

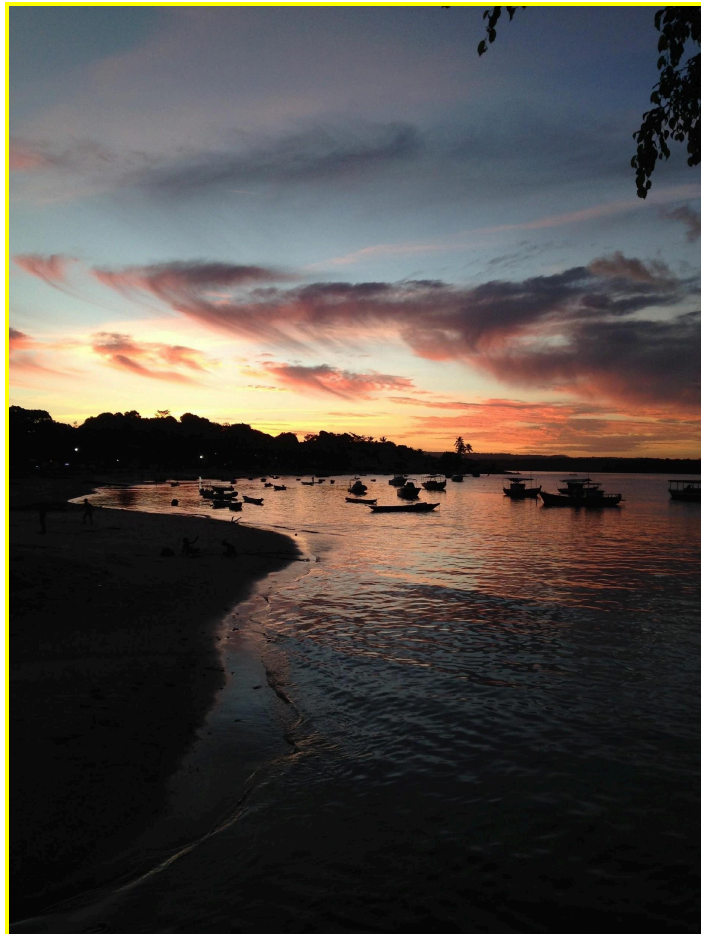


Student Handbook

Sustainability in Brazil

Amazonas & Bahia, Brazil

Maymester 2023



Sustainability in Brazil Handbook

Welcome to study abroad through CU Boulder! We are looking forward to sharing wonderful new experiences abroad together.

You will find these resources helpful as you prepare and while you are abroad. Read all information you receive from CU Boulder carefully and ensure access to it while abroad by saving as a PDF or revisiting the website. You may wish to share this information with your family and/or friends.

Along with this program-specific handbook, you should also study the information provided by CU Boulder Education Abroad program.

amadei@colorado.edu

Program Directors

Dr. Colleen Scanlan Lyons

colleen.scanlanlyons@colorado.edu

Dr. Peter Newton

peter.newton@colorado.edu

Dr. Bernard Amadei

PLANNING FOR YOUR TRIP

Program Dates & Flights

You are responsible for booking your flights to/from Brazil (although **do NOT book your flights until you are instructed to do so**). You will receive detailed instructions regarding the flights, but it is your responsibility to actually book them.

Arrive in Manaus, Amazonas by the night of Saturday May 20th, 2023.

Program ends: morning of June 3rd, 2023 in Itacaré or Ilhéus, Bahia.

Travel before and after the program

You are free to depart Brazil later than the dates posted above, but will have to make your own lodging arrangements for non-program dates.

You are welcome to coordinate plans with other students. Travel with another student is fun, and lends a certain amount of support.

Arrival & Departure Information

Please read and print a copy to put in your carry-on bag.

Immigration forms and process

1. In flight, you may be given an immigration form. **If so, mark "tourism" as the purpose of your trip.** Lower down on the form, there is a box that says "RNE Number" with instructions above it that says

"Everyone required to complete". This is for permanent foreign residents – so you can leave this blank. **You may well not be offered a form – they have begun phasing this out.**

2. You may also be offered a customs form for those carrying over \$500 of goods. This only applies to individuals who plan to sell (or give gifts) above \$500 in value. You should not plan on this and thus won't need to fill out this form.
3. On arrival, you will walk through the airport to Immigration. Use the lines for foreigners "*estrangeiros*", or marked "non-Brazilian citizens." (There may be folks in yellow vests who speak English if you're uncertain which line is which).
4. Give your passport and immigration form to the immigration officer. They will stamp and return the form. *Important: keep this paperwork with your passport, as you will need to surrender it on departure (there's a fine if you lose it). **If asked about the purpose of your trip, remember to say tourism.**
5. Once out of immigration and into baggage claim, there are bathrooms if needed. Do not drink tap water in the airport nor use it to brush your teeth.
6. In baggage claim, pick up your luggage if you checked any (luggage carts are usually free). Proceed through the customs line "no goods to declare". You could be pulled aside for a random check of your bags. No need to worry as long as you've followed all the advice about packing.

