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## The Best of Brazil

There's a joke Brazilians like to tell: When the world was created, one of the archangels peered over God's shoulder at the work in progress and couldn't help noticing that one country had been especially favored. "You've given everything to Brazil," the archangel said. "It has the longest beaches, the largest river, the biggest forest, the best soil. The weather's always warm and sunny, with no floods, hurricanes, or natural disasters at all. Don't you think that's a little unfair?" "Ah," God replied, "just wait until you see the people I'm putting there."

Accuracy rarely comes with a punch line, but there's a significant grain of truth in that tale. Brazil as a nation *is* unusually blessed. Five thousand miles of coastline—some of it packed with cafes and partygoers, but long stretches blissfully empty. Rainforests and wetlands teem with exotic critters. Some of the oldest cities and civic architecture in the New World (and one of the newest cities in the entire world) are here. Restaurants match the snobbiest standards, with regional cuisines that have yet to be discovered in culinary capitals like New York or L.A. Music lovers could make Brazil a lifetime study. And let's not forget a little thing called Carnival.

And about those Brazilians: They work as hard as anyone in the First World, and many a good deal harder. In recent years Brazil has devoted time and resources to improving its tourism infrastructure, reflected in the new airports, hotels, and inns that have sprung up around the country. Yet no one could accuse Brazilians of worshipping efficiency. They'd much rather get along than get things done; the goal is, above all, harmony. Harmony can mean an entire Sunday spent watching soccer, or afternoons off for quality time with your buddies at the beach. It can mean countless hours of effort for a single night's party. But above all, harmony mandates never taking anything all that seriously. And at this, Brazilians excel. Read on to discover some of the best this country has to offer.

### 1 The Most Unforgettable Travel Experiences

- **Attend Carnival in Rio:** The biggest party in the world; whether you dance it on the streets, watch thousands participate with their elaborate costumes in the samba parade, or attend the fairy-tale Copacabana Palace ball. It's the one event not to miss! See chapters 2 and 4.
- **Be the Girl or Boy from Ipanema:** Rio may have other beaches, but Ipanema is still the one with the best people-watching. Grab a spot and food, drink, and eye candy will come to you. See chapter 4.
- **Watch a Soccer Game at Maracanã Stadium:** Nothing can prepare you for a game at the largest stadium in the world. Up to 100,000 fans sing, dance, and drum for hours in one of the biggest parties in town. See chapter 4.
- **Stroll the Streets of Ouro Preto:** Ouro Preto's cobblestone streets haven't changed much since the 18th century. Over a dozen

baroque churches and beautifully preserved colonial architecture dot the hills of this charming town. See chapter 5.

- **Get to Know Pelourinho:** The restored historical center of Salvador is a treasure of baroque churches, colorful colonial architecture, steep cobblestone streets, and large squares. See chapter 8.
- **Hear the Drummers in Pelô:** At night the historic heart of Salvador comes alive with music. Most impressive are the Blocos Afro, the all-percussion bands that create a rhythm and beat with their drums so intense it sends shivers down your spine. See chapter 8.
- **Hit the Waves in Porto de Galinhas:** This casual laid-back tropical resort of white beaches is the perfect spot to learn to surf. You'll never get cold, while steamed crab and fresh tropical juices between waves do wonders to keep you going. See chapter 9.
- **Watch the Sunset Over the Dunes in Genipabu:** White as snow, the sand dunes of Genipabu, north of Natal, contrast

sharply with the blue sky and sparkling ocean. Sunsets cast a glow of pure gold over the dunes. See chapter 10.

- **Kayak in the Amazon:** To explore the rainforest in depth, nothing beats a slow descent of an Amazon tributary; the kayak provides the freedom to view the rainforest at leisure, guides explain the workings of this ecosystem, and cooks prepare meals of delicious Amazon fish. See chapter 12.
- **Admire the Modernist Architecture of Brasília:** Built from scratch in a matter of years on the red soil of the dry *cerrado*, Brasília is an oasis of modernism in Brazil's interior. Marvel at the clean lines and functional forms and admire some of the best public art in the country. See chapter 13.
- **Get Drenched at Amazing Iguaçu Falls:** These falls consist of 275 cataracts along a 2.5km (1½-mile) stretch of the Iguaçu River. The water's power mesmerizes as you stare into the roiling cauldrons. See chapter 14.

