

CHENGDU FORTUNE

Big city attracts expats with small-town feel

By DENG ZHANGYU
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Walking around Chengdu, a big city in southwestern China, tends to make people feel about the same as they would in Beijing, Shanghai or other big cities.

Yet, lying beneath the modern face of the city is "a small-town feeling," said Andrew Barnett, a restaurant manager at the Chengdu branch of the Bookworm bookshop, where he has worked for several months.

"It's a big city with a small-town feeling, very comfortable and hospitable," said the 39-year-old.

The Korean-American restaurant manager has lived in several big cities, including Boston and New York City. Barnett stayed briefly in Hong Kong and Shanghai last year before moving to Chengdu.

"I love big cities," he said. "Chengdu is just another big city where I don't speak the language."

Barnett is among the increasing number of expatriates who are moving to Chengdu amid the city's quickening modernization.

More than 14,000 expatriates from 125 countries and regions now either work or study in the city, and the number keeps increasing, according to the 2012 Chengdu Investment Guide.

Barnett said living in Chengdu is like jogging, and living in Shanghai is like running. He said that doesn't mean the pace of life is slower in the southwestern city, only that people's attitudes in both places differ. In other words, he explained, Chengdu residents are more relaxed.

Sascha Matuszak, a German-American who came to Chengdu 10 years ago to work as a freelance



PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Chengdu's biggest community to accommodate expatriates is located in the city's high-tech development zone.

writer, had similar thoughts.

"People always say life in Chengdu is slow," he said. "It's not slow. Things are happening very quickly — metros, skyscrapers and airports. But people here are cool about it."

He said Shanghai and Beijing residents find the fast pace of those cities to be stressful. Chengdu residents, in contrast, find respite from those pressures in the city's food and tea, Matuszak said.

Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province, is home to many famous dishes, including *mapo tofu* and *kung pao chicken*.

Barnett said dining in New York is a serious ritual.

"But in Chengdu, people care more about food and taste," he said.

Barnett has worked in the food industry for more than 20 years.

He said diners in New York City are serious about matters such as the way a plate comes out, when it comes out and how it's served. People in Chengdu, in contrast, care only about one thing — taste.

Matuszak agreed.

"If chefs can't provide authentic, twice-cooked spicy pork (a traditional Sichuan cuisine), nobody will visit their restaurants in Chengdu," he said in the local dialect.

Chengdu residents tend to be fond of restaurants that are hidden in alleys and street corners and only have room for a few tables.

"If the chefs (at these places) aren't in a good mood, they'll just close their restaurants for a day or two," he said. "They're serious about their food."

Apart from Sichuan cuisine, people can find relaxation in the teahouses dotting nearly every corner of the city. In many ways, the teahouse is to Chengdu what the bar is to London and the cafe is to Paris.

Both Barnett and Matuszak go to teahouses in the city — often to meet friends. They said a cup of tea can cost them anything from less than a dollar to more than 10 dollars, depending on where they buy it.

"Everyone here has a teacup," said Matuszak, who is married to a Chengdu woman and has two sons. "People drink tea

while they're working."

Matuszak first arrived in Chengdu in 2002 and left and returned several times over the following years. In 2011, he spent an entire year in Shanghai in search of better pay. In the end, though, he decided to settle in Chengdu, where he began his Chinese journey.

"Chengdu has a little bit of everything," he said. "It has the culture of Beijing, but isn't as big. It has the business and jobs that Shanghai has, but isn't as stressful as Shanghai."

In the past few years, renowned organizations and economists have bestowed various honorary titles on Chengdu. The World Bank, for instance, has deemed it "a benchmark city for investment environment in inland China" and economists have called it the "engine" of the western development, a government initiative.

The city is also renowned for its manufacturing. Two-third of the world's iPads are made in Chengdu, and the city's production capacity of computers reaches one-fifth of the world's total.

The Chengdu Investment Presentation and Project Signing Ceremony, which was held in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen this month, was the occasion for pledges to invest 42.253 billion yuan (\$6.79 billion) into the city.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mayor Ge Honglin said Chengdu is poised to become the engine of the development of the country's western region, especially as domestic and foreign companies spend more in the city.

