



Rio de Janeiro



The City of Wonder

Rio is known as the *cidade maravilhosa* (marvelous city), and it certainly lives up to its name. With a population of seven million, the city is reputed for its hedonism: beaches and beautiful bodies, football, beer and caipirinha, all converging in the massive Rio de Janeiro Carnival in February.

Although *joie de vivre* is a French invention (as is the bikini), it's its people, the Cariocas, who've made it their own. While large-scale festivities like Carnival make Rio famous, there are countless occasions for revelry: Saturday at Ipanema Beach, a festa (party) in Lapa, soccer at Maracanã, or an impromptu roda de samba (samba circle) on the sidewalks of Leblon, Copacabana or any other corner of the city.

Music is the meeting ground for some of Brazil's most creative artists and nets an audience as diverse as the city. This is another of Rio's disarming traits: its rich melting pot of cultures. Cariocas they may call themselves, but the city's enticing variety of cuisines speaks volumes about its history of immigration.

The spectacular landscape is another of Rio's shameless virtues. Verdant mountains and white-sand beaches fronting deep blue sea offer a range of adventure: surfing great breaks off Prainha, hiking through Tijuca's rain forests, sailing across Guanabara Bay or rock climbing up the face of Sugarloaf Mountain.



Getting there

Most flights depart from Aeroporto Galeão (also called Aeroporto Antônio Carlos Jobim), 15km north of the center. Some flights to/from São Paulo and other nearby cities use Aeroporto Santos Dumont, in the city center. Many international airlines have offices on or near Av. Rio Branco, Centro.

Rio Airport Transfer (www.rioairporttransfer.com) provides both individuals and travel agents with transfers from airports, harbors and resorts in Rio de Janeiro using high quality modern vehicles, complete with safety belts and air-conditioning.

Transfers can be booked online. They also provide instant online confirmation and amendment of your booking.

Beaches and Safety

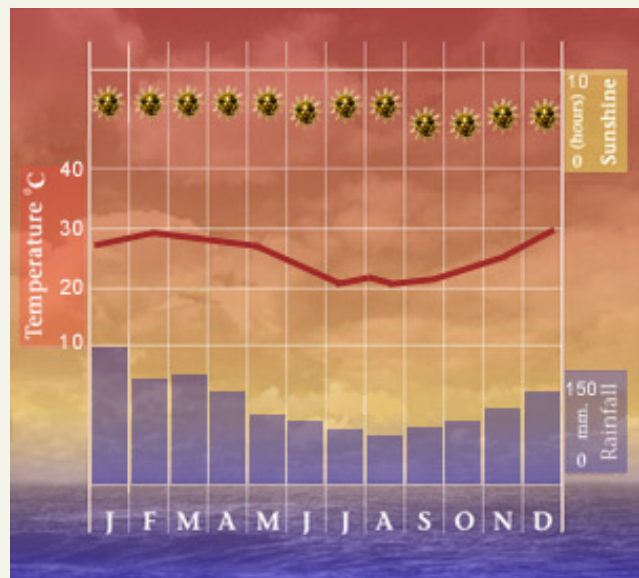
Purse- and bag-snatching is common on the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema, where thieves work with lightning speed. A common beach scam is for one thief to approach you from one side and ask you for a light or the time. While you're distracted, the thief's partner grabs your gear from the other side.

Although beautiful during the day, beaches are dangerous at night. Avoid walking on the beach at all costs after dark.

Weather

As expected, Rio de Janeiro has one average temperature: hot and humid. The city is warm all year round and there is plenty of sunshine to make the most out of the beautiful beaches. Cariocas despise the rain, so don't be surprised if everyone disappears during a tropical shower: they'll come running back again once the sun comes out.

Summers, between November and March, are very hot and humid. Winters are cooler and drier, never cold, with some precipitation, lasting only from June to September. Throughout the year, temperatures in Rio de Janeiro usually stay between 25°C / 77°F and 30°C / 86°F and rarely stray too far either side.



