Fact Sheet ELANBiz:

Business Travel Brazil

Prepared by ELANBIZ Trade Experts in Brazil, updated to March 25th, 2019

General Information

Geographic situation:

Brazil has a privileged location, occupying almost half of South America. Brazil borders all South American countries, except Chile and Ecuador. It is the fifth largest and fifth most populous country in the world, with over 209 million inhabitants. It is more than 8.5 million square kilometres in area and has about 8,000 km of coastline.

Brazil’s population is concentrated in the Southeast (including the triangle formed by the cities of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Belo Horizonte, the largest industrial and commercially relevant area of the country) and in the Northeast, followed by the Southern region. Other areas of economic importance exist around the cities of Goiânia, Belém, Manaus, Fortaleza, Recife, Salvador, Porto Alegre, and Curitiba.

In addition to Brazil’s continental size and the dispersal of the centres of economic interest, there is a wide disparity of tastes and consumption habits due to the population’s mix of origins and cultures, climatic variations, social inequality and differences in purchasing power.

Disclaimer

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Time zones:

There are three time zones in Brazil:

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<tr>
<th>Time Zone</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fernando de Noronha Time</td>
<td>UTC – 2</td>
<td>Brasilia Time</td>
<td>UTC – 3</td>
<td>Amazon Time</td>
<td>UTC – 4</td>
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<td>Atol das Rocas, Fernando de Noronha, São Pedro e São Paulo, Trindade e Martim Vaz</td>
<td></td>
<td>Federal District; South, Southeast and Northeast; Goias, Tocantins, Pará, and Amapá</td>
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<td>Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Rondonia, Roraima, Acre, and two thirds of Amazonas state</td>
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Language:

The official language of Brazil is Portuguese. The teaching of English is mandatory in middle school, while other languages are optional, with a preference for Spanish. Both English and Spanish are used frequently in business. However, knowledge of foreign languages is not widespread and one should not take for granted that a Brazilian will speak English. At the same time, people are generally sympathetic with foreigners and will make an effort to understand and be understood by them.

Religions:

Although Brazil is constitutionally a secular country, it has an array of religions. Christianity is the most common form of religion in Brazil, with a large number of Catholics and a growing number of Evangelicals. The country has other important religions that normally coexist in harmony, including Spiritism, Afro-Brazilian religions, Judaism, and Islam.

Geography and Climate:

Brazil is usually divided into five geographical regions (North, Centre-west, Northeast, Southeast, and South). It has a great diversity of climates but is most commonly classified as a tropical country.

National holidays:

Brazil’s national holidays are:

New Year’s Day (January 1st)
Monday and Tuesday of Carnival (variable dates)
Ash Wednesday (variable date, only in the morning)
Good Friday (variable dates)
Tiradentes (April 21st)
World Labour Day (May 1st)
Corpus Christi (variable dates)
Brazilian Independence (September 7th)
Nossa Senhora Aparecida, Brazil’s patron saint (October 12th)
Public Servant’s Day (October 28th)
Day of the Dead (November 2nd)
Proclamation of the Republic (November 15th)
Christmas Eve (December 24th)
Christmas Day (December 25th)
New Year’s Eve (December 31st).
In addition to national holidays, there are state and municipal festivals and holidays. It is important to check whether business travel will overlap with various holidays.

**Business hours:**

The most common office hours are weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Office hours may however vary from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) However, stores, shopping malls, and restaurants in major cities are often open seven days a week and later into the night.

**Mainstream media:**

*Valor Econômico Newspaper*
*Estado de São Paulo Newspaper*
*Folha de São Paulo Newspaper*
*O Globo Newspaper*
*Exame Magazine*
*Veja Magazine*
*Isto é Dinheiro Magazine*
Before travelling

Vacation periods:

In Brazil there are two school holiday periods when families often take vacations: from December 15th to January 31st (Summer holidays), and from July 1st to 31st (Winter holidays). For business purposes, it is advisable to inquire about holidays before making travel arrangements, to avoid Carnival week, and to avoid weekdays around extended holidays (long weekends).

Visas:

European Union citizens are not required to obtain a visa for stays of up to 90 days (tourism or business purposes). Brazilian authorities require: a) A passport valid for at least six months; b) A round-trip ticket with a confirmed return date within 90 days for stays without a visa; c) Reasonable proof of financial means; d) A document confirming a hotel reservation (already paid or guaranteed by credit card); or e) In case of lodging in a private residence: an invitation letter from the owner of the residence in the destination city.

