

Spanish Language Kit

Expressions - Grammar - Online Resources - Culture



Introduction

Whether you plan to embark on a new journey towards learning Spanish or you just need a basic reference booklet for a trip abroad, the Cactus team has compiled some of the most helpful Spanish expressions, grammar rules, culture tips and recommendations. Spanish, being one of the world's most commonly spoken languages, is a highly useful language to learn. Knowing Spanish will enable you to fully explore Spain and Latin America, and will help you discover Hispanic and Latin American food, music, film and way of life. Spanish is one of the easiest languages for native English speakers to learn and it remains the most popular language among Cactus language learners, not least due to the high-demand for Spanish language skills in the professional world. Learning Spanish is the beginning of an exciting adventure that is waiting for you!



The Cactus Team

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Metro

Essential Expressions

Hello	Hola (<i>oh-lah</i>)
Goodbye	Adiós (<i>ah-dee-ohs</i>)
Please	Por favor (<i>por fah-bor</i>)
Thank you	Gracias (<i>grah-see-ahs</i>)
Yes	Sí (<i>see</i>)
No	No (<i>no</i>)
Excuse me/sorry	Disculpe/Perdone (<i>dees-kool-peh / pehr-dohnay</i>)
My name is...	Mi nombre es/Me llamo... (<i>mee nohm-breh ess/may yah-moh</i>)
What is your name?	¿Cómo te llamas? (<i>koh-moh tay yah-mahs</i>)
Nice to meet you	Encantado (<i>en-cahn-tah-doh</i>)
Where do you come from?	¿De dónde eres? (<i>day dohn-day eh-rehs</i>)
I come from Great Britain/America	Soy de Gran Bretaña/América
How are you?	¿Qué tal estás? (<i>kay tahl ay-stahs</i>)
Where is...?	¿Dónde está...? (<i>dohn-deh eh-stah</i>)
I would like (2 bottles of water)	Me gustaría / ¿Me puede dar? (<i>dos botellas de agua</i>)
How much is that?	¿Cuánto cuesta esto?
How do I get to...?	¿Cómo puedo ir a...?
I don't understand	No (lo) entiendo (<i>noh (loh) ehn-tyen-doh</i>)
I'm sorry, I don't speak Spanish	Lo siento, no hablo español (<i>loh see-ehn-toh noh ah-bloh eh-spahn-yol</i>)
Do you speak English?	¿Hablas inglés? (<i>ah-blahs een-gleh-s</i>)



Grammar and Numbers

Indefinite articles

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	el martes	los martes
Feminine	la carta	las cartas

Definite articles

	Singular	Plural
Masculine	un coche	unos coches
Feminine	una carta	unas cartas

Numbers

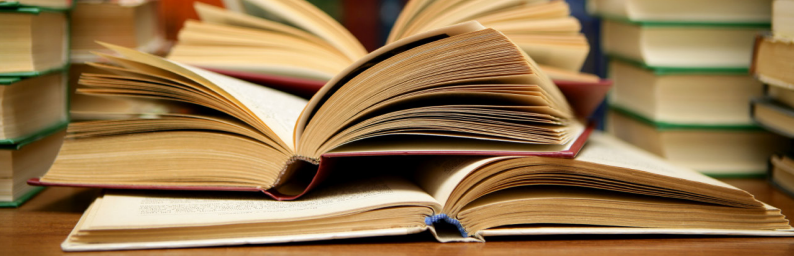
0	cero	10	diez
1	uno	11	once
2	dos	12	doce
3	tres	13	trece
4	cuatro	14	catorce
5	cinco	15	quince
6	seis	16	dieciséis
7	siete	17	diecisiete
8	ocho	18	dieciocho
9	nueve	19	diecinueve

Possessives

Masculine singular	Masculine plural	Feminine singular	Feminine plural
mi	mis	mi	mis
tu	tus	tu	tus
su	sus	su	sus
nuestro	nuestros	nuestra	nuestras
vuestro	vuestros	vuestra	vuestras
su	sus	su	sus

