

Connections: A Student Newsletter

Volume 5 – March 2021

Welcome to the latest issue of Connections, a newsletter for the Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County community, prepared by the Student Outreach Committee.

During these pandemic times, all of us have missed the opportunity to travel, both to return home for a visit to see family and the dear sights of our native country, and also to travel to new locations and learn more about the world around us. To inspire us until the day comes that we can travel again, in this issue some of your friends share with us what a tourist should see or do if they were visiting our home countries. Many thanks to all who have contributed.

Also, the Student Outreach Committee that organizes this newsletter now has two new members. In addition to Sunny Lee, Yorleny Fuentes and Maria Novoa Besteiro the new members are Nadezda Ivanov (Babanina) and Glorys Villaroel. You can meet them here:



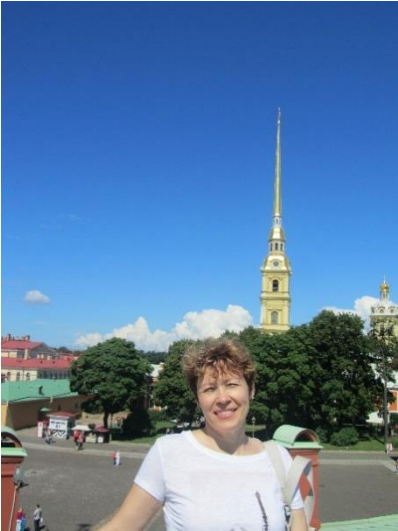
Hello LVCS Community, I am Glorys.

I was born in Caracas, Venezuela. I've been living in Whitehouse Station, NJ for the last two years. Previously, I had been living in Sao Paulo, Brazil for the past 15 years. An important part of my life happened there - I raised both of my sons in the country. Because of that, I feel a strong connection with both my native country,

Venezuela, and Brazil.

One of the first things I noticed about living here was the ability to enjoy the night sky and to witness New Jersey's beautiful sunsets, some of them from my backyard patio. This marks a big contrast to living in Sao Paulo, a big and dynamic megalopolis where mostly skyscrapers fill the sky. I am also loving living here and discovering New Jersey and its people. Wandering through small towns crossed by creeks, dropping by their natural parks and visiting the coast are some of my favorite things to do here. But, to have had the opportunity to meet people from around the world through the LVSC and their marvelous and dedicated team of teachers and volunteers has created in me a sense of belonging and gratitude to this community - and has also, hopefully, improved my communication skills in English.

Finally, a little more about me. I love travelling, I'm an Ikebana lover, I'm always seeking to add a healthy and sustainable new habit in my lifestyle; I love creating and trying vegetarian recipes and working out yoga, and Pilates are my favorites physical activities right now.



Hello everyone!

My name is Nadezda Ivanov (Babanina). I previously lived in Moscow, Russia, before immigrating to the US 14 years ago with my husband and a son. My husband is a software engineer and I am a former software engineer. For the last 6 years I have been a housewife. My son is in the 10th grade.

My family loves hiking and we are impressed with the incredible number of beautiful national and state parks and other walking areas in the United States.

I like to travel, I am interested in literature and history, I like listening to classical music, watching popular science and historical films. Now I miss museums, exhibitions and opportunity to spend time with my family and friends.

We'd like to thank Artur Gawkowski, Nadezda Ivanov, Soojung Lee, Amira Ahmed, Andrea Serrano, Veronica Perez Urquia, Pedro Castillo, Li Dezheng & Tracy Zheng, John Ye, Elizabeth Carmora, Glorys Villaroel, Yorlenny Fuentes, Ji Young Kim, Oksana Ratushna, Nora Mady, Mariana Julião Paiva, Olga Cordova, and Sunny Lee for contributing to this issue of Connections. Now, please read their stories below.

Ten of the most interesting places in Poland

Written by Artur Gawkowski

If you do not know yet which direction to choose for the upcoming vacation, I hope that a short guide to interesting places in Poland will help you choose which region is worth visiting.

1. Tatra Mountains - lovers of the mountains either love or hate the Tatra Mountains. One thing is certain, it is impossible to pass by them indifferently. For some, they will be a manifestation of the monumental beauty of nature, and for others, a pile of stones.
2. The Bieszczady Mountains have been attracting nature lovers with their wildness, primeval nature, peace and quiet. Now they have become quite popular, so history is the time when you could wander the trails all day without meeting anyone.
3. The Pieniny Mountains are considered by some to be small Tatras. It is the perfect place for mountain holidays with older preschoolers and schoolchildren.
4. The Table Mountains are characterized by picturesque topography and a variety of attractions. Szczeliniec Wielki is the most famous must-see for visiting the Stolowe Mountains.
5. Masuria - the land of lakes and forests. Recreation by the lake is an attraction in itself - canoes, pedal boats, beaches (better developed, some with attractions for children), mushroom forests.
6. Kashubia is a non-obvious and vast land. It includes both Bory Tucholskie, so worn down by the recent storms, and the Tri-City.
7. Warmia is primarily Olsztyn with its monuments, Frombork with the cathedral hill, Lidzbark Warmiński. The Elbląg Canal should not be missed - the cruise will surely leave indelible memories.
8. The Lubuskie Lake District consists of almost 500 lakes, including those attractive to divers, as well as to people looking for more secluded beaches than in Warmia and Mazury.
9. The Białowieża Primeval Forest is the last primary forest in Poland. It is also the largest bison sanctuary not only in Poland but also in the world.
10. Jura Krakowsko-Częstochowska is a mecca for rock climbers. Therefore, when spending a longer vacation there, or at least a few days, it is worth taking advantage of the offer of companies or instructors offering the opportunity to try out in this sport.