Entry of commercial samples:

The following are considered, as a general rule, commercial samples of insignificant value or without commercial value:

✓ Samples consisting of goods in a quantity, or in fragments or parts thereof, which are strictly necessary for demonstrating the nature, type, and quality of the goods;

✓ Goods contained in international postal consignments of no commercial value, not suitable for sale, for which the FOB price does not exceed ten US dollars.

Specific rules apply for different kinds of goods, such as drugs, items for testing, and exhibitions. Samples with commercial value are defined as those that cannot be proven to be without commercial value. Samples with commercial value are not tax exempt (with exceptions), and they are cleared upon payment of the applicable customs duties.

Communication:

Brazil has good broadband Internet and telephone coverage in major cities and surrounding areas. The main mobile operators are Claro, Telefónica-VIVO, TIM and Oi (Brasil Telecom). There are also cable operators offering competitive telephone, voice, data and the full range
of cable services. All operators offer international roaming services.

Money and payments:

Brazil’s official currency is the Brazilian real. All payments and receipts are in Brazilian reais. It is not difficult to exchange dollars and euros in major cities and in airports, exchange bureaus, and hotels. Credit cards and debit cards are widely accepted in stores, but it is advisable to carry some cash (Brazilian reais). Many, but not all, ATMs accept cards from foreign countries, and it is possible to use ATMs to withdraw cash from foreign bank accounts. It is important to check in advance whether your bank allows you to withdraw money in Brazil.

Hotels:

Hotels in the São Paulo region offer greater security. Prices generally vary from between 100 euros (4 stars) to 500 euros (5 Stars), although luxury hotels may have higher rates. Low quality hotels should be avoided, especially if the brand is unknown. Standard hotel rates usually include a double room with breakfast. Depending on the dates of the trip, it may be necessary to book in advance. São Paulo, for instance, hosts a large number of events and there may not be a wide range of rooms available at a given time and location. Visitors should note that in Brazil “motels” should not be confused with “hotels”. Motels are not generally suitable lodgings for business travel.

In the country

Security:

Brazil is not among the safest countries, so visitors should take adequate safety precautions, particularly in medium and large cities (e.g., be aware of the surroundings, do not talk on the phone when walking in the street, do not walk alone in unknown areas at late hours, and do not wear expensive jewellery in unknown areas). Visitors should ask locals about safety, and follow basic safety measures for a safe stay. Is it normally safe to travel by road between cities.

Health Services and hygiene:

It is essential to have adequate health insurance coverage in Brazil whether on business or residing in the country. Many Brazilian cities have well-equipped hospitals, laboratories and private clinics. Many private hospitals offer emergency services. In São Paulo, some of the best private hospitals are: Albert Einstein, São Luiz, Sirio-Libanês, Samaritano, Santa Catarina, Santa
Isabel, just to name a few. Fleury and Delboni Auriemo are respected laboratories. Hygiene is usually high in good hotels and well-known or long-established restaurants, but visitors should be careful when eating street food, avoiding places with questionable hygiene.

**Transportation:**

Public transportation can be deficient in Brazil, even if big cities are well-served by buses and may be served by a metro or train service. Large cities and state capitals normally have good public taxi service. People can board taxis at taxi stands ("Ponto de Taxi"), on the street, or order a taxi by phone. Generally, it is safe to take taxis circulating on the street. Taxis are equipped with a meter. Additional rates may apply if the visitor requests a special service, carries large bags or objects, or travels long distances or between cities. There are various apps operating in Brazil, such as Uber, Cabify, 99 Taxi, Easy Taxi, Lady Driver (only female drivers and exclusively for female passengers), which may offer competitive fares when compared to those of normal taxis, as well as e-payment. Major international car rental companies operate in Brazil, in case visitors prefer to drive. If a visitor chooses to rent a car, it is recommended that they also rent a GPS navigation device.

Major cities are serviced by an airport. Brazil’s main international airports are: (i) Guarulhos (GRU, also called Cumbica), and (ii) Viracopos-Campinas (VCP), which serves the metropolitan area of São Paulo; (ii) Antônio Carlos Jobim (GIG, also called Galeão), which serve the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro; Tancredo Neves (CNF, also called Confins), which serve the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte; (iv) Luís Eduardo Magalhães (SSA), which serve the metropolitan area of Salvador; (v) Juscelino Kubitschek (BSB), which serves Brasilia; (vi) Gilberto Freyre (REC), which serves the metropolitan area of Recife; and (vii) Pinto Martins (FOR), which serves the metropolitan area of Fortaleza. In addition to the main international airports, among the busiest domestic airports are: (i) Congonhas (CGH) in São Paulo, and (ii) Santos Dumont (SDU), in Rio de Janeiro.

