

# João's and Fede's Rio Tips

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# 1 What to do

- Christ the Redeemer (*Cristo Redentor*).
  - You know it, you've seen it, now you must go. The views from up there are absolutely breathtaking. The best way to go up is to take the train. When going up, sit on the right side for the best views. It is possible to hike all the way up. I do *not* recommend it. There have been some reports of the trail not being very safe these days.
- Sugarloaf (*Pão de Açúcar*)
  - Another very famous landmark. My favourite views of the city. Though lower than *Corcovado* (the mountain where *Cristo* is), I like the vantage point better. After your visit, go to [Bar Urca](#).
- Helicopter tour.
  - A super fun way to see the city. We recommend [RioCopter](#). We have done their tours twice and loved it both times. Fede loves the moment when the helicopter goes around the Christ statue, and you get to see the city from its viewpoint.
- [Jardim Botânico](#).
  - Rio's botanical garden. A lovely place for a leisurely stroll. They have a green house full of *bromélias*, it's beautiful.
- [Real Gabinete Português de Leitura](#).
  - A stunning reading room dating from the mid 1800s. Often appears in lists of the most beautiful libraries in the world. You can pair a visit to the *Gabinete* with a visit to other historical buildings in the area, like the *Teatro Municipal* (Municipal Theatre) and the *Biblioteca Nacional* (National Library). It might be a good idea to search for a tour of historical downtown Rio, though my personal highlight would be the *Gabinete*. After visiting the *Gabinete*, you may also stop at *Confeitaria Colombo* for a coffee and a bite.
- [Escadaria Selaron](#).
  - Tall stairs with colorful tiles. A popular touristic spot.
- [Maracanã](#).

- The temple of football. Do attend a match if you can get tickets (a *Flamengo* match, please), or book the stadium tour.
- Samba.
  - There are, very roughly speaking, two types of samba. There are the super-produced competitive parades at the *Sambódromo* and a more traditional instance (*samba de raiz*, *samba de roda*). You might have seen the former. I am much more into the latter. For a very light introduction, you may go to [Rio Scenarium](#). Another good spot for an introduction is [Carioca da Gema](#). If you wanna jump into the deep end, you can go [Vaca Atolada](#) or [Pedra do Sal](#).
- Beaches
  - Leblon
    - \* Where I'd go to the beach, because it's wonderful and where I grew up. The best spot is at or around the *Paraíso do Leblon* stall.
  - Ipanema
    - \* Of *Girl from Ipanema* fame. Maybe the best beach in the South zone. The best spot: between the Garcia D'ávila and Joana Angélica streets.
  - Copacabana
    - \* I mention because of how famous it is. I would rather go to Leblon or Ipanema.
  - Prainha
    - \* Far from the South Zone, but absolutely gorgeous. It is a natural reserve, and it shows. The waves are a bit more aggressive here, and the beach is popular with surfers. But you can still enjoy even if you don't surf, as the waves break fairly far out. If you're driving, go early in the morning, as parking is scarce. Go to [Bira](#) for lunch.
  - Grumari
    - \* Next to Prainha, after a hill. Also a natural reserve and beautiful. Much longer than *Prainha*, so you can come here if *Prainha* is full or you can't find a parking space (this is not meant to imply that Prainha is better, they are different but equally beautiful.) The recommendation to go to [Bira](#) for lunch applies to this one too.

## 2 Where to Eat

- [O Caranguejo](#)
  - Traditional seafood restaurant. Drinks some chopp (light unpasteurized beer) and have some pastéis. For main, try the moqueca, a traditional fish stew. Their pirão is one of the best.
- [Jobi](#)
  - A classic bar in Leblon. Have more chopp, perhaps a caipirinha, bolinhos de bacalhau, maybe the carne seca. We love this place!
- [Rainha](#)
  - A more modern take on the classic Carioca/Portuguese bar. All of the food is great, you can go for a couple of drinks and a snack or a full meal.
- [Boteco Princesa](#)
  - Owned by the same group that runs Rainha. Slightly closer to a traditional *boteco*. They make a great *carne assada* and the octopus is delicious.
- [Bracarense](#)
  - There you go, a traditional *boteco*.
- [Ocyá](#)
  - Seafood, but with a spin. They age most of their fish, and it's delicious. They have two branches, one is Leblon and another in Itanhangá. We recommend the latter. It will take you to a different part of town, and you have to take a brief boat ride in a small canal to get to the restaurant, which makes for a fun experience.
- [Sardinha Taberna Portuguesa](#)
  - A small bar/restaurant for Portuguese food.
- [Ruda](#)
  - More modern, cheffy, Brazilian food. It is wonderful!

