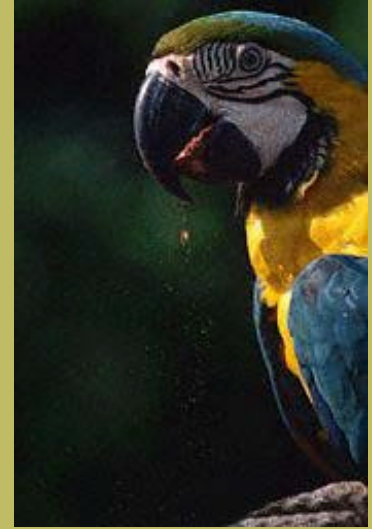


Why Brazil

Youth For Understanding International Student Exchange

Brazil is South America's biggest country and the fifth largest in the world. It is located in the center of the continent, has borders with then countries and a coastline of 7.408 km (4.445 miles). It is divided into five regions: Norte, Nordeste, Centro-Oeste, Sudeste and Sul.

Brazil has always been a land of great contrast. From colonial times until the present, its great diversity has made it come alive. With people of so many different origins, Brazil is a country of myriad faces. At the same time, strong factors hold the country together as a nation: the Portuguese language and a zest for living.



Short Facts

Area: Brazil alone covers half of the South American continent, with 8.521.100 km² (3.290.000 sq. mi). It is almost the same size as the United States.

Brazil
Great diversity

Climate: Most of Brazil is located between the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn, which means that average temperature, on a yearly basis, is not extreme. The highest average temperature is 27.5°C (85°F). Depending on the time of the year, the climate in Brazil can range from tropical weather with heavy rainfalls in the Amazon region, to snowfalls in the South.



Population: Brazil has a population of approximately 156 million. With 70% of the population under 30 years of age, Brazilians are a young friendly people eager to show visitors the beauty and rich heritage of their country region or town. Most of the population is racially mixed, made up of people from different parts of Europe, African nations, Asia, and Indians-the original inhabitants of South America. Only a few people consider themselves descendants of a certain race. The majority consider themselves Brasileiros.

Brasileiros
Friendly people

Religion: The official religion is Catholicism, but other religions are also respected and practiced.

Government: Brazil is a Federal Republic with 26 states and the Federal District of Brasilia, where the capital is located. The president as well as governors, deputies and senators gain office by direct election

History: Only Indians lived in Brazil before the arrival of the Portuguese. Its colonisation dates back to the 1500, when Portuguese navigator Pedro Ivaes Cabral arrived to what was to become Brazilian land. Brazil became the only Portuguese colony in the Americas and the only Latin American Portuguese-speaking nation.

Since 1500, different export cycles dominated Brazil's economic development. One of these cycles was the exportation of Brazil wood-pau brasil-commonly used to make dyes and paint. During the 17th century, sugar became the main export product as Brazil became the world's largest producer. This period marks the first appearance of African slaves in Brazil. They were brought to work on sugar cane plantations.

Gold and diamonds later replaced sugar as the country's major export. During the second half of the 19th century and onwards, coffee became the principal export product. Additionally during this time, the rubber boom brought prosperity and development to the previously ignored northern part of Brazil.

In the early 1880s when Napoleon invaded Portugal, Dom Joao VI, king at the time, fled Portugal to go to Brazil. There, the Portuguese court continues to rule. During this period, ports were opened mainly to British commerce causing the colony to grow significantly. In 1789, one of Brazil's first attempts to end monarchy crushed and its leader, Tiradantes, became a national symbol for liberty. In 1822 Dom Pedro I, Dom Joao's son, finally proclaimed independence from Portugal. In 1888, slavery was finally abolished, and in 1889, Brazil became a republic.



