



## Stuttford Van Lines Country Guide for

# Brazil



Country Guides: Courtesy of Overseas Moving Network International ( OMNI )

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## 1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

**Location:** South America.

**Time:** Brazil spans several time zones: Eastern Standard Time: GMT - 3 (GMT - 2 from third Sunday in October to third Saturday in March). Western Standard Time: GMT - 4 (GMT - 3 from third Sunday in October to third Saturday in March). North East States and East Pará: GMT - 3. Amapa and West Pará: GMT - 4. Acre State: GMT - 5. Fernando de Noronha Archipelago: GMT - 2.

Brazil Embassy and Tourist Office in the UK

**32 Green Street, London W1K 7AT, UK Tel:** (020) 7399 9000 (embassy) or 7629 6909 (tourist office) Website: [www.brazil.org.uk](http://www.brazil.org.uk) Opening hours: Mon-Fri 1000-1300 and 1400-1700.

Brazilian Consulate General in the UK

**6 St Alban's Street, London SW1Y 4SQ, UK Tel:** (020) 7930 9055. Website: [www.brazil.org.uk](http://www.brazil.org.uk) Opening hours: Mon-Fri 1000-1600 (personal callers).

Brazilian Embassy in the USA

**3006 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel:** (202) 238 2700 or 2828 (consular section). Website: [www.brasilemb.org](http://www.brasilemb.org)

Consulate General of Brazil in the USA

**1185 Avenue of the Americas, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA Tel:** (917) 777 7777. Website: [www.brazilny.org](http://www.brazilny.org)

Brazilian Tourism Office in the USA

@ Brazil Information Center, 2141 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite E-2, Washington, D.C. 20008, **USATel:** (800) 727 2945 or (800) 7BRAZIL [www.braziltourism.org](http://www.braziltourism.org)

## 2 OVERVIEW

'The ultimate pick 'n' mix'

Two-thirds of Brazil's population lives near the coast, meaning that life is a beach for locals and tourists alike. People are the essence of the country, and while Brazil is home to a multitude of ethnic groups of varying economic status, there are some characteristics that everyone shares energy and passion. It's not all reserved for football either; Brazilians enjoy a good party whatever the circumstances. Rio is the hottest of destinations, particularly around Carnival time. Dancers gyrate, the music beats and the summer temperature rises. Almost anything goes. Bodies of all ages, colours and sizes don the very minimum in beachwear and idle away the days on the sun-kissed Copacabana and Ipanema beaches. Volleyball, swimming and people-watching are but a few of the activities in which you can indulge. Brazil's landscape is as diverse as the people who inhabit it. A rich colonial history exists, and the town of Parati is an exquisite example of eighteenth-century Portuguese architecture. The jungles and rivers of the Amazon, home to lush vegetation and exotic wildlife, incite notions of exploration amongst the intrepid, while the



thundering Iguacu Falls are simply a spectacular wonder. Brazil's massive assortment of people and places renders it ripe for choice.

Sharon Harris

### 3 GENERAL INFORMATION

**Area:** 8,547,404 sq km (3,300,170.9 sq miles).

**Population:** 186 million (official estimate 2005).

**Population Density:** 22 per sq km.

**Capital:** Brasília. Population: 2 million (2000).

**GEOGRAPHY:** Brazil covers almost half of the South American continent and it is bordered to the north, west and south by all South American countries except Chile and Ecuador; to the east is the Atlantic. The country is topographically quite flat and at no point do the highlands exceed 3000m (10,000ft). Over 60 per cent of the country is a plateau; the remainder consists of plains. The River Plate Basin (the confluence of the Paraná and Uruguay rivers, both of which have their sources in Brazil) in the far south is more varied, higher and less heavily forested. North of the Amazon are the Guiana Highlands, partly forested, partly stony desert. The Brazilian Highlands of the interior, between the Amazon and the rivers of the south, form a vast tableland, the Mato Grosso, from which rise mountains in the southwest that form a steep protective barrier from the coast called the Great Escarpment, breached by deeply cut river beds. The population is concentrated in the southeastern states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The city of São Paulo has a population of over 10 million, while over 5.5 million people live in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

**Government:** Federal Republic. Head of State and Government: President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva since 2002. Recent history: Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a former shoeshine boy and metal worker, became Brazil's first left-wing President in four decades when he beat his Government-backed rival by a wide margin in the October 2002 elections. The Lula Government faces a difficult balancing act. It has committed itself to a major programme of social and economic reform but a reminder of the power of international capital came shortly before the election when, amid fears of a Lula victory, market activity brought the Brazilian economy to the brink of collapse. Lula has managed to keep both popular sentiment and the international markets more or less on track. He has implemented pension reforms as well as bringing about an increase in the minimum wage. In 2005, however, his party faced claims of corruption and he was forced to apologise on television, saying he knew nothing of the supposed corruption.

**Language:** The official language is Portuguese, with different regional accents characterising each State. Spanish, English, Italian, French and German are also spoken, particularly in tourist areas. Four linguistic roots survive in the indigenous areas: Gê, Tupi-guarani, Aruak and Karib.

**Religion:** There is no official religion, but approximately 70 per cent of the population adhere to Roman Catholicism. A number of diverse evangelical cults are also represented, as are animist beliefs (particularly spiritism, umbanda and candomblé).



**Electricity:** Brasília and Recife, 220 volts AC; Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, 127 volts AC or 220 volts in larger hotels. Plugs are of the two-pin type. Most hotels provide 110-volt and 220-volt outlets, transformers and adaptors.

**SOCIAL CONVENTIONS:** Handshaking is customary on meeting and taking one's leave, and normal European courtesies are observed. Frequent offers of coffee and tea are customary. Flowers are acceptable as a gift on arrival or following a visit for a meal. A souvenir from the visitor's home country will be well received as a gift of appreciation. Casual wear is normal, particularly during hot weather. In nightclubs, smart-casual (eg blazer, no tie) is acceptable. For more formal occasions the mode of dress will be indicated on invitations. Smoking is acceptable unless notified otherwise. The Catholic Church is highly respected in the community, something which should be kept in mind by the visitor.

Passport/Visa

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
<b>British</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>Australian</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Canadian</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>USA</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>OtherEU</b>	Yes	1	Yes
<b>Japanese</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Restricted entry:** Passports issued by Bhutan, Central African Republic and Chinese Taipei are not recognised by the Brazilian Government. Holders of such passports should hold a Laissez-Passer issued by the Brazilian authorities. For further details, check with the nearest Consulate or Consular section of Embassy.

**PASSPORTS:** Passports valid for at least six months from date of entry required by all except nationals of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay arriving in Brazil directly from their own countries and holding a national identity card.

**Note:** Persons under 18 years of age, when not accompanied by both parents, must have a birth certificate (an original or authenticated photocopy). This must be in English, French, Portuguese or Spanish, otherwise an official translation must be presented as well. When travelling alone or with one parent, a declaration from the absent parent(s) must be presented authorising the journey and giving the name and address of the person in Brazil who will be responsible for the minor. In the case of divorced or deceased parents, papers attesting to full custody must be presented.

**VISAS:** Required by all except the following:(a) nationals mentioned under passport exemptions above; (b) 1. nationals of EU countries (except nationals of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovak Republic who do require a visa) for touristic and business stays of up to 90 days; (c) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Iceland, Israel, Korea (Rep), Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, The Philippines, San Marino, South Africa, Sovereign Order of Malta, Surinam, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad & Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, Vatican City and Venezuela for touristic and



business stays of up to 90 days (except nationals of Andorra, The Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Namibia, Panama, Trinidad & Tobago and Venezuela who must always obtain a visa if travelling to Brazil for business purposes); (d) transit passengers continuing their journey to a third country by the same or first connecting flight, provided holding onward documentation and not leaving the airport.

**Note:** All travellers must be in possession of onward or return tickets and sufficient funds to cover their stay.

**Types of visa and cost:** Tourist: cost varies according to nationality. Generally, it is around £16. Other prices, based on reciprocity, are £28 (for nationals of Australia); £32 (for nationals of Canada and Nigeria); free, but £80 processing fee (for nationals of the USA); £44 processing fee for nationals of the United Arab Emirates; £40 (for nationals of Japan and the Russian Federation). Business: £48 (£12 processing fee for nationals of the United Arab Emirates; £80 processing fee for nationals of the USA). Transit: contact the Consulate for details of cost. Postal applications, and those via courier or travel agent, cost an additional £8. Some countries must pay an extra £20.

**Validity:** 90 days from date of issue. Tourist visas can be used for multiple entry within the period of validity. For an extension of the (up to three months) tourist visa, apply in Brazil, although this is always at the discretion of the Brazilian Immigration Authorities.

**Application to:** Consulate (or Consular section at the Embassy); see Passport/Visa Information.

**Application requirements:** Tourist/Transit: (a) Valid passport for at least six months. (b) Application form. (c) Proof of sufficient funds to cover duration of stay or return or onward tickets (photocopy, or letter from carrier giving flight details). (d) One passport-size photo. (e) Certificate of vaccination, if necessary; enquire at Embassy/Consulate. (f) Fee (paid at any post office in the UK with a Giro slip obtainable from the Consulate). (g) If participating in conferences, seminars, an artistic or sports event, a letter from the organisers is required. Business: (a)-(g) and, (h) Letter from applicant's company stating the purpose and duration of the visit and contacts to be maintained by the applicant.

**Note:** For postal applications, travellers should also submit a special delivery or guaranteed delivery, self-addressed, pre-paid envelope and a written request stating nationality, status and length of residence in the UK (where applicable) and validity of the British visa (where applicable).

**Working days required:** Depends on nationality. A minimum of three working days in person, 10 by post, 15 for those who require consultation.

