Dominican

A–L

Spanish Words · 1

340 words with audio · *Habla como un dominicano*

INSIDE THIS BOOK

a cada rato · a la veldá que · el abanico · aficie · aguacero · ahí mimo · el aire · and 333 more words



▶ QR: hear every word

✎ Meanings + examples

RD · Dominican Spanish

by **Estalkin José** · Dominican Spanish teacher

interactivespanishbooks.com

Dominican Spanish Words · Book 1 (A–L)

340 words and phrases you will really hear in the Dominican Republic, from the dictionary of Estalkin José, a Dominican Spanish teacher. Each word has its meaning, the standard Spanish way to say it, real examples and a short explanation.

▶ **Hear every word.** Scan the QR code next to a word with your phone camera: it opens its page with Dominican audio and more examples.

Register. Next to each word you see if it is neutral, colloquial or very colloquial. With colloquial words, think about who you are talking to.

Practise. Free lessons with these words: interactivespanishbooks.com/slides · The app **Learn Dominican Spanish** (iPhone and Android).

© 2026 Estalkin José · Interactive Spanish Books · interactivespanishbooks.com

A

a cada rato *colloquial*



all the time · standard Spanish: muy a menudo

«Se va la luz a cada rato.» *The power goes out all the time.*

High and irritating frequency. Stronger than «a veces» and more informal than «con frecuencia».

- Mi vecina me llama a cada rato. My neighbor calls me all the time.
- A cada rato cambian el horario. They change the schedule all the time.

a la brigandina *colloquial*

any old way, sloppily · standard Spanish: de cualquier manera, mal hecho

«Ese ingeniero construyó esa casa a la brigandina.» *That engineer built that house any old way.*

Something done carelessly, without care or effort. You will hear it when someone complains about a bad job.

a la veldá que *colloquial*



honestly, truth is · standard Spanish: la verdad es que

«A la veldá que tú tienes razón.» *Honestly, you are right.*

A Dominican filler phrase used to introduce an honest opinion.

- A la verdad que hoy hace calor. Honestly, it's hot today.
- A la verdad que ese muchacho trabaja mucho. Truth is, that guy works a lot.

a la vera *colloquial*

right next to · standard Spanish: al lado de

«Yo taba a la vera de la acera.» *I was right next to the sidewalk.*

Beside something or someone. It sounds warm and a bit country; in the city you also hear «al lado».

a millón *colloquial*

at full speed · standard Spanish: muy rápido, a toda velocidad

«Ese carro va a millón.» *That car is going full speed.*

At top speed. Also said about a person who is doing everything very fast.

a po' ta' bien *very colloquial*

ah, fine then · standard Spanish: ah, pues está bien

«A po' ta' bien, yo me voy pa' mi casa.» *Ah, fine then, I'm going home.*

«Ah, pues está bien» with everything swallowed. It is what you say when you give in — sometimes for real, often annoyed.

el abanico *neutral*

the fan · standard Spanish: el ventilador

«Prende el abanico, que hace un calor.» *Turn on the fan, it's boiling.*

In the DR an electric fan is an «abanico». And with the blackouts, it is the first appliance you miss.



- Duermo con el abanico prendido. I sleep with the fan on.
- El abanico del cuarto no funciona. The bedroom fan doesn't work.

abimbar *colloquial*

to beat someone up · standard Spanish: golpear, dar una paliza

«La mamá de Luis lo abimbó porque llegó ajumao.» *Luis's mom beat him up because he came home drunk.*

To hit someone hard enough to leave them swollen. Usually a beating from a parent or in a fight.

ace *colloquial*

laundry detergent · standard Spanish: el detergente en polvo

«Échale ace a la ropa.» *Put some detergent on the clothes.*

A brand name that became the word for any powdered detergent, the way «Kleenex» works in English.



acechar *colloquial*

to spy on, to keep an eye on · standard Spanish: vigilar, espiar

«Tengo que acechar a la vecina nueva.» *I have to keep an eye on the new neighbor.*

To watch someone on the sly. Here it is used casually, often half joking about nosy neighbors.

la acera *neutral*

the sidewalk · standard Spanish: la vereda

«Camina por la acera, no por la calle.» *Walk on the sidewalk, not the street.*

An ordinary word, but in many neighborhoods the sidewalk is taken up by motorcycles, tables or goods, so people walk in the street.

- La acera está rota. The sidewalk is broken.
- Hay un vendedor en la acera. There is a vendor on the sidewalk.

acotejar *colloquial*

to tidy up, to sort out · standard Spanish: organizar, acomodar

«Hoy tengo que acotejá mi cuarto, ta' hecho un desatre.»

To put things in order. It works for a room, for papers and for a plan.



aficie *colloquial*

a crush, being head over heels · standard Spanish: el enamoramiento, la obsesión

«Esa muchacha tiene un aficie del diablo.» *That girl has one hell of a crush.*

Being completely stuck on someone. «Del diablo» here makes it bigger, not evil.

agallú *colloquial*

greedy · standard Spanish: avaricioso, egoísta

«Manuel se comió toda la pizza, ese agallú.» *Manuel ate the whole pizza, that greedy guy.*

Someone who wants everything for himself. From «agalla», guts — here it is appetite, not courage.

ser agarrao *colloquial*

to be stingy · standard Spanish: ser tacaño

«No lo invites, que es bien agarrao.» *Don't invite him, he's really stingy.*



From «agarrado», minus the /d/. In a culture where everything is shared, this is a serious criticism.

- Mi tío es tan agarrao que no da ñapa. My uncle is so stingy he doesn't give extra.
- No seas agarrao y compra la ronda. Don't be stingy and buy the round.

agentao / agentá *colloquial*

a poser, someone who acts important · standard Spanish: presumido, que aparenta

«Esa e' una agentá: dice que trabaja en una oficina, pero nunca sale.» *She's a poser: she says she works in an office, but she never goes out.*

Someone who pretends to be more than they are. The feminine drops the -o: agentá.

agolpiá *colloquial*

to beat up · standard Spanish: golpear, dar una paliza

«Voy a agolpiá a Miguel si sigue así.» *I'm going to beat up Miguel if he keeps that up.*

«Agolpear» with the ending eaten. Said as a threat far more often than as a fact.

aguacero *neutral*

downpour · standard Spanish: lluvia fuerte

«Cayó tremendo aguacero anoche.» *There was a huge downpour last night.*



Heavy, short rain. «Tremendo aguacero» is the normal way to say it — in the DR «tremendo» intensifies anything.

el aguaje *colloquial*

a bluff, all show · standard Spanish: el farol, la apariencia falsa

«Eso es puro aguaje, él no tiene nada.» *That's all bluff, he's got nothing.*

Pretending to have something you do not, or threatening with no intention of following through. An «aguajero» is someone who does it.

- Tanto aguaje y no tiene ni para el pasaje. So much show and he can't even pay the fare.
- Ese reloj es puro aguaje. That watch is all show.

aguajero *colloquial*

a bluffer · standard Spanish: fanfarrón, farolero

«Ese es un aguajero, nadie le cree nada.» *He is all talk, nobody believes a word he says.*

Someone who lives on bluff. Close to «jablador», but the aguajero exaggerates more than he lies.

- Mi primo es un aguajero. My cousin is a bluffer.
- Los aguajeros hablan mucho y hacen poco. Bluffers talk a lot and do little.

ahí mimo *colloquial*

right there, close by · standard Spanish: muy cerca, justo ahí

«Déjalo ahí mimo, que yo lo busco.» *Leave it right there, I will get it.*

Careful with this one: «ahí mismo» can be twenty meters or twenty minutes away. Always ask how many blocks.



- El colmado está ahí mismo. The corner store is right there.
- Déjame ahí mismo, en la esquina. Drop me off right there, on the corner.

el aire *colloquial*

the AC · standard Spanish: el aire acondicionado

«Prende el aire, que esto está caliente.» *Turn on the AC, it's hot in here.*

Nobody says the full «aire acondicionado». And «esto está caliente» means it is hot, not that there is danger... although sometimes that too.



- Apaga el aire, que tengo frío. Turn off the AC, I'm cold.
- El aire del carro no funciona. The car's AC doesn't work.

coger aire *colloquial*

to get some air · standard Spanish: tomar aire, despejarse

«Salgo un chin a coger aire.» *I'm stepping out for some air.*

Careful, not to be confused with «coger un aire», which is getting sick from a draft.

- Salí al balcón a coger aire. I went out on the balcony to get some air.
- Coge aire antes de responder. Take a breath before answering.

el ají cubanela *neutral*

cubanelle pepper · standard Spanish: pimiento verde alargado

«Pica un ají cubanela para el sofrito.» *Chop a cubanelle pepper for the sofrito.*

The mild green pepper that goes in everything. It is not hot: that is what ají gustoso or separate chilli is for.

- Compra dos ajíes cubanela. Buy two cubanelle peppers.
- El ají cubanela no pica. The cubanelle pepper is not hot.

ajumao / ajumá *colloquial*

drunk · standard Spanish: borracho

«Hay que echarle agua a Nicol, ta súper ajumá.» *Somebody throw water on Nicol, she's completely drunk.*

Drunk. It comes from «humo», smoke — the same idea as being fogged up.



ajuntar *colloquial*

to put together · standard Spanish: juntar, unir

«Ajunta esa silla pa' la fieta.» *Put those chairs together for the party.*

«Juntar» with an a in front, which is very common here: ajuntar, arrempujar, arrecordarse.



estar alante *colloquial*

to be doing well · standard Spanish: irle bien, ir por delante

«Ese muchacho está alante, montó su negocio.» *That guy is doing well, he started his own business.*

From «adelante», minus the d. It means thriving. «Ponerse alante» is starting to get ahead.

- Ella está alante con su negocio. She is doing well with her business.
- Mi vecino está alante, compró casa. My neighbor is doing well, he bought a house.

ponerse alante *colloquial*

to start getting ahead · standard Spanish: empezar a progresar

«Este año me voy a poner alante.» *This year I'm going to get ahead.*

Getting ahead financially. Same family as «estar alante».

- Con este trabajo me pongo alante. With this job I'll get ahead.
- Él se puso alante vendiendo carros. He got ahead selling cars.

alante *colloquial*

ahead, in front · standard Spanish: delante, adelante

«Nos vemo' mañana alante del colmado.» *See you tomorrow in front of the colmado.*

«Adelante» with the first syllable eaten. Careful: «estar alante» is a different thing — it means to be doing well.

alentaito / alentaita *colloquial*



on the mend · standard Spanish: mejorando, recuperándose

«¿Cómo está tu abuela? Ella ta mejor, ta alentaita.» *How is your grandmother? She's better, she's on the mend.*

Getting better after an illness. It is the word you will hear when you ask about someone who was sick.

allá tú *colloquial*



suit yourself · standard Spanish: tú verás

«Si no quieres ir, allá tú.» *If you don't want to go, suit yourself.*

It leaves the decision and the responsibility with the other person, often with a hint of reproach.

- Si no estudias, allá tú. If you don't study, suit yourself.
- Allá tú si te lo gastas todo. Suit yourself if you spend it all.

allantar *colloquial*

to bluff, to talk big · standard Spanish: fingir, echar un cuento

«No me allante, dime la verdad.» *Don't bluff me, tell me the truth.*

To pretend or to promise something you will not do. The noun is «allante».

aluzar *colloquial*



to light something up · standard Spanish: iluminar, alumbrar

«Aluza aquí con el celular, que no veo na'.» *Shine the light here with your phone, I can't see a thing.*

To point a light at something. Very useful in a country where the power goes out.

amanecer *colloquial*



to stay up all night · standard Spanish: pasar toda la noche despierto

«Amanecemos en el coro todos los viernes.» *We stay out partying until dawn every Friday.*

As well as «for the sun to come up», it means staying awake until morning. «Amanecí trabajando» — I was up all night working.

- Vamos a amanecer en la fiesta de Ana. We are going to stay up all night at Ana's party.
- Amanecí estudiando para el examen. I stayed up all night studying for the exam.

andá *colloquial*

oh no, wow · standard Spanish: vaya, no me digas

«Se murió María. —Andá, ¿y cómo se murió?» *Maria died. —Oh no, how did she die?*

A short sound of surprise or sorrow at news. It is not the verb «andar».

anda pal diablo *very colloquial*



get out of here! · standard Spanish: ¡no me digas!

«¿Que te ganaste la lotería? ¡Anda pal diablo!» *You won the lottery? Get out of here!*

Pure disbelief, not an insult. It is said with the eyes wide open.

añoñar *colloquial*



to spoil (a child) · standard Spanish: consentir, mimar

«Mi mai me tiene añoñao.» *My mom has me spoiled.*

To give someone too much affection and too many treats. Said about children and about pets.

añugarse *colloquial*

to choke on food · standard Spanish: atragantarse

«Come depacio, que te va a añugá.» *Eat slowly, you're going to choke.*

To choke on food or drink. Mothers say it at every table.

apagón *neutral*



blackout, power cut · standard Spanish: corte de luz

«Se fue la luz otra vez, tremendo apagón.» *The power went out again, huge blackout.*

An everyday word. «Se fue la luz» and «llegó la luz» are things you will hear daily.

apechurrao *colloquial*



squeezed in, packed tight · standard Spanish: muy apretado, apretujado

«En esa guagua vamo' apechurrao.» *We're packed tight in that guagua.*

Pressed against other people or things. The picture is chest to chest — «pecho».

apota *colloquial*

I bet · standard Spanish: apuesta, apostar

«Apota que no va a llover.» *I bet it's not going to rain.*

«Apuesta» with the u eaten. It opens a friendly bet, not a serious one.



estar arrancao *colloquial*

to be flat broke, penniless · standard Spanish: sin un peso, en la ruina

«Ando arrancao hasta la quincena.» *I'm flat broke until payday.*

Same as «estar en olla». From «arrancado», minus the /d/.

