SPANISH LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR FRONT-OF-HOUSE TO BACK-OF-HOUSE STAFF

Let's forget for a moment that front of house vs back of house secret war and think; what makes everything go smoothly between the moment a diner arrives and the moment he leaves satisfied with a smile on his face? Yes, all of us who work in this world know it, you and I know it, and that is the communication between the front of the house and back of the house, every day-to-day detail that tells you when, how and what to do with the greatest calling card of any restaurant: "the menu". The fact that the waiter is called "the salesman" by the back house staff says a lot about how goals are set within the kitchen, if a diner has any allergies to notify, cooking preference, substitutions, absolutely everything counts for us to achieve that final smile.

Now, let's think for a moment, if more than half of the staff is Spanish-speaking or you are starting in a Spanish restaurant, all this nice communication stuff we just talked about simply goes down the drain (and not just because someone has crossed the line and made the trays fall). Fortunately, you don't have to learn Spanish in 2 minutes before the diners come in, Spanish in the kitchen can be as useful as we are willing to learn it, step by step, perhaps the phrases, vocabulary, slangs and keywords to get us started and begin to feel confident speaking in both the front and back house.

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Spanish Training for Restaurants

Spanish FOH to BOH Slang

If two teachers have code words, so their kids don't know what they're saying in an adult conversation, no doubt all other professions have those kinds of code words. And in restaurants, we are experts at making diners not know that a dish has to be taken off the menu because it's over (if you've ever searched for "what does 86 mean", I just gave you the answer). In this chart, I'm going to give you the lingo between FOH and BOH in Spanish. You're going to be able to answer questions like "What does all day mean in a

kitchen?" or "What does it mean when a chef says hands?" I assure you.

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Fiesta	Party	Una fiesta para ocho - A party of 8
Ocho seis	86'd	La lasaña está 86 - Lasagna is 86'd
Voy atrás	Behind	Me gritó "¡Voy atrás!", pero igual nos tropezamos - He shouted "Behind!", but we still bumped into each other.
Campista	Camper	No sé cómo sacar al campista - I don't know how to get the camper out
Competir	Comp / Comped	Hay que competir a dos - We have to comp two guests
Tapa	Cover	Fue un día flojo, solo tuvimos 12 tapas - It was a weak day, we only had 12 covers
Soltar la cuenta	Drop the check	Le solté la cuenta, pero no ha pagado - I dropped him the check, but he hasn't paid
Recoger / Recogida	Pick up	Pedro necesita que le recojan la mesa 10 - Pedro needs for someone to pick up table 10
Mueve ese hueso	Push	Mueve ese hueso, tenemos demasiados camarones - Push the shrimps tonight, we have too many of them
Girar y quemar	Turn and burn	Mejor giras y quemas si no quieres encamotarte - You better turn and burn if you don't want to get slammed

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Todo el día	All day	Tengo dos hamburguesas, todo el día - I've got 2 burgers all day
Oído	Heard	An Adam and Eve on a raft for table 3, heard!
CP	Family meal	Hoy hay pasta de CP – Today's Family meal is pasta
Correr	Run	Corre la ensalada a la mesa del Chef - Run the salad to the Chef's table
Cena y pica	Walkout	Se nos escapó un cena y pica - We missed a walkout
Marchar / Marchando	Working / On deck	Marchando el principal de la mesa dos - Working main from table 2
Cantar	Reading	¡Cocina! El camarero va a cantar la orden - Kitchen! The waiter it's going to read the command
Aún muge	Still mooing	Bistec, ¡aún muge! - Steak, still mooing!
Los muertos	The deads	Saca / Recoge los muertos para el próximo servicio - Collect the dead for the next service
		Used to talk about dishes left on the tables
¡Muerde!	It bites!	¡Usa un trapo que muerde! - Use a cloth because the plate is burning hot!
¿Quién lleva?	Hands!	¿Quién se lleva la 15? - Hands, order 15!

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Descamochar	Clean leftovers	Descamocha los platos antes de traerlos - Clean the leftovers off the plates before bringing them in
Ser rallado / Irse de lado	Having a great tip	¡Me fui de lado con esa mesa! - Amazing, what a great tip from that table!
Ser matado / Piojo	Stiffed / Flea	Me mataron, ¡qué piojo! - They stiffed me, what a flea!
Pollo	Crumber	Daniel dejó el pollo en la mesa - Daniel left the crumber on the table
Caballo	Waiter's napkin	El caballo debe estar pulcro en todo momento - A waiter's napkin must be neat at all times

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Daily FOH to BOH Terms & Phrases

In this section, we lower (just) a little bit the level of complexity. With a little more literal sentences you can make the base strong enough so that when giving orders or making a request in the kitchen, everything will be easier. To have a more complete work without a doubt I recommend you to take Spanish lessons specialized in cooking and restaurants, not only you will have this kind of information, but you will be able to give much more sense to everything you have read.

Spanish	English
Salón / Sala / Piso	FOH

Spanish	English
Cocina	BOH
La reservación / reserva	Reservation / Reso
Corredor	Runner
La sección / estación	Section / Station
A la carta	À la carte
Al minuto / Al momento	À la minute
Ayudante	Busser
Ventana	Window
Trabajo secundario	Side work
Turno de mesa	Table turns
Turnos	Shifts
Carro de servir	Serving cart
Venta cruzada	Cross-selling
Doble	Double
Piscina de propina / Moche	Tip pool
Punto de venta	POS
Poco hecha / Al punto / Pasada	Rare / medium / well done
Tomar comanda	Take the order
Aperitivo / Entrada / Entrante	Appetizer

Spanish	English
Plato principal	Main course
Menú de degustación	Tasting menu
Especialidad del chef	Chef's special
Inicia la 30	Let's get started with table 30!
Sale un / una...	Marching a...
Monta la 30	Clean the table 30
Sobre la marcha	On the fly

Check Out Our English Training for Restaurants

Hey there. Welcome.

I'm Kéllyta Quijada - and I wrote this article.

Stuck on this topic? Hire me for just 1 hour to start mastering it. Pass a test, improve basic vocabulary or improve your conversational level in Spanish.

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I know, not all English is as simple as spelling or pronunciation of common English words. At first, there are always searches like “FOH meaning” (btw the acronym FOH stands for in front of house, which in Spanish as you saw is salón) and, as you could guess, BOH meaning is back of house or cocina in Spanish; however, once you become familiar with terms that are every day to us, the rest comes to be like a diner who asks for no substitutions and is happy with just the way the menu is, in other words…. Simple!