

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 in 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 5.
- **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 5.
- **Get to Know Pelourinho:** The historic center of Salvador is a treasure of baroque churches, colorful colonial architecture, steep cobblestone streets, and large squares. See chapter 9.
- **Hear the Drummers in Pelô:** At night the historic heart of Salvador comes alive with music. Most impressive are

Brazil



Brazil Itineraries

● BRAZIL IN 1 WEEK

- 1 Days 1–3: Rio de Janeiro
- 2 Days 4 & 5: Salvador
- 3 Days 6 & 7: Iguazu Falls

■ BRAZIL IN 2 WEEKS

- 1 Days 1–3: Rio de Janeiro
- 2 Days 4–6: Salvador
- 3 Days 7–11: The Amazon
- 4 Day 12: Transit
- 5 Days 13 & 14: Iguazu Falls

■ BRAZIL FOR NATURE LOVERS

- 1 Days 1 & 2: Rio de Janeiro
- 2 Days 3–6: Pantanal
- 3 Days 7–12: Amazon
- 4 Days 13–16: Fernando de Noronha
- 5 Days 17 & 18: Iguazu Falls



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 9.

- **Herd Water Buffalo in Marajó:** The buffalo ranches on this island in the mouth of the Amazon offer city slickers a unique cowboy experience. Riding out on horseback, visitors to Fazenda Sanjo help round up the water buffalo herd and bring it back to the ranch. See chapter 14.
- **Watch the Sunset Over the Lençóis Maranhenses:** The magical snow-white dunes interlaced with strings of turquoise, blue, and green lagoons make one of the most spectacular sights in all of Brazil. See chapter 13.
- **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 14.
- **Wildlife Viewing on Horseback in the Pantanal:** Richer in birdlife by far than the Amazon, but far too soggy to hike, the wet fields of the Pantanal are best explored on 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 17.
- **Admire the Modernist Architecture of Brasilia:** Built from scratch in a matter of years on the red soil of the dry *cerrado*, Brasilia 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 15.
- **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 16.

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 5.
- **Boipeba, Bahia:** The perfect island getaway, Boipeba makes Morro de São Paulo seem busy and hectic. Just south of Morro, Boipeba offers glorious empty beaches framed by rows and rows of palm trees. At Boca da Barra, where the river *Inferno* meets the ocean, huge sand banks appear at low tide. You can choose whether to swim on the freshwater side or play in salty ocean. See chapter 9.
- **Porto de Galinhas, Pernambuco:** 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 restaurants, a bank, some surf shops, and a beachside bar or two. See chapter 10.
- **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 14.

- **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 18.

- **Praia Mole, Florianópolis:** 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 a bohemian crowd of locals from Floripa, yuppie tourists, surfers, gay and gay-friendly sunbathers, and families. See chapter 19.

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 5.
- **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 9.
- **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 14.
- **Tree Climbing in the Amazon Forest:** Get off the river and delve into the forest. Most visitors only see the trees from the bottom up. Actually climbing into the tree will give you a

whole new perspective on the forest and its ecosystem. See chapter 14.

- **Swimming in the Lençóis Maranhenses:** The end of the rainy season signals the best time of year to visit the dunes at Lençóis National Park. June to October, the dunes are full of crystal-clear freshwater lagoons. A swim is the best reward for hiking through the desert of dunes. See chapter 13.
- **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 17.
- **Riding a beach buggy from Natal to Fortaleza:** The long coast from Natal to Fortaleza is one of the last places on earth with hundreds of kilometers of unobstructed sand. Make the 4-day journey by dune buggy and never once leave the beach, exploring vast towering dunes along the way. See chapter 11.
- **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 a time. See chapter 18.

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 9.
- * **Bird Spotting in the Pantanal:** Even if you're not a birder, the Pantanal has hundreds of species to spot, some as big as your little brother, others as colorful as Carnival. Plus hungry caiman and giant river otters, and sometimes even jaguar, all of it best viewed from horseback. See chapter 17.
- **Caiman Spotting** (the Amazon): Spotting caiman (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 14.
- **Butterflies in Iguaçú:** Everyone talks about the falls; few mention the

butterflies. The lush rainforest provides the perfect environment for many colorful species, and everywhere you go lovely butterflies are aflutter. Hard to miss is the metallic-blue Morpho butterfly; it's about the size of your hand. See chapter 16.

