

All About Brazil: Natural Resources

Brazil is the largest country in South America. In fact, it borders every other South American country except for Chile and Ecuador, and is almost the same size as the United States! The eastern side of the country borders the Atlantic Ocean, which is why Brazil is known for its many beautiful beaches. Brazil's tropical *climate* is due to the country's location on the *equator*.

Brazil has many *natural resources*, including iron ore, gold, nickel, platinum, and timber. Perhaps its greatest resource is the Amazon, a large jungle covering the northern part of the country. There are over 40,000 different species of plants and 2.5 million species of insects in the Amazon! Many scientists call the Amazon "the Lungs of the Planet" because it *produces* over 20% of the world's oxygen. Over the last 50 years, the Amazon has been *deforested* in order to extract timber and make room for cows and *crops*, such as soy and palm. One group working to protect the rainforest are the Kayapo Indians. These native people have fought to keep their rights to the land in the southern Xingu river basin of Brazil by staging protests and pressuring the Brazilian government. Partly because of their work, Brazil is moving to protect more and more areas of the Amazon from deforestation.



Vocabulary

Climate: Weather of an area

Equator: A great circle around the Earth that is an equal distance to the North and South Pole. It is the part of the Earth that gets the most sunshine.

Natural Resources: Material from the Earth

Produces: Gives

Deforested: Cleared an area of trees

Crops: Food or other useful material that grows out of the ground.

What is one of Brazil's greatest natural resources, and why should it be protected? Use examples from the text in your answer.
