

Hot Hot Hot

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Such heat

It's hot in Rio this year for carnival. Really hot. Record breaking hot. One day last week Rio was officially the hottest city in the world. The shopping area of Saara has been hotter than the Sahara desert after which it is named.

Every where you go there is just one topic of conversation, Oh, What heat! Some people have taken to sleeping on the beach. Even in Copacabana, where the influence of the sea makes the temperature cooler, temperatures have topped 40 degrees. Inland in Bangu it reached 50 degrees one day. But the worst has been in one state prison where the governor invited journalists in to see for themselves - and the temperature registered 56 degrees! The governor is trying to persuade the state government to close the prison and move the inmates elsewhere before people start to die.

And this heat has serious implications for carnival, especially in Grupo Especial, the top group, where costumes can be heavy and padded. My costume for Salgueiro must weigh a good 10 pounds, but at least it isn't closed: air can get in. The poor Baianas, old women in costumes of many layers weighing 20 pounds or more, are in for a hard time this year.