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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

Macao's tourism in 2020 was hard hit by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. According to the Statistics and Census Service, the total number of tourists visiting Macao in 2020 was 5,896,848 – representing a decrease of 85 percent from the 2019 figure. The number of overnight visitors during the year totalled 2,822,037, representing a decrease of 84.9 percent, and accounting for 47.9 percent of visitors to Macao. The average length of stay of overnight visitors was 2.8 days, representing an increase of 0.6 days, while the overall figure was 1.4 days; representing an increase of 0.2 days.

Major Markets

In 2020, the ten major source markets of visitors were:

Country / Region	No. of Visitors	Percentage (%)
Mainland China	4,754,239	80.6%
Hong Kong	843,165	14.3%
Taiwan	104,124	1.8%
South Korea	44,457	0.8%
Philippines	32,018	0.5%
Japan	15,200	0.3%
The United States of America	13,489	0.2%
Indonesia	12,883	0.2%
Malaysia	9,455	0.2%
Australia	7,915	0.1%

In 2020, tourists from Greater China (mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan) comprised 96.7 percent of the total; and tourists from the international market comprised 3.3 percent. Mainland China continued to be the largest market for visitors to Macao, accounting for 80.6 percent of the total number of visitors, which was 83 percent lower than in 2019. Among the mainland China visitors,

1,865,152 (39.2 percent) 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 88.5 percent, and those from Taiwan decreased by 90.2 percent, compared with 2019.

Regarding the international market, South Korea remained at the top of the list of sources of international visitors, albeit with a decrease of 94 percent from the figure of 2019.

Regarding the Southeast Asia market, visitors from both Indonesia and Philippines decreased by 92.4 percent.

Visitors from Japan also decreased, by 94.9 percent. Visitors from the United States and Australia, the long-distance sources of visitors on the top ten list, also recorded decreases of 93.2 percent and 90.6 percent, respectively.

The Hotel Industry

According to Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) statistics, at the end of 2020, Macao had a total of 132 hotel premises, of which 90 were star-rated hotels and 42 were guesthouses, supplying a total of 41,884 guest rooms.

Star Rating	Number of Hotels	Number of Rooms
Five-star Luxury Hotels	11	5,798
Five-star Hotels	26	19,211
Four-star Hotels	18	8,102
Four-star Apartment Hotels	1	289
Three-star Hotels	16	5,743
Three-star Apartment Hotels	1	208
Two-star Hotels	17	1,402
Sub-total	90	40,753
Guesthouse	42	1,131
Total		41,884

* The average room rate of three- to five-star member hotels was 920.4 patacas in 2020, 32.4 percent lower than in 2019, according to the Macau Hotel Association.

The total number of guests who stayed in hotels in Macao during 2020 was 3,874,307, representing a decrease of 72.5 percent from the figure in 2019. The average year-round occupancy rate of hotels decreased by 62.2 percent to 28.6 percent. The average length of stay was 1.7 nights, representing an increase of 0.2 nights.

Travel Agencies

At the end of 2020, there were 220 licensed travel agencies in Macao, six less than in 2019. A total of 1,931 people held tourist guide licences issued by the MGTO, 41 (2.1 percent) fewer than in 2019. 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 2020, 243,556 tourists visited Macao on package tours, representing a decrease of 97 percent from 2019. Most package tourists, totalling 166,662, came from mainland China, representing a decrease of 97.3 percent. The second and third-largest sources of tourists were Taiwan and South Korea, with numbers plummeting by 94.7 percent to 36,050 visitors and 96.3 percent to 21,483 visitors, respectively.

In 2020, a total of 125,020 Macao residents engaged with travel agent services to travel abroad. Of these, 40,656 joined outbound group tours. The most popular destination was mainland China, with 34,303 (84.4 percent) residents visiting. South Korea was the second most-popular package tourism destination for Macao residents, attracting 1,503 visitors, or 3.7 percent of the total. Hong Kong ranked third, attracting 1,010 visitors, or 2.5 percent of the total. A total of 84,364 residents engaged with travel agent services without joining guided tours, 93 percent less than in 2019.

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, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Taiwan region, India, 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.

The number of tourists visited Macao in 2020 dropped sharply due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To align with the anti-pandemic measures implemented by the Government, the MGTO commenced several special tasks to provide the industry with anti-pandemic guidelines, hold briefing sessions, and engage 13 hotels as quarantine locations. By 31 December 2020, 23,123 people had been isolated for quarantine in hotels. Macao residents stranded in foreign countries were also transported back to Macao through charter flights and special coach, bus routes and ferry services. Meanwhile, the Government launched other measures, such as tax relief and waiver of licence fees, to provide timely financial support to the tourism industry.

