



SECOND EDITION

HOW TO BECOME

A SUCCESSFUL ENGLISH SPEAKING TOURIST GUIDE
IN THE CITY OF SANTAMARTA, COLOMBIA

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Muñoz G.; Rubén Darío

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¿Qué es “How to become a successful English speaking tourist guide in the city of Santa Marta, Colombia”?

Cómo convertirse en un guía exitoso de habla inglesa en la ciudad de Santa Marta, Colombia, es un libro con **propósitos específicos** diseñado como libro guía para los estudiantes de 5º semestre del programa de Tecnología en Gestión Hotelera y Turística en la asignatura “*Guianza Turística*” y del cual no había material para desarrollarla. En su primera edición, los resultados han sido muy positivos ya que un gran número de estudiantes se encuentran trabajando en agencias de viaje ya sea como vendedores o como guías. Los estudiantes a través del desarrollo del curso refuerzan los conocimientos del inglés del nivel B1 del Marco Común Europeo(MCER)¹ para poder comunicarse eficazmente con turistas de habla inglesa que visitan nuestra ciudad y poder comentarles, narrar, explicar o responder en asuntos referentes a nuestro entorno histórico, cultural y turístico.

Igualmente sirve para cualquier persona que esté laborando en el sector del turismo y quiera prepararse para ser anfitrión de turistas de habla inglesa y poder comentarles acerca de los atractivos turísticos de Santa Marta.

La mayor parte de la información contenida en este libro se obtuvo a través de mis recorridos por esta encantadora tierra, y a pesar de no haber nacido en ella, la siento como mi ciudad natal, y también por mis 15 años de experiencia como docente de inglés que me han servido para la elaboración de la parte de la gramática y usos de los tiempos verbales contextualizados en nuestro entorno.

Nota:

Al final del libro el lector encontrará un glosario de términos con su correspondiente traducción al español y un listado de verbos regulares e irregulares.



View of the City. Given by “Banco de Fotos del Distrito de Santa Marta-COTELCO Magdalena.”

1. Source: http://www.examenglish.com/CEFR/cefr_es.php



The launching of the first edition of the book. Given by the writer.

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Magdalena University, taken by the writer.

This book is dedicated to my loving mother Amanda, Lourdes my wife, my three children, Daniel, Silvia and Valentina and to Alfredo Dávila, former Program Director, who motivated me to start it and who must be now in heaven with God. R.I.P. Their support and love inspired me to write it.



Photos provided by the author. Photos provided by the author.



Alfredo Davila and his family. Pictures given by Arelis Aguilar.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM AND ENGLISH WORLDWIDE

INTRODUCTION

Tourism: The traditional definition of tourism is based on the concept of demand and refers to all activities undertaken by people traveling to somewhere outside their usual environment for less time than a year and with the purposes of recreation, fun, business or other. (CEPAL 2003)²

Tourism activity has a special importance in the economy and social development of territories. Its participation in international trade has increased considerably in recent years, becoming a viable alternative of economic growth for many underdeveloped economies. Its impact on the global economy is significant; according to the WTO in 2013, total revenues from exports generated by the international tourism reached 1.4 billion USD. The cost of international visitors from tourism was estimated at 1,159,000 million USD. Revenues and the increase in international tourist arrivals went up by 5% in 2013 compared to 2012, reaching 1,087 million. Similarly, international tourism accounts for 9% of global GDP, 29% of world exports of services and 6% of total world exports, making tourism the fifth export activity worldwide, after fossil fuels, chemicals, food, and automotive products.

For many economies, tourism is the main source of income, The UNWTO in 2013 argues that Europe accounts for 42% of international tourism receipts (489.000 million USD), followed by Asia-Pacific with 31% (359,000 million USD) and the Americas with 20% (229.000 million USD). The emerging economies of China, Brazil and Russia, have also been stimulated by tourism since 2013, these three markets accounted for about 50% of a total increase of 81,000 million USD in international tourism spending. The UNWTO in 2013 also indicates that in the workplace, tourism contributes 1 in 11 direct jobs worldwide. It also provides an average of 3.3% per year sustained growth over the next two decades, with a range of 50% share of the market by emerging countries, which for 2030 is expected to reach 1.8 billion tourists. Colombia has not been immune to the dynamics of the tourism sector and in recent years, the government has opted different strategies for strengthening the industry by making regional plans, which have been developed in various departments. The effort of the national government is reflected in the increase in international tourist arrivals in the last 10 years at an average close to 10%, and also, for 2013 the travel and tourism industry contributed to 5.3% of the national GDP (37 billion COP) and 5.5% of total employment (1,157,170 jobs).

