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TOURISM



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

Major Markets

According to the Statistics and Census Service, the total number of tourists visiting Macao in 2016 was 30,950,336, representing a slight increase of 0.8 percent over the 2015 figure. The number of overnight visitors during the year totalled 15,703,616, representing an increase of 9.8 percent, and accounting for 50.7 percent of visitors to Macao. This was the first time over the past ten years that the number of overnight visitors exceeded the number of same-day visitors. The average length of stay of overnight visitors remained at 2.1 days, while the overall figure was 1.2 days (+0.1 days). In 2016, the 10 major source markets of visitors were:

Country/Region	No. of Visitors	Percentage (%)
Mainland China	20,454,104	66.1%
Hong Kong	6,419,839	20.7%
Taiwan	1,074,525	3.5%
Korea	662,321	2.1%
Japan	300,613	1.0%
Philippines	287,025	0.9%
Thailand	236,169	0.8%
Malaysia	222,809	0.7%
United States of America	190,885	0.6%
India	182,467	0.6%

In 2016, Greater China (mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) comprised 90.3 percent of the total market, and the international market comprised 9.7 percent. Mainland China continued to be the largest market for visitors to Macao, accounting for 66.1 percent of the total number of visitors to Macao. The number slightly increased by 0.2 percent over the 2015 figure, and 9,579,412 (46.8 percent) of the mainland China visitors 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 1.8 percent, while

those from Taiwan increased by 8.8 percent, when compared with 2015.

Regarding the international market, Korea remained at the top of the list of sources of international visitors, with an increase of 19.5 percent in 2016. The Southeast Asia market also fared well. Thailand recorded an increase in visitors to Macao of 30.6 percent, topping the list of the top ten sources of visitors. Indonesia and the Philippines recorded increases of 11.7 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively. Japan recorded an increase of 6.5 percent; while the United States, which was the only long-distance source of visitors on the top-ten list, also recorded an increase of 4.6 percent.

The Hotel Industry

According to Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) statistics, at the end of 2016, Macao had a total of 113 hotel premises, of which 79 were star-rated hotels and 34 were guesthouses, supplying a total of 37,634 guest rooms.

Star Rating	Number of Hotels	Number of Rooms
Five-star Luxury Hotels	9	5,384
Five-star Hotels	24	17,268
Four-star Hotels	17	7,869
Three-star Hotels	15	5,392
Three-star Apartment Hotels	1	208
Two-star Hotels	13	861
Sub-total	79	36,982
Guesthouse	34	652
Total		37,634

- *Average room rate of three to five-star member hotels was 1,288.6 patacas in 2016 (down 12.7 percent from 2015), according to the Macau Hotel Association.*

The total number of guests who stayed at hotel premises in Macao during 2016 was 12,001,404, representing an increase of 13.6 percent over the figure in 2015. The average year-round occupancy rate of hotel premises increased from 81.5 percent in 2015 to 83.3 percent in 2016. The average length of stay was 1.4 nights, down 0.1 nights compared with the 2015 figure.

Travel Agencies

At the end of 2016, there were 221 licensed travel agencies in Macao, down by three from 224 in 2015. A total of 1,900 people held tourist guide licences issued by the MGTO, an increase of 34 (1.8 percent) compared with the 2015 figure. The language abilities of these tourist guides spanned Cantonese, Putonghua, English, Portuguese, German, Japanese, Korean, Thai, French, Spanish, Russian, Indonesian, Hokkien and Chaozhouese.

In 2016, 7,033,336 tourists visited Macao on package tours, representing a decrease of 18.1

percent from 2015. Most package tourists, totalling 5,538,912, came from mainland China, representing a decrease of 21 percent. The second and third-largest sources of package tourists were Taiwan and Korea, with 398,240 and 370,338, respectively.

In 2016, a total of 1,255,900 Macao residents engaged with travel agent services to travel abroad. Of these, 501,200 joined outbound group tours. The most popular destination was mainland China, with 342,300 (68.3 percent) residents visiting. Korea was the second most-popular tourism destination for Macao residents, attracting 51,000 visitors or 10.2 percent of the total. Taiwan ranked third, attracting 34,500 visitors or 6.9 percent of the total. A total of 754,700 residents engaged with travel agent services without joining guided tours, 11.8 percent less than in 2015.

