

Visit São Paulo and stamp your passport to 52 countries and the most varied styles of restaurants and cuisines

In search of one of the ten best restaurants in the world? The D.O.M., of Chef Alex Atala, was elected in 2011 by the British traditional cuisine magazine "Restaurant" as the seventh best on the planet. Or a unique experience where, when least expected, the waiters start singing Broadway acclaimed songs while savoring a first class cuisine? Go to the Brooklyn restaurant in the district of the same name, prepare the heart and palate.

If you prefer a more relaxed atmosphere with divine appetizers ranging from a simply indescribable coxinha (the Frangó, for example, at Freguesia do Ó), a hearty Italian mortadella sandwich (in several stands of Mercado) or a traditional pastel de feira [homemade pastry] (there are many options and one of the most famous is the fair held in front of the Paulo Machado de Carvalho stadium, popularly known as Pacaembu).

Pizzas? If the Italians created the delicacy, the São Paulo people improved it and made it a real institution, which can be savored at charming, old houses, such as Veridiana (Higienópolis) or Leona (Campo Belo), with thin pasta such as at Camelo or Cristal in Jardins, thicker, such as at Castelões in Brás, or even at the bakeries, another São Paulo institution. There are thousands of bakeries across the city, which go far beyond the bread, which is already a delight by itself. Prefer all-you-can eat? Then choose from traditional barbecues, soups or even buffet of sushi or Japanese food in general.

Comprised of over 50 nationalities and Brazilians from all states who came to São Paulo and here established their roots, the city of São Paulo is a true mosaic of cultures that directly reflects in its identity – multicultural and diverse – and consequently, in its cuisine, which makes the capital one of the largest cuisine centers in the world.

The city has about 12,500 restaurants, originating from 52 nationalities and the most diverse influences of national cuisine, often mixed with spices and international trends of contemporary cuisine forming an indescribable combination – literally, it is necessary to try. And the numbers continue significantly. Moreover, 15,000 bars are counted in the four corners of the city. The São Paulo capital also has 600 Japanese restaurants, 3.2 thousand bakeries and 6,000 pizzerias. Here, 10.4 million rolls are made daily (or 7.2 thousand per minute), one million pizzas (720/min) and 400 thousand sushi's (278/min).

This is very well translated by the mix of colors and flavors of the Cantareira Municipal Market, in the central area, better known as Mercado, where gourmets and gourmands find everything – spices, sweets, vegetables, meats, fish and the most famous codfish pastry or mortadella sandwich of São Paulo.

In Liberdade, there are oriental restaurants and many pastelarias (pastry shops). Bixiga is the canteens district, with a multitude of options. In Vila Madalena, there are typical bars and taverns, with mouth-watering appetizers. But long ago, São Paulo crossed those boundaries. Japanese restaurants, for example, are no longer just in the district of Liberdade – one can find great sushis in Jardins, Pinheiros, and Morumbi. Quibes and esfihas are in Vila Mariana, Paraíso, and Higienópolis, in addition to French restaurants in Consolação, or Vila Madalena.

Just think about a particular cuisine and leave the hotel. In São Paulo you can always find a restaurant, bar or night clubs to your liking. Everything depends on the ratio between your money and your desires. Whatever the indicators are, you will not be left empty-handed. In some areas, you can find restaurants according to the visitor's profile and budget. As a practical city, São Paulo also has countless fast-food restaurants – especially snack bars, from the international chains to the most chic. The fashion in São Paulo is to try "brand name" hamburgers, seasoned by chefs of the first magnitude. Most of them are in the district of Itaim.

The southern area has bars, restaurants and night clubs for all tastes. In the districts of Moema and Ibirapuera, you can focus on Av. Lavandisca: there are several bars there, from trendy to traditional, passing by Italian canteens. The sweet-shops also do well and may stay open 24 hours, such as Ofner, at Av. Ibirapuera or Rua João Cachoeira. The German presence is strong at the restaurants of the area, such as at the German Konstanz

and Windhuk (trout is a must), and the Swiss Florina and Platz.

Now, in Vila Mariana, be prepared for good charades. One of them is to find out where they serve the best esfiha: at the neighbors Catedral and Jaber or at some other Arabian food emporium in the area. If you want another type of appetizer, resort to Rancho da Empada and their finger foods that deserve applause. Rua Joaquim Tavora concentrates some of the best bars in the district, frequented by students of the Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing (ESPM) during the week. There is always a guarantee of beautiful and lively people at the next table.

The pizza is well represented by places like Braz – a neighbor of the great bar Original, in Moema. Itaim houses the “hamburger corridor”, at Rua Joaquim Floriano; the sandwich is served with caprice in traditional cafeterias, such as Joakin’s, New Dog and General Prime Burger, headed by star chef Sérgio Arno at the parallel Rua Leopoldo Couto Magalhães Jr.

In the Paulista Avenue area, there are some of the best restaurants in town, from sandwiches to the sophisticated homes of the Jardins, passing through the coolest and “trendy” ambiances. On one of its side streets, Rua Haddock Lobo, living peacefully together the great Arábia, serving Moroccan couscous, on Saturdays, and the Jewish rotisserie Z-Deli, with an excellent gefilte fish, fried and recommended only for well reinforced budgets, and the Figueira Rubayat (photo) and Fasano – inside the luxurious hotel of the family – represent the haute cuisine in the city

If you do not know whether to meet celebrities or be seen as one, decide at the tables of the Spot. Three blocks from Paulista Avenue, the Mestiço is packed every night, with beautiful and famous people circulating among the tables, making it difficult to decide between a Thai coxinha or acarajé from Bahia. For the hungry of the dawn, the good bakery Galeria dos Pães, Rua Estados Unidos, prepares sandwiches and serves a buffet of soups fiercely fought over. Another bakery, open for less than a year, but which is already adding fans in the city is the Villa Grano, in Vila Madalena, more precisely at Rua Wisard, also open 24 hours, in addition to Bella Paulista, one block from Paulista.

