



A pyramid at Chichén Itzá in Yucatán, México. See page 3 for info about our Special Program in this region.

Special Program Spotlight: Professional Study Program

In addition to Spanish immersion programs, AmeriSpan offers a variety of experiential programs in Latin America. One experiential program that we are especially excited about is our Professional Study-Internship. The program is geared toward individuals who already have experience in law, finance, marketing, tourism, or other professional fields and wish to utilize those skills in Latin America but are not fluent in Spanish.

These type of jobs are normally not available to foreigners due to their limited language skills and local labor laws. By working as an unpaid intern, you will be able to open doors that are usually locked.

The program is scheduled so that you intern in a professional setting during the morning (Monday-Friday) and receive private Spanish classes in the afternoon (Monday-Thursday). Currently, this program is available in San José (Costa Rica), Quito (Ecuador) and Buenos Aires (Argentina). Participants should be willing to commit for at least one month and speak at an intermediate level of

Spanish before beginning this program.

So if you are contemplating a job change, returning to graduate school or coming out of retirement - why not consider the AmeriSpan Professional Study-Internship program. Of course, it's open to skilled recent graduates as well. You will learn about Latin American business culture & etiquette, gain some solid experience and sharpen your Spanish skills.

Travel Tips

Below is a list of some pre-departure travel tips and tips while you are traveling:

- ◆ **Get Documents Ready NOW** - Make sure you have a passport and that it will not expire during your trip. Call the local consulate to see if you need a visa, how long your tourist card is valid and how you extend either. If you are under 18 or traveling with your child, find out if you need to do anything special. A notarized letter may be required from both legal guardians.
- ◆ **Do Your Homework** - Know the exchange rate, where you are going, how you will get there and what to do if there is a problem. A good guide book is a must.
- ◆ **Must-Have Toiletries** - A roll of toilet paper, antiseptic, aspirin, Imodium/Lomotil, Band-Aids and prescription drugs.
- ◆ **Handy Things To Bring** - A small flashlight, small alarm clock, a few plastic bags (great for packing leaking or wet things) and a large towel (can be used as an extra blanket, pillow, scarf, wrapping breakables and more).

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Letter and Acknowledgements From The Co-founders:



Hello Friends,

Welcome to issue VIII of *The Translator*. *The Translator* is a newsletter published periodically for the customers and friends of AmeriSpan. Each issue is full of news, tips and hard-to-find information. Whether you are a seasoned language traveler, or new to the language travel concept, *The Translator* is required reading.

Usually, we fill this space with what is happening at AmeriSpan but this time we want to reflect on the past four years. In late 1992, we started AmeriSpan after a 4 1/2 month language travel adventure through Latin America that was probably the most positive experience of our lives. We started AmeriSpan because our trip was a nightmare to arrange and despite our best efforts, we encountered many bumps along the way. Our goal was to make it easy for others to have similar positive educational experiences in Latin America without the hassles.

Today, AmeriSpan is the leading force in promoting educational travel to Latin America and we have definitely made language travel easier. However, it hasn't been easy nor have we done it alone. We had so many ideas when we started but only 24 hours per day to make those ideas happen. Somehow most of those ideas have become reality through the hard work of our diligent staff, our partner schools and many other organizations. We want to say "Thank you" to our customers, our partner schools and everyone else who has made this possible.

We hope you enjoy this issue and *Hasta Pronto*.

Sincerely,
John Slocum & Dorioara Pinku
Co-Directors

Below, we identify a few special organizations that have helped AmeriSpan get the hassle out of language travel to Latin America. If you are not listed, it is because our graphic designer could not fit you in (his home phone number is... just kidding).

Info On Latin America

- ◆ Footprint Books (formerly Trade & Travel) - The hard cover handbooks to Mexico, Central & South America are our bibles, and great bug smashers - Thanks Ben!
- ◆ Rough Guide to Mexico & Guatemala - No nonsense, straight shooting, chocked full of info, and great when the cash supply gets low - Thanks Peter!
- ◆ Latin American Travel Advisor - Best up-to-date overview of each Latin American country. With the ever-changing situations, do you ever sleep? - Thanks Robert & Daisy!
- ◆ Honduras Travel Tips - Brad Martin, the author of this in-depth guide to Honduras, recently passed away. We will miss him and his vault of information.
- ◆ Green Arrow Guide to Central America - A wonderful on-line source for information on Central America (www.greenarrow.com). Thanks Sorrel and gang!

