

Sunday April 16, 2006

U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs
Washington, DC 20520

Consular Information Sheet

[Please click on this link to read important information you should see before you travel abroad](#)

This information is current as of today, Sun Apr 16 13:29:08 2006.

Brazil

April 15, 2005

COUNTRY DESCRIPTION: Brazil, a nation the size of the lower 48 United States, has an advanced developing economy. Facilities for tourism are excellent in the major cities, but vary in quality in remote areas. The Capital is Brasilia.

ENTRY/EXIT REQUIREMENTS: On December 31, 2005, the U.S. Government will begin to phase in new passport requirements for U.S. citizens traveling in the Western Hemisphere. By December 31, 2007, all U.S. citizens will be expected to depart and enter the United States on a valid passport or other authorized document establishing identity and U.S. citizenship. The Department of State strongly encourages travelers to obtain passports well in advance of any planned travel. Routine passport applications by mail take up to six weeks to be issued. For further information, go to the State Department's Consular website: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html.

A passport and visa are required for U.S. citizens traveling to Brazil for any purpose. Brazilian visas must be obtained in advance from the Brazilian Embassy or consulate nearest to the traveler's place of residence. There are no "airport visas," and immigration authorities will refuse entry to Brazil to anyone not possessing a valid visa. All Brazilian visas, regardless of the length of validity, must initially be used within 90 days of the issuance date or will no longer be valid. Immigration authorities will not allow entry into Brazil without a valid visa. The U.S. Government cannot assist travelers who arrive in Brazil without proper documentation. In response to the introduction of the US-VISIT program, on January 1, 2004 the Government of Brazil began fingerprinting/photographing all U.S. citizens arriving in Brazil. In the first six weeks of 2004, two U.S. citizens were fined (an average \$15,000 each) for making obscene gestures while being photographed at a Brazilian port of entry. Travelers are reminded that they are subject to local law, and that showing contempt to a government official is a serious offence in Brazil. (Fines for such offenses are based on the offender's claimed income.) Additionally, travelers who have recently visited certain countries, including most other Latin American countries (check Brazilian Embassy website below) may be required to present an inoculation card indicating they had a yellow fever inoculation or they may not be allowed to board the plane or enter the country. Minors (under 18) traveling alone, with one parent or with a third party, must present written authorization by the absent parent(s) or legal guardian, specifically granting permission to travel alone, with one parent, or with a third party. The authorization (in Portuguese) must be notarized and then authenticated by the Brazilian Embassy or Consulate. For current entry and customs requirements for Brazil, travelers may contact the Brazilian Embassy at 3009 Whitehaven St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20008;

telephone 1-202-238-2828, e-mail consular@brasilemb.org; Internet: <http://www.brasilemb.org>. Travelers may also contact the Brazilian consulates in Boston, Houston, Miami, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, or San Francisco. Addresses, phone numbers, web and e-mail addresses, and jurisdictions of these consulates may be found at the Brazilian Embassy web site above.

[Read our information on dual nationality and the prevention of international child abduction](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1469.html) at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1469.html. For Customs Information see http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1468.html.

DUAL NATIONALITY: U.S. citizens also possessing Brazilian nationality will not be issued Brazilian visas and must obtain a Brazilian passport (from the Brazilian Embassy or Consulate nearest to their place of residence) to enter and depart Brazil. In addition to being subject to all Brazilian laws affecting U.S. citizens, dual nationals may also be subject to other laws that impose special obligations on Brazilian citizens. Note that children adopted from Brazil are still considered Brazilian citizens and must be documented as such should they return to Brazil. For additional information, please contact the nearest Brazilian embassy or consulate. Please also see the Consular Affairs home page on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov> for our Dual Nationality flyer.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Political and labor strikes and demonstrations occur sporadically in urban areas and may cause temporary disruption to public transportation. By nature, protests anywhere in the world have the potential to turn violent. While it is unlikely that U.S. citizens would be targeted during such events, U.S. citizens traveling or residing in Brazil are advised to take common-sense precautions and avoid any large gatherings or any other event where crowds have congregated to demonstrate or protest. Individuals with ties to criminal entities operate along the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay. These organizations are involved in the trafficking of illicit goods, and some individuals in the area are financially supporting designated foreign terrorist organizations. U.S. citizens crossing into Paraguay or Argentina in that area may wish to consult the [Consular Information Sheets](#) for those countries.

