

# Brazilian dunes dotted with dazzling pools make UNESCO heritage list

July 26 2024

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A member of a team taking part in the Elf Authentique Aventure raid crosses the Lençóis Maranhenses National Park in Maranhão State, northeastern Brazil, on April 25, 2000. The Lençóis Maranhenses National Park, known for its endless dunes and dazzling natural pools in northeastern Brazil, was declared a World Heritage site by Unesco on July 26, 2024. The decision was taken during the 46th annual meeting of the United Nations World Heritage Committee in New Delhi, India's capital, which is considering applications for recognition from 28 sites around the world.

Brazil's Lencois Maranhenses National Park, famed for its white dunes that fill with blue and emerald lagoons in the rainy season, was on Friday declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The vast park, named for the dunes' resemblance to a bedsheet spread across the landscape—"lencois" means sheets in Portuguese—is located in the northeastern state of Maranhao, in a [transition zone](#) between the Amazon, Cerrado, and Caatinga biomes.

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Lencois Maranhenses is the 24th site in Brazil to make it onto the list of places of significant cultural or natural significance.

The [national park](#) was created in June 1981 and covers an area of 156,000 hectares, more than half of which offers a landscape of dunes and multi-colored lagoons, which attract more than 100,000 tourists each year.

According to UNESCO, it is the largest expanse of dunes in South America.

The Lencois Maranhenses are a protected area "where the desert meets the sea, creating a unique landscape," Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said in a letter sent in early 2023 to UNESCO to urge the site's inscription as a World Heritage Site.

The park has also hosted several Hollywood film shoots.

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Citation: Brazilian dunes dotted with dazzling pools make UNESCO heritage list (2024, July 26) retrieved 3 September 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-07-brazilian-dunes-dotted-dazzling-pools.html>

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