

Language

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There are 21 Mayan indigenous languages used in and around Guatemala, but Spanish is still the most commonly spoken language, and what visitors will encounter on a daily basis. If you're keen to try out some Mayan languages, see the short and sweet Mam and K'iche' sections at the end of this chapter.

It's easy enough to pick up some basic Spanish, but for those who want to delve a little deeper, courses are available in Antigua (p106), Panajachel (p129), San Pedro La Laguna (p143), Nebaj (p158), Quetzaltenango (p168), Todos Santos Cuchumatán (p186), Monterrico (p206), Cobán (p220) and near Flores (p283 and p284). Alternatively, before you leave home you can study books, records and tapes, resources that are often available free at public libraries. Evening or college courses are also an excellent way to get started. For food-related words and phrases, see p59.

For a more comprehensive guide to the Spanish of Guatemala, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Latin American Spanish Phrasebook*.

PRONUNCIATION

Spanish spelling is phonetically consistent, meaning that there's a clear and consistent

relationship between what you see in writing and how it's pronounced.

Vowels

a	as in 'father'
e	as in 'met'
i	as in 'marine'
o	as in 'or' (without the 'r' sound)
u	as in 'rule'; the 'u' is not pronounced after q and in the letter combinations gue and gui , unless it's marked with a diaeresis (eg <i>argüir</i>), in which case it's pronounced as English 'w'
y	at the end of a word or when it stands alone, it's pronounced as the Spanish i (eg <i>ley</i>); between vowels within a word it's as the 'y' in 'yonder'

Consonants

Most Spanish consonants are pronounced much the same way as their English counterparts. A few of the exceptions are listed below.

While the consonants **ch**, **ll** and **ñ** are generally considered distinct letters, **ch** and **ll** are now often listed alphabetically under **c** and **l** respectively. The letter **ñ** is still treated as a separate letter and comes after **n** in dictionaries.

b	similar to English 'b,' but softer; referred to as 'b larga'
c	as in 'celery' before e and i ; otherwise as English 'k'
ch	as in 'church'
d	as in 'dog,' but between vowels and after l or n , the sound is closer to the 'th' in 'this'
g	as the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> before e and i ('kh' in our guides to pronunciation); elsewhere, as in 'go'
h	invariably silent. If your name begins with this letter, listen carefully if you're waiting for public officials to call you.
j	as the 'ch' in the Scottish <i>loch</i> (written as 'kh' in our guides to pronunciation)
ll	as the 'y' in 'yellow'
ñ	as the 'ni' in 'onion'

r	a short r except at the beginning of a word, and after l , n or s , when it's often rolled
rr	very strongly rolled
v	similar to English 'b,' but softer; referred to as 'b corta'
x	usually pronounced as j above; in some indigenous place names it's pronounced as an 's'; as in 'taxi' in other instances
z	as the 's' in 'sun'

Word Stress

In general, words ending in vowels or the letters **n** or **s** have stress on the next-to-last syllable, while those with other endings have stress on the last syllable. Thus *vaca* (cow) and *caballos* (horses) both carry stress on the next-to-last syllable, while *ciudad* (city) and *infeliz* (unhappy) are both stressed on the last syllable.

Written accents will almost always appear in words that don't follow the rules above, eg *sótano* (basement), *América* and *porción* (portion).

GENDER & PLURALS

In Spanish, nouns are either masculine or feminine, and there are rules to help determine gender (there are of course some exceptions). Feminine nouns generally end with **-a** or with the groups **-ción**, **-sión** or **-dad**. Other endings typically signify a masculine noun. Endings for adjectives also change to agree with the gender of the noun they modify (masculine/feminine **-o/-a**). Where both masculine and feminine forms are included in this language guide, they are separated by a slash, with the masculine form first, eg *perdido/a*.

If a noun or adjective ends in a vowel, the plural is formed by adding **s** to the end. If it ends in a consonant, the plural is formed by adding **es** to the end.

ACCOMMODATIONS

I'm looking for ...	<i>Estoy buscando ...</i>	e-stoy boos-kan-do ...
Where is ...?	<i>¿Dónde hay ...?</i>	don-de ai ...
a hotel	<i>un hotel</i>	oon o-tel
a boarding house	<i>una pensión/ residencial/ un hospedaje</i>	oo-na pen-syon/ re-see-den-syal/ oon os-pe-da-khe
a youth hostel	<i>un albergue juvenil</i>	oon al-ber-ge khoo-ve-neel

MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written requests)

To ...	<i>A ...</i>
From ...	<i>De ...</i>
Date	<i>Fecha</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Quisiera reservar ...</i> (see the list under 'Accommodations' for bed and room options)
in the name of ...	<i>en nombre de ...</i>
for the nights of ...	<i>para las noches del ...</i>
credit card ...	<i>tarjeta de crédito ...</i>
number	<i>número</i>
expiry date	<i>fecha de vencimiento</i>
Please confirm ...	<i>Puede confirmar ...</i>
availability	<i>la disponibilidad</i>
price	<i>el precio</i>

Are there any rooms available?

