



BRAZIL

FLAG



FACTS AND STATISTICS

- Location: Eastern South America bordering Argentina (1,224 km), Bolivia (3,400 km), Colombia (1,643 km), French Guiana (673 km), Guyana (1,119 km), Paraguay (1,290 km), Peru (1,560 km), Suriname (597 km), Uruguay (985 km) and Venezuela (2,200 km)
- Capital: Brazilia
- Flag: The flag of Brazil – ('Bandeira do Brasil') is known as the 'Yellow and Green one' and features a yellow diamond on a green field. In the center of the diamond is a blue star-studded globe which is encircled by a white strip bearing the national motto – 'Ordem e Progresso' which means – order and progress.
- National anthem: The national anthem of Brazil was originally composed as an orchestral piece by Francisco Manuel da Silva (1795-1865). It was not until 1922 that the lyrics, penned by Joaquim Osorio Duque Estrada, (1870-1927) were officially adopted.
- Nationality: Brazilian
- Ethnic Make-up: White (includes Portuguese, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish) 55%, mixed white and black 38%, black 6%, other (includes Japanese, Arab, Amerindian) 1%
- Population: 212,559,417 million (2020)
- Population growth rate: 0.75% annual change (2019)
- Climate: Although the climate is mostly tropical, it is temperate in the south
- Time Zone: Brazil is a vast country with four standard time zones which are as follows: UTC – 2.00, 03.00, 04.00, 05.00. The Southern and Central Western States are the only area that observe daylight saving times
- Currency: Brazilian Real
- Government: Federal Republic
- Internet Penetration: 71% (2020)
- Business Culture: Ranked 33rd in The Business Culture Complexity Index™

INTRODUCTION TO BRAZIL

Brazil achieved independence in 1822 having been subject to Portuguese rule for more than three hundred years. They remained under imperial rule for 67 years until the military proclamation of independence in 1889 which followed the abolition of slavery in 1888.

From this point, there succeeded a period of political and social turmoil with the Paulista Coffee Oligarchy dominating the political scene. In 1930, the populist dictator, Getúlio Vargas, overthrew the Old Republic thus giving way to what became known as the 'Vargas Era'. Brazil was hence drawn into more than fifty years of populist and military government until 1985. The military regime was peacefully settled and power placed into the hands of civilian leaders.

Brazil managed to surmount a difficult period of financial and social problems in the latter half of the last century. In 2013, the economy was failing and there was a huge rise in unemployment and inflation. The President, Dilma Rousseff, was impeached in May 2016 after a political scandal.

LANGUAGE IN BRAZIL

Language is one of the strongest elements of Brazil's national unity with Portuguese the spoken language of nearly 100 percent of the population.

The only exceptions are some members of Amerindian groups and pockets of immigrants (primarily from Japan and South Korea), who have not yet learned Portuguese. The principal families of Indian languages are Tupí, Arawak, Carib, and Gê.

There difference between the Portuguese spoken in Brazil and that spoken in Portugal comparable to the differences in English spoken in the United States and that spoken in the United Kingdom. Within Brazil, there are no dialects of Portuguese, but only moderate regional variation in accent, vocabulary, and use of personal nouns, pronouns, and verb conjugations. Variations tend to diminish as a result of mass media, especially national television networks that are viewed by the majority of Brazilians.

BRAZILIAN CULTURE & SOCIETY

Religion & Beliefs:

- Brazil is predominantly a Roman Catholic country with an estimated 65% of the population affiliated to the religion.
- Catholicism's beliefs and practices tend to vary throughout this vast country particularly in rural areas where the Saints of the Church are honoured with a vow of pilgrimage.
- When the Portuguese colonized Brazil, they brought with them the religion which met with the religious traditions of the indigenous population and those of the African slaves, thus giving way to syncretic practices in some areas.
- Symbolic of Brazil's religious affiliation is the colossal statue of Christ the Redeemer that stands on the summit of Mount Corcovado in Rio de Janeiro.

Major Celebrations/Secular Celebrations:

- Jan 1st - New Year's Day
- April 21st – Tiradentes – The anniversary of Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (known as Tirenentes); a national martyr who led the inconfidencia Mineira which constituted a revolutionary attempt to gain independence in 1789
- Easter Sunday and Good Friday – The dates vary each year as they are driven by the lunar calendar. In some parts of Brazil Easter is celebrated in the autumn
- May 1st – Work Day

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- September 7th – Independence Day (based on the declaration of independence from Portugal in 1822)
 - October 12th – Children’s Day
 - November 2nd – Day of the Dead
 - November 15th – Republic Proclamation Day – (remembers the end of the Empire and the commencement of the Brazilian Republic 1889)
 - December 25th – Christmas Day.

