

3.7 Things to drink

Traditionally, Chinese quenched their thirst with soup (often simply the water used to boil vegetables) or, if they could afford it, tea (which was introduced to China from India around the beginning of the Tang dynasty). For formal occasions, there were varieties of jiǔ, alcoholic drinks made from grains, such as rice and millet.

Nowadays, soup, tea and boiled water (kāishuǐ ‘open water’) are still probably the main beverages, but with increasing affluence and foreign commercial influence, drinking practices are changing, particularly in urban areas. Iced drinks, which were traditionally regarded as unhealthy – as they probably are – are now common. Soy milk drinks are popular, and even cow’s milk is gaining acceptance (despite widespread lactose intolerance). With the rise of fancy restaurants and cocktail bars, alcohol drinking practices are changing too. A Franco-Chinese joint enterprise is producing wines made with grapes under the Dynasty (Chádài) label. Brandies and whiskeys are quite popular. Foreign wines and spirits (yángjiǔ), are drunk in different fashion in China. Grape wines and spirits, for example, are sometimes mixed with carbonated drinks, or are watered down and drunk with meals. Spirits, served in small glasses or cups, are more compatible with Chinese practices of toasting (cf. §8.4.5) than are grape wines served in larger amounts.

Non-alcoholic

chá	tea	kāfēi	coffee
kělè	cola [generic]	kāishuǐ	boiled water
qìshuǐ	carbonated drinks; soda	júzi shuǐ	orange juice
guǒzhī	fruit juice	níngméngzhī	lemonade
niúǎi	milk	dòujiāng	soybean milk
kuàngquánshuǐ	mineral water (mineral-spring-water)		
Kékǒu kělè	Coke	Bǎishì kělè	Pepsi
Xuěbì	Sprite (snow-azure)'	Qī Xǐ	7 Up

Alcoholic (jiǔ)

	yángjiǔ	(‘foreign-wine’); any foreign alcoholic drinks, both wines and spirits
<i>Milder drinks -- ‘wines’ and beers</i>	píjiǔ	beer
	zhāpí, shēngpí	draft beer
	mǐjiǔ	rice wine
	pútaojiǔ	wine (grape-wine)
	hóngjiǔ	red wine
	hóngpútaojiǔ	red wine (red+grape-wine)
	báipútaojiǔ	white wine
	Shàoxīngjiǔ	a smooth rice wine, often served hot, from Shàoxīng in Zhèjiāng province.
<i>Spirits</i>	báijiǔ	generic white spirit, with high alcohol content.
	liángshíjiǔ	generic name for wines made from grains.
	gāoliang<jiǔ>	a white spirit made from gaoliang, or ‘sorghum’.

Máotái<jiǔ>	the most famous of Chinese liquors, from Maotai in Guizhōu.
Wǔliángyè	(‘5-grains-liquid’); a popular grain liquor with a medicinal taste.

The syllable pí in píjiǔ derives from the English word ‘beer’; jiǔ is generic for alcoholic drinks. Nowadays, there are a large number of popular beers in China, eg Yànjīng píjiǔ (from Yànjīng, an old name for Běijīng), Shànghǎi píjiǔ, Wǔxīng píjiǔ (‘5 star’), Xuělù píjiǔ (‘snow deer’) and Qīngdǎo píjiǔ, named after the city of Qīngdǎo in Shandong. The Qīngdǎo Co. was originally a German brewery, set up in the German concession in Shandong.

Exercise 4

You can practice ordering drinks in succinct language, stating the item first, and then the amount: Niúnǎi, yì bēi. ‘A glass of milk.’ Typically, soft drinks are now served cold (albeit sometimes at a slightly higher price), but if not, you can request a cold one by saying bīng de ‘ice one’, or yào bīng de ‘want ice one’. In ordinary places, ice is not usually added to drinks, possibly because people are aware that it may be made from non-potable sources. But to be sure, you may want to add bú yào bīngkuài ‘not want icecubes’ or, more politely, qǐng bié jiā bīngkuài ‘request don’t add icecubes’. Now, following the model above, try ordering the following:

1. A glass of coke; check to see if they have cold ones.
2. A bottle of orange juice.
3. 2 bottles of cold beer.
4. Tea for two; and a cup of boiled water.
5. 2 bottles of mineral water.
6. Find out if they have draft beer; if so, order two mugs.
7. 2 cups of coffee with milk.
8. Find out what kinds of soda they have; order two bottles or glasses.



Lái yì bēi lǚchá ba. [JKW 2002]

3.7.1 Dialogue

Huáng Jūrén (male) hears a knock on the door and recognizes his friend, Zhèng Chūnhuá (female). He addresses her with the personal xiǎo+last syllable of míngzi:

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|-----|---|--|
| Hg. | Shéi a? | Who is it? |
| Zh. | Wǒ shì Zhèng Chūnhuá. | I'm Zhèng Chūnhuá. |
| Hg. | O, Xiǎohuá, qǐngjìn, qǐngzuò. | Oh, Xiǎohuá, come on in, have a seat. |
| Zh. | Xièxie. Ài, jīntiān rè jǐle. | Thanks. Gosh, it's so hot today! |
| Hg. | Ng. Nà nǐ hē yìdiǎnr shénme?
Yǒu kělè, níngméngzhī, píjiǔ. | Sure is. What'll you have to drink?
There's cola, lemonade, beer. |
| Zh. | Bú yòng le, bú yòng le. | No need! [I'm fine.] |
| Hg. | Nǐ bié kèqi. Hē ba. | Relax! Have something! |
| Zh. | Hǎo, nà lái <yì> bēi lǜchá ba. | Okay, bring a cup of green tea, please. |
| Hg. | Hǎo, lǜchá...Nǐ zuìjìn zěnmeyàng? | Okay, green tea...How are you doing these days? |
| Zh. | Hái kěyǐ. Zuótiān yǒu diǎnr
bù shūfu, dànshì xiànzài hǎo le. | I'm okay. I didn't feel too well
yesterday, but I'm okay now. |
| Hg. | Nǐ tài máng le! | You're too busy! |
| Zh. | Shì yǒu diǎnr máng! Nǐ yě shì.
Xuéshēng zǒngshì hěn
máng hěn lèi a! | I am a bit! You too! Students are
always tired and busy. |