Top Attractions

CORCOVADO AND CHRIST THE REDEEMER

The statue of Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) perched atop the 710-metre high Corcovado Mountain



attracts almost half a million visitors a year, and no amount of hyperbole can do justice to the views of Rio that its peak affords. Grab the 20-minute tram ride uphill from Cosme Velho and be sure to go on a clear day or the clouds may roll in and destroy the view.

MARACANA STADIUM

One of the world's largest sports stadiums, this football arena has seating for 200,000. Unfortunately there are no soccer matches scheduled for the time being, as it is being renewed for the World Cup in 2014.



SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN

An icon of Rio's landscape and a name recognized worldwide, Sugarloaf Mountain (Pão d'Açúcar) and her cable cars provide one of the best views in the city. Head up at sunset and watch Rio transform into a sea of twinkling lights. Several trails offer alternative routes up and down Morro da Urca - the middle cable car station - and you can catch a ride back down for free after.



COPACABANA, IPANEMA & OTHER BEACHES

Beaches such as Copacabana and Ipanema are far more than tourist magnets, they are home to playgrounds, sporting clubs, and places to eat and drink. Enjoy yourself strolling through the ample walkways full of joggers, local urban tribes, muscle bunnies posing on impromptu beach gyms and pale northern tourists trying to overdose on vitamin D.



TRAVESSA DO COMÉRCIO

Beautiful two-story colonial townhouses line the narrow cobblestone street of Travessa do Comércio. The archway known as Arco de Teles leading into the area was once a part of an old viaduct running between two buildings.

Today, the street contains half a dozen restaurants and drinking spots that open onto the streets. It's a favorite spot for Cariocas after work.



FORTE DUQUE DE CAXIAS

More commonly known as Forte do Leme, this military base is open to the public on weekends, when visitors can access the forested trail skirting up to the top of

Morro de Leme. The short but steep trail passes through Atlantic rain forest and by the ruins of an earlier 18th-century fort that stood here. The views from the top are magnificent.



PARQUE DO FLAMENGO

Officially called Parque Brigadeiro Eduardo Gomes, Parque do Flamengo stages every manner of Carioca outdoor activity. Cyclists and rollerbladers glide along

the myriad paths, while the many soccer fields and sports courts are framed against the sea. On Sundays and holidays, the avenues through the park are closed (from 7am to 6pm).



RODRIGO DE FREITAS LAGOON

One of the city's most picturesque spots, Lagoa has 7.2km of cycling/walking path around the lake. Bikes are available for hire near Parque

Brigadeiro Faria Lima.

Boat rental is available on the lake's east side in Parque do Cantagalo, December through early January. For those who prefer caipirinhas to plastic swan boats, the kiosks in Parque dos Patins offer lakeside dining al fresco, often accompanied by live forró (traditional music from the northeast).

Shopping

The old downtown neighborhood of **Centro** offers great deals for clothes and shoes. Fun to explore are the pedestrian streets around **Rua da Alfândega, Rua Uruguiana, and Rua Buenos Aires**, jam-packed with hundreds of merchants in small shops side by side. Back in the '70s the area was slated to be demolished to make room for a viaduct, but over 1,200 shopkeepers formed a merchant's association and banded together to put a halt to the development. The best days for shopping are Monday through Friday when downtown is full of office workers.

The area around **Largo da Carioca** has a number of market stalls and street vendors. More upscale clothing can be found around the **Rua Gonçalves Dias**, with many stores selling Brazilian brand names and local designers.

Botafogo has two interesting shopping centers, the **Botafogo Praia Shopping** and the older **Rio Sul**. Rio Sul was one of the first malls of Rio and is still a very popular shopping destination. Many Brazilian stores can be found in this mall, and it makes a convenient place to browse and get a sense for brands and prices.

