

BRAZIL

Brazil Quick Facts

Official Name: Federative Republic of Brazil

Total area: 8,515,770 sq km

Population: 205,823,665 (July 2016 est.)

GDP: \$3.135 trillion (2016 est.)

Government: federal presidential republic

Capital: Brasilia

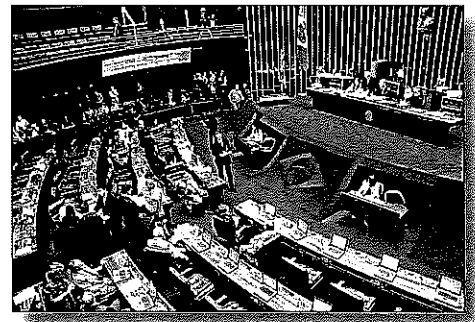
Motto: Order and Progress

Brazil is the largest country in South America and the fifth largest country in the world. It was a colony of Portugal, and Portuguese is still the most widely spoken language. Brazil declared its independence from Portugal in 1822, and September 7 is celebrated as Independence Day.

The president is both the head of the government and the chief of state. The president is elected by popular vote for a single four-year term. There are 26 states and one federal district. The legislature is called the National Congress. It is composed of the Federal Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The Supreme Federal Court consists of 11 justices.

Brazil is known for its vast rain forests and river systems. The Amazon rain forest accounts for about half of the world's rain forests. It contains an estimated one-third of all the known animal species in the world. Rain forests cover about 60 percent of Brazil.

Most of the rain forest area is located in the Amazon River Basin. The Amazon River flows through the northern half of Brazil. Where the Amazon flows into the Atlantic Ocean, the rate of discharge is 209,000 cubic meters (55,212,000 U.S. gallons) of water per second. The Amazon River Basin generally experiences flooding from November to June. This is mainly due to the rainy seasons in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador and Peru.



Federal Senate of Brazil

The climate of the Amazon Rain Forest is warm, rainy, and humid. Temperatures in the city of Manaus average from 32°C (upper 80s F) in September to 24°C (mid-70s F) in April. Other areas of Brazil can be dry. Brazil has five different ecosystems: the tropical rain forest, the Pantanal (a tropical wetland), the Cerrado (a tropical savanna), the Mata Atlantica (the Atlantic forest), and the pampas (fertile plains).

The Brazilian Highlands or Brazilian Plateau covers most of the central, eastern, and southern parts of Brazil. The area is generally under 1,220 m (4,000 ft) above sea level. The highest peak in Brazil is Pico da Neblina at 2,995 m (9,827 ft). It is located in northwestern Brazil, right next to the border with Venezuela.

Agriculture is an important part of Brazil's economy. Most of the country's grains, sugarcane, and oilseeds are grown in southern Brazil. Central Brazil has recently seen an increase in agriculture with new techniques for growing soybeans and other crops. Cattle are raised mainly in central Brazil, as well. In northeast Brazil, the major crops are cocoa, tropical fruits, and forest products. Many families in this area grow food for their own survival. Deforestation occurs as the rain forest is cleared to provide new land for farming. However, after a few years of farming, the land becomes less fertile.

Brazil is also rich in mineral resources. Bauxite, gold, iron ore, manganese, nickel, uranium, and petroleum are plentiful. In fact, the yellow on the Brazilian flag represents gold and other minerals and the green represents the forests.

