

Language

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CHINESE

The official language of the PRC is the dialect spoken in Běijīng. It is usually referred to in the west as 'Mandarin', but the Chinese call it Putonghua – common speech. Putonghua is variously referred to as *hànyǔ* (the Han language), *guóyǔ* (the national language) or *zhōngwén* or *zhōngguóhuà* (simply 'Chinese').

THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE Dialects

Discounting its ethnic minority languages, China has eight major dialect groups: Putonghua (Mandarin), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan and Hakka. These dialects also divide into many more sub-dialects.

With the exception of the western and southernmost provinces, most of the population speaks Mandarin, although regional accents can make comprehension difficult.

THE WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Chinese is often referred to as a language of pictographs. Many of the basic Chinese characters are in fact highly stylised pictures of what they represent, but most (around 90%) are compounds of a 'meaning' element and a 'sound' element.

So just how many Chinese characters are there? It's possible to verify the existence of some 56,000 characters, but the vast majority of these are archaic. It is commonly felt that a well-educated, contemporary Chinese person might know and use between 6000 and 8000 characters. To read a Chinese newspaper you will need to know 2000 to 3000 characters, but 1200 to 1500 would be enough to get the gist.

Writing systems usually alter people's perception of a language, and this is certainly true of Chinese. Each Chinese character represents a spoken syllable, leading many people to declare that Chinese is a 'monosyllabic language.' Actually, it's more a case of having a monosyllabic writing system. While the building block of the Chinese language is indeed the monosyllabic Chinese character, Chinese words are usually a combination of two or more characters. You could think of Chinese words as being compounds. The Chinese word for 'east' is composed of a single character (*dōng*), but must be combined with the character for 'west' (*xī*) to form the word for 'thing' (*dōngxī*). English has many compound words too, examples being 'white-wash' and 'backslide'.

Theoretically, all Chinese dialects share the same written system. In practice, Cantonese adds about 3000 specialised characters of its own and many of the dialects don't have a written form at all.

Simplification

In the interests of promoting universal literacy, the Committee for Reforming the Chinese Language was set up by the Běijīng government in 1954. Around 2200 Chinese characters were simplified. Chinese communities outside China (notably Taiwan and Hong Kong), however, continue to use the traditional, full-form characters.

Over the past few years – probably as a result of large-scale investment by overseas Chinese and tourism – full-form or 'complex' characters have returned to China. These are mainly seen in advertising (where the traditional characters are considered more attractive) and on restaurant, hotel and shop signs.

GRAMMAR

Chinese grammar is much simpler than that of European languages. There are no articles (a/the), no tenses and no plurals. The basic point to bear in mind is that, like English, Chinese word order is subject-verb-object. In other words, a basic English sentence like 'I (subject) love (verb) you (object)' is constructed in exactly the same way in Chinese. The catch is mastering the tones.

MANDARIN

PINYIN

In 1958 the Chinese adopted a system of writing their language using the Roman alphabet. It's known as *pinyin*. The original idea was to eventually do away with characters. However, tradition dies hard, and the idea has been abandoned.

Pinyin is often used on shop fronts, street signs and advertising billboards. Don't expect Chinese people to be able to use Pinyin, however. There are indications that the use of the Pinyin system is diminishing.

In the countryside and the smaller towns you may not see a single Pinyin sign anywhere, so unless you speak Chinese you'll need a phrasebook with Chinese characters.

Since 1979 all translated texts of Chinese diplomatic documents, as well as Chinese magazines published in foreign languages, have used the Pinyin system for spelling names and places. Pinyin replaces the old Wade-Giles and Lessing systems of Romanising Chinese script. Thus under Pinyin, 'Mao Tse-tung' becomes Mao Zedong; 'Chou En-lai' becomes Zhou Enlai; and 'Peking' becomes Běijīng. The name of the country remains as it has been written most often: 'China' in English and German, and 'Chine' in French. In Pinyin it's correctly written as Zhōngguó.

Now that Hong Kong (a Romanisation of the Cantonese for 'fragrant harbour') has gone over to China, many think it will only be a matter of time before it gets renamed Xiānggǎng.

PRONUNCIATION

Vowels

a	as in 'father'
ai	as in 'aisle'
ao	as the 'ow' in 'cow'
e	as in 'her', with no 'r' sound
ei	as in 'weigh'
i	as the 'ee' in 'meet' (or like the 'oo' in 'book' after c, ch, r, s, sh, z or zh)
ian	as the word 'yen'
ie	as the English word 'yeah'
o	as in 'or', with no 'r' sound
ou	as the 'oa' in 'boat'
u	as in 'flute'
ui	as the word 'way'
uo	like a 'w' followed by 'o'
yu/ü	like 'ee' with lips pursed

Consonants

c	as the 'ts' in 'bits'
ch	as in 'chop', but with the tongue curled up and back
h	as in 'hay', but articulated from farther back in the throat
q	as the 'ch' in 'cheese'
r	as the 's' in 'pleasure'
sh	as in 'ship', but with the tongue curled up and back
x	as in 'ship'
z	as the 'dz' in 'suds'
zh	as the 'j' in 'judge' but with the tongue curled up and back

The only consonants that occur at the end of a syllable are **n, ng** and **r**.

PINYIN Charles Qin

While there are many dialects across China, the one thing all Chinese speakers have in common is their written language. Efforts have been made over the last 100 years to reform the written language, and a system called Pinyin (literally meaning 'spell sound') was invented last century as the standard for spelling Chinese characters. While Pinyin started life as a communist ploy to unite the peoples and popularise Mandarin within China, in its short life it has become the United Nations standard for 'spelling' Chinese characters, and for transliterating the names of people, places and scientific terms. Taiwan initially promulgated a different system of Romanisation, but recently announced that it was switching to the communist-designed Pinyin system, falling into line with the rest of the world.

Pinyin was not the first foray into spelling out Chinese characters. As early as the 17th century, foreign missionaries sought effective ways to spread the word and various spelling systems arose; even the Bible was reproduced in such scripts. In the late 19th century the Chinese themselves started to explore the issue of phonetic spelling systems. In 1933 the communists worked with a Russian and designed what they called Latinised New Script. This was based on Mandarin pronunciation and in 1958 the communist government implemented this as the official system, coinciding with its decision to adopt Mandarin as the official language of China. This new script came to be known as Pinyin. The government's prime purpose for adopting a Roman alphabet spelling of Chinese characters was to promote Mandarin throughout the nation. Although Mandarin was the language of government, it had previously only enjoyed the same status as numerous other dialects spoken in China. A secondary purpose was to enable non-Chinese ethnic groups in China to create or reform their languages with a common base.

Another, less important, aim of Pinyin was to assist foreigners to learn Chinese. As foreign language learners will tell you, Pinyin is a fantastic tool, particularly at the beginning of a quest on the road to fluency. Unlike English, once you learn the Pinyin pronunciation system it is completely consistent. However, once the pronunciation system is learnt, problems start to arise: for one, Pinyin does not itself indicate tones (Mandarin has four tones) and there may be dozens of characters represented by one Pinyin word: for example there are about 80 dictionary entries for the word pronounced and written *yi*. Luckily, context and grammatical structure, as well as the formation of compound words when *yi* combines with other sounds, usually give a few clues as to which of the 80 possibilities is meant. To assist travellers, this book has used tones throughout for towns, cities, sights, hotels, restaurants and entertainment venues.

