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Report Highlights:

Chongqing, a major economic and logistics hub in Southwest China with more than 31 million residents and a 2025 GDP of RMB 3.38 trillion (\$469 billion), offers growing opportunities for U.S. agricultural exports. Its strategic location and expanding logistics infrastructure strengthen its role as a gateway for imported food products into western China. Demand for high-quality imports is supported by Chongqing's hotpot culture, growing premium restaurant and retail sectors, and food processing industry, creating opportunities for U.S. meat, poultry and alcohol. While competition and consumer price sensitivity remain challenges, rising incomes, premiumization, and growing interest in food safety continue to support market opportunities for U.S. suppliers.

Executive Summary

Chongqing is one of Southwest China's largest consumer markets, with 31.9 million residents and a \$497 billion economy in 2025. As a major commercial and logistics hub, it connects western China through the Yangtze River, China-Europe Railway Express, and New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor. Its renowned hotpot culture, expanding premium retail and foodservice sectors, and strong tourism continue to support demand for imported food and beverages. Despite price sensitivity and strong competition, premiumization and growing interest in food safety and quality create opportunities for U.S. exporters.

Best Product Prospects for U.S. Exporters

- Beef — Strong demand from premium hotpot restaurants and retail, including specialty cuts such as honeycomb tripe, omasum, and beef aorta.
- Poultry (chicken feet) — U.S. products are valued for their size, texture, and consistent quality and are widely used in processed snacks.
- Craft beer — Strong market acceptance, with U.S. brands accounting for more than half of the taps at a leading local craft beer bar; consumers increasingly trade up to U.S. craft beer.

Entry and Localization Tips for U.S. Companies

- Leverage hotpot culture by positioning U.S. beef and poultry around quality, consistency, and traceability.
- Target premium retail channels such as Sam's Club and Hema to reach higher-income consumers.
- Use Chongqing as a regional gateway to reach Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and other Southwest China markets.
- Engage craft beer and spirits venues to build brand awareness among younger, trend-driven consumers.

City Overview

Located at the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, Chongqing is one of China's four municipalities directly administered by the central government and the largest municipality by population. The city serves as the economic, transportation, manufacturing, and logistics center of Southwest China and plays a pivotal role in the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle.

With a resident population of approximately 31.9 million, Chongqing has one of the largest consumer bases in inland China. In 2025, the municipality's gross domestic product (GDP) reached approximately RMB 3.38 trillion (US\$497 billion)¹, representing 5.3 percent year-on-year growth, while GDP per capita exceeded RMB 105,000 (US\$15,441). Total retail sales of consumer goods reached approximately RMB 1.67 trillion (US\$245 billion), reflecting the continued recovery of domestic consumption.



Table 1: Chongqing City at a Glance 2025

Municipality	Chongqing
Population	31.9 million
Land Area	82,400 km²
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	\$497 billion
GDP per capita	\$15,441
Per capita disposable income	\$4,767
Growth in per capita disposable income	4.7%
Total Retail Sales of Consumer Goods	\$245billion
Tourism Revenue	\$81 billion
Foreign Direct Investment	\$637million
Total Imports	\$ 85 billion
Total Exports	\$ 32 billion
Source: Chongqing Economic and Social Development Report 2025	

Traditionally recognized as one of China's industrial powerhouses, Chongqing has diversified rapidly into modern services, tourism, logistics, and consumer industries. The municipality has become an increasingly important destination for imported food products due to rising household incomes, rapid urbanization, and a vibrant restaurant culture centered around Chongqing hotpot.

As one of China's most popular tourist destinations, Chongqing attracts well over 100 million domestic visitors annually, driven by its mountainous cityscape, Yangtze River attractions, and vibrant nightlife. Tourism continues to support strong demand from the hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) sector, particularly for premium imported meat, seafood, alcoholic beverages, and specialty ingredients.

Unlike many inland cities, Chongqing enjoys unique transportation advantages through its extensive multimodal logistics network. The municipality is China's largest inland river port along the Yangtze

¹ The exchange rate used in this report is 1 USD = 6.8RMB.

River and serves as a major rail hub connecting western China with Europe through the China-Europe Railway Express. Chongqing is also the origin of the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, linking western China with Southeast Asia through ports in Guangxi, significantly improving logistics efficiency for imported products

Distribution Channels & Logistics

Chongqing benefits from direct access to both inland water transportation and an extensive multimodal logistics network. Imported agricultural products typically arrive through Shanghai, Shenzhen, or Guangzhou before being transported upstream via the Yangtze River, by rail, or by truck to Chongqing. For time-sensitive products, Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport provides direct cargo connections with major domestic and international markets.

Chongqing has become one of western China's most important logistics hubs through three major transportation corridors:

- **Yangtze River Golden Waterway**, providing efficient river transportation from eastern China's seaports;
- **China-Europe Railway Express (Chongqing)**, connecting Chongqing with major European logistics centers in approximately two weeks;
- **New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor**, linking western China with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) markets through Guangxi's seaports.