The Family:

- Family is of paramount importance to the Brazilian people and grown up children often remain with parents until they marry.
- Extended family members tend to keep close ties with one another and elderly parents are looked after, often living with one of their children.
- Historically, family sizes were quite large but in recent decades people are having less children, particularly in the more urban areas.
- Similarly, marriage was very much a religious observance and legally binding. However, in the last four decades, attitudes have changed and civil marriage is becoming more common.
- Divorce was not legalized until 1977 due to opposition from the Catholic Church.

Social Stratification:

- Despite the mixing of ethnicities, there is a class system in Brazil.
- Social discrimination on the basis of skin color is a common occurrence and, in general, people with darker brown skin are economically and socially disadvantaged.
- The middle and upper classes often have only brief interaction with the lower classes – who are typically made up of maids, drivers, etc.
- There is a great disparity in wage differentials and lifestyle and social aspirations among the different classes
- Women, who make up 40% of the Brazilian workforce, are typically found in lower paid jobs such as teaching, administrative support, and nursing
- The 1988 constitution prohibits discrimination against women, but inequities still exist. The one place where women are achieving equality is in the government.

Gender Roles:

- When the Portuguese colonized Brazil they brought with them the concept of ‘machismo’. This came largely from the patriarchy of the Catholic Church whereby men were encouraged to exercise their strength and virility and women to be submissive to them.
- Whilst that attitude has been the tradition throughout the centuries, changes have been taking place over the past few decades.

The distinction between gender roles in Brazil today still tends to be dictated by class, race and geography. Women residing in the urbanized areas are more predisposed to higher occupational and educational options.

- Although men have historically taken the higher professional roles and women have been deemed to be responsible for domestic affairs, those concepts are changing.
- Egon Zehnder’s – ‘Leaders and Daughters Global Survey, 2017’ - rank Brazilian women as no.1 globally in ambition and career development.
- However, in the poorer areas, women tend to be more disadvantaged with little access to education or career options and work mostly in low paid, low skilled industries.
- Afro Brazilian women are particularly marginalized and many work in domestic occupations such as maids or as sex workers. This has led to the growth of the Afro-Brazilian Feminist movement who have been fighting for Racial and Gender inclusion for more than forty years.

Socialization:

- As one of the largest countries in the world, child rearing in Brazil is very much dependent upon class, cultural and racial diversity and socio-economic differences throughout the country.
- Educational opportunities and social development tend to be concentrated in the urbanized areas which are primarily situated in the south east of the country.
- Brazil’s cultural diversity emanates from the various immigrant populations over the past three hundred years, including the Portuguese who colonized the country and other European peoples, Japanese, Chinese and African slaves. The aspects of socialization, therefore, vary considerably between groups. Although some cultural exchanges exist much depends upon ethnicity.
- Although education in Brazil is compulsory between the ages of 6 years and 14 years, funding resources tend to be concentrated in the urban areas and many groups are disadvantaged socially and economically so have little access to further education.

Food:

- Due to centuries of immigration, Brazilian cuisine varies throughout the regions and encompasses influences from Africa, Asia, Middle East, Italian, Spanish, Amerindian, China and Japan.
Rice and beans are diet staples, coupled with spices, meat, fresh fruit, vegetables and fish.
- Feijoada is a great favorite with the Brazilian people and was brought to the country with the African slaves. It is a black bean stew containing pork meat and eaten with rice.
- Street markets (Feira) are a popular feature in all areas of Brazil. They offer a wide selection of foods including the popular and versatile Pastel which is a pastry crust containing various fillings, either sweet or savoury and deep fried. The ingredients can vary from minced chicken, shrimps, cheese to soft fruits, banana or chocolate.

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- Coxinha, which is popular in the markets, contains minced chicken, wrapped in a dough and moulded into the shape of a chicken leg before being deep fried.
 - Kibeh is another deep-fried snack dish with middle eastern influences containing beef, garlic, onions, cinnamon and mint mixed with bulgur wheat.
 - Other favourite dishes include Gaucho Rodizio which is grilled meat on skewers and Moqueca de Peixe, a fish stew with onions, tomatoes, garlic, coriander cooked in coconut milk.

Economy:

- Brazil has been experiencing a severe financial crisis since 2015 much of which has been associated with the political scandal that led to the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, the President, in 2016.
- Despite stringent measures introduced by Michel Temer, the new President, recovery is slow.
- According to the World Bank, GDP annual growth rate stood at -3.6% in 2016 and the gross domestic product for 2016 - 1.796 trillion USD.