Pinyin has permeated some groups in Chinese society, but most ordinary Chinese cannot use it very effectively, and some people argue that Pinyin is for foreigners. For those travelling in China using either this book or the Lonely Planet *Mandarin Phrasebook*, the ability to use Pinyin and the government's regulation that all signs be in Pinyin and characters will be a blessing.

In Pinyin, apostrophes are occasionally used to separate syllables in order to prevent ambiguity, eg the word *píng'ān* can be written with an apostrophe after the 'g' to prevent it being pronounced as *pín'gān*.

Tones

Chinese is a language with a large number of words with the same pronunciation but a different meaning; what distinguishes these 'homophones' is their 'tonal' quality – the raising and lowering of pitch on certain syllables. Mandarin has four tones – high, rising, falling-rising and falling, plus a fifth 'neutral' tone which you can all but ignore. To illustrate the importance of getting tones right, look at the word *ma*,

which has four different meanings according to tone:

high tone	<i>mā</i> (mother)
rising tone	<i>má</i> (hemp, numb)
falling-rising tone	<i>mǎ</i> (horse)
falling tone	<i>mà</i> (scold, swear)

Mastering tones is tricky for newcomers to Mandarin, but with a little practice it can be done.

GESTURES

Hand signs are frequently used in China. The 'thumbs-up' sign has a long tradition as an indication of excellence. Another way to indicate excellence is to gently pull

CHINESE SAYINGS

Chinese is an extremely rich idiomatic language. Many sayings are four-character phrases that combine a great balance of rhythm and tone with a clever play on the multiple meanings of similar-sounding characters. Perhaps most interesting is how many phrases have direct English equivalents.

缘木求鱼 (yuánmù qiúyú)

Like climbing a tree to catch fish (a waste of time)

问道于盲 (wèndào yú máng)

Like asking a blind man for directions (another waste of time)

新瓶装旧酒 (xīnpíng zhuāng jiùjiǔ)

A new bottle filled with old wine (a superficial change)

坐井观天 (zuòjǐng guāntiān)

Like looking at the sky from the bottom of a well (not seeing the whole picture)

水落石出 (shuǐluò shíchū)

When the tide goes out the rocks are revealed (the truth will out)

守株待兔 (shǒuzhū dàiù)

Like a hunter waiting for a rabbit to kill itself by running into a tree (trusting to dumb luck)

临阵磨枪 (línzhèn móqiāng)

To not sharpen your weapons until the battle is upon you (to do things at the last minute)

热锅上的蚂蚁 (règuōshàng demǎyǐ)

Like ants on top of a hot stove (full of worries)

殊途同归 (shūtú tóngguī)

Different roads all reach the same end

同床异梦 (tóngchuáng yìmèng)

To sleep in the same bed but have different dreams (different strokes for different folks)

削足适履 (xiāozú shìlǚ)

Like trimming the foot to fit the shoe

种瓜得瓜 (zhòngguā déguā)

If a man plants melons, so will he reap melons

酒肉朋友 (jiǔròu péngyou)

An eating and drinking friend (fair-weather friend)

晴天霹雳 (qíngtiān pīlǐ)

Like thunder from a blue sky (a bolt from the blue)

沐猴而冠 (mù hóu ér guān)

A monkey dressed in a tall hat (a petty official)

燃眉之急 (ránméi zhījī)

A fire that is burning one's eyebrows (extremely urgent)

hotel

lǚguǎn 旅馆

tourist hotel

bīnguǎn/fàndiàn/jiǔdiàn 宾馆/饭店/酒店

hostel

zhāodàisuǒ/lǚshè 招待所/旅社

youth hostel

qīngnián lǚshè 青年旅舍

Where is a cheap hotel?

Nǎr yǒu piányi de lǚguǎn?

哪儿有便宜的旅馆?

What is the address?

Dìzhǐ zài nǎr?

地址在哪儿?

Could you write the address, please?

Néngbùnénghé qǐng nǐ bǎ dìzhǐ xiě xiàlái?

能不能请你把地址写下来?

Do you have a room available?

Nimen yǒu fángjiān ma?

你们有房间吗?

I'd like (a) ...

Wǒ xiǎng yào ... 我想要...

bed

yí ge chuángwèi 一个床位

single room

yījiān dānrénfáng 一间单人房

double room

yījiān shuāngrénfáng 一间双人房

bed for two

shuāngrén chuáng 双人床

room with two beds

shuāngrénfáng 双人房

economy room (no bath)

pǔtōngfáng (méiyǒu yùshì) 普通房(没有浴室)

room with a bathroom

yǒu yùshìde fángjiān 有浴室的房间

standard room

biāozhǔn fángjiān 标准房间

deluxe suite

hāohuá tàofáng 豪华套房

to share a dorm

zhù sùshè 住宿舍

How much is it ...?

... duōshǎo qián ... 多少钱?

per night

měitiān wǎnshàng 每天晚上

per person

měigerén 每个人

May I see the room?

Wǒ néng kànkan fángjiān ma?

我能看看房间吗?

Where is the bathroom?

Yùshì zài nǎr?

浴室在哪儿?

Where is the toilet?

Cèsuǒ zài nǎr?

厕所在哪儿?

I don't like this room.

Wǒ bù xǐhuān zhèjiān fángjiān.

我不喜欢这间房间。

Are there any messages for me?

Yǒu méiyǒu rén gěi wǒ liú huà?

有没有人给我留话?

May I have a hotel namecard?

Yǒu méiyǒu lǚguǎn de míngpiàn?

有没有旅馆的名片?

Could I have these clothes washed, please?

Qǐng bǎ zhè xiē yīfú xǐ gānjìng, hǎo ma?

请把这些衣服洗干净,好吗?

I'm/We're leaving today.

Wǒ/Wǒmen jīntiān líkāi.

我/我们今天离开

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.

Nǐ hǎo.

你好

Nǐn hǎo. (pol)

您好

Goodbye.

Zàijiàn.

再见

Please.

Qǐng.

请

CHINGLISH

Help!

Initially you might be puzzled by a sign in the bathroom that reads 'Please don't take the odds and ends put into the nightstool'. In fact this is a warning to resist sudden impulses to empty the contents of your pockets or backpack into the toilet. An apparently ambiguous sign with anarchic implications like the one in the Lhasa Bank of China, 'Question Authority', is really just an economical way of saying 'Please address your questions to one of the clerks'.

On the other hand, just to confuse things, a company name like the 'Risky Investment Co' means just what it says. An English-Chinese dictionary proudly proclaims in the preface that it is 'very useful for the using'. And a beloved sign in the Liangmao Hotel in Tai'an proclaims:

Safety Needing Attention!

Be care of depending fire

Sweep away six injurious insect

Pay attention to civilisation

If this all sounds confusing, don't worry. It won't be long before you have a small armoury of Chinglish phrases of your own. Before you know it, you'll know without even thinking that 'Be careful not to be stolen' is a warning against thieves; that 'Shoplifters will be fined 10 times' means that shoplifting is not a good idea in China; that 'Do not stroke the works' (generally found in museums) means 'No touching'; and 'very liking' something means liking it very much.

The best advice for travellers in China grappling with the complexities of a new language is not to set your sights too high. Bear in mind that it takes a minimum of 15 years of schooling in the Chinese language and a crash course in English to be able to write Chinglish with any fluency.

