

Rodrigo Oliveira
Chef de cozinha
Esquina Mocotó AND Mocotó Restaurante

Rodrigo Oliveira and Mocotó

Mocotó, now one of the most praised restaurants by international food critics, chefs and food lovers.

This is not just a restaurant serving Brazilian food. It is a real Brazilian restaurant, in which the guests have a unique opportunity to experience Brazilian hospitality, exquisite food and cocktails in a casual and warm atmosphere.

For Brazilians, the restaurant represents a link between their past and their future

For foreigners, it is a piece of Brazil with intense flavors, colors and textures, showing the best, original and sincere gastronomy that the country has to offer

Honest, simple and fabulous food, cocktails made with fresh fruit from the tropics, the best cachaças, and a chef who is always in the kitchen and lives what he preaches – is this the beginning of a new food revolution?

The food at Mocotó represents comfort, and expresses identity and pride of a Brazilian region that lives with extreme heat and monsoons, but is rich in its simplicity and warm-hearted people.

Elle japonesa – elege RO um dos jovens chefs mais influentes do mundo.

2. Rodrigo Oliveira (Mocotó a San Paolo): “La cucina brasiliana semplicemente non esiste. Il Brasile è un continente nel continente con mille volti e culture che rendono forti cucine popolari e povere. Rodrigo Oliveira sta codificando la tradizione che meglio conosce per elevarla al rango di grande cucina mondiale. Due secoli dopo la Francia e uno dopo l’Italia”.

Two French chefs, Claude Troisgros and Laurent Suaudeau, who fell in love with Brazil in the 1980s have begun to incorporate indigenous

produce into their classic cuisine, opening the doors for many other chefs for developing an authentic haute cuisine with a Brazilian identity.

However, one particular restaurant outside the chic urban area of the metropolis is now the highlight of the gastro-scene in Sao Paulo, the gastronomic capital of Brazil. It is Mocotó, now one of the most praised restaurants by international food critics, chefs and food lovers. This is not just a restaurant serving Brazilian food. It is a real Brazilian restaurant, in which the guests have a unique opportunity to experience Brazilian hospitality, exquisite food and cocktails in a casual and warm atmosphere.

Democratic gastronomy is the hidden subtitle of Mocotó. There are no reservations, and it is affordable to all pockets. The workers and businessmen in suits share the space at the bar, or wait for a table with no VIP treatment. There are no tablecloths, no fine cutlery and no designer plates...

The food satisfies both a farmer and a gourmet, and has proved that it is possible for a restaurant to please all types of guest. The secret of Mocotó's success lies behind the stove!

Rodrigo Oliveira, son of "Seu José", is the protagonist of the Mocotó story! Or, to be fair, the protagonist of the second phase of the tale!

It all began with his father, José Oliveira de Almeida...

Born in a small village in the backland (sertão) of Pernambuco, he arrived in São Paulo with nothing but his clothes, and after many years of hard work in factories, he decided in 1973 to open a small bar with his brother. A year later he went on his own, opening a small bar which became famous with his Calf-foot jelly soup (similar to Ox hoof), called in Brazil 'Caldo de Mocotó'. People used to queue in front of the small bar only for a cup of the delicacy! In 1979 he decided to open a bigger place in front of the bar, which became the actual restaurant.

In 2004, his son, Rodrigo, at that time an Environmental Engineering student, began a new phase at "Seu José's Bar". Rodrigo had intended to have an academic future but a hidden passion for gastronomy became more important, and he decided to embrace the family business, much against his father's will. From that point on, Rodrigo Oliveira turned the place into the most emblematic Brazilian restaurant in the country, and

at the same time helped the city of São Paulo to heal the wounds caused by the discrimination against the food of workers from the northeastern regions, labeled up till then as food for the poor.

Rodrigo has also a special passion for the Brazilian spirit, cachaça, and Mocotó is called Restaurant and 'Cachaçaria' because of the extensive collection of the sugar cane spirit. The chef has travelled 30,000km around the country to find small artisans, and his cachaça menu now is unique, with almost 400 references!

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Mocotó shows that it is possible to stage an affordable and democratic gastronomy, and that 'fine-simple food is not a contradictory concept! At Mocotó, 'poor' meat cuts are elevated to a high status, and previously forgotten vegetables are prepared to perfection, as if they were a rare asparagus. Honest, simple and fabulous food, cocktails made with fresh fruit from the tropics, the best cachaças, and a chef who is always in the kitchen and lives what he preaches - is this the beginning of a new food revolution?

For Brazilians, the restaurant represents a link between their past and their future, and a place that has helped the city to accept its own story. For foreigners, it is a piece of Brazil with intense flavors, colors and textures, showing the best, original and sincere gastronomy that the country has to offer. Tapiocas (cassava starch pancakes), grilled country 'coalho" cheese with molasses, Northeastern 'cassoulets' with sundried meat, tasting of Brazilian farm desserts with a twist, and many dishes that stay in the memory of the guests - who are very willing to return!

Rodrigo is a quiet man who avoids talking about himself, who works with many talented young chefs in a community spirit, and who embodies the Brazil of the new millennium.

His education in gastronomy was enhanced by research into the work of great international masters, but above all by his investigations into the work of artisans, great anonymous masters of regional cuisine, and knowledgeable and passionate people who hold the secrets of Brazilian flavors.

His presentations have no special effects, are not showy and do not exploit indigenous myths. They are based in the principle of the Luxury of Simplicity, combining tradition and modernity without the necessity of a conceptual positioning between both of these aspects, and reveal what we food lovers treasure most – food with narrative and passion, introduced by a sincere and talented protagonist!