

Happy New Year to all our readers wishing you sincerely health, happiness and prosperity!



Christmas and the New Year in WA were celebrated, as usual, with the arrival of a heat wave around the 24th- 25th of December. Christmas Day was celebrated by most families, at the beach, at the parks, with relatives and friends, or visiting, trying to keep cool with the air conditioning! Those lucky enough to have a swimming pool, organised BBQs outdoors, and tried to escape the heat!

Special Dates

“Christmas in Latin America”

Being predominantly Catholics we celebrate Christmas Eve on the evening of December 24 with a luscious dinner. It is a night to share with relatives and friends, dress up, and exchange presents. In Venezuela, where I come from, the traditional dishes are “hallacas” (similar to a tamale wrapped in banana leaves), Ham Bread, Pork Roast, Black Christmas cake, nougats, papaya in syrup, and Ponche Crema (similar to eggnog), Cuba Libre, and whiskey.

Dinner is late and most of us attend Midnight Mass, known as Misa de Gallo and throw lots of fireworks all over the city. December 25 is for the children to open presents left the night before by Baby Jesus, under the Christmas tree. Some families, in modern times, welcome Santa Claus as an alternative.

We also enjoy typical Venezuelan Christmas music that we start hearing on the radio and the shopping centres from October till mid-January. January 6 is the coming of The Magi or The Three Kings, a tradition we inherited in Latin America from Spain. It is a holiday and the children receive again presents, while the families enjoy the last meal of the Christmas season.

Spain and most countries in Latin America celebrate in a similar way. The food, drinks, and music may vary from country to country, but the celebration is predominantly religious to commemorate the coming of Jesus.

“Carnival”

A Christian tradition brought by the Spanish and celebrated in most Latin American countries in February, 40 days before Ash Wednesday. The most famous Carnival happens in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, followed by Colombia, Uruguay, Bolivia, and Venezuela. It is a long weekend holiday, full of music, a parade of fantastic floats, and the election of the Queen.

Each country spends months preparing the floats, the themes, and costumes, competing between different groups for the best show. People dance day and night to the rhythms of Samba, Cumbias, and Salsa. A must see!!!



Events

“Perth International Arts Festival”

The 61st International Arts Festival will run from the 8th of February until the 2nd of March. The University of Western Australia (UWA) initiated the idea in 1953 y, since then, it promotes the festival very successfully every year, bringing a fabulous array of theatre, music, dance, films, and circus performances from all over the world.

We will also have the opportunity to enjoy the Writers Festival, visual arts and exhibits, the international film festival, and numerous free events and shows all over the city.

If you would like to know more, please visit www.perthfestival.com.

The Festival starts and ends with a beautiful fireworks display, something we love here in Australia!

“The Hopman Cup”

The first important tennis tournament every year takes place in Perth from the end of December to the beginning of January. This year Spain won the 25th Hopman Cup against Serbia at the Perth Arena, our new, amazing venue for big events and entertainment. See more at www.pertharena.com.au.

“Did you know....”

That, according to information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), on February 18, 2013 the population of Australia will be almost 23.000.000. And based on the approximate overall resident population, by the end of the 2012 financial year, last June, the population increased by one person every 1 minute and 24 seconds and we had a new immigrant every 2 minutes and 24 seconds.

The latest Census 2011 shows that we speak around 300 languages in Australia. Perth has around 1,728,867 inhabitants with an average age of 36. Pretty young! And the state of Western Australia has an approximate population of 2,239,170, of which more than half were born in Australia.

The next Australian Census is expected to be in 2016. Be ready!

“The People’s Corner”



Rafael Baro, Coordinator of Languages and Director of Oniria Language Studio en Perth, Western Australia.

Rafa, as we call him among friends, was born in Río de Janeiro, Brazil, where he completed primary school before moving with his family to La Plata, Argentina at the age of 11, and finishing his high school studies. He starts to study photography at the age of 14 and, two years later, he returns with his family to Curitiba, south of Brazil, where he completes his university degree in Anthropology at the Federal University of Santa Catarina.

One year before finishing his career Rafa embarks on a 5 year trip around Latin America to experience first hand the way of life of the indigenous communities, their customs, their struggle to preserve their cultural identity, all from the point of view of personal interaction.

During those 5 years Rafa develops Oniria, Infancias Latinoamericanas in Los Andes, the Amazon, Brazil and the Patagonia, focusing on the artistic and cultural aspects of the children of the indigenous communities. This experience was very rewarding and it changed Rafa’s vision of life and people in general in a positive way. He learned to love life, the arts and cultural authenticity.

Later on, Rafa returns to Brazil to continue his university studies, presenting his thesis on The Anthropology of Infancy and exhibits his work of 5 years in Latin America, taking the opportunity to share his photographic skills.

At the end of 2006 Rafael travels to Australia where he decides to settle and Oniria Language Studio is born with the idea of associating the spoken word with the cultural aspects of Hispanic countries. At present, Rafa promotes the interest in the culture of Spanish and Portuguese speaking etnias through language courses combined with trips to different countries in South America, giving his students the wonderful opportunity to practice both languages in real life situations, enjoying a valuable and interesting experience. Oniria offers Spanish and Portuguese courses at all levels, including special courses tailored for companies and their staff.

This year Rafael is planning to start Spanish and Portuguese courses for children between 2 and 4 years of age, putting him in contact with their young and curious abilities to learn fast and taking advantage of the experience he acquired through Oniria Infancias Latinoamérica. The challenge lies in the preparation of non-traditional courses carried out through creative, entertaining, and practical workshops, with the active participation of children in role playing and games.

Another project that was very successful in 2012, was the Latin American Film Festival organised by Oniria Language Studio in Joondana, offering an excellent repertoire of Spanish and Latin American movies, while enjoying delightful evenings of music and gastronomic delights. Oniria Language Studio hopes to continue presenting the Festival in 2013. We can hardly wait!

If you wish to know more about Oniria Language Studio or the projects Rafael is working on, please visit www.oniria.com.au.

SEE YOU IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER DUE IN APRIL!