Notes

1. Other teas: lóngjǐng chá a type of green tea; wūlóng chá 'oolong tea'; júhuāchá 'chrysanthemum tea'; [Yīngguó] nǎichá 'English milk-tea'.
2. Zuìjìn 'recently; these days'.

3.8 Why, because, so

If someone says they are tired or anxious, you will want to find out why. ‘Why’, wèishénme, is made up of wèi ‘for [the sake of]’ and shénme ‘what’. The response will often be introduced with yīnwèi ‘because’. Suǒyǐ ‘so’ introduces the consequences. Before you can give good reasons, you need some additional vocabulary. The following nouns all have to do with classwork:

kǎoshì	gōngkè	zuòyè	bàogào	shíyàn
test; exam	assignments	homework	reports	experiments

Notes

Kǎoshì and shíyàn are also [two-syllable] verbs, meaning ‘to do a test’ and ‘do an experiment’. ‘To test someone’s ability in a subject’ is simply kǎo: Yīnggāi kǎo tāmen de Zhōngwén ‘[We] should test their Chinese’. For now, concentrate on the use of these words as nouns.

Dialogues

- A. Jīntiān zěnmeyàng? How are you today?
Yǒu kǎoshì suǒyǐ yǒu yìdiǎnr jǐnzhāng. *[I] have a test, so I’m a bit nervous.*
- B. Nǐ wèishénme jǐnzhāng? How come?
 <Yīnwei> míngtiān yǒu kǎoshì. *[I] have an test tomorrow.*
 Shénme kǎoshì? What kind of test?
 Zhōngwén kǎoshì. *A Chinese test.*

3.8.1 A lot of

Duō (a word to be carefully distinguished from dōu ‘all’) is a SV meaning ‘much; many; lots, etc.’ Its opposite, shǎo, can mean ‘few; not many’ but is also common as an adverb meaning ‘seldom; rarely’. Duō has some rather idiosyncratic properties: it may modify nouns directly (without de), but to do so, it requires the presence of at least a modifying adverb, such as hěn:

yǒu hěn duō <de> gōngkè	lots of assignments
yǒu hěn duō <de> kǎoshì	lots of tests
yǒu hěn duō <de> zuòyè	lots of homework

Instead of hěn, the two more or less synonymous adverbs zhème ‘in this way; so; such’ and nàme ‘in that way; so; such’, can also be used in conjunction with duō (and shǎo):

zhème duō gōngkè such a lot of assignments
nàme duō bàogào so many reports

Duō and shǎo can also be used as predicates – that is, main verbs. English finds the literal translation of the construction awkward (ie ‘exams are numerous’), preferring instead an existential ‘there is/are’, or a possessive ‘we have’:

Shíyàn duō bu duō? Are there lots of experiments?
Gōngkè bǐjiào duō. There are relatively many assignments.
Bàogào yě hěn duō. [We] also have lots of reports.
Zuòyè gèng duō. There is even more homework.
Kǎoshì bù shǎo. [I] have quite a number of tests.
Zuòyè wèishénme nàme shǎo? How come so little homework?

Reference can be made to the course by simply presenting it at the head of the sentence as a ‘topic’:

Zhōngwén, zuòyè hěn duō. Chinese [class] has a lot of homework.
Rìwén, zuòyè duō dànshì Japanese [class] has a lot of homework, but
kǎoshì shǎo. few tests.

Sentences of the above type can usually be re-formed with yǒu, ‘have’, which makes them look rather more like the English:

Zhōngwén yǒu hěn duō zuòyè. Chinese has lots of homework.
Rìwén méiyǒu nàme duō kǎoshì. Japanese does have so many tests.

Zhōngwén, zuótiān yǒu kǎoshì, [We] has a test in Chinese yesterday,
jīntiān yǒu bàogào. [and] today we have a report.

Summary (not possible)*

Yǒu Zhōngwén zuòyè.	[We] have Chinese homework.
*Yǒu duō Zhōngwén zuòyè.	
Yǒu hěn duō Zhōngwén zuòyè. <i>OR: Zhōngwén, zuòyè hěn duō.</i>	There’s a lot of Ch. homework. [Chinese has lots of homework.]
Yǒu zhème duō Zhōngwén zuòyè.	There’s so much Ch. homework!
Yǒu nàme duō Zhōngwén zuòyè.	There’s so much Ch. homework!

Exercise 5.

In Chinese:

1. Explain that students have lots of homework each day so they're always tired.
 2. Ask why Japanese doesn't have a lot of tests.
 3. Explain that there are no classes tomorrow because it's May the 1st.
 4. Explain that your Chinese teacher is quite strict, and that you have lots of tests.
 5. Explain that you didn't have any homework yesterday.
 6. Ask why they have so many reports.
 7. Explain that you feel quite nervous today because you have a test.
 8. Explain that you have lots of tests, and even more assignments.
 9. Explain that physics [class] isn't hard, but it has lots of homework.
 10. Ask why they all have so many keys?
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