Connecting to your Manaus flight (if relevant)

Make sure that you are at the right airport (e.g., there are two major airports in both São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro), and that you are at the right terminal (e.g., for domestic flights). Leave plenty of time to find the right airline checkin desks, and to clear security.

Most of you will have enough time in a major city airport to draw cash from an ATM (or to change money from US dollars to Brazilian real). This would be a good time to make sure you have enough cash for the first week of the trip; it will be difficult to find ATMs or change money in Amazonas.

Arriving into Manaus

1. After de-boarding the plane, proceed to baggage claim. Use the restroom as needed, but remember not to drink the water!
2. Make your way into the main arrival area of the airport, where you will be met by a bus to take you to the hotel in Manaus. When you exit the luggage area there will be a sign marked "Universidade de Colorado."

Visas

If you are traveling on a US passport, you do not need a visa to enter Brazil. If you do not have US citizenship, check the Brazilian visa requirements for your nationality. Be aware that the visa application process can be long (several weeks to more than a month), complicated, and may entail substantial fees.

Once you have been provided with detailed visa instructions, it is your responsibility to follow them carefully and in the recommended timeline.

PACKING SUGGESTIONS

Since you will only be traveling for a short time, we would like to stress that you should pack as lightly as possible! A daypack plus a light, easily carried suitcase would be ideal.

You will need to be able to carry all of your belongings. Your travel to and fro will be more enjoyable if you are not carting too many things with you. Also, you can buy essentials that you have forgotten in Brazil if need be. You really can get by with very little.

Lost Luggage

If you are missing a bag upon arrival into Brazil do not panic. You will be instructed to file a claim with the Lost Luggage Office. Be prepared to describe your bag and to leave your luggage keys if you have locks as the bags will clear customs in Brazil without you. Most airlines will deliver your bags to you in a few days—check if they will charge you for this (it usually depends on whether they agree it was their fault). If you do not check a bag, this can't happen!

You should plan to take at least one change of clothing with you in your carry-on luggage, as well as essential items such as your contact lens solution and any prescription medications.

For this reason, and as we will be up the river early on in the trip we strongly recommend carry on luggage! We have found a roller suitcase or duffle bag plus a backpack (which can sit on top if hard luggage) works well.

Adapters

In Brazil, wall sockets are configured differently and are incompatible with American plugs. Wall sockets are either type C (two holes) or type N (three holes), depending on the age of the building and the region. **You will need to pack a travel adapter** that adjusts your electronics for different socket types. Note that type C plugs will work in type N sockets, but not vice versa. See, for example: <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/us/brazil/>.

You may also want to bring a **surge protector** to shield your electronic devices against power surges.



Converters

In Brazil, the voltage varies but is often different than in the U.S. (120 in US vs. 220 often used in Brazil). Thus, an electrical converter is required for items such as hair dryers, hair straighteners, or electric razors. We do NOT recommend that you purchase an electrical converter to use with these items, since the wattage and volts do not always convert correctly and can damage your appliance or the hotel's electrical supply. It would be best not to bring appliances that require a converter. You could also purchase an appliance upon arrival or buy a special kind at a travel store that has built-in convertibility.

Most chargers for laptops, tablets, cell phones, and digital cameras have an automatic voltage converter, but double-check the charger to make sure (it should indicate this somewhere and may have a large “box” on the plug or somewhere along the cord). If it contains a converter, then you simply need an adapter for the different wall sockets in Brazil.

Clothing

Forest and beach areas can get very warm and humid. As Brazil is a tropical country it may rain quite a bit and sidewalks can get slick. Refer to the section on weather or a guidebook for more climate specific information.

Tourists are especially conspicuous in foreign countries, so use common sense when you are out on the town. Try not to make yourself a target by sticking out and drawing unwanted attention. A person wearing a sports team sweatshirt, carrying a camera, and talking loudly may stick out more than one who dresses and acts like the locals.

