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Report Highlights:

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, is a thriving economic and cultural hub in Western China, offering significant opportunities for U.S. agricultural exports. With a population of over 21 million and a rapidly growing middle class, the city demonstrates strong demand for high-quality imported food products, particularly in sectors like retail, food processing, and the hotel and restaurant industry. Chengdu's vibrant culinary scene, including its renowned Sichuan cuisine and hotpot culture, is increasingly incorporating premium U.S. ingredients such as meat, seafood, and poultry. While challenges such as price sensitivity and limited cold chain infrastructure exist, the modernization of Sichuan cuisine and rising consumer interest in health-focused foods create promising avenues for U.S. exporters. Chengdu's strategic location and dynamic market make it a key gateway for U.S. agricultural products in Western China.

City Overview

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan Province, is a major economic, financial, and cultural center in Western China. Known for its rapid economic growth and vibrant business environment, Chengdu serves as a hub for technology and innovation, attracting both domestic and international investments. With a population of 21 million people, Chengdu is recognized as a “new first-tier” city, boasting a strong economy and high quality of life. In 2024, Chengdu's GDP reached approximately \$326.5 billion, contributing to more than 36 percent of Sichuan Province’s overall GDP and reflecting a 5.7% year-on-year growth.



Chengdu in China Map

Chengdu is a vibrant hub for imported products, with thriving sectors in alcohol consumption, retail, hotel and restaurant industries (HRI), and food processing. The city's food sector is particularly dynamic, driven by a growing middle class with increasing purchasing power and a strong preference for high-quality, diverse food products. Renowned for its spicy Sichuan cuisine, Chengdu's rich

Table 1: Chengdu City at a Glance 2024 (USD calculated at 05/19/25 rate ¹)	
Province	Sichuan
Population	21.4million
Land Area	14,335km ²
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	\$326.5 billion
GDP per capita	\$15,500
Per capita disposable income	\$4,767
Growth in per capita disposable income	4.6%
Total Retail Sales of Consumer Goods	\$150.5 billion
Tourism Revenue	\$51.8 billion
Foreign Direct Investment	\$1.7 billion
Total Imports	\$ 52.1 billion
Total Exports	\$ 64.5 billion
Source: Chengdu Economic and Social Development Report 2024	

culinary heritage and robust tourism continue to attract visitors and food enthusiasts, further driving demand for premium ingredients and international flavors.

Chengdu is a top tourist destination for both domestic and foreign travelers. With Tianfu Airport beginning operations in 2021, Chengdu has become the third city in the country to have two international airports, joining Beijing and Shanghai. The city’s transportation network, combining railways and waterways, plays a crucial role in facilitating trade, particularly with Europe and Southeast Asia, through the China-Europe Railway Express and connections to Southeast Asian ports.

¹ The exchange rate used in this report is 1 USD = 7.2 RMB.

Distribution Channels & Logistics

As an inland city without a seaport, Chengdu relies on road and rail transport to receive imported goods. U.S. agricultural products are typically shipped to major coastal ports such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, or Yantian, and then transported inland to Chengdu by truck or domestic rail, depending on the product category and cold chain requirements. For European goods, the China-Europe Railway Express provides a more direct and efficient logistics option, connecting several European countries, such as Russia, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands to Chengdu in 12 to 18 days. This rail service offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional sea freight, significantly reducing transit time and enhancing supply chain efficiency for European products. While this channel is not applicable for U.S. shipments, Chengdu's growing demand and improving logistics infrastructure make it an increasingly accessible market for imported food and agricultural products.

Market for Imported Products

Serving as the gateway to western China and the hub of trade in southwest China, Chengdu is an increasingly vibrant city for imported products. Chengdu boasts a robust alcohol consumption market and the largest number of bars in the country. The hotel and restaurant industry are very well developed, as Chengdu is one of the top three cities with the greatest number of visitors. Chengdu also has a robust food processing and animal husbandry industry, with New Hope Group, a giant of food processing and animal husbandry headquartered in Chengdu.

