

NIGHTLIFE

top picks

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The city that gave the world samba, bossa nova and baile funk offers dozens of ways to spend a sleepless night among the Cariocas (residents of Rio). Music is the lifeblood of Rio, with few places in the world rivaling its dynamism. You'll find samba clubs, jazz bars, dance halls, lounges and nightclubs all churning out that addictive Brazilian sound. In general, Cariocas prefer live bands over DJs, with many places around the city to hear the latest talent (though Lapa is the headquarters of the music scene). While there are fewer nightclubs, these certainly have their supporters – and hardcore partiers often end their night on a dance floor after catching live music elsewhere.

As with bar-goers, there are a few different subcultures (models and modelizers, surfers, hipsters and hippies) within the nightlife circuit, though there's plenty of crossover between groups. The well-heeled crowd from the Zona Sul for instance tends to favor high-end nightclubs in Gávea and Barra, while an alternative crowd heads to the clubs in Botafogo. Lapa's mix of bars and dance halls attracts a more diverse mix of people from all backgrounds who have little in common aside for a love of samba.

Venues come and go – and the best parties are often one-off events in unique spots – so it helps if you can get the latest from a local source. If you can read a bit of Portuguese, pick up the *Veja Rio* insert in *Veja* magazine, which comes out each Sunday. Thursday and Friday editions of *O Globo* and *Jornal do Brasil* also have extensive entertainment sections. Rio Festa (www.riofesta.com.br) lists the top picks for shows, clubs and happy-hours each week.

MUSIC & DANCE

Rio has a world-class music scene. Samba, jazz, bossa nova, *Música Popular Brasileira* (MPB), rock, hip-hop, reggae, electronic music and the fusions among them are a big part of the picture. Brazil's many regional styles – *forró* (traditional Brazilian music from the northeast), *chorinho* (romantic, intimate samba) and *pagode* (relaxed and rhythmic samba) – are also a part of the scene.

Venues range from megamodern concert halls seating thousands to intimate samba clubs in edgy neighborhoods. Antiquated colonial mansions, outdoor parks overlooking the city, old-school bars, crumbling buildings on the edge of town and hypermodern lounges facing the ocean are all part of the mix.

LIVE MUSIC

Although straight-up bossa nova isn't much in fashion today in Rio, jazz has been growing in popularity, and there's even a dedicated newsstand where you can catch live blues once or twice a week. Those looking to dance should check out samba clubs (p165). For more information on Brazilian music, see p34.

ALLEGRO BISTRÔ MUSICAL Map pp76–7

☎ 2548 5005; www.modernsound.com.br; Modern Sound, Rua Barata Ribeiro 502, Copacabana; admission free; ☎ store 9am–9pm Mon–Fri, to 8pm Sat

This small café in Copacabana's music store **Modern Sound** (p119) features live music most nights of the week. Jazz and MPB groups play to a mix of Cariocas, predominantly aged 30 and up. Most groups play from 5pm to 9pm, though Allegro periodically becomes a lunchtime venue (1pm to 5pm). The more popular groups attract a large audience, with people spilling out into the store. Reservations are available if you want to be sure to snag a table.

ASA BRANCA Map pp98–9

☎ 2224 9358; Av Mem de Sá 17, Lapa; admission R\$10–20; ☎ 10pm–3am Thu–Sun

Near the Arcos da Lapa, Asa Branca attracts lovers of *forró* to its large, smoky dance floor. Recently renovated, this is one of the mainstays of Lapa, with a slightly older crowd packing in on weekends. In addition to some of the best *forró* in the city, the club also hosts samba and MPB.

