

Tourism

Tourism is the backbone of Macao's economy. With the long-term goal of building Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre, the government department responsible for tourism development – the Macao Government Tourist Office (MGTO) – started adjusting tourism policies and measures in accordance with Macao's new positioning, and promoted sustainable and healthy development of the tourism industry in areas including marketing and promotion, tourism planning, products and events, tourism industry management, and training and quality control.

Overview of Tourism in Macao

In 2021, the tourism industry continued to be hard hit by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, but its performance improved compared to 2020, supported by a series of promotional and boosting measures.

According to the Statistics and Census Service, the total number of tourists visiting Macao in 2021 was 7,705,943 – representing an increase of 30.7 percent from the 2020 figure. The number of overnight visitors during the year totalled 3,696,800, representing an increase of 31 percent, and accounting for 48 percent of visitors to Macao. The average length of stay of overnight visitors was 3.2 days, representing an increase of 0.4 days, while the overall figure was 1.6 days; representing an increase of 0.2 days.

Major Markets

In 2021, tourists from Greater China (mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) comprised almost 100 percent of the total. Mainland China continued to be the largest market for visitors to Macao, accounting for 91.4 percent of the total number of visitors, which was 48.2 percent higher than in 2020. Among the mainland China visitors, 2,449,128 (accounting for 34.8 percent of visitors from mainland China to Macao) travelled to Macao under the Facilitated Individual Travel (FIT) scheme.

Hong Kong and Taiwan were the second and third largest markets for visitors to Macao, respectively; the numbers of visitors from Hong Kong decreased by 30.1 percent, and those from Taiwan decreased by 31.9 percent, compared with 2020.

The Hotel Industry

According to Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) statistics, at the end of 2021, Macao had a total of 136 hotel premises, of which 92 were star-rated hotels and 44 were guesthouses, supplying a total of 44,224 guest rooms.

Star Rating	Number of Hotels	Number of Rooms
Five-star Luxury Hotels	12	7,690
Five-star Hotels	26	19,242

(Cont.)

Star Rating	Number of Hotels	Number of Rooms
Four-star Hotels	18	8,059
Four-star Apartment Hotels	2	657
Three-star Hotels	16	5,745
Three-star Apartment Hotels	1	208
Two-star Hotels	17	1,402
Sub-total	92	43,003
Guesthouse	44	1,221
Total		44,224

* The average room rate of three- to five-star member hotels was 834.5 patacas in 2021, nine percent lower than in 2020, according to the Macau Hotel Association.

The total number of guests who stayed in hotels in Macao during 2021 was 6,623,900, representing an increase of 71 percent from the figure in 2020. The average year-round occupancy rate of hotels increased by 21.4 percent to 50 percent. The average length of stay was 1.8 nights, representing an increase of 0.1 nights.

Travel Agencies

At the end of 2021, there were 208 licensed travel agencies in Macao, 12 less than in 2020. A total of 1,854 people held tourist guide licences issued by the MGTO, 77 (four percent) fewer than in 2020. The language abilities of these tourist guides spanned Cantonese, Putonghua, English, Portuguese, Indonesian, German, Japanese, Korean, Thai, French, Spanish, Russian, Malay, Hokkien and Chaozhouese.

In 2021, a total of 149,800 Macao residents engaged with travel agent services to travel abroad. Of these, 49,900 joined outbound group tours, and the destinations were all in mainland China, mainly Guangdong Province, accounting for 76 percent of the total, while the total number of residents engaging with travel agent services without joining guided tours increased by 18.4 percent to 99,800, compared to 2020.

Macau Government Tourist Office

The functions of the Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) include assisting the formulation and implementation of local tourism policies; enhancing development and diversity of the tourism

industry; monitoring tourism and related businesses and issuing licences; formulating tourism crisis emergency responses; managing the Travel Alert System; and realising the Government's overall tourism objectives.

The MGTO has set up representative offices and marketing consultants in many countries and regions around the world, including the Hong Kong SAR, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Taiwan region (marketing consultant), India, the United Kingdom and Ireland, the United States of America, Russia, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2021, the MGTO was committed to organising a series of activities and offering travel discounts by launching online and offline publicity programmes to promote a healthy image of Macao as a safe city for travel, thereby achieving success in tourism recovery.

The MGTO also organised the mega roadshow “Macao Week” in several cities in mainland China, receiving overwhelming responses; held the first “Light Up Macao Drone Gala”; continued organising the “Macao Light Festival”; co-organised the “New Tour Macao FUN Fair”; and organised or supported 30 community tourism events in different forms to deepen the “Tourism+” scheme, which has attracted over 6,443,000 participants.

The MGTO introduced Stay, Dine and See Macao, to encourage Macao citizens to join local tours, boost local consumption and support the tourism industry. Also in 2021, the tourism industry introduced the tourist-oriented exquisite Macao tourism routes.

Tourism Planning and Study

The MGTO announced the review report on the first Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan in November 2021. There were 91 action plans established after the review and reform, including 77 interim plans (zero to five years) and 14 long-term plans (six years or more). The proposals and action plans will strengthen the interaction between the tourism industry and other associated industries, enriching Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre.

