

How to

Obtain Visas for Brazil



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Appendix: Who must obtain a visa before traveling to Brazil

Notes: As a grammatical simplification, the visa applicant is referred to throughout this booklet as masculine. Readers should be aware that all requirements apply equally to applicants of both sexes. Also, the term "Brazilian company" means one established in Brazil under Brazilian law. It does not refer to the origin of the company's capital. The wholly-owned Brazilian subsidiary of, say, an American multinational is classed as a Brazilian company for legal purposes.

Overview

Knowing the procedures will help your visa application

Once you have decided to visit Brazil for pleasure or a business trip, or seek to extend an existing visa to remain longer in the country, you may face a certain amount of bureaucracy. However, procedures are fairly straightforward if steps are taken in the right order and at the correct time.

Documentation required to obtain a visa can vary from the simple presentation of a passport on arrival in Brazil for tourists of certain countries, to notarized documents such as an educational record, certificate of good standing, etc. for foreigners who wish to reside and/or work in Brazil.

It should be noted that this publication is based on legislation and procedures in effect in August of 2005, and is therefore subject to changes that may have been implemented subsequently by the Brazilian Government.

Where to start: The first step, before even thinking of packing your suitcases, is to find out from the nearest Brazilian Consulate which documents are necessary for your authorized entry into Brazil.

Tourist and transit visas are normally easy to obtain. However, temporary and permanent residence visas require an extensive list of documents. It is always wise to have a professional specialized in such matters to accompany these administrative proceedings, given the bureaucracy involved and the constant changes in legislation.

Brazil issues seven principal types of visa

This publication covers procedures for obtaining the first four types of visas, which are the most commonly used by the majority of travelers and businessmen.

Courtesy, official and diplomatic visas have special rules and are not dealt with in this publication.

Transit visa

This is granted to foreigners who, during their journey to a third country, need to pass through Brazilian territory. This situation typically occurs in flight connections where the passenger has to change planes at separate airports to proceed on his trip, or in journeys that involve different modes of transport. Obtaining this type of visa is usually very simple basically a case of going to the nearest Brazilian Consulate and presenting your passport and connection flight ticket.

When a trip to a third country is interrupted in Brazil for reasons beyond the control of the traveler, the transport company must communicate this fact to the Federal Police. They will authorize the foreigner's stay for the period strictly necessary to proceed with the trip. Expenses during the stay are the responsibility of the transport company.

Types of visa

Tourism

Brazil practices a policy of reciprocity with respect to tourist visas. In other words, Brazil requires the prior issuance of a visa for citizens of countries that make the same requirement for Brazilian citizens (see inside back cover). It is important to stress that it is not unknown for travelers to be barred at Brazilian airports if they arrive without a visa. While travelers arriving without the necessary visas may sometimes be able to arrange for emergency issue at the airport, this is not a right and it is within the discretionary powers of immigration officials to insist on compulsory departure on the next available flight, irrespective of destination. Therefore, travelers are strongly advised to take the proper precautions beforehand.

The tourist visa is granted to people who wish to enter Brazil for tourism or to visit friends or relatives. The trip can not be made for the purposes of immigration neither may the holder of such a visa work in Brazil nor receive any form of remuneration. A person traveling to Brazil on a business visit or to attend a professional congress should apply for a temporary visa for this specific purpose, rather than abuse the tourist visa status.

Validity - Tourist visas may be issued for up to five years, with multiple re-entries, for citizens from countries offering similar or longer periods to Brazilian citizens. However, it is important to note that this refers to the validity of the visa stamp on the passport and not to the length of the permitted stays in Brazil. When the tourist arrives at the airport or other point of entry he will normally receive permission to stay for 90 days, which can be extended once for an equal period of time. To extend the length of stay a petition must be made to the Federal Police Department before the initial period expires. The tourist seeking an extension of stay must hold a valid return ticket and demonstrate means of support for the subsequent 90 days.

The traveler who overstays his permitted time in the country is liable to a daily fine, plus an order to leave within eight days, coupled with the threat of deportation should he disobey such an order.

It is important to note that the initial and/or extension periods may be reduced at the discretion of Federal Police immigration officials. Also, an extension is permitted only once every 12 months, counting from the first entry.