Thank you.

Xièxie.

谢谢

Many thanks.

Duōxiè.

多谢

You're welcome.

Búkèqì.

不客气

Excuse me, ...

Qǐng wèn, ...

请问, ...

(When asking a question it is polite to start with the phrase *qǐng wèn* – literally, 'may I ask?' – this expression is only used at the beginning of a sentence, never at the end.)

your earlobe between your thumb and index finger.

PHRASEBOOKS

Phrasebooks are invaluable, but sometimes seeking help by showing a phrase to someone can result in them wanting to read every page! Reading place names or street signs isn't difficult, since the Chinese name is usually accompanied by the Pinyin form; if not, you'll soon learn lots of characters just by repeated exposure. A small dictionary with English, Pinyin and Chinese characters is also useful for learning a few words.

Lonely Planet's *Mandarin Phrasebook* has script throughout and loads of useful phrases – it's also a very useful learning tool.

ACCOMMODATION

I'm looking for a ...

Wǒ yào zhǎo ... 我要找...

camping ground

lùyingdì 露营地

guesthouse

bīnguǎn 宾馆

I'm sorry.

Duìbùqǐ. 对不起

May I ask your name?

Nǐn guìxìng? 您贵姓?

My (sur)name is ...

Wǒ xìng ... 我姓...

Where are you from?

Nǐ shì cóng nǎr lái de? 你是从哪儿来的?

I'm from ...

Wǒ shì cóng ... lái de. 我是从...来的

I like ...

Wǒ xǐhuān ... 我喜欢...

I don't like ...

Wǒ bù xǐhuān ... 我不喜欢...

Wait a moment.

Dēng yíxià. 等一下

Yes & No

There are no specific words in Mandarin that specifically mean 'yes' and 'no' when used in isolation. When a question is asked, the verb is repeated to indicate the affirmative. A response in the negative is formed by using the word 不 *bù* (meaning 'no') before the verb. When *bù* (falling tone) occurs before another word with a falling tone, it becomes *bú* (ie with a rising tone).

Are you going to Shanghai?

Nǐ qù shànghǎi ma? 你去上海吗?

Yes.

Qù. ('go') 去

No.

Bú qù. ('no go') 不去

No.

Méi yǒu. ('not have') 没有

No.

Búshì. ('not so') 不是

DIRECTIONS**Where is (the) ...?**

... zài nǎr? ...在哪儿?

Go straight ahead.

Yízhí zǒu. 一直走

Turn left.

Zuǒ zhuǎn. 左转

Turn right.

Yòu zhuǎn. 右转

at the next corner

zài xià yíge guǎijiǎo 在下一个拐角

at the traffic lights

zài hónglǜdēng 在红绿灯

map

dìtú 地图

SIGNS

入口	<i>Rùkǒu</i>	Entrance
出口	<i>Chūkǒu</i>	Exit
问讯处	<i>Wènxūnchù</i>	Information
开	<i>Kāi</i>	Open
关	<i>Guān</i>	Closed
禁止	<i>Jìnzhǐ</i>	Prohibited
有空房	<i>Yǒu Kōngfáng</i>	Rooms Available
客满	<i>Kèmǎn</i>	No Vacancies
警察	<i>Jǐngchá</i>	Police
警察局	<i>Jǐngchájú</i>	Police Station
厕所	<i>Cèsuǒ</i>	Toilets
男	<i>Nán</i>	Men
女	<i>Nǚ</i>	Women

Could you show me (on the map)?

Nǐ néng bùnéng (zài dìtú shàng) zhǐ gěi wǒ kàn?
你能不能(在地图上)指给我看?

behind	<i>hòubianr</i>	后边儿
in front of	<i>qiánbianr</i>	前边儿
near	<i>jìn</i>	近
far	<i>yuǎn</i>	远
opposite	<i>duìmiàn</i>	对面儿
beach	<i>hǎitān</i>	海滩
bridge	<i>qiáoliáng</i>	桥梁
island	<i>dǎoyú</i>	岛屿
main square	<i>guǎngchǎng</i>	广场
market	<i>shìchǎng</i>	市场
old city	<i>lǎochéng</i>	老城
palace	<i>gōngdiàn</i>	宫殿
sea	<i>hǎiyáng</i>	海洋

HEALTH**I'm sick.**

Wǒ bìngle. 我病了

It hurts here.

Zhèr tég. 这儿疼

I need a doctor.

Wǒ děi kàn yīshēng. 我得看医生

Is there a doctor here who speaks English?

Zhèr yǒu huì jiǎng yīngyǔ de dàifu ma?
这儿有会讲英语的大夫吗?

I'm ...

Wǒ yǒu ... 我有...

asthmatic	<i>xiàochuǎnbìng</i>	哮喘病
diabetic	<i>tánghuānbìng</i>	糖尿病
epileptic	<i>diānxiánbìng</i>	癫痫病

EMERGENCIES**Help!**

Jiùmìng a! 救命啊!

emergency

jǐnjí qíngkuàng 紧急情况

There's been an accident!

Chūshìle! 出事了!

I'm lost.

Wǒ mílùle. 我迷路了

Go away!

Zǒu kāi! 走开!

Leave me alone!

Bié fán wǒ! 别烦我!

Could you help me please?

Nǐ néng bùnéng bāng wǒ ge máng?
你能不能帮我个忙?

Call ... !

Qǐng jiào ...! 请叫...!

a doctor

yīshēng 医生

the police

jǐngchá 警察

I'm allergic to ...

Wǒ duì ... guòmǐn. 我对...过敏

antibiotics

kàngjūnsù 抗菌素

aspirin

āsipīlín 阿司匹林

bee stings

mìfēng zhēcì 蜜蜂蜇刺

nuts

guǒrén 果仁

penicillin

qīngméisù 青霉素

antidiarrhoea medicine

zhǐxiàyào 止泻药

antiseptic cream

xiāodúgāo 消毒膏

condoms

bìyùn tào 避孕套

contraceptive

bìyùnyào 避孕药

diarrhoea

lā dùzi 拉肚子

headache

tóutēng 头疼

medicine

yào 药

sanitary napkins (Kotex)

fùnǚ wèishēngjīn 妇女卫生巾

sunscreen (UV) lotion

fángshài'yóu 防晒油

tampons

yuèjīng miánsāi 月经棉塞

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES**Do you speak English?**

Nǐ huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?
你会说英语吗?

Does anyone here speak English?

Zhèr yǒu rén huì shuō yīngyǔ ma?
这儿有人会讲英语吗?

How do you say ... in Mandarin?

... zhōngwén zěnmē shuō?
... 中文怎么说?

What does ... mean?

... shì shénme yìsi?
... 是什么意思?

I understand.

Wǒ tīngdédǒng.
我听得懂

I don't understand.

Wǒ tīngbúdǒng.
我听不懂

Please write it down.

