

Mag *aux* ine

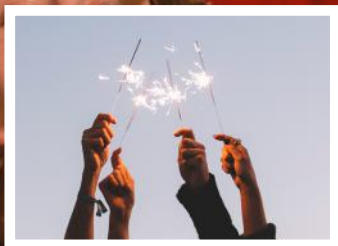
No. 9, January 2026

conversaSpain
Auxiliares de conversación

New Year, New Me!



**Get to know our
Communications Manager:
Sara Remírez!**
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**New Year's
Resolutions: Auxi
Edition**
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New year, new me

January feels like a new notebook waiting to be filled. Like a reset button. The holidays are over, the *roscón* is gone, and suddenly we're standing at the start of something new.

It's the moment to set intentions. It doesn't have to be about big promises or perfect plans, though. It's about small steps. Maybe you try waking up a little earlier, maybe you finally join that dance class, or maybe you just decide to try speaking a bit more Spanish. Whatever it is, it counts.

Every day is a chance to add something fun, kind, or different to your routine. Let January (and Spain!) be your reminder that you can reinvent yourself, not just once a year, but every day you choose to.

So, here's to January: to trying, to failing, to trying again, and to enjoying the ride.

¡Feliz Año Nuevo!

Tomás

CEO, Multilingual Education Development & Support

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tomás', located at the bottom left of the page.

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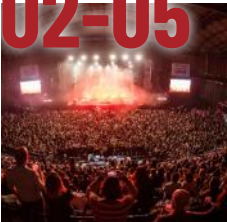
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January

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Starting Off Sweet



In Spain, New Year's celebrations don't end on January 1st; the "magic" lasts until (at least!) the 6th, the Day of the Three Wise Men (*Los Reyes Magos*). And since you probably already know that tradition, let me tell you about another one: *el roscón*, which is almost certainly the opposite of your typical "eat healthier" resolution.

Picture this: January 6th, a chilly morning, and a table full of people still half-asleep after the *Cabalgata* the night before and opening the presents the Three Wise Men have left. In the center sits the *roscón*, big, round, shiny, and decorated with fruits that look like tiny jewels. Someone brings hot chocolate. Someone else pretends they don't want a slice (they do). And suddenly, everyone is debating which part to cut because nobody wants to be the one who gets the bean.

The bean is the plot twist. If it's in your slice, you pay for the whole *roscón*. But if you find the tiny figurine, you're the "king." When I was a kid, I held my breath every time I cut my piece. Honestly? I still do.



What I love about this tradition is that it's not really about the cake (though as a food lover, that is a big part of it). It's about starting the year together. It's about laughing when someone bites into the bean and everyone shouts "*¡te toca pagar!*"

And maybe there's lesson hidden inside the *roscón*. The year will bring surprises, whether they're good ones, weird ones, or funny ones. Some days you'll be the king, others you won't.

Maybe your year in Spain will be just like that, too. Whether you've just arrived, you've been here for months, or you're planning to come soon, expect the unexpected. You'll discover new friends, new words, new places, and new versions of yourself you didn't know existed.

So, if you're looking for a January resolution, here's one that always works: stay open to whatever comes your way. Because, just like the *roscón*, the best part is often hidden where you least expect it.



“Este año quiero...”

As the New Year dawns, the question on everyone's lips is: “What are your resolutions for 2026?”

Here's some useful vocabulary to help you join in the conversation.



Spanish

English

<i>Propósito de Año Nuevo</i>	New Year's resolution
<i>Este año quiero...</i>	This year I want to...
<i>Mi meta es...</i>	My goal is...
<i>Hacer más ejercicio</i>	To exercise more
<i>Comer más sano</i>	To eat healthier
<i>Dormir mejor</i>	To sleep better
<i>Aprender algo nuevo</i>	To learn something new
<i>Ser más organizado/a</i>	To be more organized
<i>Ahorrar dinero</i>	To save money
<i>Gastar menos</i>	To spend less
<i>Hacer nuevos amigos</i>	To make new friends
<i>Hacer voluntariado</i>	To volunteer
<i>Viajar más</i>	To travel more

Ideas for a New You:



Too Good to Go
Save money, eat better



Meetup
Meeting new people



Tandem
Spanish Lessons



Volunteering
National volunteering platform

New Year's Resolutions

Happy New Year! It's time to start afresh, set new goals and focus on the year ahead!

In the classroom, you've already gotten to know your students, so now you can set realistic expectations for the months ahead.

Strive for variety. Try a new game or activity.
Don't get stuck in a rut!