Colombian terrorist groups have been known to operate in the border areas of neighboring countries. Although there have been reports of isolated small-scale armed incursions from Colombia into Brazil in the past, we know of no specific threat directed against U.S. citizens across the border in Brazil at this time. Colombian groups have perpetrated kidnappings of residents and tourists in border areas of Colombia's neighbors. Therefore, U.S. citizens traveling or residing in areas of Brazil near the Colombian Border are urged to exercise caution. U.S. citizens are urged to take care when visiting remote parts of the Amazon basin and respect local laws and customs. U.S. visitors should ensure that their outfitter/guide is experienced in the Amazon.

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov> where the current [Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements](#) can be found.

Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll-line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

The Department of State urges American citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas. For general information about appropriate measures travelers can take to protect themselves in an overseas environment, see the Department of State's pamphlet [A Safe Trip Abroad](#) at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html.

CRIME: Crime rates throughout Brazil have increased, but remain highest in the larger cities. The

incidence of crime against tourists is greater in areas surrounding beaches, hotels, discotheques, bars, nightclubs, and other similar establishments that cater to visitors and is especially prevalent during Carnival (Brazilian Mardi Gras). Occasionally, crime against tourists has been violent and has led to some deaths. While the risk is greater at dusk and during the evening hours, street crime can occur during both the day and night, and safer areas of the city are not immune. Incidents of theft on city buses are frequent, and such transportation should be avoided. Several Brazilian cities have established specialized tourist police units to patrol areas frequented by tourists.

Brasilia, once spared the crime rates of other Brazilian cities, now has significant crime problems. Armed robberies of homes and vehicles, some violent, and street crime are becoming commonplace. "Express kidnappings," where victims are abducted and forced to withdraw money from ATMs, have become frequent. In Rio de Janeiro, efforts by jailed drug lords to exert influence over the city, has lead to a violent backlash against the local authorities and businesses (see separate section on Rio de Janeiro).

At airports, hotel lobbies, bus stations and other public places there is much pickpocketing, and the theft of carry-on luggage, briefcases, and laptop computers is common (including some reports of thefts on internal flights). Travelers should "dress down" when outside and avoid carrying valuables or wearing jewelry or expensive watches. "Good Samaritan" scams are common. If a tourist looks lost or seems to be having trouble communicating, he or she might be victimized by a seemingly innocent and helpful bystander. Care should be taken at and around banks and internationally connected automatic teller machines that take U.S. credit or debit cards. Very poor neighborhoods known as "favelas," often located on steep hillsides in Rio de Janeiro, are found throughout Brazil. These areas are sites of uncontrolled criminal activity, and are often not patrolled by police. U.S. citizens are advised to avoid these unsafe areas. Carjackings are on the increase in Sao Paulo and other cities.

While the ability of Brazilian police to help recover stolen property is limited, it is nevertheless strongly advised to obtain a "boletim de ocorrencia" (police report) at a "delegacia" (police station) whenever any possessions are lost or stolen. This will facilitate the traveler's exit from Brazil and insurance claims.

The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. U.S. citizens may refer to the Department of State's pamphlet, [A Safe Trip Abroad](#), for ways to promote a trouble-free journey. The pamphlet is available by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, via the Internet at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/>, or via the Bureau of Consular Affairs home page at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

SAO PAULO: While similar incidents may occur elsewhere, all areas of Sao Paulo have a high rate of armed robbery of pedestrians at stoplights. There is a particularly high incidence of robberies and pickpocketing in the Praca da Se section of Sao Paulo and in the eastern part of the city. As is true of "red light districts" in other cities, the areas of Sao Paulo on Rua Augusta north of Avenida Paulista and the Estacao de Luz metro area are especially dangerous. There are regular reports of young women slipping knock-out drops in men's drinks and robbing them of all their belongings while they are unconscious. Armed holdups of pedestrians and motorists by young men on motorcycles ("motoboy") are an increasingly common occurrence in some parts of Sao Paulo. Victims who resist risk being shot.

