

Gávea, Jardim Botânico & Lagoa

Neighborhood Top Five

- ❶ Hiring a bike and going for a spin around the **Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas** (p78).
- ❷ Taking a stroll through the lush and flower-filled **Jardim Botânico** (p79).
- ❸ Looking for monkeys on the forested paths of **Parque Lage** (p80), followed by lunch in the open-air restaurant.
- ❹ Sipping cocktails in an alfresco setting while admiring the view from **Palaphita Kitch** (p83).
- ❺ Checking out the latest exhibit at the **Instituto Moreira Salles** (p79).



For more detail of this area, see Map p242 ➔

Explore Gávea, Jardim Botânico & Lagoa

Rio's picturesque lake is the focal point of these well-heeled neighborhoods. The Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas is actually a saltwater lagoon and is much utilized by *cariocas* (residents of Rio). Joggers and cyclists zip along the shoreline trail by day, while the lakeside restaurants fill with people enjoying a meal and live music in the open air by night. This area includes the north, east and west sides of the lake. The streets on the south side of Lagoa are generally considered part of Ipanema and Leblon.

West of the lake are the botanical gardens for which the neighborhood, Jardim Botânico, is named. Here you'll find stately palms and a variety of flowering plants. South of the gardens is Gávea, home to Rio's premier horse-racing track and a planetarium. Aside from their natural attractions, these neighborhoods also have some excellent restaurants, lively nightlife and one of the Zona Sul's best cultural centers, the Instituto Moreira Salles.

Much of the development of this area is linked to the lake, which is named Rodrigo de Freitas in honor of the Portuguese settler who made his fortune off the sugarcane fields surrounding the lake in the 16th century. Factories blighted the landscape in the 1900s, and it took much of the 20th century for the area to recover. Although the lake is still too polluted for swimming, some wildlife has returned, and visitors might see egrets on the lookout for fish in the lake.

Local Life

- ➔ **Walks** For a scenic hike, you can take the uphill trail to Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) in Parque Lage (p80). A shorter trail offers great views from Parque da Catacumba (p80).
- ➔ **Markets** Praça Santos Dumont hosts an antiques market on Sundays and a fruit market on Fridays.
- ➔ **Nightlife** Bars near Praça Santos Dumont attract a young, festive crowd during the week.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Gávea buses** Centro, Flamengo and Catete (170); Ipanema and Copacabana (571, 572 and 574); and Leblon (432, 435 and 593).
- ➔ **Jardim Botânico buses** Centro, Flamengo and Catete (170); Copacabana and Ipanema (162, 570 and 584); and Leblon (512, 574 and 584).
- ➔ **Metro** Gávea (by early 2017).
- ➔ **Metrô na Superfície** Metro buses connect Botafogo station with Jardim Botânico.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

One of Rio's often overlooked attractions, the Instituto Moreira Salles is well worth a visit. It has a picturesque setting and the museum stages first-rate exhibitions. If you have kids in tow, Saturdays are a good time to visit, as there are special (free) activities such as crafts, music and the like.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Volta (p81)
- ➔ PLage Cafe (p81)
- ➔ Olympe (p82)
- ➔ Bráz (p81)
- ➔ CT Trattorie (p82)

For reviews, see p80 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Palaphita Kitch (p83)
- ➔ Hipódromo (p82)
- ➔ 00 (Zero Zero) (p82)
- ➔ Palaphita Gávea (p82)

For reviews, see p82 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Dona Coisa (p83)
- ➔ Gabinete (p83)
- ➔ O Sol (p83)

For reviews, see p83 ➔