- Ando arrancao, no puedo salir. I'm flat broke, I can't go out.
- Después de la Navidad todo el mundo está arrancao. After Christmas everybody is flat broke.



arrebatao *colloquial*

out of his mind · standard Spanish: loco, fuera de sí

«Ese tipo ta como arrebatao, se puso a discutir con el seguridad.» *That guy is out of his mind, he started arguing with the security guard.*

Someone acting wild. Depending on the company it can also point at drugs, so be careful with it.



arrecordarse *colloquial*

to remember · standard Spanish: acordarse, recordar

«¿Tú te arrecuerda' de aquel día?» *Do you remember that day?*

«Acordarse» with an a in front, like ajuntar and arrempujar. Very common with older people.

arrecotarse *colloquial*

to lean back, to rest against · standard Spanish: recostarse, apoyarse

«Quiero arrecotarme, me duele pila la cabeza.» *I want to lie back, my head hurts a lot.*

To lean on something or lie down for a moment. Also to lean on a person for support.

arreglarse *neutral*

to get dressed up · standard Spanish: vestirse y acicalarse

«Dame media hora para arreglarme.» *Give me half an hour to get ready.*

In the DR getting ready is a serious matter: turning up well presented is seen as respect for other people.

- Se arregló para la boda de su prima. She got dressed up for her cousin's wedding.
- Dame diez minutos, me estoy arreglando. Give me ten minutes, I'm getting ready.



arregoso *colloquial*

at risk that something happens, liable to · standard Spanish: expuesto a que pase algo

«Cruza la calle sin mirar, arregoso a que un carro lo atropelle.» *He crosses the street without looking, at risk of a car running him over.*

Not «dangerous» as a thing, but a person left open to something bad: arregoso a que te caigas, arregoso a que te vean. From «riesgo», risk.

arreguindarse *colloquial*

to hang off something · standard Spanish: colgarse de algo

«El muchacho se arreguindó de la mata.» *The boy hung off the tree.*

To hang from something with your hands. Children do it; so do people on a full guagua.

arrematao *colloquial*

completely nuts · standard Spanish: loco de remate

«Ese Juancito salió arrematao, quería agolpiá a to' el mundo.» *That Juancito came out completely nuts, he wanted to fight everybody.*

«Rematado» — finished off. Stronger than arrebatao and always about behavior.



arrempujar *colloquial*

to shove · standard Spanish: empujar

«Comenzó a arrempujar a to' el mundo en la fila.» *He started shoving everybody in the line.*

«Empujar» with an a in front. The extra syllable makes it sound rougher, and that fits the word.

arretao *colloquial*

daring, ballsy · standard Spanish: atrevido, valiente

«Tú ere' arretao, le hablaste al jefe así.» *You're ballsy, talking to the boss like that.*

Someone who dares. It can be praise or a warning, depending on the tone.



el arroyo *neutral*

the stream · standard Spanish: el riachuelo

«Detrás de la casa pasa un arroyo.» *There's a stream behind the house.*

A small watercourse. Many neighborhoods and rural areas are named after the stream that runs through them.

- Los niños se bañan en el arroyo. The kids bathe in the stream.
- El arroyo se seca en verano. The stream dries up in summer.

¡ay, Dios mío! *colloquial*

oh my God! · standard Spanish: exclamación de susto o cansancio

«¡Ay, Dios mío, se fue la luz otra vez!» *Oh my God, the power went out again!*

Works for fright, irritation and surprise. Intonation changes everything.

- ¡Ay, Dios mío, qué tapón! Oh my God, what traffic!
- ¡Ay, Dios mío! Se me olvidó la reunión. Oh my God! I forgot the meeting.



azaroso *colloquial, slightly derogatory*

troublemaker; a sour, unhappy person · standard Spanish: problemático; amargado

«No invite a ese, que e azaroso.» *Do not invite that one, he is a troublemaker.*

It cuts two ways. Someone who looks for trouble and bothers everybody, and someone who is always sour, grumpy and no fun. It depends on the tone: between friends it is a joke, said seriously it stings.





la azotea *neutral*

the flat roof · standard Spanish: el techo plano

«Subimos a la azotea a ver los fuegos.» *We went up to the roof to watch the fireworks.*

This is where the water tank goes, the washing gets hung, and where people end up when there is a party.

- En la azotea hay tanques de agua. On the roof there are water tanks.
- Desde la azotea se ve el mar. From the roof you can see the sea.

B

bacano / vacano *colloquial*

awesome, cool · standard Spanish: genial, buenísimo

«Ese concierto tuvo bacano.» *That concert was awesome.*

Spelled both ways. Works for things and for people.

- Qué bacano ese lugar. How cool that place is.
- La película estuvo bacana. The movie was awesome.



el balneario *neutral*

a river bathing spot (with food and music) · standard Spanish: zona de baño en un río

«Ese balneario tiene agua bien fría.» *That river spot has really cold water.*

In the DR a balneario is on a river, not the sea. Many have thatched shelters, music and food.

- El balneario se llena los domingos. The river spot gets packed on Sundays.
- Hay un balneario cerca de Jarabacoa. There is a river spot near Jarabacoa.



la banca *neutral*

the betting shop · standard Spanish: local de apuestas

«Queda al lado de la banca.» *It's next to the betting shop.*

Lottery and betting parlors are on every corner, which is why they work as landmarks when giving directions.

- Mi tío trabaja en una banca. My uncle works in a betting shop.
- La banca cierra a las nueve. The betting shop closes at nine.



la bandera *neutral*

rice, beans and meat · standard Spanish: arroz, habichuelas y carne

«Hoy hay bandera con ensalada.» *Today it is the classic plate with salad.*

The national lunch, every day, across the whole island. Named after the colors of the Dominican flag.



baraja eso *very colloquial*

drop it, forget that · standard Spanish: olvídalo, cambia de tema

«Muchacho, no me hable' de esa tipa, baraja eso.» *Man, don't talk to me about that girl, drop it.*

Literally «shuffle that», as with cards: put the subject away. It closes a conversation.

el barrio *neutral*



the neighborhood · standard Spanish: la zona popular

«Yo me crié en el barrio.» *I grew up in the barrio.*

Beyond the neutral sense, «el barrio» points to the working-class world, with its own pride and its own code.

- En mi barrio todo el mundo se conoce. In my neighborhood everybody knows each other.
- El barrio tiene un colmado en cada esquina. The neighborhood has a corner store on every corner.

el batey *neutral*

a sugar-mill settlement · standard Spanish: poblado de una zona cañera

«Se crió en un batey de San Pedro.» *He grew up in a batey near San Pedro.*

A settlement beside the sugar mills, lived in mostly by cane workers and their descendants, many of Haitian origin. The word is Taíno and originally meant the village's central square.

- Mi papá nació en un batey. My dad was born in a batey.
- En el batey se corta caña. In the batey they cut sugar cane.

bendición *neutral, family use*



blessing (a greeting to elders) · standard Spanish: saludo pidiendo la bendición

«—¡Bendición, mami! —Dios te bendiga.» *—Blessing, mom! —God bless you.*

Children and nieces and nephews greet parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents this way, and get «Dios te bendiga» back. About as Dominican as it gets.

- Bendición, abuela, ¿cómo está? Blessing, grandma, how are you?
- Los niños piden la bendición antes de salir. The kids ask for the blessing before leaving.

el bizcocho *neutral*



the cake · standard Spanish: el pastel, la torta

«El bizcocho es para el cumpleaños de Ana.» *The cake is for Ana's birthday.*

In the DR a birthday cake is a «bizcocho», with its suspiro (meringue) on top. In Spain a bizcocho is something else entirely.

- Mi mamá hace un bizcocho de chocolate. My mom makes a chocolate cake.
- ¿Quieres un pedazo de bizcocho? Do you want a piece of cake?

bobolongo *colloquial*

a big fool · standard Spanish: bobo, tonto

«Ese bobolongo cree que engaña a to' el mundo.» *That fool thinks he's fooling everybody.*

«Bobo» stretched out, which makes it funnier and heavier at the same time.

boche *colloquial*

a public telling-off · standard Spanish: la regañina, la vergüenza

«Ese niño estaba molestando y le di un boche.» *That kid was messing around and I gave him a telling-off.*

A scolding that embarrasses whoever gets it. «Dar un boche» is to give one; «llevarse un boche» is to get one.

el bochinche *colloquial*



gossip · standard Spanish: el chisme

«Aquí lo que hay es bochinche.» *There's nothing but gossip around here.*

Gossip as a social activity. It can also mean an uproar.

- No me gusta el bochinche. I don't like gossip.
- En la peluquería se oye todo el bochinche. At the salon you hear all the gossip.

bochinchero / bochinchera *colloquial*

gossipy · standard Spanish: chismoso

«No le cuentes nada, que es bien bochinchera.» *Don't tell her anything, she's a big gossip.*

Someone who lives on gossip. It is a criticism, though often said with humor.

- Mi tío es bochinchero, lo cuenta todo. My uncle is gossipy, he tells everything.
- No seas bochinchera y guarda el secreto. Don't be gossipy and keep the secret.

la bocina *neutral*



the speaker · standard Spanish: el altavoz

«Baja esa bocina, que son las doce.» *Turn that speaker down, it's midnight.*

In the DR a speaker is a «bocina», and it is a central object in social life: the colmadón, the yard, the car.

- Compré una bocina para la fiesta. I bought a speaker for the party.
- La bocina del vecino suena toda la noche. The neighbor's speaker plays all night.

la bomba *colloquial*



the gas station · standard Spanish: la gasolinera

«Queda frente a la bomba.» *It's across from the gas station.*

In the DR the gas station is «la bomba». And it is one of the most used landmarks.

- Para en la bomba, que no tengo gasolina. Stop at the gas station, I'm out of gas.
- La bomba cierra a las once. The gas station closes at eleven.

ponerse bravo *colloquial*

to get angry · standard Spanish: enfadarse

«No te pongas bravo, era una broma.» *Don't get mad, it was a joke.*

An important false friend: in the DR «bravo» means angry, not brave. «Está bravo conmigo» = he is annoyed with me.

- Mi papá se puso bravo por la nota. My dad got angry about the grade.
- No te pongas brava, fue un chiste. Don't get angry, it was a joke.

brechador / brechadora *colloquial*

a peeper · standard Spanish: mirón, voyerista

«En el gym un hombre taba brechando a una chica, e un brechador.»

Someone who watches other people on the sly, usually with a sexual edge. The verb is «brechar».

brechar *colloquial*

to peep, to watch on the sly · standard Spanish: mirar a escondidas

«Deja de brechar por la ventana.» *Stop peeping out the window.*

To watch without being seen. It can be innocent curiosity or the other kind; the tone tells you which.

la brega *colloquial*

the daily grind · standard Spanish: la lucha diaria

«Así es la brega todos los días.» *That's the daily grind.*

The noun from «bregar». It is the work, the effort and the endurance, all at once.

- Levantarse a las cinco es parte de la brega. Getting up at five is part of the daily grind.
- Después de la brega, un descanso. After the daily grind, a rest.

dar brega *colloquial*

to be a hassle · standard Spanish: dar trabajo, costar

«Ese trabajo me dio mucha brega.» *That job was a real hassle.*

Something that takes more effort than it should. From «brega», the daily grind.

bregar *colloquial*

to deal with, to handle · standard Spanish: lidiar, arreglárselas

«Hay que bregar con lo que hay.» *You have got to work with what you have got.*

A key Caribbean verb. It means to deal with, to work, to sort out and to put up with, all at once. As a noun, «brega» is the daily grind.



- Estoy bregando con el carro desde ayer. I've been dealing with the car since yesterday.
- Mi mamá brega con cinco muchachos. My mom handles five kids.

la brisa *neutral*

the breeze · standard Spanish: el viento suave

«Siéntate en el patio, que ahí corre brisa.» *Sit out in the yard, there's a breeze there.*

In a hot country, «corre brisa» is one of the best things you can say about a place.



- En la playa siempre hay brisa. At the beach there is always a breeze.
- Abre la ventana para que entre la brisa. Open the window so the breeze comes in.

brisiao *colloquial*

fast, in a rush · standard Spanish: rápido, a la carrera

«Él empezó a bailar brisiao.» *He started dancing fast.*

Moving fast. It comes from English «breeze» and it is said about dancing, driving and working.



bueeeno *colloquial*

weeell... · standard Spanish: bueno... (con duda)

«Bueeeno, yo no sé, pero la vi con otro tipo.» *Weeell, I don't know, but I saw her with another guy.*

«Bueno» stretched out. The long e is the message: doubt, or news you are about to enjoy telling.

ser buena gente *colloquial*

to be a good person · standard Spanish: ser buena persona

«Ese muchacho es buena gente.» *That guy is good people.*

The most common and most important compliment you can pay someone in the DR. It stays singular even though it says «gente».



- La vecina es muy buena gente. The neighbor is a very good person.
- Mi jefe es buena gente. My boss is a good person.

hacer bulla *colloquial*

to make noise, to kick up a fuss · standard Spanish: armar ruido o escándalo

«Hicieron bulla hasta que arreglaron la calle.» *They kicked up a fuss until the street got fixed.*

Literal noise or public pressure. In the DR «la bulla» is both the noise and the social uproar.

