

Directory

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ACCOMMODATIONS

Brazilian accommodations range from battered, windowless cells to sumptuous, seaside guesthouses, with many possibilities in between. Nearly every *pousada* (guesthouse), hostel and hotel serves some form of *café da manhã* (breakfast). In this book we note only when breakfast is not served. Private rooms with communal bathrooms are called *quartos*. Rooms with a private bathroom are *apartamentos*.

For our listings, hostels as well as guesthouses where dorm beds or double rooms cost less than R\$80 are placed in the budget category. At the bottom end of this scale, cheap hotel rooms outside of major cities and resort areas sometimes cost as little as R\$40/60 for

a single/double. At that price expect a bare room with nothing but a bed and maybe a fan.

Midrange listings run from R\$80 to R\$200 and are usually comfortable but not stylish, with decent beds, air-conditioning, hot-water bathrooms and cable TV. The top end runs from R\$200 and up. Here you'll find spacious digs, with maybe a veranda, a pool in back and other amenities. Many midrange and top-end hotels have safes in the rooms for storing valuables. Note that R\$200 buys you a lot less in pricier haunts, such as Rio, Salvador and Búzios than it does at smaller, less-visited towns.

In tourist centers, especially Rio, it's wise to make reservations during July (school holidays), and from Christmas to Carnaval. The same holds for any vacation mecca (eg Búzios, Ilha Bela, Morro de São Paulo) on weekends, and anywhere during major festivals. For prime peak times (eg Carnaval), try to make contact months ahead. Many places allow you to book online, which can save you 30% or more. In Rio you can score discount rates by booking through reputable local outfits, such as www.ipanema.com and riocharm.com.br.

Camping

Camping has limited popularity in Brazil but is a viable alternative in some parts of the country for those wanting to explore national or state parks. Obviously, you'll need your own tent and other necessary gear. The biggest concern is safety. Many camping grounds are near urban areas and it's unwise to camp in these spots, unless trustworthy locals have assured you it's safe.

The **Camping Clube do Brasil** (Map p138; ☎ 0xx21-2532 0203; www.campingclube.com.br, in Portuguese;

BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodations reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels. You'll find the true, insider low-down on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

PRACTICALITIES

- The biggest Portuguese-language daily newspapers are *Jornal do Brasil* (www.jbonline.com.br) and *O Globo* (www.globo.com.br), both from Rio, and *O Estado de São Paulo* and *Folha de São Paulo*, out of São Paulo. The weekly *Veja* is a current-affairs magazine, and in Rio and São Paulo it comes with a good pullout guide to what's happening locally.
- TV programming revolves around sports, comedy shows and the nightly *telenovelas* (soap operas). *O Globo* is the largest nationwide TV network.
- Brazil uses the PAL system for video/DVD.
- Electrical current is not standardized in Brazil and can be almost anywhere between 110V and 220V. The most common power points have two sockets, and most will take both round and flat prongs. Carry a converter and use a surge protector with electrical equipment.
- Brazilians use the metric system for weights and measures.

29th fl, Rua Senador Dantas 75, Centro, Rio de Janeiro) operates several dozen camping grounds as far apart as Fortaleza and Porto Alegre. Check its website for info.

Hostels

Youth hostels in Brazil are called *albergues da juventude*. The HI-affiliated **Federação Brasileira de Albergues da Juventude** (FBAJ; www.hostel.org.br) has more than 90 hostels in the country, most with links on the website. There are also scores of private hostels. Rio is by far the country's hostel capital, with more than three dozen at last count. Quality varies considerably, but they're generally good places to meet Brazilian and foreign travelers.

A dorm bed in a FBAJ hostel costs between R\$20 and R\$45 per person. At HI-hostels, nonmembers usually pay around 20% extra, but you can buy an HI guest card for R\$40 at many hostels and at youth hostel association offices in Brazil.

Hotels

Brazil's hotels range from the good, modern and luxurious, to shabby and moldy. At the more expensive places, taxes of 15% are often added to the price. Always ask for prices, as they're often lower than posted prices. Also it never hurts to ask '*Tem desconto?*' ('Is there a discount?'), which might net a small saving. Prices typically rise by 30% to 40% during the high season, and room rates double or even triple during Carnival and around New Year's Eve. Hotels in business-oriented cities such as São Paulo, Curitiba, Porto Alegre and Brasília usually give discounts for stays on weekends.

Jungle Lodges

One popular type of remote-area accommodations is the jungle lodge, which caters to tourists in or on the edge of the forest. Though sometimes pricey, you're paying for the experience of lodging in the rain forest, rather than amenities – which are midrange at best. All the same, some lodges do have options for different budgets, eg an area for hammocks and shared toilets, and an area with private rooms with en suites. Naturally, the setting is considerably more exotic as is the architecture (they're usually made of wood and often stand on stilts). The largest number of jungle lodges are found outside of Manaus.

Pousadas

A pousada typically means a small family-owned guesthouse, though some hotels call themselves 'pousadas' to improve their charm quotient. Rustic pousadas can cost as little as R\$60/90 per single/double and as much as R\$500 for a lavish double – breakfast is typically included in these rates.

Rental Accommodations

It's possible to rent holiday, short- or long-term apartments through a number of sources. Real-estate agencies in most large cities will be able to provide information on rentals for foreigners. The best bet is to speak to other foreigners in Brazil to get an idea of current prices, which vary from city to city. In the classified real-estate sections of newspapers, apartments are usually listed under *temporada* or *apartamentos para aluguel*. If you just want a room in someone else's house or apartment, look under *vaga* or *quarto*.