

**A Once in a Lifetime Trip to
South America with Learning in Retirement:
Exploring the ABC Countries of Argentina, Brazil and Chile**

**Sponsored by:
Learning in Retirement
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
Continuing Education and Extension**

October 24 – November 11, 2009



“I can see how puzzling a country can be that starts at the frozen South Pole and stretches upwards to salt mines and deserts where it hasn’t rained for ions.”

Pablo Neruda, Memoirs



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October 24 – November 14, 2009

September 5, 2008

October 24: Saturday. Manaus. Depart Miami for Manaus.

Manaus was at one time an isolated urban island in the jungle, before becoming one of the wealthiest cities in South America during the rubber boom. It is now the most important port of entry for visiting the Amazon, with river islands and tranquil waterways less than a day away.

Upon arrival in Manaus head to the *Amazon Ecopark Jungle Lodge* where you will enjoy a late welcome reception including a chance to taste the “local Juice” which is prepared with local exotic fruits. The Amazon Ecopark Jungle Lodge is a touristic, scientific and educational property, created and directed by a private initiative back in 1991, opening its doors to the public as an Ecotourism Lodge in 1995. Several streams of clear water run through the area. Over 6 miles of jungle trails including un-catalogued species, natural savannahs and creeks enable clients to explore the jungle, observe orchids and giant trees. **D.**

October 25: Sunday. Manaus. This morning enjoy a nature hike and a visit of the nearby Amazon “Monkey Jungle.” The “Monkey Jungle” is an ecological park where many monkey species are treated and rehabilitated in natural surroundings.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Return to the hotel for a short rest.

Depart in an outboard motor canoe to the Anavilhanas Archipelago (the biggest fluvial archipelago in the world) to observe its flora and fauna. Crossing the island we will reach an Indian Village (Baniwas & Tukano's). Enjoy a jungle trek with one of the Indians as a native guide to learn about the natural medicine and food which can be found in the jungle.

Continue on to enjoy a late afternoon tour down the Amazon by canoe to see some of the local wildlife and have a chance to meet the alligators. The Amazon is a region of superlatives: it spans the borders of eight countries; it is the world's largest river basin and the source of one-fifth of the Earth's river water; it has the world's highest diversity of birds and freshwater fish; it is the planet's largest and most luxuriant rainforest in which, amazingly, live more than one third of all species in the world.

Dinner at a local restaurant. **B,L,D.**

October 26: Monday. Manaus. This morning depart for a full day tour of the “Meeting of the Waters.” For eight kilometers, the waters of Rio Negro and Rio Solimões flow side-by-side without mixing, as if getting used to each other. This interesting phenomenon, known locally as the *Encontro das Aguas*, is one of the area's principal attractions, only 10 kilometers downstream from Manaus. You will be taken down to the meeting to observe the two distinct colors, speeds, and temperatures of the rivers flowing together. The tea-colored waters of the Rio Negro (a comfortable 28°C) and the milky, muddy waters of the Solimões (fast and cold at 22°C) finally get together downstream. Such is the formation of the Amazon River. At the meeting, it's common to see numerous pink river dolphins playing in the waters. They enjoy both of the rivers, navigating primarily by sonar. Excursions to the Meeting usually include views of huge water lilies and even short hikes into the jungle near the confluence at the January National Park. **B,L,D.**

October 27: Tuesday. Rio de Janeiro. Local guides this morning will take the group on a specially designed nature hike.

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Manaus including the Teatro Amazonas an opera house built in 1896 which reflects the massive wealth of the turn of the century rubber boom. Also visit the Justice Palace, the floating docks and the Mercado Adolpho Lisboa dating back to 1882 it is the city's oldest marketplace offering fruit, vegetables and especially fish.

Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Late afternoon flight to Rio de Janeiro. Upon arrival in Rio de Janeiro transfer to the *Copacabana Palace Hotel* where we have reserved *superior ocean-view rooms*. Known as the cidade maravilhosa, Rio de Janeiro is a place of sun, mountains, world-famous beaches and friendly people. Rio lies between the mountains and the ocean and is one of the most photographed cities in the world. The capital of Brazil from 1763 to 1960, this city of 7 million is now the center of Brazilian style and is the most popular tourist destination in the country. **B,L,D.**

October 28: Wednesday. Rio de Janeiro. This morning depart the hotel for a tour of Old Rio walking through the historic city center. The architecture and the traditional commerce will make you feel welcome. In this tour you will visit the São Bento Monastery, Praca XV (square), Candelaria Church, França-Brasil House, old Market Street, Imperial Palace. Enjoy some time on your own before departing for lunch.

After lunch at a local restaurant visit the Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and enjoy a tour of the 19th century Neoclassical buildings on the campus and an opportunity to meet with students and faculty from the university.

Later in the day we have arranged a special tour of the favelas of Rio. A favela is the Brazilian equivalent of a shanty town, which are generally found on the edge of the city. They have electricity, but often not formally. Favelas are constructed from a variety of materials, ranging from bricks to garbage. Many favelas are very close and very cramped. Although many of the most infamous are located in Rio de Janeiro, there are favelas in almost every large Brazilian town. The name originates from a species of plant with thorny leaves that grows in the semi-arid North-East region. Refugees and former soldiers involved in the Canudos Civil War (1895-1896) in Bahia would eventually settle on unreclaimed public land on a hill in Rio de Janeiro called Morro da Providência, because the government failed to provide any housing for them. The former soldiers named their new settlement Morro da Favela after the plant which had thrived at the site of a famous victory against the rebels.

There are close to 750 favelas in Rio. Mostly placed on former public areas on the hillsides, they are now home to 20% of Rio's population but they continue to remain a mystery for most people who don't live there. The tour is not only to explain about favelas, but to give you a whole new understanding about different aspects of Brazilian society. You will go to the favelas of Vila Canoas and Rocinha, the largest one in the country. We have arranged a visit at a local school. Picturesque from a distance, once closer they reveal their complex architecture, developing commerce and friendly people. Most of the Samba Schools participating in the Carnival parade come from favelas. We have arranged for the group to have a samba lesson while at the school!

Enjoy dinner tonight at a local Churrascaria, a Brazilian steakhouse. Churrasco is the cooking style, which translates roughly from the Portuguese for 'barbecue'. Distinctly a South American style rotisserie, it owes its origins to the fireside roasts of the gaúchos of southern Brazil traditionally from the Pampa region,

centuries ago. In modern restaurants, rodizio service is typically offered. Passadors (meat waiters) come to your table with knives and a skewer, on which are speared various kinds of meat, be it beef, pork, filet mignon, lamb, chicken, duck, ham (and pineapple), sausage, fish, or any other sort of local cut of meat. **B,L,D.**

October 29: Thursday. Rio de Janeiro. After breakfast depart from the hotel to the Corcovado railway station at the foot of the Corcovado Mountain. A 3.5 kilometer (25 minutes) train ride through the lush mountain greenery takes you to the station on the top of the mountain. From here walk two hundred and twenty steps from the train station to the 38 meter high statue of Christ the Redeemer, 710 m above sea level.

Return to the train and ride back to the Corcovado railway station. The tour continues through the 2.1 kilometer long “Reboucas” tunnel, passing by the lake “Rodrigo de Freitas”, through the tunnel “Two brothers”, the living area of Sao Conrado and on to Barra da Tijuca, Rio’s newest and fastest growing living area.

Drive along the beaches of Barra da Tijuca, Sao Conrado, Leblon, Ipanema and Copacabana to the northern part of Rio with a stop at “Sambodromo”, the purposed built stadium where the Samba-schools perform during the carnival. Next stop is the biggest soccer stadium in the world, Maracana with a capacity for more than 160,000 spectators. Our drive continues to the downtown area, which is the business heart of Rio towards Sugar Loaf. Pass through Flamengo Park and Botafogo before arriving at Urca and the cable car station to the Sugar Loaf. Travel by cable car to the first stage, the Morro da Urca Mountain. The glass-paneled cable car holds 75 passengers and runs along a 1,850 feet route. Walk to the other side of the mountain to take the next cable car to Sugarloaf Mountain. Sugarloaf Mountain (in Portuguese, Pão de Açúcar), is a peak situated in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from the mouth of Guanabara Bay on a peninsula that sticks out into the Atlantic Ocean. Rising 1,299 feet above sea-level, its name is said to refer to its resemblance to the traditional shape of concentrated refined loaf sugar. However, it is believed by some that the name actually derives from Pau-nh-acuqua (“high hill”) in the Tupi-Guarani language, as used by the indigenous Tamoios. The mountain is only one of several monolithic morros of granite and quartz that rise straight from the water’s edge around Rio de Janeiro. So familiar is this peak, the mere sight of it in a film is sufficient to establish the setting as Rio.