Tourism Planning and Study

The Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan, which was released in 2017 by the MGTO, proposed eight major key objectives, 33 strategies, 29 planning proposals and 91 short-, medium- and long-term action plans in accordance with the goal of building Macao as a world tourism and leisure centre.

In 2020, the MGTO continued implementing the action plans of the Macao Tourism Industry Development Master Plan, and commenced a review and study regarding the plan with consideration of the developments and changes in the global tourism industry, thereby promoting sustainable development of the tourism industry.

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 news materials about Macao tourism from different news sources, 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

In 2020, the MGTO participated in and organised several smart tourism seminars, introducing the tourism information interchange platform and sharing the benefits of using open data. In November 2020, the “Smart Trip Planner” webpage and a new mobile app were launched to integrate three official mobile apps – “Experience Macao”, “What’s On, Macao” and “Step Out, Macao” into one, thereby providing tourists with more comprehensive information on travelling. The “Smart Trip Planner” applies artificial intelligence technology and big data, and combines smart visitor flow forecasts and public transportation information, to create customised travel itineraries for users with different preferences.

To keep pace with the development of e-governance, in January 2020 the MGTO launched a one-stop account management system, through integrating the login accounts for various online services. In September 2020, it launched an online account renewal service for hotels, restaurants, clubs, bars and travel agencies, integrating online payment platforms for use by the travel industry.

Licensing and Industry Management

In 2020, the MGTO issued 6 licences for hotels and catering premises, and followed up regarding the applications for various kinds of licence. In 2020, the MGTO conducted 1,947 inspections of licensed premises and activities under its supervision, 787 inspections of border crossing checkpoints and tourist attractions, and 800 random inspections of “Macao Ready Go! Local Tours” groups. Regarding combating illegal accommodation, 82 units were closed to visitors in 2020.

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", and provided subsidies to community groups for organising events under the Community Tourism Plan.

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. Regarding the increase of Aquatic Trek berths, the construction at Barra pier was completed in the fourth quarter of 2020. Meanwhile, after a cross-departmental conference and the opinions from the industry were heard, the MGTO also considered building a temporary pier in the Northern District, in order to facilitate and enrich the Aquatic Trek itinerary and cruise routes.

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 2020, the MGTO supported Macao enterprises to launch 70 related cultural and creative products, for promoting 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 2020, it subsidised 28 activities organised by 19 organisations, attended by over 919,000 participants.

Grand Prix Museum

The expansion of the Grand Prix Museum has been completed, with a solar power generation system added to the infrastructure, along with an energy management system and a building management system installed, in the hope of achieving the objectives of energy conservation and resources recycling, thereby leading Macao's tourism facilities to adopt a sustainable operating mode. The expansion of the Grand Prix Museum has earned LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification in the building design and construction category for new construction projects.

After expansion, the four-storey museum will provide much more space to systematically display cars and motorcycles that have raced in Macau Grand Prix, and its history, displaying exhibits on various types of car races with evolution over time as the main axis, and using interactive multimedia equipment and racing scene displays to introduce the development of and information on Macao

Grand Prix from multiple perspectives, thus creating an educational and fun museum experience.

Besides the elevator built according to the General Guidelines on Design and Construction of Accessibility Facilities of the Macao SAR, the museum has installed various accessibility features that facilitate access and information exchanges. The museum also cooperated with Macao tertiary educational institutions to create a tactile, accessible formula racing exhibition hall.

Business Tourism

Travel Stimulus Programme

In 2020, the Government continued with the Travel Stimulus Programme, which combines elements of incentive travel, wedding travel and student travel facilitation programmes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, just two cases involving 128 visitors benefited in 2020.

The Eighth Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo

The Eighth Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo was held from 6 November to 8 November 2020. 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 22,000 square metres, and there were more than 660 exhibition booths and a total of 398 on-site and online exhibitors, attracting approximately 23,000 visitors. This was the first time that the Travel Expo combined virtual and physical exhibitions, with more than 40 on-site exhibitors participating in 12 Live Cloud Broadcast sessions, attracting up to 262,000 concurrent online viewers and over 120 million playback counts.

