Mandarin

Acing Your Language Class
Tips & Best Practices

Student Spotlight

Eating Authentically in Boston
Restaurant recommendations and recipes to try

Language of the Month
Film Discussion

Study Abroad

Add to Your Playlist and Watchlist
Songs and Movies

Literature and Authors

The peach and plum do not speak, yet a path is born beneath them. — Sima Qian

táo lǐ bù yán, xià zì chéng xī — sī mǎ qiān
The ERC offers tutoring for Mandarin! Peer Tutoring provides BU students the opportunity to meet with fellow students and ask questions related to their course material. Our tutors are here to guide, encourage, and support you in your learning process.

The ERC also offers Language Link for Mandarin! Language Link hosts several informal, half-hour discussions each week. Sessions are led by a native speaker and are offered at three different levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced.
STUDY ABROAD

Programs Offered

- China Hong Kong Polytechnic University Exchange
- China Shanghai Chinese Language and Culture
- China Shanghai Internship
- China Shanghai Internship (summer)

Visit the Study Abroad website to learn more!
Spotlight

Meet our Mandarin Chinese Language Link Leader, Jinge. She is currently a third-year student in CAS, studying political science. On campus, Jinge is also a member of BU's Debate Society, the Allocations Board, and the Brazilian Jujitsu Club.
What tips do you have for people learning Mandarin?
I think language learning is less about factual knowledge and more about your curiosity for that language and how you use what you learn. You can't master or get comfortable with a language by studying for an exam. You need the desire to have a conversation with someone or to watch a TV show in that language. When you're constantly thinking about how you can use the words and phrases you just learned, that language becomes a part of your life.

What do you enjoy most about Language Link and being a Language Link leader?
The thing I love the most about Language Link is the connections we build here. We learn about each other’s lives and cultural backgrounds through our sessions together.

What’s your favorite aspect of Chinese culture?
My favorite aspect of Chinese culture is the Chinese writing system, hanzi. If you're proficient in Chinese, you feel a connection with every Chinese word you see. In hanzi, there’s no alphabet to spell words, and every word is unique. We have over 20,000 ways to combine a total of 8 strokes to make words. Once you become familiar with the Chinese writing system, every word you see invokes a particular mental image.

What advice do you have for someone who's considering Language Link or Peer Tutoring for the first time?
Language Link and Peer Tutoring at BU offer a very relaxed environment where we can learn from each other, so first, relax and don’t be nervous. Once you do that, be prepared before each session, especially your first one. Set expectations on what you want to get out of a session, and communicate with your Language Link leader or peer tutor. We’re here to help, and we’d love to know how we can make the most of our time together.
Qingming Festival (清明节) is one of the most important traditional festivals observed by Chinese and Chinese diaspora communities around the world. Its history traces back over 2,500 years to the Zhou dynasty. It was first observed to commemorate the death of Jie Zitui (介子推), an aristocrat who died to avoid a career in politics amid feudal wars. There’s no definitive translation of this holiday, but the most widely recognized is “Tomb Sweeping Day,” which is an fitting description of what people do on this day. In literary translations, it’s sometimes referred to as “Pure Brightness Day,” “Clear-and-Bright Feast,” or “Mourning Day.” All of these translations elucidate some aspects of the festival. During the Qingming Festival, families visit their ancestral cemetery to make ritual offerings (贡品) of fruits and incense.
Qingming Festival is observed in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand. Tomb Sweeping Day is also considered the best time of the year to go hiking and explore nature.

This day is often compared to Día de Los Muertos in Mexico and All Souls' Day in Roman Catholicism as they all commemorate the dead and inspire the living.

There are no major regional differences in how Qingming Festival is observed, but in terms of food, there are always some subtle regional variations. Sweet green rice balls (青团) are usually served in southern China, while the fried dough twist (馓子) is a tradition of the north.
Foods for Qinming Festival
- Qingtuan (Sweet Green Rice Ball)
- Sangza (deep-fried noodles in a twisted pyramid shape)

**Tomato & Egg Noodle Soup**

This soup is well loved by people in almost all regions of China. In winter, many people have it for breakfast to warm themselves up. It can also be served for lunch and dinner.
TRY BOBA

Gong cha
Known for: Cheese Foam Top

Pin Ming
Known for: Peach Milktea

Tiger Sugar
Known for: Black Sugar & Bubbles

Teazzi Tea Shop
Known for: Taro Milktea

Check out these boba shops in Boston!
RESTAURANTS • BOSTON •

MEET FRESH
This dessert chain specializes in soft taro balls and herbal jelly. Find Meet Fresh in Allston or Chinatown.

