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# *Health in Brazil*

## *Summer 2018*

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## **Study Abroad Program Guide**

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## DESTINATION: BRAZIL

*Information taken from Lonely Planet (2006)*

No country ignites the western imagination as Brazil does. For hundreds of years it has symbolized the great escape into primordial, tropical paradise. From the mad passion of Carnival to the enormity of the dark Amazon, Brazil is a country of mythological proportions. There are stretches of unexplored rainforest, islands with pristine tropical beaches, and endless rivers. And there are the people themselves, who delight the visitor with their energy and joy.

Brazil is roughly the size of the United States (excluding Alaska). It is a vast country encompassing nearly half of South America, and bordering most of the continent's other nations - Ecuador and Chile are the exceptions. After 40 years of internal migration and population growth, Brazil is also an urban country; more than two out of every three Brazilians live in a city. Sao Paulo is the world's second most populous city.

Following three centuries under the rule of Portugal, Brazil became an independent nation in 1822 and a republic in 1889. By far the largest and most populous country in South America, Brazil overcame more than half a century of military intervention in the governance of the country when in 1985 the military regime peacefully ceded power to civilian rulers. Brazil continues to pursue industrial and agricultural growth and development of its interior. Exploiting vast natural resources and a large labor pool, it is today South America's leading economic power and a regional leader. Highly unequal income distribution remains a pressing problem.

**Full Name:** República Federativa do Brasil

**Capital City:** Brasília

**Area:** 8,514,215 sq km; 3,287,338 sq miles

**Population:** 175,000,000

**Languages:** Portuguese (official)

**People:** 55% European descent, 38% mulatto, 6% African descent.

**Religion:** 70% Roman Catholic; also significant proportions who either belong to various cults or practice Indian animism

**Government:** federative republic

**Currency:** Real (R\$)

**Major Industries:** Textiles, shoes, chemicals, lumber, iron ore, tin, steel, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, arms, soya beans, orange juice, beef, chicken, coffee, sugar

**Major Trading Partners:** EU, Central and South America, Asia, USA

**Electricity:** 110/220V 60Hz

**Country Dialing Code:** 55

### **Climate**

Most of the country has noticeable seasonal variations in rain, temperature and humidity, but only the south of Brazil has large seasonal changes. The Brazilian winter is from June to August, with the coldest southern

## THE STATE OF MINAS GERAIS

**State Population: 16.143.322**

**Economy:** agriculture, industries, cattle raising



The relative isolation from European influence, added to the huge influx of gold and other valuable minerals, helped the local people to develop their own style art, which became known as Barroco Mineiro. Prime examples of this period are the richly decorated churches at the colonial cities, some of them preserved today as museums. The most important artist of this period was Antônio Lisboa, who became known as Aleijadinho. His statues and paintings are now highly valued by experts as one of the most refined artistic expressions outside Europe at that time.

In addition to art and architecture, there was an explosion of musical activity in Minas Gerais in the 18th century. Printed copies of European music, as well as accomplished musicians, made the journey to the area, and soon a local school of composition and performance was born and achieved considerable sophistication.

During the 18th century, mining exploration was strongly controlled by the Portuguese Crown, which imposed heavy taxes on everything extracted (one fifth of all gold would go to the Crown). Several rebellions were attempted by the colonists, always facing strong reaction by the imperial crown. The most notable one was the Inconfidência, started by a group of middle-class colonists, mostly intellectuals and young officers. They were inspired by the American and French Revolutions and Illuminist ideals. The conspiracy failed and the rebels were arrested and exiled. The most famous of them, Joaquim José da Silva Xavier (known as Tiradentes), was hanged by order of Queen Maria I of Portugal, becoming a local hero and a national martyr of Brazil. The Minas Gerais flag—a red triangle on a white background—is based on the design for the national flag proposed by the "Inconfidentes", as the rebels became known.



The people are considered reserved, prudent, relatively silent to the point of melancholy, but welcoming and family-focused. It is one of the most religious states, with a large proportion of staunch Roman Catholics and a burgeoning Evangelical and neo-Pentecostal population, with pockets of African magic religions. Kardecist Spiritism is also professed by a significant portion of the population, partly due to the influence of Chico Xavier, the main spiritual icon of Brazil, who lived in Minas Gerais all his life.