- Los vecinos hicieron bulla por la basura. The neighbors kicked up a fuss over the garbage.
- No hagas bulla, que el niño duerme. Don't make noise, the baby is sleeping.

bultero / bultera *colloquial*

all talk, a big mouth · standard Spanish: mentiroso, fanfarrón

«Tú sí ere' bultero, dijiste que me ibas a traer unos zapatos y no me trajiste na'.» *You're all talk, you said you'd bring me shoes and you brought me nothing.*

Someone who promises and never delivers, or who makes a scene over nothing. From «bulto», bulk: a lot of volume and no content.



el bulto *neutral*

the backpack · standard Spanish: la mochila

«El niño lleva el bulto a la escuela.» *The kid takes his backpack to school.*

Never «mochila». Say mochila and people will understand, but you will sound like an outsider.

- Guarda los libros en el bulto. Put the books in the backpack.
- Ese bulto pesa mucho. That backpack is very heavy.



hacer bulto *colloquial*

to make a scene, to make noise about yourself · standard Spanish: montar un escándalo, presumir

«El tipo estaba haciendo bulto con su guagua nueva y ni siquiera era de él.» *The guy was making a big deal about his new van and it wasn't even his.*

To talk loud so everyone notices you. Someone who lives like that is a «bultero».



buscársela *colloquial*

to hustle, to get by · standard Spanish: ganarse la vida como sea

«Él se la busca vendiendo en la calle.» *He gets by selling on the street.*

Making a living from whatever comes up. Said with no negative judgment at all.

- Aquí todo el mundo se la busca. Here everybody hustles.
- Me la busco vendiendo dulces. I get by selling sweets.



C

cacazo *colloquial*

a hard knock · standard Spanish: el golpe fuerte

«Se cayó y se dio tremendo cacazo.» *He fell and took a hell of a knock.*

A heavy blow, usually to the head. From «caco», head.

caco *colloquial*

head · standard Spanish: la cabeza

«Y el pobre tiene ese caco grandísimo.» *And the poor guy has that huge head.*

The head, said with humor. It gives you cacazo (a knock) and cacón (big head).

cacón / cacona *colloquial*

big-headed · standard Spanish: cabezón

«Tú le dice' cacón y ya tú ere' enemigo de él.» *You call him big-head and you're his enemy already.*

Someone with a big head. It is about the head itself, not about pride.

el caldero *neutral*

the heavy pot · standard Spanish: la olla pesada

«Saca el caldero grande para el arroz.» *Get out the big pot for the rice.*



A thick aluminum pot. It is the one that makes the concón, which is why it gets looked after most.

- El arroz se pega en el caldero. The rice sticks to the pot.
- Lava el caldero con agua caliente. Wash the pot with hot water.

estar caliente *colloquial*

to be angry; to be hot right now · standard Spanish: estar molesto; estar de moda

«Está caliente conmigo. / Ese sitio está caliente.» *He's mad at me. / That place is hot right now.*

Depending on context it is anger or popularity. Watch whether the subject is a person or a thing.

- El jefe está caliente por el retraso. The boss is angry about the delay.
- Ese restaurante está caliente ahora. That restaurant is hot right now.

los calizos *colloquial*

flip-flops, sandals · standard Spanish: las sandalias, las chancletas

«Ese muchacho vive descalzo, siempre anda sin calizo.» *That kid lives barefoot, he's always without his flip-flops.*

Another name for chancletas. You will hear it more in the country than in the capital.

el callejón *neutral*



the alley · standard Spanish: calle estrecha del barrio

«Vive en el callejón de atrás.» *He lives in the alley round the back.*

A narrow street, often a dead end. In working-class neighborhoods a whole social life happens there.

- El callejón es estrecho para el carro. The alley is narrow for the car.
- Mi tía vive al final del callejón. My aunt lives at the end of the alley.

el campesino *neutral*

a country person, farmer · standard Spanish: la persona del campo

«Los campesinos bajan al pueblo los sábados.» *The country folk come down to town on Saturdays.*

No negative charge to it. Another common phrase is «el hombre del campo».

- El campesino vende sus víveres en el mercado. The farmer sells his root vegetables at the market.
- Los campesinos madrugan mucho. Country people get up very early.

la canilla *colloquial*

a skinny leg · standard Spanish: la pierna muy delgada

«Mira esa canilla, tiene que comer más.» *Look at that skinny leg, he needs to eat more.*

A very thin leg. Someone with them is «canillú».

canillú / canillúa *colloquial*



skinny-legged · standard Spanish: de piernas muy flacas

«No le diga' canillú, que se pone bravo.» *Don't call him skinny-legs, he gets mad.*

Someone with very thin legs. It is teasing, and it can sting.

la canquiña *colloquial*

a hard coconut candy · standard Spanish: el dulce duro de coco y leche

«Pero vite la canquiña que taba vendiendo la doña, ¡qué buena!» *But did you see the candy that lady was selling, so good!*

A hard sweet of coconut and milk wrapped in colored paper, sold on the street and at school gates.

capitaleño *neutral*



from Santo Domingo · standard Spanish: de Santo Domingo

«Él es capitaleño, vive en la Zona.» *He's from the capital, he lives in the Colonial Zone.*

Someone from the capital. Where you are from is the first thing people ask: ¿de dónde tú ere?

- Mi mamá es capitaleña y mi papá es del Cibao. My mom is from Santo Domingo and my dad is from the Cibao.
- Los capitaleños hablan rápido. People from the capital talk fast.

carabelita *colloquial*

fake, knock-off · standard Spanish: de imitación, de mala calidad

«Dame una cadena carabelita.» *Give me a knock-off chain.*

Said about a copy that is not the original: a chain, a phone, a pair of sneakers.

el carajito / la carajita *colloquial*

the little kid · standard Spanish: el niño pequeño

«Esos carajitos no se están quietos.» *Those kids won't sit still.*

Very common and not rude, though it is informal. Used affectionately or in irritation, depending on tone.

- El carajito tiene cinco años. The little kid is five years old.
- Esa carajita habla mucho. That little girl talks a lot.



dar carpeta *colloquial*

to pester · standard Spanish: molestar, incordiar

«Ese niño sí da carpeta.» *That kid really pesters you.*

To keep bothering someone. A person who does it a lot is «carpetoso».



el carrito de concho *neutral*

a shared-route taxi · standard Spanish: el carro público

«Coge un carrito de concho hata la equina.» *Take a shared taxi to the corner.*

A car that runs a fixed route and picks up whoever fits. It is the cheapest way to move in the city.



el carro público *neutral*

shared route taxi · standard Spanish: taxi colectivo de ruta

«El carro público te deja en la esquina.» *The shared taxi drops you at the corner.*

The same as a concho: fixed route, passengers packed in. You pay a flat fare when you get out.

- El carro público cuesta treinta pesos. The shared taxi costs thirty pesos.
- Voy al centro en carro público. I go downtown by shared taxi.



casimente *colloquial*

almost, any minute now · standard Spanish: casi, en cualquier momento

«Casimente le gana.» *He almost beats him.*

«Casi» with an ending added, which makes it sound closer still.

la cédula *neutral*

national ID card · standard Spanish: documento de identidad

«Necesito tu número de cédula.» *I need your ID number.*

The Dominican ID card. You will be asked for it for almost any piece of paperwork.

- Trae la cédula para abrir la cuenta. Bring your ID to open the account.
- Se me quedó la cédula en la casa. I left my ID at home.



el chamaquito / la chamaquita *colloquial*

a little kid · standard Spanish: el niño pequeño

«Ese chamaquito no se queda quieto.» *That little kid won't stay still.*

A small child. The same family as carajito and muchachito, and the softest of the three.

la chancleta *neutral*

flip-flops · standard Spanish: las sandalias de dedo

«Ando en chancleta to el día.» *I'm in flip-flops all day.*

«La chancleta» is also the classic weapon of Dominican mothers, jokingly speaking.

- En la playa uso chancletas. At the beach I wear flip-flops.
- No salgas a la calle en chancletas. Don't go out in flip-flops.



el charco *colloquial*

a river pool (the deep spot you swim in) · standard Spanish: poza natural de río

«Nos bañamos en el charco de arriba.» *We swam in the upper pool.*

The deep part of a river where you can swim. Every charco has its own name in the village.

- Los niños se tiran al charco. The kids jump into the river pool.
- El charco es hondo, cuidado. The river pool is deep, careful.

charlatán / charlatana *colloquial*

a con artist, a fast talker · standard Spanish: embaucador

«No le compre' a ese charlatán.» *Don't buy from that fast talker.*

Someone who wins you over with words and sells you something that is not there.

¡che! *colloquial*

ew! yuck! · standard Spanish: ¡puaj!, ¡qué asco!

«¡Che! ¿Y eso qué e'?» *Ew! What is that?*

The sound of disgust at something dirty or rotten. It has nothing to do with the Argentinian «che».

chele *colloquial*

cent · standard Spanish: centavo

«Estoy sin un chele.» *I am flat broke.*

An old coin. It survives mainly in «sin un chele», the most Dominican way to say you are broke.



la chepa *colloquial*

a lucky break · standard Spanish: el golpe de suerte

«¡Qué chepa!» *What luck!*

Luck that you did not earn. «De chepa» means by luck, by chance.



cheposo / cheposa *colloquial*

lucky · standard Spanish: suertudo

«¡Qué cheposo!»

Someone with chepa, luck. It is said with a bit of envy and a smile.



chercha *colloquial*

banter, goofing around · standard Spanish: relajo, cachondeo

«Aquí siempre hay chercha.» *There is always joking around here.*

Joking and laughing in a group. The verb is «cherchar». It is a cultural value: where there is no chercha, something is wrong.

- En la esquina siempre hay chercha. On the corner there's always banter.
- Deja la chercha y ponte a trabajar. Stop goofing around and get to work.

el chicharrón *neutral*



fried pork · standard Spanish: carne de cerdo frita

«Chicharrón con yuca y cebollita.» *Fried pork with cassava and onion.*

Chunks of fried pork. With boiled cassava and pickled onion it is a classic roadside meal.

- Los domingos compramos chicharrón. On Sundays we buy fried pork.
- El chicharrón de Villa Mella es famoso. Villa Mella's fried pork is famous.

chichí *colloquial, affectionate*



baby · standard Spanish: bebé

«¡Qué lindo ese chichí!» *What a cute baby!*

Used for babies and very small children. Also, jokingly, for a spoiled adult.

- El chichí duerme toda la tarde. The baby sleeps all afternoon.
- Mi helmana tiene un chichí de dos meses. My sister has a two-month-old baby.

la chichigua *neutral*



the kite · standard Spanish: la cometa

«En Semana Santa se ven chichiguas por todos lados.» *At Easter you see kites everywhere.*

A kite. Flying them during Holy Week is a tradition, especially among boys.

- Los niños vuelan chichiguas en el parque. The kids fly kites in the park.
- Mi papá me hizo una chichigua de papel. My dad made me a paper kite.

un chin *colloquial, used by everyone*



a little bit · standard Spanish: un poco

«Dame un chin de café.» *Give me a little bit of coffee.*

Used constantly, in every situation, even formal ones. «Un chin chin» is even less than a chin. Probably the fastest way to show you learned your Spanish IN the Dominican Republic.

- Espérame un chin, ya salgo. Wait for me a little, I'm coming out.
- Ponle un chin de sal a la sopa. Put a little salt in the soup.

chin a chin *colloquial*



little by little · standard Spanish: poco a poco

«Chin a chin se aprende.» *Little by little you learn.*

Another life for «chin». Used to encourage someone who is going slowly.

- Ahorro chin a chin para el viaje. I save little by little for the trip.
- Chin a chin vamos terminando la casa. Little by little we are finishing the house.

la chinola *neutral*



passion fruit · standard Spanish: maracuyá

«Un jugo de chinola bien frío.» *An ice-cold passion fruit juice.*

Called maracuyá or parchita elsewhere. In the DR it is chinola, and it is the most ordered juice after orange.

- Compra chinolas para el jugo. Buy passion fruit for the juice.
- El jugo de chinola es mi favorito. Passion fruit juice is my favorite.

el chofer *neutral*



the driver · standard Spanish: el conductor

«El chofer va a parar en la esquina.» *The driver is going to stop at the corner.*

From French «chauffeur». This is the normal word; «conductor» sounds like the TV news.

- El chofer conoce toda la ciudad. The driver knows the whole city.
- Dile al chofer que pare aquí. Tell the driver to stop here.

chopo / chopa *colloquial, derogatory*

tacky, low-class · standard Spanish: de mal gusto, corriente

«Ese carro con esas luces está chopo.» *That car with those lights is tacky.*

Careful: this word carries social class baggage and can offend. Understand it, but think twice before using it.

- Ese carro con luces moradas se ve chopo. That car with purple lights looks tacky.
- No seas chopa, baja la música. Don't be tacky, turn the music down.

chulo / chula *colloquial*



cute, nice · standard Spanish: bonito, agradable

«Qué chula esa camisa.» *That shirt is really nice.*

In the DR this is an ordinary compliment for things and people. In Spain the same word can be an insult, so mind that when you travel.

