



# Statue Of Christ

## *Located*

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Summit of Mount Corcovado, South Eastern Brazil

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***Christ the Redeemer*** (Portuguese: *Cristo Redentor*, standard Brazilian Portuguese: , local) is an Art Deco statue of Jesus Christ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, created by French sculptor Paul Landowski and built by Brazilian engineer Heitor da Silva Costa, in collaboration with French engineer Albert Caquot. Romanian sculptor Gheorghe Leonida fashioned the face. Constructed between 1922 and 1931, the statue is 30 metres (98 ft) high, excluding its 8-metre (26 ft) pedestal. The arms stretch 28 metres (92 ft) wide.

The statue weighs 635 metric tons (625 long, 700 short tons), and is located at the peak of the 700-metre (2,300 ft) Corcovado mountain in the Tijuca Forest National Park overlooking the city of Rio de Janeiro. A symbol of Christianity across the world, the statue has also become a cultural icon of both Rio de Janeiro and Brazil and was voted one of the New Seven Wonders of the World.<sup>[3]</sup> It is made of reinforced concrete and soapstone.

## History

Vincentian priest Pedro Maria Boss first suggested placing a Christian monument on Mount Corcovado in the mid 1850s to honor Princess Isabel, regent of Brazil and the daughter of Emperor Pedro II, but the project was not approved. In 1889 the country became a republic, and owing to the separation of church and state the proposed statue was dismissed.

The Catholic Circle of Rio made a second proposal for a landmark statue on the mountain in 1920. The group organized an event called *Semana do Monumento* ("Monument Week") to attract donations and collect signatures to support the building of the statue. The organization was motivated by what they perceived as 'Godlessness' in the society. The donations came mostly from Brazilian Catholics. The designs considered for the "Statue of the Christ" included a representation of the Christian cross, a statue of Jesus with a globe in his hands, and a pedestal symbolizing the world. The statue of Christ the Redeemer with open arms, a symbol of peace, was chosen.

Local engineer Heitor da Silva Costa and artist Carlos Oswald designed the statue. French sculptor Paul Landowski created the work.

In 1922, Landowski commissioned fellow Parisian Romanian sculptor Gheorghe Leonida, who studied sculpture at the Fine Arts Conservatory in Bucharest and in Italy.

A group of engineers and technicians studied Landowski's submissions and felt building the structure of reinforced concrete (designed by Albert Caquot) instead of steel was more suitable for the cross-shaped statue. The concrete making up the base was supplied from Limhamn, Sweden. The outer layers are soapstone, chosen for its enduring qualities and ease of use. Construction took nine years, from 1922 to 1931, and cost the equivalent of US\$250,000 (equivalent to \$3,600,000 in 2020) and the monument opened on October 12, 1931. During the opening ceremony, the statue was to be lit by a battery of floodlights turned on remotely by Italian shortwave radio inventor Guglielmo Marconi, stationed 9,200 kilometres (5,700 mi) away in Rome but because of bad weather, the lights were activated on-site.

In October 2006, on the 75th anniversary of the statue's completion, Cardinal Eusebio Oscar Scheid, Archbishop of Rio, consecrated a chapel, named after Brazil's patron saint—Our Lady of the Apparition—under the statue, allowing Catholics to hold baptisms and weddings there.

Lightning struck the statue during a violent thunderstorm on February 10, 2008, causing some damage to the fingers, head and eyebrows. The Rio de Janeiro state government initiated a restoration effort to replace some of the outer soapstone layers and repair the lightning rods on the statue. Lightning damaged it again on January 17, 2014, dislodging a finger on the right hand.

In 2010, a massive restoration of the statue began. Work included cleaning, replacing the mortar and soapstone on the exterior, restoring iron in the internal structure, and waterproofing the monument. Vandals attacked the statue during renovation, spraying paint along the arm. Mayor Eduardo Paes called the act "a crime against the nation". The culprits later apologized and presented themselves to the police.

In reference to Brazil striker Ronaldo's usual goal celebration of both arms outstretched, the Pirelli tyre company ran a 1998 commercial in which he replaced the statue while in an Inter Milan strip. The commercial was controversial with the Catholic Church.

