

CHONGQING: ULTIMATE CHINA



CHONGQING: BASIC INFORMATION		World Rank	Similar to
Urban Area Population (2010)	5,400,000	53	Madrid, Miami, Santiago, Wuhan
Projection (2025)	6,775,000	53	Atlanta, Toronto, Pune, Essen-Dusseldorf
Urban Land Area: Square Miles (2009)	280	131	Mumbai, Adelaide, Tucson, Wuhan
Urban Land Area: Square Kilometers	725		
Density: Per Square Mile (2007)	18.700	295	Sao Paulo, Hyderabad, Bucharest
Density: Per Square Kilometer (2007)	7,500		
*Continuously built up area (Urban agglomeration)			
Land area & density rankings among the approximately 850 urban areas with 500,000+ population.			
Data from <i>Demographia World Urban Areas</i> (http://www.demographia.com/db-worldua.pdf)			

1 January 2010

Chongqing is one of China's most unique urban areas. First time visitors to China should, obviously, see the capital, Beijing, the financial center, Shanghai and the model for what China has become, Hong Kong. But after that, Chongqing should be high on the list.

Chongqing offers a view of "old China" that is simply not easy to find in the more prosperous urban areas of the east coast. That is not to suggest that Chongqing is not prosperous. A drive around Chongqing (or Chengdu, Changsha or Xi'an) makes it clear that western China is well on its way to equaling the affluence that has come to the east coast. Further, China is different than any of the other major Chinese urban areas, as will be described below.

Chongqing: "The City:" The Chongqing urban area is not to be confused with the municipality or "city" of Chongqing, which is not a city by any normal use of the term. The municipality of Chongqing is a provincial level division of China, which was carved out of the province of Sichuan in 1997. It covers an area

approximately 32,000 square miles (82,400 square kilometers), which is the same size as Austria or the state of Indiana and is mostly rural. Chongqing is by far the largest urban area in the provincial level municipality, yet has little more than 15% of the population and covers less than 1% of the land area. China has three other provincial level municipalities, Shanghai, which was carved out of Jiangsu, as well as Beijing and Tianjin, both carved out of the province of Hebei. These three municipalities were created during the 1920s.

The Setting

The setting of the Chongqing urban area is similar to that of Pittsburgh. A “Google Earth” examination or a flight into Chongqing shows lines of narrow mountains (Slides 2 & 3) that look almost exactly like the mountains of western Pennsylvania (or the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia). Moreover, Chongqing has more impressive “gates” than virtually any other urban area. The gates are formed by a narrow, short gorge immediately to the north of the airport and the urbanization (Slides 4 & 5).

The urban area itself is largely contained between two of the mountain ranges, both running roughly north to south (Slide 2). The urbanization has filled up virtually all of the space between the two mountain ranges. Development is spilling over the mountains to the west, where three adjacent mountain ranges are insufficient to block a new university center and other development. On the east side of the urban area, development has jumped over the mountain range and another adjacent range, with residential and educational development. Most of the urban area is at around 800 feet (250 meters) elevation. The eastern ranges reach nearly 2,000 feet (600 meters), while the western mountain ranges reach nearly 1,500 feet (450 meters).

Yuzhong

For starters, Chongqing’s core (Yuzhong) does not a grid of streets and, as a result does not follow the ancient pattern that has governed Chinese urban design (Slides 6-29). There is a simple reason for this. Chongqing, like Pittsburgh, is at the confluence of two rivers (the Yangtze and the Jiangbei) and a steep hill rises from its “golden triangle” (Chaotianmen), as opposed to in Pittsburgh, where there is a flat plain large enough to accommodate a large central business district.

Yuzhong is the central zone of Chongqing. It is on a narrow peninsula between the two rivers. Aerial trams connect Yuzhong with neighborhoods across both rivers.

Yuzhong has irregular and generally narrow streets, wider, but otherwise similar to medieval European street patterns. Yuzhong may have the highest building density in all of mainland China, with skyscrapers hugging the sidewalks. Only Hong Kong (and New York and Chicago) has a more densely developed central business district. With its hills, Chongqing is also reminiscent of San Francisco, however the city by the bay managed to develop a grid street pattern despite the hills. So, Yuzhong resembles New York, Pittsburgh and San Francisco in various ways. Yuzhong also has areas of comparatively substandard housing that are more obviously placed than in the more affluent east coast urban areas (Slides 27-29).

The density provides the opportunity for a spectacular light show at night from the rivers. A number of boat operators provide night tour service on both rivers, with optional dinner and drinks (Slides 45-49).

Outside Yuzhong

There are large residential and commercial areas on the flatter land behind (west of) Yuzhong and north, on the other side of the Jialing River (Slides 36-44). There are many large condominium developments in both areas. There is also a high tech development zone (Slide 41-42). There is little land for urbanization across the Yangtze River from Yuzhong, because the eastern mountain range begins rising almost immediately from the

river bank. To the south, however, the development pattern on the east side of the Yangtze is similar to that of the rest of the urban area outside Yuzhong (Slides 31-34).

