

LESSON NOTES

Survival Phrases S2 #12

Restaurant 1

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KANJI

1. いらっしゃいませ。
2. 何名様ですか？

KANA

1. いらっしゃいませ。
2. なんめいさまでですか？

ROMANIZATION

1. Irasshaimase.
2. Nan-mei sama desu ka?

ENGLISH

1. Welcome.
2. How many people in your party?

VOCABULARY

Kanji	Kana	Romaji	English
何	なに	nani	what

様	さま	sama	(pol) Mr or Mrs
二	に	ni	two
名	めい	mei	people

SAMPLE SENTENCES

何名様ですか。 <i>Nan mei-sama desu ka.</i> How many people in your party?	お客様、ご注文は？ <i>O-kyaku-sama, go-chūmon wa?</i> Are you ready to order, sir/ma'am?
これを二個ください。 <i>Kore o ni-ko kudasai.</i> Two of these, please.	大人二名、子供一名。 <i>Otona ni-mei, kodomo ichi-mei.</i> Two adults and one child.

GRAMMAR

Language Tip

When you first walk into a restaurant, most likely you'll hear, *Irasshaimase*, which in Japanese is the polite greeting you hear when customers enter a place of business.

Then they will ask you, "How many people in your party?" which in Japanese is *Nanmei sama desu ka?* *Nan* is one way of saying "What." In this case, it means, "How many" because it's followed by a people counter *mei*. *Sama* is an honorific word we use after *mei*. *Desu* is a copula roughly meaning, "to be." And *ka* is a particle that turns a sentence into an interrogative. Altogether, *Nanmei sama desu ka?* literally means, "How many people is?" or in this context, "How many people are in your party?"

To answer this question, simply say the number of people in your group, followed by *mei*. For example, you would say, *ni mei* to mean, "two people." Remember, the word *sama* is an honorific form, so you should never use it when referring to yourself or your party. I would never call myself *Sachiko-san*, or Ms. Sachiko. To say "four people" you say, *yon mei*. Now these aren't full sentences, but they will suffice when answering the question, *Nanmei sama desu ka?*

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Avoiding Crowds and Saving Time in Japanese Restaurants

Tip #1

Now it's time for Sachiko's Secret. When I'm short on time or the restaurant is noisy, when I enter, I simply hold up my fingers to indicate how many people in my party. This helps avoid confusion. Even if you are fluent in Japanese, it's sometimes so loud in the restaurant the wait staff can't hear you. If you hold up your fingers, the wait staff can easily see how many places you need. Sometimes they won't come to the door to greet you. They will just smile and point to the seat(s) you can take. This saves time when I'm on a short lunch break.

Tip #2

Here's a tip on how to avoid crowded restaurants. If you're in a busy business district, there will be long lines for lunch and dinner. Noon to 1:30 PM is the typical lunchtime for Japanese corporate employees, and 7 PM to 9 PM is the common dinnertime. So try to avoid those hours. If you must, go in small groups. If you're in a party of four or more, you will most likely wait for a while until enough seats open up. Generally, if your group is four or more, you should try to get reservations. As for closing time, many restaurants stop taking food orders at around 9:30 PM or 10 PM so you should get in before that.

We'll go over the numbers 1 to 10 in an upcoming lesson, but in case you need it urgently, here they are: *ichi, ni, san, yon (shi), go, roku, nana (shichi), hachi, kyu, juu*. Be sure to check our lesson on the numbers 1 to 10 to get the pronunciation and intonation right.