

Rio Gay Pride 2016 Celebrates LGBT Identity and Respect

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With a streak of rainbow colour, Gay Pride returns to Brazil's Olympic city

The Olympics may be over but the celebrations continue for Brazil as Rio de Janeiro prepares to host its 21st LGBT Pride Parade. Large and culturally diverse as a country, Brazil is increasingly becoming known as a leading LGBT tourist destination.

Stretching along the vibrant Copacabana beach front, Gay Pride will take place this year on Sunday 11th December, and activities celebrating LGBT culture will take place in Rio for seven days. The theme for 2016's Pride is 'I am my gender identity', encouraging people to recognise that identity is a choice that must be respected.

Rio de Janeiro's Parade is the country's second largest LGBT parade, after Sao Paulo's, which is the largest gay pride parade in the world. The Rio parade will involve a 2km long procession along Copacabana beach, which hundreds of thousands of people are expected to join. Brazil's welcoming of the LGBT community is proving successful as Rio de Janeiro was voted the 4th top city in the world that the LGBT community intended to visit last year.

The Brazilian Tourist Board is continually seeking to increase the number of LGBT tourists visiting Brazil and improve the services for travellers. LGBT tourists represent 10% of the world's travellers and move 15% of the sector's turnover, according to data from the World Tourism Organisation.

Top LGBT friendly destinations in Brazil

Sao Paulo

The largest city in Latin America, Sao Paulo represents the heart of LGBT culture and gay diversity in Brazil. Each year, millions of tourists and locals alike travel to Avenue Paulista, the multicultural centre of the city for the most famous LGBT gay pride parade in the world.

Must see attractions in Sao Paulo include the Museum of Sexual Diversity, the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Art of Sao Paulo. There are nearly 100 venues in Sao Paulo, where locals and tourists of all sexual orientations unite to celebrate and party. Gay bars, LGBT night clubs and exhibitions are an integral part of the city's culture.

Florianopolis

The friendly ambiance of Florianopolis has increasingly attracted the attention of the international gay community, making the city one of the main destinations for gay and lesbian tourists from around the world. Voted a city with one of the best qualities of life, Florianopolis combines urban infrastructure with picturesque landscapes and lively beaches.

Some of the best things to do in Florianopolis include:

Mole Beach – Open in the summer season, the crystal waters and white sand of Mole Beach are one of the LGBT community's favourite meeting places and reveller hang-outs.

Jurerê International – The attractive isolated beach of Jurerê International is a hotspot for sophisticated and glamorous LGBT tourists in search of chic beach clubs and exclusive parties.

Rio de Janeiro

Voted in 2016 as the most attractive gay destination in the world, Rio de Janeiro is the entry gate for most LGBT tourists that visit Brazil. Home to stunning natural beauty and iconic attractions including Christ the Redeemer and Carnival, Rio is packed with travellers from all around the world, all year round.

Ipanema beach is the primary meeting point for the LGBT community, located opposite the Rua Farma de Amoedo, Rio's gay strip in the sophisticated neighbourhood of Ipanema. During Carnival there are many raves and exclusive parties for the gay community, predominantly located in Lapa, the trendy neighbourhood and heart of nightlife in downtown Rio.

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