Here are a few words on dressing in Brazil:

- In general, people dress up a bit more in the cities, while on the coast and outside of the cities dress is much more relaxed. For example, in Manaus if going to an official meeting people dress quite nicely while in the Amazonian river towns, or Ilhéus, people are much more casual. Light fabrics that dry quickly (shorts and skirts and pants) are all fine. Please bring one “nice” outfit – we can’t guarantee you will use it but it is good to have if we meet governmental officials.
- In city centers (Manaus, Ilhéus) you can wear a pair of nice shoes OR if you are walking around the port area can wear flip flops or tennis shoes. Bring one pair of shoes that is good for walking in the forest (running shoes are fine, you don’t need boots). Water sandals can be good but aren’t necessary as people generally wear flip flops on the beaches and they are cheap to buy in Brazil.

Suggestions to pack in your backpack

- Medications in original containers
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Hand sanitizer
- Contact lens equipment
- Malaria prophylaxis (Malarone is generally what we have taken)
- Books, IPod, computer
- Sweatshirt or coat for plane and scarf (if you like scarves)
- Essential documents: passport/visa, flight itineraries, emergency contact information
- Insurance information
- Credit cards
- Extra copies of ID, passport, visa, credit cards, insurance
- US cash (\$50-\$100)
- Travel neck pillow, earplugs, or other travel comforts
- Notebook and pen

Suggestions to pack in your main bag (whether checked or carry-on)

- Toiletries
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Make-up/hair accessories (please note there will be little time or reason to do a whole lot of this due to weather conditions, our daily activities and lack of outlets. We suggest that you go light here!)
- Travel-sized shampoo, conditioner, soap, mouthwash (you can purchase more upon arrival) – biodegradable if possible
- Daypack

- Small over-the shoulder purse (for going out at night)
 - Camera and accessories
 - Batteries as needed
 - Adapter
 - Flashlight/headlamp
 - Journal
 - Pens and pencils
 - Ziploc bags (to keep things dry)
 - Gifts for Brazilians – e.g. unique Colorado items: postcards, chocolates, hats, stationery, a children’s book
 - Hat
 - Sunglasses
 - Water bottle
 - Travel towel (every hotel and boat should provide one, but a small personal one may be smart)
 - Underwear
 - Socks
 - T-shirts
 - 1-2 nice dress up outfits
 - Few pairs of shorts and tops
 - Casual wear (sometimes you want to shower after the day and change into something clean!)
 - Light sweatshirt/fleece (it can get VERY cold on planes)
 - Running/workout clothes
 - Pajamas
 - Swimsuit
 - Closed shoes (e.g., running shoes)
 - Sport sandals (e.g., Chaco, Teva, Keene)
 - Flip-flops (you can buy cheaply in Brazil)
 - Casual dress shoes or sandals
- Optional**
- Combination lock (optional, if you want to be able to lock your suitcase)
 - Laptop (optional)
 - Light rain jacket (optional)
 - Steri-pen (optional)
 - Ear plugs (optional)
 - Dress up shoes (optional)
 - Portuguese/English dictionary or app (optional)

Laundry

We should have access to laundry when we arrive in Bahia. You may want to bring a travel-sized bottle of biodegradable laundry detergent and tiny packable laundry line with you.

HEALTH & SAFETY MATTERS

Please consult additional health and safety information available from CU Boulder Education Abroad.

Disclosure of Medical and Disability Needs

Knowing your medical and disability needs in advance can better enable a healthy, safe, and successful experience. This information will be treated confidentially and shared *only* with select staff on a need-to-know basis. Report yours (or lack thereof) via the Medical & Disability Needs Abroad e-Form (on your MyCUAbroad checklist):

- Chronic or temporary medical conditions
- Mental health information
- Medications currently taking and/or you will take while abroad
- Disabilities and accommodations
- Allergies and/or dietary restrictions
- Need to see health professional while abroad
- Other

Health & Safety Reports

Please read the **Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) Crime & Safety Report** for Brazil, which you can find here: <https://www.osac.gov> – you can see a full report for a given country by creating an account through their website.

For additional up-to-date information, please refer to the State Department country information pages at <http://travel.state.gov> – you can also follow them on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/travelgov>

Accident and Health Insurance

See the [Accepted Student Guide](#) for information on your CU Boulder health insurance carrier and policy, including your coverage while abroad, coverage dates, carrier contact information, and more.

Special Safety Precautions

General safety advice

- Be aware of where you are and what is going on around you at all times. Always remember that you are in a foreign country. It is easy to feel that you are immune to the dangers, but when you let your guard down, you become a target. Act as you would in any city in the US: with caution. Do not be paranoid, just aware of your surroundings.
- **Do not walk alone at night**
- **Do not hike trails alone**, even in Itacaré, which seems like a small, safe town. If you wish to hike, hire a local guide to accompany you. Itacaré is located in a relatively poor region of Brazil and has become a tourist attraction. This combination makes petty theft and street or trail assaults an ongoing problem. Tell your professors if you are going out on the trails!
- Manaus and Ilhéus are large cities, so treat them like you would any large city in the US. Walk on main streets that are well-lit.
- Be very careful with your belongings (see below for more on theft & pick-pocketing)
- By using good judgment, you will be able to relax and enjoy the fun times that Brazil has to offer!

