

New Semester/Year Abroad Programs!
In September, AmeriSpan introduced our newest product, University Abroad programs. Our semester/year programs are at accredited international universities intended for college students who want to study outside of their home country. Students will be able to earn credits towards their degrees. Along with classes we will be offering excursions, accommodations with host families and a complete orientation program.

The Homestay Experience

You've heard it more than once - travelers describing their time spent living with a local family as either The Best or The Worst part of their trip! Despite everyone's different definitions of "best" and "worst", it is agreed that the homestay experience makes a strong impact on the student traveler's view of this new culture! Some people love their host families because of how *different* the family culture is from their own. Others love their host families because the host family treats them the *same* as their own family. Some enjoy the constant interaction. Some enjoy the independence. For as many different travelers as there are in this world, there are probably an equal number of reasons why people fall in love with their homestay experience.

So, who are these families that choose to accept foreign students into their homes? They are often your typical, middle-class family who has space in their home and an interest in cultural awareness. Often in Spanish-speaking cultures they include more of the extended family than what is typical in North American families. For example, many households in Latin cultures include members of four generations. It is not uncommon for cousins or aunts and uncles to be part of the household, as well. This was the experience of one student

who described her time in San Juan, Puerto Rico as a continual family reunion! Other host families may consist of a couple that does not have children of their own or whose children are grown and out of the house. Personally, I come from a family of ten.

When three or four of my siblings were away at college, bedrooms became available. My parents always encouraged us to study a language and learn about other cultures. Hosting students was one way for them to give that lesson personal meaning for us. It worked. After we had a student from Spain, I went to Spain. After we hosted girls from Ecuador, I visited Quito and Cuenca. Homestay families come in all different shapes and sizes and each offers a truly unique experience for the traveler.

So, we know who these families are. Now, what motivates them to do such a thing as welcome strangers from another country into their home? The answers to that question are as varied as the reasons a stranger would choose to join a random foreign family for weeks at a time. Some families are eager to



create an exchange opportunity for their own children. For some families, hosting provides a significant source of income. For many, it comes down to a basic appreciation of different places, peoples, and cultures. Maybe your family has hosted international students at one time. Maybe friends or neighbors that you know have done the same. Most certainly they all have their own stories to tell. One of my family's favorite experiences was in the late 80's when we simultaneously hosted a student from Israel and a student from Palestine. As you can imagine, we unexpectedly were forced to hone our peace negotiation skills! However, the tense beginning did not last. We soon got to witness walls breaking down between the students. We saw cold glares turn to timid smiles.

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Tortilla Española (Spanish Tortilla)

This is a wonderful dish famous throughout Spain. Contrary to the Mexican tortilla, the Spanish tortilla is more like an omelette. It can be eaten plain cut into pieces, or on a baguette as a "bocadillo de tortilla." It can be served hot or cold.

Ingredients:

4 medium sized potatoes, peeled and sliced
6 eggs
1 onion, chopped (optional)
1 green pepper, chopped (optional)
¼ liter olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the sliced potatoes until soft. Stirring frequently so they do not burn. Add onion and pepper and fry until soft.

Beat the eggs in a separate bowl and season with salt and pepper. Add the potatoes, onions, and pepper and mix everything together.

Heat some oil in the frying pan on medium heat. Pour the mixture into the pan, shaking the pan occasionally so that the mixture doesn't stick to the bottom. Once the bottom of the mixture has set, turn the heat to low and cover the pan. Turn the tortilla over after 10 minutes. Continue to fry the tortilla until it is cooked all the way through. Remove from the pan and serve hot or cold.

(Serves 4)

Letter From The Editor:

Hello Friends,

Welcome to the Winter issue of the Translator, a newsletter that is published periodically for the customers and friends of AmeriSpan.



AmeriSpan Unlimited
THE BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES

This issue is mainly dedicated to "getting started" either in your language learning experience, or in your travels to a Portuguese or Spanish-speaking country. While some of our readers have been abroad, many of you are still uncertain about when, where, or if you should go. This edition will aid you in your decision making. We feature articles on the homestay experience and on choosing a language dictionary as well as country information on Peru and program information on Sevilla, Spain. For those of our readers who deal with Latinos in day to day business, there is an interesting article on trust.

