Mexican Slang: 50+ Common Words and Phrases (with Examples)

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Quick answer: Some of the most common Mexican slang words are **chido** and **padre** (cool), **¿qué onda?** (what's up?), **neta** (truth, really), **lana** (money), **chamba** (job), **cuate** (buddy), **ahorita** (right now… or later), **órale** (wow, OK, come on) and **¡aguas!** (watch out!).

Mexican Spanish is famous for its slang, and you'll hear it in movies, music, texts and every conversation with Mexican friends. This list has 50+ everyday words and phrases

with meanings and example sentences. We've kept it family-friendly: everything here is safe to use with coworkers, your tutor or your host family.

Mexican slang for "cool," "great" and "bad"

Slang	Meaning	Example
Chido / chida	Cool, great	*¡Qué chido tu carro!* – Your car is so cool!
Padre / padrísimo	Cool, awesome	*La fiesta estuvo padrísima.* – The party was awesome.
Buena onda	Nice, a good person / good vibes	*Tu hermana es muy buena onda.* – Your sister is really nice.
Mala onda	Not nice, a bad vibe	*Qué mala onda que no te invitaron.* – That's not cool that they didn't invite you.
Gacho / gacha	Bad, mean, ugly	*Está gacho el tráfico hoy.* – The traffic is awful today.
Chafa	Low quality, cheap, lame	*Este cargador es bien chafa.* – This charger is really cheap.
Está cañón	It's tough, it's hard	*Está cañón el examen.* – The exam is really hard.
Me late	I like it / sounds good to me	*¿Tacos? Me late.* – Tacos? Sounds good.

Mexican slang for people and friends

Slang	Meaning	Example

Cuate	Buddy, friend	*Es mi cuate de la prepa.* – He's my buddy from high school.
Carnal / carnala	Brother/sister, close friend	*¿Qué onda, carnal?* – What's up, bro?
Compa	Pal, friend (short for *compadre*)	*Vino con unos compas.* – He came with some friends.
Chavo / chava	Young guy / young woman	*Ese chavo trabaja conmigo.* – That guy works with me.
Chamaco / chamaca	Kid	*Los chamacos están jugando afuera.* – The kids are playing outside.
Morro / morra	Kid, young person (northern Mexico)	*Está bien morro todavía.* – He's still really young.
Fresa	Preppy, posh (literally "strawberry")	*Habla muy fresa.* – She talks really preppy.
Codo / coda	Stingy (literally "elbow")	*No seas codo, invita.* – Don't be stingy, treat us.
Fodongo / fodonga	Lazy, a couch potato	*Hoy me siento bien fodongo.* – I feel really lazy today.

Everyday Mexican slang words

Slang	Meaning	Example
Lana	Money (literally "wool")	*No tengo lana.* – I don't have any money.
Feria	Change, money	*¿Traes feria para el camión?* – Do you have change for the bus?
Chamba	Job, work	*Encontré chamba nueva.* – I found a new job.

Chambear	To work	*Mañana chambeo temprano.* – I work early tomorrow.
Camión	Bus (in most countries it means “truck”)	*Voy a tomar el camión.* – I’m going to take the bus.
Aventón	A ride, a lift	*¿Me das un aventón?* – Can you give me a ride?
Chela	Beer	*¿Unas chelas después del trabajo?* – A few beers after work?
Botana	Snack, appetizer	*Trae botana para el partido.* – Bring snacks for the game.
Antro	Nightclub	*Vamos al antro el sábado.* – Let’s go to the club on Saturday.
Pachanga	Party	*Hay pachanga en casa de Luis.* – There’s a party at Luis’s place.
Bronca	Problem, trouble	*No hay bronca.* – No problem.
Changarro	Small shop, small business	*Abrió su changarro en el centro.* – He opened his little shop downtown.
Tianguis	Open-air street market	*Compré fruta en el tianguis.* – I bought fruit at the street market.
Cruda	Hangover	*Tiene una cruda terrible.* – He has a terrible hangover.

