

Adventure in Paradise

With gorgeous beaches, the natural bounty of the Amazon, and a diverse and dynamic culture, Brazil remains South America's hottest travel destination.



THE BEST OF RIO

Here's where to sleep, eat, and, of course, party in Brazil's most popular destination

Text by KEITH GORDON



Rio de Janeiro is a world-renowned party town. It's a reputation well earned. But Rio is also a diverse metropolis with a spirited culture, a rich history, and vibrant neighborhoods. You can relax on Copacabana Beach, get wild at Carnavale, and dive into the city's unique character and energy. The recent Summer Olympics host is also capable of matching any global city in terms of luxury and opulence, with world-class hotels, Michelin-starred restaurants, and unrivaled nightlife venues. Here's where to begin.

Where to Stay

The jewel of the Rio hotel scene since it opened in 1923, the Belmont Copacabana Palace is where the city's elite sip caipirinhas on a stretch of Copacabana Beach. The recently remodeled hotel offers stylish accommodations with incredible views of the entire beachfront. The



hotel also features a botanical spa, an iconic bar, and a Michelin-starred restaurant, Mee.

Fresh off a comprehensive remodeling, the antiquated Caesar Park Hotel is now the Sofitel Rio de Janeiro Ipanema. The designers combined a laid-back beach vibe with elegance and refinement, perfect for the diverse crowd of celebrities, athletes, and beautiful people who lounge by the hotel's rooftop pool.

The founders of hotel Emiliano São Paulo opened Emiliano Rio, catering to young professionals and stylish couples. The hotel is situated on the southern tip of Copacabana Beach, and guests can see all the way to Sugarloaf Mountain from the L-shaped rooftop pool.

Fasano hotel competes with the Copacabana Palace as the destination of choice for Brazil's A-listers when they visit Rio. A young,

The Belmont Copacabana Palace is where the city's elite sip caipirinhas. Opposite: The Niterói Contemporary Art Museum.

COURTESY OF THE BELMOND COPACABANA PALACE. OPPOSITE: WILLIAM ABRANOWICZ/ART+COMMERCE



hip crowd frequents the pool throughout the day, while Fasano al Mare restaurant and Baretto-Londra bar are a draw in the evening. Beyond has been a guest.

The Gran Meliá Nacional hotel is impossible to miss along São Conrado beach. A cylindrical tower that looms over the surrounding area, the hotel has been reborn after decades of disrepair and disuse. Set in stunning gardens filled with sculptural art, the hotel offers a world-class spa, multiple bars, and an acclaimed restaurant. But for all its amenities, and one of the best pools in Rio, it's the hotel's vista that steals the show. Get a room on the upper floors for views of the mountains, the beach, and the Christ the Redeemer statue.

Where to Eat

While São Paulo is the bigger draw for top chefs, Rio holds its own. The current star of the city's culinary scene is chef Rafa Costa e Silva's farm-to-table Brazilian restaurant Lasai. Located in the Botafogo neighborhood, Lasai serves produce from the chef's own local gardens and highlights specific ingredients each day across its menu. Diners can also take advantage of the wine service and cocktail bar, both among the best in the country.

Situated near the Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon and serving a French menu with a strong Brazilian influence, Olympe features a warm and cozy atmosphere in which guests can enjoy some of the most unique dishes in Rio. Most combine classic French elements with the carioca flavors native to Brazil, like the slipper lobster confit in melted butter with vanilla from Bahia, potato crisps, and dedo de moça pepper.

Laguiole, located within the modernist structure of the Modern Art Museum, is both a world-class restaurant and a culinary classroom for up-and-coming chefs. To match its bold and modern surroundings, Laguiole takes traditional dishes like picadinho or rabada rice and

reimagines them as contemporary offerings. The wine list offers thousands of bottles from more than 500 different labels.

For a true European culinary experience, look to Michelin-starred Eleven Rio. Those in the know go for the 11-course Chef's Menu, which sometimes includes suckling pig cooked at low temperature with passion fruit and tomato chutney. The restaurant boasts a robust wine list; be sure to try one of the wines created by Eleven Rio's chef, Joachim Koerper.

Meanwhile, one of the top Brazilian chefs, Felipe Bronze, helms the celebrated Oro, where his focus on a Brazilian tradition of cooking with fire and coal has helped earn the restaurant a Michelin star. Try the Creativity Menu, which changes daily and features an array of snacks, four surprise dishes, and a dessert. Ask for wine pairing advice from Bronze's wife, Cecilia Aldaz, considered a top sommelier in Brazil.

Where to Party

When it comes to nightlife, there's something for everyone in Rio, from raging EDM clubs to laid-back live music venues, dive bars, and samba-specialist dance halls. Check out longtime Rio favorite Clube dos Democráticos, where you can find some of the best samba music in the world, a lively dance floor, and plenty of locals willing to teach you some moves.