Making The Impossible Happen

- ◆ Shelly Nicholson, the first Director of the AmeriSpan office in Guatemala - We knew you were good but never knew how good, until you were gone. The Peace Corp. better appreciate you!
- ◆ Citibank of Guatemala - Thanks for waiving the required minimum balance. Without you we would still be trying to locate those wire transfers that disappeared into thin air.
- ◆ Western Union - Thanks for being everywhere and insuring that our payments arrive. We would love you even more if you lowered your rates...
- ◆ Federal Express - You always deliver (no pun intended) whether it's to rural America, Latin America or Europe. A special thanks for the 15th Street office in Philadelphia that is open to 8:45PM. After the countless last minute dashes to this office, an oxygen mask waiting upon arrival would sure be appreciated.
- ◆ Our competitors - Thanks for exchanging timely information about Latin America, offering advice, sharing ideas and working together to beat our biggest competitor - Ignorance about language travel programs. Thanks Charlene, Kay, Mike, Nancy and Louise.
- ◆ Telegroup - Offers a callback service which allows calls originating from Latin America to be made at greatly reduced prices. Thanks for continually investing in new technology to out-smart the local phone monopolies and reducing the cost of communicating.
- ◆ Cardservice Int'l - When we were a new company, you made it possible for us to accept credit cards from the get-go!

De-Mystifying Airfares

- ◆ ETS Latin America - Great airfares, great service and the staff knows *almost* as much as we do about Latin America. Thanks Todd and gang!
- ◆ Stravaganza - You have saved more than one group program by going the extra mile and haunting the airlines to get us seats and low airfares. Thanks Chris!

Improving Our Programs

- ◆ Our Partner Schools - Every school has worked hard to improve its overall programs, its customer service and has implemented our suggestions when practical. Gracias por su paciencia y su dedicación para llegar a un nivel de excelencia en sus programas.
- ◆ Teacher Discount Participants - Teachers who submit 3-4 page detailed evaluations of their experience with AmeriSpan receive a 10% discount. Thanks for encouraging improvements and making it easy to identify problems. You are our undercover agents!
- ◆ University of Southern Mississippi - You have made it easier for students to obtain transferable academic credit while helping to improve the overall programs at many schools. Thanks Dr. Hudson and Dr. Sánchez!

Spreading The Word

- ◆ CCI - Specializes in organizing educational travel programs for groups. Thanks Corky, you have opened doors to the group market that would still be closed today!
- ◆ Pura Vida - After the owner participated on an AmeriSpan program, this Spanish school in the USA became an enthusiastic AmeriSpan local sales representative. Thanks Lucille!

Sanity Awards

- ◆ [Chris Converse Design](#) - With us from the very beginning. How did we find you again - a friend of a friend of a friend? Sometimes you have to dig deep to find the best. Chris, thanks for putting up with our never-ending design changes and helping build AmeriSpan's visual identity.
- ◆ Minuteman Press and Copytek Systems - We promise that one of these days, we will stop asking for impossible deadlines (2 hours...Now...Yesterday!). By the way, please, please, get this newsletter printed NOW! Thanks.

Insure a Space, Register Soon

Registrations for the summer are up nearly 100% versus last year. Many programs will be filling up earlier than usual. Register soon to insure a space and don't buy a non-refundable ticket until your participation is confirmed.

