



BEGUILING BEACH RESORTS AND RAINFOREST RETREATS IN BRAZIL

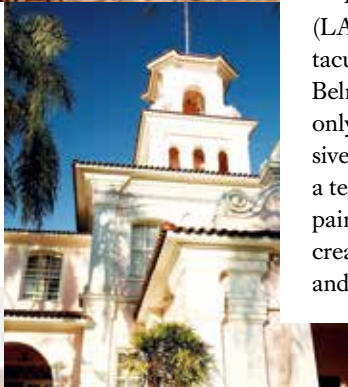
As fans of the beautiful game descend on Rio de Janeiro this summer, make for the city's best beachside bolthole, the Miramar hotel (www.windsorhotels.com.br), where the view of Copacabana from the rooftop pool is second to none. A lavish breakfast buffet includes freshly made omelettes, delicate pastries and mountains of fruit – fuel aplenty to visit Christ the Redeemer.

Then head to the historical town of Paraty, once the centre of the coffee and gold trading route between Brazil, Portugal and Africa. At its heart is an annual literary festival (www.flip.org.br), from 30 July to 3 August; previous guests have included Salman Rushdie, William Boyd and Tom Stoppard. Stay at the breezy Casa Turquesa (www.casaturquesa.com.br), where little luxuries include a pair of Havaianas on arrival and a view facing the bay of Ihla Grande.

For complete seclusion, head to the Ponta dos Ganchos resort (www.pontadosganchos.com.br), on a peninsula near Florianopolis. Nestling in the fringes of the rainforest are 25 villas, many of which have their own terrace and plunge pool and overlook the endless emerald ocean. For adventures further afield, paddle from the private beach to the village of Ganchos do Meio for lunch, or catch a boat with a local fisherman, who will take you on a round trip to eat oysters fresh from the ocean with a glass of champagne.

Finally, with the rainforest on your doorstep, fly to Foz do Iguacu (LAN or TAM airlines from Rio or São Paulo), the site of a spectacular waterfall twice as wide as Niagara Falls. The world-class Belmond Hotel das Cataratas (www.hoteldascataratas.com) is the only hotel located in the Iguacu National Park, which means exclusive exploration before the bus tours are let in at 9am, and a terrace that overlooks the torrents. With sumptuous suites and a painstaking attention to detail – cold towels, fruit smoothies and sun cream are brought to you poolside – it's little wonder the butterflies and toucans like to hang around. LUCY HALFHEAD AND HELENA LEE

Above: Christ the Redeemer in Rio. Clockwise from right: the streets of Paraty. The Belmond Hotel das Cataratas. Houses on the river in Paraty



Left: children on the beach in Rio de Janeiro. Right: Iguacu Falls. Top right: Rio's coastline

