

NOTES FOR VISITORS TO CHINA:

ChongQing 重庆

This document is intended to provide general information for visitors to Chongqing, China.



Chongqing -重庆

重 chóng ("again")

庆 qìng ("celebrate")

i.e. "double celebration"

What is Chongqing like?

Modern day Chongqing

In 1997, Chongqing was made a provincial level municipality directly under the central government. There are only three other municipalities in China: Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin. Chongqing boasts the largest area and population of these four.

Chongqing municipality covers an area of 83,000 square kilometres with a population of over 31 million.

Chongqing City itself is home to around 7 million of these residents, whilst the rest live in the surrounding cities and rural areas. The city has four main centres: Jie Fang Bei – Chongqing's 'downtown' area – on the peninsula; Sha Ping Ba on the north bank; Jiangbei – the city's newest centre – also on the north bank; and Nan Ping on the south bank.

What is it famous for?

Hot pot – Chongqing's food is very spicy and the most famous meal of all is hot pot. A very sociable way to dine; groups sit around a bubbling pot of oil, spice and water. Raw ingredients are added and within a short time they're ready for eating. Most foreigners are a little hesitant to start off with but if they can handle the spice they are soon big fans and telling everyone back home about their hot pot experience. The best place to enjoy hot pot is on Nan Bin Lu, the long street of restaurants and bars along the river.

'Mountain City' and 'Fog City' – Chongqing has gained these two nicknames within China. The fog can make Chongqing very atmospheric especially at sunrise. The mountains are a pleasant way to escape the busy city centre and Nanshan, among others, is just a short taxi ride away. All of them provide great views of the city.

Hot temperatures – Chongqing is known as one of the 'three furnaces' of China because of its hot summer temperatures.

Beautiful girls – As many guidebooks will tell you, Chongqing girls are renowned for being the most beautiful girls in China!

'Bang-Bang' men and women – All around Chongqing, men and women can be seen with thick bamboo poles slung across their shoulders and big baskets on either end. They hang around the docks, the markets and the bus stations waiting for goods to carry up the steep slopes of this mountain port. You may be interested to check what the bang-bang men are carrying today. Is it chickens or fridges or somebody's grocery shopping?

How's the weather in Chongqing? What should I expect?

Temperature range: 6°C to 40°C
Annual precipitation: 1000mm to 1400mm

As is true of most of China, severe air pollution is frequently present, largely as a result of local industries burning coal without pollution controls.

In winter, Chongqing can become quite cold and it often feels harsher because of the moisture in the air. Most houses will not have heating systems but all the top hotels are warmly heated during this time.

In the summer, Chongqing has experienced droughts in recent years which have had a terrible impact on local agriculture. Government and charity programmes are tackling the associated problems but summer is a difficult season for rural Chongqing people.

In the city, all buildings have air-conditioning but remember to still drink plenty of water. The city can get up to about 40°C in the summer months and the tall buildings and mountains keep the heat in.

Practical things to know for your visit

Language

Mandarin Chinese is the official language of China (called Putonghua in Chinese) and is spoken in all formal contexts, as well as in education. Chinese characters are used for writing, though many signs on roads and in shops now also appear in "pinyin", which is the Romanised version of written Chinese. The local Chongqing people have an obvious accent which is different from mandarin but most of them can speak mandarin.

Ni hao (nee how) - Hello Xie xie (shi shia) - Thank you Zai jian (dsai jen) - Goodbye (although 'Bye bye' is probably more common) Wo Shi... (wor sher) - I am... (a simple way to introduce yourself) Mai dan (my dan) – Can I pay the bill please? Wo bu shuo hanyu (wor bu shwor han you-eh) – I don't speak Chinese. Duo shao qian? (Dwoor sh-ow tien) – What does that cost? Yi (ee) - one Er - two San - three Si (sur) - four Wu - five Liu - six Qi (chee) - seven Ba (bah) - eight Jiu - nine Shi (shur or sur in dialect) – ten San Shi Ba – thirty eight (literally three ten eight)

Travel & transport

Transportation from the airport – Chongqing's airport is about 30km from the centre of town. If you are not being picked up by our official driver or by a hotel car pick-up service, ignore the touts in the arrivals hall and go to the taxi rank on the right outside the terminal. It is best to have your destination written down in Chinese but, if not, the staff at the taxi rank usually have lists of hotels in English with their Chinese translations. The staff will advise how much to pay. Try to avoid taxis without metres and make sure the taxi driver turns the metre on when you set off. If you cannot find a taxi with a metre, negotiate the price with the taxi driver before you leave. Depending on what kind of taxi you take the fare into the city should be between ¥80 & ¥120.

