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Profile

Introduction

Brazil is a South American country of massive size, population, and natural resource wealth. Known officially as the Federative Republic of Brazil, its government is a federal republic with democratically elected leaders representing a multitude of political parties. The country's population of approximately 194 million (2009 est.) is ethnically diverse, including descendents of Europeans, Africans, and indigenous (Amerindian) peoples.¹ Such diversity reflects a history of colonialism and immigration that dates back to 1500, when Portuguese explorers first arrived in the region. Following three centuries of colonial development, Brazil officially declared its independence from Portugal in 1822. The Portuguese language and Catholicism, the religion of the Portuguese Empire, remain predominant among the population today.



© Fernando Stankuns
São Paulo skyline

Following a history of commodity-driven boom and bust cycles, Brazil has developed a robust, diversified economy that is among the largest in the world.² Its economic influence has contributed to its growing reputation as an emerging global power.³ Yet, despite the country's wealth, Brazilian society is marked by stark inequalities in income and access to resources and services. These factors contribute to rampant poverty and crime. Socioeconomic disparities are particularly evident in urban areas, where the majority of the Brazilian population is concentrated. Competition for resources is also a pressing issue in the richly forested Amazon Basin, where ongoing development has both regional and international ramifications.

Area

Brazil comprises roughly half of South America, including most of its central and eastern territory. Because of its massive size, the country borders nearly every South American nation. In the north, Brazil shares borders with three countries that are sometimes known collectively as the Guianas.⁴ From east to west, these



© Arthur Zapparoli
Bolivia-Brazil border

¹ United Nations Population Fund. *State of the World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World: Women, Population and Climate*. "Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators [p. 86]." 2009.

http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2009/en/pdf/EN_SOWP09.pdf

² The World Bank. "Brazil Country Brief." 16 April 2010. <http://go.worldbank.org/UW8ODN2SV0>

³ Council on Foreign Relations. Emerging Powers Programme, South African Institute of International Affairs. O'Neil, Shannon. "Brazil as an Emerging Power: The View from the United States." February 2010. http://www.cfr.org/publication/21503/brazil_as_an_emerging_power.html

⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "The Guianas." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9038397>

include French Guiana, Suriname, and Guyana. To the northwest, Brazil is bounded by Venezuela and Colombia. To the west lie Peru and Bolivia. In the southwest, Brazil borders Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay. Measuring some 7,367 km (4,578 mi), the country's eastern border is an extensive coastline on the Atlantic Ocean.⁵ Brazil also claims several islands in the Atlantic. Overall, the country comprises an area of more than 8.5 million sq km (3.29 million sq mi), making it the fifth largest country in the world. By comparison, its territory is larger than the combined area of the 48 contiguous U.S. states.⁶

Geographic Regions and Features

Topographically, Brazil can be divided into five regions: the Guiana Highlands, Amazon Basin, Brazilian Highlands, Pantanal, and Coastal Lowlands. Across these regions, the terrain varies widely from densely forested mountains and basins to rolling savanna (grassland), wetlands, and rugged, semi-arid plateau.

Guiana Highlands

Extending throughout Brazil's borderlands in the north, this highland region forms the northern boundary of the Amazon Basin. The terrain consists of forested lowlands and savannas rising to rocky peaks and flat table-topped mountains known as *tepui*.⁷ The major mountain ranges in the region include the Serra do Imeri, Serra Parima, Serra da Pacaraima, Serra Acarai, and Serra Tumucumaque. Intermittent portions of Brazil's northern border run along the crests of these ranges. The country's highest point, Pico da Neblina (3,014 m/9,888 ft), is located near the Venezuelan border in the Serra do Imeri. Another highpoint is the flat-topped Monte Roraimã (2,772 m/9,094 ft), which is located in the Serra da Pacaraima where the Venezuelan, Guyanese, and Brazilian borders converge.⁸ Many tributaries to the Amazon originate in the Guiana Highlands. The regional population is relatively sparse and includes many indigenous peoples. Among them are the Yanomami, whose traditional homeland extends into southern Venezuela. This region



© Yosemite / Wikimedia.org
Mt. Roraima in Guiana Highlands

⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A Hudson. Ed. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: The Physical Setting [p. 91]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: Introduction." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9106094>

⁷ World Wildlife Fund. "Ecoregion Profile: Tepuis." 2001.

http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/nt/nt0169_full.html

⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Land: Relief: Guiana Highlands." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222803>

has been a site of conflict between the Yanomami and miners and loggers who have ventured into the area to exploit its rich mineral and timber resources.⁹

Amazon Basin

The world's largest river basin, Amazonia covers some 6 million sq km (2.3 million sq mi) of South America, including roughly 40% of Brazil. The low-elevation Amazon Basin is covered in dense tropical rainforests, which extend from the foothills of the Andes in western South America—where the headwaters of the Amazon originate—to the river's mouth on the coast of northern Brazil. The region's hot, humid, wet climate is



© Julio Pantoja / World Bank
Amazon Basin, near Manaus

responsible for the vast size and richness of the rainforests.¹⁰ Seasonally flooded, forested plains known as *várzeas* are found along the rivers' branches in central Amazonia.¹¹ Lakes and marshes scatter the region, and some areas are marked by rolling hills known as *terra firme*.¹² Home to 1 of every 10 of the world's known species, Amazonia hosts some of the richest biodiversity in the world.¹³ More than 20 million people live in the Brazilian Amazon, most of them in urban areas such as Manaus, the region's commercial capital. Among the region's residents are a few hundred thousand indigenous peoples,¹⁴ some of whom have had limited, or, in some reported cases, no peaceful contact with outsiders.¹⁵ Agricultural expansion, logging, and development have increasingly exploited the region's rich resources and have fueled rampant deforestation.¹⁶ As development has pushed further into the pristine forests, controversy and conflict have erupted over land tenure and use practices.¹⁷

⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Roraima." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9064067>

¹⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Amazon Rainforest." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9006028>

¹¹ World Wildlife Fund. "Ecoregion Profile: Purus Varzea." 2001.

http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/nt/nt0156_full.html

¹² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Land: Relief: Amazon Lowlands." 2010.

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222804>

¹³ World Wildlife Fund. "Amazon: World's Largest Tropical Rain Forest and River Basin." 2010.

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/wherewework/amazon/index.html>

¹⁴ Greenpeace International. "People of the Amazon." 28 April 2003.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/forests/amazon/people-of-the-amazon>

¹⁵ Ethnologue.com. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th Ed. M. Paul Lewis, Ed. "Languages of Brazil." 2009. Dallas, TX: SIL International. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=BR

¹⁶ World Wildlife Fund. "Amazon: Threats." 2010.

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/what/wherewework/amazon/threats.html>

¹⁷ BBC News. Cabral, Paulo. "Could Land Law Stoke Amazon Conflict?" 11 September 2009.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8234236.stm>

Brazilian Highlands

Comprising more than half of the country, this highland region encompasses most of central, eastern, and southern Brazil. The terrain consists of rolling, upland savanna; rocky, scrub-covered plateau; and numerous mountain ranges intersected by river valleys.

Brazilians call the central interior of this region—specifically the area around the capital, Brasília—the *Planalto Central*, or Central Plateau.¹⁸ In the northeast, a dry, rugged region is characterized by a type of scrub and thorn forest known as *caatinga*.¹⁹ The hinterland of this region is known as the *sertão*, meaning “backwoods” or “bush.”²⁰ The central interior is also characterized by its vegetation type, *cerrado*, which consists of savanna (grassland) scattered with shrub and forest.²¹ The west-central region, namely the state of Mato Grosso, is dominated by the Mato Grosso Plateau, which is marked by *cerrado*. Eastern and southeastern Brazil were historically covered in rich Atlantic forests (*Mata Atlântica*), but most of these forests have been altered or removed through logging, agriculture, and urbanization. A major range in the eastern interior is the Serra do Espinhaço, which runs generally north–south through the states of Bahia and Minas Gerais. The Serra do Mar range runs along the Atlantic coast in the southeast. Broadly, the highland region is the site of most of the country’s vast mineral resources.²²

Pantanal

The largest freshwater wetland in the world, the Pantanal is a flat floodplain that extends throughout southwestern Brazil into eastern Bolivia and northern Paraguay.²³ Dissected by the Paraguay River and its tributaries, the Pantanal floods during the rainy season, leaving most of the region submerged. The terrain ranges from flooded grasslands and marshes to patches of wooded savanna. While the region is mostly privately owned, limited development has



© Vihh / flickr.com
National park in Planalto Central

¹⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Land: Relief: Brazilian Highlands.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25062>

¹⁹ World Wildlife Fund. “Ecoregion Profile: Caatinga.” 2001. http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/nt/nt1304_full.html

²⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Sertão.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9066872>

²¹ World Wildlife Fund. “Ecoregion Profile: Cerrado.” 2001. http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/nt/nt0704_full.html

²² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Land: Relief: Brazilian Highlands.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25062>

²³ The Nature Conservancy. “Brazil: Places We Protect: The Pantanal.” 2010. <http://www.nature.org/wherewework/southamerica/brazil/work/art5083.html>

left the majority of it in pristine condition.²⁴ Among the region's inhabitants are cattle ranchers who traditionally herd their livestock to higher elevations during the flood season. Proposed development projects, including an extensive trade and transportation water-highway called the Hidrovia project, could substantially alter the region.²⁵

Coastal Lowlands

The historic gateway for the colonization of Brazil, the eastern seaboard comprises intermittent coastal lowlands of varied width and terrain. Much of this region is lined with tropical beaches scattered with dunes and lagoons. Offshore coastal reefs and islands occur in some areas. In several regions, especially the southeast, rugged ranges extend to the coast, forming natural deepwater harbors. Several of Brazil's major cities sprawl throughout coastal plains and up the hillsides of surrounding ranges.²⁶ Of the numerous significant ports in this region, the port of Santos, the largest port in South America, is the nation's busiest; it is located on the southeastern coast, in São Paulo state.²⁷



Climate

Brazil's climate demonstrates significant regional variations. Because most of the country lies south of the equator, its seasons are reversed, with summer occurring from December through March, and winter from June through September. Northern Brazil, including the Guiana Highlands and much of the Amazon Basin, has an equatorial climate characterized by hot, humid weather with limited seasonal variation. Annual rainfall in Amazonia is around 200 cm (79 in), although some areas may receive as much as 300 cm (118 in). Temperatures average over 25 °C (77 °F),²⁸ with highs usually not



²⁴ World Wildlife Fund. "Ecoregion Profile: Pantanal." 2001.

http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/nt/nt0907_full.html

²⁵ National Geographic News. Brendle, Anna. "Behind Threats to World's Largest Freshwater Wetland." 10 January 2003. http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/01/0110_030110_pantanal.html

²⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Land: Relief: Coastal Lowlands." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222806>

²⁷ The Wall Street Journal. "Darby Invests in Grain Terminal in Latin America's Largest Port." 28 April 2010. <http://online.wsj.com/article/PR-CO-20100428-910820.html>

²⁸ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: The Physical Setting [pp. 97–98]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

surpassing 35 °C (95 °F).²⁹ Conditions vary markedly across the Brazilian Highlands. Northeastern Brazil, namely the *sertão*, is the country's hottest and driest area. Annual rainfall in this drought-prone region ranges from 37–75 cm (15–30 in). Summer temperatures average around 29 °C (84 °F), but highs of 38 °C (100 °F) are not uncommon. Summer is the rainy season in the west-central interior of the highlands, which receives around 150 cm (59 in) or more of annual precipitation. The Pantanal floods from abundant rainfall during this time. Although varying according to elevation, temperatures in the highlands are typically moderate year-round, with averages ranging from 20 °C (68 °F) in winter to around 25 °C (77 °F) in summer.³⁰

Subject to moist oceanic air currents, portions of the coastal lowlands and immediate highland interior receive rainfall year-round. Temperatures are generally warm and moderated by ocean breezes, but highs of 38 °C (100 °F) can occur in places such as Rio de Janeiro. Southern Brazil (comprising the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grand do Sul) has a subtropical climate characterized by hot summers and cool winters with occasional frosts and rare occurrences of snowfall at higher elevations. While winter is its wettest season, this region receives precipitation year-round.³¹



© Herr Stahlhoefer
Itaipu hydroelectric facility

Rivers and Lakes

Brazil is endowed with roughly 14% of the world's freshwater resources, giving it an immense capacity for irrigation and hydroelectric power.³² Yet these resources are not evenly distributed or developed, and tens of millions of Brazilians remain without access to potable water.³³ Located mostly in Brazil, the Amazon River system is the most extensive river system in the world. The Amazon originates in the Andes of Peru and runs eastward some 6,400 km (4,000 mi) to its mouth on the Atlantic coast of northern Brazil. It is fed by numerous tributaries of considerable size and length. From its mouth, small ships can navigate the Amazon all the way to its upper course in eastern Peru; large ships can travel upstream to the city of Manaus, in central Amazonia. Forming the drainage system for southwestern Brazil, the country's second-largest river system

²⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Climate [p. 17]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Land: Climate." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25064>

³¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Climate [pp. 17–18]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³² Aquastat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. "Brazil." 2000.

<http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries/brazil/index.stm>

³³ World Wildlife Fund. "Brazil – Water for Life." No date.

http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/safeguarding_the_natural_world/rivers_and_lakes/wwf_s_freshwater_projects_around_the_world/brazil_water_for_life/

comprises the Paraguay and Paraná rivers, which originate in the Brazilian Highlands. The Paraguay River runs southward through the Pantanal, where it floods seasonally. The Paraguay River also forms a portion of the Brazilian-Paraguayan border.³⁴ The Paraná is dammed in multiple places, most notably at Itaipú, on the Brazilian-Paraguayan border, where one of the world's largest hydroelectric facilities generates a significant portion of Brazil's energy supply.³⁵

The Tocantins-Araguaia river system originates in the highlands and runs generally northward, ultimately emptying into the Pará River near the Amazon delta. A large hydroelectric dam is located on the Tocantins at Tucuruí. The longest river wholly within Brazil, the São Francisco River flows through eastern Brazil, where it is an important source of water for the *sertão*.³⁶ While the country has many reservoirs, which are typically constructed for either irrigation or hydroelectricity, it has no natural lakes aside from coastal lagoons and scattered shallow lakes in the Amazon Basin.³⁷

Major Cities

Brasília

The nation's capital, Brasília, is a planned city whose initial construction began in 1956. Located in the upland savanna of the *Planalto Central*, the relatively young city was built as part of an effort to expand development from the eastern seaboard into the central interior. (The *Distrito Federal*, the administrative division surrounding the capital, is also a product of this plan.) Brasília officially became the capital in 1960, replacing the former capital, Rio de Janeiro. It is known for its meticulously designed layout, the so-called "pilot plan," that includes two wing-like residential districts branching off a central axis lined with government buildings and other public facilities.³⁸ The residential districts are composed of groups of apartment buildings known as *superquadras* ("superblocks"). The inner city faces an artificial lake, which is lined in many areas by upscale residential neighborhoods. Located on the outskirts of Brasilia are several "satellite cities" that were not planned as



© Xavier Donat
Brasilia under construction

³⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Land: Drainage." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25063>

³⁵ U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior. Sampaio, J. and L. Silva. "Itaipú Dam: The World's Largest Hydroelectric Plant." 29 March 2010. <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/hybiggest.html>

³⁶ Aquastat, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. "Brazil." 2000. <http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries/brazil/index.stm>

³⁷ FAO Document Repository, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Sugunan, V.V. *Fisheries Management of Small Water Bodies in Seven Countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. "Chapter 6: Brazil." 1997. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w7560e/W7560E06.htm>

³⁸ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Distrito Federal [pp. 354–355]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

permanent settlements but were nonetheless established through rapid growth.³⁹ Today, the inner city is considered relatively safe, spacious, and traffic-free in comparison to other Brazilian cities. Yet, in stark contrast, the nearby satellite cities are marked by poverty, crime, and sprawl. In 2010, the city's population was estimated at 2.5 million,⁴⁰ with another million or more living in the greater metropolitan area.

São Paulo

São Paulo is situated in southeastern Brazil, in an upland basin just inland from the coast and the port city of Santos. It is the largest city in Brazil and one of the largest in the world. While its urban population is about 10.3 million (2005 est.), the greater metropolitan area, known as Greater São Paulo, is home to upward of 19 million people (2005 est.). The city's expansive development began only with the enhancement of the Brazilian coffee trade in the late 19th century. Thereafter, São Paulo grew rapidly as the center of Brazilian industrialization. Today, it remains the country's major industrial, as well as financial, hub.⁴¹ Encompassing a vast expanse of high-rise buildings, the sprawling city is characterized by its high density and fast, work-driven pace of life. *Favelas*, or shantytowns, are a feature of the city's outskirts. The city is known locally as *Sampa*; its residents are called *Paulistanos*.⁴² The diverse population includes Portuguese, Italians, Africans, Arabs, Japanese, and Jews, among others. Reflecting the wide gap between the city's rich and poor, criminal activity—including robbery, kidnapping, and carjacking—is common and widespread.⁴³



© Paul Sherman
São Paulo cityscape

Rio de Janeiro

Located on the southeastern coast, some 350 km (220 mi) northeast of São Paulo,⁴⁴ Rio de Janeiro was the longstanding capital of colonial and independent Brazil. The city extends throughout coastal lowlands and up the



© Rodrigo Soldon
Rio de Janeiro skyline

³⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brasília: City Layout." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-92829>

⁴⁰ Reuters. Da Costa, Ana Nicolaci. "50 Years On, Brazil's Utopian Capital Faces Reality." 21 April 2010. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE63K4CT20100421>

⁴¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "São Paulo: Introduction." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109514>

⁴² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "São Paulo: Character of the City." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-261968>

⁴³ Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil 2010 Crime & Safety Report: São Paulo." 22 February 2010. <https://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=114056>

⁴⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "São Paulo: Introduction." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109514>

surrounding hillsides of the partially forested coastal mountains that encircle and divide it. Measuring some 704 m (2,310 ft), Mount Corcovado is the site of the city's famous statue of Jesus Christ, or Christ the Redeemer (*Cristo Redentor*), which is 30 m (98.5 ft) tall, not including its base.⁴⁵ On the coastal plain, the city's central district (Centro) abuts the western, beach-lined shore of Guanabara Bay, a natural deepwater harbor that makes Rio one of Brazil's major ports. Although São Paulo is known as the country's economic engine, Rio also has a strong, diversified economy. It is better known, however, as the center for Brazilian culture and tourism, especially for the festival of Carnaval. Rio's residents are called *Cariocas*, and they are known to have a rivalry with the *Paulistanos* of São Paulo.⁴⁶ Rio has a population of 6.1 million (2007 est.),⁴⁷ with an estimated one million or more of these residents living in *favelas*. These shantytowns, many of which sprawl up steep hillsides, have limited or no municipal services and are often under the practical control of local drug gangs. Yet some of these impoverished neighborhoods directly abut upscale suburban developments.⁴⁸

Salvador

Located on the northeastern coast, Salvador is situated on a peninsula separating the Atlantic Ocean from the Baía de Todos os Santos, or All Saints Bay. The city is one of Brazil's oldest. Its location alongside a natural deepwater harbor played a vital role in its development, and it remains a major port. Portuguese settlers founded the city in 1549 as the colony's first capital. As a shipping center for regional sugar cane exports,



© Bruno Ginn
Historic Salvador

Salvador grew to become the Portuguese Empire's second greatest city, behind only Lisbon, the capital of modern Portugal. Throughout this time, the city was a major destination for African slaves. Today, the majority of the city's residents are either partially or primarily of African descent. The city is a vibrant center for Afro-Brazilian culture and a well-preserved artifact of Portuguese colonial history.⁴⁹ Salvador's city center has two parts: a lower city (*cidade baixa*) that includes the port; and an upper city (*cidade alta*), located atop an adjacent bluff, that includes the offices of local and regional government. The city proper has a population of around 2.7 million (2005 est.), with more than 3.3 million (2005 est.) living in the greater metropolitan area.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Mount Corcovado." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9026251>

⁴⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 3: The Brazilians [pp. 59–60]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Rio de Janeiro." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109485>

⁴⁸ Financial Times. Morris, Harvey. "Favela Urbanisation: Aim Is to Bring Slums into the Mainstream." 6 May 2010. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a2bc15b4-571c-11df-aaff-00144feab49a.html>

⁴⁹ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Salvador [pp. 412–413]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

⁵⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Salvador." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9065159>

Manaus

While smaller than many of Brazil's major coastal cities, Manaus, a river port, is significant as the major commercial and transportation hub of Amazonia. The city is situated on the north bank of the Rio Negro, near the river's confluence with the Amazon. It is dissected by channels known as *igarapés*, or "canoe paths." A former center for the regional rubber trade, Manaus retains a substantial industrial sector. Its equatorial climate is hot and especially humid; malaria is a common sickness in the region.⁵¹ In addition to receiving large sea-faring ships traveling upstream from the coast, Manaus hosts an international airport. The city is home to approximately 1.6 million people (2005 est.).⁵²



© Eric in SF / flickr.com
Machu Picchu, "lost city of the Incas"

History

Pre-Colonial History

Archeological evidence indicates that humans settled the Brazilian region by at least 9000 B.C.E. Yet, due to a variety of cultural, historic, and geographic factors, the pre-colonial history of the region and its peoples is not well known. First, the region's hot, humid climate is not conducive to the preservation of artifacts. Latin America's highly-developed indigenous civilizations—such as the Incas and Aztecs—constructed large, durable city settlements using stone. But only limited remains of this kind have been found in Brazil, where indigenous peoples are thought to have lived in smaller, less complex societies. Their settlement structures were generally made of wood or clay, materials subject to decay over the centuries.⁵³ When the Portuguese arrived in 1500, an estimated 2–6 million indigenous (Amerindian) peoples inhabited the Brazilian region.⁵⁴ Comprising hundreds of different tribes, these indigenous peoples historically migrated throughout the region, subsisting as hunters and gatherers or small-scale farmers and fishers. Many engaged in warfare and some practiced ritualistic cannibalism. In particular,



© idua_japan / flickr.com
Manaus, Brazil

⁵¹ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Amazonas & Roraima [pp. 620–622]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

⁵² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Manaus." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9050450>

⁵³ Live Science. Associated Press. Lehman, Stan. "Archaeologists Discover Brazilian 'Stonehenge.'" 28 June 2006. http://www.livescience.com/history/060628_ap_brazil_stonehenge.html

⁵⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: History." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222833>

various Tupi-speaking tribes populated the coastal regions where the Portuguese first made contact.⁵⁵

The Early Colonial Era

Led by Pedro Álvares Cabral, Portuguese explorers first landed on the Brazilian coast on 22 April 1500. They originally intended to follow a course around the southern cape of Africa en route to India, but veered off course to the west, into the vicinity of South America's eastern coast. Upon landing, the Portuguese claimed the region under a pre-established treaty with Spain, the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), which divided the recently discovered New World between the two early colonial powers.⁵⁶ Originally named Vera Cruz, or "True Cross," the region was later renamed Brazil after a local type of tree, the *pau-brasil* (brazilwood), which was heavily exploited for its red dye.⁵⁷ Driven by economic motivations, interaction and intermarriage with the native Tupi-speaking peoples began shortly after the Portuguese arrived.⁵⁸

The Portuguese presence was initially limited to scattered trading posts. In the 1530s, in an effort to stave off Spanish and French competition, the Portuguese initiated a campaign to colonize the region. The Portuguese king instituted a hereditary captaincy system. Under this system, land grants were given to nobles willing to develop (and defend) their respective territories in the name of Portugal but through their own efforts and investment.⁵⁹ Most of the 15 captaincies failed because of mismanagement or conflict with indigenous tribes, some of whom the Portuguese began to domineer and enslave soon after arriving. The limited success of the captaincy system prompted the Portuguese king to establish direct administrative control over most of the coastal region. On the king's orders, Tomé de Sousa, the colony's first governor-general, arrived in 1549 and established the city of Salvador, which would remain the colonial



© Paulo Carmona Sanchez Neto
Replica of Pedro Álvares Cabral's ship

⁵⁵ *A Brief History of Brazil*. Meade, Teresa A. "Chapter 1: Land and People Before and After Portuguese Exploration (Prehistory to 1530) [pp. 4–11]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

⁵⁶ *A Brief History of Brazil*. Meade, Teresa A. "Chapter 1: Land and People Before and After Portuguese Exploration (Prehistory to 1530) [p. 12]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

⁵⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: History: Early Period: Exploration and Initial Settlement." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25035>

⁵⁸ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Colonial Era, 1500–1815 [pp. 14–16]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁵⁹ *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. Skidmore, Thomas E. "Chapter 1: Birth and Growth of Colonial Brazil: 1500–1750 [p. 10]." 1999. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

capital until 1763.⁶⁰ Jesuit missionaries arrived with Sousa and, in the following decades, they established missionary villages (*aldeias*) in order to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity.⁶¹

Colonial Expansion and Slavery

From the 1530s to the mid 17th century, sugar cane was the primary commodity fueling the colonial economy. The large-scale development of sugar cane plantations was mostly carried out through slave labor. While indigenous peoples were initially targeted for enslavement, the Portuguese came to rely on imported African slaves.⁶² The latter were perceived as more industrious and less vulnerable to diseases the Portuguese and other Europeans carried with them to the New World.⁶³ Indeed, diseases such as influenza, smallpox, and measles contributed to the near total decimation of the indigenous population, which by the early 20th century had diminished to around 150,000.⁶⁴ This drastic decline was also a product of *bandeiras*, slave hunting and exploration missions waged deep into the Brazilian interior. Mostly based out of São Paulo, these missions played a major role in the expansion and development of Portuguese territory throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. They commonly involved raids on Jesuit missionary villages, which were viewed as competition by many colonialists because they provided indigenous peoples with refuge from the slave trade. Many *bandeirantes* were themselves of mixed Portuguese and indigenous descent.⁶⁵



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Portuguese colonial scouts

The Portuguese repelled numerous French and Dutch invasions in the 16th and mid 17th centuries; several of the Dutch incursions occurred during a period in which Portugal and Spain were temporarily united under the Spanish monarchy (1580–1640). Beginning in the late



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Cutting sugar cane, 19th century

⁶⁰ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Colonial Era, 1500–1815 [p. 17]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: History: Early Period: Royal Governors, Jesuits, and Slaves." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25036>

⁶² Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 1: Historical Setting [pp. 3–4]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶³ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "History [pp. 30–31]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

⁶⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Social Structure: Amerindians [p. 125]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Bandeira." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9012127>

17th century, a gold and diamond rush in the southeastern highlands spurred a strong mining economy that compelled officials to move the colonial capital from Salvador to Rio de Janeiro. As in the sugar cane plantations, African slaves were used extensively in the booming Brazilian mines.⁶⁶ Overall, from the early colonial era until the abolishment of the slave trade in the 19th century, an estimated four million African slaves were imported to the Brazilian region.⁶⁷ Several Portuguese-Spanish treaties in the mid-late 18th century solidified Portugal's claims to the colony's massive territory, which had been greatly enlarged over the years through the efforts of settlers, missionaries, and *bandeirantes*.⁶⁸

Independence

Influenced by the recent establishment of the United States, Brazilian independence movements mounted in the late 18th century as the mining economy declined. A small rebellion, known as the Minas Conspiracy (*Inconfidência Mineira*), coalesced in 1789 but was quickly suppressed by Portuguese authorities. One of its members, Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, a dentist who was also known as *Tiradentes* (“Tooth Puller”), was tried and executed. His body was cut into pieces and displayed to dissuade further rebellion. He would later be celebrated as a martyr for Brazilian independence and nationalism.⁶⁹



© Franco Rene Moreaux
Announcement of independence

In 1807, Napoleon's invasion of Portugal compelled the Portuguese monarchy, then led by the prince regent Dom João, to flee to safety in Brazil. Once in Brazil, Dom João initiated significant reforms, including the opening of Brazilian markets to international commerce. (Previously, Portugal had retained exclusive access to Brazilian goods.) In 1815, Dom João declared the establishment of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil, and the Algarves, effectively upgrading Brazil's status from a colony to a kingdom. Dom João, who became King João IV in 1816, returned to Portugal in 1821 amid a domestic crisis. He left his son, Dom Pedro, in control of Brazil. Following the Portuguese government's attempts to relegate Brazil to a dependent colony, the defiant Dom Pedro

⁶⁶ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Colonial Era, 1500–1815 [p. 24].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

⁶⁷ The New York Times. Simons, Marlise. “Brazil's Blacks Feel Bias 100 Years After Slavery.” 14 May 1988. <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/14/world/brazil-s-blacks-feel-bias-100-years-after-slavery.html?pagewanted=all>

⁶⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Early Period: Colonial Reforms.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25039>

⁶⁹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Colonial Era, 1500–1815 [pp. 31–32].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

founded an independent Brazilian government on 7 September 1822. Dom Pedro adopted the title of Emperor on 1 December of that year. Following relatively minor conflict, the Portuguese recognized Brazil's sovereignty in 1825.⁷⁰

The Brazilian Monarchy

The first few decades of independence were marked by widespread social upheaval and territorial conflict. In 1831, Dom Pedro, or Pedro I, abdicated the throne, allowing his young son, Dom Pedro II, to take power in 1840, after a nine-year regency (period of substitute rule). Spanning until 1889, the reign of Pedro II was characterized by prosperity and progress, including the development of railways and other infrastructure. Coffee cultivation, which was concentrated in the southeast, increasingly fueled the economy; by the late 19th century, coffee comprised the majority of Brazilian exports. In the meantime, measured efforts to abolish the slave trade and liberate Brazilian slaves were met with both support and opposition; the latter was posed by land-owning elites, among others. The process occurred in several stages, culminating in full emancipation of Brazil's remaining slaves on 13 May 1888.