These transportation networks significantly improve supply chain resilience and reduce transportation costs compared with many inland cities, making Chongqing an increasingly attractive destination for imported agricultural products.

As the commercial hub for Southwest China, Chongqing also serves as a distribution center for neighboring provinces and municipalities, including Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and parts of Hubei and Shaanxi, further expanding the market reach of imported agricultural products.

Market for Imported Products

As the commercial center of Southwest China and one of China's largest municipalities, Chongqing represents an increasingly important destination for imported agricultural products. Rising household incomes, rapid urbanization, expanding premium retail channels, and the city's internationally renowned hotpot culture continue to drive demand for imported food and beverages. In addition to serving its own population of nearly 32 million residents, Chongqing functions as a regional distribution center for surrounding provinces, extending market opportunities throughout western China.

Imported products are increasingly viewed by middle- and upper-income consumers as offering superior quality, food safety, and nutritional value. At the same time, the rapid expansion of e-commerce, on-

demand retail, and membership warehouse clubs has significantly improved consumer access to imported agricultural products.

Retail

Chongqing’s retail market has increasingly shifted toward modern supermarkets, membership warehouse clubs, premium grocery chains, and online retail platforms as key channels for imported agricultural products. Regional retailer Chongqing Department Store (CBEST) remains a major market player, operating 263 stores and retail outlets across Chongqing and neighboring provinces as of the end of 2025, with RMB 14.7 billion (\$2.2 billion) in operating revenue. CBEST reported that while consumers have become more price-sensitive amid weaker economic conditions, demand for imported food products remains resilient, driven by perceptions of food safety and quality.

Premium retailers such as Sam’s Club and Hema (Freshippo) are the leading channels for imported products, particularly among higher-income consumers, while discount chains such as Tiao Ma are expanding rapidly to meet growing demand for value-oriented shopping. Although Chongqing has three Ole' stores, industry contacts reported that sales have lagged behind Sam’s Club and Hema because of its premium pricing, with many products priced two to three times higher than those in conventional supermarkets, limiting its appeal to a small segment of ultra-high-income consumers.

Table 2. Major Retailers of Imported Agricultural Products in Chongqing (2026)

Retailer	Ownership	Primary Customer Base	#Outlets
Ole'	China	Premium imported food shoppers	3
Sam's Club	U.S.	Upper-middle and affluent households	2
Metro	Germany	Middle-income consumers	4
Hema (Freshippo)	China	Upper-middle income consumers	19
Yonghui Superstores	China	Mainstream consumers	53
Walmart	U.S.	Mainstream consumers	6
Chongbai Supermarket & New Century Supermarket	China	Mainstream consumers	200+

Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional (HRI)

Chongqing's HRI sector is among the most dynamic in southwestern China, supported by its large urban population, strong domestic tourism, and renowned culinary culture. Hotpot remains the dominant foodservice segment and continues to drive demand for high-quality meat, poultry, seafood, seasonings, and specialty ingredients.

The sector, however, has come under pressure from slower economic growth and government austerity measures. According to the local catering industry association, mid-range restaurants with average per capita spending of \$22–45 have been the hardest hit, as government banquets, business dining, and official receptions have declined significantly. In contrast, premium restaurants serving affluent consumers and value-oriented establishments have remained relatively resilient. As consumers become more price-conscious, restaurants are placing greater emphasis on cost control while seeking differentiated products that enhance menu offerings and attract customers.

Despite these headwinds, Chongqing's foodservice market continues to diversify. Western restaurants, premium steakhouses, boutique cafés, cocktail bars, and craft beer venues are expanding in commercial districts such as Jiefangbei, Guanyinqiao, and Liangjiang New Area. Growing interest among younger consumers in premium dining experiences and international cuisines, together with the municipality's strong tourism sector, continues to create opportunities for U.S. suppliers of high-quality proteins, specialty ingredients, and beverages.

Food Processing

Food processing is one of Chongqing's largest manufacturing industries and continues to expand as demand grows for convenience foods, prepared meals, and value-added agricultural products. The municipality has become a leading production base for hotpot soup bases, compound seasonings, self-heating meals, snack foods, beverages, and other ready-to-eat products, supplying both the domestic market and overseas Chinese communities.

Local manufacturers are increasingly incorporating imported proteins and food ingredients into frozen prepared meals, ready-to-cook meal kits, and other premium products to enhance quality and product differentiation. As consumers seek higher-quality, more convenient food options, demand for premium imported ingredients is expected to continue growing.

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

Strengths ✓ Strong hotpot culture drives demand for premium imported proteins. ✓ Growing middle-income consumers value imported products for quality, safety, and consistency. ✓ Advanced logistics networks improve access to imported products.	Weaknesses ✓ Price sensitivity remains high, especially in mass-market foodservice. ✓ Inland location can increase logistics costs for chilled and frozen products. ✓ Strong competition from domestic and third-country suppliers on price.
Opportunities ✓ Growth of premium retail, membership clubs, and instant retail expands sales channels. ✓ Premiumization of restaurants drives demand for high-quality imported ingredients. ✓ Rising demand for healthy, nutritious, and traceable products benefits U.S. suppliers.	Threats ✓ Intense price competition from lower-cost imports and domestic suppliers ✓ U.S. products often confined to niche, premium channels—vulnerable to economic slowdown ✓ Trade policy and regulatory changes may affect import costs and market access.

