



Bahia the Beautiful (Clockwise, from top left) Parade honoring Our Lady of Gloria in Cachoeira, Bahia; a dressed member of Boa Morte; and Bahian aunts celebrating.



# Dancing in the Streets

Deep in the heart of Bahia, Brazil, Black women honor their past, present and future

It's no secret that Brazilians like to party, even months after Carnival ends. But the festival of Irmandade da Boa Morte (Sisterhood of the Good Death), which takes place August 13–15 in Cachoeira, a coastal town in Bahia, is no ordinary celebration. On the surface, the three-day event—marked by street processions, abundant feasts and the joyous dancing of sisters dressed in flowing gowns—honors the assumption of the Virgin Mary into heaven. But at its heart, the fes-

tival honors African traditions never forgotten, and a group of freed Black women who helped slaves win their liberation. "These are descendants of female slaves who started a sisterhood," says Simone Manigo Truell of Levantamos, an organization that builds cultural partnerships between Americans and Afro-Brazilians in Brazil. "It's a great example for today's sororities to see people come together and celebrate women who rejoiced in their freedom." —BRETT JOHNSON