Chinese Phrases FOR DUMMIES

by Dr. Wendy Abraham

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Wendy Abraham is the Associate Director of the Stanford Center for Buddhist Studies and the Asian Religions & Cultures Initiative. She has taught courses on Chinese language, Chinese literature, and Asian cultures at Hunter College, Georgetown University, New York University, and Stanford University, where she's currently pursuing her second doctorate in modern Chinese literature. She spent a year researching Shang Dynasty oracle bones in Taiwan, which sparked her deep interest in the development of China's written language. Wendy has directed Chinese language programs for American students in Beijing and Shanghai and has interpreted for high-level arts delegations from China. Her first doctoral dissertation from Teachers College (Columbia University) was on the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, a subject about which she has written widely and continues to lecture frequently throughout the United States. She also created Jewish Historical Tours of China, bringing people to visit Shanghai and Kaifeng on educational trips. Her interest in all things Chinese continues unabated.
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<table>
<thead>
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<td>Huānyīng Huānyīng!</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bìbì Bìbì</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiǔyáng Jiǔyáng</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Màn Màn Chǐ!</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wō Qīng Kē</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yōu Kōng Lái Wán</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lǎojià Lǎojià</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Zhù Nǐ Zǎo Rì Kāng Fù</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bǔkèqi</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hǎo Jiǔ Méi Jiàn</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"You mean, 'wo', 'ta', 'baba', and 'mama' are all words in the Mandarin dialect? My gosh, Alice, our baby's been speaking Chinese the last few weeks!"
Introduction

Globalization has made familiarity with other people, cultures, and languages not only preferable in the 21st century, but also essential. With the help of the Internet, reaching out and touching someone on the other side of the world has become as easy as the click of a mouse. And yet, nothing quite beats the excitement of a face-to-face encounter with someone who hails from the other side of the globe in his or her own language. Communication in cyberspace doesn’t even come close.

Whether you’re going around the world for business, getting ready to study overseas, interested in frequenting Chinatown, befriending a Chinese-speaking classmate or coworker, or just plain curious about China, Chinese Phrases For Dummies can help you get acquainted with enough Chinese to carry on a decent conversation on any number of topics. You won’t become fluent instantly, of course, but this book helps you greet a stranger, buy a plane ticket, order some food, and even adopt a baby. This book also gives you some invaluable cultural tips so that you can not only rattle off those newly acquired words and phrases, but also back them up with the right behavior at the right time.

I design this book to help guide you toward the successful use of one of the most difficult languages on earth. I hope this book makes studying Chinese fun.

About This Book

The good news is that you can use Chinese Phrases For Dummies anytime, anywhere. No mandatory class sessions, no exams, and no homework assignments to dread. Need to get to a business meeting after you arrive in a new town? Just turn to the chapter on
travel to find out how to haggle for a plane ticket, 
determine the price, and get to the airport on time. 
Have to make a sudden trip to the doctor? Turn to the 
chapter on health and figure out how to tell your care-
givers exactly what ails you.

The beauty of this book is that it can basically be all 
things to all people. You don't have to memorize one 
chapter before moving on to the next, if what the 
second chapter deals with what you really need. Read 
as much or as little as you want, as quickly or as 
slowly as you like. Whatever interests you is what you 
can focus on. And remember: You're discovering a 
language that simultaneously represents one of the 
world's oldest civilizations and one of today's fastest 
growing economies.

Note: If you've never taken Chinese before, you may 
want to read Chapters 1 and 2 before you tackle the 
later chapters. They give you some of the basics that 
you need to know about the language, such as how to 
pronounce the various sounds.

Conventions Used in This Book

Pay attention to a couple of conventions that can help 
you navigate this book's contents:

✔ Chinese terms are set in **boldface** to make them 
stand out.

✔ Pronunciations and meanings appear in paren-
theses immediately after the Chinese terms. The 
pronunciations are in *italics*.

This book uses the **pinyin** (literally: spelling the way it 
sounds) romanization of Chinese words. What does 
that mean? Well, if you go to China, you see signs in 
Chinese characters, but if you look for something in 
English, you may be hard pressed to find it. Whatever 
signs you see in roman letters are in pinyin, the 
romanization system developed by the Communists 
in the 1950s, so seeing pinyin in this book is good 
practice for you.
Something else to keep in mind as you begin to understand Chinese is that many of the English translations you see in this book aren't exactly literal. Knowing the gist of what you hear or see is more important instead of what individual words in any given phrase mean. For example, if you translate “horse horse tiger tiger” literally into Chinese, you have the phrase meaning “so so.” You’re not actually talking about animals. Whenever I give a literal translation, I preface it with “literally” in italics.

**Foolish Assumptions**

Some of the foolish assumptions I made about you while writing *Chinese Phrases For Dummies* are:

- You don’t know any Chinese, except for maybe a couple of words you picked up from a good kung-fu movie or the word “tofu,” which you picked up while grocery shopping.
- Your goal in life isn’t to become an interpreter of Chinese at the United Nations. You just want to pick up some useful words, phrases, and sentence constructions to make yourself understood when speaking Chinese.
- You have no intention of spending hours and hours memorizing Chinese vocabulary and grammar patterns.
- You want to have fun while trying to speak a little Chinese, like at your local Chinese restaurant.

**Icons Used in This Book**

The cute little icons in the left-hand margins highlight the kind of information you’re looking at and can help you locate certain types of information in a hurry. This book’s five icons are
The bull’s-eye appears wherever I highlight a great idea to help make your study of Chinese easier.

This icon serves as a reminder about particularly important information concerning Chinese.

The icon acts as a stop sign in your mind. It warns you something you need to avoid saying or doing so that you don’t make a fool of yourself.

This icon clues you in on fascinating bits of information about China and Chinese culture. Knowledge of a culture goes hand in hand with knowledge of a foreign language, so these icons help light the way as you embark on your journey.

This icon highlights various rules of grammar that may be unusual. Even though this book doesn’t focus primarily on grammar, by paying attention to these little grammatical rules as they pop up can only enhance your successful execution of the language.

Where to Go from Here

Chinese is often considered one of the toughest languages in the world to master. Don’t worry. The good news is that you’re not trying to master it. All you want is for people to understand you when you open your mouth. All you have to do now is turn to whichever chapter piques your curiosity and keep practicing your favorite Chinese phrases when you’re with your family and friends in Chinatown.
Chapter 1

I Say It How? Speaking Chinese

In This Chapter
- Getting a handle on basic Chinese sounds
- Perfecting the four basic tones
- Practicing Chinese idioms
- Understanding basic Chinese phrases and gestures

Time to get your feet wet with the basics of Chinese. This chapter gives you the guidelines that help you pronounce words in standard Mandarin (the official language of both the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan) like a native speaker and helps you get a handle on the four tones that distinguish the Mandarin dialect. After you have the basics down, we show you how to construct basic Chinese phrases.

But before you dive in, here’s a bit of advice: Don’t be intimidated by all the tones! When studying a foreign language, don’t worry about making mistakes the minute you open your mouth.
The Written Word: Yikes!  
No Alphabet!

With so many distinct dialects in Chinese, how do people communicate with each other? The answer lies in . . . (drum roll) . . . the written word.

Say you see two Chinese people sitting next to each other on a train traveling from Canton to Shanghai. If the Cantonese speaker reads the newspaper out loud, the guy from Shanghai won’t have a clue what he’s saying. But if they both read the same newspaper article silently to themselves, they could understand what’s going on in the world. That’s because Chinese characters are uniform all across the country.

Chinese words are written in beautiful, often symbolic configurations called characters. Each character is a word in and of itself, and sometimes it’s a part of a compound word. It makes no difference if you write the characters from right to left, left to right, or top to bottom, because you can read and understand them in any order.

During the Han dynasty, a lexicographer named Xu Shen identified six ways in which Chinese characters reflected meanings and sounds. Of these, four were the most common:

✔ Pictographs: These characters are formed according to the shape of the objects themselves, such as the sun and the moon.

✔ Ideographs: These characters represent more abstract concepts. For example, the characters for “above” and “below” each have a horizontal line representing the horizon and another stroke leading out away above or below the horizon.

✔ Complex ideographs: Combinations of simpler characters, such as the sun and moon together which mean “bright.”
Phonetic compounds: Also called *logographs*, these compound characters are formed by two graphic elements — one hinting at the meaning of the word and the other providing a clue to the sound. Phonetic compounds account for more than 80 percent of all Chinese characters.

No matter which type of character you see, you won’t find any letters stringing them together like you see in English. So how in the world do Chinese people consult a Chinese dictionary? In several different ways.

Because Chinese characters are composed of several (often many) strokes of the writing brush, one way to look up a character is by counting the number of strokes and then looking up the character under the portion of the dictionary that notes characters by strokes. But to do so, you have to know which radical to check under first. Chinese characters have 214 *radicals* — parts of the character that can help identify what the character may signify, such as three dots on the left-hand side of the character representing water. Each radical is itself composed of a certain number of strokes, so you have to first look up the radical by the number of strokes it takes to write it, and after you locate that radical, you start looking once more under the number of strokes left in the character after that radical to locate the character you wanted to look up in the first place.

You can always just check under the pronunciation of the character (if you already know how to pronounce it), but you have to sift through every single character with the same pronunciation first, according to which tone the word is spoken with — first, second, third, or fourth. And because Chinese has so many homophones, this task isn’t as easy as it may sound (no pun intended). For example the word pronounced “ma” if spoken with a first tone, means “mother,” with a second tone it means “hemp,” with a third tone it means “horse,” and with a fourth tone it means “to scold.” So if you’re not careful you can scold your mother and call her a horse.
I bet you feel really relieved that you’re only focusing on spoken Chinese and not the written language about now.

**Pinyin Spelling: Beijing, Not Peking**

To spell the way it sounds . . . that’s the literal meaning of pìnyīn. For decades, Chinese had been transliterated in any number of ways. Finally, in 1979, the People’s Republic of China officially adopted pìnyīn as its official romanization system. After the adoption, U.S. libraries and government agencies diligently changed all their prior records from other romanization systems into pìnyīn.

Keep in mind the following quick facts about some of the initial sounds in Mandarin when you see them written in the relatively new pìnyīn system:

- **J**: Sounds like the “g” in “gee whiz.” An “i” often follows a “j.” “Jì kuài qián?” (jee kwyə chyan) means “How much money?”

- **Q**: Sounds like the “ch” in “cheek.” You never see it followed by a “u” like in English, but an “i” always follows it in pìnyīn, possibly before another vowel or a consonant. Qīngdào (cheeng daow) beer used to be spelled “ch’ing tao” or “Tsingtao.”

- **X**: The third letter that’s often followed by an “i.” It sounds like the “sh” in “she.” One famous Chinese leader, Dèng Xiāoping (dung shyaow peeng), boasted this letter in his name.

- **Zh**: Unlike “j,” which often precedes a vowel — making it sound like you’re opening your mouth — “zh” is followed by vowels, which make it sound like your mouth is a bit more closed. Take Zhōu ēnlái (joe un lye), for example, the great statesman of 20th-century China. When you say his name, it sounds like Joe Un-lye.
Z: Sounds like a “dz.” You see it in the name of the PRC’s first leader, Máo Zédōng (maow dzuh doong), which used to be spelled Mao Tse-tung.

C: Pronounced like “ts” in such words as cāi (tsye; food) or cèsuō (tsuh swaw; bathroom).

B, D, and G: In the past, the sounds made by these three letters were represented by P, T, and K, respectively, and the corresponding aspirated initial sounds (like in the words “pie,” “tie,” and “kite”) were written as “p’,” “t’,” and “k.” Today, the letters “P,” “T,” and “K” represent the aspirated sounds.

Sounding Off: Basic Chinese Sounds

Don’t worry about sounding like a native speaker the first time you utter a Chinese syllable — after all, who does? But the longer you procrastinate becoming familiar with the basic elements of Chinese words, the greater your fear of this unique language may become.

The main thing to remember about the Chinese language is that each morpheme (the smallest unit of meaning in a language) is represented by one syllable, which in turn consists of an initial sound and a final sound, topped off by a tone. This applies to each and every syllable. Without any one of these three components, your words may be incomprehensible to the average Chinese person. For example, the syllable “mā” is comprised of the initial “m” and the final “a,” and you pronounce it with what’s called a first tone. Together, the parts mean “mother.” If you substitute the first tone for a third tone, which is written as “mā,” you say the word “horse.” The following sections break up the three parts and give each their due.
## Starting off with initials

In Chinese, initials always consist of consonants. Table 1-1 lists the initials you encounter in the Chinese language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Letter</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>English Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>baw</td>
<td>bore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>paw</td>
<td>paw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>maw</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>faw</td>
<td>four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>duh</td>
<td>done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>tuh</td>
<td>ton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>nuh</td>
<td>null</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>luh</td>
<td>lull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>guh</td>
<td>gull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>kuh</td>
<td>come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>huh</td>
<td>hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>gee</td>
<td>gee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q</td>
<td>chee</td>
<td>cheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>she</td>
<td>she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z</td>
<td>dzuh</td>
<td>“ds” in suds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>tsuh</td>
<td>“ts” in huts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s</td>
<td>suh</td>
<td>sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zh</td>
<td>jir</td>
<td>germ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ch</td>
<td>chir</td>
<td>churn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sh</td>
<td>shir</td>
<td>shirt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The initials -n, -ng, and -r can also appear as finals (see the next section for more on finals), so don’t be surprised if you see them there.

**Ending with finals**

Chinese boasts many more consonants than vowels. In fact, the language has only six vowels all together: a, o, e, i, u, and ü. If you pronounce the vowels in sequence, your mouth starts off very wide and your tongue starts off very low. Eventually, when you get to ü, your mouth becomes much more closed and your tongue ends pretty high. You can also combine the vowels in various ways to form compound vowels. Table 1-2 lists the vowels and some possible combinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Vowel</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>English Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>ah</td>
<td>hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ai</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ao</td>
<td>ow</td>
<td>chow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an</td>
<td>ahn</td>
<td>sonogram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>ahng</td>
<td>angst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>aw</td>
<td>straw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ong</td>
<td>oong</td>
<td>too + ng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chinese Vowel</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>English Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ou</td>
<td>oh</td>
<td>oh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>uh</td>
<td>bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ei</td>
<td>ay</td>
<td>way</td>
</tr>
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<td>ton</td>
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<td>er</td>
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<td>i</td>
<td>ee</td>
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<tr>
<td>ia</td>
<td>ya</td>
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<tr>
<td>iao</td>
<td>yaow</td>
<td>meow</td>
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<tr>
<td>ie</td>
<td>yeh</td>
<td>yet</td>
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<tr>
<td>iu</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>leo</td>
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<tr>
<td>ian</td>
<td>yan</td>
<td>Cheyenne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iang</td>
<td>yahng</td>
<td>y + angst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in</td>
<td>een</td>
<td>seen</td>
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<tr>
<td>ing</td>
<td>eeng</td>
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<tr>
<td>iong</td>
<td>yoong</td>
<td>you + ng</td>
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<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>oo</td>
<td>too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ua</td>
<td>wa</td>
<td>suave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uo</td>
<td>waw</td>
<td>war</td>
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<tr>
<td>ui</td>
<td>way</td>
<td>way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uai</td>
<td>why</td>
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<tr>
<td>uan</td>
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<td>want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uang</td>
<td>wahng</td>
<td>wan + ng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tone marks in pīnyīn always appear above the vowel, but if you see a couple of vowels in a row, the tone mark appears above the first vowel in that sequence. One exception is when you see the vowels iu and ui together. In that case, the tone marks fall on the second vowel.

Sometimes vowels appear without initial consonant accompaniment, but they still mean something. The word āi, meaning “short” (of stature), is one example.

**Perfect pitch: Presenting . . . the four tones**

Mandarin has only four tones. The best way to imagine what each of the four tones sounds like is to visualize these short descriptions:

**First tone:** High level. The first tone is supposed to be as high as your individual pitch range can be, without wavering. It appears like this above the letter a: ã.

**Second tone:** Rising. The second tone sounds like you’re asking a question. It goes from the middle level of your voice to the top. It doesn’t automatically indicate that you’re asking a question, however — it just sounds like you are. You mark it like this: á.

**Third tone:** Falling and then rising. The third tone starts in the middle level of your voice
range and then falls deeply before slightly rising at the end. It looks like this if you were to see it above the letter a: ā

Fourth tone: Falling. The fourth tone sounds like you’re giving someone an order (unlike the more plaintive-sounding second tone). It falls from the high pitch level it starts at. Here’s how it looks above the letter a: â.

Even though tones reduce the number of homophones (words that are pronounced alike even if they differ in spelling, meaning, or origin), any given syllable with a specific tone can have more than one meaning. Sometimes the only way to decipher the intended meaning is to see the written word.

One third tone after another

When you have to say a third tone followed by another third tone out loud in consecutive fashion, the first one actually becomes a second tone. If you hear someone say “Tā hěn hǎo” (tah hun how; she’s very well), you may not realize that both “hěn” and “hǎo” individually are third tone syllables. It sounds like “hěn” is a second tone and “hǎo” is a full third tone.

Half-third tones

Whenever a third tone is followed by any of the other tones — first, second, fourth, or even a neutral tone — it becomes a half-third tone. You only pronounce the first half of the tone — the falling half — before you pronounce the other syllables with the other tones. In fact, a half-third tone barely falls at all. It sounds more like a level low tone (kind of the opposite of the high level first tone). Get it?

Neutral tones

A fifth tone exists that you can’t exactly count among the four basic tones, because it’s actually toneless, or neutral. You never see a tone mark over a fifth tone, and you only say it when you attach it to grammatical
particles or the second character of repetitive syllables, such as bàba (bah bah; father) or māma (mah mah; mother).

Tonal changes in yī and bù

Just when you think you’re getting a handle on all the possible tones and tone changes in Chinese, I have one more aspect to report: The words yī (ee; one) and bù (boo; not or no) are truly unusual in Chinese, in that their tones may change automatically depending on what comes after them. You pronounce yī by itself with the first tone. However, when a first, second, or third tone follows it, it instantly turns into a fourth tone, such as in yìzhāng zhě (ee jahng jir; a piece of paper). If a fourth tone follows yī, however, it automatically becomes a second tone, such as in the word yìyàng (ee yahng; the same). I know this all sounds very complicated, but when you get the hang of tones, pronunciation becomes second nature. These concepts will sink in quicker than you expect.

Adding Idioms and Popular Expressions to Your Repertoire

The Chinese language has thousands of idiomatic expressions known as chéngyǔ (chung yew). Most of these chéngyǔ originated in anecdotes, fables, fairy tales, or ancient literary works, and some of the expressions are thousands of years old. The vast majority consists of four characters, succinctly expressing morals behind very long, ancient stories. Others are more than four characters. Either way, the Chinese pepper these pithy expressions throughout any given conversation.

Here are a few chéngyǔ you frequently hear in Chinese:

✔ Àn bù jùn bān. (ahn boo jyoeh bahn; To take one step at a time.)

✔ Huǒ shàng jiā yóu. (hwaw shahng yyah yo; To add fuel to the fire; to aggravate the problem.)
Hú shuō bā dào. (hoo shwaw bah daow; literally: to talk nonsense in eight directions.) To talk nonsense.

Mò míngh qí miào. (maw meeng chee meow; literally: No one can explain the wonder and mystery of it all.) This saying describes anything that’s tough to figure out, including unusual behavior.

Quán xīn quán yì. (chwan sheen chwan ee; literally: entire heart, entire mind.) Wholeheartedly.

Rǔ xiāng suī sú. (roo shyahng sway soo; When in Rome, do as the Romans do.)

Yì jǐ liǔng dè. (ee jyew lyahng duh; To kill two birds with one stone.)

Yì mó yì yàng. (ee maw ee yahng; Exactly alike.)

Yē shēn zuò zé. (ee shun dzwaw dzuh; To set a good example.)

Yì zhēn jiàn xiě. (ee jun jyan shyeh; To hit the nail on the head.)

Another fact you quickly become aware of when you start speaking with chéngyú is that the expressions are sometimes full of references to animals. Here are some of those:

gōu zhàng rén shì (go jahng run shir; literally: the dog acts fierce when his master is present; to take advantage of one’s connections with powerful people)

guà yáng tóu mài gōu ròu (gwah yahng toe my go roe; literally: to display a lamb’s head but sell dog meat; to cheat others with false claims)

dā cǎo jīng shé (dah tsaow jeeng shuuh; literally: to beat the grass to frighten the snake; to give a warning)

duí niú tán qín (dway nyo tahn cheen; literally: to play music to a cow; to cast pearls before swine)
Chapter 1: I Say It How? Speaking Chinese

✓ **xuán yá lè mǎ** (shywan yah luh mah; literally: to rein in the horse before it goes over the edge; to halt)

✓ **huà shé tiān zú** (hwah shuh tyan dzoo; literally: to paint a snake and add legs; to gild the lily; to do something superfluous)

✓ **hū tóu shé wěi** (hoo toe shuh way; literally: with the head of a tiger but the tail of a snake; to start strong but end poorly)

✓ **chē shuǐ mǎ lóng** (chuh shway mah loong; literally: cars flowing like water and horses creating a solid line looking like a dragon; heavy traffic)

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**Mastering Basic Phrases**

If you make it a habit to use the following short Chinese phrases whenever you get the chance, you can master them in no time:

✓ **Nǐ hǎo!** (nee how; Hi; How are you?)

✓ **Xièxiè.** (shyeh shyeh; Thank you.)

✓ **Bú kèqi.** (boo kuh chee; You’re welcome; Don’t mention it.)

✓ **Méi shì.** (may shir; It’s nothing; Don’t mention it.)

✓ **Hǎo jílè.** (how jee luh; Great; Fantastic.)

✓ **Dùi lè.** (dway luh; That’s right.)

✓ **Gōngxí gōngxí!** (goong she goong she; Congratulations!)

✓ **Duìbùqǐ.** (dway boo chee; Excuse me.)

✓ **Suàn le.** (swan luh; Forget it; Never mind.)

✓ **Méiyōu guānxi.** (mayo gwan she; It doesn’t matter.)

✓ **Děng yíxià.** (dung ee shyah; Wait a minute.)
Communicating with body language

Ever think you know what certain couples are saying or thinking just by observing their gestures and body language? Well, people can make the same observations in China. Although the gestures are different, they contain important clues as to social status between people, their emotions, and so on. Observe Chinese people wherever you can to see if you notice any of the following gestures:

- **Pointing to one’s own nose.** You may find this hard to believe, but Chinese people often point to their own noses, often touching them, when they refer to themselves by saying the word “wǒ” (wǎː; I). The Chinese are probably just as curious as to why Westerners point to their hearts.

- **Nodding and bowing slightly.** When greeting older people, professors, or others in positions of power or prestige, people lower their heads slightly to acknowledge them and show respect. Unlike the Japanese, who bow deeply, the Chinese basically bow with their heads in a slight fashion.

- **Shaking hands.** People of vastly different status generally don’t give each other a handshake, but it’s common among friends and business colleagues.

- **Bowing with hands clasped.** If you see hand clasping and bowing going on at the same time, you know the participants have something to celebrate. It indicates conveying congratulations or greeting others during special festival occasions. Their hands are held at chest level and their heads are slightly bowed (and they often have big smiles on their faces).
Chapter 2
Grammar on a Diet:
Just the Basics

In This Chapter
► Getting the hang of the parts of speech
► Discovering how to ask questions

You’re probably one of those people who cringe at the mere mention of the word grammar. Just the thought of all those rules on how to construct sentences can put you into a cold sweat.

Hey, don’t sweat it! This chapter could just as easily be called “Chinese without Tears.” It gives you some quick and easy shortcuts on how to combine the basic building blocks of Chinese (which, by the way, are the same components that make up English).

How Chinese Is Easier Than English

The basic word order of Chinese is exactly the same as in English. Just think of it this way: When you say “I love spinach,” you’re using the subject (I), verb (love), object (spinach) sentence order. It’s the same in Chinese. Only in Beijing, it sounds more like Wǒ xǐhuān bòcài (waw she hwahn baw tseye).
And if that weren’t enough to endear you to Chinese already, maybe these tidbits of information will.

✔ You don’t need to conjugate verbs!
✔ You don’t need to master verb tenses. (Don’t you just love it already?)
✔ You don’t need to distinguish between singular and plural nouns.
✔ You don’t need to worry about gender-specific nouns.
✔ You can use the same word for both the subject and the object.

The way you can tell how one part of a Chinese sentence relates to another is generally by the use of particles and what form the word order takes. (For those of you presently scratching your heads, you can find particles at the beginning or end of sentences; they serve mainly to distinguish different types of emphatic statements but can’t be translated in and of themselves.)

Some interesting characteristics of the Chinese language include

✔ You don’t have to think about first, second, or third person (for example, “I eat” versus “he eats”).
✔ You don’t have to worry about active or passive voices (for example, “hear” versus “be heard”).
✔ You don’t have to concern yourself with the past or present (“I like him” versus “I liked him”).

In addition, Chinese language has only two aspects — complete and continuous — whereas English has all sorts of different aspects: indefinite, continuous, perfect, perfect continuous, and so on. (Examples include ways of distinguishing between “I eat,” “I ate,” “I will eat,” “I said I would eat,” “I am eating,” and so on.) Aspects are what characterize the Chinese language in place of tenses. Aspects refer to how a speaker views an event or state of being.
Chapter 2: Grammar on a Diet: Just the Basics

Naming Those Nouns

Chinese is just chock-full of nouns:

- Common nouns that represent tangible things, such as háizi (hi dzuh; child) or yè (yeh; leaf)
- Proper nouns for such items as names of countries or people, like Fāguó (fah gwaw; France) and Zhāng Xiānshēng (jahng shyan shung; Mr. Zhang)
- Material nouns for such nondiscrete things as kāfei (kah fay; coffee) or jīn (jin; gold)
- Abstract nouns for such items as zhèngzhì (juhng jir; politics) or wénhuà (one hwah; culture)

 Pronouns

Pronouns are easy to make plural in Chinese. Here’s what you need to know: Just add the plural suffix -men to the three basic pronouns:

- Wǒ (waw; I/me) becomes wǒmen (waw mun; we/us).
- Nǐ (nee; you) becomes nǐmen (nee mun; you [plural]).
- Tā (tah; he/him, she/her, it) becomes tāmen (tah mun; they/them).

Sometimes instead of using the term wǒmen for “us,” you’ll hear the term zánmen instead. This word is used in very familiar settings when the speaker is trying to include the listener in an action, like when you say Zánmen zǒu ba (dzah mun dzoer bah; let’s go).

When speaking to an elder or someone you don’t know too well and the person is someone to whom you should show respect, you
need to use the pronoun nín (neen) instead of the more informal nǐ (nee). On the other hand, if you're speaking to several people who fit that description, the plural remains nǐmen (nee mun).

Classifiers

Classifiers, sometimes called measure words, help classify particular nouns. For example, the classifier běn (bun) can refer to books, magazines, dictionaries, and just about anything else that's printed and bound like a book. You may hear Wǒ yào yīběn shū (waw yaow ee bun shoo; I want a book.) just as easily as you'll hear Wǒ yào kān yīběn zázhì (waw yaow kahn ee bun dzah jir; I want to read a magazine.).

Classifiers are found in between a number (or a demonstrative pronoun such as “this” or “that”) and a noun. They’re similar to the English words such as “herd” (of elephants) or “school” (of fish).

Because you have so many potential classifiers to choose from in Chinese, the general rule is: When in doubt, use ge (guh). It’s the all-purpose classifier and the one used the most in the Chinese language. Just don’t give into the temptation to leave a classifier out altogether because no one may understand you at all.

Table 2-1 lists classifiers for natural objects, but first here are some other examples:

- gēn (gun): Used for anything looking like a stick, such as a string or even a blade of grass
- kē (kuh): Used for anything round and tiny, such as a pearl
- zhāng (jahng): Used for anything with a flat surface, such as a newspaper, table, or bed
Table 2-1  Some Typical Classifiers for Natural Objects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classifier</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Used For</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>düō</td>
<td>dwaw</td>
<td>flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kē</td>
<td>kuh</td>
<td>trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lī</td>
<td>lee</td>
<td>grain (of rice, sand, and so on)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhī</td>
<td>jir</td>
<td>animals, insects, birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuò</td>
<td>dzwaw</td>
<td>hills, mountains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whenever you have a pair of anything, you can use the classifier shuāng (shwahng). That goes for yì shuāng kuāizi (ee shwahng kwye dzuw; a pair of chopsticks) as well as for yì shuāng shōu (ee shwahng show; a pair of hands). Sometimes a pair is indicated by the classifier düi (dway), as in yì düi ērhuán (ee dway are hwahn; a pair of earrings).

Singular and plural: It’s not an issue

Regular nouns in Chinese make no distinction between singular and plural. Whether you want to talk about one pingguō (peeng gwaw; apple), two júzi (jyew dzuh; oranges), or both pinggniō hé júzi (peeng gwaw huh jyew dzuh; apples and oranges), the fruits always sound the same in Chinese. On the other hand, if you want to refer to human beings, you can always add the suffix men (mun). The word for “I” or “me” is wǒ (waw), but “we” becomes wōmen (waw mun). The same goes for nǐ (nee; you) and tā (tah; he, she, and it). “They” becomes nīmen (nee mun) or tāmen (tah mun). If you want to refer to a specific number of apples, however, you don’t use “men” as a suffix. You can either say pingguō (peeng gwaw) for apple (or apples) or liāngge pingguō (lyahng guh peeng gwaw), meaning two apples. Got it?
Never attach the suffix -men to anything not human. People will think you’re nuts if you start referring to your two pet cats as wōde xiǎo māomen (waw duh shyaow maow mun). Just say Wōde xiǎo māo hěn hǎo, xièxiè, (waw duh shyaow maow hun how, shyeh shyeh; My cats are fine, thank you), and that should do the trick.

**Those Little Words: Definite Versus Indefinite Articles**

If you’re looking for those little words “a,” “an,” and “the” in Chinese, they simply don’t exist. The only way you can tell whether something is being referred to specifically (hence, considered definite) or just generally (and therefore it’s indefinite) is by the word order. Nouns that refer specifically to something are usually found at the beginning of the sentence, before the verb.

- Shū zài nàr. (shoo dzye nar; The book[s] are there.)
- Hái zì men xì huān tā. (hi duh mun she hwahn tah; The children like her.)
- Pán zi zài zhuó zì shāng. (pahn duh dzye jwaw duh shahng; There’s a plate on the table.)

You can often find those articles that refer to something more general (and are therefore “indefinite”) at the end of the sentence, after the verb.

- Nār yōu huā? (nar yo hwah; Where are there some flowers? Or, Where is there a flower?)
- Nār yōu huā. (nar yo hwah; There are some flowers over there. Or, There’s a flower over there.)
- Zhēi ge yōu wèntí. (jai guh yo one tee; There’s a problem with this. Or, There are some problems with this.)
These rules do have a few exceptions: If you find a noun at the beginning of a sentence, it may refer to something indefinite if the sentence makes a general comment (instead of telling a whole story), like when you see the verb shì (shir; to be) as part of the comment:

Xióngmāo shì dòngwù. (shyooong maow shir doong woo; Pandas are animals.)

You use the same rule if an adjective comes after the noun, such as

Pútáo hěn tián. (poo taow hun tyan; Grapes are very sweet.)

Or if there’s an auxiliary verb:

Xiǎo māo hū zhuā lāoshū. (shyaow maow hway jwah laow shoo; Kittens can catch mice.)

Or a verb indicating that the action occurs habitually:

Niú chī cǎo. (nyo chir tsaow; Cows eat grass.)

Nouns that are preceded by a numeral and a classifier, especially when the word dōu (doe; all) exists in the same breath, are also considered to be definite:

Sīge xuēshēng dōu hěn cōngmíng. (suh guh shweh shung doe hun tsoong meeng; The four students are all very smart.)

If the word yǒu (yo; to exist) comes before the noun and is then followed by a verb, the reference may be indefinite:

Yǒu shū zài zhuózíshàng. (yo shoo dzye jwaw dzuh shahng; There are books on top of the table.)

