

Top Tourist Destination

Overview

With a unique blend of East and West, old and new, Hong Kong is one of Asia's top tourist destinations. From high-end shopping malls to bustling street bazaars, ancient Chinese temples to towering skyscrapers, neon-lit streets to verdant countryside, Hong Kong is a city of colour and contrast.

Travel website TripAdvisor rated Hong Kong as one of the top 10 Asian destinations in the Travellers' Choice awards in 2016.

In 2015, Hong Kong welcomed 59.3 million visitors.

Expanding Tourism Attractions

Hong Kong continues to develop its tourism sector by expanding its world-class attractions.

- Ocean Park and Hong Kong Disneyland ranked 15th and 19th respectively among the theme parks worldwide, according to the latest Themed Entertainment Association's *Global Attractions Attendance Report*.
- Ocean Park is a world-class marine theme park featuring more than 80 attractions. Ocean Park's all-weather indoor-cum-outdoor waterpark and its two hotels are expected for completion in phases from 2017 to 2020.
- The Hong Kong Disneyland Resort has been a major component of the tourism infrastructure in Hong Kong since its opening in 2005. In June 2016, a series of new "Star Wars"-themed offerings were introduced, and the new themed area based on Marvel's "Iron Man" franchise was officially launched in January 2017. Furthermore, the new resort-style hotel, "Disney Explorers Lodge" with the theme of exploration will open in the first half of 2017.

Cruise Terminal

The state-of-the-art Kai Tak Cruise Terminal has strengthened Hong Kong's position as a leading cruise tourism hub.

The terminal features spacious passenger and service areas which provide seamless services for passengers to embark on or disembark from cruise vessels; as well as a 23 000 square metre rooftop garden. With 360-degree views of Victoria Harbour and an impressive array of amenities, the terminal meets the demands of a new generation of super cruise liners and has the capacity to simultaneously handle two of the world's largest cruise ships. Its open design and spacious interior is highly flexible and offers an excellent venue for performances and events.

The terminal serves about 94 ship calls in 2016. This figure is expected to reach 200 in 2017.

Culinary Paradise

The 2017 edition of the *Michelin Guide Hong Kong and Macau* features 238 restaurants, including 61 restaurants awarded with Michelin stars. Many inexpensive restaurants and street stalls offering local delights, making Hong Kong's Michelin restaurants some of the most affordable in the world.

The annual Wine and Dine Festival showcases Hong Kong's great wining and dining attractions, enhancing the city's status as the culinary capital of Asia. The event in 2016 was the biggest in scale since the festival was inaugurated in 2009. Over 430 booths were set up in an enlarged venue, offering fine wine and spirits from 28 countries / regions complemented with international and local culinary delights, for the enjoyment of overseas visitors and local residents.

Asia's Top MICE Destination

Hong Kong is the premier meetings, incentives travels, conventions and exhibitions (MICE) destination in Asia. In 2015, Hong Kong received some 1.7 million overnight MICE visitors.

Hong Kong was judged the "Best Business City in the World" at the 2015 Business Traveller Asia-Pacific Travel Awards, and named the "Best City for Business Events" in the 2015 CEI Industry Survey, organised by the prominent MICE publication CEI Asia.

Hong Kong's world-class venues can accommodate conventions and exhibitions of different scales. The main venues are the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in the heart of the city, AsiaWorld-Expo near the airport and Hong Kong International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kowloon Bay. The Kai Tak Cruise Terminal also offers an excellent venue for MICE events in recent years.

Mega Events

The Mega Events Fund aims to promote tourism, raise Hong Kong's international profile and develop the city into Asia's events capital. Mega Events staged in 2016 included the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival, the Prudential Hong Kong Tennis Open, and the UBS Hong Kong Open golf tournament.

