

# GLOBAL ATLANTA SnapSHOTS

A LOOK AT ETHNIC COMMUNITIES IN THE ATLANTA REGION



## B R A Z I L I A N S

The Global Atlanta Snapshots were created to foster understanding among all people of the Atlanta region. The Snapshots show the rich ethnic and cultural diversity that our region now enjoys. The residents of Atlanta's ethnic communities may have lived in the region for a long time or may have recently arrived. They may come from cultures and have customs significantly different from each other's, and from those of the general population of the Atlanta region. What they have in common with the rest of the region is that they make it their home, and they share in and contribute to its success. The Snapshots introduce and portray selected communities in terms of their backgrounds, their customs and cultures, their roles in the regional economy, and specific local resources available throughout the region.

### Who are the Brazilian-Americans?

Brazil and its nearly 190 million people make the nation the world's fifth largest in terms of population. It is also one of the largest in land area and is a growing economic power. In 2000, the Brazilian economy was \$900 billion, ranking ninth among all nations. As a Portuguese-speaking land, the South American nation also stands apart from its Latin American neighbors. Brazil was discovered by Europeans in 1500, when the Portuguese explorer Pedro Alvares Cabral landed on the northeast coast. While initially indifferent to the possibilities posed by this new land, the Portuguese king realized that competing European powers had an interest and began active colonization. A capital was established at Savador da Bahia in 1549. Rio de Janiero was founded in 1567.

The original inhabitants, the Amerindian tribes, were decimated by new diseases, measles and smallpox resulting from contact with the Portuguese colonizers. Today, only some 220,000 of these Amerindians survive and live mostly in the Amazon region.

As the Portuguese began to develop this vast land, they established plantations. In order to meet the demand for labor, they imported



*A Brazilian-American family at home in Sandy Springs, a place many Brazilians call home.*

African slaves to work the land. The settlers also prospected for precious minerals. A gold rush began in 1693 when gold deposits were found in the interior region of Minas Gerais. In the 19th century, further agricultural development and European immigration were encouraged. Late in the century, 100,000 immigrants a year settled in Brazil, arriving mostly from Western Europe.

After three centuries of colonial rule, Brazil achieved its independence from Portugal in 1822. It established a republican form of government in 1889, but the early 20th century was marked by political instability. After more than a half century of military intervention in the county's government, Brazil peacefully reverted to civilian rule in 1985. Since January 2003 the Brazilian government has been led by President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, popularly known as "Lula." While the country as a whole is becoming a major player in the global economy, the extreme inequality in income distribution is a deep-seated concern.

*continued inside*



*Rio de Janerio, Brazil*

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## A PERSONAL STORY



A native of Brazil, Wilma Kruger grew up in Minas Gerais state. While visiting a friend who was attending Yale University, she met her husband Rudi. Two months after meeting they were married and have been together for 35 years. The Krugers were married in Brazil and then spent the next five years in Berlin, where Wilma received her graduate

degree in Engineering Architecture. The couple returned to Brazil where Wilma spent 18 years working as an architect and raising their three children.

Rudi was also born in Brazil and was raised in a German community there. He studied at the Divinity School at Yale. While living in Germany he was employed by the government, working with young people in the streets in Berlin.

The Krugers have lived in Atlanta since 1994. While they were living in Rio de Janeiro, Rudi, then the leader of a major church, received a religious call to go to Atlanta. Once here, with the help of a Messianic Jewish congregation and other churches, he started a German Baptist church which Wilma describes as a modern congregation and an international church. Wilma joined Rudi after two months, and their two teenage sons joined them six months later when they received their green cards. Their daughter and her husband remained in Rio, but then joined them in 2005 on a religious visa. The Krugers became U.S. citizens in 1999, and their three now grown children also live in the U.S. with their families.

“This was not the first foreign country I lived in. It was more difficult to assimilate into the first [foreign] country ... Germany,” Wilma said. “The Southern hospitality that people showed us made us feel welcome. The members of the church that Rudi worked for embraced us with kindness and almost immediately we felt part of the American community.”

The transition was made easier because Rudi spoke English. Even though she didn't, Wilma was already fluent in three other languages, “so learning a fourth was not difficult and people were very patient with me as I learned English.” Wilma, who serves as chair of the Atlanta-Rio de Janeiro Sister City Commission, now speaks five or more languages (Portuguese, Spanish, German, English, French, and some Italian) and along with her education and leadership experience, that has eased the transition to living in Atlanta.

