



Language Link

Your Pass to
Spanish Learning

No cost: 800.552.2051

Email: info@langlink.com

Full details of all programs on our website including fees and dates:
www.langlink.com

Cocina Cooking

Ropa Vieja (what many of us ate at our farewell dinner in Havana). Ours was prepared with lamb from a closely held family recipe, but the beef which follows is also traditional. Serve with white rice with a touch of lime.

Ingredients: 6 oz. rough chopped bacon, 2 lb. flank steak cut into 1 1/2 inch ribbons, salt and pepper to taste, 1 medium yellow onion thinly sliced, 1 red bell pepper thinly sliced, 1 Cubanelle or green pepper thinly sliced, 6 oz. tomato paste, 1 T. cumin, 1 T. thyme, 1 T. oregano, 5 finely chopped garlic cloves, 1 bay leaf, 1/2 C. dry white vino, 2 C. beef stock, one 16 oz. can whole peeled tomatoes crushed, 1/2 C. halved, pitted green olives, 1/3 C. sliced jarred pimiento peppers, 3 T. drained capers, 1 T. vinegar, 1/4 C. roughly chopped cilantro to add at end

Instructions - Render bacon in a 6 qt. Dutch oven over med high heat. Transfer to a plate, leaving fat in vessel. Sprinkle steak with salt and pepper. In small batches cook until browned, about 6 minutes; transfer to plate. Add onion and peppers and cook about 4 minutes, until soft. Add tomato

Language Link Line

OCTOBER 2013

Language Link Line October 2013
Tips and information about learning Spanish and the people who speak it. Published every other month

What's in this edition

Online Lesson, Cocina Cooking, Culture Clips, Language Link's Latest, OJO (real deals), Rhythm & Read, Been There, Loved That (reports from participants), Likeable Links

Early birds for interesting

Cuba! Contact kay@langlink.com to request information on our next licensed viaje to Cuba, March 5 – 13. Without active publicity, we have 12 out of 20 places already filled. See our viaje report which follows.

You can still plan an all inclusive Thanksgiving week in Cuernavaca, \$800 including classes, cultural program, housing and all meals. See info at www.langlink.com under Cultural in the Programs section of the Cuernavaca school.

Online Lesson

Short and Sweet

Spanish, when it is casually spoken, is like all languages in that people commonly use many shortcuts. Words are shortened; words become contractions, and this often affects the pronunciation.

For instance: *Para* – in this sense meaning toward. Note how it's casually said in many Spanish speaking countries –*Pa'allá* – meaning over there. Note that this combines into what sounds like one word *pallá*, but you are meaning *para allá*. What happens with the sounds in the above is linguistically called elision. It's just a fancy word for words sliding together, such as the two vowels in *pallá*. A good example of this elision is *mi hija*. Your ear will perceive this as *mija*, as the h is silent, and the two I's slide into each other.

paste and all spices and cook about 3 minutes. Add vino and cook 1 minute. Return bacon and steak with stock and canned tomatoes. Boil. Reduce heat to medium low. Cook covered for 2 – 3 hours until steak is very tender. Remove steak and shred. Return meat with olives, pimientos, capers and vinegar. Cook for 30 minutes until sauce is slightly thickened. Stir in cilantro before serving 6 – 8.

Rhythm and Reads

Rhythm – Buena Vista Social Club by Ry Cooder, 1997. This is a compilation done with true feeling, talent and spirit. Great artists never get too old and here is evidence the great sound from Cuba is still vibrant today as it was 40 years ago. These are real professionals playing the real stuff. It is more of an experience than just good sound and is no less than a masterpiece.

Reads – CUBA. What Everyone Needs to Know by Julia E. Sweig, 2009 (updated edition) - Easily one of the best studies of Cuba and its cultural scene. It gives a very well documented historical background. For the Cuban Revolution of the 1950s, Sweig offers a well balanced analysis of all the factors in a very objective way.

OJO (real deals)

An ongoing contest on our website for a gratis one week study at Intercultura of either Heredia or Playa Sámara, Costa Rica. Air is on you, but the premio includes one week of small group classes and a homestay with individual and two daily meals. Just click our contest box to enter. All we ask is a brief comment from you. You'll then be included in the general drawing for a winner. ¡Suerte!

Language Link's Latest

Why not the holidays in Spain? Lacunza of San Sebastian is preparing for all things Christmas, from workshops of Christmas Spanish traditions to a traditional Christmas market in a country town. Christmas Dinner will include the famed Olentzero, the Basque Santa Claus. The New Year

Pa'cá – meaning over here. *Para acá*. *Acá* is a common substitute for *aquí*. You will hear it often in the command, *Ven acá*. Come here.

No tengo dinero pa' comer. I don't have money to eat. *No sirve pa' na'*. This is short for *no sirve para nada*. It's (or he/she is) not good (of any use) for anything

These shortened forms are commonly heard (particularly in Mexico) *Feliz cumple* – short for *Feliz cumpleaños*, *Porfa* – short for *Por favor*, *La compu* – short for *la computadora*

The key component in learning these shortened forms is to listen, listen, listen. Yes, you need to actually speak and practice to improve your Spanish, but it's equally as important to listen carefully and “sing back the song” you're hearing around you. And just to remember why you're doing all this and working so hard at your Spanish – 10 reasons from IMAC of Guadalajara for studying Spanish

1. Learning one foreign language makes learning the next one easier.
2. It improves your cultural understanding and makes you aware of your own.
3. Medical reports state that fluency in two languages reduces the risk of Alzheimer's.
4. Make more friends by interacting with millions of Hispanics in their own language.
5. Transform your on the road experiences by actually participating in the culture
6. Be prepared for doing business with important trading partners
7. Get a better paid position through knowing Spanish
8. Spanish is one of the easiest foreign languages to learn.
9. Help others with bilingual skills in emergency or everyday situations.
10. Expand your dating possibilities! You'll have a larger pool of dating partners if you can use the beautiful romance language of Spanish.

