



Colorful, warm and creative indigenous people of Perú

The Obnoxious Tourist – Are You One?

“Who me? Of course not! Not in a million years! I’ve never been on a tour to see 12 countries in 3 1/2 days! Don’t even own a loud Hawaiian shirt! Heck, I’m studying *their* language.”

Despite being well-intentioned, you may be “Culturally Maladjusted” and never know it. Latin American people consider it rude to point out people’s faults to their faces. The problem lies in assuming that behavior and habits accepted in your country are acceptable in Latin America. We recently conducted a survey of our partner schools to find out how students might unknowingly offend their host families, teachers and others. Here are some tips to follow:

Waste Not Want Not: Latin Americans are astounded at the wastefulness of some students: leaving the lights and TVs on, taking long showers, not eating all the food served and using “all that toilet paper”. This may be the real reason that in many places low wattage light-bulbs, cold showers, small helpings at meals and no toilet paper are the norm.

Telephone - A Precious & Expensive Commodity: Normally, Latin Americans don’t talk on the phone for long periods of time and you should keep this in mind when you use the phone at your homestay or the school. Your homestay is likely to

be a bit paranoid about you using the phone because many families have been left with gigantic phone bills. School administration will also want you to keep it short, so that their lines are not tied up forever. Why not get additional lines? Because it can take up to several years and it can be very expensive.

Keep Your Clothes & Shoes On: In most Latin American countries it is offensive to be wandering around the homestay “half-naked” or without shoes. Bring a pair of flip-flops or slippers for wearing in the household if you don’t feel comfortable in your regular shoes.

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Earn Financial Aid As A Research Subject

The prestigious Johns Hopkins University is planning a research study in cooperation with AmeriSpan for students who will be studying in Antigua, Guatemala during the month of January or February or during the summer of 1998. Details are still being worked out, but we anticipate that students who participate in the January study will be able to earn a \$200 scholarship and that students who participate in the summer study will earn a \$400 scholarship. Participants in the study will need to be between 18 and 60, they cannot have traveled to a less developed country during the last five years and they must be planning on studying for at least three weeks. If these apply to you, and if you wish to be considered for either of these studies, please send email to research@amerispan.com with your name, address, telephone, email and the dates when you would like to study. Participants traveling as a group are especially encouraged to inquire since each individual will be eligible for the scholarship.

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AmeriSpan Unlimited
THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

Letter From The Editor:

Hello Friends,



You probably know that we have visited hundreds of schools over the years to assemble the best network of partner schools in Latin America. However, you may not know what happens after we begin working with a school. We view it as a partnership determined to deliver the best overall program to our mutual client, you. The staff at both our partner schools and AmeriSpan share ideas on ways to improve the services you receive. One area we have worked on together is professional development for teachers. Throughout 1997, AmeriSpan has helped organize a number of workshops and conferences for our schools to insure that their teachers continue to be the best. One successful effort was a joint project with our partner school in Alajuela, Costa Rica (Instituto de Cultura y Lengua), where we offered financial assistance to teachers from AmeriSpan partner schools to attend the 5th Annual Conference On Teaching Second Languages in Alajuela. About 25% of our partner schools sent at least one representative to this conference. All told, about 50% of our partner schools have participated in at least one professional development conference in 1997. That number should increase to 80-90% after the first annual AmeriSpan conference this fall in Antigua, Guatemala. What does all this mean to you as a client? It means that our programs and services just keep getting better!

Enjoy this issue of the newsletter and hasta pronto!

John Slocum
President



John Slocum relaxing in a hide-away in Montezuma, Costa Rica



Association of Residents of Costa Rica
AmeriSpan highly recommends the Association of Residents of Costa Rica (ARCR) as a vital source for: pre-arrival information; professional recommendations (lawyers, doctors, accountants, etc.); import assistance; health, home and vehicle insurance; answering questions regarding residency; explaining local laws & regulations and a host of other services. For info: Tel: (506) 233-8068, fax: (506) 233-1152 or email: arcrsacc@sol.racsa.co.cr

More Choices Than Ever

AmeriSpan has added three new programs: Cuenca, Ecuador; Cusco, Perú; and Monteverde, Costa Rica. Each one of these programs is easily combinable with other programs in Ecuador, Perú, and Costa Rica and offer an experience different from any of our other programs.