At Fosfobox in Copacabana, the top DJs keep the club alive till morning. Take a break from the dance floor at the cool upstairs bar. For a more rock & roll evening, Bar Bukowski (yes, named for the author) is a Rio legend. Located in a historic mansion, the spacious bar features a garden, hookahs, and a decidedly non-EDM soundtrack.

If you want a drink with a beachside view, check out the Deck Lounge Bar. Sugarloaf Mountain provides the perfect backdrop.

A young, hip crowd frequents Fasano's pool throughout the day





THE ENDURING LEGACY OF *AYRTON SENNA*

Remembering the legendary Formula 1 driver 23 years after his tragic death

Text by KEITH GORDON

In global sport, it's not always the winningest athlete who serves as a sport's spiritual and cultural ambassador. For all of Bill Russell's titles, or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's scoring records, it is Michael Jordan who is basketball's most revered icon. Similarly, it's not Michael Schumacher and his seven world championships, or Lewis Hamilton and his global social media celebrity, who serve as Formula 1's biggest hero. It is the late Brazilian driver Ayrton Senna, still the sport's guiding light 23 years after the accident at the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix that took his life.

In his native Brazil, Senna was a driving god on the track and a national sensation off of it. He was beloved by his countrymen, even though soccer here is not just the most popular sport but a quasi-religion. He was revered across socioeconomic groups, despite his affluent upbringing. He was a national role model.

His on-track reputation was well-earned, but his impact was most strongly felt away from the track. His charitable foundation, originally inspired by Senna's stated desire to give back to his nation, was created by his sister Viviane six weeks after his untimely death, and has spent hundreds of millions of dollars to help educate some two million children and train 60,000 teachers each year. This is made possible by the continuing success of the Senna brand, which has earned close to \$320 million in the past half-decade alone.

His influence can also still be felt in the sport that made him famous. Following his death, FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile), the organization that oversees Formula 1, began a long and comprehensive shift away from prioritizing performance toward an emphasis on safety. New car designs included crash-protection monocoques, and existing circuits added safety barriers. The effort continues to this day, and the result has been a dramatic drop in the number of fatal Formula 1 accidents.

When Senna died, the government declared three days of national mourning, and an estimated three million people attended his funeral in São Paulo. They wanted to pay their final respects to their idol, but in truth, there was nothing final about Senna's passing. His impact on his nation and his sport continues well beyond his lifetime. As his sister told CNN last year: "All the Brazilians would sit in his car, would push his car; we would raise the flag with him on the podium. It was like we were as one. Ayrton and Brazil were as one." They still are.

For his success on the track and philanthropy off of it, Senna was a national role model

Play Beautiful

Soccer in Brazil isn't so much a sport as it is a religion

Text by KEITH GORDON

Canada loves its hockey and produces some of the world's best players. The same goes for New Zealand and rugby, or the Dominican Republic and baseball. But there is perhaps no stronger connection between a nation and a sport than that between Brazil and soccer. Ever since the country won its first World Cup in 1958, the Seleção (Brazilian national team) has won the tournament a record five times. Teams from Europe and beyond bolster their squads with Brazilian players. The country even has a national philosophy to describe its style of play: Joga Bonito, which means "play beautiful."

Names like Zico, Socrates, Roberto Carlos, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, and Romário are recognized around the world, while Pelé remains the greatest player of all time. Today's best Brazilian is Neymar, the world's most expensive player after his \$263 million transfer from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain (that doesn't include

a salary of more than \$50 million per year, before accounting for sponsors).

Brazil is still trying to wash away the memory of World Cup 2014, where the Seleção was a heavy favorite on its home soil. But a shocking 7-1 loss to Germany in the tournament's semifinal turned what was supposed to be a national celebration into a nationwide period of mourning.

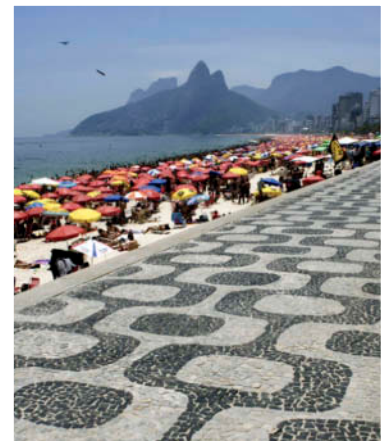
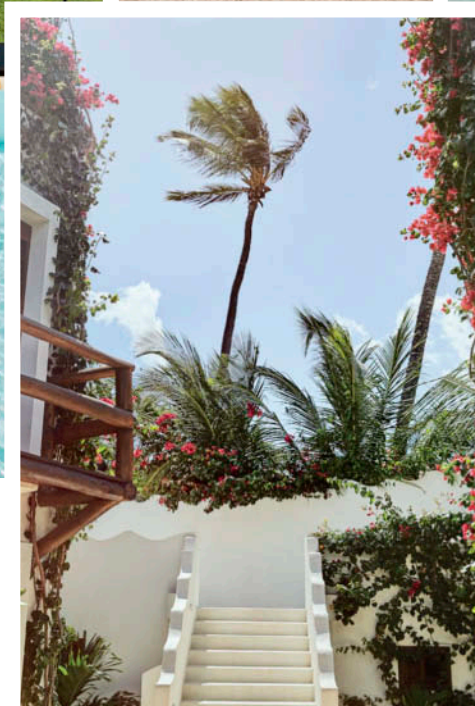


