

INSIDE: LANGUAGE VACATIONS WORLDWIDE

May/June 1999

\$4.75

# TRANSITIONS ABROAD

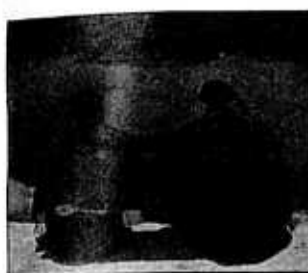
THE GUIDE TO LEARNING, LIVING, AND WORKING OVERSEAS

**Learning Vacations in Latin America**  
**Budget Travel, Volunteering, and Spanish Study**

**PLUS: Cheap Airline Tickets**  
**Choosing a Language School**  
**Jamaica's Mountain Retreats**  
**Rick Steves' Travel Health Guide**



## FEATURE: PHOTO CONTEST



### 26 AND THE WINNERS ARE. . .

The response to our very first photography contest was simply overwhelming: over 260 sensitive, evocative, fascinating images from all over the globe. With the help of world-renowned photographer Jerome Liebling, we were able to choose three photographs that stood out from the pack.

## LANGUAGE LEARNING

“Good  
travelers are  
prepared  
with advance  
information  
but open to  
possibilities.”

### 33 THE BEST PLACE TO STUDY SPANISH?

No shortage of places to go, but if you're looking for inexpensive courses in a beautiful locale *Diane Slawych* says choose Guatemala.

### 37 LANGUAGE PROGRAM DIRECTORY

From Argentina to Thailand, this year's directory has over 130 language schools worldwide. Find the place to go for full immersion language study.

### 52 SPANISH IN MEXICO

So how does one choose from among the many Spanish language programs offered in Mexico? *Arlene Gould* relates her experience.

## KEY RESOURCES: STUDY ABROAD

### 54 1999-2000 STUDY ABROAD KEY RESOURCES

If you want to combine the least expense abroad with the most reward, you'll find the information you need here. Country-specific and worldwide guides to study opportunities (54); funding sources (57); key publishers and organizations (58).

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Walking in Europe

the eccentric owner will fill you in on the local Bella Coola lore. She also provides free laundry service and a hot tub. (Hagar's Haven, Hagensborg, BC; 250-799-5659.)

At the turn of the century, Bella Coola was a thriving fishing and cannery town. When the fish stocks began to wane, the canneries were abandoned. One of these, the Talheo Cannery, whose painted red buildings can be seen across the inlet from Bella Coola, has been restored to its former glory and is operated as an inn. Guests are whisked off to Talheo in a private boat in the early evening. The owner, Jim Newkirk, offers a tour of the cannery which includes an art gallery, the former office that still houses antique maps, the bunkhouse, and dining hall. An organic vegetable garden provides the raw materials for the gourmet five-course feast waiting for guests after the tour. Visitors can stay the night in a restored 1920s bunkhouse where cannery workers once lived. The package is a splurge but well worth every penny. For reservations contact: Dream Factory Adventures, P.O. Box 100, Bella Coola, BC V0T 1C0 Canada; (800) 707-3363; kcorbould@belco.bc.ca.

**Logistics.** BC Ferries offers service to Bella Coola twice a week during the summer season (June-September). Fares and schedules are available at: [www.bcferries.com](http://www.bcferries.com).

For more information about the Great Bear Rainforest and the conservation effort to preserve its resources contact: National Resource Defense Council, [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org), and the Forest Action Network, [www.fanweb.org](http://www.fanweb.org). Read *The Great Bear Rainforest: Canada's Forgotten Coast* by Ian McAllister, Karen McAllister, and Cameron Young. And be sure to visit the House of Smayusta in Bella Coola where Nuxalk activists are based. For a guide, contact Darren Edgar, Bella Coola's Goodwill Ambassador, (250) 799-5263.

