

BRIEF INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

Welcome to Natal - Rio Grande do Norte

History of Natal

In the 16th century, The King of Portugal divided Brazil, its colony, into large stripes that were distributed among chosen members of the Portuguese Royalty. The piece that now constitutes the State of Rio Grande do Norte was given to the families of João de Barros and Ayres da Cunha. The first Portuguese expedition set out to colonize this land took place 5 years after the distribution. Before Portuguese arrival, French pirates used to come to the coast to smuggle the wood known as Pau Brazil, after which the country is named. The first attempts of Portuguese colonization failed because the native Potiguares population established an alliance with the French, helping them in fighting the attempts of the Portuguese to settle in the land.

In December 25th 1597, a Portuguese expedition commanded by Mascarenhas Homem and Jerônimo de Albuquerque arrived to fight the French. Twelve days later the Portuguese started to build a Fortress which they named Forte dos Reis Magos, or "Three Kings Fortress", because its construction starting day was dedicated to the "Reis Magos" in the Catholic tradition. The fortress was projected by Father Gaspar de Samperes, who later also projected the Cathedral of the patron saint of [Natal](#), of Our Lady of Presentation.

Immediately after the construction of the fortress, a settlement was created and named Santos Reis city, later to become Natal. There are two versions for this name: one is related to the date the Portuguese fleet entered the Potengi River in 1597, and another to the day the site was occupied by Jerônimo de Albuquerque in 1599, both on Christmas Day, Natal in Portuguese. The routine of the town was completely changed by a Dutch invasion in 1633. For 21 years the fortress became Keulen Castle, and the name Natal changed to New Amsterdam. After the Dutch left, everything changed back to the previous situation.

Natal grew slowly during the first 100 years. By the end of the 19th Century the population of Natal reached around 16.000 people. The growth of Natal accelerated with the first attempts of urbanization in 1922. Due to its peculiar geographic position (it is the nearest point to Africa in America), during the Second World War Natal became a very important North American Air and Sea Base, and developed the yearning to achieve the status of an international city, known to the world.

During the post war years Natal continued to grow together with its population. The implementation of the Via Costeira (Coastal Highway), 10 km (5.5 mi) long avenue along the shore and the dunes, was the true starting point for the beginning of tourist activity in the 1980s. The main hotels, shopping centers, and restaurants of the State of Rio Grande do Norte are located in the capital. Natal has several tourist attractions and is famous for its natural beauty, for its historical monuments and buildings (such as the Forte dos Reis Magos, the Alberto Maranhão Theatre and Newton Navarro bridge), for its beaches such as Ponta Negra, and also for its off-season carnival, the Carnatal. The second largest urban park in Brazil, the Parque das Dunas, is in Natal.



Main Academic Institutions

University of Rio Grande do Norte

The Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, UFRN) is a public Brazilian university funded by the Brazilian federal government. Formally established in December 18, 1960, UFRN was created by Federal Law 3.988 from December 15th, 1961. Today it embraces 60 departments providing 50 different undergraduate courses, as well as a number of graduate programs.

Data obtained from the National Examination Performance of Students in Brazil (ENADE) indicate that UFRN has the best education of all federal universities in the Northeast Region. UFRN is also included among the 25 best universities in Latin America. The University comprises around 27.000 students, 3.062 staff and 1.638 faculty members. UFRN is a major center for the study of seismology in the country. In addition, the university has a graduate program in Complex Systems Applied to Life Sciences, the only one in Latin America. The Brazil's Lawyers Association (OAB) has chosen UFRN's law school (Caicó Campus) as the third best in the country.



