

Regions (Continental)| A1 Sample answer

Culture in Brazil

The three main cultural groups in Brazil are Native Brazilians, African Brazilians and White people. Brazil was originally inhabited by Portuguese colonists who arrived in the 16th century. Slaves were brought from Africa to Brazil where they worked in the sugar plantations. Brazil was the last country in the world to free its slaves in 1888. The Northeast of Brazil has the greatest amount of African Brazilians. There are more people of African origin in Brazil than any other country outside of Africa. In Brazil African Brazilians are more likely to work in menial jobs and live in the slums than white Brazilians.

Only 14% of African Brazilians enrol in school and third level education while around 45% of the white population go to third level. This number is much higher in countries such as Ireland. Most native people live in the Amazon Basin. Native tribes are divided into two hundred cultural groups with 120 different languages. Today there about 350000 native people left compared to the 2 to 6 million there was 500 years ago. They suffered from slavery and dispossession of their lands. Many died from diseases such a small pox. Native people remain under threat from deforestation caused by cattle ranching. The government has allocated 20% of the rainforest to the tribes. The main religion in Brazil is Catholicism. Brazil has more Catholics than any other country in the world. Many churches are seen around Brazil.

The native tribes have their own tribal religions. African Brazilian religions add to the cultural diversity of Brazil. Portuguese is the official language of Brazil. Brazilian Portuguese contains many words and expressions from African languages like Piranha and Samba. Many of the native tribes have their own languages but several are spoken by less than 600 people. They are in danger of becoming extinct. Guarani is spoken by about 35000 tribal people near the border with Paraguay. Brazil has a distinctive music tradition. Music is Central to the culture of the country. Samba music is based on African rhythms brought by slaves. Brazil also has a carnival each year.