Think about what went well in class
last year and how you can improve.

Tailor your classes to your students
now that you know their interests
and how they tick.

Build bridges with the teachers, improve
communication, and schedule coordination so
you know what they need from you in good time.

Get involved in school life by volunteering to help at a social or sports event.

Project: New Year's Challenge

Talk with your students about their goals for the year ahead and draw up a calendar of challenges to cross off by the end of term. Here are a few ideas:

Week 1

Learn to spell 10
difficult words in
English

Week 2

Read 5 books

Week 3

Tell my *auxi*
about my
favorite music

Week 4

Write a letter,
postcard, email,
or text to a family
member

Week 5

Learn a new
phrasal verb in
English

Week 6

Run 3 km

Week 7

Take a funny
picture to show to
my *auxi* and tell
them about it

Week 8

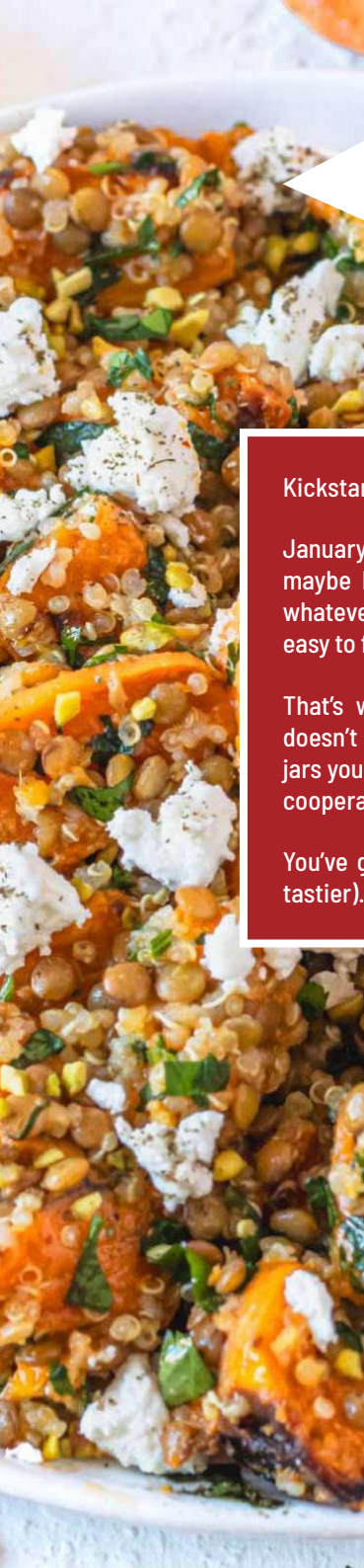
Learn new
hobby-related
vocabulary in
English

Week 9

Try food from
another country
or culture

Week 10

Tell my *auxi* what
I did over the
holidays



Recipes by Nûpelda

New Year, New Me(al Prep)

Kickstart your year with easy and budget-friendly meals.

January always brings on familiar thoughts: maybe I'll eat healthier, maybe I'll save a bit more, or maybe I'll finally stop surviving on whatever's quick. With all those good intentions floating around, it's easy to feel a little overwhelmed when it comes to cooking every day.

That's where meal prep comes in. It's practical, low-stress, and doesn't require fancy Tupperware. Even old takeout containers or jars you already have can do the trick. Got a pot, an oven that mostly cooperates, and a couple of containers? You're good to go.

You've got this! Now your week is about to get a little easier (and tastier).

Base batches

Small effort, big payoff

Think of this as your week's secret weapon. Cook a big batch of something simple and versatile like rice, couscous, quinoa, lentils, or beans. These are your "base" foods you can remix during the week without thinking too hard. Prep once and future-you will be very grateful on those chaotic days.

Pro tip: freeze anything you won't eat soon. It's basically a stash of emergency meals for those moments when ordering delivery feels way too tempting.



Veggie bowls

Your bowl, your rules

Roast, steam, or sauté seasonal vegetables and layer them over your base. Mix and match as the week goes on so it doesn't feel repetitive. Day to day, tweak the flavors with different sauces, dressings, or herbs. Even a tiny switch like a squeeze of lemon, a sprinkle of *pimentón*, or a handful of olives can make a meal feel completely new.

Leftovers remix

Yesterday's food, today's magic

Leftovers don't have to be the sad, forgotten dish at the back of the fridge. You can turn roasted chicken into a quick salad topper, fold last night's veggie stir-fry into a Spanish *tortilla*, or throw in a few slices of *jamón* or tofu for extra protein. Think of leftovers as ingredients, not "yesterday's food."

