

GRINGO BOY

LYRIC AND MUSIC BY JIM RUNGEE

Verse I

I was born a Gringo - south Alabama
Loved my country all of my life
Pledged allegiance to the flag when I started school
Taught that America was just too cool
Never doubted none of that as I grew
Loved everything red white and blue

But in '69 - moved to Santiago
I hated leaving home and the USA
First 2 months I was really down
Startin' all over in a foreign town
Couldn't get my feet planted on the ground
Never thought things would ever turn around

But that all changed come that September
Dieciocho holiday
A new friend from my junior high said,
"It's kinda like America's 4th of July"
So he took me to a *Fonda* right nearby
Downtown under a clear blue Chileno sky

I could hear guitars strum
And singing from behind a fence
The cordillera cut the skyline like a knife
I felt a soulful rush - my heart began to pound
Seeing for the first time what would come to re-define my life -

Chorus I

Everybody had a pisco sour in their hand
Soakin' up some afternoon sun
Dancin' the Cueca to a Huaso band
Just havin' too much fun!

Copihue scent, a springtime breeze
Asados all around
Barros Lucos dripping cheese
Empanadas baked up brown

Right then I could see
That I was meant to be
As Chileno as a Gringo boy could be!

Verse II

I picked up on a bit of Castellano
Tried to live my life the Chileno way!

I'd climb Manquehue in the summer sun
Horseback ride– and when I was done
Grab me a Churrasco on a hot fresh bun
And hit Nico's Pizza for weekend fun with my friends

Take a day train over to Viña del Mar or
Hang out on the beach in sunny Zapallár or
Up San Cristóbal in a trolley car and
Eat me a Cuchufli candy bar

My mom and dad always called these years
The best ones of their life
I know they always hoped they'd never end
And to this day I still recall them having their good times
On our patio out back relaxed, laughing with their friends!

Chorus II

They'd have them a Pisco Sour in their hands
Soakin' up some afternoon sun
Stereo music – nothing really planned
Just havin' lots of fun

Queso Montecoso, vino and
Empanadas baked so brown
Lovin' every day in this magic land
Never feelin' down!

And this made it clear to me that
All I could ever hope to be
Was as Chileno as a Gringo Boy could be!

Verse III

The years went by – all was good
I did everything Chileno that I could!

Spent a month with a friend down on Chiloé
Eatin' fresh steamed picorocos from the bay and
Piping hot Curanto in a steamed bouquet and
Toasted marraquetas for once everyday

Sold corn in a market down in Chillán
Camped with some friends in El Arrayán
Caught an Andes sunrise at the break of dawn
Eatin' chirimoyas and a Sándwich Choripán

Basking in the moment
Just living for the day
Never leaving any song unsung
Never ever thinking that this all might slip away
Tomorrow was forever, and even though I was too young -

Chorus III

- to have me a Pisco Sour in my hand
I could soak me up some afternoon sun!
And a Mote con Huesillo from a roadside stand
To me was just as fun!

I loved Barros Lucos with dripping cheese
Empanadas baked up brown
A condor soaring on a mountain breeze
Or just a cheap bus ride downtown

So I'm sure that y'all can see
That I had come to be
As Chileno as a Gringo Boy could be

Bridge

I never thought the day would come
When we'd say goodbye and leave
When it did, it tore me up inside
As our plane rolled down the runway
And lifted off from Pudahuel
I think that was the last time that I cried

Verse IV [Lento]

A new high school just not the same
Weeks passed before anyone knew my name
I made a few friends but just couldn't adjust
I longed to ride down Apoquindo on a crowded bus
And see the lights set La Moneda all aglow at dusk
Eat a warm empanada and taste that toasted crust

Or to wake and see the Andes with a brand new snow
The cordillera silhouetted from a full moon's glow
Hear the rustle of Copihues when the wind would blow
All just memories from so long ago...

And though the years rolled by they could not erase
The memories in my heart of that special place
So when I got a little notice in 2002
At first I wasn't certain that it could be true
But I knew that it was something that I had to do
A 30 year reunion with the friends I knew...*in Chile!*

I was a little bit anxious, a little bit scared
Been so long since I'd lived down there
Through the years I'd often wondered what became
Of the place I cherished... would it be the same?
Or would I be disappointed? Would this be in vain?
But I still got a ticket, and got on a plane

I worried all the way that I'd hate the truth
I was troubled that everything had changed
And that the Chile that I fondly treasured from my youth
Would feel different, distant, strange...

But as the plane descended
And saw those Andes rise
I felt that rush and my heart began to pound!
Suddenly it hit me just what I was gonna do
The moment that plane landed, and those wheels were on the ground

CHORUS IV

Gonna get me a pisco sour in my hand
Soak me up some afternoon sun
Ride a bus down Apoquindo, see La Moneda and
Have myself some fun!

Get a Mote con Huesillo from a roadside stand
Probably gonna sip a little wine
See all my amigos from my Nido days
We'll have a real good time!

And once again decree
That I was meant to be
As Chileno as a Gringo Boy can be!

Verse V

Been 10 years since that first reunion
Go back to Santiago every chance I get
My Castellano's rusty but that's OK
They can understand what I want to say
It really doesn't matter anyway
Just so happy to be back in my Chile

The only thing that makes me frown
Is that Escudos aren't still around
This Peso gig really drags me down
All those zeros just make my head spin 'round

And when my time on Earth is done it's anybody's guess
If I'm heaven bound, or serving time for sin
It may take a bit to figure out where I am when I arrive
But I'll know that I'm in heaven, if, when St Peter lets me in...

Chorus IV

He has me a Pisco Sour in his hand
And says, "*Get on in here, son!*"
"Right over there is the Huaso band"
"Go join in the fun!"

There'll be Empanadas and Cuchufli
Barros Lucos by the score
Papayas al jugo all for me
Who could ask for more?

Ending

So I hope that y'all can see

That I love Cuchufli

And Lapis Lazuli

And Once after 3

And surely you agree

Que desde cuando fui

Yo siempre pertenecí

Aquí, Aquí, Aquí!

And this I guarantee

I may live in Tennessee

But I'm as Chileno as a Gringo Boy can be!