

Language

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The predominant language of Mexico is Spanish. Mexican Spanish is unlike Castilian Spanish (the language of much of Spain) in two main respects: in Mexico the Castilian lisp has more or less disappeared and numerous indigenous words have been adopted. About 50 indigenous languages are spoken as a first language by more than seven million people, and about 15% of these don't speak Spanish.

Travelers in cities, towns and larger villages can almost always find someone who speaks at least some English. All the same, it is advantageous and courteous to know at least a few words and phrases in Spanish. Mexicans will generally respond much more positively if you attempt to speak to them in their own language.

It's easy enough to pick up some basic Spanish, and for those who want to learn the language in greater depth, courses are available in several cities in Mexico (see Language Courses, p281). You can also study using books, records and tapes before you leave home. These resources are often available for loan from public libraries. Evening or college courses are also an excellent way to get started.

For a more comprehensive guide to the Spanish of Mexico, get a copy of Lonely

Planet's *Mexican Spanish Phrasebook*. For words and phrases that will come in handy when dining, see p55.

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. In addition, most Spanish sounds have English equivalents, so English speakers shouldn't have too much trouble being understood.

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 *argüür*), 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 *ley*); between vowels within a word it's as the 'y' in 'yonder'

Consonants

As a rule, Spanish consonants resemble their English counterparts. 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 *loch* 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 Scottish <i>loch</i> (written as 'kh' in our guides to pronunciation)
ll	varies between the 'y' in 'yes' and the 'lli' in 'million'
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 (not reflected in the pronunciation guides)
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), *porción* (portion), *América*.

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 ...

Estoy buscando ... e-stoy boos-kan-do ...

Where is ...?

¿Dónde hay ...? don-de ai ...

a cabin/cabana

una cabaña oo-na ca-ba-nya

a camping ground

un área para acampar oon a-re-a pa-ra a-kam-par

a guesthouse

una pensión oo-na pen-syon

a hotel

un hotel oon o-tel

a lodging house

una casa de huéspedes oo-na ka-sa de wes-pe-des

a posada

una posada oo-na po-sa-da

a youth hostel

un albergue juvenil 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 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?

ay 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 ...? *¿Cuánto cuesta por ...?* 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 cheaper	<i>demasiado caro/más económico</i>	de-ma-sya-do ka-ro 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.

Está bien. La tomo. es-ta byen la to-mo

I'm leaving now.

Me voy ahora. me voy a-o-ra

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

When approaching a stranger for information you should always extend 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 Mexicans and a recommended tool in your travel kit.

Hi.	<i>Hola.</i>	o-la (inf)
Hello.	<i>Buen día.</i>	bwe-n dee-a
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
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
Apologies.	<i>Perdón.</i>	per-don
May I?	<i>Permiso.</i>	per-mee-so
Excuse me.	<i>Disculpe.</i>	dees-kool-pe

(used before a request or when apologizing)

How are things?

¿Qué tal? ke tal

What's your name?

¿Cómo se llama usted? ko-mo se ya-ma oo-sted (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 llego a ...? ko-mo ye-go 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

Can you show me (on the map)?

¿Me lo podría señalar (en el mapa)? me lo po-dree-a se-nya-lar (en el ma-pa)

north	<i>norte</i>	nor-te
south	<i>sur</i>	soor
east	<i>este</i>	es-te
west	<i>oeste</i>	o-es-te
here	<i>aquí</i>	a-kee

SIGNS

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

there	<i>ahí</i>	a-ee
avenue	<i>avenida</i>	a-ve-nee-da
block	<i>cuadra</i>	kwa-dra
street	<i>calle/paseo</i>	ka-lye/pa-se-o

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

EMERGENCIAS

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

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 stan los ba-nyos

HEALTH

I'm sick.

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

I need a doctor.

Necesito un doctor. ne-se-see-to oon dok-tor

Where's the hospital?

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

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 have ...	<i>Tengo ...</i>	ten-go ...
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
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
penicillin	<i>la penicilina</i>	la pe-nee-see-lee-na
nuts	<i>las fruta secas</i>	las froo-tas se-kas

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.

