

Rodrigo Barneschi

OUTSIDERS

**A Football Fanatic's
South American Odyssey**

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A Brief Introduction to Brazil and South America

BRAZIL IS the seventh most populous country in the world, with 213 million people, and the fifth largest in area, comparable with Europe.

The country is divided into 27 states, including a Federal District. The richest and most populous state is **São Paulo**, with 44 million people in an area slightly larger than the United Kingdom. **Rio de Janeiro**, with 16 million people living in an area the size of the Netherlands, is better known internationally, sometimes as a stereotypical symbol of the country. These neighbouring states account for almost 40 per cent of Brazil's GDP.

The city of **São Paulo** is the capital of the state of São Paulo. With a population of 11.5 million people, it is the most populous city in the southern hemisphere and the cultural and financial centre of Brazil.

The city of **Rio de Janeiro**, 270 miles from São Paulo by road and with a population of 6.2 million, is the leading tourist destination in Brazil, famed for its beaches and outstanding natural beauty.

The other major cities in Brazil are **Brasília**, the capital, built in the 1960s on the country's central plateau; **Belo Horizonte**; **Porto Alegre**; **Curitiba**; **Recife**, and **Salvador**.

South America comprises 13 countries, but Brazil is a giant (its land mass accounts for 50 per cent of the entire continent) and has little to do with the rest. It is the only country to speak Portuguese in a region dominated by the

Spanish language. Some other major cities in terms of football are **Buenos Aires (Argentina)**, **Montevideo (Uruguay)**, **Santiago (Chile)**, and **Asunción (Paraguay)**.

FOOTBALL

S.E. Palmeiras, founded in 1914 by Italian immigrants, is arguably the most successful Brazilian club, with 12 national titles, four *Copas do Brasil*, three *Copas Libertadores*, one *Copa Mercosul*, and 25 regional trophies.

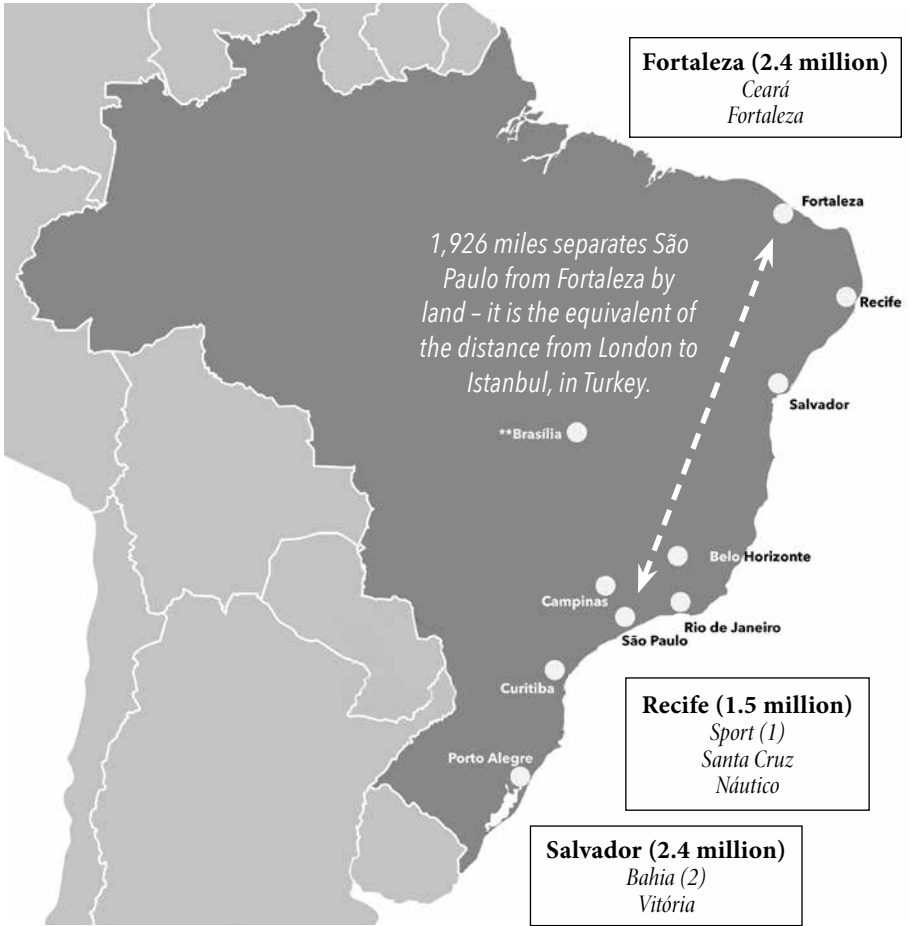
Based in the city of São Paulo, it has one of the four largest *torcidas* in the country:

Flamengo;
Corinthians;
São Paulo FC;
Palmeiras;
Vasco.

