## **Christ the Redeemer**

The Christ the Redeemer statue in Brazil is iconic. Sitting atop Corcovado mountain and overlooking the city of Rio de Janeiro, it is a statue known around the world. *Cristo Redentor* is the local name for Rio's statue of Jesus Christ, although English-speakers call it the *Christ Redeemer* statue or *Christ, the Redeemer*. More secular students of statuary simply call it the *Corcovado statue* or *Christ of Corcovado*. No matter the name, it is striking architectural design and construction.

In 2007, the Christ the Redeemer statue was named one of the [New 7 Wonders of the World](https://www.thoughtco.com/wonders-of-the-world-new-list-4065228) — beating out the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, which was only one of the 21 finalists. The Brazilian statue is not as old and it's smaller than Lady Liberty, yet its perceived presence is pervasive — Christ the Redeemer is omnipresent throughout this South American city even when Lady Liberty is quickly forgotten on the streets of New York City.

Cristo Redentor stands only 125 feet tall (38 meters, including pedestal). The statue, including the small chapel within the pedestal, took five years to construct, being inaugurated on October 12, 1931, so it's not even a very old statue. So, why do we care about the Christ the Redeemer statue? There are at least five good reasons.

## **Architecture as Protection and Collaboration**

If architecture includes everything in the built environment, we look at the purpose of this statue as we would any other structure. Why is it here? Like other buildings, the placement on the site (its location) is an important aspect. The statue of Christ the Redeemer has become a symbolic protector of people. Like Jesus Christ, the statue protects the urban environment, like a roof over your head. Cristo Redentor is as important as any shelter. Christ the Redeemer provides protection for the soul.

The Christ the Redeemer statue was designed by Brazilian engineer and architect Heitor da Silva Costa. Born in Rio de Janeiro on July 25, 1873, da Silva Costa had sketched a figure of Christ in 1922 when the foundation was laid. He won the statue design competition, but the open-arm design may have been the idea of artist Carlos Oswald (1882-1971), who helped da Silva Costa with the final sketches.

Another influence on the design was from French sculptor Paul Landowski (1875-1961). In his studio in France, Landowski made scale models of the design and separately sculpted the head and hands. Because this structure would be open to the elements of wind and rain, additional construction guidance was given by the French engineer Albert Caquot (1881-1976).

It is stunning how many people it takes to bring a building idea to reality. When we realize all of the people involved in a project such as this, we may pause and reflect that collaboration may be the real reason that the Christ the Redeemer statue is so popular. Nobody can do it alone. This is architecture for our spirit and soul.

## **Sources**

* Christ the Redeemer at www.paul-landowski.com/en/christ-the-redeemer [accessed June 11, 2014]
* [Christ the Redeemer](https://www.britannica.com/failedlogin?t=SL) by Lorraine Murray, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., Last Updated January 13, 2014 [accessed June 11, 2014]
* [New 7 Wonders of the World](https://world.new7wonders.com/) at world.new7wonders.com [accessed February 1, 2017]
* ["Arms Wide Open,"](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2014/newsspec_7141/index.html) BBC News, March 10, 2014 [accessed February 1, 2017]

# Facts about Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro

This statue weighs about 635 tons and stands on top of Corcovado mountain at 2,300 feet.

The statue is 98 feet long and 92 feet wide. It overlooks the city of Rio de Janeiro. This statue has been for the longest time been seen as a symbol of Christianity across the world.

Christ the Redeemer has always been a cultural icon of both Rio de Janeiro and Brazil. It has been listed as one of the seven wonders of the world.

This statue is the largest art deco statue in the whole world made of concrete and soapstone.

Christ the Redeemer may be standing tall in Tijuca forest in Rio de Janeiro but it was not built on Brazilian soil. A Brazilian engineer, Heitor da Silva Costa, is responsible for the design of the statue.

The statue was made in France by Paul Landowski, a French sculptor. He created the statue in clay pieces which were shipped to Brazil.

On reaching Brazil, they were put together by a Brazilian engineer known as Heitor da Silva Costa and another French engineer Albert Caquot.

The face of the statue was designed by Gheorghe Leonida from Romania. These engineers worked on the statue between 1922 and 1931.

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| [Wikimedia](https://foundation.wikimedia.org/wiki/Maps_Terms_of_Use) | © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright) |
| **Coordinates** | [22°57′7″S 43°12′38″W](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Christ_the_Redeemer_(statue)&params=22_57_7_S_43_12_38_W_type:landmark_region:BR-RJ)[Coordinates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geographic_coordinate_system): [22°57′7″S 43°12′38″W](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Christ_the_Redeemer_(statue)&params=22_57_7_S_43_12_38_W_type:landmark_region:BR-RJ) |
| **Location** | [Corcovado mountain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corcovado_mountain),[Rio de Janeiro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rio_de_Janeiro), [Brazil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil) |
| **Designer** | Designed by sculptor [Paul Landowski](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Landowski) and built by engineer [Heitor da Silva Costa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heitor_da_Silva_Costa) in collaboration with [Albert Caquot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Caquot). Sculptor [Gheorghe Leonida](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gheorghe_Leonida) created the face |
| **Material** | Soapstone |
| **Width** | 28 metres (92 ft) |
| **Height** | 30 metres (98 ft), 38 metres (125 ft) with its pedestal |