(No) Entiendo. (no) en-tyen-do

How do you say ...?

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

What does ...mean?

¿Qué significa ...? ke seeg-nee-fee-ka ...

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

NUMBERS

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-se
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

PAPERWORK

birth certificate	<i>certificado de nacimiento</i>
border (frontier)	<i>la frontera</i>
car-owner's title	<i>título de propiedad</i>
car registration	<i>registración</i>
customs	<i>aduana</i>
driver's license	<i>licencia de manejar</i>
identification	<i>identificación</i>
immigration	<i>migración</i>
insurance	<i>seguro</i>
passport	<i>pasaporte</i>
temporary vehicle import permit	<i>permiso de importación temporal de vehículo</i>
tourist card	<i>tarjeta de turista</i>
visa	<i>visado</i>

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	<i>Quisiera comprar ...</i>	kee-sye-ra kom-prar ...
I'm just looking.	<i>Sólo estoy mirando.</i>	so-lo es-toy mee-ran-do
May I look at it?	<i>¿Puedo verlo/la?</i>	pwe-do ver-lo/la
How much is it?	<i>¿Cuánto cuesta?</i>	kwan-to kwes-ta
That's too expensive for me.	<i>Es demasiado caro para mí.</i>	es de-ma-sya-do ka-ro pa-ra mee
Could you lower the price?	<i>¿Podría bajar un poco el precio?</i>	po-dree-a ba-khar oon po-ko el pre-syo
I don't like it.	<i>No me gusta.</i>	no me goos-ta
I'll take it.	<i>Lo llevo.</i>	lo ye-vo
Do you accept ...?	<i>¿Aceptan ...?</i>	a-sep-tan ...
American dollars	<i>dólares americanos</i>	do-la-res a-me-ree-ka-nos
credit cards	<i>tarjetas de crédito</i>	tar-khe-tas de kre-dee-to
traveler's checks	<i>cheques de viajero</i>	che-kes de vya-khe-ro

less	<i>menos</i>	me-nos
more	<i>más</i>	mas

large	<i>grande</i>	gran-de
small	<i>pequeño/a</i>	pe-ke-nyo/a

I'm looking for (the) ...	<i>Estoy buscando ...</i>	es-toy boos-kan-do
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ATM	<i>el cajero automático</i>	el ka-khe-ro ow-to-ma-tee-ko
bank	<i>el banco</i>	el ban-ko
bookstore	<i>la librería</i>	la lee-bre-ree-a
exchange house	<i>la casa de cambio</i>	la ka-sa de kam-byo
general store	<i>la tienda</i>	la tyen-da
laundry	<i>la lavandería</i>	la la-van-de-ree-a
market	<i>el mercado</i>	el mer-ka-do
pharmacy/chemist	<i>la farmacia</i>	la far-ma-sya
post office	<i>la oficina de correos</i>	la o-fee-see-na de ko-re-os
supermarket	<i>el supermercado</i>	el soo-per-mer-ka-do
tourist office	<i>la oficina de turismo</i>	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.

Quisiera cambiar dinero/cheques de viajero.

kee-sye-ra kam-byar dee-ne-ro/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

I want to call ...

Quisiera llamar a ...

kee-sye-ra lya-mar a ...

airmail	<i>correo aéreo</i>	ko-re-o a-e-re-o
letter	<i>carta</i>	kar-ta
registered (mail)	<i>certificado</i>	ser-tee-fee-ka-do
stamps	<i>timbres</i>	teem-bres

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 seven o'clock.

Son las siete. son las sye-te

Half past two.

