



An Icaef Culinary Learning Journey
**Savoring the Samba in
Brazil**

*January 26th to
February 3rd, 2023*

*Optional Extension:
February 3-6, 2023*

General Information - Asking a Brazilian to describe his fellow Brazilians, he stated, "We are funny, resilient, a bit ridiculous, a lot of fun and kind of weird. We are also tons of beauty and wholesomeness." They sound like people you would want to meet, no? In January 2023, the ICAEF is going to give you an opportunity to do just that.

Thursday, January 26

We're going to start our adventure in Salvador. Salvador is an absolutely colossal city (about 3 million people) that you probably never heard of.... And if you had heard of it, you probably never considered visiting it. Until now. Salvador was the first colonial capital of Brazil from 1549 to 1763. Now it is the capital of the state of Bahia. It is a city that blends the cultures of European, African, and Amerindian cultures. There is an old town and a new town. The old town features brightly colored colonial houses, the new town, skyscrapers.

Our hotel in Salvador, the Fera Palace Hotel, is a classic, having hosted the likes of Carmen Miranda, Pablo Neruda, and Orson Welles. There are only two top-rated hotels in Salvador, and this is one of them. The CU officially starts with dinner this evening. If you arrive earlier in the day, transportation from the airport to the hotel will be provided.



Friday, January 27

You never get to know a city until you walk the city. Before lunch on Friday, our walking tour will take us through the Pelourinho neighborhood, the largest assemblage of colonial buildings in Latin America, a UNESCO World Heritage site celebrated for its Baroque architecture. The cathedral we will visit is a perfect introduction to this art form. We'll continue our walk through the cobblestone streets of the colonial district, flanked by homes in pastel shades, to Pelourinho Square and Municipal Square, the first public square in Brazil, towering above the Lower City, with a view of All Saints Bay.

Our first market tour will be of the Ceasinha Market at Rio Vermelho, including a visit to the Culinary Training Center, where we will learn from local cooks the secrets of Bahian cuisine. This day will also include your first tasting of cachaça, a distilled liquor made from sugar cane juice. It is erroneously thought of as a style of rum. It is the national drink of Brazil and the key ingredient to a caipirinha, the national cocktail of Brazil.

On this day, you will discover why Bahia is called the percussive heart of Brazil. You'll recognize the sounds that Paul Simon, Wayne Shorter, and Michael Jackson borrowed from Bahia for their music. We will also have time to engage in a percussion workshop, so when you don't want to work, you can bang on your drum all day...with a rhythmic soul.

The African culture will become evident when the Bahia Folklore Company performs for us at dinner. This day ends with a Bahia-by-night tour.

Saturday, January 28

Today is a full day in Salvador, including a visit to the Gastronomy Museum of Bahia and the African Brazilian Museum.

The lower city has many attractions, so we will be returning to it several times in our four days in Salvador. We'll pass the Tororo Lagoon with the imposing statues of the *candombié* orixas in mid-lake and the towering Arena Fonte Nova football stadium built for the World Cup.

From so many international CLJs, we have seen that you can learn the most about a foreign cuisine from the "street food." The scene in Salvador will be no exception. Many of the foods you will be tasting are indigenous to the native Amerindians. The *acarajé* became the icon of Bahian street food, perhaps to Bahia what falafel is to the Middle East. This morning you will learn to make them from a black-eyed bean batter, deep-fried in palm oil. When cut in half, blazing hot pimento sauce is slathered on it - then topped with ground peanuts and cashew nuts, coconut milk, ground onions, and ginger - sweet, salty, and fire hot.

This afternoon we will be guests of Banda Dida at Casa do Carnaval. This will be your first introduction to the Brazilian Samba. By Thursday, you'll be dancing it with a professional dance troupe. This will also be your first opportunity to engage in a percussion workshop.

Saturday evenings in Salvador are wild. We'll walk through the dozens of food stalls in Rio Vermelho, sampling as we go, often stopping to taste the various versions of *caipirinha* from numerous vendors.