Transportation around Chongqing – Taxis are the easiest way to get around. Taxis are metreed and the fare starts at ¥5 (but between 10pm and 6am the fare starts at ¥5.90). You can pick taxis up outside hotels or in the street even late at night. Taxis in Chongqing are substantially cheaper than some of the other large cities in China and certainly cheaper than in the UK. A twenty minute journey will cost around ¥20 (£1.30). Visitors to the city should be aware that it is very difficult to pick up taxis between the hours of 6pm and 6.45pm as all of the taxi drivers change shift at this time.

More travel information is available at:
<http://www.chongqing-life.com/chongqingtransport.htm>

Navigation

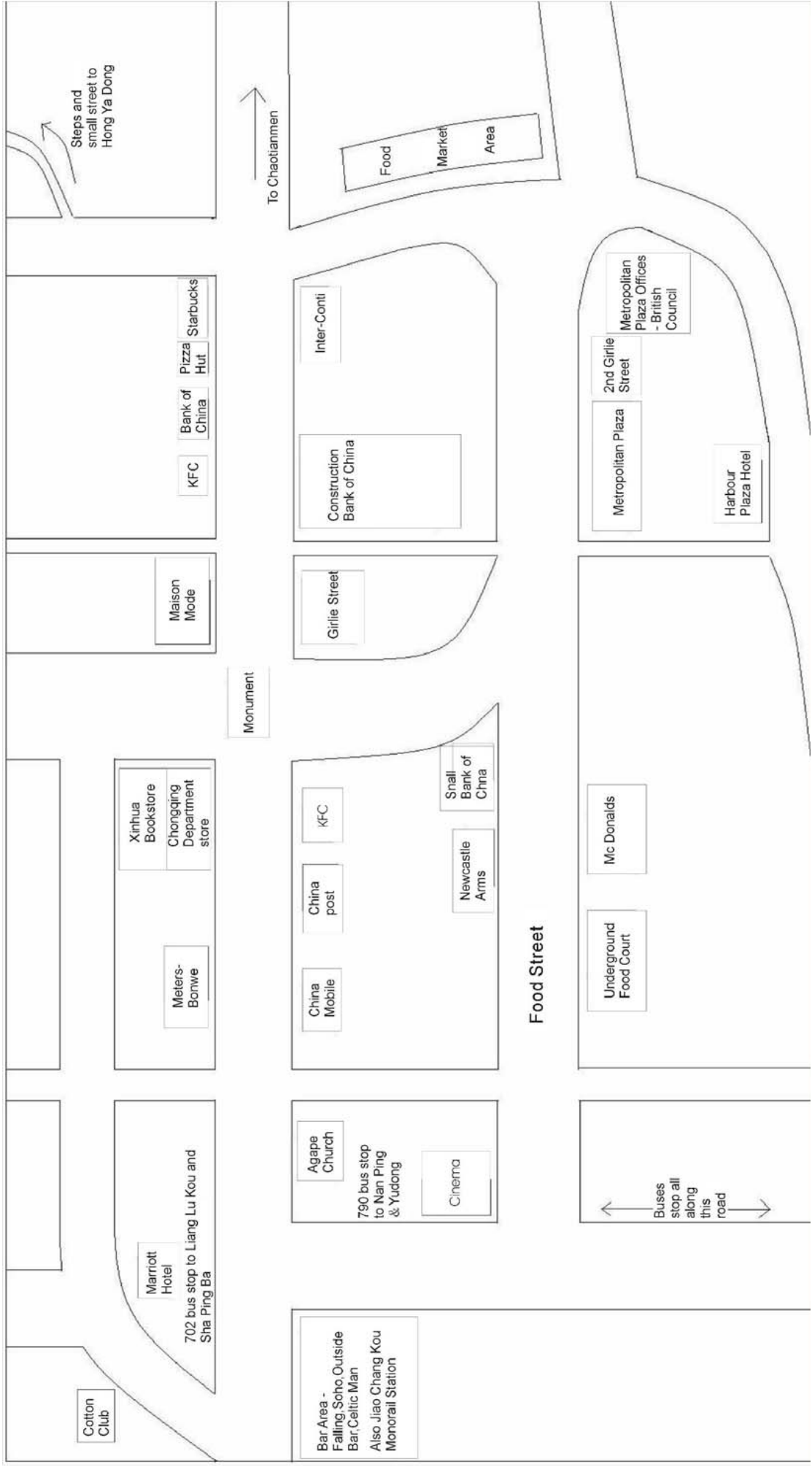
Chongqing is a multi-centre city. Among these centres, Sha Ping Ba, Jiangbei, Jie Fang Bei and Nan Ping are most busy and popular.

