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Chaozhou










tones

Chaozhou is a tonal language ('tonal quality' refers to the raising and lowering of pitch on certain syllables). Tones in Chaozhou fall on vowels, on **n** and on **m** when it appears as a word on its own. The same combination of sounds pronounced with different tones can have a very different meaning.

Chaozhou has eight tones. In our pronunciation guide they've been simplified to seven tones, indicated with accents or underscores on the letters, as shown in the table below for the vowel 'a'. Note that we haven't indicated the tone on **m** when it appears as a word on its own – in all these instances it carries a low falling tone.

Higher tones involve tightening the vocal cords to get a higher sounding pitch, while lower tones are made by relaxing the vocal cords to get a lower pitch. Bear in mind that the tones are relative to the natural vocal range of the speaker, eg high tones are pronounced at the top of one's vocal range. Note also that some tones slide up or down in pitch.

| high flat & short high flat ā | high falling â | high rising á | mid flat a | low falling à | low falling-rising ǎ | low flat & short low flat a |
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