

# **Number of Hong Kong and Macau Tourists Visiting Taiwan Scales New Heights as Government Actively Promotes Measures to Facilitate Taiwan's Contacts with Hong Kong and Macau**

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) states that, over the past few years, the government has actively streamlined entry and inspection procedures for Hong Kong and Macau residents visiting Taiwan and increased the number of round-trip flights. It has also actively marketed Taiwan through various channels, creating a "Taiwan Craze" among residents of Hong Kong and Macau. With a 20% plus growth over the 810,000 visits in 2011, more than one million visits were made from Hong Kong and Macau to Taiwan in 2012. The figure set record high and made Hong Kong and Macau the third area to cross the one-million mark for visitors to Taiwan after mainland China and Japan.

The MAC further points out that, the government first launched the online Taiwan Entry Permit registration application system on September 1, 2010, granting Hong Kong and Macau residents entry into Taiwan without requirement of paper documents and application fees, thus greatly simplifying entry and inspection procedures. Furthermore, the signing of Air Services Agreement between Taiwan and Hong Kong on December 30, 2011 paved the way for additional airlines to operate on the Taiwan-Hong Kong route and also increased the number of round-trip passenger flights between Taiwan and Hong Kong. Regular charter flights were also included into the Agreement, enabling Hong Kong and Macau tourists to take direct charter flights to Tainan, Taichung, Hualien, Taitung, Magong and Kinmen, thus promoting

tourism development in these counties and cities. Over the recent years, the government has also actively marketed Taiwan's unique tourism attractions in Hong Kong and Macau through various channels. For example, the government has invited domestic travel agencies on a regular basis to participate in tourism exhibitions in Hong Kong and Macau so as to raise the locals' awareness and understanding of Taiwan's tourism resources; and it has also teamed up with the industry in promoting incentive travel packages in order to increase motivation for visiting Taiwan.

The MAC stresses that in addition to the above-mentioned efforts of the government and industry, popular Taiwanese movies such as "Cape No. 7" and "You Are the Apple of My Eye" have also sent a "Taiwan Wave" sweeping through Hong Kong and Macau over the past few years. The trend indicates that if Taiwan's tourism industry works together with the cultural and creative industry, there would be more room for further developments and would also make more Hong Kong and Macau residents fall in love with Taiwan.

In closing, the MAC hereby states that the Tourism Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications has estimated that the daily per capita consumption of Hong Kong and Macau tourists in Taiwan is US\$212.61, ranking fourth in all foreign visitors, following Japan, mainland China and Singapore, while at the same time, making considerable and substantive contributions to the growth in Taiwan's tourism revenues.