**Temporary residence:** Apply to Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy).

**Passport/Visa Information:** Brazilian Embassy in the UK32 Green Street, London W1K 7AT, UK Tel: (020) 7399 9000. Website: [www.brazil.org.uk](http://www.brazil.org.uk) Opening hours: Mon-Fri 1000-1300 and 1400-1700. Brazilian Consulate General in the UK6 St Alban's Street, London SW1Y 4SQ, UK Tel: (020) 7930 9055. Website: [www.brazil.org.uk](http://www.brazil.org.uk) Opening hours: Mon-Fri 1000-1600 (personal callers). Brazilian Embassy in the USA3006 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA Tel: (202) 238 2700 or 2828 (consular section). Website: [www.brasilemb.org](http://www.brasilemb.org) Consulate General of Brazil in the USA1185 Avenue of the Americas, 21st Floor, New York, NY 10036, USA Tel: (917) 777 7777. Website: [www.brazilny.org](http://www.brazilny.org)



## 4 MONEY

**Currency:** Real/Reais (R\$) = 100 centavos. Notes are in denominations of R\$100, 50, 10, 5 and 1. Coins are in denominations of R\$1, and 50, 25, 10, 5, 2 and 1 centavos.

**Currency exchange:** All banks, cambios, travel agencies and authorised hotels exchange recognised traveller's cheques and foreign currency. There is an extensive network of ATMs around the country. The US Dollar is the most widely accepted foreign currency.

**Credit & debit cards:** Most major international credit cards are accepted, though not universally. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

**Traveller's cheques:** Exchangeable at hotels, banks and tourist agencies. Tourists cannot exchange US traveller's cheques for US banknotes but they may, however, benefit from a 15 per cent discount when paying hotel or restaurant bills in foreign currency or traveller's cheques. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in US Dollars.

**Currency restrictions:** The import and export of local currency is unlimited, provided amounts over R\$10,000 are declared.

Exchange rate indicators

Date At time of publishing £1.00=R\$3.95 \$1.00=R\$2.26

**Banking hours:** Mon-Fri 1000-1600.

## 5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Brazil by persons over 18 years of age without **incurring customs duty:** clothes and other articles for personal use; books and periodicals; 400 cigarettes or 25 cigars; maximum 24 units of alcohol; up to US\$500 worth of goods bought duty free in Brazilian airports; any other articles with total value not exceeding US\$500 or equivalent in other currency.

**Note:** Tourists/visitors may also bring, in addition to duty free mentioned above, a tape recorder, typewriter, camera, portable video, pair of binoculars, movie camera, provided used and for personal use only.

**Prohibited imports:** Meat and dairy products; fruit and vegetables; and plants or parts of plants.

## 6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2006-June 2007 period. Jan 1 2006 New Year's Day. Jan 20\* Founding of Rio de Janeiro. Jan 25\* Founding of São Paulo. Feb 25-Mar 1 Carnival.



Apr 14 Good Friday. Apr 21 Tiradentes. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 15 Corpus Christi. Sep 7 Independence Day. Oct 12 Our Lady Aparecida, Patron St of Brazil. Nov 2 All Soul's Day. Nov 15 Republic Day. Dec 24 Christmas Eve (half day). Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 31 New Year's Eve (half day). Jan 1 2007 New Year's Day. Jan 20\* Founding of Rio de Janeiro. Jan 25\* Founding of São Paulo. Feb 17-21 Carnival. Apr 6 Good Friday. Apr 21 Tiradentes. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 7 Corpus Christi.

**Note:** \*Regional observances only.

## 7 HEALTH

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required
<b>Yellow Fever</b>	Yes	1
<b>Cholera</b>	Yes	2
<b>Typhoid and Polio</b>	3	No
<b>Malaria</b>	4	N/A

**1:** A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from all travellers over nine months old arriving within from infected regions. Vaccination is strongly recommended for those intending to visit rural areas in the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Goiás, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins, and certain areas of Minas Gerais, and specific areas of Espírito Santo, Piani, Bahia, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. If in any doubt, please contact the Brazilian Consulate General (see Passport/Visa section).

**2:** Following WHO guidelines issued in 1973, a cholera vaccination certificate is no longer a condition of entry to Brazil. However, cases of cholera are still reported, especially in the northeast, and precautions are essential. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness; see the Health appendix for more information.

**3:** Immunisation against typhoid is recommended. A polio vaccination certificate is required for children aged between three months and six years old.

**4:** Malaria risk exists throughout the year (78 per cent vivax form and 22 per cent falciparum form) below 900m (2953ft) in Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão (western part), Mato Grosso (northern part), Pará (except Belém City), Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins states, as well as some larger cities, such as on the periphery of Pôrto Velho, Boa Vista, Macapá, Manaus, Santerém, Rio Branco and Maraba. The malignant falciparum form of the disease is reportedly highly resistant to both chloroquine and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine. Mefloquine, doxycycline or atovaquone/proguanil is the recommended prophylaxis.

**Food & drink:** All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. Water used for drinking, brushing teeth or making ice should have first been boiled or otherwise sterilised. Even filtered water in more remote areas should be avoided and bottled mineral water should be drunk instead. Pasteurised milk and cheese is available in towns and is generally considered safe to consume. Milk outside of urban areas is unpasteurised and should be boiled; powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised in rural areas, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure



water. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably freshly prepared and served hot. Pork, salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled.

**Other risks:** Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present. Snakes and leeches may be a hazard. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water; swimming pools that are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe. Other infectious diseases prevalent in Brazil include trypanosomiasis (Chagas disease) and mucocutaneous leishmaniasis (on the increase). The former is widespread in rural and poor areas of Brazil and is spread by either insect bites or ingestion of byproducts in contaminated foods/drinks of the vector insect. Dengue fever is on the increase, especially after rain in densely populated areas. Visceral leishmaniasis is endemic (especially in the northeast). Onchocerciasis (especially northern Brazil) and Bancroftian filariasis are also present. Hepatitis A, B and D, Brazilian purpuric fever, amoebiasis, shigella infection, leptospirosis icterohaemorrhagica and brucellosis all occur. There are epidemics of meningococcal meningitis in and around the Rio area. Air pollution, especially in São Paulo City, may aggravate chest complaints. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. For more information, consult the Health appendix.

**Health care:** There is no reciprocal health agreement with the UK or USA. Full insurance is strongly recommended as medical costs are high. English-speaking medical staff are found mainly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The main hospital in São Paulo is the Hospital das Clinicas.

Travel - International

**AIR:** The national airlines are TAM (KK) (website: [www.tam.com.br](http://www.tam.com.br)) and Varig (RG) (website: [www.varig.com.br](http://www.varig.com.br)).

**Approximate flight times:** From London to São Paulo and to Rio de Janeiro is approximately 11 hours. From Los Angeles to Rio de Janeiro is 14 hours. From New York to Rio de Janeiro is 10 hours. From Sydney to Rio de Janeiro is 20 hours.

**Main airports:** Brasilia International (BSB) is 11km (7 miles) south of the city. To/from the airport: Buses run regularly to the city centre (travel time 30 minutes). Taxis are also available (travel time 15 minutes). Facilities: Left luggage, first aid, snack bar, post office, banks/bureaux de change, bar, restaurant, shops and car hire. Rio de Janeiro (GIG) (Galeão) is 20km (13 miles) north of the city. To/from the airport: Public buses operate 0530-2330 to the city (travel time 40 minutes). There is an airport shuttle bus which stops at all major resorts and hotels, running every hour. Taxis are also available. Facilities: Left luggage and lockers, banks/bureaux de change, duty free shops, a pharmacy and a small 24-hour hospital, restaurant, snack bar, car parking, tourist information, post office and car hire companies. São Paulo (GRU) (Guarulhos) is 25km (16 miles) northeast of the city. To/from the airport: An airport bus runs every 30 minutes (travel time 30 minutes). Taxis are also available. Facilities: Left luggage and lockers, duty-free shops, banks/bureaux de change, pharmacies, restaurants, snack bar, post office and car hire. Further information on Brazilian airports can be found on the following website ([www.infraero.gov.br](http://www.infraero.gov.br)).

**Air passes:** The Mercosur Airpass is valid within Argentina, Brazil, Chile (except Easter Island), Paraguay and Uruguay. Participating airlines include TAM Mercosur (PZ), Pluna (PU), TAM Linhas Aéreas (JJ) and VARIG (RG). The pass can only be purchased by passengers who live outside South America, who have a return ticket. Only eight flight coupons are allowed with a maximum of four coupons for each country and it is valid for seven to a maximum of 30 days. At least two



countries must be visited and the flight route cannot be changed. A maximum of two stopovers is allowed per country. The Visit South America pass is valid within Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile (except Easter Island), Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Participating airlines include Aer Lingus (EI), American Airlines (AA), British Airways (BA), Cathay Pacific (CX), Finnair (AY), Iberia (IB), LAN (LA) and Qantas (QF). The pass must be bought outside South America in the country of residence. It allows unlimited travel to 34 cities. A minimum of three flights must be booked, with no maximum; the maximum stay is 60 days, with no minimum, and prices depend on the amount of flight zones. For further details, contact one of the participating airlines.

**Departure tax:** None.

**SEA:** The main port is Rio de Janeiro, which is used by many international cruise ships. Other popular ports include Manaus, Fortaleza, Recife, Salvador and Vitória. Passenger services are limited although Grimaldi Freighter do offer sailings from Europe. Most major international cruiselines sail to Brazilian ports.

**RAIL:** Limited rail services link Brazil with Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, although travelling by train is not a popular option. The main international routes include Rio de JaneiroBuenos Aires, Rio de JaneiroSantiago, Rio de JaneiroSão PauloMontevideo, São PauloBauru CorumbaSanta CruzLa Paz, São PauloAntofagasta.

**ROAD:** It is possible to drive or take a bus to Brazil from the USA, but it is wise to check any changes in political status or requirements in Central America before travelling. It is also possible to travel from Rio de Janeiro to other Latin American countries. The journeys tend to be long; for example, from Rio de Janeiro to Buenos Aires (Argentina) is 44 hours.