- *Retail*

Chengdu's retail sector is highly fragmented, with no single channel dominating the market. Overseas retail chains such as Metro, Ito Yokado, and Sam's Club have been present for years, offering a variety of imported products. Local Chinese retail chains like Ole, and Hema are also recognized as major destinations for purchasing imported goods. In response to competition from online platforms, major retailers have also launched online delivery services, targeting younger consumers as the primary audience. Ito Yokado, Sam's Club, Ole, and Hema have become key sources for imported products. Reports indicate that the percentage of imported products has been increasing as consumers become more concerned about food safety and health. Safe, healthy, convenient, and cost-effective products are becoming increasingly popular among consumers.

Table 2: Chengdu Retailers of Imported Ag Products (As of June 2025)

Retailer	Ownership	#Outlets
Ito Yokado Dept. Store	Japanese	7
Sam's Club	U.S.	3
Hema	Chinese	30
CR Vanguard (Ole and Blt)	Chinese	3
BHG	Chinese	2
Metro	German	3

Chengdu's convenience store market is dominated by Hongqi Chain, a local convenience chain established in 2000. Hongqi Chain now operates over 3,600 stores in Sichuan Province, with half located in downtown Chengdu. Almost every neighborhood and street in Chengdu features the presence of Hongqi stores. Japanese convenience stores Seven-Eleven, Lawson, and Family Mart have also been in Chengdu for years and developed rapidly. In contrast to Hongqi's strategy of capturing the community market, these three major brands tend to open their stores in high-traffic areas such as office buildings, commercial districts, and metro stations. Although the combined total number of Japanese convenience stores is only one-eighth that of Hongqi Chain, they dominate the 24-hour convenience store market in Chengdu. Known for its "night-time economy," Chengdu frequently sees young people gathering at these convenience stores late at night to make purchases.

- *HRI*

Chengdu's hotel and restaurant sector is thriving, driven by its large population, booming tourism, and rich culinary tradition. While China's HRI industry has faced a general consumption downgrade, Chengdu has remained more resilient than cities like Beijing and Shanghai, thanks to its strong appeal to both domestic and international tourists. Recognized as a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, Chengdu boasts a vibrant food scene with 13 Michelin-starred restaurants as of 2025 and a range of popular restaurant chains. Affordable, high-quality dining is widely accessible across the city. By the end of 2024, Chengdu had 15 five-star hotels—half of Sichuan Province's total—which, along with high-end restaurants, serve as key channels for U.S. agricultural products. From 2020 to 2023, fine dining expanded rapidly, though growth slowed after 2023 due to operational pressures. Nonetheless, the sector's overall quality improved. While Sichuan cuisine remains dominant, the growing presence of international culinary concepts and the fusion of global and local flavors are reshaping Chengdu's dynamic food landscape.

Chengdu, renowned as the “capital of hotpot,” is increasingly integrating premium U.S. meat and seafood to elevate its iconic cuisine. Leading hotpot chains are turning to U.S. products to diversify offerings and enhance the dining experience. Known for its bold flavors and versatility, hotpot is ideally suited to a wide range of U.S. agricultural ingredients that enrich taste and texture. In May 2024, ATO Beijing spotlighted these opportunities in nearby Chongqing, reinforcing the strong fit of U.S. products in Sichuan-style hotpot and their growing role in China's evolving foodservice sector.

- *Food Processing*

Food processing is a pillar of Chengdu, known for its competitiveness and distinct regional characteristics. The city excels in key areas such as pre-prepared foods, seasonings, snack products, beverages, and baijiu (Chinese liquor), with Sichuan-style prepared dishes and seasonings particularly popular among consumers.



U.S. Chicken Paws and Meat Manufactured by a Leading Food Processing Company in Chengdu

Supported by favorable policies by local government, the industry’s operating revenue reached \$33.3 billion in 2020 and is projected to exceed \$56 billion by 2025 and \$97 billion by 2030. In recent years, the food processing demand for high-quality ingredients has grown significantly, creating opportunities for U.S. exports such as nuts, dried fruits, meat, poultry, and seafood. Headquartered in Chengdu, New Hope Group—one of China’s largest private agribusinesses—is a key player in the sector, with extensive operations in meat processing and supply for both domestic and international markets.