Minas Gerais is also known nationally for its cuisine. The cultural basis of its cuisine is the small farmhouses, and many of the dishes are prepared using locally produced vegetables and meats, especially chicken and pork. Traditional cooking is done using coal- or wood-fired ovens and cast iron pans, making for a particularly tasty flavor; some restaurant chains have adopted these techniques and made this type of food popular in other parts of the country.

Many of the appetizers of the local cuisine use corn or cassava (known there as mandioca) flour instead of wheat, as the latter didn't adapt well to the local weather. Corn flour is the basis for a wide variety of cakes and appetizers. But the best-known dish from Minas Gerais is "pão de queijo", recently introduced internationally as "Brazilian cheese rolls"; it's a small baked roll made with cheese and cassava flour that can be served hot as an appetizer or for breakfast.

Minas Gerais is often recognized abroad as the state where the footballers Pelé and Ronaldo were born and raised.

Many famous Brazilian writers were born in Minas Gerais: Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Fernando Sabino and João Guimarães Rosa.

## **SPECIAL NOTES REGARDING OUR DESTINATION**

### ***Climate***

Since it is winter in Brazil, it is best to dress in layers since it will warm up during the day and get cooler at night. Sweaters, windbreakers and jeans are fine for most site seeing trips. There will be some occasions when a dress or skirt for women and dress pants for men are appropriate. The weather will be warmer in some areas and students may be able to take advantage of the beach and wear summer clothes.

### ***Local transportation***

Transportation will be provided while we are staying in Minas Gerais. We will be traveling by van and the driver is an employee of the consortium of the two collegiate institutions in the state of Minas Gerais. There are many times that we will be touring small towns and cities and walking quite a bit. Many of the areas are



hilly and comfortable footwear is important. When there is free time, students are encouraged to travel in groups at night and use taxis.

### **Food**

Breakfast is light; bread, cheese, fruit and meats are served. Lunch is the heavy meal and dinner is light. The mid-day meal will be eaten in restaurants while breakfast and some dinners will be eaten with host families. In addition, there will be many occasions where we will be dining out for dinner.

In addition to the planned meals, there are restaurants and cafes everywhere in case you get hungry or miss a meal. Prices are affordable and somewhat inexpensive by US standards. There are also many familiar, and not-so-familiar, snack foods available.

### **Alcohol**

All participants in the program will be of legal drinking age while in Brazil. It is absolutely mandatory that every participant behave responsibly in choices involving alcohol, as the abuse of alcohol endangers not only the individual but the other participants as well. Alcohol abuse is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, at the discretion of the program director. However, wine, beer, and native drinks, *Cachaça*, are certainly a staple of Brazilian cuisine and culture, and can be enjoyed and savored in moderation. Of course, alcohol consumption is never mandatory and students should feel no pressure or obligation to participate in the consumption of alcohol.

### **Living Safely in Brazil**

Brazil is a beautiful country with a rich culture and friendly people, and reports of crime in Brazil are sometimes exaggerated in the U.S., but whenever traveling to another country, it is always best to be aware of potential risks. Generally speaking, taking the necessary precautions will greatly increase your chances of avoiding any unwanted incidents. In particular, carry small amounts of cash, dress down and leave expensive jewelry at home. Don't walk around flashing iPhones, iPads and other expensive electronics. Be alert and walk purposefully. Use ATMs inside buildings and before doing so, be aware of your surroundings. Be sure to work closely with your financial institutions to monitor accounts and keep your credit card in view when it is scanned at a point of sale. Do not exchange money in the street, instead use exchange centers in a bank or other authorized exchange agencies. Don't walk alone after dark and in particular, avoid empty streets, deserted parks or urban beaches, especially at night. Crime is most heightened in Brazil's major cities, so be especially vigilant when traveling in Rio de Janeiro or Belo Horizonte. Avoid large groups or events where crowds have gathered and note that demonstrations and strikes are common in urban areas, which may occur unexpectedly, disrupt transportation, and could escalate into violence.