## Restoration

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In 1990, several organizations, including the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, media company Grupo Globo, oil company Shell do Brasil, environmental regulator IBAMA, National Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage, and the city government of Rio de Janeiro entered into an agreement to conduct restoration work.

More work on the statue and its environs was conducted in 2003 and early 2010. In 2003, a set of escalators, walkways, and elevators were installed to facilitate access to the platform surrounding the statue. The four-month restoration in 2010 focused on the statue itself. The statue's internal structure was renovated and its soapstone mosaic covering was restored by removing a crust of fungi and other microorganisms and repairing small cracks. The lightning rods located in the statue's head and arms were also repaired, and new lighting fixtures were installed at the foot of the statue.

The restoration involved one hundred people and used more than 60,000 pieces of stone taken from the same quarry as the original statue. During the unveiling of the restored statue, it was illuminated with green-and-yellow lighting in support of the Brazil national football team playing in the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Maintenance work needs to be conducted periodically because of the strong winds and erosion to which the statue is exposed, as well as lightning strikes. The original pale stone is no longer available in sufficient quantity, and replacement stones are increasingly darker in hue.

## Similar structures

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- [Christ the Protector](#) in [Encantado, Rio Grande do Sul](#), Brazil (43m)
- Christ the Redeemer in [Rio Verde, Goiás](#), Brazil
- Christ in the Mount in [Pitangui, Minas Gerais](#), Brazil
- [Cristo del Otero](#) in [Palencia, Spain](#) built in 1930 (21 m)

- Cristo Rey (statue, Mexico) located on the Cerro del Cubilete in Guanajuato, Mexico, inspired by Rio's Christ the Redeemer (23 m)
- Cristo Rey in Tenancingo, México, México (30 m)
- Christ Blessing in Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia (30 m)
- Christ of Havana in Havana, Cuba, inspired by Christ the Redeemer (20 m)
- Christ of the Abyss in various underwater locations
- Christ of the Ozarks in Arkansas, United States, inspired by Rio's Christ the Redeemer (20 m)
- Christ of Vũng Tàu in Vietnam (32 m)
- Christ the King in Świebodzin, Poland (33 m)
- Christ the Redeemer of the Andes (Argentina/Chile)
- Christ the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Ibiza, Spain, inspired by Christ the Redeemer (23 m)
- Cristo Blanco in Cusco, Peru
- Cristo de la Concordia in Cochabamba, Bolivia (34 m)
- Cristo de las Noas in Torreón, Mexico (22 m)
- Cristo del Pacífico in Lima, Peru, erected in 2011 (37 m)
- Patung Yesus Kristus<sup>[28]</sup> in Mansinam Island, West Papua, Indonesia (30 m)
- Cristo Redentore (Christ the Redeemer) of Maratea, Italy (21 m)
- Cristo Rei (Christ the King) in Almada, Portugal (28 m)
- Cristo Rei of Dili in Dili, Timor-Leste (27 m)
- Cristo Rei, Madeira on Madeira island, completed in 1927 (15 m)
- Cristo Rei in Lubango, Angola (14 m)
- Statue of Cristo Luz in Balneário Camboriú, Santa Catarina, Brazil
- Statue of Jesus Christ on the top of Sagrat Cor, Barcelona, Spain
- Tas-Salvatur, Malta (12 m)
- Statue of Jesus Christ, Monte Urgull, Donostia-San Sebastian, Spain - 12 m
- Jesus de Greatest in Imo, Nigeria, Africa's tallest statue of Jesus and fifth tallest statue on the continent (8.53 m)
- Cristo del Picacho in Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- Cristo Redentor, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic
- Christ The King Lebanon
- Another imitation statue of Christ the Redeemer is at Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India.(Shrish Patil)
- imitation at Kovalam, near Trivandrum, Kerala, India.
- Imitation at Ecopark, Kolkata, India.
- Christ the Redeemer of Malacca is on the Portuguese Settlement Square in Melaka, Malaysia (20' tall)
- Cristo Rey in Colombia (26 m)
- Cristo Rey by Urbici Soler in Sunland Park, New Mexico - (8.83 M)
- Cristo Redentor (Barranca province, Lima, Peru)
- Cristo Rey Tijuanaense, at Iglesia de San Martín de Porres near Colonia Los Álamos, Tijuana, Baja California, México (23 m 30 cm).