## 2 The Best Beaches

- **Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro:** Yes, this is one of the most urban beaches in the world, but it's still one of the country's prime tanning spots. The long stretch of white sand is perfect for observing the tan and lovely (male and female alike). Or watch a game of volleyball while having a beer and some fresh seafood; if you feel like it, go for a swim or a stroll. See chapter 4.
- **Praia dos Castelhanos, Ilhabela:** Ilhabela's prime unspoiled beach is long and wild and completely undeveloped; mountains covered in untouched Atlantic rainforest provide a stunning backdrop. Access is by boat or over a bumpy

rutted track, but the views are more than worth it. See chapter 7.

- **Morro de São Paulo, Bahia:** The perfect island getaway, Morro de São Paulo is only a 2-hour boat ride from Salvador. The rustic setting, car-free streets, and laid-back atmosphere are perfect for relaxing. The calm, warm waters are excellent for swimming or snorkeling. See chapter 8.
- **Porto de Galinhas, Pernambuco:** Unlike so many beaches in Brazil, development in Porto de Galinhas has been kept resolutely small scale. No high-rises mar the unpretentious town of Porto de Galinhas, which boasts perhaps four streets—enough for a dozen

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restaurants, a bank, some surf shops, and a beachside bar or two. See chapter 9.

- **Ponta Negra, Manaus:** Not an ocean beach but a river beach, Ponta Negra, on the shores of Rio Negro, is the most popular tanning spot in the dry season. All the standard beach accouterments are present, including vendors plying food, drinks, and souvenirs. Beach kiosks serve up snacks until the wee hours. See chapter 12.
- **Fernando do Noronha:** The island archipelago of Fernando do Noronha has so many spectacular beaches, it's hard to single out just one. Praia do Leão offers wild crashing surf and sea turtle hatchings in season. The most gorgeously secluded is Praia da Baía

do Sancho, a crescent of red sand on shimmering clear blue water that can only be reached by clambering down a rickety iron ladder through a chasm in the cliff side. See chapter 16.

- **Praia Mole, Florianópolis:** Facing the open ocean, Praia Mole is one of the most popular beaches on the beautiful southern island of Santa Catarina (aka Florianópolis). Perfectly white fluffy sand, lush green vegetation, and rocky outcrops give the beach an isolated, paradisiacal feel. Yet, the strand is anything but quiet, packed with an attractive bohemian crowd of locals from Floripa, yuppie tourists, surfers, gay and gay-friendly sunbathers, and families. See chapter 17.

## 3 The Best Outdoor Adventures

- **Hang Gliding in Rio:** Running off the edge of a platform with nothing between you and the ground 800m (2,624 ft.) below requires a leap of faith, so to speak, but once you do, the views of the rainforest and beaches are so enthralling that you almost forget about the ground until your toes touch the sand at São Conrado beach. See chapter 4.
- **Board, Kite, and Yacht Sailing in Ilhabela:** A gem of an island just an hour from one of the world's largest cities, Ilhabela has the wind and waves and infrastructure for any wind on watersport, be it yacht sailing, board sailing, or that new adrenaline kick of kite surfing. The undeveloped east coast is thick with rainforest and lined with white-sand beaches. See chapter 7.
- **Hike or Bike the Chapada Diamantina:** These highlands inland from Salvador have rock formations similar to the buttes and mesas of the American Southwest.

They also have waterfalls and natural waterslides of smooth red marble, plus lots of great hiking and biking trails. See chapter 8.

- **Canoeing the Amazon:** Just you and a canoe in the jungle. Your senses heighten as you listen to the sounds of the forest, watch for splashes in the water, and peer into the trees to find birds, sloths, and monkeys. See chapter 12.
- **Walking Through the Amazon Forest:** Get off the river and delve into the dense forest. In a temperate forest you may see three or four varieties of trees; in the Amazon you'll spot 10 to 20 different types in a matter of minutes. See chapter 12.
- **Horseback Riding in the Pantanal:** Too soggy to hike, the wet fields of the Pantanal are perfect for exploring by horseback. And if you like it fast, there's nothing like galloping through the fields, as a flurry of colorful birds scatter and caiman scurry off underfoot. See chapter 15.