¿Hay habitaciones libres? ai a-bee-ta-syon-es lee-bres

I'd like a ...	<i>Quisiera una</i>	kee-sye-ra oo-na
room.	<i>habitación ...</i>	a-bee-ta-syon ...
double	<i>doble</i>	do-ble
single	<i>individual</i>	een-dee-vee-dwal
twin	<i>con dos camas</i>	kon dos ka-mas

How much is it per ...?	<i>¿Cuánto cuesta por ...?</i>	kwan-to kwes-ta por ...
night	<i>noche</i>	no-che
person	<i>persona</i>	per-so-na
week	<i>semana</i>	se-ma-na

full board	<i>pensión completa</i>	pen-syon kom-ple-ta
private/shared bathroom	<i>baño privado/ compartido</i>	ba-nyo pree-va-do/ kom-par-tee-do
too expensive	<i>demasiado caro</i>	de-ma-sya-do ka-ro
cheaper	<i>más económico</i>	mas e-ko-no-mee-ko
discount	<i>descuento</i>	des-kwen-to

Does it include breakfast?

¿Incluye el desayuno? een-kloo-ye el de-sa-yoo-no

May I see the room?

¿Puedo ver la habitación? pwe-do ver la a-bee-ta-syon

I don't like it.

No me gusta. no me goos-ta

It's fine. I'll take it.

OK. La alquilo. o-kay la al-kee-lo

I'm leaving now.

Me voy ahora. me voy a-o-ra

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

In their public behavior, South Americans are very conscious of civilities, sometimes to the point of ceremoniousness. Never approach a stranger for information without extending a greeting, and use only the polite form of address, especially with the police and public officials. Young people may be less likely to expect this, but it's best to stick to the polite form unless you're quite sure you won't offend by using the informal mode. The polite form is used in all cases in this guide; where options are given, the form is indicated by the abbreviations 'pol' and 'inf.'

Saying *por favor* (please) and *gracias* (thank you) are second nature to most Guatemalans and a recommended tool in your travel kit. The three most common Spanish greetings are often shortened to simply *buenos* (for *buenos días*) and *buenas* (for *buenas tardes* and *buenas noches*).

Hello.	<i>Hola.</i>	o-la
Good morning.	<i>Buenos días.</i>	bwe-nos dee-as
Good afternoon.	<i>Buenas tardes.</i>	bwe-nas tar-des
Good evening/ night.	<i>Buenas noches.</i>	bwe-nas no-ches
Goodbye.	<i>Adiós.</i>	a-dyos (rarely used)
See you soon.	<i>Hasta luego.</i>	as-ta lwe-go
Yes.	<i>Sí.</i>	see
No.	<i>No.</i>	no
Please.	<i>Por favor.</i>	por fa-vor
Thank you.	<i>Gracias.</i>	gra-syas
Many thanks.	<i>Muchas gracias.</i>	moo-chas gra-syas
You're welcome.	<i>De nada.</i>	de na-da
Pardon me.	<i>Perdón.</i>	per-don
Excuse me.	<i>Permiso.</i>	per-mee-so
	(used when asking permission)	
Forgive me.	<i>Disculpe.</i>	dees-kool-pe
	(used when apologizing)	

How are things?

¿Qué tal? ke tal

What's your name?

¿Cómo se llama? ko-mo se ya-ma (pol)

¿Cómo te llamas? ko-mo te ya-mas (inf)

My name is ...

Me llamo ... me ya-mo ...

It's a pleasure to meet you.

Mucho gusto. moo-cho goos-to

The pleasure is mine.

El gusto es mío. el goos-to es mee-o

Where are you from?

¿De dónde es/eres? de don-de es/er-es (pol/inf)

I'm from ...

Soy de ... soy de ...

Where are you staying?

¿Dónde está alojado? don-de es-ta a-lo-kha-do (pol)

¿Dónde estás alojado? don-de es-tas a-lo-kha-do (inf)

May I take a photo?

¿Puedo sacar una foto? pwe-do sa-kar oo-na fo-to

DIRECTIONS

How do I get to ...?

¿Cómo puedo llegar a ...? ko-mo pwe-do ye-gar a ...

Is it far?

¿Está lejos? es-ta le-khos

Go straight ahead.

Siga/Vaya derecho. see-ga/va-ya de-re-cho

Turn left.

Voltée a la izquierda. vol-te-e a la ees-kyer-da

Turn right.

Voltée a la derecha. vol-te-e a la de-re-cha

I'm lost.

Estoy perdido/a. es-toy per-dee-do/a

Can you show me (on the map)?

¿Me lo podría indicar (en el mapa)? me lo po-dree-a een-dee-kar (en el ma-pa)

SIGNS

Entrada	Entrance
Salida	Exit
Información	Information
Abierto	Open
Cerrado	Closed
Prohibido	Prohibited
Comisaría	Police Station
Servicios/Baños	Toilets
Hombres/Varones	Men
Mujeres/Damas	Women

north	<i>norte</i>	<i>nor-te</i>
south	<i>sur</i>	<i>soor</i>
east	<i>este/oriente</i>	<i>es-te/o-ryen-te</i>
west	<i>oeste/occidente</i>	<i>o-es-te/ok-see-den-te</i>
here	<i>aquí</i>	<i>a-kee</i>
there	<i>allí</i>	<i>a-yee</i>
avenue	<i>avenida</i>	<i>a-ve-nee-da</i>
block	<i>cuadra</i>	<i>kwa-dra</i>
street	<i>calle/paseo</i>	<i>ka-lye/pa-se-o</i>

HEALTH

I'm sick.

