

When in Spain: a quick primer for KubeCon

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Do you need to know Spanish to get by in Spain? Probably not, with many younger people learning English in school and Google Translate on our phones, we can probably survive.

However, knowing a few words can help you get more out of your stay and make connections with people that you may meet.

I'm breaking down a few key words into categories, hope you find them helpful.

It's never too late to learn at least a few words, and you'll never know how helpful they could be during your stay.

How are you?

¿Cómo estás? How are you - informal

¿Cómo está? / ¿Cómo está usted? How are you - formal

Spanish has a concept of a [formal and informal way to address others \(tu vs usted\)](#), which is similar to French (tu vs vous), or German (Du vs Sie).

¡Hasta luego! See you later

¡Adios! Bye

¡Buenas noches! Good night

¡No te preocupes! - "don't worry" - something I heard said quite a bit (preocupar is the verb and it sounds like "preoccupied")

Paying for things

¿Cuánto cuesta? ("kwanto" "kwesta") - how much is it?

Now, you may know your numbers, but at least you can express your intent. Perhaps say: "escribir lo, por favor" (write it down please)

La cuenta, por favor - the bill, when sitting down to a meal or having drinks.

Beware, you may sound odd asking for "la cuenta" in a "tienda" (shop) or "supermercado" (supermarket). There, you tend to need to ask for "un recibo" (sounds like receipt, doesn't it?)

Take a photo of your receipts for Concur when you get home!

Drinks

Un cafe - a coffee

Un té - a tea

una taza de té - a cup of tea, una taza de cafe - a cup of coffee

"z" is said like "th", like the way Americans say "ma_th_"

"e" at the end of a word is said like "ey", like "h_ey_"

Un cafe con leche - a coffee with milk, similar in size to a latte

Un cortado - a short coffee finished with milk, you should try these

Un cafe solo - an espresso, a short black coffee

Un cafe sin leche - a black coffee, without milk

Un té con azucar - a tea with sugar

Leche de soja - Soya milk

Leche de almendras - Almond milk

Quisiera un cafe con leche de soja - I'd like a coffee with soy milk

See some other [phrases involving coffee](#)

agua - water

agua sin gas - still water

agua con gas - fizzy water

agua potable - drinkable water

A note from a local, [Ivan Pedrazas](#):

Not all water in Spain is considered drinkable, even if you ask: "¿Qué es el agua potable?" (said: "pot-ab-ley"), the levels of chlorine may give you an upset stomach. Best stick to bottled water, buy a large bottle and take it to your hotel room.

I learned this the hard way when walking across Spain in my 20s for [El Camino De Santiago](#). Me duele el estomago!

Do you like juice?

zumo de naranja - orange juice

zumo de manzana - apple juice

Once you've had a coffee or two, you may need the bathroom.

¿Dónde está el baño?

¿Dónde está el baño, por favor? - if you're not in a hurry, you can add a "por favor" to the end of the sentence, which means "please". I like to think of this like saying "for a favour".

Food

Desayuno - Breakfast

Almuerzo - Lunch

Cena - Dinner, the evening meal

Huevos fritos - fried eggs

Hamburguesa - Hamburger

Patatas fritas - fries (potatoes)

When I walked on my camino, it was common to eat a "menú del día" for lunch which may include fried egg and chips along with a yoghurt or dessert.

Jamón - serano ham, cured pork leg

Un bocadillo de jamón (said like boka-di-i-yo) - a ham sandwich.

Pan integral - wholewheat bread

You can generally ask for food by saying its name, then adding "por favor" to the end.

Un bocadillo de jamón, por favor.

Don't be surprised when your sandwich comes out without butter or mayo. It may come across a bit dry to us in the UK or USA, however the bread is usually softer to make up for this.

Vegetarian? Playing it safe?

Un de queso - a cheese sandwich

Days of the week

You may be getting to Spain on Sabado, having a rest on Domingo and a walk around on Lunes.

Spanish days correspond to the names of the planets.

- Lunes - Moon - Monday
- Martes - Mars - Tuesday
- Miércoles - Mercury - Wednesday

- Jueves - Jupiter - Thursday
- Viernes - Venus - Friday
- Sabado - Saturn - Saturday
- Domingo - dominicus - of the Lord (from Latin)

When did you arrive on this trip?

