

SERVICE DELIVERY GUIDELINES PREPARING FOR THE CHINESE VISITOR

EATING AND DRINKING (DINING)



Chinese visitation to Australia has been growing strongly over the past ten years and has seen Australia reach its 2020 goal of one million visitors in March this year – making it the largest and fastest growing of all inbound markets.

Year ending March 2016, 34,000 Chinese visitors included South Australia in their itinerary, spending \$211 million, making it our most valuable international market. Projections suggest that if we maximise the growth of

Chinese visitation to South Australia we could attract up to 57,000 visitors by 2020 with associated expenditure of \$450 million.

To achieve this potential, it is essential we understand the current Chinese visitor, as well

as the likely changes in travel patterns that are to occur over the next five years and look at ways to prepare and deliver the expectations of the market.

The South Australian Tourism Commission in partnership with Fastrak Asian Solutions

has developed this series of service delivery guidelines to assist our industry partners in preparing South Australia to meet the expectations and grow visitation from one of the fastest growing markets – China.

Food is very important to Chinese visitors - it is a time to get together, enjoy, converse and they are often noisy. Research indicates that Chinese visitors find trying local Australian produce and cuisine to be difficult. This is largely due to the way in which we serve food, the fact that we “assume knowledge” of cooking terminologies, and that we do not provide enough information for visitors to understand what the item is.

Chinese meal service style is one of “shared” plates. “Face” is a key issue here, as with shared platters a person can sample unfamiliar dishes, eating more of the things they like and less of those they don’t, without being forced to commit to a single item and the potential of being embarrassed if they don’t like it. Platter or shared plate service also assists with the pace of delivery, as Chinese tend to eat faster than westerners, and even in fine dining restaurants expect this to be possible.

CHINESE VISITORS PREFER HOT DRINKS TO COLD (EVEN IF IT IS ONLY HOT WATER)

To assist Chinese visitors there also needs to be clear explanation and information on what that local produce actually is, why it is different (ie: types of fish or oysters, cuts of meat and even types of wines and differences between vineyards) and in simple English rather than cooking jargon. Chinese people also tend to separate their meals into proteins (meats and fish), carbohydrates (rice and pastas) and vegetables, so providing information on this will also assist. Fish and seafood are very important as they denote wealth and prosperity.

Chinese visitors prefer to use condiments they are familiar with, so the addition of even just soy sauce, chilli sauce, tabasco sauce and chopped fresh chilli can go a long way to making their dining experience more enjoyable.

Finally, Chinese visitors prefer hot drinks to cold (even if it is only hot water) and unlike Australia, tea is considered both culture and art-form, and thus deserving a degree of respect. While Chinese visitors often have limited knowledge in regards to local wine or beer varieties, toasting is a cultural norm and alcoholic and non-alcoholic options are usually required at meals.

FOOD IS SO MUCH MORE THAN SUSTENANCE

- It’s about balance (Heating and Cooling)
- It’s about chi (energy flows)
- It’s about face (food has meaning)
- It’s about Guanxi (relationships & respect)
- It’s about art and history (the story behind the plate)

EATING AND DRINKING

- Chinese visitors will prefer to eat earlier, will eat more quickly and may be noisier than western guests
- They prefer platters or shared plates - especially sampler plates of Australian produce such as seafood platters
- Explain foods, cooking techniques, and local terminologies (eg: writing “fish” after King George Whiting)
- Simplify menus - include pictures and use colour coding to highlight local produce
- Offer condiments like soy sauce, chilli sauce, Tabasco or fresh chopped chilli at all meals
- Tea is both culture and an art-form and toasting is a cultural norm, so offer alcoholic and non-alcoholic options at meals
- Be mindful of limited knowledge of local food, wine and beer so consider offering samples
- Chinese prefer hot drinks - even just water!
- Obviously, the addition of Chinese language menus and Chinese speaking staff are a bonus!

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CONTACT

For more information and the full series of Service Delivery Guidelines - Preparing for the Chinese visitor, see www.tourism.sa.gov.au