Jie Fang Bei (see map on next page) is 'downtown' Chongqing. Located on the peninsula between the two rivers, it is a commercial centre with big name hotels and shops. The British Council office is in this area. The main landmark in Jie Fang Bei is the Clock Tower/Liberation Monument which forms a crossroads, making it easy to describe locations in relation to it.

Sha Ping Ba is on the north bank, to the north-west. It is notorious for its heavy traffic thanks to most universities being situated there along with many of Chongqing's elite schools.

Jiangbei is directly north across the river from downtown Chongqing. The airport and brand new train station are located in this area. Jiangbei is a very new commercial area and has a city centre full of expensive shops and restaurants with many western names such as Starbucks, Pizza Hut, Häagen-Dazs, Mango, French Connection etc.

Nan Ping is on the south bank of the river. Nan Bin Lu and its hot pot restaurants are in the vicinity as well as popular residential neighbourhoods and a good shopping area. It has one of the city's main bus stations.



Cotton Club

Marriott Hotel

702 bus stop to Liang Lu Kou and Sha Ping Ba

Meters-Bonwe

Xinhua Bookstore
Chongqing Department store

Monument

Maison Mode

KFC
Bank of China
Pizza Hut
Starbucks

To Chaotianmen

Bar Area -
Falling, Soho, Outside
Bar, Celtic Man
Also Jiao Chang Kou
Monorail Station

Agape Church

790 bus stop to Nan Ping & Yudong

Cinema

China Mobile

China post

KFC

Newcastle Arms

Small Bank of China

Girle Street

Construction Bank of China

Inter-Conti

Food Market Area

Food Street

Underground Food Court

Mc Donalds

Metropolitan Plaza

2nd Girle Street

Metropolitan Plaza Offices - British Council

Harbour Plaza Hotel

Buses stop all along this road

Steps and small street to Hong Ya Dong

Eating out

Chongqing food is delicious and renowned for being especially spicy – even more so than other Sichuan food. Peppercorns, chillies, ginger and other spices are used enthusiastically. Veer away from the little black balls which are the peppercorns that will make your lips numb.

Here are some handy phrases for your dining experience:

Not spicy – Bu la – 不辣

Medium spicy – Wei la – 微辣

The most spicy – Zui la – 最辣

Fish Tasting Aubergine (recommended) – Yu Xiang Qie Zi– 鱼香茄子

Sweet and Sour Pork – Hong Xiang Rou Si – 红香肉丝

Twice Cooked Meat – Hui Guo Rou – 回锅肉

Egg and Tomato – Xi Hong Shi Chao Ji Dan – 西红柿炒鸡蛋

Chicken with Peanuts – Gong Bao Ji Ding – 宫保鸡丁

Chinese Vegetable (spinach) – Chao Kong Xin Cai – 炒空心菜

Spicy Pork – Shui Zhu Rou Pian – 水煮肉片

Spicy Beancurd (Tofu) – Ma Po Dou Fu – 麻婆豆腐

Lotus Root (recommended) – Chao Ou Ding – 炒藕丁

Dumplings – Jiao Zi or Bao zi – 饺子 or 包子

Egg Fried Rice – Dan Chao Fan – 蛋炒饭

Rice – Mi Fan – 米饭

Rice Noodles – Mi Xian – 米线

Noodles – Mian – 面

Noodles with Spice and Vegetables – Xiao Mian – 小面

Places to eat

- Hot Pot on Nan Bin Road (南滨路)
- Wai Po Qiao (外婆桥) in Maison Mode (美美百货Mei Mei) 1st floor – for Chinese food. Maison Mode is at the Liberation Monument.
- Floors 6 and 7 of Metropolitan Plaza (大都会Dadu Hui) – this is the same building as the British Council. On the 6th and 7th floors, there are many restaurants. The 6th floor includes a food court, a western restaurant, a steak grill, a Chinese grill, and a sushi restaurant. A particularly good Yunnan restaurant and other Chinese restaurants are on the 7th floor
- Food Street (好吃街Hao Chi Jie) has lots of snack stalls and an underground food court. There are many little restaurants all around the area next to hotels serving the dishes mentioned above.
- Jiangbei (江北) – the central shopping area has many good restaurants.

