MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
Traveling Bulldogs



Duration
10 days

Activity Level
Active Travel

Journey Type
Land

Brazil: The Afro Brazilian Experience

May 10-20, 2027

Starting from $6,045/pp

Move to the captivating rhythm of Brazil during an enriching journey that introduces you to the African roots of the country's music, cuisine, religion and more during four nights each in lively Rio de Janeiro and Salvador, the cultural heart of Brazil. Listen to local musicians, learn to make one of the national dishes with a local chef, visit sacred sites and immerse yourself in Brazil's rich heritage.





Day-by-Day Itinerary

Air Program – 10 days/9 nights (includes 1 air night)

Land Program – 9 days/8 nights

Breakfasts: 8

Lunches: 4

Dinners: 4

B | L | D denotes included breakfasts, lunches and dinners

- A special note about air: If you have purchased only the Land Program, please book flights that arrive on Day 2, the first day of the Land Program. The date is listed at the top of your Reservation Confirmation.
- This ACTIVE program is designed for people who are in good health and can comfortably participate in a demanding daily schedule of physical activities. The itinerary may feature full days of ongoing activities. Excursions on this program require: walking distances of up to 3–5 miles; walking on cobblestones, unpaved paths and/or uneven surfaces; getting on/off motor coaches, funiculars and cable cars; walking up and down (sometimes steep) hills; tolerating varying climatic conditions, including high altitude and humidity.
- Depending on the excursion, more leisurely alternatives may be available.

Day 1 | Depart gateway city

AHI FlexAir passengers depart for Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Please check your luggage from your gateway city to your arrival city. Your claim checks should have the following airport code: GIG.

Day 2 | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana

D

Arrive at Galeão/Antonio Carlos Jobim International Airport. Proceed through immigration to the baggage claim area and retrieve your luggage. After completing customs, AHI FlexAir passengers traveling on flights that qualify for the group arrival transfer and Land Program passengers who have purchased seats on the group transfer should exit the baggage claim area and proceed to the designated meeting spot, where an AHI Travel representative will meet you. The meeting location will be provided with your final documents.

Transfer to the Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana, a hotel on famous Copacabana Beach. Please note, if you arrive before check-in time, your room may not be immediately available. Your luggage will be stored until check in. Enjoy light snacks before your afternoon excursion begins.

Urca Hill & Sugarloaf Mountain. Get an introduction to Rio with a sweeping view of the city and its environs from the top of iconic Sugarloaf Mountain. Drive through the leafy Urca neighborhood to Praia Vermelha, or Red Beach, and board a cable car bound for the top of Urca Hill, which overlooks Guanabara Bay. Continue to the top of Sugarloaf Mountain for a dazzling 360-degree view of the city from 1,299 feet (396 meters), including Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, the Christ the Redeemer statue atop Corcovado Mountain and more. The natural beauty of Rio's mountains and coastal location has been shaped by the diversity of the city's population, resulting in a unique cultural landscape recognized on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Return to the hotel and check in.

Tonight, mingle with your fellow travelers as you kick off your Brazilian adventure at a Welcome Reception and Dinner.

Day 3 | Rio de Janeiro

Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana

B | L

Enjoy a delicious breakfast at your hotel each morning.

Enrichment: The Origins of the African Diaspora in Brazil. A local expert shares the history of Afro Brazilian people from the beginning of the slave trade in Brazil to its dissolution.