“I consider myself an international or multi-cultural person. I am an immigrant. My grandparents were immigrants. I will always be a Brazilian in my heart because that's where I grew up. That's my ethnic identity. It doesn't matter what country I live in, but my cultural identity is evolving,” Wilma said. “I have lived in Germany and America and have added their cultures to my life. When I lived in Germany I learned how to live like a German. I learned the language, I belonged to a German church, and I attended a German university. When we moved to Atlanta, I assimilated into the American culture. I learned English, and I live in a typical suburban neighborhood. I have never forgotten my Brazilian roots, but I have enlarged my cultural identity by adding German and American culture to it.”

## Brazilians in the Atlanta Economy

Most of the Brazilian workforce in Atlanta consists of blue-collar workers, though there are also many professionals. With a total workforce of 1,950 (1,018 men and 932 women), Atlanta's Brazilians have small concentrations of workers in management and professional occupations, building and grounds cleaning jobs and sales and office positions. Among the men, the largest concentration consists of construction occupations with 326 workers, including carpenters, painters and paperhangers, and other construction trade workers.

Among local Brazilian women, more than a quarter (238 workers) are in building and grounds cleaning occupations. Others are found in sales and office occupations, as well as in production jobs in factories.

Some Brazilians who live in metro Atlanta are trained engineers and lawyers, but they are working blue-collar jobs because of their undocumented status.



Bookstore in Delk Village Shopping Center



# Brazilians in the Atlanta Region: By the Numbers

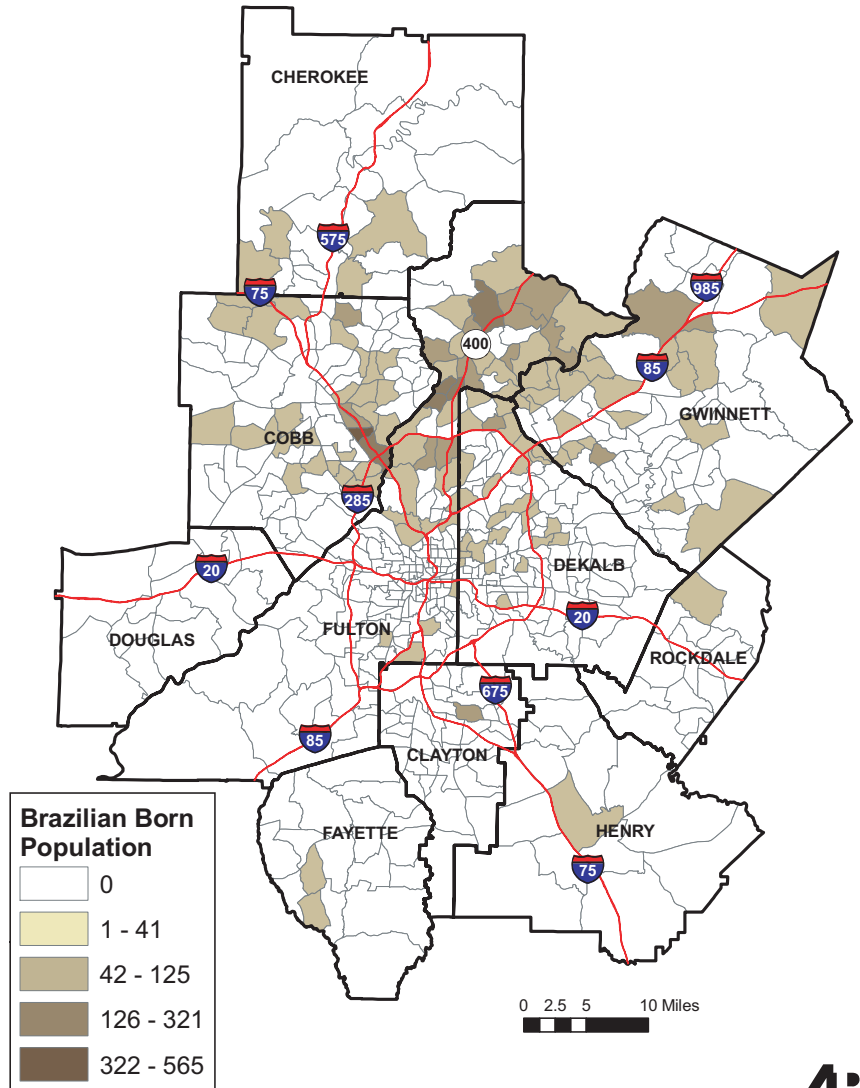
Cherokee: 44	Clayton: 49
Cobb: 1,813	DeKalb: 353
Douglas: 0	Fayette: 40
Fulton: 1,721	Gwinnett: 523
Henry: 7	Rockdale: 7

**Total 10-county Region: 4,557**

- **Cobb County** is home to the largest population of Brazilians, with 1,813, followed closely by **Fulton** with 1,721. **Gwinnett County** is next with 523.
- **Cobb and Fulton** are home to **78 percent** of the Brazilians in the Atlanta region and **55 percent** of the Brazilians living in Georgia.
- The 10-county Atlanta region is home to approximately **42 percent** of **Georgia's total population**, but represents **89 percent** of the state's **Brazilian population**
- The largest concentrations of Brazilians are found along GA 400 in northern Fulton County.