Therefore, providing all other conditions are complied with, it is theoretically possible to spend six months of each 12 consecutive months in Brazil as a tourist.

Obtaining a tourist visa - Tourists visiting Brazil fall into two basic categories, depending on reciprocity agreements between Brazil and other countries:

- Those who **MUST** obtain a visa stamp on their passport **BEFORE** traveling and
- Those who may travel **WITHOUT** a visa, that is granted at the airport, seaport or border point on arrival.

Countries whose citizens must obtain a tourist visa before traveling to Brazil, are listed on the inside back cover. However, since these rules are subject to change, it is advisable to check with a Brazilian Consulate before traveling.

Those who must apply for a visa before traveling should present their passport at the Brazilian Consulate nearest their normal place of residence, showing means of support in Brazil and a return ticket. Consular fees may range from very little to US\$100 or more – the amount depends on reciprocity agreements and varies according to where the application is made.

Note that all tourists, regardless of whether they are required to seek a visa before traveling or may simply request one on arrival, must carry a passport valid for at least six months. Additionally, immigration officials may ask any incoming tourist to show his return ticket and means of support (cash, credit card, traveler's checks and/or other financial instruments). It is thus advisable to carry all such items and documents in hand luggage.

Brazilian Consulates

New York: Tel: (212) 827-0976
1185 Americas Avenue 21st floor

Los Angeles: Tel: (323) 651-2664
8484, Wilshire Boulevard, suites 711/730 - Beverly Hills

Miami: Tel: (305) 285-6200
80SW 8th Street, 33130

Mexico City: Tel: (55) 5201.4531
Calle Lope de Armendariz, 130

The "How to..." series

Buenos Aires: Tel: +54 (11) 4515.6500
Carlos Pellegrini 1363 5° piso

Frankfurt: Tel: (4969) 9207.4220
Hansaallee 32 a+b, D-60322

Paris: Tel: (331) 4561.6300
34, bis Cours Albert 1er - 75008

London: Tel: (207) 930-9055
6, St. Alban's Street SW1 Y4SQ

Tokyo: Tel: (813) 5488-5451
Gotanda Fugii Building 2nd floor 13-12
Higashi Gotanda 1-Chome Shinagawa-Ku
141-002

Note: This is not a complete global list. There are Consulates in most major capitals.

Business trips, fairs and congresses

The short-stay business visa is appropriate for the following purposes:

- Making business contacts, holding interviews, demonstrating samples, negotiating, etc.
- Evaluating markets.
- Making preparatory contacts that may lead to establishing a company in Brazil.
- Attending fairs, congresses, etc.
- Speaking at congresses, seminars, etc. (without local payment)

The validity of a business visa varies according to the nationality of the traveler and depends on international reciprocity agreements. Rules are basically the same as for tourist visas, i.e., the norm is a multiple re-entry visa valid for up to five years, with individual visits limited to 90 days, with one extension. As with the tourist visa, in any 12-month period a business traveler may not spend more than a total of 180 days in Brazil

Obtaining a non-resident business visa

Not all nationalities are required to obtain a business visa before traveling to Brazil. Essentially, as with tourist visas the position is one of international reciprocity. Those countries whose citizens are required to obtain business visas BEFORE TRAVELING to Brazil are listed at the end of this booklet.

Other travelers – those who are not required to seek prior issue of a business visa – can enter Brazil by showing a valid passport and noting "business" on the Brazilian immigration landing card, which is normally handed out during international flights to the country.

Procedures for obtaining a visa prior to departure are essentially the same as for a tourist visa, with the additional requirement that the traveler's home company must annex a letter on its headed paper explaining the nature and purpose of the trip. This letter should specify the duration of the trip and include a declaration that no paid activity will be undertaken by the individual in Brazil.

A few Brazilian consulates around the world still ask applicants for an official declaration that they have no criminal record.

The temporary residence visa

Brazil issues temporary residence visas under a number of specific circumstances. These have different durations (see "Length of stay" below) but have certain features in common. They involve considerably more bureaucracy than the simple tourist or short-stay business visas and they entitle the visitor to bring in household items, although these must be shipped out again on departure. Temporary visas are issued for a specific activity and limit the holder's ability to change jobs once in the country.