Theft and robbery

Unfortunately, pick-pocketing, robbery, and theft from cars are possible scenarios, and are often directed toward tourists. Theft of small items like laptops, luggage, cameras, and briefcases is a common problem. Most reported thefts occur at crowded tourist sites, on public buses, or in particular neighborhoods (including some in the cities you are traveling to). If you choose to take your laptop we advise that you look into your own or your parent's renter's/homeowner's insurance or personal renters insurance to confirm that your laptop is insured in the case of theft. **If your laptop is not covered under any current insurance, you may want to seek alternative insurance that covers theft of your laptop.** And, it would be prudent to ensure that all data on your laptop is backed up.

Common Theft Tactics

- Thieves often attempt to distract their victims by bumping into them, spilling something on their clothing, asking for directions, or otherwise diverting attention from an accomplice.
- Pickpockets take advantage of crowded situations, so always be aware of your surroundings and keep your belongings close (and keep all bags zipped and/or not easily accessible).
- Thieves also are known to use weapons such as guns or knives for “holding up” the victim and stealing their belongings. If you find yourself in a “hold-up” situation, do not fight back! Fighting back could get you seriously injured. Hand over the requested items.
- See the section on finances for additional precautions regarding credit/debit card theft and fraud.

Traffic and pedestrian accidents

Traffic and pedestrian accidents are the leading cause of injury and death for study abroad students, especially in cities.

- Look both ways twice when crossing the street.
- Do not ride on motor scooters or drive a car.

- Pedestrians do NOT have the right of way like they do in Boulder. Brazilians drive aggressively and do NOT stop for pedestrians. Be cautious and alert when walking on streets and sidewalks and follow the lead of locals whenever possible.

Personal safety

- Whenever possible, avoid being alone. Absolutely do not walk around alone at night.
- People may sometimes make unnecessary comments – including offensive or suggestive comments – to you as you walk by, and non-Brazilians may draw more attention than locals. Usually, the best response to these situations is NO response, NO turn of the head, NO eye contact and NO smile.

Hitchhiking

Do not hitchhike!

Illegal Drugs

Possession of and trafficking of illegal drugs are considered to be a federal offense, and drug cases are rigorously prosecuted. Tourists who commit illegal acts have no special privileges in Brazil and are subject to full prosecution under the Brazilian judicial system. The US government and CU Boulder have NO power to help if you are charged with possession or use of drugs.

- Do NOT use or possess illegal drugs (remember that marijuana is illegal in Brazil and elsewhere)
- Remove yourself immediately from any social situation involving drugs

Alcohol consumption

Many countries, including Brazil, have a different attitude about the consumption of alcohol and the legal drinking age than the U.S. The laws of Brazil allow persons over the age of 18 to drink all types of alcoholic beverages. Being drunk is not socially acceptable and can be extremely dangerous in a foreign environment because it can send the wrong message. Thieves love inebriated tourists: they are a perfect target.

Make sure you stay safe abroad: don't abuse alcohol.

Special Health Precautions

Water

A great tip to avoid sickness is to stay hydrated and get rest. Water is not potable in Brazil. Many of our accommodations will have large containers of drinking water available, from which you can fill a water bottle. Otherwise, you will have to buy bottled water and be careful about the products you consume made with water (such as smoothies, or drinks with ice). Also remember not to use tap water for brushing your teeth! While 500mL to 1L bottles are available at convenience and grocery stores, you can also buy five-gallon containers, which will last you several days.

Another option, which generates less waste, is to use a steri pen, which cleans drinking water with ultraviolet light. These pens clean one 16 ounce bottle at a time and can be purchased at REI or other camping stores for about \$100. In 2022, we did not need these – it might be handy for 1-2 people to bring one, if they already own one.

Insect bites: Dengue Fever and Malaria

Most of your time in Brazil will be spent in forested, and/or coastal, tropical areas, where there many insects. It is always important to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

- Use insect repellent with 30%-50% DEET. Picaridin, available in 7% and 15% concentrations, needs application that is more frequent. Apply repellent before dusk.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and a hat outdoors.
- Try to remain indoors in a screened or air-conditioned area (and/or covered up if outside) during the peak biting periods (dusk and dawn).
- Repellent products can be purchased pre-departure or in country at any drug store.
- Avoid areas with stagnant, standing water. These are breeding grounds for mosquitos.

