

# Spanish Clothing Terms *For Non Spanish Speakers*

As we study clothing, especially late period clothing, it's pretty much impossible to avoid influences that come from outside our chosen culture. But that influence often brings with it *language*, and we may or may not have...well, any idea how to read into that language. This class is a quick primer for those who aren't fluent in Spanish (modern or Renaissance) and want to understand how Spanish clothing terms may (or may not) inform clothing in other cultures, or just gain a basic understanding without having to spend years learning the language.

**Hola, Español!** *A few quick Spanish basics that will really help, I promise.*

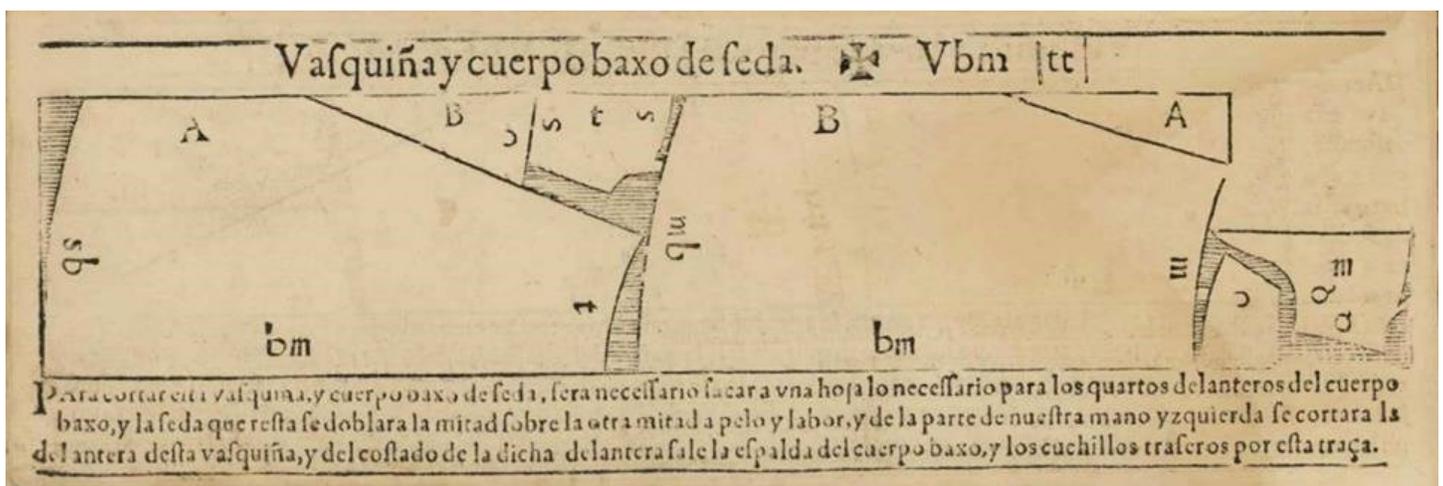
- Spanish words are often similar to English—but not always (embarrassment/*embarazado*)
- Spanish is noun, then adjective—English: A blue dress. Spanish: A dress blue.
- Noun + ado/ada: “noun”ed. Ex: Randa, noun meaning trim. Randada, adjective meaning trimmed.

## Common Spanish words:

- **De:** Of (from a city, made of, or for purpose x)
- **Con:** With
- **Y:** And

## And finally, a note on spelling:

Renaissance Spanish, much like Renaissance English, has a ton of spelling variations. In particular, a s might be an f, a u might be a v or vice versa, and an x might be a j. Also, many items have multiple names, many of them in use simultaneously.



Renaissance Spanish at its finest in Juan de Alcega's 1589 *Libro de Geometria, Practica, y Traca*—commonly called the Tailor's Pattern Book, but more accurately translated as “Book of The Practice of Tailoring, Measuring, and Marking Out.” The goal of the book is to communicate the most fabric-efficient layout to craft garments the reader already knows how to construct. It's super fascinating and 100% off topic here!

## Let's Get To It!

What follows is a list of the terms I can currently pin to a definition in some meaningful way. Some of them have images, some do not. Some are better defined than others. Keep in mind that some of these items have evolved over the years—so googling “*mantilla*” will yield you tons of results, and they’ll be pretty, and they’ll have not much to do with what a *mantilla* looked like in 1582.

The list is alphabetized. If an item has an image, that image appears on the same page as the text for that item, and the text is repeated as the image caption.



**Abarcas:** An ancient, rustic slipper made from cow's hide. Protects the feet.



**Chapines:** Early, tall platform sandals. Look strikingly similar to what exists today, but were usually made of wood or cork.



**Cofia y tranzado:** A long single-piece hair covering.

**Abarcas:** An ancient, rustic slipper made from cow's hide. Protects the feet.

**Albanega:** a net, or woven, caul/hood/women's bonnet. A specific form of coif that encloses the head. May also be referred to as *escofia* or *escofieta*. No further details known.

**Alhareme:** A Moorish head wrap

**Almaizar:** A Moorish head wrap

**Beatilla:** A particular type of hood – not specified beyond that.

**Cebti:** A popular form of silk. Specific characteristics are unknown.

**Chapines:** Early, tall platform sandals. Look strikingly similar to what exists today, but were usually made of wood or cork.

**Cofia:** Most commonly, a linen cap, often used with the *tranzado*, later as single piece *cofia y tranzado*. May also be a net head covering.