If you are looking for travel information in addition to what you read in this issue, or information for a different Latin American country, our Travel Resource section on our website is a great place to find all kinds of links to hotels, general information, tours, and many more topics. All of that information can be found at

<http://www.amerispan.com/travel/>.

We have some great specials going on to make your dreams of a winter getaway come true!

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to hearing from you!

Elizabeth Gregory

Win a 'Footprint' Travel Guide Book

We have a trivia contest going on monthly until March, 2002 in our on-line newsletter. Each month, 5 lucky winners picked at random will win a guide book courtesy of Footprint Handbooks. A different location and book is featured each month. So, sign up for our on-line newsletter to test your global trivia skills.

Choosing a Foreign Language Dictionary That's Right for You

Many times, language participants ask which is the best dictionary to get. With so many choices out there, and everyone having their personal favorite to recommend, how do you know what the best choice is for you?

First off, you need to assess your current level in the target language, be it Spanish, Portuguese, or another language. If you are a beginner there is no reason to purchase a large hard-backed dictionary because at first, you will not have the need for a dictionary that big. Ultimately, buying a dictionary that is too large could hinder your learning. Instead of thinking of ways to say things that you already know, you may become too tempted to look up new ways to say things instead of using what you already know. In the long run, it is much better to start with a smaller dictionary and "upgrade" to a larger one when you are ready.

Second, dictionaries have different layouts. You need to decide what you are comfortable with so that you don't choose a dictionary whose layout is confusing to you. Go to a large bookstore near you that carries a variety of foreign language dictionaries. Flip through a few and decide what layout is easiest for you to use. Try looking up a few words to see how comfortable you are with the dictionary. If you don't like one, try another.

The most important thing to remember is not to use your dictionary as a crutch. Rather, your dictionary should be a useful reference tool when it is truly needed. Spanish and Portuguese dictionaries, grammar guides, and phrase books are available in our on-line store at <http://www.amerispan.com/store/>.

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Trust, Loyalty and the Hispanic Mind

by: Ricardo González, Founder and Executive Director of Bilingual America

A couple of weeks ago I was in Dallas giving a seminar regarding “Success with Hispanics.” As my wife and I arrived at this very, very nice hotel, it struck me that I, as do most Hispanics, still have a very basic conflict with our ability to trust other people.

When we arrived, we were met by a bellman who offered to take our bags and some boxes up to our room. We had enough things (because of the boxes) that it required two of the carts that they use in hotels. Well, the bellman wanted my wife and I to go ahead up to the room and he told me that he would bring up the carts in a different elevator.

Guess what? I wouldn't do it.

My basic instinct said, “no, I don't know this guy and I can't trust this guy.” As much as I tried to overcome it, after all I was in a five star hotel, I couldn't. I just had to be honest with the guy and say, “Thank you, but I would like to stay with my bags and boxes.” Since children we are conditioned to lock all doors, watch our bags like eagles, keep our wallets in our front pockets, and put iron bars on our homes.

So what's the point?

The point is this. Hispanics for the most part are VERY slow to trust other people.

Of course, why should we? Our governments are corrupt, our fathers for the most part have shown themselves to be absent and more than frequently cheat on our mothers. The class system in the Hispanic culture keeps people from advancing. Business deals hang on a string and it's hard to know if someone is telling you the truth or just trying to make you feel good.

So, why am I telling you this?

Because if you travel to Latin America, or do business with Hispanics, or employ Hispanics, you need to know that you must EARN the trust of an Hispanic person. It will not be automatically given. You earn trust by completing a series of small commitments over a period of time. Not by doing one BIG thing and then expecting someone to think you're great from that point forward.

This is important for you because if you actually do earn the sincere trust of an Hispanic, you will have a friend for life... a person who will easily do business with you... an employee who will stay with you for a long period of time. This is true because in the Hispanic culture, once a friend always a friend. Loyalty is expected of true friends and family. Your goal should be to “become like family.”

There is a basic difference between the Hispanic culture and the American culture. It is:

Hispanics are slow to trust, but once trust is earned, the bond of loyalty is very real. Americans are fairly quick to trust what others say, but true loyalty is very difficult to achieve.

This is easily shown in the typical business negotiation with Hispanics. It takes time and patience to get a deal done with Hispanics. They want to know you, they want to know if they can trust you. They want to LIKE you. In fact, if they don't like you, many times they won't do business with you, even if the deal makes objective business sense.