Subject pronouns: yo, tú, él/ella/usted, nosotros/nosotras, vosotros/vosotras, ellos/ellas/ustedes

20	veinte	200	doscientos
21	veintiuno	300	trescientos
30	treinta	400	cuatrocientos
40	cuarenta	500	quinientos
50	cincuenta	600	seiscientos
60	sesenta	700	setecientos
70	setenta	800	ochocientos
80	ochenta	900	novecientos
90	noventa	1000	mil
100	cien		



Useful Verbs

Hablar (to speak)

Present

hablo
hablas
habla
hablamos
habláis
hablan

Present perfect

he **hablado**
has **hablado**
ha **hablado**
hemos **hablado**
habéis **hablado**
han **hablado**

Imperfect

hablaba
hablabas
hablaba
hablábamos
hablabais
hablaban

Pluperfect

había **hablado**
habías **hablado**
había **hablado**
habíamos **hablado**
habíais **hablado**
habían **hablado**

Future

hablaré
hablarás
hablará
hablaremos
hablaréis
hablarán

Future perfect

habré **hablado**
habrás **hablado**
habrá **hablado**
habremos **hablado**
habréis **hablado**
habrán **hablado**

Comer (to eat)

Present

como
comes
come
comemos
coméis
comen

Present perfect

he **comido**
has **comido**
ha **comido**
hemos **comido**
habéis **comido**
han **comido**

Imperfect

comía
comías
comía
comíamos
comíais
comían

Pluperfect

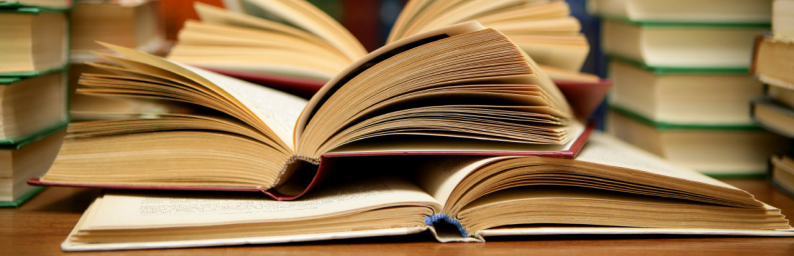
había **comido**
habías **comido**
había **comido**
habíamos **comido**
habíais **comido**
habían **comido**

Future

comeré
comerás
comerá
comeremos
comeréis
comerán

Future perfect

habré **comido**
habrás **comido**
habrá **comido**
habremos **comido**
habréis **comido**
habrán **comido**



Useful Verbs

Vivir (to live)

Present

vivo
vives
vive
vivimos
vivís
viven

Present perfect

he **vivido**
has **vivido**
ha **vivido**
hemos **vivido**
habéis **vivido**
han **vivido**

Imperfect

vivía
vivías
vivía
vivíamos
vivíais
vivían

Pluperfect

había **vivido**
habías **vivido**
había **vivido**
habíamos **vivido**
habíais **vivido**
habían **vivido**

Future

viviré
vivirás
vivirá
viviremos
viviréis
vivirán

Future perfect

habré **vivido**
habrás **vivido**
habrá **vivido**
habremos **vivido**
habréis **vivido**
habrán **vivido**

Ser (to be)

Present

soy
eres
es
somos
sois
son

Present perfect

he **sido**
has **sido**
ha **sido**
hemos **sido**
habéis **sido**
han **sido**

Imperfect

era
eras
era
éramos
erais
eran

Pluperfect

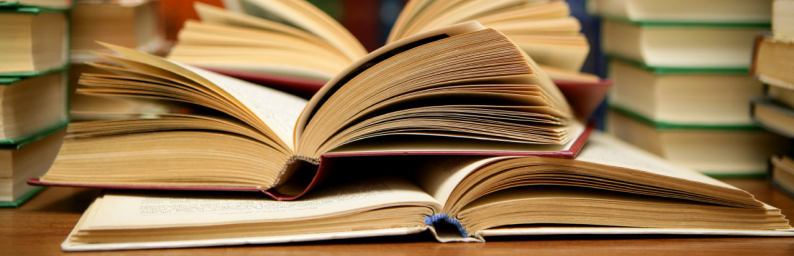
había **sido**
habías **sido**
había **sido**
habíamos **sido**
habíais **sido**
habían **sido**

