Av João Maurício 315, Manaíra; without breakfast r US\$15) A no-frills place on the waterfront with giant rooms with kitchenettes.

Manaíra Hostel (☎ 3247-1962; www.manairahostel.br2.net; Rua Major Ciraulo 380, Manaíra; dm/d US\$16/30; 🚽 🚿) This modern home converted into an attractive hostel has nice bathrooms, cooking facilities and plenty of hangout space.

Pousada do Caju (☎ 2107-8700; www.pousadadocaju.com.br; Rua Helena Meira Lima 269, Tambaú; s/d US\$27/47; 🚽 🚿) Two neighboring homes were connected to create this colorful *pousada*. Look at a few rooms.

Eating

Bars and restaurants concentrate in Tambaú. Stalls in front of the round Hotel Tropical Tambaú serve *beiju de tapioca* (savory or sweet manioc flour 'taco'), *macaxeira na chapa* (manioc pancake filled with meat or cheese), soup and more.

Oca (Rua Almirante Barroso 303, Centro) The spot for a weekday vegetarian buffet lunch.

Lion (Av Tamandaré 624, Tambaú; mains US\$2.25-8) Known for crepes, but the pizza is a good deal on midweek *rodízio* nights (US\$5.50).

Mangai (Av General Édson Ramalho 696, Manaíra; per kg US\$10) The dinner buffet is a local institution and an excellent way to sample specialties from the northeast's interior.

Picanha de Ouro (Av Epitácio Pessoa, Tambaú; sirloin for 2 US\$13) Don't let the complete lack of ambience keep you from the best BBQ around.

Getting There & Around

Gol, TAM and Varig operate domestic flights from João Pessoa's airport, 11km west of the center.

Buses run to Recife (US\$7 to US\$9, two hours, hourly 5am to 7:30pm), Natal (US\$10 to US\$13, three hours, eight daily), Fortaleza (US\$42 to US\$80, 10 hours, two daily) and Salvador (US\$55, 14 hours, one to two daily). Buses 510 and 511 go to Tambaú from the first platform in front of the bus station. Most local buses pass the Lagoa in the center.

PRAIA DA PIPA

☎ 0xx84 / pop 3000

Pipa rivals Jericoacoara as the Northeast's hippest beach town outside Bahia. It becomes more upscale with every passing year, but try not to let the boutiques get you down. An alternative, laid-back vibe dominates Pipa, and nightlife can be really fun. Natural beauty abounds here, too, with dolphin-filled waters and pristine beaches backed by magnificent tall bluffs.

There is one ATM and internet runs US\$2 per hour. Bookshop rents books.

Sights & Activities

Santuário Ecológico (admission US\$2; ☒ 8am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun) is a small flora and fauna reserve worth visiting for the spectacular views. It's on the road into town.

Southernmost of the beaches is **Praia do Amor**. North of town, **Praia dos Golfinhos** is accessible only via the beach and is closed off by high tide. You can get to **Praia do Madeiro** from Golfinhos or catch a *kombi* leaving town. Pipa has some decent surf – boards and lessons are available in town. Kite surfing lessons are also available.

Sleeping

Reservations are required for all major holidays.

Camping das Mangueiras (☎ 3223-8153/3246-2472; Rua Praia do Amor; campsites per person US\$5) Shady patches and outdoor showers.

Albergue da Rose (☎ 8844-8371; Rua da Mata; s/d US\$12.50/25) At the top of the hill, sweet Rose rents a few rooms around a small, open-air veranda with hammocks.

Pousada Xamã (☎ 3246-2267; www.pousadaxama.com; Rua dos Cajueiros 12; dm/s/d US\$12.50/15/35; ☒ ☑) This primo budget *pousada* has hammocks all around, a great breakfast, comfortable rooms and is pretty and green.

Pousada Aconchego (☎ 3246-2439; www.pipa.com.br/aconchego; Rua do Céu 100; s/d US\$25/35) Simply constructed bungalows with hammocks and extra touches in a pretty garden. Central location.

Eating

Restaurants are pricey in Pipa.

Casa da Farinha (main road) An excellent bakery with a sandwich grill.

Soparia Chez Liz (main road; soup US\$2-4) This simple café serves up yummy veggie and meat soups.

Tá Massa (Rua da Gameleira; pastas US\$2.75-6.50) Choose from a range of meat or veggie sauces to top penne or spaghetti at this cute little nook.

Tapas Bar (Rua do Céu) The Spanish tradition of creating a meal out of several small plates (tapas) is sensationalizing Pipa.

Getting There & Away

The last bus from Natal (US\$4.25, 1¼ hours, 10 daily, four on Sunday) leaves at 6:45pm, and 6:25pm on Sunday. Taxis from Natal to Pipa run US\$50. If you're coming from the south, get off at Goaininha, 1½ hours from João Pessoa. From Goaininha, catch a *kombi* (US\$1.25, 40 minutes) from behind the church or a taxi (US\$10).

Pipa Tour Ecoturismo, behind Blue Bar, posts bus schedules. There is frequent transport to Natal, but if headed south, you'll have to flag down a bus in Goaininha.

NATAL

☎ 0xx84 / pop 800,000

Natal is a clean, rather bland capital surrounded by impressively large sand dunes. Due to its status as Brazil's 'sun city,' claiming 300 sunny days yearly, it's become a major European package destination. Most travelers stop here simply to spend a day on the dunes. Another draw is **Carnatal**, Natal's Salvador-style, out-of-season Carnival in the first week of December.

Information

ATMs are on Ponta Negra's beachfront.
Banco do Brasil (Av Rio Branco) In the center.
Bradesco (Av Rio Branco) Also in the center.
Hotel Miami Beach (Av Governador Sílvio Pedrosa 24, Praia das Artistas; per hr US\$2) Internet access available.
Pizza a Pezzi (Rua Dr Manoel A B de Araujo, Alto de Ponta Negra 396A; per hr US\$1.50) For internet.
Setur airport (☎ 0800-841-516); Rodoviária Nova (☎ 0xx81-3205-2428) Gives out maps and limited information. Also at Centro de Turismo.

Sights & Activities

Dune-buggy excursions to beautiful **Genipabu** are offered by would-be Ayrton Sennas. If you choose a trip *com emoção* (with emotion), you'll be treated to thrills like Wall

of Death and Vertical Descent. Accredited drivers – members of the **Sindicato dos Bugeiros** (☎ 3225-2077; Posto VIP, Av Rota do Sol, Ponta Negra) – can be more trustworthy. An eight-hour trip runs US\$35 per person and can be arranged through *pousadas*, agencies or, more cheaply, the Sindicato. Before you go, consider the damage these trips do to the dune ecosystem. It's possible to drive to Fortaleza by dune buggy – 760km of gorgeous coastline.

Of Natal's city beaches, **Praia Ponta Negra** (14km south of the center) is urbanized but the nicest. **Morro de Careca** – a steep, monstrous sand dune that drops into the sea – towers over its southern end.

The views of the city and the dunes across the Rio Potengi are fantastic from the



BRAZIL

16th-century **Forte dos Reis Magos** (admission US\$1; ☎ 8am-4:30pm).

Sleeping

Most backpackers stay in pricey-and-pleasant Ponta Negra or with Tia Helena.

Albergue Pousada Meu Canto (☎ 3212-2811; Rua Ana Neri, Petrópolis; dm/d US\$9/20) Within minutes Tia Helena will add you to her international family at this simple *pousada* with pretty greenery. Take bus 21 to the first stop (at Padaria Duro Trigo) on Rua Manoel Dantas.

Albergue da Costa Hostel (☎ 3219-0095; www.alberguedacosta.com.br; Av Praia de Ponta Negra 8932, Ponta Negra; dm/d US\$15/35, d without bathroom US\$32.50; ☎) This fun hostel is laid-back, a bit bohemian, and a more natural environment than Lua Cheia. Guest-use kitchen and hammock area.

Pousada Recanto das Flores (☎ 3219-4065; www.pousadarecantodasflores.com.br; Av Engenheiro Roberto Freire 3161, Ponta Negra; s/d US\$20/35; ☎) This small, cute *pousada* would be charming were it not for noise from the busy avenue. Single rooms are a great deal – check mattress thickness.

Lua Cheia Hostel (☎ 3236-3696; www.luacheia.com.br; Rua Dr Manoel A B de Araujo 500, Alto de Ponta Negra; dm/s/d US\$20/40/40) This novel brick hostel is modeled after a castle – drawbridge, turrets and all. Dark dorms vent to the hostel's exterior and interior, so they're pretty loud. Good for party animals.

Pousada do Alemão (☎ 3219-2655; www.pousada.doalemaorn.com.br; Rua Pedro Fonseca Filho 2030, Ponta Negra; s/d US\$30/35; ☎) Fine, spacious rooms are complemented by a beautiful, oasis-like courtyard with a trickling fountain and pond. German-run.

Eating

In Ponta Negra, places like Esquinão da Vila serve cheap *prato feitos* on Rua Ver Manuel Sátiro south of Av Engenheiro Roberto Freire. For dinner, there are all sorts of novel places in Alto de Ponta Negra.

A Toca do Açai (Rua das Algas 2206, Alto de Ponta Negra) Plastic tables and chairs are spread through a large space, great for hanging out while enjoying *açaí*, snacks and sandwiches. On a residential street.

Lion (Rua Aristides Porpino Filho 285B, Alto de Ponta Negra; mains US\$4.25-12) Choose between crepes, pizza, pasta, meat or seafood dishes as you soak in the cool atmosphere at this former family home (resist the pool). Don't miss the

midweek pizza (US\$6) and pasta (US\$8.50) *rodízio* night.

Restaurante Erva Doce (Av Estrela do Mar 2238, Alto de Ponta Negra; half-portions US\$8-14) The half-portions of meat or seafood feed at least two at this neighborhood place with checked tablecloths and fluorescent-tube lighting.

Entertainment

Ponta Negra is Natal's nightlife center. There are a few dance clubs, and a compact zone of cool, charismatic, open-air bars around Rua Dr Manoel Augusto Bezerra de Araújo in Alto de Ponta Negra. The beachfront is seedy.

Chaplin (Av Presidente Café Filho 27, Praia dos Artistas; admission US\$10; ☎ Thu-Sun) Live *pagode*, *farró* and electronica rock this popular dance club with six separate dance floors. Half-price cover before 11pm.

Forró com Turista (Centro do Turismo, Rua Aderbal Figueiredo 980, Petrópolis; ☎ Thu) This local staple may sound cheesy; live *farró* in a historical courtyard is actually a blast.

Getting There & Around

BRA, Gol, Trip, TAM, and Varig operate domestic flights from Natal's airport, 15km south of the center. TAP connects Natal with Europe.

Long-distance buses leave the Rodoviária Nova (New Bus Station), 6km south of the center, for Fortaleza (US\$28 to US\$49, eight hours, nine daily), Recife (US\$21.50, 4½ hours, nine daily), João Pessoa (US\$8 to US\$13, three hours, eight daily) and Salvador (US\$59 to US\$80, 20 hours, two daily).

If coming from the south and heading for Ponta Negra, get off at Shopping Cidade Jardim and catch a bus or *kombi* to Ponta Negra.

From the Rodoviária Nova to Ponta Negra, take bus 66. For Praia dos Artistas, take bus 38. The Rodoviária Velha (Old Bus Station) is a city bus terminal in the center.

CANOA QUEBRADA

☎ 0xx88 / pop 2800

A former fishing village full of aging hippies, Canoa Quebrada is quickly becoming a wind-sport hot spot. A handful of sand streets, including a main drag lined with restaurants and a few shops, perches between white dunes and rust-colored ocean cliffs. There are a few loud bars, which heat up on weekends, and one ATM. **Canoa Criança**, a children's circus

school, loves interactive guests and gives monthly shows.

Though the hard-packed beaches are not Brazil's most beautiful, dune-buggy tours to **Ponta Grossa** (per person US\$23) or the surrounding dunes (per person US\$12.50) remain popular. The **kite-surfing** season is from July to December; lessons are available. A half hour of **tandem paragliding** runs US\$35. **Ernesto** (☎ 3421-7059; 10min incl cape US\$12.50) has rigged up a way to pull paragliding clients with his jeep such that they fly through the air in superhero position.

Pousada Via Láctea (☎ 3421-7103; www.pousada.vialactea.com; Rua Descida da Praia; per person US\$4) offers camping near the sea. Simple rooms have hammocks, their own wooden staircases and a sea breeze at **Pousada Europa** (☎ 3421-7004; www.portalcanoaquebrada.com.br; s/d US\$15/17.50; 🚽). Sweet hippy touches live up clean, simple rooms at **Pousada das Cores** (☎ 3421-7140; www.portalcanoaquebrada.com.br/pousada_das_cores.htm; s/d US\$15/25). You can hear the waves from **Pousada Colibri** (☎ 9604-4953; www.portalcanoaquebrada.com.br/colibri.htm; s/d US\$35/40; 🚽), which has four comfortable rooms overlooking the far-off sea. **Gostozinho** (Rua Descida da Praia) has no sign and a variety of good *prato feitos* (US\$3). Daily specials (US\$3 to US\$5.50) range from garlic shrimp to chicken lasagna at **Café Habana** (main road).

From Natal, catch a bus to Aracati (US\$27, six hours, six daily) and then a bus, a *kombi* (US\$1), which leave from Aracati's Igreja Matriz until 8pm, or taxi (US\$6) the remaining 13km to Canoa. From Fortaleza (US\$9, 3½ hours, four daily), it's possible to pick up the bus to Canoa in front of Albergue Atalaia (Av Beira Mar 814, Iracema) or in front of Club Náutico (Av Presidente Kennedy, Meireles) before it passes the bus station. Beach Point (Av Presidente Kennedy, Meireles), a shop facing Club Náutico, sells tickets.

FORTALEZA

☎ 0xx85 / 2.2 million

This sprawling commercial center and major fishing port has little touristic appeal, but all the facilities to get you sorted before setting out again. A few historical buildings with pretty facades dot the center, but Fortaleza's overall feel is pretty gritty. Those who partake emerge impressed with the city's nightlife. Bahian tunes shake up Fortaleza during **Fortal**, a Salvador-style, out-of-season Carnival in the last week of July.

Information

Internet access is widely available in Iracema (per hr US\$2).

Banco do Brasil (Rua Floriano Peixoto 941, Centro) Has ATMs at the Centro Cultural Dragão do Mar (Iracema), and in front of the Mercado Central (Centro) and Club Náutico (Meireles).

Tourist information posts airport (☎ 3477-1667); Centro de Turismo (☎ 3101-5508); Praça da Ferreira (☎ 3226-3244); Praia Náutico (☎ 3242-4447)

Dispenses maps and speak some English. Also at the bus station.

Dangers & Annoyances

There is an increasing amount of prostitution in the city, particularly in Iracema, and petty theft is a problem. Male travelers have reported having their drinks drugged by solicitous females on the beach.

Sights & Activities

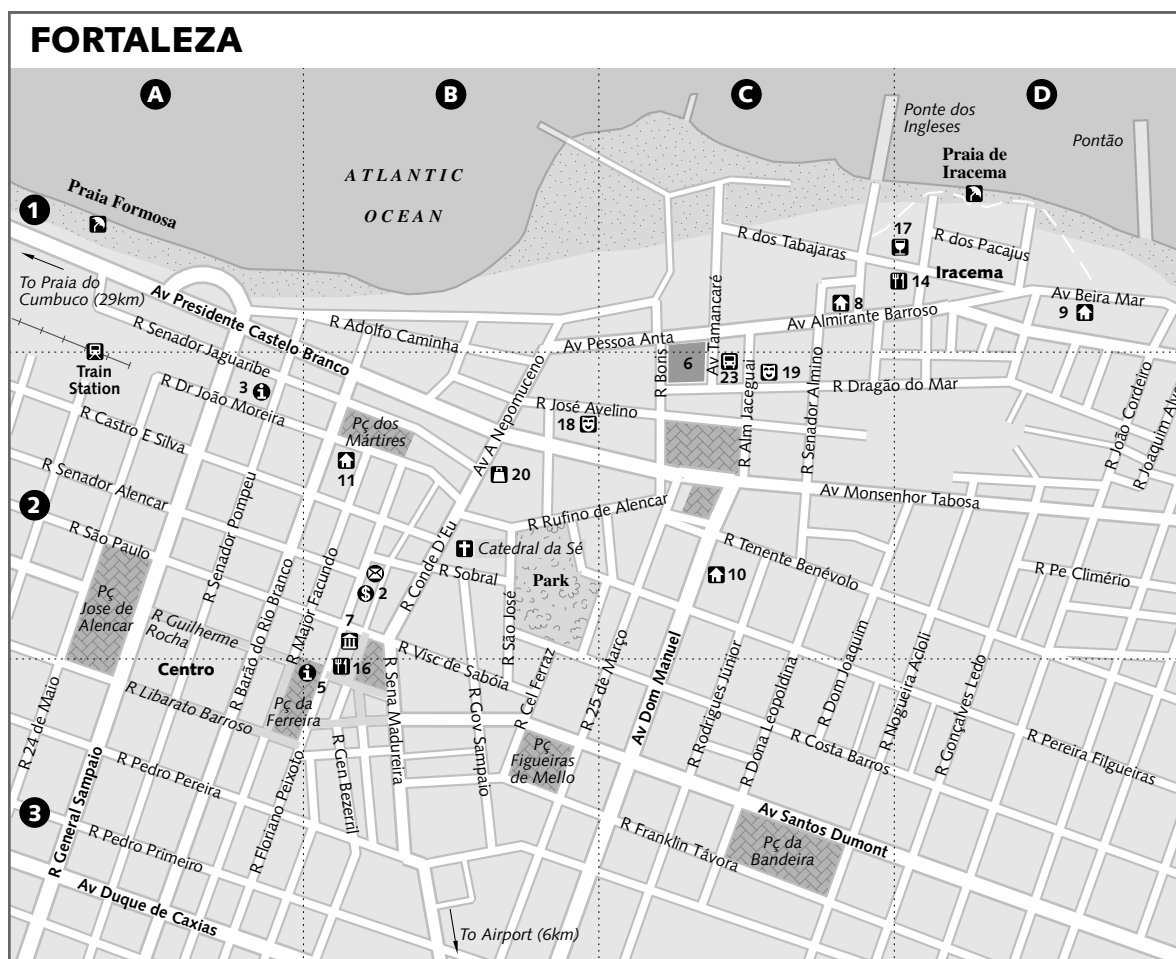
The one-room **Museu de Arte e Cultura Populares** (Centro de Turismo, Centro; admission US\$50¢; 🕒 8am-4:30pm Mon-Sat, to 11:30am Sun) displays folk art from woodblock prints to incredibly intricate colored sand bottles. **Centro Cultural Dragão do Mar** (Iracema; 🕒 9am-5:30pm Mon-Thu, 2-9:30pm Fri-Sun) houses a planetarium, cinema, theater, galleries and the **Museu de Arte Contemporânea** (admission US\$1; 🕒 closed Mon). **Museu do Ceará** (Rua São Paulo 51, Centro; admission US\$1; 🕒 8:30am-5pm) has good exhibits on Ceará's history and anthropology.

Praia do Meireles has an attractive waterfront promenade with thatched-roof restaurants, sport facilities and an evening craft fair. Though nothing too special, **Praia do Futuro** (11km) is the cleanest and most popular of the city beaches. Immediately northwest, tranquil **Praia do Cumbuco** has dunes and *jangada* (traditional sailboat) trips. Beach-buggy excursions to **Morro Branco** (White Hill; per person US\$13) are enjoyable and sold along Meireles' promenade.

Sleeping

Iracema is past its glory days and cheaper than affluent Meireles. Both are preferable to the center.

Albergue Backpackers (☎ 3091-8997; www.alberguebackpackers.sites.uol.com.br; Av Dom Manuel 89, Iracema; s/d US\$12.50/25, without bathroom US\$10/20) Built and run by former traveler and Fortaleza native Gisele, this fantastic hostel has simple rooms with hand-decorated walls, a green chilling area and plenty of insider information. English spoken.



Hotel Passeio (☎ 3226-9640; Rua Dr João Moreira 221, Centro; s/d US\$17.50/27.50; 🏠) For city-center accommodation, the rooms at this hotel aren't too shabby.

Albergue Atalaia (☎ 3219-0755; www.alberguedajuventudeatalaia.com.br; Av Beira Mar 814, Iracema; dm/s/d US\$17.50/30/42.50; 🏠) Cooking facilities, a TV room, and a front patio round out this well-kept hostel. Dorm sheet set an additional US\$3.

Alamo Praia Hotel (☎ 3219-7979; www.alamohotel.com.br; Av Almirante Barroso 885, Iracema; s/d US\$20/30; 🏠) Rooms are dingy but adequate at this three-story, proper hotel.

Mundo Latino (☎ 3242-8778; www.mundolatino.com.br; Rua Ana Bilhar 507, Meireles; s/d US\$40/45; 🏠) Wood parquet floors add charm to large rooms in this house-turned-*pousada*. Convenient location.

Eating

Restaurants near Iracema's Ponte dos Ingleses are pricey and pretty seedy. Try Iracema's Av Monsenhor Tabosa for lunch and the Centro Cultural Dragão do Mar for dinner. Varjota's restaurants have more character and/or sophistication.

Mercado de Peixe (fish market; Praia de Mucuripe) Buy fish, shrimp or lobster (US\$5 to US\$7.50 per kilo) at one stall and have it prepared in garlic and oil (US\$1.50 to US\$2 per kilo) at another.

Bebelu (Av Historiador Raimundo Girão 789, Iracema; sandwiches US\$1-5) This upscale sandwich and burger joint spices up its menu with pita bread, pineapple and fried banana.