Dos y media. dos ee me-dya

midnight	<i>medianoche</i>	me-dya-no-che
noon	<i>mediodía</i>	me-dyo-dee-a
now	<i>ahora</i>	a-o-ra

today	<i>hoy</i>	oy
tonight	<i>esta noche</i>	es-ta no-che
tomorrow	<i>mañana</i>	ma-nya-na
yesterday	<i>ayer</i>	a-yer

Monday	<i>lunes</i>	loo-nes
Tuesday	<i>martes</i>	mar-tes
Wednesday	<i>miércoles</i>	myer-ko-les
Thursday	<i>jueves</i>	khwe-ves
Friday	<i>viernes</i>	vyer-nes
Saturday	<i>sábado</i>	sa-ba-do
Sunday	<i>domingo</i>	do-meen-go

January	<i>enero</i>	e-ne-ro
February	<i>febrero</i>	fe-bre-ro
March	<i>marzo</i>	mar-so
April	<i>abril</i>	a-breel
May	<i>mayo</i>	ma-yo
June	<i>junio</i>	khoo-nyo
July	<i>julio</i>	khoo-lyo
August	<i>agosto</i>	a-gos-to
September	<i>septiembre</i>	sep-tyem-bre
October	<i>octubre</i>	ok-too-bre
November	<i>noviembre</i>	no-vyem-bre
December	<i>diciembre</i>	dee-syem-bre

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

What time does ... leave/arrive?	<i>¿A qué hora ... sale/llega?</i>	a ke o-ra ... sa-le/ye-ga
the boat	<i>el barco</i>	el bar-ko
the bus (city)	<i>el camión</i>	el ka-myon
the bus (intercity)	<i>el autobús</i>	el ow-to-boo
the minibus	<i>el pesero</i>	el pe-se-ro
the plane	<i>el avión</i>	el a-vyon

the airport	<i>el aeropuerto</i>	el a-e-ro-pwer-to
the bus station	<i>la estación de autobuses</i>	la es-ta-syon de ow-to-boo-ses
the bus stop	<i>la parada de autobuses</i>	la pa-ra-da de ow-to-boo-ses
a luggage locker	<i>un casillero</i>	oon ka-see-ye-ro
the ticket office	<i>la taquilla</i>	la ta-kee-ya

A ticket to ..., please.

Un boleto a ..., por favor. oon bo-le-to a ... por fa-vor

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>viaje sencillo</i>	vee-a-khe sen-see-yo
round trip	<i>redondo</i>	re-don-do
taxi	<i>taxi</i>	tak-see

Private Transport

I'd like to hire a/an ...	<i>Quisiera rentar ...</i>	kee-sye-ra ren-tar ...
4WD	<i>un cuator por cuatro</i>	oon kwa-tro por kwa-tro
car	<i>un coche</i>	oon ko-che
motorbike	<i>una moto</i>	oo-na mo-to
bicycle	<i>bicicleta</i>	bee-see-kle-ta
hitchhike	<i>pedir aventón</i>	pe-deer a-ven-ton
pickup (ute)	<i>pickup</i>	pee-kop
truck	<i>camión</i>	ka-myon

Where's a petrol station?

¿Dónde hay una gasolinera? don-de ai oo-na ga-so-lee-ne-ra

How much is a liter of gasoline?

¿Cuánto cuesta el litro de gasolina? kwan-to kwes-ta el lee-tro de ga-so-lee-na

ROAD SIGNS

Though Mexico mostly uses the familiar international road signs, you should be prepared to encounter these other signs as well:

Acceso	Entrance
Estacionamiento	Parking
Camino en Reparación	Road Repairs
Ceda el Paso	Give way
Conserve Su Derecha	Keep to the Right
Curva Peligrosa	Dangerous Curve
Derrumbes	Landslides
Despacio	Slow
Desviación	Detour
Dirección Única	One-way
Escuela (Zona Escolar)	School (zone)
Hombres Trabajando	Men at Work
Mantenga Su Derecha	Keep to the Right
No Adelantar	No Overtaking
No Hay Paso	Road Closed
Pare/Stop	Stop
Peaje	Toll
Peligro	Danger
Prepare Su Cuota	Have Toll Ready
Prohibido Aparcar/No Estacionar	No Parking
Prohibido el Paso	No Entry
Puente Angosto	Narrow Bridge
Salida de Autopista	Freeway/Highway Exit
Topes/Vibradores	Speed Bumps
Tramo en Reparación	Road Under Repair
Vía Corta	Short Route (often a toll road)
Vía Cuota	Toll Highway