- **Snorkeling in Bonito:** The crystal rivers in Bonito offer some of the best freshwater snorkeling you have ever seen, with 9m to 18m (30 ft.–60 ft.) of visibility. Various fish (and the occasional anaconda) can be spotted as you quietly drift downriver. See chapter 15.
- **Swimming in the Waterfalls of Chapada dos Guimarães:** The red-rock formations of this minicanyon hide some spectacular waterfalls nestled in small stands of lush tropical forest. With dozens and dozens of falls and trails, it's not hard to find one all for yourself. See chapter 15.
- **Diving in Fernando de Noronha:** Brazil's best diving is found on this small archipelago off the coast of Pernambuco. See dolphins, turtles, manta rays, and lots of underwater caves. Crowds are limited, because only 420 visitors are allowed on the island at any given time. See chapter 16.

#### 4 The Best Encounters with Wildlife

- **Go, Turtles, Go! (Bahia):** From mid-February to April you have a good chance to watch turtle hatchings at Praia do Forte Tamar's turtle project. See how these tiny sea turtles crawl out of the egg, and cheer them on as they waddle to the ocean for their first swim. See chapter 8.
- **Caiman Spotting (the Amazon):** Spotting caimans (alligators native to South America) involves setting out in a canoe after the sun has set. Boating through the dark Amazon forest is quite an experience, but nothing quite prepares you for the sight of those caiman eyes that light up in the beam of the spotlight. See chapter 12.
- **Butterflies in Iguazu:** Everyone talks about the falls; few mention the butterflies. The lush rainforest provides the perfect environment for many colorful species, and everywhere you go there are lovely butterflies aflutter. Hard to miss is the metallic-blue Morpho butterfly; it's about the size of your hand. See chapter 14.
- **Red Araras (the Pantanal):** The sunset over the red-rock formations in the Chapada dos Guimarães, north of Cuiabá, is a magical experience in itself. Even more special is the view of scarlet macaws working the thermals off the sheer cliffs in the warm glow of the setting sun. See chapter 15.

#### 5 The Best Museums

- **Museu Internacional de Arte Naïf do Brasil** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2205-8612; [www.museunaif.com.br](http://www.museunaif.com.br)): Don't miss this little museum, located just a few hundred yards from the Corcovado tram station. The practitioners of naïve art (also called primitive or ingénue art) paint from the heart, creating colorful and expressive drawings. Visitors will recognize many popular scenes from Cariocas's daily life—a soccer game at the Maracanã stadium, the samba parade, the beaches, and neighborhood cafes. See p. 104.
- **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Mariana; ☎ 031/3557-2516): One of the best collections of Sacred Art in Brazil can be found in the small town of Mariana, just outside of Ouro Preto. The vast collection of impressive gold and silver works is displayed in a gorgeous old colonial mansion. See p. 170.
- **Monument to Latin America** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3823-9611; [www.memorial.org.br](http://www.memorial.org.br)): Designed

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by famed Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, the monument is, well, *so* Niemeyer—shy of a visit to Brasília, it's the best place to see Brazilian Modernism in all its concrete austerity. See p. 213.

- **Pinacoteca do Estado** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/229-9844): The Pinacoteca in São Paulo is the place to come for anyone who wants to see Brazilian art. The museum has an excellent collection of Brazilian art from the 19th and 20th centuries, including works by Alfredo Ceschiatti, the artist who designed many of the sculptures in Brasília. See p. 218.
- **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Salvador; ☎ 071/243-6310): One of the finest museums in Salvador, the Arte Sacra displays one of Brazil's best collections of Catholic art. The artifacts are shown in the

monastery adjoining the Igreja de Santa Teresa, a simple, beautiful building that itself counts as a work of art. The collection includes oil paintings, *oratorios* (small cabinets containing a crucifix or saint image), and amazing silver work. See p. 262.

