

# Exciting Events

Hailed as Asia's events capital, Hong Kong has an action-packed yearly events calendar. Take a look at the major events organised or supported by the Hong Kong Tourism Board.



### Cultural Celebrations

#### An Intense Dose of Culture

Among the matrix of skyscrapers and ultramodern infrastructure of Hong Kong, you can still find centuries-old traditions which have been preserved and continue to be piously observed. The Cheung Chau Bun Festival, for example, is believed to date back to the 18th century, and today continues to attract flocks of foreign visitors to the tiny island of Cheung Chau each year, with its colourful and somewhat mythical *piu sik* parade and gravity-defying bun scrambling competition.

In addition to the Cheung Chau Bun Festival, which was added to China’s third national list of intangible cultural heritage and has achieved some international fame, there are a number of other folk festivals embodying Hong Kong’s living culture, such as the celebrations of the birthdays of the Buddha and the deities Tin Hau and Tam Kung. Since these four festivals are all held in springtime, the HKTB packaged them into its “2013 Hong Kong Cultural Celebrations” promotion last year, introducing visitors to precious cultural gems of Hong Kong and making sure they know where to go to take part in these festive activities.



**Highlights**

To facilitate visitor participation, the HKTB arranged:

- Free tram rides to Shau Kei Wan for visitors to see the Tin Hau Temple and the Tam Kung Festival parade
- Free ferry service to Cheung Chau for the Bun Festival



## Dragon Boat Carnival

### Battle of the Boats

While the dragon boat is associated with the Tuen Ng Festival and rice dumplings in Chinese communities, dragon boat racing is widely practiced around the world as a team sport, and it was in Hong Kong where it was first recognised as a modern international sport in 1976.

Through the years, the scale of dragon boat racing has expanded tremendously in Hong Kong. The CCB (Asia) Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races, part of the

Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival 2013, attracted 200 teams comprising over 5,000 paddlers, compared to just 10 teams back in 1976. The carnival also further stretched the concept of dragon boat racing, from a Chinese custom and a sport, to a party activity in summer. Offering fun elements like the Celebrity Bathtub Race and the San Miguel BeerFest, the carnival allowed spectators and paddlers to enjoy the hot action in the sea, while cooling down with ice-cold beer and live music at the same time.



**Highlights**  
 Three-day carnival – almost 230,000 participants

Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races were title-sponsored by

中国建设银行(亚洲)  
 China Construction Bank (Asia)

Official Beer of Hong Kong Dragon Boat Carnival

San Miguel



## Mid-Autumn Festival Reinventing Tradition

Some say tradition is the enemy of innovation, but four young designers were determined to discard this notion with their entry for the HKTB’s Lantern Wonderland Design Competition 2013. To make people rethink the age-old Mid-Autumn Festival, the design quartet turned 7,000 old plastic bottles into a three-storey-high art installation to evoke environmental awareness. The end product, lit up with a matrix of LED bulbs, resembled the earth’s natural

satellite, and was thus poetically named “Rising Moon”, forming the centrepiece of “one2free Lantern Wonderland” in Victoria Park.

After the exhibition, all the plastic bottles were sent to Yan Oi Tong EcoPark Plastic Resources Recycling Centre to be turned into useful objects. In addition to creating beautiful memories for the viewers, “Rising Moon” kindled the hope that one day recycling would become a tradition in its own right to be followed and celebrated.



**Highlights**  
*Lantern Wonderland –  
560,000 people in  
eight days*

Lantern Wonderland was  
title-sponsored by



**Halloween Treats**  
**Dial H for Halloween**

Hong Kong may not have a long tradition of celebrating Halloween, but the Halloween atmosphere in the city is as strong as that in many Western cities.

The two main theme parks were among the first to set up haunted houses in Hong Kong to attract visitors during this ancient Western festival. Soon other attractions and shopping malls put up their own Halloween decorations and even elaborate haunted houses to draw traffic, and now, a week or two before 31 October, it seems as if the entire city is coloured orange and black.

Restaurants also concoct spooky themed drinks and dishes, especially those in Lan Kwai Fong, where the city’s biggest Halloween street party takes place, attracting expats, locals and tourists, who are dressed up as not just as witches and vampires, but as every sort of character one can imagine.

To attract travellers to Hong Kong’s Halloween parties, the HKTB rolled out a wave of promotions in 2013, including social media campaigns, media co-ops, trade co-ops, and consumer events, including a large-scale pumpkin field in Taiwan.



© Hong Kong Disneyland



© Ocean Park Hong Kong



The image is created and owned by Madame Tussauds

## Wine & Dine Festival

### A Moveable Feast

The chemistry between *dim sum* and wine went largely unnoticed until the HKTB championed the pairing of wine and Chinese cuisine through the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, inaugurated in 2009, following the abolition of wine duties.

Just as Hong Kong became the no. 1 wine auction city by sales in no time, the festival quickly became a notable culinary event in Asia. Relocated to Central, the American Express Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival 2013 boasted about

300 stalls in six themed zones, showcasing an impressive medley of wines and food items for pairing. There was also a new “Tasting Room”, offering wine classes, as well as dishes created by Hong Kong’s top chefs for the prestigious Salon Culinaire Mondial 2013, in which the Hong Kong team became the champion and earned the “Culinary World Master” title.

