

EXPLORE!

Rio and Recife Carnivals

9 days

Brazil - Trip code RRC



Rio and Recife Carnivals

Brazil, the largest country in Latin America, presents us with a festival experience like no other as the whole country becomes alive in February for Carnival season. This short break takes in the more traditional street parades in the north eastern cities of Recife and Olinda before travelling to Rio for the glitz and glamour of the famous Rio Carnival, and its highlight the winners' parade at the Sambadrome. As well as soaking up the incredible carnival atmosphere there is plenty of time to explore the cobbled streets of Old Recife, stand beneath Rio's iconic Christ the Redeemer Statue and wander the cobbled streets of the artists' district, Santa Teresa.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Recife and Olinda** - Explore these quaint Portuguese-influenced cities and join locals celebrating the Night of the Silent drums, in memory of their African ancestors
- ★ **Rio** - Take the train up Corcovado Mountain to stand beneath the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue
- ★ **Blocos** - Join locals dancing in the streets at a typical bloco (street) party, and sample the traditional drink - the caipirinha
- ★ **Samba time** - Celebrate Mardi Gras in true Brazilian style with tickets to the Rio winner's parade in the Sambadrome!

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Recife

Our trip begins today in Recife, a city founded during the early colonisation of Brazil. The city is often referred to as the 'Brazilian Venice' due to the channels of the Capibaribe and Beberibe Rivers that join here before flowing in to the Atlantic. Depending on your arrival time there may be time for some personal exploration of the city or to relax on the beach after your flight.



Accommodation: Best Western Manibu (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Experience the first taste of Carnival on the cobbled streets of Olinda

After breakfast today our Explore Leader will brief us about the trip ahead, and we will have some free time in the morning to relax on the beach or take in the sights of the city. We will need this preparation time as we spend the rest of the day enjoying the parties and parades of the carnival period. In the afternoon we make our way over to Olinda, a beautiful city filled with Portuguese churches and a convent which has earned the city UNESCO World Heritage Site status. The carnivals of Olinda and Recife are said to be some of the most traditional in Brazil, and one of Olinda's specialities are the giant paper-mache statues of folklore legends, which are paraded through the town, swaying to the sounds of frevo music. These statues are known as bonecos and some are almost 3 metres in height. Later in the evening we head to the carnival in Recife Antigo (the Old Town), where we listen to the vibrant, rhythmic music played by the numerous parading bands, their dancers swirling around them. We will be standing during the carnival festivities and it can get very busy so wear comfortable shoes! There are plenty of side streets where we can find a café to take a break from the action which typically ends at midnight.



Accommodation: Best Western Manibu (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Walking tour of Recife; ceremony of the Night of the Silent Drums

Today we will head out on a walking tour of Recife. We will start off by visiting Republic Square and the Capela Dourada, also known as the Golden Chapel, before walking around the historic fortifications at Forte das Cinco Pontas. Our exact plan will be decided on the day because at carnival time there will be road closures to allow for the impromptu 'blocos' and planned parades. Blocos are relaxed street parties where friends and family gather, play music and dance. In Recife the music is typically frevo, a mix of European, African and Brazilian beats said to make people move their feet as if the ground were boiling! In the afternoon there will be some free time to relax before we head out to the Praca Terco to watch the traditional ceremony of the Noite dos Tambores Silenciosos - the 'Night of the Silent Drums'. This special carnival event celebrates African heritage and pays tribute to the many slaves who suffered in colonial Brazil, as over 20 maracatu bands (maracatu is a rhythm of african origin, typical to this area), take centre stage. Just as midnight approaches, the drums reach a fevered pitch only to fall silent for several minutes in honour of those slaves who died. The street lights are turned off, the roads plunged into darkness, and prayers and hymns begin. After this period of calm, the rhythmic drumming starts once again and launches a party that continues through the night.



Accommodation: Best Western Manibu (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Discover the pulsating rhythms of the Old Recife Carnival

We have a free morning planned to allow us to sleep in after last night's parade or to relax at the beach or sit in one of Recife's many cafes. In the afternoon and evening today we spend our time enjoying the street parades of Recife Antigo, listening to more of the pulsating sounds of the frevo and samba music, watching the carnival dancers along the busy streets and squares. When it comes to sounds, rhythms and dance, no other carnival compares to Recife; we will hear a fusion of many different musical styles, from frevo and maracatu to coco, samba and mangubeat, as well as the traditional and highly rhythmic 'caboclinho' folk dance, which is derived from the amerindian and african influences in the area. Spectacles are on show in every corner of the old town, with hundreds of artists performing in the streets.