Temporary residence visa

The principal situations in which a foreigner may apply for a temporary residence visa are:

- As a business executive, scientist, teacher, technician or other professionally qualified person, under contract or rendering services to a company in Brazil or to the Brazilian government;
- To supply technical assistance or services to a Brazilian company, without a formal employment relationship;
- As a teacher, researcher or scientist of high standing;
- For a cultural trip or study mission;
- As a professional artist, entertainer or sportsman;
- As a welfare worker;
- As a student;
- As a trainee, seeking professional experience within a university course;
- For professional training;
- As a foreign correspondent for a newspaper, magazine, radio, television or news agency;
- As a minister of religion, member of a consecrated order or equivalent;
- To work in a project of international cooperation and
- For sports training.

Holders of any of the temporary visas mentioned above with a validity period equal or greater than 90 days must register with the Federal Police within 30 days of their entry into Brazil. They will be issued identity documents to be used during their stay. This registration can be effected only once the foreigner is in possession of the authorization for temporary residence, issued by the Brazilian Consulate abroad.

Immediate family can usually be included in the same visa application. See "Close family can normally be included" below.

Obtaining a temporary residence visa - businessmen

Where the temporary residence visa is for a business executive, scientist, teacher, technician or other professionally qualified person who will be under contract to a company in Brazil (including the Brazilian government), or will be rendering paid services without a formal employment relationship, the Brazilian employer initiates the visa application procedure by applying to the Immigration Coordinator of the Ministry of Labor. If the application is approved the documents are forwarded via the Foreign Ministry to the Brazilian Consulate within the jurisdiction of the residence of the foreigner, where the candidate of the visa will complete the remaining bureaucratic steps of the process.

For temporary work visas appropriate to the majority of businessmen, the following regulations apply:

Applicants who will be formally employed in Brazil will be required to demonstrate suitable educational qualifications and/or work experience. The Brazilian government practices a visa issuance policy based upon protecting Brazilian professionals and workers. Therefore, in order for a visa to be issued by the General Immigration Coordination section of the Brazilian Labor Ministry, the foreigner must demonstrate that his qualifications are different from or superior to those held by a Brazilian professional who would occupy the same position. Where the applicant holds a degree from a recognized university, he will be required to present his diploma and proof of two years' relevant work experience. Where the applicant does not hold a degree, he must demonstrate at least nine years' formal education and three years' work experience.

Note that Article 352 of the Consolidation of Labor Laws provides that all industrial or commercial corporations with three or more employees must maintain a minimum of two-thirds of Brazilian employees in their work force. The same applies to the total – payroll the salary paid to foreigners may not exceed 1/3 of the total payroll. Exceptions are (a) foreigners who have lived in Brazil for more than 10 years with a permanent visa and have a Brazilian spouse or offspring, and (b) Portuguese citizens.

Applicants who will not be formally employed for example, those providing a contractual paid service must provide suitable documentary evidence of the relationship, such as a

Cooperation Agreement, proof of purchase and importation of equipments and/or a Technology Transfer Agreement.

Note that university degrees, other educational diplomas, letters from current or former employers and all other such documents must be notarized in their country of origin and then presented to the Brazilian Consulate in that country for re-notarization by Brazilian authorities. Applicants are cautioned to allow plenty of time to complete the process.

Obtaining a temporary residence visa - other cases

For cases other than the business travelers listed above, a temporary residence visa may be obtained in one of the following manners:

- As a teacher, researcher or scientist of high standing - application to the Brazilian Ministry of Labor;
- For a cultural trip or a study mission - application to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, via the Brazilian Consulate nearest the applicant's normal place of residence. Applicants must produce a written invitation or indication from a private or official cultural or scientific entity, justifying the trip and specifying the length of stay as well as demonstrating means of support.
- As a professional artist, entertainer or sportsman - Concession of this visa requires that the person be contracted by an entity in Brazil. Application to the Brazilian Ministry of Labor in Brazil, by the contracting entity.
- As a welfare worker - Foreigners working for social assistance organizations may receive temporary or permanent visas. Concession requires that the person be contracted by an entity in Brazil. Application must be made to the Brazilian consulate within the jurisdiction of the applicant's place of residence.
- As a student - Application is made by the individual to the Brazilian Consulate nearest his place of residence. Student visa applications require a document that identifies the foreigner as the beneficiary of a scholarship at a specific institution for a specific time, possibly but not necessarily under a cultural agreement previously approved by the Brazilian government. Otherwise the candidate must demonstrate sufficient resources to support himself during his stay.
- As a trainee, seeking professional experience within a university course - Application is made to the Brazilian

Ministry of Foreign Relations, via the Brazilian Consulate nearest the applicant's normal place of residence. The applicant must be enrolled at a recognized university or intervening entity.