Generally speaking, in the United States most people could care less what kind of a person you are as long as “the deal” makes sense. Business relationships are built on objective financial data, rather than subjective feelings. Latin Americans tend to go more from the “gut feeling” and are known to turn down deals even though they will lose money.

So here's the lesson. If you're dealing with Hispanics, be patient and take your time. Work to earn trust over time by following through on several small commitments. By doing so, you'll eventually earn trust and once you gain the trust of an Hispanic, you have a friend for life who will be willing to give you much more than the shirt off his back.

For more information on the “Success with Hispanics” Course or for Results-driven Spanish Training, please call Bilingual America TOLL FREE at 1-888-850-1555. You may also visit Bilingual America on the Internet at www.bilingualamerica.com

The Homestay Experience

(continued from page 1)

We saw stubborn silence change to heated conversation and occasional laughter. We saw them say good-bye, exchanging hugs and phone numbers. So, who are these families, you ask? They are people who find individuals and cultures interesting. They are people who want to share what they have to make an intercultural experience possible for someone else. No amount of money can fully reimburse families for accepting strangers into their homes. Hosting is no ordinary job. These families may be ordinary people, but for travelers, they make extraordinary experiences possible!

And who are the students?

After all is said and done, how can you ensure that you have the best experience possible while living with your host family? Basically: Be flexible. Be sensitive. Be yourself. If that's not specific enough for you, read the following advice gathered from countless students' feedback, host families' comments, and first-hand homestay experiences:

Tips on Making the Most of Your Homestay Experience: By Liz Cleveland (Language Travel Consultant for AmeriSpan)

- Bring pictures of family, friends, your house, a map of where you live. These can be used to begin discussions.
- If interaction with the family is important to you – take the initiative to spend time with them. They will follow your lead.
- It's OK to make mistakes with the language! Your host family does not expect you to speak perfectly and they can become excellent teachers if you let them.
- Absolute beginners - you'll be amazed how much you can communicate when you're creative. Play charades!
- Ask questions. It shows interest and the answers may be more interesting than you expected.
- Your host family is just that: a family. They are not a tour company, available at your disposal. However, they are a valuable resource for advice on places to explore. Find out what they suggest.
- *Different* is not bad. *Different* is . . . different!
- Remember what your parents always told you: "Try one bite! It won't kill you and if you don't like it you don't have to finish it."
- Treat your family with respect. They are not your personal hotel staff.
- Discuss your concerns around issues like telephone use, meal routines and visitors. That is the only way to find out what they expect.
- Know what subjects are *inappropriate* to discuss with your family. These may include religion and politics.
- When in doubt, take the conservative approach.
- Be patient with yourself and with the new culture.
- Put aside self-consciousness and have fun. There is much to learn and many friends to be made in the process.

Music Review

The self-titled debut album from Si*sé blends electronica with Latin rhythms and sensual vocals. This band is made up of seven members, the most prominent being the lead singer Carol C. These band members, of Latin heritage, grew up in New York City but were all influenced by the Latin music they heard growing up.

The songs, a mixture of English and Spanish, are sexy, soulful and unique. To back up the smooth vocals of Carol C, Si*sé adds violas, percussion, bass and even a drum machine. Known in the New York City underground scene, the band's release of their debut album is sure to attract many more fans. You can find their CD on AmeriSpan's website.

- Highly Recommended by Suzanne Keller
(Language Travel Consultant for AmeriSpan)

Other AmeriSpan Favorites available in our online store at:

<http://www.amerispan.com/store/>

- Bebel Gilberto – Tanto Tempo
- Marisa Monte – Rose and Charcoal
- Juan Luis Guerra – Bachata Rosa



Si*sé album cover.

Program Profile



Sevilla, Spain

School:

Centro de Lenguas e Intercambio /
International House

Country:

Spain, the larger of the two countries that form the Iberian Peninsula, provides a multitude of geographical landscapes and cityscapes for travelers to enjoy. From mountains to beaches to arid plateaus to rich fertile land, there is much to experience during a visit to Spain. It is a country rich with history; the occupation of the Romans and Moors can still be seen in much of the architecture. It is also a country full of life; people are seen in the streets, cafes and bars until all hours of the morning. Whether you are searching for the bustling streets of major international cities such as Madrid and Barcelona, or looking to lose yourself in the windy small streets of Granada and Salamanca, Spain can offer the traveler both.