Dengue is caused by any one of four related viruses transmitted by mosquitoes. There are not yet any vaccines to prevent infection with dengue virus and the most effective protective measures are those that avoid mosquito bites. The principal symptoms of dengue are high fever and at least two of the following: severe headache; severe eye pain (behind eyes); joint pain; rash.

Malaria is caused by the Plasmodium parasite, which can be spread to humans through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes, which are known as "night-biting" mosquitoes because they most commonly bite between dusk and dawn. Symptoms of malaria can develop as quickly as seven days after you're bitten by an infected mosquito. The initial symptoms of malaria are flu-like and include: a high temperature; feeling hot and shivery; headaches; vomiting; muscle pains; diarrhoea; generally feeling unwell.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROGRAM

Location

You will spend one week in the state of Amazonas, in the Amazon biome, and one week in the state of Bahia, in the Atlantic Forest biome. In both places, you will gain an introduction to the ways in which sustainable development is widely promoted, natural resource governance is currently debated, and entrepreneurial leadership is rapidly growing in response to contemporary development and governance challenges in Brazil's forests. In both places, you will work alongside local Brazilian students to explore development, governance, cultural, and entrepreneurial challenges. Both locations have similarities; they are both forested regions, with complex social-environmental dynamics. CU Boulder has close connections with universities in each location and students will work closely with local students and faculty members.

Climate

Due to the varying heights above sea level of the Brazil landscape as well as how far inland (Amazonas) or proximate to the coast (Bahia) we are, the climate (and, therefore, vegetation and animal life) varies somewhat from region to region. There are five distinct climatic zones, of which you will be visiting two: the tropical zone and the equatorial zone.

In Brazil, you will experience high levels of humidity and precipitation. There is no "winter" season and you will experience temperatures in the 80s daily. Rainfall is usually heavy but intermittent, and yields dense, luscious vegetation typical of rainforests. Nighttime temperatures will not drop significantly from daytime highs, although ocean breezes can cool the air and require you to wear a sweater or jacket.

Before departure, we recommend that you check the extended forecast and monthly temperature and precipitation averages. There are a variety of online tools that can provide this information.

Transportation

During the course

Throughout the course, we will be using transportation arranged for us by our collaborators at the two universities with whom we will be partnering: UEA (in Amazonas) and UESC (in Bahia).

The following information may be useful if you arrive in Brazil before the course begins, or remain for some time after the course ends.

Bus

Local/regional bus services tend to be pretty reliable in Brazil. Since most Brazilians take the bus to work every day, municipal buses are usually frequent and their network of routes is comprehensive. Fares

range from R\$1.50 to R\$2.10 in Ilhéus and Rio de Janeiro. In most city buses, you get on at the front and exit from the back, though occasionally the reverse is true. Usually there's a money collector sitting at a turnstile just inside the entrance. Be careful however for pickpockets—buses are a favored spot.

Taxi

Taxis in cities usually have meters that start at R\$4.30 and rise by something like R\$3 per km (more on nights and weekends). Occasionally, the driver will refer to a chart and revise slightly upwards. This reflects recent official hikes in taxi rates and the meter “has not yet been adjusted.”

In small towns like Itacaré, taxis often don't have meters, and you'll have to arrange a price beforehand. In Itacaré, taxi drivers tend to congregate around the *Praça dos cachorros* (Dog Plaza) where Pituba intersects the center of town. You should ask several drivers what their price would be to drive you from Point A to Point B before choosing a driver.

Car

It is strictly prohibited (and extremely dangerous) for students to drive a car or motorcycle/scooter while abroad.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation

We will be staying in a wide range of accommodations, including: hotels, *pousadas* (guest houses), and on a boat.

In general, you should expect:

- Smaller appliances (i.e., refrigerators)
- Smaller living accommodations, closet space, beds, showers and tubs
- Shared bathrooms
- An electric water heating device directly attached to the head of the shower
- Less water availability, including less hot water (i.e., take short showers)
- No central air
- Insects in houses

You should NOT expect:

- Milk, eggs, and cheese may not have been refrigerated
- Consistent and fast internet everywhere
- Familiar snacks (e.g., peanut butter, chips, cookies)
- TV as a main form of entertainment
- Screened windows
- Microwaves
- Distance from neighbors
- Complete silence during the evening and early morning hours

Notes about toilet paper

Toilet paper cannot be flushed because the pipes used for sewage in Brazil are smaller than those in the US. You will notice a waste basket by the toilet. Please put all toilet paper there or risk blocking the toilet!

