

# Top tourist destination

## Overview

With a unique blend of East and West, old and new, Hong Kong has long been one of Asia's top tourist destinations. In 2019, before the outbreak of COVID-19, Hong Kong welcomed more than 55 million visitors. From high-end shopping malls to bustling street bazaars, ancient Chinese temples to towering skyscrapers, historic trams to high-speed trains, Hong Kong is a city of colour and contrast.

- More diversified tourism products are planned to increase Hong Kong tourism's appeal, attract more overnight and high value-added visitors and tap newer markets, once the global COVID-19 pandemic abates.
- New themed tours, featuring heritage, art and culture, authentic experiences, green tours and cruise tours will be developed.
- Major events such as the equestrian Longines Masters of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens enhance the city's appeal.

## Tourism Attractions

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

- Ocean Park Hong Kong and Hong Kong Disneyland ranked 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> respectively among theme parks worldwide, according to the latest Themed Entertainment Association's Global Attractions Attendance Report.
- Ocean Park Hong Kong is a major resort and leisure destination in Hong Kong featuring a diverse selection of world-class animal attractions, thrill rides, shows and an all-weather indoor and outdoor Water World. Ocean Park is taking forward its strategy to transform itself into a destination that focuses on conservation and education, grounded in nature and complemented by adventure and leisure elements to enhance visitor experience. Apart from the Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel which came into operation in 2018, the Fullerton Ocean Park Hotel Hong Kong has started operating in an early stage soft opening mode since July 2022.
- Hong Kong Disneyland Resort is one of the most popular and best themed resorts in Asia. The resort is taking forward its multi-year expansion plan and has rolled out various new attractions in recent years, including the "Castle of Magical Dreams" unveiled in 2020, "Follow Your Dreams" daytime stage show and "Momentous" nighttime spectacular launched in 2021 and 2022 respectively, etc. Looking ahead, more new attractions are coming on stream, including a new "Frozen"-themed area.

## Cruise Terminal

- The state-of-the-art Kai Tak Cruise Terminal began operating in 2013.
- The Terminal consists of spacious waiting and service areas for passengers and a 23,000 sq m rooftop garden with panoramic views of the Victoria Harbour. Equipped with an impressive array of amenities, the terminal is capable of receiving mega cruise ships. It is also an ideal event venue with flexible and open design.
- Hong Kong is an excellent place for cruise lines to develop fly-cruise business for long-haul cruise passengers who wish to explore Asia.

## **Culinary Paradise**

- The 2022 edition of the Michelin Guide Hong Kong Macau features 201 restaurants, including 71 Michelin-starred restaurants in Hong Kong. Six Hong Kong restaurants were among the 50 Top Pizza Asia-Pacific list in 2022.
- Many inexpensive restaurants and street stalls offering local tastes make Hong Kong's Michelin restaurants some of the most affordable in the world.

## **Asia's Top MICE Destination**

Hong Kong is Asia's premier Meetings, Incentives, Travels, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) destination.

- Hong Kong ranked third in the Best Business City in World category in the Business Traveller Asia-Pacific Awards 2021 and the Best City for Meetings in the Best of the Decade Awards (2010-2019) by Smart Travel Asia.
- Hong Kong's world-class venues can accommodate conventions and exhibitions of different scales.

Main venues:

- Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai
- AsiaWorld-Expo on Lantau Island, close to the airport
- Hong Kong International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kowloon Bay
- Kai Tak Cruise Terminal in Kowloon

## **Events Galore**

- The Hong Kong Tourism Board organises popular events such as the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, Hong Kong WinterFest and New Year Countdown Celebrations.
- Hong Kong hosts a wide variety of international sporting events, including the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon and the UCI Track Cycling Nations Cup-Hong Kong, China.
- The Hong Kong Sevens attracts top teams and thousands of rugby fans from around the world.

## **Eco-tourism**

Hong Kong offers a spectacular range of natural scenery within easy reach of urban areas. About 40 per cent of Hong Kong's land mass has been designated as country parks and special areas.