© Almeida Júnior
Prudente de Morais, 1890 portrait

The reign of Pedro II was also marked by the Paraguayan War (1864–1870), or the War of the Triple Alliance, which entailed large-scale loss of life. Paraguay initiated the war against Brazil in response to the latter's involvement in a civil conflict in Uruguay. Brazil allied with Argentina and Uruguay in the resulting combat.⁷¹ According to some estimates, Paraguay lost upward of half its population, including the majority of its male citizens, in defeat. Brazil, which also experienced heavy casualties, annexed a portion of eastern Paraguay in the victory.⁷² Both the war and the abolishment of slavery contributed to growing dissatisfaction with the monarchy, which was overthrown in a military coup on 15 November 1889.⁷³

⁷⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: History: Independence." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25040>

⁷¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: History: The Brazilian Empire: Pedro II." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25043>

⁷² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "War of the Triple Alliance." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9058388>

⁷³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: The Past and the Present [pp. 26–28]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

The Brazilian Republic

The leaders of the coup founded a constitutional republic on 24 February 1891. Prudente de Moraes, a civilian president, assumed office in 1894.⁷⁴ He was the first of several successive Brazilian leaders who originated from the prosperous and politically powerful states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais. The former was the site of intensive coffee cultivation, while the latter was a major dairy producing state. The politics of this era are thus sometimes referred to as “the politics of coffee with milk” (*a política do café com leite*).⁷⁵ This era was marked by fixed elections and manipulated political appointments at the hands of the wealthy land-owning elites in the southeast. Beginning in the late 19th century, following the end of the slave trade, Brazil was flooded with immigrants. They provided a pool of cheap labor for the booming coffee industry. The late 19th and early 20th centuries also saw a booming rubber industry emerge in Amazonia, where intensive exploitation of the rubber tree fueled regional development.⁷⁶ In the 1920s, unrest and revolt mounted against the wealthy ruling elites. Their power and influence diminished when the global economic crisis of 1929–1930 led to a drastic decline in coffee prices.⁷⁷



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Brazilian officers, c. 1868

The Vargas Era (1930–1954)

In 1929, the Brazilian president, Washington Luís, refused to adhere to the established arrangement of alternating the presidency between São Paulo and Minas Gerais.⁷⁸ Getúlio Vargas, a former governor of the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, used military support to forcibly seize power following his defeat in the 1930 presidential election. Amid the economic and



© Clairo Jansson
Getúlio Vargas and his followers

⁷⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: The Republic to 1960: The ‘Coffee Presidents.’” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25046>

⁷⁵ *Politics Beyond the Capital: The Design of Subnational Institutions in South America*. Eaton, Kent. “Chapter 3: Decentralization from Below: Argentina before 1966, Brazil before 1964 [p. 77].” 2004. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. http://books.google.com/books?id=G6-54rg0BNQC&pg=PA77&lpg=PA77&dq=%22politics+of+coffee+with+milk%22&source=bl&ots=ibIYM C_Ke6&sig=W9hV3NxDbD9tp9g1munNvv87E0&hl=en&ei=hxjzS4O7Dob8sgO_1uypDA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22politics%20of%20coffee%20with%20milk%22&f=false

⁷⁶ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. “History [pp. 37–38].” 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

⁷⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: The Republic to 1960: The Rebellion Against the Coffee Elite.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25047>

⁷⁸ *Politics Beyond the Capital: The Design of Subnational Institutions in South America*. Eaton, Kent. “Chapter 3: Decentralization from Below: Argentina before 1966, Brazil before 1964 [p. 77].” 2004. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

social strife of the Great Depression, Vargas centralized the government, instituted electoral reforms (including universal suffrage), and created a large public economic sector geared toward industrialization. In 1937, following his indirect election three years earlier, he formed the *Estado Novo* (“New State”) in which he effectively assumed dictatorial powers over the expansive central government.⁷⁹ Vargas distributed government jobs and instituted labor reforms, including a minimum wage that allowed him to maintain popular support as a champion of the working class. Overall, his policies represented a counterpoint to those of the previous era, in which the wealthy elites of the private agricultural sector maintained authority at the state rather than federal level.⁸⁰ As pressure grew for him to reinstate democratic institutions, Vargas was forced to resign in October 1945 under threat of a military coup.⁸¹ General Eurico Gaspar Dutra was elected president in December 1945, while Vargas took elected office in the senate. Nonetheless, five years later, Vargas won the next presidential election. His term was plagued by economic woes, civil unrest, and corruption. He committed suicide in August 1954 under the renewed threat of a military coup.⁸²

The Post-Vargas Republic (1954–1964)

Elected in 1955, Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira promoted a policy of intensive government-funded development in Brazilian industry and infrastructure. He is perhaps best known as the driving force behind the planning and construction of Brasília, the new capital intended to promote the development and settlement of the Brazilian interior. While Kubitschek’s policies produced large gains in the national gross domestic product (GDP), the government incurred massive debt, adding to the already substantial debt left by Vargas.⁸³ Kubitschek’s successor, Jânio Quadros, assumed office in January 1961 but served less than seven months before suddenly resigning. The vice president, João Goulart, assumed the presidency. Opposition groups, including many military officers, perceived Goulart as a radical with Communist leanings.⁸⁴ Goulart’s politics moved



© Brazil News Agency
President Juscelino Kubitschek

⁷⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: The Republic to 1960: The Vargas Era.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25048>

⁸⁰ The London School of Economics. Valença, Márcio M. “Patron-Client Relations and Politics in Brazil: An Historical Overview [pp. 14–17].” 1999. <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/geographyAndEnvironment/research/Researchpapers/rp58.pdf>

⁸¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: The Past and the Present [pp. 29–30].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁸² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: The Republic to 1960: The Democratic Interlude.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25049>

⁸³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: The Republic to 1960: Kubitschek’s Administration.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25050>

⁸⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Brazil Since 1960: Political Turmoil.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272262>

increasingly left over the course of his term. Following political unrest and continued economic decline, he was removed in a military coup in 1964.⁸⁵

Military Rule (1964–1985)

Brazil's military regime initially sought to maintain the structure of a representative government while implementing economic reforms and removing leftist and subversive political elements.⁸⁶ However, the regime's incremental changes in policy and constitutional law—known as “Institutional Acts”—grew increasingly repressive. Power was consolidated with the regime, which was led by a series of military commanders. Political opposition was effectively outlawed, and dissidents were subject to arrest, detention, torture, and execution.⁸⁷ Freedom of the press and other civil liberties were severely curtailed. Repression peaked under the presidential rule of General Emílio Garrastazu Médici (1969–1974).⁸⁸ Médici also oversaw a period of economic growth that is sometimes referred to as the “Brazilian miracle.” From 1968–1974, the economy grew at a remarkable pace, foreign investment was high, and major infrastructural projects—such as the Trans-Amazonian Highway—were initiated.⁸⁹ Civil liberties were incrementally reinstated under General Ernesto Geisel (1974–1979) and General João Figueiredo (1979–1985). Figueiredo's period of rule is known as the *abertura*, or “opening” of the political system to democratic reforms. Direct elections for state governors were held in 1982, and indirect elections (via an electoral college) appointed an opposition candidate, Tancredo Neves, to the presidential office in 1985. Neves died prior to assuming office, however, leaving José Sarney, the vice president, to become the country's first civilian president since 1964.⁹⁰



© Byron Suchmaker
Presidents Médici and Nixon

⁸⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Brazil Since 1960: Military Intervention and Dictatorship.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272263>

⁸⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Brazil Since 1960: Military Intervention and Dictatorship.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272263>

⁸⁷ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 3: Politics and Government: The Military Republic [pp. 160–162].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

⁸⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: The Past and the Present [p. 32].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁸⁹ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 1: Geography and History: Brazil's Military Dictatorship (1964–1985) [p. 66].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

⁹⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: The Past and the Present [pp. 32–33].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Democracy and Economic Reform

President Sarney faced severe economic concerns, including high inflation and immense—and steadily rising—foreign debt. Despite continued economic woes, a new constitution—the eighth in Brazil’s history—was passed in 1988, restoring civil liberties and allowing for a direct presidential election in 1989.⁹¹ Marking Brazil’s return to democracy, Fernando Collor de Mello won the 1989 election, but he resigned in 1992 amid an impeachment trial for corruption. Itamar Franco, the vice president, replaced Collor as inflation continued to climb. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Franco’s finance minister, developed an economic reform program that involved the institution of a new currency, the *real* (BRL). His plan also entailed reduced government spending, the continued privatization of state-owned companies, and the use of high interest rates and wage freezes to contain inflation. Cardoso won the 1994 presidential election following signs of an economy recovery.⁹² Over the course of his term, his economic reform policies proved successful by reducing the rate of inflation—which fell to almost zero in 1998—while also allowing the economy to expand. Cardoso won another term in the 1998 election, but competition among the parties forming his coalition government weakened his administration over the course of the term.⁹³



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who ran and lost in the previous three presidential elections, won the presidential office in 2002 and, again, in 2006. A member of the Workers’ Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, or PT), Lula is popularly known as the country’s first working-class president. His two terms in office have been characterized by continued economic growth and reform but also occasional scandal. Lula’s social and economic policies have emphasized the reduction of poverty and hunger. As of mid 2009, an estimated 19 million Brazilians had risen out of poverty under his administration. Despite such efforts, however, the gap between the rich and poor remains wide, and economic opportunity and development remain largely limited to the southeast and south. Both Lula’s administration and party have suffered corruption scandals that resulted in the resignation of important officials, including members of Lula’s advisory staff.⁹⁴ Yet Lula has retained remarkable popular support. His ability to deflect and survive scandal has led

⁹¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Brazil Since 1960: The Return of Civilian Government.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272267>

⁹² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: The Past and the Present [pp. 33–34].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁹³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Brazil Since 1960: Brazil Since 1990.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272268>

⁹⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Brazil Since 1960: Brazil Since 1990.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-272268>

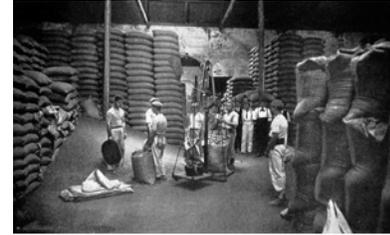
observers to call him “the Teflon president.”⁹⁵ Elections scheduled for October 2010 will choose a new president.

Economy

The Brazilian economy—the largest in South America—is highly diversified, with well-developed agricultural, industrial, and service sectors. The agricultural sector is responsible for a relatively small percentage of Brazil’s GDP (around 6%), but related agribusiness greatly contributes to the country’s immense industrial output.

Of its many high-volume agricultural crops, Brazil is the world’s foremost producer of coffee, tropical fruits

(namely oranges), and sugar cane. The latter is used to produce ethanol, a biofuel exported and widely used domestically as a vehicle fuel. Other major crops include soybeans, corn, cassava (yuca or manioc), cocoa, and tobacco. Home to one of the largest livestock populations in the world, Brazil is also a major producer of beef, poultry, and other animal products.⁹⁶ Approximately 20% of the Brazilian labor force works in agriculture.⁹⁷ Agricultural activity is concentrated in the southeast and south.⁹⁸



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Bagging coffee for export

The Brazilian industrial sector is fueled by the country’s immense natural resources, a large portion of which are used locally by its strong manufacturing sector.⁹⁹ As one of the world’s leading mineral suppliers, Brazil’s mineral products include aluminum, bauxite, graphite, manganese, copper, gold, iron ore, and precious gems.¹⁰⁰ The eastern states of Bahia and Minas Gerais are the site of intensive mining operations. Concentrated in the southeast and south, the Brazilian manufacturing sector is a major producer of automobiles, aircraft, machinery, chemicals, consumer goods (especially shoes), textiles, and processed food.¹⁰¹ The Amazon Basin is a major source of timber. Brazil’s energy resources are vast but domestic consumption is high—the 10th highest in the world in 2009. Brazil has proven oil reserves of 12.6 billion barrels (2009). Yet recently

⁹⁵ Reuters. “Factbox: Brazil under Lula, the Working-Class President.” 10 June 2009.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE55950U20090610>

⁹⁶ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Brazil.” 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

⁹⁷ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. “Brazil.” 3 May 2010.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

⁹⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Economy: Agricultural, Fishing, and Forestry: Agriculture.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222810>

⁹⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Economy: Industry.” 2010.
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25096>

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior. *2007 Minerals Yearbook*. Gurmendi, Alfredo C. “The Mineral Industry of Brazil.” August 2009.
<http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2007/myb3-2007-br.pdf>

¹⁰¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Economy: Industry: Manufacturing.” 2010.
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25099>

discovered deposits off the coast of Rio de Janeiro could make it one of the most oil-rich nations in the world.¹⁰² Brazil is also one of the world's leading producers of hydroelectric energy and ethanol.¹⁰³



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Curitiba skyline

Brazil's services sector is the country's largest formal economic sector and the employer of up to two thirds of the official labor force. This sector includes finance, commerce, telecommunications, and government. Brazil's informal economy is vast, however, accounting for an estimated 40% of total GDP and 50% of urban employment in recent years.¹⁰⁴ Demanding regulation, bureaucratic red tape, and high taxes have contributed to this trend. Buttressed by a stable, democratic government, Brazil is Latin America's leading recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI). The U.S. has historically been its primary source of FDI, as well its leading trade partner.¹⁰⁵ Brazil overcame longstanding foreign debt concerns to become a net external creditor in 2008.¹⁰⁶

Government

The Brazilian government is a federal republic with executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The president, who is the chief of state and head of government, is elected by direct popular vote to a four-year term, with a maximum of two terms in office. In 2010, the Brazilian President was Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (known in short as Lula), who first came to office in 2003 and whose second term was slated to end 1 January 2011. The legislative branch consists of a bicameral National Congress comprising a Federal Senate (the upper house) and a Chamber of Deputies. Brazil's large number of active political parties typically ensures a coalition government, in which multiple represented parties enter into a power-sharing agreement. Party loyalty is weak, however, and changes in party affiliation are



© Brazil News Agency
President Lula da Silva

¹⁰² Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Brazil." 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

¹⁰³ U.S. Energy Information Administration. "Country Analysis Briefs: Brazil." September 2009. <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/Brazil/Full.html>

¹⁰⁴ Bloomberg Businessweek. Farrell, Diana. "Tackling the Informal Economy." 8 May 2006. http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/may2006/gb20060508_633382.htm

¹⁰⁵ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Brazil." 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

¹⁰⁶ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Brazil." 3 May 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

common among elected officials.¹⁰⁷ Significantly, voting is compulsory for all literate Brazilians age 18–70; it is optional for illiterate citizens and anyone age 16–17 or over 70.¹⁰⁸ Such practice ensures high turnout for elections.

Brazil is divided into 26 states (*estados*) and the *Distrito Federal*, or Federal District, around the capital. States are headed by directly elected governors and legislative assemblies comprised of state deputies.¹⁰⁹ The country is further subdivided into municipalities (*municípios*)—essentially county-like districts made of an urban center and the surrounding rural area. Municipalities are headed by an elected mayor and city council.¹¹⁰ Governors and mayors exercise “considerable power” due to constitutional provisions that mandate revenue allocation to states and municipalities.¹¹¹ For statistical purposes, the federal government subdivides the country into five major geographic regions, each consisting of several states: the North (Norte), Northeast (Nordeste), Central-West (Centro-Oeste), Southeast (Sudeste), and South (Sul).¹¹²

Media

The Brazilian constitution allows for freedom of speech and of the press. In practice, these rights are generally respected and upheld by authorities.¹¹³ The country’s thriving independent press is dominated by large conglomerates whose diversified operations include television, radio, and print media.¹¹⁴ Despite the high concentration of ownership by a few firms in both broadcast and print media, a variety of viewpoints are presented across hundreds of daily newspapers and television channels and thousands of radio stations. Coverage is dictated by commercial criteria rather than censorship. Foreign news is increasingly bought from international wire services.¹¹⁵ Most Brazilian

¹⁰⁷ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Brazil.” 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

¹⁰⁸ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. “Brazil.” 3 May 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

¹⁰⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administrative and Social Conditions: Government: Regional, State, and Local Administration.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222823>

¹¹⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Government and Political System [p. 35].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹¹¹ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Brazil.” 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

¹¹² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Land: Geographic Regions.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222802>

¹¹³ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. “Brazil.” 11 March 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136103.htm>

¹¹⁴ BBC News. “Brazil Country Profile.” 20 November 2009. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1227110.stm

¹¹⁵ Panos London. “Brazil’s Media Agenda: Whose News is it Anyway?” 29 April 2008. <http://www.panos.org.uk/?lid=22650>

households have televisions,¹¹⁶ although satellite service is required in many rural areas. Brazilian *telenovelas*, or soap operas, are extremely popular and broadcast internationally. A few state-owned television channels broadcast educational and cultural material.¹¹⁷ Access to the internet is also generally free of government restrictions. As of 2008, Brazil had nearly 65 million internet users.¹¹⁸

Race and Ethnicity

Ethnic Background

Brazil's racial and ethnic diversity reflects its history of colonialism and immigration. Upward of 50% of the population is of primarily European descent, including Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, and Polish.¹¹⁹ The Portuguese first settled in the region in the early 16th century. Most of the other European groups came to the country during a period of large-scale immigration that began in the late 19th century, following the decline of the slave trade. They settled primarily in the southern states of São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul.¹²⁰ Reflecting a long history of miscegenation (interracial marriage or coupling) around 40% of the population is multiracial.¹²¹ This group includes Brazilians of mixed European and African descent (*mulatos*), mixed European and Amerindian descent (*caboclos*), and mixed African and Amerindian descent.¹²² Brazilians of primarily African ancestry comprise around 6% of the population.¹²³ Along with the more numerous Brazilians of mixed ancestry, they are the descendents of the millions of African slaves brought to the region during the colonial era. Brazilians of African descent are known by outside observers as Afro-Brazilians.¹²⁴



¹¹⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: Cultural Life: Press and Telecommunications." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25116>

¹¹⁷ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 7: Enjoying Brazil: The Media [pp. 225–227]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹¹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Brazil." 21 April 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

¹¹⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Climate [pp. 17–18]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹²⁰ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Brazil." 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

¹²¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Climate [pp. 17–18]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹²² *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 1: Land and People [p. 29]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

¹²³ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Brazil." 21 April 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

¹²⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25080>

Many members of this group continue to practice various African cultural traditions. Northeastern Brazil, where sugar plantations were established under colonial rule, has historically had the highest concentration of Afro-Brazilians.¹²⁵

Brazil's surviving indigenous peoples, sometimes known collectively as Amerindians, account for only a very small percentage of the total population. While distributed throughout the country, most indigenous peoples live in the Amazon Basin, particularly in the western and northern border regions.¹²⁶ Amazonia is also home to many *caboclos*. Within the Amerindian group are some 230 small subgroups that speak varied languages and dialects. While some groups are isolated, most maintain some form of contact with members of the dominant society. The Brazilian government has parceled out more than 350 Amerindian reservations—together comprising over 10% of the country's land area—but their borders are not always acknowledged or respected by outsiders.¹²⁷ Additional immigrant ethnic groups include Arabs of diverse origin and Japanese, as well as other Asian communities. These groups are, for the most part, descendents of immigrants that came to the country in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.¹²⁸ Brazilian Japanese are concentrated in São Paulo, where they form the largest Japanese community outside of Japan.¹²⁹

Racial Categories and Relations

For official purposes such as the Brazilian census, Brazilians are classified according to race. Yet objective classifications of race are mostly impractical due to Brazil's long history of miscegenation among all groups. Racial classification is thus often subjective and based on skin color and self-identification. Brazilians of primarily European descent typically identify themselves as white (*branco*). Multiracial Brazilians typically identify themselves as *pardo* ("brown"), while Brazilians of primarily African descent are classified as *preto* ("black"). Skin color plays an especially large role in the differentiation of these latter two groups. The term *moreno*, which roughly translates to



© Brazil News Agency
Tupinikin tribal dancers

¹²⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups: Africans." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25082>

¹²⁶ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Brazil." 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

¹²⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups: Indians." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25081>

¹²⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups: Europeans and Other Immigrants." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25083>

¹²⁹ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Brazil." 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

“brunette” or “brown-skinned,” is commonly used colloquially in place of *pardo* or *mulato*.¹³⁰

Brazil has often been described as a “racial democracy” due to its cultural tradition of tolerance and laws against racial discrimination. A strong sense of Brazilian national identity has also served to unite the diverse population. However, in practice, discrimination remains widespread, if often in subtle or masked forms. As scholars have noted, in Brazil, “[t]here is a very strong correlation between light [skin] color and higher income, education, and social status.”¹³¹ The country’s large population of poor is disproportionately composed of darker-skinned Brazilians, who are also significantly underrepresented in government and other positions of authority, including in the commercial sector.¹³² Even the city of Salvador in Bahia State, with a population that is 80% black, has yet to elect a black mayor, although one was appointed during military rule.¹³³ Because of ongoing racial discrimination, many Afro-Brazilians prefer to identify themselves as *pardo* (“brown”) rather than *preto* (“black”).¹³⁴

Languages

Nearly all Brazilians speak Portuguese, the country’s official language. It is one of the major unifying forces for the nation’s diverse peoples. Since its introduction in the 16th century, the Portuguese language has been modified through the assimilation of elements of several other languages. Among the most influential languages were those of the Tupi-Guarani language group, spoken by many of Brazil’s native tribes and used for communication with Portuguese settlers during the colonial era. Elements of African languages, as well as Italian, German, and Japanese, have also been incorporated into the varieties of Portuguese spoken in Brazil today.¹³⁵ Among segments of Brazil’s historic immigrant community, the latter three languages are still spoken. Spanish, a fellow Romance language and the predominant language of most adjoining countries, is spoken by some and understood by many Brazilians. English is spoken and/or understood by

¹³⁰ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: A Spectrum of Colors [p. 119].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=nFozTyIodkoC&printsec=frontcover&dq=brazil&cd=4#v=onepage&q=pardos&f=false>

¹³¹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson Ed. “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Social Structure: Race and Ethnicity [p. 124].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

¹³² BBC News. Rocha, Jan. “Analysis: Brazil’s ‘Racial Democracy.’” 19 April 2000.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/719134.stm>

¹³³ BBC News. Duffy, Gary. “Racial Legacy Haunts Brazil.” 4 November 2009.
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8338593.stm>

¹³⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups.” 2010.
<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25080>

¹³⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The People: Language.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25084>

some.¹³⁶ Many indigenous Amerindian groups retain their native languages, although these groups are typically small in number; both they and their languages are at risk of extinction.¹³⁷

Self Study Questions

Brazil is the largest country in South America. True or False?

Brazil claims the largest freshwater wetland in the world. True or False?

The Amazon River is the largest river located entirely in Brazil. True or False?

Rio de Janeiro is the capital of Brazil. True or False?

Today, the size of the Amerindian population in Brazil is comparable to what it was when the Portuguese first arrived in the region. True or False?