Estoy enfermo/a. es-toy en-fer-mo/a

I need a doctor.

Necesito un médico. ne-se-see-to oon me-dee-ko

Where's the hospital?

¿Dónde está el hospital? don-de es-ta el os-pee-tal

EMERGENCIES

Help!	<i>¡Socorro!</i>	so-ko-ro
Fire!	<i>¡Incendio!</i>	een-sen-dyo
I've been robbed.	<i>Me robaron.</i>	me ro-ba-ron
Go away!	<i>¡Déjeme!</i>	de-khe-me
Get lost!	<i>¡Váyase!</i>	va-ya-se
Call ...!	<i>¡Llame a ...!</i>	ya-me a
an ambulance	<i>una ambulancia</i>	oo-na am-boo-lan-sya
a doctor	<i>un médico</i>	oon me-dee-ko
the police	<i>la policía</i>	la po-lee-see-a

It's an emergency.

Es una emergencia. es oo-na e-mer-khen-sya

Could you help me, please?

¿Me puede ayudar, por favor? me pwe-de a-yoo-dar por fa-vor

I'm lost.

Estoy perdido/a. es-toy per-dee-do/a

Where are the toilets?

¿Dónde están los baños? don-de es-tan los ba-nyos

I'm pregnant.

Estoy embarazada. es-toy em-ba-ra-sa-da

I've been vaccinated.

Estoy vacunado/a. es-toy va-koo-na-do/a

I'm allergic to ...	<i>Soy alérgico/a (a) ...</i>	soy a-ler-khee-ko/a (a) ...
antibiotics	<i>los antibióticos</i>	los an-tee-byo-tee-kos
nuts	<i>las nueces</i>	las nwe-ses
penicillin	<i>la penicilina</i>	la pe-nee-see-lee-na
peanuts	<i>al maní</i>	al ma-nee

I'm ...	<i>Soy ...</i>	soy ...
asthmatic	<i>asmático/a</i>	as-ma-tee-ko/a
diabetic	<i>diabético/a</i>	dya-be-tee-ko/a
epileptic	<i>epiléptico/a</i>	e-pee-lep-tee-ko/a

I have ...	<i>Tengo ...</i>	ten-go ...
altitude sickness	<i>soroche</i>	so-ro-che
diarrhea	<i>diarrea</i>	dya-re-a
nausea	<i>náusea</i>	now-se-a
a headache	<i>un dolor de cabeza</i>	oon do-lor de ka-be-sa
a cough	<i>tos</i>	tos

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak (English)?**

¿Habla/Hablas (inglés)? a-bla/a-blas (een-gles) (pol/inf)

Does anyone here speak English?

¿Hay alguien que hable inglés? ai al-gyen ke a-ble een-gles

I (don't) understand.

Yo (no) entiendo. yo (no) en-tyen-do

How do you say ...?

¿Cómo se dice ...? ko-mo se dee-se ...

What does ...mean?

¿Qué quiere decir ...? ke kye-re de-seer ...

Could you please ...?	<i>¿Puede ..., por favor?</i>	pwe-de ... por fa-vor
repeat that	<i>repetirlo</i>	re-pe-teer-lo
speak more slowly	<i>hablar más despacio</i>	a-blar mas des-pa-syo
write it down	<i>escribirlo</i>	es-kree-beer-lo

NUMBERS

0	<i>ceros</i>	se-ro
1	<i>uno</i>	oo-no
2	<i>dos</i>	dos
3	<i>tres</i>	tres
4	<i>cuatro</i>	kwa-tro
5	<i>cinco</i>	seen-ko
6	<i>seis</i>	says
7	<i>siete</i>	sye-te
8	<i>ocho</i>	o-cho
9	<i>nueve</i>	nwe-ve
10	<i>diez</i>	dyes
11	<i>once</i>	on-se
12	<i>doce</i>	do-se
13	<i>trece</i>	tre-se
14	<i>catorce</i>	ka-tor-se
15	<i>quince</i>	keen-se
16	<i>dieciséis</i>	dye-see-says
17	<i>diecisiete</i>	dye-see-sye-te
18	<i>dieciocho</i>	dye-see-o-cho
19	<i>diecinueve</i>	dye-see-nwe-ve
20	<i>veinte</i>	vayn-te
21	<i>veintiuno</i>	vayn-tee-oo-no
30	<i>treinta</i>	trayn-ta
31	<i>treinta y uno</i>	trayn-ta ee oo-no
40	<i>cuarenta</i>	kwa-ren-ta
50	<i>cincuenta</i>	seen-kwen-ta
60	<i>sesenta</i>	se-sen-ta
70	<i>setenta</i>	se-ten-ta
80	<i>ochenta</i>	o-chen-ta
90	<i>noventa</i>	no-ven-ta
100	<i>cien</i>	syen
101	<i>ciento uno</i>	syen-to oo-no
200	<i>doscientos</i>	do-syen-tos
1000	<i>mil</i>	meel
5000	<i>cinco mil</i>	seen-ko meel
10,000	<i>diez mil</i>	dyes meel
50,000	<i>cincuenta mil</i>	seen-kwen-ta meel

SHOPPING & SERVICES**I'd like to buy ...**

Quisiera comprar ... kee-sye-ra kom-prar ...