The Russian cultural heart

Written by Nadezda Ivanov

Hello!

I'm Nadezda. I have been living in the USA for 14 years with my husband and son. All other members of our family still live in Russia. This is the first reason why we often visit Russia. The second reason is the desire to show my son many Russian sights.

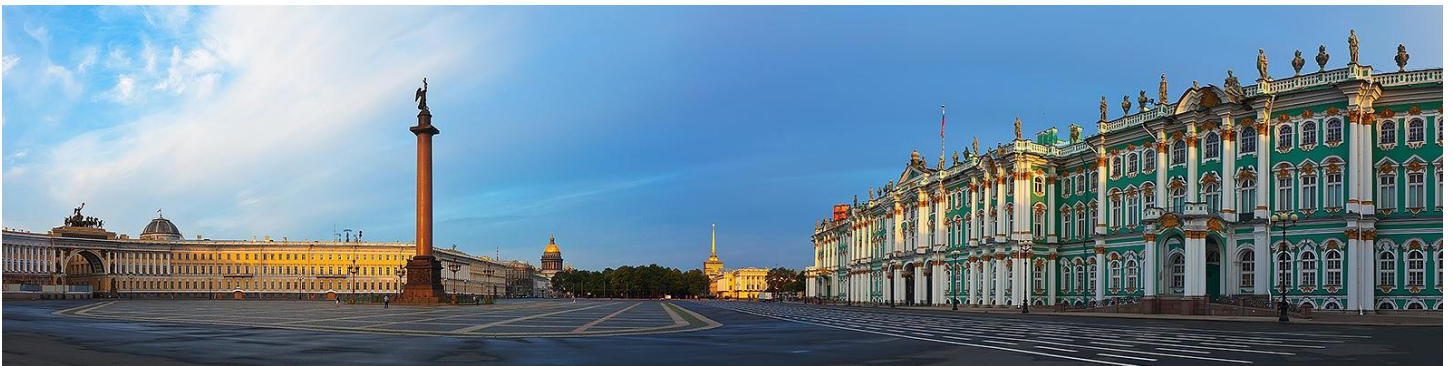
The most popular destination for domestic and foreign tourists is St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg is the youngest among well-known European cities. In 2003 this city celebrated its 300th anniversary. For more than two hundred years it was the brilliant capital of the immense Russian Empire. Having lost the official status of the capital in 1918, it has still remained the country's cultural and spiritual center. Created by the powerful will of Peter the Great as a "window to

Europe", with its sudden appearance it reminded to European countries about the Russian Empire and the first Russian Emperor. St. Petersburg is truly unique. I cannot list all the well-known places that tourists should see:

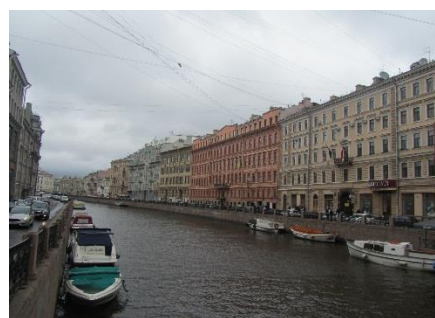
the State Hermitage Museum, Kazan Cathedral, Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, The State Museum St. Isaac's Cathedral, the Peter and Paul fortress, Smolny Cathedral, Summer Garden, etc, etc, etc. In addition, there are a large number of suburban residences of Russian tsars around the city: Peterhof, Tsarskoe Selo, Pavlovsk, Gatchina, Strelna, Oranienbaum, Pavlovsk. All of them are also gems of architecture and landscape design.

If you decide to visit Russia, you should definitely come to St. Petersburg and you must have enough time for enjoying this Russian cultural heart.

You just need to remember that in "Peter" (as the townspeople call this city) it rains very often. So don't forget your umbrella and rain shoes.



Collage of the most famous places of St. Petersburg



The city Jeonju in Korea

Written by Soojung Lee

Today, the place I would like to introduce to my ESL friends is the city of Jeonju in Korea.