#### Travel - Internal

**AIR:** There is a shuttle service between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, a regular service from São Paulo to Brasília, and a shuttle service from Brasília to Belo Horizonte. There are air services between all Brazilian cities, Brazil having one of the largest internal air networks in the world. At weekends it is advisable to book seats as the services are much used. The monthly magazine Panrotas (website: [www.panrotas.com.br](http://www.panrotas.com.br)) gives all timetables and fares for internal air travel. No-frills airlines include GOL Linhas (website: [www.voegol.com.br](http://www.voegol.com.br)) and OceanAir (website: [www.oceanair.com.br](http://www.oceanair.com.br)). Air taxis are available between all major centres.

**Domestic airports:** São Paulo (VCP) (Viracopos), 96km (60 miles) southwest of the city. Facilities: Banking, a duty free shop and a restaurant. São Paulo (CGH) (Congonhas), 14km (8 miles) from the city. Manaus (Internacional Eduardo Gomes) (MAO), 14km (9 miles) from the city. To/from the airport: There are coach services into the city and to other destinations. Salvador (SSA) (Dois de Julho), 36km (22 miles) from the city. To/from the airport: 24-hour taxi facilities are available. Facilities: A bank, duty free shop and restaurant.

**The Brazil Airpass:** The Brazil Airpass is available through VARIG and can be purchased only outside of Brazil. Any IATA international carrier may be used. The pass costs US\$560 for one to five coupons. Extra coupons cost US\$100 each, up to a maximum of nine coupons; validity is for 21 days from first day of travel. The same route cannot be travelled twice. The similar Star Alliance VARIG Brazil Airpass must be used in conjunction with a Star Alliance or Pluna international carrier ticket. The pass costs US\$399 for one to four coupons; extra coupons cost US\$100. The Star Alliance Northeast Airpass is valid in the northeastern region of Brazil only and



costs US\$299 for one to four coupons. It is also possible to buy an airpass with TAM, using any international carrier.

**Departure tax:** None.

**SEA/RIVER:** Ferries serve all coastal ports. River transport is the most efficient method of travel in the Amazon Delta. The government-owned Empresa de Navegação de Amazônia (ENASA) has now virtually suspended its passenger-boat services, but private companies have stepped in and provide constantly improving services on rivers throughout the country. Boat trips from the mainland to the popular and beautiful islands of Ilha Grande, Ilhabela and Ilha de Santa Catarina are also possible.

**RAIL:** Limited rail connections exist to most major cities and towns, but there has been a substantial decline in the provision of long-distance services from the 18 major regional networks. Most (95 per cent) of Brazil's 22,000km (13,640 miles) of rail lines are located within 480km (300 miles) of its Atlantic coastline. Because of the great distances and the climate, some of these journeys can be uncomfortable. Daytime and overnight trains with restaurant and sleeping-cars link São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Brazil's most scenic rail routes are from Curitiba to Paranagua (originating in São Paulo) and from São Paulo to Santos. Other major rail routes include Belo Horizonte ItabiraVitoria (with buffet car), Campo GrandePonte Pora (with restaurant car), Porto SantanaSerra do Navio (second-class only), Santos Ana CostaJuquia (second-class only), São Luis A GuardaParauapebas (with buffet car), CuritibaFoz do Iguacu, São PauloPanorama (second-class only), São PauloPresidente Prudente (first-class, air conditioned, buffet and sleeping cars available), Araguari Campinas (restaurant or buffet car) and Santa MariaPôrto Alegre (with restaurant car). Children under three travel free. Children from three to nine pay half fare.

**ROAD:** General: Brazil has 1.9 million km (1.2 million miles) of roads. Traffic drives on the right. Regulations: The minimum driving age is 18. The speed limit is 110 kph (70 mph) on most national highways and 80 kph (mph) in cities. Passing on the right is forbidden. Road conditions vary. Documentation: International Driving Permit required.Car hire: Available in all major centres but rates are expensive and the whole procedure very bureaucratic. Parking in cities is very difficult and it is best to avoid driving through the often congested urban areas if at all possible.

**BUS:** Inter-urban transport is very much road-based (accounting for 97 per cent of travel), compared with air (2.2 per cent) and rail (less than 1 per cent). High-quality coaches have been increasingly introduced on the main routes, which are well served. Services connect all inhabited parts of the country. Standards and timetables vary, and the visitor must be prepared for overnight stops and long waits between connecting stages.

**URBAN:** There are extensive bus services in all the main centres, often with air-conditioned express executive coaches running at premium fares. Rio and São Paulo both have two-line metros and local rail lines, and there are trolleybuses in São Paulo and a number of other cities. Trolleybuses are increasingly being introduced as an energy-saving measure. Fares are generally regulated with interchange possible between some bus and metro/rail lines; for instance, on the feeder bus linking the Rio metro with Copacabana. Taxi: In most cities these are identified by red number plates. Fares are inexpensive, costing a little more with the 'special' taxis with air conditioning and better comfort. Willingness to accept a taxi driver's advice on where to go or where to stay should be tempered by the knowledge that places to which he takes a visitor are more than likely to give him a commission and the highest commissions will usually come from the most expensive places. Taxis are metered and passengers should insist that the meter is turned on. Tipping taxi drivers is not normal practice.



**TRAVEL TIMES:** The following chart gives approximate travel times (in hours and minutes) from Rio de Janeiro to other major cities/towns in Brazil. Air Brasília 1.30 Manaus 5.00 Recife 2.45 Salvador 2.00 São Paulo 0.55

## 8 ACCOMMODATION

**HOTELS:** Accommodation varies according to region. First-class accommodation is, by and large, restricted to the cities of the south and is generally expensive. There are also a number of pousadas, small, privately run hotels that are less expensive than the major hotels. Rio de Janeiro/São Paulo: Many modern hotels, ranging from the very expensive deluxe hotels to moderately priced hotels. It is vital to book well in advance for the Carnival (which takes place annually in February/March). Brasília: Small number of good hotels. Most tourists visit Brasília by air from Rio or São Paulo for a day trip, or make a single-night stopover. Bahia (Salvador): Small number of good hotels, some moderately priced hotels, several demi-pensions. The Bahia carnival takes place after Christmas (from December to March). Amazon Basin: This region is being developed in part as a tourist attraction and has numerous lodges. Visitors are reminded that hotel tariffs are subject to alteration at any time, and are liable to fluctuate according to changes in the exchange rate. Note: The best guide to hotels in Brazil is the Guia do Brasil Quatro Rodas, which includes maps available from the Brazilian Tourist Board (EMBRATUR) and from any news-stand in Brazil. Grading: The Brazilian Tourist Board has a star-rating system, but the classification is not the standard used in Europe and North America. Grading ranges from 5-star to 1-star.

**CAMPING/CARAVANNING:** Cars may be hired, and camping arranged on safari tours or group 'exploration' trips in the Amazon region. The road network in Brazil is good and is being expanded, but since many parts are wild, or semi-explored, it is wise to drive on main roads, to camp with organised groups under supervision and with official permits, or otherwise to stay in recognised hotels. The country is peaceful, but because it is so large there is a real danger of getting lost, or being injured or killed by natural accident or lack of local survival skills. The Camping Clube do Brasil has 52 sites in 14 states. Those with an 'international camper's card' pay only half the rate of a non-member (about US\$4 per person). For those on a low budget, service stations can be used as campsites. These are equipped with shower facilities and can supply food.

**YOUTH HOSTELS:** There are over 80 youth hostels (albergues de juventude).

**OTHER TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION:** Eco-Hotels: Owing to a recent government initiative to invest in ecotourism, there are now a relatively small number of 'eco-hotels' available, located mostly in or near the Amazonian rainforest. Some provide visitors with luxury accommodation built on treetops and also arrange informative tours to the surrounding area; prices tend to be very high. Budget: Dormitórios, which have several beds to a room, cost as little as US\$5 per night, though standards are correspondingly basic (with shared bathroom facilities); a pousada (small guest house) costs approximately US\$10 per night. Rooms with bathrooms are called apartamentos, those without a bathroom are called quartos.

**ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION:** Associação Brasileira da Industria de Hotéis (Information on Hotels) Sala 213, Avenida das Americas, 3.120 Bl.1, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Tel: (21) 3410 5131. Website: [www.riodejaneirohotel.com.br](http://www.riodejaneirohotel.com.br) Camping Clube do Brasil (Information on Camps) Divisao de Campings, Rua Senador Dantas 75, 29 andar, 20037 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Tel: (21) 210 3171. Website: [www.campingclube.com.br](http://www.campingclube.com.br) Federação Brasileira dos Albergues da Juventude



(Information on Youth Hostels) Rua General Dionisio 63, Botafogo, 22271-050 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Tel: (21) 2286 0303. Website: [www.hostel.org.br](http://www.hostel.org.br)

### The International Gateways to Brazil

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Known as the cidade maravilhosa (the marvellous city), Rio has one of the most beautiful settings in the world. The city's spectacular harbour is dominated by the famous rocky outcrop, Pão de Açúcar (Sugar Loaf), and, further up, the Corcovado (Hunchback) peak, rising 709m (2326ft) above the Baía de Guanabara and providing the focal point for the classic Rio skyline. The Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) statue stands on top of Corcovado. Pão de Açúcar can be reached by two cable cars ascending 396m (1300ft) above Rio and the Baía de Guanabara (one leaves approximately every 30 minutes). Flocks of tourists arriving by tour buses can sometimes spoil the view, so visitors should avoid the busiest times (between 1000-1100 and 1400-1500). The Corcovado peak is located within the Parque Nacional da Tijuca, and is accessible by cog train (leaving from the Rua Cosme Velho). From the top there are magnificent views of Rio. Taxis also take visitors up to the peak and driving there will take up to an hour. Rio's other landmarks are its numerous beaches, most notably the infamous Copacabana and Ipanema. Beach life is a ritual in Brazil and different beach sections reflect different ways of life and fashions. The Girl from Ipanema beach is particularly popular with young people and is located at Posto Nine in Ipanema. Owing to strong waves and undertows, swimming off Ipanema can be dangerous. Rio's other main beaches include Arpoador, Barra da Tijuca, Botafogo, Flamengo, Leblon, Leme, Pepino and Vidigal. Rio has many interesting museums, including the Museu Histórico Nacional, located in the São Tiago Fortress. The Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro contains Brazil's most important collection of modern art. The Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói, designed by famous architect Oscar Niemeyer and overlooking Boa Viagem beach, showcases contemporary Brazilian art. The Museu do Folclore Edison Carneiro displays folk art and art naïf. The Museu do Índio contains some 14,000 objects made by Brazilian Indians and is one of the nation's most important Indian heritage museums. The Museu da República is set in the well-restored Palácio do Catete and reveals a fascinating insight into Brazilian history.

