Guaranteed to get you talking

Fast Talk
Spanish

Fast, fun and easy-to-use
Essential phrases to meet all your travel needs

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Easy-to-use pronunciation guides

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**Before You Go**

Although English is relatively widely spoken in Spain, just a few phrases go a long way in making friends, inviting service with a smile, and ensuring a rich and rewarding travel experience – you could order delicious tapas in a bar packed with locals, find a hidden art gallery or grab a great shopping bargain from a hot new designer.

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**PRONUNCIATION TIPS**

The sounds of Spanish can almost all be found in English, and if you read our coloured pronunciation guides as if they were English you'll be understood. The stressed syllables are indicated with italics.

- The few sounds that do differ from English include the strong, rolled r, and the harsh, throaty kh (as in the Scottish loch).
- Also note that the Spanish v is soft, pronounced almost like a 'b' (with the lips pressed together), and that ly is pronounced as the 'li' in 'million'.
- You may have heard that Spanish has a ‘lisping’ th sound. In fact, when you hear the Spanish say gracias gra-thyas, they are are no more lisping than when you say ‘thank you’ in English.

**MUST-KNOW GRAMMAR**

The structure of Spanish holds no major surprises for English speakers since the two languages are quite closely related.

- Spanish has a formal and informal word for 'you' (Usted oo-ste and tú too respectively). When talking to someone familiar or younger than you, use the informal tu form.
Phrases in this book use the form that is appropriate to the situation. Where both forms can be used, they are indicated by pol and inf respectively.

★ Spanish also distinguishes between masculine and feminine forms of words, eg bello/bella be·lyo/be·lya (beautiful), indicated in this book by m and f.

★ Verbs have a different ending for each person, like the English ‘I do’ vs ‘he/she does’. Travellers don’t need to worry too much about this though – if you use the dictionary form of a verb in all contexts, you’ll still be understood.

**SOUNDS FAMILIAR?**

Numerous Spanish words are already part of the English vocabulary – you’re sure to recognise armada, aficionado, embargo, fiesta, machismo, patio, plaza, salsa ...

**Fast Talk Spanish**

Don’t worry if you’ve never learnt Spanish (español es·pa·nyol), or Castilian (castellano kas·te·lyo·no) as it’s also called in Spain, before – it’s all about confidence. You don’t need to memorise endless grammatical details or long lists of vocabulary – you just need to start speaking. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain when the locals hear you making an effort. And remember that body language and a sense of humour have a role to play in every culture.

“you just need to start speaking”

Even if you use the very basics, such as greetings and civilities, your travel experience will be the better for it. Once you start, you’ll be amazed how many prompts you’ll get to help you build on those first words. You’ll hear people speaking, pick up sounds and expressions from the locals, catch a word or two that you know from TV already, see something on a billboard – all these things help to build your understanding.
1. What time does it open/close?
¿A qué hora abren/cierran?  a ke o-ra ab-ren/thye-ran
The Spanish tend to observe the siesta (midday break), so opening times may surprise you.

2. Are these complimentary?
¿Son gratis?  son gra-tees
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?  kwon-do es la en-tra-da gra-twee-ta
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)?  don-de po-de-mos eer a bai-lar (sal-sa)
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 esto en (catalán/gallego/euskera)?  ko-mo se dee-the es-to en (ka-ta-lan/ga-lye-go/e-oos-ke-ra)
Spain has four official languages, and people in these regions will appreciate it if you try to use their local language.
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