

ASIAN TOURISM GUIDE 2011/2012

*Vital tourism statistics
and information on 18
Asian countries*

PRODUCED BY



ASIAN TOURISM GUIDE 2011/2012



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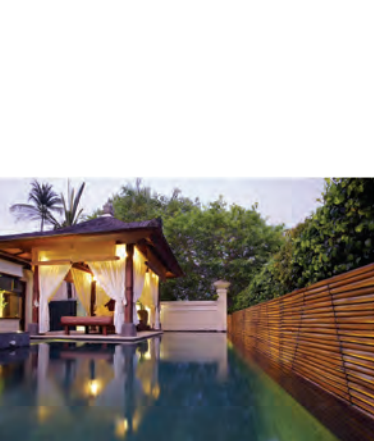
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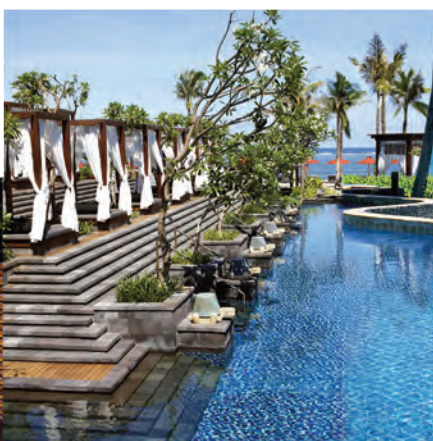
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Bhutan

General Overview

Official name	Kingdom of Bhutan
Capital	Thimphu
Population	695,819
Total area	47,000 sq km
Currency	Ngultrum
Official language	Dzongkha; English is widely spoken



The recent royal wedding of Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk to commoner Jetsun Pema has drawn attention to the Himalayan kingdom. In 2010, the destination saw a dramatic increase in arrivals to 40,873, thanks in part to aggressive marketing by the Tourism Council of Bhutan. It is targeting 100,000 tourists by 2012. The first hospitality training institute in the capital Thimphu, the Royal Institute of Tourism and Hospitality, is supplying the new workforce required by the growing industry.

Climate

Average temperature	18°C to 22°C
Average rainfall	66.5mm
Average humidity	62 per cent in June

Best time to visit

Busiest tourist months are March, April and May in spring, and September, October and November in autumn, when popular festivals are held. This is also when the weather is mild, with clear skies and sunny days that are suitable for trekking.

Bhutan tour operators recommend an advance booking of eight weeks during peak season. Thimphu has dry winter months (December through February) and almost no precipitation until March, the best time for trekking. Discounts (minimum daily tariff of US\$200 on packages) are offered during the off-peak months of summer. Cold winters offer the best view of the Himalayan mountains.

Distances

From Thimphu to:

Paro	65km, 1 hr 30 mins
Phuntsholing	176km, 6 hrs
Ha	115km, 3 hrs 30 mins
Punakha	77km, 2hr 15 mins

Visitor arrivals statistics

The tourism industry in Bhutan rebounded last year, with international arrivals of 27,196 (+15.83 per cent), after a dip of 15 per cent in 2009.

Tourism earnings increased to US\$35.98 million, a surge of 12.86 per cent over 2009. The US remained the single largest source market, providing 19.08 per cent of the total visitors, followed by Japan with 10.89 per cent. Countries with declined arrivals in 2009 rebounded well in 2010, with significant growth rates, except for the UK, which registered a 9.96 decline in arrivals.

German arrivals increased by 41.78 per cent. China is a promising new market, now ranked fifth in arrivals, with an increase of 30.71 per cent. Arrivals from Thailand,

Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, South Korea and the Philippines continue to grow.

Top 10 source markets

	2009	2010	% Growth
US	4,786	5,189	8.42
Japan	3,136	2,963	-5.51
Germany	1,587	2,250	41.78
UK	1,968	1,772	-9.96
China	1,143	1,494	30.71
France	1,189	1,454	22.29
Australia	970	1,318	35.88
Italy	759	1,028	35.44
Thailand	975	875	-10.25
Regional arrivals (India, Bangladesh & the Maldives)	27,837	30.46	

Source: Tourism Council of Bhutan

Total tourist arrivals

2009	23,480, -15 per cent
2010	40,873, +15.83 per cent

Total tourism receipts

2009	US\$ 31.9 million
2010	US\$ 35.98 million

Average length of stay

7.6 days in 2009

BT-MICE arrivals

2010	6,598
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Percentage of BT-MICE to overall arrivals

2009	2.5 per cent
2010	16.14 per cent

Average length of stay

2009	7.6 days
2010	7.6 days

Arrivals target for 2012

Bhutan is targeting 100,000 visitors by 2012.

Hotel statistics

The Tourism Council of Bhutan accredited 119 accommodation providers with its new 'star classification' under the categories hotels, guest houses and serviced apartments. There are a total of 2,454 rooms in Bhutan, with a capacity of 4,868 beds available per night.

Sixteen new hotels are under construction across the country, with most of the one- and two-star hotels being upgraded to three-star.

Total accommodation count

	Hotels	Guesthouse/ lodge	Serviced apartments	Total
Five-star	8	–	–	8
Four-star	6	1	–	7
Three-star	20	7	1	28
Two-star	49	10	0	59
One-star	13	1	1	15

Source: Tourism Council of Bhutan

- Farmhouses registered with the Tourism Council of Bhutan 15
- Farmhouses under renovation 5
- Hotels under construction across the country 16

Source: Tourism Council of Bhutan

Registered tour operators

2009	318
2010	676

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

The **Merak Sakteng** sanctuary in the east was opened to tourists in September 2010. Guests can now stay at renovated guesthouses and campsites and experience community-based tourism. They can also interact with craftsmen at the Centennial Farmers Market in Thimphu.

Upcoming attractions include the Buddha Dordenma, the US\$100 million giant statue under construction in the mountains near Thimphu, funded by China. The statue will house over 100,000 smaller bronze statues of Buddha in gold finish.

Key events and festivals 2012

The Tourism Council of Bhutan launched three new festivals in 2011. These will be celebrated every year.

Takin Festival (January 7-9) in Damji and Gasa.

Nomad Festival Choekor gewog (village block) in Bumthang (February 23-25)

Haa Summer Festival (July 7-8)

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water 30 cents

Starbucks latte There is no Starbucks in Bhutan.

A glass of wine at a pub \$5

Taxi fare (point-to-point, within Bhutan) US\$1

Visa requirements

The online visa processing system, introduced in July 2010, has reduced visa processing time from two weeks to just one or two days.

All tourists, except for those from the Maldives, India and Bangladesh, will have to pay the minimum daily tariff of US\$250 starting January 1, 2012.

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www.abto.org.bt

Compiled by Anand Katti and Madhura Katti
All information is correct at press time

Brunei

General Overview

Official name	Brunei Darussalam
Capital	Bandar Seri Begawan
Population	408,000
Total area	5,765 sq km
Currency	Brunei dollar
Official language	Malay; English is widely spoken



There was a significant year-on-year growth for most markets in 2010. Inbound air arrivals for the year totalled 214,290, a 36.08 per cent increase over 2009's total of 157,474.

With a strong 2010 performance, Brunei Tourism is expecting to further consolidate its recovery in 2011. The sultanate had suffered a 30 per cent decline in arrivals in 2009. It is anticipating strong growth from the Chinese market, especially in the second half of 2011, where it will start reaping rewards from having a marketing office in China and Hong Kong.

With the lifting of visa requirements for Hong Kong SAR passport holders, and the granting of visa-on-arrival facilities for Taiwan passport holders, Brunei Tourism and the private sector will be engaging those markets with more activities.

Climate

Average temperature	23°C and 34°C
Average rainfall	3,200mm
Average humidity	98 per cent

Best time to visit

Brunei is open to international visitors all year round. There is no seasonality in room rates. Rooms are easy to get anytime of the year, except during Chinese New Year, when it is advisable to book in advance.

Distances

From Bandar Seri Begawan city centre to:
 Ulu Temburong National Park (express boat) 2 hrs
 Belait district (taxi) 1 hr 30 mins

Visitor arrival statistics

Most travellers to Brunei are from the Asia-Pacific region. The five fastest growing markets in 2010 were Indonesia (90.6 per cent), the Middle East (89.7 per cent), Vietnam (78.6 per cent), China (55.6 per cent) and India (44.7 per cent).

Arrivals from Vietnam, New Zealand and Australia are expected to drop, following Royal Brunei Airlines' (RBA) move to cut services to Brisbane (from October 28), Perth (from October 29) and Auckland (from October 30), as well as to Vietnam's capital Ho Chi Minh City (from October 30) and Sarawak's capital Kuching (from August 1).

Plans to cancel these services were part of a major re-structure.

RBA said the company was moving forward with a comprehensive and sustainable plan to improve its oper-

ations, financial performance and customer service experience. The good news is that Malaysia Airlines subsidiary, MASWings, has plans to commence services between Kuching and/or Kota Kinabalu and Bandar Seri Begawan by 2012, pending approval from the relevant ministries in Malaysia.

Total tourist arrivals

2009	157,474 air arrivals, -30.24 per cent
2010	214,290 air arrivals, +36.08 per cent
2011	239,000 air arrivals, +11.5 per cent (target)

Top 10 source markets 2010

Countries	2010	2009	% Change
Malaysia	54,127	38,193	41.72
China	24,579	15,800	55.56
UK	17,416	14,386	20.99
Australia	17,237	13,824	24.69
Indonesia	16,343	8,576	90.57
Singapore	15,973	14,221	12.32
Philippines	14,720	11,013	33.66
New Zealand	10,324	8,236	25.35
India	4,904	3,390	44.66
Thailand	4,589	3,390	35.37

Source: Brunei Tourism

Average length of stay for each of the top 10 markets

Three days for each market

Estimated revenue per tourist for each of the top 10 markets (2010)

Malaysia	B\$ 651.14
China	B\$ 926.60
UK	B\$ 825.17
Australia	B\$ 786.44
Indonesia	B\$ 651.14
Singapore	B\$ 651.14
Philippines	B\$ 651.14
New Zealand	B\$ 786.44
India	B\$ 617.55
Thailand	B\$ 651.14

Source: Brunei Tourism

Percentage of BT MICE to overall arrivals

Information is not available.

Estimated total revenue

B\$158.6 million (US\$130 million)

Total MICE receipts

Information is not available.

NTO marketing budget

B\$4 million to B\$5 million in 2010 and 2011.

In Brunei, budgets are based on a five-year submission, and spending is done within these parameters, depending on approvals obtained for each individual proposal submitted.

Arrivals target for 2012

Brunei Tourism has yet to set a target for 2012, as it needs to better analyse the impact on overall arrivals of the recent Royal Brunei Airlines cuts from some key markets. It is also looking at setting up a system to capture tourist arrival data from land and sea entry points, which would give it a more accurate figure of total tourist arrivals, and would prompt it to re-evaluate targets.

Hotel statistics

Most hotels have maintained contract rates in 2011. As hotels in Brunei also do not have peak season surcharges, most published rates are constant throughout the year.

The 112-room Times Hotel Brunei, which fully opened in March, is the newest. Its unique selling point is its location – only less than five minutes from the Brunei International Airport and on levels two and three of the Times Square Shopping Centre.

The Brunei Hotel in Bandar Seri Begawan reopened in February 2011, after closing for a year for major renovations.

The 11-year-old, 518-room Empire Hotel & Country Club Brunei will spend B\$8 million on the first facelift of its 197 guestrooms. This is being done in stages and scheduled for completion by end-2011. The new rooms will be equipped with high-speed, in-room wireless Internet, 55-inch LED TV with interactive channels, video-on-demand and an iPod docking station.

Room statistics

Overall number of rooms	3,000 (average)
Number of four-star rooms	1,000 (estimate)
Number of five-star rooms	650 (estimate)

Average occupancy rate (AOR)

	2010	2011
Overall AOR in capital city	53%	55%
Overall AOR of five-star in capital city	40%	45%
Overall AOR in capital city	55%	55%
AOR of four-star in capital city and key tourism destinations	45%	50%
AOR of five-star in capital city and key tourism destinations	40%	45%

Source: Based on market intelligence

Average room rate (ARR)

	2010	2011
ARR of four-star in capital city and key tourism destinations	B\$110	B\$120
ARR of five-star in capital city and key tourism destinations	B\$180	B\$195

Source: Based on market intelligence

Projected number of rooms 3,000
(estimate for 2012 and 2013)

New hotels in 2011

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN
Times Square Hotel 115 rooms

No new hotel opening in 2012.

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Times Square Shopping Centre had its grand opening in December 2010. It is a three-minute drive away from the Brunei International Airport. It has over 70 outlets, with the top floor comprising a 16,000 square-foot indoor playground for children, which is the biggest in Brunei. Times Hotel is located on the third floor of this shopping complex.
www.timeshotelbrunei.com

Airport Mall, Brunei's newest shopping mall, opened in July 2011. A four-storey building on Jalan Berakas, next to the Times Square Shopping and Entertainment Complex, it features 174 shop units, a 22-lane bowling alley and a basement car park with 285 parking spaces.
<http://www.taib.com.bn/projects/airportmall.htm>

Diving is a new activity that is being promoted by Brunei Tourism. The waters off the coast of Brunei are a diver's paradise, with shallow coral dives perfect for inexperienced divers, as well as more challenging reef and wreck dives for the experts. The shipwrecks, scattered between Brunei and the Malaysian island of Labuan, are mostly in pristine condition due to little dive activity.
www.oceanic-quest.com
www.thebananahutbrunei.com

Key events and festivals 2012

Butra Heidelberg Cement Tour de Brunei

For the first time, an international cycling race sanctioned by the International Cycling Union (UCI) as part of its Asia Tour calendar of races, was staged in Brunei. Fifteen national, continental and club teams from as far away as the Netherlands, Iran and Uzbekistan competed for the US\$67,145 purse.

The five-stage race covered most roads in Brunei's three main districts, and was held from September 7-11. The race, organised by the Brunei Darussalam Cycling Federation and the Department of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, is expected to become an annual event.
www.letourdebrunei2011.com

Essentials in the city

Food Brunei's traditional *ambuyat* set (sticky sago with side dishes) is a must-try.

Quirky Visit a *tamu* (market) for an authentic Bruneian social experience and a full-on sensory feast. The outdoor al fresco markets are a kaleidoscope of colours, smells and sounds.

Tipping policy Tipping is usually not expected. Some establishments include a service tax, but otherwise, about 10 per cent of the total bill if service warrants it.

Shopping Brunei is famous for its high-quality Brunei brocade (*kain tenunan*) such as the *jong sarat* brocade. There are a lot of choices at the Arts and Handicraft Centre at Jalan Residency, Bandar Seri Begawan.

How to maximise two hours of free time Make a stop to snap photos at the Istana Nurul Iman, which is the biggest residential palace in the world, and end with a visit to Kampong Ayer.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Start with some retail therapy at Yayasan Shopping Complex. Then have lunch at Italian Restaurant Fratini's across the road. Get a seat at the verandah, which offers great views of Kampong Ayer. After lunch, walk to Bubongan Duabelas (House of 12 Roofs), where you will learn about Britain's historic ties with Brunei. When you are done, take a short walk to the Arts and Handicrafts Centre to browse through traditional handicrafts, brocades, silverware and woven baskets.

Need to impress clients lunch Place to go is Deals Restaurant, a fine-dining in Radisson Hotel Brunei Darussalam. Voted one of Asia's finest in the Miele Guide 2011/2012, it offers tantalising dishes,



Brunei Tourism

such as gnocchi with white sausage and grilled Angus, in a modern setting. Telephone: (673) 224-4272

Lunch on your own Aminah Arif, Units 2&3, Block B, ground floor, Bangunan Haji Abdul Rahman, Simpang 88, Kiulap. The *chendul selasih* and *ambuyat* are a must.

Late nights Organise your own private party at home/restaurant/hotel, or sip coffee with trendy locals, intellectuals and travellers at the De Royale cafe on Jalan Sultan, Brunei's only 24-hour cafe located downtown.

Electricity Voltage is 240 volts AC at 50 cycles per second. Standard three-pin square plugs and sockets.

Visa requirements

Foreign nationals entering Brunei for employment purposes must have the appropriate visa and employment pass prior to their arrival. Pass holders' spouses and children under 18 years old are required to obtain dependent passes.

A 72-hour transit visa issued on arrival is available for B\$5 nett per passport. For more details on visas and entry procedures, log on to <http://www.mofat.gov.bn/visainformation/visaarrangements.htm>.

Visa requirements by nationality

Nationality	Visa requirement
US	90-day entry with no visa
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Malaysia, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, South Korea, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, UK	30-day entry with no visa
Australia, Kuwait	Visa-on-arrival for visits not exceeding 30 days
Bahrain, Qatar	Visa-on-arrival for visits not exceeding 14 days
Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Maldives, Peru, Philippines, Switzerland, Thailand, Vietnam	14-day entry with no visa
China	Visa-on-arrival (14 Days) only for tourists handled by travel agents. Those on business visits require sponsors or counterparts in Brunei Darussalam.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water B\$0.70 for 500ml, B\$1.10 for 1 litre
Starbucks latte (small) There is no Starbucks in Brunei.
A glass of open wine at a pub Brunei is a dry country.
Taxi fare (2km) Rates are open to negotiation, as taxis do not use meters. A 2km fare could range from B\$5 to B\$10. Taxis from the airport charge more.

Taxis from Brunei International Airport to Gadong commercial area costs between B\$25 and B\$30. It is advisable to pre-arrange your taxis by contacting (673) 222-

2214 and (673) 222-6853. A standard ride on water taxis, which you can hail from the jetties along the Brunei River, cost B\$1.

Important contacts

NTO

Brunei Tourism is a department in the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources, headed by its CEO, Sheikh Jamaluddin Sheikh Mohamed.

Brunei Tourism has marketing representation offices in China, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. The main target markets are Malaysia, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Western Europe, the Middle East and other regional markets in ASEAN and the Far East.

These are the markets that produce most of Brunei's arrivals, and are either directly connected by flights and/or tour operators in Brunei who have business relationships with their counterparts in those markets.

Brunei generally targets mature and well-travelled market segments, and through its promotional activities, wants to project the destination as a safe, wholesome and family-friendly exotic destination.

Principal attractions revolve around its natural, cultural, heritage and Islamic tourism offerings, while not forgetting the opulence of its accommodation and the quality of its world-class golf, diving and meeting facilities.

Brunei Tourism
Tel: (673) 238-2822/(673) 238-2832
Fax: (673) 238-2824
info@bruneitourism.travel
www.bruneitourism.travel

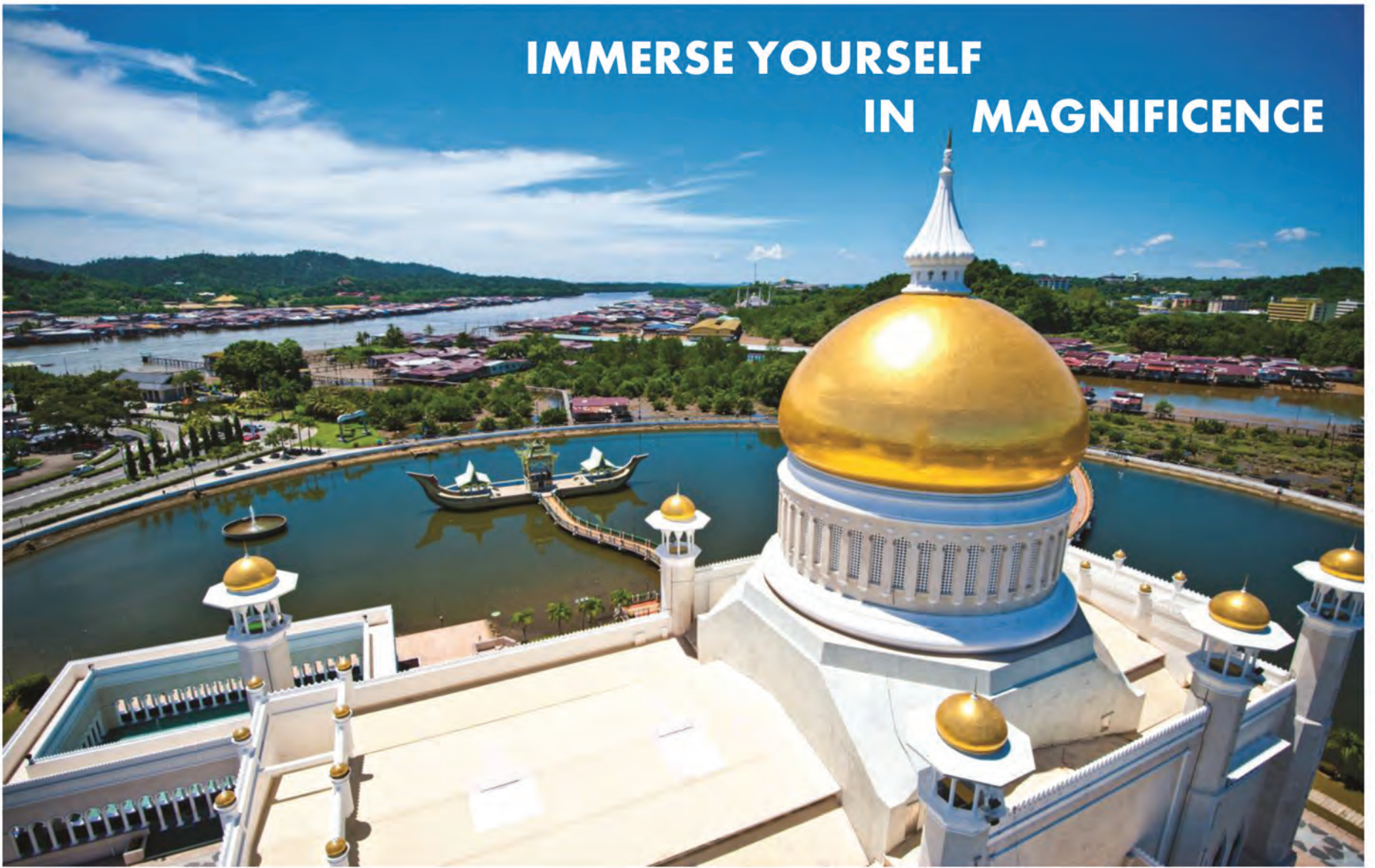
Travel trade associations

The Association of Travel Agents Brunei (ATAB) is the officially recognised travel industry professional association in Brunei. The association works closely with Brunei Tourism in the development of strategies and implementation of procedures aimed at enhancing the quality and diversity of travel-related services available in Brunei.
Address: P.O. Box 485, Gadong, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei
Tel: (673) 242-7340, 427-440, 442-980
info@bruneitravelagents.org.bn
www.bruneitravelagents.org.bn

Brunei Association of Hotels Brunei Association of Hotels (BAH's) function is to maintain and develop the hospitality industry by working closely with government and other tourism bodies. BAH strives to create and sustain local employment opportunities within the hospitality industry, as well as aims to enhance awareness of the local hospitality industry.
Mailing address: P.O. Box 2033
Bandar Seri Begawan BS8674
Brunei Darussalam
Tel: (673) 234-2026
bahsecretariat@gmail.com
<http://www.hotelsofbrunei.com>

Compiled by TTG Asia in Singapore
All information is correct at press time

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN MAGNIFICENCE



For a cultural immersion in an ancient Sultanate, discover Brunei's strong Malay, Islamic and Royal traditions that effortlessly blend heritage and piety with outward looking modernity, tolerance and genuine hospitality. Magnificent gilded Mosques, majestic architecture, richly endowed museums and picturesque water villages of houses on stilts dot Bandar Seri Begawan, the lovely capital of friendly Brunei Darussalam, the prosperous, safe and placid oil rich Kingdom nestled on the northern shores of the huge island of Borneo.

Culture and tradition is complemented by pristine nature, with easily accessible lush primary jungles teeming with life covering most of the country.

In Brunei one can also enjoy world class golf, diving and business events, from remote jungle lodges to palatial resort accommodation, allowing discerning travelers wholesome vacation experiences at good value for money.

Nature, heritage, opulence...Discover Brunei, the Green Heart of Borneo.

BRUNEI TOURISM

Jalan Menteri Besar
Bandar Seri Begawan BB3910

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Tel : + 673 - 238 28 22 / Fax : + 673 - 238 28 24

Email : info@bruneitourism.travel



www.bruneitourism.travel

Cambodia

General Overview

Official name	Kingdom of Cambodia
Capital	Phnom Penh
Population	14.7 million
Total area	181,035 sq km
Currency	Riel, but the US dollar is widely used
Official language	Khmer



Tourism in Cambodia has continued its upward trajectory with 1,874,985 arrivals through August 2011, up 15 per cent from the same period in 2010, and on track for another record year. But blips include low performances from the UK and Thailand, the latter a result of the spat at the Thai-Cambodia border.

Short trips to Siem Reap and the Angkor temples are still Cambodia's main draw, but Phnom Penh and the southern beaches around Sihanoukville are also gaining popularity, buoyed by new tourism infrastructure and promotion by the Ministry of Tourism.

Climate

Average temperature	27°C to 28°C
Average rainfall	1,000mm to 1,500mm
Average humidity	80 per cent to 90 per cent

Best time to visit

The best time to visit Cambodia is in December and January, when there's least humidity and rain and a relatively cool breeze blows throughout the country. However, this is also the high season when most tourists arrive, so things can get crowded, especially at the temples. March and April are the hottest months in Cambodia, and September and October have the most rain.

During the wet season of May to October, temperatures range from 20°C to 27°C, while in the dry season from November to April, it is from 28°C to 35°C.

Distances

From Phnom Penh to:

Siem Reap	314km, 35 mins flight time
Sihanoukville	214km
Koh Kong	350km
Kompot	148km
Kratie	340km
Steung Treng	481km
Ratanakiri	636km
Mondulakiri	543km
Preah Vihear	292km
Kompong Thom	162km

Visitor arrival statistics

Roughly 87 per cent of arrivals to Cambodia in 2010 were first-time visitors. About 52 per cent arrived by air – 23.59 per cent to Phnom Penh and 28.41 per cent to Siem Reap – and 43.64 per cent arrived by land or water.

Of the 2.5 million arrivals in Cambodia in 2010, about 75 per cent came as tourists, six per cent for business, and 11 per cent for official travel.

Almost three per cent came to visit friends and relatives and almost five per cent came for other reasons.

Total tourist arrivals

2009	2.16 million, +1.7 per cent
2010	2.51 million, +16 per cent
2011 (Jan-Aug)	1.87 million, +15 per cent (estimated)

Top 10 source markets 2009

2009	Arrivals	% Change
Vietnam	316,202	50.92%
South Korea	197,725	-25.81%
US	148,482	2.35%
Japan	146,286	10.7%
China	128,210	-1.09%
UK	106,837	8.91%
France	105,437	8.12%
Thailand	102,018	-6.42%
Laos	94,181	54.56%
Australia	84,581	-0.44%

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Top 10 source markets 2010

Country	Arrivals	% Change
Vietnam	466,695	47.59%
South Korea	289,702	11.55%
China	177,636	38.55%
Japan	151,795	3.77%
US	145,005	-1.67%
France	113,285	7.44%
UK	103,067	-3.53%
Thailand	96,277	-5.63%
Australia	93,598	10.66%
Taiwan	91,229	26.50%

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January to August)

Country	Arrivals	% Change
Vietnam	408,517	20.7%
South Korea	227,545	19.3%
China	158,492	38.7%
Japan	103,421	5.8%
US	101,492	4.8%
Laos	79,857	42.5%
France	77,759	7.2%
UK	70,480	0.5%
Taiwan	67,917	6.9%
Thailand	67,340	-32.8%

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Hotel statistics

There are only a few new high-profile hotel projects in Cambodia at present. The two most important additions are the Sofitel Phnom Penh Phokeethra, which opened in December 2010, and the Song Saa Resort, scheduled to open in late-2011. The Sofitel Phnom Penh is only the third five-star hotel in the city and sits in a beautiful location just south of the city centre, overlooking the Bassac and Mekong rivers. Song Saa is a luxury private island eco-resort with villas, about a 30-minute boat ride from Sihanoukville in the Gulf of Thailand.

Hotel occupancy rates

2005	52 per cent
2006	54.79 per cent
2007	54.79 per cent
2008	62.68 per cent
2009	63.57 per cent
2010	65.74 per cent

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Total number of hotel rooms

- Phnom Penh, 6,920
- Siem Reap, 9,438
- Sihanoukville, 1,952
- Kampot, 104
- Koh Kong, 421
- Kratie, 269
- Ratanakiri, 251
- Banteay Meanchey, 517
- Battambang, 1,333
- Kampong Cham, 206
- Svay Reing, 1,135

New hotels in 2011

GULF of THAILAND

- Song Saa Resort, 27 villas

New hotels in 2012

PHNOM PENH

- Sokha Hotel Chroy Changva, 580 rooms

KAMPOT

- Thansor Bokor, hotel and casino, 412 rooms (first phase)

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Flag carrier Cambodia Angkor Air will launch flights between Sihanoukville and Siem Reap thrice weekly in December. This is a big development for Cambodia because Siem Reap, the biggest tourist draw in the country, will be easily linked to Sihanoukville's beaches. Travellers will now have more reasons to stay for the requisite beach trip on an Asian holiday in Cambodia rather than head to Thailand or Bali, Indonesia.

Sihanoukville International Airport, however, does not live up to its name yet, as there are no international flights landing there. But it was upgraded with a new airstrip in 2010.

Key festivals and events 2012

Chaul Chhnam Thmei or Khmer New Year Festival (normally from April 14-16)

The festival is celebrated after the end of the harvest season and is full of the joys of spring. It is the equivalent of Songkran in Thailand and Thingyan in Myanmar.

www.catacambodia.com/festivals

Johnnie Walker Cambodian Open

This is the third consecutive year for the week-long tour-

nament that began in 2007. It normally takes place in December, but it is recommended to check the exact dates with the organiser, Phokeethra Country Club.
www.phokeethragolf.com

Bon Om Took or Khmer Water Festival (November)

This three-day festival is probably the most extravagant event on Cambodia's calendar. The highlight is the boat races on Tonle Sap River, held in conjunction with fairs, shows, parades, fireworks and performances.
www.catacambodia.com/festivals

International Half Marathon (December)

Usually held at the Angkor temples complex, the event attracts competitors and thousands of spectators from around the world.
www.catacambodia.com/festivals

Essentials in the city

Food Cambodian food is delicious, similar to Thai, but less spicy and with more earthy flavours. Traditional Khmer favourites are *amok* (fragrant steamed fish curry usually served in a coconut shell) and *lok lak* (peppery, rich beef strips served with rice and a fried egg on top). You can also find a lot of great French food in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh – a colonial legacy of their colonisation.

Quirky Try a massage by blind masseurs, a Cambodian specialty, available in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. Their 'seeing hands' will have you lulled into a catatonic state of bliss in no time.

Tipping policy People are starting to tip more as the ranks of the local upper-class swells, and more foreign visitors arrive. Tipping jars can sometimes be seen at restaurants and bar counters, particularly in more pricey places.

Shopping Sihanouk Boulevard in the capital is gaining more and more high-end clothes stores, often offering good discounts. For even cheaper bargains, hit the Russian Market, and for souvenirs to take home try Siem Reap's Night Market.

How to maximise two hours of free time in Phnom Penh Head to the National Museum and immerse yourself in the world's finest collection of Khmer art and sculpture outside the Angkor temples. The museum is

comprises four art pavilions around a beautiful and lush central garden.

