

## Salsa Dancing

It is a Saturday night in New York City and on 57th and 11th in midtown, there is a long line of people anxiously waiting entrance into a club called Copacabana. The language of choice here is Spanish, although English is also spoken. After paying the \$20 cover charge, one enters into the massive club that can host 2,000 guests.

The stage is 400 square feet and is able to accommodate a 20-piece band. The art deco design captures the ambiance of the 1940's, and the carpet maintains its sea shell motif of the 1940's. On stage there is an orchestra pumping out sounds that are reminiscent of the Big Band era. However, the band is not playing swing, it is playing salsa and mambo. The patrons are paired up on the dance floor dancing with Latin rhythm and salsa moves that compliment the music in perfect step.

Salsa music and dance is not a passing fad, it has always been around, and it is just gaining strength and popularity with time. Many people and cultures around the world embrace salsa. It continues to develop and evolve.

Salsa is a tropical music form with Afro-Cuban roots. It has been the subject of debate since the development of this musical form. Many argue where and who actually invented salsa (Cubans or Puerto Ricans). Salsa has many roots, but the style that gave rise to and shaped it is the Cuban music style called Son. However, the Puerto Ricans embraced and advanced this musical style.

The term "salsa" started in the 1960's. Its main influence was the Cuban "son" style, but also encompassed many musical genres, instru-



Dance class at our Heredia program.

mental combinations, and cultural influences. Salsa music incorporates son, Puerto Rican bomba and plena, Dominican merengue, jazz, and rhythm and blues. The format is as follows: there is an opening melody followed by "coro" backing improvisation sung by a soloist, then followed by a mambo section, consisting of the trumpet and reed sections. Heard in the music are bongos, congas and timbales. Very popular in New York salsa is the use of the "Bata" drum and guitar. However, new styles keep evolving along with different instruments.

The dance that accompanies the music requires much practice and commitment. The male dancer

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(salsero) leads his partner through a number of turns and steps. Salsa is believed to be one of the hardest of the Latino dances to learn. There is a combination of steps and it is necessary for the two dancers to be in-sync and have a good grasp of the rhythm in order to dance salsa correctly.

So what is stopping you from locating the nearest Salsa Club or Dance Studio and exploring what may very well become your new hobby, exercise form, or even passion!

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AmeriSpan Unlimited  
THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

## Letter From The Editors:

Hello Friends,



Viva la cultura Latina! In recent months, both Time and Newsweek have devoted their cover stories to the "Latin Phenomena" from music to dance to food to literature. Well, we have seen the light and have begun to include more cultural articles in our Translator. In our last issue, we featured an interview with Isabel Allende, one of the most popular Latin writers. In this issue, we focus on Salsa, music and even throw in a recipe for flan.

In addition to a focus on culture, AmeriSpan has quite a bit of exciting news. First, we have added more new programs than at any time since 1993. Secondly, AmeriSpan programs are now available at some of the world's largest student travel organizations & language travel agencies. We are now offered at over 100 STA Travel and Council Travel offices in the USA, in England and France by the don Quijote Schools, and by Travel Active in the Netherlands. Finally, we have entered into a joint venture with Languages Abroad, a company that offers programs to study 25 different languages.

Of course, this Translator is also full of the hard-to-find language travel related information that has made the Translator so popular over the last few years. We have country a close-up on Chile, a program profile of our new program in Córdoba (Argentina) and lots of other helpful news and tips.

John Slocum & Dorioara Pinku  
Co-Directors

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Johns Hopkins School of Medicine has extended its research project through the summer of 2000. You can easily earn \$600 while studying Spanish for three weeks in Antigua, Guatemala or Cuernavaca, Mexico. Please note that if you participated in this study over a year ago, you may be eligible to participate again! For more information visit our web site or call JH toll-free at 877-205-1941.

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## Contest Winner!

Belinda Aber from Austin, Texas is the winner of the 2 week language travel trip to Chile. We want to thank everyone for your assistance with our efforts to fight illiteracy. AmeriSpan will be donating all net proceeds from this fundraising effort to Concilio Hispano, a non-profit human services agency serving Latinos in Cambridge, MA.

## Homemade Flan

Flan is known throughout the Spanish speaking world, even in countries where it is not as typical. This recipe was given to me in Mexico by the mother of a friend. I had never tasted a flan the equal to this one, until a Puerto Rican friend, known for her superb flan, compared notes with me. We use the same recipe. The recipe is fool proof, easy to make and most of us have or can have the ingredients on hand at all times. The preparation time is about 15 minutes; the cooking time is about one hour. In a pinch you can serve it warm. Serve as well with fresh fruit (e.g. berries) placed about the edge of the flan on the plate.