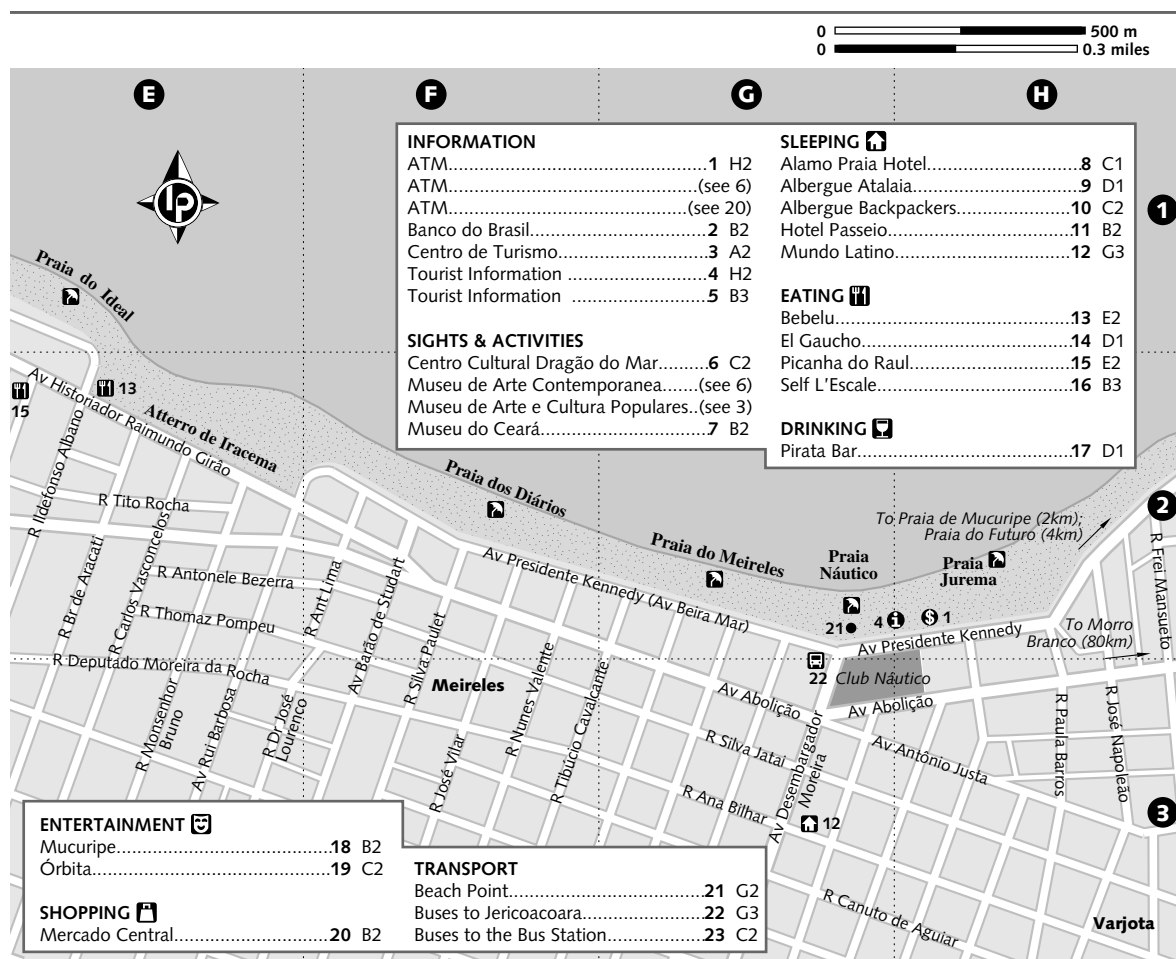
Self L'Escale (Rua Guilherme Rocha, Centro; per kg US\$10) The excellent spread has tons of veggies at this buffet in a restored colonial building.

Picanha do Raul (Rua Joaquim Alves 104, Iracema; for 2 US\$6.50-10) It's all about beef (there are two nonbeef options) at this humble BBQ restaurant on a quiet, shady street. Order meat by weight if you'd like.

Coco Bambu (Rua Canuto de Aguiar 1317, Varjota) Enjoy a buffet lunch or pizzas, *beiju de tapioca* (manioc flour 'taco'), crepes or sushi with sand underfoot and palms overhead at this Caribbean-themed eatery.

Drinking

The bars and clubs surrounding the Centro Cultural Dragão do Mar see some action all week, and fill on weekends.



Pirata Bar (Rua dos Tabajaras 325, Iracema; admission US\$12.50) Locals frequent this, especially for *forró* on ‘the craziest Monday on the planet.’

Entertainment

Órbita (Rua Dragão do Mar 207, Iracema; admission US\$6-8) Has reggae (Thursday), live music, electronic nights.

Mucuripe (Rua Travessa Maranguape 108, Centro) Another good club with one open and three enclosed dance floors.

Shopping

Ceará has a strong craft tradition (Brazil’s best hammocks!). Prices are great at the Mercado Central and the Centro de Turismo in the center.

Getting There & Around

BRA, Gol, Ocean Air, TAF, TAM, Trip and Varig operate domestically from Fortaleza’s airport. TAP connects Fortaleza with Europe.

Buses run to Natal (US\$28 to US\$50, eight hours, seven daily), Teresina (US\$25 to US\$42, 10 hours, eight daily), São Luís (US\$47, 16 hours, three daily), Recife (US\$43 to US\$50, 12

hours, three daily), Belém (US\$75 to US\$80, 22 hours, four daily), Salvador (US\$77, 22 hours, daily) and Rio (US\$146, 48 hours, daily).

The ‘Siqueira/Mucuripe’ bus connects the bus station to Iracema and Meireles – catch it in front of the Telemar building on Av Borges de Melo. The air-con Guanabara Top Bus (US\$2.50, half-hourly from 7am to 10:15pm) connects the airport and bus station (both 6km south of the center) to all major beaches. From Iracema to the bus station, catch a ‘Aguanabi 1’ or ‘Siqueira/Mucuripe’ bus on Av Tamandaré.

JERICOACOARA

☎ 0xx88 / pop 2000

A truly special place, Jericoacoara combines nightlife, a range of activities and a yummy variety of cuisine, enhanced by the remote setting. The sand-street village faces a broad gray beach, shouldered by a huge yellow sand dune and rolling green hills. The relaxed vibe keeps hip Brazilians and travelers staying longer than planned. Wind-sport folks find the conditions South America’s best, and Jeri has a great long-boarding wave (great for learning).

BRAZIL

Avoid *bichos de pé* (burrowing foot parasites) by not walking barefoot. Internet runs US\$4 per hour. There are no banks.

Sights & Activities

The 3km walk to the rock arch **Pedra Furada** is beautiful, and buggy trips (US\$20) to surrounding dunes and lakes, like **Lagoa do Paraíso**, are highly recommended. Surfing and wind-sport lessons are offered, and gear, including sand boards, is available to rent. **Kite Club Prea** (☎ 3669-2359; www.kiteclubprea.com), run by an American/Brazilian couple, offers great kite surfing lessons. At sunset, catch a *capoeira* circle (classes available) on the beach. Before crashing, drop by **Padaria Santo Antonio** and use fresh-from-the-oven breads to absorb those caipirinhas.

Sleeping

In the low season, midrange places become affordable.

Pousada do Véio (☎ 3669-2015; www.jericoacoara.tur.br/pousadadoveio; Rua Principal; s/d US\$20/30; 🏠) Simple rooms (some with lofts) with hammocks open onto a sweet garden behind a family home.

Pousada Bangalô (☎ 3669-2075; www.jericoacoara.praia.com; Rua Novo Jeri; s/d US\$25/30; 🏠) A tall wall creates an intimate compound at this rustic, pretty *pousada* with a lush garden.

Pousada Atlantis (☎ 3669-2041; www.jericoacoara.tur.br/atlantis; Rua das Dunas; s/d US\$25/35; 🏠) A row of simple yet comfortable rooms, each with outdoor hammock and table look out onto a strip of leafy plants. Swiss-owned.

Vila dos Ipês (☎ 3669-2241; www.viladosipespousada.com.br; Rua São Francisco; s/d US\$42/50; 🏠) Rustling palms sooth you to sleep and an ocean view brightens your breakfast at this attractive beachfront *pousada*.

Eating

Café Brasil (between Rua Principal & Rua São Francisco) This sweet little café serves quality coffee drinks, *açaí* and light meals.

Pizzaria Delacasa (Rua Principal; pizzas US\$2.25-8) There are competitors, but these pizzas are the best for your buck. Pastas too.

Restaurante do Sapão (Rua São Francisco; specials US\$2.50-5) Unusual *prato feitos* like eggplant parmesan, eggs and *moqueca de raio* (Bahian stingray stew) are served at tables in the sand under a towering tree.

Carcará (Rua do Forró; mains US\$6-12) Quality pasta and meat dishes are prepared with fresh herbs and the utmost care. Jeri's finest food.

Getting There & Away

In addition to the bus station, tickets from Fortaleza to Jericoacoara (US\$18 to US\$25, six hours, three daily) can be purchased at **Velastur** (Av Monsenhor Tabosa 1273, Meireles) and **Beach Point** (Av Presidente Kennedy, Meireles). Catch this bus outside the Praiano Palace Hotel (Av Presidente Kennedy, Meireles) or the airport before it passes the bus station. Included in the ticket price is a one-hour transfer in an open, 4WD truck from Jijoca to Jeri.

If coming from the west, catch the 10:30am bus to Jijoca from Sobral (US\$10, three hours) and connect with the Fortaleza bus there. Alternately, 4WD trucks leave Camocim for Jericoacoara (US\$10, 1¼ hours) anywhere from 9am to 11am. Zeldés leaves weekdays from the Posto Antônio Manual; Carlinhos leaves Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Bus tickets for Fortaleza (US\$18 to US\$25, six hours, three daily) are sold at Pousada Casa do Turismo.

If heading west from Jeri, catch the 10:30pm 4WD to Jijoca (US\$2.50). Once there, snooze inside the Sobral minibus (US\$10, three hours) until it leaves at 2am (no bus on Sundays). Alternately, get a 4WD truck driven by Zeldés (4:30am Monday to Friday) or Carlinhos (6:30am Monday, Wednesday, Friday) to Camocim from Jeri's Rua Principal and catch a bus to Parnaíba (US\$7, two hours, 4:30pm and 1am daily).

PARQUE NACIONAL DE SETE CIDADES

Ancient rock paintings, arches and caves grace **Parque Nacional Sete Cidades** (admission US\$1.50; ☎ 8am-5pm), but the highly unusual rock formations rising from the surrounding flat, dry land are unforgettable. Some people, educated scientists among them, claim the rocks are everything from seven ruined, 190 million-year-old cities to alien creations. At the park center, 6km from the entrance, pick up your obligatory guide (per group US\$10). English-speaking guides are rare. The 13km walk to all seven cities takes two to three hours. Follow it with a swim in a pond or stunning waterfall (December to July only). Touring by bicycle (per hour US\$1) reduces the entire tour to three to four hours. Start your day early and bring snacks, water and protection from the unrelenting sun.

In Piripiri (population 62,000), modern **Califórnia Hotel** (☎ 3276-1645; Rua Dr Antenor Freitas 546; s/d US\$15/25; 🏠) has sterile rooms. Just outside

the park entrance, **Hotel Fazenda Sete Cidades** (☎ 3276-2222; s/d US\$12/16; 🚽 🚿) has expansive grounds, farm animals, a restaurant and rooms that don't live up to the rest of the hotel. On park grounds, 2km from the park center, comfortable **Parque Hotel Sete Cidades** (☎ 3223-3366; www.hotelsetecidades.com.br; s/d US\$21/28, campsites per person US\$5; 🚽 🚿) has a restaurant and natural swimming pool.

Transport between the park and Piripiri (26km) is via *mototaxi* (US\$6), taxi (US\$15), or the free park employee bus, which leaves at 7am from the Telemar building on Praça da Bandeira and 5pm from the park. Buses to Piripiri run from Fortaleza (US\$16 to US\$21, seven hours, three daily), Sobral (US\$10 to US\$13, three hours, three daily), Parnaíba (US\$10 to US\$13, three hours, nine daily) and São Luís (US\$33, 10 hours, two daily).

PARNAÍBA

☎ 0xx86 / pop 170,000

Parnaíba is an unremarkable port on the mouth of the Rio Parnaíba, with good beaches to its northeast. Porto das Barcas, the town's restored riverfront warehouse area, has a few simple shops and restaurants with unrealized bohemian intentions. Parnaíba's **delta**, a 2700 sq km expanse of islands, mangroves, and lots of birds, is found by travelers to be pretty but not fantastic. The 8½-hour trip runs US\$7 to US\$20 per person depending on boat type. Trips only occur when there's sufficient interest and often leave at 8am from Porto das Barcas. Contact **Casa do Turismo** (☎ 3323-9937; casadoturismo@bol.com.br; shop 17, Porto das Barcas).

Agencies around Porto das Barcas offer internet access (per hour US\$1). **Bradesco** (Av Presidente Getúlio Vargas 403, Centro) has reliable ATMs.

Casa Nova Hotel (☎ 3322-3344; Praça Lima Rebelo 1094, Centro; s/d US\$12.50/20, without bathroom US\$7.50/15; 🚽) is sterile but good quality and a short walk from Porto das Barcas. **Hotel Cívico** (☎ 3322-2470/2432; www.hotelcivico.com.br; Av Governador Chagas Rodrigues 474; s/d US\$20/27; 🚽 🚿) is a proper hotel some 10 blocks from Porto das Barcas that slashes prices in the low season. It serves Parnaíba's best buffet lunch (US\$11 per kilo). **Sabor e Arte** (Av Vargas 37, Porto das Barcas; for 2 US\$14) serves good meat or veggie *prato feitos* (US\$2.50 to US\$4.50).

Parnaíba can be a jumping-off point for Parque Nacional dos Lençóis Maranhenses (see the boxed text, below) or Jericoacoara (p371).

Buses run to Camocim (US\$7 to US\$11, three hours, three daily), Sobral (US\$14 to US\$22, five hours, three daily), Fortaleza (US\$26 to US\$42, 10 hours, three daily), Teresina (US\$19 to US\$26, six hours, nine daily) and São Luís (US\$25, nine hours, two daily).

TERESINA

☎ 0xx86 / pop 700,000

Teresina, famed as the hottest city in Brazil, is a pleasant but unnoteworthy capital where tourists are rare. **Inter.com** (Rua David Caldas 270; per hr US\$75¢; 🚽) offers internet. Major banks are in the center. **Micarina** (🗓 mid-July) is the city's Salvador-style, out-of-season Carnival.

The **Central de Artesanato** (Praça Dom Pedro II; 🗓 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) has shops selling local crafts. The **Casa da Cultura** (Rua Rui Barbosa 348; admission US\$25¢; 🗓 8am-5:30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, 12:30-5:30pm Sun) is a cultural center with local art exhibits to the sounds of ongoing music classes.

We have yet to find a passable budget guest-house in the Center. If you do, let us know!

ALTERNATE ROUTE

Transport between Parnaíba and Barreirinhas involves rattling on a wooden bench over a track between sand dunes, past isolated communities and gorgeous scenery. It is a recommended adventure. From Parnaíba, there's a ferry (US\$17.50, seven hours) through the delta to Tutoía (population 45,000) that leaves a few times weekly on no reliable schedule. Alternately, buses to Tutoía (US\$5.25, three hours) leave at 6am and 4:30pm daily, plus 11:30am every day but Sunday, and 4pm on weekdays. Catch it at the bus station or the Praça Troca Troca in Parnaíba's center. From Tutoía, open 4WD trucks to Paulinho Neves (aka Rio Novo; US\$2.50, 1½ hours) leave at 10am and 5:30pm Monday through Saturday, 4pm on Sunday. There are *pousadas* in tiny Paulinho Neves and dunes within walking distance. The 4WD ride onward to Barreirinhas (US\$5, two hours) is rougher and more scenic. Departures are at 6am and 12:30pm Monday through Saturday, and 6am on Sunday.

Bright murals spice up the standard **Hotel Sambaiba** (☎ 3222-6712; sambaibahotel@yahoo.com.br; Rua Gabriel Ferreira 230, Centro; s/d US\$22/30; 🏠). Room maintenance is poor. Comfortable rooms have high ceilings at the semi-attractive **Metro Hotel** (☎ 3226-1010; metrohotel@webone.com.br; Rua 13 de Maio 85, Centro; s/d US\$27/32; 🏠). Ignore the posted prices.

Across from the Casa da Cultura, the self-service **Bom Bocado** (Rua Paissandu 120; per kg US\$8; 🏠) has freshly grilled meats and an indoor waterfall. Try **Camarão do Elias** (Av Pedro Almeida 457) for seafood. A fine-dining, all-you-can-eat, buffet lunch is prepared daily at **Forno e Fogão** (Luxor Piauí Hotel; Praça da Bandeira 310; buffet US\$9; 🏠). Saturdays are *feijoada* (bean and pork stew) and Sundays are brunch.

BRA, Gol, TAM and Varig fly domestically from Teresina's airport, 6km north of center.

Buses run to São Luís (US\$21 to US\$38, seven hours, eight daily), Belém (US\$48, 14 hours, six daily), Parnaíba (US\$20, five hours, nine daily), Sobral (US\$15 to US\$27, seven hours, eight daily) and Fortaleza (US\$25 to US\$43, 10 hours, nine daily).

From the bus station to the center, catch the Rodoviária Circular bus from the stop across the road or a Potivelho or Dirceuit *kombi*.

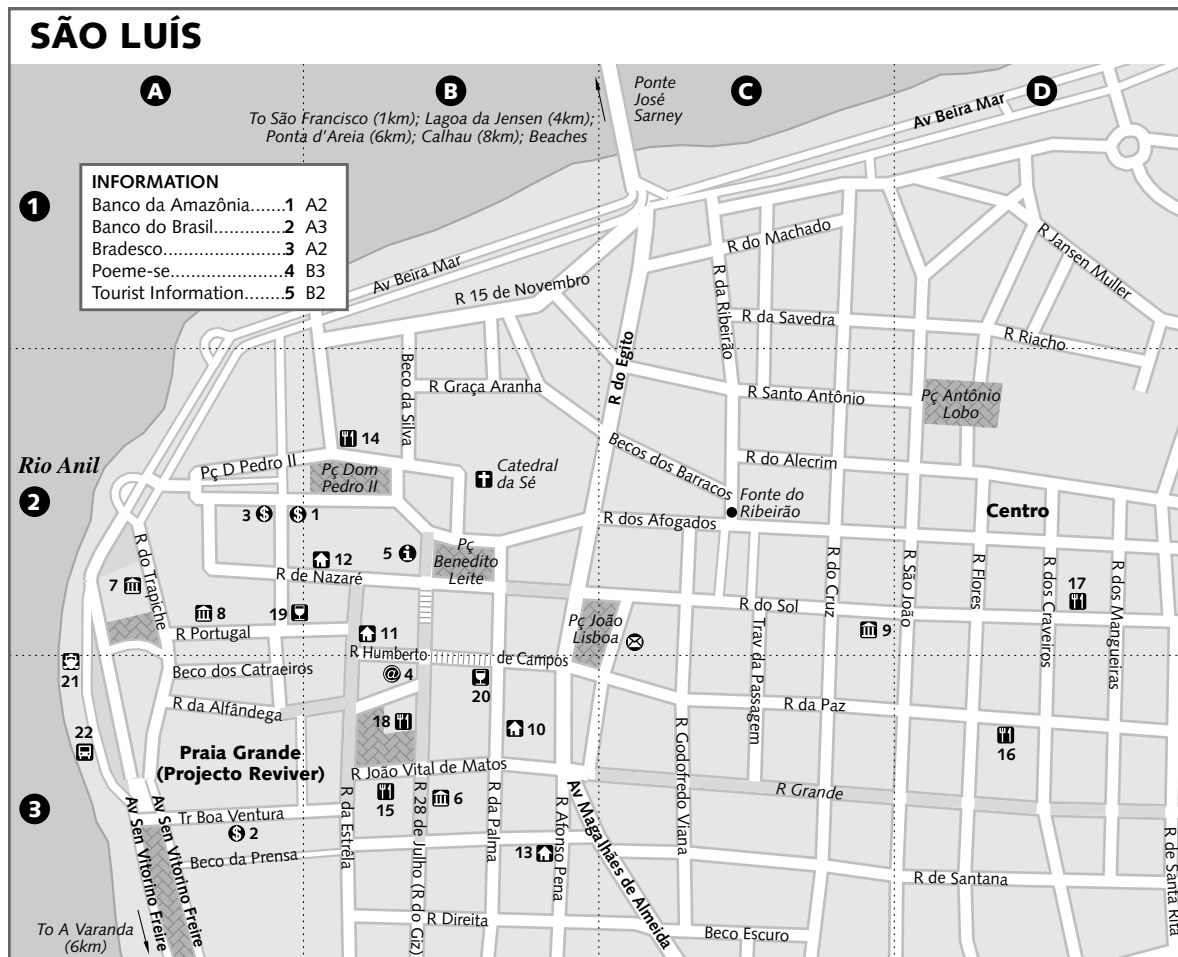
SÃO LUÍS

☎ 0xx98 / pop 950,000

Some call São Luís Brazil's last charming colonial capital, as it remains unselfconscious in the face of foreign, and a trickle of national, tourism. The cobbled streets of the revitalized historical center – a Unesco World Heritage Site – are lined with colorful colonial mansions noted for their *azulejo* (Portuguese painted tiles) facades used to combat the predominant damp heat. São Luís has a rich folkloric tradition embodied by its colorful festivals, and has become Brazil's reggae capital.

Orientation

São Luís is divided into two peninsulas by the Rio Anil. On the southernmost, the Centro sits on a hill above the historic core of Praia Grande (aka Projeto Reviver). Many streets in these neighborhoods have multiple names. The Centro and outlying streets in Projeto



Reviver are deserted at night. On the northern peninsula lie affluent suburbs (São Francisco) and city beaches (Calhau).

Information

Banco da Amazônia (Av Dom Pedro II; ☎ 11am-2pm Mon-Fri) Changes US dollars and traveler's checks.

Banco do Brasil (Travessa Boa Ventura) Has ATM.

Bradesco (Av Dom Pedro II) Has ATM.

Poeme-se (Rua Humberto de Campos; per hr US\$1.50) Offers internet access.

Tourist information airport (☎ 3244-4500); bus station (☎ 3249-4500); Praça Benedito Leite (☎ 3212-6211) Has good brochures and English-speaking attendants.

Sights & Activities

The Projeto Reviver juxtaposes beautifully restored buildings housing an odd mix of government offices and tourism businesses with abandoned structures serving as living quarters for homeless people and the neighborhood's many cats.

The Centro de Cultura Popular maintains three of the Northeast's best museums. There are English-speaking guides available. The

Casa da Festa (Rua do Giz 221; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) has four floors of colorful costumes and props from local festivals and religious practices. The **Casa do Maranhão** (Rua do Trapiche; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) has what amounts to a multimedia state tourism brochure, and an upper floor dedicated to the regional flavors of Bumba Meu Boi (below) costumes. Items from Maranhão quotidian life, from delicate wooden fish traps to children's toys made from trash, are displayed at the **Casa do Nhozinho** (Rua Portugal 185; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun).