Sunday, January 29

Sunday morning starts with one more shopping tour in Mercado Model. This time, we will visit local artisans where you can purchase artifacts and souvenirs. When you've satisfied your need to buy from local artists, we have a sweet treat for you. While past CLJs have featured gelato and ice cream, the *Sotveteria da Ribiera* features a myriad of tropical fruit sorbets, sherbets, and ices. Plan to taste several varieties. Consider the fresh fruit sorbets an appetizer because from here, we head straight over to Uaua for lunch.

This afternoon is the first time you will have a short break of about two hours before we head out again... Visit the pool, beach, or shop - but remember, you only have two hours.

One of the finest restaurants in Salvador is called Casa da Tereza. Not only are we dining in this restaurant, Chef Tereza Paim, who has received many awards and published several books, has agreed to host us for a cooking lesson on contemporary Bahian cuisine in her eclectically decorated restaurant in the bohemian Rio Vermelho district. Her lesson will lead directly into dinner.

Monday, January 30

Today we'll be flown from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. Rio is an awe-inspiring city of contrasts. Impossibly steep granite mountains jut out of the ocean between glorious stretches of golden sand, impeccable colonial buildings nestle between modern glass skyscrapers, and verdant forests tumble down hillsides into densely populated residential areas. It is a city high on life, a city of beach worship, football, samba, and Carnival. And high above all of this fun and frivolity stands Rio's ever-present, iconic landmark – the statue of Christ the Redeemer. Tomorrow, you will get up close and personal with this statue.

We will walk the famous swirled black, and white stone beach walks from Copacabana to Ipanema. Watch beach volleyball played by bikini-clad locals and sample beach snacks and chilled fruit beverages as we enjoy the view of the mountains that make Rio famous. (Remember the words, "Tall and tan, and young and lovely, the girl from Ipanema goes walking." Today that is going to be you.) This afternoon's tour is of Sugar Loaf Mountain by cable car. It is not for the faint of heart.

Dinner is Argentine steaks at the world-famous Rubayat. Our hotel for the next four nights is the Fairmont RJ Copacabana, located in one of the most spectacular places in Rio, Copacabana Beach. Locals believe that it took seven days for God to create the entire world, but five of them must have been spent on Rio.



Tuesday, January 31

We have hired a "foodie host" rather than just a local guide here. With our host, we will explore the bustling street markets and the little bars and restaurants that have been locals' favorites for generations. You'll taste the best of Brazilian cuisine – delicious street food, tasty bar snacks, fantastic fruits and juices, weird Amazonian dishes, Brazilian beers and cocktails, and more.

After our mid-morning snacks, we'll get our tickets and head over to the statue of Christ the Redeemer. Lunch will be provided as part of our "foodie adventure" in a series of small restaurants. Tonight's dinner is at my all-time favorite restaurant in Rio... Aprazivel. It is located high in the mountains above Rio; this restaurant is set on a series of small wooden platforms in a large thicket of trees - so much so that it will give you the feeling of dining in a treehouse.

Wednesday, February 1

Even though many of our attendees are accomplished chefs, we feel that cooking lessons are always fun. So today, we'll see how the indigenous, black and Portuguese people influenced Brazilian cuisine by learning to make a traditional Brazilian seafood stew, vatapà, with fish and shrimp cooked with coconut milk. The brigadeiro, a famous chocolate creation, will be the dessert.



This afternoon, we show off our Samba skills with “Samba behind the Scenes” at a professional samba school. We’ll learn about costumes and all of the razzmatazz that goes into creating a Carnival float. Carnival is not just an event or a party for Brazilians. It is their way of life - and celebrations start immediately after Christmas for them.

Tonight we attend Rio Scenarium, a live music experience, with tapas being offered all evening long. The location is vast; four buildings were joined to create it. The two top floors are open and overlook the ground floor dance floor.