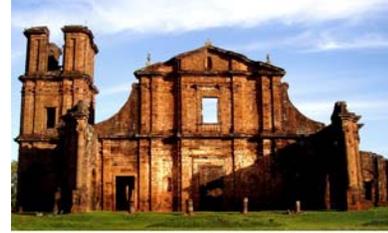
¹³⁶ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Brazil." 21 April 2010.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

¹³⁷ Ethnologue.com. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th Ed. "Languages of Brazili." M. Paul Lewis, Ed. 2009. Dallas: SIL International. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=BR

Religion

Introduction

Brazil hosts a diverse array of religious beliefs, including numerous forms of Christianity and several syncretic, or blended, religions. Christianity, in its various forms, is the predominant religion. The majority of Brazil's large population is affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church; indeed, Brazil has the largest Catholic population of any country in the world.¹³⁸ Catholicism was initially spread by the Portuguese, who made efforts to convert the indigenous population, as well as the huge number of African slaves that they imported to the country. Yet, these latter groups retained elements of their native belief systems, often blending them with Catholicism or other forms of spiritual practice. Today, many Brazilians continue to practice native or syncretic religions. Many self-identified Catholics also observe popular folk traditions, such as the veneration of saints or belief in superstitions. Over the last several decades, the popularity of evangelical churches has grown dramatically, drawing many Brazilians away from the Catholic Church.¹³⁹ Other religions, such as Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism, are practiced among the descendents of Brazil's historic immigrant communities.¹⁴⁰ Overall, most Brazilians are spiritual, and religion, even if not actively or formally practiced, is an important part of their heritage and identity.



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Ruins of Sao Miguel Church

Roman Catholicism

Historical Background

The Portuguese brought Roman Catholicism to the region when they first arrived in 1500. Catholic missionaries subsequently traveled to the colony in order to gain converts, the stated goal of not only the Pope but the Portuguese ruler, King João III, who commissioned the first expeditions to the region.¹⁴¹ Of the many missionary groups who operated during the colonial era, the Jesuits were the most dominant and effective. They

¹³⁸ Time. Downie, Andrew. "Behind Brazil's Catholic Resurgence." 8 May 2007. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1618439,00.html>

¹³⁹ The New York Times. Barrioneuvo, Alexei. "Fight Nights and Reggae Pack Brazilian Churches." 14 September 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/americas/15evangelicals.html?scp=7&sq=brazil%20catholic&st=cse>

¹⁴⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. "Brazil." 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127381.htm>

¹⁴¹ *A Brief History of Brazil*. Meade, Teresa A. "Chapter 2: The Portuguese Colony (1530–1800) [p. 20]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

established missionary villages (*aldeias*), schools (*colégios*), and expansive commercial operations employing indigenous labor.¹⁴² Many colonialists viewed the Jesuits as competition since their missions effectively provided indigenous peoples with refuge from the slave trade.¹⁴³ The Jesuits' efforts pushed Catholicism and colonial development deep into South America. They and other missionaries also baptized imported African slaves upon their arrival to the coast. This practice occurred as part of a general policy in which all colonial subjects were deemed Catholic, regardless of their personal beliefs.¹⁴⁴ The Jesuits were ultimately expelled from the colony in 1759 amid charges of commercial profiteering, which colonial authorities viewed as a threat to their own economic designs.¹⁴⁵

The expulsion of the Jesuits reflected the weak political and institutional power of the Catholic Church in Brazil, where it played a subordinate role to the Portuguese monarchy. (These circumstances contrasted widely with those in the nearby Spanish colonies, where the Church wielded significant political and economic influence.) This trend continued under the independent Brazilian monarchy, which suppressed additional Catholic orders and implemented other policies that served to limit the Church's reach.¹⁴⁶ Such constraints were mostly instituted during the reign of Pedro II (1840–1889), who was officially Catholic but reportedly agnostic. As a result, by 1889, the Catholic Church had only a small institutional presence and “virtually no political or economic power in Brazil.”¹⁴⁷ Yet Catholicism remained the official religion of the state and the overwhelmingly predominant religion of the people, if only nominally. It was not until the newly founded Brazilian republic put forth a constitution in 1891 that church and state were officially separated.¹⁴⁸ Beginning around the same time, the immigration



© Servio Savarese
Marcelo Rossi, Catholic priest

¹⁴² *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. Skidmore, Thomas E. “Chapter 1: Birth and Growth of Colonial Brazil: 1500–1750 [pp. 25–26].” 1999. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

¹⁴³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History: Early Period: Royal Governors, Jesuits, and Slaves.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25036>

¹⁴⁴ *The Brazilians*. Page, Joseph A. “Chapter 13: Roman Catholicism [p. 324].” 1995. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

¹⁴⁵ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Colonial Era, 1500–1815 [p. 28].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

¹⁴⁶ *The Brazilians*. Page, Joseph A. “Chapter 13: Roman Catholicism [pp. 322–325].” 1995. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

¹⁴⁷ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Varieties of Religious Experience [pp. 123–125].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

¹⁴⁸ *The Brazilians*. Page, Joseph A. “Chapter 13: Roman Catholicism [p. 325].” 1995. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

of a large number of Italian Catholics and smaller numbers of Polish and German Catholics greatly increased the Catholic population.¹⁴⁹

Catholicism in Brazil

The Catholic Church's weak institutional presence fostered a religious climate in which Catholicism was widely adopted in name but not widely or strictly enforced in practice. Most notably, the Church lacked a sufficient number of priests to encourage and oversee regular, formal Catholic practice among the large population.¹⁵⁰ Thus, while most Brazilians came to identify as Catholics, they often did not actively practice the religion, or they practiced it informally or in combination with folk or native religions. Many African slaves and indigenous peoples retained or blended their native religions with elements of Catholicism, giving rise to a number of syncretic religions.¹⁵¹ A popular form of Catholicism emerged around the veneration of saints, a practice that remains common today. It involves homage to any of numerous Catholic saints believed to wield "special powers in one or several specific areas of life," such as marriage or childbirth. Practitioners appeal for a saint's assistance through prayers, vows, and donations to the church, or pilgrimages to holy venues, where they may light candles or make other votive offerings. Pilgrimages are typically timed to correspond with folk festivals in honor of specific saints; these events are frequent and widespread. Believers may also regularly wear pendants bearing a saint's image.¹⁵²



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Pedro II, last Emperor of Brazil

As in the past, formal and active Catholic practice, including the regular attendance of Mass and other official church activities, is not widely observed among Brazil's Catholic population. In the 2000 census, nearly three-fourths of the Brazilian population identified themselves as Roman Catholic.¹⁵³ Yet, according to surveys in recent decades, the percentage of Catholics who regularly practice is low, around 20%, or less.¹⁵⁴ This is

¹⁴⁹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Religion [p. 133]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

¹⁵⁰ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. "Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [p. 227]." 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁵¹ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. "Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Varieties of Religious Experience [pp. 123–125]." 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

¹⁵² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [pp. 41–42]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁵³ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. "Brazil." 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127381.htm>

¹⁵⁴ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Religion [p. 133]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

partially due to a continued lack of priests, especially in rural areas, where Catholics may have limited or no contact with clergy members. It is also reflective of the casual and flexible approach to religion that many Brazilians share. A common saying among Brazilians is that “a man needs to go to church three times in his life—to be baptized, to marry, and to die.”¹⁵⁵ Indeed, many Brazilians limit their formal participation to holidays and important life-cycle events, although they may frequently participate in folk religious festivals and activities.¹⁵⁶ In general, Brazilian women and the elderly are said to be the most active.¹⁵⁷

Overall, the percentage of self-identified Catholics in Brazil has declined over the last several decades, falling from 94% in 1950 to 74% in 2000. During that time, the number of Protestants, especially those belonging to evangelical churches, has grown rapidly.¹⁵⁸ In recent years, the Catholic Church has initiated a campaign—known as the Charismatic Renewal—to compete with the growing number of evangelical churches, which have been seen as “offering services that are more joyful, happier, friendlier and more down-to-earth.” A major figure in this revival has been Father Marcelo Rossi, a priest who sings and releases popular music, hosts regular radio and television shows, and performs at large concerts targeting Brazilian youth. Although such practice contrasts widely with traditional Catholic services, it has received the subtle approval of the Vatican (the preeminent Catholic authority) as part of its effort to retain the country’s large but dwindling number of Catholics.¹⁵⁹ Yet previous non-traditional movements in the Brazilian Catholic Church were relatively short-lived. Beginning in the 1960s, liberation theology and the related development of ecclesiastical base communities (CEBs) emerged. These politically-oriented activist movements aimed to address class disparities and poverty from within



© Francisco Martins
Church of Holy Family, São Paulo

¹⁵⁵ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [p. 229].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁵⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [pp. 41–42].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁵⁷ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Religion [p. 133].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

¹⁵⁸ The New York Times. Barrioneuvo, Alexei. “Fight Nights and Reggae Pack Brazilian Churches.” 14 September 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/americas/15evangelicals.html?scp=7&sq=brazil%20catholic&st=cse>

¹⁵⁹ Time. Downie, Andrew. “Behind Brazil’s Catholic Resurgence.” 8 May 2007.

<http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1618439,00.html>

the Church. Such activity was ultimately met with a return to moderation and conservatism.¹⁶⁰

Protestantism

Following exploratory efforts in the 16th century, Protestant groups established themselves in Brazil in the early 19th century.¹⁶¹ They came as either missionaries or immigrants, with many originating from Germany or Britain.¹⁶² While Protestant groups continued to settle in the country throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, it was not until the 1980s that Protestantism, namely in the form of evangelicalism, became widely popular.¹⁶³ In the 2000 census, nearly 18% of the Brazilian population classified itself under the broad Protestant grouping, which includes Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and Methodists. (These groups are largely concentrated in southern Brazil.) Yet the majority of Brazilian Protestants identified themselves as Pentecostals or, more broadly, evangelicals.¹⁶⁴

Pentecostalism and Evangelism

Pentecostalism is a charismatic movement that “emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit and the direct experience of the presence of God by the believer.” It takes its name from the day of Pentecost, which, according to the Bible, was the day the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus’ disciples, granting them the ability to speak in tongues.¹⁶⁵

Pentecostals thus seek “baptism with the Holy Spirit,” or a religious experience in which the Holy Spirit works through and transforms the believer, endowing him or her with the ability to speak in tongues and, in some cases, prophesy or heal. Typically grouped within the larger evangelical movement, Pentecostalism embraces emotion, spiritual revival and renewal, and a literal interpretation of the Bible.¹⁶⁶



© Luiz Felipe Castro
Historic Church of Sé, Olinda

¹⁶⁰ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [pp. 227–229].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁶¹ *Slavery and Protestant Missions in Imperial Brazil: “The Black Does Not Enter the Church, He Peeks in from Outside*. Barbosa, Jose Carlos. Translated by Fraser Glen MacHaffie and Richard K. Danford. 2008. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

¹⁶² *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 77].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

¹⁶³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Protestant and Evangelical Churches [p. 46].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁶⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. “Brazil.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127381.htm>

¹⁶⁵ BBC. “Religions: Pentecostalism.” 2 July 2009.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/pentecostal_1.shtml

¹⁶⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Protestantism.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9059127>

The growing popularity of Pentecostalism in Brazil has been attributed to several factors. Foremost, it has historically been a popular faith among the poor, not only in Brazil but in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.¹⁶⁷ Its message of renewal, moral responsibility, and a savior, has resonated with Brazil’s urban poor, many of whom live a life of hardship and frequent exposure to crime and drug abuse. Observers have noted that many Brazilians have embraced Pentecostal and other evangelical churches because they provide “flexibility of...religious expression” and the opportunity to not only worship but “meet and socialize.” Pentecostal and evangelical churches, which typically host lively and engaging sermons, provide a ready support group for converts. The country’s many evangelical churches have appealed to Brazilian youth through television shows and entertainment events, including martial arts (jujitsu) competitions and sermons with rock and reggae music.¹⁶⁸ These churches have grown rapidly in impoverished urban areas where the Catholic Church is understaffed and seen as “out of touch.”¹⁶⁹ By some estimates, Brazil now has the largest Pentecostal population of any country in the world, surpassing that of the U.S.¹⁷⁰ Some evangelical groups, including the highly successful Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, have come under scrutiny for alleged corruption and fraud, including the extravagant misuse of church funds.¹⁷¹



© Xavier Donat
Cathedral of Brasília

Syncretism

Syncretism is a process in which disparate religious beliefs are blended in an effort to reconcile their differences. This process has long occurred in Brazil as part of its history of diverse cultural contact, conflict, exchange, and assimilation. In the colonial era, indigenous peoples and African slaves were nominally converted to Catholicism, but many retained their native religious practices or



© Sabroma Gledhill
Madonna and Yoruba divinity

¹⁶⁷ BBC. “Religions: Pentecostalism.” 2 July 2009.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/subdivisions/pentecostal_1.shtml

¹⁶⁸ The New York Times. Barrioneuvo, Alexei. “Fight Nights and Reggae Pack Brazilian Churches.” 14 September 2009.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/americas/15evangelicals.html?scp=7&sq=brazil%20catholic&st=cse>

¹⁶⁹ Reuters. Grudgings, Stuart. “Brazil Evangelicals Seek Drug Gangs’ Lost Souls.” 15 September 2008.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0132664320080915>

¹⁷⁰ The New York Times. Rohter, Larry and Ian Fisher. “Brazil Greets Pope but Questions His Perspective.” 9 May 2007.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/09/world/americas/09pope.html?pagewanted=1&_r=2&sq=brazil%20catholic&st=cse&scp=3

¹⁷¹ The Guardian. Phillips, Tom. “The Rise of the Mighty Evangelicals Filled with the Spirit of Capitalism.” 2 March 2007. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/mar/02/brazil.international>

blended them with elements of Catholicism and other religions. For many of the slaves who were forced to adopt Catholicism, syncretism was a method of retaining their indigenous beliefs and practices, only in a disguised form.¹⁷² The weak institutional presence of the Catholic Church, as well as a relatively tolerant attitude among some colonialists and clergy members, also allowed for the practice and assimilation of diverse religions.¹⁷³ Today, many Brazilians continue to practice syncretic religions that combine various elements of African, Amerindian, Christian, and other belief systems. This includes many Brazilians who identify as Catholic but either publically or privately observe folk or syncretic traditions.¹⁷⁴

Candomblé

Candomblé is largely based on African religious rites and beliefs. Its foundational elements were brought to Brazil by imported African slaves of Yoruba and Bantu heritage, among others. Its practitioners believe in a Supreme Being, or God, known as Olurum or Oludumaré. Spirits or deities known as *orixás* are believed to serve as intermediaries between humans and the Supreme Being.¹⁷⁵ This structure was reconciled with the similar structure of Catholicism in which saints are venerated as intercessors between humans and God. Most *orixás* therefore have both African and Catholic identities, a feature that allowed African slaves to worship their native spirits while outwardly adopting Catholicism. Each Candomblé practitioner has a specific *orixá* who is believed to oversee and influence their destiny. Candomblé rites are designed to initiate communication with one of the many *orixás*, whose powers pertain to specific aspects of life, such as health, love, or war. Candomblé ceremonies involve music, dance, feasts, and religious offerings. They are held at sacred spaces known as *terreiros* and are traditionally led by priestesses (*mãe de santo*) or priests (*pai de santo*) who serve as mediums for the *orixás*. Popular festivals are held in honor of the various *orixás*. The northeastern state of Bahía is the center for Candomblé practice,



© Toluaye / wikimedia.org
Candomblé dance ritual

¹⁷² *A Brief History of Brazil*. Meade, Teresa A. “Chapter 3: Society in Early Brazil: Slavery, Patriarchy, and the Church (1530–1889) [pp. 55–57].” 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

¹⁷³ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Varieties of Religious Experience [pp. 124–126].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

¹⁷⁴ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [pp. 227, 232–234].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁷⁵ BBC. “Religions: Candomblé: Beliefs.” 2 February 2007.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/candomble/beliefs/beliefs.shtml>

popular among Afro-Brazilians.¹⁷⁶ *Candomblé do caboclo*, a form of Candomblé practiced in the *sertão* region of the northeast, is influenced by indigenous traditions.¹⁷⁷

Umbanda and Quimbanda

Umbanda is a blend of African, Catholic, Amerindian, and Spiritistic beliefs. It developed in the early 20th century in Rio de Janeiro. This highly syncretic religion is also known as *magia branca*, or “white magic,” and may be practiced in different manners by different sects. Similar to Candomblé, practitioners of Umbanda recognize a pantheon of *orixás* with corresponding Catholic identities. Among their venerated spirits are Brazilian types such as *caboclos* (indigenous peoples) and *pretos velhos* (old blacks).¹⁷⁸ Umbanda rites are meant to invoke these spirits; they are believed to temporarily inhabit spiritualistic mediums who, in turn, convey their insights to other participants. As in Candomblé, these ceremonies are led by priestesses (*mãe de santo*) or priests (*pai de santo*).¹⁷⁹ The religion remains popular in urban areas such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, where it has historically been associated with the middle class.¹⁸⁰



Umbanda, which is seen as a positive religion, contrasts with Quimbanda, or *magia preta* (“black magic”), which is said to harness evil spirits for malevolent and harmful purposes.¹⁸¹ Quimbanda is associated with witchcraft (*feitiçaria*), a practice that has roots in both African and indigenous customs.¹⁸² Quimbanda may also be known as Macumba, although the latter term has various meanings and is broadly used to describe syncretic religions that are based in African traditions.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Candomblé [pp. 47–48].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁷⁷ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Varieties of Religious Experience [pp. 126–127].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

¹⁷⁸ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [p. 235].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁷⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Umbanda [pp. 50–51].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁸⁰ “African-Derived Religions in Brazil [pp. 71–72].” Clarke, Peter B. In *Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions*. Stephen D. Glazier, Ed. 2001. New York, NY: Routledge.

¹⁸¹ “Umbanda [p. 393].” Hale, Lindsey. In *African American Religious Cultures*. Anthony B. Pinn, Ed. 2009. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁸² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Witchcraft [p. 51].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁸³ “Macumba [p. 212].” Hale, Lindsey. In *African American Religions Cultures*. Anthony B. Pinn, Ed. 2009. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Other Spiritual Practices

Shamanism (Pajelança)

Shamanism, known locally as *pajelança*, is an indigenous belief system that remains popular among Amerindians and *caboclos* (persons of mixed indigenous and Portuguese descent.) Shamans, or *pajés*, function as spiritual leaders and healers among the community. They practice traditional medicine, which uses the region's wealth of plants and other natural resources. These may include hallucinogenic substances used by the shaman to communicate with spirits while in a sacred trance.¹⁸⁴ Spirits may be those of ancestors, animals, or natural objects. Some practitioners have absorbed elements of Catholicism or other religions into their rites.¹⁸⁵



© PICQ / wikimedia.org
Shaman in Amazon region

Kardecism (Spiritism)

Kardecism is known broadly as Spiritism or Spiritualism. It was developed in the 19th century by Hyppolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, a French scientist and mystic who promoted his ideas under the pseudonym of Allan Kardec.¹⁸⁶ Its basic objective is to communicate with spirits, which are believed to speak through mediums during séances. Practitioners of Kardecism believe in reincarnation and karma, the notion that a person's good and bad deeds influence the evolution of his or her soul over time. Charity is therefore an important part of Kardecist practice in Brazil.¹⁸⁷ Kardecism grew popular among Brazil's educated middle class in the 20th century, and it influenced the development of syncretic religions such as Umbanda. While official tallies are low, estimates place the number of Kardecists in Brazil at 2–3 million.¹⁸⁸



© anonimo / wikimedia.org
Allan Kardec

¹⁸⁴ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Shamanism [p. 51]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁸⁵ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 74]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

¹⁸⁶ "Macumba [p. 212]." Hale, Lindsey. In *African American Religious Cultures*. Anthony B. Pinn, Ed. 2009. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

¹⁸⁷ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Kardecism (Spiritualism) [p. 50]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁸⁸ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. "Brazil." 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127381.htm>

Religion and the State

Historically, Brazil was officially Catholic—first as a Portuguese colony, then as an independent nation under the Brazilian monarchy. While Brazilians nominally enjoyed freedom of religion as early as 1824 (via the constitution of the Brazilian monarchy), church and state were first formally separated in 1891 under the Brazilian republic.¹⁸⁹ Today, Brazil remains an officially secular nation with a constitution (1988) that allows for freedom of religion. The government’s policies and legal code support this constitutional mandate. Religious discrimination is illegal. While remaining officially neutral, the government observes a general policy of ensuring access to religion in all civil and military settings. Accordingly, public educational facilities are obligated to provide optional religious instruction for students. The government recognizes numerous Catholic holidays as either national or regional holidays.¹⁹⁰ Although the Catholic Church is no longer directly affiliated with the government, it retains a strong cultural and political influence that is reflected in public policies such as a nearly comprehensive ban on abortion.¹⁹¹ Political identities are often strongly colored by religious affiliation. The political influence of the increasingly popular evangelical movement has grown in recent years, with many evangelicals elected to public office.¹⁹²



© Jurema Oliveria
Candomblé temple in Salvador

Religion and Gender

Brazilian society’s patriarchal structure, in which women are often seen as subordinate to men, has been described as a legacy of traditional Catholic values.¹⁹³ Catholic traditions include prohibitions against birth control and abortion, issues that disproportionately affect women. In 2009, a controversial case of abortion in Brazil highlighted public policy and opinion regarding this issue. A nine-year-old girl, who was allegedly raped and impregnated by her step-father, underwent an abortion. In Brazil, abortions are only legal in cases of rape or when childbirth poses severe health risks to the mother. While the young girl’s case met both of these stipulations, the Catholic Church in Brazil excommunicated her mother and the doctors who performed the procedure on the grounds that their actions transgressed “God’s laws.” Reportedly, most Brazilians

¹⁸⁹ *The Brazilians*. Page, Joseph A. “Chapter 13: Roman Catholicism [p. 325].” 1995. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

¹⁹⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. “Brazil.” 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127381.htm>

¹⁹¹ Time. Downie, Andrew. “Nine Year-Old’s Abortion Outrages Brazil’s Catholic Church.” 6 March 2009. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1883598,00.html>

¹⁹² The Christian Science Monitor. Downie, Andrew. “Political Influence Growing for Evangelicals in Brazil.” 25 October 2002. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1025/p07s01-woam.html>

¹⁹³ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Varieties of Religious Experience [pp. 124–125].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

supported the girl's right to an abortion. At the same time, the majority of Brazilians reportedly support "the status quo," in which abortion is only permitted in these types of cases.¹⁹⁴ Vatican officials supported the excommunication order.¹⁹⁵

Within the Catholic Church, women may serve as nuns but cannot be ordained as priests. In contrast, Brazil's African-based religions, most notably Candomblé, endow women with active and authoritative roles in their practice. In Candomblé, both men and women may lead rites as a priest or priestess. However, in some groups, the priestess traditionally occupies a higher position in the religion's social hierarchy. Priestesses are known as either *mãe de santo* or *ialorixá*.¹⁹⁶

Religion and Daily Life

The role of religion in a person's day-to-day life varies widely according to his or her religious affiliation, socio-economic background, family, gender, and personal choice. Among Brazilian Catholics, the percentage of those who actively practice the religion is small. Everyday Catholic practices include regular attendance of Mass in churches and cathedrals, with Sunday and holiday Masses being the most important. At Mass, Catholics receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, or Holy Communion, in which consecrated bread and wine is said to "become the body and blood" of Christ. (This refers to the Catholic belief that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ served to relieve the sins of humankind and was thus a sacrifice.)

Another practice is the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in which Catholics confess their sins to a priest, who, acting in the place of Jesus, absolves them of their sins and prescribes penance. Practitioners of popular or folk Catholicism may make vows, offerings, or pilgrimages in honor of Catholic saints. Various Catholic holidays and observances mark the annual calendar, while major life-cycle events include baptism and marriage, which are sacraments (sacred rites) in the Catholic Church. Broadly, as a legacy of the religion's strong cultural influence, Catholic values permeate Brazilian society. As one scholar noted, "In Brazil, Catholicism's greatest legacy has been to pass on [the] values of collectivism, hierarchy, male domination, family, and community."¹⁹⁷



¹⁹⁴ Time. Downie, Andrew. "Nine Year-Old's Abortion Outrages Brazil's Catholic Church." 6 March 2009. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1883598,00.html>

¹⁹⁵ BBC News. "Vatican Backs Abortion Row Bishop." 7 March 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7930380.stm>

¹⁹⁶ *Sacred Leaves of Candomblé: African Magic, Medicine, and Religion in Brazil*. Voeks, Robert A. "Chapter 4: Religion of the Orixás [p. 63]." 1997. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

¹⁹⁷ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. "Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Varieties of Religious Experience [p. 125]." 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Religious Events and Festivals

Brazil hosts a great variety of religious festivals, which are a frequent and widespread occurrence throughout the country. Indeed, festivals (*festas*) are the most common form of religious expression and participation in Brazil.



© Mauro Cruz
Mask festival, Pirenópolis

Christian Holidays and Festivals

A common Brazilian saying is *pouco padre, pouca missa e muita festa*, or “few priests, few masses, but a lot of feasts.”¹⁹⁸ For Roman Catholics, the major holidays are Easter, Christmas, and Our Lady Aparecida. Easter (*Páscoa*) is characterized by the occurrence of large public processions throughout the Holy Week prior to Easter Sunday, which is marked by a special mass.¹⁹⁹

Exchange 1: Will you celebrate Easter tomorrow?