We will be interacting socially with students and other young Brazilians from our host institutions. This is one of the positive aspects of this program. However, avoid going out at night with persons you do not know well, especially if other group members are not present.

For more safety information about Brazil, visit the following links: [Government of the UK](#), [Government of Canada](#), [U.S. Department of State](#).

## **USEFUL WEBSITES (IN ENGLISH)**

- US Department of State, Brazil Information:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/brazil.html>
- Tourism: [www.geographia.com/brazil/](http://www.geographia.com/brazil/)  
[www.lonelyplanet.com/brazil](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/brazil)

## THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

**John H. Stone**, Ph.D. is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Rehabilitation Science. Dr. Stone has been at the University of Buffalo since 1991. Prior to that he held faculty positions in Brazil for 17 years. At the University at Buffalo, he initially worked in the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Aging and in the Center for Assistive Technology. Since 1999, he has directed the federally funded Center for Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange ([CIRRIE](#)).

Dr. Stone is interested in international rehabilitation and the relationship between culture and disability. He is also interested in the process of dissemination and utilization of information, as well as the translation of information from research to practice. Dr. Stone directed the study abroad program, Health in Brazil, in 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2017 and will direct this program this upcoming summer, 2018. He speaks Portuguese fluently and serves as translator for the groups he leads.

This study abroad program to Brazil won the SUNY Chancellor's Award for Internationalization in 2004.

### Contact information:

515 Kimball Tower  
716-829-6739  
[jstone@buffalo.edu](mailto:jstone@buffalo.edu)

## ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Students will begin the program with orientation sessions that include an overview of the history, culture, and political system of Brazil, as well as information about its university system. Students are expected to log into their UB email in order to stay current with information about the program. This is especially important soon after acceptance to the program for information about ticket purchase and visas.

### ***Program Description***

*Health in Brazil* is an exchange program between the University at Buffalo (UB) and a consortium of two collegiate institutions in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. 2018 will mark the 13th year of successful reciprocal exchanges between UB and Brazil in the area of health and rehabilitation.

During most of the program, the group will stay with host families in medium size cities in which the consortium has campuses.

The program will include visits to nearby points of interest within driving distance of these cities, such as historical towns with their colonial architecture and art. The group will also spend several days in the city of Belo Horizonte, the capital of the state of Minas Gerais, which boasts a famous artisans' fair and brilliant soccer teams.

The program concludes with several days in Rio de Janeiro

### ***Course Description***

*Health in Brazil* is an intensive 3-credit elective course focusing on comparisons between health services in the US and Brazil. Students are not required to study the Portuguese language.

Once in Brazil, the academic program will include lectures on the organization of health services in Brazil, health care in the private and public sectors, a profile of the principal health care providers, university

preparation for health professionals, and the job market for them. Site visits are an integral part of the academic program, and include clinics, hospitals and community programs.

Since many of these visits will be to neighboring towns and cities, the field trips will serve the dual purpose of technical visits and opportunities to experience other locations in the region.

### **Objectives**

- Understand the trends in models of service delivery in Brazil, and their effect on the practice of health, including, but not limited to, medical, educational, community, and social models.
- Discuss the current policy issues and the social, economic, political, geographic, and demographic factors in Brazil that influence the various contexts for health care delivery.
- Compare and contrast the health care service delivery system in Brazil with the United States.
- Analyze and understand the role of the individual within the cultural context of Brazilian family and society. How does this influence the effects of physical and mental health, heritable diseases and predisposing genetic conditions, disability, disease process, and traumatic injury?
- Understand and compare and contrast quality of life, wellbeing, and health within the cultural and social context of Brazilian life.
- Exhibit cultural competence when interacting with persons from various cultures and backgrounds.

### **Assignment**

Students will write a 10-12 page paper, not including references, for their final grade in the course. Students are encouraged to pursue an area of interest that relates to their particular field of study. Students may contact the trip leader for assistance with choosing a topic or help with research as needed. The final paper must be submitted no later than October 9, 2018. Please submit the paper via email to [jstone@buffalo.edu](mailto:jstone@buffalo.edu). Five points per day will be deducted for late papers and no papers will be accepted after October 13, 2018. Students who miss the deadline for paper submission will receive a failing grade for the course.

