

International Student Guide

Introduction

Welcome to Chongqing and Southwest University for Political Science and Law (SWUPL)! This guide will not answer all your questions but will provide insight into life at SWUPL and in Chongqing. Regardless of how long you're staying in Chongqing, I hope the following information will make the transition a little easier. It is a humble attempt to help you gain some perspective. Enjoy your stay in Chongqing.

I. SWUPL

For information on the history and academic departments of SWUPL visit the school's new and improved website(<http://www.swupl.edu.cn/english/index.htm>). SWUPL is divided into two campuses: Shapingba and Yubei, separated by approximately 20 kilometers.

Shapingba Campus

Shapingba Campus is home to post-graduate students. It resides in Lie Shi Mu in the Shapingba District of Chongqing. It is an incredibly green campus and provides a quiet oasis from the city outside its gates. SWUPL is one of several large universities in Shapingba District, heavily populated with foreign students and teachers. Shapingba is on the west side of Chongqing, just south of the Jialing River. It is also home to *ci qi kou* (old town), a popular tourist destination and entertainment area. While most foreign teachers and students at SWUPL live in Yubei, some still live in campus. While smaller than Yubei campus, it is peaceful and relaxing.

Yubei Campus

Yubei is the future of SWUPL. In less than a decade, it has been transformed into a large, modern university setting. This sprawling campus is under many renovations and construction projects. It is a modern Chinese campus, housing undergraduate students, teacher offices, and the University's administration. With the completion of the state-of-the-art library, Yubei campus has become a great learning environment. Residential areas are being constructed around the campus and will be

a major Chongqing destination in a few short years. Foreigners may find it more convenient to live in Yubei as the campus is gradually becoming the center of SWUPL. In contrast to Shapingba, Yubei is removed from much of the traffic and noise of Chongqing. If Shapingba campus is urban, Yubei resembles suburban or rural universities you find in North American and Europe.

Travel between Shapingba and Yubei

Student and teachers are constantly traveling from one campus to the other. This is a brief description of travel options:

Shapingba to Yubei

It takes approximately 30 minutes to travel from Shapingba to Yubei on a University bus. University buses transport students and teacher all day, from 7:30 AM to 8:00 PM. The buses leave outside the library across from the badminton and table tennis courts. There is a bus schedule located at the stop, leaving approximately every hour or two. There is also an abbreviated schedule on Saturdays and Sundays. Ask for a bus schedule when you arrive.

It costs 4 RMB/one way with a SWUPL money card (5 RMB without). This card can also be used in the school cafeterias and money may be added to it at any time. I suggest you use this card as you never know when you may not have currency.

A couple other travel options are city bus 801 and taxis. Bus 801 leaves from the main gate of Shapingba campus and takes longer than a University bus (approximately 60-70 minutes). Taxis are a convenient but considerably more expensive option. The best place to catch one is outside the main gate. It will cost approximately 50-60 RMB to get to Yubei campus. Some taxi drivers may be unwilling to travel that far so do not use taxis as primary transport to Yubei.

Yubei to Shapingba

From Yubei campus, catch the bus outside teaching building #3. Again, refer to the bus schedule for exact times. You can also use Bus 801 or taxis to get to Shapingba. Bus 801 leaves outside the north and south gates of SWUPL. Taxis are more difficult to find in Yubei so be prepared to wait.

Academic Schedule

Students at SWUPL and most Chinese universities take a lot of classes. Morning classes begin at 8:30 AM and night classes finish around 9 PM. There is a mid-day break from 12-2 PM and a dinner break from 6-7 PM. Everyone's schedule will be different but teachers can expect to teach 10-14 hours/week. Chinese language students will have morning classes Monday-Friday and may be asked to teach 1-2 hours of language each week. Students are in class most of the day so it may be difficult to organize meetings or extra classes.

II. Chongqing

Chongqing is the fastest growing city in China and is set to become a major international city, the cornerstone of development in western China. As you enter the city upon arrival you'll be struck by the fields of condos and apartment buildings being constructed all over the city.

Foreigners number only a few of the 15 million people or so that reside in Chongqing. As a major metropolitan area, it remains a traditional Chinese city, although dramatic changes over the next 10 years may change that distinction. Nonetheless, it is an exciting place to be at the moment and I hope the next bits of information will assist your exploration of the city.

