

Academy of Language Studies  
UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang

# e-Lingua

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*Connecting Cultures  
One Word at a Time*

你好

Apa Khabar?

Bonjour

Hello

مرحبًا

Hallo

こんにちは



# Preparation for Traveling to Chengdu, China

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To prepare for our trip to Chengdu, China, we first secured our flights. As we were traveling during the peak Hari Raya Aidilfitri season, we booked our tickets six months in advance. We used websites like Skyscanner, Cheapflights, and Google Flights to compare options based on travel period, flight duration, number of transits, and arrival times. After reviewing several choices, we selected a Thai Airways flight from Penang to Chengdu. This flight departs in the morning, has a short travel time with only one transit, and arrives in Chengdu in the afternoon. This timing is just perfect to simplify the journey from the airport to our accommodation and allows for a smoother check-in process.

Next, we planned our itinerary. We researched reputable local travel agents in China online. They generally offered three types of packages: very cheap ones with mandatory shopping stops; moderately priced ones with no shopping; and fully customized, more expensive tours.

Wanting a customized experience at a moderate cost, we chose a hybrid “free-and-easy” travel plan. We arranged our own flights and accommodation while booking several guided tours. These included two one-day tours—one to the Sanxingdui Museum and the Dujiangyan ancient irrigation system, and another to Mount Emei and the Leshan Giant Buddha—as well as three-day tours to the Chengdu Panda Base, Huanglong, and Jiuzhaigou through Trip.com.



*Pandas in Panda Research Base at Chengdu China*

This plan covered most of the recommended attractions in Chengdu and provided flexibility to add more guided tours if we wished to explore additional destinations after completing the initial three tours. We found that Trip.com offered high-quality tours and efficient refund processing for cancellations. We had previously used Klook, but their customer service was slower and less effective when issues arose. Overall, Trip.com’s strong expertise in China travel made the booking process smooth and reliable.

Finally, we set up the essential tools for navigating China: we activated the Alipay e-wallet for seamless cashless payments and downloaded the Amap app for real-time train, taxi, and subway schedules.

#### Other Considerations:

- **Visa:** As Malaysian citizens, we can enter China visa-free for tourism for up to 30 days.
- **Connectivity:** To save on mobile data costs, we purchased a China-mainland-compatible eSIM from [Trip.com](https://www.trip.com) before departure. Be careful, some China eSIM only cover Hong Kong and Macau.
- **Attire:** Traveling to Chengdu in March is a good choice. It has fewer crowds, but the weather is cool, potentially damp and we will bring some cold-weather clothing accordingly.
- **Cash Backup:** We carried a small amount of Chinese Yuan (RMB) cash as a backup.
- **Money Management:** We used the Settle Up app, a shared expense tracker. It records who pays for what, splits all shared costs, and calculates who owes whom at the end of the journey.



*Jiuzhaigou, a UNESCO World Heritage site*

With all these preparations complete, we are ready for our adventure in Chengdu this March.

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