# BRAZILIAN POPULATION IN ATLANTA Atlanta Region, 2000



(Source: 2000 Census Data on Foreign-Born Population by Region, Country or Area of Birth)



## Holidays Celebrated

In addition to other Western and Christian holidays, Brazilians may celebrate the following:

### Carnival

February/ March in Brazil  
(the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday; in Atlanta, Brazilians may participate in the Carnival celebrations of other Latin/ Caribbean Communities)

### Brazilian Independence Day

September 7

## Who are the Brazilian-Americans continued

Brazilian society reflects the diversity resulting from its colonial past, its history of slave-holding and later streams of European immigration. A national census in 2000 revealed the following pattern: 53.7% white (of predominantly Portuguese ancestry), 38.5% mulatto (mixed white and black), 6.2% black, 0.9% other (includes Japanese, Arab, Amerindian), 0.7% unspecified. While the population is spread over land of nearly 3.3 million square miles, Brazil has several major metropolitan complexes that are among the world's largest. These include Sao Paulo with 20 million people and Rio de Janeiro at 12 million. The country's modern capital of Brasilia, established in the 1960s to help develop the nation's interior, has a population of 2 million.

While Portuguese is the official language, Spanish, English, French, German and Italian are important second languages for many in the country. Brazilian Portuguese is a variant of the language spoken



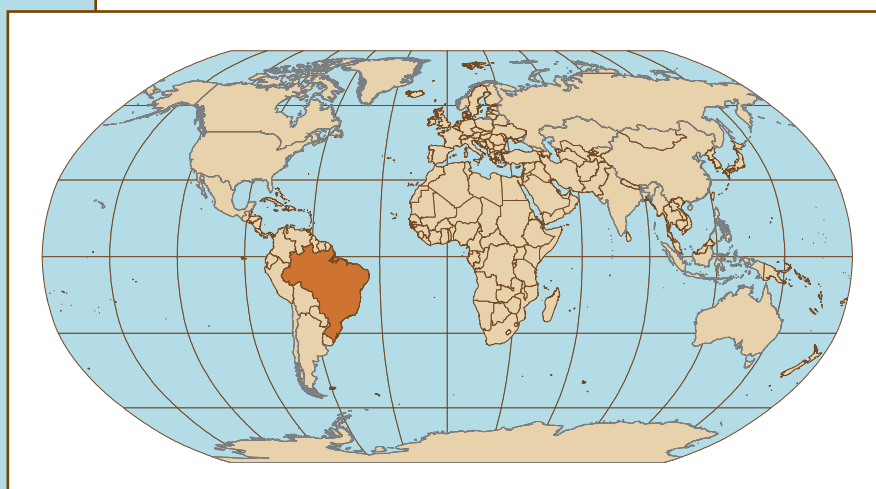
Facade of a church in Olinda, Brazil

in Portugal, having been influenced by an Indian language, Tupi-Guarani, during the early period of colonization.

The country's Roman Catholic population of 145 million is among the largest in the world. That total includes Afro-Catholic sects with spiritualist beliefs and rituals. Other major religious groups include Evangelical Protestants.

Brazilians have been migrating in greater numbers to the U.S. in recent decades. From 1960 until the mid-1980s, there was a relatively even pattern of Brazilian immigration to the U.S. Estimates suggest between 1,500 and 2,300 Brazilians immigrated to the U.S. each year, mainly from southern and south-central Brazil. The majority of these immigrants was of European heritage and came from the middle- and upper-middle-classes of Brazilian society.

During the mid-1980s, Brazil's economy began to deteriorate rapidly, with hyper-inflation taking hold by the end of the decade. (In the 1990s, inflation reached 1,795 percent annually.) Despite the economic reforms instituted in the 1990s by then-President Collor de Mello, incomes continued to drop significantly, and many Brazilians lost faith in their government. The Brazilian government estimates that between 1986 and 1990, 1.4 million Brazilians left the country permanently—many of them emigrating to the U.S. and others to Japan, Europe and elsewhere in Latin America. In 2000, an estimated 4,500 natives of Brazil were living in metropolitan Atlanta.