I'm just looking.

Sólo estoy mirando. so-lo es-toy mee-ran-do

May I look at it?

¿Puedo mirarlo/la? pwe-do mee-rar-lo/la

How much is it?

¿Cuánto cuesta? kwan-to kwes-ta

That's too expensive.

Es demasiado caro. es de-ma-sya-do ka-ro

Could you lower the price?

¿Podría bajar un poco el precio? po-dree-a ba-khar oon po-ko el pre-syo

I don't like it.

No me gusta. no me goos-ta

I'll take it.

Lo llevo. lo ye-vo

Do you accept ...?

¿Aceptan ...? a-sep-tan ...

American dollars

dólares do-la-res

credit cards

americanos a-me-ree-ka-nos

traveler's checks

tarjetas de crédito tar-khe-tas de kre-dee-to

cheques de viajero che-kes de vya-khe-ro

less

menos me-nos

more

más mas

large

grande gran-de

small

pequeño/a pe-ke-nyo/a

I'm looking for (the) ...

Estoy buscando ... es-toy boos-kan-do ...

ATM

el cajero el ka-khe-ro

automático ow-to-ma-tee-ko

bank

el banco el ban-ko

bookstore

la librería la lee-bre-ree-a

embassy

la embajada la em-ba-kha-da

exchange house

la casa de cambio la ka-sa de kam-byo

general store

la tienda la tyen-da

laundry

la lavandería la la-van-de-ree-a

market

el mercado el mer-ka-do

pharmacy/chemist

la farmacia/ la far-ma-sya/

la droguería la dro-ge-ree-a

post office

los correos los ko-re-os

supermarket

el supermercado el soo-per-mer-ka-do

tourist office

la oficina de turismo la o-fee-see-na de too-rees-mo

What time does it open/close?

¿A qué hora abre/cierra? a ke o-ra a-bre/sye-ra

I want to change some money/traveler's checks.

Quiero cambiar dinero/ kye-ro kam-byar dee-ne-ro/

cheques de viajero. che-kes de vya-khe-ro

What is the exchange rate?

¿Cuál es el tipo de cambio? kwal es el tee-po de kam-byo

How many quetzals per dollar?

¿Cuántos quetzales por kwan-tos ket-za-les por

dólar? do-lar

I want to call ...

Quiero llamar a ... kye-ro lya-mar a ...

airmail

correo aéreo ko-re-o a-e-re-o

letter

carta kar-ta

registered mail

certificado ser-tee-fee-ka-do

stamps

estampillas es-tam-pee-lyas

TIME & DATES**What time is it?**

¿Qué hora es? ke o-ra es

It's one o'clock.

Es la una. es la oo-na

It's six o'clock.

Son las seis. son las says

midnight

medianoche me-dya-no-che

noon

mediodía me-dyo-dee-a

half past two

dos y media dos ee me-dya

now

ahora a-o-ra

today

hoy oy

tonight

esta noche es-ta no-che

tomorrow

mañana ma-nya-na

yesterday

ayer a-yer

Monday

lunes loo-nes

Tuesday

martes mar-tes

Wednesday

miércoles myer-ko-les

Thursday

jueves khwe-ves

Friday

viernes vyer-nes

Saturday

sábado sa-ba-do

Sunday

domingo do-meen-go

January

enero e-ne-ro

February

febrero fe-bre-ro

March

marzo mar-so

April

abril a-bree-l

May

mayo ma-yo

June

junio khoo-nyo

July

julio khoo-lyo

August

agosto a-gos-to

September

septiembre sep-tyem-bre

October

octubre ok-too-bre

November

noviembre no-vyem-bre

December

diciembre dee-syem-bre

TRANSPORTATION**Public Transportation****What time does ... leave/arrive?**

¿A qué hora ... a ke o-ra ...

sale/llega? sa-le/ye-ga

the bus	<i>el autobús/ la camioneta</i>	el ow-to-boos/ la ka-mee-o-ne-ta
the pickup	<i>el picop/ la camioneta</i>	el pee-kop/ la ka-mee-o-ne-ta
the bus (long distance)	<i>el autobús/ la flota</i>	el ow-to-boos/ la flo ta
the plane	<i>el avión</i>	el a-vyon
the ship	<i>el barco/buque</i>	el bar-ko/boo-ke
airport	<i>el aeropuerto</i>	el a-e-ro-pwer-to
bus station	<i>la estación de autobuses</i>	la es-ta-syon de ow-to-boo-ses
bus stop	<i>la parada de autobuses</i>	la pa-ra-da de ow-to-boo-ses
luggage check room	<i>la guardería/ el equipaje</i>	la gwar-de-ree-a/ el e-kee-pa-khe
ticket office	<i>la boletería</i>	la bo-le-te-ree-a

I'd like a ticket to ...

