

I, New York

You asked for it

Learning Spanish



Illustration: Dave Ercolini

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 To: inyc@timeoutny.com
 Subject: Spanish lessons

As a result of recent unemployment, I have too much free time and too little money. I would like to pick up a new language while idling between interviews. Spanish, to be exact. Where in NYC can I learn Spanish for free or for as little money as possible?

Ah, mec

Meet and mingle

Spanish conversation workshops at **New York Spanish Language Meetup** are led by native-speaking teachers and grammar experts (\$15 for 70 minutes of chitchat, held in bars or parks). Cultural outings include a monthly Spanish film with English subtitles. Begin with no knowledge, or stay to pick up advanced slang so you can give up that "hasta la vista" *Terminator* impression. With 4,400 members, you're bound to find a conversation partner, fellow single or just a friend at one of the many social events.

meetup.com/spanishconversation

Give a little, talk a little

Donate your time to ESL or computer classes at **A Spanish Journey**, and your Spanish instruction (starting at \$30 per week) is free. The school offers a free 30-minute evaluation to see where you fit in and if you're down with their method. Instructor Ivan Romero says he tracks individual progress, so you can drop that "my perro ate my homework" alibi. 251 W 14th St, between Seventh and Eighth Aves, second floor (212-633-7108, aspanishjourney.com)

Instead of watching *Golden Girls* reruns, or whatever it is that sucks up your time, do one measly evening hour of administrative work per week at **El Centro de Educación de Trabajadores** and get free Spanish classes (it's \$90 for 8 weeks otherwise). Centro NYC also holds informal conversations called *intercambio* (Spanish for "exchange") Tuesday nights, with topics ranging from pop culture to politics—and it's free through July 2. 413 W 46th St between Ninth and Tenth Aves (212-765-4634, elcentronyc.org)

Score a scholarship

Tell **ABC Language Exchange** why you're passionate about learning your language of choice, and voilà—you just may get a helping hand with its four-week tuition, which starts at \$120. "The people tell us their story, and they get a little scholarship to get them going," says CEO and founder Elizabeth Lunney. "They ask if they need to fill out a form, and I say, no, this is me giving you a break." If you're not so lucky, be sure to attend an open house, where the \$50 registration fee is waived, or try the \$50, three-hour crash travel course, what Lunney calls the "wham bam thank you ma'am" of classes. You get schooled on greetings, directions, restaurant ordering and basic phrases (like, say, "Help, I procrastinated on learning your language before my trip to Cancun!"). 135 W 29th St between Sixth and Seventh Aves, suite 1204 (212-563-7580, abclang.com)

Wax on, wax off

Native Spanish speakers from **Spanish Black Belt** teach tiny groups (up to four students) who share the same level and neighborhood (starting at \$224 for 16 hours). Focused on speaking and listening, these classes put the language into practice with role-playing exercises, then advance through a karate-like belt system. As a bonus, the school can tailor a course for student needs, be it health care, government or black-market business dealings (kidding—we assume). 347-410-9273, spanishblackbelt.com —Ashley Hoffman

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