## What are Brazilian Customs and Culture?



Brazilian traditions, customs and beliefs can be traced to the various groups that have populated the land over its history: the Portuguese colonists who brought their Catholic faith and the Portuguese language; the Amerindians, who influenced both the language and the cuisine; the African slaves, who introduced their traditions in music and dance; and the many European immigrant groups, perhaps most notably the Italians and Germans in the south of Brazil, who brought their own ethnic traditions.

Religious rituals, military and political rallies, festivals and family celebrations are important parts of Brazilian society. The annual pre-Lenten Carnival celebration, a major event in Brazilian life, may have less hold on Brazilian-Americans in Atlanta. Some local Brazilians may travel as tourists to Rio to experience what they regard as the authentic Carnival festivities.

As in other areas of Brazilian culture, music and dance incorporate blends of African and European musical traditions. A well known form of Afro-Brazilian music, the *samba*, had its beginnings in the poor neighborhoods of Rio inhabited by the descendents of African slaves and grew into wide popularity during the 20th century. The *bossa nova* developed in the 1950s as a fusion of jazz and the slower *samba* beat. This music was popularized in Rio's beach neighborhoods of Ipanema and the Copacabana nightclubs.

Brazilians also give parties to celebrate such events as soccer (*futebol*) victories. The sport is such an important part of Brazilian culture and many highly skilled soccer players from Pele to Ronaldinho have reached international stardom. The 2006 World Cup was a major social and cultural occasion for Brazilians, as well as an athletic competition.

At their parties and celebrations, Brazilians are likely to enjoy meals including such staples as beans (*feijão*), rice (Brazilian style – *arroz brasileiro*), dried shrimp (*camarão seco*) and pork. *Feijoada*, known as the national dish of Brazil, consists of a mixture of black bean, pork and *farofa* (manioc meal). Having its origins as a dish for the slaves brought from Africa, feijoada has now been adapted into many variations in the different regional and ethnic communities of Brazil.

## Brazilian-American Life in Metro Atlanta

Atlanta's Brazilian population is concentrated in major areas: Marietta (Cobb), Sandy Springs (Fulton) and Alpharetta (Fulton). While the census records a total of 4,600 Brazilians in the region, some believe the actual number may be much higher. Many Brazilian stores have opened in the area. In Marietta, there are about 15 such stores. Sandy Springs and Alpharetta have several Brazilian stores as well.

Brazilians are close – they help each other, take care of each other's kids, teach them Portuguese. "The Brazilian community in Atlanta is very young. There are a lot of newcomers in the area," said Wilma Kruger, a native Brazilian who lives in Atlanta with her husband and family. "One of the biggest achievements has been exposing the Brazilian culture to the people of Atlanta through music, art, dance and food. We have several very good Brazilian restaurants in Atlanta. There is a Brazilian radio station that plays Brazilian music. There are Brazilian newspapers and magazines."

"I think the challenges that Brazilians face are the same for any immigrant community," Kruger added. "There is the legality issue. Many, but not all Brazilians are undocumented. Most are here because they want to live in the U.S. They have more opportunities for a better life here than where they came from. But, once they are here and working, how do we help them become legal? This is a difficult and complicated issue and there are no easy answers."

Other concerns within the local Brazilian community include cases of domestic violence and parents who don't speak English with children who do. A limitation of Brazilian life in Atlanta is that there is typically not a family support system present. On an institutional level, there is no Brazilian consulate in Atlanta. In order to obtain required governmental documents, local Brazilians have to travel to either Washington D.C. or Miami.



# Brazilian Organizations, Associations and Resources

Below is a listing of selected organizations who work with the Brazilian Community. Additional resources are available at [www.atlantaregional.com](http://www.atlantaregional.com) and [www.globalatlantaworks.com](http://www.globalatlantaworks.com)

## ASSOCIATIONS

### Comunidade Brasileira de Atlanta (Association of the Brazilian Community of Atlanta)

8975 Roswell Road, Suite 204  
Atlanta, GA 30350  
678-528-7543  
[www.asombra.org](http://www.asombra.org)  
[www.comunidadebrasileiradeatlanta.com](http://www.comunidadebrasileiradeatlanta.com)

### The Atlanta-Rio de Janeiro Sister Cities Committee

Contact: Wilma Kruger  
770-663-6580  
E-mail: [chair@atlantario.org](mailto:chair@atlantario.org)  
<http://www.atlantario.org>

