



5 FAST FACTS

1. Around 60% of the Amazon rainforest is in Brazil.
2. Brazil shares a border with every South American country with the exception of Ecuador and Chile.
3. Brazilian prisoners are allowed to reduce their sentence by four days for every book that they read.
4. Brazil is the world's largest exporter of coffee.
5. Brazil has the world's longest stretch of continuous coastline, 4,655 miles.



5 ITEMS TO PACK

1. A swimsuit and cover up
2. A universal plug adaptor
3. Insect repellent
4. Sturdy sandals
5. Water filter bottles - Take note: The water is not potable in all areas and often tastes bad.



TOURS/EXCURSION IDEAS

1. Visit the Amazon Rainforest and Amazon River.
2. Hike, take a bus, or ride a train to visit Cristo Redentor (Christ the Redeemer) Statue.
3. Soak in the natural beauty of Iguazu Falls.
4. Survey a Carnival parade from the Sambódromo, a long series of grandstand boxes.
5. Catch some rays at the white sand beaches of Ipanema.
6. Soak yourself in history at the colonial town of Ouro Preto.
7. Meditate on bronze sculptures and other works of art at the Museu de Arte in São Paulo.
8. Ride a cable car up to Sugar Loaf Mountain and watch the sun set.
9. Feast on Churrascaria, traditional Brazilian BBQ.
10. Cheer on the home team at a futebol (soccer) game.
11. Contemplate the street art in Vila Madalena in São Paulo.





GETTING THERE: There are numerous gateways to Brazil in the US and Canada; direct flights leave from Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Newark, New York, Orlando, Washington and Toronto. TAM is the only Brazilian carrier serving the US at present, while the North American airlines are American, Air Canada, Delta and United. Most flights go to either Rio de Janeiro Galeão International Airport (GIG) or São Paulo–Guarulhos International Airport (GRU). If your ultimate destination is somewhere other than these cities, it is usually best to connect at one of these international airports.

LANGUAGE: The official language in Brazil is Portuguese, which comes from Portugal, but has a different accent and some different idiomatic expressions. Many Brazilians speak English and Spanish, and it is also possible to meet people who are fluent in other languages, such as German, Italian, indigenous dialects, and other languages.

CLIMATE: The tropical and subtropical climate makes Brazil an all-year-round destination. The Brazilian winter lasts for only three months from June to August. From December to February, it's summer and most rain is seen in these months. Most parts of Brazil have moderate annual rainfall of between 38 and 61 inches. The temperature varies within a year with monthly averages in winter between 55 and 64 degrees Fahrenheit. During summer temperatures can reach 86 and 104 degrees Fahrenheit in Rio de Janeiro and regions in the south. This, accompanied by frequent showers, creates a rather heavy humidity.

MONEY/CURRENCY: The currency in Brazil is the REAL (R\$). It can be exchanged at banks, exchange brokers, travel agencies, and authorized hotels. The official exchange rate is published daily in newspapers and specialized websites. Both traveler's checks and cash are easily exchanged at exchange counters. International credit cards are accepted in most hotels, restaurants, shops, travel agencies, car rental companies, and other companies that provide services to tourists.

You need to have a four-digit PIN to be able to access ATMs in Brazil. For most ATMs the limit is R\$1,000 but depending on the machine these amounts may be lower. The vast majority of travelers find they are able to use the HSBC and Banco do Brasil ATMs bearing a PLUS/Visa and Cirrus/MasterCard logo.

Tipping in Brazil is typically not expected nor given. Usually, Brazilians only consider giving an extra if there was some special, nonstandard service. However, if you are a foreign guest with a good exchange rate and can easily afford to be generous, service people will be grateful. At almost all restaurants and bars, a standard "serviço" service fee of 10% is included as a line item at the end of the "conta" or bill. This fee is not compulsory, even though it may seem so. However, most people do pay it unless there's a good reason not to.

ELECTRICITY: Power voltage in Brazil varies between 110V and 220V, depending on the location you're in. Many Brazilian hotels offer electric outlets in both voltages, and you can easily find portable voltage transformers in electrical supply stores.

Power outlets in Brazil are type N and have the standard 3-pin sockets. For safety, the outlets are recessed. This way, plugs have to be fully inserted into the outlet for power to pass through, thus preventing accidental contact with live plugs.

Power outlet adapters can be easily found at electrical supply stores or at airport convenience stores.

