

Language

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The predominant language of Baja California is Spanish. Mexican Spanish is unlike Castilian Spanish (the language of much of Spain) in two main respects: in Mexico you won't hear the Castilian lisp, but you will hear many words of indigenous origin.

Travelers in cities, resort areas like Los Cabos 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.

For dining vocabulary, see p63. For a more comprehensive guide to the Spanish of Mexico, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Mexican 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. 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 <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

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

Where is ...?	<i>¿Dónde hay ...?</i>	<i>don-de ai ...</i>
a camping ground	<i>un área para acampar</i>	<i>oon a-re-a pa-ra a-kam-par</i>
a guesthouse	<i>una pensión</i>	<i>oo-na pen-syon</i>
a hotel	<i>un hotel</i>	<i>oon o-tel</i>
a youth hostel	<i>un albergue juvenil</i>	<i>oon al-ber-ge khoo-ve-neel</i>

Are there any rooms available?

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

I'd like a ... room.	<i>Quisiera una habitación ...</i>	<i>kee-sye-ra oo-na a-bee-ta-syon ...</i>
double (two beds)	<i>doble</i>	<i>do-ble</i>
double (two people, one bed)	<i>matrimonial</i>	<i>ma-tree-mo-nyal</i>
single	<i>individual</i>	<i>een-dee-vee-dwal</i>
twin	<i>con dos camas</i>	<i>kon dos ka-mas</i>

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 ... (see the list under 'Accommodations' for bed and room options)</i>
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>

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

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

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*

It's fine. I'll take it.

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

I don't like it.

No me gusta. *no me goos-ta*

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

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*

SIGNS

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

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>	<i>nor-te</i>
south	<i>sur soor</i>	
east	<i>este</i>	<i>es-te</i>
west	<i>oeste</i>	<i>o-es-te</i>
here	<i>aquí</i>	<i>a-kee</i>
there	<i>ahí</i>	<i>a-ee</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 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'm allergic to ...	<i>Soy alérgico/a</i>	<i>soy a-ler-khee-ko/a</i>
antibiotics	<i>a ...</i>	<i>a ...</i>
	<i>los antibióticos</i>	<i>los an-tee-byo-tee-kos</i>
nuts	<i>las nueces</i>	<i>las nwe-ses</i>
peanuts	<i>los cacahuates</i>	<i>los ka-ka-khwa-tes</i>
penicillin	<i>la penicilina</i>	<i>la pe-nee-see-lee-na</i>

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

I have ...	<i>Tengo ...</i>	<i>ten-go ...</i>
diarrhea	<i>diarrea</i>	<i>dya-re-a</i>
nausea	<i>náusea</i>	<i>now-se-a</i>
a headache	<i>un dolor de cabeza</i>	<i>oon do-lor de ka-be-sa</i>

EMERGENCIES

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.	<i>Es una emergencia.</i>	es oo-na e-mer-khen-sya
Could you help me, please?	<i>¿Me puede ayudar, por favor?</i>	me pwe-de a-yoo-dar por fa-vor
I'm lost.	<i>Estoy perdido/a.</i>	es-toy per-dee-do/a
Where are the toilets?	<i>¿Dónde están los baños?</i>	don-de es-tan los ba-nyos

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 slowly	<i>hablar más despacio</i>	a-blar mas 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-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

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?

¿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 credit cards

dólares do-la-res
americanos a-me-ree-ka-nos

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

traveler's checks

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 automático el ka-khe-ro ow-to-ma-tee-ko

bank

el banco el ban-ko

bookstore

la librería la lee-bre-ree-a

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

post office

la oficina de correos la o-fee-see-na de 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.

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

correo aéreo ko-re-o a-e-re-o

letter

carta kar-ta

registered (mail)

certificado ser-tee-fee-ka-do

stamps

timbres 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

medianoche me-dya-no-che

noon

mediodía me-dyo-dee-a

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-breel

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**

¿A qué hora ... a ke o-ra ...

