



## Add this hot Brazilian spot to your list now (HINT: It's not Rio!)

*By Michele Hermann  
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*Salvador, Brazil is full of culture and color.*

Now that the Brazilian Government has announced that U.S. citizens no longer need a visa to visit Brazil (effective June 17, 2019), there's no better time to head to this fascinating South American country. As for where to go, Rio is the obvious choice but you'd be doing yourself a huge favor to also

consider [Salvador](#). This coastal city within the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia is packed with incredible culture and cuisine, in a totally immersive atmosphere. Here's a sampling of what awaits you in this captivating city of 2.7 million.



*Pelourinho's historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage site.*

## **Wander through Pelourinho**

With colorful buildings and cobblestone alleys, this historic district's central plaza, the **Terreiro de Jesus**, was once a slave auction market; today, it reflects a vibrant spirit. Michael Jackson filmed his video for "They Don't Care About Us" here. The **Museum of Gastronomy of Bahia** shows how different nationalities influence Bahian food. **Restaurante Sorriso da Dada** is just as charming as its owner, Dada Sorriso, who offers both great cuisine and conversation. The Terreiro de Jesus holds many houses of worship; among them, the **Church and Convent of Saint Francis** has a

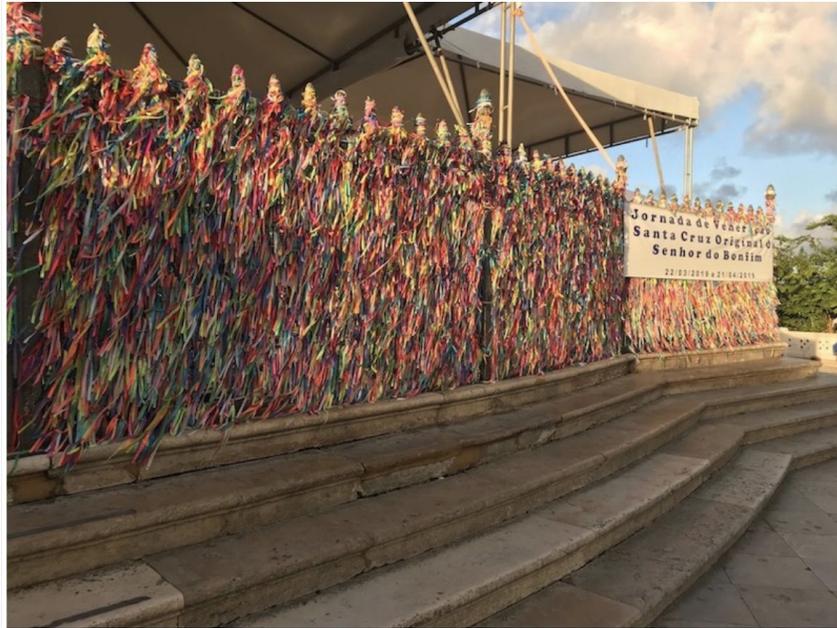
mural patio and lavish interior while the **Cathedral of Salvador** towers overhead.



*Casa do Carnaval da Bahia teaches about this Salvador, Brazil festival's history.*

## **Enjoy a different kind of Carnaval**

As with Rio de Janeiro, Salvador has a long history of holding a carnival prior to the start of Lent. Their version offers a major street party with Bahian bands performing while revelers wear bright costumes. Marked by a statue of three masks stationed out front, the **Casa do Carnaval da Bahia** in Pelhourinho provides a lesson on Salvador's history with exhibits showing past carnival film footage and vibrant attire. On the upper level, visitors experience Carnaval by grabbing hats and boas and following along to an interactive screen presentation of songs and dance moves.



*Bahia bands are considered to be a measure of good luck.*

## **Tie on a Bahia Band**

Bahia bands are not a fashion accessory, but rather a good luck charm. Tie these single-colored ribbons with the phrase, “Lembrança do Senhor do Bonfim da Bahia,” around your wrist by making three knots; a wish is made on each knot. If the band falls off on its own, it’s said that your wishes will come true. Find them at shops, stands and attractions, but in particular, at **Igreja de Nosso Senhor do Bonfim**. The gates of this Bahia landmark are completely covered with them, and visitors are welcome to add on. Plus, this church has a reputation for granting miracles, including displays of photos, personal notes and objects reflective of prayers answered.