- For professional training - Application to the Brazilian Ministry of Labor. The applicant must be formally contracted by a company outside of Brazil or receive a scholarship. Holders of this visa are prohibited from exercising paid employment in Brazil.
- As a foreign correspondent for a newspaper, magazine, radio, television or news agency - application is made to the Brazilian Consulate within the jurisdiction of the applicant's normal place of residence.
- As a minister of religion, member of a consecrated order or equivalent - application is made to the Brazilian Consulate within the jurisdiction of the applicant's normal place of residence. Applicants require a document from a religious entity in Brazil assuming financial and contractual responsibility for their stay in and departure from the country.
- To work in a project of international cooperation - application to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, via the Brazilian Consulate nearest the applicant's normal place of residence.
- For sports training - application to the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations, via the Brazilian Consulate nearest the applicant's normal place of residence.

Length of stay

Temporary residence visas have different validations and conditions, depending on the reasons for which they are requested and issued.

Maximum durations are:

- As a business executive, scientist, teacher, technician or other professionally qualified person, under contract or rendering services to a company in Brazil, or to the Brazilian government - two years;
- To supply technical assistance or services to a Brazilian company, without a formal employment relationship - 30 days, 90 days or up to one year;
- As a teacher, researcher or scientist of high standing - up to two years;

- For a cultural trip or study mission - two years;
- As a professional artist or entertainer - 90 days;
- As a professional sportsman - one year
- As a welfare worker - two years;
- As a student - one year;
- As a trainee, seeking professional experience within a university course - one year, with no renewal;
- For professional training - one year, with no renewal;
- As a foreign correspondent for a newspaper, magazine, radio, television or news agency - four years;
- As a minister of religion, member of a consecrated order or equivalent - one year;
- To work in a project or international cooperation - two years, with no renewal;
- For sports training - one year, with no renewal.

Notes: The duration counts from when the visa holder enters Brazil, not from when the visa is issued. A foreigner entering Brazil to take up temporary residence should carry with him the ORIGINAL COPY of the form granting his visa and present this to immigration officials on arrival at the airport or port.

Extension: A temporary residence visa can be extended only once, for the same period as it was initially granted. An extension request should be made to the Ministry of Justice before the original visa expires. The following documents, among others, must be submitted: a notarized copy of the travel document (passport, identity card, laissez-passer or other); proof of temporary registration; evidence of means of support; and proof of the motives for the requested extension. In the case of a student, proof of enrollment and attendance should also be submitted.

Leaving the country: The temporary resident may exit and re-enter Brazil without restriction during the validity of his visa. However, the total length of stay will always be counted from first entry into Brazilian territory and periods absent from the country are not added to the total visa duration. If the visa expires while the foreigner is out of the country, he must return on a new visa, for example as a tourist or on a business visit, in accordance with the rules established for such cases.

Permanent residence visa

The permanent residence visa

This visa will be granted only to applicants who satisfy the requirements established by the National Immigration Council, the Ministry of Labor or the Ministry of Justice.

In principle, there are six cases in which a foreigner can obtain a permanent visa:

- The administrator, manager or director of an established Brazilian professional or business corporation;
- A foreigner who intends to remain permanently in Brazil and will invest foreign funds in productive activities, so absorbing or training specialized labor;
- A researcher or high level specialist;
- A retired foreigner, who will transfer to Brazil the monthly equivalent of a least US\$2,000;
- When the applicant is married to a Brazilian citizen;
- When the foreigner has dependent Brazilian offspring.

Business applicants will normally fall into the two first categories.

Obtaining a permanent residence visa requires the presentation of an extensive list of documents for each of these situations, besides the normal documents required from temporary visa applicants. Some of these documents are mentioned below. However, it is important that prospective applicants check with appropriate government departments. The process is handled by the Brazilian Federal Police for the Ministry of Justice but may also involve the Ministry of Labor, depending on the situation.

