



Macau

853 / POP 556,783

Includes ➔

Central Macau Peninsula	529
Southern Macau Peninsula	536
Northern Macau Peninsula	537
The Islands	540
Taipa	540
Coloane	540
Macau Peninsula ...	542
The Islands	543

Best Places to Eat

- A Petisqueira (p544)
- Antonio (p545)
- Guincho a Galera (p545)
- Clube Militar de Macau (p545)

Best Sights

- Ruins of the Church of St Paul (p529)
- Guia Fort (p537)
- Mandarin's House (p533)
- St Lazarus Church District (p533)

Why Go?

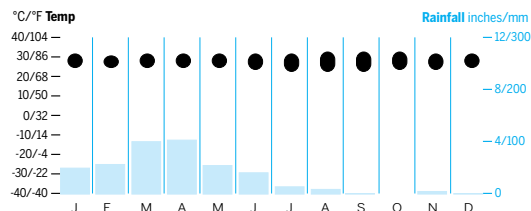
The Chinese people have stood up and they're off to Macau. Chairman Mao (who coined the first half of that sentence) must be spinning faster than a roulette wheel in his crystal coffin. Mainlanders can't get enough of this once Portuguese-administered backwater-turned-gambling-megaresort.

Such has been its explosive growth since 2002 that it is commonplace to refer to Macau as the Vegas of the East. It might be more appropriate to put that the other way round, since Macau has eclipsed its American rival in gambling income. And there are many other things that Macau does better. Beyond the gaming halls, it offers cobblestoned streets punctuated with Chinese temples and baroque churches, pockets of natural greenery, and a historic centre of Unesco World Heritage status.

Macau's unique history has also created a one-of-a-kind cuisine that celebrates the marriage of European, Latin American, African and Asian flavours.

When to Go

Macau



Mar–May Celebrate the arts, a sea goddess and a dragon as mist hangs over the harbour.

Jun–Sep Days in the shade of temples and dragon boats; nights aglow with fireworks.

Oct–Feb Music and Grand Prix in a high-octane run-up to Christmas and New Year.

History

Portuguese galleons first visited southern China to trade in the early 16th century, and in 1557, as a reward for clearing out pirates, they obtained a leasehold for Macau. The first Portuguese governor of Macau was appointed in 1680, and as trade with China grew, so did Macau. However, after the Opium Wars between the Chinese and the British, and the subsequent establishment of Hong Kong, Macau went into a long decline.

In 1999, under the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration, Macau was returned to China and designated a Special Administrative Region (SAR). Like Hong Kong, the pact ensures Macau a 'high degree of autonomy' in all matters (except defence and foreign affairs) for 50 years. The handover, however, did not change Macau socially and economically as much as the termination of the gambling monopoly in 2001. Casinos mushroomed, redefining the city's skyline, and tourists from mainland China surged, fattening up the city's coffers.

Yet the revenue boost, coupled with government policies (or the lack thereof), also led to income inequality and a labour shortage. Macau residents are also increasingly critical of their chief executive's pro-Beijing stance. In May 2014 thousands in the formerly placid city took to the streets to protest Chief Executive Fernando Chui, who was reelected three months later.

Language

Cantonese and Portuguese are the official languages of Macau, though few people actually speak Portuguese. English and Mandarin are reasonably well understood, though the former is harder to find here than in Hong Kong.

Sights

For a small place (just 29 sq km), Macau is packed with important cultural and historical sights, including eight squares and 22 historic buildings, which have collectively been named the Historic Centre of Macau World Heritage Site by Unesco. Most of the sights are on the peninsula. At many of these sites, seniors aged over 60 years and children 11 years or under are admitted free.

Central Macau Peninsula

Running from Avenida da Praia Grande to the Inner Harbour, Avenida de Almeida



Macau Highlights

- 1 Get context for your impressions at the **Macau Museum** (p533)
- 2 Explore the ethereal ruins of the very symbol of Macau at the **Church of St Paul** (p529)
- 3 Sample Macau's unique cuisine at **Alfonso III** (p545)
- 4 Lose yourself in mazelike spaces at **Lou Lim Ioc Garden** (p538) and the **Mandarin's House** (p533)
- 5 Take the cable car to handsome **Guia Fort** (p537) and its gorgeous chapel
- 6 Mingle with artists on the cobbled paths of the charming **St Lazarus district** (p533)

Ribeiro – or San Ma Lo (新馬路; New Thoroughfare) in Cantonese – is the peninsula's main thoroughfare and home to the charming **Largo do Senado** (Map p534), a black-and-white tiled square close to major sights.

★ **Ruins of the Church of St Paul** RUIN
(大三巴牌坊; Ruínas de Igreja de São Paulo; Map p530; Travessa de São Paulo; admission free; ☎ 8A,