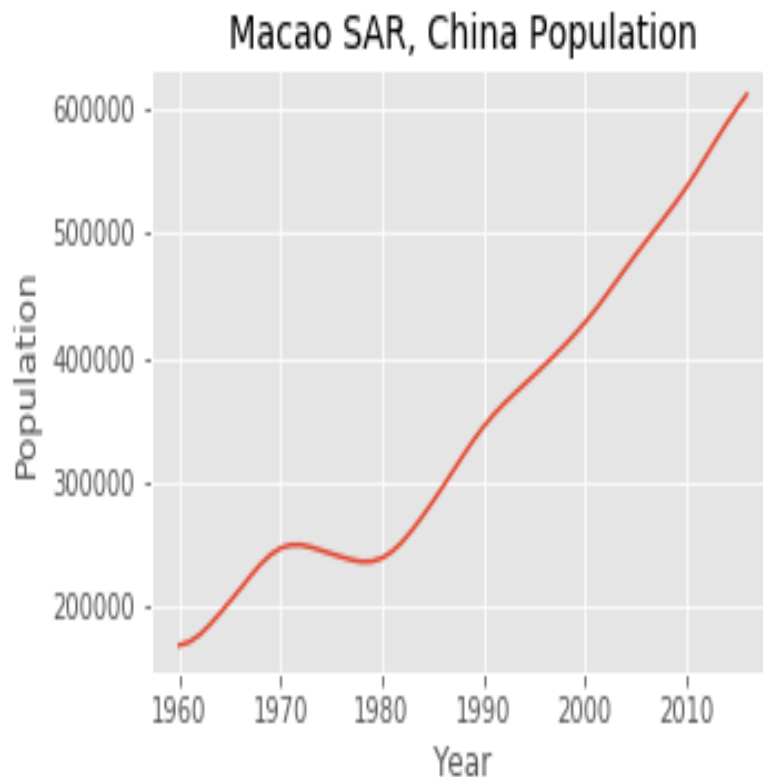


Macao SAR, China



Macao (Chinese: 澳门, Cantonese: [m̌u.m̌aːn], (listen); Portuguese: Macau), officially the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, is an autonomous territory on the western side of the Pearl River estuary in East Asia. Macau is bordered by the city of Zhuhai in mainland China to the north and the Pearl River Delta to the east and south. Hong Kong lies about 64 kilometres (40 mi) to its east across the Delta. With a population of 650,900 living in an area of 30.5 km² (11.8 sq mi), it is the most densely populated region in the world. A former Portuguese colony, it was returned to Chinese sovereignty on 20 December 1999. Macau was administered by the Portuguese Empire and its inheritor states from the mid-16th century until late 1999, when it constituted the last remaining European colony in Asia. Portuguese traders first settled in Macau in the 1550s. In 1557, Macau was leased to Portugal from Ming China as a trading port. The Portuguese Empire administered the city under Chinese authority and sovereignty until 1887, when Macau became a colony through an agreement forced by Portugal after instability in China. Sovereignty over Macau was transferred back to China on 20 December 1999. The Joint Declaration on the Question of Macau and Macau Basic Law stipulate that Macau operate with a high degree of autonomy until at least 2049, fifty years after the transfer. Under the policy of "one country, two systems", the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China is responsible for military defense and foreign affairs while Macau maintains its own legal system, public security force, monetary system, customs policy and immigration policy. Macau participates in international organizations and events that do not require members to possess national sovereignty. Macau is a resort city in Southern China, known for its casinos and luxury hotels. Its gaming revenue has been the world's largest since 2006, with the economy heavily dependent on gaming and tourism. According to The World Factbook, Macau has the fourth highest life expectancy in the world. Moreover, it has a very high Human Development Index, ranking 17th in the world as of 2016. Macau is among the world's richest regions and its GDP per capita by purchasing power parity was higher than that of any country in the world, according to the World Bank. It is known as the pre-eminent gambling (or gaming) capital of the world, dwarfing other