Return to the hotel late afternoon.

This evening enjoy a Samba show and dinner. **B,L,D.**

October 30: Friday. Santiago. Morning flight to Santiago, one of South America’s most sophisticated cities and a thriving metropolis. On a clear day, Santiago’s main attraction is its spectacular location at the foot of the snow-capped Andes which rise majestically over the city’s eastern limits. Santiago remains the historic, economic and cultural center of Chile and its restaurants, art centers and theaters are the best in the country. The city is a curious mix of old and new; a glitzy glass skyscraper towers over a 200-year old stone building and a charming cobblestone street dead-ends in a modern shopping mall. Upon arrival transfer to the *Ritz Carlton Hotel – deluxe king rooms.*

After lunch at a local restaurant depart for a visit of the Catholic University of Santiago. The Catholic University of Santiago (La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile or UC) was founded on June 21, 1888, to offer training in traditional professions and in technological and practical fields such as business, accounting, chemistry, and electricity. On February 11, 1930, Pope Pius XI declared it a Pontifical University, and in 1931 it was granted full academic autonomy by the Chilean government. It is a private (but with some public support), urban, multi-campus university. It is one of six Catholic universities, and one of 25 institutions within the Chilean university system. After visiting the campus we have arranged for the group to meet with students at the university for a cross-cultural exchange.

Continue on to a local hospital to tour the facility and meet with staff.

Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **B,L,D.**

October 31: Saturday. Santiago. After breakfast depart for a full day tour of Santiago. Our first stop will be the changing of the guard at the Palacio de la Moneda – the Government Palace. At the changing of the guard hundreds of soldiers march in step in front of the Palace. This palace was the first building erected by the Spanish government during the 18th-century. At the time, it was criticized for being too ostentatious but today it is considered one of the finest examples of neoclassical architecture in Latin America. It was designed by Joaquin Toesca and it eventually became the official presidential residence. It continued as the presidential headquarters until the infamous coup d'etat on September 11, 1973 when Pinochet's troops shelled and bombed the building until ex-President Allende allegedly surrendered by suicide. A statue of Allende has just been erected in Constitution Square, in front of La Moneda, fulfilling a 1993 law calling for recent, deceased presidents to be represented there.

From here head to the Plaza de Armas. The Plaza de Armas was founded by Pedro de Valdivia in 1541 as the civic nucleus of the country, and its importance was such that all distances to other parts of Chile were, and still are, measured from here. The impressive plaza was surrounded by the Royal Court of Justice (now the Natural History Museum), the Governor's Palace (now the Central Post Office), the Metropolitan Cathedral, and the grand residences of principal conquistadors, including Valdivia himself. In the mid-1800's the plaza was fitted with gardens and trees, creating a promenade that became a social center for fashionable society. The plaza is a wonderful spot to people-watch with a host of colorful characters milling about – old street photographers with box cameras, men lingering over chess games, shouting religious fanatics and artists selling paintings.

Today enjoy lunch at the Central Market (Mercado Central). The Mercado Central, an imposing wrought iron building reminiscent of a London rail way station, was fabricated in England and brought piecemeal to Chile and assembled here for the National Exposition of 1872 and later became a market. Today, the Central Market still shines with nostalgic architectural pride, and offers an eclectic selection of handicrafts, fruit and vegetables. The specialty is fish and shellfish, which can be sampled in the small kitchens down the side of the building, or in the more formal restaurants that are interspersed throughout the market. Enjoy a plate of fish marinade or razor clams in parmesan sauce, while being serenaded by a band of local mariachis. Open every day of the year, except on election day.