The **Museu Histórico do Estado de Maranhão** (Rua do Sol 302; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) is a restored 1836 mansion with attractive, historical displays of wealthy families' belongings.

Local beaches are broad and flat. Locals and their cars pack windswept **Praia do Calhau** on weekends.

Festivals & Events

Carnaval São Luís' largest festival, with São João and Bumba Meu Boi.

São João & Bumba Meu Boi These festivals are combined from late June to the second week of August. The latter celebrates a legend of the death and resurrection of a bull with music, dance and theater. Year-round rehearsals are a great way to get a taste of these festivals – ask the tourist office for locations.

Marafolia An out-of-season, Salvador-style Carnival in mid-October.

Sleeping

The overall standard of São Luís' budget accommodation is pretty low.

Pousada Internacional (☎ 3231-5154; Rua da Estrela 175; s/d US\$8.50/14, without bathroom US\$7.50/12.50) The best of the basic cheapies, this place even attempts decoration. Windowless rooms.

Pousada Reviver (☎ 3231-1253; www.pousadareviver.com.br; Rua de Nazaré 173; dm/s/d US\$7.50-10/20/25; ♿) As the building is newly renovated, rooms are updated, bright and incredibly spacious. The overall feel is a bit sterile.

Hostel Solar das Pedras (☎ 3232-6694; www.ajsolardaspedras.com.br; Rua da Palma 127; dm/s/d US\$9/13/17) Housed in an attractive, restored colonial home, this hostel has exposed rock walls and a living room perfect for people-watching. Windowless, poorly ventilated rooms.

Pousada Vitória (☎ 3231-2816; Rua Afonso Pena 98; s/d US\$17.50/30; ♿) Large rooms with improvised bathrooms face an inner patio and are incorporated into a family home. Friendly.



Pousada Portas da Amazônia (☎ 3222-9937; www.portasdaamazonia.com.br; Rua do Giz 129; s/d US\$44/59; 🍽️) Dark wood and whitewashed walls fill this stark, upscale *pousada* housed in two joined colonial homes. Breakfast includes local specialties.

Eating

São Luís has a fairly limited restaurant selection.

Valéry (Rua do Giz) This French-owned bakery has tasty pastries, croissants, quiches and, of course, fantastic breads.

Naturista Alimentos (Rua do Sol 517; per kg US\$7.25) Weekday vegetarian lunch.

Base da Lenoca (Av Dom Pedro II 181; mains for 2 US\$7-20) Enjoy a beer and a breeze with your meal at this popular seafood restaurant overlooking the river.

Gula Gula (Rua da Paz 414; per kg US\$8; 🍽️) *The spot* in the center for a workday buffet lunch.

Crioula (Beco da Pacotilha 42; per kg US\$9) This large buffet restaurant has regional decor and tasty local specialties.

A Varanda (Rua Genésio Rego 185, Monte Castelo; mains for 2 US\$18; 🍽️) The extremely lush patio and excellent fish, shrimp and beef dishes will distract you from the slow service. To get there, take a 'Vicente Fiaro' or 'Santa Clara' bus from inside the Terminal de Integração, get off at CEFET and take your first right. Well worth the trip.

Drinking

Take a 'Calhau Litorânea' bus from inside the Terminal de Integração Praia Grande to get to the places following.

Reggae bars like **Bar do Nelson** (Av Litorânea, Calhau) and **Roots Bar** (Rua da Palma) are the thing here. The tourist office can recommend others that don't suffer from drunken brawls.

From Thursday to Sunday the outdoor pubs on the Lagoa da Jensen, like Academia do Chopp, are great for drinking beer and listening to live music.

Entertainment

Café Bagdá (Rua Portugal) In the old city; converts itself into a disco at night.

Studio 7 (Av dos Holandeses, Calhau) Head here for electronica and Rio-style funk.

Getting There & Around

BRA, Gol, TAF, TAM and Varig fly domestically from São Luís' airport, 15km southeast

of the center. TAP connects São Luís with Europe.

Buses run to Belém (US\$48, 12 hours, daily), Barreirinhas (US\$13, four hours, four daily), Teresina (US\$21 to US\$37, seven hours, six daily) and Fortaleza (US\$47, 18 hours, three daily). Long-distance buses leave from the bus station, 8km southeast of the center.

ALCÂNTARA

☎ 0xx98 / pop 6000

This picturesque colonial architectural treasure, slipping regally into decay, lies across the Baía de São Marcos from São Luís. Built in the early 17th century, Alcântara was the hub of the region's sugar and cotton economy and home to Maranhão's rich landowners. Today the seat of Brazil's space program lies outside of town. Alcântara makes for a memorable day trip. There are no banks.

Two streets at the village's highest point contain the finest architecture. Sights include Brazil's most well-preserved **pelourinho** (whipping post; Praça da Matriz) and the **Museu Histórico** (Praça da Matriz; admission US\$0.50; 🕒 8am-2pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun), displaying the personal effects of 18th- and 19th-century residents. The colorful Festa do Divino (first Sunday after Ascension Day, usually in May) features a parading drum corps of black women accompanying a pair of children costumed as the royal couple.

There are a few *pousadas* and a campsite in the village. **Pousada dos Guarás** (☎ 3337-1339; pousadosguaras@aol.com; Praia da Baronesa; s/d US\$12.50/20; 🍽️) is beachfront (kayaks available) and surrounded by mangrove and monkeys. Its thatched-roof bungalows in a tropical garden are clean and comfortable. It is a great place for a drink, but beware of mosquitoes in the rainy season. **Restaurante da Josefa** (Rua Direita; prato feito US\$3-4) serves Alcântara's best home cooking. Stop by Rua das Mercês 401 to try *doce de espécie*, the local cookie-sweet made from coconut and the juice of orange-tree leaves.

Boats to Alcântara (US\$5, one hour, 7am and 9:30am daily) depart from São Luís' *hidroviária* (boat terminal), or, at low tide, from Praia Ponta d'Áreia (bus included in ticket price, leaves from the *hidroviária*). For the more adventurous, the sailboat *Mensagem da Fé* (US\$2.50, 1¼ hours, daily) leaves at high tide (between 11am and 5pm). The ride on both vessels is slow and rolling, and best on a stomach neither empty nor full. Keep an eye out for scarlet ibis.

PARQUE NACIONAL DOS LENÇÓIS MARANHENSES

The best time to visit this remote park is between March and September, when aqua-colored, crystal-clear rainwater pools form between white sand dunes up to 40m tall. Motorized vehicles are not permitted in the 1550 sq km park, which is predominantly dunes. Local tour agencies offer half-day trips into the park (per person US\$20); the light is best in the later half of the day. Two-day hikes through the park can also be arranged. A full-day trip upriver (per person US\$25) through Brazil's tallest mangrove to the oceanfront village **Caburé** stops at a restaurant with a monkey colony. The extra trip to the river mouth (US\$5) doesn't get rave reviews.

Access to the park is through the riverfront town of Barreirinhas (population 13,000), which has an **internet café** (per hr US\$2) around the corner from the **Banco do Brasil** (main road). **Pousada Tia Cota** (☎ 3349-1237; Rua Coronel Godinho 204; s/d without bathroom US\$7.50/15, s/d US\$15/25; ♿) has dark *quartos* and good simple rooms with bathrooms. **Pousada do Porto** (☎ 0xx98-3349-1910; Rua Anacleto de Carvalho 20; s/d US\$10/22; ♿) is riverfront, modern and bright. **Restaurante Bela Vista** (Rua Anacleto de Carvalho 617) has a shady deck over the river and a good *prato feito* (US\$3).

Those seeking tranquility and isolation should catch the morning ferry (US\$2.50, three to four hours, daily) upriver. Caburé has a selection of *pousadas* and Atins has a couple too. In Atins, Luzia is famous for putting up anyone who walks the hour and a half out to her home, and for her cooking. Ask the ferry staff for directions.

Barreirinhas can be a jumping-off point for Parnaíba and Jericoacoara (see the boxed text, p373). There are four daily buses between São Luís and Barreirinhas (US\$13, four hours). The return to São Luís can also be made by van (US\$12.50) or collective taxi (US\$15), both of which drop at your requested destination.

THE NORTH

Certain places reside as romanticized, near-mythical destinations in travelers' imaginations, and the Amazon is at the top of the list. Images fill our heads of wild panthers and anacondas, impossibly dense rainforest and indigenous tribes unexposed to western ways. Some travelers leave the Amazon

unimpressed, but only in the halogen glare of unreasonable expectations (or too short a visit) can this region disappoint. Wildlife is hard to see, but is that much more special when you do. Deforestation is widespread, but the rainforest remains vast and unrelenting. Many indigenous people have traded tradition for modern life, but *caboclos* (indigenous-Portuguese mix) communities are vital and compelling.

The numbers alone are mind-boggling: the Amazon Basin contains 6 million sq km of river and jungle, and just over half is in Brazil. It contains 17% of the world's fresh water and the main river-flow at its mouth is 12 billion liters per minute. There are 80,000km of navigable rivers. Annual rainfall averages around 2.5m. River levels rise on average 10m in the rainy season.

Forget your expectations, figure you're here to see how people have adapted to this 'water world' and the Amazon cannot fail to impress.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Bus travel is limited to a few routes in the North, so rivers serve as highways. Though flights are usually at least twice the price of hammock-boat fare, check for specials. Flights to Manaus from São Luís are usually pricier than from Teresina or Belém.

BELÉM

☎ 0xx91 / pop 1.4 million

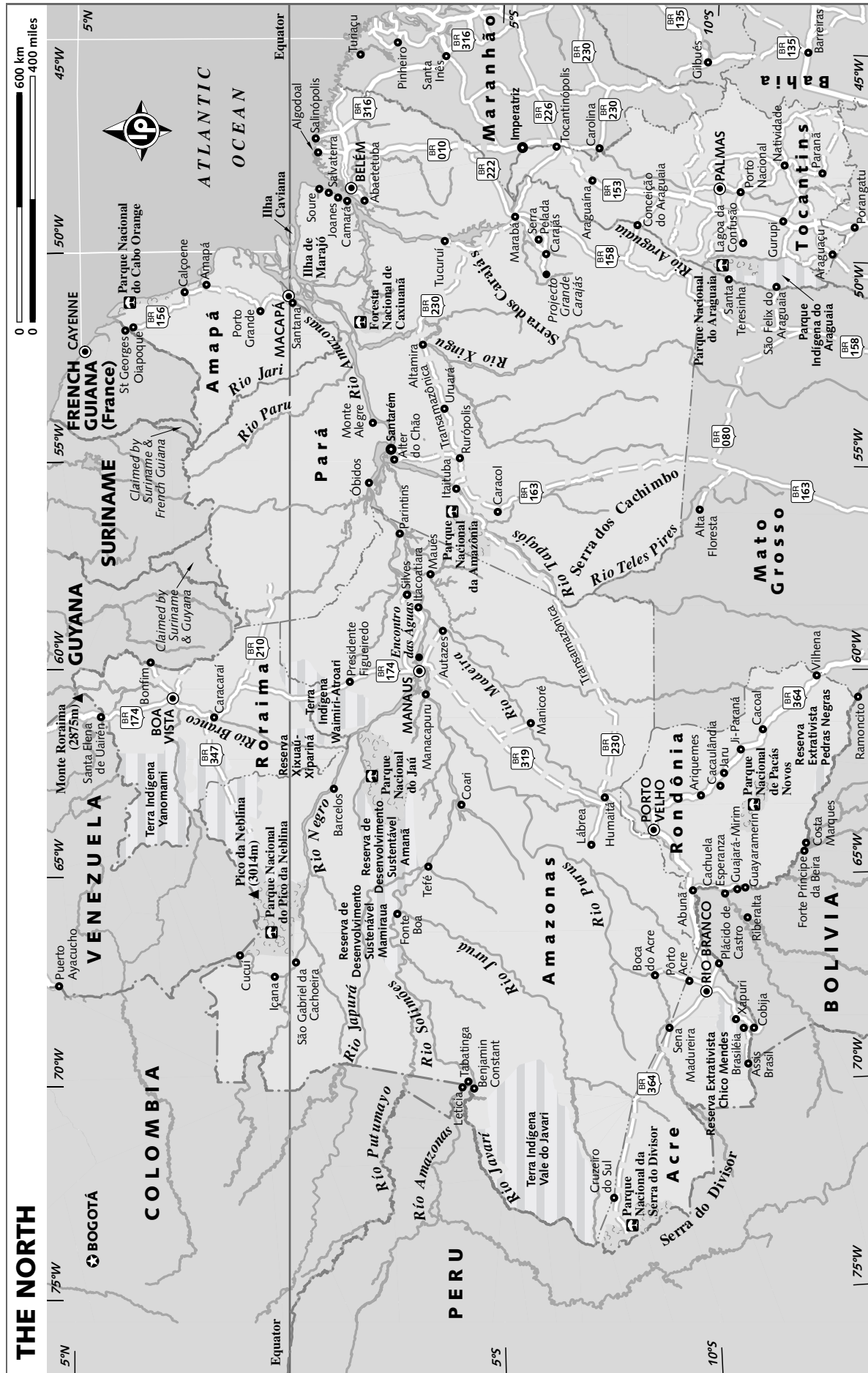
More prosperous than the coastal capitals to its southeast, Belém has a cultural sophistication unexpected from a city so isolated. Its

GETTING INTO TOWN

Aeroporto Val de Cães is 8km north of the center. Bus 'Pratinha-P Vargas' runs between the traffic circle outside the airport and Av Presidente Vargas (US\$60¢, 40 minutes). Taxis cost about US\$8.

The bus station is on Av Almirante Barroso, 3km east of the center. For a city bus to Av Presidente Vargas, catch any 'Aero Club' or 'P Vargas' bus from the far side of Av Almirante Barroso. Going out to the bus station, take an 'Aeroclube' or 'Pratinha-P Vargas' bus from Av Presidente Vargas. Taxis to points along Av Presidente Vargas cost around US\$5.

BRAZIL



wealth comes from its position at the gateway to the Amazon, meaning that any extracted (timber) or cultivated (soybeans) regional products pass through here before going to market. Refreshingly, Belém has recently invested in its tourism, and the resulting renovations and constructions are fantastic. If you take some time to wander the mango tree-lined boulevards, and investigate the bohemian arts and music scenes, this attractive city will reward like few others in Brazil.

Orientation

Av Presidente Vargas is the center's main drag. The Comércio, roughly between Av Presidente Vargas and Av Portugal, is a compact commercial district, noisy by day and deserted by night. Budget accommodations concentrate here. The riverfront is industrial, save for in the Comércio. The Cidade Velha (Old City) is quiet and contains Belém's historical buildings. East of the center, prosperous Nazaré has some chic shops and restaurants along Av Brás de Aguiar.

Information

Banco da Amazônia (Rua Carlos Gomes; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri) Changes traveler's checks, US dollars and euros.

Hilton Hotel (Av Presidente Vargas 882; per hr US\$3; ☎ 8am-10:30pm Mon-Fri, to 6:30pm Sat & Sun) Internet access in the business center.

Hospital Adventista (☎ 0800-910-022, 3246-8686; Av Almirante Barroso 1758)

HSBC (Av Presidente Vargas 670)

Paratur airport (☎ 3210-6330); center (☎ 3212-0575; Praça Waldemar Henrique) English spoken.

Sinemar (cnr Av Presidente Vargas & Rua Riachuelo; per hr US\$1.50) Internet access.

Tourist police (☎ 3212-5525 ext 39; Praça do Pescador)

Dangers & Annoyances

The Comércio and Cidade Velha have a reputation for muggings when fairly empty (at night and on Sunday). Locals recommend preparing a wad of small bills to hand over if mugged, and dividing cash in at least three places. Always take a taxi at night. Pickpocketing and strap

RIVER TRAVEL

Riverboat travel is a uniquely Amazonian experience. Be forewarned that regular boats are always slow and crowded, often wet and smelly, sometimes dull and never comfortable. Luckily, Brazilians are friendly and river culture is interesting. Do you like *fórró* music? You won't after this trip! Some tips:

- Downstream travel is considerably faster than upstream, but boats heading upriver travel closer to the shore, which is more scenic.
- Boats often moor in port for a few days before departing – check boat quality before committing.
- Fares vary little between boats, and are cheapest when bought onboard. Captains often set a minimum ticket price for vendors. If you buy for less, the difference will be demanded once onboard – so be wary of street vendors with rock-bottom prices!
- *Camarotes* (cabins) for two to four people are usually available and afford additional privacy and security. Ensure that yours has a fan or air-con. *Camarotes* are usually the same price as flying.
- Put up your hammock (available at any market, don't forget rope!) as soon as you are allowed to board the boat. The engine is on the lowest level, bathrooms are in the back, and foot travel is at either end, so the ideal hammock position is on the uppermost deck, toward the bow. Others are likely to sling their hammocks above and/or below yours.
- Bring rain jacket or poncho, sheet or light blanket, toilet paper and diarrhea medication.
- Meals included in the ticket price are mainly rice, beans and meat, with water or juice to drink. It's advisable to bring a few liters of bottled water, fruit and snacks. Tomato and onion are great to spice up the food.
- Watch your gear carefully. Lock your zippers, wrap your backpack in a plastic bag or cloth, and lash it to a ceiling beam, post or railing with rope or chain. Carry your valuables around the boat with you. Boats stop frequently – be especially alert before and while at port.

slashing are common during daylight, especially at Mercado Ver-o-Peso. Be wary if approached by a 'German' man with a robbery story asking for money – he's been doing it for years.

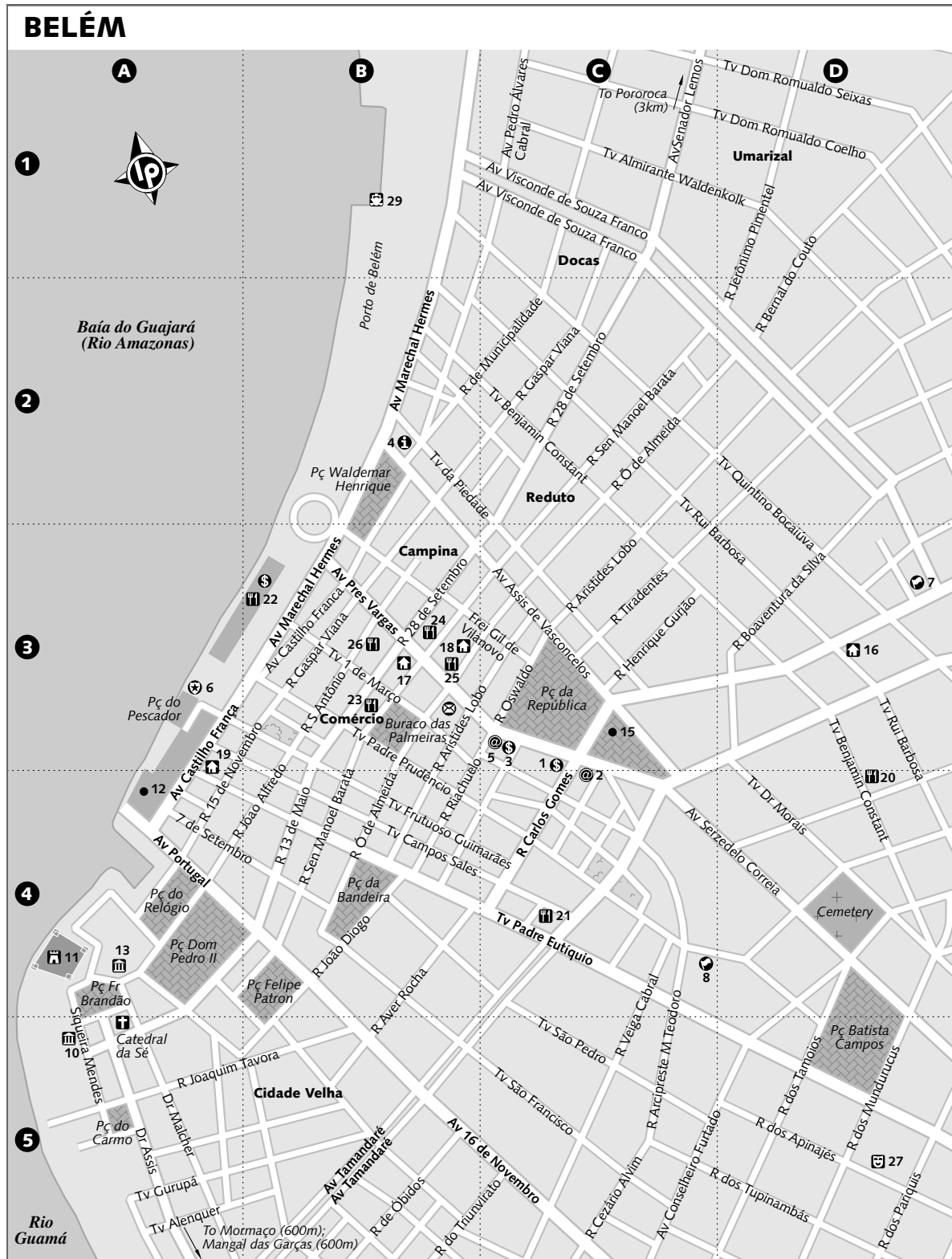
Sights

The iron structure of the **Mercado Ver-o-Peso** (🕒 7:30am-6pm Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun) was brought

from Britain around 1900. It's a great place to try *açaí* – go early to see the fish being unloaded.

The 17th-century **Forte do Castelo** (Praça Fr Brandão, Cidade Velha; admission US\$1; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) has been artistically restored. It has fantastic views over the market and a first-class museum on the colonization of the area. The

BRAZIL



lavish **Teatro da Paz** (Praça da República; admission US\$2; ☞ 9am-5pm Tue-Fri, to 1pm Sat) is one of Belém's finest rubber-boom buildings – try to catch a show.

National contemporary art and work by photographers from Pará is displayed in the renovated **Casa das Onze Janelas** (Praça Fr Brandão, Cidade Velha; admission US\$1; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun). The

Museu de Arte Sacra (Praça Fr Brandão, Cidade Velha; admission US\$2; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) is comprised of the rebuilt version of Belém's first church and an adjoining bishops palace, and displays brilliant carved works by Indian artisans. The 1909 **Basílica de NS de Nazaré** (Praça da Basílica, Nazaré; ☞ 7am-noon & 3-7pm Tue-Sun, 3-7pm Mon) has a fine marble interior housing the tiny image of the



BRAZIL

Virgin of Nazaré, a miraculous statue believed to have been sculpted in Nazareth.

