

Trazer vs Levar: Do I Bring or Do I Take - Differences in Use (with Video)

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Any student can get a dictionary and look up the meaning of these verbs, right?

- To bring = trazer
- To take = levar

However what you do not find in dictionaries or in any traditional Portuguese language blog is the key difference in the use of these verbs in Portuguese and in English. These verbs are tricky for both students of Portuguese and for Brazilian students of English.

When studying the examples below keep in mind that in Brazil:

- We bring things to where we are at the moment in which we are speaking
- We take things to where we will be going

Situation 1:

Marta is throwing a party at her place later this evening. She is on the phone with her friend Rodrigo. Marta is at home. Rodrigo is at work. They are talking about the party:

Rodrigo, calling from work:



Marta, o que **levo** para a festa? Estou pensando em **levar** umas cervejas e pãozinho de queijo. O que você acha?

Marta, what do I **take** to the party? I am thinking about **taking** [beer](#) [1] and [pãozinho de queijo](#) [2]. What do you think?

Marta, speaking from her home:



Pode **trazer** qualquer coisa. Pãozinho é uma boa ideia, com certeza.

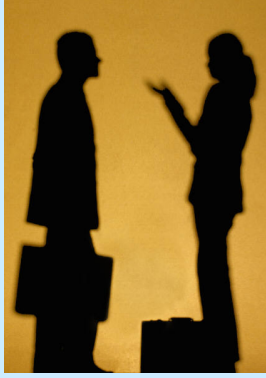
You can **bring** anything. Pãozinho is a good idea, for sure.

I intentionally translated Rodrigo's question to English using the verb 'to take'. This is how we would say it in Brazil. He will **take** food and drinks to where he is going, i.e., Marta's place. Because she is at her home, she tells him to **bring** the stuff to where she is at the moment in which she is speaking.

Situation 2:

What if Rodrigo and Marta were both at work when they have this conversation? Check it out:

Rodrigo and Marta are at work:



Marta, o que **levo** para a festa? Estou pensando em **levar** umas cervejas e pãozinho de queijo. O que você acha?

Pode **levar** qualquer coisa. Pãozinho é uma boa ideia, com certeza.

Marta, what do I **take** to the party? I am thinking about **taking** beer and pãozinho de queijo. What do you think?

You can **take** anything. Pãozinho is a good idea, for sure.

Now both Rodrigo and Marta use the verb 'levar = to take' because they are talking about taking stuff to where they will be going. See the difference between English and Portuguese?

If you have Brazilian friends, at some point you probably heard them saying in English: "Yes, I will be at the party tomorrow. I will take a bottle of wine. Now you know why we Brazilians do so :) It is the literal translation of how we speak in Portuguese.

Situation 3:

John lives in San Francisco and is packing to go to Brazil on vacation. This will be his first time in Brazil and he is unsure about what to pack. He thinks:

"Preciso **levar** um casaco? Com certeza vou **levar** minha máquina fotográfica."
= Do I need to **take** a coat? I will surely **take** my camera.

Remember, we take things to where we are going. John is in the US and will take his camera to Brazil (not bring it, as we would say in English).

Situation 4:

When John is in Brazil, he thinks:

"Foi uma boa ideia **trazer** roupas leves."
= It was a good idea to **bring** light clothes.

We bring things to where we are at the moment in which we are speaking.

Situation 5:

Now John wants to buy gifts for his friends in the USA. He is still in Brazil. He thinks:

"Vou **levar** café brasileiro para meus amigos."
= I will **take** Brazilian coffee to my friends.

He is in Brazil and he will take coffee to the USA which is where he is going to.

I hope that helps you use 'trazer' and 'levar' with confidence.