Mexican slang phrases and expressions

Phrase	Meaning	Example

¿Qué onda?	What's up?	*¿Qué onda, cómo estás?* – What's up, how are you?
¿Neta? / La neta	Really? / The truth	*La neta, no me gustó.* – Honestly, I didn't like it.
Órale	Wow! / OK! / Come on!	*¡Órale, qué rápido llegaste!* – Wow, you got here fast!
Ándale	Come on, hurry up / that's right	*¡Ándale, que se hace tarde!* – Come on, it's getting late!
¡Aguas!	Watch out!	*¡Aguas con el perro!* – Watch out for the dog!
Sale / Va	OK, deal	*¿Nos vemos a las seis? –Sale.* – See you at six? –Deal.
Simón / Nel	Yes / No (very casual)	*¿Vienes? –Nel, estoy cansado.* – Coming? –Nah, I'm tired.
¡No manches!	No way! You're kidding!	*¡No manches, ganaste!* – No way, you won!
¡Qué oso!	How embarrassing!	*Me caí en la calle, ¡qué oso!* – I fell in the street, so embarrassing!
¿A poco?	Really? No way?	*¿A poco ya terminaste?* – You're done already? Really?
¿Mande?	Pardon? Yes? (polite)	*¿Mande? No le escuché.* – Pardon? I didn't hear you.
Ponerse las pilas	To get your act together	*Ponte las pilas con la tarea.* – Get going on your homework.
Echarle ganas	To give it your all	*¡Échale ganas!* – Give it your best!
Rajarse	To back out, chicken out	*Dijo que venía y se rajó.* – He said he'd come and backed out.

¿Te late?	Are you in? Do you like the idea?	*Vamos al cine, ¿te late?* – Let's go to the movies, are you in?
Estar en la luna	To be daydreaming	*Hoy andas en la luna.* – You're in a daze today.

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"Ahorita": the most confusing word in Mexican Spanish

Officially, **ahorita** means "right now." In practice, Mexicans use it for anything from "this second" to "sometime later, maybe." Context and tone are everything:

- *Ahorita voy.* – I'm coming (soon… probably).
- *Ahorita mismo.* – Right this minute.
- *Ahorita no, joven.* – Not right now, young man (a polite "no").

Mexican slang vs other countries

English	Mexico	Colombia	Peru	Spain
cool	chido, padre	bacano, chévere	bacán	guay

friend	cuate, compa	parcero, parce	causa, pata	tío, colega
money	lana	plata	plata, lucas	pasta
job	chamba	camello	chamba	curro
bus	camión	bus, buseta	micro, combi	autobús

For more countries, see our guides to Colombian slang, Peruvian slang, Venezuelan slang and Ecuadorian slang.

Tips for using Mexican slang

- **Know your audience.** Words like *chido*, *padre* and *¿qué onda?* are fine almost anywhere. Save the more casual ones (*simón*, *nel*) for friends.
- **Listen first.** Slang changes by region and age. What a teenager in Monterrey says may sound different from Mexico City.
- **Use *usted* and *¿mande?* with elders and clients.** Mexicans value politeness, and these show respect.
- **Practice with a native speaker.** A tutor from Mexico can tell you which words sound natural and which sound forced.

Keep learning Mexican Spanish

Start with Mexican greetings and our guide to Mexican Spanish. When you're ready to use these words in real conversation, book a lesson with one of our Spanish tutors from Mexico.

Frequently asked questions

What does “chido” mean in Mexico?

Chido means “cool” or “great.” ¡Qué chido! – How cool! Padre and padrísimo mean the same thing.

What does “¿qué onda?” mean?

It means “What’s up?” It’s the most common casual greeting in Mexico. See our guide to Mexican greetings for more.

What does “neta” mean in Mexican slang?

La neta means “the truth” or “honestly.” ¿Neta? means “Really?”

What does “ahorita” mean in Mexico?

Literally “right now,” but Mexicans use it for anything from this second to sometime later. Ahorita mismo means right this minute.

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