- 1 can Eaglebrand milk
- 1 + tsp vanilla
- 1 Eaglebrand can full of regular milk (vaporated OK)
- A splash of rum (optional)
- 6 eggs
- 1 scant cup sugar

Start water to simmer in bottom of 2-quart double boiler. Melt sugar in top of 2-quart double boiler over low heat. When the sugar is liquidy, start coating pot by tilting & twirling thither & yon. Careful not to touch HOT sugar! While sugar is melting, beat remaining ingredients to a foam. Pour into caramelized pot. Place in top of double boiler over the simmering water. Cover, cook until almost firm in center, about 1 hour or a bit more. Cool a bit, run knife around top of flan to loosen and invert on a dish with a lip by placing dish over pot, flip carefully. Remember, custards continue to bake after removed from heat.

– By Mariana Patchen

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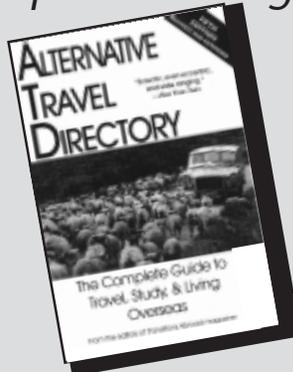
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## Country Close-Up: Chile

### Public Safety: Safe

An overall deterioration in public safety is reported especially in the largest cities, attributed to the ongoing economic slump and consequent unemployment (see below). Armed robberies (up 40% from last year) and break-ins (up 6%) are among the forms of crime on the rise. At the same time murders have decreased by 30%. Routine precautions are advised even during the daytime throughout Santiago, Valparaiso/Vina del Mar and Concepcion. In Santiago, visitors should be careful in the downtown core, Cerro Santa Lucia and Parque Metropolitano, including Cerro San Cristobal, and especially in poor peripheral neighbourhoods. In Valparaiso, avoid the hills to the south of town and the port area at night. Small cities, towns, and the countryside are generally a good deal safer.

### Health Risk: Low.

Generally healthful conditions prevail throughout Chile. Air pollution is an ongoing problem in Santiago, worst during the recent winter months.

**Weather & Nat. Phenomena:** The drought, which had been affecting much of the country for almost 2 years, has eased considerably in recent months. A number of minor earth tremors were reported during the same period, without causing any injuries or property damage.

**Travel Costs:** Daily travel budget: luxury \$275, 1st class \$132, economy \$41, basic \$14. Hotels: luxury \$87, 1st class \$39, economy \$14, basic \$6. Restaurants: luxury \$35, 1st class \$19,

economy \$10, basic \$2. Airfares \$0.13/mi. Bus \$0.04/mi. Train \$0.036/mi. Taxi \$1.24/mi. City bus fare \$0.40. Gasoline \$1.71/gal.

**The Economy:** US\$1=518 Peso Chileno (official cash). Inflation 0.4%/mo. Unemployment 11%. Minimum wage \$166/mo. Cost of living index \$682/mo. Recession continues, in Chile's worst slump since 1982-83. GDP fell by 2.3% during the first quarter of 1999 and estimates for the year continue to be revised downwards. Steadily rising unemployment (currently at its highest level in 12 years) is perhaps the single most serious consequence of the economic downturn, along with falling consumer purchasing power; the latter is reflected in a 39% decrease in new car sales during the first half of this year. The crisis has resisted several recent govt attempts to reactivate the economy, although figures suggest that the situation has at last begun to stabilize, if not yet improve. The other encouraging sign is a 110% increase in foreign investment during the first quarter of this year, amounting to US\$6.25 billion, concentrated mainly in the country's energy sector. Analysts point to this international confidence as an indication of the fundamental soundness of the Chilean economy, despite its current difficulties.

**Political Situation:** Stable. Constitutional Democracy. President Eduardo Frei (term 3/94 to 3/2000). Presidential elections are due to being held on Dec 19. The front-running candidates are former senator Ricardo Lagos of the incumbent center-left coalition, and Joaquin Lavín, former mayor of a wealthy Santiago suburb, leading the country's political right. The continued

detention of General Augusto Pinochet in England, and his possible extradition to Spain to face charges of human rights violations during his 18-year dictatorship, has kept the issue of reconciliation at political center-stage. Despite almost a decade of democracy since 1990, the widely disparate economic and social strata of Chile have found little common ground to forgive or forget the injustices of the past. The issue of human rights, justice, and reconciliation have figured prominently in the election campaign to date. At the same time, there is broad consensus regarding the structure of the country's economy, which is unlikely to change despite the current recession (see above) and regardless of whom wins the presidential race.