With an expanding middle class in Asia, this glamorous festival can be expected to become even more sophisticated in the years to come to satisfy the palates of wine and food lovers in the region.



**Highlights**

- 140,000 patrons in four days
- 31,100 wine passes sold
- The festival kicked off Wine & Dine Month in November

Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival and Hong Kong Wine & Dine Month were title-sponsored by




## Great Outdoors

### Hikes (and Bikes) & the City

Ask any expats in Hong Kong and they will tell you Hong Kong reigns supreme as a city for hiking. In fact, many visitors, especially those from the long-haul markets and Japan, travel to Hong Kong simply to enjoy its breathtaking natural scenery. This probably means the HKTB has been doing a good job with its “Great Outdoors Hong Kong” campaign, which it has organised since 2009.

Initially, the campaign focused on providing guided tours to some of the city’s popular hiking trails. In 2013, a guided cycling tour was introduced to enrich the offerings.

Though Hong Kong is known worldwide as a densely populated, skyscraper-dominated city, the largest part of it – three quarters of its land area to be precise – is covered by countryside. And the best part of this is that many of the unspoilt country parks and pristine beaches are only a short ride away from the city centre.



**Highlights**

- Ten guided hikes and four guided cycling tours from Nov 2013-Feb 2014
- A new guidebook on hiking and cycling trails, island walks and the Geopark for FITs



## Winterfest

### Wish You were Here

Christmas without a Christmas tree can still be wonderful. Just look at “Wishes on the Wind”, a Christmas hotspot set up by the HKTB at Statue Square for its Hong Kong WinterFest in 2013, with support from American Express and T Galleria by DFS. Replacing a Christmas tree were three larger-than-life dandelions and their seeds, a piece

by American artist Robert James Buchholz, which he named “WISH”, with the good intention of spreading wishes of love. The ultra-futuristic-looking installation, which had previously appeared in the popular hipsters’ music fest Coachella, in California, became an instant hit when it landed in Hong Kong. How could anyone resist three five-storey-high dandelions that changed colours in rhythm with “All I Want for Christmas is You”?



Wishes on the Wind was jointly presented by



## New Year Countdown Celebrations

### The New Year in High Resolution

When we turn on our telly for the New Year’s Eve countdown, we are usually unaware of why we see spectacular fireworks displays in some cities and not others. In fact, behind the fireworks is a PR war, in which city authorities and tourism bureaux fight for the attention of TV news producers, who choose the cities to highlight based on how stunning and representative their countdown shows are.

For Hong Kong, then, it was a major PR victory in 2013, as the HKTb-curated “New Year • New World – Hong Kong Countdown Celebrations” event was covered by over 650 TV channels, including the BBC, CNN and CCTV, placing Hong Kong among the ranks of the signature Sydney Harbour countdown and New York’s Times Square ball drop. And no wonder! Hong Kong’s iconic skyline became more dazzling than ever in the biggest countdown show Hong Kong had ever witnessed – a spectacle combining a huge amount of pyrotechnics, fireworks, music, and of course, screams of appreciation from massive crowds on both sides of Victoria Harbour.



**Highlights**  
Over 380,000 onsite spectators

The Hong Kong Countdown Celebrations event was title-sponsored by  
**新世界發展有限公司**  
New World Development Company Limited



## Chinese New Year Celebrations

### The Biggest & the Best

There are Chinese New Year celebrations all over the world, but *Forbes* picked Hong Kong's as one of the 10 best events in 2011, alongside Munich's Oktoberfest and Rio's Carnival.

The choice wasn't surprising because Hong Kong's annual Chinese New Year celebrations are probably the biggest and the most fanciful anywhere in the world. A few days before the festival, traditional flower markets spring up in different districts, and when the New Year finally arrives, the city

celebrates it with a large-scale fireworks display, a special horseracing event, and the Cathay Pacific International Chinese New Year Night Parade by the HKTB, which turns Tsim Sha Tsui into one big party area.

After a whirlwind of festive activities within just a few days, visitors still have time to enjoy other equally splendid Hong Kong features, like a potpourri of world-class cuisines and shopping – and *that* is the best thing about spending Chinese New Year in Hong Kong.



**Highlights**

- The 2014 parade – 13 floats, 21 performing troupes, 3,000 performers
- 150,000 spectators, over half of whom were visitors

International Chinese New Year Night Parade was title-sponsored by



**CATHAY PACIFIC**  
國泰航空公司



## Other Events

### City of Action

Rugby fans who could not get Hong Kong Sevens tickets, which are sold out at lightning speed each year, were happy when the Hong Kong Rugby Football Union and the HKTB announced HK Fan Zone, an auxiliary area for Sevens fans to enjoy the games. Erected at the New Central Harbourfront, the fan zone provided live broadcasts of the matches on a big screen. While things can get a little wild at Hong Kong Stadium, where the games are played, HK Fan Zone was more family-friendly, with a game area and training sessions by rugby stars for kids, and music performances for everyone.

In addition to the wildly popular Hong Kong Sevens in March, the HKTB supports numerous events each year, particularly those with tourism value, and helps promote them through its official website, social media platforms and other channels. These events include the Hong Kong Marathon, the Hong Kong International Races, the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Art Basel Hong Kong, and the Hong Kong International Film Festival.



**Highlights**  
 HK Fan Zone – 50,000 fans  
 in six days

HK Fan Zone was organised by