Yucatán Summer Spanish Institute

Are you an advanced, superior or native Spanish speaker? Are you looking for Spanish content program? Our partner in Mérida, México offers the Yucatán Summer Spanish Institute, a special program, every summer. The 1997 program is from June 29 1st - July 26th, costs \$1,199 and includes the following:

- ◆ 18-25 hours/week of sessions on Mayan History and Latin American literature
- ◆ Meetings with contemporary authors and related professionals
- ◆ Private room and board with a Mexican family
- ◆ Exploring Ruins (Dzibilchaltún, Uxmal and Chichén Itzá)
- ◆ Excursion to Progreso Beach
- ◆ Visit to the colonial town of Valladolid
- ◆ Visit to the agricultural village of Yaxcaba
- ◆ Airport pick-up
- ◆ AmeriSpan Services

Special Offers:

- ◆ Register before May 1st and you will be guaranteed a homestay with air-conditioning and private bath at no extra charge.
- ◆ Option to receive 10 hours/week of private classes at only \$80/week

White-Faced monkeys in the wild - a common sight on excursions in Costa Rica.

Attention Group Leaders

AmeriSpan has introduced all inclusive packages for groups of 10 or more people. Each package includes language instruction, homestay, cultural activities, airfare and all the AmeriSpan extra services. Group leader incentives are available. For more information contact: Mariana Patchen or visit our web site (<http://www.amerispan.com>).

5th Annual Conference for FL Teachers in Costa Rica

A chance to share your ideas with your peers from around the world! Instituto de Cultura y Lengua (our partner in Alajuela) will be hosting the fifth Annual International Conference on Teaching Second Languages. The program consists of lectures and workshops while the final three days of the week are filled with excursions to many exciting places in Costa Rica. Lodging is with local Costa Rican families and most meals are included. The 1997 program is from July 3 - July 10 and costs \$800.00.

Programs for Advanced and Superior Levels

If you are an advanced or a superior level Spanish speaker, you may be wondering which of these programs can accommodate your needs. Based on the experience of past AmeriSpan students, we recommend the following programs: Cuernavaca & Morelia (México), San Juan (Puerto Rico), Alajuela (Costa Rica), Montevideo (Uruguay) and Quetzaltenango (Guatemala). The programs in Mérida (Venezuela) and Santiago (Chile) have done an excellent job with past advanced/superior level students who opted for private classes.

Remember, AmeriSpan offers the *Yucatán Summer Spanish Institute*, a content course focusing on Mayan History and Latin American literature, and the *5th Annual Conference for Foreign Language Teachers* in Costa Rica. Both are described elsewhere in this newsletter.



Travel Tips

continued from page 1

- ◆ **Packing** - Pack a change of clothes, your essential toiletries and medications in your carry-on, just in case your luggage gets delayed (a bit too common).
- ◆ **Bring Copies Of Documents** - Make copies of prescriptions, passport, travel check numbers, credit cards, airline tickets, AmeriSpan confirmation statement. Pack copies in a separate place. Should you lose the originals, this will speed the replacement process.
- ◆ **Bring A Credit Card** - Visa is the most widely accepted. Many banks will allow you to get a cash advance. Moreover, ATM machines are spreading throughout Latin America so make sure you have your PIN (Personal Identification Number). Many establishments don't accept credit cards or charge a hefty fee. ATMs can be a life-saver (when they work).
- ◆ **Spread The Wealth** - In crunch or emergency, you can usually get by with US dollars. Keep small denominations in a few locations throughout your luggage and on your person, just in case.
- ◆ **Lock Your Suit Case** - If you are checking your luggage, lock it! Even if you lock it, don't put valuables in it such as jewelry, camera, electric shaver or a walkman.
- ◆ **Don't Trust Baggage Claim** - Don't check your bags all the way through, especially if you are changing airlines. Too often luggage is left in major hub cities such as Miami, Houston, Dallas and Los Angeles.
- ◆ **Don't Trust People Just Because They Speak English** - Don't be suckered by the nice person who can speak some English in the airport or bus station. Chances are that you'll get taken advantage of whether it is finding a cab, changing money or looking for a place to stay. If you need to speak English, ask one of the people working for an airline or someone who has lots of bags and is definitely another traveler.

Important Travel Tip: Relax and you'll learn more!



Students lounging between classes.

