

Brazil: The Very Exclusive Petroleum Club

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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Air France is investing so as to win the preference of a group of professionals responsible for the turnover of hundreds of billions of dollars worldwide: the men and women who operate in the oil business.

The company has developed an exclusive fidelity program for those working in the sector. In Brazil, the Petroleum Club, as it is called, has already attracted 503 members since it was implemented five years ago.

The program provides those professionals participating, who travel between the cities defined as destinations in the Petroleum Club, with a series of advantages.

Two Brazilian cities and seven Arab ones are included in the routes. In Brazil, the cities are Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In the Arab world, the cities are Riyadh, Dubai, Cairo, Amman, Beirut, Damascus, and Nouakchott, in Mauritania.

"The oil and gas market is very dynamic, with a very large buying power. It is a sector that travels all year round, with or without crises. During the war in Iraq and the Asian flu crisis, for example, this market maintained its entire travel program," stated Miled El Khouri, the Air France sales manager for Rio de Janeiro, the north and the northeast of Brazil.

Apart from Brazil and the Arab countries, the routes also include the city of Mumbai, in India, Hanoi, in Vietnam and Caracas, in Venezuela. In all, 46 cities from 33 countries are included in Petroleum Club.

Apart from Brazil, only the United States, Nigeria, the Cameroon, Vietnam and China have more than one destination included in the club.

Most of the advantages offered can be used at Charles de Gaulle airport, in Paris, where most of the connections are made. At that airport there are exclusive check-in counters for club members, speeding up the process, and a private room with showers, bar, TV's, newspapers, magazines and free laptop connection.

Those who have to wait for a connection for more than three hours have the right to a meal or breakfast, and those who have a six-hour wait are given another meal. The food is served in the restaurant airports or at L'Escale restaurant at Sofitel Hotel, which is at the airport.

There are also exclusive check-in counters for Petroleum Club members at other airports, such as Port-Harcourt and Lagos, in Nigeria, Libreville, in Gabon, Abidjan, in Ivory Coast, N'Djamena, in Chad, and Caracas, in Venezuela.

The associates also have special rate agreements at the Sofitel chain of hotels, giving 60% discount in hotel room rates and 10% discount in the renting of meeting rooms, 40% reduction when renting Geolink cellular telephones and special rates on cars rented at the Hertz chain.

According to information supplied by Air France, so as to become a Petroleum Club member, all you have to do is have an activity connected to the gas and oil production or exploration industry, or work in an oil society.

Becoming a member is free and may be done by filling out a form at the Air France counters or offices. To be accepted, however, it is necessary to fly on the Air France oil route at least once a year.

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