gambling centers. == Etymology == The present Chinese name (Chinese: 澳門; pinyin: Àomén; Cantonese Yale: Oumún) means "Bay Outlet". Macao is otherwise known in Chinese as Haojing (海鏡, literally "Moat Mirror") or Jinghai (鏡海, literally "Mirror Sea"). The name Macao is thought to be derived from the A-Ma Temple (Chinese: 媽祖廟; pinyin: Māzǔ Miào; Cantonese Yale: Māgok Muih), a temple built in 1448 dedicated to Mazu, the goddess of seafarers and fishermen. More precisely, the name Macao corresponds to the Chinese name "媽港" (pinyin: Māgǎng), meaning "Mazu Harbor", and referring to the waters adjacent to the Ama Temple. == History == The history of Macao is traced back to the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC), when the region now called Macao came under the jurisdiction of Panyu County, Nanhai Prefecture (modern Guangdong). The first recorded Chinese inhabitants of the area were people seeking refuge in Macao from invading Mongols during the Southern Song. Under the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), fishermen migrated to Macao from Guangdong and Fujian. The Macao native people were Tanka boat people. Macao did not develop as a major settlement until the Portuguese arrived in the 16th century. In 1513, Jorge Álvares became the first Portuguese to land in China. In 1535, Portuguese traders obtained the rights to anchor ships in Macao's harbours and to carry out trading activities, though not the right to stay onshore. Around 1552–1553, they obtained temporary permission to erect storage sheds onshore, in order to dry out goods drenched by sea water; they soon built rudimentary stone houses around the area now called Nam Van. === Portuguese Macao === In 1557, the Portuguese established a permanent settlement in Macao, paying an annual rent of 500 taels (18.9 kilograms / 41.6 pounds) of silver. The Portuguese continued to pay an annual tribute up to 1863 in order to stay in Macao. By 1564, Portugal commanded western trade with India, Japan, and China. In 1631 the Chinese restricted Portuguese commerce in China to the port of Macao. During the 17th century, some 5,000 slaves lived in Macao, in addition to 2,000 Portuguese and 20,000 Chinese. As more Portuguese settled in Macao to engage in trade, they made demands for self-administration; but this was not achieved until the 1840s. In 1576, Pope Gregory XIII established the Roman Catholic Diocese of Macao. In 1583, the Portuguese in Macao were permitted to form a Senate to handle various issues concerning their social and economic affairs under strict supervision of the Chinese authority, but there was no transfer of sovereignty. Macao prospered as a port but it was the target of repeated failed attempts by the Dutch to conquer it in the 17th century. On 24 June 1622, the Dutch attacked Macao in the Battle of Macao, in the hope of turning it into a Dutch possession. The Portuguese repulsed their attack and the Dutch never tried to conquer Macao again. The majority of the defenders were African slaves, with only a few Portuguese soldiers and priests. Captain Kornelis Reyerszoon was commander of the 800-strong Dutch invasion force. The grieving Dutch Governor Jan Pz. Coen said after the defeat that "The slaves of the Portuguese at Macao served them so well and faithfully, that it was they who defeated and drove away our people there last year", and "Our people saw very few Portuguese" during the battle. Following the First Opium War (1839–42), Portugal occupied the empty islands of Taipa and Coloane in 1851 and 1864 respectively. On 1 December 1887, the Qing and Portuguese governments signed the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Peking, under which China ceded the right of "perpetual occupation and government of Macao by Portugal" in compliance with the statements of the Protocol of Lisbon. In return, Macao Government would cooperate with Hong Kong's smuggling trade in Indian opium and China would profit from imposing customs taxes. Portugal was also obliged "never to alienate Macao without previous agreement with China", therefore ensuring that negotiation between Portugal and France (regarding a possible exchange of Macao and Portuguese Guinea with the French Congo) or with other countries would not go forward – so that the British commercial interests would be secured; Macao officially became a territory under Portuguese administration. In 1928, after the Qing dynasty had been overthrown following the Xinhai Revolution, the Kuomintang (KMT) government officially notified Portugal that it would abrogate the Treaty of Amity and Commerce; the two powers signed a new Sino-Portuguese Friendship and Trade Treaty in place of the abrogated treaty. Changing only a few provisions concerning tariff principles and matters relating to business affairs, the new treaty did not alter the sovereignty of Macao and Portuguese government of Macao remained unchanged. During World War II, unlike Portuguese Timor, which was occupied by the Japanese in 1942 along with Dutch Timor, the Japanese respected Portuguese neutrality in Macao, but only up to a point. Macao enjoyed a brief period of economic prosperity as the only neutral port in South China after the Japanese had occupied Guangzhou and Hong Kong. In August 1943, Japanese troops seized the British steamer Sian in Macao and killed about 20 guards. The next month they demanded the installation of Japanese "advisors" under the threat of overt military occupation. The result was that a virtual Japanese protectorate was created over Macao. When it was discovered that "neutral" Macao was planning to

