



FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS · FREE GUIDE

Portuguese "False Friends" Guide

You already know more Portuguese than you think — but these look-alike words will trip you up if you're not warned.

Fala Portuguese.

Free resource from the Fala Portuguese Resource Library — falaportuguese.com

FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS

False Friends: Spanish vs. Portuguese

Words that look nearly identical but mean something completely different.

WORD	MEANS IN SPANISH	ACTUALLY MEANS IN PORTUGUESE
Embarazada	Embarrassed	N/A — Portuguese uses envergonhado/a; embaraçada in PT can mean "tangled/awkward," not pregnant like Spanish "embarazada"
Exquisito	Exquisite	Esquisito = weird/strange (not a compliment!)
Largo	Long	Largo = wide; "long" is longo
Salada	Salty (fem.)	Salada = salad; "salty" is salgada
Oficina	Office	Oficina = workshop/repair shop; "office" is escritório
Presunto	Alleged/ presumed	Presunto = ham (ordering "presunto" gets you deli ham, not a legal term)
Polvo	Dust	Polvo = octopus; "dust" is pó
Rojo	Red (Spanish)	Portuguese "red" is vermelho; roxo in Portuguese means purple
Taça	—	Looks like Spanish "taza" (cup/mug), but taça is a wine/champagne glass or trophy — cup is xícara (BR) / chávena (PT)
Cena	Dinner scene / scene	Cena = dinner in Portuguese (matches Spanish "cena" here — one of the rare overlaps!)

WHY THIS MATTERS

The Spanish-Speaker Advantage (and Trap)

You'll pick up Portuguese faster than most learners — with one catch.

Spanish and Portuguese share roughly 89% lexical similarity, which means most vocabulary really is a shortcut for you. The danger is the other 11% — the false friends above are exactly the kind of word that feels safe to guess and turns out to be wrong (sometimes embarrassingly so, as with embarazada/embaraçada).

Rule of thumb: if a word feels too easy and comes up in a sensitive context (health, money, relationships), double check it before you say it out loud. Pair this guide with our Portuguese vs. Spanish comparison content for the fuller picture of pronunciation and grammar differences, not just vocabulary traps.