



# *Flying down to* **Rio**

*It is admittedly a long way to go for a long weekend, but I highly recommend Rio de Janeiro as a short break destination.*

It offers a spectacular city and beach break in one sunny (hopefully!) package. I recently returned to Rio five years after my first visit as a student, and this time took a couple of friends to show off one of my favourite places. What follows are my suggestions of the must-see sights in a must-see city.

#### Daytime

- Corcovado ("hunchback") is the granite peak topped with the 38 metre statue of Christ. Take the cog railway up the tropical sides of the hill, then climb the stairs (escalators not yet completed!) for a breathtaking picture postcard view of the city.

*Cariocas, the residents of Rio, say that God created the world in 6 days, the seventh he devoted to Rio. Carolyn Foreman, Audley's Latin America Programme Manager, believes they may have a point.*

- Wander through the downtown area – a walk with a knowledgeable guide will reveal many secrets in streets that are an interesting mix of high rise and colonial.
- Take the open-sided tram to the bohemian district of Santa Teresa (the old barrio of Ronnie Biggs), browse the galleries and peer into the crumbling colonial mansions.

#### Sunset

- Enjoy the views of Rio from the top of Sugar Loaf mountain, and see why it really is the most beautiful city in the world. The city was bathed in a pink glow when I was there - unforgettable.

## Nighttime

- Perched on a rocky promontory across the bay from Rio is the Museum of Contemporary Art. The voluptuous building is best viewed when lit up at night, the exhibitions inside change regularly.
- Eating and drinking – a pleasure in a city of good value food and lively restaurants. Tuck into huge steaks and fine fish dishes, and make the most of having hundreds of varieties of freshly squeezed and blended fruit juices available for less than 50p.
- Join the crowds and share the passion at a floodlit match in the Maracana, the largest football stadium in the world. You do not have to be a football fan to marvel at the spectacle.

## Adventure

- The truly adventurous can hang-glide off the granite peak of Pedra Bonita, soaring over the city for a birds-eye view before landing on the golden sand of Sao Conrado beach.
- Why take the cable car (think of what happened to James Bond in Moonraker!) when you could climb

to the top of the Sugar Loaf mountain?

- Explore the dark and steamy trails in Tijuca, the world's only urban rainforest.



## Relaxation

- Where better to relax than on the world's most famous beaches? Copacabana and Ipanema have miles of golden sands where you can soak up the sun and the atmosphere.

## Hotels

- Range from the art-deco glamour of the Copacabana Palace to simple hotels a few blocks back from the main beaches, whatever your

preference or budget there's a hotel to suit you.

## More time

- If you do have more time than a long weekend then the state of Rio has mountain retreats, colonial towns and chic resorts to tempt you. And if you wish to see even more then the Amazon, Iguacu Falls and Salvador are just three of the places that you should visit. However, after just a long weekend we returned home tanned, relaxed, and unable to stop humming the Girl from Ipanema. Audley Travel can arrange a trip to Brazil as short or as long as you like, call us on 01869 276210.

## Getting there

- Fly down to Rio in the comfort of VARIG's brand new B-777s, complete with head and foot rests and seat-back entertainment. VARIG offer a daily service from London Heathrow, the overnight flight is just over 13 hours but the time difference is only 3 hours, so there shouldn't be much jet lag. You arrive in the morning and can be standing at Christ's feet by lunchtime!