Quiero un boleto a ... kye-ro oon bo-le-to a ...

What's the fare to ...?

¿Cuánto cuesta hasta ...? kwan-to kwes-ta a-sta ...

student's	<i>de estudiante</i>	de es-too-dyan-te
1st class	<i>primera clase</i>	pree-me-ra kla-se
2nd class	<i>segunda clase</i>	se-goona da kla-se
single/one-way	<i>ida</i>	ee-da
return/round- trip	<i>ida y vuelta</i>	ee-da ee vwel-ta
taxi	<i>taxi</i>	tak-see

Private Transportation

I'd like to hire a/an ... bicycle	<i>Quisiera alquilar ... una bicicleta</i>	kee-sye-ra al-kee-lar ... oo-na bee-see- kle-ta
car	<i>un auto</i>	oon ow-to
4WD	<i>un todo terreno</i>	oon to-do te-re-no
motorbike	<i>una moto</i>	oo-na mo-to

pickup (truck)	<i>camioneta</i>	ka-myo-ne-ta
truck	<i>camión</i>	ka-myon
hitchhike	<i>hacer dedo</i>	a-ser de-do

Is this the road to (...)?

*¿Se va a (...) por esta
carretera?* se va a (...) por es-ta
ka-re-te-ra

Where's a petrol station?

*¿Dónde hay una
gasolinera/un grifo?* don-de ai oo-na
ga-so-lee-ne-ra/oon gree-fo

Please fill it up.

Lleno, por favor. ye-no por fa-vor

I'd like (20) liters.

Quiero (veinte) litros. kye-ro (vayn-te) lee-tros

ROAD SIGNS

Acceso	Entrance
Aparcamiento	Parking
Ceda el Paso	Give Way
Despacio	Slow
Dirección Única	One-Way
Mantenga Su Derecha	Keep to the Right
No Adelantar/ No Rebase	No Passing
Peaje	Toll
Peligro	Danger
Prohibido Aparcar/ No Estacionar	No Parking
Prohibido el Paso	No Entry
Pare/Stop	Stop
Salida de Autopista	Exit Freeway

diesel	<i>diesel</i>	dee-sel
leaded (regular)	<i>gasolina con plomo</i>	ga-so-lee-na kon plo-mo
gas/petrol	<i>gasolina</i>	ga-so-lee-na
unleaded	<i>gasolina sin plomo</i>	ga-so-lee-na seen plo-mo

(How long) Can I park here?

*¿(Por cuánto tiempo)
Puedo aparcar aquí?* (por kwan-to tyem-po)
pwe-do a-par-kar a-kee

Where do I pay?

¿Dónde se paga? don-de se pa-ga

I need a mechanic.

Necesito un mecánico. ne-se-see-to oon me-ka-nee-ko

The car has broken down (in ...).

*El carro se ha averiado
(en ...).* el ka-ro se a a-ve-rya-do
(en ...)

The motorbike won't start.

No arranca la moto. no a-ran-ka la mo-to

I have a flat tyre.

Tengo un pinchazo. ten-go oon peen-cha-so

I've run out of petrol.

Me quedé sin gasolina. me ke-de seen ga-so-lee-na

I've had an accident.

Tuve un accidente. too-ve oon ak-see-den-te

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

I need ...	<i>Necesito ...</i>	ne-se-see-to ...
Do you have ...?	<i>¿Hay ...?</i>	ai ...
a car baby seat	<i>un asiento de seguridad para bebés</i>	oon a-syen-to de se-goo-ree-da pa-ra be-bes
a child-minding service	<i>un servicio de cuidado de niños</i>	oon ser-vee-syo de kwee-da-do de nee-nyos
a children's menu	<i>una carta infantil</i>	oona kar-ta een-fan-teel

a creche	<i>una guardería</i>	oo-na gwar-de-ree-a
(disposable) diapers/nappies	<i>pañales (de usar y tirar)</i>	pa-nyo-les de oo-sar ee tee-rar
an (English-speaking) babysitter	<i>una niñera (de habla inglesa)</i>	oo-na nee-nye-ra (de a-bla een-gle-sa)
formula (milk)	<i>leche en polvo</i>	le-che en pol-vo
a highchair	<i>una trona</i>	oo-na tro-na
a potty	<i>una pelela</i>	oo-na pe-le-la
a stroller	<i>un cochecito</i>	oon ko-che-see-to

Do you mind if I breast-feed here?

¿Le molesta que dé de pecho aquí? le mo-les-ta ke de de pe-cho a-kee

Are children allowed?

¿Se admiten niños? se ad-mee-ten nee-nyos

MODERN MAYAN

Since the classic period, the two ancient Mayan languages, Yucatecan and Cholan, have subdivided into 35 separate Mayan languages (such as Yucatec, Chol, Chortí, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Lacandón, Mam, K'iche' and Kaqchiquel), some of them unintelligible to speakers of others, some not. Indigenous languages are seldom written, but when they are, the Roman alphabet is used. Most literate Maya will only be able to read and write Spanish, the language of government, schools, the church and the media – they may not be literate in Mayan.

