

Spanish For Gringos Lesson 2 Courtesy Essentials 2026 10 03

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Maya: ¡Hola! And welcome back to Spanish for Gringos, the daily course that gets you ready for Latin America, one lesson at a time. I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. Yesterday we learned how to say hello and introduce ourselves. Today is lesson two, and this is the one that buys you goodwill everywhere you go. The magic words. Courtesy essentials.

Maya: Six little phrases, and they will make every cashier, waiter, and taxi driver treat you like family. Let's go.

Devon: Phrase one: por favor. That means please. Say it por fah-VOR, with the accent on the last syllable, and give that final R a tiny little roll, like a cat purring for half a second.

Maya: Phrase two: gracias. Thank you. GRAH-syahs. In Latin America, the C before an I or E sounds like an S, not the Spanish-from-Spain TH. So GRAH-syahs, not GRAH-thyahs.

Devon: Phrase three: de nada. You're welcome. Deh NAH-dah. Pronounce every vowel nice and open, and it sings by itself.

Maya: Phrase four: perdón. Sorry, or excuse me. Pair-DOHN. That little accent mark over the O tells you to lean hard on the last syllable. Use this when you bump into someone or step on a toe in a crowded market.

Devon: Phrase five: disculpe. Also excuse me, but the formal, respectful version. Dees-KOOL-peh. This is your get-out-of-jail-free card with strangers, elders, and anyone wearing a uniform.

Maya: And phrase six: con permiso. Literally, with permission. Kohn pair-MEE-soh. This is the special one. You say con permiso when you need to squeeze past someone on a packed bus or wiggle through a market stall. It's physical excuse me.

Devon: Let's hear them in action. Maya, you're a gringo tourist at a beach caf  in Costa Rica. I'm your server.

Maya: Buenos d as. Un caf , por favor.

Devon: Claro. Aqu  tiene su caf .

Devon: Claro. Con permiso, seæorita.

Maya: You just ordered coffee, praised it, and asked for the check, all with perfect manners. Cultural note: in Latin America, politeness is a whole ritual. Always greet before you ask for anything, even just a coffee. And in many places, strangers, especially older folks, expect the formal disculpe instead of the casual perdón. A little formality goes a very long way.

Devon: Time for your recap drill. Repeat after us. One: por favor, por fah-VOR, please.

Maya: Two: gracias, GRAH-syahs, thank you.

Devon: Three: disculpe, dees-KOOL-peh, the polite excuse me.

Maya: That's lesson two. Six magic words, and you're officially a polite gringo. Tomorrow, lesson three: numbers one to twenty, so you can start understanding prices. Hasta luego.