

What about Macau?



Our China specialists pride themselves on knowing the country better than anyone, enabling them to tailor-make your route through this vast country with an attention to detail that differentiates an Audley itinerary from more 'conventional' operators. After having freely wandered around the Palaces and explored the backstreet 'hutongs' of Beijing, walked along an empty section of the Great Wall at the quieter, more authentic stretch at Jinshaling, visited the Terracotta Warriors in Xian first thing in the morning before the crowds arrive and then relaxed amongst the classic scroll and breathtaking beauty of the Li River at Yangshou, upriver from Guilin – most of our guests find themselves ending the holiday with several days in Hong Kong, the natural exit point for a journey through China. However, Audley's ability to create 'something different' does not necessarily end here, as just next door is Macau, a city as beautiful, historic and worthy of a visit as any. And no-one else appears to be bothering to visit, in their haste to head home!

Only a one hour high speed jetfoil ride away from Hong Kong, the former Portuguese colony is a prime commercial and cultural crossroads of Asia. A city distinct in atmosphere and culture from its brasher high-rise neighbour, a city with European architecture centred on Iberian style

squares, with unique Taoist temples sat alongside Catholic churches and cathedrals, with exquisite manicured gardens and a wonderfully characterful boutique hotel reflecting an illustrious history.

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Macau was established as result of the European explorations of the 16th century, when the Portuguese needed a viable trading post and missionary base. Eying its prosperity and privileged location on the Pearl River estuary, other European nations began casting covetous looks at Macau and some even plotted to seize it from Portugal. However, it was not until three centuries later when the British settled in Hong Kong that Macau began to lose its cultural and commercial dominance in the region. Nowadays it makes for a fascinating excursion from Hong Kong and surely completes a classic Audley tour of China, both in its modern day and historical perspective. Whilst it is possible to visit on a day trip, we would encourage you to try and find time to spend at least one night here. Not least to allow you opportunity to sample the fine cuisine,

acknowledged as offering a distinct Macanese flavour borne out of a mastery of the arts of stir-frying, steaming and the balancing of flavours from Portugal, Africa, Brazil and China.

Having said that, in the past the rather bland quality of accommodation may have made us a little reluctant to suggest spending one or two nights in Macau. That has changed with our recent discovery of The Pousada de Sao Tiago, a classic Portuguese Inn built on the foundations of the 17th century fortress that once stood on Barra Point to guard the entrance to the inner harbour. The cannon platform is a terrace for 'al fresco' dining and the rooms themselves are set in to the hillside, with terracotta tiles and reproduction 18th century furniture, crystal lamps, drapes and furnishings imported from Lisbon. The hotel retains the original stone tunnel entrance and has transformed an old water cistern into a fountain.

Macau is one of China's, indeed Asia's, best kept secrets. Colonial history, fine food, a wonderful hotel, forts, museums, temples and a cathedral, all only 40 miles from Hong Kong,.....yet seldom visited. Why ever not?

Travel File

To find out more about visiting Macau, call our China specialists on 01869 276 217 or try the Macau website:- www.macautourism.gov.mo