Meals

When filling out the Medical & Disability Needs information on your MyCUAbroad checklist, be sure to provide very detailed information about any food allergies or dietary needs. Staff will do their best to accommodate such needs. However, you should be diligent about learning the Portuguese vocabulary needed to ask about and check for any food preferences and allergies if you are at all unsure.

Most meals are included in the program cost and arranged for you. However, you may wish to buy additional snacks. One option is to go the grocery store: stores carry crackers, peanuts and cookies and have many fruits.

Vegetarianism is not uncommon in Brazil; veganism is less common. When eating out vegetarian fare is readily accommodated in most restaurants in major cities. Let your program directors know of any dietary restrictions as soon as possible. Inform servers that you are vegetarian if you're not sure about the menu, he or she may be able to substitute main dishes with salads and other vegetarian side dishes and appetizers. Remember to be patient, as it may not be a common request.

For more information, including lists of restaurants: International Vegetarian Union: <http://www.ivu.org/>

Useful phrases

- I am a vegetarian/vegan. *Eu sou uma vegetariana/vegano [female speaker] / um vegetariano/vegano [male speaker].*
- I do not eat meat (pork or chicken). *Eu não como carne (carne de porco, ou frango).*
- I do not eat eggs, milk or cheese. *Eu não como ovos, leite ou queijo.*
- No, I don't want any fish, thank you. *Não, eu não quero nenhum peixe. Obrigada [female speaker] / Obrigado [male speaker].*

Recreational activities

The program agenda is pretty packed! However, there will be a small amount of free time. If you enjoy running, you can bring running clothes. In Bahia, on the Sunday we arrive, there may also be opportunity to swim, surf, or engage in other beach recreational activities.

Communicating with each other

We strongly encourage you to **install WhatsApp on your cell phone**, laptop, and/or tablet. This is the most common way that Brazilians communicate by text. We have a WhatsApp group set up for all of us.

Communicating with home

There will be a one hour (in Amazonas) and three hour (Bahia) time difference between Colorado and Brazil (depending on your exact location). Familiarize yourself with the differences:

<http://www.timezoneconverter.com/cgi-bin/tzc>

We will have no cell phone or internet connection for the three days that we are on the boats in Amazonas.

There are multiple ways to communicate internationally while in Brazil. However, in most cases, you may be best off communicating internationally when you have an internet connection. You can use Zoom, Skype, Facetime, GoogleVoice, iChat and other web-based calling services to speak with your family and friends in the US wherever you have an internet connection. Video quality may be spotty at times, so bring headphones in order to hear the person on the other end.

Laptops

It may be worth installing Zoom, Skype, or another internet-based communication software on your laptop or tablet, if you bring one, and setting up and putting credit on an account if you don't already have one. Skype allows computer-to-computer audio & video calling (free), and calls to other land and cell line (usually very reasonable per-minute charges).

Phones

Using your US phone with your current plan/carrier in Brazil is usually possible, but can be expensive. Some other options include:

Get an international plan for your current phone/service

You can also contact your cell phone service provider and ask about international plans on your current phone. These can be a bit more expensive but may be the most convenient. If you choose this option, be sure to ask detailed questions about the rates, data-usage, and coverage areas.

Using your US phone with a local SIM card

Visit or call your cell phone provider to un-lock your phone and then purchase a pay-as-you-go SIM card upon arrival in Brazil. The main phone companies are Vivo, Claro, or TIM. This allows your cell phone to function like a pre-paid phone that you may recharge at multiple locations. Most prepaid SIM cards come in various denominations, between \$5 (10 reais) and \$20 (40 reais), and they all have different rates and expiration times. The LOCAL per minute rates come out to about 25 cents depending on the card and the time of day. The \$20 variation should give you around 80 minutes of talking time.

Buying a Domestic Phone

You can also buy a cheap Brazilian phone and the rechargeable SIM cards described above. The phones can range in price from \$15-\$40 and the capability varies greatly. Unless you buy a high-end smart phone (in which case you might as well just bring your current phone and get a new SIM card), buying a local phone can help reduce the chance of theft.

Laptops and internet access

Personal laptops are not required, but may be useful for your work and project(s). There are no computers available on-site for student use. You will have wifi access in many but not all of the places that we will stay. Please ensure that you have insurance for your laptop, and that your data is backed up.

Mail

Mail between the US and Brazil usually takes one week but may take up to three. Given the short duration of the program and the fact that you will be moving around, we don't recommend that you have anything mailed to you. If you wish to send postcards home, understand that you might arrive home before they do!