- Qué chulo ese carro rojo. How cool that red car is.
- Tu casa está chula. Your house is nice.

cibaeño *neutral*



from the Cibao region · standard Spanish: del Cibao

«Se le nota el acento cibaeño.» *You can hear his Cibao accent.*

From the Cibao valley up north (Santiago, La Vega, Moca). Their accent swaps the /r/ for an /i/: «poique» instead of «porque».

- Un cibaeño dice «poique» y no «porque». Someone from the Cibao says «poique», not «porque».
- La comida cibaeña es muy rica. Food from the Cibao is very good.

el ciclón *neutral*

the hurricane · standard Spanish: el huracán

«Ese año pasó un ciclón por el sur.» *That year a hurricane came through the south.*

In the DR people say «ciclón» as much as «huracán». The season runs from June to November.

- El ciclón tumbó los postes de luz. The hurricane knocked down the power poles.
- Compramos velas por si viene el ciclón. We bought candles in case the hurricane comes.

la ciguapa *neutral*

the ciguapa · standard Spanish: criatura del folclore

«Mi abuela juraba haber visto una ciguapa.» *My grandmother swore she saw a ciguapa.*

A woman with long hair who lives in the hills and has backward feet, so her tracks mislead anyone following her. The best-known creature in Dominican folklore.

- La ciguapa tiene los pies al revés. The ciguapa has backwards feet.
- Mi abuelo jura que vio una ciguapa. My grandpa swears he saw a ciguapa.

la clínica *neutral*

the private clinic · standard Spanish: el hospital privado

«Lo llevan a la clínica ahora mismo.» *They're taking him to the clinic right now.*

In the DR a «clínica» is the private one and a «hospital» is the public one. The difference matters a lot in a real conversation.



- Mi mamá trabaja en una clínica. My mom works at a clinic.
- La clínica queda cerca del parque. The clinic is near the park.

cocotazo *colloquial*

knock on the head · standard Spanish: golpe en la cabeza

«Si sigues así te doy un cocotazo.» *Keep it up and you will get a smack on the head.*

From «coco» (head). Almost always joking, or a telling-off from your mother.



- Me di un cocotazo con la puerta. I bumped my head on the door.
- Cuidado, que te vas a dar un cocotazo. Careful, you're going to bump your head.

el cocote *colloquial*

the back of the neck · standard Spanish: la nuca

«Me duele el cocote de estar en la computadora.» *The back of my neck hurts from the computer.*

From «coco», head. «Meterse hasta el cocote» is throwing yourself completely into something.

- Me duele el cocote de tanto mirar el celular. The back of my neck hurts from looking at my phone so much.
- Le dieron un golpe en el cocote. They hit him on the back of the neck.

colmado *neutral*

corner store · standard Spanish: tienda de barrio

«Voy al colmado a buscar huevos.» *I am going to the corner store for eggs.*

Far more than a store: they let you run a tab, deliver by motorcycle, play music, and act as the social center of the neighborhood. A «colmadón» is one with tables that turns into a party on weekends.



- El colmado abre a las siete. The corner store opens at seven.
- Compra el pan en el colmado de la esquina. Buy the bread at the corner store on the corner.

el colmadón *neutral*

corner store turned bar · standard Spanish: colmado con mesas y música

«El viernes hay ambiente en el colmadón.» *Friday nights the colmadón gets going.*

The colmado that brings out tables, plastic chairs and a speaker on the weekend. The neighborhood bar without being one.

- El colmadón pone música hasta tarde. The colmadón plays music until late.
- Nos vemos en el colmadón a las nueve. See you at the colmadón at nine.

el comedor *neutral*



small cheap eatery · standard Spanish: restaurante pequeño y barato

«Almuerzo en un comedor cerca del trabajo.» *I eat lunch at a little place near work.*

A simple place serving home cooking at midday. This is where people actually eat la bandera.

- En el comedor la bandera cuesta doscientos pesos. At the eatery the bandera costs two hundred pesos.
- Vamos al comedor de la esquina. Let's go to the eatery on the corner.

como el diablo *very colloquial*

like hell, super fast · standard Spanish: muy rápido

«Ese motor iba como el diablo.» *That motorbike was going like hell.*

It adds speed or intensity to whatever you are saying. It is not about the devil.

¿cómo tú ta? *colloquial*



how are you? · standard Spanish: ¿cómo estás?

«¡Klk! ¿Cómo tú ta?» *Hey! How are you?*

Two Dominican traits in three words: the pronoun before the verb, and the /s/ that disappears from «estás».

- ¿Cómo tú ta, mi helmano? How are you, bro?
- —¿Cómo tú ta? —Bien, ¿y tú? —How are you? —Fine, and you?

como un chele *colloquial*

fast as a coin drops · standard Spanish: muy rápido

«Se fue como un chele.» *He took off in a flash.*

A «chele» was the smallest coin. The image is how fast one slips out of your hand.

como una pedrá *colloquial*

like a thrown stone · standard Spanish: muy rápido

«Acaba de pasar José en su motor, andaba como una pedrá.» *José just went by on his motorbike, he was flying.*

«Una pedrada», a stone throw, with the d eaten. Said about anything that goes by fast.

compai *colloquial, rural and affectionate*



buddy, pal · standard Spanish: compadre, amigo

«¿Cómo va la cosa, compai?» *How is it going, pal?*

Short for compadre. It sounds rural and close. Very common between men.

- Compai, vamos a tomar un café. Buddy, let's have a coffee.
- Mi compai Luis me ayuda con el carro. My pal Luis helps me with the car.

compai *colloquial, family use*

close family friend · standard Spanish: compadre, amigo

«Ahí viene mi comai con los muchachos.» *Here comes my comadre with the kids.*

Originally your child's godparents, but it spread to any very close friendship, near family.



- Mi comai vive al lado. My close friend lives next door.
- Compai, ¿me ayuda con esto? Buddy, can you help me with this?

comparón / comparona *colloquial*

stuck-up · standard Spanish: creído, presumido

«El tipo estaba creído, comparón, como si fuera rico.» *The guy was full of himself, stuck-up, as if he were rich.*

Someone who thinks he is above everyone. Nothing to do with «comparar».

la comparsa *neutral*

the carnival troupe (group that parades together) · standard Spanish: grupo que desfila en el carnaval

«Cada febrero salgo con la comparsa de mi barrio.» *Every February I go out with my neighborhood's carnival troupe.*

It is the group that goes out together at carnival, with the same costume and the same music. They rehearse for weeks and compete with the comparsas from the other neighborhoods. The word is also used outside carnival for a group that follows someone around.

concho *neutral*

shared route car · standard Spanish: carro de ruta compartida

«Cojo un concho hasta la Duarte.» *I take a shared car to Duarte Avenue.*

A car that runs a fixed route and picks up anyone who flags it down. Passengers keep squeezing in — six in a small car is normal.



el concón *neutral*

the crispy rice at the bottom · standard Spanish: arroz tostado del fondo

«Guárdame el concón.» *Save me the crispy rice.*

The most fought-over thing on a Dominican table. It gets scraped off the bottom of the pot and served separately.



- A mí me gusta el concón con habichuelas. I like the crispy rice with beans.
- Mi abuela hace el mejor concón. My grandma makes the best crispy rice.

el contén *neutral*

the curb · standard Spanish: el borde de la acera

«Se sentó en el contén a esperar.» *He sat on the curb to wait.*

The curb. «Sentarse en el contén» is a very neighborhood image: that is where you talk and watch the street go by.



- No parquees sobre el contén. Don't park on the curb.
- Los muchachos se sientan en el contén. The guys sit on the curb.

el conuco *neutral*

a small family plot · standard Spanish: la huerta familiar

«Mi abuelo tenía un conuco detrás de la casa.» *My grandfather had a small plot behind the house.*

A word of Taíno origin. A small plot where a family grows root vegetables for themselves.

- En el conuco sembramos yuca. In the family plot we plant yuca.
- Mi tío vive de su conuco. My uncle lives off his small plot.

el cooler *neutral*

the cooler · standard Spanish: la hielera

«Mete las bebidas en el cooler.» *Put the drinks in the cooler.*

Pronounced «cúler». Compulsory kit for any pasadía.

- Lleva el cooler con hielo. Bring the cooler with ice.
- El cooler está en la yipeta. The cooler is in the SUV.

un coro *colloquial*

hangout, party · standard Spanish: fiesta, reunión con amigos

«Hay un coro en casa de Juan.» *There is a hangout at Juan's place.*

«Estar en un coro» is hanging out with people. «Corito» is a smaller, quieter version.



- Vamos a armar un coro en la playa. Let's set up a hangout at the beach.
- Ese coro estuvo bueno anoche. That hangout was good last night.

criollo *neutral*

local, homegrown · standard Spanish: local, de aquí

«Pollo criollo, no de granja.» *Local chicken, not factory-farmed.*

It means «from here, the way it has always been». Used for food, music and customs.



- Este queso es criollo, de aquí. This cheese is local, from here.
- Un plato criollo con arroz y habichuelas. A local dish with rice and beans.

cualto *colloquial*

money · standard Spanish: dinero

«No tengo cualto hasta el viernes.» *I have no money until Friday.*

The everyday word for money. Written «cuartos», said «cualto»: the r turns into an l and the final s goes quiet. One form for singular and plural.



- Ella ahorra cualto para la casa. She saves money for the house.
- ¿Tienes cualto para el pasaje? Do you have money for the fare?

la cubeta *neutral*

the bucket · standard Spanish: el cubo, el balde

«Llena el balde de agua.» *Fill the bucket with water.*

In a Dominican house the bucket is essential: when the water goes off, you store it in buckets and tanks.



- Trae el balde para limpiar el piso. Bring the bucket to clean the floor.
- El balde está en el patio. The bucket is in the yard.

el cuento *colloquial*

the story · standard Spanish: la historia, la versión

«Ese es el cuento que él da.» *That's the story he tells.*

«El cuento que él da» hints there is another version. An elegant way of doubting someone.

- No me creo ese cuento. I don't believe that story.
- Cada uno da su cuento de lo que pasó. Everyone gives their version of what happened.

dar cuerda *colloquial*

to wind someone up · standard Spanish: picar, hacer enfurecer

«No le des cuerda, que se pone bravo.» *Don't wind him up, he gets mad.*

To keep poking at someone until they explode, like winding up a toy.



D

dame un chance *colloquial*



give me a chance · standard Spanish: dame una oportunidad

«Dame un chance de explicarte.» *Give me a chance to explain.*

From English «chance», pronounced «chan-se». Used to ask for time, an opportunity or a favor.

- Dame un chance, que llego en cinco minutos. Give me a chance, I'll be there in five minutes.
- Dame un chance de pagarte el mes que viene. Give me a chance to pay you next month.

dársela a alguien *colloquial*

to give someone credit · standard Spanish: reconocerle el mérito

«Yo se la doy a María, ella cocina muy bien.» *I give it to María, she cooks very well.*

To admit that someone is good at something. Said with the hand open, as if handing the credit over.

dársela en *colloquial*

to fancy oneself as · standard Spanish: presumir de algo

«Martín se la da en filósofo, siempre habla de figuras griegas.» *Martín fancies himself a philosopher, he's always talking about Greek figures.*

To act like something you are not quite. It is the same «dar» as above, turned into a criticism.

¡date! *very colloquial*

hurry up! · standard Spanish: ¡apúrate!

«¡Date, que se va la guagua!» *Hurry up, the bus is leaving!*

One word to say get moving. Short, loud and everywhere.

de chepa *colloquial*



by pure luck · standard Spanish: por suerte, de casualidad

«No tengo que ir al trabajo, de chepa.» *I don't have to go to work, by pure luck.*

Something that came out right without you doing anything. From «chepa», luck.

¿de dónde tú ere? *colloquial*



where are you from? · standard Spanish: ¿de dónde eres?

«¿Y de dónde tú ere, del Cibao?» *So where are you from, the Cibao?*

The question that comes up two minutes into any conversation. Notice the pronoun in front and the missing /s/ again.

- ¿De dónde tú ere? ¿De la capital? Where are you from? From the capital?
- —¿De dónde tú ere? —De Santiago. —Where are you from? —From Santiago.

de repente *colloquial*

maybe · standard Spanish: quizás

«De repente voy mañana.» *Maybe I'll go tomorrow.*

A very Caribbean use: as well as «suddenly», it can mean «maybe». Context makes it clear.

- De repente salgo esta noche. Maybe I go out tonight.
- De repente llueve más tarde. Maybe it rains later.



de seguro *colloquial*

surely, most likely · standard Spanish: seguramente

«De seguro está en un tapón.» *He's most likely stuck in traffic.*

It expresses high probability, not certainty. It takes the indicative.

- De seguro se le olvidó. Most likely he forgot.
- De seguro hay tapón en la avenida. Surely there's traffic on the avenue.



de una vez *colloquial*

right away · standard Spanish: ahora mismo, ya

«Lo necesito de una vez, no para horita.» *I need it right now, not later.*

This one really does mean now. It is how you make clear you do not mean the Dominican «horita».