- **Forte das Cinco Pontas/Recife City Museum** (Recife; ☎ 084/3224-8492): Originally built by the Dutch in 1630 and rebuilt by the Portuguese in 1677, the fort today has been magnificently restored; you can wander the ramparts and explore at will. The city museum, which takes up two wings of the fort, is well done. Two whole (air-conditioned) rooms are devoted to the Dutch period, and there's a wealth of maps and drawings. See p. 309.

## 6 The Best Festivals & Celebrations

Well, Carnival—*that's* an obvious choice (and already covered under “The Most Unforgettable Travel Experiences,” above). Here are some other favorites:

- **Reveillon/New Year's Celebration** (Rio de Janeiro): Close to 2 million people gather for one of the most spectacular New Year's celebrations in the world. It starts on the evening of December 31 and continues well into the morning of January 1. The main event takes place on Copacabana Beach—live music, fireworks, and the muted Candomblé religious ceremonies. For details contact Riotur (☎ 021/2217-7575; [www.rio.rj.gov.br/riotur](http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/riotur)) or Alô Rio (☎ 021/2542-8080). See chapter 4.
  - **São Paulo Bienal** (São Paulo): A must-see for lovers of art, theater, music, and architecture, the Bienal is the biggest arts event in Latin America. It takes place every even
- year in Ibirapuera Park (the next two take place in 2004 and 2006). Contact the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo (☎ 011/5574-5922). See chapter 7.
- **Washing of the Steps of Bonfim Church** (Salvador): One of the most important religious ceremonies in Salvador takes place on the third Thursday of January when hundreds of women in traditional Bahian dress form a procession and carry perfumed water to wash the church steps; 800,000 onlookers and revelers accompany them. For details contact Bahiatursa (☎ 071/321-2463; [www.bahiatursa.ba.gov.br](http://www.bahiatursa.ba.gov.br)). See chapter 8.
  - **Celebration of Yemanjá, the Goddess of the Sea** (Salvador): On February 2, watch the devotees throughout Brazil offer flowers, perfumes, and jewelry to the sea. Celebrated on the beach with

music and food. The largest celebration takes place in Salvador on Praia Vermelha. For details contact Bahiatursa (☎ 071/321-2463; www.bahiatursa.ba.gov.br). See chapter 8.

- **The Passion Play** (Nova Jerusalem, near Recife): South America's

largest passion play takes place at Nova Jerusalem, just outside of Recife in the Northeast of Brazil. Performances are daily in the 10 days leading up to Easter. For details contact Recife Tourist Information (☎ 081/3462-4960 or 081/3341-6090). See chapter 9.

## 7 The Best Views

- **Rio at Your Feet:** Whether you hike, drive, or take the cogwheel tram (our preferred method) to the top of Corcovado Mountain, the view from just below Christ's toes is stunning. The 360-degree view of Rio de Janeiro is awesome. See chapter 4.
- **Ruin Park** (Rio de Janeiro): One of the most enjoyable lookouts in Rio is in the quaint hilltop neighborhood of Santa Teresa. Half the attraction is getting up there on the old rickety trams. Climb the ruins of this old mansion and explore the catwalks, walkways, and ladders that connect the floors, all the way to the top for one of Rio's best free views. See chapter 4.
- **Sugarloaf** (Rio de Janeiro): It may be the most visited tourist attraction in town—and tacky as hell—but views over the bay and the ocean beaches are tough to beat. If you don't want to be seen boarding the silly tram, you can always hoof it up. See chapter 4.
- **Elevador Lacerda** (Salvador): The cheapest ride in town (only US5¢), this Art Deco elevator whisks you from the lower town of Salvador to the historic heart of the city. Views of the bay and the city are fantastic but quick. Linger at the top of the elevator platform to savor the views, or splurge and take another trip. See chapter 8.
- **Farol da Barra** (Salvador): The view at the foot of the lovely lighthouse on Barra beach is not of the

city, but of the bay and most spectacular at sunset when the red glowing ball drops just behind Itaparica Island, casting a deep red glow over the sparkling ocean. See chapter 8.