Also, the MGTO started using scientific research methods to continue reviewing the effectiveness of tourism products, in order to understand the behaviour and characteristics of the tourists from different countries, as a reference for product promotion and development.

In addition, “Macao Tourism News plus” (<https://newsplus.macaotourism.gov.mo/>) integrates a variety of news materials about Macao tourism, to enable the media and industry to more easily access and use the database through its one-stop service.

The MGTO continued updating the “Macao Tourism Data plus” (MTD plus) database (<http://dataplus.macaotourism.gov.mo>) and provided the public with temporary data on tourists visiting Macao during mainland China's Golden Week holidays.

Smart Tourism

The MGTO launched the “Macao Full of Fun – Smart Trip Planner” to promote Distinctive Shops, cultural and creative shops, retail shops, food and beverage, and check-in hotspots. Through the

application of artificial intelligence technology and open data, the MGTO has systematically integrated Macao's various tourism products and activities, diverse tourism elements and information, as well as peripheral tourism facilities and resources, and added search criteria including zones, labels, food and beverage categories, modes of transportation and day itineraries, to further enrich the experience of visiting Macao, and promote the development of local tourism and peripheral industries, thereby boosting the community economy.

Licensing and Industry Management

In 2021, the MGTO issued four licences for hotels and 45 licences for catering premises, and followed up regarding the applications for various licences. In 2021, the MGTO conducted 2,982 inspections of licensed premises and activities under its supervision, 391 inspections of border crossing checkpoints and tourist attractions, and 157 random inspections of "Stay, Dine and See Macao" local tours. Regarding combating illegal accommodation, 10 units were closed to visitors in 2021.

In 2021, the Legislative Assembly passed Law No. 8/2021 – "Law on the Operation of Hotel Premises", which clarifies the scope of application and the duties and power of the departments, and enhances the licensing procedures, including through the introduction of a one-stop licensing procedure and a temporary business permit system; while also promoting the diversified development and improving the service quality of the tourism industry. The law came into force on 1 January 2022, together with By-law No. 44/2021 - "Enforcement Rules for the Law on the Operation of Hotel Establishments" and Executive Order No. 208/2021.

Tourism Products

The MGTO further enriched the resources of Macao's maritime tourism products, supported the introduction of cultural and creative products featuring the Macao Tourism Mascot "Mak Mak", provided subsidies to community groups for organising events under the Community Tourism Plan; co-organised New Tour Macao FUN Fair; and launched Macao Full of Fun – Smart Trip Planner.

Macao Aquatic Trek

The MGTO supported the long-term development of Macao's maritime tourism products, enhanced the hardware facilities of related projects, and enriched the content of combo products. The Barra pier was newly deployed as a berth for Macao Aquatic Trek; besides, to complement the festivals and the major tourism events, the industry launched a Macao Aquatic Trek night-time sailing.

Macao Tourism Mascot "Mak Mak"

The MGTO cooperated with the Cultural Industry Fund to jointly implement the Specific Financial Support Programme for the Cultural Tourism Brand Building, with the Macao tourism mascot "Mak Mak" as the theme. In 2021, the MGTO supported Macao enterprises with launching 84 related cultural and creative products, boosting synergy between tourism and cultural and creative industries.

Promotional Scheme for Community Tourism

The Promotional Scheme for Community Tourism continued supporting local organisations with holding a variety of activities to promote tourism on the Macao peninsula and the Islands District, to create a diverse tourism environment in order to foster the recovery of Macao's tourism and community economy. In 2021, it subsidised 20 activities organised by 12 organisations, attended by over 784,000 participants.

New Tour Macao FUN Fair

Hosted by community associations and co-organised by the MGTO, the New Tour Macao FUN Fair was held on every Saturdays and Sundays from November 2021 to January 2022. It was held in the form of a bazaar uniting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, to promote the Distinctive Shops in Macao, products from Portuguese-speaking countries and cultural and creative products, thereby facilitating tourism development and enhancing economic efficiency in the community. In 2021, activities on the themes of "Creative and Artistic Carnival" and "Light Carnival" attracted over 120,000 visitors, involved over 200 local merchants, and stimulated tourism-related consumption.

Grand Prix Museum

The Grand Prix Museum partially commenced trial operation in April 2021, and was officially opened to the public on 1 June. After an expansion project, the floor area of Grand Prix Museum has increased sixfold to approximately 16,000 square metres, with a new solar power system and accessible facilities. It has earned LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification in the building design and construction category for new construction projects.

The layout of the four-storey museum emphasises fun educational experiences. The museum is divided into different zones on each floor, to display racing cars from various kinds of motor races. In 2021, the Grand Prix Museum attracted a total of 46,254 visitors, including 4,184 visitors in 297 tour groups.

In addition, 16 sessions of Little Racers DIY Parent-child Workshop were held in November, with more than 300 parents and children participating.

