

Character Builder 您好嗎？

The basic unit of the Chinese language is the *zi* (字), i.e. a Chinese word. Each *zi* has a written form (called a character, made up of strokes), a sound (made up of consonant and vowel) and a meaning (or multiple meanings). When we speak or write Chinese, we string *zi* together to form terms, phrases and sentences.

In Putonghua (the spoken form of Modern Standard Chinese) each *zi* is pronounced in one of four tones:

1st tone: 1 = diacritical mark — pitch: 5 to 5, highest prolonged

2nd tone: 2 = diacritical mark / pitch: 3 to 5, middle to high

3rd tone: 3 = diacritical mark U pitch: 2 to 1 to 4, low to lowest to high

4th tone: 4 = diacritical mark \ pitch: 5 to 1, highest to lowest)

To pronounce each *zi* below, follow its pinyin and the given tone number. Light-sound words, which have no definite pitch, carry no diacritical mark and are marked by 0.

This week: Words about Chinese recipes

蛋

Putonghua pronunciation: *dan4*

Cantonese pronunciation: *daan6*

Meanings: egg

乾貝煎蛋 (*gan1 bei4 jian1 dan4* = dried-scallops~fry~eggs = conpoy omelette): 浸 (*jin4*, soak) handful of conpoy until soft, pull into 幼絲 (*you4 si1* = fine~silk = thin shreds). Beat 黃 (*huang2* = yellow = yolks) and 白 (*bai2* = whites) of four 雞蛋 (*ji1 dan4* = chicken-eggs), mix with 油 (*you2*, oil), 鹽 (*yan2*, salt), 酒 (*jiu3*, wine)

On medium~fire, heat oil in 鑊 (*huo4* = Cantonese “wok”), lightly 炒 (*chao3*, stir-fry) conpoy, pour in eggs to form round shape. 煎 (*jian1*, light-fry) on both sides till slightly 焦黃 (*jiao1 huang2* = charred~yellow = browned) at edges. Serve hot/warm.

Patisserie sells 蛋糕 (*dan4 gao1* = egg~pudding = cakes).

Intruder is told: “滾蛋!” (*gun3 dan4* = roll~egg = “Get out!”)