



Shaped like a diamond, Brazil lies in the heart of South America. Brazil borders ten countries. In South America, only Ecuador and Chile do not border Brazil. Brazil's coastline along the Atlantic Ocean extends for over 4,500 miles. Northern Brazil is home to the Amazon rain forest, a hot and wet region on the Amazon River. Plains, plateaus, and mountains occupy the rest of the country. Warm tropical weather extends north from Rio de Janeiro (the capital) throughout most of the year. South of Rio de Janeiro, the climate generally includes warm summers and cold winters.

Brazil was home to millions of native Brazilians for thousands of years before a Portuguese sailor, Pedro Alvares Cabral, landed there in 1500. Cabral was trying to reach India to trade for spices, silk, and other valuables. Instead, he claimed the region for Portugal. Portuguese colonists

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started moving to coastal sections of Brazil, and many planted sugarcane. Between 1550 and 1850, about 4 million Africans were brought as slaves to Brazil to work in the sugarcane fields. Later, farmers grew coffee, which continues today to be a very important crop. In 1822, Brazil declared its independence from Portugal, but the national language is still Portuguese.

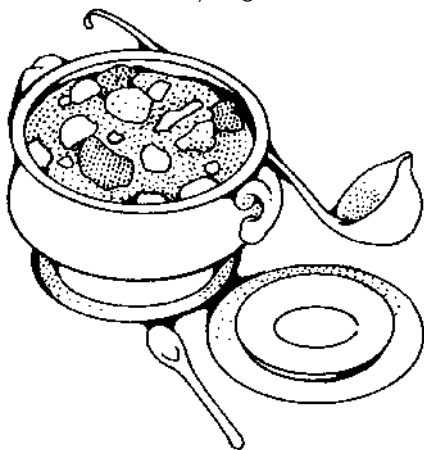
For most of the 1900s, Brazil welcomed immigrants from around the world. In the past 40 years, however, Brazilians have been emigrating to the United States and other countries because of Brazil's growing population, which has led to overcrowded cities and a poor economy. Many immigrants came to the United States looking for better-paying jobs and settled in cities such as New York and Boston.

Brazilian culture and foods reflect the four major groups of people who make up the population of Brazil: native Brazilians, Portuguese and other Europeans, Africans, and Asians. The **samba** is a famous Brazilian dance with African origins. The **bossa nova** is a popular Brazilian music that combines jazz with unique rhythms. Brazilians love sports, and their favorite sport is soccer, which they call *futebol*.

Brazilians eat a great deal of beef because cattle are raised in many areas of Brazil. A favorite dish in southern Brazil is **churrasco**, skewers full of grilled meats of all kinds. In America, restaurants serving Brazilian-style grilled meats called *churrascarias* have recently become quite popular.

Other basic Brazilian ingredients include rice, black beans, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Brazil's national dish is **feijoada**, a stew of beef, pork, sausage, and black beans. The stew is simmered for a long time and served on special occasions with side dishes such as rice, orange slices, and shredded kale (a green leafy vegetable).

The Africans gave Brazilian food its spicy flavors and ingredients such as *malagueta* (a hot red pepper), coconut milk, and palm oil. Native Brazilians contributed many types of native fish





and wild animals, sweet potatoes, corn porridge, hearts of palm, and manioc. **Hearts of palm** are the edible inner portion of the stem of the cabbage palm tree, which grows in many tropical climates and is Florida's official state tree. **Manioc**, also called cassava, is native to the Amazon rain forest. Once peeled, sweet manioc can be boiled and eaten like potatoes. It is also used to make flour.

The Portuguese heritage is seen in the Brazilian love for coffee and desserts that use a lot of eggs and sugar. For example, **quindim** is an upside-down dessert made with eggs, sugar, and grated coconut. The Portuguese also brought dried fruits to Brazil.

Churrasco

Time

40 minutes

Tools

measuring cups
measuring spoons
cutting board
paring knife
small bowl
whisk
broiling pan
oven mitts
spatula

Makes

4 servings



In the United States, Brazilian cooks might grill beef steaks, pork tenderloin, chicken, or a spicy sausage that is like Brazilian sausage. This recipe uses sirloin steak and includes a dipping sauce.

