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## **Speak English At Pueblo Ingles!**

### **A Volunteer Vacation experience that is economical and amazing!**

An unexpected delight was my time at Pueblo Ingles in November 2006 near a small village called La Alberca in Spain. I had heard about the week-long program from various friends and family, but nothing I heard prepared me for the fun and rewards of speaking English for 16 hours a day.

Pueblo Ingles, sometimes also called Vaughan Village, is a conversational English language intensive program for Spanish business people. The Spaniards practice speaking English with native English speakers affectionately called Anglos. While English is taught in schools in Spain, a businessperson may not have had to use it on a daily basis and are uncertain about pronunciation or vocabulary.

During Pueblo Ingles, I walked to the village amid the fall colors and I spoke English. I had one-on-one meetings with at least four different Spaniards daily and I spoke English. I ate breakfast at 9 am, lunch at 2 pm and dinner at 9 pm with another Anglo and two Spaniards and we all spoke English. Everybody spoke English - lots of English. It was so much fun. I can't wait to go back and do it again!

Piloted in 2000, the first program was such a success, there are programs at five different locations, four in Spain and one in \* Italy. (\*More about Italy at the end of this article) Pueblo Ingles has also expanded to include programs that focus on teens and medical personnel mainly during the summer months.

Two of the goals for the Spaniards from the Pueblo Ingles website are 1) To expose the Spanish participants to the personal, raw and authentic styles of English spoken by native speakers, and 2) To prove to them that being effective with the English language does not revolve around a perfect mastery of grammar or a broad spectrum of vocabulary.

While this may sound rather daunting, what it really means is that through one-on-one and group conversations, the Anglos assist the Spaniards to become more confident when communicating in English.

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If you are frantically trying to remember your high school Spanish, don't worry. You are encouraged **not** to speak Spanish during Pueblo Ingles.

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT** - Your weeklong program begins on Friday morning and ends on the following Friday at 5pm. Your program will consist of several PI staff members and an equal number of Anglos and Spaniards. The location will vary depending on the date you selected, but they tend to be in a secluded resort or village. After the getting-to-know-you reception on Thursday, the following morning, the Anglos and Spaniards meet in a central location of to board the bus for the program. Our trip took about 3 hours.

Your normal day begins at 9 am with breakfast followed by several hours of one-on-one conversations with individual Spaniards.

As an Anglo, you are given instructions on how best to approach miss pronunciations and verb tenses in a fun, yet effective manner. (During our week, the common mispronunciation of breakfast was hilarious!) Because there is not set curriculum, you are able to discuss anything you both agree would be enjoyable. (I had back-to-back experiences one day, first with a royal Spanish bodyguard followed by a financial planner who liked the Lord of the Rings movies. Talk about eclectic!)

After your one-on-one sessions is a three-course lunch and then SIESTA or free time. After your nap, there are several group activities and entertainment performed by a rotating subgroup of the participants. You will end your formal day at 9 pm with a three-course dinner. If you are interested, the fun can continue in the bar following dinner, or you can retreat to you room for voice rest and sleep.

About half way into the week, there is a day where the entire group goes on a local excursion and believe me, it will be fun. By this time in the process, even our most reluctant English speaking Spaniards were loquacious and our conversations really rocketed. During our trip, the group walked into the town of La Alberca, toured the local museum, and learned about the village and history of the region. We next visited a bodega (wine shop) where we all took turns having red wine poured into our mouth from a wine skin. Then we tottered up the street for a marvelous lunch.

**What I found** – Speaking English 16 hours a day was not a problem. Because you constantly change partners, there are endless possibilities to share.

**Who else volunteers** – We had a very wide range of Anglos from Canada, England, Wales, Australia, Ireland, and the U.S.

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**How often is it offered?** There is generally at least one program running from the middle of January to the end of November. Some locations offered a limited calendar. Therefore, if you want a specific site, it is best to apply early.

**How much did it cost** - Here comes the good part! You need to get yourself to Madrid, Barcelona or Rome at least one day before the start of the program. You may have two nights of hotels in your city, depending on when you arrive and plan to depart. From Friday morning until they return you to your city, you are housed and fed BEAUTIFULLY. Therefore, for a plane ticket and two nights hotel, you have a wonderful volunteer experience.

**How to apply** - You can review the information and available dates from the website and apply on-line. The 2009 dates will be published in November 2008. Once accepted, you can then search for flights and make reservations.

If you plan to go as a couple or with a teen, just remember, each person must complete an application for the program(s). Teen's programs are offered concurrently with adults but it may not be in the same location as the adult program.

Programs specifically designed for medical doctors are offered several times a year. In 2008, 10 different programs were available for oncologists, rheumatologists, urologists, and one program specifically for general practitioners.

ITALY! I really want to go to ITALY! So do we all. As you will see from the website, as there are limited spaces for the Italian program, only graduates from the Spanish programs are eligible to apply at this time.

This is an easy way to begin your experience as an international volunteer because you don't have to worry about the language. This placement also fits nicely into a traditional two-week vacation from the U.S. Just add a day or two on either side of your week if you want to do some local touring.

I met several people who go back to Pueblo Ingles again and again. While you may visit the same location, I can guarantee you that you won't find the same mix of people. Try it and see! And when you get back, let me know what you loved about Pueblo Ingles!

**Pueblo Ingles**  
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Travel in Safety. Jane Stanfield