

HONG KONG FIGHTING FOR TOURISTS



Asia as well as many other regions faces the consequences of economic recession and numerous **tourism destinations** are preparing for decline in the upcoming months. Hong Kong decided to fight the worsened situation with more aggressive promotion of its tourism products.

Hong Kong **Tourism Board** determined to focus more intensively on the mainland China. They will promote their tourism products in 42 Chinese cities. Originally it should be only 40 cities. "Local" tourists are becoming increasingly important for Hong Kong tourism. Last year 29.5 million tourists visited the city, 16.9 million of them were tourists from the mainland China.

Hong Kong Tourism Board expects the number of Chinese visitors to increase by approximately 4.1 per cent. To achieve this there will be new tourism products that would be promoted on greater market. The officials hope to attract families, young people as well as the older ones. Mainland tourists should be also lured by the "Food & Wine Year" that will be launched by the board.

Tourists traveling to Hong Kong are especially fond of shopping. Despite the crisis, there has been a 40 per cent rise in the number of tourists going on shopping tours to Hong Kong this year, compared to January 2008. Businesses offer large discounts to lure more shoppers. The most popular items for tourists on a shopping trip are cosmetics, clothes, clocks and jewelry.

Nevertheless, despite all those efforts, the city's economy will be probably hit by the crisis. Hong Kong is an important trade and financial hub; therefore it cannot evade the crisis. China wants to support the city's economy, therefore it promised to further relax the visa requirements so that more mainland Chinese tourists could visit the city of Hong Kong. Local business people, however, expect a drop anyway.

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