RIO DE JANEIRO: The city continues to experience a high incidence of crime. Tourists are particularly vulnerable to street thefts and robberies on and in areas adjacent to the main beaches in the city. Walking on the beaches is very dangerous at night. Recent efforts of incarcerated drug lords

to exert their power outside of their jail cells have resulted in serious disruptions in the city, violence directed at the authorities and incidents of crimes against property, including after-hours shootings and explosions set off outside hotels and restaurants frequented by tourists. While these occurrences have not resulted in any injuries to U.S. citizens, visitors and residents alike should be aware that inconveniences such as closed shops and disrupted municipal services are likely. In Rio de Janeiro City, motorists are allowed to treat stoplights as stop signs between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. to protect against holdups at intersections. All incidents should be reported to the tourist police, who can be reached at 3399-7170/71/72/73.

INFORMATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME: The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, in addition to reporting to local police, please contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate for assistance. The Embassy/Consulate staff can, for example, assist you to find appropriate medical care, contact family members or friends and explain how funds could be transferred. Although the investigation and prosecution of the crime is solely the responsibility of local authorities, consular officers can help you to understand the local criminal justice process and to find an attorney if needed.

See our information on Victims of Crime at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1748.html.

MEDICAL FACILITIES AND HEALTH INFORMATION: Medical care is generally good, but it varies in quality, particularly in remote areas, and it may not meet U.S. standards outside the major cities. The Albert Einstein Hospital in Sao Paulo is regularly used by expatriates in Brazil. The hospital phone is (55-11) 3747-1301.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC's Internet site at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>. For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad consult the World Health Organization's (WHO) website at <http://www.who.int/en>. Further health information for travelers is available at <http://www.who.int/ith>.

MEDICAL INSURANCE: The Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. [Please see our information on medical insurance overseas](#) at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1470.html.

TRAFFIC SAFETY AND ROAD CONDITIONS: While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Brazil is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Travelers may consider obtaining an Inter-American Driving Permit, to carry along with their valid U.S. license if they plan to drive while in Brazil. Such permits can be obtained through AAA or other sources. While in a foreign country, U.S. citizens may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in the United States. The information below concerning Brazil is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance:

Road conditions in Brazil vary widely throughout the country. State roads (especially in the south) are often excellent, while federal, interstate highways (designated by 'BR') are often very poor due to lack of maintenance. There are occasional stretches of modern divided highway (especially in Sao

Paulo State) that rival European or U.S. roads. In municipal areas, however, signs, shoulders, exits, and merge lanes tend to be haphazard. There are many potholes and surfaces are frequently uneven and bumpy. Some stretches of federal roads are so potholed that high-clearance vehicles are needed to traverse them. Many cities and towns have erected speed bumps, which are sometimes severe and may be unpainted and unmarked. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and horse-drawn vehicles all can be encountered, and pose hazards even on major routes. Travel after dark outside city centers is not recommended because of animals and broken down vehicles. Dirt roads are the rule in remote areas. These vary widely in quality and may quickly become more dangerous, even impassable, in rainy weather. Passenger car travel can be reasonably safe in most areas if one takes into account the prevailing conditions described above and exercises due prudence and caution. Passenger-bus hijacking, usually non-violent, occur at random in some areas of the country, more recently around Sao Paulo and northeast of the country.

