

## 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

**inf** informal

**lit** literal

**m** masculine

**pl** plural

**pol** polite

**sg** singular

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Learn about Mexican 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.

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## **Two-Way Dictionary**

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

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INTRO

# Mexican Spanish

*español mexicano es-pa-nyol me-khee-ka-no*

ABOUT

INTRODUCTION

## Who speaks Mexican Spanish?

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGE**  
MEXICO

**WIDELY UNDERSTOOD**

ARGENTINA • BELIZE  
BOLIVIA • CHILE • COLOMBIA  
COSTA RICA • CUBA  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC  
ECUADOR • EL SALVADOR  
EQUATORIAL GUINEA  
GUATEMALA • HONDURAS  
NICARAGUA • PANAMA  
PARAGUAY • PERU • PUERTO RICO  
SPAIN • URUGUAY  
USA • VENEZUELA

### Why Bother

Even if you can't roll your *r*'s like Speedy González, communicating with locals is crucial, as Mexicans well know. It was La Malinche, the enslaved Mayan mistress of conquistador Hernán Cortés, who ultimately facilitated the

Spanish conquest by interpreting for him.

### Distinctive Sounds

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

### Spanish in the World

Over the last 500 years, Spanish in Mexico has

# 110 MILLION

speak Mexican Spanish as their first language

evolved differently to the Spanish spoken in Europe. You'll easily recognise Spaniards by the 'lisp' in their speech – ie *cerveza* (beer) is *ser·ve·sa* in Mexico but *ther·ve·tha* in Spain.

## Spanish in Mexico

What sets Mexican Spanish apart from other Latin American Spanish varieties is the rich vocabulary. In addition to the influence by indigenous Náhuatl and Mayan languages, there's strong impact from US English, especially in the northern border areas.

## False Friends

Warning: many Spanish words look like English words

but have a different meaning altogether, eg *éxito ek·see·to* is 'success', not 'exit' (which is *salida sa·lee·da* in Spanish).

## 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 oos·ted* and *tú too* respectively). Also, verbs have a different ending for each person, like the English 'I do' vs 'he/she does'.

## Donations to English

Numerous. Thanks to Columbus' discovery of the New World in 1492, there's a large corpus of words from indigenous languages that have entered English via Mexican Spanish. You may recognise *avocado, chocolate, coyote, tomato ...*

## 5 Phrases to Learn Before You Go

- 1** **Where can I buy handicrafts?**  
¿Dónde se puede comprar artesanías?  
*don-de se pwe-de kom-prar ar-te-sa-nee-as*

Star buys in Mexico are the regional handicrafts produced all over the country, mainly by the indigenous people.

- 2** **Which *antojitos* do you have?**  
¿Qué antojitos tiene? *ke an-to-khee-tos tye-ne*

'Little whimsies' (snacks) can encompass anything – have an entire meal of them, eat a few as appetisers, or get one on the street for a quick bite.

- 3** **Not too spicy, please.**  
No muy picoso, por favor. *no mooy pee-ko-so por fa-vor*

Not all food in Mexico is spicy, but beware – many dishes can be fierce indeed, so it may be a good idea to play it safe.

- 4** **Where can I find a *cantina* nearby?**  
¿Dónde hay una cantina cerca de aquí?  
*don-de ai oo-na kan-tee-na ser-ka de a-kee*

Ask locals about the classical Mexican venue for endless snacks, and often dancing as well.

- 5** **How do you say ... in your language?**  
¿Cómo se dice ... en su lengua?  
*ko-mo se dee-se ... en su len-gwa*

Numerous indigenous languages are spoken around Mexico, primarily Mayan languages and Náhuatl. People will appreciate it if you try to use their local language.

## 10 Phrases to Sound Like a Local

**Hey!** :: **iOye!/iOiga!** inf/pol :: o·ye/oy·ga

**How's things?** :: **¿Qué tal?** :: ke tal

**What's new?** :: **¿Qué onda?** :: ke on·da

**Cool, dude!** :: **iChido, güey!** :: chee·do gway

**Awesome!** :: **iCámara!** :: ka·ma·ra

**Check this out!** :: **iCheca esto!** :: che·ka es·to

**Wow, really?** :: **iÓrale!** :: o·ra·le

**Are you serious?** :: **¿Te cae?** :: te kai

**You must be kidding!** :: **iNo manches!** :: no man·ches

**Whatever.** :: **Me vale.** :: me va·le

# Understanding

## KEY PHRASES

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

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