After lunch visit the Chilean Museum of Pre-Columbian Art housed in the old Royal Customs House which was built in neo-classical design in 1807. There are more than 1,500 objects on display here including textiles, metals, paintings, figurines and ceramics spread through seven exhibition rooms. It offers a vivid exhibition of indigenous life and culture before the arrival of the Spanish.

From the museum we will head to San Cristobal hill (Cerro San Cristobal). The hill rises 880 m above sea level and about 300 m above the rest of Santiago; the peak is the second highest point in the city, after cerro Renca. Its original indigenous name was *Tupahue*. It was named by the Spanish conquistadors for St Christopher, in recognition of its use as a landmark. At the peak, there is a church with an amphitheater, and a 22 m statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary donated by France in the 1920s. Pope John Paul II gave mass there in 1987. The spot is a superb location from which to view the city - when the smog permits it.

Tonight enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. **B,L,D.**

November 1: Sunday. Santiago. Morning drive west towards Valparaiso whose history and vibrant culture speaks strongly of the golden days before the Panama Canal, when every ship on its way around the Cape stopped here for supplies. Valparaiso with its multicolored jumble of clapboard homes and weathered Victorian mansions, sinuous streets and steep hills is enchanting. Valparaiso has also spawned a generation of international poets, writers and artists who have found inspiration in the city, including the Nobel prize-winning poet Pablo Neruda, who owned a home here.

Visit La Sebastinao one of Pablo Neruda's homes that has since been converted into a museum honoring the Nobel Laureate's work and life. Drive along La Cintura (the Waist) on a route that takes the group up and down and around the snaking streets of Valparaiso. Continue on to the Naval Museum which is cleverly designed into four areas – the War of Independence, the War against the Peru-Bolivian Confederation, the War against Spain and the War of the Pacific.

Head south for a late lunch and a chance to explore some of the many wineries located close to Santiago. The minute you drive out of Santiago towards the Central Valley, the scenery changes dramatically to wide fields of grapevines, a testament to the nation's thriving wine industry. The region has a rich soil and a Mediterranean climate conducive to agriculture. Wine-making in Chile dates back over 400 years and more recently the Chilean wine industry has caught in a big way. In 1998 some 84 Chilean wineries exported \$502 million dollars in wine. As a country Chile ranks third in exports to the United States. A solid reputation for flavor and values has been bolstered by a recent export that ranks Chilean cabernets first in levels of flavanol, a natural antioxidant.

Return to Santiago and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. **B,L,D.**

November 2: Monday. Puerto Varas. Morning flight to Puerto Montt. Stop at the traditional seafood market of Angelmo which has served as an inspiration for artists and intellectuals over the years and now houses an esteemed market, which features, besides fish and seafood, local arts and crafts. After lunch continue by road – 12 miles – to Puerto Varas and the *Hotel Puelche*.

After lunch at the hotel begin exploring Puerto Varas which was founded in 1853 by German immigrants.

Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. **B,L,D.**

November 3: Tuesday. Bariloche. This morning drive north past Puerto Varas to Chile's oldest national park, Vicente Perez Rosales. Founded in 1926 it covers an area of 617,500 acres and incorporates the park's centerpiece – Todos Los Santos Lake – and three volcanoes: Osorno, Tronador and Puntagudo. The shores of Lago Todos Los Santos are deeply wooded and several small islands rise from its surface. Beyond the hilly shores are several graceful snow-capped mountains with the mighty Tronador in the distance.

Drive by road to Petrohue and stop at the Petrohue Falls, which were formed by a relatively recent lava flow of hard volcanic rock. Cross the unbelievably blue emerald waters of the Todos Los Santos Lake to Peulla where we stop for lunch. This journey is a chance to admire spectacular panoramic views and to really take in the beauty of the Andes and the volcanoes, rivers and waterfalls in the mountain range.

Clear Chilean customs in Peulla before continuing by road through the Psao Perez Rosales to Argentine customs in Puerto Frias. Enjoy a short boat ride across Lago Frias to Puerto Alegre and another short drive from Puerto Alegre to Puerto Blast. From Puerto Blast it is a beautiful one-hour catamaran trip along Lago Nuhuel to Puerto Panelo from where there is another drive (one hour) to San Carlos de Bariloche.