- **The TV Tower in Brasilia:** It figures that in a modern town the views are high-tech. The TV Tower, in the center of the Eixo Monumental, offers spectacular views up and down the main avenue, aligning buildings the way they were meant for architects to see them. The famous big sky sunsets of Brasilia make the view even more impressive, lending a hint of color to the pale concrete of the buildings. See chapter 13.
- **Banespa Tower** (São Paulo): The best view of the biggest city in South America is from atop the **Banespa Tower**. Ascending to its 35th-floor observation deck, you get an incredible view—high-rise towers, 360 degrees of them, filling every inch of land for as far as the eye can see. Even better, it's free. See chapter 7.
- **Peering into Iguaçu Falls:** Get as close as you can to the waterfalls at Iguaçu and the power of the water is hypnotizing. Watch for those cute swifts that manage to sneak in behind the falls. See chapter 14.
- **The Lookout at Araras Eco Lodge** (Pantanal): A rickety wooden platform high above the Pantanal provides sweeping views of the surrounding fields. Monkeys



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play in the trees—and if you have the time to sit patiently, you'll see hyacinth macaws, toucans, roseate

spoonbills, and storks fly by in the greatest nature show on earth. See chapter 15.

## 8 The Best Hotels

- **The Copacabana Palace** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 0800/211-533 or 021/2548-7070): Fred and Ginger didn't dance just anywhere when they went "flying down to Rio." The Copacabana Palace is Brazil's most famous and glamorous hotel, standing beautiful on the country's most famous beach. See p. 68.
- **Hotel Novo Mundo** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 0800/253-355 or 021/2557-6226): For that perfect postcard view of Rio's Aterro Park, the Gloria Marina, and the Bay of Guanabara against the backdrop of the Pão de Açúcar, book the Suite Mar on the top floor of the Hotel Novo Mundo. See p. 76.
- **Hotel Sofitel** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 0800/241-232 or 021/2525-1232): Considered Rio's best hotel, the Sofitel combines old-world elegance and style with one of the city's best locations, across from the Copacabana Fort and steps from Ipanema. See p. 68.
- **Marina All Suites Hotel** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2540-4990 or 021/2540-5212): The Marina All Suites is Rio's first design hotel; all suites are luxuriously furnished. The two-bedroom oceanview Diamante suite is surely the city's most beautiful suite. See p. 64.
- **Marriott Rio de Janeiro** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 800/228-9290 in the U.S. and Canada, or 021/2254-6500): The Marriott in Copacabana opened in May 2001 and has significantly raised the bar for hotels in Brazil. All rooms come with CD players, free mineral water, coffeemakers, and iron and board. The staff wins high marks. See p. 69.
- **Sheraton Rio Hotel & Towers** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 0800/210-750 or 021/2274-1122): The Sheraton Rio is the only hotel that's really on the beach. No crossing the street; just walk down the steps and you're on the sand. See p. 64.
- **Unique** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3055-4700): Extraordinary high design, rooms and suites featuring the cleanest-of-clean white-on-white decor, luscious bedding, sparkling bathrooms with Jacuzzi tubs, a plethora of room gadgets, plus a rooftop view of the Avenida Paulista's power skyscrapers and lush green Ibirapuera park. See p. 202.
- **Marian Palace** (São Paulo; ☎ 0800/558-433 or 011/228-8433): Built in the '40s by a Polish princess, the Marian Palace is a lovely preserved Art Deco gem. Wherever possible the furniture and finishings (think lampshades, carpets, and even the colored-tile bathrooms) have been maintained. See p. 199.
- **Tropical Manaus Eco Resort** (Manaus; ☎ 0800/701-2670 or 092/659-5000): The Tropical Hotel in Manaus is without a doubt *the* hotel in town. Set in its own piece of rainforest on the banks of the Rio Negro, the hotel is built in an elegant colonial style. Rooms are spacious, and the amenities are top-notch; archery lessons, a zoo, wakeboard lessons, a wave pool, salon, and more await you in the middle of the Amazon. See p. 346.
- **Bourbon Foz do Iguaçu** (Foz do Iguaçu; ☎ 0800/451-010 or 045/529-0123): Make sure you don't forget to see the falls! The

Bourbon Hotel has plenty to keep you busy. Over 3km (2 miles) of trails through orchards and tree nurseries are the perfect place to watch for toucans, butterflies, and parrots. The pool deck has three

large pools to soak up those rays or an indoor wave pool and spa for a dreary day. Active types can play a game of tennis, try the climbing wall, and play volleyball or soccer. See p. 395.