- There are 24 country parks, 22 special areas and seven marine parks with scenic hills, woodlands, reservoirs and coastline, most of them easily accessible.
- The stunning Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark showcases ancient geological landscapes.
- There are numerous hiking trails, outlying islands and other green attractions for nature lovers.
- Many hiking trails are easily accessible from urban areas.
- The 100-kilometre MacLehose Trail was listed on NatGeo's World's Best Hikes: 20 Dream Trails.
- Sai Kung in the New Territories is rated the World's 9<sup>th</sup> "Coolest Neighbourhood" by Time Out magazine in its 2021 Index.

## **Heritage Conservation**

There are currently 132 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.

**Awarded projects:**

- Mei Ho House transformed into the YHA Mei Ho House Youth Hostel which received an Honourable Mention in the 2015 UNESCO Awards.
- Old Tai Po Police Station, turned into the Green Hub for sustainable living, received an Honourable Mention in the 2016 UNESCO Awards.
- Old Tai O Police Station transformed into the Tai O Heritage Hotel, earning the Award of Merit in the 2013 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- The revitalisation of the Blue House Cluster into the Viva Blue House received the Award of Excellence in the 2017 UNESCO Awards.

**Other completed projects under the Scheme include:**

- Former Lai Chi Kok Hospital which has become the Jao Tsung-I Academy.
- Lui Seng Chun has become the Hong Kong Baptist University School of Chinese Medicine Lui Seng Chun.
- Stone Houses has been revitalised into the Stone Houses Family Garden.
- Bridges Street Market in Central has been revitalised into the Hong Kong News-Expo.
- Former Fanling Magistracy has become the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups Leadership Institute.
- Haw Par Mansion, with its private garden built in the 1930s by "Tiger Balm King" Aw Boon Haw, has been revitalised into Haw Par Music, promoting Chinese and Western music training and public programmes.
- No. 12 School Street has been revitalised into the Tai Hang Fire Dragon Heritage Centre, which introduces the history and culture of the Tai Hang Fire Dragon and promotes traditional Hakka culture.
- Old Dairy Farm Senior Staff Quarters has been revitalised into the Pokfulam Farm, which reveals the history and operation of the Old Dairy Farm, and presents the culture of Pokfulam village and the surrounding area.
- Lady Ho Tung Welfare Centre has been revitalised into the Lady Ho Tung Welfare Centre Eco-Learn Institute.

Apart from the Revitalisation Scheme, other built heritage conservation projects include:

- The Former Police Married Quarters on Hollywood Road in Central has been revitalised into a creative industries landmark, PMQ.
- The Central Police Station Compound, dating from the mid-19th century, has been revitalised and transformed into Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts ("Big Station" in Cantonese), a vibrant centre for heritage and contemporary arts and culture.
- 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 from the American Institute of Architects.
- The Central Market offers a variety of community and festive events for the public after its revitalisation.

**Victoria Harbour**

Attractive promenades spanning a total of about 25km have been built along both sides of iconic Victoria Harbour, providing residents and visitors with easily accessible vibrant open spaces for a range of events and activities.

**Highlights:**

- The longest promenade (about 7.4km) linking up the harbourfront from Shek Tong Tsui to the East Coast Park Precinct is decorated with installations by local artistes.
- The dynamic Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade with the historic cross-harbour ferry pier, cruise berthing facility, large-scale indoor and outdoor performing venues, Hong Kong Museum of Art and Avenue of Stars, and a variety of cultural, retail and food and beverage facilities.
- “A Symphony of Lights” is a nightly multimedia light and sound show staged on both sides of Victoria Harbour, which symbolises the dynamic energy and contrasting culture of Hong Kong.

**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 Art Basel, Art Central, Hong Kong International Film Festival, Le French May, International Arts Carnival and World Cultures Festival enhance the city’s reputation as a hub for arts and culture in Asia.

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