... leave/arrive?

sale/llega? sa-le/ye-ga

the boat

el barco el bar-ko

the bus (city)

el camión el ka-myon

the bus (intercity)

el autobús el ow-to-boos

the plane

el avión el a-vyon

the bus station

la estación de autobuses la es-ta-syon de ow-to-boo-ses

the bus stop

la parada de autobuses la pa-ra-da de ow-to-boo-ses

a luggage locker

un casillero oon ka-see-ye-ro

the ticket office

la taquilla 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-goon-da kla-se
single/one-way	<i>viaje sencillo</i>	vee-a-khe sen-see-yo
return/round trip	<i>redondo</i>	re-don-do
taxi	<i>taxi</i>	tak-see

Private Transportation

I'd like to	<i>Quisiera</i>	kee-sye-ra
hire a/an ...	<i>rentar ...</i>	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/eta</i>	ka-myon/-e-ta

Where's a gas/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**Please fill it up.***Lleno, por favor.* ye-no por fa-vor**I'd like (20) pesos worth.***Quiero (veinte) litros.* kye-ro (vayn-te) pe-sos

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
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**ROAD SIGNS**

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

Acceso	Entrance
Aparcamiento	Parking
Camino en Reparación	Road Repairs
Ceda el Paso	Give way
Conserve Su Derecha	Keep to the Right
Cuida Su Vida, Maneje Con Precaución	Protect Your Life, Drive with Caution
Curva Peligrosa	Dangerous Curve
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 Passing
No Hay Paso	Road Closed
No Rebase	No Overtaking
No Rebase con Raya Continua	Don't Drive with Your Lights On
Pare/Stop	Stop
Peaje	Toll
Peligro	Danger
Por Su Seguridad Disminuye La Velocidad	Decrease Speed for Your Safety
Precaución Zona de Ganado	Careful: Cattle Zone
Prepare Su Cuota	Have Toll Ready
Prohibido Aparcar/No Estacionar	No Parking
Prohibido el Paso	No Entry
Puente Angosto	Narrow Bridge
Salida de Autopista	Exit Freeway
Si Toma No Maneje Utilice Cinturón de Seguridad	Don't Drink and Drive Use Your Seatbelt
Topes/Vibradores	Speed Bumps
Tramo en Reparación	Road Under Repair
Vía Corta	Short Route (often a toll road)
Vía Cuota	Toll Highway

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 ...)***I have a flat tire.***Tengo una llanta pinchada.**ten-go oo-na yan-ta pon-cha-da***I ran out of gas/petrol.***Me quedé sin gasolina.**me ke-de seen ga-so-lee-na***I 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-da pa-ra be-bes***a babysitting service***oon club para niños**oon kloob pa-ra nee-nyos***a children's menu***un menú infantil**oon me-noo een-fan-teel***(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 inglesa)**oo-na nee-nye-ra (ke a-bla een-gle-sa)***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***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 the Spanish language, see the Language chapter (p280). For a list of food and drink terms, see the Food & Drink chapter (p64).

acequia – irrigation canal, often stone-lined, in Baja California missions

adobe – sun-dried mud brick used for building

agave – century plant

albergue de juventud – youth hostel

alto – stop; also high

Apdo – (*Apartado*) post office box

arroyo – brook, stream; often a dry riverbed

asentamientos irregulares – shantytowns of Tijuana, Mexicali and other border towns

avenida – avenue

bahía – bay

bajacaliforniano – resident of Baja California

ballena – whale; also a colloquial term for 1L bottle of Pacifico beer

banda – style of music dominated by brass instruments, often without drums

barrio – neighborhood of a town or city, often a poor neighborhood

béisbol – baseball

billete – banknote

biznaga – barrel cactus

boleto – ticket

borrego – bighorn sheep, a rarely seen species in the sierras of Baja California that is frequently represented in the pre-Columbian rock art of the peninsula

