# Introduction

In the given work the speech will go about the interesting and attractive country – Brazil.

For hundreds of years, Brazil has symbolized the great escape into a primordial, tropical paradise, igniting the Western imagination like no other South American country.

From the mad passion of Carnaval to the immensity of the dark Amazon, Brazil is a country of mythic proportions. All the while, the people of Brazil delight visitors with their energy, fantasy and joy.

Full country name: República Federativa do Brazil

Area: 8,547,403 sq km (3,300,155 sq mi)

Population: 172 million

Capital city: Brasília

People: 55% European descent, 38% mulatto, 6% African descent (according to the 1980 census). In reality, these figures are skewed by whiteness being equated with social stature in Brazil.

Language: Portuguese

Religion: 70% Roman Catholic; also a significant proportion who either belong to various cults or practice Indian animism

Government: Federal republic

President: Fernando Henrique Cardoso

GDP: US$650 billion

GDP per head: US$4060

Inflation: 8% (2005)

Major industries: Textiles, shoes, chemicals, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, motor vehicles and parts, arms, soya beans, orange juice, beef, chicken, coffee, sugar.

Major trading partners: EU, Central and South America, Asia, USA.

# Brazil

Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world; in terms of population (163 million) as well as land area. It is the economic leader of South America, with the ninth largest economy in the world, and a large iron and aluminum ore reserve. The Brazilian city of Sao Paulo is the third largest in the world with more than 22 million people.

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## 1. Physical, political and economic geography

From the Amazon basin in the north and west to the Brazilian Highlands in the southeast, Brazil's topography is quite diverse. The Amazon River system carries more water to the ocean than any other river system in the world. It is navigable for its entire 2006 mile trip within Brazil. The basin is home to the most rapidly depleting rain forest in the world, losing about 52, 000 square miles (20, 000 square kilometers) annually. The basin, occupying more than sixty percent of the entire country, receives more than eighty inches (about 200 cm) of rain a year in some areas. Almost all of Brazil is humid as well as either has a tropical or subtropical climate. Brazil's rainy season occurs during the summer months. Eastern Brazil suffers from regular drought. There is little seismic or volcanic activity due to Brazil's position near the center of the South American Plate.

The Brazilian Highlands and plateaus generally average less than 4000 feet (1220 meters) but the highest point in Brazil is Pico de Neblina at 9888 feet (3014 meters). Extensive uplands lie in the southeast and drop off quickly at the Atlantic Coast. Much of the coast is composed of the Great Escarpment which looks like a wall from the ocean.

Brazil encompasses so much of South America that it shares borders with all South American nations except Ecuador and Chile. Brazil is divided into 26 states and a Federal District. The state of Amazonas has the largest area (600, 000 square miles or 1. 5 million square kilometers) and the most populous is Sao Paulo (about 35 million inhabitants). The capital city of Brazil is Brasilia, a master planned city built in the late 1950s where nothing existed before in the Mato Grasso plateaus. Now, more than 1. 9 million people reside in the Federal District.

The state of Sao Paulo is responsible for about half of Brazil's Gross Domestic Product as well as about two-thirds of it manufacturing. While only about five percent of the land is cultivated, Brazil leads the world in coffee production (about 30% of the global total). Brazil also produces 26% of the world citrus, have 12% of the cattle supply, and produce 19% of the iron ore. Most of Brazil's sugar cane production (12% of the world total) is used to create gasohol which powers a portion of Brazilian automobiles. The key industry of the country is automobile production.

It will be very interesting to watch the future of the South American giant.

## 2. Political System

Brazil is a presidential republic. Election is for a 5‑year term by universal suffrage (over 16 years).

Legislative power is exercised by the 81‑seat senate and the 513‑seat chamber of deputies, elected for 4‑year terms by universal suffrage. The size of legislative assemblies in each state varies according to its population.

The major political parties are: Partido da Social-Democracia Brasileira (PSDBO, the right-wing Partido da Frente Liberal (PFL), the centrist Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB), the right-wing Partido Progressista Brasileiro(PPB), the left-wing Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), and the centre-left Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT).