With such fast growth, Chengdu is almost certain to continue attracting foreigners, more and more of whom are taking to running businesses and restaurants.

To better accommodate expatriates, the Chengdu government has built up several international communities. The biggest one is in its high-tech development zone, where it has apartments, schools, hospitals, shopping malls and a community church to accommodate 5,000 people.

"Chengdu, with its comfortable living conditions, is ready to welcome more expatriates," said Tang Jiqiang, spokesman



Pandas are a great tourist attraction in Chengdu.



Sascha Matuszak relaxes at teatime in a small alley in Chengdu.

for the Chengdu Hi-Tech Development Zone.

"As I stay in Chengdu longer and longer, I feel more and more comfortable," Barnett said. "Like a nice pair of shoes, you never want to take them off."

Matuszak said he sees many of the same advantages.

"Right now, living here is not a problem," he said. "Many of my friends think Yunnan province is the best place to travel. But for living, they come here."

Proposed Beijing law seeks data on charities

Legislation mandates disclosure of philanthropic groups' fundraising

By HE DAN
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Beijing authorities have vowed to punish charity organizations that fail to disclose information as required, according to draft legislation.

The lack of a State-level law remains the biggest problem in efforts to promote transparency in the charity sector, a source from the country's top watchdog for charity organizations said on Tuesday.

The Regulations on Promoting the Development of Charity in Beijing state that charities that fail to disclose information will face a fine of up to 30,000 yuan (\$4,800).

The draft states that it is mandatory for a philanthropic organization to disclose information under six categories, including the organization's basic information, fundraising and the inflow and outflow of donations. All new information should be released within 20 days, it states.

The municipal government will help set up a platform for charities to make their information public.

The draft regulations also state that the public can ask philanthropic organizations to release other information if this requirement is in line with the law.

The draft, released on the website of the legal affairs office of Beijing, is open for public opinion until Jan 20.

Chen Lunan, who heads the charity and social donation department of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, said govern-

role in triggering competition among charity organizations and allows those that are more transparent and efficient to survive.

"Disclosure also makes it possible for the government to supervise charities," he said.

China's philanthropic sector has been losing credibility and money from the public, and lack of transparency is believed to be a major reason.

According to the China Charity and Donation Information Center, donations and goods going to the charity sector fell by about 18 percent, from 103.2 billion yuan in 2010 to 84.5 billion yuan in 2011.

Cui Lanxin, secretary-general of the Beijing Chunmiao Save the Children Foundation, which helps orphaned and severely sick children, said her organization updates donation information daily and details of charitable projects monthly on its website.

"I'm concerned whether it's mandatory for us to release the information again on the unified platform," she said. "If so, is there any financial aid for us to cover the extra expense?"

Hang Yu, who is in charge of website maintenance for the China Social Welfare Foundation, a public foundation in Beijing, urged the government to increase financial and technical support for grassroots organizations in terms of disclosure.

"Our foundation has sponsored more than 10 grassroots organizations, and although we expected them to hand in project information regularly for our website, they often complained that they are short of hands to collect the information," he said.



Without a dedicated law on charities, we don't have the legal basis to make information disclosure a legal obligation."

CHEN LUNAN
HEAD OF THE CHARITY AND SOCIAL DONATION DEPARTMENT OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AFFAIRS

ments, including those in Beijing and in Hunan and Guangdong provinces, have issued detailed regulations for disclosure of information by charity organizations after the ministry issued a guidance paper in late 2011.

"We encourage local governments to explore feasible ways for disclosure," he said. "Introducing penalty mechanisms will prompt charities to act."

He said his ministry has had many rounds of talks with the legislation department of the State Council but the State-level regulations on information disclosure have yet to come into force due to the lack of a higher-level law.

"Without a dedicated law on charities, we don't have the legal basis to make information disclosure a legal obligation," he said.

Liu Peifeng, a law expert at Beijing Normal University specializing in nonprofit organizations, said information disclosure plays an important



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