Little Africa. Delve into Rio's African heritage in the area of the city called Pequena África, or Little Africa. Begin with a visit to Praça XV, or the Fifteenth of November Square. Situated by Guanabara Bay, this square is inextricably tied to the history of slavery in Brazil. Praça XV once was the first stop for some 2 million enslaved Africans brought to Brazil and it also is the site of the Royal Palace, where Princess Isabel signed the decree abolishing slavery in 1888. Next, stop at Cais do Valongo, the UNESCO-listed wharf built in 1811 specifically for the importation of enslaved Africans. It is estimated that 900,000 enslaved Africans entered the Americas at Cais do Valongo. Continue on a walk to the Jardins do Valongo, where you can see the Largo do Depósito, where those brought against their will to Brazil were held before their sale. Continue to the Pedra do Sal, the Salt Stone, another iconic Rio landmark. These steps, where enslaved Africans hauled the salt unloaded from cargo ship, evolved into a gathering spot for the Afro Brazilian community. It also is considered the birthplace of samba, and today, samba parties are held several evenings each week at this spot. The next site is a solemn reminder of the low value put on the lives of the Africans who were captured and transported against their will across the ocean. Established to study, share and preserve the history of slavery in Brazil and promote racial equality, the New Blacks Research and Memory Institute was built on the site of the largest cemetery for enslaved Africans in the country. Many of the newly arrived Africans, called "Pretos Novos" or New Blacks, died of disease or brutal treatment before they left the docks. The bodies of 20,000 to 30,000 people were tossed into ditches and pits. After slavery was abolished, the cemetery was forgotten and only rediscovered in 1996 when a house built over cemetery was being renovated and bones were unearthed. The morning concludes with a visit to Museum of Afro Brazilian History and Culture to study paintings, sculptures and photographs that represent the history and legacy of slavery in Brazil.

Take a break for a delicious lunch of Afro Brazilian cuisine at a local restaurant.

The Magic of Carnaval. Get a behind-the-scenes look at one of Rio's famous samba schools, where dancers that participate in the city's iconic Carnaval parades hone their craft. During a visit to the Acadêmicos da Grande Rio warehouse, where you can see the process of creating the school's elaborate floats and costumes as you learn about the history of samba and the Carnaval parades. Have some fun and try on a carnaval costume before participating in a percussion and dance workshop to learn some samba moves!

Free Time: The evening is at leisure to enjoy on your own. Your Travel Director can offer restaurant suggestions for dinner.

Day 4 | Rio de Janeiro

Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana

B | L

Corcovado Mountain & Santa Teresa. Mountains, hills and the Atlantic Ocean all have contributed to Rio's dramatic urban evolution, creating a unique city inspired by its location. Explore more of Rio's beautiful outdoors and its UNESCO-listed landscape. See some of Rio's famous beaches during a drive to Tijuca National Forest. Ride a funicular through the scenic Atlantic forest, part of the Mata Atlantica Biosphere Reserve, to the top of Corcovado Mountain for an up-close look at Christ the Redeemer, the city's iconic statue, and a spectacular view from the summit at 2,330 feet (710 meters). Tour the exquisite Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro, which is home to some 6,500 tropical and subtropical plant species and 140 bird species. Founded in 1808, the lush garden enjoys a reputation around the world for its scientific research and focus on conservation. During a guided walk through the park, see native plants as well as varieties from around the world, including palm trees, orchids and cacti. You may also catch a glimpse of the toucans, marmoset monkeys and other wildlife that make their home in the garden.

Savor local dishes and conversation with the group during a delicious Brazilian barbecue lunch.

Free Time: Spend the afternoon at leisure. Your Travel Director can offer sightseeing suggestions as well as restaurant options for dinner.

Day 5 | Rio de Janeiro

Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana

B | D

Enrichment: A Comparison of Slavery in Brazil and the United States. During a discussion with a local speaker, learn about enslaved life in Brazil, focusing on resistance and the growth of capoeira, the martial art that developed in Brazil's enslaved communities. Discuss the abolition of slavery in Brazil and compare post-slavery conditions with the Reconstruction period in the U.S.

Free Time: Spend the morning exploring on your own. Perhaps you'll take a walk along famous Copacabana Beach and snap your own photos of the iconic coastal view. Enjoy lunch at your leisure.