Qǐng xiěxiàlái.
请写下来

NUMBERS

0	<i>líng</i>	零
1	<i>yī, yāo</i>	一, 幺
2	<i>èr, liàng</i>	二, 两
3	<i>sān</i>	三
4	<i>sì</i>	四
5	<i>wǔ</i>	五
6	<i>liù</i>	六
7	<i>qī</i>	七
8	<i>bā</i>	八
9	<i>jiǔ</i>	九
10	<i>shí</i>	十
11	<i>shíyī</i>	十一
12	<i>shí'èr</i>	十二
20	<i>èrshí</i>	二十
21	<i>èrshíyī</i>	二十一
22	<i>èrshíèr</i>	二十二
30	<i>sānshí</i>	三十
40	<i>sìshí</i>	四十
50	<i>wúshí</i>	五十
60	<i>liùshí</i>	六十
70	<i>qīshí</i>	七十
80	<i>bāshí</i>	八十
90	<i>jiǔshí</i>	九十
100	<i>yībǎi</i>	一百
1000	<i>yìqiān</i>	一千
2000	<i>liǎngqiān</i>	两千

PAPERWORK

name	xìngmíng	姓名
nationality	guójí	国籍
date of birth	chūshēng rìqī	出生日期
place of birth	chūshēng dìdiǎn	出生地点
sex (gender)	xìngbié	性别
passport	hùzhào	护照
passport number	hùzhào hàomǎ	护照号码
visa	qiǎnzhèng	签证
extension	yǎncháng	延长

Public Security Bureau (PSB)

gāng'ānjú 公安局

Foreign Affairs Branch

wàishìkē 外事科

QUESTION WORDS

Who?	Shuí?	谁?
What?	Shénme?	什么?
What is it?	Shì shénme?	是什么?
When?	Shénme shíhòu?	什么时候?
Where?	Zài nǎr?	在哪儿?
Which?	Něige?	哪个?
Why?	Wéishénme?	为什么?
How?	Zěnmé?	怎么?

SHOPPING & SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	Wǒ xiǎng mǎi ...	我想买...
I'm just looking.	Wǒ zhǐshì kànkàn.	我只是看看
How much is it?	Duōshǎo qián?	多少钱?
I don't like it.	Wǒ bù xǐhuan.	我不喜欢
Can I see it?	Néng kànkàn ma?	能看看吗?
I'll take it.	Wǒ jiù mǎi zhèige.	我就买这个
It's cheap.	Zhè buguì.	这不贵
That's too expensive.	Tài guìle.	太贵了
Is there anything cheaper?	Yǒu piányi yìdiǎn de ma?	有便宜一点的吗?
Can I pay by travellers cheque?	kěyǐ fù lǚxíng zhīpiào ma?	可以付旅行支票吗?
Do you accept ...?	... shōu bùshōu?	... 收不收?
credit cards	xìnyòngkǎ	信用卡

travellers cheques

lǚxíng zhīpiào 旅行支票

more	duō	多
less	shǎo	少
smaller	gèng xiǎo	更小
bigger	gèng dà	更大
too much/many	tài duō	太多

Excuse me, where's the nearest ...?

Qǐng wèn, zújīnde ... zài nǎr?
请问,最近的...在哪儿?

I'm looking for a/the ...

Wǒ zài zhǎo ... 我在找...

automatic teller machine

zìdòng guìyuánjī 自动柜员机

bank

yínháng 银行

Bank of China

zhōngguó yínháng 中国银行

chemist/pharmacy

yàodiàn 药店

city centre

shìzhōngxīn 市中心

... embassy

... dàshǐguǎn ... 大使馆

foreign affairs police

wàishì jīngchá 外事警察

foreign exchange office/currency exchange

wàihuì duìhuànchù 外汇兑换处

hospital

yīyuàn 医院

hotel

bīnguǎn/ fàndiàn/ lǚguǎn 宾馆/ 饭店/ 旅馆

market

shìchǎng 市场

museum

bówùguǎn 博物馆

police

jīngchá 警察

post office

yóujú 邮局

public toilet

gōnggòng cèsuǒ 公共厕所

telephone

diànhuà 电话

telephone office

diànxùn dàlóu 电讯大楼

the tourist office

lǚyóujú 旅游局

change money

huàn qián 换钱

telephone card

diànhuà kǎ 电话卡

international call

guójì diànhuà 国际电话

collect call

duìfāng fùfèi diànhuà 对方付费电话

direct-dial call

zhíbō diànhuà 直拨电话

fax

chuánzhēn 传真

computer

diànnǎo 电脑

email (often called 'email')

diànzǐyóujiàn 电子邮件

internet

yīntèwǎng 因特网

(more formal name)

(hùliánwǎng) (互联网)

online

shàngwǎng 上网

Where can I get online?

Wǒ zài nǎr kěyǐ shàngwǎng?

我在哪儿可以上网?

Can I check my email account?

Wǒ chá yíxià zìjǐ de email hù, hào ma?

我查一下自己的email户,好吗?

TIME & DATES

What's the time?

Jǐ diǎn? 几点?

... hour ... minute

... diǎn ... fēn ... 点...分

3.05

sān diǎn líng wǔ fēn 三点零五分

When?

Shénme shíhòu? 什么时候?

now

xiànzài 现在

today

jīntiān 今天

tomorrow

míngtiān 明天

yesterday

zuótiān 昨天

in the morning

zǎoshang 早上

in the afternoon

xiàwǔ 下午

in the evening

wǎnshang 晚上

weekend

zhōumò 周末

Monday

xīngqīyī 星期一

Tuesday

xīngqī'èr 星期二

Wednesday

xīngqīsān 星期三

Thursday

xīngqīsì 星期四

Friday

xīngqīwǔ 星期五

Saturday

xīngqīliù 星期六

Sunday

xīngqītīān 星期天

January

yīyuè 一月

February

èryuè 二月

March

sānyuè 三月

April

sìyuè 四月

May

wǔyuè 五月

June

liùyuè 六月

July

qīyuè 七月

August

bāyuè 八月

September

jiǔyuè 九月

October

shíyuè 十月

November

shíyīyuè 十一月

December

shíèryuè 十二月

TRANSPORT

Public Transport

airport

feijīchǎng 飞机场

long-distance bus station

chángtú qìchē zhàn 长途汽车站

subway (underground)

dìtiě 地铁

subway station

dìtiě zhàn 地铁站

train station

huǒchē zhàn 火车站

What time does ... leave/arrive?

... jǐdiǎn kāi/dào? ... 几点开/到?

boat

chuán 船

intercity bus; coach

chángtú qìchē 长途汽车

local/city bus

gōnggòng qìchē 公共汽车

minibus

xiǎo gōnggòng qìchē 小公共汽车

microbus taxi

miànbāochē, miàndī 面包车, 面的

plane

feijī 飞机

train

huǒchē 火车

I'd like a ...

Wǒ yào yíge ...

我要一个...

one way ticket

dānchéng piào 单程票

return ticket

lái huí piào 来回票

platform ticket

zhàn tái piào 站台票

1st class ticket

tóu dēng cāng 头等舱

2nd class ticket

èr dēng cāng 二等舱

hard-seat

yìng xí / yìng zuò 硬席 / 硬座

soft-seat

ruǎn xí / ruǎn zuò 软席 / 软座

hard-sleeper

yìng wò 硬卧

soft-sleeper

ruǎn wò 软卧

When's the ... bus?... *bānchē shénme shíhòu lái?*

... 班车什么时候来?

first	<i>tóu</i>	头
last	<i>mò</i>	末
next	<i>xià</i>	下

I want to go to ...*Wǒ yào qù ...*

我要去...

