

@ American Restaurants

Karen in America

By Karen Zhang



在中国的餐馆点餐对我们来说已经驾轻就熟了，可是在美国点餐也是很有讲究的，那一连串可能从来都没听过的关于食物的名词，可能一早就已经让你昏了头脑。让我们来看看Karen是怎么说的吧。

A lot of Chinese friends ask me about what I think of dining at American restaurants. To tell the truth, I'm more used to the taste of food than the questions posed by the servers. (note: to equalize [使相等, 划一] gender in America, people who serve you call themselves servers instead of waiters or waitresses) As soon as you are seated in a restaurant, a server will come to you and ask: *Hi! How're you doing today?*

Of course, you'll answer fine even if you had a terrible day. Then the server will ask you: *What would you like to drink?*

In my earlier restaurant experiences, I thought everyone had to order a drink. But I was wrong. The only free drink in almost all restaurants in America is iced water. So if you don't want to spend money on drinks, just ask for water. You'll certainly get *plenty* (along with blocks of ice).

At an American style restaurant, you'll find salads, sandwiches and burgers are the staples [主食]. When you order, be prepared for a chain of questions. This is one of the conversations from my early restaurant

experience.

Me: I'd like to have a cup of soup and caesar salad. For entrée [进入, 进来], I'll have a quarter pound burger on grill.

Server: OK. For soup, we have Chicken Noodle, Italian Wedding, French Onion, Broccoli [花椰菜] Cheese and Beef Chili. Which one do you want?

Me: Chicken Noodle, please. (I didn't catch what the server said as she jabbered [快而不清楚地说话] the soup list in one breath. I picked the first one that echoed the loudest in my pea brain.)

Server: What kind of dressing for your salad?

Me: What do you have? (The server probably knew I was foreign as local Americans seem to just pop out a favorite on cue [恰好在这个时候].)

Server: We have Honey Ranch, Italian, Thousand Island, Blue Cheese, Strawberry Vinaigrette and Creamy Caesar.

Me: Thousand Island. (I only recognized this one because I saw it sold in China.)

Server: OK. How would you like your burger done?

Me: Medium.

Server: Your dinner comes with two sides. What would you like?

Me: What is side? (I had never heard of this phrase.)

Server: We have cole slaw, green beans, home fries, mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, apple sauce and hush puppies.

Me: Green beans and baked potatoes, please. (Play it safe, choose the names you know.)

For those who are smarter than me but yet have no idea about what "sides" are, it means side dishes.

Now you're almost there—ready to enjoy a quiet dinner, except your server will return a few more times to make sure you're satisfied. After all, he/she expects you to leave a good tip for their services. Bon appetite! 🍴