

## Episode 3: Rio de Janeiro

### Summary

Nick's English friend Luke has lived in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the past three years with his wife and young son. Nick and Luke talk about the things Luke likes about living in Rio and the experiences he has had there.

### Transcript

Nick: Today I'm talking to my friend Luke about your adopted home city, which is Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Uhh, how long have you lived in Rio?

Luke: Umm, just over three years now.

Nick: OK, and I think it's probably fair to say that you've enjoyed it?

Luke: Yeah, it's fantastic. It's, umm, it's known as the *cidade maravilhosa* by the locals. *Cariocas*, which means people from Rio, umm, are really proud of the city. And for me, it's, uhh, fantastic. I love it. I love ... I came here when I was 19, and, umm, and umm, thought it was fan ... thought it was just the coolest city I'd ever seen, a mixture of mountains and sea and forest, so close together, umm, I love. And now, slightly when I came back three years ago, it hit me a bit more that there's a lot of buildings involved as well. Umm, it's quite a messy city, uhh, the buildings are not very pretty, there are areas where there are pretty buildings, but generally it's a vibrant, fun, outdoors place, with, uhh, just full of cool people.

Nick: Right, so I guess when you came here the first time you were just here for holidays, and of course, you know, you're always going to think, 'Oh wow, this place is great.' So has it been a little bit different now living and working, with different responsibilities and things like that?

Luke: Yeah, that's definitely true. I mean when ... I still feel, I still say to some people that I'm in a honeymoon period<sup>1</sup> still after three years, because we arrived and moved to Copacabana because we wanted to be near the sea, right on the sea, so we didn't have to get any transport to get to the beach, and we're still there. We now live in an end of Copacabana called Lemme, it's a little bit more

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<sup>1</sup> in a honeymoon period: he still loves the city as though he had just arrived, like the way you feel about your marriage when you are on your honeymoon (pretty good!)

community-esque<sup>2</sup> than the other parts, but, umm, there are annoying things about the city. It's quite dirty, uhh, it's a little bit tense, uhh, there's a lot of, umm, pollution, and then the bureaucracy and the inability to get things done is quite tricky.

Nick: OK, umm, and so you came with a one-year-old child when you first arrived?

Luke: Yep.

Nick: And has that had its challenges as well?

Luke: Yeah that was interesting, because I think when we came ... it was kind of useful in a way because you meet a lot of people quite quickly, because other people with kids, Brazilians ... one thing, one of the many things I really love about Brazilians, they're mad about kids. And so, they come up to you in the street and without even looking at the parent they pick up your kid and talk to him or her and are really friendly. And he has, actually, most of the time it's been a positive, he's loved it. Again, the outdoor stuff I really like with him. He's grown up and for three years, and nearly every day he can run about outdoors, umm, and, just the general, yeah the general vibe<sup>3</sup> is good for kids.

Nick: And he - at age four he speaks better Portuguese than you do.

Luke: He does speak a lot better Portuguese than me.

Nick: OK, and so what do you- so there's these famous, very famous aspects of the city: Copacabana Beach and Christ the Redeemer and Sugarloaf Mountain. For you what's the best part of the city in that regard?

Luke: Of the famous, sort of, parts?

Nick: Yeah.

Luke: Well I still think Ipanema Beach is pretty special. Umm, I love Copacabana too, and the far end of Copacabana where I live on an evening is fantastic. The sun sets out to one side of it, umm, and that's pretty cool, but the view from, umm, Ipanema and if you, generally the water looks a bit cleaner, certainly, and if you swim out a little bit, you're then looking and you can see these two mountains, they're called *Dois Irmãos*, the two brothers, and you can see Christ in the background on top of his hill, and the city, and it's pretty fantastic.

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<sup>2</sup> community-esque: putting 'esque' at the end of a word is often an unofficial way to turn a noun into an adjective; a common real example is picturesque

<sup>3</sup> vibe: atmosphere, feeling

Nick: Is there a kind of different vibe in the people or in the types of places at the two beaches, or is it more just the view and the sea?

Luke: No there is a different vibe. Ipanema is, uhh, well it's smarter<sup>4</sup> generally, the area is smarter and a bit more upmarket, but then, umm, what's cool about ... there's no such thing as a private beach in Brazil. It's enshrined in law that the beach is for everyone. So on a holiday or on a Sunday, Ipanema - one end of it, anyway - gets insanely<sup>5</sup> busy because it's near a metro stop, so it's easy for the vast majority of the population to come in from quite a way, and Copacabana likewise. The middle of Copacabana is a bit less, uhh, it's just a bit, it's normally a little bit dirtier and a bit more rowdy<sup>6</sup> and a bit less attractive than either end, and then Ipanema is probably a bit more attractive.

Nick: And when you go up the mountains to Sugarloaf or to the Christ, what do you see, or what makes it special to go to a place like that?