- **Sea Horses in Porto de Galinhas:** The roots of the mangroves in Porto de Galinhas are home to one of the most magical sea creatures, the sea horse. Guides dive in the water to look for these delicate animals and are usually successful in scooping one up (literally, in a glass jar). Once you have had a chance to learn a little bit more about the animal it goes back into its natural habitat. See chapter 10.
- **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 17.

5 The Best Museums

- **Museu Internacional de Arte Naïf do Brasil** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2205-8612; www.museunaif.com.br): Don't miss this little museum, 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' daily life—a soccer game at the Maracanã stadium, the samba parade, the

beaches, and neighborhood cafes. See p. 102.

- **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Mariana; ☎ 031/3557-3259): 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. 175.
- **Monument to Latin America** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3823-4600; www.memorial.org.br): Designed 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. 210.

- **Museum of the Portuguese Language** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3326-0775; www.museudalinguaportuguesa.org.br). Who would have thought you could make a whole museum about so esoteric a topic? Who would have thought you could make it so engaging? Among other displays, the museum features a 100m-long (328-ft.) wall-size screen showing images and clips that illustrate words unique to Portuguese. Unique and unforgettable. See p. 210.
- **Pinacoteca do Estado** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3229-9844): 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. 215.

- **Museu de Arte Sacra** (Salvador; ☎ 071/3243-6310): 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 is itself a work of art. The collection includes oil paintings, *oratorios* (small cabinets containing a crucifix or saint image), and amazing silver work. See p. 255.

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 two 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) or Alô Rio (☎ 021/2542-8080). See chapter 5.
- **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 (☎ 071/3321-2463; www.bahiatursa.ba.gov.br). See chapter 9.

- **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. It's celebrated on the beach with music and food. The largest celebration takes place in Salvador on Praia Vermelha. For details contact Bahiatursa (☎ 071/3321-2463; www.bahiatursa.ba.gov.br). See chapter 9.
- **Bumba-meu-boi** (São Luis): A party that gets the whole city involved, the Bumba-meu-boi is a fascinating folk festival centered around the story of a bull that gets killed and resurrected. The festivities take place over several months as there are several stages to each part of the story. Contact the São Luis Tourist Office for details on what happens when (☎ 081/3462-4960). See chapter 13.

- **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 p. 309.

7 The Best Hotels

- **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.
- **Fasano** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/3202-4000; www.fasano.com.br) The first-ever complete hotel—top to bottom, inside and out—designed by the famous *enfant terrible* of the design world Phillippe Starck. Rooms and lobby are lovely. The rooftop pool deck is a masterpiece. See p. 64.
- **Convento do Carmo** (Salvador; ☎ 071/3327-8400; www.pousadas.pt). A 17th-century convent in the very heart of a 17th-century city, restored to 21st-century luxury. Unforgettable. See p. 240.
- **Marina All Suites Hotel** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2172-1100): 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. 65.
- **Portinari** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/3222-8800): Designed by eight different Brazilian designers and architects, the hotel offers a wonderful showcase of Brazilian style and inventiveness; everything from the furniture to the lighting and accessories is unique. Best of all, this style doesn't get in the way of comfort. See p. 69.
- **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. 157.

- **Unique** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3055-4700): Extraordinary high-design rooms and suites feature 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. 200.
- **Tropical Manaus** (Manaus; ☎ 0800/701-2670 or 092/3659-5000): The Tropical 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. 373.
- **Bourbon Cataratas** (Foz do Iguaçu; ☎ 0800/451-010 or 045/3521-3900): 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. 433.

8 The Best Pousadas

- **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. 172.
- **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. 178.
- **Pousada Santa Clara** (Boipeba; ☎ 075/3653-6085): For a romantic getaway or just a few days of blissful relaxation, there's no place better than this lovely pousada, on the small island of Boipeba south of Morro de São Paulo. Each room is uniquely decorated, and many feature a veranda and large windows looking out over the lush tropical garden. The nearly deserted beach is only 5 minutes away, if you walk slowly. See p. 286.
- **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. 303.
- **Tabapitanga** (Porto de Galinhas; ☎ 081/3552-1037): The oceanfront rooms of Tabapitanga are so close to the beach that light sleepers may want to close their veranda doors to keep the sound of the waves out. All rooms feature bright and cheerful artwork, king-size beds, and a veranda with hammock and lazy chair. See p. 320.
- **Manary Praia Hotel** (Natal; ☎ 084/3204-2900): 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 some of the best beaches in the Northeast. See p. 326.
- **Araras Eco Lodge** (Pantanal; ☎ 065/3682-2800): 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. 445.

