

BRAZIL OVERVIEW



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BASIC STATISTICS

- **Total population:** 198,739,269
- **National GDP:** US \$1.993 trillion (200 est.)
- **GDP per capita:** US \$10,200.
- **Median Age:** 28.6 years (27.8 years Male, 29.3 years Female)
- **Infant Mortality:** 22.58 per 1,000 live births.

GEOGRAPHY

- **Location:** covers the eastern half of South American continent.
- **Borders:** Bolivia, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana,

- Suriname, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela, and Uruguay.
- **Area:** 3,286,478 square miles.
 - **Climate:** Predominantly tropical or sub-tropical, but temperate in the southern parts.
 - **Capital:** Brasília.
 - **Major cities and population:** São Paulo—17,755,000, Rio de Janeiro—10,582,000, Belo Horizonte—4,170,000 and Brasília—199,000.
 - **26 states:** Acre, Alagoas, Amapa, Amazonas, Bahia, Ceara, Espirito Santo, Goias, Maranhao, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Para, Paraiba, Parana, Pernambuco, Piaui, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Norte, Rio Grande do Sul, Rondonia, Roraima, Santa Catarina, Sao Paulo, Sergipe, Tocantins.
 - **1 federal district:** Distrito Federal.

DEMOGRAPHY

- **Population:** 198,739,269
- **Population density:** 57 per square mile.
- **Children 0-14:** 26.7% of the population (27,092,880 Male/26,062,244 Female).
- **15-64 years:** 66.8% (65,804,108 Male/67,047,725 Female).
- **Seniors Over 65:** 6.4% (5,374,230 Male/6,358,082 Female).
- **Male to female ratio:** 98 males per 100 females (2009 est.)
- **Birth rate:** 18.43 per 1,000 people.
- **Life expectancy at birth:** 68.43 for males and 75.73 for females.
- **Infant mortality rate:** 22.58 per 1,000 live births.
- **Official language:** Portuguese.

- **Principal languages:** Spanish, English, and French.
- **Ethnic Groups:** 53.7% white (includes Portuguese, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish), 38.5% mixed white and black, 6.2% black, and 1% other (includes Japanese, Arab, Amerindian).
- **Religious group representation:** 91.11% Christians (169,524,380), 4.83% Spiritists (8,992,031), 2.33% Nonreligious (4,342,250), .34% Atheists (626,441), .75% New-Religionists (1,389,198), .25% Buddhists (474,041), .08% Jews (140,354), .16% Ethno-Religionists (304,971).
- **Education:** Free and compulsory from 7-14 years old.
- **Literacy rate:** 88.6%.

ECONOMY

- **Currency:** Real.
- **GDP per capita:** US \$10,200 (2008 est.)
- **National GDP:** US \$1.573 trillion (2008 est.)
- **Major Industries:** Steel, autos, textiles, shoes, chemicals, and machinery.
- **Chief crops:** Coffee, soybeans, sugarcane, cocoa, rice, corn, wheat, citrus.
- **Electricity production:** 438.8 bil kWh (2007 est.)
- **TVs:** 278 per 1,000 people.
- **Radios:** 340 per 1,000 people.
- **Telephones:** 78 per 1,000 people.
- **Daily newspaper circulation:** 45 per 1,000 people.

POLITICS

- **Government type:** Federal republic.
- **Head of state and government:** President Luiz

Inacio LULA da Silva (Since 1 January 2003).

- **International organization memberships:** United Nations (UN) and Organization of American States (OAS).

Historical Background: Prior to 1500, native tribes of the Tupí-Guaraní populated the region. Estimates of the total native population by 1500 ranges from around 1 to 6 million. In 1500, the Portuguese navigator, Pedro Alvares Cabral, was the first European to reach Brazil. His arrival marks the beginning of the colonial period of Brazilian history. As the centuries passed, Portuguese settlers established themselves further inland and brought many African slaves with them to the New World. During Napoleon's offensive in Europe, the King of Portugal moved the capital of Portugal to Brazil in 1808. After the King had returned to Portugal, his son, Pedro, declared Brazil's independence on September 7, 1822 and named himself emperor. Thus, the national period of Brazilian history began. His successor was overthrown in 1889 and the United States of Brazil was formed. Between 1930 and 1985, Brazil's government experimented with a variety of formats including dictatorships, democratic regimes, and military control. During this time, the country renamed itself the Federal Republic of Brazil (1967). The 1985 elections marked the country's return to civilian rule. In 1992 Fernando Collor de Mello, elected President in 1989, was impeached for corruption and resigned. In 1994 and 1998, President Henrique Cardoso was elected and guided Brazil through the economic crises of the 1990s. Luiz Inacio LULA da Silva was elected president in January of 2003 and reelected in October 2006.

TRENDS AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Understanding the trends and social issues of a particular

country should always consider the opinions of persons within the country. The Center for Youth Studies is looking for contributors from each country to add to our appreciation and understanding of its culture, potential, trends, and critical issues. If you have insight as to what is important to Brazilians, please contact us.

We look forward to hearing the insights on what insiders consider the most important issues facing them. From an outsider's perspective, current issues would include the Brazil's role in the world economy, the distribution of wealth and large-scale poverty, government leadership, and the recovery of the Amazon ecosystem. What are the most important issues for Brazil today? This will be added as we receive feedback from those who would know best, Brazilians.

SOURCES

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reserved.

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US Central Intelligence Agency. World Factbook.

World Christian Database.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How important do you see Brazil's role in South America and in the world?
2. What most impresses you about the above information?
3. Do you take issue with any of the above? If so, how would you express it differently?
4. What strikes you most about the population of Brazil? Why?
5. What do you see as the historical and cultural contributions of Brazil to the world?
6. How has Brazil handled its part in environment issues?
7. What can we learn from Brazil and the Brazilian people?

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