

RIO'S CARNIVAL & COLONIAL TREASURES TOUR

Combine Carnival in Rio & the Colonial Brazil Gold Route

9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS

Arrive in Rio for Carnival's Winner's Parade and combine it with the gems of the colonial hinterland of Rio: The Rio de Janeiro "Gold Route". It traces the route from Brazil's gold mines to the important towns and ports where the gold was shipped to the Old World. Visit Ouro Preto, a city in the Atlantic Rainforest that was a hub for gold miners. Also see the port of Paraty, whose cobblestone streets encircle many a colonial mansion. Also see São João del Rei, Tiradentes, and other gold mining towns with unique architecture and beautiful rainforest scenery. The Carnival's Winners Parade, which is included in this tour package is when all the champion samba schools from the previous days of the Carnival festival show off their costumes, music and dancing for one grand finale performance. It's a must-see show!

THIS TOUR INCLUDES:

- 9 days/ 8 nights in Brazil
- All Breakfasts
- All Transfers
- English speaking Tour Guides

HIGHLIGHTS

- Rio Carnival Winner's Parade
- Sugar Loaf Mountain
- Corcovado Mountain and the Christ the Redeemer Statue
- UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Paraty & Ouro Preto
- Train ride to Tiradentes
- Visit to São João del Rei
- Visit to a Gold Mine in Mariana
- Schooner Excursion through the bays of Paraty

FROM
\$ 3440
per person

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Day 1

ARRIVE IN RIO DE JANEIRO

Arrive today in Rio de Janeiro, a city of stunning natural beauty, nestled between the Atlantic Rainforest-covered hills and the dazzling waters of Guanabara Bay. Rio de Janeiro has been nicknamed the "Marvelous City," and on this Rio Carnival & Gold Route tour, you'll have the opportunity to find out why.

Your tour guide will greet you at the airport or port and take you to your hotel on Copacabana Beach. Famous for its wide sidewalks, high-rise hotels, warm waters and white sandy beaches, Copacabana shouldn't be missed. Next door is the world-renowned Ipanema Beach. Go for a stroll along the boardwalk or take a dive in the rooftop swimming pool of your hotel.

In the evening, sip on a complimentary *caipirinha*, a typical Brazilian cocktail while enjoying *rodizio* buffet dinner.



Day 2

SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN, RIO CITY TOUR, & RIO CARNIVAL PARADE

Ascend Sugarloaf Mountain this morning, a granite peak that overhangs Guanabara Bay and offers panoramic views of the city. Ride to the top of Sugarloaf by cable car. Peer out of the gondola's wide windows to soak up the views of the city, forests and bay from all angles.

Afterward, your guide will show you some of the historic sites and beaches of Rio de Janeiro. Learn about how the prince of Portugal broke away from the royal family, naming himself Emperor of Brazil and declaring independence from Portugal.

In the evening, your guide will escort you to the Sambadrome Stadium to watch the Rio Carnival Champion's Parade. The six best samba schools perform in a "grand finale" parade, with over 3000 dancers and musicians dressed in colorful, vibrant costumes. Soak up the atmosphere, shake your hips and clap your hands in time with the beat at this unforgettable event.



Day 3

CHRIST THE REDEEMER STATUE & CORCOVADO MOUNTAIN TOUR

Visit the impressive Christ the Redeemer statue which stands and welcomes newcomers into the city with outstretched arms. Take a tour to the top of Corcovado via the *trenzinho* cogwheel railway to see the iconic statue, a world-renowned icon that is indicative of the openness and kindness of *Cariocas*, the residents of Rio de Janeiro.

The rest of the day is free for exploring the city. Go shopping, sunbathe or swim at the beaches, or take an optional tour. Or relax in the green open spaces of the Botanical Gardens if an escape from the city is needed. After sunset, there's a choice to see a dinner and samba dance show or perhaps sit down and enjoy a meal at one of the many restaurants showcasing authentic Brazilian cuisine.