Please fill it up.*Lleno, por favor.* ye-no por fa-vor**I'd like (100) pesos worth.***Quiero (cien) pesos.* kye-ro (syen) pe-sos

diesel	<i>diesel</i>	dee-sel
gas (petrol)	<i>gasolina</i>	ga-so-lee-na
unleaded	<i>gasolina sin plomo</i>	ga-so-lee-na seen plo-mo
oil	<i>aceite</i>	a-say-te
tire	<i>llanta</i>	yan-ta
puncture	<i>agujero</i>	a-goo-khe-ro

Is this the road to (...)?*¿Por aquí se va a (...)?*

por a-kee se va a (...)

(How long) Can I park here?*¿(Por cuánto tiempo) Puedo estacionarme aquí?*

(por kwan-to tyem-po) pwe-do ess-ta-syo-nar-me a-kee

Where do I pay?*¿Dónde se paga?*

don-de se pa-ga

I need a mechanic/tow truck.*Necesito un mecánico/remolque.*

ne-se-see-to oon me-ka-nee-ko/re-mol-ke

Is there a garage near here?*¿Hay un garaje cerca de aquí?*

ai oon ga-ra-khe ser-ka de a-kee

The car has broken down (in ...).*El coche se se descompuso (en ...).*

el ko-che se des-kom-poo-so (en ...)

The motorbike won't start.*La moto no arranca.*

la mo-to no a-ran-ka

I have a flat tire.*Tengo una llanta pinchada.*

ten-go oo-na yan-ta pon-cha-da

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 ...***Necesito ...*

ne-se-see-to ...

Do you have ...?*¿Hay ...?*

ai ...

a car baby seat*un asiento de seguridad para bebés*

oon a-syen-to de se-goo-ree-dad pa-ra be-bes

a child-minding service*oon club para niños*

oon kloob pa-ra nee-nyos

a children's menu*un menú infantil*

oon me-noo een-fan-teel

a daycare*una guardería*

oo-na gwar-de-ree-a

(disposable) diapers/nappies*pañales (de usar y tirar)*

pa-nya-les de oo-sar ee tee-rar

an (English-speaking) babysitter*una niñera (que habla inglés)*

oo-na nee-nye-ra (ke a-bla een-gles)

formula (milk)*leche en polvo*

le-che en pol-vo

a highchair*una silla para bebé*

oo-na see-ya pa-ra be-be

a potty*una bacinica*

oo-na ba-see-nee-ka

a stroller*una carreola*

oona ka-re-o-la

Do you mind if I breast-feed here?*¿Le molesta que dé el pecho aquí?*

le mo-les-ta ke de el pe-cho a-kee

Are children allowed?*¿Se admiten niños?*

se ad-mee-ten nee-nyos



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Mexican Spanish Phrasebook

Glossary

For general information on Spanish, see p310. For food and drink terms, see p60; for transportation terms, see p315.

abarrotería – small grocery
agave – family of plants, including *maguey*
alfarería – potter's workshop
amate – paper made from tree bark
antojitos – appetizers; literally 'little whims'
Apdo – abbreviation for Apartado (Box) in addresses; hence Apdo Postal means Post Office Box
artesanías – handicrafts
arroyo – brook, stream
artesanías – handicrafts, folk arts
auriga – transport pickup

bahía – bay
balneario – bathing place, often a natural hot spring
banda – (Mexican brass-based big-band music)
barrio – district, neighborhood, often a poor neighborhood
béisbol – baseball
billete – bank note
boleto – ticket
brujo, -a – witch doctor, shaman; similar to *curandero, -a*

