

KEEPING IT RIO

Copacabana caipirinhas? Lobster in Leblon? TOM YARWOOD savours Rio's foodie scene



ACONCHEGO CARIOCA

In suburban Praça da Bandeira, far from the tourist hotspots, this is the neighbourhood restaurant of choice for several of Rio's most famous cooks. Kátia Barbosa specializes in the African-inflected dishes of Brazil's north-east and reimagines them as tiny bean burgers and pasties; the ubiquitous *bolinho de feijoada* pork-and-bean dish is here buttoned up in neat falafel-like balls and best paired with artisanal *cachaça* from the Nêga Fulô distillery. *R. Barão de Iguatemi, 379, Praça da Bandeira*

RIBA

The world's most ravishing boardwalk now has a decent beach bar. Riba was an instant hit when it opened last summer in Leblon; its logo-branded coconuts are now a local rich-kid Instagram cliché. DJs spin bossa nova and Balearic beats at sunset while toned waiters keep the hearty street snacks coming, including cassava balls stuffed with beef and watercress, and decadent brioche-and-lobster rolls washed down with ice-cold caipirinhas. *ribabotecagem.com.br; Quiosque Leblon, Avenida Delfim Moreira, S/N Leblon*

TACACÁ DO NORTE

Slow-creaking ceiling fans and cracked *azulejo* tiles lend this busy little neighbourhood café an air of faded glory. Principally serving workers from the city of Belém—a



gateway port to the lower Amazon—this eatery uses many of Brazil's lauded tropical ingredients. *Tacacá* itself is a citrusy and sour prawn soup swimming with numbing jambu leaves; there's also acai, the super-fruit mash served here in traditional Amazonian style—smoother, and less sweet. *R. Barão do Flamengo, 35 R Flamengo*

DA ROBERTA

This pavement garage turned industrial-chic bar is the latest opening from super-chef Roberta Sudbrack—a graduate of a Brasília hotdog stand who became the personal chef to a former president. Her focus is on making fine dining affordable (as she does in the restaurant at the new Hotel Arpoador), as well as using the best organic ingredients for street food, such as spicy sausages from Patricia Polato, whose family has been in the business for 200 years. There's a good selection of beers from the city's Jeffrey brewery, a couple doors down. *R. Tubira, 8A Leblon*

TEVA

Cariocas are traditionally highly carnivorous, so Daniel Biron's new vegan joint on a shady Ipanema side street represents a radical departure. A former product designer, the chef has created a Bahian-style beach club vibe with pan-Asian dishes and Brazilian staples such as *bolinhos de baião de dois*, the delicately smoky bean cakes from the neighbouring state of Minas Gerais, as well as aubergine curry, and ceviche made with palm heart—a deliciously meaty monkfish substitute. *Avenida Henrique Dumont, 110 / Loja B Ipanema*

ORO

Felipe Bronze is the wunderkind of Rio's fine-dining scene, and Oro is his principal playground—a temple of molecular gastronomy infused with humour thanks to his love of local street food. Infused, too, with smoke—from an Argentine *parrilla*, a Japanese yakitori grill, and a wood-fired oven. The tasting menu includes five dishes made with root vegetables—a *baroa* potato in coffee, a sweet potato with orange and *bottarga*, and so on. The climax is a tiny but irresistible pork-and-pineapple burger atop a towering wooden plinth—a tribute to Cervantes, a grand Copacabana bar that has been serving the same to hungry office workers for over 50 years. *ororestaurante.com.br; Av. Gen. San Martin, 889 Leblon*

SIX OF THE BEST BRAZILIAN INGREDIENTS

Tapioca—a starch used in the white pancakes that are among Brazil's most popular snacks

Acai—a dark berry, rich in antioxidants, that grows on Amazonian palms

Batata baroa—a root resembling a sweet potato, sometimes used to thicken stews

Cachaça—the most versatile of Latin America's sugar-cane spirits

Jambu or Acemella oleracea—an Amazonian herb with a mild anaesthetic effect

Maxixe—a spiny relative of the cucumber, often cooked with okra

Dehouche (dehouche.com) offers two days of private guiding plus a cooking class with chef Roberta Sudbrack, including return flights and five nights at Hotel Arpoador from £1,855pp