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## Brazil Fest

Pompano Beach Festival Celebrates the  
Brazilian Spirit and Promotes Global Unity

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FESTIVAL  
CELEBRATES

# The Brazilian Spirit

AND PROMOTES  
MESSAGES OF  
GLOBAL UNITY

BY DANIELLE CHARBONNEAU

The Rio de Janeiro spirit of Carnival is coming to Pompano Community Park Oct. 22 for the 5th annual Pompano Beach Brazilian festival – the largest Brazilian festival in South Florida and ranked the “Best Brazilian Festival in the United States” by the 2013 International Brazilian Press Awards. Last year’s festival drew approximately 10,000 celebrants to the 300,000-square-foot Pompano Beach park to enjoy a vast array of music, international cuisine and Brazilian festivities.

The festival features over 100 local vendors, 40 food vendors, a kids zone, extreme sports park, two stages, a celebrity VIP area and parading Samba performances by internationally-renowned troupe SambaLá (who performed in the 2010 Rose Parade, the 2014 Coca-Cola World Cup trophy tour and on “Dancing with the Stars”). This year, event organizer and co-founder Luciano Sameli projects the festival will draw nearly 20,000, due mostly to

The Pompano Beach Brazilian Festival will take place Oct. 22, 2016 at Pompano Community Park from 10am to 10pm. Admission is free.





Luciano Sameli

this year's much-anticipated, headlining band, Cidade Negra. Cidade Negra (translation Dark City) is a Latin Grammy award-nominated reggae band who has been performing for nearly two decades.

"Cidade Negra is one of the best reggae bands of all time in Brazil," said Sameli. "They are a historic reggae band with lyrics that promote unity and love."

Unity is a theme Sameli and festival co-founder Mayor

Lamar Fisher hope the event will promote. From its beginning in 2011, the festival has placed emphasis on bridging the gaps between the Broward community at large, and the Brazilian community. Brazilians and Brazilian Americans account for roughly 7 percent of Pompano Beach's total population and 11 percent of Deerfield Beach's (based on the 2000 census data). Roughly 300,000 Brazilians live in South Florida and Broward County has one of the largest percentages of Brazilians per total population outside of Brazil. Ten years ago, in 2006, the Brazilian population in Broward county alone accounted for 63 percent of the tri-county total population of Brazilians (according to the Broward County Urban Planning and Redevelopment Department Planning Services Division).

Understanding the Brazilian's integral and essential part of the Broward community, Mayor Fisher saw the festival as a way to celebrate and connect the community. He recruited Sameli, who at the time was working for a Brazilian television station, to help plan the festival. Since then, the festival has doubled in size.

"We started the first year with approximately 5,000 people. The second year about 7,500, and last year 10,000," said Sameli. "The festival is truly a way of showing what the Brazilian community is capable of doing together. The festival is meant to display that the Brazilian community is united and has outstanding small businesses."

In the last five years, the festival has generated 1,600 temporary jobs and donated more than \$10,000 to local institutions.



# A TASTE OF BRAZIL

BY ABBIE GONÇALVES, FOOD WRITER  
PHOTOS BY HALI WALSH

**The vibrancy and beauty of Brazilian culture can easily be recognized in its samba, soccer and steak! For those who have never explored the "flavors of Brazil," you don't need to book a trip to Rio de Janeiro to get your first taste. Brazilians make up a significant demographic in South Florida, and they have influenced the culture in many ways, one of those being food. It's a cultural experience you don't want to miss. As the wife of a Brazilian, I like to think I have a taste for it. Here are my local picks:**

## CASA DO PASTEL

To start with the basics, you must be sure to visit Casa do Pastel, located near I-95 off of Sample Road. Don't be fooled by the ethnic shopping center and humble displays; Casa do Pastel is one of the best Brazilian bakeries in our area.

If you are a first time visitor, ordering a few "pão de queijo" is the perfect place to start. These little loaves of cheese bread are a Brazilian staple and for good reason. Casa do Pastel is best known for their pastels (hence the name—House of Pastel). These savory baked goods are similar to a the latin food staple, the empanada, and there are vegetarian, beef and chicken varieties. My personal favorite is the chicken and catupiry (cream cheese) coxinha—a fried potato dough pastry. A little bit of ketchup or hot sauce on there and I could eat these for lunch every day. Casa do Pastel also offers a variety of traditional Brazilian deserts and gorgeous cakes. You can also get a desert pastel, freshly made, on-the-spot, with chocolate goodness melted inside.