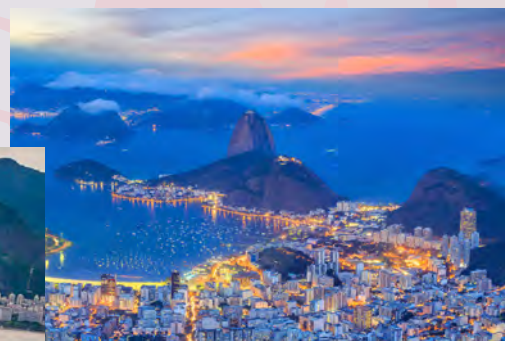
Thursday, February 2

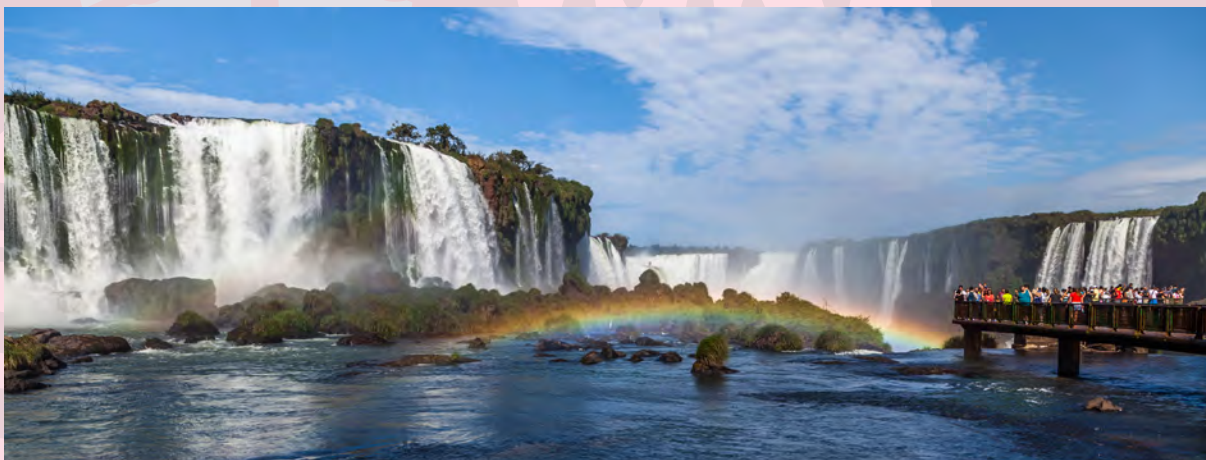
After a morning visit to the Botanical Gardens, we will be entertained with a feijoada lunch at the Academia da Cachaça. The delicious black bean stew with every element of pork product is the most typical meal in Brazil. If you would like, H Stern is a famous jewelry store worldwide, and they have its headquarters in Brazil. We can take a quick tour of their lapidary to see how their gems are mined, cut, and polished and have the opportunity to shop at one of their many stores.

After lunch, you will most likely need a nap on the beach or one poolside at the hotel. But rest up for tonight’s closing night party, which will undoubtedly be one to remember. An ICA member caterer, whom we first met at Catersource, will be hosting this blowout event for us.

Friday, February 3

After breakfast, we will be saying goodbye to some friends and “Welcome to Iguassù Falls” to those opting for the three-day extension.





Optional Three Day Extension— February 3— February 6

Friday, February 3

This morning we will be flown to the Brazil side of Iguassu Falls. Without a doubt, the falls are majestic and breathtaking. They are situated on the border between Brazil and Argentina. The falls receive water from about 30 rivers before plunging over the precipices. There are approximately 275 falls extending about a mile and a half. These falls are 60 feet higher than Niagara and about one and a half times as wide. On first seeing these falls, Eleanor Roosevelt is said to have exclaimed: "Poor Niagara! This makes Niagara look like a kitchen faucet."

We'll spend our first half day exploring the falls. We'll actually be entering a jungle-like national park, where we will see colorful butterflies fluttering about the trail and some grumbling coati (a larger relative of the raccoon) begging for food. At the trail's end, an elevator will lift us up to the restaurant by the edge of the falls for lunch.

