



Survival Phrases S1

Cantonese Restaurant: Part 1 - Seating

11

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Traditional Chinese

幾多
三
四
一
位
個
人

Jyutping

gei2 do1
saam1
sei3
jat1
wai2
go3
jan4

English

how many
three
four
one
seat; (formal) measure word for person
measure word
person

Vocabulary

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Traditional	Jyutping	English
幾多	gei2 do1	how many
三	saam1	three (3)
四	sei3	four (4)
一	jat1	one (1)
個	go3	(measure word)
人	jan4	people
位	wai2	measure word for people

Vocabulary Sample Sentences

幾多位？ 佢有三個細路。	gei2 do1 wai2 ? keoi5 jau5 saam1 go3 sai3 lou6。	How many people are you? He has three children.
我有四個細路。 佢俾咗一本書我。	ngo5 jau5 sei3 go3 sai3 lou6。 keoi5 bei2 zo2 jat5 bun2 syu1 ngo5。	I have four children. He gave me a book.
我有兩個姊姊。	ngo5 jau5 loeng5 go3 ze4 ze1。	I have two older sisters.
我哋都係中國人。	ngo5 dei6 dou1 hai6 zung1 gwok3 jan4	We are all Chinese.
三位。	saam1 wai2。	We're three.

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Grammar Points

When entering a restaurant in Hong Kong, someone will most likely ask you "How many people?" (幾多位？ - gei2 do1 wai2) The first part of this sentence is made up of the word for "how many," which in Cantonese is 幾多 (gei2 do1). The measure word for "people" is 位 (wai2) and literally means "seat."

You can simply respond to this question by replacing 幾多 with a number followed by the measure word for "people" (位).

The numbers 1-5 in Cantonese are:

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Number	Cantonese	Jyutping
1	一	jat1
2	二	ji6
3	三	saam1
4	四	sei3
5	五	ng5

Cultural Insight

Quick Tip

Table manners are rather relaxed in Hong Kong, although there are a few rules you may want to follow. If you are unsure, you can watch what others do and emulate their behavior. Wait to be told where to sit since there is often a seating plan. Wait for the others to start eating before you begin eating. Food is served on a "Lazy Susan," or revolving tray. Also, it is considered a compliment to burp, so let loose.