## PAMPAS GAUCHO

If you are a meat lover, than this next spot is the place of your dreams. This traditional Brazilian churrascaria (steakhouse) features all-you-can-eat meat, as well as an extensive wine list and a delicious anti-pasta bar. Pampas Gaucho opened just this year on Federal Highway in Lighthouse Point and already has a steady following. A rotation of meats, ranging from picanha (top sirloin) to shrimp, is brought on long metal skewers and cut right onto your plate. My favorites were the filet mignon, the oh-so-tender beef ribs, and the top sirloin—cooked medium rare. There is a small plastic coin on the table that you flip to communicate with the servers. Red means, "I'm still working on my plate;" green means, "bring on the meat!" With all the delicious flavors coming from the kitchen, "green" is the safest bet so you don't miss anything. The salad



bar has a wide selection and also offers the traditional rice and black beans that compliment the meat perfectly. In addition to all this, throughout the meal, small sides are brought to your table including mashed potatoes, Brazilian cheese bread and fried plantains. And if you aren't quite full (which isn't likely) they have a dessert cart featuring Brazilian classics like brigadeiro cake (chocolate and condensed milk goodness) and Florida favorites like Key lime pie. The decoration and outside appearance of this restaurant are not much to speak of, but the wait staff is attentive and extremely friendly making you feel welcomed and at home the moment you walk in. They are open every night for dinner at 5pm and for lunch Friday through Sunday from noon to 3pm.

## BARRACUDA

Located in the heart of Deerfield Beach is another incredible Brazilian restaurant with a menu focused primarily on seafood. Barracuda is in a hidden corner near Island Water Sports, but it will quickly make its way to the top of your "dining-out" list. Whether you're looking for a casual lunch after the beach or a night out with friends, this is the place to go. The menu is extensive, creative and delicious. The blackened fish tacos pair perfectly with the Key lime coco caipirinha, a coconut variation of the traditional Brazilian cocktail. The Portuguese clams, mussels and chorizo appetizer is outstanding and is served with a fresh Portuguese bread loaf. The white wine and lemon broth the appetizer is cooked in is so good, you might have to resist tipping the small cast iron pot and drinking the little bit left once the shells have been emptied. One entrée, in particular, intrigued my friend and I when we stopped in for lunch. One taste of the Camarao na Moranga, and I was beyond delighted with our choice. Fresh shrimp sautéed in white wine, then baked in a baby pumpkin and filled to overflowing with tomato-cream sauce. This decadent dish is served with jasmine rice and perfectly cooked vegetables. The shrimp was incredibly soft and flavorful, and the sauce made me want to lick the

plate clean. As I fished out the last few pieces of shrimp from the pumpkin bowl, I decided to scoop out a bite of the beautiful orange flesh. Only my full stomach kept me from gobbling it down as well! "Perfection at every bite" is the best way to describe a dining experience at Barracuda. The chef is truly a master of taste and textures and I personally can't wait to go back and work my way further down the menu. Beyond the delicious dining experience, Barracuda features nightly live entertainment that showcases the best of Brazilian music from samba to Forró. Come early because on nights like Thursday and Sunday there is standing room only.