Santa Teresa. Delight in the vibrant Santa Teresa neighborhood on Morro do Desterro, or Exile Hill, which was built around an 18th-century convent. Explore this historic district, where art galleries and studios, colonial architecture, villas and restaurants line leafy, cobblestone streets and create a lively, bohemian vibe. Your tour starts at the top of the hill. Visit Parque Glória Maria, the former Parque das Ruínas. The mansion at the center of the park belonged to Laurinda Santos Lobo, a Brazilian heiress and patron of the arts. The grand home fell into ruins after her death in the mid-20th century. A restoration project in 1997 by two Brazilian architects breathed new life into the building, which is known for the spectacular view of Rio. It has been a cultural arts center, hosting exhibitions, concerts and other events since its reopening. In 2023, the park was renamed to honor trailblazer Glória Maria, the country's first Afro Brazilian television reporter and, later, news anchor. Beloved by her fellow Brazilians, Glória Maria was known for breaking racial barriers as much as she was for her charismatic personality.

Free Time: Then, experience the festive atmosphere of Largo do Guimarães, a lively neighborhood with art galleries, shops and restaurants. It's a favorite gathering spot for Cariocas, as residents of Rio are known.

Rejoin the group for dinner at a restaurant in Santa Teresa.

Day 6 | Salvador

Fera Palace Hotel

B | L

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to Salvador, capital of the Brazilian state of Bahia and the heart of Afro Brazilian culture.

Upon arrival, have lunch at a local restaurant before venturing out on your afternoon excursion.

Pelourinho. Pelourinho is at the heart of the historic center of Salvador, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Explore this historic, culturally rich district on a walking tour. Pelourinho, capital of Portuguese colonies in the Americas from 1549-1763, stands out because its urban plan still reflects its 16th-century origins. This district boasts an extensive collection of colonial architecture— brightly painted buildings, ornate churches, palaces and more — and a lively spirit. The eye-catching colors and ornate stucco work belie the city's grim distinction as having had the first slave market in the Americas. In this city, however, the meeting of indigenous, European and African cultures led to the development of the vibrant Afro Brazilian culture that defines Brazil today. During your guided stroll, visit the opulent Catedral Basílica de Salvador. Continue to Largo do Pelhourinho, the public square where enslaved people once were punished at the pelhourinho, or pillory. See Municipal Square, said to be the first public square in Brazil, and the Elevador Lacerda, which opened in 1873 to transport people between Salvador's upper and lower towns.

Check in to your hotel after your tour.

Free Time: Spend an evening at leisure. Your Travel Director can offer restaurant suggestions for dinner on your own tonight.

Day 7 | Salvador

Fera Palace Hotel

B | L

Percussion Workshop. The world-famous drummers from Bahia are known for creating African-influenced rhythms and have attracted many musicians from around the world. Paul Simon recorded much of his 1988 album, "The Rhythm of the Saints," in Pelourinho Square with the percussion group Olodum. A local professional percussionist shares the history of the local percussive style and discusses how these drums permeate nearly every aspect of Afro Brazilian life. Then, join in the fun and learn the local rhythms on different types of drums.

Free Time: Enjoy lunch on your own this afternoon and some leisure time to explore on your own.

Casa de Iemanjá & Rio Vermelho Street Food Experience. Visit to the Casa de Iemanjá. This blue-and-white temple is dedicated to Iemanjá, the Candomblé orixá (goddess) of the sea. . Iemanjá is said to be the goddess that ensured the safe passage of the enslaved to Brazil. In addition, fishing is an important part of Salvador's economy, and the temple formerly held the scales where fishermen would weigh their catch. A festival is held here every year to pray for a successful fishing season. Having been brought to Brazil by enslaved Africans, Iemanjá and other gods and goddesses of the Candomblé religion are an important part of Afro Brazilian spiritual life. Continue to the Rio Vermelho neighborhood, Salvador's lively bohemian neighborhood and popular entertainment district. Restaurants, music clubs and botecos, bars known for drinks and petiscos (the Brazilian version of tapas), line the cobblestone streets. Rio Vermelho also is the one of the city's top spots for street food, with many vendors offering popular local snacks. Tonight for dinner, join a local favorite pastime and enjoy local street food along with the casual atmosphere of Rio Vermelho. From appetizers to dessert, taste several local favorites.

