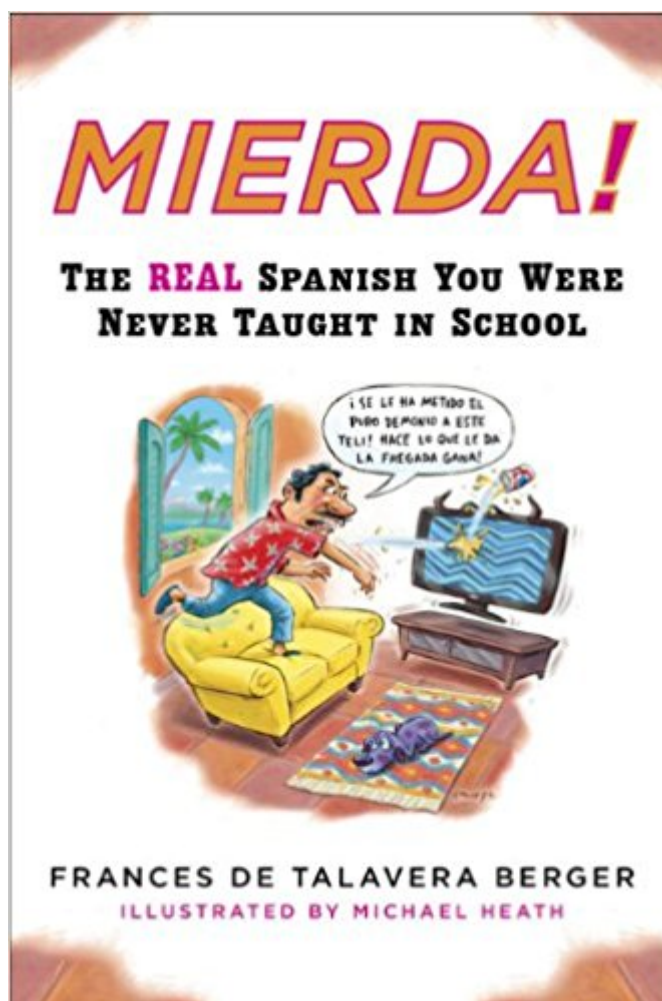


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Mierda!: The Real Spanish You Were Never Taught In School (Plume)



Synopsis

A collection of hard-core curses, colorful colloquialisms, and streetwise slang never taught in Spanish class includes sample conversations, painless quizzes, tips on body gestures, and discussions of Spanish history, culture, and cuisine—complete with delightful cartoons.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Firstly, I would like to summarize my credentials for writing such a harsh review: I am a quasi-native speaker of Spanish, having learnt the language at the age of five and lived a total of more than twenty years in six different Spanish-speaking countries. Furthermore, I am a federally certified court interpreter for Spanish and have become acquainted with the speech patterns of all Spanish-speaking countries without exception. Now Ms. Berger clearly is unable to construct a correct sentence in Spanish. Much of her pseudo-Spanish is a crude translation from French and/or Italian. She does get some things right, but spoils it by failing to specify where such words and phrases are used. Cusswords are among the terms which most vary from country to country. A Spaniard curses completely differently from a Mexican or Argentine. All in all, a waste of time and money.

This form does not allow a rating of NO STARS, so I had to give it one, even though it doesn't deserve it. For someone who really wants to learn "dirty" idioms in Spanish, Street Spanish

(published by Wiley) is MUCH, MUCH better. Frances de Talavera, in Mierda, goes for shock value ONLY and many times gets things wrong. Street Spanish, on the other hand, focuses on many idioms which people actually use, plus it contains a section on how to avoid saying something embarrassing (or unintentionally obscene).

...especially for gardening! Actually, I bought this book in college, and it's great! I am a teacher with lots of hispanic students, and it enabled me to understand what vile things they were calling me. I could then politely tell them (in Spanish) how their mothers would enjoy hearing our discussion. It was very effective. My high school age daughter thought it was the most fantastically funny book she had ever read, and is now majoring in Spanish in college. And no, mierda is NOT our favorite word.

I am not going to try to convince you that this book will teach you a lot of useful Spanish slang. As one reviewer pointed out a lot of the Spanish "cusswords" are so regional that much of the material may be useless. But if you study Spanish as much as I do there comes a time when you need a break from your studies and you simply want to be entertained. For learning Spanish entertainment I think the book is great. If you find this kind of stuff amusing I also recommend a set of tapes called Spanish for Adults Only : A Complete Course in Sexual Slang.

I thought this was a good book, BUT, I think everyone interested in buying it should know that it is not for beginners... which is cool for me, but not for the person I bought the book for. In order to follow this book, you have to already be familiar with pronunciation and verb usage and stuff. It is very helpful being that colloquialisms and cliché phrases aren't taught as often as they should be in most Spanish courses and textbooks (everyone should know how to say "pain in the neck" or "my back is killing me"), but this book has to be used as a supplement or "refresh" book.

So far I've read MERDE!, SCHEISSE! and this MIERDA!, and come to each with at least a rudimentary knowledge of the subject language -- this one is by far the weakest of the three. It's only 82 pages long, which doesn't leave room for some of the silliness it engages in. (Amusing to think that testicles are nicknamed "los ping-pongs" in East L.A., but really how useful is it? I didn't sign up for a course in Spanglish.) The book should have mentioned that "verga" is one of the commonest, if not the commonest, slang term for "penis," right up there with "gallo," but this book mentions neither. Nor is there any mention of the fact that, while Latin Americans use "chingar" for

the F-word, in Spain it's "joder." It makes me wonder how authoritative the book really is. Three stars because while it may deserve two, I prefer to think the best of MIERDA! if possible, and some of the slang in it is good. But save your money, even at this bargain price, and head for DIRTY SPANISH -- or maybe, for the cost of a dinner, a T.A. or assistant prof at your local college will clue you in to what's both hip and filthy. MIERDA! was published back in 1990, another strike not in its favor.

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