

Squiz the World goes to... Brazil

"Each week, we give the world globe a spin, and see where we land. Then we take the kids of Australia on an audio excursion to visit that country and its people.

"

I'm Amanda Bower, and today on Squiz the World we're visiting the biggest country in South America... a powerhouse soccer nation... a place known for its huge celebrations of Carnevale. Can you guess?

Strap yourselves into the Squiz Kids Super Fast Supersonic Jetliner as we take off and take a squiz at Brazil ...

Just the Facts

If you look at a map of South America, Brazil is the huge country that occupies much of the north east coast... it has 7,400 kilometres of coastline, and yes, it has some pretty gorgeous beaches.

As of 2024, there are 216 million humans living in Brazil - that's about eight times as many people that live in Australia! It's also home to the greatest variety of animals of any country in the world. We're talking 600 mammal species, 1,500 fish species, 1,600 bird species, and 100,000 different types of insects.

Many of those creatures live in the Amazon jungle, which is in Brazil's north and is the world's biggest. We often hear about the Amazon in the news, because huge amounts of the rainforest are being cut down by farmers, miners, and other kinds of industry. About 17% of the forest has already been lost, which is a problem because the Amazon's trees store carbon, which helps slow climate change.

But there's some cool stuff happening ... the Amazon is home to about one million indigenous people, and they are using something unexpected to protect the trees: drones, GPS, and artificial intelligence! AI predicts which areas are likely to be chopped down by farmers; indigenous people visit those farmers, then use drones to monitor the areas and make sure they're safe.

I'd really like to see that in action! Another trip to put on my travel bucket list.

Of course, whenever you do travel, it's important to learn a few words in that country's language. It's a great way to show respect. So, let's....

Learn the Lingo

"For 322 years, Brazil was a colony of Portugal... so the main language spoken there is Portuguese. Squiz Kids Gaby and Olivia, whose Mum is Brazilian, are here to teach us how you say hello. Take it away, Gaby!

bom Dia

Go on, you give it a try! bom Dia

People are always really grateful when you just try to speak their language. They may even thank you for it. Hey, Olivia, how do we say thank you?

muito obrigada.

And muito obrigada to you, too, Olivia."

Now that we can communicate a little bit, it's....

Time for School

How would you like to go to school for only four hours of lessons? That's what kids in Brazil do! Half of a school's students show up at 7:30 in the morning, and learn until 11:30. The other half come at 1:30 and go until 5:30.

Everyone has lunch at home, except for kids whose families don't have much money - they stay at school for lunch, and for some of them, it's the only meal they'll get all day. That's not such a fun fact, is it?

So why are school days split in two like this? The Brazilian government did it because many kids weren't going to school, because there wasn't space, or because the family needed kids to work. Splitting a school into two shifts allowed everyone to go; and also gave kids time to help their parents with work before or after school if necessary.

And in actual fact, there's a THIRD shift of primary school at night. Teachers are at schools until as late as 10 o'clock at night, holding classes for adults and teenagers who couldn't go to school when they were kids. And I thought Australian teachers worked hard!

"When people visit Australia, there are things they find AMAZING that we might take for granted. Like our unique wildlife, the food we eat, the games we play. And Brazil has something pretty astonishing....

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

As well as being home to a huge chunk of the Amazon rainforest, Brazil also contains not surprisingly, to a long stretch of the Amazon river. And what a river it is... check out these extraordinary facts:

Number 1: The Amazon river contains pink dolphins. Nope, I'm not a victim of misinformation - I even checked with Squiz-E the newshound... the boto dolphin is one of the rarest and most endangered Amazon River animals. It appears pink because its skin is so thin that the blood vessels beneath... which flow with red blood... make its skin look pink. The more excited it gets, the pinker it is! Kind of like my face when I'm playing sport...

Number 2: A Slovenian athlete once swam 5,268km of the Amazon's entire 6,400km-length... it took him 66 days! But Amanda, I hear you cry, aren't there flesh-eating piranhas in the Amazon? Why yes, Squiz Kids, there are. Martin Strel avoided them by having supporters in boats on either side of him, ready to drop raw meat and blood into the water to distract any threats. Phew.

And Number 3: The Amazon River used to flow backwards. Up until 15 million years ago, the Amazon flowed out into the Pacific Ocean, instead of the Atlantic. Then, the Andes mountains rose up, and the river was landlocked—that means it was surrounded by land—for nearly five million years. Then, the masses of water found a way out... just in the other direction.

Phew! I've learned a ton about Brazil, and now I'm starving! I think it might be...

Dinner Time

The national dish of Brazil is called feijoada (fey-jwah-duh), and it's as colourful as those costumes at Carnival!

Feijão is Portuguese for beans, so we're talking a black bean stew that's cooked up with a variety of meat products - the more traditional versions might have pig's ears and beef tongue, but I've popped a recipe in your episode notes that does not! The rich, smoky stew is then served with rice, sautéed greens, and orange slices. It's rich, and warm, and comforting... and apparently it's on the menu at every restaurant in Brazil. Mmmmm

The S'Quiz

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening.

Question 1 What's an unlikely tool that's being used to stop deforestation of the Brazilian rainforest?

Question 2 What did Martin Spel's supporters drop into the water for piranhas?

Question 3 What makes boto dolphins pink?

That's all we have time for today. Thanks for staying curious about the world, and joining me on this incredible trip to Brazil.

Now get out there, and have a most excellent day. Over and out.