Insider's tip for a half-day off in Siem Reap Explore the Angkor Wat temples by bicycle at your own pace, which is more pleasurable than being hurried along by a tour guide and a *tuk-tuk*. Bikes are available for rent everywhere in town, and it's a short ride from central Siem Reap to Angkor Wat on a beautiful tree-lined road.

Need to impress clients lunch in Phnom Penh Take them to Café Metro on the Mekong Waterfront. The inside of the café is reminiscent of Paris or New York rather than Phnom Penh, and the food is first-rate fusion of Western and Khmer.

Lunch on your own in Siem Reap The Blue Pumpkin, right near the central tourist hub of Pub Street, serves great coffee and tasty Western café food, as well as some Khmer favourites. It's popular with tourists and locals alike for its urbane atmosphere and free Wi-Fi.

Late nights in Phnom Penh There's a lot more to Phnom Penh now than backpacker dives and hostess bars. Pontoon nightclub, just off Street 51, frequently hosts international DJs and is always open late.

Electricity Single phase voltage of 220 volts and a frequency of 50Hz, primarily two- and three-pin sockets.

Visa requirements

A visa on arrival, valid for 30 days, is issued at a cost of US\$20 for tourists and US\$25 for businessmen at Phnom Penh International Airport, Siem Reap International Airport and international border checkpoints. A valid passport and a photograph are needed.

Visas can also be obtained at embassies or consulates abroad, and can be extended at the Immigration Department in Phnom Penh.

Visa exemptions exist only for holders of diplomatic and service passports from all ASEAN countries except Indonesia, as well as those from India, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cuba, Slovakia and mainland China (but excluding citizens from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan).

Prices of common items in 2012

Bottled water 2,000 riel (US\$0.45)

Starbucks latte (small) There is no Starbucks in Cam-

bodia.

A glass of open wine at a pub US\$4

Taxi fare (2km) US\$1.00 using the taxi metre

Important contacts

NTO

Cambodia Ministry of Tourism, led by tourism minister Dr Thong Khon, is continuing its *Cambodia, Kingdom of Wonder* campaign, which was launched in 2009, but has added a tagline, 'Clean city, clean resort and good service,' through advertisements with international TV networks. The ministry and the private sector have been working closely in offering special tour packages to increase demand.

Contact: Marketing and Promotion Department, No. 3 Monivong Boulevard, Phnom Penh 12258, Cambodia
Tel: (855-23) 211-593
Fax (855-23) 217-503
marketing@mot.gov.kh
www.mot.gov.kh

Tourism-related authorities

Apsara Authority, established by the government, is in charge of research, protection and the conservation of cultural heritage, and urban and tourist development of the region of Siem Reap.
www.authorityapsara.org

Travel trade associations

Cambodia Association of Travel Agents (CATA) Established in 1996, CATA's main objectives are to work closely with the public and private sector to develop and increase tourism, while giving its own members the strongest possible united voice in how this development will occur.
www.catacambodia.com

Cambodia Hotel Association Grouping of hotel and resort operators and owners in Cambodia.
www.cambodiahotelassociation.org.kh

Compiled by Byron Perry

All information is correct at press time



The traditional Apsara Show performed at Angkor Miracle

China

General Overview

Official name	People's Republic of China
Capital	Beijing
Population	1.34 billion
Currency	Yuan (renminbi = RMB)
Total area	9,596,960 sq km
Official language	Mandarin (<i>putonghua</i>)



Inbound tourism saw slower growth in 2011, after a healthier 2010 that had benefited from the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, which attracted inbound leisure and MICE visitors. For the first time in several years, China in 2011 had no international mega-event on its sleeves, and the same will be true for 2012.

The Expo has left its legacy, though, in the form of new tourism agreements between China and countries looking to expand international flight services at airports in emerging Chinese cities beyond Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou.

China's NTO is having success in growing domestic tourism. From October 1 to 7, the national Golden Week holiday, about 24.3 million tourists visited 119 national scenic spots overseen by the China National Tourism Administration, nearly nine per cent more than in 2010.

Best time to visit

China has climates that vary across regions, from the tropical Hainan Island south of the mainland, to the Siberian borderlands of Heilongjiang province in the north and the western deserts bordering Central Asia. Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou all have long, hot summers.

Winter in Beijing (November to April) can be bitterly cold, and in Shanghai, wet and grey. The key MICE seasons in mainland cities are in spring (April to June) and autumn (September to November). Hainan Island, which enjoys year-round sunshine, offers a more flexible MICE calendar.

During the Lunar New Year period, Labour Day and October 10 National Day period, domestic travel peaks and one must expect congestion at various transport hubs.

Distances

From Beijing to:

Shanghai 1,000km, 2 hrs
Guangzhou 1,900km, 3 hrs
Sanya 2,400km, 4 hrs

From Shanghai to:

Guangzhou 1,300km, 2 hrs
Sanya 1,990km, 3 hrs

From Guangzhou to:

Sanya 650km, 1 hr 20 mins

Visitor arrivals statistics

Growth in international arrivals to mainland China

slowed to 1.32 per cent year-on-year from January to July, according to the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). This follows a nearly six per cent growth for the same period in 2010.

Arrivals from Japan, China's second biggest market after South Korea, saw a significant 8.29 per cent drop. Visits from South Korea followed the trend of China's other top 10 markets, increasing by 4.73 per cent. Russia, the US and Malaysia round out the top five contributors to China's inbound travel market.

Total tourist arrivals (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan)

2009	126,475,000, -2.73 per cent
2010	133,762,200, +5.76 per cent
2011 (Jan-Aug)	89,599,200, +0.97 per cent

Sources: Jones Lang LaSalle Hotels and China National Tourism Administration

Arrivals target for 2012

No overall target for inbound travel was published.

Projections of 70 million visitors for the Shanghai World Expo 2010 were exceeded, as the event attracted 73 million over six months, according to the International Bureau of Expositions (BIE).

China's international arrivals grew by 9.4 per cent in 2010, overtaking Spain to rank third in the UNWTO's tally of destinations. The China National Tourism Administration has said it expects similar growth for 2011 and 2012.

In 2010, Chinese airports handled 564.3 million passengers, up 16.1 per cent over 2009, according to the Civil

Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). Beijing Capital International Airport was the country's busiest, with 74 million travellers passing through. Shanghai's two airports saw about 72 million passengers, and Guangzhou Baiyun saw 41 million last year, according to CAAC.

Domestic tourism growth continued to surge, with 2.1 billion visitors for all of 2010, a 10-year compounded growth rate of 10.9 per cent, according to Jones Lang LaSalle, which also anticipates a seven per cent average annual growth rate for the next five years.

Hotel statistics

For the first nine months of 2011, average occupancy nationwide was 61 per cent, just as it was for the same period last year. Average daily rate (ADR) was RMB768.67 (US\$ 120.8), up four per cent over 2010, and RevPAR was RMB467.80, also up four per cent, according to STR Global.

While Beijing and Guangzhou saw improvements in all industry performance data, Shanghai experienced a hangover from its 2010 hosting of the World Expo, in the form of a 16 per cent drop in ADR and 21 per cent drop in RevPAR.

The hotel community is increasingly looking inland. Developers have nearly maxed out the prime locations in tier-one cities, slowing development on such sites, according to Jones Lang LaSalle. This has brought occupancy and room rates up in Beijing and Guangzhou. Shanghai saw all hotel industry indicators dip significantly in 2011, after being driven up by last year's Shanghai World Expo.

Government policies encourage development in tier-two and three cities. Jones Lang LaSalle estimates that 84,000 internationally-branded rooms will enter the market by 2013, with development in second- and third-tier cities accounting for an increasing proportion. Cities expected to see the biggest increase outside of the three big coastal metropolises include Chongqing, Chengdu, Tianjin, Dalian and Kunming.

Chinese hoteliers were generally optimistic about 2011, according to Jones Lang LaSalle, which reports that only 15 per cent of China Tourist Hotel Association members expected any decrease in occupancy for the year. However, the same survey revealed that 74 per cent expected to see an increase in operating costs over the same period.

Average room rate 2011 (January to September)

Beijing	RMB644.59, +6.4
Shanghai	RMB785.67, -6.1
Guangzhou	RMB786.02, +10.5

Average occupancy rate 2011, 2010 (January to September), percentage change (year-on-year)

Beijing	67.9 per cent, 62.4 per cent, +8.7
Shanghai	55.4 per cent, 65.8 per cent, -15.7
Guangzhou	63.2 per cent, 60.8 per cent, +3.9

RevPAR 2011, 2010 (January to September), percentage change (year-on-year)

Beijing	RMB437.52, RMB378.05, +15.7
Shanghai	RMB435.28, RMB550.35, -20.9
Guangzhou	RMB496.98, RMB432.82, +2.8

Total number of rooms nationwide

1,287,675

Projected number of new rooms nationwide in 2011

40,732

Rooms to be opened nationwide in 2012

109,898

Source: STR Global

New hotels in 2011

BEIJING

- Sheraton Beijing Dongcheng, 441 rooms

SHANGHAI

- Andaz Shanghai, 307 rooms
- Hotel Indigo Shanghai, The Bund 184 rooms
- Kerry Hotel, Pudong, 574 rooms
- W The Bund, 600 rooms
- Jumeirah Himalayas Hotel Pudong, 400 rooms

HAINAN

- Raffles Sanya Resort Qing Shui Bay, 250 rooms
- Renaissance Sanya Resort and Spa, 507 rooms
- Kempinski Hotel Haitang Bay Sanya, 576 rooms
- The St. Regis Sanya Yalong Bay, 401 rooms

- Four Points by Sheraton Shenzhou Peninsula Resort, 338 rooms
- Sheraton Shenzhou Peninsula Resort, 308 rooms

GUANGZHOU

- Sheraton Guangzhou, 445 rooms
- Sheraton Guangzhou Huadu Resort, 98 rooms
- Westin Pazhou, 325 rooms
- Guangzhou Marriott Tianhe, 278 rooms
- Hilton Guangzhou Tianhe, 504 rooms
- Hilton Guangzhou Baiyun, 313 rooms

OTHER CITIES

- Sheraton Chongqing, 300 rooms
- Hilton Xi'an, 211 rooms
- Park Hyatt Ningbo Resort and Spa, 236 rooms

New hotels in 2012

BEIJING

- Conrad Beijing, 300 rooms
- Four Seasons Beijing Chaoyang, 300 rooms

SHANGHAI

- Twelve at Hengshan, 177 rooms
- Four Seasons Shanghai at Pudong, 200 rooms
- Banyan Tree North Bund, 130 rooms
- Banyan Tree Riverside Shanghai, 181 rooms
- Jing'an Shangri-La 600 rooms

GUANGZHOU

- Aloft Guangzhou University Park, 300 rooms
- W Guangzhou
- Mandarin Oriental Guangzhou, 286 rooms
- Four Seasons Guangzhou, 344 rooms
- Jumeirah Guangzhou, 205 rooms
- Hotel Nikko Guangzhou, 411 rooms
- Langham Place EDZ Guangzhou Luogang, 320 rooms
- W Guangzhou Zhujiang New Town, 320 rooms

HAINAN

- Sheraton Sanya Haitang Bay Resort, 511 rooms
- Jumeirah Clearwater Bay Resort, 250 rooms
- Westin Haikou, 251 rooms
- Hilton Qing Shui Bay, 500 rooms
- Four Points by Sheraton Hainan, Sanya 379 rooms
- Sheraton Sanya Haitang Bay Resort, 500 rooms
- The Royal Begonia, Sanya
- Shangri-La Sanya Haitang Bay, 508 rooms
- Park Hyatt Sanya Sunny Bay, 195 rooms

OTHER CITIES

- Westin Chongqing Liberation Square, 300 rooms
- Westin Xiamen, 300 rooms
- Banyan Tree Tianjin, 159 rooms
- Fairmont Nanjing, 371 rooms
- The Langham, Shenzhen, 352 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

China continued to add to its high-speed rail network in 2011, the most high-profile addition being the Beijing-Shanghai bullet train, which reduced train travel time between the two cities from 11 hours to five, for just RMB500.

But not long after its much-touted debut, there were technological glitches. A crash on the Yongtaiwen line that killed 40 people cast doubt on the system's safety, but even then, China's high-speed trains continue to run, albeit at reduced speeds, and are placing downward pressure on domestic air tickets.

On the city level, Shenzhen saw the biggest infrastructure changes in 2011, with the expansion of its metro system from two lines to five, as 100 new stations opened for the city's hosting of the 2011 World University Games.

In Shanghai, several World Expo pavilions were reconfigured, including the Expo Performance Centre, which will reopen as the Mercedes Benz Arena hosting international sporting, musical and theatrical events. The Expo Centre reopened in 2011 as the new Shanghai Convention Centre. The city also welcomed three new sporting venues to host the FINA World Aquatics Championships.

The expansion of the Guangzhou's Baiyun Airport is scheduled for completion in 2013. Nationwide, 97 new airports are under construction, including a second one in Beijing.

Key events and festivals 2012

Avoid travel in China around national holidays. Particularly during Chinese New Year, room rates go up, transport hubs are crowded, and some restaurants and attractions may be closed. The holidays to steer clear of in 2012 are Chinese New Year (January 22-28), May Day (May 1-3) and Golden Week (September 30-October 7).

Chinese Lunar New Year (January 23)

27th Harbin Ice and Snow Festival, Harbin (January 5 to February 29)

Shanghai Literary Festival, M on the Bund (February 29 to March 18)

Bookworm Literary Festival, Beijing (March 9-23, 2012)

F1 Chinese Grand Prix, Shanghai International Circuit (April 13 to 15)

Strawberry Music Festival and MIDI Music Festival, Beijing (early May)

China WTA Open, Beijing, Olympic Tennis Centre (October 1-8)

Shanghai ATP Masters 1000, Qizhong Tennis Centre (October 10-16)

Essentials in the city – Beijing

Food Tuck into a Beijing duck or gather around the table for *shuan rou* (Mongolian-style lamb or beef hot pot). The capital is also a great city for sampling cuisine from around China.

Quirky Forgo the dingy bars that surround Houhai Lake, and get out on the water instead. Several outfits rent kitschy paddleboats toward the south end of the lake.

Tippling policy Generally, tipping is not accepted, but in tier-one cities, the impression is it is expected.

Shopping Steer clear of the glitzy new malls, where high-end brands cost more than at home. Instead, brave one of the big indoor markets – Yashou and the Silk Market have the best mix of practicality and variety.

How to maximise two hours of free time Shop at Panjiayuan antique market for traditional Chinese art, toys, jade crafts, furniture and much more. Arrive by early afternoon, as the market begins to shut down at 16:00.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Try your hand at calligraphy or mahjong, get an introduction to Chinese kung-fu, or listen to a local expert lecture on business culture or Chinese philosophy.

Need to impress clients lunch Take your pick – Maison Boulud in the Legation Quarter, south of Tian'anmen Square (French); SALT in the Lido district (Mediterranean); and Bei in the Opposite House hotel in Sanlitun North (Northern Chinese, Japanese, Korean).

Lunch on your own Sample some of Beijing's best dumplings at Dongbeiren or let your tastebuds travel to Yunnan province at In & Out near Sanlitun.

Late nights The grimy, friendly underbelly of Beijing's rock music is at its best at 2 Kolegas, an indoor/outdoor venue near Sanyuanqiao. For a taste of the local club scene, join the local young and rich at Mix, Vic's, or Latte at the north gate of the Worker's Stadium.

Visa requirements

Most visitors require a pre-paid/pre-stamped visa to enter China. There is no visa on arrival.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water RMB1.50 for 500ml (US\$0.25)

Starbucks latte (small) RMB19

A glass of open wine at a pub RMB45 to RMB65

Taxi fare RMB10 plus RMB2 fuel surcharge (RMB11 after 23.00), RMB2/km after the first 3km.

Important contacts

NTO

China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) is directly affiliated to the State Council and has 18 institutions in 14 countries and regions.

Tel: (86-10) 6520-1114

<http://en.cnta.gov.cn>

Travel trade associations

China International Travel Service

No.1 Dongdan Beidajie, Dongcheng District, Beijing

Tel: (86-10) 6522-2991

www.cits.net

Shanghai Municipal Tourism Administration

100 Dagu Road

Tel:(86-21) 2311-1111

www.meet-in-shanghai.net

Beijing Tourism Administration

<http://english.visitbeijing.com.cn/>

PATA China

1805C, Citic Building, 19 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Beijing

Tel: (86-10) 6500-1397

Compiled by Maggie Rauch

All information is correct at press time



Hong Kong

General Overview

Official name	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China
Capital	Hong Kong
Population	7.02 million
Total area	1,104 sq km
Currency	Hong Kong dollar
Official languages	Chinese, English



In the first three quarters of 2011, Hong Kong tourist arrivals reached 30,423,421, an increase of 16.2 per cent over the same period in 2010. Total tourism expenditure associated with inbound tourism in the first six months was HK\$11.6 billion (US\$1.5 billion), up by 21.5 per cent. Mainland China was a big growth driver.

The destination is also seeking to grow Taiwan, the second biggest market to date, with the formal establishment of a Taipei office in September.

Even with positive growth, the industry still remains cautiously optimistic, taking the global economic crunch into consideration and despite the sustained growth of the mainland's economy and exchange rates of major currencies against the Hong Kong dollar – factors which can be expected to bring more tourists. The mainland and other shorthaul markets are expected to be major sources of visitor arrivals in 2012.

Climate

Average temperature	23°C to 28°C
Average rainfall	2,214.3mm
Average humidity	69 per cent to 82 per cent

Best time to visit

Hong Kong's sub-tropical climate results in four seasons. In November and December, there are pleasant breezes, plenty of sunshine and comfortable temperatures. That's the best time to visit, but the period is also typically peak seasons for exhibitions and business travel.

January and February are more cloudy, with occasional cold fronts followed by dry northerly winds.

Spring starts in March and April, when occasional spells of high humidity results in fog and drizzle that can be particularly troublesome on high ground. Both air traffic and ferry services are occasionally disrupted because of reduced visibility.

Hot summer is from May to August. Severe weather phenomena that can affect Hong Kong include tropical cyclones (July to October), strong winter monsoon winds and thunderstorms that are most frequent from April to September. Waterspouts and hailstorms occur infrequently.

Distances

From Hong Kong to:

Beijing	1,971km, 2 hrs 27 mins
Shanghai	1,208km, 1hr 30 mins
Taipei	812km, 1 hr

Fukuoka	2,049km, 3 hrs 50 mins
Kuala Lumpur	2,504km, 3 hrs 7 mins
Manila	1,111 km, 1hr 23 mins
Seoul	2,097 km, 2 hrs 36 mins
Singapore	2,569km, 3 hrs 12 mins
Bangkok	1,723km, 2 hrs 8 mins
Sydney	7,349km, 9 hrs 8 mins
Vancouver	10,278km, 12 hrs 46 mins
San Francisco	11,121km, 13 hrs 49 mins
New York	12,983km, 16 hrs 8 mins
London	9,646km, 11 hrs 40 mins
Moscow	7,156km, 8 hrs 54 mins

Visitor arrivals statistics

Visitor arrivals hit 30 million in the first three quarters of 2011, with mainland China driving growth. Arrivals from the market surged 23.6 per cent to exceed 20 million during the period.

Chinese FIT dominated, with 65.1 per cent or 13.27 million arriving under the Individual Visit Scheme, showing a 29.2 per cent year-on-year increase. This was followed by South and South-east Asia, the Americas, North Asia (South Korea and Japan), Taiwan and Europe/Africa and the Middle East.

Overnight arrivals totalled 16.29 million, representing a 10.8 per cent increase or 53.6 per cent of all visitor arrivals. Same-day arrivals surpassed 14.12 million, 23.2 per cent more than the previous year.

In terms of per capita overnight spending for January to June 2011, the biggest growth market was Australia/

New Zealand/South Pacific, which stood at HK\$2,032 (US\$260.67). The biggest spenders were from Taiwan (HK\$2,372), followed by North Asia (HK\$2,201) and Macau (HK\$2,062).

Benefitting from economic stability and high travel propensity, double-digit growth in arrivals was seen from Indonesia (17.1 per cent), Malaysia (12.8 per cent), Singapore (12.7 per cent) and Thailand (11.9 per cent) during the first nine months.

In the longhaul markets, cumulative arrivals were two per cent higher year-on-year, with the Americas (4.1 per cent) as the best performer.

Top 10 source markets 2009

Countries	Arrivals	%Growth
Mainland China	17,956,731	+6.5
Taiwan	2,009,644	-10.3
Japan	1,204,490	-9.1
US	1,070,073	-6.7
Singapore	623,730	-1.4
South Korea	618,694	-31.6
Australia	600,085	-6.8
Philippines	563,750	-0.8
UK	513,984	-8.9
Malaysia	441,698	-10

Source: Hong Kong Tourism Board

Top 10 source markets 2010

Countries	Arrivals	%Growth
Mainland China	22,684,388	+26.3
Taiwan	2,164,750	+7.7
Japan	1,316,618	+9.3
US	1,171,419	+9.5
South Korea	891,024	+44
Singapore	709,777	+13.8
Australia	650,618	+8.4
Philippines	603,030	+7.0
Malaysia	578,877	+31.1
India	530,910	+44.8

Source: Hong Kong Tourism Board

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January to September)

Countries	Arrivals	% Change
Mainland China	20,383,966	+23.6
Taiwan	1,639,597	Down less than 1%
Japan	930,103	+5.4
US	870,583	+2.9
South Korea	764,710	+15.8
Singapore	532,466	+12.7
Australia	467,474	-0.8
Philippines	462,734	+2.7
Indonesia	392,876	+17.1
India	375,571	-5.1

Source: Hong Kong Tourism Board

Average length of stay/average per capita expenditure (HK\$) 2009

Market	Average length of stay	Average expenditure
Mainland China	2.6	8,489
Taiwan	2.3	5,577
Japan	2.1	3,976
US	3.3	4,872
Singapore	3	5,090
South Korea	2.2	3,733
Australia	3.4	5,533
Philippines	3.4	4,211
UK	3.8	4,902
Malaysia	2.9	4,040

Source: Hong Kong Tourism Board

HONG KONG IS A REWARD IN ITSELF!

Dear Travel Trade Partners

Hong Kong Rewards you more for your Corporate Meeting and Incentive!

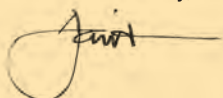
Ideal combination of good infrastructure, convenience, right mix of business and leisure attractions – Hong Kong have all these plus more new developments to offer your meeting and incentive groups.

Get incentivised with our Hong Kong REWARDS! program. Why not pamper your group with MORE!

Groups with above 20 participants gets a welcome pack and groups with above 100 participants have a choice of added perks like Lion Dance, Airport Meet & Greet, and many more.

Contact the MEHK Southeast Asia team: Ms Linda Tan (Linda.Tan@hktb.com) and Ms Rachel Quek (Rachel.Quek@hktb.com) for more information.

Yours Sincerely,



David Leung
Regional Director, South & Southeast Asia
Hong Kong Tourism Board

For 20-99 pax

- Welcome souvenir
- Complimentary copy of the Hong Kong Street Map
- Coupon with museum offer, drink offer at Knutsford Terrace, Lan Kwai Fong and SOHO, local delicacies dining offer and shopping offer at Consumer Electronics Outlets

For 100-199 pax

- The Basic Package PLUS
- A welcome message displayed at the Hong Kong International Airport
- One of the following value-added options:
 - a) Airport Welcome with chaperon service;
 - b) Acrobatic & Kung Fu Show;
 - c) Lion Dance;
 - d) Magic Show

For 300-699 pax

- The Basic Package PLUS
- A welcome message displayed at the Hong Kong International Airport
- Lion Dance
- One of the following value-added options:
 - a) Two Airport Welcome with chaperon services;
 - b) Face Changing
 - c) Chinese Quartet;
 - d) Magic Show;
 - e) Fluorescent Dragon Dance
 - f) Cultural Bazaar (four of the following: Fortune Telling; Chinese Rainbow Calligraphy; Chinese Knotting; Dragon Beard Candy Making; Chinese Egg Roll; Egg Puff Making; Glutinous Rice Snowball Making)

Special Offers From Attractions

- D Deck, Discovery Bay • Hong Kong Disneyland • The Hong Kong Jockey Club • Ngong Ping 360 • Sky100 • Ocean Park Hong Kong

*Remarks:

1. Valid only for groups staying at least two consecutive nights in Hong Kong. 2. Overseas groups coming to Hong Kong for the same corporate event are only entitled to redeem the privileges offered according to the TOTAL number of participants regardless of the number of segments into which the group is divided. 3. All offers are subject to availability and venue conditions. 4. Please allow 15 working days in advance for action. All offers are valid until 31 March 2012 and subject to change without prior notice.



Lantau Island: An Inspirational MICE Destination

Where nature, traditions and entertainment converge for your event!

Lantau Island, Hong Kong's largest outlying island, has great potential as a MICE hub with a wide selection of attractions, venues and entertainment for MICE groups.

Geared to handle the largest events, Lantau features world-class meeting venues such as Asia World-Expo as well as comprehensive accommodation with dining and meeting facilities.

Combine culture with nature for a unique MICE experience. Visitors can get hands-on conservation projects and learn traditional skills at Tai O fishing village, study kung fu

from a Shaolin master or enjoy spectacular Ngong Ping cable car ride to the awe-inspiring Giant Buddha and themed Chinese village offering a variety of experience and distinct MICE facilities.

Only 25 minutes from Central, the island's green attractions are ideal for group activities, from hiking to playing corporate golf tournaments, and from watching pink dolphins upclose to fun sailing-themed activities on The Bounty.

Unwind to alfresco dining at Discovery Bay, Chinese cuisine, magical entertainment at

Hong Kong Disneyland and exciting shopping at Citygate Outlets - Hong Kong's biggest collection of international brands.

Log on to discover what makes Lantau Island the ideal location for your next event!

www.mehongkong.com/lantau

 Meetings & Exhibitions Hong Kong



Average length of stay/average per capita expenditure (HK\$) 2010

Market	Average length of stay	Average expenditure
Mainland China	3.9	7,453
Taiwan	2.5	5,197
Japan	2.2	5,213
US	3.8	6,274
South Korea	2.3	4,643
Singapore	3.1	5,840
Australia	3.8	7,356
Philippines	3.5	4,239
Malaysia	3.1	5,010
India	3.5	7,453

Source: Hong Kong Tourism Board

Total tourism arrivals

2009	29,590,654
2010	36,030,331
2011 (Jan-Sept)	30,423,421

Percentage growth over the previous year

2009	0.3 per cent
2010	21.8 per cent
2011 (Jan-Sept)	16.2 per cent

Percentage of BT-MICE to overall arrivals

2009	1,164,848
2010	1,429,941
2011 (Jan-June)	725,779

Overall tourism expenditure

2009	HK\$158.3 billion
2010	HK\$210 billion

NTO overall budget and marketing budget

2010-2011	HK\$362.0 million
2011-2012	HK\$341.3 million

Arrivals target

Visitor arrivals are expected to grow for the rest of 2011 due to sustained growth of the mainland economy and exchange rates. Major currencies against the Hong Kong dollar remain favourable and are seen to bring more leisure and business traffic to Hong Kong. The mainland and other shorthaul markets are predicted to be the engine of growth. Other star contributors include emerging markets like Russia, the Middle East and India. Vladivostok Air's flights to Hong Kong are expected to bring more Russians during the winter season.

Hotel statistics

2011 is turning out to be another record year for the hotel industry, barring any unforeseen factors that may occur between now and the year-end. Hotel occupancy for the first nine months was 88 per cent, up three per cent compared to the same period of last year. Room rates were up 17 per cent to HK\$1,287.

Hong Kong is set to add 17 new hotels with 3,066 rooms in 2011. Despite the surge of new room supply, hoteliers remain positive and see double-digit occupancy and room rates. Everyone is anticipating a rate increment for 2012 due to projected increase in demand.

Overall average occupancy rate

2010	87 per cent
2011 (Jan-Sept)	88 per cent

Overall average room rate

2010	HK\$1,165
2011 (Jan-Sept)	HK\$1,287

ARR High Tariff A hotels

2010	HK\$1,965
2011 (Jan-Sept)	HK\$2,140

ARR High Tariff B hotels

2010	HK\$946
2011 (Jan-Sept)	HK\$1,058

AOR of High Tariff A hotels

2010	81 per cent
2011 (Jan-Sept)	83 per cent

AOR of High Tariff B hotels

2010	88 per cent
2010 (Jan-Sept)	90 per cent

Overall number of rooms

2010	60,428
2011 (as of Sept)	62,063

No. of four-star and five-star rooms

High Tariff A	
2010	16,052
2011 (Jan-Sept)	17,181

High Tariff B

2010	21,432
2010 (Jan-Sept)	24,218

Projected no. of rooms in 2012 and 2013

2012	217 hotels (67,734 rooms)
2013	231 hotels (70,284)

New hotels in 2011

- The Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong, Kowloon, 312 rooms
- Hotel ICON, Tsim Sha Tsui, 262 rooms
- The Bauhinia (Central) Hotel, Hong Kong, 249 rooms
- Hotel de EDGE by Rhombus, Sheung Wan, 90 rooms
- Best Western Hotel Causeway Bay, 258 rooms
- Dorsett Regency Hotel, Hong Kong, 209 rooms
- Tai O Heritage Hotel, Lantau Island, nine rooms

New hotels 2012

- Dorsett Regency Hotel Kwun Tong, 370 rooms (Q1)
- Dorsett Regency Hotel, Tsuen Wan, 506 rooms (Q2)
- Ibis Hong Kong Sheung Wan, 550 rooms
- Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Shatin, 548 rooms
- Best Western, 239 Queen's Road West, 460 rooms
- Discovery Bay Hotel and Conference Centre, 325 rooms
- Express by Holiday Inn Hotel The Soho, Sheung Wan, 299 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Tai O Heritage Hotel The Tai O Police Station built in 1902 is being revitalised as the Tai O Heritage Hotel. The two-storey, neo-colonial-style boutique hotel will house nine rooms, a heritage interpretation centre and a rooftop restaurant. It is scheduled to open at the end of 2011.

www.hkheritage.org/en/index.asp

Sky100 indoor observation deck is the only vantage point that offers a panoramic 360-degree view of Hong Kong at 393m above sea level. www.sky100.com.hk

Ocean Park Hong Kong has revitalised its attractions with the Rainforest. Located at the summit of the park, it features the Discovery Trail and The Rapids. www.oceanpark.com.hk

Toy Story Land, exclusive to Hong Kong Disneyland, debuted in November 2011 with Toy Soldier Parachute Drop, Slinky Dog Zig Zag Spin and RC Racer. www.hongkongdisneyland.com

Cruise Terminal Development Located on the runway of the former Kai Tak Airport, it is right at the centre of Victoria Harbour. The first berth is expected to be operational in 2013. www.tourism.gov.hk/english/ctkt/ctkt.html

Key events and festivals 2012

Chinese New Year Celebration (January 1)
Organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board. www.discoverhongkong.com

Hong Kong Sevens (March 23-25)

Organised by the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union. www.hksevens.com

Hong Kong Wine & Dine Month (November 2012 to January 2013)

Organised by the Hong Kong Tourism Board. Hotels, food districts and party hotspots are participating. www.discoverhongkong.com

40th Hong Kong Arts Festival (January 28 to March 8)

Organised by Hong Kong Arts Festival Society Limited. www.hk.artsfestival.org

Essentials in the city

Food The newest hotspots are Japanese restaurants. In Central, try out Yardbird, which serves modern yakitori. On Wyndam Street, there's Robata Zawa Zawa.