**SÃO PAULO:** The view from the top of São Paulo's tallest building, the Edifício Italiano reveals South America's largest city (over 10 million inhabitants) and Brazil's financial, commercial and industrial heartland. Famed throughout the continent for its abundant nightlife and shopping, São Paulo's rapidly growing population resides in a sprawling urban maze characterised by perpetual traffic jams and a chronic lack of space. While São Paulo's concrete jungle is a far cry from the colour and charm of other Brazilian cities, there are some cultural attractions on offer, notably the MASP Museu de Arte de São Paulo with an internationally renowned collection of impressionist paintings (with works by Van Gogh and Degas amongst many others).

### The Brazilian Northeast

The Northeast of Brazil is famed for its beautiful beaches and distinct history and folklore. Known as the 'Golden Coast', this region contains the states of Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Maranhão, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe.

**SALVADOR DA BAHIA:** The state capital is split into upper and lower sections. Cidade Alta, the heart of the old city, is perched at the top of a 50m-high cliff, linked to Cidade Baixa by steep streets, a funicular railway and the marvellous Art-Deco Elevador Lacerdo. The majority of Salvador's museums, palaces and churches are concentrated within Cidade Alta and thus the city is ideal for exploring on foot. This UNESCO World Heritage Site boasts a staggering number of churches, including the impressive Church of São Francisco and the fascinating Church of Bonfim,



where middle-class matrons rub shoulders with the peasantry as they gather to worship. However, religion in Bahia is not limited to the established church. The state's African legacy extends to candomble, a fusion of African and Catholic religions. Candomble followers dress in white and honour hundreds of native deities in terreiros (or cult houses) all over the city, it is possible to witness ceremonies as some terreiros accept visitors as long as they dress accordingly and are respectful. Salvador has some of the best museums in Brazil and next to the opulent Catedral Basilica is the Museu Afro-Brasileiro, a fascinating insight into afro-Brazilian culture, with sections on candomble, capoeira and Carnaval. Other interesting museums include the Casa de Jorge Amado, Bahia's best-known novelist, the Museu da Cidade and the Museu de Arte Sacra, the latter housed in a 17th-century convent. Avid shoppers should head for the Mercado Modelo for a wide variety of goods including many examples of local handicrafts. The local cuisine (comida bahiana) is among the best in Brazil, focusing on rich African flavours. Salvador is also renowned for being the hub of Brazilian music and Salvador's central district of Pelourinho is home to numerous bars and clubs showcasing live music and afoxé (Salvador's carnival bands).

**ELSEWHERE:** Also in Bahia state, the Diamantina National Park is also well worth a visit; it contains several underground lakes (such as Lago Azul) and spectacular waterfalls (such as Veu da Noiva). The towns of Ilhéus and Aracaju with their ornate churches and colonial architecture are also worth a visit. Piauí State contains the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Serra da Capivara National Park, which contains ancient cave paintings estimated to be over 25,000 years old. Alagoas state capital, Maceiô, is deservedly proud of its fantastic beaches, reputedly the finest in all of Brazil. Pernambuco state capital, Recife, has been the beneficiary of sizeable investment to promote tourism. However despite being one of the most visited cities in the Brazilian Northeast, it still suffers from a poor infrastructure and the influx of rich, foreign tourists has made begging and street crime a real problem in the city. A world away is the nearby historical town of Olinda, infamous for its Carnaval celebrations and one of Brazil's eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Rio Grande do Norte's state capital, Natal, is divided between the commercial section of the city and its beach suburbs clean, safe and good for surfing. Natal has several large markets and is famous for its cotton and leather handicrafts. Ceara's capital, Fortaleza, sprawls lazily along a spectacular coastline. Blessed with excellent restaurants and an abundance of attractions for the visitor, the city is also a great place to organise a trip to Jericocoara. Just four hours by car, this heavenly village is nestled between a dazzling white sand-dune desert and a balmy turquoise sea.

### The Interior

Few tourists venture far from Brazil's spectacular beaches but a trip into the interior reveals a different Brazil, one with a great deal to offer the visitor.

**MINAS GERAIS:** As its name suggests, this was so called after the abundant gold and diamond mines that transformed the state into a treasure trove of gold and also of baroque art. During the 18th century, the stream of riches from this region was so relentless that the Portuguese lacked sufficient ships to transport it to Europe. Almost all the gold that gilded altars in cathedrals and churches from as far north as Olinda came from Minas. In towns such as Ouro Preto, Tiradentes, Sabará and Mariana, this tidal wave of wealth resulted in the construction of hundreds of churches and civic buildings in lavish baroque style. All of the cidades históricas are immaculately preserved examples of Brazil's colonial heritage and are accessible by road from the state capital Belo Horizonte. This region's highlight for art-lovers is Aleijadinho's interpretation of 'The Passion' at the Basilica de Bom Jesus de Matosinhos. Set in gardens that gently slope towards Matosinhos town, the work is positioned in six small domed chapels filled with life-size statues that dramatise the scenes. All of the figures, including the 12 magnificent soapstone statues of prophets from



the Old Testament, are more poignant for being sculpted by an artist almost completely disabled by the advanced stages of leprosy and who, therefore, knew it to be his final work.

**ELSEWHERE:** Brasília, the country's capital, was built on land originally covered by cerrado (sub-tropical forest) and is renowned for its futuristic architecture, most notable in the Praça dos Três Poderes, Palácio do Planalto and the National Congress. Attracting far fewer visitors than the huge cities of Rio and São Paulo or the tropical paradise of the Northeast, Brasília has little to offer the visitor interested in Brazilian history and culture. However, it is Brazil's future and it is up to the individual to decide whether it is as attractive as Brazil's colourful past. Mato Grosso is the gateway to the Pantanal, a vast area of wetlands approximately half the size of France and Brazil's largest ecological reserve. Flooded by the Rio Paraguai during the wet season (October to March), this region is the best place in Brazil to see wildlife. However, the region is sparsely populated, with few towns or villages and only one major road (the 'Transpantaneira'). Therefore, in order to get the most out of the area, wildlife enthusiasts should choose an organised tour with experienced guides.

### The South

**PORTO ALEGRE:** In the rich southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, this city caters for thousands of tourists each year, the majority of whom come from nearby Argentina. The capital has excellent museums, art galleries and restaurants to entertain the visitor, as well as delightful surrounding countryside. To the west, travellers can visit the ruins of the 300-year-old Jesuit missions, abandoned when the Jesuits were expelled from Spain. One of the most fascinating is São Miguel das Missões, yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site, located 58km (36 miles) from the town of Santo Angelo (a good starting point for visiting the missions). The most popular beaches in this area are the Tramandai and Torres, respectively 126km (78 miles) and 209km (130 miles) from Pôrto Alegre. In addition, the region's Gramado and Canela Mountains provide ample opportunities for walking and trekking.

**ELSEWHERE:** The state of Santa Catarina, with its island capital of Florianópolis, has superb beaches at Laguna, Itapena and Camburiu. The island is famous for its excellent surfing and watersports facilities are particularly good in the area. Further inland Blumenau and Joinville are both living testaments to the last century's massive influx of German immigration with both towns constructed in predominantly German architecture. Germanic culture is still vibrant in small towns like Pomerode (near Blumenau) where German remains the lingua franca with Portuguese only used in government offices. Blumenau's annual three-week Oktoberfest is not to be missed. Paraná is a prime coffee-producing state with a bright modern capital, Curitiba, whose public transport system could be the envy of European capitals like London or Paris. Efficient trams run throughout the city and travellers are encased in glass tunnels that protect them from the elements as they wait for the next tram. However, Curitiba is relatively compact and (weather permitting) easy to explore on foot with most areas of interest found in the historic centre. Curitiba is famous for its parks, two of which are worth seeking out; visitors will be fascinated by the riot of vivid plumage in the aviaries of the Passeio Público, where several species of local birds are kept. A fascinating insight into frontier life and the endeavours of countless European immigrants, who moved here during the last 150 years, is the Museu de Imigração Polonesa in the centre of Bosque João Paulo. The museum's best exhibits are the log cabins, built by Polish immigrants in the 1880s and relocated here over 100 years later. The train journey between Curitiba and Paranaguá is a spectacular journey through dense jungle, its route strewn with memorials for the many workers who perished from tropical diseases as they constructed the tracks. Accessible by road or air from Curitiba are the world-famous Iguazu Falls, a spectacular set of 70m waterfalls, including the impressive Garganta del Diablo (Devil's Throat). Standing near the waterfalls is a humbling experience. The deafening roar of 5000 cubic metres of water



cascading down each second accompanies a perpetual (and in summer temperatures, welcoming) mist that envelopes visitors. The area encompasses two national parks, each boasting hundreds of species of plant and animal life, and spans the borders of two countries, Argentina and Brazil, divided by the River Paraná. For a good view of the entire set of falls, visit the Brazilian side of the Park in Foz de Iguazu and photograph the spectacle. To get close enough to stare into the watery abyss, visit the Argentine side. Unfortunately, there is no access to Brazil from the Argentine Park or vice versa, so visitors wishing to see both parks must travel overland to the border crossing, about 10km south. Due to Foz de Iguazu's proximity to both the Argentine and Paraguayan borders, it is possible to visit both countries in a day trip from Foz.

