

Tips for Tourists traveling to Brazil

Text from Brazil Travel Guide (<http://www.justbrazil.org/>) and Brazil Tourism Office (<http://www.braziltourism.org/>)

VISAS

Citizens of the following countries **do not** need visas when traveling to Brazil for tourism purposes for a period of up to 90 days:

Andorra- Argentina - Austria - Bahamas - Barbados - Belgium - Bermuda - Bolivia - Bulgaria - Chile- Colombia - Costa Rica - Czech Republic - Denmark - Ecuador- Finland - France -Germany - Great Britain - Greece - Hungary - Iceland -Ireland - Italy - Israel - Liechtenstein - Luxembourg - Malaysia - Malta - Monaco - Morocco - Namibia - Netherlands - New Zealand - Norway - Paraguay - Peru -Philippines - Poland - Portugal - San Marino - Slovenia - South Africa - South Korea - Spain - Surinam - Sweden - Switzerland - Thailand - Trinidad & Tobago - Tunis - Turkey - Uruguay – Vatican - Venezuela

Citizens of the countries not listed will need a VISA, even for tourism purposes.

Please contact the Brazilian Embassy in your country for further information.

The list of Brazilian Embassies can be found at

<http://www.embassiesabroad.com/embassies-of/Brazil#3457>

Vaccination

A yellow fever vaccination is mandatory if applicant has traveled within the last 90 days to any of the following Countries: Angola, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Gabon, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Peru, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (ex-Zaire) or Venezuela.

A yellow fever vaccination is advisable if applicant's destination in Brazil includes any of the following States: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Goiás, Maranhão, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins and the Federal District.

Language

Portuguese is the official language in Brasil. Except for the languages spoken by Indian tribes living in remote reservations, Portuguese is the only language of daily life. There are no regional dialects. Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in South America. (note that the official language of IFIP 9.4 2007 Congress is English).

Currency

The currency in Brazil is called Real, the plural is Reais. However, the name of the money was only adopted in 1994. This was because in the past Brazil had lots of different currencies due to changes in the economy.

In Brazilian currency there are 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 bills. Most bills have pictures of animals on one side and a feminine character that is a representation of Brazil on the other. Coins are available in values of 1 cent, 5 cents, 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents and 1 Real. Coins vary in size and colour.

In March 2007, the currency exchange rate was about R\$ 2.10 for US\$ 1.00, R\$ 4.00 for £1.00 and R\$ 2.70 for € 1.00

Changing Money

All banks and "**cambios exchange**" recognize travellers checks and foreign currency. There is an extensive network of ATMs around the country. The US Dollar is the most popular foreign currency.

Most large bank offices and hotels in bigger Brazilian cities have a foreign section where you can change money at the slightly lower tourism rate, but sometimes this may involve a bit of time-wasting bureaucracy. You will need your passport to change money. US dollar is the most common currency to be exchanged in Brazil. Be aware that it can be almost impossible to change money weekends, especially in the interior. It is recommended, already upon arrival, to go to the exchange office and/or to the cash dispensers at the International Airport. Notice that most cash dispensers have adhesive "Visa" and "MasterCard" decals, but there are just some of them that allow transactions with foreign credit cards. The Brazilian currency 'Real' can not be changed outside of Brazil. When leaving Brazil, change the local currency for dollar before you pass the passport and airport security controls. The other side is an international restricted area and there you cannot change 'Real', and all purchases are in US dollar.

Credit & debit cards Most major international cards are accepted. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travellers cheques Exchangeable at hotels, banks and tourist agencies. Tourists cannot exchange US travellers cheques for US banknotes but they may, however, benefit from a 15 per cent discount when paying hotel or restaurant bills in foreign currency or travellers cheques. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in US Dollars.

Currency restrictions The import and export of local currency is unlimited

although it may be subject to prior approval by Brazil Central Bank. The import of foreign currency is unlimited, provided amounts over US\$1000 are declared on arrival; the export of foreign currency is limited to US\$4000 per person (amounts in excess of this need special approval from the Brazilian Central Bank).

Banking hours Mon-Fri 10AM-4PM.

Customs

Besides their clothing and personal effects, persons entering Brazil may bring one of each of the following items: radio, tape player, typewriter, video, movie and still cameras up to a total value of US\$ 500. Visitors are allowed to buy a further US\$ 500 of merchandise in local duty free shops on arrival.

Things to Bring

Next is the list of things that you have to take for travel to Brazil, or something that you have to do before your trip.

- Make sure you have a safe and subtle money belt for keeping your money. It must be the type that you wear under your clothing as the pushes worn outside are a telling sign that you are a foreigner probably carrying dollars. An even better suggestion is to sew a cloth pouch into your trousers as thieves today are often wise to notice conventional money belt
- Make copies of all important documents
- Due to different electricity outlets in Brazil, is recommendable have a universal electric plug adaptor.
- Brazil is a tropical place. Bring with you sunblock, sunglasses, and a hat for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays.

