

Brazil

Country Information

Source: Travel Info

Security

- There is a high crime rate, particularly in the main cities, including violent crime.
- Be very alert, particularly in crowds and tourist areas, and practise proper safety precautions.
- Keep all valuables hidden and safe, and avoid carrying large amounts of money.
- Take licensed taxis only.
- Avoid using buses within cities at night.
- There is a risk of hijacking.
- Stay away from slums unless on a guided tour.
- Avoid travelling after dark outside main urban areas.
- Be alert for drink spiking.
- Beware of crime at ATMs and banks.
- Beware of credit card and bank card fraud.
- There is harsh punishment for drug crimes.
- Protests, demonstrations and strikes take place regularly in cities across Brazil. Avoid political rallies or other events where crowds have congregated to protest
- The emergency police number is 190

Note for LGBT travellers: There is no law against homosexuality in Brazil, and the age of consent is 18, the same as for heterosexuals. Brazilians are pretty laid-back when it comes to most sexual issues, and homosexuality is more accepted here than in any other part of Latin America.

Note for women travellers: There are no specific threats to women, but you should practise standard safety procedures. Flirtation – often exaggerated – is a prominent element in Brazilian male-female relations. It goes both ways and is nearly always regarded as amusingly innocent banter; no sense of insult, exploitation or serious intent should be assumed.

Health Precautions

Vaccinations:

- **Compulsory:** Everyone older than nine months travelling from risk areas (not SA) need a yellow fever vaccination certificate. Travellers returning to SA from Brazil will also need a yellow fever certificate.
- **Recommended:** Hepatitis A and B and tetanus.

There is a risk of yellow fever in the interior (including Brasilia and Iguacu Falls tourist resorts) and travellers visiting those areas should be vaccinated more than 10 days before arrival. Immunisation against typhoid, tuberculosis, rabies and diphtheria may be advised. There is a risk of malaria in rain forest regions below 900m, and prophylaxis (not Chloroquine) is advised if visiting those areas. If suffering from flu-like symptoms or a fever up to a year after visiting a malaria-risk area, consult a doctor. There is a risk of Dengue fever and a current outbreak of the Zika virus (pregnant women should reconsider travel). Take care to prevent mosquito bites and use insect repellents during day and night. Seek urgent medical attention if suffering from symptoms such as bad headache, fever, rash, bodily pains and nausea. It is advisable to drink bottled water. There is good standard medical treatment available in major cities, but medical services may be limited in rural areas. Proof of payment capability is required before treatment at private facilities. The emergency number is 192 but the operator may not speak English.

Currency

1 Brazilian Real (BRL) = 100 centavos.

Latest exchange rate: BRL1 = ZAR3,2482 (26 Jul 2024 05:00).

Exchange currency (USD or EUR) at banks, hotels, bureaux de change and travel agencies. Traveller's cheques (in USD) may be exchanged at some banks and hotels but can be difficult to cash. Major credit cards, particularly Visa, are generally accepted. There are widespread ATMs, but some are not open at night, and some machines in smaller towns may not accept foreign cards. ATMs may run out of cash on public holidays. Clients are advised to obtain their credit card PIN numbers before leaving the country as most ATMs prompt for a PIN when withdrawing cash from a credit card.

Banking hours: Monday to Friday 10:00 to 16:00.

Language

Portuguese is the official language, but it differs slightly from European Portuguese. Spanish, English, Italian, French and German are also spoken, particularly in tourist areas.

Electricity

127/220 volts, 60Hz (not the same as SA). Plugs are European 2-pin round and Brazilian 3-pin round.

Telecoms/Internet

Wi-Fi is available in most public areas in major cities free of charge. Some hotels still charge for WIFI access, however many restaurants, coffee shops, malls, libraries, museums and so on will offer free, but possibly limited, WIFI. WIFI gets slower and often patchy the further you venture out of the major cities. Local SIM cards can be purchased at airports and from suppliers in the major cities.

