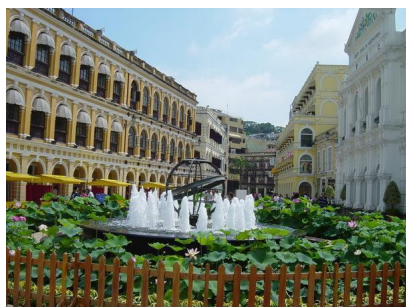


# Macao's Unique Attractions bring in Millions



Ever since Macao returned to China in 1999, its number of tourists has been on the rise. Indeed, 54% of today's tourists come from China's mainland. Beforehand, Macao was a Portuguese colony and struggled to attract so many visitors. The official figure for the amount of tourists hit 20 million in 2004 and has been on the up ever since. Although most people come from either the Chinese mainland, the number of visitors from Europe and America is growing.

A catalyst for such success was the government's granting of approval to local travel agencies to deal with 144-day tourist visas. Macao has a low taxation policy and is, like Monaco, a duty-free port.

Macao has a number of selling points. It is known to be the "Las Vegas" of Asia, with a wide range of gambling opportunities. As soon as the number of visitors began to grow, projects to finish the Macao sightseeing tower, turn the fisherman's wharf into a tourist attraction and build the famous A-Ma culture centre were completed. These achievements for the local government made the future of the tourism industry here very bright.

Macao's unique flair is a special blend of European and Chinese culture. Portuguese and Chinese are recognised as official languages and for sightseeing lovers there is a mixture of ancient Chinese temples along with Portuguese architecture. As a result, many local cultural events are influenced by European and Chinese styles. For example, Macao hosts the famous dragon boat races, the Grand Prix, music festivals with a blend of music from Europe and Asia and international firework displays.

Date: 2006-12-12

Article link: <http://www.tourism-review.com/macaos-unique-attractions-bring-in-millions-news92>