

SÃO PAULO · TRAVELER SECURITY CHECKLIST · 2026

São Paulo, before you land: the three decisions that do the safety work

Most São Paulo safety advice describes a city that no longer exists. The current data says the risk model is not "dangerous city." It is "exposed handset." Three decisions, made before wheels-down, do most of the work.

DECISION 1

Pick your map before you book

The gap between neighborhoods is bigger than the gap between São Paulo and Brazil, and no advisory makes that distinction.

- ☐ Book Tier 1: **Jardins, Itaim Bibi, Moema, Vila Nova Conceição.** Comparable to upscale European districts.
- ☐ Tier 2 works with standard awareness: **Pinheiros, Vila Madalena, the Paulista corridor, Higienópolis.**
- ☐ Centro (Sé, República, Luz) after dark: no. Not braver, just unnecessary.

DECISION 2

Decide transport once, not per ride

- ☐ Pre-arrange the **Guarulhos transfer.** The GRU-to-city corridor crosses the most variable security zones of your entire trip.
- ☐ After dark: ride-hail (Uber, 99), never a street-hailed taxi.
- ☐ Confirm the car from indoors and walk out when it arrives. Curbside waiting with a phone out is where the 87.4% happens.

DECISION 3

Set the phone protocol before you fly

- ☐ **The PIX pattern** (Brazil's instant-payment rail): express-kidnap crews force transfers from the victim's own phone. Most visitors cannot hold PIX; the coercion lands on the apps you do carry. Set transfer limits and app locks before you fly; cap any PIX wallet (Wise, for example) the day you add it.
- ☐ Navigate with **earbuds, phone pocketed.** Step into a shop to check the map.
- ☐ On **Marginal Pinheiros after 20:30**, phones below the window line; the current pattern targets visible devices at the curbside window.

On Vanguard movements these rules hold at professional grade; method, not hardware, closes most of the exposure. São Paulo does not require courage. It requires three decisions made early.

AT A GLANCE

87.4%

of state robberies target a mobile phone
SSP-SP

−18%

robberies, Jan–Apr 2026. The lowest
total ever recorded
Agência SP, May 2026

5.7

homicides per 100,000. Brazil's lowest
state rate, three times below the
national average
Sinesp, 2024

*The full four-tier map, seasonal risk calendar, and
transport comparison live in our São Paulo guide.*