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Understanding more about Brazilian social standards and expectations may make your adjustment easier and perhaps help you to avoid embarrassing moments. In order to learn more about the culture of Brazil, you may need to understand different societal norms and to make some changes in your social behavior.

The following are general guidelines and comments to help understand differences.

General cultural information

You are studying abroad to do something different. In times of confusion or cross-cultural misunderstanding keep in mind that flexibility and a sense of humor are key. Remember you have peers and experienced faculty/staff members who are there for support and advice! You are responsible for bringing your concerns to them — they will not know how you feel unless you tell them. Take on your international experience with an open mind and you will have the best experience possible.

What to expect:

- Slower paced life;
- Brazilian cuisine at all meals;
- The concept of personal space is different – kisses are common as a greeting (or, in times of Covid, fist-bumps), and people may stand very near to your face when speaking with you.
- You may stand out, lots of people may stare or point

What NOT to expect:

- Do not expect immediate adaptation to host community and culture (culture shock is normal)

- Not everyone will speak English;
- Many buildings do not have elevators
- Sidewalks are not universal (be careful when stepping out onto the street)
- Waiting lines may not be structured
- Traffic laws and norms differ to the US
- There may be more flexibility with timeliness with appointments and meetings

Interacting with locals

As a rule, Brazilians are warm and friendly people. Many acquaintances will adopt you and treat you as their friends. They will likely be flattered that you have chosen to learn their language and experience their culture. Nonetheless, you should try to be courteous and respectful. Here are some tips:

- When you enter a home, a classroom, store, office, post office, bank, anywhere, make eye contact with the person you will be talking to and greet everyone with a simple “*bom dia, boa tarde, or boa noite.*” Although this sounds simple enough, it goes a long way and its absence will be noted. When walking into a home, people also often say “*com licença*”, meaning “with your permission.”
- Common greetings include the following and tend to be more affectionate than in the US
 - o Among men and women, and between two women, one kiss on the right cheek and one kiss on the left cheek (although in certain cities like São Paulo the common greeting is only one kiss on the right cheek).
 - o Among two men, a firm handshake with your right hand with a pat on the back with your left, almost a loose hug.
 - o In Itacaré, another common greeting among men is a hand slap followed by a fist bump.
 - o You should also not be surprised to receive hugs.
- Be sure to address others appropriately based on how you are spoken to. It is a good general rule to just stick to only using “*você*” (it is a lot easier than “*tu*”)
- Make sure to say “*Por favor*” and “*Obrigado/a*” whenever appropriate, and say an “*até logo*” or “*tchau*” when departing.
- When trying to get by someone or if someone is in your way, politely say “*com licença*”.
- It may be smart not to speak English loudly in closed quiet places.
- Do not assume someone speaks English. Try to speak Portuguese all of the time (regardless of your level) to everyone. Brazilians will appreciate your tenacity and, after all, you are there in part to practice. The more you do this, the better you will get – quickly.
- When shopping, do not ask store clerks how much an item costs in US dollars (!)
- Taxi drivers are also a great source of information in the city (Ilhéus, Rio, Manaus). When driving around, ask what certain buildings are, about the history, and any other stories they may know. You will get to practice your Portuguese, learn about the city and the country, and eliminate the awkward silence. It also makes you appear more aware and may cut down on the attempts to overcharge foreigners.
- Between greeting and saying goodbye to friends it is customary to kiss each other on the right cheek (male to female, female to female).

Educating yourself

One of the best ways to prepare for your time in Brazil is for you to read as much as you can about Brazil, the US, and Latin American history, politics, and current events. This cannot be overemphasized, especially since politics and current events are very popular topics of discussion in Brazil. Your new Brazilian friends are going to be very curious about your opinions on US foreign policy and other current issues. You may find that many Brazilians know more about contemporary US politics than the average US American. So, do not be surprised if someone asks you very specific questions!

Apps

You might want to explore guidebooks, dictionaries, or translation apps to download to your phone before we travel.

ACADEMICS

Please review the syllabus for details of the academic expectations and requirements for this course.

FINANCES

Ensure that you have reviewed the program budget in detail and understand which costs are included and which you will need to cover on your own. Check estimated expenses not included in your program fee on MyCUSTudyAbroad.

Tipping

While many Brazilians do not tip, as foreigners, it may be expected that you will. Most restaurants will add a 10% tip to the bill, but you can also add on a bit more as the service warrants. As a rule, taxi drivers are never tipped very much. Porters are always found at airports and should be tipped a few reais. For guides, tips should be modified, as always, if service is exceptionally good or bad.