Western restaurants

- There are two Starbucks in downtown – one in Hong Ya Dong (洪崖洞) old town (with great views across the river and Nan Bin Road) and one in the Wang Fu Jin (王府井) department store just off the monument (see map for details). There's another one in Sha Ping Ba, one in Jiangbei and more are planned. The Chinese name for Starbucks is "Xing Ba Ke" (星巴克).
- Pizza Hut (必胜客) – just off the monument if you take the exit with Maison Mode to your left.
- There is a McDonalds (麦当劳) on Food Street.
- "A La Carte" western restaurants are located in all the chain hotels. There are excellent buffets in the Marriott and Harbour Plaza.

Shopping

Markets Chaotianmen is the market area near the docks. It provides both a great atmosphere and a great opportunity to practise bartering skills.

Women's Street (Nv Ren Jie 女人街) is an indoor market with clothes, jewellery and handbags as well as stalls for manicures and beauty treatments. With good haggling, there are absolute bargains to be had.

Traditional Crafts and Souvenirs Ci Qi Kou (磁器口) is the original old town of Chongqing and is located close to Sha Ping Ba. Here you can find a whole host of souvenirs including silk dressing gowns, pashminas, chopsticks, instruments, wood carvings, preserved beef tea and tea pots – all in the traditional setting of an old Chongqing street. There are also some interesting temples and teahouses in this area once you get past the front streets.

Hong Ya Dong (洪崖洞) is a new tourism spot, built in the style of an old town. It has great views of the river, particularly at night. There is a food street, a bar street, traditional shops, a waterfall, restaurants and a theatre with shows about Chongqing's history.

Department stores

Metropolitan Plaza (Da Du Hu 大都会) is in the same building as the British Council. This is Chongqing's first flashy multi-storey shopping centre in which you can buy an extremely wide range of products (mostly branded commodities). However, it is more expensive than most stores in the city and bargaining is not possible.

Maison Mode (Mei Mei Bai Huo 美美百货) is next to the monument and very similar to *Metropolitan Plaza*. It has all the top designers and names from Cartier to Ralph Lauren.

Wang Fu Jin (Wang Foo Gin 王府井) has some great Chinese brands as well as names like Levis. It is more reasonably priced than the previous two examples and is also home to the Jie Fang Bei Starbucks.

Supermarkets Carrefour (Jia Le Fu 家乐福) is a French funded supermarket supplying a wide range of products from food to clothing to electrical appliances. Western products are available here.

New Chongqing Square Cotton Street (Mian Hua Jie 棉花街) Jiefangbei Opening Hours: 09:00 – 22:00

Entertainment

There is plenty to do in Chongqing and the city is always buzzing with activity. For a traditional evening's entertainment, *Sichuan Opera* with the spectacular face-changing and glorious costumes is a good way to see some of the region's culture. At Huguang Exhibition Centre guests can watch Sichuan Opera in authentic imperial settings.

A *river boat cruise* shows off the city's impressive night skyline with the skyscrapers displaying dancing neon lights in the form of musical staves and rhythm beats. The cruises start from Chaotianmen docks.

For modern Chinese culture, head to one of the karaoke bars for an evening's *KTV*. Groups of friends or colleagues gather in a private room and sing Cantonese, Mandarin and western pop songs until the early hours. Haoledi (好乐迪), above the Cotton Club (棉花see map page) is a popular venue but there are many in the bar district as well.

There is *ice-skating* at the indoor rink on the 6th floor of the Metropolitan Plaza Building as well as an arcade and a cinema showing some foreign films. There is a bowling alley on the sports floor,.

Lying 55km northeast of the city, the *Northern Hot Springs* (Bei Wen Quan 北温泉) are in a large park which is the site of a Fifth Century Buddhist temple. The springs have an Olympic-size swimming pool and there are also private rooms with hot baths where you can enjoy the 32°C water coming up to your neck or waist.

