Welcoming Chinese guests

Food and beverage checklist

NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

AUSTRALIA'S NORTHERN TERRITORY

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Food and beverage checklist

Chinese cuisine is diverse, with more than 50 regional styles, so there is no single 'Chinese food. Many Chinese visitors enjoy eating Chinese dishes at least once a day, but they also like to try local dishes, market offering, seafood, and international cuisines such as Italian. Enhance dining experiences by offering familiar options alongside local choices, providing translated menus, chopsticks and condiments, hot water and tea service, banquet-style dining, and accessible payment methods to ensure a welcoming and memorable experience.

Menu and meal offerings

- Include a Chinese-inspired dish on your menu.
- Simplify menus with clear descriptions, simple language, and highlight local produce.
- Provide Chinese language menus where possible, including buffet signage.
- Offer sampler or shared plates (seafood platters, tasting boards) with side plates.
- If cooking meat to order, show images or translations of doneness levels (rare, medium, well done).

Dining experience

- Expect guests to prefer earlier dining times, faster service (meals within 10 minutes of seating), and shorter meal duration (under 1 hour).
- Be prepared for livelier/noisier dining environments.
- Provide chopsticks and Chinese soup spoons.
- Offer condiments such as soy sauce, chilli sauce, Tabasco, or fresh chopped chilli.
- For packed lunches, consider instant cup noodles or other hot meal alternatives rather than cold sandwiches.

Drinks and toasting culture

- Offer hot or warm water, not just iced water.
- Ensure access to hot water stations for tea thermoses or instant noodles.
- Toasting is customary – provide both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink options.
- Chinese visitors may be unfamiliar with Australian wine and beer varieties – offer samples and simple explanations.

Service and communication

- Provide simple explanations of local produce (types of fish, cuts of meat, wine varietals).
- Where possible, have Mandarin-speaking staff or provide translated key service phrases.
- Use international "no smoking" signage to make clear that smoking is not permitted in dining areas.
- Recognise that sharing meals builds relationships – creating opportunities for group dining adds value.

Payments

- Mobile Wallets: Enable Alipay and WeChat Pay via Australian payment providers (e.g. Windcave, Adyen).
- Ensure EFTPOS terminals accept UnionPay credit/debit cards.

Tip

Even small touches such as chopsticks, hot water, or signage in Simplified Chinese show cultural respect and create memorable dining experiences.