

# INTRODUCTION

## introdução

Portuguese is spoken by around 190 million people worldwide, 89% of whom live in Brazil. Brazil, the largest country in South America, is the only Portuguese-speaking nation on the continent. Although the country is large, there's very little regional variation, so you'll have no trouble making yourself understood from top to bottom.

The Portuguese arrived in Brazil at the beginning of the 16th century. Speakers from the different regions in Portugal all brought their own dialectal variations. However, as Portuguese colonists came into contact with the Tupi tribes that lived along the Atlantic coast, the Tupi language, along with Portuguese, became the main languages of Brazil. This was mostly due to the Jesuits, who translated prayers and hymns

into Tupi and in doing so recorded and promoted the indigenous language. This situation did not last and the use of Tupi was banned in 1759 when the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil and Portuguese was instated as the country's main language.

Portuguese spoken in Brazil was influenced by Tupi and the Bantu and Yoruba languages of African slaves who were brought to Brazil through till the middle of the 19th century. Over a similar period, European Portuguese also underwent linguistic change through

### at a glance ...

**language name:**

Portuguese

**name in language:**

*português* **porr·too·ges**

**language family:**

Romance

**key country:** Brazil

**approximate number**

**of speakers:** 169 million  
in Brazil, 190 million  
Portuguese speakers  
worldwide

**close relatives:**

Catalan, Galician, French  
Italian, Occitan,  
Romanian, Spanish

**donations to English:**

cashew, ipecac, macaw,  
petunia, piranha, toucan

contact with French. Due to this divergence, Brazilian Portuguese today differs from European Portuguese in approximately the same way that British English differs from American English. European and Brazilian Portuguese have different spelling, different pronunciation and to some extent, different vocabulary. For example, in Portugal, the word for 'train' is *comboio* and in Brazil you'd say *trem*.

This book will ensure not only that you have the right words at your disposal, but that you pronounce them as a true *brasileiro* (if you're a man) or *brasileira* (if you're a woman). Need more encouragement? Remember, the contact you make using Brazilian Portuguese will make your travels unique. Local knowledge, new relationships and a sense of satisfaction are on the tip of your tongue, so don't just stand there, say something!

### abbreviations used in this book

**m** masculine

**f** feminine

**sg** singular

**pl** plural

**pol** polite

**inf** informal

# TOOLS > pronunciation

## pronúncia

The pronunciation guide used in this book is based on the pronunciation of Brazilian Portuguese common in urban areas. There are small variations in pronunciation throughout the country, but they cause little difficulty when communicating.



## vowel sounds

Vowel sounds are quite similar to those found in English, so you should be able to get talking with confidence. There are some differences of course: the *ay* sound, for example, is much shorter than the English version of it. But with every conversation you have, the sounds will become more familiar and you'll discover ways to make those same sounds yourself.

symbol	english equivalent	brazilian portuguese example
a	run	<i>camera</i>
aa	father	<i>padre</i>
ai	aisle	<i>pai</i>
aw	saw	<i>nó</i>
ay	day	<i>lei</i>
e	bet	<i>cedo</i>
ee	bee	<i>fino</i>
o	go	<i>gato</i>
oo	moon	<i>azul</i>
ow	how	<i>saudades</i>
oy	boy	<i>noite</i>