Clubs and Bars

Cotton Club is a particular favourite with expats due to its popular dance-floor, theme nights and welcoming atmosphere. There are two resident bands and the clubbers are a cheerful, fun-loving crowd. The music is a mix of all genres.

Falling is an unusual place in that it plays dance and house music and is in the main bar area.

Celtic Man is a more relaxed venue and, with its mellow music, it makes for a good place to chat. Big sports games are played on the big screens as well which is helpful if your visit coincides with a major sporting competition. *Soho* is another popular club and usually very busy. There is also an outside bar where you can sit and enjoy a beer on warm summer evenings and people-watch.

Tourist sites

The tourism industry in Chongqing is quite undiscovered by foreign tourists who usually only spend a day or an afternoon in the city waiting to board one of the Three Gorges cruise ships. Even backpackers haven't picked up on the city's hidden treasures. However, there's plenty to explore in Chongqing and the lack of foreign tourists can make it feel even more special.

The Arhat temple (Luohan Si 罗汉寺) was first built during the Tang Dynasty but later enlarged and dedicated to the Dragon God. In 1942, a Japanese bomb destroyed the entire complex but it was rebuilt quickly and restored to its former glory. The entrance to the temple is up a narrow gully in which more than 400 Song Dynasty statues of Buddha are arranged, protected now by a gallery roof. The temple itself has specific treasures including a mural of Sakyamuni's visit to Myanmar and three bronze statues of the Western Saints. It has also become a major repository for Buddhist scriptures. This is an active, crowded, living temple and there is always a bonfire of candles and offerings in the courtyard.

The *Huguang Guild Hall* (*Hu Guang Hui Guan* 湖广会馆) is a grand building complex found in East Shuimen Street. The complex covers a large area and contains many halls as well as towers for opera shows. The temple was first erected at the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty by immigrants from Huanguan areas (today's Hunan, Hubei, Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces) who had been brought into the area to stop Sichuan's population decline at the time. The building has been repaired and extended many times but the basic style has remained much the same and the towers there are still in active use. Local performances are shown daily including the famous 'face changing' of Sichuan Opera.

People's Square (*Ren Min Guang Chang* 人民广场) is a pleasant place to people-watch and relax. Trees line the marble square and fountains cool down local residents on hot summer days. All day and for much of the night, the square is humming with people, walking, sitting, chatting and just soaking up the atmosphere in a uniquely Chinese way: just walking, doing very little but enjoying the day. At one end of the Square, the newly renovated *People's Hall* is a fine, unique and neat oriental structure. In 1987, it was placed second in the China section of the *History of Comparative Architecture*, published in the UK. Built in June 1951, the whole building is composed of an auditorium and three accompanying buildings: the east, the south and north which feature large green glazed roof tiles, red colonnades and white balustrades. At the other end of the square is the not-to-be-missed *Three Gorges Museum*.

Chaotianmen Square (朝天门) is the best spot to see where the differently coloured Jialing and Yangtze Rivers meet. The picture of Chongqing on the title page shows this well.

Nearby the *Urban Planning Museum* (*Gui Hua Zhan Lan Guan* 规划展览馆) proudly displays the local government's extensive plans for the development on the city and is situated at the top of the steps at Chaotianmen docks. There is an impressive city model of what it is hoped the city will soon look like.

Hong Ya Dong (洪崖洞) and *Ci Qi Kou* (磁器口) Old towns have already been described in the shopping section of this document.

Eling Park (峨岭公园) was built in 1909 and was originally the home of Lee, a wealthy businessman. During the war against Japan, Chiang-Kai Shek and his wife lived here and some embassies were also established in the park. After the liberation of Chongqing in 1949 the park became the headquarters of the Southwest Military Command. In 1958 it was remodelled as a park and named Eling Park. It is an ideal place to enjoy views of the rivers and the night views of Chongqing from the tall pagoda or to drink tea and play *mahjong* while watching older Chongqing residents dance and practise Tai Chi. Another fascinating site in the park is the small museum and art centre.

The *Sichuan Fine Arts Institute* (*Si Chuan Mei Shu Xue Yuan* 四川美术学院) is in the western part of the city. This university has a great campus to wander around with interesting sculptures and green space. There's an exhibition centre at the front of the university and also the *Tank Loft* (*Tan Ke Ku* 坦克库) exhibition area which holds modern art exhibitions. Both are highly impressive. Recently, some of the arts students there took an innovative approach to urban regeneration: they repainted local shops and apartment blocks with graffiti-style murals so the streets alongside the Art School are now a cacophony of colours.