Quirky Take a walking tour through old Central and Sheung Wan. Visit internationally-acclaimed art galleries, dry goods stores selling fish and old *dai pai dongs* where you can sample Hong Kong-style coffee.

Tippling policy While there is no need to tip, tips are welcome if the service warrants it.

Shopping Bargain hunters can head down to Tung Chung to Citygate Outlets for year-round discounts from brands like Bally, Polo Ralph Lauren and Levi's.

How to maximise two hours of free time Head southside to Stanley where you can find an open-air market. Thereafter, pop into the Maritime Museum.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Jump into a taxi to experience Sai Kung, the 'back garden' of Hong Kong and home to the new Geopark. Take a boat to Sharp Island (Kiu Tsui Chau) 2,000m from Sai Kung pier to walk around the island.

Need to impress clients lunch Dim sum at the Shang Palace at the Island Shangri-La. Boisterous atmosphere and excellent service at reasonable prices.

Lunch on your own Try out the quintessential Hong Kong lunch – wonton noodles in broth.

Late nights Venture out on the streets of Causeway Bay to shop, explore and find dessert around the corner.

Electricity European and British standards, 220V/50Hz.

Visa requirements

Visitors from some 170 countries can visit Hong Kong visa-free for periods ranging from seven to 180 days. Citizens of Australia, Canada, the UK, Denmark, Japan and New Zealand can remain in Hong Kong for three months visa-free.

Frequent visitors holding valid passports who are eligible to come to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) without a visa or entry permit for visit purposes may apply for HKSAR Travel Pass.

Since September 2011, Taiwan residents holding a valid Mainland Travel Permit have been able to visit Hong Kong for 30 days, an extension from seven days. www.immd.gov.hk/ehhtml/hkvisas_visit.htm

Prices of common items in 2011

- Bottled water** HK\$6 (US\$0.77)
- Starbucks latte (small)** HK\$28
- A glass of open wine at a pub** HK\$40 to HK\$60
- Taxi Fare (2km)** HK\$18

Important contacts

NTO

The Hong Kong Tourism Board is a government-funded body under the control of the Tourism Commission with a worldwide network of 16 offices and representatives in five different markets. In addition to Russia, the Middle East and India, the board has also identified Vietnam and the Netherlands as emerging markets. www.discoverhongkong.com (for consumers and general resources) <http://partnetnet.hktb.com> (for trade and in-depth resources)

Travel trade associations

Tourism Commission of the Government of the HKSAR
www.tourism.gov.hk

Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme
www.DiscoverHongKong.com/hk/qts

Hong Kong Association of Travel Agents (HATA)
www.hata.org.hk

Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC)
www.tichk.org

Compiled by Prudence Lui
All information is correct at press time



A Refreshing Experience at Award Winning Harbour Plaza 8 Degrees

A modern and chic hotel emphasizing sleek design, the tastefully decorated award winning Harbour Plaza 8 Degrees is a classic example of clever planning and creative design. The unique twist design lobby elicits its innovating optical illusion.

Located near the former Kai Tak Airport area and Mongkok, the hotel is close to shopping and entertainment areas including MTR Hung Hom Station, Kowloon Bay shopping and the bustling district of Tsimshatsui. All reachable by the hotel's complimentary shuttle bus.

Features 702 charming, down to basics design and earthy tone guestrooms with well-equipped modern furnishings and amenities providing comfortable living at great value. Over 4,500 sq. ft. function venue divisible to smaller meeting rooms equipped with multi-function room lighting and the latest audio-visual technology, a pillar-less multi-purpose function room of 1646 sq. ft., contemporary furnished with luxurious chandeliers with maximum capacity of 120 persons, stylish restaurants with series of delightful Asian and International cuisine and an inviting bar, a full service Business Centre, an appealing Harbour Club Lounge, a Fitness Centre and a distinctively shaped outdoor Swimming Pool, Children's Pool and Whirlpool surrounded by lush landscaping.

Guests staying on the top three Executive Floors have full access to the exclusive Harbour Club Lounge featuring daily complimentary breakfast, afternoon tea, evening refreshments and personalised concierge services in a relaxing, upscale space. To cater for the long staying guests, a number of rooms and suites are fully equipped with kitchenette units.



India

General Overview

Official name	Republic of India
Capital	New Delhi
Population	1.16 billion
Total area	3.3 million sq km
Currency	Indian rupee
Official Language	Hindi, English

*There are 22 national languages that are recognised by the Constitution of India, of which Hindi is the official language. Besides these, 844 different regional dialects are spoken in various parts of the country.



India aims to grow its share of total international arrivals to one per cent, from the current 0.59 per cent, by 2016. The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) has sought a five-fold increase in its budget allocation to US\$4.37 billion for the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-2017) to create 50 more tourist destinations in the country. MoT is proposing to engage private enterprises to create theme destinations to encourage tourists to stay longer. In terms of infrastructure, the tourism ministry also plans to introduce tourist trains in every state with new circuits. Additionally, road, rail and aviation infrastructure is continuously being added. Tourism received 7.2 per cent of the total investment that the government makes in different local industries in 2010.

Climate

Average temperature	10°C to 15°C (winter) 32°C to 40°C (summer)
Average rainfall	912.8 mm (2010)
Average humidity	49.17 per cent

India is divided into four climatic zones, namely alpine, subtropical, tropical and arid. Its meteorological seasons are winter (January to February), pre-monsoon (March to May), south-west monsoon (June to September) and post-monsoon (October to December). India has 2,856 hours of sunlight per year, which is an average of 7.8 hours per day.

Best time to visit

India is a year-round destination. One can choose to visit based on its seasons. The winter period from October to March is suitable for visiting most sights. Hill stations across the country and the Himalayas in the north are pleasant during the summer months of April, May and June. Kerala, Goa, Gujarat and Maharashtra have special monsoon promotions. Ayurveda is perceived to be best experienced during the monsoon.

The best times to visit Delhi, Agra and Jaipur are October to November and February to March. The winter months (November to February) are the best time to visit Mumbai.

Distances

From New Delhi to:

Agra	209km, 45 mins
Mumbai	1,407km, 1 hr 50 mins
Bengaluru	2,061km, 2 hrs 35 mins
Kolkata	1,461km, 2 hrs
Chennai	2,095km, 2 hrs 35 mins
Jaipur	258 km, 55 mins
Hyderabad	1,499km, 2 hrs

Ahmedabad	915km, 1 hr 25 mins
Thiruvananthapuram	2,814km, 4 hrs 30 mins
Ahmedabad	915km, 1 hr 25 mins
Amritsar	447km, 1hr
Guwahati	1,959km, 2hrs 50 mins
Srinagar	876km, 1 hr 20 mins

Visitor arrival statistics

Arrivals have positively increased to 10 per cent for the period until September this year, with 18.7 per cent growth in tourism receipts, and are expected to cross the six million mark by year-end.

India's arrival growth rate of 8.1 per cent, with 5.58 million visitors during 2010, was much higher than the UNWTO's projected growth rate of five per cent to six per cent for the world during the same period.

India's tourism receipts grew substantially at 24.6 per cent with US\$14.19 billion in 2010, as compared to a decline of three per cent in 2009.

The top 10 markets comprised 61.64 per cent of total arrivals to India. Germany and Japan moved up two positions to fifth and eighth place respectively, with 224,000 and 165,000 arrivals each in 2010. France moved three positions down to seventh and Sri Lanka dropped to sixth position from fourth in 2009.

Total tourist arrivals

2009	5.17 million, -2.2 per cent
2010*	5.58 million, +8.1 per cent
2011 (Jan to Sept)*	4.22 million, +10 per cent

*Provisional. Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Total tourism receipts in US\$

2009	11.39 billion, -3.7 per cent
2010*	14.19 billion, +24.6 per cent
2011 (Jan to Sept)*	11.89 billion, +18.7 per cent

*Provisional. Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Top 10 arrival markets 2010

	Arrivals*	Market share (%)
US	916,000	16.4
UK	755,000	13.52
Bangladesh	381,000	6.82
Canada	240,000	4.3
Germany	224,000	4.01
Sri Lanka	219,000	3.92
France	218,000	3.9
Japan	165,000	2.95
Australia	164,000	2.94
Malaysia	160,000	2.87

*Provisional. Source: Bureau of Immigration, Government of India

Share of top 10 state/union territories of India in number of international tourist visits in 2010

	International tourist visits	Market share (%)
Maharashtra	508,000	28.5
Tamil Nadu	280,000	15.7
Delhi	189,000	10.6
Utter Pradesh	168,000	9.4
Rajasthan	128,000	7.2
West Bengal	119,000	6.7
Kerala	66,000	3.7
Bihar	64,000	3.6
Himachal Pradesh	45,000	2.5
Goa	44,000	2.5

Source: Market Research Division, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

MICE arrivals

India does not keep track of MICE statistics.

NTO budget

The total tourism budget of India Tourism for financial year April 2011 to March 2012 is US\$222.18 million (Rs 1170 crore), including 60 crores of complimentary extra budgetary resources.

Breakdown of NTO budget

• Domestic promotion	US\$14.66 million (Rs75 crore)
• Marketing or overseas publicity and promotion	US\$55.55 million (Rs280 crore), +1.82 per cent
• Tourism infrastructure	US\$117.44 million, (Rs592 crore), +13 per cent

Arrivals target

India Tourism is targeting 10 million travellers by 2013 and 15 million by 2015. The Ministry of Tourism seeks to achieve a share of one per cent of total international arrivals by 2016.

Hotel statistics

The hotel market in India is expected to grow to 119 billion rupees (US\$2.4 billion) by 2013 from 74 billion rupees at the end of 2010, with an addition of about 36,000 rooms, according to Knight Frank India.

India, with 56,302 rooms in the pipeline, had the largest expected growth of 34 per cent as of September 2011, according to STR Global Construction Pipeline Report. The India hotel pipeline is mainly oriented towards 'upper upscale' and 'upscale' projects, accounting for more than half of the rooms in the 'in construction' or 'final planning' phase.

The hotel industry's performance at end-2010 improved over the previous year, according to data from STR Global. Increases in occupancy have generally outweighed falls in average daily rate (ADR), resulting in improved revenue per available room.

RevPAR for India as a whole was up 6.2 per cent during 2010 compared with 2009, led by individual RevPAR gains in Goa (11.4 per cent), Delhi (8.1 per cent) and Chennai (7.4 per cent). Only Hyderabad saw a RevPAR decline, mainly due to the addition of significant supply, which limited occupancy gains.

Number of branded rooms in Indian states

• Maharashtra	15,793
• Delhi	9,178
• Karnataka	7,977
• Tamil Nadu	5,965
• Andhra Pradesh	5,015
• Rajasthan	4,233
• Goa	3,580
• Haryana	3,559
• Uttar Pradesh	2,582
• Kerala	2,028
• Gujarat	2,003
• West Bengal	1,636
• Punjab	1,516
• Madhya Pradesh	1,113
• Uttarakhand	986
• Himachal Pradesh	492
• Orissa	296
• Jharkhand	277
• Jammu & Kashmir	253
• Assam	119
• Sikkim	99
• Tripura	70
• Bihar	46
• Arunachal Pradesh	18

Source: HVS Research

Year-on-year percentage change 2010 vs 2009 (ADR in Indian rupees)

	Occupancy	ADR	RevPAR
India	7.6	-1.3	6.2
Bangalore	15.0	-10.6	2.8
Chennai	11.2	-3.4	7.4
Delhi NCR	8.2	-0.1	8.1
Goa	8.6	2.6	11.4
Hyderabad	1.9	-5.0	-3.3
Mumbai	4.8	-3.9	0.8

Source: STR Global

New hotels in 2011**Delhi NCR**

- Oberoi Gurgaon, 202 rooms
- The Leela Palace New Delhi, 260 rooms
- Radisson Blu Hotel New Delhi Dwarka, 209 rooms
- Hotel Pullman Gurgaon Central Park, 285 rooms
- Hilton New Delhi-Noida Mayur Vihar, 168 rooms
- Ibis Gurgaon, 217 rooms
- Eaton Smart, New Delhi Airport Transit Hotel, 93 rooms

Bengaluru

- Bengaluru Marriott Whitefield, 250 rooms
- Alila Bangalore, 122 rooms
- Sheraton Bangalore, 230 rooms
- Movenpick Bangalore, 182 rooms
- Novotel Bengaluru Techpark, 291 rooms
- Ibis Bengaluru Techpark, 341 rooms
- Ibis Bengaluru Hosur Road, 185 rooms
- Park Plaza Bengaluru Hotel, 234 rooms
- Best Western Premier, La Marvella, 109 rooms
- Fortune Park Celestial Bengaluru, 130 rooms
- Citadines Richmond, 96 rooms

Mumbai

- Sofitel Mumbai Bandra Kurla, 302 rooms
- Ibis Mumbai Airport, 148 rooms
- Majestic Court Sarovar Portico Navi Mumbai, 58 rooms

Hyderabad

- Park Hyatt Hyderabad, 253 rooms
- Lemon Tree Premiere, HITEC City, Hyderabad, 267 rooms
- Best Western Jubilee Ridge, 40 rooms

Pune

- Courtyard by Marriott Pune City Centre, 179 rooms

Jaipur

- Jaipur Marriott Hotel, 365 rooms
- Fairmont Jaipur, 255 rooms

Goa

- Grand Hyatt Goa, 314 rooms
- Radisson Blu Goa, 132 rooms

Other Cities

- Hyatt Regency Chennai, 327 rooms
- Hilton Chennai, 204 rooms
- J W Marriott Chandigarh, 170 rooms
- The Gateway Hotel Gir Forest, 28 rooms
- Holiday Inn Cochin, 212 rooms
- Fortune JP Palace Mysore, 108 rooms
- St Larn Meditation, Spa & Resort, Shirdi, 103 rooms
- The Grand Bhagwati, Surat, 162 rooms
- Radisson Blu Ranchi, 116 rooms

New hotels in 2012

- Ritz Carlton Bangalore, 250 rooms
- Hilton Bangalore residences, 243 rooms
- Shangri La Hotel Bangalore, 360 rooms
- Bangalore Marriott Hotel Whitefield, 324 rooms
- Shangri-La Hotel Mumbai, 412 rooms
- JW Marriott Hotel Pune City Center, India, 250 rooms
- JW Marriott Hotel Kolkata, India, 300 rooms
- JW Marriott Hotel New Delhi International Airport, 510 rooms
- Westin Jaipur Infotech City, 292 rooms
- Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Gurgaon-New Delhi NCR, 182 rooms
- Pullman Lavasa, 258 rooms
- Fairmont Hyderabad, 350 rooms
- Westin Jaipur Infotechcity, 292 rooms
- Best Western Bhubaneswar, 100 rooms
- Best Western Celebrity Hotel, Hyderabad, 210 rooms
- Best Western Whitefield, 215 rooms
- Best Western Hebbal, 120 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure**F1 grand prix track at Buddh International Circuit**

The Buddh International Circuit is a 5.14km track spread over 875 acres at the new Jaypee Greens Sports City. www.jaypeesports.com/jaypee-race-circuit.shtml

Hot Air Balloon Festival Karnataka

Thirty hot-air balloon enthusiasts from India and abroad are expected to participate in the four-day event. www.karnatakaturism.org

The Mahatma Mandir Convention and Exhibition Centre

in Gandhinagar, Gujarat has completed its first phase. The second phase will finish by December 2012. www.indextb.com

Key events and festivals 2012**Konark Festival, Orissa (February 19-21)**

This annual dance and music festival will be held at the Natya Mandap at the Konark Sun Temple. www.konarkfestival.com

IT&CM India, Delhi (August 21-23)

The first edition of the annual Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings India will be held at the India Expo Centre and Mart in Delhi. www.itcmindia.com

Saputara Monsoon Festival, Gujarat (July 30 to August 30)

Annual monsoon festival at the hill station of Saputara. www.gujarattourism.com

Elephant Festival, Jaipur (March 7)

Elephant beauty pageants, races, fights and polo are part of the day's events. www.rajasthan tourism.gov.in

Essentials in the city – New Delhi

Food *Parathas* (Indian stuffed bread), with yoghurt and pickles are a must-have.

Quirky Pop *gol gappas*, hollowed spheres of fried dough stuffed with potato and chickpeas, to tickle your taste-buds.

Tipping policy Ten per cent at restaurants and US\$5 a day for a tour guide is fine. Radio taxis, public taxis and auto rickshaw drivers don't expect tips.

Shopping Central Cottage Industries Emporium in Janpath has a good selection of local handicraft.

How to maximise two hours of free time Visit one of the two *dilli haats*, open-air food plaza and craft bazaars run by the Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corp. Cultural shows are held on occasion.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Head to Kingdom of Dreams, a mega-Indian theme park on Delhi's outskirts. Entertainment, eating and shopping options are aplenty.

Need to impress clients lunch Bukhara restaurant at ITC Maurya, New Delhi, has maintained its top position as the best place to have an Indian meal in a regal setting.

Lunch on your own Punjabi by Nature in Vasant Vihar has traditionally-dressed *sardarjis* with *pagdi* (headgear) serving authentic food in pleasant interiors.

Late nights Smoke House Grill has hip hop hoop on Wednesdays, retro night on Fridays and live night jamming on Saturdays. Or just come for the contemporary European cuisine.

Electricity 220 Volts (circular pins).

Visa requirements

A valid passport and visa is required to enter India. Visa fees vary according to country of origin and type of visa.

Citizens of Finland, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Singapore, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Laos and Myanmar can get a tourist visa on arrival (VoA). The VoA is valid for 30 days and costs US\$60, or its equivalent in Indian rupees, per person.

www.meaindia.nic.in

www.incredibleindia.org

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water US\$0.25 to US\$1

Starbucks latte (small) US\$1.50

A glass of open wine at a pub US\$4 to US\$5

Taxi fare (2km) US\$0.60

Important contacts

India Tourism is headed by Subodh Kant Sahi, Minister for Tourism, Government of India. It has a network of 15 overseas offices located in Sydney, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Dubai, London and New York and seven sub-regional offices located in Toronto, Paris, Milan, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Johannesburg, Singapore, Beijing and Moscow.

Contact: Leisure: Rajen Habib Khwaja, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, RNo 109, Transport Bhawan, 1 Parliament Street, New Delhi 110001

Tel: (91-11) 2371-1792, 2332-1395

Fax: (91-11) 2371-7890

Email: sectour@nic.in

www.incredibleindia.org

Travel trade associations**The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO)**

www.iato.in

The Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI)

www.travelagentsofindia.org

Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI)

www.fhrai.com

The Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI)

www.tafionline.com

IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI)

www.iaai.in

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB)

www.icpb.org

Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI)

www.adtoi.in

PATA India Chapter

www.pata.org

Adventure Tour Operator Association of Indian (ATOAI)

www.atoai.org

Hotel Association of India (HAI)

www.hotelassociationofindia.com

Compiled by Anand Katti and Madhura Katti
All information is correct at press time

Indonesia

Continued from previous column

Top 10 source markets

	2011	2010	(+/-) %	2009	(+/-) %
South Korea	223,489	212,202	5.32	181,280	17.06
Taiwan	157,472	153,720	2.44	140,342	9.53
UK	145,679	141,926	2.64	130,971	8.36
US	141,587	128,307	10.35	120,311	6.65
France	133,196	123,547	7.81	124,069	-0.42

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy

Average length of stay

	2009	2010
Singapore	4.51	4.67
Malaysia	5.28	5.03
Australia	10.22	10.56
China	6.21	5.98
Japan	6.50	6.14
South Korea	5.49	5.93
Taiwan	5.79	5.84
UK	10.75	11.76
US	11.11	10.55
France	11.85	12.59

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy

Average expenditure per visit (US\$)

	2009	2010
Singapore	602.81	675.81
Malaysia	684.41	676.60
Australia	1,447.35	1,518.38
China	888.54	923.33
Japan	916.00	978.28
South Korea	847.77	912.92
Taiwan	789.00	865.62
UK	1,210.72	1,441.50
US	1,409.49	1,398.47
France	1,405.95	1,497.46

Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism

Arrivals target for 2012

Indonesia is eyeing eight million arrivals and US\$8 billion in tourism receipts. Political stability and the growing economy have helped build its image as a tourist destination.

The growing number of LCCs connecting regional destinations with Indonesia's secondary cities, along with Garuda Indonesia's domestic and regional expansion plans and an improved domestic airline network thanks to new aircraft, are some factors that are expected to boost traffic. The government also expects the opening of Lombok International Airport to provide an alternative to the busy Bali airport. Nordwind, a Russian airline, is already operating into Lombok International Airport.

Amid a possible stagnation of longhaul traffic due to the economic crisis, regional and medium-haul source markets such as ASEAN, China, India, the Middle East and South Korea outbound markets are growing, providing opportunity to balance the market share.

Hotel statistics

Investors continue to see opportunities in accommodation in both major and secondary cities. Apart from international brands, many homegrown brands are making their presence felt in the country.

Discovery Hotels and Resorts, which for many years had only the Hotel Borobudur Jakarta and Discovery Kartika Plaza Bali, added three properties in 2011, with more under construction. Whiz Hotels and PHM Hospitality, which belong to Panorama Group, are also expanding.

Some hotel management companies are even basing themselves in secondary destinations. Kagum Hotels, for example, is based in Bandung, West Java, Dafam Hotels & Resorts in Semarang, Central Java and Grand Zuri in Riau, growing their properties locally first before expanding to other parts of Indonesia.

General Overview

Official name	Republic of Indonesia
Capital	Jakarta
Population	237.6 million
Total area	1.9 million sq km
Currency	Rupiah
Official Language	Bahasa Indonesia



Tourism arrivals to Indonesia in the first nine months of 2011 have shown a positive 8.26 per cent growth over the same period last year to 5,614,238.

This year, arrivals reached a record high of 745,451 in July, a 13.2 per cent increase over the same month in 2010. While arrivals from Europe are expected to end up flat in 2011, the tourism ministry is expecting arrivals from the region and medium-haul destinations to offset the balance, and is optimistic that the target of 7.7 million arrivals this year will be achieved. The tourism authority targets between 7.8 million and eight million arrivals in 2012.

Climate

Average temperature	22°C to 35°C
Average rainfall in mm	180mm to 280mm per month
Average humidity	70 per cent to 80 per cent

Best time to visit

Indonesia is suitable to visit year-round. June to August, December and early January are peak holiday seasons for Bali. January to May are the best season for MICE, as hotel occupancy is usually lower, although those intending to conduct outdoor activities need to note that January and February are the peak of the rainy season. Other destinations like Jogjakarta and Bandung are packed with domestic travellers during long weekends and school holidays.

Distances

From Jakarta to:

Denpasar 977km, 1 hr 20 mins
Jogjakarta 443 km, 50 mins

From Denpasar to:

Jogjakarta 541 km, 50 mins
Lombok 57 km, 20 mins

Visitor arrivals statistics

Australia continues to book the highest growth rates in 2011, with the first nine months showing 23.5 per cent growth to 654,635, thanks to the positive economic condition in the country and increasing air capacity.

Direct seat capacity from Australia to Indonesia in 2011 rose by 16.87 per cent to 1,566,084 in a year, according to data from the Ministry of Transportation. In 2010, the total seat capacity between the two countries was 1,340,040.

In ASEAN, the Philippines booked the highest growth rate of 21.99 per cent, from 76,877 to 99,781, thanks to improved economic conditions and increased activities

by Indonesia in the Philippines.

In terms of numbers, Singapore continued to field the highest with 891,270, 11.5 per cent increase over the same period in 2010.

Malaysia maintained its second position as Indonesia's biggest market in terms of volume, but the total number of arrivals dropped by 4.98 per cent to 734,021 over the same period in 2010. Deputy minister of Tourism and Creative Economy, Sapta Nirwandar, said there was a significant surge of the Malaysian market to Indonesia, between 17 per cent and 38 per cent monthly, in 2010 because of the political situation in Thailand at the time. The market shifted back to how it was before in 2011.

Total tourism arrivals (January to September)

2009	4,619,483
2010	5,185,917
2011	5,614,238

Overall tourism receipts

2009	US\$6.3 billion
2010	US\$7.6 billion
2011	US\$7.7 billion (target)

NTO budget

Not available at press time due to a reshuffle of ministries.

Top 10 source markets

	2011	2010	(+/-) %	2009	(+/-) %
Singapore	891,270	799,337	11.50	756,716	5.63
Malaysia	734,021	772,455	-4.98	666,185	15.95
Australia	654,635	530,075	23.50	380,759	39.22
China	380,416	326,661	16.46	275,738	18.47
Japan	313,972	310,273	1.19	349,587	-11.25

Continued next column

Jakarta occupancy and rates

	2010 AOR (%)	2010 ARR (US\$)	2011 AOR (Jan-Sept)	2011 (Jan-Sept) ARR
Five star	65	85	65	90
Four star	75	55	70	60
Combined 4* and 5*	70	70	70	80

Source: Horwath HTL Jakarta

Jakarta number of rooms

	2011	2012	2013
Overall star-rated	20,961	21,818	22,042
Five star	10,158	10,892	11,167
Four star	10,803	10,926	10,875

Source: Horwath HTL Jakarta

Bali occupancy and rates

	2010 AOR (%)	2010 ARR (US\$)	2011 (Jan-Sept) AOR	2011 ARR (Jan-Sept)
Boutique/ Luxury	60	360	70	350
Five star	75	135	75	145
Four star	80	75	75	90
Three star	75	50	70	55
Overall	75	125	75	140

Source: Horwath HTL Jakarta

Bali number of rooms

	2011	2012	2013
Over all star-rated	22,534	26,030	28,677
Five star	12,647	13,846	15,763
Four star	7,202	8,494	8,744
Three star	2,685	3,690	4,170

Source: Horwath HTL Jakarta

New hotels 2011**BALI**

- Hotel Santika Raya Kuta-Bali, 101 rooms
- Swiss-Belhotel Segara Nusa Dua, 153 rooms
- Harris Sunset Road, 190 rooms
- Favehotel Seminyak, 251 rooms
- Quest Kuta Central Park, 226 rooms
- Sun Island Hotel Kuta, 132 rooms
- The Seminyak Beach Resort & Spa, 107 rooms

JAKARTA

- Pullman Jakarta Central Park, 317 rooms
- Favehotel Wahid Hasyim, 70 rooms
- Harris Suites fX, 88 rooms

SURABAYA

- LJ Discovery Hotel, 265 rooms
- Prime Royal Hotel (boutique hotel), 72 rooms

JOGJAKARTA

- All Season Jogjakarta, 112 rooms

LOMBOK

- Villa Queen, 125 rooms

New hotels 2012**BALI**

- HARRIS Bukit Jimbaran, 242 rooms
- Quest San Hotel Denpasar, 167 rooms
- Eden Kuta, 273 rooms
- Swiss-Belresort Watu Jimbar, 285 rooms

JAKARTA

- Keraton at The Plaza, 140 rooms
- POP! Airport, 150 rooms

BANDUNG

- Ibis Bandung Supermall, 606 rooms

SURABAYA

- Swiss-Belhotel Darmo Surabaya, 232 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Garuda Citilink, Garuda Indonesia's budget carrier will

get 50 aircraft – 25 on firm order and 25 optional – from the Airbus 320 family. The delivery of five planes a year will begin in 2014. Garuda Citilink currently operates six Boeing 737-300 and 400 series aircraft.

KAI, the Indonesia railway company, plans to develop a railway track between Jakarta city centre and Soekarno-Hatta International Airport. The project, which will connect Manggarai station with the airport via Sudirman, Tanah Abang, Duri, Grogol and Kalideres by 2014, will cost about 2.2 trillion rupiah (US\$235 million).

The Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta will be revitalised. It is optimising its capacity to cater to growing passenger and cargo traffic. The project will include renovating Terminals 1 and 2, completing Terminal 3 development and adding a new cargo terminal. The project is estimated to cost US\$1.4 billion.

Key events and festivals 2012**Jakarta International Java Jazz Festival (March 2-4, 2012)**

At the Jakarta International Expo, Kemayoran and organised by Java Festival Production.

www.javajazzfestival.com

Essentials in the city – Jakarta

Food Try *nasi uduk* – rice cooked in coconut milk with a choice of omelette, *balado* or chilli eggs, fried chicken, and *semur* or tofu in soya sauce – and buy *lapis legit* (layer cake) to take home.

Tipping policy Five to 10 per cent when no service charge is levied.

Shopping Muslim attire of all variety and quality at Thamrin City (Pusat Busana Muslim), and electronic items in the Mangga Dua area.

How to maximise two hours of free time Indulge at a day spa that offers traditional Indonesian herbs, oils and massage techniques. There are also spas that use international spa products.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Take the Trans Jakarta bus, which travels a special lane, and beat the traffic to get to Old Jakarta (Kota Tua). Visit the Jakarta History Museum, then take an *ojek* (bike taxi) to visit the *wayang* (puppet) and ceramic museums. Hop on the bus again and stop at Sarinah Thamrin to shop for *batik*.

Need to impress clients lunch Visit theme restaurants like Bunga Rampai Restaurant or Merah Delima, which serve authentic Indonesian food in an elegant setting.

Lunch on your own Places like the Central Park, Plaza Indonesia eX and Grand Indonesia Shopping Town have a lot of cafes and restaurants for a quiet lunch.

Late nights Go clubbing at Dragonfly or enjoy beer at Pizza e Birra and Paulaner Brauhaus.

Electricity Two-pin (round) plug.

Visa requirements

Visitors must have a passport that is valid for at least six months at the time of arrival.

A non-extendable visa-free entry to Indonesia for 30 days is available to passport holders of Brunei, Chile, Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR, Malaysia, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. At press time, Cambodia and Myanmar were in the process of being extended this facility.

Visa on Arrival is available to 65 nationalities and can be obtained at major airports in Indonesia.

The visa fee is US\$25 for 30 days, extendable up to another 30 days. Countries covered are Algeria, Australia, Austria, Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Egypt, Fiji, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Latvia, Laos PDR, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Netherlands, Oman, Panama, People's Republic of China, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Suriname, Switzerland, Sweden, Taiwan, Tunisia, Timor Leste, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the UK and the US.

Prices of common items in 2010

Bottled water 4,000 rupiah (US\$.045) for 1.5 litres

Starbucks latte (small) 29,000 rupiah

A glass of open wine at a pub 150,000 rupiah to 250,000 rupiah

Taxi Fare (2km) 11,000 rupiah in Jakarta

Important contacts**NTO**

The directorate general of marketing is part of the Ministry of Tourism and Economy Creative. The NTO head at press time has yet to be appointed, as the former director general, Sapta Nirwandar, has been promoted to deputy minister. The NTO reports to the Minister of Tourism and Economy Creative.

The tourism authority in 2012 will focus on intensifying marketing in its 10 major markets and developing products in the country. The plan is to increase market presence with more events.

The NTO will also develop partnerships with smaller travel professionals and specialists apart from the traditional and big wholesalers. Internally, regional travel planners have been created and creative zones and corridors developed as part of product development.

The ministry has 11 *Visit Indonesia* tourism officers in Australia, China (two offices), Germany, India, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, the UAE (for the Middle East), the Netherlands and Russia.

