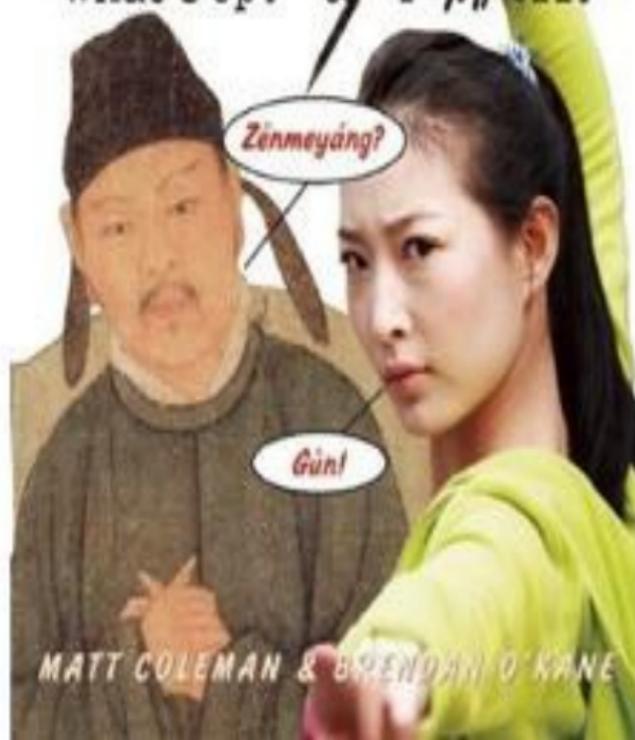


D!RTY

CHINESE

Everyday Slang from
"What's Up?" to "F*%# Off!"



MATT COLEMAN & BRENDAN O'KANE

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DIRTY CHINESE

EVERYDAY SLANG FROM
"WHAT'S UP?" TO "F*%# OFF!"

.....Matt Coleman
Edmund Backhouse

Illustrated by Lindsay Mack

Ulysses Press



For Paul, an 89-year-old Chinese-American gentleman I met in a bar yesterday who has an even fouler mouth than I do!

Acknowledgments

Matt: Thanks to Brendan O’Kane, who taught me how to say, “fuck [my] grandpa’s piss-stinking asshole,” Hans Cui, the Canto-Canuck for his infinite filthiness, Huang Sui for her long distance kinkiness, Shanghai Lane for the long Logo sessions, Catherine Mathes and Derek Sandhaus for teaching me “how to get my swerve on,” Nick, Keith, and the good people at Ulysses Press for their endless patience, last but not least the Godfather of the China Blog Mafia—John Paden—for hooking this up, keeping it real, and for teaching us all the dirty words we know in English and Chinese (We won’t tell about the kittens, John!).

Edmund: For my parents, who taught me better, and my teachers, who will hopefully read this with the good humor and tolerance that got them through their classes with me. Thanks to Song Li for her patience, and Ulysses Press, for theirs.

USING THIS BOOK

Dirty Chinese assumes you know enough Chinese to get around, and if you don't—that is, unless you really think it's a good idea to learn how to say “fistfucking” before you can order food—then you might want to put this down, put a few months into getting a grounding, and come back later. It's cool, we'll still be here.

The dirty little secret about “Chinese” is that it doesn't exist: it's a family of languages, rather than a single language, and a speaker of Cantonese will be able to understand a speaker of Mandarin about as well as a Portuguese person can understand a speaker of Italian. When we say “Chinese” throughout this book, we're really referring to Modern Standard Mandarin, or putonghua—the national language of the People's Republic of China. Some of the terms here may be more Beijing-y (these are mostly from Edmund) or more Shanghai-y (these are mostly from Matt), but all of them should be generally understood anywhere proper Mandarin is spoken. In some cases we've added Taiwanese slang terms, but in general we've confined ourselves to Mainland Mandarin so that in a few years when Taiwan gets “liberated” into the ground, this book will still be current.

All of the sentences in this book are given in English, then in the Hanyu Pinyin Romanization, then in characters. (We've gone with simplified characters throughout the book.) There's a quick and dirty guide to Hanyu Pinyin below, and you may want to take some additional time to get yourself up to speed with the system before reading on, just to make sure that every come-on, every blistering insult, every slurred request for "Jus' onnnne more" hits home.

(Quick and) dirty Chinese (pronunciation)

We know, we know—you want to get straight to the dirty bits, and we'll be happy to take you there in a second. But there's nothing worse than telling someone that you'll kick their ass so hard their ancestors will feel it eight generations back only to find that they couldn't understand what you were saying, so here's a quick guide to making yourself basically understandable.

The tones

The first tone is high, level, and held a little longer than the other tones. The second tone starts around the middle of your range and rises quickly to the top. The third tone starts around the middle, drops very quickly to the bottom of your range, then rises sharply to the top. The fourth tone starts at the top of your range and drops quickly to the bottom. Tones also sometimes change depending on what tones they're surrounded by; the details of this are head-explody, but the most common example—where two third tones become a second tone and a third tone (so that 你好 *nǐhǎo* is actually pronounced *nǐhǎo*) is easy enough to remember.

Pinyin

Hanyu Pinyin is the standard way of writing Chinese using the Roman alphabet. There are some tricks to the system, but for the most part it's easy enough to learn with some practice. This pronunciation guide isn't 100% accurate, but should hopefully get you more or less up to speed quickly.

The vowels

a: When this is on its own or after a consonant, it sounds like “ah,” or the “a” in “father.”

ai: Like “eye” or “buy.”

an: The “a” here sounds a little more like the “a” in “cat.”

ang: Back to the “a” in “father.”

ao: As in “cow.”

e: When this is on its own, it’s like “uh” or “cup.”

ei: As in “hey.”

en: More or less like the English “pen,” but with a little

bit of “pun” in it.

eng: As in “bunghole.”

er: Complicated, but roughly like “grrr.” Tongue is curled toward the roof of the mouth.

i: Usually as in “pee,” BUT: after a “z(h)-,” “c(h)-,” or “s(h)-” it is pronounced more like the “ir” in “sir.”

ie: Like the start of “yeah.”

iong: Like “-ong” below, but with a “y” in front of it.

in: Halfway between “kin” and “keen.”

ing: As above.

iu: “Yo.”

o: Closer to “swum” or “won” than “whoa.”

ou: As in “woe,” “go,” or “nasty-ass ho.”

ong: Lips are more rounded than in English “thong” or “young.”

u: “Ooh.” BUT: after a “j-,” “q-,” “y-,” or “x-” this becomes ü (see below).

ui: As in “no way.”

un: “Would” plus an “n.” BUT: after a “j-,” “q-,” “y-,” or “x-” this becomes ü (see below).

uo: Like “won” with a bit of “woe.”

ü: Make like you’re about to whistle—rounded lips, raised tongue. Now say “whee” or “oo.”

ün: Ditto, but with an “-n” after it.

The consonants

Consonants in Chinese are mostly the same as in English, though unvoiced. (If that doesn't mean anything to you, don't worry.) There are some unfamiliar sounds, though:

c-: A hard "ts-," like "t's" in "that's it."

g-: Always a hard "g-," as in "go."

h-: Closer to a "ch-" as in "ach" or Scottish "loch."

j-: Roughly like "itch," but without the puff of air. A normal English "j" will do in a pinch.

q-: Roughly like "itch," but this time with the puff of air.

r-: About halfway between a French "j" and an English "r."

x: Somewhere between “sh” and “sy.”

z: Like “ts-,” as with “c-” above, but without the puff of air. The sound in “cads,” “ads,” etc.

zh-: Like “judge,” “edge,” etc. Not pronounced like a French “j.”

Finally, Standard Mandarin has something called 儿化 (érhuà; “erization”). In érhuà, an “r” sound is added to the end of a word—remember that this is the Chinese “r,” which is pronounced with the tip of the tongue sticking up toward the roof of the mouth, rather than the English “r.” Most of the time, this behaves the way you would expect it to—for example, 把儿 (bǎr; “handle”) is pronounced as “bǎ” plus “-r.” (Although these words are written with two characters, they are only pronounced as one syllable.) What happens to words ending in “-n” or “-ng” is a little less intuitive: in the case of the word 玩儿 (wánr; “to play”), the word is pronounced almost as if it were “wár,” but with a more nasal realization of the vowel—ditto for words ending in “-ng.”

Now let's get dirty.

CHAPTER 1

HOWDY CHINESE

Dǎ zhāohu

打招呼

Hello

Nǐhǎo

您好

Back in the day, the standard greeting was “Hi, Comrade,” but thanks to the perfidious influence of the debauched Taiwanese, saying that these days will make you sound like a friend of Dorothy to pretty much anyone under age 50. There are many ways to greet people in China, starting from the more formal “Nǐhǎo,” progressing to the less formal but equally boring “Nīhǎo,” and ending up in “Wǒ cào,” “Fuck.” Chinese greetings cover all the important facets of life: food, what you are up to, obvious observations on what you are currently in the act of doing, and live bulletins on breaking bowel events.

Hi

Nīhǎo

你好

Hey

Āi

哎

Have you eaten yet?

Chī le ma?

吃了吗？

I've got diarrhea.

Wǒ lā dùzi.

我拉肚子。

Have you still got diarrhea?

Nǐ hái lā dùzi ma?

你还拉肚子吗？

In traditional Chinese towns, most families didn't have their own toilets, they'd share communal facilities, and it was common to greet your neighbors as you entered or exited the communal commodes with "Have you eaten yet?" **Tasteful!**

'Bout ya?

Gānmá qù?

干嘛去？

What's up?

Zěnmeyàng?

怎么样？

Whaddup?

Gànshá?

干啥？

Slightly rural-sounding; can also mean “WTF?”

In some of your more relaxed places, people will greet each other with “gànmá qù?”—literally, “What’re you doing?” Unlike its literal English counterpart, “What’s up?” “gànmáqù” only has one or two variations—e.g. “gànmá?” More generally you can say “How’s it goin’?” or “zěnmeyàng?” This is way more flexible and covers greetings like “What’s goin’ down?” and the equivalent of “How’s it hangin’?”

How’s it goin’?

Zěnmeyàng a?
怎么样啊？

How's it hangin'?

Zěnmē nòngde?

怎么弄得？

Literally, "How've you been 'doing' it?"

How've you been lately?

Zuìjīn zěnmeyàng?

最近怎么样？

Good morning / Good evening.

Zǎoshàng hǎo / Wǎnshàng hǎo?

早上好 / 晚上好？

There is an informal variation on "good morning," **zǎo**, but not so for "good evening."

Mornin'.

Zǎo.

早。

Evenin'!

Wǎnshàng hǎo a!

晚上好啊！

Night night.

Wǎn'ān.

晚安。

Long time no see

Hǎo jiǔ bù jiàn

好久不见

As in English, the next part of a greeting usually involves inquiring about the other person's well-being.

Been good?

Zuìjìn hái kěyǐ ba?

最近还可以吧？

Same as ever.

Lǎoyàngzi.

老样子。

You're still as fat as ever!

Nǐ hái shì zhè me pàng!

你还是这么胖！

Just as retarded as ever!

Nǐ hái shì zhè me chī!

你还是这么痴！

Hey, guys!

Hēi, gēmen!

嘿，哥儿们！

Goodbye

Zàijiàn

再见

When it comes to bidding farewell, there are also a few variations on the old “zàijiàn”:

Bye-bye.

Bàibai.

拜拜。

See ya next time.

Xià cì jiàn.

下次见。

I'm off.

Wǒ zǒu le.

我走了。

See you 'round.

Huítóu jiàn.

回头见。

Hey!

Wèi!

喂！

In British English, “oi” is a slightly impolite word used to get people’s attention. In Chinese, “Wèi!” is a slightly impolite word used to get people’s attention, or to answer the phone. Whatever, if expediency is key then here’s a few more useful goodies:

Come here a sec.

Guòlái yī xià.

过来一下儿。

I want to have a word with you.

Wǒ yǒu huà gēn nǐ shuō.

我有话跟你说。

Me

Wǒ

我

In Chinese there are a variety of ways to express me, from me, to me-myself, to the ridiculously formal, sometimes used in jest “Speaking personally, I,” to the hickish “ǎn.”

I myself

Wǒ zìjǐ

我自己

Speaking personally, I...

Wǒ běn rén...

我本人。。。

The above two words are usually used to contrast yourself with

other people, as in sentences like 现在兽交在上海越来越流行，不过我本人还没这个倾向。(Xiànzài

shòujiāo zài Shànghǎi yuè lái yuè liúxíng, bùguò wǒ běn rén hái

méi zhègè qīngxiàng: “Bestiality is getting more and more

popular

in Shanghai these days, but I haven't got the taste for it myself.”)

Ah wanna go home (to the farm)!

Ān yào huí lǎojiā!

俺要回老家！

I'm an honest, dependable guy worthy of your affections. (I want to get into your pants.)

Wǒ shì yī ge shízài de, kékào de rén, hé wǒ zài yīqǐ de huà nǐ jiù huì xìngfú.

我是一个实在的，可靠的人，和我在一起的话你就会幸福。

Sorry

Duìbùqǐ

对不起

There are quite a few ways to apologize in Chinese. From “I’m sorry” to “I do apologize,” there are plenty of ways you can say sorry and really mean it, or just shrug when you “accidentally” elbow the guy who’s been blocking the subway doors like he owns the goddamned train.

My bad.

Bù hǎo yīsi.

不好意思。

I do apologize.

Zhēn bàoqiàn.

真抱歉。

A mistake.

Gǎo cuò le.

搞错了。

You're cool?

Méishìr ba?

没事儿吧？

Oops. (Or “Uh-oh.”)

Āiyō.

哎哟。

Excuse me

Bù hǎo yīsi

不好意思

“Excuse me” is one of those multipurpose words that smooths over a social faux-pas or vomiting all over someone’s new leather jacket, or it can be an apology for farting. But if there’s a bunch of ignorant fuckers blocking your way and you want to get past, this is the way to deal with them:

Coming through!

Rang yī xià!

让一下！

'Scuse me!

Guò yī xià!

过一下！

Beg pardon!

Láojià lei!

劳驾嘞！

'Scuse my craphouse Chinese.

Bù hǎo yīsi, wǒ Zhōngwén jiǎngdé zhème chǒu.

不好意思，我中文讲得这么丑。

Sorry I'm late.

Bù hǎo yīsi, chídào le.

不好意思，迟到了。

Aside from “sorry” and “excuse me,” there are a couple other slangy ways to shrug off guilt:

You're so unlucky! (expressing sympathy)

Nǐ zhēn dǎoméi!

你真倒霉！

It's all my fault.

Dōu guài wǒ.

都怪我。

What a pity.

Zhēn kěxī.

真可惜。

You poor thing.

Nǐ zhēn kělǎn.

你真可怜。

Watch it! (When it's someone else's fault.)

Xǎoxīn diǎnr!

小心点儿！

Watch where you're going! (When someone bumps into you.)

Nǐ kǎnzhe diǎnr!

你看着点儿！

Look out!

Xǎoxīn!

小心！

This warning is especially useful if you're flying on your bike

and some dumbshit just wanders out in front of you.

This sort

of apparent utter unawareness of one's surroundings

happens

often enough in China to make you wonder how on earth we've managed to come so far as a species.

Please

Qǐng

请

Asking for a favor is another of those things that you usually want to be polite about. But when you are talking to friends, feel free to be a little more casual:

When you get the chance...

Yǒu shíjiān...

有时间...

give me a call.

gěi wǒ dǎ diànhuà.

给我打电话。

Could you...

Kě bù kěyǐ...

可不可以。。。

lend me 100 bucks?

jiè wǒ yībǎi kuài?

借我一百块？



help get me some toilet paper?

bāng wǒ ná diǎnr zhǐ guòlái?

帮我拿点儿纸过来？

Pro Tip: Most toilets in China do not supply toilet paper and 97% of foreign travelers find this out the hard way. Be smart—bring your own!

help me scratch this itch?

bāng wǒ zhuāzhuā yǎng?

帮我抓抓痒？

Could you give me your name? **Could you?**

Kěyǐ gàosu wǒ nǐ de míngzi ma? Kěyǐ ma?

可以告诉我你的名字吗？可以吗？

INTRODUCING YOURSELF

ZÌWǒ JIÈSHÀO

自我介绍

My name is Martin.

Wǒ jiào Mǎdīng.

我叫马丁。

I'm from Nebraska.

Wǒ láizì Měiguó de Nèibùlāsījī zhōu.

我来自美国的内布拉斯加州。

I've got a terminal illness.

Wǒ shēn huàn juézhèng le.

我身患绝症了。

And, innocent of the ways of the world, I have
never known a
woman.

Wǒ méi zěnme jiàn guò shìmiàn, hái méi cháng guò nǚrén
de wèidào.

我没怎么见过世面，还没尝过女人的
味道。

Could you give me your number?

Kě bù kěyǐ liú ge diànhuà (hào)?

可不可以留个电话(号)？

**I'll join you and your hot friend for the night,
cool?**

Wǒ jīnwǎn péi nǐmen liǎng ge měinǚ yìqǐ kuàihuo, hǎo bù

hǎo?

我今晚陪你们两个美女一起快活，好不好？

I hope we can hang out more.

Xīwàng zánliǎ kěyǐ duō zài yīqǐ wánr.

希望咱俩可以多在一起玩儿。

You should. . .

Nǐ yīnggāi...

你应该。。。

I'm Renee.

Wǒ shì Renee.

我是 Renee 。

I'm from England.

Wǒ lái zì Yīngguó.

我来自英国 。

I'm woman enough for two men.

Wǒ de shēncái fēngmǎn dé zúyǐ tóngshí mǎnzú liǎng ge nánrén.

我的身材丰满得足以同时满足两个男人 。

I was born a guy...

Wǒ chūshēng shí shì ge nánhái'r...

我出生时是个男孩儿。。。

...but with the amazing advances in **medical technology** these days...

Bù guò xiàn zài yīxué jìshù zhēn liǎobùqǐ...

不过现在**医学技术**真了不起。。。

Let's be **friends**.

Zánmen jiāo ge péngyǒu ba.

咱们交个**朋友**吧。

think hard about what you've done.

hǎohǎo fǎnxīng.

好好反省。

come kick it at my place sometime.

yǒu shíjiān lái wǒ jiā wánr.

有时间来我家玩儿。

I'm begging you...

Wǒ qiúqiú nǐ...

我求求你。。。

**I'm begging you, please take a shower,
you stink worse than goddamned dog shit!**

Wǒ qiúqiú nǐ gǎnkuài qù xǐzǎo, nǐ shēnshàng de wèi
bǐ tā māde gǒushǐ hái chòu!

**我求求你，赶快去洗澡，你身上的味儿比他
妈的狗屎还臭！**

Whether you are sitting next to some over-friendly fella from Hebei on the train or you've been introduced to someone whose contacts will come in very handy on your business venture, “jiāo ge péngyǒu”—“make a friend”—is an all-terrain phrase that will work in any situation in this nation of natural-born networkers.

Asking for help

Bāngmáng

帮忙

You'd better learn how to ask for help here in China, because despite a change for the better in recent years, and the fact that foreigners are treated quite well here, many people need to be overtly asked for help before they will offer it.