If you see the word zhè (juh; this) or nà (nah; that) plus a classifier used when a noun comes after the verb, it indicates a definite reference:

Wǒ yào mǎi nà zhāng huà. (waw yaow my nah jahng hwah; I want to buy that painting.)
Describing Adjectives

Adjectives describe nouns — the question is where to put them. The general rule in Chinese is, if the adjective is pronounced with only one syllable, it appears immediately in front of the noun it qualifies. The following are a couple examples:

✔ lǚ chá (lyew chah; green tea)
✔ cháng zhītiáo (chahng jir tyaow; long stick)

If the adjective has two syllables, though, the possessive particle de (duh) comes between it and whatever it’s qualifying:

✔ gānjīng de yīfu (gahn jeeng duh ee foo; clean clothes)
✔ cāozá de wǎnhiu (tsaow dzah duh wahn hway; noisy party)

And if a numeral is followed by a classifier, they both need to go in front of the adjective and what it’s qualifying:

✔ yí jiàn xīn yīfu (ee jyan shin ee foo; a [piece of] new clothing)
✔ sān bēn yōuyīsī de shū (sahn bun yo ee suh duh shoo; three interesting books)

One unique thing about Chinese is that when an adjective is also the predicate, appearing at the end of a sentence, it follows the subject or the topic without needing the verb shì (shir; to be):

✔ Tā de fángzi hěn gānjīng. (tah duh fahng dzuh hun gahn jeeng; His house [is] very clean.)
✔ Nà jiàn yīfu tài jiù. (nah jyan ee foo tye jyo; That piece of clothing [is] too old.)
Chapter 2: Grammar on a Diet: Just the Basics

Verbs

Good news! You never have to worry about conjugating a Chinese verb in your entire life! If you hear someone say Tāmen chī Yídī fàn (tah men chiree dah lee fahn), it could mean “They eat Italian food” just as easily as it could mean “They are eating Italian food.” Table 2-2 lists some common verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chī</td>
<td>chir</td>
<td>to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kàn</td>
<td>kahn</td>
<td>to see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mái</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>to buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mài</td>
<td>my</td>
<td>to sell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rènshī</td>
<td>run shir</td>
<td>to know (a person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shī</td>
<td>shir</td>
<td>to be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yào</td>
<td>yaow</td>
<td>to want/to need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yòu</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>to have</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhīdāo</td>
<td>jir daow</td>
<td>to know (a fact)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zōu lǜ</td>
<td>dzoe loo</td>
<td>to walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuò fàn</td>
<td>dzwaw fahn</td>
<td>to cook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feeling tense? Le, guò, and other aspect markers

Okay, you can relax now. No need to get tense with Chinese because verbs don’t indicate tenses all by themselves. That’s the job of aspect markers. Those are little syllables that indicate whether an action has been completed, is continuing, has just begun, and just about everything in between.
Take the syllable le (luh), for example. It can indicate an action has been completed if it’s used as a suffix to a verb:

✔️ Nǐ mǎi le hēn duō shū. (nee my luh hun dwaw shoo; You bought many books.)

✔️ Tā dàí le tāde yǔsān. (tah dye luh tah duh yew sahn; He brought his umbrella.)

And if you want to turn it into a question, just add méiyōu (maya) at the end. It automatically negates the action completed by le.

✔️ Nǐ mǎi le hēn duō shū méiyōu? (nee my luh hun dwaw shoo maya; Have you bought many books? Or, Did you buy many books?)

✔️ Tā dàí le tāde yǔsān méiyōu? (tah dye luh tah duh yew sahn maya; Did he bring his umbrella?)

Then there’s guò (gwaw). It basically means that something has been done at one point or another even though it’s not happening right now:

✔️ Tā qù guò Méiguó. (ta chyew gwaw may gwaw; He has been to America.)

✔️ Wǒmen chī guò Fāguó cài. (waw mun chir gwaw fah gwaw tsye; We have eaten French food before.)

If an action is happening just as you speak, you use the aspect marker zài (dyeh):

✔️ Wǒmen zài chīfàn. (waw mun dyeh chir fahn; We are eating.)

✔️ Nǐ māma zài zuòfàn. (nee mah mah dyeh dzaw fahn; Your mother is cooking.)

If something is or was happening continually and resulted from something else you did, just add the syllable zhe (juh) to the end of the verb and you can say things like
Chapter 2: Grammar on a Diet: Just the Basics

- Tǎ dàì zhe yī ge huáng màozi. (tah dye juh ee guh hwahng maow dzuh; He’s wearing a yellow hat.)

- Ni chuān zhe yī jiàn piào liàng de chènshān. (nee chwan juh ee jyan pyaow lyaing duh ee foo; You’re wearing a pretty shirt.)

Another way you can use zhe is when you want to indicate two actions occurring at the same time:

Tǎ zuò zhe chī fān. (tah dwaw juh chir fahn; She is/was sitting there eating.)

Coverbs

The coverb bā often appears right after the subject of the sentence, separating it from the direct object, which is always something concrete rather than an abstract idea. It separates the indirect and direct objects.

Instead of having the following sentence pattern:

Subject + Verb + Complement (+ Indirect Object) + Object

You have:

Subject + bā + Object + Verb + Complement (+ Indirect Object)

Here are some examples:

- Wǒ bā shū jiè gěi nǐ. (waw bah shoo jye yee gay nee; I’ll loan you the book.)

- Qīng nǐ bā běn zi ná gěi làoshi. (cheeng nee bah bun dzuh nah gay laow shir; Please give the notebook to the teacher.)

You use the coverb bā (bah) when you want to put the object right up front before you state the verb that tells what you did or will do with the object.
To be or not to be: The verb shì

Be careful not to put the verb shì (shir) in front of an adjective unless you really mean to make an emphatic statement. In the course of normal conversation, you might say Nà zhī bì tài gui (nah jir bee tye gway; That pen [is] too expensive). You wouldn’t say Nà zhī bì shì tái gui (nah jir bee shir tye gway) unless you really meant to say “That pen IS too expensive!” in which case you’d emphasize the word shì when saying it, too.

To negate the verb shì, put the negative prefix bù in front of it. “Shì bù shì?” (shir boo shir; Is it or isn’t it?) and “Zhè bù shì táng cù yú” (jay boo shir tahng tsoo yew; This isn’t sweet and sour fish.) are two examples.

The special verb: Yǒu (to have)

Do you yǒu (yo) a computer? No?! Too bad. Everyone else seems to have one these days. How about a Ferrari? Do you yǒu one of those? If not, welcome to the club. People who have lots of things use the word yǒu pretty often. It means “to have.”

✔ Wǒ yǒu yí wàn kuài qián. (waw yo ee wahn kwye chyan; I have $10,000.)

✔ Wǒ yǒu sān gè fáng zì — yí ge zài ōu zhōu, yí ge zài Yāzhōu, yí ge zài Méiguó. (waw yo sahn guh fahng dzuh — ee guh dzye oh joe, ee guh dzye yah joe, ee guh dzye may gwaw; I have three homes — one in Europe, one in Asia, and one in America.)

Another way yǒu can be translated is “there is” or “there are”:

✔ Yǒu hěn duō hái zi. (yo hun dwaw hi dzuh; There are many children.) As opposed to: Wǒ yǒu hěn duō hái zi. (waw yo hun dwaw hi dzuh; I have many children.)

✔ Shūzhūoshàng yǒu wǔ zhāng zhī. (shoo jwaw shahng yo woo jaing jir; There are five pieces of paper on the desk.)
To negate the verb **yǒu**, you can’t use the usual negative prefix **bù**. Instead, you must use another term indicating negation, **méi**:

- **Méiyǒu hěn duō háizi.** *(maw oh dun dwaw hi dzuhh; There aren’t many children.)*
- **Shūzhuōshàng méiyǒu wǔ zhāng zhǐ.** *(shoe jwaw shahng may yo woo jahng jir; There aren’t five pieces of paper on the desk.)*

**Asking for what you want:**

**The verb yào**

**Yào** *(yaow)* is one of the coolest verbs in Chinese. When you say it, you usually get what you want. In fact, the mere mention of the word **yào** means that you want something.

- **Wǒ yào yì bēi kāfēi.** *(waw yaow ee bay kah fay; I want a cup of coffee.)*
- **Wǒ yào gēn nǐ yīqǐ qù kàn diànyǐng.** *(waw yaow gun nee ee chee chyew kahn dyan yeeng; I want to go to the movies with you.)*

You can also give someone an order with the verb **yào**, but only if you use it with a second-person pronoun:

- **Nǐ yào xiāoxī!** *(nee yaow shyaow sheen; You should be careful!)*
- **Nǐ yào xī shǒu.** *(nee yaow she shou; You need to wash your hands.)*

**Advocating Adverbs**

Adverbs serve to modify verbs or adjectives and always appear in front of them. The most common ones you’ll find in Chinese are **hěn** *(hun; very)* and **yě** *(yeah; also).*
If you want to say that something isn’t just hāo (how; good), but that it’s very good, you say it’s hěn hāo (hun how; very good). If your friend wants to then put his two cents in and say that something else is also really good, he’d say “Zhèige yě hěn hāo” (Jay guh yeah hun how; This is also very good.) because yě always comes before hěn.

The adverb yě always comes not only before the adverb hěn but also before the negative prefix bù.

**Bù and Méiyǒu: Total Negation**

Boo! Did I scare you? Don’t worry. I’m just being negative in Chinese. That’s right, the word bù is pronounced the same way a ghost might say it (boo) and is often spoken with the same intensity.

Bù can negate something you’ve done in the past or the present (or at least indicate you don’t generally do it these days), and it can also help negate something in the future:

- Tā xiǎo de shíhòu bù xīhuān chǐ shūcài. (tah shyaow duh shir ho boo she hwahn chir shooye; When he was young, he didn’t like to eat vegetables.)
- Wǒ búyào chàng gē. (waw boo yaow chahng guh; I don’t want to sing.)
- Wǒ bú huà huàr. (waw boo hwah hwar; I don’t paint.)
- Diànyīngyuàn xīngqīliù bù kāimén. (dyan yeeng ywan sheeng chee lyo boo kye mun; The movie theater isn’t open on Saturday.)

The negative prefix bù is usually spoken with a fourth (falling) tone. However, when it precedes a syllable with another fourth tone, it becomes a second (rising) tone instead, as in such word as búqū (boo chyew; won’t/didn’t/
doesn’t go) or **búyào** (booy ao; don’t/ didn’t/won’t want). (For more about tones, see Chapter 1.)

Remember that when Chinese people speak quickly, they may leave out the second syllable in a few bisyllabic verbs and even a few auxiliary verbs like in the “verb-bù-verb” pattern. So, instead of saying “Tā xǐhuān bùxǐhuān hé jiǔ?” (tah she hwan boo she hwan huh jyo; Does he or she like to drink wine?), you may hear someone say “Tā xī bùxǐhuān hē jiǔ?” (tah she boo she hwan huh jyo’e.).

**Méiyōu** is another negative prefix that also goes before a verb. It refers only to the past, though, and means either something didn’t happen or at least didn’t happen on a particular occasion.

✔️ Wō méiyōu kàn nèi bù diànyīng. (waw mayo kahn nay boo dyan yeeng; I didn’t see that movie.)

✔️ Zuótiān méiyōu xiàyǔ. (dzwaw tyan mayo shyah yew; It didn’t rain yesterday.)

If the aspect marker **guò** is at the end of the verb **méiyōu**, it means it never happened (up until now) in the past. By the way, you’ll sometimes find that **méiyōu** is shortened just to **méi**:

✔️ Wō méi qū guò Fāguó. (waw may chyew gwaw fah gwaw; I’ve never been to France.)

✔️ Wō méi chī guò Yīndū cài. (wo may chir gwaw een doo tsye; I’ve never eaten Indian food.)

**Getting Possessive with the Particle De**

The particle **de** is ubiquitous in Chinese. Wherever you turn, there it is. **Wōde tiān!** (waw duh tyan; My goodness!) Using it is easy. All you have to do is
attach it to the end of the pronoun, such as nǐ de chē (nee duh chuh; your car) or other modifier, such as tā gōngsī de jīnglǐ (tah goong suh duh jeeng lee; his company’s manager), and — voilà — it indicates possession.

Nǐde diànnǎo yǒu méiyǒu yǐntèwǎng? (nee duh dyan now yo mayo een tuh wahng; Does your computer have Internet?)

Kěxī méiyǒu. Nǐde ne? (kuh she mayo. nee duh nuh; Unfortunately not. How about yours?)

The particle de acts as an apostrophe “s” (‘s) in English when it’s not attached to a pronoun. It also makes the process of modification exactly the opposite of the French possessive “de” or the English “of,” with which you may be tempted to compare it.

**Asking Questions**

You can ask questions in Chinese in a couple easy ways. You may be so curious about the world around you that you ask tons of questions after you know how.

**The question particle “ma”**

By far the easiest way to ask a question is simply to end any given statement with a ma. That automatically makes it into a question. For example, Tā chīfān (tah chir fahn; He’s eating/he eats.) becomes Tā chīfān ma? (tah chir fahn mah; Is he/does he eat?). Nǐ shuō Zhōngwén (nee shuow joong one; You speak Chinese.) becomes Nǐ shuō Zhōngwén ma? (nee shuow joong one mah; Do you speak Chinese?).

**Using bù to ask a question**

The second way you can ask a question is just to repeat the verb in its negative form. The English equivalent would be to say something like “Do you
eat, not eat?" for example. You can use this format only for a yes or no question, though. For example:

✔️ Nǐ shì bùshì Zhōngguórén? (nee shir boo shir joong gwaw run; Are you Chinese?)
✔️ Tā yào bùyuàn hái zi? (tah yaow boo yaow hi dzuh; Does he want children?)
✔️ Tāmén xīhuān bùxīhuān chī Zhōngguó cài? (tah mun she hwahn boo she hwahn chir joong gwaw tye; Do they like to eat Chinese food?)

**Interrogative pronouns**

The last way of asking questions in Chinese is to use interrogative pronouns. The following are pronouns that act as questions in Chinese:

✔️ nǎ (nah + classifier; which)
✔️ nār (nar; where)
✔️ shéi (shay; who/whom)
✔️ shéi de (shay duh; whose)
✔️ shénme (shummuh; what)
✔️ shénme difāng (shummuh dee fahng; where)

**WARNING!**

Don’t confuse nǎ with nār. That one extra letter makes the difference between saying “which” (nǎ) and “where” (nār).

Figuring out where such interrogative pronouns should go in any given sentence is easy. Just put them wherever the answer would be found. For example:

✔️ Question: Nǐ shì shéi? (nee shir shay; Who are you?)
✔️ Answer: Nǐ shì wǒ péngyǒu. (nee shir waw puhng yo; You are my friend.)
✔️ Question: Tāde nūpéngyǒu zài nār? (tah duh nyew puhng yo dzye nar; Where is his girlfriend?)
✔️ Answer: Tāde nūpéngyǒu zài jiālǐ. (tah duh nyew puhng yo dzye fyah lee; His girlfriend is at home.)
This rule also goes for the verb-\texttt{bù}-verb pattern. All you have to do to answer that type of question is omit either the positive verb or the negative prefix and verb following it:

\textbf{Question}: \texttt{Nǐ hǎo bù hǎo?} (\textit{nee how boo how}; How are you? \textit{Literally: Are you good or not good?})

\textbf{Answer}: \texttt{Wǒ hǎo}. (\textit{waw how}; I'm okay.). Or \texttt{Wǒ bùhǎo}. (\textit{waw boo how}; I'm not okay.).
Chapter 3

Numerical Gumbo: Counting of All Kinds

In This Chapter
► Counting to 10
► Telling time
► Ticking off the calendar
► Spending money

Numbers make the world go round, or is that money? Well, it’s probably both. This chapter gives you a rundown on number and money phrases and also shows you how to tell time and navigate the months of the year.

1, 2, 3: Cardinal Numbers

Cardinal numbers are important when talking about amounts, telling time, or exchanging money. Table 3-1 lists numbers from 1 to 19.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lǐng</td>
<td>leeng</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yī</td>
<td>ee</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èr</td>
<td>are</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sān</td>
<td>sahn</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sì</td>
<td>suh</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wǔ</td>
<td>woo</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liù</td>
<td>lyo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qī</td>
<td>chee</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bā</td>
<td>bah</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiǔ</td>
<td>jyeoe</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shí</td>
<td>shir</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìyī</td>
<td>shir ee</td>
<td>11 (literally 10 + 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shì’èr</td>
<td>shir are</td>
<td>12 (literally 10 + 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìsān</td>
<td>shir sahn</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìsì</td>
<td>shir suh</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìwǔ</td>
<td>shir woo</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìliù</td>
<td>shir lyo</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìqī</td>
<td>shir chee</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìbā</td>
<td>shir bah</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shìjiù</td>
<td>shir jyeoe</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the number “two” comes before a classifier (see Chapter 2), use the word liǎng instead of èr. So you would say that you have liǎng běn shū (yahng bun shoo; two books) instead of èr běn shū (are bun shoo).
When you get to 20, you have to literally think “two tens” — plus whatever single digit you want to add to that up until nine for 21 through 29, as shown in Table 3-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>èrshí</td>
<td>are shir</td>
<td>20 (literally two tens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshi'yī</td>
<td>are shir ee</td>
<td>21 (two tens plus one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshi'èr</td>
<td>are shir are</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshísān</td>
<td>are shir sahn</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshísì</td>
<td>are shir suh</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshíwǔ</td>
<td>are shir woo</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshíliù</td>
<td>are shir lyo</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshíqǐ</td>
<td>are shir chee</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshíbā</td>
<td>are shir bah</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èrshíjiǔ</td>
<td>are shir jyoe</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same basic idea goes for sānshí (sahn shir; thirty; literally: three tens), sìshí (suh shir; forty), wǔshí (woo shir; fifty), liúshí (lyo shir; sixty), qīshí (chee shir; seventy), bāshí (bah shir; eighty) and jiǔshí (jyoe shir; ninety). What could be easier?

After the number 99, you can no longer count by tens.

- 100 is yì bāi (ee bye).
- 1,000 is yì qiān (ee chyan).
- 10,000 is yì wàn (ee wahn; literally: one unit of ten thousand).
- 100,000 is shí wàn (shir wahn; literally: ten units of ten thousand).
1,000,000 is  yi bāi wàn (ee bye wahn; literally: one hundred units of 10,000).

100,000,000 is yi yì (ee ee; one hundred million).

Chinese people count all the way up to wàn (wahn; ten thousand) and then repeat up to yi (ee; a hundred million), unlike in English, where counting goes up to a thousand before being repeated all the way to a million.

Numbers are represented with the higher units of value first. So the number 387 is săn bāi bā shí qī (sahn bye bah shir chee). The number 15,492 is yí wàn wǔ qiān sì bāi jiǔ shí èr (ee wahn woo chyan suh bye jvoe shir are).

The number 1 (yī) changes its tone from its first (high) to the fourth (falling) tone when followed by a first (high) tone as in yī qiān (ee chyan; 1,000), by a second (rising) tone as in yī nián (ee nyan; one year), and by a third (low dipping) tone as in yī bāi (ee bye; 100). (See Chapter 1 for a review of the four tones.) And it changes to the second (rising) tone when followed by a fourth (falling) tone as in yí wàn (ee wahn; 10,000). It remains its original first tone mark only when people count numbers: one, two, three, and so on.

If you want to add a half to anything, the word for half is bān (bahn), and it can either come at the beginning, such as in bān bēi kēlè (bahn bay kuh luh; a half a glass of cola), or after a number and classifier but before the object, to mean “and a half,” such as in yī ge bān xīngqī (ee guh bahn sheeng chee; a week and a half).

Discovering Ordinal Numbers

Ever tell someone to make a right at the second jiāotōng dēng (jyaow toong dung; traffic light) or that your house is the third one on the left? Creating ordinal numbers in Chinese is quite easy. Just put dì in front of the numeral:
Chapter 3: Numerical Gumbo: Counting of All Kinds

✓ di yī (dee ee; first)
✓ di èr (dee are; second)
✓ di sān (dee sahn; third)
✓ di sì (dee suh; fourth)
✓ di wǔ (dee woo; fifth)
✓ di liù (dee lyoe; sixth)
✓ di qī (dee chee; seventh)
✓ di bā (dee bah; eighth)
✓ di jiǔ (dee jyoe; ninth)
✓ di shí (dee shir; tenth)

You may need to use these examples to give directions:

✓ di yī tiáo lù (dee ee tyaw loo; the first street)
✓ di èr ge fángzǐ (dee are guh fahng dzuh; the second house)
✓ zuǒ biān di bā ge fángzǐ (dzwaw byan dee bah guh fahng dzuh; the eighth house on the left)

If a noun follows the ordinal number, a classifier needs to go in between them, such as di bā ge xuéshēng (dee bah guh shweh shuhng; the eighth student) or di yī ge hái zǐ (dee ee guy hi dzuh; the first child).

Telling Time

All you have to do to find out the shíjiān (shir jyan; time) is take a peek at your shōubiāo (show byaow; watch) or look at the zhōng (joong; clock) on the wall.

You can indicate the hour by saying 3-diān or 3-diān zhōng. Diān (dyań) means “hour,” but it’s also a classifier, and zhōng (joong) means “clock.” Feel free to use either to say what time it is. (Check out Table 3-3.)
### Table 3-3: Telling Time in Chinese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Phrase</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-dián zhōng</td>
<td>ee dyan joong</td>
<td>1 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-dián zhōng</td>
<td>lyahng dyan joong</td>
<td>2 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-dián zhōng</td>
<td>sahn dyan joong</td>
<td>3 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-dián zhōng</td>
<td>suh dyan joong</td>
<td>4 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-dián zhōng</td>
<td>woo dyan joong</td>
<td>5 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-dián zhōng</td>
<td>lyo dyan joong</td>
<td>6 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-dián zhōng</td>
<td>chee dyan joong</td>
<td>7 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-dián zhōng</td>
<td>bah dyan joong</td>
<td>8 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-dián zhōng</td>
<td>jyo dyan joong</td>
<td>9 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-dián zhōng</td>
<td>shir dyan joong</td>
<td>10 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-dián zhōng</td>
<td>shir ee dyan joong</td>
<td>11 o’clock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-dián zhōng</td>
<td>shir are dyan joong</td>
<td>12 o’clock</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When mentioning 12 o’clock, be careful! The way to say noon is simply zhōngwǔ (joong woo), and the way to say midnight is bānyè (bahn yeh).

The Chinese are very precise when they tell time. You can’t just say 3-dián zhōng (sahn dyan joong) when you want to say 3 o’clock; you need to add what part of the day or night you mean:

- qīngzǎo (cheeng dzaow; midnight to dawn)
- zǎoshàng (dzaow shahng; 6 a.m. to noon)
- xiàwǔ (shyah woo; noon to 6 p.m.)
- wǎnshàng (wahn shahng; 6 p.m. to midnight)

The segment of the day comes before the actual time itself in Chinese:
Chapter 3: Numerical Gumbo: Counting of All Kinds

✔ wǎnshàng qī diǎn zhòng (wahn shahng chee dyan foong; 7 p.m.)
✔ xiàwǔ sān diǎn bàn (shyah woo sahn dyan bahn; 3:30 p.m.)
✔ qǐngzǎo yī diǎn yì kē (cheeng dzaow ee dyan ee kuh; 1:15 a.m.)
✔ zāoshàng bā diǎn ěrshíwǔ fēn (dzaow shahng bah dyan are shir woo fun; 8:25 a.m.)

If you want to indicate half an hour, just add bàn (bahn; half) after the hour:

✔ 3-diǎn bàn (sahn dyan bahn; 3:30)
✔ 4-diǎn bàn (suh dyan bahn; 4:30)
✔ 11-diǎn bàn (shir ee dyan bahn; 11:30)

Do you want to indicate a quarter of an hour or three quarters of an hour? Just use the phrases yī kē (ee kuh) and sān kē (sahn kuh) after the hour:

✔ 2-diǎn yī kē (lyahng dyan ee kuh; 2:15)
✔ 4-diǎn yī kē (suh dyan ee kuh; 4:15)
✔ 5-diǎn sān kē (woo dyan sahn kuh; 5:45)
✔ 7-diǎn sān kē (chee dyan sahn kuh; 7:45)

Here are some other examples of alternative ways to indicate the time:

✔ chà shí fēn wǔ diǎn (chah shir fun woo dyan; 10 to 5)
✔ wǔ diǎn chà shí fēn (woo dyan chah shir fun; 10 to 5)
✔ sì diǎn wǔshí fēn (suh dyan woo shir fun; 4:50)
✔ chà yī kē qī diǎn (chah ee kuh chee dyan; a quarter to 7)
✔ qī diǎn chà yī kē (chee dyan chah ee kuh; a quarter to 7)
✔ liù diǎn sān kē (lyo dyan sahn kuh; 6:45)
✔ liù diǎn sīshíwǔ fēn (lyo dyan suh shir woo fun; 6:45)
When talking about time, you may prefer to say before or after a certain hour. To do so, you use either \textit{yìqián} (\textit{ee} \textit{chyan}; before) or \textit{yìhòu} (\textit{ee} \textit{ho}; after). Here are some examples:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{xiàwù 3-diān zhōng yìqián} (\textit{shyah} \textit{woo} \textit{sahn dyan joong \textit{ee} \textit{chyan}; before 3:00 p.m.})
  \item \textbf{qīngzǎo 5-diān bān yìhòu} (\textit{cheeng} \textit{dzaow} \textit{woo dyan bahn \textit{ee} \textit{ho}; after 5:30 a.m.})
\end{itemize}

\section*{Monday, Tuesday: Weekdays}

Although Chinese people recognize seven days in the week just as Americans do, the Chinese week begins on \textit{xīngqìyī} (\textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{ee}; Monday) and ends on \textit{xīngqìtiān} (\textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{tyan}; Sunday). See Table 3-4 for a list of days of the week.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\hline
\textbf{Chinese Word} & \textbf{Pronunciation} & \textbf{English Word} \\
\hline
\textit{xīngqìyī} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{ee} & Monday \\
\textit{xīngqìèr} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{are} & Tuesday \\
\textit{xīngqìsān} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{sahn} & Wednesday \\
\textit{xīngqìsì} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{suh} & Thursday \\
\textit{xīngqìwù} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{woo} & Friday \\
\textit{xīngqìlìù} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{lyo} & Saturday \\
\textit{xīngqìtiān} & \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{tyan} & Sunday \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Days of the Week}
\end{table}

So, \textit{jǐntiān xīngqìjī}? (\textit{jin} \textit{tyan} \textit{sheeng} \textit{chee} \textit{jee}; What day is it today?) Where does today fit in your weekly routine?
Jīntiān xīngqī'èr. (Jin tyan sheeng chee are; Today is Tuesday.)

Wō xīngqīyī dào xīngqīwǔ gōngzuò. (Waw sheeng chee ee daww sheeng chee woo goong dzwaw; I work from Monday to Friday.)

Wōmen měige xīngqīyī kāihui. (Waw mun may guh sheeng chee ee kye hway; We have meetings every Monday.)

Xiàge xīngqīsān shì wǒde shēngrì. (Shyah guh sheeng chee sahn shir waw duh shung ir; Next Wednesday is my birthday.)

**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hòutiān</th>
<th>ho tyan</th>
<th>the day after tomorrow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jīntiān</td>
<td>jin tyan</td>
<td>today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>míngtiān</td>
<td>meeng tyan</td>
<td>tomorrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiántiān</td>
<td>chyan tyan</td>
<td>the day before yesterday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shàngge xīngqī</td>
<td>shahng guh</td>
<td>last week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sheeng chee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàge xīngqī</td>
<td>shyah guh</td>
<td>next week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sheeng chee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhèige xīngqī</td>
<td>jay guh</td>
<td>this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sheeng chee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuótiān</td>
<td>dzwaw tyan</td>
<td>yesterday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the Calendar and Dates

To ask what today’s date is, you simply say Jīntiān jīyuè jīhào? (jin tyan jee yweh jee how; literally: Today is what month and what day?)

When answering, remember that the larger unit of the month always comes before the smaller unit of the date in Chinese:

✔ Yīyuè èr hào (ee yweh are how; January 2nd)
✔ Sānyuè sì hào (sahn yweh suh how; March 4th)
✔ Shí’èryuè sānshí hào (shir are yweh sahn shir how; December 30th)

I list the months of the year in Table 3-5 and the seasons in Table 3-6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-5</th>
<th>Months of the Year and Other Pertinent Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Word or Phrase</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yīyuè</td>
<td>ee yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>èryuè</td>
<td>are yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sānyuè</td>
<td>sahn yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sìyuè</td>
<td>suh yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wūyuè</td>
<td>woo yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liūyuè</td>
<td>lyo yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qūyuè</td>
<td>chee yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bāyuè</td>
<td>bah yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiūyuè</td>
<td>jyo yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shíyuè</td>
<td>shir yweh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shíyīyuè</td>
<td>shir ee yweh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Numerical Gumbo: Counting of All Kinds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word or Phrase</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word or Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shí'èryuè</td>
<td>shir are yweh</td>
<td>December</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhèige yuè</td>
<td>jay guh yweh</td>
<td>this month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shàngge yuè</td>
<td>shahng guh yweh</td>
<td>last month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàge yuè</td>
<td>shyah guh yweh</td>
<td>next month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shèngrì</td>
<td>shung er</td>
<td>birthday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-6  
Seasonal Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word or Phrase</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word or Phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sì jì</td>
<td>suh jee</td>
<td>The four seasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōngjì</td>
<td>doong jee</td>
<td>winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chūnjì</td>
<td>chwun jee</td>
<td>spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàjì</td>
<td>shyah jee</td>
<td>summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiūjì</td>
<td>chyo jee</td>
<td>fall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though you say each month by adding the number of the month in front of the word yuè (which means “month”), if you add the classifier ge (guh) in between the number and the word yuè, you say “one month,” “two months,” and so on. For example, bā yuè (bah yweh) means August (which is the 8th month), but bā ge yuè (bah guh yweh) means eight months.

You can’t check out the months of the year without first looking at the holidays. First you celebrate
Chinese Phrases For Dummies

- Xinian (shin nyan; New Year's Day; also known as Yuandan; ywan dah) on Yi Yue Yi Hao (ee yweh ee how; January 1st).
- Chun Jie (chun jye; Spring Festival, or Chinese New Year). This a three-day celebration coinciding with the lunar new year. Every year the dates for Chun Jie change because it follows the Yinli (yeen lee; lunar calendar) rather than the Yangli (yahng lee; solar calendar). Chun Jie always occurs sometime in January or February.

If you travel to China Jin Nian (jin nyan; this year) during 2005, you arrive during Ji Nian (jee nyan; the Year of the Rooster). Want to travel in the coming years instead?

- 2006: gou nian (go nyan); Year of the Dog
- 2007: zhu nian (joo nyan); Year of the Pig
- 2008: shu nian (shoo nyan); Year of the Rat

The Year of the Rat is actually the beginning of a whole new 12-year cycle of animals. Table 3-7 shows all the animals of the Chinese zodiac. Just as in Western astrology, each of the Chinese animals represents a different personality type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shu</td>
<td>shoo</td>
<td>rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niu</td>
<td>nyo</td>
<td>ox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hu</td>
<td>hoo</td>
<td>tiger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuzi</td>
<td>too duh</td>
<td>rabbit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long</td>
<td>loong</td>
<td>dragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she</td>
<td>shuh</td>
<td>snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Word</td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>English Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mǎ</td>
<td>mah</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáng</td>
<td>yahng</td>
<td>goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hóu</td>
<td>ho</td>
<td>monkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jī</td>
<td>jee</td>
<td>rooster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gǒu</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhū</td>
<td>joo</td>
<td>pig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In mainland China, Láodòng jié (laow doong jye; Labor Day) is celebrated on wǔ yuè yī hào (woo yweh ee how; May 1st), and Guó qíng jié (gwaw cheeng jye; National Day) is celebrated on shí yuè yī hào (shir yweh ee how; October 1st) in commemoration of the day Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party declared the founding of the Zhōnghuá rénmín gònghé guó (joong huah run meen goong huh gwaw; the People’s Republic of China) in 1949. In Taiwan, Guó qíng jié is celebrated on shí yuè shí hào (shir yweh shir how; October 10th) to commemorate the day in 1911 when China’s long dynastic history ended and a new era of the Zhōnghuá mín guó (joong huah meen gwaw; the Republic of China) began, under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

In Taiwan, you often see years written out that seem to be 11 years short of what you think is correct. That’s because the founding of the Republic of China in 1911 is considered the base line for all future years. So 1921 is listed as mín guó shí nián (meen gwaw shir nyan; “meen gwaw” is the abbreviation for Zhōnghuá mín guó [joong huah meen gwaw], or the Republic of China, and “shir nyan,” meaning 10 years, refers to 10 years following the founding of the Republic of China). The year 2005 is noted as mín guó jiǔshí sì nián (meen gwaw jyo shir suh nyan; 94 years after the establishment of the Republic of China).
Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hòunián</td>
<td>ho nyan</td>
<td>the year after next</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jìnnián</td>
<td>jin nyan</td>
<td>this year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>měinián</td>
<td>may nyan</td>
<td>every year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>míngnián</td>
<td>meeng nyan</td>
<td>next year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shàngge xīngqìsì</td>
<td>shahng guh</td>
<td>last Thursday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sheeng chee suh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiánnián</td>
<td>chyan nyan</td>
<td>the year before last</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qùnlán</td>
<td>chyew nyan</td>
<td>last year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàng xīngqìyī</td>
<td>shyah guh</td>
<td>next Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sheeng chee ee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhù nǐ shēngrì kuàilè!</td>
<td>joo nee shung ir kwye luh</td>
<td>Happy Birthday!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Money, Money, Money

Qián (chyan; money) makes the world go around. In this section, pick up important words and phrases for acquiring and spending money.