Directorate of International Marketing

Contact Nia Niscaya for leisure

Tel: (62-21) 383-8309

Fax: (62-21) 386-0628

nia_niscaya@yahoo.com

MICE

Contact Berman Lubis (director of MICE)

Tel: (62-21) 383-8300

Fax: (62-21) 344-9268

www.budpar.go.id

Travel trade associations

The Association of Indonesian Tours and Travel Agencies (ASITA) is a national association comprising wholesalers and inbound, outbound and ticketing agents under the Department of Culture and Tourism. It was established in 1970 and has chapters in almost all provinces.

Indonesia Ticketing Agents Association (ASTINDO) is an association of ticketing agents under the auspices of the Department of Communications. It is a young association that is still expanding its number of chapters in the regions and is an active member of the Federation of ASEAN Travel Agents.

Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association (IHRA)

is national association of hotels, owning companies, restaurants and hotel institutes. It was founded in 1969 and now has 9,500 members countrywide. IHRA is an active member of ASEAN Hotel and Restaurant Association and ASEAN Tourism Association.

<http://www.ihra.co.id>

The Indonesia Congress and Convention Association

INCCA is an association of MICE stakeholders in Indonesia. Founded in 1998, it now has 12 chapters and 300 members in Indonesia. It a member of the Asian Federation of Exhibition and Convention Associations.

The Indonesia Exhibition Companies Association

(IECA/ASPERAPI), established in 1990, is a non-profit organisation with the exhibition, convention and the supporting industries as members. It now has 250 active members in Indonesia.

www.ieca.or.id

The Indonesia National Air Carriers Association (INACA)

is a trade association of the Indonesian airline industry. Founded in 1970, it now groups together 34 airlines. These airlines fly most of the scheduled and non-scheduled air traffic, from, to and within Indonesia.

www.inaca.org

Compiled by Mimi Hudoyo

All information is correct at press time

Laos

General Overview

Official name	People's Democratic Republic of Laos
Capital	Vientiane
Population	6.8 million
Total area	238,800 sq km
Currency	Kip (US dollar and Thai baht accepted)
Official Language	Lao



Laos is experiencing a high growth rate in arrivals, registering a 23 per cent increase in the first seven months of 2011. This growth was mainly fuelled by arrivals from neighbouring countries and other Asia-Pacific markets. According to the trade, although regional visitors dominate, such visitors tend to spend less and only stay for a short period. The Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA) has its eye on the US and European longhaul markets, and is promoting quality and sustainable tourism, while Lao tour operators are focused on attending key international trade shows despite the financial crunch besetting these markets. Air access to Laos is seen to improve, as Lao Airlines has taken delivery of two Airbus A320s and started new routes to Singapore in November 2011, followed by routes to South Korea and China.

Climate

Average temperature	28°C to 38°C
Average rainfall	1,500mm to 2,000mm in Vientiane 1,000mm to 1,500mm in the northern provinces 3,000mm in southern Laos
Average humidity	75 per cent to 85 per cent

Best time to visit

October to mid-March are the most pleasant months to travel to Laos, though mornings turn chilly in January and February, especially in the mountainous north. Temperatures peak in April. The rainy season from May to September lures tourists to explore boat cruises, river rafting and plains of flourishing rice paddies. When it rains, however, land and river transportation may face disruptions.

Distances

From Vientiane to:

Luang Prabang	390km, 40 mins
Pakse	685km, 1hr 15mins
Vang Vieng	160km
Thakhek	354km
Savannakhet	470km, 2hrs 30mins
Luang Namtha	698km, 50mins
Xieng Khouang	435km, 30mins

From Luang Prabang to:

Pakse	1,075km, 1hr 40mins
Vang Vieng	230km
Luang Namtha	308km
Houei Xai	477km, 280km (by boat)
Xieng Khouang	306km

From Pakse to:

Savannakhet	215km, 35mins
Thakhek	331km

Visitor arrival statistics

After reaching over two million overseas visitors for the first time in 2009, Laos continued to enjoy a 25 per cent year-on-year surge to 2,513,028 in 2010. In the first seven months of 2011, Laos recorded a 23 per cent increase in visitor arrivals compared to the same period the previous year.

Thailand remains the top source market, followed by Vietnam and China. But arrivals from Europe saw a slight decline – a five per cent fall for the UK and three per cent for Germany. Numbers from the US remained stagnant.

The Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA) estimates tourist numbers for 2011 to register a six per cent increase over 2010, to 2,662,556 visitors. It expects revenue to grow by four per cent year-on-year, to US\$399.1 million for 2011.

Total tourists arrivals

2009	2,008,363, +16 per cent
2010	2,513,028, +25 per cent
2011 (Jan to July)	1,485,462, +23 per cent
Target 2011	2,662,556, +6 per cent (estimated)

Source: Lao National Tourism Administration

Total tourism receipts

2009	US\$267.7 million
2010	US\$381.6 million
2011	US\$ 399.1 million (estimated)

Top 10 source markets

	2010	% Change over 2009	2011 (Jan-Jul)	%Change (Jan-Jul 2010)
Thailand	1,517,064	19	865,308	19
Vietnam	431,011	45	328,490	71
China	161,854	26	76,271	-17
US	49,782	27	25,403	0
France	44,844	41	21,436	1
Japan	34,076	21	18,249	14
UK	37,272	38	18,217	-5
South Korea	27,312	53	16,566	31
Australia	30,538	26	15,838	1
Germany	22,583	28	11,584	-3

Source: Lao National Tourism Administration

Arrivals target for 2012

The LNTA plans to launch the *Visit Laos Year 2012* (VLY2012) marketing campaign to showcase existing cultural festivals and attract more foreign visitors. Though the details of VLY2012 has yet to be finalised, LNTA is projecting 2,867,718 foreign visitors in 2012, a 7.7 per cent year-on-year growth. However, the trade predicts a fairly balanced year for tourism in 2012, with no significant change from 2011.

On the other hand, the global economic crisis has had a negative impact on Laos tourism due to its reliance on Europe.

The number of group bookings looks likely to increase steeply, while FITs are falling, especially luxury travellers – like those from the US – who request five-star accommodation with private tours.

Hotel statistics

Most of the newest properties in Vientiane are independently-operated hotels in the three-star category.

A 300-room hotel funded by a Chinese investment consortium is targeting 2014 as its completion date. The Lao National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality (LANITH) is also in the process of selecting a company to design, finance and operate a four- to five-star hotel on its Mekong campus. Construction is slated to begin in late 2012, with operations to start in 2015.

In Luang Prabang, recent developments include the opening of an 18-hole golf course by a South Korean joint-venture company, which includes provisions for a 250-room hotel and 100 upscale villas. The existing supply of 1,078 rooms from 44 hotels will increase by 16 per cent in 2012, including from two Anantara brand properties.

In Champasak and Pakse, though upscale hotels remain limited, there are several small boutique hotels, like the 17-room Sala Don Knone and 13-room Residence Sisouk to cater to the demand of foreign tourists, especially for those who are looking to explore popular tourist destinations in Southern Laos like Si Phan Don (Four Thousand Islands).

Overall number of rooms

	2009	2010	% Change
Vientiane			
Total rooms	7,972	8,512	6.7
Hotels (with more than 15 rooms)	5,471	6,011	9.8
Guesthouses (with less than 15 rooms)	2,501	2,501	0
Luang Prabang			
Total rooms	2,703	2,817	4.2
Hotels (with more than 15 rooms)	993	1,021	2.8
Guesthouses (with less than 15 rooms)	1,710	1,796	5
Pakse			
Total rooms	2,669	2,705	1.3
Hotels (with more than 15 rooms)	1,302	1,365	4.8
Guesthouses (with less than 15 rooms)	1,367	1,340	-1.9

Overall number of rooms

	2009	2010	% Change
Luang Namtha			
Total rooms	939	944	0.5
Xieng Khouang			
Total rooms	992	992	0
Savannakhet			
Total rooms	2,302	2,302	0
Khammouane			
Total rooms	992	992	0
Oudomxay			
Total rooms	817	1,158	41.7

Source: Lao National Tourism Administration

Average occupancy rate

	2009	2010	2011
Vientiane	63%	65%	N/A
Luang Prabang	68%	63%	N/A
Pakse/Champasak	63%	63%	N/A

Source: Lao National Tourism Administration and trade

New hotels in 2011**VIENTIANE**

- Mercure Vientiane, 172 rooms (rebranded from Novotel Vientiane)

LUANG PRABANG

- Kiridara Luang Prabang, 24 rooms
- Xieng Thong Palace, 26 rooms
- Hotel de La Paix Luang Prabang, 23 rooms
- Villa Nagara, 7 rooms
- Luang Say Residence, 24 rooms
- Le Palais Juliana, 59 rooms
- Shintamani Luang Prabang, 54

CHAMPASAK/PAKSE (no data available)

- Sala Don Khone, 17 rooms, including new six rooms
- Residence Sisouk, 13 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

The newest 1,423m **Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge**, linking Thailand's Nakhon Phanom to Khammouane in Laos, was inaugurated on November 11, 2011, while the construction of the fourth friendship bridge from Thailand's northern Chiang Rai province to Houei Xai in Laos' Bokeo province will be completed in mid-2013.

The **Savannakhet Night Market**, located in the heart of the historic Suvannakhet Town near Talat Yen Plaza, has a number of kiosks for souvenirs, food and drink.
www.lpptourism.org

Lao Airlines' two newly-purchased, narrow-body A320 aircraft, with a 126-seat economy class and 16-seat business class, are used to link Vientiane with key South-east Asian destinations. The new fleet is part of the government's preparations to host the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2012.
www.laoairlines.com

Vientiane's Wattay International Airport's US\$37.68 million upgrade project includes the improvement of the runway, apron expansions to accommodate 25 aircraft, a new approach lighting system, more car parking space, drainage system renovations and entry road. The renovation will be completed in November 2012.

Luang Prabang Airport's US\$86.4 million upgrade started in 2010 and will include a new 3,000m runway for the landing of 400-seat aircraft and improvements to the terminal. The airport is open during the construction period, which is scheduled for completion in 2013.

The construction of the US\$34 million **Don Khong Bridge** has begun in Don Khong, the Mekong River's largest island. The bridge, spanning 718.8m and slated for completion by mid-2014, offers a new way to reach the 4,000 islands, which is only currently accessible by ferry.

Key events and festivals 2012**Wat Phou Festival in Champasak (February)**

To celebrate the third full moon of the lunar calendar, Laotians gather on the grounds of the pre-Angkor Wat Phou ruins in Champasak. Festivities include elephant races, buffalo fights, cockfighting, traditional Lao music and dance performances.
www.tourismloas.org

The 6th Annual Lao Elephant Festival in Sayaboury (February 17-19)

The Sayaboury province's Paklai district, some 300km west of Vientiane, has been selected to host Laos' annual Elephant Festival. Aside from selecting the 'Elephant of the Year', there are traditional Buddhist blessings, fairs, night markets and live performances.
www.laoelephantfestival.com

Boun Ok Phansa and Boat Racing Festival (October)

To celebrate the end of the three-month-long Buddhist Lent, donations and offerings are made at temples in the city at dawn. Candlelit processions are held and hundreds of colourful floats decorated with flowers, incense and candles are set adrift along the Mekong River to pay respects to the river spirit. The following day in Vientiane, Savannakhet and Champasak, a boat race competition is also held along the Mekong River.
www.tourismloas.org

The 9th ASEM Summit of Heads of State and Government (November 5-6)

Vientiane has been selected to host the 9th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit of Heads of State and Government (ASEM9) on November 5-6, 2012. The summit is themed *Friends for Peace, Partners for Prosperity*, and is expected to be the largest-ever event to be held in Laos, with leaders of 50 European and Asian nations expected to attend.
www.aseminfoboard.org

Essentials in the city – Vientiane

Food The Don Chan Palace, Vientiane hotel offers an array of international cuisine at its lobby lounge, Riverland restaurant and Lunar 36 Bistro and Karaoke dining areas.
www.donchanplaceprd.com

Quirky Located a few kilometres south-east of Vientiane, Sisatannak district presents a bizarre juxtaposition of Lao village life and Western living. Massive walled-in residences occupied by expats sit side by side with wooden houses on stilts, while goats, chickens and cows roam the street.

Tipping policy Tipping is not expected, but leaving small notes received as change is appreciated. Most upscale restaurants include a service charge in the bill.

Shopping The Dong Palane Night Market features Lao authentic dishes, as well as Chinese and Vietnamese fare from 17.00 to 21.00.

How to maximise two hours of free time Wat Sok Pa Louang, a 45-minute walk away from downtown Vientiane, is the best place to have herbal saunas and Lao traditional massages. The *wat* is open from 13.00 to 20.00 daily. The steam room costs US\$1.85 and a one-hour massage US\$4.30.

Insider's tip for half-day off Lao office workers often refer to Friday afternoons as 'extended Saturdays', with



The Hmong people of Laos

lunches at open-air Lao restaurants that stretch into extended Beer Lao sessions.

Need to impress clients lunch Bistro 22, formerly known as Chez Philippe, is a French bistro featuring popular and reasonably-priced dishes, including the highly-recommended tender lamb shank in a rich red-wine *jus*. Located near the French Embassy, it is closed on Sundays.

Lunch on your own Just for Fun at That Dam Stupa offers simple Thai and Lao menu, as well as sandwiches. An ample noodle or rice dish accompanied by a Beer Lao generally costs less than US\$4.

Late nights The Sala Khounta bar, commonly known as the Sunset Bar, offers perfect views by the Mekong river. Customers can tuck into Beer Lao and tasty local snacks like spring rolls here.

Electricity A single phase voltage of 220V and a frequency of 50Hz, primarily two-pin.

Visa requirements

A passport valid for at least six months and a visa are required for most foreigners entering Laos. Visas cost from US\$8 to US\$42, depending on government agreements, and can be obtained at embassies, consulates or designated tour companies.

Visas-on-arrival for most countries cost US\$35 and can be obtained at Wittay, Luang Prabang and Pakse airports, as well as at major overland gateways.

Visa exemptions apply to visitors from eight ASEAN-member countries – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam – Japan, Russia and Mongolia. Visa extensions are available at US\$2 per day at immigration headquarters or via designated tour operators at major destinations for an additional fee.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water (small) US\$0.25

Starbucks latte There is no Starbucks in Laos.

A glass of open wine at a pub US\$2.50

Taxi fare (2km) US\$1.50 (Vientiane)

Important contacts**NTO**

The **Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA)** is under the prime minister's office.

LNTA has begun preparations for the *Mekong Tourism Forum 2012*, *Visit Laos Year 2012* and the *ASEAN European Summit (ASEM)* in November 2012, and is formulating plans for hosting the *ASEAN Tourism Forum* in 2013.

LNTA's tourism marketing and promotion department takes care of all marketing and promotional activities.

Tel: (856-21) 212-248/212-251

Fax: (856-21) 212-769/212-248/217-910

Email: lnta_info@tourismloas.org

The **Lao Tourism Marketing and Promotion Board (TMPB)** held its inaugural meeting in July 2010 to discuss its work plan. TMPB aims to improve cooperation among stakeholders and maximise private sector involvement to better promote Laos tourism. TMPB's activities will be supervised by the chairman of the LNTA, who may issue instructions and directives consistent with the organisation's overall policies, objectives and good governance.

Travel trade associations

The **Lao Association of Travel Agents (LATA)** was established in November 2004 with the formal approval of the LNTA. LATA is an independent, voluntary, private-sector representative association. Its more than 100 members are travel professionals and tour operators in Laos.
www.latalaos.com.org

The **Lao Hotel and Restaurant Association (LHRA)** comprises a group of public- and private-sector entrepreneurs in the hospitality sector, set up with the objective of developing the tourism industry.
www.laohotelgroup.org

Compiled by Vashira Anonda

All information is correct at press time

Macau

General Overview

Official name	Macau Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China
Capital	Macau
Population	544,200 (estimate)
Total area	29.2 sq km
Currency	Pataca
Official languages	Cantonese, Portuguese



Macau enjoyed steady growth in the first nine months of 2011. During this time, the destination had over 20.6 million visitors, an increase of 11.2 per cent over the same period in 2010.

While leisure traffic has had positive growth so far in 2011, MICE, on the other hand, dipped in the first six months, mainly due to competitive offerings from neighbouring countries. Outlook for 2012 is generally positive, given stable growth in tourism arrivals over the past few years, and provided that global economy improves.

Climate

Average temperature	20.5°C to 25.4°C
Average rainfall	2,122.9mm
Average humidity	82.5 per cent

Best time to visit

The best time to visit Macau is autumn (October and December) and spring (March to May), when temperatures are mild. Winters can be fresh, with cold northern winds sweeping down from mainland China.

Distances

From Macau to:

Beijing	1,988km, 2 hrs 28 mins
Shanghai	1,253km, 1 hr 33 mins
Hong Kong	64km (by helicopter and ferry)
Taipei	874km, 1 hr 5 mins
Tokyo	2,947km, 3 hrs 40 mins
Kuala Lumpur	2,461km, 3 hrs
Manila	1,147km, 1 hr 26 mins
Seoul	2,140km, 2 hrs 40 mins
Singapore	2,532km, 3 hrs 10 mins
Bangkok	1,664km, 2 hrs
Sydney	7,376km, 9 hrs 10 mins
London	9,617km, 12 hrs

Visitor arrivals statistics

Macau boasts a vast variety of tourism products that draws millions of visitors with different interests from different markets to the city every year. The mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan continue to be the top three visitor generating markets. New markets such as Russia also performed well in the first quarter of 2011, with a rise of 37.1 per cent.

Visitors from mainland China dominated the tourist arrivals and they surged 39.3 per cent year-on-year to 1,246,256 (57.5 per cent of total). Most of them come from Guangdong, Fujian and Hunan and they are the highest spenders but with the shortest average length of stay amongst the top 10 markets.

Total tourism arrivals

2009	21,752,751
2010	24,965,411
2011 (Jan-Sept)	20,662,153

Percentage growth over the previous year

2009	-5.2 per cent
2010	+14.8 per cent
2011 (Jan-Sept)	+11.2 per cent

Top 10 source markets 2010

Countries	Arrivals	%Change
China	13,229,058	+20.4
Hong Kong	7,466,139	+29.9
Taiwan	1,292,734	+0.0
Japan	413,507	+1.7
Malaysia	338,058	+1.7
South Korea	331,768	+62
Singapore	257,196	+1
Philippines	247,770	+0.1
Thailand	212,442	-12.4
Indonesia	208,440	+8.9

Source: Statistics & Census Service and MGTO

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January to September)

Countries	Arrivals	%Change
China	11,752,830	+19.8
Hong Kong	5,777,244	+3
Taiwan	943,742	+4.6
South Korea	302,530	+1.5
Japan	283,224	+1.4
Malaysia	221,402	+1.1

Continued next column

Continued from previous column

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January to September)

Countries	Arrivals	%Change
Philippines	189,386	+1.9
Singapore	187,448	+5
Indonesia	165,718	+0.8
Thailand	147,968	-3.5

Source: Statistics & Census Service and MGTO

Average length of stay

Countries	2009	2010	2011
China	1.29	1.32	1.32
Hong Kong	1.32	1.37	1.36
Taiwan	1.79	1.83	1.74
Japan	1.89	1.82	1.87
Malaysia	1.68	1.69	1.57
Singapore	1.68	1.8	1.88
Philippines	1.93	2.02	1.95
Thailand	1.65	1.79	1.72
South Korea	1.77	1.86	1.54
Indonesia	2.02	2.1	1.72

Source: MGTO

Hotel statistics

The pace of hotel development began to pick up in 2011, and the 2,200-room Galaxy Resort debuted in May. The new inventory has not lowered room rates, and occupancy continues to rise, given the upward arrivals trend.

The next wave of supply is expected in 2012, with Sands Cotai Central (parcels 5 and 6 adjacent to Venetian Macao) generating about 6,000 new luxury rooms. A total of 8,629 rooms are planned over the next two years, made up of 8,589 hotel rooms and 40 guesthouse rooms.

While the majority of new hotels are four- to five-star, there is a need for more midscale hotels if Macau wants to diversify its market reach. While 2011 has been a good year, with players enjoying high occupancy and rates, for 2012, the future relies on the current global economic situation and China's policy.

Overall average occupancy rate

2009	76.12 per cent*
2010	84.51 per cent
2011 Jan-Sept	87.58 per cent

Source: Macau Hotel Association

Overall average room rate

2009	MOP\$1,031.64*
2010	MOP\$1,111.01
2011 Jan-Sept	MOP\$1,311.50

Source: Macau Hotel Association

AOR of four-star

2009	80.58 per cent*
2010	85.52 per cent
2011 Jan-Sept	88.30 per cent

AOR of five-star

2009	73.88 per cent*
2010	83.97 per cent
2011 Jan-Sept	86.58 per cent

ARR of four-star

2009	MOP\$546.39*
2010	MOP\$645.89
2011 Jan-Sept	MOP\$781.00

ARR of five-star

2009	MOP\$1,300.95*
2010	MOP\$1,353.23
2011 Jan-Sept	MOP\$1,559.30

Overall number of rooms

2009	20,316
2010	20,988
2011 Jan-Sept	22,383

No. of four-star and five-star rooms

2009	16,109
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2010 16,781
2011 Sept 18,176

*Revised figures

Sources: MGTO and Statistics & Census Service

New hotels in 2011 and 2012

Galaxy Macau, 2,200 rooms across three hotels (Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts, Okura Hotels & Resorts and Galaxy Hotel)

Sands Cotai Central, 6,000 rooms across three hotels (Conrad Macao, Sheraton Macao Hotel and Holiday Inn Macao)

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

The 'yellow house', the new face of the Macau Tourism and Cultural Activities Center, offers a glimpse into the mix of the East and West and includes a 'Made-in-Macau' products display and a Portuguese-style café.
www.macautourism.gov.mo

The **WH Macau app** includes an introduction to Macau's World Heritage, real-time multimedia information on tourist attractions and an interactive interface.
www.icm.gov.mo

The **UA Galaxy Cinemas**, including the Galaxy Macau 3D cinema, is scheduled to open by end-2011. Located in the Galaxy Macau, it will occupy nearly 16,000m², including a Grand Theatre with balcony boxes and four VIP houses.
www.facebook.com/galaxymacau

The **New Taipa Ferry Terminal**, adjacent to Macau International Airport, will provide 16 berths of 400 pax/berth and three berths with 1,200 pax/berth), along with a five-helicopter apron that connects to the Macau International Airport.
<http://www.gdi.gov.mo/pt/index.php>

The **Macau International Airport expansion project** is due for completion by 2012. The five-year development project includes extending facilities such as aircraft parking position (apron), the passenger terminal and runway.
www.macau-airport.com/site/php/en/main.php

Both the 21km **Macau Light Rapid Transit (LRT) System and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge** will be built to ease connectivity. Construction of the bridge started in December 2009. It runs from the artificial island of Zhuhai (Gongbei) to the eastern artificial island for the tunnel section just west of the HKSAR boundary.
<http://www.hzmb.org/>

Key events and festivals 2012

23rd Macau Arts Festival (May 1 to June 2, tentative)
Organised by the Macau Cultural Affairs Bureau.
www.icm.gov.mo/fam

24th Macau International Fireworks Display Contest (September 8, 15, 22, 29 and October 1)
Organised by the Macau Government Tourist Office at the Macau Tower waterfront area.
www.macautourism.gov.mo

The 26th Macau International Music Festival (October 5 to November 4, tentative)
Organised by the Macau-listed Cultural Affairs Bureau at the destination's UNESCO-listed World Heritage sites
Organiser: Macau Cultural Affairs Bureau
www.icm.gov.mo/fimm

59th Macau Grand Prix (November)
Organised by the Macau Grand Prix Committee.
www.macau.grandprix.gov.mo

Essentials in the city

Food You are spoiled for choice, as international resorts bring in a wide variety cuisine in addition to traditional Macanese and Portuguese dishes.

Quirky Traffic is still an issue, and getting a cab during peak hours may be a challenge. It is common practice for tourists to leverage on complimentary casino coach buses.

Tipping policy There is no need to tip, but one can do so for good service.



Monte Fortress Garden

Shopping There are many choices of reproduction of traditional-style rosewood Chinese furniture, porcelain wares, lacquer, bronzeware, wood carvings and Chinese paintings in the Rua de S.Paulo Area

How to maximise two hours of free time Hop on the newest harbour cruise and tour around the harbour and port. There are live performances and meal service on-board. Enjoy the scenic coastal view.

Insider's tip for half-day off in Macau Apart from glitzy international resort facilities, the city has a tranquil country park equipped with exercise and leisure facilities. You may test your strength by hiking along one of the trails ranging from 1.5km to 8.1km.

Need to impress clients lunch. Book a table at the newly-opened Belon Oyster Bar & Grill at the top floor of Banyan Tree Resort of Galaxy Macau, or try out Portuguese fare at the Training Restaurant of the Institute for Tourism Studies.

Lunch on your own The *dai pai dong* (hawker stalls) behind the Red Market, a traditional open-air local dining place, is a feast for the senses.

Late nights Club CUBIC, a 30,000 sq ft venue, is the largest club in Macau.

Electricity 220V/50Hz, with European and British socket types as the norm.

Visa requirements

Starting October 2011, nationals of Montenegro are exempted from visa requirements when entering the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) for a stay of a maximum of 90 days. Apart from this, final consensus on the Mutual Visa Exemption Agreement was reached by the Macao SAR Government and the Russian Federation Government in March 2011 and the agreement is expected to be signed in 2011.

All visitors must hold a passport or a valid travel document. Visas are required by all visitors except:

- Nationals of Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Croatia, Czech, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania and the UK (six months) for a stay up to 90 days.

- Nationals of Australia, Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, Monaco, Namibia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Samoa, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, the United States of America and Uruguay for a stay of up to 30 days

- Holders of Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card or "Hong Kong SAR Re-entry Permit; Valid Hong Kong Identity Card holders are required to bring their valid passport or travel documents when they enter Macau.
- Nationals of China with valid Macau entry/depart documents
- Holders of consulate/diplomatic documents issued by the Macau SAR or Hong Kong SAR
- Holders of Diplomatic Passport
- Holders of Laissez Passer issued by the United Nations in the course of duty
- Holders of travel document issued by the Portuguese authorities for foreign citizens

Visas can be obtained from the Immigration Services through embassies/consulates of the PRC and should be used within the validity.

Visas may be applied for upon arrival at the immigration counter. However, some countries are required to apply for an entry visa before embarking to Macau. There are three types: Individual (MOP\$100), Children under 12 years of age (MOP\$50), Family Passport (MOP\$200) and Group (MOP\$50) per person for bonafide groups of 10 or more and children aged 12 or under.

The above information is for reference only. For further information on entry formalities, please call the Macau Immigration Services of Public Security Police Force at (853)2872-5488, log on to <http://www.fsm.gov.mo>, or email sminfo@fsm.gov.mo.

For those who wish to travel to mainland China, visas may be obtained at any of the China Travel Service (CTS) offices counters in Macau. The main branch is located at Avenida do Dr. Rodrigo Rodrigues, Nos. 223-225, Edifício Nam Kuong, Tel. (853)2870-0888, or at the Gongbei Immigration and Customs (after the Border Gate).

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water MOP\$5 (US\$0.62)

Starbucks latte (tall) MOP\$29

Glass of open wine in a pub MOP\$50 to MOP\$80

Taxi fare (2km) MOP\$13.00 for the first 1,600m. MOP\$1.50 will be added for every 230m afterwards.

Important contacts

NTO

The Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) is headed by director João Manuel Costa Antunes. As of September 2011, it has 19 representatives in Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, the US, France, the UK and the Republic of Ireland, German-speaking markets, Indonesia, India, Australia, New Zealand, Portugal and Belgium.

MGTO has recently restructured and added two new departments – the Communication and External Relations Department and Training and Quality Control Department.

MGTO is under the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture and has 17 representatives. Macau's tourism industry continues to move towards diversification, with both tourism products and source markets. The long-term goal is to build the city as a 'World Center of Tourism and Leisure'.

MGTO

Tel: (853) 2831-5566

Tourist hotline: (853) 2833-3000

Fax: (853) 2851-0104

industry@macautourism.gov.mo

www.macautourism.gov.mo

Macau Business Tourism Centre

Edif. Ritz, Largo do Senado, Macau

Tel: (853) 8396-3008,

Fax: (853) 2872-7310

Email: projects@macautourism.gov.mo

Travel trade associations

Association of Macao Tourist Agents

Email: amta@macau.ctm.net

Macau Hotel Association

Website: www.macauhotel.org

E-mail: mhacmo@macau.ctm.net

Compiled by Prudence Lui

All information is correct at press time

Malaysia

General Overview

Official name	Malaysia
Capital	Kuala Lumpur
Population	28.66 million
Total area	329,758 sq km
Currency	Ringgit Malaysia
Official language	Bahasa Malaysia. English is widely spoken



Having set a target of 25 million arrivals in 2011, the Tourism Ministry recorded 11.4 million arrivals as of June 2011, a drop of 4.2 per cent over the same period in 2010. Despite the Japan disasters, eurozone crisis and flooding in Thailand – important source markets – the ministry still aspires to meet its goal for 2011.

Malaysia attracted 24.6 million tourists in 2010, an increase of one million arrivals from the previous year. It exceeded its target of 24 million. Despite the global economic crisis, various longhaul markets showed an increase in arrivals over 2009's performance. While positive growth was seen from the Netherlands (3.4 per cent), France (1.0 per cent), Germany (2.0 per cent), Russia (9.8 per cent) and Italy (1.5 per cent), it tapered down from the double-digit growth in 2009. The UK recorded a deficit in arrivals (-1.2 per cent) compared to 2009.

Climate

Average temperature	21°C to 32°C (lowlands) 15°C to 25°C (highlands)
Average rainfall	2,000mm to 2,400mm
Average humidity	70 per cent to 90 per cent

Best time to visit

Malaysia's weather is moderate, making the country good to visit year-round. But do take note of rainy seasons: the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia has heavy rainfall in December and January, while Langkawi sees downpours from July to October. The low season during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan would also be a good time to visit, as travel consultants would be able to negotiate for better hotel rates during this period. In 2012, Ramadan will start on July 20 and end on August 18.

Distances

From Kuala Lumpur to:

Penang	369km, 50 mins by air
Johor Bahru	368km, 45 mins
Kota Kinabalu	1,622km, 2 hours 25 mins
Kuching	977km, 1 hr 45 mins

Visitor arrival statistics

Arrivals from January to June this year reached 11.4 million, a decrease of 4.2 per cent compared to the same period in 2010 impacted by Japan and the eurozone crisis.

The country is looking at attracting higher-yield clients.

According to Tourism Malaysia, the highest spenders, in 2010, based on average per capita expenditure, were from Saudi Arabia at RM8,047.10 (US\$2,700), followed by Iran at RM7,214.40, Kuwait at RM7,174.70, Oman at

RM6,759.90 and the UAE at RM6,370.80.

Vietnam and Taiwan recorded the two highest increases in per capita expenditure in 2010 compared to the previous year. Vietnam logged in a 36.8 per cent increase from RM796.30 to RM1,089.40, while Taiwan came in with a 30.4 per cent increase from RM1,676.90 to RM2,186.00.

