

Wuhan

Located in central China, Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province, serves as the political, economic and cultural center of the province. The Yangtze, World's third longest river and its largest tributary Hanshui meet in Wuhan and cut the city into three parts of Hankou, Hanyang and Wuchang, namely, three towns of Wuhan. As a line by Li Bai, a great poet in Tang Dynasty goes, "In the Yellow Crane Tower the jade flute is being played while in the River City of Wuhan plum blossoms are dropping in May." This biggest metropolis in hinterland China was hence reputed as a River City. With an area of 8494 km² and a population of 8.58 million, Wuhan administers 13 districts and 3 state-level development zones. (Wuhan Economic & Technological Development Zone, East Lake Hi-tech Development Zone and Wujiashan Taiwan-investment Area)

As a typical garden city featuring mountains and waters, Wuhan is home to hundreds of hills and nearly 200 lakes of various sizes. With a water area making up 25.8% of its entire territory, Wuhan is ranked the first among major Chinese cities in water resources. East Lake, China's biggest downtown lake, covers an area of 33 km² .

With a history of 3500 years, Wuhan's urban civilization dates back to Panlong Town which is the oldest city ever unearthed in the Yangtze River basin. Scholars deemed it a breakthrough proof of the fusion of Yangtze Civilization and Yellow River Civilization. Over the past 3500 year, thanks to its well-developed transport network and abundant local products. This area has always been a place contested by all strategists and gradually developed from a military center into a regional political, commercial and trade center. As a result, Wuhan possessed an advantage and characteristic of diverse cultures. Xinhai (1911) Revolution overthrowing Qing Dynasty originated in Wuhan and endowed the city with a culture of "be the first to rise in revolution" which fostered Wuhan people's humanistic spirit of dare to lead the world".

As one of the country's key scientific and educational bases, Wuhan enjoys the 3rd biggest scientific and educational capabilities among major Chinese cities. It is home to 52 universities including Wuhan University and Huazhong University of Science and Technology with an enrolment of 700 thousand university students. There are 106 science and research institutes of various kinds, 1 national laboratory, 13 state key laboratories, 47 academicians of Chinese Academy of Science and Chinese Academy of Engineering. Wuhan is abundant in talent and human resources. East Lake area where Wuhan Optics Valley of China is located is China's second talent-concentrated area. It is the country's leader in R&D capabilities of optical communications, biological engineering, laser, microelectronics and new building materials.

As the biggest water, land and air transportation hub in inland China, Wuhan has long been well known as a "through fare to nine provinces". With an equidistance of 1000 km away from other major Chinese cities including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xi'an, Wuhan stands out as China's geo-economic "heart" and plays a role of linking east and west, connecting north and south and serving all directions. The unique geographical advantage gives the edge to Wuhan's exceptional advantage in transportation. China's

north-south and east-west traffic arteries such as 4 trunk railway lines of Beijing-Zhuhai and Shanghai-Chengdu, Beijing-Kowloon, Wuhan-Jiujiang and Wuhan-Danjiangkou and 6 national expressways such as Beijing-Zhuhai and Shanghai-Chengdu meet in Wuhan. A passenger-cargo water transport network has taken shape, which combines trunk and branch route service and gives access to the sea. Wuhan Port boasts a key hub port on the Yangtze, which opens to foreign ships. As the biggest airport in central China, Wuhan Tianhe Airport is the only airport in the region offering visa service to foreign visitors. The operation of its second terminal building will enable Wuhan Airport to rank among China's top 4 hub airport. The great advantages in its geographical location and transportation have brought about the rapid growth of Wuhan's modern logistics. To build Wuhan into a state level logistics hub city, a modern logistics system is well planned with modern logistics parks, logistics centers and delivery centers as the joints. As a result, Wuhan emerges as bridge connecting domestic and international markets and promoting interaction among China's eastern, central and western parts.

Wuhan has long been the center of commerce, trade and finance in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. A saying handed down from the past history goes like this. "Goods sell well when they reach Hankou" .At the turn from Ming Dynasty to Qing Dynasty, Hankou emerged as one of top 4 Famous Towns in China and "the most flourishing and bustling place in central China".

In the beginning of last century, Hankou was once the second biggest port city in the country and one of China's top 4 financial centers. Today, this strategic city is still the rendezvous of businessmen and as busy and bustling as before. Up to date, the city is home to approximately 120 thousand shopping networks and stores. 3 retailers based in Wuhan are among China's top 30 franchising enterprises. The city's total retail sales of consumer goods surpassed 100 billion RMB Yuan.

A number of international retail giants including Carrefour of France, Metro of Germany and Wal-Mart of the United States have set up operations in Wuhan one after another and gives great momentum to the local retail sector. Wuhan's financial sector and other state-owned commercial banks established regional headquarters in the city. Dozens of foreign banks and insurers have their offices in Wuhan.

As one of the first open cities on the Yangtze, Wuhan has always been a top recipient of foreign investment in central and western China. Thanks to the strategy of "let opening up be the leading strategy", a great number of functional infrastructures have been built and put into use. As a result, the city's comprehensive service functions are greatly upgraded. As part of efforts to change government functions, a series of measures are introduced to improve the city's investment climate, including one-stop united service system for external investors, mayors' dialogue with investors, investors' complaints receiving system and investment climate responsibility system. 2005 witnessed a continued strong growth momentum of foreign investment. Newly approved committed foreign investment registered 1.989 billion US dollars, an increase of 65.6% from the previous year with an actually utilized foreign investment of 1.74 billion US dollars, up by 14.5%. 60 of world's top 500 companies have made investment in Wuhan. In

Addition, over 300 multinational companies have set up offices, of which over 100 have their regional head offices located in Wuhan.

<http://www.wuhan.com/cmarter.asp?doc=310>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wuhan>