Weather

Positioned in a valley, Chongqing has a sub-tropical climate. While it may reach as high as 38-40 degrees Centigrade in the summer months, it also may drop to 1-2 C in the winter. Depending on the climate you prefer, you will have the chance to experience it in Chongqing. People who enjoy warm weather will enjoy the summers while those who prefer a cooler climate will prefer the fall and winter. Luckily, it does not snow in Chongqing so you won't have to worry about frigid temperatures and snow storms.

Transportation in the City

Chongqing is currently building a massive metro system, but still relies on city buses as the main form of public transportation. A light rail system operates in a small area of central and eastern Chongqing but is only useful to those who live in a small section of the city. Here is a list of rates for different modes of public transportation:

City bus: 1 RMB – 3 RMB (depending on distance)

Taxi: Flat fee of 5 RMB in the daytime and 5.9 RMB in the evening. Rate is 1.2 RMB/km (Round to nearest RMB)

Motorcycle taxi: 3 RMB – 10 RMB (depending on distance)

Note: Motorcycle taxis can be dangerous so use caution. Taxi drivers won't speak English so know your destination in Chinese or have someone write down the address for you.

Mobile phones

Everyone seems to have a mobile phone in China. Chinese people text constantly and use it in place of email under most circumstances. Whether you forgot the address of that restaurant where you're meeting friends, or you need help translating, a quick call can solve your problems in a matter of seconds. China is the world's largest market for mobile technology, so nearly all students and teachers employ a mobile phone as their primary communication device. Before joining the 400-500 million Chinese mobile users, however, consider the costs of maintaining mobile service in the following breakdown:

Mobile phone, entry level (read no voicemail) – 300-700 RMB

One text message, sent or received – 1 to 2 Jiao

Phone call, dialed or received – 1 to 2jiao RMB/minute

Data plan – 20 RMB/month

If you use your phone a lot, figure to spend 50-60 RMB/month for service. You can get a Chongqing-only phone or one that operates in all of mainland China. The cost to you will be considerably less if you already own a tri-band phone that will operate in China. You can purchase a monthly plan with a Chinese mobile company (China Mobile and China Telecom are the most popular), and the number of text messages allotted per month can be negotiated to fit your needs.

Mail Service

When sending letters and packages abroad, the cheapest route is China Post. There are locations all around the city that will ship international. The fastest way is by plane (allow 2 weeks for delivery) but you can also go by boat (allow 1 month). Sending an envelope by plane will cost 7-8 RMB and shipping prices for packages are determined by weight. You can also use FedEx or DHL but be prepared to spend 500-1,000 RMB on shipping costs.

Food

Grocery Shopping

New Century Department Store/CBEST: Chinese chains around the city. Very little foreign food.

CarreFour: ChangBai Road , JieFangBei, Yuzhong District
JiangXin Xi Road , GuanYinQiao, Jiangbei District
San Xia Guang Cheng, Shapingba District

French supermarket chain. Mediocre selection of foreign foods but large selection of electronics, cooking supplies, health and beauty, and Chinese food

METRO: Nan Ping, Nan An District. Requires membership card. Home appliances, electronics, and bulk food. Good selection of foreign food, beer, and wine

Wal-Mart: 2 Xijiao Third Street, Yangjiaping, Jiulongpo District
Chongqing Yingxiang Building, 60 Nanping Road West, Nan'an District
Longhu Zidu Plaza, 111 Longshan Avenue, Yubei District

The best part of Chongqing. If you like hot and spicy food then this is the place for you. Chongqing or Sichuan cuisine relies on peppers, garlic, and onions to deliver massive amounts of flavor in dishes. Most notably, Chongqing is home to “hot pot” (the original). Usually, it’s a pork-based broth boiled in a large serving both filled with meats and vegetables. Chongqing people eat it all the time and it’s a great meal for large groups of friends.

Chongqing food is divided into two major groups: dishes and noodles. Here’s an example of a typical meal for two people, prices included at a restaurant around campus.

Two vegetable dishes: 10-15 RMB
Two meat dishes: 15-25 RMB
Two beers (local Chongqing): 6 RMB

Total: 31-46 RMB

Noodles are much less expensive, usually costing 5-10 RMB. There are plenty of options when choosing restaurants in Chongqing, but I’ve found local, family restaurants to be the best value. They’re always filled with students and teachers and usually patient with foreigners when they make fools of themselves ordering. Ask

students and teacher for recommendations but have the courage to point at the menu and wait for a surprise. If you have a diverse palate, then you'll do fine in Chongqing. If you can't handle hot and spicy food, be sure to order dishes without peppers (See Appendix for helpful website)

Western/Non-Chinese Food

Although Chongqing food is great, you can't eat it everyday. Chongqing has some good Western food options available. It's difficult to keep track of them as there are openings and closings all the time. Outside of McDonald's, KFC, and Pizza Hut, there are a few gems in the city:

Indian restaurant: Qing Nian Road, Jie fang bei, Yuzhong District (next to International Trade Center Plaza Hotel).