Major "M" Mark sports events in 2016 included: Cathay Pacific/HSBC Hong Kong Sevens, Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon, Longines Masters of Hong Kong, UCI Track Cycling World Cup - Hong Kong, Hong Kong DanceSport Festival WDSF GrandSlam Hong Kong, FIVB Volleyball World Grand Prix, New World Harbour Race, Yonex-Sunrise Hong Kong Open Badminton Champion-

ships and Cathay Pacific Sun Hung Kai Financial Hong Kong Squash Open.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board organises many popular events such as the International Chinese New Year Parade, Hong Kong Cyclothon, Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, Hong Kong Winterfest and Hong Kong New Year Countdown.

Hong Kong has become a popular stage for a wide variety of international sporting events. The first FIA Formula E Hong Kong ePrix was held in Hong Kong in 2016. In August 2016, Hong Kong was the venue for the inaugural Arnold Classic Asia Multi-Sport Festival.

The city's best known sports event, the annual Hong Kong Rugby Sevens tournament, attracts top teams and thousands of rugby fans from around the world.

Eco-tourism

Perhaps no other city offers such a spectacular range of scenery within such easy reach of the city centre. About 40 per cent of Hong Kong is protected countryside. There are 24 country parks and four marine parks with scenic hills, woodlands, reservoirs and coastline, most of which are easily accessible from the urban areas.

Apart from the stunning Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark – which features unique volcanic rock columns – Hong Kong boasts numerous hiking trails, outlying islands and other green attractions for nature lovers.

Heritage Conservation

There are currently 114 declared monuments, including historic buildings, ancient forts, rock carvings and archaeological sites.

The Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme encourages non-profit-making organisations to transform government-owned historic

buildings into cultural landmarks, preserving their integrity while enhancing their utility.

The revitalisation of the Former North Kowloon Magistracy (into the Savannah College of Art and Design (Hong Kong)), the Mei Ho House (into the YHA Mei Ho House Youth Hostel), and the Old Tai Po Police Station (into the Green Hub for sustainable living) received an Honourable Mention in the 2011, 2015 and 2016 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation respectively, while the revitalisation of the Old Tai O Police Station (into the Tai O Heritage Hotel) gained the Award of Merit in the 2013 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

Other projects under the Scheme include: the Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital which has become the Jao Tsung-I Academy; Lui Seng Chun which has become the Hong Kong Baptist University School of Chinese Medicine – Lui Seng Chun; and the Stone Houses which has been revitalised into the Stone Houses Family Garden.

The Former Explosives Magazine Compound of the Old Victoria Barracks, built between 1843 and 1874 by the British Army, now houses the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre. This cultural, artistic, and intellectual hub won the prestigious 2016 Institute Honor Awards for Architecture given by the American Institute of Architects.

In 2016, the Government has allocated US\$64.1million to set up the Built Heritage Conservation Fund to conserve historic buildings in Hong Kong.

Harbourfront Enhancements

The Victoria Harbourfront is being enhanced with promenades, parks and other beautification projects.

“Kai Tak Fantasy” aims to develop the tip of the old Kai Tak Airport runway and adjoining areas into a world-class tourism, entertainment and leisure hub for the local community and visitors.

Kwun Tong Promenade in Kowloon, a waterfront open space designed to bring nature into the city, features a seaside boardwalk, multi-purpose plaza, performance area and children's play area. The one kilometre boardwalk, offering leisure facilities and harbour views, is part of the rejuvenation of the Kai Tak area.

The Hong Kong Maritime Museum at the Central harbourfront presents Hong Kong's maritime heritage.

The Symphony of Lights has been adjudged the World's Largest Permanent Light and Sound Show by Guinness World Records. Other harbourfront attractions include the giant observation wheel, as well as art events and carnivals year round.

Festivals

Hong Kong celebrates Western and Eastern festivals with equal enthusiasm. Lunar New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival are major festivals. There are also unique local festivals such as the Cheung Chau Jiao Festival (Bun Festival), Tai O Dragon Boat Water Parade, Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance and Yu Lan Ghost Festival. Also popular are Western festivities such as Christmas, Easter, Halloween, Valentine's Day and Oktoberfest.

Arts events such as the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Le French May, Chinese Opera Festival and International Arts Carnival, and, in alternate autumns, New Vision Arts Festival and World Cultures Festival enhance the line-up.