

## **Brazil: Exploring Rio de Janeiro**

### **Day 1 Flight To Brazil**

Depart from London, connect in Europe for Overnight Flight to Rio De Janeiro.

### **Day 2 Arrive Rio de Janeiro**

Arrive in Rio de Janeiro this morning and transfer to your hotel. Then it's off for Guided introductory sightseeing of Rio and a visit to **Sugar Loaf Mountain**. A green, unearthly peak rising over Rio de Janeiro, Sugar Loaf is an iconic locale for a bird's eye view of Rio de Janeiro, from Copacabana beach to Corcovado Mountain. Ascend by cable car to the peak of Sugarloaf. Ride through Flamengo Park and downtown. The top of Sugar Loaf, 396 metres high, has been landscaped and includes several pathways and a cafe.

Relax at the pool this afternoon after the flight and tour.

### **Day 3 Corcovado & Copacabana Beach**

Your guide will pick you up at the hotel and transfer you to the cogwheel train that will ride you up the 710 meters to the statue of Christ. To reach the top of **Corcovado Hill**, the train crosses the largest urban forest of the planet. The Tijuca Forest is located at the heart of Rio de Janeiro and it separates the South and North zones of the city. The train, built in 1885, provides delightful views of Ipanema and Leblon from an absurd angle of ascent, as well as a close look at thick vegetation and butterflies. Finally at the top of several flights of steps you are beneath the almost 40-metre tall statue of Christ with the whole of Rio at your feet. The entire city spreads out in a magnificent panorama during the day, glittering and magic after dark and always protected by Christ, the Redeemer, who blesses visitors and residents from on high. The spectacle is truly incredible. Return to your hotel via a panoramic road.

This afternoon you can walk across to the most famous beach in the world, the **Copacabana**. Life is vibrant here, filled with hotels, restaurants, bars and stores thousands of people make their way to and from the beach, either just strolling along or exercising along the Avenida Atlantica on rollerskates, jogging or on bicycle. You will meet a blend of people, different languages, different social backgrounds, sellers, entertainers, businessmen, sun worshippers.

### **Day 4 Historical Rio**

As you approach the centre, you pass the Marina da Glória and you can see the simple chapel of Nossa Senhora da Gloria do Outeiro beautifully situated up on the hill. **Central Rio**, which is a busy mixture of historic buildings overshadowed by high rise office blocks, is the main business area. The downtown area is where the 400-year-old city started to grow and is nowadays a very busy trade centre. Despite this hectic movement, you can discover the most interesting places, combining baroque and modern architecture, little cafes, and pedestrian streets. The historical centre of Rio houses an impressive complex of colonial Baroque architecture, including the Royal Palace, the National Historical Museum, the Candelaria Church and the Municipal Theatre, a two-thirds replica of the Paris Opera inaugurated in 1909.

Probably the world's most famous football stadium, **Maracana** is able to hold 100,000 spectators. Going to the Maracana is an unforgettable experience, even if there is no game going on. On the inside visit you get to know the main spaces: the Dressing Rooms, the Training Field, the Main Soccer Field and the Fame Hall, besides having the panoramic view from the Special Chairs. A sound equipment gives you the impression that you are in a full stadium, with everybody screaming!

### **Day 5 Tropical Islands Cruise**

Today we take a full-day tour to the village of Itacuruçá, located one and a half hours south of Rio de Janeiro, with its simple houses of fishermen. Board your Saveiro, the name given to this typical boat that looks like a schooner, and **cruise the Sepetiba Bay**, an area rich in natural beauty, where it is normal to spot flora and fauna such as dolphins, giant kingfisher, parrots, turtles and sting-rays. A stop is made for a swim and then the saveiro continues to the island of **Itacuruça** where a delicious lunch self-service buffet will be waiting. There will be a time to explore the Island before returning to Itacuruça then back to Rio.

### **Day 6 Tijuca Forest**

**Tijuca Forest** offers a contrast between the 'Stone Jungle' and tropical forest, right in the middle of a city; an oasis of green and fresh air with mammals, birds and reptiles living together in this humid scenery. The area used to be a coffee farm and in 1967 was transformed into a National Park. The Pico da Tijuca (Tijuca Peak), with an altitude of 1022 meters (approximately 3352 feet), is the highest peak within the Tijuca National Park area, and the second highest peak in the city of Rio. The hike takes one hour to the summit, at a starting altitude of 600 meters (1968 feet). Besides the amazing view of the city, small mammals and beautiful birds may be seen.

### **Day 7 Petropolis**

Today we take a trip back to Brazilian history and its imperial days. Petropolis and Nova Friburgo were colonised by Swiss and German immigrants, and display, therefore, physical and cultural traits of those European regions. **Petropolis** originated and developed as the imperial city, since it was the favourite of monarch Pedro II, who spent the summers there, in order to avoid the heat of Rio de Janeiro. The German immigrants initially settled in the town in order to serve the imperial family, and they left strong influences in the habits, in the local food and in the architecture. Petropolis has several attractions, such as the Imperial Museum, former summer palace of the royal family, containing a great collection of objects formerly belonging to royalty, even Pedro II's imperial crown fashioned with 5 lb. of gold and encrusted with hundreds of pearls, diamonds and emeralds. Other important attractions of that mountain resort are the well-known Quitandinha Hotel, a former casino built in the 1940's; the Crystal Palace; Sao Pedro de Alcantara Cathedral and parks and gardens.

Optional Brazillian evening (£60). By far the best Carnival show you can get - when it is not Carnival. Gorgeous women in spectacular costumes ('fantasias') let you enjoy fast rhythms including Samba and Frevo. An acrobatic Capoeira act will intrigue you. The show is fast-paced and very entertaining.

**Day 8 Rio/Departure**

Free time for shopping in Rio - Good-quality arts and crafts are available at regular outdoor markets, which are colourful and entertaining places for tourists to visit. Rio Sul mall has everything from all the best in women's clothes, men's clothes, to souvenirs. It also has a good food court, great shoes, and a movie theatre. Transfer to the airport for an evening departure for an overnight flight.

**Day 9 Arrive UK**

Transfer planes and arrive in the UK this morning.