Brazil's inter-city roads are widely recognized as among the most dangerous in the world. The Federal Highway Police reported 120,000 accidents in 1998, but this is believed to be a very conservative figure. As is the case elsewhere in the region, poor driving skills, bad roads and a high density of trucks combine to make travel considerably more hazardous than in the United States. There are no laws requiring truckers to take mandatory rest stops, and they often drive for excessive periods of time. All major inter-city routes are saturated with heavy truck traffic, and for the most part have only two lanes. Road maintenance is inadequate and some long-distance roads through the Amazon forest are impassable much of the year. While the government is encouraging the development of a cargo railway network to relieve road congestion, currently there are few railroads, and passenger train travel is almost nonexistent. Private cars and public buses are the main modes of inter-city road travel. Buses can range (depending on the route and the price) from luxurious and well maintained to basic and mechanically unsound.

The Brazilian Federal Government maintains a (Portuguese language) website with up-to-date information on road conditions throughout the country (<http://www.dnit.gov.br>). It also has downloadable state roadmaps. A private Brazilian company, Quatro Rodas, publishes road maps that contain local phone numbers to ascertain the current conditions of roads on the map. They are available at www.guia4rodas.com.br. Apart from toll roads, which generally have their own services, roadside assistance is available only very sporadically and informally through local private mechanics. There is a group called the "Angels of the Pavement" that provides roadside assistance on the main highway between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The fastest way to summon assistance in an emergency anywhere in the country is to dial 193, a universal number staffed by local fire departments. This service is in Portuguese only. Many motorists in major urban areas and more developed parts of the country carry cellular phones, and can be asked to assist in calling for help.

Brazilian traffic laws impose severe penalties for a number of traffic offenses. Enforcement ranges from sporadic to non-existent, so motorists should not assume that others will necessarily follow even the most fundamental and widely accepted rules of the road. Some important local rules and customs include the following: - Seat Belts: All states have seat belt laws, but enforcement varies from state to state.

Child Car Seats: Some states require child car seats, but they are not universally available or affordable, and enforcement is also lax. As a result, most children are not secured in car seats.

Speed Limits: The maximum speed limit on major, divided highways is 120kmph (74 mph). Lower limits (usually 60kmph (40 mph)) are often posted in urban areas, depending on the road and the nature of the neighborhood. Speed limits are widely ignored and rarely enforced. Many towns and cities have marked electronic/photographic devices ("Fiscalisacao Electronica"), which verify speed and snap photos of violators' cars and license plates as a

basis for issuing speeding tickets.

Yielding the Right of Way: Drivers must yield the right of way to cars on their right. Stop signs are rarely enforced, so many motorists treat them as yield signs.

Driving Under the Influence: Drivers are in violation of the law if blood/alcohol level reaches 0.6 percent.

Turns on Red Lights: Not permitted, except for right turns where there is a sign with an arrow pointing right and the words "Livre a Direita."

Penalties for Drivers Involved in an Accident Resulting in Injury or Death: In addition to possible criminal charges and penalties, compensatory and punitive damages may also apply.

Local Driving Customs: Drivers often use flashes or wave a hand out of the window to signal other drivers to slow down. Drivers will often break suddenly to slow down for the electronic speed traps mentioned above. In addition, pedestrian "zebra" crossings are strictly observed in some places (especially in Brasilia) and ignored most everywhere else.

For additional general information about road safety, including links to foreign government sites, please

refer to our Road Safety page for more information at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1179.html. For specific information concerning Brazilian driving permits, vehicle inspection, road tax, and mandatory insurance, please contact the Brazilian National Tourist Organization offices in New York via the Internet at

<http://www.embratur.gov.br/>. For additional information from other sources in Brazil about road safety and specific information about accident statistics, Brazilian driving permits, vehicle inspection, road tax, and mandatory insurance, please see the following web sites:

<http://www.dprf.gov.br> (Brazilian Federal Highway Police, in Portuguese only), and

<http://www.transportes.gov.br> (Ministry of Transportation, in Portuguese only).

