



IGLTA
FOUNDATION



Think Tank Report

LGBTQ+ Travel in Brazil: Data, Insights, & Strategies for Inclusive Business

An IGLTA Foundation Leadership Think Tank report

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Executive

Introduction: Embracing the Power of Inclusive Tourism

Brazil is a culturally rich, and globally significant destination with the **potential to lead the world in inclusive LGBTQ+ tourism**. As home to one of the world's largest Pride celebrations and a growing demand for diverse, welcoming travel experiences, Brazil is at a pivotal moment of opportunity and responsibility. Yet, **systemic inequalities, discrimination, and fragmented policies** continue to limit the full potential of LGBTQ+ tourism as a driver for equity and economic transformation.

To better understand the landscape and identify ways to move forward,

Summary

the IGLTA Foundation supported a **nationwide study* conducted by the Federal University of São Carlos** (Universidade Federal de São Carlos), and later convened a Leadership Think Tank in São Paulo that included voices from leading organizations like Accor, the Brazilian LGBTQ+ Tourism Chamber of Commerce, SEBRAE, and Itaú-Unibanco. The university-led research provided **data on traveler identities, behaviors, and priorities**, while the Think Tank turned those findings into **real-world insight and strategy**.

This report is a shared roadmap for LGBTQ+ tourism in Brazil that is deeply rooted in intersectionality, safety, equity, and sustainability.



*Ferragi, C. A., & Gabrielli, C. P. (2024). Research report on LGBTQIA+ tourism in Brazil - English Version. CNPq Research Group "i-Context: Innovation, Co-creation, Experience, and Territory." Unpublished manuscript. (PDF) Relatório de Pesquisa sobre Turismo LGBTI+ Research Report on LGBTQIA+ Tourism in Brazil. Available from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387970938_Relatorio_de_Pesquisa_sobre_Turismo_LGBTI_Research_Report_on_LGBTQIA_Tourism_in_Brazil [accessed Jul 30 2025].

Section 1: The LGBTQ+ Traveler Profile in Brazil

A comprehensive understanding of the LGBTQ+ traveler is essential. The 405 survey respondents offer a data-rich snapshot that counters stereotypes and illuminates diverse realities:

- **Age & Ethnicity:** Majority aged 35-44 (30.1%) and 25-34 (28.1%); 90% identify as cisgender; 64.4% White, with 24.7% Mixed-race and 6.9% Black.
- **Sexual Orientation:** 69.1% homosexual, 15.3% bisexual, 4.7% pansexual.
- **Education & Income:** Over 50% hold university or postgraduate degrees; nearly 40% earn less than R\$2,824 or report no income.
- **Religion:** 53.3% Christian; 40.7% Non-religious.
- **Location:** 68.4% reside in São Paulo.

This profile not only examines a concentration in urban, educated populations, but also stark economic disparities and underrepresentation of **trans and Black travelers**, pointing to **broader systemic exclusions**. The insight helped shape the Think Tank conversations and highlighted where change is most urgently needed.



Section 2: **Core Needs and Behaviors of LGBTQ+ Travelers**



LGBTQ+ travelers in Brazil are not a monolith. Their choices reflect priorities that blend identity, safety, and cultural engagement:

- **Travel Motivations:** 35.8% travel for LGBTQ+ events, and 28.9% express future interest.
- **Companions:** Friends (66.4%) and partners (57.8%) are common, but 45.4% travel solo.
- **Booking Habits:** Majority use direct online booking (50.5%); 77% rely on Instagram for information.
- **Accommodation Preferences:** LGBTQ+ friendly neighborhoods and formal hotels are preferred.
- **Top Destinations:** Nationally, São Paulo and Rio; globally, San Francisco, Mykonos, Amsterdam, and Bangkok.

The study validated long-held assumptions and uncovered new areas for innovation and investment, such as in digital content strategy and solo travel safety.

Section 3: Beyond Visibility — The Real Barriers to Inclusive Tourism

Inclusion goes beyond rainbow flags; it requires the **dismantling of the deeper structural barriers** that continue to limit access and safety for LGBTQ+ travelers and professionals.

To truly meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ community, especially travelers, meaningful change must start from within the industry itself. This was the driving focus of the Think Tank conversation, where participants identified **key challenges that still stand in the way of achieving truly inclusive tourism**.

- **Prejudice & Structural Exclusion:** Deep-seated societal biases limit opportunities in employment, tourism leadership, and service delivery.
- **Unsafe Work Environments:** Even when LGBTQ+ people are employed in tourism, workplace cultures often fail to protect them from harassment or marginalization.
- **Low DEI Literacy:** Particularly among small businesses and rural operators, there is a critical knowledge gap around LGBTQ+ needs and rights.
- **Intersectional Inequality:** Black and trans individuals face compounded discrimination and economic precarity.

While these issues were evident in the survey data — which had a disproportionate number of cis, white, middle-class respondents — Think Tank participants took a closer look, bringing the lived experiences of trans professionals, Afro-Brazilian entrepreneurs, and community advocates into the equation.



Section 4: Strategic Pillars for Transformative LGBTQ+ Tourism

Through the survey data and Think Tank discussions, participants identified **six transformative pillars designed to address existing gaps and offer strategic solutions** to overcome them. Grounded in both real data and lived experience, these pillars call for **systemic change and a collaborative effort** across industry, government, and communities.