The basic elements of all Chinese currency are the yuán (colloquially referred to as a kuài), which you can think of as a dollar, the jiāo (colloquially referred to as the máo), which is the equivalent of a dime, and the fēn (fun), which is equivalent to the penny.
Want to know how much money I have right now in my pocket, Nosy? Why not just ask me?

- **Ni yǒu jǐ kuài qián?** (*nee yoy jee kway chyan*; How much money do you have?)
  
  Use this phrase if you assume the amount is less than $10.

- **Ni yǒu duōshǎo qián?** (*nee yoy dwaw shaw chyan*; How much money do you have?)
  
  Use this phrase if you assume the amount is greater than $10.

### Making and exchanging money

You can always **huàn qián** (*hwahn chyan*; exchange money) the minute you arrive at the **feǐjì chǎng** (*fay jee chahng*; airport) at the many **duìhuàn chū** (*duay hwahn choo*; exchange bureaus), or you can wait until you get to a major **yìngháng** (*een hahng*; bank) or check in at your **lǐguǎn** (*lyew gwahn*; hotel).

The following phrases come in handy when you’re ready to **huàn qián**:

- **Qǐng wèn, zài nǎr kěyǐ huàn qián?** (*cheeng one, dzye nar kuh yee hwahn chyan*; Excuse me, where can I change money?)

- **Qǐng wèn, yīngháng zài nǎr?** (*cheeng one, eeng hahng dzye nar*; Excuse me, where is the bank?)

- **Jīntiān de duìhuàn lǜ shènmé?** (*jin tyan duhh dwaw hwahn lyew shir shhumh*; What’s today’s exchange rate?)

- **Qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ sì zhāng wūshí yuán de.** (*cheeng nee gay waw suh jahng woo shir ywan duh*; Please give me four 50-yuan bills.)

- **Wǒ yào huàn yī bāi měiyuán.** (*waw yaow hwahn ee bye may ywan*; I’d like to change $100.)

- **Nīmén shòu duōshǎo qián shōuxìfèi?** (*nee mun show dwaw shaw chyan shewn shyew fay*; How much commission do you charge?)
# Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>朋友 (chūnàyuán)</td>
<td>choo nah ywan</td>
<td>cashier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>交换汇率 (duīhuàn lǜ)</td>
<td>dway hwahn lyew</td>
<td>exchange rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>交换柜台 (duīhuànchù)</td>
<td>dway hwahn choo</td>
<td>exchange counter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>交换 (huàn)</td>
<td>hwahn</td>
<td>to exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>交换款项 (huàn qián)</td>
<td>hwahn chyan</td>
<td>to exchange money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>美元 (měiyuán)</td>
<td>may ywan</td>
<td>U.S. dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>清给我你的护照 (Qǐng gěi wǒ kànrkàn nǐde hùzhào.)</td>
<td>Cheeng gay waw kahn kahn nee duh hoo jaow.</td>
<td>Please show me your passport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>人民币 (rénmínbì)</td>
<td>run meen bee</td>
<td>Chinese dollar (mainland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>手续费 (shǒuxùfèi)</td>
<td>show shyew fay</td>
<td>commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>外币 (wàibì)</td>
<td>why bee</td>
<td>foreign currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>新台币 (xīn táibì)</td>
<td>shin tye bee</td>
<td>New Taiwan dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一美元 (yì měiyuán)</td>
<td>ee may ywan</td>
<td>one U.S. dollar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cashing checks and checking your cash

When you talk about how much something costs, you put the numerical value before the word for bill or coin. For example, you can call a dollar **yì kuài** (ee kwy; one dollar) or **sān kuài** (sahn kwy; three dollars). You translate 10 cents, literally, as one 10-cent coin — **yì máo** (ee maow) — or 30 cents as, literally, three 10-cent coins — **sān máo** (sahn maow).

Here’s how you speak of increasing amounts of money. You mention the larger units before the smaller units, just like in English:

✔ **sān kuài** (sahn kwy; $3)
✔ **sān kuài yì máo** (sahn kwy; ee maow; $3.10)
✔ **sān kuài yì máo wǔ** (sahn kwy; ee maow woo; $3.15)
✔ Qing wèn, zhè jiàn yīfu duōshāo qián? (Cheeng one, jay jyan ee foo dwaw shaow chyan; Excuse me, how much is this piece of clothing?)
✔ **Nǐmén shōu bù shōu zhīpiào?** (nee mun show boo show jir pyaow; Do you take checks?)
✔ **Nǐmén shōu bù shōu xīnyòng kā?** (nee mun show boo show sheen yoong kah; Do you accept credit cards?)

---

**Words to Know**

- **dà piào zi** = dah pyaow dzuh = large bills
- **fù zhàng** = foo jahng = to pay a bill

*continued*
Words to Know (continued)

huàn kái  hwahn kye  to break (a large bill)
kǒudài  ko dye  pocket
língqián  leeng chyan  small change
lǔxíng zhīpiào  lyew sheeng jir pyaow  traveler’s checks
qiánbāo  chyan baow  wallet; purse
zhīpiào  jir pyaow  checks
zhīpiào bù  jir pyaow boo  checkbook

Doing your banking

If you plan on staying in Asia for an extended time or you want to continue doing business with a Chinese company, you may want to open a huóqi zhànghū (hwaw chee jahng hoo; checking account) where you can both cún qián (tswun chyan; deposit money) and qū qián (chyew chyan; withdraw money). If you stay long enough, consider opening a dingqī cúnkuān hùtōu (deeng chee tswun kwan hoo toe; savings account) so you can start earning some lixi (lee she; interest). Earning interest sure beats stuffing dà piàozì (dah pyaow dzuh; large bills) under your chuáng diàn (chwahng dyan; mattress) for years.

How about trying to make your money work for you by investing in one of the following:

✔ chǔxù cúnkuān (chew shyew tswun kwan; Certificate of Deposit; CD)
✔ guókù quàn (gwaw koo chwan; treasury bond)
Chapter 3: Numerical Gumbo: Counting of All Kinds

- güpiào (goo pyaow; stock)
- hǔzhù jījīn (hoo joo jee jeen; mutual fund)
- tàotóu jījīn (taow toe jee jeen; hedge fund)
- zhàiquàn (jye chwan; bond)

If you plan to cash some checks along with your deposits, here are a couple useful phrases to know:

- Wǒ yào duìxiàn zhèi zhǎng zhǐpiào. (waw yaow dway shyan jay jahng jir pyaow; I’d like to cash this check.)
- Bèimiàn qīan zì xiě zài nǎr? (bay myan chyan dzuh shye dzye nar; Where shall I endorse it?)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chūnà chuāngkǒu</td>
<td>choo nah chwahng ko</td>
<td>cashier's window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chūnàyuán</td>
<td>choo nah ywan</td>
<td>bank teller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cúnkuǎn</td>
<td>tswun kwan</td>
<td>savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cún qián</td>
<td>tswun chyan</td>
<td>to deposit money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kǎi yīge cúnkuǎn</td>
<td>kye ee guh tswun kwan</td>
<td>to open a savings account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hùtóu</td>
<td>kwan hoo toe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qǔ qián</td>
<td>chyew chyan</td>
<td>to withdraw money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yíngháng</td>
<td>eeng hahng</td>
<td>bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xìàojīn</td>
<td>shyan jeen</td>
<td>cash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accessing an ATM machine

Zìdòng tíkuānǐ (dzuh doong tee kwan jee; ATM machines) are truly ubiquitous these days. In order to use one, you need a zìdòng tíkuān kā (dzuh doong tee kwan kah; ATM card) to find out your jiéyǔ (jyeih yew; account balance), to cún qián (tswn chyan; deposit money), or to qū qián (chyew chyan; withdraw money). And you definitely need to know your mìmā (mee mah; PIN number); otherwise, the zìdòng tíkuānǐ is useless.

And one more thing: Make sure you don’t let anyone else know your mìmā. It’s your mìmì (mee mee; secret).

Words to Know

| tóngyì | toong ee | to agree |
| yígòng | ee goong | altogether |
| yīnggāi | eeng guy | should |
| yīnwèi . . . suǒyǐ | een way . . . swaw yee | because . . . therefore |
| zhàngdān | jahng dahn | bill |
Chapter 4

Making New Friends and Enjoying Small Talk

In This Chapter
- Introducing yourself and others
- Using question words
- Greeting and chatting with family, friends, and colleagues

Nǐ hǎo! (nee how; Hello!; How are you?) These two words are probably the most important you need to know to start a conversation.

In this chapter, I show you how to greet people, introduce yourself, and make small talk.

Making Introductions

Nothing beats making new friends at a wǎnhuí (wahn hway; party), a xīn gōngzuò (sheen goong dzwaw; new job), on the dìtiē (dee tyeh; subway), or just zài lùshàng (dzye loo shahng; on the street). This section gives you a head start in making a good first impression.
**Acquainting yourself**

You have options other than **ni hǎo** (*nee how*; hi; how are you) when you first meet someone, such as

- **Hěn gāoxìng jiàndào nǐ.** (*hun gaow sheeng jyan daow nee*; Glad to meet you.)
- **Wǒ hěn róngxìng.** (*waw hun roong sheeng*; I'm honored to meet you.)

Or if you want a time-specific greeting, try

- **zǎo** (*dzaow*; good morning)
- **zǎo ān** (*dzaow ahn*; good morning; literally: early peace)
- **wǎn ān** (*wahn ahn*; good night)

Don’t know what to say after the first **ni hǎo**? The following are a few examples of common opening lines to get you started:

- **Qīng ràng wǒ jièshào wǒ zìjǐ.** (*cheeng rahng waw jye shao waw dzuh jee*; Please let me introduce myself.)
- **Wǒ jiào ______. Nǐ ne?** (*waw jyoaw ____ nee ruh*; My name is _____. What’s your?)
- **Nǐ jiào shénme mínghuǐ?** (*nee jyoaw shhummu dzuh*; What’s your name?)
- **Wǒ shì Měiguó rén.** (*waw shir may gwaw run*; I’m an American.)

**Introducing your friends and family**

To introduce your friends to each other, say “**Qīng ràng wǒ jièshào wǒde pénghyōu, Carl.**” (*cheeng rahng waw jye shao waw duh puhng yo, Carl*; May I please introduce my friend, Carl.) In addition to introducing your **pénghyōu** (*puhng yo*; friend), you can also introduce these important people:
Chapter 4: Enjoying Small Talk

- àirén (eye run; spouse — used mostly in mainland China [as opposed to Taiwan])
- bàba (bah bah; father)
- érzi (are zuh; son)
- fūmū (foo moo; parents)
- mǔqin (moo cheek; mother)
- fūqin (foo cheek; father)
- háizi (hi zuh; children)
- läobān (laow bahn; boss)
- läoshi (laow shir; teacher)
- māma (mah mah; mother)
- nán péngyōu (nahn puhng yo; boyfriend)
- nū’ér (nyew are; daughter)
- nūpéngyōu (nyew pung yo; girlfriend)
- qīzi (chee zuh; wife)
- sūnnū (swun nyew; granddaughter)
- sūnzi (swun zuh; grandson)
- tāitāi (tye tye; wife — used mostly in Taiwan)
- tóngshi (toong shir; colleague)
- tóngwū (toong woo; roommate)
- tóngxué (toong shweh; classmate)
- wōde péngyōu (waw duh puhng yo; my friend)
- xiōngdī jiēmèi (shyoong dee jyeh may; brothers and sisters)
- zhàngfu (jahng foo; husband)
- zūfū (dzoo foo; grandfather)
- zūmū (dzoo moo; grandmother)

When introducing two people to each other, always introduce the one with the lower social status and/or age to the person with the higher social status. The Chinese consider it polite.
**Asking people for their names**

Many situations call for informal greetings like

- **Wǒ jiào Sarah. Nǐ ne?** (waw jyaow Sarah. nee nuh; My name is Sarah. And yours?)
- **Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?** (nee jyaow shummuh meeng dzuuh; What’s your name?)

To show a greater level of politeness and respect, ask

**Nǐn guī xìng?** (neen gway sheeng; literally: What’s your honorable surname?)

When answering this question, don’t use the honorific **guī** to refer to yourself. Such a response is like saying “My esteemed family name is Smith.” The best way to answer is to say **Wǒ xìng Smith.** (waw sheeng Smith; My family name is Smith.)

The polite way to ask the name of someone who’s younger than yourself or lower in social status is

**Nǐ jiào shénme míngzi?** (nee jyaow shummuh meeng dzuuh; What’s your name?)

Even though **míngzi** usually means “given name,” when you ask this question, it may elicit an answer of first and last name.

If a guy tells you his name in Chinese, you can be sure the first syllable he utters will be his surname, not his given name. So if he says his name is **Lǐ Shīmín,** for example, his family name is **Lǐ** and his given name is **Shīmín.** Keep on referring to him as **Lǐ Shīmín** (rather than just **Shīmín**) until you become really good friends. If you want to address him as **Xiānshēng** (shyan shuhleng; Mr.), or if you’re addressing a female as **Xiāojīě** (shyaow jye; Miss), you put that title after his or her last name and say **Lǐ Xiānshēng** or **Lǐ Xiāojīě.** Even though the Chinese language has words for Mr., Miss, and Mrs. (tăităi; tye tye), it doesn’t have an equivalent term for “Ms.” At least not yet.
This little conversation shows how to introduce a friend:

Sylvia: Irene, qǐng ràng wǒ jièshào wǒde pèngyǒu Mel. (Irene, cheeng rahng waw jye shaw waw duh puhng yo Mel; Irene, allow me to introduce my friend Mel.)

Irene: Nǐ hǎo. Hěn gǎoxìng jiàndào nǐ. (nee how. hun gaow sheeng jyan daow nee; Hi. Nice to meet you.)

Mel: Hěn gǎoxìng jiàndào nǐ. Wǒ shì Sylvia de tōngxué. (hun gaow sheeng jyan daow nee. waw shir Sylvia duh toong shweh; Good to meet you. I’m Sylvia’s classmate.)

Irene: Hěn gǎoxìng jiàndào nǐ. (hun gaow sheeng jyan daow nee; Nice to meet you.)

Mel: Nǐmen zénme rènshì? (nee mun dzummuh run shir; How do you happen to know each other?)

Irene: Wǒmen shì tóngshì. (waw mun shir toong shir; We’re coworkers.)

Addressing new friends and strangers

You can always safely greet people in professional settings by announcing their last name followed by their title, such as Wáng Xiàozhāng (wahng shyaow jahng; President [of an educational institution] Wang) or Jīn Zhūrèn (jeen joo run; Director Jin). Here are some other examples of occupational titles:

✓ bùzhāng (boo jahng; department head or minister)
✓ fúzhūrèn (foo joo run; assistant director)
✓ jiàoshòu (jyaow show; professor)
✓ jīnglǐ (jeeng lee; manager)
✓ lǎoshī (laow shir; teacher)
Sometimes people add the terms lǎo (laow; old) or xiǎo (shyaow; young) in front of the last name and omit the first name completely. It indicates a comfortable degree of familiarity and friendliness that can only develop over time. But make sure you know which one to use — lǎo is for someone who’s older than you, and xiǎo is for someone who’s younger than you.

Taking (a.k.a. rejecting) compliments

Chinese people are always impressed whenever they meet a foreigner who has taken the time to learn their language. So when you speak Zhōngwén (joong one; Chinese) to a Zhōngguórén (joong gwaw run; Chinese person), he may very well say “Nǐde Zhōngwén tài hāole.” (nee duh joong one tye how luh; Your Chinese is fantastic.) But don’t give in to the temptation to accept the compliment easily and say xièxiè (shye shye; thanks), because that implies that you agree wholeheartedly with the complimentary assessment. Instead, try one of the following replies. Each of them can be roughly translated as “It’s nothing” or the equivalent of “No, no, I don’t deserve any praise.”

✔ guò jiāng guò jiāng (gwaw jyahng gwaw jyahng)
✔ nǎlǐ nǎlǐ (nah lee nah lee)
✔ nār de huà (nar duh hwah)

Saying goodbye

When it comes time to say goodbye, refer to the following list of phrases:

✔ Huítóu jiàn. (hway toe jyan; See you later.)
✔ Míngnián jiàn. (meeng nyan jyan; See you next year.)
✔ Míngtiān jiàn. (meeng tyan jyan; See you tomorrow.)
Chapter 4: . . . Enjoying Small Talk

- Xiàge lìbài jiàn. (shyah guh lee bye jyan; See you next week.)
- Xīngqì’ér jiàn. (sheeng chee are jyan; See you on Tuesday.)
- Yǐhuìr jiàn. (ee hwahr jyan; See you soon.)
- Yǐlù píng’ān. (ee loo peeng ahn; Have a good trip.)
- Zài jiàn. (dzye jyan; Goodbye.)

Practice your adieu’s with this conversation:

Christopher: Lǎoshī zǎo. (laow shir dzaow; Good morning, Professor.)

Professor: Zǎo. Nǐ hǎo. (dzaow. nee how; Good morning. Hello.)

Christopher: Jīntiān de tiānqì hěn hǎo, duì bùduì? (jin tyan duh tyan chee hun how; dway boo dway; The weather today is great, isn’t it?)

Professor: Duìle. Hěn hǎo. (dway luh. hun how; Yes, it is. It’s very nice.)

Christopher: Nèmmé míngtiān shàngkē de shìhòu zài jiàn. (nummuh, meeng tyan shahng kuh duh shir ho dzye jyan; So, I’ll see you again in class tomorrow.)

Professor: Hǎo. Míngtiān jiàn. (how. meeng tyan jyan; Okay. See you tomorrow.)

 Asking Basic Questions

A surefire way of initiating a conversation is to ask someone a question. Here are some basic question words to keep in mind:

- Duō jīǔ? (dwaw jyo; For how long?)
- Shéi (shay; Who?)
- Shénme? (shummuh; What?)
- Shénme shìhòu? (shummuh shir ho; When?)
中文短语

- Wèishénme? (way shummuh; Why?)
- Zài nǎr? (dzye nar; Where?)
- Zěnme? (dzummah; How?)

这些例子可以帮助你使用这些疑问词来简单地提问——有时你也可以单独使用其中一些，就像在英语中那样：

- Tā shì shéi? (tah shir shay; Who is he/she?)
- Nǐ yào shénme? (nee yaow shummuh; What would you like?)
- Jǐ diǎn zhōng? (jee dyan joong; What time is it?)
- Cēsuǒ zài nǎr? (tsuh swaw dzye nar; Where’s the bathroom?)
- Nǐ shénme shíhòu chīfàn? (nee shummuh shir ho chī fahn; When do you eat?)
- Nǐ wèishénme yào qù Zhōngguó? (nee way shummuh yaow chyew joong gwaw; Why do you want to go to China?)
- Nǐ zěnme yàng? (nee dzummah yahng; How’s it going?)
- Nǐ yǐjīng zài zhèr duō jiǔ le? (nee ee jeeng dzye jar dwaw jyoe luh; How long have you been here already?)
- Xiànzài jǐ diǎn zhōng? (shyan dzye jee dyan joong; What time is it now?)

你也可以使用下面的回应来回答在前面列出的问题，如果有人来接近你。这些语句是外语对话的基础，确实非常实用，当你学习一门新的语言时。

- Wǒ bùdōng. (waw boo doong; I don’t understand.)
- Wǒ bùzhīdào. (waw boo jir daow; I don’t know.)
- Wǒ bùrènshi tā. (waw boo run shir tah; I don’t know him/her.)
Duībùqǐ. \( (dway \ booh \ chee; \) Excuse me.)

Hěn bāoqiàn. \( (hun \ baow \ chyan; \) I’m so sorry.)

The following dialog incorporates some basic questions:

Molly: Duībùqǐ. Qīngwèn, xiàngzài jīdiǎn zhōng? \( (dway \ booh \ chee. \ cheeng \ one, \ shyan \ dzye \ jee \ dyan \ joong; \) Excuse me. May I ask what time is it?)

Man: Xiàngzài yīdiǎn bànn. \( (shyan \ dzye \ ee \ dyan \ bahn; \) It’s 1:30.)

Molly: Hǎo. Xièxiè nǐ. \( (how. \ shye \ shye \ nee; \) Great. Thank you.)

Man: Bù kèqi. \( (boo \ kuh \ chee; \) You’re welcome.)

Molly: Máfán nǐ, sì lù chēzhàn zài nǎr? \( (mah \ fahn \ nee, \ suh \ loo \ chuh \ jahn \ dzye \ nar; \) Sorry to trouble you again, but where’s the No. 4 bus stop?)

Man: Chēzhàn jiù zài nàr. \( (chuh \ jahn \ jyo \ dzye \ nar; \) The bus stop is just over there.)

Molly: Hǎo. Xièxiè. \( (how. \ shye \ shye; \) Okay. Thanks.)

Man: Méi wèntí. \( (may \ one \ tee; \) No problem.)

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**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chēzhàn</td>
<td>chuh jahn</td>
<td>bus stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>méi wèntí</td>
<td>may one tee</td>
<td>no problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàngzài jí diǎn</td>
<td>shyan dzye jee</td>
<td>What time is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhōng?</td>
<td>dyan joong</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is a list of simple questions you can use when you meet people.
Chinese Phrases For Dummies

- Ni jiàoshénmě míngzi? (nee jyaow shummuh meeng dzuh; What’s your name?)
- Ni niánjì duō dà? (nee nyan jee dwaw dah; How old are you?)
- Ni zhù zài nǎr? (nee joo dzye nar; Where do you live?)
- Ni jiēhūn le mèiyǒu? (nee jyeh hwun luh mayo; Are you married?)
- Ni yǒu hái zǐ ma? (nee yo hi dzuh mah; Do you have children?)
- Ni zuò shénme gōngzuò? (nee dzwaw shummuh goong dzwaw; What kind of work do you do?)
- Ni huì jiǎng Zhōngwén ma? (nee hway jyahng joong oen mah; Do you speak Chinese?)
- Ni xǐhuān kàn diànyīng ma? (nee she hwahn kahn dyan yeeng mah; Do you like to see movies?)
- Ni shénme shíhòu zǒu? (nee shummuh shir ho dzoe; When are you leaving?)
- Jīntiān de tiānqì zěnme yāng? (jin tyan duh tye chee dzummah yahng; How’s the weather today?)

Chatting It Up

Xiǎnliáo (shyan lyaow) means “small talk” in Chinese. Xiántún (shyan tahn) is “to chat”... either term does the trick. This section helps you master a few key phrases and questions you can use to establish a relationship.

Yakking about the weather

Talking about the tiānqì (tyan chee; weather) is always a safe topic in any conversation. In fact, it’s kind of the universal icebreaker. If the skies are blue and all seems right with the world, you can start by saying
Jīntiān de tiānqì zhēn hǎo, duì bù duì? (jin tyan duh tyan chee juhn how, dway boo dway; The weather today is sure nice, isn’t it?)

The following adjectives can help you describe temperature and humidity:

- lěng (lung; cold)
- liángkuài (lyahng kwy; cool)
- mēn rè (mun ruh; muggy)
- nuān huò (nwan hwaw; warm)
- rè (ruh; hot)

The sījī (suh jee; four seasons) — dōngtiān (doong tyan; winter), chūntiān (chwun tyan; spring), xiàtiān (shyah tyan; summer), and qiūtiān (choo tyan; fall) — all have their charms. They also all have their distinctive characteristics when it comes to the weather, which you can express with the following words in any conversation:

- bàofēngxuě (baow fuhng shweh; blizzard)
- dàfēng (dah fuhng; gusty winds)
- dùōyún (duaw yewn; cloudy)
- fēng hěn dà (fuhng hun dah; windy)
- lèiyǔ (lay yew; thunderstorm)
- qíngláng (cheeng lahng; sunny)
- qíngtiān (cheeng tyan; clear)
- xià máomáoyǔ (shyah maow maow yew; drizzle)
- xiàwù (shyah woo; fog)
- xiàxuě (shyah shweh; snow)
- xiàyǔ (shyah yew; rainy)
- yíntiān (yeen tyan; overcast)

Try out this small talk on the weather:
Jean: Hā’ěrbīn dōngtiān hěn lěng. Chángcháng xiàxuě. (hah are been doong tyan hun lung. chahng chahng shyah shweh; Harbin is very cold in the winter. It snows often.)

Bill: Zhèndè ma? (jun duh mah; Really?)

Jean: Zhèndè. Yē yǒu bàofēngxué. Xiàtiān hái hǎo. Bǐjiào nuǎnhuó. (jun duh. yeh yo baow fuhng shweh. shyah tyan hi how. bee jyaow nwan hwaw; Really. There are also blizzards. Summertime is okay, though. It’s relatively warm.)

Bill: Lěng tiān kěyǐ qù huáxuě, hái kěyǐ qù liūbǐng. Nèmmé Hā’ěrbīn dōngtiān de shíhòu hěn hǎo wán. (lung tyan kuh yee chyew hwah shweh, hi kuh yee chyew lyo beeng. nummah hah are been doong tyan duh shir ho hun how wahn; In cold weather, you can go skiing or ice-skating. So Harbin during the winter is a lot of fun.)

Finding out where people are from

Wondering where people are from when you first meet them is only natural. You ask them by saying

Nǐ shì cóng nǎr láide? (nee shir tsoong nar lye duh; Where are you from?)

To answer, you replace the word nǐ (nee; you) with wǒ (waw; I) and put the name of wherever you’re from where the word nǎr is.

Wǒ shì cóng Paris láide. (waw shir tsoong paris lye duh; I am from Paris.)

People in Taiwan say náli (nah lee) rather than nǎr (nar) for the word "where." Nári indicates a northern accent and is used primarily by people from mainland China.

This list includes countries that may come up in conversation:
Audaliya (ow dah lee yah; Australia)
Faguó (fah gwaw; France)
Méiguó (may gwaw; America)
Ribén (ir bun; Japan)
Ruidián (rway dyan; Sweden)
Ruish (rway shir; Switzerland)
Yidáli (ee dah lee; Italy)
Yíngguó (eeng gwaw; England)
Yüenán (yweh nahn; Vietnam)
Zhōngguó (joong gwaw; China)

A little chat about where you’re from:

Cynthia: **Adrienne, nǐ shì cóng nǎr láide?**
(Adrienne, nee shir tsoong nar lye duh; Adrienne, where are you from?)

Adrienne: **Wǒ shì cóng Jiāzhōu láide. Nǐ ne?**
(waw shir tsoong jyah joe lye duh. nee nuh; I’m from California. How about you?)

Cynthia: **Wǒ bùshì Méiguórén. Wǒ shì cóng Yíngguó Lùndūn láide.**
(waw boo shir may gwaw run. waw shir tsoong eeng gwaw lwan dun lye duh; I’m not American. I’m from London, England.)

Adrienne: **Nà tài hǎo le.** (nah tye how luh; That’s great.)

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**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jiāzhōu</th>
<th>jyah joe</th>
<th>California</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Méiguórén</td>
<td>may gwaw run</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nà tài hǎo le</td>
<td>nah tye how luh</td>
<td>That’s great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yíngguó</td>
<td>eeng gwaw</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chatting about family

If you want to talk about your family when answering questions or making small talk, you need to know who is in your family. (Check out “Introducing your friends and family” earlier in this chapter for important vocabulary words.)

Join with these women chatting about their families:

Lǐ Huá: Beverley, nǐ yǒu méiyǒu xiōngdì jiēmèi? (Beverley, nee yo mayo shyoong dee jyeheh may; Beverly, do you have any brothers or sisters?)

Beverly: Wǒ yǒu yīge jiējie. Tā shìwǔ suì. Bǐ wǒ dá liàngsuì. (waw yo ee guh jyeheh jyeheh tah shir woo swway; bee waw dah lyahng swway; I have an older sister. She’s 15. She’s two years older than me.)

Lǐ Huá: Tā yě hū jīáng Zhōngwén mà? (tah yeah hway jyahng joong one mah; Can she also speak Chinese?)

Beverly: Búhuì. Tā zhī hūi Yíngyǔ. (boo hway. tah jir hway eeng yew; No. She only speaks English.)

Lǐ Huá: Nǐde fùmǔ zhù zài nǎr? (nee duh foo moo joo dzye nar; Where do your parents live?)

Beverly: Wǒmen dōu zhù zài Běijīng. Wō bàba shì wàijiāoguān. (waw men doe joo dzye bay jeeng. waw bah bah shir why jyaow gwan; We all live in Beijing. My father is a diplomat.)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>jǐàng</th>
<th>jyahng</th>
<th>to talk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wàijiāoguān</td>
<td>why jyaow gwan</td>
<td>diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yíngyǔ</td>
<td>eeng yew</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Making small talk on the job

The kind of job you have can say plenty about you. It can also be a great topic of conversation or spice up an otherwise dull exchange. To ask someone about his or her **gōngzuò** (*goong dzwaw*; work), you can say

**Nǐ zuò shénme gōngzuò?** (*nee dzwaw shummuh goong dzwaw*; What kind of work do you do?)

You may even try to guess and say, for example,

**Nǐ shì lāoshi ma?** (*nee shir laow shir mah*; Are you a teacher?)

The following are some occupations you or the person you’re talking with may hold:

- **biānjí** (*byan jee*; editor)
- **cáifeng** (*tsye fung*; tailor)
- **chéngwùyuán** (*chuung woo ywan*; flight attendant)
- **chūnàyuán** (*choo nah ywan*; bank teller)
- **diàngōng** (*dyan goong*; electrician)
- **fēixíngyuán** (*fay sheeng ywan*; pilot)
- **hāiguān guānyuán** (*hi gwan gwan ywan*; Customs agent)
- **hūshī** (*hoo shir*; nurse)
- **jiàoshòu** (*jyaoow show*; professor)
- **jiēxiànyuán** (*jye shyan ywan*; telephone operator)
Chinese Phrases For Dummies

⚠️ kěfáng fúwùyuán (kuh fahng foo woo ywan; housekeeper)
⚠️ kuàiji (kwye jee; accountant)
⚠️ lǎoshī (laow shir; teacher)
⚠️ lièchéyuán (lyeh chuh ywan; train conductor)
⚠️ lǚshī (lyew shir; lawyer)
⚠️ qiángtái fúwùyuán (chyen tye foo woo ywan; receptionist)
⚠️ shuīnuāngōng (shway nwan goong; plumber)
⚠️ yānyuán (yan ywan; actor)
⚠️ yīshēng (ee shung; doctor)
⚠️ yóudiyuán (yo dee ywan; mail carrier)
⚠️ zhǔguǎn (joo gwan; CEO)

The following are some useful job terms and job-related expressions:

⚠️ bàn rì gōngzuò (bahn ir goong dzaw; part-time work)
⚠️ gùyuán (goo ywan; employee)
⚠️ gùzhǔ (goo joo; employer)
⚠️ jīnglǐ (jeeng lee; manager)
⚠️ miànshì (myan shir; interview)
⚠️ quán rì gōngzuò (chwan ir goong dzaw; full-time work)
⚠️ shìyè (shir yeh; unemployed)

In China, your dānwèi (dahn way; work unit) is an important part of your life. (This term refers to your place of work, which can be anywhere in the country. Your dānwèi is the group that’s responsible for both taking care of you and being responsible for any missteps you happen to make.) In fact, when people ask you to identify yourself over the phone, they often say “Ni nār?” (nee nar; literally: Where are you from?) to find out what dānwèi you belong to.
The following dialog uses these occupational phrases:

Xiǎo Liú: Yáng, nǐ zuò shénme gōngzuò? (Yahng, nee dzaw shummuh goong dzaw; Yang, what kind of work do you do?)

Yáng: Wǒ shì lánqiú duìyuán. (waw shir lahn chyo dway ywan; I'm a basketball player.)

Xiǎo Liú: Nà hěn yōuyìsì. (nah hun yo ee suh; That's very interesting.)