Pronunciation

There are several rules to remember when pronouncing Mayan words and place names. Mayan vowels are pretty straightforward, but consonants can be tricky.

c	always hard, as in 'cat'
j	an aspirated 'h' sound, eg <i>jipijapa</i> is pronounced 'hee-pee-haa-pa' and <i>abaj</i> is pronounced 'a-bah'; to get the 'ah' sound, imagine the 'h' sound from 'half' at the end of a word
u	as in 'prune', except when it occurs at the beginning or end of a word, in which case it's like English 'w'; thus <i>baktun</i> is 'bak-toon,' but <i>Uaxactún</i> is 'wa-shak-toon' and <i>ahau</i> is 'a-haw'
x	as English 'sh'

Mayan glottalized consonants (indicated by an apostrophe: **b'**, **ch'**, **k'**, **p'**, **t'**) are similar to normal consonants, but are pronounced

more forcefully and 'explosively.' An apostrophe following a vowel signifies a glottal stop (like the momentary stop between the syllables in 'oh-oh!'), not a more forceful vowel.

Another rule to remember is that in most Mayan words the stress falls on the last syllable. Sometimes this is indicated by an acute accent, sometimes not. The following place names are useful guides to pronunciation:

Abaj Takalik	<i>a-bah ta-ka-leek</i>
Acanceh	<i>a-kan-keh</i>
Ahau	<i>a-haw</i>
Kaminaljuyú	<i>ka-mee-nal-hoo-yoo</i>
Pop	<i>pope</i>
Tikal	<i>tee-kal</i>
Uaxactún	<i>wa-shak-toon</i>

K'ICHE'

K'iche' is widely spoken throughout the Guatemalan Highlands, from around Santa Cruz del Quiché to the area adjacent to Lake Atitlán and around Quetzaltenango. There are estimated to be around two million K'iche' Maya living in Guatemala, giving you plenty of opportunity to practice some of the common terms and phrases listed below.

Greetings & Civilities

These are great icebreakers, and even if you're not completely and accurately understood, there'll be goodwill and smiles all around just for making the effort.

Good morning.	<i>Saqarik.</i>
Good afternoon.	<i>Xb'eqij.</i>
Good evening/night.	<i>Xokaq'ab'.</i>
Goodbye.	<i>Chab'ej.</i>
Bye. See you soon.	<i>Kimpetik ri.</i>
Thank you.	<i>Uts awech?</i>
Excuse me.	<i>Kyunala.</i>
What's your name?	<i>Su ra'b'i?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Nu b'i ...</i>
Where are you from?	<i>Ja kat pewi?</i>
I'm from ...	<i>Ch'qap ja'kin pewi ...</i>

Useful Words & Phrases

Where is (a/the) ...?	<i>Ja k'uichi' ri ...?</i>
bathroom	<i>b'anb'al chulu</i>
bus stop	<i>tek'lib'al</i>
doctor	<i>ajkun</i>
hotel	<i>jun worib'al</i>
police station	<i>ajchajil re tinamit</i>

Do you have ...?	<i>K'olik ...?</i>
boiled water	<i>saq'li</i>
coffee	<i>kab'e</i>
copal	<i>kach'</i>
a machete	<i>choyib'al</i>
rooms	<i>k'plib'al</i>

We have it.	<i>K'olik.</i>
We don't have it.	<i>K'otaj.</i>

blanket	<i>k'ul</i>
soap	<i>ch'ipaq</i>
vegetables	<i>ichaj</i>
good	<i>utz</i>
bad	<i>itzel</i>
open	<i>teb'am</i>
closed	<i>tzapilik</i>
hard	<i>ko</i>
soft	<i>ch'uch'uj</i>
hot	<i>miq'in</i>
cold	<i>joron</i>
sick	<i>yiwab'</i>
north (white)	<i>saq</i>
south (yellow)	<i>k'an</i>
east (red)	<i>kaq</i>
west (black)	<i>k'eq</i>

Numbers

1	<i>jun</i>
2	<i>keb'</i>
3	<i>oxib'</i>
4	<i>kijeb'</i>
5	<i>job'</i>
6	<i>waq'ib'</i>
7	<i>wuqub'</i>
8	<i>wajxakib'</i>
9	<i>b'elejeb'</i>
10	<i>lajuj</i>
11	<i>julajuj</i>
12	<i>kab'lajuj</i>
13	<i>oxlajuj</i>
14	<i>kajlajuj</i>
15	<i>o'lajuj</i>
16	<i>waklajuj</i>
17	<i>wuklajuj</i>
18	<i>wajxaklajuj</i>
19	<i>b'elejlajuj</i>
20	<i>juwinak</i>
30	<i>lajuj re kawinak</i>
40	<i>kawinak</i>
50	<i>lajuj re oxk'al</i>
60	<i>oxk'al</i>
70	<i>lajuj re waqk'al</i>
80	<i>waqk'al</i>
90	<i>lajuj re o'k'al</i>

100	<i>o'k'al</i>
200	<i>lajuj k'al</i>
400	<i>omuch'</i>

MAM

Mam is spoken in the department of Huehuetenango, in the western portion of the country. This is the indigenous language you'll hear in Todos Santos Cuchumatán, which is nestled among the Cuchumatanes mountains.

