

The Mighty “Echar”

One verb, how many meanings?!

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*Somewhere south of the Retiro Park,
Madrid*

¡Hola!

Just how many things can one verb mean? Well, in the case of **‘Echar’**, quite a lot!

It’s most simple translation would be ‘to throw’, as in ‘Echar a la basura’, to throw something in the bin, or ‘Echar sal’, to add salt to the pot.

But combining ‘Echar’ with other words and phrases turns it into a verb of many talents, and when you add just a few of these top ‘echar’ phrases to your Spanish conversation, you’re going to start sounding dangerously like a real Spanish speaker again!

We’ve picked out our favourite uses of ‘Echar’ below, and grouped them into two sections: “Very Common”, and “Less Common But Still Used A Lot”. We hope you like (and use!) them.

¡Saludos desde Madrid!

Ben y Marina

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Very Common

Echar de menos - To miss something

Echo de menos París - I miss Paris.

N.B. With people, you will usually hear Echo de menos a... e.g. Echo de menos a mi mujer - I miss my wife.

Echar balones fuera - To blame someone else

No eches balones fuera, sé que tu equipo tiene la culpa por el retraso - Don't try and place the blame elsewhere, I know your team is responsible for the delay.

Echar un ojo - To have a look at something

¿Puedes echarle un ojo a mi trabajo? - Can you take a look at my work?

Echar una mano - To lend a hand

¿Me puedes echar una mano con la cena? - Can you lend me a hand getting supper ready?

Echar leña al fuego - To add fuel to the fire

Si le dices la verdad, solo vas a echar mas leña al fuego - If you tell her the truth, you're only going to add fuel to the fire (make things more complicated).

Echar un vistazo - To take a look at

Echa un vistazo a los niños, hace un rato que no les oigo - Take a look at the kids, I haven't heard anything from them in a while.

Echarse la siesta - To take a siesta

Hoy me voy a echar una siesta, que ayer me fui a la cama muy tarde - Today I'm going to have a siesta, as I went to bed very late last night.

Echarse a llorar - To burst into tears

Es un llorón, se echa a llorar por nada - She's a cry-baby, she bursts into tears at the slightest thing.

Echar la culpa - To blame

No me eches la culpa de todo, que tu también te equivocas a veces - Don't blame everything on me, you get things wrong too sometimes.

Less Common But Still Used A Lot

Echar algo en falta - To miss something

Echo en falta la comida de mi país - I miss the food from my country

Echar a suertes - To decide by luck, e.g. by tossing a coin

¿Quién va a conducir? Vamos a echarlo a suertes - Who's going to drive? Let's toss a coin

Echar una cana al aire - To be unfaithful

María se ha enterado de que Pepe ha echado una cana al aire y está muy enfadada - Maria found out that Pepe has been unfaithful and is very angry

Echar toda la carne en el asador - To put everything you've got into something

Vamos a echar toda la carne en el asador invirtiendo todos nuestros ahorros en el negocio - We're going to really go for it, investing all our savings in the company.

Echar mano de alguien - To ask someone for help

Vamos a tener que echar mano de tu hermano para construir los armarios - We're going to have to ask for your brother's help to build the wardrobes.

Echar una cabezada - To have a nap

Después de comer voy a echar una cabezada en el sofá - After lunch I'm going to have a nap on the sofa

Echar la llave - To lock the door

No te olvides de echar la llave antes de irte a la cama - Don't forget to lock the door before going to bed.

Echar a perder - To go to waste

Hay que comer el pescado hoy o se va a echar a perder - We have to eat the fish today or it's going to go to waste.

Echase atrás - To back out

Pedro dijo que vendría conmigo a Japón, pero en el último momento se ha echado atrás - Pedro said he'd come to Japan with me but at the last minute he's backed out.

Echase un novio/a - To get a boy/girlfriend

David se ha echado una novia muy guapa - David has got a really beautiful girlfriend.