The riverfront park **Mangal das Garças** (Praça do Arsenal, Cidade Velha; admission to park free, 4 sights US\$3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) has a dome packed with free-flying local butterflies and hummingbirds, another with free-flying birds, a navigation museum and a 47m-high view tower.

The Victorian **Bosque Municipal Rodrigues Alves** (Av Almirante Barroso; US\$50; ☎ 8:30am-5pm Tue-Sun) is a 15-hectare piece of rainforest in grand old botanical garden style. It has macaws, coatis, monkeys and the world's largest waterlilies. Locals exercise here in the mornings. The **Museu Emílio Goeldi** (Av Governador Magalhães Barata; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) has snakes, big cats, crocodiles and other Amazonian species in a beautiful 5.2-hectare piece of rainforest. The aquarium and archaeological museum were closed for renovation at press time. **Praça Batista Campos** is another green escape.

Festivals & Events

During the **Círio de Nazaré**, on the second Sunday in October, a million people accompany the image of the Virgin of Nazaré from the Catedral da Sé to the Basílica de NS de Nazaré. Two weeks of serious partying follow.

Sleeping

Hotel Vitória Régia (☎ 3212-2077; Travessa Frutuoso Guimarães 260, Comércio; s/d US\$13/16; 🏠) A run-down, musty place that maintains a proper hotel structure.

Hotel Central (☎ 3241-8477; Av Presidente Vargas 290, Comércio; s/d US\$20/25, without bathroom US\$13/19) A somewhat haunting, run-down art deco gem, with large rooms that are super dank in the rainy season. The back side has less traffic noise.

Amazônia Hostel (☎ 4008-4800; www.amazoniahostel.com.br; Av Gov José Malcher 592, Nazaré; dm/d US\$17.50/20) A well-equipped, new hostel in a renovated old building. Convenient to the center.

Hotel Ver-o-Peso (☎ 3241-2022; Boulevard Castilhos França 208, Comércio; s/d US\$25/30; 🏠) A modern, proper hotel with good-value rooms and decorated hallways. The catch is the unsavory location.

Hotel Unidos (☎ 3252-1891/1411; hotel.unidos@bol.com.br; Rua Ó de Almeida 545, Campina; s/d US\$30/36; 🏠) This clean, well-kept hotel is a totally presentable midrange option with a 10% discount for cash payment. Good location.

Eating

Belém is known for *pato no tucupi* (duck in a manioc juice and tongue-tingling *jambu* leaf sauce), *tacacá* (a gummy soup made from manioc root, dried shrimp and *jambu* leaves) and *maniçoba* (black beans, pork and manioc leaves).

Mãe Natureza (Rua Sen Manoel Barata 889, Campina; per kg US\$10; 🏠) The sterile dining room doesn't do justice to the unique vegan lunch buffet. Mãe Natureza makes its own soy milk and uses raw sugar.

Restaurante Higashi (Rua Ó de Almeida 509, Campina; per kg US\$12.50; ☎ Mon-Fri; 🏠) This small Japanese restaurant offers a lunch and dinner buffet, worker specials (US\$2.50 to US\$7) and à la carte Japanese dinners (US\$7 to US\$15).

Cantina Italiana (Travessa Benjamin Constant 1401, Nazaré; mains US\$9-13; 🏠) The pink walls of this cozy pasta and pizza restaurant are covered with framed photos and artwork.

Cozinha de Bistrô (Travessa Campos Sales 898, Comércio; mains around US\$10; 🏠) This funky-hip bistro, slightly sunken below street level, has a random furniture collection and local art on the walls. The daily lunch specials are yummy and affordable (US\$4.50 to US\$7.50) and the menu is wide ranging.

Estação das Docas (Building 2, Av Castilho Franca, Comércio; lunch buffet US\$11; 🏠) In a renovated port warehouse, a row of fine eateries offers all-you-can-eat lunch buffets and à la carte dinners. There is one pricey per-kilo restaurant on the 2nd level. Indoor or outdoor seating overlooks the river.

Recommended lunch buffets:

Restaurante Belo Centro (Rua Santo Antônio 264, Comércio; per kg US\$7; ☎ Mon-Fri)

Express Grill (Rua Sen Manoel Barata 713, Comércio; per kg US\$12)

Drinking

The Praça da República and Estação das Docas are reliable, atmospheric spots to drink, afternoon and night.

Café Imaginario (Rua Apinagés) The walls of a small house have been fingerpainted and windows flung open to let live jazz and bossa nova (Tuesday, Friday and Saturday) float out. The *jambu*-leaf pizzas (medium US\$10) are famous.

Entertainment

Mormaço (Praça do Arsenal, Cidade Velha; ☎ Fri-Sun) A covered, open-air pier has a basic bar and

rows of tables facing a small platform-stage. Live bands play reggae, rock, heavy metal and, on Sunday afternoons, local *carimbo*. Behind Mangal das Garças.

Pororoca (Av Senador Lemos 3326, Sacramento; admission US\$5-7) A simple but superpopular dance club playing *pagode* (Thursday), reggae (Sunday) and *brega* (a fast and free couples dance of Pará, Friday).

Casa do Gilson (Travessa Padre Eutíquio 3172, Condor; ☎ 3pm-on Fri & Sat, 5:30pm-on Sun) Under a tin roof and fueled by cheap beer, *chorinho* (samba variation) rules the house at one of Belém's most celebrated live-music spots.

Getting There & Away

AIR

BRA, Gol, Meta, Puma, Rico, TAF, TAM, Total and Varig operate domestic flights from Belém. Suriname Airways connects Belém to Georgetown (Guyana), the Caribbean, Miami and Amsterdam. Air Caraïbes connects Belém to Cayenne (French Guiana), the Caribbean and Paris.

BOAT

Passenger boats use Belém's Terminal Hidroviária. (Tickets are sold at booths inside. Boats to Santarém (hammock US\$50-60, three days) and Manaus (hammock US\$75-110, five days) depart on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Boats to Macapá (hammock US\$40, 23 hours) depart on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. See the boxed text, p379 for information and tips.

BUS

Buses run to São Luís (US\$56, 12 hours, daily), Fortaleza (US\$75 to US\$82, 25 hours, one to three daily), Recife (US\$105, 34 hours, daily), Salvador (US\$119, 36 hours, daily), Palmas (US\$66, 19 hours, daily), Brasília (US\$112, 34 hours, daily) and Rio de Janeiro (US\$120 to US\$178, 50 to 55 hours, one to two daily).

ALGODOAL

0xx91 / pop 1000

Isolated on the Ilha de Maiandua, Algodual is an idyllic remnant of the past surrounded by hard, windswept beaches, mangrove forests, dunes and vegetation. This rustic fishing village maintains carless sandy streets, a very basic tourism infrastructure, and only recently received electricity. There are no banks.

The village is separated by a small river (wade at low tide, or canoes are available) from **Praia do Farol** and **Praia da Princesa**, which has a row of shack restaurants. These beaches are backed by the tea-colored **Lagoa da Princesa**.

It's a 10-minute walk (horse carts available) along the beach to Rua Principal. Algodual fills during holidays.

Algodual Camping Club (☎ 3229-0848; per person US\$5) has shady sites. Tents and sleeping bags rented. You can peek through the walls of the basic stick cabins of **Pousada Kakuri** (☎ 3854-1138; Rua Principal; dm US\$10, cabañas with/without bathroom US\$15/13). The laid-back atmosphere and friendly owner maintain its popularity. They serve tasty fish dishes.

Just up the road, **Cabanas do Cesar** (Rua Principal; cabañas s/d US\$7.50/12) lacks the travelers' vibe, but has good, clean cabañas with mosquito nets and shared bathrooms.

Jardim do Éden (☎ 9967-9010/9623-9690; www.algodual-amazon-tourism.com; Praia do Farol; hammock or tent s/d US\$12.50/20, without bathroom s/d US\$30/37, cabin US\$55/65) has comfortable rooms on both floors of an attractive, eclectically decorated, wooden house facing the beach. A 2nd-story deck offers tables and hammocks. Preserved vegetation surrounds the three simple brick cabins. English is spoken, and tours are offered. Its vegetarian plate (US\$7.50) and other meals (US\$12.50) are excellent. Ask the ferry to drop you here or it's a 25-minute walk through the village.

Access is via mainland Marudá. Buses (US\$7.50, 3½ hours, four or five daily) leave Belém's bus station for Marudá, and quicker minibuses (US\$7.50) leave from just behind it until about 4:30pm. They'll drop you at Marudá's port, where boats for Algodual (US\$2, 40 minutes) require at least five passengers (or US\$10 to US\$15) to depart. To return, buses and minibuses leave the port until about 4pm.

ILHA DE MARAJÓ

☎ 0xx91 / pop 250,000

Slightly larger than Switzerland, this verdant, 50,000 sq km island lies at the mouth of the Rio Amazonas. The western side is swampy and inaccessible, and has a reputation for snakes and malaria, but the eastern side makes for a relaxing visit. This island has abundant wildlife, and buffalo meat replaces beef on restaurant menus. Marajó is known for its unguarded, friendly people and *carimbo* – the colorful folkloric dance of Pará.

You'll want to base yourself out of Joanes or Salvaterra (or both!).

Joanes

The closest to Camará, Joanes is a tiny hamlet with the fragments of an old Jesuit church and a good sandy beach. Livestock wander grassy streets lined with a few shops and sandwich stands. The attractive **Pousada Ventania do Rio-Mar** (☎ 3646-2067; www.pousadaventania.com; s/d US\$22/37) sits atop a breezy headland overlooking the beach and has individually decorated rooms. The Belgian owner offers a book exchange, and rents bikes, motorcycles, horses and canoes. She also organizes inexpensive walking and canoeing excursions led by locals, and trips out with local fishermen. Several beach restaurants serve straightforward meals at decent prices.

Salvaterra

About 18km north of Joanes, Salvaterra (population 5800) has more of a town feel and a decent beach, Praia Grande. A tourist information kiosk is on the plaza near the river.

Atop an ocean bluff, low-key **Pousada Bosque dos Aruãs** (☎ 3765-1115; Segunda Rua; s/d US\$25/30; 🍽️) has good, simple wooden cabins on stilts in an attractive natural yard. Its restaurant serves fantastic meat and seafood dishes (for two US\$5 to US\$10), soups and salads. The young, English-speaking owners know Brazilian music well and play great tunes. Bicycles rented.

Soure & Around

Soure (population 17,000), Marajó's unofficial capital, sits at the mouth of the Rio Paracauari, almost opposite Salvaterra. Main streets are paved and divided by towering mango trees; the rest quickly reduces to grassy bike paths.

Banco do Brasil (Rua 3 btwn Travessa 17 & 18) has ATMs. **Bimba** (Rua 4 btwn Travessa 18 & 19) rents bicycles (per day US\$3).

Ceramicist Carlos Amaral combines traditional Aruã and Marajoara ceramic traditions with award-winning results. Check out his **Olaria** (workshop; Travessa 20 btwn Rua 3 & 4) – small, affordable pieces are for sale. After exploring Soure's streets, bicycle out to **Praia Barra Velha** (3km) by following Travessa 14 out of town and through the *fazenda* gate. A row of simple shacks sells drinks and seafood. Head left for **Praia de Araruna**, which is long, starkly beautiful and practically deserted. There's

an intervening river, which requires a boat at high tide. Follow Rua 4 inland to **Praia do Pesqueiro** (11km), Soure's popular weekend beach, which also has seafood shacks.

The best budget option, **Hotel Araruna** (☎ 8163-7731; Travessa 14 btwn Rua 7 & 8; s/d US\$20/30; 🍽️) has clean if uninteresting rooms. **Paraíso Verde** (Travessa 17 btwn Rua 9 & 10; mains for 2 US\$7-12) serves delicious typical meat and seafood dishes in a gorgeous leafy courtyard.

Getting There & Around

Boats travel between Belém's Terminal Hidroviário and Camará (US\$6.25, three hours) on the Ilha do Marajó twice daily and once on Sunday. Buses to Joanes, Salvaterra and Soure meet the boats. A few kilometers outside of Salvaterra, small motorboats (US\$50¢, five minutes) and an hourly vehicle ferry (free) connect Salvaterra and Soure. *Mototaxis*, taxis and infrequent vans (ask at your *pousada* for the schedule) move people around the island.

MACAPÁ

☎ 0xx96 / pop 336,800

If you are traveling to or from French Guyana, you'll enjoy a day's rest in orderly Macapá. As it sits right on the equator, Macapá is hot and super humid, but breezes are easy to come by on the pleasant waterfront.

Information

Agência Solnave (Rua Padre Júlio M Lombaerd 48) Purchase boat tickets here.

Bradesco (Rua Cândido Mendes 1316) Has reliable ATMs. **Setur** (☎ 3212-5335; Rua Independência 29) Tourist information.

TV Som (Av Mendonça Furtado 253; per hr US\$75¢) Internet access.

Sights

The impressive **Fortaleza de São José de Macapá** (entrance Av Henrique Galúcio; admission free; 🕒 9am-6pm) was built by the Portuguese between 1764 and 1782 to defend against French incursions from the Guianas.

The primary exhibits at the **Museu SACACA de Desenvolvimento Sustentável** (Av Feliciano Coelho 1509; admission free; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) are reconstructions of rural homes, from thatched huts to riverboats. The best way to get there is via *mototaxi* (US\$75¢).

APITU (Av Mendonça Jr at Rua Azarias Neto; 🕒 8am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Sat) has a small but authentic collection of indigenous crafts.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel América Novo Mundo (☎ 3223-2819; Av Coaracy Nunes 333; s/d US\$15/20, without bathroom US\$7.50/12.50; 🚻) This place has friendly service and good rooms – get a breezy one in front.

Hotel Glória (☎ 3222-0984; Rua Leopoldo Machado 2085; s/d US\$29/40; 🚻) Neat rooms and hot showers.

Peixaria Amazonas (Rua Beira Rio at Rua Macacoari; mains for 2 US\$12-15) Enjoy a *caldeirada de peixe* (soup with veggies and big pieces of fish, feeds four) with a river view and a breeze.

Bom Paladar Kilos (Av Presidente Getúlio Vargas 456; per kg US\$8; 🚻) The excellent lunch buffet includes vegetarian dishes.

Getting There & Around

AIR

Gol, Puma, TAF, TAM, Rico, Varig operate domestic flights (usually via Belém) from Macapá's airport, 3.5km northwest of the center. TAF also flies to Cayenne (French Guiana). Puma flies to Oiapoque. Between the airport and the center, taxis (US\$8) are best.

BOAT

Boats to Belém (hammock US\$45, 23 hours) leave on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. There are daily boats to Manaus (hammock US\$150, five days) via Santarém (US\$60, three days). Passenger boats dock in Santana, 25km southwest of Macapá. To get there, catch a 'Santana' (US\$1.25, 30 minutes) bus from Rua Tiradentes (at Av Mendonça Furtado). Taxis between Macapá and Santana run US\$15. See the boxed text, (p379) for information and tips.

BUS

There are one to two daily buses to Oiapoque (US\$32, 12 to 24 hours). The first 250km are paved, after that the going can be very rough in the rainy season. Call ahead to confirm departures. 'Jardim' and 'Pedrinhas Novo Horizonte' buses connect the center to the **bus station** (☎ 3251-5045), which is about 3km north.

OIAPOQUE

☎ 0xx96 / pop 13,000

This remote, not especially pleasant town sits across the Rio Oiapoque from St Georges (French Guiana).

There are branches of Banco do Brasil and Bradesco. Hotels here are cheaper than in St Georges. The **Arizona Hotel** (☎ 3521-2185; Av Coaracy

GETTING TO FRENCH GUIANA

Before leaving Brazil, get an exit stamp from the **Polícia Federal** (🚫 closed Sun) on the main street, 500m from the market where the bus stops. Motorboats (US\$7.50, 20 minutes) cross the river to St Georges (French Guiana) from the bottom of the main street. For information on travel in the opposite direction, see p754. An international bridge is scheduled for completion in 2007.

Nunes 551; s/d US\$15/20) is basic and clean. The **Restaurante Beija Flor** (Rua Joaquim C da Silva) serves decent Brazilian and French food.

Oiapoque is linked to Macapá by bus and plane (see left).

PALMAS

☎ 0xx63 / pop 151,000

Starting in 1989, Palmas was built from scratch to become the new state of Tocantins' capital. After the bustle waned, this remote, sterile city has found itself without industry on which to base an economy, and is slowly turning to ecotourism. If you have cash and time on your side, there are a surprising number of good outdoor excursions.

The most promising areas are the Ilha do Bananal, where Pantanal-like wetlands meet rainforest, and the Parque Estadual do Jalapão, which contains dunes, canyons and waterfalls.

Bananal Ecotour (☎ 3215-4333; www.bananalectour.com.br; Quadra 103-5, Conjunto 02, Lote 02, Sala 03) organizes recommended excursions.

The pleasant **Hotel Serra Azul** (☎ 3215-1505; Rua N0-03 at NS-01; s/d US\$11.50/15; 🚻) has clean but smallish rooms and very friendly service. It's located on the north side of Galeria Bela Palma.

The 2nd-floor rooms are better at **Alvorada Hotel** (☎ 3215-3401; Quadra 103-N, Conjunto 2, Rua N0 1, Lotes 20 & 21; s/d US\$20/27.50; 🚻), a good budget spot a block north of Praça dos Girassóis.

Palmas Shopping mall, immediately south of Praça dos Girassóis, has a decent food court.

Gol, TAM and Varig operate domestic flights (most via Brasília) from Palmas' airport, 28km from the center. Bus 71, Expresso Miracema, runs to the center (US\$50¢).

Buses run to Alto Paraíso de Goiás (US\$18, seven hours, daily), Brasília (US\$34, 12 hours, daily) and Salvador (US\$45, 19 hours, daily). Connections to Teresina, São Luís and Belém

are made through Imperatriz (US\$29, 10 hours). To get to the center, cross the road in front of the *rodoviária* – almost every bus goes to the center and passes the Galeria Bela Palma. A taxi costs US\$12.

SANTARÉM

☎ 0xx93 / pop 200,000

Most travelers rush between Belém and Manaus, skipping over the very thing they are desperate to see: the Amazon. A stop in riverfront Santarém not only breaks up a long trip, it provides a chance to investigate the jungle and communities seen from your hammock. Though mild-mannered and unnoteworthy itself, Santarém allows access to a lovely river-beach town and beautiful rainforest preserves.

Information

Bradesco (Av Rui Barbosa) Has ATMs.

Cyber Café (Av Tapajós 418; per hr US\$1.50; 📶) Offers internet access until 11pm.

Sights & Activities

American Steve Alexander leads interesting half-day botanical tours (per person US\$30-

40) through the **Bosque de Santa Lúcia**, which include a lot of explanation of the farming and deforestation around the forest. Contact his agency **Amazon Tours** (☎ 3522-1928; www.amazonriver.com; Travessa Turiano Meira 1084) for details.

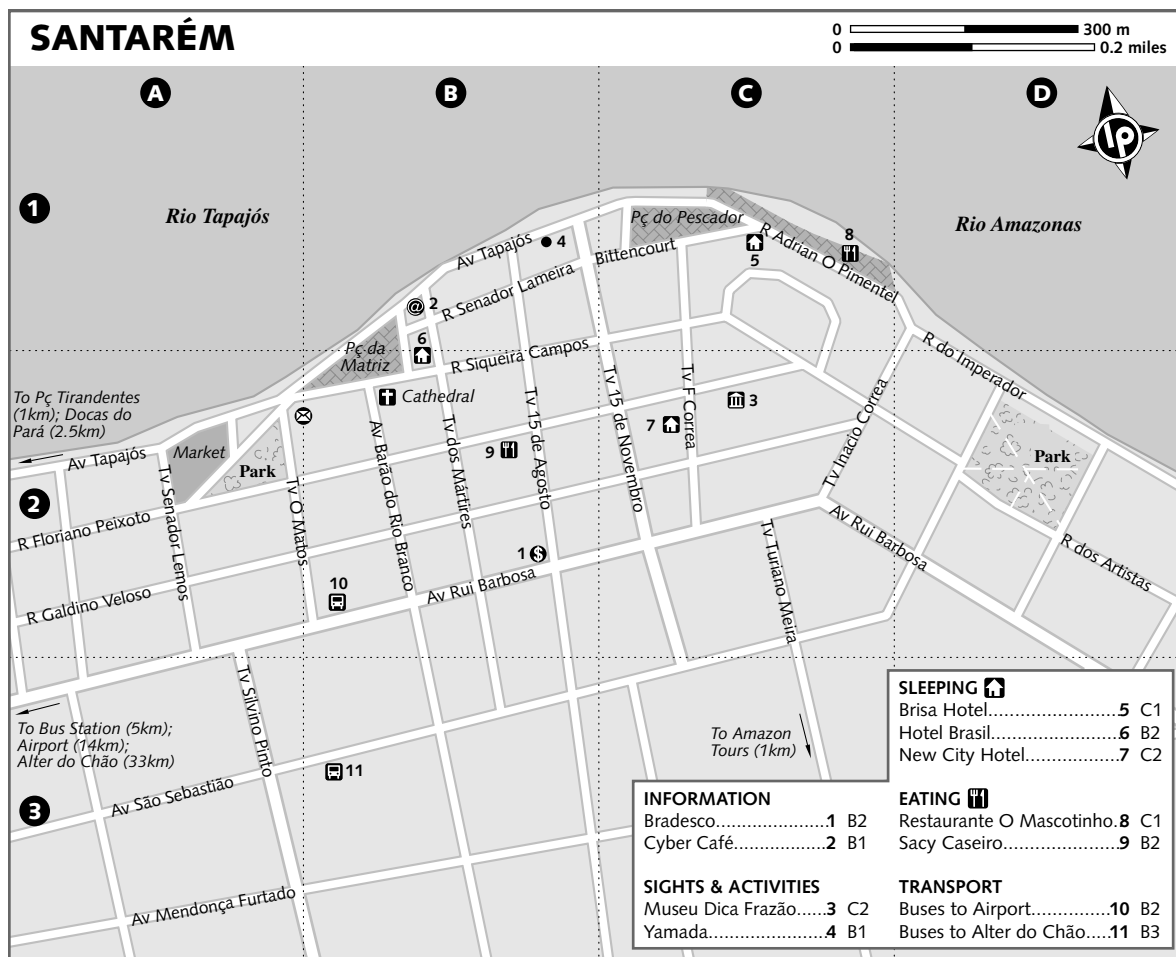
The tea-colored Rio Tapajós flows into the café au lait Rio Amazonas in front of Santarém. The two flow side by side for a few kilometers without mingling (owing to differences in speed, density and temperature), and are amazing to see. You can get a good view of it from the Yamada (Av Tapajós) galeria roof-top restaurant/cafeteria.

