



Introduction

Where Did You Learn to Speak Chinese Like That!

1

Simplified	2
Traditional	2
Pinyin	2
English	2
Vocabulary	2
Grammar Points	3
Cultural Insight	5

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Simplified Chinese

要吃什么?
我要吃面。
好吃!
对!

Traditional Chinese

要吃什麼?
我要吃面。
好吃!
對!

Pinyin

Yào chī shénme?
Wǒ yào chī miàn.
Hǎochī!
Dùi!

English

What do you want to eat?
I want to eat noodles.
Delicious!
Yes!

Vocabulary

Simplified	Traditional	Pinyin	English
要	要	yào	to want, to need
吃	吃	chī	to eat
面	面	miàn	noodle



我	我	wǒ	I, me
好	好	hǎo	good
对	對	duì	correct, right
好吃	好吃	hǎochī	delicious
什么	什麼	shénme	what

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

她要回家。	Tā yào huí jiā.	She wants to go home.
我要喝水。	Wǒ yào hē shuǐ .	I want to drink water.
要吃什么？	Yào chī shénme?	What do you want to eat?
那个饭店的面很好吃。	Nàge fàndiàn de miàn hěn hǎochī.	The noodles at that restaurant are delicious.
我不喜欢吃面。	Wǒ bù xǐhuan chī miàn.	I don't like to eat noodles.
我是大学生。	Wǒ shì dà xué sheng.	I am a college student.
加州很好。	Jiāzhōu hěn hǎo.	California is very nice.
你说得对。	Nǐ shuō de duì.	You are correct.
这道菜很好吃！	Zhè dào cài hěn hǎo chī.	This dish is very delicious!
要吃什么？	Yào chī shénme?	What do (you) want to eat?
她要回家。	Tā yào huí jiā.	She wants to go home.
我要喝水。	Wǒ yào hē shuǐ .	I want to drink water.
要吃什么？	Yào chī shénme?	What do you want to eat?
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这道菜很好吃！	Zhè dào cài hěn hǎo chī.	This dish is very delicious!
要吃什么？	Yào chī shénme?	What do (you) want to eat?

Grammar Points

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The focus of this lesson is using the verb 要(yào) to express volition or desire.

我要吃面。

Wǒ yào chī miàn.

"I want to eat noodles."

There are quite a few uses for the verb 要 (yào), which we will learn in other lessons, however, one of the very common usages is to express 'to want' or 'to need'.

For example, in our dialogue, the person wants to eat noodles, therefore he uses 要(yào) to express this desire (see example above).

We also saw 要 (yào) used in a question in the dialogue, namely:

要吃什么?

Yào chī shénme?

"What do (you) want to eat?"

(literally 'Want to eat what?')

Here are some other examples of sentences where 要 (yào) is used to express desire:

我要喝水。

Wǒ yào hē shuǐ .

"I want to drink water."

她要回家。

Tā yào huí jiā.

"She wants to go home."

我要去北京。

Wǒ yào qù Běijīng .

"I want to go to Beijing."

你要做什么?

Nǐ yào zuò shénme?

"What do you want to do?"



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Pronunciation Tip

In this lesson we introduced the four tones of Chinese. Here is a description of the four tones of Mandarin Chinese:

First tone - high and steady, at your voice's highest natural pitch

Second tone - rising, like the intonation we use in English to indicate a question (i. e. huh?)

Third tone - starts relatively low, dips

Fourth tone - falls sharply

There is also the neutral tone, which is short and unemphasized.

Make sure to check out the pinyin chart on the website. Click on the audio files and listen for the difference in how each word sounds when pronounced in each of the four tones. The more you expose yourself to Chinese and practice imitating the sounds, the quicker you will master the tones. It's not as hard as you think!

Cultural Insight

We talked about the Chinese love of noodles in this lesson. The fascination with eating noodles goes beyond eating only, however. In China, the humble noodle embodies a wealth of history and culture. Some notable veneration of the noodle: the Chinese often eat noodles on their birthday; the long noodles represent long life. Also, upon returning home from a journey, a noodle dish is traditionally served.

Of note: it is not considered rude to slurp your soup or noodles in China... much to your mother's chagrin!



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Food is a focal point for Chinese culture, celebrations and family life. We will teach you more about auspicious Chinese foods and the celebrations surrounding them in lessons to come! Long live the noodle!