Greetings & Civilities

Luckily, in Mam you only need two phrases for greeting folks, no matter what time of day it is.

Good morning/	<i>Chin q'olb'el teya.</i>
afternoon/evening.	(informal singular)

Chin q'olb'el kyeyea.
(informal plural)

Goodbye. *Chi nej.*

Bye. See you soon. *Chi nej. Ak qli qib'.*

Thank you. *Chonte teya.*

How are you? *Tzen ta'ya?*

Excuse me. *Naq samy.*

What's your name? *Tit biya?*

My name is ... *Luan bi ...*

Where are you from? *Jaa'tzajnia?*

I'm from ... *Ac tzajni ...*

Useful Words & Phrases

Where is (a/the) ...?	<i>Ja at ...?</i>
bathroom	<i>bano</i>
doctor	<i>medico/doctor</i>
hotel	<i>hospedaje</i>

Many words in Mam have been in disuse for so long that the Spanish equivalent is now used almost exclusively.

Where is the bus stop?	<i>Ja nue camioneta? (literally, where does the pickup stop?)</i>
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How much is the fruit and vegetables?	<i>Je te ti lobj?</i>
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Do you have ...?	<i>At ...?</i>
boiled water	<i>kqa'</i>
coffee	<i>café</i>
rooms	<i>cuartos</i>

Is there somewhere we can sleep?	<i>Ja tun kqta'n?</i>
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We have it. *At.*

We don't have it. *Nti'.*

I'm cold. *At xb'a'j/choj.*

I'm sick.	<i>At yab'</i>
good	<i>banex/g'lan</i>
bad	<i>k'ab'ex/nia g'lan</i>
open	<i>jqo'n</i>
closed	<i>jpu'n</i>
hard	<i>kuj</i>
soft	<i>xb'une</i>
hot	<i>kyaq</i>
north (white)	<i>okan</i>

south (yellow)	<i>eln</i>
east (red)	<i>jawl</i>
west (black)	<i>kub'el</i>

Numbers

The numbers from one to 10 are the same as in K'iche' (p341). For numbers higher than 10, Mam speakers use the Spanish equivalents.



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Latin American Spanish Phrasebook

Glossary

abrazo – embrace, hug; in particular, the formal, ceremonial hug between political leaders

alux, aluxes – Mayan for gremlin, leprechaun, benevolent ‘little people’

Apartado Postal – post-office box; abbreviated Apdo Postal

Ayuntamiento – often seen as H Ayuntamiento (Honorable Ayuntamiento) on the front of town hall buildings; translates as ‘Municipal Government’

barrio – district, neighborhood

billete – bank note (unlike in Spain, where it’s a ticket)

boleto – ticket (bus, train, museum etc)

bolo – colloquial term for drunk (noun)

cabañas – cabins

cacique – Mayan chief; also used to describe provincial warlord or strongman

cafétería – literally ‘coffee-shop,’ but refers to any informal restaurant with waiter service; not usually a *cafétería* in the North American sense of a self-service restaurant

cajero automático – automated teller machine(ATM)

callejón – alley or narrow or very short street

camión – truck or bus

camioneta – bus or pickup truck

cardamomo – cardamom; a spice grown extensively in the Verapaces and used as a flavor enhancer for coffee and tea, particularly in the Middle East

casa de cambio – currency exchange office; offers exchange rates comparable to those of banks and is much faster to use (uncommon in Guatemala)

cazuela – clay cooking pot; usually sold in a nested set

cenote – large, natural limestone cave used for water storage (or ceremonial purposes)

cerveza – beer

Chac – Mayan god of rain

chac-mool – Mayan sacrificial stone sculpture

chapín – citizen of Guatemala

charro – cowboy

chicle – sap of the *sapodilla* tree; used to manufacture chewing gum

chicleros – men who collect *chicle*

chingar – literally ‘to rape’ but in practice a word with a wide range of colloquial meanings similar to the use of ‘to screw’ in English

Chinka’ – small, non-Mayan indigenous group living on the Pacific Slope

chuchkajau – Mayan prayer leader

chuj – traditional Mayan sauna; see also *tuj*

chultún – artificial Mayan cistern

cigarro – cigarette

cocina – kitchen; also used for a small, basic one-woman place to eat, often located in or near a municipal market, and in the phrases *cocina económica* (economical kitchen) or a *cocina familiar* (family kitchen)

cofradía – religious brotherhood, most often found in the Highlands

colectivo – jitney taxi or minibus (usually a Kombi or minibus) that picks up and drops off passengers along its route

comal – hot griddle or surface used to cook tortillas

comedor – basic and cheap eatery, usually with a limited menu

completo – full; a sign you may see on hotel desks in crowded cities

conquistador – explorer-conqueror of Latin America from Spain

copal – tree resin used as incense in Mayan ceremonies

correos – post office

corte – Mayan wraparound skirt

costumbre – traditional Mayan rites

criollos – people born in Guatemala of Spanish blood

cruce – crossroads, usually where you make bus connections; also known as *entronque*

curandero – traditional indigenous healer

damas – ladies; the usual sign on toilet doors

dzul, dzules – Mayan for foreigners or ‘townsfolk’

encomienda – Spanish colonial practice of putting indigenous people under the ‘guardianship’ of landowners; practically akin to medieval serfdom

entronque – see *cruce*

faja – Mayan waist sash or belt

ferrocarril – railroad

finca – plantation, farm

galón, galones – US gallons; fluid measure of 3.79L

glyph – symbolic character or figure; usually engraved or carved in relief

gringo/a – a mildly pejorative term applied to a male/female North American visitor; sometimes applied to any visitor of European heritage

gruta – cave

guayabera – man’s thin fabric shirt with pockets and appliquéd designs on the front, over the shoulders and