The **Museu Dica Frazão** (Rua Floriano Peixoto 281; 🕒 daily) is run by eccentric, internationally recognized, 80-something Dona Dica herself. Here she displays and sells the beautiful clothing and tapestries she makes from Amazonian root fibers.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Brasil (☎ 3523-5177; Travessa dos Mártires 30; s/d without bathroom US\$7.50/15; 📶) The place itself is great: clean, decorated with fake flowers and superfriendly. The rooms aren't as great: walls

BRAZIL



that don't meet the ceiling, street noise and those with air-con are windowless.

Brisa Hotel (☎ 3522-1018; Av Senador Lameira Bitencourt 5; s/d US\$22.50/30; 🏠) Small rooms and tiny bathrooms are modern and sterile, but a pretty good value given the options. Windows aren't very useful – you'll need the air-con.

New City Hotel (☎ 3522-0355; Travessa Francisco Corréa 200; s/d US\$25/35; 🏠) Rooms vary in size and quality, and have mismatching furniture, but are comfortable. Bargain hard as it's a bit overpriced.

Restaurante O Mascotinho (Rua Adrian O Pimentel; mains US\$1.25-6) Pastas, pizzas and burgers served on a large terrace overlooking the river.

Esquina do Jardim (Travessa Francisco Correa; per person US\$3) A simple lunch buffet with a good selection of freshly roasted meats. Indoor and outdoor seating.

Sacy Caseiro (Rua Floriano Peixoto 521; per kg US\$9; 🍴) This lunch buffet spot has a great selection for this backwater town. Uninteresting dining room.

Getting There & Around

AIR

Gol, Meta, Puma, Rico, TAM and Total operate domestic flights from Santarém's airport, 14km west of the center. A taxi costs US\$15. The 'Aeroporto' bus (US50¢, 40 minutes) runs irregularly from early morning until about 6pm – get schedules from the airport information desk or a *fiscal* at the bus stop on Av Rui Barbosa.

BOAT

Boats to Manaus (hammock US\$30 to US\$40, two days, Monday through Saturday) and Belém (hammock US\$40 to US\$50, 34 hours, Thursday through Sunday) use the Docas do Pará, 2.5km west of the center. Each of the ticket booths outside the entrance sells tickets for the same boats. At press time AJATO had suspended fast boat service to Manaus. Boats to Macapá (US\$45 to US\$62, 36 hours, daily) depart from the Praça Tiradentes, 1km east of the center. See the boxed text, p379 for information and tips.

The 'Orla Fluvial' minibus connects the center and both ports every 20 minutes until 7pm. The 'Circular Esperanza' bus runs directly from the center to the Docas do Pará, but deviates radically on the return. A taxi costs US\$6.

BUS

A bus leaves for Cuiabá (US\$124 to US\$132, about three days) on Wednesday and Saturday. Departures are irregular as only 84km south from Santarém is paved, and the remaining 700km can take a week in the rainy season.

AROUND SANTARÉM

Floresta Nacional (FLONA) do Tapajós

This 6500 sq km primary rainforest reserve on the Rio Tapajós is notable for its giant trees, including behemoth *sumauná* (type of ceiba tree). Its *igarapés* (channels connecting rivers) and, in the rainy season, *igapós* (flooded forests) promise some wildlife viewing; sloths, monkeys, river dolphins and birds are relatively common. Rubber harvesting is an important source of income for residents, and latex-production facilities welcome visitors. While FLONA lacks the deep-jungle feel of areas in the western Amazon Basin, it is still strikingly beautiful. Visits can be arranged through agencies in Santarém or Alter do Chão, or go on your own.

Two small communities within FLONA – Maguary and Jamaracua – receive visitors for homestays. Neither has electricity, running water or indoor bathrooms. You will sleep (bring a hammock) and eat (typically rice and fish) with a family. Bring bottled water, toilet paper, flashlight, and any additional food you may want.

To visit, authorization (per person, per day US\$1.50) from **IBAMA** (☎ 0xx93-3523 2964; Av Tapajós 2267; 🕒 7am-noon & 2-7pm Mon-Fri) is required. Guides are obligatory in the park. Fees for hikes (per group US\$15) and canoe trips (per boat US\$8) are accompanied by a community charge (per person US\$2.50 to US\$5).

Buses for Maguary (US\$2.50, three to four hours) leave Monday to Saturday from Av São Sebastião near the Telemar building. Get off at Sr Adalberto or Sr Almiro's house. They oversee park visitation and arrange guides.

ALTER DO CHÃO

☎ 0xx93 / pop 7000

With its white-sand river beaches and tropical ambience, Alter do Chão is one of Amazonia's most beautiful places to unwind. River beaches are largest from June to December, but Alter is worth a visit any time of year.

This simple village overlooks the Rio Tapajós at the entrance of the picturesque **Lago**

Verde. It is surrounded by rainforest under various levels of protection, including the FLONA do Tapajós (p387). Also accessible is the **Rio Arapiunes**, whose beaches and clear waters earned it the nickname 'the Caribbean of the Amazon' (a forgivable exaggeration).

There are no banks.

Activities

Kayak or canoe (rental US\$1.50 per hour) the Lago Verde alone or ask around for a guide. Very cool **Mãe Natureza** (☎ 3527-1264; www.maenatureza.com; Praça Sete de Setembro) offers everything from eight-day riverboat trips to walking, snorkeling, fishing or cultural excursions around Alter (US\$15 to US\$43) including into FLONA. This Argentine-owned agency is multilingual and has English-speaking guides. Just next door, **Vento em Popa** (☎ 3527-1379; ventoempopa@netsan.com.br) offers much of the same plus bike (US\$15 per person) and 4WD trips.

Festivals & Events

Alter do Chão fills during the **Festa do Çairé**, a lively folkloric festival with dancing and processions in the second week of September.

Sleeping & Eating

Visitors and interesting local characters end up hanging out around the main plaza after dark.

Albergue da Floresta (☎ 9928-8888; www.alberguepousadadafloresta.com; Travessa Antônio Pedrosa; hammock per person US\$10, chalets d US\$25) Super laid-back and set in thick garden surroundings, hammock (mosquito net provided) space is in a thatched-roof, open-air pavilion, and cabins are simple but comfortable. Run by cool, international hippy types. Guest-use kitchen.

Pousada Vila Praia (☎ 3527-1346; Av Copacabana; s/d US\$15/22, chalet US\$30-35; 🚻) This *pousada* consists of two rows of close-set cabins, each with their own porch and hammock. Rooms are rather ordinary, but the two-room chalets are great for groups of three to five.

Pousada Tia Marilda (☎ 3527-1144/1131; Travessa Antônio A Lobato 559; s/d US\$16.50/20; 🚻) This friendly, simple place is a little cute and makes an attempt to decorate its decent-sized rooms. Second-floor rooms are breezier and larger.

Tribal (Travessa Antônio A Lobato; mains US\$4-6) and **Farol da Vila** (Rua Jo Caisi de Arrimo; mains US\$4-6) serve great typical meat dishes with home cooked flavor.

Shopping

Arariba (Travessa Antônio A Lobato) This excellent indigenous art store unites the artwork of eight different Amazonian tribes.

Getting There & Away

Buses to Alter do Chão (US\$90¢, one hour, eight daily) leave Santarém from 5am to 6pm. Catch them in front of the Telemar building on Av São Sebastião or from Praça Tiradentes. From the airport, catch the bus into Santarém, get off in the first neighborhood at the *garagem do Perpetuo Socorro*, across from Supermercado O Gauchinho. Cross the road and flag down the 'Alter do Chão' bus.

MANAUS

☎ 0xx92 / pop 1.67 million

There's something alluring about Manaus, probably its remote setting deep in the mythical Amazon rainforest. The reality however is pretty unromantic. Aside from a few remnants of its late 19th-century, 'Paris of the Tropics', rubber-boom days, Manaus' urban landscape is pretty unattractive. But if you're planning a jungle trip, this is the starting point. If you can spend your time here tripping out on the fact that Manaus is an international port some 1500km from the sea, and the materials that constructed it traveled here by slow boat, you'll be better off. For information on jungle trips and lodges, see p393.

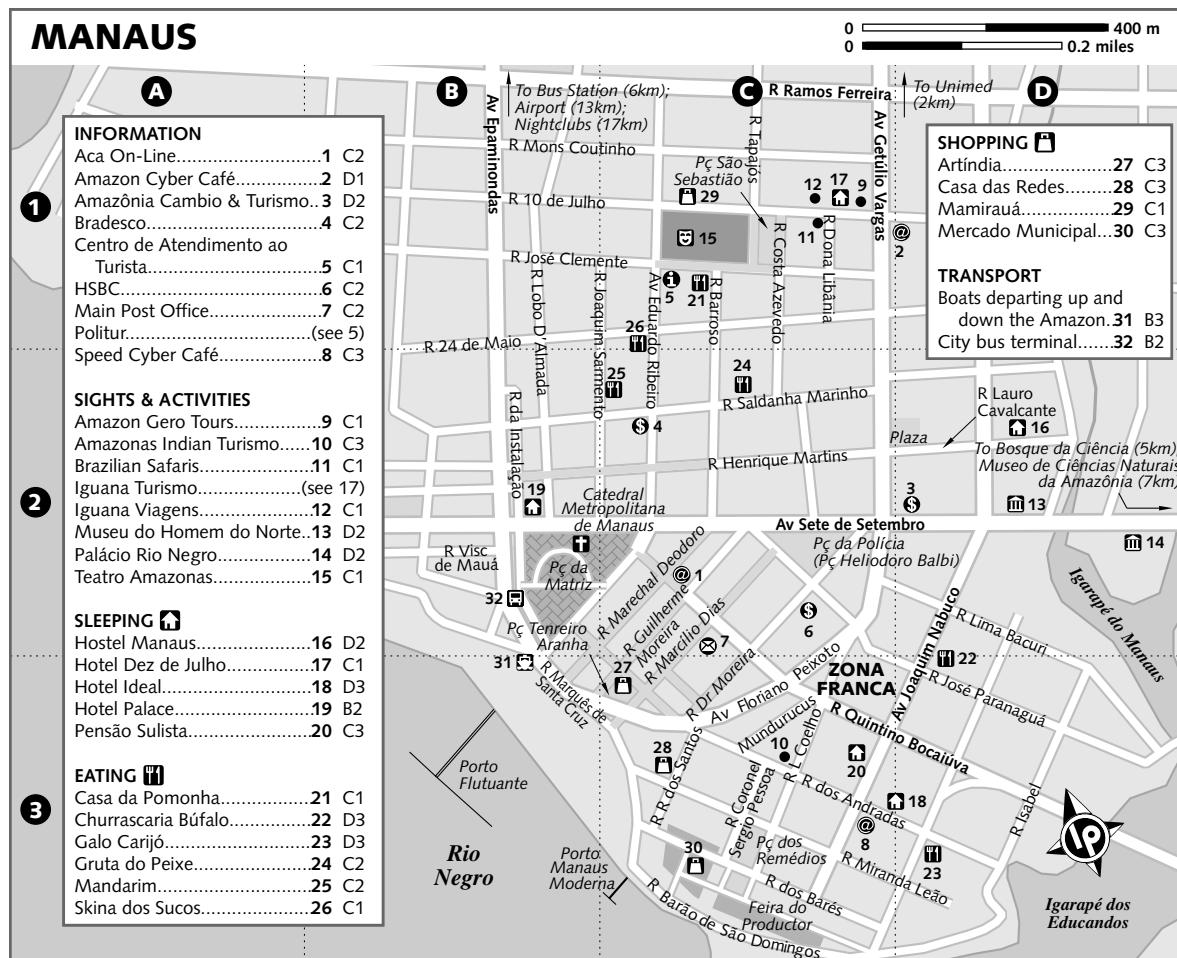
Orientation

The area south of the Teatro Amazonas, and encircled by a U-shape created by Av Epaminondas, Av Floriano Peixoto and Av Getúlio Vargas, is a noisy commercial district that is busy by day and deserted at night and on Sun-

GETTING INTO TOWN

The airport is 13km north of the center. Bus 306 'Aeroporto Centro' (US\$90¢, 30 minutes) runs roughly every half hour until 11pm. Taxis are set at US\$21, but can be cheaper from the airport bus stop.

The bus station is 6km north of the center and is a short walk from main bus routes. From the station cross the footbridge out front, walk with traffic to the closest bus stop and take one of the buses listed under 'Centro' on the stop's sign. A taxi costs US\$10.



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Amazônia Cambio & Turismo.....	3 D2
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days (save for the plazas). The area between Rua dos Andradas and the river is much the same. The Praça da Matriz is seedy at night. The Zona Franca is less seedy but still a pretty undesirable area. The Teatro Amazonas' immediate surroundings are slightly upscale.

Information

EMERGENCY

Politur (☎ 3231-1998; CAT, Av Eduardo Ribeiro)

INTERNET ACCESS

Aca On-Line (Rua Guilherme Moreira; per hr US\$1.50; ☎)

Amazon Cyber Café (cnr Rua Getúlio Vargas & 10 de Julho; per hr US\$ 1.75; ☎) Open late.

Speed Cyber Café (Rua dos Andradas 408; per hr US\$1; ☎)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Unimed (☎ 3633-4431; Av Japurá 241)

MONEY

Amazônia Cambio e Turismo (Av Sete de Setembro 1251; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat) Changes euros, US dollars and traveler's checks.

Bradesco (Av Eduardo Ribeiro)

HSBC (Rua Dr Moreira 226) 24-hour ATMs.

POST

Main post office (Rua Marcílio Dias 160)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Amazonastur airport (☎ 0800-280-8820, 3652-1120); Centro de Atendimento ao Turista (CAT; ☎ 3622-0767; Av Eduardo Ribeiro); Estação Hidroviário (☎ 3233-8698; inside PAC) Also at the bus station.

Dangers & Annoyances

At the airport, avoid the vultures touting jungle trips or city accommodations. Some have reportedly hustled people off to be robbed. After 11pm steer clear of the port area and the Praça da Matriz. If arriving late by boat, take a taxi to a hotel – muggings are common.

Sights

The cozy 19th-century **Teatro Amazonas** (admission US\$5; ☎ 9am-8:30pm Mon-Sat) captures the opulence of the rubber boom. English-speaking guides are available or Livro Vivo, a theatrical group, does fun living-history tours in

BRAZIL

Portuguese. Catch a show – free ones are on Sunday afternoons. The square out front hosts free cultural presentations most nights.

The **Museu de Ciências Naturais da Amazônia** (Estrada Belém s/n, Colônia Cachoeira Grande; admission US\$6; ☎ 9am-noon, 2-5pm Mon-Sat) displays preserved regional animals, fish and insects (amazing butterflies and beetles). The collection is small but excellent, and it's satisfying to get a good look at the unique wildlife. Take bus 519 from Praça da Matriz, or onward from the Bosque da Ciência. Follow the 'Museu' signs from the stop (10-minute walk).

The tranquil **Bosque da Ciência** (Forest of Science; Rua Otávio Cabral; admission US\$1; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sun) has contained giant otters, manatees, caimans, and free-roaming turtles, monkeys, sloths and other creatures on 130 sq km of rainforest. Take bus 519 from the Praça da Matriz.

The **Museu do Homem do Norte** (Av Sete de Setembro 1385; admission US\$1.50; ☎ 9am-noon & 1-5pm Mon-Fri) has anthropological displays on regional peoples, especially the riverbank-dwelling *caboclos*. The ornate **Palácio Rio Negro** (Av Sete de Setembro 1546; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 4-8pm Sat) is a rubber baron's mansion turned cultural center that hosts temporary art exhibits and concerts.

There are **Bumba Meu Boi** festival rehearsals at the *sambódromo* on Fridays and Saturdays from September to June. Ask Amazonastur for details.

Activities

The **Encontro das Águas** (Meeting of the Waters) is where the dark Rio Negro meets the café au lait Rio Solimões. The two flow side by side without mingling for several kilometers (owing to differences in speed, density and temperature), before finally combining to create the Amazon River. Many jungle trips include the Encontro, but if yours doesn't, see it by either hiring a boat with the Associação dos Canoeiros (p392), or by traveling from Ponta do Catalão, 12km east of the center, to Careiro. Take bus 713 from Praça da Matriz to Ponta do Catalão (last stop) and either take a motorboat (US\$3, 40 minutes) or the hourly car ferry (free). Careiro is a quaint village and worth a look around.

Sleeping

Most of Manaus' budget accommodations are very low quality. Near the Teatro Amazonas is the ideal location.

Pensão Sulista (☎ 3234-5814; Av Joaquim Nabuco 347; s/d US\$10/15; 🏠) A tenementlike, super basic option in a rather charming old building. High ceilings.

Hotel Ideal (☎ 3622-0038; Rua dos Andradas 491; s/d US\$11/16.50; 🏠) Ideal is a multistory block of plain rooms coated in gray and white high-gloss paint. Request a window. A little sterile, but eons better than run-down options in its price bracket. Surrounded by other budget hotels.

Hostel Manaus (☎ 3233-4545; www.hostelmanaos.com; Rua Lauro Cavalcante 231; dm US\$11.50) This Australian-owned hostel was just opening during research. In a converted home with guest-use kitchen.

Hotel Dez de Julho (☎ 3232-6280; www.hoteldezdejuho.com; Rua 10 de Julho 679; s/d US\$25/27.50; 🏠) Behind a spacious, proper lobby this four-story hotel stacks a variety of simple rooms with updated fixtures and two patios with tropical murals. Can be noisy. Cheaper and inferior option next door.

Hotel Palace (☎ 3622-4622/4623; www.hotelpalace.brasilcomercial.com; Av 7 de Setembro 593; s/d US\$32.50/42.50; 🏠) A green, ornate, early-20th-century facade shields large, bright rooms with wooden furniture. Bathrooms are small and circa 1950. Quietest rooms face the plaza.

Eating

Praça Heliodoro Balbí and Praça São Sebastião are good places to find food at night and on Sundays. Try *tacacá* (a gummy soup made from manioc root, dried shrimp and tongue-tingling *jambu* leaves) at street stalls.

Skina dos Sucos (cnr Av Eduardo Ribeiro & Rua 24 de Maio; sandwiches & snacks US25¢-\$4) This busy lunch counter serves sandwiches and snacks. A great place for fresh Amazonian fruit juices like *açaí*.

Gruta do Peixe (Rua Saldanha Marinho 609; per kg US\$5.50, mains US\$7) Lunchtime finds this bright, grotto-like basement crowded and a little smoky from the meats barbecued in the back. Known for fish.

Casa da Pamonha (Rua Barroso 375; per kg US\$9; 🏠) Unlike the dining room, the vegetarian lunch buffet is creative and flavorful. Arrive close to noon for the best selection. Snacks served all day.

Galo Carijó (cnr Rua dos Andradas & Rua Pedro Botelho; mains for 2 US\$10-17) It's all about fried fish at this low-key spot.

Mandarim (Rua Joaquim Sarmiento 224; per kg US\$11, mains US\$7-9; 🏠) This Chinese restaurant has

a lunch buffet with Chinese, Japanese and Brazilian dishes.

Churrascaria Búfalo (Av Joaquim Nabuco 628; per person US\$20; 🍴) Despite the neighborhood, an upscale crowd flocks to Búfalo for a classy lunch and dinner *rodízio* (all-you-can-eat), which consists of an extensive buffet (including sushi!) and meats brought to the table on skewers. Bufolete, the per-kilo (US\$11.50) version, is right next door.

Drinking

The area surrounding the Teatro Amazonas is the center's best area to hang out, for adults and kids alike. On Friday and Saturday nights, Praça da Polícia and Praça da Saudade fill with people and snack and drink stands.

Ponta Negra (13km from the center) has some bars and restaurants on a sort of riverfront promenade. Many of Manaus' cool nightspots sit on the Estrada de Ponta Negra just before this area.

Entertainment

Coração Blue (Estrada de Ponta Negra 3701, Ponta Negra) A dance club with different music every night.

Aomirante (Rua Padre Agostinho Caballero, Santo Antonio) Known for its reggae night on Sunday.

Tulipa Negra (Rua Recife 2515, Flores; 🎸 Thu-Sat) Has live rock, and sometimes blues.

Shopping

Mercado Municipal (🕒 6am-6pm Mon-Sat, to noon Sun) The sprawling, cast-iron, art nouveau *mercado* opened in 1882. Shop here for Amazonian herbal remedies and crafts.

Mamirauá (Rua 10 de Julho 495) Sells high-quality baskets and mats.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Gol, Meta, Rico, TAF, TAM, Total, Trip and Varig operate domestic flights from Manaus. LAB connects Manaus to Latin America and Miami, and TAM has direct flights to Miami. Smaller airlines use Terminal 2, 'Eduardinho,' about 600m east of Terminal 1.

BOAT

Large passenger boats use the Estação Hidroviária (aka Porto Flutuante). Inside, Agência Rio Amazonas sells tickets on behalf of most boats. Guys on the street may sell cheaper tickets, but if something goes wrong you'll be on your own. For hammocks try **Casa das Redes**

(Rua Rocha dos Santos). See the boxed text (p379) for information and tips.

Destination	Duration	Cost (US\$)	Frequency
Belém	3½ days	upper/lower deck 118/108	Wed & Fri
Porto Velho	4 days	upper/lower deck 101/97	Tue & Fri
Santarém	30-36 hr	upper/lower deck 57/49	Tue-Sat
Tabatinga	6½ days	upper deck 134	Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat

AJATO runs fast boats to Tabatinga (US\$150, 34 hours) on Tuesday from the Porto Manaus Moderna, which is also where tickets are sold. At press time its service to Santarém had been suspended. Travelers report fast boats to be too fast to be pleasant.

BUS

Five daily buses run to Boa Vista (US\$40 to US\$45, 12 hours, five daily). A direct daily bus to Caracas, Venezuela (US\$114, 36 hours) that stops in Santa Elena de Uairén (US\$71, 16 hours) and Puerto La Cruz (US\$103, 32 hours) usually only runs in the summer.

Road travel south to Porto Velho has been suspended indefinitely.

Getting Around

All buses to the center pass the Praça da Matriz, loop up on Av Floriano Peixoto, and either head right on Av Sete de Setembro or straight on Av Getúlio Vargas. City buses and downtown streets get super congested around 1pm to 2pm and 5pm to 7pm.

