

# Brazil

## Business Guide

Compiled by:

**Swiss-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce**

**Sao Paulo, December 2023**

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

**Documents:** Swiss citizens are exempted from visa requirements to entry in Brazil for Tourism or Business. The total stay in Brazil, including outings and multiple entries, is limited to 90 days every 180 days, and cannot be extended. However, passports must be valid for at least six months and a return ticket may be requested on arrival.

See a complete [list](#) with the entry visas to Brazil for all nationalities.

The Federal Police of Brazil requires an immigration form (entry/exit card) that has to be filled in on arrival (normally distributed on the flight or [online](#) version available for print). Half of the form must be retained and shown at the departure.

Money above 10,000.00 dollars in cash has to be declared through the Electronic Traveler's Declaration of Goods ([e-DBV](#)).

**Work visa:** To work in Brazil, a visa is needed. There are different types of visas for different sectors (cultural, temporary work / technical assistance, emergency technical assistance, journalists, missionary work, students, trainees, voluntary work etc.) Please contact the consulate for further information (see all the contacts below in this document).

Further information on working in Brazil can be found on the guide 'Working in Brazil' [www.swisscam.com.br/en/publicacao/working-in-brazil](http://www.swisscam.com.br/en/publicacao/working-in-brazil).

Custom Duties: Baggage carried by the traveler consisting of a) items for the own use (clothes, shoes, hygiene items), b) books and newspapers c) other items (i.e. gifts) with a value up to US\$ 1,000.00, and d) other personal or professional used items, are duty free. Additionally, the [limit](#) for purchases at the duty free shop at the arrivals airport in Brazil are US\$ 1,000 per traveler.

The value exceeding the exemption quota will be subject to customs duties, calculated at a 50% rate. Further information (in Portuguese): <https://www.gov.br/receitafederal/pt-br/assuntos/aduana-e-comercio-exterior/viagens-internacionais/guia-do-viajante/entrada-no-brasil/bens-a-declarar-tributacao-e-calculo-do-imposto>

The following items are prohibited from entering the country, according to the [Brazilian federal revenue service](#) (Receita Federal):

- Cigarettes and beverages manufactured in Brazil, intended for sale exclusively abroad;
- Cigarettes of a brand that is not marketed in the country of origin;
- Firearm Replicas;
- Wild animal species without a license and technical advice;
- Aquatic species for ornamental purposes and agriculture, without permission of the competent agency;
- Counterfeit products and / or pirated;
- Products containing genetically modified organisms;
- Pesticides, their components and related;
- Goods that offend morality, traditions, health or public order; and
- Narcotics Substances or drugs.

Should you bring the following items, please go through the "goods to declare" exit:

- Goods which the overall value exceeds the exemption quota;
- Lost goods;
- Cash when totaling more than US\$ 10,000.00 or the equivalent in another currency, both at the exit of Brazil and upon arrival in the country;

- Items under control by Health Dpt, Agricultural Dept and Army or subject to restrictions and prohibitions of another agency;
- Goods that cannot be considered as baggage (goods not included in the baggage concept) such as:
  - Products under health surveillance for the provision of services to third parties;
  - Goods that exceed the quantity limits;
  - Goods that the value exceed US\$ 3,000.00 subject to special customs regime of temporary admission, this applies only for non-resident in Brazil.

See the complete list of goods to declare [here](#).

## LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

The national language is Portuguese. In Brazilian companies with international activities, English is widely understood, followed by Spanish. As a general rule, the higher you go within an organization, the easier it gets to find Brazilians speaking other languages.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays	2023	2024
New Year's Day	January 1	January 1
Founding of Rio de Janeiro (City only)	January 20	January 20
Founding of Sao Paulo (City only)	January 25	January 25
Carnival	February 21	February 12
Good Friday	April 7	March 29
Tiradentes	April 21	April 21
May Day	May 1	May 1
Corpus Christi	June 8	May 30
Constitutional Revolution (Sao Paulo only)	July 9	July 9
Independence Day	September 7	September 7
Our Lady of Aparecida	October 12	October 12
All Souls' Day	November 2	November 2
Proclamation of Republic	November 15	November 15
Black Consciousness Day (Rio, Sao Paulo)	November 20	November 20
Christmas Day	December 25	December 25

Companies may extend the weekend if a holiday falls on a Thursday or Tuesday. All local holidays can be seen on <https://www.feriados.com.br/2024>

## HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

**Inoculation:** Vaccination is not mandatory to enter the country, including for COVID-19. However, in order to minimize any health risks, all routine vaccinations should be up to date. The Brazilian Ministry of Health recommends, in particular, yellow fever, polio, measles, rubella, diphtheria and tetanus vaccines.

Dengue, Chikungunya and Zika fever is common over the country. According to the Ministry of Health, the states Espírito Santo, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Santa Catarina, Acre and Rondônia had the highest incidence rate of dengue in 2023, while Tocantins, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo e Mato Grosso do Sul registered the most number of cases of Chikungunya. The agent is transmitted by day-active mosquitoes and the vaccination for Chikungunya and Zika virus is still being tested. For that reason, it is recommended to wear long sleeved clothing and to use mosquito repellent.