Day 4

FREE MORNING IN RIO DE JANEIRO & TRANSFER TO PARATY

Today there's the option of a free day or take one of several city tours instead. A 4x4 off-road trip tour of the Tijuca Forest is perfect for adventurous travelers that yearn to get out of the city. There's also a tour of the green and leafy Botanical Gardens, or on Sundays, hunt for a bargain at the weekly street fair known as the Hippie Market.

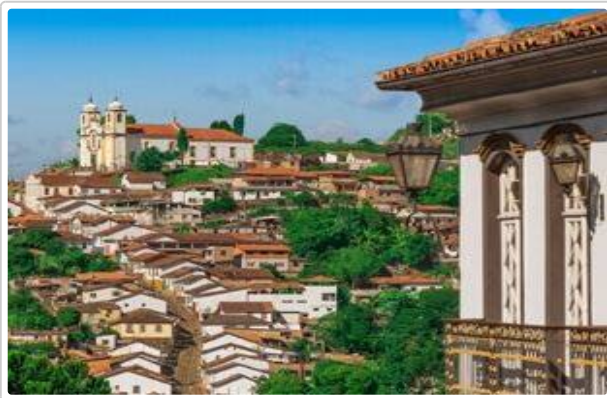
After lunch, transfer to the coastal city of Paraty. Travel along the coastline of Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest region and look up to view the scenic cliffs. Paraty features cobblestone streets, a protected port with calm waters, and colonial-era mansions and churches. End the tour at the harbor, the site where gold was loaded and shipped to Portugal. Find a local restaurant to dine at and remember the events of the day while enjoying your meal.



Day 5

PARATY SCHOONER CRUISE & LUNCH

After breakfast at the hotel, stroll along the streets and the waterfront and absorb the scenic view of the sky meeting the water. At the port, board a schooner for a half-day cruise around the bay. Enjoy a Brazilian buffet lunch on the ship. The rest of the day is free to explore Paraty or you can take the chance to discover even more of the area with an additional excursion.



Day 6

SERRA DA BOCAINA PARK & MINAS GERAIS TOUR

Escape from the city and take a trip through the Serra da Bocaina National Park to observe intriguing prehistoric rock formations. Continue to Minas Gerais, the region where Brazil's gold rush began. Stop in Caxambu along the way, a resort town that is a remnant of Brazil's imperial past. Finally, make your way to São João del Rey, another important gold mining town during Portugal's rule. Check into your hotel, explore the town with a walk through the streets and enjoy a dinner at a local restaurant, included in your tour.



Day 7

TRAIN TO TIRADENTES & OURO PRETO TOUR

This morning, take a train ride to the town of Tiradentes and pass through small historic towns that exhibit striking colonial-era sculptures and architecture. You'll have the chance to see the creations of Aleijadinho, the "Michelangelo" of Brazil, who sculpted the Prophets and other remarkable statues in the Congonhas.

Continue to follow Brazil's Route of Gold and travel to Ouro Preto which means "Black Gold." Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ouro Preto was once a bustling mining hub during the 18th century. Check into your hotel and relax. Tonight's dinner is included.



Day 8

OURO PRETO WALKING TOUR & MARIANA GOLD MINE

Begin the day with a historical walking tour through Ouro Preto. Learn about both its incredible wealth during the gold rush days and the bloody rebellions that were fought over this precious metal. Continue onto Mariana, a quiet town 12km from Ouro Preto. Venture into a former gold mine to get a glimpse of what life was like for miners. There's also the opportunity to shop for locally-made handicrafts in Mariana.



Day 9

PETROPOLIS TOUR & RETURN TO RIO DE JANEIRO

The final day of the Rio Carnival and Brazil Route of Gold tour includes a stop in Petrópolis. Formerly the summer palace of the emperor of Brazil, Petrópolis is located several miles inland from Rio de Janeiro where the imperial capital was located. Admire the palace's architecture and grounds and continue onto Rio de Janeiro.

Your driver will drop you off at the airport for your flight home or to your next Brazilian destination.