They save time, save money, and honestly, some things taste even better the next day. Sneak in fresh veggies wherever you can, and suddenly leftovers feel like a brand-new meal.



Breakfast and lunch prep

Fuel for busy days

Overnight oats, yogurt parfaits, mini *tortillas*, or portable wraps are easy to prep ahead. For lunch, pre-portioned salads or grain bowls keep you fueled for the rest of your day.

Salad tip: Layer smartly by putting wetter or heavier ingredients at the bottom, delicate greens on top, and store dressings separately, unless soggy lettuce is your thing (no judgment!). Don't be afraid to throw in some leftover protein or grains.

Interview by Ainhua

SARA REMÍREZ, “REMY”

Age: 29 years old

Role:

From: Spain

Communications
Manager

Region: Navarra



“

The New Year is a great moment to look back, reflect and identify what made you feel connected”

As we welcome a new year, many of us feel a familiar spark: the desire to reset, refocus, and grow. At ConversaSpain, this spirit of renewal is something we see every day in our *auxiliaries*. Our *auxis* are people who choose to step out of their comfort zones, embrace a new culture, and make a meaningful impact in classrooms across Spain.

To explore this theme of transformation, we sat down with Sara Remírez, our Communications Manager. With years of experience supporting *auxiliares* and shaping the way we connect as a community, Sara shares her insights on purpose, growth, and how to make the most of the *auxiliar* journey in 2026.

Sara, as we begin a new year, what does this “fresh start” represent for you personally and within your role at ConversaSpain?

I always say that our “new year” really begins in October. Our calendar works a bit differently, following the academic year, so October is when we welcome the first group of participants and start opening doors for the next year. So, in a way, we reset earlier!

But there is something special about January. The energy changes, we welcome the rest of our participants, and many of us shift our focus toward more personal goals.

This year, I’m really prioritizing enjoying the moment a bit more, and it’s something I encourage everyone to do. At the same time, at ConversaSpain we’re constantly starting something new. This year, we already have fresh ideas on the table, and we’re excited to bring them to life so everyone can enjoy them.



Looking back at your journey here, what originally drew you to the world of education and communication?

I think one interest led naturally to the other. I’ve always been drawn to communication because I love the idea of expressing something clearly, sharing stories, and creating impact through words. You see the true power of communication when people take action because they feel inspired, not instructed, which makes my role so special.

And then came education. At ConversaSpain, those two worlds come together perfectly. We present an opportunity that can genuinely change people's lives, and at the same time, positively shapes the lives of the students here in Spain. There's something incredibly fulfilling about seeing how many people can be impacted through something as simple as sharing the right message at the right moment.

How has your perspective on the *auxiliar* experience evolved since you first joined the team?

At first, I think the *auxiliar* experience made me feel nostalgic. I remembered my own school days and the bilingual program I was part of. We had an *auxiliar* named Tom, from England, and we enjoyed his classes so much. We learned so much from him that I still remember him clearly!

So, every time I think about a participant going through the selection process, I go back to that feeling. There's a double impact: the *auxiliar* who leaves a mark on students for years to come, and the participant whose life is changed by the experience.

Now, instead of nostalgia, my perspective is more inspired, mixed with a little bit of jealousy, I'd say, haha. I never had the chance to do something like this, so honestly, I'd encourage everyone to give it a try. It's the kind of experience that truly stays with you forever.



As we enter a new year, what changes have you noticed in what *auxiliares* are looking for when they come to Spain?

I think the most common answer is still the desire to live abroad. But what I'm seeing more and more is that people are adding a sense of purpose to that experience. Our participants come from all kinds of backgrounds, countries, and studies, but they all arrive with a similar mindset. It's one that says, "Okay, I'm going to live in Spain, but I want this experience to mean something." And that makes the whole experience so much more authentic and enriching.



Many *auxiliares* see January as a moment to reset. From your experience, what mindset shifts tend to help them make the most of the second half of the school year?

We also have *auxiliares* who are just starting their experience now, and for both them and the ones who've already been here for a few months, I'd say the same thing: there's always an adjustment period. You're arriving somewhere new, and integration takes time. Give yourself space to do so but also recognize that this is the moment to make the most of the experience.

I'd remind them that the program will eventually come to an end, but the memories won't. So, fill your time with moments you'll never forget. That's what will stay with you.



So, what communication habits or approaches help *auxiliares* build stronger relationships with teachers, students, and their community as the year progresses?

