

Fact Sheet on Northeast Brazil

General Information on Brazil

- Pedro Alvares Cabral claimed Brazil for Portugal in 1500.
- Brazil is the largest country in South America.
- Brazil is predominately Roman Catholic.
- The language of Brazil is Portuguese.
- Brazil's capital city is Brasilia.
- Brazil is the 5th largest country in the world and has the 5th largest population in the world

Three coastal cities in Northeast Brazil:

Salvador, Recife, and Fortaleza

Salvador

- The city of Salvador became the capital of the Portuguese colony in 1549.
- Enslaved Africans were first brought to Bahia, Salvador in the 1538.
- The population of Salvador is 3.5 million; it is the 3rd largest city in Brazil.
- Nearly a century before the English founded Plymouth Colony in 1620, the Northeast was home to 3,000 sugar plantations and thriving colonial cities.
- By 1600 Brazil had become the largest sugar exporter in the world and Salvador one of the richest and busiest cities in the Americas.
- Gold was discovered in Minas Gerais during the 1700s, and the capital was moved from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro in 1763.

- Salvador is the second most popular tourism destination in Brazil, after Rio de Janeiro.
- In 1983, the Pelourinho was designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. A massive restoration project that began in the 1990s has made the Pelourinho one of the largest architectural reclamation projects in the world.

Recife

- Recife is the capital city of Pernambuco; the population of Recife is 1.5 million.
- It has two international ports on the Atlantic Ocean; Recife is Portuguese for “reef.”
- The design of the city is reminiscent of Venice and Amsterdam with bridges, canals, rivers and one-way streets.
- Recife produces sugar, ethanol, electronics for cars, and textiles.
- Dance and music called “frevo” originated in Recife; Maracatu is the name of carnival celebrated in Recife.

Fortaleza

- Fortaleza means “fortress” in Portuguese.
- Fortaleza is the capital city of the state of Ceará and its population is 2.3 million.
- Fortaleza abolished enslavement in 1884, four years ahead of Brazilian government.
- The industries in Fortaleza include: manufactured goods, textiles, and leather-derived items and tourism.