Applicants are advised that the process is bureaucratically complex and lengthy - many of the declarations or documents must be presented in a specific, legally-approved manner and notarized by specific agents or government departments. Most applicants find it worthwhile to seek the advice and help of a Brazilian specialist to prepare and accompany the application.

Immediate family can usually be included in the same visa application. See "Close family can normally be included" below.

Businessmen

Businessmen seeking a permanent residence visa will normally fall into one of the following two categories:

The administrator, manager or director of an established Brazilian company:

This category is designed to cover the need of a Brazilian Company to have a foreigner as its general manager.

Necessary documents for the first step will include:

- A demonstration that the Brazilian company is bringing in specialized labor that will transfer technology, increase productivity and/or bring social benefits;
- Proof that the company outside of Brazil or its parent has effected total foreign-capital investments of a least US\$200,000 in the employing company in Brazil for each visa requested. Proof of such investment must be given by demonstrating that the investment has been registered with the Brazilian Central Bank through the Electronic Declaration Register.

Where the employing company cannot demonstrate such an investment, it must alternatively be able to prove that the Brazilian company will have at least 10 (ten) Brazilian employees in the next two years and that it already has received an investment from its foreign shareholder of US\$50,000.

Administrator, manager or director of more than one company in Brazil:

If a foreigner needs to administrate in Brazil more than one company of the same economic group, he has to obtain an authorization, issued the Ministry of Labor, so he can legally accumulate more than one position as a general manager of Brazilian companies.

The following conditions will apply:

Proof that the Brazilian companies belong to the same economic group.

Proof that the actual employer and the general manager do not disagree on the application.

Notes on process: In both the above cases, the application must be initiated in Brazil, via the Ministry of Labor, in much the same way as an application for a temporary work visa. Once approved by the Ministry of Labor, the applicant must finalize the bureaucratic process at a Brazilian consulate.

Note that all non-Brazilian documents must be notarized by the competent authorities in their country of origin as well as by the Brazilian consulate that has jurisdiction over the region where the documents were issued. Finally, they also have to be translated into Portuguese by a sworn Brazilian translator in Brazil.

Note also that foreigners who receive a permanent visa on the ground that they will hold an executive or administrative function in a Brazilian company will be required to work up to five years for the applicant company, before changing jobs in Brazil. Failure to comply with this minimum limit will result in cancellation of the visa.

Other cases

Non-business applicants for permanent residence visas will normally fall into one of the following categories:

Researcher or high level specialist

The applicant must supply:

A document from a Brazilian research institution manifesting its interest in the services of the researcher;

A curriculum vitae and appropriate academic references and diplomas.

Retiree

The applicant must apply to the Brazilian Consulate nearest his or her place of normal residence. There is no limit to the number of dependents who may also receive permanent residence visas, but the main applicant must provide proof that they are genuine dependent relatives, as defined in Brazilian law - see Res.36 of the CNI (National Immigration Council).

The main applicant must prove he has a pension of at least US\$2,000 a month. This will entitle him to visas for himself and two dependents. The applicant must demonstrate an

additional US\$1,000/month for each additional dependent, over and above the two already mentioned, and must supply, amongst other things:

- A statement from the foreign agency responsible for paying his retirement pension, informing the total monthly sum of the benefits and
- A bank declaration authorizing a monthly transfer of at least US\$2,000.

Marriage to a Brazilian citizen

This case is covered by Resolution 36 of the National Immigration Council. A permanent residence visa is normally granted to foreigners married to Brazilian citizens. Application is made to the Ministry of Justice (normally via regional Federal Police offices, which represent the ministry at a State level) or to a Brazilian consulate abroad. Evidence of the matrimonial union (e.g. a marriage certificate, statement from witnesses) should be presented.

Immigration officials will effect a surprise visit to the couple's home to make sure that the relationship is not a "marriage of convenience" that has the principal purpose of fraudulently obtaining a residence visa.

Foreigner with Brazilian offspring

CNI Resolution 36 also covers this case. A permanent visa is traditionally granted to the foreign parent or parents of a Brazilian child. Application is made to the Ministry of Justice (normally via regional Federal Police offices, which represent the ministry at a State level). The offspring must be economically dependent on the foreign mother or father and be under the guardianship of the applicant.

