

# Rio de Janeiro: The "Marvellous City" welcomes digital nomads



(Image credit: Giordano Cipriani/Getty Images)



By Sarah Brown 25th April 2023

Launched in January 2022, Brazil's new Digital Nomad Visa is enticing a new type of traveller to the South American country. And Rio is one of the most alluring spots to settle.

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rio de Janeiro, a colourful urban sprawl divided by forest-covered mountains and edged by golden coastlines, has long seduced international tourists with its samba-fuelled nights and spectacular landscapes. Now, the "Marvellous City", as it's known by Brazilians, is enticing a new type of traveller with its **Digital Nomad Visa**, which was launched across the country **last year**.

The local government has been pushing ahead with investments to make the city increasingly suitable for remote workers, including improving connectivity with **citywide 5G coverage**. An **emerging coffeehouse scene** also brings new working spots and a digital nomad vibe to Rio's popular beachside areas, with modern cafes equipped with fast internet, contemporary brunch options and a variety of decent coffee.

But it's not all about the grind. Rio-born Cariocas cherish playing sports, being in nature and socialising after working hours, and **it's this work-life balance that makes Rio so appealing to digital nomads over other Brazilian cities**. "Unlike São Paulo, Brasília and Belo Horizonte, **Rio has both big-city amenities and amazing beaches, hiking and other outdoor attractions**," said Janeesa Hollingshead, a North American digital nomad who has been living in Rio for a year.



*Digital nomads are drawn to Rio by the work-life balance, with locals loving socialising and being outdoors (Credit: MareMagnum/Getty Images)*

## Why should I go now?

Getting residency in Brazil was once shrouded in red tape, but the Digital Nomad Visa has

made the process easier. It **enables visitors** to keep their current employment in another country while allowing stays of one year, with the option of renewing for another 12 months. **Applicants must provide proof of work and earn at least US\$1,500 (£1,200) per month or have US\$18,000 (£14,400) in savings.**

Remote workers in Rio also have the benefit of a **thriving digital nomad community**, said Hollingshead. **Highly active social media and WhatsApp groups** allow visitors to find an assortment of **in-person meetups**, from samba nights and hiking expeditions to business-networking and language exchanges. These online hubs are also valuable resources for finding out information about visas, taxes and other general day-to-day life in Rio.

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The international community is also supported by welcoming and friendly locals. "We [foreigners] get treated well here – locals want to help you. That makes you feel good about where you live," said Dan Hobbs, Australian owner of **Aussie Coffee** in the beachside neighbourhood of Ipanema.

### Working amenities

Traditional bakeries designed for in-and-out strong espressos and quick bites remain prolific. But remote workers can also find several coffeehouses dotted throughout Rio's affluent South Zone (Zone Sul) that offer air conditioning and high-speed internet, such as **Café Cultura** and **Mini Joe** in Copacabana and Aussie Coffee in Ipanema. "There are free Wi-Fi spots you can easily find and laptop friendly," said Emily Anctil, a multilingual advisor specialist from Canada who worked remotely in Rio for six weeks.



*Most of the city's co-working spaces are located in Centro (Credit: MareMagnum/Getty Images)*

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Many of Rio's **coworking spaces** are in the business block of downtown Centro, which is a bustling hive during weekday working hours but largely deserted in the evenings and weekends. Coworking spaces in Rio's city centre often appeal to corporate individuals looking for quiet places to make calls, whereas coffee shops reel in digital nomads seeking a more laid-back community, Hobbs explained.

"We get digital nomads every single day [in Aussie Coffee] because they feel comfortable working here," he said. "A lot of foreigners come to Rio by themselves. They might have friends, but they seek the community that they can find here."