When I visited Korea a few years ago, my mom, my sister and I went to Jeonju on a girls' trip. My mom was happy to travel with her daughters, so I remember that I was also so happy to see her talking more than usual. Jeonju is the 16th largest city in South Korea and the capital of North Jeolla Province. The name Jeonju literally means "Perfect Region".

Jeonju is the most Korean city in Korea. If we book early, we can stay at a hotel using a traditional Korean house. There are many traditional houses that are well preserved. We stayed in Hanok Village, a traditional Korean house with wood frame construction. We enjoyed traditional Korean food at a famous Korean restaurant. You will be surprised to see the number of side dishes there. This menu, called Hanjeongsik, includes 20 to 30 side dishes as a course meal or you can taste various foods at the same time.

There are stores that rent traditional Korean clothes. If you rent the clothes, it would be good to wear them and pretend to be a Korean who lived hundreds of years ago for a while.

Also, there are many things to see in Jeonju. If you are interested in the old style of Korea, you should definitely visit here.

We visited historical places such as Eojin Museum (Royal Portrait Museum) in Gyeonggijeon Garden, Jeondong Catholic Church and Omokdae. The best thing about this spot is the night view of the city. I couldn't forget the many lotus flowers we saw in Deokjin Park on our way home.

It was really great to be able to recall the many good memories with my mom and sister while introducing Jeonju to everyone.



Hanok Village



Hanjeongsik



Many lotus flowers in Deokjin Park

Visiting Egypt

Written by Amira Ahmed

If you go to Egypt, you must go to Alexandria. It has a very old and famous library. The library has so many books and magazines which were written by hand. People come from all over to see the Library. There are many activities for all ages. The children often do painting or other artwork for the Library. Actors come and perform in shows there.

Alexandria is by the Red Sea, so it has good weather. Alexandria is on one side and Italy and Spain is on the other. Many people go there for the beach. You can find many hotels, cafes and all for shopping for all the tourists. The area is known for their fresh seafood and good restaurants. I wish all the people would go to Egypt and visit Alexandria!





Costa Rica, Puntarenas

Reminiscences by Andrea Serrano

The breeze touches my face,
And the smell of sea and fish is still in my mind.
What beautiful place is in my heart,
Returning my memories of the blue of the sky?
Puntarenas “Dona Ana”, the sadness and happiness where “mama” took us.
My feet sink into the sand,
Running and playing with my sisters.
Mama prepared the simple food.
Who is giving her a hand?
Enormous trees like Giants,
Monkeys hang on the branches,
Looking at you in a defiant way.
The Sun burns your cheeks.
The hot water leads to the sea.
The waves play with you.
You find the shells like precious ivory.
Building castles in funny rivalry.
Big Turtle in the middle of the Shore, representing majestic love.

Many memories come and go like soft and mad sea waves

I hope one day to return to the beautiful place

Where one little piece of my heart is left.

Catracho (Honduras)



Written by Veronica Perez Urquia

My name is Veronica Pérez. I am from Honduras, I want to talk about some of the beautiful places in my country that every tourist should visit.



1. Bay Islands (Roatán, Utila and Guanaja):
Where one of the biggest coral reefs in the world is found.





2. Copan Ruins, history on stone, one of the most important sites of the Mayas, one of the greatest civilizations.



3. Trujillo: its strength reminds us of the fight against filibusters, that is, pirates. Here Christopher Columbus landed in 1502 during his fourth and last voyage.



4. Valle de Angeles: where you can find the best handicrafts in all of Honduras.



5. Lancetilla Botanical Garden: it is the only botanical garden in Honduras and perhaps the largest and most important in Latin America.

I like living in the United States, but I love and miss my home country. I hope you have the opportunity to someday visit Honduras and discover some, if not all of these places and the many wonders my country can offer, including the warm and friendly welcome you'll get from its people.

Reasons why we should visit Ecuador

Written by Pedro Castillo

Ecuador is a small country centered in South America, and could be a fascinating place to visit, not only for being in the middle point of the planet, closer to our capitol it's the Ecuadorian line used for the engineer to calculate latitudes.





Or has one of the most valuable treasures like the Galapagos Islands.



Or maybe be considered lungs of the planet.

If you are interested, you can enjoy in one day the warm wind of the beach, and inhale the pure oxygen in the mountains, and enjoy the food, and biodiversity is for that you can visit this country.

Keep an eye on this, we had the dollar as the official money, 65% of our population speaks English and we are in the top 5 of destinations in the world for people to go and live their retirements.



Welcome to China

Written by Li Dezheng & Tracy Zheng

When you first arrive to any major city of China, you will see a lot of people, very friendly people. Majority of people don't speak English unless you are in big city like Shanghai. But people will try to communicate in different ways. You will feel very safe in China.

The city skylines are beautiful and modernized which could be the total opposite of what you have imagined. Traveling in China is quite easy since high speed trains could take you almost anywhere. China is so big, you can always find many extraordinary places to visit. From the Great Wall to Sichuan panda reserve and many historical sites that will give you a glimpse of how ancient China once was.