Visitor:	Will you celebrate Easter tomorrow?	vosey vaay komemoraar a paaskowa aamaanyaa?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Christmas (*Natal*) is celebrated with a late mass on Christmas Eve, followed by a special Christmas dinner (*ceia de Natal*). Presents are, by tradition, left by *Papai Noel* (Santa Claus).²⁰⁰ Often described as Brazil’s biggest religious festival, Our Lady Aparecida (*Nossa Senhora Aparecida*), or “Our Lady Who Appeared,” is celebrated on 12 October. This festival marks the discovery of a black Madonna figure in a fishermen’s net in 1717. The figure, which was said to bring a large catch of fish that day, was thereafter associated with numerous miracles in the region. Our Lady Aparecida was later adopted as Brazil’s patron saint,



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Our Lady of Aparecida

¹⁹⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [p. 41].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

¹⁹⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 7: Enjoying Brazil: Celebrations and Festivals [p. 195].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁰⁰ *Brazil: The Culture* (The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures Series). Hollander, Malika. “Christmas and the New Year [p. 10].” 2003. New York, NY: Crabtree Publishing.

and the saint's shrine grew to become the most popular pilgrimage site in the country.²⁰¹ It is located in Aparecida do Norte, between Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.²⁰² The town reportedly attracts more than 8 million visitors each year.²⁰³



© Breno Peck
Círio de Nazaré festival

Both Christmas and Our Lady Aparecida are national holidays. Good Friday (*Sexta-Feira da Paixão*), the Friday before Easter, is also a national holiday. Commemorative events for this day include Passion plays, in which the Passion of Christ (the story of Christ's arrest and crucifixion) are dramatized.²⁰⁴ Easter Sunday marks the end of Lent, a 40-day period during which devout Catholics practice self-denial and enhanced piety and prayer. Additional government-recognized Catholic holidays on a national or regional basis include Saint Sebastian's Day, Ash Wednesday (the beginning of Lent), Corpus Christi, Saint John's Day, Our Lady of Carmen (Carmo), the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15 August), All Soul's Day (2 November), and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December).²⁰⁵

Other major popular festivals include *Círio de Nazaré* and several summertime festivals collectively known as the *Festas Juninas*. *Círio de Nazaré* is a huge two-week festival that begins on the second Sunday in October. Based in the northern city of Belém, it commemorates the discovery, in 1700, of a statue of Madonna that was subsequently associated with miraculous events.²⁰⁶ The *Festas Juninas* comprise Saint Anthony's Day (13 June), Saint John's Day (24 June), and Saint Peter's Day (29 June).²⁰⁷ Still more Catholic festivals, including commemorations of additional saints, are celebrated on a local basis. For many practitioners of folk Catholicism, religious holidays are a time for commemorating Padre Cicero Romão Batista (1844–1934), a Brazilian priest whose alleged miracles were disputed by the Catholic Church, resulting in his excommunication. Nonetheless, he remains venerated by many Brazilian Catholics, who make pilgrimages

²⁰¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [p. 44]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁰² *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 92]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²⁰³ Reuters AlertNet. "Factbox: Benedict Visits Shrine to Virgin Mary." 13 May 2007. <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/B49806.htm>

²⁰⁴ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [pp. 88–89]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²⁰⁵ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State. *International Religious Freedom Report 2009*. "Brazil." 26 October 2009. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2009/127381.htm>

²⁰⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [pp. 44–45]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁰⁷ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 7: Enjoying Brazil: Celebrations and Festivals [p. 195]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

to his tomb (located in Juazeiro do Norte of the northeastern state of Ceará) and other shrines around the country.²⁰⁸

Afro-Brazilian and Syncretic Festivals

Practitioners of Candomblé and Umbanda also observe their own unique festivals. Members of both groups commemorate the Festival of Iemanjá, which is celebrated in Rio de Janeiro on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Iemanjá, the *orixá* of the sea, is venerated by hundreds of thousands of worshippers who gather on Copacabana beach and toss offerings into the sea.²⁰⁹ Another Candomblé festival, held in Salvador on the second Thursday of January, is known as *Lavagem do Bonfim*, or the Washing of Bonfim. Drawing hundreds of thousands of participants, this holiday entails a huge procession that ends at steps of the Church of Our Lord of Good Endings (*Nosso Senhor do Bonfim*). There, the procession attendants wash the steps of the church, which is associated with the *orixá* of Oxalá. Additional Candomblé festivals are observed alongside Catholic holidays and festivals.²¹⁰



© Julio Garcia
Church of St. Joseph, Rio de J.

Places of Worship

Brazil has a variety of religious venues to correspond with its diverse religious faiths. Roman Catholic churches are known as *igrejas* or *catedrales*. Many historic Catholic churches and missions remain intact. Among the country's modern facilities is the Basilica of the National Shrine of Our Lady Aparecida, which is one of the largest Catholic churches in the world. Located in Aparecida do Norte, the site of the popular pilgrimage festival of Our Lady Aparecida, the basilica can hold some 45,000 worshippers.²¹¹



© Gui Lopes
Festival of Yemanjá, Salvador

²⁰⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [pp. 45–46]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁰⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Catholicism [p. 49]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²¹⁰ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 94]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²¹¹ Reuters. "Brazil's Giant Basilica is Backdrop for Pope Visit." 6 May 2007.
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKN0236838720070506>

Exchange 2: May I enter the church?

Visitor:	May I enter the church?	eyoo pawsoo /e/traaR naa eegrezha?
Local:	Yes, of course.	s/ee/, klaaroo!

Catholic Churches traditionally offer formal services for which visitors may be expected to dress in conservative attire. Men are expected to remove their hats upon entry.²¹²

Exchange 3: May I wear pants inside the cathedral?

Visitor:	May I wear pants inside the cathedral?	eyoo pawsoo usaar kaalsas k/o/preedas d/e/tro da eegrezha?
Local:	No, they prefer that you wear a dress or skirt.	n/a/oo, as mulyeres devem usar saayas o vesteados

Note: this exchange is most likely to be applicable in northern Brazil

Many of Brazil's evangelical churches, especially during their early development, have offered services in informal settings, such as rented spaces and storefronts in urban areas.²¹³ Their growth in popularity and donorship, however, has allowed many of them to construct large, elaborate churches with numerous satellites.²¹⁴ Evangelical "mega-events" may also be held at public places or entertainment venues, such as beaches and concert halls. Evangelical services are typically informal, with participants, as well as some pastors, dressed casually for some occasions.²¹⁵

²¹² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 10: Fast Facts about Brazil: Do's and Don'ts [p. 274]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²¹³ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. "Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [p. 231]." 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

²¹⁴ The Boston Globe. Burge, Kathleen. "Lawsuit on Cape Imperils Thriving Brazilian Chapel." 7 September 2004.
http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2004/09/07/lawsuit_on_cape_imperils_thriving_brazilian_chapel/

²¹⁵ The New York Times. Barrioneuvo, Alexei. "Fight Nights and Reggae Pack Brazilian Churches." 14 September 2009.

Candomblé rites are held in sacred spaces or compounds known as *terreiros*, which is also the term for each local Candomblé group. Typically privately run, these venues may consist of a house or an open square with a central temple. Candomblé groups and their corresponding *terreiros* typically have sponsors, known as *ogã*, who provide the group with financial and political support.²¹⁶ Historically, political support was necessary to prevent authorities from disrupting and dispersing their services, which were suppressed as recently as the 1970s.²¹⁷

Self Study Questions

Most Brazilians identify themselves as Catholic. True or False?

A key reason the Portuguese came to Brazil in the 16th century was to produce converts to Christianity. True or False?

The rate of Brazilian Catholics who attend Mass is rising. True or False?

The number of Protestants in Brazil has grown significantly over the last several decades. True or False?

Pentecostalism is an offshoot of Roman Catholicism. True or False?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/americas/15evangelicals.html?scp=7&sq=brazil%20catholic&st=cse>

²¹⁶ *Sacred Leaves of Candomblé: African Magic, Medicine, and Religion in Brazil*. Voeks, Robert A. "Chapter 4: Religion of the Orixás [p. 65]." 1997. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

²¹⁷ *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. "Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Religion [pp. 233–234]." 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Traditions

Introduction

Brazilian society is characterized by contrasts and contradictions. A long history of colonialism and immigration has endowed the country with great ethnic and cultural diversity. Many Brazilians are of mixed descent, resulting in cultural traditions that are a blend of diverse customs and practices, be they indigenous, African, or of varied European heritage. Some traditions—most notably Carnival and *futebol* (soccer)—are so widely observed as to be characteristic of Brazilian national identity. Other cultural traditions are followed locally, such as among the indigenous peoples of the Amazon region, the Afro-Brazilians of the northeast, and the ethnic Italian and German communities of the south. As a “melting pot” of peoples and cultures, Brazil carries the reputation of a tolerant and assimilative society.²¹⁸ But the country also retains a class system as a legacy of colonialism and slavery.²¹⁹ Social status is tied to occupation, wealth, and race. In terms of the latter, whiteness continues to be associated with higher social status, despite Brazil’s reputation as a “racial democracy.”²²⁰ While a robust economy has contributed to greater social mobility, and a growing middle class has pulled many Brazilians from poverty, a wide gap between the rich and the poor has long characterized Brazilian society.²²¹



© Fernando Stankuns
Brazilians gathering to see the Pope

A common Brazilian characteristic is known as *jeitinho*, or literally “a little way.” This term refers to the Brazilian tendency to find alternative solutions to small or large problems and complications. It is commonly described as the “Brazilian way.” *Jeitinho* is in large part associated with efforts to maneuver around the Brazilian government’s historically thick bureaucratic red tape.²²² Thus, “In its worst form, it amounts to

²¹⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups.” 2010.

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25080>

²¹⁹ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Social Structure: Social Classes [pp. 115–117].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²²⁰ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Social Structure: Race and Ethnicity [p. 124].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²²¹ Newsweek. “The Land of Less Contrast: How Brazil Reined in Inequality.” 28 November 2009. <http://www.newsweek.com/2009/11/27/the-land-of-less-contrast.html>

²²² *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 2: Values & Attitudes [p. 60].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

corruption. At its best, it means finding pragmatic solutions to difficult problems without making waves.”²²³

Traditional Gender Roles and Relations

Brazilian society is traditionally patriarchal, meaning that men generally enjoy greater authority and freedom than women. Circumstances vary widely according to region, class, family, and other factors, but traditional gender stereotypes remain influential. Gender relations in Brazil are shaped by the concept of *machismo*, in which masculinity is characterized as active, assertive, and dominant in relation to femininity. Femininity is, by contrast, stereotyped as passive, submissive, and subordinate.²²⁴ In this way, traditional gender roles are clearly distinguished, although they are said to be less rigid in Brazil than in most Latin American countries where *machismo* shapes gender relations.²²⁵ Within Brazil, traditional gender roles are the most rigid in rural areas where conservative values remain strong. Lifestyles vary widely in urban areas, where progressive attitudes toward gender roles and sexuality are increasingly common.



© Frédéric Roelands
Men from Taiba, Brazil

Brazilian men traditionally carry themselves as strong authority figures, protectors, and breadwinners. As one scholar wrote, men commonly express *machismo* through demonstrations of “sexual virility, use of violence when given ‘just cause,’ and bringing home monetary earnings to support their family.”²²⁶ Women are traditionally associated with the domestic roles of motherhood, caretaking, and housekeeping, even if they also work outside the home. Women indeed comprise a significant share of the Brazilian workforce, but they typically receive lower wages than men and they remain underrepresented in positions of power, such as government.²²⁷ Domestically, women are generally expected to be obedient and accommodating to their male partners. Women

²²³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Cultural Unity and Diversity: The Brazilian Way [pp. 128–130].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²²⁴ Department of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, University of New Brunswick. Onsrud, Hazel and Silvano Paixao, Sue Nichols. “Women and Land Reform in Brazil [p. 12].” May 2006. <http://gge.unb.ca/Pubs/TR239.pdf>

²²⁵ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Family, Gender, and Sexuality [pp. 137–142].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

²²⁶ Department of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, University of New Brunswick. Onsrud, Hazel and Silvano Paixao, Sue Nichols. “Women and Land Reform in Brazil [p. 12].” May 2006. <http://gge.unb.ca/Pubs/TR239.pdf>

²²⁷ Open Democracy. 50.50 Inclusive Democracy. Alcántara, Ana Alice. “Women and Politics: The Brazil Paradox.” 11 March 2008. http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/5050/political_representation_brazil

who do not adhere to this role may be labeled “bossy” or “commanding.”²²⁸ They may also be subject to domestic abuse, which is widespread but often unreported.²²⁹



Brazilian woman with tattoos

Gender relations in Brazil have historically been marked by a double standard in which sexual promiscuity is allowed and expected for men, while women are expected to remain chaste and faithful.²³⁰ At the same time, great value is placed on feminine beauty and sensuality, and it is customary for women to carefully maintain and enhance their appearance. Many young Brazilian women wear clothing that emphasizes or partially reveals their physical features.²³¹ It is not unusual for Brazilian men to openly stare at and comment upon women as they pass in the street.²³² Friendship and casual dating between the sexes is now common practice among most of the Brazilian population, although Brazilians typically date and marry within the same social class. Relationships are often possessive, especially from the male’s viewpoint. While men frequently have extramarital affairs, it is common for Brazilian women to be shamed and divorced if they do the same.²³³ Historically, Brazilian men were acquitted of murdering their adulterous wives on the grounds of “defense of honor.” This practice was only officially banned in 1991.²³⁴ While homosexuality is tolerated to a much a greater extent in Brazil than in the rest of Latin America, allegations of homosexuality are interpreted as a serious attack upon a Brazilian man’s honor and *machismo*.²³⁵ Homophobia hampers HIV prevention and has led to discrimination and violence against gays. In 2009, it was reported that “every 2 or 3 days a person is killed in Brazil in violence connected with his or her sexual orientation.”²³⁶ To

²²⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Attitudes [p. 109].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²²⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department. *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. “Brazil.” 11 March 2010.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136103.htm>

²³⁰ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Family, Gender, and Sexuality [pp. 135–138].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

²³¹ *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 1st Ed. Timothy L. Gall, Ed. “Brazilians.” 1998. Detroit, MI: Gale Research.

²³² *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. “Conversational Concerns [p. 29].” 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

²³³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Love and Sexuality [pp. 89–90].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²³⁴ The New York Times. Brooke, James. “‘Honor’ Killing of Wives Is Outlawed in Brazil.” 29 March 1991. <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/29/us/honor-killing-of-wives-is-outlawed-in-brazil.html?pagewanted=1?pagewanted=1>

²³⁵ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Family, Gender, and Sexuality [pp. 137–138].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

²³⁶ *Exploring the Dimensions of Human Sexuality*, 4th Ed. Greenberg, Jerrold S., and Clint E. Bruess, Sarah C. Conklin. “Chapter 10: Homophobia [p. 373].” 2011. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.

confront this human rights issue, the government launched a campaign in 2003 called “Brazil without Homophobia.”²³⁷

Futebol

Soccer, or *futebol*, is the national sport of Brazil. The Brazilian passion for the game has led many observers to describe it as more of a religion than a sport for Brazilians. Indeed, intense and often fanatical support of the country’s national team is a force that serves to bridge Brazil’s ethnic and class divisions.²³⁸ Soccer was first introduced to the region in 1894 by Charles Miller, a Brazilian national who established a club in São Paulo after learning the game in Britain.²³⁹ Over the course of the 20th century, Brazil developed into one of the most dominant soccer powers in the world. Its national team, known as *a seleção* (“the selection”), is the only team to have played in all 19 World Cups, the sport’s highest level of international competition. It is also the only team to have won the tournament five times.²⁴⁰ Three of these wins (1958, 1962, and 1970) occurred while Edson Arantes do Nascimento, or Pelé, played on the team. Widely considered one of the greatest players in the history of *futebol*, Pelé remains a national hero in Brazil.²⁴¹ The traditional Brazilian style of play, known as *jogo bonito* (“beautiful game”), is known for its skill and creativity.²⁴²



The sport is widely played by Brazilian males of all classes and backgrounds. Its popularity is due in part to its limited equipment demands. Requiring just a ball (or even a makeshift ball), soccer can be played in the streets by the poorest of youth. Pick-up games, known as *peladas*, are common occurrences, especially on Sundays. For spectators, national team games draw the attention of the entire nation. Work essentially halts while Brazilians gather to watch the game in homes, offices, bars, and other venues.²⁴³ Wins in international competition can lead to nationwide partying and parades;

²³⁷ Rede Social de Justiça e Direitos Humanos. Reis, Toni. “GLTB and Human Rights in 2004: A Summary.” No date. <http://www.social.org.br/relatorio2004ingles/relatorio028.htm>

²³⁸ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 79].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²³⁹ The New York Times. Barrionuevo, Alexei. “São Paulo Erects a Temple to the Gods of Soccer.” 8 October 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/08/world/americas/08iht-brazil.1.16777061.html>

²⁴⁰ ESPN Soccernet. World Cup 2010. “Team Profile: Brazil.” 2010. <http://soccernet.espn.go.com/world-cup/team/history?id=205&ver=us&cc=5901>

²⁴¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: National Passions [p. 93].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁴² *Brazil: A Global Studies Handbook*. Edwards, Todd L. “Chapter 4: Society and Culture: Selected Themes in Brazilian Culture [p. 248].” 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

²⁴³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: National Passions [pp. 93–94].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

losses can lead to widespread disappointment and national debate concerning the team’s performance and future.²⁴⁴ In this way, *futebol* is an essential component of the country’s national identity. As a common topic of discussion among both friends and strangers, *futebol* can be an icebreaker for foreigners who are familiar with the game and the Brazilian team in particular.

Greetings and Interaction

Brazilians are, in general, an outgoing and social people. Manners of greeting vary according to relationship, gender, and status. Official business introductions and meetings involve formal greetings, while greetings among acquaintances are more casual.



© Szymon Kochanski
Shaking hands

Men greet each other with a firm handshake, which may last longer than the typical handshake in the U.S.

Brazilians maintain steady eye contact while greeting, as well as during conversation.²⁴⁵

Exchange 4: Good morning!

Visitor:	Good morning!	b/o/ jeeya!
Local:	Good morning!	b/o/ jeeya!

Handshakes are exchanged upon both greeting and departure. Male friends and relatives may hug and pat each other on the back.

Exchange 5: How are you?

Visitor:	How are you?	komoo vaay?
Local:	I am fine, thank you.	b/e/, obreegaadoo

²⁴⁴ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 80].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²⁴⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Socialising with Brazilians [p. 94].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Women typically greet each other with a kiss on each cheek, usually beginning with the left cheek. The number of kisses may vary but usually consists of two or three.²⁴⁶ Women may sometimes simply brush cheeks and kiss the air. They may also touch each other on the arms in a gentle embrace.²⁴⁷

Exchange 6: Good afternoon!

Visitor:	Good afternoon!	bowa taaRjee!
Local:	Good afternoon!	bowa taaRjee!

When greeting women, men should allow them the option to initiate a handshake. If they do not shake hands, men and women may simply greet each other with a nod and verbal exchange. Men and woman who are friends or relatives greet each other with a kiss on each cheek, a gesture that is initiated by the woman. Though less common, some Brazilian men in areas of the rural interior may take offense if unfamiliar men address their female partners.²⁴⁸



© IsraelMFA / flickr.com
Government officials greeting

Exchange 7: Good evening!

Visitor:	Good evening!	bowa noychee!
Local:	Good evening!	bowa noychee!

²⁴⁶ Culture Crossing. "Brazil: Greetings." No date.

http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=7&CID=30

²⁴⁷ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. "Conversational Concerns [p. 29]." 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

²⁴⁸ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 5: Making Friends: Socializing with the Opposite Sex [p. 113]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

When greeting or leaving groups, it is customary for Brazilians to offer handshakes to each individual in the group, rather than a general wave or verbal acknowledgement.²⁴⁹

Exchange 8: Good night!

Visitor:	Good night!	bowa noychee!
Local:	Good night!	bowa noychee!

Titles may be used in formal introductions and meetings, especially with elders, superiors, and unacquainted persons. *Senhor* (“Sir” or “Mr.”) and *Senhora* (“Lady” or “Mrs.”) are used to address men and women, respectfully. Women may also be called *Dona*, a less formal title, in conjunction with their first name. *Doutor* (Dr.) or *Doutura* (for women) are also typically used with a person’s first name.²⁵⁰



© Lou Gold
President Lula and President Sarkozy

Exchange 9: Hi, Mr. Silva.

Visitor:	Hi, Mr. Silva.	b/o/ jeeya (bowa taaRjee), sEnyoR seewuva
Local:	Hello!	b/o/ jeeya (bowa taaRjee)
Visitor:	Are you doing well?	o sEnyoR vaay b/e/?
Local:	Yes, and how about you?	b/e/, obreegaadoo, eh yo sEnyoR?

²⁴⁹ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. “Conversational Concerns [p. 28].” 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

²⁵⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Socialising with Brazilians [p. 95].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

It is common for friends and good acquaintances to inquire about the well-being of each other's family.

Exchange 10: How is your family?

Visitor:	How is your family?	komoo vaay a soowa faameelya?
Local:	They are fine, thank you.	v/a/oo b/e/, obregaadoo

Touching is common between friends, relatives, and close acquaintances. Brazilians tend to stand closer to others than what is typical in the U.S.²⁵¹ Men are traditionally expected to display courteous and gentlemanly behavior toward women, such as opening doors and helping with coats.²⁵²

Hospitality and Gift-Giving

Brazilians are known as hospitable people. An invitation for a *cafezinho*, a strong but typically sweet black coffee, is the most common form of hospitality. Some Brazilians may consider it rude for a guest to refuse such an offer.²⁵³ Invitations for a meal or social gathering are also common. When visiting a Brazilian's home for a social occasion, guests should wear nice clothes. It is typical for guests to arrive at least 15 to 30 minutes late for dinner invitations.²⁵⁴ In rural areas where homes lack doorbells, it is appropriate for guests to clap their hands to signal their arrival. In general, guests will not be expected to remove their shoes, although this may vary on a case-by-case basis. Guests are often limited to common areas, such as the *sala de visita* (living room or entertaining room), where shoes are commonly worn.²⁵⁵



© World Economic Forum
President Lula greets Klaus Schwab

²⁵¹ Culture Crossing. "Brazil: Personal Space & Touching." No date. http://www.culturecrossing.net/basics_business_student_details.php?Id=7&CID=30

²⁵² *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. "Overview [pp. 6–7]." 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

²⁵³ CultureGrams World Edition. "Federative Republic of Brazil." 2010. <http://online.culturegrams.com/world/openpdf.php?filename=Brazil>

²⁵⁴ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 5: Making Friends [p. 114]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²⁵⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 4: Socialising: A Hospitable People [pp. 97–98]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

It is appropriate to bring a small, inexpensive gift for the hostess or the family’s children. This may include items such as flowers or sweets.

Exchange 11: These chocolates are for the children.

Visitor:	These chocolates are for the children.	eshcheesh shokolaates s/a/oo paaraa as kreey/aa/sash
Local:	It is not necessary, but thank you.	n/a/oo era neseysaareeyo, maaz obreegaada

Gifts of black or purple color should be avoided, as these colors are associated with mourning.²⁵⁶ It is customary for gifts to be opened when received.

Eating Habits

Although circumstances vary according to family and location, dinner engagements at a Brazilian’s home are typically casual affairs. Dining etiquette is similar to that in the U.S. Guests should wash their hands before dinner. Although seating arrangements are typically informal, guests should wait to be seated by the host.²⁵⁷ Soup and dessert may be served individually, but guests typically fill their own plates from communal dishes. Guests should take care not to serve themselves more than they can eat, as leaving food unfinished may be interpreted as a sign of dissatisfaction. The most significant difference between U.S. and Brazilian dining etiquette concerns the use of the hands. In Brazil, most dishes—including pizza, fruit, chicken, and sandwiches—are typically eaten using utensils. If held, items such as sandwiches are usually wrapped.²⁵⁸ Guests should follow



²⁵⁶ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 5: Making Friends [p. 114].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²⁵⁷ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: A Hospitable People [p. 99].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁵⁸ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. “Food and Eating [p. 33].” 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

their host’s example if they are unsure about handling certain foods. Brazilians usually hold the fork in their left hand and knife in the right hand.²⁵⁹



© Francisco Martins
Brazilian woman making coffee

It is polite to comment favorably on the quality of the food.

Exchange 12: This food is very good.

Visitor:	This food is very good.	estaa komeeda estaa awtcheema
Local:	Thank you.	obreegaada

The host will likely encourage guests to have additional servings. It is acceptable to decline such offers.

Exchange 13: Thank you, I’m done now.

Visitor:	Thank you, I’m done now.	obreegaada, zhaa aakaabey
Local:	You have to eat more!	koma maays /u/ pokoo
Visitor:	No thank you, I’m done.	n/a/oo obreegaada, zhaa aakaabey

Guests can signal they have finished their meal by placing their fork and knife on the plate. Coffee, such as *cafezinho*, is usually served after the meal, which is a time for conversation.²⁶⁰ Toothpicks are commonly provided at both restaurants and homes. It is

²⁵⁹ CultureGrams World Edition. “Federative Republic of Brazil.” 2010.
<http://online.culturegrams.com/world/openpdf.php?filename=Brazil>

²⁶⁰ CultureGrams World Edition. “Federative Republic of Brazil.” 2010.
<http://online.culturegrams.com/world/openpdf.php?filename=Brazil>

polite to cover the mouth with one hand while using a toothpick.²⁶¹ Belching is considered rude.

Guests should thank their hosts before leaving.

Exchange 14: Thank you for your hospitality.

Visitor:	Thank you for your hospitality.	obreegaada pela soowa ospeetaaleedaajE
Local:	You are always welcome in our home.	vosey eh s/e/pre b/e/ v/ee/da /e/ nawsa kaaza

Food and Drink

Brazilian cuisine reflects a blend of indigenous, European, African, and other culinary influences. It also reflects the country's highly developed agricultural sector, which produces a wealth of grains, fruits, vegetables, and animal products. Regional differences are pronounced, but a great variety of culinary styles can be found in urban areas. When it can be afforded, meat (*carne*) is essential to most meals. Vegetarianism is rare. Among the most characteristic ingredients of Brazilian cuisine is manioc, also known as cassava or yuca, which is a starchy tuber (root) that indigenous peoples traditionally processed for flour. It is used in a variety of dishes.²⁶²



© Kenn Wilson / flickr.com
Caipirinha (traditional cocktail)

Brazilian breakfasts (*café da manhã*) are typically light, often just consisting of *café com leite*, or coffee with milk. Fruit, bread, pastries, cheese, and/or cold cuts may also be served. Lunch (*almoço*) is the primary meal in Brazil. Rice and beans (*arroz e feijão*) are an essential feature of most lunches. Beans are commonly topped with manioc flour (*farinha de mandioca*), which when toasted and combined with spices and other ingredients is known as *farofa*.²⁶³ The typical lunchtime meal also comprises salad

²⁶¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 6: Food and Entertaining [pp. 171–172]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁶² *The Brazilian Table*. Roberts, Yara Castro and Richard Roberts. "Brazilian Ingredients [pp. 21–23]." 2009. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith.

²⁶³ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Food & Drink [p. 97]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

(*salada*), a vegetable of some sort, and a grilled meat. Beef (*bife*), chicken (*frango*), and fish (*peixe*) are popular. Brazil's national dish is *feijoada*, or *feijoada completa*.

Exchange 15: What is the name of this dish?

Visitor:	What is the name of this dish?	komoo sE shaamaa esey praatoo?
Local:	This is called <i>feijoada</i> .	sE shaamaa fezhoowaadaa

Feijoada is a stew made with black beans and various meats, usually pork; it is served with rice and vegetables. Preparation of this dish involves several steps, and is traditionally served on Wednesdays and Saturdays.²⁶⁴

Exchange 16: What ingredients are used?