**Lunchtime:**

Lunch is an important meal in Brazil. Lunchtime is usually between 12:00 and 2:00 p.m. Most cities offer a large range of restaurants. Many people in business centres choose buffet lunches (charged by the weight of the items selected), and food courts. For business purposes, it is recommended to have an “à la carte” lunch at restaurants, preferably making reservations in advance.
Tips:

Although tipping is formally voluntary, it is normally included as a service charge in the bill. The tip normally corresponds to 10% of the bill in most of the country, or from 13 to 15% in some restaurants in São Paulo. If the customer is not satisfied with the service, the customer has a right to ignore the amount included as a tip.

Business protocol

✓ Schedule your meeting at least one month in advance, confirming a week before the meeting. Allow between 1 hour and 1½ hours per meeting.

✓ Due to traffic jams in large cities, especially during rush hour, delays of 15 minutes to half an hour are acceptable. Visitors should always inform the meeting host of the expected delay by telephone, both as a sign of respect, and to confirm that the meeting will still take place.

✓ Try to respect the local lunchtime when you schedule your meetings, unless you plan to have lunch with your counterparty.

✓ In Brazil, business dress is similar to European dress; a "social" jacket is generally worn; although in certain business sectors, such as the technology sector, dress is much more casual.

✓ Always take your business card with you.

✓ At the beginning of the meeting, it is normal to have a few minutes of polite “small-talk” about, family, the country, the climate, or the food.

✓ Brazilians are very friendly and empathetic in negotiations. A Brazilian will often avoid a direct “no” and does not like to receive a direct “no”. Not infrequently, what sounds like initial interest may cool off.

✓ Prepare your business conversation properly: e-mail a presentation, be polite, and introduce your company in the context of your business sector. Follow the negotiations assiduously. To succeed in Brazil, it is vital to build business confidence with partners and prospective clients, to demonstrate continuity, and to provide necessary assistance.

✓ Insist with kindness but persevere. Brazilian buyers receive many offers with price disparities. The lowest bid is usually chosen. Nevertheless, to be successful your offer has to not only be competitive, but provide better service, quality, technology, and/or
a higher degree of specialization.

✓ Local references projects are more important to governmental bodies and local companies than successful business projects conducted abroad.

✓ Companies should consider developing a website and promotional materials in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. Portuguese is nevertheless essential to reach the Brazilian public.

✓ Collaboration with local companies can help you obtain work permits, to market your services, and to provide adequate after-sales service.

Practical advice

✓ Do not avoid doing business in Brazil due to safety reasons. Safety at work is the norm in all major Brazilian cities.

✓ From time to time, Brazil has unstable economic cycles that are rapidly overcome. Do not give up on Brazil due to its current economic situation. Brazil’s market presents opportunities, and it is necessary to take a position for one to two years before recovering the initial investment.

✓ Before arriving for business purposes, visitors are advised to learn a bit about Brazilian history, culture and language. Brazilians will highly appreciate your effort.

✓ Visitors should plan to arrive in Brazil the day before the first meeting, due to traffic and flight delays.

✓ Depending on the region visited, there may be climatic variations. Check the weather before you travel and pay attention to the maximum and minimum temperatures.

✓ Be cautious while in Brazil. Inquire in your hotel and with your local contacts about any dangerous areas in the city you are visiting.

Contact details and useful links

Delegation of the European Union in Brazil

+55 (61) 2104-3122 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/brazil_en
Useful contacts for doing business in Brazil:


Relevant contacts:

- Brazilian Federal Polica; 194
- Military Police: 190
- Civil Police: 197
- Ambulance: 192
- Firefighters: 193
- Federal Highway Police: 191

Taxis (São Paulo):

- Guarulhos Airport: Guarucoop: (55 11) 2440-7070 www.guarucoop.com.br/
- Ligue Taxi: Tel. (55 11) 2101-3030 www.liguetaxi.com.br

Mobility Apps:

- Easy Taxi (app): http://www.easytaxi.com/br/
- Lady Driver (women-only app): https://ladydriver.com.br/

List of Hospitals (São Paulo)

https://www.plano-de-saude-saopaulo.com.br/lista-de-hospitais-em-saopaulo/

Tourism

- Brazil – Official Travel Guide http://www.visitbrasil.com