The train has been cancelled/delayed.*Huǒchē tuīchí le/qǔxiāo le.*

火车推迟了/取消了

CAAC ticket office*zhōngguó mínháng shòupiào chù*

中国民航售票处

boarding pass	<i>dēngjī kǎ</i>	登机卡
left-luggage room	<i>jīcún chù</i>	寄存处
platform number	<i>zhàntái hào</i>	站台号
ticket office	<i>shòupiào chù</i>	售票处
timetable	<i>shíkèbiǎo</i>	时刻表

Private Transport**I'd like to hire a ...***Wǒ yào zū yīliàng ...*

我要租一辆...

car	<i>qìchē</i>	汽车
4WD	<i>sìlún qūdòng</i>	4轮驱动
motorbike	<i>mótuōchē</i>	摩托车
bicycle	<i>zìxíngchē</i>	自行车

How much is it per day?*yītiān duōshǎo qián?* 一天多少钱?**How much is it per hour?***yīgè xiǎo shí duōshǎo qián?* 一个小时多少钱?**How much is the deposit?***yājīn duōshǎo qián?* 押金多少钱?**Does this road lead to ...?***Zhè tiáo lù dào ... ma?* 这条路到...吗?

road	<i>lù</i>	路
section	<i>duàn</i>	段
street	<i>jiē/dàjiē</i>	街/大街
No 21	<i>21 hào</i>	21号

Where's the next service station?*xià yīgè jiāyóuzhàn zài nǎr?*

下一个加油站在哪儿?

Please fill it up.*Qǐng jiāmǎn yóuxiāng.*

请加满油箱

I'd like ... litres.*Wǒ yào ... gōngshēng.*

我要... 公升

ROAD SIGNS

减速让行	<i>Jiǎnsù Mǎnxíng</i>	Give Way
绕行	<i>Ràoxíng</i>	Detour
不得入内	<i>Bùdé Rùnèi</i>	No Entry
不得超车	<i>Bùdé Chāochē</i>	No Overtaking
不得停车	<i>Bùdé Tíngchē</i>	No Parking
入口	<i>Rùkǒu</i>	Entrance
保持畅通	<i>Bǎochí Chàngōngtōng</i>	Keep Clear
收费	<i>Shōufèi</i>	Toll
危险	<i>Wéixiǎn</i>	Danger
减速慢行	<i>Jiǎnsù Mǎnxíng</i>	Slow Down
单行道	<i>Dānxíngdào</i>	One Way
出口	<i>Chūkǒu</i>	Exit

diesel	<i>cháiyou</i>	柴油
leaded petrol	<i>hánqiān qìyóu</i>	含铅汽油
unleaded petrol	<i>wúqiān qìyóu</i>	无铅汽油

How long can I park here?*Zhèr kěyǐ tíng duōjiǔ?* 这儿可以停多久?**Can I park here?***Zhèr kěyǐ tíngchē ma?* 这儿可以停车吗?**Where do I pay?***Zài nǎr fùkuǎn?* 在哪儿付款?**I need a mechanic.***Wǒ xūyào jīxiūgōng.* 我需要机修工**We need a mechanic.***Wǒmen xūyào jīxiūgōng.* 我们需要机修工**The car has broken down (at ...)***Qìchē shì (zài ...) huài de.* 汽车是(在...)坏的**The car won't start.***Qìchē fādòng bùqǐlái.* 汽车发动不起来**I have a flat tyre.***Lúntāi biě le.* 轮胎瘪了**I've run out of petrol.***Méiyóu qìyóu le.* 没有汽油了**I had an accident.***Wǒ chū shìgù le.* 我出事故了**TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN****Is there a/an ...?***Yǒu ... ma?* 有...吗?**I need a/an ...***Wǒ xūyào ...* 我需要...

baby change room	<i>yīng'ér huànxiǎoshì</i>	婴儿换洗室
baby food	<i>yīng'ér shípǐn</i>	婴儿食品
baby formula (milk)	<i>pèifāngǎi</i>	配方奶
baby's bottle	<i>nǎipíng</i>	奶瓶

child-minding service*tuō'ér fúwù* 托儿服务**children's menu***értóng càiđān* 儿童菜单**(disposable) nappies/diapers***(yícìxìng) niàopiàn* (一次性)尿片**(English-speaking) babysitter***(huì shuō yīngwén de)* (会说英文的)*yīng'ér bǎomǔ* 婴儿保姆**highchair***yīng'ér gāojiǎoyǐ* 婴儿高脚椅**potty***yīng'ér biànpén* 婴儿便盆**pusher/stroller***yīng'ér tuīchē* 婴儿推车**Do you mind if I breastfeed here?***Wǒ kěyǐ zài zhèr wèi nǎi ma?*

我可以在这儿喂奶吗?

Are children allowed?*Yǔnxǔ értóng ma?*

允许儿童吗?

CANTONESE

What a difference a border makes. Cantonese is still the most popular dialect in Hong Kong, Guangzhou and the surrounding area. It differs from Mandarin as much as French differs from Spanish. Speakers of both dialects can read Chinese characters, but a Cantonese speaker will pronounce many of the characters differently from a Mandarin speaker. For example, when Mr Ng from Hong Kong goes to Beijing the Mandarin-speakers will call him Mr Wu. If Mr Wong goes from Hong Kong to Fujian the character for his name will be read as Mr Wee, and in Beijing he is Mr Huang.

For a more detailed guide to Cantonese, with script throughout, loads of phrases, and information on grammar and pronunciation, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Cantonese Phrasebook*.

ROMANISATION & PRONUNCIATION

Unfortunately, several competing systems of Romanisation of Cantonese script exist and no single one has emerged as an official standard. A number have come and gone, but at least three have survived and are currently in use in Hong Kong: Meyer-Wempe, Sidney Lau and Yale. In this language guide we use the Yale system. It's the

most phonetically accurate and the one generally preferred by foreign students.

Vowels

Note that the examples given below for the pronunciation of vowels reflect British pronunciation.

a	as in 'father'
ai	as the 'i' in 'find', but shorter
au	as the 'ow' in 'cow'
e	as in 'let'
ei	as the 'a' in 'say', but without the 'y' sound
eu	similar to the 'ur' in 'urn' with lips pursed, but without the 'r' sound
i	as in 'marine'
iu	similar to the word 'you'
o	as in 'not'; as in 'no' when at the end of a word
oi	as the 'oy' in 'boy'
oo	as in 'soon'
ou	as the word 'owe'
u	as in 'put'
ue	as the 'u-e' in 'suet'
ui	as 'oo-ee'

Consonants

In general, consonants are pronounced as in English. Three that may give you a little trouble are:

g	as in 'go'
j	as the 'ds' in 'suds'
ng	as in 'sing'

Tones

Cantonese has seven tones (although you can easily get by with six). In the Yale system used in this language guide, six basic tones are represented: three 'level' tones, which do not noticeably rise or fall in pitch (high, middle and low), and three 'moving' tones, which either rise or fall in pitch (high rising, low rising and low falling).

Remember that it doesn't matter whether you have a high or low voice when speaking Cantonese as long as your intonation reflects relative changes in pitch. The following examples show the six basic tones. Note how important they can be to your intended meaning:

high tone: represented by a macron above a vowel, as in *fóo* (husband)

middle tone: represented by an unaccented vowel, as in *foo* (wealthy)

low tone: represented by the letter 'h' after a vowel, as in *fooh* (owe); note that 'h' is only pronounced if it occurs at the start of a word; elsewhere it signifies a low tone

middle tone rising: represented by an acute accent, as in *fóo* (tiger)

low falling tone: represented by a grave accent followed by the low tone letter 'h', as in *fòoh* (to lean)

low rising tone: represented by an acute accent and the low tone letter 'h', as in *fóoh* (woman)

ACCOMMODATION & SHOPPING

Do you have any rooms available?

yáhùh mó fáng a?
有冇房呀?

