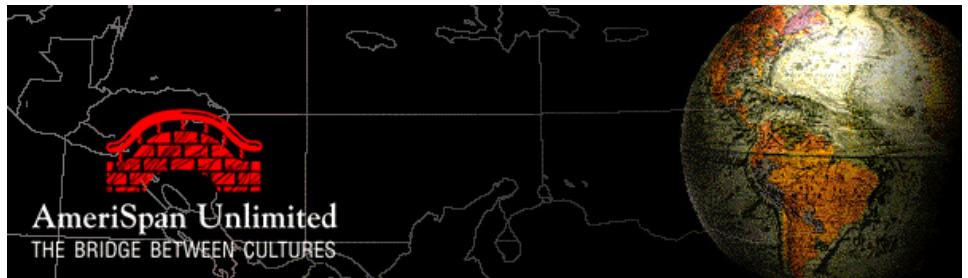


## Finding Low Airfares to Latin America

If you regularly purchase airline tickets from your local retail travel agency or directly from the airline, you can save 10-40% on your next trip to Latin America. The following tips are not big secrets or tricks, just facts.

1. Use a travel agent that specializes in Latin American airfare because often these agents have special deals with airlines that offer substantial savings versus the published fare, offer more flexible change policies and allow you to stay longer. AmeriSpan does not endorse nor vouch for any particular travel agent. However, we have a list of agents that has been recommended to AmeriSpan by past participants.
2. Whether or not you chose to purchase your ticket directly from the airline, from you local agent or from an agent that specializes in Latin America, try to depart from a major hub serving Latin America. In major hubs, ticket prices are held down because of competition among the different airlines. The major US hubs include: Miami, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Dallas and New Orleans. If you are not within driving distance of any of these hubs, chances are you can find a low priced domestic ticket to one of the hubs.
3. Special fares are often available for young children, senior citizens, youth (under 26) and students. Make sure your agent or the airline knows if you fall into one of these categories.
4. Check prices of the Latin American airline companies because often their prices are below major US, Canadian or European carriers serving the same markets. The quality of service is usually below the quality provided by major US, Canadian and European carriers so there is a reason why the



AmeriSpan's World Wide Web welcome page.

- rates are lower.
5. The lowest airfare rates available are offered to air couriers. Although, there are many inconveniences, the \$300 savings may be worth it. If you are interested in flying as a courier, AmeriSpan recommends that you join the IAATC (International Association of Air Travel Couriers).

The reasonable membership fee of around \$45 gets members bi-monthly updates of air courier bargains, access to a fax-on-demand service with daily updates of last minute specials and the bi-monthly newsletter, *The Shoestring Traveler*. For more information:

IAATC  
8 South "J" Street  
P.O. Box 1349  
Lake Worth, FL 33460  
Tel: 407-582-8320

## AmeriSpan Is Online

In June, AmeriSpan activated its World Wide Web site on the Internet. This was a mammoth project and includes our complete program catalog, back issues of our newsletter and a large amount of other information. The site was designed to be visually appealing and fast for the ordinary home user. We have succeeded in both of these aspects. Our welcome screen was pictured in a recent issue of PUBLISH magazine. Moreover, we are really proud of our AmeriSpan Travel Resource Center with links to more than 80 other web sites where "web-heads" can find all kinds of information related to traveling abroad and Latin America. On the drawing board is a number of improvements and some exciting additions. Come take a look, our web address is <http://www.amerispan.com>

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## Letter From The Editor:



Hello Friends,

Welcome to issue V 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.

Congratulations to Glenda Bullock (1st place) and JoEllen Schuleman (runner-up) on their entries for our 1995 Language Travel Essay Contest. We thoroughly enjoyed reading every essay. Look for Ms. Bullock's essay in this issue.

Our office has been overflowing with letters and evaluations sent by recent participants on AmeriSpan programs. Many thanks to all of you who have participated on AmeriSpan sponsored programs, we really appreciate your confidence in us. We could easily fill this entire newsletter with words of praise for AmeriSpan and the programs that we offer. We could pretend that we never receive any criticism. However, we are committed to improving our service and maintaining our leadership in providing the best language travel programs to Latin America. With that in mind, we address the concerns and suggestions that we have received from past participants.

In this issue, we investigate finding low airfare to Latin America, feature Uruguay in our regular *Country Close-Up* section and profile our partner schools in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. In addition, you will find information about the fourth International Conference on Teaching Second Languages in Costa Rica, AmeriSpan's World Wide Web homepage and much more.

