

Spanish For Gringos Lesson 4 Numbers 20100 Money Prices 2026 10 05

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Maya: Hola, and welcome back to Spanish for Gringos! I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. This is lesson four, and today we go big: numbers twenty through one hundred, plus the money talk every traveler needs.

Maya: Because knowing your numbers means nothing if you can't ask the price of that amazing taco.

Devon: Our most important phrase today: ¿Cuánto cuesta? It means, how much does it cost?

Maya: Say it with me. ¿Cuánto cuesta? KWAHN-toh KWES-tah. The letter u is always a long oo, like in moon, so cuesta is KWES-tah, not kwess-tah. You'll say this fifty times a day, so make it musical.

Devon: Now the money itself. The currency in Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, and Chile is the peso. In Spanish it's just pesos. PEH-sos. Nice and easy.

Maya: And the word for dollars is dólares, with the accent on the first syllable. DOH-lah-res. Careful, gringos: in Mexico the dollar sign is also the peso sign. If a menu shows a price with a dollar sign, it usually means pesos, not American dollars. When in doubt, ask: ¿pesos o dólares?

Devon: Great tip. Now the big numbers. You already know veinte, twenty. Here are the rest of the tens: treinta is thirty, cuarenta is forty, cincuenta is fifty, sesenta is sixty, setenta is seventy, ochenta is eighty, noventa is ninety, and cien is one hundred.

Maya: And here's the magic pattern: to build any number, just connect the ten and the one with the word y, which means and. Thirty-five is treinta y cinco. Sixty-two is sesenta y dos. Ninety-nine is noventa y nueve.

Devon: So eight tacos at veinte pesos each? That's ciento sesenta. One hundred and sixty.

Maya: One warning about cien, pronounced see-EN: past one hundred it becomes ciento, like ciento veinte. For markets and taxis, cien is your workhorse.

Devon: Two bargaining phrases before our demo. Es caro means it's expensive. KAH-roh. And yes, give that r a little roll, like a purr. Es caro.

Maya: And es barato means it's cheap. Bah-RAH-toh. These two are your negotiation superpowers. A smile plus es caro can drop a price faster than anything.

Devon: And one more lifesaver: ¿Tiene cambio? Means, do you have change? Pronounced tee-EH-nay KAHM-byoh. Say it before you hand over a big bill, never after.

Maya: And finally, the kindness shield: solo estoy mirando. I'm just looking. SOH-loh es-TOY mee-RAHN-doh. When a vendor follows you through the market, smile and say it. Works every time.

Devon: Demo time. Maya's at a market in Oaxaca. I'm the vendor. Here we go.

Maya: Buenos días. ¿Cuánto cuesta esta blusa?

Devon: Cuesta trescientos pesos.

only, and vendors often can't break big bills. Carry small bills, ask ¿tiene cambio? before you pay, and pay in pesos, not dollars. Dollar-paying gringos get a terrible exchange rate.

Maya: And one more: in Colombia, prices are often quoted in thousands, and locals drop the thousand. If a vendor says cuesta diez, they might mean diez mil, ten thousand pesos. Listen for the word mil.

Devon: Recap drill. Three phrases. Maya, start us off.

Maya: How do you say, how much does it cost?

Devon: ¿CuÆento cuesta? KWAHN-toh KWES-tah.

Maya: How do you say, it's cheap?

Devon: Es barato. Bah-RAH-toh.

Maya: And how do you say, I'm just looking?

Devon: Solo estoy mirando. SOH-loh es-TOY mee-RAHN-doh.

Maya: Beautiful. Numbers twenty to one hundred and money talk are yours now. Next lesson, ordering food and drink like a local. Hasta luego, amigos.

Devon: Nos vemos. And remember, practice out loud: ¿cuÆento cuesta? Say it everywhere today.