Total tourist arrivals

2009	23.6 million
2010	24.6 million
2011 (January to June)	11.4 million
2011	25 million (target)

Total tourism receipts 2010 RM56.5 billion

Total MICE receipts 2010 RM10.6 billion

Top 10 source markets

	2010	2009	% change
Singapore	13,042,004	12,733,082	2.4
Indonesia	2,506,509	2,405,360	4.2
Thailand	1,458,678	1,449,262	0.6
China	1,130,261	1,019,756	10.8
Brunei	1,124,406	1,061,357	5.9
India	690,849	589,838	17.1
Australia	580,695	533,382	8.9
Philippines	486,790	447,470	8.8
UK	429,965	435,091	-1.2
Japan	415,881	395,746	5.1

Source: Tourism Malaysia

Average per capita expenditure (in RM) of top 10 sources

	2010	2009	% change
Singapore	2,178.90	2,159.70	0.9
Indonesia	1,898.50	1,861.90	2.0
Thailand	1,015.30	1,013.40	0.2
China	2,768.40	2,729.60	1.4
Brunei	2,334.40	3,352.00	-0.7
India	2,615.80	2,715.70	-3.7
Australia	4,113.00	4,011.80	2.5
Philippines	1,875.80	1,683.00	11.5
UK	3,831.50	3,885.2	-1.4
Japan	2,751.10	2,610.30	5

Source: Tourism Malaysia

NTO budget

Tourism Malaysia's budget for advertising and promotions for 2011 was RM150 million.

Hotel statistics

Hotel rates in Malaysia are among the lowest in Asia. The average room rate in Kuala Lumpur was RM313 in the second quarter of 2011, RM221 in Penang and RM217 in Kota Kinabalu.

The government has continued to advise hotels to raise their rates to be at par with those of regional counterparts and for them to have the necessary funds to refurbish and maintain their properties. In 2011, many hotels refurbished their properties, which has in turn led to an increase in rates. In 2012, rates are expected to increase between eight per cent and 10 per cent at five- and four-star hotels respectively.

Average occupancy rate (April 2010 to June 2011)

	2010	2011	Variance
Kuala Lumpur	66.77	73.04	6.27
Penang	60.32	67.56	7.24
Langkawi	54.29	46.86	-7.43
Kota Kinabalu	52.10	64.37	12.27

Source: Malaysian Association of Hotels

Average room rate

	2010 *	2011 *	Variance
Kuala Lumpur	214.13	312.99	98.86
Penang	219.49	220.60	1.11
Langkawi	545.10	684.88	139.79
Kota Kinabalu	187.97	217.38	29.41

Source: Malaysian Association of Hotels

*April - June

New hotels in 2011

- Four Points by Sheraton Langkawi Resort, 214 rooms
- Gold Coast Morib Resort, Selangor (300 of 673 units)
- InterContinental Kuala Lumpur (formerly Nikko Hotel), 468 rooms
- Lost World Hotel Tambun, 174 rooms
- Maxim's Genting (formerly Genting Hotel), 422 rooms
- Somerset Ampang Kuala Lumpur, 207 units
- Swiss Garden Residences, 478 units
- The Danna, Langkawi 125 rooms

New hotels in 2012

- Best Western Plus Riverside Hotel Malacca, 170 rooms
- Best Western Sandakan Hotel and Residence, 170 rooms
- D'Tiara Amanah Raya Hotel Suites, 507 rooms
- Grand Uno Hotel & Residence, South China Sea Place, Kota Kinabalu, 167 rooms
- Hatten Hotel, Malacca, 700 rooms
- Ibis Styles Fraser Business Park Kuala Lumpur, 500 rooms
- Ibis Styles Cheras, 156 rooms
- Royal Bintang Surian Petaling Jaya, 300 rooms
- Park Regis Kuala Lumpur, 443 rooms
- Pullman Kuala Lumpur Bangsar, 513 rooms
- The Datai Langkawi, 14 additional beach villas
- YTL Resort-Pulau Gaya Borneo, Kota Kinabalu, 132 units (villas)

- YTL Resort-Pulau Tiga Borneo, Kota Kinabalu, 132 units (villas)

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

KLIA2 is the permanent low-cost carrier terminal currently under construction. Being built at a cost of RM2 billion, this terminal is designed to have 68 aircraft parking bays and a third runway located 1.5km from the second runway.

The new terminal will be at least 242,000m² in size, inclusive of retail space of 32,000m². When completed in 2012, it will be able to handle 30 million passengers with the provision to expand to handle up to 45 million passengers a year. It is also set to include a rail extension for the Express Rail Link.

Legoland Malaysia, Asia's first Legoland theme park, is scheduled to open in the Iskandar region in Johor. Estimated to cost RM720 million, the park will offer 40 rides, shows and displays of the famous Lego bricks of Denmark. Legoland Malaysia will be the sixth such park in the world after Denmark, the UK, California and Florida in the US and Germany.

Johor Premium Outlets is a premium shopping facility that provides a wide selection of off-season branded items at discount prices of up to 65 per cent on more than 80 designer and brand names. These include Burberry, Coach, Tumi, DKNY, Giorgio Armani, Gap and Levi's. Built at a cost of RM149 million and touted to be the first of its kind outlet in South-east Asia, it is located in Kulai, Johor. The centre will span about 37,000m².

KL City Walk is Kuala Lumpur's first-ever pedestrian strip mall spanning almost 500m between P Ramlee Road and Pinang Road in the commercial and business district. Open from 10.00 to 05.00, it is a one-stop lifestyle mall.

Key events and festivals 2012

Le Tour de Langkawi (February 24 to March 4)

Organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Malaysia. www.ltdl.com.my

Petronas Malaysian F1 Grand Prix (April 23-25)

Organised by the Sepang International Circuit. www.malaysiangp.com.my

Colours of 1Malaysia (May 19)

Organised by the Ministry of Tourism. www.motour.gov.my

Sabah Fest (May 5-6)

Organised by the Sabah Tourism Board. www.sabahtourism.com

Rainforest World Music Festival (July 13-15)

Organised by the Sarawak Tourism Board. www.rainforestmusic-borneo.com

Langkawi One Earth Music Festival 2012 (November 9-10)

Organised by the Asian Overland Services Tours & Travel. www.asianoverland.com.my

Essentials in the city

Food *Roti canai* and *satay* are a must-try for those who like savoury dishes.

Quirky When speaking with the locals, work in phrases such as '*boleh*', which means 'can do' in Malay to give an affirmative reply.

Tipping policy Tipping is not usually expected. Some establishments include a service tax. Otherwise, tip about 10 per cent of the bill if the service warrants it.

Shopping Purchase a *sayong* (gourd-shaped carafe) from Karyaneka in Kuala Lumpur.

How to maximise two hours of free time Visit Royal Selangor's visitor centre at Setapak Jaya for insights into how to make pewterware.

Insider's tip for a half-day off At Resorts World Genting, there are indoor and outdoor theme parks with rides for adults and children. It is also a great place to shop, with over 90 retail brands to choose from.



National Park Malaysia

Need to impress clients lunch Check out Madam Kwan's high-end hawker fare at Suria KLCC. It is a great place to sample favourite Malaysian dishes such as *nasi lemak*, *nasi bojari* and *assam laksa*.

Lunch on your own Check out Little Penang Café at Suria KLCC for decent local dishes. Or if you can get to Solaris Dutamas, try out Western fare at the sports bar Eckywoobee just because of the unusual name. The sports theme cuts across the décor and some food items.

Late nights Euphoria by Ministry of Sound at Sunway Lagoon Resort is a popular nightspot for clubbers with an affinity for house, techno and hip hop music.

Electricity 240V AC/50 Hz, standard three-pin square plugs and sockets.

Visa requirements

Single-entry visas are issued to foreign nationals who enter Malaysia on social visits. They are valid for three months from the date of issue. Multiple-entry visas are issued to foreign nationals who enter Malaysia on business or government-to-government trips. They are valid for three to 12 months from the date of issue.

Indian and Chinese citizens who wish to enter Malaysia on social visits are eligible to apply for multiple-entry visas which cost RM100 for Indian citizens and RM30 for Chinese citizens.

No visa is required for US citizens visiting Malaysia for social, business or academic purposes (except for employment). The same applies to a stay of less than one month for nationals of all ASEAN countries except Myanmar. For a stay exceeding one month, a visa will be required, except for nationals of Brunei and Singapore.

For Israeli nationals, visas are required and permission must be granted from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

For more details, visit www.imi.gov.my.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water RM1.60 (US\$0.50) for 500ml

Starbucks latte (small) RM10

A glass of open wine at a pub About RM20

Taxi fare (2km) Taxi fares are not standardised in Malaysia. The meter is not always used and negotiations are needed. In Kuala Lumpur, the flag-down rate is RM3 for the first 2km and increases by 10 cents for every 115m.

Important contacts

NTO

Tourism Malaysia is the promotional arm of the Ministry of Tourism. It has 42 overseas offices. The ministry is targeting high-yield tourists from all market segments in 2011 and 2012. Niche segments such as business, health, education, sports and ecotourism tourism are being

tapped to attract the high-yield market. www.tourism.gov.my

Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB), a subsidiary of Tourism Malaysia, is a one-stop centre that coordinates MICE activities in the country. www.myceb.com.my

Travel trade associations

Malaysian Association of Tour & Travel Agents' (MATTA) main objective is to promote the interests of the travel and tour industry in the country. www.matta.org.my

Malaysia Inbound Tourism Association (MITA) is a non-profit membership association dedicated to building responsible travel to and within Malaysia. www.mitamalaysia.com

Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) is the umbrella body for hotels in Malaysia. Formed in 1974, the association's vision is to build a workforce of highly skilled, innovative and disciplined individuals who would enhance the efficiency of the hotel industry. www.hotels.org.my

Malaysian Association of Hotel Owners (MAHO) is a grouping of hotel owners in Malaysia with the common objective of representing the interests of members in safeguarding their return on investments through a conducive business environment, and to promote and support healthy industry development. www.maho.org.my

The Malaysia Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS) was established in 1990 to provide a platform for discussion among exhibition and convention organisers. www.maceos.com.my

PATA Malaysia Chapter activities include monthly and quarterly meetings, educational workshops/seminars and overseas workshops. Contact executive secretary Veronica Chong. Tel: (603) 5633-3223 email: patamalaysia@po.jaring.my www.pata.org/Chapters/6510

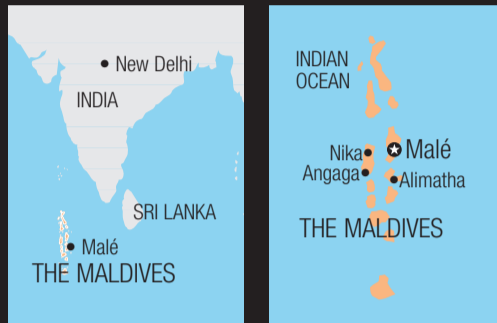
Skal Kuala Lumpur brings together all sectors of the travel and tourism industry in Malaysia by organising networking opportunities. It has 85 members. Tel: (603) 5634-6921 www.kul.skala.org.my

Compiled by N. Nithiyanthan
All information is correct at press time

The Maldives

General Overview

Official name	Republic of Maldives
Capital	Malé
Population	396,334
Total area	90,000 sq km archipelago of 1,190 islands in 26 atolls
Currency	Rufiyaa
Official language	Dhivehi, but English is widely spoken



Maldives – Always Natural, announced in October 2011, is Tourism Maldives' new slogan. It not only intends to reflect the country's natural beauty and the preservation of its environment, but also supports sustainability of the fishing industry, its second-largest foreign exchange earner after tourism. The new slogan replaces the 11-year-old *Sunny Side of Life*, which travel consultants sometimes found difficult to promote since there is actually plenty of rain in the destination.

China has become the biggest source market for the Maldives in the past two years, overtaking the UK. In terms of infrastructure, eight domestic airports are under development, in addition to the redevelopment of the renamed Ibrahim Nasir International Airport.

Climate

Average temperature	25°C to 31°C
Average rainfall	1,786.4mm to 2,277.8mm
Average humidity	80 per cent
Average daily sunshine	7.6 hrs

Best time to visit

The Maldives has a year-round hot tropical climate. There are two monsoons, the southwest from May to October, and the northeast from November to April. The most preferred time to visit is between December and April (resort rates are the highest at this time) when the weather is very calm and the country has the least rainfall. February and March provide the most sun during the year, and is ideal for European holidaymakers seeking refuge from winter. The off-peak season attracts many Chinese visitors. Regular showers are expected in June and July.

Distances

From Malé to:

Colombo	777km, 1 hr 25 mins
Thiruvananthapuram	605km, 1 hr 40 mins
Bangkok	3,167km, 4 hrs 20 mins
Kuala Lumpur	3,135km, 4 hrs 20 mins
Singapore	3,402km, 4 hrs 40 mins
Beijing	5857.04km, 7 hrs 20 mins
Shanghai	5844.09km, 7 hrs 23 mins
Shenzhen	4819.51km, 6 hrs 9 mins
Hong Kong	4819.24km, 6 hrs 30 mins
London	8296.5km, 10 hrs 42 mins

Visitor arrival statistics

Tourist arrivals reached 791,917 by the end of 2010, up by 20.7 per cent, and the highest ever for the country after a dismal 2009, which recorded negative growth owing to a global recession. Asia-Pacific registered double-digit

growth of 12.6 per cent, while Europe, the worst hit by the recession, mustered only 3.4 per cent growth. China was the largest source of visitors from Asia, followed by Japan, a trend that has continued this year.

At the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, 80 per cent of all passengers arrived on scheduled flights compared to 83.8 per cent in 2009, while 17 per cent arrived on chartered flights, up from 16.2 per cent.

The year 2010 was remarkable for the Maldives, with arrivals every month being above that of the same month in the previous years (2006-2009), except in April 2010, when European airspace was closed due to the volcanic eruption in Iceland. Total international visitor arrivals from January to September 2011 grew to 669,172, up 17.7 per cent from the same period in 2010. Average length of stay of visitors was 7.1 days.

Europe continued to be the dominant market leader, with nearly 64 per cent of total arrivals in 2010, but its control is gradually slipping from a high of 75 per cent in 2006, with visitors from Asia on the rise. Robust growth from the Chinese market during 2010 accounts for the huge growth in Asian markets during the year. North-east Asian countries such as China, Japan and South Korea led this region in 2010.

Over the last five years, Europe's share has dropped by 12 per cent due to the emerging Asian markets. However although the market share declined, arrivals from this region registered a positive growth of 9.4 per cent in 2010 against 2009. The main markets from this region included the UK, Italy, Germany, France, Russia and Switzerland.

Arrivals to the Maldives from the Asia-Pacific region have been increasing rapidly over the years, with an annual average growth rate of nearly 31 per cent in 2010, from 20.8 per cent in 2006.

The new tourism tax or GST of 3.5 per cent from January 2011 initially triggered concern among European op-

erators, as contracts had already been entered into, forcing big operators to absorb this added cost. However, the new tax has been factored into new contracts.

Room rates have gone up eight per cent to 10 per cent in 2011 against the previous year, but that would not deter arrivals, seen growing by 15 per cent to 850,000 this year. Another added cost is the US\$25 Airport Development tax on every outgoing passenger at the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, to be levied from January 2012 onwards. This is to be included in the airfare.

Top 10 source markets 2010

	Arrivals	Marketshare%	%Change
China	118,961	15.0	96.1
UK	114,158	14.4	7.7
Italy	89,596	11.3	0.3
Germany	77,108	9.7	11.6
France	54,789	6.9	8.8
Russia	49,111	6.2	22.7
Japan	38,791	4.9	5.9
Switzerland	27,766	3.5	3.7
India	25,756	3.3	62.5
South Korea	24,808	3.1	53.8

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January-September)

	Arrivals	Marketshare%	%Change
China	146,668	21.9	61.8
UK	78,772	11.8	-7.5
Italy	64,231	9.6	-5.7
Germany	61,929	9.3	15.8
Russia	44,829	6.7	30.3
France	43,112	6.4	13.6
Japan	26,388	3.9	-5.7
Switzerland	21,814	3.3	14.6
India	20,617	3.1	28.5
South Korea	14,469	2.2	-4.5

Source: Ministry of Tourism

Hotel statistics

As of end-September 2011, the Maldives had 92 resorts with 20,929 beds, 17 hotels with 1,467 beds and 104 live-aboard safari vessels with 1,591 beds. During the first half of 2011, average occupancy at resorts was 81.6 per cent, hotels at 40.7 per cent and live-aboard safari vessels at 27.2 per cent.

Tourism contribution to GDP

Year	GDP (Rufiyaa, in millions)	Tourism contribution (Rufiyaa in millions)	Per cent share of GDP
2006	15.1	4.6	31.0
2007	16.9	5.3	31.7
2008	18.9	5.8	30.6
2009	17.7	5.7	32.4
2010	19.5	6.9	35.7

Source: Tourism Yearbook 2011 (Ministry of Tourism) website

Tourism receipts (2006-2010)

	Receipts (US\$ in millions)	Per cent change
2006	512.4	78.8
2007	602.4	17.5
2008	663.6	10.2
2009	608.3	-8.3
2010	713.6	17.3

Source: Tourism Yearbook 2011 (Ministry of Tourism)

Average occupancy rates (January to September 2011)

Resorts	78.7 per cent
Hotels	39.1 per cent
Live-aboard safari vessels	23.8 per cent

As of end-September 2011, the Maldives had 92 resorts with 20,929 beds, 17 hotels with 1,467 beds and 104 live-aboard safari vessels with 1,591 beds.

New/rebranded hotels in 2011

Alila Villas Hadahaa has been rebranded as Park Hyatt Maldives after Hyatt Hotels took over management of the 50-villa resort, Hyatt's first in the Maldives. The Ayada Maldives, with 50 water villas and 62 seafront villas, also opened in 2011.

Other new openings in mid- to late-2011 were the Jumeirah Vittaveli Resort on Bolifushi Island, with 91 villas and suites, and the Jumeirah Dhevanafushi Resort on Meradhoo Island, with 38 suites. Other planned openings include the Raffles Konotta with 49 villas (delayed from 2008, but now due to open in late 2011); Dusit Thani Maldives, with 104 villas opening end-2011; and Radisson Plaza Resort Maldives in the third quarter of 2012, with 281 land villas and 99 overwater villas.

New resorts in the works include first-time facilities like a floating golf course, a Shariah-compliant resort joining an underwater restaurant and an underwater spa and treatment rooms.

New hotels in 2011/2012

- Naridhoo, Haa Alifu Atoll, 100 beds
- Uligamu, Haa Alifu Atoll, 100 beds
- Berinmadhoo, Haa Alifu Atoll, 200 beds
- Kelaa, Haa Alifu, 200 beds
- Hondaafushi, Haa Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds
- Kudamuraidhoo, Haa Dhaalu Atoll, 250 beds
- Naagoashi, Haa Dhaalu Atoll, 600 beds
- Hanimaadhoo Airport Hotel, Haa Dhaalu Atoll 200 beds
- Nolvivaranfaru, Haa Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds
- Dholhiyadhoo, Shaviyani Atoll, 200 beds
- Vagaru, Shaviyani Atoll, 70 beds
- Gaakoshibee, Shaviyani Atoll, 200 beds
- Kanbaalifaru, Shaviyani Atoll, 200 beds
- Farukolhu (South), Shaviyani Atoll, 200 beds
- Farukolhu (North), Shaviyani Atoll, 200 beds
- Maavelaavaru, Noonu Atoll, 100 beds
- Randheli, Noonu Atoll, 100 beds
- Ekuhivaru, Noonu Atoll, 180 beds
- Maafaru, Noonu Atoll, 200 beds
- Huvandhumaavattaru, Noonu Atoll, 200 beds
- Maanenfushi, Raa Atoll, 150 beds
- Eththigili, Raa Atoll, 200 beds
- Lundhufushi, Raa Atoll, 40 beds
- Ufulandhoo, Raa Atoll, 200 beds
- Mudhdhoo/Dharavandhoo Airport, Baa Atoll, 200 beds
- Finolhas /With Dharavandhoo Airport, Baa Atoll, 200 beds
- Vakkaru, Baa Atoll, 200 beds
- Kanufushi, Baa Atoll, 200 beds
- Kanufushi and Muthaafushi, Baa Atoll, 100 beds
- Hudhufushi, Lhaviyani Atoll, 400 beds
- Kanifushi, Lhaviyani Atoll, 300 beds
- Male' Hotel, Kaafu Atoll, 200 beds
- Kaashidhuffaru, Kaafu Atoll, 200 beds
- Kuda Villigili, Kaafu Atoll, 200 beds
- Dhekunu Boduveli, Gasveli, Kudaufushi, Meemu Atoll, 60 beds
- Embudhufushi & Olhuveli, Dhaalu Atoll, 220 beds
- Kudahuvadhoo, Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds
- Male'Fushi, Thaa Atoll, 100 beds
- Elaa Thaa, Atoll, 280 beds
- Kalhufahalafushi, Thaa Atoll, 200 beds
- Thimarafushi, Thaa Atoll, 200 beds
- Olhugiri, Thaa Atoll, 200 beds
- Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll, 200 beds
- Gan, Laamu Atoll, 150 beds
- Bodufinolhu & Gaggandufinolhu, Laamu Atoll, 150 beds
- Meradhoo Dhevanafushi, Gaafu Alifu Atoll, 74 beds
- Mahadhdhoo, Gaafu Alifu, 100 beds
- Kondeymatheelaa badhu, Gaafu Alifu Atoll, 100 beds
- Falhumaafushi, Gaafu Alifu Atoll, 200 beds
- Vodamulaa, Gaafu Alifu Atoll, 300 beds
- Raavereha, Gaafu Alif Atoll, 200 beds
- Munandhuvaa, Gaafu Alifu Atoll, 48 beds
- Lonudhuahuttaa, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 100 beds
- Konotta, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 100 beds
- Vatavarrehaa, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 150 beds
- Magudhdhuvaa, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds
- Kaadedhdhoo City Hotel, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds
- Gazeera, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 44 beds
- Kaishidhoo, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 60 beds
- Maavedhdhoo, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds

- Odegalla, Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll, 200 beds
- Fuvahmulah, Gnayiyani Atoll, 120 beds
- Hankede, Seenu Atoll, 100 beds
- Vadinolhu, Laamu Atoll, 50 beds
- Maanagala Gaaf Alif Atoll, 50 beds
- Dhhipparufushi, Haa Dhaal Atoll, 50 beds
- Vommuli, Dhaal Atoll, 50 beds
- Foththeyo, Vaavu Atoll, 50 beds
- Kudakurathu, Raa Atoll, 50 beds
- Fushivelaavaru, Noonu Atoll, 100 beds
- Raafushi, Noonu Atoll, 100 beds

Source:Ministry of Tourism (updated to September 2011)

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Mega Maldives, the country's international airline, began operations from January 2011, with direct flights to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. The Maldives previously had an international airline, Air Maldives, which is now defunct.

Three international airports are either being redeveloped or built to cater to the growing passenger demand. The renovated Plaza Premium lounge at the renamed Ibrahim Nasir International Airport was reopened. More renovations are about to be completed.

Essentials in the city – Malé

Food Sample traditional fish curry, which contains tuna or white fish, made in a mild- to medium-spicy sauce. Usually served with rice or *roshi* (unleavened bread).

Tipping policy A service charge of 10 per cent is usually added to the bill, but customers may also choose to tip.

Shopping A small replica of the traditional Dhoni boat is a good souvenir.

How to maximise two hours of free time It's a coffee culture in Male. There are dozens of coffee shops, some with free Internet, that are open until late.

Insider's tip for a half-day off For just five rufiyaa (US\$0.33), hop onboard the newly-introduced bus service in Malé, which provides a fascinating view of the tiny capital.

Need to impress clients lunch Sala Italia restaurant in Malé serves authentic Italian food.

Lunch on your own Try the Shell Beans seafront restaurant, which offers sandwiches, burgers, coffee and pastries. It also offers free Internet access to its customers.

Late nights There are no night spots in Malé.

Electricity 230-240V, three-pin round or rectangular blade plugs or two-pin flat blade.

Visa requirements

Visitors of all nationalities travelling with a valid passport are granted a free 30-day visa on arrival, provided they also possess sufficient funds and a return ticket. A visa extension may be obtained at the Department of Immigration and Emigration in Malé.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water 15.36 rufiyaa (US\$1)

Starbucks latte (small) There is no Starbucks in the Maldives.

A glass of open wine at a pub Sale of liquor is prohibited in all places in Malé, including hotels.

Taxi fare Speedboat transfers from resorts to the airport for more than 10km or 15km away costs between US\$45 and US\$105, depending on the distance. This is generally included in the package. For excursions or diving trips, a dhoni could be hired at most resorts for between US\$200 and US\$250 per day.

Travelling to Malé from the airport, the best transportation deal is the traditional dhoni ride which is just US\$0.80. In Malé, taxis are available at Rufiyaa 20 (US\$1.30) per journey to any part of the city, irrespective of the distance. Seaplane transfers cost around US\$140 and US\$350 return, depending on the distance.

Important contacts

NTO

The Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), after a year-long search and consultation with industry members, on October 25 unveiled a new slogan and logo, replacing the 11-year-old *Sunny Side of Life*. The new slogan, *Maldives – Always Natural*, is accompanied by a logo highlighting the country's natural attractions. The industry has welcomed the new slogan and logo, which will be part of a new campaign set to begin by end 2011/early 2012.

www.visitmaldives.com

Travel trade associations

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

www.tourism.gov.mv

Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators (MATATO)

www.matato.org

Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI)

www.matimaldives.com

Maldives Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB)

www.visitmaldives.com

Compiled by Feizal Samath

All information is correct at press time



Maldives, Soneva Fushi, Six Senses

Myanmar

General Overview

Official Name	Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Capital	Nay Pyi Taw
Population	60 million
Total Area	676, 577 sq km
Currency	Kyat
Official Language	Myanmar



Following a record-breaking year for the tourism sector that saw Myanmar welcome almost 300,000 foreign visitors in 2010, industry players are anticipating an even stronger 2011-2012.

Figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism show that 295,174 foreign tourists passed through the Yangon gateway in 2010, a 29.8 per cent year-on-year growth. In the first eight months of 2011, the number of foreign visitors rose to 221,190, representing an increase of 20.39 over the same period in 2010. The figure for the whole of 2009, which totalled at 227,421, was itself a 17.64 per cent increase on the 193,319 recorded for 2008.

Climate

Average temperature	20°C to 24°C (October to March)
Average rainfall	5,000mm (coastal region) and less than 1,000mm (central region)
Average humidity	66 per cent to 82.6 per cent

Best time to visit

December to February	sunny to cool
April to August	hot to dry
September to October	wet to rainy

Distances

From Yangon to:

Mandalay	695km, 1 hr 30 mins flight
Bagan	700km, 1 hr 20 mins flight
Heho (Inle)	700km, 1 hr 10 mins flight
Ngapali	496km, 50 mins flight
Myitkyina	1703km, 3 hrs flight

Visitor arrivals statistics

Tourist arrivals were up almost 20.39 per cent in the first eight months of the year following a record-breaking 2010, based on figures from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MHT). Industry sources said that they were confident of sustained growth over the next 18 months.

From January to August, 221,190 tourists visited the country, a 20.39 per cent increase on the same period in 2010, and the industry is on track to improve on the 295,174 foreign tourists who visited through the Yangon gateway last year. Most visitors to Myanmar in the first eight months – about 148,022, or 66.92 per cent of the total – were from Asian countries. The largest single group, Thailand, had 40,462; 23,020 came from China; 14,798 from South Korea and 12,793 from Japan.

A total of 49,090 tourists from Europe visited from January to August, representing over 22.19 per cent of total arrivals. France was on top with 11,442 visitors, followed

by Germany (6,917 visitors) and Italy (6,291 visitors).

FIT travellers made up the majority of the increase, with arrivals jumping 28.92 per cent to 133,585, compared to the 103,617 recorded for the same period in 2010. But only 7,707 of the 221,190 visitors who visited the country in the first eight months came on group packages, down more than 49 per cent on the same period last year. There were more modest rises among travellers with business visas and social visas, 40.76 per cent and 25.84 per cent, respectively.

Types of tourist for the year 2010

Package tour groups	8 per cent
Foreign independent travellers	57 per cent
Business travellers	18 per cent
Others	17 per cent

Hotel statistics

Myanmar is projecting more than 50 new hotels across the country in preparation for the 27th South-east Asian Games in 2013. According to MHT, Myanmar has 691 licensed hotels with 23,454 rooms. They include 22 foreign-invested, nine government and 678 private hotels. These are located in the country's 11 designated hotel zones in

Top 20 source markets (January-August 2011)

Market	Arrival numbers	Market share (%)
Thailand	40,462	18.29
China	23,020	10.41
Korea	14,798	6.69
Malaysia	14,079	6.37
Japan	12,739	5.76
United States	12,330	5.57
France	11,442	5.17

Continued next column

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Top 20 source markets (January - August 2011)

Market	Arrival numbers	Marketshare (%)
Taiwan	10,640	4.81
Singapore	8,684	3.93
India	7,791	3.52
Germany	6,917	3.13
Italy	6,291	2.84
UK	5,991	2.71
Australia	659	2.56
Spain	3,693	1.67
Switzerland	2,907	1.31
Hong Kong	2,265	1.02
Russia	1,959	0.89
Canada	1,929	0.87
Belgium	1,541	0.70

Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan, Chaungtha, Ngwesaung, Taunggyi (Inle), Mawlamyine, Bago, Rakhine and Golden Triangle regions.

New hotels in 2011

- East Hotel, Yangon, 48 rooms
- Aureum Palace Resort & Spa Inle, Inle Lake, 66 rooms
- Dat Taw Gyaint Waterfall Luxury Resort, Pyin Oo Lwin, 10 bungalows
- Ocean Paradise, Ngwe Saung Beach, 51 rooms
- Inle Max Hotel, Inle Lake, 66 rooms
- Ngapali Max Hotel, Ngapali Beach, 70 rooms
- Sky Blue Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, 102 rooms
- Myanmar Treasure Resort, Ngapali Beach, 90 rooms

New hotels in 2012

- Jade City Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, 90 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

The newly-launched **Dora cruise** showcases fascinating scenery, rich history and the spectacular landscape of Yangon's waterways and rivers, including bustling ports, fishing villages and views of Botataung and Sule pagodas.

cruisewithdora@gmail.com

The **Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon** Exploration Travel has developed a four-hour tour with an English-speaking guide designed to show the Shwedagon in a different angle.

customer.myanmar@khiri.com

The **first-ever equestrian tour** was introduced by the Myanmar Equestrian Federation in September. The tour will cover Hmawbi in Yangon, Bagan, Mandalay, Kalaw, Aung Pan and Pindaya, where tourists can take equestrian tours with guides and horse trainers.

ayeindamar@myanmar.com.mm

Hotels, motels and guesthouses in key destinations

City	No of Hotels	No of Rooms
Yangon	181	7,658
Mandalay	72	3,035
Bagan	75	1974
Nay Pyi Taw	24	1,596
Ngwe Saung Beach	20	857
Tarchileik	12	538
Taunggyi	16	502
Ngapali Beach	14	480
Pyin Oo Lwin	27	479
Chaungtha Beach	14	470
Kawthoung	5	365
Bago	11	297
Lashio	8	242
Mawlamyine	9	194
Sittwe	6	129
Myauk U	5	126
Putao	2	24

Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

Hotel occupancy and room rates

Hotel name	Total rooms	Average occupancy fiscal year 2009-2010	Average occupancy fiscal year 2010-2011 (estimated)	Average room rates
Yangon				
Sedona	366	N/A	N/A	US\$100- US\$160
Traders	233	60%	70%	US\$50
Chatrium	303	60%	65%	US\$80
Park Royal	267	55%	65%	Undisclosed
Mandalay				
Mandalay Hill	206	N/A	N/A	US\$65- US\$600
Bagan				
Bagan River View	107	60%	65%	Undisclosed
Aureum Palace	114	65%	70%	US\$100- US\$150
Myanmar Treasure Resort	94	70%	75%	US\$75
Inle Lake				
Myanmar Treasure Resort	60	70%	75%	US\$90
Golden Island Cottage	65	55%	60%	US\$40- US\$80
Popa				
Popa Mountain Resort Hotel	50	65%	65%	US\$80- US\$145
Mrauk Oo				
Mrauk Oo Princess Resort	21	N/A	N/A	US\$120
Vesali Resort	18	N/A	N/A	US\$35
Ngapali Beach				
Aureum Palace Hotel	42	55%	60%	US\$100- US\$150
Ngwe Saung Beach				
Bay of Bengal	62	60%	70%	US\$170- US\$230
Sunny Paradise	112	50%	60%	US\$30- US\$150
Aureum Palace	97	60%	65%	US\$70- US\$100
Myanmar Treasure Resort	60	65%	65%	US\$20- US\$40
Chaugtha Beach				
Hotel Max	70	70%	80%	US\$40- US\$170
Pyin Oo Lwin				
Aureum	40	60%	65%	US\$40- US\$60
Naypyitaw				
Aureum	30	55%	65%	US\$75- US\$325
Thingaha	30	60%	65%	US\$70- US\$90
Amara	67	55%	60%	US\$35- US\$250

Source: Ministry of Hotels and Tourism

Key events and festivals 2012
Kachin Manaw Festival (January)

The Kachin Manaw Festival or Kachin New Year Festival is a one-day festival in Myitkyina, Kachin State. The Kachins, one of the major races of Myanmar, actively participate, with many of those based abroad coming back home to meet and dance at the event.