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

Sincerely,  
John Slocum  
President & Co-Director



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

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### Interesting Newsletter

Network for Living Abroad is a newsletter that focuses on living abroad; full of little tidbits and interesting travel information. 1-818-789-2804.

### Updates on Latin America

Tune-in to "The Latin American Travel Advisor" on international short-wave radio. The program features sound advice for safe travel and special on-site features, broadcast in English on the third Friday of each month by radio station HCJB, "The Voice of the Andes", at the following times and frequencies - For Europe: 0730 UTC (GMT) on 6050 Khz and 1700 UTC on 15490 KHz. For the Americas: 0100 and 0500 UTC on 9745 Khz. For the South Pacific: 0900 UTC on 5900 KHz.

### Program Catalog-Always Current

AmeriSpan has decided to keep the same program catalog cover but we update the content of our Program Catalog about every 4 months therefore it is always current.

### Local Sales Reps Wanted

AmeriSpan is seeking individuals or organizations that are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about travel to Latin America, study abroad programs and intercultural experiences. If you possess these attributes and have access to or contact with a large number of people trying to learn Spanish, we may be interested in having you represent AmeriSpan's programs. For more information request a Local Sales Rep package.

## Language Travel Contest Winner!

Glenda Bullock was the grand prize winner of the 1995 Language Travel Giveaway Contest. Her winning essay - "Two Worlds in One" follows:

Why study Spanish in Latin America? For North Americans, the reasons are both practical and philosophical, with rewards that are far-reaching. I'll admit that when I first contemplated studying the language in a Spanish-speaking country, like most products of a typical liberal arts (i.e. Eurocentric) education, I thought first of Spain. Nor am I alone. Many US colleges and universities unquestioningly direct their Spanish students to study abroad in Spain, without thought of Latin America. Even travel expert Arthur Frommer, in his guide to *The New World of Travel*, advises aspiring language students to choose Spain over the more accessible language schools in México, because "México is México, but Spain is ...well, Spain."

Well, I'm sure it is, with El Grecos and castillos and Cervantes, but also with European prices, Castilian lisp, and insistence on conjugation verbs in the second person plural. So, I thought to myself, "México is closer and less expensive and I will learn enough Spanish to visit Spain for my next language vacation." Which is how, in the last decade of the twentieth century, I "discovered" the continent with which we *norteamericanos* share a 2,000-mile border and about which we know far less than we do the continent we're separated from by 3,000 miles of ocean.

Spanish is the mother tongue of 250 million people, but only 37 million of them live in Spain. When we read of the

growing Spanish-speaking population in the United States; when sugar cane, jicama, and habanero chiles appear in the produce section of our supermarkets; when Grammy awards include categories for Mexican-American performance and Latin jazz; what we are experiencing is not the influence of Spain, but of Latin America.

The Spanish speakers we meet in our daily lives are far more likely to be from Colombia, México, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, or Central America. For almost every practical purpose, it makes sense for us to learn the Spanish of the Americas — its accents, its usage, its vocabulary.

For those who wonder whether the culture of Latin America is as interesting as that of Spain, I would offer these parallels: where Spain has Roman ruins, Latin America has Mayan pyramids; where Spain has flamenco and zarzuela, Latin America has mariachi and salsa and Andean flutes; if Spain has paella, Latin America has mole poblano; and on both sides of the Atlantic you will find open-air markets and sidewalk cafes, spacious plazas and opulent cathedrals, fountains and fiestas, bullfights and nightlife, and all the popular emblems of Hispanic culture.

But what Latin America offers beyond this, and which ultimately makes it so complex and fascinating, is the heritage of its indigenous peoples, the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas, plus hundreds of other less well-known tribes whose own contributions to world civilization, in astronomy, architecture, agriculture, I'm just beginning to appreciate. The Spanish influence, overlaid on this ancient culture, results in a social fabric as colorful and intricate as a Guatemalan weaving. In Latin America, you have two worlds for the price of one – the pre-Hispanic and the European combined.

To visit, to live, and to get to know Latin America makes you a better citizen of the Western Hemisphere. It's an extraordinary antidote to our cultural myopia. Just as studying another language teaches you more about the structure and origins of your own, experiencing Latin America will lead you to understand the United States better and provide an eye-opening perspective on the evolving relationship our country has with all its American neighbors.