The vaccination for Dengue was approved in 2023 by Anvisa (Brazilian Health Surveillance Agency) and has also been assessed by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), receiving a positive recommendation under the 'EU Medicines for All' program. At present, the government is deciding the details about the incorporation of the vaccine in SUS (Unified Brazilian Health System), but it is already available in the private health system.

Yellow fever is a risk in certain parts of Brazil, so CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends the yellow fever vaccine for travelers 9 months of age or older to these areas.

**Malaria:** When traveling in Brazil, you should avoid mosquito bites to prevent malaria. You may need to take prescription medicine before, during, and after your trip to prevent malaria, depending on your travel plans, such as where you are going, when you are traveling, and if you are spending a lot of time outdoors or sleeping outside.

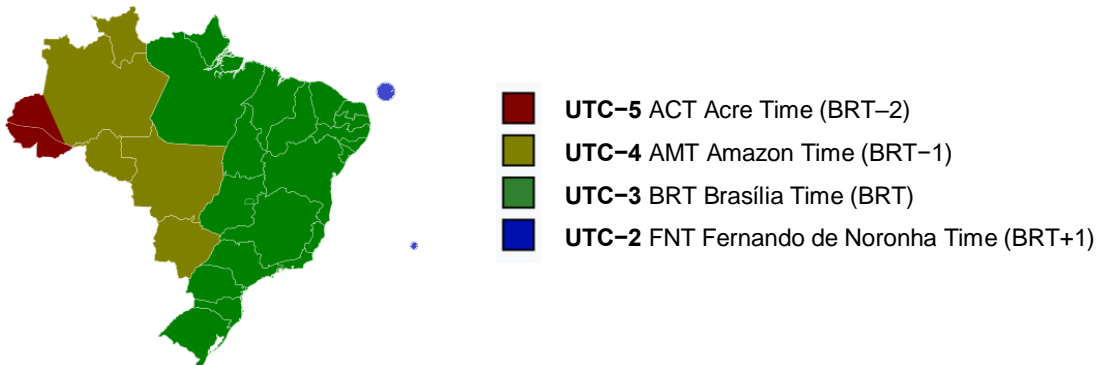
For more information, see [yellow fever and malaria recommendations and requirements for Brazil](#). See also [www.who.int/countries/bra/en/](http://www.who.int/countries/bra/en/)

Hospitals and Insurance:

Medical care is inadequate in most public hospitals and the sanitary conditions are precarious. Therefore, it is advised to use private hospitals. Brazil has an excellent network of private hospitals in the major metropolitan areas. Private medical care nevertheless is expensive, so it is advisable that all visitors purchase medical insurance prior to their arrival.

## TIME ZONES

There are four time zones in Brazil.



Local time:

In 2019, President Jair Bolsonaro signed a decree that revokes daylight saving time and it is still valid to this day. Check local time by city or state: [www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/custom.html?continent=samerica](http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/custom.html?continent=samerica)

Weather:

Although 90 per cent of Brazil is within the tropics, more than 60 per cent of the population lives in areas where altitude, sea winds, or polar fronts moderate the temperature.

Weather forecast:

<https://worldweather.wmo.int/en/country.html?countryCode=136>

## TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND BRAZIL

Switzerland's single time zone is the Central European Time CET (UTC+1). However, Switzerland observes Daylight Saving Time (DST) and during this period it shifts to Central European Summer

Time CEST (UTC+2). Normally Brasilia Time (BRT) is 4 hours behind Switzerland or 5 hours behind during DST in Switzerland. Check the current local time difference between Brasilia and Bern [here](#).

## ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

The voltage varies throughout the country between 110 volts (the new standard is 127 volts, but most people still say 110v) and 220 volts. All are on 60Hz frequency. Sao Paulo is generally 127 volts but occasionally 220 volts. Brasilia is 220 volts, Rio de Janeiro is mainly 127 volts. Search [here](#) by city to find the correct voltage.

Plugs and sockets: Type N is the official Brazilian standard as illustrated below. Please note that at a first glance, Brazilian type N seems to be pretty much the same applied in Switzerland (J type), but there is no compatibility among them once plugs have a different angle arrangement.



Type N



Other plug widely found throughout the country is Type C:



Source: <https://www.iec.ch/world-plugs> / <https://world-power-plugs.com/switzerland-to-brazil>

## METHODS OF PAYMENT

Currency: The currency in Brazil is the Real (BRL), for each Real there are 100 centavos.

1 CHF = approx. 5.53 BRL (November 2023)

1 BRL = approx. 0.1808 CHF.

Currency calculator: <https://www.bcb.gov.br/conversao>

Import/export of currencies: Money above 10,000.00 dollars, in cash, has to be declared through the Electronic Traveler's Declaration of Goods ([e-DBV](#)).

