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ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



Chupacabras

Rio for Adrenaline Junkies

Rio de Janeiro, 1 Day

Table of contents:

- Guide Description 2
- Itinerary Overview 3
- Daily Itineraries 4
- Rio de Janeiro Snapshot 7

Guide Description



AUTHOR NOTE: With jungle-clad mountains jutting right out into crashing ocean waves, Rio is a city that offers no end of potential for adventure tourism. This one-day trip suggests ways to pack in as much white knuckle activity as possible into a tight schedule - we've even allowed time for eating, drinking and partying later on!

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Rio de Janeiro

DAY NOTE: You'll want to get up early to make sure you pack as much as possible into your adrenaline-charged day, so be the first down for breakfast at the hotel before heading out to catch some waves right in front of your accommodation at Arpoador, or further down the beach at Copacabana. If you don't have your own gear or are a surfing novice, ask at the hotel about lessons and board hire. After a few morning waves, rock climbers can head down to Urca and scale up to Morro do Urca, the smaller peak next to Sugar Loaf mountain. From here, climbers can make the rest of the ascent, and the descent, for free! Again, beginners can arrange guided climbs and equipment hire. Once you're back on solid ground, it's time to climb yet even higher above it - head over to Pedra Bonita to take a hangliding trip high above the city, before landing on the soft sands of Praia do Pepino. After all that activity, you'll deserve a good meal, so treat yourself to an all-you-can-eat feast at Porcao, the legendary churrascaria. Once you've eaten your fill, it's time for more thrills and spills in Lapa - grab a couple of cocktails at the street party before joining the hip hop, funk and dance music throng on the floor at the Club Six, always heaving on a Friday night.



Arpoador Inn

Perfect spot for sunseekers



Surfing in Rio

On the Crest of a Wave



Morro da Urca

Next stop – Sugar Loaf!



Tandem Hangliding

Birds' eye view of the city



Porcão

All the meat you can eat



Club Six

Lapa's hip hop haven

Day 1 - Rio de Janeiro

QUICK NOTE

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contact:

tel: +55 21 2523 0060
fax: +55 21 2511 5094
<http://www.arpoadorinn.com.br/>

location:

Rua Francisco Otaviano 177
Rio de Janeiro 22080-040

1 Arpoador Inn

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Rooms with sea views are more expensive, but well worth the indulgence if your budget can stretch to it.

DESCRIPTION: With a great location right on the beach at popular surf spot Arpoador, this small hotel offers fantastic value for money. Arpoador lies between the beaches of Copacabana and Ipanema, so beach bunnies will be spoilt for choice. The road in front of the hotel is completely closed to traffic, and guests eating at the hotel restaurant can enjoy their meals and drinks right on the sands. © NileGuide



Hotels.com

location:

Praça do Arpoador -
Ipanema, Rio de Janeiro - RJ,
22080-070, Brazil

2 Surfing in Rio

DESCRIPTION: Rio is blessed with more than its fair share of beaches, and the crashing waves make the city a favourite spot with surfers from across the world. While there is some good surf to be found at Praia do Arpoador, between Ipanema and Copacabana, it's necessary to head away from the best-known beaches to find the most impressive breaks and swells. Take a bus west of the city and explore the beaches of Sao Conrado, Barra da Tijuca, and Recreio, all of which can be easily reached by bus. There are a handful of companies offering lessons, equipment hire, and transport to farther-flung beaches such as Prainha and Grumari - favourite spots for local surfistas. Across the bay at Niteroi, there are yet more surf opportunities to be found, and you won't be battling it out for beach space with the tourist hordes.

© wcities.com

location:

Praia Vermelha
Rio de Janeiro 22290-270

3 Morro da Urca

DESCRIPTION: At just over 210 meters, Morro da Urca is the first stop for sightseers making the dramatic ascent to the top of Sugar Loaf mountain. While most people arrive here by the cable car that soars high above Praia Vermelha beach, taking in staggering views of the city, others choose the DIY approach. Seasoned climbers can frequently be seen scaling the sheer granite front of the mini-mountain, while others take the gentler option by taking the marked paths that lead from the ground up. If you choose to take this route, wear good walking shoes or sandals (flip flops are not recommended), and be prepared to sweat somewhat if you're making the ascent during the heat of the early afternoon. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: 21 2268 0565
fax: 21 2268 0565
www.justfly.com.br

location:

Pedra Bonita, Floresta da
Tijuca
Rio de Janeiro RJ

hours:

Call for details

Tandem Hangliding

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

For a bird's-eye view of Rio's beaches and mountains, check out Just Fly Rio (tel. 021/9985-7540 mobile, or 021/2268-0565; www.justfly.com.br). Flight instructor Paulo Celani has more than 20 years experience in this, so you know you're in safe hands.