- Cómpralo de una vez, que se acaba. Buy it right away, it's running out.
- Vamos de una vez, que es tarde. Let's go right away, it's late.



debaratáo *colloquial*

falling apart · standard Spanish: desbaratado, roto

«Ese carro ta debaratáo.» *That car is falling apart.*

«Desbaratado» with the s gone. Said about things, and about a person who is worn out.

debembao / debembá *colloquial*

stretched out, shapeless · standard Spanish: dado de sí, sin forma

«Estas medias tan medio debembá.» *These socks are kind of stretched out.*

Clothes that lost their shape. Also a person walking around loose and floppy.



decricajao / decricajá *colloquial*

looking like you just got up · standard Spanish: despeinado, recién levantado

«Tú vinite hoy decricajao, como si te acabaran de jalar de la cama.» *You came in looking like you just got dragged out of bed.*

Hair and clothes out of place, the face of someone who just woke up.

el decricaje *colloquial*

a state of disarray · standard Spanish: el desorden, el despeine

«María ta en decricaje, parece que no ha visto agua en tres días.» *María is a mess, she looks like she hasn't seen water in three days.*

The noun for looking undone. «Estar en decricaje» is to be in that state.

degaritarse *colloquial*

to storm off · standard Spanish: irse, desaparecer

«Se degaritó sin decir na'.» *He took off without saying a word.*

To leave suddenly, almost always angry or upset.

el degreñe *colloquial*

bed hair · standard Spanish: el despeine

«Péinate ese degreñe.» *Comb that bed hair.*

Hair standing in every direction. Someone in that state is «degreñao».



deguabinao *very colloquial*

worn out, floppy · standard Spanish: sin fuerzas, decaído

«Estoy deguabinao con este calor.» *This heat has me wiped out.*

From the guabina, a fish that goes limp out of water. One of those words with no decent translation.

- Después del trabajo llego deguabinao. After work I get home worn out.
- Ese perro está deguabinao del calor. That dog is floppy from the heat.

depotricar *colloquial*

to badmouth · standard Spanish: hablar mal de alguien

«Se pasó la tarde depotricando del jefe.» *He spent the afternoon badmouthing the boss.*

To speak badly about someone behind their back. The standard spelling is «despotricar»; here the s falls.



el derriengue *colloquial*

a slump · standard Spanish: algo tirado, descuidado

«Recoge ese derriengue de ropa.» *Pick up that pile of clothes.*

Something thrown down any which way. Also a person slumped over with no energy.



desabrío / desabría *colloquial*

bland, dull · standard Spanish: soso, sin gracia

«Esa comida ta desabría.» *That food is bland.*

Without salt, or without spark. It works for food and for people.

desacatáo / desacatá *colloquial*

out of control, wild · standard Spanish: rebelde, sin control

«Ese muchacho anda desacatáo.» *That boy is running wild.*

Someone who follows no rules. About a woman it is said with a heavier, unfair edge, so use it with care.

desacreditar *neutral*

to talk someone down · standard Spanish: hablar mal, quitar crédito

«No desacredite' a la muchacha, que ella sabe.» *Don't talk that girl down, she knows her stuff.*

To say publicly that someone is worth less than they are.

despotricar *neutral*

to rant about someone · standard Spanish: hablar mal de alguien

«Empezó a despotricar de todo el mundo.» *He started ranting about everybody.*

The standard form of depotricar. Here you will hear both, with and without the s.



el diablo cojuelo *neutral*

the limping devil (carnival figure) · standard Spanish: personaje del carnaval

«Los diablos cojuelos salen los domingos de febrero.» *The limping devils come out on February Sundays.*

The central figure of Dominican carnival: a horned mask, a brightly colored suit, and an inflated bladder he hits people with.

- En La Vega el diablo cojuelo va con látigo. In La Vega the limping devil carries a whip.
- El traje del diablo cojuelo pesa mucho. The limping devil costume is very heavy.

dime / dime a ver *colloquial*

tell me, what's up · standard Spanish: cuéntame, dime

«—Klk. —Dime a ver.» *—What's up. —Tell me.*

It is both a greeting and the normal way to answer the phone. It is not blunt, even though the translation makes it sound that way.



- Dime, ¿a qué hora llegas? Tell me, what time do you arrive?
- —¿Aló? —Dime a ver, ¿qué pasó? —Hello? —Tell me, what happened?

Dios quiera *neutral*

let's hope · standard Spanish: ojalá

«Dios quiera que no llueva mañana.» *Let's hope it doesn't rain tomorrow.*

Like «ojalá», it always takes the subjunctive after it.



- Dios quiera que llegue el cheque. Let's hope the paycheck arrives.
- Dios quiera que no haya tapón. Let's hope there's no traffic.

Dios te bendiga *neutral*

God bless you · standard Spanish: que te vaya bien

«Hasta mañana, mi'ja, Dios te bendiga.» *See you tomorrow, sweetie, God bless you.*

The answer to «bendición», and also a normal goodbye, even among people who are not especially religious.



- Cuídate, Dios te bendiga. Take care, God bless you.
- —Bendición, tía. —Dio te bendiga, mi'jo. —Blessing, auntie. —God bless you, son.

dique *colloquial*

supposedly, allegedly · standard Spanish: supuestamente, dizque

«Dique viene mañana, pero yo no creo.» *He is supposedly coming tomorrow, but I doubt it.*

From «dice que» (they say that). It marks doubt or mockery about what is being told. Nothing to do with a dam.



- Dique el jefe llega a las ocho. Supposedly the boss arrives at eight.
- Ella dique no sabía nada. She supposedly didn't know anything.

el disparate *colloquial*

nonsense, junk · standard Spanish: la tontería, la basura

«Eso que tú dice' e' un disparate.» *What you're saying is nonsense.*

Something silly or worthless. It is also what a mother calls the food you should not be eating.

dizque / dique *colloquial*

supposedly · standard Spanish: supuestamente

«Dique se va del país.» *Supposedly he's leaving the country.*

It marks what you are saying as second-hand, and that you do not entirely believe it.



- Dique compró una casa en Punta Cana. Supposedly he bought a house in Punta Cana.
- Dizque no tenía cualto. Supposedly he had no money.

doblar *neutral*

to turn · standard Spanish: girar

«Dobla a la derecha en el semáforo.» *Turn right at the light.*

In the DR you «doblar», not «girar». «Coge a la derecha» is also very common.



- Dobla a la izquierda en la bomba. Turn left at the gas station.
- No dobles aquí, es contra la vía. Don't turn here, it's the wrong way.

don / doña *respectful*

sir / ma'am · standard Spanish: señor / señora

«Buenas, doña Ana, ¿está don Pedro?» *Hello Doña Ana, is Don Pedro in?*

It goes before the first name, not the surname. The everyday respectful form of address.



- Don Pedro vende frutas en la esquina. Don Pedro sells fruit on the corner.
- Doña Carmen cocina para todo el barrio. Doña Carmen cooks for the whole neighborhood.

estar duro *colloquial*

to be really good at; to be tough · standard Spanish: ser muy bueno en algo; estar difícil

«Ese muchacho está duro en matemáticas. / La cosa está dura.» *That kid is really good at math. / Things are tough.*

Two almost opposite senses: a person «está duro» if they are great at something; a situation «está dura» if it is hard.

- Mi prima está dura en inglés. My cousin is really good at English.
- La cosa está dura este mes. Things are tough this month.

E

la ecoba *neutral*

the broom · standard Spanish: la escoba

«Pásale la ecoba a la galería.» *Sweep the porch.*

An ordinary word, but mind the superstition: never sweep the broom over a single woman's feet.

- La escoba está detrás de la puerta. The broom is behind the door.
- Necesito una escoba nueva. I need a new broom.

el elevado *neutral*

the overpass · standard Spanish: el paso elevado

«Coge el elevado para evitar el semáforo.» *Take the overpass to skip the light.*

In the capital, flyovers and tunnels are basic landmarks for giving directions.



- Sube por el elevado y sigue derecho. Go up the overpass and keep straight.
- Debajo del elevado hay un tapón. Under the overpass there is traffic.

embullarse *colloquial*

to get into something · standard Spanish: entusiasmarse, sentirse a gusto

«Pedro ta de lo má' embullao con su trabajito nuevo.» *Pedro is really into his new little job.*

To get excited about something and settle into it happily.

el embulle *colloquial*

a fling, a casual thing · standard Spanish: el noviazgo informal

«Tengo un embulle con una muchacha.» *I've got a thing going with a girl.*

Something between talking and dating: more than a friend, less than a partner.

emburujarse *colloquial*

to get into a fight · standard Spanish: pelear, irse a las manos

«Se emburujaron en plena calle.» *They got into a fight right in the street.*

Two people tangled up fighting. The word itself sounds like the knot it describes.

empachao / empachá *colloquial*

stuffed, with an upset stomach · standard Spanish: con indigestión

«Me comí un viaje de cangrejos y ahora toy empachao.» *I ate a load of crab and now my stomach is a mess.*

The feeling after eating far too much. «Un viaje de» means a whole lot of.



emperrao / emperrá *colloquial*

crazy about someone · standard Spanish: muy enamorado

«Ese tipo ta emperrao de esa mujer.» *That guy is crazy about that woman.*

In love to the point of following someone around — literally «dogged». It also means stubborn about a plan.

en lo que *colloquial*

while, in the time it takes · standard Spanish: mientras

«En lo que tú te bañas, yo hago el café.» *While you shower, I'll make the coffee.*

Widely used in the DR instead of «mientras». For something that has not happened yet it takes the subjunctive: «en lo que llegue».



- En lo que llega la guagua, me como algo. While the bus arrives, I'll eat something.
- En lo que tú terminas, yo friego. While you finish, I'll wash the dishes.

estar en olla *colloquial*

to be broke · standard Spanish: estar sin dinero

«Esta semana estoy en olla.» *I'm broke this week.*

One of the most vivid ways to say you do not have a chele. It lives alongside «estar arrancao».



- Estoy en olla hasta el viernes. I'm broke until Friday.
- Cuando estás en olla, cocinas en casa. When you're broke, you cook at home.

en tu mente de cacaíto *very colloquial*

only in your head · standard Spanish: eso solo lo crees tú

«¿Que ella te quiere? En tu mente de cacaíto.» *She likes you? Only in your head.*

A joking way to tell someone they are imagining things. «Cacaíto» is the little head doing the imagining.

encaquetarse *colloquial*

to throw on, to wear something new · standard Spanish: ponerse algo, estrenar

«Se encaquetó una camisa nueva.» *He threw on a new shirt.*

To put something on, usually something new that you want people to see.



encaramarse *colloquial*

to climb up on · standard Spanish: subirse, treparse

«El gato se encaramó en la mata.» *The cat climbed up the tree.*

To get up on top of something. Between adults it can carry a sexual sense, so keep it for cats and trees.



enchivao / enchivá *colloquial*

stuck · standard Spanish: atascado, trancado

«El carro ta enchivao en el lodo.» *The car is stuck in the mud.*

Stuck and unable to move on. It works for a car, a door and a plan that went nowhere.

enchuflar *colloquial*

to plug in · standard Spanish: enchufar

«Enchufla el abanico, que hace calor.» *Plug in the fan, it's hot.*

«Enchufar» with an l added. Between adults it also has a sexual meaning, so use it for appliances.

el enchufle *colloquial*

the outlet, the plug · standard Spanish: el enchufe, el tomacorriente

«No hay enchufle libre en el cuarto.» *There's no free outlet in the room.*

The wall socket. Same word as Spain's «enchufe» with the l of enchuflar.



la enemoscada *colloquial*

nutmeg · standard Spanish: la nuez moscada

«Échale un chin de enemocá al habichuela'.» *Put a little nutmeg in the beans.*

«Nuez moscada» run together into one word. You hear it in the countryside and in every kitchen.



estar enredao *colloquial*

to be seeing someone casually · standard Spanish: estar en una relación informal

«Ella ta enredá con un tipo del barrio.» *She's seeing a guy from the neighborhood.*

To be involved with someone without it being official. Also, plainly, to be tangled up in a mess.

el enrede *colloquial*

a casual thing · standard Spanish: la relación informal

«Ellos tienen un enrede.» *They've got a casual thing going.*

The same as «embulle»: two people involved without calling it a relationship.

entremetío / entremetía *colloquial*

nosy · standard Spanish: entrometido

«No sea' entremetío, eso no e' tuyo.» *Don't be nosy, that's not your business.*

Someone who gets into other people's business. «Entrometido» with the d eaten.



estar entumío *colloquial*

to be stiff, numb · standard Spanish: estar entumecido

«Amanecí entumío del cuello.» *I woke up with a stiff neck.*

From «entumecido», with the usual dropped /d/. Said of the body and of cold.

- Tengo la pierna entumía de estar sentado. My leg is numb from sitting.
- Amanecí entumío por el frío. I woke up stiff from the cold.

escogido *neutral*

Escogido (baseball team) · standard Spanish: el otro equipo de la capital

«Mi papá es escogido y yo licey.» *My dad's Escogido and I'm Licey.*

The red team, eternal rivals of Licey. Asking which team you support is a way of getting to know someone.

- El Escogido ganó anoche. The Escogido won last night.
- Mi tío es escogido hasta la muerte. My uncle is Escogido till he dies.



eso es así *colloquial*

that's just how it is · standard Spanish: así son las cosas

«Aquí hay que esperar. Eso es así.» *You have to wait here. That's just how it is.*

It closes an argument by accepting reality, with resignation or with humor.

- Los lunes hay tapón. Eso es así. Mondays there's traffic. That's just how it is.
- Aquí se come a la una, eso es así. Here we eat at one, that's just how it is.



eso sí *colloquial*

mind you · standard Spanish: pero eso sí

«Te ayudo. Eso sí, tiene que ser hoy.» *I'll help you. Mind you, it has to be today.*

It adds a condition or a caveat after accepting something.