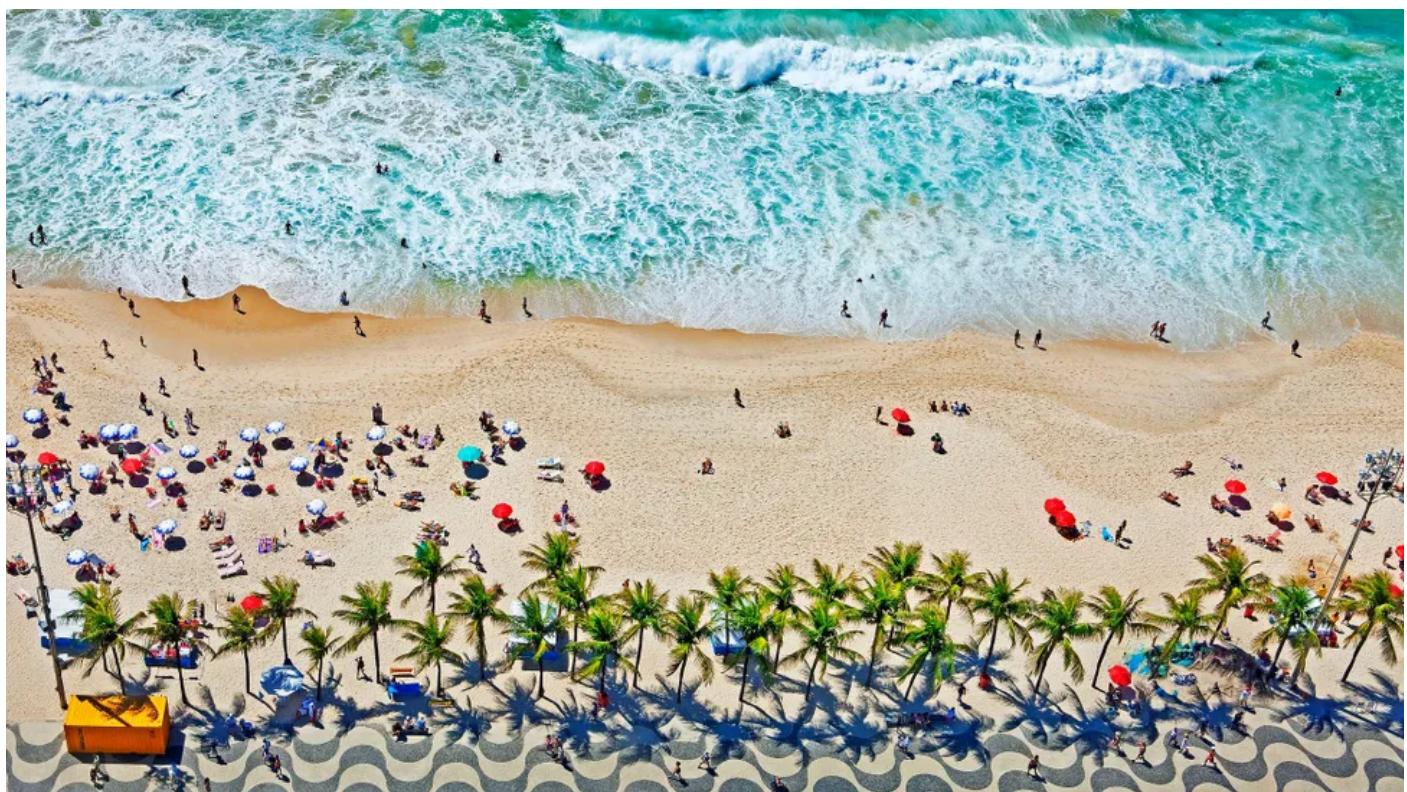
## Living in Rio

**Rio is one of Brazil's most expensive cities**, but it's still affordable compared to European and American metropolises, especially with the current exchange rates. "You get a lot of value for your money in Brazil, especially if you have euros and dollars," said Jack Krier, **YouTuber** and content creator from Luxembourg who worked remotely in Brazil for two months. "Rio is a bit more expensive than São Paulo, but still, compared to Western prices, it's just really good value."

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It means prime locations, such as the beachside neighbourhoods of Leblon, Ipanema and Copacabana, become much more accessible. "I could never live on the beach in Australia, as I do here. And [Ipanema] is one of the best beaches in the world," said Hobbs.

Inland neighbourhoods such as Flamengo, Botafogo and Catete are cheaper options that are still located near beaches, hikes and vibrant nightlife. For Hollingshead, Botafogo is her favourite place to live. "It's super walkable, has a ton of restaurants and bars, is within walking distance to two different shopping malls (each with good coworking spots) and feels much less touristy and crowded than Copacabana. You can also get much more space for better prices," she said.



*"Enjoying the outdoors is the essence of Rio," according to Brazilian tour guide Alessandra Alli*  
*(Credit: John W Banagan/Getty Images)*