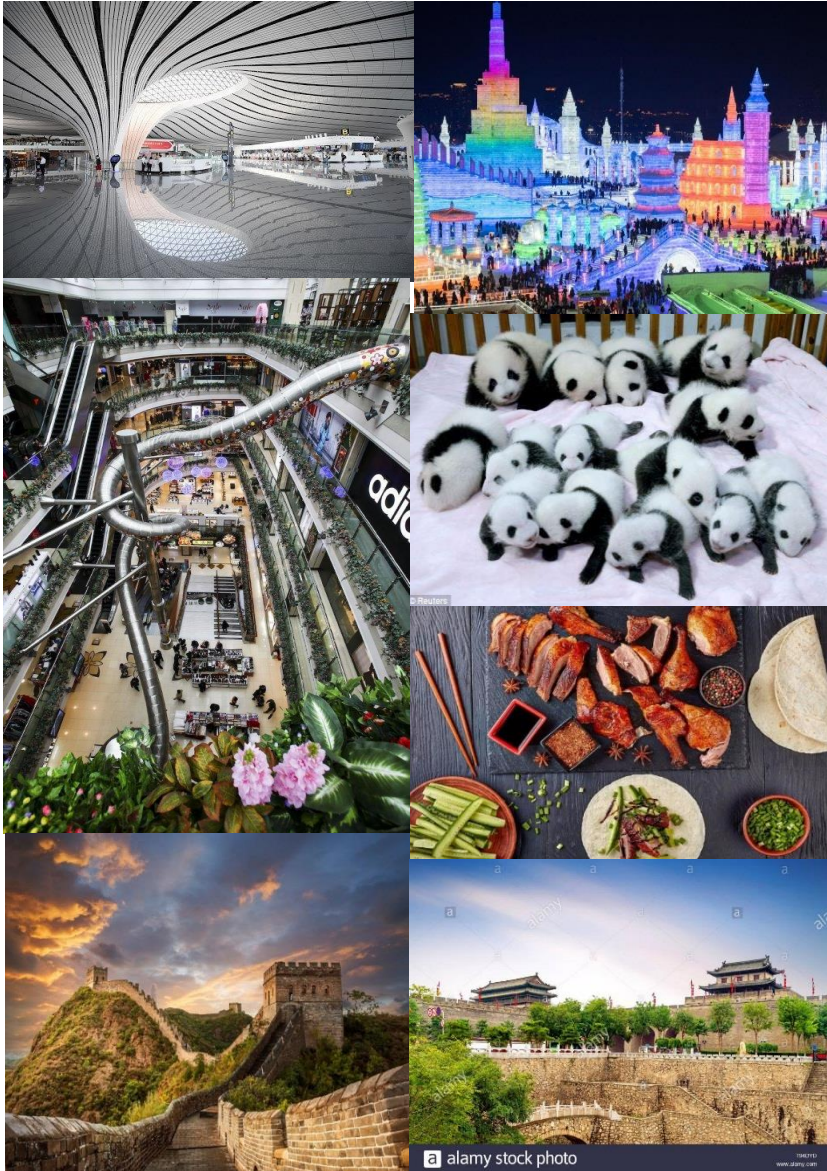
Chinese cuisines have so many varieties. You can always find something that you will enjoy. They are much better and absolutely not the same Chinese food you can have in America.

You won't be disappointed for your trip to China!



Touring China

Written by John Ye



1. **Beijing** – the Capital in Northern China where you will be stunned by unbelievable Beijing Daxing International Airport in modern architecture and enormous space. The facility features a 7,500.000 SQFT. Great Wall, Imperial palace and Forbidden City and Beijing Hutong (traditional courtyard residences) are the scenery you must visit.

Shanghai- China's financial and commercial center which is located in Eastern China. Shanghai is known as a Sleepless and shopping Paradise City. You can see so many modern skyscrapers and buildings in western style at the same time. Shanghai has the most advanced and convenient transportation system in China.

Shenzhen- It is the most advanced cutting-edge technology hub in southern China and it's just opposite Hong Kong. It has been developed from a small fishing village to a modernized city within 40

years. You can't imagine how fast you can get your satisfied products as soon as you present your designs. This is a city full of dynamics, diversities and opportunities.

2. See in **Chengdu** China's 'national treasure'—giant and baby pandas who you will adore deeply; Visit **Harbin** city during winter season to enjoy amazing crystal ice sculptures in the world famous 'Harbin Ice International Festival'; another one of 'must see' attractions is 'The

Terracotta Army' which is located in **Xi'an**. It is the underground tomb with more than eight thousand warriors, around 520 horses and more than 100 chariots and also with numerous non-military characters and treasures which dates back to around 280 BC.

