

BRAZIL



History and Migration

- Native Indians first inhabited Brazil.
- Claimed by Portugal in 1500, colonized in 1532 and became an official royal colony in 1549.
- Name derived from the wood *pau-brasil* (produces a red dye) that was brought back to Portugal by early explorers.
- African slaves imported by European settlers to work in cane fields and sugar refineries.
- *Tiradentes* (Joaquim da Silva Xavier), an army officer inspired by the American Revolution led a movement against Portugal rule; became an independent country in 1822.
- Inflation and decreased economic growth in the 1980s, the “lost decade,” led to emigration to US and Europe.
- Brazilians migrate to United States because of poverty and lack of economic opportunity.
 - New arrivals tend to be low-income young adults; however there has been an increase in middle class Brazilians immigrants.
 - Live mostly in communities near Boston, MA (Framingham, Marlborough); New York, NY; Newark, NJ; and Miami, FL.
 - Make money here to send home or to use when they return to Brazil; many expect to return home and not stay in US.
 - They have their own shops and services.

Geography and Agriculture

- Population (2006) 188 million: 58 people/square mile; 5th largest country in the world and the 6th most populous.
- Comprises nearly half of South America; largest country in S.A; capital is Brasilia; currency is *Real*.
- Eastern South America, bordering the Atlantic Ocean.
- Tropical climate, temperate in south.
- Agriculture: coffee, soybeans, wheat, rice, corn, sugar cane, cocoa, citrus and beef.

Social Values, Culture, and Religion

- Family is the most important cultural value. Family comes first, and it is every family member’s first priority; meal time is family time.
- Relationships of all kinds take precedence and are cherished; respect for elders is essential.
- Tend to be patriarchal with women assuming domestic duties.
- Derives its language and culture from Portugal; influenced by Portugal and African immigration.
- Languages: Portuguese (official language), Spanish and English, which are widely taught.
- Roman Catholic (74%), Protestant (15%), Spiritualist (1%) and none (7%).
- Religion: 73% of Brazilians are Roman Catholic. Brazilians from all social and economic groups participate in Candomble, a religion brought by Yoruba slaves from Nigeria and Benin.
- Brazilians do not consider themselves Hispanics.

Health Concerns and Beliefs

- Life expectancy is 72 years.

- Lack of health insurance.
- In America, Brazilians have CVD, CVA, DM, HIV, obesity and acute respiratory illness.
- In Brazil health concerns among the poor include tuberculosis, malaria and vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, rubella, polio, diphtheria. Very poor Brazilians suffer from protein-calorie malnutrition (cassava, a root vegetable and staple food is devoid of protein), parasitic infection, iron-deficiency anemia, iodine deficiency and Vit. A deficiency. Herbal teas are used as remedies.
- Large group of immigrants are in the U.S. illegally, and they do not have health insurance
- Elderly people live with and are cared for by their family.
- Most associate faith with health. Believe in fate and seek intervention from patron saints when ill.
- Often attribute bad health to liver problems or imbalance between hot and cold, such as drinking water on a hot day or taking a cool shower after a warm meal.
- Often seek health advice from mothers or friends.

Brazilian Food Habits, Practices and Staple Foods

- Heavy Portuguese, African and native influence; varies according to geographical area
 - Portuguese influence: Dried salt cod, linguica (sausage), spicy meat stews and desserts such as corn and rice pudding.
 - African influence: Okra, palm oil and peppercorns.
- Common foods eaten include: manioc (cassava), rice, black beans, corn, potatoes, chilies, bananas, *dende* oil (palm oil), sweet potatoes, hearts of palm, rice, quinoa, and grilled meats are all staples.
- National dish: *Feijoda completa* consists of cooked beans, smoked meats, sausages with rice, sliced oranges, boiled greens and hot sauce. It is topped with toasted cassava.
- Typically eat a small breakfast, a large meal at lunch time (*O almoco*), and a smaller meal for dinner (*Jantar*) late at night. This has changed due to American work schedules.
 - Breakfast: Bread with butter and jam and coffee or tea and sometimes fruit or juice.
 - Lunch (heaviest meal): Fritters or turnovers start each lunch meal followed by grilled meat, beans and rice and cassava (major source of CHO) and greens served at lunch. Lunch is followed by a siesta.
 - Dinner: Another heavy meal that lasts several hours and often starts as late as 9:00 PM.
 - Beverages: Coffee is diluted with evaporated milk (*Cafe de manha*); coffee after dinner, (*cafezinho*) is very strong and very sweet. Rum and beer are common beverages.
- The women do all household duties as well as the shopping and share food; meal time is family time.
- Sunday meals are often shared with extended family and are served by the mother.
- Do not eat on the go. It is considered rude to eat in places not meant for eating.
- Do not eat with their hands; may use forks and knives for pizza, open sandwiches and chicken.
- Use a glass for beverages; do not drink from bottle or can; keep both hands above the table while eating. (American habit of keeping one hand on lap is considered odd and may spark jokes.)
- On holidays the male, head of the household, serves the meat to the family.
- Parents often mash up cassava for their young children to eat.
- The mothers teach the daughters to cook when they are very young.
- Young children are taken out to restaurants and learn table manners at a very young age.

Major Celebrations

- January 1st, New Year: offering of fruit, rice and flowers.
- February/March, Carnival - Brazilian carnival (marks beginning of Lent): they eat foods ranging from beans and meat to a variety of rice dishes.
 - People eat and drink excessively, including spicy foods and sweets. This indulgence lasts a whole week.
 - During Lent, for next forty days, will not eat meat.
- Good Friday and Easter: Lamb, pork and dried fruits are often served.
- June, Corpus Christi: Celebrated with baked sweet potatoes and corn-based dishes
- June, *Festas Juninas and Bumba Meu Boi*, Brazil's brandy made from cane sugar
- September, Independence Day: Cheese, cold cuts, rice, beans and fruit are served
- December 25 Christmas
 - The serving of duck and ham is common.
 - Turkey cooked in a coffee sauce with cream and sugar.

Communication Style

- Free-spirited, gregarious, outgoing people; very family oriented.
- Can be very opinionated and passionate which may appear as anger to outsiders.
- Friendly by nature and the climate allows them to spend much time outdoors chatting with friends and watching people. Winters are difficult for immigrants.
- Physical contact is accepted and considered appropriate.
 - Touch and maintain eye-contact frequently.
 - Express and convey emotional information through touch.
 - Family and friends meet and depart with kisses.
 - Women often hug and kiss on both cheeks when greeting someone.
 - Men pat on the back or give bear hugs.
 - Are not bothered by being packed really close into public crowds
- Casual attitude about time; view time more as a sequence of events rather than hours, minutes, and seconds; often late for events or appointments; take unexpected vacations.
- Brazilians favor formality; they use formal and informal to show respect.
 - Usually address teachers, doctors, priests, and other professionals using their title followed by their first name.
- Specific behaviors:
 - Brazilians are more comfortable, free and open with their bodies and nudity.
 - Men stare and make comments to women as they pass by; women are advised to ignore this behavior.
 - Belching is considered offensive; and to call attention to the belch after the fact is embarrassing for all. The same is true for sneezing and coughing; it is customary to leave table or turn away from group.
 - When offered something, the cultural norm is to say 'yes' or 'please.' 'Thank you' indicates refusal, and 'no, thank you' is considered rude.