It all starts with listening and paying attention. I think this is a transferable skill that goes far beyond being an *auxiliar*. Once you really understand how things work and what people need, you're in a much better position to contribute and make suggestions.

This is essential for staying in sync with both teachers and students. You need to sense the classroom environment, pick up on students' needs, and adapt so you can add value and, of course, so you can feel more confident and comfortable in what you're doing.

As you look at the *auxiliar* community today, what gives you the most hope or excitement for the year ahead?

Hearing their stories is the best part. Every time they write to us, join a call, make a video, or do an interview, it's amazing to see the impact we've had on their experience. Being able to contribute in some small way to someone's journey is incredibly rewarding. So, I'm really looking forward to seeing what 2026 has in store for them! (And of course, the projects we have in the oven for them, too!)

In that sense, how can *auxiliares* use the New Year to redefine their goals, both inside the classroom and in their personal life in Spain?

I think the New Year is also a great moment to look back, right? It allows you to reflect on the past few months and identify the highlights, the moments that made you feel happy, connected, or proud. And once you know what those moments were, the goal is simple: find ways to create more of them. That's how you make the second half of the year even better!

What role does the Communication Team play in shaping a successful year abroad?

Well, as I mentioned before, one of the best parts of our job is being able to share this experience with people in the first place, so the work really starts there. But throughout the year, our team stays very connected with the *auxiliares*. We play an important role in helping build that sense of community through different initiatives. Right now, for example, we have a magazine and collaborative content on social media.

It might seem like a small thing, but *auxiliares* share so many tips and personal insights that others find incredibly useful. Giving them a space to express themselves and learn from each other is honestly one of the most rewarding parts of what we do.



And finally, if you could leave *auxiliares* with one message as they step into 2026, what would you want them to carry with them?

We are defined not only by what we do, but also by what we choose not to do. So go for it, try the things that scare you, speak Spanish, make new friends, taste that food, or pitch that idea. Never let yourself be left wondering, "What if...?"



Did you know... ?

It takes an average of **66 days** to form a new habit?

For years, people repeated the “21-day rule,” but science shows it’s not that simple. Depending on the habit, it can take anywhere from **18 to 254 days** for a behavior to become automatic. That means some changes (like drinking more water) might stick quickly, while others (like exercising regularly) can take much longer.

The good news? Every small step counts. Habits aren’t about perfection, they’re about consistency. Missing a day doesn’t erase your progress, it just means you pick it up again tomorrow.

And here’s the best part: if you start now, by **April** you could already be living as a new version of yourself.

*Sources:

[European Journal of Social Psychology](#)

[Healthline](#)

[BBC Future](#)

A Mindful Take on New Year's Resolutions

Every January, we receive many “New Year, New Me” messages (just like this magazine!). While that is okay, it can feel a bit overwhelming, especially adjusting to a new country and a whole new life in Spain. Instead of piling on more pressure, a mindful approach to the new year can help you **create real change without the guilt or the stress**.

Why traditional resolutions don't always work

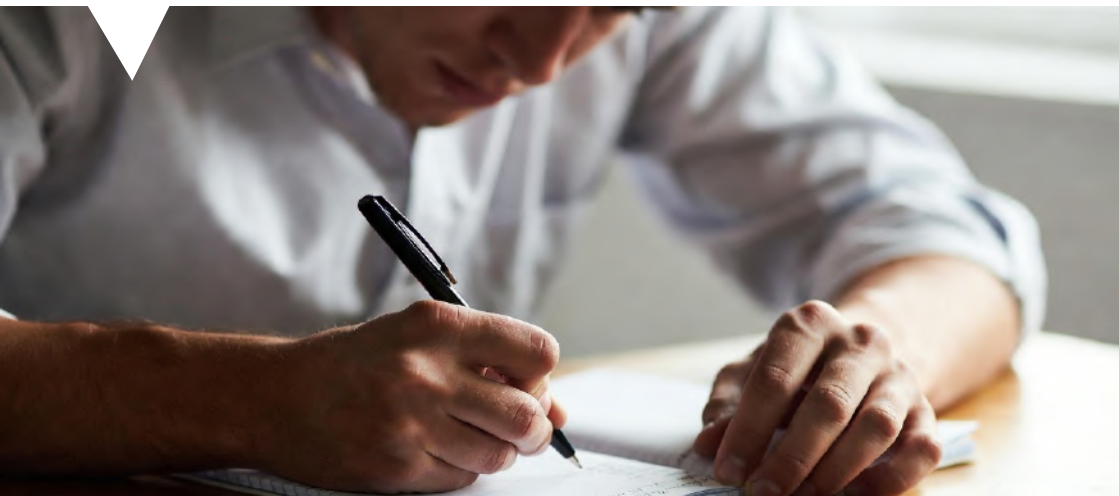
Most resolutions are **strict** and totally focused on the end result (“save money” or “exercise every day”), **relying on willpower alone**. They feel great on January 1st, but one single slip-up can make you feel like you've failed. The problem isn't you; it's the way traditional resolutions are set up.

