

Gay São Paulo

Gay life in the city.

You can say that many of the world's major cities have really come out of the closet in the last decade, but nowhere else is that more true than in São Paulo. Its first Gay Pride was in 1997 and only attracted about 2000 people. Ten years later it had about 3.5 million participants, making it the world's biggest gay parade. A few days before that major event in 2007, about one million evangelical Christians protested against homosexuality, but that just may have served as inspiration to the city's gay and gay-friendly population to come out stronger and attract over three times more people to the gay parade.

With over 10 million residents, São Paulo has more people than many countries. As you'd expect in such a big metropolis, there is a variety of restaurants, bars, and clubs to enjoy. You'll find that many of the nightlife hotspots are highly sophisticated and hip, yet refreshingly unpretentious. In the Jardins district you'll see flyers advertising the special parties at the city's biggest clubs, but whenever you're wondering where you should go, simply follow our recommendations below.

Vermont Itaim

Dine at this restaurant and stay late for when it turns into a gay bar. It offers good pastas and salads, live music on most nights, and resident DJs on weekends. Lesbian samba parties have taken place here on Sundays.

A Loca

This club has been a major gay destination for over a decade, with every night having a different DJ but always with the sounds of techno or house. There are three bars serving a variety of drinks, while the lounge upstairs is for those not yet in the mood to hit the dancefloor. You'll find all sorts of people in the crowd, from drag queens putting on a show to muscled pretty boys.

Audio Delicatessen

The "Delicatessen" in the name is misleading, as this is really a bar/lounge. Various DJs make the rock and electronic music selections, as a young and older crowd sips caipirinhas, cocktails, and both national and imported beers. Others dance in the dark space decorated in a trio of colors: orange, purple and black.

Cantho

This club was made for dancing, and that's just what everyone does. The gay crowd and a few of their straight friends move to the hottest hits of the 70s, 80s, 90s, and today, and take breaks at one of the three bars. It has a slightly kitschy décor, with 1970s mirror balls doing many of the lighting effects.

The Week

This major hotspot is where the world's top DJs do their thing when they're in town. It's not gay but gay-friendly (perhaps straight-friendly), with a mixed crowd including gym-sculpted 30-somethings and twinkles getting together on the dancefloor.

Vegas Club

This club turns gay on Friday and Saturday nights. It's still mixed on those nights, but that's when a large number of gay Paulistas dance to the sounds mixed by one of the resident DJs. There's a large bar for drinks and an outdoor area to get some fresh air.

Clube Gloria

Previously a church, this is now a gay-friendly club. Check yourself and admire others through the mirrors that surround the place, and have a drink at one of the four bars. Don't bother passing by during the week, as it only opens on Friday and Saturday nights.

SoGo

Three resident DJs take turns mixing high-energy sounds at this club which opens from Thursday to Sunday.

There are three bars, two dancefloors, and a VIP section, while the music goes from 70s hits to today's house mixes. There are also go go boy shows and cruising in "the dungeon."

D-Edge

São Paulo hipsters (and that includes a large number of young gay guys) flock to this trendy club for the big-name DJs, dancing under flashing colored lights.

Gay-friendly restaurants

Chakras

Quite popular with the gay community, this restaurant serves contemporary cuisine in an Asian-inspired space. It's also home to cultural exhibitions and events.

Consulado Mineiro

You'll find a significant number of gay guys on Saturdays at this restaurant in Praça Benedito Calixto. Its menu lists traditional Brazilian dishes, especially from Minas Gerais, a northern region of the country that's also reflected in the décor.

Spot

As one of the most fashionable restaurants in the city, it's only natural that it gets a sizable gay clientele. It's the see-and-be-seen spot (the name is quite appropriate), serving dishes that combine European and Asian flavors.

Tordesilhas

It's named after the treaty that divided the world between Portugal and Spain, but the food is all Brazilian. It's a welcoming, gay-friendly place with a charming decor.

Saunas

Termas for Friends

Keep in mind that most saunas in Brazil are frequented by "rent boys." While São Paulo has over a dozen of gay saunas, one of the only two we could recommend is Termas for Friends. It officially prohibits those types of gay-for-pay services, so if that's what you're looking for, this is not the place for you. It's a big, clean sauna with a good atmosphere, but best of all is its garden.

Thermas Lagoa

As one of the best and best-known saunas in São Paulo, this one gets a diverse crowd. In addition to the typical sauna services there are special events throughout the week.

Lesbians

Boteco Ouzar

This lesbian hangout is a fun place to play pool and have a few drinks. There is also a large number of sandwich options if you get hungry.

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