Guarulhos Airport

Guarulhos International Airport is located

Public Transport

Road: Taxi: Prepaid radio taxis serve the terminals. Bus: The airport shuttle bus connects with Congonhas Domestic Airport, the city centre and Hotels in the Avenida Paulista. There is also an executive city bus for which tickets should be purchased in advance on the Arrivals floor. There is also a shuttle minibus

service which runs to the city centre (journey time to the city centre: 30-50 minutes for all methods of transport).

Information and Help Desks

There are tourist information desks (tel: (0)11 6445 2380 or 6445 4029) on the Arrivals floor of Terminals 1 and 2 and there are also two *Infraero* information counters in both terminals. *Comunicação Social* can help with specific enquiries (tel: (0)11 6445 2256 or 6445 2891).

Airport Facilities

Money and communications: Banks with bureau de change facilities and ATMs are located at the airport. There is also a 24-hour post office in Terminal 1. **Eating and drinking:** Restaurants selling refreshments are available in both terminals. **Shopping:** Shops, including duty-free, are available in both terminals. **Other facilities:** First aid facilities and pharmacies are located in both terminals.

Flying to Brazil

As a result of a "work to rules" campaign by air traffic controllers and the sale of the Brazilian airline Varig, delays and cancellations in domestic flights are being experienced. Visitors should check with travel agents to ensure that connections take this into account and be prepared for the possibilities of extended waits at airports.

Dress

Brazilians, even in the major cities, dress casually outside the office. None of the country's top restaurants insists on collar and tie although an occasional private club does. Collar and tie still predominate in formal office and business surroundings in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and most working women wear dresses or skirts. Ladies should remember to pack a jacket or shawl when coming to Brazil, as some of the buildings and restaurants can be a little enthusiastic with the air conditioning. When packing keep in mind that cities like Rio and São Paulo are big, fashionable, cosmopolitan cities and not small tourist resorts. If you forget to bring some item of clothing, don't worry; you will be able to find what you forgot in any of the big shopping centers. When heading further south in South America, remember to pack some warmer clothes, especially during the Southern Hemisphere's winter months.

Electricity

The electrical current in Brazil varies from city to city. In Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte, the current is 110/120 volts, 60 cycles, AC. In Salvador and Manaus, it is 127 volts. In Recife, Brasília and a number of other cities, 220 volts. Most hotels provide 110-volt and 220-volt outlets.

Business Hours

Government and private companies' offices usually work Mondays to Fridays from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm (or later), with an hour's break for lunch.

Most shops in Brazil are open from 9 am to 6:30 or 7:00 pm on weekdays, and from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays. Some shops may close earlier, and many shopping centres open as late as 10 pm. Banks open from 10 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday, in most part of the country, with regional variations. In some regions, shops may also close for lunch.

Tipping

Most restaurants and bars already include a 10% service charge in the bill. It is customary to leave a bit extra for good service. When service charge is not included in the bill, 10-15% is the general rule. Tips are not expected by taxi drivers, although most people tell the driver to keep the change. Airport and hotel porters should receive the equivalent of US\$ 0.75 per bag.

General Security

Brazil, like many countries, has had a bad reputation for personal security, although there are far more police patrolling tourist areas now, than in the past. Use common sense. The best way to avoid theft is to stay in safe areas (if in doubt please ask your hotel receptionist / concierge whether where you want to go is safe). Where possible, leave valuables, documents and passports in your hotel safety deposit box and carry a copy of these documents retained separately, in case of loss or theft. Do not wear valuable jewellery or a visible wristwatch, keep your camera in your pocket or bag. Cash kept on your person should be kept to a minimum. If you have to take a bag while you are out, hold it in front of you where you can see it.

Clothing

Casual wear is normal, particularly during hot weather. In nightclubs, smart-casual (eg blazer, no tie) is acceptable. For men, coats and ties are common in São Paulo and Brasília as well as some formal business situations. For women, slacks or skirts with a blouse, or dresses are common and acceptable, although, a dress or skirt may prove to be much cooler. If you are traveling to the south of the country, in the winter (June/July), it is worth taking an extra layer, or something warm, as the temperature can be quite cool.

Social Customs

Since Brazilian culture is European based, most familiar European social customs are observed in Brazil. In both business and social situations, shaking hands when meeting or leaving is customary. But Brazilians are also very warm and caring people, the women may kiss one (or both) cheeks of other women upon meeting them and, often, kiss men in a similar manner. Smoking is acceptable unless notified otherwise, however throughout Brazil smoking has

been banned or severely limited in many public areas including airports, post offices, government offices, rest rooms, banks, hospitals, supermarkets, shopping centers and malls. Numerous restaurants do the same but some will have a separate section “para fumantes” (for smokers).