Could you help me please?

Qǐng bāng wǒ yíxià?

请帮我一下？

Can you gimme a hand?

Bāng ge máng, hǎo ma?

帮个忙，好吗？

In China, your real friends will always do their best to help you out if you are short on cash. As for other favors, your acquaintances will help you with bureaucratic issues if they can as it means that some day (Brando voice)—and that day may never come—they might just ask a favor of you, too.

I've gotta pay my rent at the end of the month, but I'm running pretty light on cash.

Wǒ yuèdǐ yào jiāo fángzū, dàn zuìjìn yǒudiǎnr jǐn.

我月底要交房租但最近有点儿紧。

(Don't tell them it's because you spent it all on hookers and booze.)

Hey, bro, I got a small problem—think you could help me out?

Gēmenr, wǒ yǒudiǎnr shìr gēn nǐ shuō, nǐ néng bù néng bāng ge máng?

哥们儿，我有点事儿跟你说，你能不能帮个忙？

If you could ... I'd be so grateful!

Rúguǒ nǐ néng bāng wǒ... wǒ jiù huì fēicháng gǎnxiè nǐ!

如果你能帮我...我就会非常感谢你！

Would you mind looking after my bag for a moment?

Néng bù néng bǎng wǒ kàn yīxià bāo?

能不能帮我看一下儿包？

Use this with caution, i.e., not on the nice gentleman from Henan

who just stuck his hand in your pocket “to put back some money that you dropped.”

Nice to meet you

Rènshi nǐ hěn gāoxìng

认识你很高兴

This is what you'll see in pretty much any Chinese textbook, and people do actually say it (though it sounds a bit stilted). A more natural-sounding—not to mention shorter—way to say it would be:

A pleasure.

Xìnghuì.

幸会。

Literally, “a fortunate meeting.”

What's your surname, (please)?

(Qǐngwèn) nín guìxìng?

(请问)您贵姓？

Have we met before?

Wǒmen yǐqián jiànguòle ma?

我们以前见过了吗？

Got a light?

Jiè ge huǒr?

借个火儿？

(Excuse me,) do you have the time?

(Qǐngwèn,) xiànzài jīdiǎn?

(请问，) 现在

几点？

Do you come here often?

Nǐ jīngcháng lái zhèr ma?

你经常来这

儿吗？



Do you want to get a drink?

Yào bù yào hē yībēi?

要不要喝一杯？

How old are you?

Nǐ duō dà ne?

你多大呢？

No waaaay! You don't look it! (It's a compliment.)

Bù huì ba, kàn bù chū lái!

不会吧，看不出来！

How old do you think I look?

Wǒ kànqǐlái duōdà ne?

我看起来多大呢？

I'm new to China.

Wǒ shì gānggāng lái dào Zhōngguó de.

我是刚刚来到中国的。

I want to make some Chinese friends.

Wǒ xiǎng jiāo xiē Zhōngguó péngyou.

我想交些中国朋友。

What do you like to do in your free time?

Nǐ yǒukòng de shíhòu xǐhuān zuò shénme?

你有空的时候喜欢做什么？

Can you teach me some fun Chinese?

Nǐ jiāo wǒ diǎnr hǎowánr de Zhōngwén, hǎo ba?

你教我点儿好玩儿的中文好吧？

I like hanging out with you.

Wǒ gēn nǐ wánr de hěn kāixīn.

我跟你玩儿得很开心。

Taking pictures

Pāizhào

拍照

Can you take a picture for me?

Néng bù néng bāng wǒ pāi yīxià zhào?

能不能帮我拍一下照？

Let's take a group photo.

Zánmen pāi ge héyǐng ba.

咱们拍个合影吧。

I don't like pictures of myself.

Wǒ bù xǐhuan zìjǐ de zhàopiàn.

我不喜欢自己的照片。

Every language has a word people use when they take pictures—

something long, high-pitched, with an “eeeeee” sound in the middle of it to stretch people’s faces out into a rictus grin. In English, it’s “cheese.” In Chinese, it’s “eggplant.”

Cheese!

Qiézi!

茄子！

Literally, “eggplant.”

CHAPTER 2

FRIENDLY CHINESE

YŌUHǎO ZHŌNGWÉN

友好中文

Friends

Péngyou

朋友

Meeting people is easy in China—from classmates who just want to hang out, to chatty neighbors, to people who just want to try out their English on you, Chinese people treat visitors with a friendliness and kindness that—reserved as it may be at times—is truly surprising for many visitors. ... Unless they're Japanese, in which case history is personal and immediate. Oh, and don't mention the Opium Wars, and you might want to be circumspect on the “three Ts” of Taiwan, Tibet, and Tian'anmen.

Stranger

Mòshēngrén

陌生人

**I don't care how delicious their candy looks,
don't
talk to strangers!**

Bù yào hé mòshēngrén shuōhuà, wúlùn tāmen shǒu
zhōng de **tángguǒ** yǒu duō yòurén.

不要和陌生人说话，无论他们手中的糖果有多诱人。

Knowing (or recognizing) somebody

Rènshi

认识

I don't know him (her).

Wǒ bù rènshi tā.

我不认识他(她)。

Able / unable to recognize

Rèn de chūlái / rèn bu chūlái

认得出来 / 认不出来

The guy hit me from behind with a blackjack and ran off. I'd be able to recognize his silhouette, at most.

Tā gěi le wǒ yī mèn gùn, rán hòu mǎ shàng liū le, wǒ dīng duō zhǐ **rèn de chū lái** tā de bèi yǐng.

他给了我一闷棍，然后马上溜了，我顶多只**认得出来**他的背影。

Classmates

Tóngxué

同学

After our finals, I went out with some classmates and got so drunk that I woke up on a street corner in Tianjin the next day wearing an air stewardess's uniform.

Qīmò kǎoshì hòu, wǒ hé jǐ ge **tóngxué** chūqu hē le ge dà zuì. Dì'èr tiān zài Tiānjīn de dàjiē shàng xǐngguòlai shí, fāxiàn zìjǐ chuānshàng le kōngjiě zhǐfú.

期末考试后，我和几个**同学**出去喝了个大醉。第二天在天津的大街上醒过来时，发现自己穿上了空姐制服。

Schoolmates

Xiàoyǒu

校友

Schoolmates went to the same school, but may be of different generations.

After she graduated, she found a job through a schoolmate connection.

Bìyè yǐhòu, tā kào **xiàoyǒu** de guānxi zhǎodàole gōngzuò.

毕业以后，她靠**校友**的关系找到了工作。

Coworkers

Tóngshì

同事

His coworkers thought he was such a kiss-ass

that he might as well grow a tail to wag.

Tóngshìmen juéde tā zuìhǎo zhǎngchū yī tiáo néng yáo de gǒu wěiba, zhèyàng pāi mǎpì shí dòngzuò huì gèng fēngfù xiē.

同事们觉得他最好长出一条能摇的狗尾巴，这样拍马屁时动作会更丰富些。

Colleagues

Tóngháng

同行

I haven't had time to meet up and talk with colleagues lately.

Wǒ zuìjìn méiyǒu shíjiān gēn tóngháng jiànmiàn jiāoliú.
我最近没有时间跟同行见面交流。

Getting along well with...

Gēn... chǔ de tǐng hǎo

跟。。。处得挺好

He gets along well with his coworkers, or at least it looks that way.

Tā gēn tóngshìmen chǔ de tǐng hǎo, zhìshǎo
kànqilai rúcǐ.

他跟同事们处得挺好，至少看起来如此。

Tight

cí

磁

Literally, “magnetic.”

**Don't worry—I'm tight with him. When the
cops
get here he won't say anything.**

Béng dǎnxīn, wǒ gēn tā bèi er cí, jǐngchá miànqián tā bù
huì shuō shénme de.

甭担心，我跟他倍儿磁，警察面前他不会说
什么的。

Solid

Kàodezhù

靠得住

**He looks honest enough, but who knows if
he's
really solid?**

Zhè rén kànqilai zhōnghòu-lǎoshí, shéi zhīdào shìbùshì
zhēn de kàodezhù?

这人看起来忠厚老实，谁知道是不是真的靠得住？

Flaky, Sketchy

Bù kào pǔr

不靠谱儿

He's a good guy, but he can be flaky.

Tā rén hái xíng, bùguò yǒu shíhòu yě bù kào pǔr.

他人还行，不过有时候也不靠谱儿。

Dude, he got kicked out of Cambodia by the government? That's way sketchy!

Wǒ kào, tā dōu ràng Jiǎnpǔzhài de zhèngfǔ gěi shàn
chū le guómén? Nà tài tā mā bù kào pǔr!

我靠，他都让柬埔寨的政府给扇出了国门？

那太他妈不靠谱儿！

Considerate

Tītīe

体贴

My wife's always complaining that I never think about anybody else.

Wó lǎopo lǎo bàoyuan wǒ bùgòu tītīe.

我老婆老抱怨我不够体贴。

Friends

Péngyou

朋友

At home she relies on her parents; away from home, she relies on her friends.

Zài jiā kào fùmǔ, chūmén kào péngyou.

在家靠父母，出门靠朋友。

Online friend

Wǎngyǒu

网友

I've got more online friends than real friends.

Wǒ de wǎngyǒu bǐ xiànrí zhōng de péngyou duō.
我的网友比现实中的朋友多。

Homeboy

Gēmenr

哥们儿

Homegirl

Jiěmenr

姐们儿

Friend from childhood (girl)

Fàxiǎor

发小儿

Boyfriend

Nán péngyou / nányǒu

男朋友 / 男友



Girlfriend

Nǚpéngyou / nǚyǒu

女朋友 / 女友

Friends with benefits

Shuìyǒu

睡友

Bang-buddies

Pàoyǒu

炮友

Titles

Chēnghào

称号

It's common in Chinese to address people by their surname plus their profession—sort of the same way as English has “Mayor McCheese,” “Doctor Octopus,” and “Professor Snape,” except much more so: Lawyer Zhang, Teacher Wang (and there is nothing funny about that name), Director Lu, Chairman Mao, and so on.

Mr.

Xiānsheng

先生

Ms. / Mrs. (formal)

Nūshì

女士

Mrs. (generally an older woman)

Tàitai

太太

Teacher

Lǎoshī

老师

Doctor (medical)

Yīsheng

医生

Doctor (more colloquial)

Dàifu

大夫

Doctor (Ph.D.)

Bóshì

博士

Lawyer

Lǚshī
律師

Shifu (general term of address for an older working man)

Shīfu
師傅

Comrade

Tóngzhì
同志

Now dated and used—at least among the young and urbane—
mostly in the context of gay slang.

Family

Jiātīng

家庭

Ever think to yourself, “Boy, I sure wish there were a convenient two-syllable word for ‘father’s sister’s son’s wife’”? Me neither—but at some point in the development of the Chinese language, somebody did. Many of the more arcane words have mostly fallen out of use, but even within the immediate family there’s a bit more to remember than there would be for English:

Mother

Mǔqīn

母亲

Mommy

Māma

妈妈

Mom

Mā

妈

Ma (slightly hickish)

Fùqin

娘

Mothers feature heavily in certain more, ah, colorful phrases. We'll get to those later; don't worry.

Father

Bàba

父亲

Daddy

Bàba

爸爸

Dad

Bà

爸

Pa (slightly hickish)

Dìe

爹

Older brother

Gēge

哥哥

Younger brother

Dìdi

弟弟

Older sister

Jiějie

姐姐

Younger sister

Mèimei

妹妹

Husband

Zhàngfu

丈夫

Hubby

Lǎogōng

老公

Wife

Qīzi

妻子

Ol' Lady

Lǎopo

老婆

Literally, "old woman."

Characters

Lèixíng

类型

Poor

Qióng

穷

Rich

Fùyǒu

富有

Genius

Tiāncái

天才

Dummy

Bèndàn

笨蛋

Airhead

Shǎguā

傻瓜

Plain

Zhǎng de bù zěnmeyàng

长得不怎么样

Musclehead

Dàkuàitóu

大块头

Prettyboy

Xiǎo bái liǎnr

小白脸儿

Nerd

Shūdàizi

书呆子

(to) Party too hearty

Wánr de tài fēngkuáng

玩儿得太疯狂

Responsible (mothers love him)

Lǎoshībājiāo de

老实巴交的

Regional stereotypes

Fēiwǒ zúlèi, qíxīnbìyì

非我族类，其心必异

There are some things that everyone just knows: that girls from Sichuan province are feisty and totally up for whatever; that Cantonese people will eat just about anything; that the Shanghainese are prissy little compradors; that Northeasterners are all bruisers with volatile tempers. Like most stereotypes, these are absolutely true. Here's a brief guide to regional stereotypes:

Beijingers

Běijīngrén

北京人

Also known as 京油子 (jīng yóuzi; “Beijing slickers”) and

胡同串子 (hútòng chuànzi; something like “alley rats,” after the 胡同 hútòng alleys that wind through the old capital), the Beijingers are renowned for their laziness, their know-it-all attitude, and their cheerful willingness to argue over just about anything. These qualities enabled them to make their marble-mouthed slush of a local dialect the basis for standard Mandarin.

Shanghainese

Shànghǎirén

上海人

No country is complete without a big-city rivalry: the U.S. has New York and Los Angeles; the U.K. has Manchester and Liverpool; China has Beijing and Shanghai, and they hate each other so much. The locals call themselves 沪上 (Hùshàng; “At Hù,” Hù being another name for Shanghai) and refer to everyone else as 乡下的 (xiāngxià de; “in the countryside”). The men are known for being more than a bit effeminate, and the women are known for being impeccably dressed, merciless goldiggers.

Sichuanese

Sichuānrén

四川人

Sichuan province is home to hot girls, hot food, and hot...uh... hot heavy industry investment opportunities. A lot of Sichuanese leave the province to find work—often as “hairdressers,” if they’re women, or as migrant workers, if they’re men. Girls from Sichuan are known for their clear skin, fine features, killer bods and incomprehensible accents; they’re referred to as 麻辣屌 (málà ^{bī}; “spicy snatch”) if they’re working as prostitutes, or 辣妹子 (là mèizi; “spicy sistaz”) if they’re not.

Northeasterner

Dōngběirén

东北人

Hailing from Dongbei, the frigid bit of China stuck between North Korea and Siberia, Northeasterners generally describe themselves as 豪爽 (háoshuǎng; “extroverted,” “direct,” “fun-loving”), while people from elsewhere in the country typically describe them as “alcoholics prone to violent outbursts” and assume them to be affiliated with organized crime. This is unfair. Dongbei guys make great drinking buddies, if you’re a guy (if you’re a girl, you may want to carry pepper spray), and they’re good to have on your side

in a fight. And with their big hair, heavy war-paint, piercing accents, negotiable virtue and square-headed boyfriends, Dongbei chicks are like the Jersey girls of China.

Types

Lèixíng

类型

In America, you have your classic personality archetypes—preppy kids, hipsters, nerds, geeks, goths, punks, hippies, backpackers, rednecks. China has no shortage of its own colorful set of pleasing titles.

The Big Spender

Bàofāhù

暴发户

Frequently seen carrying a pleather man-purse, sporting a flat-top haircut and speaking loudly into his oversized cellphone, the Big Spender (literally, “suddenly wealthy” or “nouveau riche”) has done well for himself, probably in some grim former state-owned

enterprise, and he's keen to let everyone, particularly his rented KTV arm candy, know about it.

The Arm Candy

Xiǎomì

小蜜

Big Spenders will often appear at dinner with young, attractive women who are neither their wives nor their “second wives.” These young women are the 小蜜 (xiǎomì; “little honey”—“*mì*” comes from the English “Miss”), a category that falls somewhere between “piece on the side” and “arm candy,” since they’re not even necessarily banging the guy they’re with. Identifiable by: apparent belief that speaking like a four-year-old is sexy, high incidence of sentence-final interjective particles, age disparity between them and the dude whose lap they’re sitting on.

The Kept Woman

Èrnǎi

二奶



Unlike Arm Candy, Kept Women are engaged in serious, long-term relationships, playing the role of “second wife.” The men they’re involved with frequently not only 包二奶 (“bāo” èrnǎi; “take” second wives), they 养 (yǎng; “look after”) them, buying apartments for them, paying living costs, and even paying school tuition for their children if there are any. It’s actually pretty stand-up of the guys, until you remember that they’re still cheating on their real wives.

The Yuppie

Báilǐng

白领

Often heard before they are seen, Yuppies (literally, “white collars” in Chinese) are the ones in line behind you at Starbucks—they’d never go to SPR or any of the other local chains—dropping English words conspicuously into their sentences, talking about real estate and stocks, and buying cars they can’t afford and vacations that will bring them no joy in a sad attempt to fill the gaping holes at the core of their being. Fun game: next time you talk on the phone with a Chinese person, use English for all the words you don’t know in Chinese and see if you get mistaken for one of these guys.

The Slacker

Hūnzi

混子

You know slackers back home? The same with these guys. At high risk of being in rock bands and having poor haircuts.

The Busybody

The eyes, ears and especially mouths of the neighborhood grapevine, Busybodies are small, formidable dolmen-shaped old women with severe perms and flower-print blouses. Having done their bit for the Revolution, they now spend their retirement sitting around the yards of apartment developments talking to one another, observing neighbors' children approvingly and getting all up in people's business. They're not malicious; they just grew up without TV. Literally known as "the small-footed search-and-arrest squad," they can frequently be seen just watching. Get on their good side, seriously.

The Poser

Zhuāngbīfàn

装屁犯

Literally "poser cunt perpetrator," the Poser thrives in his or her natural habitat of upscale cafes and art galleries. Readily identifiable by emo glasses, Buddhist prayer beads around their wrists and their tendency to name-drop whatever foreign writer is fashionable at the moment, they seek potential mates by talking endlessly about how they went to Lhasa and

found it so spiritual that they'd like nothing better than to give up their apartment, car and Macbook and spend the rest of their lives living in a yak-hide tent eating nothing but tsampa and drinking nothing but yak-butter tea. Note: may have never actually been to Lhasa.

The Migrant Worker

Mingōng

民工

The unsung, perpetually fucked-over hero behind China's economic miracle, the migrant worker (occasionally 农民工, (nóngmín gōng or "rural migrant worker") leaves his or her horrible little hometown somewhere in the heartland to come to the big city and work long hours at dangerous, low-paying jobs to send money to their family back home. Hygiene and manners are frequently unfamiliar concepts for these guys, and you'll hear city dwellers bemoaning their crudeness, but give them a break and be friendly if you meet them—God knows they've earned it.

CHAPTER 3

PARTY CHINESE

PARTY ZHŌNGWÉN

Party 中文

Let's go have some fun!

Zánmēn chūqù wánr ba!

咱们出去玩儿吧！

It's a big ol' country, and depending on who you are, where you are and what your purchasing power is, the local interpretation of partying can range from sculling sorghum rotgut out of paper cups and playing checkers outside a grocery store to bumping and grinding (or at least trying to) at a club serving complimentary pitchers of green tea and Chivas Regal to—if you are, say, the former vice-Mayor of Beijing—getting a house out in the suburbs, stocking it up with toothsome young things from Guizhou and spending your weekends ripped to the tits on amphetamines and Viagra and getting freak-ay. From the corner store to the dance floor, from the 24-hour “barbershop” to the Pussy Palace, from sipping and chugging to snorting and toking, there's more than just one Party in China.

