

# BIG FIVE®

TOURS & EXPEDITIONS

*Enriching Lives Through Distinctive Journeys*

## Destination Information Guide

# Brazil



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# Welcome to the World of Big Five!

*The following general outline offers practical information, suggestions and answers to some frequently asked questions. It is not intended to be the definitive guide for your trip.*

Big Five Tours & Expeditions is pleased to welcome you on this exciting adventure. We take great care to insure that your travel dreams and expectations are well met. Our distinctive journeys allow you to experience the finest aspects each destination has to offer. We also aim to provide you with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the places you'll visit and the people you'll meet.



<b>Rio De Janeiro ~ Elevation: 20 feet / Latitude: 22 49S / Longitude: 043 15W</b>												
<b>Average Temperature</b>												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	83	84	82	79	75	73	72	73	74	76	79	81
<b>Average Precipitation</b>												
in.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	5.3	4.9	5.3	4.3	3.1	2	1.8	1.8	2.4	3.2	3.9	5.4
<b>Manaus ~ Elevation: 276 feet / Latitude: 03 09S / Longitude: 059 59W</b>												
<b>Average Temperature</b>												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	81	80	81	81	81	81	81	82	83	83	83	81
<b>Average Number of Days With Precipitation</b>												
Days	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	20	20	20	19	16	10	10	6	8	9	11	18
<b>Salvador ~ Elevation: 20 feet / Latitude: 12 54S / Longitude: 038 20W</b>												
<b>Average Temperature</b>												
°F	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	81	82	82	81	79	78	77	77	78	79	80	81
<b>Average Number of Days With Precipitation</b>												
Days	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	11	13	15	20	21	21	21	19	17	14	14	13

## WEATHER

Brazil covers almost half of the South American continent and it is bordered to the north, west and south by all South American countries except Chile and Ecuador; to the east is the Atlantic. The country is topographically quite flat and at no point do the highlands exceed 10,000ft. There are five climatic regions spread across Brazil: equatorial, tropical, semi-arid, highland tropical, and subtropical. Plateau cities such as São Paulo, Brasília, and Belo Horizonte claim mild climates, averaging 19°C/66°F while coastal cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Recife, and Salvador have warm climates moderated by trade winds. In southern Brazil, the subtropical climate is similar to parts of the U.S. and Europe with regularly occurring frosts. In this region, temperatures in winter can fall below freezing. In general, March through November is the driest period and best time to visit. December to February can be rainy and humid. In southern Brazil, the evenings and winter days can be fairly cool, and sweaters or light coats are needed.

The Amazon region is always hot and humid, with temperature occasionally reaching 32°C/90°F. The best time to see it is July through August, when it's neither the peak of the rainy season nor the time when the river is lowest. There are only slight seasonal variations. Annual average temperatures Manaus, for example, range from 23-30°C/73-86°F from January through April, and 24-33°C/75-91°F August through October. Northeastern Brazil is hottest, where temperatures above 38°C/100 °F are commonly recorded during the dry season between May and November. Temperatures along the Atlantic coast above Rio de Janeiro range from 23 to 27°C/73°F-81°F. Inland temperatures are a bit cooler, 18 to 21°C/64°F-70°F. South of Rio, seasons are more noticeable. Still, the average temperature is in the neighborhood of 17 to 19°C/63°F-66°F. Rainy seasons occur from January to April in the north, April to July in the northeast and November to March in the Rio de Janeiro /São Paulo area. Generally speaking, April to June and August to October are ideal times for touring Brazil.

## TIME ZONES

Brazil is GMT – 3 hours. The Amazon time zone, which includes Manaus, is GMT – 4 hours, and the state of Acre is GMT – 5 hours. During October to February daylight savings time (Summer time) is in effect in the South and Southeast Zone. Clocks are set forward one hour. The starting and ending dates

vary each year and are announced with very short prior warning.

## PASSPORTS & VISAS

**PASSPORTS:** For International travel, U.S. and Canadian passports must be **valid for at least six months** from date of departure, containing at least 3 blank pages are necessary.

**VISAS:** Many countries require travelers to obtain visas prior to arrival. Big Five Tours & Expeditions has appointed Trivisa to process required visas. You will find the necessary forms from Trivisa's website at: **www.trivisa.com**. Please use account code JP1551, and follow the directions.

**Important:** Even if you do not need a visa prior to departure, please check your passport well in advance of departure to insure:

- 1) It is valid for at least six months after the date of travel.
- 2) You have sufficient blank pages for visa/entry stamps that will be added as you travel in and out of various countries.

