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Brazilian Portuguese

3rd Edition

by Karen Jacobson-Sive

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A Wiley Brand

Brazilian Portuguese For Dummies®, 3rd Edition

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Introduction

Brazil's diversity is immense, whether you consider the Indigenous, African, and European roots of the majority of its inhabitants or whether you put the staggering biodiversity of Brazil's lush landscapes under a microscope. Latin America's most populous and largest nation is also the region's largest economy — and it just happens to be home to friendly people, stunning beaches, and great music.

Need I say more? (I can't stop gushing — did you know that Brazil is in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for having the biggest street carnival in the world, in Salvador, Bahia?). Yes, it's time to learn Brazilian Portuguese.

Business or pleasure — the book in your hands is perfect as a solid crash course for learning Brazilian Portuguese, no matter your motive. I've stocked this book with cultural insights to complement the basics of the language. This third edition even has a chapter for businesspeople who are interested in speaking a bit of Portuguese to enhance their career. I've also updated the book to go over social media vocab, even including slang abbreviations you can use to react to posts online.

Portuguese is the sixth most-spoken language in the world, due in large part to Brazil's huge population that hovers now around 213 million. Be sure to check out Chapter 1 to find out which other countries in the world, including Portugal, speak Portuguese. I point out differences between the Portuguese that's spoken in Brazil and Portugal in Chapter 1, but this book focuses on Brazilian Portuguese.

A bonus to learning Brazilian Portuguese is that it can help you to understand a little French, Spanish, and Italian, too. They're all Romance languages, so many words of these languages sound similar.

The sounds of Brazilian Portuguese can be difficult to make for non-native speakers, but stick with it and have fun. I'm not promising fluency here, but you can find out how to make small talk with a Brazilian, ask for directions in a city, and even make some plans. So go buy yourself some Brazilian music and fill your space with the sounds of Brazil. You'll fall in love with this lyrical language.

About This Book

Here's the good news: This isn't a class you have to drag yourself to or a language book that's weighed down with complicated grammar rules, like so many others you may find in a bookstore or online. It's a reference book for learning to speak Brazilian Portuguese that you can pick up at your leisure. You're the boss. You may choose to leaf through, glancing only at chapters and pages that grab your attention. Or you can read the whole thing from start to finish. (From finish to start is okay, too — no one's looking.)

The first few chapters may be helpful to read first, though, because they offer basic information about pronunciation and point out words that appear throughout the book. Of course, if there's a chapter you just have to read first, it's okay. After all, if you're heading to Brazil for Carnaval or for business, I'm guessing you'll want to flip to those chapters right away.

Just keep in mind that more advanced instruction comes later in the book as your knowledge and ability progresses. However, all chapters contain background, grammar, and dialogues that reflect the information you need to know at a particular level and in the situation of focus.

Conventions Used in This Book

To make the book easy to follow, I've set up a few stylistic rules:

- » Portuguese terms are set in **boldface** to make them stand out.
- » Pronunciations and definitions, which are shown in parentheses, follow the terms the first time they appear in a section.
- » Within the pronunciation, the part of the word that's stressed is shown in *italics*.
- » English translations appear in italics.
- » Verb conjugations (lists that show you the different forms of a verb) are given in tables in this order: *I, you* (singular), *he/she, we, they*, and *you* (plural). Pronunciations follow in a second column.

Here's an example of a conjugation chart for the word **ser** (seh) (*to be*). Because the subjects always come in the same order, you can see that words in this chart mean *I am, you are, he/she is, we are, they are, and you are*.

Conjugation	Pronunciation
eu sou	eh-oooh soh
você é	voh-seh eh
ele/ela é	eh-lee/eh-la eh
nós somos	nohz soh-mooz
eles/elas são	eh-leez/eh-lahz sah-oooh
vocês são	voh-sehz sah-oooh

In each chapter, you can also find the following sections:

- » **Talkin' the Talk dialogues:** The best (and most fun) way to learn a language is to hear real-life dialogues, so I include little conversations throughout the book. The dialogues come under the heading "Talkin' the Talk" and show you the Portuguese words, how to pronounce them, and their English translations. Most of these conversations exist as audio files you can find online on the website associated with this book (www.dummies.com/go/brazilianportuguese1d3e), so when you see an Audio Online icon, be sure to listen along.
- » **Words to Know blackboards:** Knowing key words and phrases is also important in the quest to speak a new language. I collect important words that appear in the Talkin' the Talk dialogues (and perhaps add a few related terms) and put them in a special blackboard-shaped box that follows the dialogues.
- » **Fun & Games activities:** At the end of each chapter, find an activity designed to help you practice some of the words and concepts featured in that chapter. Don't worry; the exercises cover the essentials of a topic — nothing too difficult. The answers to these exercises are in Appendix C so you can quickly find out whether you got the right answers!