Nobody's leaving till we're all fucked up!

Bù zuì bù guī!

不醉不归！

Where do you feel like going?

Ni xiǎng qù nǎr wánr?

你想去哪儿玩儿？

Let's...!

Zánmen ... ba!

咱们。。。吧！

get something to eat

chī diǎn dōngxi

吃点东西

play Mahjong

dǎ májiàng

打麻将

go to a bar

qù jiǔbā

去酒吧

hit the clubs

pào bā
泡吧

sing some karaoke

kāi qē
开歌



The Chinese have more words for singing karaoke than the Eskimos do for snow. The latest

and greatest, the yuppiest of the yuppie, is 唱 (chàng K; “sing K”), where “K” is short for “KTV.”

get an oil massage

qù yóuyǎ

去油压

Literally, “oil and pressure” ...on certain key pressure points. Well, one of them, at least.

get high

qù hāi

去嗨

Warning: Thanks to the pernicious influence of Taiwanese pop music, “high” doesn’t always mean “high.” Sometimes it just means “having a good time.”

have another drink

zài lái yī tiáo coke

再来一杯

do another line of coke

再来一条 coke

keep it on 'til the break of dawn

tōngxiāo kuánghuān

通宵狂欢

Why don't we...

Yàobùrán zánmen...

要不然咱们。。。。

have a few drinks at my place!

qù wǒ jiā hē liǎngbēi!

去我家喝两杯！

People usually prefer conspicuous consumption at bars.

play a drinking game!

huàquán!

划拳！

Huàquán is an ancient, mystical game involving flashing fingers at your opponent in pre-set patterns and drinking if you mess up. Mastery of this, according to ancient lore, can grant

immortality, or at least prolonged sobriety.

go fuckin nuts!

chūqù fēng!

出去疯！

chill tonight.

jīntiān wǎnshàng fàngàngsōng.

今天晚上放放松。

PARTYING (IN THE PANTS)...

Let's... Wǒmen..

我们。。。

blow this joint.

gūn ba

滚吧。

rent a woman.

zhǎo ge jī.

找个鸡。

rent a man.

zhǎo ge yā.
找个鸭。

pick up some guys.

diào shuài gē.
钓帅哥。

Literally, to “fish” for some hotties.

pick up some chicks.

pào niǚ.
泡妞。

I need a wingman!

wǒ xūyào yī ge tuō!
我需要 一个托！

This term usually refers to a co-conspirator when cheating on one's S.O.

I'm gonna...

wǒ xiǎng..

我想。。。。

schmooze.

rènshi yìxiē xīn miànkǒng.

认识一些新面孔。

hit up the next joint.

huàn ge dìr.

换个地儿。

Kick starting the night

Dìyīchǎng

第一场

What's the word (tonight)?

(Jīnwǎn) zěnmeshuō?

(今晚)怎么说？

Do you have plans?

Yǒu shénme fāngxiàng?

有什么方向？

Literally, "What direction are we headed?"

I'm bored outta my mind.

Wúliáo sǐ le!

无聊死了！

Whatcha up to (tonight)?

Jīnwǎn yǒu shénme jiémù?

今晚有什么节目？

Not much, how 'bout you?

Méi shénme jiémù, nǐ ne?

没什么节目，你呢？

Fuck it, let's party.

Qù tā mā, zánmen chūqù fēng ba.

去他妈，咱们去疯吧。

Getting your schverve on

Kāishǐ zhǎo lèzi

开始找乐子

So you've already had two pitchers of Chivas and green tea, you're feeling like you're the king/queen of the dance floor and you want everyone to know it. You're gonna need some ammo for this:

This music is fucking sweet!

Zhè ge yīnyuè tài niúbī le!

这个音乐太牛屎了！

This place is dead—let's move this party somewhere else.

Zhè gǒu dìfāng, huàn ge fāngxiàng ba.

这狗地方，换个方向吧。

I might as well go home early and pleasure myself.

Wǒ hái shì zǎo diǎn huí jiā dǎ fēi jī.

我还是早点回家打飞机。

In Chinese this actually means either “this place sucks!” or “I’m really tired.”

I/I’m...

Wǒ...

我。。。

feel like partying.

xiǎng qù hǎi.

想去嗨。

gonna get my swerve on.

xiǎng qù pào mǎ zǐ.

想去泡马子。

Literally, “chase horses.”

having a fuckin’ awesome night!

jīn wǎn wán er de zhēn tā mā de shuǎng!

今晚玩儿得真他妈的爽！

I'm gonna rock out with my cock out!

Bù gù yīqiè de wánr, zhǐyào shuǎng jiù xíng!

不顾一切的玩儿，只要爽就行！

Let's kick this party up a notch!

Wǒmen yīnggāi wánr dé gèng fēng diǎnr!

我们应该玩儿得更疯点儿！

I don't give a fuck.

Qù tā māde, wǒ bù guǎn le.

去他妈的，我不管了。

I didn't know this place existed, it's the bomb!

Wǒ hái bù zhīdào yǒu zhège dìfāng, zhèdìfāng tǐng niúbī!

我还不知道有这个地方，这地方挺牛屌！

Let's go to that park across the road and make out.

Wǒmen qù duìmiàn de gōngyuán dǎ yězhàn.

我们去对面的公园打野战。

Literally, "conduct field operations."

Let's go for a stroll.

Zánmen yà mǎlù ba.

咱们轧马路吧。

Staying in

Jìngyīxià

静一下

Your Chinese friends will feel obliged to take you out every night, but after getting fucked up two nights in a row, they—like yourself—don't necessarily feel like going out, but they'll take you out anyway...unless you make it clear that although you'd love to chug beers and pitchers of green tea and Scotch, even rack up a couple of lines of K, you really need to rest in order to restore your health. They too will sigh with relief. But perhaps you should invite them to chill with you—after all, they have been gracious hosts.

I'm so wasted, I can't go out again—I'll get a cold if I do.

Lèisǐ wó le, bù xiǎng zài chūqù, zài chūqù jiù gǎnmào le.

累死我了，不能再出去，再出去就感冒了。

I'm just gonna take it easy, you want to go for a foot massage?

Jīnwǎn xiǎng fāngsōng yīxià, yào bù zuò zúliáo qù?
今晚想放松一下，要不做足疗去？

I'm not going nowhere—I went way too hard last night.

Wǒ zuówǎn hāi dà le, jīnwǎn nǎr dōu bù xiǎng qù.
我昨晚嗨大了，今晚哪儿都不想去。

I'm just gonna smoke a few bowls and chill with some DVDs, wanna join me?

Wǒ zhǐ xiǎng kànkàn dié, fēi diǎnr cǎo, nǐ lái ma?

我只想看看碟，飞点儿草，你来吗？

I'm just gonna chill out at my pad, you're welcome to crash over if you like.

Wǒ xiǎng zài jiā xiēzhe, nǐ kěyǐ guòlái.
我想在家歇着，你可以过来。

I'm just gonna beat off at home.

Wǒ zhǐ xiǎng zài jiā lǐ dǎ fēijī.
我只想在家里打飞机。

Funny shit

Tài jībā dòu

太鸡巴逗

Chinese people are constantly taking the piss. Different phrases are used depending on context—check it out.

... crack(s) me up! / tickles my funny bone / is a riot!

... bǎ wǒ lè huài le!

。。。把我乐坏了！

Midgets

Zhūrú

侏儒

Everything that comes out of your mouth

Nǐ jiǎng shénme dōu néng
讲什么都能

This DVD

Zhè zhāng dié
张碟

His / her clothes

Tā chuān de yīfu
他 / 她穿的衣服

The way you dance

Nǐ tiàowǔ de yàngzi
跳舞的样子

Your lame-ass jokes

Nǐ de shǎbī xiàohuà
的傻屌笑话

The latest 5-year plan

Xīn de Wǔ Nián Jìhuà
新的五年计划

...make(s) me piss myself laughing!

...ràng wǒ xiào dé xiǎobiàn shījīn!

。。。让我笑得小便失禁！

Stephen Chow

Zhōu Xīngchí (Xīng Yé)

周星驰 (星爷)

They always

Tāmen yīzhí

们一直

Your stupid face

Nǐ zhègè dǎiruòmùjī de liǎn

你这个呆若木鸡的脸

Literally, “dumber than a wooden chicken” face.

The Three Represents

Sānge dàibiǎo de zhèngzhì kǒuhào

三个代表 的政治口号

Cool shit

Niúbī de dōngxi

牛屎的东西

This shit is awesome, it's off the hook, it's fucking wicked. We have millions of ways to express awesomeness, but in China you only need 牛屎 (niúbī; "cow-cunt") which means all of the above.

...is wicked / killer / bad-ass.

...niúbī.

。。。牛屎。

This DVD is awesome.

Zhè zhāng dié niúbī.

这张碟子牛屎。

Chinese police are off the hook.

Zhōngguó de jīngchá niúbī.

中国的警察牛屁。

That's one wacky up-mop (hairstyle).

Tāde fàxíng niúbī.

他的发型牛屁。

Where Chinese go to play

After dinner the question is bound to arise: where to from here fellow comrades? Chinese, young and not so young, hang anywhere from pool halls, pubs/clubs and karaoke to bath houses, massage parlors and Internet cafes... The list is huge.

Foot massage

Zúyù

足浴



You're hammered from a killer baijiu session at dinner, so your hosts may take you to a foot massage parlor to relax—definitely not for the ticklish. These places

generally don't offer oil change.

Karaoke (tame)

Kāla-OK / K-gē

拉OK / K歌

This type of establishment is the usual choice after dinner, or even after the midnight snack after the club. Most people here will be getting pretty wasted, but these establishments are considered to be wholesome venues—the type you could bring your kids to.

”Nightclub” (the kind with sex, drugs and schmaltz-pop karaoke)

Yèzǒnghuì

夜总会

Your standard yèzǒnghuì is a scandalous den of debauchery. It has a night club, private karaoke rooms and a selection of scantily clad women and men to pleasure you behind closed doors. At some of them you can even score your drugs of choice and get all Chris Farley on their asses (without the heart attack).

Pub

(xiūxián) Jiǔbā

(休闲) 酒吧

Pubs have a mostly Western (expatriate) clientele, but

there's no shortage of Anglophone locals either. Pretty girls in short skirts everywhere you look.

Club

Dǐtīng

迪厅

The music is usually shite, but there are plenty of women for hire at the local clubs. Of course the big cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou (Canton) have international standard clubs with the latest DJs from all over the world, plenty of fun, not to mention a wide selection of exotic international whores (and man whores).

Pool hall

Zhuōqiú guǎn

桌球馆

Chilled out local pool halls are usually packed in the afternoons, many of them are actually outdoors. You'll find them the busiest just before dinner time.

Mahjong room

Qí pái shì

棋牌室

You pay a fee, you play mahjong, you lose, you leave. Legal so long as you're not gambling real money, wink-wink.

Bath house (with the option of sex for hire)

Yùchǎng

浴场

Many Chinese hosts will take you to the bathhouse to relax in a communal, naked, manly atmosphere, and if you're lucky they organize prostitutes for your added relaxation.

Barbershop

Fàláng

发廊

Ah, the “barbershops.” There are legitimate hair salons aplenty, but we're talking here about the ones with no scissors or combs—just lots of pink neon, bored girls, hand lotion and flexible operating hours.

Barbershop girls

Fàlángmèi

发廊妹

Booze and firewater

Jiǔ

酒

China offers a wide variety of places, substances and amounts to drink. In bars you'll find all of the stuff you're used to from home. In other contexts you may encounter 白酒 (báijiǔ; literally, "white liquor"), the choice of taxi drivers and discriminating alcoholics everywhere. Some people will tell you that baijiu means "white wine," but don't fall for it. It's usually distilled from sorghum at somewhere between 40 to 60 percent ethanol and 100 percent nasty, with a delicate bouquet of nail polish remover. If you're a guy, you probably won't be able to get out of drinking it at some point, and after a couple shots of the stuff, you might as well just go with it. Here are some choice phrases to help you along on your descent into Sorghum Hell:

Cheers!

Gānbēi!

干杯！

Literally, “dry the cup.” And they’re usually not kidding.

To . . . !

Wèi . . . gānbēi!

为 . . . 干杯！

international friendship

guójì yǒuyì

国际友谊

my homies

gēmen

哥儿们

my girlfriends

jiěmenr

姐们儿

the ladies

niǚmen

妞儿们

baijiu

báijiǔ

白酒

cirrhosis

gānyìnghuà

肝硬化

**successful implementation of the Four
Modernizations**

Sì ge Xiàndàihuà de chénggōng luòshí

四个现代化的成功落实

Yeowch, that burns!

Wā, zhēn gòu là de!

哇，真够辣的！

That's got a hell of a kick to it!

Hòujīnr dà!

后劲儿大！

Chug!

zǒu yì ge

走一个

To (explode a) torpedo

zhà ge léizi

炸个雷子

Your typical Chinese drinking sesh combines aspects of the sprint (sipping is for pussies—real men drain their cups every GO GO GO) and the marathon. It is a long, unending slog that tends to leave you with chafed, bleeding nipples. Sometimes you've got to slow things down a bit:

Just half a glass!

Yībàn!

一半！

(Drink as little) as you like.

Suíyì ba.

随意吧。

随意 (suíyì) can still result in standoffs, so keep your eye on the other person. If he hesitates, put your glass down—he's hurting bad, but if you down yours, he will too.

Ordering drinks

Diǎn jiǔ

点酒

What do you have on tap?

Yǒu shénmeyàng de zhāpí?

有什么样的扎啤？

Draft beer

shēngpí / zhāpí

生啤 / 扎啤

Both of these words for draft beer are in common use. As a general rule of thumb, Northerners are the ones ordering up big ol' pitchers of zhāpí, while the epicene Southerners will sit off to one side sipping daintily at their little glasses of shēngpí.

I will have a...

Gěi wǒ lái yí ge / yí píng...

给我来一个 / 一瓶。。。。

瓶 (píng) is the proper measure word for "bottle," but

个 (ge) will

do the job too, so don't feel compelled to remember it.

Give me a draft of...

Gěi wǒ lái yī zhā...
给我来一扎。。。

Tsingtao Beer (pretty much anywhere).

qīngdǎo.
青岛。

Yanjing Beer (mostly Beijing).

yānjīng.
燕京。

Snow Beer (pretty much anywhere).

xuěhuā.
雪花。

Suntory (mostly Shanghai and parts southward).

sāndé lì.
三得利。

Budweiser.

bǎiwēi.
百威。

Corona.

kēluónà.
科罗娜。

Guinness.

jiàn lì shì.
健力士。

Erdinger.

àidīnggé.

艾丁格。

Tiger Beer.

hǔpái pījiǔ.

虎牌啤酒。

Heineken.

xǐlì.

喜力。

Asahi.

zhāorì.

朝日。

Stout.

hēipī.

黑啤。

Literally, “black beer.”

I want a glass of...

Gěi wǒ lái yī bēi...

给我来一杯。。。。

yellow wine (rice wine).

huángjiǔ.

黄酒。

Authorial opinion is divided as to the merits of rice wine. It's usually served heated, results in a nice warm buzz, and despite the relatively low alcohol content—about 10% Alc/ Vol., can be dangerous

given how easily it goes down. Most popular south of the Yangtze.

champagne.

xiāngbīn jiǔ.

香槟酒。

red wine (red grape wine).

hóngjiǔ (hóng pútào jiǔ).

红酒 (红葡萄酒)。

white wine.

bái pútào jiǔ.

白葡萄酒。

葡萄 (pútào; or “grape”) is important when ordering white wine. It’s all that stands between you and a snoot full of 白酒 (báijiǔ; “sorghum wine”). If ordering red, though, it’s optional. China has begun producing its own wine, only some of which tastes like cough syrup. Following the recent poison-wine scandal in China, we foreigners now have an airtight excuse to avoid engaging in locally produced red wine chugging matches.

Cocktails

Jīwěi jiǔ

鸡尾酒

B-5

Hōngzhà jī

轰炸机

Black Russian

Hēi éluósī

黑俄罗斯

White Russian

Bái éluósī

白俄罗斯

Bloody Mary

Xuèxīng mǎlì

血腥马丽

Daiquiri

Dàikèrǔì

黛克瑞

Kamikaze

Rìběn wǔshì

日本武士

Long Island Iced Tea

Chángdǎo bīng chá

长岛冰茶

Manhattan

Màn hādùn

曼哈顿

Margarita

Mǎgélìtè

玛格丽特

Martini Dry

Xīnlà mǎdīngní
辛辣马丁尼

Screwdriver

Luósīdāo
螺丝刀

Sex on the Beach

Xìngǎn shātān
性感沙滩

Disappointingly, this is literally just “sexy beach.”

Tequila Sunrise

Rìshēng lóngshélán
日升龙舌兰

Bacardi

Báijīadé
白家得

Bailey's

Bǎilì tiántiánjiǔ
百利甜酒

Gin

Jīn jiǔ
金酒

Jack Daniels

Jiékè Dānní
杰克丹尼

Jameson

Zhànměichén

占美臣

Jim Beam

Zhàn Biān

占边

Johnny Walker Black

Hēi Fāng

黑方

Rum

Lǎngmǔ jiǔ

朗姆酒

Tequila

Tējiā

特基拉

Tequila is sometimes also known as 龙舌兰 (lóngshélán, or literally “dragon-tongue orchid”)—the name for the agave plant from which it’s made.

Vodka

Fútèjiā

伏特加

Vodka Red Bull

Fútèjiā (jiā) Hóng Niú

伏特(加)红牛

Whiskey

Wēishìjǐ
威士忌

Single Malt Whiskey

Dānyī màiyá wēishìjǐ
单一麦芽威士忌

The preferred modality of whiskey consumption among many would-be movers and shakers is to get a bottle of Chivas Regal and a large bottle of sweetened green tea and then mix them together in a large glass pitcher. It's not as bad as you'd think.

I usually don't touch the stuff, but seeing as how you're here...

Wǒ píngshí dī jiǔ bù zhān, zhè huí suān shì shěmìng péi jūnzǐ le.
我平时滴酒不沾，这回算是舍命陪君子了。

I'll drink first to show my respect.

Xiān yǐn wéi jìng.
先饮为敬。

Nobody leaves 'til we're good and trashed!

Bù zuì bù guī!
不醉不归！

Let's get Xiao Wang messed up.

Zánmen bǎ Xiǎo Wáng guànzui ba.
咱们把小王灌醉吧。

The punishment is three more glasses of beer!

Fājǔ sān bēi!

罚酒三杯！

China has a glorious 5000 year tradition of making people drink more than they really want to by 罚酒, fájiǔ, “fining alcohol”—that is, making people chug a number of drinks—usually 3—to make up for some offense, real or imagined. There’s no way to get out of this gracefully.



100 degrees of wreckedness

Gèzhǒng jiǔzuì chéngdù

各种酒醉程度

I'm getting...