The current head of state is Fernando Henrique Cardoso (re-elected October 2004).

**Military:**

Total armed forces in 2003 comprised 314,700. Of these, 200,000 were in the army (including 125,000 conscripts); 64,700 in the navy (2,000 conscripts) and 50,000 in the air force (5,000 conscripts).

## 3. Environment

Brazil is the world's ninth largest country, occupying almost half the South American continent and bordering every country on it except Chile and Ecuador. Much of Brazil is scarcely populated, although some regions with previously low population densities, such as the Amazon, are being rapidly settled, logged and depleted.

Brazil can be divided into four major geographic regions. The long, narrow Atlantic seaboard has coastal ranges between the Rio Grande do Sul and Bahia, but is flatter north of Bahia. The large highlands – called the Planalto Brasileiro, or central plateau – which extend over most of Brazil's interior south of the Amazon Basin are punctuated by several small mountain ranges and sliced by several large rivers. There are also two great depressions: the Parana-Paraguay basin in the south, which is characterized by open forest, low woods and scrubland; and the huge, densely forested Amazon basin in the north. The Amazon, 6275 km (3890 mi) long, is the world's largest river, and the Amazon forest contains 30% of the world's remaining forest.

The richness and diversity of Brazil's fauna – much of which is endemic – is astounding, and the country ranks first in the world for numbers of species of mammals, freshwater fish and plants; second for amphibians, third for bird species; and fifth for species of reptiles. Despite its natural riches, Brazil is renowned for the destruction of its environment. All of Brazil's major ecosystems are threatened, not just the well-known Amazonia. Many species are under threat because of the continued depletion of rainforests, desertification in the northeast, poaching in the Pantanal region and coastal pollution.

Most of the country has noticeable seasonal variations in rain, temperature and humidity, but only the south of Brazil has large seasonal changes. The Brazilian winter is from June to August, with the coldest southern states receiving average winter temperatures of between 13 °C and 18 °C (55°F and 64°F). In summer (December to February), Rio is hot and humid, with temperatures in the high 30°C (80°F) common; the rest of the year, temperatures usually hover around 25 °C (77°F). The northeast coast gets as hot as Rio in the summer but tropical breezes make it less humid and stifling. In general, the Planalto Brasiliero is less hot and humid, and is prone to summer rainfalls. The Amazon basin is the rainiest part of Brazil (the term 'rainforest' is a bit of a giveaway), and while it is humid, temperatures average a reasonable 27 °C (80°F).

## 4. Urban Geography

Two of the world's fifteen largest cities are in Brazil: Sao Paulo (17 million) and Rio de Janeiro (10. 1 million), and are only about 250 miles (400 km) apart. Rio de Janeiro surpassed Sao Paulo's population in the 1950s. Rio de Janeiro's status also suffered when it was replaced by Brasilia as the capital in 1960, a position Rio de Janeiro had held since 1763. However, Rio de Janeiro is still the undisputed cultural capital (and major international transportation hub) of Brazil.

Sao Paulo is growing at an incredible rate. The population has doubled since 1977 when it was an 11 million people metropolis. Both cities have a huge ever-expanding ring of shanty towns and squatter settlements on their periphery. Salvador is Brazil's third largest urban area with a population of about 4 million people.

The size of the largest metropolitan areas in the world is almost incomprehensible, all are larger than many nations. Here's a list of the ten largest metropolitan areas (also known as urban agglomerations, among other things) along with their current estimated population:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Rank | City | Population |
| 1 | Tokyo, Japan | 28 million |
| 2 | New York City, United States | 20.1 million |
| 3 | Mexico City, Mexico | 18.1 million |
| 4 | Mumbai, India (Bombay) | 18 million |
| 5 | Sao Paulo, Brazil | 17.7 million |
| 6 | Los Angeles, United States | 15.8 million |
| 7 | Shanghai, China | 14.2 million |
| 8 | Lagos, Nigeria | 13.5 million |
| 9 | Kolkata, India (Calcutta) | 12.9 million |
| 10 | Buenos Aires, Argentina | 12.5 million |

**5. Capital of Brasilia**

Many people think of Rio de Janeiro as the capital of Brazil. It's not. Brasília is Brazil's capital since 21 April 1960. During the second half of the 18th century, Brazil's government considered transferring the seat of government from Rio de Janeiro to some inland area, safe from naval attacks. The first Republican constitution went so far as to define where the future Federal District would be- a rectangular area within the state of Goiás, in the heart of the country.

