

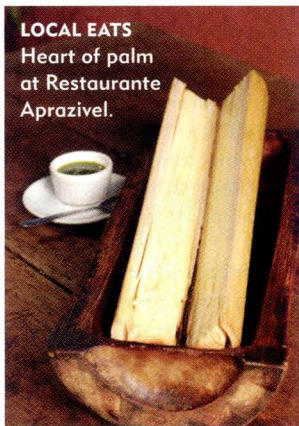
PERFECT PERCH
Marina All Suites hotel
overlooks Leblon Beach,
one of Rio's best.

Rio

Brazil's beachside city is a seductive playground year-round

LOCAL EATS

Heart of palm
at Restaurante
Aprazivel.



PERHAPS THE MOST unusual bit of trivia surrounding Rio de Janeiro is the fact that its name is a mistake. The river (*rio*) that Portuguese sailors thought they discovered in January (*Janeiro*) of 1502 was actually just a bay. But that's a minor error and certainly nothing to hold against this gorgeous Brazilian city. With its vibrant mix of cosmopolitan verve and lush natural surroundings, Rio always exudes a laid-back vibe.

Blessed with a sun-kissed climate, the city is also constantly abuzz, whether from a fashion show, a samba parade, a soccer match or Carnaval. So when

you find yourself seduced by the city's backdrop, including that infamous bay, and begin swaying to the bossa nova rhythms, just blame it on Rio.

DOING THE TOWN

A lengthy coastline frames the southeastern edge of the city with sandy beaches and easy access to scuba diving, snorkeling and fishing. If you can pull yourself away from the sand, visit Corcovado to see **Christ the Redeemer**. This 125-foot statue is one of the most iconic images in all of South America,

and visitors come to its base for spectacular 360-degree views. A cable car takes people up nearby **Sugar Loaf Mountain** to a height of 1,320 feet to look out over the Atlantic. Back down on the ground, open-air Jeeps tour **Tijuca National Park**. With roughly 50 square miles, Tijuca is the world's largest urban forest. Chic high-end boutiques abound in Rio, but a different kind of shopping excursion awaits at Ipanema's **Hippie Fair**. This outdoor bazaar has hundreds of artists selling their goods every Sunday.

DINING OUT

The options are as diverse as the rest of Rio's offerings. **Restaurante Aprazivel** (011-55-21/25-08-91-74; aprazivel.com.br) features a garden setting with brilliant city views. The artisanal Brazilian cuisine includes seafood, fried turnovers and salads. **Porcão** (011-55-21/33-89-89-89;

porcao.com.br) is as Brazilian as it gets: At this *churrascaria*—as much a gastronomic event as it is a restaurant—waiters constantly circulate with an array of succulent grilled meats to slice right onto your plate. For more intimate fine dining, **Olympe** (011-55-21/25-39-45-42; claudetroisgros.com.br/olymp.htm) is an ideal setting for the epicurean delights from renowned chef-owner Claude Troisgros. Dishes like salted cod with white truffle oil have helped pioneer contemporary Brazilian cuisine. Less formal but still wonderful is **Celeiro** (011-55-21/22-74-78-43; celeiroculinaria.com.br), a breezy sidewalk café with fresh organic fare.

WHERE TO STAY

There is no shortage of modern oceanfront hotels in Rio. **Marina All Suites**, for instance, is a boutique property located in the affluent Leblon neighborhood. Up the coast is **Ipanema Plaza**, a stylish hotel that is a great home base for dynamic nightlife. **Porto Bay Rio Internacional Hotel**, in the trendy Copacabana neighborhood, is near many open-air cafés. **D**



DETAILS

➤ **Ipanema Plaza**
011-55-21/25-51-04-88
ipanemaplazahotel.com
From \$177

➤ **Marina All Suites**
011-55-21/21-72-10-01
marinaallsuites.com.br
From \$350

➤ **Porto Bay Rio Internacional Hotel**
011-55-21/25-46-80-00
riointernational.com.br
From \$196

➤ **Rio Convention & Visitors Bureau**
rioconventionbureau.com.br

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