### **Grading**

Students will be graded with a letter grade for the course. Expectations for students will coincide with their level of education and experience. Student grades can be enhanced or deteriorate depending on their willingness to acclimate and adapt to the study abroad experience. Frequent debriefing sessions will be held with the students while in Brazil, in order to discuss concerns or resolve conflicts, if necessary, accommodate needs and requests, and assist students with their assignments. Behavior that is appropriate for representatives of the University at Buffalo is expected. Behavioral problems are not anticipated but will be dealt with in a firm but fair manner.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students will be staying with families while visiting the small towns and cities where the consortium has campuses. Most host families will have at least one member of the family with some knowledge of English although this is sometimes not the case. The home stay will expose students to Brazilian culture and family life, and provide an opportunity for a deeper understanding and appreciation of Brazilian culture than would otherwise be possible.

Hotel accommodations will be arranged for students while staying in Belo Horizonte and historical towns in Minas Gerais, and the final days of the trip are spent in Rio de Janeiro. Same sex students will share rooms. Costs for the hotel are included in the Program Fee.

## ADVICE ON MONEY, COMPUTERS, PHONES, ETC.

### **Money**

You may withdraw money at ATM machines or exchange cash at currency exchange bureaus. Both currency exchange bureaus and ATMs are located in every airport terminal. Also, there are many ATMs all around Brazil, just like in any US city. In Brazil not all ATMs are connected to the international network, and not all ATMs are cash machines. To withdraw money from your bank at home look for an ATM marked "Saques" (withdrawals) or "Multi-Função." Also look to see if the machine has a decal with the international credit card symbols on it. That's usually a sign that the machine accepts foreign bank cards. In the bigger branches, where there are multiple machines, there is often a bank employee assisting customers who can show you which machine to use. As far as I know, all Citibank and HSBC machines accept foreign cards. Banco do Brasil and Bradesco branches are among Brazil's biggest banks and their ubiquitous local branches have at least one of their ATMs linked to the network. Once you insert your card into a linked machine you will get instructions in English for getting cash. However, some smaller cities may not have ATMs, so it is good to keep some extra cash in Brazilian currency. We recommend that you notify your bank/credit card companies and tell them you will be traveling to Brazil. Most banks question purchases and withdrawals made abroad and if they have not been they may put a stop on your credit card withdrawals and purchases.

Note that you may use a credit card for purchases in most stores in Brazil. The credit card will automatically convert the local charges into dollars on your statement, with a fee in most cases. In addition, you will have a written record, and you won't have to pay until the due date on your statement. Even though this is convenient, and highly recommendable, you may find that in Brazil it is useful to have some cash on hand. Street vendors and small stores only take cash. Most of your daily expenditures will be paid in cash.

Therefore, you will need some cash for these small day-to-day expenses. Our recommendation is to use an ATM to obtain cash. You get the bank's exchange rate, although there is usually a fixed fee per transaction. Before departure, find out how much your bank fee is per transaction and make sure your bank account allows for international withdrawals. Also, double check that your PIN number will work abroad! Not all ATM cards will automatically work abroad: some need activation. There also may be problems if your account is a savings account vs. a checking account. Make sure you contact your bank before departure. It is good to inform your credit card company that you will be in Brazil. Otherwise, they may interpret charges from Brazil as a potential credit card fraud and may suspend your account.

You may also withdraw cash from an ATM machine, if you use your credit card. For this, you will need your credit card PIN number. If you don't have a PIN, contact your credit card company and request one in advance. Processing a PIN number may take up to two weeks. Credit card fees vary by company so find out how much your credit card charges for ATM transactions. In some cases, it will be cheaper to use a credit card for a withdrawal than using a bank debit card, but this is not always the case. Fees do add up.

We do not recommend using traveler's checks, they are time consuming and not as practical as the ATM.