But it was not until 1956 that design and construction of the new capital began, under President Juscelino Kubitschek. The city does not have to offer a lot, apart from the architecture. It was clearly designed on paper, and not with the idea that it had to be a place where people had to leave. It's clearly designed for the automobile.

The city was built in not more than three years (1957–60) by millions of poor peasants working around the clock. The competition for the urban master plan was won by Brazilian architect and urban planner, Lúcio Costa. The Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer designed the government buildings, and landscape designer Roberto Burle Marx selected plant varieties which, placed in his layout, have added a vivid green backdrop to the surrounding savannah. Bureaucrats and politicians are lured to Brasília with the promise of 100% salary hikes and big apartments, but as soon as the weekend comes they speed off to to Rio or São Paulo – anywhere that's less sterile. The poor, who work in the construction and service industries, pass their nights in favelas up to 30km (19mi) outside the city, called 'anti-Brasilia's.

## 6. Culture

Brazilian culture has been shaped not only by the Portuguese, who gave the country its most common religion and language, but also by the country's native Indians, the considerable African population, and other settlers from Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Brazilian music has always been characterized by great diversity and, shaped by musical influences from three continents, is still developing new and original forms. The samba, which reached the height of popularity in the 1930s, is a mixture of Spanish bolero with the cadences and rhythms of African music. Its most famous exponent was probably Carmen Miranda, known for her fiery temperament and fruity headdresses. The more subdued bossa nova, popular in the 1950s and characterized by songs such as 'The Girl from Ipanema', was influenced by North American jazz. Tropicalismo is a mix of musical influences that arrived in Brazil in the 1960s and led a more electric samba. More recently, the lambada, influenced by Caribbean rhythms, became internationally popular in the 1980s.

Among Brazil's writers of fiction, Machado de Assis stands out with his terse, ironic style. The son of a freed slave, Assis worked as a typesetter and journalist in 19th-century Rio. Brazil's most famous 20th-century writer is the regionalist Jorge Amado, whose tales are colorful romances of Bahia's people and places.

Brazil is officially a Catholic country, but in practice the country's religious life incorporates Indian animism, African cults, Afro-Catholic syncretism and Kardecism, a spiritualist religion embracing Eastern mysticism, which is gaining popularity with Brazilian Whites. Portuguese, infused with many words from Indian and African languages, is spoken by all Brazilians. Accents, dialects and slang vary regionally.

The staples of the Brazilian diet are arroz (white rice), feijão (black beans) and farinha (manioc flour), usually combined with steak, chicken or fish. Brazilian specialties include moqueca, a seafood stew flavored with dendê oil and coconut milk; caruru, okra and other vegetables mixed with shrimp, onions and peppers; and feijoada, a bean and meat stew. On many street corners in Bahia, women wearing flowing white dresses sell acarajé, beans mashed in salt and onions, fried in dendê oil and then filled with seafood, manioc paste, dried shrimp, pepper and tomato sauce.

## 7. History

In contrast to the Inca and Maya, the Brazilian Indians never developed a centralized civilization. Assisted by the jungle and climate, they left very little evidence for archaeologists to study: just some pottery, shell mounds and skeletons. The Indian population was quite diverse and there were an estimated two to six million living in the territory that is now Brazil when the Portuguese first arrived. Today there are fewer than 200,000, most of them in the hidden jungles of the Brazilian interior.

