

Wellness In Chengdu, China

TRAVEL

By Rona Berg / April 27, 2016



Known as China's fourth city after Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, is home to 80 percent of the world's pandas, with the birthplace of Taoism nearby. Here are two amazing places—one city, one country—where you can experience the beauty of Chengdu.

CITY : The Temple House Hotel

The latticed entrance to [The Temple House](#), a stylish Swires Hotel that opened in 2015, features an ancient courtyard dating back to the 17th century Qing Dynasty. The Library, on the ground

floor, is a quiet place to relax and enjoy a glass of wine or tea. (Chengdu is renowned for its teahouses.) The nearby Gallery is a showcase for local artists. There are yoga mats in the lovely modern rooms, and breakfast includes organic cold-pressed juices.



But the Mi Xun Teahouse and brand-new Mix Xun Spa are a special highlight: an extraordinary integrated experience that I wish I could return to again and again. Lydia Xu, the knowledgeable teahouse manager, has created a beautiful tea list of over 40 teas to complement the stunning vegetarian menu—spinach and tofu sheet salad, Sichuan cold noodles with organic sprouts and flowers—inspired by traditional Chinese medicine. My favorite: a blend of mulberry leaf, chrysanthemum and dianthus leaf tea, that yields a gorgeous purple-brown color. Xu has worked with Spa Director Kelly Coates-Xu to custom-blend teas that sync with the treatments, i.e., detox, anti-aging. At the spa, you are served the corresponding tea, and it is blended into treatments like

the Four Tea Exfoliation Elixir. One of the highest bamboo-producing areas in China—those pandas love bamboo!—you can also book a custom treatment that includes an incredibly relaxing and muscle-detangling signature Bamboo Massage.



Must-sees nearby include the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding; a walk to the impressive 1,000-year-old Daci Temple; and a stroll along Jinlin Street, a pedestrian walkway with teahouses, coffee shops, markets and a strong whiff of local culture. thetemplehousehotel.com

COUNTRY : Six Senses Qing Cheng Mountain

Less than an hour from the city center, [Six Senses Qing Cheng](#), completed in 2015, lies near a UNESCO World Heritage site, at the foot of the Qing Cheng mountains, where Taoism was born.



Just like Sedona, AZ, where there is an energy vortex, a relaxing energy permeates this place. It is a beautiful hike up Qing Cheng Mountain to a plaza—wear sturdy sneakers, it's a good climb—where you may find people practicing Tai Chi. (There is a small panda park 15 minutes away, which will eventually feature Tai Chi with the pandas.)

At the tranquil spa, my Massage Therapist, Nancy Zhang, explained Tui Na, the first of two treatments I would experience, as, "a traditional Chinese massage without the oil, which works on acupressure points and kneads the muscles." My Deep Relax massage, which included a blend of cupping (silicone, leaving no marks) and Chinese reflexology, was one of my top 10 spa treatments of all time. And I've had a lot of spa treatments.



A cluster of charming "little shops" on the property feature dim sum, housemade ice cream, kombucha and coffee (beans are roasted right there). Of course, local Chinese tea is available. Sala Thai restaurant features regional Thai cuisine, and 28 Zodiac and Farm2Fork source ingredients from Six Senses' organic gardens and local farmers. The food—like the entire Six Senses experience—is just about perfect. [sixsenses.com](https://www.sixsenses.com)

GETTING THERE [Cathay Pacific Airlines](https://www.cathayairlines.com) just opened The Pier, a first-class lounge in the Hong Kong airport, offering exquisite dining, comfortable showers and rejuvenating foot massage.