Yáng: Nǐ ne? (nee nuh; How about you?)

Xiǎo Liú: Wǒ shì hūshì. Wǒ zài Kàifēng dīyī yíyuàn gōngzuò. (waw shir hoo shir. waw dzye kye fung dee ee ee ywan goong dzaw; I'm a nurse. I work at Kaifeng's No. 1 Hospital.)

Yáng: Nán būmán? (nahn boo nahn; Is it difficult?)

Xiǎo Liú: Bùmán. Wǒ hěn xīhuān wǒde zhíyè. (noo nahn. waw hun she hwahn waw duh jir yeh; It’s not difficult. I really like my profession.)

---

**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gōngzuò</th>
<th>goong dzaw</th>
<th>to work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hūshì</td>
<td>hoo shir</td>
<td>nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nán</td>
<td>nahn</td>
<td>difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xīhuān</td>
<td>she hwahn</td>
<td>to like; to enjoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yíyuàn</td>
<td>ee ywan</td>
<td>hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhíyè</td>
<td>jir yeh</td>
<td>profession</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Talking about where you live**

After folks get to know each other through small talk, they may exchange addresses and phone numbers to keep in touch. That introductory question covered
earlier in this chapter, “Nǐ zhù zài nǎr?” (nee joo dzye nahr; Where do you live?), may pop up. You may also want to ask a few of these questions:

- Nǐ dìzhī shì shénme? (nee duh dee jir shir shummu; What’s your address?)
- Nǐ diànhuà hàomǎ duōshǎo? (nee duh dyan hwaah how mah dwaw shaow; What’s your phone number?)
- Nǐ shénme shíhòu zài jiā? (nee shummu shir ho dzye jyah; When will you be at home?/When are you home?)

You may also talk about your home from time to time. These words and phrases can come in handy:

- Wǒmen zhù de shì fángzi. (waw mun joo duh shir fahng dzuh; We live in a house.)
- Tā zhù de shì gōngyù. (tah joo duh shir guh goong yew; She lives in an apartment.)
- Tāmen yǒu yīge yuànzi. (tah mun yo ee guh ywan dzuh; They have a yard.)
- Nǐ yǒu yīge huāyuán. (nee yo ee guh hwaah ywan; You have a garden.)
- Wǒ zhù zài chénglì. (waw joo dzye chueng lee; I live in the city.)
- Wǒ zhù zài jiāowài. (waw joo dzye jyaow why; I live in the suburbs.)
- Wǒ zhù zài nónɡcūn. (waw joo dzye noong tswun; I live in the country.)

In addition to your diànhuà hàomǎ (dyan hwaah how mah; phone number) and your dìzhī (dee jir; address), most people also want to know your diànzī yóuxiāng dìzhī (dyan dzuh yo shyahng dee jir; e-mail address). And if you find yourself in a more formal situation, it may be appropriate to give someone your mínɡpiàn (meeng pyan; business card).
Chapter 5

Enjoying a Drink and a Snack (or Meal!)

In This Chapter
► Eating, Chinese style
► Ordering and conversing in restaurants
► Paying for your meal

Exploring Chinese food and Chinese eating etiquette is a great way to discover Chinese culture. You can also use what you discover in this chapter to impress your date by ordering in Chinese the next time you eat out.

All about Meals

If you feel hungry when beginning this section, then stop and chí (chir; eat) some fān (fahn; food). Different meals throughout the day, for example, are called

✔ zāofān (dzaw fahn; breakfast)
✔ wūfān (woo fahn; lunch)
✔ wānfān (wahn fahn; dinner)

For centuries, Chinese people greeted each other not by saying “Nǐ hǎo ma?” (nee how ma; How are you?), but by saying “Nǐ chīfān le méiyǒu?” (nee chir fahn luh mayo; literally: “Have you eaten?”)
If you’re hungry, you can say wǒ hěn è (waw hun uh; I’m very hungry) and wait for a friend to invite you for a bite to eat. If you’re thirsty, just say wǒde kǒu hěn kě (waw duh ko hun kuh; literally: my mouth is very dry) to hear offers for all sorts of drinks.

Or you can be subtler with one of these phrases:

✔ Ni è ma? (nee uh mah; Are you hungry?)
✔ Ni è bù è? (nee uh boo uh; Are you hungry?)
✔ Ni hái méi chī wǎnfàn ba. (nee hi may chir wahn fahn bah; I bet you haven’t had dinner yet.)

When having dinner at someone’s home, don’t be hesitant to use some of these phrases at the table:

✔ Màn chī or màn màn chī! (mahn chir or mahn mahn chir; Bon appetite!) This phrase literally means “Eat slowly,” but it’s loosely translated as “Take your time and enjoy your food.”

✔ Zǐjì lái. (dzuh jee lye; I’ll help myself.)
✔ Gānbēi! (gahn bay; Bottoms up!)
✔ Duò chī yídīār ba! (dwaw chir ee dyar bah; Have some more!)
✔ Wǒ chībāo le. (waw chir baow luh; I’m full.)

Whenever a dining partner begins to serve you food, as is the custom, you must always feign protest with a few mentions of zǐjì lái (dzuh jee lye; I’ll help myself) so you don’t appear to assume that someone should be serving you. In the end, permit the person to follow proper etiquette by serving you portions from each dish if you’re the guest.

**Dining Out**

Whether you eat in a friend’s home or in a fancy Chinese restaurant, you need to know how to ask for some basic utensils and how to refer to items already on the table.
You ask for something politely by saying **Qínɡ nǐ ɡěi wǒ . . .** (*cheeng nee gay waw*; Would you mind please getting me a . . . )

You can also say **Máfàn nǐ ɡěi wǒ . . .** (*mah fahn nee gay waw*; May I trouble you to please get me a . . . )

Here are some items you commonly encounter or need to ask for when dining out:

- **yíge wān** (*ee guh wahn*; a bowl)
- **yíge pánzi** (*ee guh pahn dzuh*; a plate)
- **yíge bēizi** (*ee guh bay dzuh*; a glass)
- **yíge tiáogēng** (*ee guh tyaow guhng*; a spoon)
- **yíge dāozi** (*ee guh daow dzuh*; a knife)
- **yíge chāzi** (*ee guh chah dzuh*; a fork)
- **yì zhāng cánjīn** (*ee jahng tsahn jeen*; a napkin)
- **yì gēn yáqiān** (*ee gun yah chyan*; a toothpick)
- **yíge shī máojīn** (*ee guh shir maow jeen*; a wet towel)
- **yíge rè máojīn** (*ee guh ruh maow jeen*; a hot towel)
- **yì shuāng kuàizi** (*ee shwahng kwye dzuh*; a pair of chopsticks)

When in doubt, use the measure word **ge** (*guh*) in front of the noun you want to modify by a numeral or a specifier, such as “this” (*zhè; jay*) or “that” (*nà; nah*). As you can see from the previous list, the word for “a” always begins with **yī** (*ee*), meaning the number 1 in Chinese. In between **yī** and the noun is the measure word. For chopsticks, it’s **shuāng** (*shwahng*), meaning pair; for napkin, it’s **zhāng** (*jahng*), used for anything with a flat surface (such as paper, a map, or even a bed); and a toothpick’s measuring word is **gēn** (*gun*), referring to anything resembling a stick, such as rope, a thread, or a blade of grass. Chinese has many different measure words, but **ge** (*guh*) is by far the most common.
When you're thinking about dining out, here's a conversation you may have:

Livia: **Charlotte, nǐ hāo! (Charlotte, nee how; Charlotte, hi!)**

Charlotte: **Nǐ hǎo. Hǎo jiǔ méi jiàn. (nee how. how jyoe may jyan; Hi there. Long time no see.)**

Livia: **Nǐ è bù è? (nee uh boo uh; Are you hungry?)**

Charlotte: **Wǒ hěn è. Nǐ ne? (waw hun uh. nee nuh; Yes, very hungry. How about you?)**

Livia: **Wǒ yě hěn è. (waw yeah hun uh; I'm also pretty hungry.)**

Charlotte: **Wōmen qù Zhōngguóchéng chī Zhōngguó cài, hǎo bù hǎo? (waw men chyew joong gwaw chuhng chir joong gwaw tsye, how boo how; Let's go to Chinatown and have Chinese food, okay?)**

Livia: **Hǎo. Nǐ zhídào Zhōngguóchéng nà jiǎ cānguān hǎo ma? (how. nee jir daow joong gwaw chuhng nah jya tsahn gwahnh how ma; Okay. Do you know which restaurant in Chinatown is good?)**

Charlotte: **Bēijīng kǎo yā diàn hǎoxiāng bù cuò. (bay jeeng cow ya dyan how shyang boo tswaw; The Peking Duck place seems very good.)**

**Understanding What's on the Menu**

Familiarize yourself with the basic types of food on the **càidān** (isye dahn; menu) in case you have only Chinese characters and pinyin romanization to go on. Having the knowledge allows you to immediately know which section to focus on (or, likewise, to avoid).

Table 5-1 shows the typical elements of a **càidān**:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kài wèi pín</td>
<td>kye way peen</td>
<td>appetizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ròu lèi</td>
<td>row lay</td>
<td>meat dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jī lèi</td>
<td>jee lay</td>
<td>poultry dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hǎi xiān</td>
<td>hi shyan</td>
<td>seafood dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>súcài</td>
<td>soo tsye</td>
<td>vegetarian dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāng</td>
<td>tahng</td>
<td>soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diǎnxīn</td>
<td>dyan sheen</td>
<td>desserts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǐn liào</td>
<td>een lyaow</td>
<td>drinks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is a conversation you may have when arriving at a restaurant:

Host: Jī wèi? (jee way; How many are in your party?)

Leslie: Sān wèi. (sahn way; There are three of us.)

Host: Qīng zuò zhèr. Zhè shì cǎidān. (cheeng dzwaw jar. jay shir tsye dahn; Please sit here. Here’s the menu.)

Leslie: Nǐ yào chī fān háishì yào chī miàn? (nee yaow chir fahn hi shir yaow chir myan; Do you want to eat rice or noodles?)

Gerry: Liāng ge dōu kěyǐ. (lyahng guh doe kuh yee; Either one is fine.)

Jean: Wǒ hěn xǐhuān yāogūō jǐdīng. Nǐmen ne? (waw hun she hwan yaow gwaw jee deeng. nee men nhu; I love diced chicken with cashew nuts. How about you guys?)

Gerry: Duibùqǐ, wǒ chī sū. Wòmen nèng bù nèng diān yǐdīār dòufǔ? (dway boo chee, waw chir soo. waw mun nung boo nung dyan ee dyar doe foo; Sorry, I’m a vegetarian. Can we order some tofu?)
Jean: Dāngrán kěyǐ. (dahng rahn kuh yee; Of course we can.)

Leslie: Bù guǎn zěnme yàng, wǒmen lái sān píng jiǔ, hǎo bù hǎo? (boo gwahn dzummmuh yahng, waw mun lye san peeng jyo, how boo how; No matter what, let’s get three bottles of beer, okay?)

Gerry: Hěn hǎo! (hun how; Very good!)

### Words to Know

| bù guǎn   | boo gwahn   | no matter   |
| zěnme yàng | dzummmuh yahng | what       |
| fānguǎn   | fahn gwahn  | restaurant  |
| gāo jì jiǔlóu | gaow jee jyo low | fancy restaurant |
| kāfēitīng | kah fay teeng | cafe       |
| kuàicān   | kwye tsahn  | fast food   |
| píjiǔ     | pee jyo   | beer        |
| xiǎochīdiàn | shyaow chir dyan | snack shop |
| Xīcān     | she tsahn   | Western food |
| Zhōngcān  | joong tsahn | Chinese food |

### Vegetarian’s delight

If you’re a vegetarian, you may feel lost when looking at a menu filled with mostly pork (the staple meat of China), beef, and fish dishes. Not to worry. Table 5-2 shows some vegetarian dishes. (And take a look at the list of vegetables in Chapter 6 for some added help.)
**Table 5-2 Vegetarian Dishes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Words</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dān'huā tān̄g</td>
<td>dahn hwah tahng</td>
<td>egg drop soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gānbiān sjǐ̀dōu</td>
<td>gahn byan suh jee doe</td>
<td>sautéed string beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hōngshāo dōufu</td>
<td>hoong shaow doe foo</td>
<td>braised bean curd in soy sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suān là tān̄g</td>
<td>swan lah tahng</td>
<td>hot-and-sour soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yūxiāng qièzi</td>
<td>yew shyang chyeh dzuh</td>
<td>spicy eggplant with garlic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Some favorite Chinese dishes**

You may be familiar with many of the following dishes if you’ve ever been in a Chinese restaurant:

- ✔️ **Bēijīng kǎo yā** *(bay jeeng cow yah; Peking roast duck)*
- ✔️ **chūnjuān** *(chwun jwan; spring roll)*
- ✔️ **dān'huā tān̄g** *(dahn hwah tahng; egg drop soup)*
- ✔️ **dōufu gān** *(doe foo gahn; dried beancurd)*
- ✔️ **gài'lān niúròu** *(guy lahn nyoe row; beef with broccoli)*
- ✔️ **gōngbāo jǐ̀dīng** *(goong baow jee deeng; diced chicken with hot peppers)*
- ✔️ **háoyóu niúròu** *(how yo nyoe row; beef with oyster sauce)*
- ✔️ **hōngshāo dōufu** *(hoong shaow doe foo; braised beancurd in soy sauce)*
- ✔️ **húndūn tān̄g** *(hwun dwun tahng; wonton soup)*
- ✔️ **shuān yángròu** *(shwahn yahng row; Mongolian lamb hot pot)*
Chinese Phrases For Dummies

✓ suăn lâ täng (swan lah tahng; hot-and-sour soup)
✓ tângcū yú (tahng tsoo yew; sweet and sour fish)
✓ yân huângguā (yan hwahng gwah; pickled cucumber)

Sauces and seasonings
The Chinese use all kinds of seasonings and sauces to make their dishes so tasty. Check out Chinese Cooking For Dummies by Martin Yan (Wiley) for much more info. Here are just a few of the basics:

✓ cū (tsoo; vinegar)
✓ jiâng (jyahng; ginger)
✓ jiângyōu (jyahng yo; soy sauce)
✓ làyōu (lah yo; hot sauce)
✓ máyōu (mah yo; sesame oil)
✓ yân (yan; salt)

Dipping into some dim sum
Dim sum takes the shape of mini portions, and it’s often served with tea to help cut through the oil and grease afterwards. Part of the allure of dim sum is that you get to sample a whole range of different tastes while you catch up with old friends. Dim sum meals can last for hours, which is why most Chinese people choose the weekends to have dim sum. No problem lingering on a Saturday or Sunday.

You can tell the waiter you want a specific kind of dim sum by saying:

Qǐng lái yì dié _____. (cheeng lye ee dyeh _____.; please give me a plate of _____.) Fill in the blank with one of the tasty choices I list in Table 5-3.
Table 5-3  Common Dim Sum Dishes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chünjuän</td>
<td>chwun jwan</td>
<td>spring rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dântâ</td>
<td>dahm tah</td>
<td>egg tarts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dôushâ bâo</td>
<td>doe shah baow</td>
<td>sweet bean buns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guô tiê</td>
<td>gwaw tyeh</td>
<td>fried pork dumplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luôbo gâo</td>
<td>law baw gaow</td>
<td>turnip cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niâng qûngjiao</td>
<td>nyahng cheeng jyaow</td>
<td>stuffed peppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niûrûwân</td>
<td>nyoe row wahn</td>
<td>beef balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yûjiâo</td>
<td>yew jyaow</td>
<td>deep fried taro root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiä jïo</td>
<td>shyah jyaow</td>
<td>shrimp dumplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiä wân</td>
<td>shyah wahn</td>
<td>shrimp balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiäolông bâo</td>
<td>shyaow lonog baow</td>
<td>steamed pork buns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following conversation uses these dim sum phrases:

George: Ní chî guò dim sum ma? (nee chir gwaw deem sum mah; Have you ever had dim sum before?)

Rhoda: Méiyōu. Zhè shì dì yī cì. (mayo. jay shir dee yee tsuh; No. This is the first time.)

Susan: Wèidào zênmê yâng? (way daow dzum-muh yahng; How does it taste?)

Rhoda: Hâo jîle. (how jee luh; It’s great.)
George: Nǐ xǐ bùxīhuān chī dim sum? (nee she boo she hwahn chir deem sum; Do you like dim sum?)

Susan: Dāngrán. Hēn xīhuān. (dahng rahn, hun she hwahn; Absolutely. I like it very much.)

Rhoda: Nǐ zuì xīhuān chī de dim sum shì shénmé? (nee dzway she hwahn chir duh deem sum shir shummuh; What’s your favorite dim sum dish?)

Susan: Nà hēn nán shuò. Bú shì guó tiè jiù shì xià jiāo ba. Dim sum wǒ dōu xīhuān chī. (nah hun nahn shuow. boo shir gwaw tyeh jyeo shir shyah jyaow bah. deem sum waw doe she hwahn chir. It’s difficult to say. If not pork dumplings, then definitely shrimp dumplings. I love all dim sum dishes.)

**Ordering Western food**

Even though Chinese food is so varied and great, once in a while you may really find yourself hankering for a good old American hamburger or a stack of French fries. Table 5-4 lists some items you may want to order when you’re in need of some old-fashioned comfort food, and Table 5-5 lists common beverages.

**Table 5-4  Western Food**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bīsā bīng</td>
<td>bee sah beeng</td>
<td>pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hàn bǎobāo</td>
<td>hahn baow baow</td>
<td>hamburger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāo túdòu</td>
<td>cow too doe</td>
<td>baked potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>règòu</td>
<td>ruh go</td>
<td>hot dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sānmíngzhì</td>
<td>sahn meeng jir</td>
<td>sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shālā jiāng</td>
<td>shah lah jyahng</td>
<td>salad dressing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Chapter 5: Enjoying a Drink and a Snack (or Meal!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shālā zìzhūguì</td>
<td>shah lah dzhoo joo gway</td>
<td>salad bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tǔdòuní</td>
<td>too doe nee</td>
<td>mashed potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáng pái</td>
<td>yahng pye</td>
<td>lamb chops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yìdàlī shì miàntiáo</td>
<td>ee dah lee shir myan tyao</td>
<td>spaghetti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhá jǐ</td>
<td>jah jee</td>
<td>fried chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhá shùtiáo</td>
<td>jah shoo tyao</td>
<td>French fries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhá yángcōng quān</td>
<td>jah yahng tsoong chwan</td>
<td>onion rings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhū pái</td>
<td>joo pye</td>
<td>pork chops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5-5: Beverages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>jyo dahn</td>
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<td>kuh luh</td>
<td>soda</td>
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<td>kwahng chwan shway</td>
<td>mineral water</td>
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<td>neeng muhng chee shway</td>
<td>lemonade</td>
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<td>nyoe nye</td>
<td>milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>pǐjū</td>
<td>pee jyo</td>
<td>beer</td>
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</table>
Placing an Order and Chatting with the Wait Staff

Chinese table etiquette dictates that everyone decides together what to order. The two main categories you must decide upon are the cài (tsye; food dishes) and the tāng (tahng; soup). Feel free to be the first one to ask wómen yǐnggāi jiāo jǐge cài jǔge tāng? (waw men eeng gye jyaow jee guh tsey jee guh tahng; How many dishes and how many soups should we order?). Ideally, one of each of the five major tastes should appear in the dishes you choose for your meal to be a "true" Chinese meal: suān (swan; sour), tián (tian; sweet), kū (koo; bitter), lā (lah; spicy), or xián (shyan; salty).

Here are some questions your server is likely to ask you:

- Nǐmen yào shénme cài? (nee men yaow shum-muh tsey; What would you like to order? Literally: What kind of food would you like?)

- Nǐmen yào hē diār shénme? (nee mun yaow huh dyar shummuh; What would you like to drink?)

- Yào jǐ píng pǐjiǔ? (yaow jee peeng pee jyoe; How many bottles of beer do you want?)

And here are some phrases that come in handy when you need to give an answer:

- Wómen yào yīge suān là tāng. (waw mun yaow ee guh suan lah tahng; We'd like a hot-and-sour soup.)

- Wǒ bù chǐ là de. (waw boo chir lah duh; I don't eat spicy food.)

- Qīng bié fāng wèjàng, wǒ guòmǐn. (cheeng byeh fahng way jeeng; waw gwauw meen; Please don't use any MSG, I'm allergic.)
When addressing a food server, you can call him or her by the same name: fúwùyuán (foo woo ywan; service personnel). In fact, “he,” “she,” and “it” all share the same Chinese word, too: tā (tah). Isn’t that easy to remember?

- Qīng gěi wǒ cài dàn. (cheeng gay waw tsye dahn; Please give me the menu.)
- Nǐ gěi wòmen jiēshào jīge cài, hǎo ma? (nee gay waw men jyeh shaow gee guh tsye, how ma; Can you recommend some dishes?)
- Dà shīfū nǎshōu cài shì shènmé? (dah shir foo nah show tsye shir shummuh; What’s the chef’s specialty?)
- Yú xǐnxìān ma? (yew shin shyah mahn; Is the fish fresh?)
- Wǒ bù yuàn yì chī hǎishēn. (waw boo ywan yee chir hi shun; I don’t want to try sea slugs.)
- Nǐmen yǒu kuǎngquán shuǐ ma? (nee mun yo kwahng chwan shway mah; Do you have any mineral water?)
- Wǒ bù yào là de cài. (waw boo yaow lah duh tsye; I don’t want anything spicy.)
- Wǒ bù néng chī yǒu táng de cài. (waw boo nuhng chir yo tahng duh tsye; I can’t eat anything made with sugar.)
- Wǒ bù chī zhūròu. (waw boo chir joo row; I don’t eat pork.)
- Qīng cā zhuōzi. (cheeng tsah jwaw dzuh; Please wipe off the table.)
- Qīng bā yínliào sòng lái. (cheeng bah yin lyaow soong lye; Please bring our drinks.)
- Wǒ méi jiào zhèige. (waw may jyaow jay guh; I didn’t order this.)

Here’s how a conversation may go when ordering:

Tom: Wǒmen néng bùnéng kǎnkàn cài dàn? (waw mun nung boo nung kahn kahn tsye dahn; May we see the menu?)
Waiter: Dāngrán kěyǐ. (daɪŋ rɑn kʰuh jə; Of course you may.)

Waiter: Nǐmen xiāng diăn shénme cài? (nee mun sheyang dyan shummuh tsey; What dishes would you like to order?)

Tom: Qǐng wèn, nǐmen de náshōu cài shì shénme? (cheeng one, nee mun duh nah show tsey shir shummuh; Excuse me, may I ask what your house specialty is?)

Waiter: Mǎpó dòufu hé Chángshā jǐ dòu yōumíng. (mah paw doe foo huu chaɪŋ shah jee doe yo meeng; Sichuan beancurd and Changsha chicken are both very famous.)

Wendy: Tīngshuō mǎpó dòufu hěn là. Duībùqǐ, kēshí wǒ bùchǐ là de. Yǒu méiyǒu biéde cài? (teeng shuaw mah paw doe foo hun lah. dway boo chee, kuh shir waw boo chir lah duh. yo mayo byeh duh tsey; I’ve heard the Sichuan beancurd is very spicy. I’m sorry, but I don’t like spicy food. Do you have any other kinds of dishes?)

Waiter: Dāngrán yǒu. Jiēlán jǐ hé xiǎo lónghú dòu bijiǎo wěnhé. Hǎo bùhǎo? (daɪŋ rɑn yo. jye mahn jee huu shyah loong hoo doe jyaw one huu. hou boo hou; Of course we do. Chicken with broccoli and shrimp with lobster sauce are both relatively mild. How about those?)

Wendy: Hěn hǎo. Xièxiè. (hu̯n hou. sheh sheh; Very good. Thank you.)

Tom: Qǐng lǐngwǎi gěi wǒmen lǎjiāo jiāng. Wǒ hěn xīhuān chī lāde. (cheeng leeng wye gay waw mun lah jyaw jyahng. waw hun she huwan chir lah duh; Please also bring us some hot pepper sauce. I love spicy food.)

Waiter: Hái yào biéde ma? (hi yaow byeh duh ma; Would you like anything else?)

Tom: Qǐng lǐngwǎi lái yīge chāo qīngcài. (cheeng leeng wye ee guh chaow cheeng tsey; Please also bring a sautéed green vegetable.)
## Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>guòmǐn</td>
<td>gwaw meen</td>
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<td>nah show tsey</td>
<td>house specialty</td>
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<td>tuǐjiàn</td>
<td>tway jyan</td>
<td>recommend</td>
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<td>wèijīng</td>
<td>way jeeng</td>
<td>MSG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wǒde kǒu hěn kě.</td>
<td>waw duh ko hun kuh</td>
<td>I’m thirsty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wǒ hěn è.</td>
<td>waw hun uh</td>
<td>I’m very hungry.</td>
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## Finding the Restrooms

After you have a bite to eat, you may be in need of a restroom. The need may be dire if you’re smack in the middle of a 12-course banquet in Beijing and already had a couple of glasses of máotái (maow tye), the stiffest of all Chinese drinks.

Now all you have to do is garner the energy to ask “Cēsuō zài nǎr?” (tsuh swaw dzye nar; Where’s the restroom?) if you’re in mainland China or “Cēsuō zài nǎlǐ?” (tsuh swaw dzye nah lee) if you’re in Taiwan. You can also ask “Nǎlǐ kěyǐ xí shǒu? (nah lee kuh yee she show; Where can I wash my hands?)

In most cases, the pictures on the bathroom doors are self-explanatory, but you may also see the pinyin for male (nán; nahm) and female (nǚ; nyew) before the word cēsuō. Those are the words you want to pay attention to above all else.
Finishing Your Meal and Paying the Bill

After you’re through sampling all possible permutations of Chinese cuisine, you need to pay the bill, my friend. I hope the food was worth the expense. Here are some phrases you need to know when the time comes:

✔ Bāokuò fúwūfèi. (baow kwaw foo woo fay; The tip is included.)
✔ fěnkāi suān (fun kye swahn; to go Dutch)
✔ jiézhàng (jye jahng; to pay the bill)
✔ Qīng jiézhàng. (cheeng jye jahng: The check, please.)
✔ Qīng kǎi shōu jīyu. (cheeng kye show jyeu; Please give me the receipt.)
✔ Wǒ kěyǐ yòng xīnyòng kā ma? (waw kuh yee yoong sheen yoong kah mah; May I use a credit card?)
✔ Wǒ qīng kè. (waw cheeng kuh; It’s on me.)
✔ Zhàngdān bāokuò fúwūfèi ma? (jahng dahn baow kwaw foo woo fay mah; Does the bill include a service charge/tip?)
✔ Zhàngdān yǒu cuò. (jahng dahn yo tsauw; The bill is incorrect.)

The following is a short conversation about paying a tip:

Rebecca: Wōmen de zhàngdān yígòng sānshí kuài qián. Xiǎo fèi yīnggāi duōshāo? (waw mun duh jahng dahn ee goong sahn shir kwye chyan. shyaow fay eeng guy dwaw shaow; Our bill comes to $30 altogether. How much should the tip be?)
Rachel: Yīnwèi fúwù hěn hǎo, suǒyī xiǎo fēi kěyǐ bāi fēn zhí èr shí. Nǐ tóngyì ma? (een way foo woo hun how, swaw yee shyaw fay kuh yee bai fun jir are shir. nee toong ee mah; Because the service was really good, I think we can leave a 20 percent tip. Do you agree?)

Rebecca: Tóngyì. (toong ee; I agree.)

All the Tea in China

You encounter about as many different kinds of tea as you do Chinese dialects. Hundreds, in fact. To make ordering or buying this beverage easier, however, you really only need to know the most common kinds of tea:

✔ Lǜ chá. (lyew chah; Green tea) Green tea is the oldest of all the teas in China, with many unfermented subvarieties. The most famous kind of Green tea is called lóngjǐng chá (loong jeeng chah), meaning Dragon Well tea. You can find it near the famous West Lake region in Hangzhou, and people in the south generally prefer this kind of tea.

✔ Hóng chá. (hoong chah; Black tea) Even though hóng means red in Chinese, you translate this phrase as Black tea. Unlike Green tea, Black teas are fermented and enjoyed primarily by people in Fujian Province.

✔ Wūlóng chá. (oo loong chah; Black dragon tea) This kind of tea is semifermented. It’s a favorite in Guangdong and Fujian provinces and in Taiwan.

✔ Mòli huā chá. (maw lee hwah chah; Jasmine) This kind of tea consists of a combination of Black, Green, and Wūlóng teas, in addition to some fragrant flowers like jasmine or magnolia thrown in for good measure. Most northerners are partial to jasmine tea, probably because the north is cold and this type of tea raises the body’s temperature.
Chapter 6

Shop ‘til You Drop!

In This Chapter
► Checking out the stores
► Looking for clothes and other items
► Bargaining for a better price
► Making comparisons

To mǎi dōngxi (my doong she; buy things) is one of the most enjoyable pastimes for people the world over. Whether you’re just going guàngshāngdiàn (gwahng shahng dyan; window shopping) or actually about to mǎi dōngxi doesn’t matter. You can still enjoy looking at all the shāngpǐn (shahng peen; merchandise), fantasizing about buying that zuànshí jièzhī (dzwan shir jyeh jir; diamond ring), and haggling over the jiàgē (jyah guh; price).

Going to Stores

The following list contains some types of stores you may encounter and some items you can find in them:

✔ Zǎi yīge shūdiàn nǐ kěyǐ mǎi shū, zázhì hé bāozhī. (dzye ee guh shoo dyan nee kuh yee my shoo, dzah jir huh baow jir; In a bookstore, you can buy books, magazines, and newspapers.)

✔ Zǎi yīge wūjīn diàn nǐ kěyǐ mǎi zhuǎnjiē qì, chātōu hé yānwù bàojíng qì. (dzye ee guh woo jeeen dyan nee kuh yee my jwan jyeh chee, chah...
In a hardware store, you can buy adaptors, plugs, and smoke detectors.

In a tobacco shop, you can buy cigars, cigarettes, pipes, and all kinds of tobacco.

In a jewelry store, you can buy bracelets, earrings, necklaces, pins, and rings.

Here are a few other stores you may want to visit:

- 買物 (bye hwaw shahng dyan; department stores)
- 餐館 (chahng pyan dyan; record store)
- 雜貨 (chow jee shir chahng; supermarket)
- 服裝 (foo jwahng dyan; clothing store)
- 礼品 (lee peen dyan; gift shop)
- 購物 (shoo dyan; gift shop)
- 書店 (wahn jyew dyan; bookstore)
- 五金 (woo jeen dyan; hardware store)
- 袜店 (shyeh dyan; shoe store)
- 藥房 (yaow fahng; drugstore)

When you finally make up your mind about what to shop for, you may want to call ahead to check out the store’s hours. The following questions can be helpful:

What time do you open/close?
If all you want to do is browse, you don’t want a salesperson sneaking up behind you and asking Nǐ xiǎng mái shénme? (nee shyahng my shummuh; What would you like to buy?). At this point, just say Wǒ zhǐ shì kàn kàn. Xiè xiè. (waw jir shir kahn kahn. shye shye; I’m just looking. Thanks.)

But if you really do want help, here are some phrases that can help:

✔ Néng bùnèng bāngmǎng? (nung boo nung bahng mahng; Can you help me?)

✔ Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu Yīngwén de shū? (nee yo mayo eeng one duh shoo; Do you have any books in English?)

✔ Nár yǒu wàitào? (Nar yo why taow; Where are the jackets?)

✔ Qīng nǐ gěi wǒ kàn kàn nǐde xīzhūāng. (cheeng nee gay waw kahn kahn nee duh she jwahng; Please show me your [Western] suits.)

✔ Nimen mài bùmài guāngpān? (nee mun my boo my gwahng pahn; Do you sell CDs?)

**Shopping for Clothes**

Going shopping for clothes is an art — one requiring plenty of patience and fortitude, not to mention new vocabulary if you’re going to do it in Chinese.

**What’s your size?**

To find the right dà xiǎo (dah shyaow; size) in Chinese, here are some useful phrases you may want to know:
Nín chuān duō dá hào? (neen chwan dwaw dah how; What size are you?)

Dàxiǎo búduì. (dah shyaow boo dway; It’s the wrong size.)

Hěn hēshēn. (hun huh shun; It fits really well.)

Zǎi Měiguó wǒde chǐcún shì wǔ hào. (dzye may gwaw waw duh chir tsun wair woo how; In America I wear a size 5.)