3. A bite of China---whenever and wherever you go, you will be astonished to see uncountable Chinese dishes with different flavors. If you are a foodie, go to China! You can watch TV series ' A bite of China' from YouTube.

P.S. China's territory is almost the same as the United States but the population of China is around 1.4 billion which is 4.5 times of the U.S. So it is crowded everywhere but most of the cities even rural areas have highways, subways and bullet trains. No any problem for you to travel here and there. Last but not least, China is one of the safest countries in the world.

Seeing is believing!

Mexico

Written by Elizabeth Carmona

I am Elizabeth and I am from Mexico. My country has many beautiful places to visit. Cancun is one of them because of the beaches and its beautiful colors. But I want to tell you about a special place, a place that is not especially touristy but it is a place that will captivate you - the Sierra Tarahumara. The Sierra Tarahumara is located in the State of Chihuahua, north of Mexico. Its mountains and valleys captivate you with their panoramic views from above. Here live the Raramuris, which means the ones with light feet (el de los pies ligeros, in Spanish) or runners on foot (corredores a pie in Spanish). They are known for running long distances and have participated in some marathons running in their traditional sandals and have won awards for their athletic endurance. My country is beautiful, I invite you to one day come and experience it.



Coche Island Venezuela.

Written by Glorys Villarroel

I would be delighted to share one of the most remarkable trips I have taken in my home-country of Venezuela to the island of "Coche". "Coche", "Cubagua" and "Margarita" are a trio of islands that form the state of "Nueva Esparta". It's located in the north east of my country. Coche is the smallest one and is traditionally a fisherman village. Today, Coche is also a tiny tourist Caribbean destination: crystalline and warm greenish-blue water, white sand, glaring sunlight, dunes that you can explore; Coche also has a kind of secret lagoon in the middle of the beach that you can dive and explore snorkeling.

In essence, this is Coche Island - 100 % beautiful nature. You'll feel that Coche is a little bit off the beaten track, it has remained almost untouched and has also kept its authentic dazzle throughout the years.



Coche Island. Venezuela.

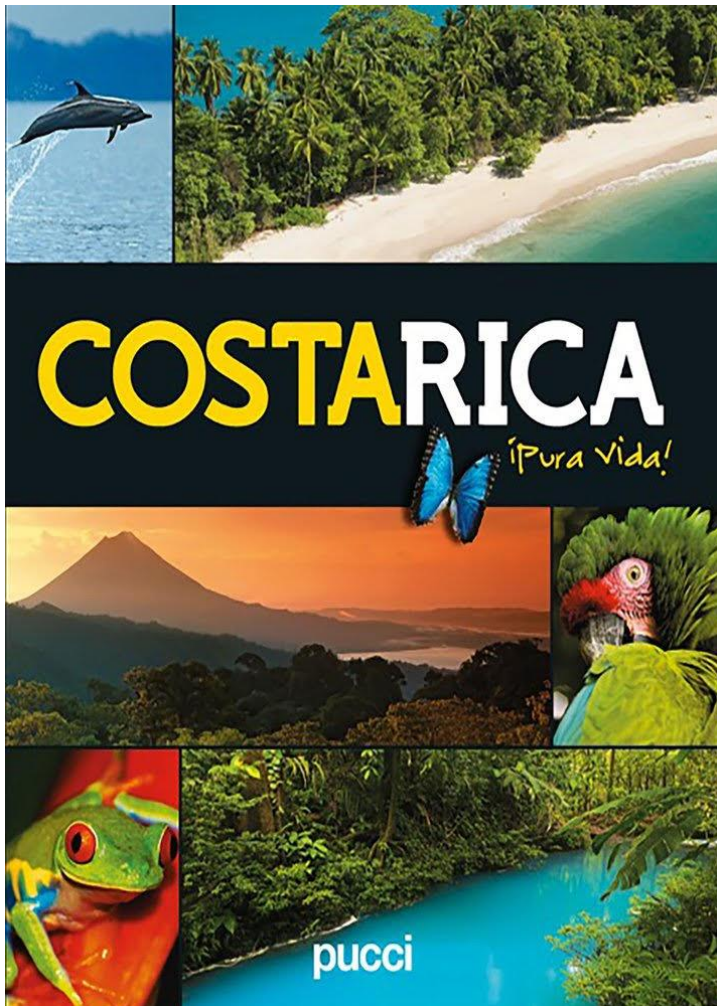


My family and me in Coche Island.

Glorys Bueno.

Costa Rica

Written by Yorlenny Fuentes



There is so much about my country, I'd like to share, but I'll narrow it down to a few of my favorites. Costa Rica is located in Central America, bordering Nicaragua to the north and Panama to the south. Our capital is San Jose. Costa Rica means rich coast.

