

# João Pessoa

**João Pessoa**, sometimes called *the city where the sun comes first*, is a Brazilian city and the easternmost city in the Americas. Local residents call its easternmost point *Ponta do Seixas*. It is also considered "the second greenest city in the world". The city has more than 7 square kilometers of forested land, losing only to Paris. It gained this distinction in 1992, after a survey of urban centres in various countries carried out by the United Nations. The city is characterized by the juxtaposition of tropical beaches, modern architecture and historic buildings from colonial periods.

João Pessoa is the capital of Paraíba, a state in the northeast region of Brazil. João Pessoa is the state's largest and most important city, with a population of about 672,000 (about one sixth of the state's population - 2006 estimate). Its metropolitan area comprises eight other satellite cities (Bayeux, Cabedelo, Conde, Lucena, and Santa Rita) and about 384,000 people, reaching more than 1 million inhabitants in the metropolitan area.

Founded in 1585 as Filipéia, João Pessoa is the third oldest city in Brazil. It fell under Dutch occupation from 1634 to 1654, and was called *Friederstadt*. Portugal then reclaimed it and called it Paraíba. An important fortress was built in the north, in present day Cabedelo, which is inside the `Greater João Pessoa` area and is a port city. In 1930 the capital assumed its current name, after the assassination of the eponymous politician.

Tourism is one of João Pessoa's chief economic activities, together with construction, food, metalworking, and other industries. Sugar cane agriculture and related industries are also important.

## Tourism

João Pessoa is full of preserved natural forests, squares and gardens, which is why it is considered one of the cities with the highest index of green area per inhabitant in the world. Another beauty of the city is the Ponta do Seixas, the easternmost point of South America, which can be seen from the majestic Farol do Cabo Branco (Cabo Branco Lighthouse)" and "natural pools of Picãozinho on the island Areia Vermelha."

João Pessoa has approximately 40 km of beaches (both residential and savage) and it has a big amount of small natural islands. On the outskirts of the capital are the most popular beaches in the State, such as Tambaú and Manaíra. Nearby it is possible to find one of the few Brazilian nudist beaches (naturism) that are officially recognized, Tambaba. In addition, it is full of parks and avenues packed with fruit and ornamental tree's, João Pessoa has many forest reserves, including the coconut trees and various species of trees which constitute the maritime margin landscape – attracting thousands of tourists every year.

João Pessoa has many green areas scattered among its avenues, parks, and residential neighborhoods, which all make it very pleasant and allegedly "the second greenest city in the world" with more than 7 square kilometers of forested land, second only to Paris. It was considered thus in 1992, after a survey of urban centres in various countries carried out by the United Nations.

## Transportation

João Pessoa has an international airport (Presidente Castro Pinto) which is located in Bayeux, approximately 30Km from downtown. Currently the airport is being renovated. Access by car to the airport is by the state road BR-101. The following airlines offer regular flights to and from João Pessoa: BRA, Gol and TAM.

In the city, public transportation is mostly based on a private bus system, taxis and railways. The city has approximately 500 buses. When using the bus system, a single passenger ticket can be used to travel around town and to make connections. There's a major terminal (Terminal de Integração do Varadouro) where passengers can change buses. An electronic ticketing system is being implemented with the purpose of offering better efficiency to passengers. Currently the bus fee is R\$ 1, 60, or less than \$1 USD.

Extended time or trips in taxis can often be negotiated directly with the driver. For example, a taxi to the American Consulate in Recife, about two hours away, can be taken for about R\$125, or \$65 USD, depending on the exchange rate.

The railway system provides inter-city commuting possibilities for people from cities in the metropolitan area. The system only serves some parts in the west and north of the capital area, however.

## Education

João Pessoa is home to the Federal University of Paraíba - UFPB, which offers degrees in areas such as medicine, engineering, law, arts, and technology. In addition to the UFPB, other smaller private universities attract many students from within Paraíba and from other states. The "Centro Universitário de João Pessoa - UNIPÊ" offers courses ranging from psychology to law and the "Faculdade de Ciências Médicas da Paraíba" offers degrees in medicine-related disciplines.

## Major Events

**Muriçocas do Miramar** (Feb) there is a main street carnival held on the Wednesday prior to official carnival days.

**Vem Viver a Paraíba** (Jan - Feb) "Come and Experience Paraíba" is a tourism fair and folklore performance event.

**Centro em Cena** (Jan) this is an art and culture event.

**Folia de rua - Prévía Carnavalesca** (Feb) this street carnival is held a few days prior to official carnival days.

**Carnaval da Melhor Idade** (Feb) this carnival is geared more towards older people.

**Auto de Deus** (Apr) this is a play of the crucifixion of Christ.

**São João Pessoa - São João fora de época** (The month is to be announced.) This is one of João Pessoa's major regional music events.

**Feira Brasil mostra Brasil** (Jul) This Exposition features commercial Brazilian goods.

**Festa das Neves** (Aug) this is a community festivities and fair with a theme of St. Neves.

**FENART João Pessoa** (Nov) this is a major fine arts exhibition in the area.

**Vaquejada do Cowboy** (Nov) this is a rodeo like event with cowboys.

**Festa do Atum** (Dec) this community fair has a theme of Tuna.

**Reveillon** (Dec 31) there are New-Year's Eve festivities and fireworks at the beach.