Cash: Brazilian Reais are usually not readily available at banks in Switzerland and they must be ordered in advance. In addition, the exchange rate (cash) is normally unfavorable in Switzerland, that's why it is recommended to exchange money only in Brazil. The easiest foreign currency to exchange is the US dollar, but Euros and lesser extent Swiss Francs are also welcome.

Very few places accept cash in US\$. Foreign currency normally can be exchanged in money exchange offices (called "casa de câmbio") and not in banks. At arrival, it is worth getting hold of some low denomination notes and coins, as shops and restaurants always are short of change.

Maestro cards: There is also an extensive network of ATMs and at the ones with the Maestro card or VISA card, visitors can use their Swiss cash cards (Maestro or Visa cards) to cash money. It is advisable to use ATMs only inside of supervised banks and this only during the day.

PIX: The instant payment system [PIX](#) was launched by the Central Bank of Brazil in November 2020. Available 24 hours every day, users can make payments and transfers through a QR code or an alias (normally a mobile phone number, an e-mail address or the Taxpayer Identification Number (CPF or CNPJ)) and it is not necessary to have a bank account. Other payment service providers such as some fintechs may offer PIX.

The Central Bank of Brazil is studying the possibility for international transactions, but no deadline has been set.

Credit cards: Almost in all commercial places (hotels, restaurants, night clubs, shops) credit cards are accepted. Most major international credit cards (especially MasterCard, Visa and to a lesser extent Diners and American Express) are accepted in Brazil.

Traveler's cheques: Traveller's cheques are more difficult to be exchanged. Normally they are accepted at hotels, banks and money exchange offices ("casa de câmbio").

To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take travelers cheques in US Dollars.

Make sure you have additional identification when using your credit card or traveler's cheques (passport, identity card or driver's license).

## TRANSPORTATION

Travel and tourist: For general information on Brazil and its tourist attractions, you can visit the following pages:

English: [www.embratur.com.br](http://www.embratur.com.br)

German: [www.brasilienportal.ch](http://www.brasilienportal.ch)

Travelling to Brazil Brazil has many international airports, such as Brasília International (BSB), Rio de Janeiro – Galeao (GIG), Sao Paulo – Guarulhos (GRU), Belo Horizonte (CNF), Florianopolis, Salvador, Natal, Recife or Fortaleza.

Flight time from Europe to Brazil's Southeast region is about 12 hours and a little over 9 hours or even less to the Northeast region.

Companies flying from Europe to Brazil: Air France, Air Europa, Azul, British Airways, Iberia, ITA Airways, KLM, Lufthansa, Swiss, LATAM and TAP.

Swiss International Airlines ([www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com)) serves Sao Paulo with daily flights from Zurich. The direct flight takes approximately 12 hours, back 11<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> hours.

Travelling in Brazil

Distances:

<https://maps.google.com/>

<http://br.distanciacidades.net/>

## BY AIR

Unless you have plenty of time, air travel is the best way to get from one city to another. Flights between major cities are frequent. Business visitors intending to visit more than one city should consider a Brazilian Airpass, booked through Swiss travel agents.

Major Companies: Azul ([www.voeazul.com.br](http://www.voeazul.com.br)), Gol ([www.voegol.com.br](http://www.voegol.com.br)), and LATAM ([www.latamairlines.com](http://www.latamairlines.com)).



Regional Airlines: Voepass ([www.voepass.com.br](http://www.voepass.com.br))

## BY SEA

Transportation of passengers by sea is little explored in Brazil. However, it is widely used for international freight transportation.

According to the Cruise Lines International Association Brazil, nine cruise ships traveled in the 2022/2023 season through 17 Brazilian destinations, reaching around 600,00 cruisers. The season is earning its place as the best one in 10 years.

## BY ROAD

**Buses:** There are good long-distance express bus services between Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (approx. 6 hours) and to other main towns. Seats can be reserved in advance at [www.brazilbustravel.com](http://www.brazilbustravel.com). These buses are relatively cheap and, if the distance involved is not too long, a good alternative of getting around.

City buses: there are usually plenty of buses in all major cities but for personal security reasons we do not recommend their use.

**Taxis:** Taxis are the best way of getting around. Taxis in most cities are fitted with red numbered plates and have taximeters. **Radio taxis** can be booked in advance and, although they are more expensive, they offer a better service. Most of the main hotels have 24-hour taxi ranks nearby.

**Taxis Comuns** (regular taxis) are generally white in Sao Paulo and yellow with blue stripes in Rio. **Taxis de Luxo** (luxury taxis) normally are larger, offering more comfort, safety and better service, which can cost about double the price of a regular taxi. Taxi fares for cabs hailed in the street are payable in accordance with the meter. All meters should now show the precise fare to be paid in local currency (BRL). Certain journeys (eg. from hotel to airport) may be charged on a fixed-price basis, ask your hotel for advice.