AROUND MANAUS

Jungle Trips

Many visitors to Amazonia expect to see wildlife close enough to take magazine-quality photos and meet spear-toting indigenous people just outside Manaus. This just isn't possible. The vegetation is too thick, animals are too shy and the cultural gap too great. (To visit 'unacculturated' communities, you'll need an expedition of a week or more.) On a typical trip, you are likely to glimpse pink and gray river dolphins, crocodiles, monkeys and plenty of birds including macaws and toucans. Sloths are relatively common. Manatees, anacondas and jaguars are extremely hard to spot. Expect to get a sense of how these animals

move and where they hang out. The more remote, unpopulated and pristine the area, the better wildlife-viewing will be.

While anything's possible, the typical jungle trip is two to four days. Common activities include piranha fishing, nighttime crocodile-spotting, an informational jungle walk, a visit to a local home and a night of jungle camping. Canoeing through *igarapés* (channels connecting rivers) and *igarapós* (flooded forests) – which have more flora and fauna than channels and rivers – is a priority. This is one reason the high-water period (roughly March to July) is the best time to visit.

'White' rivers, like the Lago Mamorí region, tend to have a higher density of animals than 'black' ones, like the Rio Negro. But they also have more mosquitoes and somewhat thicker vegetation, which inhibits wildlife-viewing.

Things to consider while researching trips:

- Your guide's proficiency in your common language.
- Amount of guide's experience in trip's ecosystem.
- Group size.
- Ratio of travel time to time spent at the destination.
- Amount of non-motorized boat/canoe time.
- Availability of lifejackets.
- The cost breakdown for nontypical trips.

You'll need sturdy shoes or boots, long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, a raincoat, insect repellent, a flashlight and a water bottle. High-power binoculars really improve the experience. You'll need at least 4L of bottled water per person per day. Bring your passport.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

You name it, it's happened on a jungle trip outside Manaus. Consider that you are placing your personal safety in another's hands in an unknown, often isolated, natural environment. It's best to use agencies or guides registered with Amazonastur (see p389). Personally verify registration status as some agencies display outdated or revoked certification. Using a registered agency or guide means having a better chance of being refunded should something go wrong, and having recourse to prevent others from having the same experience. If using an unregistered agency or guide, check out its reputation. Women should con-

sider being part of a group of three or more to avoid being alone remotely with a guide.

SCAMS

Manaus has more scammers on the make than possibly anywhere in Brazil. Before handing anyone cash for a jungle trip, personally visit the office of the tour agency they represent. If they are indeed an authorized vendor, they will still receive their commission. As the industry has become more competitive, scammers have gone so far as to create false IDs and receipts, fake confirmation phone calls to agencies, and falsely represent or impersonate guides and agencies listed in guidebooks. These scammers are most often at the airport, but also work on the street and at hotel receptions. Hotel receptionists earn side commissions by giving out room information.

AGENCIES & GUIDES

Manaus has scores of agencies offering Disneyland-esque tours; those listed below are recommended budget options offering a more genuine and adventurous experience. Some agencies have a minimum-group-size requirement to set out, while others maintain a constant flow of clients in and out of a set spot. Yet other agencies pool their clients. Agencies can set up almost anything, but most have expertise in a certain geographical area. Fees should be all-inclusive (lodging, meals, drinking water, transfers, activities, and guides). Unless the agency is very well established, insist on paying a portion of the fee up front, and the rest upon return.

Take some time to research the options. Many well-seasoned travelers have left Manaus disappointed with their once-in-a-lifetime Amazon jungle experience because they rushed booking the trip.

Amazonas Indian Turismo (☎ 0xx92-3633-5578; www.amazonasindianturismo.tur.br; Rua dos Andradas 311, Centro) The office and the English-speaking Indian guides just feel like the real deal, and the client-response book is positively exuberant. Its rustic camp on the Rio Urubú has hammocks and latrines. Three-day, two-night trips run US\$223 per person. Trips from two to 9 days.

Amazon Gero Tours (☎ 0xx92-3232-4755; www.amazongerotours.com; Rua 10 de Julho 679, Centro) This agency is run by English-speaking guides and piloted Gero, an all-around helpful guy. Typical trips are to Lago Mamorí, Lago Ararinha and Cu-trapa and run US\$90 to US\$110 per person per

night. Bed or hammock accommodation and flush toilets are available. Honest and flexible.

Iguana Turismo (www.amazonbrasil.com.br) Hotel Dez de Julho (☎ 0xx92-3633-6507; Rua 10 de Julho 669, Centro); Hotel Rio Branco (☎ 0xx92-3248-3211; Rua dos Andrades 474, Centro) Iguana's typical trip to Lago Juma runs US\$90 per person per night. Comfortable hammock or cabin accommodation with flush toilets is located next to Guyanese owner Gerry Hardy's riverfront home. His wife and her family are from the area and staff the lodge. Great for custom trips.

Mamori Adventure Camping (☎ 0xx92-9184-8452/8123-3744; vicenteguidetour@hotmail.com) If you are looking to trek and camp deep in the jungle, Vicente and David are your guys. Friendly and English speaking.

Brazilian Safaris (☎ 0xx92-8112-7154; www.braziliansafaris.com; Rua 10 de Julho 632, Centro) Guyanese Munaf 'Steve' Roman's agency offers trips to Lago Tucunaré anywhere from three days/two nights to seven days/six nights for US\$60 per person per night. Riverboat or combination lodge/riverboat trips are available. Avoid his 'swim with and feed the dolphins' tours – they are disruptive to the dolphins' natural habits.

Associação dos Canoeiros (Estação Hidroviária) This association of independent, licensed boatmen is run by English-speaking Antonio Franco. They often sport green jackets and yellow badges

and hang around the Estação Hidroviária's entrance. They can arrange anything from a two-day river trip to 15-day overland journey to Guyana and Venezuela. A jungle trip for a group of three or four runs US\$175 per day. Accommodation is with local families.

JUNGLE LODGES

Within 250km of Manaus are at least two dozen jungle lodges – waterside hotels ranging from rustic (hammocks) to luxurious (suites). Visits are normally by (somewhat costly) packages that include activities. As many agencies are affiliated with or run their own lodge, it can be a very fine line between low-budget jungle trips and jungle lodges.

Acajatuba Jungle Lodge (☎ 0xx92-3642-0358/0378; www.acajatuba.com.br; Rua 7 87, Adrianópolis; 1-/2-night packages per person US\$225/305) The lodge has 20 round bungalows on stilts on Lago Acajatuba.

Amazon Eco-Lodge (☎ 0xx92-3656-6033; www.naturesafaris.com; Rua Flavio Espirito Santo 1, Kissia II, Manaus; 4-day & 3-night packages per 2 people US\$500) A small floating lodge on Lago Juma, 60km southeast of Manaus, this lovely lodge caters to 28 guests.

TRIPLE FRONTIER

On the northeast bank of the Amazon – about 1100km west of Manaus – Tabatinga (Brazil) and Leticia (Colombia) are separated by an

SPLURGE!

A remote floodplain forest, halfway between Manaus and the Peruvian frontier, is protected by the **Reserva de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Mamirauá** (Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve; office ☎ 0xx97-3343-4160; www.mamiraua.org.br; Av Brasil 197, Tefé; all-inclusive packages per person 3 days & 3 nights US\$450, 4 days & 4 nights US\$520). This 1.24 million hectare reserve is part of the second-largest (57,000 sq km) continuous block of protected tropical rainforest in the world. Mamirauá combines nature conservation and scientific research with improved opportunities for the communities within the reserve.

Their excellent ecotourism program affords access to a pristine piece of towering primary rainforest, rivers and lakes absolutely teeming with life. Silence there will be the loudest you've ever heard, and wildlife-viewing is among the best in Amazonia. The reserve contains four species of monkey (including the rare, crimson-faced white uacari), squirrels and 400-odd recorded bird species, as well as a higher concentration of the animals seen outside of Manaus. Guides native to the reserve and an English-speaking, trained naturalist lead unpretentious excursions.

Average group size is 12, maximum is 20. Accommodations are in agreeably comfortable yet unpretentious floating bungalows. The food includes regional fruits and fish, and much of it is grown locally and/or organically.

Rico and Trip fly between Manaus, Tefé and Tabatinga. From Manaus to Tefé there are regular (upper/lower deck US\$57/49, 45 hours, Wednesday to Saturday) and fast (US\$90, 13 hours, Wednesday and Saturday) boats. There are regular (US\$45/37, 40 hours, daily except Wed) and fast (US\$90, 11 hours, Thursday and Sunday) boats for the return trip too. **AJATO** operates the fast boats (p391). Boats between Tefé and Tabatinga are via Jutai.

GETTING TO PERU OR COLOMBIA

Before leaving Brazil, get an exit stamp from the **Polícia Federal** (Av da Amizade 650; ☎ 8am-6pm) in Tabatinga.

For Peru, boats depart from the Porto da Feira to Santa Rosa (US\$1, five minutes, 6am to 6pm). Regular (US\$35, 2½ days, three weekly) and express (US\$75, 10 hours, daily) boats also depart for Iquitos (further upriver in Peru). Iquitos boats pass immigration in Santa Rosa.

For Colombia, it's a short walk to Leticia, or you can take one of the frequent *kombis*. Also see Leticia's Boat section (p625) and the boxed text, p936.

invisible international border. The opposite bank of the river, and the islands in the middle of it, are Peru. Santa Rosa, Peru's border settlement, is on an island. This 'triple frontier' has travel routes linking all three countries and is a good base for jungle trips. Leticia is the largest and most pleasant of the three border towns and has the best services. For information, see p620).

BOA VISTA

☎ 0xx95 / pop 197,000

This planned, somewhat stark riverfront capital of Brazil's least populated state is surrounded by dry savanna. It sits isolated between the jungle territories of the Yanomami, one of Amazonia's largest surviving indigenous peoples, and beautiful high plains on the Venezuelan border. Any tourist interest lies in hiking and camping possibilities nearby.

Information

A tourist information post at the bus station opens irregularly.

Bradesco (Av Sebastião Diniz & Rua Inácio Magalhães) Has ATMs.

Byte Internet (Av Dr Silvio Botelho 537; per hr US\$1) Offers internet.

Edson Ouro Safira Joyas (Av Benjamin Constant 64 W; ☎ 8am-5:30pm Mon-Sat) Exchanges US, Venezuelan and Guyanese currencies and euros.

Sights & Activities

Spend the weekend at the vast **Parque Anauá**, about 2.5km northwest of the center. It has gardens, a lake and the small but interesting **Museu Integrado de Roraima** (admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm).

Riverfront **Porto do Babazinho** (☎ 3224-8174; babazinhorr@yahoo.com.br; Av Major Williams 1) rents kayaks (per hour US\$2), offers river day-trips (four-person minimum), teaches windsurfing from December to March and organizes two-night trips to a local ranch (per person US\$60). Belgian **Jean-Luc Felix** (☎ 3624-3015; Restaurante Bistro Gourmet, Av NS da Consolata) and **Lula** (☎ 9965-2222) lead hiking and camping trips in the surrounding mountains for two days or more.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Monte Libano (☎ 3224-7232; Av Benjamin Constant 319 W; s/d US\$14/17.50, without bathroom US\$10/15; ☎) The best of the cheapies, with drab *quartos* and marginally better air-con rooms. Coffee and bread breakfast.

Hotel Ideal (☎ 3224-6342; Rua Araújo Filho 481; s/d US\$20/25; ☎) A plain, multistory hotel with clean, simple rooms.

La Gondola (Av Benjamin Constant 35W; per kg US\$7) A popular lunch buffet and á la carte spot facing the central plaza. Nothing fancy.

Restaurant Ver O Rio (Praça Barreto Leite; mains for 2 US\$17.50/25) The menu is heavy on the fish, but does include beef, chicken and shrimp at this breezy spot overlooking the river.

Getting There & Around

Gol, Meta and Varig operate domestic flights from Boa Vista's airport, 3.5km from the center. A taxi costs US\$10. Meta also flies to Georgetown (Guyana) and Paramaribo (Suriname).

Five daily buses run to Manaus (US\$40 to US\$45, 12 hours). The daily bus to Caracas, Venezuela (US\$80, 24 hours) stops in Santa Elena de Uairén (US\$12.50, 3½ hours) and Puerto La Cruz (US\$74, 17 hours). A taxi between the bus station and the center (2.5km) costs US\$4.

GETTING TO VENEZUELA

Determine whether you require a Venezuelan tourist card from the consulate in Manaus or Boa Vista before boarding a Venezuela-bound bus. Buses stop at a Brazilian Polícia Federal border post for exit stamps before entering Venezuela. The Venezuelan town of Santa Elena de Uairén (p1043) lies 15km north of the Venezuelan border. For information on travel from Santa Elena to Brazil, see p1045.

GETTING TO GUYANA

Before leaving Brazil, get an exit stamp from the **Polícia Federal** (☎ 8am-7pm). The 2pm bus leaving Boa Vista stops at the Polícia Federal and then continues to the river. If you take an earlier or later departure, catch a taxi from Bonfim's bus station to the Polícia Federal (US\$2.50); from there it's a short walk to the river. Motorized canoes cross the river (US\$2) to Guyana. Once there, check in with officials immediately as smuggling is an issue here.

Collective taxis marked 'Lotação' (US\$1) travel roughly fixed routes and are the best way to get around. Ask if they're going where you are – sometimes they'll deviate a bit.

BONFIM

☎ 0xx95 / pop 3000

The small town of Bonfim sits on Rio Tacutu, and is a stepping-stone to Lethem, Guyana (p782). Lethem is 5km from the other side of the river. Neither Bonfim nor Lethem are exactly pleasant, so get an early start to assure you reach your destination before nightfall.

Lethem's accommodations are much better, but if you're stuck in Bonfim try **Pousada Fronteira** (☎ 3552-1294; Rua Aluísio de Menezes 26; r US\$7.50; 🚽).

Four daily buses run between Boa Vista and Bonfim (US\$6.50, 1½ hours).

PORTO VELHO

☎ 0xx69 / pop 311,500

Stretched along the muddy banks of the Rio Madeira, Porto Velho's new economic importance as the transfer point for Mato Grosso's soybeans from truck to barge is improving this backwater town. Change is slow, however. Porto Velho remains a major conduit for cocaine smuggling and has the rugged feel of a frontier town, especially at night.

Information

Shops and offices generally close between noon and 2pm.

Bradesco (Av Carlos Gomes) Has ATMs.

Casa de Câmbio Marco Aurélio (☎ 3223-2551; Rua José de Alencar 3353; ☎ 8:30am-3pm Mon-Fri) Changes US dollars and traveler's checks.

Titan Cyber Lan (Av Campos Sales 2913; per hr US\$1.25; ☎ 9am-11pm) Provides internet access above Sandubá's.

Sights

The **Museu da Estrada de Ferro Madeira-Mamoré** (Praça Madeira Mamoré; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm) displays relics from this railway line, intended to carry rubber over the unnavigable section of river between Guajará-Mirim and Porto Velho, thereby connecting it to world markets. The project was a disaster, and resulted in so many casualties it earned the nickname 'Railway of Death'. Restoration of the line is rumored – ask at the museum.

Sleeping

Hotel Tia Carmem (☎ 3221-1908/7910; Av Campos Sales 2895; s/d without bathroom US\$10/15, with bathroom US\$17.50/25; 🚽) The cheapest rooms have no ventilation. Definitely upgrade at this friendly cheapie. Good location.

Hotel Tereza Raquel (☎ 3223-9234/5906; Rua Tenreiro Aranha 2125; s/d US\$17.50/23; 🚽) The friendly staff and bright rooms in fine shape make this a good-value hotel for Porto Velho.

Vitória Palace Hotel (☎ 3221-9232; Rua Duque de Caxias 745; s/d US\$17.50/22.50; 🚽) Room (especially bathroom) quality is a notch below the Tereza Raquel, but the quiet surroundings of this bland hotel feel much safer at night.

Eating

Sandubá's (Av Campos Sales 2913; sandwiches US\$1.25-4.50) A popular open-air sandwich grill with good juices, *guaraná* or *açaí* smoothies and projected TV.

Mirante II (Rua Dom Pedro II; mains US\$5-12.50; ☎ closed Mon) Enjoy a meal, an *açaí* or a drink at this open-air patio restaurant overlooking the river.

Remanso do Tucunaré (Av Brasília 1506; mains for 2 US\$10-21) Half-portions are available at this fish restaurant. The dark dining room has big fish tanks and plaques naming its most loyal customers.

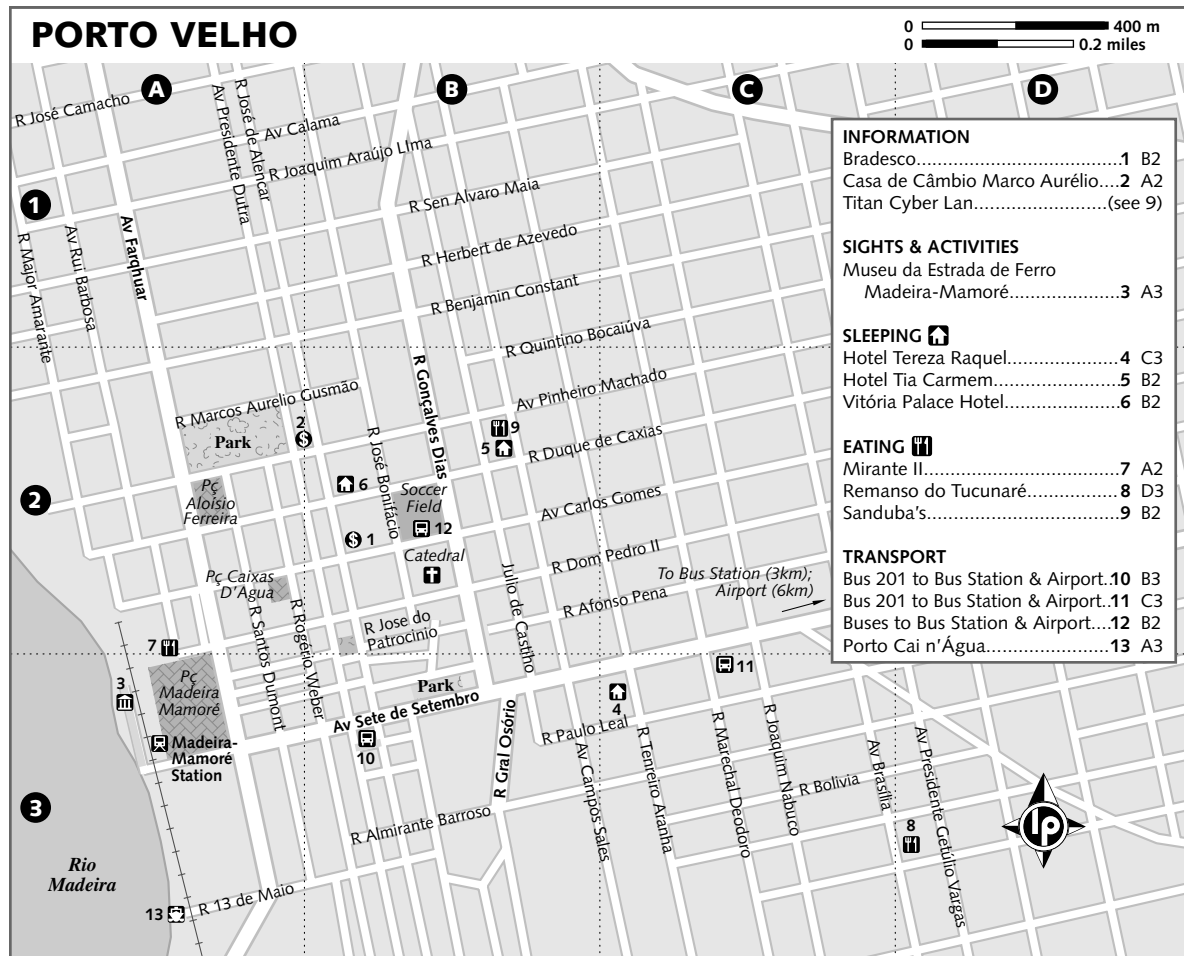
Getting There & Around

AIR

Gol, Rico, TAM, Trip and Varig operate domestic flights from Porto Velho's airport, 6km from the center. A taxi costs US\$12.50, or take bus 201 'Hospital de Base via Aeroporto.'

BOAT

Boats to Manaus (hammock US\$50 to US\$65, three to 3½ days) leave around 6pm on Tuesday and Friday from Porto Cai n'Água. A Wednesday departure requires you to hang



BRAZIL

around Manicor in the middle of the night while transferring boats, which can be unsafe and isn't recommended. See the boxed text on p379 for information and tips.

BUS

Buses run to Guajar-Mirim (US\$15, 5½ hours, six daily), Rio Branco (US\$26 to US\$31, eight hours, five daily) and Cuiab (US\$75, 21 hours, three daily). Collective taxis also leave the bus station for Guajar-Mirim (US\$22.50, 3½ hours). From the bus station to the center (3km), take bus 201 'Hospital de Base via Aeroporto'. To return, take a 'Presidente Roosevelt' or 'Esperanza da Comunidade' bus.

GUAJAR-MIRIM

☎ 0xx69 / pop 35,500

In this pleasant town just opposite Guayaramern (Bolivia), bushy trees shade overgrown grass and sidewalks, stained red by the earth, from the relentless sun. In the quiet center on the Rio Mamor there are quite a few boarded-up old buildings.

Playnet Games (Posto Nogueira, Rua Getlio Vargas; per hr US\$1.25) offers internet access inside a gas

station until late. **Bradesco** (cnr Av Costa Marques & Av Leopoldo de Mateos) has ATMs. There is no currency exchange in Guajar-Mirim.

The small **Museu Histrico Municipal** (admission free; ☎ 8:30am-12pm & 2:30-5pm), in the old Madeira-Mamor train station, is a pretty cool bug-eaten natural history museum. There are crazy photographs of a snake that swallowed a man whole.

Despite the commercial-street location and run-down exterior, the rooms at **Alfa Hotel** (☎ 3541-3121; Av Leopoldo de Mateos 239; s/d US\$10/20; 🗿) are clean and bright. Rooms are clean with aging fixtures at the simple **Hotel Mini-Estrela Palace** (☎ 3541-1205; Av 15 de Novembro 460; s/d US\$10/23; 🗿), in a residential area. A similar option is across the street and restaurants are nearby.

The lunch buffet at **Restaurante Osis** (Av 15 de Novembro 460; per kilo US\$8) includes freshly grilled meats at Guajar-Mirim's best restaurant.