Table 3: SWOT Analysis: U.S. Agricultural Products Exports to Chengdu

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Strong fit with premium dining segment (e.g., boutique restaurants, Sam’s Club, Hema, high-end hotels)✓ Affluent consumers associate U.S. products with safety, nutrition, and international quality✓ Existing ATO and cooperator promotions build brand awareness and trade relationships	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Price sensitivity in Chengdu’s mid- and low-tier restaurants limits usage of higher-cost U.S. products✓ Limited cold chain and distribution coverage outside city center restricts market reach.✓ Deep-rooted culinary traditions favor local ingredients, limiting openness to unfamiliar U.S. products
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Modernization of Sichuan cuisine opens doors for fusion with U.S. ingredients✓ Expanding presence of international retail formats (Sam’s Club, Metro, Hema) boosts shelf space for U.S. goods✓ Rising demand for health-focused, functional foods aligns with U.S. offerings (e.g., organic, fortified, low-sodium)	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Intense price competition from lower-cost imports and domestic suppliers✓ U.S. products often confined to niche, premium channels—vulnerable to economic slowdown✓ Market saturation in categories like wine, snack foods, and sauces makes entry more challenging

U.S. Ag Products Market Entry

Chengdu's residents are increasingly drawn to imported products, valuing quality, reliability, and food safety, and are willing to pay a premium for these attributes. Health-conscious consumers are showing growing interest in products with lower sugar and fat content, further driving demand for healthier options. The city’s evolving culinary landscape is reflected in the doubling of western-style restaurants between 2019 and 2024, highlighting strong local interest in international cuisine. At the same time, products that cater to Chengdu’s bold and spicy flavor preferences, rooted in its Sichuan culinary heritage, perform particularly well. With steady growth in demand for imported alcohol, snack foods, and premium meat products such as beef, pork, and poultry, Chengdu has solidified its position as a key destination for international trade and U.S. agricultural exports. For specific information on regulatory requirements for imports please see [FAS China’s FAIRs Report](#).

- *Alcohol and Ingredients*

Chengdu is a hub for renowned breweries, baijiu producers, and spirits distilleries. U.S. brewing and distilling ingredients—particularly hops and sorghum—are widely used due to their superior quality, diverse varieties, and reliable supply. With the rapid rise of China’s craft beer industry, U.S. hops have become indispensable to many breweries, especially in Chengdu. The city is home to several award-winning craft brewers, including Wild West and NBeer. For more details, see the USDA report [US Brewing Ingredients - Opportunities in China's Booming Craft Beer Sector | CH2025-0099](#)

Chengdu also boasts one of the most active alcohol consumption markets in China and the largest number of bars nationwide. Known historically as the “Land of Abundance,” the city fosters a relaxed lifestyle with vibrant nightlife and entertainment scenes. Chengdu ranks second only to Shanghai in nightlife activity and dining venues, showcasing residents' robust appetite for leisure spending and positioning the city as a prime market for alcoholic beverages.

Imported U.S. wine, beer, and spirits resonate with Chengdu’s younger consumers, who are increasingly willing to pay a premium for quality and uniqueness. For example, a glass of Goose Island beer brewed in Chengdu sells for about \$3 more than in Shenzhen and \$1.5 more than in Shanghai. Rising disposable incomes, a growing middle class, and the influence of Western culture and social media are further fueling demand. As consumers seek more distinctive drinking experiences, opportunities for U.S. exporters to expand in Chengdu’s dynamic and evolving alcohol market are set to grow.



U.S. beer and brewing ingredients showcased at ATO Beijing’s marketing activity

The China Food and Drinks Fair (CFDF), also known as *Tangjiuhui* (TJH), is China’s largest trade show for wine, spirits, and food. Held annually in Chengdu since 1987, the CFDF has become a premier platform for the alcohol industry, drawing thousands of domestic and international exhibitors and buyers, and underscoring Chengdu’s pivotal role in China’s alcohol production and consumption.