Future

seré
serás
será
seremos
seréis
serán

Future perfect

habré **sido**
habrás **sido**
habrá **sido**
habremos **sido**
habréis **sido**
habrán **sido**



Useful Verbs

Estar (to be)

Present

estoy
estás
está
estamos
estáis
están

Present perfect

he **estado**
has **estado**
ha **estado**
hemos **estado**
habéis **estado**
han **estado**

Imperfect

estaba
estabas
estaba
estábamos
estabais
estaban

Pluperfect

había **estado**
habías **estado**
había **estado**
habíamos **estado**
habíais **estado**
habían **estado**

Future

estaré
estarás
estará
estaremos
estaréis
estarán

Future perfect

habré **estado**
habrás **estado**
habrá **estado**
habremos **estado**
habréis **estado**
habrán **estado**

Ir (to go)

Present

voy
vas
va
vamos
vais
van

Present perfect

he **ido**
has **ido**
ha **ido**
hemos **ido**
habéis **ido**
han **ido**

Imperfect

iba
ibas
iba
íbamos
ibais
iban

Pluperfect

había **ido**
habías **ido**
había **ido**
habíamos **ido**
habíais **ido**
habían **ido**

Future

iré
irás
irá
iremos
iréis
irán

Future perfect

habré **ido**
habrás **ido**
habrá **ido**
habremos **ido**
habréis **ido**
habrán **ido**



Online Resources

There are so many free online resources that it is sometimes difficult to know which ones to use, and to identify which ones are good. Cactus has carefully assessed the wide range of free language learning resources available online to provide you with a selection of our most recommended, useful and reliable sources of information for learning Spanish. These can be used as a helpful support to language learning whilst taking one of our face-to-face Spanish courses.

Dictionaries

WordReference is a popular bilingual dictionary, and combines its own dictionary with the long-established Collins dictionary. WordReference also includes a handy Spanish verb conjugator and a forum where users can get help with Spanish language related questions.

Reverso is a well-established online bilingual dictionary. It includes an English-Spanish dictionary, along with other handy tools such as a translator and spellchecker.

The **Diccionario de la lengua española** is the official monolingual Spanish dictionary published by the Real Academia Española. In Spanish only.

Clave is a useful monolingual Spanish dictionary. In Spanish only.

General resources

The **BBC** has an extensive Spanish section with grammar, vocabulary, and culture resources.

Pronunciation

Forvo is a free and comprehensive pronunciation guide maintained by native speakers around the world. It includes the pronunciation of more than 3 million words in 325 languages.



Online Resources

Grammar

Verbix offers a free online Spanish verbs conjugator.

Aprender Español is a comprehensive website offering grammar resources and exercises. It also has a vocabulary section along with songs and videos to help you practice Spanish.

Vocabulary

Memrise is a popular website and mobile app which enables you to memorise Spanish vocabulary. It is a great and fun way to learn new vocabulary in addition to your language course.

Language Guide is a project helping Spanish language students to build their vocabulary using an image and sound dictionary.

Quizlet is a fun and simple website and mobile app which will help you develop your Spanish vocabulary using flash cards.

Cram has a large list of flash cards to help you learn new Spanish words. It also has a mobile app, so you can memorise Spanish vocabulary anywhere anytime.

Mobile app

Duolingo is a fun mobile app which offers a comprehensive series of vocabulary, pronunciation and translation exercises. It is a great way to practice what you learn during your Spanish evening courses while on the go.



Take a Language Holiday

Taking an immersion course abroad is a very efficient way to quickly improve your Spanish language skills. Not only it will increase your confidence in speaking Spanish, but it will also be a unique opportunity to discover and experience the culture of a Spanish-speaking country and practice Spanish with native speakers on a daily basis. Cactus has teamed up with the best language schools across the world to offer you a first-rate language learning experience.

