



## Barrier Islands Brazil

Barrier islands are narrow strips of sand—often spits or sandbars that grow into full-blown, vegetated islands. They stretch from a few hundred meters to several kilometers wide. They run parallel to the coast, facing the sea, bearing the brunt of waves and wind, and protecting lagoons, bays, and coastal wetlands. And they move constantly, shaped and reshaped by currents, tides, people, and winds.

Barrier islands are found along the edge of every continent except Antarctica, and scientists and naturalists are still finding new ones. In June 2006, Landsat 5 captured this image of previously unrecognized barrier islands along the coast of Brazil between the Amazon River and São Luís. Brazil has the world's longest continuous chain of barrier islands—54 in total—extending more than 570 kilometers (350 miles) along the Atlantic coast.