

Rio de Janeiro City



Be warned: Rio's powers of seduction can leave you with a bad case of *saudade* (indefinable longing) when you leave. Planted between lush, forest-covered mountains and breathtaking beaches, the Cidade Maravilhosa (Marvelous City) has many charms at her disposal.

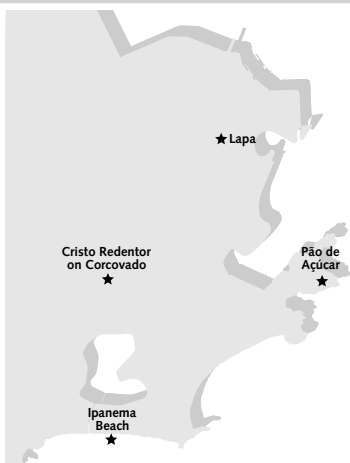
Although *joie de vivre* is a French invention (as is the bikini), it's the Cariocas (Rio dwellers) who've made it their own. How else to explain the life-lusting zeal with which the city's inhabitants celebrate their days? While large-scale festivities such as Carnival make Rio famous, there are countless occasions for revelry – Saturday at Ipanema Beach, a *festa* (party) in Lapa, football 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, hiking through Tijuca's rain forests or rock climbing up the face of Pão de Açúcar (Sugarloaf).

The downside to Rio is its crime rate and alarming social inequalities. Yet despite her many problems, most visitors arrive home already dreaming of their return.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Watch the sunset, caipirinha in hand, over at lovely **Ipanema Beach** (p130)
- Celebrate with King Momo – and millions of others – at **Carnaval** (p76)
- Take the cog train up Corcovado for stunning views beneath the open-armed **Cristo Redentor** (p145)
- Find the perfect beat at a samba club in **Lapa** (p175), Brazil's most musically charged neighborhood
- Admire the Cidade Maravilhosa from eagles' nest heights atop **Pão de Açúcar** (p144)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 0XX21

■ POPULATION: 6.2 MILLION

■ AREA: 1182 SQ KM

HISTORY

The Tamoio people were living on the land surrounding the Baía de Guanabara when Gaspar de Lemos sailed from Portugal for Brazil in May 1501 and entered the huge bay in January 1502. Mistaking the bay for a river, Lemos named it Rio de Janeiro. The French, however, were the first Europeans to settle along the great bay in 1555. After a brief alliance with the Tamoio – who hated the Portuguese for their cruelty – the French were expelled in 1567. The Portuguese victors then drove the Tamoio from the region in another series of bloody battles.

By the 17th century, the Tamoio had been wiped out. Those who weren't taken into slavery died from disease. Other indigenous groups were 'pacified' and taken to live in settlements organized by the Jesuits. The Portuguese had set up a fortified town on the Morro Castelo in 1567 and, by the 17th century, Rio became Brazil's third-most important settlement (after Salvador da Bahia and Recife-Olinda). African slaves streamed in and the sugar plantations thrived. Even more slaves arrived to work in the gold mines of Minas Gerais during the 18th century.

In 1807 Napoleon's army marched on Lisbon. Two days before the invasion, 40 ships carrying the Portuguese prince regent (later known as Dom João VI) and his entire court of 15,000 set sail for Brazil. When the prince regent arrived in Rio, his white Brazilian subjects celebrated wildly, dancing in the streets. He immediately took over the rule of Brazil from his viceroy.

Dom João fell in love with Brazil. Even after he became king of Portugal, he remained and declared Rio the capital of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarve. This made Brazil the only New World colony to ever have a European monarch ruling on its soil.

At the end of the 19th century the city's population exploded because of European immigration and internal migration (mostly of ex-slaves from the declining coffee and sugar regions). By 1890 Rio boasted more than a million inhabitants, a quarter of them foreign-born, and the city spread rapidly.

The early 1920s to the late 1950s were Rio's golden age. With the inauguration of the grand hotels (the Glória in 1922 and the Copacabana Palace in 1924), Rio became a romantic, exotic destination for Hollywood celebrities and in-

ternational high-society people who came to play and gamble at the casinos and dance or perform in the nightclubs.

Rio continued to change. Three large landfill projects were undertaken to ease the strain on a city restricted by its beautiful surroundings. The first was to become Aeroporto Santos Dumont, near Centro. The second resulted in Flamengo Park, and the third expanded the strand at Copacabana.

Rio remained the political capital of Brazil until 1960, when the government moved to Brasília. During the 1960s, modern skyscrapers rose in the city, and some of Rio's most beautiful buildings were lost. During the same period, the favelas (shantytowns) of Rio grew to critical mass with immigrants from poverty-stricken areas of the Northeast and the interior, swelling the number of Rio's urban poor. The Cidade Maravilhosa began to lose its gloss as crime and violence increased.

The final decade of the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985 was not kind to Rio. There were numerous protests during that period (notably in 1968 when some 100,000 marched upon Palácio Tiradentes). Even Rio's politicians opposed the military regime, which responded by withholding vital federal funding. The administration was forced to tighten its belt, and infrastructure deteriorated as the city's coffers dried up.

As Rio entered the new millennium, social problems continued to plague the city, with violence continuing to take thousands of lives – particularly in the favelas. Rio's middle and upper classes seemed mostly resigned to life behind gated and guarded condos, while poverty and violence surged in the slums nearby.

As a result of a worsening situation, Brazilian officials began to take a new approach. President Lula, aware of the link between poverty and crime, announced in 2007 that Rio's favelas would receive US\$1.7 billion to invest in running water, sanitation, roads and housing.

Pulling people out of poverty has long been one of Lula's overarching goals, and Brazil has had marked success in achieving this, with 10.4 million people leaving poverty-level conditions since 2001. The city for its part continues to focus on bringing these dramatic improvements to other slums in the city, setting a goal of reaching 100 favelas by 2011 and the entire city by 2016.