Changing a visa category

Changing a visa category is normally impossible

The general principal is that a visa category may not be changed. Therefore, the holder of, say, a tourist visa who chooses to apply for temporary or permanent residence must initiate a new visa application process, which will follow the procedures detailed in this publication.

The following categories are an exception to the general rule:

- Scientists, teachers, technicians or other qualified professionals under contract or rendering services to the Brazilian Government;
- Members of religious institutions or orders and
- Relatives joining a family member (see "Families").

These groups may apply to convert a temporary residence visa into a permanent visa during their stay in Brazil. The change will be granted only if the applicant satisfies the conditions for the concession of a permanent visa (see above).

The application should be submitted to the Federal Police office nearest the foreigner's place of residence in Brazil, at least 30 days before the expiration of the temporary visa. If the foreigner leaves Brazil and returns after the temporary visa has expired and before his permanent residence application is approved, he will enter the country as a tourist, but without prejudice to his ongoing application for permanent residence

Close family can normally be included

Family Reunion

A permanent or temporary resident visa can normally be issued to include dependent relatives - specifically a spouse, aged parents and unmarried children under 24 - provided these are named at the time of the original application.

CNI Administrative Resolution 05/03 covers visas for partners. According to this resolution, a companion can be included in the original visa request or may solicit a family reunion as long as one of the following conditions is met:

- Proof of common living arrangements in a certificate issued by a government agency from the applicant's country, and legalized by a Brazilian consulate;
- Proof of dependency issued by a Juvenile Judge or the corresponding authority in the foreigner's country, legalized by the Brazilian consulate;
- Proof of dependency issued by the tax authority or organ corresponding to the Brazilian Internal Revenue Service, and legalized by the Brazilian consulate;
- Proof of common living arrangements for more than five years, issued by a competent authority in the foreigner's country, legalized by the Brazilian consulate;
- Proof of a child of both parents through the presentation of the birth certificate, legalized in a Brazilian consulate.

The normal practice is that dependent relatives receive the same visa type and duration as the head of the family. However, applicants should be aware that they may not receive permission to work in Brazil. This can frequently pose problems for working couples where one accepts employment in Brazil and the other is faced with enforced idleness.

Families

Uniting families

The Brazilian government may grant temporary or permanent residence visas for the purpose of allowing families to live together. This can typically include the case of a foreign family where dependent relatives seek to move to Brazil some time after the head of the family has received a temporary or permanent residence visa.

The following categories of foreigners may normally be considered, providing they are either dependent on a Brazilian citizen or on a foreigner who already holds a temporary or permanent residence visa:

- Unmarried sons and daughters under 24;
- Parents or grandparents of a Brazilian citizen;
- Brothers, sisters or grandchildren if an orphan, unmarried and under 18;
- Companion;
- Spouse of a Brazilian citizen or of a temporary or permanent foreign resident.

In the case of a family member seeking to join a temporary or permanent foreign resident, the application can be submitted only once the temporary or permanent visa has been obtained by the sponsoring family member. This is typically the case of the wife and/or children of an executive who moves to Brazil with his family on a temporary or permanent work visa.

The most common and recommended form of uniting the family is to include all members in the applicant's original visa application. If this is not possible, the applicant may apply for visas, citing CNI Resolution 36/99 related to uniting families. (See "Family Reunion" above.)

Documents required in the original visa application include:

- Proof of kinship (normally a birth or marriage certificate, notarized by a Brazilian consulate in the country of issue);
- Proof of the sponsor's means of livelihood and financial capacity to support the enlarged family group;
- A declaration from the resident sponsor assuming responsibility for the incoming family member during his stay, for his keep and for his departure from Brazil and
- A certification of a clean criminal record in the applicant's country of origin.

Note that non-Brazilian documents must be notarized by public authorities in the country of issue and then by a Brazilian consulate.

It is important to note that incoming family members, if approved, will normally receive a visa of the same status and duration as their resident sponsor. This means that if the sponsor is a Brazilian or has a permanent residence visa, the incoming family member will receive permanent residence. Because a temporary visa for an administrator of a Brazilian company is issued to facilitate the exercise of a specific function and does not confer on its holder the right to change jobs or seek general employment on the Brazilian market, the logic is that the incoming family member of a temporary or permanent resident (administrator of a Brazilian company) is not allowed to work.