Christopher Columbus named this country Costa Rica, because the land was filled with gold and precious metals. The first thing ticos teach to a foreigner is to "to say Pura Vida, mae". This is a kind of greeting. Mae means dude, it's slang. The most popular breakfast in Costa Rica is pinto, made up of rice and beans mainly. For those who love wildlife and the outdoors the most common activities in Costa Rica are: Whitewater

rafting, snorkeling and scuba diving. October is the peak nesting and hatching season for the green sea turtle. You can go to Tortuguero National Park and be captivated by it. In addition, you can visit Arenal Volcano, Poas Volcano, Rincon de la Vieja National Park and Manuel Antonio, another of our gorgeous National Parks. If you want to get a perfect tan, sunbathe and bask in the sun you should visit Tamarindo or Jaco beach. And of course, one of the places you shouldn't miss when you set foot in Costa Rica is our architectural and alluring National Theater, located in the heart of San Jose.

Where You Should Go in South Korea

Written by Jiyoung Kim

Do you have a plan to visit Korea? You should go to Insadong-gil. It is one of the famous streets in Seoul. What is distinctive is that it is a street where tradition and modernity coexist. There are not only antique shops, galleries, traditional teahouses, and native restaurants, but also trendy shops such as dessert cafes and character shops. If you are lucky, you can watch street performances on weekends. I miss the street food especially Ho-tteok which is fried pancake filled with brown sugar and the unique mood only Insadong-gil has.



Ukraine

Written by Oksana Ratushna

First of the all for me Ukraine means Kyiv. Modern Kyiv is a mix of the old and the new. The city probably existed as a commercial center as early as the 5th century. Also, it is home to many high-tech industries, higher education institutions.

Lviv, Vinnytsia, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Lutsk, Uzhhorod, Odessa - this is a short list of other incredible Ukrainian cities.

Ukraine has amazing nature. We have mountains - Carpathian. Its flora and fauna are identical in nature to the Alps. We also have beautiful rivers and two seas - Black and Azov.

Below I add link with really interesting places to visit in Ukraine:

<https://theculturetrip.com/europe/ukraine/articles/the-top-10-things-to-see-and-do-in-ukraine/>

Welcome to Egypt

Written by Nora Mady

In Egypt there are many places who travels to Egypt can visit. I will talk about some of them for example, Cultural tourism. Egypt has many museums such as The Egyptian museum in Cairo which contains many pharaonic statues. There is also Religious tourism. In Egypt there are many religious places, Mosques such as Al-Azhar, Churches such as Saint-Cathrin and many Synagogues. Medical tourism: in Egypt there are many natural springs that contain minerals such as magnesium and sulfur which help treat some diseases (Helwan springs and Ras-Sider). You also can enjoy diving in the Red sea in Sharm el-Shaikh and in the wonderful city Dahab. And don't forget the three pyramids of which are considered one of the seven wonders of the world. Finally, you can buy the best souvenirs at Khan Al-Khalily market.



Brazil

Written by Mariana Julião Paiva

Hello.

I'm Mariana Julião Paiva from São José dos Campos, São Paulo, Brazil.

Let me tell you about my beautiful country and my favorites places.

I am from Brazil from the state of São Paulo. In São Paulo there is a gorgeous city called São José dos Campos. There we have beautiful parks and one nature preserve called "Banhado". There you can walk, run, ride a bike or just sit on a bench and enjoy the scenery.

The Central Technology Aeronautic (similar to the Pentagon) of Brazil and the Institut Aeronautic which is the best university in the country (like MIT) are there. Excellent engineers are graduating from there.

If you need to relax, a great place to visit is the park Vicentina Aranha. There you will find a peaceful place around big trees and one great library. If you have kids, there is another park, Santos Dumont, where there is a playground for the kids and picnic tables.

The nature in São José dos Campos is wonderful. There is another park called Parque da Cidade and there are many species of flowers and animals. One funny animal is a large rodent the Capivara. It is like a small dog and wiggles when it walks. There you can play soccer, walk into nature or just sit on the ground and have a great picnic.

In the Midwest of the city you can go to the Anchieta avenue where you can enjoy gourmet foods or just try the Bolinho Caipira, one delicious salt cake with ground beef or sausage which is a typical food of São José dos Campos.

For those who are crazy for pizza in the west you can go to the Troina Pizzaria and enjoy gourmet pizza and of course try the delicious sweet pizzas like ice cream pizza or brigadeiro pizza.

São José dos Campos is a good place to live and grow up. There you will find people from many countries and many parts of Brazil. This city is between the big states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. I lived in São José dos Campos for 30 years. I grew up there and did my university and built my career there and most importantly, I built my Family there and God gave me my handsome husband and my two lovely daughters.

São José dos Campos is a special city not just because I lived there but because there are big factories like Jonhson & Johnson, General Motors, Ford, Embraer, etc. Their economy is very good and strong.

Thank you for letting me share with you about my country. Maybe I have convinced you to visit my beautiful and interesting country.