To Mr. Frommer, I would counter, "Europe is Europe, with which we have



far more in common than in contrast, but Latin America is a labyrinth that draws you in deeper, once you begin to discover its variety and enchantment." I'm sure I'll visit Spain one day to see where it all started, armed with my American-accented Spanish – and what could be more appropriate? After all, along with the Taíno, the Mayan, the Chileno, the boricueño, I am an American. But there is no hurry. With so much of Latin America still to discover, I'm having too much fun experiencing the reality of the name early explores gave this hemisphere: a New World.

—Glenda Bullock  
Albany, NY



### Country Close-up: Uruguay

**Public Safety:** very safe.

A new public safety law has come into effect, intended to facilitate the work of the police and courts.

**Health Risk:** very low.

No recent developments.

Weather & Natural

**Phenomena:** Spring is about to begin.

**Travel Costs:** Daily travel budget:

luxury \$230, 1st class \$158, economy \$59, basic \$32.

**Hotels:** luxury \$51, 1st class \$39, economy \$24, basic \$15.

Restaurants: luxury \$28, 1st class \$20, economy \$13, basic \$8. Bus \$0.046/km, \$0.075/mi. Taxi \$1.13/km, \$1.83/mi. City bus fare \$0.56. Gasoline \$0.79/liter, \$3.00/gal.

*continued on page 7*

## AmeriSpan Report Card

It is that time of the year again, report card time. For the staff of AmeriSpan, the summer is like 4 months of exams and the first few of September we receive our grades. Overall, we are again amazed at the amount of positive feedback from past participants. Most companies would be thrilled and go on vacation. Not us, we have been painstakingly following up on criticisms, concerns and suggestions. During this process, we discovered a few recurring comments that we felt needed to be addressed before we take any kind of break.

*“It was not easy to get through directly to an AmeriSpan representative, sometimes I had to leave a message”*

AmeriSpan’s policy is not to rush customers when they have questions. Sometimes this means a language travel specialist may spend 20 or 25 minutes on one call. We check messages continuously throughout the day and every person who leaves a message receives a phone call back. We continue to hear that AmeriSpan is the most knowledgeable and responsive organization offering language travel programs.

To prepare for last summer, we opened an additional office in Atlanta, installed a sophisticated telephone system to control the flow of calls, added an e-mail address and created a fax-back service. Our fax-back service allows callers to specify which documents they want to be automatically faxed to their own fax machines.

To prepare for next year, we are adding additional language travel specialists, additional phone lines and expanded fax-back services. We are confident that these efforts will help reduce the bottleneck that occurs from mid-April through mid-August each year.

*“Your answering service was not helpful”*

We have hired an answering service to take the names and addresses of people requesting information packages so that our language travel specialists can focus on answering questions. Calls are only routed to this service from our telephone system if the caller selects option 1 to receive

a free information package. Furthermore, callers only get this option if all our language travel specialists are assisting other customers or AmeriSpan is closed. These operators are not language travel specialists and therefore are not qualified to answer questions.

*“I wish that I had the name of my host family before arrival”*

Most students do receive their homestay prior to arrival, but a few schools do not provide this information beforehand. However, if you ask, we can usually obtain this information. One of AmeriSpan’s internal goals is to require all of our partner schools to begin providing homestay information in the future.

*“My family did not regularly eat meals with me”*

Families not eating with students is the exception, not the rule, but does occur occasionally. One reason is the fact that the family members have different schedules and do not regularly eat together as a family. Also, in some parts of Latin America (such as Hondu-

ras), it is simply a sign of hospitality!

*“I did not receive enough to eat”*

Despite the cultural and diet differences between Latin America and the US, Canada and Europe, you should never feel underfed. The families are compensated well enough to feed you sufficient food. If you find yourself in this situation, immediately talk to the school’s director. If the situation isn’t resolved, call AmeriSpan collect and we will resolve it.

*“My family complained that they were underpaid by the school”*

Please be aware that every dollar that you pay for the homestay is not paid to the family. The schools keep a small amount to cover the costs associated with operating the homestay program. The families receive a good income from participating in the program. For example, in Guatemala, a family earns as much as a college educated bookkeeper from hosting one student. However, we still hear comments from our students that the family is being “underpaid”. Besides, the families are volunteering to host students.