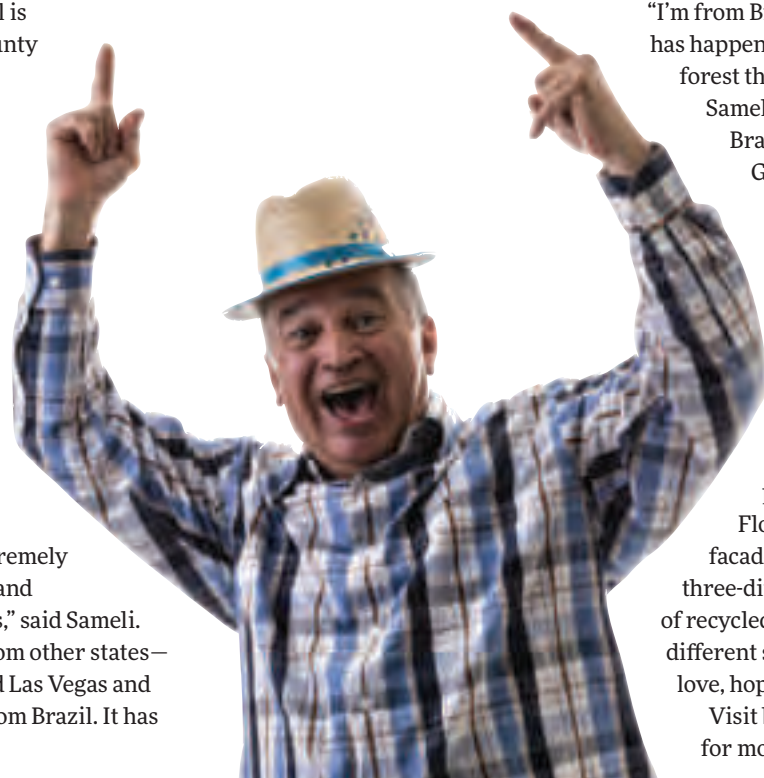




In addition, it has contracted services from about 150 local businesses, and helped more than 400 local small businesses with brand exposure. While the cultural focus of the festival is Brazilian, Sameli says the festival is helping to establish Broward County as a “multi-cultural capital of Florida.”

“Even though the festival is Brazilian, it is also multi-cultural,” Sameli adds. “For example our 40 food vendors—we have Greek food, we have Hispanic foods, we have Brazilian foods and all types of cuisines. We have fish. We have grilled foods. We have a variety that is unbelievable. It’s becoming one of the largest multi-cultural food festivals.”

“The festival has also been extremely important to promote Pompano and Broward nationally and overseas,” said Sameli. “People have been coming out from other states—from New York and Colorado and Las Vegas and California. And a lot of people from Brazil. It has been growing exponentially.”



The music lineup is just as diverse as the food. The festival will feature Paulinho Reis, a rising Brazilian country music star; Thathi, a rebellious rock ‘n’ roll guitarist who will pay tribute to Brazilian legend Cássia Eller and was voted the “Best Cover Artist in Bahia Salvador;” Cravo e Canela, Florida’s own and only Forró Band; and Macaxeira, a samba-reggae band and winner of the international Brazilian Press Award for best Brazilian band in the United States.

In addition to promoting unity and multiculturalism, from the beginning the festival has placed emphasis on promoting environmentally-conscious practices. This year, the infrastructure of the festival—including the set designs and stage — will be built with nearly 100 percent recycled, and recyclable, materials. It’s a cause that’s extremely important to Sameli.

“I’m from Brazil and we have seen what has happened in Brazil in the Amazon forest the past few decades,” said Sameli. “It’s something that makes Brazilians extremely sad.

Global warming is, today, the most important concerns of our generation. So one of the most important things of the festival is the environmental protection and awareness.”

The main “Eco Stage,” where Cidade Negra will perform, is themed “The Flora and Fauna of Brazil.” The facade will be covered with giant, three-dimensional flowers made of recycled paper. Each flower has a different symbolic meaning including love, hope and faith.

Visit [brazilianfestpompano.org](http://brazilianfestpompano.org) for more information.

## Music at the Festival

### Cidade Negra

Having performed for over two decades, Cidade Negra is a Brazilian reggae legend. The band formed in 1991 and in 2002 recorded their first acoustic record on MTV Brasil. In 2001 Cidade Negra was nominated for a Latin Grammy music award, and in 2005 for the Brazilian VMAs (VMB) for best music video.

### Thathi

Thathi is a Brazilian pop singer from Salvador, Bahia. At age 11 she won her first guitar. At 13, Thathi was already performing in shows on the road. Her show, entitled “Cássia Eller by Thathi” will pay tribute to Eller, the legendary Brazilian rock ‘n’ roll musician. Thathi is known for her deep voice, electric personality, rebellious spirit and eclectic style.

### Cravo e Canela

Cravo e Canela is the only South Florida band that plays traditional Forró, the most popular genre of music and dance in Brazil’s Northeast. Historically, “going to the Forró” meant simply going to party. The music is based on a combination of three instruments accordion, zabumba (a type of bass drum) and a metal triangle.

### Macaxeira

Macaxeira was founded in 1999. Led by Victor Souza, the band will perform a wide variety of music in English and Portuguese. Their repertoire includes covers from Brazilian and American performers infused with the rhythms of Samba. Macaxeira recently won the International Brazilian Press Award for the best Brazilian band in the United States.

### Paulinho Reis

A southern Brazilian native, Pauinho Reis performs in the Sertanejo musical style, a country-folk style of Brazilian music. Paulinho has thousands of fans on YouTube and has developed a cult following of ardent fans.

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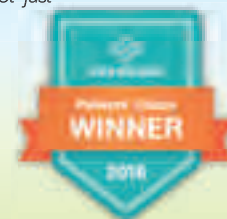


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