sell aviation fuel to Japan, aircraft from the USS Enterprise bombed and strafed the hangar of the Naval Aviation Centre on 16 January 1945 to destroy the fuel. American air raids on targets in Macao were also made on 25 February and 11 June 1945. Following Portuguese government protests, in 1950 the United States paid US\$20,255,952 to the government of Portugal. Between the end of the Pacific War and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Macao served as a safe haven for refugees of the Chinese Civil War. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Beijing government declared the Sino-Portuguese Treaty invalid as an "unequal treaty" imposed by foreigners on China. However, Beijing was not ready to settle the treaty question, allowing the maintenance of "the status quo" until a more appropriate time. Influenced by the Cultural Revolution in mainland China and by general dissatisfaction with Portuguese government, riots broke out in Macao in 1966. In the most serious, the so-called 12-3 incident, 6 people were killed and more than 200 people were injured. On 28 January 1967, the Portuguese government issued a formal apology by means of an "admission of guilt". Shortly after Portugal's 1974 Carnation Revolution, which overthrew the Estado Novo dictatorship, the new government determined it would relinquish all its overseas possessions. In 1976, Lisbon redefined Macao as a "Chinese territory under Portuguese administration" and granted it a large measure of administrative, financial, and economic autonomy. Three years later, Portugal and China agreed to regard Macao as "a Chinese territory under [temporary] Portuguese administration". The Chinese and Portuguese governments commenced negotiations on the question of Macao in June 1986. The two signed the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration the next year, making Macao one of the special administrative regions of China.

=== Transfer of sovereignty and SAR status === The Chinese government assumed formal sovereignty over Macao on 20 December 1999 as a special administrative region (SAR) after over 400 years of Portuguese colonial rule. This event also marked the end of the Portuguese Empire and European colonialism in Asia. The economy since then has continued to prosper with the sustained growth of tourism from mainland China and the construction of new casinos.

== Government and politics == The Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration and Macao Basic Law, Macao's constitution, promulgated by China's National People's Congress in 1993, specify that Macao's social and economic system, lifestyle, rights, and freedoms are to remain unchanged for at least 50 years after the transfer of sovereignty to China in 1999. Under the principle of "one country, two systems", Macao enjoys a high degree of autonomy in all areas except defence and foreign affairs. Macao officials, rather than PRC officials, run Macao through the exercise of separate executive, legislative, and judicial powers, as well as the right to final adjudication. Macao maintains its own currency (the Macanese pataca), customs territory, immigration and border controls and police force.

=== Executive === The government in Macao is headed by the Chief Executive of Macao, who is appointed by the central government upon the recommendation of an election committee, whose three hundred members are nominated by corporate and community bodies. The recommendation is made by an election within the committee. The chief executive's cabinet is made up of five policy secretaries and two commissariats and is advised by the Executive Council of Macao, which has between seven and eleven members. Edmund Ho, a community leader and former banker, was the first chief executive of the Macao SAR, replacing General Vasco Rocha Vieira at midnight on 20 December 1999. Fernando Chui is the current Chief Executive. The chief executive and the cabinet have their offices in the Macao Government Headquarters, located in the area of São Lourenço.

=== Legislature === The legislative organ of the territory is the Legislative Assembly, a 33-member body comprising 14 directly elected members, 12 indirectly elected members representing functional constituencies and seven members appointed by the chief executive. Any permanent residents at or over 18 years of age are eligible to vote in direct elections. Indirect election is limited to organizations registered as "corporate voters" and a 300-member election committee drawn from broad regional groupings, municipal organizations, and central government bodies. In February 2009, the Legislative Assembly passed the Macao national security law based on a withdrawn security legislation previously introduced in Hong Kong. Democracy advocates feared that the bill's excessively broad scope could lead to abuses, a concern which has been heightened after a number of prominent supporters of democracy in Hong Kong were denied entry into Macao in the run-up to the bill's passage.

=== Judiciary === The original framework of the legal system, based largely on the Law of Portugal, the Portuguese civil law system, was preserved after 1999. The territory has its own independent judicial system with a High Court independent of both the local Government and the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. Judges are selected by a committee and appointed by the chief executive. Foreign judges may serve on the courts. The judicial organs of the Macao are the Public Ministry; the Courts of First Instance, which are