If your journey takes you away from the town centre, it is recommended to ask the taxi to wait in case your appointment will not take too long. Expect most drivers to treat you fairly but take extra care in Rio. Bear in mind that Sao Paulo and Rio are large cities and it can take much longer than you think to get around.

In order to have an idea of taxi fares, check: [www.taxi-calculator.com](http://www.taxi-calculator.com)

It is possible to use on-demand car booking apps to request taxis and private drivers. The most used apps in Brazil are 99 and UBER. The advantage is that you will be able to know how much it is going to cost your trip and you can pay by credit card or cash.

**Car rental:**

Cars can be rented at airports and in major cities. It is advisable to choose one of the major national or international firms and ask for a full explanation of the insurance covered on the offer. Some companies offer lower rates if the reservation is made from abroad and in advance. The minimum age to hire a car is normally between 21 and 25 years for foreigners, the driver must have 2 years of experience and the passport of the same nationality of the driver's license. To avoid inconveniences, an international driver's license is recommendable.

As an alternative, most good hotels can arrange a car with an English-speaking driver on a daily basis. Street parking can be difficult, mostly in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and it may be necessary to pay a street "guard" or a fee for the rotative public parking spot called "Zona Azul" in São Paulo and "Rio Rotativo" in Rio de Janeiro.

**Speed limit:**

Speed limits are almost always signaled. If not otherwise indicated, speed limits are the follows:

Urban streets:            80 km/h fast line (vias de trânsito rápido)  
                                  60 km/h slower line (vias arteriais)  
                                  40 km/h communication road (vias coletoras)  
                                  30 km/h local road (vias locais)

Non-urban streets:       110 km/h cars and pick ups  
                                  90 km/h other vehicles

**Maps:**

Political and regional maps can be found on the website [www.guiageo.com](http://www.guiageo.com), street maps of certain cities on [www.google.com.br/maps](http://www.google.com.br/maps).

Please be aware: roads are not always in the best conditions.

## BY RAIL

Inter-city rail services for passengers were discontinued in 1998 following privatisation. In the State of São Paulo, the government has plans to restore rail services to the countryside of the state and to the coast. In 2023 the government announced investments in the railway stretch linking São Paulo to Campinas, expected to be in full operation by 2029.

Underground: There are very good underground (Metro) facilities in Sao Paulo and Rio, though the networks are quite limited. More information at:  
[www.metro.sp.gov.br](http://www.metro.sp.gov.br) and [www.metrorio.com.br](http://www.metrorio.com.br)

## HOTELS

There are a variety of hotels to choose depending on your budget and needs. Below is a list of web sites that provide information on hotels in Brazil:

[www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com)

[www.decolar.com.br](http://www.decolar.com.br)

[www.hoteis.com](http://www.hoteis.com)

[www.trivago.com.br](http://www.trivago.com.br)

Nearly all hotels add a service charge to the bill, usually 10%. Most restaurants also add 10% to 15% to the total of the bill, but must make it clear that they have done so. Brazilians don't normally tip taxi drivers, although they may round the total up.

## COMMUNICATION

Telephone:	From Switzerland	00 55 (+city code + phone number)
	From Brazil	00 xx 41 (+city code + phone number)
	Within Brazil	0 xx (+city code + phone number)
	Same city	phone number only

xx are the phone operators' codes, [www.ddi-ddd.com.br/Codigos-Telefone-Operadoras/](http://www.ddi-ddd.com.br/Codigos-Telefone-Operadoras/)

Internet: It is quite easy to have internet access around the major cities in all hotels and other places, as well as through cell phone plans. The domain for Brazil is designated as *.com.br* but many organizations and institutions use *.org.br* or *.gov.br*.

## CELL PHONES

Approx. 98% of Brazil's cities are covered by 4G mobile networks and around 3.4% are covered by 5G network (mainly the capitals). European mobile phones normally work in the country. More information: <https://www.expat.com/en/guide/south-america/brazil/9222-phones-in-brazil.html>

Chip card: You can buy a prepaid international chip card. They are normally sold at international airports in Brazil, but it is also possible to buy it on the internet. Above a list of companies that provide this service:

<https://www.worldsim.com/>

<http://www.onesimcard.com/international-sim-card/universal/>

<https://gosim.com/>

<https://travelsim.com/>

Mobile phones can also be rented. The companies mentioned below bring the phone to your hotel.

Uniir			+55 11 2114 0080
Telecomunicações	<a href="http://www.uniir.com.br">www.uniir.com.br</a>	São Paulo	+55 11 99360 9000
Taas Telecom	<a href="http://www.taastelecom.com.br">www.taastelecom.com.br</a>	São Paulo	+55 11 2677 4947

## BUSINESS HOURS

There are no formal business hours in Brazil. Nevertheless, most of the cities adopt opening hours from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, some exceptions are listed below.