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; and monitoring tourism and related business and issuing licences, in order to realise the Government's overall tourism objectives.

The MGTO has set up representative offices in many countries and regions around the world, including the Hong Kong SAR, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, France, the United Kingdom and Ireland, the United States of America, Russia, Australia and New Zealand.

Macao's tourism industry was also actively promoted by three overseas offices: the Tourism Section of the Office of the Macao Special Administrative Region in Beijing, Macau Economic and Cultural Office in Taiwan, and Macau Tourism Promotion and Information Center in Portugal.

In 2016, there was a change in the composition of tourists visiting Macao, with a notable increase in inbound international travellers and positive growth in several tourism indicators. In line with the Government's active participation in the "Belt and Road" initiative, we will continue to make the best use of Macao's unique tourism and cultural advantages. Through better tourism planning, improvements to the tourism service industry, exploring diverse tourism products, enhancing regional cooperation, and participating in events organised by international organisations, we will further foster the development of a world tourism and leisure centre.

Tourism Planning

In 2016, to pursue the building of Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre, the MGTO began the second phase of the Master Plan for Tourism Industry Development by fine-tuning the relevant proposals. By collecting information and learning from other tourism countries' development models, and with consideration of the actual situation in Macao, a number of tourism plans were formulated. A two-month public consultation was held from 23 May to 22 July. Through public consultation sessions, exchanges and outdoor roadshows, the public and tourism organisations were briefed on the plans, and opinions were collected from different social sectors and incorporated into the master plan.

Also, the MGTO started using scientific research methods to review effectiveness of tourism

products, and understand the travel behaviour and characteristics of visitors from different sources, for reference in planning and developing future tourism products. In 2016, MGTO conducted surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the Parade for Celebration of the Year of the Monkey, Macao Light Festival 2016, and the First International Film Festival & Awards Macao; surveys on Singaporean visitors and Malaysian visitors; and the longitudinal study on family-run guest houses. In addition, MGTO launched “Macao Tourism News plus” (<https://newsplus.macaotourism.gov.mo/>) (phase 1), an online news archive that consolidates news materials about Macao tourism provided by different news publishers. The archive currently contains over 10,000 records, including thousands of high-resolution photos for easy access by media representatives seeking materials for news about tourism. The MGTO continued to optimise “Macao Tourism Data plus” (<http://dataplus.macaotourism.gov.mo>) by launching the Portuguese version, and providing new functions including subscriptions, a user manual, and an enquiry service regarding statistical indicators about the hotel industry.

The MGTO also participated in cross-departmental planning for the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the management of Macao’s waters, the facilitated sailing tourism scheme, the new Taipa Ferry Terminal, the Macao Urban Electronic Surveillance System, and the cross-departmental task force on climate change, to provide the Government with views regarding tourism development.

Tourism Products

The MGTO developed and supported a variety of tourism products, including Anim’Arte NAM VAN, Rubber Duck in Macao, and Chibi Maruko Chan Animation 25th Anniversary Exhibition – Tour in Macao. The MGTO continued implementing its Community Tourism Plan, to explore community tourism resources with distinctive Macao characteristics. It also continued to recommend walking routes under the “Step Out, Experience Macau’s Communities” programme, as well as promote events and facilities. Together with the improvement of the environment along the walking routes, the MGTO attracted tourists to engage in in-depth travel. It also supported various community groups in organising a wide range of educational and interactive promotion events under the Macao Tourism Awareness Campaign. The MGTO promoted cultural tourism, explored tourism elements with local features, supported local performance groups to perform at various tourist spots during weekends, and launched a promotion campaign for temples and churches, to draw attention to the substance of local culture.

Anim’Arte NAM VAN

Anim’Arte NAM VAN is a leisure landmark at the Nam Van lakeside, which is jointly developed by the Cultural Affairs Bureau, the MGTO, the Sports Bureau and the Institute for Tourism Office. It features a combination of cultural and creative products for sale, food and beverage, pedal boats, and cultural performances during weekends –thus providing a diverse range of tourism services and experiences for residents and tourists, and adds additional cultural elements to Macao’s tourism and leisure industry.