subdivided into the Basic Judicial Court and Administrative Court; the Court of the Second Instance and the Court of Final Appeal. The legal system of Macao is essentially based on the model of Portuguese law, and is thus part of the family of continental legal systems (Roman-Germanic). From 1987 to 1999, this legal system was completely modernized with a view to the transfer of sovereignty from Macao to the People's Republic of China. Thus, a number of new laws and codes have been adopted, including the Criminal Code (1995), the Civil Code (1999), the Commercial Code (1999), the Criminal Procedure Code (1996) and the Civil Procedure Code (1999). Following the transition, major reforms in the legal system continued, such as the use of Chinese language in courts and legislations. From a constitutional point of view, the Macao legal system is characterized by the existence of a text with constitutional force in the Macao SAR, the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region, promulgated by the National People's Congress in 1993. As a rule, the national laws of the People's Republic of China do not apply to Macao, except for those expressly indicated in Annex III of the Basic Law. At present, they are eleven and deal with matters not included in the autonomy of the Special Administrative Region, such as national defense and external relations. The gambling sector, being a fundamental economic activity for Macao, is subject to a very developed regulation, thus having a good and developed right of the game. There is no death penalty or life imprisonment in Macao, as they are not covered by the Macao Criminal Code. === Military === Under Portuguese rule, Macao often served as an expeditionary base to Japan and other regions of East Asia from the 16th century onwards, while maintaining a strong garrison mainly to repel Dutch and mainland Chinese attacks. However, since the allied British settled Hong Kong, the need for a strong military presence in Macao dimmed and it became limited before ceasing in 1974. However, despite having no Portuguese garrison left on the territory, a small security force managed by the local PSP was kept, which proved useful with the escalating triad warfare tensions towards the last decades of Portuguese administration. Also the Capitania dos Portos kept operating a coast guard and the Portuguese airforce kept airfields active until the opening of Macao International Airport in the mid-1990s. In 1999, upon handover to the PRC, a substantial garrison of the People's Liberation Army was established in the city helping deliver the last blow to the violence perpetrated by the triads, who were weakened by police action and arrests prior to the handover. The garrison remains, with a large portion of the forces stationed in neighbouring Zhuhai as well. According to the Article 14, Macao Basic Law, The Central People's Government shall be responsible for the defense of the Macao Special Administrative Region. And The Government of the Macao SAR shall be responsible for the maintenance of public order in the Region. === International relations === As a special administrative region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Macao's diplomatic relations and defence are the responsibility of the Central People's Government of the PRC. Except diplomatic relations and defence, nonetheless, Macao has retained considerable autonomy in all aspects, including economic and commercial relations, customs control. According to Chapter VII of Macao's basic law, Macao may, on its own, using the name Macao, China or Macao, China, maintain and develop relations and conclude and implement agreements with foreign states and regions and relevant international organisations in the appropriate fields, including the economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural, science and technology, and sports fields. In addition, Macao can participate in international organizations and conferences not limited to states. The Macao government has maintained offices in Lisbon, Taipei, Beijing and in Brussels for the European Union and Geneva for the World Trade Organization. The Special Administrative Region of Macao is member of the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund as well as other international cultural and commercial organizations. Macao is twinned with: Lisbon, Portugal Coimbra, Portugal Porto, Portugal Dili, Timor-Leste São Paulo, Brazil Linköping, Sweden Praia, Cape Verde Brussels, Belgium Maputo, Mozambique Da Nang, Vietnam San Francisco, United States Seoul, South Korea Calcutta, India Luanda, Angola Macao has established different friendship conventions and cultural memorandums with sister cities. === Administrative divisions === Macao is divided into 8 parishes. == Geography == Macao is situated 60 kilometres (37 mi) southwest of Hong Kong and 145 kilometres (90 mi) from Guangzhou of Mainland China. It also has 41 kilometres (25 mi) of coastline, yet only 310 metres (1,000 ft) of land border with Guangdong of Mainland China. It consists of the Macao Peninsula itself and the islands of Taipa and Coloane, which are now connected by landfill forming Cotai. The peninsula is formed by the Zhu Jiang (Pearl River) estuary on the east and the Xi Jiang (West River) on the west. It borders the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone in mainland China. The main border crossing between Macao and China is known as the Portas do Cerco (Barrier Gate) on the Macao side, and the Gongbei Port of Entry on the Zhuhai side. Macao Peninsula was originally an island, but a connecting sandbar gradually turned into a narrow isthmus.

