

# Countries Around the World™

## Brazil

### Program Summary

Meet 10-year-old Laura. She and her family live in Rio de Janeiro, a city on the southeastern coast of Brazil. Join Laura as she samples some of Brazil's luscious, tropical fruits that are for sale in an outdoor market. Next, Laura strolls through Tijuca National Park, a large forest located inside Rio de Janeiro, before taking the tram to stables where she rides a horse around a track. After a lunch of *feijoada*, a popular Brazilian dish made from pork and black beans, Laura and her mother see some of Rio de Janeiro's famous sites, including the Imperial Palace, Corcovado Mountain and its "Cristo Redentor" statue, Sugarloaf Mountain and Niterói, a modern art museum. Experience Brazil's beach culture when Laura goes to the beach and watches people surfing before playing volleyball and cooling off with a drink of coconut juice. Finally, Laura and her family partake in one of Brazil's most famous pastimes, Carnival, by attending a spectacular parade at Rio's Sambodrome.

### Country Information

- **location:** Eastern South America, bordering the Atlantic Ocean; bordered by Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela
- **capital:** Brasilia
- **official language:** Portuguese
- **type of government:** federal republic
- **total area:** approximately 8,511,965 sq km
- **climate:** mostly tropical, but temperate in the South
- **terrain:** mostly flat to rolling lowlands in the North; some plains, hills, mountains, and a narrow coastal belt
- **major bodies of water:** Atlantic Ocean, Amazon River and Paraná River
- **natural resources:** includes bauxite, gold, iron ore, manganese, nickel, phosphates, platinum, tin, uranium, petroleum, hydropower and timber
- **industries:** includes textiles, shoes, chemicals, cement, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, and other machinery and equipment
- **agricultural products:** includes coffee, soybeans, wheat, rice, corn, sugarcane, cocoa, citrus and beef

### Vocabulary

**Pau Brasil** — Roughly translated, it means "firewood" in Portuguese. Also "Brazilwood." The national tree of Brazil.

**guava** — A round, pear-shaped fruit with reddish, edible flesh.

**carambola** — Also "star fruit." An edible, yellow to orange, ridged fruit that is star-shaped in cross-section.

**real** — The currency of Brazil.

**cruzeiro** — A former currency of Brazil.

**cruzado** — A former currency of Brazil.

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**cruzado novo** — A former currency of Brazil.

**feijoada** — A spicy dish that is most commonly made from pork, sausage, black beans and rice.

**cassava** — A plant whose roots can be processed to produce a nutritious starch.

**dictatorship** — A system of government characterized by unlimited powers of one person, group or political party and an absence of political liberty.

**samba** — A Brazilian dance that is African in origin.

**Niterói** — An art museum that was designed by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer. It is also the name of a seaport.

**Carnival** — An annual celebration in Brazil that marks the beginning of the Christian tradition of Lent.

**Sambodrome** — Also "Sambadrome." An avenue in downtown Rio de Janeiro that is lined with seats, which serves as a venue for samba school parades during Carnival.

### Pre-viewing Discussion

- Discuss diversity and how it is often reflected in a country's culture. Begin by having students brainstorm a list of things that compose culture, like clothing, music and food. For each cultural element on the list, ask students to provide examples that highlight the diversity and varied backgrounds of people in the United States. Questions to ask include: How do people in society benefit from diversity? What are the positive effects of people being able to share each others' culture, beliefs and ideas? How can sharing these things lead to a better understanding of other people? What do you think life would be like if everyone was the same? As they prepare to watch the program, advise students to look for examples of diversity in Brazil's culture.
- Distribute outline maps of South America to the class. Have students find and label Brazil, its capital city and major bodies of water in addition to the other countries of South America and their capitals. Ask questions, such as: How many countries border Brazil? Which country shares the longest border with Brazil? Which country shares the shortest? How does Brazil compare in size to the other countries of South America? Estimate how many times bigger Brazil is compared to the smallest country in South America.
- Lead a discussion about identity. Begin by asking students to share examples of people, places and things with which they identify. How do these things represent you? What do they say about you? If you had to describe who you are as a person, what would you say? How is being a part of your community a part of your identity? How is being a resident of your state and of the United States part of your identity? As they prepare to watch the program, inform students to watch for examples of Brazilian identity.

### Follow-up Activities

- Brazil is one of the world's leading producers of gemstones, like diamonds and sapphires. These gemstones are often crafted into beautiful jewelry. Have students create their own jewelry using various craft materials, such as beads, beans or colored macaroni, in place of the gemstones from Brazil. Students can even give their jewelry Brazil-inspired names, like "Copacabana charm bracelet" or "Carnival crown." Then, have students draw pictures of their jewelry and write captions for them that describe the gemstones used. Students can provide prices for the jewelry in reais and in U.S. dollars. Collect the students' work for inclusion in a class "Brazilian jewelry catalog."

