Look out for the following icons throughout the book:

‘Shortcut’ Phrase
Easy to remember alternative to the full phrase

Q&A Pair
‘Question-and-answer’ pair – we suggest a response to the question asked

Look For
Phrases you may see on signs, menus etc

Listen For
Phrases you may hear from officials, locals etc

Language Tip
An insight into the foreign language

Culture Tip
An insight into the local culture

How to read the phrases:
• Coloured words and phrases throughout the book are phonetic guides to help you pronounce the foreign language.
• Lists of phrases with tinted background are options you can choose to complete the phrase above them.

These abbreviations will help you choose the right words and phrases in this book:

f feminine   m masculine   pol polite
inf informal pl plural   sg singular
lit literal

See also p7 for the abbreviations of country-specific terms.
About Latin American Spanish
Learn about Latin American Spanish, build your own sentences and pronounce words correctly.

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Travel Phrases
Ready-made phrases for every situation – buy a ticket, book a hotel and much more.

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Menu Decoder
Dishes and ingredients explained – order with confidence and try new foods.

Two-Way Dictionary
Quick reference vocabulary guide – 3500 words to help you communicate.

- English–Spanish Dictionary 205
- Spanish–English Dictionary 239

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**Latin American Spanish**

*español latinoamericano*

**Who speaks Latin American Spanish?**

**Why Bother**

With an entire continent of gregarious Spanish-speaking locals to chat with, you don’t want to be limited to ‘gringo lingo’ – and you’ll find that revving up your *eres e·res* (*r’s*) and grunting out your *jotas kho·tas* (*j’s*) is fun.

**Distinctive Sounds**

The strong and rolled *r*, and *kh* (pronounced as in the Scottish *loch*).

**Spanish in the World**

Over the last 500 years, Spanish in Latin America has evolved differently to the
300 million speak Latin American Spanish as their first language

Spanish spoken in Europe. You’ll recognise Spaniards by the ‘lisp’ in their speech – eg cerveza (beer) is ser·ve·sa across Latin America but ther·ve·tha in Spain.

Spanish in Latin America

There’s no doubting the richness of the language that has lent itself to the ‘magic realism’ of world-famous authors such as Gabriel García Márquez. Influenced by indigenous languages, Latin American Spanish varies slightly from country to country, especially when it comes to vocabulary. In this book country-specific terms are indicated with abbreviations (see below).

Language Family

Romance (developed from Vulgar Latin spoken by Romans during the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the 3rd to the 1st century BC). Close relatives include Portuguese, Italian, French and Romanian.

Must-Know Grammar

Spanish has a formal and informal word for ‘you’ (Usted oo-ste and tú too respectively). The verbs have a different ending for each person, like the English ‘I do’ vs ‘he/she does’.

Abbreviations of country-specific terms used in this book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arg</th>
<th>Bol</th>
<th>CAM</th>
<th>Chi</th>
<th>Cos</th>
<th>Col</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
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<td>Ecu</td>
<td>Gua</td>
<td>Hon</td>
<td>Mex</td>
<td>Nic</td>
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<td>Ven</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5 Phrases to Learn Before You Go

1. Can you recommend private lodgings?
   ¿Puede recomendar una casa particular?
   pwe·de re·ko·men·dar oo·na ka·sa par·tee·koo·lar
   Staying with locals will give you a true Cuban experience and an opportunity to sample hearty home-cooked dishes.

2. I’d like the fixed-price menu, please.
   Quisiera el menú del día, por favor.
   kee·sy·e·ra el me·noo del dee·a por fa·vor
   Eateries in Guatemala and Mexico usually offer a fixed-price meal which may include up to four courses and is great value.

3. Where can I get a shared taxi/minibus?
   ¿Dónde se puede tomar un colectivo?
   don·de se pwe·de to·mar oon ko·lek·tee·vo
   Cheap transport options in Peru and other countries are shared taxis or minibuses – ask locally as there are no obvious stops.

4. Where can we go salsa/tango dancing?
   ¿Dónde podemos ir a bailar salsa/tango?
   don·de po·de·mos eer a bai·lar sal·sa/tan·go
   In dance-crazy Colombia and Argentina you won’t be lacking in dance-hall options, but you may want a local recommendation.

5. How do you say ... in your language?
   ¿Cómo se dice ... en su lengua?
   ko·mo se dee·se ... en su len·gwa
   Among hundreds of indigenous languages in Latin America are Quechua, Aymara, Mayan languages, Náhuatl and Guaraní.
10 Phrases to Sound Like a Local

What's up? | ¿Qué más? (Col) | ke mas
---|---|---
What's up? | ¿Qué bolá asere? (Cub) | ke bo-la a-ser-e
Cool! | ¡Chévere! (Col/Ven) | che-ve-re
How cool! | ¡Qué chido! (Mex) | ke chee-do
No problem. | No hay drama. | no ai dra-ma
Get on with it! | ¡Ponte las pilas! (Arg) | pon-te las pee-las
It's messed up. | Está en llama. (Cub) | es-ta en ya-ma
Come off it! | ¡No manches! (Mex) | no man-ches
No way! | ¡Ni hablar! (Arg) | nee a-blar
Of course! | ¡Claro! | kla-ro
Latin American Spanish pronunciation differs from the Castilian Spanish spoken in Spain. The most obvious difference is the lack of the lisping ‘th’ sound which is found in Castilian Spanish. Pronunciation in Latin America also varies to an extent from country to country and from region to region (see p12). In this book we’ve used pronunciation guides which will allow you to be understood in all parts of Latin America. If you read them as if they were English, you should get your meaning across.

Vowel Sounds

Vowels are pronounced crisply. There are four vowel sounds that roughly correspond to diphthongs (vowel-sound combinations) in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>ENGLISH EQUIVALENT</th>
<th>SPANISH EXAMPLE</th>
<th>TRANSLITERATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>a</td>
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<td>a·gwa</td>
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<td>gusto</td>
<td>goo·sto</td>
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<td>cow</td>
<td>autobús</td>
<td>ow·to·boos</td>
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<td>oy</td>
<td>boy</td>
<td>hoy</td>
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