

HONG KONG ATTRACTS MILLIONS OF TOURISTS



Hong Kong, the former British colony that was returned to Chinese rule in 1997 has a booming tourism industry. In 2007 there were 28.1 million visitors to the city, which is up 11.6% on 2006. Majority of the tourists (over fifty per cent) come from mainland China. Nevertheless, Chinese are not the biggest spenders and many of them make only one-day trips to Hong Kong. China remains the main source for Hong Kong tourism sector but the city is quite popular with foreigners too. There are 80 non-stop flights a week from London. The number of UK visitors has exceeded 600,000 in 2007 which is an increase of more than 16% over 2006. There were 1.1 million visitors from the US in 2006.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board expects that this year will be even better. Tourism officials expect the number of arrivals to increase to 30 million in 2008. Hong Kong has only 6.9 million residents so the city is quite cosmopolitan and it deserves the brand name "Asia's World City".

Tourism officials spend vast sums of money on marketing campaigns to keep this brand known. The Hong Kong Tourism Board also wants to participate on the cruise business and it will be present on the UK Cruise Convention in Southampton in May. According to the Hong Kong Tourism Board executive director Anthony Lau, Hong Kong is an ideal spot for the cruise business market.

The city's popularity will even rise after the Olympic Games. Hong Kong will host the Olympic Equestrian events. There will be also another event this year that will lure more visitors in here. The Peninsula Hong Kong, one of the world's top hotels, will celebrate its 80th anniversary on December 11. The celebrations will take place during the whole year and will include offers of special accommodation and spa packages, helicopter as well as yacht tours.

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