

Mini Rio: Exploring Rio de Janeiro Through 100 Pictograms

By Fabio Lopez

Discover the vibrant culture of Rio de Janeiro through 100 unique pictograms. This design project explores the city's landmarks, traditions, and daily life, offering a visual celebration of its diverse identity.



With the Olympic spotlight shining on Rio de Janeiro, interest in this vibrant city has surged. *Mini Rio* is a collection of 100 pictograms and illustrations designed to visually showcase the

city's rich cultural heritage. This independent project, developed over 17 months, offered an opportunity to explore new narratives and design tools.

Content research

The initial goal of creating city illustrations evolved into a collection of 100 pictograms. Defining the content proved challenging. While extensive research informed the selection, some important aspects may have been omitted, and others included might not resonate with everyone. Some ideas translated better visually than others. Subjective factors like personal relevance, thematic diversity, and political positioning also played a role. Ultimately, the project reflects a personal perspective of Rio.



[Content research] Definition and categorization.

Mini Rio isn't an idealized portrayal. It acknowledges both the beautiful scenery and the social challenges of a large city. While not focusing solely on problems, they are not ignored.



[Content research] Referential images.

To balance the pictogram development, subjects were categorized into: tourist attractions, culture (music, art, museums, tradition, events), lifestyle (customs, habits, points of interest),

required numerous revisions, while others came together quickly. Often, completed pictograms were revisited for refinement or differentiation.



[Rendering] Prints and small size tests.

Typography

To integrate image and text in pictograms featuring alphabet characters, two exclusive typefaces were developed: *mini Tipo* and *mini Gentileza*.



[Typography] Exclusive typefaces with the same pictogram characteristics.

Both typefaces share the pictograms' visual characteristics: rounded finish, uniform width, and simple structure. *Mini Gentileza* was created specifically to evoke the traditional writings of the city's prophet and wanderer.¹

+ 100 and mini Lab

Nearing completion of the initial 100 pictograms, the possibility of complementary images emerged. This led to the creation of another 100 smaller, simpler pictograms, enabling animation in certain applications.



[Mini pictograms] Additional pictograms for each subject.

Following the pictogram creation, a dedicated period called *mini Lab* was initiated to explore the potential of the visual language. This involved expanding and combining pictograms to create colorful designs, patterns, animations, new pictographs, graphics, and complex landscapes.





[mini Lab] Visual language lab *mini Rio*.

Next steps

The next phase involves commercializing the pictograms and derivatives through partnerships and licensed products. A book about *mini Rio* is also in production to provide further context for each pictogram.

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1. These fonts can be downloaded from the project site.

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