Our hotel, the Melia Iguazu Spa & Resort, is in a natural sanctuary in the heart of the jungle, where the magnificent falls cascade in front of the hotel. While still in Brazil today, the cuisine at the hotel is more Argentinian than Brazilian, with grilled meats being the specialty. We'll have cocktails in the lobby bar while we enjoy the roar of the falls and admire the lush, leafy jungle outside. This is really a jungle retreat. So rest up because the next day is far more strenuous. Even though we will be taking it nice and slow, there is some climbing involved, and we'll stop to catch our breath at different viewpoints, at different elevations.





Saturday, February 4

The Lower Circuit offers the best views, as magnificent waterfalls come hurtling down before you in walls of silvery spray. The Upper Circuit winds its way along the top of the canyon, allowing you to look down the falls and see the area's rich flora, including cacti, ferns, and orchids. We will be exploring both circuits, the order of which will depend on the temperature and humidity of the day. Rainbows often appear near sunset. We'll stop at Devil's Throat, the mother of all waterfalls.

Now comes the first boat tour. We'll provide plastic raincoats for the La Gran Aventura Boat tour. Going up-river in these boats, we'll get to the base of Iguazu Falls and be able to admire and feel them from up close. Whirlpools, waves, and currents provoked by the Falls add adrenaline and lots of emotions to this unforgettable tour. In the Iguazu National Park (Argentina side), big trucks adapted explicitly to this tour will take us to explore 6 kilometers in the humid subtropical forest on the banks of the Iguazu River. Once we get downstream from the Falls, we will board unique boats that will take us, at high speed, to enjoy one of the most unforgettable experiences in the region: the direct and wet contact with the mighty Iguazu Falls!

After this incredible emotion-packed afternoon, we will get off the boat at the base of the Falls, onto a cat-walk that connects to the lower visitation circuit of the Falls. We suggest bringing a backpack with a change of clothes as you will get soaked after the boat tour.

Tonight we'll be grilling our own dinner and enjoying the many salads and side dishes prepared by the hotel. The journey continues the following day to the Argentine side of the falls.



Sunday, February 5

Today we will learn what Argentine cuisine and wine are all about. Our first stop today In Argentina is to visit a Guarani village. Located at the famous triple border of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. We'll learn about the secret natural medicines of the Guarani while we walk the "Spirit of the Trees," a jungle walk led by Aboriginal experts.

We have a hands-on class starting mid-afternoon that will teach us how to close our own empanadas using the "repulge" technique and learn about their national drink, "mate." Dinner will be at the Argentine Experience featuring beef fillet steaks accompanied by free-flowing Malbec. It is more like an intensive crash course in Argentine culture, complete with an empanada and alfajor-making sessions.

From the Porteños' fondness for expressing themselves with a wide range of hand gestures to the intricacies of the mate ritual, Argentine customs can be baffling (first-timer mate drinkers beware: NEVER use the bombilla (metal straw) to stir the yerba). For this reason, the Argentine Experience is jointly hosted by an ex-pat who understands how strange such idiosyncrasies first seem to outsiders and a local who offers an insider's view. This is hands-on like you have never seen it before.

We'll return to our hotel on the Brazilian side of the falls for a restful night before heading to the airport in the morning.

Iguassu Falls is only 600 miles from either Buenos Aires or Montevideo, Uruguay, and only about 200 miles from Asuncion, Paraguay- all major South American capitals with easy access to the US, so people do not have to fly back to Rio or Sao Paulo. Many airport options are available in various countries.

PRODUCERS' NOTE: At the time of printing, May 2022, the dates of the trip are confirmed, and the hotels are confirmed, but we are still working on some of the activities and restaurant confirmations. Please note that the producers may be changing the schedule of activities and/or restaurants and/or towns slightly to create a better flow of events and accommodate travel times between meals, events, and activities. The autumn harvest may also force us to change wineries, vineyards, and tastings.

