

Federative Republic of Brazil



Brazil was inhabited by numerous tribal nations prior to the landing in 1500 of explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral, who claimed the area for the Portuguese Empire. Brazil remained a Portuguese colony until 1808, when the capital of the empire was transferred from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro. Independence was achieved in 1822 with the creation of the Empire of Brazil, a unitary state governed under a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary system. The country became a presidential republic in 1889 following a military coup d'état. An authoritarian military dictatorship came to power in 1964 and ruled until 1985, after which civilian governance resumed. Brazil's current constitution, formulated in 1988, defines it as a democratic federal republic.

Brazil is the largest and most influential country in South America. Having successfully weathered a period of global financial difficulty in the late 20th century, Brazil was seen as one of the world's strongest emerging markets and a contributor to global growth. The awarding of the 2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympic Games, the first ever to be held in South America, was seen as symbolic of the country's rise. However, since about 2013, Brazil has been plagued by a shrinking economy, growing unemployment, and rising inflation. Political scandal resulted in the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in May 2016, a conviction that was upheld by the Senate in August 2016; her vice president, Michel Temer, will serve as president until 2018, completing her second term.

Geography

Official Name: Federative Republic of Brazil

Conventional Short Form: Brazil

Region: South America

Area: 8,515,770 sq km

Bordering Countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela

Climate: Mostly tropical, but temperate in the south

Physical Features/Terrain: Mostly flat or rolling lowlands in the north with some plains, hills, mountains, and a narrow coastal belt

Natural Hazards: Recurring droughts in the northeast with floods and occasional frost in the south

People and Society

Population: 205,823,665 (6th in the world)

Ethnic Groups: White 47.7%, Mulatto (mixed white and black) 43.1%, Black 7.6%, Asian 1.1%, Indigenous 0.4%

Official Language: Portuguese

Other Languages Spoken: Spanish (border areas and schools), German, Italian, Japanese, English

Religions: Roman Catholic 64.6%, other Catholic 0.4%, Protestant 22.2%, Other Christian denominations 0.7%, Spiritist 2.2%, other 1.4%, none 8%, unspecified 0.4% (2010 est.)

Capital City: Brasilia

Other Major Cities: Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Recife

Median Age (*half the people are younger than this age and half are older*)

Male: 30.7

Female: 32.4

Total Population: 31.6

Literacy Rate (*percentage of the population 15 and older who can read and write*)

Male: 92.2%

Female: 92.9%

Total Population: 92.6%

Life Expectancy at Birth (*average number of years to be lived by those born in the same year*)

Male: 70.2

Female: 77.5

Total Population: 73.8

Government

Country Founded: September 7, 1822 (independence from Portugal)

Type of Government: Federal presidential republic

Country Leaders

President: Michel Miguel Elias Temer Lulia

Vice President: N/A

Allies: The United States, France, Germany, The United Kingdom

Enemies: Uruguay, Colombia (regarding transnational disputes)

Economy

Currency: Brazilian Real

GDP: \$3.081 trillion (2016 est.)

Natural Resources: Bauxite, gold, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, platinum, tin, rare earth elements, uranium, petroleum, hydropower, timber

Unemployment Rate: 11.8% (2016 est.)

Population Below Poverty Line: 3.7%

Major export and imports

Exports: Transport equipment, iron ore, soybeans, footwear, coffee, automobiles

Imports: Machinery, electrical and transport equipment, chemical products, oil, automotive parts, electronics

Biggest trading partners

Exports: China, United States, Argentina, Netherlands

Imports: China, United States, Germany, Argentina

More information can be found at:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/br.html>