I'd like a (single/double) room.

ngóh sèuhng yüeh yāt gáahn (dāahn yáhn/sèuhng yáhn)
fóng

我想要一間(單人/雙人)房?

How much per night?

géh dóh chin yāt máhàhn a?
幾多錢一晚呀?

How much is this?

ní gah géh dóh chin a?
呢個幾多錢呀?

That's very expensive.

hó gwaih
好貴

Can you reduce the price?

péng dí dāk m dāk a?
平啲得唔得呀?

I'm just looking.

ngóh sìn táih yāt táih
我先睇一睇

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello, how are you?

néhih hó ma? 你好嗎?

Fine, and you?

géh hó, néhih nē? 幾好, 你呢?

Good morning.

jó sàhn 早晨

Goodbye.

bāāhih baāhih/joih gin 拜拜/再見

Thank you very much.

dóh jē saāhih/ 多謝嘢/
m gōih saāhih 唔該嘢

Thanks. (for a gift or special favour)

dóh jē 多謝

Thanks. (making a request or purchase)

m gōih 唔該

You're welcome.

m sáih haāhk hēih 唔使客氣

Excuse me. (calling someone's attention)

m gōih 唔該

I'm sorry.

m hó yí sí 唔好意思

What is your surname? (polite)

chéng mahn gwaih sing? 請問貴姓?

My surname is ...

síuh sing ... 小姓...

Is it OK to take a photo?

hóh m hóh yíh yíng 可唔可以影相呀?

sèuhng a?

Do you speak English?

néhih sík m sík góng 你識唔識講英文呀?

yíng mán a?

I don't understand.

ngóh m mihng 我唔明

Pronouns

I	<i>ngóh</i>	我
you	<i>néhih</i>	你
he/she/it	<i>kúhih</i>	佢
we/us	<i>ngóh dēih</i>	我哋
you (plural)	<i>néhih dēih</i>	你哋
they/them	<i>kúhih dēih</i>	佢哋

NUMBERS

0	<i>lihng</i>	零
1	<i>yāt</i>	一
2	<i>yíh (léhuhng)</i>	二(兩)
3	<i>sāāhm</i>	三
4	<i>sēih</i>	四
5	<i>ng</i>	五
6	<i>luhk</i>	六
7	<i>chāt</i>	七
8	<i>baāht</i>	八
9	<i>gāuh</i>	九
10	<i>sahp</i>	十
11	<i>sahp yāt</i>	十一
12	<i>sahp yíh</i>	十二
20	<i>yíh sah p</i>	二十
21	<i>yíh sah p yāt</i>	二十一
100	<i>yāt baāhk</i>	一百
101	<i>yāt baāhk lihng yāt</i>	一百零一
110	<i>yāt baāhk yāt sah p</i>	一百一十
120	<i>yāt baāhk yíh sah p</i>	一百二十
200	<i>yíh baāhk</i>	二百
1000	<i>yāt chin</i>	一千
10,000	<i>yāt mahāhn</i>	一萬
100,000	<i>sahp mahāhn</i>	十萬

TRANSPORT

airport	<i>gēih chéuhng</i>	機場
bus stop	<i>bā sí jahāhm</i>	巴士站
pier	<i>máh tàhùh</i>	碼頭

USEFUL PORTUGUESE

A few words in Portuguese will come in handy when travelling in Macau. Portuguese is still common on signs (along with Cantonese script) and where opening and closing times are written.

Monday	<i>segunda-feira</i>	22	<i>vint e dois</i>
Tuesday	<i>terça-feira</i>	30	<i>trinta</i>
Wednesday	<i>quarta-feira</i>	40	<i>quarenta</i>
Thursday	<i>quinta-feira</i>	50	<i>cinquenta</i>
Friday	<i>sexta-feira</i>	60	<i>sessenta</i>
Saturday	<i>sábado</i>	70	<i>setenta</i>
Sunday	<i>domingo</i>	80	<i>oitenta</i>
		90	<i>noventa</i>
1	<i>um/uma</i>	100	<i>cem</i>
2	<i>dois/duas</i>	1000	<i>mil</i>
3	<i>três</i>		
4	<i>quatro</i>	Entrance	<i>Entrada</i>
5	<i>cinco</i>	Exit	<i>Saída</i>
6	<i>seis</i>	Open	<i>Aberto</i>
7	<i>sete</i>	Closed	<i>Encerrado</i>
8	<i>oito</i>	No Smoking	<i>Não Fumadores</i>
9	<i>nove</i>	Prohibited	<i>Proibido</i>
10	<i>dez</i>	Toilets	<i>Lavabos/WC</i>
11	<i>onze</i>	Men	<i>Homens (H)</i>
20	<i>vint</i>	Women	<i>Senhoras (S)</i>
21	<i>vint e um</i>		

subway station	<i>dēih tit jahāhm</i>	地鐵站
north	<i>bāk</i>	北
south	<i>nāhāhm</i>	南
east	<i>dūng</i>	東
west	<i>sāih</i>	西

I'd like to go to ...

ngóh sèuhng huìh ... 我想去...

Where is the ...?

... háih bin doh a? ... 係邊度呀?

Does this (bus, train etc) go to ...?

huìh m huìh ... a? 去唔去...呀?

How much is the fare?

géh dóh chin a? 幾多錢呀?

Please write down the address for me.

m gōih sé gah dēih jí 唔該寫個地址俾我
bēih ngóh

TIBETAN

PRONUNCIATION

Tibetan has its fair share of tricky pronunciations. There are quite a few consonant clusters, and Tibetan makes an important distinction between aspirated and unaspirated consonants.

Lonely Planet's *Tibetan Phrasebook* has script throughout and is an excellent tool for those wishing to learn the language in greater depth.

Vowels

The following pronunciation guide reflects standard British pronunciation.

a	as in 'father'
ay	as in 'play'
e	as in 'met'
ee	as in 'meet'
i	as in 'big'
o	as in 'go'
oo	as in 'soon'
ö	as the 'u' in 'fur, with no 'r' sound
ü	as in 'flute'

Consonants

With the exception of those listed below, Tibetan consonants should be pronounced as in English. Where consonants are followed by an 'h', it means that the consonant is aspirated (ie accompanied by an audible puff of air). An English example might be 'kettle', where the 'k' is aspirated and the 't'

is unaspirated. The distinction is fairly important, but in simple Tibetan the context should make it clear what you're talking about even if you get the sounds muddled up a bit.

ky	as the 'kie' in 'Kiev'
ng	as the 'ng' in 'sing'
r	produced with a slight trill
ts	as the 'ts' in 'bits'

ACCOMMODATION

guesthouse	<i>dhön-khang</i>
hotel	<i>drü-khang/fan-dian</i>
Do you have a room?	<i>kang mi yöpe?</i>
How much is it for one night?	<i>tsen chik la katsö ray?</i>
I'd like to stay with a Tibetan family.	<i>nga phöbe mitsang nyemdo dendö yö</i>