burro – donkey

caballero – gentleman

cabaña – cabin

cabina – phone booth

caguama – any species of sea turtle, but most commonly the Pacific green turtle; also a colloquial term for 1L bottle of Tecate beer

cajero automático – automatic teller machine (ATM)

calle – street

callejón – alley

calzada – grand boulevard or avenue

cama matrimonial – double or queen bed

cambio – *casa de cambio*

camino – road, path, way

campanario – bell tower

cardón – either of two species of *Pachycereus* cactus, a common genus in Baja

carretera – highway

casa de cambio – currency exchange house

casa de huéspedes – guesthouse

cascabel – rattlesnake

casita – cottage

central camionera – bus terminal

cerro – hill

charreada – rodeo

charro – cowboy or horseman

chingar – literally ‘to fuck’; it has a wide range of colloquial usages in Mexican Spanish equivalent to those in English

cholismo – rebellious youth movement, akin to punk, that has had some influence on the visual arts in Baja California

chubasco – a violent storm approaching hurricane force, associated with summer low-pressure areas in the tropical Pacific

cirio – boojum tree, a slow-growing species resembling an inverted carrot

colonia – neighborhood in Tijuana or other large city

comida corrida – set lunch

conquistador – early Spanish explorer-conqueror

cordillera – mountain range

correos – post office

corrida de toros – bullfight

corrido – folk ballad of the US–Mexico border region; corridos often have strong but subtle political content

Cotuco – Comité de Turismo y Convenciones (Committee on Tourism & Conventions)

coyote – smuggler who charges up to US\$2000 to spirit illegal immigrants across the US–Mexican border

Cruz Roja – Red Cross

cuota – toll

curandero – folk healer

damas – ladies; seen on toilet doors

datilillo – yucca

desierto – desert

ejidatario – member of an *ejido*

ejido – cooperative enterprise, usually of peasant agriculturalists, created under the land reform program of President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–40)

encomienda – system of forced labor and tribute, which the Spanish crown instituted in mainland New Spain and other densely populated parts of its empire

fianza – bond posted against the return of a motor vehicle to the USA

fideicomiso – 30-year bank trust that has fostered the construction and acquisition of real estate by non-Mexicans in Baja California

Fonatur – Mexican federal government tourist agency

fraccionamiento – *colonia*

frontera – border

fronterizo – inhabitant of the US–Mexico border region

frontón – venue for *jai alai*

glorieta – city traffic circle; most numerous in Mexicali and Tijuana

gringo – term describing any light-skinned person, but most often a resident of the USA; often but not always pejorative

güero – ‘blond,’ a term often used to describe any fair-skinned person in Mexico

hacienda – local treasury department

hielo – ice

hipódromo – horseracing track

hombres – men; seen on toilet doors

huarache – woven leather sandal, often with tire tread as the sole

iglesia – church

INAH – Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Historia (National Institute of Anthropology & History); administers museums and archeological monuments

indígena – indigenous person

IVA – Impuesto de Valor Agregado (value-added tax)

jai alai – game of Basque origin resembling squash

Judiciales – Mexican state and federal police

La Frontera – the area where Dominican priests built their missions in colonial times; it extends from immediately south of present-day San Diego (mainland California) as far as El Rosario, at about the 30th parallel; also refers to the US–Mexico border

Ladatel – Larga Distancia Automática (automatic long-distance phones)

larga distancia – long-distance; usually refers to telephones

librería – bookstore

línea – line; *La línea* is the colloquial term for the Mexico–US border

llantera – tire-repair shop, common even in Baja’s most out-of-the-way places

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

lonchería – casual eatery, often a counter in markets, serving breakfast and lunch only

machismo – an exaggerated masculinity intended to impress other men more than women; usually innocuous if unpleasant

