

lonely planet

≡ *Fast Talk*

# Spanish

Guaranteed to get you talking

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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.*

## 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 'lispings' **th** sound. In fact, when you hear the Spanish say *gracias gra-thyas*, they are are no more lispings 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 **pl** 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·lya·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.

## 5.

Phrases  
to Learn Before You Go

## 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?

*kwan-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 ésto en (catalán/gallego/euskera)?

*ko-mo se dee-the es-to en (ka-ta-lan/ga-lye-go/e-ooos-ke-ra)*

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*

## 10.

Phrases  
to Start a Sentence**When's (the last flight)?**¿Cuándo sale (el último vuelo)?  
*kwan-do sa-le (el ool-tee-mo vwe-lo)***Where's (the station)?**¿Dónde está (la estación)?  
*don-de es-ta (la es-ta-thyon)***Where can I (pay)?**¿Dónde puedo (pagar)?  
*don-de pwe-do (pa-gar)***How much is (the room)?**¿Cuánto cuesta (la habitación)?  
*kwan-to kwes-ta (la-bee-ta-thyon)***Do you have (a map)?**¿Tiene (un mapa)?  
*tye-ne (oon ma-pa)***Is there (a toilet)?**¿Hay (servicios)?  
*ai (ser-vee-thyos)***I'd like (a coffee).**Quisiera (un café).  
*kee-sye-ra (oon ka-fe)***Can I (enter)?**¿Se puede (entrar)?  
*se pwe-de (en-trar)***Can you please (help me)?**¿Puede (ayudarme), por favor?  
*pwe-de (a-yoo-dar-me) por fa-vor***Do I have to (book)?**¿Necesito (reservar)?  
*ne-the-see-to (re-ser-var)*



# Chatting & Basics

## ≡ Fast Phrases

Hello./Goodbye.

Hola./Adiós.

*o·la/a·dyos*

Please./Thank you.

Por favor./Gracias.

*por fa·vor/gra·thyas*

Do you speak English?

¿Habla inglés? *pol*

*ab·la een·gles*

¿Hablas inglés? *inf*

*ab·las een·gles*

## Essentials

Yes./No.

Sí./No.

*see/no*

Please.

Por favor.

*por fa·vor*

Thank you (very much).

(Muchas) Gracias.

*(moo·chas) gra·thyas*

You're welcome.

De nada.

*de na·da*

Excuse me.

Perdón./Discúlpeme.

*per·don/dees·kool·pe·me*

Sorry.

Lo siento.

*lo syen·to*