**THE NORTHERN INTERIOR AND AMAZON:** Almost entirely covered with dense rainforest, Brazil's northern interior is split into the vast regions of Amazonas, Pará, Acre and Rondônia. These massive federal states easily outstrip the land resources of many European countries and, combined, cover over 3,400,000 sq km (1,300,000 sq miles) of endless jungle filled with countless species of life.

**RONDÔNIA AND ACRE:** Created in 1991 Rondônia has suffered extensive deforestation. There are still natural wonders hidden away such as the stunning Teotônio and Santo Antônio Falls, accessible from capital Porto Velho. Other attractions include river trips to the Forte Príncipe de Beira or to Bolivia, where air taxis operate to La Paz from Guayaramerin. Territorially annexed from Bolivia in the early 20th century, Acre is a state of contrasts with a funky capital in Rio Branco, a thriving market and university town on the river. Because of its student population, Rio Branco has good nightlife and its geographical position as a trading post has made the town an important handicrafts centre.

**AMAZONAS:** The state capital, Manaus, was transformed by the 19th-century rubber boom and nowhere is this more evident than in the Teatro Amazonas, built in 1896 in the elaborate style of the Italian Renaissance. In front of the theatre, a marble square is designed to reflect the four continents represented by four great ships. Along Avenida Sete de Setembro are numerous museums worth a visit; the Museo do Índio, Museo de Amazonas and the marvellous colonial mansion that houses the Centro Cultural de Palacio Rio Negro, an extensive archive of naturalist Alexandre Ferreira. The city is easy to navigate and offers the visitor both fine restaurants and tax-free bargains in the free trade zone. As a major port for river-traffic with arrivals and departures to Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, Manaus is an excellent starting point for river trips and guided tours into the rainforest. 25 million years ago, the volcanic activity that created the Andes blocked the Amazon's path to the Pacific, sending it on the 6400km journey to the Atlantic and thus creating the vast Amazon basin. Upriver from Manaus, the rivers Amazon and Negro meet but their waters (yellow and black respectively) run parallel for many miles in different-coloured channels.

**PARA AND AMAPA:** The Eastern Amazon region is split between the states of Para and Amapá. Para's state capital Belem was founded in 1616. Situated at the Atlantic end of the Amazon estuary at the mouth of the Rio Tocantins, Belem is a thriving port city with an exquisite historical centre, dotted with splendid churches and elegant parks. The Goeldi Museum boasts the largest collection of tropical plants in the world. The docks are the location of the early-morning Ver O Peso (See the Weight) market, which was originally a slave market but still exists these days although the stalls now mostly sell fruit and produce.



## 9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

**Jungle treks:** The Amazon rainforest is the world's largest biological reserve. It contains one-third of all living species on the earth and is crossed by 10 of the world's 20 largest rivers, including the River Amazon (the largest river in the world). The usual base for trips to the Amazon is the city of Manaus, where numerous tour operators can arrange anything from standard day trips to month-long expeditions to more remote areas. It is best to hire a local guide (trips without guides are only allowed on certain trails). During the rainy season (February to April), the flooded rainforest can be explored by boat or canoe. Several jungle lodges and hotels offer ecotourism packages, though many of these tend to be expensive. River cruises to the so-called 'wedding of the waters', where the clear waters of the Rio Negro meet the muddy Amazon, are popular. For information on wildlife, see the Resorts & Excursions section.

**Hiking and climbing:** The best time for hiking and climbing is from April to October. Rio de Janeiro is the centre of Brazilian rock climbing: over 300 climbs can be reached within 40 minutes from the city centre. There are many great hiking trails in the national parks and along the coastline. The Iguazu Falls on the Parana River near the junction of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay is one of the world's greatest waterfalls, with 275 cataracts. Boat trips to the falls from Rio are available and take two days. Good aerial views can be enjoyed from a helicopter tour of the falls that can be booked on location.

**Watersports:** Brazil is one of the world's top surfing destinations. The best places to surf in Brazil include Joaquina Beach (near Florianópolis in Santa Catarina state, which hosts the annual Brazilian surfing championships); Saquarema (in Rio state); Búzios (a chic resort area on the Cabio Frio Peninsula); Itacoatiara; and a string of beaches near Rio de Janeiro. There are hundreds of beaches along the coastline suitable for many types of watersports, some of the best being at Buzios; Angra (on the Costa Verde, which is fairly uncrowded, with access to hundreds of offshore islands); Fortaleza; Niteroi (near Rio, with three good beaches); and Itamaraca Island (north of Recife). Diving can be practised in Fernando de Noronha (a small archipelago off Brazil's north eastern coast in Pernambuco state, where a strict environmental protection programme allows a maximum of 420 visitors at a time); Angra dos Reis (a seaside village in Rio de Janeiro state, part of Ilha Grande Bay, with possible diving trips to 300 surrounding islands); Bonito (located in the fairly untouched and undeveloped Panatal region); Recife (the 'birthplace' of Brazil, offering excellent diving in the vicinity); and Parcel Manoel Luís. Diving clubs are located all along the coastline. For further information, contact the Brazilian Tourist Board (see above).

**Golf:** Rio de Janeiro's spectacular location makes for a number of dazzling golf courses. The Gávea Golf & Country Club, located beneath the massive Gávea rock and next to São Conrado beach, has an 18-hole course; non-members are not allowed at Itanhangá Golf Club has a 9- and an 18-hole course, located near Barra da Tijuca beach.

**Carnaval and music:** four days in the South, to two weeks in northern cities such as Salvador and Recife. Brazilians themselves remark that the Recife and Olinda celebrations are the most distinctive but it is cities like Rio or Salvador that receive the most foreign visitors. However in every town and village in Brazil, Carnaval is a time to celebrate and the visitor will see processions and blocos every region during Carnaval time. Accommodation is traditionally prepaid in four- or five-day blocks and overland travel during Carnaval is notoriously difficult, although always entertaining! Music: Brazil is the perfect place to sample the samba, bossa nova or lambada and the major cities, particularly Rio de Janeiro, are full of cafes with live music and dancing. Gefieiras are samba parlours where visitors can either watch or join in. In Rio, many gefieiras are located on the south side. The Copacabana beach, where parties are staged nearly



24 hours a day, is also a good location for sampling some Latin American entertainment. An exciting way to experience the genuine samba is by attending a rehearsal at the escolas de samba (samba schools), which open their doors to visitors a couple of months before the beginning of Rio de Janeiro's carnaval. Bandas, the non-professional equivalent of the samba schools, are also a good place to practice. Tickets for the carnival go on sale two weeks before the beginning. The best costumes and most spectacular samba parades can be seen at the Sambódromo (Sambadrome), a stadium on Rua Marquês de Sapucaí, where 14 samba schools parade on Carnival Sunday and Monday; the parades go on for 24 hours and tickets should be bought well in advance. It is possible for visitors to take part in a parade. One week of preparation should be allowed and hotels can often make all the necessary arrangements. During carnival, foreign visitors should be alert to pickpockets and not carry more money than needed.

**Football:** A good way to experience the Brazilian Maracana Stadium, the largest in the world.

#### Entertainment

**Food & Drink:** Many regional variations are very different from North American and European food. One example is Bahian cookery, derived from days when slaves had to cook scraps and anything that could be caught locally, together with coconut milk and palm oil. Some bars have waiters and table service. National specialities: Vatapá (shrimps, fish oil, coconut milk, bread and rice). Sarapatel (liver, heart, tomatoes, peppers, onion and gravy). Caruru (shrimps, okra, onions and peppers). From Rio Grande do Sul comes: Churrasco (barbecued beef, tomato and onion sauce). Galleto al primo canto (pieces of cockerel cooked on the spit with white wine and oil). From Amazonas comes: Pato no tucupi (duck in rich wild green herb sauce). Tacacá (thick yellow soup with shrimps and garlic). In the northeast, dried salted meat and beans are the staple diet. In Rio de Janeiro, a favourite dish is feijoada (thick stew of black beans, chunks of beef, pork, sausage, chops, pigs' ears and tails on white rice, boiled green vegetables and orange slices). Types of establishment vary. If resident in a hotel, drinks and meals can often be charged to an account. National drinks: All kinds of alcoholic drinks are manufactured and available and there are no licensing hours or restrictions on drinking. Beer is particularly good and draught beer is called chopp. The local liqueur is cachaça, a type of rum popular with locals, but not so much with visitors. This phenomenally strong spirit is often mixed with sugar, crushed ice and limes to make caipirinha, a refreshing if intoxicating cocktail, and the Brazilian national drink. Southern Brazilian wine is of a high quality. Brazilian coffee is served in espresso-sized cups and is extremely popular. Tipping: 10 to 15 per cent is usual for most services not included on the bill.

**Nightlife:** The best entertainment occurs in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. In Rio, the major clubs do not present their main acts until after midnight, and the daily paper gives current information; small clubs (boites) provide nightly entertainment throughout the city. São Paulo nightlife is more sophisticated, with greater choice; the shows tend to start earlier.

**Shopping:** In Rio and São Paulo, major shops and markets stay open quite late in the evening. Rio and Bahia specialise in antiques and jewellery. Special purchases include gems (particularly emeralds), jewellery (particularly silver), souvenirs and permissible antiques, leather or snakeskin goods. Fashions and antiques, crystal and pottery are a speciality of São Paulo. Belém, the city of the Amazon valley, specialises in jungle items, but be careful that you are not purchasing objects that have been plundered from the jungle, contributing to the general destruction. Check for restrictions on import to your home country of goods made from skins of protected species. Shopping hours: Mon-Sat 0900-1900. Supermarkets are open Mon-Sat 0800-2200. Major shopping centres also open on Sundays 1500-2200. All the above times are subject to local variations and many shops open until late in the evenings, especially in December.



