The best of Rio in the tours for accompanying persons

The tour programme for delegates and accompanying persons includes the best view of Rio de Janeiro, which may be seen from the top of the Sugar Loaf. Visitors who reach the peak of the 596-metre-high mountain can delight in the splendid natural scenery composed by the Guanabara and Botafogo bays and the city’s beaches and lagoons. The cable car ride up to the Sugar Loaf unveils to visitors the extraordinary beauty of the Atlantic Forest. Carrying many ferns, bromeliads and flowering plants, the forest is home to rare plant species as well as exotic birds and butterflies.

The Congress’s tour programme also has other unforgettable Rio de Janeiro tours in store. A visit to the Corcovado, one of the city’s main attractions has become a must for all tourists. At the top of the 710-metre-high mountain, the statue of Christ the Redeemer is among the city’s most admired and visited monuments. The view from there is sheer ecstacy: the buildings, the ocean, the whole Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon, another top attraction in Rio.

Those who prefer to go on a slightly more adventurous tour, will do very well in choosing the Jeep excursion across the Tijuca Forest. Here, the city’s geography gradually unveils itself in all its contrasts, from the ocean beaches to the rainforest. The tour includes several stops for taking photographs at well-known sites, such as the Macacos and Tijuca waterfalls, the Vista Chinesa and Alameda Imperial belvedere, and the Mayrink Chapel. Tour participants will also be able to take a walk in an easy-access trail cutting through the heart of the forest. Another excursion that is sure to pump some adrenaline into the blood stream is the Helicopter Ride, which makes a stop at the city’s most remote spots, such as the Guanabara Bay and the historic downtown area.

Centred mostly around the downtown area, Rio de Janeiro’s historical attractions and cultural tradition offer themselves as an additional option for those who are interested in the city’s past as the seat of the Portuguese crown and the country’s capital. Sites such as the Praça XV square, the Lapa Arches, the Santo Antônio Convent, the São Bento Monastery, the latter among our most precious historical heritage sites, will all launch you into the rich past of the “Wonderful City.”

But it is in historic town of Petrópolis that the history of the Brazilian Empire may be best appreciated. One hour drive away from Rio, Petrópolis is nestled in the mountains and surrounded by waterfalls, creeks and a great deal of vegetation. Among the town’s countless attractions, the most noteworthy are the Imperial Museum — which in the nineteenth century was the summer residence of both Brazil’s emperors — the Crystal Palace and the neogothic São Pedro de Alcântara Cathedral.

Brazil: affordable clothes and food

Brazil is one of the most affordable countries in the world for tourists. Food, beverages, clothes and footwear cost in average less than half their prices in Europe. A meal in a decent self-service or even a la carte restaurant costs around US$ 5.00, and a glass of draft beer costs less than US$ 1.00. September, the first month of spring, is when the shopping malls and other city stores go on winter sales. This is the best time to buy jeans, jackets and cold-weather clothes.

Note: These photographs are in the art book on Rio de Janeiro that is part of the delegate pack.