## 9 The Best *Pousadas*

- **Colonna Park Hotel** (Búzios; ☎ 022/2623-2245): On a hillside overlooking two beaches in Búzios, Colonna Park has one of the best views in town. The elegantly furnished rooms are done in cool blue and white, and the best room in the house has a deck with views of both beaches. See p. 158.
- **Pousada do Mondego** (Ouro Preto; ☎ 031/3551-2040): Wake up to the unforgettable view of Ouro Preto's most famous church, São Francisco de Assis, just outside your window. Early in the morning the surrounding hills are often shrouded in mist. See p. 173.
- **Pousada Tankamana** (Petrópolis; ☎ 024/3222-2706): Nestled in the hills above Petrópolis, Pousada Tankamana is a breath of fresh air. The luxury chalets with Jacuzzi tubs and fireplaces are perfectly cozy on a cold winter day, just the kind of place to stay put and finish that book you have been trying to read. See p. 165.
- **Solar da Ponte** (Tiradentes; ☎ 032/3355-1255): In the heart of Tiradentes, one the most charming colonial villages, Pousada Solar da Ponte is a real retreat. The spacious antique furnished rooms look out over the cobblestone streets. The lovely garden, library, and sitting rooms are perfect for a relaxing day. A yummy breakfast is served in the dining room overlooking the garden. See p. 179.
- **Porto Pacuiba Hotel** (Ilhabela; ☎ 012/3896-2466): Located on Ilhabela, this sprawling wooden mansion with its courtyards and walkways was built around tall mango trees on the property. This oasis of comfort is an ideal home base for exploring the rest of the island. See p. 238.
- **Pousada do Boqueirão** (Salvador; ☎ 071/241-2262): This renovated *pousada* on the edge of Salvador's Pelourinho has the charm of the 17th century and the convenience of the 21st. The view from your personal veranda out of the Bay of All Saints would be memorable in whatever century you found yourself. See p. 247.
- **Estalagem Alcino** (Lençóis; ☎/fax 075/334-1171): Though it looks like an 18th-century manor house, this *pousada* in the Chapada Diamantina is only a few years old. Rooms are lovely; the breakfast you'll remember for the rest of your life. See p. 289.
- **Pousada do Amparo** (Olinda; ☎ 081/3439-1749): In the heart of Olinda's old town, Pousada do Amparo is a perfectly restored 18th-century house. Set on a hillside, the views from the rooms and back deck of Olinda, the ocean below, and Recife in the background are amazing. Elegantly furnished in period-style, the *pousada* is a real labor of love of the owners. See p. 301.
- **Manary Praia Hotel** (Natal; ☎ 084/219-2900): On the beach of Ponta Negra in Natal, the Manary Praia offers luxurious and comfortable accommodations. The hacienda-style mansion is an excellent home base for exploring

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some of the best beaches in the Northeast. (But you may never get past the swimming pool.) See p. 320.

- **Araras Eco Lodge** (Pantanal; ☎ 065/682-2800): This lodge is the best in the Pantanal for wildlife viewing and experiencing

the lifestyle of the *pantaneiro* cowboy. Accommodations are rustic but the quality of guides, the amazing food and unparalleled wildlife are worth it. The owner has a history of environmental work in the region and runs an excellent program. See p. 410.