Visitor:	What ingredients are used to make <i>feijoada</i> ?	kee /i/greejeey/e/tes t/e/ /e/ ooma fezhoowaadaa?
Local:	Black beans cooked with pork, sausage, and bacon.	fezh/a/oo preytoo cozeedos k/o/ kaRnee jE porkoo, l/ee/gweesa ee beyk/o/

Lunch also typically includes dessert (*sobremesa*), such as ice cream (*sorvete*) or fruit (*fruta*). *Cafezinho*, a strong but sweetened black coffee, is taken after lunch; it is usually served in small espresso cups.²⁶⁵ Brazilian dinners (*jantar*) are typically light and often occur late in the evening. It is customary for Brazilian families to eat a long lunch together on Sundays.²⁶⁶ In addition to coffee, which is the staple Brazilian drink, common



© Jurema Oliveira
Feijoada ingredients

²⁶⁴ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. "Food and Eating [p. 35]." 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

²⁶⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 6: Food and Entertaining [pp. 169–170]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁶⁶ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Food & Drink [p. 102]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

beverages include fruit juices (*sucos*) and fruit shakes (*vitaminas*). *Cachaça*, known informally as *pinga*, is an inexpensive type of rum made from sugar cane. It is combined with sugar, ice, and lime to make *caipirinha*, the Brazilian national drink.²⁶⁷



© Carla Arena
Feijoada

Brazil hosts several regional cuisines. The cuisine of the Amazon region is characterized by its heavy reliance upon manioc, native fruits (such as *guaraná*), and several varieties of freshwater fish, including *pirarucu*, *pacú*, and *piranha*. The cuisine of northeastern Brazil, particularly in the state of Bahiá, carries a strong African influence. *Dendê* oil, an orange-colored palm oil, and coconut milk are used heavily in this region. A characteristic dish made with these ingredients is *moqueca*, or seafood stew. Residents of the central-west region, which includes the graze lands of the *cerrado*, enjoy cuisine based on the local agricultural economy. This includes beef, grains, and freshwater fish. The cuisine of the southeast, including São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, is reflective of the region's ethnic diversity. Italian food, including pizza, is popular. Seafood is widely consumed, often in the form of sushi. Salted codfish is a classic Portuguese dish and regional favorite. *Feijoado* is closely associated with Rio de Janeiro.²⁶⁸ Southern Brazil, the heart of the country's livestock industry, is known for its meat-based diet. *Churrasco*, the Brazilian form of barbeque, is popular in this region. The region's *gauchos*, or cowboys, traditionally drink *chimarrão*, a tea made from *maté*. German food is also popular in this region, where many ethnic Germans live.²⁶⁹

Manners of Dress

Brazilians place a high value on personal appearance. A person's clothing and demeanor are widely interpreted as signs of social status. This emphasis on appearance is reflected in two common Brazilian sayings: "Good appearance is a letter of introduction,"²⁷⁰ and "The world treats people better when they dress well."²⁷¹ Modern modes of dress are common throughout the country. High fashion and name-brand clothing is worn in urban



© Adam Jones, Ph.D.
Brazilian men near Salvador

²⁶⁷ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 6: Food and Entertaining [pp. 180–182]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁶⁸ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Food & Drink [pp. 98–99]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

²⁶⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 6: Food and Entertaining [pp. 173–181]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁷⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 4: Socialising: Attitudes [p. 110]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁷¹ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 2: Values & Attitudes [p. 64]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

areas. Suits and dresses are donned for business and formal events. Clean, polished shoes are seen as an important sign of a carefully maintained appearance. Leisure attire is casual, especially at the beach, where skimpy clothing is common and accepted. Shorts and tennis shoes are associated with leisure and are not suitable for entry into some venues, however. Government offices, in particular, may deny entry to men wearing shorts or sleeveless tops.²⁷² Overall, the Brazilian notion of “casual” attire is a bit more formal than that of the U.S.²⁷³

Exchange 17: Is this acceptable to wear?

Visitor:	Is this acceptable to wear?	eyoo pawsoo mE vestcheeR deshtaa maaneyra?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Some styles are associated with different regions. Indigenous peoples in the Amazon region may wear traditional clothing, such as tunics, and practice body painting.²⁷⁴ Afro-Brazilian women of the northeast often wear colorful laced dresses and turbans. *Gauchos*, or cowboys, of southern Brazil typically wear ponchos and loose-fitting pants known as *bombachas*.²⁷⁵

Holidays and Festivals

In addition to their many religious commemorations, Brazilians celebrate a large number of holidays and festivals of varied cultural significance. Several of these events are recognized as public holidays. New Year’s Day (1 January) and Carnival (February/March) are the biggest and most popular celebrations. With January being a summer month south of the Equator, Brazilians customarily wear white for New Year’s Eve festivities,



© janhamlet / flickr.com
Christmas breakfast

²⁷² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Attitudes [pp. 110–111].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁷³ kwintessential. “Brazil: Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette.” No date.

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/brazil-country-profile.html>

²⁷⁴ Buzzle.com. Intelligent Life on the Web. “Traditional Brazilian Clothing.” Jirage, Reshma. No date.

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/traditional-brazilian-clothing.html>

²⁷⁵ *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life*, 1st Ed. Timothy L. Gall, Ed. “Brazilians.” 1998. Detroit, MI: Gale Research.

known as Reveillon.²⁷⁶ Tiradentes Day (21 April) honors Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, or Tiradentes (“Tooth Puller”), a martyr figure from the country’s early independence movement. Labor Day is observed on 1 June; it is especially popular among blue collar workers. Independence Day (7 September) commemorates the country’s independence from the Portuguese in 1822. Proclamation of the Republic Day (November 15) marks the founding of the Brazilian republic in 1889. Although not public holidays, additional days of significance include Dia do Índio (Indigenous People’s Day) on 19 April; and Dia dos Namorados (Lovers’ Day) on 12 June. The former recognizes Brazil’s indigenous peoples and culture, while the latter is similar to Valentine’s Day, with couples exchanging gifts. Other major regional festivals include Boi Bumbá (June), an Amazonian folk festival based in Parintins, and Mãe Preta do Castainho, a festival honoring the Quilombo dos Palmares, a historic settlement for runaway slaves in the northeastern state of Pernambuco.²⁷⁷



© Guilherme Lopes
Yemanjá festival in Salvador, Brazil

Carnaval

Carnaval is the most popular and widely celebrated festival in Brazil. Along with *futebol*, it is frequently described as a national obsession and defining feature of Brazilian popular culture. As one observer wrote, “Love for football and Carnaval is almost synonymous with being Brazilian, and these two national passions are the most significant collective expressions of a unified national identity.”²⁷⁸ The festival occurs annually over



© Sergio Luiz Brazilian
Samba dance float at Carnaval

the four-day span leading up to Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Lent is the 40-day period of piety and self-denial observed by practicing Catholics. Carnaval is thus essentially an outpouring of extravagance and self-indulgence prior to a period of religious abstinence.²⁷⁹ A legacy of ancient pagan springtime festivals, Carnaval in Brazil can be traced back to the Portuguese celebration of *entrudo*, a rowdy pre-Lenten festival in which people doused each other with flour, water, and ink. The festival evolved over time, incorporating African, indigenous, and European traditions to create a uniquely Brazilian event. Among the most influential of these traditions has been the African-

²⁷⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 7: Enjoying Brazil: Celebrations and Festivals [pp. 196–197].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁷⁷ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [pp. 81–93].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

²⁷⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: National Passions [p. 91].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁷⁹ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 3: Religion, Customs, & Traditions [p. 84].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

influenced dance and music movement of samba, which is performed in Carnival parades and competitions. Other features of Carnival include masked balls—a legacy of Italian culture—and *blocos*, parades formed by large groups of costumed partygoers.²⁸⁰

Overall, the festival comprises several non-stop days and nights of music, dancing, parading, feasting, and revelry. Work activities effectively cease during this time. Carnival is cherished by many Brazilians as a time when social roles are reversed and the world is temporarily “turned upside down.” This can be seen in the common practice of donning costumes that temporarily transform the poor into the rich, the rich into the poor, men into women, and women into men. One observer described the immense cultural importance of Carnival, especially among the poor: “This enormous national party releases Brazilians from what some refer to as ‘the hard reality of life’ (*a dura realidade da vida*) through an illusory, utopian world. Pleasure replaces work; abundance supplants poverty; equality and individuality push aside hierarchy and class.”²⁸¹ While Carnival is celebrated nationwide, each region’s festivities have their own unique character. Rio de Janeiro’s Carnival is known as the largest and most commercialized. It is characterized by samba parades in the 60,000-seat *sambódromo*, a stadium designed specifically for such events. In Salvador, Carnival is distinguished by *trios elétricos*, or bands that play on moving flat-bed trucks.²⁸²

Do’s and Don’ts

Do maintain steady eye contact when greeting and conversing with Brazilians.

Do allow Brazilian women to initiate greeting gestures such as handshakes.

Do kindly accept friendly offers of coffee (*cafezinho*).

Do take a small, inexpensive gift to a social event at a Brazilian’s home.

Do use utensils to eat most foods.

Do remove your hat when entering a church.

Don’t eat in the street, especially while walking.

²⁸⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 7: Enjoying Brazil: Celebrations and Festivals [pp. 197–199].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁸¹ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Carnival: The World Turned Upside Down [pp. 142–143].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

²⁸² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 7: Enjoying Brazil: Celebrations and Festivals [pp. 197–199].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Don't use the “okay” hand gesture (using the thumb and index finger to form a circle), as this is considered an offensive gesture in Brazil.

Don't curse or use blasphemous language.

Self Study Questions

Women generally receive lower wages than men. True or False?

Traditional gender roles remain influential in Brazil. True or False?

Soccer, or *futebol*, is the national sport of Brazil. True or False?

In Brazil, the colors green and orange indicate mourning. True or False?

The title, *Dona*, followed by a person's first name is used for informal address of a male elder. True or False?

Urban Life

Introduction

Brazil has a highly urbanized population. In 2009, roughly 86% of the population—some 167 million people—lived in urban areas.²⁸³ The urban population is largely concentrated along the eastern seaboard and in the immediate interior. Southeastern Brazil, in particular, is the site of several major metropolitan areas, including the mega-cities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The greater metropolitan area of São Paulo, the country's most populous city, is one of the largest urban agglomerations in the world. It holds upward of 19 million people in a sprawling urban expanse covering 7,951 sq km (3,070 sq mi).²⁸⁴



© Rodrigo Soldon
Rio de Janeiro metro area

While colonialism laid the foundation for Brazil's major cities, the Brazilian population remained largely rural until the mid 20th century.²⁸⁵ Urbanization began in the 19th century with large-scale immigration.²⁸⁶ Following World War II, the rapid growth of urban areas was driven by rural-to-urban migration.²⁸⁷ This process coincided with Brazil's intensive industrialization efforts; industry, alongside other economic activity, attracted large numbers of landless rural poor to cities.²⁸⁸ Between 1970 and 2000, the percentage of the country's urban population rose from 56% to 80%.²⁸⁹ Yet, throughout this time, urban growth was largely unchecked, leading to unregulated sprawl. Moreover,

²⁸³ United Nations Population Fund. *State of the World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World: Women, Population and Climate*. "Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators [p. 86]." 2009. http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2009/en/pdf/EN_SOWP09.pdf

²⁸⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "São Paulo: Introduction." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9109514>

²⁸⁵ *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. Skidmore, Thomas E. "Chapter 6: Democracy Under Vargas, Halcyon Days with Kubitschek, and a Military Coup: 1945–64 [p. 142]." 1999. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

²⁸⁶ *Brazil (Countries of the World)*. Dicks, Brian. "Urban Brazil [p. 42]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

²⁸⁷ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. "Chapter 2: The Society and Its Environment: Population [p. 114]." 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

²⁸⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Land: Settlement Patterns: Urbanization." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25078>

²⁸⁹ The World Bank. Da Mata, Daniel, et al. "Examining the Growth Patterns of Brazilian Cities [p. 4]." September 2005. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2005/09/20/000016406_20050920112529/Rendered/PDF/wps3724.pdf

the formal economy was incapable of absorbing the large number of migrants, who instead turned to the informal economy to eke out a living.²⁹⁰

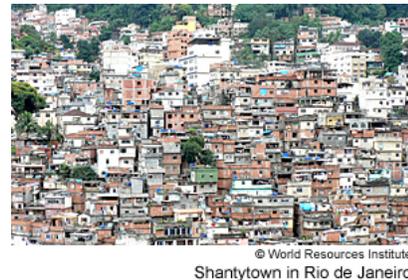


As a legacy of rapid and unregulated development, Brazil's major cities remain marked by high-density living conditions, old or insufficient infrastructure, expansive informal settlements, a large informal economy, rampant crime, heavy traffic, noise, and pollution.²⁹¹ As exceptions, the southern cities of Curitiba, Florianópolis, and Porto Alegre have the reputation of orderly, well-maintained urban areas. While the planned cities of Brasília and Belo Horizonte were carefully designed, both are now ringed by slums.²⁹² Migration patterns have changed in recent years, but urbanization remains an ongoing process. According to forecasts made by the UN Population Division, the country's net population growth will be wholly confined to urban areas for years to come.²⁹³

Urban Conditions

Poverty and Slums

Historically, Brazilian society has been marked by severe income inequality, with a deep divide between a small upper class and much larger lower class. Urban areas in particular are characterized by stark disparities in wealth, with slums abutting upscale residential developments in some areas.²⁹⁴ In recent years, economic growth and government anti-poverty measures have contributed to a reduction in economic disparity and the growth of the middle class. Between 2003 and late 2009, approximately 21 million Brazilians rose out of poverty. One government program that aided this process is known as Bolsa Família. This welfare



²⁹⁰ *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. Skidmore, Thomas E. "Chapter 6: Democracy Under Vargas, Halcyon Days with Kubitschek, and a Military Coup: 1945–64 [p. 142]." 1999. New York: NY: Oxford University Press.

²⁹¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 3: The Brazilians [p. 73]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁹² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 3: The Brazilians [pp. 75–76]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

²⁹³ The World Bank. Da Mata, Daniel, et al. "Examining the Growth Patterns of Brazilian Cities [p. 4]." September 2005. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2005/09/20/000016406_20050920112529/Rendered/PDF/wps3724.pdf

²⁹⁴ Financial Times. Morris, Harvey. "Favela Urbanisation: Aim Is to Bring Slums into the Mainstream." 6 May 2010. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/a2bc15b4-571c-11df-aaff-00144feab49a.html>

program distributes small monthly grants to families who meet certain requirements, such as regularly visiting health clinics and ensuring their children's attendance in school.²⁹⁵ Despite these improvements, however, poverty remains widespread in both urban and rural areas. Urban poor typically resort to eking out a living in the informal economy, such as through street vending, menial labor, and illicit activities.

Favelas (slums or shantytowns) are a common feature of Brazilian cities. They are typically located on the outskirts of urban centers. Many are former temporary worker camps that were permanently established through rapid, unchecked growth. As of 2010, an estimated 54 million Brazilians—or more than 25% of the population—lived in *favelas*. These informal settlements typically comprise makeshift structures that lack access to basic municipal services such as

electricity, water, and sanitation. In some cities, most notably Rio de Janeiro, *favelas* spread up the steep hillsides of mountains surrounding the city proper. Such settlements are exposed to natural disasters such as mudslides, which can result in large-scale casualties.²⁹⁶ In recent years, some well-established *favelas* have benefited from government and individual investment in infrastructure and services.²⁹⁷ Thus, conditions in *favelas* can vary widely. As one journalist wrote about the *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro, “Some favelas are so violent that police won’t enter the warrens of twisting streets and ramshackle houses that cling to the hills high above the city’s glistening beaches. Other favelas verge on middle class, with long-established schools, shops and homes with cable TV.”²⁹⁸ *Favelas* with near “middle-class” conditions are less typical. It is more common for them to be characterized by severe poverty and crime. *Favela* residents are subject to eviction because they lack formal ownership rights, despite some families having lived in their *favela* for generations.²⁹⁹



© Armando Lobos
Favela in Rio de Janeiro

²⁹⁵ Newsweek. “The Land of Less Contrast: How Brazil Reined in Inequality.” 28 November 2009. <http://www.newsweek.com/2009/11/27/the-land-of-less-contrast.html>

²⁹⁶ The Rio Times. Gray, Doug. “Favelas Demolished as Rains Kill 230.” 13 April 2010. <http://riotimesonline.com/news/front-page/favelas-demolished-as-rains-kill-230/>

²⁹⁷ IPS News. Frayssinet, Fabiana. “Fewer Slum Dwellers Thanks to Upgrading.” 22 March 2010. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50747>

²⁹⁸ The Seattle Times. Jackson, Kristin R. “Rio’s Favelas Offer Views of Brazil’s Best and Worst.” 15 May 2010. http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/pacificnw/2011785862_pacificpdestinations16.html

²⁹⁹ The Guardian. Phillips, Tom. “Blood, Sweat and Fears in Favelas in Rio.” 29 October 2005. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/oct/29/brazil.mainsection>

Crime and Corruption

Crime is a very serious problem in Brazil, especially in major urban areas. The country as a whole has a very high murder rate—more than four times that of the U.S.³⁰⁰ The U.S. State Department rates the criminal threat in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro as “critical.” In these areas, “Violent crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, carjacking, armed assault, and burglary are a normal part of everyday life.”³⁰¹ Drug gangs and other organized crime groups are responsible for much of this activity. Many *favelas* are controlled by drug gangs who enforce their own social order based upon internal solidarity and “silence” in opposition to Brazilian authorities and other gangs.³⁰² In effect, many gangs essentially operate “parallel governments” within Brazilian society.³⁰³



© openDemocracy / flickr.com
Police officer in Sao Paulo

Brazilian security forces, including state police and military units, frequently engage in deadly conflict with heavily armed criminal groups. Yet corruption among security forces is also an issue. Reports of “unlawful killings, excessive force, beatings, abuse, and torture of detainees and inmates by police and prison security forces” are common. In particular, death squads that target “suspected criminals or persons considered problematic or undesirable by landowners” frequently operate with police participation or tolerance.³⁰⁴ In June 2010, for example, 17 state police officers were arrested on charges of participating in a death squad that killed 23 people in April of that year.³⁰⁵ Members of security forces have also been linked to other crimes, such as kidnappings and bank robberies.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁰ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil: Country Specific Information.” 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

³⁰¹ Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil 2009 Crime and Safety Report: Rio de Janeiro.” 21 August 2009. <https://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=106705>

³⁰² International Reporting Project, The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University. Lowry, Bruce. “Rio’s [sic] de Janeiro’s Teeming Favelas Are a World Apart.” 1 June 2001. <http://www.internationalreportingproject.org/stories/detail/814/>

³⁰³ Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil 2010 Crime & Safety Report: São Paulo.” 22 February 2010. <https://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=114056>

³⁰⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department. *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. “Brazil.” 11 March 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136103.htm>

³⁰⁵ Latin American Herald Tribune. “17 Cops Arrested for Wave of Killings in Brazil.” 7 June 2010. <http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=358266&CategoryId=14090>

³⁰⁶ Reuters. Colitt, Raymond. “Brazil Pays for Inequality with Violence.” 15 April 2007. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN0435489020070416>

Crime is not limited to *favelas* but is widespread, affecting city centers and all types of residential neighborhoods, including heavily secured upscale communities.³⁰⁷ The high rate of street crime—such as muggings and carjackings—has compelled many middle- and upper-class Brazilians to purchase armored cars with bulletproof windows. Accordingly, São Paulo is the world’s leading producer and market for armored cars. According to one man who purchased such a vehicle after suffering two separate incidents of assault, “It is not a question of if you are going to be assaulted, it is when it is going to happen.” While crime has actually receded in the city since it reached a record high murder rate in 1999, feelings of insecurity remain common among urban residents, especially among the middle and upper classes, as they are frequently targeted for their wealth.³⁰⁸ Many observers link the country’s high crime rate to the deep social and economic inequalities that permeate Brazilian society.³⁰⁹

Telecommunications

The privatization of the country’s telecommunications industry in the late 1990s spurred massive investment and growth in the sector.³¹⁰ Most of this growth has occurred in the mobile-cellular phone market. As of March 2010, Brazil had roughly 179 million cell phone subscribers, comprising some 93% of the population.³¹¹



© Ryan Joy
Tapping into favela power lines

³⁰⁷ Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil 2010 Crime & Safety Report: São Paulo.” 22 February 2010.

<https://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=114056>

³⁰⁸ The New York Times. Barrionuevo, Alexei. “Fearful Brazilians Keep Armored Car Sales Booming.” 3 May 2009.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/04/world/americas/04brazil.html?_r=2&pagewanted=1&sq=sao%20paulo&st=cse&scp=7

³⁰⁹ Diplomat & International Canada. Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. *Paterson Review*, Vol. 9. Peirce, Jennifer. “Divide Cities: Crime and Inequality in Urban Brazil.” 2008.

http://www.diplomatonline.com/pdf_files/npsia/2009/PDF%20-%20Jen%20Peirce%20-%20Crime%20and%20Inequality%20in%20Urban%20Brazil.pdf

³¹⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Cultural Life: Press and Telecommunications.” 2010.

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25116>

³¹¹ Wall Street Journal. Bjork, Christopher and Santiago Perez. “4th Update: Telefonica Offers EUR 5.7B to Control Brazil JV.” 11 May 2010. <http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20100511-712756.html>

Exchange 18: What is your telephone number?

Visitor:	What is your telephone number?	kwaaw sewoo telefoney?
Local:	My phone number is 4050-2156.	meyoo telefoney eh kwaatro zero s/ee/koo zero doyz /u/ s/ee/koo meya

Rapid market expansion has been driven by low-cost cellular technology, which has provided many lower-income Brazilians with access to cellular service. Fixed line service, which is more expensive and less convenient, is much less common.³¹²

Exchange 19: May I use your phone?

Visitor:	May I use your phone?	pawsoo oozaaR o telefoney?
Local:	Sure.	klaaroo

A large percentage of cellular service subscriptions in Brazil are pre-paid rather than monthly service plans. Enhanced cell phone service has allowed many Brazilians, especially those eking out a living in the informal economy, to expand their business contacts.³¹³ While urban and some rural residents of the Amazon region use mobile phones daily, large areas of the region remain without cellular service.³¹⁴

³¹² Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. "Brazil." 27 May 2010.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

³¹³ IPS News. Osava, Mario. "Cell Phones: Democratizing Communications." 8 January 2007.
<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=36094>

³¹⁴ The Washington Post. Ali, Rafat. "This Mobile Life: Roeding's World Travels: Brazil." 2 September 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/02/AR2008090200143.html>

Health

Brazil’s health care system comprises public and private sectors. Government-funded universal health care is provided through the Sistema Único de Saúde (Unified Health System), or SUS. In Brazil, universal health care is a constitutional right.³¹⁵ The government program is funded by a variety of taxes; services are, in turn, provided at no direct cost to the public. Brazilians can also purchase private health



© Ygor Oliveira
Public health immunization program

insurance plans to supplement their public coverage. As of 2009, roughly 79% of Brazilians were reliant solely on the SUS for their health care services. The SUS provides primary care through the Programa de Saúde de Família (Family Health Program), which employs mobile health teams to reach areas historically lacking services. This includes impoverished *favelas*. As part of this program, “people’s pharmacies” (*farmácias populares*) have been established to provide pharmaceutical drugs to patients in need.³¹⁶ While public health facilities, including *postos de saúde* (health clinics), are found throughout urban areas, they are often mismanaged and lacking in sufficient infrastructure, personnel, and funding.³¹⁷

Exchange 20: Is there a hospital nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a hospital nearby?	t/e/ /oo/ oshpeetaaw aakee peRtoo?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	s/ee/, no s/e/troo daa seedaajE

Quality and availability of care can thus vary widely at public facilities. Long lines are common; some people may wait overnight to see a doctor the next day.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Worldfocus. “The Highs and Lows of Universal Health Care in Brazil.” 26 January 2009.
<http://worldfocus.org/blog/2009/01/26/the-highs-and-lows-of-universal-health-care-in-brazil/3768/>

³¹⁶ World Health Organization. “Country Cooperation Strategy Brief: Brazil.” May 2009.
http://www.who.int/countryfocus/cooperation_strategy/ccsbrief_bra_en.pdf

³¹⁷ Foreign Policy. Gómez, Eduardo J. “Brazil’s Public Option.” 2 September 2009.
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/02/brazils_public_option?page=0,0

³¹⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 165].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Exchange 21: Is Dr. Silvera in, sir?

Visitor:	Is Dr. Silvera in, sir?	o dotor seew-vera eshtaa?
Local:	No.	n/a/oo

While poor Brazilians are heavily reliant on public health care services, the middle and upper classes increasingly depend on private insurance. Private insurance provides coverage for care at private hospitals where advanced technology and better infrastructure contribute to a higher quality of service. Wait times are short or non-existent at private facilities. At the same time, the privately insured can rely upon public health care facilities for services not covered by their private insurance.³¹⁹

Urban residents are exposed to health concerns related to pollution, crime, and traffic accidents. In particular, residents of *favelas* are prone to sicknesses related to a lack of treated water and sanitation services.

Exchange 22: Do you know what is wrong?

Visitor:	Do you know what is wrong?	vosey saabe o kee aa jE eRaadoo?
Local:	No.	n/a/oo

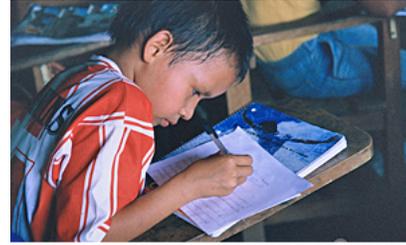
Among the many infectious diseases that pose health risks are yellow fever, dengue fever, and, in the Amazon region, malaria. All of these illnesses are transmitted by mosquitoes.³²⁰

³¹⁹ Foreign Policy. Gómez, Eduardo J. "Brazil's Public Option." 2 September 2009. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/02/brazils_public_option?page=0,0

³²⁰ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil: Country Specific Information." 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

Education

Historically, education in Brazil was reserved for the elite. Today, a wide gap persists in educational quality and access. Officially, primary education (*ensino fundamental*) for students aged 7–14 is mandatory and free. Enrollment and attendance rates are high for primary school.³²¹



© Julio Pantoja / World Bank
Young boy in school

Exchange 23: Do your children go to school?

Official:	Do your children go to school?	seyoosh feelyoos v/a/oo aa eshkola?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Yet the quality of education at public primary schools is often poor, and many students do not graduate. Primary schools are said to be more widely available, and better funded and staffed in the highly developed south and southeast than in other regions of the country.³²²

Exchange 24: Is there a school nearby?