AVIATION SAFETY OVERSIGHT: The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Brazil as being in compliance with ICAO international aviation safety standards for oversight of Brazil's air carrier operations. Foreigners are required to carry their passports for internal flights. For more information, travelers may visit the FAA's internet web site at www.faa.gov/avr/iasa/index.cfm.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Brazilian customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Brazil of items such as firearms, antiquities, tropical plants, medications, and business equipment. In the Amazon region, there is a special concern for the export of biological material, which could have genetic value. People propagating or exporting biological material without proper permits run the risk of being accused of "biopiracy," a serious offence in Brazil. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Brazil in Washington or one of Brazil's consulates in the United States for specific information regarding customs requirements.

[Please see our information on customs regulations](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1468.html) at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1468.html.

CRIMINAL PENALTIES: While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations, which sometimes differ significantly from those in the United States and may not afford the protections available to the individual under U.S. law. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating Brazilian laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Brazil are severe, and convicted offenders can expect long jail sentences and heavy fines. Engaging in illicit sexual conduct with children or using or disseminating child pornography in a foreign country is a crime, prosecutable in the United States. For more

information visit http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1467.html.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES: For information on international adoption of children and international parental child abduction, see the Office of Children's Issues website at http://www.travel.state.gov/family/family_1732.html.

REGISTRATION / EMBASSY LOCATION: Americans living or traveling in Brazil are encouraged to register with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate through the State Department's travel registration website, <https://travelregistration.state.gov>, and to obtain updated information on travel and security within Brazil. Americans without Internet access may register directly with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By registering, American citizens make it easier for the Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency. The U.S. Embassy is located in Brasilia at Avenida das Nacoes, Lote 3, telephone 011-55-61-312-7000, after-hours telephone 011-55-61-312-7400; web site at <http://www.embaixada-americana.org.br/>. Consular Section public hours are 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday except Brazilian and U.S. holidays. There are consulates in the following cities:

RECIFE: Rua Goncalves Maia 163, telephone 011-55-81-3421-2441, after-hours telephone 011-55-3421-2641; web site at <http://www.embaixada-americana.org.br/index.php?itemmenu=161&submenu=14&action=recife.php>. Consular Section public hours are 8:00 a.m. - 12 noon and 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday except Brazilian and U.S. holidays.

RIO DE JANEIRO: Avenida Presidente Wilson 147, telephone 011-55-21-2292-7117, after-hours 011-55-21-2220-0489; web site at <http://www.consulado-americano-rio.org.br/>. Consular Section public hours are 8:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Brazilian and U.S. holidays.

SAO PAULO: Rua Henri Dunant, 500 Barrio Chacara Santo Antonio, telephone 011-55-11-5186-7000, after hours telephone 011-55-11-5181-8730; web site at <http://www.consuladoamericanosp.org.br>. Consular Section public hours are 8:30 a.m. -11:30 a.m., Monday through Friday and 2:00 p.m. -3:30 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Friday except Brazilian and U.S. holidays.

There are Consular Agencies in:

Belem: Edificio Sintese 21, Av. Conselheiro Furtado 2865, Rooms 1104/1106; telephone 011-55-91-259-4566.

Manaus: Rua Franco de Sa, 230 Sao Francisco, Edificio Atrium, Rm. 306; telephone 011-55-92-611-3333.

Salvador da Bahia: Av. Tancredo Neves, 1632, Rm. 1401 - Salvador Trade Center - Torre Sul, Caminho da Arvores; telephone 011-55-71-3113-2090/2091/2092.

Fortaleza: Av. Santos Dumont 2828 s.708 - Aldeota; telephone 011-55-85-3486-1306

Porto Alegre: The Instituto Cultural Brasil-Norteamericano, Rua Riachuelo, 1257, Centro; telephone 011-55-51-3226-3344.

* * *

This replaces the [Consular Information Sheet](#) dated October 14, 2004, to reflect the latest changes to

entry requirements for U.S. citizens traveling to Brazil and increased Brazilian vigilance on the export of biological material from the Amazon.



This site is managed by the Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein. [Copyright Information](#) [Disclaimers](#)