

Brazil



Introduction

Brazil has a population of 146 Million people concentrated on its two hundred miles of east coast. Over 90 percent of the people live on 10 percent of the land, and over 15 Million live in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Brazil's ethnic composition is 55 percent European descent (primarily Portuguese), 38 percent a mixture of cultures (African, German, Japanese, Amerindian, and so forth), 6 percent African, and only 1 percent Amerindian. Brazil is a multiparty federal republic. The president is both the chief of state and the head of the government. There are two legislative houses: an 81 member Senate and a 503-member Chamber of Deputies.

Portuguese is the official language, although some of the population speak Spanish, Italian, or various Amerindian languages. There is no official religion, however the predominant religion is Roman Catholic (about 90 percent of the population). Some 16 percent practice Afro-Brazilian religions that combine tribal and Catholic beliefs (Spiritual Catholics) and Evangelical Catholics make up 9 percent. Protestants, Judaism, Buddhism, and other religions account for less than 9 percent.

Fun Fact

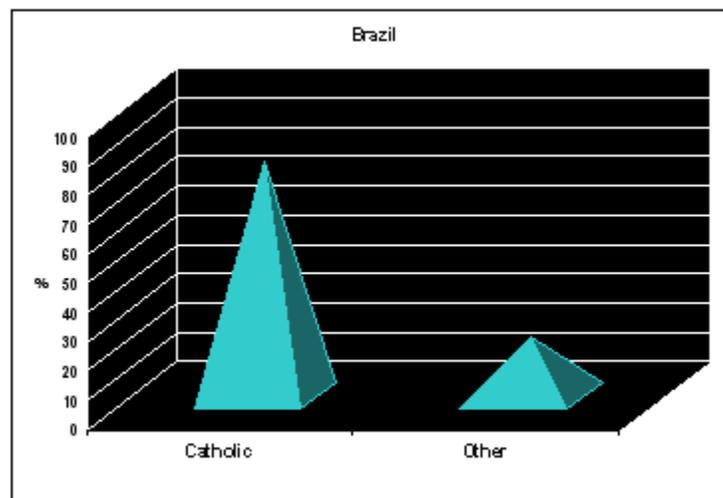
Nearly 50 percent of the population is under twenty years of age. Despite massive economic problems, Brazil is often regarded as a potentially rich country with a strong industrial sector, large agricultural production, and rich natural resources. An example of its potential for efficient utilization of resources is its processing of sugarcane into ethyl alcohol for fueling 1.5 Million Brazilian cars.

Geert Hofstede Analysis Brazil

[Click Here for Geert Hofstede country scores](#)

The Geert Hofstede analysis for Brazil is similar to its Latin American neighbors. Uncertainty avoidance ranks highest which indicates a high concern for rules, regulations, controls and issues with career security – typically, a society that does not readily accept change and is risk adverse. A large power distance indicates that inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow with Brazilian society. High long-term orientation ranking signifies Brazil has respect for tradition and supports a strong work ethic where long term rewards are expected as a result of today's work. [More Details](#)

Religion in Brazil



* WORLD FACTBOOK 2002

Appearance

- Three-piece suits carry an "executive" connotation, whereas two-piece suits are associated with office workers. Conservative attire for women in business is very important. Also make sure your nails are manicured
- The colors of the Brazilian flag are yellow and green. Avoid wearing this combination in any fashion
- Touching arms and elbows and backs very common

- The O. K. hand signal a rude gesture in Brazil
- To express appreciation, a Brazilian may appear to pinch his earlobe between thumb and forefinger
- To invoke good luck, place your thumb between your index and middle fingers while making a fist. This is also known as the "fig"
- Flicking the fingertips underneath the chin indicates that you do not know the answer to a question

Behavior

- Make appointments at least two weeks in advance. Never try to make impromptu calls at business or government offices
- Be prepared to commit long term resources (both in time and money) toward establishing strong relationships in Brazil. This is the key to business success
- Some regions have a casualness about both time and work. However San Paulo is not one of those, and in Rio casual refers to the personal and social events, not business. In these two cities, business meetings tend to start on time
- Never start into business discussions before your host does. Business meetings normally begin with casual 'chatting' first
- Midday the normal time for the main meal. A light meal is common at night, unless entertaining formally
- American coffee is a mere shadow of Brazilian coffee. Expect to be served small cups of very strong coffee
- In Brazil, restaurant entertainment prevails versus at home
- If entertained in the home, it is polite to send flowers to the hostess the next day, with a thank-you note
- Giving a gift is not required at a first business meeting; instead buy lunch or dinner
- Purple flowers are extensively used at funerals, so be cautious when giving someone purple flowers. Violets are OK to give

- Toast: *Saude* or *Viva* (Sah-OO-Day, VEE-va)
- Tipping is typically 10% in Brazil
- If you here the term *jeito* - it refers to the idea that nothing is set in stone, that a good attempt can break a rule

Communications

- Handshaking, often for a long time, is common. Shake hands for hello and goodbye; use good eye contact; when leaving a small group, be sure to shake hands with everyone present
- When women meet, they exchange kisses by placing their cheeks together and kissing the air
- First names used often, but titles important
- Music and long, animated conversation are favorite Brazilian habits. When conversing, interruptions viewed as enthusiasm. Brazilians enjoy joking, informality, and friendships
- Portuguese is the language of Brazil
- Good conversation topics: soccer, family, and children
- Bad conversation topics: Argentina, politics, poverty, religion, and the Rain Forest
- Stay away from phrases such as, "Is it true that everyone in Brazil is either very rich or very poor?" It is very likely you will be talking with someone that isn't either one