Official:	Is there a school nearby?	t/e/ ooma eshkola aakee peRtoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Secondary education (*ensino médio*), which is free at public schools, offers three additional years of education for students aged 15–17. Enrollment and attendance rates are significantly lower for secondary school.³²³ This is partially due to economic factors, as many children either choose or are forced by necessity to seek employment.³²⁴

³²¹ UNICEF. “Brazil: Statistics.” 2 March 2010. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_statistics.html

³²² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Education: Primary and Secondary School.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222826>

³²³ UNICEF. “Brazil: Statistics.” 2 March 2010. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_statistics.html

³²⁴ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Education: Primary and Secondary School.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222826>

Also, many students do not complete secondary education, a stepping stone to higher education, because of the limited opportunities to attend college. According to a Brazilian report published in 2007, “Universities are not expanding their ranks to accommodate the increasing number of high school students and graduates—only 15 percent of the population enters college.” Indeed, opportunities for higher education are largely limited to middle- and upper-class families, who have the resources to enroll their children in private schools. Private schools generally provide a better education than public schools, thus making their students more competitive for university level studies.³²⁵ Admission is highly competitive for public universities, which are free but in limited number. Private universities are more numerous, but their high tuition costs make them similarly exclusive.³²⁶ Universities and secondary schools are largely limited to urban areas. The south and southeast produce a large percentage of the country’s college students.³²⁷



© Julio Pantoja / World Bank
Students in a community school

Overall, the adult literacy rate has greatly improved over the last several decades, rising to 91% in recent years. Youth literacy rates (15–24 years) are higher: 99% for females and 97% for males.³²⁸ Yet many Brazilians are functionally illiterate, having limited reading and writing abilities; this is often the case for those who attended some school, but received a poor quality education.³²⁹

³²⁵ Instituto Fernand Braudel. Brazil Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. *Thinking Brazil*, No. 25. “Basic Education in Brazil: What’s Wrong and How to Fix It.” February 2007. http://www.braudel.org.br/noticias/midia/pdf/thinkingbrazil_25.pdf

³²⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 157].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³²⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Education: Higher Education.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222827>

³²⁸ UNICEF. “Brazil: Statistics.” 2 March 2010. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_statistics.html

³²⁹ Instituto Fernand Braudel. Brazil Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. *Thinking Brazil*, No. 25. “Basic Education in Brazil: What’s Wrong and How to Fix It.” February 2007. http://www.braudel.org.br/noticias/midia/pdf/thinkingbrazil_25.pdf

Restaurants

Dining out is a popular activity in urban Brazil. Urban areas host a wide variety of dining establishments, ranging from inexpensive snack bars (*lanchonetes*) to formal restaurants (*restaurantes*).³³⁰ Many buffet-style restaurants serve *comida por quilo*, or food that is priced by weight.³³¹



© Jonathan Killen
Tourist at a restaurant in Brazil

Exchange 25: Are you still serving lunch?

Customer:	Are you still serving lunch / dinner?	aa-/ee/daa esht/a/o serv/ee/doo aalmoosoo / zh/aa/ta?
Waiter:	Yes.	s/ee/

In Brazil, waiters are typically male. It is common for customers to signal their waiter's attention by calling him *garçom* ("waiter") or *moço* ("boy").

Exchange 26: I'd like some (hot) soup.

Customer:	I'd like some (hot) soup.	eyoo goostaaria jE ooma sopa
Waiter:	Sure.	poysh n/a/oo

The typical lunchtime meal includes rice and beans (*arroz e feijão*), salad (*salada*), a vegetable of some sort, and a grilled meat, such as beef (*bife*).

³³⁰ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Where to Eat & Drink [p. 101]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

³³¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 6: Food and Entertaining [p. 170]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Exchange 27: What type of meat is this?

Customer:	What type of meat is this?	kee cheepoo jE kaaRnee eh eysaa?
Waiter:	Beef.	kaaRnee jE vaakaa

Juices (*sucos*) are popular and available in wide variety. Native varieties include *açaí* (a highly nutritious Amazonian berry), *guaraná* (a berry with caffeine-like properties), and *côco* (coconut).³³² Bottled and mineral water are recommended over tap water.



© Mathieu Plourde
Coffee shop at the airport

Exchange 28: May I have a bottle of mineral water?

Customer:	May I have a bottle of mineral water?	eyoo goostaaria jE ooma gaRaafa jE aagwa mineyraal
Waiter:	Yes, right away.	s/ee/, eh paaraa zha

It is common for Brazilians to eat dessert (*sobremesa*) with lunch. Typical varieties include fruit (*fruta*), ice cream (*sorvete*), and custard (*pudim*).

Exchange 29: Do you have any dessert?

Customer:	Do you have any dessert?	t/e/ aalgoo paaraa sobremeyza?
Waiter:	Yes, we do.	s/ee/, temoos

³³² *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. “Drinks [p. 99].” 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

Coffee (*cafezinho*) is usually taken after the meal. It is typically presweetened and served in an espresso cup.³³³

Exchange 30: I'd like a cup of coffee.

Customer:	I'd like a cup of coffee.	eyoo gostaaria jE /u/ kaafeh
Waiter:	Sure.	poysh n/a/oo

Each dining party typically receives one bill; it is uncommon, and in some cases inappropriate, to request separate checks. Customers must ask for the check; it is considered rude to bring the check to a table before it is requested.

Exchange 31: Waiter, the bill please.

Customer:	Waiter, the bill please.	gaaRs/o/, aa k/o/ta poR favoR
Waiter:	Okay, I'll bring it to you.	poysh n/a/oo, traagoo zhaa

For groups, the person who organized the meal may pay the bill, especially if the cost is low. It is more common, however, for each member of the group to pay their portion of the bill. In such cases, Brazilians often split the bill evenly among those present to avoid petty calculations. The bill usually includes the tip in the form of a service charge—typically 10%. If not, it is customary to tip the waiter directly.³³⁴

³³³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 6: Food and Entertaining [pp. 170–172]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³³⁴ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. "Food and Eating [p. 40]." 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

Exchange 32: Thank you for the service.

Customer:	Thank you for the service. This is for you.	obreegaada pelo sewoo seRveesoo. eeshtoo eh paaraa vosey
Waiter:	Thank you.	obreegaada

Credit cards are widely used in Brazil, but small shops and merchants may accept only cash or local check.³³⁵

Exchange 33: Do you accept credit cards?

Visitor:	Do you accept credit cards?	aaseyta kart/a/oo dE krejeetoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Public toilets are less common in Brazil than in the U.S; some may require a small fee.³³⁶ Restaurants typically provide facilities for their customers. They often have a sink for hand washing located outside the restroom itself.³³⁷

Exchange 34: Where is your restroom?

Visitor:	Where is your restroom?	/o/jee feekaa o banyeyroo?
Local:	Over there, to your left.	laa, a soowa eshkeRda

³³⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 135]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³³⁶ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. "Toilets [p. 694]." 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

³³⁷ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. "Food and Eating [p. 40]." 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

Marketplaces

Brazil's urban centers have modern shopping venues such as malls, department stores, and supermarkets.

Exchange 35: Will you be going to the supermarket today?

Visitor:	Will you be going to the supermarket today?	vosey vaay aawo soopermerkaado ozhE?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Towns and city neighborhoods also host traditional *feiras livres*, or open-air markets that comprise numerous individual vendors. City markets (*mercado municipal*) are permanent market venues that house vending stalls under a roof.³³⁸

Exchange 36: Is there a street faire nearby today?

Visitor:	Is there a street faire nearby today?	t/e/ feyraa aakee peRtoo ozhE?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	s/ee/, laa a jeereyta

Like farmers' markets, *feiras* and *mercados* offer an array of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as meat and animal products. Some vendors may also sell clothes and other consumer goods.³³⁹ Arts and crafts fairs (*feira de arte e artesanato*) are also common.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [pp. 143–144]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³³⁹ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. "Chapter 4: Brazilians at Home [pp. 107–108]." 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

³⁴⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 145]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Exchange 37: Do you sell _____?

Buyer:	Do you sell _____?	vosey v/e/jee ___ ?
Seller:	Yes.	s/ee/

Bargaining is common practice at fairs and markets. Shoppers can usually negotiate markdowns.

Exchange 38: Can I buy a ___ with this much money?

Buyer:	Can I buy a _____ with this much money?	pawsoo k/o/praar ___ k/o/ estchee t/aa/too dE jeenyeyroo?
Seller:	No.	n/a/oo

It is important for customers to familiarize themselves with the market by visiting a number of different stalls and comparing prices and quality.



© Flávio Jota de Paula
Marketplace in São Paulo

Exchange 39: May I look at this close up?

Buyer:	May I look at this close up?	pawsoo veR maayis peRtoo?
Seller:	Sure.	klaaroo

With an understanding of local pricing norms, foreigners will be able to better conduct negotiations with vendors. This process is not only economic but social.

Exchange 40: Do you have any more of these?

Buyer:	Do you have any more of these?	t/e/ maayis aalg/u/s destches?
Seller:	No.	n/a/oo

Brazilian currency is known as the *real* (BRL) or, in plural form, *reais*. *Real* is pronounced “hay-OW.” One *real* equals 100 *centavos*. *Reais* come in notes of BRL 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, and 100. *Centavos* come in coins of BRL .01, .05, .10, .25, and .50.³⁴¹

Exchange 41: Do you accept U.S. currency?

Buyer:	Do you accept U.S. currency?	aseyta paagaam/e/too /e/ dolaaR?
Seller:	No, we only accept reais.	n/a/oo, so aseytaamosh paagaamento /e/ Reyaayish

After a price has been agreed upon, customers should follow through with the transaction. It is inappropriate to withdraw an offer that has been accepted.



© Luciano Silva
Brazilian currency

Exchange 42: Please look at this, only 200 reais.

Seller:	Please look at this, only 200 reais.	poR favoR, olye aakee. s/a/oo som/e/cheh v/ee/cheh Reyaayish
Buyer:	Sorry, I have no money left.	s/ee/too moo/i/too, eyoo n/a/oo tenyo maaysh jeenyeyroo

Open-air markets may be held once or twice a week in each town or neighborhood. Fixed markets may be open daily, although venders may rotate.³⁴²

³⁴¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 133].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³⁴² *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 4: Brazilians at Home [pp. 107–108].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

Exchange 43: How much longer will you be open?

Buyer:	How much longer will you be open?	feekaa aabeRto ateh kee oraas?
Seller:	We stay open until 8:00 p.m.	estaamos abeRtos ateh aas v/ee/chee (20:00) oraas

As poverty remains widespread in Brazil, beggars are a common sight in urban areas. Many beggars are women and children.

Exchange 44: I need money.

Local:	I need money.	preeseezoo jee alg/u/ jeenyeyroo
Visitor:	I don't have any.	eyoo n/a/oo tenyoo neny/u/ jeenyeyroo

Child beggars are often victims of human trafficking; they are forced to turn over most of their earnings to their captors.

Transportation

The quality and coverage of Brazil's urban transportation infrastructure varies widely. Some roads and highways are newly built and well-maintained, while others have serious structural deficiencies such as potholes, uneven surfaces, and haphazard merge and exit lanes. (Some of the better maintained roads are toll roads.)³⁴³ Basic traffic laws, including speed limits and lane assignments, are not



© Jonathan Talbot/World Resources
City bus in Rio de Janeiro

³⁴³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 138]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

regularly obeyed or enforced.³⁴⁴ Brazilian cities are known especially for their extreme traffic congestion. Traffic in São Paulo is so severely and regularly congested that wealthy residents have increasingly relied on helicopters—either hired or purchased—to commute throughout the city.³⁴⁵ Heavy congestion reflects the historic inability of Brazilian cities to respond to rapid population growth with sufficient infrastructural improvements. It is also a product of the country’s growing wealth, which has provided more Brazilians with the financial means to purchase vehicles.³⁴⁶

Overall, a combination of heavy traffic, poor driving habits, poor vehicle maintenance, crime, sporadic law enforcement, and haphazard road conditions has contributed to a very high rate of fatal traffic accidents.³⁴⁷ In 2008, the implementation of a strict anti-drunk-driving law demonstrated mixed but generally limited results in preventing road fatalities. The law was, however, used by some corrupt policemen to extort bribes from drivers suspected of being drunk.³⁴⁸



© Nathália Santana
Traffic in São Paulo

Urban areas host international and domestic car rental agencies. In order to drive in Brazil, foreign nationals are required to have a domestic license from their own country as well as an international or inter-American driving permit.³⁴⁹

Exchange 45: Where can I rent a car?

Visitor:	Where can I rent a car?	/o/zhee pawsoo aalooгааR /oo/ kaaRo?
Local:	In a city.	naa seedaajee

³⁴⁴ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil: Country Specific Information.” 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

³⁴⁵ CNN. Romo, Rafael. “Rich Fight Brazil’s Congestion with Helicopters.” 8 April 2010. <http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/americas/04/08/brazil.congestion/index.html>

³⁴⁶ The Sun. “Brazil’s Traffic is a Real Jam.” 14 April 2008. http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/expats/expats_community/article1039940.ece

³⁴⁷ Bloomberg. Caminada, Carlos. “Drunk Drivers Protest Brazil Crackdown as Traffic Deaths Plunge.” 14 August 2008. <http://preview.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=arcKT8xn6k.I>

³⁴⁸ The Washington Post. Partlow, Joshua. “Beer-Loving Brazilians Adapt to the ‘Dry Law.’” 23 December 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/22/AR2008122202199.html>

³⁴⁹ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil: Country Specific Information.” 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

Ethanol, a biofuel produced from sugar cane (or corn, as in the U.S.), is widely used as a vehicle fuel in Brazil. It is typically cheaper than regular gasoline, which can be expensive.³⁵⁰

Exchange 46: Is there a gas station nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a gas station nearby?	t/e/ /u/ poshtoo jE gaazoleena aakee peRtoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Many vehicles in Brazil are old and/or poorly maintained, contributing to pollution and traffic safety concerns.³⁵¹

Exchange 47: Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	t/e/ aalg/oo/ mekaneekoo b/o/ aakee peRtoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Brazil’s urban areas are home to the country’s major airports, including international airports at São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Brasília, Salvador, and several other cities.

³⁵⁰ The Dallas Morning News. Landers, Jim. “Cheaper Ethanol Outselling Gasoline in Brazil.” 8 April 2008. http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/news/washington/jlanders/stories/DN-landers_08bus.State.Edition1.c50449.html

³⁵¹ Sociedad Española de Acústica (SEA). Zannin, Paulo H.T. and Fabiano B. Diniz, Alfredo Calixto. “Urban Noise Pollution in Residential Areas of the City of Curitiba, Brazil [p. 4].” No date. <http://www.sea-acustica.es/Sevilla02/noi07011.pdf>

Exchange 48: Which road leads to the airport?

Visitor:	Which road leads to the airport?	kee eshtraada vaay paaraa o aa-eropoRtoo?
Local:	The road heading east.	aa eshtraada /e/ jeeres/a/oo paaraa o lesh-chee

Several major urban areas, most notably São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, have metropolitan rail and subway systems, or *metrô*s.³⁵² Metros are typically inexpensive and commonly used by commuters between suburbs and city centers.³⁵³

Exchange 49: Is there a train station nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a train station nearby?	t/e/ ooma eshtas/a/oo jE t/e/ aakee peRtoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Brazil’s railways are otherwise used primarily to transport cargo. Long-distance passenger services are limited. Several short lines are used mostly for tourism.³⁵⁴ As of mid 2010, construction on a planned high-speed passenger railway between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro had yet to begin.³⁵⁵



© Rodrigo Galdon
Santa Teresa tramway in Rio

Bus services are widely used for long-distance and local travel. City buses are inexpensive but can be

³⁵² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [pp. 150–151].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³⁵³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The Economy: Transportation: Railways.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25106>

³⁵⁴ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 7: Traveling [p. 134].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

³⁵⁵ Reuters India. “Brazil to Hold High-Speed Rail Auction on May 2.” 5 February 2010. <http://in.reuters.com/article/idINN0419382520100204>

crowded and slow-moving.³⁵⁶ They are also prone to petty crime, namely theft.³⁵⁷

Exchange 50: Will the bus be here soon?

Visitor:	Will the bus be here soon?	oo oneeboosh vaay shegaaR lawgoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Taxis are generally considered a quicker and safer form of transport than city buses. Common taxis can be found at taxi stands or hailed on sight.

Exchange 51: Where can I get a cab?

Visitor:	Where can I get a cab?	/o/jee pawsoo peygaar /oo/ taaksee?
Local:	Over there.	laa

Radio taxis, which are considered more reputable, serve customers who call ahead for appointments. Fares are higher for this type of service.

Exchange 52: Can you take me there?

Visitor:	Can you take me there?	pawjE mE levaaR laa?
Local:	Yes, I can.	s/ee/, pawsoo

³⁵⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [pp. 149–150]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³⁵⁷ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil: Country Specific Information." 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

Some urban areas have informal taxi services known as *lotação*, which use vans and minibuses to carry larger groups. This is one of the only types of transportation service available in *favelas*. The U.S. State Department recommends that visitors avoid these types of informal taxis.³⁵⁸ Smaller towns often have motorcycle taxis (*mototaxis*).³⁵⁹

Self Study Questions

Brazil's population is highly urbanized. True or False?

Brazil's urban areas reflect great income disparity. True or False?

Most Brazilians make their living in the formal economy. True or False?

A minority of Brazilians subscribe to mobile phone service. True or False?

Typical middle-class Brazilian residences are known as *favelas*. True or False?

³⁵⁸ Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil 2009 Crime and Safety Report: Rio de Janeiro." 21 August 2009.

<https://www.osac.gov/Reports/report.cfm?contentID=106705>

³⁵⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [pp. 149–150]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Rural Life

Introduction

While urbanization has transformed pockets of Brazil, most of the country's territory remains rural and underdeveloped. In 2009, only 14% of the population lived in rural areas,³⁶⁰ down from 44% as recently as 1970.³⁶¹ This trend is expected to continue, as the population growth rate for rural Brazil remains negative, averaging -1.9% annually from 2005–2010.³⁶²

Occurring over several decades, this massive demographic shift is reflective of the stark disparity in economic opportunity and development between urban and rural areas. Huge numbers of rural-to-urban migrants have settled in slums (*favelas*), but in many cases this represents a form of upward mobility in comparison with the low standard of living in rural areas.³⁶³



© Nickyd75 / wikipedia.org
Favela in Rio de Janeiro

In general, life in rural Brazil is characterized by poverty, hardship, and limited access to jobs, social services, and modern infrastructure. The rural northeast, in particular, is the country's most impoverished region, especially the drought-prone interior known as the *sertão*.³⁶⁴ Conditions are better in the south, where the standard of living and level of development are much higher. Overall, rural life remains heavily influenced by a colonial legacy of unequal land distribution. A large percentage of the country's arable land is concentrated in the hands of a small class of wealthy landowners, leaving millions of landless peasants to eke out a living as migrant laborers or subsistence farmers. As a result, intense competition for land, often in the form of occupation and seizure, is a

³⁶⁰ United Nations Population Fund. *State of the World Population 2009: Facing a Changing World: Women, Population and Climate*. "Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators [p. 86]." 2009. http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2009/en/pdf/EN_SOWP09.pdf

³⁶¹ The World Bank. Da Mata, Daniel, et al. "Examining the Growth Patterns of Brazilian Cities [p. 4]." September 2005. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2005/09/20/000016406_20050920112529/Rendered/PDF/wps3724.pdf

³⁶² UN Data. "Country Profile: Brazil." 2010. <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Brazil>

³⁶³ *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change*. Skidmore, Thomas E. "Chapter 6: Democracy under Vargas, Halcyon Days with Kubitschek, and a Military Coup: 1945–64 [p. 142]." 1999. New York: NY: Oxford University Press.

³⁶⁴ Rural Poverty Portal, International Fund for Agricultural Development. "Rural Poverty in Brazil." No date. <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/brazil>

common source of conflict in rural areas.³⁶⁵ Land reform thus remains a pressing and controversial issue with social, economic, and environmental implications.³⁶⁶

Rural Livelihoods

Most rural residents earn a living in the agricultural sector, which includes farming, animal husbandry, and forestry. The majority of Brazilian farms are small, measuring less than 10 hectares. In Brazil, small-scale farming operations are known as “family farms.”³⁶⁷ They can consist of either subsistence or commercial operations, and may be run by landowners, squatters, or tenant farmers.

Exchange 53: Do you own this land?

Visitor:	Do you own this land?	vosey eh o donoo dehsash teRaash?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Family farms produce a large share of the country’s foodstuffs—ranging from as much as 50–85% according to varied reports. They also employ a large share of the rural labor force. While vast in number, small farms occupy less than 25% of the country’s farmland. The majority of Brazilian farmland is controlled by large agribusiness operations, which have greatly expanded in recent years.³⁶⁸ This pattern of farmland distribution reflects the concentration of a large share of arable land with a small share of farmers and landowners.³⁶⁹ Ironically, much arable land remains unused or used inefficiently, despite the fact that the country is



© João henrique rosa
Sugar cane worker, São Paulo State

³⁶⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 3: The Brazilians [pp. 70–73].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

³⁶⁶ BBC News. Duffy, Gary. “Changing Times for Brazil’s Landless.” 23 January 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7845611.stm>

³⁶⁷ Rural Poverty Portal, International Fund for Agricultural Development. “Rural Poverty in Brazil.” No date. <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/brazil>

³⁶⁸ Grassroots International. Araujo, Saulo. “Family Farmers Feed Brazil.” 16 October 2009. <http://www.grassrootsonline.org/news/blog/family-farmers-feed-brazil>

³⁶⁹ BBC News. Duffy, Gary. “Changing Times for Brazil’s Landless.” 23 January 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7845611.stm>

home to a huge number of landless farmers.³⁷⁰ While family farming is associated with domestic food production, agribusiness is associated with extensive monoculture (single-crop) production for export. Many agribusiness operations are under the control of multinational corporations.³⁷¹



© Marcelo M. Gabbay
Herding livestock, Pará State

Agricultural operations vary according to region. In the Amazon region, subsistence farming, logging, and cattle ranching are the dominant activities.³⁷² Farmers in this region have frequently employed slash and burn agriculture, which consists of razing patches of forest to convert them to farmland, then abandoning the land after the soil loses its nutrients. (Regional soils are not very fertile; they instead gain their nutrients from decomposing plant and animal remains on the surface.)³⁷³ The slash and burn practice has greatly contributed to deforestation in the Amazon, as has the conversion of forests to graze lands for cattle ranching.³⁷⁴ The coastal regions of the northeast and southeast are dominated by plantation operations specializing in cash crops such as sugar cane, coffee, cocoa, cotton, and tobacco. While some of these operations are mechanized, many remain heavily reliant on manual labor. The agricultural economy of the interior northeast, including the *sertão*, consists of cattle ranching and farming. Drought, poverty, and unequal land distribution are severe in this region, where small-scale subsistence farming is the norm.³⁷⁵ Impoverished migrants who flee the region in times of drought are known as *retirantes*.³⁷⁶

Brazil's central interior is dominated by cattle ranching, although farming operations have expanded in the region. Southern Brazil is a major site for cattle ranching and both single-crop and mixed farming operations. Cattle hands and sheepherders in the south are traditionally known as *gauchos*. Across these regions, migrant farm laborers travel seasonally in



© Raphael Barros
Cattle at pasture, Três Irmãos

³⁷⁰ BASIS Research Program on Poverty, Inequality and Development, University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Basis Brief: Assets and Market Access CRSP*. Buanain, Antonio Márcio, et al. "Land Rental Markets and Land Access in Brazil." July 2008. <http://www.basis.wisc.edu/live/amabrief08-05.pdf>

³⁷¹ IPS News. Frayssinet, Fabiana. "Agribusiness Driving Land Concentration." 5 October 2009. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48734>

³⁷² *Brazil (Countries of the World)*. Dicks, Brian. "Agriculture [p. 42]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

³⁷³ *Brazil (Countries of the World)*. Dicks, Brian. "Amazonia [p. 28]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

³⁷⁴ McClatchy Newspapers. Chang, Jack. "As Brazil's Rain Forest Burns Down, Planet Heats Up." 8 September 2007. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2007/09/08/19533/as-brazils-rain-forest-burns-down.html>

³⁷⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Economy: Agriculture, Fishing, and Forestry: Agriculture." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222810>

³⁷⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 3: The Brazilians [p. 71]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

search of work.³⁷⁷ Many households and small subsistence farms are run by women whose husbands have migrated elsewhere for employment. Overall, Brazil's agricultural sector has thrived in recent years, in part due to the prevalence of cheap labor.³⁷⁸ Yet, for the country's many landless peasants, farm work is a low-paying, irregular source of income. Moreover, mechanization has increasingly reduced the need for low-skilled workers. Poverty is thus rampant, affecting more than half of the rural population.³⁷⁹ Not all rural residents work in agriculture, however. Roughly 30% of the rural labor force engages in non-agricultural employment, such as manufacturing (including crafts), commerce, and domestic services. Poverty rates tend to be lower among non-agriculture workers.³⁸⁰

Land Reform and Conflict

Given the vital importance of land in the rural economy, land reform is a major issue in Brazil, where there remains a strong colonial legacy of unequal land distribution. Almost half of the country's agricultural land is controlled by 1% of landowners.³⁸¹ This disparity is among the most severe in the world.³⁸² Since the 1980s, agrarian reform has been pushed by an organization of landless workers known as the

Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (Landless Worker's Movement), or MST.³⁸³ MST has staged protests and land occupations in an effort to provoke reform and settle landless peasants. The movement has based its activities on an interpretation of the Brazilian constitution and related legal provisions that allow for the expropriation (seizure) of land deemed unproductive, unused, and not meeting its "social function."³⁸⁴



© Marcelo Trasel
Nova Petrópolis rural zone

MST has employed a controversial practice in which it organizes collective invasions and occupations of land thought to be underutilized, and thus subject to expropriation. Such

³⁷⁷ *Brazil (Countries of the World)*. Dicks, Brian. "Agriculture [pp. 33, 36–37]." 2003. New York, NY: Facts on File.

³⁷⁸ BBC News. Cabral, Paulo. "Brazil's Booming Agricultural Sector Eyes Global Markets." 25 May 2010. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/latin_america/10125582.stm

³⁷⁹ Rural Poverty Portal, International Fund for Agricultural Development. "Rural Poverty in Brazil." No date. <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/brazil>

³⁸⁰ Department of Economics, Lund University. Jonasson, Erik and Steven M. Helfand. "Locational Determinants of Rural Non-Agricultural Employment: Evidence from Brazil." January 2008. http://www.nek.lu.se/publications/workpap/Papers/WP08_3.pdf

³⁸¹ BBC News. "Land Activist Killed in Brazilian Amazon." 2 April 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8600353.stm>

³⁸² BBC News. Duffy, Gary. "Changing Times for Brazil's Landless." 23 January 2009. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7845611.stm>

³⁸³ MST: Brazil's Landless Worker's Movement. "About." No date. <http://www.mstbrazil.org/?q=about>

³⁸⁴ eScholarship, University of California. Vera, Flávia Santinoni. "The Social Function of Property Rights in Brazil." March 2006. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0tp371xs>

activity by MST and other landless worker movements has frequently resulted in violent conflict with large landowners, who may be supported by Brazilian authorities or even their own privately commissioned security forces or militias.³⁸⁵

Exchange 54: Did these people threaten you?