- The colonial town of Cuenca remains relatively undiscovered by tourists and is home to a rich indigenous culture.
- The proximity to the Inca Trail and the inspiring ruins of Machu Picchu make Cusco a great base to learn some Spanish and discover ancient Perú. Our partner school does a great job incorporating Peruvian culture into the program.
- Set in the largest Costa Rican Cloud Forest, our program in Monteverde is a nature-lover's dream come-true. Additionally, there is an abundance of volunteer opportunities available in this location through AmeriSpan's Volunteer & Internship Program.

The Obnoxious Tourist

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Shower Regularly: Body odor is just as unpleasant to Latin Americans! Why do you think many homestays provide laundry service?

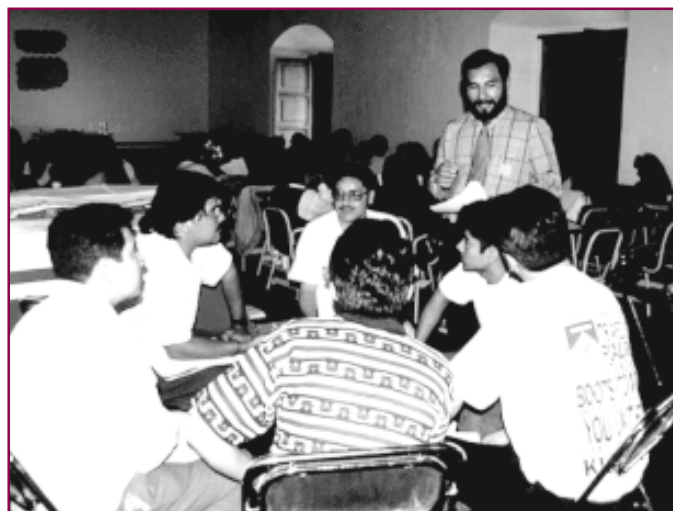
Learn Local Courtesy: Lots of niceties and small talk are part of the culture and it's considered rude if you don't conform - you should greet people (Buenas Tardes, etc.) even if you see them 20 times a day; say "con permiso" before leaving a room or the table; and MOST IMPORTANT, if your homestay señora says "my house is your house" she does not mean it is OK to raid the refrigerator or bring home overnight guests.

Be Prepared, Attentive and On Time: Your teacher and other classmates are there to teach and learn, respectively.

Do your home-work assignments, review your notes, come to class on time and pay attention. Hang-overs are never an acceptable excuse for not being prepared, arriving late or falling asleep in class.

Operate Doors Properly: Sounds pretty simple but it never ceases to amaze Latin Americans how so many foreigners can only "slam" doors or just leave them open.

Your Home Is Different: Plain and simple, Latin America will be different from your home country. Don't expect



AmeriSpan sponsored Professional Development Conference in Antigua, Guatemala (May 1997)

it to be the same and don't compare it by telling Latin Americans "this is better in my country".

Educational Travel Calendar

AmeriSpan offers a variety of special Educational Travel Programs & Conferences. Below is a calendar of what is scheduled:

| Tour/Conference | Dates | Cost |
|--|---------------------|---------|
| Expedition to the End of the World (Chilean Patagonia) | 1/5/98 - 1/23/98 | \$3,570 |
| Culture & Cuisine of México | 1/9/98 - 1/18/98 | \$1,483 |
| La Ruta Maya | 2/1/98 - 2/14/98 | \$1,995 |
| 6th Annual Teachers Conference in Costa Rica | July 1998 | \$800 |
| Yucatan Summer Spanish Institute | 6/29/98 - 7/24/98 | \$1,199 |
| The Highlands of Guatemala | 8/2/98 - 8/13/98 | \$1,782 |
| Popular Folk Art of México | 7/22/98 - 8/2/98 | \$1,584 |
| Mysteries of Mount Roraima and the Orinoco Delta (Venezuela) | 4/14/98 - 5/2/98 | \$2,910 |
| World-Class Trekking & Archaeology in Perú | 7/6/98 - 7/25/98 | \$2,600 |
| The Galapagos, Andes & Amazon (Ecuador) | 10/26/98 - 11/14/98 | \$3,590 |
| Spanish In The Galapagos | Late Summer 1998 | \$2,650 |

For more info contact AmeriSpan or visit our web site at <http://www.amerispan.com>

La Ruta Maya

AmeriSpan's *La Ruta Maya* tour focuses on Mayan Heritage/Living History while exploring important Mayan sites including Palenque, Chichén Itzá and Uxmal. The tour will also explore significant "newly developing" sites such as Rio Bec, Xpujil, Chichaná & Edzná. Mariana Patchen, AmeriSpan's Academic Coordinator, will be accompanying the tour.

