

Travel Journal Entry 12: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Greetings from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I am having a marvelous time. After my long flight from Paris, I headed to my hostel. I stayed at the Sun Rio Hostel, which is in the neighbourhood of Botafogo, South Zone, just a few minutes from Rio's main attractions.

Rio de Janeiro is Brazil's second largest city with over 11 million people living there. The official language is Portuguese. "Eu nao posso falar" – "I cannot speak Portuguese" was a phrase I had to use a lot.

For my first day, I decided to take it easy and went to Copacabana beach. I strolled along the boardwalk, swam, read and generally relaxed! Copacabana beach is one of the famous tourist attractions in Brazil. I had lunch at a great sidewalk café and just enjoyed a day in the sun.

On my second day, I went to Sugar Loaf Mountain. I took a two-stage cable car to the top and enjoyed the great view of Rio, Copacabana Beach and Guanabara Bay. Do you know how high up the top of the mountain is? Well, it is 396 m. (1,300 ft.) above sea level. That sure is high!

On my third day, I visited the H. Stern Gem Factory, the largest jewelry store in the world. There sure were a lot of things I would have liked to buy in there. Well, since I am on a budget, maybe another time.

In the afternoon, I decided to visit Corcovado Mountain. We went up this mountain by cog railway, and had another great view of Rio de Janeiro from where the statue of Christ the Redeemer stands 2,300 feet above the city. This is a very famous landmark in Rio. Here is a little information about this statue:

- The statue is 30 meters high.
- It took five years to build (from 1926-1931).
- It stands on top of the Corcovado Mountain.
- The statue represents Jesus, standing with outstretched arms.
- The original design for this statue was done by a man named Oswald. He had designed it to be standing over a pedestal with a globe in one hand. This design was not agreed on.
- Then, the idea of having the statue with wide-open arms was proposed by Heitor da Silva Costa.
- This statue is one of the biggest in the world.

On my fourth day in Rio, I decided to take a sailing tour of the tropical islands. We had lots of time to swim and listen to Brazil's native bossa nova and samba music. It was great fun!

On my last day in Rio, I had a tour of the Imperial Petropolis, once the residence of Brazil's royal family. I saw rare imperial artifacts including the crown jewels of Emperor Dom João II. For my last dinner and evening in Brazil, I went to a barbecue restaurant and then watched a performance of Carnival/samba music and a dance show.

I really enjoyed my time in Brazil and I hope you enjoyed your trek as well!

I'll write soon!

Zoë