



OUTCAN Guide | Life in Brazil

LOCATION

- **Country:** Brazil
- **City:** Brasília (capital)
- **Base:** Embassy Posting
- **Mission Acronym:** BRSLA, BELO, PALGR, RECIF, RIO, SPALO

OTHER INFO TO CONSIDER

- **Residency Registration:** Foreigners must register with the Federal Police within 90 days of arrival.
- **Visa Requirements:** Canadians can stay visa-free for up to 90 days. For longer stays, apply for a temporary resident permit.

POPULATION

- **Size:** Approximately 3 million people in Brasília (July 2024)
- **Ethnicity:** Diverse population with significant numbers of European, African, and Indigenous ancestry.

LANGUAGE(S)

- **Official Language:** Portuguese
- **Local Languages:** English is spoken in tourist areas and among business professionals.

COST OF LIVING

- **Currency:** Brazilian Real (BRL)
- **Exchange Rate:** 1 CAD = 4.12 BRL (July 2024)

QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Climate:** Coastal areas are humid, while the interior regions experience a more temperate climate. Brasilia has a tropical climate with a rainy season (Oct-Apr) and a very dry season (May-Sept). Temperatures are generally pleasant, averaging 25-35°C during the day throughout the year. However, at night in June and July, temperatures can drop to a cool 13°C.
- The rainy season normally is marked by torrential downpours that might flood the streets.
- The dry season is very dry, with humidity as low as 7%, and regularly there is 100+ consecutive days without any rain, wildfires are frequent. For those with breathing problems, this season can be quite challenging.
- **Natural Disasters:** Occasional floods and landslides during the rainy season.

LAWS AND CULTURE

- **Drug Laws:** Severe penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs.
- **Alcohol:** Legal drinking age is 18. Alcohol is widely available.
- **Driving:** The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.06%. Penalties for drinking and driving are strict.
- **Cultural Influence:** Brazilian culture is a mix of Portuguese, African, and Indigenous influences, with a strong emphasis on music, dance, and festivals.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

- **Driving:** An international driving permit is recommended. Road conditions can vary widely.
- **Crime:** Petty theft and pickpocketing are common, especially in tourist areas. Violent crime can occur, particularly in urban centers.

HOUSING

- **Support:** Embassy postings, families are allocated a place based on the local housing committee's recommendation.
- **Availability:** A range of housing options including apartments and houses with varying levels of amenities is available for those not working with the Embassy.

EMPLOYMENT

- **Spousal Employment:** Limited opportunities. Employment in the local economy may be subject to local regulations and taxes.

- **Op Tempo:** Varies depending on position. Travel within the region may be required.

HEALTH CARE

- **Access:** Medical facilities in major cities are generally good, but services can be limited in rural areas.
- **Language:** English-speaking doctors are available in major cities, nurses and health staff supporting might not be able to speak English.
- **Special Needs:** Services are limited. Consultation with medical officers is recommended.
- **Pregnancy and Birth:** Comprehensive care is available in private hospitals.
- **Dental:** Private dental care is available. Upfront payment is required, with reimbursement through health insurance. OUTCAN, families of Canadian Armed Forces members are enrolled in comprehensive medical coverage through the [Public Service Health Care Plan](#), which is administered by [MSH International](#). Families are covered for dental care through the [Public Service Dental Care Plan](#) by [Canada Life](#). Look for places that direct bill to your insurance where possible.
- <https://www.who.int/countries/bra/>

SCHOOLING

- **Schools:** Several international schools are available in major cities, offering various curricula such as IB, British, and American systems.
 - **Examples:**
 - The American School of Brasília (EAB)
 - The British School, Rio de Janeiro
- **Special Needs:** Services are limited. Consultation with schools and education management is advised.
- Consult with [CEM](#) and schools prior to any commitments.

CHILDCARE

- **Availability:** Childcare services are available, though limited. English-speaking staff are less common.

TRANSPORTATION

- **Airport:** Brasília International Airport (BSB) Flights: The official routing is currently Air Canada via Toronto and Sao Paulo. Most international flights require connections in Sao Paulo or Rio. Brasilia has international flights to Panama City (Copa), Lisbon (TAP), Miami (American) and

Buenos Aires (GOL, LATAM). Domestically, the airport is busy with 400+ arrivals and departures per day, meaning that domestic flights are plentiful with several choices; book very early for best prices.

- **Public Transport:** Buses, taxis, and metro systems in major cities. Private car services are recommended.
- **Driving:** An international driving permit is recommended for driving in Brazil.
- Brasilia is challenging without a vehicle.

RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

- **Military Family Services:** No specific center in Brazil, but remote support is available through the global MFS team: globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com
- **Mental Health Resources:** Comprehensive mental health services are available through the public and private sectors.
 - Family Information Line: FIL-LIF@cfmws.com
 - [CFMWS | Mental Health | CFMWS](#)
 - For additional resources or questions please reach out to your Global MFS Team: globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com
- **Internet:** High-quality internet service is available in urban areas.

ACTIVITIES

Historical Sites

- **Christ the Redeemer:** An iconic statue overlooking Rio de Janeiro, offering panoramic views of the city.
- **Ouro Preto:** A well-preserved colonial town with historic churches and museums showcasing Brazil's gold rush era.
- **Pelourinho:** The historic center of Salvador, known for its colorful colonial buildings and vibrant cultural scene.

Nature and Outdoor Activities

- **Amazon Rainforest:** Explore the diverse wildlife and lush landscapes of the Amazon. Popular entry points include Manaus and Belém.
- **Iguaçu Falls:** A stunning series of waterfalls located on the border with Argentina, accessible from the city of Foz do Iguaçu.
- **Pantanal:** The world's largest tropical wetland, renowned for its wildlife, including jaguars, capybaras, and numerous bird species.

Cultural Experiences

- **Rio Carnival:** The world's largest carnival, featuring elaborate parades, music, dance, and street parties.

- **Bumba Meu Boi:** A traditional folklore festival celebrated in the northeast, particularly in São Luís and Parintins.
- **Samba Schools:** Visit a samba school in Rio de Janeiro to experience the preparations for Carnival and learn about this vibrant dance form.

Modern Attractions

- **São Paulo's Avenida Paulista:** A bustling avenue known for its skyscrapers, shopping, dining, and cultural institutions like the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP).
- **Copacabana Beach:** One of the most famous beaches in the world, located in Rio de Janeiro, perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and people-watching.
- **Oscar Niemeyer Museum:** Located in Curitiba, this museum showcases the works of Brazil's most famous architect.

Markets and Shopping

- **Mercado Municipal (São Paulo):** A large market offering fresh produce, local delicacies, and traditional foods.
- **Feira Hippie de Ipanema (Rio de Janeiro):** A popular Sunday market where you can buy handicrafts, art, and souvenirs.
- **Ver-o-Peso Market (Belém):** One of the largest open-air markets in Brazil, offering a wide variety of Amazonian products.

RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

- **Common Law Relationships:** Not legally recognized.
- **Same-Sex Couples:** Legal and increasingly socially accepted. Same-sex marriage is recognized.
- **Medications:** Prescription medications are regulated. Narcotics and certain pain medications are controlled substances.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Canadian Travel Advisories
<https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/brazil>
- CIA World Factbooks (One Pager from the US)
<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/brazil/>
- Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)
<https://www.gov.uk/world/living-in-brazil>

FOR MORE COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO THE RESOURCES BELOW

- Global MFS Team: globalmfs-sfmmondiaux@cfmws.com