



It's always sunny - somewhere!

For a beach experience so stylish and sexy it puts South Beach to shame, set your sights on Uruguay. Punta del Este (less than an hour by plane from Buenos Aires in nearby Argentina) has been called many things: the St. Tropez, the Hamptons and the Monte Carlo of South America. There are Brazilian and Argentinean supermodels galore during the peak summer months (December to February).

And from this place, the money does ooze—not only in the flashy casino at the uber-luxe Conrad Hotel, but in the beautiful harbor, too, where you can tap your toes to the rhythm of bobbing yachts while enjoying fresh seafood washed down with medio y medio, Uruguay's national drink.

“Punta is very seasonal. In the summer you have three times the people than in the off season, it's like everything explodes,” said Montevideo resident Franco Vidiella. “Everything you see here is over-produced—from the women, with their beautiful clothes and tans, to the cars and the clubs.”

For more beauty on the beach, head a few hundred miles north of Punta del Este to the beaches of Florianopolis on the island of Santa Catarina in Southern Brazil.

Floripa, as Brazilians call this California-esque coastal enclave, is as renowned throughout Latin America for its golden beaches as it is for the golden-haired bombshells that abound—Germans, Polish and Italians colonized the South of Brazil, explaining the Giselle Bündchen look-a-like phenomenon that's unmissable on the beaches here.

“Floripa is recognized as a top-end beach place in Brazil,” says Sao Paulo tourism executive Francisco Costa Neto. “They have some great seafood there, too, so it's really the best of both worlds.”

The eastern beaches, particularly Praia Mole, draw international surfers and gorgeous groupies for good waves in a strut-your-stuff atmosphere, while the southern beaches, popular with Santa Catarina locals, are emptier due to the colder water, rocky shoreline and more remote access (many require hiking in).

Ponta dos Ganchos, an hour north of Santa Catarina, features 20 oceanfront bungalows on an isolated peninsula. With private saunas and plunge pools, it's Floripa's most indulgent place to stay.

For a Brazilian island experience even farther removed from the mainland masses, set your sights on otherworldly Fernando de Noronha, an archipelago of 21 volcanic islands located roughly 215 miles off the northeast coast of Brazil and accessed by flights from Recife.

“It's very Turks and Caicos. It's unbelievable,” said Costa Neto about the area, “It's probably one of the most amazing places in Brazil.”

Some 70 percent of the archipelago is designated national marine park, and the diving in Fernando de Noronha is considered the best in Brazil. Eight luxury bungalows at Pousada Maravilha were built to blend with the natural surroundings, but submerged mountain ridges jutting from the cerulean sea make this place seem from another planet.