Why intentions feel so much better

Instead of big, rigid resolutions, try setting intentions, which are more like **gentle guides** than strict rules. They focus on **how you want to show up in your life**: “be more present”, “take care of my body”, “connect more with people around me.” There's no pressure to be perfect. You can always come back to your intention.

Focus on the journey (not just the goal)

One of the best parts of a mindful approach is shifting your attention to the process. Instead of saying, “I must lose 10 pounds”, you might focus on walking more or cooking fresh meals. When the focus is on **daily actions**, and not a big finish line, you're more likely to **enjoy the changes** and stick with them.





Understanding your habit loop

We all fall into patterns, especially when living abroad and juggling new routines. Every habit works in a loop: a **cue**, an **action**, and a **reward**. When you start noticing these, you can tweak small pieces of the loop instead of trying to force huge changes overnight. It's not about being stronger, but **smarter**.

Self-compassion: your secret weapon

Let's be honest: you're going to slip up sometimes. Everyone does. Instead of spiraling into guilt, mindfulness invites you to pause and **observe what happened without judgement**. From there, you can **gently steer yourself back on track**. Self-compassion makes the whole journey feel lighter and way more sustainable.

Other fun ways to set the tone for your year

If traditional resolutions stress you out, try making a **vision board** (gather images and little reminders that capture how you want your life to feel) or choosing a **"Word of the Year"** (like "explore," "balance," or "connection"). These creative methods help you move into the new year with intention rather than obligation.

A Gentle Start to Your Year

A mindful approach to the new year doesn't demand that you reinvent yourself. Instead, it invites you to take small, **meaningful steps** that feel natural and true to who you already are. It's about **choosing intentions** that support your well-being and giving yourself the **space to grow** at your own pace, especially as you make the most of your year in Spain.

01

How many *comunidades autónomas* are there to put on your bucket list?

- A) 8
- B) 12
- C) 17

02

Which of the following is the least budget-friendly supermarket?

- A) Día
- B) Aldi
- C) El Corte Inglés

03

Which is the most visited national park in Spain?

- A) Teide
- B) Picos de Europa
- C) Sierra de Guadarrama

04

What is the word for the informal post-meal chats?

- A) *Hablacena*
- B) *Postsechateado*
- C) *Sobremesa*

06

How long is the famous “Camino” pilgrimage (French Way)?

- A) 360 km / 223 miles
- B) 780 km / 485 miles
- C) 1000 km / 621 miles

If you find this, you must pay for the *roscón*:

- A) *Figurita*
- B) *Rey*
- C) *Haba*

05

Answers

1) C, 2) C, 3) A, 4) C, 5) C, 6) B

Fill in the Blanks

2026 New Year's Resolutions: *Auxi* Edition

Customize at least 3 of these New Years Resolutions to make the most of what's left of your auxi experience!

I want to visit at least _____ regions of Spain by the end of the program.

I plan to improve my teaching skills by _____ .

My Spanish goal is to _____ .

I want to learn how to _____ .

I want to try _____ for the first time.

I look forward to _____ this year.

This year, I want to feel more _____ and less _____ .

I'll say "yes" to _____ and "no" to _____ .

I'll celebrate progress by _____ .

I'll remind myself that _____ is enough.

It's time to quiz yourself!

Letter to Yourself

Write a note to your June self. Keep it safe to re-read when summer begins. Include any challenges, fears, friendships, memories and/or favorites from this year. Let's see if, by June, you have overcome these challenges, kept those friendships and your favorites are still the same!

Dear Future me, _____

Resolution Bingo

Check off what you achieve this month. No pressure: just fun little wins.

5 in a row = you're glowing.

Full card = legend of 2025

Wake up before 8 AM	Try a new Spanish word	Cook something healthy	Say "no" to something	Go for a walk without headphones
Write down 3 things you're proud of	Dance alone in your room	Do something that scares you a little	Drink water instead of coffee (just once!)	Learn a Spanish song
Discover a new Spanish city	Try yoga/pilates once	Take yourself out to eat	Embrace your artistic side (paint, pottery...)	Compliment someone

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