- [Aprazível](#)
  - Will take you to the very top of Santa Teresa, an artsy neighborhood that is definitely worth a visit (it will appear in this list again soon!). The views are fantastic. The food is a mix of Northern and Northeastern. Do not miss the *palmito*!
- [Majórica.](#)
  - Finally, a meat restaurant! This place has been around for a while, it's a classic. They grill all of their meat over charcoal. Get the *picanha* and be happy.
- [Adega da Velha](#)
  - A *boteco* in Botafogo that makes wonderful Northeastern food.
- [Bar do Mineiro](#)
  - A lovely restaurant in Santa Teresa for food from *Minas Gerais*. Get the *tutu*!
- [Academia da Cachaça](#)
  - Well, the name says it all. They have a massive selection of *cachaça* and the food is also great. My favourite is the *arrumadinho de carne de sol desfiada*. Their *feijoada* is also excellent, one of the best really.
- [Da Casa da Táta](#)
  - *The* place for breakfast, in my opinion. Absolutely the best cakes in the entire world.
- [Empório Jardim](#)
  - They have many branches, I'd go to the one in Jardim Botânico. The best *pão de queijo*. Great for breakfast or brunch.
- [Sud, O Pássaro Verde](#)
  - An outstanding restaurant. They use an old-school clay oven, iirc, and it shows.
- [Grado](#)

- An excellent Italian restaurant, in case that's what you want (but really, there's pasta everywhere).
- [Plage Café](#)
  - Good for a coffee and a snack or a light lunch. The food is not that great, but the location is gorgeous, inside Parque Lage and set in the courtyard of a beautiful historical building.
- [Braseiro da Gávea](#)
  - Another place for meat and traditional dishes. Have the *picanha*, *linguiça* and *pão de alho*.
- [Bira](#)
  - A rustic seafood restaurant in the west part of the city. The food is delicious and the views are beautiful. A reservation is a must. Get the *pastel de siri*, the *moqueca* and the *pirão*. I said *O Caranguejo* makes one of the best *pirão*. Bira might make the very best. The restaurant is pretty far from the South Zone, where you will likely be staying. You should pair a visit to Bira with a beach day at *Prainha* or *Grumari*.
- [Bar Urca](#)
  - A classic bar close to the [Sugarloaf](#). Grab a cold beer and some snacks, bring it all to the waterfront (the *Mureta da Urca*) and enjoy the views.
- [BB Lanches](#).
  - You will see many juice bars in Rio. They are most definitely not a 2025 Instagram and kale juice led fad. They've always been around. BB Lanches is my favourite. This is the place to get *açaí* (with granola and banana!), any juice you can concoct (I go for tangerine, lime, and ginger), and eat their excellent and somewhat unusual *pastel de carne*.
- Street fairs.
  - Street fairs are wonderful in Rio. They sell fresh fish, meat, veggies, and more fruits than you knew existed. Grab a *pastel* (is this the most used word in this document?) and *caldo de cana* (pressed sugarcane, very sweet as you can imagine) and go for a

stroll. The vendors will offer you to taste their fruit, which you can and should accept. You do not have to buy from them. I usually walk around, try fruit from many vendors, and then go back to whomever I liked best and buy from them. Prices are relatively high, but so is quality. I go to the *Nossa Senhora da Paz* street fair in Ipanema, which happens on Fridays.

## If you want to splurge

- [Oro](#)
  - Two Michelin stars. Great value for money relative to what you can get in the US or Europe. We recommend you go there towards the end of your trip so you understand what they are doing.