

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Hong Kong inbound tourism numbers soar 70 times after 2023 reopening

March 10, 2023



Hong Kong businesses are hopeful that more inbound arrivals from mainland China and the rest of the world will boost the city's retail and tourism sectors. Image credit: Hong Kong Tourism Board

By [Crystal Tai](#)

In January, the number of visitors to Hong Kong jumped nearly 70 times compared with the year before.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Arrivals clocked in at 498,689 after the city's gradual reopening to the world, following nearly three years of stringent zero-COVID lockdowns and entry restrictions.

According to [Reuters](#), the city's retail sales in January rose from \$33.7 billion in 2022 to \$36.2 billion in 2023, up 7 percent.

Watches, jewelry and other valuable goods saw the greatest increase in sales, rising 23.1 percent, according to the same report.

Meanwhile, fashion and footwear sales grew by 14.7 percent in January rosy signs for a slow but steady recovery on the horizon.

In pre-pandemic times, mainland Chinese tourists in Hong Kong accounted for the consumption of many of the aforementioned goods, especially in the jewelry, watches and luxury spaces.

The city, which [fully reopened its borders with China in early February](#), has continued to see a growing number of arrivals over recent weeks.

Local businesses and retailers are hopeful the return of mainland travelers will boost Hong Kong's sluggish economy, which has been embattled since the 2019 pro-democracy protests.

In an effort to jumpstart tourism, retail and investment sectors, the Hong Kong government is launching a \$255 million "Hello Hong Kong" tourism campaign, which will also involve giving away a half-million air tickets to international visitors. One goal is to raise the city's retail sales by 22 percent, according to Bloomberg.

However, the campaign has come under fire by critics for its lackluster messaging, and for being "[frothy, vapid and meaningless](#)," according to PR insiders quoted in a report by PProvoke Media.

"What's lacking is emotional connection to the real' HK the alleys of Central, the eclectic atmosphere of older districts, the beauty of HK's natural environment, the unknown attractions such as mountain bike trails and running trails, and beaches, and creative use of the two new drawcards of M+ and Palace Museum," another communications expert told PProvoke Media. "So far the emotional connection is missing."

It remains to be seen how Hong Kong's ongoing efforts to re-engage and reconnect with the outside world will play out.

Published with permission from [Jing Daily](#). Adapted for clarity and style.

© 2023 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.