## Past Participants Say It Best

*“I would like to thank AmeriSpan for one of the best summer learning experiences of my life. I am a High School Spanish Teacher who has traveled extensively and experienced other study programs. The service and experience provided to me by AmeriSpan was exceptional.”*

—Deborah Sams, TN  
Spanish Teacher  
(studied in Mazatlán)

*“The program is excellent with workbooks written by the head of the school - would definitely recommend this school to others.”*

—Glen Todd, CA  
Engineer, (studied in Montevideo)

*“The staff & school far exceeded my expectations. My homestay was indeed a highlight to my trip.”*

—Tara Dossey, TX  
Mental Health Worker  
(studied in Heredia)

*“The homestay was great. My ‘Señora’ was a fabulous cook who never repeated a dish in the whole four weeks I stayed in her home.”*

—June Gill, CA  
Teacher  
(studied in Morelia)

*“As a foreign language teacher of twenty-one years I have had many opportunities for advanced study abroad. I count my experience with AmeriSpan and Linguatéc in Chile as one of the highlights of my professional development experiences.”*

—Laura Humphrey, NY, Spanish  
Teacher  
(studied in Santiago)

*“It was overall just an excellent experience, one I wish I had taken long ago.”*

—Christopher Cruise, NC  
Mortgage Broker  
(studied in Quetzaltenango)

## Program Profile

### Quetzaltenango, Guatemala



### Casa de Español Xelajú (CEX)



### Escuela de Español ICA

#### Location

As the origin of the mysterious and fascinating Mayan Civilization and still predominately Indian, Guatemala offers some of the continent's richest folklore. Existing among this array of traditions are the Indian, Spanish and, along the Caribbean Coast, African cultures. The country is physically beautiful, the friendly people live a simple life and the cost of living is extremely low.

The city of Antigua is arguably the Spanish learning capital of the world with as many as 10,000 foreigners studying Spanish each year. Spanish schools have been popping up all over the country during the last 5-8 years. One such place is Quetzaltenango, located in the largely indigenous Western Highlands about 4 hours west of Guatemala City. Xela, as it is called by the locals, is the second largest city in Guatemala and few locals speak English. In fact, Spanish is the second language to many people from the villages surrounding the city. With more than 25 Spanish schools, the quality of programs and teachers vary greatly in Quetzaltenango. However, AmeriSpan has discovered two jewels - Casa de Español Xelajú (CEX) and Escuela de

Español-ICA (ICA). We rate both of these schools as superior to virtually all other Spanish schools in Guatemala, including those located in Antigua.

#### Atmosphere

Both schools provide a relaxed structured setting in which to learn Spanish. The students are all ages, mostly North American, but there is always a good mix of Europeans, especially from September to April. The staff members interact in a friendly manner with the students in a family-like atmosphere.

#### Language Program

Both programs focus on one-on-one instruction which allows students to move at their own pace. The history and politics of Guatemala are integrated into the class, as well as, Latin American literature for students at the intermediate or higher level. The teachers are well-trained and are able to meet the individual needs of most students including specialized vocabulary.

#### Academic Credit

Casa de Español Xelajú's program has been approved for academic credit from a number of Universities, including transferable credit from the University of Southern Mississippi.

#### Homestay

Generally, homestays in Quetzaltenango are simple when measured by creature comforts and students should be

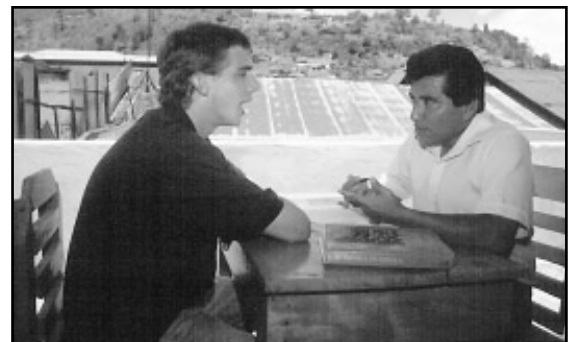
prepared for a bit more cultural adjustment than most AmeriSpan programs. Usually, only one student is placed per home, leading to family interaction and a strong immersion experience.

#### Activities/Excursions

Both programs offer a full complement of afternoon activities including lectures, discussions, movies, visits to museums, Latin dance classes, trips to nearby towns, soccer/volleyball games and volunteer opportunities. Weekend excursions include the beach, market towns, ruins, hiking/climbing volcanoes and much more. All activities are well organized and accompanied by at least one member of the staff.

