Spanish Pronunciation Guide
For Beginning Spanish Speakers

There are regional differences to consider when talking about the pronunciation of Spanish words. For these examples, we've used the Mexican Spanish pronunciations.

How To Pronounce Spanish Vowels

All the Spanish vowels are generally pronounced the same in most circumstances.

The most important factor in learning to pronounced Spanish vowels is remembering that their pronunciation is more distinct that they would be in English. In some cases Spanish vowels are pronounced slightly differently depending on the letters around them. Pronouncing the vowels consistently in any Spanish word is the safest way to pronounce them.

- In Spanish, A is pronounced like the A in "awesome", never like the A in "apple".
- In Spanish, E is pronounced like the A in "hay".
- In Spanish, I is pronounced like the EE in "jeep".
- In Spanish, O is pronounced like the OA in "goat".
- In Spanish, U is pronounced like the U in "duty".

Pronunciation of Spanish Consonants

Spanish consonants have similar pronunciation as consonants in English; however there are a few consonants that have distinct differences to those of English, as shown below:

- In Spanish, B and V sound identical in Spanish in most cases, like the "b" in baby.
- In Spanish, G is pronounced like the g in good, except when it comes before an E or an I, when it is pronounced like the hard H in English (the Spanish J).
- In Spanish, H is always silent "hola" is pronounced "ola"
- In Spanish, J is pronounced like the hard H of "hello", perhaps a little harder than one would say it in English.
- In Spanish, L is pronounced like the L in "like", never like the "le" in ankle.
- In Spanish, LL is pronounced like the Y in "yawn",
- In Spanish, Ñ is pronounced like the NY in "canyon".
- In Spanish, RR is the infamous rolling R, which stumps beginning speakers. You can try making to brum-brum sound imitating a car motor or imitate a cat purring.
- In Spanish, X is pronounced either like the S or the Spanish J, "experto", is pronounced as esperto, "México" is pronounced as meh-hee-co and not meks-ih-co.
- In Mexican Spanish, Z is pronounced identically to S, like "single". This pronunciation is standard in all of Latin American. In Spain, Z is pronounced as TH, as in the TH of 'math'.