However, Colombia continues to exhibit lags in tourism competitiveness. The requirement of the world tourism market implies the creation of greater efforts in human resource training, infrastructure development, accessibility and transport, and strengthening institutions. The country therefore has a major task if we want to excel in tourism development and achieve higher levels of sustainability. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2013) Competitiveness Report Travel and Tourism 2013, Colombia received a score of 3.9, ranking 84th, 11 positions lower than the previous year. In the analysis variables, the country's strengths lie in the cultural wealth and natural resources, but is ranked 97th in the pillar of environmental sustainability, and insecurity remains a major obstacle for tourism competitiveness, given the high costs generated by violence, terrorism and crime. Another improvement susceptible variable according to the report is infrastructure, especially transport by land.

2. Source: Schulte S.(2003). *Conceptual and methodological guide for the development and planning of the tourism sector.*, S. CEPAL

Despite these figures, you cannot ignore the progress that the tourism sector has had on the country and its particular importance on the economy of some localities, which focus business on tourist vocation. One of them is the city of Santa Marta, capital of the Department of Magdalena, whose various attractions have gained interest from domestic and foreign visitors and has incremented in tourist arrivals. According to the Vice Ministry of Tourism (2013), the arrival of international tourists in 2012 was 22,501 and 22,263 foreigners in 2013, domestic air passenger also showed an increase of 26% in recent years, with 492,702 passengers in 2012 and 621,065 in 2013. The department of Magdalena has become a destination of choice for foreign travelers from countries like Argentina, USA, Venezuela, Chile, and Peru. It also has 3.2% of the total supply of rooms in the country, equivalent to 4,562 rooms (Proexport, 2013, today Procolombia). But for the city to take full advantage of its tourism and cultural potential, it is necessary to overcome some weaknesses in supply of basic public services such as infrastructure, environment, mobility, road safety, and communication in English. Tourism is Santa Marta main economic activity due to its geographical location and history and has a significant potential for the practice of different forms of tourism, including sun and beach, eco, adventure, historic, cultural, and gastronomic tourism. All these things position Santa Marta as a major national tourist destination.

It is not a secret that Santa Marta could be the number one tourist destination not only in Colombia but also in South America. Santa Marta has beautiful landmarks, landscapes, nature, and people, but the tourist industry has not grown as much as we all wish it would. Some problems have stopped the city from being the number one destination; one being the lack of people who speak English in the city.

This is the reason why I decided to create this dynamic course, which is written and taught in English, and it covers a variety of topics, tenses, rules and exercises to master the speaking skills needed for communicating in English with visitors from all over the world.

Ruben D. Muñoz

TO THE STUDENTS

For a tourist destination to be more internationally competitive and sustainable, there must be an effective and smooth communication with visitors from foreign countries. Being this the main reason for me to write this material.

For whom is this course?

How to Become a Successful English Speaking Tourist Guide in the city of Santa Marta, Colombia is a book for specific purposes designed for students in 5th semester of the Technology Program in Hotel and Tourism Management, who take the course “Guidance Travel”. The results of the First Edition have been very good since a large number of students are now working in travel agencies, either as sales people or tour guides. Through the development of the course, students acquire the necessary knowledge of English to communicate effectively with English-speaking tourists who visit our city and are able to comment, narrate, and explain or respond to issues concerning our historic, cultural and tourist environment.

This course is also recommended to anyone who is eager to become more fluent in the language and wants to earn some extra cash by taking people on tours or just learn the language and be able to communicate effectively with other people in English. It does not matter if you are a student, teacher, manager, housewife, or a freelance guide, what is really important is that you are willing to master the necessary skills to perform an excellent job while treating tourists with courtesy and respect, making them happy, which in the end will bring more tourists to the city; this being the main goal of the course.



Hotel and Tourism Management Program. Provided by the writer.

A MOTIVATING LETTER TO THE STUDENTS BY A FORMER STUDENT

Making your best effort is the key to success, it is what I have learnt. Being interested in something makes you feel love for it and makes you work harder to get it.

Not being the best, does not mean you are the worst. In my case, I was not the best, but gradually I learned many things, and now I can say I am one of the best tour guides in the city.

Friends, journeys, languages, and culture are words that just hearing them make me smile, because each of them has a great meaning, not only to me but to every person who has had the opportunity to working in tourism or shared some experiences with foreigners.

Now I know how important it is to speak at least one foreign language, in my case I speak two (Portuguese and English) and thanks to this I can say that I have someone in every country of Europe, America, and even in Africa who would let me stay at their home. All this for being committed and for having taking advantage of every single thing I was taught as a student.

Thank you so much Ruru for teaching me how to become who I wanted to be...

Your former pupil

Hernàn Yepes Leyva



A group of foreigners visiting the city with Hernàn as the guide

FIVE REASONS TO VISIT SANTA MARTA

Article by Manuel Alexander Muñoz

Certified Professional Tourist Guide and Evaluator in labor occupational competencies in Tourism from SENA.