9 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 some *malaqueta* 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 **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. 81.
- **Colonial Coffee in Rio:** For the most elegant coffee experience, visit **Confeitaria Colombo** (☎ 021/2221-0107). This 19th-century Belle Époque establishment is one of the most beautiful salons in all of Brazil. See p. 77.
- **Italian Cuisine in São Paulo:** For some of the best Italian food in the world (well, outside of Italy), head to São Paulo's **Fasano** (☎ 011/3062-4000) (☎). The city's immigrants have created delicious new-world interpretations of some old-world classics. See p. 204.
- **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. Try **Jardim das Delicias** (☎ 071/3321-1449) See p. 245.
- **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. 321.
- **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. Local chefs make the most of the variety. For regional cuisine, try **Lá em Casa** (☎ 091/3424-4222). See p. 402.
- **Eating Fish in the Pantanal:** Anywhere in the Pantanal you can try the phenomenal bounty of the world's largest flood plain. *Paçú*, *dourado*, and *pintado* are just a few of the best catches. In Cuiabá, visit **Peixaria Popular** (☎ 065/3322-5471). See p. 444.

10 The Best Markets

- **Feirarte** (Rio de Janeiro): This crafts market on Rio's most historic square features a range of artists showcasing their handiwork. There are leatherwork, ceramics, glass, and silver, not to mention food and drink stands and less-talented vendors with more touristy souvenirs. See p. 130.
- **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. 211.
- **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. 211.

- **Mercado Modelo** (Salvador; ☎ 071/3243-6543): Souvenir junkies will think they've died and gone to heaven. 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. 256.
- **Mercado Adolpho Lisboa** (Manaus; ☎ 092/3233-0469): This beautiful

iron-and-glass market hall is a great place to see exotic Amazonian fish, fruits, and vegetables. A number of stalls have indigenous handicrafts at reasonable prices. See p. 378.

- **The Ver-o-Peso Market** (Belém; no phone): The Ver-o-Peso is a vast waterside cornucopia of outrageously strange Amazon fish, hundreds of species of Amazon fruits found nowhere else, traditional medicine love potions, and just about anything else produced in the Amazon, all of it cheap, cheap, cheap. See p. 405.

11 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 buildings 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 p. 139.
- **Centro Cultural Carioca** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2242-9642; www.centroculturalcarioca.com.br): This beautifully restored building from the 1920s hosts local musicians and big names who specialize in samba, MPB, choro, and gafeira. The room is cozy and intimate, and guests sit at small tables to watch the shows. See p. 136.
- **Carioca da Gema** (Rio de Janeiro; ☎ 021/2221-0043): One of the hottest nightspots in the samba-rich sector of Lapa, Carioca da Gema offers some of the finest pagode and samba. 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. 136.

- **Rua das Pedras** (Búzios): The hottest beach resort close to Rio, Búzios is the place to go if you're on a mission to party. Nightlife central is on the Rua das Pedras where the pubs, bars, discos, and restaurants stay open on weekends until 3 or 4am. One of the most popular spots is the Mexican bar and disco **Zapata**, very busy during vacations and weekends. See p. 159.
- **Skye** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3055-4702): One of the city's trendiest bars, Skye also comes with one of the best views in the city. On the Unique Hotel's top floor, the bar's large glass windows and pool deck offer spectacular skyline views of South America's largest city. See p. 208.
- **Rabo do Peixe** (São Paulo; ☎ 011/3845-2296): If there is such a thing as a typical Brazilian pub, this is it. 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. 232.

- **Pelourinho** (Salvador): Many nights of the week Pelourinho transforms itself into one big music venue. Two of the most popular venues are the Praça Quincas Berro D'Água and the Largo Pedro Archanjo. At the Praça do Reggae, there's always reggae playing. See chapter 9.
- The **Reviver** (São Luis): Now that it's been brought back to life, the historic

downtown of São Luis has a new name—Reviver. It's packed with bars and restaurants that center around the Rua da Estrela. One of prettiest is **Antigamente** (☎ 098/3232-3964). Most tables spread out on the sidewalk and there's live music every evening. See p. 356.