Luke: Well I think, the first thing is the forest, because although it's a big hulking<sup>7</sup>, like, dirty city, there, umm, there is so much greenery, and it's the world's largest urban forest apparently, as I read in my guide book, umm, when we first got here. And, uhh, but it is really cool up there, so if you're going- I've walked up to the Christ three or four times, and you walk, you hike for an hour and a half through forest, and you don't, from Copacabana it takes you 20 minutes, you could cycle it, or 20 minutes by car to get to the bottom and you're in the middle of the city and then you walk up and you're through forest and then you get up there and you just see so much, obviously so many buildings, but you see the huge lagoon that on its own would be the centrepiece of any city and then the racetrack right in the middle of the city and all these areas that you think would have been built, you know, would have been overtaken by man. Umm, and it's, yeah, it's a mind-blowing view, I love it. And I love the fact that you can see the Christ from almost anywhere in the city, and he's watching.

Nick: OK, and what about the security, because people are really scared sometimes when they come, they think they're going to be robbed everywhere, as we all did, uhh, this week, but have you had any problems with security?

Luke: No, I have to say, yes, for three years I haven't had any real problems. We live just off a really, pretty busy road, that connects Copacabana with, uhh, the main part of, sort of, downtown and on a holiday or on a Sunday in the early evening it's,

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<sup>4</sup> smarter: in this context Luke means that it's cleaner and attracts wealthier people

<sup>5</sup> insanely: extremely

<sup>6</sup> rowdy: a bit rough, noisy and disorderly - the opposite of smart earlier in the paragraph

<sup>7</sup> hulking: Luke means that the city has lots of large buildings

the feeling, I'm always aware to be a bit careful. My wife has had a couple of small incidents in three years, but most of the time it's been when, one time she was walking speaking on her phone and when we first arrived, we wouldn't do that much in the street, and the other time it was a group of young kids, umm, who actually can be, yeah, a source of problem.

Nick: That's the sort of thing that can happen anywhere.

Luke: I think so. Yeah for me you've just got to be as sensible as you would be in London...

Nick: And did you have any trouble finding work?

Luke: Umm, I was really lucky, in that, not too much trouble. I spent a lot of time preparing beforehand, meeting a lot of people, getting a lot of contacts and coming out here for a visit to set up things and have meetings. Umm, but having said that, umm, after the Olympic Games I'm not sure how difficult it's going to be in my, in the media industry to find work for a foreigner. I'm worried it might be quite tricky<sup>8</sup>.

Nick: And you might be leaving soon. Are you already a little bit worried about that, or are you already feeling like you'll regret leaving as soon as you're gone?

Luke: Yeah a little bit. I think since, umm, we decided at the beginning of this year, more or less, that we were almost certainly gonna go at the end of the year, I have regular pangs<sup>9</sup> on a beautiful day, that, 'What on earth am I doing?' And that, the standard of life, the standard of outdoor life, may not be anywhere better where, especially with a kid, or you know, if we have more kids, you can go on a Sunday afternoon, 'Oh we haven't really planned anything, it's 3:30, oh stuff it<sup>10</sup>, let's just go to the beach,' and then you sat there on a pretty deserted nice beach...

Nick: So that's what you'd miss the most, this outdoor beach and jungle together.

Luke: Yeah, and night-time being able to run along the beach for a jog or a cycle.

Nick: Brilliant, thanks a lot.

Luke: Thank you very much.

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<sup>8</sup> tricky: in this context, Luke means a bit difficult

<sup>9</sup> pangs: sudden feelings (in this case, of regret that he has decided to leave Rio)

<sup>10</sup> stuff it: forget it, never mind, let's not worry about it

## Comprehension Questions

1. In general, what is Luke's favourite thing about Rio?
2. More specifically, what is his favourite single attraction in Rio and why?
3. How do Brazilians react to Luke's four-year-old son?

## Exercises

*Use the words and expressions in the footnotes of the transcript to fill in the gaps.*

1. English fans at football matches can get a bit \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I didn't want to pay that much, but in the end I just thought, \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I've had this job for 10 years but I still feel like I am \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It can be a bit \_\_\_\_\_ to use an Android phone if you're used to an iPhone.
5. In Paris, Montmartre has an artsy \_\_\_\_\_ about it.
6. The square was dominated by a big, \_\_\_\_\_ statue.
7. He felt \_\_\_\_\_ of regret every time he saw her after they had broken up.
8. The bus was \_\_\_\_\_ crowded.
9. A village usually has a more \_\_\_\_\_ vibe than a city.
10. Some areas of London are a lot \_\_\_\_\_ than they used to be.

## Discussion Questions

*Discuss these questions with a partner or in the [English in 10 Minutes Listeners group on Facebook](#):*

1. Would you like to live in Rio? Why or why not?
2. Have you been to places like Rio that are considered dangerous? If so, what security measures did you take?
3. Luke loves the combination of city and nature that Rio offers. Which other cities can you think of that have this combination? Can you describe them?

## Answers

### Comprehension Questions

1. He likes how he is able to be so close to nature despite living in a large city because of the forests and beaches that Rio has.
2. He likes Ipanema beach because he says it has a different vibe from Copacabana and because of the views of the city and the mountains.
3. Brazilians are very friendly towards Luke's son. Luke says that strangers often just pick him up without even looking at Luke or his wife.

### Exercises

1. rowdy
2. stuff it
3. in a honeymoon period
4. tricky
5. vibe
6. hulking
7. pangs
8. insanely
9. community-esque
10. smarter