

Chongqing

Chongqing is a port city with the largest municipal area and population in China. It is situated in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River at the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing Rivers in southwest China. With an area of 82,400 square kilometers (31,800 square miles), Chongqing shares borders with the provinces of Hubei, Hunan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Shaanxi. Besides the Han who form the majority of its total population of 30.9 million, numerous ethnic groups reside in Chongqing, including Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Qiang, You and Tujia.

Today, Chongqing is a modern city, China's fourth municipality after Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin. Within its borders Chongqing encompasses a wealth of water reserves, mineral resources, dense forests, and abundant flora and fauna. The focal point of the unique Yangtze Three Gorges Dam, Chongqing is a tourist attraction as well as a commercial city.

Tourist attractions

Chongqing attracts visitors from home and abroad for its cultural heritage and other tourist attractions. The city is the starting point for the Yangtze River Cruise, which explores the stunning scenery of the Three Gorges. Other attractions include the Dazu Rock Carvings, valuable works of art carved during the Ninth Century, Gold Buddhist Mountain, a rich repository of diverse animals and plants; and Fishing Town, one of three ancient battlefields in China. Ancient Ci Qi Kou village lures tourists to linger in its streets to buy handicraft souvenirs.

Chongqing and surrounding areas are full of tourism resources. The most famous is the Three Gorges, a scenic area along Yangtze river. The 200-km long area is the most visited canyon in China. Besides its gorgeous natural scene, it is also a culturally rich area. Other tourism sites include Dazu Rock Carvings, mainly Buddhist themes, it was carved from the Tang Dynasty, now belongs to UNESCO World Heritage. City sightseeing is also a famous part of Chongqing tourism. Historical sites in World War II are located in the metropolitan area. In the surrounding areas, Fishing town is an important battlefield event in world history. In 1243, Mongol prince Mongke Khan was defeated and died here and it stopped the Mongols' expansion in Europe and Africa because of turmoil after his death.

Chongqing is famous for its hot Sichuan cuisine and world-famous hotpot dishes. Street vendors as well as restaurants feature exciting spicy delicacies for the adventurers.

Servicing western China, Chongqing provides convenient water, land, and air transportation. Hundreds of star-ranked hotels provide excellent facilities and services. Chongqing is ready to be the pilot in the Western China Development to usher in more investors and visitors.

Development

The central government has recently embarked on an economic policy that is aimed to develop western China – China Western Development strategy. As part of this new plan, the central government has heavily invested in Chongqing's infrastructure and has made a plan for

Chongqing to become the "Gateway to the West". Located at the head of the reservoir behind the Three Gorges Dam, Chongqing is planned to be the beachhead for the development of the western part of the country. With the completion of the Three Gorges project, its reservoir will bring ocean going ships to the quays of Chongqing. By some counts already the world's biggest city, Chongqing and its population of 32 million are busy reinventing themselves. The hope is that this gritty fogbound megalopolis can do for China what Chicago did for the United States in the 19th century: open up the interior, shift the country's centre of gravity west, and kick-start an economic superpower. Massive public works are currently under way in the city, including overhead and surface commuter rail lines connecting the many districts of the city. Foreign investment in the city is growing at a fast pace. Chongqing is enlarging its commercial sector. New development zones such as the Chongqing New North Zone (CNNZ) located north of the downtown district have been established to form Chongqing's modern 21st century industrial base.

Transportation

Meanwhile, the transportation system in the metropolitan area is also being developed to modern standards. Due to its hilly geography and Yangtze and Jialing rivers which run through it, ground transportation in the city requires an unusual number of bridges and tunnels, which increases cost dramatically. However, the highway network around the city and to nearby satellite towns is almost completed. One unique form of transportation in the city are the cable cars which are suspended over the rivers. Recently, the Chongqing metro system was completed and entered service in June 2005.

Resource

Historically, Chongqing has been a major trading inland port, transporting goods from the southwestern provinces to eastern China. During the Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945), Chongqing was transformed into a heavy industrial city, especially the military industry which continued to thrive for decades after 1949. Since the 1980s, many of these military industry enterprises have undergone reforms and turned from producing military goods to mostly civilian products for survival and growth.

Chongqing is rich in natural resources, with more than 40 kinds of minerals. Its coal reserves are estimated to be 4.8 billion tonnes. The Chuandong Natural Gas Field in Chongqing is China's largest inland production base of natural gas, with deposits of 270 billion m³, accounting for more than one-fifth of China's total. Chongqing also contains China's largest reserve of strontium, and China has the 2nd largest reserve of the mineral in the world. Important industries in Chongqing include mining, iron, steel, aluminum, military, auto, motorcycle, chemical, textiles, machinery, electronics, building materials, food processing, retail, and tourism. Chongqing is also home to Asia's largest aluminum plant – South West Aluminium – which rolled out 213,000 tonnes of finished products in 2004 – for companies engaged in building materials, printing, electrical appliances, aerospace, packaging, and vehicle production. Chongqing's agricultural sector still employs a significant portion of the population. Other than rice, fruits especially oranges are important sources of income for the farmers. In the past 25 years, surplus labor resulted a huge number of farmers to migrate to the relatively more developed industrial centers of southern and eastern China for employment opportunities, thus making Chongqing one of the biggest labor export areas in China.

Geography and Climate

The climate is semi-tropical, with the two-season monsoonal variations typical of South Asia. It has hot summers, and the temperature can be as high as 40 C (102F). It is known as one of the "three furnaces" of China, the other two being Wuhan and Nanjing. In the winter, it is wet and warm. While it seldom snows, most days are foggy.

The city is very hilly and is the only major metropolitan area in China without significant numbers of bicycles.

The typically severe fogs were protective during World War II as the city was periodically bombarded by Japanese aircraft — their aircrew were unable to effectively target their bombs using optical bombsights. The prevalent black tile roofs of buildings would also tend to blend into the ground colors and so became an effective form of camouflage.

As is true of most of China, the city often experiences severe air pollution, largely as a result of the burning of coal without pollution controls. Coal is burned both for industrial processes and for the production of electric power. Also, due to the surrounding mountains, a lack of wind makes the air pollution in the city even worse.