DESCRIPTION: With a natural landscape as beautiful as Rio's, soaring above the city and enjoying a bird's eye view has to be the perfect way to take in the view. Unless you're scared of heights of course. For those with the stomach for it, tandem hangliding over Rio is one of the most exciting things you can do here, and an experience that will stick with you forever. No experience or skills are necessary, but just remember that once you start running to the edge of the cliff, you can't change your mind! You'll also have the chance to buy photos/DVD of your flight, so you will be able to astound your friends with the proof of your daredevil adventure. Prices are high but worth it. © NileGuide



Photo courtesy of Tandem Hangliding

contact:

tel: 55 21 3389 8989
http://www.porcao.com.br/

location:

Rua Barão da Torre, 218
Rio de Janeiro 22411-000

4 Porcão

DESCRIPTION: Don't be put off by the name, which means "big pig" in Portuguese, this legendary churrascaria caters to a well-heeled crowd. The decor is sophisticated, the ambience is relaxed, and the food is of the very highest quality. Waiters brandishing spits bring cuts of meat to your table until you can eat no more, while a buffet invites you to try excellent salads, sushi, pasta dishes, cheeses, breads, olives and countless other treats. © NileGuide



Porcao

contact:

tel: 55 21 2510 3230

<http://www.clubsix.com.br/>

location:

Rua das Marrecas 38, Lapa
Rio de Janeiro

hours:

Fr to Sa from 11:00 PM to
06:00 AM

5 Club Six

DESCRIPTION: In a huge building spread over three floors, Club Six opens very late at the weekends to offer hip hop, beats and Brazilian pop music to hordes of sweaty revellers.



Club Six

Rio de Janeiro Snapshot

Local Info

This sizzling city of over six million people is the second largest in Brazil. Tourists flock to the wealthy Zona Sul (South Zone), where the world-famous beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana host throngs of beautiful people all year round. A city of contrasts, Rio's working class North Zone is a far cry from the glamor of the beach areas, while the hillside favelas (shanty towns) are notorious the world over. But despite its social problems, Rio is a city that loves to party-- Rio Carnaval and New Year's in Rio are two of the world's biggest and most colorful celebrations-- and Rio moves to a constant musical beat. Once described as "The most sinful city every to be blessed by Christ," Rio goes about its business under the ever-watchful gaze of Christ the Redeemer (Corcovado), who towers above the city, embracing saints and sinners alike in his outstretched arms. The staggering natural beauty of the city is best appreciated from above, and a trip to the top of Corcovado mountain is a great way to take in a panoramic view of this most stunning of cities. The dizzying cable car ride up to the top of Sugar Loaf mountain is another tourist must-do, and provides another opportunity to take in the spectacular cityscape below. Beautiful people, beautiful landscapes, magical music and memorable moments: they are all part and parcel of a trip to Rio de Janeiro, the Cidade Maravilhosa (Marvelous City).

Centro

The city center is the financial and business heart of Rio, and is also home to most of the city's historic monuments and buildings. Centro is awash with excellent cultural centers, many of which are free of charge, and the crumbling colonial buildings are an attraction in themselves. Centro is also home to Lapa-- a major party district that throngs with revelers at the lively weekend street parties. In Lapa's historic center, around Rua do Lavradio and Avenida Mem de Sa, visitors will find handsome colonial buildings that now serve as bars, restaurants, and samba clubs. Centro's interesting museums and cultural centers make it a good rainy day option, and visitors should be sure to check out the Monumento Nacional aos Mortos da II Guerra Mundial, the Teatro Municipal, the

Museu Nacional de Belas Artes (National Fine Arts Museum), the Museu de Arte Moderna (Museum of Modern Art) and the Sambódromo, where the Carnaval parades take place every year.