A *river cruise* is a pleasant way to spend an evening taking in Chongqing's impressive night skyline and the neon lights decorating high-rise after high-rise. Hong Ya Dong also looks spectacular from a boat.

The night views can also be seen on one of two *cable car rides*; either from Hong Ya Dong to Nan Bin Road or from Chaotianmen Square to the Jiangbei side of the river.

Nanshan Scenic Park (Nan Shan GongYuan 南山公园) is a mountain park known for its flowers and trees. Nanshan means 'South Mountain' and, being only about twenty minutes from downtown, it gives great views of the city as well as having cleaner air and lots of flora and fauna to explore. There are also several temples on the mountain.

Yang Jia Ping Zoo (Yang Jia Ping Dong Wu Yuan 杨家坪动物园) is a modern and well stocked zoo with many national and regional animals. This is the place where you can see the Giant Panda in its native region and also the extremely rare South China Tiger.

Zha Zi Dong Prison (Zha Zi Dong 渣滓洞) is one of two Guomindang prisons located in Shapingba, the other being Bai Gong Guan. Both are located at the base of Ge Le Mountain in Lie Shi Mu. Zha Zi Dong offers a unique look at a 1940s era prison and the horrors that took place there when nearly 300 communist political prisoners were massacred at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949. The entire area was also once the location of the Sino American Cooperative Organization (SACO), a camp where Chiang Kai Shek's elite troops were trained.

Outside the City

The *Dazu Stone Grottoes (Da Zu Shi Ke 大足石刻)* is a UNESCO site, 167 kilometres to the east of Chongqing. The grottoes take about two hours to reach from the west bus stations. Tours by private car from the city can also be organised. The site at Dazu is hailed as the 'Magic Pearl of Oriental Art' both in China and abroad and is home to over 50,000 statues. The statues in Dafowan are carved into the rocks and show Buddhist tableaus which give a unique insight into the culture of the times. Some figures have kept their original paint and the Buddhas inside one of the caves are also remarkably preserved.

Fishing Town (Diao Yu Cheng 钓鱼城) in the pretty satellite town of Hechuan is also known as the 'Oriental Mecca' and 'the place that broke god's whip'. One of the three great ancient battlefields of China, it is famous for its resistance to the Mongol armies in the latter half of the Song Dynasty. The Mongols were unable to take the tiny fortress and their leader Mongke Khan was killed by cannon shot here, which forced the immediate withdrawal of Mongol troops from Europe and Asia and prevented the Mongolian Empire from expanding towards Africa. Situated on a hill surrounded by water on three sides, it is located about five kilometres east of Hechuan, near the confluence of the Qu, Fu and Jialing rivers.

Hechuan itself is worth a visit for its location at the confluence of the Qu, Fu and Jialing rivers. You can visit some of the pagodas there and the old town or spend a leisurely afternoon flying kites and drinking tea down by the river.

The *Three Gorges Cruise* can be done in three days, usually stopping at the Ghost Town of Fengdu before continuing along the Three Gorges, down the Three Little Gorges and the Shennong Stream before reaching Yichang for a tour of the world famous dam.

Alternatively, you can take a hovercraft and arrive in eleven hours but this doesn't include the stops along the way.

RELIGION

The most prevalent local religion is Buddhism, with a number of temples around the city. However the local Chinese people are not strictly religious and are very tolerant of other beliefs. You can also find Christian churches, Catholic churches and mosques, both historic and in use.

The basic premise is that any religion, belief or lifestyle is acceptable as long as it's not pushed onto others. Very zealous public displays of any kind of alternative lifestyle will probably make people uncomfortable.

GENDER ISSUES

While China has traditionally had a male dominated society this does not really seem to affect the business world greatly as many women hold leading positions in local and multinational companies as well as leadership roles in government. Women visitors can expect to be treated with equal respect by their Chinese hosts as their male counterparts.

Although Chongqing is relatively safe, and women's safety is not a particular problem, caution should be exercised in bars and clubs and generally at night, as in any city.

People with disabilities

Chongqing and China generally are not disabled-friendly. People with physical disabilities will find China to be little more than a constant obstacle course. Any movements should have every stage carefully planned out well in advance.

