

## Keeping It Real

All people have different tastes. When you offer your guests a beverage, some just desire a simple glass of water. Others prefer an exotic, flavorful drink. Likewise, when it comes to language learning, some speakers are more colorful; they spice up their conversation with their own flavors and unique tastes. This means they all develop their own way of speaking. Their accents, vocabulary, slang, idioms, and sometimes even grammar have their own swagger from region to region, and are still evolving as we speak. At its core, however, it's still Spanish.

Having said that, you should realize that this book cannot be all things to all people. It leans towards Spanish spoken in the Americas, with one foot firmly planted in Mexico. The good news is that if you're going to pick a flavor, you have certainly picked a good one. At least here in the United States, Spanish as spoken in Mexico pulls a lot of weight because of Mexico's huge cultural influence and the fact that we are blessed with such a diverse Mexican population. Furthermore, you will realize that for this very reason, Spanish speakers who come from other countries and reside in the United States do understand (at least to some degree) the Mexican flavor of speaking.

Lastly, I must reassure you that *Speaking Spanish Like a Native* does not neglect the more elementary expressions. A great percentage of the examples in this book are in fact universal, and for those that are not, you will often be presented with other options for expressing the same thoughts. In the end, Spanish is still Spanish, no matter where you are. As a student of the language, you must take in whatever you can, even if only one drop at a time, because in Spanish there are no words that can be thrown away; they can only be recycled. Therefore, store these words in your mind's closet but leave the door open.