¿Cuándo llegaste? Llegué el Martes.

(el) noche - night

(el) día - day (bear in mind, despite ending in "a" this is a masculine word"

(la) mañana - the morning, or "mañana" - tomorrow

Hoy - today

Ayer - yesterday

Directions

Dónde está? Dónde está su hotel? Where's your hotel?

Dónde está el mercado? Where's the market?

Todo recto - keep going straight on

A la izquierda - on the left

A la derecha - on the right

Baja la calle - walk down the road

If you're looking for something, but aren't sure if there is one, you can say:

¿Dónde hay una farmacia? (Is there a pharmacy?) Or simply: (¿Hay una farmacia por aquí?): Is there a pharmacy around here?

If you've got some pain, you can say:

Me duele aquí (it hurts me here, pointing to where)

Tengo dolor a la cabeza - I have a headache (I have a pain of the head)

Social

De dónde eres? Where are you from?

Soy de Inglaterra - I'm from England

Soy de los Estados Unidos - I'm from the US

Soy de Alemania - I'm from Germany

Me gusta el ciclismo - I like cycling

Me gusta correr - I like running

Me gusta nadar - I like swimming

In Spanish there is a formal way to address people using "usted" and a less formal way using "tu". It's likely that you'll be forgiven for getting this wrong, and should try to focus on getting the message across.

Te gusta nadar? Do you like to swim? (asked to a peer)

Le gusta nadar? Do you like to swim? (formally)

Being comfortable

Tengo hambre (silent "h") - I'm hungry

Estoy cansado (for a male) - I'm tired

Tengo calor - I'm feeling warm

Tengo frío - I'm feeling cold

Tengo que ir al baño - I need to go to the toilet

Hace calor - it's warm

Hace frío - it's cold

Hace sol - it's sunny

Llueve - it's raining

Taking it all in

I've given you a few of the words that I've found useful in the past, and I hope you'll recognise some of these when you're in Spain for KubeCon.

You may be able to pick up a Spanish phrase book before you leave, in a shop near your hotel, or even order on Amazon to your hotel. These almost always have a "menu reader" at the back of the book to help with food and navigating things like intolerances and preferences.

I don't drink dairy, so I may say: "contiene lactosa?" Does it contain lactose? Gluten free would be: "sin gluten". Perhaps, "lleve trigo?" Does it contain wheat? This is literally like saying "does it wear wheat"? [See also llevé](#)

If you have a serious allergy, rather than an intolerance do be very careful.

One trick you can use if you forget a word is to simply ask:

"¿Qué cosa es eso? ¿Qué es esto?"

As a rule, I found that Spanish people enjoy it when we tourists make an effort, even if it's a small one, so have courage and try out some of the words we've covered today.

And if you head to Kubecon North America later in the year, you'll also be able to use Spanish in more places than you may realise. Last time I was over in San Diego I heard Spanish spoken in shops, cafes, the conference center and it can be more precise to ask someone a question in Spanish than in English at times. Especially if they're a native speaker.

I will almost never remember a new word until I write it down, so perhaps write down some of the words we've covered, or if you see a new one write it down and practice it. For pronunciation, you'll find help on Google Translate, and many videos on YouTube too.

Enjoy your trip and come and feel free to [reach out to me on Twitter](#) to meet up for a cafe con leche!

Memorias de Kubecon 2019 con [@ewilde](#), [@TheAxeR](#), [@mccabejohn](#), [@AngelBarrera92](#) y [@paurosello](#) pic.twitter.com/4ywxscur4E

— Alex Ellis (@alexellisuk) [May 12, 2022](#)

Of course, I am not Spanish, nor a native. If you've found a problem or want to suggest a more idomatic expression, send me a quick email to alex@openfaas.com

Thank you to [Ivan Pedrazas](#) for keeping me honest and checking over what I've written up.

What if Kubernetes is more like your kind of language?

I've also got a special offer for you if you'd like to do some reading and learning between talks or flights.

The first 50 people will get 20% off with code `estudiante`:

- [Everyday Go - learn Go, the language used to write Kubernetes and Docker](#)
- [Serverless For Everyone Else - Learn how to make the most of functions with Node.js](#)

Feel free to check out the reviews and scan the table of contents to make sure the material is a good fit for you.