Copacabana and Leblon don't have any large malls, just boutique malls known as galerias in Brazil. Ipanema, however, boasts a brand new shopping center. The

prominent shopping areas are the main streets of the neighborhood. In Copacabana, **Nossa Senhora de Copacabana** is the main shopping street, with the best stores concentrated around the **Rua Santa Clara** and **Rua Figueiredo de Magalhães**. The beachfront area also houses a street market on Saturdays and Sundays, selling souvenirs and arts and crafts from various regions of Brazil. For upscale and exclusive shopping in Ipanema, try **Rua Visconde de Pirajá**, especially between the Rua Anibal de Medonça and Rua Vinicius de Moraes. Another popular destination for Rio's well-heeled shoppers is the classy **São Conrado Fashion Mall**, located in São Conrado, a neighborhood wedged in between Leblon and Barra. Those who prefer mega-malls may want to head straight for Barra da Tijuca. This newly developed neighborhood is home to many malls, including the **Barra Shopping** -- the largest mall in Latin America.

Hours for small stores and neighborhood shops are typically Monday through Friday from 10am-7pm, and 9am-1pm on Saturday. Malls are usually open from 10am-10pm Monday through Saturday and limited hours on Sundays (2-8pm). In tourist areas shops will often be open on weekends.

The Rio Subway

The subway in Rio is a really safe way to travel. It runs 7 days a week. Monday-Saturday 5h/00h and Sunday and holidays 7h/23h. It is limited to only two lines currently, the end stations are General Osório in Ipanema, Saens Peña in Tijuca (will be expanded to a station called Uruguai) and Pavuna in Zona Norte.

For the regular Metro just buy a ticket for about 3.20 R\$ one way (unitário). Catching the Metroônibus (subway shuttle bus) is possible at only a few stops. A sign with the text and a tidy cue of people marks the spot. The price is 3.20R\$ for the single ticket. Make sure you keep the ticket you will get, it will grant you entrance to the actual subway. If you are going to a destination that is on the route of the Metroônibus make sure that you get the right ticket, otherwise it won't be valid on the bus. In the subway stations you can buy subway passes that are easy to recharge with cash, they don't give you a discount but you don't have to stand in line everytime you are going somewhere.



Restaurants & Dining

Brasileirinho

Brazilian (regional)

Rua Jangadeiros 10a, Ipanema - Tel: (21) 2513-5184

Brasileirinho is a typical Brazilian restaurant serving up big portions of tasty regional food and a sumptuous buffet. Checked tablecloths, wood-fired ovens and soapstone pots complete the picture, and to really get you into the spirit of things the caipirinhas are among the best around.

Capricciosa

Italian

Rua Vinicius de Moraes 134, Ipanema - Tel: (21) 2523-3394

Cariocas love their pizza, and it is one of the few outlets where the Italian staple is on a par with their Paulistano (if not quite Italiano) brothers. Branches in Barra da Tijuca (Rua Oligario Maciel 108), Copacabana (Rua Domingos Ferrira 187) and Jardim Botânico (Rua Maria Angélica 37).

Casa da Feijoada

Brazilian

Rua Prudente de Moraes 10, Ipanema - Tel: (21) 2247-2776

Since 1989 this charming monument to the national dish has been serving up one of the city's best feijoadas (bean stew), as you would expect from the name. Heading there on a weekend almost certainly means patience will be required before you find a table.

Confeitaria Colombo

Mediterranean/ Tea House

Rua Gonçalves Dias 32, Centro - Tel: (21) 2232-2300

A Rio institution since 1894, the Confeitaria Colombo is the place for anyone after a touch of classical grandeur with their morning tea. Stunning display cabinets and tiling with mirrors and marble direct from France, the ambiance makes it easy to see why this was the choice for the city's politicians and intellectuals back in the day, not to mention the selection of beautifully-presented pastries.

The first floor restaurant has a good buffet and à la carte lunch choice offering hearty Spanish and Portuguese-inflected Brazilian cooking, or if the day

has marched on then the Virginia Lane tea will satisfy with its selection of cakes, biscuits and sandwiches. The Copacabana Fort branch is also worth a visit for the same quality in an entirely different setting overlooking one of the world's most famous beaches.