Wǒ gǎnjué...

我感觉。。。。

Last night I got...

Wǒ zuówǎn...

昨晚。。。。

a bit dizzy.

yǒu diǎnr yūn le.

有点儿晕了。

a bit sloppy.

hě dàowèi le.

喝到位了。

smashed.

hēduō le.

喝多了。

fucked-up.

hē chōu le.

喝抽了。

Hang on, I gotta go tap a kidney.

Dāihuìr, wǒ děi zǒuzǒushèn.

待会儿，我得走走肾。

What's up with Xiao Wang?

Xiǎo Wáng zěnmē le?

小王怎么了？

As soon as he gets drunk he starts running off at the mouth.

Rénjia yì hēduō jiù huànmì.

人家一喝多就话密。

Check it out—he's fucked up.

Qíáo tā guàxiàngr.
瞧他挂相儿。

I gotta ralph!

Wǒ yào tù le!

我要吐了！

Get him to the bathroom, quick!

Kuài bǎ tā sòng dào cèsuǒ lǐ qù!

快把他送到厕所里去！

**Man, that poor bastard has got no luck at all.
Between the booze and the diarrhea, he's
running at both ends.**

Yā zhēn bèi, hē zuì jiǔ zài jiǎshàng chīhuài le, zhèng zài nàr

shàng tù xià xiè le.

丫真背，喝醉酒再加上吃坏了，正在那儿
上吐下泻了。

I gotta get home.

Wǒ děi xiān chè le.

我得先撤了。

**My old lady will kill me if I spend all night out
again.**

Wǒ yào zài **shuāyè** dehuà lǎopó kěndìng děi bǎ wǒ kǎn le.

我要再刷夜的话老婆肯定得把我砍了。

OK, OK, OK. But after this one I really have to go.

Chéng chéng chéng, hē wán zhè ge yīdìng yào zǒu.

成成成，喝完这个一定要走。

Drinking games

Xínjiǔ lìng

行酒令

Dice

Shǎizi

色子

Finger-guessing games

Huàquán

划拳

Party drugs

Dúpǐn

毒品

毒品

For most of the general population, there's not much of a line between smoking weed and mainlining heroin into your neck because all your other veins are closed up. That said, if you're in any big city like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou or even Changsha—to say nothing of Yunnan province, where weed grows wild—the local party people are getting high on way more than just ganj. In some places E, ice and Special-K are more easily available than the herb. If you do get something to roll up, it'll most likely be hash.

Coke is around but not easy to find unless you hook up with some of the business-minded Nigerian gentlemen hanging

around the nightlife scene in Beijing or Guangzhou. Just remember that if you get caught with this stuff, simply getting deported means you got off easy.

Weed

Dàmá

大麻

Papers

Juǎnyānzhǐ

卷烟纸

Pipe

Yāndǒu

烟斗

Bong

Shuǐyāndǒu

水烟斗

Stoned

Hāi le

嗨了

Baked

Fēi le

飞了

Totally fucked-up

Guà le

挂了

What do Chinese people think about pot?

Zhōngguó rén shì zěnmē kàndài dànmá de?

中国人是怎么看待大麻的？

I heard that ganja grows wild in Yunnan.

Tīngshuō Yúnnán dànmá dōu shì yě shēng de.

听说云南大麻都是野生的。

You know where I can score some hash around here?

Zhèbiān nǎlǐ néng nòng diǎnr mágāo?

这边哪里能拿到麻膏？

Don't you have anything other than hash?

Chúle mágāo nǐ hái yǒu xīnxiān de dànmá ma?

除了麻膏你还有新鲜的大麻吗？

I didn't bring any papers.

Wǒ méi dài juǎnyānzhǐ.

我没带卷烟纸。

Take some bong rips.

Shuǐyāndǒu chōu ba.

水烟斗抽吧。

I'm pretty ripped.

Wǒ tǐng hāi le.

我挺嗨吧了。

Fuck, I'm totally baked.

Wācào, wǒ hāi de bùdéliǎo.

哇噻，我嗨得不得了。

Haha, she's so ripped her eyes are like all Chinese and shit.

Tā hāi dàle, yǎnjīng mǐ de xiàng Zhōngguó rén yī yàng

xiǎo.

她嗨大了，眼睛眯的像中国人一样小。

Damn, I got the munchies something bad.

Wā kào, xīwán dà má wǒ dōu è sǐ le.

哇靠，吸完大麻我都饿死了。

Do Ketamine

Dǎ K-fěn

打K粉

Rack up some lines

Guā jǐ tiáo

刮几条

Let's go into the toilets and snort some K.

Zánmen qù cèsuǒ dǎ diǎn K fěn.

咱们去厕所打点K粉。

Ecstasy

Yáotóuwán

摇头丸

Can I get two please?

Mǎi liǎng kē ba?

买两颗吧？

Wanna go halves? These are pretty strong.

Yàojìn bǐjiào qiáng, wǒmen yī ge rén yī bàn ba.

药劲比较强，我们一个人一半吧。

How come they just keep shaking their heads nonstop?

Tāmen wèishénme bùtíng de yáotóu?
他们为什么不停的摇头？

Ice

Bīngdú
冰毒

Got a pipe?

Yānguǎn yǒu ma?
烟管有吗？

OK, lets go get some tin-foil.

Wǒmen ná diǎn xīzhǐ ba.
我们拿点锡纸吧。

Shit man, I haven't slept since...hey, what day is it again?

Wākào, jǐsù méishuì...āi, jīntiān shì nǎ tiān lái zhe?

哇靠，几宿没睡。。。哎，今天是哪天来着？

Coke

Kěkǎyīn

可卡因

Lets do some lines.

Zánmen guā jǐ tiáo ba.

咱们刮几条吧。

I am GOD, MWAHAHAHA!

Wǒ chéng xiān le, hā hā ha!

我成仙了，哈哈哈哈！

Rack me up another line.

Zài gěi wǒ nòng yī tiáo.

再给我弄一条。

Let's go into the bathroom for a rail.

Zánmen qù cèsuǒ zài xī yī tiáo ba.

咱们去厕所再吸一条吧。

I'm not going to be in China long, so do you mind if I just get my shit through you?

Wǒ zhè cì zài Zhōngguó bùhuì dài tài jiǔ le, kěyǐ còng nǐ nàr nòng diǎnr huò ma?

nàr nòng diǎnr huò ma?

我这次在中国不会呆太久了，可以从你那儿
弄点儿货吗？

CHAPTER 4

BODY CHINESE

SHĒNTǐ ZHŌNGWÉN

身体中文

Chinese ideals of beauty have changed over the centuries, evolving from 杨贵妃 (Yáng Guìfēi), the chubby skank of a concubine who helped ruin the Tang dynasty, to deliberately crippled women with three-inch 金莲 (jīnlián; “golden lotus”) feet, to the severely pigtailed model workers of the Mao years, to the relatively normal standards of today. As you may have heard, there are a lot of people in China. Here are some words to get you started making unkind assessments of them.

The Chinese “beauty”

Zhōngguó rén yǎnzhōng de “měimào”

中国人眼中的“美貌”

Heart-shaped face

Guāzǐ liǎnr

瓜子儿脸

Literally, “melon-seed face.”

Doll face

Wáwa liǎnr

娃娃脸

She has a kid in school, but if you looked at that doll face of hers, you'd swear she was still in college.

Tā hái zài xuéxiào shàng xué, kě chòngzhe tā

nèi zhang wáwa liǎnr, hěn duō rén yīwéi tā hái zài shàngxué ne.

她孩子都能打酱油了，可冲着**她那张娃娃脸儿**，很多人以为她还在上学呢。

Willow-leaf eyebrows

Liǔyè méi

柳叶眉

Upward-slanting “phoenix” eyes

(dān) Fèngyǎn

(单)凤眼

She oughtta convert to Islam and start wearing a burqa—those phoenix eyes of hers are the only good-looking thing on her.

Tā zěnmē bù xìn Yísīlánjiào, chuān bùkǎ, Liǎnshàng

chúle **nèi shuāng fèngyǎn** jiù méi shénme hǎokàn de le.

她怎么不信伊斯兰教，穿

布卡？脸上除了**那双凤**

眼，就没什么好看的了。

Almond eyes

Xínghé yǎn

杏核眼

Pouty lips

Dūdu zuǐ
嘟嘟嘴



Whenever I hear about Angelina Jolie, all I

can think of are those pouty lips of hers.

Yī tí dào Ānjīlínà Zhūlì, wǒ néng xiǎng dào de zhǐ yǒu tā
nèi shuāng **dū dū zuǐ**.

一提到安吉丽娜·茱丽，我能想到的只有她
那双嘟嘟嘴。

Small “cherry” mouth

Xiǎo mán yāo

樱桃小口

Hot little waist

Xiǎo mán yāo

小蛮腰

**I love walking down the street with my arm
around
a hot little waist.**

Wǒ jiù xǐhuan lōuzhe xiǎo mán yāo yā mǎlù.

我就喜欢搂着小蛮腰压马路。

Long legs

Cháng tuǐ

长腿

Big and tall

Shēncái gāodà

身材高大

Don't go thinking you're all manly just because you're big and tall.

Bié yǐwéi shēncái gāodà jiù yǒu nánzǐ qìgài le.

别以为身材高大就有男子气概了。

Bounteous boobs and junk in the trunk

Fēng rǔ féi tún

丰乳肥臀

Protrusions in front, partay in back

Qián tū hòu juē

前突后撅

Killer bod

Móguǐ shēncái

魔鬼身材

Literally, “demonic figure.”

**Blouse filled to bursting, junk in the trunk—
she's got a killer bod that'll give you a**

nosebleed just by looking at it.

Kàn nǚ nǚ de qián tū hòu juǎ de móguǐ shēncái, ràng rén bíxiě liú ge bùtíng.

看那女的前突后撅的魔鬼身材，让人鼻血流个不停。

He / She is...

Tā / Tā...

他 / 她。。。

cute.

kě'ài.

可爱。

pretty (mostly for girls).

piàoliang.

漂亮。

pwetty (only for girls; cutesy).

piàopiào.

漂漂。

(has) a certain je ne sais quoi.

(yǒu) qìzhì.

(有)气质。

(has) personality.

(yǒu) xìnggé.

(有)性格。

Sure, he's not much to look at, but he's got personality.

Tā zhǎngde shì bù zěnmeyàng, bǔguò hái shì tǐng yǒu xìnggé ne.

他长得是不怎么样，不过还是挺有性格呢。

BODY PARTS THEY DON'T TALK ABOUT IN YOUR TEXTBOOK

SĪCHÙ

私处

Although they talk about them damn near everywhere else. Chinese attitudes toward the body are relaxed—relaxed enough that you should not get weirded out if the guy at the urinal next to you complements you on your wedding tackle, or

if the saleswoman at the clothing store tells you flat-out that you're too fat for the blouse you wanted.

(finger/toe) nail

(shǒu/jiǎo) zhǐjiǎ
(手/脚)指甲

eyelashes

jiémáo
睫毛

bellybutton

dùqíyǎnr
肚脐眼儿

armpit

gāzhīwō
夹肢窝

nostril

bíkǒng
鼻孔

tailbone

wěizhǔ

尾椎

foreskin

bāopí

包皮

Literally, “wrapper.”

frenulum

bāopí xìdài

包皮系帶

Literally, “foreskin-fastener.”

scrotum

yīnnáng

陰囊

labia

yīnchún

陰唇

labia (in classical pornography)

ròubàn

肉瓣

Literally, “meat petals.”

If a girl's not pretty, tell her she's cute. If she's not cute, tell her she's just got something about her.

Rúguǒ yī ge nǚrén bù piàoliang, jiù yào kuā tā kě'ài,
rúguǒ tā yě bù kě'ài, jiù yào kuā tā yǒu qìzhì.

如果一个女人不漂亮，就要夸她可爱，如果她也不可可爱，就要夸她有气质。

handsome.

shuài.

帅。

easy on the eyes. (a pretty face and nice body) (girls only)

pánr liàng tiáor shùn.

盘儿亮条儿顺。

refined, delicate (girls only).

qīngxiù.

清秀。

sexy.

xìnggǎn.

性感。

fashionable.

shímáo.

时髦。

hip.

cháo.

潮儿。

Aren't we hip? You spend all your time
reading
fashion news or something?

Dǎban de gòu cháo de ya, tiāntiān jìn huā shíjiān
zài gǎn shímáoshàng le ba?

打扮得够潮儿的呀，天天尽花时间在赶
时髦上了吧？

The Chinese “ugly”

Zhōngguó rén yǎnzhōng de “chǒutài”

中国人眼中的“丑态”

Big face

Liǎnpánr dà

脸盘儿大

Square / slabby face

Guó zì liǎnr

国字脸儿

Literally, “a face like the character 国.”

Dark skin

Pífū hēi

皮肤黑

Gaunt, miserable-looking

Jiān zuǐ hóu sāi

尖嘴猴腮

Literally, “sharp-mouthed and monkey-cheeked.”

Dull-eyed

Yǎn dà wú shén

眼大无神

Look at her, all cow-eyed. Big ol’ boobs and a tiny little brain!

Nǐ kàn tā nài yǎn dà wú shén, xiōng dà wú nǎo de yàngzi!

你看她那眼大无神，胸大无脑的样子！

Four-eyed

Sì yǎn tiánjī

四眼田鸡

Literally, “four-eyed frog.”

Squinty eyes

Xiǎo mí yǎn

小眯眼

Flat-nosed

Tā bīliáng / bīliáng tā

塌鼻梁 / 鼻梁塌

Hare-lip

Tùchún

兔唇

Hare-lip (slightly more colloquial)

Huǒzi zuǐ

豁子嘴

Pug / snub nose

Suàntóu bí

蒜头鼻

Literally, “garlic nose.”

Flat-chested

Fēijīchǎng

飞机场

Literally, “airport runway.”

Flat-chested

Tàipíng Gōngzhǔ

太平公主

Literally, “Princess of Great Peace,” “peace” here being a pun on “flat” in Chinese.

Spare tire

Jiùshēngquān

救生圈

Literally, “life-saver.”

Jeez, that was fast—I don’t see you for a few days, and you go and grow yourself a spare tire!

Cái jǐ tiān méi jiàn, nǐ jiù chī chū ge jiùshēngquān lái

zhēn yǒu xiàolǜ! 才几天没见，你就吃出个救生圈来，真有效率！

Thick, stumpy legs

Xiǎo xiàng tuǐ

小象腿

Literally, “elephant legs.”

Short legs, long torso

Tuǐ duǎn shēnzi cháng 腿短身子长

I’ve got short legs and a long torso—a great figure, except upside-down.

Wǒ zhè rén tuǐ duǎn shēnzi cháng, tǐng hǎo de shēncái zhǎng dǎo le.

我这人腿短身子长，挺好的身材长倒了。

Bandy legs

Luóquān tuǐ

罗圈腿

Thick waist

Shuǐtǒng yāo

水桶腰

Literally, “barrel waist.”

Skinny waist

Shuǐshé yāo

水蛇腰

Literally, “water-snake waist.”

Unkempt, disshevelled

Bù xiū biānfú

不修边幅

He / She is...

Tā..

他 / 她。。。。

hickish.

tǔ.
土。

a hick from the sticks.

tǔ lǎomàoer.
土老帽儿。

**such a hick you can see the manure flaking off
him / her.**

tǔ de diào zhānr.
土得掉渣儿。

ugly.

nánkàn.
难看。

dumpy-looking.

zhǎng de hánchēn.
长得寒碜。

homely.

zhǎng de ānquán.
长得安全。

Literally, “safe looking.”

You don't have to worry about her walking home alone at night. She's totally "safe-looking"; nobody's going to bother her.

Nǐ bùyòng dānxīn tā yèlǐ yí ge rén huíjiā, méi rén huì fěilǐ tā, zhǎng de bèi'ānquán.

你不用担心她夜里一个人回家，没人会非礼她，长得倍儿安全。

"Beethoven."

bèiduōfēn.

贝多芬。

Homophone for "would score higher from behind."

Everyone says the girls at big-name schools are all Beethovens. The reputation is richly deserved.

Dōu shuō míngxiào lǐ jìnshì bèiduōfēn, guǒrán míng bù xū chuán.

都说名校里尽是贝多芬，果然名不虚传。

Other body types

Qítā tǐxíng

其他体型

Big-headed

Dàtóu

大头

Small

Gèr xiǎo

个儿小

Svelte

Miáotiao

苗条

Musclebound (guy / girl)

Jīròu nán / nǚ

肌肉男 / 女

Stooped

Luóguōr

罗锅儿

Hunch-backed

Tuóbèi

驼背

Literally, “camel-backed.”

Pallid

Cāngbái

苍白

Hairy

Máomáo

毛毛

Scrawny

Gānbashòu

干巴瘦

Bony

Gǔgǎn

骨感

Apple-shaped / Pear-shaped

Píngguǒ xíng / Lí xíng

苹果型 / 梨型

Toilet Chinese

Cèsuǒ Zhōngwén

厕所中文

Some people will tell you that it's impossible to say objectively that something is "good" or "bad," that it's all a continuum, and that everything's relative, and that what seems bad to you may be perfectly good for someone else. Fuck these people. These people have never seen stall #2 in the bathroom of the gas station halfway between Deqing and Jiaxing, an example of badness roughly on the order of the Holocaust. They live in a state of blissful ignorance that your author, alas, can never hope to regain.

Micturition

Páiniào

排尿

Urination

Sǎniào

撒尿

Pee

Xiǎobiàn

小便

Literally, “the small convenience.”

Number 1

Xiǎohào

小号

Literally, “the little number.”

Tap a kidney

Zǒu shèn

走肾

Wee-wee

Xūxū

嘘嘘

Frequent urination

Niàopín

尿频

The urge to urinate

Niàoyì

尿意

Pee one's pants

Niào kùzǐ

尿裤子

Wet the bed

Niàochuáng

尿床

Piss tracks

Huà dìtú

画地图

Literally, “drawing maps” (leaving behind pee stains on cloth, especially sheets or a couch).

Beijing traffic is so bad, I'm happy if I can get out of the car without drawing a map.

Běijīng zhè dǔchē qíngkuàng yě tài yánzhòng le, wǒ méi zài chē shàng huà dìtú jiù bùcuò le.

北京这堵车情况也太严重了，我没在车上画地图就不错了。

I'ma go...

Wǒ yào qù ...

要去。。。。

poop.

dàbiàn.

大便。

Literally, “the big convenience.”

defecate.

páifèn.

排粪。

number two.

dàhào.

大号。

Literally, “the big number.”

move the bowels.

lāshǐ.

拉屎。

Literally, “pull shit.”

have diarrhea.

lāxī.

拉稀。

Literally, “pull thin.”

Man, this diarrhea is killing me!

Wó zhè dùzi lā de kě fāhài le!

我这肚子拉得可厉害了！

Constipation

Biànmì

便秘

I've been blocked up for a week!

Wò biànmì le yī ge xīngqī!