Santa Teresa & Glória

High on a jungle-clad hillside, beautiful Santa Teresa is notable for its bohemian atmosphere as well as its beautiful mansions, its excellent restaurants and lively cultural scene. Awash with artists, musicians, writers, and assorted eccentrics, Santa (as it is affectionately known by locals) is best reached by the charming bonde, the little yellow tram that rattles its way along the cobble streets. Be sure to check out Parque das Ruínas, a reformed mansion home with terrific city views, and the adjoining Museu Chácara do Céu. Downhill from Santa Teresa lies Glória, a relaxed residential area that is home to one of the city's most attractive churches: the 18th-century Baroque Igreja de Nossa Senhora da Glória do Outeiro.

Flamengo & Catete

These residential areas benefit from being served by the city's efficient metro system, and hotel and hostel prices here compare favorably with the beach zones of Copacabana, Ipanema and Leblon. Flamengo's beach is pleasant, if not the city's finest, and the Burle Marx-designed Parque do Flamengo is an oasis of calm in this bustling city. Catete boasts some handsome historic buildings, good value restaurants, and tourist attractions such as the Folklore Museum and Museum of the Republic.

Laranjeiras & Cosme Velho

These leafy, largely residential areas are pleasant escapes from the hustle and bustle of the city center, and Laranjeiras in particular is becoming increasingly famous for its lively bar and restaurant scene. Pleasant pavement cafes are springing up beneath the orange trees, and some of the city's more interesting nightclubs can be found here. These two districts are located between Flamengo, Corcovado, and the Rebouças Tunnel. The Guanabara Palace, seat of the state government, is in Laranjeiras, while closer to the entrance of the tunnel, in Cosme Velho, are the colonial-style houses of the Largo do Boticário and the railway station for the train that goes up Corcovado mountain.

Botafogo

A relatively wealthy and largely residential suburb, Botafogo is a good bet for budget travelers heading to Rio thanks to its good hostel scene. Many of the hostels here, such as Tupiniquim, are housed in attractive colonial buildings, and prices compare very favorably with the tourist Meccas of Copacabana and Ipanema. While the neighborhood's own beach is not the cleanest or most popular in Rio, Botafogo's metro station puts it within a few minutes' reach of Rio's more celebrated sands. Handily located between the city center and the Zona Sul, Botafogo sits directly beneath the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue, and is home to a lively, relaxed bar scene and some highly regarded restaurants, such as Miam Miam. A handful of decent museums and some good shopping centers combine to make Botafogo a good base for a holiday in Rio.

Urca

Urca's main tourist draw is the legendary Sugar Loaf mountain, but it would be a shame to visit here without taking the time to explore a little further. The quiet streets are lined with some of the finest colonial buildings to be found anywhere in the city, and the little bay with its bobbing boats is a nice place to take in the view. Laid-back neighborhood bars largely cater to locals rather than a tourist crowd, and Praia Vermelha, the little beach right by Sugar Loaf, is a favorite spot for families.

Adventure tourists in Rio can try their hand at abseiling or climbing here, and the trail that runs around the base of Sugar Loaf makes a very pleasant short walk-- keep an eye out for monkeys in the trees overhead.

Copacabana & Leme

Possibly the most famous stretch of sand in the world, Copacabana Beach boasts over four kilometers of sands, crashing waves and the magnificent backdrop of Sugar Loaf mountain. Copacabana Beach is the spot for the biggest of Rio's New Year celebrations, and the neighborhood is awash with hotels and restaurants. However, the once-chic neighborhood has lost out to neighboring Ipanema in recent years, and the congested back streets, strip clubs and red light activity can make the neighborhood feel more than a little seedy at night. Although the beach is now

Rio de Janeiro Snapshot continued

floodlit after dark, it's still not a safe spot for late-night walks, although the many beach bars are generally trouble-free (you will be approached by a million and one hawkers, however, selling everything from sarongs and sunglasses to plastic miniatures of the Christ statue). Modern glass and chrome kiosks have recently replaced many of the traditional beach kiosks, and it's now possible to enjoy fine dining and champagne right on the sands. Like many spots in Rio, tourists should avoid flashing any valuables here, but with a little caution Copacabana can be a fascinating place to stay. For those with the budget for it, the legendary Copacabana Palace Hotel remains one of the most glamorous places to stay in Rio, and continues to attract visiting celebrities-- Tom Cruise, Madonna, Will Smith and the Rolling Stones being just a few of the famous names to have stayed here of late.

