



Table service: the first thirty seconds

30 Mandarin phrases that carry a whole table — greeting, taking the order, serving, payment, and the four lines that save you when the words run out. **Every phrase has audio online, spoken at a natural pace.**

IF YOU ONLY MEMORIZE FIVE

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|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | 欢迎光临。 Huānyíng guānglín. | Welcome. |
| 2 | 几位? Jǐ wèi? | How many people? |
| 3 | 要辣吗? Yào là ma? | Would you like it spicy? |
| 4 | 小心烫。 Xiǎoxīn tàng. | Careful, it's hot. |
| 5 | 谢谢光临。 Xièxie guānglín. | Thank you for coming. |

01 Greeting & seating

迎宾入座 5

欢迎光临。
Huānyíng guānglín.

Welcome.

几位?
Jǐ wèi?

How many people?

请坐这边。
Qǐng zuò zhèbiān.

Please sit here.

这是菜单。
Zhè shì càidān.

Here's the menu.

要喝点什么吗?
Yào hē diǎn shénme ma?

Would you like something to drink?

你想吃点什么？

Nǐ xiǎng chī diǎn shénme?

What would you like to eat?

今天有特餐。

Jīntiān yǒu tècān.

We have a special today.

要辣吗？

Yào là ma?

Would you like it spicy?

要几分熟？

Yào jǐ fēn shú?

How would you like it cooked?

还要别的吗？

Hái yào biéde ma?

Anything else?

请稍等。

Qǐng shāo děng.

One moment, please.

03 Serving

你的菜来了。

Nǐ de cài lái le.

Here's your food.

小心烫。

Xiǎoxīn tàng.

Careful, it's hot.

还需要什么吗？

Hái xūyào shénme ma?

Do you need anything else?

我帮你换盘子。

Wǒ bāng nǐ huàn pánzi.

Let me change your plate.

要不要加水？

Yào bú yào jiā shuǐ?

Would you like more water?

一共八十块。

Yígòng bāshí kuài.

That's eighty total.

现金还是刷卡？

Xiànjīn háishì shuākǎ?

Cash or card?

可以微信支付。

Kěyǐ Wēixìn zhīfù.

WeChat Pay is fine.

要分开付吗？

Yào fēnkāi fù ma?

Would you like to pay separately?

要发票吗？

Yào fāpiào ma?

Do you need a receipt?

要打包吗？

Yào dǎbāo ma?

Would you like a box for the leftovers?

05 When language gets hard

语言不通时 4

请说慢一点。

Qǐng shuō màn yídiǎn.

Please speak a little slower.

你会说英语吗？

Nǐ huì shuō Yīngyǔ ma?

Do you speak English?

我听不太懂。

Wǒ tīng bú tài dǒng.

I don't quite understand.

等一下，我叫翻译。

Děng yíxià, wǒ jiào fānyì.

One moment, I'll get a translator.

06 Wrapping up

送客 4

谢谢光临。

Xièxie guānglín.

Thank you for coming.

请慢走。

Qǐng màn zǒu.

Take care.

欢迎再来。

Huānyíng zàilái.

Please come again.

祝你今天愉快。

Zhù nǐ jīntiān yúkuài.

Have a nice day.

Asking is the easy half. These 10 short answers cover most of what comes back at you — and they are what makes the exchange either work or stall.

一位。	Yí wèi.	Just one.
两位。	Liǎng wèi.	Two people.
不要辣。	Bú yào là.	Not spicy.
微辣。	Wēi là.	A little spicy.
七分熟。	Qī fēn shú.	Medium well.
全熟。	Quán shú.	Well done.
现金。	Xiànjīn.	Cash.
刷卡。	Shuākǎ.	Card.
分开付。	Fēnkāi fù.	Separate checks.
好吃。	Hǎochī.	It's good.

THE NUMBERS YOU'LL NEED



Head counts, table numbers, the total. Say the number and hold up fingers together — 几位? is answered with fingers more often than words.

THE ONE LINE THAT PREVENTS A BURN

小心烫。

Careful — it's hot.

Say it as you set the plate down, not before. And point at the bowl, not at the person.



Scan to hear
all 30 phrases

THREE THINGS THAT MAKE IT WORK

- Say the number and hold up fingers.** 几位? gets answered with fingers more often than with words. Do both at once and you will never seat a table of four as two.
- Chinese first, English only if they look lost.** The moment you say one English sentence, they stop listening for Chinese. Lead with the Chinese and let the sheet do the rest.
- Don't translate the menu — point at it.** Naming a dish in English rarely lands, and a wrong guess is worse than a gesture. Point at the line, say 这个 (zhège, "this one"), and let them nod.

Hear all 30 phrases spoken out loud — free

Whole-phrase playback, or syllable by syllable when it's loud on the floor. Works on any phone, no signup.

[zenmandarin.com](https://zenmandarin.com/courses/chinese-for-waiters-and-shop-staff/)
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