Spain

The most popular language holiday destination among Cactus Spanish learners, Spain is also a country with a rich culture, and gastronomy. Cactus offers immersion courses in various settings including colourful and bustling cities such as Barcelona and Madrid, sunny coastal destinations such as Alicante, Marbella and Valencia, and stunning islands including Ibiza and Tenerife.

Central America and the Caribbean

Central America has much to offer to Spanish learners, from vibrant cities to large sunny beaches. Cactus offers language holidays across Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, and Panama. In addition to this, if you prefer to learn Spanish in one of the many enchanting Caribbean islands, our Spanish immersion courses can be taken in Cuba and Dominican Republic.

South America

Spanish is the dominant language in South America, and as such Cactus offers immersion courses in many destinations such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru.



Cultural Differences

Every culture has its specificities, and as fascinating as they can be, not knowing them can prove surprising and challenging when travelling. To help you blend into the local culture and make the most of your time in Spain, we have listed some of the most striking cultural differences you should be aware of, along with some helpful tips.

Times

The difference in terms of times between the UK and Spain can be quite challenging. It is safe to say that everything occurs later in Spain. The famous Spanish siesta usually takes place between 2pm and 4pm, and people often work until 8pm. Few shops and supermarkets are open during the siesta time, and you should take this into account when planning your day. Similarly, unlike in the UK, Spanish people go out later in the night.

Politeness

British people are notoriously polite, and not adding 'please' after a 'yes' or 'thank you' after a 'no' can be seen as rude, if not offensive, in the UK. In Spain on the other hand, directness is the rule, and Spanish people will not make an extensive use of 'please' and 'thank you'. You should not be dismayed at this, and using 'please' everytime could even make locals think you 'le estás tomando el pelo', that is, you're making fun of them.

Tone of communication

Spanish people have a reputation for speaking loudly, beeping their cars and even shout from windows. Rather than being a sign of rudeness, this is seen as a sociable characteristic. Even in professional situations, Spanish people can be more informal than British people would be. Don't be put off by this, as it is part of standard Spanish behaviours and it can show friendliness.



Hispanic Culture Recommendations

Books

The Spanish and Latin American literature is renowned across the world and there is a variety of genres you can choose from to practice Spanish. It is almost impossible to make an exhaustive list of books to read when it comes to Spanish literature, but we would certainly recommend these for those who are learning the language:

- ***Papelucho***, by Marcela Paz: these Chilean series of twelve books follow the everyday life of Papelucho, an eight-year-old middle class boy living in Santiago de Chile.
- ***Cuentos de la selva***, by Horacio Quiroga: written in 1918, this book is a collection of short stories depicting crocodiles, parrots, tigers and other animals living in the jungle in South America.
- ***El príncipe de la niebla***, by Carlos Ruiz Zafón: a young adult novel taking place in a mysterious village during the Second World War. You will have no trouble reading this entertaining book.
- ***El entenado***, by Juan José Saer: this Argentine novel follows the adventures of a young Spanish boy crossing the ocean to explore the New World, and facing the strange habits and behaviours of the natives. A must-read if you love exotic and adventure stories.

Music and Films

The Spanish cinema industry has been thriving with well-known filmmakers such as Luis Buñuel and Pedro Almodóvar. There are many Spanish films you could watch, but as a new learner we would recommend popular and easy-to-understand films such as:

- ***Tres metros sobre el cielo*** (2010): fast-paced yet predictable, this film will be easy to follow for Spanish learners. The film tells the story of a troubled teenager wreaking havoc and starting a life-changing romance with a wealthy girl.



Hispanic Culture Recommendations

- ***El laberinto del fauno*** (2006): this dark fantasy film takes place in 1944, five years after the Spanish Civil War, and follows the touching story of Ofelia, a young girl living between the real world and a mythical world.
- ***Como agua para chocolate*** (1992): this Mexican film spans over two decades, is about family and traditions. Tita, the main character, cannot marry the man she loves because of traditions and her frustration is heightened when her sister marries him in her place.