Public Holidays

2024: New Year's Day (01 Jan); Carnival (12-13 Feb); Good Friday (29 Mar); Tiradentes Day (21 Apr); Labour Day (01 May); Corpus Christi (30 May); Independence Day (07 Sep); Our Lady of Aparecida (12 Oct); All Souls' Day (02 Nov); Republic Day (15 Nov); Black Consciousness/Awareness Day (20 Nov); Christmas Day (25 Dec).

Customs

Visas:

- South Africans do not require a visa to enter Brazil.

Duty-free allowances:

- Clothes and items for personal use
- Books and periodicals
- USD500 (or equivalent in other currency) worth of goods
- USD500 (or equivalent in other currency) worth of goods bought duty-free on arrival at Brazilian airports, including:

- 400 cigarettes or 25 cigars or 250 grams of tobacco
- 24 units of alcohol (where a unit is 1L) subject to a maximum of 12 units per type of beverage
- 10 units of make-up items
- 3 units of watches, toys, games, electric or electronic equipment

Prohibited goods:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Meat - fresh, dried, canned or otherwise (cold cuts, ham, salted, etc.) or meat products
- Dairy products (milk, eggs, cheese etc.)
- Honey (Royal Jelly, beeswax, propolis, etc.)
- Eggs and egg products
- Fish and fish products
- Flowers and plants, or parts thereof
- Bulbs, seeds, seedlings or cuttings
- Insects, snails, bacteria or fungi
- Birds
- Animal feed
- Earths
- Untreated wood
- Agrochemicals
- Biological materials for scientific research and other purposes
- Semen, embryos, biological or veterinary products

Special notes:

- Duty-free allowances are subject to interpretation by authorities on arrival of the passenger. Quantities must be compatible with the duration of the stay and be for personal use only.
- Previous authorisation from the Ministry of Agriculture is needed to import meat products, dairy products, plants and fruits and vegetables.
- Arms and ammunition regulations: Prohibited unless the passenger has a special authorisation from the Ministerio of Exercito in Brazil. The authorisation must be obtained prior to the departure for Brazil. Passengers must declare firearms/ammunitions on arrival. These will be retained by Customs until a representative of the Ministerio of Exercito comes to the airport to authorise entry into the country.
- Export regulations: Free export of personal effects and objects for personal use.
- Pet regulations: Within 15 days prior to the issue date of the International Veterinary Certificate/Pet Passport cats and dogs must be submitted to a broad-spectrum treatment against internal/external parasites with products authorised by the Veterinary Authority. The animal must be examined within 10 days prior to the date of issue of the International Veterinary Certificate/Pet Passport showing no clinical signs of infectious or parasitic diseases and is fit for transport. The International Veterinary Certificate/Pet Passport is valid for 60 days from the date of issuance. The Health Certificate, if not in Portuguese, may be required to be translated by a sworn translator. Animals older than 90 days must have a rabies vaccination certificate issued 30 days prior to the intended date of arrival. The certificate must be valid and the validity period must be specified in the certificate. Not applicable if arriving from countries declared rabies free by the OIE (World Organization for Animal Health). Pets may enter as passengers' checked baggage, in the cabin or as cargo. Copy of air waybill for animals arriving as cargo is required.
- Baggage clearance regulations: Baggage belonging to passengers with a connecting flight booked on a separate ticket through São Paulo Guarulhos (GRU) must be collected and re-checked in for the connecting flight. Baggage is cleared at the airport where the passenger disembarks from international flights. Exempt: baggage of transit passengers with a destination outside of Brazil.
- Currency import/export regulations: Local currency (Brazilian Real-BRL) and foreign currency: no restrictions up to BRL10 000 or equivalent. Amounts higher than BRL10 000 or equivalent: must be declared.
- Global liquid ban regulations apply. See below.



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NB! This is only a brief overview of Customs requirements. If you need additional information, please contact the Embassy of Brazil (012) 366 5200.

GLOBAL LIQUID BAN REGULATIONS

Global security guidelines have been issued by the International Civil Aviation Organisation implementing restrictions on liquids, gels, pastes and aerosols that passengers are allowed to carry in their hand luggage.