## So... how did the statue get up there?

One of the many things that baffles anyone who feasts their eyes on the statue for the first time is, how the heck did the statue get up there in the first place?

Because of the statue's massive size, the statue was actually put together on top of Mount Corcovado, and all the necessary materials (as well as the workers) were transported up the mountain on a small cog-wheel train; (which at the time was mainly used to take tourists to the top of the mountain to see the vistas).

Workers used long wooden poles to act as scaffolding during the construction phase, and they actually had to scale them in order to put all the materials in the right place – a task that must have been truly daunting in every sense of the word, yet symbolized the locals' intense religious faith, above all else.

## The fascinating origin

The idea of designing a massive statue of Jesus Christ in Rio first came about way back in the 1850s, when a local priest came up with the idea of placing a Christian monument on top of Mount Corcovado. Apparently he had requested Princess Isabel (the daughter of Emperor Pedro II and Princess Regent of Brazil at the time), to fund the project, but the idea was scrapped after a Declaration of the Republic was declared in Brazil in 1889 – a pinnacle move as it separated the church from the state in the country.

It wasn't until after World War I when the Roman Catholic archdiocese in Rio and a group of locals started becoming concerned about the "lack of religious faith" in the Brazilian community, and it was hoped that by placing a massive statue of Jesus on top of a mountain in Rio, it would rebel against what they saw as an "increasing godlessness" in the country. It was requested that the statue be placed on the summit of Mount Corcovado so it would be visible from anywhere and everywhere in Rio, and thus represent a way of "reclaiming Rio" (which was Brazil's capital city at that time) to Christianity.

## Funding and cost

Funding was difficult to find, and was provided by a charitable collection made in the name of the Church to the parishioners (essentially), but this fund-raising struggled to progress. The Church had to play an important role in raising awareness among Catholics so that the money raised could correspond to the total amount of the project. It should be noted that the campaign was national, not international.

Funding was thus obtained from public generosity. It was a bit forced by many organized events, including the "Week of the Monument", from September 2 to 9, 1923. This week served as a support for major national gatherings. cardinal Leme, the indefatigable promoter of the project, sent instructions to the vicars to address the widest possible population.

It is necessary to appeal to all budgets and not content with the usually generous classes of our people. They had to solicit the contributors to make a donation of more than ten thousand reis. But by the end of the week only half of the money had been collected, so it was necessary to make a new campaign.

The cost of construction was \$ 250,000, but that is an approximation, we do not have the details of all the costs, whether they are purchases of materials or service, such as studies on the general shape, or even labor, necessarily quite consistent. Some people have estimated the correspondence of this cost if Christ redeemer had been built these days: It is \$ 3.2 million, which is quite low for a monument of this size.

## The choice of coating: Soapstone

The material of the envelope of the statue was discussed. Of the original bronze, the designer of the statue did not know where to go.

We were marching towards the inevitable artistic failure, without being able to go back, wrote Silva Costa. This little phrase speaks volumes about the fact that he did not know how to finish his statue, with what material. The inspiration came to him in an arcade that had recently opened on the Champs-Élysées, where, after work, one evening he saw a fountain covered with a silver mosaic. "Seeing how the little tiles covered all the curved profiles of the fountain, I was soon taken by the idea of using them," wrote Da Silva Costa. "Moving from idea to completion took less than 24 hours. The next morning I went to a ceramic workshop where I did the first samples."

The choice was based on steatite, which has the characteristic of being very little subjected to temperature variations while remaining a soft rock. This stone was crushed into pieces which were polished before being applied in facing on all the parts of the statue, forming a gigantic mosaic. According to Heitor da Silva Costa, the designer, it was the first time that the technique of mosaic was applied to a monumental statue. We want to believe it.

The choice of soapstone came in part because it had been previously used by the 18th century sculptor Aleijadinho, said the cripple, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, north of Rio. After losing his fingers as a result of illness, Aleijadinho miraculously continued sculpting ornamented statues with a hammer and a chisel attached to what remained of his hands. That these were still in good condition 120 years later, in the opinion of Heitor da Heitor da Silva Costa, testified to the durability of the stone.

