Choose in Spanish: Elegir vs Escoger vs Seleccionar

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Quick answer: "To choose" in Spanish is **elegir** or **escoger**. Both are correct everywhere and mostly interchangeable: *Elige un color* and *Escoge un color* both mean "Choose a color." **Elegir** is also the verb for elections (*elegir a un presidente*), and **seleccionar** is the formal or digital option ("select").

This guide explains the small differences between elegir, escoger and seleccionar, shows the spelling changes that trip learners up (*elijo*, *escojo*), and lists the phrases

you need, like “you choose,” “I can’t decide” and “choice.” There’s a short quiz at the end.

Choose in Spanish: the short version

English	Spanish	Example
to choose, to pick	**elegir**	*Elegí la camisa azul.* – I chose the blue shirt.
to choose, to pick	**escoger**	*Escoge el que más te guste.* – Pick the one you like best.
to elect	**elegir**	*Eligieron a una nueva alcaldesa.* – They elected a new mayor.
to select	**seleccionar**	*Seleccione una opción.* – Select an option.
to decide	**decidir**	*No puedo decidir.* – I can’t decide.
a choice	**una elección / una opción**	*Es tu elección.* – It’s your choice.

Elegir: meaning and conjugation

Elegir means “to choose,” “to pick” or “to elect.” It can sound a little more thoughtful or formal than escoger, and it’s the only one you use for voting.

- *Elegimos este hotel por la piscina.* – We chose this hotel for the pool.
- *¿Qué carrera vas a elegir?* – What major are you going to choose?
- *Los ciudadanos eligen a sus representantes.* – Citizens elect their representatives.

Elegir conjugation (e → i and g → j)

Elegir has two changes: the stem **e** becomes **i**, and the **g** becomes **j** before o and a, to keep the same sound.

Pronoun	Present	Preterite (past)	Command
yo	elijo	elegí	–
tú	eliges	elegiste	¡elige!
él / ella / usted	elige	eligió	¡elija!
nosotros	elegimos	elegimos	¡elijamos!
vosotros	elegís	elegisteis	¡elegid!
ellos / ustedes	eligen	eligieron	¡elijan!

The participle is **elegido** (and **electo** as an adjective: *el presidente electo*). See our full elegir conjugation guide for every tense.

Escoger: meaning and conjugation

Escoger also means "to choose" or "to pick," and it's very common in everyday speech, especially for picking from a group of things in front of you.

- *Escoge una carta.* – Pick a card.
- *Escogimos los tomates más rojos.* – We picked the reddest tomatoes.
- *No me dejaron escoger.* – They didn't let me choose.

Escoger conjugation (g → j in yo)

Escoger is regular except for a spelling change: **g** becomes **j** before o and a (*escojo, escoja*).

Pronoun	Present	Preterite (past)	Command
yo	escojo	escogí	–
tú	escoges	escogiste	¡escoge!
él / ella / usted	escoge	escogió	¡escoja!
nosotros	escogemos	escogimos	¡escojamos!
vosotros	escogéis	escogisteis	¡escoged!
ellos / ustedes	escogen	escogieron	¡escojan!

Elegir vs escoger vs seleccionar

	Elegir	Escoger	Seleccionar
Meaning	to choose, to elect	to choose, to pick	to select
Tone	Neutral, a bit more formal	Everyday	Formal, technical, digital
Elections?	Yes	No	No
Typical use	Life decisions, voting	Picking items	Forms, apps, teams
Example	*Elegí estudiar medicina.*	*Escoge una fruta.*	*Seleccione su idioma.*

In most sentences you can use elegir or escoger and sound natural in any country. If you only learn one, learn **elegir**: it works for everything, including elections.

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Useful phrases

- **Tú eliges. / Tú escoges.** – You choose. / Your pick.
- **Elige bien.** – Choose wisely.
- **No sé cuál elegir.** – I don't know which one to choose.
- **No me puedo decidir.** – I can't make up my mind.
- **No tengo opción. / No me queda otra.** – I have no choice.
- **A elegir** – of your choice (*postre a elegir* – dessert of your choice)
- **Las elecciones** – the elections
- **Selección múltiple / opción múltiple** – multiple choice

Common mistakes

- × **Yo elego** → ✓ **Yo elijo.** Both changes (e → i, g → j) apply in the yo form.
- × **Yo escogo** → ✓ **Yo escojo.** The j keeps the same sound as the g in escoger.
- × **Ella elegió** → ✓ **Ella eligió.** The e → i change also happens in the él/ellos preterite.
- × **Escogimos al presidente** → ✓ **Elegimos al presidente.** Elections use elegir.

Quick quiz: elegir or escoger?

Fill in the blank with the correct form.

1. Yo siempre _____ (elegir) el asiento de la ventana.

2. ¿Qué sabor _____ (tú, escoger)?
3. El año pasado ellos _____ (elegir) a un nuevo gobernador.
4. Yo _____ (escoger) la manzana más grande.
5. Por favor, _____ (usted, elegir) una opción.

▼ **Show answers**

1. elijo
2. escoges
3. eligieron
4. escojo
5. elija

Keep practicing

Elegir follows the same e → i pattern as **pedir**, **seguir** and **repetir**. For more everyday verb pairs, read **entender vs comprender** and **poner vs meter vs colocar**.

Frequently asked questions

What is the difference between elegir and escoger?

Very little. Both mean “to choose” or “to pick” and work in every country. Elegir is also used for elections and can sound slightly more formal; escoger is very common for picking items.

How do you conjugate elegir in the yo form?

Elijo. Elegir changes e → i and g → j: elijo, eliges, elige, elegimos, elegís, eligen.

How do you say “you choose” in Spanish?

Tú eliges or tú escoges (informal), usted elige (formal). To offer someone the choice: Tú decides – It’s up to you.

How do you say “choice” in Spanish?

Una elección or una opción. No tengo opción means “I have no choice.”

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