*Please note: pages reserved for amendments and endorsements cannot be used for visas.*

## AIRPORT FORMALITIES

Upon arrival in Brazil, proceed through Customs and Immigration. After obtaining your luggage, exit the airport. If you have booked a complete package with Big Five tours, a representative will be holding a sign identifying you or him/her. We recommend you change money at airports, hotels, or local banks. **Airport Departure Tax:** Domestic departure tax is about US\$11.50; international departure tax is about US\$36. Taxes are paid in US dollars or local currency.

## BRAZIL CUSTOMS

**Duty Free:** The following goods may be imported into Brazil by persons over 18 years of age without incurring any customs duty: 400 cigarettes and 250g of tobacco and 25 cigars; 2l of alcohol; up to US\$500 worth of goods bought duty-free in Brazilian airports, any other articles with total value not exceeding US\$500 or equivalent in other currency. Note: Tourists/visitors may also bring, in addition to duty free mentioned above, a tape recorder,

typewriter, camera, portable video, pair of binoculars, movie camera, provided used and for personal use only.

**Prohibited imports:** Meat and dairy products; fruit and vegetables; and plants or parts of plants.

Regulations frequently change. For more information, you can check the Customs & Border Protection homepage at [www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml](http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml) or contact the Brazilian Embassy at 3009 Whitehaven St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20008; telephone (202) 238-2700.

## U.S. CUSTOMS

Returning U.S. residents are allowed to bring back \$800 worth of merchandise duty-free. There are limits on some items. For more information you can write U.S. Customs Service at Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044, or check the Customs and Border Protection homepage at [www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml](http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/home.xml).

## HEALTH

International travelers should be in generally good health. Talk with your personal physician about any shots or boosters recommended depending on your personal health profile and your itinerary. Tetanus and polio vaccines should be up to date. Be prepared to take precautions against sunburn with sunscreen and lip balm. At the time of this writing, no inoculations are required for entry into Argentina

**Yellow Fever:** Yellow fever inoculation is required if one of the following applies:

- If you are coming from any area other than the United States, Europe, or Canada.
- If you are traveling between countries, and one of those countries have areas where Yellow Fever can be found.

## RECENT CHANGES REGARDING YELLOW FEVER

Yellow Fever has always been recommended for those traveling the jungle or the lowlands. **HOWEVER, IT IS NOW ALSO REQUIRED IF COMING FROM PERU, BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, PANAMA, VENEZUELA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.** Below is the statement for Brazil.

An international certificate of vaccination against yellow fever is **compulsory** for travelers who, within three months prior to their arrival in Brazil, have

visited or been in transit through any of the following countries:

Angola, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Congo (Republic of), Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, French Guiana, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Suriname, Tanzania, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Venezuela.

Note: "According to our Health Ministry, there is a certificate which is accepted worldwide, as per the regulation of World Health Organization, WHO, for people who cannot be inoculated against yellow fever. This certificate is issued by the residential country of the traveller. Suggest you check with your doctors how to obtain the certificate. By having it the group will not face any problem travelling between Peru and Brazil."

**Cholera:** a vaccination certificate is no longer a condition of entry to Brazil, however, cases of cholera are still reported, especially in the northeast, and precautions are essential. Up-to-date advice should be sought before deciding whether these precautions should include vaccination as medical opinion is divided over its effectiveness.

**Typhoid:** Immunization against typhoid is recommended. A polio vaccination certificate is required for children aged between three months and six years old.

**Malaria:** Risk exists throughout the year (78% vivax form and 22% falciparum form) below 2953 feet in Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Maranhão (western part), Mato Grosso (northern part), Pará (except Belém City), Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins states, as well as some larger cities, such as on the periphery of Pôrto Velho, Boa Vista, Macapá, Manaus, Santerém, Rio Branco and Marabá. The malignant falciparum form of the disease is reportedly highly resistant to both chloroquine and sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine. Mefloquine, doxycycline or atovaquone/proguanil is the recommended prophylaxis.

**Other risks:** Bilharzia (schistosomiasis) is present. Snakes and leeches may be a hazard. Avoid swimming and paddling in fresh water; swimming pools that are well-chlorinated and maintained are safe. Other infectious diseases prevalent in Brazil include trypanosomiasis (Chagas disease) and

mucocutaneous leishmaniasis (on the increase). The former is widespread in rural and poor areas of Brazil and is spread by either insect bites or ingestion of byproducts in contaminated foods/drinks of the vector insect. Dengue fever is on the increase, especially after rain in densely populated areas. Visceral leishmaniasis is endemic (especially in the northeast). Onchocerciasis (especially northern Brazil) and Bancroftian filariasis are also present. Hepatitis A, B and D, Brazilian purpuric fever, amoebiasis, shigella infection, leptospirosis icterohaemorrhagica and brucellosis all occur. There are epidemics of meningococcal meningitis in and around the Rio area. Air pollution, especially in São Paulo City, may aggravate chest complaints. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay.