Visitor:	Did these people threaten you?	eshtaash pesoowas o ameyasaar/a/?
Local:	No.	n/a/oo

In 1996, in one of the deadliest confrontations, 19 landless peasants were killed and 69 others injured when Brazilian police opened fire on an MST demonstration in the northern state of Pará.³⁸⁶ Conflict has also arisen over efforts to keep lands from large landowners and land grabbers seeking to expand their territory. In 2005, Dorothy Stang, a U.S.-born Catholic nun, was murdered in a suspected contract-killing thought to be commissioned by local ranchers.³⁸⁷ Stang spent 23 years as a missionary in a village in Pará state, where she made efforts to preserve the rainforest and protect the property rights of small farmers against encroaching loggers and ranchers.³⁸⁸



© Sales Neto
Police in Rio de Janeiro favela

Overall, more than 1,400 Brazilian rural workers were murdered in land disputes between 1985 and 2010. Much of this violence occurred in Pará state, where in 2008 alone 13 people with ties to land reform were killed. Areas along the “arc of deforestation,” the growing expanse of cleared land on the Amazon rainforest’s eastern and southern edges, have been described as “lawless” and “reminiscent of the Wild West.” In these areas, “Settlers struggle for control of land and the small and ill-equipped police

³⁸⁵ PBS. Frontline/World Rough Cut. Schubert, Siri. “Brazil: Hired Guns: Fighting for a Share of the Land.” 24 September 2009. http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2009/09/brazil_hired_gu.html

³⁸⁶ BBC News. “Brazil Jails Peasant Massacre Officer.” 16 May 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/1991281.stm>

³⁸⁷ BBC News. “Brazil Man Jailed for Murdering Nun Dorothy Stang.” 13 April 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8616877.stm>

³⁸⁸ IPS News. Frayssinet, Fabiana. “Stiff Sentence for Killer of US-Born Nun Upheld.” 23 October 2007. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=39771>

officers and justice officials are powerless to stop them.”³⁸⁹ Land disputes are also a serious issue in southern Brazil.³⁹⁰

Despite such conflict, MST claims to have successfully settled some 350,000 families on 2,000 settlements that the government has formally recognized with land titles. It also supports many more “encamped” families awaiting recognition from the government.³⁹¹ While the movement has won numerous legal battles, it has been evicted from many properties. In legally expropriated areas, MST has established cooperative farms and schools for the settled community.³⁹² Under President Lula, the Brazilian government has also expropriated and allocated “unproductive” land for settlement by landless peasants. Between 2003 and 2008, approximately 519,000 families were given title to land, according to the National Institute for Colonization and Agrarian Reform (INCRA). Critics claim that such practice is simply a form of “social compensation” enabling the government to avoid undertaking more substantial land reform initiatives.³⁹³ At the same time, the policy of expropriation makes landowners wary. Such anxiety contributes to a weak land rental market; many landowners remain unwilling to lease to peasants for fear of expropriation.³⁹⁴

Indigenous Peoples

When the Portuguese arrived in 1500, an estimated 2–6 million indigenous (Amerindian) peoples inhabited the Brazilian region.³⁹⁵ Thereafter, slavery, conflict, and disease contributed to the rapid decline of their population.³⁹⁶ Brazil’s remaining indigenous population is small, numbering some 460,000, or roughly one quarter of 1% of the total Brazilian population.³⁹⁷



© Fábio Rodrigues Pozzebom/Abr
Indigenous Tucuxi tribespeople

³⁸⁹ Time. Downie, Andrew. “Brazil’s Land-Reform Murders: Dark Side of an Economic Miracle.” 4 April 2010. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1977697,00.html>

³⁹⁰ PBS. Frontline/World Rough Cut. Schubert, Siri. “Brazil: Hired Guns: Fighting for a Share of the Land.” 24 September 2009. http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2009/09/brazil_hired_gu.html

³⁹¹ MST: Brazil’s Landless Worker’s Movement. “About.” No date. <http://www.mstbrazil.org/?q=about>

³⁹² PBS. Frontline/World Rough Cut. Schubert, Siri. “Brazil: Hired Guns: Fighting for a Share of the Land.” 24 September 2009. http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/rough/2009/09/brazil_hired_gu.html

³⁹³ IPS News. Frayssinet, Fabiana. “Agribusiness Driving Land Concentration.” 5 October 2009. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=48734>

³⁹⁴ BASIS Research Program on Poverty, Inequality and Development, University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Basis Brief: Assets and Market Access CRSP*. Buanain, Antonio Márcio, et al. “Land Rental Markets and Land Access in Brazil.” July 2008. http://www.basis.wisc.edu/live/ama_publications.html

³⁹⁵ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: History.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222833>

³⁹⁶ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 1: Historical Setting: The Colonial Era, 1500–1815 [p. 24].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

³⁹⁷ Fundação Nacional do Índio (FUNAI). “Provos Indígenas: Índios do Brasil.” No date. <http://www.funai.gov.br/>

(Many more Brazilians are of mixed indigenous and European and/or African descent.) Indigenous peoples are distributed throughout the country, including in urban areas.³⁹⁸ Between 280,000 and 350,000 of them inhabit the Amazon region, particularly the western and northern border regions.³⁹⁹ Around 180,000 of the indigenous peoples of the Amazon are said to retain their traditional culture and way of life, including subsistence livelihoods based on hunting, gathering, and small-scale farming.⁴⁰⁰

Exchange 55: Do you know this area very well?

Visitor:	Do you know this area very well?	vosey konyesey b/e/ eshtaa aareeya?
Local:	Yes, I grew up here.	s/ee/, eyoo kresee aakee

The indigenous population comprises some 225–230 distinct groups who speak varied languages and dialects. Many of these groups are small and at risk of extinction.⁴⁰¹ The majority of them maintain some form of contact with other Brazilians. Many groups have done so for centuries, while for other groups contact has occurred only in recent decades.⁴⁰² This has resulted in varying degrees of acculturation and assimilation among indigenous peoples. Some tribes—possibly as many as 67—have reportedly had no contact with outsiders.⁴⁰³ The National Indian Foundation (FUNAI), Brazil’s governmental agency for indigenous affairs, has a policy of not contacting these isolated groups due to the threat of disease, and other factors. FUNAI instead delimits areas where the isolated groups are known to live, restricts these areas from development, and occasionally monitors them. Contact is seen



© UN Photo/Joseane Daher
Shavante Indian mother and child

³⁹⁸ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups: Indians.” 2010.

<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25081>

³⁹⁹ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Brazil.” 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

⁴⁰⁰ Greenpeace International. “People of the Amazon.” No date.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/forests/amazon/people-of-the-amazon>

⁴⁰¹ Ethnologue.com. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 16th Ed. “Languages of Brazil.” M. Paul Lewis, Ed. 2009. Dallas: SIL International. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=BR

⁴⁰² Survival International. “Brazilian Indians.” No date.

<http://www.survivalinternational.org/tribes/brazilian>

⁴⁰³ Reuters. Colitt, Raymond. “Brazil Sees Traces of More Isolated Amazon Tribes.” 17 January 2007.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN17285256>

as a last option in cases of severe threat or emergency.⁴⁰⁴ Most of these isolated groups are thought to be aware of outsiders but determined to remain sequestered.⁴⁰⁵

Nationwide, there are more than 350 indigenous reservations, together comprising over 10% of the country's land area. While their land is nominally protected by the government, these groups have long been threatened by encroaching loggers, ranchers, and miners who do not always acknowledge or respect reservation boundaries.⁴⁰⁶ The Yanomami, a tribe based in northern Brazil along the border with Venezuela, have a history of deadly conflict with miners and loggers who have ventured into their lands to exploit their rich resources.⁴⁰⁷ In practice, the government's protection of indigenous reserves is sporadic, with only occasional deployments of federal police to expel illegal settlers from such areas.⁴⁰⁸ Many indigenous people, including whole tribes, have been killed by settlers in territorial disputes.⁴⁰⁹ Other groups, such as the most isolated tribes, have simply been pushed off their land into other, typically more remote areas.



© Carol Sawada
Guararema City Hall, São Paulo State

Local Administration

The Brazilian government is decentralized, meaning that administrative power is not concentrated with the federal government but is distributed among regional and local governmental bodies. Brazil is divided into states (*estados*) and municipalities (*municípios*). Municipalities are county-like districts that typically comprise a town or city center and the surrounding rural area; some are wholly urban while others are mostly rural. Brazil has more than 5,500 municipalities. They are headed by a directly elected mayor and city council.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁴ The New York Times. Wilford, John Noble. "Trying to Keep the World from Closing in on 'Uncontacted' Tribes." 9 June 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/09/world/americas/09iht-brazil.1.13564481.html>

⁴⁰⁵ Reuters. Colitt, Raymond. "Brazil Sees Traces of More Isolated Amazon Tribes." 17 January 2007. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN17285256>

⁴⁰⁶ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The People: Ethnic Groups: Indians." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25081>

⁴⁰⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Roraima." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9064067>

⁴⁰⁸ Reuters. Colitt, Raymond. "Brazil Sees Traces of More Isolated Amazon Tribes." 17 January 2007. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN17285256>

⁴⁰⁹ The Times Online. Strange, Hannah. "'Man in the Hole,' Lone Survivor of Amazon Tribe Massacre, Escapes Ranchers' Bullets." 11 December 2009.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/us_and_americas/article6952409.ece

⁴¹⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 2: A Look at Brazil: Government and Political System [p. 35]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Exchange 56: Does your mayor live here?

Visitor:	Does your mayor live here?	o prefeytoo daa seedaajE mora aakee?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Mayors exercise “considerable power” due to constitutional provisions that mandate revenue allocation to municipalities.⁴¹¹ In other words, mayoral administrations are influential and relatively independent because they have their own funds and the power to distribute them.⁴¹²

Exchange 57: Can you take me to your mayor?

Visitor:	Can you take me to your mayor?	vosey pawjE mE levaaR atey o prefeytoo?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Municipal governments are charged with administering public schools and health facilities, as well as providing services such as water and sanitation.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Brazil.” 5 February 2010. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35640.htm>

⁴¹² Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Government: Regional, State, and Local Administration.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222823>

⁴¹³ Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Brazil: A Country Study*, 5th Ed. Rex A. Hudson, Ed. “Chapter 4: Government and Politics: Structure of Government: State and Local Governments [p. 278].” 1998. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Exchange 58: Sir, we need your help.

Visitor:	Sir, we need your help / advice / opinion.	sEnyoR, nosh preseezaamos soowa aazhoodaa / k/o/selyoo / opeenya/a/oo
Local:	OK.	poysh n/a/oo

Historically, Brazil’s municipal governments have been vulnerable to corruption. This trend is reflective of the role of local governments as relatively autonomous distributors of resources. It is also reflective of Brazil’s history of social, economic, and political inequality, including a long history of rule by wealthy elites. Corruption typically takes the form of clientele or patronage systems in which community members secure resources from local government officials in return for votes in future elections. In this way, resources are often funneled to those with political connections rather than those who are most in need.⁴¹⁴ Many local political leaders are themselves members of the wealthy, landed elite.

While such practice is not widespread, municipal governments can form popular participatory committees that incorporate citizens into the local planning and administrative process. These participatory committees can consist of local health, education, and budgetary councils, for example.⁴¹⁵ In some municipalities, these councils are used to reduce corruption by extending political participation to the general community and enhancing transparency in local government. Overall, they serve as a forum for public debate over policies that affect the local community.⁴¹⁶



© Brazil Agency
Federal Highway Police vehicle

⁴¹⁴ Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation, University of Amsterdam. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 83. Wood, Terence and Warwick E. Murray. “Participatory Democracy in Brazil and Local Geographies: Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte Compared [pp. 19–20].” October 2007. http://www.cedla.uva.nl/60_publications/PDF_files_publications/83RevistaEuropea/83-Wood&Murray-ISSN-0924-0608.pdf

⁴¹⁵ International Development Research Centre. Toni, Fabiano. “Forest Management in Brazil’s Amazonian Municipalities.” No date. http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-43424-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

⁴¹⁶ USAID. Brinkerhoff, Derick W. and Arthur A. Goldsmith. “Clientelism, Patrimonialism, and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Programming [pp. 31–32].” December 2002. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pnacr426.pdf

Health

As in urban areas, publicly-funded universal health care is provided to rural residents through the Sistema Único de Saúde (Unified Health System) or SUS.⁴¹⁷ However, medical personnel, facilities, and supplies are not widely available in rural areas, especially in remote, undeveloped regions.⁴¹⁸ Many rural communities are located at long distances from advanced or even basic care. Moreover, local public facilities are often crowded and understaffed, with limited capacity to provide immediate care.⁴¹⁹ Overall, the quality and availability of services at rural health facilities can vary widely.⁴²⁰



© Public Health Image Library
Child receiving polio vaccine

Exchange 59: Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Visitor:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	t/e/ aalg/oo/ s/e/troo jE saa-oojee aakee peRtoo?
Local:	Yes, over there.	s/ee/, laa

As a result, some rural residents travel to urban areas for treatment, while many rely on folk or traditional medicine. Some rural residents benefit from public health programs that send mobile health teams to remote areas where professional medical services are otherwise unavailable. In such cases, health agents (*agentes de saúde*) may “travel by

⁴¹⁷ Foreign Policy. Gómez, Eduardo J. “Brazil’s Public Option.” 2 September 2009. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/02/brazils_public_option?page=0,0

⁴¹⁸ World Health Organization. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, Vol. 86, No. 4. “Flawed but Fair: Brazil’s Health System Reaches Out to the Poor.” April 2008. <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/86/4/08-030408.pdf>

⁴¹⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 165].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴²⁰ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. “Brazil: Country Specific Information.” 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

bicycle, boat, and horse-drawn cart” to reach distant rural residents in need.⁴²¹ These services are often limited to primary care and basic health promotion and education.⁴²²

Exchange 60: I’m injured; can you help me?

Visitor:	I’m injured; can you help me?	eshto mashookaadoo vosey pawjE mE aazhoodaaR
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	s/ee/, pawsoo aazhoodaa-loo

Rural residents, especially the poor, face a host of serious health concerns. They are much less likely to have access to improved drinking water and sanitation facilities than their urban counterparts.⁴²³ They are therefore vulnerable to various food and water-borne illnesses such as diarrhea, cholera, and hepatitis. Brazil’s tropical environment allows for the spread of many insect-borne diseases, such as yellow fever, dengue fever, and malaria. These illnesses are all transmitted by mosquitoes. Additional health threats include leishmaniasis, schistosomiasis, and Chagas disease—all parasitic diseases. Leishmaniasis is transmitted by sand flies. Schistosomiasis is caused by worms that live in contaminated bodies of freshwater, especially in the northeast.⁴²⁴ Chagas disease is transmitted by reduviid bugs (beetles) that typically burrow in the walls of mud or palm huts.⁴²⁵ Overall, rampant poverty and lack of regular and ready access to health facilities contribute to a generally lower level of health in rural areas.⁴²⁶

⁴²¹ UNICEF. Nybo, Thomas. “Mobile Health Workers Deliver Essential Services to Brazilian Families.” 1 October 2007. http://www.unicef.org/health/brazil_41042.html

⁴²² Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization. *Pan Am J Public Health*, Vol. 7, No. 5. Svitone, Ennio Cufion, et al. “Primary Health Care Lessons from the Northeast of Brazil: The *Agentes de Saúde* Program.” 2000. <http://www.paho.org/english/dbi/es/j-v7n5-healthagents.pdf>

⁴²³ UNICEF. “Brazil: Statistics.” 2 March 2010. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_statistics.html

⁴²⁴ *Brazil*, 6th Ed. St. Louis, Regis, et al. “Other Infectious Diseases [pp. 713–714].” 2005. Footscray, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications.

⁴²⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [pp. 160–163].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴²⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 3: The Brazilians [p. 71].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Education

In general, rural residents have fewer educational opportunities than their urban counterparts. As in urban areas, a rural family's financial means often determines their children's educational opportunities. Officially, primary education (*ensino fundamental*) for students aged 7–14 is mandatory and free at public schools. Primary schools are more scattered in the north, northeast, and central-west—areas that are largely rural and underdeveloped—than in the heavily urbanized south and southeast. They also offer a lower-quality education.⁴²⁷ For example, rural schools in the Amazonian state of Pará are isolated and thinly distributed, with serious deficiencies in infrastructure, supplies, and personnel.⁴²⁸ Nationwide, enrollment and attendance rates are high for primary school.⁴²⁹ Yet, the quality of education at public facilities is often poor. Many students need to repeat grade levels and many fail to complete the full eight years.⁴³⁰



© Charlie Phillips
School in Favela da Rocinha

Secondary schools (*ensino médio*), which offer an additional three years of education for students aged 15–17, are largely concentrated in urban areas. Many rural families cannot afford the costs of room and board for their children to attend school away from home. Moreover, many Brazilian children choose or are forced by necessity to work rather than attend school.⁴³¹ As a result of these and other factors, enrollment and attendance rates are significantly lower for secondary school.⁴³² Higher education facilities are also concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural residents at a disadvantage. In any case, higher education is mostly limited to the middle and upper classes.⁴³³ Overall, illiteracy rates in rural areas are roughly three times higher than those in urban areas.⁴³⁴ Due to the

⁴²⁷ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Education: Primary and Secondary School.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222826>

⁴²⁸ UNICEF. Page, Kent. “Improving Quality Basic Education for Children in Brazil’s Amazon Region.” 4 October 2006. http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/brazil_36077.html

⁴²⁹ UNICEF. “Brazil: Statistics.” 2 March 2010. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_statistics.html

⁴³⁰ Instituto Fernand Braudel. Brazil Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. *Thinking Brazil*, No. 25. “Basic Education in Brazil: What’s Wrong and How to Fix It.” February 2007. http://www.braudel.org.br/noticias/midia/pdf/thinkingbrazil_25.pdf

⁴³¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Education: Primary and Secondary School.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222826>

⁴³² UNICEF. “Brazil: Statistics.” 2 March 2010. http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/brazil_statistics.html

⁴³³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. “Brazil: Administration and Social Conditions: Education: Higher Education.” 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222827>

⁴³⁴ IPS News. Osava, Mario. “Pockets of Illiteracy, Despite Strides.” 12 November 2008. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=44669>

generally poor quality of public education, many Brazilians are functionally illiterate even after attending several years of primary school.⁴³⁵

Transportation

Brazil's transportation network is impaired in coverage and quality by the country's vast size, tropical climate, and uneven development across regions. Of the country's 1.67 million km (1 million mi) of roads, only 161,503 km (100,353 mi) are paved.⁴³⁶ According to the U.S. State Department, "state roads (especially in the south) are often excellent, while federal, interstate roads (designated 'BR') are often very poor due to lack of maintenance."⁴³⁷ (This pattern reflects the decentralized structure of the Brazilian government.) Divided highways are limited to the highly developed south and southeast, where roads are generally in better condition than elsewhere in the country. Some federal highways have been privatized and now operate as toll roads; these roads typically receive regular maintenance.⁴³⁸ Federal and rural state roads are often severely potholed; many require high-clearance vehicles to negotiate them. Heavy truck traffic characterizes travel on the highways between urban areas, which the U.S. State Department has described as "among the most dangerous in the world." The dirt roads of rural Brazil are subject to climatic hazards such as heavy rains, which can quickly make travel impossible. Many roads are impassable during the rainy season. Hazards such as pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles are common.⁴³⁹



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Rural highway

Passenger train service is extremely limited, making private passenger car and public bus the most common forms of transportation between urban areas.⁴⁴⁰ Air flights are irregular and significantly more expensive than bus fares; they are thus less popular, despite the country's vast size and large number of functional airports.⁴⁴¹ Air travel remains the only method of reaching many areas, however.⁴⁴² In the Amazon region, most transportation is

⁴³⁵ Instituto Fernand Braudel. Brazil Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. *Thinking Brazil*, No. 25. "Basic Education in Brazil: What's Wrong and How to Fix It." February 2007.

http://www.braudel.org.br/noticias/midia/pdf/thinkingbrazil_25.pdf

⁴³⁶ Global Road Safety Partnership. "Brazil." 2007. <http://www.grsproadsafety.org/page-brazil-34.html>

⁴³⁷ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil: Country Specific Information." 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

⁴³⁸ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 5: Arriving and Settling Down [p. 138]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴³⁹ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil: Country Specific Information." 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

⁴⁴⁰ Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. "Brazil: Country Specific Information." 12 January 2010. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1072.html

⁴⁴¹ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Economy: Transportation: Aerospace." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-25105>

⁴⁴² Global Road Safety Partnership. "Brazil." 2007. <http://www.grsproadsafety.org/page-brazil-34.html>

conducted on waterways.⁴⁴³ Built in the 1970s, the Trans-Amazonian Highway was designed to enhance regional development and link the area with the rest of the country. But the road was never fully paved and has since suffered degradation due to environmental factors.⁴⁴⁴ Planned small-scale agriculture and settlement along the road largely failed but increased access led to large-scale deforestation along it and other highways in the region. Indeed, most deforestation in the Amazon has occurred within close proximity of roads.⁴⁴⁵ Recent efforts to rehabilitate existing roads and develop new highways in the region have been marked by tensions between social, economic, and environmental interests.⁴⁴⁶ Many rural regions remain isolated and difficult to access.

Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Brazil shares international borders with 10 countries: French Guiana, Suriname, Guyana, Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay. In the Amazon region, where development is limited and terrain is often impassable, many border regions remain remote and difficult to access.



© Jerônimo Freitas Rodrigues de Carvalho
Triple border, Brazil, Paraguay & Bolivia

Exchange 61: Where is the nearest border crossing?

Visitor:	Where is the nearest border crossing?	/o/jE feekaa a fr/o/teyra maayish prawseema?
Local:	It's about 2 kilometers from here.	feekaa seyRka jee doysh keelomeetrosh daakee

⁴⁴³ Encyclopædia Britannica Online. "Brazil: The Economy: Transportation: Shipping." 2010. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-222817>

⁴⁴⁴ National Public Radio. Garcia-Navarro, Lourdes. "The Amazon Road: Paving Paradise for Progress?" 14 September 2009. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=112535943>

⁴⁴⁵ Department of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, University of New Brunswick. Hutchison, Meredith. "Demarcation and Registration of Indigenous Lands in Brazil [p. 24]." May 2006. <http://gge.unb.ca/Pubs/TR238.pdf>

⁴⁴⁶ IPS News. Osava, Mario. "Activists Opposed to Rebuilding Amazon Highways." 28 April 2008. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=42158>

Brazilian law requires all persons to carry some form of ID. For foreign nationals, passports and visas are required.⁴⁴⁷

Exchange 62: May I see your ID?

Local:	May I see your ID?	pawsoo veR soowa kaRteyra dE eej/e/cheedaajE?
Visitor:	Yes.	s/ee/

The tri-border area at Brazil’s boundary with Paraguay and Argentina is known for smuggling, trafficking, and other illicit activities, including fundraising for terrorist operations.⁴⁴⁸ Contraband ranges from drugs and arms to electronics and other consumer goods.

Exchange 63: Are you carrying any weapons?

Local:	Are you carrying any weapons, food, or electronics?	eshtaa kaaReyg/aa/do aaRmaash, komeeda, o aapaarelyos eletraaneekoosh?
Visitor:	No.	n/a/oo

Smugglers hope to transport such items to Brazil’s urban areas, where consumer goods can be sold for up to twice their cost in Paraguay. This is due to Brazil’s high taxes,

⁴⁴⁷ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. “Travel Report: Brazil.” 8 January 2010.
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/report_rapport-eng.asp?id=38000

⁴⁴⁸ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. “Brazil.” 27 May 2010.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

which make such items more expensive domestically.⁴⁴⁹ The international borders of Brazil’s Amazon region are porous to drug trafficking.⁴⁵⁰

Domestically, Brazilian authorities have sporadically operated sobriety checkpoints on roads and highways following the implementation of a strict anti-drunk driving law.⁴⁵¹

Exchange 64: Please get out of the car.

Local:	Please get out of the car.	poR favor, saaya do kaaRo
Visitor:	OK.	poysh n/a/oo

Self Study Questions

Most of Brazil’s land area is urbanized. True or False?

Some Brazilians consider migration to *favelas* an improvement in their standard of living. True or False?

While indigenous lands are nominally protected by the Brazilian government, in practice federal police are only occasionally deployed to protect the land set aside for native people. True or False?

Rural life is heavily influenced by the colonial legacy of unequal land distribution. True or False?

Competition for land in Brazil commonly leads to violence. True or False?

⁴⁴⁹ McClatchy Newspapers. Chang, Jack. “Brazil, Paraguay Try to Rein in Lawless Border.” 30 August 2007. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2007/08/30/19347/brazil-paraguay-try-to-rein-in.html#>

⁴⁵⁰ Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. “Travel Report: Brazil.” 8 January 2010. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/report_rapport-eng.asp?id=38000

⁴⁵¹ The Washington Post. Partlow, Joshua. “Beer-Loving Brazilians Adapt to the ‘Dry Law.’” 23 December 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/22/AR2008122202199.html>

Family Life

Introduction

Traditionally, Brazilian families are close-knit units comprising both immediate and extended family members. A Brazilian's extended family network is known as his or her *parentela*. *Parentelas* serve as lifelong support systems for their members. Family is the primary source of a Brazilian's social identity, which in Brazil is based much less on individuality than in the U.S. As one scholar wrote, "No one in Brazil would ever make the claim of being 'self-made,' since everyone recognizes the need for connections to others in order to do anything. Trying to act alone for one's own benefit is folly, not only because of the intricacy of rules and regulations that govern life, but also because a group provides identity and status." Indeed, family networks provide social, economic, and political connections vital for operating in Brazilian society, which has historically been class-based and highly bureaucratized. Thus, a Brazilian's familial status and network typically play a large role in determining his or her educational and business opportunities, marriage partners, social circle, and political associations.⁴⁵²



© betta design
Family meal at a restaurant

Brazil's strong Catholic heritage remains influential in shaping family structure and values. Patriarchal (male-dominated) households remain typical, and marriage and childbirth are norms that are encouraged and regulated by Catholic doctrine. Yet modern attitudes toward marriage and family planning have increasingly shaped Brazilian society.

The Typical Household

Large, extended-family households are the traditional norm in Brazil. They may contain three generations of family members, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Exchange 65: Does your family live here?

Visitor:	Does your family live here?	soowa faameelya mora aakee?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

⁴⁵² *Culture and Customs of Brazil (Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean)*. Vincent, Jon S and Margo Milleret. "Chapter 6: Social Customs [pp. 81–82]." 2003. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Children traditionally live with their parents until they marry, while the elderly, especially the infirm, often live with their children, who customarily care for them in their old age.⁴⁵³



© Pequena Verena
Brazilian kids in Alagoas State

Exchange 66: Is this your entire family?