## MEXICO

### Community Tourism

By A. Kay Herrmann

Sixteen communities participate in the tourist Yu'u (Zapotec for house)

program in the state of Oaxaca in southern Mexico. The brightly painted houses are the only "touristy" thing about the tourist Yu'u. Once visitors arrive in the communities—third class buses and hitchhiking are the only ways in and out—they're on their own. The administrators, who are elected by their communities and trained by Oaxaca's state tourism office, Secretaria de Desarrollo Turístico (SEDETUR), are available to help. They have some knowledge of English; however, almost all communication is in Spanish.

At \$5 per night, you won't find a better deal in Mexico. The Yu'us, which were built by members of the community with direction from the state, include comfortable beds, kitchens, and bathroom facilities with hot water. For a small fee, the administrators offer guided tours and hikes. However, the most rewarding part of the tourist Yu'u experience is getting to know the people—you enter into their world.

Tourist Yu'us offer communities a way to attract extra income without compromising livelihoods—most of the communities are not dependent on tourism. All the money that visitors spend remains in the community. In Benito Juárez, dollars from the Yu'u have meant a new school, road maintenance, and potable water. Benito Juárez has even established a small bank that offers low-interest microloans.

**Cost per night:** \$5 per person (\$3 for students) and \$20 per family (up to six members).

**Reservations:** SEDETUR, Tel. (011) 52-951/6-0984; [sedetur3@oaxaca-travel.gob.mx](mailto:sedetur3@oaxaca-travel.gob.mx).

**Getting there:** Once you're in the city of Oaxaca, you can find the Central Camionera de Segunda Clase (the second-class bus station) near the Abastos market, where people from outlying areas come to buy and sell.

**What to bring:** Nothing more than you can carry on your back; however, warm clothing for high-altitude areas is a must.

**Locations of Tourist Yu'us:** Abasolo, Benito Juárez, Hierve el Agua, Palpalutla, El Mogote, Quialana, San Martín Huamelulpan, San Francisco Yosocuta, San Miguel Tequixtepec, San Pedro Juchatengo, San Sebastián de las Grutas, Santa Ana del Valle, Santiago Apoala, Teotitlán del Valle, Tlacolula, Tlapazola.

## BELIZE

### Affordable Island Paradise

By Clare Stark

If you want to relax in a hammock under a palm tree with only the sound of sea gulls and a vista of turquoise water to complicate your life, you should go to Caye Caulker, an island paradise off the coast of Belize.

The three cars on the island are used only to transport building materials. The main street is sand, and the locals get around by golf cart, bike, or on foot. You can walk barefoot everywhere; even the restaurants and bars have sandy floors.

For entertainment you can go snorkeling or diving, visit the manatees, or take jungle tours to ancient Mayan ruins. If you go with Anwar tours, Carlos will take you to the Ho Chan marine sanctuary. For \$15 you can swim with docile nurse sharks and sting rays, snorkel the northern reef off Caye Caulker, and have lunch at the neighboring island, Ambergris Caye. You can also take an all-day trip to see the manatees. These beguiling creatures live near a deserted mangrove island that conservationists are struggling to make into a protected sanctuary. After visiting the manatees, Carlos takes you on two snorkel trips and then to lunch on another deserted island. This day of fun costs \$20, not including lunch.

Caye Caulker is affordable for even the most limited budgets. At the youth hostel accommodations cost \$10 a night. If you want to enjoy the quiet, beautiful splendor of the south side of the island, go to Mara's Place. Each room has a deck and a hammock. The cost is approximately \$25 a night. At Wish Willy's, try chef Maurice's spicy red snapper and lobster. The Sandbox is another great restaurant if you want to watch the languid sea from your table. Seafood dishes range from \$7-\$10, including drinks. The local beer, Belinki, has little alcohol but it tastes great.

So, if you are in need of a retreat, get on the plane and fly to Belize. Roundtrip fares from Atlanta to Belize City can be found for \$300. Once in Belize City take a taxi to the marine terminal for \$10. From the marine terminal take a 45-minute boat taxi for \$15 to Caye Caulker, an affordable island paradise.