Glacier in Patagonia, Chile.

For additional details regarding 17 countries of South and Central America you may contact The Latin American Travel Advisor by calling toll-free from the U.S. or Canada, 1-800-327-3573, by sending e-mail to [LATA@pi.pro.ec](mailto:LATA@pi.pro.ec), or by visiting their web site ([www.amerispan.com/lata/](http://www.amerispan.com/lata/)) from anywhere in the world.

## More Chile Facts

- **Population:** 14,025,000
- **Location:** Left-hand side of South America, with the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Andes bordering on the east.
- **Area:** 4300km (2,666miles).
- **Weather:** Chile's weather is varied, it is temperate in the north and rainy, snowy and windy in the south. The rainy season in the heartland is from May to August with temperatures averaging 10C (50F) January's temperatures average 28C (82F). Chilean Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego have summer averages of 11C (52F), but have a major wind chill.
- **Languages:** Spanish is the official language, although there are native languages spoken including Aymara, Mapuche, and Rapa Nui.
- **Capital:** Santiago (population 5,000,000)
- **Religion:** Over 90% Roman Catholic, 5% Protestants
- **Ethnic Makeup:** 90% mestizo, 5% Indians, 5% European Descent.
- **Economy:** GDP US\$42 billion and GDP annual growth \$6.5%
- **Monetary Unit:** Peso

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## Music Review

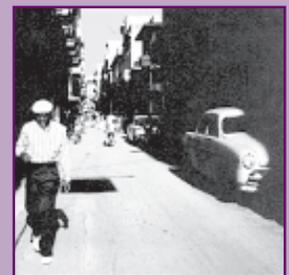
**Buena Vista Social Club** – Although this band has been around for a long time, they have begun to garner some deserved attention after Ry Cooder produced their latest album and after the well-received independent film, *Buena Vista Social Club*, which documents the making of the album.

Led by Cuban-born 72 year old singer, Ibrahim Ferrer, this 21-piece band links us to the eras of swing and salsa that are timeless. These veteran players use horns, guitars, drums and vocals in a way that is reminiscent of the 1950's Cuban big bands. This rhythmic, soulful recording is the type of music that continues to grow on listeners.

– Highly Recommended

### Other AmeriSpan Favorites:

- 100% Azucar: the Best Of Celia Cruz
- The Best of the Gypsy Kings
- Pies Descalzos: Shakira
- Americas: Strunz & Farah (our hold music!)
- Mi Tierra: Gloria Estefan
- Jesus Alemany: Cubanismo
- Los Super Seven

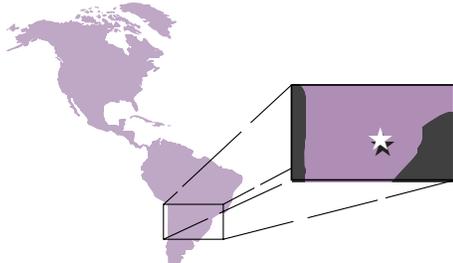


*Buena Vista Social Club*  
album cover.

Of course all these CDs, including *Buena Vista Social Club* are available at our online store:

[http://www.amerispan.com/au\\_store\\_fr.html](http://www.amerispan.com/au_store_fr.html)

## Program Profile



### Córdoba, Argentina

#### School:

Casa de Lenguas - Córdoba

#### Location:

Virtually undiscovered by North American tourists, this city has a little of everything for visitors. Founded in 1573, Córdoba boasts many colonial style cathedrals and buildings. Like many other cities in Latin America built by the Spanish, the city was designed using a grid system and is void of intimidating skyscrapers making it easy to navigate despite its size (population 1.5 million). Home to South America's oldest university, Córdoba is alive with a university town feel offering many cultural activities and an active nightlife while still being one of Argentina's most important industrial centers.

Cordoba has a continental climate, with seasons opposite of North America. Summer (December-February), with its hot days (85-95°F) and cool nights, is a favored season for tourism. However, the crisp sunny days of winter are not without their charm. Temperatures usually range from 50-60F during the day, so don't forget your hat and gloves!

#### Atmosphere:

The school is located downtown within close proximity to the city's lively shopping district. Those studying during the Argentinean summer will enjoy the rooftop terrace with a view of an ancient cathedral. The large kitchen, located in the center of the school ends up being a social center, even though there is also a student lounge for watching movies and other activities.