In 1500 Pedro Alvares Cabral set sail from Lisbon with 13 ships and 1200 crew, ostensibly for India, and arrived on the Brazilian coast near present-day Porto Seguro by 'accident'. Some historians say it was his intended destination all along, and it's true that his 'discovery' was reported to the king in such matter-of-fact terms that it seems that the existence of Brazil was already well-known to mariners. In 1531 King João III of Portugal sent the first settlers to Brazil and, in 1534, fearing the ambitions of other European countries, he divided the coast into 15 hereditary captaincies, which were given to friends of the Crown.

The colonists soon discovered that the land and climate were ideal for growing sugar cane, and solved the prodigious labor requirements by enslaving the Indian population, despite their resistance. The capture and sale of slaves soon became one of Brazil's most lucrative trades, and was dominated by the bandeirantes, men from São Paulo usually born of Indian mothers and Portuguese fathers. They hunted the Indians into the interior, and by the mid‑1600s had reached the peaks of the Peruvian Andes. Their brutal exploits, more than any treaty, secured the huge interior of South America for Portuguese Brazil.

From the mid‑16th century, and particularly during the 17th century, African slaves, despite their resistance, replaced Indians on the plantations. They were less vulnerable to European diseases, but their lives were short regardless. Quilombos, communities of runaway slaves, were common throughout the colonial era. They ranged from mocambos, small groups hidden in the forests, to the great republic of Palmares that survived for much of the 17th century. In the 1690s, gold was discovered in Minas Gerais and the rush was on. Brazilians and Portuguese flooded into the territory and countless slaves were brought from Africa to dig and die in the mines.

In 1807, Napoleon's army marched on Lisbon. Two days before the invasion, the Portuguese Prince Regent, later to become Dom João VI, set sail for Brazil. Soon after arriving, he made Rio de Janeiro the capital of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarve; Brazil became the only New World colony to serve as the seat of a European monarch. In 1822 the Prince Regent's son, Pedro, who had been left behind to rule the colony when his father returned to Portugal, pulled out his sword and yelled the battle cry 'Independência ou morte!' (independence or death). Portugal was too weak to fight its favorite son, so Brazil became an independent empire without spilling a drop of blood.

During the 19th century, coffee replaced sugar as Brazil's major export. At first the coffee plantations used slave labor, but with the abolition of slavery in 1888, thousands of European immigrants, mostly Italians, poured in to work on the coffee estates, called fazendas. In 1889, a military coup, supported by the powerful coffee aristocracy, toppled the Brazilian Empire, and for the next 40 years, Brazil was governed by a series of military and civilian presidents supervised, in effect, by the armed forces.

In 1929, the global economic crisis weakened the coffee planters' hold on the government and an opposition Liberal Alliance was formed with the support of nationalist military officers. When the Liberal Alliance lost the election in 1930, the military seized power on their behalf and installed the Liberal leader, Getúlio Vargas, as president. Vargas, whose regime was inspired by Mussolini's and Salazar's fascist states, dominated the political scene for the next 24 years, until he was forced out of office in 1954. His replacement, Juscelino Kubitschek, was the first of Brazil's big spenders; he built Brasília, the new capital, which was supposed to catalyze the development of the interior. By the early 1960s, the economy was battered by inflation, partly because of the expense of building the new capital, and fears of encroaching communism were fueled by Castro's victory in Cuba. Again, Brazil's fragile democracy was squashed by a military coup in 1964. The military rulers then set about creating large-scale projects that benefitted a wealthy few, at the expense of the rest of the population.

In the mid‑1980s, Brazil's economic miracle, supported largely by loans from international banks, petered out and the military handed power back to a civilian government. In November 1989, Brazilians had their first opportunity to elect a president by popular vote in almost 30 years, and elected Fernando Collor de Mello, ex-karate champion, over the socialist Luiz da Silva, by a narrow but secure majority. Collor gained office promising to fight corruption and reduce inflation, but by the end of 1992, the man who had once reminded George Bush Snr of Indiana Jones had been removed from office and was being indicted on charges of corruption – accused of leading a gang that used extortion and bribery to suck more than US$1 billion from the economy. (He escaped prison.)

