

Chapter 1 Notes "At the Breakfast Stand" (VPC Book p.20)

1. The question word (**what**) comes at the end of the question, not the beginning.

你	要	吃	什 麼	?
nǐ	yào	chī	shén me	
You	want	eat	what	

2. Follow the same word order of the question to form your reply.

我	要	一 個	蛋 餅	.
wǒ	yào	yí ge	dàn bǐng	
I	want	a	danbing	

A **dànbǐng** 蛋餅 is a scrambled egg rolled up in a crepe shell, served with a sweet garlic sauce.

If a friend or family member asks you what you want to eat, you would answer:

我 想	吃	蛋 餅	.
wǒ xiǎng	chī	dàn bǐng	
I'd like	eat	danbing	

wǒ yào 我要 (I want) is an acceptable way to ask for something in a store or restaurant, as you are a paying customer, however it is a rather abrupt way to address a friend or family member.

3. A typical **A or B** choice question:

這 裡	吃	還 是	外 帶	?
zhè lǐ	chī	hái shì	wài dài	
Here	eat	or	take-out	

zhèbiān 這邊 (here; at this place) can be used instead **zhèlǐ** 這裡

You might also hear the above question phrased as:

內 用	還 是	外 帶	?
nèi yòng	hái shì	wài dài	
Here	or	take-out	

nèi 內 (inside) **yòng** 用 (use) is the direct opposite of **wàidài** 外帶 (take-out)

4. To answer, simply repeat the desired option.

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>這 裡</td><td>吃</td><td>.</td></tr> <tr><td>zhè lǐ</td><td>chī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Here</td><td>eat</td><td></td></tr> </table>	這 裡	吃	.	zhè lǐ	chī		Here	eat		/	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>內 用</td><td>.</td></tr> <tr><td>nèi yòng</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Here</td><td></td></tr> </table>	內 用	.	nèi yòng		Here		or	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td>外 帶</td><td>.</td></tr> <tr><td>wài dài</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Take out</td><td></td></tr> </table>	外 帶	.	wài dài		Take out	
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Take out																									

5. The subject (**you**) is left out as it is obvious to whom the question is directed.

好	,	要	飲	料	嗎	?
hǎo		yào	yǐn	liào	ma	
OK		want	beverage		ma	

ma 嗎 is used for questions that can be answered with yes or no.

The same subject (**you**) verb (**want**) object (**chicken**) **ma** 嗎 sentence pattern can be used with other verbs.

Nǐ 你 you	yào 要 want	jīròu 雞肉 chicken	ma 嗎 ?
	yǒu 有 have		
	chī 吃 eat		
	xǐhuān 喜歡 like		
	kěyǐ chī 可以吃 able to eat		

6. The subject (**you**) may be left out of this question in casual conversation or hurried speech.

你	有	什	麼	飲	料	?
nǐ	yǒu	shén	me	yǐn	liào	
You	have	what		beverages		

ma 嗎 is not used in the above question.

7. Choices will often be presented in a list, as in this statement.

綠	茶	,	紅	茶	,	咖	啡	,	什	麼	都	有	啊	!
lǜ	chá		hóng	chá		kā	fēi		shén	me	dōu	yǒu	a	
Green tea			black tea			coffee			what	all	have		a	

Topic sentences – where the object (or list of objects, in this case) have been moved to the front of the sentence – are very common in Mandarin.

dōu 都 (**all**) always refers to the topic or list of topics that directly precede it in order to emphasize that all are referenced to the verb directly after it.

Other **shénme** 什麼 + **dōu** 都 + **verb** statements (Also see Ch.6 Notes p.39 no.10)

雞	肉	,	豬	肉	,	牛	肉	,	什	麼	都	吃	啊	!
jī	ròu		zhū	ròu		niú	ròu		shén	me	dōu	chī	a	
Chicken			pork			beef			what	all	eat		a	

台	南	,	台	北	,	高	雄	,	什	麼	都	想	去	啊	!
tái	nán		tái	běi		gāo	xióng		shén	me	dōu	xiǎng	qù	a	
Tainan			Taipei			Kaohsiung			what	all	want	go		a	

8. While this is polite enough, to be even more courteous, add **qǐng** 請 (please) in front of **gěi** 給 (give) to say "Please give me."