Panificadora Central (Av 15 de Novembro 632) The quality and variety of salty and sweet snacks and fresh juices is surprisingly good at this corner bakery.

Buses run to Porto Velho (US\$15 to US\$17, 5½ hours, six daily) and Rio Branco (US\$23,

GETTING TO BOLIVIA

Before leaving, get an exit stamp from the **Policia Federal** (Av Presidente Dutra; ☎ 8am-10pm). When walking toward the river turn right onto Dutra. Passenger launches to Guayaramerín (US\$1.50, five minutes) depart from the port at the base of Av 15 de Novembro roughly every 15 minutes from 7am to 6pm. From 6pm to 7am departures require a minimum of 10 passengers. For information on travel in the opposite direction, see p255.

eight hours, daily). Collective taxis also leave the bus station for Porto Velho (US\$22.50, 3½ hours). Buy bus tickets at the bus station (2km east of the center) or at the Real Norte office by the port. Buses (excluding midnight departures) pass the office about 20 minutes before they leave the station. A taxi between the station and the center runs to US\$5.

RIO BRANCO

☎ 0xx68 / pop 255,000

Acre is a remote jungle state known for wanton environmental destruction, rampant high-level crime and corruption, violent land struggles and drug smuggling. Despite this, its riverfront capital Rio Branco is a pleasant enough, and relatively developed, place to pass through.

Viarena (Rua Rui Barbosa 507; per hr US\$1.50) offers internet access. Major banks are on Praça Eurico Dutra.

The **Museu da Borracha** (Rubber Museum; Av Ceará 1441; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri) has good displays on rubber tapping, Indian artifacts, and the local Santo Daime cult, centered around the hallucinogenic drink *ayahuasca*.

Chalé Hotel (☎ 2332-2055; Rua Palmeiral 334; s/d US\$15/22.50; 🏠) has friendly staff and decent rooms, just outside the bus station. The room quality is a little rough around the edges at **Afa Hotel** (☎ 3224-1396; Rua Franco Ribeiro 109; s/d US\$15/20; 🏠), but it is clean, friendly and located on a quiet block. Rooms are in great shape at the sterile **Hotel e Churrascaria Triângulo** (☎ 3224-0600/3529; Rua Floriano Peixoto 893; s/d US\$17.50/30; 🏠) and set back from the busy avenue. Its BBQ restaurant offers a *rodízio* (US\$9) or buffet (per kg US\$9) with air-con and checkered tablecloths. Creative salads, brown rice and vegetarian options set semigourmet buffet

lunch spot **Afa Bistrô d'Amazonia** (Rua Franco Ribeiro 99; per kilo US\$8.50; 🍴), apart.

Gol, Rico and Varig operate domestic flights from Porto Velho's airport, 20km west of the center. A taxi to the airport costs US\$25 or **Inácio's Tur** (Rua Rui Barbosa 450) runs a bus to, but not from, the airport (US\$15). Bus 304 (40 minutes) runs irregularly from the city bus terminal to the airport – ask a *fiscal* at the terminal for the schedule. Catch it at the Estádio José de Melo stop on Av Ceará.

Buses run to Porto Velho (US\$53, eight hours, four daily), Guajará-Mirim (US\$23, eight hours, one daily), Xapurí (US\$9, 3½ hours, two daily) and Brasiléia (US\$10, 4½ hours, five daily). From the bus terminal to the center (1.5km), catch a 'Norte-Sul', 'Amapá', 'Taquari' or 'Domoacir' bus.

XAPURI

☎ 0xx68 / pop 6200

Rows of neat wooden houses, flowers and thick trees line paved and red dirt roads in this sweet little town. Its charm and a look unlike any other Northern Brazilian town make it well worth a visit if you're in the area.

Xapurí was home to rubber tapper and internationally recognized environmental martyr Chico Mendes, who was murdered in 1988 after years of successful campaigning against the destruction of forests by loggers and ranchers. The **Fundação Chico Mendes** (Rua Dr Batista de Moraes; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm), a block from the bus station, displays touching Mendes photos and memorabilia. It is staffed in part by his sister-in-law. You'll see Mendes' rustic house where he was fatally shot, which gives a feel for the characteristic homes of the area.

Several fine budget *pousadas* rent comfortable rooms. **Restaurante Central** (Rua 6 de Agosto 173) has a simple lunch buffet (per kg US\$5.50).

Buses run to Rio Branco (US\$8.50, 3½ hours, two daily) and Brasiléia (US\$3.50, two hours, two daily). Collective taxis to Rio Branco (US\$12.50, two hours) and Brasiléia (US\$5, 45 minutes) leave from a kiosk on Rua Coronel Branão.

BRASILÉIA

☎ 0xx68 / pop 10,500

Brasiléia is separated from Cobija, Bolivia, by the Rio Acre and Igarapé Bahia. Brasiléia's atmosphere is decidedly more mellow, while Cobija has more and better services.

GETTING TO BOLIVIA & PERU

Before leaving Brazil, get an exit stamp from the Polícia Federal in Brasília's neighboring town Epiaciolândia. Ask to be dropped there on your way into town.

For Bolivia, take a taxi (US\$3.50) or *mototaxi* (US\$1) from the Polícia Federal over either Epiaciolândia's or Brasília's international bridge. The fare includes a stop at Bolivian immigration and onward travel to a hotel or bus station. Cobija has several places to stay, an airport (two, in fact) and early morning bus connections to Riberalta, Bolivia and Guayaramerín, Bolivia.

For Peru, get an exit stamp in Epiaciolândia, catch a bus to Assis, Brasil (US\$3.50, 1¾ hours, three daily) and cross the Rio Acre to Iñapari (Peru). Assis has better accommodations than Iñapari if you need to spend the night.

For travel from Peru to Brazil, see p928.

Alto Acre (Praça Hugo Poli; per hr US\$1.50) offers internet access. **Banco da Amazônia** (Av Prefeito R Moreira; ☎ 8am-1pm Mon-Fri) changes foreign cash and traveler's checks.

Pousada Las Palmeras (☎ 3546-3284; Av Geny Assis 425; s/d US\$20/30; 🏠) has well-maintained rooms with little to no natural light, and an airy sitting area. Standard eateries line Av Prefeito Rolando Moreira.

Buses run to Rio Branco (US\$18.50, 4½ hours, five daily) and Xapuri (US\$3.70, two hours, two daily). Collective taxis depart for Rio Branco (US\$12.50, 2½ hours) and Xapuri (US\$5, 45 minutes) across from the bus station

80 hostels in the country, most with individual links on the website. Many hostels are excellent, and they're great places to meet young Brazilians. A dormitory bed costs between US\$10 and US\$17 per person. Non-HI members usually pay 20% extra, but you can buy an HI guest card for US\$15 at many hostels and at youth hostel association offices in Brazil.

Hotels

Brazil has the lavish, the shabby and everything in between. Prices here are among South America's highest, but you can still find good deals.

At the low end, US\$10/16 for very basic single/double *quartos* is possible in nonurban guesthouses. Better rooms with private bathrooms start at about US\$20/30 for single/double and substantially more in major cities like Rio.

Always ask for prices, as they're often much lower than posted prices. Also, it never hurts to ask '*Tem desconto?*' (Is there a discount?), which might net a savings between US\$3 a night and 30%. Prices typically rise by 30% during high seasons. Hotels in business-oriented cities such as São Paulo and Curitiba readily give discounts on weekends.

Pousadas

A *pousada* typically means a small family-owned guesthouse, though some hotels call themselves 'pousadas' to improve their charm quotient. Rustic *pousadas* can cost as little as US\$10/20 per single/double and as much as US\$160 for a double room with breakfast.

ACTIVITIES

The options for adrenaline-fueled adventure in Brazil are endless. The websites www.360graus.com.br and www.guiaverde.com.br

BRAZIL DIRECTORY**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Brazilian accommodations are simple yet usually clean and reasonably safe, and nearly all come with some form of *café da manhã* (breakfast). Private rooms with communal bathrooms are called *quartos*. Rooms with private bathrooms are *apartamentos*. Nearly every town in Brazil has at least one hotel or *pousada*.

Camping

Camping is a good way to experience national parks and other remote areas, as long as you're prepared to carry a tent and other essentials. The **Camping Clube do Brasil** (www.campingclube.com.br in Portuguese) has around 40 camping grounds spread between Fortaleza and Porto Alegre.

Hostels

Youth hostels are called *albergues da juventude*. The HI-affiliated **Federação Brasileira dos Albergues da Juventude** (www.hostel.org.br) has over

(both in Portuguese) are valuable resources on canyoning, paragliding, kite-surfing, wakeboarding as well as rafting, surfing, trekking, diving or mountain climbing.

Hiking & Climbing

These popular activities are best during the cooler months, April to October. Outstanding hiking areas include the national parks of Chapada Diamantina in Bahia (p315), Serra dos Órgãos in Rio de Janeiro state (p298), Chapada dos Veadeiros in Goiás (p332) and the Serra de São José near Tiradentes in Minas Gerais.

Rio de Janeiro is the Brazilian climbing hub, with some 350 documented climbs within a 40-minute drive. Serra dos Órgãos and Itatiaia (Rio de Janeiro) and Caparaó (Minas Gerais) national parks also have some particularly good climbs.

Visit Rio's climbing clubs to meet others and go on group outings. **Centro Excursionista Brasileiro** (☎ 0xx21-2252-9844; www.ceb.org.br in Portuguese; Av Almirante Barroso 2, 8th fl, Centro) lists upcoming excursions, and has weekly meetings to discuss the weekend's program, usually geared toward trekking and day hikes.

Surfing

Brazil has some choice surf spots. The best surfing beaches are in the South and Southeast: Saquarema (p299), Ilha de Santa Catarina (p320), São Francisco do Sul, Ilha do Mel (p319), Búzios (p301) and Rio de Janeiro (p280). In the Northeast, Itacaré (p349), Praia da Pipa (p366) and Fernando de Noronha are the major surf spots. The waves are best in the Brazilian winter (June to August).

Windsurfing & Kite-Boarding

Búzios in Rio state has good conditions, and access to rental equipment. But Brazil's hardcore windsurfing mecca is the Ceará coast northwest of Fortaleza, from July to December. Here, Jericoacoara (p371), Canoa Quebrada (p368) and the small fishing village of Icaraízinho are the most popular spots.

BOOKS

Lonely Planet's *Brazil*, *Rio de Janeiro* and (in French) *Brésil* guides have all the information needed for travelers making a more in-depth exploration of the country. Lonely Planet also publishes an excellent Brazilian phrasebook.

Quatro Rodas: Viajar Bem e Barato, available for US\$18 at most Brazilian newsstands and bookstores, has detailed listings of inexpensive accommodations and restaurants all over the country, plus some information on sights.

Travelers' Tales Brazil, edited by Scott Doggett and Annette Haddad, is a fine anthology of travel adventures with good portraits of life in Brazil. One of the great classics of travel writing is Peter Fleming's *Brazilian Adventure*, a hilarious account of an expedition into Mato Grosso in the 1930s. Claude Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) was an anthropological milestone for its study of Indian peoples in the Brazilian interior.

Several worthwhile books on history are *A Concise History of Brazil* by Boris Fausto and *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* by Thomas Skidmore. The story behind Euclides da Cunha's masterly *Rebellion in the Backlands* (which describes the Canudos rebellion) is told by Mário Vargas Llosa in his entertaining novel *The War of the End of the World*. Jorge Amado, Brazil's best novelist, wrote many wonderful books, including *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon*.

The Brazilians, by Joseph A Page, is a fascinating portrait of the country and its people. For a well-illustrated, accessible introduction to Brazilian popular music, get *The Brazilian Sound* by Chris McGowan and Ricardo Pessanha. *Futebol: The Brazilian Way* gives insight into the culture behind Brazil's national addiction.

Sy Montgomery's *Journey of the Pink Dolphins* recounts her experiences studying these elusive Amazonian creatures. *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice* by Mark Plotkin relates his mystical encounters in the Amazon with some of the world's greatest healers. In *Samba*, Alma Guillermoprieto gives an insightful account of joining one of Rio's samba schools.

BUSINESS HOURS

Most shops and government services (including post offices) are open 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm Saturday. Banks are generally open 9am or 10am to 2pm or 3pm. Most restaurants open from noon to 3pm and 6pm to 10pm; those open for breakfast serve from around 8am to 10:30am. Bars typically open from 7pm to 2am, staying open until 4am on weekends.

CLIMATE

Most of Brazil experiences only moderate temperature changes throughout the year, though southern states like *Río Grande do Sul* have more extreme seasonal changes like those in Europe and the US.

During the summer, which runs from December to February (school holidays coinciding), Rio and the Northeast have temperatures in the high 30s. The rest of the year temperatures are generally in the mid-20s to low 30s. The south has wider temperature variations, ranging from 15°C in the winter (June through August) to 35°C in the summer.

The Amazon region rarely gets hotter than 27°C, but it is humid there, with considerable rainfall over tropical Amazonia. In some parts of the North, December to March is considered winter, since that's the rainiest season.

Owing to generally temperate weather year-round, there's no bad time to visit Brazil. But unless you have your heart set on attending Carnival, you may want to avoid the summer crowds (and heat), and visit from April to November. Treks into the Amazon and the Pantanal are best then – especially from June to August, when it's drier.

For more information and climate charts see p1062.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Brazil receives a lot of bad press about its violence and high crime rate. By using common sense, there is much you can do to reduce the risks, including taking the general precautions applicable throughout South America (see p1063).

First off, don't start your trip by wandering around touristy areas in a jetlagged state soon after arrival: you'll be an obvious target. Accept the fact that you might be mugged, pickpocketed or have your bag snatched while you're in the country, and don't try to resist them if you do. Carry only the minimum needed for the day plus a *fat-looking* wad to hand over to would-be thieves. Other tips:

- Dress down, leave the jewelry at home and don't walk around cities with iPods, digital cameras and other flashy goods (disposable cameras are better choices).
- Keep small change handy so you don't have to flash a wallet to pay a bus fare.
- Keep spare money in a sock or shoe.
- Before arriving in a new place take a map or at least have a rough idea of the area's

orientation. Use taxis to avoid walking through risky areas.

- Be alert and walk purposefully. Criminals will home in on dopey, hesitant, disoriented-looking individuals.
- Use ATMs inside buildings. Before using any ATM or exchanging money, be aware of those around you. Robbers sometimes watch these places looking for targets.
- Check windows and doors of your room for security, and don't leave anything valuable lying around.
- If you're suspicious or uneasy about a situation, don't hesitate to make excuses and leave, change your route, or do whatever else is needed to extricate yourself.
- Don't take anything to city beaches except your bathing suit, a towel and just enough money for lunch and drinks. No camera, no bag, no jewelry.
- After dark, don't ever walk along empty streets or into deserted parks.
- Don't wander into *favelas*.

If something is stolen from you, you can report it to the police. This, however, is a real headache and only recommended if you need a police report for your insurance company.

DRIVER'S LICENSE

The legal driving age in Brazil is 18. Most foreign licenses are legally valid in Brazil, but we recommend obtaining an International Driver's Licence, as the police you are likely to encounter as a foreign driver don't always know the law.

ELECTRICITY

Electrical current is not standardized in Brazil and can be almost anywhere between 110V and 220V. Carry a converter and use a surge protector with electrical equipment.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

Embassies & Consulates in Brazil

Argentina (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2553-1646; Praia de Botafogo 228, No 201, Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro)

Australia (Map p284; ☎ 0xx21-3824-4624; Av Presidente Wilson 231, 23rd fl, Centro, Rio de Janeiro)

Bolivia Manaus (☎ 0xx92-3236-9988; Av Efigênio Salles, Condomínio Greenwood, Quadra B, Casa 20); Rio de Janeiro (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2552-5490; Av Rui Barbosa 664, No 101, Flamengo)

Canada (Map p292; ☎ 0xx21-2543-3004; Av Atlântica 1130, 5th fl, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro)

Chile (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2552-5349; Praia do Flamengo 344, 7th fl, Flamengo, Rio de Janeiro)

Colombia Belém (Map p284; ☎ 0xx91-3246-5662; Av Almirante 71, Apto 601, Bloco B); Manaus (☎ 0xx92-3234-6777; Rua Dona Libânia 62); Rio de Janeiro (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2552-5048; Praia do Flamengo 284, No 101, Flamengo)

Ecuador (☎ 0xx21-2491-4113; Av das Americas 500, Bldg 21, No 305, Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro)

Germany (☎ 0xx21-2554-0004; Rua Presidente Carlos de Campos 417, Laranjeiras, Rio de Janeiro)

Ireland (☎ 0xx21-2501-8455; Rua 24 de Maio 347, Riachuelo, Rio de Janeiro)

Israel (☎ 0xx21-2235-5588; Av NS de Copacabana 680, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro)

Netherlands (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2157-5400; Praia de Botafogo 242, 10th fl, Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro)

Paraguay (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2553-2294; Praia de Botafogo 242, 2nd fl, Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro)

Peru Manaus (☎ 0xx92-3236-5012; Rua HI 12, Morada do Sol, Alexio); Rio de Janeiro (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2551-9596; Av Rui Barbosa 314, 2nd fl, Flamengo)

UK Belém (☎ 0xx91-3222-5074; Av Governador J Malcher 815 Ed Palladium Center); Manaus (☎ 0xx92-613-1819; Rua Poraquê 240, Distrito Industrial); Rio de Janeiro (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2555-9603; Praia do Flamengo 284, 2nd fl, Flamengo)

Uruguay (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2553-6030; Praia de Botafogo 242, 6th fl, Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro)

US Belém (☎ 0xx91-3223-0800; Rua Oswaldo Cruz 165); Manaus (☎ 0xx92-3633-4907; Rua Recife 1010, Adriano-polis); Rio de Janeiro (Map p284; ☎ 0xx21-3823-2000; Av Presidente Wilson 147, Centro)

Venezuela Belém (☎ 0xx91-3222-6396; Rua Presidente Pernambuco 270); Manaus (☎ 0xx92-3233-6004; Ferreira Pena 179); Rio de Janeiro (Map pp288-9; ☎ 0xx21-2554-6134; Praia de Botafogo 242, 5th fl, Botafogo)

Brazilian Embassies & Consulates Abroad

Countries with Brazilian embassies and/or consulates include the following:

Australia Embassy (☎ 02-6273-2372; <http://brazil.org.au>; 19 Forster Cres, Yarralumla, Canberra ACT 2600); consulate (☎ 02-9267-4414; www.brazilsydney.org; Level 17, 31 Market St, Sydney NSW 2000)

Canada Embassy (☎ 613-237-1090; 450 Wilbrod St, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M8); Montreal consulate (☎ 514-499-0968); Toronto consulate (☎ 416-922-2503; www.consbrastoronto.org; 77 Bloor Street West, Suite 1109 & 1105, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1M2)

France Embassy (☎ 01 45 61 63 00; www.bresil.org; 34 Cours Albert, 1er, 75008 Paris)

Germany Embassy (☎ 030-726280; www.brasilianische-botschaft.de; Wallstrasse 57, 10179 Berlin-Mitte)

New Zealand Embassy (☎ 04-473-3516; 10 Brandon St, Level 9, Wellington 1)

UK Embassy (☎ 020-7399-9000; www.brazil.org.uk; 32 Green St, London W1Y 4AT); consulate (☎ 020-7930-9055; 6 St Alban's St, London SW1Y 4SQ)

USA Embassy (☎ 202-238-2828; www.brasilemb.org; 3006 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008); Boston consulate (☎ 617-542-4000; www.consulatebrazil.org; 20 Park Plaza, Suite 810, Boston, MA 02116); Chicago consulate (☎ 312-464-0244; 401 North Michigan Ave, Suite 3050, Chicago, IL 60611); Houston consulate (☎ 713-961-3063; www.brazilhouston.org; 1233 West Loop South, Park Tower North, Suite 1150, Houston, TX 77027); Los Angeles consulate (☎ 323-651-2664; 8484 Wilshire Blvd, Suites 711-730, Beverly Hills, CA 90211); Miami consulate (☎ 305-285-6200; www.brazilmiami.org; 2601 South Bayshore Drive, Suite 800, Miami, FL 33133); New York consulate (☎ 917-777-7777; www.brazilny.org; 1185 6th Ave, 21st Fl, New York, NY 10036); San Francisco consulate (☎ 415-981-8170; www.brazilsf.org; 300 Montgomery St, suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94104)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Festa de Iemanjá (Festival of Iemanjá) Celebrated in Rio on January 1, and in Salvador on February 2.

Procissão do Senhor Bom Jesus dos Navegantes Procession of the Lord Jesus of Boatmen. In Salvador, Bahia on New Year's Day.

Lavagem do Bonfim (Washing of Bonfim church) Second Thursday in January. A Candomblé festival culminating in the ritual cleansing of Bonfim church in Salvador, Bahia.

Carnaval Friday to Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday. Carnaval celebrations usually start well before the official holiday.

Semana Santa (Holy Week) The week before Easter. Festival in Congonhas, Ouro Preto, Goiás Velho.

Dia do Índio (Indian Day) April 19.

Festas Juninas (June Festivals) Throughout June. Celebrated throughout in Rio state and much of the rest of the country.

Boi-Bumbá June 28–30. Celebrated in Parintins, Amazonas.

Bumba Meu Boi Late June to second week of August. Festival in São Luís.

Fortal (out-of-season Carnaval) Last week of July. Celebrated in Fortaleza.

Jubileu do Senhor Bom Jesus do Matosinhos (Jubilee of the Savior of Matosinhos) September 7–14. Celebrated in Congonhas.

Círio de Nazaré (Festival of the Virgin of Nazaré) Starts second Sunday in October. Festival in Belém.

Carnatal (Carnaval in Natal) First week of December. Natal's answer to Brazil's big celebration comes in December (Natalese simply can't wait for the *other* Carnaval).

FOOD & DRINK

Brazilian Cuisine

Brazilian restaurants serve huge portions, and many plates are designed for two. It's hard to go hungry, even on a modest budget. The basic Brazilian diet revolves around *arroz* (white rice), *feijão* (black beans) and *farinha* (flour from the root of manioc or cassava). The typical Brazilian meal, called *prato feito* (set meal, often abbreviated 'pf') or *refeição*, consists of these ingredients plus either meat, chicken or fish and costs US\$3 to US\$6 in most eateries.

Another good option are *por quilo* (per-kilogram) lunch buffets. Here, you pay by the weight of what you serve yourself: typically around US\$12 per kilogram, with a big plateful weighing around half a kilo. Per-kilo places are good for vegetarians too. The fixed-price *rodízio* is another deal, and most *churrascarias* (meat BBQ restaurants) offer *rodízio* dining, where they bring endless skewers of different meat to your table.

