



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PROVIDING SERVICE TO CHINESE VISITORS TO TASMANIA

COMMUNICATING WITH CHINESE SPEAKERS



What is the Chinese Language?

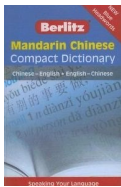
There are eight major regional languages spoken in China. What we refer to as ‘Mandarin’ was originally the dialect of the Beijing area. It has now been adopted as the official language of China and is also spoken by most Chinese from other countries. It is the second most widely spoken language in the world after English. Under the Mao Government, Chinese characters were standardised and simplified. Pronunciation was also standardised and a system of phonetic writing using the Latin alphabet with tone markings called ‘Pinyin’ was developed. The newly standardised written and spoken language is called Standard Modern Chinese and is almost universally understood by Chinese people. In modern China when people refer to ‘Chinese’ they mean Standard Modern Chinese. When Westerners refer to ‘Mandarin’ they also mean Standard Modern Chinese. Mandarin is also the second language of many Asians in the same way that English is the second language of Europe.

How Can English Speaking Tasmanians Communicate with Chinese Speaking Visitors?

If you are having difficulty communicating with a Chinese visitor you can:

- First try writing what you want to say in English using lower case printing. Most Chinese people can read and write English much better than they can speak or understand it spoken. Joined up writing and upper case printing are harder for them to understand than lower case printing.
- Use various translation tools as explained below.

Translation Tools



English—Chinese two way translation dictionaries are available in hard copy for \$15—\$20 retail. These dictionaries are cheap, readily available, and easy to use. You and the visitor simply pass it backwards and forward and show each other words that you are want to communicate. This method has the advantage of being easily used by the least technologically savvy of visitors and hosts and they are quite effective. Hard copy dictionaries are also portable, they never break down and their batteries never go flat.

Downloadable software is available in several forms. There are soft copy translation dictionaries that can be downloaded some of them have speech functions. There are translation applications for computers, iPhones and so on. Some Chinese travelers will have these with them.

Google Translate can be accessed and used online. You need to activate the Chinese script option in windows but that is simple. The two screens below show google translate used from Chinese to English and from English to Chinese. Note a speech facility is included. For simple sentences it is quite accurate but do not risk it for anything complicated. Translating lengthy paragraphs usually yields ridiculous results. The two screens reproduced below show google translate used from Chinese to English and from English to Chinese.

Google translate can also be used to translate between many other languages.

The top screenshot shows Google Translate with the source language set to Chinese and the target language set to English. The input text is '我们想打国际电话' (Wǒmen xiǎng dǎ guójì diànhuà) and the output is 'We want to make international calls'. Below the input, the pinyin 'Wǒmen xiǎng dǎ guójì diànhuà' is visible.

The bottom screenshot shows Google Translate with the source language set to English and the target language set to Chinese. The input text is 'Do you need a taxi to the airport?' and the output is '你需要打车去机场吗?' (Nǐ xūyào dǎchē qù jīchǎng ma?).

Which Translation Tool is Best?

The writer mostly uses google translate because it’s vocabulary and grammar are better than other software applications and the speech facility gives a very clear standard pronunciation of Chinese. Paper translation dictionaries are also often used because of their convenience, and, they still have by far the largest vocabulary and accuracy of single word translations. If having a smart phones application is important to you could experiment with what is available.

Translated Phrases

The following phrases are written in English, Standard Modern Chinese and Pinyin with tone markings. You can practice using Google Translate by using it to perform the translations. You could then listen to the Chinese being spoken and try copy the sound. You could also use this page by showing it to a Chinese visitor and pointing at the phrase you would like to say to them.

Welcome

欢迎

Huānyíng

Welcome to Tasmania, I hope you enjoy your visit.

欢迎来到塔斯马尼亚，我希望您享受你的光临。

Huānyíng lái dào tā sī mǎ ní yǎ, Wǒ xīwàng nǐ xiǎngshòu nín de guānglín.

Welcome to stay in our hotel.

欢迎住我们的酒店。

Huānyíng zhù wǒmen de jiǔdiàn.

Exit

出口

Chūkǒu

Woman

女

Nǚ

Man

男

Nán

Your name

您姓名

Nín xìngmíng

My Name

我姓名

Wǒ xìngmíng

Thank you

谢谢您

Xièxiè nín

Toilet

洗手间

Xǐshǒujiān

If you need anything, please feel free to contact our staff, we are very willing to assist you.

请随时联系我们的员工，我们非常乐意为您，提供各种帮助。

Qǐng suíshí liánxì wǒmen de yuángōng, wǒmen fēicháng lèyì wèi nín, tígōng gè zhǒng bāngzhù.

Would you like something to eat or drink?

您想吃点东西或喝点什么吗？

Nǐn xiǎng chī diǎn dōngxī huò hē diǎn shénme ma?

Restaurant

饭店

Fàndiàn

Bar

酒吧

Jiǔbā

I wish you good luck.

祝您好运

Zhù nǐn hǎo yùn.

Is your room comfortable? Would you like anything else?

您的房间舒服吗？您还需要什么吗？

Nǐn de fángjiān shūfú ma? Nǐn hái xūyào shénme ma?

Thank you for visiting us, I wish you a safe journey, goodbye.

感谢您访问我们的，祝您一路平安，再见。

Gǎnxiè nín fǎngwèn wǒmen de, zhù nǐn yīlù píng'ān, zàijiàn.

Goodbye/See you later

再见

Zàijiàn

