

# HONG KONG TOURISM - MAKING EFFORT TO ATTRACT VISITORS



Many travelers have been asking themselves - when will mainland China open up? Experts forecast that the de-escalation measures will be seen by the Chinese New Year 2023. Another question is - when will Hong Kong change its quarantine policy? Hong Kong Tourism's campaign to revamp the city's slogan ("Hello Hong Kong") is on hold for now, indicating that a massive influx of foreign tourists is not expected anytime soon. Once this campaign is launched, we will be on the verge of no quarantine measures.

The reopening of the city to visitors will however put local infrastructure to the test. They are currently underutilized and suffering from the loss of skilled labor. The airport in particular will serve as a thermometer not only for the pace of tourist arrivals but also for the adequacy of preparatory measures and the smoothness of daily operations.

**Hong Kong Tourism's objective is to attract major events with international impact again, thus marking the city's return to the leisure and business tourism scene.** They will focus on promoting Hong Kong for its artistic offerings, being the meeting point between the West and Asia, its bars and restaurants, sporting events and MICE.

Local government revved up efforts to attract tourists with plans to distribute half a million free air tickets to the city and other promotional benefits. Besides providing this free passage by early 2023, there will be a slew of packaged travel deals worth a whopping total of HK\$100 million (US\$12.7 million), courtesy of the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

While seriously hit by the Covid pandemic, local hospitality industry also plans to grasp the coming recovery in full. For instance, the Hong Kong-based Rosewood Hotels & Resorts plans to open 25 new hotels across the world in the next eight years, even as the risk of a global recession that is likely to crimp travel spending is increasing.

In 2018, Hong Kong was crowned the world's most visited city by market research company Euromonitor International, receiving 65.1 million visitors, most of them from mainland China.

But in 2019, the number of visitors declined by 14.2 per cent to 55.9 million. In the next two years, virtually no tourists came to Hong Kong because of its strict travel curbs.

Beijing's zero-Covid policy ensured that its **citizens would find it practically impossible to travel out of mainland China, including to Hong Kong.**

The city and its local and foreign inhabitants are extremely resilient and their entrepreneurial spirit endures. The nuance lies in knowing how to detect and adapt to the evolution that the city in particular and the region, in general, are experiencing.

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