Walking Tour: Historic Centro

A mélange of cobblestone streets and colonial architecture, Centro is a fine place to delve into Rio’s past. Weekdays are the best time to visit, as the area is deserted (and unsafe) on weekends.

**Start** Praça Floriano  
**Length** 3km  
**Distance** 4 hours

1. The heart of downtown is the [Praça Floriano](https://www.realgabinete.com.br), a scenic plaza dotted with outdoor cafes and framed by grand architecture.

2. One of Rio’s finest buildings, the neoclassical [Theatro Municipal](https://www.theatromunicipal.rj.gov.br) has a lavish interior and stages opera, dance and classical concerts.

3. On the hill above Largo da Carioca, [Igreja São Francisco da Penitência](https://www.conventosantoantonio.org.br) is an 18th-century church with a jaw-dropping gilded interior.

4. Stop in [Confeitaria Colombo](https://www.confeitariacolombo.com.br) for caffeine, pastries and art nouveau surroundings.

5. [Real Gabinete Português de Leitura](https://www.realgabinete.com.br) is a historic reading room that seems straight out of 19th-century Portugal.

6. Once the seat of the Portuguese rulers in Brazil, the [Paço Imperial](https://www.amigosdopacoimperial.org.br) today houses cafes and intriguing art exhibitions.

7. One of Centro’s oldest lanes, the [Travessa do Comércio](https://www.confeitariacolombo.com.br), springs to life at workday’s end with open-air bars on the cobblestone streets.

**Take a Break...**

**Cais do Oriente** is set in a charming mansion from the 1870s and features gastronomic delights.

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