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**Report Highlights:**

Bite size local news, Post reports and activity summaries wrapped by ATO Hong Kong. In this issue: California Raisins Sweeten Vegetarian Food Asia with Chef Competition; ATO Hong Kong Joins USAPEEC Annual Trade Reception, Food Export Showcases Premium American Petfood at Top Retailer; New Year's Holiday Visitors Jump 40 Percent; Hong Kong Ranks Second Globally in Ultra-High Net Worth Individuals; Asia's 50 Best Restaurants Awards to be Held in Hong Kong for First Time; and Macau Breaks Record with 40 million Visitors in 2025.

# THE HONG KONG WONTON

wrapped by ATO Hong Kong

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## USAPEEC 2026 Trade Reception Brings Together Hong Kong and Mainland China Poultry Buyers



On January 14, ATO joined the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council's Annual Trade Reception in Panyu, China. The event brought together nearly 700 attendees, including U.S. poultry and egg exporters, regional buyers, logistics companies, and FAS, FSIS, and APHIS colleagues. Through November 2025, U.S. poultry meat exports to Hong Kong dropped 37 percent to \$79.3 million, primarily a result of restricted market access due to highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) detections in the United States and Chinese retaliatory tariffs.

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## Chef's Highlight the Versatility of California Raisins at Vegetarian Food Asia Competition



On January 23, ATO was excited to join the Raisin Administrative Committee (RAC) and the Hong Kong Association of Bakery & Coffee Practitioners (HKABCP) as a guest judge for a bakery and coffee competition at the Vegetarian Food Asia (VFA) trade show. Held annually in Hong Kong, VFA is Asia's largest trade show for vegetarian and eco-friendly products. The U.S. has been the leading raisin supplier to Hong Kong for over two decades, with imports totaling \$3.3 million from January to November 2025, accounting for 80 percent of the total import market.

## U.S. Pet Food Festival Showcases Premium American Brands at Leading Hong Kong Retailer



Food Export (Midwest & Northeast) partnered with leading pet food retailer Whiskers N' Paws to hold a U.S. Pet Food Festival at 2 retail outlets. The festival, which ran from December 30, 2025, to January 31, 2026, featured an exclusive selection of over 20 SKUs of U.S. pet products. The U.S. is the largest supplier of pet food to Hong Kong, with imports reaching \$25.5 million through November 2025. U.S.

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pet food is highly regarded by discerning Hong Kong consumers for its rigorous food safety standards, advanced processing technology, and human-grade nutritional ingredients.

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## ECONOMY

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### **About 950,000 Visitors Arrive in Hong Kong over New Year Holidays [[HKSAR Press Releases, Jan. 5](#)]**

Around 950,000 visitors arrived in Hong Kong between December 31, 2025, and January 4, 2026, representing an increase of about 40 percent over the same period last year. Benefiting from the mainland's "adjusted holiday" arrangement, mainland inbound visitors accounted for over 740,000, representing a 48 percent year-on-year increase. The number of non-mainland inbound visitors was around 210,000, representing an increase of about 19 percent. The Hong Kong Government has noted a significant increase in visitors to popular countryside attractions and campsites during the holiday period. **ATO Notes:** Though still below the peak of 65 million in 2018, yearly visitors to Hong Kong continued to rebound in 2025, reaching nearly 50 million arrivals. Mainland Chinese tourists comprised 76 percent of visitors, with many engaging in "special-forces tourism", which are fast-paced, social media-organized trips. This trend has driven a surge in day-trippers, which has reduced average visitor spending by nearly 30 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels.

### **Hong Kong Ranks Second in the World for Highest Ultra-Wealthy Population [[TimeOut, Jan. 3](#)]**

According to Altrata's World Ultra Wealth Report 2025, Hong Kong's uber-wealthy population experienced dramatic levels of growth from January to June 2025, reaching a total of 17,215 individuals. Hong Kong ranks second only to New York. When considering countries and territories, the United States, China, and Germany rank as the top three, with 192,470, 52,020, and 26,570 ultra-high net worth individuals, respectively. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's ultra-high net worth population growth rate was 11.5 percent in the first half of 2025, down from 22.9 percent in 2024, reflecting a normalization after the previous year's exceptional expansion following several years of decline.

### **Hong Kong Leading High Streets Rent Expects to Rise 5 to 7 Percent [[The Standard, Jan. 6](#)]**

Hong Kong's commercial property market is expected to improve in 2026, with rents on leading high streets expected to rise 5 to 7 percent this year. An Industry expert highlighted that Hong Kong's retail leasing market maintained active momentum in 2025, led by a rebound in tourism and vibrant food and beverage demand. Non-central retail rents are expected to decline slightly. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's retail sector continued recovering in November 2025, with total sales rising 6.5 percent year-on-year to \$4.3 billion, driven by a 28.4 percent surge in online sales to \$487 million (11.2 percent of total sales) and a 2 percent increase in food, alcoholic drinks, and tobacco sales. The rise in prime high street shop rents reflects landlord confidence in growing consumer demand.

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## HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND INSTITUTIONS

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### Asia's 50 Best Restaurants Awards to Be Held in Hong Kong for First Time in March [[The Standard](#), Jan. 7]

The Asia's 50 Best Restaurants awards will reveal the 2026 ranking at a ceremony on March 25. Hosted with the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the event will bring together top chefs, restaurateurs and food media for a multi-day program. The list is voted by a gender-balanced academy of over 350 independent industry experts. The program includes forums, collaborative dining experiences, a chefs' feast and media roundtables. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong is well known for its dynamic and multicultural culinary landscape, with over 12,000 licensed general restaurants which range from local “dives” to high-end fine dining outlets. The Michelin Guide 2025 stars 95 restaurants in Hong Kong and Macau, including seven three-starred establishments in Hong Kong, outnumbering three-starred restaurants in both New York City and London. For more information on the city’s foodservice industry, please refer to [Hong Kong HRI Annual 2025-2026](#).