Culture Clips

Maya Angelou - Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.

Complicated and Complex Cuba

Many of you have asked for a report on our first On The Road to Cuba. It was such a treat for me to personally meet

will start off with the Three Kings Parade on Jan 6. There will be scenic tours of San Sebastian, Bilbao and Vitoria planned, and on Jan 20, San Sebastian Day, there will be a 24 hour drumming parade, concerts, markets and more.

Late fall and winter dates find many of our schools offering programs such as 50+ more culturally oriented classes, limited to those of a similar age.

Fewer students in these months mean smaller classes in the regular programs. In January, however, we have many large college groups.

Our new website at www.langlink.com continues with revisions and corrections. We appreciate all your patience with the glitches, and we're doing everything possible to make it function at 100%.

We hope to someday offer Cuba as a regular Spanish school destination, but for the present we can only offer two licensed People to People viajes on March 5 and June 23, 2014.

Likeable

Linkshttp://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_of_Cuba - the sound of Cuba
<http://www.culinaryarts360.com/index.php/a-history-of-cuban-cuisine-27765/> - Cuban cuisine
<http://www.havanaarchitecture.info/index.html> - Architecture of Cuba

our group of 20, almost all who were old friends and have studied in many Language Link programs. The experience was completely enhanced by their flexibility, openness, and eagerness to learn. It was indeed a group of well experienced lifelong learners, with participants from the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

Quite hot and humid, but alleviated by the sounds of great rhythms everywhere...in every bar, on street corners, in most restaurants. We even had participants in their 70's dancing with the oldies in a Buena Vista Social Club show on our last night. Some of the players were in their 80's!

Complex, contradictory, often cloaked and disguised, multi-layered with fascinating characters – we were all seriously just trying to figure it out, but we still left with many questions. I was grateful for all the background reading I did, as there is so much contentious history involved. Without knowing the background, a walk through the Bay of Pigs Museo or the Museo de la Revolución with a Cuban guía would leave you quite perplexed.

This visually stunning country is clearly not a black and white situation with simple good guys and bad guys. Most were impressed with the “triumphs” of the revolution, but also were quite aware of the failures, particularly in the economy. One of the triumphs is the literacy campaign where they reduced illiteracy from 28% to 3% in a one year period, a stunning achievement. We observed a school and admired the healthy and happy looking, nicely uniformed children. However, we were left with a bit of a “brain washing” feeling, as the school was replete with wall paintings such as *Seremos como el Che*, and one with a picture of three things depicting work, learning, and *anarma* (meaning you should be willing to die for your country). All of us adored the support of the arts, and a cultural center gave us a wonderful performance of Cuban dancers to “Rock Around the Clock”! One of the outstanding schools of danza was a highlight, although we were saddened by the tattered state of the slippers on every foot. Health care seemed to be quite good and at no cost for all, although medications were scarce, and we were told that a bottle of aspirin is a coveted donation. No one seemed to be starving, and we were told that there is no unemployment and that everyone gets the *canasta básica*...but we were often accosted by beggars. So many contradictions!

In our 3 days in the beautiful and fertile green countryside, we were amazed that there is almost no agriculture outside of Havana amidst spectacular landscapes. All of us were fighting the instinct to run out and plant a vegetable plot.

Was it without problems? Absolutely not. Technologically some in the group had serious difficulty in disconnecting from their internet umbilical cords. We only had availability for a few days while in Havana, and then it was almost \$10 US for an hour of

painfully slow connectivity. Hotels (and we were in two of the best) were very mismanaged, and we had constant problems with hot water and even electricity. Our flexible group handled this with great grace, and it made me proud to be with them.

Even though quite different than the usual Caribbean vacation with a siesta on the playa, and realizing that this is not for everyone, the vast majority reported a terrific viaje. One very experienced student stated that this was the most educational viaje he had ever experienced. Mission accomplished.

Been There Loved That

Cuba October 2013 Participants

This viaje was a dream come true, a check on the bucket list. It was made easier knowing it was sponsored by a company that I trust to give me a good experience at a very reasonable price. What a perfect way to get insight into Castro's Cuba and its people! I thought the itinerary we followed was excellent – a good balance of Cuban history, landscapes and current life. – Anne and Ted Bell, Wayland MA

Very enlightening. There was a wonderfully diverse group of people. – Robert Schroer, Dentist, Miami FL

Overall this viaje was everything I hoped it would be and more. I was very shocked at the conditions in Cuba and inspired by the people. – Jennifer Bergstresser, Clinical Social Worker, Nazareth PA

It was an amazing experience and an enjoyable one. It's obvious that it took a lot of hard work to pull it all together. – Barbara Altstaetter, Teacher, Northfield MN

We would rate our experience as absolutely superior. The viaje was extremely helpful to our Spanish. To be at the BVSC show in Havana on the anniversary of the first day of the Cuban Missile Crisis was an additional touch! – Steve and Carol Barrymore, Teacher and Advertising and Marketing Professional, Oklahoma City OK

You put together a rich and amazing program. It was jam-packed, and I learned so much and feel so lucky that I was able to participate. And I know we caught a glimpse of Cuba before the big changes which are afoot come. – Sue DeVinny, ESL Teacher, Greenbrae CA

We hope you enjoyed our news. See us at www.langlink.com.

Call us at 800.552.2051

Central Standard Time with hours 9:00 to 5:00.

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