

# Chengdu – Temples and Museums for All Culture Lovers

Sichuan's capital Chengdu, referred to as a "Heavenly State", is located to the west of Sichuan Basin and in Chengdu Plain, it has an area of 4,749 square miles and a population of more than 11 million.

Chengdu is extremely productive because of the Dujiangyan Irrigation Project from 256 B.C., the Yangtze River's branches Min and Tuo Rivers which irrigate over 270.27 square miles and abundant mineral resources.



The city is also a popular destination for tourists thanks to a number of remarkable sights:

## **Wuhou Temple** (Marquis Wu Memorial Temple)

Wuhou Temple, dedicated to Zhuge Liang who was the Marquis Wu of Shu Kingdom which formed part of the Three Kingdoms that ruled from 280 to 220 B.C. Wuhou Temple is located in a suburb to the south Chengdu, covering an area of 398,277 square feet.

It is not known when the temple was built, but it is located next to Liu Bei's (Shu emperor) temple. As the temple was combined with that of Liu Bei at the start of the Ming Dynasty, the plaque at the entrance reads 'Zhaolie (Lieu Bei's posthumous title) Temple of Han Dynasty'. The rebuilding of the current temple was carried out in 1672. The temple has five sections: Gate, second Gate, Liu Bei Haal, corridor, and Zhuge Liang Hall. The special feature of the temple is the sculptures of Emperor Shu and his ministers.

## **Three-Star Piles Museum**

Three-Star Piles Museum or Sanxingdui Museum on the banks of Jian River is 40 kilometers to the north of Chengdu City. Opened in October 1997, this archaeological museum preserves the cultural relics of ancient Shu (Sichuan) excavated from the Three-Star Piles archaeological site. This is considered to be an important archaeological discovery because it changed the understanding about ancient culture and history. If your goal is to know more about the Shu culture, this is the museum to visit.

Three-Star Piles got its name from the three earth mounds seen at the site. The legend has it that the

three mounds on the banks of the Jian River were formed when the Heavenly Emperor cast three handfuls of earth down on Chengdu Plain. It is now confirmed that the earth mounds are the southern side wall of an ancient city.



### **Jinli Street**

Jinli Street in the eastern side of Wuhou Temple in Chengdu city was famous for the rich ornate cloth, baldachin, during Qin Dynasty (221 B.C. to 206 B. C.). In the period 263 B.C. to 221 B.C., when the Shu Kingdom was in power, it was a busy commercial area. Therefore, Jinli Street is also referred to as Shu Kingdom's First Street. The street was restored to its former glory and opened in 2004 with contributions made by Wuhou Temple. Visitors come to this street to relax, admire traditional buildings and taste a few of the local snacks.

The green flagstones-paved lane that extends for about 350 meters from the imposing archway at the end of the street engraved with 'Jinli Street' on it has tea houses, hotels and stores on both sides. The buildings are modeled to resemble the architecture of a western Sichuan old town from the Qing Dynasty (1911 B.C. to 1644 B.C.) by combining the Three Kingdoms Period culture and the Sichuan folk customs. The brick walls and wooden steles display an ancient charm.

### **Scenic and Historic Jiuzhaigou Valley Area**

Jiuzhaigou Valley in Nanping County is about 280 miles away from Chengdu City to its north. The valley got its name from the nine stockaded villages that originated from Tibet. The watercourse in the valley and the surrounding mountain are revered by Tibetans. The great masterpiece of nature with its scenic beauty is regarded as the wonderland on earth.

According to the legend, Dago, the mountain deity, who had a crush on Semo, the goddess, gifted a mirror made from cloud and wind to her. However, the devil created some trouble for Semo and inadvertently she broke the mirror into 108 pieces. They fell down on to the earth and formed the 108 colorful lakes, referred to as Haizi by the locals.

The natural forest is home to around 3,000 plant species and about 330 species of animals including vertebrates, birds and rare animals.



## **Giant Panda Chengdu**

Giant pandas, fewer than 1000 in total, can be seen only in Shanxi, Sichuan and Gansu provinces with 80% of them in the Sichuan province. Giant Pandas are treasured by the Chinese and loved by people around the world. Many visitors come to Chengdu only to see them. The Panda Breeding Research Center is located 10 kilometers away from Chengdu city. The Giant Panda Museum consisting of three main exhibition halls – Giant Panda Hall, Butterfly Hall and Vertebrate Hall – was opened in 1993.

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