Business Tourism

Travel Stimulus Programme

Combining the elements of "Tourism+", the Government officially launched the revamped Travel Stimulus Programme on 1 May 2021. In addition to incentive travel, wedding travel and student travel facilitation programmes, the Government incorporated sports tourism, to attract teams from foreign countries to compete, watch competitions and enjoy sightseeing in Macao, in synergy with the promotion of sports tourism development. In 2021, 11 applications were approved, benefiting 4,216 tourists.

The Ninth Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo

The Ninth Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo was held from 9 July to 11 July 2021. The event was hosted by the MGTO, supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China and organised by the Macau Travel Agency Association.

The area of the expo venue was 23,000 square metres, and there were more than 708 exhibition booths and a total of 399 exhibitors from 38 countries and regions, including Macao, mainland China, Taiwan region and foreign countries, along with 339 buyers, including hosted buyers from mainland China and online buyers worldwide.

The Travel Expo held in 2021 strengthened the “Cloud Series” system and combined virtual and physical exhibitions, promoting exchanges and cooperation in the tourism industry. The Travel Expo attracted about 24,000 participants over three days, with 39 contracts signed, 4,974 business-to-business meetings conducted, 7.81 million view counts accumulated for “Live Cloud Broadcasts”, and a peak count of 123,000 concurrent viewers.

During the Tourism Expo, 42 sessions of physical meetings, seminars and forums were held.

Events and Festivals

In 2021, the MGTO organised various large-scale events to boost the revitalisation of tourism, including “Light Up Macao Drone Gala” and Macao Light Festival 2021.

Light Up Macao Drone Gala

Hosted by the MGTO, the “Light Up Macao Drone Gala” was held on 4, 11, 18, 21 and 25 December 2021. Five professional teams from Beijing, Tianjin, Guangzhou and Shenzhen were invited to operate 300 drones with computers. During the event, the average daily flow of visitors exceeded 13,000, representing an average increase of 24.6 percent over 2020.

Macao Light Festival 2021

From 4 December 2021 to 2 January 2022, the MGTO held the “2021 Macao Light Festival — Travellers from Mars”, which highlighted Macao’s image as a tourist-friendly city. Colourful installations, interactive games and 3D mapping shows were set up in 17 locations in seven areas – Zona Nova de Aterros do Porto Exterior (NAPE), Nam Van District, Northern District, Praia do Manduco District, Central District, Taipa and Coloane, benefiting local businesses and boosting the economy at night time and in the community. Afterwards, the event was extended to 16 January 2022, attracting over 310,000 visitors in total.

Ongoing promotion of Macao · Creative City of Gastronomy

The MGTO published a travel guide to Macao and an entertainment guide to China-Zhuhai-Macao, and constantly introduced the local gastronomy of Macao in various newspapers and magazines.

The MGTO worked with local TV stations to explore the delicacies and touching human stories about Macao amid local streets and lanes, as well as produce a special publication about gastronomy, and promote Macao's diverse gastronomic culture. The MGTO also cooperated with the Economic and Technological Development Bureau to produce a series of adverts for Distinctive Shops. Targeting the trend towards young visitors, the adverts were produced using a multimedia, multi-angle approach and promoted on various social media platforms. The MGTO also worked with social media platforms to produce a video on cooking Macanese cuisine .

In collaboration with Macao Cuisine Association, the MGTO invited local chefs to create cooking videos to promote Macao's delicacies, Portuguese cuisine, Macanese cuisine and desserts, and infuse the other promotional videos produced by the MGTO with gastronomic elements, thus enhancing the promotion of Macao as a Creative City of Gastronomy.

The MGTO subsidised local organisations to hold the 21st Macao Food Festival, World Cities of Gastronomy (China) Meet in Macao Activities 2021 and the 12th International Culture and Food Festival, attracting over 799,000 participants.

Tourism Promotion

In 2021, the MGTO's promotional strategy aimed at boosting the confidence of tourists in visiting Macao, expand the number of visitors and promote the revitalisation of the tourism industry, and promoting Macao as a safe travel destination through comprehensive online and offline promotions, thereby creating synergy for promoting the revitalisation of the Macao tourism economy.

Outsourced Information Counter Service

To provide employment opportunities for local tourist guides whose jobs were lost or reduced as a result of the pandemic, the MGTO outsourced the services of a total of seven information counters to Macao Tourist Guide Association, so the counters could provide tourism information for visitors through professional tourist guides.

Tourism Promotional Strategies and Activities

The MGTO promoted "Tourism+" by cross-sector integration, leveraging elements including conventions and exhibitions, sports, cultural creativity and e-commerce; fusing the elements into various promotional activities; and adopting the name cards of Macao World Heritage and city of gastronomy as the tourism image, thereby promoting tourism products to the public, including events and festivals, gastronomy and comprehensive cultural tours of Macao.