For those who cherish tradition, be sure to visit the district of Bixiga – or Bela Vista, for the most formal. In the district, Rua Treze de Maio and its side streets gather old canteens, where the order is to serve hearty portions. One of the most traditional pizzerias of the city is located there, Speranza – responsible for introducing the margherita pizza to Brazilians and an indescribable sausage bread. Among the several canteens, towards Consolação, in Higienópolis, near Av. Angélica, be sure to try the most traditional – and delicious – polpetone of the city, in Jardim di Napoli. Enjoy and have a genuine Parmesan cheese appetizer.

If bohemian is your thing, find your gang in Vila Madalena, in the western area. On its streets of such different names such as Aspicuelta (name of a Spanish priest of the sixteenth century), Girassol (the sunflower) and Purpurina (glitter), there are bars for all tastes: “classic” taverns, with tiles on the wall, cold beer, and bean soup, such as Bar Filial, there are those who meet journalists and soccer fans, such as São Cristóvão (in honor of a team from Rio of which very few remember...); and for the GLS (Gays, Lesbians, and Sympathizers), the Farol Madalena is the great tip.

The churrascarias (barbecue restaurants) are another major attraction in the state capital. And there are examples for all tastes and budgets. In São Paulo, they are more than 500. Most of them are on the marginal avenues and also on Avenida 23 de Maio. Among the famous buffets, Fogo de Chão (Av. 23 de Maio and Av. dos Bandeirantes), Jardineira (Av. dos Bandeirantes), Rodeio (Rua Haddock Lobo), Vento Haragano (Av. Rebouças). When it comes to meat a la carte, the options also are many – the chain Rubaiyat (Baby Beef and Figueira), in Paradise, Itaim and Jardins, are attended by an audience with high purchasing power. And it is often considered the best beef house of São Paulo.

And since this is the theme, there are many Argentinean and Uruguayan restaurants around town, with tender and juicy meat, according to tradition, also for all budgets. Highlights are for the Argentinean Bárbaro, in Itaim, Parrilla Argentina, in Saúde, or La Caballeriza, at Al. Campinas, and the Uruguayan El Tranvía, in the area of Higienópolis/Santa Cecília. Do not forget to ask for cheese soufflé as a side dish.

From across the world, the Japanese restaurants have taken over the city and range from sophisticated like Jun Sakamoto or Nakombi, to the more accessible, such as Koi, of a good quality and present in several areas of the city. And there are also the Japanese buffets, plenty in the areas of Pinheiros/Vila Madalena and Jardins, such as Mori Sushi and Kabuki, or Olímpia/Itaim, with highlights to the Noyoi. And there are many special ambiances for late-night, such as Forneria São Paulo or Pasta e Vino. If you prefer the romantic ones – in the winter, there are many options for fondues in the city, to be savored by two, such as the Casa da Suíça, in Pinheiros, or Chalet Suisse, in the São Paulo Othon Hotel, downtown.

By the way, the City center has good options for those who do not want or cannot spend a lot, the Bar do Léo, at Rua Aurora, is among the most traditional, as well as the Estadão, at Avenida Nove de Julho, in Anhangabaú. For medium budgets and MPB lovers, the Bar Brahma completes one of the most famous corners in the city – the intersection of Avenida Ipiranga with Av. São João. And there other charming options in the area, such as the Café Girondino, of the 19th century, the monks' rotisserie of Mosteiro de São Bento, inside the Monastery, or the traditional Terraço Itália, on the 44th floor of the building of the same name, and with a beautiful 360o view of the city of São Paulo.

Another amazing view of the city is from the Skye, on top of the Hotel Unique, on Av. Brigadeiro Faria Lima, led by chef Emmanuel Bassoleil; or The View, both in Jardins; special ambiances also for the French La Tambouille, or the Italian La Risotteria; and also contemporary and divine cuisine of star chefs such as Carla Pernambuco (Carlota), Morena Leite (Capim Santo), Bella Masano (Amadeus) and the always divine Sergio Arno (La Vecchia Cuccina). In an authentic Italian alley, this is how anyone feels visiting the beautiful Il Viccolo Nostro, in Brooklyn, on the south side of town.

But the delights are not limited to tables of bars and restaurants. They go through sweet-shops such as Cristallo, Maria Brigadeiro, chocolates from Chocolat du Jour, Häagen-Dazs ice creams, Stuppendo, Sottozero or Gelateria Parmalat, all in Jardins, but with a few branches around town, especially in the malls.

Another puzzle for the São Paulo people, residents and visitors, is to choose the best coffee. The Express is another local institution, and there are points where they will receive that refinement of flavors and aromas of dozens of combinations. Try Suplicy in Al. Lorena, Café Florinda, in Vila Madalena, Octávio Café, on Av. Brigadeiro Faria Lima, and many Frans Café 24 hours, and Starbucks, in many districts.

There is much more. Come and explore your senses. And speaking of them, there are also many fine wines and restaurants with first class wine lists, with a large number of options. But that is a topic for another script.

“The establishments mentioned in this material are for illustrative purposes only. The objective of São Paulo Turismo is to promote the city of São Paulo, independently, and without any link to the establishments.”