In China disabled people enjoy equal rights with other citizens in political, economic, cultural and social fields, in family life and other aspects. Citizen's rights and personal dignity are protected by law.

Recently facilities for disabled people have been increasing in public places in Chongqing. But Toilets for people using wheelchairs can only be found in airports, new shopping malls and occasionally in public places. In some hotels above 3-star, improved wheelchair accessible rooms for disabled people are available at the same rate as for a standard room.

China can be relaxed on certain issues for example, allowing electric mobility scooters around airports and buildings.

According to central government policy, level footpaths and an extra slope to each entrance is compulsory in all new apartment buildings and communities.

Communications

Time: China runs eight hours ahead of GMT. During British summertime the time difference is seven hours.

Business hours: Office hours are generally a standard 9am to 5pm or 6pm. (There are, however, some individual differences depending on the industry and some places may close for lunch.) Shops tend to open from 9am or 10am to about 10pm and bars and clubs stay open till about 2am.

Post: Airmail letters/parcels to and from Britain take 4-10 days and parcels must be sealed at the post office after inspection. International postage rates are expensive but the service is generally reliable.

Phones: To reach the UK, once you have an outside line, dial 00 44, then drop the first zero of the city number (e.g. 0161 for Manchester, dial 00 44 161.....).

Mobile Phones: There is a very good network in Chongqing so it is worthwhile activating international roaming with your service provider before you arrive. Another option is to purchase a 'pay as you go' SIM card when you arrive. This is very cheap at around RMB100 for the SIM card which will include around RMB50 credit.

Money

Just as Britain uses the terms 'sterling' and 'pounds' to describe its currency, China has a couple of ways of describing its money. 'Renminbi' (or RMB) is the Chinese equivalent of 'sterling' while the 'yuan' is the term comparable to pounds or dollars. The yuan (¥) is also known colloquially as 'kuai' (pronounced 'kwai'). At the current exchange rate, one pound sterling is approximately equal to 10.8 yuan. (03/11/08)

Foreign money and travellers cheques can be changed at international airports, main branches of the Bank of China and the large tourist hotels. The official rate is given everywhere so there is no need to shop around.

Credit cards are accepted in major hotels, restaurants and some supermarkets but don't count on them being accepted everywhere. You can use international debit and credit cards including Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro to withdraw cash in renminbi. This service isn't available at all local cash machines but you should be fine at any Bank of China ATMs.

Forgeries, as in many countries, are in circulation. Shopkeepers are admirably vigilant so do not be offended or concerned by them checking the 100 RMB notes several times.

Tipping

Tipping is not encouraged although some taxi drivers might expect it and may refuse to give change. You will not get change for amounts less than ¥1. Hotel restaurants usually have a service charge of around 15%.

Electricity

Electricity supply is usually 220 volts so UK appliances will work without transformers. The local plugs usually have 3 flat pins, the lower pair angled, but other types are also in use. International hotels will have shaver sockets but these may not be available elsewhere.

Security, health and in case of emergency

Security

It is recommended that you check the FCO travel advice for UK citizens before travelling:
www.fco.gov.uk

Chongqing is a relatively safe city but it is worthwhile being prudent and taking simple precautions. Pick-pockets are common in crowded areas and particular care should be taken on public transport and in the area around the roadside market. Valuables should be put into a front rather than back pocket or in a bag out of sight to avoid tempting thieves. You can generally get taxis late at night but the same caution in taking taxis alone late night should be exercised as in any other major city.

Health

Current health precautions are specified in the most recent DSS leaflets on health care abroad.

Common complaints include gastric disorders, colds and inflammation of the throat and sinus during dry weather. Pollution may cause extra problems for asthma sufferers. It is also wise to bring sufficient supplies of those medications which you regularly use although it is possible to buy certain UK prescription-only drugs (such as asthma inhalers) over the counter in Chongqing. As with many other countries, water should not be drunk from the tap. Bottled distilled water is widely available in shops while hotels will supply bottles of distilled water in hotel rooms.

Significant precautions have been taken to avoid the recurrence of the 2003 SARS outbreak. This includes temperature checks and forms to fill in at the border crossings which ask about any symptoms of infections and your recent travel history. While this means it can take a little longer to cross, it is in everyone's best interest.