Events and Festivals

The MGTO continued organising various events and festivals, which included the Valentine Light

Show, Lunar New Year Parade, Macau International Fireworks Display Contest, celebration events for World Tourism Day, Macau Food Festival, Macau Shopping Festival, Macao Light Festival, and International Film Festival & Awards Macao, with the aim of building Macao as a city of mega events.

Community Tourism

In 2016, the MGTO continued implementing its Community Tourism Plan, supporting relevant organisations that held activities in various parishes. It supported 17 organisations that held a total of 44 activities, attracting over 730,000 participants. The MGTO continued implementing the Step Out, Experience Macau walking routes promotional programme, to better publicise the tourism walking routes. The MGTO also supported 12 organisations that held 28 events along the walking routes, attracting over 11,000 participants. In 2016, the MGTO again organised the Tourism Awareness Campaign, demonstrating hospitality and disseminating travel information to residents and the industry, by supporting 17 bodies to organise 46 events, which were attended by over 36,000 participants.

Business Tourism

In 2016, the Government continued with the Travel Stimulus Program, which combined elements of incentive travel, wedding travel and student travel facilitation programmes. During the year, the Incentive Travel Facilitation Programme benefited 25,616 participants, and the Student Travel Facilitation Programme benefited 1,219 students and teachers.

Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo

The Fourth Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo was held from 2 to 4 September 2016. It was hosted by the MGTO, supported by the National Tourism Administration and organised by the Macau Travel Agency Association. The area of the expo venue was 6,800 square metres, with 370 exhibition booths. A total of 28 countries and regions, as well as tourism departments and industry groups from over 70 cities in mainland China, participated in the expo, which attracted about 32,000 visitors.

Global Tourism Economy Forum - Macau 2016

The Global Tourism Economy Forum - Macau 2016, which was a recognised partner of the World Tourism Organization of the United Nations (UNWTO), was held from 15 to 16 October 2016. It was hosted by the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture, and co-organised by the China Chamber of Tourism and the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre. Beijing was the partner city of this year's forum, and France was the partner country. The forum theme was "Growing Consumer Class – Rethinking and Reshaping the Future Tourism Landscape", and the major activities included the opening ceremony, a keynote speech and discussion sessions, business matching, and cultural performances.

From 4 to 31 December 2016, the MGTO held the Macao Light Festival from 7 pm to 10 pm every night, at eight tourist spots: Nam Van Lake Nautical Centre, Avenida Panoramica do Lago Nam Van, Anim'Arte NAM VAN, St Lawrence's Church, Mandarin's House, Largo do Lilau, Maritime Administration Building, and Largo do Pagode da Barra. The festival included 3D mapping, light installations, lighting and music performances, and interactive games, and attracted about 380,000 visitors.

International Film Festival & Awards Macao

The First International Film Festival & Awards Macao was held from 8 to 13 December 2016. The activities included a film contest and award presentation ceremony, film premiere, a red carpet, film shows for the industry and the public, an exchange session on the film industry, master classes, a press conference, a micro film contest, and a screenplay competition. During the film festival, 54 films from more than 20 countries/regions were shown, with most of them shown for the first time in the world or Asia.

2016 International Gastronomy Forum, Macao

From 23 to 26 November, the MGTO held the First International Gastronomy Forum, Macao. More than 200 people participated, including representatives of 16 cities of gastronomy and one city of literature within the Creative Cities Network of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as mainland China, overseas and local food experts, scholars and media. The forum aimed to raise public awareness of adopting creativity as a sustainable city development strategy, and to provide an exchange platform for participating cities and experts. It also aimed to enable a better understanding of the advantages of cultural assets, creativity and sustainable development, and to facilitate the sustainable development of creative gastronomy through sharing participants' successful experiences.

Tourism Marketing

In 2016, the Government began promotions under the new theme - "Experience Macao in Your Own Style", with campaigns targeting consumers and the tourism industry. We participated in major tourism exhibitions in major source markets of visitors; organised briefing sessions and discussion meetings about tourism for the industry; participated in and organised large-scale promotion events, including the 67th Sapporo Snow Festival in Sapporo, Japan, for which we deigned a large snow sculpture with the theme of the Ruins of St Paul's and 3D lighting show; organised a large-scale tourism promotion campaign, Experience Macao-Korea, in Seoul; organised promotion activities for Macao in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; and organised roadshows about Macao tourism in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Malaysia.