Promotion of the Greater Bay Area

The MGTO and the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) jointly held Macao tourism and MICE presentations in Guangzhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Zhaoqing, Huizhou and Shenzhen in the Greater Bay Area, with over 180 participants from the Macao tourism and MICE industries. These events helped to promote exchanges between industries in Macao and mainland

China, while opening up business opportunities. In November, the “Safe and Quality Destination - Glamorous Macao” tourism roadshow was held in Shenzhen, to promote Macao’s festivals and events in December, attracting around 5,000 visitors.

Cooperation with Online Tourism Platforms

The MGTO cooperated with a number of mainstream online travel agencies in mainland China to set up product pages and promote the image of Macao as a safe destination, while using various marketing resources of online travel agencies to promote Macao’s tourism resources and boost sales of tourism products. In 2021, these promotions attracted 421,754 visitors purchasing Macao tourism products, and 11,009 visitors purchasing Guangdong-Macao multi-destination tourism products.

Promotional Social Media Approach and Training Bloggers

The MGTO actively posted the latest information on Macao tourism, food, market conditions and life on mainland China social media platforms. In addition to constantly posting promotional information on its official accounts, the MGTO also launched the fun hashtag campaigns “Short Videos about Macao” and “Safe and Quality Destination - Glamorous Macao” to attract residents and visitors to participate in promoting Macao’s tourism and culture by turning their personal experiences into videos, and inviting more than 100 micro-influencers from mainland China and Macao to create online buzz, thus increasing the online popularity of Macao as a safe destination.

The MGTO launched the “Incubation Plan for Macao’s KOL in Tourism”, with 50 trainees selected from over 300 applicants to learn the skills of promoting on social media, making good use of their own media platforms to promote the image of Macao’s tourism, and conveying accurate tourism information through online interactions with people in mainland China, hence boosting their confidence in visiting Macao.

In 2021, the numbers of followers of MGTO’s social media accounts were 1.9 million on WeChat, 1.56 million on Weibo, 115,000 on TikTok and 26,000 on Xiaohongshu. The MGTO also strengthened the output of its official TikTok account “Macao Government Tourist Office”, with a total of 252 short videos posted in 2021 and the number of followers increasing from 15,000 to 115,000.

Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme

Due to the pandemic, applications for accreditation from the food and beverage sector were suspended, but the MGTO resumed the assessments during surveillance periods of accredited merchants and enhanced the assessment criteria. For the travel agency sector, both applications and assessments were suspended in 2021, but the qualifications of the merchants accredited during the surveillance period were retained. In 2021, among the “Star Merchants”, there were 258 food and beverage businesses and 34 travel agencies, respectively, while the retail sector continued working with the Consumer Council, with 29 retail sector businesses receiving Star Merchant Awards in 2021.

Regional and International Cooperation

Regarding international cooperation, the conferences, seminars, and training courses organised by international tourism organisations were again held online/virtually in 2021. Macao actively participated in various conferences, seminars and events organised by international tourism organisations, thereby enhancing Macao's participation and popularity in international tourism-related activities.

As an associate member of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the MGTO attended various events, including the 33rd Joint Meeting and Regional Conference of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (in September), and the 15th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy (in October); also, the MGTO attended UNESCO Creative Cities Network Virtual Conference (in July), and the Creative City of Gastronomy Virtual Conference (in March, May, October and December); and PATA Executive Board Meetings (in March, April and July), PATA Board Meetings (in April and October), PATA Annual General Meeting (in April) and PATA Gold Awards 2021, which were sponsored by MGTO (in September).

The MGTO also attended WTCF Beijing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit & World Conference on Tourism Cooperation and Development 2021 (in September). Also during 2021, the MGTO became an official member of the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI).

Regarding regional cooperation, to fully leverage the functions of its mechanism in fostering Macao's development as world tourism and leisure centre, the Joint Working Committee on Tourism to Support the Development of Macao into a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure (Joint Working Committee) convened the 2021 Annual Work Meeting in Macao in July. The meeting engaged leaders and officials representing various entities, including the Secretariat for Economy and Finance of the MSAR Government, and leading officials and representatives of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region. The MGTO was invited to attend an activity at "Beautiful China - Experience with Heart & Eyes Online Presentation Seminar 2021", hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism; the main event was held in Chongqing, Sichuan province, while Macao served as a parallel venue.

Work on Prevention and Control of COVID-19 Pandemic

In 2021, the MGTO continued coordinating the loans of Medical Observation Hotels, and organised and assisted in the selection of these hotels, along with cleaning and disinfecting the hotels after they have been used, in accordance with the Health Bureau's work on pandemic prevention and control. The MGTO has optimised the operational procedures of Medical Observation Hotels, including the implementation of "closed-loop management" measures, introduction of robots for providing contactless services (such as body temperature screening and delivery of supplies), and so on. From 1 January to 31 December 2021, 41,059 people were assisted, and stayed in nine hotels for medical observations.

The MGTO forwarded the guidelines on pandemic prevention issued by the Health Bureau to

premises licensed and supervised by the MGTO, and regularly inspected these premises to ensure their full compliance with the related guidelines. It also cooperated with multiple departments to provide anti-pandemic vehicles at all checkpoints to escort people considered a risk for COVID infections to designated quarantine stations and the Medical Observation Hotels. As the outbreak changed, a closed-loop management measure targeting drivers on medical observation routes was introduced from the end of 2021.