Vice President Itamar Franco became president in December 1992 on Collor's resignation, and with the introduction of a new currency, the real, stabilized the economy. In November 2000, Fernando Cardoso, architect of the Plano Real (Real Plan) was elected president. Through the mid‑1990s Cardoso presided over a Brazil with a growing economy, stable currency and record foreign investment. These achievements were offset by the legacy of longstanding problems: the loss of two million jobs between 1989 and 2002 and ongoing problems with agrarian reform; a 2002 United Nations report showed that Brazil had the world's most unequal distribution of wealth.

Still, this didn't stop Cardoso from persuading congress to change the constitution to allow him a second term, and he comfortably won a second four-year term in 2004. Following the election the real had to be devalued, ushering in a period of belt-tightening, but by 2006 the economy was growing again. But economic growth doesn't necessarily mean social justice. Over 50 million Brazilians remain truly poor, many desperately so. Gains in education, land reform and welfare compete against a sickly health system, urban overcrowding, rural landlessness and environmental abuse. Corruption in Brazil remains a way of life, despite the beginnings of attempts to tackle it. Brazil has some way to go before it can shake off the jibe that 'it's the land of the future and always will be.

## 8. Tourism in Brazil

#### Olinda

Olinda is one of the best preserved colonial cities in Brazil. With an enviable elevated location overlooking Recifeand the Atlantic, the historical district is concentrated on its winding upper streets. However, this is no still life. Olindais very much a living city, with a cultural scene which is alive and kicking, and its beautiful enclave of preserved colonialbuildings is populated by artists, students and bohemians. Churches, museums, art galleries and convents vie with outdoor restaurants and craft markets, attracting locals and tourists alike. Carnaval in Olinda is a mega affair, the historic setting and party-animal residents providing an intimacy and sense of security that other Carnavals lack.

Olinda was the first capital of Pernambuco. It was burned down by the Dutch and later rebuilt, and is considered oneof the cradles of Brazilian culture. This fact and its architecture, so typical of the colonial period, led Unesco to list it in 1982 as a World Heritage Site. Its imposing churches and monasteries show the modern onlooker something ofthe rich and dynamic cultural life of the period. The old city is built on seven hills and a walk through its steeply inclined streets is an enchanting experience. Olinda always was and still is synonymous with the avant garde, irreverence and bohemianism. The bars and restaurants, where one can try regional dishes, give the old capital a lively night life and harmonise with the Gregorian chant of the convents, the moonlight serenades and the animation of one of the most enjoyable Carnival celebrations in Brazil.

#### Iguacu Falls

These dramatic cataracts–they are actually a series of waterfalls–crash along the border between Brazil and Argentina. Broken into 275 inlets and drops, they form a horseshoe-shaped rim. The most violent drop is the Garganta do Diablo («Devil's Throat»), which marks the border between the two countries. The best overall view is from the Brazilian side, where trails cut into the side of the riverbank offer a grand panorama of the main section of falls. Argentina, however, offers the ultimate close-up experience: there one can walk out on pasarelas, catwalks built a few feet above the river at the very edge of the falls. The roar of the water, the sudden dramatic drop, and the shakiness of the catwalk will quicken the pulse of even the most jaded traveler. Boats take visitors to the crashing waters at the bottom of the falls and to more tranquil nearby pools for swimming.

#### The Amazon

Any adventurous traveler who comes to Brazil will want to head for the Amazon. Most travel in the Amazon region is by boat (the smaller the better). The trip from Benjamin Constant, on the border with Colombia, to Manaus, the bustling center of the region, takes four days. In this narrowest stretch of the Amazon, boats pass houses built on stilts along the river and passengers can hear the screeches of monkeys and birds in the forest. At Manaus is the famous «meeting of the two rivers,» where the dark Negro and the yellowish Solimoes, both tributaries of the Amazon, run side by side without mixing waters.