International Living & AmeriSpan Announce Joint Programs

"The world is full of undiscovered destinations...it's rich in nuances, enchanting distinctions, and unbelievable values," says Kathleen Peddicord, publisher of *International Living*. "We seek out these kinds of opportunities the world offers for fun, for personal growth, for adventure, and for profit."

But it's more than that, really. Not only does this monthly publication send its editors out to scour the globe for the best bargains in real estate, retirement, and travel, but it takes its mission one step further. *International Living* invites its readers to discover for themselves the great places they've been reading about.

International Living Discovery Tours takes groups of readers to destinations like Honduras, Mexico, Belize, and Ireland to learn about the tremendous opportunities in these countries, for fun and for profit. Groups attend a seminar where they hear from realtors, economists, local expatriates, and government officials. Then they tour the county, looking at properties for sale and getting a feel for the various regions where they might consider retiring or investing.

AmeriSpan, the industry leader in educational travel to Latin America, is joining forces with *International Living* to offer 2-week language programs that combine the elements of *International Living's* Discovery Tours with the best portions of AmeriSpan's language programs. Participants will learn Spanish through immersion classes and get an intimate taste of local culture. They'll have the option of living with local families or staying in four-star hotels.

The first tour will be to Mérida, Mexico in August, the second to Antigua, Guatemala in September. For more information, call *International Living* Discovery Tours at 800-926-6575.

Country Close-up: Honduras

Public Safety: Intermediate.

There has been a slight improvement in Public safety, with fewer robberies in tourist destinations. Joint police/military operations continue in the main cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula aimed at curbing holdups of businesses and car theft, as well as controlling juvenile gang violence. Poor peripheral neighborhoods of both cities remain the most dangerous, especially at night. The countryside is generally safer.

Health Risk: Moderate

Public health authorities are taking measures to prevent outbreaks of malaria, cholera and dengue fever following extensive flooding in the northern part of the country (see below).

Weather & Natural Phenomena:

Heavy rains fell in all of Honduras in Nov, with flooding throughout the North; worst near the town of La Lima (15 km E of San Pedro Sula) and in the department of Gracias a Dios. There were 8 deaths as a result and extensive property damage affecting 60,000 people.

Travel Costs:

Daily travel budget: luxury \$179, 1st class \$104, economy \$31, basic \$15. Hotels: luxury \$71, 1st class \$37, economy \$15, basic \$8. Restaurants: luxury \$14, 1st class \$11, economy \$7, basic \$4.75. Airfares \$0.11/km, \$0.18/mi. Bus \$0.015/km, \$0.024/mi. Taxi \$0.39/km, \$0.63/mi. City bus fare \$0.062. Gasoline \$0.51/liter, \$1.93/gal.

The Economy:

US\$1=12.85 *Lempira* (official cash), 12.78 (official TCs). Inflation 2.1%/mo = 25.2%/yr. Unemployment 17.2%. Minimum wage \$70/mo. Cost of living index \$321/mo. The financial community is attempting to bring pressure to bear on the govt. to lower interest rates, currently above of 34% *per annum* (the Central Bank's reference lending rate). The high cost of credit has caused a contraction of the country's already precarious economy. Meanwhile, a steady rise in gasoline prices has generated a ripple of price hikes. Combined with ongoing devaluation of the *Lempira* against the US\$, the result has been a significant increase in the cost of both imported and domestically produced goods, including many staples.

Question & Answers - Volunteer and Internship Program

We have been receiving many calls about the AmeriSpan Volunteer & Internship program. We'll try and answer a few of the most commonly asked questions:

1. "Do the placements provide room & board?"

Some provide room & board depending on the type of placement, time commitment and your skills. Most English Teaching and Student Service Coordinator positions provide room and board if you commit for a minimum of 3 months. Currently, we have about 25-30 openings for the aforementioned placements during the summer 1997.

2. "What if I only want to work in one country, can I still apply?"

Yes but we may have a more difficult time finding you an appropriate position and you may lose your \$30 application fee. Currently, we offer the most placements in Central America (especially Guatemala and Costa Rica) but more are constantly being added.

3. "What is the difference between a skilled and an unskilled Standard Placement?"