It took a full two years for the nation to recover, thanks to the efforts of the youthful Olympic team that won the gold medal (also on home soil in Brazil) by defeating Germany on penalties. Neymar, who missed the 7-1 beatdown in 2014 with a back injury, scored the winning penalty to secure Olympic gold and restore his nation's sporting honor. Now back in his rightful place atop the soccer landscape, the national squad is looking to secure its sixth World Cup title in Russia in 2018. History is in their favor.



FROM TOP: DEAN MOUHARPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES; FRANCESCO CARROZZINI/TRUNK ARCHIVE

Neymar, the most expensive player in the world, is one of a long line of Brazilian soccer royalty



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: © SIME/ESTOCK PHOTO; BEN WATTS/TRUNK ARCHIVE; KEN KOCHERY/TRUNK ARCHIVE; VANDERLEI ALMEIDA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; PULSAR IMAGES/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; SQUIRE FOX/AUGUST (2); BUENA VISTA IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



Aerial Commuting

*To avoid the city's crushing traffic,
São Paulo's elite turn to a growing fleet
of helicopters*

São Paulo is not only Brazil's largest city, it's also the country's financial center, not to mention the economic heart of South America. As a result, people have flowed into the city, pushing its population beyond 12 million (including suburbs, the area is home to around 20 million). There are some six million vehicles on the road, one for every two people, which turn the city into a veritable parking lot. On Friday evenings, rush-hour traffic jams can reach 110-plus miles in length and, on the worst days, even extend to 180 miles.

While sitting in traffic for hours a day may be unavoidable for the masses, São Paulo's elite are barely affected. Instead of driving, the city's wealthiest ascend to rooftops, where they are plucked up by a growing fleet of private helicopters and whisked above the chaos below. São Paulo has the largest copter fleet in the world at over 400, more than in New York, London, or Beijing, completing around 1,300 landings and departures daily.

Flying choppers isn't cheap, but in a city with so much demand, the economy of scale has enabled the development of a potential solution. Voom, an Uber-esque mobile app, allows for easy, and far more affordable, on-demand choppers to take you around the city. Simply order a flight on your mobile device, and head to one of the city's more than 500 helipads to get picked up.

A project created by A3, the Silicon Valley-based incubator of European aerospace giant Airbus, Voom offers helicopter travel in São Paulo for up to 80 percent less than what traditional air-charter companies charge. Instead of taking a \$50 car from your hotel to the airport and sitting in traffic for 90 minutes, for example, a flight on Voom can cost \$150. In recent years, Uber has launched trial runs of its UberCopter service in global cities.

Text by KEITH GORDON



AMAZON

Luxe

Experience one of the world's great adventure destinations in style and comfort

Text by KEITH GORDON

Brazil is home to one of the planet's greatest natural wonders, the Amazon. Flowing across most of South America, it houses some of the rarest and most exotic wildlife and flora on earth. Countless outfits run adventures and educational outings throughout the region, but for those who want to experience the beauty of raw nature from the comfort of a refined hotel, the only choice is the city of Manaus.

Carved out of the jungle and home to more than two million people, Manaus is by far the largest metropolis in the Amazon river basin. While there are sights and activities there to occupy your time, many use the newly formed city as a kicking-off point for trips ranging from jungle survival courses and tracking alligators at night to searching for giant water lilies and dolphin watching during the day. Be sure to check out the confluence of the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões rivers, where the warm, clear waters of the Negro run alongside (but don't mix with) the silt-filled, murky waters of the Solimões, creating a remarkable spectacle that stretches for miles before combining to form the lower Amazon River.

But experiencing this unique natural bounty doesn't mean you have to sleep in a mosquito-filled tent or on a beat-up riverboat. Tropical Hotel Manaus, for example, located near the beachfront, offers a large and beautiful pool area, plentiful dining options, and accessibility to both Manaus' cultural activities and all the adventure that lies just upriver.

For those wanting a less-traditional stay, there's the Amazon Jungle Palace, a floating boutique hotel just across the river from the city. There, you're surrounded by the jungles and riverfronts that brought you to the Amazon in the first place. We recommend reserving one of the more expensive rooms for its outdoor seating area, the perfect spot in which to relax and enjoy the beauty of the Amazon with a cold glass of Champagne in hand.

Those wanting the full river experience can climb aboard the Iberostar Grand Amazon, a river cruise ship with five-star amenities, which allows you to explore the Amazon without giving up any comfort. On-board facilities include world-class dining, spa treatments, on-ship entertainment, and activities. All around you is the best of the Amazon.

The city of Manaus, the largest in the Amazon basin, provides the perfect jumping-off point to explore the surrounding nature