Tourism Training

Tourism and related industries employ a significant proportion of Macao's total workforce. The Government attaches great importance to training people employed in the tourism sector; it offers training courses for various tourism-related professionals through the Institute for Tourism Studies.

The Institute of Tourism Studies

Established in 1995, the Institute for Tourism Studies (IFT) is a public tertiary education institute that provides tourism education, and is the world's first educational institution to be granted the TedQual Certification by the UNWTO.

The IFT offers degree and professional programmes, covering hotel services, tourism, cultural heritage, conventions and exhibitions, retail and marketing, leisure and entertainment, sports and recreation, cultural and creativity, and culinary arts. The institute also cooperates with renowned overseas colleges and training institutions to offer advanced management courses. In addition, the IFT has been commissioned by the Government and other institutions to conduct policy research on tourism planning and development.

In 2017, the IFT was the world's first higher education institution that passed the International Quality Review (IQR) from the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The IFT was ranked by "QS World University Rankings by Subject 2021" as the best higher education institution in Macao in the field of hospitality and leisure management, the fourth best higher education institution in Asia, and the 30th best higher education institution in the world in this field.

Tertiary Education

August 2019, besides bachelor programmes, the institute also offered postgraduate diploma, master's degree and doctoral degree programmes, and has become an all-round institution of higher education, to serve the development of tourism and meet Macao's tourism industry's future demands for human resources.

The enrolments in the programmes held during the 2020/2021 academic year were as follows:

IFT's diploma and degree programmes admitted 453 students during the 2020/2021 academic year, with a total of 1,700 registered students (including 11 exchange students in the first semester) enrolled in the following degree programmes at the beginning of the academic year:

Degree Programmes	Diploma and Degree Programmes
(Taught in daytime, English as medium of instruction)	(Taught in the evening, Chinese as medium of instruction)
(1) Culinary Arts Management	(1) Hotel Management
(2) Heritage Management	(2) Tourism Event Management
(3) Hotel Management	(3) Tourism Retail and Marketing Management
(4) Tourism Business Management	
(5) Tourism Event Management	
(6) Tourism Retail and Marketing Management	
Postgraduate Diploma Programme (Taught in the evening, English as medium of instruction)	Master's Degree Programmes (Taught in the evening, English as medium of instruction)
(1) Hospitality Management	(1) Hospitality and Tourism Management (2) International Food and Beverage Management (3) International Hospitality Management (4) International Tourism Management
Doctoral Degree Programme (English as medium of instruction)	
Hospitality and Tourism Management	

Non-tertiary Education

A total of 12,483 students took various vocational and continued education courses during the 2020/2021 academic year, with 161 of them enrolled in the Western Culinary Skills and Pastry and Bakery programme; 976 enrolled in assessment under the Macao Occupational Skills Recognition System (MORS); and 1,046 enrolled in various free training courses under the Community Education and Development Programme (CEDP).

Moreover, the school joined hands with Escola Luso-Chinesa Tecnico-Profissional, which is under the Education and Youth Development Bureau, to organise a three-year tourism programme for senior secondary students, a graphic design programme, and an international culinary programme. It also cooperated with several organisations to promote various courses under the Community Education and Development Programme, to meet the demands for human resources in the tourism sector including the hotel industry.

Regarding international exchanges and cooperation, as at August 2021, the IFT had built connections with 159 schools (127 of which are non-local), organisations and institutions in 33 countries and regions, including Macao, mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, America and Canada, to actively promote academic and cultural exchanges.

In the 2020/2021 academic year, due to the pandemic, students were not able to go abroad for exchange programmes, but the IFT actively sent students to mainland China for exchange programmes and internships. A total of 30 students were on internships abroad, six students went on exchanges to mainland China for a semester, and 172 students visited Beijing, Tianjin, Hainan, Gansu, Hunan, Guangdong and Guizhou to participate in exchange activities. Students also connected with the world through online platforms, with 35 students participating in international competitions. Also during the academic year, the IFT signed cooperation agreements with BINUS University, Sunway University, Sejong University, Hunan Normal University, Beijing International Studies University and Guangzhou University, to expand academic and cultural exchanges.

In 2021, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area tourism education and training base set up a new cooperation centre in Guangzhou and Shunde with competent partners, and continued launching a variety of online and offline activities with members of the Alliance for Developing Macao into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Tourism Education and Training Base, including training courses, certification assessments, seminars, forums, talks, research and exchange activities.

In 2021, the IFT signed collaboration agreements with the Vocational Skills Service Guidance Centre of the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province and the Labour Affairs Bureau of the MSAR Government to develop new standards for tourism services industry skills in the Greater Bay Area.

Since 2016, IFT's Global Centre for Tourism Education and Training has regularly collaborated with UNWTO, organising 12 professional training sessions, which targeted government agencies, tourism industry professionals and educators. These were attended by 270 participants from 34 countries and regions, including about 212 students from the Belt and Road regions.

