



Dandan noodle is a popular Sichuan-style dish. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



Sichuan's authentic dish Fuqifeipian is made of sliced beef and ox tongue in chili sauce.

'GASTRONOMY CITY' TAKES OVER SILICON VALLEY



Mapo tofu is a delicious dish to warm your stomach.



Spicy fried pork is a classic cuisine of Sichuan food.



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10
top chefs
from Chengdu visited high-tech companies in Silicon Valley

Incredible cuisine at the food festival in the US attracts visitors from home and abroad, **Zhuan Ti** reports.

To deepen ties with its friendship cities globally, Chengdu, a megacity in western China, is introducing traditional Sichuan culinary techniques and culture to people around the world, according to officials at an international food festival last month.

The 2016 Chengdu Food & Cultural Festival, held from Nov 10 to 19 in San Francisco, is the largest and first food event of its kind organized by San Francisco and Chengdu, the first Asian city to be named by UNESCO as a "city of gastronomy".

An evening gala, attended by Edwin Lee, mayor of San Francisco, Fu Yonglin, deputy mayor of Chengdu, and 250 Bay Area luminaries, was launched at San Francisco City Hall on Nov 10.

Top chefs from Chengdu served up signature dishes on a classic Sichuan food menu at the gala.

Renowned Sichuan artists offered the guests an amazing visual feast of Chengdu's Kung Fu Tea ceremony and face-changing, one of the traditional stunts of Sichuan Opera.

"San Francisco and Chengdu share many similarities. The people of both cities love culture, arts and technology and, in particular, food," said Lee.

"We are delighted to hold the festival and are looking forward to more food festivals that will further strengthen the ties between the

two cities," he said. His wife, Anita Lee, said she hopes to see further cooperation between the two in fields such as trade, cultural creativity, education and tourism.

During the festival, a team of 10 top Sichuan chefs visited the high-tech companies of Silicon Valley, including Intel, Oracle, Facebook, Cisco and Google.

Wang Qinru, a famous Chengdu chef, cooked typical Chengdu dishes with three other top chefs for staff at the headquarters of Cisco, including sliced beef and ox tongue in chili sauce, kung pao chicken and mapo tofu.

The chef said he was happy to promote Chengdu's food and culture at one of the world's leading high-tech companies.

"We worked until midnight the night before, making preparations for the activity.

But we never felt tired of it. All we want is to try our best to make the staff of Silicon Valley feel the charm of Sichuan cuisine," he said.

Amanda Filingeri, leader for Cisco's international communication and public relations, said her company has broadcast the activity to nearly 100,000 staff at 50 branches around the world. She said the activity makes her colleagues more familiar with Chengdu.

"I look forward to more exchanges with Chengdu in the future," she said.

The Chengdu chefs also visited famous Chinese restaurants in the area, and worked with their counterparts to provide dinners of Sichuan cuisine.

Five special Sichuan-themed culinary events were hosted at the Chinese restaurants Koi Palace, Chef Chu's, China Stix,

Crystal Jade and M.Y. China. Lawrence C. C. Chu, owner of Chef Chu's, said his restaurant prepared 11 tables for the event, and they were fully booked two weeks before the activity began.

"Chengdu is rich in delicacies from land while Silicon Valley abounds in seafood. The two regions are a perfect match for each other," he said.

The chefs also conducted talks at noted Bay Area institutions of higher learning — the Le Gordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts, Contra Costa College, and the Confucius Institute at San Francisco State University.

Martin Yan, an international culinary icon and Bay Area TV personality who helped to organize the Bay Area culinary exchange tour, said the event is a cultural exchange between two of the most dynamic regions of the world. "It is a historical step to establish cultural, business and social ties between two cities where good food and good cooking are always appreciated," he said.

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The spice must flow

As a prelude to the 2016 Chengdu Food & Cultural Festival, a Sichuan cuisine overseas promotion center and a Chengdu tourism experience center were set up in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

The two centers were located at Yan Can Cook Inc, the catering company of Chef Martin Yan, famous star of the long-running television show Yan Can Cook.

Yan said he will try his best to introduce the food and culture of Chengdu to audiences across the United States through a variety of activities.

He also announced that the next series of his Yan Can Cook show will be produced in Chengdu. It is a series of 13 half-hour episodes entitled A Taste of Chengdu, with Martin Yan.

The new series is scheduled for production in early 2017 and to launch on PBS in 2018.

"This is truly an ambitious campaign," Yan said. "It's designed to put Chengdu front and center on the North American stage."

