

News



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Rotorua safe haven for Brazilian

By Imogen Crispe

Renato Longo from Brazil finds Rotorua beautiful and safe, after being kidnapped and burgled in Sao Paulo.

Renato first came to live in New Zealand in 2008, after seeing it on the internet and thinking it looked beautiful.

"I was curious about New Zealand. It's a beautiful country."

He is going to talk at the Neighbours in Our Community meeting next week.

Renato first settled in Invercargill, where he met his girlfriend.

He then went to live in England with her, before they both came to live in Rotorua six months ago.

Renato says Rotorua is very different from Sao Paulo.

"Sao Paulo is the most popular city in South America."

It is the largest city in the southern hemisphere, with a population of 20 million people.

He lived in a small apartment and said there were lots of traffic jams. But he says the public transport is very good, with an underground metro system and buses.

Renato says Brazil is a growing place, with a total population of 190 million.

"When I left it was the 15th largest economy, now it is the 5th largest."

But he says it can be dangerous.

Renato has been kidnapped twice, he has had seven cars stolen and had his house burgled twice.

He describes being kidnapped as "horrible" and says he felt useless and had to give the kidnapers money as they held a weapon to his head.

But there are things Renato likes about Sao Paulo.

"There are a lot of parties."

He says Brazilian men and women like to dance and shake their hips.

The biggest party in Brazil is the annual Carnival, a traditional celebration held in Sao Paulo and other cities around the country. It is held 46 days before Easter and lasts about a week.

Renato likes living in Rotorua, and says it is safer and cheaper than Brazil.

"My home now is New Zealand," Renato says.

When he first came to New Zealand he couldn't speak English at all, and went to work on a farm with other Brazilian people.

Since then he has been practicing his English by reading books, watching movies and



NEW HOME: Brazilian Renato Longo says New Zealand is his home now.

PICTURE: BEN FRASER

talking to customers where he works at Pak N Save.

"I'm doing this to save some money to pay for my uni."

Next year Renato hopes to go back to university to do an engineering degree. He has already has a degree from university in Brazil, but wants to do further study.

At the Neighbours in Our Community meeting, Renato will

talk about tourist attractions in Brazil including Rio de Janeiro, Iguacu Falls and the beaches.

■ **The Neighbours in Our Community meeting is on July 29 from 12.10pm to 1.50pm at Rotorua Arts Village, 1240 Hinemoa St.**



BIG: Brazil takes up a large portion of South America. PICTURE: SUPPLIED