

HONG KONG TO GIVE AWAY 500,000 FREE AIRLINE TICKETS TO BOOST TOURISM



Hong Kong will give away half a million free airline tickets to visitors from all over the world with the intention of attracting tourists again once the borders are definitively reopened and all the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

The promotion campaign has been confirmed by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, which, in the absence of a definitive timetable for the reopening, expects to be able to confirm the dates of the campaign early next year.

The campaign, which will cost around 250 million euros, aims to revive tourism in the area after the bottleneck caused by the restrictions resulting from the coronavirus, which is already affecting even economic relations with the rest of the world. Recently, for example, Virgin Atlantic announced that it would eliminate routes from London to Hong Kong for the first time in 30 years,

"Once the government announces that it is finally ending the anti-Covid-19 measures for domestic travelers we will launch the campaign with free airline tickets," said Dane Cheng Ting-yat, chief executive of the Hong Kong Tourism Board. "We will be working hand-in-hand with the various players in the tourism industry, namely airlines, hotels and tour operators to ensure that we also make attractive offers that will serve to attract visitors again."

The half a million tickets to be distributed through the Airport Authority will be used to try to revitalize the Hong Kong tourism sector which has been practically suffocated for the last three years from the first minute of the definitive end of the restrictions. Until last September 26, travelers wishing to enter Hong Kong had to stay in a hotel, at their own expense, where they were quarantined, but now they only have to accept a series of government supervision measures for three days, such as daily tests or the prohibition to enter certain public spaces.

According to official data, during first eight months of the year, the number of people who have visited Hong Kong has doubled the figures of 2021 (184,000 compared to 91,400), but in 2019 there were about 56 million people who crossed its borders.

The dates for the full reopening, however, are still unclear. The government cannot yet commit to a definite timetable for the full reopening of the city even though it is something that many people are calling for, especially given the fact that the rest of the world has turned the page and started treating Covid-19 as a common cold.

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