我便秘了一个星期！

Farting

Fàngpì

放屁

Farting (放屁, fàngpì; literally, “releasing farts”) occupies a special space in the world of Chinese expressions. Someone tells you an untruth? That’s farting. Want to accuse someone of bullshitting you? That’s “dogfart.” Want to refer to the release of intestinal gas through the rectum? That’s farting too. Just remember, as Confucius did not say: 别人屁臭自己屁香 (biérén pì chòu zìjǐ pì xiāng): The farts of others are stinky, my own farts are fragrant.

Pass gas

Páiqì

排气

Who farted?

Shéi fàng de pì?

谁放的屁？

I just ripped one.

Wǒ gāng fàng le pì.

我刚放了屁。

Silent but deadly

Siānr pì / Mèn pì

蔫儿屁 / 闷屁

Literally, “weak fart” and “stifled fart.”

Farting (“Nonsense!”)

Fàngpì

放屁

Smelly farts (nasty remarks)

Chòupì

臭屁

Dog farts (bullshit)

Gǒupì

狗屁

Not worth a fart

Dǐng ge pì yòng

顶个屁用

**I asked you for 300—what the hell good does
50 bucks do me?**

Wǒ gēn nǐ yào de shì sānbǎi, nǐ gěi wǒ wǔshí kuài dǐng
ge pì yòng?

我跟你要的是三百，你给我五十块顶个
屁用？

...my ass!

... ge pì!

。。。个屁！

Wow, the latest “Star Wars” is awesome!

Wā, zuì xīn de “Xīngqiú Dàzhàn” zhēn kù!

哇，最新的“星球大战”真酷！

**Awesome, my ass! I saw the originals back
when you were still wetting the bed!**

Kù ge pì, wǒ kàn yuánbǎn de shíhòu nǐ hái
niàochuáng ne!

酷个屁，我看原版的时候你还尿床呢！

Fartbasket (a favored insult among the K-6 set)

Pì lǒuzi

屁篓子

You're the biggest fartbasket on the playground.

Nǐ shì cāochǎng shàng zuǐ dà de pì lǒuzi.

你是操场上最大的屁篓子。

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)

Zhōngyī

中医

Traditional forms of Chinese medicine are becoming increasingly popular in Western countries. However, along with this new wave of coolness comes a whole new generation of charlatans. When practiced properly, the doctors will prescribe various concoctions of natural ingredients that are cooked up into a foul-tasting brew. Traditional Chinese herbal medicine doesn't produce an obvious immediate effect, but you'll usually feel a difference by the second day. TCM aims to attack the root cause of your ailments and to boost your immune system over time, whereas Western medicine attacks the symptoms and produces quicker, short-term relief.

Acupuncture and moxibustion

Zhēnjiū

针灸

Literally, “needle” (针. zhēn) and “scorch” (灸). The doctor turns you into a pin cushion or burns little mounds of mugwort on your body in order to heal you. Sounds creepy, but it apparently works.

Pressure points / acupuncture points

Xuéwèi

穴位



These are the points that are situated on the meridians

(经络, jīngluò), the lines upon which “qi” flows throughout the body. You may think of these in terms of the points Spock uses for the Vulcan nerve pinch.

Cupping

Bá huǒguǎn

拔火罐

They light a fire inside the cup to suck out the air and create a vacuum, then apply it to your back or ass. This creates better circulation of “qi” and sucks out toxins.

Scraping

Guāshā

刮痧

Here they move the cups that are already sucking purple welts out of your skin around your back, creating a scraping effect. This hurts like shit but feels great when you're done—kinda like when you go for the male G-spot.

Tiger Balm

Hǔbiāo wànjīnyóu

虎標萬金油

Probably the most famous Chinese herbal mixture worldwide. For headaches, stomach aches, coughs, chest congestion, you name it, a tiny amount of Tiger Balm rubbed onto the skin, preferably on a pressure point, will do the job.

You don't look so good.

Nǐ kànqǐlái liǎnsè hěn chà.

你看起来脸色很差。

You OK?

Nǐ méi shì ba?

你没事吧？

I'm not feeling so great.

Wǒ gǎnjué bù shūfu.

我感觉不舒服。

I'm feeling pretty gross.

Wǒ juéde ǎixin.

我觉得恶心。

I'm gonna puke.

Wǒ yào tǔ.

我要吐。

I've got a headache.

Wǒ tóutóng.

我头疼。

My stomach hurts.

Wǒ dùzi téng.

我肚子疼。

It's my time of the month.

Wǒ de dà yímā lái le.

我的大姨妈来了。

Literally, "My auntie's here."

Please stay away, I have...

Qǐng lí wǒ yuǎn diǎn, wǒ...

请离我远点，我。。。

a cold.

gǎnmào.

感冒。

the flu.

yǒu liúgǎn.

有流感。

malaria.

dǎ bǎizi.

打摆子。

a communicable rash.

yǒu chuánrǎnxìng de pífēn.

有传染性的皮疹。

SAR.

yǒu fēidiǎn.

有非典。

a heavy period. yǒu tòngjīn.

有痛经。

uncontrollable seizures.

chōu qī fēng lái kě guǎnbuzhù zìjǐ.

抽起疯来可管不住自己。

**You're very (pretty / handsome), but I'd rather not
(get / pass on my) ...**

Nǐ hěn (piàoliang / shuài), kěshì wǒ bù xiǎng (zhān / bǎ...
guò géi nǐ)

你很(漂亮/帅), 可是我不想(沾/把。。。
过给你)

VD

xìngbìng

性病

gonorrhea

línbìng

淋病

syphilis

méidú

梅毒

genital warts

shīyóu

湿疣

herpes

pào zhěn

疱疹

Please call me a doctor.

Qǐng nǐ bāng wǒ zhǎo ge yīshēng.

请你帮我找个医生。

Please get me some (painkillers / antibiotics).

Qǐng nǐ gěi wǒ ná diǎn (zhǐténg yào / kàngjūn yào).

请你给我拿点(止疼药 / 抗菌药)。

CHAPTER 5

HORNY CHINESE

XÌNGGǎN ZHŌNGWÉN

性感中文

Fuck

Cào

肏

From “boning” to “getting laid” and “a roll in the hay” to “making whoopee,” the English language offers more colorful idioms and euphemisms to describe “fucking” than you can shake a stick at. From “fucking a cunt” to “frying rice,” Mandarin also offers up a “fat” selection of ways to describe the act of fornication. Of course, dear debaucher, you must choose carefully which ones to use when trying to get someone into the sack, and which ones for sharing tales of conquest with your buddies at the bar. So without further ado—let’s get our fuck on!

I’d like to eat your “tofu.”

wǒ xiǎng chī nǐ de dòufu.

我想吃你的豆腐。

This is a common expression for “I would like to

sexually harass
you a bit.”

Let's go back to mine and...

Āi, zánmen huíqù...

哎，咱们回去。。。。

Do you wanna...

Yàobùrán wǒ...

要不然我。。。。

All you ever want to do is...

Nǐ lǎoshì yào...

老是要。。。。

fuck.

cào.

肏。。。

Let's...

Wǒmen...ba. (Add this “ba” to the end of the sentence.)

我们。。。吧。

do some serious fucking

cáo shuǎng yīdiǎn

糙爽一点

get busy

chǎofàn

炒饭

Literally, “to fry rice.”

bang

dǎpào

打炮

do it

gàn

干

hump

rì

日

to thrust

chā

插

Literally, “to insert.”

“Clouds and rain” (a traditional euphemism for sex)

Yún-yǔ

云雨

“Bedroom matters” (a more current euphemism)

Fángshì

房事

Popping the cherry

Jiàn hóng

见红

Literally, “seeing red.” In some rural dialects this can be

碰红

(pèng hóng; “hitting red”).

Midnight tryst

Chūnxiāo

春宵

This is soooo embarrassing!

Tài diūliǎn le!

太丟臉了！

Especially useful if you are too drunk to fuck.

All smooth

Báibái huáhuá

白白滑滑

Premature ejaculation

Zǎoxiè

早泄

Impotent

Yángwēi

阳痿

Penis

Yángwù

阳物

Every guy's got one, and yet the fun bits of the body are a subject on which so many textbooks and dictionaries are conspicuously silent. On top of that, the tendency of mainstream Chinese media to remove any reference to sex, and language teachers' habit of laughing nervously and changing the subject, might lead you to think Chinese people reproduced by spores or something. Of course, that's nothing but poppycock. (Heh.) It's the world's most populous country for a reason: They've got genitalia too, and they know how to use them.

Where did the nasty man touch you?

Zhège huài shūshū zěnmē mō le nǐ ne?

这个坏叔叔怎么摸了你呢？

Touch my...

Mō wǒ de...

摸我的。。。。

Lick my...

Tiǎn wǒ de...

舔我的。。。。

Spank my...

Chōu wǒ de...

抽我的。。。。

Can I touch your...

Kěyǐ mō nǐ de...ma?

以碰你的。。。吗？

cock

jība

鸡巴

donkey dick

lǘ jība

驴鸡巴

second-in-command

lǎo èr

老二

dick

diǎo

屌

wiener

xiǎodidi

小弟弟

pecker

jīgōuzi

鸡勾子

willy

鸡

鸡

schlong (hammer)

chuízi

锤子

tool

jiāhuo

家伙

Pussy

Bī

屄

People will likely point out that 屄 (bī) is pretty heavy artillery, language-wise, and it's true—it's about as harsh as “cunt.” And gets used the same way, a lot of the time. Here are some softer ways of referring to the holiest of holies:

The Jade Gate

Yùmén

玉门

This is an old-fashioned, literary term.

GET YOUR FUCK ON

尢个痛快

I'm getting horny.

Wǒ fā chūn le.

我发春了。

Can also be used to mean something like, "I'm in heat."

Can you handle my size?

Nǐ méi shìr ma?

你没事吗？

Literally, "You're okay," and usually innocuous.

Give it to me!

Wǒ yào le!

我要了！

No way, here?

Bù huì ba, zài zhèr?

不会吧，在这儿？

Why not?

Wèishénme bù?
为什么不？

All right then, prepare to get fucked!

Hǎo de, zhǔnbèi bèi cǎo le!

好的，准备被肏了！

Your cock's so hard, I wanna suck it!

Nǐ de diào tài yìng le, wǒ xiǎng xī!

你的屌太硬了，我想吸！

Hairy pussy

Bīmáo nóngmì

屌毛浓密

A hairy pussy is the norm here, but if you insist on describing the norm, you can say this.

Shaved pussy

Báihúxīng

白虎星

I can't take it anymore, hurry up and fuck me!

Shōu bù liǎo le, kuài cào wǒ!

受不了了，快肏我！

I'm gonna fuck you till it hurts. / I'll fuck your pussy raw. Wǒ yào bǎ nǐ de bǐ cào làn.

我要把你的屁肏烂

I'm going to fuck you to death!

Wǒ yào bǎ nǐ cào sǐ!

我要把你肏死

I want to drink it!

Wǒ yào tūn xià qù! 我要吞下去！

That hurts!

Hǎo tòng!

好痛！

That feels really good.

Tài shuǎng le.

太爽了。

That's too fucking good!

Shuǎngtǐ le!

爽死了！

You're so wet.

Nǐ hǎo shī le.

你好湿了。

Clitoris

Yīndī

阴蒂

Literally, “vagina stalk.”

Clit

Sàodòuzi

臊豆子

Literally, “urine-stinking bean.” Aww, yeah.

G-spot

G-diǎn

G点

Pussy lips (labia)

Ròubàn

肉瓣

Literally, “meat petals.” You will probably not encounter this

anywhere outside of classical pornography.

Pussy lips

Yīnchún

阴唇

Pubes

Yīnmáo

阴毛

Love juice

Ài yè

爱液

Pussy Juice

Bīshuǐ

屌水

Tits

Dà bō

大波

Titties

Mì mī

秘密

Bosom

Xiōng

胸

Teats

Nǎi zǐ

奶子

Boobies

Bō bō

波波

Flat-chested

Fēijīchǎng
飞机场

Bitties (little tittes)

Shuīmìtáo
水蜜桃

Cupcakes

Mǎntóu
馒头

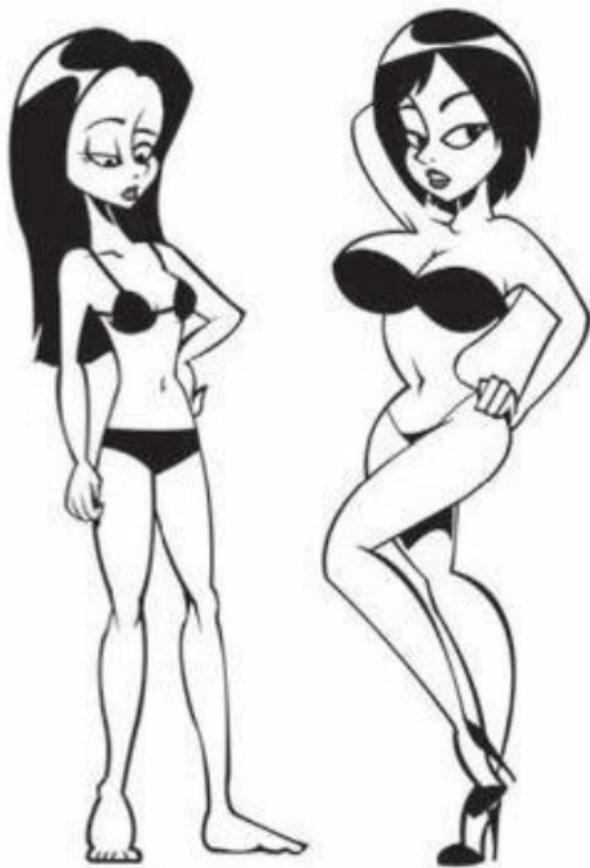
Literally, “steamed buns.”

Big Macs

Jùwúbà
巨无霸

Jugs

Bōbā
波霸



Nipples

Rǔtóu

乳头

Milk trenches

Rǔgōu

乳沟

To get breast implants

Lóngǔ / lóngxiōng

隆乳 / 隆胸

Ass

Pìgù

屁股

Anus

Júhuā

菊花

Literally, “chrysanthemum.”

Butt-hole

Pìyǎnr

屁眼儿

Literally, “butt eye.”

Back-door (sexual reference only)

Hòutíng

后庭

Ass fuck

Bào júhuā

爆菊花

Literally, “to explode the chrysanthemum.”

Butt fuck

Cào piyǎnr

肏屁眼儿

Perineum

Huìyīn

会阴

Sexual positions & perversions

Xingtǐwèi

性体位

If you want to get down and dirty in China then you NEED to know this shit. Just remember, nothing sets the mood like whipping out a phrase book mid-coitus.

Let's change positions?

Yào bù yào huàn ge zīshì?

要不要换个姿势？

I want to...

Wǒ yào...

我要。。。。

Wanna try...?

Yàobù zánliǎr shìshì...?

要不咱俩儿试试。。。？

Have you ever done...?

Nǐ shì guò ... méiyǒu?

你试过。。。没有？

I like...

Wǒ xǐhuān...

我喜欢。。。。

I'm tired of...

Wǒ juéde ... méi yìsi le.

我觉得。。。没意思了。

titty-fucking

rǔjiāo

乳交

missionary style

zhèngtǐwèi

正体位

doggy-style

gǒu cǎo shì

狗禽式

cowgirl (woman on top)

qíchéngwèi

骑乘位

This is a Japanese-loan phrase; literally, “mount and ride.”

hard fucking

kuángào

狂禽

threesome

sān-pī (also frequently, sān-P)

三匹 (also 三P)

group sex

qúnjiāo

群交

gang-bang

lúnjiān

轮奸

bondage

nüèliàn / SM

虐恋 / SM

Literally, “abuse love.”

golden shower

shèngshuǐ

圣水

Literally, “holy water.”

female ejaculation

cháo pēn / cháo chuī

潮喷 / 潮吹

bestiality

shòujiāo

兽交

whipping

biān dǎ

鞭打

masturbation

shǒuyīn

手淫

Masochist

Nüèdàikuáng

虐待狂



Pervert

Liúmáng

流氓

Foot fetishist

Lìanzúkuáng

恋足狂

Foot fuck fetishist

Zújiāokuáng

足交狂

Be gentle...

Wēnróu yī diǎn... 温柔一点儿。。。。

kissing.

kěn.

啃。

Literally, “to nibble.”

petting.

xǐ shǒu.

洗手。

Shanghai slang.

finger-banging.

zhǐjiān.

指奸。

Literally, “finger rape.”

fist-fucking.

quánjiāo.

拳交。

Licking the pussy and sucking the cock are usually just described with the same term, 口交 (kǒujiāo; “oral intercourse”). But if you insist on splitting hairs (and getting them stuck in your teeth), then here’s a couple of dictionary meanings for your dictionary-loving stiff ass.

Fellatio

Kǒuyín

口淫

Licking pussy

Tiǎnbī

舔屌

Blowjob

Kǒujiāo / kǒugōng

口交 / 口功

Playing the skin flute

Chuīxiāo

吹箫

Sucking cock

Xīdiǎo

吸屌

Swallowing sperm

Tūnjīng

吞精

Facial

Yánshè

颜射

Sixty-nine

Liùjiǔ shì

六九式

Orgasm

Gāocháo

高潮

Faster!

Kuài diǎnr!

快点儿！

PORNO

HUÁNGSÈ DIÀNYǐNG

黄色电影

Porn is illegal in China. And so are pirated DVDs and jaywalking and unlicensed food stalls.

Porno

A-piàn

A-片

Skin flick

Sānjípiàn

三級片

Literally, “Category III movie”—from Hong Kong’s rating system.

“Fuzzy movies”

máopiàn

毛片

From bad-quality VHS dubs, though the term is still common in the digital era.

Slower!

Màn diǎnr!

慢点！！

Harder!

Yòng lì!

用力！

Knock yourself out!

Shìjìn!

使劲 !

Literally, "go hard as you can."

Softer!

Qīng yī diǎn!

轻一点 !

Not enough!

Bù gòu!

不够 !

I want more!

Hái yào!

还要 !

I'm there!

Dào le!

到了 !

I'm coming!

Wǒ lái le!

我来了 !

I'm going to shoot!

Wǒ yào shè le!

我要射了！

**I've lost it! (... because I'm coming so hard!;
female)**

Wǒ diào le!

我丢了！

Whoa, I'm gonna blow!

Wākào, wǒ kuài shè le!

哇靠，我快射了！

No way! That fast?

A? Bùhuì ba! Zhème kuài!

啊？不会吧！这么快！

I'm gonna blow on your face!

Wǒ bāng nǐ xǐ liǎn!

我帮你洗脸！

Literally, "wash your face for you."

I'm almost there.

Kuài dào le.

快到了。

I'm coming, I'm coming!

Láile láile!

来了来了！

Where do you want me to blow?

Nǐ yào wǒ shè zài nǎr?

你要我射在哪儿？

Come in my ass!

Shè zài pìgu lǐ!

射在屁股里！

Here I goooooo! (male)

Xièle!

泄了！

That really hit the spot.

Guòyǐn le.