Magónistas – followers of the exiled Mexican intellectual Ricardo Flores Magón, who attempted to establish a regional power base in the towns of northern Baja California during the Mexican Revolution

maguay – any of several species of a common Mexico fiber plant (*Agave* spp), also used for producing alcoholic drinks such as tequila, mescal and pulque

malecón – waterfront promenade

maquiladora – industrial plant in Tijuana, Mexicali or another border town that takes advantage of cheap Mexican labor to assemble US components for reexportation to the north

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

matador – bullfighter

mercado – market; often a building near the center of a town, with shops and open-air stalls in the surrounding streets

mestizo – person of mixed Indian and European heritage

moneda nacional – national money, meaning the Mexican peso as distinguished from the US dollar (both use the symbol ‘\$’); often abbreviated as ‘m/n’

mono – human figure, as represented in the pre-Columbian rock art of the Desierto Central

mordida – bribe; literally, ‘the bite’

mujeres – women; seen on toilet doors

municipio – administrative subdivision of Mexican states, roughly akin to a US county; Baja California (Norte) consists of five municipios, Baja California Sur of four

NAFTA – (North American Free Trade Agreement) a pact between the USA, Canada and Mexico that reduces or eliminates customs duties and other trade barriers

nao – in colonial times, a Spanish galleon on the Acapulco–Manila trade route; such galleons frequently took shelter in Baja ports on their return voyages

neophyte – a new convert (in this case, of the Indians by the missionaries)

nopal – any cactus of the genus *Opuntia* that produces edible fruit (*tuna*), which was common in the diet of pre-Columbian Baja and is still widely consumed today

norte – north; El Norte is the colloquial term for the USA

ofrenda – offering to a saint in exchange for a wish or wishes granted

ola – wave

otro lado – literally ‘other side;’ *el otro lado* refers colloquially to the USA

paceños – residents of La Paz

palapa – palm-leaf shelter

PAN – (Partido de Acción Nacional) a free-market–oriented populist party that is strong in Baja California (Norte)

panga – fiberglass skiff used for fishing or whale-watching

panguero – one who owns or pilots a skiff

parque nacional – national park

pastillas para purificar agua – water purification tablets

peatonal – pedestrian walk

peligro – danger

Pemex – (Petróleos Mexicanos) the Mexican government oil monopoly

pitahaya dulce – organ pipe cactus, a key element of the traditional diet of Baja's native peoples

plaza de toros – bullring

pollero – synonymous with *coyote*; a smuggler of undocumented immigrants (*pollos*) into the USA

posada – at Christmas, a parade of costumed children reenacting the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem

presidio – a military outpost during colonial times

PRI – (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) the official party of government in Mexico from 1929 until 2000

propina – tip

pueblo – town

ranchería – subsistence unit of hunter-gatherers in the contact period with Europeans, or, later, units associated with missions; implies a group of people rather than a place

rancho – tiny rural settlement, ranging from about 20 to 50 people

Secture – Secretaría de Turismo del Estado (State Tourism Office)

Semarnap – (Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca) the Mexican government's primary conservation agency

Servicio Postal Mexicano – the Mexican national postal service

Servicios Migratorios – immigration office

SIDA – AIDS

sin número – (s/n) street address without a specific number

todo terreno – mountain bike

tombolo – sandspit beach

tope – speed bump

torote – elephant tree

tortillería – tortilla factory or shop

tortuga carey – hawksbill turtle

tortuga laúd – leatherback turtle

tranquilo – tranquil, mellow

trapiche – sugar mill

turista – tourist; also a colloquial name for diarrhea contracted by tourists

ultramarino – small grocery store

Unesco – UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

vado – ford, as of a river; can also refer to a dip in a road

vaquero – cowboy

vía cuota – toll road

zócalo – central plaza; more common in mainland Mexico than in Baja California

zona de tolerancia – in border cities such as Tijuana and Mexicali, an area in which prostitution and related activities are concentrated

zona hotelera – hotel zone

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