Park Vicentina Aranha



Park Santos Dumont



Capybara



Salt Cake Bolinho Caipira

Visiting Ecuador

Written by Olga Cordova



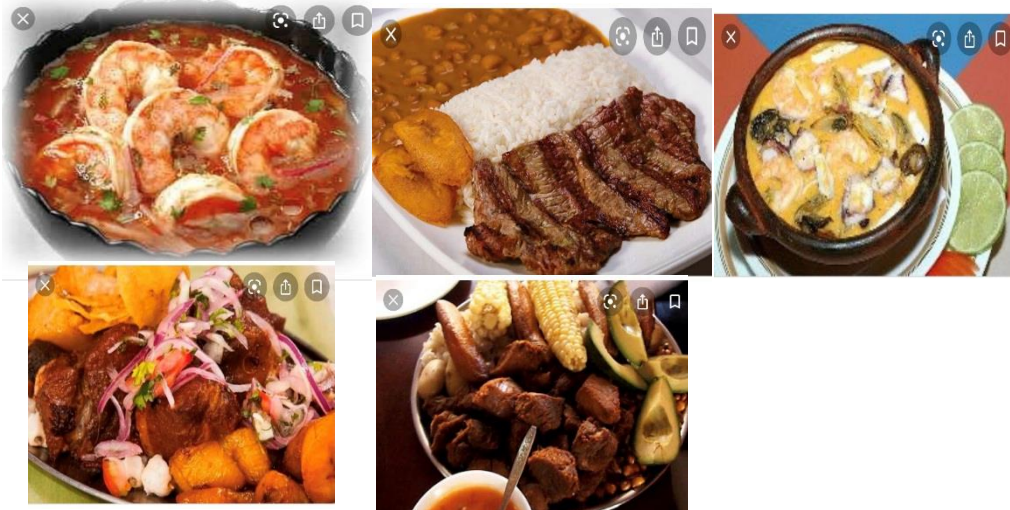
Ecuador is a small country but with many beautiful places to visit. In Quito, its capital there are many churches but one of the most distinctive is the "Iglesia Compañía de Jesús" one of the most beautiful works that we find in the historic center and with a unique style, this temple was inspired by the Church of "Gesú" in Rome. Inside it has a gold lining, several pictures and paintings.

Another place to visit is the Historic Centre of Quito. It is located in the southern center of the city of Quito and is considered the best-preserved historical complex and one of the most important in Latin America.



The Virgin of the Panecillo, also known as the Virgin of Quito, is a monument that is located on the top of the Panecillo hill in the Historical Center.

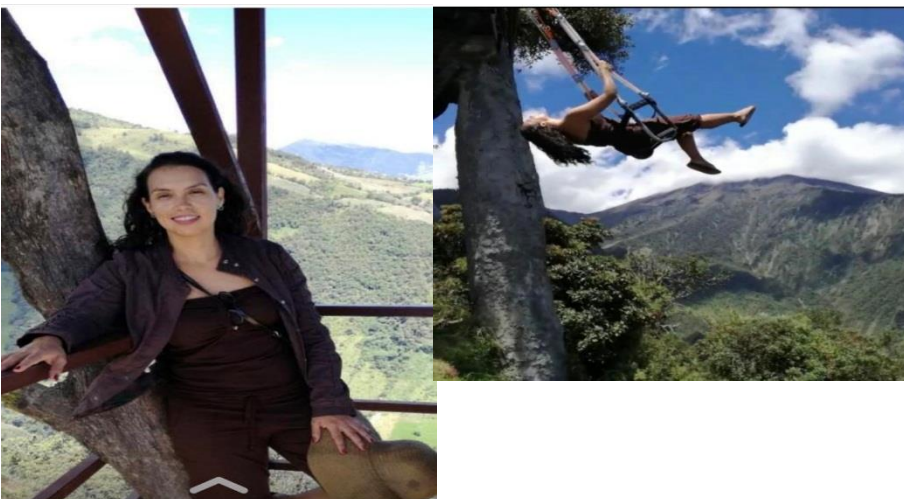
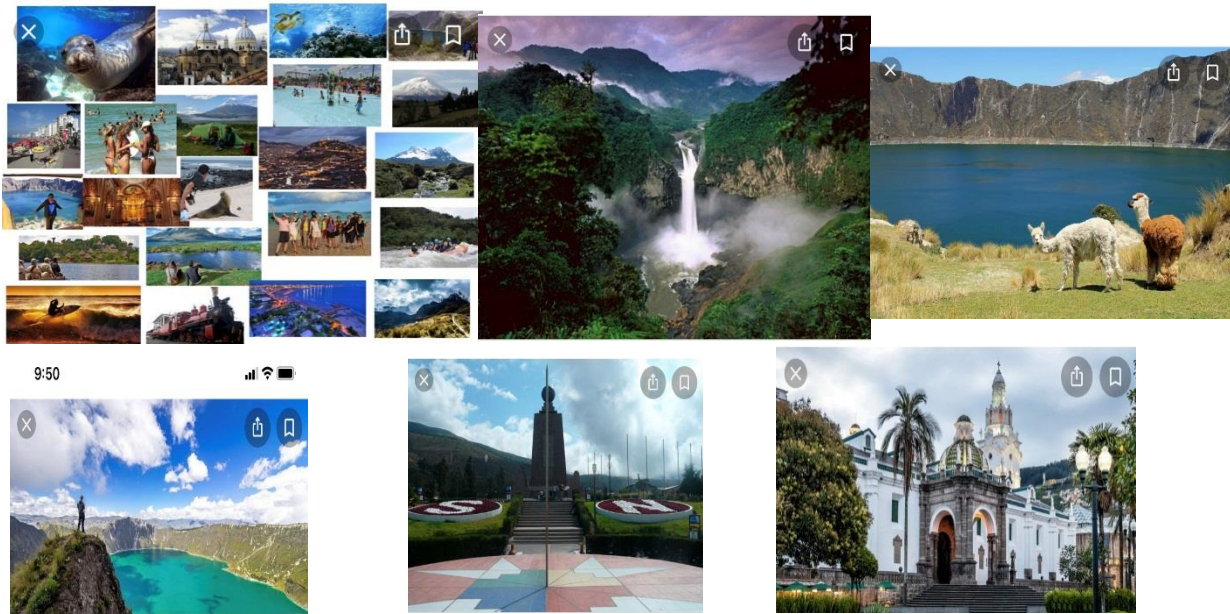
Ecuador has a varied gastronomy, each region has its typical dish and the main ingredients vary depending on the natural conditions of each region.