**Please note:** If you are on medication, be sure to bring enough for the duration of the trip. Prescription medicines should always be carried in their original containers in your hand luggage. If you wear contact lenses or glasses, we suggest you bring an extra pair and cleaning fluid.

### **Health insurance is essential for any foreign travel.**

*Check the latest regulations with your local health office or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); fax: 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299), or their main telephone number in Atlanta, 404-332-4559. To receive these documents, call 404-332-4565 and follow the prompts. You can also get information on the CDC's website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).*

### **CLOTHING**

*For general clothing information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials. See pre-departure information for general packing check list.*

In general, Brazilians are less formal than other Hispanic countries. But note that shorts are not welcomed everywhere such as office buildings. Bring lightweight clothing with waterproofing for the rainy season (November-March), and warm clothing for the south during winter (June-July). All clothing should be easily laundered.

**Rio's** dress style is casual in almost all circumstances. If in doubt, ask your guide. It is also good to keep in mind that the state has geographical diversities.

Factors, such as sea proximity, mountain ranges, vegetation and altitude cause climate variations in the several regions.

**Iguassu Falls:** As one of the city's with largest temperature amplitude in Brazil, has very hot and rainy summers and winters with temperatures that get close to 32°F. These characteristics make the city's climate subtropical humid. It is better to bring heavy clothes during the Brazilian winter.

**Salvador:** It is a city that's between the sun and the ocean and the climate is similar to Rio. To soften the heat there is a constant gentle breeze. The city has a typical tropical climate since it is located between the Tropic of Capricorn and the Equator. The average temperature is 76°F, and the climate is hot and humid. Although it is hot, you always have the waters of the Bay of All Saints to refresh.

**Amazon:** The water level during September, October, November and December is low - dry period. We suggest a light raincoat/hat, swim suit, binoculars, sufficient film, sun block, T-shirts, long sleeve shirt, sweatshirt or sweater, pants and shorts, jeans or track suits, tennis shoes or hiking boots, mosquito repellent, flashlight, personal medicine, a good book/magazine, sunglasses and a great sense of humor.

### **LUGGAGE**

*For general baggage information, please review the **Travel Handbook** in your pre-departure materials.*

In this security conscious era, airline luggage restrictions may change without notice. Also, luggage limits vary depending on ticket class, plane size, destinations, etc. It is always best to confirm with airlines for specific limitations.

Scheduled flights from other countries and within foreign countries generally limit luggage to 44 pounds total, plus one carry-on personal item. Further restrictions may apply for charter flights. This will vary according to destination. We will advise you of those restrictions in your final documents.

### **MONEY**

**Currency:** Brazilian currency is the real (R\$). R\$1 = 100 Centavos. Notes are in denominations of R\$100, 50, 10, 5 and 1. Coins are in denominations of R\$1, and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 centavos. **Credit cards:**

MasterCard & Visa the most commonly accepted but American Express & Diners Club are also accepted. **Traveler's checks:** Exchangeable at hotels, banks and tourist agencies. Tourists cannot exchange US traveler's checks for US banknotes. They can benefit from a 15% discount when paying hotel or restaurant bills in foreign currency or travelers checks. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, visitors are advised to use traveler's checks in US Dollars.

## COMMUNICATION

**Language:** Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in South America. In many large cities, English is spoken at 5-star hotels, some restaurants, a few downtown shops as well as some shops in major shopping malls.

## ELECTRICITY

Electricity varies. The current in Rio de Janeiro may be 110 or 220 volts, 60 cycles, AC. In Manaus in the north, the same is true: primarily 110 volts AC but some hotels have 220 volts AC, 60 cycles. Bring an adapter. Plugs have two round pins.

## FOOD & DRINK

Do not drink tap water. All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. All water used for drinking, brushing teeth, cleaning contacts, or making ice should first be boiled or otherwise sterilized. Even filtered water in more remote areas should be avoided and bottled mineral water should be consumed instead. Pasteurized milk and cheese is available in towns and is generally considered safe to consume. Milk outside of urban areas is unpasteurized and should be boiled; powdered or tinned milk is available and is advised in rural areas, but make sure that it is reconstituted with pure water. Avoid dairy products which are likely to have been made from unboiled milk. Coffee is only served with breakfast, and usually with milk. It is served after other meals. Brazilian *cafezinho*, after dinner coffee, is very strong and very sweet.