### CCLS Atlanta (Cultural Center for Language Studies)

7000 Peachtree Dunwoody Road NE  
Atlanta, GA 30328-1655  
770-804-0808  
Note: English, Spanish, and Portuguese Languages

### Latin American Association

2750 Buford Highway  
Atlanta, GA 30324  
404-638-1800  
404-638-1806 (fax)  
E-mail: [main@latinamericanassoc.org](mailto:main@latinamericanassoc.org)  
[www.latinamericanassoc.org](http://www.latinamericanassoc.org)

### LAA – Gwinnett Outreach Center

Harmony Station Outreach Center  
Harmony Station Apartments  
1250 Old Norcross Tucker Road  
Tucker, GA 30084  
678-205-1018  
404-396-5150 (cell)  
678-205-1027 (fax)  
E-mail: [ndyste@latinamericanassoc.org](mailto:ndyste@latinamericanassoc.org)

### LAA – Cobb Outreach Center

Hickory Lake Outreach Center  
Hickory Lake Apartments  
490 Windy Hill Road  
Smyrna, GA 30082  
678-213-0500  
404-396-8017 (cell)  
678-213-0374 (fax)  
E-mail: [galarragam@latinamericanassoc.org](mailto:galarragam@latinamericanassoc.org)

### LAA – Las Colinas Apartments Outreach Center

861 Franklin Road  
Marietta, GA 30067  
678-213-0360  
404-396-7478 (cell)  
678-213-0650 (fax)  
404-929-9998  
E-mail: [cobboffice@latinamericanassoc.org](mailto:cobboffice@latinamericanassoc.org)

### League of United Latin American Citizens

Southeast Region – Georgia  
P.O. Box 12104  
Atlanta, GA 30355  
[www.lulac.org](http://www.lulac.org)

## BUSINESS

### Brazilian American Chamber of Commerce of Georgia

P.O. Box 93411  
Atlanta, GA 30377  
404-880-1551  
E-mail: [baccga1@aol.com](mailto:baccga1@aol.com)  
<http://www.bacc-ga.com/>

## GENERAL

### Catholic Social Services, Inc.

680 West Peachtree St.  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
404-881-6571  
Hispanic Hotline – 404-888-7841  
404-881-6571  
[www.cssatlanta.com/](http://www.cssatlanta.com/)  
Note: Contact main office for services and outreach center locations.

### Honorary Consulate of Brazil

One Atlantic Center  
1170 Peachtree St. NE  
Suite 800  
Atlanta, GA 30309  
404-962-6493

## MEDIA

### Brazil Atlanta

P. O. Box 7008  
Atlanta, GA 30357  
E-mail: [info@BrazilAtlanta.biz](mailto:info@BrazilAtlanta.biz)  
<http://www.brazilatlanta.biz>

102.3 (FM) WLKQ La Raza Radio  
Station – Spanish  
[www.laraza1023.com](http://www.laraza1023.com)

## RELIGIOUS

### Assembleia de Deus

Ministerio Semeadores de Boas Novas  
2131 Kingston Court  
Marietta, GA 30067  
404-843-9151  
[www.semeadores.com](http://www.semeadores.com)

### Assembleia de Deus

35 Leader Road SE  
Marietta, GA 30008-3311  
770-792-2455

### Brazilian Christian Church

505 Powers Ferry Road SE  
Marietta, GA 30067  
678-560-1582

### Brazilian Church of God

1750 Enterprise Way SE  
Marietta, GA 30067  
770-956-0701

### Georgia Brazilian Assembly of God

461 Powers Ferry Road SE  
Marietta, GA 30067  
770-321-0025

### St. Jude the Apostle Catholic Church

7171 Glenridge Drive  
Atlanta, GA 30328  
770-394-3896  
[www.stjudeatlanta.com](http://www.stjudeatlanta.com)

### Vine Brazilian Ministries

1572 Holcomb Bridge Road  
Roswell, GA 30076  
770-518-0500

## Contact:

E-mail: [globalsnapshots@atlantaregional.com](mailto:globalsnapshots@atlantaregional.com)

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Charles Krautler, Executive Director      Darlene Daly, Project Coordinator

The Atlanta Regional Commission is the official planning agency for the 10-county Atlanta region including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale, as well as the City of Atlanta and 62 other cities. ARC provides a forum where leaders come together to discuss and act on issues of region wide consequence.

The Community Foundation • 50 Hurt Plaza, Suite 449, Atlanta, Georgia 30303 • 404.688.5525 • [www.atlcf.org](http://www.atlcf.org)

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