Ingredients

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 pound sirloin steak, 1 inch thick | 1/8 cup red wine vinegar |
| 1 teaspoon adobo seasoning | 1/4 cup olive oil |
| 1/2 red onion | 1 teaspoon dried parsley |
| 2 garlic cloves | salt and pepper to taste |

Steps

1. Season the steak with 1 teaspoon Adobo seasoning. Set aside.
2. Remove the papery skin from the red onion. Lay the onion half on its side on a cutting board. Slice and then chop into small pieces. Put 1/4 cup chopped red onion in a small bowl.
3. Peel the papery skin from the garlic cloves. On a cutting board, mince. Add to the bowl with the red onion.
4. Add the red wine vinegar, olive oil, dried parsley, salt, and pepper to the onion and garlic. Whisk together well. Set aside as your sauce for the steak.
5. Preheat the broiler. Place the seasoned steak in the broiling pan. Using oven mitts, place the pan about 3 to 4 inches from the heat element or flame. Broil about 6 to 7 minutes, keeping an eye on the broiler at all times.
6. Using oven mitts, remove the pan from the oven. Turn the meat with a spatula and broil 6 to 7 minutes more for medium-doneness.
7. Using oven mitts, remove the pan from the oven. Turn the broiler off.
8. Slice the steak and serve immediately with the sauce on the side.

Classic Corn Cakes

Corn, which is a staple in Brazil, is used in many Brazilian American recipes, such as pudding and cookies. Enjoy these corn cakes with dinner.

Ingredients

vegetable oil cooking spray	1½ cups yellow cornmeal
1 tablespoon margarine	1½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 cups sugar	1 tablespoon baking soda
3 eggs	4 tablespoons Parmesan cheese
4 cups low-fat or nonfat milk	

Steps

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Spray a 9 × 13-inch baking pan with vegetable oil cooking spray.
3. Place the margarine in a small microwave-safe dish and put a lid on top. Heat on high power for about 20 seconds until melted.
4. In a large bowl, whisk the margarine, sugar, and eggs together.
5. Add the milk, and mix until well combined.
6. In a separate medium bowl, mix the cornmeal, flour, baking soda, and Parmesan cheese together with a wooden spoon.
7. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the milk mixture. Stir with a wooden spoon just until all of the dry particles are moistened.
8. Pour the batter into the baking pan. Use oven mitts to place pan in oven.
9. Bake at 350°F for about 30 to 35 minutes or until the top turns golden brown.
10. Use oven mitts to remove the pan from the oven. Allow to cool for at least 15 minutes before cutting into squares.

Time

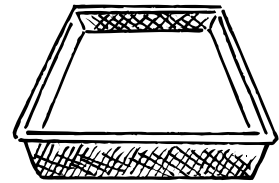
15 minutes to prepare
plus
30 to 35 minutes to bake

Tools

measuring cups
measuring spoons
9 × 13-inch baking pan
small microwave-safe dish
with lid
large bowl
whisk
medium bowl
wooden spoon
oven mitts

Makes

15 squares



Fried Bananas with Cinnamon

Time

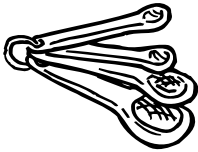
10 minutes

Tools

cutting board
paring knife
large frying pan
measuring spoons
spatula

Makes

2 to 4 servings



Brazilians cook fried bananas and serve them with meals or as dessert. Cinnamon trees grow in the tropical parts of Brazil.

Ingredients

2 ripe bananas
1 tablespoon vegetable oil or margarine
1 teaspoon cinnamon or 1 tablespoon cinnamon sugar

Steps

1. Peel the bananas. Using a cutting board, cut the bananas in half lengthwise.
2. Heat the frying pan over medium heat for 2 minutes. Add the oil or margarine and heat for a minute.
3. Add the banana halves. Fry them on one side until golden brown, then turn with a spatula.
4. Once the second side is golden brown, put the bananas on plates. Sprinkle with cinnamon or cinnamon-sugar. Serve immediately.