Palmeiras's biggest rivals are **Corinthians**, but **São Paulo FC** and **Santos FC** are also fierce rivals at a state level. Outside the state, rivalry is very strong with **Flamengo**, from Rio de Janeiro, and **Cruzeiro**, from Belo Horizonte.

The author of this book is a Palmeiras supporter, and this glossary can (and should) be consulted whenever contextualisation is needed.

BRAZIL – largest cities (by population, 2022) and clubs with the most national titles:



Rio de Janeiro (6.2 million)
Flamengo (8)
Vasco (4)
Fluminense (4)
Botafogo (3)

São Paulo (11.5 million)
Palmeiras (12)
Santos FC* (8)
Corinthians (7)
São Paulo FC (6)

Campinas (1.1 million)
Guarani (1)
Ponte Preta

*The port city of Santos is 50 miles from São Paulo city and has a population of 418,000 people. With Santos FC having the majority of its fans in the state capital, it makes more sense for the club to be categorised here.

**Capital.

Curitiba (1.8 million)
Athletico (1)
Coritiba (1)

Porto Alegre (1.3 million)
Internacional (3)
Grêmio (2)

Belo Horizonte (2.3 million)
Cruzeiro (4)
Atlético (3)

South America

Leading teams in the *Copa Libertadores*

7 titles: Independiente /ARG

6 titles: Boca Juniors/ARG

5 titles: Peñarol/URU

4 titles: River Plate/ARG, Estudiantes/ARG

3 titles: Palmeiras/BRA, São Paulo FC/BRA, Santos FC/BRA, Grêmio/BRA, Flamengo/BRA, Nacional/URU, Olimpia/PAR

2 titles: Internacional/BRA, Cruzeiro/BRA, Atlético Nacional/COL

Stadiums that appear most in the book

São Paulo

Palestra Itália (capacity 32,000): Palmeiras's stadium from 1933 to 2010 – also known as **Parque Antarctica**. It was demolished to make way for **Allianz Parque** (43,000), a multipurpose arena opened in 2014.

Pacaembu (25,000): a municipal stadium opened in 1940, and which served all the clubs in the city; once huge, it has recently been refurbished and its capacity reduced.

Morumbi (60,000): the São Paulo FC stadium is the largest in the city. Until the 2000s, with a capacity of more than 100,000 people, it was the stage for the derbies among the four big clubs in São Paulo.

Arena Corinthians (48,000): built for the 2014 World Cup, it is the home of the most popular club in the state.

Canindé (18,000): home of Portuguesa, a small club with its roots in Portuguese culture.

Arena Barueri (30,000): in Barueri, a city in the metropolitan region, it is used by local teams as an alternative when their stadiums are hosting concerts.

Campinas (57 Miles From São Paulo)

Brinco de Ouro da Princesa (20,000) and **Moisés Lucarelli** (16,000) belong to local teams Guarani and Ponte Preta.

Curitiba (258 miles from São Paulo)

Arena da Baixada (43,000) is a modern arena that belongs to Athletico, a regional team that has gained prominence in Brazilian football over the last two decades; its main rival, Coritiba, plays at the recently-remodelled **Couto Pereira** (37,000).

Rio De Janeiro (270 miles from São Paulo)

Maracanã (70,000): the stage for two World Cup finals (1950 and 2014) and now widely used by Flamengo and Fluminense, it is one of the most iconic stadiums in the world. At the time of its construction, it could hold up to 200,000 people.

São Januário (22,000): Vasco da Gama's stadium, built in 1927.

Nilton Santos (Engenhão) (40,000): Botafogo's home was the 2016 Olympic stadium in Rio.

Belo Horizonte (367 miles from São Paulo)

Mineirão (60,000): the state stadium, currently used by Cruzeiro and sometimes by Atlético.

Independência (20,000): a compact, central stadium that belongs to established, yet small, América; it had been used a lot by Atlético, which now has its own home, **MRV Arena** (46,000), in a more remote region.

Brasília (624 miles from São Paulo)

Mané Garrincha (70,000): a venue for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, it depends on games played by the big clubs of Rio and São Paulo to avoid becoming a white elephant – as the country's capital does not have a relevant local *torcida*.

