

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Restaurants to try - Sao Paulo and Itacare, Brazil



São Paulo - Maksoud Plaza, Veridiana and *Chiabatta*; North of São Paulo - *Canto do Gula*; Itacaré - *Restaurante Dedo de Moça*.

Brazil has always been noted for its exceptional cuisine influenced by its rich cultural diversity. In December 2004, Edward F. Nesta and I traveled to Brazil, and stayed there well into January 2005, and we found several outstanding restaurants that you will want to definitely highlight for your next trip to Brazil.

São Paulo and the surrounding area:



Maksoud Plaza, Alameda Campinas, 150, São Paulo, www.maksoud.com, prides itself on its restaurants. In addition to being a luxury hotel, it also has fine restaurants that offer guests a wide selection of gastronomic diversity from offering traditional Brazilian cuisine, to French, Italian and Continental cuisine. We enjoyed a fabulous dinner with Marco Jorge, Director of Marketing and Sales, and began with an appetizer of Casquinha de Siri Gratinada, (Crabmeat gratinee in the shell), which is a favorite of mine, followed by Salmão ao Molho de Cogumelos Morilles (Fresh Chilean Salmon with a morel mushroom sauce served with spaghetti with vegetable threads), which was very tasty, and Tornedos à Maturini con Talharim Tricolor, (Beef tenderloin with green peppercorns, raisins, honey and cognac in rotie sauce with tricolor tagliarini), which was perfectly cooked and seasoned. Portions are ample, so we had to bypass dessert.

Veridiana, Rua Donna Veridiana, 661, is a definite must for pizza lovers. Our musician friend, and pizza connoisseur, Renato Pascon found this upscale pizza restaurant, that features exposed brick walls, an enormous wood-burning oven, and live jazz! We went there with Renato, his fiancée, Lauren, his brother Marcelo, and his mother, Gicelia. The pizza was outstanding, and the casual but sophisticated ambience attracts a hip crowd that in addition to appreciating great pizza also enjoy great jazz.



Chiabatta, at the **Casa Grande Hotel Resort & Spa**, Avenida Miguel Stefano, 1001, Guarujá, www.casagrandehotel.com.br, proves itself to be another worthy restaurant. Edward and I, along with our friends, Dr. Daniela Bittencourt and Dr. Andre Malta had a really exceptional lunch at this stylish restaurant located on the second floor of the hotel, with amazing ocean views of Praia da Enseada. Our selections

Created by: Debra C. Argen

included Saumon em sauce lavanda com amendoas tostadas, e pontas de aspargos frescoes e ervilhas da horta, (Salmon in a lavender sauce with toasted almonds, served with fresh asparagus tips and garden peas), which was an absolutely beautiful dish with a delicate lavender sauce that was fabulous with the salmon; Caçarola de camarão com palmito natural e arroz de Lauça com dados de frutos frescas, (Casserole of shrimp with palm hearts and Lauça rice with diced fresh fruit), Camarões jumbo em crosta de pistachio e sauce vanilla com quenelles de polenta e alecrim, (Sautéed prawns in a pistachio crust with a vanilla sauce with polenta quenelles and rosemary), which I found to be another really exceptional dish with its crunchy pistachio crust and hint of vanilla sauce; and Panelinha de frutas do mar com ervas, (Seafood pot with herbs), a seemingly endless pot of seafood goodies. Daniela, our tapioca aficionado, had to sample the Crêpe da tapioca, (a tapioca Crêpe filled with chocolate cream, in a pistachio sauce and garnished with sliced bananas, which she gave two forks up, that is, after she finished every last bite!

North of São Paulo:

Canto da Gula, Av. Ministro Nelson Hungria, 328 in Santo Antônio de Pinhal, is a charming small restaurant, with handcrafted items on its walls as decoration. Located in the mountains, it offers more hearty fare and is open for lunch only on the weekends and during the holidays, and for dinner Thursday through Sunday. We stopped at this restaurant for lunch after playing in nearby waterfalls with our friends, Eloa Maria da Oliviera, Cândido Gonçalves and Regina and Gilberto Sacilotti, and were impressed with the menu and the service.

Itacaré:

Restaurante Dedo de Moça, www.dedodemoca.com, Rua Plinio Soares, 26, in Itacaré, is an upscale pretty restaurant offering a sophisticated menu with a well-stocked bar in this sleepy little artsy town. Edward and I, along with our friends, Regina and Gilberto Sacilotti worked our way through a delicious assortment of breads, tasty appetizers, salad and entrees. Alas, we were too satisfied to try any of the desserts on the menu.

For additional information on Bahia, please contact the **Bahia Tourism Office** at: www.bahia.com.br.

Please read our other articles on **Brazil in Destinations, Hotels & Resorts, Restaurants, Gastronomy, Chefs' Recipes, Spa and Music Scene**. You may also enjoy our articles the “**Best of São Paulo**” and “**From Rio with Love**” in **Destinations**.

© April 2005. Luxury Experience www.luxuryexperience.com. All rights reserved.