**Cuerpo/Corpecico/Corpino:** An interior piece of clothing, may be an early forerunner to the pair of bodies. Frequently associated with the *saya* in inventories. No images survive; it is possible that some under-gown sleeves may actually be from these, but it's impossible to tell.

**Cos:** An interior garment that's the equivalent of a man's *jubon*. Fell into disuse before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Often lavishly decorated with gold, silver, etc. No clear surviving images.

**Cota:** By the 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish Golden Age, this has evolved into an underskirt worn beneath a *saya*, only seen when the *saya* is lifted up slightly. No images survive, but it was made from very fine material.

**Crespinas:** a caul made from a thin, slender mesh. No certain images survive.



**Faldetas/Faldillas/  
Faldrillas:** An interior skirt, worn beneath the other clothing items. Very common.



**Gorguera:** A partlet and possibly also ruff, not specified beyond that. The word has been shown to refer to a wide variety of different partlets (high necked, lower necked, decorated, not...)

**Jubon:** Shirt worn by men in between their base layer and their upper layer to protect and shape the fabric.



**Faldetas/Faldillas/Faldrillas:** An interior skirt, worn beneath the other clothing items. Very common.

**Gayas:** Stripes.

**Gonete:** A type of woman's clothing with sleeves. Not further specified.

**Gorguera:** A partlet and possibly also ruff, not specified beyond that. The word has been shown to refer to a wide variety of different partlets (high necked, lower necked, decorated, not...)

**Habito:** A long, loose gown, often made from a particularly decorative fabric.

**Jubon:** Shirt worn by men in between their base layer and their upper layer to protect and shape the fabric.

**Labrada:** Embroidered

**Lienzo de Calicut:** Cotton, name possibly related to Kolkata/Calcutta in India.

**Lienzo:** Cotton.

**Mangas:** Sleeves. This is a generic term, and does not refer to any specific type of sleeves.

**Mantellina:** a long hood, framing the face and hanging down to the shoulders or longer, in some cases long enough to cover part of the dress, but not longer than to the waist. Could be very richly adorned with fabric and trim, but not usually embroidered. No clear, certain examples exist.

**Mantilla de Peinar:** Combing cloak – worn for hairdressing during the winter. No examples survive.



**Habito:** A long, loose gown, often made from a particularly decorative fabric.

**Marlota:** A type of clothing originally popularized by the Moors. When Spain reconquered Granada and the surroundings, some people adopted Moorish fashions.

**Mechones:** Earlocks, pulled down over the ear

**Mechuelas:** Small locks of hair left outside the style.

**Orillas:** Edgings (general, may be from any kind of material – including gold!)

**Oro hilado:** Spun gold thread

**Partidor de crencha:** "Hair parter", probably something similar to a modern long tailed comb.

**Peinadores:** A combing jacket – literally worn as part of the hairdressing process. No examples survive and no more detailed description is known.

**Randada:** Trimmed.

**Redecilla:** A small net caul. No clear images or further description.

**Rodeo, Rodete, Rollo:** Roundlet, usually thick and stuffed with wool or rushes, sometimes wrapped in long, thin strip of fabric. Description only – none have survived and although they are represented in images, they're not clear and we cannot see the interior.

**Saya:** The general term for "woman's dress" in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. The exact definition varies wildly throughout this time, but is almost always distinct from other fashions such as the *habito* and later the *sayuelo*. Note: this gets VERY confusing! Two dresses can look pretty darn different and be constructed entirely differently and both be considered sayas.

**Sayo:** A men's garment, distinct from the *saya*. Skirted garment worn directly over the *jubon*.



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**Sayo:** A men's garment, distinct from the *saya*. Skirted garment worn directly over the *jubon*.



**Sayuelo:** A dress distinct from the *saya*, but common and fairly durable, used by lower class women. Lasted through the eras of Isabel la Catolica, her daughter Juana, and her son's wife Isabel of Portugal.



**Tiras:** Small strips of fabric sewn on in patterns to create decoration. Somewhat similar to modern bias tape, although it's not clear if or when they were cut on the bias. The stripes on the bodice of this woman are typical.



**Vasquina:** An over-skirt made with less fabric than some underskirts. Commonly shown on women of lower social standing (attendants, companions, etc).

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**Sinabafo/Sinabafa:** White silk, often used for *cofia* or *tranzado*.

**Sombrero:** A wide-brimmed hat intended to provide shade from the sun. Usually covered in velvet and lined in satin. Looks pretty much exactly like you're thinking, but black felt/fabric instead of straw.

**Tela:** Fabric, generally. This is a modern word.

**Tiras:** Small strips of fabric sewn on in patterns to create decoration. Somewhat similar to modern bias tape, although it's not clear if or when they were cut on the bias.

**Toca de camino:** A draped head scarf used for traveling. Could be decorated.

**Tranzado:** Braid case, often quite long, sometimes artificially lengthened. May be plain or may be wrapped in ribbons or otherwise decorated. In some cases, may be wrapped up around the head. First indicated in 1410.

**Trenza:** Braid. May be used in the context of hair, or in the context of metal, etc to be applied to clothing.

**Tunecí:** Tunisian silk

**Vasquina:** An overskirt made with less fabric than some underskirts. Commonly shown on women of lower social standing (attendants, companions, etc).

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