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## Brazil's Government: A Democratic Journey



Brazil, the largest country in South America, boasts not only beautiful landscapes and a rich culture but also a vibrant and complex system of government. From its colonial history to the establishment of democracy, Brazil's government has undergone significant changes. In this reading passage, we will explore the government of Brazil, its structure, and the country's journey towards democracy.

### Colonial Rule and Independence

Before becoming a republic, Brazil was a Portuguese colony for over three centuries. It gained its independence from Portugal in 1822 when Dom Pedro I declared himself Emperor of Brazil. This marked the beginning of Brazil's nationhood.

### Empire and Monarchy

Brazil's early years as an independent nation were marked by the rule of emperors. Dom Pedro I and later his son, Dom Pedro II, ruled as constitutional monarchs. However, the monarchy was eventually abolished in 1889, and Brazil became a republic.

### The Republic of Brazil

Brazil's transition to a republic brought about a new system of government. The country adopted a presidential system, where a president serves as both the head of state and the head of government. The first president of Brazil was Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca.

### Democracy and Military Rule

Brazil experienced periods of democracy and military rule during the 20th century. From 1946 to 1964, Brazil had democratic elections and civilian governments. However, in 1964, a military coup led to a long period of military rule that lasted until 1985. During this time, Brazil's democracy was suspended, and the military held political power.

### Return to Democracy

In the mid-1980s, Brazil began its journey back to democracy. In 1985, the military government gave way to civilian rule, and Tancredo Neves was elected



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president by an electoral college. Unfortunately, he passed away before taking office, and his vice president, José Sarney, assumed the presidency.

### **The 1988 Constitution**

One of the key milestones in Brazil's return to democracy was the adoption of the 1988 Constitution. This constitution established Brazil as a federal republic and outlined the principles of democracy, human rights, and social justice. It also introduced a system of checks and balances among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

### **The Three Branches of Government**

Brazil's government is divided into three branches, each with its own distinct role:

- **Executive Branch:** The executive branch is headed by the president, who is both the head of state and the head of government. The president is elected by popular vote for a four-year term and can be re-elected for one consecutive term.
- **Legislative Branch:** The National Congress is Brazil's legislative body, consisting of two houses: the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate. Members of both houses are elected by the people. The Congress is responsible for making laws and overseeing the executive branch.
- **Judicial Branch:** The judicial branch is responsible for interpreting and applying the law. The Supreme Federal Court (STF) is the highest court in Brazil and plays a crucial role in ensuring the constitutionality of laws and government actions.

### **Elections and Political Parties**

Brazil holds regular elections to choose its leaders and representatives. Political parties play a significant role in the country's democratic process, and various parties compete for positions in government.

### **Challenges and Progress**

Brazil's journey to democracy has not been without challenges. The country has faced issues such as corruption, economic instability, and social inequality. However, Brazil continues to make progress in strengthening its democratic institutions and addressing these challenges.