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- Using a map of Brazil, locate Brasilia and Brazil's former capital, Rio de Janeiro. Discuss the geographical and historical reasons why the capital was moved. What would be the positive and negative consequences of building a new, modern capital? If you had to move the capital of Brazil, to where would you have moved it? Then, students can find facts about the history of the capital city of the United States and how it finally came to be located in Washington, D.C. Students can create time lines that chronicle the events around establishing the capital of the United States.
- The Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral is credited with being the first European to discover and explore Brazil. Have students find facts about Cabral's life and voyages. Based on the information students find, they can create biographical booklets of Cabral that include pictures, illustrations, time lines and maps of his voyages. As a prewriting activity, students can visit [readwritethink.org/materials/bio\\_cube/](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/bio_cube/) to create a "bio-cube" — a fun, foldable, 3-D graphic organizer for biographical information.
- Due to economic factors like inflation, Brazil has changed its currency several times in recent history. Students can pretend that the government of Brazil has put them in charge of designing new paper and coin currencies for the country. Students can name and draw their currency designs and incorporate Brazil symbols, mottoes and landmarks on them. Then, students can create their own currency conversion charts that show the value of their new currency as compared to the U.S. dollar. As an extension, students can find the prices of common items and convert them to the value of their invented Brazilian currency.
- *Bom dia!* Invite students to learn basic words and phrases in Portuguese, Brazil's official language, by visiting [www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/portuguese/talk/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/portuguese/talk/). Students can pair up, and using a combination of the words and phrases, write and perform short skits in Portuguese. After they perform their skits, students can translate what they were saying into English. Students can then write their favorite words and phrases on note cards that include the English translations. Post the cards on a word wall dedicated to Portuguese.
- The tropics have the perfect climate for growing some of the world's most luscious fruits, like papayas, pineapples and mangoes. But the tropics are also the ideal place for other foods, like coconuts, peppers and vanilla. Invite students to learn more about tropical foods from around the world by visiting [www.mobot.org/education/05actforkidsnfamilies/onlineactivities/tropicalfeast/tropfeast.html](http://www.mobot.org/education/05actforkidsnfamilies/onlineactivities/tropicalfeast/tropfeast.html). Then, have students plan a lunchtime "Tropical Food Feast" that features different foods from the tropics. Each student can pick a tropical food and bring in a dish featuring that food. It can be as simple as a bunch of bananas or something a little more complex, like eggplant parmesan with a side of fried plantains! Instruct students to make informational placards to accompany their dishes that include information about the tropical food(s) featured in their dish.
- The Amazon rainforest, one of the world's largest ecosystems, covers a substantial portion of Brazil. Students can discover more about the Amazon by working together to build a classroom display dedicated to the Amazon rainforest. Begin by dividing the class into small groups and assigning each group a topic related to the Amazon rainforest, such as plant and animal life, the forest's role in the carbon cycle, yearly rainfall totals, threats from deforestation, etc. Contributions to the displays can include fact sheets, posters, pictures and illustrations, models, charts, dioramas, time lines and maps. Students can take turns presenting their display contributions to the class and sharing what they learned.
- Students will have fun learning all about Brazil by creating their own question and answer books. Begin by dividing the class into small groups and assigning each group a topic to cover, such as climate, history, food or wildlife. Once they have finished creating their books, students can use the material from their question and answer books in a classroom trivia game about Brazil. An interactive tool for making a question and answer book can be found at [www.readwritethink.org/materials/flipbook/](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/flipbook/).
- Students will have fun creating their own "Traveling on the Amazon River" board games. Divide students into small groups and, using a pieces of cardboard and various craft materials, have students design and fashion their game boards to resemble South America and the Amazon River, while inventing the rules for their games. The games can include facts about the Amazon River, such as the types of animals that live in or near the river or the number of countries through which the river flows. The games can even include playing pieces that resemble the types of watercraft used on the Amazon! Once they have finished making their boards, students can take turns playing each other's games.
- What better way to celebrate Brazilian culture than through hosting a classroom Carnival? Begin by dividing the class into "samba" groups. Each group can choose its own colors, costumes, music, dance or marching routines and a theme that reflects its members' school, heritage or community. Students can work together to decorate the classroom. After the parade, each group can explain its theme.
- What do a *berimbau*, a *caxixi* and a *cuica* have in common? They're all instruments used in Brazilian music, of course! Have students find facts about the musical instruments of Brazil and invite students to build their own versions of Brazilian instruments by using various materials and a bit of imagination. Then, listen to samples of Latin and South American music by visiting [www2.worldmusic.net/listen/mp3.html](http://www2.worldmusic.net/listen/mp3.html) and scrolling down to the section titled "Latin American and Caribbean" for clips of different types of music from Brazil and other countries, such as Guatemala, Venezuela and Argentina. Discuss the different types of music by asking questions like: What are the similarities and differences among the Brazilian music? How does the Brazilian music compare to the music from the other countries? Which songs do you like the best? As an extension, students can create covers and booklets for a fictional CD of Brazilian music by visiting [www.readwritethink.org/materials/cd-dvd/](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/cd-dvd/).

## Suggested Internet Resources

- [www.brasilemb.org/kids\\_corner/kids1.shtml](http://www.brasilemb.org/kids_corner/kids1.shtml)  
Presented by the Brazilian Embassy in Washington, D.C., this site features links to information and activities for elementary school children.
- [library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/brazil.html](http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212302/brazil.html)  
Learn about the culture and customs of Brazil from the perspective of a child who lives there! The students of Roosevelt School in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin present this award-winning site to teach people about different cultures.
- [www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/goplaces/0,12405,104221,00.html](http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/specials/goplaces/0,12405,104221,00.html)  
Discover Brazil and what it is like to live there! This web site by Time Inc. presents information about Brazil's famous sites, animals, culture and language.
- [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov)  
The CIA World Factbook web site presents detailed and up-to-date information on Brazil and many other countries. Topics include geography, people, government, economy, transportation and communication. On the main page of the CIA site, click on the "World Factbook" link.

## Suggested Print Resources

- Bauer, Brandy. *Brazil: A Question and Answer Book*. Capstone Press, Mankato, MN; 2004.
- Charry, Lynne and Mark J. Plotkin. *The Shaman's Apprentice: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*. Gulliver Green, San Diego, CA; 2001. A fictional text about an indigenous tribe in the Amazon rainforest.
- Graf, Mike. *The Amazon River*. Capstone Press, Mankato, MN; 2004.
- Morrison, Marion. *Brazil*. Franklin Watts, London, England; 2006.

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