

## The temple of football: Maracanã Stadium, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Few iconic stadiums in the world can rightly claim to be genuinely historical monuments as well as sporting arenas. But the Maracanã Stadium, popularly known as the *Estadio Jornalista Mario Filho*, named after the journalist that was in strong favor of its construction, with its colossal seating capacity and majestic architecture, is one of them.

Inaugurated for the 1950 FIFA World Cup, the huge stadium has seen some of the most incredible moments in Brazilian and world soccer history, hosting some of Brazil's greatest players, including Pelé, Garrincha, Zico, Romario, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho and Neymar.

The Guinness Book of World Records estimates it could seat 180,000 people, while the Brazilian government claims it could seat over 200,000 people when it was completed.

The world's largest stadium was opened on 16<sup>th</sup> June 1950.

The Maracanã is a state property in Rio de Janeiro. In addition to hosting its 'big four' teams (Botafogo, Flamengo, Fluminense and Vasco), it hosts musical performances, from the former Beatles Paul McCartney to Tina Turner, among other international idols, but its greatest pride was having served as a temple for the mass offered by Pope John Paul II in 1997.

Following its renovation in 2013, the stadium now seats 78,838 spectators, making it Brazil's largest stadium. Several football matches, including the 2014 World Cup final, were played at the Maracanã stadium. In addition to hosting the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2016 Summer Rio Olympics and Paralympics, the stadium hosted the main track and field events.

### 1 Read the text and answer the questions.

1. What is the popular name of Maracanã Stadium?
2. What event was it inaugurated for?
3. What famous football players did it host?
4. How many people were estimated to be seated?
5. When was the stadium officially opened?
6. Who is the owner of the stadium?
7. What football teams play at Maracanã?
8. What other events can the stadium host?
9. What religious event was held in the stadium?
10. How many people can be seated after the 2013 renovation?
11. What international sport event took place in 2014?
12. What was the Stadium used for in 2016?

### 2 Think about the stadium where your favourite team plays (or another famous stadium in the world) and write a short text about its history and current use.