## The inauguration

The inauguration of the statue took place on October 12, 1931, under the leadership of the head of the Provisional Government, Getúlio Vargas and Cardinal Dom Sebastião Leme, who delivered the consecration speech. The latter was a praise to the Catholic Church and proclaimed the will of evangelization of the Brazilian people as well as to increase the number of Catholics in the country. The following sentence was heard:

May this sacred image be the symbol of your place of life, of your protection, of your predilection, of your blessing which radiates over Brazil and the Brazilians.

During the ceremony 500 priests officiated. He was asked for the beatification of the small French Guy de Fontgalland, 11 years, died in 1925.

## Illumination

The inauguration of the monument provided an opportunity for an experiment that combined science and progress. It was the journalist Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand who proposed it. It consisted in launching the illumination of the very new statue of Christ the Redeemer from Naples, Italy. The principle was simple. The Italian scientist Guglielmo Marconi triggered the illumination by sending a radio signal from Naples which was received in Dorchester, England. This station was to send it back to Rio, where a reception station was planned in the Jacarepaguá district.

Alas, when the operation was carried out, bad weather prevented the transmission of the signal which never arrived. The illumination was triggered manually from the monument.

Learn more about the inauguration of Christ the Redeemer.

## Renovations and Miscellaneous Amendments

The first changes took place in the year following its inauguration in 1932. The lighting system had to be changed. It will be a second time in the year 2000.

In 1980 the statue was renovated following the visit of Pope John Paul II on the spot. In 1990, another restoration took place.

The site was reorganized in 2003 with, among other things, the installation of an automatic staircase, to make it more accessible. A panoramic lift is also provided. To make this tourist site compatible with ecological requirements, no mechanical device uses lubricant. This important constraint has been respected with difficulty, but we are indeed there in the proof that with will the technique follows. Be aware that the escalators and lifts are made in France, and they avoid having to climb a staircase of 220 steps.

Finally in 2010 other works were carried out on the statue. They took place under the supervision of Marcia Braga, architect. Its main difficulty at that time was to find stones identical to those used 85 years earlier. Indeed, in the process of replacing 60,000 small tiles that covered it, it had to reject 80% of those supplied by the quarry where it was supposed to source. In this respect, it should be noted that the previous renovation has slightly modified the tint of the statue since the stone quarry has now been exhausted. It was therefore necessary to find

another career whose stone had a similarity, but the previous works had not necessarily been done with as much rigor as what is currently done, and so the use of somewhat different stones gave different colors depending on where they were applied.

To deal with this problem, it was envisaged to replace at once the 6 million stone forming the mosaic, which would cause the color change of the whole of the statue. It is a more acceptable solution than that of changing only a small percentage of the stones, because in this case the statue would have taken different shades depending on the parts replaced. But it was not accepted, and the renovation was done on the basis of stone totally identical to the original stones, thus requiring a greater quantity of material than was originally intended.

The idea is to do something as close to the original as possible because when you use different colors, the aesthetic is altered

This 2010 renovation cost \$ 3.5 million. It was financed by Vale (Companhia Vale do Rio Doce), a large Brazil mining company committed to protecting and maintaining the famous statue and Corcovado site until 2015. But part of the funding is also arrived from the people with the sale of golden brooches representing Christ the Redeemer sold at the price of 7 reais (4,3 dollars) in the 252 parishes of the archbishopric of Rio.

The next renovation is known, it will take place in 2020, 10 years later. Since no decision has yet been taken on the amount of stone that will have to be replaced, it is already known that the next stones will be in a shade of green somewhat deeper than those currently used, spokesman of the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage of Brazil.

You should know that the statue is regularly touched by lightning, which almost abyssees it every time. It is therefore repaired, systematically, which gives it the air of being in work during great periods.

## **Controversy**

If the fact of offering a religious statue on the Corcovado, so visible from Rio, did not really have a negative impact on the local population, the fact that it was a Catholic installation caused some the religious communities of the region. From the initiation of the project in 1923, the first protests were made, in particular Protestant organizations (without any pun intended).

But this sense of forced evangelization which provoked the statue of Christ the Redeemer quickly disappeared in the face of the beauty of the work and the universal significance of the message it conveys.