International Institute of Physics (IIP)

The International Institute of Physics - <http://www.iip.ufrn.br/>, founded in October 2009, is located at the UFRN campus and is administratively linked to the university Rector. The Institute was created under in a partnership with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) and became an associated organization of that Ministry. The creation of IIP fits within the effort of MCTI to decentralize science and technology throughout the Country. The Institute is open to all areas of Physics. IIP has the mission to foster the exchange of scientific knowledge within the Brazilian and the international community, especially the Latin American community, keeping the permanent goal of developing and carrying out frontier scientific research and acting decisively towards the scientific development of the Country, serving as a link between basic and applied research benefiting strategic areas for the Brazilian economy. The Institute holds annually a series of international conferences on a variety of topics. Two will take place just before and after the Meeting Física 2016:

BOUNDARY DEGREES OF FREEDOM AND THERMODYNAMICS OF INTEGRABLE MODELS WORKSHOP | MON, AUG 22, 2016 | FRI, SEP 02, 2016

Directors: Andreas Klümper, Giuliano Ribeiro, and Vladimir Korepin

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ON LASER-BEAM INTERACTIONS (BRAZIL, FRANCE, ITALY) SCHOOL | THU, SEP 08, 2016 | MON, SEP 12, 2016

Directors: Massimo Ferrario, Antonio Serbeto, Alessandro Variola, Fabian Zomer



Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN)

The Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte was founded in 1909 within an initiative of the recent Republican Federal Government to foster the basic and professional education of the children of workers. In the following year, it started as the School for Craftsmen of Rio Grande do Norte. Along its existence, the Institute passed through many transformations. In 1994, its pedagogical orientation was adapted to the model of "technological education centers", that started to be implanted in Brazil since 1978. Finally, in 2008 it acquired its current status as one of the federal institutes of the National Network of Professional, Scientific and Technologic Education, and has consolidated the reputation of one of the most distinguished centers of excellence in technological education in the country.

During the Física 2106 meeting, a series of lectures and outreach activities for the public in general will be held at IFRN.



Tourism in Natal

There are many sites giving useful information for tourists in Natal,

- <http://turismo.natal.rn.gov.br> (Official site, in Portuguese)
- <http://www.nataltouristguide.com/en/>
- <http://www.natal-brazil.com/>
- <http://www.natalriograndedonorte.com/natal-brazil-overview/>



Gastronomy

Natal offers a great variety of typical dishes, and its diversified gastronomy is leader in the use of shrimps, found in several dishes of the local cuisine. Many of them are based on fish and sea food in general (shrimps, lobster), with the addition of local ingredients such as coconut, and palm tree oil, and are served with green beans, yucca and rice.

Other dishes are typically Northeastern such as carne de sol (sun cured meat), with arroz de leite (rice cooked in milk), paçoca (pronounced as passoca), which is sun cured meat mashed with onions and yucca flour. Commonly the arroz de leite is made with a locally produced rice, called arroz da terra. A typical local dessert would be queijo de qualho (local made cheese), with molasses, made out of sugar cane. Other typical dishes are: Tapioca a tortillalike dish made of yucca flour; Baião de Dois rice and beans cooked together; and Galinha à Cabidela, boiled chicken cooked in its own blood.



Fogo e chama



Caixa de Portugal



Mangá



Pizza de Itatiaia



Restaurants

The three venue hotels, Praia Mar, Rifoletos and Pontalmar, have restaurants and also provide information on other specialized restaurants in the city. Further information can be found in the tourist sites, as the following specialized in restaurants.

<http://www.natalguia.com.br/restaurantes.html>

VISA

Only a tourist visa is required for participants in scientific conferences in Brazil. European and Latin-American citizens do not need a visa to stay up to ninety days in Brazil. Citizens from other countries are usually required to hold a valid visa. However, because of the 2016 Summer Olympics, held in Rio de Janeiro from August 5–21, Brazilian officials have announced they are temporarily waiving visa requirements for

travelers in the country from June 1 through September 18. In addition to U.S. tourists, the visa waiver also applies to citizens holding passports from Japan, Australia, and Canada. Citizens from other countries are advised to contact the nearest Consular Division of the Brazilian Embassy or Brazilian Consulate in the country of residence to check specific visa requirements.

Electric Equipment - Brazilian Standard

Type N is the official standard for sockets and plugs in Brazil, consisting of two alive pins and a grounding one. This standardization of one single plug and socket type, however, does entail some risks because the country does not have a standard voltage, while having only one official type of socket. In Natal the voltage is 220 V, but that is not the case in most regions of the country. So if you travel through Brazil make it sure that you know the correct voltage of the socket you are using.