In June and December 2021, the IFT collaborated with the UNWTO to organise two online training programmes with the themes of "Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism in Island Countries" and "Solutions for Sustainable Tourism Development and Destination Branding in Times of Crisis and Beyond", designed for decision makers in government tourism departments in island countries in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean and ASEAN countries, recommended by the UNWTO. The institute also invited personnel from the Greater Bay Area, with a total of 50 trainees from 12 countries joining the two courses.

Tourism Resources

Boasting a brilliant and fascinating history encompassing 400 years of cultural exchanges between China and the West, Macao has a unique appeal to tourists. Its scenery is embellished with tourist treasures of all types, including picturesque dwellings constructed in traditional styles and ancient

temples built during the Ming and Qing dynasties, buildings with Southern European architectural features, baroque-style churches and impressive contemporary structures.

Churches

Ruins of St Paul's

The Ruins of St Paul's, the surviving facade of St Paul's Church, is Macao's landmark. Designed by a Spanish Jesuit, construction of the original church began in 1602, and it was completed between 1637 and 1640.

St Paul's Church has been destroyed by fire three times, but fortunately its original facade remained standing. The facade has since been repaired many times, and is now generally known as the Ruins of St Paul's.

St Paul's Church is a delicate mixture of European Renaissance and Eastern architectural styles. The Museum of Sacred Art and Crypt was built at the location of the church, and houses collections paintings, sculptures and ceremonial decorations from churches and abbeys.

The Chapel of Our Lady of Guia

Originally built in 1622, the Chapel of Our Lady of Guia is the oldest building on Guia Hill. A project to enlarge it was carried out in 1637 and was completed in 1638. The Portuguese dedicated the church to the protector of seafarers. The interior preserves features that were common in 17th century Portuguese abbeys.

In 1996, a mural was discovered inside the church; this is a rarity in the churches of southern China.

St. Anthony's Church

The oldest church in Macao, St Anthony's Church, was built by the Society of Jesus between 1558 and 1560. Catholics regard St Anthony as the patron saint of marriage, so locals also call it the "Wedding Church".

St. Augustine's Church

St Augustine's Church was built in 1591, and is one of the oldest churches in Macao. The church underwent considerable changes and assumed its present form when it was restored in 1874.

St Dominic's Church

St Dominic's Church stands on part of the former site of St Dominic's Convent. In 1587, Spanish friars built the original church, which was dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. It was initially built of camphor wood, and later restructured with stucco bricks and cream-coloured stones. The

architecture is in Portuguese style, which was popular in the Orient in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the main chapel stands a statue of Our Lady of Fatima, from which the Parade of the Virgin commences on 13 May each year. Believers march to Penha Hill to commemorate the Virgin Mary's appearance in Fatima, Portugal. There is a museum of sacred art inside the chapel. The collection includes religious items of artistic value, as well as scriptures and carved wooden representations of saints.

Every year, the Macao Orchestra and guest orchestras from around the world choose St Dominic's Church as a performance venue, for mainly holding vocal and religious music shows.

St Lawrence's Church

St Lawrence's is one of Macao's most famous large churches. Built in the middle of the 16th century, it has undergone several restorations, and its present construction was completed in 1846. The Portuguese, who were great mariners and navigators, believed that St Lawrence offered protection and bestowed the gift of the wind.

Hermitage of Our Lady of Hope

The Hermitage of Our Lady of Hope, also called St Lazarus's Church, is the first cathedral built after the establishment of the Macao Diocese. Before the present cathedral was built, whenever a new bishop arrived in Macao to take up office, he first had to come to St Lazarus's Church to receive his crosier before he could exert his power. Consequently, this church is especially holy among Catholics in Macao. The present structure of St Lazarus's Church remains as it was in 1885.

The Cathedral

The Cathedral was built in 1576 and was originally a simple wooden structure. Between 1844 and 1850, Catholic parishioners collected donations to rebuild the church and enlarge it to its present size. Many major events in the Church's calendar centre on the Cathedral, especially during Easter. In addition to the procession of Our Lord of Passion, a solemn parade takes place on Good Friday and special masses are held on Easter Sunday.

Fortresses

Mount Fortress

Mount Fortress is one of Macao's major tourist attractions. Work on its construction began in 1617, during the reign of Emperor Shenzong of the Ming Dynasty, and it was completed in 1626. Mount Fortress was originally used by the Church to protect the clergymen of St Paul's Church from pirate attacks. It was later turned into a military installation. In the past, the fortress stood high above the city centre of Macao, and it was regarded as an important part of its defensive fortifications. It has now become a heritage site and witness to history.

Mount Fortress occupies about 8,000 square metres. The ancient fortress tower was once an office

of the Society of Jesus. It was also used as the office of the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, and it has since been rebuilt as the Museum of Macao. At the entrance, a stone carving records the fort's military successes in defending the city against invasions.