Price: Appetizers and soups ranging from 10-20 RMB, curry dishes from 20-35 RMB

\
Tasty Thai Garden: Jiangbei Longhu Crystal Town (opposite Ferrari showroom)

Price: Expensive but good. Entrees from 50-100 RMB

Brazilian Barbeque: 5F, Metropolitan plaza, Jie fang bei, Yuzhong District

Price: All-you-can-eat meat and side dishes buffet, 60-70 RMB

Piccolo's Pizza: 88-27 Shapingba North Road, Shapingba District

Price: Appetizers 10-15 RMB, Pizza from 20-30 RMB (note: Pub Quiz Tuesdays, every two weeks or so)

Foreign Hotels

JW Marriot Hotel: 77 Qing Nian Road, Yuzhong District.

Price: 125 RMB for the buffet (includes service charge; beer and wine excluded)

Howard Johnson: Qing Nian Road, Yuzhong District (across from JW Marriott)

Price: 180 RMB for buffet (local beer and wine included)

Holiday Inn: 87 Nan Ping Bei Xin Jie, Nan An District & 68 Wu Hong Road, Yubei District

Price: 120 RMB (beer and wine excluded)

Starbucks:

City Balcony, 11F Hongyadong Folklore Area No.58 Cang Bai Road, Yuzhong District

1F Wang Fu Jing Department Store, No.166 Min Zu Road, Yuzhong District

1F Bei Cheng Tian Jie Shopping Mall, No.6 Bei Cheng Tian Street, Jiangbei District

1F Wang Fu Jing Department Store, No.49 Xiao Xin Street, Sha Ping Ba District

Nightlife

Chongqing is gradually improving its bar/club scene. Most students stick to KTV's around the city. You can buy local beer pretty much anywhere, convenient for anyone looking to buy a few for a house party. There isn't a classic pub in Chongqing but a few places carry a good selection of beer. Clubs are filled with young people looking to drink and have fun, dancing the night away under strobe lights. Go in with an open-mind and you're bound to enjoy yourself. Here's a few noteworthy places. None has a cover charge (All are in or around the Deyi Entertainment Center in the CBD, Jie fang bei, Yuzhong District) :

Cotton Club: Most famous club in Chongqing. Live music on the weekends is great. Can get crowded on the small dance floor. Popular among ex-pats.

Soho: Considered a bit more fashionable than Cotton Club. Large, dark, open space. Loud techno music. Live performances usually around midnight

88: Newest addition to club scene. Huge, ornamented entrance way. Large, two-tier dance floor and bar. Packed on the weekends. Good late-night spot as party goes steadily until 3 or 4 AM.

True Love: Bar separated into three areas. Hookah bar and lounge. Live music on most days. Older, late 20s-early 30s crowd.

Deyi Outdoor Bar: Located next to Soho, the outdoor bar is great summertime meeting spot and serves Carlsberg on tap (15 RMB). Great "people-watching" and expat hangout.

Here's a general price list:

Beer (Budweiser, Heineken, Carlsberg): 20-30 RMB/bottle

Alcohol (Chivas Regal, Vodka, Jack Daniels): 250-300 RMB/bottle (comes with tea or soda as mixer)

There are plenty of other places to go and dance so don't feel limited to this list. They're filled with Chinese students and can be a blast with Chinese friends. Nightlife is now a priority in Chongqing and new places are popping up every few months.

Money and Banking

If you're going to open a bank account, use a major bank such as the Bank of China, Bank of Communications or Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. To get a debit card you'll the bank will need your passport information. It will take 30 minutes-1 hour to open an account. ATMs are pretty easy to find in the city. China is, for the most part, a cash country so a credit card (VISA, Mastercard) won't be useful in the city. More places are now accepting Chinese debit/credit cards but that's still a small percentage of shops/supermarkets/restaurants.

Appendix

Helpful Websites:

<http://www.swupl.edu.cn/english/index.htm> (SWUPL English website)

www.cqexpat.com (Chongqing expat community site)

www.elong.net (Ticket booking site for air travel in China)

www.howtoorderchinesefood.com (names and descriptions of Chinese food)

www.chinadaily.com.cn (China Daily newspaper, English version)