

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

Language Tip

An insight into the foreign language

CULTURE TIP

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.

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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

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Two-Way Dictionary

Quick reference vocabulary guide – 3500 words to help you communicate.

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INTRO

Latin American Spanish

español latinoamericano
es·pa·nyol la·tee·no·a·me·ree·ka·no

ABOUT

INTRODUCTION

Who speaks Latin American Spanish?

WIDELY UNDERSTOOD
BELIZE
EQUATORIAL GUINEA
SPAIN

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

MEXICO • GUATEMALA • HONDURAS
NICARAGUA • EL SALVADOR
COSTA RICA • PANAMA • CUBA
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
PUERTO RICO • VENEZUELA
COLOMBIA • ECUADOR • PERU
CHILE • BOLIVIA • PARAGUAY
URUGUAY • ARGENTINA

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 k~~h~~o-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

100 MILLION

speak Latin American Spanish as their second 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

Arg	Argentina	Cub	Cuba	Par	Paraguay
Bol	Bolivia	Ecu	Ecuador	Per	Peru
CAM	Central America	Gua	Guatemala	Pue	Puerto Rico
Chi	Chile	Hon	Honduras	Sal	El Salvador
Cos	Costa Rica	Mex	Mexico	SAM	South America
Col	Colombia	Nic	Nicaragua	Uru	Uruguay
		Pan	Panama	Ven	Venezuela

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·sye·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·se·re

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

Understanding

KEY PHRASES

Do you speak English?	¿Habla/Hablas inglés? <i>pol/inf</i>	<i>a-bla/a-blas een-gles</i>
I don't understand.	No entiendo.	<i>no en-tyen-do</i>
What does ... mean?	¿Qué significa ...?	<i>ke seeg-nee-fee-ka ...</i>

Q Do you speak (English)?	¿Habla/Hablas (inglés)? <i>pol/inf</i>	<i>a-bla/a-blas (een-gles)</i>
Q Does anyone speak (English)?	¿Hay alguien que hable (inglés)?	<i>ai al-gyen ke a-ble (een-gles)</i>
A I speak Spanish/English.	Hablo castellano/inglés.	<i>a-blo kas-te-ya-no/een-gles</i>
A I speak a little.	Hablo un poco.	<i>a-blo oon po-ko</i>
Q Do you understand?	¿Me entiende/entiendes? <i>pol/inf</i>	<i>me en-tyen-de/en-tyen-des</i>
A I (don't) understand.	(No) Entiendo.	<i>(no) en-tyen-do</i>
What does ... mean?	¿Qué significa ...?	<i>ke seeg-nee-fee-ka ...</i>
How do you write ...?	¿Cómo se escribe ...?	<i>ko-mo se es-kree-be ...</i>
How do you pronounce this?	¿Cómo se pronuncia esto?	<i>ko-mo se pro-noon-sya es-to</i>