U.S. Agricultural Products Market Entry

Consumers in Chongqing increasingly associate imported agricultural products with superior food safety, consistent quality, and premium value. While affordability remains an important consideration, rising incomes and growing awareness of food quality are driving demand for imported fruits, nuts, meat, poultry, and alcoholic beverages, particularly among younger consumers and families. The municipality's expanding premium retail, foodservice, and food processing sectors provide multiple market entry opportunities for U.S. exporters. Participation in trade shows, retail promotions, and importer education programs can help build market awareness and facilitate sales.

Poultry

Poultry products remain an important component of Chongqing cuisine, particularly within hotpot, prepared foods, snack foods, and quick-service restaurants. Chicken feet, wings, drumsticks, and specialty cuts are widely consumed both in restaurants and as packaged snack products.

Demand for imported chicken feet continues to present opportunities for U.S. exporters. Food processors in Chongqing manufacture a broad range of flavored chicken feet products, including pickled pepper, spicy braised, lemon-flavored, and boneless varieties, which are distributed throughout



Figure 1: Poultry Snack Products at a Local Grocery Store

Southwest China.

Although imported chicken feet generally command higher prices than domestic products, many processors continue to prefer U.S. supplies because of their larger size, superior texture, and consistent quality. These attributes improve product appearance and consumer acceptance in premium snack food applications.

As prepared foods and convenience products continue expanding, demand for imported poultry ingredients is expected to remain stable.

Meat

Chongqing's vibrant restaurant industry and internationally renowned hotpot culture make the municipality one of Southwest China's largest consumers of meat products. The continued expansion of premium barbecue restaurants, Western steakhouses, and international hotels has further diversified demand for imported proteins, while consumers increasingly value the tenderness, consistency, and traceability associated with premium U.S. meat products.

Meetings with a leading local beef importer indicated that demand for imported beef remains resilient despite broader economic headwinds, supported by limited domestic beef production and growing consumer familiarity with imported products through overseas travel and international exposure. The importer identified U.S. beef as a premium product recognized for its quality and consistency and expects demand to remain strong in high-end restaurants and premium retail channels.

High-end hotpot restaurants also expressed strong interest in sourcing U.S. beef products, particularly honeycomb tripe, omasum ("hairy tripe"), and beef aorta ("crisp tube"), which are staple ingredients in Chongqing hotpot. They noted that consumer demand for these specialty cuts remains robust and believe high-quality U.S. products would be well received if they become available in the Chinese market at competitive prices.

Alcohol

Chongqing presents promising opportunities for U.S. alcoholic beverages, particularly premium craft beer. The city's strong beer-drinking culture, supported by its hot climate and spicy cuisine, continues to drive robust beer consumption, while growing interest among younger consumers and women is fueling the expansion of the craft beer segment. Meetings with a leading local craft beer bar



Figure 2: Craft Beer Taps at a Leading Craft Beer Bar in Chongqing

demonstrated strong market acceptance of U.S. products, with more than half of its 37 draft taps dedicated to U.S. craft beers. Although many consumers initially enter the category through lower-priced domestic craft beers, they often trade up to U.S. products as they become more familiar with different beer styles and flavor profiles, recognizing the diversity, innovation, and quality of American craft beer. This trend suggests continued growth potential for premium U.S. craft beer despite a more price-sensitive consumer environment.

Demand for imported spirits, particularly U.S. whiskey, is also increasing as younger consumers increasingly favor whiskey and cocktails over traditional baijiu. High-end restaurants, cocktail bars, and specialty retailers are expanding their imported spirits selections to meet this growing demand.

In contrast, imported wine demand has softened due to the decline in government banquets and business entertainment. However, premium retail channels, including Sam's Club and e-commerce platforms, continue to support steady growth in wine sales for home consumption and gifting.

China (Chongqing) Hotpot Ingredients Exhibition

As China's "Hotpot Capital," Chongqing hosts one of the country's leading exhibitions dedicated to the hotpot industry. The exhibition brings together manufacturers, distributors, restaurant chains, ingredient suppliers, cold chain logistics providers, and foodservice buyers from across China. Products showcased include meat, seafood, poultry, prepared foods, seasonings, beverages, and kitchen equipment.

The exhibition provides an excellent platform for U.S. exporters of beef, pork, poultry, seafood, dairy products, frozen foods, and food ingredients to connect directly with restaurant operators and food processors serving the rapidly growing hotpot sector.

Key Contacts and Further Information

For more detailed information on the products and market conditions discussed in this report, please refer to the following recommended USDA GAIN reports.

[Exporter Guide Annual](#)

[Food Processing Ingredients Annual](#)

[China Food Service Hotel Restaurant Institutional Annual](#)

[Retail Foods Annual](#)

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