A skilled placement is one where you want to use a particular skill (i.e. nursing, marketing, finance, etc.) in your placement. An unskilled placement simply means that you will do just about anything.

4. "If I say that I will not accept a position that does not provide room and board, and you can't place me - how much do I lose?"

You will lose the \$30 application fee. We will refund the \$170 placement fee.

5. "What is the difference between a skilled Standard Placement and a Customized Placement?"

A customized placement is a very specific request relating to a location, the type of work and the type of organization. For example, "I want to work at a law office in Caracas specializing in business law". A Skilled Standard Placement might be "I am in law school and want to do something related to law". This is a standard placement because we have the flexibility to find a related position anywhere in Latin America, we may place you with a law firm, a court, a judge, a corporate legal department, a university law school or a variety of other positions.

6. "I want to study in ____ country for so many weeks before starting my placement. Can I do it?"

Yes, but remember that you will still need to study for 2 weeks in the country where your placement is, unless you are a high intermediate Spanish speaker and have previously spent time in the country. If you wish, we will try and find a placement where you want to study but we can't guarantee it.

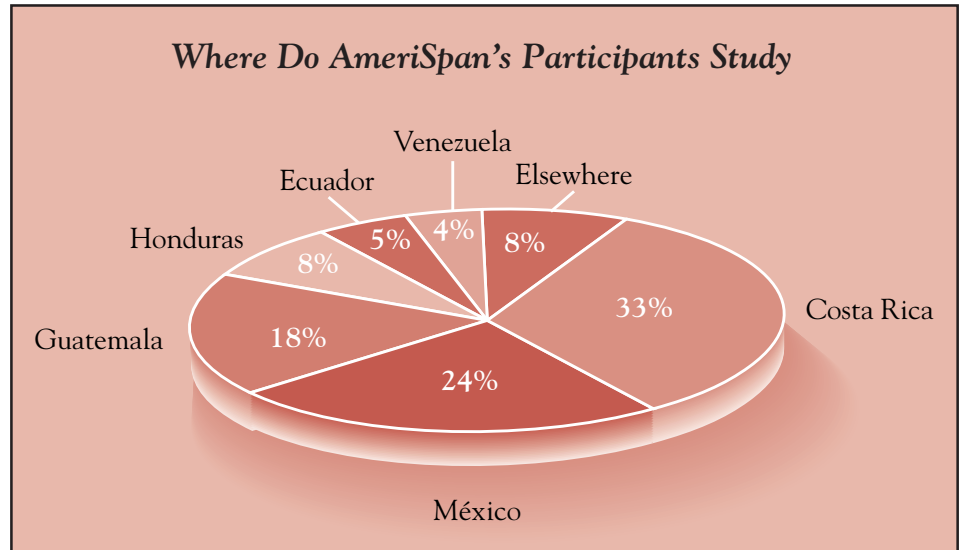
Political Situation: Stable.

Constitutional Democracy. President Carlos R. Reina (term 1/94 to 1/98). In preparation for presidential elections to be held on Nov/97, members of Honduras' two main political parties (the *Partido Nacional* and the *Partido Liberal*) cast internal ballots on Dec 1, to choose their respective candidates. Orderly progress towards next year's voting is taken as evidence of the consolidation of democracy in Honduras. In Oct, army commander General Mario Hung and 5 other military officers were charged with obstructing justice in the investigation of human rights abuses allegedly committed by the armed forces during the 1980s.

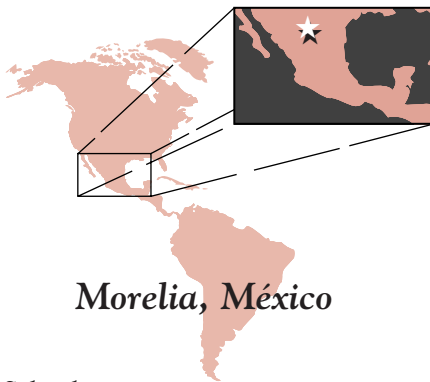
There have been several explosive devices (including a grenade and military dynamite) detonated in front of govt. buildings since Oct. The chief prosecutor, Edmundo Orellana, declared that one of the bombings by the courthouse was an attempt to intimidate the country's judiciary.