Global Tourism Economy Forum – Macao 2020

The Global Tourism Economy Forum – Macao 2020 was held on 9 December 2020, with Gansu as the major partner province. It was hosted by the Secretariat for Economy and Finance, and co-organised by the MGTO. The forum, with “Solidarity and Innovation: Reshaping Tourism in the New Global Economy” as the theme, initiated discussions on the post-pandemic tourism economy and how to leverage the technology and innovation of the Greater Bay Area to upgrade and transform the tourism industry. There were 32 sessions in the forum, and two memorandums on strategic cooperation were signed. During the forum, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre delivered their seventh joint research report on Asia Tourism Trends.

The forum was held both physically and virtually for the first time, to gather members of the tourism industry from all over the world by using innovative technology. It attracted about 436,000 participants from 60 countries and regions across six continents to watch online.

Events and Festivals

The MGTO resumed organising various large-scale events in the second half of 2020, including

Macao Light Festival 2020, celebration events for World Tourism Day, Full Moon National Day Celebration Fireworks by Macao and Hengqin, and the Eighth Macao International Travel (Industry) Expo.

Macao Light Festival 2020

From 26 September to 31 October 2020, the MGTO held the “2020 Macao Light Festival — Light Carnival” from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. each night. Four routes were featured, to link parishes throughout Macao and Taipa. They were decorated with light installations, and together with 3D mapping, and interactive games, showed residents and visitors the fascinating side of Macao. The large-scale 3D mapping performance of the Macao Light Festival was held at the Tap Seac Square for the first time, using four heritage sites as the backdrop, and combining images with music to present a unique 3D mapping experience. The event attracted 243,258 participants.

Full Moon National Day Fireworks Celebration by Macao and Hengqin

On the night of 1 October 2020, the MGTO and the Administrative Committee of Hengqin New Area co-organised the “Full Moon National Day Fireworks Celebration by Macao and Hengqin”, to celebrate the 71st anniversary of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. The fireworks show lasted for about 20 minutes, with three sessions: “Meet in Macao”, “Macao Emotions” and “Sounds of Macao and Hengqin”, aiming to promote the tourism industry in Zhuhai and Macao, and the development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as a world-class tourism destination.

Ongoing promotion of Macao · Creative City of Gastronomy

The MGTO published a travel guide and a food guide to introduce the gastronomy of Macao, and distributed them through information counters and hotels in Macao; regularly promoted local cuisine through newspapers; introduced time-honoured shops and distinctive shops in Macao; and continuously shared posts about Macao’s gastronomy and cooking video clips on social media platforms of MGTO’s outreach market representatives.

The MGTO worked with local TV stations and social media platforms 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. It also worked with social media platforms to produce a Macanese cuisine cooking video. In collaboration with Macau Catering Industry Association, the MGTO invited local chefs to create cooking videos to promote Macao’s delicacies, 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.

Tourism Promotion

As mainland China resumed accepting travel permit applications for visiting Macao, the MGTO

invited over 50 travel experts from mainland China to visit Macao in the second half of 2020, and promoted the event through various popular social media platforms in the form of videos, infographics, and travel tips. At the same time, the MGTO strengthened cooperation with online tourism platforms by launching special packages with airlines and travel agencies, and participated in large-scale travel exhibitions in mainland China, to promote Macao as a healthy city favourable for tourism, and widely disseminate the important notes on entering Macao to visitors from mainland China.

In 2020, the MGTO created official accounts on social media platforms Xiaohongshu and Douyin, named “Experience Macao” and “Macao Government Tourism Office of Macao Special Administrative Region Government”, respectively. It launched the “Discover Macao (Douyin in Macao) Challenge” contest during the Macao Light Festival, with short videos attracting over 300 million views on the video sharing app.

The promotional events of Macao Week in Beijing were held from 26 September to 29 September 2020. The campaign was organised by several government departments of Macao and Beijing, and attracted participation by many enterprises, institutions and merchant associations, and six major tourism complexes. The event attracted 800,000 visits, 75 million views of livestreams by travel experts, 27.69 million views on Weibo, more than 30 on-site live interviews by news media, and over 6,500 visits to the outdoor cafe activities.

Regarding the international market, in 2020 the MGTO participated in various online seminars and symposiums to maintain the popularity of Macao among foreign markets and connections with the industry.

Information Counters

The six information counters under the MGTO were awarded to the Macau Tourist Guide Association and relevant organisations in 2020, in the form of job opportunities offered in lieu of welfare, to support local tourist guides.

Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme

Due to the pandemic, applications for and assessments of the Quality Tourism Services Accreditation Scheme were suspended, but the qualifications of the awarded merchants were retained. In 2020, 269 food and beverage businesses and 36 travel agencies retained their Star Merchant Awards. A collaborative project for the retail sector was launched by the MGTO and the Consumer Council. In 2020, 155 certified shops retained their Star Merchant Awards.

Regional and International Cooperation

Regarding international cooperation, the conferences, seminars, and training courses originally scheduled by international tourism organisations were held online/virtually in 2020. 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 UNWTO, the MGTO attended various events, including the 32nd Joint Meeting and Regional Conference of the UNWTO Commission for East Asia and the Pacific and the UNWTO Commission for South Asia (in June), and the international conference on Restarting International Tourism (in November) hosted by the government of Spain, and co-organised by the UNWTO and the World Travel and Tourism Council.

The virtual event “Dream to Travel Festival” was held in July by the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), and the PATA Gold Awards Dinner and Presentation 2020 sponsored by the MGTO was held virtually for the first time in September.

Regarding Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the MGTO attended the 56th Meeting of APEC’s Tourism Working Group as a guest economy in September.

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 2020 Annual Work Meeting in Beijing in September. The meeting engaged leaders and officials representing various entities, including the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture 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.

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 the “QS World University Rankings by Subject 2020” as the best higher education institution in Macao in the field of hospitality and leisure management, the second best

higher education institution in Asia, and the 14th best higher education institution in the world in this field. In the 2020 Shanghai Ranking's "Global Ranking of Academic Subjects", the IFT was ranked the 50th best in the world in the field of hospitality and tourism management.

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 2019/2020 academic year were as follows:

IFT's diploma and degree programmes admitted 455 students during the 2019/2020 academic year, with a total of 1,709 students (including 35 exchange students in the first semester) enrolling in the following degree programmes:

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) International Hospitality and Tourism Management	(1) Hospitality and Tourism Management (2) International Food and Beverage Management (3) International Hospitality Management
Doctoral Degree Programme (English as medium of instruction)	
(1) Hospitality and Tourism Management	

Vocational Education

A total of 10,649 students took various vocational and continued education courses during the 2019/2020 academic year, with 188 of them enrolled in the Western Culinary Skills and Pastry and Bakery programme; 1,029 enrolled in assessment under the Macao Occupational Skills Recognition System (MORS); and 1,760 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, 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 2020, the IFT had built connections with 155 schools (120 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.

During the 2019/2020 academic year, in addition to exchange programmes and global internships, there were over 36 students participating in exchange courses and international conferences in mainland China, Austria, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Finland, South Korea, Sweden, Australia and the United States, through scholarships supported by the IFT. The IFT also signed agreements to develop academic and cultural exchanges with the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, William Angliss Institute, University of Social Sciences & Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Duy Tan University and Shenzhen University.

Due to the pandemic, in response to the requirements of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the school held 11 free online training lectures for tourist guides from March to July 2020, with participation by 1,340 tourist guides from the Greater Bay Area.

In November, commissioned by the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province, the school held an advanced training course for officials of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as representatives of the industry from various Greater Bay Area cities.

In December, the school sent a delegation in the name of the “Alliance for Developing Macao into the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Tourism Education and Training Base” to attend the plaque unveiling ceremony of the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies’ Training Base in Hengqin (Training Centre), and visited the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies Tourism Education Collaboration Centre for Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and Entrepreneur Incubation (Training) Base in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province.

Since 2016, IFT’s Global Centre for Tourism Education and Training has regularly collaborated with UNWTO, organising ten professional training sessions, which targeted government agencies, tourism industry professionals and educators. These were attended by 220 participants from 33 countries and regions, including about 146 students from the Belt and Road regions, and with 14

students from Portuguese-speaking countries.

In July and December 2020, the IFT collaborated with UNWTO to organise two online training programmes with the themes of “Handling, Coping and Dealing with COVID-19” and “Rural Development and Community-based Tourism for Sustainable Recovery”, designed for decision makers in government tourism departments in Asia recommended by UNWTO. Participants from the tourism industry and education sector from 19 countries and regions joined online.

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, 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, 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.



**Gathering at dusk on Senado
Square**



Tourism in Macao gradually resumes in tandem with the anti-pandemic efforts. In line with “Macao Ready Go!” Local Tours programme, an al fresco area selling snacks and drinks outdoors is set up at the Senado Square, offering European-style street leisure to the public. Jazz performances are staged every evening, as people enjoy food and beverages while admiring the sunset at Senado Square. In summer 2020, people rediscover the beauty of the city.