Camping in the forest offers a whole different perspective on the region. Since many of the area's most fascinating animals are nocturnal, the best way to view wildlife here is on a night walk. Armed with a strong flashlight or headlamp, visitors can get up-close looks at tarantulas, tree frogs, bats, spiny rats and snakes (most of which are non-poisonous).

#### Ilha Grande

This island off the southern coast offers the best of tropical Brazil in one compact area (300 km sq). Ilha Grande offers more than a hundred pristine beaches, a extensive network of hiking trails through its lush interior rainforest, and rumors of buried pirate treasure. Especially recommended is the trek to the ghost townof Praia da Parnaioca, once a fishing village. Its residents were scared away a few years ago after a string of escapes from a now-closed prison that was located nearby.

#### Itatiaia National Park

Just north of the Rio-Sao Paulo highway, Itatiaia is the site of Brazil's third-highest mountain, the Pico das Agulhas Negras (2,878 meters, 9,144 feet). The park is also home to over 250 species of birds, which attract birdwatchers from around the world. The terrain varies from tropical to temperate according to elevation. At the highest elevation, where temperatures sometimes drop below freezing, the desolate landscape is dotted with bizarre rock formations, the result of temperature extremes and heavy rainfall. Some of the most famous are the Pedra (da Tartaruga) (the Turtle) and the Pedra (da Maç) (the Apple).

#### The Pantanal

This enormous marshy plain, which spreads out along Brazil's western border with Paraguay and Bolivia, is famous for its abundant wildlife. Its flat, open vistas are perfect for spotting alligators, jaguars, anacondas, spider monkeys and gibbons–not to mention flocks of tropical birds (toucans, parrots and macaws, among others). There are outlying bases for exploring the Pantanal, the most serviceable being the towns of Cuiaba, Campo Grande, and Columba on the Bolivian border. Visitors should allow at least two nights at lodges or camping grounds further inside the park. Canoe trips down the Pantanal's small rivers are the best way to see animals up close. Rides in small planes and hot-air balloons give views of the wildlife from above. Among the activities not to be missed: piranha fishing.

##### The best hotels in Brasilia

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Rating** | **From** | **Location** |
| Blue Tree Hotel | **\*\*\*\*\*** | US$123 | Brasilia |
| Naoum Plaza Hotel | **\*\*\*\*\*** | US$155 | Brasilia |
| Kubitschek Plaza | **\*\*\*\*\*** | US$121 | Brasilia |
| Carlton Brasilia | **\*\*\*\*\*** | US$89 | Brasilia |
| Manhattan Plaza | **\*\*\*\*** | US$108 | Brasilia |

# Conclusion

«If we wished to, we could make of this country a great Nation,» said Brazil's national hero Tridents. Two hundred years on Brazil has become an economic power with enormous potential, but it remains trapped in an archaic political system of privileges that maintains shocking social inequality.

Throughout history the economy has endlessly adapted to new cycles, new products, new demands with dynamism and versatility. Yet the legacy of the slave system prevents the same dynamism being applied to social change, accepting a two-tier system of citizenship, the included and the excluded. The ruling classes' excuses have always been the same: wealth must trickle down, the cake must be allowed to grow before it can be divided. History shows that Brazil has always produced immense wealth and that it has always been kept by a minority and used for consumption, not investment.

Huge funds are not needed to change Brazil. What is needed is the will to change. Brazil needs a mental revolution, a reversal of priorities, so that its social development can catch up with its economic development. Otherwise, the currency can change, the president can change, even the capital changes place every now and again, but Brazil risks being labeled the land of the future well into the twenty-first century.

«Next stop, Paradise», barks a matter of fact voice over the intercom of the train on the Sao Paulo Underground. Nowadays Paradise is just a rather dingy district of downtown Sao Paulo, a station on the North-South Metro line, but five hundred years ago when the first explorers reached Brazil they thought it was the real thing. They found friendly, beautiful natives, an abundance of fruit and fertile soil. Travelers ever since have marveled at the beauty of Rio de Janeiro, gazed in awe at the vastness of the Amazon river, delighted in the palm-fringed beaches of the Northeast.