过瘾了。

Sex toys

Xìng wánjù

性玩具

They have sex shops everywhere here—just look for the 成人用品 (chéng rén yòng pǐn; “Adult Goods”) signs. No skin mags or x-rated DVDs (you’ll have to go around the corner from your local computer and electronics mall for those), but they do stock a range of toys and devices, balms, unguents and stiffen-up pills.

Do you have a...?

Yǒu méi yǒu...?

有沒有。。。？

Let's try using a...

Zánmen shìshì yòng...?

咱们试试用。。。。

condom.

tàozǐ.

套子。

dildo.

dildo.

假阳具。

vibrator.

ānwèibàng.

安慰棒。

strap-on.

chuāndài jiǎyángjù.

穿带假阳具。

double-dong.

shuāngtóu jiǎ yángjù.

双头假阳具。

vibrator.

zhèndòngqì.

振动器。

vibrator with moving bead.

tiǎodòubàng,

挑逗棒。

pearls.

lāzhū, 拉珠。

cock ring.

diǎohuán,

屌环。

butt plug.

gāngshuān,

肛栓。

Do you like my fingers or your vibrator better?

Xīhuān shǒuzhǐ háishì zhèndòngqì?

喜欢手指还是振动器？

Get a hard-on

Yingle

硬了

Have a wet dream

Mèngyīn

梦淫

Beat off (male)

Dǎ fēijī

打飞机

Literally, “hit a plane,” possibly from the name of a children’s game similar to Battleship. This one is quite funny, because in Taiwan

“dǎ fēijī” means to catch a plane. They prefer 打枪 (dǎ qiāng, “shoot a gun”).

Masturbate (both male and female)

Shǒuyīn

手淫

Queef

Yīnchuī

阴吹

People come in all shapes and sizes...You may think the Chinese a little judgmental by the number of derisive words

they have to describe promiscuous women, but they also have a decent selection of ways to describe dirty men.

I'm a bit of a...

Wǒ shì yǒu diǎnr...

我是有点.....

You seem like a...

Nǐ hǎo xiàng shì...

你好像是。。。。

Are you a...?

Nǐ shì bù shì...?

你是不是。。。？

virgin (female)

chǔnǚ

处女

virgin (male)

chǔnán

处男

dead fish

sǐyú

死鱼

dirty bitch

dàngfù

荡妇

cougar

là shǎofù

辣少妇

merry widow

sǎo guānfù

骚寡妇

dirty slut

sǎo bāo

骚包

whore

biǎozi

婊子

dirty whore

sāohuò / sāobī

骚货 / 骚屄

Literally, “slutty thing / slutty cunt.”

nasty ho

jiàn huò

贱货

Literally, “cheap goods.”

cheating wife

pò xié

破鞋

Literally, “broken shoe”—as in, has been tried on too many times.

callgirl

jī nǚ

妓女

pimp

pí tiáo kè

皮条客

minute-man (quickdraw)

zǎo xiè zhě

早泄者

horny bastard

sè láng

色狼

Literally, “carnal wolf.”

Old men like 'em young.

Lǎo niú chī nèn cǎo.

老牛吃嫩草。

Literally, “old oxen eat tender grass.”

Gay Chinese

Tóngzhì Zhōngwén

同志中文

Attitudes toward homosexuality have taken a number of twists and turns over the millennia. An old story recounts the tenderness of an emperor for a male courtier whom he loved so much that when his beloved's sleeping head pinned down a sleeve of his gown, he cut off the sleeve rather than risk waking the man up by moving it, leading to the lovely classical euphemism 断袖之恋 (duànxiù zhī liàn) —“the love that cut off its sleeve.” A later classical term, 龙阳癖 (Lóngyáng pǐ “Longyang's vice”), is rather more negative, coming as it does from the tale of a famous catamite. And until just a few years ago, homosexuality was against the law and could get you fired from your work unit or signed up quick for electroshock therapy. Times are turning, though, and while there's still plenty of prejudice—and the traditional family pressures to marry and have

children—the new generation is developing a vibrant, proud subculture and increasingly winning acceptance from mainstream society. Hell, everyone in the government's a “comrade.”

LESBIAN COUPLE

LĀLĀ QÍNGŪ

拉拉情侶

Top

yī

一

Literally, “one.”

Bottom

Líng

〇 or 零

Literally, “zero.” I wondered about this too, until a friend demonstrated with hand gestures.

Pitcher

gōng

供

Literally, “provider.”

Catcher

shōu

收

Literally, “receiver.”

P

P

P

More feminine half of a lesbian couple. “P” stands either for “pretty” or 婆 (pó; “wife”).

T

T

T

More butch half of a lesbian couple. “T” stands for “tomboy,” and was apparently originally Taiwanese slang.

Tóngzhi

同志

Literally, “comrade.” This usage began in Taiwan, but has since become by far the most common term among Mainland gays.

Homo

Bōli

玻璃

Literally, “glass.” This is mostly a Taiwanese usage. Funny story: I once knew an American guy who was a true believer in Marxist-Leninist thought and moved to China to, I guess, do his part for the revolution. He addressed everybody around him as “comrade.” The oldsters ate it up; everyone under the age of about 40 got really uncomfortable. Finally one day it hit home when a delivery guy turned pale, sputtered, hissed “我不是那样的!” (“Wǒ bù shì nà yàng de!”; “I’m not like that!”) and ran away, slamming the door in his face.

Lesbian

Nütóngzhi

女同志

Lesbo (more informal, somewhat cuter)

Lālā

拉拉

Bi

Shuāngxìngliàn

双性恋

hermaphrodite

Yīnyáng rén

阴阳人

Shemale

Rényāo

人妖

CHAPTER 6

ANGRY CHINESE

MÀRÉN ZHŌNGWÉN

骂人中文

**Yo momma's cunt
Is fat and wide
With planes up top
And ships inside**

Nǐ mā dà bǐ
Féi yòu kuǎn
Shàng pào fēijī
Xià pào chuán
你妈大屄
肥又宽
上泡飞机
下泡船

Insults are for the highly skilled, Grasshopper. It's best not to shoot your wad too early in a cuss-off—start small, end big. In Chinese arguments, as in any form of diplomacy, proper escalation is key.

Dropping F-Bombs¹ is no way to argue in China. In fact dirty cussing should be a last resort, to be used only when the situation is hopeless and one has no care for maintaining dignity, or a bloodbath will most certainly follow.

The best and most effective personal insults are derived from knowing someone (superficially) enough to describe their weaknesses in insulting ways—kind of like a verbal caricature painted with poo.

Disclaimer: The words you will learn in this chapter are to be used with care. Remember there are 1.3 billion Chinese people and one of you, and they tend to stick together—that means if you take on one, you'll be taking on everyone in the vicinity. More importantly, you represent all Westerners—try not to make us look any worse than we already do!

What the hell are you doing?

Nǐ zěnmē nòng de?

你怎么弄的？

The first stage of an argument: Your intonation and word stress will convey your displeasure.

What the hell?

Nǐ gān shénme ne?

你干嘛呢？

What the? (WTF?)

Zěnmē huí shì?

怎么回事？

Are you blind?

Nǐ mei zhǎng yǎn ma?

你没长眼吗？

Having established that they are fucked in the head, you proceed with stage two: insulting a person's intelligence.

Psycho!

Shēnjīngbìng!

神经病！

You're fucked in the head!

Nǐ nǎozǐ yǒu bìng!

你脑子有病！

You've got water in your brain!

Nǎozǐ lǐ jìnshuǐ le ma?

脑子里进水了吗？

Did your head get slammed in a door?

Nǎodài bèi mén jī le ma?

脑袋被门挤了吗？

Dumbass!

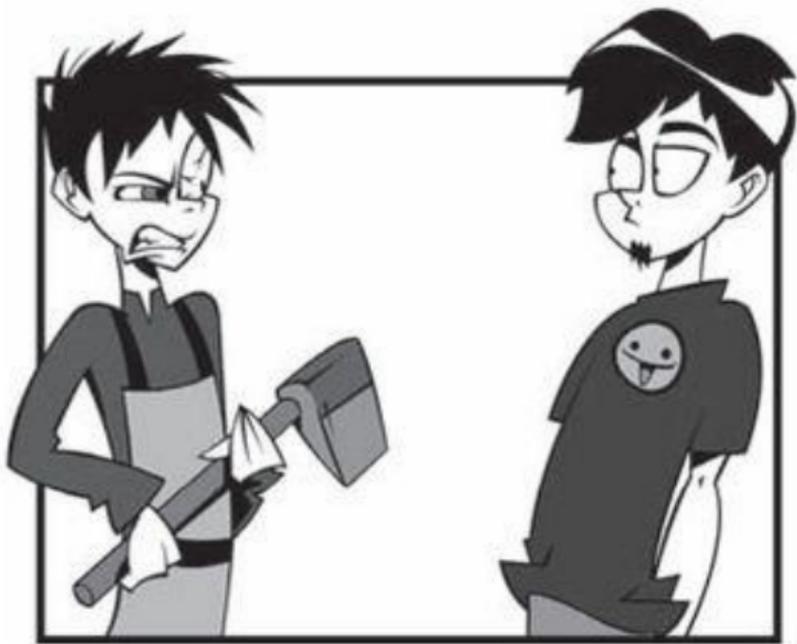
Shǎguā!

傻瓜！

Idiot!

Bèndàn!

笨蛋！



These last two can be used affectionately, as terms of endearment. These next ones can't.

Half-wit!

Bàn ge nǎozil

半个脑子！

Fool!

Èrbǎiwǔ!

二百五！

Imbecile!

Báichī!

白痴！

Retard!

Ruòzhì!

弱智！

Idiot!

Chǔnhuò!

蠢货！

Insulting someone's outward appearance:

You're so ugly, even if I shaved my dog's butt and taught it to walk backward it wouldn't be as ugly as you!

Nǐ zhǎngde chǒu bùshì nǐ de cuò, nǐ chūlái xiàrén jiù bù duì le!

你长得丑不是你的错，你出来吓人就不对了！

Literally, “It’s not your fault you’re so ugly, but it is your fault that you’re going outside and scaring people with your ugly face.”

These are really superficial insults that are commonly used when you are pissed, but not yet livid.

Look how fucking dorky this jerk looks!

Nǐ kàn tā chuān dé duō tǔ!

你看他穿得多土！

You...

Nǐ...

你。。。。

He / She...

Tā.

他 / 她。。。。

is a redneck!

zěnme zhème tǔ!

怎么这么土！

dress(es) like a ho!

chuān de xiàng ge jī!

穿得像个鸡！

are / is too fucking ugly!

zhǎngdé tài chǒu!

长得太丑！

are / is a fat pig!

pàng de xiàng zhū yīyàng!

胖的像猪一样！

You eat like a pig, it's gross!

Nǐ chī dé xiàng zhū yīyàng kǒngbù!

你吃得像猪一样恐怖！

You are GROSS!

Nǐ zhège rén tài kǒngbù!

你这个人太恐怖！

Fatass!

Sǐpàngzi!

死胖子！

Insulting someone's uselessness:

You feckless fuck!

Nǐ zhège rén méi chūxi!

你这个人没出息！

Now you are getting worked up, it's time to start slinging truthful insults—and the truth hurts.

Good-for-nothing! / Oaf!

Wōnangfèi!

窝囊废！

Selfish prick!

Zìsīguǐ!

自私鬼！

Hopeless!

Zhēn méi zhǐwàng!

真没指望！

Useless!

Yīshìwúchéng!

— 一事无成！

You couldn't if you wanted to!

Nǐ méi běnshì!

你没本事！

Stingy!

Xiǎoqì guǐ!

小气鬼！

Tight-ass!

Lǎo kòuménr!

老抠门儿！

Nagging bitch!

Sānbā!

三八！

Go to hell!

Qù sǐ ba nǐ!

去死吧你！

Now you are mad, you don't give a fuck, it's time to start being petty.

You deserve whatever's coming to you.

Huógāi dǎoméi.

活该倒霉。

I hope you get hit by a car and die!

Chūmén bèi chē zhuàngsǐ!

出门被车撞死！

Bastard! / Asshole!

Zázhǒng!

杂种！

Whore!

Biāozǐ!

婊子！

Punk!

Liúmáng!

流氓！

Pervert!

Sèláng!

色狼！

Sick fuck!

Biàntài!

变态！

Petty Bourgeois! (insulting nickname for the Shanghainese)

Xiǎoshìmín!

小市民！

Beaḡar! / Vaarant! (Shanghainese slang)

Xiǎo biēsān!

小瘪三！

Foreign Devil!

Yánqūizi!

洋鬼子！

Peasant!

Xiǎonóngmín!

小农民！

Broke-ass chump!

Qióngguāngdàn!

穷光蛋！

Fuck you motherfucker!

Wǒ cào nǐ mā!

我肏你妈！

Now you've gone over the edge, you've exploded and you don't care if it leads to a fistfight. Just remember that you are outnumbered 1.3 billion to one.

Your mom's cunt!

Mā le ge bī

妈了个屌！

Eat shit!

Chī shī ba nǐ!

吃屎吧你！

Stupid cunt!

Shābī!

傻屌！

Get fucked by a dog!

Gǒu rì de!

狗日的！

This can also be used as a general interjective.

Fuck you!

Wǒ cào nǐ!

我肏你！

Fuck!

Cào!

肏！

This is as good a place as any to note that the character for “fuck” consists of 入, “to enter,” over 肉, “meat.”

I'll fucking beat you to death!

Wǒ tā mā de zòu sǐ nǐ!

我他妈的揍死你！

I'll beat you, you dogfucked fucker!

Wǒ dǎ nǐ ge gǒu rì de!

我打你个狗日的！

Son of a bitch!

Gǒuniángyǎng de!

狗娘养的！

So few things translate literally. This is one of them that does.

Fuck your grandpa!

Wǒ cào nǐ dàyē!

我肏你大爷！

Pussy!

Ruǎndàn!

软蛋！

Literally, “soft-balls.”

Your mother's dripping cunt!

Nǐ mā ge sāo bī!

你妈个骚屄！

Your mother's stinking cunt!

Nǐ mā ge chòu bī!

你妈个臭屄！

Try not to use these unless it's a really messy divorce:

May your children be born without assholes!

Shēng hái zǐ méi pì yǎn r!
生 孩 子 没 屁 眼 儿 ！

**Fuck your ancestors eight generations back!
(Seriously.)**

Cào nǐ zǔ zōng bā bèi!
操 你 祖 宗 八 辈 ！

May your lineage become extinct!

Nǐ quán jiā sǐ guāng guāng!
你 全 家 死 光 光 ！



CHAPTER 7

POPPY CHINESE

BŌPŭ ZHŌNGWÉN

波普中文

When talking about Chinese pop culture and its quality relative to American pop culture, it may be instructive to think of cheese. Imagine that Elvis is a wheel of fine aged Asiago cheese, that New Kids on the Block are Kraft singles, that Avril Lavigne is a block of neon-orange mild cheddar you got at the 7-11. Chinese pop culture is Easy Cheese. What with all of the fuss about China having 5000 years of history and all that, people listening to Chinese music for the first time might be excused for wondering how a culture capable of inventing gunpowder and creating some of the world's finest literature and cuisine could suck so bad on the music end of things.

Music

Yīnyuè

音乐

Do you listen to...?

Nǐ xǐhuan tīng ... ma?

喜欢听。。。吗？

Do you know where I can hear...?

Qù nǎlǐ tīng...?

哪里听。。。？

Hong Kong / Taiwanese pop

Gǎng-Tái gēqǔ

港台歌曲

Sappy ballads

Kǒushuǐ gē

口水歌

Literally, “drool music.”

Pop

Liúxíng yīnyuè

流行音乐

Rock

Yáogǔn yuè

摇滚乐

Punk

Péngkè yuè

朋克乐

Metal

Zhòngjīnshǔ

重金属

Rap

Shuōchàng

说唱

Reggae

Léiguǐ

雷鬼

Hip-hop

Xī-hà

嘻哈

Jazz

Juésì

爵士

Techno

Diànzǐ yuè

电子乐

Folk

Mín yuè

民乐

Folk Rock

Mín yáo

民谣

Where do you usually go to see shows?

Nǐ yībān qù nǎr kàn yǎnchū?

你一般去哪儿看演出？

What bands do you like?

Nǐ xǐhuan shénme

yuèduì?

你喜欢什么乐队

MP3 (player)

MP-sān

MP3

Who've you got on your MP3 player?

Nǐ de **MP-sān** shàng

yǒu shéi de gē?

你的**MP3**上有谁

的歌？



Who's your favorite singer?

Nǐ zuì xǐhuan de gēshǒu shì shéi?

你最喜欢的歌手是谁？

Can you recommend any good Chinese bands?

Néng bù néng xiàng wǒ jièshào yīxiē hǎo de Zhōngguó yuèduì?

能不能向我介绍一些好的中国乐队？

I said good bands.

Wǒ shuō de shì hǎo de yuèduì ne.

我说的是好的乐队呢。

This music is truly eye-opening.

Zhè zhǒng yīnyuè zhēn ràng wǒ dà kāi yǎnjiè.

这种音乐真让我大开眼界。

I never imagined there could be anything wussier than the Backstreet Boys.

Wǒ méi xiǎngdào shìjiè shàng jīng yǒu bǐ "Hòujiē Nánhái"
gèng niángmen de yīnyuè.

我没想到世界上竟有比“后街男孩”更娘们儿的音乐。

Comedy

Yōumò

幽默

Chinese comedy tends to come in one of two major flavors: the traditional northern 相声 (xiàngsheng; “cross-talk”), which is similar in structure and humor content to a couple of early-morning AM radio hosts deprived of their palette of funny sound effects, and the more recent, often Cantonese-language *mo lei tau* (无厘头, wúlítóu) comedy typified by Stephen Chow and other Hong Kong comedians, who make Robin Williams on a cocaine bender look reserved.

Joke

Xiàohuà

笑话

(to be) The butt of the joke

(zuò) Xiàoliào

(作)笑料

Pun

Shuāngguān yǔ

双关语

THE GRASS MUD HORSE

CǎONÍ Mǎ

草泥马

While online censorship in China isn't the totalitarian affair many imagine, there are some words—especially words of the naughty variety—that get screened out by many forums and blog sites. This postfacto screening is known as “harmonizing”—和谐 (héxié)—a play on the government's stated policy of building a “harmonious society” (和谐社会, héxiéshèhuì).

My post got “harmonized” by the moderator!

Wó de tiēzi ràng guǎnlǐyuán gěi héxié le!

我的帖子让管理员给和谐了！

For years Chinese Internet users got around keyword-based censorship by substituting homophonous characters, like “river crab” (河蟹, héxiè), a rough homophone for “harmony.” People had fun with this for a while, but didn’t do much with it until more recently, when netizens came up with a whole menagerie of imaginary, homophonous animals—including the “grass mud horse” (草泥马, cǎoní mǎ) or “Fokk Ewe,” a rough homophone for “fuck your mother” (禽你妈, cào nǐ mā). There followed a whole imaginary zoological study of the “grass mud horse” that found that it lived in the “Gobi ass-hurt” (马勒戈壁, mǎlè Gēbì; “Horse-bit Gobi”), a rough homophone for 妈了个屁 (mā le ge pǐ; “your mother’s cunt”), and was engaged in a constant battle for its survival against the perfidious river crabs. This gave rise to Photoshopped, LOLCats-like pictures (with doofy-looking alpacas playing the part of the grass mud horse), online slang that got old almost instantly, stuffed animal representations of the key players in the “grass mud horse” mythos, and an adorable music video

set to the tune of the Smurfs theme song.