- *Poultry*

Poultry products, especially chicken paws, are highly sought-after ingredients in Chengdu, particularly in the processing of pre-prepared and snack foods. Southwest China, including Chengdu, is one of the primary destinations for imports of U.S. chicken paws. Local food processors are adept at developing a wide range of popular chicken paw snacks in



U.S. Chicken Paw Application in Sichuan Cuisine

localized flavors, including pickled pepper paws, tiger-skin fried paws, and lemon-flavored deboned paws.

Although U.S. chicken paws are priced higher than domestic and some other imported options, they remain highly popular among Chengdu's food manufacturers due to their large size, superior texture, and excellent taste. As consumer preferences shift toward high-quality and diverse snack offerings, demand for U.S. chicken paws is expected to continue growing, presenting strong opportunities for U.S. exporters in the region.

- *Meat and Seafood*



U.S. Meat Showcased at ATO Beijing Marketing Event in Chengdu

Chengdu's demand for meat remains strong, fueled by its vibrant hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) sector. The rising number of Western-style restaurants—especially steakhouses—has driven growing interest in U.S. beef and pork. At the same time, high-end Sichuan cuisine restaurants, including popular hotpot chains, are increasingly incorporating U.S. protein specialty cuts, such as pork feet, stomach, ribs, beef omasum, heat-processed chicken paws, Alaska Pollock surimi, lobster, and halibut into their menu, although the volume remains relatively small. These establishments value the consistent quality, tenderness, and flavor of U.S. protein products,

particularly for spicy and richly seasoned dishes. This trend reflects a broader shift toward premium ingredients and more diverse dining experiences, further strengthening demand for U.S. meat in Chengdu's dynamic and evolving food landscape.

- *Animal Husbandry*

Chengdu and its surrounding areas are home to several leading animal husbandry enterprises, including New Hope, Tongwei, TechLex Group, and COFCO Feed. These companies represent strong demand for U.S. agricultural inputs such as genetics, soybeans, corn, sorghum, and a range of feed and feed ingredients—including alfalfa hay, whey protein, lactose, and specialized feed additives.

As these firms expand and adopt more advanced farming practices, the need for high-quality, nutrient-rich feed will become increasingly important. Growing consumer demand for premium meat and dairy products is also pushing producers to prioritize feed solutions that enhance livestock health, performance, and sustainability. This shift presents valuable opportunities for U.S. exporters to deepen their footprint in Chengdu's dynamic market by supplying reliable, high-performance feed products tailored to the evolving needs of the region's livestock industry.

Key Trade Show in Chengdu

- *The China Food and Drinks Fair (CFDF)*

The China Food and Drinks Fair (CFDF), also known as Tang Jiu Hui (TJH), dates back to 1955 and is the largest food and beverage trade show in China. While the CFDF is held twice a year, the Spring Session—commonly referred to as Chun Tang—takes place annually in Chengdu and is considered the main event. The fair features separate exhibition halls for food & beverages and alcoholic products.



U.S. Pavilion at 2025 Pre-Show of CFDF

Unlike most trade shows, CFDF is preceded by a series of highly active, alcohol-focused pre-shows that occur three to four days before the main event. These pre-shows, often called "hotel shows," are hosted by individual companies in various hotels and spotlight specific alcohol categories. Among the most popular venues for imported alcohol pre-shows are Niccolo (wine and beer), Shangri-La (wine), and Kempinski (whiskey and beer). ATO Beijing has collaborated with several organizers in recent years to support a U.S. Wine Pavilion at these events. U.S. wine exporters interested in participating are encouraged to contact ATO

Beijing for more information and guidance on how to get involved.

- *Whiskey Fun Chengdu*

Established in 2018, Whiskey Fun Chengdu is a weekend tabletop trade show designed to engage both consumers and professional buyers. The event provides a platform for new-to-market brands to connect directly with end-users and gain insights through firsthand feedback. The 2025 edition is set to take place from November 1 to 2 at the Grand Hyatt Chengdu. ATO Beijing is ready to assist interested U.S. spirits companies in connecting with the show organizers for more information and participation details.



A Bustling Scene from Whiskey Fun Chengdu 2024

Key Contacts and Further Information

[Exporter Guide Annual | CH2024-0076](#)

[US Brewing Ingredients - Opportunities in Chinas Booming Craft Beer Sector | CH2025-0099](#)

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