

# How To Beat The Language Barrier And Other Top Tech Tips

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We do of course owe it to our host country to learn both language & culture as well as we can but that is often easier said than done when newly arrived in Portugal & especially as the language is so mega rich & complicated so let's look at ways we can try to make it easier for us & I would however encourage everyone to do their very utmost to learn as much as they can of the Portuguese language (and culture).

For some strange reason many people seem to think I'm some kind of tech savvy expert/fundi but the truth is I am the absolute opposite & am more at home with a spanner & big hammer than a computer so I'm unsure if that makes me the best or worst type of person to be writing this piece. but that said, I do like to use the KISS principle (keep it stupidly simple) & always try to find a simple solution to any problem..... So I'll give it a go!

As far as understanding tech, especially new tech then the youtube.com tutorials are your best friend as no matter what you need to learn to use properly, you'll find it there & I learned more about flying Apple devices in a couple of hours of tubing than I would have learned in a month of Sundays of just exploring the phone or device & you'll very quickly learn which are the best channels for the tech you're using & my very favourite is Proper Honest Tech as he's really laid back in his presentation style & extremely well informed & super helpful.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/ProperHonestTech>

One of the biggest problems we newbies often face is how to deal with things related to the language issues & whilst this piece is mostly based on Apple products & technology (because I'm a recent Apple convert thanks to my friends Tim & Julie who introduced me to the wonderful world of Apple) the Android options are ('m told) very similar so if you prefer Androids then use those alternatives even though they are not perhaps as idiot user friendly as Apple tech is.

First up is to install DeepL Translate to your PC, phone & device as DeepL is way better than the other options & even grammatically correct in pretty much all cases & although the free version is slightly limited in the

amount of translation it can do at one go it is usually good enough for most tasks. On your PC or laptop the most common way to use it will be simple cut & paste jobs & I'd caution you not to use abbreviated words such as 'I'm' & better to use 'I am' etc.

<https://www.deepl.com/translator>

DeepL is even better when it comes to using it on a phone or device such as iPhone or iPad & when you need to read any document from a menu to a contract that is in a foreign language just you open DeepL, select camera & hold your phone over the document you need to read & it auto translates to your selected language & you can either read it on the screen or screenshot the translated version with an Apple Mac of any kind you can simply highlight the relevant section & then right click & select "Translate" to get what you need in your preferred language. Another option is to select the languages required & then tap the microphone icon & say whatever you need to say & then tap stop recording & it will give you the Portuguese version in text or in some cases spoken words. Yet another option is to ask that clever person who lives in your phone & with an Apple then you would open Siri and/or say something like 'Hey Siri, how do I say (whatever you need to say) in Portuguese' & Siri will speak the necessary words. At the moment, Siri is limited to Brazilian Portuguese not European Portuguese but it's usually close enough & I have no doubt the European Portuguese version will appear in the not too distant future.

Note however these options tend to result in a somewhat one-way conversation unless the other person has similar tech or if you can phrase your questions in a way that they only need simple replies such as a yes or no answer but I recently used it successfully to have an in depth, technical conversation about a large solar powered fencing set up to contain my livestock so it is more than good enough for most things.

Another handy little tip is when you receive a Portuguese language SMS text message just hold your finger on the text of the message for a second or two & then lift off & then select your choice of translate or copy or similar & hey presto it will be auto translated into your preferred language. Another super helpful tip is if you run your PC or laptop on a browser such as Edge or Chrome or similar & need to translate Portuguese language websites such as SEF or similar then install one of the free auto translators (NOT Google Translate) then the pages will usually auto translate to your selected language & if they don't then right click the text & select 'Translate' & it's done.

Another good option are Air Tags or whatever Android alternatives there are. These are about the size of 2 €2 coins stacked one on the other & once activated & paired to your phone or device & placed in/on car, wallet,

husband, wife, pet or whatever you might be in danger of losing track of & you can then use the 'Find My' function to locate whatever it's attached to & these work in the background of all Apples or Android alternatives in conjunction with the air tag & although not the complete answer they help you find whatever it is that you have lost & these are especially useful in scenarios such as large car parks in big cities or pubs (when looking for your partner) etc where the world & his dog has a smartphone of some kind about their person & it's also a good idea to put one in each checked bag when travelling as it also makes life easier should the airline misplace your baggage.

It should be noted that Air Tags can be set to sound an alarm on your phone if you move more than a set distance away from it & this is especially useful when the Air Tag is in a wallet or similar as it means your phone will squawk if you leave it somewhere & walk away from it.

I'm sure most of us are familiar with either Apple or Google maps both of which are really useful & with these you can also 'drop a pin' or send your location by the various options on the phone which include MS, email & FB messenger amongst several others. There are also other options which can be a Godsend if you need to send your location to someone in event of a car breakdown or for any other reason but there are other options as well & with Apple you can simply say 'Hey Siri where am I?' & Siri will give you both address & GPS location which you can then send to whoever you need to inform & other options are to use What 3 Words which works the same way & again can be obtained free from your app store or simply use the 'drop a pin' & send it to whoever you need to send it to.