Banks: Monday to Friday, 10:00 – 16:00

Automated Teller Machines (ATM's) can be found at most banks, shopping centres, big supermarkets, petrol/gas stations and main avenues.

Offices: Monday to Friday, 8:00 – 17:00 or 9:00 – 18:00.

Petrol stations: Petrol stations are allowed to operate 24 hours a day, although not all of them do so.

Shopping centres: Monday to Saturday, 10:00 – 22:00. The largest shopping centres also open on Sunday from 14:00 – 20:00

Stores: Monday to Friday, 9:00 – 19:00  
Saturdays, 9:00 – 13:00, depending on the district.

Supermarkets: Monday to Saturday, 8:00 – 22:00. Some also open on Sundays or are open 24 hours.

## **ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF THE EMBASSY OF THE COUNTRY IN SWITZERLAND**

### **Brazilian Embassy in Bern**

Ambassador Cláudia Fonseca Buzzi  
Monbijoustrasse 68  
CH - 3007 Bern  
Tel.: +41 31 371 8515  
E-mail: [brasemb.berna@itamaraty.gov.br](mailto:brasemb.berna@itamaraty.gov.br)  
<http://berna.itamaraty.gov.br>

### **Consulate General of Brazil in Zurich**

Stampfenbachstrasse 138  
CH - 8006 Zürich  
Tel.: +41 79 742 5300  
E-mail: [geral.cgzurique@itamaraty.gov.br](mailto:geral.cgzurique@itamaraty.gov.br)  
<http://zurique.itamaraty.gov.br>  
Open: Monday to Friday: 9:00 - 13:00  
And Monday to Thursday: 14:00 - 16:00

### **Consulate General of Brazil in Geneva**

Rue de Lausanne 45 - 1<sup>er</sup> étage  
CH - 1201 Genève  
Tel.: +41 22 906 9420  
E-mail: [cq.genebra@itamaraty.gov.br](mailto:cq.genebra@itamaraty.gov.br)  
<http://genebra.itamaraty.gov.br>  
Open: by appointment only, from Monday to Friday

## **ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY AND CONSULATES**

### **Swiss Embassy in Brasilia**

Ambassador Pietro Lazzeri  
SES - Avenida das Nações, Q. 811, lote 41  
70448-900 Brasília - DF  
Tel.: +55 61 3443 5500  
E-mail: [brasilia@eda.admin.ch](mailto:brasilia@eda.admin.ch)  
[www.eda.admin.ch/brasilia](http://www.eda.admin.ch/brasilia)

### **Consulate General, São Paulo**

Avenida Paulista, 1754 - 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
01310-920 São Paulo - SP  
Tel.: +55 11 3372 8200

### **Consulate General, Rio de Janeiro**

Rua Cândido Mendes, 157 - 11<sup>th</sup> floor  
20241-220 Rio de Janeiro - RJ  
Tel.: +55 21 3806 2100

E-mail: [saopaulo@eda.admin.ch](mailto:saopaulo@eda.admin.ch)  
[www.eda.admin.ch/saopaulo](http://www.eda.admin.ch/saopaulo)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Belo Horizonte**

Rua Gonçalves Dias, 82/1100  
30140-090 – Belo Horizonte - MG  
Tel.: +55 31 3273 8991  
E-mail: [riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch](mailto:riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch)  
[belohorizonte@honrep.ch](mailto:belohorizonte@honrep.ch)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Fortaleza**

Rua Napoleão Laureano 505  
60411-170 Fortaleza - CE  
Tel.: +55 85 3081 8754  
E-mail: [riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch](mailto:riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch)  
[fortaleza@honrep.ch](mailto:fortaleza@honrep.ch)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Manaus**

Rua Monsenhor Coutinho, 688  
69010-110 Manaus - AM  
Tel.: +55 92 3213 9156  
E-mail: [riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch](mailto:riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch)  
[manaus@honrep.ch](mailto:manaus@honrep.ch)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Recife**

Av. Domingos Ferreira, 1930  
- Ed. Arcuri - sala 201  
51111-020 Olinda - PE  
Tel.: +55 81 99212 8800  
E-mail: [riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch](mailto:riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch)  
[recife@honrep.ch](mailto:recife@honrep.ch)

E-mail: [riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch](mailto:riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch)  
[www.eda.admin.ch/riodejaneiro](http://www.eda.admin.ch/riodejaneiro)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Curitiba**

Rua Francisco Rocha, 198  
80420-130 Curitiba - PR  
Tel.: +55 41 4042 0310  
E-mail: [saopaulo@eda.admin.ch](mailto:saopaulo@eda.admin.ch)  
[curitiba@honrep.ch](mailto:curitiba@honrep.ch)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Florianópolis**

Rod. José Carlos Daux, 5500  
88032-005 Florianópolis - SC  
Tel.: +55 48 4042 9668  
E-mail: [saopaulo@eda.admin.ch](mailto:saopaulo@eda.admin.ch)  
[florianopolis@honrep.ch](mailto:florianopolis@honrep.ch)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Porto Alegre**

