

## (Bound for the) Rio Grande

1. A ship went a-sailing out over the bar  
**'Way for Rio,**  
We pointed her bow for the southern star  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

**And away boys away ...**  
**'Way for Rio,**  
**So fare thee well, me bonny young girl**  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

2. Say was you never down Rio Grande?  
**'Way for Rio,**  
It's there that the river runs on golden sand  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

3. We've a bully good ship and a  
a bully good crew.  
**'Way for Rio,**  
A bully good mate and a good skipper too  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

4. So it's pack up your donkeys and get  
underway  
**'Way for Rio,**  
And the judies we're leaving will draw our  
half-pay  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

5. Cheer up Mary Ellen and don't look so glum  
**'Way for Rio**

On white-stocking day you'll be drinking  
hot rum  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

6. So lift up your glasses and sing  
"Fare Thee Well"  
**'Way for Rio**  
To the bonny young lasses who loved us  
so well!  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

7. Goodbye to Molly and sweet Sally too  
**'Way for Rio,**  
and Liverpool judies, well goodbye to you  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

**And away bullies away ...**  
**'Way for Rio,**  
**So fare thee well, me bonny young girl**  
**And we're bound for the Rio Grande!**

An **Outward Bound** shanty.

Sing along with **Johnny Collins** at  
<https://youtu.be/wIG5j7RyP8o>

Compare it with the **Fo'c'sle Singers'** version at  
<https://youtu.be/aVXaMgC1uz0>



**Garibaldi and his men carrying boats from Los Patos lagoon to Tramandahy lake during the War of Rio Grande do Sul. 19th century.**

From **De Agostini/Getty Images**, via [wikimedia commons](#):

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### Notes:

An **Outward Bound** shanty sung at anchor, capstan or windlass.

Hugill states it was commonly sung on ships leaving the West Coast of England and Wales on their way to stop at Newfoundland or Cadiz for salt or salt cod.

### About the words:

**Rio** is pronounced **Righ-O**! You sing with your mouth open on "aye" rather than stretched on "ee", much better for accompanying heavy work!

The chorus can appear as Away for Rio or Way O Rio, 'Way down Rio, Oh you Rio etc

**White stocking day** - a day of celebration and dressing up in finery to greet the sailors coming home.

### Geography

The Rio Grande referred to here is most likely the mouth of the Rio Grande (great river) in the **Brazilian** state of **Rio Grande do Sul**.

The Portuguese found the Rio Grande do Sul "great river of the south" in the 1530's. The city named **Rio**

**Grande** was founded there in 1737 to defend Portugal's territory, which covered the present state of Rio Grande do Sul plus all of today's Uruguay.

William Main **Doerflinger**, in **Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman** writes:

It has been suggested that it refers to the famous river on the Mexican border. It seems clear, however, that it was first sung in the **Brazil trade** and inspired by the port and province of **Rio Grande do Sul**. ... One version runs, "*There the Portugee girls may be found.*"

Usually known succinctly as "**Rio Grande**", the southern Brazilian province and its chief port, of the same name, carried on a busy trade with the United States and Britain, outdoing in this respect all of the many other Rio Grandes on the map."

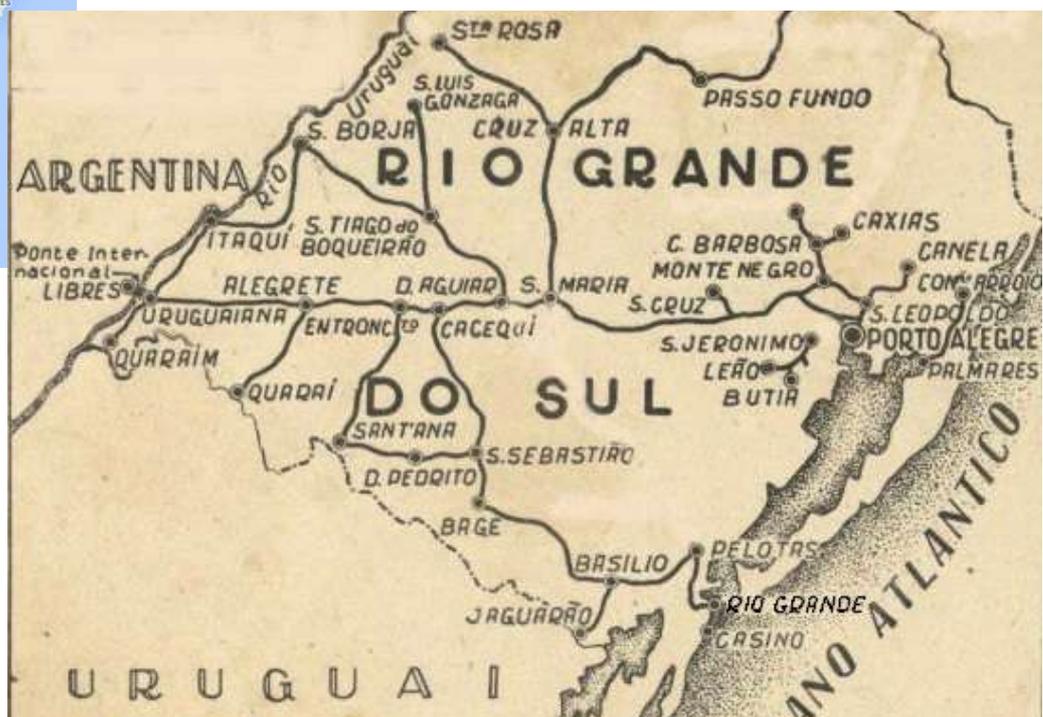
**Stan Hugill**, 1994 **Shanties from the Seven Seas**,

The reference in some versions to "golden sand", whether taken literally or symbolically, apply to this southern Brazilian river and port, for both banks of the Brazilian Great River (it is a lagoon really) are heaped high with sand dunes, and in the past, gold was a commodity found in this district. ... Gold was [also] found in the Mexican Rio Grande district but [by then] this song was already well aired.



**Left**, map of South America showing the Brazilian province of Rio Grande do Sul as "RS" in pink.

**Below**, Brazilian 1940's map from [estacoesferroviarias.com.br](http://estacoesferroviarias.com.br) ("Railway Stations"), shows **Rio Grande's** position in the state of Rio Grande Do Sul



**Argentina**  
is here, to the west

**Uruguay**  
is here, to the south

The **Port of Rio Grande** is in the south-east corner of the province, at the southern end of the long peninsula, guarding the harbour entrance.