

RIO DE JANEIRO GENERAL INFORMATION



Sitting on the southern shore of the magnificent Guanabara Bay, **Rio de Janeiro** has, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the most stunning settings in the world. As the second largest city in Brazil, with a population of over 6 million, Rio is a city of stunning architecture, abundant museums, and marvelous food. Rio is also home to 23 beaches, an almost continuous 73-km (45-mile) ribbon of sand. Extending for 20km along an alluvial strip, between an azure sea and forest-clad mountains, the city's

streets and buildings have been molded around the foothills of the mountain range that provides its backdrop, while out in the bay there are many rocky islands fringed with white sand.

In January 1502, the second exploratory expedition of the Portuguese, led by a captain by the name of Gaspar Lemos, reached Guanabara Bay. It is legend that he caught sight of what he thought that was a river, so he eventually named it Rio de Janeiro (the River of January). But it was not until 1565 that Estácio de Sá founded the municipality which he named São Sebastião do Rio de Janeiro, in honour of the then King of Portugal, Dom Sebastião.

Rio de Janeiro, known as Cidade Maravilhosa (Marvelous City), is the most popular destination of Brazil and an important trade center in South America with many large corporate offices situated here. The two main landmarks of the city are Morro do Pão de Açúcar, where it is possible to take a cable car and enjoy excellent views of the Atlantic Ocean and the Rio - Niteroi Bridge, which crosses Guanabara Bay. Another venue is the statue of Christ the Redeemer on Corcovado Mountain, recently declared as one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World, and from where you can enjoy a beautiful view of the city.

Climate

Rio enjoys a tropical climate due to the forests surrounding it. Most of the year, the climate is warm and humid with exceptions due to altitude, vegetation and closeness to the ocean. Occasionally temperatures can reach to a high of 40°C but mostly they hover around 30°C. Regions which are near the sea are somewhat cooler due to the ocean winds. Although the weather in Rio de Janeiro is similar throughout the year, temperatures do start to rise slightly in August, after the cooler summer. Readings average 19 to 24 degrees Celsius and continue to rise into August.

Language

Portuguese is the official language of Brazil, and is spoken by more than 99% of the population. Rio de Janeiro is the second largest city in the Portuguese speaking world. Minority languages include indigenous languages, and languages of more recent European and Asian immigrants.

Currency

The "Real" (pronounced ray-all) is the present-day currency of Brazil and is denoted with the sign R\$. The Real in recent years has become a stable currency, and is currently very strong against the US dollar and the Euro.

The current exchange rate is:

1 BRL = USD 0.45096

1 BRL = EUR 0.32767

Source: OANDA.com / 12.05.14

You can change currency at exchange counters, Bureau de Change, scattered throughout the city centre, and in banks, post offices and travel agencies. Banks generally offer the best rates.

Traveller Cheques are not a good option since they have high fees. If you have to change them, Citybank and HSBC will provide the service.

Local Time

There are three time zones in Brazil: UTC-4 in the western states, UTC-3 in the eastern states (and the official time of Brazil) and UTC-2 in the Atlantic islands.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil time is GMT/UTC -3:00 hours.



Voltage

Electrical sockets/outlets in Brazil usually supply electricity at between 110 and 120 volts AC. You will require a voltage converter and an adapter.

Cuisine

Brazilian cuisine is full of intense flavors, spices and variety with European and African influences. It varies greatly by region, reflecting the country's mix of native and immigrant populations, and its continental size as well. This has created a national cuisine marked by the preservation of regional differences.

Rice and beans are extremely popular dishes, considered basics at a dinner table. Feijoada is the national dish, a black-bean stew with beef and pork (plus rice, collard greens, and manioc flour). Churrasco is another favorite where waiters slice off huge hunks of barbecued beef, pork, and other meats, serving them with manioc and onions.



Visas

Please note that some countries require a visa for Brazil. Therefore please contact your local Embassy of Brazil.

Please note that all individuals are responsible for their own travel arrangements and visa matters