Retard(ed)

Ruòzhì

弱智

Catchphrase

Míngjù

名句

I'm a famously unfamous xiangsheng performer!

Wǒ shì yí ge zhù míng de fēi zhù míng xiàng shēng yǎn yuǎn!

我是一个著名的非著名相声演员！

Six grenades for a buck—and I've got a hundred bucks to throw at you!

Yī kuài qián liù ge shǒu liú dàn, wǒ xiān rēng nǐ yī bǎi kuài qián de!

—块钱六个手榴弹，我先扔你一百块钱的！

My admiration for you surges like the mighty waters of the Yangtze River, and is furthermore as

impossible to restrain as the Yellow River in flood.

Wǒ duì nǐ de jìngyǎng yǒurú Jiāng shuǐ miánmián bù jué, yòu yóurú Huáng Hé fànlàn yī fā bù kě shōushí.

我对你的敬仰犹如江水绵绵不绝，又如黄河泛滥一发不可收拾。

Movies

Diànyǐng

电影

Fun project: see how many people, out of a random group of strangers on the street, have ever heard of 史泰龙 (Shítàilóng; Sylvester Stallone), 汤姆克鲁斯 (Tāngmǔ Kèlǔsī; Tom Cruise) or 阿诺德施瓦辛格 (Ānuòdé Shīwǎxīnggé; Arnold Schwarzenegger). Then see how many have heard of 甘地 (Gāndì; Gandhi) or 马丁路德金 (Mǎdīng Lùdé Jīn; Martin Luther King).

Action Dòngzuò piān 动作片



Kung-fu

Wūdǎ piàn
武打片

Sci-fi

Kē-huàn piān
科幻片

Horror

Kǒngbù piān

恐怖片

Suspense

Xuánniàn piān

悬念片

Romance

Làngmàn piān

浪漫片

I like movies with...

Wǒ xǐhuan diànyǐng yǒu ...

我喜欢电影有。。。。

historical significance.

lìshǐ yìyì.

历史意义

artistic value.

yìshù jiàzhí,
艺术价值

intricately realized characters.

xìní fùzá de rénwù miáoxiě,
细腻复杂的人物描写。

explosions and tits.

bàozhà hé dà bō,
爆炸和大波。

Fashion

Shíshàng

时尚

Japanese-style

Rì fàn'ér

日范儿

“Japanese-style” is a catchall term for the gallimaufry of sartorial oddities imported from China’s neighbor to the east, from Visual Kei (视觉系, shìjué xì), the bastard offspring of anime and hair metal favored by Japanese goths, to more generally J-Pop- influenced looks.

Lolita

Luòlìtǎ

洛丽塔

Lolitas come in two flavors: monochrome and Technicolor. In both cases, frills and flounces play an important role; in the latter case, so does hot pink.

Cosplay

(Just “cosplay.”)

The good news: Yes, there really are girls who dress up like Chun Li and Sailor Moon. The bad news: they're still, physically, the kind of people who tend to be really into Chun Li and Sailor Moon.

Kawai Kāwāyī 卡哇伊

Named after the Japanese word for “cute,” Kawai tends to be coincident with terminal cases of 嗲 (diǎ), a neurological disorder that causes young and occasionally not-so-young

women to
believe that acting like a four-year-old is sexy.

Korean-style

Hán fàn'r

韩范儿

Clothes copied from whatever Korean soap opera is popular at the moment. Can range from relatively inoffensive—blue jeans, sneakers, baseball caps, cute suit jackets on girls—to full-on bleached-hair FUBU breakdancing hilarity.

English-style

Yīng fàn'r

英范儿

Burberry and Burberry knock-offs. As dull as its namesake country.

His / Her outfit looks (really...)

Tā chuānde (fēicháng)...

他 / 她穿得非常。。。。

retro. fùgǔ.

复古。

avante-garde.

qiánwèi.

前卫。

stylish.

shímáo.

时髦。

cute.

kěài.

可爱。

like a model.

xiàng mòtèr.

像模特儿。

lame.

tǔ.

土。

slutty.

lòu.

露。

Literally, “revealing.”

hideous.

xià rén.

吓人。

Literally, “frightening.”

CHAPTER 8

SPORTY CHINESE

JÌNGJÌ ZHŌNGWÉN

竞技中文

Chinese are crazy about sports. More and more elite Chinese athletes and sports people are becoming internationally recognized household faces. If you can talk sports in Chinese, you'll make a lot of friends.

Do you like to... ?

Nǐ xǐhuan ... ma?

你喜欢。。。吗？

I want to ...

Wǒ xiǎng ...

我想。。。。

play soccer.

tī zúqiú.

踢足球。

Here 踢 (tī; "kick") means play.

play basketball.

dǎ lánqiú.

打籃球。

Here 打 (dǎ; "hit") means play.



play baseball.

dǎ bàngqiú.
打棒球。

play (beach) volleyball.

dǎ (shātān) páiqiú.
打(沙滩)排球。

play badminton.

dǎ yǔmáoqiú.
打羽毛球。

Not only is badminton actually considered a sport in China, but it's incredibly popular. You'll see people playing it out in the street when the weather's warm.

play ping-pong.

dǎ pīngpāng.
打乒乓。

play tennis.

dǎ wǎngqiú.
打网球。

play ice hockey.

dǎ bīngqiú.

打冰球。

A SOCCER JOKE

God decided to have a soccer match with the devil.

Shàngdì juéding hé Sādàn jǔxíng yī chǎng zúqiúsài.

上帝决定和撒旦举行一场足球赛。

God said to **the devil**, “I’ve got this thing sewn up —all the best

players are on my side.”

Shàngdì duì Sādàn shuō, “Wǒ yíng dīng le, yīnwèi wǒ yōngyǒu shìjiè shàng zuì hǎo de qiúyuán.”

上帝对撒旦说：“我赢定了，因为我拥有世界上最好的球员。”

“Don’t be so sure,” said the devil. “I’ve got a **Chinese ref.**”

Sādàn huídá, “Nǐ bié gāoxìng tài zǎo le, wǒ qǐng de shì Zhōngguó cáipàn.”

撒旦回答：“你别高兴太早了，我请的是中国裁判。”

play field hockey.

dǎ qūgùnqiú.

打曲棍球。

play mahjong.

dǎ májiàng.

打麻将。

Combining the nail-biting excitement of dominoes with the gambler-crack addictiveness of poker, mahjong was banned by the new Chinese government in 1949, but legalized again once they realized there was no getting rid of it. Every region of China has its own variant of mahjong, so if you get accused of cheating and/or incompetence, just say you're playing by an obscure set of rules from another part of the country and no one will be the wiser.

Hey, I win!

Hú le!

胡了！

Well, I almost won, anyway.

Fǎnzheng shì chàdiǎn hú le.

反正是差点胡了。

According to Inner Mongolian rules, at least.

Zhìshǎo shì ànzhào Nèi Měng de chángguī.

至少是按照内蒙的常规。

I don't play sports, but I like to watch.

Wǒ bùzěnme yùndòng, kě xǐhuan kàn bǐsài.

不怎么运动，可喜欢看比赛。

Especially women's beach volleyball.

Tèbié shì nǚzǐ shātān páiqiú.

特别是女子沙滩排球。

What...do you like?

Nǐ xǐhuan shénme ...?

你喜欢什么。。。？

sports

yùndòng

运动

teams

qiúduì

球队

players

yùndòngyuán

运动员

Other sports and games

Qíta yùndòng hé yóuxì

其他运动和游戏

Billiards Zhuǎqiú

桌球

Billiards Táiqiú

台球

Chess Guójì xiàngqí

国际象棋

Go

Wéiqí

围棋

Bowling

Bǎolíngqiú

保龄球

Darts

Fēibiǎo

飞镖

Rugby

Gǎnlánqiú

橄榄球

American football

Měishì gǎnlánqiú

美式橄榄球

Golf

Gāo'ěrfū

高尔夫

Cheering and jeering

Hècǎi yǔ hēdào cǎi

喝彩与喝倒彩

Go, ...!

...jiāyóu!

...jiayou!

。。。加油！

We support you!

Wǒmen zhīchí nǐ!

我们支持你！

Kick-ass!

Niúbī!

牛屎！

Literally, “cow-cunt.”

Which (ball) team do you support?

Nǐ zhīchí nǎige qiúduì?

你支持哪个球队？

Not long ago a few young no-goodniks in Beijing formed the Beijing Profanity Alliance (京骂联盟, Jīngmà Liánméng), a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting awareness of Beijing's unique linguistic heritage by yelling "THE REF IS A STUPID CUNT" at visiting teams.

The...is a stupid cunt!

...shì ge shǎ bī

。。。是个傻屌！

referee

cáipàn

裁判

goalie

shǒumén de

守门的

striker

qiánfēng

Working out

Jiànshēn

健身

Many cities provide public fitness equipment—picture the crappy plastic swing sets you get in parks back home, except made of hard, cold, pointy metal and less fun. If that's not your style, or if you're just unable to dislodge the old ladies from the weird clothes rack-looking thing, here are some words that should stand you in good stead at the nearest gym (健身房, jiànshēnfáng):

Stretching

Shēnzhǎn

伸展

Leg lifts

Tītuǐ

踢腿

Jogging

Pǎobù

跑步

Treadmill

Pǎobù qì

跑步器

Weight-lifting

Jǔzhòng

举重

Yoga

Yújiā

瑜伽

Splits

Pǐtuǐ

劈腿

Swimming

Yóuyǒng

游泳

Aerobics

Jiànshēncāo

健身操

Jumping jacks

Kāihé tiào

开合跳



Sit-ups

Yǎngwò qǐzuò

仰卧起坐

Push-ups

Fǔwòchēng

俯卧撑

Pull-ups

Yǐntǐ xiàngshàng

引体向上

I want to work out my...

Wǒ xiǎng liàn liàn wǒ de...

我想练练我的。。。。

biceps.

èrtóujī.

二头肌。

triceps.

sāntóujī.

三头肌。

pecs.

xiōngjī.

胸肌。

abs.

fùjī.

腹肌。

gluteus.

túnjī.

臀肌。

thighs.

dàtuǐ.

大腿。

calves.

xiǎotuǐ.

小腿。

(gym) Membership card

(jiànshēnfáng) Hùiyuán kǎ

(健身房) 会员卡

Video games

Diànyóu

电游

Video games may have arrived late here compared to the U.S. and Japan, but the benighted young people of China are doing their absolute damndest to make up the gap in hours logged. A lot of gaming takes place online, either through personal computers or at Internet cafes.

Sony PlayStation / PSP

Suǒní PS / PSP

索尼 PS / PSP

Nintendo (Wii)

Rèntiāntáng (Wii)

任天堂 (Wii)

X-Box (360)

X-Box (Sān-liù-ling)

X-Box (360)

Online game

Wǎngyóu

网游

Casual game

Xīxián yóuxì

休闲游戏

(MMO)RPG

(dàxíng duō rén zàixiàn) Juésè bànyǎn yóuxì

(大型多人在线) 角色扮演游戏

Most people just use the English abbreviation.

World of Warcraft

Móguǐ Shìjiè

魔兽世界

Dungeon & Fighter (a popular Korean game)

Dìxià Chéng yǔ Yǒngshì

地下城与勇士

Yulgang (another Korean game) Rèxuè Jiānghú

热血江湖

Counter-Strike

Fǎn-kǒng Jīngyīng (or just CS)

反恐精英

Starcraft

Xīngjì Zhēngbà

星际争霸

Gamer

Wánjiǎ

玩家

N00b

Xīnshǒu

新手

Camping

Yīnrén

阴人

Head-shot

Bào tóu

爆头

Fire in the hole!

Xiǎoxīn shǒuléi!

小心手雷！

Rush

Kuàigōng

快攻

Dude, Xiao Wang's totally addicted to online games.

Wǒ kào, Xiǎo Wáng zhēnshi wánr wǎngyóu shàngyīn le.

我靠，小王真是玩儿网游上瘾了。

What makes you say that?

Nǐ zěnmē zhīdào ?

你怎么知道？

He's wearing a catheter and hasn't left the Internet café in a week.

Tā dǒu zhuāngshàng dǎoniàoguǎn le, zhèngzhèng yǐ ge xīngqī méi líkāi wǎngbā.

他都装上导尿管了，整整一个星期没离开网吧。

CHAPTER 9

HUNGRY CHINESE

Yǐnshí Zhōngwén

饮食中文

Food is of paramount importance to the Chinese. It's rare that you'll bump into someone you know and NOT ask them if they've eaten yet. If you're on a trip and unsure what souvenir to bring back for your Chinese buddies, just buy some edible local specialty and you're set. They love food so much here, they extended their borders just so the map of China would be shaped like a chicken.

First-time visitors to China often worry about food poisoning. They soon learn that like death and taxes, food poisoning is basically inevitable. After a few meals, though, they're well on their way to having bowels of steel—provided they don't drink the tap water.

Tummy

Dùzi

肚子

My tummy is...

Wǒ dùzi...

我肚子。。。。

growling.

jiào le.

叫了。

famished.

è huài le.

饿坏了。

starving.

è sǐ le.

饿死了。

full.

bǎo le.

饱了。

stuffed.

chēngsǐ le.

撑死了。

(My) stomach hurts.

(Wǒ de) wèi téng.

(我的)胃疼。

Food

fàn

饭

The Chinese have multiple names for rice. It plays such an important role in Chinese gastronomy that cooked rice is synonymous with food in general. The weirdest thing is that when you've stuffed yourself full with all the awesome food laid out on the table in front of you, you'll be asked what you'd like for your main meal. And you thought you'd already stuffed yourself enough for five main meals! The Chinese believe that unless you eat rice or other staples such as noodles or dumplings, you can't actually feel fully satisfied. For them, the staples are the main meal, everything else is just condiments.

The basics:

Rice (cooked)

Mǐfàn

米饭

White rice

(cooked)

Bái (mǐ) fàn

白(米)饭

Noodles

Miàntiáo

面条

Dumplings

Jiǎozi

饺子



I'd like some...

Wǒ lái diǎnr...

我来点儿。。。。

food.

shíwù.

食物。

snacks.

língshí.

零食。

Have you eaten yet?

Chīfàn le méiyǒu?

吃饭了没有？

You eaten?

Chī le méiyǒu?

吃了没有？

I want to EAT!

Wǒ yào chī fàn!

我要吃饭！

I love...

Wǒ hěn xǐhuān chī...

我很喜欢吃。。。。

What do you feel like eating?

Nǐ xiǎng chī shénme?

你想吃什么？

What's your favorite food?

Nǐ zuì xǐhuān chī shénme?

你最喜欢吃什么？

How 'bout I make you some...?

Wǒ lái gěi nǐ zuò diǎn...chī ba.

我来给你做点。。。吃吧。

I feel like eating junk food.

Wǒ xiǎng chī lājī shípǐn.

我想吃垃圾食品。

Let's get some take out delivered.

Zánmen diǎn wàimài ba.

咱们点外卖吧。

Hurry up!

Kuài yī diǎn!

快一点！

Because the most common dishes in China are pretty quick to prepare, most Chinese have become accustomed to getting their meals pretty damn quick. So don't be surprised when you hear people everywhere in every restaurant screaming at the waiter to tell the cook to hurry the fuck up. You don't tip here, so don't expect the wait staff to bend over backward to give you good service. In fact, the wages are pretty low, so if you get a smile, you're already doing pretty good.

Waiter / Waitress...

Fúwùyuán...

务员。。。

Note that it's safest, especially in Northern China, to address the waitress with the gender-neutral term 服务员 (fúwùyuán) rather than 小姐 (xiǎojiě, "Miss") as is common in the south. You see, besides meaning "Miss," 小姐 (xiǎojiě) is also a relatively common term for a bar girl. It depends on who's speaking, and it's no longer as touchy as it used to be, but if you drop a 小姐 (xiǎojiě) up north, you may offend.

we want to order!

wǒmen xiǎng diǎn cài!

服务员！我们想点菜！

Follow the pattern: call out for the wait staff in a loud voice, then make your request.

what do you recommend (to eat)?

nǐ tuījiàn (chī diǎnr) shénme?

你推荐(吃点儿)什么？

how much does this cost?

zhè ge duōshǎo qián?

这个多少钱？

are the portions large?

cài liàng duō bù duō?

菜量多不多？

what is this shit?

zhè shì shénme gǒushǐ?

这是什么狗屎？

I'll have one of these.

lái yī fèn ba.

来一份吧。

this tastes strange.

wèidào bù zhèngcháng.

味道不正常。

CAFÉS

KĀFĒIDIÀN

咖啡店

Although tea houses are the traditional “cafés,”

the Chinese have caught on to sipping their tea at coffeeshops. Actually, coffee culture is huge here—but as a rule, it's post-Starbucks café culture, not the Old World incubator of ideas/information exchange.

Starbucks

Xīngbākè

星巴克

These are everywhere in China, even at one point (though no longer) in the Forbidden City. Expect no surprises. The clientele are mostly wannabe young Chinese professionals, brand-conscious Taiwanese, and Korean housewives.

SPR (Shanzhai Starbucks)

P

SPR

These “Shanzhai Starbucks” are popping up all over China like mushrooms after a spring rain. The logo looks like Starbucks, the coffee is cheaper and they have free wi-fi—’nuff said. The clientele either come

because of brand recognition (albeit the wrong brand) or because they are Westerners who have lived here long enough to know that anything “Shanzhai” is cool (counter-culture-cum-mainstream) and they want to be cool too. Either that, or they just prefer the cheaper coffee.

I can't use chopsticks. Do you have a knife and fork?

Wǒ bù huì yòng kuàizi. Yǒu méi yǒu dāochā?

我不会用筷子。有没有刀叉？

Could I trouble you to...

Máfan nǐ...

麻烦你。。。。

bring me a menu please?

bǎ càidān náguòlái, hǎo ba?

把菜单拿过来，好吧？

You know how there are some restaurants where they've got “atmosphere” and thick, sound-

cancelling carpets and you feel like you have to whisper your order so people don't look at you funny? Most restaurants aren't like that, and a lot of the time you'll probably have to bellow to make yourself heard. This is hard for some people to get used to when they first arrive, but eventually hunger wins out over manners.

gimme a menu!

càidān!

菜单

leave out the MSG. (It's rare that they'll listen, but say it if it makes you feel better...)

bié fàng wèijīng.

别放味精。

please bring us some more hot (boiled) water?

zài lái diǎn bái kāishuǐ.

再来点白开水。

hurry up!

kuàidiǎnr a!

快点儿啊！！

What time do you finish work?

Nǐ jǐ diǎn xiàbān?

你几点下班？

Tasty

Hǎo chī

好吃

This is delicious!

Fēicháng hǎochī!

非常好吃！

Really fucking amazing!