Inti Tours - Recommended

We recommend Inti Tours, a tour operator which offers a variety of trekking tours in Ecuador, Perú and Bolivia. Inti keeps group sizes small (5-10) and has interesting itineraries not normally offered by other tour operators. Additionally, Inti's prices are as much as 50% less than similar tours offered by other operators. For more information contact their US representative at 1-800-655-4053 or visit their web site at: <http://www.wonderlink.com/inti>

Country Close-up: Perú

Public Safety: intermediate.

Private patrols known as serenazgos have contributed to better security in some neighborhoods, however Lima and other large cities call for continued caution. Most significant hazards are concentrated in the downtown core, in market areas and poor peripheral neighborhoods, especially at night. The port of Callao and the area surrounding the bus stations in Lima also call for extra care. Smaller towns and the countryside are generally safer, including the much visited departments of Cusco and Ancash. Insurgency remains a latent hazard. In Aug, 29 workers of a survey company were kidnapped by a group of insurgents from Sendero Luminoso, in the jungle area of the Department of Junin, they were released after 2 days in exchange for food and clothing. In early Sept, authorities captured insurgents of both the Sendero Luminoso and Tupac Amaru groups, in the department of Ucayali. The central jungle is considered dangerous because of the presence of these armed groups operating in league with drug runners. The Servicio de Proteccion al Turista can be contacted 24 hr/day; Lima Tel/Fax: 224-7888, nationwide toll-free Tel: 0-800-4-2579, Cusco Tel: 252-974.

Health Risk: low.
Nothing new.

Weather & Natural Phenomena:

A severe winter in the S of the country, especially in the Andean plateaus, has caused road damage in the departments of Arequipa, Cusco, Puno and Ayacucho.

Travel Costs:

Daily travel budget: luxury \$301, 1st class \$140, economy \$46,

basic \$14. Hotels: luxury \$122, 1st class \$56, economy \$19, basic \$7. Restaurants: luxury \$30, 1st class \$17, economy \$11, basic \$2.50. Airfares \$0.055/km., \$0.088/mi. Bus \$0.02/km., \$0.032/mi. Taxi \$0.75/km, \$1.21/mi. City bus fare \$0.56. Gasoline \$0.48/liter, \$1.80/gal.

The Economy:

US\$1=2.64 Nuevo Sol (official cash), 2.65 (official Travelers Checks). Inflation 0.8%/mo = 9.6%/yr. Minimum wage \$132/mo. Cost of living index \$519/mo. The economy is stable with GDP expected to grow by 6% for this year. Foreign investment continues to increase, reaching US\$740 million in the first 6 months of 1997. Brazil was the largest investor with US\$9.6 million. The privatization program continues, 50 enterprises in the mining, energy sectors, ports, roads and airports are to be sold-off by the year 2000.

Political Situation: intermediate.

Constitutional Democracy. President Alberto Fujimori (term 07/95 to 07/2000). The national security service has been a subject of much controversy. Accusations of corruption and wiretapping by Peru's security apparatus were made by Frecuencia Latina, a Lima television station on July 13. The authorities reacted by immediately

stripping Baruch Ivcher, the station's owner, of his Peruvian nationality (which he had acquired in 1984) and later transferring Ivcher's shares to minor shareholders in the company. There was a strong reaction both within and outside Peru, especially by the press, which sees in the incident an attempt to curtail freedom of speech. Foreign affairs minister Francisco Tudela and other cabinet members subsequently resigned and there were large protests in the streets of Lima. The president reshuffled his cabinet and the opposition has launched investigations into the wiretapping allegations; under the pressure of public opinion it seems the govt might be stepping back. Ironically, another scandal affected Fujimori's own citizenship shortly thereafter, when a magazine article suggested that he was born in Japan and not in Peru as he claims; being a native Peruvian is constitutional requirement for the presidency.

Country Close-Up is as of September 1997 and provided by:

Latin American Travel Consultants
Box 17-17-908
Quito, Ecuador
Fax: 593-2-562-566
E-mail: lata@pi.pro.ec
WWW: <http://www.amerispan.com/latc>



Machu Picchu, Perú - the lost city of the Incas.

Tips for Flying

Special Feature by eXito Latin America Travel Specialists

Before You Buy

Tickets are priced by length of stay - The longer you want to stay, the more expensive your airfare will be. The least expensive tickets are usually for stays of 30 days or less. Student tickets sometimes allow longer stays but may be more expensive.