Ipanema

Together with neighboring Leblon, Ipanema is the destination of choice for chic beach-goers. The beach itself is packed year-round with beautiful Brazilian girls and boys, and this is the place to head for if you're looking for your own girl (or boy) from Ipanema. The neighborhood is home to countless upscale restaurants, shops and bars, and the elegant Fasano Rio hotel added some much needed glamor to the Ipanema hotel scene when it opened in 2007. You'll pay through the nose for a hotel room along Ipanema's beachfront, but there are some more reasonably priced options, including lots of hostels, to be found in the neighborhood's tree-lined back streets. Ipanema and Leblon are where the city's beautiful people come to party, so dress to impress if you're heading to bars and nightclubs here. Ipanema is also a key spot for gay visitors to Rio-- Rua Farma do Amoeda is packed with gay-friendly bars and restaurants, and the adjacent section of the beach is also earmarked for gay and lesbian beach-goers-- just look out for the large rainbow flag. Further along the sands, Posto Nove (lifeguard post 9) is the hangout for young, beautiful sun-seekers, while other sections of the beach are popular with families and sporty types. A small canal separates Ipanema and Leblon, a good spot for families, while Arpoador Beach connects Ipanema with Copacabana. With its crashing waves and jutting rocks,

Arpoador is a popular destination for surfers in Rio.

Lagoa

Surrounded by towering jungle-clad mountains, Rio's vast city lake is another of its picture-perfect spots. A seven-kilometer running, walking, and cycling track runs the perimeter of the lake, and free workout stations add to the appeal for athletic types. Families flock here on weekends, taking to the water aboard swan boats, while the many bars and restaurants dotted along the water's edge are wonderful places to relax with dinner and drinks as the sun sets over Rio. Throughout November and December, an enormous Christmas tree in the middle of the lake adds a sparkling centerpiece to Rio's Christmas lights.

Leblon

Home to some of Rio's most expensive apartments, upmarket Leblon is home to smart shopping centers and chic boutiques, elegant restaurants, bars and clubs, and a beautiful beach. There are informal bars and restaurants to be found at the Cobal do Leblon, while the calmer waters at this end of the beach make Leblon a popular spot with families. There are fewer hotel options here than in Ipanema and Copacabana, but Marina All-Suites is an excellent high-end option for those who have the budget for it.

Gávea and Jardim Botânico

These two leafy, upper class residential areas don't have much in the way of hotels and guest houses, but there are scores of good bars and restaurants to choose from, many of them largely undiscovered by tourists. Both neighborhoods are pleasant places for a day's exploring, and Gavea's planetarium is a major draw for families visiting Rio de Janeiro. In Jardim Botânico, meanwhile, the vast botanical gardens that lend the area its name are a leafy haven from the hectic pace of Rio's city life. Nearby Parque Lage is a perfect spot for a quiet picnic and a wander around the gardens.

São Conrado

Perfectly summing up the vast wealth disparity in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Conrado is an exclusive beach neighborhood packed with vastly expensive condominiums, yet it sits directly next door to Rocinha, Brazil's largest favela (slum). Surfers and hang-gliders populate the beach, while a designer shopping arcade sells

upscale brands to the wealthy. Meanwhile, favela residents are now seeing some improvements in their quality of life, with increased public services, more paved roads and improved sanitation. As a snapshot of the rich and poor in Rio, things couldn't get more explicit.

Barra da Tijuca & Recreio dos Bandeirantes

Jokingly referred to as the United States of Barra by some Rio locals, Barra da Tijuca feels like a city in itself. The wide avenues and towering apartment buildings of this wealthy neighborhood were modeled on Miami, and the sprawling shopping malls that dot the landscape feel more like the US than Rio de Janeiro. This is not the place to come for cultural activities, but if you're after a shopping splurge, Barra is the place. Barra Shopping is the largest shopping mall in Rio, packed with everything from mid-range chain stores to chic boutiques, and there are cinemas and bowling alleys to be found elsewhere in the area. Tellingly, Barra da Tijuca is where you will find the Rio de Janeiro branch of Hard Rock Cafe. Barra is also home to theme parks and a motor racing circuit, as well as a spectacular 15km beach that attracts tanned and toned locals. Nearby, Recreio is a more humble beach neighborhood, whose sands are popular with local surfers.