Country Close-Up is as of December 1996 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>



Program Profile



Morelia, México

Schools:

- Baden-Powell Institute

Location:

Diversity is the word that best describes México's people and geography. Over 50 different Indigenous Groups, each with its own language, comprise 28% of México's 83 million inhabitants.

Morelia is located 4 hours from Mexico City, in the state of Michoacán. This is one of the most interesting states in Mexico with beautiful mountains, volcanoes, mountain lakes and river valleys which change in the western part as one encounters the beaches of the Pacific coast. Nearby villages offer crafts, indigenous life, colonial architecture, pre-Colombian ruins and laid-back life styles. Morelia still boasts the hidden colonial gardens, arches, and baroque facades on the carved pink stone walls. It is an active University town of

800,000 friendly people. Most of the city's life is centered around the downtown area, making your visit surprisingly easy; culture, outdoor cafés and night-life fully accessible. A climate of perpetual spring and few tourists are additional bonuses for the language traveler.

Atmosphere:

The atmosphere is warm, personal and students get to know each other and the staff. In addition, the school teaches English to Mexicans so that students have the opportunity to meet locals.

Language Program:

This language program is one of the best and utilizes a variety of text books and other reading materials. Instruction is one-on-one and the student has a different teacher along with a different theme each of the 4 hours per day. As hard as this is to achieve, they actually manage to keep a very nice consistency through the teacher switches! The same four teachers usually stay with the student for the entire program. The instructors are well-educated, professional and speak at least two languages. Whether you know zero Spanish or you are fluent and want to study literature, this program can accommodate your needs.

Homestays:

Most homestays are within walking distance to school and others require a 15-20 minute bus ride. Usually, only one

student is placed in each home leading to a great deal of family interaction and a strong immersion experience. Homestays are a bit above the average AmeriSpan homestay when measured by creature comforts.

Activities/Excursions:

From May through August, the school administration organizes at least 2 activities per week. During other times of the year, at least one activity per week is offered. Students have the option to participate in an "intercambio" with local Mexicans studying English. The school offers weekend trips and tours when there is sufficient interest from the students. Remember, Morelia is a university town so there is much to explore on your own, or with fellow participants.

Academic Credit:

Currently, the University of Southern Mississippi offers fully transferable academic credit at the Undergraduate level. This program is scheduled to be reviewed in July for eligibility for Graduate credit.

Other Comments:

Although Morelia has an airport, you may be able to save a considerable amount of money by flying to México City and taking a bus to Morelia (4-5 hours).



AmeriSpan: Off The Wire

Educate The Press Gains Momentum

A number of study abroad organizations have joined AmeriSpan in making 1997, the year that we "Educate The Press" about language travel. Like AmeriSpan, they are offering incentives for any published articles about language travel. If you are interested, visit our web site at <http://www.amerispan.com/ameri.live/educate.html> or call us and request info.



New Program in Dominican Republic

If you like beaches and a city with lots of history, check out our new

program in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.



Change of Partner in La Ceiba

AmeriSpan is now working with a different partner school in La Ceiba which offers a well-organized program in an air-conditioned, centrally located building.



Meals in Puerto Rico

Normally, our program in San Juan, Puerto Rico is offered without meals but breakfast and dinner are available at some homestays for an extra \$50/week. Just request it on your application form.



Class Size Changes

Maximum class size has increased in Oaxaca to 10 and Buenos Aires to 5. Remember, class sizes are usually smaller than the maximum except during June and July.



Academic Credit Update

The University of Southern Mississippi has approved some additional AmeriSpan programs for fully transferable academic credit including Morelia, San Miguel de Allende #2, Heredia and San José #1. This means AmeriSpan students can now easily transfer academic credit for study in 15 different locations in Latin America. USM has increased the minimum number of weeks to receive academic credit to 3 weeks for 3 credits.



AmeriSpan Unlimited
THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

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

<http://www.amerispan.com>