Porto Alegre (700 miles from São Paulo)

The GreNal (the derby between Grêmio and Internacional) is arguably the fiercest football rivalry in Brazil.

Olimpico Monumental (50,000): one of the most iconic Brazilian grounds for decades, it was replaced in 2012 by the **Grêmio Arena** (60,000), on the northern edge of the city.

Beira-Rio (50,000): remodelled for the 2014 FIFA World Cup, it maintained its original architecture and is the home of Internacional.

Buenos Aires, Argentina

It is the capital of football in South America, with dozens of large stadiums throughout the metropolitan area. The ones that appear most in this book are:

La Bombonera (56,000): Boca Juniors' stadium is one of the most iconic football venues in the world; it owes its name to its chocolate box shape and exerts enormous pressure on the teams that visit it.

Más Monumental (84,000): home of River Plate and the Argentina team, it was recently expanded and became the largest on the continent.

Nuevo Gasómetro (48,000): San Lorenzo's home.

Cilindro (50,000): in the neighbouring city of Avellaneda, it is home to Racing Club; no more than 300 metres away is the **Libertadores de América** (43,000), of Independiente.

José Amalfitani (50,000): one of the venues for the 1978 World Cup, it is home to Vélez Sarsfield, a *club de barrio* that became relevant as world champions in 1994.

Tomas A. Ducó (48,000): Huracán's home is considered to be one of the most beautiful stadiums in the world.

Montevideo, Uruguay

Centenario (60,000): built in just eight months as the venue for the 1930 World Cup final, the original architecture has

been preserved and it was declared as the first Historical Monument of World Football by FIFA. Besides the Uruguay national team, it is used by a lot of Montevideo sides, although Nacional and Peñarol, the big ones, have chosen to use their own grounds, **Gran Parque Central** (37,000) and **Campeón del Siglo** (41,000), over the last decade.

Useful Expressions

An editorial decision was made to use some terms in the original languages (Portuguese or Spanish):

CBF: the governing body of football in Brazil, equivalent to the Football Association in the UK.

CONMEBOL: South America's equivalent of UEFA.

FPF: the governing body of football in São Paulo state.

Brazilian championship (Brasileirão): the country's main competition, played since 1959 – before, there were only state tournaments; until 2002, there were many different regulations, with the champion being decided in a final; from 2003, the consecutive points system was adopted. It is worth remembering that the Brazilian football calendar runs from February to December.

Copa do Brasil: a nationwide knockout tournament, played by clubs from all 27 Brazilian states since 1989.

Copa Libertadores da América (or simply Libertadores or Copa Libertadores): the South American equivalent of the Champions League, its name referring to the heroes who proclaimed independence in the region's countries (the word *libertadores* is spelled the same in Spanish and Portuguese).

Copa Sul-Americana: the South American equivalent of the UEFA Europa League; from 1993 to 1999, it was called **Copa Conmebol**; from 1998 to 2001, **Copa Mercosul**.

Carioca: native of the city of Rio de Janeiro – do not use this word to refer to a Brazilian not born in Rio.

Paulista: native of the state of São Paulo.

Paulista (or Carioca) championship: each of the 27 Brazilian states has a local competition. This tradition dates to the beginning of the twentieth century and, until the turn of the century, state tournaments were more important than national ones. Today, they are smaller tournaments, played at the beginning of the season.

Torcida: a Portuguese word used to refer to the group of supporters of a club, notably those who attend stadiums. In Spanish, the word is **hinchada**.

Organised torcida: a group of supporters similar to European ultras. In Brazil, membership of these groups can number in the tens of thousands, and they are noted in the stadiums for their uniform outfits, flags, and percussion instruments. Because they have been involved in a lot of violence in recent decades, they are viewed with fear and marginalised by public opinion. **Mancha Verde** is the main group of organised fans of Palmeiras, and it appears a lot in this book. In Argentina and other countries in the region, such groups are known as **Barra bravas**.

Palmeirense: a Palmeiras supporter.

Alviverde: the combination of the colours green and white, and a common way to refer to Palmeiras or its fans.

Corintiano: a Corinthians supporter.

Santista: a Santos FC supporter.

Alvinegro: the combination of the colours black and white, and a common way to refer to Corinthians or its fans (the same word applies to Santos FC, and all other Brazilian clubs with black-and-white uniforms).

Flamenguista: a Flamengo supporter.

Rubro-negro: the combination of the colours black and red, and a common way to refer to Flamengo or its fans.