Host Country Currency

The currency of program country: Real

The symbol for that currency (dollar = \$): R\$

The denominations of that currency (cents, etc.):

- Bills are available in R\$2, R\$5, R\$10, R\$20, R\$50, and R\$100.
- The coins are available in R\$0.01, R\$0.05, R\$0.10, R\$0.25, R\$0.50, and R\$1.00.

You can verify the current exchange rate with the dollar online – as of Apr 4, 2022 it was R\$4.61 to US\$1

Costs for Common Items in Your Host Country

Costs for common items can vary greatly from country to country. While building your budget, it is a good idea to look up the cost of common items (you may use the list below) in your host country. You can do so using the Worldwide Cost Index: <http://www.numbeo.com/cost-of-living/>. Sample items to look up: bottle of water, cappuccino or coffee, loaf of bread, mid-range restaurant dinner, movie ticket.

Vacation Travel

If you plan to travel around your host country and neighboring countries before or after the program, you have to budget for travel, room and board, laundry, museum admissions, and souvenirs. The cost of these items will vary greatly, depending on how you travel and where you stay. Refer to travel guides for information on traveling in your host country and neighboring countries.

Banking

See your CU-Boulder Education Abroad portal for general information on banking. There are several ways to exchange money while in Brazil. Each offers advantages and disadvantages. Please carefully consider which option will work the best for you. Finally, you should have a backup plan. For example, if you plan to use an ATM card to get cash, and you lose it, have another means to access your money, like US dollars to exchange, or another ATM card.

Credit Cards

While credit cards are becoming more prevalent in Brazil and you should bring your credit card, it is still a cash-based society (especially in small river towns). While larger stores in cities almost always accept credit cards, small stores often do not. In smaller towns and cities, it can be very difficult to find merchants

who accept credit cards. As such, do not rely on being able to use a credit card for day-to-day purchases as one might in the US. Avoid using debit/ATM cards for purchases for security reasons.

Be sure to call your credit card and debit card company before going abroad to inform them of upcoming travel, so that your card is not blocked by your bank for 'unusual activity'.

Bank machines (ATMs)

ATMs are convenient and can be found in most cities. When using an ATM you typically receive an excellent exchange rate, one that is very close to the rate quoted in the newspaper. It is recommended that you withdraw a fairly large sum of money (in broad daylight in a safe location of course!) and then leave the bulk of the cash in your accommodation in a safe place. Take small amounts with you each day as needed until you need to withdraw more.

Absolutely **let your bank know that you will be traveling abroad** so they don't shut down your account because of 'suspicious activity'. Also ask what fees you will be charged each time you withdraw cash.

After taking money out from a cash machine, make sure you close out the transaction. It is not uncommon, however, to find a cash machine that says "no cash." You may also find ATMs that do not accept international cards. In that event, keep looking for one with funds. *Banco do Brasil* is usually reliable.

We recommend withdrawing enough cash for the first week in whichever main Brazilian airport you transfer in, when you first land in Brazil. Do not depend on being able to withdraw cash from an ATM in Amazonas. You will be able to use an ATM again at Brasilia or Sao Paulo airports on the day we fly to Bahia.

Travelers/Checks

Traveler's checks are not recommended.

Exchanging Dollars for Cash

We do not recommend that you bring all of your spending money to Brazil in dollars. It is dangerous; if you are robbed or lose your money there is no way to replace it. Also, you still have to exchange dollars for real, meaning that you will have to wait in line at a bank or pay steep commission fees at an exchange store.

Running Out Of Money

You should set up a contingency plan with a family member or friend **before** you leave for Brazil, deciding what steps you will take if you run out of money or experience unplanned expenses. For example, it is often a requirement to pay a hospital in advance for care (even when you can prove that you have health insurance coverage). We recommend taking a credit card to use in such emergencies or as a back-up plan for cash advancing.

Credit/Debit Card Fraud

While credit, debit, and ATM cards can be a convenient means to pay for things while abroad and to get money from home, it is important that you use them with caution. It is best not to allow the card to leave your sight, in order to prevent your card number being copied down for illegal use. Additionally the Consular Information Sheet advises that you "avoid using debit cards for point-of-sale purchases, as a skimmed number can be used to clean out an account."

While you are abroad and when you get home, you may want to monitor or have someone monitor your account statement(s) to verify all purchases are, in fact, your own. Many banks offer on-line statement summaries for your convenience. It is also very important to let your bank know that you are leaving the country and using your ATM/Credit Cards while abroad. This way they will not see the charges you are making as 'suspicious activity' and will not close your accounts as a security precaution.