Instead of using the word dàxiǎo, you can say

Wǒ chuān sānshíqī hào. (waw chwahn sahn shir chee how; I wear a size 37.)

Nín chuān jǐ hào de chéngshān? (neen chwahn jee how duh chun shahn; What size shirt do you wear?)

Wǒ chuān xiǎohào. (waw chwahn shyaow how; I wear a size small.)

Of course, you can always guess your approximate size just by indicating you want to see something in one of the following categories:

xiǎo (shyaow; small)
zhōng (joong; medium)
dà (dah; large)

Here’s a sample conversation using some of these phrases:

Julia: Wǒ xiāng mài yījiàn jiākè. (waw shyahng my ee jyan jyah kuh; I’m looking for a jacket.)

Clerk: Hǎo ba. Nǐ chuān jǐ hào? (how bah. nee chwahn jee how; Very well. What size are you?)

Julia: Wǒ bùzhǐdào. Měiguó de hào mǎ hěn bùyīyàng. (waw boo jir daow. may gwaw duh how ma huh joong gwaw duh how ma hun boo ee yahng; I don’t know. American sizes are quite different from Chinese sizes.)
Clerk: Wǒ gūjǐ nǐ chuān xiǎohào. (waw goo jee nee chwahn shyaow how; I would estimate you wear a size small.)

Julia: Hǎo ba. Nà, máfán nǐ gěi wǒ kǎnkàn xiǎohào de jiákè. Xièxiè. (how bah. nah, mah fahn nee gay waw kahn kahn shyaow how duh jyah kuh. shyeh shyeh; That sounds about right. Would you mind showing me the small size jackets, then? Thank you.)

**Words to Know**

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<td>dah how</td>
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<tr>
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<td>jyah dah how</td>
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<tr>
<td>zhōnghàò</td>
<td>joong how</td>
<td>medium</td>
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**What are you wearing? Chuān versus dàì**

Dài (dye) and chuān (chwan) both mean to wear, but Chinese uses them differently depending on what you’re putting on your body. You dài things like màozi (maow dzuh; hats) and yānjìng (van jeeng; glasses) — in other words accessories, but you chuān things like qūnzi (chewn dzuh; skirts) and dàyī (dah ee; coats).
Here are some things you can chuan:

- běixīn (bay sheen; vest)
- chángkù (chahng koo; pants; also referred to simply as kùzǐ)
- chángxiù (chahng shyoe; long sleeve)
- chènshān (chun shahn; blouse)
- dàyī (dah ee; coat)
- duānkù (dwan koo; shorts)
- duānxīù (dwahn shyoe; short sleeve)
- jiákè (jyah kuh; jacket)
- kùzǐ (koo duzh; pants)
- nēiyī (nay ee; underwear)
- niúzāikù (nyo dzye koo; blue jeans)
- qūnzi (chewn duzh; skirt)
- tuōxié (twaw shyeh; slippers)
- wāzi (wah duzh; socks)
- yūyī (yew ee; raincoat)
- gāogènxiē (gaow gun shyeh; high heels)

Here are some things you dāi:

- lǐngdài (leeng dye; necktie)
- shōubiǎo (show byow; wristwatch)
- shōutào (show taow; gloves)
- zhūbāo (joo byaow; jewelry)

**Asking about the color**

Yánse (yan suh; colors) are an important consideration when buying clothes. Do you generally prefer dānsè (dahn suh; solid colors) or huā (hwah; patterned) shirts? The following is a list of handy words the next time you go shopping either for clothes or for material to create your own.
bái (bye; white)
fěnhóng (fun hoong; pink)
héi (hey; black)
hóng (hoong; red)
huáng (hwahng; yellow)
júhóng (jyew hoong; orange)
lán (lahn; blue)
zǐ (dzuh; purple)
dànsè (dahn suh; solid color)
dàn yídīān (dahn ee dyan; lighter)
duànzi (dwahn dzuh; satin)
huā (hwah; patterned)
kāishímǐ (kye shir mee; cashmere)
lāozi (lyaow dzuh; fabric)
shēn yídīān (shun ee dyan; darker)
síchóu (suh cho; silk)
yángmáo (yahng maow; wool)

Here's a conversation that incorporates colors:

Laurel: Zhè jiàn máoyī nǐ juédè zěnmeyàng? (jay jyan maow ee nee jweh duh dzummuh yahng; What do you think of this sweater?)

John: Nà jiàn máoyī tài xiǎo. Yánsè yě būpiàoliáng. (nay jyan mow ee tye shyaow yan suh yeah boo pyaow yahng; That sweater is too small. The color doesn't look good either.)

Laurel: Nǐ xīhuān shénme yánṣè? (nee she hwahng shummuh yan suh; What color do you like?)

John: Wǒ xīhuān hóngde. Búyào nēige hēide. (waw she hwahng hoong duh. boo yaow nay guh hey duh; I like the red one. You shouldn't get the black one.)

Laurel: Hǎole. Nà, wǒ jiù mǎi hóngde ba. (how luh. nah, waw jyo my hoong duh bah; Okay. In that case I'll buy the red one.)
When the possessive particle de is attached to an adjective and no noun follows it, it can be translated as the one which is (adjective), as in hóngde (hoong duh; the red one), dà de (dah duh; the big one), tián de (tyan duh; the sweet one), and so on.

You can use two classifiers when it comes to clothing: jiàn and tiáo. Classifiers are the words used in between a number or the words this or that and the clothing you’re talking about. Jiàn is used when you’re talking about clothing worn on the upper part of the body, and tiáo is used for clothes worn on the lower part. So you’d say yījiàn chènshān (ee jyan chun shahn; one shirt) or sān tiáo kūzī (sahn tyaow koo dzuh; three pairs of pants).

Shopping for Other Items

Of course clothes aren’t the only items in the world to buy. How about some antiques or hi-tech toys? The possibilities are endless in today’s consumer-oriented world.

Hunting for antiques

One of the best places in the world to go searching for gūdōng (goo doong; antiques) is — you guessed it — China. The following words and phrases can come in handy when hunting for antiques:

✔ Zhè shì něige cháodài de? (jay shir nay guh chaow dye duh; Which dynasty is this from?)
✔ Néng dài chángguó ma? (nung dye choo gwaw mah; Can it be taken out of China?)
✔ Nide gūdōng dītān zài nàr? (nee duh goo doong dee tahn dzye nar; Where are your antique carpets?)
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✓ Kéiyī bûkéyi jìa zhúnxū chûguó de huǒqiī yīn? (kuh yee boo kuh yee jyah jwun shyew choo gwaw duh hwaw chee yeen; Can you put the export seal on it?)
✓ Zhèige duǒshāo nián? (jay guh dwaw shaow nyan; How old is this?)
✓ Nêige cháodài de? (nay guh chaow dye duh? Which dynasty is it from?)
✓ bí yān hú (bee yan who; snuff bottles)
✓ dēnglóng (dung loong; lantern)
✓ diāokè pīn (dyaw kuh peer; carved objects)
✓ fōxiàng (faw shyahng; Buddhas)
✓ gūdōng diàn (goo doong dyan; antique shop)
✓ gūdōng jiājū (goo doong jyah jyew; antique furniture)
✓ gūzi (gway duzh; chest)
✓ jībài yòng de zhúōzi (jee bye yoong duh jwaw duzh; altar table)
✓ jǐngtài lán (jeeng tye lahn; cloisonné)
✓ píngfēng (peeng fung; screen)
✓ shénxìàng (shun shyahng; idol)
✓ shūfā (shoo fah; calligraphy)
✓ xiōngzhēn (shyooong zhuhn; brooch)
✓ xiùhuā zhîpîn (shyow hwah jir peen; embroidery)
✓ yù (yew; jade)

Buying hi-tech and electronics

New electronic gadgets appear on the market every two minutes these days, or so it seems. The following list includes some of the most commonly used (and most commonly bought) items you may need:

✓ chuánzhēn jǐ (chwahn juhn jee; fax machine)
✓ dâyînî (dah yeen jee; printer)
diànnǎo shèbèi (dyen noow shuh bay; computer equipment)
diànsī jī (dyen shir jee; TV)
gèrén diànnǎo (guh run dyen noow; PC)
guāngpān (gwahng pahn; CD)
jiàn pān (jyan pahn; keyboard)
jīsuàn jī (jee swaan jee; computer)
kālāōukě jī (kah lah okay jee; karaoke machine)
ruānjīān (rwahn jyan; software)
sāomiáoyí (saow myaow ee; scanner)
shèxiāng jī (shuh shyahng jee; camcorder)
shōútíshī (show tee shir; laptop)
shūbiāo (shoe byaow; mouse)
xīānshīqi (shyan shir chee; monitor)
yīngjiàn (eeng jyan; computer hardware)
zhūhē yǐnxīāng (dzoo huh yeen shyahng; stereo system)

Hitting the Markets for Food

Outdoor markets in China usually offer all sorts of food items. Table 6-1 lists them for you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6-1</th>
<th>Typical Foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Word(s)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ròu</td>
<td>row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>niúròu</td>
<td>nyoe row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yángròu</td>
<td>yahng row</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jīròu</td>
<td>jee row</td>
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<td>yú</td>
<td>yew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiā</td>
<td>shyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Word(s)</td>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pángxìè</td>
<td>pahng shyeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lóngxiā</td>
<td>loong shyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yóuyú</td>
<td>yo yew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuǐguǒ</td>
<td>shway gwaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>píngguǒ</td>
<td>peeng gwaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>júzi</td>
<td>jyew dzuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biàndōu</td>
<td>byan doe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bōcài</td>
<td>baw tsye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dòufu</td>
<td>doe foo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fānqié</td>
<td>fahn chyeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gàilán</td>
<td>gye lahn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mówů</td>
<td>maw goo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qiézi</td>
<td>chyeh dzuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qǐngjiǎo</td>
<td>cheeng jyaow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tǔdōu</td>
<td>too doe</td>
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<tr>
<td>xīlánhuā</td>
<td>she lahn hwah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yáng báicài</td>
<td>yahng bye tsye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yùmǐ</td>
<td>yew me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhússün</td>
<td>joo swoon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These following words can be helpful when buying food:

- **màiròude** (*my row duh*; butcher)
- **chāojí shìchāng** (*chow jee shir chahng*; supermarket)
- **shìchāng** (*shir chahng*; market)
- **shípīn záhuò** (*shir peen dzah hwaw*; groceries)
When buying fruits and vegetables, you buy by the weight, which is the metric system in both mainland China and Taiwan. The basic unit of weight is the gōngkē (goong kuh; gram). The standard liquid measurement is the shēng (shung; liter). One liter equals about 1.06 quarts. Table 6-2 gives you a list of weights and measures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6-2</th>
<th>Weights and Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Word</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pîntūō</td>
<td>peen twaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bàng</td>
<td>bahng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuātūō</td>
<td>kwah twaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>àngsí</td>
<td>ahng suh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiālún</td>
<td>jyah lwun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōngkē</td>
<td>goong kuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōngjīn</td>
<td>goong jeen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>háokē</td>
<td>how kuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shēng</td>
<td>shung</td>
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<tr>
<td>lîmî</td>
<td>lee mee</td>
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<tr>
<td>gōnglǐ</td>
<td>goong lee</td>
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<tr>
<td>mî</td>
<td>mee</td>
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<tr>
<td>yînglǐ</td>
<td>eeng lee</td>
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<tr>
<td>mà</td>
<td>mah</td>
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<tr>
<td>yîngcûn</td>
<td>eeng tswun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yîngchî</td>
<td>eeng chir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Getting a Good Price and Paying

When you’re ready to buy some merchandise, here are two simple ways to ask how much the products cost:

- Duōshāo qián? (dweaw shaow chyan; How much money is it?)
- Jīkuài qián? (jee kwye chyan; literally: How many dollars does it cost?)

The only difference between the two questions is the implied amount of the cost. If you use the question word “duōshāo” (dweaw shaow), you want to inquire about something that’s most likely greater than $10. If you use “jī” in front of kuài (kwye; the term for dollars), you assume the product costs less than $10. Of course, whether you accept that price depends on where you’re shopping.

Negotiating prices at the night market

Among the more fun things to do in Taiwan and mainland China is visit one of the many lively night markets. Because the Chinese love to mǎi dōngxi (my doong she; shop) and tāojià huānjià (taow jyah hwahn jyah; haggle), you’ll have plenty of company on your sojourns.

You always need to assume that prices are negotiable in an open-air market. You can always ask one of the following and see what happens:

- Néng bùnéng piányí yidiār? (nunng boo nunng pyan yee ee dyar; Can you sell it more cheaply?)
- Néng bùnéng shǎo yidiār? (nunng boo nunng shaow ee dyar; Can you lower the price?)

Or you can always play hardball and say something like Zěnmé zhènmé guī a? (dzummah jummah gway ah; Why is this so expensive?) in an exasperated voice, start walking away and see what happens. These haggling-related phrases are also worth knowing:
Nimen shou bu shou Meiyuan? (nee mun show boo show may ywan; Do you accept U.S. dollars?)

Zhige duoshao qian? (jay guh dwaw shaw chyan; How much is this?)

Da zhe, hao buhao? (dah juh, how boo how; How about giving me a discount?)

Kyi jiang jia ma? (kuh yee jyahng jyah mah; Can we negotiate the price?)

The following conversation uses some of these phrases:

Kate: Zhe tiao hong qunzi duoshao qian? (jay tyaow hoong chwun dzuh dwaw shaow chyan; How much is this red skirt?)

Clerk: Na tiao qunzi ershiwu kuai qian. (nah tyaow chwun dzuh are shir woo kwye chyan; That skirt is $25.)

Kate: Na tai guile! Ni neng buneng da zhe? (nah tye gway luh. nee nung boo nung dah juh; That’s too expensive! Can you give me a discount?)

Clerk: Keneng. (kuh nung. Perhaps.)

Kate: Ni neng gei wo duoda de zhekou? (nee nung gay waw dwaw dah duh juh ko; How much of a discount can you give me?)

Clerk: Bai fen zhi shi, hao buhao? (bye fun jir shir, how boo how; How’s 10 percent?)

Kate: Na tai hao le. Xiexie. (nah tye how luh. shyeh shyeh; That’s great. Thanks.)

**Demanding a refund**

If you end up being buyuakai (boo yew kwye; unhappy) about your purchase, one of these phrases may come in handy when you try to tui (tway; return) your huo (hwaw; merchandise):

Wo yaoqiui tuikuan. (waw yaow chyo tway kwahn; I want a refund.)
Wǒ yào tuì huò. (waw yaow tway hwaw; I would like to return this.)

Qǐng nǐ bā qián jīn wǒ de xīnyòng kǎ. (cheeng nee bah chyan jee roow waw duh sheen yoong kah; Please refund my credit card.)

Wǒ néng bùnèng jiān zǒngjīnglǐ? (waw nung boo nung jyan dzoong jeeng lee; May I see the manager?)

Qǐng nǐ bāo qīlái. (cheeng nee baow chee lee; Please wrap these/this.)

Dui wǒ bù hēshēn. (dway waw boo huh shun; It doesn’t fit me.)

Comparing Quality: Good, Better, Best

When you want to let loose with a superlative in order to say something is absolutely the best — or, for that matter, the worst — always keep this one little word in mind: zúi (dzway), which means the most (it’s the equivalent of the suffix -est).

Zúi is a word just waiting for something to follow it; otherwise it won’t have much meaning. Here are some superlatives you may need to use from time to time:

✔ zúi lèi (dzway lay; the most tired)
✔ zúi màn (dzway mahn; the slowest)
✔ zúi máng (dzway mahng; the busiest)
✔ zúi qíguài (dzway chee guye; the strangest)
✔ zúi yōu míng (dzway yo meeng; the most famous)
✔ zúi yóu qián (dzway yo chyan; the richest)

If you just want to say that something is better than something else, or “more” something, rather than the best necessarily, you use the word gèng (guhng)
before an adjective. You can consider these the equivalent of the suffix -er. Another word that has the meaning of more or -er is yidiān (ee dyan). Although the term gèng comes before an adjective, the term yidiān must appear after it. Instead of saying gèng kuài (gung kuye; faster), for example, say kuài yidiān (kuye ee dyan) to mean faster.

Here are some examples:

✔ gèng cōngming (guhng tsoong meeng; smarter)
✔ gèng gui (guhng gway; more expensive)
✔ piányi yidiān (pyan yee ee dyan; cheaper)
✔ gèng kuài (guhng kuye; faster)
✔ gèng màn (guhng mahn; slower)
✔ hāo (how; good)
✔ gèng hāo (guhng how; better)
✔ zuí hāo (dzway how; best)
✔ duān yidiān (dwahn ee dyan; shorter)
✔ cháng yidiān (chahng ee dyan; longer)
✔ xiǎo yidiān (shyaow ee dyan; smaller)
✔ dā yidiān (dah ee dyan; larger)
✔ gèng piányi (gung pyan yee; cheaper)

When you want to compare people or objects, you generally put the word bǐ (bee; compared to) between two nouns, followed by an adjective: A bǐ B (adjective). This means A is more ____ than B.

Here are a few examples:

✔ Píngguó bǐ júzī hāochī. (peeng gwaw bee jyew dzuh how chir; Apples are tastier than oranges.)
✔ Zhèige fāngwū bǐ nèige fāngwū guì. (jay guh fahn gwaw bee nay guh fahng gwaw gwaw; This restaurant is more expensive than that one.)
✔ Tā bǐ nǐ niánqīng. (tah bee nee nyan cheeng; She’s younger than you.)
If instead you want to convey similarity between two things, use the coverbs gèn (gun) or hé (huh) in between the two things being compared, followed by the word yìyàng (ee yahng; the same) and then the adjective. So if you say A gèn B yìyàng dà (A gun B ee yahng dah), you're saying that A and B are equally large or as big as each other. You can also just say A gèn B yìyàng, meaning A and B are the same. Here are some other things you can say with this sentence pattern:

✔️ Gège hé didi yìyàng gāo. (guh guh huh dee dee ee yahng goo; My older brother is as tall as my younger brother.

✔️ Māo gèn gōu yìyàng tiáopi. (maow gun go ee yahng tyaow pee; Cats are just as naughty as dogs.)

✔️ Wǒ gèn nǐ yìyàng dà. (waw gun nee ee yahng dah; You and I are the same age.)

To make a negative comparison, such as I'm not as tall as he, use the following sentence pattern:

A méiyǒu B nèmme adjective

The means “A is not as (adjective) as B.” You can see this pattern in action in the following sentences:

✔️ Shāyú méiyǒu jīnyū nèmme kě’ài. (shah yew mayo jeen yew nummah kuh eye; Sharks are not as cute as goldfish.)

✔️ Yīngwén méiyǒu Zhōngwén nèmme nán. (eeng one mayo joong one nummah nahn; English is not as difficult as Chinese.)

✔️ Māo de wēiba méiyǒu tūzi de wēiba nèmme cū. (maow duh way bah mayo too dzuh duh way bah nummah toor; Cats’ tails aren’t as thick as the tails of rabbits.)

Here's a dialog using comparisons:

Olivia: Zhè jiàn qǐpáo zěnmeyāng? (jay jyan chee paow dzummah yahng; What do you think of this traditional Chinese dress?)
Lêilêi: Wǒ juéde hěn hǎo. (waw jweh duh hun how; I think it looks great.)

Olivia: Zhènde ma? (jun duh mah; Really?)

Lêilêi: Zhènde. Kēshì jīnsède méiyǒu hóngde nèmmé piàoliàng. (jun duh. kuh shir jeen suh duh mayo hoong duh nummah pyaow lyahng; Really. But the gold one isn’t as pretty as the red one.)

Olivia: Jīnsède hé hóngde yīyàng gui ma? (jeen suh duh huh hoong duh ee yahng gway mah; Are the gold one and the red one the same price?)

Lêilêi: Méiyǒu. Jīnsède bǐ hóngde piányi. (mayo. jeen suh duh bee hoong duh pyan yee; No. The gold one is less expensive than the red one.)

Olivia: Nà, wǒ jiù mǎi jīnsède. (nah, waw jyoe my jeen suh duh; In that case I’ll buy the gold one.)
Chapter 7

Making Leisure a Top Priority

In This Chapter
► Getting into the nightlife
► Talking about your hobbies
► Appreciating Mother Nature
► Exercising as an athlete

Life requires a little fun, a little going out on the town, a little immersing yourself in a hobby, a little getting outdoors, a little delving into art, and a little playing your favorite sport. This chapter gets you out of the house.

Going Out on the Town

If you have an active nightlife, then you want to review this section thoroughly. It offers you plenty of vocabulary to help you when you’re out on the town.

Attending a performance

Are you planning on taking in a few yānchū (yan choo; shows) in the near future? You have so much to choose from nowadays:

✔ bālèi (bah lay; ballet)
✔ diànyīng (dyan yeeng; movie)
- gējù (guh jyew; opera)
- yǐnyuèhuì (yin yweh hway; music concert)

The following phrases can help you get what you want, or at least understand what you’re being told:

- Zài năr kěyǐ mǎidào piào? (dzye nar kuh yee my daow pyaow; Where can I buy tickets?)
- Yǒu méiyǒu jīntiān wǎnshàng yǎnchū de piào? (yo mayo jin tyan wahn shahng yan choo duh pyaow; Are there any tickets to tonight’s performance?)
- Duibuqǐ, jīntiān wǎnshàng de piào dōu màiwǎn le. (dway boo chee, jin tyan wahn shahng duh pyaow doe my wahn luh; I’m sorry, tickets for tonight are all sold out.)
- Wǒ yào māi yì zhāng dàréng piào, liǎng zhāng ěrtóng piào. (waw yaow my ee jahng dah run pyaow, lyahng jahng are toong pyaow; I’d like to buy one adult ticket and two kids’ tickets.)
- Shénme shǐhòu kāiyān? (shummuh shir ho kye yan; What time does the show begin?)
- Shénme shǐhòu yān wán? (shummuh shir ho yan wahn; What time does the show end?)

You can use these phrases in a conversation like this one:

Maria: Nīmen jīntiān wǎnshàng xiǎng kàn shénme? Kàn huàjūma? (nee men jin tyan wahn shahng shyahng kahn shummuh? kahn hwah jyew mah; What do you guys want to see tonight? A play?)

Catherine: Wǒ hěn xiǎng qù kàn wūshù biāoyán. Zājī biāoyán yě kěyī. (waw hun shyahng chyew kahn woo shoo byaow yan. dzah jee byaow yan yeah kuh yee; I’d really like to see a martial arts performance. Acrobatics would be okay, too.)

Elizabeth: Wǒ xiǎng kàn huàjū. (waw shyahng kahn hwah jyew; I want to see a play.)
Maria: Nimen kāngùō Jǐngjū ma? nee mun kahn gwaw jeeng jyew mah; Have you ever seen Peking Opera?

Catherine: Méiyǒu. (mayo; No.)

Maria: Nà, wǒmen qù kàn Jǐngjū ba! Jǐngjū shénme dōu yǒu. Yǒu huàjù, yǒu wǔshù, lián záji yě yǒu. (nah, waw mun chyew kahn jeeng jyew bah! jeeng jyew shummu doh yo. hwah jywyo, woo shoo yo, lyan dzah jee yeah yo; In that case, let’s go to see Peking Opera! It has everything. It has a play, it has martial arts, and it even has acrobatics.)

Maria: Ni hǎo. Wǒ xiāng mǎi sānzhāng jǐntiān wǎnshàng de piào. (nee how. waw shyahng my sahn jahng jin tyan wahn shahng duh pyaow; Hello. I’d like to buy three tickets to tonight’s performance.)

Clerk: Hǎo ba. Jǐntiān wǎnshàng de piào chàbùduō dōu máiwǎn le. Zhi yǒu ěr lóu de zuòwèi. (how bah jin tyan wahn shahng duh pyaow chah boo dwaw doh my wahn luh. jir yo are low duh dzwaaw way; Sure. Tickets for tonight are almost all sold out. We only have second floor seats left.)

Maria: ěr lóu méiyǒu wèntí. Qián pái zuòwèi de piào yǒu méiyǒu? (are low mayo one tee. chyan pye dzwaaw way duh pyaow yo mayo; Second floor is no problem. Do you have any front row seats, though?)

Clerk: Yǒu. Yīgòng sānshí kuài qián. (yo. ee goong sahn shir kwee chyan; Yes. That will be $30 all together.)

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**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bālèi wǔ</td>
<td>ballet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dìfāng xì</td>
<td>local folk opera</td>
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*continued*
### Words to Know (continued)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gēwǔ</td>
<td>guh woo</td>
<td>song and dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jīngjù</td>
<td>jeeng jyew</td>
<td>Peking Opera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jùchǎng</td>
<td>jyew chahng</td>
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<td>lǐtáng</td>
<td>lee tahng</td>
<td>auditorium</td>
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<tr>
<td>lóushàng de wèizi</td>
<td>lo shahng duh way dzuh</td>
<td>balcony seats</td>
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<tr>
<td>lóuxià de wèizi</td>
<td>lo shyah duh way dzuh</td>
<td>orchestra seats</td>
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<td>mùjlàn</td>
<td>moo jyan</td>
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<td>shyo she</td>
<td></td>
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<td>piào</td>
<td>pyaow</td>
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<td>wūshù</td>
<td>woo shoo</td>
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<td>biāoyǎn</td>
<td>byaow yan</td>
<td>performance</td>
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<td>yīnyuè tīng</td>
<td>yin yweh teeng</td>
<td>concert hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yuèjù</td>
<td>yweh jyew</td>
<td>Cantonese opera</td>
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<td>zájī</td>
<td>dzah jee</td>
<td>acrobatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>biāoyǎn</td>
<td>byaow yan</td>
<td>performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Exploring museums and galleries

Theater shows and live musical performances aren’t the only forms of entertainment you can see to get your fill of wénhuà (one hwa; culture). One of the nicest, calmest activities to do at your own pace is to visit a bówùguǎn (baw woo gwahn; museum) or huàláŋ (hwah lahng; gallery). Sometimes the best
reason to go to a bówuguān is to buy some lìwù (lee woo; gifts) and some cool zhāotiē (jaow tyeh; posters).

Here are some questions you may want to ask in a museum or gallery:

- Bówuguān jídiăn zhōng kāimén? (baw woo gwahm jee dyan joong kye mun; What time does the museum open?)
- Lǐpīn shāngdiàn shénme shíhòu guānmén? (lee peeng shahng dyan shummuh shir ho gwahm mun; What time does the gift shop close?)
- Nīmen mài būmài zhāotiē? (nee mun my boo my jaow tyeh; Do you sell posters?)

**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bówuguān</th>
<th>baw woo gwahm</th>
<th>museum</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>huàláng</td>
<td>hwah lahng</td>
<td>gallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiézuò</td>
<td>jyeh dzwaw</td>
<td>masterpiece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shōuyīrén</td>
<td>shoh ee run</td>
<td>artisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yìshù</td>
<td>ee shoo</td>
<td>art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yìshùjiā</td>
<td>ee shoo jyah</td>
<td>artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visiting historical sites**

By far the easiest way to see the major historical sites in China is to join a tour. Here are some phrases that may come in handy:

- Lǐxíngshè zài nàr? (lyew sheeng shuh dzye nar; Where’s the travel agency?)
- Yōu méiyǒu shuō Yīngwén de dāoyóu? (yo mayo shuaw eeng one duh daow yo; Are there any English-speaking guides?)
Bàn tiān duōshāo qián? (bahn tyan dwaw shaw chyan; How much for half a day?)

Ni yǒu méi yǒu lǐyóu shōu cē? (nee yo mayo lyew yo show tshuh; Do you have a guidebook?)

Qīngwén, zài nǎr kěyǐ mǎi piào? (cheeng one, dzye nar kuh yee my pyaow; Excuse me, where can I buy tickets for admission?)

Hǎo jíle. Piào jià duōshāo? (how jee luh. pyaow jyah dwaw shaow; Great. How much is the ticket price?)

Xiǎoháizi miǎnfèi ma? (shyaow hi dzuh myan fay mah; Do children get in free?)

Wǒmen kě bù kěyǐ zhàoxiàng? (waw mun kuh boo kuh yee jaow shyahng; May we take pictures?)

Going to the movies
So you want to relax, kick back, and take in a movie. What kind of movie do you want to see? Table 7-1 gives you a few genres to choose from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7-1</th>
<th>Movie Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Word(s)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xǐ jù piān</td>
<td>she jyew pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gǔ shì piān</td>
<td>goo shir pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ài qíng piān</td>
<td>eye cheeng pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōng zuò piān</td>
<td>doong dzwaw pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jí lù piān</td>
<td>jee loo pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōng huà piān</td>
<td>doong hwah pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kǒng bù piān</td>
<td>koong boo pyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wù xiá piān</td>
<td>woo shyah pyan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the following conversation as an example of talking about movies:

Wendy: Wōmen jīntiān wǎnshàng qù kàn yībù diànyīng ba. (waw mun jin tyan wahn shahng chyew kahn ee boo dyan yeeng bah; Let’s go see a movie tonight.)

Tom: Jīntiān yǎn shénme? (jin tyan yan shum-muh; What’s playing today?)

Wendy: Yīge Zhāng Yīmóu dāoyān de piānzi. Wǒ wàngle nèige míngzi. (ee guh jahng ee moe daow yan duh pyan dzuh. waw waling luh nay guh meeng dzuh; A film directed by Zhang Yimou. I forget the name.)

Tom: Shì shuō Yīngwén de ma? (shir shwaw eeng one duh mah; Is it in English?)

Wendy: Bùshì, kěshì yǒu Yīngwén zìmù. (boo shir, kuh shir yo eeng one dzuh moo; No, but there are English subtitles.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words to Know</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dǎoyān</td>
<td>daow yan</td>
<td>director</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diànyīng yuàn</td>
<td>dyan yeeng ywan</td>
<td>movie theater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diànyīng yuàn zài nǎr?</td>
<td>dyan yeeng ywan dzye nar</td>
<td>Where’s the movie theater?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nán yǎnyuán</td>
<td>nahn yan ywan</td>
<td>actor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nǚ yǎnyuán</td>
<td>nyew yan ywan</td>
<td>actress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wàiguópiān</td>
<td>wye gwaw pyan</td>
<td>foreign film</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yīngwén zìmù</td>
<td>eeng one dzuh moo</td>
<td>English subtitles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Listening to a concert

You often hear that the language of music crosses international boundaries. If you’re feeling a bit exhausted after practicing Chinese, you can head to a concert in the evening where you can relax. Let the music transport you to another mental space.

At the end of a concert in China, you don’t hear anyone yelling “Encore!” What you do hear, however, is “Zài lái yíge, zài lái yíge!” (dzye lye ee guh, dzye lye ee guh; Bring on one more!)

Here are some words that may come in handy:

- dàiwèiyuán (dye way ywan; usher)
- gè chàng hui (guh chahng hway; choral recital)
- guódìàn yīnyuè (goo dyan een yweh; classical music)
- jiāoxiǎng yuè (jaow shyahng yweh; symphonic music)
- jíémùdān (jye moo dah; program)
- juéshi yīnyuè (jyeuh shir een yweh; jazz music)
- mǐngē (meen guh; folk song)
- qì yuè (chee yweh; instrumental music)
- shínxí yuè (shir nay yweh; chamber music)
- yáogūn yuè (yaow gun yweh; rock ‘n’ roll)
- yǐnyuè hūì (een yweh hway; concert)
- Zhōngguó guódìányīnyuè (joong gwaw goo dyan yeen yweh; classical Chinese music)

Hopping around bars and clubs

The following phrases may come in handy when you’re out exploring the local pubs and dance halls:

- Qīng lái yīpíng píjiǔ. (cheeng lye ee peeng pee jyo; Please bring me a bottle of beer.)
When you go to a bar with friends, you may ask for some bǐngzhèn píjiǔ (beeng juhn pee jyo; cold beer) or maybe some hóng (hoong; red) or bái (bye; white) pútáo jiǔ (poo taow jyo; wine). And don’t forget to ask for some huāshēngmǐ (huah shung mee; peanuts) or tūduǒpiàn (too doe pyan; potato chips) so you don’t get too sloshed with all that píjiǔ.

**Naming Your Hobbies**

Having at least one yèyú àihào (yeh yew eye how; hobby) is always good. How about getting involved in some of the following?

- diàoyú (dyaw yew; fishing)
- guójí xiàngqí (gwaw jee shyahng chee; chess)
- kàn shū (kahn shoo; reading)
- niǎo (nyaow; birds)
- pèngtiáò (pung tyaow; cooking)
- píngpāngqiú (peeng pahng chyo; Ping Pong)
- pú kè (poo kuh; cards)
- tāijíquán (tye jee chwan; commonly referred to just as Tai Ji, a slow form of martial arts)
- yóupiào (yo pyaow; stamps)
- yuányì (ywan ee; gardening)
If you want to ask a person what his or her hobby is, use the following terms.