Foolish Assumptions

To write this book, I had to imagine who my readers would be. Yes, you! I think if you've picked up this book, you're probably an open-minded person who enjoys learning. That's excellent. Here are some other things I imagine about you:

- » You're interested in learning enough conversational Brazilian Portuguese to get by in most social situations, not fluency.
- » You don't want to memorize long lists of vocabulary to learn Portuguese.
- » You have little or no experience with the Portuguese language.
- » You're interested in learning about Brazilian culture as well as its language.

The only thing I ask of you is to leave any foolish assumptions behind that might prevent you from getting the most out of this book. For example, it's nonsense that only younger people can learn languages. The desire to learn is all you need. And it doesn't matter how well you did in high school French or German, or whichever language classes you've taken before. This book is designed to take a fresh approach to learning languages, and I won't grade you.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided by topic into parts and then into chapters. Chapters are further divided into sections. The following sections tell you what types of information you can find in each part.

Part 1: Getting Started with Brazilian Portuguese

This part covers the basics of Portuguese — how to pronounce words, construct sentences, and so on. I also point out Portuguese words that are so close to English that you already know their meanings.

Part 2: Brazilian Portuguese in Action

Discover everyday words and phrases in Portuguese and practice speaking this language. Instead of focusing on grammar points and philosophizing about why the language is structured the way it is, I jump right in to show you how it works.

This section highlights how to talk to new Brazilian friends and business associates.

Part 3: Brazilian Portuguese on the Go

Here are the tools you need to take your Portuguese on the road, whether you're trying to figure out which part of Brazil you want to visit or talking with a Brazilian about the bus schedule. These chapters are devoted to the traveler in you, the one who checks into hotels, hails a cab, and attends sporting events or Carnival in Brazil.

Part 4: The Part of Tens

If you're looking for quick advice about Portuguese, this part is for you. Here, you can find ten ways to pick up Portuguese quickly, ten common slang expressions, and ten expressions to help you sound fluent (even if you're faking it).

Part 5: Appendixes

This part of the book is a straightforward reference — conjugation tables for the most common verbs and two mini-dictionaries: one translates common words from English to Portuguese; the other defines Portuguese words in English. Here, too, is where you find answers to the Fun & Games activities.

Icons Used in This Book

Drawings and symbols always liven things up a bit, don't they? Here are some icons that point you to important information:



TIP

This icon shows you where you can find some fascinating tidbits that highlight either a linguistic aspect or give travel tips. Tips can save you time and frustration.



REMEMBER

This handy icon pops up whenever you run across a bit of information that you really should remember after you close the book. These tidbits may tell you something important about the Portuguese language or Brazil in general.



SOUND
NATIVE

When you see this icon, you can find insider pronunciation and vocab tips that go beyond basic Portuguese and can help you impress your Brazilian friends.



CULTURAL
WISDOM

These snippets provide insight into Brazilian culture.



AUDIO
ONLINE

The online audio files contain conversations between native Brazilians. This icon marks the “Talkin’ the Talk” sections that are included online at www.dummies.com/go/brazilianportugueseefd3e and reminds you that you can listen to the dialogue while you read it.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you’re reading right now, this book comes with a free, access-anywhere Cheat Sheet containing tips and techniques for learning Brazilian Portuguese faster. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and type **Brazilian Portuguese For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the search box.

Where to Go from Here

When you have a spare moment, pop open the book to find out about Brazil and Brazilian Portuguese. Also, try to complement the information in this book with other activities that enhance your knowledge of Portuguese, such as reading the news in Portuguese or listening to Brazilian music. Have fun! Oh, and **boa sorte** (*boh-ah soh-chee*) (*good luck*)!

1

Getting Started with Brazilian Portuguese

IN THIS PART . . .

See the links between Portuguese and English.

Master the basics of Portuguese grammar.

Say “Hello” — and “Goodbye.”

Work with numbers, time, and measurements.

Be a homebody — in Portuguese.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Recognizing what English and Portuguese have in common
- » Spell it out: Saying the alphabet
- » Looking at vowels and consonants: Basic Portuguese sounds
- » Listening for regional variations in accent

Chapter **1**

You Already Know Some Portuguese!

Much like English, the Portuguese language comes in several different versions. The accent you hear in Brazil is pretty different from the Portuguese that's spoken in Portugal. In fact, some Brazilian tourists in Portugal say they can't understand a word that's spoken there! The situation is similar to a conversation among English speakers from Texas, South Africa, and Ireland: It would probably sound like they were speaking three different languages. No doubt they'd struggle to understand each other.