The Government continued to work with the Tourism Administration of Guangdong Province and Hong Kong Tourism Board on enhancing tourism cooperation based on the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao cooperation mechanism, including setting up a joint exhibition booth for Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in major tourism exhibitions to promote itineraries of multiple destinations

in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao; conducting joint promotion activities with the tourism authorities of Guangdong Province and Hong Kong in Thailand in March and July, respectively; and promoting Macao and Pearl River Delta tourism products in cities along high-speed railway routes.

We commenced several joint promotion activities in support of the China Maritime Silk Road Tourism Promotion Alliance. In the 12th Strait Travel Fair and Guangdong 21st Century Maritime Silk Road International Expo, the alliance set up a joint exhibition booth to promote tourism resources in member provinces and cities.

The Guangdong-Macao cooperation pilot scheme for cross-boundary pleasure boat sailing arrangements between Macao and Zhongshan was launched on 23 November 2016. The MGTO was mainly responsible for promoting the scheme; arranged for pre-launch exchanges and site visits for members of the tourism industries in the two places; and organised joint seminars with the related authorities, to prepare for the implementation of the cross-boundary pleasure boat sailing arrangements.

Information Counters

Seven information counters have been set up by the MGTO in major ports and tourist spots in Macao (the Border Gate, the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, Edif Ritz at the Largo do Senado, Macau International Airport and Taipa Temporary Ferry Terminal) and major ports in Hong Kong (Shun Tak Centre and Hong Kong International Airport).

In 2016, information counters in Macao and Hong Kong received 1,454,011 visitors. There were 819 complaints received during the year regarding retail services, gaming, restaurants, travel agencies, hotels, transportation, and services provided by public bodies.

Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme

To implement the tourism policy of enhancing service quality and optimising the industry accreditation mechanism, the Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme was launched in 2014. Since then, a total of 212 merchants have been accredited within the catering sector, 201 of which were still operating in 2016. The scheme has been expanded to cover the travel agency sector, with 28 accredited merchants in total.

Regional and International Cooperation

Regarding international cooperation, the MGTO actively participated in various conferences, seminars and events organised by international tourism organisations, thereby enhancing Macao's participation in international tourism affairs. The Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture attended the World Tourism and Security Meeting for High-level Officials; the MGTO attended the 1st meeting of UNWTO Committee on Tourism Ethics, the 1st World Tourism Development Conference and the 28th Joint Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia & UNWTO Conference on Tourism and Technology; the director of the MGTO attended the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Annual Submit 2016 in Guam

in the United States, and was elected as an Executive Board Member (voting) of PATA, which would be conducive to enhancing Macao's participation in international tourism affairs. Following the direction of "One Centre, One Platform", the MGTO actively facilitated cooperation in and promotion of the markets of Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs); maintained close cooperation with PSCs; and signed the Tourism Cooperation Agreement with Portugal, to enhance exchanges and cooperation in the tourism field.

Regarding regional cooperation, the MGTO attended the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Joint Working Committee on Tourism to Support Macao's Aspirations to Build a World Tourism and Leisure Centre, to exchange views with the National Tourism Administration on details related to Macao in the tourism plan for the 13th National Five-year Plan and the "Belt and Road" initiative, as well as the Master Plan for Developing the Tourism Industry of Macao and regional tourism cooperation, with a view to proceeding with building Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre. The MGTO also followed up on tourism-related work under the Framework Agreement on Cooperation between Guangdong and Macao, and signed a Memorandum on Tourism Cooperation with the Tourism Administration of Guangdong Province and the Shenzhen Municipal Bureau of Culture, Sport and Tourism, to further enhance cooperation in regional tourism; and signed a Memorandum on Tourism Cooperation with the Tourism Administration of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region to enhance cooperation and communication, thereby developing the tourism industry of the two regions. Regarding Fujian-Macao cooperation, the MGTO signed a Memorandum on Tourism Cooperation with the Tourism Department of Pingtan Comprehensive Pilot Zone of Fujian Province, to work together to develop A-Ma cultural tours, and explore the tourism market of the Maritime Silk Road.