caballeros – literally 'horsemen,' but corresponds to 'gentlemen' in English; look for it on toilet doors
cabana – cabin, simple shelter
calle – street
callejón – alley
camión – truck or bus
camioneta – pickup truck
campesino, -a – country or rural person, peasant
casa de cambio – exchange bureau; place where currency is exchanged
caseta de larga distancia, caseta de teléfono, caseta telefónica – public telephone call station
cazuela – clay cooking pot; usually sold in a nested set
cerro – hill
charreada – Mexican rodeo
charro – Mexican cowboy
chingar – literally 'to fornicate'; has numerous colloquial usages in Mexican Spanish equivalent to those in English
Churrigueresque – Spanish late-baroque architectural style; found on many Mexican churches
cigarro – cigarette
clavadistas – the cliff divers of Acapulco and Mazatlán
colectivo – minibus or car that picks up and drops off passengers along a predetermined route; can also refer to other types of transport, such as boats

colonia – neighborhood of a city, often a wealthy residential area
combis – minibuses
comedor – simple, inexpensive eateries
comida corrida – set-price lunch or dinner menu
completo – no vacancy, literally 'full up'; a sign you may see at hotel desks
conquistador – early Spanish explorer-conqueror
cordillera – mountain range
correos – post office
criollo – Mexican-born person of Spanish parentage; in colonial times considered inferior by peninsular Spaniards
crucero – crossroads or turnoff
crudo – hangover
cuota – toll; a *vía cuota* is a toll road
curandero, -a – literally 'curer'; a medicine man or woman who uses herbal and/or magical methods and often emphasizes spiritual aspects of disease

damas – ladies; the sign on toilet doors
dársena – pier, dock
Día de los Muertos – a celebration of the memory of the deceased, observed on November 1
Distrito Federal – the official name for Mexico City, often shortened to DF

edificio – building
ejido – communal landholding
embarcadero – jetty, boat landing
encomienda – a grant made to a *conquistador* of labor by or tribute from a group of indigenous people; the conquistador was supposed to protect and convert them, but usually treated them as little more than slaves
enramada – literally a bower or shelter, but it generally refers to a palm-frond-covered, open-air restaurant
enredo – wraparound skirt
escuela – school
esq – abbreviation of *esquina* (corner) in addresses
ex-convento – former convent or monastery

faja – waist sash used in traditional indigenous costume
feria – fair or carnival, typically occurring during a religious holiday
ficha – locker token available at bus terminals
fútbol – football (soccer)

gringo, -a – US or Canadian (and sometimes European, Australasian etc) visitor to Latin America; can be used derogatorily
gruta – cave, grotto

guarache – also *huarache*; woven leather sandal, often with tire tread as the sole

guardería de equipaje – room for storing luggage, eg in a bus station

güero, -a – fair-haired, fair-complexioned person; a more polite alternative to *gringo*

hacienda – estate; Hacienda (capitalized) is the Treasury Department

hombres – men; sign on toilet doors

huarache – see *guarache*

huipil, -es – indigenous woman's sleeveless tunic, usually highly decorated; can be thigh-length or reach the ankles

huitlacoche – a black fungus that grows on young corn; considered a delicacy

iglesia – church

INAH – Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia; the body in charge of most ancient sites and some museums

indígena, -a – indigenous, pertaining to the original inhabitants of Latin America; can also refer to the people themselves

INI – Instituto Nacional Indigenista; set up in 1948 to improve the lot of indigenous Mexicans and to integrate them into society

ISH – *impuesto sobre hospedaje*; lodging tax on the price of hotel rooms

isla – island

IVA – *impuesto de valor agregado*, or 'ee-bah'; a 15% sales tax added to the price of many items

jai alai – the Basque game *pelota*, brought to Mexico by the Spanish; a bit like squash, played on a long court with curved baskets attached to the arm

jefe – boss or leader, especially political

lancha – fast, open, outboard boat

latifundio – large landholding; these sprang up after Mexico's independence from Spain

latifundista – powerful landowner who usurped communally owned land to form a *latifundio*

lleno – full, as with a car's fuel tank

machismo – Mexican masculine bravura

maguay – a type of agave; tequila and *mezcal* are made from its sap

malecón – waterfront street, boulevard or promenade

mariachi – ensemble of street musicians playing traditional ballads on guitars and trumpets

marimba – wooden xylophone-type instrument, popular in the south

menú del día – lunch special, also called *comida corrida*

mercado – market

Mesoamerica – the region inhabited by the ancient Mexican and Mayan cultures

mestizo – person of mixed (usually indigenous and Spanish) ancestry, ie most Mexicans

metate – shallow stone bowl with legs; for grinding maize and other foods

mezcal – an alcoholic drink made from the sap of the *maguay* plant

mirador, -es – lookout point(s)

