

Copacabana Palace Rio de Janeiro



If you are in luck and arrive in Rio by plane at the Santos-Dumont airport the mood is already set before you even get there because the landing strip starts almost right where the ocean ends; in itself a spectacle! And if from the airport you go straight to the **Copacabana Palace**¹ then its “*noor ala noor*”²

Last time I was in Rio, already 20 years ago, I stayed at the Rio Palace.

It was a classy hotel.

If I remember correctly Prince Charles and Princess Diana had preceded me there by just a few days. Their pictures were everywhere. Funnily, many years later Prince Charles also beat me by a few days to Bam³ when he came to visit the city after the earthquake; this time unfortunately without Diana!



Santos-Dumont Airport

The Rio Palace is located strategically on the waterfront boulevard between Copacabana and Ipanema, two of the most magic beach names in the world.

As luxurious and classy as the Rio Palace was, it is nothing compared to the renovated **Copacabana Palace** which has both the sumptuousness and the history and of course modern amenities, luxury shops, WIFI LAN, etc...



Copacabana Palace Poolside

¹ Designed by French architect Joseph Gire, it was inspired by the Negresco and the Carlton on the Cote d'Azur. It is considered to be a neoclassical gem

² Persian expression literally “light of all lights” meaning the absolute best

³ Ancient Iranian city. There was a major earthquake there in 2003 – See my 2 Bam reports

The place has so much atmosphere that were it not for the modern shops and the somewhat intimidating security guards you wouldn't be surprised to run into Saint-Exupéry⁴ or Santos-Dumont⁵ around the corner sipping a "Caipirinha"⁶ at the beautiful bar or at the even more stunning poolside – although I imagine them more at the bar than by the pool!

The only main drawback of the hotel is that it is so pleasant especially around the pool that you don't really feel like leaving it to visit Rio!

Still, there is always room for improvement:

Most of the staff only speaks Portuguese, worse even the concierge or at least one of them only spoke Portuguese. I wanted to go scuba diving so I talked to two of them and none of them were properly informed and made any out of the ordinary effort.

What else? The service may be a little slow and if you don't tip, I always do, you don't get served properly by the pool where there is competition for mats, umbrellas, etc...

Of course there are other shortcomings here and there but the atmosphere is so overwhelming that you forget these worldly details.

At the **Copacabana Palace**

you are actually on a voyage in time and space not just in a mere hotel!

For those into nostalgia, pictures of the famous people that have stayed here are displayed in one of the halls. The young guest relations manager can fill you in on the history and even anecdotes. I met him by chance while looking at the photos and his knowledge and love of the hotel's past, very much in line with the hotel's overall style impressed me.



⁴ Antoine de, French aviator and writer

⁵ Brazilian aeronaut and designer of dirigibles. One of Rio's airports bears his name

⁶ The potent cocktail is made from cachaça, a spirit distilled from sugarcane, blended with fresh lime juice, sugar and ice.

If you do venture out of the hotel you have the beautiful Copacabana Beach with its life, folklore and the Atlantic Ocean right in front you. What more could one want?

A great hotel on a great beach in as great a city.



Copacabana Beach

Our cost at a preferential rate, including a light meal and drinks at the poolside restaurant came to less than \$ 900 for two nights in a magnificent suite with a TV in each room and a superb and large bathroom with a walk-in closet.

Some of the famous people that stayed at the Copacabana Palace

King George VIII, King Edward VII, Santos-Dumont, Andre Maurois, Orson Wells, Maurice Chevalier, Igor Stravinsky, Fred Astaire, Jean Paul Sartre, Marlene Dietrich, Ava Gardner, Rita Hayworth, Walt Disney, Rudolf Nureyev, Brigitte Bardot⁷ even Errol Flynn! etc, etc...

Links

<http://www.lhw.com/property.aspx?propertyid=10&ext=Gcopa&qclid=CLPC6fug5osCFQ8yZwodVxrySw>

http://www.copacabanapalace.com.br/web/orio/orio_c4b1_cipriani.jsp

http://www.copacabanapalace.com.br/web/orio/orio_a2a_home.jsp

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rio_de_Janeiro_\(state\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rio_de_Janeiro_(state))

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gunter_Sachs

Thank you

Yasmin H, Fred G and Massoud G for proofreading and editing

J-M Houtcieff

⁷ Actually she only gave an interview there. I told the story to a friend in Iran who incredibly enough being also a close friend of Gunter Sachs's son, was of the same "party". He confirmed the story adding that they stayed at Gunter Sachs' friend's villa in Rio