Floresta da Tijuca

A vast expanse of tropical rain forest in the middle of one of the world's major metropolises, the Floresta da Tijuca (Tijuca Forest) offers a great number of opportunities for hikes, climbs, and other outdoor activities. Natural pools and waterfalls, magnificent flora and fauna, and some spectacular views await the adventurous, but the sheer scale of the place makes it essential to come here with a guide or knowledgeable local. Attempts to explore the place by yourself are bound to end in tears, so ask at your hotel or hostel about trips to suit your tastes.

Zona Norte

Few holidaymakers in Rio will make the trip out to the city's North Zone, which is largely made up of residential apartment buildings and cinder block favelas. The Zona Norte is a long way, both literally and metaphorically, from the beautiful beach zones of the Zona Sul (South Zone), but there are some points of interest for tourists. The City's zoo, located in Sao Cristovao, is a

Rio de Janeiro Snapshot continued

great day out for families, while the Feira Nordestina (Northeastern Fair), also at Sao Cristovao, is a vast space dedicated to Northeastern culture and cuisine. Open during the daytime on weekdays, the fair opens its doors on Friday morning and doesn't close them again until Sunday evening, making it a great place to come and sample inexpensive and absolutely delicious food from Brazil's North, while taking in live forró music and dancing.

© NileGuide

Fun Facts

1. Interesting fact: when explorers arrived in Guanabara Bay on New Year's Day 1502, they mistook the bay for the mouth of a mighty river. Hence they called the place Rio de Janeiro- literally, 'River of January'.

2. Random fact: Funk music here bears no resemblance whatsoever to James Brown style funkiness. Carioca Funk is a style of music featuring lyrics shouted over tinny keyboards. Born in the city's vast favelas, Rio's baile funks (funk parties) are legendarily debauched. There are some socially conscious funksters out there making music with a positive message, but sex, drugs and gang violence remain the principal theme for most funk anthems.

3. Weird fact: The city's rich elite like to dress their pampered pets in shoes, hats, and even full outfits. Poodles are the most popular dogs in Rio high society, and some

have a different outfit for every day of the week.

4. Copacabana is one of the most densely populated places on the planet, with some 25,000 people per square meter. The majority of these inhabitants are squeezed into the myriad high rise apartments that dominate the neighborhood.

5. The state of Rio de Janeiro boasts more than 50 kilometers of beaches, with some of the best spots outside the city being located along the Costa Verde (Green Coast).

6. Brazilian football fact: The Maracanã Stadium holds the record for the largest attendance of any football (ok, soccer if you insist...) match in history. A record-smashing 200,000 fans turned out for the decisive match of the 1950 World Cup, only to see Brazil defeated by South American rivals Uruguay.

7. Carnival fact: Rio Carnival as we know it today is a far cry from the event's beginnings in 1641, when the Portuguese settlers celebrated Ash Wednesday with masked balls and sophisticated parties. Samba began to make its mark on the carnival festivities at the beginning of the 20th Century, with the first official Samba School created in 1928.

8. Fun Rio Carnival fact: The high entrance fee to the main carnival parades doesn't mean that cash-strapped travelers have to miss out on the carnival fun. Across the city, hundreds of street parties, or blocos,

take place over carnival season, featuring samba bands, dancing, and plenty of dancing.

9. Random Rio de Janeiro fact: see all those tall and attractive 'working girls' roaming the street? Many of them are not girls at all, but members of the city's large transvestite population.

10. Cultural Rio fact: The impressive Theatro Municipal, built in 1905 and located at the heart of Centro, was directly modelled on the Paris Opera House in a bid to replicate the sophistication of the French capital.

11. Interesting fact: Contrary to popular belief, the favelas of Rio de Janeiro are not solely populated by bandits and drug dealers. Some 20 per cent of Rio's residents live in the favelas, and the majority hold down regular jobs- security workers, cleaners, bar staff, restaurant workers...many of these hardworking individuals are living in these so-called dens of sin and vice.

12. Motels in Rio do not offer basic but affordable family accommodation. Rather, they are rendezvous points for amorous couples. While the most basic are rather unappealing, the most lavish feature everything from jacuzzis and spas to dance floors complete with dry ice machines. Hotel Love Time and Sinless are just a couple of the less than subtle names given to these hotels of lurve.

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