

The Brazil Playbook

An Insider's Guide to Traveling Smart,
Safe, and **Authentically**.



Based on advice from Ramon, a Brazilian native.

A Note From Your Man on the Inside.

“

Hi, my name is Ramon. I am **Brazilian**, and because I am **Brazilian**, I understand the country's cultural codes. That's why I am writing this article with complete honesty, pointing out both the positive and negative aspects... I will write this as if I were giving advice to a friend.

“



Play #1: Secure Your Entry

Your trip's tone is set in the first hour. Arrive prepared.



The Airport Zone

Airport prices are extremely high... three, four, or even five times more expensive than normal.

Tip: Bring your own snacks. Buy souvenirs in the city, not at the airport.

Arrival Timing & Location

Try to arrive during the daytime if possible. At night, it can be more dangerous.

! Insider Tip: For Rio de Janeiro, choose Santos Dumont Airport (SDU). It's closer to downtown and safer areas than the other airport, which requires passing through more dangerous neighborhoods.

Ground Transport

Give priority to apps like Uber and 99. I do not trust taxis very much.

Warning: Be aware of taxi scams where drivers charge double the app price. If you must take a taxi, "be firm. Show that you know where you are going."



The Ground Rule: Maintain Situational Awareness

**Brazil is dangerous.
But it is not a war zone.**

You will see people living their lives, enjoying the beach, having fun,
and many visitors say, 'Wow, it's not as dangerous as people said.'
You can have great moments, but it is not a place to let your guard down.

Your biggest concern as a tourist should be your phone.



Protect Your Primary Target: The Smartphone

Key Warning: Avoid using your phone on the street, especially if it is an expensive device, like the latest iPhone models.

The Social Trap: Yes, you will see many people in tourist areas... holding their phones... But as friendly advice, do not be careless. Those people are taking risks, because someone may be watching and looking for victims to steal from.



DO ✓	DON'T ✗
 Step inside a store or cafe to check directions.	 Walk down the street while talking, texting, or navigating.
 Keep your phone secured in a front pocket or zipped bag.	 Use your phone on public transport or in crowded areas.
	 Be careless, especially if you are alone.

Play #2: Master the Money

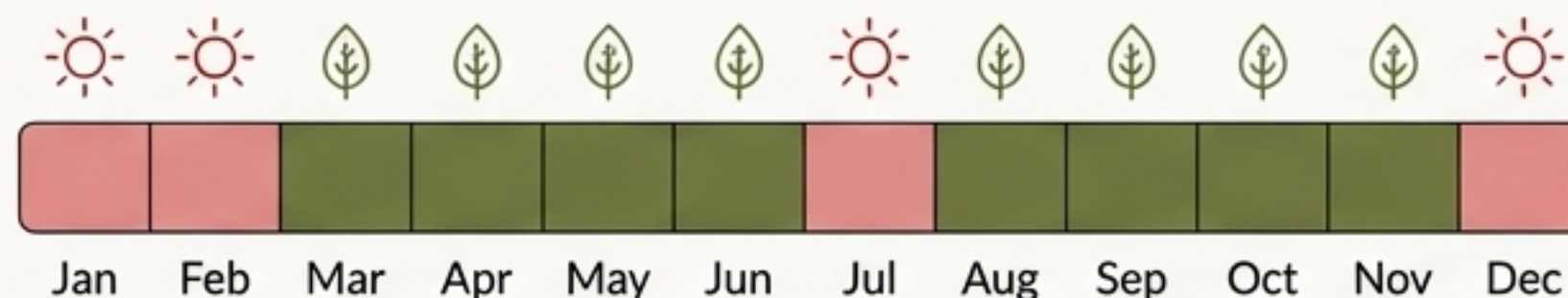
Understanding Pricing Dynamics in Brazil

High Season vs. Low Season

High Season (Higher Prices, More Crowds): December, January, February, Carnival (Feb/Mar), July.

Low Season (Lower Prices, Fewer Crowds): All other months.

Pro Tip: Always research before traveling... in some regions, such as beaches in the Northeast, it may be the rainy season [in the off-season].



The "Gringo" Price

Concept: Unfortunately, in very touristy places like Rio de Janeiro, if people notice that you are not local, they may charge you much more.

Ramon's Experience: I am Brazilian, but... because my accent is different, they can tell and may try to charge me more... For foreigners, it is even worse.

The Solution: Buy from places that clearly display prices. Beach kiosks usually have menus with prices.

A Field Guide to Common Scams

Rule of Thumb: You need to be firm when saying no.



Scam 1: The “Gift”

📍 Salvador

Some people try to paint you or put bracelets and accessories on you, saying it is a gift, and then later demand payment. Avoid these interactions.



Scam 2: The Fruit Market

📍 São Paulo

At the Municipal Market, vendors sell fruit at “absurd prices” using persuasive talk.

The Trick

The prices are often listed in very small letters per 100 grams (3.5 oz), not per kilogram (2.2 lb).