好	,	給	我	一 杯	紅 茶	.
hǎo		gěi	wǒ	yì bēi	hóng chá	
Ok		give	me	a glass of	black tea	

9. Usually cold follows hot (water is cold in its natural state and must be heated to make it hot).

冰 的	還 是	熱 的	?
bīng de	hái shì	rè de	
iced	or	hot	

Some other pairs of opposites in the order they're usually stated:

gāo 高 tall ...	ǎi 矮 short	dà 大 big ...	xiǎo 小 small
pàng 胖 fat ...	shòu 瘦 thin	hēi 黑 black ...	bái 白 white
kuài 快 fast ...	màn 慢 slow	gāo 高 high ...	dī 低 low
duō 多 more ...	shǎo 少 less	cháng 長 long ...	duǎn 短 short

Here are temperatures for beverages from boiling to freezing.

tàngde 燙的 scalding hot	lěngde 冷的 cold
rède 熱的 hot	bīngde 冰的 iced
wēnde 溫的 warm	

10. This question can be answered by stating your preference, followed by any further requests.

冰 的	,	冰 塊	少 一 點	.
bīng de		bīng kuài	shǎo yì diǎn	
iced		ice cubes	a little less	

"A little less" in English is said **shǎo yìdiǎn** 少一點 (less a little) in Chinese.

A few other ways to use **adjective + yìdiǎn** 一點

duō yìdiǎn 多一點 a little more	shǎo yìdiǎn 少一點 a little less
kuài yìdiǎn 快一點 a little faster	màn yìdiǎn 慢一點 a little slower
là yìdiǎn 辣一點 a little spicier	dàn yìdiǎn 淡一點 a little milder
dà yìdiǎn 大一點 a little bigger	xiǎo yìdiǎn 小一點 a little smaller
dàshēng yìdiǎn 大聲一點 a little louder	xiǎoshēng yìdiǎn 小聲一點 a little softer

11. "No problem" is a common expression in English as well as in Chinese.

沒 有	問 題	,	請	坐 一 下	.
méi yǒu	wèn tí		qǐng	zuò yí xià	
No	problem		please	sit down	

yíxià 一下 softens the tone of what might otherwise sound like a command.

Wǒ kàn yíxià.	我看一下。	I'll take a look.
Qǐng děng yíxià.	請等一下。	Please wait a minute.
Nǐ diǎn yíxià.	你點一下。	Please count to make sure the amount is correct.
Wǒ xiǎng yíxià.	我想一下。	I'll think about it.
Qǐng zuò yíxià.	請坐一下。	Please wait a minute (lit: Please sit down.)

12. Here are other items on the breakfast menu with their proper classifiers.

yí fèn luóbōgāo	一份蘿蔔糕	a portion of fried radish cake
yí fèn guōtiē	一份鍋貼	a portion of fried dumplings
yì zhāng cōngyóubǐng	一張蔥油餅	a piece of fried onion cake
yì bāo shǔtiáo	一包薯條	a bag of French fries

You may say either **yí ge** 一個 or **yí fèn** 一份 when ordering **dànbing** 蛋餅

My notes:

What it means!

	好	Woman (女) with child (子) = <i>good</i>
	hǎo	
<p>Riddle: Q: Zhōngguó rén tōngcháng zài nǎ yí ge yuè chī de zuì shǎo? 中國人通常在那一個月吃得最少? <i>In what month do Chinese people eat the least?</i></p> <p>A: Èryuè 二月 February</p> <p>Reason: èr 二 sounds like è 餓 <i>i.e. è yuè 餓月 hungry month</i></p>		

Use slang!

A: Tā měi cì dōu shuōcuò huà. 他每次都說錯話。 *He always says the wrong thing.*
B: Duì! Tā hěn bái mù! 對啊! 他很白目! *Yeah, he's totally clueless!*