Delirio Tropical

Local

Rua Garcia D'Ávila 48., Ipanema - Tel: (21) 3624-8164

Swift, affordable and very healthy, lunch at Delirio is a regular in the diaries of Ipanema's ladies that lunch and Centro executives alike. The choice is enormous, the food fresh and appetizingly presented, and its popularity speaks volumes with queues out of the door every lunchtime. The menu changes daily to make sure the regulars keep coming back, too.

Doce Delícia

Brazilian - healthy

Rua Aníbal de Mendonça 55, Ipanema - Tel: (21) 2259-0239

Doce Delícia restaurants have become the watchword for Cariocas looking for tasty yet healthy food. Besides the diverse menu, Doce Delícia occasionally hosts gastronomic festivals. With branches in Ipanema, Shopping Leblon, Fashion Mall and Shopping Tijuca.

Fellini

Por kilo buffet

Rua General Urquiza 104, Leblon - Tel: (21) 2540-6486

One of the best por kilo restaurants around by virtue of the sheer range of dishes on offer and the quality to be found therein. It's not the cheapest buffet in town, but it certainly is one of the best.

Gula Gula

Salads - healthy

Avenida Henrique Dumont 57, Ipanema - Tel: (21) 2259-3084

Proud of their gourmet salads and deservedly so, Gula Gula's emphasis on healthy food has become a real hit with Cariocas, creating low calorie but nutritious meals for the body-conscious crowd. There are currently twelve dotted around Rio, from Centro's café-like outlet (Rua Senador Dantas 80a) to

the upmarket and sleek Leblon (Avenida General San Martin 1296) and Jardim Botânico (Avenida Alexandre Ferreira 220a) versions.

La Fiorentina

Avenida Atlântica 458a, Leme - Tel: (21) 2543-8395

A traditional meeting point for intellectuals, artists and journalists in the Cidade Maravilhosa 50 years ago, La Fiorentina now also counts celebrities amongst its patrons. Don't fret over the time or day you want to go, instead be safe in the knowledge that the place barely ever closes; the doors open at 11h30 and stay that way until the last customer pays up.

Manekineko

Sushi-fusion

Rua Barão da Torre 472, Ipanema - Tel: 21 2523 0300

Manekineko is synonymous with sushi in Rio, one of the best-loved Japanese restaurants among Cariocas. The all-you-can-eat rodizio (R\$63-\$70) covers everything on the menu, meaning while it certainly isn't cheap, you can undoubtedly get value for money if you bring enough of an appetite. Other locations include Barra (Casa Shopping, Avenida Ayrton Senna 2150, 21 2429 8033) and Leblon (Rua Dias Ferreira 410, 21 2540 7461).

Porcão

All-you-can-eat steakhouse

Avenida Infante Dom Henrique, Aterro do Flamengo - Tel: (21) 3461-9020

A meat-eater heaven, waiters parade around with trays full of skewers with high-quality meat of every kind, and you get to have as much or as little as you want. There is a huge salad and side dish buffet, although that won't mean much for the carnivore crowd.

Amir

Shawarma / Arabic

Rua Ronald de Carvalho 55, Copacabana - Tel: (21) 2275-5596

Authentically decked out in Middle Eastern finery, the falafel and kebabs are authentic and delicious. Just don't go too overboard on the garlic sauce or you'll be reminded of dinner for the rest of the night.

Music, Bars and Nightlife

There is no shortage of cafes, bars and clubs for of all types for visitors to enjoy. Cariocas like the nightlife. Bars and cafes are the places where Cariocas get together before they go out dancing (and after). Sip a beer and get to know locals at one of the popular **baixos**, streets that concentrate a number of venues. The dance scene is very diversified. Do not miss the **gafieiras**, Rio de Janeiro's famous samba halls. A good start is Lapa, Rio's traditional bohemian center that went through a revival recently. Learn some new steps, dance to local beats like samba, pagode, and bossa nova, or other familiar ballroom staples, like salsa, tango, etc.