*Baianas are women who practice Candomblé. | Photo: Amanda Oliveira*

## Learn more about Candomblé

An Afro-Brazilian religious tradition, Candomblé is rooted in Salvador. It incorporates beliefs from enslaved West Africans, brought to Brazil by the Portuguese, with some elements of Catholicism. Once banned for years, but repealed in the 1970s, the practice of Candomblé is also viewed as a cultural entity and is expressed in Salvador in many ways such as with “baianas,” women dressed in traditional white clothing. Another example relates to Candomblé’s many deities; one of them being a goddess of the sea called Yemoja (also spelled as Iemanjá). There are statues of her within restaurants and public establishments. She is also honored in Salvador every February 2 with a festival in waterfront neighborhood **Rio Vermelho**, when offerings are placed into the water.



*Get a good Bahia souvenir at Mercado Modelo.*

## **Shop the Mercado Modelo**

This major public market within Salvador's **Cidade Baixa** commercial district is great for Bahia souvenir shopping. Vendor stalls at the multi-level Mercado Modelo offer handcrafted knits, Candomblé dolls and Brazilian cangas (a sarong/beach towel). The building also has restaurants; **Camafeu de Oxossi** offers rooftop views of All Saints Bay. The market is also close to the city's iconic **Lacerda Elevator**, which has been operating since the 19th century and is accessible for a small fee.



*Restaurante Casa de Tereza brings Bahian cuisine fully to the plate.*

## **Sample local gastronomic wonders**

Similar to Pelourinho, Salvador's districts have culinary offerings that are driven by professional Bahian cooks who are interpreting and invigorating this native cuisine. In trendy Rio Vermelho, **Restaurante Casa de Tereza** is overseen by well-respected chef Tereza Paim and merges culture and gastronomy through dining areas doubling as art spaces; purchase her cookbooks and varieties of farofa (a corn flour mixture). In seaside Barra, namesake restaurant **Du Chef Arte e Gastronomia By Lucius Gaudenzi** offers fusion style cuisine by an Italian-Brazilian chef. The port neighborhood of Comercio is the location for the fine dining establishment **Amado** where the outdoor terrace overlooks All Saints Bay.



*Praia da Itapuã features the lighthouse, Faro de Itapuã. Photo by Amanda Oliveira*

## Hit the beaches

Like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, Salvador has a good share of public beaches or *praias* (in Brazilian Portuguese). The popular **Praia da Barra** faces the Atlantic Ocean and contains shack-like restaurants. Near **Itapuã** and **Stella Maris** beaches, **Praia de Flamingo** offers good surfing conditions; spend the day at **Lóro at Stella Maris Beach** for relaxed oceanside dining and an in-between quick walk over to the water.



*Balé Folclórico da Bahia puts on performances featuring cultural dances such as capoeira. Photo by Amanda Oliveira*

## Get engrossed in folkloric dance

Watch a theatrical performance of slave dances, capoeira (a form of martial arts), samba, and carnival-related customs at a performance of **Balé Folclórico da Bahia**, Brazil's professional folk dance company. Held at **Teatro Miguel Santana** in Pelourinho, the company presents a daily evening show year-round.



*Tour the home of Brazilian author Jorge Amado.*

## **See a writer's residence**

Get literal during your time in Salvador at the home Brazilian author Jorge Amado and his wife Zélia Gattai lived in for approximately 40 years. Named for one of his books, this house-turned-museum not only features the couple's personal belongings and published works, but also paintings by their friend Pablo Picasso, an interactive kitchen and garden bench commemorating the couple's love.

**Getting there:** [Flights to Salvador](#) often connect via Miami International Airport. LATAM's new direct flight from Miami to Salvador departs on Sundays at 4:55pm and returns to Miami early Monday morning at 3:25am.

**Where to stay:** Opened in December 2018, the [Hotel Fasano Salvador](#) is across from the Bay of All Saints and within a former newspaper building dating back to the 1930s. Its rooftop pool has views of the bay, and the hotel also contains 70 guest rooms along with a spa, fitness center, business center and restaurant with an Italian/Bahian menu, banana leaf papered walls and old sugarcane processing equipment turned into chandeliers.