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 affiliated to the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture, and is the first educational institution to be granted the TedQual Certification by the UNWTO. The IFT offers degree and professional programmes in a wide range of tourism-related disciplines, such as 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.

To meet the human resources demands of the tourism sector and complement the sector's future development, IFT's diploma and degree programmes admitted 352 students and 24 exchange students during the 2015/2016 academic year. During the academic year, there were 1,532 students

enrolled in the following degree programmes:

Daytime Degree Programmes (English as Medium of Instruction)	Evening Diploma and Degree Programmes (Chinese as Medium of Instruction)
(1) Culinary Arts Management (2) Tourism Business Management (3) Heritage Management (4) Hotel Management (5) Tourism Event Management (6) Tourism Retail and Marketing Management	(1) Hotel Management (2) Tourism Event Management

Regarding non-tertiary education, a total of 19,393 students took various vocational and continued education courses during the 2015/2016 academic year, with 146 of the students enrolled in two 1.5-year Western Culinary Skills and Pastry and Bakery programmes; 1,560 students enrolled in the Macao Occupational Skills Recognition System (MORS); and 1,755 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 to organise a three-year tourism programme for senior secondary students, and cooperated with several organisations to promote various courses under the Community Education and Development Programme.

Regarding international exchanges and cooperation, as at August 2016, the IFT had built connection with 101 schools, organisations and institutions in 30 countries and regions, including mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and North America, to promote academic and cultural exchanges. During the 2015/2016 academic year, in addition to exchange programmes and international internships, there were over 100 students participating in exchange courses and international conferences in Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Portugal, the Netherlands, and the United States, with support from the IFT. The IFT also signed an agreement with the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong, Chung-Ang University in Korea and the Hotel and Tourism Training Institute in the Republic of Zambia, to widen the scope of international cooperation in the IFT's academic exchanges and student exchange programmes.

In January 2016, the library of the Institute of Tourism Studies became the first depository library for UNWTO publications in Hong Kong and Macao. It provides a comprehensive, wide range of tourism information, thereby providing support to scientific research projects on tourism in Macao and neighbouring regions.

In line with Macao's development positioning regarding the establishment of "One Centre, One Platform", as outlined in the 13th National Five-year Plan, the IFT actively deepened cooperation with governments, institutions and organisations of Portuguese-speaking countries; worked hand-in-hand with the Government to participate in the establishment of the "Belt and Road" initiative,

made the best use of advantages in tourism education and training, facilitated frequent cultural exchanges between teachers and students in the regions and countries along the Silk Road economic belt, and provided relevant tourism courses for them.

After signing a cooperation agreement with the UNWTO in late 2012, the IFT provided training for DPR Korea and Cambodia, which were both members of the UNWTO, from August to November 2015 and in June 2016, respectively. The training was provided to two scholars from Pyongyang Tourism Institute of DPR Korea, 20 tour guides specialising in Cambodia's cultural heritage, and four Cambodian government tourism representatives.

In October 2015, the Government and the UNWTO signed the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Macao Special Administrative Region Government and UNWTO, under which the Government would cooperate with the UNWTO in raising the quality of human resources of the tourism industry. The IFT would be responsible for implementing the cooperation projects. To this end, the Chief Executive issued an executive order in November 2016 regarding the establishment of the World Tourism Education and Training Centre, through which the IFT would continue to facilitate tourism education and training courses, as well as the relevant research work.

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 Civic and 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 Diversoes 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, cafe, 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, 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.



Tray Race



On 9 September, World Tourism Day, the Macau Government Tourist Office organised a variety of activities to celebrate this major global tourism event.

The tray race was a highlight event, in which participants wore fancy dress for a race starting from the Ruins of St Paul's. They had to carry glasses of beer on trays, and ran all the way to the finish line at Largo do Senado, through the streets of the Historic Centre of Macao. This exciting and fun race attracted a large crowd of tourists to take photos and cheer for the contestants, manifesting the joyful festive atmosphere of Macao.