Naga New Year Festival (January)

This traditional Naga New Year Festival takes place in villages in Sagaing town, with festivities that include Naga clan ceremonies and the New Year ceremony.



A resort in Ngapali

Kekku Pagoda Festival (February)

At the Kekku Ancient Pagoda Complex in Shan State, a cluster of more than 3,000 pagodas, said to be from Bagan period but done in the Yun Shan style, are grouped on a small hillock overlooking the Hopon Valley. Pa O people flock to the festival in their best costumes to pay homage to the pagoda on the full-moon day of Tabauung. The best time to see this is at dawn on the full-moon day, when villagers come.

Thingyan Water Festival (April 13 to 16)

Myanmar people celebrate their New Year with a famous four-day water festival called Thingyan, which sees everyone throwing water at one another.

Taungpyone Nat (Spirit) Festival

Taungpyone Nat Festival takes place every year at Taungpyone Village, about 10km north of Mandalay. This spirit festival attracts mediums and devotees from all over the country, as well as curious tourists.

Nine Thousand Lamps Festival in Golden Rock (December)

On the platform of the Kyaik-Hti-Yo 'Golden Rock' Pagoda, devotees light 9,000 lamps to welcome the New Year and to give thanks to Buddha's peaceful doctrine. The golden spire pagoda sits on the top of a huge boulder covered with gold leaves and perched on the edge of a cliff.

Essentials in the city – Yangon

Food Try *mont hin gar*, a well-known Myanmar breakfast that is a mix of thick fish soup and thin rice noodles. Roasted chilli powder, lime juice, fish sauce and chopped coriander are added to heighten the flavour.

Tipping policy From 200 kyat at local restaurants, and from 500 kyat for international or hotel restaurants.

Shopping Local souvenirs and crafts from all over Myanmar can be found at Bogyoke Aung San Market, also known as Scott Market, in Yangon.

How to maximise two hours of free time Take a ferry from the wharf in downtown Yangon to Dala, then hire a trishaw to visit the peace corps project there before taking a boat back down the river to Yangon. The roughly US\$10 excursion gives you the chance to meet locals on the ferries and in town cafes.

Insider's half-day off Explore the 2,000-year-old Sule Pagoda, the colonial buildings in the city centre City Hall, the Mahabandoola Park and Fruit Market in Chinatown. A visit to the 72m-long reclining Buddha of Chauk Htak Gyi Pagoda is also highly recommended. With its impressive size, it is said to be the biggest reclining Buddha in Myanmar. After seeing the sights, swing by the famous Scott Market, with its narrow shopping streets. In the evening, visit the impressive Shwedagon Pagoda, with its 110m high golden stupa, to watch the sunset.

Need to impress clients lunch L'Opera Restaurant and Bar is the best Italian restaurant in Yangon, with its home-made pastas, wood-fired oven pizzas and fresh salads. For local cuisine, try the Royal Thazin Restaurant at Inya Road, which provides a variety of Myanmar favourites, as well as traditional breakfast and evening snacks.

Lunch on your own Check out the roadside foods stalls along Anawrahta and Sule Pagoda Roads that serve Myanmar and Indian dishes. For Chinese food, go to China-

town at Latha Township.

Late nights YGN Bar and Club in Yangon International Hotel, 50th Street Bar at 50th Street in Botataung Township and BME2 Club at University Avenue Street in Kamayut Township are popular venues.

Electricity Single phase voltage of 220V to 230V and a frequency of 50Hz, primarily two-pin sockets

Visa requirements

A tourist visa must be obtained in advance from Myanmar's embassies or consulates abroad and is valid for a stay of 28 days. A pre-arranged visa-on-arrival is applicable only to tourists buying tour packages with authorised Myanmar-based travel companies.

Subject to approval by MHT, the visa-on-arrival (VOA) must be arranged at least 10 days prior to the travel date. However, the ministry will make the final decision on visa approval. When the visa is approved, the company will notify the applicant, airline and airport. The applicant will receive an approval letter that can be presented at the immigration counter upon arrival at the airport in Myanmar, after which the immigration officer will double-check that the applicant is not blacklisted, check the security code, confirm that the visa fee has been paid, and then issue the VOA.

Several types of visas are available, including a 28-day tourist visa (US\$30, non-extendable), a 70-day business visa (US\$40, extendable), 28-day social visa (US\$40, extendable) and 24-hour transit visa (US\$18).

As a special case, Myanmar issues VOAs to travellers brought back from Cambodia's Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, and China's Guangzhou, after Myanmar Airways International (MAI) launched maiden flights to the two destinations in February and March 2011.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water (small) 300 kyat (US\$0.30) for a one-litre bottle from a local shop

Starbucks latte (small) There is no Starbucks in Myanmar.

A glass of open wine at a pub: US\$3

Taxi fare (2km) 1,000 kyat

Important contacts
NTO

The Myanmar Ministry of Hotels and Tourism (MHT) does not have tourism representation overseas, but it appoints about 30 tourism companies abroad for destination promotion. The country is also being promoted and marketed through the ASEAN Promotional Chapters for Tourism in Seoul, Sydney and Beijing. Myanmar's embassies and consulates overseas are also able to disseminate tourism information in their respective countries and MHT regularly distributes tourism collaterals and tourism information through these offices.

Tel: (95-67) 406-056

Fax: (95-67) 406-057

www.myanmar-tourism.org

Travel trade associations
Myanmar Tourism Board (MTB)

www.tourismmyanmar.org

Myanmar Marketing Committee (MMC)

www.myanmar-tourism.com

Union of Myanmar Travel Association (UMTA)

www.umtanet.org

Myanmar Hoteliers Association (MHA)

www.myanmarhotelier.org

Compiled by Rahul Khanna

All information is correct at press time

The Philippines

General Overview

Official name	Republic of the Philippines
Capital	Manila
Population	95.8 million
Total area	299,764 sq km
Currency	Philippine peso
Official languages	Filipino and English



The Philippines will be launching its long-awaited new tourism brand in early 2012, led by incoming Department of Tourism (DoT) secretary Ramon Jimenez a former advertising veteran. The brand will be rolled out across the regional tourism departments, in foreign investment campaigns and MICE promotions.

The DoT will also be promoting the Philippines across 10 special interest group segments: beaches; diving; adventure experiences; shopping, leisure and entertainment; honeymooners; health and wellness; culture; golf; MICE and birdwatching. DoT is also prioritising airport infrastructure projects to improve connectivity.

With all this, the Philippines is expected to continue its upswing in arrivals, which rose 11.72 per cent from January to August over the same period in 2011.

Climate

Average temperature	26.6°C
Average rainfall	965mm to 4,064mm annually
Average humidity	77 per cent

Best time to visit

Cool, dry and sunny weather typically greets visitors during the period from November to February. From March to May, the weather remains dry and sunny, but the temperature begins to soar.

Wet weather and typhoons with speeds of up to 120 km/hour are common from June to October. These are formed in the Pacific Ocean and bring much precipitation and mayhem to the western and northern parts of the archipelago, as they move in westerly or north-westerly directions.

Distances

From Manila to:

Boracay (via Caticlan)	302km, 1 hr 10 mins
Cebu	565km, 1 hr 10 mins
Davao	960km, 1 hr 45 mins
Puerto Princesa	583km, 1 hr 10 mins
Zamboanga	847km, 1hr 40 mins

Visitor arrival statistics

From January to August 2011, the Philippines registered 2.63 million foreign visitors, an 11.72 per cent growth over the same period in 2010. The top 10 source markets reflected some changes, with Taiwan overtaking Australia. Arrival figures followed historical trends, except for a significant drop in Hong Kong arrivals, as the market suffered the after-effects of the August 2010 Manila tour bus

hostage incident, which claimed eight lives.

East Asia – China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan – now accounts for 46.71 per cent or almost half of all recorded 2011 arrivals to date. North America – the US, Canada and Mexico – comprises 19.46 per cent, while ASEAN countries account for 8.35 per cent.

New air links from Philippine Airlines (PAL) and competing LCCs have been beneficial on arrivals. Chartered flights from Shanghai, southern China and Taipei into Kalibo and Cebu have aided in arrivals growth.

Local airlines have added new flights in 2011, with PAL now flying to New Delhi and Cebu Pacific to Busan. Newest entrant AirAsia Philippines is also expected to launch short-haul flights from Clark Airport starting December 2011, while Zest Air, which has launched a Cebu-Shanghai route, is looking at two new hubs in the Middle East.

Turkish Airways is also expected to launch an Istanbul-Manila flight, while Jet Airways is set to launch a Manila-Mumbai route. Fly Guam, a new full-service airline, is targeting to run Clark-Guam flights by 2012, subject to approval.

Top 10 source markets 2010

Country	Arrivals	Market Share	% Change
South Korea	740,622	21.04	48.74
US	600,165	17.05	3.03
Japan	358,744	10.19	10.39
China	187,446	5.32	20.92
Australia	147,469	4.19	11.44

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Continued from previous column

Top 10 source markets 2010

Country	Arrivals	Market Share	% Change
Taiwan	142,455	4.05	39.29
Hong Kong	133,746	3.80	8.93
Singapore	121,083	3.44	23.17
Canada	106,345	3.02	7.41
UK	96,925	2.75	6.50

Source: Department of Tourism

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January-August)

Rank	Arrivals	Market Share	% Change
South Korea	615,218	23.63%	29.68
US	429,280	16.49%	5.32
Japan	253,529	9.74%	5.41
China	151,042	5.80%	13.38
Taiwan	120,572	4.63%	26.53
Australia	106,091	4.07%	19.56
Singapore	89,220	3.43%	14.74
Canada	76,612	2.94%	14.61
Hong Kong	75,861	2.91%	-23.02
UK	69,295	2.66%	7.46

Source: Department of Tourism

Tourism receipts

The Department of Tourism (DoT) estimates that tourism receipts grew 11.37 per cent to US\$2.49 billion from 2009 to 2010, and that tourism contributed 5.76 per cent of the country's total GDP. Philippine tourism also recorded about P1.042 million (US\$24.8 million) in total expenditure and generated 3.6 million jobs, according to former DoT secretary Alberto Lim. Domestic tourism travel is a major driver, having doubled in the last 10 years, outnumbering foreign tourist arrivals at a ratio of 8:1.

Arrivals target for 2012

The NTO did not provide a target at press time.

Hotel statistics

In 2010, the most popular destinations were Camarines Sur, Metro Manila, Cebu, Boracay, Baguio, Davao, Puerto Princesa, Cagayan de Oro, Zambales and Bohol.

Foreign tourist hotel stays grew highest in Puerto Princesa, with a whopping 158.8 per cent, while Camarines Sur grew 49.6 per cent. Boracay grew 40.6 per cent, followed by Ilocos Norte (17.6 per cent) and Cebu (14.04 per cent).

Metro Manila was the leading destination (a 36.7 per cent foreign tourist share), with 70.45 per cent deluxe hotel occupancy rates in 2010 and growth in AOR of nine per cent from 2009. The Central Visayas region (Bohol, Cebu, Siquijor, and Negros Oriental) earned 21.36 per cent in tourist share, while the Bicol region (Albay, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur, Sorsogon, Catanduanes and Masbate) came in third with 15.7 per cent.

Outside of Metro Manila, Cebu and Bohol experienced the highest growth in room inventory in 2011, totalling 4,358, with an additional 3,100 rooms expected in 2012. In 2014, a total of 10,524 rooms will be added to the existing inventory.

New hotels in 2011

MANILA

- Acacia Grove Hotel, 262 rooms
- Bay Leaf Hotel, 56 rooms
- Casa Bocobo Hotel, 47 rooms
- Centara Manila, 96 rooms
- Cocoon Boutique Hotel, 40 rooms
- F1 City Center Hotel, 240 rooms
- Ramada Manila Central, 114 rooms
- Remington Hotel, 712 rooms
- White Knight Hotel Intramuros, 29 rooms

CEBU

- Citi Park Hotel, 105 rooms
- Diamond Suites, 102 rooms
- Harold's Hotel, 90 rooms
- Solo Grande Hotel, 77 rooms
- Allure Hotel & Suites, 70 rooms
- Goldberry Suites, 45 rooms

Luxury sea kayaking tours in El Nido, Bacuit Bay



- Premiere Citi Suites, 30 rooms
- Gran Tierra Suites, 23 rooms
- Dulcinea Hotel, 16 rooms

BOHOL

- Alona Kew Hotel, 110 rooms
- Alona Studios, 38 rooms
- Bluewater Panglao, 54 rooms
- Henann Resort, Alona Beach, 12 villas

BORACAY

- The District Hotel, 70 rooms
- The Palms of Boracay, 63 rooms
- Monaco Suites, 50 rooms

New hotels in 2012-2014

MANILA

- Ascott Hotel Global City, 220 rooms
- Belmont Luxury Hotel, 480 rooms
- Citadines Hotel, 215 rooms
- Crimson Hotel, 400 rooms
- D'Ace Suites, 192 rooms
- Grand Hyatt, 400 rooms
- Hamilton Hotel, 540 rooms
- Holiday Inn Makati, 347 rooms
- Kukun Hotel Global City, 180 rooms
- Microtel Inn and Suites Libis, 50 rooms
- Mercure Hotel, 150 rooms
- Novotel Araneta, 401 rooms
- Radisson Manila, 500 rooms
- Raffles Residences and Fairmont Hotel, 330 rooms
- Shangri-La Global City, 500 rooms

BOHOL

- The Bellevue Bohol, 158 rooms
- Panglao Sands, 80 rooms

BORACAY

- Fairways & Bluewater Boracay Newcoast, 2,500 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Four major consortiums are gearing to construct integrated resort and casino facilities in an eight square kilometre area of Manila Bay, south of the SM Mall of Asia. Belle Grande Corp is expected to open its first hotel and casino, Belle Grande Marina Bay, by 2012 or early 2013, followed by Alliance Global's Resorts World Bayshore project, which plans to open over 6,500 rooms in the next five years.

Expansions are underway in Boracay where casino licenses have been granted to Fairways and Bluewater Newcoast Boracay and the Crown Regency, and in Palawan, where new resorts are in development by the Henann Group, the El Nido Group, the Bluewater Resorts and Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts.

Plans are underway to convert airports in Bohol, Albay, Cagayan de Oro, Puerto Princesa into **international airports**.

Key events and festivals 2012

Feast of the Black Nazarene (January 9)

The Feast of the Black Nazarene is the single largest festival in the Philippines where thousands of devotees go to Quiapo in downtown Metro Manila to participate.

Ati-Atihan Festival (January 1-20)

The Ati-Atihan Festival is celebrated in Kalibo, and is reputed to be the wildest of celebrations. Participants paint their faces with soot, don bright and outlandish costumes, and hit the town dancing.

www.kalibo.gov.ph/Ati-Atihan/schedule-of-activities.html

Sinulog Festival (January 15)

Sinulog in Cebu is held in honour of the holy image of the Santo Niño de Cebu (Infant Jesus).

www.sinulog.ph

Clark Hot Air Balloon Fiesta (February 9-12)

Hot air balloons from all over the world are set off at sunrise at this four-day international celebration at the Clark Special Economic Zone in Angeles City, central Luzon.

www.philballoonfest.net

Panagbenga Festival (February 26)

The month-long annual flower festival in Baguio celebrates the city's blooms and recovery from the earthquake in 1990.

Moriones (April 1-7)

This annual folk-religious festival is held in Marinduque every Holy Week. Locals dress up as *moriones*, or soldiers in Roman centurion costumes, to commemorate the story of Saint Longinus.

www.marinduque.gov.ph/festivals.html

Masskara Festival (October 1-19)

The Masskara Festival in Bacolod is also known as the Festival of Smiles, and features street dancing competitions and a beauty pageant. Colourful mask designs are the trademark of this yearly celebration.

www.themasskarafestival.com

Essentials in the city – Manila

Food Filipino specialties worth trying include *adobo* (a pork and/or chicken stew made with soy sauce, vinegar, garlic, bay leaf, and peppercorns), *sinigang* (a meat or seafood sour soup made with tamarind or guava) and *kare-kare*, a rich peanut-based beef stew served with banana blossom and shrimp paste on the side.

Quirky You may often hear the greeting, "Good morning/afternoon ma'am-sir-ma'am", which is meant to make you feel welcome as you enter a store.

Tippling policy A service charge of 10 per cent is usually included in the bill, in addition to a 12 per cent value-added tax (VAT). Customers may add an extra tip if the service was worth it.

Shopping Hop into a cab and go to Tiendesitas, a local open market in Pasig, where you can find local souvenirs, export-quality handicrafts and inexpensive clothing.

How to maximise two hours of free time Visit Intra-

muros and see the Manila Cathedral, San Agustin church and its beautiful museum full of Christian artefacts and paintings, as well as Fort Santiago, which has a museum of Rizal memorabilia.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Carlos Celdran (<http://celdrantours.blogspot.com>) runs popular walking tours of Intramuros, the Old Walled City, in about three hours. Ivan Man Dy (<http://oldmanilawalks.com>) offers half-day tours of Chinatown and San Miguel and historical areas near Malacanang, the presidential palace.

Need to impress clients lunch Cav in Bonifacio High Street does a great job with stylish entrées, steak and wines. If you need to up the ante, go to Masseto (114 Valero St., Makati), which has an impressive wine cellar.

Lunch on your own Apt 1B at One Lafayette Square, Salcedo Village, Makati, is popular with the brunch crowd. Nearby Le Bistro Vert at Fraser Place is full of organic, vegetarian-friendly options.

Late nights Signature cocktails and lip-smacking nibbles can be had at posh Salon de Ning at Peninsula Hotel in Makati. If you're in the mood for dancing, hie off to Re-publiq at ResortsWorld Manila.

Electricity 220 volts and 60 Hz, flat-blade plug with two round pins.

Visa requirements

Nationals of countries with reciprocal agreements with the Philippines are able to enjoy visa-free stays for up to 21 days for tourism or business purposes. Extension of such stays is possible with a 59-day tourist visa obtained from the Bureau of Immigration (BI).

Hong Kong and Macau nationals, as well as BNO and Macau-issued Portuguese passport holders enjoy visa-free entry for seven days, a privilege also extended to Chinese visitors with valid and current visas for entry into the US, Japan, Australia, Canada and Schengen countries.

Visas-on-arrival (VOA) for 14 days is extended to individuals and groups from all markets, except restricted nations, if vouched for by a Philippine-registered or accredited tour operator, which has to submit details of each person to the DoT and BI two days prior to arrival. VOAs cost US\$62 per person.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water P20 pesos for 200ml (US\$0.42)

Starbucks latte (tall) P110

A glass of open wine at a pub P240

Taxi flagdown rate P40

Important contacts

NTO

A new secretary to the **Department of Tourism (DoT)**, Ramon Jimenez, was appointed in August 2011. As an advertising veteran, Jimenez is spearheading the launch of a new tourism brand. DoT has overseas offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York City, Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo, Osaka, Taipei, Sydney, Frankfurt and London. It has also appointed marketing representatives in Hong Kong, Macau, Guangzhou, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, New Delhi, Mumbai, Dubai and Moscow.

www.tourism.gov.ph

Travel trade associations

Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA)

www.ptaa.org.ph

Philippine Tour Operators Association (Philotoa)

www.philotoa.org

Philippines IATA Agents Association (PIATA)

www.piata.com.ph

National Association of Independent Travel Agencies (NAITA) www.naitas.org.ph

Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP) www.hrap.org.ph

Compiled by Marianne Carandang

All information is correct at press time

Singapore

General Overview

Official name	Republic of Singapore
Capital	Singapore
Population	5.18 million
Total area	712.4 sq km
Currency	Singapore dollar
Official languages	English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil



Singapore gave a credible performance in 2011, with all key tourism performance indicators pointing towards an optimistic outlook, despite the uncertainty battering the global economy in the latter half of the year.

Between January and August, Singapore registered close to nine million tourists. Arrivals dipped slightly in February, May and August, although numbers peaked in July to a record high of 1.27 million. Average room rate (ARR) and average occupancy rate (AOR) fluctuated between January and August. AOR hit 86 per cent, while ARR stood at S\$240.30 (US\$191.23), a 14.3 per cent rise on the same period in 2010.

The UK remains Singapore's weakest market, while China leapt ahead of the pack, growing by 38.8 per cent, followed by the Philippines and surprisingly, Japan. The pace of growth from Thailand and the US shrank significantly in 2011 compared to 2010, due to a host of economic and social-political factors.

Climate

Average temperature	22°C to 34°C
Average rainfall	2,342.2mm a year
Average humidity	60 per cent to 90 per cent

Best time to visit

Heavy rains dominate between November and February, while April is a hot and humid month. Wet weather may, however, still persist during drier months, and it is best to be prepared for intermittent downpours throughout the year.

Distances

From Singapore to:

Kuala Lumpur	325km, 45 mins
Jakarta	894km, 1 hr 35 mins
Manila	2,397km, 3 hrs 35 mins
Bali	1,690km, 2 hrs 30 mins
Bangkok	1,425km, 2 hrs 20 mins
Phuket	939km, 1hr 45 mins
Beijing	4,457km, 6 hrs 15 mins
Shanghai	2,358km, 5 hrs 20mins
Hong Kong	2,573km, 3 hrs 45 mins
Ho Chi Minh City	1,090km, 2 hrs
Hanoi	2,186km, 3 hrs 25 mins
Melbourne	6,061km, 7 hrs 20 mins
Perth	3,903km, 5 hrs
Tokyo	5,313km, 7 hrs
Seoul	4,667km, 6 hrs 25 mins
Taipei	3,248km, 4 hrs 40 mins

Visitor arrival statistics

Almost all of Singapore's top 10 markets bounced back in 2010 after a dismal performance in 2009, when the overall number of arrivals dipped by 4.3 per cent. In 2010, the number of visitors to Singapore rose by 20.2 per cent.

All top markets, except the UK, registered growth in the first eight months of 2011. Indonesia and China retained their positions on the arrivals chart as the first and second-biggest source markets respectively. Some 1.27 million tourists arrived in Singapore in July, another record for arrivals in a single month.

The Singapore Tourism Board (STB) attributed the growth to the collective effort of the local tourism industry and its stakeholders. Marina Bay Sands, for instance, launched its ArtScience Museum in February, while Resorts World Sentosa opened its Maritime Experiential Museum & Aquarium in October. September was another busy month, with world-class nightclubs Pangaea and Avalon opening their doors alongside Louis Vuitton's first Maison store in South-east Asia.

Total tourist arrivals

2009	9,682,690, -4.3 per cent
2010	11,638,633, +20.2 per cent
2011 (Jan-Aug)	8,806,599, +15.5 per cent

Total length of stay for all international arrivals

2009	9.2 million days
2010	11.1 million days
2011 (Feb-Jul)	6.3 million days

Top 10 source markets 2009

	Arrivals	% Change
Indonesia	1,745,330	-1.1
China	936,747	-13.2
Australia	830,299	-0.3
Malaysia	764,309	18
India	725,624	-6.8
Japan	489,987	-14.2
UK	469,756	-4.7
Philippines	432,072	3.1
US	370,704	-6.5
Thailand	317,905	4.8

Source: Singapore Tourism Board

Top 10 source markets 2010

	Arrivals	% Change
Indonesia	2,305,149	32.1
China	1,171,337	25
Malaysia	1,036,918	35.7
Australia	880,486	6
India	828,903	14.2
Philippines	544,344	26
Japan	528,817	7.9
UK	461,714	-1.7
Thailand	430,022	35.3
US	416,990	12.5

Source: Singapore Tourism Board

Top 10 source markets (January to August 2011)

	Arrivals	% Change
Indonesia	1,703,743	17.9
China	1,125,432	38.8
Malaysia	713,458	13.4
Australia	630,702	10.2
India	582,604	5.5
Philippines	452,779	30.8
Japan	412,441	21.3
Thailand	317,819	16.9
US	300,714	5.9
UK	296,153	-4.4

Source: Singapore Tourism Board

Top 10 markets in tourism receipts Q2, 2011 (\$ million)

Indonesia	677
China	447
Malaysia	305
Australia	270
India	254
Philippines	194
Japan	162
UK	150
Thailand	148
US	142

Percentage of BT-MICE to overall arrivals

2008	29.7 per cent
2009	27 per cent
2010	27 per cent
2011	33 per cent (estimated)

Source: Singapore Tourism Board

Hotel statistics

Occupancy rates remained relatively stable in the first eight months of 2011, hitting an average of 86 per cent. A high of 93 per cent was reached in July, a peak period for both corporate and leisure-related events.

A room supply deficit, particularly in the midscale segment, is still prevalent despite the increase in number. Strong growth in visitor arrivals continues to drive hotel room bookings.

Rising hotel rates have not deterred visitors, who are drawn by the country's new integrated resorts and attractions. The average room rate in Singapore for January to August stood at S\$240.30 (US\$190), a 14.3 per cent in-



Chinatown, Buddha Tooth Relic Temple

Michael Ozeki

crease on the same period in 2010. Hotel rates are expected to rise by 10 per cent to 15 per cent in 2011 over 2010.

Horwath HTL projects an estimated 5,250 rooms to come on-stream between the second half of 2011 and 2013. About 70 per cent of the new rooms are to be built within the midscale and economy sectors, including Holiday Inn Express, Days Inn and Ramada.

Average occupancy rate/Average room rate

	Overall average occupancy	Overall average room rate	Total number of rooms
2009	76%	S\$189.60	37,000
2010	85%	S\$217.00	39,000
2011 (Jan-Aug)	86%	S\$240.30	41,000

Source: Singapore Tourism Board/Horwath HTL

Projected number of rooms

According to Horwath HTL, Singapore has 2,321 rooms in the pipeline for 2012 and 2,217 in 2013.

New hotels in 2011

- Bay Hotel Singapore, 333 rooms
- Mövenpick Hotel Sentosa (Phase 2), 81 rooms
- Orchid Hotel, 272 rooms
- Park Avenue Rochester, 70 rooms
- Porcelain Hotel (Phase 2), 50 rooms
- Santa Grand East Coast, 67 rooms

New hotels in 2012

- Aqueen Hotel Paya Lebar, 100 rooms
- Aqueen Hotel Tyrwhitt, 110 rooms
- Days Inn Balestier, 405 rooms
- Fairy Point Hill, 188 rooms
- Holiday Inn Express (Orchard), 220 rooms
- Park Avenue Changi, 170 rooms
- ParkRoyal at CBD, 367 rooms
- Ramada Balestier, 391 rooms
- Resorts World Sentosa Equarius Hotel, 172 rooms
- Resorts World Sentosa Spa Villas, 30 rooms
- W Hotel Sentosa Cove, 240 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Gardens by the Bay, located across the Singapore River in the heart of downtown Marina Bay, spans 101 hectares. It consisted of Bay South, Bay East and Bay Central. Dining and retail outlets opened in November.
www.gardensbythebay.org.sg

The **International Cruise Terminal** at Marina South is set to double Singapore's berth capacity to four upon operation next year. The S\$500 million facility will ease the capacity crunch at the Singapore Cruise Centre.

Resorts World Sentosa opened the Maritime Xperiential Museum in October, and is now gearing up for the Marine Life Park. A new attraction, *Transformers: The Ride*, at Universal Studios opened in December.
www.rwsentosa.com

River Safari, Asia's first river-themed wildlife park, is set

to open in 2012. Built over 12 hectares, the attraction will feature 5,000 animals with some 500 species.

www.riversafari.com.sg

Key events and festivals 2012

The Singapore Arts Festival (from May 18)

Organised by The National Arts Council.

www.singaporeartsfest.com

Singapore Food Festival (July)

Organised by the Singapore Tourism Board.

www.singaporefoodfestival.com.sg

Formula 1 Grand Prix (September 21 to 23)

Organised by Singapore GP.

www.singaporegp.sg

Zouk Out (December)

Organised by Zouk Club.

www.zoukout.com

Essentials in the city

Food Singapore's diversity is reflected in its culinary delights. Local favourites, including Hainanese chicken rice, chilli crab, *char kway teow* (stir-fried rice noodles) and *rojak* (fruit and vegetable salad) are must-tries.

Quirky Singaporeans are not incapable of speaking the Queen's English. They merely prefer to punctuate their sentences with 'lah' or 'lor' for a local touch.

Tipping policy Tipping is not a common practice, as a 10 per cent service charge is usually included in the bill.

Shopping Explore Arab Street, Chinatown and Little India for unique home décor, handicrafts and accessories.

How to maximise two hours of free time Wander around bustling Orchard Road, soak up its vibrant atmosphere and take time out for some retail therapy at newest additions Ion, H&M and Somerset 313.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Indulge in soothing treatments at Banyan Tree Spa at Marina Bay Sands on the 55th floor. It's open from 10.00 to 23.00 daily.

Need to impress clients lunch Iggy's, voted by S.Pellegrino as the 27th best restaurant in the world in 2011, serves a delectable array of Pan-Asian dishes that are a feast for the eyes and the palate. Its wine list, helmed by its owner Ignatius Chan, is a source of pride.

Lunch on your own Swing down to Dempsey Hill, a green pocket on the fringe of Orchard Road, offering a plethora of trendy pubs, bistros and restaurants.

Late nights Visit Clarke Quay for its hedonistic dance clubs and bars that feature live music of various genres.

Electricity Singapore's voltage is 220-240 AC, 50 Hz. Most hotels can provide a transformer to convert it to 110-120 AC, 60 Hz.

Visa requirements

Foreigners holding travel documents issued by the following countries will require either a business or social visit visa to enter Singapore:

• Assessment level one countries: Commonwealth of Independent States (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan), Georgia, India, Myanmar, China and holders of Hong Kong Document of Identity and Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Travel Permit.

