



Lesson 60: Do You Have A Power Converter? Tem conversor de energia?

LESSON NOTES

In today's lesson we'll introduce you to a crucial phrase for all of you travelers out there who like to bring electrical equipment thousands of miles to die a fiery death on foreign soil. So you made it to Brazil, but you neglected to bring a power converter with you. In today's phrase we'll look at asking if a store has a particular item, and we'll start with power converters.

In Portuguese "Do you have a power converter?" is "Tem conversor de energia?" The first word "tem" means "is there." This is followed by "conversor" which in English means "converter." Next we have "de" which means "of." Last we have the word "energia" which means "energy" or "electricity." So all together we have "Tem conversor de energia?" Literally this translates to "Is there a power converter?" but it means "Do you have a power converter?"

Now to ask for a different item, we can just replace the term for "power converter" with any other term and the phrase works just fine. Let's try "outlet adapter." In Portuguese "Do you have an outlet adapter?" is "Tem adaptador para tomada?" The only thing that changes is the thing you are looking for. In this case it's "adaptador para tomada."

The first word "adaptador" means "adapter." Next we have "para" which means "to", and last we have "tomada" which means "outlet." This is followed by "conversor" which in English means "converter." Literally this translates to "adapter to outlet" but it means "outlet adapter".

PHRASES

Portuguese	English
Tem conversor de energia?	Do you have a power converter?
Tem adaptador para tomada?	Do you have an outlet adaptor?

QUICK TIP

What is a power converter? When I first went to Brazil it was my first time on a plane and my first time in a foreign country, so I wish someone had explained this to me before I left. Basically, different countries use different electrical systems. In the United States we use 110 but in Brazil they use a 220 system. In other words there is twice the amount of electricity at every outlet. That may sound convenient but if your electronic gizmos are not compatible with a 220 system that energy will overload your equipment and burn it up.

Well then, what's an outlet adapter? Most of the more expensive gadgets, like notebooks, have power converters built in so you don't need to purchase a separate power converter. But there is another issue beyond Brazil using a 220 system. The standards for plug designs are for two parallel cylindrical posts. This means that you may not even be able to plug in your notebook, even if you have a power converter. For situations like these an outlet adapter is needed. You just plug in your equipment into the adapter and then plug the adapter into the outlet. The major benefits being that a power converter is fairly large and will cost upwards of US\$35 while a outlet adapter is very small and probably isn't any more than US\$5.