## Business

**GDP:** US\$604 billion (2004). Exports: Transport equipment, iron ore, soya, footwear, coffee, orange juice and cars. Imports: Machinery, electrical and transport equipment, chemical products and oil. Main trade partners: Exports to: USA, Argentina and China; Imports from: USA, Argentina and Germany.

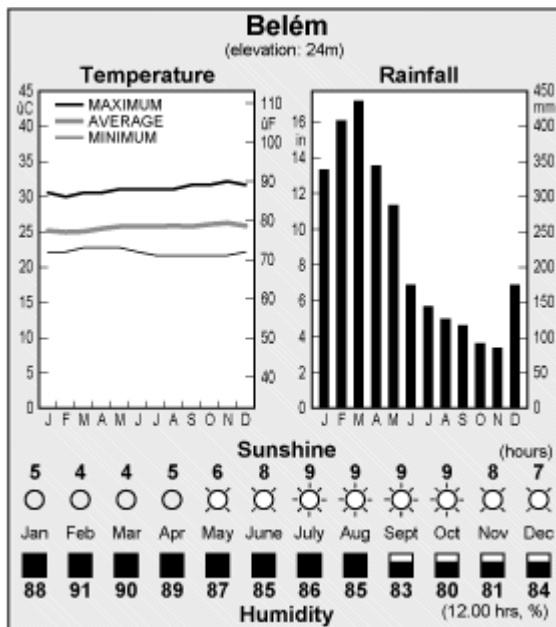
**Economy:** Brazil has the world's 14th-largest economy. Agriculture remains the largest sector in terms of employment and Brazil is the world's second-largest exporter of agricultural products, principally coffee, sugar, soya beans, orange juice, beef, poultry and cocoa. Sisal, tobacco, maize and cotton are also produced. Orange juice and coffee are key export earners. There is also a substantial industrial sector, concentrated in machinery, electrical goods, construction materials, rubber and chemicals, and vehicle production. The country also possesses large mineral reserves including iron ore of which Brazil is the world's largest exporter bauxite, gold, titanium, manganese, copper and tin. Plans to develop Brazil's potentially vast oil and gas resources will serve to reduce the country's large current energy import bill but face opposition both at home and abroad on environmental grounds. After difficulties throughout the 1980s, as the economy adjusted to new liberal economic policies, Brazil recorded a fairly strong economic performance during most of the 1990s. Industrial efficiency and financial management were improved while the government bolstered its coffers through a programme of privatisation. However, little of this money was directed towards investment and Brazil has suffered the consequences of years of under-investment in infrastructure and public services. In 1994, the Government introduced a new currency, the Real, to replace the Cruzeiro. Despite several bouts of serious speculative attack the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the 1999 Mexico financial crisis and in the run-up to the 2002 election the Real has survived with the support of several bail-outs from the IMF and World Bank, which have, as ever, demanded austerity measures in return. The Lula government, which took office with a series of radical social programmes at the beginning of 2003, was soon forced to make budget cuts. Its main target has been the country's costly pension system, which is now being overhauled. The economy recorded slow growth below 2 per cent in 2001-2003, but experienced improved growth in 2004 (5.2 per cent), while inflation dropped to 7.6 per cent (2004 estimate). Brazil's principal trading partners are the USA, Argentina, China and Germany, as well as its fellow members of the southern Latin American trading bloc, MERCOSUR. Brazil also has important trading links with a number of Arab countries, notably Saudi Arabia.

**Business Etiquette:** Business suits are worn when meeting senior officials and local heads of business, for semi-formal social functions and in exclusive restaurants and clubs. Exchange of business cards is usual. Office hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1800.

**Commercial Information:** International Chamber of Commerce Avenida General Justo 307, 8 Andar, 20021-130 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil Tel: (21) 2532 6015. Website: [www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org) Brazilian-American Chamber of Commerce (BACC) 509 Madison Avenue, Suite 304, New York, NY 10022, USA Tel: (212) 751 4691. Website: [www.brazilcham.com](http://www.brazilcham.com) American Chamber of Commerce for Brazil Rua da Paz, 1431 CEP 04713-001 São Paulo, Brazil Tel: (11) 5180 3804. Website: [www.amcham.com.br](http://www.amcham.com.br) Alternatively, contact the trade and commercial sections of Brazilian Embassies (some of which also incorporate a Brazilian Chamber of Commerce; for contact numbers, see Passport/Visa section).



## 10 CLIMATE



Varies from arid scrubland in the interior to the impassable tropical rainforests of the northerly Amazon jungle and the tropical eastern coastal beaches. The south is more temperate. Rainy seasons occur from January to April in the north, April to July in the northeast and November to March in the Rio/São Paulo area.

**Required clothing:** Lightweight cottons and linens with waterproofing for the rainy season. Warm clothing is needed in the south during winter (June to July). Specialist clothing is needed for the Amazon region. Warm clothing is advised if visiting the southern regions in winter time. The sunlight is extremely bright and sunglasses are recommended.

## 11 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

**History:** There are traces of American-Indian civilisations in Brazil, dating at least from 5000BC, or perhaps several millennia prior to that. The first European expedition, led by the Portuguese Admiral Pedro Alvares Cabral, reached Brazil in 1500, to discover a population numbering several millions (possibly up to five million), divided among hundreds of tribes and language groups. The arrival of Europeans, followed by African slaves, brought diseases that devastated the indigenous population during the early years of colonisation. The Portuguese colonial economy was initially based on slavery and exploitation of primary products but, under the influence of Jesuit missionaries, its effects were somewhat moderated. By the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the Portuguese were more concerned about resisting incursions by rival colonial powers, especially the French and Dutch. The early settlements, located in what is now the province of Bahia, were expanded. The Napoleonic wars, during which Portugal was invaded by French forces in 1807, triggered the growth of modern Brazil. Threatened by invading French forces, the Portuguese government and royal family decamped to Brazil under British protection in 1807. On arrival, they reconstructed the instruments of modern government in their new location of Rio de Janeiro. In



1821, King Joao returned to Lisbon, leaving his son, Dom Pedro, as regent. Within a year, Dom Pedro led a successful campaign for independence (backed by the British), which Lisbon was forced to accept. The imperial system created by Dom Pedro lasted until 1889, when it was overthrown and replaced by a republic. The struggle for control between central government and the most powerful regions (notably São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul) has been a major characteristic of Brazilian politics since the creation of the republic. It has often led to the intervention of the army, which, apart from the Catholic Church, is the only truly national institution. Indeed, it was the army in the form of forces led by Field Marshal da Fonseca that brought the imperial regime to an end. A sense of national identity gradually developed during the early 20th century, while the main regional potentates ensured stability by distributing national posts among themselves. Meanwhile an industrial economy was developing rapidly, bringing new social and political problems that proved difficult to resolve. The career of Getulio Vargas, who dominated Brazilian politics between 1930 and 1954, governing the country twice as popularly elected president and twice as dictator, reflects something of the instability of that era. The 1950s and early 1960s saw rapid economic growth and the evolution of Brazilian society. This ended following the accession of the left-winger Joao Goulart in 1960. In 1964, with the connivance and assistance (according to recently discovered documents) of the United States of America, the army decided to take full control, overthrowing Goulart and heralding two decades of military rule. Pressure for a return to civilian rule gathered momentum during the early 1980s, particularly after the military ceded power in neighbouring Argentina in 1983. The army consented and, at the election held in January 1985, Tancredo Neves, a respected former prime minister and latterly a state governor, became Brazil's first civilian president for 21 years. Neves died before he was able to take office and was replaced by the Deputy President-Designate José Sarney. Sarney successfully guided the country through the tricky period of transition between military and civilian rule, which many South American countries were then negotiating. Sarney remained in power until 1989, when he was defeated at national elections by the conservative Fernando Collor de Mello. The end of military rule also presented the opportunity for a major public debate about the future of Brazil's vast Amazonian rainforests, which were then being indiscriminately destroyed by loggers and ranchers. The scale of the destruction was such that it attracted intense international interest. It was appropriate, therefore, that in June 1992, Rio de Janeiro should host the first global summit on environmental issues the 'Earth Summit'. A former economy minister, Fernando Enrique Cardoso, took over as president in 1994. After an inauspicious start, Cardoso gradually established credibility sufficient enough to win him a second term at the October 1998 election. His principal opponent, as in 1994, was Luis Inacio da Silva (known as 'Lula'), a left-winger with roots in the trades union movement and a substantial, often fanatical, personal following among poor Brazilians. The two rivals represent the Partido da Social Democracia Brasileiro (PSDB) and the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) respectively. Like its predecessors, Cardoso's government did little to seriously tackle the country's diseased political system or the huge inequalities that disfigure Brazilian society. Much of his second term was taken up with economic fire fighting, as the Brazilian currency suffered a major collapse through structural economic weaknesses and adverse events in Asia and elsewhere (see Economy). It was not until 2001 that limited measures were taken to address the ethnic divisions between and relative positions of the Brazilian Indian, black and white populations. By the next scheduled elections in October 2002, the electorate had had enough. The Partido dos Trabalhadores, still led by 'Lula', had dropped some of the more radical elements of their platform to secure wider appeal. The strategy proved successful and Luis Inacio da Silva finally secured the presidency. His party, meanwhile, became the single largest in the new national assembly. The Lula government faces a difficult balancing act. It has committed itself to a major programme of social and economic reform but a reminder of the power of international capital came shortly before the election when, amid fears of a Lula victory, market activity brought the Brazilian economy to the brink of collapse. Lula has managed to keep both popular sentiment and the international markets more or less on track. He has implemented pension reforms as well as bringing about an



increase in the minimum wage. In 2005, however, his party faced claims of corruption and he was forced to apologise on television, saying he knew nothing of the supposed corruption.

**Government:** The present constitution was promulgated in 1988. Legislative power rests with the bicameral Congresso Nacional (National Congress). The Lower House has 513 seats and is elected by proportional representation for four years; members of the 81-strong Senate serve eight-year terms. The president, who holds executive power and is elected every four years, appoints and leads a Cabinet of Ministers.