Within Brazil, there are also regional differences in the way people speak — just as accents differ in various regions of the United States. Think about the accents of people in Alabama, Minnesota, and New York. So it is in Brazil. People in **São Paulo** (sah-oooh pah-oooh-loh), **Rio de Janeiro** (hee-oooh dee zhah-nay-roh), and the touristy city of **Salvador** (sahl-vah-doh) have different twangs to their speech, but it's still pretty easy to understand all of them if you know Portuguese.

Written Portuguese, however, is pretty standard, especially the writing you find in a newspaper or other type of publication. A Brazilian can understand a Portuguese newspaper or read the works of Portugal's Nobel Prize-winning author **José Saramago** (zhoh-zeh sah-rah-mah-goh), no problem.

The Portuguese in this book is Brazilian Portuguese, as opposed to the Portuguese spoken in Portugal and countries in Africa, including **Cabo Verde** (*kah-boh veh-jee*) (*Cape Verde*; islands off northwestern Africa), **Moçambique** (*moh-sahm-bee-kee*) (*Mozambique*; on the coast of southeast Africa), **Guiné-Bissau** (*gwee-neh bee-sah-oooh*) (*Guinea Bissau*; in western Africa), **Angola** (*ahn-goh-lah*) (in southwestern Africa), and **São Tomé e Príncipe** (*sah-oooh toh-meh ee preen-see-pee*) (*Sao Tome and Principe*; islands off western Africa).

Exploring the Roots of Portuguese

The beautiful Portuguese language belongs to a linguistic family known as the Romance languages. Back when the Roman Empire was around, Rome was the center of a wide swath of Europe, northern Africa, and parts of Asia. With Rome's influence came its language — Latin.

The closer a place was to Rome, the more likely it was to absorb Latin into its language. This was the case with Portugal — where the Portuguese language originates — as well as the language of places like France, Spain, and even Romania.

So how did Portuguese get all the way to Brazil? A Portuguese conquistador named **Pedro Álvares Cabral** (*peh-droh ahl-vah-reez kah-brah-oooh*) landed in modern-day Brazil on April 22, 1500, and is the person credited for having “discovered” Brazil. Many indigenous people were already living in the area, of course, many of whom spoke languages that are part of a linguistic family today called **Tupi-Guarani** (*too-pee gwah-rah-nee*).



CULTURAL
WISDOM

Brazilian Portuguese uses some **Tupi-Guarani** words, which commonly appear as names of towns in Brazil — **Ubatuba** (*oooh-bah-too-bah*), for example, is a pretty beach town in **São Paulo** (*sah-oooh pah-oooh-loh*) state. The town is nicknamed **Uba-Chuva** because **chuva** (*shoo-vah*) means *rain* and it rains there a lot! **Tupi-Guarani** words also name native plants and animals. *Armadillo*, for example, is **tatu** (*tah-too*). After you get used to speaking Portuguese, figuring out whether a word is Latin-based or **Tupi-Guarani**-based is pretty easy.

Still other words in Brazilian Portuguese are based on African languages, a result of the vast influence that Africans had on creating modern-day Brazil and its culture.

While the development of the modern-day English language wasn't influenced by **Tupi-Guarani** or African languages, what you may not realize is that it has a lot of Latin influence. Linguists consider English to be a Germanic language, and it technically is. But due to the on-and-off French occupations of the British Isles,

many of those French (Latin-based) words rubbed off on English. Some people say as much as 60 to 70 percent of English is Latin-based.

That's great news for you. It means that many Portuguese words have the same root as English words. The *root* of a word is usually the middle of the word — those few sounds that really define the meaning of a word. Some examples of Portuguese words that resemble English words and have the same meaning include **experimento** (eh-speh-ree-men-toh) (*experiment*), **presidente** (preh-zee-dang-chee) (*president*), **economia** (eh-koh-noh-mee-ah) (*economy*), **decisão** (deh-see-zah-oooh) (*decision*), **computador** (kom-poo-tah-doh) (*computer*), **liberdade** (lee-beh-dah-jee) (*liberty*), and **banana** (bah-nah-nah) (*banana*). And that's only to name a few!

Another benefit: **O português** (ooh poh-too-gehzh) (*Portuguese*), like all Latin languages, uses the Roman alphabet. Accent marks that you don't find in English appear over some of the vowels, but they add to the charm of Portuguese. Learning Portuguese is much easier for English-speaking people than learning Japanese or Arabic, which use totally different alphabets.

Finally, due to the modern influence of the United States throughout the world — which, in many ways, is much greater than Rome's ancient influence — English words are used in Portuguese, with no adaptation in the way they're written. Examples include **email** (ee-may-oh), **shopping** (shoh-ping) (in Brazil, **shopping** is a noun that means “shopping mall”), and **show** (shoh) (*show/performance*).