Transport

Highways: Like other Chinese urban areas, Chongqing is well served by freeways and now has two ring freeways. Like San Francisco and other urban areas, one of the freeways was truncated as a result of public concerns. The freeway, along the Jialing River, would have done irreparable harm to the Ciqikou Ancient Town in Shapingba (Slides 44, 52, 53). Outside Yuzhong, there is the typical Chinese grid street pattern, with wide arterials, though the orientation of the grids varies based upon topography.

Public Transport: Also, like other Chinese urban areas, buses are the workhorses of the public transport system. Chongqing is in the process of developing a rapid transit system. The first line is now operating and is a monorail, which operates in subway in the core of Yuzhong. The line quickly exits the core and follows the Jialing River along the hills. The line appears to have been relatively easy to build, but has little market to serve over the first one-third of its riverside alignment. The second line will also be a monorail. Chongqing appears to be the first world urban area to build such an extensive monorail system (Kuala Lumpur has a single monorail line and Seattle's plans for a system beyond its short, early 1960s world's fair route have been cancelled). There is also discussion of building rapid busways.

Food

Chongqing is famous for its "hot pot," which is widely available at restaurants. Like other urban areas in China, there is an abundance of small, family run restaurants, specializing in noodles. I became a regular at one of them (Slide 58). Each Chinese urban area seems to have a beer branded with its own name and served in a tall green bottle. This is quite refreshing for a summer visitor to this, one China's four "furnaces" (Chongqing, Wuhan, Nanjing and Changsha).

Stillwell Museum

This museum, commemorating the work of American General Joseph Stillwell to assist China during World War II, is within walking distance of the Fotoguan monorail station, on south bank of the Jialing River, up the hill. For this American, the most important feature of this museum is the sense that it conveys of the positive relationship that has redeveloped with China after the decades of irreconcilable differences (Slide 57).¹

"Cities" in China

Analysts are often confused by the "city" terminology used in China. No "city" illustrates this more than the municipality of Chongqing, by virtue of its overwhelming size and population, the vast majority of which is rural (not urban). Cities in China are regions.

The following, from our article in *NewGeography.com* elaborates on the term "city" and misunderstandings surrounding it (Source: <http://www.newgeography.com/content/001076-on-cities-ghg-emissions-apples-oranges>).

Whenever someone starts talking about "cities," it is best to ask what they mean. The word "cities" has so many meanings and is subject to such confusion that I generally avoid using it.

"Cities" might be municipalities, such as the city of New York or the ville de Paris.

¹ The Museum is located down the hill, perhaps 100 meters, from the monorail station, on the left side of the road.

Cities could be urban areas (urbanized areas or urban agglomerations), which are the urban footprints one observes from an airplane on a clear night.

- *“Cities” could be metropolitan areas, which are labor markets and are generally larger than urban areas, because people commute from rural areas (outside the urban footprint) to work in the urban area.*
- *In nearly the entire world, with the exception of China, urban areas and metropolitan areas are larger than municipalities.*

Or, “cities” could be used in the sense of Chinese prefectural, sub-provincial or provincial level cities, which tend to be far larger than any reasonable definition of a metropolitan area. Nearly all of China is divided into cities, in the same way that most of the United States is divided into counties.

These Chinese “cities” themselves often contain county level “cities” that are separate from the principal urban areas.

These differing definitions of municipalities make any international comparison of these entities difficult and often misleading. The ville de Paris represents barely 20 percent of the Paris region. The “city” of Atlanta represents barely 10 percent of its metropolitan area. The “city” of Melbourne represents only 5 percent of its metropolitan area. Yet, other “cities” are larger than their metropolitan areas, such as Chongqing, China, which has at least five times the population of its genuine metropolitan area (the “city” covers an area the size of Austria or Indiana). The city of San Antonio, with its vast stretches of suburbanization is surely not comparable to the city of Hartford, which is dominated by an urban core.

Any genuine comparison of “cities” must be at the metropolitan area or urban area level. These definitions both represent the city as the organism it is, rather than simply the happenstance of municipal boundaries. Of course, comparisons must be either between metropolitan areas or urban areas to be valid. It will not do to compare metropolitan areas with urban areas; they are as apples and oranges. Moreover, there are no international standards for delineation of metropolitan areas, which makes metropolitan comparisons more complex.

<http://www.rentalcartours.net>
<http://www.demographia.com>
<http://www.publicpurpose.com>

Chongqing Rental Car Tour



The Setting



Chongqing Chongqing, China

Setting: Principally Between
Parallel Mountain Ranges

Image © 2009 TerraMetrics
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**Mountain Ranges
& Yangtze River**





**“Gate” to the City
(Yangtze River)**



**“Gate” to the City
(Yangtze River)**

Chongqing Rental Car Tour



Yuzhong (Downtown)



Yuzhong Across
Yangtze River



Yuzhong Across
Yangtze River

Jialing River
from Yuzhong



Yangtze River
Downstream
From
Chaotianmen



Confluence of
Jialing & Yangtze
Rivers
(Chaotianmen)





Hong ya dong Hotel
Yuzhong



Aerial Tramway
Across Jialing River
From Yuzhong

Chaotianmen
(Confluence of
Yangtze & Jialing
Rivers)