Most program participants are from

the US. and Germany. There are also Argentinean students who come to learn English, German and Portuguese.

#### Language Program:

Most of the highly qualified teachers are educated at the University of Córdoba. This university, one of the best in the country, is well known for its excellent Education department and Linguistics department. In addition, most of the teachers have studied at least one foreign language, making them even more qualified to teach foreigners. The school has recently re-organized its entire language program and held several workshops for the teachers. Even though this is a new program for AmeriSpan, we feel that it shortly be one of our best.

#### Homestay:

Most of the homestays are in apartments or houses in residential neighborhoods, 15-20 minutes by bus from downtown. There is only one English-speaking student per family, unless otherwise requested. Students enjoy a private room and two meals per day. The families range from young couples with small children to retired women living alone. In any case, there are always lots of opportunities for interaction.

#### Activities/Excursions:

The program has a busy activity schedule with organized activities at least 3 times/week: Tango classes, movies, lectures, conversational "intercambios" with locals studying English (available upon request) and museum visits. Activities are free except for public transportation or entrance fees. The school also provides information on the various cultural events going on around the city. An exciting excursion package is offered in addition to

other weekend trips. A trip to the breath taking Iguazú Falls can also be arranged, but this must take place after your language program because a weekend is not enough time. Most weekend trips range from \$100-\$200.

#### Other Comments:

The population of Argentina comes from a primarily European decent and enjoys a relatively high standard of living. Many foreign visitors do not stand out as they do in other Latin American countries which may make some feel more comfortable, as well as less of a target for thieves. However, Córdoba is not a commonly visited city by international tourists, so when locals discover that you are foreign, they are very interested and friendly.

**Earn 5,000 American Advantage miles by studying in Córdoba**

If you choose to study in Córdoba, Argentina and fly American Airlines to get there you will be eligible to earn 5,000 Advantage miles. In order to qualify for this special promotion, you need to start your program before February 1, 2000.



Students hanging out in the school kitchen.



The majestic waterfalls of Iguazú.



## AmeriSpan: Off The Wire

### **Volunteer/Internship Changes**

In an effort to simplify our Volunteer/Internship program, we have standardized the prices and set fixed length of stays. Participants will study Spanish for a minimum of 2-4 weeks and choose to be placed for 4, 8, 12, 18 or 24 weeks. A short-term package of 2 weeks study + 2 weeks work is also offered. In addition, we have revamped our volunteer/internship web site making it easier to search, adding more information about placements and allowing participants to register online.



### **Footprint/AmeriSpan Collaboration**

We have entered into a unique collaborative effort with Footprint

Handbooks. For 75 years in hardback, the South American Handbook has been the virtual bible to Latin America. The 2000 edition will be the first ever in the new Footprint "travel proof" paperback format (highly recommended!). The collaborative effort has many facets but some parts include: AmeriSpan offering "exclusive" promotions (e.g. free language programs) on Footprint's website, Footprint creating "customized" content geared toward AmeriSpan clients on their website and AmeriSpan having the rights to specific content for our 2000 program catalog.

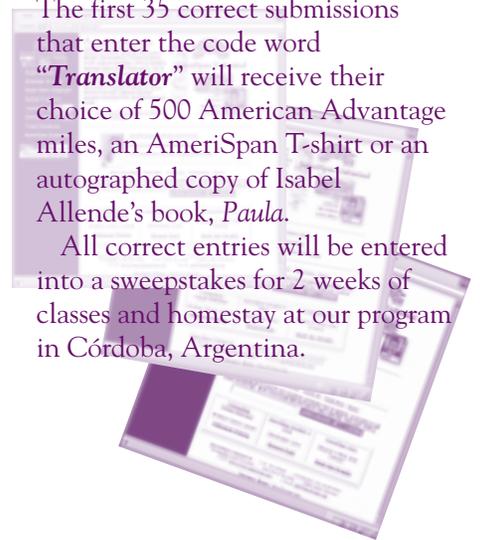


## **Quizzo Ole**

Visit our web site at:  
<http://www.amerispan.com>  
and play Quizzo Ole

The first 35 correct submissions that enter the code word "**Translator**" will receive their choice of 500 American Advantage miles, an AmeriSpan T-shirt or an autographed copy of Isabel Allende's book, *Paula*.

All correct entries will be entered into a sweepstakes for 2 weeks of classes and homestay at our program in Córdoba, Argentina.



**AmeriSpan Unlimited**  
THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

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>