Montezuma's revenge – Mexican version of Delhi-belly or travelers' diarrhea

mordida – literally 'little bite,' a small bribe to keep the wheels of bureaucracy turning

mota – marijuana

mujeres – women; seen on toilet doors

municipio – small local-government area; Mexico is divided into 2394 of them

Nafta – North American Free Trade Agreement; see *TLC*

Nahuatl – language of the Nahuatl people, descendants of the Aztecs

nievería – frozen-dessert shop

Nte – abbreviation for *norte* (north), used in street names

Ote – abbreviation for *oriente* (east), used in street names

pachanga – party

palacio municipal – town or city hall, headquarters of the municipal corporation

palapa – thatched-roof shelter

paleta – frozen fruit on a stick

pandulces – sweet breads

panga – motorized skiff for fishing, excursions and transport

para llevar – (to go) in reference to food

parada – bus stop, usually for city buses

parque nacional – national park

paseo – boulevard, walkway or pedestrian street; also the tradition of strolling in a circle around the plaza in the evening

Pemex – government-owned petroleum extraction, refining and retailing monopoly

periférico – ring road

petate – mat, usually made of palm or reed

peyote – a hallucinogenic cactus

piñata – clay pot or papier-mâché mold decorated to resemble an animal, pineapple, star etc; filled with sweets and gifts and smashed open at fiestas

playa – beach

plaza de toros – bullring

plazuela – small plaza

Porfiriato – Porfirio Díaz's reign as president-dictator of Mexico for 30 years, until the 1910 revolution

portales – arcades

presidio – fort or fort's garrison

PRI – Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party); the political party that ruled Mexico for most of the 20th century

propina – tip; different from a *mordida*, which is closer to a bribe

Pte – abbreviation for *poniente* (west), used in street names

puerto – port

pulmonía – special type of open-air taxi similar to a golf cart

Quetzalcóatl – plumed serpent god of pre-Hispanic Mexico

raicilla – rare agave distillage that may or may not have slightly psychedelic properties

ramada – thatched shelter

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

reserva de la biósfera – biosphere reserve; an environmentally protected area where human exploitation is steered towards ecologically unharmed activities

retablo – altarpiece; or painting in a church to give thanks for miracles, answered prayers etc

río – river

s/n – sin número (without number); used in street addresses

sanitario – toilet, literally ‘sanitary place’

sarape – blanket with opening for the head, worn as a cloak

Semana Santa – Holy Week, the week from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday; Mexico’s major holiday period, when accommodations and transport get very busy

servicios – toilets

sierra – mountain range

sitio – taxi stand; place

supermercado – supermarket

Sur – south; often seen in street names

taller – shop or workshop; a taller mecánico is a mechanic’s shop, usually for cars; a taller de llantas is a tire-repair shop

tapatio, -a – person born in Jalisco state

taquilla – ticket window

telar de cintura – backstrap loom

templo – church; anything from a wayside chapel to a cathedral

tianguis – indigenous people’s market

tienda – store

típico, -a – characteristic of a region; particularly used to describe food

TLC – Tratado de Libre Comercio; the North American Free Trade Agreement (*Nafta*)

topes – speed bumps; found on the outskirts of many towns and villages

torta – Mexican-style sandwich made with a roll

trova – folk music, ballad

UNAM – Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico)

viajero, -a – traveler

zócalo – main plaza or square; a term used in some (but not all) Mexican towns

Zona Dorada – literally ‘Pink Zone’; an area of expensive shops, hotels and restaurants in Mazatlán and Acapulco frequented most by the wealthy and tourists; by extension, a similar area in another city

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