- Te presto el carro, eso sí, con gasolina. I'll lend you the car, mind you, with gas.
- Eso sí, lleguen temprano. Mind you, arrive early.



eso ta serio *colloquial*

that is rough / that is great · standard Spanish: está difícil / está buenísimo

«Eso ta serio, mi helmano.» *Things are tough right now.*

Two-sided: it can mean something is tough, or that it is impressive. Intonation decides.

- ¿Sin luz tres días? Eso está serio. Three days without power? That's rough.
- Ese sancocho está serio. That sancocho is seriously good.

está claro *neutral*

it's clear · standard Spanish: es evidente

«Está claro que así no funciona.» *It's clear that it doesn't work this way.*

Because it states certainty, it takes the indicative: «está claro que ES», not «que sea».

- Está claro que va a llover. It's clear it's going to rain.
- Está claro, mañana no hay clases. It's clear, tomorrow there are no classes.



etericar *colloquial*

to stretch, to pull · standard Spanish: estirar, halar

«Voy a etericá eta cuerda pa que alcance.»

To pull something so it gives. «Estirar» with the s gone and an ending of its own.



el eteriquito *colloquial*

the jitters, a chill of fear · standard Spanish: el vértigo, el susto repentino

«No puedo caminar en la orilla del puente, me da eteriquito.» *I can't walk at the edge of the bridge, it gives me the jitters.*

The cold feeling in your body at a height or in danger. «Me da eteriquito» is how it is used.



F

el fa *colloquial*

laundry detergent · standard Spanish: el detergente en polvo

«Se acabó el fa, compra en el colmado.» *We're out of detergent, buy some at the colmado.*

Another brand that became the word for the thing, like ace.



la faja *neutral*

a wide belt, a back brace · standard Spanish: el cinturón ancho, la faja

«Ponte la faja pa' cargar eso.» *Put on the belt to carry that.*

The wide belt men wore to carry coins and a weapon; today it is mostly the one you wear to hold your back when lifting.

fajarse *colloquial*

to go all in on something · standard Spanish: esforzarse mucho, entregarse

«Pedro ta fajao con la universidad, ya no duerme ni de día ni de noche.» *Pedro is going all in on college, he doesn't sleep day or night.*

To throw yourself at a task. In a fight it means the other thing: to go at each other.

fantasmear *colloquial*

to show off · standard Spanish: presumir, aparentar

«Salió a fantasmear con el carro nuevo.» *He went out showing off the new car.*

To parade what you have so people see it. Same family as «hacer bulto».

el fantasmeo *colloquial*

showing off · standard Spanish: la presumidera

«Deja el fantasmeo, que te conocen.» *Quit showing off, people know you.*

The noun for fantasmear: the whole act of showing off.

fíame *colloquial, used by everyone*

put it on my tab · standard Spanish: apúntamelo, dame crédito

«Fíame el pan y te pago el viernes.» *Put the bread on my tab and I will pay you Friday.*

The colmado is the neighborhood credit line, and it works because the owner knows who you are. «Fíame» asks them to write it down and let you pay later; the verb is «fiar», to sell on credit.



fiao *colloquial*

on credit, on the tab · standard Spanish: fiado, a crédito

«Dame do pane fiao hata el vierne.» *Give me two breads on the tab until Friday.*

Taking something now and paying later, the way the colmado works for its neighbors. From «fiar», to trust.

la ficha *colloquial*

a police record · standard Spanish: el antecedente policial

«Ese tiene ficha.» *That guy's got a record.*

The file the police keep on someone. It is also any playing piece in a board game.



fiebrar *colloquial*

to be obsessed with something new · standard Spanish: usar algo nuevo sin parar

«Ta fiebrando con el celular nuevo.» *He can't put down his new phone.*

To use a new thing nonstop and show it around. From «fiebre», fever.



la fiebre *colloquial*

an obsession, a craze · standard Spanish: la obsesión, la manía

«Niño, deja esa fiebre, guarda esa bicicleta.» *Kid, drop that obsession, put that bike away.*

Not the temperature: the craze for something you just discovered. Careful with the double meaning.



fiestar *colloquial*

to party · standard Spanish: ir de fiesta, festejar

«Este fin de semana vamo' a fiestar.» *This weekend we're going to party.*

«Fiesta» turned into a verb, which is exactly what it feels like here.

las fiestas patronales *neutral*

the town's patron saint festival · standard Spanish: fiestas del santo del pueblo

«En agosto son las patronales del pueblo.» *The town's patron festival is in August.*

Every town celebrates its saint with music, food and a fair. It is the big event of the year outside the capital.

- En agosto son las patronales de mi pueblo. In August it's my town's patron saint festival.
- Para las patronales viene mucha gente. Many people come for the patron saint festival.

figurear *colloquial*

to be seen, to pose · standard Spanish: exhibirse, hacerse notar

«Fue pa'llá nada má' a figurear.» *He only went over there to be seen.*

To put yourself where the cameras and the people are. The noun is «figureo».



el figureo *colloquial*

posing, being seen · standard Spanish: la exhibición, el postureo

«Esa fiesta e' puro figureo.» *That party is all about being seen.*

A scene where everyone is there to be looked at. Very common about parties and politics.



la finca *neutral*

a country property, a farm · standard Spanish: la finca, la hacienda

«Vamo' pa' la finca el domingo.» *We're going to the country place on Sunday.*

Land with animals and crops — and, for many families, the house in the hills where you spend the weekend.

fiti fiti *colloquial*

fifty-fifty · standard Spanish: mitad y mitad

«Lo pagamo' fiti fiti.» *We'll pay for it fifty-fifty.*

Splitting something in two equal parts. It comes from English «fifty-fifty».

estar flojo *colloquial*

to be weak at something · standard Spanish: ser malo en algo; estar débil

«Ando flojo en gramática.» *I'm weak on grammar.*

The opposite of «estar duro». Also said of a party with no atmosphere.

- Estoy flojo en los verbos. I'm weak at verbs.
- El equipo está flojo este año. The team is weak this year.

¡fo! *colloquial*

ugh! (that stinks) · standard Spanish: ¡qué peste!

«¡Fo! ¿Qué e' ese bajo?» *Ugh! What is that stink?*

The sound for a bad smell. «Che» is for what you see; «fo» is for what you smell.

el fogón *neutral*

the wood or coal stove · standard Spanish: la cocina de leña o carbón

«Eso sabe mejor hecho en fogón.» *That tastes better cooked over the fire.*

In the countryside people still cook on a fogón, and there are dishes everyone swears only taste right that way.

- En el campo cocinan en fogón. In the countryside they cook on a wood stove.
- El sancocho de fogón sabe distinto. Sancocho from the wood stove tastes different.

forsar *colloquial*

to force · standard Spanish: forzar

«No forse' la puerta, que se rompe.» *Don't force the door, it'll break.*

«Forzar» written the way it sounds here, with an s.

freco / freca *colloquial*



cheeky; a joker with no filter · standard Spanish: descarado, bromista sin escrúpulos

«¡Qué freco! Se metió sin pedir permiso.» *What a cheeky guy! He came in without asking.*

It is said «freco» and «freca», with no s. Someone forward or shameless, and also someone who jokes with no filter. Careful: here it is not about temperature.

- Qué fresco, se comió mi almuerzo. How cheeky, he ate my lunch.
- No seas fresca y pide permiso. Don't be cheeky and ask permission.

fregar *neutral*



to wash the dishes · standard Spanish: lavar los platos

«Yo cocino y tú friegas.» *I cook and you do the dishes.*

Careful: in the DR «fregar» means the dishes, not the floor. The floor gets suapeao.

- Después de comer, hay que fregar. After eating, the dishes have to be washed.
- Hoy me toca fregar a mí. Today it's my turn to wash the dishes.

una fría *colloquial*



a cold one, a beer · standard Spanish: una cerveza fría

«Tráeme una fría, que hace calor.» *Bring me a cold one, it's hot.*

The simplest way to order a beer. Nobody needs to say the word «cerveza».

estar frío *colloquial*

to be cool, to be square · standard Spanish: estar tranquilo, en paz

«Tú tá frío conmigo, porque me trajite lo mango que te pedí.»

To be at peace with someone, with nothing owed. It is also said about a person who is low-key, keeping out of trouble.

el fríofrío *colloquial*

shaved ice with syrup · standard Spanish: el granizado

«Cómprame un fríofrío de tamarindo.» *Buy me a tamarind shaved ice.*

Shaved ice with sweet syrup, sold from a cart on every corner in summer.

la fritanga *colloquial*

a spread of fried food · standard Spanish: la fritura variada

«Te invito a la fritanga que tengo esta noche en casa.» *Come to the fry-up I'm having tonight at home.*

Meats, offal and root vegetables all fried together. It names the food and the get-together around it.

el frito *colloquial*

a fried green plantain · standard Spanish: el tostón

«Dame un pollo con frito.» *Give me chicken with fried plantain.*

The same thing as a tostón. And «estar frito» is the other meaning: to be done for, caught out.

la fritura *neutral*

street fried food · standard Spanish: comida frita de calle

«Pasamos por unas frituras a la vuelta.» *We'll grab some fried food on the way back.*

The whole genre: yaniqueques, quipes, catibías, empanadas. Eaten standing up, with a napkin.

- En la playa venden frituras. At the beach they sell fried food.
- No comas tanta fritura de noche. Don't eat so much fried food at night.



el fuetaso *colloquial*

a lash; a long swig · standard Spanish: el latigazo; el trago largo

«Se dio un fuetaso de ron.» *He took a long swig of rum.*

A hit with a whip — and, by extension, a long pull from a bottle or a big bite in one go.



el fuetazo *colloquial*

a hard blow · standard Spanish: el golpe fuerte

«Le dieron un fuetazo en la cabeza.» *They gave him a hard blow to the head.*

The standard spelling of fuetaso, with a z. Same word, same whip behind it.



fuetiar *colloquial*

to whip · standard Spanish: azotar con el fuete

«Si sigue así lo van a fuetiar.» *If he keeps that up they're going to whip him.*

To hit with a «fuete», a whip or a belt. It is the old word for punishing a child.

la funda *neutral*

the bag · standard Spanish: la bolsa

«Dame una funda para el pan.» *Give me a bag for the bread.*

The plastic bag from the colmado and the supermarket. An everyday word.

- Pon las frutas en una funda. Put the fruit in a bag.
- Esa funda está rota. That bag is torn.



estar fuñido *colloquial*

to be in a bad spot · standard Spanish: estar fastidiado, en mala situación

«Con esa deuda está fuñido.» *With that debt he's in a bad spot.*

From «fuñir». It can be a passing nuisance or a serious problem, depending on tone.

- Sin trabajo y con deudas, está fuñido. Without a job and with debts, he's in a bad spot.
- Si se daña el carro, estamos fuñidos. If the car breaks down, we're in a bad spot.



fuñir *colloquial*

to annoy, to bug · standard Spanish: fastidiar, molestar

«Deja de fuñir, que estoy trabajando.» *Stop bugging me, I'm working.*

To bother someone persistently. Informal but not rude.

- Ese ruido me está fuñendo la vida. That noise is bugging the hell out of me.
- No fuñas más con lo mismo. Stop bugging me about the same thing.



G

la gabela *colloquial*

a head start, an edge · standard Spanish: la ventaja

«En el dominó le dieron gabela y como quiera perdió.» *In dominoes they gave him a head start and he lost anyway.*

The advantage you give someone so the game is fair. «Dar gabela» is to hand it over.



la galería *neutral*

the porch · standard Spanish: el porche

«Nos sentamos en la galería a coger fresco.» *We sit on the porch to catch the breeze.*

The front porch with its rocking chairs. The social heart of a Dominican house.

- Mi abuelo lee en la galería. My grandpa reads on the porch.
- La galería tiene dos mecedoras. The porch has two rocking chairs.



la galleta *colloquial*

a slap in the face · standard Spanish: la bofetada

«Por eso fue que casi se ganó una galleta.» *That's why he almost got himself slapped.*

An open-hand slap. Careful: the cookie is also «galleta», and the tone tells you which.



el galletón *colloquial*

a hard slap · standard Spanish: el bofetón

«A ese le daban un galletón si seguía hablando así.» *He would have gotten a good slap if he'd kept talking like that.*

A galleta, but bigger. The -ón ending does the work.



gallito *colloquial*

cocky, quick to fight · standard Spanish: respondón, peleón

«Ese tipo e' un gallito: le dicen una vainita y ya quiere responder mal.» *That guy is cocky: say one little thing and he's ready to snap back.*

Someone ready to answer back at anything, like a fighting rooster. It is also a shot of rum with an olive in it.

el galón *neutral*

a jug (of water) · standard Spanish: el garrafón

«Compra un galón de agua fría.» *Buy a jug of cold water.*

The plastic jug you buy water in. Any size up to five gallons gets the name.

gambáo / gambá *colloquial*

bow-legged · standard Spanish: zambo, de piernas arqueadas

«Míralo caminando ahí, con esas piernas medio gambáas.» *Look at him walking there, with those bow legs.*

Legs that curve out at the knee. Said about people and about furniture that leans.



el gatadero *colloquial*

a stinking dump · standard Spanish: el sitio pestilente

«Ese colmado e' tremendo gatadero.» *That colmado is a real dump.*

A place that smells bad and looks worse. «Tremendo» here makes it more, not better.

el gavetero *neutral*

a chest of drawers · standard Spanish: la cómoda

«Guarda esas fichas en el gavetero.» *Put those pieces away in the dresser.*

The bedroom furniture with drawers — «gavetas» — for clothes.



gaviarse *colloquial*

to climb up · standard Spanish: treparse, subirse

«Se gavió en la mata de mango.» *He climbed up the mango tree.*

To climb, usually a tree or a wall. Same idea as encaramarse, and safer to use.



la goma *neutral*

a tire · standard Spanish: la llanta, el neumático

«Se me fue una goma en la carretera.» *I blew a tire on the highway.*

The tire of a car or motorbike. In baseball it is also home plate: «pisar la goma» is to score.

el grajo *colloquial*

body odor, BO · standard Spanish: el olor a sudor

«Báñate, que tiene' grajo.» *Take a shower, you've got BO.*

The smell from the armpits. It is direct and a bit rude, so it is said between people who trust each other.

la greña *colloquial*

messy hair · standard Spanish: el pelo despeinado

«Sal de esa greña antes de salir.» *Fix that mess of hair before going out.*

Unkempt hair. In the DR hair care is a whole cultural subject, with its own salons and vocabulary.

