

SPANISH FOR EDUCATORS

AmeriSpan Offers Summer Language-Learning Programs in Costa Rica and Mexico



article and photos by Anita Ensmann

Educators can learn Spanish through AmeriSpan's MAESTRO Spanish program in Alajuela, Costa Rica. "Maestro" means "teacher" and programs for both Spanish teachers and non-Spanish teachers are offered in July. Another MAESTRO program is offered in June in Morelia, Mexico.

The program for those who do not teach Spanish is for K-12 educators, who work with native Spanish-speakers in an English setting. Guidance counselors and other educators are included. Last year's MAESTRO program required a high-beginner Spanish level ability, but this year AmeriSpan will accommodate Spanish speakers of all levels.

The program is run through the Instituto de Cultura y Lengua Costarricense in Alajuela, and it is a good value at \$1,195 for two weeks of Spanish immersion. Educators live individually with a family, study Spanish in small groups, visit local schools and cultural spots, and go on weekend excursions to tourist destinations.

A typical day involves having breakfast with your host family, catching the local bus to the Institute, studying Spanish for four hours, and then eating lunch at a local restaurant or at the Institute. Afternoons are spent visiting a school, listening to a guest-lecturer speak about

the Latin American education system, or taking an optional cultural lesson such as salsa dancing. There is also time to run errands in town before having dinner at home with your host family and hitting the books.

Although there are weekend excursions included in the MAESTRO package, you may want to plan an extra week or more to travel on your own around the country. The Institute has an on-site travel coordinator who can help you arrange transportation and book excursions. Traveling is a good way to test your Spanish and take advantage of your student identification card, which provides you with a discount at some tourist locations. It is also possible to take additional Spanish classes either before or after the MAESTRO program for \$355 per week (this includes the homestay and classes). It is preferable to make class arrangements in advance, although the Institute is flexible and willing to accommodate.

Any interested educators should try applying for a grant or scholarship to help defray some of the costs of the MAESTRO program or for educational materials. Check with AmeriSpan and local chapters of education organizations such as TESOL.

If you participate in the program, bring

educational materials such as books in English or Spanish, dictionaries, or teacher guides for your visits to local schools. ■

FOR MORE INFO

To learn more about AmeriSpan and the MAESTRO program, contact: Tel. 800-879-6640, fax 215-751-1986; info@amerispan.com or www.amerispan.com/maestro.

You can write to the Instituto de Cultura y Lengua Costarricense, P.O. Box 609-4050, Alajuela, Costa Rica.

Anita Ensmann is an ESOL teacher in northern Virginia. She has participated in many travel-study programs in Latin America and Asia. Contact her at aensmann@hotmail.com.

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