#### Travel Advice

Most visits to Brazil are trouble-free. However, levels of crime and violence are high, especially in major cities. Travellers should be vigilant, especially when going out after dark. Travellers should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate terrorist attacks which could be against civilian targets, including places frequented by foreigners. Drug trafficking and use is a growing problem, with severe penalties in Brazil. This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change **rapidly, visitors are advised to contact the following organisations for the latest travel advice:** British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Tel: (0845) 850 2829. Website: [www.fcو.gov.uk](http://www.fcو.gov.uk) US Department of State Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>

#### Top Things To See

Enjoy one of the most beautiful settings in the world in Rio de Janeiro, the cidade maravilhosa (the marvellous city). The city's spectacular harbour is dominated by the famous rocky outcrop, Pão de Açúcar (Sugar Loaf), and, further up, the Corcovado (Hunchback) peak, rising 709m (2326ft) above the Baía de Guanabara and providing the focal point for the classic Rio skyline. Do not miss the Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) statue which stands on top of the Corcovado peak 396m (1300ft) above Rio and the Baía de Guanabara. The Corcovado peak is located within the Parque Nacional da Tijuca. Rio has many interesting museums, including the Museu Histórico Nacional, located in the São Tiago Fortress. The Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro contains Brazil's most important collection of modern art. The Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói, designed by famous architect Oscar Niemeyer and overlooking Boa Viagem beach, showcases contemporary Brazilian art. The Museu do Folclore Edison Carneiro displays folk art and art naïf. The Museu do Índio contains some 14,000 objects made by Brazilian Indians and is one of the nation's most important Indian heritage museums. The Museu da República is set in the well-restored Palácio do Catete and reveals a fascinating insight into Brazilian history. Discover South America's largest city (over 10 million inhabitants) and Brazil's financial, commercial and industrial heartland from the top of São Paulo's tallest building, the Edifício Italiano. Famed throughout the continent for its abundant nightlife and shopping, São Paulo's rapidly growing population resides in a sprawling urban maze characterised by perpetual traffic jams and a chronic lack of space. While São Paulo's concrete jungle is a far cry from the colour and charm of other Brazilian cities, there are some cultural attractions on offer, notably the MASP Museu de Arte de São Paulo with an internationally renowned collection of impressionist paintings (with works by Van Gogh and Degas amongst many others). In the Northeast of Brazil, head for the state capital, Salvador da Bahia. Cidade Alta, the heart of the old city, is perched at the top of a 50m-high cliff, linked to Cidade Baixa by steep streets, a funicular railway and the marvellous Art-Deco Elevador Lacerdo. The majority of Salvador's museums, palaces and churches are concentrated within Cidade Alta and thus the city is ideal for exploring on foot. This UNESCO World Heritage Site boasts a staggering number of churches, including the impressive Church of São Francisco and the fascinating Church of Bonfim. However, religion in Bahia is not limited to the established church. The state's African legacy extends to candomblé, a fusion of African and



Catholic religions. Candomble followers dress in white and honour hundreds of native deities in terreiros (or cult houses) all over the city; it is possible to witness ceremonies as some terreiros accept visitors as long as they dress accordingly and are respectful. Salvador also has some of the best museums in Brazil and next to the opulent Cathedral Basilica is the Museu Afro-Brasileiro, a fascinating insight into afro-Brazilian culture, with sections on candomble, capoeira and Carnaval. Other interesting museums include the Casa de Jorge Amado, Bahia's best-known novelist, the Museu da Cidade and the Museu de Arte Sacra, the latter housed in a 17th-century convent. Also in Bahia state, the Diamantina National Park is well worth a visit; it contains several underground lakes (such as Lago Azul) and spectacular waterfalls (such as Veú da Noiva). In the Piauí State, the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Serra da Capivara National Park contains ancient cave paintings estimated to be over 25,000 years old. Pernambuco state capital, Recife, has been the beneficiary of sizeable investment to promote tourism. However despite being one of the most visited cities in the Brazilian Northeast, it still suffers from a poor infrastructure and the influx of rich, foreign tourists has made begging and street crime a real problem in the city. A world away is the nearby historical town of Olinda, infamous for its Carnaval celebrations and one of Brazil's eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Ceara's capital, Fortaleza, sprawls lazily along a spectacular coastline. Blessed with excellent restaurants and an abundance of attractions for the visitor, the city is also a great place to organise a trip to Jericocoara. Just four hours by car, this heavenly village is nestled between a dazzling white sand-dune desert and a balmy turquoise sea. As its name suggests, Minas Gerais was so called after the abundant gold and diamond mines that transformed the state into a treasure trove of gold and also of baroque art. During the 18th century, the stream of riches from this region was so relentless that the Portuguese lacked sufficient ships to transport it to Europe. Almost all the gold that gilded altars in cathedrals and churches from as far north as Olinda came from Minas. In towns such as Ouro Preto, Tiradentes, Sabará and Mariana, this tidal wave of wealth resulted in the construction of hundreds of churches and civic buildings in lavish baroque style. All of the cidades históricas are immaculately preserved examples of Brazil's colonial heritage and are accessible by road from the state capital Belo Horizonte. This region's highlight for art-lovers is Aleijadinho's interpretation of 'The Passion' at the Basilica de Bom Jesus de Matosinhos. Set in gardens that gently slope towards Matosinhos town, the work is positioned in six small domed chapels filled with life-size statues that dramatise the scenes. All of the figures, including the 12 magnificent soapstone statues of prophets from the Old Testament, are more poignant for being sculpted by an artist almost completely disabled by the advanced stages of leprosy and who, therefore, knew it to be his final work. Learn about Brazil's future in Brasília, the country's capital, built on land originally covered by cerrado (sub-tropical forest). Although it attracts far fewer visitors than the huge cities of Rio and São Paulo or the tropical paradise of the Northeast, as it has little to offer the visitor interested in Brazilian history and culture, Brasilia is renowned for its futuristic architecture, most notable in the Praça dos Três Poderes, Palácio do Planalto and the National Congress. In the rich southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre has excellent museums, art galleries and restaurants to entertain the visitor, as well as delightful surrounding countryside. To the west, travellers can visit the ruins of the 300-year-old Jesuit missions, abandoned when the Jesuits were expelled from Spain. One of the most fascinating is São Miguel das Missões, yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site, located 58km (36 miles) from the town of Santo Angelo (a good starting point for visiting the missions). Blumenau and Joinville are both living testaments to the last century's massive influx of German immigration with both towns constructed in predominantly German architecture. Germanic culture is still vibrant in small towns like Pomerode (near Blumenau) where German remains the lingua franca with Portuguese only used in government offices. Blumenau's annual three-week Oktoberfest is not to be missed. Paraná is a prime coffee-producing state with a bright modern capital, Curitiba, whose public transport system could be the envy of European capitals like London or Paris. Curitiba is famous for its parks, two of which are worth seeking out; visitors will be fascinated by the riot of vivid plumage in the aviaries of the Passeio Público, where several species of local birds are kept. A



fascinating insight into frontier life and the endeavours of countless European immigrants, who moved here during the last 150 years, is the Museu de Imigração Polonesa in the centre of Bosque João Paulo. The museum's best exhibits are the log cabins, built by Polish immigrants in the 1880s and relocated here over 100 years later. The train journey between Curitiba and Paranaguá is a spectacular journey through dense jungle, its route strewn with memorials for the many workers who perished from tropical diseases as they constructed the tracks. Accessible by road or air from Curitiba are the world-famous Iguazu Falls, a spectacular set of 70m waterfalls with 275 cataracts, including the impressive Garganta del Diablo (Devil's Throat). The deafening roar of 5000 cubic metres of water cascading down each second accompanies a perpetual mist that envelopes visitors. Boat trips to the falls from Rio are available and take two days. Good aerial views can be enjoyed from a helicopter tour of the falls that can be booked on location. The area encompasses two national parks, each boasting hundreds of species of plant and animal life, and spans the borders of two countries, Argentina and Brazil, divided by the River Paraná. For a good view of the entire set of falls, visit the Brazilian side of the Park in Foz de Iguazu. To get close enough to stare into the watery abyss, visit the Argentine side. Unfortunately, there is no access to Brazil from the Argentine Park or vice versa, so visitors wishing to see both parks must travel overland to the border crossing, about 10km south. Due to Foz de Iguazu's proximity to both the Argentine and Paraguayan borders, it is possible to visit both countries in a day trip from Foz. In the Northern Interior and the Amazon, Rondônia and Acre, created in 1991, has suffered extensive deforestation. There are still natural wonders hidden away such as the stunning Teotonio and Santo Antônio Falls, accessible from capital Porto Velho. Other attractions include river trips to the Forte Principe de Beira or to Bolivia, where air taxis operate to La Paz from Guayaramerin. Territorially annexed from Bolivia in the early 20th century, Acre is a state of contrasts with a funky capital in Rio Branco, a thriving market and university town on the river. Because of its student population, Rio Branco has good nightlife and its geographical position as a trading post has made the town an important handicrafts centre. In Amazonas, the state capital, Manaus, was transformed by the 19th-century rubber boom and nowhere is this more evident than in the Teatro Amazonas, built in 1896 in the elaborate style of the Italian Renaissance. In front of the theatre, a marble square is designed to reflect the four continents represented by four great ships. Along Avenida Sete de Setembro are numerous museums worth a visit; the Museo de Indio, Museo de Amazonas and the marvellous colonial mansion that houses the Centro Cultural de Palacio Rio Negro, an extensive archive of naturalist Alexandre Ferreira. The city is easy to navigate and offers the visitor both fine restaurants and tax-free bargains in the free trade zone. As a major port for river-traffic with arrivals and departures to Colombia, Peru and Venezuela, Manaus is an excellent starting point for river trips and guided tours into the rainforest. The Eastern Amazon region is split between the states of Para and Amapa. Para's state capital Belem was founded in 1616. Situated at the Atlantic end of the Amazon estuary at the mouth of the Rio Tocantins, Belem is a thriving port city with an exquisite historical centre, dotted with splendid churches and elegant parks. The Goeldi Museum boasts the largest collection of tropical plants in the world. The docks are the location of the early-morning Ver O Peso (See the Weight) market, which was originally a slave market but still exists these days although the stalls now mostly sell fruit and produce.

