MASTER SPANISH RESTAURANT VOCABULARY AND UPSKILL YOUR STAFF

Meeting other chefs and cooks at an international level always generates satisfaction. I have met chefs from many cities: Paris, Tokyo, Rome and maybe even with some guests from Copenhagen at special events. What do we all agree on? Communication within the kitchen makes everything flow smoothly. I have been in charge of at least 10 Spanish speakers, and it would have been complete chaos if it wasn't for the decision to learn Spanish with a restaurant focus. From basic terms like how to say cooked in Spanish, to the most primordial: the cooking verbs in Spanish.

If you got this far it is probably because you need support to be in a kitchen that has contact with native Spanish speakers (whether they are part of the staff or the diners), let's make sure everything goes as planned. The more familiar you are with these cooking phrases, the easier it will be to interact with the other chefs in Spanish and, thus, all orders will go out on time.

Spanish Kitchen Slang

Although it is well known that in the kitchen you do not speak softly, but rather everything is almost shouted to make it clear what you are asking for, it would be useless to be in an environment where there is shouting with words and terms that you do not understand. More complicated than this? That the shouting is not literal words, but slangs from the kitchen. If you don't want this to happen to you, let's meet a couple that will soon become familiar.

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Sé valiente	Be brave	¡Hey, Tomas! Preparé este nuevo platillo, ¡sé valiente! - Hey, Tomas! I prepared this new dish, be brave!
		(The chef asks you to try a new meal)

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Plato muerto	Dead plate	Ya pasaron 15 minutos, ese plato está muerto, avisa al chef- It's been 15 minutes, that dish is dead, notify the chef.
Ocho seis	86'd	Hector, dile al mesonero que el plato de camarones está 86'd - Hector, tell the waiter that the shrimp dish is 86'd.
Merezco el viaje	I deserve the trip	Desde hace dos meses Guillermo está trabajado en perfeccionar algo nuevo, y ayer él grito “¡Merezco el viaje”! - For the past two months Guillermo has been working on perfecting something new, and yesterday he shouted "I deserve the trip"!
		(When the chef considers that he deserves to receive a Michelin award for a delicious dish)
El vendedor	The seller	El vendedor hoy ha sabido sacar bien todos los platos - The seller has been able to get all the plates out well today.
		This is how chefs and cooks call waiters
Empuja ese plato	Push that plate	La carne del guiso le faltó marinar, empuja ese plato para ver si se vende hoy - The stew meat lacked marinade, push that dish to see if it sells today.
		A phrase told to cooks to add extra effort in the preparation of a dish whose main ingredient is not as fresh as it should be.

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Estar camote	In the weeds	Se acerca Diciembre, tenemos programadas veinte cenas empresariales, vamos a estar camote - December is approaching, we have twenty corporate dinners scheduled, we are going to be in the weeds
Dormirse	Dragging	Tengo el plato listo desde hace tres minutos pero la fría se durmió y no ha servido la ensalada - I got the dish ready three minutes ago but the cold one is dragging and did not serve the salad.
Zapatero	Shoemaker	Tenemos nuevo zapatero en la cocina, ayer quemó el pescado, quedó negro - We have a new shoemaker in the kitchen, yesterday he burned the fish, it was black.
# fuera	# out	#5 fuera y lo paso a la fría - #5 out and pass it to the cold (salad station)
Todo el día	All day	¡Oscar! Mesa 14 ¡Necesito cuatro filets, tres tortillas españolas, 2 sopas de res, una de papas fritas con nuggtes, ¡todo el día! - Oscar! Table 14 I need four steaks, three Spanish omelets, 2 beef soups, one french fries with nuggets, all day!
Doble	Double	Este mes me tocan dos doble, pero tengo vacaciones cerca. - This month I get two double, but I have vacations nearby.
		When you have to work two shifts in a row