LAMEI HOT POT
An authentic Sichuan hot pot (火锅) restaurant in Brookline. They have a wide range of meat and vegetables, but be careful with their spicy soup base! They also have halal options available.

WINSOR DIM SUM CAFE
This is a go-to spot for dim sum in Chinatown. Be sure to try their Har Kau (虾饺), steamed egg custard buns (奶黄包), and Sampan congee (艇仔粥).

WEN'S YUNNAN NOODLE AND RAMEN
A great place for Chinese rice noodles. Don’t forget to add their special peppercorn oil to your rice noodle soup!

XIANG'S HUNAN KITCHEN
An authentic and delicious destination for Chinese cuisine in Boston. It is known for its high quality, fresh ingredients.

MALA RESTAURANT
A busy Chinese cafe focusing on spiced-to-order Sichuan fare in a cozy, contemporary setting.
PLACES TO VISIT IN BOSTON

Boston's Chinatown

T stations: Tufts Medical Center (Orange Line) & Boylston (Green Line)

Chinatown is a small but lively Boston neighborhood that celebrates the Chinese community. From dumpling houses and dim sum palaces to bakeries and food markets, there is so much to experience!

Museum of Fine Arts

465 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115

Boston's Museum of Fine Arts houses one of the best Chinese arts collections outside of China. BU community members enjoy free admission to the MFA!
Watchlist

1. Chungking Express (重庆森林)
   A 1994 comedy-drama directed by Wong Kar-Wai. The movie is almost 30 years old, but its themes of loneliness and finding one’s identity still resonate today. Available via Mugar Library

2. Love Is Not Blind (失恋天)
   A wedding planner breaks up with her cheating boyfriend and finds true love with the help of a colleague. Fun fact: this movie has been given as a diplomatic gift from China to many countries. Available via Dailymotion

3. In the Mood for Love (花样年华)
   A classic romantic drama directed by Wong Kar-Wai. Set in 1960s Hong Kong, the movie explores the relationship between two people whose spouses are having an affair with each other. Available via HBO Max

4. Infernal Affairs (无间道)
   This action thriller centers on two police officers’ undercover operations. The Academy Award-winning film, The Departed, is an American remake of this movie. Available via Mugar Library
Watch *Guangzhou Dream Factory*, available through BU Libraries, then join the ERC, CineMAfriq, and BU Libraries for a discussion with special guest speakers, Wen-hao Tien, Assistant Director of the Center for the Study of Asia (Pardee School of Global Studies) and Eric Schmidt, Assistant Director (African Students Center).

Event is open to current BU students, faculty, and staff.

**Monday, April 25 @ 4:00 PM ET | Register via Zoom**

*Guangzhou Dream Factory*

Immigration, globalization, Chinese factories and African dreams...This documentary weaves stories of Africans chasing "Made in China" dreams with a compelling critique of 21st century global capitalism.

**Guangzhou Dream Factory** follows a filmmaker's journey from Ghana to China and back to Africa, giving viewers a rare glimpse of African aspirations while also providing fresh perspectives on Chinese and African economic development.

**Boston University** Libraries and Educational Resource Center
Check out BU Libraries' Resource Guide for Chinese Language and Literature!
Listen to our Mandarin Language of the Month Spotify playlist by our Language Link Leader, Jinge!

Some other songs include:

- Qingming by Interesting Music (2020)
- Qingming Rain by Vae (2009)
- New hit songs of 2022

Click on the song names to listen!
Activities

Make a kite

Flying kites is another tradition related to Qingming. Every year around this time, more and more kites appear in Chinese parks as the weather gets warmer. Here’s a video tutorial on how to make a kite!

Try a puzzle

Test your vocabulary with this crossword puzzle or this crossword for intermediate students.

Fun Fact!

Qingming Festival is less sad than funeral but less happy than All Souls Day in Mexico.