**Tourist Information:** Brazilian Tourist Office in the UK 32 Green Street, London W1K 7AT, UK Tel: (020) 7629 6909. Website: [www.brazil.org.uk](http://www.brazil.org.uk) Brazilian Tourism Office in the USA @ Brazil Information Center, 2141 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite E-2, Washington, D.C. 20008, USATel: (800) 727 2945 or (800) 7BRAZIL. [www.braziltourism.org](http://www.braziltourism.org)

#### Top Things To Do

Enjoy the greatest party in the world at the Rio de Janeiro's Carnival. Brazilians themselves remark that the Recife and Olinda celebrations are the most distinctive but it is cities like Rio or



Salvador that receive the most foreign visitors. Celebrations can last from four days in the South to two weeks in northern cities such as Salvador and Recife. However in every town and village in Brazil, Carnival is a time to celebrate and the visitor will see processions in every region during Carnival time. Accommodation is traditionally prepaid in four- or five-day blocks and overland travel during Carnival is notoriously difficult, although always entertaining! Sample the samba, bossa nova or lambada. The major cities, particularly Rio de Janeiro, are full of cafes with live music and dancing. Salvador is also renowned for being the hub of Brazilian music and Salvador's central district of Pelourinho is home to numerous bars and clubs showcasing live music and afoxé (Salvador's carnival bands). Gefieiras are samba parlours where visitors can either watch or join in. In Rio, many gefieiras are located on the south side. The Copacabana beach, where parties are staged nearly 24 hours a day, is also a good location for sampling some Latin American entertainment. An exciting way to experience the genuine samba is by attending a rehearsal at the escolas de samba (samba schools), which open their doors to visitors a couple of months before the beginning of Rio de Janeiro's Carneval. Bandas, the non-professional equivalent of the samba schools, are also a good place to practice. Tickets for the carnival go on sale two weeks before the beginning. The best costumes and most spectacular samba parades can be seen at the Sambódromo (Sambadrome), a stadium on Rua Marquês de Sapucaí, where 14 samba schools parade on Carnival Sunday and Monday. It is possible for visitors to take part in a parade. One week of preparation should be allowed and hotels can often make all the necessary arrangements. Avid shoppers should head for Salvador's Mercado Modelo for a wide variety of goods including many examples of local handicrafts. The local cuisine (comida bahiana) is among the best in Brazil, focusing on rich African flavours. Natal also has several large markets and is famous for its cotton and leather handicrafts. Explore the jungle. The Amazon rainforest is the world's largest biological reserve. It contains one-third of all living species on the earth and is crossed by 10 of the world's 20 largest rivers, including the River Amazon (the largest river in the world). The usual base for trips to the Amazon is the city of Manaus, where numerous tour operators can arrange anything from standard day trips to month-long expeditions to more remote areas. It is best to hire a local guide (trips without guides are only allowed on certain trails). During the rainy season (February to April), the flooded rainforest can be explored by boat or canoe. Several jungle lodges and hotels offer ecotourism packages, though many of these tend to be expensive. River cruises to the so-called 'wedding of the waters', where the clear waters of the Rio Negro meet the muddy Amazon, are popular. In the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, the region's Gramado and Canela Mountains provide ample opportunities for walking and trekking. Discover Brazil's wildlife. Mato Grosso is the gateway to the Pantanal, a vast area of wetlands approximately half the size of France and Brazil's largest ecological reserve. Flooded by the Rio Paraguai during the wet season (October to March), this region is the best place in Brazil to see wildlife. However, the region is sparsely populated, with few towns or villages and only one major road (the 'Transpantaneira'). Therefore, in order to get the most out of the area, wildlife enthusiasts should choose an organised tour with experienced guides. Hiking and climbing are best done from April to October. Rio de **Janeiro is the centre of Brazilian rock climbing**: over 300 climbs can be reached within 40 minutes from the city centre. There are many great hiking trails in the national parks and along the coastline. Brazil is one of the world's top surfing destinations. The best places to surf in Brazil include Joaquina Beach (near Florianópolis in Santa Catarina state, which hosts the annual Brazilian surfing championships); Saquarema (in Rio state); Búzios (a chic resort area on the Cabio Frio Peninsula); and Itacoatiara. Rio has numerous beaches, most notably the infamous Copacabana and Ipanema. Beach life is a ritual in Brazil and different beach sections reflect different ways of life and fashions. The Girl from Ipanema beach is particularly popular with young people and is located at Posto Nine in Ipanema. Owing to strong waves and undertows, swimming off Ipanema can be dangerous. Rio's other main beaches include Arpoador, Barra da Tijuca, Botafogo, Flamengo, Leblon, Leme, Pepino and Vidigal. There are hundreds of beaches along the coastline suitable for many types of watersports, some of the best being at Buzios; Angra (on the Costa Verde, which



is fairly uncrowded, with access to hundreds of offshore islands); Fortaleza; Niteroi (near Rio, with three good beaches); and Itamaraca Island (north of Recife). Alagoas state capital, Maceiô, is deservedly proud of its fantastic beaches, reputedly the finest in all of Brazil. Diving can be practised in Fernando de Noronha (a small archipelago off Brazil's north eastern coast in Pernambuco state, where a strict environmental protection programme allows a maximum of 420 visitors at a time); Angra dos Reis (a seaside village in Rio de Janeiro state, part of Ilha Grande Bay, with possible diving trips to 300 surrounding islands); Bonito (located in the fairly untouched and undeveloped Pantanal region); Recife (the 'birthplace' of Brazil, offering excellent diving in the vicinity); and Parcel Manoel Luís. Diving clubs are located all along the coastline. For further information, contact the Brazilian Tourist Board EMBRATUR (see Tourist Information). Watch a game of football in the Brazilian Maracana Stadium, the largest in the world.

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## Overview II

Brazil is South America's biggest and most influential country and takes up almost half the continent. It is one of the world's economic giants and is revered for its football prowess, coffee production and distinctive music such as samba and bossa nova. Two-thirds of Brazil's population lives near the coast, meaning that life is a beach for locals and tourists alike. People are the essence of the country, and while Brazil is home to a multitude of ethnic groups of varying economic status, there are some characteristics that everyone shares – energy and passion. It is not all reserved for football either; Brazilians enjoy a good party whatever the circumstances. Rio is the hottest of destinations, particularly around Carnival time. Dancers gyrate, the music beats and the summer temperature rises. Almost anything goes. Bodies of all ages, colours and sizes don the very minimum in beachwear and idle away the days on the sun-kissed Copacabana and Ipanema beaches. Volleyball, swimming and people-watching are but a few of the activities in which you can indulge. Brazil's landscape is as diverse as the people who inhabit it. Few tourists venture far from Brazil's spectacular beaches but a trip into the interior reveals a different Brazil, one with a great deal to offer the visitor. Brazil includes much of the world's biggest rain forest around the Amazon, whose exploitation has become a major environmental worry. Almost entirely covered with dense rainforest, Brazil's northern interior is split into the vast regions of Amazonas, Pará, Acre and Rondônia. These massive federal states easily outstrip the land resources of many European countries and, combined, cover over 3,400,000 sq km (1,300,000 sq miles) of endless jungle home to lush vegetation and countless species of life. Brazil's massive assortment of people and places renders it ripe for choice.

## Communications

**Telephone:** Country code: 55. Full IDD services are available for the whole country and abroad. Rio's airport provides 24-hour telecommunication services. Public telephones accept telephone cards (cartões telefônicos), most of which cost R\$20. Some older telephones may require metal discs (fichas), which can be obtained from cash desks or newspaper kiosks. International calls from Brazil are expensive: to the UK, the rate is approximately US\$3 per minute, to the USA and Canada, it is approximately US\$2.50 per minute. 25 per cent cheaper calls can be made daily from 2000-0500.

**Mobile telephone:** US-style analogue and digital networks exist. Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies, but travellers should check with their service



providers. Coverage and cost vary from state to state. It is possible to rent mobile phones, which can be collected at the airport or delivered to a hotel.

**Internet:** Hotels generally provide Internet access to guests. Internet cafes can be found in main towns and cities, and there are often Internet booths at airports. In smaller towns, public access is sometimes available at post offices.

**Post:** Services are reasonably reliable. Sending mail registered or franked will eliminate the risk of having the stamps steamed off. Airmail service to Europe takes four to six days. Surface mail takes at least four weeks. Post office hours: Mon-Fri 0800-1800, Sat 0800-1200.

**MEDIA:** Brazil's constitution guarantees a free press. There are thousands of radio stations and hundreds of TV channels in Brazil, South America's largest media market. Media ownership is highly concentrated and home-grown conglomerates such as Globo, Brazil's most successful broadcaster, dominate the market, operating TV and radio networks, newspapers and pay-TV. Brazilian dramas and soaps are exported around the world. Game shows and reality TV are hugely popular. Press: In Rio de Janeiro, there is an English-language publication, the Rio Visitor, which gives tourist information. Brazil Post is a global news service providing information on the latest stories and current affairs in Brazil (website: [www.brazilpost.com](http://www.brazilpost.com)). Daily newspapers include O Dia, O Correio Braziliense and O Globo. International magazines and newspapers are also available throughout the country. TV: Major commercial networks include Sistema Brasileiro de Televisao (SBT), TV Record and Rede Globo; NBR is operated by state-run Radiobras; TV Cultura is a public network offering cultural programming. Radio: Radiobras operates Radio Nacional; Globo runs commercial station Radio Globo; Radio Cultura offers cultural programming.