✔️  Ni huǐ bù huí dǎ tàijíquán? (nee hway boo hway dah tiye jee chwah; Do you know how to do Tai Ji?)
✔️  Ni dǎ bùdā pìngpāngqiú? (nee dah boo dah peeng pahng chyo; Do you play Ping Pong?)
✔️  Ni dǎ májiàng ma? (nee dah mah jyahng mah; Do you play mah-jongg?)

Both tàijíquán and májiàng are quintessential Chinese pastimes. In addition to tàijíquán, everyone is familiar with other forms of wǔshù (woo shoo; martial arts), including kung fu — a martial art practiced since the Tang (tahng) dynasty back in the eighth century. In fact, you can still see kung fu masters practicing at the Shaolin Temple in Zhengzhou, Henan Province — one great reason for making a trip off the beaten path if you ever visit China.

**Exploring Nature**

If you want to get far from the madding crowds, or even just far enough away from your bàngōngshì (bahn goong shir; office) to feel refreshed, try going to one of the seven sacred shān (shahn; mountains) or a beautiful hāitàn (hi tahn; beach) to take in the shānshuì (shahn shway; scenery).

Here are some things you would see along the way if you were to travel through the Chinese countryside:

✔️  bāotā (baow tah; pagoda)
✔️  dàomiào (daow meow; Daoist temple)
✔️  dàotián (daow tyan; rice paddies)
✔️  fómiào (faw meow; Buddhist temple)
✔️  kōngmiào (koong meow; Confucian temple)
✔️  miào (meow; temple)
✔️  nóngmín (noong meen; farmers)
If you’re ever exploring dàzìrán (dah dzuh rahn; nature) with a friend who speaks Chinese, a few of these words may come in handy:

✔ àn (ahn; shore)
✔ chítáng (chir tahng; pond)
✔ hāi (hi; ocean)
✔ hāitān (hi tahn; beach)
✔ hé (huh; river)
✔ hú (hoo; lake)
✔ shāmò (shah maw; desert)
✔ shān (shahn; mountains)
✔ shāndōng (shahn doong; cave)
✔ xiāo shān (shyaow shahn; hills)

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**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fēngjǐng</th>
<th>fung jeeng</th>
<th>scenery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>piàoliàng</td>
<td>pyaow lyahng</td>
<td>beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tiāntáng</td>
<td>tyan tahng</td>
<td>paradise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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To indicate a similarity between two ideas or objects, use the phrase xiàng ... yìyàng. Here are some examples:

✔ xiàng nǐ dī dì yìyàng (shyahng nee dee dee ee yahng; like your younger brother)

✔ xiàng qīngwā yìyàng (shyahng cheeng wah e e yahng; like a frog)

✔ xiàng fēngzì yìyàng (shyahng fungdzuh ee yahng; like a crazy person)
Tapping into Your Artistic Side

Okay, now you're ready to tap into your more sensitive, artistic side in Chinese. Don't be afraid of expressing your gânqíng (gahn cheeng; emotions). The Chinese appreciate sensitivity to their Song (soong) dynasty shànsuī huà (shahn shway hwa; landscape painting) or the beauty of a Ming (meeng) dynasty cíqí (tsuh chee; porcelain).

I bet you have tons of chuàngzàoxing (chwhahng dzaow sheeng; creativity). If so, try your hand at one of these fine arts:

- diāokè (dyaww kuh; sculpting)
- huà (hwa; painting)
- shūfā (shoo fah; calligraphy)
- shuǐcāihuà (shway tseh hwa; watercolor)
- sùmiáohuà (soo meow hwa; drawing)
- tánqi (taow chee; pottery)

Like kids all over the world, many Chinese children take xiǎo tíqín (shyaow tee cheen; violin) and gāngqín (gahng cheen; piano) classes — often under duress. Do you play a yuè qì (yweh chee; musical instrument)? How about trying your hand (or mouth) at one of these?

- chángdí (chahng deh; flute)
- chánghào (chahng haw; trombone)
- dà hào (dah haw; tuba)
- dānhuángguǎn (dahn hwaehng gwan; clarinet)
- dà tíqín (dah tee cheen; cello)
- gāngqín (gahng cheen; piano)
- gū (goo; drums)
- lába (lah bah; trumpet)
- jíta (gee tah; guitar)
- nán đîyîn (nahd dee een; double bass)
Chapter 7: Making Leisure a Top Priority

✔ sâkèsíguăn (sah kuh suh gwahn; saxophone)
✔ shuânghuângguăn (shwahng hwahng gwan; oboe)
✔ shùqín (shoo cheen; harp)
✔ xiāo tíqín (shyaow tee cheen; violin)
✔ zhōng tíqín (joong tee cheen; viola)

If you’ve heard any traditional Chinese music at a concert or on a CD, you’ve probably heard one of these Chinese yuè qì (yweh chee; musical instruments) at one point or another:

✔ èrhú (are hoo; a two-stringed bowed instrument)
✔ gūzhěng (goo juhng; a long, plucked string instrument that rests on a large stand in front of you)
✔ pípa (pee pah; a plucked string instrument with a fretted fingerboard that sits on your lap)

The Chinese language has a couple of different verbs that you can use to indicate the practice of various instruments.

✔ For stringed instruments: Use the verb là (lah; to draw, as in draw a bow). For example, là zhōng tíqín (lah joong tee cheen; play the viola).

✔ For wind instruments: Use chuī (chway; to blow).

✔ For other instruments: Use tán (tahn; play) a gāngqín (gahng cheen; piano).

Getting into Sports

No matter where you go in the world, you’ll find a national pastime. In the United States, it’s bàngqiú (bahng chyo; baseball). In most of Europe, it’s zúqiú (dzoo chyo; soccer). And in China, it’s píngpāngqiú (peeng pahng chyo; Ping Pong). The following are popular sports you may encounter.
✔ bàngqiú (bahng chyo; baseball)
✔ bíngqiú (beeng chyo; hockey)
✔ yǐngshì zúqiú (eeng shir dzoo chyo; soccer
(literally: English-style football)
✔ lánniú (lahn chyo; basketball)
✔ lēiqiú (lay chyo; softball)
✔ páiqiú (pye chyo; volleyball)
✔ píngpăngqiú (peeng pahng chyo; Ping Pong)
✔ shōuqiú (show chyo; handball)
✔ ūncào (tee tsaow; gymnastics)
✔ wāngqiú (wahng chyo; tennis)
✔ yūmáoqiú (yew maow chyo; badminton)
✔ zúqiú (dzoo chyo; football)

Yóuyōng (yo yoong; swimming) is also a quite popular
sport. Here are some related words:

✔ cè yōng (tsuh yoong; side stroke)
✔ diè yōng (dyeh yoong; butterfly stroke)
✔ wā yōng (wah yoong; breast stroke or frog-style)
✔ yāng yōng (yahng yoong; backstroke)
✔ yóuyōng mào (yo yoong maow; swimming cap)
✔ ziyóu yōng (duh yo yoong; freestyle swimming)

Some games require the use of píngpăngqiú pāi
(peeng pahng chyo pye; Ping-Pong paddles); others
require wāngqiú pāi (wahng chyo pye; tennis rackets)
or lánniú (lahn chyo; basketballs). All games, however,
require a sense of gōngpíng jíngzhēng (goong peeng
jeeng jung; fair play).

Here are some useful phrases to know, whether you’re
an amateur or a professional athlete:

✔ Wǒ xiāng qù kàn qiúsài. (waw shyahng chyew
tahn chyo sye; I want to see a ballgame.)
✔ Bǐsài shénme shíhòu kāíshì? (bee sye shummmuh
shir ho kye shir; When does the game begin?)
✔ Bǐfēn duōshǎo? (bee fun dwaw shaow; What’s the score?)

✔ Néixiē duì cǎnjiā bìsài? (nay shyeh dway tsahn jya bee sye; Which teams are playing?)

✔ Wǒ yíngge. (waw yeeng luh; I won.)

✔ Nǐ shūle. (nee shoo luh; You lost.)

✔ Wǒ zhēn xūyào liànxì. (waw fun shyew yaow lyan she; I really need to practice.)

✔ méi tóuzhòng (may toe joong; to miss the shot)

Here’s a list of things that happen at sports events. You need to know these terms if you want to follow the action:

✔ chuī shàozì (chway shaow dzuh; to blow a whistle)

✔ dāngzhù qiú (dahng joo chyo; to block the ball)

✔ dé yì fēn (duh ee fun; to score a point)

✔ fā qiú (fah chyo; to serve the ball)

✔ méi tóuzhòng (may toe joong; to miss the shot)

✔ tījīn yì qiú (tee jeeen ee chyo; to make a goal)

Words to Know

cáipànyuán  teye pahn ywan  referee
dùifāng    dway fahng    the opposing team
fànguǐ     fahn gway    foul
fēnshù     fun shoo    the score
jīfēnbǎn    jee fun bahn    scoreboard
píngjú      peeng jyew    tied

continued
### Words to Know (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Phrase</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shàngbànchǎng</td>
<td>shahng bahn chahng</td>
<td>first half of a game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tǐyù chǎng</td>
<td>tee yew chahng</td>
<td>stadium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàbànchǎng</td>
<td>shyah bahn chahng</td>
<td>second half of a game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zúqiú chǎng</td>
<td>dzoo chyo chahng</td>
<td>soccer field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 8

When You Gotta Work

In This Chapter
► Managing the telephone
► Working around the office
► Using the Internet

Dealing with the phone, making appointments, and sending letters and e-mails are all in a day’s work. This chapter helps you get through your workday in Chinese.

Picking Up a Telephone

This section gives you all the phrases you need to use the phone, to call friends as well as work, and to leave messages.

Telephone basics
Before even going near a diànhuà (dyan hwah; telephone), you may want to become familiar with some common Chinese words and phrases connected to using one.

✔ bènshì diànhuà (bun shir dyan hwah; local call)
✔ chángtú diànhuà (chahng too dyan hwah; long-distance call)
✔ diànhuà hàomǎ (dyan hwah how mah; telephone number)
diànhuàkā (dyan hwah kah; phone card)

duìfāng fūfēi diànhuà (dway fahng foo fay dyan hwah; collect call)

gōngyòng diànhuà (goong yoong dyan hwah; public telephone)

guójì diànhuà (gwaw jee dyan hwah; international phone calls)

jièxiányuán (jye shyan ywan; operator)

shōujī (show jee; cell phone)

wǔxiàn diànhuà (woo shyan dyan hwah; cordless phone)

Here are some things you can do before, during, or after your call:

chá diànhuà hàomābū (chah dyan hwah how mah boo; look a number up in a phonebook)

dā diànhuà (dah dyan hwah; to make a phone call)

jiè diànhuà (jye h dawn hwah; answer a phone call)

guà diànhuà (gwah dyan hwah; hang up)

huí diànhuà (hway dyan hwah; return a phone call)

liú yíge huà (lyo ee guh hwah; leave a message)

náqǐ diànhuà (nah chee dyan hwah; pick up the phone)

shǒudào diànhuà (show daow dyan hwah; receive a phone call)

If you’re like me, you need to ask plenty of basic questions before you figure out what you’re doing with a telephone overseas. These questions may come in handy:

Zěnme dā diànhuà? (dzummuh dah dyan hwah; How can I place a phone call?)

Zài nár kěyī dā diànhuà? (dzye nar kuh yee dah dyan hwah; Where can I make a call?)
Běnshì diànhuà shōufèi duōshǎo qián? (bun shir dyan hwah show fay dwaw shaow chyan; How much is a local phone call?)

The following words may come in handy now that most people use cell phones and beepers:

✔ hū (who; beep)
✔ hūjī (who jee; beeper)
✔ hūjī hàomǎ (who jee how mah; beeper number)
✔ shōujī (show jee; cell phone)
✔ shōujī hàomǎ (show jee how mah; cell phone number)

Here are some problems you may encounter while trying to make a phone call:

✔ dēnghòu (dung ho; be on hold)
✔ diànhuà huàile (dyan hwah hwyeh luh; the phone is broken)
✔ mēi rén jiē diànhuà (may run jye dyan hwah; no one answers)
✔ mèiyōu bōhāoyīn (mayo baw how yeen; no dial tone)
✔ nǐ bōcuò hàomǎle (nee baw tswaw how mah luh; you dialed the wrong number)
✔ záyīn (dzah yeen; static)
✔ zhànxīǎn (jahn shyan; the line is busy)

Making a phone call

“Wéi?” (way; hello). You hear this word spoken in the second (or rising) tone a lot on the other end of the line when you make a phone call. It’s kind of like testing the waters to see if someone is there. You can reply with the same word in the fourth (or falling) tone so it sounds like you’re making a statement, or you can just get right to asking if the person you want to speak with is in at the moment. (For more about the four tones, see Chapter 1.)
A phrase you may hear on the other end of the line in mainland China is “Ni nár?” (nee nar; literally: where are you?). It asks what dānwèi (dahn way; work unit) you’re attached to. After these first little questions, you may finally be ready to ask for the person you intended to call in the first place.

For decades after Communist rule took over mainland China in 1949, all Chinese people were assigned a dānwèi, which pretty much regulated every aspect of one’s life — from where one lived, when one married, and even when one had children. Asking about one’s dānwèi is still pretty common when answering the phone.

Here’s how you might call to talk to a friend:

Mr. Chéng: Wéi? (way; Hello?)

Margaret: Qīngwèn, Luò Chéng zài ma? (cheeng one, law chung dzye mah; May I please speak to Luo Cheng?)

Mr. Chéng: Qīngwèn, nín shí nà yí wèi? (cheeng one, neen shir nah ee way; May I ask who’s calling?)

Margaret: Wǒ shì tāde tóngxué, Margaret. (waw shir tah duh toong shweh, Margaret; I’m his classmate, Margaret.)

Mr. Chéng: Háo. Shāodēng. Wǒ qù jiào tā. (how. shaow dung. waw chyew jyao tah; Okay. Just a moment. I’ll go get him.)

Calling places of business may be a bit different than the more informal call to a friend or coworker. When you call a lìyǔguàn (lyew gwahn; hotel), shāngdiàn (shahnng dyan; store), or a particular gōngsī (goong suh; company), you may be asked what fēn jí hàomǎ (fun jee how mah; extension) you want. If you don’t know, you can ask for the same:

Qīngwèn, fēn jí hàomǎ shì duōshāo? (cheeng one, fun jee how mah shir dwaw shaow; May I ask what the extension number is?)
Chapter 8: When You Gotta Work

After you figure out the extension, the jiěxiànshēng (jye h shyan shung; operator) may say

Wǒ xiànzài jiù gěi nǐ jiě hào. (waw shyan dzye jyo gay nee jye how; I'll transfer you now.)

If you finally do get through to an employee's office only to discover the person isn't there, you can always leave a yǒu shēng yǒujiàn (yo shung yo jyan; voicemail). When dealing with voicemail, you may have to deal with the following kinds of instructions on a recorded message:

✔️ Nín rúguǒ shìyòng ānjìàn shì diānhuàjī, qǐng àn 3. (neen roo gwaw shir yoong ahn jyan shir dyan hwah jee, cheeng ahn sahn; If you have a touch-tone phone, please press 3 now.)

✔️ Nín rúguǒ shìyòng xuánzhuǎn bŏhào jí, qǐng bié guà. (neen roo gwaw shir yoong shwan jwan baw how jee, cheeng byeh gwah; If you have a rotary phone, please stay on the line.)

✔️ Yào huí dào zhū mūlū qǐng àn jīngzīhào. (yow hway dow joo moo loo cheeng ahn jeeng dzuh how; If you want to return to the main menu, please press # [pound] now.)

If you want to reach your kèhù (kuh hoo; client) or your hégārén (huh goo run; business partner) in today's business world, you may want some help from the mǐshū (mee shoo; secretary) to connect you to the person you want to reach:

Jacob: Liú Xiăojiē, zĕnme jiĕ wàixiàn? (lyo shyaow jye h, dzummuh jye h wye shyan; Miss Liu, how can I get an outside line?)

Liú Xiăojiē: Mèi wèntí. Wǒ bāng nǐ dā zhèige hàomā. (may one tee. waw bahng nee dah jay guh how mah; Don't worry. I'll help you dial the number.)

Jacob: Xièxiè. (shyeh shyeh; Thanks.)

Liú Xiăojiē: Wéi? Zhè shì Wáng Xiănshēng de bàngōngshì ma? (way? jay shir wahng shyan
shung duh bahn goong shir ma; Hello? Do I have the office of Mr. Wang?

Secretary: Duile. Jiù shì. (dway luh. jyoe shir; Yes it is.)

Liú Xiāojiē: Kéyǐ gěi wǒ jiē tā ma? (kuh yee gay waw yeh tah mah; Can you connect me with him please?)

Secretary: Duibūqǐ, tā xiànzài kāihui. Nǐ yào liúyán ma? (dway boo chee, tah shyan dzye kye hway. nee yaow lyo yan mah; I'm sorry, he's in a meeting at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?)

Liú Xiāojiē: Máfan nǐ gàosù tā ABC gōngsī de jǐnglǐ Jacob Smith gěi tā dǎ diànhuà le? (mah fahn nee goaw soo tah ABC goong suh duh jeeng lee Jacob Smith gay tah dah dyan hwah luh; May I trouble you to tell him that Jacob Smith, the Manager of ABC Company, called him?)

Words to Know

| fù zǒngcái | foo dzoong tseye | vice president |
| jǐnglǐ | jeeng lee | manager |
| Qìngwèn, nín shì nǎ yì wèi? | cheeng one, neen shir nah ee way | May I ask who's calling? |
| shāodēng | shaow dung | just a moment |
| wài xiàn | wye shyan | outside line |
| Wéi? | way | Hello? |
| Wèi. | way | Hello. |
| zhǔrèn | joo run | director |
| zǒngcái | dzoong tseye | president |
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Checking the answering machine

Because people lead such busy lives, you often have to liúhuà (lyo hwa; leave a message) on the lùyín diànhuà (loo yeen dyan hwa; answering machine).

Here are some common greetings you may hear if you reach an answering machine:

✔ Zhè shì Barry Jones. (jay shir Barry Jones; You have reached Barry Jones.)

✔ Wǒ xiànzài búzài. (waw shyan dzye boo dzye; I’m not in at the moment/I’m away from my desk.)

✔ Sān yuè sì hào zhǐqián wǒ zài dūjiā. (sahn yweh suh how jir chyan waw dzye doo jyah; I’m on vacation until March 4th.)

✔ Nǐn rúguǒ xiǎng gēn wǒde zhùshòu tōnghuà, qīng bō fēn jī 108. (nee roo gwaw shyahng gun waw duh joo shwaw toong hwah, cheeng buh fun jee yaaw leeng bah; If you’d like to speak with my assistant, please dial extension 108.)

✔ Qīng liú xià nín de míngzì, diànhuà hàomā hé jiānduǎn de liúyán. Wǒ huì gěi nín huí diàn-huà. (cheeng lyo shyah neen duh meeng dzuh, dyan hwah how mah huh jyan dwahn duh lye yan. waw hway gay neen hway dyan hwah; Please leave your name, number, and a brief message. I’ll get back to you.)

When you leave a message on an answering machine, be sure to leave clear instructions about what you want the person to do:

✔ Wǒ zài dǎ diànhuà gěi nǐ (waw dzye dah dyan hwah gay nee; I’ll call you again.)

✔ Nǐ huì jiā zhīhòu qīng dǎ diànhuà gěi wǒ. (nee hway jyah jir ho cheeng dah dyan hwah gay waw; After you get home, please give me a call.)

✔ Bié wàngle huí wǒde diànhuà. (byeh wahng nhu hwaw waw duh dyan hwah; Don’t forget to return my call.)
If a live person answers and you have to leave a message, be polite. Keep these phrases in mind:

- **Qǐng ɡàosù tā wǒ ɡěi tā dā diānhuà le.** *(cheeng gaow soo tah waw gay tah dyan hwah luh; Please tell her I called.)*

- **Máfan nǐ qǐng tā huí wǒde diānhuà.** *(mah fahn nee cheeng tah hway waw duh dyan hwah; May I trouble you to please have him return my call?)*

- **Qǐng ɡàosù tā wǒ huí wǎn yǐdiār lái.** *(cheeng gaow soo tah waw hway wahn ee dyar lye; Please let him know I’ll be a little late.)*

- **Qǐng ɡěi wǒ zhuān tāde liuyánjǐ?** *(cheeng gay waw juan tah duh lyo yan jee; Could you please transfer me to his voicemail?)*

### Heading Off to Work

Time to get down to **shāngyè** *(shahng yeh; business).* Your **shāngyè,** that is. Want to know how to manage that job in Jiangsu or how to deal with the head honcho in Harbin? This section shows you everything from making a business appointment to conducting a meeting to checking your e-mail on the fly.

### Your office digs

Whether you’re a **mǐshū** *(mee shoo; secretary)* or the **zhǔxí** *(joo she; chairman)* of the board, the atmosphere and physical environment of your **bàngōngshī** *(bahn goong shir; office)* is important.

These days, just about any office you work in or visit has the following basic items:

- **chuánzhèn** *(chwan jun; fax)*
- **diānhuà** *(dyan hwah; telephone)*
- **diānnǎo** *(dyan now; computer)*
- **dàyìnji** *(dah een jee; printer)*
- **fùyìnji** *(foo een jee; copier)*
Of course, you first may want to look for the kāfei jī (kah fay jee; coffee machine), especially in the morning. In fact, the one part of the day you may look forward to the most is your xiùxì (shyo she; coffee break).

As you look around your xiǎogéjiàn (shyaow guh jyan; cubicle), I bet you can find all of these items:

- bijibēn (bee jee bun; notebook)
- dāng’ān (dahtng ahn; file)
- dīngshūjī (deeng shoo jee; stapler)
- gāngbī (gahtng bee; pen)
- huíwènzhēn (hwaw one jun; paper clip)
- qiānbī (chyan bee; pencil)
- jīāodài (jyaow dye; scotch tape)
- xiàngpījīn (shyahng pee jen; rubberband)

If you can’t find some indispensable item just when you need it, you can always ask someone in the next xiǎogéjiàn. The simplest way to ask is by using the phrase

Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu ____? (nee yo mayo ______? do you have any ____?)

Use that phrase as often as you like. Just make sure you can reciprocate whenever your tóngshì (toong shir; coworker) needs something as well.

- Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu gāngbī? (nee yo mayo gahtng bee; Do you have a pen?)
- Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu dīngshūjī? (nee yo mayo deeng shoo jee; Do you have a stapler?)

**Conducting a meeting**

Congratulations! You’ve finally set up shop in your new office in Beijing and are all set to have your first business meeting on foreign soil. But just what is the mūdī (moo dee; purpose) of your huìyì (hwaw ee;
meeting)? Is it to yǎnshì (yan shir; give a presenta-
tion) about a new chǎnpín (chahn peen; product)?
Is it to tǎnpàn (tahn pahn; negotiate) a hétóng (huh
toong; contract)? How about for the purpose of
shòuxùn (show shewn; training) — either you or your
Chinese colleagues? Do you have a specific yīchēng
( ee chung; agenda) in mind already? I hope so. You
definitely don’t want to look unprepared.

Scheduling and planning a meeting

You may be one of those people who needs to ānpáiguí
huíyì yīchēng (ahn pyay ee ee chung; schedule
a meeting) just to prepare for another meeting. The
following list includes a few tasks you may need to
do at such a preliminary meeting:

✔ jījué wèntí (jyej jweh one tee; solve problems)
✔ tàolùn wèntí (taow lewn one tee; discuss
problems)
✔ tuánduǐ jiānshè (twan dway jyan shuh; team
building)
✔ zhídǐng huíyì yīchēng (jir deeng hway ee ee
chung; set an agenda)

If you want to make sure everyone has a say in plan-
ing matters, these phrases can help:

✔ Jack, nǐ hái yǒu shénme xūyào būchōng ma?
( Jack, nee hi yo shummuh shyew yaow boo
choong mah; Jack, do you have anything else
to add?)

✔ Wǒmen xūyào dui zhèige xiàngmù biáojué
ma? (waw mun shyew yaow dway jay guh
shyahng moo byaow jweh mah; Do we need to
vote on this item?)

✔ Shéi hái yǒu shénme yìjiàn huòzhě wèntí?
(shay hi yo shummuh ee jyan hwaaw juh one tee;
Who still has any comments or questions?)
**Starting the meeting**

When you’re ready to get a business meeting started, these phrases can be helpful.

- Zāoshàng hǎo. (*dzaow shahng how*; Good morning.)

- Huānyíng nǐn dào wǒmen de bāngōngshì. (*hwahn eeng neen doow waw mun duh bahn goong shir*; Welcome to our office.)

- Zài kāihuì yǐqián, ràng wǒmen zuò zuò zìwǒ jièshào. (*dzye kye hway ee chyan, rahng waw mun dzaw waw dzaw dzuh waw jye h shaow*; Before the meeting begins, let’s introduce ourselves.)

- Wǒ xiǎng jièshào yíxià huìyì de cānjǐāzhě. (*waw shyahng jye h shaow ee shyah hway ee duh tsahn jye juh*; I’d like to introduce the conference participants.)

- Zánmen kāishī ba. (*dzahn mun kye shir bah*; Let’s begin.)

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**Cultural Wisdom**

Always greet the person who holds the highest rank first, before saying hello to others. Hierarchy is important to the Chinese, so try to always be conscious of this or you may unintentionally cause someone to “lose face” by not acknowledging his or her importance in the overall scheme of things. In order to follow this protocol, you need to know people’s titles:

- chāngzhāng (*chahng jahng*; factory director)
- dōngshì (*doong shir*; director of the board)
- fù zōngcái (*foo dzoong tsye*; vice president)
- jīnglǐ (*jeeng lee*; manager)
- shǒuxí kuāijī (*show she kwee jee*; chief financial officer)
- zhūrèn (*joo run*; director of a department)
zhǔxǐ (joo she; chairman)
zòngcái (dzoong tsey; president)
zūzhāng (dzoo jahng; team leader)

In Chinese, last names always come first. When addressing someone with a title, always say the last name first, followed by the title. So if you know someone’s name is Li Peijie (Li being the surname), and he is the company director, you would address him as Lǐ Zhūrèn (Lee joo run; Director Li).

Making a presentation

When you need to give a presentation during the meeting, you may want to use these terms:

bànzi (bahnh dzuh; board) and fēnbǐ (fun bee; chalk)
biǎogé (byaow guh; charts)
chātú (chah too; illustrations)
huàbān (hwah bahn; easel) and cāibǐ (tsey bee; marker)
túbiāo (too byaow; diagrams)
zǐliāo (duh lyaow; handouts)

Planning to go hi-tech instead? In that case you might want one of these:

PowerPoint yānshì (PowerPoint yan shir; PowerPoint presentation)
Huàndēngjī (hwahn dung jee; slide projector) and pīngmù (peeng moo; screen)
tóu yīng piàn (toe eeng pyan; transparency)

If you plan on videotaping your presentation, you need a lùxiàngjī (loo shyahng jee; video recorder). If the room is pretty big, you may also want to use a màikēfēng (my kuh fung; microphone).
Ending the meeting

Here are some phrases that can come in handy at the meeting's conclusion:

✔️ Gānxiè dàjiā jǐntiān chūxī huìyì. (gaahn shyeuh dah jyah jen tyan choo she hway ee; Thank you everyone for participating in today’s meeting.)

✔️ Wǒmen xūyào zài kāihuì tāolùn zhè jiàn shìqíng ma? (waw mun shyeew yaow dzye kye hway taow lwun jay jyan shir cheeng mah; Do we need another meeting to continue the discussion?)

✔️ Zài lǐkāi zhīqián, wǒmen bā xià cì huìyì de qiǎi ding xiàlái ba. (dzye lee kye jir chyan, waw mun bah shyah tsuh hway ee duh ir chee deeng shyah lye bah; Before we leave, let's confirm a date for the next meeting.)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bāo biào</th>
<th>baow byaow</th>
<th>spreadsheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>huìyì</td>
<td>hway ee</td>
<td>meeting; conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huìyì yíchéng</td>
<td>hway ee ee chung</td>
<td>conference agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mùdì</td>
<td>moo dee</td>
<td>purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruǎnjiànlèi</td>
<td>rwahn jyan</td>
<td>software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zǐliào</td>
<td>dzuh lyaw</td>
<td>material</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussing Business and Industry

You're sure to find one or another of the industries listed in Table 8-1 represented in mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>guānggào hé gōngguān</td>
<td>gwahng gaow huh goong gwan</td>
<td>advertising and public relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qíche</td>
<td>chee chuh</td>
<td>automotive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yíngháng yú cáiwù</td>
<td>yeen hahng yew tsye woo</td>
<td>banking and finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>diàn nnǎo</td>
<td>dyan now</td>
<td>computers</td>
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<td>jiàn zào</td>
<td>jyan dzaow</td>
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<td>shir jwahng</td>
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<td>baow shyan</td>
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<td>sheen one</td>
<td>journalism</td>
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<td>guǎnlǐ zǐxún</td>
<td>gwahn lee dzuh shwun</td>
<td>management consulting</td>
</tr>
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<td>cǎikuǎng yú shìyóu</td>
<td>tsye kwahng yew shir yo</td>
<td>mining and petroleum</td>
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<td>zhìyào</td>
<td>jir yaow</td>
<td>pharmaceuticals</td>
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<td>choo bahn</td>
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<td>fahng dee chahn</td>
<td>real estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>yūn huò</td>
<td>yewn hwaw</td>
<td>shipping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the Internet

These days you can reach your business partner in Beijing in a matter of seconds through diànzhī kōngjiān (dyan dzuh koong jyan; cyberspace). With shǒutī shì (show tee shir; portable) computers and multiple jiānsūō yǐnqīn (jyan swaw yeen cheen; search engines), you can jiānsūō guójí wāngluò (jyan swaw gwaaw jee wahng luaw; search the Internet) and find just about anything.

You can use your computer and the Internet for the following tasks:

✔ ānzhúāng tiáozhì jiētiáóqi (ahn jwaaw tyaw jir jeh tyaw chee; install a modem)
✔ chóngxīn kāîjī (choong sheen kye jee; reboot)
✔ dàkāi diànnǎo (dah kye dyan now; turn on the computer)
✔ guāndiàò diànnǎo (gwahn dyaaw dyan now; turn off the computer)
✔ jiànlí yīgé zhànghù (jyan lee ee guh jahng hoo; set up an account)
✔ jīn rú (jeen roo; log on)
✔ tuō chū (tway choo; log off)
✔ xiàzǎi wènjiān (shyah dzye one jyan; download a file)
✔ xuānzé yíjiā wǎngshāng fúwù tígōng shāng (shwan dzuh ee jya wahng shahng foo woo tee goong shahng; choose an Internet service provider)

These days your diànzhī yóuxiāng dízhī (dyan dzuh yo shyahng dee jir; e-mail address) is as important as your míngzì (meeng dzuh; name) and your diànbùà hàomā (dyan hwah hoo mah; phone number) when it comes to keeping in touch. Here are some things you can do with e-mail after you have your own account:

✔ fā diànzhī yóujiān (fah dyan dzuh yo jyan; send an e-mail)
**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>必需品</td>
<td>foo woo chee</td>
<td>server</td>
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<td>gwaw jee</td>
<td>international</td>
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<td>lay shuh</td>
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Chapter 9

I Get Around: Transportation

In This Chapter
- Traveling by plane
- Surviving Customs
- Getting around town
- Asking directions

This chapter helps you make your way around the feijichang (fay jee chahng: airport), survive the hāiguān (hi gwahn; Customs) experience, and board different types of jiāotōng (jyaow toong; transportation) after you reach your destination. It also shows you how to ask the occasional bystander for directions or give them yourself.

On the Move: Types of Transportation

You need to be able to get around with your language skills. The following sections give you some basic phrases to get you on the move.
**Catching a plane**

Ready to bànlì dēngjī shǒuxù (bahn lee duhng jee show shyew; check in)? After lugging your bags around, you finally get to tuóyún (twaw yewn; check) your xìnglì (sheeng lee; luggage). You receive a dēngjīpái (duhng jee pye; boarding pass) at the check-in counter, at which point you’re ready to make your way to the appropriate chūkōu (choo ko; gate), taking only your shōuti xìnglì (show tee sheeng lee; carry-on luggage).