• Assessment level two countries: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and holders of Palestinian Authority Passport, Temporary Passport issued by the UAE and Refugee Travel Document issued by Middle East countries.

Prices of common items in 2010

Bottled water S\$1.20 (US\$ 0.92)

Starbucks latte (small) S\$5.30

A glass of open wine at a pub S\$15

Taxi fare (2km) S\$5

Important contacts

NTO

The **Singapore Tourism Board (STB)** was first established as the Singapore Tourist Promotion Board in 1964. It now has an extensive network of 22 regional offices and two marketing representatives across eight regions.

Apart from courting the leisure market, STB has a Business Travel & MICE Group to promote Singapore as a premier business events destination. Contact: Tourism Court, 1 Orchard Spring Lane, Singapore 247729.

Tel: (65) 6736-6622

Fax: (65) 6736-9423

www.yoursingapore.com

Singapore Exhibition and Convention Bureau

secb@stb.gov.sg

<http://www.yoursingapore.com/content/mice/en.html>

Travel trade associations

National Association of Travel Agents Singapore

www.natas.travel

Singapore Hotel Association

www.sha.org.sg

Association of Singapore Attractions

www.singapore-attractions.com

Pacific Asia Travel Association (Singapore Chapter)

www.patasingapore.org.sg

ASEAN Tourism Association

www.aseanta.org

Compiled by Linda Haden

All information is correct at press time

Sri Lanka

General Overview

Official name	Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Capital	Colombo
Legislative capital	Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte
Population	20.6 million
Total area	65,610 sq km
Currency	Sri Lanka Rupee
Official language	Sinhala



Starting January 1, 2012, Sri Lanka will stop issuing visas on arrival and instead introduce an online 30-day Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for a fee of US\$10 for South Asian visitors and US\$20 for others. Transit passengers can stay free of charge for 48 hours. Sri Lanka has launched a five-year campaign aimed at lifting arrivals to 2.5 million, foreign exchange receipts to US\$2.75 billion and industry-related employment to 500,000 by 2016. The destination is offering *8 Wonderful Experiences in 8 Wonderful Days* – with themes of pristine, thrills, heritage, bliss, scenic, wild, essence and festive. Infrastructure is also being fast-tracked, with the Hambantota International Airport to operate in 2012 and Ratmalana airport to have limited international operations in 2011.

Climate

Average temperature	27°C to 29°C
Average rainfall	1,500mm to 2,100mm
Average humidity	79 per cent

Best time to visit

Sri Lanka has a good climate year-round. For those who seek the sun and sea, the best time to visit is from November to April in the southwestern coastal area, where the most of the beach resorts are located. The central highlands are pleasantly cool and relatively dry from January to April. The peak season is from mid-December to mid-January and from March to April, with a mini peak season in July and August, when festivals and pageants are held in the country.

Distances

From Colombo to:	
Mount Lavinia	12km
Bentota	64km
Hikkaduwa	99km
Galle	116km
Sinharaja	110km
Hambantota	238km
Yala	305km
Anuradhapura	206km
Dambula	148km
Minneriya	195km
Sigiriya	169km
Kandy	116km
Kalpitiya	150km
Trincomalee	257km
Batticaloa	255km
Jaffna	350km

Visitor arrival statistics

Tourism in Sri Lanka continued its phenomenal growth,

with 2010 seeing a 46.1 per cent jump in overall arrivals and similarly, a 64.6 per cent rise in receipts. The trend has continued through 2011, amidst a flow of new accommodation and refurbishment of older properties. Arrivals rose 34.3 per cent to 598,006 in the year to September, while earnings from tourism rose to US\$586 million. It is notable that major source markets continued to post strong growths in the first nine months of 2011. These included:

France	36,124, + 63.5 per cent
The Netherlands	16,998, + 44.4 per cent
Germany	38,330, +19.7 per cent
Russia*	10,934, +29.7 per cent
China	12,790, +74.5 per cent
Japan	15,079, +43.7 per cent
Malaysia	11,307, +26.6 per cent
Singapore	10,515, +42.8 per cent
India	120,530, +46.4 per cent
USA	17,152, +29.6 per cent

*SriLankan Airlines now flies to Moscow and Transaero Airlines also operates to Colombo. These should help boost numbers from Russia in the coming years

Source markets such as Singapore, Japan and US are risk averse, and their performance thus far indicates that Sri Lanka is already reaping the fruits of peace.

Worrying to note, however, is the UK market, which grew only marginally at 1.3 per cent during the first nine months of 2011, the source being the largest European market for Sri Lanka and larger than all of East Asia.

Total tourist arrivals

2009	447,890, +2.1 per cent
2010	654,476, +46.1 per cent
2011 (Jan-Sept)	598,006, +34.3 per cent

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Top 10 source markets 2010

Country	Arrivals	Marketshare (%)
India	126,882	19.4
UK	105,496	16.1
Germany	45,727	7.0
Maldives	35,791	5.5
Australia	33,456	5.1
France	31,285	4.8
Canada	21,123	3.2
US	19,093	2.9
Netherlands	17,861	2.7
Japan	14,352	2.2

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Total tourism receipts

2009	US\$350 million, +9.5 per cent
2010	US\$576 million, +64.6 per cent
2011 (Jan-Sept)	US\$586 million, +49.6 per cent

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Average length of stay in 2010

10 nights

Average expenditure in 2010

US\$88 per tourist per day

Percentage of BT-MICE arrivals to total arrivals in 2010

Business: 12.7 per cent

Conventions and meetings: one per cent

NTO budget

The government has two visions – to increase arrivals to 2.5 million in 2016, and four million arrivals and spending per tourist to US\$200, from US\$88 now, in 2020. All are aimed at making tourism the largest foreign exchange earner in Sri Lanka by 2020. These strategies are contained in the Tourism Development Strategy 2011-2016, which also includes attracting US\$3 billion worth of foreign investment in the next five years and lifting earnings to US\$2.75 billion by 2016. New sources of revenue from 2012 include the visa processing fee.

Arrivals target

Targeted arrivals for 2011 is estimated at 750,000 against 654,476 actual arrivals in 2010, while the estimate for 2012 is 925,000. MICE is expected to increase, particularly from India, where the Sri Lanka Convention Bureau is launching a new promotion campaign next year to grow numbers. However, the industry is concerned that the new visa rules could have an impact on this market and 2012 estimates.

Hotel statistics

There has been an increase in standard and upmarket hotel rooms. There has also been an increase in a new category of homestays, bungalows and guesthouses, which are proving popular among tourists.

These latter accommodation make up more than 7,500 rooms, adding to the 14,948 hotel rooms by the end of 2010. Another category of boutique hotels and villas and heritage homes added 834 rooms, taking the total number of rooms approved by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority to 22,735 by end-2010.

The outlook for hotels for winter 2011 looks a bit bleak, however, with arrivals in the four- and five-star category expected to register a 10-15 per cent drop.

In 2011, some of the upmarket hotels underwent refurbishment, a few of which have already opened. Among them, Chaaya Wild, a world-class game lodge at the Yala National Park with 66 rooms, and the Chaaya Tranz with 150 rooms, belonging to the John Keells Group chain of hotels, which reopened on November 1.

All regions of the country recorded strong occupancy in 2010 over 2009. The South Coast recorded the highest occupancy at 79.1 per cent, followed by Colombo at 78.3 per cent and Greater Colombo at 75.1 per cent. Colombo occupancy levels were around 59 per cent to 64 per cent, while resort occupancies ranged from 52 per cent to 59 per cent during the first half of 2011.

Average occupancy rate by region

Region	2009	2010
Colombo City	57.8	78.3
Greater Colombo	52.7	75.1
South Coast	49.6	79.1
East Coast	37.8	70.0
High Country	42.2	63.5
Ancient Cities	44.4	62.6
Northern Region	–	–
All Regions	48.4	70.1

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Average occupancy by hotel grades

Hotels	2009	AOR	2010	AOR
5-star	13	56.6	14	76.8
4-star	13	52.3	14	74.7
3-star	13	48.5	16	68.1
2-star	39	44.9	35	67.4
1-star	30	41.9	34	66.5
Unclassified	134	46.3	140	67.7
Total	242	48.4	253	70.2
Supplementary establishments	629	50.7	530	66.2

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

Total available rooms in graded hotels

Region	2009	2010
Colombo City	3,190	3,141
Greater Colombo	2,494	2,640
South Coast	4,940	5,099
East Coast	230	238
High Country	928	847
Ancient Cities	2,679	2,749
Northern Region	N/A	N/A
All Regions	14,461	14,714

Source: Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority

New minimum room rates came into effect on March 7, 2011 only for Colombo city hotels. Under this, a five-star hotel average room rate is US\$125, while four-star hotel rooms cost US\$95. Resorts in other cities cost slightly less.

New hotels

Infrastructure to facilitate new hotels and resorts has expanded to Arugam Bay Trincomalee, Negombo, Dedduwa, Galle, Mullaitivu and Hambantota, according to the Ministry of Economic Development. This is in addition to development work at Passikudah, Kuchchaveli and Kalpitiya.

Another 22,500 rooms are to be added to the current stock, raising the total number of rooms to more than 45,000 by 2016. Approval as of August 2011 has been given for the construction of 153 new hotels, with a total number of 9,385 rooms. These include nine five-star hotels. Four convention centres with room facilities have also been approved to attract MICE travellers.

COLOMBO

- Colombo Courtyard, 26 rooms, to open in December 2011
- John Keells Business Hotel, 240 rooms, to open in 2013
- Movenpick hotel, 220 rooms, to open in 2013
- Shangri-La Colombo, 700 rooms, to open in 2014

HAMBANTOTA

- Hotel Ranna212, 124 rooms, to open in December 2011
- Shangri-La, 161 rooms and 20 beach villas, to open in 2013

GALLE

- Six Senses Resorts & Spas, at least 80 villas, opening in 2012
- Six Senses Meeraladuaa, 16-room tented camps, opening in 2012

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

The National Performing Arts Theatre, gifted by the

Chinese government, will be one of the largest facilities in South Asia when it opens in Colombo by the end of the year. The theatre is equipped with an auditorium with 1,288 seats, a library and training facilities.

Hambantota International Cricket Stadium opened for the ICC World Cup this year. Cricket has a frenzied following in Sri Lanka and the stadium could help bring in sports fans if more international cricket test matches are organised.

Hambantota International Convention Centre, slated to have a 770-seat conference hall and a banquet hall that can seat at least 1,500, will begin construction in 2012.

The Hambantota/Mattala International Airport in Hambantota is Sri Lanka's second international airport after the Bandaranaike International Airport. Part of the airport is due to open by late-2012.

Key events and festivals 2012**Sri Lanka EXPO (March 28-30, 2012)**

This international trade fair in Colombo is aimed at attracting at least 300 overseas buyers and traders and showcases Sri Lanka's goods and handicraft for export. www.srilankaexpo.com

2012 ICC World Twenty20 (September 18 to October 7)

One of the biggest cricket tournaments in the world, the event was held in the Caribbean in 2010. In 2012, Sri Lanka will be hosting all the 10-test playing nations that are participating.

www.icc-cricket.yahoo.net**Kandy Perahera (July to August)**

This Buddhist festival is held at the central hill station of Kandy and is made up of the Buddhist clergy and hundreds of caparisoned elephants, with dances and drummers.

www.srilanka.travel**The Gathering (Between August and September)**

This is the coming together of the largest-ever concentration of elephants in Asia. Over 300 elephants gather on the banks of the Minneriya Lake at a wildlife park in northeastern Sri Lanka.

World Spice Food Festival (October/November)

Held for 10 days at Hawkers Street at Green Path in Colombo, the festival brings in chefs from Asia and the Middle East.

www.srilanka.travel**Essentials in the city – Colombo**

Food Try cheese *kothu rotti*, the quintessential Sri Lankan snack consisting sliced-up bits of *rotti* (flat bread), expertly blended with chicken, beef, eggs, onions, tomatoes, green chillies and cheese.

Quirky When attending a traditional Buddhist wedding, don't drink the glass of water offered by the host just before mealtime. The water is an invitation for guests to starting eating. Guests reciprocate by touching the glass with both hands as a gesture of accepting the invitation to come to the table.

Tipping policy A rule of thumb is to offer between US\$1 and US\$2 for hotel staff, while a guide or a tour driver would require from US\$5 to US\$15 per day.

Shopping Check out the Noritake ceramic shop, House of Fashion and Odel. Ceylon Tea masks and Ayurveda products are good buys.

How to maximise two hours of free time Try high tea at the Galle Face Hotel, Sri Lanka's oldest hotel, adjoining Colombo's landmark Galle Face seaside promenade. Lunch and dinner can be had at a reasonable price here.

Insider's tip for a half-day off Visit the turtle hatchery at Koggala in the south, run by the Wild Life Protection Society of Sri Lanka, and intended to protect Sri Lanka's turtles from extinction.

Need to impress clients lunch The Lighthouse Galley, run by the Sri Lanka Navy and located at Chaitya Road, Colombo, offers lunch and dinner with a panoramic view of the Indian Ocean. If you are lucky, the navy band with

trombone, trumpets and double bass, can play tunes at your request. The lighthouse, built in 1860, provides an ideal backdrop for a meal with some fine wines.

Lunch on your own Try the Park Street Mews, a stylish new restaurant located within a complex that comprises old stables and stores built by a well-known Sri Lankan family in the early 1900s. Apart from its signature fish and meat dishes, there is also a range of vegetarian options.

Late nights H2O is a hip and cutting-edge nightclub in the heart of Colombo, best known for its Glass Dance Floor and hosting the hottest DJs in the city.

Electricity 230 to 240V, AC. Those travelling with laptops are advised to bring power stabilisers.

Visa requirements

New visa rules apply from January 1, 2012, with Sri Lanka discontinuing the 30-day visas on arrival at no charge for nationals of 80 countries.

All travellers must now apply for an online visa called an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), the approval of which is promised within 48 hours, at a processing fee of US\$10 for South Asian visitors and US\$20 for others. Transit passengers can stay free of charge for 48 hours.

The facility covers both holiday and short business travel. Any stay beyond 30 days would require an extension plus a separate visa fee, which varies depending on nationality.

Foreign nationals planning to visit for official or diplomatic purposes should forward their applications to the Department of Immigration & Emigration through relevant Sri Lanka government ministries and agencies or overseas missions.

www.eta.gov.lk**Prices of common items in 2010****Bottled water** US\$0.50 to US\$1.25**Coffee (small)** US\$3**A glass of open wine at a pub** US\$5 to US\$8

Taxi fare The fares are metered and start from a minimum US\$0.50 per km for a new range of Nano cabs, with others charging more. Avoid hotel taxis, which are costly. For *tuk-tuks*, it's about US\$0.50 to US\$0.75 every kilometre, but learn the art of negotiation to get a good price.

Important contacts**NTO**

The Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau (SLTPB) is responsible for all marketing and promotional activities. It has one overseas office in the UK and uses Sri Lankan diplomatic missions in other countries to help promote the destination. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) is the apex body for Sri Lanka Tourism.

Tel: (94-11) 2426-900; (94-11) 2437-055, 59, 60

www.srilanka.travel; www.slttda.gov.lk

The Sri Lanka Convention Bureau is the government arm that monitors the development of the country's meetings industry. It functions under the Ministry of Economic Development.

www.visitsrilanka.net**Travel trade associations**

Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO), established in 1982, has 84 members. www.slaito.com

IATA Agents Association of Sri Lanka, formed in 1988, has 87 members and is affiliated with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce. www.iata-agents.lk

Travel Agents Association of Sri Lanka (TAASL), established in 1974, is the national body of travel agents. www.visitsrilanka.org

The PATA Sri Lanka Chapter is affiliated with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and has 72 members. www.patasrilanka.org

Compiled by Feizal Samath

All information is correct at press time

Taiwan

General Overview

Official name	Republic of China
Capital	Taipei
Population	23,071,779
Total area	35,980 sq km
Currency	New Taiwan dollar
Official language	Mandarin (Fujian dialects spoken at home. English spoken by many.)



Taiwan's open-door policy to tourists from the mainland has fueled several years of double-digit growth in overall tourism arrivals. Last year, 1.6 million Chinese visitors, nearly all of them still restricted to group tours, outnumbered the 1.1 million Japanese, traditionally the largest tourist group to Taiwan. But the Chinese influx has plateaued – growing a meagre 1.5 per cent during the first eight months of this year, compared to the double- and triple-digit surges in 2009 and 2010. To remedy this, Taiwan's government threw its doors open to FITs from Beijing, Shanghai and Xiamen, starting June 28. Turnout has been disappointing to date. Tourist hotspots, such as the National Palace Museum in Taipei, Sun Moon Lake near Taichung, and Ali Shan – the highest mountain in South-east Asia – remain popular among tourists.

Climate

Average temperature	22°C (north), 24°C (south)
Average rainfall	2,500mm
Average humidity	80.1 per cent (north), 75.9 per cent (south)

Best time to visit

Taiwan is at its best in autumn, a time of crisp blue skies and modest temperatures, though the occasional typhoon can disrupt travel plans.

Four or five typhoons hit the island between May and October. Clouds are present all year. The Chinese Lunar New Year is a peak period for international arrivals, and flights and hotels must be booked well in advance. With the growing number of Chinese visitors, local reservations can be problematic during China's Golden Week.

Distances

From Taipei to:

EAST COAST

Keelung	30km (by car)
Ilan	31km (by car, via tunnel)
Hualien	232km (by car, via tunnel)
Taitung	256km (air)

WEST COAST (high-speed rail stations)

Taoyuan	36.4km
Hsinchu	66.3km
Taichung	159.8km
Chiayi	245.7km
Tainan	308.0km
Kaohsiung	339.3km

Visitor arrival statistics

Of last year's 5.6 million visitors, 58.3 per cent came for

leisure, with business at 16.8 per cent and family visits at 8.9 per cent.

The top five destinations were Taipei (82.2 per cent), Nantou (37.5 per cent), Kaohsiung (36.7 per cent), Hualien (28.2 per cent) and Pingtung (24.6 per cent).

In Taipei, nightmarkets were the most attractive diversion (76.7 per cent), followed by Taipei 101 (59.3 per cent), the National Palace Museum (53.8 per cent), Sun Yat-sen Memorial (29.4 per cent) and the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial (27.6 per cent).

Around the island, the top scenic spots were Sun Moon Lake (36.5 per cent), Yehliu (30.4 per cent) and Taroko Gorge (27.9 per cent).

Total tourist arrivals

2009	4.4 million, +14.3 per cent
2010	5.6 million, +26.7 per cent
2011 (Jan-Aug)	3.8 million, +6.3 per cent

Average length of stay and daily expenditure

2009	7.17 nights; US\$216.30 per day
2010	7.06 nights; US\$221.84 per day

Top 10 source markets 2009

Country	Arrivals	%Change
Japan	1,000,661	-7.9 per cent
China	972,123	+195.4 per cent
HK, Macau	718,806	+16.2 per cent
US	369,258	-4.6 per cent
Singapore	194,523	-5.3 per cent
South Korea	167,641	-33.7 per cent

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Continued from previous column

Top 10 source markets 2009

Country	Arrivals	%Change
Malaysia	166,987	+7.1 per cent
Indonesia	106,612	-3.6 per cent
Thailand	78,405	-7.1 per cent
Philippines	77,206	-11.5 per cent

Source: Taiwan Tourism Bureau

Top 10 source markets 2010

Country	Arrivals	%Change
China	1,630,735	+67.7 per cent
Japan	1,080,153	+8.0 per cent
HK, Macau	794,362	+10.6 per cent
US	395,729	+7.0 per cent
Malaysia	285,734	+71.7 per cent
Singapore	241,334	+24.2 per cent
South Korea	216,901	+11.3 per cent
Indonesia	123,834	+16.0 per cent
Thailand	92,949	+17.9 per cent
Philippines	87,944	+12.9 per cent

Source: Taiwan Tourism Bureau

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January to August)

Country	Arrivals	%Change
China	1,103,860	+1.5 per cent
Japan	890,090	+15.9 per cent
HK, Macau	538,015	+1.0 per cent
US	270,722	+1.5 per cent
Malaysia	180,203	+13.1 per cent
South Korea	165,367	+14.9 per cent
Singapore	160,323	+18.4 per cent
Indonesia	Not available	Not available
Thailand	Not available	Not available
Philippines	Not available	Not available

Source: Taiwan Tourism Bureau

Arrivals target

Tourist arrivals grew 64.7 per cent, from 3.4 million in 2005 to 5.6 million last year.

Undaunted by the strain on the destination's tourism infrastructure, Taiwan policymakers are hoping to double the numbers.

On October 19, President Ma Ying-jeou announced a 10-year goal of 10 million annual tourist arrivals, with five million from China, two million from Japan, 1.5 million from South-east Asia, 1.2 million from Hong Kong and Macau, and 800,000 from Europe and the US.

Hotel statistics

Starwood Hotels & Resorts now leads the five-star hotel market in Taipei with five hotels, opening Le Meridien in 2010, W Taipei in 2011, on top of its existing Sheraton, Westin and Four Points.

The city currently has 13 local- and international-branded five-star brands, including the Grand Hyatt, Regent, Shangri-La, Sherwood, Howard Plaza, Ambassador and Palais De Chine and Grand, with an inventory of 5,486 rooms.

There is no clear data on five-star hotels outside Taipei. Not content with internationally recognisable rankings, the Taiwan Tourism Bureau (TTB) has attempted to create its own starred hotel system, but without success. To date, only 27 have joined the TTB's rankings.

Beyond this, the TTB classifies hotels as 'International Tourist', 'Standard Tourist' and 'Other'.

TTB's official figures for Taiwan's hotel industry do not include the many small domestic hotels scattered across the island.

Total number of rooms as of September 2011

International Tourist	183,505
Standard Tourist	43,870
Total	227,373

Tourist hotels

	AOR	ARR (NT\$)
2011 Jan-Sept	65.8 per cent	3,275
2010 Jan-Sept	66.6 per cent	3,070
2010	68.2 per cent	3,074
2009	62.5 per cent	3,018



Source: Taiwan Tourism Bureau

New hotels in 2012 and 2013

TAIPEI

- Xinyi, 150 rooms
- Okura Prestige Taipei, 208 rooms

TAICHUNG

- Millennium Vee Hotel Taichung, 237 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

The Taoyuan International Airport is planning to add a third terminal and runway worth an estimated NT\$300 billion (US\$9.9 billion). The goal is to create a 1,249 hectare Aeropark to serve as a regional hub for North-east Asia. Construction is planned for the next two years.

The Taipei metro to Taoyuan Airport is now under construction and is scheduled to begin service in October 2014. Passengers will be able to check baggage at the MRT's main station, with 14 service counters planned for this service.

Key events and festivals for 2012

Taiwan's big five traditional festivals

Five ancient holidays are celebrated in Taiwan, each observed according to the lunar calendar. The year kicks off with Chinese New Year (January 23, 2012), the biggest holiday of year, though not much of an event for travellers, as it is for family get-togethers. The Lantern Festival (February 6, 2012), Dragon Boat Festival (June 23, 2012), Ghost Festival (August 31, 2012) and Mid-Autumn Festival (September 30, 2012) are major holidays celebrated publicly.

Double Ten Day (October 10)

Double Ten Day is Taiwan's national day. A parade is held outside the Presidential Office in downtown Taipei.

Spring Scream (Early April, to be announced)

Taiwan's version of Woodstock, now in its 18th year, draws the island's cool bands to the beaches near Kenting for four days and nights. Timed to coincide with the spring break, the event draws a college crowd ready to party.

Kinmen-Xiamen Cross Border Swim (sometime between July and August)

Every summer, at least 100 swimmers race across the brief stretch of water separating Taiwan's outer island of Kinmen and its sister Chinese city Xiamen. Last year's event, which began at Xiamen, attracted 156 swimmers.

Essentials in the city – Taipei/Taichung/Kaohsiung

Food Good eats are everywhere. Roadside stalls prepare Taiwanese favourite snacks. Small family-owned restaurants serve Chinese cuisine.

In Taipei, Shihlin is the most visited and the best place to sample a cross-section of local fares. Off-campus areas are noted for South-east Asian cuisine. Taipei's well-heeled wine and dine in the East District.

Quirky Politeness is a noticeable trait among the locals. Pedestrians may jostle, taxis may careen, but if a visitor asks for directions, they often find themselves personally guided to their destination.

Tipping policy Locals don't tip, so it is usually not necessary. Tipping is understood at Western-style restaurants, however. Pubs sometimes have tip jars. Tipping is optional at international hotels. A 10 per cent service charge and a five per cent tax is usually added on to hotel room rates and restaurants.

Shopping Luxury goods can be bought at the Xinyi District New Life Square, with its Shin Kong Mitsukoshi stores. The Taipei 101 Mall is nearby. For authentic souvenirs, try the Taiwan Handicraft Promotion Center, located on No.1 Hsu Chow Road, Taipei. For Hello Kitty merchandise, browse the small shops at Taipei's West Gate District.

How to maximise two hours of free time in Taipei Take a walk. Taipei's streets are flanked by office buildings, but behind them, one often finds remnants of old neighbourhoods dating back to the Japanese colonial days.

Insider's tip for half a day off along the North Coast

From Keelung, hire a car or catch a bus and tour the coast. If you head south, you'll catch glimpses of the rugged scenery of the East Coast, and a leisurely half-day journey might take you as far as Ilan, a good place to turn back. If you head north from Keelung, the highway passes fishing villages and the rock formations at Yehliu. Continue on to Tanshui, and follow the river back to the city.

Need to impress clients lunch in Taipei

The Yen restaurant and bar on the 31st floor of W Taipei is ideal for a private conversation over lunch. Yen also has five private rooms for groups up to 10 people, with views of nearby Taipei 101.

Lunch on your own in Taipei

Visit the blog of resident foodie, Hungry Girl, hungryintaipei.blogspot.com, for a sampling of what is available. Her recent favourite is Flavors Restaurant, a Swedish bistro in the East District.

Late nights in Taichung

First, pass through the Feng Chia night market, often crowded with college students from nearby campuses. For live music try 99 or Animal House on Hsiang Shang Road. For a British-style pub, try Pig Pen on DaGuan Road. Prices are cheap by Taipei standards.

Electricity

Electric current of 110V at 60 cycles. Appliances from Europe, Australia or South-East Asia will need an adaptor or transformer.

Visa requirements

Potential visitors should contact the Taiwan Bureau of Consular Affairs (BOCA) in their home country for up-to-date visa requirements. Some short-stay visitors do not require visas.

Taiwan has 90-day visa exemption treaties with 33 European countries, as well as Japan and New Zealand. Thirty-day visa exemptions are offered to citizens of the US, Australia, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. Tai-

wan is currently streamlining its visa policy.

Taiwan issues many types of visas for business and travel and for family visits for overseas Chinese. Visas can be single- or multiple-entry and vary in duration.

Travellers planning frequent visits should be aware that the type of visa used for initial entry can affect the eligibility for other types of visas later on.

Prices of common items in 2011

7-Eleven latte (large) NT\$50 (US\$1.65)

A glass of open wine at a pub From NT\$150

Taxi fare (1.5 km) NT\$70, and NT\$5 for each addition 300m

Important contacts

NTO

The **Taiwan Tourism Bureau**, founded on December 29, 1972 under the Ministry of Transportation & Communications, is responsible for domestic and international tourism policy-making, execution and development.

Contact:

Janice Seh-Jen Lai, director-general
Taiwan Tourism Bureau, 9th floor, No. 290, Sec. 4, Zhongxiao E. Rd., Taipei, Taiwan (ROC)

Tel: (886) 2-2349-1500

24-hour toll-free hotline: 0800-011765

[www.tbroc@tbroc.gov.tw](http://www.tbroc.tbroc.gov.tw)

Travel trade associations

The Taiwan Visitors Association is the organiser of the Taipei International Travel Fair (TITF), held each year in November, and publisher of the Taiwan Hotel & Restaurant Guide, available for free online. TVA also has overseas offices in Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, the US and Germany.

No. 9, Sec. 2, Minsheng E. Rd., Zhongshan Dist., Taipei City 104, Taiwan

Tel: (02) 2594-3261

Fax: (02) 2594-3265

www.tva.org.tw

The Taiwan Travel Agent Association of the ROC, Taiwan works with travel agents at the national level, and is the ad hoc coordinator of activities conducted by associations at the county and city level.

3rd floor, No. 23, Lung-Chiang Road, Taipei, Taiwan

Tel: (02) 2779-0008

Compiled by Glenn Smith

All information is correct at press time



Tamsui Fisherman's Wharf in Taipei

Reinhold Sta

Thailand

General Overview

Official name	Kingdom of Thailand
Capital	Bangkok
Population	67 million
Total area	513,115 sq km
Currency	Baht
Official Language	Thai



Visitor arrivals grew 27.64 per cent to 12.89 million tourists between January and August 2011 as Thailand continued to see an upward trend, reeling back from the domestic political uncertainty of the last few years. At press time, the country's tourism stakeholders said it was too premature to assess the impact of the flood in the central region.

In 2010, the country recorded 15.93 million visitors and generated 592 billion baht (US\$19.19 billion) in revenue, representing a 12.63 per cent and 16.18 per cent increase over 2009 respectively.

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports (MoTS) was expecting to attract 19.5 million visitors and generate 700 billion baht this year. It hopes the figures will grow to 22 million visitors and 820 billion baht revenue in 2012.

Climate

Average temperature: 20°C to 32°C
(November to January)
34°C (February to May)
29°C (June to October)

Average rainfall: 150mm (February to May)
1,500mm (June to October)

Average humidity: 75 per cent (February to May)
87 per cent (June to October)

Best time to visit

Thailand is suitable for year-round visits. The best time is from November to February (when the weather is sunny, cool and dry), although prices may be higher compared to other seasons at this time. Some hotels and tour operators may offer early-bird discounts.

The dry and hot season is from February to May. During the rainy season from June to October, hotels and tour operators usually offer discounted rates or special deals.

In areas facing room oversupply, such as Bangkok, Phuket, Pattaya, Koh Samui and Chiang Mai, prices play a vital part in securing business. Hua Hin, despite oversupply, continues to enjoy high occupancy and room rates during weekends, thanks to the domestic market. However, it relies heavily on the international market during weekdays.

Distances

From Bangkok to:

Chiang Mai 695km, 50 mins
Chiang Rai 785km, 1 hr 9 mins
Phuket 862km, 1 hr 12 mins
Pattaya 150km, 20 mins

Hua Hin 123km, 45 mins
Krabi 814km, 1 hr 12 mins
Koh Samui 769km, 1 hr 3 mins
Koh Chang 345km, 1 hr 3 mins
Had Yai 950km, 1 hr 18 mins
Ubon Ratchatani 629km, 1 hr 3 mins
Udon Thani 564km, 55 mins

From Chiang Mai to:

Mae Hong Son (Pai) 245km, 35 mins
Chiang Rai 180km, 36 mins

From Koh Samui to:

Phuket 317km, 55 mins
Krabi 234km, 50 mins

Visitor arrivals statistics

East Asia continues to be largest source of foreign visitors to Thailand, supplying 6.98 million tourists from January to August 2011, up 35.7 per cent when compared to the same period in 2010. Europe remains the second largest market, recording a 19.08 per cent growth, to 3.38 million arrivals.

