

Ship as an idiom

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The word “**ship**” has some interesting uses as an idiom. Study these examples:

1. “I will buy it when my **ship** comes home”.

This goes back to the time when many people used to earn a living (ganarse la vida) by transporting or importing goods by **ship**. They only had money when the **ship** came to port and they could sell the merchandise (mercancía). In Spanish perhaps the nearest equivalent would be “lo compraré cuando lleguen las vacas gordas”.

2. “Is everything **shipshape**”? ¿Todo está en buen orden?
3. “The rats are leaving the sinking ship”.

Rats are the first to know when a **ship** is going to sink, because they live in the lower part of the hold (la bodega). Nowadays, we use the saying to describe those people (often politicians) who desert (abandonar) their party because they think it is going to lose and they want to avoid responsibility for the fiasco (same word in English!).