

## **Chapter 8- Lesson 3: Culture of Brazil**

### **Directions-**

- 1. Read**
- 2. Option 1: Take notes (key stats, facts, characteristics, issues)**
- 3. Option 2: Print and highlight**
- 4. Do not have to hand in, there will be a quiz on this next week- Open Notes.**

*Brazil's cultures have influenced many people around the world.*

### **People and Places**

#### ***What cultures are represented by Brazilians?***

With some 200 million people, Brazil is the world's fifth-largest country in population. Only China, India, the United States, and Indonesia are home to more people. About half of all South Americans live in Brazil.

#### **Brazil's Diverse Population**

Brazil is a mix of several cultures. Many people have a combination of European, African, and native American ancestry. Many are of Portuguese origin or immigrants from Germany and Italy. To a lesser degree, people came from Russia, Poland, and Ukraine. São Paulo, in particular, has a diverse population, including a large Japanese community.

Nearly 40 percent of Brazilians have mixed ancestry. This is largely because marriages between people of different ethnic groups have been more acceptable in Brazil than in many other countries. The largest group of multiethnic Brazilians are persons with European and African ancestors. People of European and Native American ancestry are a smaller group.

The smallest multiethnic group is persons of African and Native American descent. About 4 million Africans had been enslaved and brought to Brazil by the 1800s. Many escaped into the hinterland, the often remote inland regions, far from the coasts. The Africans lived there with the indigenous Native Americans or formed their own farming communities.

Today, about 80 percent of Brazilians live within 200 miles (322 km) of the Atlantic coast. After slavery ended, many formerly enslaved people left their homes and settled in other agricultural areas or towns. The northeast, however, still has Brazil's highest African and mixed populations. They also form the major population groups in coastal cities and towns north of Rio de Janeiro.

Most Brazilians of European descent live in southern Brazil. Indigenous Native Americans live in all parts of the country. The Amazon rain forest holds the greatest number, but about half of Brazil's Native Americans now live in cities.

## Crowded Cities

For most of Brazil's history, the majority of Brazilians lived in rural areas, mainly on plantations, on farms, or in small towns. In the 1950s, millions of people began migrating to cities to take jobs in Brazil's growing industries. By 1970, more Brazilians lived in urban areas than in rural ones. Today, 89 percent of Brazilians live in and around cities.

Sao Paulo, Brazil's industrial center, is one of the world's largest cities. Some 17 million people live in its metropolitan area, or the city and built-up areas around the central city. The central city is the largest or most important city in a metropolitan area. São Paulo and Brazil's other large cities look much like cities in the United States. Skyscrapers line busy downtown streets. Cars and trucks jam highways in the mornings and evenings as people travel to and from their jobs. People work in office buildings, shops, and factories. Many own small businesses.

## Favelas

Many middle-class urban dwellers live in apartment buildings. Others live in small houses in the suburbs, which are largely residential communities on the outskirts of cities. Wealthy Brazilians live in luxury apartments and mansions.

Most of Brazil's large cities also have shantytowns called favelas. Favelas are makeshift communities located on the edges of the cities.

Favelas arose as millions of poor, rural Brazilians with few skills and little education migrated to cities to seek better lives. These people could not afford houses or apartments. Instead, they settled on land they did not own and built shacks from scraps of wood, sheet metal, cinder blocks, and bricks. Some favelas lack sewers and running water. In many, disease and crime are widespread.

Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro have the most and largest favelas. Rio has about 1,000 of them. About one of every three of the city's residents live in a favela. Rio officials have tried to deal with this problem by offering favela dwellers low-cost housing in the suburbs. Many do not want to move because the long commute from the suburbs to jobs in the city can take hours.

**Analyzing** Why does Brazil have such a large percentage of people with multiethnic ancestry?

## People and Cultures

### *What is it like to live in Brazil?*

Brazilians get along well for a country whose population includes such a variety of racial and ethnic groups. This is largely due to Brazilians' reputation for accepting other people's differences. Personal warmth, good nature, and "getting along" are valued in Brazilian culture. These attitudes and behaviors are an important part of what is known as the "Brazilian Way."

Tensions exist in Brazilian society, but they involve social and economic issues more than ethnic or cultural ones. Ethnicity still plays a factor, though, because Brazilians of European origins have often had better educational opportunities. They hold many of the better jobs as a result.

## Ethnic and Language Groups

Until the late 1800s, nearly all European immigrants to Brazil were from Portugal. After slavery ended, large numbers of Italians arrived to work on the coffee plantations.

During the same period, settlers from Germany started farming colonies in southern Brazil. In the early 1900s, the first Japanese arrived to work in agriculture in the Brazilian Highlands. Many of their descendants moved to cities. The first Middle Easterners, mainly Lebanese and Syrians, arrived at about the same time. They became involved in commerce in cities and towns around the country.

The diversity of Brazil's people has given the country a unique culture. Portuguese is Brazil's official language. Almost all Brazilians speak it. Brazilian Portuguese is quite different from the language spoken in Portugal. In fact, many Brazilians find it easier to understand films from Spanish-speaking countries in South America than films from Portugal. This is because Brazil's many ethnic groups have introduced new words to the language. Thousands of words and expressions have come from Brazil's indigenous peoples. Dozens of Native American languages are still spoken throughout Brazil.

## Religion and the Arts

About two-thirds of Brazilians are Roman Catholics, but only about 20 percent attend services regularly. Women go to church more often than men, and older Brazilians are more active in the Church than the young.