Don't always assume that the cheapest ticket is from a major airport - (e.g. JFK, Miami, LA, Chicago) Many domestic airlines (United, Continental, & American) that fly to Latin America have 'Zone Fares' offering the same rate for all cities within a particular region. Be advised: You CANNOT get such fares from the airlines directly or from most mainstream travel agencies. Contact an agency that specializes in travel to Latin America.

Don't assume that tickets WITHIN Latin America are cheap - In Latin

America distance does not determine price, competition does. Many times the cost of a ticket from one capital to another, even within Central America, can be higher than the ticket from the US to the first city (exception: domestic flights in most countries). If you want to visit several cities try to combine more than one destination into one ticket (see article on stopovers).

After You Buy

Check your travel documents when you receive them - 5 minutes spent looking over the spelling of your name & the exact itinerary as printed on your ticket could save you a nightmare of explaining the mistake at the airport. Remember: mistakes caught EARLY are easy to fix.

Reconfirm your flights prior to each departure - 72 hours in advance. This is especially important if you are flying

a Latin Carrier. Airlines reserve, and routinely exercise, the right to cancel reservations that have not been reconfirmed.

Dealing with overbooked flights - especially during high season. The safest bet is to check in 3 hours prior to your departure. If you don't check in at least 2 hours in advance, the airline can use that as an excuse to deny you a seat or proper compensation. Remember: Seats are given out on a 'first-come-first-serve' basis.

Don't check your bags all the way through - unless you are traveling on ONLY one airline the whole way. When your travel includes multiple airlines (especially on separate tickets), often the bags don't make their connecting flights. When you try to track your bags, the airlines tend to blame each other for the loss.

Keep track of each part of your ticket as you travel - each time you give your ticket to an airline representative, don't give him/her documents that aren't necessary. Make sure they take only the coupon from your ticket for the flight that you are actually taking. Airline employees frequently take coupons for the wrong flight segment causing massive headaches when you try to board your next flight.

Stopovers

Maximize Miles - Minimize Dollars

If you are planning a trip to more than one country in Latin America, you can save yourself hundreds of dollars by combining more than one city on one ticket. For example if you want to visit Costa Rica, some airlines will let you make a stopover in Mexico at no extra charge. While some airlines charge a nominal fee for stopovers (\$50-\$100) the charge is minimal compared to the prospect of purchasing separate tickets.

Examples of stop-over city combinations:

- **México City** - can be used as a stopover point when traveling to Guatemala, Costa Rica, Caracas, Buenos Aires, Santiago, and Lima.

- **San José, Costa Rica** - works as a stopover for Guatemala City, Panama City, Caracas, Quito, Lima, and Santiago.
- **Caracas, Venezuela** - a stopover possibility for flights to Quito, Lima, and Bogotá.
- **Lima, Perú** - a frequent stopover city when traveling to Santiago, Buenos Aires, La Paz, and São Paulo.

Remember: You have to choose ONE of the cities listed! The stopover only applies for the four cities listed above. If you want to combine other cities, the price is considerably higher. Many tickets allowing stopovers only allow you to stay for 30 or 60 days. For longer stays the price may be much higher.

The logo for eXito features the word "eXito" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The letter "X" is stylized with two thick, purple arrows pointing upwards and outwards from its center, creating a sense of movement and direction.

Latin America
Travel Specialists

5699 Miles Ave
Oakland, CA 94618

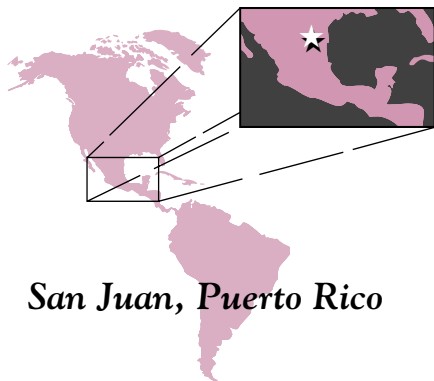
Worldwide: (510) 655-2154

USA & Canada: (800) 655-4053

Email: exito@wonderlink.com

Web: <http://www.wonderlink.com/exito>

Program Profile



San Juan, Puerto Rico

School: Euskalduna Instituto Internacional (EII)

Location:

La Isla del Encanto - The Enchanted Island - is how Puerto Ricans describe their country. This Caribbean island, south of the Bahamas and north of Venezuela, is roughly the size of Connecticut. It is home to 3.7 million people, mostly descendants of the Spanish, Africans, and the indigenous Taino Indians.

