

Brazil

We could be more creative regarding the title but what? There are too many things to write about and so many places to write about. We could also write about 'Girl from Ipanema', or about the distances within this country, or about the favelas... so we just stick to the plain *Brazil*...

We arrived the 08.10.2009 in João Pessoa. Our first trip within the country lead us to Salvador and Brasília (by plane). In a second round we went by bus and car to Recife, Olinda und Caruaru. These three cities (towns?) are all in the state of *Pernambuco* – neighbouring the state of *Paraíba* where the capital is João Pessoa.

We left João Pessoa the 08.11.2009 direction north to Natal. Natal is the capital of *Rio Grande do Norte* and *Paraíba*'s neighbour in the north. We stayed in Natal for just five days and left then again further northwest to Fortaleza. In Fortaleza we stayed for six days before leaving on the 20.11.2009 direction Caribbean.

There are so many good guidebooks about Brazil that it would be stupid to write what you can read in those (also, these books are much better researched than what we would do) so we decided to write an ABC of Brazil. This ABC is about things we though might be of interest to know however, please read them 'with twinkle in your eye':

A as for *açúcar*. Sugar. Brazilians like it sweet. Just imagine you order fresh pineapple juice. If you don't say anything it will so sweet that it sticks in your mouth. So better learn immediately to say 'sim açúcar, por favor'. In this case you will get the juice without sugar but with a sweetener bottle since it can't be sweet enough as it is.

B as for *Bikinis*. It seems that Brazil has the most expensive fabrics for bikinis. Please see the photo attached. By the way it did not hinder Susanna to buy some.. Or *Brasília*, the capital. It just keeps on growing and growing. The first time Susanna was there (82-83) she saw the nice designs how all would be once everything would be finished. Now the central part (the part in the shape of an airplane) is practically finished but there has come much more to it, parts that were not even in the original plan. No wonder, the city was designed for 0,5 million inhabitants and now there are some two millions! These people must live somewhere.

C as for *Caipirinha*. Delicious! We tried it so many times and we never had to give them back..

Or *Cachaça*. Sugarcane rum. An important ingredient for Caipirinha.

Or *Caruaru*. This City should be visited if you want to see the variety and capability of the artisans in Brazil. This city hosts a permanent artisan market of hundreds and hundreds of sales stalls and counts with more than 100'000 daily visitors. Here you can buy everything from leatherworks to rugs, jewellery, ceramics or furniture. We wandered around for some two hours and had to quit then because it was just so much.

D as for *dose de uisqui*. A shot of whisky. Once we saw it written as 'dose de hisqui'....

E as for *Entrega ao domicilio*. Home delivery. The manager of the Marina 'Praia da Jacaré' was a business man: we needed some Diesel and he offered to organize it for 2,5 Reais / litre including delivery in big jugs onto the boat. Just out of curiosity Susanna walked to the next gasoline station and asked if they'd do a home delivery to a boat. Yes, starting from 100 Litres for 2,05 Reais/Litre in big jugs carried on board....

F as for *Fortaleza*. Fortaleza is the capital of the state Ceará with two million inhabitants and a skyline full of skyscrapers. The main attractions are the beaches. The city built also some years ago a beautiful new 'Centre of Culture' called 'Dragão de Mar' (sea dragon) which

unfortunately the week we were there did not have that much to offer. However the site is very nice, in the midst of new buildings hosting a small outdoor theatre and several cinemas there are renovated old buildings hosting cafes and restaurants. Also you find there an art museum as well as a library. An interesting complex to visit!

G as for *Guaraná*. This and Coca Cola must be the most favourite soft drinks in Brazil. Guaraná is an Amazon fruit and is also said to be good to sink blood pressure. All we know it is tasty and we enjoyed it after so much Coca Cola.

H as for *Hanseniose*. Lepra. Unfortunately it has become a problem in some areas of the country. However, we saw also that Brazil has now more means (\$\$) do fight against it: we saw informative posters in the busses, bus stations, trains and train stations. Also we saw and heard cars on the weekend in poorer neighbourhoods: these cars had loudspeakers and were running a tape with information about what to do and where to go.

I as for *Ipanema*. Not only the famous beach in Rio but also the second biggest competitor of Havaianas the producer of plastic flip-flops. These flip-flops are an important assessorial just as jewels etc. New collections are launched regularly and you must have them. As one can imagine, these plastic things cost far more than the nice hand made leather flip-flops you can buy on the artisan market in Caruaru!

J as for *João Pessoa*. A city with 0,7 Million inhabitants. Cabo Branco which is part of the city is the most eastern point of the South American continent and is nearer to Africa than to the most southern part of Brazil! Talking about distances...

K as for *Kuat*. The most popular brand of Guaraná is Guaraná Antartica. It does not belong to the Coca Cola company so they launched their own brand and try hard (but not hard enough)...