Accommodation: Best Western Manibu (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Fly to Rio; explore the Copacabana neighbourhood

Today we say goodbye to Recife and take a flight to Rio de Janeiro. On arrival we transfer to our hotel which is located close to the famous Copacabana Beach. The afternoon is free to relax on the beach, or get to know the Copacabana neighbourhood.



Accommodation: Acapulco Copacabana Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Take in the views from Sugar Loaf Mountain

We have a free morning to explore Rio, and in the late afternoon we will take the cable car up to the Pao de Acucar - Sugar Loaf Mountain, where we will have great views over Guanabara Bay and a 360 degree view of Rio de Janeiro. After soaking up the view we will take the cable car back to ground level and return to our hotel.



Accommodation: Acapulco Copacabana Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Stand beneath the iconic Christ the Redeemer statue

The morning is again left at leisure. If you don't want to sleep in following the activities of the last week, there are plenty of cafes close to the hotel or take a stroll along the famous Copacabana Beach. There is a walking and cycle path which runs the length of Rio's beaches, from Leme to Bahia de Tijuca and whilst you might not want to walk the entire 42 kilometres it is worth joining the locals who use this path as part of their exercise routine each day. This morning there are also some 'blocos' (street parties) taking place in the Copacabana and Ipanema areas, which will give us our first taste of Rio's carnival atmosphere. After lunch we ride on the Corcovado rack railway from Cosme Velho to the top of Corcovado Mountain, home to the country's most famous monument, the iconic Christ the Redeemer. Recently named as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World the statue is 38 metres tall and the open arms stretch 28 metres wide. The statue looks out towards Pao de Acucar (Sugar Loaf) and offers incredible views over the city, the forested hills of Tijuca National Park and beaches that make up this incredible city. This attraction is busy at all times but even more so around carnival time when many people travel to Rio to enjoy the festivities, so be prepared for this and we may have to wait to take the train up - they depart every 30 minutes. Tonight we have the option to visit a typical churrascaria, a Brazilian BBQ. This is totally different to the BBQs we are used to at home and it's wise to come hungry. Chefs will bring out different cuts of meat throughout the evening and you can pick and choose which you fancy trying. Cuts such as picanha (top sirloin) and rib eye are cooked over an open flame and dramatically sliced from large skewers at the table. Salad and pasta items are also available but the focus is definitely on the meat dishes. We can also take the opportunity to sample the classic Brazilian cocktail, caipirinha. The drink is based on cachaça, a spirit made from sugar cane, and mixed with lime and sugar.



Accommodation: Acapulco Copacabana Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Stroll through the artists district, Santa Teresa; watch 20000 samba dancers perform at the Sambadrome

Today we take a walking tour through the cobbled streets of Santa Teresa. This area of the city was popular with wealthy coffee plantation owners in the late 19th century and these days is home to artists, writers and musicians who have opened their studios in the faded mansions. We'll stroll through the streets and stop to see the Lapa Arches, a roman style aqueduct that originally brought water to the city centre before being turned in to a route for the Bonde, Rio's original streetcar tram. The afternoon is free for you to further explore Santa Teresa on your own or make your way back to Copacabana for a spot of shopping or time to relax on the beach. In the evening we head over to the Sambadrome to watch the pinnacle of Rio's carnival season, the Winners Parade. Each year Rio's Samba Schools compete to win the prestigious title of Best Samba School, and this final night is the best of the best - the top 6 schools performing their winning routines, until the final winning performance. During the previous week, the schools have been judged over two nights in the Sambadrome - they have 87 minutes each to make their way along the sambadrome parade, which is 1km long. If the performance is too short or too long, even by a minute, then the school is docked valuable points, as well as being judged on music, choreography and costumes, which the schools design and create themselves. The competition is fierce, and tonight will showcase the very top schools. Each Samba school has between 3000 and 5000 performers, including 500 drummers! The scale of the parades is incredible. The parade runs from 9pm to approximately 4.00am. After each school performs there is a gap in between each for sweepers to clear the route - sometimes the sweepers are known to give excellent samba performances too! We will have seats reserved in the grandstand of Sector 11, which is close to the end of the parade route. There will be the option to return to the hotel at approximately 1am if you prefer not to stay for the whole night but we recommend resting up during the day because this promises to be one of the highlights of your carnival experience!