## 10 The Best Dining Experiences

- **Experiencing Feijoada, the National Dish:** It's impossible to single out one restaurant in all of Brazil for its *feijoada*. Just try it and try it right. Start with a *caipirinha* (that potent, delicious lime and sugar cane drink) and some *caldo* (soup), followed by steaming hot black beans with all the various meats. Side dishes include *farofa*, cabbage, orange slices, and white rice. Dab a bit of *malagueta* peppers on the beans for an extra kick.
- **Street Food:** Whether you want prawns, chicken, tapioca pancakes, coconut sweets, or corn on the cob, it can all be purchased on the street for next to nothing. Don't be afraid to try some of the best snacks that Brazil has to offer.
- **All Beef, All the Time!** Rodízio *churrascarias* are all-you-can-eat meat orgies. The best cuts of beef are served up one after another; try one or two, or try them all. As long as you can take it they dish it out. Our favorite is surely *picanha*, the lean, tender rump steak—it will melt in your mouth. One of the country's most popular restaurants is the **Porcão**, a nationwide chain. Their flagship location is in Rio's Flamengo neighborhood (☎ 021/2554-8535), with views of the bay and Sugarloaf Mountain. See p. 84.
- **The Best Botequim (Bar):** Location, location, location. **Bar & Restaurante Amarelinho's** (☎ 021/2240-8434) large patio

sits on Rio's most beautiful square, the Praça Floriano. Dwarfed by the National Library, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the National Theatre, this bar serves up excellent cold *chopp* and a host of Brazilian pub food: grilled beef, spicy sausage, codfish pastries, and manioc fries. Surely that's enough to munch on while you take in the views. See p. 81.

- **Colonial Coffee in Rio:** For the most elegant coffee experience, visit **Confeitaria Colombo** (☎ 021/2221-0107). This 19th-century Belle Epoque establishment is one of the most beautiful salons in all of Brazil. See p. 81.
- **Italian Cuisine in São Paulo:** For some of the best Italian food in the world (well, outside of Italy), head to São Paulo's **Massimo** (☎ 011/3284-0311). The city's immigrants have created delicious new-world interpretations of some old-world classics. See p. 206.
- **Moquecas in Salvador:** You can't say you've been to Salvador without trying *moqueca*, the tasty stew of fresh seafood with coconut milk, lime juice, cilantro, and red *dendê* palm oil. In Salvador's Pelourinho, try **Sorriso da Dadá** (☎ 071/321-5883).
- **Prawns on Ilhabela:** Ilhabela has the most succulent, sweet, and juicy prawns in all of Brazil. Enjoy them grilled, sautéed, or stuffed with cheese; this is as good as they come. See chapter 7.

- **Fine Dining in Porto de Galinhas: Beijupirá** (☎ 081/3552-2354), in a small resort town in Brazil's Northeast, is perhaps one of the most pleasant little restaurants in the country. The decorations are whimsical and rustic, the food an inspired Brazilian cuisine that makes use of fresh seafood, tropical fruits, and spices. See p. 315.
- **The Regional Cuisine of Belém.** Located in the Tropics, on the Amazon River but at the mouth of the ocean, Belém has access to a richer assortment of ingredients than almost anywhere else in Brazil, and local chefs make the most of the variety. For regional cuisine, the city's two best restaurants are the **Boulevard Café (Boi de Boulevard)** (☎ 091/241-1476), and **Lá em Casa** (☎ 091/223-1212). See chapter 12.
- **Eating Fish in the Pantanal:** Anywhere in the Pantanal you can try the phenomenal bounty of the world's largest floodplain. *Paçú*, *dourado*, and *pintado* are just a few of the best catches. In Cuiabá, visit **Peixaria Popular** (☎ 065/322-5471). See p. 408.