In some restaurants frequented by tourists, overcharging and shortchanging are almost standard procedure. Check over your bill carefully.

There are regional differences in Brazilian cuisine. The *comida baiana* of the northeastern coast has a distinct African flavor, using peppers, spices and the potent oil of the *dendê* palm tree. Both the Pantanal and the Amazon region have some tasty varieties of fish. Rio Grande do Sul's *comida gaúcha* features much meat. Common Brazilian dishes include the following:

açaí (a-sa-ee) – an Amazonian fruit with a berrylike taste and deep purple color; frozen and ground up, it makes a great, sorbetlike dish to which you can add granola, ginseng, honey etc

acarajé (a-ka-ra-zhe) – *baianas* (Bahian women) traditionally sell this on street corners throughout Bahia; it's made from peeled brown beans, mashed in salt and onions, and then fried in *dendê* (palm) oil; inside is *vatapá*, dried shrimp, pepper and tomato sauce

barreado (ba-rre-a-do) – a mixture of meats and spices cooked in a clay pot for 24 hours, it's served with banana and *farofa*; it's the state dish of Paraná

bobó de camarão (bo-bo de ka-ma-rowng) – manioc paste cooked and flavored with dried shrimp, coconut milk and cashews

caldeirada (kow-day-ra-da) – stew with big chunks of fish, onions and tomato

carne do sol (kar-ne de sol) – tasty salted beef, grilled and served with beans, rice and vegetables

caruru (ka-roo-roo) – one of the most popular Afro-Brazilian dishes, this is prepared from okra or other vegetables cooked in water, plus onions, salt, shrimp, *malaqueta* peppers, *dendê* oil and fish

casquinha de carangueijo/siri (kas-kee-nya de ka-rang-ge-zho/see-ree) – stuffed crab, prepared with manioc flour

cozido (ko-zee-do) – a stew usually made with many vegetables (eg potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots and manioc)

dourado (do-raa-do) – scrumptious catfish found throughout Brazil.

farofa (fa-ro-fa) – manioc flour gently toasted and mixed with bits of onion or bacon; it's a common condiment

feijoada (fay-zho-a-da) – Brazil's national dish, this pork stew is served with rice and a bowl of beans, and is traditionally eaten for Saturday lunch. It goes well with *caipirinhas*
frango a passarinho (frang-go a pa-sa-ree-nyo) – small chunks of crisp fried chicken make a delicious *tira-gosto* (appetizer or snack)

moqueca (mo-ke-ka) – stew flavored with *dendê* oil and coconut milk, often with peppers and onions; the word also refers to a style of covered clay-pot cooking from Bahia: fish, shrimp, oyster, crab or a combination can all be done *moqueca*-style

pato no tucupi (pa-to no too-koo-pee) – very popular in Pará, this roast duck dish is flavored with garlic and cooked in the *tucupi* sauce made from the manioc juice and *jambu*, a local vegetable

peixada (pay-sha-da) – fish cooked in broth with vegetables and eggs

peixe a delícia (pay-she a de-lee-sya) – broiled or grilled fish, usually prepared with bananas and coconut milk

prato de verão (pra-to de ve-rowng) – literally 'summer plate,' basically a fruit salad – served at many juice bars in Rio

sanduíche (sang-doo-ee-she) – covers a multitude of inexpensive bites from the *X-tudo* (hamburger with everything) to *misto quente* (toasted ham-and-cheese sandwich); *sanduíches* are a mainstay of *lanchonetes* (snack bars)

tacacá (ta-ka-ka) – Indian dish made of dried shrimp cooked with pepper, *jambu*, manioc and much more

tucunaré (too ka na-ray) – tender, tasty Amazonian fish

tutu á mineira (too-too a mee-nay-ra) – black-bean *feijoada*, often served with *couve* (a type of kale). Typical of Minas Gerais

vatapá (va-ta-pa) – perhaps the most famous Brazilian dish of African origin, a seafood dish with a thick sauce made from manioc paste, coconut and *dendê* oil.

Drinks

The incredible variety of Brazilian fruits makes for some divine *sucos* (juices). Every town has plenty of juice bars, offering 30 or 40 different varieties at around US\$1.50 for a good-sized glass.

Cafezinho (coffee), as typically drunk in Brazil, is strong, hot and sweet, usually served

without milk. *Refrigerantes* (soft drinks) are found everywhere and are cheaper than bottled water. *Guaraná*, made from the fruit of an Amazonian plant, is about as popular as Coke. It's cold, carbonated and sweet, and the fruit has all sorts of supposedly marvelous properties, so you can tell yourself it's healthy too!

The two key alcoholic drinks in Brazil are *cachaça* (more politely called *pinga*), a high-proof sugarcane rum, and *cerveja* (beer). *Cachaça* ranges from excrementally raw to tolerably smooth, and is the basis of that celebrated Brazilian cocktail the caipirinha. Of the common beer brands, Antarctica and Brahma are generally the best. Chope (*shoh-pee*) is pale blond pilsener draft beer, and stands pretty much at the pinnacle of Brazilian civilization. Key phrase: '*Moço, mais um chope!*' (Waiter, another beer!).

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELERS

Although gay characters have begun appearing on *novelas* (soap operas), mainstream Brazil is still homophobic. Machismo dominates and being out is difficult here. Rio has the best gay scene, though you'll find good gay bars in Salvador, São Paulo and elsewhere. These are all-welcome affairs attended by GLS (*Gays, Lesbians e Simpatizantes*) crowds of straights and gays. An excellent gay travel and excursions agency is **G Brazil** (☎ 0xx21-2247-4431; www.gbrazil.com; Rua Farne de Amoedo 76, No 303). Useful websites for gay and lesbian travelers are www.riogayguide.com and www.pridelinks.com/Regional/Brazil.

There is no law against homosexuality in Brazil. The age of consent is 18 years, the same as for heterosexuals.

HEALTH

A yellow-fever vaccination certificate is required for travelers who, within three months of arriving in Brazil (or applying for a Brazilian visa), have been in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Peru, Venezuela or any of about a dozen African countries. The list of countries can vary, so check with a Brazilian consulate. At most Brazilian borders and major airports there are vaccination posts where you can have the jab (free for foreigners) and get the certificate immediately. But it's wise to do this in advance.

Malaria is a concern in certain areas of the Amazon. Travelers should take an appropriate malaria preventative, such as mefloquine or doxycycline (chloroquine is inadequate here),

and cover up as much as possible to prevent mosquito bites (dengue, for which there is no medication, is also prevalent).

Tap water is safe but not very tasty in most urban areas. In remote areas, filter your own or stick to bottled water.

The sun is powerful here, and travelers should be mindful of heatstroke, dehydration and sunburn. Drink plenty of water, wear a strong sunscreen and allow your body time to acclimatize to high temperatures before attempting strenuous activities. A good drink when dehydrated is *agua de coco* (coconut water), which contains electrolytes.

See p1090 for more information.

HOLIDAYS

Brazil's high season runs from December until Carnival (usually February). Low season runs from March to November.

Ano Novo (New Year's Day) January 1

Carnaval (Friday to Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday) February/March. Carnival celebrations usually start well before the official holiday.

Paixão & Páscoa (Good Friday & Easter Sunday) Dates vary, March/April

Tiradentes (Tiradentes Day) April 21

Dia do Trabalho (May Day/Labor Day) May 1

Corpus Christi (60 days after Easter) Sunday May/June

Dia da Independência (Independence Day)

September 7

Dia da Nossa Senhora de Aparecida (Day of Our Lady of Aparecida) October 12

Finados (All Souls' Day) November 2

Proclamação da República (Proclamation of the Republic Day) November 15

Natal (Christmas Day) December 25

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés are widespread in Brazil. Charges are about US\$2 to US\$3 an hour.

INTERNET RESOURCES

Brazil Max (www.brazilmax.com) This nicely designed site has features on travel, culture and society in Brazil; decent selection of articles and links.

Brazilian embassy in London (www.brazil.org.uk) Has much practical info for tourists and links to local tourism sites in Brazil.

Brazzil (www.brazzil.com) Features in-depth articles on the country's politics, economy, literature, arts and culture.

Terra (www.terra.com.br/turismo in Portuguese) Portuguese-language travel site with up-to-date info on entertainment, nightlife and dining options in dozens of cities around Brazil.

University of Texas (lanic.utexas.edu/la/brazil) An extensive collection of Brazil links.

LANGUAGE

Portuguese is one of the world's top 10 most spoken languages. Brazilian Portuguese has a few differences from European Portuguese, but speakers can understand one another. This is not the case with Spanish. If you can speak Spanish, you'll be able to read some Portuguese, but comprehending others is difficult. Some Brazilians also find it a tad offensive when foreigners arrive speaking Spanish and expecting to be understood.

LEGAL MATTERS

Be wary of (but of course respectful to) Brazilian police. Some allegedly plant drugs and sting gringos for bribes.

Stiff penalties are in force for use and possession of drugs; the police don't share most Brazilians' tolerant attitude toward marijuana. Police checkpoints along the highways stop cars at random. Police along the coastal drive between São Paulo and Búzios are notorious for hassling young people and foreigners. Border areas are also dangerous.

A large amount of cocaine is smuggled out of Bolivia and Peru through Brazil. If you're entering Brazil from one of the Andean countries and have been chewing coca leaves, be careful to clean out your pack first.

MAPS

The best maps in Brazil are the Quatro Rodas series. These good regional maps (Norte, Nordeste etc) sell for around US\$5; they also publish the *Atlas Rodoviário* road atlas, useful if you're driving, as well as excellent street atlases for the main cities.

Good topographical maps are published by the IBGE, the government geographical service, and the DSG, the army geographical service. Availability is erratic, but IBGE offices in most state capitals sell IBGE maps. Office locations can be found on the IBGE website (www.ibge.gov.br).

Telephone directories in many states include city maps.

MEDIA

Newspapers & Magazines

The weekly Portuguese-language *Veja* is a current-affairs magazine modeled on *Time*. In seven or eight major cities it comes with *Ve-*

jinha, a good pullout guide to the local music, arts and nightclub scene. The *Folha de São Paulo* and Rio's *Jornal do Brasil* newspapers have good national coverage and a socially liberal stance. *O Estado de São Paulo* and Rio's *O Globo* are a little more comprehensive in their coverage and more right wing.

English-language publications *Newsweek* and the daily *International Herald Tribune* are widely available. European and US newspapers are sold at some newsstands in tourist and business areas of Rio and São Paulo, but they are expensive.

TV

Brazilian TV consists mostly of game shows, football matches, bad American films dubbed into Portuguese and the universally watched *novelas* (soap operas). Globo is the major Brazilian network. Better hotels have cable TV with CNN and other English-language programs.

MONEY

Brazil's currency is the real (pronounced *hay-ow*; often written R\$); the plural is reais (pronounced *hay-ice*). One real is made up of 100 centavos. Banknotes come in different colors and have a different animal on the back in denominations of 1 (sapphire-spangled emerald hummingbird), 2 (hawksbill turtle), 5 (great egret), 10 (greenwing macaw), 20 (golden lion tamarin), 50 (jaguar) and 100 (dusky grouper).

ATMs

ATMs are the easiest way of getting cash in big cities and are widely available. In some smaller towns, ATMs exist but rarely work for non-Brazilian cards. Make sure you have a four-digit PIN. In general HSBC, Banco de Brasil, Bradesco and Banco 24 Horas are the best ATMs to try. Look for stickers on the machines that say Cirrus, Visa or whatever system your card uses.

Bargaining

A little bargaining for hotel rooms is standard. On unmetered cab rides, arrange the fare before departing.

Credit Cards

You can use credit cards to pay for many purchases in Brazil and to make cash withdrawals from ATMs and at banks. Visa is the most commonly accepted card, followed by

MasterCard. American Express and Diners Club cards are also useful. Visa cash advances are widely available, even in small towns that have no other currency exchange facilities, but the process can be quite time consuming. Credit-card fraud is widespread here. Keep your card in sight at all times, especially in restaurants.

Exchanging Money

Cash and traveler's checks, in US dollars, can be exchanged in *casas de cambio* (exchange offices) or banks, which give better exchange rates but are much slower (Banco do Brasil charges US\$20 commission for every traveler's check transaction). You'll usually get a 1% or 2% better exchange rate for cash than for traveler's checks.

Exchange rates at press time included the following:

Country	Unit	R\$ (reais)
Australia	A\$1 =	1.61
Canada	C\$1 =	1.9
euro zone	€1 =	2.7
Japan	¥100 =	1.8
New Zealand	NZ\$1 =	1.4
United Kingdom	UK£1 =	4
United States	US\$1 =	2.2

Traveler's Checks

Traveler's checks can be exchanged at major banks and exchange offices. The rates are generally better at banks – except for the Banco do Brasil, which charges a US\$20 commission for every traveler's check transaction – though the slower, bureaucratic procedures make it a hassle. *Casas de câmbio* (exchange houses) are speedy and reliable, though the rates are lower. The most widely recognized traveler's check in Brazil is American Express.

POST

A postcard or letter weighing up to 20g costs around US\$1 to foreign destinations. Airmail letters to the USA and Europe arrive in one to two weeks. The *posta-restante* system functions reasonably well. Post offices hold mail for 30 days.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Most places you'll go in Brazil welcome tourism, but be sensitive to local ways of doing things.

As for Brazil's environment, we all have an obligation to protect it. You can do your bit by using environmentally friendly tourism services wherever possible. Using the services of local community groups – as guides, hosts, artisans or whatever – ensures that your money goes directly to those helping you, as does buying crafts and other products directly from the artisans or from their trusted representatives.

SHOPPING

CDs, local crafts (indigenous and otherwise) and artwork all make good souvenirs.

Air-conditioned shopping malls (*shop-pings*) feature in every self-respecting city and often contain decent music stores. Browsing the many markets and small streetside stalls yields, for better or worse, less predictable results. Street stalls sell bootleg CDs for around US\$4, against about US\$10 to US\$20 for the official releases in stores.

For genuine Indian arts and crafts, have a look in the Artíndia stores of Funai (the government Indian agency) and museum gift shops.

Artisans in the northeast produce a rich assortment of artistic items. Salvador and nearby Cachoeira are most notable for their rough-hewn wood sculptures. Ceará specializes in fine lace. The interior of Pernambuco, in particular Caruaru, is famous for wildly imaginative ceramic figurines.

Candomblé stores are a good source of curios, ranging from magical incense guaranteed to increase sexual allure, wisdom and health, to amulets and ceramic figurines of Afro-Brazilian gods.

STUDYING

It's easy but pricey to arrange Portuguese classes through branches of the IBEU (Instituto Brasil Estados Unidos), where Brazilians go to learn English. There will be one in every large city. For more on language schools, try the **National Registration Center for Study Abroad** (www.nrca.com) or the website www.onestoplanguage.net.

TELEPHONE Domestic Calls

You can make domestic calls from normal card-pay telephones on the street and in telephone offices. The cards cost around US\$3 per 30 units from vendors, newsstands and

anywhere else advertising *cartões telefônicos*. Cards for more units are also available.

Local calls (within the city you're in) cost only a few units. Just dial the number without any area code. To make a local collect call, dial ☎ 9090, then the number.

For calls to other cities, dial ☎ 0, then the code of your selected long-distance carrier, then the two digits representing the city, followed by the local number. You need to choose a long-distance carrier that covers both the place you are calling from and the place you're calling to. Carriers advertise their codes in areas where they're prominent, but you can usually use Embratel (code 21), Intelig (code 23) or Telemar (code 31) as they cover the whole country.

City codes are thus usually given in the format '0xx digit digit', with the two x's representing the carrier code. As an example, to call from Rio de Janeiro to the number ☎ 3219-3345 in Fortaleza (city code ☎ 0xx85) in the state of Ceará, you dial ☎ 0 followed by 21 or 23 or 31 or 85 (the codes of the four carriers that cover both Rio and Ceará), followed by 85 for Fortaleza, followed by the number 3219-3345.

A long-distance call usually eats up five to 10 phonocard units per minute.

To make an intercity collect call, dial ☎ 9 before the 0xx. A recorded message in Portuguese will ask you to say your name and where you're calling from, after the tone.

International Calls

Brazil's country code is ☎ 55. When calling internationally to Brazil, omit the initial 0xx of the area code.

International calls from Brazil cost at least US\$1 a minute to the USA or Canada and US\$2 a minute to Europe or Australia (20% less between 8pm and 6am daily and all day Sunday).

The regular card-pay telephones found on the streets are of little use for international calls unless you have an international calling card or are calling collect. Most pay telephones are restricted to domestic calls, and even if they aren't, a 30-unit Brazilian phonocard may last less than a minute internationally.

Without an international calling card, your best option is to find a call center or telephone office, where you pay in cash after you finish talking. Many internet cafés now offer phone services. Calls from a hotel usually cost much more.

For international *a cobrar* (collect) calls, dial ☎ 000107 from any phone. This only works to some countries. Alternatively, you can get a Brazilian international operator by dialing ☎ 000111 or ☎ 0800-703-2121. Failing that, you need to locate a phone that handles international calls. Home Country Direct services get you through to an operator in the country you're calling, and will connect the collect call for you. For most Home Country Direct services, dial ☎ 00080 followed by the country code (for North America, ☎ 10 for AT&T, ☎ 16 for Sprint; for Australia, dial ☎ 00080061).

Cell Phones

Celular (mobile) phones have eight-digit numbers starting with a 9, and calls to them run through your phonocard units much faster than calls to regular numbers. Mobiles have city codes like normal phone numbers, and if you're calling from another city you have to use them.

TOILETS

Public toilets are available at every bus station and airport; there's usually a small entrance fee of US50¢ or so. Elsewhere public toilets are not common, though Brazilians are generally nice about letting you use facilities in restaurants and bars. As in other Latin American countries, toilet paper isn't flushed but placed in the smelly basket next to the toilet. Few of the country's bathrooms are wheelchair-accessible.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist offices in Brazil are nearly all run by individual states or municipalities, and may be quite helpful or utterly useless depending upon who's behind the counter.

Brazilian consulates and embassies can provide limited tourist information.

TRAVELERS WITH DISABILITIES

Unfortunately, disabled travelers don't have an easy time in Brazil. Rio de Janeiro is probably the most accessible city for disabled travelers. The streets and sidewalks along the main beaches have curb cuts and are wheelchair-accessible, but most other areas do not have cuts and many restaurants have entrance steps.

There is one Brazilian travel agency in São Paulo specializing in travel for persons

with disabilities: **Fack Tour** (☎ 0xx11-4335-7662; factour@originet.com.br).

VISAS

See p403 for details of required yellow-fever vaccinations.

Citizens of the US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand need a visa; citizens from the UK, France and Germany do not.

Tourist visas are valid for arrival in Brazil within 90 days of issue and then for a 90-day stay. The fee depends on your nationality and where you are applying; it's usually between US\$40 and US\$60, though for US citizens visas cost a whopping US\$100. In many Brazilian embassies and consulates it takes only a couple of hours (or less) to issue a visa if you go in person. You'll generally need to present one passport photograph and a round-trip or onward ticket (or a photocopy of it or a statement from a travel agent that you have it) and, of course, a valid passport.

People under 18 years of age who wish to travel to Brazil without a parent or legal guardian must have a notarized letter of authorization from the nontraveling parent(s)/guardian(s), or from a court. Such a letter must also be presented when applying for a visa, if one is required. Check with a Brazilian consulate well in advance about this.

If you decide to return to Brazil, your visa is valid for five years.

Visa Extensions

These are handled by Brazil's Polícia Federal, who have offices in the state capitals and border towns. You must apply before your entry/exit card or visa lapses, and don't leave it until the last minute. When you go, dress nicely! Some Fed stations don't take kindly to people in shorts. Granting an extension seems to be pretty automatic, but they may ask to see a ticket out of the country and proof of sufficient funds; and sometimes they may not give you the full 90 days. If you get the maximum 90-day extension and then leave the country before the end of that period, you cannot return until the full 90 days have elapsed.

Entry/Exit Card

On entering Brazil, all tourists must fill out a *cartão de entrada/saida* (entry/exit card); immigration officials keep half, you keep the other. Don't lose this card! When you leave

Brazil, the second half of the entry/exit card will be taken by immigration officials. If you don't have it, you'll have to pay a lofty fine (around US\$75) at the Banco do Brasil, which may be far from your intended departure point. The bank will then give you a form to give to immigration officials when you leave the country. Most visitors can stay for 90 days, but if for some reason you receive fewer days, this will be written in the stamp in your passport.

VOLUNTEERING

One excellent volunteer organization you can get involved with is Rio-based **Iko Poran** (☎ 0xx21-2205-1365; www.ikoporan.org), which links the diverse talents of volunteers with needy organizations. Previous volunteers in Brazil have worked as dance, music, art and language instructors among other things. Iko Poran also provides housing for volunteers. It has plans to create volunteer opportunities in Salvador, Praia do Forte and Santarem. The UK-based **Task Brasil** (www.taskbrasil.org.uk) is another laudable organization that places volunteers in Rio. Here, you'll have to make arrangements in advance and pay a fee that will go toward Task Brasil projects and your expenses as a volunteer.

The best website for browsing volunteer opportunities is **Action Without Borders** (www.idealists.org).

A little doorknocking can help you find volunteer work in Brazil. There's plenty of need, and many local welfare organizations will gladly find you some rewarding work. Ask around at churches and community centers.

WOMEN TRAVELERS

In the cities of the southeast and South, foreign women without traveling companions will scarcely be given a sideways glance. In the more traditional rural areas of the northeast, blonde-haired and light-skinned women, especially those without male escorts, will certainly arouse curiosity.

Machismo is less overt in Brazil than in Spanish-speaking Latin America. Flirtation is a common form of communication, but it's generally regarded as innocent banter; no sense of insult, exploitation or serious intent should be assumed.

It's advisable to adapt what you wear to local norms. The brevity of Rio beach attire

generally is not suitable for the streets of interior cities, for instance.

In the event of unwanted pregnancy or the risk thereof, most pharmacies in Brazil stock the morning-after pill (*a pilula do dia seguinte*), which costs about US\$10. Tampons and other sanitary items are widely available in most pharmacies, though you'll want to stock up before heading into rural areas.

WORKING

Brazil has high unemployment and tourists are not supposed to take jobs. However, it's not unusual for foreigners to find language-teaching work in the bigger cities, either in language schools or through private tutoring. The pay is not great (around US\$13 an hour), but if you can work for three or four days a week you can live on it.

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