Only eat well-cooked meat and fish, preferably freshly prepared and served hot. Pork, salad and mayonnaise may carry increased risk. Vegetables should be cooked and fruit peeled. Regional dishes abound in this country that is almost as big as a continent. But one of the most popular dishes in Brazil is *feijoada*, a dish consisting of highly spiced black beans and assorted meats, and is served with rice, a staple. This main dish is customarily presented

with *farofa* (mandioca meal fried with a variety of ingredients that include bacon, garlic, onion and boiled eggs). Another side dish is *couve mineira* (collard or mustard greens cut in very thin strips and fried at the last minute in oil, garlic, and bacon). In addition, the presentation features *fatiias de laranja* or orange slices. The citric acid in the oranges is also supposed to counteract the fat in the pork. The meal is then topped off with *Romen e Julieta*, a side dish made up of *queijo mineiro* (a special soft cheese from the state of Minas Gerais, vaguely resembling our Monterey jack) and a slice of *goiabada* a dark sweet paste made with the guava fruit.

**Note:** If you have food allergies or are on a special/restricted diet, please notify your travel agent or our office in advance, so that we may try to comply with your needs. Also, please advise your travel agent or our office if you have any mobility restrictions, so that we may inform our representatives accordingly. They will always strive to accommodate you to the best of their ability.

## TIPPING

Tipping should be done at your discretion and as a reward for good or exceptional service.

For general tipping guidelines please refer to:

[www.cntraveler.com/travel-tips/travel-etiquette/2008/12/Etiquette-101-Tipping-Guide](http://www.cntraveler.com/travel-tips/travel-etiquette/2008/12/Etiquette-101-Tipping-Guide)

## SHOPPING

In Rio and São Paulo, major shops and markets stay open quite late in the evening. Rio and Bahia specialize in antiques and jewelry. Special purchases include gems (particularly emeralds), jewelry (particularly silver), souvenirs and permissible antiques, leather or snakeskin goods. Fashions and antiques, crystal and pottery are a speciality of São Paulo. Belém, the city of the Amazon valley, specializes in jungle items, but be careful that you are not purchasing objects that have been plundered from the jungle, contributing to its general destruction. Check for restrictions on import to your home country of goods made from skins of protected species. It's best to stay away from such products in the first place.

## **CUSTOMS IN BRAZIL**

**Greetings:** Brazilians enjoy physical contact. Handshakes are often prolonged, and, if two men are well acquainted, may be accompanied by slaps on the shoulder, on the stomach, or sustained pats on the back. Brazilian women also shake hands upon meeting someone, but most commonly greet each other with kisses, usually twice on alternative cheeks. If a man gives a woman a kiss to a woman as a greeting, he generally only kisses one cheek. In situations where North Americans may refer to a business associate as "Mr. Smith," Brazilians generally substitute first names such as "Senhor Ernesto," when addressing colleagues. There are exceptions that depend on the degree of formality of the individual. Brazilians stand in close proximity to one another while speaking, and do not apologize for bumping or brushing against another person. In places such as public markets, no lines are formed; whoever pushes to the front is next served. Like many other cultures, Brazilians usually maintain steady eye contact during conversations that some North Americans might consider a stare. Brazil is a tropical country where time is a relative matter so don't expect on-the-dot punctuality.

## **OVERVIEW BRAZIL**

The largest country in South America, and fifth largest in the world, Brazil shares common boundaries with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador. The area of Brazil is 8,511,965 sq. km. (3,290,000 sq. mi.), making it only slightly smaller than the U.S. Landscapes ranges from dense forests in northern regions, including the Amazon Basin, to semiarid terrain along northeast coast. The country also encompasses mountains, hills, and rolling plains in the southwest and coastal lowlands. Brazil's coastline stretches 7,491 km.

Brazil has the largest population in Latin America and ranks sixth in the world. The majority live in the south-central area, which includes the industrial cities of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Belo Horizonte. Urban growth has been rapid. By 1991, 75% of the total population lived in urban areas. Rapid growth has aided economic development but has also created serious social, environmental, and political problems for major cities.

Four major groups make up the Brazilian population: the Portuguese, who colonized in the 16th century; Africans brought to Brazil as slaves; various other European, Middle Eastern, and Asian immigrant groups who have settled in Brazil since the mid-19th century; and indigenous people of Tupi and Guarani language stock. Inter-marriage between the Portuguese and indigenous people or slaves was common. Although the major European ethnic stock of Brazil was once Portuguese, subsequent waves of immigration have contributed to a diverse ethnic and cultural heritage.

