

Brazil

The Brazilian culture is a mix of European, Asian and African settlers as well as a small percentage of indigenous tribes. The music of Brazil is a mix of European, Asian and African influences combined with the music of indigenous tribes. Brazilian music is the ultimate description of Brazilian culture.

CAPOEIRA is a martial art disguised as a dance, and played as a game. It was practiced among early African slaves as a way to disguise warrior training for their young sons. It is accompanied by very intricate and specific musical instruments and technique.

SAMBA is a music developed through the combination of Portuguese and Spanish music with African rhythms. In the 1930's, Carmen Miranda, an actress/singer from Rio de Janeiro delighted American audiences with samba.

BOSSA NOVA started in the 1950's with Brazilian guitarist, Joao Gilberto. Antonio Carlos Jobin hit it big in the US with his recording of The Girl From Ipanema.

Popular music in Brazil is called MPB (an acronym for Musica Popular Brasileira.) It is a blend of modern pop music with the traditional rhythms of Brazil.

Popular dances in Brazil include the Frevo, the Forro, and the Lambada.

MUSICA SERTANJA is the folksy country music of northeast Brazil.

Heitor Villa-Lobos is Brazil's most famous composer of serious music. Orchestras and soloists perform his music all over the world. He bases his orchestral music on traditional Brazilian folksongs and dance tunes. His most famous piece is called Bachianas Brasileiras.

CORDEL is the folk song of northeast Brazil that tells stories, glorifies heroes, or makes political commentary.

The *Cantador de Cordel* sings on street corners and often accompanies himself on guitar. CANDOMBLE is the drumming, dancing and chanting of the believers of the Brazilian Bahia.

Guitar is the most prominent instrument in Brazil.

Brazilian melodies are most commonly in minor keys. Minor keys have flat 3rd 6th and 7th scale degrees. The sound is darker, like you would hear in Edvard Grieg's Hall of the Mountain King.

Brazil celebrates CARNIVAL just before Lent each year. It is a celebration similar to the Mardi Gras of New Orleans. Large groups of drummers often prepare all year long for the five day festival.

Samba schools are neighborhood organizations that practice and teach music. They are the "Rec. centers" of Brazil. They are the community support, charity association, and food bank for a neighborhood as well.

Music, dance, religion and food define Brazilians as a people. Brazilians do not define themselves through their politics and economy, but their music and art.