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Soltar	Drop	¡Tengo listas las tostadas! Soltar los huevos revueltos - I have the toast ready! Drop the scrambled eggs
CP	Family meal	¿Está lista la CP? – Is Family meal ready?
Matar	Kill it	No, ¡el pollo! Lo mataste y ya estamos al límite de tiempo en esa mesa - No, the chicken! You killed it and we are already at the time limit at that table.
Estirarlo	Stretch it	Estamos a punto de quedarnos sin champiñones para la crema, pero puedo estirarlo para la última orden - We are about to run out of mushrooms for the cream, but I can stretch it to the last order.
Veg	Vegetable	Eduardo ya le está poniendo los vegs al plato de la mesa 11 - Eduardo is already putting the vegetable on the table plate 11
		Vegetables accompanying the main course
Cantar	Singing	¡Oído! ¡Edgar va a cantar la orden a la mesa 54! - Heard! Edgar is going to sing the order to table 54!
		Used when reading all the dishes on the order

Spanish	English	Example / Explanation
Desembarazar	Clean up	Otro día bien hecho, ¡ahora todos a desembararzar! - Another day well done, now everybody clean up!
		To tidy up and clean the place where work has been carried out
Hermosear	Beautify	¡Hermosea el pollo para el plato del día! - Beautify the chicken for the dish of the day!
		Used when the unusable parts of a food are eliminated
Marchando	On deck	¡Marchando el fillet y setas de la mesa 12! - The fillet and mushrooms from table 12 are on deck!

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Daily Kitchen Phrases

In those cases where you are looking how to say specific phrases in the kitchen, here are a couple that can save you from having a hard time in the middle of an order, the easiest is to resort to phrases like "what are you cooking in Spanish" *(btw se dice "¿qué estás cocinando?")*, but let's go with a couple more that are common in cooking and make Spanish for restaurant workers seem simple.

Spanish	English
Caliente atrás / Quema / Voy atrás	Behind
Oído (cocina)	Heard

Spanish	English
Rectifica la sal	Check the salt
Mesa del chef	Chef's table
Tengo libre el lunes	I am free on Monday
Necesito ayuda en la estación de...	I need help at the (...) station
Sopas y guarniciones / Salsas	Saucier
Pescados	Poissonnier
Asados	Rotisseur
Parrilla	Grillardin
Verduras	Entremetier
Pastelería / Repostería	Pâtissier
Frituras / Freidora	Friturier
Huele a quemado	Smells burnt
El cuchillo de un chef nunca se presta	A chef's knife never lends itself
Cerramos en dos horas	We will close in two hours
Mañana tenemos un invitado especial	Tomorrow we have a special guest

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Cooking Verbs in Spanish

The name of our profession is also a verb, and it is not the only action that is done in every start of a new dish, here are a few verbs that are very common in the kitchen, if you have Spanish natives in your charge, or you are aiming at a Spanish-speaking target you will constantly come across these verbs.

Keep in mind that life in the kitchen is as we know it, that is, orders, commands, the guidelines we have to give, learning the names of the ingredients together with the actions that must be done with them, is the basis and the principle with which we manage to make the whole job work. This list includes generalities ranging from cooking or cutting, to the details that are practically a mechanical movement for us, such as cleaning our workstation every two seconds. Learning these verbs is the backbone of making Spanish cooking work.

Spanish	English
Cocinar	Cook
Cortar	Cut
Aliñar	Seasoning
Reducir	To reduce
Hervir	Boil
Servir	Serve
Llevar	Take to
Hornear	Bake
Freír	Fry
Picar	Chop
Saltear	Sauté

Spanish	English
Salar	To add salt to
Salpimentar	Season with salt and pepper
Endulzar	Sweeten
Comprar	Buy
Almacenar	To Stock up
Seleccionar	Choose
Botar	Throw away
Condimentar	Season
Sofreír	Fry lightly
Asar	Roast
Exprimir	Squeeze
Abrir	Open
Cerrar	Close
Lavar	Wash
Combinar	Combine
Rallar	Grate
Quemar	Burn
Enfriar	To cool
Congelar	to freeze

