

Two cities *tussle* over who makes the tastiest Sichuan hotpot

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, has an ancient rivalry with Chongqing, a city to its south-east. Residents of Chongqing accuse their Chengdu cousins of being *pompous*. The people of Chongqing are *hotheads*, Chengdu dwellers shoot back. Both cities share a love of *spice-laden* Sichuan *cuisine*, which in recent decades has conquered Chinese palates. But they are at war over which has the best Sichuan hotpot—a type of DIY-cooking that involves boiling vegetables and slices of meat in a *communal broth* with *chillies* and numbing *peppercorns*.

tussle 争斗

pompous 自大的；浮夸的

hothead 急性子

spice 香料；调味品

laden 负载的；装满的

cuisine 烹饪；菜肴

communal 共同的；公社的

broth 肉汤

chili 辣椒

peppercorn 胡椒；花椒

A private museum in Chongqing, opened several years ago, makes the case for Chongqing-style hotpot. It describes how it developed from a method used to make cheap offcuts of meat taste delicious. But Chengdu is playing catch-up. In January the city sold *a plot of land* on condition that the developer build a hotpot museum on part of it.

a plot of land 一块地

The two cities are among many in China with their own styles of hotpot. Hotpot restaurants in China are more profitable than other kinds, according to iiMedia, a consultancy. Haidilao, a well-known Sichuan-based hotpot chain, raised nearly \$1bn when it was listed on the Hong Kong *exchange* in September.

exchange 交易所

Not all Chinese warm to hotpot. Some older Sichuanese *disown* it *altogether*. They complain that it is causing an escalation of chili-use in other dishes that drowns out subtle flavors.

disown 否认; 脱离关系

altogether 整个; 完全地

But Chengdu's plans for a museum suggest that Sichuan hotpot is not only growing in popularity, but is also becoming iconic. If it can set the West on fire, there will be plenty of glory for both Chengdu and Chongqing to bask in.