You don't have to go far from your hotel to reach the clubs. Try **Baronetti**, and **Spazio** in Ipanema, **Melt** in Leblon, **Sky Lounge** in Lagoa, and **00 (Zero Zero)** in Gavea. In Copa the scene is a very mixed. **Bunker** has different parties every weekend with guest DJ's, and attracts an alternative crowd. **Mariuzinn**, with 30 years of tradition, moved on to the main street. Humaitá, Flamengo, Botafogo and Centro also have good dance clubs. The area around Lapa is now very popular, with clubs like **Rio Scenarium** and **Carioca da Gema**.

In Barra the clubs are predictably located in the malls, like **São Thome** or the **Hard Rock Cafe**. **Av. Armando Lombardi** is known as Baixo Barra due to the concentration of night clubs. **Nuth Lounge** gathers a lot of beautiful people, and some of the best DJ's. **Bombar** and **Guapo Loco** with their branches in Barra are also guaranteed fun alternatives.

BARS

Academia da Cachaça

Rua Conde Bernadotte 26G, Leblon - Tel: (21) 2529-2680

Academia de Cachaça has managed to strike a chord with the drinking classes. A lively atmosphere draws all ages from the beach and nearby apartment blocks and it is almost always busy.

Amarelinho

Praça Floriano 55, Cinelândia - Tel: (21) 2240-8434

A prime location and good reputation have made it a historic meeting point for students, intellectuals and business people for the last eighty years. Also a perfect pit stop on a tour of downtown, rest your feet and indulge in a slice of pizza and ice cold beer, watching the cogs of Rio's business community turn.

Bar da Praia

Avenida Delfim Moreira 630, Leblon - Tel: (21) 2172-1000

One of the most inviting bars to be found along Rio's seafont, this place is as informal (post beach and sandy) or chic (this is Leblon after all) as you want it to be.

Buxixo

Avenida Maracanã 760, Tijuca - Tel: (21) 2254-4565

Occupying a full corner of Tijuca's Praça Varnhagem, the Buxixo Choperia functions as bar, restaurant and club in one, with capacity for 300 people downstairs and another 400 upstairs. The location alongside the Maracanã makes it a popular post-game spot with football fans when the stadium is in operation.

Santo Scenarium

Rua do Lavradio 36 Lapa, Lapa - Tel: (21) 3147-9007

Built on old police Station, on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, the live music is instrumental jazz and Brazilian choro, but don't forget the R\$10 cover charge. No less entertaining is the show outside, where you can perch on a balmy night and watch everyone from transvestites to street sellers wandering past.

NIGHTCLUBS

Rio Scenarium

Rua do Lavradio 20, Lapa - Tel: (21) 3147-9000

Lapa institution Rio Scenarium attracts huge numbers of tourists as well as the die hard local sambistas who still, thankfully, lead the way on the dancefloor to help the place retain its authenticity. .

Club Six

Rua das Marrecas 38, Lapa - Tel: (21) 2510-3230

Five bars, three dance floors and a somewhat unusual medieval theme help mark Club Six out from the usual samba houses spread throughout Lapa. Live acts, MC battles and DJs playing a fresh selection of funk, hip hop and a smattering of house music keep the weekends packed out, providing nothing more or less than a hot night out for the locals.

Bar Bukowski

Rua Álvaro Ramos 270, Botafogo - Tel: (21) 2244-7303

A homage to the homonymous writer and set in a beautiful old mansion on an otherwise quiet, residential Botafogo street, this place plays good old fashioned rock and roll for its long-haired patrons.



Health and Safety

Asthma, sinus and bronchial problems can be aggravated by the polluted atmosphere in the major cities. If you have specific conditions (e.g. diabetes) you should bring a sufficient quantity of medical supplies and medicines with you for the trip.

It is advisable to consult your doctor at least two months before departure to verify all vaccination requirements. Tap water in Brazil is heavily treated and you are advised to stick to bottled mineral water.

Travel Information

Tourists from the United Kingdom and EU countries do not need a visa for holidays of less than 90 days, but residents of the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, (and Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia and Malta) do and must obtain one before they leave home. Anyone entering Brazil must have a passport that is valid for at least six months from the date of entry (except for Mercosur nationals, who can use their ID card instead).

For more information check the Entry Visa tab on your official Trip Website.