#### Volunteer Projects

Both schools are actively involved with developmental projects providing many opportunities for those desiring to volunteer. ICA sponsors ICAmigos which is a charitable organization with a series of projects such as reforestation, stove building, mid-wiving, tutoring and operating an indigenous rural school. CEX is involved in a long-term social project for a local impoverished community, La Pedrera and works through Habitat for Humanity on a variety of social projects. All volunteer opportunities vary depending on the student's Spanish speaking ability, length of stay in Guatemala and area of interest.



1-on-1 instruction at Casa de Español Xelajú.

## Country Close-up: Uruguay

*continued from page 3*

**The Economy:** US\$1=6.55 Uruguayan Pesos (official cash), 6.45 (official TCs). Inflation 3.5%/mo = 42%/yr. Unemployment 11%. Minimum wage \$88/mo. Cost of living index \$813/mo. Uruguay's economic slowdown has continued in response to the recession in its two large neighbors and trading partners: Brazil and Argentina. Plans have been announced to begin construction next year on a 50 Km

long bridge from Colonia to Buenos Aires, Argentina.

**Political Situation:** very stable. Constitutional Democracy. President Julio Maria Sanguinetti (term 3/95 to 3/2000). President Sanguinetti reiterated that his country "does not have and will not have" institutionalized corruption, referring to charges brought against 3 civil servants in the gov't of his predecessor, Luis Lacalle. Sanguinetti pointed out that these were isolated cases which would be appropriately dealt with by the courts.

Proposed reforms to the constitution and the social security system are currently the focus of political attention in Uruguay.

**AmeriSpan Partner:** Montevideo Instituto de Lenguas Extranjeras

**Country Close-Up is provided by:**

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

## 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 fourth Annual International Conference on Teaching Second Languages. Each participant will receive a special package of teaching materials (tapes, videos, etc.). 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 1996 program is from July 2 - 9 and costs \$800/person (3 or more only \$720/person).

Here is what some of 1995's participants had to say:

*"The teacher's conference was excellent: enough material to make you want to throw away your text book and just use what they provided; enough ideas to last a year or two. The presenters and presentations were varied and interesting, ingeniously woven into a detailed pattern."*

—Nancy Zechiedrich, AR

*"Director and Co-Director were excellent in leading, organizing and setting a comfortable ambiance."*

—Gloria Ryskind, CT

*"Very high quality in all areas."*

—Jeanne Cochran, PA

*"It was a wonderful experience all around. The Costa Ricans were wonderful."*

—Leigh Gray, NY

*"It was much, much, much more than I expected."*

—Veronica Rodriguez, PA

*"Phenomenal! No need to improve anything."*

—Alexandra Hrab, NJ

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## AmeriSpan: Off The Wire

### AmeriSpan Antigua Office

In September, AmeriSpan's Antigua operation moved (3 doors away) to a much more spacious office with a garden, a comfortable gathering area and an expanded resource center.

The address is:

6a Avenida Norte #40  
Antigua, Guatemala

Already the preeminent Tourist Resource Center, AmeriSpan has signed an agreement with Conexion, a company specializing in communication services. Conexion will handle the telephone/fax services provided by the AmeriSpan Antigua office so that our staff can focus all of our attention on providing student and tourist services. In the future, Conexion plans to install computers for public use and e-mail access.



### AmeriSpan Group Programs

AmeriSpan has introduced all inclusive packages for groups of 10 or more people. Each package includes language instruction, homestay, afternoon activities, airfare and all the AmeriSpan extra services. Group leader incentives are available. For more information contact: Mariana Patchen at AmeriSpan.



### Montevideo Language Program Expanded

Already one of our strongest language programs, our partner school in Montevideo, Uruguay has increased the hours of group classes to 12 hours/week. The group classes are optional and when combined

with the regular 20 hours of private instruction, bring the weekly instruction to a total of 32 hours per week. With one of the most qualified staffs of any of our programs, this school should be near the top of any serious student's list of choices.



### Buenos Aires Homestays Begin Offering Meals

Our partner in Buenos Aires will upgrade their homestay program to include partial board in 1996.



### Information Via Fax

AmeriSpan has a fax-back service where you can request information on programs, a price sheet, an application and other specifics. Simply call 215-985-4514, follow the instructions, within minutes your documents are automatically faxed to you.



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