Mong Ha Fortress

Construction of Mong Ha Fortress began in 1849. It covers an area of 650 square metres. The fortress was once a barracks for African Portuguese soldiers stationed in Macao, and was called "Black Ghost Fortress". After the former Portuguese administration withdrew its Macao garrison during the 1970s, the barracks were abandoned. In the 1980s, Mong Ha Fortress was renovated and became the Government-owned Tourism School, now known as the Institute for Tourism Studies.

St Francis Fortress

St Francis Fortress was constructed in 1622. In 1584, Spanish clergymen built St Francis Convent on the site behind the fortress; subsequently, the convent was converted into a barracks. In the 20th century, after Portuguese soldiers withdrew from Macao, the barracks became the headquarters of the security forces in charge of the Marine Police, Public Security Police and Fire Service.

Guia Fortress

Guia Fortress occupies about 800 square metres. Its construction began in 1622, and it was expanded from 1637 to 1638. It was formerly valued for military purposes, because of its position overlooking the entire peninsula. It was therefore classified as a restricted military area until 1976, when the Portuguese army left. It was then turned into a tourist spot, and its appearance has been kept intact until now.

The Chapel of Our Lady of Guia was built in the fortress in 1622. Adjacent to the hermitage is the 13-metre-high Guia Lighthouse, which was built in 1864, and is one of the oldest lighthouses in the Far East. It resumed service in 1910 and has been guiding seamen ever since, with a visibility of 25 nautical miles from Macao.

When a typhoon approaches, typhoon signals are hoisted on the side of the lighthouse to warn nearby residents.

Barra Fortress

Barra Fortress, also called Pousada de S. Tiago Fortress or Sai Van Fortress, was built in 1622. It was an important fortress for protecting Macao's Inner Harbour. Inside the castle is the Chapel of St James. In 1981, the castle was converted into a hotel, while retaining its old characteristics.

Three Ancient Grand Temples

Macao's famous grand temples are the A-Ma Temple, Pou Chai Buddhist Monastery and Temple, and

Lin Fong Temple. Many visitors are attracted to these temples, because of the different generations and backgrounds they represent, and because of the gods to whom they are dedicated.

A-Ma Temple

The A-Ma Temple is one of the most famous tourist attractions in Macao and the oldest of Macao's three ancient grand temples.

Built in the Ming Dynasty, the A-Ma Temple was originally called the "A-Ma Pavilion" or "Tin Hau (Heavenly Queen) Temple" by local people. The entire temple consists of four main structures: the Stone Hall, the Main Hall, the Hong Ren Hall and the Kun Iam Pavilion. This ancient structure is distinguished by its traditional Chinese cultural characteristics.

Between Hong Ren Hall and Kun Iam Pavilion, there are many stone inscriptions along the cliff path written by celebrities, statesmen, poets and scholars and engraved in different calligraphic styles.

Pou Chai Buddhist Monastery and Temple

Built in the late Ming Dynasty, Pou Chai Buddhist Monastery and Temple is also called Kun Iam Tong Temple. The Buddhist monastery is built in the ancient Chinese architectural style of Hui Fei, resembling ancient Chinese temples on famous mountains.

The first large hall in the monastery is dedicated to the Three Precious Buddhas, the second to the Buddha of Longevity, and the third to Kun Iam. Besides the large halls, there are also some other buildings, such as the western hall, the eastern hall, the backyard garden, and so forth. Such a large Buddhist temple complex is unusual in Macao and Hong Kong.

Many collections of paintings, items of calligraphy and antiques by famous masters are housed in the temple. They include the works of Gao Jianfu, a famous painter of the Ling Nan (Guangdong and Guangxi areas) school, and his student Guan Shanyue; Chen Gongyin, who ranked among the three great poets in Ling Nan; and the famous scholar Zhang Taiyan; as well as inscriptions by ancient celebrities such as Mi Fu, Dong Qichang, and Liu Yong. The unequal Treaty of Wanghia between the United States of America and the Qing regime of China was signed in the temple garden.

Lin Fong Temple

Built in the Ming Dynasty, Lin Fong Temple is one of the most famous temples in Macao. Formerly named the "Tin Fei Temple", Lin Fong is a comparatively small monastery and temple dedicated to Tin Hau. Since the Qing Dynasty, it has been expanded and renovated from time to time, and has gradually been expanded to its present size.

In the middle of the 19th century, Lin Zexu, a Qing Dynasty imperial commissioner, received Portuguese officials in Lin Fong Temple during his temporary residence in Macao.

As well as the three ancient grand temples, there are many other old temples in Macao, such as the Na Tcha Temple, Hong Kung Temple, Tam Kung Temple, Bhaisajyaraja Bodhisattva Buddhist Monastery (Yeok San), Chu Lam Chi Buddhist Monastery, Sam Po Temple, Po Tai Buddhist

Monastery, Lin Kai Temple, Pak Tai Temple and Tin Hau Temple.