Reciting Your ABCs

A few of the sounds in Brazilian Portuguese can be difficult to imitate at first, because the sounds aren't used in English. But most Brazilians can understand what you're saying, even if you don't say every **palavra** (pah-lahv-rah) (*word*) perfectly. Many Brazilians think a foreign **sotaque** (soh-tah-kee) (*accent*) is charming, so don't worry about it.

On the upside, the way that phonetic sounds correspond to letters in Brazilian Portuguese is very systematic — much more so than in English. This means that after you get used to the way a letter or combination of letters sounds in Brazilian Portuguese, you can get the hang of the language pretty quickly. There are few surprises in the **pronúncia** (proh-noon-see-ah) (*pronunciation*) of this beautiful language.



The set of online audio files that accompany this book contains a pronunciation guide to give you a better feel for Portuguese sounds.

At the beginning of this chapter, did you notice that the pronunciation is shown in parentheses after the Portuguese word? That's how this book shares the pronunciation of all new words. The italicized part is where you put the emphasis on the word as you speak it.

Are you ready to discover the basics of **português** (poh-too-geh-z) (*Portuguese*)? You can start with the alphabet. Practice spelling your name:

- » a (ah)
- » b (beh)
- » c (seh)
- » d (deh)
- » e (eh)
- » f (*eh-fee*)
- » g (zheh)
- » h (*ah-gah*)
- » i (ee)
- » j (*zhoh-tah*)
- » k (kah)
- » l (*eh-lee*)
- » m (*eh-mee*)
- » n (*eh-nee*)
- » o (awe)
- » p (peh)
- » q (keh)
- » r (*eh-hee*)
- » s (*eh-see*)
- » t (teh)
- » u (ooh)
- » v (veh)

- » w (*dah-bli yoo*)
- » x (*sheez*)
- » y (*eep-see-lohn*)
- » z (*zeh*)



TIP

When I refer to the sound *zh* as part of a phonetic transcription (the pronunciation guide in parenthesis), think of the *s* sound in the word *treasure*. That's the *zh* sound I'm talking about.

Conquering Consonants

Getting through this book should be a cinch after you go through the basic pronunciation guide in this section. Skipping the guide is okay, too — you can get the gist by listening to the online audio files and reading the pronunciations of words in other chapters aloud. But if you want to get a general idea of how to pronounce words that don't show up in this book, this is a great place to begin. I start with the consonants — you know, all those letters in the alphabet that aren't vowels.



SOUND
NATIVE

Here's a fun aspect of Brazilian Portuguese. When a word ends in a consonant — most of these words are foreign (and mostly English) terms that Brazilians have adopted — it's pronounced with an added *ee* sound. Some examples are **club** (*kloo-bee*), **laptop** (*lahp-ee-top-ee*), **hip-hop** (*heep-ee-hoh-pee*), **rap** (*hah-pee*), and **rock** (*hoh-kee*).

That said, most consonants in Brazilian Portuguese have the same sound as in English. I point out the exceptions in the following sections.

Ready? Here we go!

The letter C

A *c* that begins a word usually sounds like a *k*:

- » **café** (*kah-feh*) (*coffee*)
- » **casa** (*kah-zah*) (*house*)

If the **c** has a hook-shaped mark under it, like this — **ç** — it makes an *s* sound:

- » **França** (*frahn-sah*) (*France*)
- » **serviço** (*seh-vee-soo*) (*service*)

The most common use of this type of **c**, called the **cedilha** (*seh-deel-yah*) (*cedilla*), is when a **c** comes at the end of a word that's followed by **-ão**. It's the Brazilian equivalent of the English *-tion* ending.

- » **evolução** (*eh-voh-loo-sah-oooh*) (*evolution*)
- » **promoção** (*proh-moh-sah-oooh*) (*sale/discount/sales promotion*)

The letter D

If a word begins with a **d**, the sound is a hard *d*, like in English:

- » **dançar** (*dahn-sah*) (*to dance*)
- » **data** (*dah-tah*) (*date* — as in calendar date)

The word **de** (*jee*), which means *of*, is an exception.

If the **d** comes in the middle of a word, it can have either a hard *d* sound or a *j* sound — as in the English word *jelly*.

- » **advogado** (*ahj-voh-gah-doh*) (*lawyer*)
- » **estado** (*eh-stah-doh*) (*state* — as in a state in a nation)
- » **liberdade** (*lee-beh-dah-jee*) (*freedom*)
- » **modelo** (*moh-deh-loo*) (*model*)
- » **pedir** (*peh-jee*) (*to ask for*)

The letter G

The **g** in Portuguese usually is a hard *g*, like in the English word *go*:

- » **gato** (*gah-too*) (*cat*)
- » **governo** (*goh-veh-noo*) (*government*)
- » **segundo** (*seh-goohn-doh*) (*second*)