How to use this book

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:

- **a** adjective
- **m** masculine
- **f** feminine
- **n** noun
- **inf** informal
- **pl** plural
- **lit** literal
- **pol** polite
- **sg** singular
- **v** verb
About Spanish
Learn about Spanish, build your own sentences and pronounce words correctly.

Introduction .................................................. 6
Top Phrases .................................................. 8
Pronunciation ............................................... 10
Grammar ..................................................... 14

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

Basics .......................................................... 31
Understanding ............................................... 32
Numbers & Amounts .................................... 34
Times & Dates ............................................... 36

Practical ......................................................... 41
Transport ..................................................... 42
Border Crossing .......................................... 55
Directions ................................................... 57
Accommodation ........................................... 60
Shopping ...................................................... 74
Communications ........................................ 84
Money & Banking ........................................ 91
Business ....................................................... 94
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 ................................. 237

Social

Meeting People .................................................. 106
Interests .......................................................... 120
Feelings & Opinions ......................................... 125
Going Out ....................................................... 130
Romance ........................................................ 136
Beliefs & Culture .............................................. 140
Sports .............................................................. 142
Outdoors .......................................................... 147

Safe Travel

Emergencies .................................................... 154
Police ............................................................. 156
Health .............................................................. 158

Food

Eating Out ..................................................... 168
Self-Catering .................................................. 182
Vegetarian & Special Meals ............................... 187

Sightseeing .......................................................... 96
Senior & Disabled Travellers ............................ 101
Travel with Children ....................................... 103

Meeting People .................................................. 106
Interests .......................................................... 120
Feelings & Opinions ......................................... 125
Going Out ....................................................... 130
Romance ........................................................ 136
Beliefs & Culture .............................................. 140
Sports .............................................................. 142
Outdoors .......................................................... 147

Emergencies .................................................... 154
Police ............................................................. 156
Health .............................................................. 158

Eating Out ..................................................... 168
Self-Catering .................................................. 182
Vegetarian & Special Meals ............................... 187

Index ............................................................................. 267
Why Bother
You’ll be seduced by this melodic language and have fun trying to roll your *rr’s* like the locals – not to mention ordering scrumptious tapas or engaging in all the shouting at the *fútbol*.

Distinctive Sounds
The strong and rolled *r*, harsh and guttural *kh* and, in European Spanish, ‘*lisping*’ *th*.

Spanish in the World
Over the last 500 years, Spanish in Latin America has evolved differently to the...
Spanish of Europe. Among other differences, you’ll easily recognise Latin Americans by the lack of lisp in their speech – i.e., *cerveza* (beer) is *ther·ve·tha* in Europe but *ser·ve·sa* across the Atlantic.

**Spanish in Spain**

Spanish, or Castilian (*castellano ka·ste·ly·no*) is primarily the language of Castille (covering the largest territory in Spain). However, Catalan, Galician and Basque are also official languages, and locals in these regions are very proud of their own language.

**False Friends**

Warning: many Spanish words look like English words but have a different meaning altogether, e.g., *suburbio soo·boor·byo* is a slum district, not a suburb (which is *barrio ba·ryo* in Spanish).

**Language Family**

Romance (developed from Vulgar Latin spoken by Roman soldiers and merchants during the conquest 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 also have a different ending for each person, like the English ‘I do’ vs ‘he/she does’.

**Donations to English**

Thanks to Columbus’ discovery of the New World in 1492, a large corpus of words from indigenous American languages has entered English via Spanish. You may recognise *canyon, guerrilla, ranch, tornado*...
5 Phrases to Learn Before You Go

1. What time does it open/close?
   ¿A qué hora abren/cierran?
   The Spanish tend to observe the siesta (midday break), so opening times may surprise you.

2. Are these complimentary?
   ¿Son gratis?
   Tapas (bar snacks) are available pretty much around the clock at Spanish bars. You’ll find they’re free in some places.

3. When is admission free?
   ¿Cuándo es la entrada gratuita?
   Many museums and galleries in Spain have admission-free times, so check before buying tickets.

4. Where can we go (salsa) dancing?
   ¿Dónde podemos ir a bailar (salsa)?
   Flamenco may be the authentic viewing experience in Spain, but to actively enjoy the music you’ll want to do some dancing.

5. How do you say this in (Catalan/Galician/Basque)?
   ¿Cómo se dice ésto en (catalán/gallego/euskera)?
   Spain has four official languages, and people in these regions will appreciate it if you try to use their local language.
10 Phrases to Sound Like a Local

What’s up? ¿Qué pasa? ke pa-sa
Great! ¡Genial! khe-nyal
How cool! ¡Qué guay! ke gwai
That’s fantastic! ¡Estupendo! es-too·pen·do
Really? ¿En serio? en se·ryo
You don’t say! ¡No me digas! no me dee·gas
Sure. Seguro. se·goo·ro
OK. Vale. va·le
Of course! ¡Por supuesto! por soo·pwes·to
Whatever. Lo que sea. lo ke se·a
Spanish pronunciation isn’t difficult, as most sounds are similar to the sounds found in English. The relationship between Spanish sounds and their spelling is straightforward and consistent. There are some easy rules to follow and once you learn them you shouldn’t have problems being understood. As in most languages, Spanish pronunciation can vary according to region – this book focuses on Castilian Spanish.

### Vowel Sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>ENGLISH EQUIVALENT</th>
<th>SPANISH EXAMPLE</th>
<th>TRANSLITERATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>alms</td>
<td>agua</td>
<td>a-gwa</td>
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