Zhēn tā mā de hǎo chī!

真他妈的好吃！

It melts in my mouth.

Rù kǒu jí róng.

入口即溶。

This smells awesome!

Hǎo xiāng!

好香！

This is seriously nom-tastic!

Māde, zhè ge cài tèi hǎo chī le!

妈的，这个菜忒好吃了！

Can I get seconds?

Zài jiā yì diǎn hǎo ba?

再加一点好吧？

You snarfed that down like a pig.

Chī dé xiàng zhū yī yàng.

吃得像猪一样。

You downed that pretty fast.

Nǐ chī de tài kuài.

你吃得太快。

Expect to have Chinese friends, coworkers and bystanders advising you on proper eating speed, the health benefits of hot water (热水, rèshuǐ) and boiled hot water (开水, kāishuǐ), over the stomach cancer (胃癌, wèiái), - causing ice water (冰水, bīngshuǐ) Westerners like to drink, and the need to eat more (多

吃点儿, duō chī diǎnr) like the Jewish mother you never had.

International cuisine

Guójì měishí

国际美食

We've already established that food is the pillar of existence in China. These people have been coming up with new ways to eat shit for millennia. Although they can have some pretty weird ideas of what tastes good, there's so much variety here you'll find plenty of good eats—whatever your tastes.

Indian food

Yìndù cài

印度菜

Curry

Gāilǐ

咖喱

We all know that curry is a combination of spices, and what passes for curry in China is a generic yellow powder not unlike Japanese curry. Never fear: authentic Indian cuisine is becoming more common in China, and any major city should have passable Indian restaurants.

Italian food

Yìdàlì cài

意大利菜

Spaghetti

Yìdàlì miàn

意大利面

Literally, “Italian noodles.” The fact that spaghetti—usually spaghetti bolognese—represents “Italian noodles” indicates that the average Zhang doesn’t know much about real Italian pasta. Although you can more or less scratch an itch by eating “Italian noodles” at most Chinese-style Western restaurants, expect it to be about on a par, authenticity-wise, with the Kung Pao chicken you’d get at an Italian restaurant.

Thai food

Tàiguó cài

泰国菜

Thai is available in big Chinese cities, but most Thai restaurants have Chinese chefs and Chinese owners, and stick to bland versions of the standards.

Japanese food

Fīběncài / Fīběnlàolǐ

日本菜 / 日本料理

There are plenty of real Japanese restaurants in China, but the numerous RMB 150 all you can eat and drink Teppanyaki buffets are by far the most popular among locals and expats alike.

Korean food

Hánguó cài / Hánguó làolǐ

韩国菜 / 韩国料理

Like Japanese food, Korean restaurants exist in every Chinese city with a decent-sized Korean population. A lot of Korean BBQs are run by ethnically Korean Chinese,

sometimes with North Korean staff.

Fast food

Kuàicān

快餐

All the usual suspects can be found in every major and not so major city. It's not unusual to see multiple McDonalds, KFCs and Pizza Huts on a single intersection in busy shopping areas in huge cities like Beijing and Shanghai. If you didn't have sensory overload yet, you will when you notice all the Chinese fast food joints doing huge business right alongside the global players.

China has its own knock-off (山寨, shānzhài) imitations of the major International chains, sometimes with names like McKFC (麦肯鸡, Mài kěnjī); these are usually crap, but some are even better than the originals. Chinese fast food chains serve up huge selections of local (fast) food—fast even by the generally zippy standards of Chinese restaurants.

Let's go to...

Zánmen qù...chīfàn ba.

咱们去...吃饭吧。

Kung-Fu

Zhēn Gōngfu

真功夫

You can't miss these Kung-Fu stores—they've got big red signs with a black and yellow picture of someone who their lawyers swear is not Bruce Lee. They claim to be the healthiest fast food choice in China, as the food is all steamed—noodles, pork ribs, vegetables, etc. Why call it Kung-Fu? Could be that 真功夫 (Zhēn Gōngfu) sounds like 蒸功夫 (zhēng gōngfu: steam power), but way cooler.

Yonghe Dawang

Yǒnghé Dàwáng

永和大王

These are everywhere in China and are inexplicably popular. The noodles are instant, the

steamed buns are dubious, the “fresh” soy milk isn’t—but somehow they manage to keep the customers coming. Some of the older stores retain the franchise’s old logo: a Chinese Colonel Sanders.

Xinianlai

Xī'niánlái

喜年来

This is an okay destination for breakfast: they serve Cantonese and Taiwanese snacks 点心 (diǎnxīn; otherwise known as dim sum) for a decent price. The food here will not blow you away, but it’s a safe bet when you’re hung-over or don’t feel like any kind of gastronomical excitement.

Kentucky Fried Chicken

Kěndéjī

肯德基

Known as KFC here in the Middle Kingdom, KFC is more popular than MickeyD’s. Maybe it’s because they got here early; maybe it’s because the Colonel’s beard and glasses mark him as a man of learning and cultivation; maybe it’s

because Chinese tend to prefer chicken and pork to dark meats. KFC has localized its offerings to a greater extent than McDonald's has, and the Macao-style egg-custard tarts are pretty tasty.

Kendeli

Kěndélì
肯德利

A fine introduction to knock-off or “Shanzhai” culture (山寨, shānzhài), Kendeli is a small Chinese fried-chicken franchise that can be found in county seats, small towns, and 3rd tier cities (these cities may have KFC, but Kendeli is cheaper). Not that bad, but every now and then you may get mild food poisoning from it.

Clam Burger

Kěnlāmū
肯拉姆

Another “Shanzhai”(山寨, shānzhài) KFC chain based in dire areas of northern China, eating here may even become a weekly event if you are living out in the boonies with no Western food at all. They wanted to call it “Clown Burger” but the tard

they hired to do the logos and all the materials wrote “Clam Burger” instead.

McDonald's

Màidāngláo

麦当劳

Chinese McDonald's is just like every other McDonald's in the world, but they speak Chinese.

Ronald McDonald is called 麦当劳叔叔 (Màidāngláo Shūshu; “Uncle McDonald”) in Chinese, which is creepy but not as creepy as the fact that the waitresses used to be called 麦当劳阿姨 (Màidāngláo Āyí; “Auntie McDonald”).

Chinese Burger Home

Zhōngguó Hànbǎo zhī Jiā

中国汉堡之家

This is the “Shanzhai” McDonald's from back before the word “Shanzhai” (山寨, shānzhài) meant “knock-off.” A lot of them use McDonald's equipment, and if you eat here you'll be getting basically the same food at half the price.

Chinese food

Zhōngguó cài

中国菜

Every small town in China has its own local food variants, but the most popular regional cuisines are represented in every city.

Let's go out and eat some...

Zánmen chū qù chī diǎn...ba.

咱们出去吃点。。。吧。

Sichuan food (Szechwan)

Chuān cài

川菜

Sichuan cuisine is known as 麻辣 (málà; numb and spicy). The numb part comes from the abundance of 花椒 (huājiāo). Sichuan peppercorns

that tease you by turning up the heat and then numbing your mouth so you can't feel anything. Sichuan cuisine is one of the most popular Chinese regional cuisines, both domestically and internationally. You can find Sichuan restaurants everywhere, but if you want authentic levels of heat you have to ask for it—they think non-Sichuanese folk are chile pussies.

Prickly ash / Sichuan peppercorn

Huājiāo

花椒

Hunan Food

Xiāng cài

湘菜

They say the Hunanese are actually afraid of eating non-spicy-hot food. Perhaps even more than Sichuan food (which occasionally offers dishes that don't bring tears to the eye), this is seriously not for the delicate of tummy. Hunan food has all the flavors: sour, salty, sweet, bitter and always SPICY HOT. If you are a serious spice freak, ask for extra hot and it will make your head ring, without the feeling of having the inside of your mouth peel off that Thai chiles will give you.

Shanghai food

Shànghǎi cài

上海菜

Renowned for its elegance, Shanghai cuisine is a lesson in subtlety—which is to say that it's oily and bland, but also overpriced. These people put sugar in vinegar.

Northeastern food (Manchurian)

Dōngběi cài

东北菜

As rough and hearty as the Northeasterners themselves, Northeastern food is heavy on potatoes, glass noodles, meat and dumplings. If a thing can be stewed, it's safe to say that the Northeasterners have tried it. Great stuff when you're hungry or when (as is so often the case in Northeastern China) it's thirty degrees below zero out.

Cantonese food

Yuè cài

粤菜

The Cantonese pride themselves on their cuisine, which offers a variety and delicacy not found in other

Chinese regional cuisines. They're the ones who brought the world dim sum—and the ones whose cuisine is blamed for starting SARS a few years back. If it walks, slithers, flies, swims or otherwise draws breath, some Cantonese person somewhere has dedicated an amazing amount of thought to eating it.



Xinjiang food

Xinjiāng cài
新疆菜

Xinjiang Uyghur food is more Central Asian than

Chinese—a melange of Silk Road dishes and flavors. There are Xinjiang restaurants everywhere in China with a charcoal kebab grill at the front and at least one or two visibly Uyghur staff in view. If it's a halal (清真, qīngzhēn) Xinjiang restaurant you will get the real deal—steaming fresh rounds of 饅 (náng) flatbread and roast mutton.

Hotpot

Huǒguō
火锅

Hotpot involves a metal pot of simmering broth placed in the middle of the table (usually a concoction of herbs, spices and stock). You order up fresh vegetables, meats, seafood, seaweed, noodles, dumplings and soybean products (豆制品, dòuzhìpǐn) and you dip the food you want to eat into the pot, cook it, then place it the bowl in front of you. There are plenty of dipping sauces to choose from. While the tastiest hotpots are spicy hot, you can order not-spicy hotpots, or you can get the divided pot (half spicy/half non-spicy).

Chongqing hotpot (Chungking hotpot)

Chóngqìng Huǒguō
重庆火锅

There are many different Chongqing hotpot chains and they are all pretty hit and miss, so you may as well just try your luck. Chongqing hotpot is said to be the spiciest of all hotpots, so if you can't handle chile, this is not for you: some of the places offer mild chicken broth, but that's really defeating the purpose. If you are hell bent on having the authentic Chongqing experience, or are otherwise into pain, ask for extra-spicy (重辣 zhònglà). If you have decided to end it all in as spectacular a manner as possible—think spontaneous combustion—ask for “super-very-really-fuckinghot” (超级非常真他妈的辣 chāoji fēicháng zhēn tānmāde là).

Little Sheep Mongolian hotpot (aka, Little Fat Sheep)

Xiǎo Fēi Yáng

小肥羊

This hotpot chain is so popular it has crossed the Pacific and can now be found at North American locations, and even Australia! If you're not sure whether to eat the spicy or non-spicy, go for the “Half-Half” hotpot (鸳鸯锅: yuānyang guō).

Snacks

Xiǎochī

小吃

Listen, save yourself some time and deal with the issue of kitchen hygiene the same way you deal with death and clowns: don't think about it. You might, as some do, opt to eat only at big and expensive restaurants because you're afraid of getting food poisoning; the truth is that the kitchens are just about the same anywhere you go, whether it's a hole-in-the-wall chow mein (炒面, chǎomiàn) joint or a hotel's banquet hall. Better to eat at the place you know is dirty than at the place where you can't see the dirt.

The best thing about eating out in China is the vibrant culture and awesome food you'll find at the night markets and street vendors. Although most night markets manifest at fixed locations, they can potentially exist anywhere. A

couple of food vendors with their whole al fresco tricycle-mounted kitchens gathering in one spot is essentially a mini night market. Here are some of the choices at your average night market or street stall snack vendor (these vary with region):

Let's get some snacks!

Wǒmen chī ba!

们吃吧！

Mutton kebabs

Yángròu chuàn'r

羊肉串儿

This is considered by most Western people who like to drink as the ultimate drunk food, usually operated by Uygur or Hui (ethnically Chinese Muslims), often strategically located near bars and clubs. “Mutton” is probably an optimistic description of what’s being sold here, but it’s tasty all the same.

Street BBQ

Shāokǎo

烧烤

Although Xinjiang kebabs are the most well known type of street snack among the Westerners fresh off the boat, the Chinese really dig their general BBQ. You can choose almost any vegetable available to be char grilled (the safer option if you are worried about the meat that's been sitting in the Styrofoam box all night in the middle of summer), or chicken wings, hearts, squid, fish, etc., for meat eaters. Get a bunch of friends, grab a table with the little plastic chairs, order a shitload of beer, maybe even get a keg if it's a large night market. If you are flying solo, just wait till some curious locals start calling out "Hello!" then refer to "Angry Chinese" and call them stupid. They'll be shocked at first, then laugh, then invite you over to join in on the BBQ madness. You will get extremely drunk.

Dapaidang

Dàpáidàng

大排档

This is basically street stir fry, just as popular as the BBQ above, similar setting, same tips for drinking with locals.

Spicy flash-boiled things

Málàtáng

麻辣烫

Málàtáng is from Chongqing (formerly part of Sichuan Province). You pick out the fresh ingredients you want from the fridge—bamboo shoots, meat balls, various tofu iterations, greens, shrooms, seaweed (yeah, you get the idea)—putting them in a basket as you go. Pay first, then they put all your shit into a steel basket and submerge it in the bubbling spicy soup in the 40-gallon drum. When it's cooked they add the chile oil, and the fried chile flakes (optional), your choice of garlic, cilantro and spring onion. Málàtáng can be found everywhere in China, but the most authentic is made by Chongqingers. If you can speak Chinese, just talk to the boss and listen for the lilting Sichuan accent (they sound like Chinese leprechauns). Don't think too hard about the sanitation.

Shengjian (pan-fried pork buns)

Shēngjiān

生煎

Shengjian is a Yangtze River delta street food.

They make the little pork buns, then put them in a huge shallow pan of bubbling oil (enough to fry only the bottom of the bun). Cover the pan with a bamboo lid and then violently rotate the pan every minute. Don't be surprised if you have to queue up for these. Be careful of the hot juices sealed inside the buns—eating them is harder than it looks, but you'll figure it out after the first few times you burn your lips.

Weird shit

Yěwèi

野味

In Beijing you'll see the starfish and scorpion kebabs at the “official” food street in Wangfujing. If you really want bragging rights back home, skip the touristy gimmicks (locals don't even eat them) and eat authentic weird shit—some of it actually tastes good! When your Chinese friends ask you what you feel like for dinner, tell 'em you want to try their local “peasant food” (土菜, tǔcài). This could turn out to be the best Chinese food you've ever had—if not the best, then at least the most authentic. Amongst the fairly normal looking food, you'll be served up stuff more suited to the “Temple of Doom” banquet. This is weird shit in real context.

Now there's weird and there's weird (by non-Chinese

standards). You gotta understand that for the Chinese, nothing is weird, so if you ask 'em if you're about to eat weird local specialties (特别风味, tèbié fēngwèi; ; literally, "unusual local flavors"), they'll honestly say no.

Ducks heads (spicy)

Yātóu

鸭头

Spicy rabbit heads

Málà tùzi tóu

麻辣兔子头

Spicy tripe (preserved duck's blood and eel stew)

Máoxuèwàng

毛血旺

Silk worm chrysalis

Cányǒng

蚕蛹

Fried cicadas

Jīnchán

金蝉

Literally, “gold cicadas.”

Little fried scorpion

Yóuzhà xiēzi

油炸蝎子

These taste like french fries.

Sparrows

Máquè

麻雀



Duck tongue

Yāshé

鸭舌

“Three Treasures”

Jíxiáng sānbǎo

吉祥三宝

The three treasures in question: bull penis, goat testicles and chicken kidney.

fish air bladder (in hotpot)

yúbiào

鱼鳔

Yuck!

Nánchī!

难吃！

There's so much good food here in China, but there is also an abundance of shite. Either it's too exotic for your taste experience, or it's just poorly made.

On your first visit, you'll either love the food or decide that it doesn't agree with you. Either way, it takes experience to tell the difference between something that is cooked well and something you wouldn't even inflict upon your pet alligator. Not only will you come across stuff that tastes bad, you'll experience tasty food that will leave you with an ass that thinks it's a sprinkler. So here are a couple of phrases that will help your gracious hosts understand that they shouldn't order the pig intestines for you next time.

This tastes weird.

Chīqǐái guàiguài de.

吃起来怪怪的。

This tastes bad.

Bù hǎochī.

不好吃。

Too disgusting.

Tài ǐxīn.

太恶心。

This is sooo bad!

Tài nánchī!

太难吃！

This is as bad as it can get.

Nánchī zhìjí.

难吃至极。

Fucking gross!

Zhēn tā māde nán chī!

真他妈的难吃！

I can't eat this shit!

Wó chī bù xià qù!

我吃不下去！

This restaurant fucking sucks!

Zhège fàndiàn tài tā mā de chà jìn le!

这个饭店太他妈的差劲了！

This is worse than eating feces.

Bǐ shǐ hái nán chī.

比屎还难吃。

This doesn't even compare with dog shit.

Lián gǒushǐ dōu bù rú.

连狗屎都不如。

Dog shit would be better.

So bad I can't swallow.

Nán yǐ xià yàn.

难以下咽。

Disgusting in so many messy ways.

Nánchī de yī tān hú tu.

难吃的一塌糊涂。

Jail food beats this shit hands down!

Zhège cài bǐ láofàn hái nán chī!

这个菜比牢饭还难吃！

This gave me food poisoning.

Zhège fàn ràng wǒ shíwù zhòngdú le.

这个饭让我食物中毒了。

Let's go.

Zǒu ba.

走吧。

Let's skip out on the check.

Bàwángcān.

霸王餐。

Literally, “King’s Meal” (i.e., you avoid paying).

Everything that is alive is a potential meal. A friend of mine was bragging about how he got hold of an anteater (illegal to possess, let alone eat) and proceeded to show me great respect by asking me to join him in enjoying this delicacy. Our relationship is at the level where I could safely turn down the offer and then proceed to express my disapproval of his intended feast. When I asked why he (Chinese people)

would want to eat such exotic, not to mention protected, creatures, his reply was lightning fast: “It’s simple—if it is alive, if it breathes, I have the uncontrollable desire to know what it tastes like. It would be unbearable to be lying on my deathbed knowing that in my life I’d passed up the opportunity to eat something I’d not yet tried.”

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Matt Coleman is a University of Queensland Chinese Language graduate who has spent six years in China—long enough to know that understanding foul language is a very important and essential skill that must be used wisely. He likes China, spicy food, and Scotch single malt whiskeys. He wants to eat home-cooked meals in every country he possibly can.

Edmund Backhouse is the nom de guerre of a Beijing-based writer and translator. Despite his potty mouth and his choice of namesake, he leads a relatively virtuous life.

1

Affectionately known as the B-Bomb by Westerners—cunt / 屄 / bī → B → B-Bomb

2

鸳鸯锅 (Yuānyang guō) is a much prettier name than “Half-Half,”
natch. 鸳鸯 (yuānyang) means “Mandarin ducks,” a traditional
Chinese symbol of marital fidelity. Mandarin duck hotpot
has a wavy divide going down the middle, so it looks either
like an incomplete “Yin-Yang,” or Mandarin ducks locked in
a 69 position.

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