

For people seeking a vacation full of contrast, terrific scenery and fabulous nightlife, they need look no further than South America. The continent attracts adrenaline addicts, history lovers and people who want to party. Brazil is one of the most popular destinations. The cities vibrate to the samba rhythm and music and dancing are never far away. The tropical beaches are busy with sunbathers and there are plenty soccer and volleyball games to join. Rio de Janeiro is surrounded by mountains and has an exciting night life. It's advisable not to go during the rainy season from January to May.

Argentina is becoming more of a tourist attraction as word gets out that there are bargain travel deals available and this South America destination has some wonderful sights. It's a great place for skiing and the season is from mid-June to mid-October. The most costly time to book a vacation here is during January, February and July when Argentineans are on holiday.

The capital city of Buenos Aires is known for its elegant architecture and wide avenues. The style is colonial and feels very European. Visitors enjoy the café culture, sophisticated restaurants and cobbled streets. Cordoba is another Argentinean city that never fails to impress. It was awarded the title of Cultural Capital of the Americas in 2006. The city is considered to have the best preserved colonial era buildings in all of South America. Architectural highlights include the underground Jesuit crypts and the Cabildo (Town Hall), on the Plaza San Martin.

Peru is another country with inspirational sightseeing opportunities, the most famous of which is the lost city of Machu Picchu, where the Incas made their stronghold. Visitors walk over the Inca Trail to reach it and are rewarded by one of the most treasured archeological sites in the world. Peru is a country of forests, snow capped mountains and tiny villages where life has not changed for hundreds of years. There are fascinating cities too, where the Spanish conquerors built their empire. The ancient city of Cuzco is a stone walled city with a large population of Incan descendents.

Chile has achieved an international reputation for the best producer of food and wine in South America. It also attracts skiers in the months from July to September and many adventure holiday specialists organise trips here. For people who love a good festival, February is the best month to come. The terrain is extremely varied and consists of desert, mountains, volcanoes, geysers and glaciers.