Land reclamation in the 17th century transformed Macao into a peninsula with generally flat terrain, though numerous steep hills still mark the original land mass. Alto de Coloane is the highest point in Macao, with an altitude of 170.6 metres (559.7 ft). With a dense urban environment, Macao has no arable land, pastures, forest, or woodland. In 2015, the Chinese government assigned Macao administrative responsibility for 85 km² (33 sq mi) of coastal ocean area. === Climate === Macao has a humid subtropical climate (Köppen climate classification: Cwa), despite its low elevation coastal location south of the Tropic of Cancer, with average relative humidity between 75% and 90%. Similar to much of South China, seasonal climate is greatly influenced by the monsoons, and differences in temperature and humidity between summer and winter are noticeable, though not as great as in mainland China. The average annual temperature of Macao is 22.7 °C (72.9 °F). July is the warmest month, the average temperature being 28.9 °C (84.0 °F). The coolest month is January, with a mean temperature of 14.5 °C (58.1 °F). Located on China's southern coast, Macao has ample rainfall, with average annual precipitation being 2,120 millimetres (83 in). However, winter is mostly dry due to the influence of the vast Siberian High affecting much of East Asia. Autumn in Macao, from October to November, is sunny and still pleasantly warm with lower humidity. Winter (December to early March) is generally mild with temperatures above 13 °C (55 °F) most of the time, although they can drop below 8 °C (46 °F) at times. Humidity starts to increase from late March. Summer is very warm to hot (often rising above 30 °C (86 °F) during the day). The hot weather is often followed by heavy rain, thunderstorms and occasional typhoons. == Economy == Macao's economy is based largely on tourism. Other chief economic activities in Macao are export-gearred textile and garment manufacturing, banking and other financial services. The clothing industry provides about three quarters of export earnings, and the gaming, tourism and hospitality industry is estimated to contribute more than 50% of Macao's GDP, and 70% of Macao government revenue. Macao is a founding member of the WTO and has maintained sound economic and trade relations with more than 120 countries and regions, with European Union and Portuguese-speaking countries in particular; Macao is also a member of the IMF. The World Bank classifies Macao as a high income economy and the GDP per capita of the region in 2006 was US\$28,436. After the 1999 Handover, China eased travel restrictions and visits from the mainland rose rapidly. Together with the liberalization of Macao's gaming industry in 2001, which induced significant investment inflows, the average growth rate of the economy between 2001 and 2006 was approximately 13.1% annually. In a World Tourism Organization report of international tourism for 2006, Macao ranked 21st in the number of tourists and 24th in terms of tourism receipts. From 9.1 million visitors in 2000, arrivals to Macao has grown to 18.7 million visitors in 2005 and 22 million visitors in 2006, with over 50% of the arrivals coming from mainland China and another 30% from Hong Kong. Starting in 1962, the gambling industry had been operated under a government-issued monopoly license by Stanley Ho's Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macao. The monopoly ended in 2002 and several casino owners from Las Vegas attempted to enter the market. With the opening of the Sands Macao, in 2004 and Wynn Macao in 2006, gambling revenues from Macao's casinos grew considerably prosperous. In 2007, Venetian Macao, at the time the second (in 2017 is seventh) largest building in the world by floor area, opened its doors to the public, followed by MGM Grand Macao. Numerous other hotel casinos, including Galaxy Cotai Megaresort, opened in 2011, and plans for a \$3.9 billion complex that will be known as Lisboa Palace is expected to be completed by 2017. In February 2015, the gambling revenue in Macao fell by 48.6 percent from a year earlier to 19.5 billion patacas (\$2.4 billion), the biggest monthly decline that has ever been recorded. Reasons for this fall of revenue are related to the slowdown that the Chinese economy is having and a corruption crackdown by Chinese officials which has constrained lavish spending. In 2002, the Macao government ended the monopoly system and six casino operating concessions and subconcessions are granted to Sociedade de Turismo e Diversões de Macao, Wynn Resorts, Las Vegas Sands, Galaxy Entertainment Group, the partnership of MGM Mirage and Pansy Ho (daughter of Stanley Ho), and the partnership of Melco and Publishing and Broadcasting Limited (PBL). Today, there are 16 casinos operated by the STDM, and they are still crucial in the casino industry in Macao, but in 2004, the opening of the Sands Macao ushered in the new era. Gambling revenue has made Macao the world's top casino market, surpassing Las Vegas. The amount of performances performed in Macao has also shown an increasing trend since the early 2010s, including the show House of Dancing Water, concerts, industry trade shows and international art crossovers. Macao is an offshore financial centre, a tax haven, and a free port with no foreign exchange control regimes. The Monetary Authority of Macao regulates offshore finance, while the Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute provides services for investment in Macao. In 2007, Moody's Investors

