

Brazil

- *Have you ever tasted "cupuaçu"?*

It's a wild fruit found in the north of Brazil.

- *What about dancing "forró" ?*

It's funny, but the word came from the sound of the American expression "for all". It is a Brazilian dance that all could perform.

Brazil is the largest, most populous and the only Portuguese speaking country in Latin American. It is a country of diversity: a landscape that includes the immense Amazon Forest, golden beaches, huge cities and a mix of people of native Indian, Portuguese ancestors, European immigrants and a proud African heritage which provided the country with its nineteen different tones of tanned brownish skin tones.

Brazilian hospitality and openness impresses foreign visitors no matter their age or background. They not only return but also quite a few remain forever. Brazilian music reflects in large part this state of mind, underlining its happy-go-lucky nature and their penchant for solidarity.

Brazil mixes 5 times World Cup Soccer Champion, the largest Carnival celebration, hot and diverse musical styles, many cultures within one, pleasant climate throughout its vast boundaries and beautiful beaches with the opportunity to have unparalleled Intercultural experiences. It's a nation of creative and easygoing people with an extraordinarily witty verve, no matter the hardship, for making the best out of everything under any situation.

AFS Intercultura Brasil began operations in 1956 when seven young Brazilians went on an AFS exchange program to the U.S. Today AFS BRA provides more than 300 host families to foreign students and offers international exchanges to almost 400 Brazilian students every year to 30 plus destinations.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

Offered to high school students who wish to experience the Latin country with the most diverse cultural background including specialties such as the Amazon, UN protected medieval cities, large urban centers contrasting with rural area the size of half of Europe, plus a taste learning Portuguese for a better understanding about Soccer, Bossa Nova, Samba, and other rhythms of Brazil. Students between 15 to 18 years old will attend carefully selected private or public schools. There will be a compulsory curriculum of 8 to 10 subjects per year that all students must follow. AFS local volunteers may create opportunities for short-term exchanges to different AFS chapter provided the students shows good adaptation and school attendance. A regional orientation will be held about six weeks after your arrival orientation. Optional trips are offered through an AFS Brazil third party provider at an additional cost and may include: the Pantanal, one of the largest and most ecologically diverse wetlands on the planet; the amazing Amazon region; and awe-inspiring Iguazú Falls, the widest waterfall in the world. Tours, destinations and prices may vary.

AFS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Adults between 18 to 30 years old experience the value of Intercultural communication, develop and practice a new foreign language and take the opportunity of developing leadership. Volunteer work on internship basis at NGO or governmental projects. Family homestay is provided in most of the cases but participants can also be placed at the projects.

During the first two weeks of the Program participants will enroll in Portuguese classes, in Rio de Janeiro, will receive cultural orientation and visit historical and tourist sites as well as one or two local NGOs.

History

On the turn of the 16th century, in the year 1500, April 21st, the Portuguese navigator Pedro Álvares Cabral reached the stunningly beautiful coast of what is currently known as The Federal Republic of Brazil and claimed the whole area on behalf of the Portuguese Crown.

Government

Brazil has a civilian President democratically elected. The bicameral legislative system is composed of the National Congress and the Senate. These two houses hold different levels of political representatives: state and national.

Currency

The REAL is the national currency and its approximate quotation is R\$2.40 to USD 1.00

Language

Portuguese is the national language. Brazilian students study English and/or Spanish as a part of scholar curriculum.

People

Brazilians descend from a mixture of races. Portuguese settlers, native Indian peoples, African slaves, and French and Dutch settlers who tried to conquer the northeast of the country. In the XX Century, German, Italian, Polish and Japanese immigrants added new elements to that social texture.

Family

Brazilians are very affectionate, outgoing and like to demonstrate what and how they feel at all times. Family ties are strong and parents tend to be overprotective of their children, especially of girls. Parents expect to know when and where their children are going out, and usually a curfew is set.

Religion

Brazil is a Catholic country and yet religious openness prevails. There's a variety of faith but there's also great respect for its own syncretism. This is probably what provides Brazilians with greater tolerance and a broader sense of religious practices.

Diet

The staples of the Brazilian diet are *arroz* (white rice), *feijão* (beans), and *farofa* (manioc flour), also called *farinha*. These are usually served with *carne* (beef), *carne de porco* (pork), *frango* (chicken), or *peixe* (fish) and a lettuce and tomato salad. *Feijoada*, the national dish, is a meat and bean stew served with rice. Barbecued meat is very popular and traditional foods also include African-influenced fish and chicken stews. There is a variety of fruits, some exotic found just in specific regions.

Climate

Temperatures and vegetation varie quite a lot accordy to cities altitude. The seasons are exactly the opposite from those in the Northern Hemisphere except in the North of the country where its climate is Equatorial.

The average annual temperature is approximately 28°C/83F° in the North and 20°C/68F° in the South.

Temperatures may drop below freezing in the South, but, in Rio de Janeiro during summer temperatures may reach 40°C/105F° for several days.

Sports

No other sport in Brazil can be compared in popularity to soccer, which Brazilians call *futebol*. This passion for the sport is reflected in the number and size of soccer stadiums all over the country. Volleyball, basketball, athletism are played among young people also.

Carnival

Carnival is a moveable feast and is celebrated all over the country. It's the most popular holiday and it lasts four days. People use to wear costumes, join parades, sing and dance on the streets.