Brasilia
Capital City



Education: Brazil's educational system is decentralised, with eleven years of compulsory attendance. Most schools are coeducational. The system is divided into three levels:

Ages	Grades	School
7-14	1 st – 8 th	Elementary (primeiro grau)
15-17	9 th – 11 th	Secondary (segundo grau)
		Tertiary/University (universidade)

Federal Republic
26 States

Or better are automatically promoted to the next class and do not have to take final exams. Failure in one or more academic subjects results in a student being held back in the same grade. After the third year of secondary school, those students who wish to continue on to university must take an entrance exam, or vestibular. Science there are limited places in the universities, passing this exam puts a lot of pressure on students, and the last year of high school is very competitive. Schools in Brazil are very academic and most schools don't offer many extra-curricular activities. These activities take place in clubs or private institutions. At the elementary level all students follow a standard program. A standard program is also followed on the secondary level, but some schools offer additional studies in one of three areas: science, biology, or humanities. Grades/marks are given every two months on a 0-10 basis. Students who achieve a grade/mark of 7.

Family life: Family life in Brazil can be considered very traditional. Roles are clear-cut for parents and children. Both the father and mother are very protective of their children. Parents usually support their children until they are out of university or even a little longer. They always assure their children that they can count on them for anything. This, of course, means that parents keep a close watch on their children's lives.

The economy in Brazil is chaotic. High inflation rates and lack of jobs keep young middle-class people from getting jobs that would permit them to live on their own.

Parents like to know who their children's friends are before they feel comfortable letting them spend time together. Within their own roles (school work, social plans, etc.) teenagers are allowed to be independent; however, in order to gain the freedom they seek (going out at night, having no curfew, travelling with friends on weekends, etc.), they are expected to keep up with their school work. Family meals are important in some families. A Brazilian meal consists of rice, beans, one kind of vegetable or salad, and meat. Brazilians consider even distant relatives' part of the family and it is very common to have big family parties or meals. Usually all age groups are included, so it is not boring for anyone.

Recreation: Brazil's most popular sport is futbol (soccer). It is played everywhere—in clubs, at school, on the streets, even on the beach! Besides the futbol (soccer), Brazilians also like to play volleyball. On weekends people enjoy going to the beach, swimming pool, waterfalls or just sitting outside at a cafe, having a snack and chatting. Going to the movies or to popular music concerts is also very common. Most cities hold local festivals with celebrations in the streets at various times of the year.



Family life

Traditional

Soccer

Most popular



YFU Brazil: YFU-Brazil began in 1963 with a six-month exchange program between Brazil and the United States. American students also come to Brazil on the summer program an eight-week family stay program. By the early 70's Brazil was sending more than one thousands students per year to the U.S. In 1997 a small number of students began to come to Brazil for the academic year. Unfortunately Brazil faces serious economic problems coursing the program to become smaller. Today YFU-Brazil sends 250 students per year to the U.S. and approximately 40 to other countries.

The YFU-Brazil's National Office is located in Rio de Janeiro, and has a staff of seven. There are 35 area representatives in different parts of the country. YFU representatives work with a number of other volunteers, such as English testers, orienters, airport staff, etc. Most students are placed outside of Rio de Janeiro and have an area representative in their region. For those placed in Rio, a person from the office or a volunteer is designed as area representative.



Exchange with: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the U.S.A., and Venezuela.

YFU Host Families: YFU recruits host families from Brazilian families that have already sent their children abroad through YFU. Those families are usually happy with the successful exchange experience their children had and want to have the exchange experience as a family. They also want to reciprocate the hospitality their children received in a foreign country. Some host families have children who hope to be exchange students in the future and want to experience hosting a foreign student first. Families with no previous contact with YFU are very carefully screened through interviews and home visit.

YFU Activities: Year and semester students attend a one-week orientation and Portuguese language course upon arrival. During their stay, YFU keeps in close contact with each student and provides counselling services when needed. For year students, YFU holds a re-entry meeting in Rio de Janeiro, towards the end of their stay. Summer students have two days of orientation and sightseeing in Rio upon arrival. All students are asked to write about their experience. This material is used with student in the next orientation.

