



José Medeiros

2. Brazil - The Environment

This fact sheet allows you to see how varied the countryside is across Brazil.

2.1 What is the climate like?

- Most of Brazil is in the Southern Hemisphere, where the seasons are the opposite to the Northern Hemisphere. The Brazilian summer goes from (roughly) January to March, followed by autumn (May - June), winter (July - September) and spring (October - December).
- The weather is nearly always warm across the whole country when compared with that in UK and so the temperature and the amount of rain that falls affects the trees and plants that grow across the country. Most of north and central Brazil has the same weather all year round, unlike the four seasons in the UK.
- Sometimes the weather is similar to our country – wet and misty!

See link at the end of fact sheet.



Luisa Ribeiro

WHERE IS SUGAR LOAF?



Renata Dias

CLOUD COVERING A HILLTOP

☺ In parts of the Amazon Basin, rain falls in frequent thunderstorms, flooding the land along the river. Silt is left over large stretches of the river bank and creates fertile soils which are rich in minerals.

☺ Look at the photo gallery for this sheet. Can you see different weather in some of the photos?

☺ However, the North East of Brazil gets less rain and sometimes suffers from drought while parts of the South occasionally experience frost and even occasional snow!

👉 Look at the site www.bbc.co.uk/weather for details of the weather in Brazil. Click on the city names to see the average weather conditions.



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2.2 What is the vegetation like?

DROUGHT IN THE NORTH EAST

☺ The world's largest tropical rainforest can be found in the Amazon Basin in Brazil. Just under half of the country (42% approx) is covered by rainforest while the remainder (just over half) is very different – grassland, pine forest, semi-desert. See photo in this sheet.

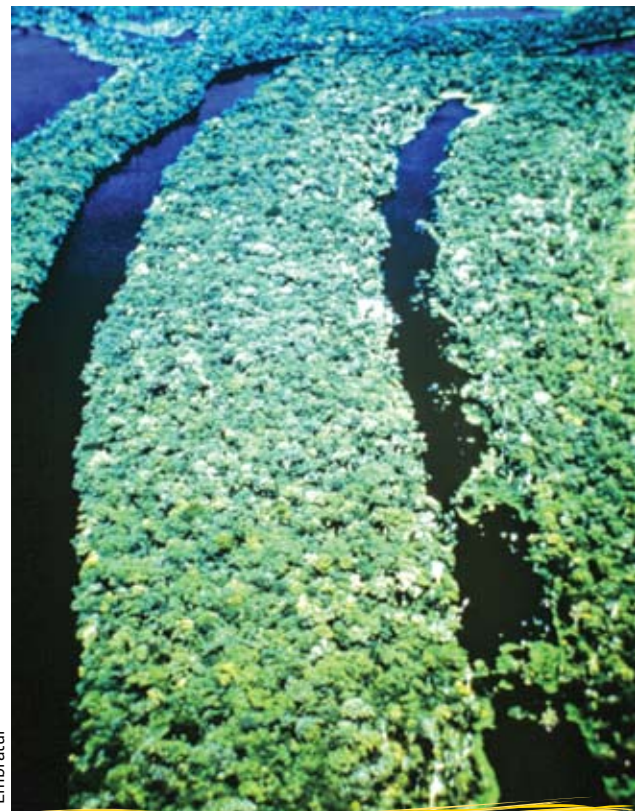
The country has five distinct areas of vegetation, reflecting the climate in each part. Here they are:

1. Rainforest
2. Tropical grasslands
3. Semi-desert vegetation
4. Tropical forests
5. Subtropical grasslands



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RAINFOREST FLOOR



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RAINFOREST

Rainforest

Over 2,000 different types of trees grow in the wet, hot conditions of the rainforests. The forest is made up of thousands of species of plants and animals and thousands of insects – it is thought to be the most diverse ecosystem in the world. There are different layers, with the tallest trees reaching heights of 50 metre or more. (Use Google Earth to locate the rainforest areas of Brazil.)



AMAZON RAINFOREST



THE PANTANAL



BRAZIL'S POSITION

Tropical grasslands

The centre of the country is made up of tropical grasslands with some trees and shrubs. The land is known as the Cerrado, where the typical climate is hot and semi-humid with a dry winter season from May to October. Towards the west of the region is the Pantanal, a swampland which is the largest of its kind in the world. The Pantanal floods during the wet season, submerging over 80% of the area. During this season the Pantanal water levels rise more than three metre with the result that fertile soil is created by deposits of silt, creating a good soil for growing plants.

Semi-desert vegetation.

The semi-desert vegetation grows in the hot, dry climate of the north east of Brazil. It is known as Caatinga and is a semi-arid scrub forest. There are two not very well defined seasons: one hot and dry and the other hot and wet. During the dry winter periods there is no foliage or undergrowth. The drought usually ends in December or January, when the rainy season starts. Immediately after the first rains, the grey, desert-like landscape starts to transform and becomes completely green within a few days. Small plants start growing in the now moist soil and trees grow back their green leaves. At this time the rivers, which were mostly dry during the previous 6 or 7 months, start to fill up and the streams begin to flow again.



Erika Tambke

SEMI-DESERT VEGETATION



Erika Tambke

CAATINGA

SEE THESE LINKS!

Weather across Brazil

<http://www.brazil.org.uk/brazilinbrief/climate.html>

Use these links to see the floods of April 2009

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8035132.stm>

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8033351.stm>

Tropical forests

The tropical forest grows on the coastal lowlands and mountains, which have high temperatures and plenty of rain. Towards the south of the country Paraná pine forests are found, and the pine seeds are popular as a winter snack. The spectacular Iguazu Falls can be found in this area on the border between Brazil and Argentina.

Look for them on a map and look at the photographs in the photo gallery at the end of the fact sheet.



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TROPICAL FOREST IN THE SOUTH EAST



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FOREST MEETS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN

Subtropical grasslands

The Campos is an area at the southern edge of the country. The term Campos refers to grasslands or pastures with vegetation cover comprising mainly grasses and herbs. Scattered small shrubs and trees are occasionally found, generally by the banks of streams.



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GRASSLANDS



Denise Kremmer

AN ISOLATED TREE

Photo Gallery



Nelson Lafraia

a sunny day...



Nelson Lafraia

...but not always



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Iguazu Falls



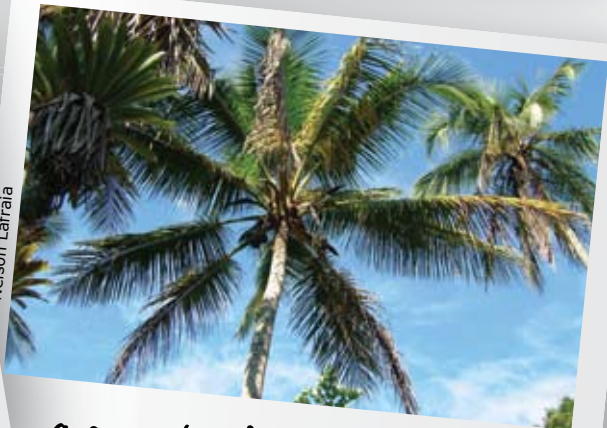
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Iguazu Falls



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enjoying the sunshine



Nelson Lafraia

a coconut palm