According to data from MoTS, foreign tourists spent on average 9.12 days and 4,078.67 baht per day in Thailand in 2010, an increase from 8.99 days and 4,011.21 baht in 2009.

Meanwhile, the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) recorded a recovery in group series, with Asian arrivals taking the lead in the top 10 markets. Between January 1 and September 27, 2011, ATTA members handled 2.23 million tourists, a 57.5 per cent jump over the same period the previous year. The top nine markets for ATTA were from Asia – China, Russia, India, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

All registered either double- or triple-digit growth.

On the MICE front, the Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) expects the country to record 720,000 MICE visitors and 56 billion baht in revenue for 2011.

Total tourist arrivals

2008	14.59 million, +0.88 per cent
2009	14.14 million, -2.98 per cent
2010	15.9 million, +12.63 per cent
2011 (Jan-Aug)	12.9 million, +27.64 per cent
2011	19.5 million (target)

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Total tourism receipts

2008	505 billion baht
2009	510 billion baht
2010	590 billion baht
2011	700 billion baht (target)

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

MICE arrivals and earnings

Year	MICE visitor numbers	MICE income (million USD)
2008	727,723	1.58
2009	730,352	1.7
2010	740,412	1.67
2011 (estimated)	720,000	N/A

Source: Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau

Top 10 source markets 2008

Country	Arrivals	Change
Malaysia	1,805,332	+17.22
Japan	1,153,868	-9.69
South Korea	889,210	-17.94
China	826,660	-8.87
UK	826,523	-3.78
Australia	694,473	+5.52
US	669,097	-1.89
Laos	621,546	+21.00
Singapore	570,047	-5.72
Germany	542,726	-0.32

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Top 10 source markets 2009

Country	Arrivals	Change
Malaysia	1,757,813	-2.63
Japan	1,004,453	-12.95
UK	841,425	+1.80
China	777,508	-5.95
Laos	655,034	+5.38
Australia	646,705	-6.88
US	627,074	-6.28
South Korea	618,227	-30.47
India	614,566	+14.45
Germany	573,473	+5.67

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Top 10 source markets 2010

Country	Arrivals	Change
Malaysia	2,058,956	+17.13
China	1,122,219	+44.34
Japan	993,674	-1.07
UK	810,727	-3.65
South Korea	805,445	+30.28
India	760,371	+23.72
Laos	715,345	+9.21
Australia	698,046	+7.94
Russia	644,678	+91.32
US	611,792	-2.44

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January-August)

Country	Arrivals	Change
Malaysia	1,566,503	+21.91
China	1,155,712	+68.59
Japan	799,527	+24.65
South Korea	720,510	+39.77
India	627,670	+34.72
Russia	619,723	+78.72
UK	577,246	+6.89
Laos	565,012	+46.61
Australia	523,418	+18.38
US	457,314	+15.53

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports

Arrivals target for 2012

MoTS is targeting 22 million visitor arrivals and 820 billion baht in revenue in 2012. It is hoping to raise the numbers to more than 30 million visitors and close to two trillion baht revenue in 2015, in which industry players have suggested that the ministry should factor in domestic tourism receipts, which accounts for 40 per cent of the overall revenue.

The ministry's tourism marketing arm, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), will continue to market the country using the *Amazing Thailand Always Amazes You* branding for 2012. In December 2011, the TAT will also introduce an ad-hoc campaign, the *Miracle Thailand Year*, as part of the government's initiative to commemorate the Thai king's 84th and queen's 80th birthdays.

Meanwhile, TCEB expects the number of foreign MICE visitors to grow by 15-20 per cent a year between 2012 and 2015.

Hotel statistics

Despite oversupply, Bangkok continues to see new hotel openings, with the majority flying international hotel flags. Phuket is seeing the second largest number of new hotels, followed by Koh Samui and Pattaya. There are also new hotel openings and ongoing projects for Hua Hin, Phang-nga (Khao Lak), Krabi and Chiang Mai.

Room statistics
By regions 2010

Location	No. of hotels	% Change	No. of rooms	% Change	Length of stay
North	1,373	+4.49	54,863	+2.92	1.67
Central, excluding Bangkok	319	+22.22	18,137	+12.41	1.37
West	1,009	+33.11	31,084	+18.19	1.99
East	1,122	-8.63	67,770	-2.49	1.65
North-east	887	+39.91	38,222	+19.16	1.42
South	2,288	-7.03	107,157	-0.48	2.31

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports
% change year-on-year

By key cities 2010

Location	No. of hotels	% Change	No. of rooms	% Change	Length of stay
Bangkok	336	nil	63,460	-0.57	2.09
Pattaya	368	+2.22	38,729	+0.46	2.36
Koh Chang	165	-1.79	5,420	+1.56	3.95
Hua Hin	233	+37.87	7,015	+20.84	1.66
Cha-am	114	-8.80	5,689	-2.65	1.25
Chiang Mai	447	+9.02	23,292	+3.55	2.15
Chiang Koh	123	+4.24	6,247	+1.68	1.53
Rai Samui	363	-14.59	14,261	-7.42	4.99
Phuket	678	+6.60	40,821	+7.75	3.17
Krabi	178	-49.29	9,985	-19.77	2.43
Phang-nga	148	-0.67	5,749	-0.93	3.83

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports
% change year-on-year

Average occupancy rate by regions

Location	2010	2009	% Change
North	30.47	31.16	-0.69
Central, excluding Bangkok	49.70	52.68	-2.98
West	36.06	44.11	-8.05
East	29.06	32.13	-3.07
North-east	37.93	39.28	-1.35
South	36.11	38.55	-2.44

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports
% change year-on-year

Average occupancy rate by key cities

Location	2010	2009	% Change
Bangkok	49.70	52.68	-2.98
Pattaya	32.99	33.23	-0.24
Koh Chang	24.29	20.17	+4.12
Hua Hin	28.27	59.25	-30.98
Cha-am	27.19	31.86	-4.67
Chiang Mai	30.99	31.83	-0.84
Chiang Rai	28.55	29.79	-1.24
Koh Samui	33.94	39.14	-5.20
Phuket	35.72	35.28	+0.44
Krabi	41.19	52.84	-11.65
Phang-nga	25.41	23.54	+1.87

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Sports
% change year-on-year

New hotels in 2011
BANGKOK

- Novotel Bangkok Fenix Ploenchit, 370 rooms
- Novotel Bangkok Impact, 380 rooms
- Sivatel Bangkok, 75 rooms
- Jasmine Resort Hotel, 200 rooms
- The St Regis Bangkok, 224 rooms
- Park Plaza Sukhumvit Soi 18, 125 rooms
- Best Western Plus@20 Sukhumvit, 78 rooms
- Ramada Encore, 188 rooms
- All Seasons Bangkok Victory Monument, 162 rooms
- LIT Bangkok, 79 rooms
- Best Western Bangkok Hipptique, 50 rooms
- Buri Tara Resort and Spa, 68 rooms
- Best Western Plus Sathorn, 256 rooms
- Novotel Bangkok Platinum, 283 rooms
- Hotel Muse, MGallery Collection, 166 rooms
- Aloft Bangkok - Sukhumvit 11, 297 rooms
- Oriental Residence Bangkok, 145 rooms
- Four Points by Sheraton Sathorn, 421 rooms
- Golden Tulip Mandison Suites, 120 rooms
- Eastin Grand Hotel Sathorn, 390 rooms
- Best Western Bangkok, 180 rooms
- Golden Tulip Sovereign Hotel Bangkok, 448 rooms (a rebranding)
- Anantara Bangkok Sathorn, 425 rooms (a rebranding)
- Anantara Bangkok Riverside, 413 rooms (a rebranding)

PHUKET

- Rawai Palm Beach Resort, 198 rooms
- U Phuket, 140 rooms
- Thanyapura Resort, 77 rooms
- Four Points by Sheraton, 200 rooms
- Holiday Inn Phuket Mai Khao Beach Resort, 244 rooms
- Regent Phuket Cape Panwa, 106 rooms
- Movenpick Residences Laguna Beach Phuket, 39 rooms (a rebranding)
- Centara Grand West Sands Resort & Villas, 316 rooms (a rebranding)

KOH SAMUI

- Nora Buri Resort & Spa, 144 rooms
- Outrigger Koh Samui Resort and Spa, 81 rooms
- Akyra Chura Samui, 61 rooms
- Conrad Koh Samui, 80 rooms
- Le Meridien Koh Samui Resort & Spa, 77 rooms
- InterContinental Samui Baan Taling Ngam Resort, 77 rooms
- Mövenpick Resort & Spa Mae Nam Beach, 81 rooms

PATTAYA/HUA HIN/KRABI/CHIANG MAI

- Nova Hotel & Spa Pattaya, Centara Boutique Collection, 79 rooms

- Centra Pattaya Resort, 152 rooms
- Best Western Plus Serenity Hua Hin, 54 rooms
- Golden Tulip Samudra Hua Hin, 100 rooms
- Mercure Krabi Deevana, 213 rooms
- Möevenpick Suriwongse Hotel Chiang Mai, 286 rooms

New hotel openings in 2012
BANGKOK

- The Siam, 39 pool villas
- U Jatujak Bangkok, 150 rooms
- U Sathorn, 78 rooms
- Amara Bangkok, 272 rooms
- Best Western Premier Sukhumvit, 138 rooms
- The Regent Bangkok, 327 rooms
- W Bangkok, 414 rooms
- Hotel Okura, 242 rooms
- Le Meridien Suvarnabhumi, 220 rooms
- Holiday Inn Express Bangkok Siam, 300 rooms
- Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok, 287 rooms
- Double Tree by Hilton Sukhumvit, 182 rooms
- Sofitel So Bangkok, 238 rooms
- Sofitel Bangkok Sukhumvit, 345 rooms
- Lancaster Bangkok, 240 rooms
- The Ritz-Carlton Residences Bangkok, 200 rooms
- Mode Sathorn Hotel by Siam@Siam, 200 rooms
- Centara Watergate Pavillion Hotel and Spa, 288 rooms

PHUKET

- COMO Resort, 129 rooms
- U Serene Phuket, 140 rooms
- Andaman Embrace Resort and Spa, 223 rooms
- Pullman Phuket Arcadia Naithorn Beach, 281 rooms

KOH SAMUI

- Vana Belle Samui Resort and Spa, 180 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Asiatique The Riverfront is slated to open in 2012, and is set to be the first and largest lifestyle riverfront integrated entertainment venue in Asia. Located along the banks of the Chao Phraya River off Charoenkrung Road, it will feature more than 1,500 boutique shops and 40 restaurants, a riverfront pathway, more than 12,000m² of open space for concerts and product launches, as well as a theatre for the *Calypso Cabaret* show and the *Joe Louis' Thai Puppet Performance*. Operating hours are set to be from 1600 to midnight. As of press time, it was under construction. www.thaiasiatique.com

THAI Smile Air is set to take the skies in July 2012, linking Bangkok with five domestic destinations – Ubon Ratchathani, Udon Thani, Khon Kaen, Chiang Rai and Surat Thani. The airline will also be linking the Thai capital with key cities in India and China from 2013. In the first year, it will be operating four 174-seat Airbus A320 aircraft, increasing to 11 by 2015. Positioned as a light premium carrier, THAI Smile Air is a subsidiary of national carrier Thai Airways International. www.thaiairways.com

Chiang Mai's convention and exhibition centre is set to open in July 2012, after much delay. This government-funded facility is situated on 52.16 hectares in Chiang Mai. The 1.86 billion-baht centre will boast 364,550m² of outdoor spaces and 55,000m² of indoor areas, including a 10,000m² exhibition hall and 3,000-seat convention room. The venue will be managed by a private company, according to MoTS.

The Phothalai Convention and Event Center is scheduled to open in February 2012. It will have 11 types of indoor and outdoor event spaces for 20 to 800 people. This include a Thai pavilion reception hall with an underground aquarium, a grand ballroom, a traditional Thai stream in a landscaped garden and an outdoor event zone at the centre court pond. The facility is being developed alongside an 18-hole golf course with a combined investment of 3.5 billion baht. It is located on the same grounds as the eight-year-old Phothalai Thai Wellness Centre on Praditmanuthum Road, about 25 minutes by car from Suvarnabhumi Airport. www.phothalai.com

Key events and festivals 2012

The Royal Flora Ratchaphruek (November 9 to February 15)

Held for the second time in Chiang Mai from November 9, 2011 to February 15, 2012, this garden show spans over 80 hectares. The venue is a 30-minute drive from the city centre and will showcase plants and flowers from more

than 30 countries.
www.royalflora2011.com

Songkran Festival (April)

The Thai New Year festival lasts for about a week.
www.tourismthailand.org

Amazing Thailand Grand Sale (June 15 to August 15)

This is the biggest annual sale in the country, with shops and related establishments taking part in offering from 10-80 per cent discounts on goods and services.
www.tourismthailand.org

King's Cup Elephant Polo Tournament (September)

This week-long affair will be held at Anantara Resort, Hua Hin.
www.anantaraelephantpolo.com

Loi Krathong Festival (November)

This is held across the country to celebrate the god of the river or *pra mea kongka* during the full-moon night of the 12th lunar month. Thais will float lotus-shaped baskets or *krathong* made of banana leaves in the rivers, wishing for good luck in the year to come.
www.tourismthailand.org

Laguna Phuket Triathlon (December)

Organised by Laguna Beach Resort, this international sport competition comprises 1.8km of swimming, 55km of cycling and 12km of running.
www.lagunaphukettriathlon.com

Essentials in the city – Bangkok

Food Try the traditional Thai dish, *tom yum goong*, a spicy prawn soup that has gained worldwide fame.

Quirky Thais like to add 'ka' for woman or 'krub' for man at the end of the sentence, even in English. In Thai culture, doing so means being polite and respectful in speech.

Tipping policy Tipping is not expected, but leaving small

notes received as change is appreciated. Most upscale restaurants include a service charge in the bill.

Shopping Roam Chatuchak Weekend Market and practise your bargaining skills for a variety of products.

How to maximise two hours' free time in Bangkok

Plenty of choices. Shop till you drop. Treat yourself to a Thai massage or foot reflexology. Or hire a long-tail boat to observe how the locals live along the banks of the Chao Phraya River.

Need to impress clients lunch in Bangkok

Reserve a table at The Table, Grand Hyatt Erawan, or at any of the other fine-dining outlets in Bangkok's five-star hotels.

Lunch on your own

Look out for food courts in department stores or shopping malls for a variety of delicious Thai and international dishes at reasonable prices, or eat as the locals do at any roadside stall.

Late nights

Popular venues in Silom, Thong Lor, Sukhumvit, Nana, Ekkamai and RCA are the places where you can mingle with the crowd.

Electricity

Single phase voltage of 220V and a frequency of 50Hz, primarily two- and three-pin sockets.

Visa requirements

A passport that is valid for at least six months and a visa are required for foreigners entering Thailand. Citizens of 42 countries, including the UK, the US and Germany can obtain on arrival visa-free stays of not more than 30 days. Nationals of 21 countries, including China, India and Russia, can obtain a visa on arrival at a fee of 1,000 baht (US\$30) for stays not exceeding 15 days.

Prices of common items in 2011

Bottled water (small) seven baht (US\$0.22)

Starbucks latte (small) 75 baht

A glass of open wine at a pub 200 baht

Taxi fare (2km) 40 baht

Important contacts

NTO

MoTS works closely with its tourism marketing arm, the TAT.
www.mots.go.th, www.tourismthailand.org

Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau

www.tceb.or.th

Travel trade associations

Tourism Council of Thailand

www.thailandtourismcouncil.org

Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA)

www.atta.or.th

Thai Hotels Association (THA)

www.thaihotels.org

Association of Domestic Travel (ADT)

www.domesticthai.com

Thai Travel Agents Association (TTAA)

www.ttaa-thai.com

Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)

www.pata.org

Compiled by Sirima Eamtako

All information is correct at press time



The Grand Palace in Bangkok

Redmond Sia

Vietnam

General Overview

Official name	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Capital	Hanoi
Population	88 million
Total area	329,560 sq km
Currency	Dong
Official Language	Vietnamese



The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in Vietnam is expecting 5.3 million to 5.5 million foreign tourists and more than 30 million domestic tourist-trips for 2011. This is an increase over 2010's five million foreign visitors and 28 million domestic tourist-trips.

In the first nine months of 2011, the destination recorded 4.3 million visitor arrivals, an increase of 15.5 per cent over the same period in 2010. Meanwhile, tourism revenue in the first half of 2011 surged 35.5 per cent year-on-year to US\$3 billion, compared to US\$5 billion for the entire 2010.

Climate

Average temperature	22°C to 27°C
Average rainfall	1,500mm to 2,500mm
Average humidity	80 per cent

Best time to visit

Vietnam's temperate north and tropical south keep its tourism industry active throughout the year. Southern beaches are best visited when it's cool and dry from November to January.

Room rates start to drop during the hot season from February to May and fall even further when the rains come from June to October.

Cool, damp winters cover Vietnam's north from November to April, when Hanoi's competitive room rates attract MICE events, while hot summers from May to October lure travellers to the cool mountain resorts.

Distances

From Hanoi to:

- Ho Chi Minh City 1,710km, 2 hrs
- Danang 763km, 1hr 15 mins
- Haiphong 103km
- Halong Bay 180km
- Sapa (Lao Cai) 340km
- Hue 658km, 1hr 10 mins
- Nha Trang 1,299km, 1hr 40 mins

From Ho Chi Minh City to:

- Phan Thiet 198km
- Dalat 308km, 40min
- Phu Quoc 383km, 1hr
- Nha Trang 448km, 1hr 10 mins
- Danang 954km, 1hr 10 mins
- Hue 1,071km, 1hr 20 mins

From Danang to:

- Hue, 108km
- Danang Hoi An, 30km

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism

Visitor arrival statistics

In the first nine months of 2011, Vietnam recorded 4.3 million visitor arrivals, an increase of 15.5 per cent over the same period in 2010. It registered the highest growth from neighbouring markets, including Cambodia (59.2 per cent increase), China (44.9 per cent increase) and Malaysia (12.2 per cent increase).

In the last three months of 2011, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism announced that it would focus on the remaining activities of the *Phu Yen National Tourism Year 2011*, preparing for the *Hue National Tourism Year 2012*, and actively participate in the voting campaign for Halong Bay to be chosen as one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, in a bid to reach its 2011 target of 5.3 million to 5.5 million foreign visitors.

Total tourism arrivals

2009	3.77 million, -10.9 per cent
2010	5 million, +34.8 per cent
2011 (Jan to Sept)	4.3 million, +15.5 per cent
2011	5.3 million to 5.5 million (estimated)

Top nine source markets 2009

Countries	Arrivals	Change
China	527,610	-18%
US	403,930	-2.6%
South Korea	362,115	-19.4%
Japan	359,231	-8.6%
Taiwan	271,643	-10.4%
Australia	218,461	-6.9%
France	174,525	-4.1%
Malaysia	166,284	-4.7%
Thailand	152,633	-6.3%

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism

Top 10 source markets 2010

Countries	Arrivals	Change
China	905,360	+74.5%
South Korea	495,902	+37.7%
Japan	442,089	+24%
US	430,993	+6.9%
Taiwan	334,007	+23.7%
Australia	278,155	+28.1%
Cambodia	254,553	+15.2%
Thailand	222,839	+39.7%
Malaysia	211,337	+27.6%
France	199,351	+15.3%

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism

Top 10 source markets 2011 (January-September)

Countries	Arrivals	Change
China	979,412	+44.9%
South Korea	380,863	+4.2%
Japan	343,755	+8.2%
US	328,933	+1.2%
Cambodia	302,293	+59.2%
Taiwan	265,968	+5.7%
Australia	210,552	+2.5%
Malaysia	168,164	+12.2%
France	156,244	+6%
Thailand	128,402	-20.6%

Source: Vietnam National Administration of Tourism

Overall tourism receipts

2009	US\$3.6 billion
2010	US\$5 billion
2011 (January to June)	US\$3 billion

Arrivals target for 2012

Vietnam's tourism targets for 2012 were not available at press time. However, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is aiming to grow tourism numbers to 10.3 million foreign visitors and 47.5 million domestic-trips, with a combined revenue of US\$19 billion by 2020.

Hotel statistics

According to the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), the country has 12,000 accommodation establishments with 235,000 rooms. Of the total, about 19 per cent are in the three- to five-star categories, comprising 48 five-star hotels with more than 12,000 rooms, 110 four-star hotels with close to 13,500 rooms and 235 three-star hotels with 16,400 rooms.

The country is seeing a boom in hotel development, with some real estate analysts describing the surge of new luxury hotel projects as a 'tsunami' of supply on the central and southern coastal shores.

According to Savills Vietnam, Hanoi would see supply increase faster than demand in the next five years.

Ho Chi Minh City has seen the number of three- to five-star hotels nearly double in the last three years to 73 with a total of 9,700 rooms, according to the city's Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism. The three-star category saw the strongest growth, climbing from 21 to 47 hotels, while the four- and five-star segment rose to 13 hotels each, from eight and 11, respectively.

New hotels in 2011

HANOI

- Crowne Plaza West Hanoi, Vietnam, 393 rooms
- Crowne Plaza West Hanoi Residences, 136 rooms
- Eastin Easy LTT, Hanoi, 70 rooms
- Eastin Easy GTC, Hanoi, 60 rooms

DANANG

- Crowne Plaza Danang, 535 rooms (a rebranding)
- Furama Resort Danang, 30 new villas (now totalling 328 keys)
- InterContinental Danang Resort, 197 rooms
- Mercure Danang 279 rooms

HO CHI MINH CITY

- Nikko Sai Gon Hotel, 335 rooms

- Grand Hotel, 500 rooms (upgraded from a four-star to five-star hotel)

OTHERS

- Best Western Dalat Plaza Hotel, 91 rooms
- Best Western Premier Indochine Palace, Hue, 222 rooms
- Chen Sea Resort & Spa Phu Quoc, a Centara Boutique Collection, 36 rooms (a rebranding)
- Romana Resort & Spa in Mui Ne, 96 rooms
- Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa, 89 rooms

2012 and beyond

HANOI

- Mercure Hanoi Hado, 222 rooms
- InterContinental Hanoi Landmark, 343 rooms
- U Hang Chuoi Hanoi, 102 rooms
- Eastin Easy Le Duan, 90 rooms

HO CHI MINH CITY

- Novotel Saigon Centre, 250 rooms
- Pullman Saigon Centre, 290 rooms
- Ibis Saigon South, 170 rooms
- Ibis Saigon Centre, 338 rooms
- Le Meridien Saigon, 320 rooms
- Eastin Easy Saigon, 60 rooms

DANANG

- Pullman Danang Olalani Resort, 197 rooms
- Novotel Danang Han River, 346 rooms
- Mercure Son Tra Resort, 120 rooms

OTHERS

- Pullman Vung Tau, 350 rooms
- Novotel Dalat, 175 rooms
- Novotel Phu Quoc Resort, 234 rooms
- Pullman Hai Phong Island Resort, 300 rooms
- Novotel Hue, 234 rooms
- Mercure Sam Son, 200 rooms
- U Dalat, 120 rooms
- U Sapa, 58 rooms
- U Hoi An, 130 rooms
- U Vung Tau, 150 rooms
- U Nha Trang, 120 rooms
- Eastin Easy Vung Tau, 110 rooms
- Eastin Easy Cat Ba Island, 70 rooms
- Swiss-Belhotel Phan Thiet, 278 rooms
- Westin Cam Ranh Resort and Spa, 330 rooms
- Nha Trang Marriott, 280 rooms
- Crowne Plaza Nha Trang, 305 rooms
- Best Western Pearl River Hotel, Hai Phong, 63 rooms
- Hoi An Marriott Resort and Spa, 250 rooms

New attractions/tourism infrastructure

Vietnam Airlines will launch direct services from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to London's Gatwick Airport from December 8, with two weekly flights each from the two Vietnamese cities. The airline already serves the European cities of Paris, Frankfurt and Moscow.

Prior to this, the flag carrier increased the Hanoi-Kuala Lumpur service from two to three flights daily in May; Hanoi-Ho Chi Minh City-Melbourne from five weekly to a daily flight and the Hanoi-Ho Chi Minh City-Sydney from six weekly to a daily flight in June; and the Hanoi-Singapore service from three to four weekly in July.

It is also upgrading its fleet by leasing eight new Airbus A321-200s and acquiring 26 aircraft of the same type for deliveries between 2011 and 2015. It plans to grow its fleet to 115 aircraft by 2015 and 165 by 2020, up from 70 now. Vietnam Airlines and Jet Airways signed an MOU in October 2010 to totally evaluate and implement air services between India and Vietnam. www.vietnamairlines.com.vn

The north-central province of Thanh Hoa is planning to spend more than US\$1 million to restore the **Ho Dynasty Citadel** and upgrade tourism infrastructure there. The project, started in October 2011, is expected to be completed by the middle of 2012, the same time the citadel will have an official certificate marking its UNESCO World Cultural Heritage status. The 14th-century citadel is located in Vinh Loc district, 150km south of Hanoi. www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn

Opened in 2011, **Can Tho International Airport** was built with the aim of facilitating international tourism to the Mekong Delta area and the southern beach towns in regions like Phan Thiet and Nha Trang. Visitors who want to bypass Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City can fly direct-

ly for a river or beach experience. A new cave with a complex series of grottos has been discovered in the northern mountainous province of **Bac Kan**. The cave is 20m deep inside the first cave. All stalactites are still untouched. The newly-explored one is 350m long and formed by five caves. All the walls are blue stone and are mixed with soil and white stone in some places. Local authorities have alerted related agencies to protect and develop the caves into a tourist destination. www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn

The Ministry of Transport has ordered Middle Airports Corp to speed up construction of a new passenger terminal at the **Danang International Airport** in central Vietnam before December 31. The new terminal project, now in its final stages, is nearly two years behind schedule. The new terminal, which requires an initial investment capital of US\$74 million, is designed to handle up to six million passengers and up to 400,000 to one million tons of cargo a year. www.vietnamtourism.gov.vn

The US\$2 billion **Happyland** project, Vietnam's version of Disneyland and Universal Studios, is being constructed by Phu An Infrastructure Development and Construction JSC, a subsidiary of Khang Thong Group.

It will include a theme park, large-scale commercial centre, three- to five-star hotels, water parks, studio parks, discotheques, indoor and outdoor theatres, restaurants, shopping centres, floating market, the miniature world with many famous buildings and a Vietnamese cultural centre. There will also be a King of Pop museum, partly funded by Michael Jackson's father, Joseph Jackson. The project is located in Ben Luc District, Long An province, only 20 minutes by car from Ho Chi Minh City, and is slated to open in April 2014. Ground-breaking for this project took place on November 11, 2011.

Key events and festivals 2012

Khmer ox races in An Giang

Every summer, from the 29th day of the eighth lunar month to the first day of the 9th lunar month (late summer, early fall), the Mekong Delta's Khmer community get together for a wet and wild ox and plough race. Hundreds of people turn up to watch the races. www.vietnamtourism.com.vn

Tet Nguyen Dan (January 23 to January 26)

The Lunar New Year or Vietnamese New Year, Tet Nguyên Đán (Feast of the First Morning in Sino-Vietnamese), more commonly known by its shortened name Tet, is the largest, most important and popular holiday and festival in Vietnam. It is the Vietnamese New Year based on the lunar calendar, a lunisolar calendar. Domestic air travel peaks during this period and advance booking of flights is necessary.

National Day (September 2, 2012)

If you are looking for a great day to be in Vietnam, consider National Day, the Vietnamese version of Labor Day. As this year's celebration falls on a Friday, it would be a good excuse to party in Ho Chi Minh City. Young lovers ride around with abandon, old men and women show up with flags and the nation travels and finds time to relax – a rare feat for a country with the lowest number of national holidays in the region. www.sgholiday.com

Thua Thien-Hue National Tourism Year 2012

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and related ministries will jointly launch tourism activities in Thua Thien-Hue under the framework of the *2012 National Tourism Year*. These will include a programme, *Vietnamese Businesses and National Culture, Heritage* in February, a *Vietnamese Charm 2012* in March 2012, a second international chorus festival, a South-east Asia international chess competition in June, as well as an international U18 tennis tournament and a national traditional martial arts championship.

Essentials in the city – Ho Chi Minh City

Food One Californian restaurant here called Bun Think Nuong, "Vietnam in a bowl", serves cold noodles, roast pork, cucumbers, fried spring rolls and fresh herbs doused in spiced fish sauce. The food can be bought in the early afternoon at a sidewalk stand on Nguyen An Ninh street near the Ben Thanh market for US\$2 to US\$3.

Shopping It may seem corny, but local shoppers will

all direct you towards Saigon Square, the town's towering mall, where good buys can be surprisingly found without the potentially harrying experience of bargaining at Ben Thanh market. Shop for some of the loveliest lacquerwares, sequined handbags and fashion accessories, etc.

Two hours Take a stroll through Cong Vien Tao Dan and towards the Reunification Palace. While most tourists focus on the humorous callisthenic classes or touring the palace itself, take time to enjoy one of the city's few green spaces. Keep your eyes peeled for the elusive Pied Hornbill that nests around the palace.

Insider's tip for a half-day off In Ho Chi Minh City, wander through District 5's (Cholon) old temples, market stalls and restaurants. Possibly the world's biggest Chinatown, the area is a confusing maze of fabric shops, pungent herbal apothecaries and old pagodas.

Need to impress clients lunch Take your clients for a high-end, open-air Vietnamese barbeque experience at Quan Nuong (3T BBQ). Enjoy tender grilled goat udder and skewered giant prawns with a view of downtown Saigon's expanding skyline.

Lunch on your own Ben Thanh market is a popular tourist destination with charming eateries inside and around it. While not a great place to go window shopping, it is great for walking and dining.

Late nights While clubs abound in Vietnam, few places are as welcoming to foreigners as the city's most famous club, Apocalypse Now. Watch out for 'catwomen'. The upstairs dance floor should be safe enough.

Tippling policy Tipping is not expected, but leaving small notes received as change is appreciated. Most upscale restaurants include a service charge in the bill.

Electricity Single phase voltage of 220V and a frequency of 50Hz, primarily two-pin sockets.

Visa requirements

Most visitors to Vietnam require a 15- or 30-day tourist visa to enter the country, and these can be applied for at any Vietnamese embassy or consulate, either by post or in person. The fee may vary, depending on the country, but the cost is usually around US\$25 to US\$40. One passport-sized photo is generally required.

Processing takes five days, although a two-day express service is available, and this application may be faxed. A same-day express service is also available for those staying less than 15 days, and these generally take an hour to process. There are no visas on arrival.

Citizens of Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore are exempt from visa requirements. Passport holders from Japan, Korea, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia are waived from tourist visa fees.

Prices of common items in 2012

Bottled water US\$0.50 (large), US\$0.25 (small)

Starbucks latte (small) There is no Starbucks in Vietnam, but a latte costs about US\$2.50 at Highland Cafés.

A glass of open wine at a pub US\$2.50

Taxi fare (2km) US\$1.50 in Ho Chi Minh City

Important contacts

NTO

The **Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT)** operates under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and is headed by general director Nguyen Van Tuan. VNAT is continuing to promote the country under the *Vietnam: The Hidden Charm* brand, aimed mostly at Western markets.

Travel trade associations

The **Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Vietnam Chapter** has 138 members and conducts monthly/quarterly meetings, promotional presentations, educational training seminars and chapter exchange tours. www.patavietnam.org

Compiled by Sirima Eamtako

All information is correct at press time



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