Spanish	English
Dejar enfriar	Leave to cool
Descongelar	Defrost
Pelar	Peel
Mazclar	Mix
Escurrir	Drain
Estirar	To stretch
Colar	Strain
Probar	Taste
Amasar	To knead
Tostar	Toasting
Rebanar	To slice
Guisar	To stew
Rebozar	To roll in batter
Gratinar	Gratinating
Dorar	Browning
Dar	Giving
Remover	To stir
Desmenuzar	To flake
Agregar	Add

Spanish	English
Comer	Eat
Triturar	Crush
Echar	Pour
Pesar	Weighing
Untar	Spread
Voltear	Turning
Remover	Stir
Medir	Measure
Limpiar	Clean
Rellenar	Fill / Stuff
Espolvorear	Sprinkle
Exprimir	Squeeze
Batir	Blend / Shake
Moler	Grind

Examples:

- **En la repostería debes pesar todo con exactitud** (In baking, you must weigh everything accurately.).
- **Él debe mezclar la masa hasta que esté suave** (He must mix the dough until it is smooth.).
- **Nunca es bueno tostar demasiado el pan para un desayuno** (It is never good to toast bread too much for breakfast.).
- **Rellenar el pollo de la cena con 5 horas de antelación** (Stuff the chicken for

dinner 5 hours in advance.).

- **Agregar una pizca de sal si es necesario** (Add a pinch of salt if necessary.).

Cooking Measurements in Spanish

These are the most common measurements in Spanish, each one can vary by □, □, 1 □ etc., being valid to say for a recipe “agregar al caldo una taza y media (1 □) de vino” add one and a half (1 □) cups of wine to the broth. Equivalences deserve more specific care - much more in our kitchens- but it is a priority to learn and understand these measurements and then move on to weight equivalences in Spanish. The advantage? You can see that there is a lot of similarity between most of the word structures.

Spanish	English
Litro	Liter
Mililitro	Milliliter
Centímetros cúbicos	Cubic centimeters
Kilogramos	Kilograms
Gramos	Grams
Libra	Libra
Onza	Ounce
Cucharada sopera	Tablespoon
Cucharadita	Teaspoon
Taza	Cup

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Bonus: Frequently Asked Questions about Spanish for Cooking

If you have found yourself wondering about some of these phrases, here you can find the answers with the logic behind it. Most of the words that come from French are kept in this language both when speaking in English and Spanish, there you can have a shortcut if you find yourself needing to know a term in Spanish and its spelling even in English is written and pronounced in French. The details of pronunciation in words that have the letter “c” followed by a vowel, or the use of vowel forces, is a constant exercise in getting to notice the differences and grammatical rules.

Question	Answer
How to say baking in Spanish?	Hornear
Where do you put the meat in Spanish?	¿Dónde se pone la carne? (And to answer: I'd say the *refrigerador* is a good place).
How do you say chef in Spanish?	In both English and Spanish, the word chef is still used, which comes from French. You can also find similar words such as "cocinero" (cook).
Cocina pronunciation?	The union of the letters "c" "i" is pronounced as "s" in Spanish. Some think it could be pronounced as in Italian "chi", but it is not.
How do you say boil in spanish?	Hervir
I am cooking in spanish?	Estoy cocinando
Cooked in Spanish?	Cocido or cocinado
Cucharada sopera	Tablespoon

Question	Answer
Cucharadita	Teaspoon
Taza	Cup

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 that facing challenges such as learning another language can generate stress and even more so when it is about a specific topic, but if there is a profession that knows how to handle stress and generate ideas and magnificent things, that profession is ours. Meeting other cultures is something that comes naturally to us either because we have to put together a complete menu of a new fusion or because we have exchanges in other countries, try to learn this and the rest of the lessons we have about cooking in Spanish and little by little you will be able to feel almost like a Latin chef.

Now, if what you need is to perfect yourself and make this knowledge useful and practical in a reasonable amount of time, check out our study plan designed specifically to learning Spanish for cooking.