

# Brazil

## Geography

Location: Eastern South America, bordering the Atlantic Ocean

Map references: South America

Area:

total area: 8,511,965 sq km

land area: 8,456,510 sq km

note: includes Arquipelago de Fernando de Noronha, Atol das Rocas, Ilha da Trindade, Ilhas Martin Vaz, and Penedos de Sao Pedro e Sao Paulo

Land boundaries: total 14,691 km, Argentina 1,224 km, Bolivia 3,400 km, Colombia 1,643 km, French Guiana 673 km, Guyana 1,119 km, Paraguay 1,290 km, Peru 1,560 km, Suriname 597 km, Uruguay 985 km, Venezuela 2,200 km

Coastline: 7,491 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm  
continental shelf: 200 nm  
exclusive economic zone: 200 nm  
territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: mostly tropical, but temperate in south

Terrain: mostly flat to rolling lowlands in north; some plains, hills, mountains, and narrow coastal belt

Natural resources: bauxite, gold, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, platinum, tin, uranium, petroleum, hydropower, timber

Land use:

arable land: 7%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 19%

forest and woodland: 67%

other: 6%

Irrigated land: 27,000 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation in Amazon Basin destroys the habitat and endangers the existence of a multitude of plant and animal

species indigenous to the area; air and water pollution in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, and several other large cities; land degradation and water pollution caused by improper mining activities  
natural hazards: recurring droughts in northeast; floods and occasional frost in south

Note: largest country in South America; shares common boundaries with every South American country except Chile and Ecuador

## People

Population: 160,737,489 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 31% (female 24,641,868; male 25,515,775)

15-64 years: 64% (female 51,966,272; male 51,254,165)

65 years and over: 5% (female 4,393,530; male 2,965,879) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.22% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 21.16 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 8.98 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 57.2 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:  
total population: 61.82 years  
male: 56.57 years  
female: 67.32 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.39 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:  
noun: Brazilian(s)  
adjective: Brazilian

Ethnic divisions: Caucasian (includes Portuguese, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish) 55%, mixed Caucasian and African 38%, African 6%, other (includes Japanese, Arab, Amerindian) 1%

Religions: Roman Catholic (nominal) 70%

Languages: Portuguese (official), Spanish, English, French

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1991)

total population: 80%

male: 80%

female: 80%

Labour force: 57 million (1989 est.)

by occupation: services 42%, agriculture 31%, industry 27%

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: Federative Republic of Brazil

conventional short form: Brazil

local long form: Republica Federativa do Brasil

local short form: Brasil

Type: federal republic

Capital: Brasilia

Administrative divisions: 26 states (estados, singular - estado) and 1 federal district\* (distrito federal); Acre, Alagoas, Amapa, Amazonas, Bahia, Ceara, Distrito Federal\*, 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

Independence: 7 September 1822 (from Portugal)

National holiday: Independence Day, 7 September (1822)

Constitution: 5 October 1988

Legal system: based on Roman codes; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: voluntary between 16 and 18 years of age and over 70; compulsory over 18 and under 70 years of age

Flag: green with a large yellow diamond in the center bearing a blue celestial globe with 27 white five-pointed stars (one for each state and the Federal District) arranged in the same pattern as the night sky over Brazil; the globe has a white equatorial band with the motto ORDEM E PROGRESSO (Order and Progress)

## Economy

Overview: The economy, with large agrarian, mining, and manufacturing sectors, entered the 1990s with declining real growth, runaway inflation, an unserviceable foreign debt of \$122 billion, and a lack of policy direction. In addition, the economy remained highly regulated, inward-looking, and protected by substantial trade and investment barriers. Ownership of major industrial and mining facilities is divided among private interests - including several multinationals - and the government. Most large agricultural holdings are private, with the government channeling financing to this sector. Conflicts between large landholders and landless peasants have produced intermittent violence. Brazil's natural resources remain a major, long-term economic strength.

Industries: textiles, shoes, chemicals, cement, lumber, mining (iron ore, tin), steel making, machine building - including aircraft, motor vehicles, motor vehicle parts and assemblies, and other machinery and equipment

Agriculture: accounts for 11% of GDP; world's largest producer and exporter of coffee and orange juice concentrate and second-largest exporter of soybeans; other products - rice, corn, sugarcane, cocoa, beef; self-sufficient in food, except for wheat

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of cannabis and coca, mostly for domestic consumption; government has a small-scale eradication

program to control cannabis and coca cultivation; important transshipment country for Bolivian and Colombian cocaine headed for the US and Europe

## Transportation

### Railroads:

total: 30,612 km (1992)

### Highways:

total: 1,670,148 km

Inland waterways: 50,000 km navigable

Pipelines: crude oil 2,000 km; petroleum products 3,804 km; natural gas 1,095 km

Ports: Belem, Fortaleza, Ilheus, Imbituba, Manaus, Paranagua, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande, Salvador, Santos, Vitoria

### Airports:

total: 3,467

## Defence Forces

Branches: Brazilian Army, Brazilian Navy (includes Marines),  
Brazilian Air Force, Federal Police (paramilitary)