The following rules will apply throughout most airports worldwide:

Passengers may only carry small quantities (max. 100 ml per container) of liquids, gels, pastes and aerosols in their hand baggage. The packaging of these products must also meet specific requirements.

The new rules apply to liquids such as water, drinks, cream, lotion, oil, perfume, spray, hair gel, bath gel, various types of foam, toothpaste, deodorant, lip gloss or any similar substance. Exceptions will be made for baby milk, special dietary foods and medication, for which prescriptions are required.

The following rules apply for liquids in hand baggage:

- Passengers are only allowed to carry liquids and gels in containers with a volume of 100 ml or less.
- These containers may only be carried in a transparent plastic bag.
- Each passenger may only carry one such transparent plastic bag.
- The volume of the transparent plastic bag may not exceed 1 litre.
- The transparent plastic bag must be re-sealable.
- You may bring a transparent plastic bag from home.

Liquids and gels that you purchase after passing through passport control or aboard the aircraft will be packed and sealed for you in the shop or on board, if necessary. The package seal will remain valid for 24 hours. If you have to catch a connecting flight, you will not be allowed to break the seal until you have reached your final destination.

Note: Please consult relevant airline for hand baggage rules regarding liquid ban.

Communication and etiquette

Greeting: People in Brazil usually adopt first names right from the beginning. Addressing Brazilians by their first name is not a sign of familiarity. When meeting and greeting, expect a firm handshake, often for a long time, combined with strong eye contact. Both men and women greet women with a kiss on each cheek.

Communication and etiquette: Brazil's official language is Brazilian Portuguese. Not many Brazilians speak other languages and business meetings will generally be conducted in Portuguese. Consider requesting an interpreter. Communication in Brazil is typically very relaxed and does not involve strict etiquette rules. If someone feels that they have something worth adding, they will frequently state their opinion. It is considered tolerable to interrupt someone when they are talking. Personal relationships are important in business, and may take time to develop. Punctuality is important for meetings. The majority religion is Roman Catholic and the Church is held in high regard. Brazilian people are warm and hospitable. Family is very important. Dress is generally casual but shorts should only be worn on the beach, and some establishments have a more formal dress code. Punctuality is not generally expected for social occasions. Avoid discussing politics or religion. During conversation, avoid crossing your arms or standing with your hands on your hips.

People are very friendly and hospitable. Most religions are found here, with the South often referred to as the Bible Belt. When socialising, dress is generally casual, although some establishments have a dress code. If visiting a person's home, take a small gift, for example flowers, chocolates or wine. Make appointments and be on time. Smoking is prohibited in public areas.

Useful tips

- The service charge is generally included in hotel bills.
- Tip 10% at restaurants if it is not already added and for other services such as hairdressers.



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- Taxi fares are usually rounded up.
- Tip porters around BRL2 per bag.

Getting around

- Because of the size of Brazil, the most effective and, at times, cost-effective way of getting around the country is by air. Visitors who are intending to travel around should consider investing in a Brazil Air Pass before arriving in the country. The Air Pass can only be sold outside Brazil and to non-residents with a return air ticket.
- There is an extensive domestic bus service linking all the main cities. While it is an inexpensive way to view the country, distances can be considerable. All cities offer city bus services. Payment is made on the bus to either the conductor or the driver.
- The international car-rental companies operate in the major Brazilian cities alongside national and local companies. Like the buses, the main restrictions to driving around are the distances, otherwise the main highways are good and well signposted.
- The passenger rail network is extremely limited and not a viable option for travelling around the country. There are, however, a number of scenic routes, including across the Pantanal.
- Taxis are relatively cheap and easy to find in the major cities. Taxis can be stopped in the street, or most cities have a radio taxi fleet that can be booked by phone and will come and pick you up at a pre-booked time. Uber is very active in the main cities.
- A number of cities have modern metro services. Most have good websites in English, and with maps and information about the stations.

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