Do not carry large amounts of US currency, but have some as a back-up, in case of difficulties with the credit card. Do not get Brazilian currency in the US; you will lose a lot of money in the exchange. Plan on retrieving money from an ATM or exchanging cash upon arrival in Brazil.

In summary, we recommend the following: Use a credit or debit card whenever possible, and use an ATM card to withdraw cash as necessary.

### **Computers**

Inexpensive "internet cafés" are becoming more available worldwide and are widely available in most Brazilian cities. You will be able to access computers and email for a small fee. We often have access to computer labs on the consortium's campuses during breaks in our schedule. Some host families may also have Internet access through which you can access email, but please do not abuse this by tying up their computer for long periods of time.



Think twice before bringing your computer. Electricity is different from the US. You will need adaptors and converters, unless they are already built into your computer (check your instruction manual). If you don't take these precautions, you may ruin your computer. You may not want to worry about carrying a computer to several different homes in cities and towns either, and our recommendations are to travel light.

### **Phones**

Brazil has several rival long-distance telephone carriers. When making an international or intercity call, you have to select a carrier and include its two-digit code in the number you dial. Brazilian city codes are commonly quoted with an xx representing the carrier code, e.g. 0xx85 for Minas Gerais.

It is also recommended that you contact your cell phone carrier and find out what the fees are and if your US cell phone will work in Brazil. We recommend the usage of phone cards although in smaller cities international phone cards to call the US are not always available for purchase. Students have used their electronic devices to Skype while in Brazil at a very reasonable rate.

Note: Students are expected to respect the families they are staying with by not making numerous phone calls and talking on the phone for long periods of time. This behavior limits the students' ability to acclimate and become involved in Brazilian culture. Ask permission before using your host family's phone and keep conversations brief.

While you will want to touch base occasionally with your families and friends in the US to let them know how you are doing, please advise them not to expect calls on a daily basis. Spending extensive time on the phone, or on the computer, will make you a nuisance to your host families and to your fellow travelers, and interfere with your full enjoyment of Brazil.

### **Time**

Because daylight savings time runs from mid-October to mid-February, the difference between Brazil and New York is three hours in December and one hour in July. So there will be a one hour difference while we are there. (This is great for travel, since jet lag is not an issue in spite of the long overnight trip from the U.S.)

Brazilians are not noted for punctuality so do not be surprised or angry if they arrive later than expected. To them it is acceptable, so when in Brazil exercise tolerance.

### **Water**

Most homes have water filtering systems. It is recommended not to drink tap water and instead buy bottled water from reputable companies in sealed containers.

### **Food**

Avoid raw vegetables and peel fruit unless you know they have been washed with purified water. Buy food from reputable restaurants and vendors; be careful of food bought on the beach or street.

## **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS**

Tickets to Brazil are purchased after students have made their deposit for the Brazil program. In order to accommodate a large number of students, tickets will be on hold with the travel agent for a limited time, usually two days. Students will be notified that they must pay for the flight in full by the end of that period. (This is one of the reasons to check email frequently.) Students will need to have access to a credit card and provide photo ID or a passport.

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

All program participants must have a valid passport for travel to Brazil that will be valid for at least six months beyond the end of the program.

Dr. John Stone, Health in Brazil Summer 2018 Program Director, will work with students on obtaining the required visa to travel to Brazil and participate in this program.

## KEEP YOUR IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS SAFE

Carry all important documents, such as money and passport, with you on your person. One of the best ways to keep these items safe from harm is to purchase a holder that you wear under your clothes. These are available from most luggage stores or camping stores, and usually you can find two styles: one that has a string to wear around your neck, or one that has a strap to wear around your waist.

Make 2 copies of your passport and leave one at home with someone whom you can easily be in touch with should you lose your passport. Keep the other in your luggage, separate from your passport. This will help to speed the process in obtaining a replacement if it is necessary.

## ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

The Brazilian standard is anywhere from 110V and 220V, so it is a good idea to travel with a voltage convertor for any electrical equipment you will use. The most common power outlets have two sockets and most will take both round and flat prongs.

