



Best Destinations: Brazil

What you need to know before you go



from 

Why go to Brazil?

Known for its extraordinary size, cultural importance, and incredible biodiversity, Brazil boasts some of the world's most beautiful and exotic scenery and wildlife. In a country that's almost as big as the United States, you're bound to find a wealth of places you'll want explore. Take a tour of the lush Amazon Rainforest, visit the incomparable Iguazu Falls, or just kick back, sip some cachaça, and people-watch on the beaches of Rio de Janeiro. If you love parties, you won't want to miss Carnival, a nationwide celebration held forty days before Easter and known for its parades, music and elaborate costumes.

How is Brazil different from the rest of South America?

For starters, it takes up almost as much space as all the other countries on the continent combined. It's the most ethnically diverse country in South America, the most populous, and the only country in the Western Hemisphere where the official language is Portuguese.

Is Brazil still considered a developing country?

For the time being, yes. However, the head of global economic research at Goldman Sachs famously coined the term *BRIC* to describe the four emerging economic powerhouses of the 21st century: Brazil, Russia, India and China. Like the other three, Brazil is massive in terms of land area and population, and boasts a wealth of natural resources.

Is this new wealth making a difference?

And how. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva recently unveiled an \$878 billion effort intended to rejuvenate Brazil's outdated infrastructure. Over the next four years, the country intends to revamp its public works entirely; its departments of transportation, utilities, health care, security and education are in for complete overhauls. By the time the country hosts the World Cup in 2014 (or the 2016 Olympics two years later), Brazil aims to be the model of a modern, cosmopolitan nation.



BRAZIL

Area: 8,514,877 sq km
Climate: mostly tropical
Population: 192,272,890

Capital: Brasilia
Largest city: São Paulo
Government type: Federal republic
Official language: Portuguese
Currency: Real
They drive on the... right

Country code: 55
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