Accommodation: Acapulco Copacabana Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 9 - Visit the Botanical Gardens; trip ends in Rio

On our final morning in Rio we visit the interesting botanical gardens and discover some of Brazil's native fauna. Our trip ends after this visit. Many of the flight options depart from Rio late in the evening and we will arrange shared day rooms to allow you to store your belongings safely and freshen up before your journey home.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

Rio Carnival is one of the world's most famous events and this trip offers a chance to watch the thousands of winning performers that have been through the grueling process of competing for the title of the Best Samba School in Rio as well as watching a more traditional version of carnival in Recife and Olinda. This itinerary is graded as Full On as there are several late nights and the winners' parade at the Sambadrome goes on all night, we've factored in plenty of free time on most days to allow you to catch up on sleep or just relax and watch the locals getting in to the carnival spirit.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 8
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus
Flight



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

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Climate

As befits such a large landmass, there are several distinct regional variations. Rio's and Paraty's average maximum is 25°C May-October, the rains falling December to March. On this tour, rain should be expected at some time - and if travelling in July and August, temperatures will be cool at night in the area around Iguacu.

Time difference to GMT

-3

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Predominantly Roman Catholic.

Language

Spanish is the main language throughout this region, along with a number of indigenous dialects, of which Quechua, Aymara, Quichua and Guarani are the most popular. In Brazil Portuguese is the main language, with Spanish, English and French also being spoken.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Rio de Janeiro - Churrascaria BBQ dinner \$28 (not including drinks); cocktail making class \$63

Clothing

Brazilians are typically very relaxed so wear whatever you feel comfortable in. During the daytime temperatures will be hot, around 30-35 degrees centigrade so cool, cotton clothing is best. At night the temperature drops but not by much, you are still likely to be comfortable in shorts and a t-shirt at 3am! Flip flops are the footwear of choice in Brazil but during the carnival parades it is wise to wear comfortable shoes as we will be standing and dancing for long periods of time.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Any suitcase, rucksack or holdall will be suitable for this trip. The domestic flight from Recife has a luggage allowance of 20kgs for check in bag (one bag maximum) and 5kgs for hand luggage.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 30 for tipping.

Country Information

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Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£10

Dinner price

£17

Beer price

£2.1

Water price

£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Real.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry all your funds in US cash NOT Sterling or Travellers Cheques which are more difficult to exchange. We recommend to take a minimum of US\$400-\$500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations. Notes should be in good condition otherwise they might be difficult to exchange.

Where To Exchange

Your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Available in Major towns. Always have some cash as back-up as they are not always reliable

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a 10% service charge

Travellers Cheques

Travellers Cheques can be awkward or expensive to change

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Flight

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

In Recife we stay close to the old part of town where most of the carnival parades take place. The hotel is walking distance from the beach and gives plenty of option to explore on your own during free time or return to the hotel at any point during the carnival parades. In Rio we stay in Copacabana, a few blocks away from the famous beachfront. There are shops, cafes and bars close by and on the beach there are small 'kioskos' selling cold drinks and ice creams as well as hiring out deck chairs if you want to relax on the beach for a few hours.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click here.

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click here

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Brazil: Visas are not required for UK citizens. They are, however, required for Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and US citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure. USA: (including those in transit) Citizens of the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and passport holders from several EU countries can enter the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - where you apply for an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorisation), which applies if you enter the country by sea or by air. This must be done on line - <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov> no later than 72 hours prior to travel. Travellers who have not registered before their trip are likely be refused boarding. You must have an electronic passport with a digital chip containing biometric information about the passport owner. UK passports which are biometric feature a small gold symbol (camera) at the bottom of the front cover. If you have visited

Iraq, Syria, Iran or Sudan since 2011 or are dual nationals of these countries, you cannot travel with an ESTA and instead you will need to apply for a visa from the nearest US Embassy or Consulate. If you are unable to provide a valid visa before boarding flights to the US, or entering via another method, you may not be permitted to travel. Please note for your ESTA application you will be required to supply Point of Contact information. Explore's USA contact information will be listed on your final documentation which you will receive approximately 3-4 weeks before departure. If you are leaving for the USA before this, please call the Explore team to get this information. (Not necessary if in transit) For further information please check out the US embassy website. Visa applications - <http://london.usembassy.gov/niv/apply.htm>

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. Please note many countries in

Central America, South America and the Caribbean require a yellow fever vaccination certificates if travelling from infected areas. A detailed list of these countries can be found on the NaTHNaC website - <http://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>. Also on the NaTHNaC site there is a list of Countries (and specific areas within a country) which are at risk of infection and a vaccination is therefore recommended.. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