From 1875 until 1960, about 5 million Europeans immigrated to Brazil, settling in the four southern states -- Sao Paulo, Parana, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. Immigrants have come mainly from Italy, Germany, Spain, Japan, Poland, and the Middle East. Sao Paulo is also home to the largest Japanese community outside Japan. Despite class distinctions, national identity is strong, and racial friction is a relatively new phenomenon.

Indigenous full-blooded people, located mainly in the northern and western border regions and in the upper Amazon Basin, constitute less than 1% of the population. Their numbers are declining as contact with the outside world and commercial expansion into the interior increase. Brazilian Government programs to establish reservations and to provide other forms of assistance have existed for years, but are controversial and often ineffective.

## SUGGESTED READING LIST

Many comprehensive and readily available guides are produced by Lonely Planet, Fodor, Insight, The Rough Guide, etc. Here are a few selections we thought might interest you. Barnes and Noble, [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com), and Longitude Books, [www.longitudebooks.com](http://www.longitudebooks.com), have collections of books, searchable by country.

### **Brazil**

#### **John Updike**

They meet by chance on Copacabana Beach: Tristao Raposo, a poor black teen from the Rio slums, surviving day to day on street smarts and the hustle, and Isabel Leme, an upper-class white girl, treated like a pampered slave by her absent though very powerful father. Convinced that fate brought them together, betrayed by families who threaten to tear them apart, Tristao and Isabel flee to the farthest reaches of Brazil's wild west — unaware of the astonishing destiny that awaits them . . . Spanning twenty-two years, from the mid-sixties to the late eighties, BRAZIL surprises and embraces the reader with its celebration of passion, loyalty, and New World innocence.

#### **The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey** **Candice Millard**

At once an incredible adventure narrative and a penetrating biographical portrait, *The River of Doubt* is the true story of Theodore Roosevelt's harrowing exploration of one of the most dangerous rivers on earth. The book goes into uncharted tributary of the Amazon that snakes through one of the most treacherous jungles in the world. Indians armed with poison-tipped arrows haunt its shadows; piranhas glide through its waters; boulder-strewn rapids turn the river into a roiling cauldron. After his humiliating election defeat in 1912, Roosevelt set his sights on the most punishing physical challenge he could find, the first descent of an unmapped, rapids-choked tributary of the Amazon. Together with his son Kermit and Brazil's most famous explorer, Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon, Roosevelt accomplished a feat so great that many at the time refused to believe it. In the process, he changed the map of the western hemisphere forever. Along the way, Roosevelt and his men faced an unbelievable series of hardships, losing their canoes and supplies to punishing whitewater rapids, and enduring starvation, Indian attack, disease, drowning, and a murder within their own ranks. Three men died, and Roosevelt was brought to the brink of suicide. *The River of Doubt* brings alive these extraordinary events in a powerful

nonfiction narrative thriller that happens to feature one of the most famous Americans who ever lived.

### **Brazil**

#### **Errol Lincoln Uys**

Brazil is the first work of fiction to depict five centuries of a great nation's remarkable history, its evolution from colony to kingdom, from empire to modern republic. With a stunning cast of real and fictional characters, the story unfolds in South America, Africa and Europe. Two families dominate this extraordinary novel. The Cavalcantis are among the original settlers and establish the classic Brazilian plantation -- vast, powerful, built with slave labor. The da Silvas represent the second element in both contemporary and historical Brazil: pathfinders and prospectors. For generations, these adventurers have their eyes set on El Dorado, which they ultimately find -- in a coffee fazenda at São Paulo. Brazil is an intensely human story -- brutal and violent, tender and passionate. Perilous explorations through the Brazilian wilderness...the perpetual clash of pioneer and native, visionary and fortune hunter, master and slave, zealot and exploiter... the thunder of war on land and sea as European powers and South American nations pursue their territorial conquests...the triumphs and tragedies of a people who built a nation covering half the South American continent...are here in one spell-binding saga.

#### **Travelers' Tales Brazil: True Stories** **by Annette Haddad (Editor), James O'Reilly (Editor), Larry Habegger (Editor), Scott Doggett (Editor), Scott Doggett (Editor)**

Brazil is a land of superlatives. It has the biggest freshwater fish and the rivers to go with them, the world's largest jungle, and the greatest number of species. *Travelers' Tales Brazil* explores these aspects and much more, from Carnival to the shamanic spiritual traditions, as well-known writers chronicle a land where commingling of cultures - indigenous tribes, West Africans, Portuguese colonists - has created a people who fearlessly embrace life.