1. Inclusive Public Policy

The survey offers a **sample of what LGBTQ+ travelers look like in Brazil**, based on responses from over 400 participants. The research suggests that LGBTQ+ tourism in Brazil is **largely centered in urban, well-resourced locales**. However, inclusive tourism must extend beyond geographic and socio-economic bubbles. To do this:

- **Develop a national LGBTQ+ tourism strategy under federal guidance** that sets a shared vision, minimum inclusion standards, and long-term goals. This strategy must be informed by empirical research and co-designed with civil society actors, especially those representing marginalized LGBTQ+ communities.
- **Establish permanent national and regional LGBTQ+ tourism councils, modeled on participatory democracy frameworks.** These should include representatives from the private sector, academia, government, and grassroots organizations, ensuring that voices historically excluded from policymaking have a seat at the table.
- **Tie public investment and tourism promotion funding to demonstrable commitments to LGBTQ+ inclusion,** such as DEI training, anti-discrimination policies, and inclusive hiring practices.

2. Invest in Formal Employment Pathways

One of the most striking insights from the study was the **high number of LGBTQ+ individuals working informally or earning no income at all**. This reflects structural exclusion from the formal labor market and unequal access to opportunity:

- **Design targeted technical training and mentorship programs for LGBTQ+ individuals**, especially **trans, Black, Indigenous, and disabled** Brazilians, who face layered barriers to employment. Partner with technical schools, industry leaders, and DEI consultants to deliver tailored curricula.
- **Create micro-credit systems and financial literacy initiatives** to help informal LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs transition into formalized businesses, particularly in regions outside São Paulo.
- **Establish industry fellowships and inclusive internship pipelines** in tourism companies, hospitality groups, and public tourism agencies.



3. *Mandatory DEI Training Across the Value Chain*

The study revealed significant **DEI literacy gaps among small operators and frontline service staff**. Many guests and employees continue to encounter **microaggressions** or **exclusionary treatment**. To close those gaps:

- **Make LGBTQ+ inclusion training a licensing requirement for all tourism-related businesses** in Brazil, especially those receiving government subsidies or participating in public promotions.
- **Develop modular DEI training programs in collaboration with LGBTQ+ organizations and universities**. These should address everything from customer service to internal workplace inclusion, with regionally tailored content.
- **Seek out third-party DEI accreditation systems like the IGLTA Accredited™ program**, that help travelers identify and support inclusive businesses while encouraging continuous improvement.

4. *Robust and Ongoing Data Collection*

The 2024 study was a landmark first step, but a single snapshot is not enough:

- **Fund long-term research projects in collaboration with public universities, LGBTQ+ NGOs, and nonprofits** to track trends in traveler behavior, inclusion practices, and discrimination over time.
- **Map the LGBTQ+ tourism ecosystem**, including queer-owned businesses, inclusive destinations, and regional access disparities.
- **Use data to target public investment and build performance indicators into tourism policies**. Without disaggregated data, even well-meaning policies can perpetuate exclusion.

5. Safe and Inclusive Infrastructure

Safety was one of the top concerns across both data sets, with nearly half of respondents reporting avoidance of destinations perceived as unsafe:

- **Launch a national certification for LGBTQ+ safe spaces**, built on clear criteria and monitored through third-party audits and user feedback.
- **Mandate the adoption of all-gender facilities and inclusive signage in public and private spaces**, especially transport hubs and high-traffic tourist areas.
- **Train public safety personnel**, including police and immigration officials, on LGBTQ+ rights and inclusive protocols.
- **Incentivize private sector investment** in inclusive architecture and design that prioritizes dignity and accessibility.

6. Authentic Communication and Representation

The research showed that **social media**, particularly Instagram, is the primary platform where LGBTQ+ travelers seek **inspiration and information**. However, Think Tank participants were unanimous: representation in tourism marketing remains **tokenistic** and often harmful. They recommended the following actions:

- **Create a national LGBTQ+ tourism storytelling initiative, spotlighting voices from across Brazil** — especially those of trans women, Afro-Brazilian lesbians, elders, and Indigenous queer people.
- **Fund content creators and LGBTQ+ influencers** to co-develop campaigns that balance aspiration with authenticity.
- **Provide capacity-building workshops for destination marketing organizations (DMOs)** on how to craft inclusive narratives that avoid stereotypes, center real experiences, and reflect the diversity of Brazilian LGBTQ+ lives.
- **Reference resources like the Comprehensive Guide for LGBTQ+ Inclusive Communication.**

These pillars, when implemented, do more than address the needs of LGBTQ+ travelers,

they position Brazil as a visionary in inclusive, rights-based tourism.



The combination of rigorous **data**, **industry accountability**, and grassroots inclusion offers a powerful blueprint for transformation **not only for Brazil**, but for the global tourism industry at large.



Section 5: **Brazil as a Global LGBTQ+ Tourism Leader**

Brazil's **multiculturalism, biodiversity, and festive spirit already make it a magnet for travelers.** The combined vision of researchers and Think Tank participants points to a **leadership model rooted in equity, evidence, and empathy.**

- **Institutionalize inclusive practices** across every level of tourism governance.
- Become a **hub of best practices in the Global South.**
- **Leverage partnerships to scale the dual research-strategy model nationally and regionally.**

Conclusion: From Evidence to Action



This resource is the product of a **unique collaboration between academic research and strategic**, cross-sector engagement.

The university study provided a snapshot of who LGBTQ+ travelers in Brazil are and what they need. The Think Tank offered a vision for how the sector can respond.

Together, they form a blueprint for transformation.

The IGLTA Foundation proudly presents this resource as both a **mirror and a map**: a mirror reflecting the challenges and triumphs of Brazil's LGBTQ+ communities in tourism, and a map pointing the way toward a sector defined not by tolerance, but by inclusion, justice, and joy.

Let tourism be the gateway to a more just future for all.

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