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

Hello.	<i>tashi dele</i>
Goodbye. (to person leaving)	<i>kale phe</i>
Goodbye. (by person leaving)	<i>kale shoo</i>
Thank you.	<i>thoo jaychay</i>
Yes, OK.	<i>la ong</i>
I'm sorry.	<i>gonda</i>
I want ...	<i>nga la ... go</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>injeeke shing gi yö pe?</i>
Do you understand?	<i>ha ko song-ngey?</i>
I understand.	<i>ha ko song</i>
I don't understand.	<i>ha ko ma song</i>
How much?	<i>ka tsö ray?</i>
It's expensive.	<i>gong chenpo ray</i>
What's your name?	<i>kerang gi ming lakary zer gi yö?</i>
My name is ...	<i>ngai ... ming la</i>
... and you?	<i>... a ni kerang zer gi yö?</i>
Where are you from?	<i>kerang lungba ka-nay yin?</i>
I'm from ...	<i>nga ...-nay yin</i>

I	<i>nga</i>
you	<i>kerang</i>
he/she	<i>khong</i>
we	<i>nga-tso</i>
you all	<i>kerang-tso</i>
they	<i>khong-tso</i>

HEALTH

I'm sick.	<i>nga bedo mindu</i>
Please call a doctor.	<i>amchi ke tongda</i>
altitude sickness	<i>lädu na</i>
diarrhoea	<i>troko she</i>
fever	<i>tsawa</i>
hospital	<i>menkang</i>

TIME & NUMBERS

What's the time?	<i>chutsö katsö ray?</i>
hour/minute	<i>chutsö/karma</i>
When?	<i>kadü?</i>
now	<i>thanda</i>
today	<i>thiring</i>
tomorrow	<i>sangnyi</i>
yesterday	<i>kesa</i>
morning	<i>shogay</i>
afternoon	<i>nying gung gyab la</i>
evening/night	<i>gonta</i>

Note: to form compound numbers, add the appropriate number for one to nine after the word in brackets, eg 21 is *nyi shu tsa chig*, 32 is *sum shu so nyi*.

1	<i>chig</i>
2	<i>nyi</i>
3	<i>sum</i>
4	<i>shi</i>
5	<i>nga</i>
6	<i>troo</i>
7	<i>dün</i>
8	<i>gye</i>
9	<i>gu</i>
10	<i>chu</i>
11	<i>chu chig</i>
20	<i>nyi shu (tsa ...)</i>
30	<i>sum shu (so ...)</i>
40	<i>shi chu (shay ...)</i>
50	<i>nga chu (ngay ...)</i>
60	<i>doog chu (ray ...)</i>
70	<i>dun chu (don ...)</i>
80	<i>gye chu (gya ...)</i>
90	<i>gu chu (go ...)</i>
100	<i>chig gya</i>
1000	<i>chig tong</i>

OUT & ABOUT

I want to go to ...	<i>nga ... la drondö yö</i>
I'll get off here.	<i>nga phap gi yin</i>
What time do we leave?	<i>ngatso chutsö katsö la dro gi yin?</i>
What time do we arrive?	<i>ngatso chutsö katsö la lep gi yin?</i>
Where can I rent a bicycle?	<i>kanggari kaba ragi ray?</i>
How much per day?	<i>nyima chik laja katsö ray?</i>
Where is the ...?	<i>... kaba yo ray?</i>
I'm lost.	<i>nga lam khag lag song</i>

airport	<i>namdrutang</i>
bicycle	<i>kanggari</i>
bus	<i>lamkhor</i>

right	<i>yeba</i>
left	<i>yönba</i>
straight ahead	<i>shar gya</i>
north	<i>chang</i>
south	<i>lo</i>
east	<i>shar</i>
west	<i>noop</i>
porter	<i>dopo khur khen</i>
pack animal	<i>skel semchen</i>

Geographical Terms

cave	<i>trapoo</i>
hot spring	<i>chuzay</i>
lake	<i>tso</i>
mountain	<i>ree</i>
river	<i>tsangpo</i>
road/trail	<i>lam</i>
valley	<i>loong shon</i>
waterfall	<i>papchu</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:
Mandarin Phrasebook

Glossary

(C) Cantonese; (M) Inner Mongolian; (T) Tibetan; (U) Uighur

A

adetki mashina (U) – ordinary bus
ali mashina (U) – soft-seat coach
amah – a servant who cleans houses and looks after the children
apsaras – Buddhist celestial beings, similar to angels
aptoos biket (U) – long-distance bus station
arhat – Buddhist, especially a monk who has achieved enlightenment and passes to nirvana at death

B

báifàn – rice
báijiǔ – literally ‘white alcohol’, a type of face-numbing rice wine served at banquets and get-togethers
bāozi – steamed savoury buns with tasty meat filling
bēi – north; the other points of the compass are *nán* (south), *dōng* (east) and *xī* (west)
biānjiè – border
biéshù – villa
binguǎn – tourist hotel
bixi – mythical, tortoise-like dragon
Bodhisattva – one worthy of nirvana but who remains on earth to help others attain enlightenment
Bōn – the pre-Buddhist indigenous faith of Tibet, pockets of which survive in western Sichuān
bówúguǎn – museum

C

CAAC – Civil Aviation Administration of China
cadre – Chinese government bureaucrat
cāntīng – restaurant
cǎoyuán – grasslands
catty – unit of weight; one catty (*jīn*) equals 0.6kg
CCP – Chinese Communist Party, founded in Shànghǎi in 1921
chang (T) – a Tibetan brew made from fermented barley
Chángchéng – the Great Wall
chau (C) – land mass, such as an island
cheongsam (C) – originating in Shànghǎi, a fashionable tight-fitting Chinese dress with a slit up the side
chí – lake, pool
chim (C) – sticks used to divine the future. They’re shaken out of a box onto the ground and then ‘read’
chop – see *name chop*
chōrten – Tibetan stupa, see *stupa*
chūzūqichē – taxi
CITS – China International Travel Service; deals with China’s foreign tourists

cohong – a local merchants’ guild
CTS – China Travel Service; originally set up to handle tourists from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan and overseas Chinese
cūn – village

D

dàdào – boulevard
dàfāndiàn – large hotel
dàjiē – avenue
dàjiǔdiàn – large hotel
dānwèi – work unit, the cornerstone of China’s social structure
dǎo – island
dàpùbù – large waterfall
dàqiáo – large bridge
dàshà – hotel, building
dàshèngtǎ – pagoda
dàxué – university
déhuà – a type of white-glazed porcelain
ditiě – subway
dōng – east; the other points of the compass are *běi* (north), *nán* (south) and *xī* (west)
dòng – cave
dòngwúyuán – zoo
dòufu – tofu

E

értóng – children

F

fāndiàn – a hotel or restaurant
fēng – peak
fēngjǐngqū – scenic area
fēng shuǐ – geomancy, literally ‘wind and water’; the art of using ancient principles to maximise the flow of *qi*, or universal energy
fó – a Buddha

G

gǎng – harbour
gé – pavilion, temple
ger (M) – the Mongolian word for a circular tent made with animal skin or felt; see *yurt*
godown (C) – a warehouse, usually located on or near the waterfront
gōmpa (T) – monastery
gōng – palace
gōngyuán – park
gōu – gorge, valley

gǔ – valley
guān – pass
guānxi – advantageous social or business connections
gūjū – house, home, residence
gwailo (C) – a foreigner; literally meaning ‘ghost person’ and interpreted as ‘foreign devil’