Music-wise, there are many songs with Spanish lyrics you could listen to to practice your listening skills. Depending on your preferences, you may be more interested in flamenco or instead in pop. Listening to easy-to-understand song will prove more efficient for beginners and elementary Spanish learners. Here are a few we picked up for you:

- ***Agua***, by Jarabe de Palo: a slow and very easy-to-understand song ideal for beginners.
- ***No me resignaré***, by Binomio de Oro de América: another easy-to-understand yet with a more moderate tempo, this love song is a good example of Vallenato, a Colombian folk music style.
- ***Carito***, by Carlos Vives: while the tempo of this song is quick, it is clearly sung and its catchy rhyme will soon be stuck in your head!
- ***Olvido***, by Amaral: this poetic song uses simple vocabulary and fuses several music styles into a captivating tune.

Food

Spanish and Latin American cuisine is diverse and has been shaped by various influences. Today, Hispanic gastronomy is one of the most prominent in the world. As result, it can be hard to decide which dish to choose from, but we thought you should taste these:



Hispanic Culture Recommendations

- **Gazpacho:** a refreshing and chilled soup made of tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, bread, peppers and cucumber. If you are in Córdoba, then try salmorejo, the local thicker version served with Ibérico ham on the top.
- **Paella:** it goes without saying you should try this famous Valencian rice dish. Served in a large frying pan and made of various ingredients, paella is the most traditional of all rice dishes the Valencian region has to offer.
- **Tortilla de patatas (Spanish omelette):** this delightful omelette simply made of eggs, potatoes and onions, slowly fried in olive oil is one of Spain's most popular recipes.
- **Patatas bravas:** made of chunks of fried potatoes and served with bravas sauce, patatas bravas are probably the most renowned tapas.
- **Chimichurri and grilled steak:** chimichurri is a herb and garlic sauce used for grilled steaks. Originally from Argentina, this sauce has spread across Latin America.
- **Fajitas:** owing to their simplicity and good taste, fajitas have become a staple of fast food chains, and it is easy to make your own.
- **Turrón:** this very Spanish almond nougat is traditionally consumed as a traditional Christmas dessert, although it is available all year round.
- **Buñuelo:** a fried dough ball popular in Spain, Latin America, and even outside the Hispanic world.
- **Natillas:** similar to the crème anglaise found in European countries, natillas is a custard dish widespread in Spanish-speaking countries. In Spain, it is made typically of milk, sugar, vanilla, eggs, and cinnamon.
- **Batido:** also known as licuado, this refreshing and delicious smoothie is a widespread beverage in Mexico.



Start Learning Spanish

With so many language learning options available ranging from evening classes to online courses, it is often difficult to know where to start your Spanish language learning journey. It's important to assess which type of language course or combination of courses is the most appropriate for you. To help you make the right choice, the experts at Cactus have compared the benefits of each alternative and provided a comprehensive list of language learning options to get you started.

Language Holidays: Immersion courses are an excellent way to learn and practice Spanish on a daily basis while discovering the local culture. For more information about our language holidays destinations, please see page 10.

Group Evening Courses: Evening classes in the UK are ideal if you want to learn Spanish after work or your studies. They will help you learn Spanish quickly in a sociable environment and they offer excellent preparation for a language holiday abroad, as they will enable you to understand the basics of Spanish prior to your trip.

Private Tuition: If you can't fit a group language course in your schedule or you prefer to study in your own time, one-to-one Spanish classes are the perfect solution. Cactus offers both face-to-face and Skype Spanish language lessons.

TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language): Living abroad is a dream that many long for, and it is often said to be the best way to achieve fluency in a foreign language. For fluent English speakers, one of the easiest ways to live abroad is by teaching English as a Foreign Language. You can become an English teacher abroad by taking a TEFL course with Cactus. We offer CELTA and Trinity Cert TESOL preparation courses across the world, including in Spain, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. For more information about TEFL courses and advice on how to become a TEFL teacher, please visit our dedicated [website](#), or email us at info@cactustefl.com.

Visit our websites

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UK Group Evening Courses

languagecoursesuk.co.uk

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