Visitor:	Is this your entire family?	eshta eh soowa faameeleeya /i/teyra?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Small, nuclear family households have grown increasingly common, especially among the urban middle class.⁴⁵⁴

Exchange 67: How many people live in this house?

Visitor:	How many people live in this house?	kw/aa/tash pesowash mor/a/ neshtaa kaaza?
Local:	Five.	s/ee/koo

Middle- and upper-income families can better afford to rent or buy housing, which is expensive in either case.⁴⁵⁵ Nuclear families living on their own still often live in close proximity to the extended family. Poorer families may have no choice but to live in close quarters under the same roof, often in densely inhabited *favelas* (shantytowns).

⁴⁵³ CultureGrams World Edition. “Federative Republic of Brazil.” 2010.

<http://online.culturegrams.com/world/openpdf.php?filename=Brazil>

⁴⁵⁴ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 4: Brazilians at Home [p. 102].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

⁴⁵⁵ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Family Life [p. 83].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

Housing conditions vary widely. In *favelas*, makeshift structures are the norm, and access to municipal services such as water and sanitation is limited or non-existent. Homes in impoverished rural areas may consist wholly of natural materials (such as clay or palm thatch); such structures also often lack services. In urban areas, many middle-class Brazilians live in modern high-rise apartment buildings or suburban homes.



© Petra / flickr.com
Houses in Curitiba, Paraná

Exchange 68: Are these people part of your family?

Visitor:	Are these people part of your family?	eshtaas pesowash faaz/e/ paaRchE dE soowa faameeleeya?
Local:	No, they are our neighbors.	n/a/oo, eles s/a/oo nawsoos veezeenyosh

Members of the upper class often live in upscale residential neighborhoods. In urban areas, homes often have security features such as iron bars or alarm systems due to the high crime rate. Despite high costs, home ownership remains a widely shared goal among Brazilians.⁴⁵⁶

Roles and Responsibilities within the Family

Brazilian society is traditionally patriarchal, meaning that men generally enjoy greater authority and freedom than women. Gender relations are shaped by the concept of *machismo*, in which men are seen as dominant and assertive and women are seen as passive and subordinate.⁴⁵⁷ Within Brazil, traditional gender



© Marlon Dutra
Brazilian couple

⁴⁵⁶ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 4: Brazilians at Home [pp. 106–107].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

⁴⁵⁷ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. “Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Family, Gender, and Sexuality [pp. 137–142].” 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press.

roles are the most rigid in rural areas where conservative values remain strong. They also remain influential in urban areas, but progressive attitudes toward gender roles and sexuality are increasingly common.⁴⁵⁸

Brazilian men traditionally carry themselves as strong authority figures, protectors, and breadwinners.

Exchange 69: Do you have a job, sir?

Visitor:	Do you have a job, sir?	o sEnyoR t/e/ /oo/ /e/pregoo?
Local:	Yes, I am a farmer.	s/ee/, eyoo so faaz/e/deyoo

The ability to provide financial support for the family is seen as an especially vital characteristic for men, whose pride and sense of masculinity may be injured if they fail to do so.⁴⁵⁹

Exchange 70: Are you the only person who has a job?

Visitor:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	vosey eh a ooneeka pesowa na soowa faameelya kee t/e/ /e/pregoo?
Local:	No, my uncle also works.	n/a/oo, meyoo tchoo t/a/b/e/ traabaalya

Women are traditionally associated with the domestic roles of motherhood, caretaking, and housekeeping, even if they also work outside the home.

⁴⁵⁸ Department of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, University of New Brunswick. Onsrud, Hazel and Silvano Paixao, Sue Nichols. "Women and Land Reform in Brazil [p. 12]." May 2006. <http://gge.unb.ca/Pubs/TR239.pdf>

⁴⁵⁹ Department of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, University of New Brunswick. Onsrud, Hazel and Silvano Paixao, Sue Nichols. "Women and Land Reform in Brazil [p. 12]." May 2006. <http://gge.unb.ca/Pubs/TR239.pdf>

Exchange 71: Does your wife work outside the home?

Visitor:	Does your wife work outside the home?	a soowa eshpoza traabaalya fora?
Local:	No, she takes care of the family.	n/a/oo, ela toma k/o/ta da faameelya

Many Brazilian women work outside of the home, but they typically receive lower wages than men. They also remain underrepresented in positions of power, such as in government.

Exchange 72: Does your wife have a job?

Visitor:	Does your wife have a job?	a soowa eshpoza t/e/ /u/ /e/pregoo?
Local:	Yes, she works at the bank.	s/ee/, ela traabaalya /e/ /u/ b/aa/ko

Domestically, women are traditionally expected to be obedient and accommodating to their male partners.⁴⁶⁰ Women who do not adhere to this role may be subject to domestic abuse, which is widespread but often unreported.⁴⁶¹

Child-rearing is largely left to the women of the household, including nannies and grandmothers. Children are highly valued and generally treated with great affection and tolerance by their elder family members. Discipline is said to be relatively lenient in the average Brazilian home. A child's duties and daily life are largely determined by the family's financial means. Children of middle- and upper-income families enjoy better educational and recreational opportunities, while poor children are often required to work to supplement the family's income. Elderly family members are respected and cared for

⁴⁶⁰ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 4: Socialising: Attitudes [p. 109]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁶¹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department. *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. "Brazil." 11 March 2010.
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136103.htm>

by their younger relatives. In comparison with the U.S., it is less common—and less socially acceptable—for Brazilians to place elderly family members in a nursing home.⁴⁶²

It is common for middle- and upper-class families to employ domestic help. A female maid (*empregada doméstica*) assists the lady of the house (*dona*) with running the household, including cooking and cleaning.⁴⁶³ Some maids are full-time employees who live in the home with the family.⁴⁶⁴ Some families may also employ a *babá*, or nanny, to care for their children. Long-term maids and nannies can develop close bonds with the family.⁴⁶⁵

Many low-income households are run by single mothers or wives whose husbands have migrated elsewhere for employment.⁴⁶⁶ The breakdown of the traditional family structure among many impoverished families is evident in the prevalence of street children in Brazil. As of 2007, Brazil was thought to have around 7 million street children. Some of these children may live with their parents but seek informal work in the streets, such as vending, begging, or scavenging. Many are alone and without shelter as a result of abandonment or running away from home. It is thus common for street children to turn to drug abuse and criminal and gang activity.⁴⁶⁷ As a result, they have been targeted for beatings or assassination by corrupt police officers and death squads.⁴⁶⁸ This trend was especially rampant in the early 1990s.⁴⁶⁹ Street children remain vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation.⁴⁷⁰



© Ali Mustafa
Mother and son in rural Brazil

⁴⁶² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: The Household [pp. 86–87].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁶³ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: The Household [p. 85].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁶⁴ *Culture Smart! Brazil: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture*. Branco, Sandra and Rob Williams. “Chapter 4: Brazilians at Home [pp. 98–99].” 2005. London, UK: Kuperard.

⁴⁶⁵ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. “Family Life [p. 89].” 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

⁴⁶⁶ Rural Poverty Portal, International Fund for Agricultural Development. “Rural Poverty in Brazil.” No date. <http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/brazil>

⁴⁶⁷ Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, PBS. “Street Children of Brazil.” 15 July 2007. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/june-15-2007/street-children-of-brazil/3563/>

⁴⁶⁸ The New York Times. Reuters. “Killing of Brazil Youths Reported.” 6 September 1990.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1990/09/06/world/killing-of-brazil-youths-reported.html?scp=4&sq=brazil%20street%20children%20death&st=cse>

⁴⁶⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: The Brazilians [pp. 69–70].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁷⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. State Department. *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. “Brazil.” 11 March 2010.

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136103.htm>

Marriage, Childbirth, and Divorce

Marriage

For Brazilian Catholics, marriage is a sacrament, or a sacred rite of passage. Brazilians typically date and marry within the same social class, although this is not always the case.⁴⁷¹



© Sue Kellerman
Bride and groom, São Paulo

Exchange 73: Are you married?

Visitor:	Are you married?	vosey eh kaazaado?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Casual dating is common practice among most of the Brazilian population. Brazilians traditionally marry at a young age, but it is increasingly common for them to wait until their late 20s and early 30s.⁴⁷² Marriage traditionally marks the beginning of a Brazilian's life outside their family home.

Exchange 74: Is this your wife?

Visitor:	Is this your wife?	eshtaa eh soowa eshpoza?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Gender relations in Brazil have historically been marked by a double standard in which sexual promiscuity is allowed and expected for men, while women are expected to remain chaste and faithful.⁴⁷³ Thus, while it is relatively common for men to have

⁴⁷¹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. "Chapter 4: Socialising: Love and Sexuality [pp. 89–90]." 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁷² CultureGrams World Edition. "Federative Republic of Brazil." 2010.

<http://online.culturegrams.com/world/openpdf.php?filename=Brazil>

⁴⁷³ *Brazil: The Once and Future Country*. Eakin, Marshall C. "Chapter 3: Lusotropical Civilization: Family, Gender, and Sexuality [pp. 135–138]." 1997. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

extramarital affairs, Brazilian women are often shamed and divorced for doing the same.⁴⁷⁴ Brazilian men were historically acquitted of murdering their unfaithful wives on the grounds of “defense of honor.” This practice was only officially banned in 1991.⁴⁷⁵

Childbirth

Children are deeply prized in Brazilian culture. Married couples are traditionally expected to produce offspring relatively soon after their nuptials.⁴⁷⁶ Such practice reflects Catholic values, which emphasize the propagation of the family. Contraception is thus traditionally prohibited by the Catholic Church.

Exchange 75: Are these your children?

Visitor:	Are these your children?	ehtaas s/a/oo soowash kreey/aa/sas?
Local:	Yes.	s/ee/

Yet Brazilian families have grown increasingly smaller in the modern era. The use of contraception has expanded and various social and economic factors have contributed to lower fertility rates.⁴⁷⁷ The fertility rate (average number of births per woman) has fallen dramatically from 6.3 in 1963 to an estimated 2.19 in 2010.^{478,479} Some observers have attributed declining birth rates to the idealized representation of small families in Brazil’s *telenovelas* (soap operas), which are extremely popular and regularly viewed by



© Jackie Roque
Baby image

⁴⁷⁴ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Love and Sexuality [pp. 89–90].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁷⁵ The New York Times. Brooke, James. “‘Honor’ Killing of Wives Is Outlawed in Brazil.” 29 March 1991. <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/03/29/us/honor-killing-of-wives-is-outlawed-in-brazil.html?pagewanted=1?pagewanted=1>

⁴⁷⁶ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Family Life [p. 84].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁷⁷ UN. Goldani, Ana Maria. “What Will Happen to Brazilian Fertility?” No date. <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/completingfertility/RevisedGOLDANIpaper.PDF>

⁴⁷⁸ Central Intelligence Agency. *The World Factbook*. “Brazil.” 27 May 2010. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>

⁴⁷⁹ CNN. Webster, George. “Brazil’s Soap Operas Linked to Dramatic Drop in Birth Rates.” 10 September 2009. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/09/10/brazil.novelas.study/index.html>

a large share of the Brazilian population.⁴⁸⁰ While contraception, including elective sterilization, has become increasingly common, abortion remains illegal except in cases of rape and when the pregnancy poses serious health risks to the mother. Nonetheless, an estimated 1 million illegal abortions are thought to occur each year in Brazil.⁴⁸¹

According to Christian tradition, the birth of a child is followed by baptism. As part of this ritual, parents choose a godparent (or set of godparents) for the child from among their close friends and associates. Godparents play an important role in the life of the child. They provide social and financial support and help mark the child’s life cycle events. Additional Catholic rites of passage include a child’s First Communion and, later, Confirmation, when the child’s commitment to the Catholic faith is affirmed on his or her conscious accord.⁴⁸²

Exchange 76: Do you have any brothers?

Visitor:	Do you have any brothers?	vosey t/e/ eeRm/a/os e eeRm/a/sh?
Local:	Yes, I have one brother.	s/ee/, tenyo /oo/ eeRm/a/o

Divorce

Historically, Catholic prohibitions on divorce contributed to social and legal mechanisms that severely restricted its practice. The Brazilian government did not legalize divorce until the late 1970s, and, in doing so, it required applicants to meet a number of stipulations.⁴⁸³ While its practice can still result in social stigmatization, divorce has grown increasingly common. In 1986, 33 divorces occurred for every 1,000 marriages; by 2000, this figure had risen to 213 divorces per 1,000 marriages.⁴⁸⁴ The rising rate of



© justine.arena
Family celebrating World Cup

⁴⁸⁰ CNN. Webster, George. “Brazil’s Soap Operas Linked to Dramatic Drop in Birth Rates.” 10 September 2009. <http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/09/10/brazil.novelas.study/index.html>

⁴⁸¹ Time. Downie, Andrew. “Nine-Year-Old’s Abortion Outrages Brazil’s Catholic Church.” 6 March 2009. <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1883598,00.html>

⁴⁸² *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: Family Life [pp. 85–86].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁸³ Inter-American Development Bank. Chong, Alberto and Eliana La Ferrara. “Television and Divorce: Evidence from Brazilian *Novelas* [pp. 6–7].” January 2009. <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=1856109>

⁴⁸⁴ Office of Population Research, Princeton University. The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. Marcondes, Glauca dos Santos and Humberto Correa. “Divorces and Remarriage in Brazil:

divorce has been attributed by some scholars to the profound influence of *telenovelas*, which “typically include themes related with criticism of traditional values and the circulation of modern ideas such as female empowerment and emancipation, both in the work sphere and in private life.” Separation and divorce have been described as “natural reflections of these attitudes.”⁴⁸⁵ Indeed, divorce provides an option of escape for women who would otherwise be trapped in abusive marriages.

In most divorces, child custody falls to the mother. As divorce has become more common, so has remarriage, especially for men. The fact that most divorced mothers retain custody of their children has been seen as an obstacle for remarriage among Brazilian women.⁴⁸⁶ In 2009, Brazilian legislators voted to overturn a law that requires couples to be separated for a minimum of one year before their divorce can be finalized. Legislators also passed a bill that would permit consensual divorces to be completed over the internet.⁴⁸⁷

Social Events

Weddings

Brazilian weddings typically include both civil and religious ceremonies, which may be held separately or on the same day. The civil ceremony involves formal registration of the marriage with Brazilian authorities. For Brazilian Catholics, marriage is a sacrament, which is generally celebrated in a church wedding. The religious ceremony is known as a Nuptial Mass.⁴⁸⁸ As is typical in most cultures, the ceremony is followed by a reception with food, music, and dancing; festivities often continue late into the night.



© Angel Johnson
Wedding ceremony

Revels from Vital Statistics (1986–2006).” No date.

<http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=93187>

⁴⁸⁵ Inter-American Development Bank. Chong, Alberto and Eliana La Ferrara. “Television and Divorce: Evidence from Brazilian *Novelas* [pp. 6–7].” January 2009.

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⁴⁸⁶ Office of Population Research, Princeton University. The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. Marcondes, Glaucia dos Santos and Humberto Correa. “Divorces and Remarriage in Brazil: Revels from Vital Statistics (1986-2006).” No date.

<http://iussp2009.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=93187>

⁴⁸⁷ ABC News. Associated Press. “Brazil Senate Passes Speedy Internet Divorce Bill.” 2 September 2009.

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=8474730>

⁴⁸⁸ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. “Events [pp. 48–49].” 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

Exchange 77: Congratulations on your marriage!

Visitor:	Congratulations on your marriage!	paaraab/e/sh pelo seyoo kaazaam/e/nt
Local:	Thank you so much for attending our wedding.	moo-/ee/too obreegaadoo poR k/o/paareseR aaw nawsoo kaazaam/e/t

Many Brazilian wedding traditions are similar to those in the U.S., such as exchanging rings, sharing cake, and tossing the bridal bouquet.⁴⁸⁹

Funerals

In Brazil, the body of a deceased person is rarely prepared by a mortician. Thus, because of tropical conditions, burial typically occurs within 24 hours of death. A wake (*velório*) may be held before the body is buried. During this time, family and friends gather to mourn and remember the deceased. Expressive displays of emotion are typical for both sexes. Depending upon the circumstances, the wake may be held in a funeral home, church, or family home.⁴⁹⁰



Funeral rites correspond with the religious affiliation of the deceased. For Catholics, it is customary to hold special Masses for the deceased one week, one month, and one year after the death. Black is the traditional color of mourning.

Exchange 78: My condolences.

Visitor:	[I offer] my condolences.	meyoosh peyzaamish
Local:	Thank you.	obreegaadoo

⁴⁸⁹ *Culture Shock! Brazil: A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, 3rd Ed. Poelzl, Volker. “Chapter 4: Socialising: The Wedding [p. 84].” 2009. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

⁴⁹⁰ *Brazil: The People* (The Lands, Peoples, and Cultures Series). Hollander, Malika. “Ceremonies and Celebrations [p. 21].” 2003. New York, NY: Crabtree Publishing.

Brazilians do not typically observe the U.S. custom of holding a reception after the funeral.⁴⁹¹

Naming Conventions

Brazilian naming conventions generally follow Portuguese naming conventions. Yet such conventions are not strictly or universally observed, and Brazilian names are often given and used in an informal manner. Following Portuguese conventions, Brazilians typically have one or two personal names, followed by two family names: the mother's paternal family name and the father's paternal family name (listed last). Examples include: José Luiz Pereira Silva and Ana María

Gonzales dos Santos. Sometimes the family names are joined using “e” (“and”), e.g. José Luiz Pereira e Silva. The father's paternal family name is typically considered the primary surname and thus may sometimes stand alone with the personal name(s). Variations on the traditional name structure are common. Brazilians may have only one personal name and/or one family name (typically the father's paternal family name). When they are married, women have the option of retaining their maiden name or adopting a portion of their husband's name, typically his paternal surname.⁴⁹²



© Joanna / flickr.com
Family visiting Rio de Janeiro

Nicknames (*apelidos*) are common and widely used in Brazil, especially among friends and relatives. Some Brazilians are known internationally by their nicknames. Brazil's most famous soccer player, Edson Arantes do Nascimento, is known throughout the world as Pelé.⁴⁹³ Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the Brazilian president from 2003–2010, is widely known as Lula, a nickname from his childhood that was eventually incorporated into his formal name.⁴⁹⁴ Nicknames are commonly made by applying diminutive suffixes to a personal name. For men, the suffix *-inho* is added, such as in the case of Ronaldinho (“little Ronaldo” or “Ronny”). For women, *-inha* is added, such as in Terezinha (“little

⁴⁹¹ *Behaving Brazilian: A Comparison of Brazilian and North American Social Behavior*. Harrison, Phyllis A. “Events [pp. 49–50].” 1983. Cambridge, MA: Newberry House Publishers.

⁴⁹² Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, U.S. Government. United Kingdom. “A Guide to Names and Naming Practices [p. 20].” March 2006. http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

⁴⁹³ Slate. Schulz, Nick. “Why Ronaldinho Has No Last Name: How Brazilian Soccer Players Get Their Names.” 10 June 2006. <http://www.slate.com/id/2143404>

⁴⁹⁴ Council on Hemispheric Affairs. Almeida, Thomaz Alvares de Azevedo. “Brazil's President Lula Is Coming to Washington.” 26 March 2007. <http://www.coha.org/brazil%E2%80%99s-president-lula-is-coming-to-washington/>

Teresa”).⁴⁹⁵ It is also common for Brazilians to be known simply by their first name.⁴⁹⁶ Names of religious significance are common for both personal names and surnames.

Self Study Questions

Brazilians value individualism above all else. True or False?

Brazilian society is traditionally patriarchal and men generally enjoy greater authority and freedom than women. True or False?

Child-rearing is shared equally between mother and father. True or False? True or False?

Middle- and upper-class families typically hire outside domestic help. True or False?

As they age, Brazilian elders typically become wards of the state. True or False?

⁴⁹⁵ Financial and Banking Information Infrastructure Committee, U.S. Government. United Kingdom. “A Guide to Names and Naming Practices [p. 21].” March 2006.

http://www.fbiic.gov/public/2008/nov/Naming_practice_guide_UK_2006.pdf

⁴⁹⁶ BankersOnline.com. Richards, James. “Know Your Customer—Naming Conventions for Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Western African, and Hispanic Cultures [p. 15].” 14 January 2002. <http://www.bankersonline.com/tools/namingconventions.pdf>

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Vincent, Jon S. *Culture and Customs of Brazil* (Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003.

Appendix A: Answers to Self Study Questions

Profile

1. Brazil is the largest country in South America.

True. Brazil comprises roughly half of South America, including most of its central and eastern territory. Because of its massive size, the country borders nearly every South American nation.

2. Brazil claims the largest freshwater wetland in the world.

True. The Pantanal, the largest freshwater wetland in the world, is a flat floodplain that extends throughout southwestern Brazil into eastern Bolivia and northern Paraguay.

3. The Amazon River is the largest river located entirely in Brazil.

False. The Amazon originates in the Andes of Peru. The São Francisco River, which flows through eastern Brazil, is the longest river located solely in Brazil.

4. Rio de Janeiro is the capital of Brazil.

False. The nation's capital, Brasília, is a planned city whose initial construction began in 1956. Rio de Janeiro was the longstanding capital of colonial and independent Brazil.

5. Today, the size of the Amerindian population in Brazil is comparable to what it was when the Portuguese first arrived in the region.

False. Diseases such as influenza, smallpox, and measles contributed to the near total decimation of the indigenous population. By the early 20th century, the Brazilian region's indigenous population was around 150,000, down from an estimated 2-6 million when the Portuguese arrived in 1500.

Religion

1. Most Brazilians identify themselves as Catholic.

True. The majority of Brazilians belong to the Roman Catholic Church; indeed, Brazil has the largest Catholic population of any country in the world.

2. A key reason the Portuguese came to Brazil in the 16th century was to produce converts to Christianity.

True. The Portuguese brought Catholicism to the region in 1500. Spreading the faith was the goal of the Pope and King João III of Portugal, who sent missionaries to Brazil with a mandate to convert the native population to Roman Catholicism.

3. The rate of Brazilian Catholics who attend Mass is rising.

False. In 2000, nearly three quarters of all Brazilians self-identified as Roman Catholic, yet the percentage of those who actively practice their religion is around 20% or less.

4. The number of Protestants in Brazil has grown significantly over the last several decades.

True. In the last half of the 20th century, the number of Protestants in Brazil rose rapidly. Facing increasing competition for religious followers, the Catholic Church initiated its Charismatic Renewal campaign.

5. Pentecostalism is an offshoot of Roman Catholicism.

False. Pentecostalism is an expression of evangelical Protestantism that emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit and the believer's direct experience of the presence of God.

Traditions

1. Women generally receive lower wages than men.

True. Women comprise a significant share of the Brazilian workforce, but they typically receive lower wages than men and remain underrepresented in positions of power.

2. Traditional gender roles remain influential in Brazil.

True. Brazilian men are traditionally expected to be strong authority figures, protectors, and breadwinners; women's roles are associated with motherhood, caretaking, and housekeeping, even if they also work outside the home.

3. Soccer, or *futebol*, is the national sport of Brazil.

True. Soccer has been described as more of a religion than a sport for Brazilians. Indeed, the country's support of its national team helps bridge its ethnic and class divides.

4. In Brazil, the colors green and orange indicate mourning.

False. In Brazil, purple and black are colors associated with mourning and are considered inappropriate choices in gift-giving.

5. The title, *Dona*, followed by a person's first name is used for informal address of a male elder.

False. *Dona* is the title used for a woman. Men may be addressed using the titles, *Dom* or *Senhor*.

Urban Life

1. Brazil's population is highly urbanized.

True. Brazil has a highly urbanized population. In 2009, roughly 86% of the population—some 167 million people—lived in urban areas.

2. Brazil's urban areas reflect great income disparity.

True. Urban areas in particular are characterized by stark disparities in wealth, with slums abutting upscale residential developments in some areas

3. Most Brazilians make their living in the formal economy.

False. In Brazil's urban areas, impoverished people typically survive by participating in informal sectors of the economy, such as street vending, menial labor, and illicit activities.

4. A minority of Brazilians subscribe to mobile phone service.

False. As of March 2010, Brazil had roughly 179 million cell phone subscribers, comprising some 93% of the population.

5. Typical middle-class Brazilian residences are known as *favelas*.

False. *Favelas* are slums or shantytowns, which are a common feature of Brazilian cities. Many are former temporary worker camps, permanently established through rapid, unchecked growth. Such districts are commonly controlled by drug gangs and other criminal operations.

Rural Life

1. Most of Brazil's land area is urbanized.

False. Most of Brazil's territory remains rural and underdeveloped. In 2009, only 14% of the population lived in rural areas; as recently as 1970, that figure stood at 44%.

2. Some Brazilians consider migration to *favelas* an improvement in their standard of living.

True. Huge numbers of rural migrants have settled in urban slums (*favelas*); in many cases, this pattern represents a form of upward mobility compared to an even lower standard of living in rural areas.

3. While indigenous lands are nominally protected by the Brazilian government, in practice federal police are only occasionally deployed to protect the land set aside for native people.

True. Indigenous lands have long been threatened by encroaching loggers, ranchers, and miners who do not typically respect reservation boundaries. Many indigenous people, including whole tribes, have been killed by settlers in territorial disputes.

4. Rural life is heavily influenced by the colonial legacy of unequal land distribution.

True. Land reform is a major issue in Brazil. A large percentage of the arable land is in the hands of a number of wealthy landowners, leaving millions to eke out a living as migrant laborers or subsistence farmers.

5. Competition for land in Brazil commonly leads to violence.

True. Intense competition for land is a common source of conflict in rural areas.

Family Life

1. Brazilians value individualism above all else.

False. In Brazil, family is the primary source of a person's social identity; individuality is emphasized less than in the U.S.

2. Brazilian society is traditionally patriarchal and men generally enjoy greater authority and freedom than women.

True. Gender relations are shaped by the concept of machismo, in which men are seen as dominant and assertive, and women are seen as passive and subordinate.

3. Child-rearing is shared equally between mother and father.

False. Child-rearing is largely left to women of the household, including nannies and grandmothers.

4. Middle- and upper-class families typically hire outside domestic help.

True. It is common for middle- and upper-class families to employ domestic workers. This can include a female maid, as well as a nanny.

5. As they age, Brazilian elders typically become wards of the state.

False. Elder family members are respected and cared for by their younger relatives. In comparison with the U.S., it is less common—and less socially acceptable—for Brazilians to place elder members of the family in a nursing home.