H

hǎi – sea
hǎitān – beach
Hakka – a Chinese ethnic group
Han – China’s main ethnic group
hé – river
hong (C) – a company, usually engaged in trade; often refers to Hong Kong’s original trading houses, such as Jardine Matheson or Swire
hú – lake
huáqiáo – overseas Chinese
Hui – ethnic Chinese Muslims
húndùn (C) – wontons
huòchēzhàn – train station
huǒguō – hotpot
huǒshān – volcano
hútòng – a narrow alleyway

I

IC kǎ – IC card
IP kǎ – IP card (phone card)

J

jiāng – river
jiǎo – see *máo*
jiàotáng – church
jiǎozi – stuffed dumpling
jīchǎng – airport
jiē – street
jié – festival
jīn – see *catty*
jǐngchá – policeman
jǐngjù – Beijing opera
jìniànbei – memorial
jìniànguǎn – memorial hall
jìniàntǎ – monument
jǐpiào – air ticket
jiǔdiàn – hotel
jū – residence, home
junk – originally referred to Chinese fishing and war vessels with square sails; now applies to various types of boating craft

K

kadimi shahr (U) – the old part of town; see also *yangi shahr*
kaido (C) – a small- to medium-sized ferry that makes short runs on the open sea; usually used for nonscheduled service between small islands and fishing villages

kǎoyādiàn – roast duck restaurant
kapala – a kind of skull cup, generally from Tibet
karakhana (U) – workshop, factory
karst – denotes the characteristically eroded landscape of limestone regions, such as the whimsical scenery of Guǐlín and Yángshuò
KCR – Kowloon-Canton Railway
Kham – traditional name for eastern Tibet, encompassing western Sichuān
KMB – Kowloon Motor Bus
kora (T) – pilgrim circuit
kuài – colloquial term for the currency, *yuán*
kuàizi – chopsticks
kūnjù – a regional form of classical opera developed in the cities of Sūzhōu, Hángzhōu and Nánjīng
Kuomintang – Chiang Kaishek’s Nationalist Party, now one of Taiwan’s major political parties

L

lama – a Buddhist priest of the Tantric or Lamaist school; a title bestowed on monks of particularly high spiritual attainment
lǎobāixíng – common people, the masses
lǎochéngqū – the old part of town
lǎowài – foreigners
liǎng – see *tael*
lín – forest
líng – tomb
lishǐ – history
lóu – tower
LRT – Light Rail Transit, in Hong Kong
lù – road
lǔguǎn – hotel
lúnchuán mǎtòu – passenger ferry terminal
luòhàn – Buddhist, especially a monk who has achieved enlightenment and passes to nirvana at death; see also *arhat*
lúshēng – a reed pipe that features in many festivals in Guǐzhōu

M

mah jong – popular Chinese card game for four people, played with engraved tiles
Mandate of Heaven – a political concept where heaven gives wise leaders a mandate to rule and removes power from those who are evil or corrupt
máo – colloquial term for *jiǎo*, 10 of which equal one *kuài*
mǎtòu – dock
mén – gate
ménpiào – entrance ticket
Miao – ethnic group living in Guǐzhōu
miào – temple
motor tricycle – an enclosed three-wheeled vehicle with a small motorbike engine, a driver at the front and seats for two passengers in the back

MTR – Mass Transit Railway, in Hong Kong
mù – tomb

N

name chop – a carved name seal that acts as a signature
nán – south; the other points of the compass are *běi* (north), *dōng* (east) and *xī* (west)

O

obo (M) – a pile of stones with a hollow space for offerings; a kind of shaman shrine
oolong (C) – high-grade Chinese tea, partially fermented

P

páilou – decorative archway
pedicab – pedal-powered tricycle with a seat to carry passengers
piāolǚ – rafting trip
Pinyin – the official system for transliterating Chinese script into roman characters
pípá – a plucked string instrument
PLA – People's Liberation Army
Politburo – the 25-member supreme policy-making authority of the CCP
PRC – People's Republic of China
PSB – Public Security Bureau/Police; the arm of the police force set up to deal with foreigners
pùbù – waterfall
púsa – Bodhisattva
Putonghua – the standard form of the Chinese language used since the beginning of this century, based on the dialect of Beijing

Q

qarvatlik mashina (U) – sleeper coach
qì – vital energy (life force) or cosmic currents manipulated in acupuncture and massage
qiáo – bridge
qìchēzhàn – bus station
qìgōng – exercise that channels *qì*
qīngzhēnsì – mosque

R

rénmín – people, people's
Renminbi – literally 'people's money', the formal name for the currency of China; shortened to RMB
ROC – Republic of China, also known as Taiwan
ruǎnwò – soft sleeper (train ticket)
ruǎnzuo – soft seat

S

sampan (C) – a small motorised launch, too small for the open sea
sānlún mótuōchē – motor tricycle
sānlúnchē – pedal-powered tricycle

SAR – Special Administrative Region
savdo dukoni (U) – commercial shops
sēnlín – forest
shān – mountain
shāngdiàn – shop, store
shāokǎo – barbecue
shěng – province, provincial
shì – city
shí – rock
shìchǎng – market
shìjiè – world
shíkū – grotto
shòupùpiàochù – ticket office
shuikù – reservoir
si – temple, monastery
sihéyuàn – traditional courtyard house
special municipality – the name given to centrally administered regions such as Běijīng, Tiānjīn, Chóngqìng and Shànghǎi
stele (stelae) – a stone slab or column decorated with figures or inscriptions
stupa – usually used as reliquaries for the cremated remains of important *lamas*

T

tǎ – pagoda
tael – unit of weight; one tael (*liǎng*) equals 37.5g; there are 16 tael to the *catty*
taichi – the graceful, flowing exercise that has its roots in China's martial arts; also known as *tàijíquán*
taipan (C) – boss of a large company
tán – pool
Tanka – a Chinese ethnic group who traditionally live on boats
thangka – Tibetan sacred art
ting – pavilion
triads – secret societies; originally founded to protect Chinese culture from the influence of usurping Manchurians, their modern-day members are little more than gangsters
tripitaka – Buddhist scriptures

W

walla walla – a motorised launch used as a water taxi and capable of short runs on the open sea
wān – bay
wǎngbā – internet café
wēnquán – hot springs

X

xī – west; the other points of the compass are *běi* (north), *nán* (south) and *dōng* (east)
xī – small stream or brook
xiá – gorge
xiàn – county

xiàng – statue
xuěshān – snow mountain

Y

yá – cliff
yán – rock or crag
yangi shahr (U) – the new part of town, usually Han-dominated; see also *kadimi shahr*
yingwò – hard sleeper
yingzuò – hard seat
yóujú – post office
yuán – the Chinese unit of currency; also referred to as Renminbi or RMB
yuán – garden

yurt (M) – the Russian word for a circular tent made with animal skin or felt; see *ger*

Z

zhào – lamasery
zhāodàisuǒ – basic lodgings, a hotel or guesthouse
zhāipí – a pint (of beer)
zhékòu – discount, egg off room price
zheng – a 13- or 14-stringed harp
zhìwúyuán – botanic gardens
zhōng – middle
Zhōngguó – China
zìrán bǎohùqū – nature reserve
zǐjū – ancestral home

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