## 11 The Best Markets

- **Babilônia Feira Hype** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2236-7195): Located in the Jockey Club, the Babilônia Hippy Fair is an arts-and-crafts market where you can listen to music, get a shiatsu massage, design a henna tattoo, buy a nose ring, get yourself pierced, and more (there's *more?*). See p. 132.
- **Feirarte** (Rio de Janeiro): This crafts market on Rio's most historic square features a range of artists showcasing their handiwork. There's leatherwork, ceramics, glass, and silver, not to mention food and drink stands and less-talented vendors peddling more touristy souvenirs. See p. 133.
- **Antiques Fair** (São Paulo): Every Sunday from 10am to 5pm there's an **antiques fair** in the open space beneath the **MASP** building on Avenida Paulista. Dealers are registered, and the quality of the wares is often good. See p. 216.
- **Japanese Market** (São Paulo). One of the largest Asian street markets takes place every **Sunday** on the **Praça da Liberdade** (next to the Liberdade metrô stop) in São Paulo's Liberdade neighborhood. The city's Japanese residents celebrate their heritage with an excellent and inexpensive selection of Japanese cuisine and arts and crafts. See p. 223.
- **Mercado Modelo** (Salvador; ☎ 071/243-6543): Souvenir junkies will think they've died and gone to heaven. Located in the former customs building, this market has around 300 merchants selling a large variety of souvenirs: leather goods, hammocks, instruments, masks, carvings, paintings, lace, terra-cotta figurines, and jewelry. See p. 262.
- **Mercado Adolpho Lisboa** (Manaus; ☎ 092/232-5073): The Adolpho Lisboa is a beautiful iron-and-glass copy of the now-demolished market hall in Les Halles, Paris. It's a great place to see exotic Amazonian fish, fruits, and vegetables. A number of stalls have indigenous handicrafts at reasonable prices. See p. 350.
- The **Ver-o-Peso Market** (Belém; no phone). The Ver-o-Peso is a vast waterside cornucopia featuring outrageously strange Amazon fish, hundreds of species of Amazon fruits found nowhere else,

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traditional medicine love potions, and just about anything else pro-

duced in the Amazon, all of it cheap, cheap, cheap. See p. 371.

## 12 The Best Nightlife

- **Arco do Teles** (Rio de Janeiro): Tucked away in an alley just off the Praça XV, the Arco de Teles reveals perfectly preserved colonial two-story walk-ups set on narrow cobblestone streets, lined with restaurants and cafes. With over 15 bars and botequins it doesn't matter which one you pick; walk around and see what's doing. If you get there after 10pm you'll be lucky to find a seat at all. See chapter 4.
- **Carioca da Gema** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2221-0043): One of the hottest nightlife spots in the city, Carioca da Gema offers some of the finest bossa nova and samba. Located just steps from the Lapa aqueduct, Carioca da Gema is one of the many small music venues in this funky bohemian neighborhood. The best night to come is Thursday. See p. 139.
- **Rua das Pedras** (Búzios): The hottest beach resort close to Rio, Búzios is the place if you're on a mission for a night out. Nightlife central is on the Rua das Pedras where the pubs, bars, discos, and restaurants open on weekends until 3 or 4 in the morning. One of the most popular spots is the Mexican bar and disco **Zapata**, very busy during vacations and weekends. See p. 160.
- **Rabo do Peixe** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3845-2296): If there is such a thing as a typical Brazilian pub, this is it. Located on a street corner, the patio fans out on all sides, and tables are packed every day. A great spot to kick off your evening with a cold beer and the best *picanha* in town. See p. 234.
- **Pelourinho** (Salvador). One of the most happening nightlife areas in Brazil, Pelourinho transforms itself into one big music venue every night of the week. With dozens of cafes and bars there is always a new band or singer to check out, and a few of the squares have stages set up for performances. Two of the most popular venues for concerts are the Praça Quincas Berro D'Água and the Largo Pedro Archanjo. See chapter 8.
- **Rua do Bom Jesus** (Recife): Recife's historic downtown is packed with bars and restaurants that radiate off of Rua do Bom Jesus. Free concerts add to the entertainment; on Sundays there's a street market with good quality crafts. One of Old Recife's nicest bars is the **Arsenal do Chopp** (☎ 081/3224-6259). Most tables are spread out on the sidewalk, leaving you in the middle of the action. See p. 311.
- **Ponta Negra** (Manaus): The most happening nightlife spot in Manaus is Ponta Negra Beach. Even when the beach completely disappears in the wet season, the action along the waterfront continues, with regular concerts and events. Many restaurants and bars line the riverfront. See p. 346.
- **Rua das Tabajaras** (Fortaleza): One of the liveliest nightlife areas in Fortaleza is this narrow street that parallels the waterfront in Praia de Iracema. On Monday nights, **Piratas** (Rua dos Tabajaras 325, ☎ 085/219-8030) is the place to be, and even though the crowd consists of mostly tourists it's a great party. On any other night of the week the street is packed with people heading out for dinner or drinks. See p. 339.