L as for *Limão*. Limes. Another important ingredient for Caipirinha. Or *Lula*, the president. When you talk to people you notice that he really divides the opinions of the people. His social engagement is highly appreciated by the poor and respected by the richer who of course ask how to make it sustainable and affordable..

M as for *Mote!* Jus remember one thing: a Family newer goes into a motel in Brazil. The prices are given per hour and the use – well see the photo!

N as for *Natal*. Natal has about one million inhabitants and it is yearly visited by thousands and thousands of tourists to see the beautiful beaches and the long stretching sand dunes. The city is following a quite restrictive building policy in order to protect the dunes and the result is an interesting mix: just behind the old town there are kilometres and kilometres of dunes, to be followed then again by further neighbourhoods of the city. Another thing that impressed us in Natal was the late Clube do Natal where we could use the facilities and enjoy a good show of local artists on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. We really enjoyed the shows as fell as our conversations wit some local members of the club. These people went really far to make us feel welcome.

O as for *Olinda*. Olinda war the first capital of Pernambuco and today it has been declared a Wold Heritage by Unesco. Winding streets covered with cobble stones and numerous baroque churches are what you see wherever you look at. It is today a Unesco World heritage site and the site (according o the locals) to the second best carnival in Brazil. We enjoyed there not only the beautiful town but also the food by dining at *Oficina do Sabor* that has won several prices in the category local, creative cuisine. The baked pumpkin filled with lobster and crab sauce with coconut passion fruit. It is something we still dream about!

P as for *picanha*. When eating Churrasco it is considered as the best part of meat. Interestingly the imported Argentinean picanhas are more appreciated than the local ones. Andreas had several goes on this picanha, he can tell more.. Or *Policia Federal*. For us it was equivalent to bureaucracy. Huh. However, with our without all these formalities, the people were always extremely nice and helpful and patient with us. But one can understand us when you know that you have to go to the police in every state and every time answer the same questions by filling in several forms (every state had different forms) which then are copied several times, stamped and signed. .. The most important thing was always to go first to the Police and then to the local port authorities. No way could you do it in the other order. And of course the port authorities asked again the same questions and had their forms and copied the papers the police had given us. Thinking about the paper industry and Amazonian rainforest...

Q as for *Queijo*. Cheese. Please be aware that if on the package is written, 'Tipo Gruyère'.. it tastes like Emmentaler. But, would you find a cheese with the label, 'Tipo Parmesão', it really tastes like a mild parmesan cheese!...

R as for *Recife*. The capital of the state of Pernambuco with about four Million inhabitants. A very interesting arts exhibition was what we liked the most: Mr Brennan inherited a brick stone factory and converted it to an atelier and a permanent exhibition site. In the middle of a forest you find this fantastic site allowing one to really see and appreciate his art. Brennan is foremost known for his ceramic works but he is also a talented painter. You need at least half a day to visit this place but it is worthwhile.

S as for *Salvador*. The capital of the state of Bahia. Most Europeans know only Salvador and have therewith seen something very Brazilian but also seen a city not only known for its beaches but also for culture and arts. About Salvador we could write so much but it is better you find in the net or guidebooks. Still, what you won't find in the guidebooks is the great massage you can get in PITUBA. Pituba is a part of the city a little to north from the old centre. There, in the shadow of the palm trees with a nice breeze from the Atlantic blowing not only the cooling wind but also blowing away any noise one might hear from the street, you lie on a massage bed and enjoy a thoroughly good professional massage. There are some 20 women (and some men) come daily with the equipment and just wait for customers. We were there already 2 years ago and now revisited the place. A perfect place to relax.... if you need than that for relaxing you can have afterwards a caipirinha in one of the nearby beach bars!

T as for *Tapioca*. A local speciality of the north east of Brazil. It looks like a white pancake. But it is made with just special flour made out of manioc. The flour is kind of humid so that it melts (lightly) when heated. The result is slightly chewy kind of a consistency and a nice soft taste. These pancakes are then filled either with salty or with sweet stuff and then folded and eaten like tacos... So, depending on the filling you will really get a 'LOW CAL' Snack

U as for *Unilever*. If the factories are not owned by Nestle they are part of Unilever! The globalisation is here!

V as for *Viagra*. On SALE in the local pharmacy in Fortaleza: instead of 62 Reais (2 Tablets) now only 53 Reais! (about 30 sfr, 20 €) (However that was not the reason we went there)

W as for *Washington*. Seemingly still a popular name for young men..

X as for *Xerox*. Now this is business: as we were one day walking in Fortaleza we saw these two women sitting at the pavement by a copy machine. Next to them was the price list, and below the umbrella there was a box of copy paper. All you need to have a copy shop!

Y as for *Ypioca*. One of (many) good Cachaça brands..

Z as for *Zero*. Whether it is Coca Cola, Sprite or Guaraná – you call it ,Zero' as for 0 calories. However, we had the feeling that Coca Cola zero was in brazil sweeter than at home.. but who knows?