Yuzhong



Yuzhong





Yuzhong



Yuzhong









Yuzhong





Yuzhong



Yuzhong





Yuzhong



Yuzhong



Yuzhong

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Chongqing Rental Car Tour



Other Areas

Nan'an (Left)
Yuzhou (Right)



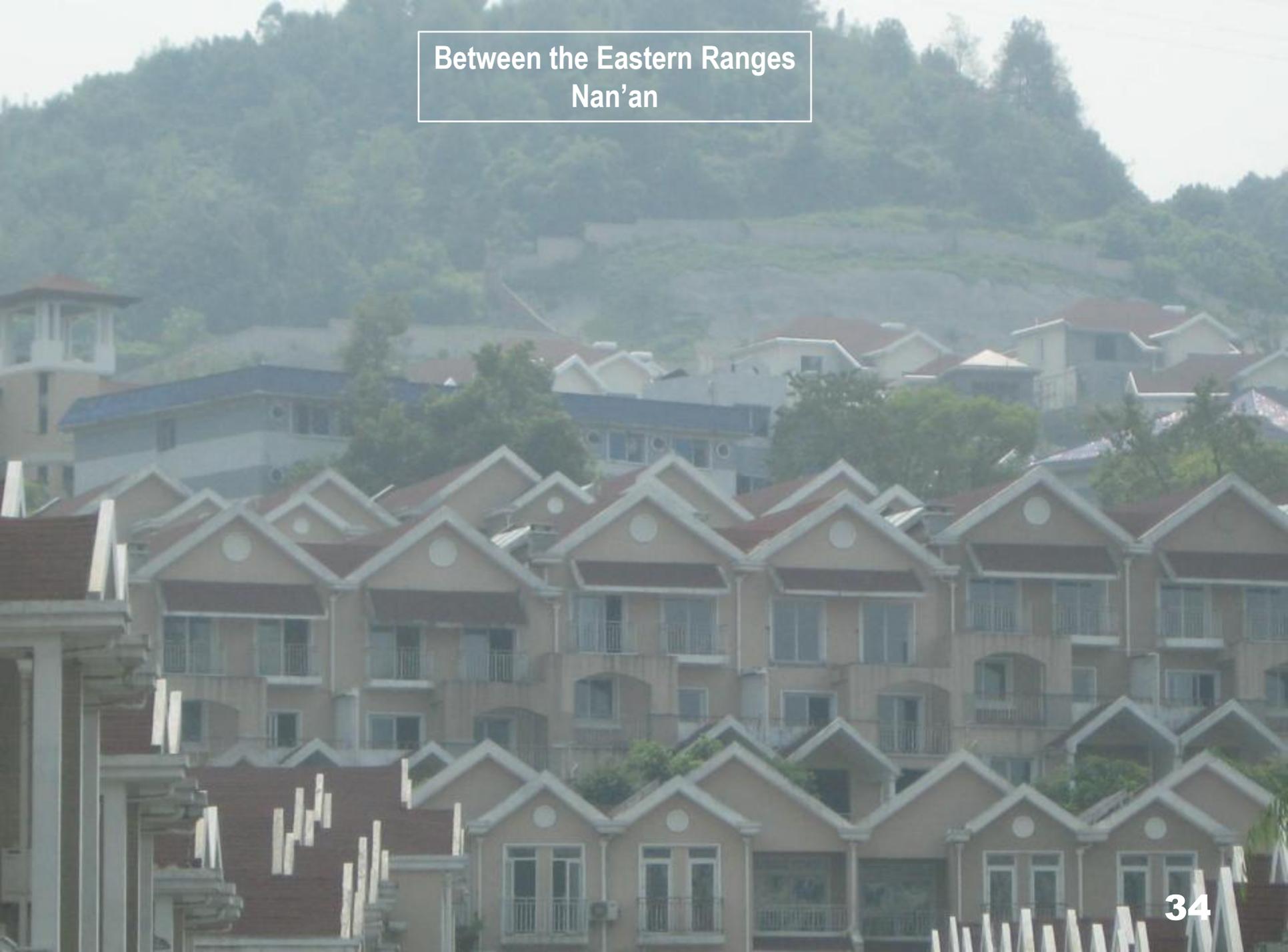
**Sheraton Hotel
Nan'an**





Development between
the Eastern Ranges (Nan'an)

Between the Eastern Ranges
Nan'an



Yuzhong toward
Jiangbei



Jiangbei





Jiangbei



Jiangbei

Juilongpo





Juilongpo



Juilongpo



Shapingba



Shapingba
Ciqikou
Ancient
Town



磁器口

入長東萬卷的燈

白日裡帶人搖手

陳

PAVILION
8号

今年中秋，送张飞牛肉

Chongqing Rental Car Tour



Night River Cruise



Yangtze River Long Distance Cruise Ship



Nan'an



Yuzhong

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Hong ya dong Hotel, Yuzhong

Chongqing Rental Car Tour



Transport



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Freeway





Monorail

Monorail



Chongqing Rental Car Tour



Other



約瑟夫·史迪威
JOSEPH W. STILLWELL
(1883-1946)