344 GLOSSARY

down the back; often worn in place of a jacket and tie on formal occasions

hacienda – estate; also ‘treasury,’ as in Departamento de Hacienda, Treasury Department

hay – pronounced like ‘eye,’ meaning ‘there is’ or ‘there are’; you’re equally likely to hear *no hay*, meaning ‘there isn’t’ or ‘there aren’t’

hombre/s – man/men

huipil – Mayan woman’s woven tunic; often very colorful and elaborately embroidered

IVA – impuesto al valor agregado or value-added tax; on hotel rooms it is 12%

juego de pelota – ball game

kaperraj – Mayan woman’s all-purpose cloth; used as a head covering, baby sling, produce sack, shawl and more

Kukulcán – Mayan name for the Aztec-Toltec plumed serpent Quetzalcóatl

ladino – person of mixed indigenous and European race; a more common term in Guatemala than *mestizo*

lancha – motorboat used to transport passengers; driven by a *lanchero*

larga distancia – long-distance telephone

lavandería – laundry; a *lavandería automática* is a coin-operated laundry

leng – in the highlands, a colloquial Mayan term for coins

libra – pound; weight measurement of 0.45kg

lleno – full (fuel tank)

machismo – maleness, masculine virility

malecón – waterfront boulevard

manglar – mangrove

manzana – apple; also a city block; see also *supermanzana*

mariachi – small group of street musicians featuring stringed instruments, trumpets and often an accordion; sometimes plays in restaurants

marimba – Guatemala’s xylophone-like national instrument

mestizo – person of mixed indigenous and European blood; the word *ladino* is more common in Guatemala

metate – flattish stone on which corn is ground with a cylindrical stone roller

milla – mile; distance of 1.6km

milpa – maize field

mirador – lookout, vista point

mochilero – backpacker

mordida – ‘bite’; small bribe paid to keep the wheels of bureaucracy turning

mudéjar – Moorish architectural style

mujer/es – woman/women

na – thatched Mayan hut

onza – ounce; weight of 28g

pachete – a squash-type vegetable; can be eaten or used as a loafah

palacio de gobierno – building housing the executive offices of a state or regional government

palacio municipal – city hall; seat of the corporation or municipal government

palapa – thatched shelter with a palm-leaf roof and open sides

panza verde – literally ‘green belly,’ a nickname given to Antigua residents who are said to eat lots of avocados

parada – bus stop; usually for city buses

picop – pickup truck

pie – foot; measure of 0.30m

pisto – colloquial Mayan term for money, quetzals

posada – guesthouse

propino, propina – a tip, different from a *mordida*, which is really a bribe

punta – sexually suggestive dance enjoyed by the Garífuna of the Caribbean coast

puro – cigar

Quetzalcóatl – plumed serpent god of the Aztecs and Toltecs; see also *Kukulcán*

rebozo – long woolen or linen scarf covering the head or shoulders

refago – Mayan wraparound skirt

retablo – ornate, often gilded altarpiece

retorno – ‘return’; used on traffic signs to signify a U-turn or turnaround

roofcomb – a decorative stonework lattice atop a Mayan pyramid or temple

rutelero – jitney

sacbé, sacbeob – ceremonial limestone avenue or path between great Mayan cities

sacerdote – priest

sanatorio – hospital, particularly a small private one

sanitario – literally ‘sanitary’; usually means toilet

secadora – clothes dryer

Semana Santa – Holy Week preceding Easter

stela, stelae – standing stone monument(s); usually carved

supermanzana – large group of city blocks bounded by major avenues; see also *manzana*

supermercado – supermarket; anything from a corner store to a large, US-style supermarket

taller – shop or workshop

taller mecánico – mechanic’s shop, usually for cars

teléfono comunitario – community telephone; found in the smallest towns

tepezcuittle – edible jungle rodent the size of a rabbit

tequila – clear, distilled liquor produced, like pulque and mescal, from the maguey cactus

tienda – small store that may sell anything from candles and chickens to aspirin and bread

típico – typical or characteristic of a region; particularly used to describe food

tocoyal – Mayan head covering

traje – traditional clothing worn by the Maya

tuj – traditional Mayan sauna; see also *chuj*

túmulos – speed bumps found in many towns; sometimes indicated by a highway sign bearing a row of little bumps

tzut – Mayan man's equivalent of a *kaperraj*

viajero – traveler

vulcanizadora – automobile tire repair shop

xate – low-growing fern native to the Petén region and exported for use in floral arrangements, particularly in the US

xateros – men who collect *xate*

zonas – zones

zotz – bat (the mammal) in many Mayan languages

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