



VEGANISING LATIN AMERICA – AN INVITATION TO BRAZIL

Vanessa Clarke

Marly Winckler

Vegan Society member Marly Winckler, the International Vegetarian Union's dynamic Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, seems to have set herself the target of veganising the whole of South America in short order and has made a very impressive start which she is following up by organising a world congress on the fabulous island of Santa Catarina in Southern Brazil.

Having set up the Portuguese language email discussion list veg-brasil in January 1999, Marly followed this up with veg-latina [in Spanish] for the whole of Latin America and beyond. Her bilingual internet site – www.vegetarianismo.com.br – averages a third of a million hits per month. With help from the Spanish Vegan Society and the IVU, hundreds of pages of information are now available in Spanish and Portuguese and a strong network has grown up linking societies and activists in Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay, Colombia, Mexico and other areas where previously no coordinated movement existed.

Marly's own society, the Sociedade Vegetariana Brasileira – www.svb.org – has flourishing groups around the country and recently held a major rally in Brasilia with American pop singer Chrissie Hynde and members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, drawing attention to animal abuse in Brazil and calling on the government to stop supporting the meat industry and promote a plant-based diet.



Young though it is, the society is now official host to the 36th World Vegetarian Congress from 8th to 14th November this year. The chosen venue has numerous beaches, lagoons, dunes, mountains and large tracts of forest. Modern tourist facilities are carefully integrated with preservation of the natural environment [see www.costao.com.br]. A number of members of the UK Vegan Society are already making plans for the holiday of a lifetime in this marvellous place and the chance to help South American vegans combat cruelty to animals and promote a vegan lifestyle.



Accommodation costs – including registration for the whole congress programme and all meals except Wednesday lunch – range from about £250 per person in a twin or double room with bathroom to twice that figure for luxury living with private jacuzzi and so on. For information on cheaper options such as camping or youth hostel accommodation, contact info@svb.org.br. It is also possible to get together with half a dozen others and share a whole villa and there is an email list for people from all over the world to discuss travel plans, accommodation sharing and other topics of mutual interest.

Discounts are available until the end of April, so book early for the best possible deal. For UK participants, the main cost will be the flight to Florianopolis [via Rio or Sao Paolo].



Marly Winckler (left) and Chrissie Hynde in Brasilia

There are doubtless some great bargains to be had if you shop around, but a standard price seems to be about £600.

The International Vegetarian Union is the umbrella organisation for all the vegetarian/vegan societies in the world, including the UK Vegan Society, and Vegan Society Chair Stephen Walsh is currently IVU Science Coordinator. IVU rules specify that all world congress catering must be entirely vegan. For more information about IVU and veggie and animal activist groups around the world, see www.ivu.org

The world congress will bring together like-minded people from around the globe for talks, workshops, excursions, beach parties and a host of other activities. Arrangements can also be made to stay longer in this beautiful part of the world. For full information, see www.ivu.org/congress/2004 or contact Marly at latinam@ivu.org.

If you've already been to an international event of this kind, you will know what a fantastic experience it is. If not, the discovery awaits you! If you'd like to make contact with other Vegan Society members planning to go to Brazil or just to get more information from a local source, get in touch with Vegan Society international contact Vanessa Clarke [see Local Contacts page for details]. Meanwhile, Marly bids everyone a warm welcome to Brazil.