City:

Sevilla, the capital of Andalusia in Southern Spain, is considered by many to be one of the most charming and beautiful cities in all of Spain. It also serves a practical purpose as a substantial river port. The common images associated with Andalusia are ever present in Sevilla as well;

orange trees, palm trees, bullfights, Flamenco, gypsies, and Moorish influenced architecture to name a few. The city of Sevilla is a center for culture and learning. A traveler can find museums, a university, shops, cafes, and historical monuments all within an easy walk from one another. Andalusia, especially Sevilla, plays an important role in the cultural events and holidays of Spain. People from all over Spain, as well as foreign tourists, come to Sevilla for Feria de Sevilla (Mid-April) and Semana Santa (Holy Week, Mid-April).

The city of Sevilla can be very hot and dry during summer months with winter temperatures rarely falling below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. The southern city sees very little rain all year as well.

School Atmosphere:

The school is located downtown, within walking distance to the town center. Classes are held in a classic Sevillian style refurbished house. The building is quite large, and also airy and bright. School facilities include 20 classrooms, large interior patio, air conditioning, library, multi-media room, rooftop terrace, public phones, and small cafeteria.

Most students are from Northern Europe, North America and Brazil. There is a wide age range from college students to retired people. The average age of participants is 26 years old.

Language Program:

Class time is split into two "blocks". The first block focuses on grammar, presented in a formal yet functional way. The second block is practical conversation and application. All class work is conducted in Spanish and the emphasis always lies on written and spoken language skills. The school has a vast collection of materials for the students to use inside and outside of the classroom. There are now two program options available in Sevilla. A student may choose to be in a group class with either a maximum of 6 students per class, or a maximum of 12.

Groups are organized in a way so that all students are at the same level. Also, private classes are available upon request. All the teachers are native speakers of Spanish, and trained in teaching Spanish to foreigners.

Homestays & Student Apartments:

The program in Sevilla has two lodging options. A student can either choose to live with a local host family or in a student apartment. Most homes are within walking distance to the school, although a few may require local transportation. Families belong to Spain's middle class, but do keep in mind the difference in standards of living between Spain and other countries. The family provides two meals daily (breakfast & dinner) and laundry service once a week. Normally, there is an average of 2 language students per home. No meals are provided in the student apartment, as there is a kitchen for the students to share and use to cook meals. In both the homestays and apartments, the student is given a private room and normally shares a bathroom with other language students and/or family members.

Activities/Excursions:

Activities and small excursions are planned for almost every day after class. These are normally included in the program cost and a student signs up for the activities on-site. Examples of such activities are: city tours, small lectures, Flamenco concerts, trips to tourist sites (the Royal Alcazar, ruins, cathedrals and churches, museums, etc). Student pays for own transportation and entrance fees, if any. In addition, more extensive day trips are planned for the weekends. Once again, students can sign up for these trips on-site with the coordinator of student excursions. These trips often go to places outside of the city and range in price (\$20-50) depending on where the trip is to, for how long and what is included. Some common weekend trips are: Ronda, Cordoba, Cadiz, Granada, etc. These trips usually include bus, meal and guide.

Country Close-Up: Peru

Public Safety: Intermediate. Thieves are “available” as pickpockets, muggers, bag and watch snatchers and razor-blade pack slashers. Lima and big cities like Arequipa, Trujillo, Huaraz and Cusco are safe in average but offer their risks when care is not taken in account, especially in crowded, dark and lonely areas. There have been border disputes with Ecuador since 1942, which have resulted in multiple military conflicts. The area in dispute was the Cordillera del Cóndor. The last conflict was held in the area of the Cenepa River in the border region. Lastly, Ecuador respected history and recognized the original borderline. On October 1998, Ecuador and Peru signed a peace treaty to end with the long dispute and complete the settlement of landmarks along the border.

Health Risks: Intermediate. No recent developments. Tropical infectious diseases exist such as malaria, yellow fever and hepatitis, which are present in the Amazon Basin and Tumbes, but risks are low. If you are planning to visit the lowlands of the Amazon Basin it's preferable to be vaccinated against yellow fever and malaria. Altitude mountain sickness, called *soroche*, happens at the higher Andean areas.

