

Santa Catarina



Life's a beach. Certainly that's true in sunny Santa Catarina, which boasts 560km of spectacular coastline.

If you like your beach deserted, there is a spot of sand for you in the south of Ilha de Santa Catarina. If you prefer a party scene, head further north on that same island. Crave the life aquatic? You'll find excellent snorkeling and diving at Praia Bombinhas. If you're all about big surf, take your pick from any number of beaches south of Florianópolis.

While beaches might be the main draw, there is more to this southern state than sun and sand. Running parallel to the coast, the Serra Geral offers cool temperatures and stunning mountain scenery, promising rewarding hiking and horseback riding.

The inland regions are also where Santa Catarina exhibits the profound influence of its German ancestry. It is most evident during Oktoberfest, Blumenau's huge festival for folk dancing, accordion playing and beer drinking. But the Alpine architecture and fresh-brewed beer are here to enjoy year-round.

Like the other southern states, Santa Catarina enjoys some of Brazil's highest standards of living. The state's prosperity means that its infrastructure is sound and the people are welcoming.

Keep in mind that, on the coast, crowds and prices go up with the temperature. Visit outside of January and February to avoid the craziness and costliness of summer in Santa Catarina.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Watch the sun drop behind the mountains while slurping oysters in **Ribeirão da Ilha** (p341)
- Snorkel in the crystalline waters off **Ilha do Campeche** (p341)
- Sample brews straight from the barrel at the **Eisenbahn Cervejaria & Fábrica** (p346) in Blumenau
- Swim and snorkel from the docks of the floating restaurants in **Caixa d'Aço** (p348) near Porto Belo
- Catch a wave at **Praia da Joaquina** (p340) and you're sittin' on top of the world



■ POPULATION: 15 MILLION

■ AREA: 43,910 SQ KM

History

In the 1820s, a newly independent Brazil realized the strategic importance of this region on the frontier between the Spanish and Portuguese Americas. The emperor invited German-speaking immigrants to develop the land and serve as a buffer against Spanish insurgency. The German immigrants – and Italians who followed – never adopted the plantation culture of the Northeast. Instead, the economy was based on small, family-owned farms, a legacy that lives on in the region's egalitarian politics and equitable distribution of income.

Climate

The coastal lowlands of Santa Catarina enjoy a semitropical climate, with hot, humid summers and mild winters. The central highlands are drier in summer and colder in winter. At the highest elevations of the Serra Geral, snow is surprisingly common.

Getting There & Around

Florianópolis is the state's transportation hub, with direct bus and air services to every

major city in Brazil. Joinville also has direct air services to São Paulo, with connections to other major cities. Most destinations within Santa Catarina are accessible from Florianópolis by bus service, which is extensive and dependable.

ILHA DE SANTA CATARINA

Ilha de Santa Catarina has a vibrant and varied coastline, from the calm, crowded bays of the north, to the wild, cliff-hugging beaches of the south. But it's not just the beaches that make this island so enchanting. A forest of protected pines protect the east coast, while the dunes near Praia da Joaquina create a lunar landscape. The spine of mountains, luxuriant with the Mata Atlântica (Atlantic rain forest), drops precipitously down to the lovely Lagoa da Conceição. The gateway to the island is Florianópolis, political capital of Santa Catarina and cultural capital of southern Brazil.

The north of the island borders on being overdeveloped, and the shores of Lagoa da

