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Brazil: In the Third Millennium  
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On the south-east coast of South America in Brazil there is a place surrounded by beautiful water and lively natives. This quaint, little town on the border of Rio De Janeiro and Sao Paulo is known as Parati, Brazil. Also spelled, Paraty, this colonial town lies on the Ilha Grande Bay and is a relaxing, historic place to get away from every day life.

It became the city it is today because it was the second most important port in the country of Brazil during the "Golden Century." Though this town has easy access for ship, it did not always have such easy access by road. It was a rough trip to Parati for people back in the colonial ages and the Golden Century, because of the mountainous, rough terrain surrounding the town. People that needed a quick route to a port were tired of traveling into Parati, and eventually a new road was built to another port in the Espiritu Santo state. Now that there was a port that was easy to travel to, Parati began to develop into a forgotten place. The neglect and lack of use of Parati is the reason that the majority of the colonial, historic buildings in the town still exist as they did in the 1700's.

This town founded in 1531, is known for its stone streets that are closed to vehicles. In fact, many of these preserved streets are covered in water every day around 4 pm when the tide rises. Because of the way the city is located, the water rises up into the streets and at one point in history, this high tide was their means of a sewage system. Many, many years ago in Parati, the sewage would be flushed to the streets and the tide would come wash it from the cobblestone. In fact, it is interesting how the air smells at night after the tide had washed up and receded from the streets in Parati. It provides the town with a very close to water, atmosphere as the night progresses in the historic district.

Nightlife is a very vivid and lively part of Parati's existence. There are restaurants on the cobblestone streets and in nearly every one, it is likely that you will see live music. Ranging from Brazilian samba, jazz, popular rock, or folk music, there is a wide variety of entertainment. During my stay in Parati we spent a great deal of time in a restaurant that had a live rock band. It was very much like a night venue on a beach town in the United States, except even more lively! The most interesting part of this experience was that the Brazilian band playing on stage would play some American rock, and fluent in English or not, people knew every word to every song. After leaving this restaurant/bar, we headed into the center of the historic district, where there was live Brazilian samba music and many arts and crafts for sale. Though there is a place for the young person trying to socialize with others, there is a friendly, family atmosphere to Parati as well.

Parati has a lot to offer in terms of family vacationing. The night time atmosphere is friendly enough for family, as well as young adults, and there are live puppet shows and all sorts of entertainment on the streets. Both an entertaining place for children and adults, Parati is surrounded by beautiful islands that can only be appreciated from a boat in the beautiful, clear, blue water. In the Ilha Grande Bay, there are about 50 different boats that offer island tours. These are a good way to view what is nearby Parati on the

water, and an excellent chance to eat a Brazilian dish on the water for lunch! At each island the boat drops its anchor, and allows the passengers to jump off for a swim to cool off from the hot sun. Children may find enjoyment in snorkeling in the crystal clear water, to observe the many gigantic starfish, and fish that may pass by the ship.

Parati is the small kind of place that the average person in the world may not be aware of; however, after one trip to this spot in Brazil one's idea of a historic city on the water may be quite different. This city should only thank those colonial Portuguese people for building the road to the new port in Espiritu Santo, because the city has remained nearly untouched and it is clearly visible. With the historic churches, incredibly old-fashioned inns, and overall exquisiteness, this port city is like no other in South America.



References:

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