The island offers miles of beautiful beaches, an exquisite rainforest (El Yunque), as well as a large metropolitan area in the capital of San Juan. Just outside the capital on a small peninsula is the historic section of the city, Viejo San Juan, which is rich in history and offers the visitor a very authentic look at the streets, architecture and social climate of the early days of the island. The walled fortress around the area adds to the sense of living history.

Atmosphere:

Students at EII include North Americans and Europeans who come to Puerto Rico for the

Spanish Immersion course, as well as those foreigners who are living and working in San Juan, and needing Spanish to enhance their work and personal lives. Also, EII is part of NESOL which teaches English to Puerto Ricans and others from various Latin countries. The

school is in the business district of the city, and is easy to access by bus. Classes are very small, and much personal attention is given to each student. Teachers are friendly and informal, and genuinely dedicated to helping the students experience and understand the Puerto Rican culture. Excursions around the city to practice the language learned in class are a regular part of the curriculum.

Language Program:

Classes are 4 hours a day either in the AM or PM. Everyday communication needs are covered at the lower levels and current topics and social issues are discussed at the upper levels. In the classroom students practice the language they need to interact with the local people, and homework helps the students get out there and use it! Grammar is covered within the language functions, and the primary focus is on building language skills for communication in the real world. Academically, this program is among the top 5 programs that AmeriSpan offers.

Homestay:

Homestays usually have only one student per home, and most are about a 20 minute bus ride, though some are

within walking distance to the school. Homes range in size and number of family members, and are usually in urban areas. Although meals are not included in the basic cost of the program, meal options are available at an additional charge of \$50/week for breakfast and dinner.

Activities/Excursions:

EII's classes usually include area trips to help the students practice the language they are learning in the classroom or to gather information to discuss and present in class. In addition, there are extra-curricular activities offered, based on the number of students enrolled and their interests. An Activity Book is provided in the Orientation, giving information on island tours, diving and snorkeling, restaurants, bars, theaters and other forms of entertainment. On weekends students sometimes get together and rent a car for their own "customized" tour of the island. It is very easy to set up a beach weekend or a one-day rain forest trip. Also suggested are Latin dance lessons while you are there, to take advantage of the local clubs for salsa and merengue dancing - definitely an integral part of the local culture!

Other comments:

As San Juan is a large city, students need to be fairly independent - not afraid to get around on their own or initiate activities according to their interests. Also, there are frequent and inexpensive flights New York-San Juan and Miami-San Juan.



AmeriSpan: Off The Wire

AmeriSpan Discount Card

The AmeriSpan Discount Card now has its own web site. Here you can get listings of the hundreds of businesses that offer discounts in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and Ecuador.



New and Improved

Volunteer/Internship Program

Now that we've gained some experience running a volunteer/internship program, it's time to make some improvements. We will still offer a wide variety of positions and locations, but now you get to choose where to go. Our new Volunteer/Internship catalog is available! It describes the work, location and requirements for each position. Applicants will be able to choose which positions interest them most.

The application and selection process still require a résumé, essay, letters of recommendation, and telephone interview. But now, rather than us choosing an appropriate placement for you, you have a say in the matter!



1998 Price Increases

Many schools will be raising prices for programs in 1998. However, the majority of our programs will honor 1997 prices if you register and pay in full by December 1st. It pays to register early!



AmeriSpan Recommended

The May issue of *International Living*, the well-regarded publication on living and traveling abroad, recommended AmeriSpan as offering "the best Spanish language programs in the world".



Insure A Space, Register Soon

As expected, many programs were full this summer and we had to turn students away. We expect this to happen at many programs in late December and January so try to register early to insure a space. Remember, some programs will be closed for 1-2 weeks during Christmas and the New Year.



Universal Academic Credit

Seattle Central Community College has begun offering transferable undergraduate first level credit for ALL AmeriSpan language programs and for participants in the AmeriSpan Volunteer & Internship Program. For more information contact: Center for Independent Study, Seattle Central Community College, 1701 Broadway, 2BE1140, Seattle, WA 98122, Tel: 206-344-4429.



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P.O. Box 40007
Philadelphia, PA 19106-0007

For complete program descriptions, applications, prices and more, visit our web site at:

<http://www.amerispan.com>