During the festival, Chengdu also set up a second Sichuan cuisine overseas promotion center in Los Angeles at a new branch of Chengdu Impression, a restaurant headquartered in Chengdu.

Officials at the Chengdu Commission of Commerce said the promotion center in San Francisco aims to improve the popularity of Sichuan cuisine and Chengdu among US society, while the one in Los Angeles is intended to increase the recognition of Sichuan cuisine.

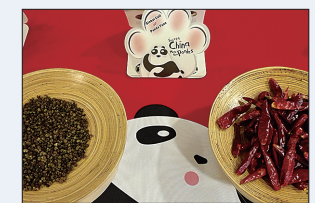
Du Bin, chairman of Chengdu Impression, said the restaurant branch in Los Angeles covers a total area of 670 square meters.

The Sichuan cuisine promotion center, covering 80 square meters, will focus on education and exchange.

"We will keep the original flavor of Sichuan cuisine, while at the same time making the dining experience more diversified and globalized," he said.

Du said he will also make full use of the platform to promote Chengdu culture and offer the experience to other Sichuan restaurants that are willing to expand their businesses overseas.

To accelerate the international promotion of Sichuan cuisine, Chengdu is scheduled to set up 10 Sichuan cuisine overseas promotion centers in three years.



Chilli and black pepper are famous flavors in Sichuan.



Foreigners take photos with a panda ambassador during the event.

San Franciscans optimistic on deepening, extension of bilateral ties

By ZHUAN TI

Chengdu in Sichuan province and San Francisco have resolved to further deepen friendly city relations, with greater collaboration among companies on both sides and various bilateral events being staged.

The two cities signed an agreement to establish a friendly cooperation relationship in October last year, following the establishment of formal exchanges in 2013.

The two cities were first linked by a non-stop air route in June 2014, when United Airlines launched the Chengdu-San Francisco direct flight, the first direct flight linking China's central and western regions to the US.

Edwin Lee, mayor of San Francisco, said his city attaches great importance to cooperation and exchanges with Chengdu, and he is optimistic about the bilateral ties.

"Both cities take innovation as the engine for city development. And we share so many similarities in fields such as science and technology, education and tourism," he said.

Thanks to its opening-up in recent years, Chengdu has turned into a top destination for international companies to invest in western China.

It is home to 278 Fortune Global 500 companies, including a number of high-tech names from Silicon Valley, such as Oracle, Intel, Hewlett Packard and Cisco. Local officials in Chengdu expect to draw more



Top chefs from Sichuan province aim to promote the taste of local food to people around the world at the 2016 Chengdu Food & Cultural Festival.

talents, companies, high-tech projects and capital from San Francisco to Chengdu as the two sides deepen cooperation, providing strong support to build the Chinese western hub into a nationally central city.

Exchange events

Todd Rowe, global managing director for channels sales at Google's Global Marketing Solutions, said the

food and cultural festival held earlier this month has strengthened ties between the two cities and will open a gateway for further cooperation.

"Chengdu is a dynamic city. Its large talent pool, competitive high-tech companies and huge economic scale create great development potential," he said, adding that the advanced flight networks also add wings to Chengdu's development.

Rowe said Google is considering increasing its presence in Chengdu by developing its collaboration with the region's companies over a wider range of sectors.

"Our target is to establish cooperation with 1,000 companies in Chengdu," he said, adding that Google is currently helping small and medium-sized enterprises in Chengdu to expand in the overseas



Zhang Jiao (right), deputy secretary of the Chengdu Cuisine Association, gives a panda gift to a representative from payment technology company Visa Inc during the event.

market. The internet giant has set up an experience center in Chengdu and has cooperated with 25 companies from the city.

Bart Fregoso, general manager for Cisco's Asian Affairs, said his company is looking to work more closely with Chengdu in scientific and technological innovation.

"The food and cultural festival is the first step for our staff to know



And we share so many similarities in fields such as science and technology, education and tourism."

Edwin Lee, mayor of San Francisco

about Chengdu," he said. During the food and culture festival, Chengdu sent invitations to high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, inviting them to co-organize a charter flight tour to Chengdu.

The city also invited high-tech talents from Silicon Valley to attend next year's Chengdu Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship Fair, an international platform that mainly promotes the exchange and transaction of innovative ideas and technological achievements.

Vaughan Smith, vice-president for corporate development at Facebook Inc, said he was interested in attending both activities. "The fast-paced economic growth and profound cultural background of Chengdu really impress me," he said.