After enjoying a good meal, it's time to enjoy some delicious paila ice cream, Paila ice cream is an extremely delicious homemade dessert, it is a tradition of Ecuador.



Ecuador has 4 regions, Coast, Sierra, Galapagos and Oriente, each one with its landscapes, culture, gastronomy, beaches, mountains, jungle, flora and fauna that make one of the most desired tourist destinations worldwide.



JEJU Island

Written by Sunny Lee

Jeju Island, located southwest of the Korean Peninsula, of South Korea is the largest island. Jeju is a world-famous volcanic island with more than 90% of its total area covered in basalt. Basalt is a type of rock with small holes in it. This island has magnificent views of nature and plenty of entertaining excursions. In many ways, Jeju Island is very similar to the Hawaiian Island in the U.S., so decades ago, it was the hottest place for honeymoon among Koreans.

Additionally, it won UNESCO-accredited titles such as Biosphere Reserve, World Natural Heritage, and the Global Geopark award.

Hallasan Mountain

Climb South Korea's highest mountain located in the center of Jeju Island. This mountain is a dormant volcano that is listed as a UNESCO World Natural Heritage site. It's 1950 meters (6,388') high.

Even if you're not interested in hiking to the peak, Hallasan Mountain offers seven scenic trails, each less than six miles. For nature lovers, there are nearly 6,000 species of plants and animals in the area.



Hallasan Mountain



Crater lake on top of Mount Hallasan Mt.

Cheonjeyeon Waterfall

Cheonjeyeon Waterfall has a nickname as the Pond of God and begins from the ceiling of a cave where it falls into three sections. The first waterfall parts to produce the second and third where it all flows together into the sea.

Seonimgyo Bridge

Reaching over the Cheonjeyeon Waterfall, Seonimgyo Bridge has seven nymphs carved on both sides. These nymphs symbolize the seven beautiful and legendary nymphs that would descend from heaven at night.



Jeongbang Falls

Jeongbang Falls is the only waterfall in all of Asia that falls directly into the ocean. Situated at a high cliff by the sea it's one of the most famous waterfalls to visit on Jeju Island.



Jusangjeolli Cliff

When Mountain Hallasan erupted into the Jungmun Sea, its lava suddenly cooled, shrinking in mass, formed the many cube-like blackish rock pillars that are known as the Jusangjeolli Cliff. It was formed over hundreds of thousands of years ago. The formation looks like a piece of art that has been sculpted delicately with a sharp tool. This site is a wonder of nature, where hexagonal rock pillars stack on top of each other perfectly.



Seongsan Ilchulbong

Famed for its picturesque sunrise scenic views (hence its nickname, Sunrise Peak), Seongsan Ilchulbong looks like a giant fortress with 99 rocks surrounding its top. Seongsan Ilchubong is an extinct volcano with a huge crater at the top. It rose from the sea more than 100,000 years ago in a series of volcanic eruptions.



Manjanggal Cave

Manjanggal cave is one of the finest and longest lava tunnels in the world. Formed more than 2.5 million years ago, Manjanggal Cave houses a variety of natural formations such as 25.6 feet long lava stalagmites. Although the entire cave's length is more than eight miles, only about a half mile of it is open for tourists to explore.