Cybernetic Fountains

Macao has a cybernetic fountain at Nam Van Lake. The fountain comprises various spouts and lights for fountain shows. The Municipal Affairs Bureau schedules two musical fountain shows and laser fountain shows on Saturdays and Sundays. More shows are staged during special festivals, such as New Year's Day, Chinese New Year, the Mid-Autumn Festival and Christmas.

Macau Tower

The Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre, which was funded and constructed by the Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macau, officially opened on 19 December 2001 as Macao's new signature landmark. Soaring 338 metres high, the Macau Tower was the tenth-highest freestanding tower in the world and the eighth-highest in Asia when it was completed.

The main observation level is 223 metres above the ground, and consists of four floors. Two floors accommodate an indoor viewing deck, café, revolving restaurant and outdoor viewing deck. The indoor viewing deck provides visitors with panoramic views of up to 55 kilometres.

The multifunction convention and entertainment centre integrated with the tower also has four floors containing exhibition and conference facilities.

A-Ma Statue

Located at the top of the Alto de Coloane, the A-Ma Statue is the tallest white marble statue of this goddess in the world. Constructed from 120 white marble boulders and completed on 28 October 1998, it is 19.99 metres in height. The face is carved from a single white marble boulder, and the statue weighs 500 tonnes.

International Sports and Cultural Events

Macao hosts a variety of international sports and cultural events throughout the year. These play an important role in promoting Macao, enhancing its international profile and attracting tourists and visitors.

Macau Grand Prix

The Macau Grand Prix began in 1954, and was originally an amateur sports event for Macao motor racing fans. Today, it has become a major event for the world's leading racing teams.

Every year in late November, world-class drivers and thousands of visitors flock to Macao to join the world's only street track event that includes both a formula touring car race and a motorcycle race.

The Formula Three race of the Macau Grand Prix is the premier event, drawing national

championship racers from throughout the world to compete for the honour of first prize. Grand Prix street track riders and motorcycle superstars such as Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher, David Coulthard, Jenson Button, Kevin Schwantz, Carl Fogarty, Didier de Radigues and Ron Haslam have competed at the Guia Circuit.

Macao International Marathon

The Macao International Marathon seeks to foster sports development, enhance international friendship and promote Macao's sports and tourism industry to the world.

The Macao International Marathon is held every December and is the largest track-and-field event in Macao. The route circles the Macao peninsula and crosses to Taipa and Coloane islands, and has a total length of 42.195 kilometres. Marathon competitors come from all over the world, and include athletes from Macao and Hong Kong as well as famous international track-and-field stars.

Macao International Fireworks Display Contest

The Macao International Fireworks Display Contest is recognised throughout the world. It attracts numerous prominent fireworks companies and is attended each year by large numbers of tourists and Macao residents. The contest provides an opportunity for Macao to showcase its tourism industry and reputation.

The first Macao International Fireworks Display Contest was held in 1989, and was contested by just five teams. The contest has gradually become a major annual tourism event, attracting high standard fireworks companies from countries and regions such as mainland China, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Australia, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, France, Germany, Portugal and Spain. The Macao International Fireworks Display Contest is usually held between September and October each year, on the seafront near the Macau Tower.

Other major sports events and cultural activities held in Macao include the FIVB World Grand Prix, the Macao Open (Golf Tournament), the annual Macao International Dragon Boat Races, the Macao Arts Festival from March to May, the Macao International Music Festival in October, and Macau Food Festival.

Culinary Delights

Since Chinese and Western cultures coexist in Macao, it offers food that blends culinary influences from around the world. Different cuisines can be sampled throughout the area, and tourists may taste the regional dishes of Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, Guangdong and Taiwan to their heart's content. They can also enjoy authentic cuisines from Portugal, Italy, France, Japan, India, Vietnam, South Korea, Brazil and Thailand.

Regarded as one of the world's unique cuisines, Macanese cuisine is actually a distillation of the culinary arts of Portugal, Africa, India, Malaysia and mainland China's Guangdong Province. Bacalao balls, African chicken, spicy prawns, Portuguese chicken, stewed duck with herbs, stewed knuckle with red beans, stuffed crab shells, and grilled sardines are celebrated delicacies in Macao.

Macao specialties also include almond cakes, egg rolls, crackers, peanut candy, chicken-shaped pastries, dried preserved fruits and various dried meats, which are tourists' favourites. Clusters of pastry houses and snack shops are found along Almeida Ribeiro Avenue to the Auto Novo Alley, Sao Paulo Road and around the old district on Taipa island.



Light Festival



The Macao Light Festival 2021 commenced on 4 December 2021, and continued until 16 January 2022 due to its popularity. This was the first time the festival resumed after the pandemic. Various Government departments hosted activities during the year-end festive holidays, to highlight Macao's image as a tourist-friendly city, thus attracting more tourists to speed up Macao's economic recovery.

The Macao Light Festival illuminates and enlivens the streets and alleys of different neighbourhoods through light installations, interactive games and light sculpture performances, to enrich Macao's evening entertainment. In conjunction with the Light Up Macao Drone Gala held on weekends and holidays, the event allowed more residents and tourists to explore different districts in Macao, participate in activities, and help revitalising the local economy.