Day 8 | Salvador

Fera Palace Hotel

B | L

Terreiro, the Heart of the Candomblé Community, & São Joaquim Market. Take a deeper look into Candomblé today with a special visit to a terreiro. A terreiro is not only a house of worship, but also a community center that promotes and preserves Afro Brazilian traditions. Meet a member of the community and expand your understanding of the Candomblé religion and the religious and social roles of the terreiro. Continue to the São Joaquim Market, which has served residents of Salvador for more than 300 years. Here, shoppers can find colorful produce, fresh meat, fragrant spices, local handicrafts and items used for Candomblé rituals.

AHI Connects | Bahia Cuisine: Visit a restaurant to learn how to make moqueca, the signature dish of Bahia, with a local chef. Roll up your sleeves and learn how to make this delicious seafood stew, featuring a creamy coconut milk broth flavored with cilantro and lime, before sitting down to a delicious lunch.

Afro Brazilian Museum. Stop briefly at the Afro Brazilian Museum to see its famous collection of 27 carved wooden panels, which represent the orixas, gods and goddesses, of Candomblé, a religion formed from elements of West African religions and Roman Catholicism.

Bahia Folk Dancing. Revel in a mesmerizing performance of the Balé Folclórico de Bahia, an acclaimed folk dance troupe. Dance in Brazil is more than entertainment. It is an important part of Candomblé and capoeira, the Brazilian martial art. Watch performances of puxada de rede, honoring the goddess of the sea and inspired by fishermen pulling in nets, and maculelê, a martial arts dance that originated in sugarcane fields. You'll also see a performance of Samba de Roda, which has been inscribed on UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Samba de Roda, which began here in the state of Bahía, spread to Rio, where it was the basis of the modern samba.

Free Time: Enjoy dinner at leisure after the performance.

Day 9 | Salvador

Fera Palace Hotel

B | D

Capoeira. Learn about capoeira, Brazil's fascinating martial art, during a visit to a traditional capoeira school. Comprising dance, acrobatics and music as well as self-defense maneuvers, capoeira began among enslaved Africans, who disguised this training, practiced in a circle, as a game. Hear about the history and philosophy of capoeira as you meet the leaders of the school. Learn some capoeira maneuvers and try your hand at playing one of the instruments, such as the berimbau, the stringed percussion instrument that crucial to the sound of capoeira music.

Free Time: Enjoy lunch and a final afternoon at leisure to explore more of Salvador on your own.

Rosary of the Blacks Church & the Terça da Bençao. On your way to dinner this evening, pass by the Rosary of the Blacks Church (the Igreja Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos) to catch a glimpse of a service that blends Catholic mass and Afro Brazilian traditions. Excluded from other churches, free and enslaved Afro Brazilians built this church in the 18th century. Here, the first of Brazil's Afro Brazilian Black Brotherhoods, a source of solidarity and spiritual support, was created. Continue to see the Terça da Benção, the weekly Tuesday of Blessing street festival. The event started as the rehearsals of Olodum, a famous percussion band, but has evolved into a weekly neighborhood party with live music and dancing!Tonight, join the group for a festive farewell dinner to celebrate your week of exploration

and enrichment in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador! A highlight of the evening is a demonstration of capoeira, the martial art that combines dance, acrobatics and music for a mesmerizing show!

Afterward, join the group for a festive farewell dinner to celebrate your exciting and enlightening journey in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. B

Day 10 | Depart for gateway city

B

After breakfast, all passengers will join the group transfer depart for the Salvador International Airport for a flight to Saõ Paolo International Airport (GRU), where the Land program ends. Your Travel Director will provide the transfer details.

Day 11 | Arrive in gateway city

Arrive in your gateway city today.





What's Included

Program Overview

- Small group: Sized just right at 28 guests.
- 4 nights in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, at the first-class Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana.
- 4 nights in Salvador at the first-class Fera Palace Hotel.
- AHI Connects: Local immersion.
- AHI Sustainability Promise: We strive to make a positive, purposeful impact in the communities we visit.
- Complimentary travel mementos.