Upon arrival – Documents for foreigners

Your first steps in Brazil

The first few days in any new country are normally spent getting settled. However, there are some bureaucratic steps that should be taken:

Register with the Federal Police: Should the foreigner already be in possession of his temporary or permanent residence visa, he and his family must register at the Federal Police station nearest to his new residence within 30 days of his arrival. This registration is a legal requirement and a necessary step to subsequently obtain Brazilian documentation for employment.

Register at the consulate: If a foreigner plans to stay in Brazil for more than 90 days, he should consider registering with the consulate of his country of nationality, informing them of his new address in Brazil. This procedure is not obligatory but may facilitate matters if ever the visitor needs a document issued or notarized by his consular authorities.

All countries that maintain diplomatic relations with Brazil have an embassy or representative office in Brasília. The United States, Germany, France, Italy and Japan and many other countries have consulates in major cities.

What you need to get around

The foreign tourist or short-stay business visitor does not receive any specific Brazilian identification. It is advisable to always carry a photocopy of the first pages of the passport (with photo, signature, etc.) and the page with the entry stamp, but the original passport itself is better left in a secure place.

American Consulate
São Paulo: Rua Henri Durant, 500;
Tel: (11) 5186.7000

Argentinean Consulate
São Paulo: Av. Paulista, 2313 - sobreloja
Tel: (11) 3082.8322

British Consulate
São Paulo: Rua Ferreira de Araújo, 241 - 2nd floor;
Tel: (11) 3094.2700

French Consulate
São Paulo: Av. Paulista, 1842, 14th floor;
Tel: (11) 3371.5400

German Consulate
São Paulo: Av. Brig. Faia Lima, 2092 12th floor;
Tel: (11) 3097.6644

Japanese Consulate
São Paulo: Av. Paulista, 475;
Tel: (11) 3287.0100

Mexican Consulate
São Paulo: Rua Holanda, 274;
Tel: (11) 3081.4144

Temporary or permanent residents are issued various documents to enable them to go about their daily business. These can be applied for only once the temporary or permanent visa has been granted. The principal documents are:

Identity Card: All Brazilian citizens and foreigners in the country (other than diplomats) are obliged by law to possess and carry a federal ID card. This document is obtained at the Federal Police station nearest the foreigner's Brazilian residence. It should be requested within 30 days of arrival or receipt of the temporary or permanent residence visa. This Card is the foreigner's principal document, and the basis of obtaining other documents. Note that Brazilians frequently call the ID card an "RG", which stands for "Registro Geral" or "General Register." Identity cards for foreigners look similar to those of native Brazilians but are numbered in the National Register of Foreigners ("Registro Nacional de Estrangeiros" - RNE). However, outside of specialized government agencies, both identity cards are normally referred to as "RG."

Work card: All workers are required to have a "Carteira de Trabalho e Previdência Social" or "Working and Social Security Document." This is normally referred to as a "Carteira Profissional" or "Professional Card," although in fact it is a small blue booklet. No company may legally hire a worker without such a document. All foreigners who seek to work in Brazil, whether on a temporary or permanent basis, must obtain this document from the closest regional office of the Ministry of Labor.

Tax Register: This is known as a "Cadastro Individual de Contribuintes" or "Register of Individual Taxpayers." It is obligatory to work in Brazil and required to open a bank account. The small card is known as a "CIC" or "CPF" and carries the individual's name and unique tax registration number with the Brazilian Internal Revenue Service.

Driver License: This is known as the "Carteira Nacional de Habilitação," or colloquially, the "Carteira de Motorista." Foreign residents may not use their national licenses in Brazil, but these will normally be recognized as a basis for obtaining a Brazilian license without taking a new driving test. In the case of a permanent resident, the Brazilian license will normally respect the validity and categories of the foreign license. Temporary foreign residents must renew their Brazilian license every six months, regardless of the validity of their original license. International driving licenses will be analyzed by the State Traffic Department, which will normally affix a stamp to the license recognizing a one-year validity from its date of issue.