Manuel touring in Q.S.P.A. Photos given by Manuel Muñoz.

Live the magic and adventure between the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the majestic Caribbean Sea. There are many reasons to enjoy tourism in the city called *“the magic of having it all”*, especially for those who love to take pictures and capture the moment of excitement, joy, or the place which dazzles our eyes with scenery where the landscape is the main spectacle.

There are five main reasons for sightseeing in Santa Marta:

First reason: Culture

Thanks to the foundation of the colony by Rodrigo Galvan de las Bastidas and the cleverness of our indigenous warriors, this corner of the Colombian Caribbean has the honor of being the first city founded inland. Today, almost 500 years after the foundation, our indigenous communities have preserved the cultural legacy in their descendants, the Kogi, Aruhacos, Wiwas and Kamkuamos. Reflecting the high degree of development of a culture, in which the conservation of the natural resources has always been its main priority.

Along with the arrival of Spaniards to Santa Marta also came many pirates. There were many pirate attacks to this city, perhaps the most mentioned by historians is the one done by the pirate Sir Francis Drake, an English sea captain and slaver who came to our shores with the intention to loot all the gold and pottery pieces of our ancestors, the Taironas. But Drake and his crew were deceived by the Indians since they used an alloy known as *tumbaga*, in the making of their goldsmith, which is 70% copper and 30% gold, and therefore he returned and set fire to the city. Unfortunately, Santa Marta was burned over 10 times in a century of war against pirates.

Second reason: Santa Marta's hospitality

Decked, diverse and bright, Santa Marta received the title of "*friendly city*", for having served as the final resting place for one of the greatest sons of Latin America, Simón Bolívar, the liberator of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Panama. By 1830 he breathed his last in a beautiful estate called *Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino*, where he wrote his last proclamation, the *Jamaica letter* and his last will.

Today San Pedro Alejandrino State has become a stage of unity and brotherhood among Bolivarian countries, a place where history, art and ecology are framed in the beauty of a botanical garden honoring the Liberator.

Third reason: Santa Marta's gastronomy

Food has a place in Santa Marta. Of course, most cravings are directed towards seafood, fish, cocktails, lobsters, prawns and many other exquisite products coming fresh from our sea, like fish stew or red snapper with plantains. Samarian cuisine is a sample of our cultural diversity, resulting from the mixture of indigenous, Spanish, and African cuisine. Foreigners also love having bites of *papas rellenas*, *empanadas*, *carimañolas*, *egg arepas*, *enyucados*, natural juices, sweets made from coconut, fruits and vegetables, the best fried plantains, and the best *cayeye* are made here. All these things make the Samarian cuisine another great attraction to visitors.

Fourth reason: Santa Marta is a happy and nighttime city

Santa Marta offers the magic and charm of the tropics. Our Caribbean rhythms like *cumbia* and *vallenato* have taken a significant importance in the international music and folklore scene. All this and more can be enjoyed in the various nightclubs, bars or pubs located in Rodadero beach, Taganga and especially la Bahía in the historic center. When museums and most stores are closed, Santa Marta's nightlife begins in the Santander park, known as *Parque de los Novios*, which has become a silent witness of night parties, special events, bohemian nights, a place to socialize or simply to enjoy an evening looking at the passersby. You can also go and see the illuminated towers of the cathedral, the bay of the city with the Marina and port, or the islet El Morro. Today our historic downtown area has become mandatory sightseeing for the thousands of tourists arriving from all over the world, we suggest you to go to a different place every night and be inspired by a musical rhythm as if it were from another dimension, one where locals and tourists can forget about daily work roles and meet to discuss cultural issues. All the magic of the historic center and the Caribbean Sea are just steps away from the main office buildings.

Fifth reason: Santa Marta is talent

The Holy City twice today has become the birthplace of great talents in the arts, science, music and sports. Soccer-players such as Radamel Falcao García, Aldo Ramírez, Carlos Alberto “*El Pibe*” Valderrama, journalists and TV reporters like Inés María Zabaraín, priest Alberto Linero, actor and film producer Yuldor Gutiérrez, talented models such as Taliana Vargas, Viña Machado, la Toya Montoya, Liceth González, the comedian Fabiola Posada known as “*la Gorda Fabiola*” and our singers Carlos Vives, Alejandro Palacio, and Blindaje 10, are a small sample of the great talent of the Samarian culture, a culture of vibrant people and entrepreneurs who laugh and dance with the flow of the urban sounds. Undoubtedly talented, dreamy, creative, and cheerful people live together in this touristic city, willing to receive any visitor in the most attentive and spontaneous way.

The above reasons and many more give us the motivation to enjoy the sightseeing in Santa Marta. This city is more than just a passing city, the historical significance is undeniable, and there is a renewed offer of entertainment, cuisine, and commerce that reaffirms the invitation to enjoy this charming city.

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