- Péinate esa greña antes de salir. Comb that messy hair before going out.
- Se levantó con la greña parada. She woke up with her hair sticking up.

el gringo *colloquial*

foreigner, esp. American · standard Spanish: el extranjero, sobre todo estadounidense



«Hay un grupo de gringos en la playa.» *There's a group of foreigners on the beach.*

In the DR it is usually descriptive rather than an insult, but tone can turn it dismissive. If someone says it smiling, no offense is meant.

- Un gringo compró la casa de la esquina. An American bought the house on the corner.
- Los gringos llegan en temporada alta. The foreigners arrive in high season.

¡guácala! *colloquial*

yuck! · standard Spanish: ¡qué asco!

«¡Guácala! Eso ta dañao.» *Yuck! That's gone bad.*

Disgust at food or at something dirty. It is the softest of the three: guácala, che, fo.

el guachimán *neutral*

the security guard · standard Spanish: el vigilante



«Pregúntale al guachimán del edificio.» *Ask the building's security guard.*

From English «watchman». A very visible job: there is one at every building, bank and parking lot.

- El guachimán abre la puerta a las seis. The security guard opens the door at six.
- Deja el paquete con el guachimán. Leave the package with the security guard.

guagua *neutral*

bus · standard Spanish: autobús



«La guagua para Santiago sale a las ocho.» *The bus to Santiago leaves at eight.*

In the DR, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Canary Islands this means bus. Careful: in Chile and Ecuador a guagua is a baby.

- Cojo la guagua todos los días. I take the bus every day.
- La guagua va llena a esta hora. The bus is full at this hour.

guallarse *colloquial*

to mess up, to blow it · standard Spanish: fallar, meter la pata

«Me guallé en el examen.» *I blew the exam.*

To fail at something or miss your chance. «Me guallé» is how you admit it.

la guanábana *neutral*

soursop · standard Spanish: la guanábana

«Hazme un jugo de guanábana.» *Make me a soursop juice.*

A green fruit with soft white flesh and black seeds, drunk as juice. «Caer como una guanábana» is to drop like a sack.

los guandules *neutral*

pigeon peas · standard Spanish: los gandules

«Hoy hay moro de guandules.» *Today there's rice with pigeon peas.*

A small round bean, sweeter than a pea. With rice and coconut it is the Sunday dish of the country.

el guarapo *neutral*

herbal or cane brew · standard Spanish: bebida de hierbas o caña

«Mi abuela me da guarapo de jengibre.» *My grandma gives me ginger brew.*

A boiled brew of herbs, ginger or cane. The default home remedy for a cold.

- Toma un guarapo caliente para la gripe. Have a hot herbal brew for the flu.
- El guarapo de caña es dulce. Sugarcane juice is sweet.



el guaremate *colloquial*

a nobody, a small-time guy · standard Spanish: el don nadie

«Ese e' un guaremate, no le haga' caso.» *That guy's a nobody, don't pay attention to him.*

Someone with no weight, a low-level tíguere. It is dismissive.

¡güáy! *colloquial*

ow! oh! · standard Spanish: ¡ay!

«¡Güáy, mamá!» *Ow, mom!*

A cry of pain, fear or surprise. Nothing to do with Spain's «guay», which means cool.

guayar *neutral*

to grate · standard Spanish: rallar

«Guaya el queso encima.» *Grate the cheese on top.*

From «guayo», the grater. Also «guayar la yuca» to make casabe.

- Guaya la yuca para el pastel. Grate the yuca for the pastel.
- Me corté guayando el coco. I cut myself grating the coconut.

güele *colloquial*

it smells · standard Spanish: huele

«Eso güele a comida.» *That smells like food.*

«Huele» with the h turned into a g sound. Same with «güeso» for hueso.

guillao / guillá *colloquial*

stuck-up, showing off · standard Spanish: creído, presumido

«Anda guillao desde que compró el carro.» *He has been showing off since he bought the car.*

Full of himself, showing off. And watch the feminine: in the -ao words it is not «-ada» but «-á» — guillao / guillá, aficiao / aficiá.

- Está guillao con su celular nuevo. He's showing off with his new phone.
- Esa muchacha anda guillá de rica. That girl acts like she's rich.

el guineo *neutral*

banana · standard Spanish: el plátano de comer crudo

«Cómprame unos guineos maduros.» *Buy me some ripe bananas.*

Careful with this one: in the DR «plátano» is the green one you cook, and the yellow one you eat raw is «guineo». Two different fruits.

- Como un guineo todas las mañanas. I eat a banana every morning.
- Los guineos están verdes todavía. The bananas are still green.





la güira *neutral*

the güira (metal scraper) · standard Spanish: instrumento de metal que se raspa

«Sin güira no hay merengue.» *There's no merengue without the güira.*

A metal cylinder scraped with a pick. Along with the tambora, it is the sound that identifies merengue.

- Mi primo toca la güira en la banda. My cousin plays the güira in the band.
- La güira se raspa con un peine de metal. The güira is scraped with a metal comb.



guisar *colloquial*

to land something good · standard Spanish: buscársela, conseguir lo suyo

«Ese muchacho ta guisando bien.» *That guy is doing well for himself.*

To get a good position or a good deal. Careful: in the kitchen it still means to stew.



gustanini *colloquial*

someone who fancies himself · standard Spanish: engreído, que se gusta

«Ese e' un gustanini, se mira en to' los cristales.» *That guy fancies himself, he checks himself out in every window.*

Someone very pleased with his own looks. It sounds like a joke, and it is one.



el guto *colloquial*

pleasure, taste · standard Spanish: el gusto

«Con mucho guto.» *With pleasure.*

«Gusto» with the s gone. You will hear it in the answer to «mucho gusto».

H

habichuelas *neutral*

beans · standard Spanish: frijoles

«Las habichuelas de mi abuela son otra cosa.» *My grandma's beans are on another level.*

In the DR it is ALWAYS habichuelas, never frijoles. Say frijoles and you will be understood, but you will sound foreign.



hablador / habladora *colloquial*

a big talker · standard Spanish: que habla mucho; mentiroso

«Hablador ere tú, que no para de inventá.»

Someone who talks too much, and usually invents half of it. The Dominican spelling «jablador» says the same with a j.



hablamo horita *colloquial*

we'll talk later · standard Spanish: hablamos luego

«Ya me voy, hablamo horita.» *I'm off, we'll talk later.*

Two things in two words: «horita» means LATER, not right now — could be in an hour, could be tomorrow. And «hablamo» is «hablamos» with the final «s» dropped, which is how it sounds when spoken.

- Tengo que colgar, hablamo horita. I have to hang up, we'll talk later.
- Hablamo horita, que voy manejando. We'll talk later, I'm driving.

hacé oficio *neutral*

to do the housework · standard Spanish: hacer las tareas de la casa

«Lo sábado hago oficio temprano.» *On Saturdays I do the housework early.*

«Los oficios» is all the housework taken together. This is the normal expression, not «las tareas del hogar».

- Hago los oficios antes de que llegue la visita. I do the housework before the visitors arrive.
- Mi helmano nunca hace los oficios. My brother never does the housework.

hacerse el loco *colloquial*

to play dumb · standard Spanish: fingir que no se entera

«Él sabía, pero se hizo el loco.» *He knew, but he played dumb.*

Dodging responsibility by acting like you did not notice. Also «guillarse de loco».

- Se hizo el loco cuando llegó la cuenta. He played dumb when the bill came.
- No te hagas la loca, tú sabías. Don't play dumb, you knew.

haragán / haragana *colloquial*

lazy · standard Spanish: vago, perezoso

«No sea' haragán, levántate.» *Don't be lazy, get up.*

Someone who does not work and does not want to. Here it is often said with a j: jaragán.

horita *neutral*

later (not now!) · standard Spanish: luego, más tarde

«Horita te llamo.» *I will call you later.*

A trap! In Mexico «ahorita» means right now. Dominicans say «horita», dropping the first «a», and it means LATER — could be in an hour, could be tomorrow. For right now, say «ahora» or «ya».



- Horita paso por tu casa. I'll stop by your house later.
- Ahora no puedo, horita hablamos. I can't now, we'll talk later.

el hoyo *colloquial*

the pothole · standard Spanish: el bache

«Cuidado con ese hoyo.» *Watch out for that pothole.*

Never «bache». And after a heavy downpour they multiply.



- La calle está llena de hoyos. The street is full of potholes.
- Ese hoyo daña los carros. That pothole damages the cars.

I

igualitico / igualitica *colloquial*

exactly the same · standard Spanish: exactamente igual

«Ese Carlos e' igualitico a un primo mío.» *That Carlos is exactly like a cousin of mine.*

«Igualito» with one more diminutive on top. Two endings mean two degrees of «even more».

igualito / igualita *colloquial*

just the same · standard Spanish: igual, muy parecido

«Igualito en la actitud.» *Just the same in attitude.*

Identical, said warmly. Dominican Spanish loves the -ito ending, and here it adds precision, not size.

imagínate *colloquial*

can you imagine · standard Spanish: fíjate, figúrate

«Imagínate, a la vecina le robaron todo.» *Can you imagine, they robbed the neighbor of everything.*

It opens a piece of news and asks you to feel it. It works for shock, sadness and sympathy.

infelí *colloquial*

a poor soul; harmless · standard Spanish: infeliz; pobre diablo

«No te preocupe, ese tipo e un infelí y no se va a aprovechá de ti.»

«Infeliz» with the z gone. It can pity someone or call them too soft to do harm.

intrometío / intrometido *colloquial*

nosy, meddling · standard Spanish: entrometido

«¡Intrometía! Siempre se mete donde no la llaman.» *Nosy! She always gets into things she isn't called for.*

Someone who gets into other people's business. You will hear it with and without the d at the end.

inversor *neutral*

power inverter · standard Spanish: inversor de corriente

«Menos mal que el inversor está cargado.» *Good thing the inverter is charged.*

A battery that keeps the house running during blackouts. «¿Esa casa tiene inversor?» is a normal question when renting.



involucrar *neutral*

to get someone involved · standard Spanish: involucrar, meter a alguien en algo

«José ta involucrao con María.» *José is involved with María.*

To include someone in something. Watch the tone: it is also how you say someone got mixed up in a crime.



ise *colloquial*

to go, to leave · standard Spanish: irse

«Tengo que ise, que ya e' tarde.» *I have to go, it's late already.*

«Irse» with the r eaten. It works exactly like «irse», in any sentence: me voy a ise, tengo que ise, déjame ise.

J



jabao / jabá *colloquial*

light-skinned with African features · standard Spanish: de piel clara y rasgos negros

«El jabao que vive en la casa má' pa' arriba.» *The light-skinned guy who lives in the house further up.*

Light skin and hair with African features. It is used as a plain description here, and often as a nickname.



jabladol *colloquial*

liar (street pronunciation of jablador) · standard Spanish: mentiroso, fanfarrón

«Ese jabladol dice que conoce al presidente.» *That liar says he knows the president.*

It is «hablador» said the Dominican way: with a j instead of an h, and with the final r turned into an l, as in «pol favol». Just like «jablador», it does not mean someone who talks a lot, but someone who lies or exaggerates. It gets written this way when you want to show how it sounds on the street.



jablador *colloquial*

liar, big talker · standard Spanish: hablador, mentiroso

«No le creas, ese es un jablador.» *Do not believe him, he is all talk.*

This is «hablador» said the Dominican way. Here it does not mean someone who talks a lot: it means someone who lies.

- Ese jablador dice que tiene tres carros. That big talker says he has three cars.
- No seas jablador y di la verdad. Don't be a liar and tell the truth.



la jabladuría *colloquial*

tall tales, gossip · standard Spanish: la mentira, la habladuría

«Dejen su jabladuría.» *Cut out the tall tales.*

Talk that is not true. From «jablador», the one who tells it.



el jabón de cuaba *neutral*

traditional laundry soap · standard Spanish: jabón de lavar tradicional

«Eso sale con jabón de cuaba.» *That'll come out with cuaba soap.*

A blue or yellow bar of soap used for washing clothes by hand. Everyone swears it gets any stain out.