Travel Costs: Hotels: luxury/1st class US\$15 and upward, moderate US\$10-15, budget US\$5-10. Restaurants: luxury/1st class US\$10 and upward, moderate US\$5-10, budget US\$2-5. Costs in Peru are lower, on average, than those in developed countries, but

higher than those in many neighboring countries. Lima and Cuzco are the most expensive places in the country. If you're on a tight budget, you can scrape by on around US\$15-20 per day, but if you want to stay in modest hotels and eat out at restaurants, you'll have a better time on around US\$50 a day. Prices for luxury accommodations run up to US\$200 at popular destinations like Machu Picchu.

Weather: Peru's climate can be divided into two seasons - wet and dry - though this varies, depending on the geographical region. The coast and western Andean slopes are generally dry, with the summer falling between December and April; during the rest of the year, the *garúa* (coastal fog) moves in and the sun is rarely seen. In the Andes, the dry season is from May to September, while the wet season takes up the remainder of the year. On the eastern slopes of the Andes, the drier months are similar to the highlands, though the wet season (January to April) is more pronounced.

The Economy: US \$1= 3.50000 Peruvian Nuevo Sol. **GDP** US\$ 30 billion **GDP per capita** US\$ 1,070 / year **Inflation** 6.5% in 1997 (the highest inflation was 7,649.7% in 1990) **Industry** Main industries in Peru are mining (metallic and non-metallic minerals), fishing (fish and fishmeal), metallurgy, textile, food, chemical and energy. Other economical activities are agriculture and cattle raising. **Annual Growth** 7.2% (figure refers to 1997). The new currency since 1991 is the NUEVO SOL, which replaced the devaluated and former

“Inti”. The sign used for Soles is S/. and the least unit is a 5 cents (*cinco céntimos*) coin, although a Sol is composed of a hundred cents. Also, there are coins of 10, 20 and 50 cents and 1, 2 and 5 Soles. Notes are of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 Soles

Political Situation: Stable. Peru is ruled by democracy. A constitutional President, the chief of Executive Power, is elected every five years and can be re-elected one term more. The Legislative Power is based on a Congress of 120 members. The Judicial Power is composed by two Courts. Voting is compulsory for every citizen between 18 and 60 years old (militaries and police not allowed). The country is divided in 24 departments and a Constitutional Province, Callao. The main threat to domestic stability remains unemployment and poverty, despite Peru's fast-growing economy. In the wake of Alberto Fujimori's controversial re-election 28 May 2000, the US State Department posted a public announcement warning that political demonstrations are becoming 'larger and more frequent.'



More Peru Facts

Full Country Name: Republic of Peru

Area: 1,285,215 sq km (501,234 sq mi)

Population: 27,012,899 (1.9% growth)

Capital City: Lima (pop 8 million)

People: 54% Indian, 32% Mestizo (mixed European and Indian descent), 12% Spanish descent, 2% Black, Asian minority

Languages: Spanish, Quechua, Aymara

Religion: Over 90% Roman Catholic, small Protestant population

Government: Democracy

President: Alejandro Toledo

Prime Minister: Javier Perez de Cuellar



AmeriSpan: Off The Wire

Buenos Aires, Argentina

2 program options are now available. We have added a second partner school in Buenos Aires that is a bit more economical than our other Buenos Aires partner school. This new program is 4 hours a day of group instruction in groups no more than 5 people per class and includes room and 2 meals per day with a host family. The main difference between the new Buenos Aires option, and the original option is that the new option is downtown near the main square "Plaza de Mayo." The original program is downtown in an upscale business area, and is a bit more geared towards executives.

Antigua, Guatemala

We are thrilled with a new group class option in Antigua, Guatemala. Traditionally, the programs in Antigua have been 1-1 instruction. Under this new program, groups are no larger than 4 students per class and are 4 hours per day. This option is even less expensive than the already bargain price of language programs in Antigua.

Morelia, Mexico

We are now also offering a group program in Morelia in addition to the outstanding 1-1 program. The group classes are 4 hours per day and there are no more than 6 people per class.

Sevilla, Spain

Participants going to Sevilla may now choose which class size they prefer. We now offer classes with a maximum number of 6 or a maximum number of 12 students.