All sorts of questions may be running through your mind about now. Here are some basic phrases that may come in handy during check in:

- **Wǒ xiǎng yào kào guòdào de wèizi.** (waw shyahng yaow cow gwaw daow duh way dzuh; I’d like an aisle seat.)

- **Wǒ xiǎng yào kào chuāng de wèizi.** (waw shyahng yaow cow chwahng duh way dzuh; I’d like a window seat.)

- **Wǒ xiǎng tuóyún xìnglì.** (waw shyahng twaw yewn sheeng lee; I’d like to check my luggage.)

- **Fēi jí diàn qifēi?** (fay jee jee dyan chee fay; What time does it depart?)

- **Wǒde hángbān hàomā shì duóshāo?** (waw duh hahng bahn how mah shir dwaw shaow; What’s my flight number?)

- **Zài jī hào mén hòujì?** (dye jee how mun ho jee; Which gate do we leave from?)

The following conversation can help you with phrases you may encounter when getting on a plane:

Zhíyuán: Nǐn hǎo. Qǐng chūshì nǐn de jǐpiào.  
(neen how. cheeng choo shir neen duh jee pyaw; Hello. Your ticket, please.)

Gordon: Jiù zài zhèr. (jyo dyee jar; Here it is.)

Zhíyuán: Nǐn shí bù shì qù Běijīng? Néng kànkàn nǐn de hùzhào ma? (neen shir boo shir...
Chapter 9: I Get Around: Transportation

chyew bay jeeng? nuhng kahn kahn neen duh hoo jaow mah; Are you going to Beijing? May I see your passport?

Zhíyúán: Yǒu jí jiàn xíngli? (yo jee jyan sheeng lee; How many suitcases do you have?)

Gordon: Wǒ yǒu sāngè xiāngzì. (waw yo sahn guh shyahng dzuh; I have three suitcases.)

Zhíyúán: Yǒu méiyǒu shōutí xíngli? (yo mayo show tee sheeng lee; Do you have any carry-on luggage?)

Gordon: Wǒ zhǐ yǒu yīge gōngwénbāo. (waw jir yo ee guh goong one baow; I have only one briefcase.)

Zhíyúán: Hǎo. Nín yào kào guòdào de wéizi háishi yào kào chuāng de wéizi? (how. neen yow cow gwaw daow duh way dzuh hi shir yao cow chwangng duh way dzuh; Okay. Would you like an aisle or a window seat?)

Gordon: Wǒ xiǎng yào kào guòdào de wéizi. (waw shyahng yaw cow gwaw daow duh way dzuh; I’d like an aisle seat.)


Zhíyúán: Zhè shì nín de xíngli lǐngqūdān. Dàole Běijīng yīhòu kěyǐ lǐngqū nín de xíngli. (jay shir neen duh sheeng lee leeng chyew dahm. daow luh bay jeeng ee ho kuh yee leeng chyew neen duh sheeng lee; Here are your luggage claim tags. After you arrive in Beijing, you can claim your luggage.)

Gordon: Xièxiè. (shyeh shyeh; Thanks.)

Zhíyúán: Zhù nín yí lù píng ān. (joo neen ee loo peeng ahn; Have a nice trip.)
Okay! You’re all set to board the plane. Are you lucky enough to sit in the **tōudēngcāng** (toe duhng tsahng; first-class) section, or do you have to sit in **jīngjìcāng**.
(jeeng jee tsahng; economy class) the whole time? Either way, here are some people you see get on the plane before you:

- **chéngwùyuán** (chung woo ywan; flight attendants)
- **jiàshīyuán** (jah shih ywan; pilot)
- **jīzū** (jee dzoo; crew)

And if you’re like me, you get worried about some things as the plane begins to taxi down the runway:

- **qīfēi** (chee fay; take off)
- **qīlǜ** (chee lyo; turbulence)
- **zhuólǜ** (jwaw too; landing)

You may also hear the **chéngwùyuán** say the following instructions:

- **Jījǐn nǐde ānquándài.** (jee jin nee duh ahn chwan dye; Fasten your seat belt.)
- **Bǔ zhǔn chōuyān.** (boo jwun cho yan; No smoking permitted.)
- **Bā zuòyǐ kàobèi fāngzhǐ.** (bah dzwaw ee cow bay fahng jir; Put your seat back to the upright position.)
- **Bā tuòpán cānzhuō shōu qīlái.** (bah twaw pahn tsahhn jwaw show chee lye; Put your tray table back.)
- **Rúguǒ kōngqì yālǐ yǒu biānhuà, yǎngqízhào huì zhídōng luòxià.** (roo gwaw koong chee yah lee yo byan hwah, yahng chee jaow hway dzuh doong lwaw shyah; If there’s any change in air pressure, the oxygen mask will automatically drop down.)

If you’re not a nervous flyer, you’ll probably spend all your time listening to **yǐnyuè** (een yweh; music) through the **ěrjī** (are jee; headset), flipping **pǐn dǎo** (peen daow; dials) on the radio or **diànsī tái** (dyan...
shir tye; channels) on the television, or trying to
shuijiào (shway jyaow; sleep). I hope the flight is
showing a good diànying (dyan yeeng; movie) on
such a long trip.

If things are going a little slow, you may use these
phrases:

✔ Qing wên, wômen de fêijî hui búhui zhèngdiān
qìfèi? (cheeng one, waw mun duh fay jee hway
boo hway juhng dyan chee fay; Excuse me, but
will our plane be departing on time?)

✔ Hên duîbùqî. Fêijî yào tuîchî châbûduô bângè
xiâoshî. (hun duay boo chee. fay jee yaow tway
chir chah boo dwaw bahn guh shyaow shir; I'm
very sorry. Takeoff has been postponed for
about a half an hour.)

Words to Know

châbûduô    chah boo dwaw    about; almost
            (approximately)
jînjî chûkôu    jin jee choo ko    emergency exits
jîshêngyî    jyo shung ee    life vests
zhèngdiān    juhng dyan    on time
zuòyîu    dzwaw yo    approximately

Hailing a cab

Renting a car in China is virtually impossible,
so take a taxi and relax. Let the driver worry
about how to get you from point A to point B.
Here’s what you say to the hotel door atten-
dant if you want help hailing a cab:

Wô yào jiào jîchêngchê. (waw yaow jyaow jee
chung chuh; I would like a taxi.)
You can also say

**Wǒ yào jiào chūzūchē.** *(waw yaow jyaow choo dzoo chuh; I would like a taxi.)*

The two methods are interchangeable, just like saying “taxi” or “cab.”

After you’re safely in the cab, you need to know how to say the following phrases:

- **Qǐng dài wǒ dào zhèige dīzhǐ.** *(cheeng dye waw daow jay guh dee jir; Please take me to this address.)*

- **Qǐng dā biǎo.** *(cheeng dah byaow; Please turn on the meter.)*

- **Qǐng kāi màn yǐdiār.** *(cheeng kye mahn ee dyar; Please drive a little slower.)*

- **Qǐng kāi kuài yǐdiār.** *(cheeng kye kwaye ee dyar; Please drive a little faster.)*

- **Wǒ děi gǎn shījīān.** *(waw day gahn shir jyan; I’m in a hurry.)*

- **Qǐng zǒu fēngjīng hǎo de lù.** *(cheeng dzoe fung jeeng how duh loo; Please take a scenic route.)*

- **Zāi zhèr guǎi wār.** *(dzye jar guye wahr; Turn here.)*

- **Ni kěyǐ děng jí fēn zhōng mǎ?** *(nee kuh yee duhng jee fun joong mah; Can you wait a few minutes?)*

Oh, and one more thing. As you chūfā *(choo fah; set off)* with your taxi sījī *(suh jee; driver)*, make sure you put on your ānquándài *(ahn chwan dye; seat belt).*

Finally, before you get out of the cab, these phrases may come in handy for price negotiations:

- **Wǒ gāi gěi nǐ duōshǎo qián?** *(waw guy gay nee dwaw shaow chyan; How much do I owe you?)*

- **Wǒ huì àn biǎo fū kuān.** *(waw hway ahn byaow foo kwahn; I’ll pay what the meter says.)*
Chinese Phrases For Dummies

✔ Bié qīpiàn wǒ. (byeh chee pyan waw; Don’t cheat me.)

✔ Kāi wán xiǎo! Wǒ jùjue fù zhèmmé duō qián. (kye wahn shaaw! waw jyew jweh foo jyehm mah dwaw chyan; You’ve got to be kidding! I refuse to pay so much.)

✔ Bú yòng zhāo le. (boo yoong jaow luh; Keep the change.)

✔ Qīng gěi wǒ shōu jū. (cheeng gay waw show jyew; Please give me a receipt.)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chē</th>
<th>chuh</th>
<th>car</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chéngkè</td>
<td>chuhng kuh</td>
<td>passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chūzūché</td>
<td>choo dzoo chuh</td>
<td>taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dūchē</td>
<td>doo chuh</td>
<td>traffic jam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gāofēngqī</td>
<td>gaow fung chee</td>
<td>rush hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jīchéngbiǎo</td>
<td>jee chuhng byaow</td>
<td>meter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāi chē</td>
<td>kye chuh</td>
<td>to drive a car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sījī</td>
<td>suh jee</td>
<td>driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wènlù</td>
<td>one loo</td>
<td>to ask for directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiǎofoèi</td>
<td>shyaow fay</td>
<td>tip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hopping on the bus

Gōnggōng qīché (goong goong chee chuh; buses) are almost as common as bicycles in China. They also
cost much less than chūzūchē (*choo dzoo chuh*; taxis), but you’ll need these phrases:

- **Yīnggāi zuò jǐ lù chē?** (*eeng guy dzaw jee loo chuh*; Which (number) bus should I take?)

- **Yīnggāi zuò sān lù chē. Nèige gōnggōng qīchē zhàn jiù zài zhè.** (*eeng guy dzaw sahn loo chuh. nay guh goong goong chee chuh jahn jyo dzye jar*; You should take the number 3 bus. That bus stop is right here.)

- **Chē piào duōshǎo qián?** (*chuh pyaow dwaw shaow chyan*; How much is the fare?)

- **Gōnggōng qīchē zhàn zài nār?** (*goong goong chee chuh jahn dzye nar*; Where’s the bus station?)

- **Duōjiǔ lái yītàng?** (*dwaw jyo lye ee tahng*; How often does it come?)

- **Qīng gāosū wǒ zài nār xià chē.** (*cheeng gaow soo waw dzye nar shyah chuh*; Please let me know where to get off.)

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### Words to Know

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>gōnggōng qīchē</td>
<td>goong goong chee chuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gōnggōng qīchē zhàn</td>
<td>goong goong chee chuh jahn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hái hǎo</td>
<td>hi how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jǐ lù</td>
<td>jee loo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jǐ lù chē?</td>
<td>jee loo chuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuè piào</td>
<td>yweh pyaow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Riding the rails

If you want to get where you need to go really quickly, especially in Hong Kong, the fastest way is the ditié (dee tyeh; subway). Hong Kong’s ditié zbàn (dee tyeh jahn; subway stations) are pretty easy to navigate.

Unlike in Hong Kong, the subway system in mainland China is relatively new, and you only find stations in less than a handful of cities. Aboveground huōché (hwaw chuh; train) travel, however, is tried and true. You can find plenty of huōchézhàn (hwaw chuh jahn; train stations) in China. They even come equipped with houcheshi (ho chuh shir; waiting rooms).

If you plan to travel a long distance, be sure to book a ruānwo (rwan waw; soft sleeper) for such occasions — or at least ask for a ruānzuò (rwan dzwaw; soft seat). Table 9-1 gives you the goods on the types of seats in trains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yingzuò</td>
<td>eeng dzwaw</td>
<td>hard seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruānzuò</td>
<td>rwan dzwaw</td>
<td>soft seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yingwò</td>
<td>eeng waw</td>
<td>hard sleeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruānwo</td>
<td>rwahn waw</td>
<td>soft sleeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàpù</td>
<td>shyah poo</td>
<td>lower berth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shàngpù</td>
<td>shahng poo</td>
<td>upper berth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before you shàngchē (shahng chuh; board the train), you need to go to the shòupiàochù (show pyaow choo; ticket office) to buy your piào (pyaow; ticket). You use the following words and phrases to get the job done:

- dānchéngpiào (dahn chuhng pyaow; one-way ticket)
- láiihuípiào (lye hway pyaow; roundtrip ticket)
- màncē (mahn chuh; local train)
- piào (pyaow; ticket)
- piàojià (pyaow jyah; fare)
- shòupiàochù (show pyaow choo; ticket office)
- tèkuài (tuh kuye; express train)

The following questions may come in handy at the train station:

- Piàofáng zài nār? (pyaow fahng dzye nar; Where’s the ticket office?)
  
  Notice the different way of saying ticket office in this question. Options abound in the Chinese language.

- Wō yào yīzhāng yīngwò piào. (waw yow ee jahng eeng waw pyaow; I’d like a hard-sleeper ticket.)

- Huòchē cōng něige zhàntáí kǎi? (hwaw chuh tsoong nay guh jahn tye kye; Which gate does the train leave from?)

And when you finally hear the lièchéyuán (lyeh chuh ywan; conductor) say “Shàng chē le!” (shahng chuh luh; All aboard!), you can board and ask the following questions:

- Zhěige zuòwèi yǒu rén ma? (jay guh dzwaw way yo run mah; Is this seat taken?)

- Cànchē zài nār? (tsahn chuh dzye nar; Where’s the dining car?)
**Words to Know**

- cânchē  tsahn chuh  dining car
- chápiào  chah pyaow  check the ticket
- huànchē  hwahn chuh  change train
- huí lái  hway lye  to return
- lái huí piào  lye hway pyaow  roundtrip ticket
- shǐkèbiào  shir kuh byaow  time schedule
- zhàntái  jahn tye  platform

**Going through Customs**

Surviving hǎiguān (hi gwahn; Customs) is an experience, especially if none of the hǎiguān guānyuán (hi gwahn gwahn ywan; Customs officers) dōng Yīngyǔ (doong eeng yew; understand English). Table 9-2 lists the items you need to have ready at Customs. The following phrases can come in handy, too:

- ✅ Nǐ dōng Yīngyǔ ma? (nee doong eeng yew mah; Do you understand English?)
- ✅ Wǒ shì Měiguó rén. (waw shir may gwaw run; I’m American.)
- ✅ Wǒ shì Yīngguó rén. (waw shir eeng gwaw run; I’m British.)
- ✅ Wǒ shì Jiānádà rén. (waw shir jyah nah dah run; I’m Canadian.)
- ✅ Xīshǒujīān zài nǐr? (she show jyan dzye nar; Where are the restrooms?)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ㄖㄐㄧㄥ ㄉㄥㄐㄧ ㄌㄧˇ</td>
<td>roo jeeng duhng jee kah</td>
<td>arrival card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄓㄨㄥ ㄖㄧㄥ ㄉㄥㄐㄧ ㄌㄧˇ</td>
<td>choo jeeng duhng jee kah</td>
<td>departure card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄐㄧㄢㄎㄤ ㄓㄥ ㄆㄧㄥˊ</td>
<td>jyan kahng juhng</td>
<td>health certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄒㄧㄤˊ ㄕㄥ ㄆㄧㄣ</td>
<td>shun baow duh woo peen</td>
<td>articles to declare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄒㄧㄤˊ ㄎㄧㄢˋ ㄧㄥˇ</td>
<td>shyahng yan</td>
<td>cigarettes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄐㄧㄡˋ</td>
<td>jyo</td>
<td>alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄆㄠˇ</td>
<td>baow</td>
<td>bag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄒㄧㄤˊ ㄕㄥ ㄉㄢˇ</td>
<td>shyahng dzuh</td>
<td>suitcase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ㄒㄧㄥˊ ㄌㄧˇ</td>
<td>sheeng lee</td>
<td>luggage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hǎiguān guānyuán may ask you a couple of these important questions:

✔ Ni yǒu méiyǒu yào shēnbào de wùpin? (nee yo mayo yaow shun baow duh woo peen; Do you have anything you want to declare?)

✔ Qīng gěi wǒ kànkàn nǐde hùzhào. (cheeng gay waw kahn kahn nee duh hoo jaow; Please show me your passport.)

✔ Qīng gěi wǒ kànkàn nǐde hǎiguān shēnbàodān. (cheeng gay waw kahn kahn nee duh hi gwan shun baow dah; Please show me your Customs declaration form.)

✔ Ni dāsuàn zài zhèr dāi duōjiǔ? (nee dah swan dzye jar dye dwaw jyo; How long do you plan on staying?)

✔ Ni lái zhèr shì bàn gōngwù hāishī lǐyǒu? (nee lye jar shir ban goong woo hi shir lyew yo; Are you here on business or as a tourist?)
Customs agents aren’t the only people with questions to ask. You may have some questions you want to try out yourself:

✔️ Xíngli yào dǎkāi ma? (sheeng lee yaow dah kye mah; Should I open my luggage?)

✔️ Xíngli kēyǐ shōu qīlái ma? (sheeng lee kuh yee show chee lye mah; May I close my suitcases now?)

✔️ X guāng hui sūnhuài wōde jiāojiān ma? (X gwahng hway suhn hwye waw duh jyaow jwan mah; Will the X-ray damage my film?)

✔️ Wō yào fū shuǐ ma? (waw yaow foo shway mah; Must I pay duty?)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>gōngwù</th>
<th>goong woo</th>
<th>to be on business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jiǎo shuì</td>
<td>jyaow shway</td>
<td>pay duty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lǜguò</td>
<td>loo gwaw</td>
<td>passing through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lǐyóu</td>
<td>lyew yo</td>
<td>tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qǜ xíngli chù</td>
<td>chyew sheeng lee choo</td>
<td>baggage-claim area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asking for Directions

Everyone (yes, even you) has to ask for fāngxiàng (fahng shyahng; directions) at some time or another. This section helps you figure out exactly how to ask for directions before you ever mǐlù (mee loo; get lost).
Avoiding 20 questions:  
Just ask “where”

The easiest way to ask where something is in Chinese is to use the question word **näär** (*nar*). It means “where.” But you can’t just say näär, or folks still won’t know what you’re talking about. You have to use the coverb **zài** (*dzye*) in front of näär (**zài näär**), which can be translated as “in” or “at.” Just put the name of whatever you’re looking for before the word **zài** to create a complete question:

- Yóujú zài näär? (*yo jyw dzye nar*; Where’s the post office?)
- Shūdiàn zài näär? (*shoo dyan dzye nar*; Where’s the bookstore?)
- Nǐ zài näär? (*nee dzye nar*; Where are you?)

Here are some more places you may be looking for when you lose your way:

- cèsuǒ (*tsuh swaw*; bathroom)
- chūžū qīchēzhàn (*choo dzoo chee chuh jahn*; taxi stand)
- dìtiēzhàn (*dee tyeh jahn*; subway station)
- fānguǎn (*fahn gwahn*; restaurant)
- gōnggōngqīchēzhàn (*goong goong chee chuh jahn*; bus stop)
- huǒchēzhàn (*hwaw chuh jahn*; train station)
- jízhěnshí (*jee juhn shir*; emergency room)
- Měiguó Dàshīguǎn (*may gwaw dah shir gwahn*; American Embassy)
- piàofáng (*pyaow fahng*; ticket office)
- xuéxiào (*shweh shyaow*; school)
- yínháng (*een hahng*; bank)
When you travel in unknown areas, you may need to determine whether you can walk or if you need to take a ㄍㄠㄍㄤㄤ ㄑㄧㄝ ㄕ (goong goong chee chuh; bus) or ㄔㄨˊㄗㄨˊ ㄑㄧㄝ ㄕ (choo dzoo chee chuh; taxi) to reach your destination:

✓ Hén jìn ma? (hun jeen mah; Is it near?)
✓ Hén yuǎn ma? (hun ywan mah; Is it far?)

The word nār spoken with a third (low falling and then rising) tone means “where,” but the same word said with a fourth (falling) tone, nàr, means “there,” so be particularly careful which tone you use when you ask for directions. The person you ask may think you’re making a statement, not asking a question. (See Chapter 1 for more on tones.)

### Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dízhǐ</th>
<th>dee jir</th>
<th>address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fāngxiàng</td>
<td>fahng shyahng</td>
<td>directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuò chūzū</td>
<td>dzwaw choo dzoo</td>
<td>to take a taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qìché</td>
<td>chee chuh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuò gōnggòngqìché</td>
<td>dzwaw goong goong chee chuh</td>
<td>to take the bus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Getting direction about directions

Knowing how to ask where you can find a particular place is the first step, but you also need to know how to get there. Here’s the simplest way to find out:

Qù . . . zěnme zǒu? (chyew dzummuh dzo; How do I get to_______?)
Here are some examples of how to use this question pattern:

- Qù fēijīchāng zěnme zǒu? (chyew fay jee chaing dzummuh dzo; How do I get to the airport?)
- Qù tūshūguān zěnme zǒu? (chyew too shoo gwahhn dzummuh dzo; How do I get to the library?)
- Qù xuéxiào zěnme zǒu? (chyew shweh shyaow dzummuh dzo; How do I get to the school?)

**Answering “where” questions**

Short of using international sign language with a pantomime act, you may want to get a handle on some basic terms that indicate direction and location. Read on for a quick list:

- yòu (yo; right)
- zuō (dzwaw; left)
- qián (chyan; front)
- hòu (ho; back)
- lǐ (lee; inside)
- wài (why; outside)
- shàng (shahng; above)
- xià (shyah; below)
- duìmìàn (dway myan; opposite)
- kàojīn (kaow jeen; next to)

If you plan to indicate that something is inside, outside, above, below, in front of, or behind something else, you can use three different completely interchangeable word endings with any of the location words:

- biàn (byan)
- miàn (myan)
- tōu (toe)
So, for example, if you want to say that the dog is outside, you can say it in any of the following ways:

- Gǒu zài wàimìan. (go dzye why myan; The dog is outside.)

- Gǒu zài wàibiān. (go dzye why byan; The dog is outside.)

- Gǒu zài wàituō. (go dzye why toe; The dog is outside.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words to Know</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>duì miàn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāi chē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shàng</td>
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<tr>
<td>wàng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xià</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zǒu (zǒu lù)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zuò huǒchē</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Giving directions**

Knowing how to give directions comes in handy when you think the taxi driver is about to take you for a ride (figuratively, that is) because he figures you don’t know your way around town.

If you really do know your way around the city, you use the following words to instruct the taxi driver which way you want to go:
Chapter 9: I Get Around: Transportation

- dìxiàdào (dee shyah daow; underpass)
- gāosùgōnglù (gaow soo goong loo; freeway)
- gōnglù (goong loo; highway)
- guǎijiāo (guye jyaow; corner)
- lù (loo; road)
- qiáo (chyaow; bridge)
- tiānqiáo (tyan chyaow; overpass)
- xiàngzi (shyahng dzuh; alley or lane)

Wherever you want to go, you need to know a few key verbs to instruct the cab driver:

- guò (gwaw; to pass)
- shàng (shahng; to go up)
- xià (shyah; to go down)
- yǒu zhuǎn (yo jwan; turn right)
- zuǒ zhuǎn (dzwaw jwan; turn left)
- zhí zǒu (jir dzo; go straight ahead)
- zhuǎn wān (jwan wahn; turn around)

If you don’t know an exact location, you can also convey less specific details:

- fūjin (foo jeen; near)
- sīzhōu (suh joe; around)

Expressing distances with lǐ

To indicate the distance from one place to another, you need to use the “distance from” coverb “lǐ” (lee). The general sentence pattern looks something like this:

Place word + lǐ + place word + description of the distance
For example:

✔ Gōngyuán lǐ tūshūguǎn hěn jìn. (goong ywan lee too shoo gwahng hun jeen; The park is very close to the library.)

✔ Wō jiā lǐ nǐ jiā tīng yuǎn. (waw jyah lee nee jyah teeng ywan; My home is really far from your home.)

If you want to specify exactly how far one place is from another, you use the number of lǐ (lee; the Chinese equivalent of a kilometer) followed by the word lǐ and then the word lù (loo; literally: road). Whether you say sì lǐ lù (suh lee loo; 4 kilometers), bā lǐ lù (bah lee loo; 8 kilometers), or èrshísān lǐ lù (are shir sahn lee loo; 23 kilometers), people know the exact distance when you use this pattern. You also have to use the word yǒu (yo; to have) before the number of kilometers. If the answer includes an adjectival verb such as yuǎn (ywan; far) or jìn (jin; close) rather than a numerical distance, however, you don’t need to specify the number of kilometers or use the word yǒu.

Check out the following samples questions and answers that use these new patterns:

✔ Gōngyuán lǐ tūshūguǎn duōme yuǎn? (goong ywan lee too shoo gwahng dwaw mah ywan; How far is the park from the library?)

✔ Gōngyuán lǐ tūshūguǎn yǒu bā lǐ lù. (goong ywan lee too shoo gwahng yo bah lee loo; The park is eight kilometers from the library.)

✔ Yíngháng lǐ nǐ jiā duōme jìn? (een hahng lee nee jyah dwaw mah jin; How close is the bank from your home?)

✔ Hěn jìn. Zhī yì lǐ lù. (hun jin. jir ee lee loo; Very close. Just one kilometer.)
You may have some other questions when you inquire about locations and distances:

✔️ Yào duō cháng shíjiān? (yaow dwaw chahng shir jyan; How long will it take?)
✔️ Zōu de dào ma? (dzoè duh daow mah; Can I walk there?)
✔️ Zōu de dào, zōu bú dào? (dzoè duh daow, dzoè boo daow; Can one walk there?)

**Specifying cardinal points with directional coverbs**

You can tell someone to go yòu (yo; right) or zuǒ (dzuaaw; left) until you’re blue in the face, but sometimes the best way to give people directions is to point them the right way with the cardinal points: north, south, east, or west.

In Chinese, however, you say them in this order:

✔️ bēi (bay; north)
✔️ dōng (doong; east)
✔️ nán (nahn; south)
✔️ xī (she; west)

To give more precise directions, you may have to use the following:

✔️ dōng bēi (doong bay; northeast)
✔️ dōng nán (doong nahn; southeast)
✔️ xī bēi (she bay; northwest)
✔️ xī nán (she nahn; southwest)

**WARNING!**

When indicating north, south, east, west, left, or right, you can use either -biān (byan) or -miān (myan) as word endings, but not -tóu (toe), which you can use with other position words such as front, back, inside, and outside.
Giving directions often entails multiple instructions. You can’t always say “make a right and you’re there” or “go straight and you’ll see it right in front of you.” Sometimes you have to use a common Chinese pattern for giving multiple directions. That pattern is *xiān* + Verb #1, *zài* + Verb #2

This translates into “first you do X, and then you do Y.” Here are some examples:

✔️ Xiān wàng dōng zǒu, zài wàng yòu zhuǎn.  
(shyan wahng doong dzo, dzye wahng yo jwan;  
First walk east, and then turn right.)

✔️ Xiān zhí zǒu, zài wàng xī zǒu.  
(shyan jir dzo,  
dzye wahng she dzo; First go straight, and then turn west.)

Here’s an example conversation:

George: Qing wén. Shànghǎi bówǔguǎn lí zhèr hěn yuǎn ma? (cheeng one. shahng hi baw woo gwahn lee jar hun ywan mah; Excuse me. Is the Shanghai Museum very far from here?)

Stranger: Bù yuǎn. Shànghǎi bówǔguǎn jiù zài rénmín dà dào. (boo ywan. Shahng hi baw woo gwahn fyo dzye run meen dah daow; It’s not far at all. The Shanghai Museum is on the Avenue of the People.)

George: Rénmín dà dào lí zhèr duōme yuǎn?  
(run meen dah daow lee jar dwaw mah ywan;  
How far is the Avenue of the People from here?)

Stranger: Rénmín dà dào lí zhèr zhī yǒu yī lǐ lù zuǒyǒu.  
(run meen dah daow lee jar jir yo ee lee loo dzwaw yo; The Avenue of the People is only about one kilometer from here.)

George: Cónɡ zhèr zǒu de dào, zǒu bú dào?  
(tsoong jar dzoe duh daow, dzoe boo daow; Can I walk there from here?)
Stranger: Kěndìng zǒu de dào. Nǐ xiān wàng nán zǒu, zài dì èr tiáo lù wàng xī zhuǎn. Dì yī ge lóu jiù shì. (kun deeng dzoe duh daow. nee shyan wahng nahn dzoe, dzye dee are tyaow loo wahng she jwan. dee ee guh low jyoe shir; It’s certainly walkable. Walk north first, and then turn west at the second street. It’ll be the first building you see.)

George: Fēicháng gānxiè nǐ. (fay chahng gahn shyeh nee; I’m extremely grateful (for your help).)

Stranger: Méi shì. (may shir; It’s nothing.)
Chapter 10

Finding a Place to Lay Your Weary Head

In This Chapter

- Booking your room reservation
- Checking in upon arrival
- Requesting hotel service
- Packing your bags and paying your bill

The right lǚguǎn (lyew gwahn; hotel) can make or break a vacation. This chapter runs you through the gamut of booking your hotel, checking in at the front desk, checking out at the designated time, and dealing with all sorts of issues that may come up in between.

First, however, I have an astounding fact for you: You have not one, not two, but as many as five ways to say the word “hotel” in Chinese:

✔️ lǚguǎn (lyew gwahn; hotel)
✔️ fàndiàn (fahn dyan; literally: a place for meals)
✔️ jiǔdiàn (jyo dyan; literally: a place for wine)
✔️ zhāodàisuǒ (jaow dye swaw; literally: a place to receive people)
✔️ bǐnguǎn (been gwahn; literally: a place for guests)
Making a Room Reservation

Are you thinking of yùdīng (yew deeng; reserving) a hotel fángjiān (faung jyan; room)? What kind do you want? A dānrén fángjiān (dahn run faung jyan; single room) all for yourself? A shuāngrén fángjiān (shuaahngh run faung jyan; double room) for you and your special someone? Or perhaps a penthouse tàojiān (taow jyan; suite) for a special occasion like your 50th wedding zhōunián (joe nyan; anniversary)?

Here are some questions you may want to ask over the phone as you begin the search for your líxiāng (lee shyahng; ideal) hotel:

✔️ Nimen hái yòu fángjiān ma? (nee mun hi yo faung jyan mah; Do you have any rooms available?)

✔️ Nimen fángjiān de jiàng shì duōshǎo? (nee mun faung jyan duh jyah guh shir dwaw shaow; How much are your rooms?)

✔️ Nà shì dānrén fángjiān hái shì shuāngrén fángjiān de jiàng? (nah shir dahn run faung jyan hi shir shuaahngh run faung jyan duh jyah guh; Is that the price of a single room or a double?)

✔️ Nimen yào dài jī ge wānshāng? (nee mun yaow dye jee guh wahn shahng; How many nights will you be staying?)

✔️ Wŏ yào yíge fángjiān zhù liáng guē wānshāng. (waw yaow ee guh faung jyan joo lyahng guh wahn shahng; I’d like a room for two nights.)

✔️ Nimen shōu bù shōu xǐnyōng kă? (nee mun show boo show sheen yoong kah; Do you accept credit cards?)

✔️ Yōu měiyòu shāngwū zhōngxīn? (yo mayo shahng woo joong sheen; Is there a business center?)

✔️ Nimen de fángjiān yòu měiyòu wǎngluò lián-jìé? (nee mun duh faung jyan yo mayo wahng luaw ylan jye; Do your rooms have Internet access?)
You have many kinds of rooms to choose from, depending on your budget and your unique needs:

- **yíge ānjìng de fángjiān** (ee guh ahn jeeng duh fahng jyan; a quiet room)
- **yíge guǎngxiàn hǎo de fángjiān** (ee guh gwahng shyan how duh fahng jyan; a bright room)
- **yíge cháo hǎi de fángjiān** (ee guh chaow hi duh fahng jyan; a room with an ocean view)
- **yíge cháo yuànzi de fángjiān** (ee guh chaow ywan dzuh duh fahng jyan; a room facing the courtyard)
- **yíge yǒu kǒngtiáo de fángjiān** (ee guh yo koong tyaow duh fahng jyan; a room with air conditioning)
- **yíge dàì yángtái de fángjiān** (ee guh dye yahng tye duh fahng jyan; a room with a balcony)
- **yíge hù xiān de fángjiān** (ee guh boo she yan duh fahng jyan; a nonsmoking room)
- **yíge fāngbiàn cánjí rén de fángjiān** (ee guh fahng byan tsahn jee run duh fahng jyan; a room equipped for handicapped people)

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**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dāi</th>
<th>dye</th>
<th>to stay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dānrén fángjiān</td>
<td>dahn run fahng jyan</td>
<td>single room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōu</td>
<td>doe</td>
<td>both; all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dōu yǐyàng</td>
<td>doe ee yahng</td>
<td>they’re both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hé</td>
<td>huh</td>
<td>and</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

continued
The coverb hé (huh; and), along with the noun that always follows it, precedes the main verb or adjective of a sentence. Some synonyms of hé are gěn (gun), yū (yew), and tóng (toong), although tóng translates more closely to “with.”