Service upgraded Macao's foreign and local currency government issuer ratings to 'Aa3' from 'A1', citing its government's solid finances as a large net creditor. The rating agency also upgraded Macao's foreign currency bank deposit ceiling to 'Aa3' from 'A1'. As prescribed by the Macao Basic Law, the government follows the principle of keeping expenditure within the limits of revenues in drawing up its budget, and strives to achieve a fiscal balance, avoid deficits and keep the budget commensurate with the growth rate of its gross domestic product. All financial revenue of the Macao Special Administrative Region shall be managed and controlled by the region itself and shall not be handed over to the Central People's Government. The Central People's Government shall not levy any taxes in the Macao Special Administrative Region. === Monetary system === In Macao, the unit of currency is the pataca, which is currently pegged to the Hong Kong dollar at a rate of HK\$1 = MOP1.03. The name pataca is a Portuguese word which was applied to the Mexican dollars that were the main circulating coin in the wider region in the second half of the 19th century. In 1894, the pataca was introduced in both Macao and Portuguese Timor as a unit of account for the Mexican dollar and the other silver dollar coins in circulation. However, the pataca was not the official currency when it was first enacted. In 1901, it was decided to grant the Banco Nacional Ultramarino the exclusive rights to issue banknotes denominated in patacas, and in the year 1906, all foreign coins were outlawed. However, the Chinese were suspicious of these paper patacas, being so accustomed to using silver for barter, and as such, the paper patacas circulated at a discount in relation to the silver dollar coins. In 1935, when China and Hong Kong abandoned the silver standard, the Hong Kong dollar was pegged to sterling at the fixed rate of 1 shilling and 3 pence, whereas the pataca was pegged to the Portuguese escudo at a sterling equivalent rate of only 1 shilling. From 1945 to 1951, fractional coins of the pataca were minted for issue in Portuguese Timor; and, in 1952, similar issues were minted for Macao including an actual pataca coin for the first time. == Demographics == Macao is the most densely populated region in the world, with a population density of 21,185.28 persons per square kilometre in 2016. Han Chinese make up 95% of Macao's population; another 2% is of Portuguese and/or mixed Chinese/Portuguese descent, an ethnic group often referred to as Macanese. According to the 2006 by-census, 47% of the residents were born in mainland China, of whom 74.1% were born in Guangdong and 15.2% in Fujian. Meanwhile, 42.5% of the residents were born in Macao, and those born in Hong Kong, the Philippines and Portugal shared 3.7%, 2.0% and 0.3% respectively. The growth of population in Macao mainly relies on immigrants from mainland China and the influx of overseas workers since its birth rate is one of the lowest in the world. According to The World Factbook, Macao has the fourth highest life expectancy in the world, while its infant mortality rate ranks among the lowest in the world. === Language === Macao's official languages are Chinese (Cantonese) and Portuguese. Macao still retains its own dialect of Portuguese, called Macanese Portuguese. Other languages—such as Mandarin, English, and Hokkien—are spoken by local communities. The Macanese language, a distinctive creole generally known as Patuá, is still spoken by several dozen Macanese. Since Macao has an economy driven by tourism, 14.6% of the workforce is employed in restaurants and hotels, and 10.3% in the gambling industry. With the opening of several casino resorts and other major constructions underway, many sectors reportedly experience a shortage of labour, and the government seeks to import labour from neighbouring regions. The number of imported workers stood at a record high of 98,505 in the second quarter of 2008, representing more than 25% of the labour force in Macao. Some local workers complain about the lack of jobs due to the influx of cheap imported labour. Some also claim that the problem of illegal labour is severe. Another concern is the widening of income inequality in the region. Macao's Gini coefficient, a popular measure of income inequality where a low value indicates a more equal income distribution, rose from 0.43 in 1998 to 0.48 in 2006. It is higher than those of neighbouring regions, such as mainland China (0.447), South Korea (0.316) and Singapore (0.425). === Religion === Macao residents are endowed with considerable religious tolerance and freedom. Most Chinese in Macao are profoundly influenced by their own tradition and culture. While most are not religiously affiliated, many take part in Chinese folk religion (Taoism and Confucianism). According to a survey conducted in 2005, 2007 and 2009, 55% of the population do not declare religious affiliation, 30% follows folk faiths, 10% are adherents of Buddhism or Taoism, and the remaining 5% are Christians. Most Christians in Macao are members of the Catholic Church, which is organized and structured in Macao in the Diocese of Macao. == Infrastructure == === Education === A fifteen-year free education is currently being offered to residents, that includes a three-year kindergarten, followed by a six-year primary education and a six-year secondary education. The literacy rate of the territory is 93.5%. The illiterates are mainly among the senior residents aged 65 or above; the younger generation, for example the population aged 15–29, has a literacy rate of above

