

100 million-year-old footprints of world's biggest dinosaur species found at restaurant in China

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Glen Rose Sauropod Footprint (*Brontopodus birdi*) Early Cretaceous, 115-112 million years ago. Collected Somervell County, Texas. Credit: Rodney, CC BY 2.0

A restaurant in southwestern China was discovered to be harboring ancient history, as dinosaur footprints—dating back 100 million

years—were found in the establishment's outdoor courtyard.

Footprints of two sauropods, a type of dinosaur that lived during the early Cretaceous period, were found along several stones in the outdoor courtyard at the restaurant in Leshan, Sichuan province according to paleontologists. The restaurant previously had been a farm and the footprints had been buried by layers of dirt to shield them from weather damage.

Lida Xing, a paleontologist and associate professor at the China University of Geosciences, told U.S. TODAY by email his team confirmed the discovery on Saturday by using a 3D scanner.

Sauropods' species include the popularized brontosaurus and were known for their long necks and tails. They're considered to be the largest animals ever to walk the Earth—extending the length of three [school buses](#)—according to research by the University of California, Berkeley. Xing noted that the footprints of the dinosaurs that roamed the Earth found in the restaurant measured around 26 feet in body length.

Xing said China's development and constant building have made studying fossils challenging for paleontologists, making the discovery at the restaurant extremely rare. That's why his team focuses on trying to visit sites within 48 hours of hearing about a report before more construction takes place.

The find in Sichuan is also rare because it dates back to the Cretaceous period, believed to be a glory era for the dinosaurs by many paleontologists.

According to Xing, the restaurant owner has currently fenced off the area in the courtyard so people do not disrupt the footprints.

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