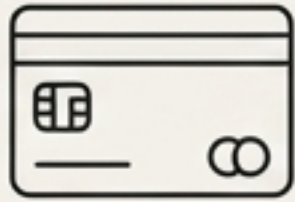
Scam 3: The Price Switch

📍 Porto de Galinhas

People agree on a price for a service or product and later try to charge more.

How to Pay: Cards, Cash, and Pix

The Modern Standard: In Brazil, cash is not used as much anymore. Many people use Pix... or credit and debit cards. This is true even for street vendors.



Cards

Where: Stores, restaurants, established businesses.

Benefit: Generally safe and convenient.



Cash

Where: Street vendors.

Strategy: "It is better to carry small bills and pay in cash." This avoids issues with change or card machine "errors."



Pix

What: A popular digital payment system.

Benefit: Widely accepted, even by small vendors.

CRITICAL WARNING: The Card Machine Scam

"Always check the amount before paying. I have seen cases where something costs R\$10 and the vendor charges R\$1,000." **Immediate Action:** "If you notice a very high amount was charged, contact the police immediately... to report it and try to block the transaction."

Play #3: Choose Your Base Wisely

Choosing where to stay is extremely important. Sometimes cheap accommodations can end up being very expensive in other ways.



✓ **Where to Stay:** It is better to spend a little more and stay in safer, more developed areas.

⚠ **Where to Avoid:** As a tourist, I would avoid staying in favelas or peripheral neighborhoods.

The Research Rule

💡 ****Problem**** "I sometimes see videos of people shocked after discovering that their accommodation is located inside a favela."

📖 ****Solution**** "This can usually be avoided with proper research. Use Google Maps, enter the address, and check the surrounding area." Brazil has huge differences between adjacent neighborhoods.

The Favela Question: A Reality Check

****Ramon's Core Advice****: "I would advise a friend not to visit." ****The Reality****: 'Favelas are poor neighborhoods... often controlled by drug traffickers, militias, or criminal groups, so the danger should never be underestimated. Anything can happen at any moment.' ****The Ethical Problem****: "I believe some people lack a sense of reality and end up glamorizing favelas."

"I find it disturbing when tourists go into favelas in vehicles that look like safari tours. That crosses the line into lack of humanity. These are real people living there."

****If You Must Go****: "Go with a tour guide and never go alone. Support the local community by consuming local services."

Play #4: Navigate the Night

Mindset: Even if everything looks like fun and parties, do not let your guard down.

****Strategy**:**



1. ****Prioritize Daytime****: Enjoy beaches, tourist attractions, and restaurants during the day. Be more cautious at night.



2. ****Stay in the Light****: "If you want to go out at night, stay in busy areas."



3. ****Proximity is Key****: "Choose accommodation close to where you are going out."



****The Greatest Risk****: "The biggest risk is leaving a busy area and walking into an empty one, especially late at night... Criminals often target quiet streets." This risk is multiplied if you are alone and using your phone.

Brazil for Adults: A Warning on Hidden Realities

The Dangers of **Adult Services**



Context: Certain adult services are not illegal, but “the risk for foreigners is extremely high.”



Threats: Foreigners have been “drugged and robbed, including having their bank accounts accessed through their phones.” These services can be linked to criminal organizations.

On **Parties & Substances**



Advice: “Avoid parties in favelas, dangerous neighborhoods, and illegal events.” Locals may know how to escape danger; you won’t.



Warning: “Many substances are illegal, and if you are caught with them, the consequences can be serious.”

Cultural Note: Debunking the Myth

“Many Brazilians, including myself, hate the sexualization of Brazilian women. Some foreigners think Brazil is an endless Carnival... That makes no sense.”

Clarification: “The people dancing in samba parades are performers and artists. It is not how people live their daily lives.”

Play #5: Read the People

Brazil is a large country, and each region has its own personality.



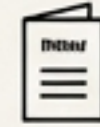
Savor the Flavor: Your Guide to Eating Well



Restaurant Types



Self-service / Pay-by-weight: Simpler, common options.



Menu-based (À la carte): "Usually prepare better dishes."



Service Fee: A 10-20% service fee is often added, but it's optional.

Smart Savings



The Two-Street Rule: "Eating right by the beach is usually more expensive, but if you walk a couple of streets inland, prices become much more reasonable."



Markets & More: "Street markets... are great places to buy fruits and vegetables." Supermarkets and pharmacies are also great value, especially for those with strong currencies.

Delivery



iFood

A very popular app in Brazil is **iFood**.

Your Brazil Playbook: Key Takeaways



1. Stay Alert

- Maintain constant situational awareness.
- Protect your phone.
- Know the risks of the night.



2. Be Financially Savvy

- Understand pricing seasons.
- Recognize common scams.
- Use the right payment method.



3. Research Your Terrain

- Choose your accommodation wisely.
- Understand the reality of favelas before you consider visiting.



4. Engage Authentically

- Appreciate regional differences in people.
- Savor the local food.
- Separate cultural reality from tourist myths.

If you follow these tips, you will save money, avoid unnecessary stress, and reduce risks, allowing you to have a much better experience in Brazil.