There has been increasing concern around the world, and especially in developing countries, about the spread of HIV/AIDS. This is no exception in China so relevant levels of caution should be exercised where necessary. There are some concerns about prostitution in urban areas, especially around hotels, and it is not uncommon to be propositioned in the street and even in your hotel room (by phone or a visit to your door) on occasion. While the authorities are working on these problems they are difficult to eradicate entirely.

Emergency Contacts

International hotels in Chongqing almost always have a clinic and doctor on call. You should buy medical insurance before your departure. Any preferred remedies or prescriptions should be brought with you since they are unlikely to be available locally.

There are of course traditional Chinese medicine alternatives that you might wish to try. This might be difficult unless you have knowledge of the language or assistance from a local resident.

Please feel free to contact British Council staff in case of an emergency by calling one of the following mobile phone numbers:

Sarah Deverall, Consul, Director Chongqing: 13983352090 Phyllis Luo,
Resource Manager: 13983382569

Hotel staff will also always help in an emergency.

Medical Emergency numbers in Chongqing:

Local first-aid emergency call (24 hours): **120**

Global doctor stationed at Hilton Hotel Chongqing (24 hours)

Tel: 8903 8837

China Southwest Hospital (24 hours) Tel: 65318301 No2 Hospital attached to Chongqing
Medical University

Tel: 63832133

The British Council in China

History

The British Council was first represented in China from the early 1940s to 1952. Operations began again when, in January 1979, a British Council officer was attached to the Embassy.

Dr Joseph Needham of Cambridge University was the Director of the Chongqing Office from 1942 to 1946, later penning his acclaimed 'Science and Civilisation in China' encyclopaedias.

Following the end of the war in East Asia, the British Council moved its China office from Chongqing to Nanjing in 1946. Since our return in 1979 we have functioned as the Cultural and Education Section of the British Embassy. In Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing, we are known as The Cultural and Education Section of the British Consulate General.

The current office in Chongqing was opened on 18th October 2000.

What do we do?

The **aim** of the British Council in China is to win recognition in China for the UK's values, ideas and achievements, and nurture lasting, mutually beneficial relationships between China and the UK by:

Making the UK China's most valued partner in training and education
Promoting the UK's creativity and modernising perceptions of the UK
Supporting China's reforms in areas where the UK has relevant strengths – including education, governance and law and development of civil society
Promoting more effective learning of English in China

Activities

All activities are carried out in close co-operation with one or more local partners and draw on the services of a wide range of resources from Britain. The main areas are:

- . Education and training
- . Education UK promotion
- . School links
- . English language teaching
- . Training and scholarships
- . UK Alumni
- . UK & international qualifications (IELTS and BULATS)
- . Governance & civil society
- . Information provision, new media and books
- . The Arts
- . Science, technology & the environment.

Useful Addresses in China

Beijing:

Cultural and Education Section, British Embassy 4th Floor, Landmark Building Tower 1 8 North Dongsanhuan Road Chao Yang District Beijing 100004 Tel: (0086) 10 6590 6903 Fax: (0086) 10 6590 0977 E-mail: bj@britishcouncil.org.cn Counsellor (Cultural) and British Council Director China: Joanna Burke Director Beijing: Robin Rickard

Shanghai:

Cultural and Education Section of the British Consulate-General 1st Floor Cross Tower 318 Fu Zhou Lu Shanghai 200001 Tel: (86 21) 63912626 Fax: (86 21) 63912121 E-mail: sh@britishcouncil.org.cn Director Shanghai: Gavin Anderson

Guangzhou:

Cultural and Education Section of the British Consulate General 7th Floor, Teem Tower 208 Tianhe Road Guangzhou 510620 PR China Tel: (86 20) 8510 3000 Fax: (86 20) 8510 3111 E-mail: gz@britishcouncil.org.cn Director Guangzhou: Jim Hollington

Chongqing:

Cultural and Education Section British Consulate-General 28th Floor Metropolitan Tower 68 Zourong Road Chongqing 400010 PR China Tel: (86 23) 6373 6888 Fax: (86 23) 6373 7898 E-mail:bc.chongqing@britishcouncil.org.cn Director Chongqing: Sarah Deverall

British Consulate-General

28th Floor Metropolitan Tower 68 Zourong Road Chongqing 400010 PR China Tel: (86 23) 6369 1500 (Dial Switchboard for Visa Section) Fax: (86 23) 6369 1525 Consul-General: Nick Whittingham