

BEFORE TRAVELLING

Money

Bring credit cards, US Dollars (the most readily exchangeable foreign currency), and, some (not much) travelers checks (optional).

Currency: The unit of currency is the “Real” (R\$) implemented as from July 1994. Notes in circulation include: 100 reais (R\$100), 50 reais (R\$50), 20 reais (R\$20), 10 reais (R\$10), 5 reais (R\$5), and 2 reais (R\$2). Coins in circulation include: 1 real (R\$1), 50 centavos (R\$0.50), 25 centavos (R\$0.25), 10 centavos (R\$0.10), 5 centavos (R\$0.05) and 1 centavo (R\$0.01).

Credit cards: In Rio there is little problem in changing other foreign currencies and there is an extensive network of ATMs. Most major credit cards are accepted in Brazil (VISA – the most widely accepted - and MasterCard; American Express, Diners Club - less accepted.) Your credit card may not work in cash dispensers, but those marked ‘Banco 24 Horas’ will dispense cash against most international cards. Non-ATM cash advances against credit cards are possible (e.g. at some banks), but the process can be complicated.

Please be advised that you may not be able to withdraw cash from an ATM after 10 pm.

ARRIVAL

Immigration:

Before landing, passengers are given a form to be completed and handed over to the Brazilian immigration authorities at the international airports. After your passport is stamped, the immigration officer will hand you back the form you have completed. Keep it **carefully** with your passport, **as it may be requested when you leave the country.**

Customs:

Visitors are recommended to declare to customs authorities articles such as notebook computers, tablets (and even gifts you might be bringing into the country). Duty might not be levied on such articles, however, declaring them on entry will avoid possible delay on departure. Duty Free in Tom Jobim International airport in Rio is also open to arriving international travelers. They are well stocked and prices are lower than in a lot of countries. Passengers in transit will not be allowed to shop.

Exchange:

You can exchange currency at the airport, where there are *bureaux de change*, (Casas de Câmbio), with varying opening hours. There is one agency of Banco Safra at each arrival gate (ground floor) of both Terminals 1 and 2 at Tom Jobim International airport, in Rio de Janeiro. It might be worth your changing roughly US\$50 into local currency, at least enough to pay for the cab to your hotel.

Hotels can change small amounts of US Dollars in cash and US Dollar Travelers Checks on the spot. They generally give higher rates of exchange and may have little cash at weekends. Better exchange rates are available from banks, but the process can be time-consuming. You will need your passport to exchange money. US\$ exchange rates are published daily in the newspapers (commercial and travel rates).

TIP: Obtaining change in Brazil is almost a daily hurdle. Ensure you have a good supply of smaller denomination bills (such as R\$2, R\$5 and R\$10), rather than fifties or hundred. Cab drivers, for instance, very rarely have (or pretend not to) change.

Transportation from the Airport:

We recommend that you take a pre-paid airport taxi (If you are coming with a colleague or more, it might be a good idea to share a cab). A taxi from the airport to the ZONA SUL currently costs about R\$ 100 and it takes about 40 minutes with regular traffic. Most operators (cooperatives such as COOTRAMO, TRANSCOOPAS, etc.) will ask for payment at their desks, situated just outside the baggage collection area, before you leave the airport building, and accept credit cards. Be prepared to pay extra for pieces of luggage carried in the trunk of the car. It is safest to travel by a pre-paid airport taxi rather than a metered common taxi. It is not advisable to use the shared airport limousine minibus services.

PERSONAL SECURITY ADVICE IN BRAZIL

Below are suggestions of some precautions you should take during your stay in Rio:

- Avoid carrying large quantities of cash and valuable objects (expensive cameras etc).
- Brazilian law requires that everyone **carries identification at all times**. It is advisable **not** to carry your **original** passport with you, but, rather, have a copy of the main pages (number, identification and visa, if any). If possible, carry some form of photo ID, like a Driver's License.
- Pickpockets abound, particularly on public transport and on beaches. Never leave personal belongings unattended.
- Expensive watches and large wedding rings offer unnecessary temptation. Do not wear them. Bring plastic/costume jewellery if you want to wear any at all.
- Do not walk alone on the streets, when it's dark or at any time in deserted areas.
- It is not advisable to walk alone along the beach or by the lagoon at night, even though these places are very well lit.

GENERAL TIPS:

Electricity: In Rio, voltage is usually 110 volts AC at 60 cycles. Plugs are normally two pin, fat or round. Most hotels have dual voltage sockets for electric shavers. If you are bringing a laptop computer, the telephone jack is of the American type. Check before you plug.

Clothing: For meetings, exhibitions, cocktail parties, a smart suit (matching outfit for women) is normal, especially in business circles. On other occasions clothing is relaxed. The seasons in Brazil are the opposite of those in the Northern Hemisphere. In Rio, it can be hot any time of the year, though most people stick to smart business attire for business and formal events, despite a degree of discomfort.

Climate: Annual average: 16°C-25°C. Winter: 5°C-20°C, Summer: 30°C-35 °C. The weather is mostly hot and humid in Rio, especially in the summer, and during this season, you should expect summer thunderstorms, which can leave some streets knee-high in water.

Water: **Tap water is not to be drunk in Brazil.** The safest is to drink mineral water. There is no need, however, to use mineral water for personal wash and tooth brushing.

Tipping: Waiters' tips are usually included in the bill (it is shown as "service charge", usually of 10%). When not included in the bill, recommended tips range from 10% to 15%. It is also customary to tip other attendants such as doormen, car park valets, supermarket hands etc. A tip of R\$ 5 is fine.

Social etiquette: Brazilians are generally friendly and relaxed. You may be expected to shake hands every time you meet or take leave of a Brazilian (even if you have met the person previously the same day). Among women, it is normal to exchange kisses on the cheek (but not a rule). Back-slapping (men) and hugging (women) between friends and acquaintances is commonplace.

Public telephones: you can make local, inter-city and international calls by buying telephone cards at the airport, from bars or some newspaper stands.

For instance, to call from Rio de Janeiro to the UK: 00 21 + 44 (country code) + area code + telephone number. To call from Rio de Janeiro to other cities in Brazil = 0 + 31(local carrier) or 0 + 21(local carrier) + city area code + telephone number.