**Checking In Before You Hit the Pool**

Aaahhh, Yàzhōu (yah jœ; Asia)! Its allure often begins as soon as you pull up to the front entrance and walk through the hotel door. You may even find yourself mysteriously lingering a bit in the dàtīng (dah teeng; lobby), visually casing the joint long enough to take in all sorts of amenities. The luxuries at your disposal may include the following:

- **diànshì** (dyan shir; television)
- **gānxì fúwù** (gahn she foo woo; dry cleaning)
- **huíyá ànmōchí** (hway yah ahn maw chir; hot tub)
- **lǚguǎn fǎndiàn** (lyew gwahn fahn dyan; hotel restaurant)
- **shāngwù zhōngxīn** (shahng woo joong sheen; business center)
Before you can take advantage of these conveniences, however, you have to officially bànlì rùzhù shǒuxù (bahn lee roo joo show shyew; check in). You don’t want to be caught red handed running in the tàiyùguān or relaxing in the huíyà ànmóchí unless you’re a bona fide guest, right?

When you walk up to the fándiàn qiántái (fahn dyan chyan tye; reception desk), you’ll invariably find yourself needing to say one of the following sentences:

Wǒ yǐjing yǔdǐng le fāngjiān. (waw ee jeeng yew deeng luh fahng jyan; I already made a reservation.)

Wǒ méiyǒu yǔdǐng fāngjiān. (waw mayo yew deeng fahng jyan; I don’t have a reservation.)

Nǐmen hǎi yǒu fāngjiān ma? (nee mun hi yo fahng jyan mah; Do you have any rooms available?)

If you’re in luck, the hotel will have at least one kōng (koong; empty, vacant) fāngjiān (fahng jyan; room). If the hotel has no available space, you’ll hear

Duìbùqǐ, wǒmen kèmān le. (dway boo chee, waw mun kuh mahn luh; Sorry, there are no vacancies/we’re full.)

In this case, you may need these phrases:

Záogāo! Nǐ néng bù néng tuījiàn biédé lǚguān? (dzaow gaow. nee nung boo nung tway jyan byeh duh lyew gwahn; Rats! Could you perhaps recommend another hotel then?)

Kéyī. Gébǐ de lǚguān yǒu kōng fāngjiān. Nǐ zuì hǎo zōu guò qù shì shí kàn. (kuh yee. guh bee duh lyew gwahn yo koong fahng jyan. nee dzoay how dzoe gwaw chyew shir shir kahn; Yes. The hotel next door has vacancies. You may as well walk over there and have a look.)
The qián tái fúwùyuán (chyan tye foo woo ywan; front desk clerk) will ask you to tián (yjan; fill out) a couple of biāo (byaow; forms) to book your room, so have a gāngbǐ (gahng bee; pen) and some form of zhèngjiān (juhng jyan; ID) ready — especially your hùzhào (hoo jaow; passport). Voilà! You’re officially a hotel kèrén (kuh run; guest).

After you successfully manage to check in, a xīnglǐyuán (sheeng lee ywan; porter/bell boy) immediately appears to help take your xīnglí (sheeng lee; luggage) to your fāngjiān. After he lets you in, he’ll give you the yàoshibǐ (yaow shir; key) if you didn’t get it from the qián tái fúwùyuán downstairs.

Now you can finally xiūxí (shyo she; take a rest) and maybe fall asleep. Before you do, however, you may want to put in for a wake-up call. All you have to say is

Qīng nǐ jiào wǒ qǐchuáng. (cheeng nee jyaow waw chee chwahng; literally: Please call me to get out of bed.)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>biéde</th>
<th>byeh duh</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>duìbùqǐ</td>
<td>dway boo chee</td>
<td>I’m sorry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gěbǐ</td>
<td>guh bee</td>
<td>next door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lǚguǎn</td>
<td>lyew gwahng</td>
<td>hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuǐjiàn</td>
<td>tway jyan</td>
<td>recommend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zāogāo</td>
<td>dzaow gaow</td>
<td>ratsl/what a shame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Taking Advantage of Hotel Service

You’re finally ensconced in your big, beautiful hotel room when you discover that the méng suō bú shàng (mun swaw boo shahng; door doesn’t lock) and the kōngtiáo huài le (koong tyaow hwye luh; air conditioning doesn’t work). To make matters worse, your chuānhù dā bù kāi (ch wahng hoo dah boo kye; window won’t open). Heat wave! It may be hard to believe, but in addition to all that, your mātōng dūzhúlè (mah toong doo foo luh; toilet is clogged).

Time to call the nearest kēfāng fúwùyuán (kuh fahng foo woo ywan; hotel housekeeper) and ask for help.

You may want the kēfāng fúwùyuán to sòng (soong; send) the following items right over:

✔ chuīfēngjí (chway fung jee; hair dryer)
✔ māojīn (maow jeen; towel)
✔ māotān (maow tahn; blanket)
✔ wèishēngzhǐ (way shung jir; toilet paper)
✔ zhěntóu (jun toe; pillow)

Quickly call if the following pieces of equipment are huài le (hwye luh; broken) and need immediate fixing:

✔ chāzuò (chah dzwaw; electric outlet)
✔ kāiguān (kye gwahn; light switch)
✔ kōngtiáo (koong tyaow; air conditioner)
✔ mātōng (mah toong; toilet)
✔ nuānqì (nwan chee; heater)
✔ yáokòng qì (yaow koong chee; remote control)

Maybe you just need someone to dāsāo fǎngjiān (dah saow fahng jyan; clean the room). Oh well. Even the best hotels need some tweaking every now and then.
You interact with many different employees on any given hotel stay:

✓ fúwùtái jīnglǐ (foo woo tye jeeng lee; concierge)
✓ fúwùyuán (foo woo ywan; attendant)
✓ fúwùyuán lǐngbān (foo woo ywan leeng bahn; bell captain)
✓ zhùlǐ jīnglǐ (joo lee jeeng lee; assistant manager)
✓ zōngjīnglǐ (dzoong jeeng lee; general manager)

Before you decide to order room service, however, just remember that it’s often guī liǎng bèi (gway lyahng bay; twice as expensive) as dining in the lǚguǎn fàndiàn (lyew gwahn fahn dyan; hotel restaurant), because the service is more fāngbiàn (fahng byan; convenient).

Here’s a practice conversation:

Housekeeper: Kèfáng fúwùyuán! (kuh fahng foo woo ywan; Housekeeping!)
David: Qīng jīn! (cheeng jin; Come on in!)
Housekeeper: Yǒu shénme wèntí? (yo shummuh one tee; What seems to be the trouble?)
David: Zhèige shuǐlóngtōu huàile. Yě mèiyǒu rēshuí. (jay guh shway loong toe huye luh. yeah mayo ruh shway; This faucet is broken. There’s also no hot water.)
Housekeeper: Hěn duībūqǐ. Mǎshàng sòng shuǐnuāngōng guòlái kànkàn. (hun dway boo chee. mah shahng soong shway nwan goong gwaw lye kahn kahn; I’m so sorry. We’ll send a plumber right away to have a look.)
David: Xiǎojiē, nǐmen yǒu mèiyǒu xīyǐ fúwù? (shaow jye, nee men yo mayo she ee foo woo; Miss, do you have any laundry service?)
Housekeeper: Yǒu. (yo; Yes we do.)
David: Hǎo jíe. Jīntiān kěyǐ bā zhè xiē yǐfú xī hǎo ma? (how jee luh. jin tyan kuh yee bah jay shyeel ee foo she how mah; Great. Can I have these clothes cleaned today?)
To make a comparison by saying that something is a number of times more expensive than something else, you first use the word **gui (gway; expensive)**, followed by the number of times you think it’s more expensive and the word **bèi (bay; roughly translated as “times”)**. You can compare the relative cost of two products or services by using the word **bǐ (bee; compared to)** in the following pattern:

\[ X \ bǐ \ Y \ \text{gui} \ # \ \text{bèi} \]

Here are some examples:

- **Zuò chūzūchē bǐ zuò gōnggòng qichē gui wǔ bèi.** *(zwaw choo dzoo chuh bee dzwaw goong goong chee chuh gway woo bay; Taking a cab is five times more expensive than taking the bus.)*

- **Zhèitiáo qúnzi bǐ nèige gui shí bèi.** *(jay tyaw chwun dzuh bee nay guh gway shir bay; This skirt is ten times more expensive than that one.)*

Every hotel room in China has a large flask of boiling water that you can use to make tea or for drinking water. Never drink directly from the tap. You can brush your teeth with tap water because you just spit it out. Local Chinese don’t dare drink the tap water either, so you’re in good company.

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**Words to Know**

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mǎshàng</td>
<td>mah shahng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>méi wèntí</td>
<td>may one tee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qùdiào</td>
<td>chyew dyaow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued
Words to Know (continued)

qing jin       cheeng jin       come in, please
shuǐnuǎngōng  shway nwan goong  plumber
wūdiǎn        woo dyan          stain
xǐ            she               to wash
xǐyī fúwù     she ee foo woo    laundry service
yóuqíshì      yo chee shir      especially

Checking Out Before Heading Out

Time to těngchū (tuung choo; vacate) your hotel fángjiān (fahng jyan; room) and tuífāng (tway fahn; check out).

You may need to say some of the following as you begin the end of your stay:

✔ Wǒ yào fù zhàng. (waw yaow foo jahng; I’d like to pay the bill.)

✔ Nimen jīshòu shénme xínányòng kǎ? (nee mun jye h show shum muh sheen yoon kah; Which credit cards do you accept?)

✔ Zhè bùshì wǒde zhǎngdàn. (jay boo shir waw duh jahng dahn; This isn’t my bill.)

✔ Wǒ bù yīnggāi fù zhè xiàng. (waw boo eeng gye foo jay shyahng; I shouldn’t be charged for this.)
✓ Jiézhàng yǐhòu wǒ néng bùnéng bā bāoguǒ liú zài qiántái? (jye jahng ee ho waw nung boo nung bah baow gwaw lye dzye chyan tye; After checking out, may I leave my bags at the front desk?)

✓ Yǒu méiyǒu qù fēijīchāng de bānchē? (yo mayo chyew fay jee chahng duh ban chuh; Is there a shuttle to the airport?)

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**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fángjià</td>
<td>fahng jya</td>
<td>room charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jié zhàng</td>
<td>jye jahng</td>
<td>figure out the bill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suǒyǐ</td>
<td>swaw yee</td>
<td>so; therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuīfāng</td>
<td>tway fahng</td>
<td>check out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yàoshí</td>
<td>yaow shir</td>
<td>key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhàngdān</td>
<td>jahng dahn</td>
<td>bill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 11

Dealing with Emergencies

In This Chapter

► Yelling for help
► Visiting your doctor
► Going to the authorities
► Looking for legal advice

This chapter gives you the language tools you need to communicate your problems during your times of need — whether you need a doctor, the police, or an attorney.

Calling for Help in Times of Need

When you’re faced with an emergency, you don’t want to waste your time searching for an oversized Chinese-English dictionary to figure out how to quickly call for help. Try memorizing these phrases before a situation arises:

✔ Jiù mìng! (jyo meeng; Help; Save me!)
✔ Zhuā zéi! (jwah dzay; Stop, thief!)
✔ Zháohuǒ la! (jaow hwaw lah; Fire!)
✔ Jiào jiùhùchē! (jyaow jyo hoo chuh; Call an ambulance!)
✔ Jiào jīngchá! (jyaow jeeng chah; Call the police!)
Be careful when you say the words jiào (jyaow; to call) and jiù (jyo; to save) in the previous phrases. You don’t want to mistakenly ask someone to save the police when you want him to call the police.

Sometimes you have to ask for someone who speaks English. Here are some phrases you can quickly blurt out during emergencies:

- **Ni shuō Yīngwén ma?** (nee shuaw eeng one mah; Do you speak English?)
- **Wǒ xūyào yīge jiāng Yīngwén de lǚshī.** (waw shyew yaow ee guh jyahng eeng one duh lyew shir; I need a lawyer who speaks English.)
- **Yǒu méiyǒu jiāng Yīngwén de dàifú?** (yo mayo jyahng eeng one duh dye foo; Are there any English-speaking doctors?)

When you finally get someone on the phone who can help you, you need to know what to say to get immediate help:

- **Wǒ bèi rén qiāng le.** (waw bay run chyahng luh; I’ve been robbed.)
- **Yǒu rén shòu shāng le.** (yo run show shahng luh; People are injured.)
- **Wǒ yào huì bāo yīge chē huò.** (waw yaow hway baow ee guh chuh hwaw; I’d like to report a car accident.)

**Receiving Medical Care**

If you suddenly find yourself in the yīyuàn (ee ywan; hospital) or otherwise visiting an yīshēng (ee shung; doctor), you need to explain what ails you — often in a hurry. Use Table 11-1 to figure out how to say the basic body parts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shēnǐ</td>
<td>shun tee</td>
<td>body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gēbō</td>
<td>guh baw</td>
<td>arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiān)bāng</td>
<td>jyan bahng</td>
<td>shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shǒu</td>
<td>show</td>
<td>hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shǒuzǐ</td>
<td>show jir</td>
<td>finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuǐ</td>
<td>tway</td>
<td>leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiǎo</td>
<td>jyaow</td>
<td>foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tóu</td>
<td>toe</td>
<td>head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bózi</td>
<td>baw dzuh</td>
<td>neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiōng</td>
<td>shyoong</td>
<td>chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèi</td>
<td>bay</td>
<td>back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liǎn</td>
<td>lyan</td>
<td>face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǎn)jǐng</td>
<td>yan jeeng</td>
<td>eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ěrduō</td>
<td>are dwaw</td>
<td>ear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bízi</td>
<td>bee dzuh</td>
<td>nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hóulōng</td>
<td>ho loong</td>
<td>throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gǔtóu</td>
<td>goo toe</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jǐròu</td>
<td>jee row</td>
<td>muscles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shèn)jǐng</td>
<td>shun jeeng</td>
<td>nerves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fèi</td>
<td>fay</td>
<td>lungs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gān</td>
<td>gahn</td>
<td>liver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shèn</td>
<td>shun</td>
<td>kidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xīn</td>
<td>shin</td>
<td>heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dúzi</td>
<td>doo dzuh</td>
<td>stomach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finding a doctor

If your yünqi (yewn chee; luck) is good, you’ll never need to use any of the phrases I present in this chapter. If you end up running dāoměi (daow may; out of luck), however, keep reading. Even if you’ve never chōuyān (cho yan; smoked) a day in your life, you can still develop késòu (kuh so; a cough) or even qiguānyán (chee gwahn yan; bronchitis). Time to see an yǐshēng (ee shung; doctor). The following is a sample dialog between a nurse and patient.

Nurse: Nǐ zēnme būshūfú? (nee dzummah boo shoo foo; What’s wrong?)

Patient: Wǒ gānjué būshūfū kēshí bù zhīdào wǒ děle shēnme bīng. (waw gahn jweh boo shoo foo kuh shir boo jir daow waw duh luh shummuh beeng; I don’t feel well, but I don’t know what I have.)

Nurse: Nǐ fā shāo ma? (nee fah shaow mah; Are you running a fever?)

Patient: Méiyōu, dànshì wǒ tóuyūn. Yēxū wǒ xùyào kàn nèlkē yǐshēng. (mayo, dahn shir waw toe yewn. yeh shyw waw shyew yaow kahn nay kuh ee shung; No, but I feel dizzy. Perhaps I need to see an internist.)

Words to Know

| bǐngrén | beeng run | patient |
| hùshì | hoo shir | nurse |
| kànbing | kahn beeng | to see a doctor |
| yáyī | yah ee | dentist |
| yǐshēng | ee shung | doctor |
Describing what ails you

Whether you make a sudden trip to the jīzhěnshì (jee jun shir; emergency room) or take a normal visit to a doctor's office, you'll probably be asked

Yōu shēnme zhèngzhùàng? (yo shummuh juhg jwahng: What sorts of symptoms do you have?)

Table 11-2 lists some symptoms you may have.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11-2</th>
<th>Common Medical Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Phrase</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pàngle</td>
<td>pahng luh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shòule</td>
<td>show luh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fāshào</td>
<td>fah shaow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lādùzi</td>
<td>lah doo dzuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biànmí</td>
<td>byan mee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ēxīn</td>
<td>uh sheen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hōulóng tèng</td>
<td>ho loong tung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tóu tèng</td>
<td>toe tung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wèi tèng</td>
<td>way tung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bèi tèng</td>
<td>bay tung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ěr tèng</td>
<td>are tung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yá tèng</td>
<td>yah tung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiàntí zhōngle</td>
<td>shyan tee joong luh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your doctor has a laundry list of inspections she must perform when you hit the check-up table:

♪ Qīng juǎnqǐ nǐde xiùzì. (cheeng jwan chee nee duh shyo dzuh; Please roll up your sleeve.)
✔ Wǒ yòng tīngzhēnqì tīng yǐxià nǐde xīnzàng. (waw yong teeng jun chee teeng ee shyah nee duh shin dzahng; I’m going to use a stethoscope to listen to your heart.)

✔ Shēn hūxī. (shun hoo she; Take a deep breath.)

✔ Bā zuǐ zhāngkāi. (bah dzway jahng kye; Open your mouth.)

✔ Bā shētōu shēn chūlái. (bah shuh toe shun choo lye; Stick out your tongue.)

✔ Wǒmen huàyàn yǐxià xiāobiàn. (waw men hwah yan ee shyah shyaow byan; Let’s have your urine tested.)

The following phrases about insurance may come in handy:

✔ Yǒu méiyǒu yǐliáo bǎoxiǎn? (yo mayo ee lyaw baow shyan; Do you have any medical insurance?)

✔ Hǎo. Qīng tiān yǐxià zhèi zhāng biāo. (how. cheeng tyan ee shyah jay jahng byaow; Alright. Please fill out this form.)

---

**Words to Know**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bìnglì</td>
<td>beeng lee</td>
<td>medical history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bingle</td>
<td>beeng luh</td>
<td>to be sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bìngrén</td>
<td>beeng run</td>
<td>patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fāyán</td>
<td>fah yan</td>
<td>an infection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gǎnmào</td>
<td>gahn maow</td>
<td>to have a cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gāo xuěyā</td>
<td>gaow shweh yah</td>
<td>high blood pressure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Discussing your medical history**

When you see a doctor for the first time, he or she will want to find out about your *bing shí* (*beeng shir*, medical history). You may hear the following query:

**Ni jia you meiyou ____ de bingli?** (*nee jyah yo mayo ____ duh beeng lee*; Does your family have any history of ____?)

Table 11-3 lists some of the more serious illnesses that I hope neither you nor your family members have ever had.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 11-3</strong></th>
<th><strong>Serious Illnesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Word(s)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pronunciation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>áizhèng</td>
<td>eye juhng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>åizibing</td>
<td>eye dzuh beeng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bìngxìng gányán</td>
<td>beeng sheeng gahn yan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fèi jiéhé</td>
<td>fay jyeh huh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fèi tái</td>
<td>fay eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huòluàn</td>
<td>hwaw lwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
Table 11-3 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Word(s)</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>English Word(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jiāxǐng gānýán</td>
<td>jya sheeng gahn yan</td>
<td>hepatitis A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lǐ jì</td>
<td>lee jee</td>
<td>dysentery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qīchūăn bìng</td>
<td>chee chwan beeng</td>
<td>asthma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuǐ dōu</td>
<td>shway doe</td>
<td>chicken pox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tǎng niǎo bìng</td>
<td>tahng nyaow beeng</td>
<td>diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xīn zàng yǒu máo bîng</td>
<td>shin dzahng yo maow beeng</td>
<td>heart trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǐxǐng gānýán</td>
<td>ee sheeng gahn yan</td>
<td>hepatitis B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yǒu lǐ jì</td>
<td>yo lee jee</td>
<td>dysentery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Making a diagnosis

You may have heard stories about how doctors who use traditional medical techniques from ancient cultures can just take one look at a person and immediately know what ails him or her. The truth is, aside from simple colds and the flu, most doctors still need to take all kinds of tests to give a proper diagnosis. They may even need to perform the following tasks:

✔ huà yàn  (*hwah yan*; lab tests)
✔ xǐndiàntú  (*shin dyan too*; electrocardiogram)
✔ huà yàn yíxià xiăobiăn (*hwah yan ee shyah shyaow byan*; have your urine tested)

Here are some other phrases you may hear:

✔ Níde tíwèn zhèngcháng. (*nee duh tee one juhng chahng*; Your temperature is normal.)
✔ Kēyī chuánrăn ma? (*kuh yee chwahn rahn mah*; Is it contagious?)
Yánzhòng ma? (yan joong mah; Is it serious?)
Tă dĕi zài chuángshàng tăng duōjiǔ? (tah day dzye chuhng shahng tahng dwaw jyo; How long must she rest in bed?)

When you give approximate numbers or amounts, you don’t need to use the word “or” (huŏ zhe),” as in “three or four days.” Just say the numbers right after each other to automatically imply the “or.” For example, wū liū ge rén (woo lyo guh run) means five or six people, and sī wū tiān (suh woo tyen) means four or five days.

Words to Know

chōu xiĕ  cho shyeh  to draw blood
dàbiàn  dah byan  to have a bowel movement
liăng tīwēn  lyahng tee one  take one’s temperature
màibó  my baw  pulse
wěndū jì  one doo jee  thermometer
xiăobiăn  shyaow byan  to urinate
xiĕ/xuè  shyeh/shweh  blood
xuèyā  shweh yah  blood pressure

Treating yourself to better health

Not everything can be cured with jī tāng (jee tahng; chicken soup), despite what my grandmother told me. Your doctor may prescribe some yăo (yaow;
medicine) to make you feel better. After you ná (nah; fill) your yào (yaow; prescription), you may find the following instructions on the bottle:

✔️ Nin néng bùnéng gěi wǒ zhuā zhēige yào? (neen nung boo nung gay waw jwah jay guh yaow; Can you fill this prescription for me?)

✔️ Wǒ dúi qǐngméisù yǒu guòmín. (waw dway cheeng may soo yo gwaw meen; I’m allergic to penicillin.)

✔️ Wǒ yě yào zhì kèsòu de yào. (waw yeah yaow jir kuh so duh yaow; I’d also like something for a cough.)

✔️ Měi sige xiǎoshí chí yíci. (may suh guh shyaow shir chir ee tsuh; Take one tablet every four hours.)

✔️ Měi tiān chí liǎng cì, měi cì sān piàn. (may tyan chir lyahng tsuh, may tsuh sahn pyan; Take three tablets, twice a day.)

✔️ Fàn hòu chí. (fahn ho chir; Take after eating.)

Words to Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pinyin</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>āsīpǐlín</td>
<td>aspirin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chī yào</td>
<td>to take medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dānjià</td>
<td>stretcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dǎ zhēn</td>
<td>injection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dòng shǒushù</td>
<td>to undergo an operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiùhùcē</td>
<td>ambulance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jízhěnshī</td>
<td>emergency room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Calling the Police

Have you ever had your pocketbook tōu le (toe luh; stolen)? Being a victim is an awful feeling, and I know from personal experience. You feel shēngqì (shung chee; angry) at such a kēpà (kuh pah; scary) experience, especially if it happens in another country and the zéi (dzay; thief) tāopāo (taow paow; escapes) quickly.

You always need to be prepared with some key words you can use when the jīngchá (jeeng chah; police) finally pull up in the jīngché (jeeng chuh; police car) and take you back to the jīngchájú (jeeng chah jyew;
police station) to identify a potential zéi. Hopefully the culprit will be zhūā zháó le (jwah jaow luh; arrested).

You may also find yourself in an emergency that doesn’t involve you. If you ever witness an accident, here are some phrases you can relay to the police or emergency workers:

✔ Tā bèi qíchē yà zháó le. (tah bay chee chuh yah jaow luh; He was run over by a car.)

✔ Tā zài liúxiě. (tah dzye lyo shyeuh; He’s bleeding.)

✔ Bié kū. Jīngchá hé jiūhùè chá láile. (byeh koo. jeeng chah huh jyo hoo chuh lye luh; Don’t cry. The police and the ambulance have arrived.)

Acquiring Legal Help

Nine out of ten foreigners never need to look for a lawyer during a stay in China, which isn’t as litigious a society as the United States, to be sure. If you do need a lūshī (lyew shir; lawyer), however, your best bet is to check with your country’s dàshìguān (dah shir gwahn; embassy) or lǐshìguān (leen shir gwahn; consulate) for advice.

It can be very māf an (mah fun; annoying) and stressful to have to deal with lūshī, no matter what country you’re in, but you have to admit — they do know the fālǜ (fah lyew; law). And if you have to go to fāyuàn (fah ywan; court) for any serious shìjiànn (shir jyan; incident), you want the judge to pànjué (pahn jweh; make a decision) in your favor. Moral of the story: Good lūshī are worth their weight in jīn (gin; gold), even if you still consider them shāyu (shah yew; sharks) in the end.
Chapter 12

Ten Favorite Chinese Expressions

This chapter offers some idiomatic expressions that make you sound like a native. You hear these expressions all the time in typical daily situations.

Gōngxǐ Gōngxǐ
goong she goong she; Congratulations!

You say gōngxǐ gōngxǐ for happy occasions when congratulations are in order.

“My wife just had a baby!” your friend says. “Wow! I didn’t even know she was pregnant,” you say. “Gōngxǐ gōngxǐ!”

Hey! You just turned 21. Now you can finally go to a bar. Gōngxǐ gōngxǐ! Let’s go!

On the Chinese New Year, you hear not only “gōngxǐ gōngxǐ,” but also “gōngxǐ fācái” (goong she fah tse), which means “Congratulations and may you prosper.”

Yì Lù Píng'ān
ee loo peeng ahn; Bon Voyage! Have a good trip.
This phrase is great to use when a friend or acquaintance is about to embark on a long journey. When you see someone off at the airport, you hear many people say this phrase. You may want to teach your family and friends 跳楼 评安 before you board the plane!

 Yi Yán Nán Jìn

ee yan nahn jeen; It’s a long story.

Maybe someone wants to know how you got that black eye. Maybe you don’t really want to go into the details. Just say 跳楼 撞人 to save the blow-by-blow description for when you’re ready.

Māmā Hūhū

mah mah hoo hoo; So-so

The phrase  мама хуху  literally means “horse horse tiger tiger.” You use this expression when you want to indicate a situation is just okay or mediocre.

Kāi Wán Xiào

kye (rhymes with pie) wahn shyaow; Just kidding, or You’ve got to be kidding!

You say 开完笑 when you can’t believe your ears. Suppose your coworker just told you she’s been fired, even though she was promoted only a month ago. That definitely calls for a 开完笑 in response. When she finally tells you it’s not true, she adds 开完笑 at the end. She was just kidding. (Now you’re really angry.)
Máfàn Nǐ

*mah fahn née*: Sorry to trouble you.

You say máfàn nǐ when, although you don’t want to put anyone out, you politely accept an extended offer to do something for you. If you can’t reach the salt at the other end of the dinner table and someone offers to pass it to you, you say máfàn nǐ. It means, “So sorry to trouble you, but would you mind?”

Zěnme Yàng?

*dzummah yahng*: How’s it going, or what’s up?

A great catchall expression when you run into old friends and want to find out how they’ve been or what they’re up to these days. You just say: Hey! Zěnme yàng?

Another way you can use zěnme is by adding “le” in place of “yàng” at the end. (Nǐ zěnme le?) If you do, you say, “Hey, what’s wrong with you?” Kind of like, “What could you possibly have been thinking when you did such a stupid thing?”

Qǐng Wèn

*cheeng one*: Please, may I ask; excuse me, but . . .

Before you ask a question, be polite and preface it with qǐng wèn. You’re asking if you can even ask about something. You can use it when you go shopping and need to address a store clerk:

Qǐng wèn (Please, may I ask), how much is that thousand-year-old egg?
You can also use it when you need directions and have to approach a total stranger:

Qǐng wèn (Excuse me), which bus can take me to the Temple of Heaven?

Zǐjī Lái

dzuh gee lye; I'll help myself, thanks.

The rules of Chinese eating etiquette dictate that you should never start to fill up your plate before at least attempting to serve someone else first. Zǐjī lái is a polite expression you use to indicate that you can help yourself as soon as someone starts to serve you. A host always starts to serve the guests sitting closest, but the guests should always say zǐjī lái (and then relent and let the person serve them anyway) for each and every course. After the host has started a dish, however, you may indeed begin to serve yourself.

Āiyà!

eye yah; Oh my!

Āiyà can be heard all over China whenever people feel frustrated, shocked, or even just plain old annoyed. You hear it when you show up to your parents’ home for dinner with a friend who looks like he’s in a punk rock band. You may even say it yourself when you realize you left your briefcase in the taxi, which is now halfway across town.
Chapter 13

Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Like a Local

This chapter gives you phrases that help your conversation for many social occasions. Notice that the Chinese often repeat phrases. Repeating words happens often in spoken Chinese.

Huānyīng Huānyīng!

*hwan yeeng hwan yeeng:* Welcome!

Use this phrase when guests arrive at your home or in your country to make them feel at home. And if you say huānyīng zài lái (*hwan yeeng dzye lye*) before they leave, it means you welcome them to come again.

Biči Biči

*bee tsuh bee tsuh:* same to you; you too

This little phrase comes in handy when someone wishes you well or gives you a compliment that merits return so you don’t appear vain. What’s that you say? Great looking dress I have on? Biči biči. (Yours looks great, too.)
Jǐuyǎng Jǐuyǎng

jyo e yahng jyo e yahng; Pleased to meet you; literally: I have admired you for a long time.

Saying Jǐuyǎng jǐuyǎng when you first meet someone you’ve heard something about is a polite gesture.

Màn Màn Chī!

mahn mahn chir; Bon Appetit!

Be sure to say màn màn chī! to the others at your table before you take your first bite. You’ll win hearts all around. It actually means “eat real slowly.” This phrase lets everyone know you hope they take their time and enjoy the meal.

Wǒ Qǐng Kè

waw cheeng kuh; It’s on me; My treat.

You hear this phrase day in and day out all over China. Everyone wants to be the one to pay the bill, so folks make a big deal out of being the first person to go to the hip when the check comes.

Friends often make a joke by adding “nǐ fū qián” (nee foo chyan) at the end of this phrase. If you hear someone say “wǒ qǐng kè, nǐ fū qián,” it means “I’ll take the bill, but you’ll be the one to pay it.” Only say this when you dine with a good friend who can take a joke.

Yòu Kōng Lái Wán

yo koong lye wahn; Please come again.

Just before guests leave your home, say “Yòu kōng lái wán.” (literally: When you have time, come back and play.) Sometimes you also hear people say “màn
zōu,” (mahn dzoē) which literally means “walk slowly” and is loosely translated as “careful going home.”

Láojià Láojià

*laow jyah laow jyah; excuse me; pardon me*

Ever wonder what to say when you need to pass a person who’s standing in your way? Láojià láojià is the phrase you want to remember for crowded moments. It offers you a nice way of getting someone’s attention without being rude.

Zhù Nǐ Zāo Rì Kāng Fù

*joo née dzaow ir kahng foo; Get well soon.*

Ideally you won’t have to use this expression too often, but if you do, at least the folks hearing it will know your colloquial Chinese is good.

Būkèqi

*boo kuh chee; you’re welcome; no problem; don’t mention it*

You say būkèqi as the bookend to xièxiè (shyeh shyeh; thanks). You can’t say one without expecting to hear the other. Būkèqi represents more than just a response to “thank you,” however. It’s part and parcel of a larger group of words that express a humble spirit, which the Chinese always treasure in friends and acquaintances. If someone thanks you profusely for something you do, whether big or small, never accept the thanks as something you agree you deserve. Giving yourself a pat on the back is the opposite of what you want to convey. Always make it sound like your deed is no big deal, something you prefer to downplay.
Hǎo Jiǔ Méi Jiàn

*how jyoe may jyan; long time no see*

You can use this phrase in all seriousness or in jest if you’ve just seen someone an hour before. Either way, it puts people in a good mood to know that you care about being in their presence again.
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