

# CULTURAL INSIGHTS BRAZIL



a culture crash course every other month, sent right to your inbox!

## FUN FACTS

-  Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world and the seventh most populated
-  The country exports a quarter of the world's coffee supply
-  Nearly 100% of the population speaks Portuguese, which differs only slightly from that spoken in Portugal and has moderate regional variations within Brazil



## WATCH OUT! cultural taboos

Discussing religion in public may be perceived as an invasion of privacy. The country is predominantly Catholic

## QUICK FACTS

### Group Orientation

Brazilians draw their sense of identity from groups and family. Overall harmony and saving face is paramount in dealing with any problems. "Jeitinho," the way around, is the solution, and appearance and final result tend to be more important than promptness. In a professional setting personal initiative is not expected, as that is the supervisor's job, and taking responsibility does not come naturally.

### Relationship Focused

Personal interaction is highly valued and friendship is a powerful bond. Business relationships require a particular kind of social interaction, and building strong, personal connections are key to creating a pleasant work environment. Family and friends are the primary social unit and consideration.

Little privacy exists between family members and close friends (*amigos*). People speak freely and openly about family, health, children, relationships, salary, money, and titles. Brazilians are comfortable being in close proximity to one another in public places.

### Hierarchy

Respect for hierarchy, status, age, experience, and etiquette is a must. Subordinates are expected to show respect and supervisors are expected to take care of and guide their employees. Personal initiative is not expected. Usually, decisions are made at the top.

Gender roles tend to be traditional and strict, although this pattern continues to evolve, especially in metro areas. Afro-Brazilian women and women in rural areas tend to experience a higher degree of disadvantages. While Brazil made same-sex marriage legal in 2013, marginalized groups still suffer poverty and hardship as the remnants of systemic inequities persist.

## COMMUNICATION IN BRAZIL



## EMOTIONALLY EXPRESSIVE

Showing emotions signals interest, dedication, and enthusiasm. Touching is welcome between close friends and family and at work. A firm prolonged handshake is often seen in business. Embracing and "air kissing" is also common. Quiet, reserved manner may be perceived as unfriendly or lacking commitment to a relationship or project.

## INDIRECT

Friendly communication is critical to establishing social and business relationships. Direct communication may be seen as cold and unfeeling; "face" is very important. Criticism must be intermingled with praise to soften the blow. Always take time to greet amigos and colegas as people come before appointments. Shaking hands is expected each time you greet a colleague. Gestures often add to the message and may even contradict the verbal message.



## THE DETAILS BRAZIL CULTURAL PROFILE

