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HAT TRICK

Brazil sets goals

Steve Gillick

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13 NOV 2012: For Canadians starved for hockey and the ultimate celebration of their favourite player scoring the mythical three goals in one game, otherwise known as a Hat Trick, Brazil has graciously stepped into the breach.



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Brazil will host the Confederations Cup (Football) in 2013; the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympics in 2016. And the net results (get it?) are , in the words of Marco Lomanto, the director of products and destination services for Embratur, “to open a window to the world so they can discover the culture, music, gastronomy and destinations that Brazil has to offer”.

At the “Goal to Brasil” travel industry event held recently at Toronto’s Ritz Carlton Hotel, media, tour operators and travel agents were introduced to the 12 cities hosting the 2014 World Cup matches, as well as the bounties that each city holds for tourists looking to explore beyond the Stadiums and street Fan Fests.

Lomanto noted that Canada is a relatively new market for Brazil tourism and they will be offering workshops and road shows in 2013, not only to promote the world cup but also tourist destinations.

He noted that Canadians like long distance travel. They enjoy a sophisticated tourist infrastructure and they relish eco-tourism and adventure as well as learning, understanding and interacting with other cultures. He mentioned that Toronto, as an example, was a huge multi-cultural city and Manaus, the city that was specifically being promoted at the event, mirrored the same multi-cultural pride.

Lomato introduced Oreni Braga da Silva, the president of the Amazonas Tourist Board, in which the city of Manaus is located. She emphasized again that most people travel to Brazil to see the beaches of Rio and the nightlife in Sao Paulo but don't necessarily venture off the beaten track to explore and experience the lesser known cities. The Amazon holds mystery, secrets, a huge forest preserve, wildlife and adventure galore, including a number of organized walking and hiking trips, canopy walks, programs to learn about the amazing variety of plants in the Amazon as well as a wealth of sightings and photographic memories for birders.

And all the speakers, including Ambassador Afonso Cardoso, the consul general of Brazil in Toronto, and Miguel Capobiango Neto, the coordinator of the World Cup Management Unit, noted the safety of travel in Brazil.

While travellers will still need to speak with their travel medical clinic about proper inoculations against, potentially, yellow fever and malaria (although it was noted that in the Amazon many of the waters are acidic and therefore mosquitoes are not a problem), they will not have to worry about their own personal safety, and to emphasize this point, Braga da Silva mentioned a special tourist

police force that will be very visible during the World Cup activities and other events that will attract tourists from abroad.

International connections were mentioned with flights on Air Canada out of Toronto, as well as flights from the US on American, TAM and Copa Airlines. But in the country itself, there are many hubs for domestic airlines and each of the 12 World Cup cities has their own airport. As well, Brazil currently is serviced by no less than 25 cruise ships and Manaus, to name one city, is a Free Trade Zone, making shopping an ideal activity for those die-hard souvenir hunters or fashionistas!

There will be many package tours available to cater to travellers' travel preferences, as well as to provide some assistance for those who haven't yet mastered the Portuguese language. World Cup and FIFA ticket orders should be referred to the FIFA.com website, as the worldwide demand will be in the millions.

With Brazilians themselves being absolutely enamoured by football, those unable to attend live matches during the World Cup will be able to attend the Fan Fests, where large screens will be set up in various locations to telecast the matches.

From a travel trend point of view, Brazil is one of the acronymic BRIC countries: Brazil, Russia, India and China expected to stand as financial and developmental powerhouses in the years to come. Part and parcel of this growing global influence is Brazil's determination to show off its country, present opinion-change opportunities for tourists looking for that 'what else can we do' travel need, and to cater to those seeking fulfilment in a majority of the 450 recognized niche markets that

complement travel today.

Brazil's Hat Trick is bound to capture the imagination of travel agents looking for a new exciting destination in which to specialize and then master, as well as clients looking to re-define their travel habits in response to those mind maps that their creative travel agent can paint for them.

The theme of the event, 'Goal to Brazil', speaks of the Confederations Cup, the World Cup and the Olympics, but it also resonates strongly with a destination with which you definitely need to familiarize yourself.

And you can leave the vuvuzelas at home, this time, please.





Steve Gillick

A tireless promoter of "infectious enthusiasm about travel", Steve delivers his wisdom once a month in his column *The Travel Coach*.

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