

# QINGDAO CHINA EXPAT GUIDE

## Basic Guide to Pronouncing and Understanding the Sounds of Pinyin

### 1. Pinyin consonants that can begin a syllable

**b** is pronounced like **b** as in "bell", but is pronounced more lightly than in English.

**c** is pronounced like **ts** as in "hats".

**ch** is pronounced like **ch** as in "chalk", with the tongue curled back somewhat.

**d** is pronounced like **d** as in "day", but is pronounced more lightly than in English.

**f** is pronounced like **f** as in "five".

**g** is pronounced like **g** as in "go", but is pronounced more lightly than in English.

**h** is pronounced like **h** as in "how", but is pronounced further back in the throat, and is accompanied by a stronger puff of air than in English.

**j** is pronounced like **j** as in "jeep", with the tongue forward.

**k** is pronounced like **k** as in "kite", but is accompanied by a stronger puff of air than in English.

**l** is pronounced like **l** as in "like".

**m** is pronounced like **m** as in "month".

**n** is pronounced like **n** as in "nine".

**p** is pronounced like **p** as in "pen", but is accompanied by a stronger puff of air than in English.

**q** is pronounced like **ch** as in "cheep", with the tongue forward.

**r** is pronounced with the tongue curled back as for **l** in "laugh", but with the tip of the tongue not touching the roof of the mouth.

**s** is pronounced like **s** as in "sand", but is pronounced more strongly than in English.

**sh** is pronounced like **sh** as in "shop", with the tongue curled back somewhat.

**t** is pronounced like **t** as in "ten", but is accompanied by a stronger puff of air than in English.

**w** is pronounced like **w** as in "wood".

**x** is pronounced like **sh** as in "sheep", with the tongue forward.

**y** is pronounced like **y** as in "yes"; except that the syllable **yi** is pronounced like **ee** as in "bee".

**z** is pronounced like **ds** as in "weeds".

**zh** is pronounced like **j** as in "jam", with the tongue curled back somewhat.

### 2. Pinyin vowels, and combinations of letters that can end a syllable

**a** is pronounced like **a** as in "father".

**ai** is pronounced like **i** as in "fine".

**an** is pronounced like **an** as in "fan".

**ang** is pronounced like **ong** as in "song".

**ao** is pronounced like **ow** as in "how".

**e** is pronounced like **e** as in French "le"; except after **i** or **y**, where it is pronounced like **e** as in "yet".

**ê** is pronounced like **e** as in "yet".

**ei** is pronounced like **a** as in "late."

**en** is pronounced somewhat like **en** as in "ten".

**eng** is pronounced like **ung** as in "rung".

**er** is pronounced somewhat like **er** as in "mermaid"; **r** is pronounced with the tongue curled back somewhat.

**i** After **b, d, j, l, m, n, p, q, t** and **x**, the letter **i** is pronounced like **ee** as in "bee".

However, after **c, ch, r, s, sh, z** and **zh**, the letter **i** is not pronounced like **ee** as in "bee".

Instead, after the initial consonant has been pronounced, the position of the tongue remains unchanged, and a voiced sound is made. For example, **si** is pronounced like **s** as in "so", immediately followed by **z** as in "zoo".

**ia** is pronounced like **yaw** as in "yawn".

**ian** is pronounced like "yen".

**iang** is pronounced like **y** as in "yes", followed by **ong** as in "song".

**iao** is pronounced like **yow** as in "yowl".

**ie** is pronounced like **ye** as in "yet".

**in** is pronounced like **in** as in "pin".

**ing** is pronounced like **ing** as in "sing".

**iong** is pronounced like **y** as in "yes", followed by **o** as in "note", followed by **ng** as in "ring".

**iu** is pronounced like **yo** as in "yodel".

**o** is pronounced somewhat like **o** as in "hot", but with the mouth not as wide open.

**ong** is pronounced like **o** as in "note", followed by **ng** as in "ring".

**ou** is pronounced like **o** as in "note".

**u** is pronounced like **oo** as in "too"; except after **j, q, x** and **y**, where it is pronounced like **u** as in French "une".

**ua** is pronounced like **wa** as in "watch".

**uai** is pronounced like "why".

**uan** is pronounced like **wan** as in "wander"; except after **j, q, x** and **y**, where it is pronounced like **u** as in French "une", followed by **wen** as in "went".

**uang** is pronounced like **w** as in "wet", followed by **ong** as in "song".

**ue** is pronounced like **üe** (see below).

**ui** is pronounced like "way".

**un** is pronounced like **oo** as in "moon", followed by **un** as in "under"; except after **j, q, x** and **y**, where it is pronounced like French "une".

**uo** is pronounced like **w** as in "wet"; followed by a sound pronounced somewhat like **o** as in "hot", but with the mouth not as wide open.

**ü** is pronounced like **u** as in French "une".

**üe** is pronounced like **u** as in French "une", followed by **we** as in "went".