Stop at Cerro Campanario and enjoy a chair-lift ride to enjoy the best lookout point in the region with exceptional views of Naheule Huapi and Perito Moreno Lakes.

Bariloche sits in the center of Nahuel Hapi National Park and is fronted by an enormous, irregularly shaped lake of the same name. It is essentially a town that has been set down in the middle of beautiful wilderness. Remains of the charming architecture influenced by German, Swiss and English are still in evidence.

Upon arrival transfer to the *Llao Resort – mountain view rooms*. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant this evening. **B,L,D.**

November 4: Wednesday. Bariloche. Spend the day exploring this part of Patagonia and the vast area of wilderness that surrounds it with its high snow-packed peaks, a perfect white volcano mirrored in a still lake, chalk-white glacial streams cascading over polished granite and many, many lakes with few houses or boats.

Begin at the Museo de la Patagonia, which tells the social and geological history of northern Patagonia through displays of Indian and gaucho artifacts and exhibitions of regional flora and fauna. Continue on to explore Parque Nacional Nahuel Huapi, which is Argentina's oldest national park. Lago Nahuel Huapi is the sapphire in its crown. The park extends over two million acres along the eastern side of the Andes in the province of Neuquen and Rio Negro, on the frontier with Chile. It contains the highest concentration of lakes in Argentina. We will take a boat ride on Lago Nahuel Huapi to Victoria Island, the largest in the lake. A grove of redwoods transplanted from California thrives in the middle of the island. Enjoy a short walk for enchanting views of emerald bays and still lagoons. **B,L,D.**

November 5: Thursday. Guerrero. After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight to Buenos Aires. Upon arrival we will drive for the two hours to *Estancia Bella Vista de Guerrero*. Enjoy dinner at the estancia. **B,L,D.**

November 6: Friday. Guerrero. Experience authentic *gaucho* life-style, explore and engage in the activities of the *estancia*, set amidst the Pampa plains dotted with picturesque slopes, lakes, and century-old woodlands. Activities include guided nature walks, horse riding, boating, cycling, and swimming; an Interpretation Centre helps us to understand the region's history, both natural and cultural. **B,L,D.**

November 7: Saturday. Buenos Aires. Morning transfer to Buenos Aires. Upon arrival transfer to the *Park Hyatt – Palacio Duhau*. The identity of Buenos Aires lies in its forty-eight barrios each with its own character and history. Unlike most other Latin American cities where the architecture reveals a strong Spanish colonial influence, Buenos Aires has a huge mix of styles. Modern high-rises sit side by side with ornate buildings from days long gone. It's most important buildings are modeled after buildings in Madrid, Rome and Paris. The essence of Buenos Aires lies in the sum of its whole and this afternoon we will set out to explore that whole.

After lunch we will visit a Nursing Home on a specially arranged visit.

Tonight enjoy dinner at Lilas Steakhouse. **B,L,D.**

November 8: Sunday. Buenos Aires. This morning visit the bohemian San Telmo neighborhood. Its cobblestone streets teem with early 19th century colonial buildings, once inhabited by wealthy Spaniards until an outbreak of yellow fever in the 1870's turned them away. The neighborhood is a cradle of the city's historic and cultural traditions. After lunch continue on to the vibrant, working-class neighborhood of La Boca, just south of San Telmo, which served as the first port of Buenos Aires. Waves of immigrants

have passed through this area, the most significant and lasting group were Italian immigrants from Genoa who arrived between 1880 and 1930. Stroll through the streets here and stop at the Calle Museo Caminito an open-air art market and museum. Stop at the Fundacion Proa located in a building, which fuses classic Italian architecture with modern elements to represent the prow of a ship. Sit on the terrace overlooking the river and enjoy a chance understand the work of the foundation which sponsors exhibitions and concerts.

Also visit Recoleta Cemetery designed by Prospero Catelin of France, following a proposal by Bernardino Rivadavia, and opened in 1822 as a public cemetery for ordinary citizens. Now it hosts many former Presidents and, most famously, Eva Perón, in mausolea of marble, bronze and granite.