Most of the rest of Brazil's population follows the Protestant faith. Those who practice Islam and Eastern religions such as Buddhism are growing in numbers. Many Brazilians blend Christian teachings with beliefs and practices from African religions.

Other African influences on Brazilian culture include foods, popular music, and dance, especially the samba. Brazilians blended samba rhythms with jazz to introduce the world to music called bossa nova. Several Brazilian writers have gained world fame for their books exploring regional and ethnic themes. Brazilian movies and plays also have gained worldwide attention.

Each February, Brazilians celebrate a four-day holiday called Carnival. Millions of working-class and middle-class Brazilians spend much of the year preparing for it by making costumes and building parade floats. Nearly all city neighborhoods are strung with lights. Rio de Janeiro's Carnival is the largest and is world famous. Elaborately costumed Brazilians ride equally elaborate floats in dazzling parades. They are accompanied by thousands of costumed samba dancers moving to the lively music.

## Rural Life

Family ties are strong in Brazil. Family members usually live close to one another. They hold frequent reunions or gather at a family farm or ranch on weekends and holidays. Life in rural Brazil has changed little over the years. Most rural families are poor. They work on plantations or ranches or own small farms. They live in one- or two-room houses made of stone or adobe—clay bricks that are dried and hardened in the sun. Their chief foods are beans, cassava, and rice. A stew of black beans, dried beef, and pork is Brazil's national dish.

## Urban Life

Many city dwellers are poor, too, and they eat a similar diet. For those who can afford it, U.S. fast-food chains are rapidly expanding in larger Brazilian cities. In general, people in the industrial cities of southern Brazil have a better life than people in the more rural northeast.

Life in Brazil's cities moves at a faster pace. Government services and modern conveniences are available there. Many workers have good jobs and enjoy a decent quality of life. Most middle-class families have cars. Poor families rely on buses to get to work and to the beach or countryside on weekends.

Soccer ("football") is Brazil's most popular sport. It is played nearly everywhere on a daily basis. Matches between professional teams draw huge crowds in major cities. Brazil's national team is recognized as one of the best in the world.

**Describing** Describe one element of Brazil's culture. Explain why that element of culture is important to Brazilians.

## Contemporary Brazil

***What challenges does Brazil face?***

Brazil has the world's seventh-largest economy. It ranks among the leaders in mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. These activities have produced great wealth for some people and a growing middle class. However, only 10 percent of Brazilians receive about half the country's income, while the bottom 40 percent receive only 10 percent of the total income. At the same time, 1 in 10 Brazilians is forced to live on less than \$2 a day. About 1 in 5 workers is employed in agriculture, mainly on large farms and ranches owned by corporations or wealthy Brazilians.

Brazil is a member of several organizations designed to promote free trade. MERCOSUR, established in 1991, is South America's leading trading bloc. In 2008 the leaders of 12 South American nations created the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

## Education and Earning a Living

Education is an important key to success in Brazil. College graduates earn twice as much as high school graduates do, and high school graduates earn four times as much as those with little or no schooling. School is free up to age 17. Yet 60 percent of Brazilians have only four years of schooling or less. These people have a hard life. They work long hours for low pay. In 2011 the government launched "Brazil Without Poverty," a program aimed at raising the standard of living and improving access to education and health care.

Seeking to create a skilled workforce, Brazil's government is trying to improve education at all levels. It has increased funds to build better primary and secondary schools. At the university level, Brazil has introduced the "Science Without Borders" program, which aims to send thousands of students to universities abroad, including to colleges in the United States.

## Connections and Challenges

Improving citizens' quality of life is just one of the challenges facing Brazil. The government is sponsoring a program to colonize the country's sparsely populated interior. Several highways have been built across the country. The most important is the Transamazonica Highway, from the coastal city of Recife to the border with Peru. To relieve poverty and overcrowding, poor rural Brazilians have been offered free land in the Amazon if they will develop it. Thousands have followed new roads into the Amazon Basin to take advantage of this offer.

Brazilians also have worked to develop the energy resources the country needs for continued economic development. Large power plants along several major rivers use water power to produce most of Brazil's electricity. In the 1970s, the high cost of oil caused the government to develop a program that substitutes ethanol, a fuel made from sugarcane, for gasoline. Recent discoveries of oil and natural gas off Brazil's coast provide the country with the energy it needs.

## Environmental Concerns

Programs to develop Brazil's interior have resulted in great concern for the future of the Amazon rain forest. Logging has long been a problem, as trees are cut down to sell as wood. The Transamazonica Highway and other new roads have increased this destruction by making it easier to get into the rain forest and to get the logs out.

The farmers, ranchers, miners, and other settlers the roads have brought into the region have become cause for even greater concern. About 15 percent of the rain forest is already gone, and the rate of its destruction has attracted worldwide attention.

It is easy to think that good soils must lie underneath tropical rain forests. However, this is often not true. The heat and moisture of the area keep the nutrients in the biosphere, that is, in the living organisms, particularly the plants. As a result, the soil is poor. When the forest is cleared for farming, the soil cannot support crops.

**Identifying** What are reasons for allowing development in the rain forest?

## LESSON 3 REVIEW

## Reviewing Vocabulary

1. What is Brazil doing to develop some of its *hinterlands*?

## Answering the Guiding Questions

2. **Identifying** In what parts of Brazil do most of its population live?
3. **Determining Central Ideas** How has Brazil's African heritage affected its culture today?
4. **Analyzing** How do education issues contribute to economic inequalities in Brazil?
5. **Argument Writing** Choose one challenge Brazil faces today and write a short essay suggesting how to solve it.