Tourists and short-stay business visitors will find that regulations for renting a car differ from state to state. However, car rental companies may operate policies that

vary slightly from those required by law. In Rio de Janeiro State, police normally accept a valid international license as it stands, but require that a national license be accompanied with a translation made by an officially-recognized Brazilian translator. Regulations in São Paulo are that a national license is unacceptable, while an international license must be recognized and stamped by DETRAN, the local transit authority, prior to rental. In practice, major rental companies in both states will normally rent vehicles to foreigners on the basis of either a valid national or international license, but the visitor may face subsequent problems if he is stopped by traffic police.

Brazilian citizenship

Naturalization may be granted to foreigners who:

- Have permanent visas and have lived in Brazil for at least four uninterrupted years;
- Have permanent visas and are married to a Brazilian spouse or have a Brazilian child and have lived in Brazil for at least one year after the marriage or the birth of the Brazilian child.

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 stipulates that if a foreigner applies for and receives Brazilian citizenship by means of naturalization, then the Brazilian government will no longer recognize the original nationality that the foreigner is voluntarily relinquishing.

The Constitution prohibits discrimination between natural-born and naturalized Brazilians. The only exceptions are positions restricted to natural-born Brazilians: President and vice president of the Republic, president of the Chamber of Deputies, president of Senate, judges of the Supreme Court, diplomats and officers of the Brazilian Armed Forces.

A naturalization process is submitted to the Ministry of Justice, which analyzes the extensive list of necessary

documents. These include police certification of a clean criminal record; proof of the exercise of a profession or a document proving possession of sufficient resources to support the applicant and his family; official certification of good health and mental sanity (for those who apply for naturalization after one year of marriage with a Brazilian citizen or have a Brazilian offspring) and certification of a clean criminal record from the country of origin.

There are special procedures for the foreign spouses of Brazilian diplomats, foreigners employed by Brazilian consular offices and foreigners under five years of age.

At the end of the process the new citizen receives a naturalization certificate and can then request his Brazilian identity number, voting card and passport.

Portuguese citizens: Brazil is a former Portuguese colony and the two countries have a convention granting Portuguese citizens residing permanently in Brazil the same civil and political rights as Brazilian citizens, without loss of their Portuguese citizenship. This is applicable only to Portuguese citizens who have a permanent visa. The process for obtaining the permanent or the temporary visa is the same as that required for any foreigner.

About our sponsor

Consulting and legal services in immigration issues

Atene Assessoria Técnica S/C Ltda. is a legal advisory firm managed by Ziara Abud, a lawyer with post-graduate studies in international economic relations. She has 20 years of experience in specialized consulting services for corporations and individuals in Brazil and is fluent in English, French and Spanish.

Comprised of a professional staff of 18, Atene has developed a comprehensive service for companies, mainly multinationals, providing legal and consulting services on immigration rights and issues, including applications for temporary and/or permanent visas for executives and their families.

Atene also has extensive experience in helping foreigners obtain work papers, driver licenses and other documents in Brazil, after their arrival. The company's main office is in São Paulo. It has associates in the federal capital of Brasília.

Specific services include:

- Temporary visas;
- Permanent visas;
- Extensions of temporary visas;
- Transformation of temporary visas into permanent visas;
- Permanent visa for foreigners married to a Brazilian spouse or with a Brazilian offspring;
- Family reunions;
- Brazilian document applications for identity cards, driving licenses, registration of individuals as well as work and social security cards.

For more information about Atene and its services, please contact:

Ziara Abud
Al.Santos, 2441 6º andar Cj 61 São Paulo SP CEP 01419-002
Tel.: 55 11 3286.0655
Fax.: 55 11 3286.0655 - ramais 016 ou 019
Email: ziara.abud@atene.com.br

Appendix

Citizens of the following countries must obtain visas before traveling to Brazil

Business or tourist visa

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia, Botswana, Brunei, Bulgaria, Burkina Fasso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, China, Congo, Cook Islands, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Lithuania, Macedonia, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Northern Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldavia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Qatar, Kyrgystan, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, St. Cristobal, St. Lucia, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Sri Lanka, St.Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Twalu Islands, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vietnam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Business visa - Andorra, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Venezuela

Laissez-Passer with business or tourist visa - Buthan, Central African Republic, Comoros, Taiwan.

Câmara Americana de Comércio
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SP DF GO MG PE PR RS

Rua da Paz, 1.431 - 04713-001
São Paulo - SP - Brasil
Fone: (11) 3011.6000 - www.amcham.com.br