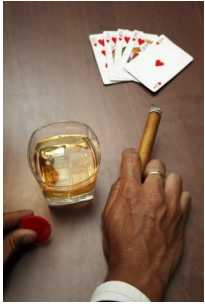


# MACAU - THE CHINESE LAS VEGAS



Macau a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, is economically booming. This former Portuguese colony with approximately half a million of inhabitants capitalizes mainly on its tourism and gambling industry.

According to latest news, the number of international visitors to the region continuously grows. In the first half of this year 1.5 million international visitors have come which is a 46.5 per cent increase compared to the same period last year. There were also 8.8 million visitors from the Mainland China. The Mainland visitors make 58% of the total of 14,925,604 tourist arrivals in this period.

Spending power of the Mainlanders is the highest. They usually spend double that of other tourists. However, Macau's tourism officials want to diversify. The number of visitors from Asian destinations like Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia grows and the officials want to support this development. Macau invests greatly in the development of infrastructure. New conference facilities as well as new hotels should be opened in the upcoming years. Local airport is also to be expanded. Even now the number of flights to Macau by budget airlines grows.

The region is very popular for its casinos. Big companies like e.g. Las Vegas Sands Corp or MGM Mirage are running their businesses here. Even though many tourists are attracted to Macau by its gambling industry the region can offer services also to other kinds of tourists. For example the historic centre of Macao is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2005.

Nevertheless the rapid economic development of Macao has its drawbacks. There are traffic jams as well as social issues. The Chinese authorities also seem to be unhappy with the rapid growth. According to some sources China is tightening the visa policy for Macau. They want to limit the number of Mainlanders visiting the country to slow down the development and keep inflation in check.

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