After lunch in the cloisters of a beautiful church continue exploring this vibrant city. Stop at the Teatro Colon, one of the world's finest opera houses. Tiered like a wedding cake, the gilt and red-velvet auditorium has unsurpassed acoustics. Pavarotti has said that the Colon has only one flaw: the acoustics are so good, every mistake can be heard! Explore the superb art collection of the Museum of Latin American Art which is housed in a beautiful contemporary building.

The final stop for the day will be at the Academia Nacional de Tango for a private tango lesson. A mixture of passion, sensuality, nostalgia and melancholy, the tango is the dance of Argentina and more specifically, Buenos Aires. The dance emerged from the poor immigrant quarters of the capital at the end of the 19th century, from a combination of the Spanish tango and the *milonga*, a sensual and risqué Argentine dance. It gained mainstream acceptance throughout Argentina only after becoming a craze in fashionable European society.

Dinner on your own this evening. **B,L**.

November 9: Monday. Buenos Aires. Depart the hotel this morning for an excursion into the Tigre Delta. Travel past residential neighborhoods and the President's Residence in Olivos, in front of which the Maipú Station is located. This is the first station of the Riverside Train, where we will board this picturesque train. Panoramic windows allow us to appreciate the immensity of the Rio de la Plata and the gorgeous residences built over its hills. Get off the train at the renewed San Isidro Station, an interesting complex of restaurants, cinemas and shopping placed in an elegant, residential area. Visit the imposing Neo-gothic Cathedral, located in the historic center of the city, which is surrounded by houses in Colonial and Italian styles, cobbled streets and its square with centenary trees.

The visit continues towards Tigre, a lovely neighborhood situated in the delta of Paraná River. The area was first colonized in 1580 but it was not until the last years of the XVIII century that some people settled in this area. The first inhabitants were smugglers that took advantage of the labyrinth of little rivers and isles to hide and to enter with goods, evading the customs taxes. Finally, in the last years of the 19th century, it turned into the favorite recreation place for the high class of Buenos Aires.

Board a boat and enjoy a cruise along the delta. The Tigre Delta, named for the fierce animal, is a 14,000 square kilometer area where thousands of islands and inlets, water channels, rivers and backwaters form a sub-tropical wonderland. Enjoy this spectacular landscape and admire the old residences that contrast with the wooden houses built over piles, to beat the constant floods. The Delta contains several little isles covered with abundant subtropical vegetation, crossed by channels and streams, making it an ideal place to relax amongst nature and pure air.

Enjoy a wonderful farewell dinner this evening. **B,L,D**.

November 10: Tuesday. Miami. Fly to Miami through Sao Paulo. Late arrival in Miami. Walk to the *Miami International Airport Hotel* for an overnight. **B.**

November 11: Wednesday. Return home from Miami. **B.**

Trip Cost:

\$8,195 based on 20 travelers

Single room supplement: Approximately \$3,000

Trip Price Includes:

1. Hotel accommodations based on double occupancy in hotels as listed in the itinerary.
2. Meals as indicated in the itinerary
3. A sightseeing program as listed in itinerary in a private bus with air-conditioning.
4. All entrance fees as listed.
5. Local English-speaking guides in each city for all sightseeing tours.
6. Tips to porters and restaurant staff.
7. Brazilian visa fee of \$135
8. Chilean landing tax of \$131

Trip Price Does Not Include:

1. International and domestic airfare.
2. Airport departure taxes.
3. Drinks with meals.
4. Tips to guides and drivers
5. Meals not listed
6. Any items not listed.

International and domestic airfare: \$1,775 approx (as of September 5, 2008 and subject to fuel surcharges) price includes the following flights:

Miami/Manaus (Airline: Tam Linhas Aereas)
Manaus/Rio de Janeiro (Airline: Tam Linhas Aereas)
Rio de Janeiro /Santiago de Chile (Airline: LAN)
Santiago de Chile/Puerto Montt (Airline: LAN)
Bariloche/Buenos Aires (Airline: LAN)
Buenos Aires/Sao Paulo (Airline: Tam Linhas Aereas)
Sao Paulo/ Miami (Airline: Tam Linhas Aereas)