Av. São Pedro, 1545  
90230-122 Porto Alegre - RS  
Tel.: +55 51 3222 2025  
E-mail: [saopaulo@eda.admin.ch](mailto:saopaulo@eda.admin.ch)  
[portoalegre@honrep.ch](mailto:portoalegre@honrep.ch)

#### **Honorary Consulate in Salvador**

Rua Lucaia, 316  
Rio Vermelho  
41940-660 Salvador - BA  
Tel.: +55 71 3334 1671  
E-mail: [riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch](mailto:riodejaneiro@eda.admin.ch)  
[salvador@honrep.ch](mailto:salvador@honrep.ch)

### **TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS / BUSINESS PRACTICES**

#### **Business etiquette**

First contact: Brazilians are mostly very warm and friendly. Shake hands every time you meet or take leave of a Brazilian (even if you have met the person previously the same day). Meeting with a group, shake hands with everyone. If you are

male, remember that Brazil is a Latin country: expect Brazilian men to stand close to you (for Europeans almost uncomfortably close), to hold your hand or arm for extended periods, and to put their arms around your shoulders and hug you in some cases. These are normal and socially acceptable signs of friendship. Shake hands with Brazilian women on a first meeting, and expect to be kissed (on the cheek, usually more like a kiss in the air) on subsequent encounters. If you are female, both Brazilian men and women will shake hands with you on a first encounter but may kiss you on subsequent meetings and leave-takings.

**Forms of address:** In Brazil the main surname (unlike the Spanish) is usually the last. Thus, Dr Paulo Lopes Pereira would normally be referred to as Dr Pereira. However, Brazilians are often known only by their first names, e.g Dr Paulo. You should also bear in mind that the title Dr is sometimes used as a mark of respect and may have nothing to do with professional qualifications.

If you are having difficulties with a person's name, you may inquire about the correct pronunciation, before trying to guess it.

**Indication:** Personal relationship is an essential element of business in Brazil, sometimes personal contacts count more than a convincing business plan, that's why referred contacts can open doors and facilitate contact with new business partners.

**Meetings:** Allow yourself ample time to get to your appointment since traffic and long distances in major cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro could cause serious delays, especially if it rains or if it is prior to a local holiday or purchasing season. During a business trip, it is recommended to arrange one or two meetings in the morning and depending on the location, maximum two in the afternoon if you want to make it on time. Check beforehand the best alternative path to get to the desired places.

It is not recommended to arrange business meetings in the evening or in between holidays. Besides the heavy traffic and difficulty to find plane tickets, as the majority of Brazilians leave their own cities to travel, you may not be able to find all the contacts you want to meet.

You should arrive at meetings/appointments promptly at the agreed time. If you know that you are going to be late for a business appointment, call and let your contact be informed. Nevertheless, it can happen that you will have to

wait for your Brazilian counterparty. Poor punctuality is sometimes a characteristic of Brazilian business culture. As a general rule, the higher a Brazilian ranks, the longer the wait.

Big meetings, seminars and social events normally start 15 to 30 minutes late. Business entertaining is conducted over lunch or dinner. Breakfast meetings are much less common. Sometimes, brunches are used during seminars. Set aside two hours for a business lunch and around three hours for a business dinner.

Swap business cards during introductions. Expect a number of appointments to be cancelled or re-arranged at short notice; on the positive side, you may be able to arrange further meetings at very short notice.

Spend the first few minutes of a meeting in social chat - Brazilians like to get to know you and a little of your background and interests. It is appreciated when foreigners show that they value people and relationships over business. Reluctance on your part to chat may be interpreted by your host as representing a lack of interest in doing business. Resist the temptation to get straight down to business, even if time is short.

Do not expect to do much business on a first visit - Brazilians like to get to know a business partner first, so be prepared that it will probably take several contacts and trips to bring the negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion. A mid term vision is necessary.

**Negotiation:**

Brazilians normally prefer to negotiate in groups. The group work is more valued than the individual work. Nevertheless, the Brazilian business culture is intensely hierarchical; only the highest person in authority makes the final decision. Therefore, it is indeed important to find the "key person", it saves time and facilitates negotiations. Brazilians normally conduct business only through personal connections. It is important to show commitment and the desire to establish a long-term business relationship. During negotiations, avoid confrontations and mask frustrations. Brazilians take criticism less issue-related but very personally.

**Communication:**

Most Brazilians are very polite and will often avoid giving an outright "no". Instead of disagreeing, they will try to find other ways of showing what is preferable. Expect the majority to be completely honest but do not expect them to volunteer information, particularly where they could benefit from you



being kept in the dark. If you hit a problem that seems not possible to be negotiated, do not give up: in Brazil, there is usually a way round things “jeitinho”.