99%. Currently, there is only one school in Macao where Portuguese is the medium of instruction, Macao Portuguese School. Macao does not have its own region-wide education system; non-tertiary schools follow either the British, the Chinese, Portuguese, or the Canadian education system. There are currently 10 tertiary educational institutions in the region, four of them being public. According to a post written in July 2017, The International School of Macao was ranked Macao's top private school. In 2006, the Programme for International Student Assessment, a worldwide test of 15-year-old schoolchildren's scholastic performance coordinated by OECD, ranked Macao as the fifth and sixth in science and problem solving respectively. Nevertheless, educational attainment in Macao is relatively low when compared to other high income countries. According to the 2006 by-census, among the resident population aged 14 and above, only 51.8% has a secondary education and 12.6% has a tertiary education. As prescribed by the Basic Law of Macao Chapter VI Article 121, the Government of Macao shall, on its own, formulate policies on education, including policies regarding the educational system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the recognition of educational qualifications, and the system of academic awards so as to promote educational development. The government shall also in accordance with law, gradually institute a compulsory education system. Community organizations and individuals may, in accordance with law, run educational undertakings of various kinds. === Healthcare === Macao is served by one major public hospital, the Hospital Conde S. Januário, and one major private hospital, the Kiang Wu Hospital, both located in Macao Peninsula, as well as a university associated hospital called Macao University of Science and Technology Hospital in Cotai. In addition to hospitals, Macao also has numerous health centres providing free basic medical care to residents. Consultation in traditional Chinese medicine is also available. None of the Macao hospitals are independently assessed through international healthcare accreditation. There are no western-style medical schools in Macao, and thus all aspiring physicians in Macao have to obtain their education and qualification elsewhere. Local nurses are trained at the Macao Polytechnic Institute and the Kiang Wu Nursing College. Currently there are no training courses in midwifery in Macao. A study by the University of Macao, commissioned by the Macao SAR government, concluded that Macao is too small to have its own medical specialist training centre. The Macao Corps of Firefighters (Portuguese: Corpo de Bombeiros de Macao) is responsible for ambulance service (Ambulância de Macao). The Macao Red Cross also operates ambulances (Toyota HiAce vans) for emergency and non-emergencies to local hospitals with volunteer staff. The organization has a total of 739 uniformed firefighters and paramedics serving from 7 stations in Macao. The Health Bureau in Macao is mainly responsible for coordinating the activities between the public and private organizations in the area of public health, and assure the health of citizens through specialized and primary health care services, as well as disease prevention and health promotion. The Macao Centre for Disease Control and Prevention was established in 2001, which monitors the operation of hospitals, health centres, and the blood transfusion centre in Macao. It also handles the organization of care and prevention of diseases affecting the population, sets guidelines for hospitals and private healthcare providers, and issues licences. As of 2016 Macao healthcare authorities send many patients to Queen Mary Hospital in Hong Kong in certain cases, and many Macao residents intentionally seek healthcare in Hong Kong because they place more trust in Hong Kong doctors than in Mainland-trained doctors operating in Macao. === Transport === In Macao, traffic drives on the left, unlike in either mainland China or Portugal, but like neighbouring Hong Kong. Macao has a well-established public transport network connecting the Macao Peninsula, Cotai, Taipa Island and Coloane Island. Buses and taxis are the major modes of public transport in Macao. Currently three companies – Transmac, Transportas Companhia de Macao and Macao Nova Era de Autocarros Públicos operate franchised public bus services in Macao. The trishaw, a hybrid of the tricycle and the rickshaw, is also available, though it is mainly for sightseeing purposes. The newest public bus operator, Macao Nova Era, previously Reolian Public Transport Co., entered service on 1 August 2011. This new bus operator operates on the existing routes by Transmac and Transportas Companhia de Macao. Free Casino Shuttle Buses are everywhere in Macao. Due to tourism being the main economic industry in Macao a majority of the larger hotels provide free round trip shuttle bus services which cover the major tourist sites including the airport, Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, Taipa Temporary Ferry Terminal and other sites. Some Larger hotels such as Venetian Hotel and Holiday Inn even provide a free shuttle between them. The frequency for each route is usually 15 minutes. The taxi system is noted for having a notoriously poor reputation among tourists and even locals. Common complaints include "constant overcharging, refusal of passengers when the destination or passenger type does not suit the driver, circuitous routes and even violent behaviour." In recent years, the Macao