Voltage converters are inexpensive and available at most electronic and travel stores. Be sure to read the packaging prior to purchase and compare the capacity with your intended usage. Some AC power sources for electronic devices, such as those used for computers, may have built-in voltage converters. Check any AC appliances you plan to bring with you to see if they automatically adjust to the local voltage.

Regardless of whether or not your appliances need a voltage converter, you will need a special “plug” to fit into the wall sockets as they do not match US plugs. Many converters include the plug adaptor, but they are also available separately. You can buy simple plug adaptors that fit the Brazilian outlets and enable you to plug in US-style plugs.

## SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Please refer to the Study Abroad Handbook for information and tips on packing for a summer study abroad program. Here are some specific tips for Brazil.

### Guiding Principles:

- Traveling light is better than struggling with a lot of luggage! This can't be overemphasized. You might have fewer "outfits" to choose from, but who cares?! The ease and the extra mobility are worth so much more.
- Shopping is good and plentiful there if you ever decide that you need something else.
- Check with the airline for baggage allowances (number of pieces and weight).
- Bring a small bag to use for our excursions (a regular campus-sized backpack is ideal for this). This can double as your carry-on bag.
- If you can get by with a single suitcase, great! The airports may have luggage carts for free usage, but you will have to do a lot of carrying and wrestling with our own luggage at both ends of the trip. My advice: only one suitcase with wheels and a small carry on duffel bag or backpack.

- Pack your luggage and then walk around the block with it. If it is a struggle, repack and eliminate some items. You must be able to handle your luggage by yourself.

**Additional Observations:**

- Winter weather in Brazil ranges from warm during the day to cool at night.
- You may do a \*considerable\* amount of walking! Pants and especially shoes should be comfortable for this.
- The weather may be cooler in some areas of Minas Gerais. Plan accordingly and in layers. Shirt, sweater, and jacket... shorts, sweatpants or pants.
- Include at least one dress or skirt for women and a suit or sports coat for men for special occasions, i.e. formal receptions, special dinners, presentations.
- Although dress is casual for clinical visits, students should dress modestly. That includes no shorts, midriff exposure, low pants, low cut blouses, and uncomfortably tight clothing.
- Students are free to dress as they like for the Brazilian night life activities, the beach, or other informal occasions.

**Recommended Clothing:**

- Jeans and long pants
- Shorts
- Shirts - short-sleeve and long sleeve
- T-shirts for athletic use
- 1-2 sweaters, nice enough but functional for everyday use if cool.
- Light jacket for cool weather and rain
- Underwear and socks.
- Sneakers, sandals and casual dress shoes, good for walking. Weather may be chilly
- Are you going dancing this evening? A cool outfit
- Bathing suit

**Personal Care:**

- Shampoo and conditioner
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Comb and/or hairbrush
- Anti-perspirant
- Skin moisturizer and other creams
- Sun screen
- Make up
- Razor/shaving cream, if needed
- Vitamins
- Over-the-counter generic brands of personal first-aid kit

**Other:**

- Small organizer to hold passport etc, such as a "neck wallet" that hangs inside your shirt.
- Camera!
- Prescription medication in original containers
- Sunglasses
- Hat for sunny days and/or for light rain
- Addresses/phone numbers/etc for contacting friends and relatives

**Suggestion:**

- Include in your carry-on bag any important medications, contact lenses and glasses, a change of clothes and toiletries (liquids must meet airline size specifications). This is a just-in-case suggestion on the off-chance luggage does get lost and you will be more comfortable if you have all your necessary items with you. We have experienced delayed luggage on more than one trip to Brazil. Not having a toothbrush or a change of underwear after a long journey is not a pleasant way to start a trip.

## IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

### UB Study Abroad Programs:

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Director, Study Abroad Programs  
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Fax: +1 716 645-6197  
E-mail: [maryodrz@buffalo.edu](mailto:maryodrz@buffalo.edu) or [studyabroad@buffalo.edu](mailto:studyabroad@buffalo.edu)

### In Brazil:

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United States Embassy in Brazil  
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[www.embaixada-americana.org.br/](http://www.embaixada-americana.org.br/)

**Emergency (in Brazil): 911**