BANCA DO BLUES Map pp90–1

☎ 2517 3310; Av Rio Branco 311, Centro

A rather nondescript *banca* (newspaper stand) by day transforms into a serious jam fest for blues bands certain nights of the week. It's a great street scene, with folding chairs, vendors selling beer and the clash of electronically amplified chords firing up the blues-loving crowd. The schedule changes,

SAMBA SCHOOLS & SHOWS

Starting in September (in preparation for Carnaval) most big samba schools open their weekly rehearsals to the public. An *escola de samba* (samba school) is a professional troupe that performs in the samba parade during Carnaval. These are large dance parties, not specific lessons in samba, although you may learn to samba at some of them. They typically charge between R\$5 and R\$20 at the door, and you'll be able to buy drinks. Many samba schools are in the favelas (shanty towns), so use common sense when going.

Following is a list of samba schools, contact information and rehearsal days – they all get incredibly packed as Carnaval approaches. The best ones for tourists are generally Salgueiro and Mangueira. It's always best to confirm if there is going to be a rehearsal. A decent website for checking times and reading up on other Carnaval-related activities is www.rio-carnival.net.

Beija-Flor (☎ 2791 2866; www.beija-flor.com.br in Portuguese; Praçinha Wallace Paes Leme 1025, Nilópolis; ☎ 9pm Thu)

Caprichosos de Pilares (☎ 2592 5620; www.caprichosos.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Faleiros 1, Pilares; ☎ 10pm Sat)

Grande Rio (☎ 2775 8422; www.granderio.org.br in Portuguese; Rua Almirante Barroso 5–6, Duque de Caixas; ☎ 10pm Fri)

Imperatriz Leopoldinense (☎ 2560 8037; www.imperatrizleopoldinense.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Professor Lacé 235, Ramos; ☎ 8pm Sun)

Mangueira (Map pp60–1; ☎ 2567 4637; www.mangueira.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Visconde de Niterói 1072, Mangueira; ☎ 10pm Sat)

Mocidade Independente de Padre Miguel (☎ 3332 5823; Rua Coronel Tamarindo 38, Padre Miguel; ☎ 10pm Sat)

Porta da Pedra (☎ 3707 1518; www.gresportadapedra.com.br; Av Lúcio Tomé Feteiro 290, São Gonçalo; ☎ 10pm Fri)

Portela (☎ 2489 6440; www.gresportela.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Clara Nunes 81, Madureira; ☎ 10pm Fri)

Rocinha (Map pp60–1; ☎ 3205 3303; www.academicosdarocinha.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Bertha Lutz 80, São Conrado; ☎ 10pm Sat)

Salgueiro (Map pp60–1; ☎ 2238 9226; www.salgueiro.com.br in Portuguese; Rua Silva Teles 104, Andaraí; ☎ 10pm Sat)

Tradição (☎ 3350 5668; Estrada Intendente Magalhães 160, Campinho; ☎ 8pm Fri)

Unidos da Tijuca (☎ 2263 9836; www.unidosdatijuca.com.br in Portuguese; Clube dos Portuários, Rua Francisco Bicalho 47, Cidade Nova; ☎ 10pm Sat)

Vila Isabel (☎ 2578 0077; www.gresunidosdevilaisabel.com.br in Portuguese; Av Blvd 28 de Setembro 382, Vila Isabel; ☎ 11pm Sat)

Viradouro (☎ 2628 7840; www.unidosdoviradouro.com.br in Portuguese; Av do Contorno 16, Barreto, Niterói; ☎ 10pm Sat)

so call before making the trip. At the time of writing, bands were playing on Friday night, starting at about 7pm or 8pm.

BECO DO RATO Map pp98–9

☎ 2508 9574; Rua Joaquim Silva 11, Lapa; admission free; ☎ 7pm–2am Thu–Sat

One of Lapa's classic samba spots, this tiny bar has excellent live groups playing to a cheerful crowd. The outdoor seating and informal setting are an unbeatable mix.

Marcio, the friendly owner, hails from Minas Gerais; to get the night started, ask him for a tasty *cachaça* (cane liquor) from his home state. Friday night is particularly good to catch live samba.

BIP BIP Map pp76–7

☎ 2267 9696; Rua Almirante Gonçalves 50, Copacabana; admission free; ☎ 6.30pm–1am

For years, Bip Bip has been one of the city's favorite spots to catch a live *roda de samba*