government have been making attempts to hold drivers to a higher standard of service through methods such as undercover police prosecuting drivers who violate the taxi regulations on the spot. The Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal and the Taipa Temporary Ferry Terminal provides cross-border transportation services for passengers travelling between Macao and Hong Kong, while the Yuet Tung Terminal in the Inner Harbour serves those travelling between Macao and cities in mainland China, including Shekou and Shenzhen. The Macao Light Rapid Transit or Macao LRT also known as Metro Ligeiro de Macao is a mass transit system in Macao under construction. It will serve the Macao Peninsula, Taipa and Cotai, serving major border checkpoints such as the Border Gate, the Outer Harbour Ferry Terminal, the Lotus Bridge Border and the Macao International Airport. It is planned to open in 2019. Macao has one active international airport, known as Macao International Airport located at the eastern end of Taipa and neighbouring waters. The airport used to serve as one of the main transit hubs for passengers travelling between mainland China and Taiwan, but now with the introduction of direct flights between those two regions, passenger traffic in this regard has lessened. It is the primary hub for Air Macao. In 2006, the airport handled about 5 million passengers.

== Culture ==

The mixing of the Chinese and Portuguese cultures and religious traditions for more than four centuries has left Macao with an inimitable collection of holidays, festivals and events. The biggest event of the year is the Macao Grand Prix in November, when the main streets in Macao Peninsula are converted to a racetrack bearing similarities with the Monaco Grand Prix. Other annual events include Macao Arts festival in March, the International Fireworks Display Contest in September, the International Music festival in October and/or November, and the Macao International Marathon in December. The Lunar Chinese New Year is the most important traditional festival and celebration normally takes place in late January or early February. The Pou Tai Un Temple in Taipa is the place for the Feast of Tou Tei, the Earth god, in February. The Procession of the Passion of Our Lord is a well-known Roman Catholic rite and journey, which travels from Saint Austin's Church to the Cathedral, also taking place in February. A-Ma Temple, which honours the Goddess Matsu, is in full swing in April with many worshippers celebrating the A-Ma festival. In May it is common to see dancing dragons at the Feast of the Drunken Dragon and twinkling-clean Buddhas at the Feast of the Bathing of Lord Buddha. In Coloane Village, the Taoist god Tam Kong is also honoured on the same day. Dragon Boat festival is brought into play on Nam Van Lake in June and Hungry Ghosts' festival, in late August and/or early September every year. All events and festivities of the year end with Winter Solstice in December. Macao preserves many historical properties in the urban area. The Historic Centre of Macao, which includes some twenty-five historic locations, was officially listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO on 15 July 2005 during the 29th session of the World Heritage Committee, held in Durban, South Africa.

=== Cuisine ===

Local cooking in Macao consists of a blend of Cantonese and Portuguese cuisines. Many unique dishes resulted from the spice blends that the wives of Portuguese sailors used in an attempt to replicate European dishes. Its ingredients and seasonings include those from Europe, South America, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, as well as local Chinese ingredients. Typically, Macanese food is seasoned with various spices and flavours including turmeric, coconut milk, cinnamon and bacalhau, giving special aromas and tastes. Famous dishes include minchi, capella, galinha à Portuguesa, galinha à Africana (African chicken), bacalhau, Macanese chili shrimps and stir-fry curry crab. Pork chop bun, ginger milk and Portuguese-style egg tart are also very popular in Macao.

=== Sports ===

Macao has its own professional football league, the Campeonato da 1ª Divisão do Futebol, where the Big Three professional football clubs of Portugal have their own branches: S.L. Benfica de Macao, Sporting Clube de Macao and F.C. Porto de Macao. In general, football (soccer) has the greatest popularity in Macao, which has a representative international side, Macao national football team. Another common sport is rink hockey, which is often practised by the Portuguese. The national team of Macao is the most powerful of Asia, always participates in the Rink Hockey World Championship in B category and has many Rink Hockey Asian Championship titles. The last Championship was won in Lishui, China, at the 2016 Asian Roller Hockey Championship. Macao also has a basketball team, which qualified for the Asian Basketball Championship twice. The automobile racing event Macao Grand Prix is arguably the most important international sporting event in Macao, mainly with Formula 3, motorcycle road racing and touring car races. Since 1989, Macao owns a thoroughbred horse racing track called Taipa Racecourse operated by the Macao Jockey Club. The racecourse has a 15,000 seater grandstand.

== Notable people ==

Stanley Ho, business magnate, father of Macao gambling industry Xian Xinghai (spelt as Hsien Hsing-hai during his era), ■■■ musician and composer during Sino-Japanese War, known work included Yellow River Cantata Michelle Reis, Hong Kong actress and former Miss Hong Kong Edmund Ho, business leader, chief

executive of Macao SAR Jenny Tseng, ■■ Cantonese pop singer and actress in the 1970s and 1980s
 Ming-Na Wen, ■■■ TV and movie actress, one of the first Chinese-American actresses with a contract
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