After the meeting  
deadlines:

Usually documents are not signed immediately after an agreement is reached; a handshake and person’s word are considered sufficient. The necessary papers will be prepared and signed later. After a meeting, if your Brazilian counterpart is expected to take the next step, feel free to charge it in case of a delay. In general, Brazilians are not keen on following agendas or deadlines, even if it is something of their interest. Brazilian’s time perception is quite different from the Swiss one.

Business dress:

On clothing, some Brazilian businesspeople dress fairly casually at their office but they generally expect visitors to wear appropriate business attire. When deciding what to wear, remember that in the north-eastern States, suits are rarely worn because of the heat. In the South, however, lightweight suits made of natural fibres are fine for most of the year. A dark lightweight suit will be useful for more formal evening appointments. Dinner jackets are rarely needed.

Women wear light cotton dresses in summer. During the winter, light woollen clothing is suitable for southern Brazil and for Rio de Janeiro and the north-east, European summer clothing is appropriate. Brazilian women are very fashion conscious.

Business cards:

Bring a plentiful supply of business cards, since Brazilians tend to be very keen about exchanging them. Not being able to present a business card or a material from your own company could be viewed by your Brazilian contact as unprofessional and eventually hurt your credibility as a legitimate and serious business.

Conversation:

Maintain steady eye contact at all times. People stand closely in front of each other, even when talking. Brazilians tend to be very fast talkers. It is normal for a conversation to be highly animated. During meals, “small talk” is welcomed. Business may be discussed at the conclusion of the meal, when coffee is served.

Generally, Brazilians are open to discuss a wide range of subjects, particularly in a business context. Make an effort to learn different words and phrases in Portuguese. Don’t worry about the mistakes; Brazilians will

appreciate your efforts even if your vocabulary is limited. Welcomed topics of conversation are: “futebol“ (soccer) as Brazilians are enthusiastic soccer fans, food, your travels and family, positive aspects of Brazilian industry and other aspects of the country’s arts. Try to avoid discussions about class differences, economic problems and politics.

**Gifts:** Small gifts are very welcomed by Brazilians. Something typical from Switzerland might be a good idea. Instead of a gift, you might also offer to treat for lunch or dinner and use this opportunity to learn more about the recipient's tastes.

**Other Considerations:** If your Brazilian counterparts have doubts about you, this attitude will not be overcome by presenting them impressive charts, graphs, or other empirical data. Instead, you will have to effectively use your personality, cultural awareness, and other interpersonal skills to win your Brazilian counterparts over to your side.

In general, being a foreigner is a plus. Brazilians like to know about other countries and cultures. Foreign products are often considered to be superior to local ones.

One of the strong points about Brazilians is their readiness to work, if necessary, long hours and their willingness to learn about new technologies and products.

In general, Brazilians perceive Swiss products as reliable, high tech and high quality. The brand “Swiss Made” makes a good impression and facilitates the entrance of Swiss goods in the Brazilian market.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET**

Dates, numbers and measures

Date	Day, month, year; e.g., 1 June, 2023, or 01/06/2023
Currency	R\$ or BRL (singular: Real; plural: Reais)
Numbers	2.000,50 (two thousand Reais and fifty cents); point after thousands and comma to denote fractions
Weight	Kilogram
Distances	Meter

## Safety:

Politically Brazil is a stable country. However, criminality must be considered as an issue. Brazil has high rates of violent crimes such as murders and robberies. Although some regions show decreasing crime rates over the last years, Brazil is still one of the most criminalized countries in the world. Petty crimes such as carjacking, pickpocketing, and express kidnappings are common in the major cities. Most assaults happen in quiet streets, at red traffic lights and crossroads; but also beaches, public transportation and even restaurants have been places for robberies lately.

In big city centres it is therefore advisable not to walk on dark and deserted streets or to go out alone at night. Also unknown places and locations should be avoided if not accompanied by a person of trust.

The following precautionary measures are to be considered:

- do not carry any belongings of value on you that call attention, in general: do not carry anything you are not needing
- only carry photo copies of your documents on you. Alternatively, you can have another form of photo identification, such as a driver's license, and keep your passport in the hotel
- know where you are going, criminality varies strongly depending on the area and district
- only use ATMs in supervised banks and avoid getting money at night time
- if you are carrying a bag, put it in front of you with the strap laterally across your shoulder
- if you should be robbed, do not offer any resistance and do exactly as you are told, often robbers are only interested in one specific item, for example they just want your mobile phone while they are not interested in your watch nor your money

In case of any emergencies the most important phone numbers are:

- 190 Police and general emergencies
- 192 Ambulances, Medical Emergency
- 193 Fire Service

## Additional information to the market

- Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world and the largest in the southern hemisphere. It has the 11<sup>th</sup> largest economy (by [GDP](#)) and a population of about 214 million people. Brazil is home to the [seventh](#) largest grouping of people in the world and the largest in Latin America.

- In 2022, Brazil exported US\$ 335B and imported US\$ 272.7B, resulting in a positive trade balance of US\$ 62.3B ([GOV.BR](#)). In 2022 the GDP of Brazil was BRL 9.9T and its GDP per capita was BRL 46,154 (2022), according to [IBGE](#).

