

JINGANDO HOLIDAYS IN BRAZIL

— by CHRISTINA McDONALD LEGG —

People shop in Paris, eat in Italy and soak up the sun in the Caribbean. Yet Brazil, a country of sensual spontaneity, seems governed by a different kind of energy – the energy of music. With its rhythms of Samba, Forró, street style Funk and African beat, music and dance are such important aspects of Brazilian culture; it seems only natural to make them a part of any visit to Brazil.



Rio de Janeiro, famous for its Carnival and the Copacabana beach is a colourful city, tucked between miles of coastline and jagged mountains. It pulsates with life and the locals, known as Cariocas, are friendly and unashamedly outgoing. 'Jingando' is the term that refers to their elusive essence and their culture of dance, which gives them their rhythm and style.

Jingando Holidays, the brain child of Teresa Keohane and Kate Nowakowski, was created as a way to encourage travellers to experience as much as possible during their stay in Rio. To give each traveller an authentic taste of Brazilian culture, the holiday packages combine tourist excursions throughout Rio de Janeiro with dance lessons and voluntary work within the community.

It has been found that dance lessons, taught by local teacher Marinho Bras, along with volunteering, complement one another giving visitors an opportunity to improve their experience in Brazil. Styles of dance taught include Forró Pé de Serra, Forró Nordestino, Samba no Pé and Samba Partido Alto. Whilst dancing involves physical participation and communication, voluntary work entails socialising and acquainting oneself with new people. These two aspects marry into one sense of involvement and pride in accomplishment. The goal, of Jingando Holidays, is to break down the barriers between tourists and locals thus eliminating the gap in cultures and bringing the visitors and the Brazilians closer together in harmony.

Jingando is a different kind of holiday experience as it works alongside non-profit organisations to help improve the favelas (Brazilian

PHOTOGRAPHY: CELIA MANNINGS



- CARNIVAL IN RIO DE JANEIRO



- JINGANGO FOUNDERS KATE AND TERESA



shanty towns). Holiday makers contribute by painting entire favelas - transforming them into colourful sights, and their involvement with the scheme allows Jingando to pay 25 per cent of the running costs of an after-school children's club in an underprivileged area.

Aside from dance lessons and volunteering, visitors can explore many of Rio's famous landmarks; from the Sugarloaf Mountain and famous Copacabana Beach to the Corcovado Mountain and Praia Vermelha (Red Beach).

For spectacular views of the city, visitors can take a cable car to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain (Pao de Acucar) which sits at the entrance to Guanabara Bay, and is so named for its resemblance to a sugar loaf. Copacabana Beach, one of the world's most renowned shores, which sprawls along three miles of crystal blue water and is situated on the edge of Rio's bustle, is great for a lazy day.

If you would prefer to relax further and escape the bustle of Copacabana, try the sheltered but intimate Praia Vermelha (Red Beach). Set in a residential neighbourhood and situated at the bottom of Urca hill, this beach is named for its characteristic dark sand and offers spectacular views of Sugarloaf Mountain.

And of course who could forget the statue of Christ the Redeemer (Cristo Redentor) that stands pride of place at the top of Corcovado Mountain. Brazil's most iconic landmark can be seen from anywhere in Rio and stands with open arms as if embracing the city. A tour around Lapa, where Escadaria de Selaron can be found, is also offered. The Escadaria de Selaron features 215 steps covered in a ceramic mosaic made up of hundreds of green, yellow and blue coloured mirrors and tiles. Representing the colours of Brazilian National Flag, the Escadaria de Selaron was created and de-

signed as a tribute to the Brazilian people by Chilean born artist Selaron. Its stairway links the Rua Joaquim Silva in Lapa to the Rua Pinto Martins in Santa Teresa.

The food of Brazil is another major attraction to visitors and so diverse that breakfast is the only meal included in the Jingando package. This leaves guests to sample the local cuisine at lunch and dinner times. From exotic French cafés and Spanish Tapas, to traditional Feijoada (black bean and pork stew), eating in Brazil is an unforgettable activity. One of the most popular dishes in the city of Cariocas is Churrasco, a Brazilian barbecue which includes a variety of meat. Brazilian Churrascaria restaurants are a carnivore's dream come true where patrons receive two cards upon arrival. One says stop and the other says go. Flashing the go sign will bring a waiter scurrying over with meat including alligator, Amazon fish, wild boar, pork, beef, lamb, spare ribs and filet mignon, to name but a few. To compliment the meal, the national Brazilian rum drink, the Caipirinha, made from Cachaça - Brazilian sugarcane goes down perfectly.

Rio de Janeiro really is a unique place complete with contrasting cultures, sights, smells and tastes. To only experience it superficially would be a shame as the city has so much to offer. It has a vibrant soul and its beating heart exists beyond the colourful buildings, the soft white sand beaches and the iconic statues.

To go straight to the heart of Rio, the place, the people and the culture, Jingando offers five different packages for visitors to choose from and advises on the best value flights. All prices include bed and breakfast in Santa Teresa, airport transfers, dance lessons with an acclaimed instructor, excursions, welcome drinks and an introductory Portuguese lesson. *

- PACKAGES INCLUDE -

DANCE AND COMMUNITY

This offers either 18 hours dancing and nine hours community work, or vice-versa. (£999)

BRAZILIAN DANCE IMMERSION

Learn the Samba no Pé as danced in the Rio carnival and the Samba Gaftera (the couples dance) alongside the hugely popular forró plus an introduction to some of Brazil's street style and African influenced dances. (£949)

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Celebrate on Copacabana beach and become part of one of the biggest holiday parties in the world on. (£1350)

THE CARNIVAL

Take part in the Samba course and prepare yourself for the festive fun of parading down the Sambadrome in full carnival costume (£1450)

'SALSA SAMBA FUSION

Combine Salsa and Reggaeton classes with Samba and Forró. (£949)

For more information contact info@jingandoholidays.com. www.jingandoholidays.com. Tel: 020 8877 1630