

Hong Kong moving speedily from “0+3” to “0+0” onto Reopening mainland Borders

Adopted in late September 2022, Hong Kong’s “0+3” policy waived mandatory quarantine for incoming travelers tested negative upon arrival but kept the 3 days restrictions like arrivals barred from entering restaurants etc. , which in less than 2 months almost completely abolished on Dec 13.

Days later, the city relax social distancing restrictions like allowing full capacity for restaurants and removing limit on banquet’s participants etc.

On Dec 28, Hong Kong Government announced scrapping / relaxing even more Covid-19 restrictions which effective on Dec 29. They include: (a) Incoming travelers shall present a negative RAT result valid for 24 hours or a negative PCR test result valid for 48 hours taken before departure, but need not take PCR test upon arrival. Instead they shall take daily RAT test in the following 5 days. (b) Stop categorizing citizens as “close contacts” who will not subject to mandatory quarantine. (c) Scrapping Vaccine Pass Requirement and other social distancing measures but will still require wearing mask.

Thus, Hong Kong now implementing a “0+0” Covid-19 Policy. What’s more, Hong Kong now very close to reopening border with the mainland!

China reopening Border

China made on Dec 26 following announcements which will take effect on Jan 8, 2023! Then, China will only require incoming travelers take PCR test taken within 48 hours before departure and tested negative but no PCR test upon arrival; arrivals with normal health declaration and no abnormal health sign when passing through regular health check at immigration can go free; restart processing mainland travelers to apply Exit-Entry Permit to travel to Hong Kong and Macau; and remove various restrictions on international flights.

In fact, Hong Kong Chief Executive, upon his return from Beijing, announced on Dec 24 the Central government already agreed to reopen border between the mainland and Hong Kong around mid-January next year.

Earlier, local media reported operators of shops in train stations LOWU and LOK MA CHAU, where located border crossing with Shenzhen, recently been invited to hold site inspection there in early January, a move widely regarded as preparing for reopening.

Big Jumps in Outbound during Xmas & Spring Festival

These recent developments immediately give Hong Kong’s outbound another round of strong push, after the earlier one in late Sep. The week following Dec 13 saw departures by Hong Kong residents at airport jumped by times! Specifically, these departures average 22843 daily between Dec 15 and 20, which up 3 times over the Oct average of 6860! In fact, the city’s residents made 70% more departures in Oct than the month before.

Though prices some 30% more expensive, many travel agents reported full bookings for tour groups in Xmas and travelers more incline booking quality tours. Limited by flights additional groups for Xmas not possible! Understandably, good tour groups in coming Spring Festival in Jan projected.

From the Hong Kong Travel Industry Council, departing the city in Dec are over 600 tour groups of which 70% to Asian destinations while long haul Europe and the Middle East are popular long haul destinations. In fact, travel trade commented outbound business this Xmas back to around 30% to 50% pre-pandemic level, media reported.

Earlier, Cathay announced resuming flights from around 16% of pre-pandemic level in Sep to about one third by year end, then to 70% by the end of 2023. As rehiring and retraining staff take time, bulk of flight resumptions expected in 2023. Likely, many airlines will prefer catching the outbound peak in next summer! Thus ITE Hong Kong 2023, which will be held in June, well timed.

ITE Asia's leading Outbound Travel Fair

The three largest sources of ITE2019's buyers and trade visitors, who totaled around 12000 buyers in 2 trade days, are respectively Hong Kong at around 60%, Guangdong at 20% and other parts of China at 10%. Visitors in the 2 public days totaled around 80000m with 85% quality FIT. Also, over 80% of its some 700 exhibitors came from outside and overseas. The annual ITE, which Hong Kong's only travel fair, is highly international.

ITE is the earliest travel fair in the Greater Bay Area (the Bay), which in 2020 has a combined population of 86 million and combined GDP of US\$1669 billion. Also, the Bay include three of China's top five cities, namely, Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, which linked by speed train and within one hour traveling time.

During the pandemics years, ITE2020 was cancelled but ITE2021 and ITE2022 were held physically and successfully. Maintaining sessions exclusively for registered trade and MICE visitors, each of the two pandemic editions reconnect over 100 multinational exhibitors with some 30000 trade and quality FIT visitors which do not include online participants.

The next ITE Hong Kong

ITE Hong Kong 2023, the 37th ITE (Leisure) & the 18th ITE MICE, will be held from June 15 to 18 at Halls 1 of the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. Its first 1.5 days admit only registered trade and MICE visitors, while in remaining days visitors can pay for admission.

By sharing government subsidy, ITE2023 offers 20% rental discount for payment within 2022, and 10% discount thereafter till March 2023. In addition, Hong Kong exhibitors can also separately apply for government's EMF with maximum possible subsidy at 50% rental.

Organized by TKS Exhibition Services Ltd., the annual ITE is strongly supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, with Hong Kong Tourism Board, Macau Government Tourism Office and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong etc. as Supporters. For further details, please visit www.itehk.com. For enquiries, please contact TKS via Email: travel@tkshk.com | WhatsApp: +852 69361271 Wechat: [itehongkong](#) | Facebook: [itehk](#)