- The top exports of Brazil in 2022 were Soy (US\$ 46.6B), Crude Petroleum or Bituminous Mineral Oils (US\$ 42.6B), Iron Ore and Concentrates (US\$ 28.9B), Corn (US\$ 12.2B) and Bovine Meat (US\$ 11.8B). Its top imports are Chemical Fertilizers (US\$ 24.7B), Petroleum Oils or Bituminous Mineral Fuels (excluding crude oils) (US\$ 23.5B), Thermionic, cold cathode or photo-cathode valves and tubes (US\$ 11.5B), Organo-inorganic compounds, heterocyclic compounds, nucleic acids and their salts, and sulfonamides (US\$ 9.9B) and Machinery Appliances and Vehicle Parts (US\$ 7.6B). (<http://comexstat.mdic.gov.br/pt/comex-vis>).

- The top export destinations of Brazil are China (US\$ 89.4B), the United States (US\$ 37.4B), Argentina (US\$ 15.3B), the Netherlands (US\$ 11.9B) and Spain (US\$ 9.7B). The top import origins are China (US\$ 60.7B), the United States (US\$ 51.3B), Argentina (US\$ 13.1B) and Germany (US\$ 12.8B).

- The country represents the gateway to the Mercosur trade block, including Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (suspended since August 2017), as well as with the associated members Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guiana, Peru and Suriname, which together form a common market of more than 295 million consumers. In 2019, the member countries of Efta (European Free Trade Association) and Mercosur concluded negotiations for a free trade agreement in Buenos Aires, which still awaits the approval of the parliaments of the respective countries to enter into force. According to the Swiss Ambassador to Brazil, Pietro Lazzeri, there is still a long way to go to get to ratification and implementation, which requires efforts at the governmental, legislative and private levels.

- Regionally speaking, Brazil faces sharp differences in terms of economic output between its various regions. The economic power is concentrated in the southern and south-eastern regions of the country, especially in the State of Sao Paulo which contributes with 30,2% of the national GDP itself, although it only occupies 3% of total territory and accommodates 22% of the total population. Thus, GDP per capita is more than the double of the States in the North and Northeast region.

- According to the Direct Investment Report 2022 of the Central Bank of Brazil, Europe remains as the region with the largest stock of Direct Investment in Brazil in 2021, and Switzerland occupies the 5th place among the main European investors ([https://www.bcb.gov.br/content/publicacoes/relatorioidp/RelatorioID2021/RID\\_2022.pdf](https://www.bcb.gov.br/content/publicacoes/relatorioidp/RelatorioID2021/RID_2022.pdf)).

• Brazil and Switzerland have a harmonious and long-term business relationship. Brazil is the main economic partner in Latin America, responsible for 33% of Swiss business in the region. In 2022, Brazil occupied the 26th position in the ranking of Switzerland's most important trading partners (<https://www.bazg.admin.ch/bazg/en/home/topics/swiss-foreign-trade-statistics/daten/handelspartner.html>). On the other hand, among Brazil's main trading partners, Switzerland ranks 41th in the ranking of exports and 21th in the ranking of imports (period from January to November 2023 - <http://comexstat.mdic.gov.br/pt/comex-vis>). Around 500 Swiss companies are currently established in the country.

• Bureaucracy is still high in Brazil, especially within government institutions. Previous awareness, knowledge and patience are recommended. Brazilian Customs is quite different from the Swiss one. Strict controls and regulations sometimes make processes time consuming and complex. In order to avoid clearance problems followed by steep fines, be well prepared regarding export/import procedures in advance.

## Recommendation

No matter the differences in business practices and attitudes, it is essential that you are well prepared and have the financial commitment to enable a successful entrance in Brazil.

Before entering this promising country, obtain information on your specific segment of business. Consider who is already in the market, what the opportunities are, the threats and main regulations. The Swiss Business Hub in Sao Paulo or the Swiss-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce are willing to provide Swiss companies with the appropriate support.

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## Useful Links and Sources

List of Trade Shows in Brazil  
Trade and Investment Guide – Invest & Export Brazil  
Credit Rating Database  
Official Government Site

[www.ubrafe.org.br](http://www.ubrafe.org.br)  
[www.investexportbrasil.gov.br](http://www.investexportbrasil.gov.br)  
[www.serasa.com.br](http://www.serasa.com.br)  
[www.brasil.gov.br](http://www.brasil.gov.br)

Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics  
National Institution of Industrial Property  
Brazilian foreign trade statistics  
The World Bank  
World Trade Organization

[www.ibge.gov.br](http://www.ibge.gov.br)  
[www.inpi.gov.br](http://www.inpi.gov.br)  
<http://comexstat.mdic.gov.br>  
[www.worldbank.org/en/country/brazil](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/brazil)  
[www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/res\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/res_e.htm)

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