<https://what3words.com/pretty.needed.chill>

While we're on the subject of apps, you will find your app store will also have an almost endless number of options for things like plant, insect, bird, bird song & animal ID so don't be afraid to spend time exploring the app store & a significant number of those are for free & mahala & yet another option is to simply select the camera function hold it over whatever it is you want to identify & simply say something like 'Hey Siri, what is this?' & Siri can very often give you a relatively accurate answer.

For those who want to buy something really obscure such as a toilet plunger then simply find a photo of such an item on Amazon or Google images & either print it or show the person in the shop an image of it..... and in that particular case, don't resort to mime for the obvious reason!

The Two stage authentication facility is a useful security measure as it ensures that even if someone has accessed your device password(s) then they are no use unless they also have the phone AND device in their

possession which makes it a lot harder for hackers & similar & the way it works is (for example) if an attempt is made to hack into your email account or your banking website etc on your laptop (or similar) then the email provider sends a passcode to your phone which then needs to be entered onto the laptop so if the hacker does not have your phone as well then they can't access your email or banking website etc. – It's simple tech but it works a treat.

The measurement app is also a great little tool especially when house hunting or initially planning a building project or similar. This app works on augmented reality (whatever that is?) & although a little tricky to first master, it's great for anything from taking approximate measurements of anything from simple length to cubic area & most even have a spirit level function so you can use it for all kinds of things & pretty much all app stores will offer you a number of options so it's well worth installing one if your phone doesn't already have it.

Air pods (ear piece with speaker) paired to your phone or device are also useful in that if you have to take a call when out & about somewhere such as a supermarket & your hands are occupied pushing a trolley then no need to hold a phone to your ear or even take it out of your pocket or bag.

I finally discovered the huge benefit of smartphone wallets fairly recently when I realised that if I save the relevant card info to my smartphone wallet then I have no need to carry all those annoying points & discount store cards that every store wants to give you & that you need to carry in your proper wallet & that are the bane of my life & once on your phone all those next to useless cards can go in the kitchen drawer where they all deserve to be!

That same wallet function can be used to store e-versions of your debit & credit cards & most stores now will have the Apple Pay function so you can pay the relevant bill from your phone or smartwatch. That one is a bit scary at first but it works well especially when you're in a hurry to get things done.

As for smartwatches, at first I simply failed to see the logic of them as I simply don't need to know how many calories I've consumed or how many steps I've taken in a day but I've recently taken the plunge & now have an Apple Smartwatch & have learned the various hand gestures I have to say, I'm impressed with it as some of the functions have proven to be far more useful than I thought they would be & I now think they are well worth having but as with the other tech discussed here, we will all use different parts of the tech in different ways & whilst I have no interest in things like calories consumed & steps taken etc I have found it useful to have notifications of emails & messages pop up on my wrist when driving

or out & about & both the maps & GPS functions combined with the backtrack function is also more useful than I'd expected & those same youtube tutorials have taught me that there is always a LOT more to tech than I first imagined & I suspect that now I taken the plunge, I'm going to find a lot more useful functions with the watch & the one thing I have learned above all others when it comes to 21st Century tech is that we all use it in different ways & for different reasons but the one constant is that once you learn to fly it properly then it can be the saviour of all born in the BBC (Born Before Computers) era so don't be scared of trying it out & once you manage to suss out how it can be useful to YOU then you won't regret it for a millisecond!

Apple Mac laptops were a completely unexplored region for me until very recently & I was terrified of making such a drastic change, but I bit the bullet & took the plunge some months ago & am astounded at how much easier that change turned out to be. I did admittedly spend several weeks researching the tech changes before I swapped to Mac & I'm very glad to say, I had the basics at least sussed out within a week or so but I am still improving my knowledge & ability base every day I use the Mac..... which is pretty much every day of my life & I sure as heck would not consider switching back to a Windows computer or laptop & changing to 100% Apple has made my life so much easier it's hard to believe but I do have to say that Apple tech is a bit like the Marmite principle in that it's something you either love or hate.

This piece would not be complete without the mention of money as new tech, especially new Apple tech is pretty much always obscenely expensive which is why I & I'm sure many others have been put off of investing such large amounts into such items, but I quickly realised how important it is to see through the sales hyperbole & the trick is not to necessarily buy the newest models.

For example, the Apple 15 iPhone range has just been launched & the top of the line models are eye wateringly expensive. However, if you look at the prices on 2 or 3 models behind such as the iPhone 12s or 13s then they become way more sensibly priced & affordable & you can even buy

second hand from companies such as Swappie & they will even give a report of the battery condition of that particular device before you buy & essentially they are very similar to the newest model & have most but not quite all of the newest model & also don't necessarily look for the top of the range & (for example) the Apple watch SE is something like half the price of the top of the range Ultra model & not many of us will be running ultra-marathons or trekking to the pole & therefore the SE is more than adequate for all but the very few.

<https://swappie.com/pt/>

I'm sure I've missed out an awful lot of what might also be considered top tech tips so if you have any other handy tips to add then don't hesitate to let me know please?