Arts, Humanities & Popular Culture:

- Brazil has a historically rich tapestry of folk traditions, music, dance, art and literature emanating from the varied mix of cultures introduced over centuries.
- Brazilians are renowned for their love of dance and music with regular festivals taking place; the most famous being the Brazil festival held in Rio de Janeiro each year with revelry taking place over a period of five days.
- Brazil is also known for those beloved of dances that appeal to all ages, the bossa nova and the samba.
- Brazil encourages and funds art throughout the country and has many museums, the most notable of all which is the Centre of Culture in São Paulo
- Throughout the country local folklore is celebrated and preserved amongst the various ethnic cultural groups
- Brazil has produced many great writers including:
Euclides da Cunha (1866 – 1909), a journalist known for his works relating to the political turmoil in the country. His best-known work: ‘Backlands’ is a classic novel which was written in 1902 and is still in print today. Jorge Amado (1912 – 2001) is one of the most well-loved authors of Brazil, known for his sense of humour. His best known titles are Dona Flôr and her Two Husbands, Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon.
- Many contemporary artists of Brazil have made their name globally:
Albano Alfonso – born 1964 who works with an eclectic mix of materials through photography, painting and film. He made his debut at the Centre of Culture in São Paulo.
Fernanda Quinderé, is a female artist, born in 1979, who was nominated for the Pipa prize award

in 2013. The Pipa Prize was introduced in 2010 with the aim of celebrating Brazilian contemporary artists.

- Brazil has also produced many musicians both classical, jazz and Latin dance. Chico Buarque, achieved hit records in the 1960s with songs that included political messages directed against the military dictatorship at the time. Tim Maia became popular in the 1970s when he brought Soul into the mix of Brazilian music.

SOCIAL CUSTOMS & PROTOCOL IN BRAZIL

Naming Conventions:

- In Brazil, the sequence of naming begins with the first name then the middle name or names followed by the mother's last name, then the father's last name.
- The mother keeps her name therefore and adds her husband's name last.
- In recent years tradition has evolved and it is not always considered necessary for the woman to include her husband's name.

Meeting & Greeting:

- Men almost always hug women as a greeting.
- Men shake hands when greeting one another, while maintaining steady eye contact.
- Women generally kiss each other, starting with the left and alternating cheeks.
- Hugging and backslapping are common greetings among Brazilian friends.
- If a woman wishes to shake hands with a man, she should extend her hand first.

Communication Style:

- Brazilian people are open and friendly.
- They often use hand gestures in communication and are not put off by touch.
- It is not uncommon for women and children to link arms when walking and men may use both hands to shake hands to add warmth and sincerity to their greeting.
- Some foreigners can find it a culture shock when Brazilians leave little distance when talking.

Personal Space:

- Personal space too is not the taboo it is in some countries and Brazilian people tend not to be uncomfortable when in close proximity with others .

Gift Giving:

- If invited to a Brazilian's house, bring the hostess flowers or a small gift.
- Orchids are considered a very nice gift, but avoid purple ones.
- Avoid giving anything purple or black as these are mourning colors.
- Since handkerchiefs are associated with funerals they do not make good gifts.
- Gifts are opened when received.
- Gift giving is very big in this culture .

Dining & Food:

- It is not unusual to be casual about timing so being late for dinner or a party is not frowned upon, however, avoid being more than half an hour late for dinner or more than an hour for a party.
- Brazilians dress with flair and judge others on their appearance.
- Casual dress is more formal than in many other countries. Always dress elegantly and err on the side of over-dressing rather than under- dressing.
- If you did not bring a gift to the hostess, flowers the next day are always appreciated.
- Eat with the knife in the right hand and fork in the left. After eating, place the knife and fork next to one another and do not cross them.
- In formal dinners remember that the eating utensils start from the outside in. The spoon and fork at the top of your plate are for the dessert.
- There will be separate glasses for drinking, red wine or white wine and beer.
- Do not place hands out of sight and keep wrists but not elbows on the table.
- Do not eat food with your hands - including fruit. Items such as fruit should be cut with a knife and fork .
- Food should always be passed to the left.
- The most honored guest sits at the head of the table and hosts to sit either side.
- If invited to a restaurant it is normally the person who offers the invitation who pays although it is important to make an offer to pay.
- Brazilians often like to spend some time over a meal so expect to not rush off.

Taboos:

- Although the Brazilians are typically tolerant people bear in mind that it is a Catholic country and raising religion in conversation particularly if expressing any strong atheistic views is a definite no-no.