- Lava esa camisa con jabón de cuaba. Wash that shirt with cuaba soap.
- El jabón de cuaba huele a limpio. Cuaba soap smells clean.



la jaiba *neutral*

river crab · standard Spanish: el cangrejo de río

«Hay jaiba hecha en coco.» *There's crab cooked in coconut.*

A flat brown river crab, cooked in coconut milk on the north coast.

jalar *colloquial*

to pull · standard Spanish: halar, tirar de algo

«Jala esa silla pa'cá.» *Pull that chair over here.*

To pull. It also means to pull out a weapon, and to hang back so nobody asks you for anything.

jallar *colloquial*

to find · standard Spanish: hallar, encontrar

«Si yo me jallo una cartera llena de billetes, se la devuelvo a su dueño.» *If I find a wallet full of bills, I give it back to its owner.*

«Hallar» with a j. The silent h of standard Spanish very often sounds like a j here.

janguear *colloquial, youth slang*



to hang out · standard Spanish: salir, pasar el rato

«Vamos a janguear el viernes.» *Let's hang out on Friday.*

From English «hang out», brought in by the New York diaspora. «El jangueo» is the noun.

- Los viernes jangueamos en el malecón. On Fridays we hang out on the seafront.
- ¿Vamos a janguear esta noche? Are we going to hang out tonight?

el jangueo *colloquial*

the hanging out, the night out · standard Spanish: la salida, la juerga

«Ese vive de jangueo.» *That guy is always out partying.*

The whole business of going out and having fun. It can carry a hint of reproach depending on who says it.

- El jangueo empieza a las diez. The night out starts at ten.
- Estoy cansado de tanto jangueo. I'm tired of so much going out.

jaragán / jaragana *colloquial*

lazy, a slacker · standard Spanish: haragán, vago

«¿Y tú viste cómo la vecina anda ahí, to' jaragana? Ni trabaja ni estudia.» *Did you see the neighbor there, being a total slacker? She doesn't work or study.*

The Dominican spelling of haragán. Same word, with the h turned into a j.

jariniando *colloquial*

drizzling · standard Spanish: lloviznando

«Ahora mismo ta jariniando y yo no toy en na'.» *Right now it's drizzling and I'm not doing anything.*

That fine rain that does not soak you. From «jariniar».

jariniar *colloquial*

to drizzle; to give barely anything · standard Spanish: lloviznar; dar poco

«Empezó a jariniar temprano.» *It started drizzling early.*

Light rain — and, about a person, helping a tiny bit when much more was asked.

la jarra *colloquial*

a wide mug · standard Spanish: la taza ancha

«Un café en jarra, tú sabe', pa' agarrar el día.» *A coffee in a mug, you know, to get the day going.*

A wide, low cup with a handle. Coffee «en jarra» is the big morning one.

jartarse *colloquial*

to get fed up · standard Spanish: hartarse, cansarse

«Me jarté de esperar.» *I got fed up with waiting.*

«Hartarse» with a j. It is about patience running out, and also about eating until you cannot move.

jarto / jarta *colloquial*

full; fed up · standard Spanish: harto, lleno; cansado

«Toy jarto de comida.» *I'm stuffed.*

Full from eating, or full of a situation. The tone tells you which one.

la jartura *colloquial*

being stuffed · standard Spanish: la hartura, la llenura

«¡Qué jartura, no puedo ni moverme!» *I'm so stuffed I can't even move!*

The state of having eaten far too much. Said at the end of every family lunch.

jediondo / jedionda *colloquial*

stinking; stuck-up · standard Spanish: hediondo; parejero

«Ese tipo e' un jediondo, siempre tiene un mal olor terrible.» *That guy stinks, he always smells terrible.*

«Hediondo» with a j. It is also said about someone proud and full of himself.



jévi *colloquial*

cool, nice · standard Spanish: chévere, bueno

«Ese carro ta jévi.» *That car is cool.*

From English «heavy». Here it means good, well made or good looking — never heavy.

el jevito / la jevita *colloquial*

a sharp-dressed young guy · standard Spanish: el joven bien arreglado

«Mira a fulano por ahí, el jevito del barrio, siempre con su camisa metía.» *Look at that guy, the sharp kid of the neighborhood, always with his shirt tucked in.*

A young person who dresses carefully and wants it noticed. Half admiration, half tease.

jevo / jeva *colloquial*

boyfriend / girlfriend · standard Spanish: novio / novia

«Va a salir con su jeva.» *He is going out with his girlfriend.*

Informal and very common among young people. From English «heavy», according to the most accepted theory.



- Mi jeva trabaja en el banco. My girlfriend works at the bank.
- Ella vino con su jevo nuevo. She came with her new boyfriend.

jinchao / jinchá *colloquial*

puffy, swollen · standard Spanish: hinchado

«Lo veo como jinchao de lo' ojo', parece que no durmió.» *His eyes look puffy, seems like he didn't sleep.*

«Hinchado» with a j and no d. Said about eyes after a bad night or a good cry.



el joseo *colloquial*

the hustle · standard Spanish: la lucha diaria, el rebusque

«El joseo e' duro, pero no me quejo.» *The hustle is hard, but I'm not complaining.*

Fighting daily for your money, doing whatever comes up. It is said with pride.

josiar *colloquial*

to hustle · standard Spanish: buscarse la vida

«Ah, pero tú ta josiando lo tuyo, tú tiene' pila de cualto.» *So you're out there hustling, you've got plenty of cash.*

The verb of joseo: to work hard at whatever pays. From English «hustle».

juchar *colloquial*

to egg on, to sic on · standard Spanish: azuzar, instigar

«No me juche, que yo no quiero problema.» *Don't egg me on, I don't want trouble.*

To push someone into attacking another — said of dogs and of people.

jugar vitilla *colloquial*

street baseball with bottle caps · standard Spanish: béisbol callejero con tapas

«Los muchachos juegan vitilla en la calle.» *The kids play bottle-cap baseball in the street.*



You bat a bottle cap with a broomstick. Plenty of Major League players started exactly like this.

- De niño jugaba chapita con mis primos. As a kid I played chapita with my cousins.
- Para jugar vitilla solo hace falta un palo. To play chapita you only need a stick.

jumo *colloquial*

drunkenness, a buzz · standard Spanish: borrachera

«Cogió un jumo anoche.» *He got wasted last night.*

«Estar en jumo» or «coger un jumo». Very common and fairly harmless in tone.

- Llegó con un jumo tremendo. He arrived with a huge buzz.
- Con dos cervezas ya tiene jumo. With two beers he's already buzzed.

la junta *colloquial*

a work party, a barn raising · standard Spanish: el trabajo en común

«Me levanté temprano pa' una junta donde un primo, tábamo limpiando un solar.» *I got up early for a work party at a cousin's, we were clearing a lot.*

Neighbors getting together to clear land, plant or build for one of them. It is the old country way of doing big jobs.



juntar lo cualto *colloquial*

to scrape the money together · standard Spanish: juntar el dinero

«Estoy juntando lo cualto para el pasaje.» *I'm scraping the money together for the ticket.*

Remember that «cualto» is money: written «cuartos», said «cualto», one form for singular and plural.

- Hay que juntar lo cualto para el viaje. We have to scrape the money together for the trip.
- Entre todos reunimos los cualto. Among all of us we scraped the money together.



la juntilla *colloquial*

the crew, the usual gang · standard Spanish: la pandilla de amigos

«Ahí viene la juntilla de siempre.» *Here comes the usual crew.*

The same as «juntiña»: the friends you are always with, usually up to something.



la juntiña *colloquial*

the crew · standard Spanish: la pandilla, el grupo de amigos

«Tú siempre ta en esa juntiña con lo' tíguere', jangueando.» *You're always with that crew of guys, hanging out.*

A group of friends who meet all the time, usually young and usually up to mischief.



¡juye! *very colloquial*

run! hurry! · standard Spanish: ¡corre!, ¡apúrate!

«¡Juye, ante' que llegue má' gente!» *Hurry, before more people get here!*

«Huye» with a j: run, get out of here, move. Said fast and loud.

K

klk / ¿qué lo que? *very colloquial*

what's up? · standard Spanish: ¿qué tal?, ¿qué pasa?

«—¡Klk, mi helmano! —Tranquilo, ¿y tú?» —What's up, bro! —Chilling, and you?

The Dominican greeting. It comes from «¿qué lo que hay?» and gets written klk in texts. If you learn only one Dominican expression, make it this one.



- Klk, ¿qué hay para hoy? What's up, what's the plan for today?
- Me escribió «klk» y nada más. He texted me «klk» and nothing else.

L

tener la paca *colloquial*

to be loaded · standard Spanish: tener mucho dinero

«Ese tiene la paca, paga to' en efectivo.» *That guy is loaded, he pays everything in cash.*

«La paca» is a bundle of bills. Having it means real money, in hand.

tener labia *colloquial*

to have the gift of gab · standard Spanish: saber convencer hablando

«Ese tíguere tiene una labia tremenda.» *That guy has serious gift of gab.*

The ability to convince or charm by talking. Admired and mistrusted at the same time.

- Con esa labia vende lo que sea. With that gift of gab he sells anything.
- Mi tío tiene labia para todo. My uncle has the gift of gab for everything.

labioso / labiosa *colloquial*

smooth-talking · standard Spanish: que tiene labia, embaucador

«Ese e' bien labioso, no le crea' na'.» *That guy is a smooth talker, don't believe a thing.*

Someone who convinces you with words. From «labia», the gift of the gab.

el lambí *neutral*

conch · standard Spanish: el caracol grande de mar

«Pedimo lambí guisao.» *We ordered stewed conch.*

The big sea snail eaten on the coast. Its shell is the horn that country people blow, the «fututo».

lambón / lambona *colloquial*

a brown-noser; a freeloader · standard Spanish: adulador; gorrón

«Ese lambón se pasa alabando al jefe.» *That brown-noser spends the day praising the boss.*

Someone who flatters to get something — or who shows up at your house at meal time without being invited.

el lapicero *neutral*

the pen · standard Spanish: el bolígrafo

«Préstame un lapicero para firmar.» *Lend me a pen to sign.*

In the DR a pen is a «lapicero»; «bolígrafo» is understood but almost nobody says it. A pencil is still «lápiz».



- ¿Tienes un lapicero azul? Do you have a blue pen?
- Firma aquí con este lapicero. Sign here with this pen.

la lechosa *neutral*

papaya · standard Spanish: papaya

«Desayuno lechosa con avena.» *I have papaya and oatmeal for breakfast.*

Papaya almost everywhere in the Americas; lechosa in the DR and Venezuela.

- Hay lechosa en la nevera. There is papaya in the fridge.
- Un batido de lechosa con leche. A papaya milkshake.



ser lengua larga *colloquial*

to have a big mouth · standard Spanish: no saber guardar un secreto

«No le digas, que es lengua larga.» *Don't tell him, he's got a big mouth.*

Someone who repeats everything they hear. Also «tener la lengua suelta».

- Mi primo es lengua larga, no le digas. My cousin has a big mouth, don't tell him.
- La lengua larga de la vecina lo contó todo. The neighbor's big mouth told everything.

liáo / liá *colloquial*

tangled up, in debt · standard Spanish: endeudado, enredado

«Toy liáo con el banco.» *I'm tangled up with the bank.*

Wrapped up in a mess, usually money or a relationship.

licey *neutral*

Licey (baseball team) · standard Spanish: equipo de béisbol de la capital

«—¿Tú eres licey o escogido? —Licey, de toda la vida.» *—Licey or Escogido? —Licey, always.*

Licey and Escogido are the two great rivals of Dominican baseball, and both are from Santo Domingo. The rivalry splits families.

- Esta noche juega el Licey. Tonight the Licey plays.
- Toda mi familia es licey. My whole family is Licey.



el lío *colloquial*

trouble, a mess · standard Spanish: el problema, el pleito

«Comida buena, bebida fría y cero lío.» *Good food, cold drinks and zero trouble.*

Any trouble: a fight, a mix-up, a complication. «Cero lío» is the whole plan for a good day.

lo teni *neutral*

the sneakers · standard Spanish: las zapatillas deportivas

«Uno lo teni blanco bien limpio.» *A pair of spotless white sneakers.*

Never «zapatillas», which would mean something else in the DR. And clean tenis are a serious matter.

- Mis tenis están sucios. My sneakers are dirty.
- Para correr uso tenis. I use sneakers for running.



el locrio *neutral*

seasoned rice with meat · standard Spanish: el arroz amarillo con carne

«Hoy hice locrio de pollo.» *Today I made chicken locrio.*

Yellow rice cooked with meat, sausage or fish all in one pot. Cousin of the Spanish paella and of arroz con pollo.

la loma *neutral*

the hill · standard Spanish: la colina

«Hay que subir la loma para llegar.» *You have to climb the hill to get there.*

In the DR you say «loma», almost never «colina». «Subir la loma» even shows up figuratively.



- La casa está en la loma. The house is on the hill.
- Desde la loma se ve el pueblo. From the hill you can see the town.

las losas *colloquial*

the dishes · standard Spanish: los platos, los trastes

«Muchacha, vete a fregar las losas.» *Girl, go wash the dishes.*

The plates and cups to wash. «Fregar las losas» is the chore every kid knows.

coger lucha *colloquial*

to stress out · standard Spanish: preocuparse, angustiarse

«No cojas lucha con eso, se resuelve.» *Don't stress about that, it'll work out.*

«No cojas lucha» is one of the most Dominican phrases there is: half comfort, half philosophy of life.



- No cojas lucha por el examen. Don't stress out over the exam.
- Mi mamá coge lucha con todo. My mom stresses out about everything.

lucirse *neutral*

to shine, to outdo yourself · standard Spanish: quedar muy bien, brillar

«Guau, María, te la lucite con tu traje, tá muy bonito.»

To do something so well that everyone notices. Said as a compliment.

The whole dictionary, with audio



interactivespanishbooks.com/dominican-spanish/slang/