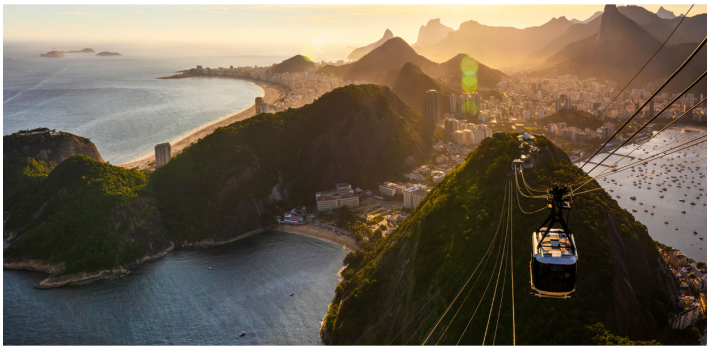
Meal Program

- 8 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners.
- Welcome and Farewell Dinners to mingle with fellow travelers.
- Tea or coffee with all meals, plus wine with dinner.

On-site Features

- Flights and deluxe motor coach transfers during the Land Program with baggage handling.
- Enrichment by expert speakers enhances your insight into the region.
- Engaging excursions showcase the local culture, heritage and history.
- Elective activities to pursue your individual interests.
- Free time to pursue your individual interests.
- Tipping of guides and drivers.
- A personal VOX headset to hear your English-speaking guide clearly.





FlexAir Travel Program

Need assistance booking your travel arrangements? Our experts are here to help. Our air program offers the following benefits.

Trip Transportation

- Assistance in the event of schedule changes or delays
- Arrival and departure transfers on group dates

Price Guarantee

- Price guarantee to protect you from fuel surcharge increases after ticket purchase

Travel and Hotel Accommodations

Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro Copacabana

Enjoy your stay in Rio de Janeiro along Copacabana Beach, the world-famous, crescent-shaped beach. The first-class Grand Mercure Rio de Janeiro is the perfect base in vibrant Rio. Start each day with a hearty buffet breakfast served with a view of the beautiful beach. The hotel also has an all-day restaurant that serves regional Brazilian cuisine, a rooftop bar that's ideal for viewing the sunset, an outdoor swimming pool and a well-equipped fitness center. Relax in a comfortably appointed guest room with an espresso machine, mini refrigerator and WiFi.



Tripadvisor

Fera Palace Hotel

Delight in a stay at Salvador's iconic Fera Palace Hotel, an art deco beauty that welcomed its first guests in 1934. Its famous visitors included Carmen Miranda, Pablo Neruda and Orson Welles. The city's historic center fell into decay in the mid 20th century, but decades of revitalization efforts in this culture-rich district included the restoration of the Fera Palace, which reopened in 2017. The décor of the updated Fera Palace proudly incorporates elements of the local Bahia culture with its art deco origins. During your stay, you might find yourself enjoying a dip in the rooftop infinity pool or simply sipping drinks and admiring the sunset. The hotel has a restaurant, lobby lounge and fitness center. It also offers wellness massages. Enjoy a well-appointed, comfortable guest room with a smart TV, minibar and WiFi.



Tripadvisor

Pricing

$500 Full Payment Discount expires December 11, 2026

Trip Price (USD)

Base Price	**$6,045**
Full Payment Discount *	**-$500**
Special Price	**$5,545**
You Pay	**$5,545 per person**

Package rates are per person based on Double occupancy from Land Only. Prices include all service charges; port charges when applicable; U.S. government taxes and fees. The minimum deposit is $1000.00 per person. To view Program Terms and conditions please click here. Some airlines may impose additional charges if you choose to check any baggage. Please contact your airline or refer to its website for detailed information regarding your airline's checked baggage policies.

*Full Payment Discounts are only available at the time of booking with initial payment 150+ days prior to departure. This offer only applies to full payment at the time of reservation. Details on how to qualify for this savings will be included when your reservation request is confirmed.


Bahia
Salvador
BRAZIL
Rio de Janeiro
São Paulo
Sugarloaf Mountain
Corcovado Mountain