### Royal Garden Hotel Brand Expands in Tseung Kwan O Hong Kong [[The Hotel Conversation](#), Jan. 8]

Hong Kong’s iconic Royal Garden hotel brand is expanding for the first time in 44 years. The Royal Garden Kowloon East in Tseung Kwan O, with guest rooms and suites launched in January, exclusive villas and family-focused amenities opening by March, and the final phase concluding in July will feature Ponentino restaurant. **ATO Notes:** Overnight visitors accounted for 46.5 percent of Hong Kong’s nearly 50 million visitors in 2025. The Hong Kong Government continues efforts in 2026 to drive tourism growth by [hosting various mega events](#).

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## RETAIL

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### Provisional Statistics of Retail Sales for November 2025 [[HKSAR Press Releases](#), Jan. 2]

The value of total retail sales in November 2025, provisionally estimated at \$4.3 billion (HK\$33.7 billion), increased by 6.5 percent compared with the same month in 2024. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in October 2025 increased by 6.9 percent compared with a year earlier. For the first 11 months of 2025 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales increased by 0.4 percent compared with the same period in 2024. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's retail sales

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grew 6.5 percent year-on-year in November, marking a third consecutive month of strong growth, with the government citing improved consumption and more visitors. However, supermarket sales dropped 1.8 percent and 1.0 percent year-on-year in October and November, respectively.

## **Hongkongers Flock to Say Goodbye as Landmark Sham Shui Po Department Store Closes** **[SCMP, Jan. 4]**

Loyal customers and bargain hunters crowded a landmark department store in Hong Kong on Sunday as it closed its doors after three decades of operations. The closure of Sincere Department Store's Sham Shui Po branch, a neighborhood fixture for 30 years, leaves the chain with only two remaining outlets. Founded in 1900, Sincere was the first Chinese-owned department store in Hong Kong and remains one of the city's oldest retail groups. **ATO Notes:** The closure is attributed to high rents and changing local consumption patterns, including cross-border and online shopping. These challenges are expected to continue to affect traditional retailers in the near term.

## **Brands and Products Expo Sales Hit \$128.2 Million (HK\$1 Billion), up 5 Percent Year-on-Year** **[The Standard, Jan. 6]**

A 24-day edition of the annual Hong Kong Brands and Products Expo organized by the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong recorded total sales of about \$128.2 million, a 5 percent increase from the previous edition. Consumers showed the strongest interest in health supplements, food products, and dried seafood, while overall spending power was broadly similar to last year. Visitors to Hong Kong accounted for about 10 percent of total attendance. **ATO Notes:** The uptick in sales reflects consumers seeking special deals on essential and festive goods at large-scale promotional events rather than a broad recovery in general consumption. This aligns with the wider Hong Kong retail climate, where modest growth is driven by consumers' price sensitivity and a trend towards more cautious, value-driven purchases.

## **FarmFest 2026 Opens at Fa Hui Park in Mong Kok (with photos) [HKSAR Press Releases, Jan. 9]**

Jointly organized by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), the Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) and the Fish Marketing Organization (FMO), FarmFest is the largest outdoor farmers' market in Hong Kong, where local producers can directly sell their products to consumers. The event ran for three consecutive days, from January 9 to January 11, in Mong Kok to showcase a variety of local Hong Kong agricultural and fisheries products, as well as various cultivation and aquaculture technologies and modern farming machinery. **ATO Notes:** Aligned with the Chief Executive's 2025 Policy Address, FarmFest is a government effort to strengthen Hong Kong's local agricultural sector through branding, technology, and direct consumer engagement. The event serves as a key platform for promoting a new unified brand aimed at enhancing product traceability and market competitiveness for local produce.

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## TRADE AND POLICY

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### **Nestle Hong Kong Recalls 21 Batches of Baby Milk Formula over Toxin Fears** [[SCMP, Jan. 7](#)]

Nestle Hong Kong has recalled 21 batches of baby milk formula in Hong Kong amid a global scare over potential contamination with a toxin that can cause nausea and vomiting. Nestle recalled batches of its SMA, Beba and Nan products in Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Switzerland and Britain. **ATO Notes:** Under Hong Kong's regulations, all formula products for infants must comply with strict safety and labeling requirements set by the Centre for Food Safety, including limits on harmful substances and mandatory reporting of food incidents. CFS actively monitors global recalls and often seeks additional information on products that may have entered the Hong Kong market.

### **Hong Kong Suspends Imports of Poultry Meat and Products from 22 U.S. Counties** [[CFS, Jan. 6](#); [CFS, Jan. 15](#); [CFS, Jan. 19](#); and [CFS, Jan. 26](#)]

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has suspended poultry imports from 22 counties following a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). **ATO Notes:** U.S. poultry meat exports dropped 37 percent in January-November 2025 to \$79.3 million compared to the same period in 2024, while egg exports fell even more dramatically by 51.6 percent to just \$0.8 million.

### **Hong Kong Customs Extends Free Trade Agreement Transshipment Facilitation Scheme** [[HKSAR Press Releases, Jan. 12](#)]

Hong Kong Customs has extended the Free Trade Agreement Transshipment Facilitation Scheme (FTA Scheme) to cover transshipment cargoes from mainland China to Peru via Hong Kong. Upon the extension, local traders can apply to Hong Kong Customs for a Certificate of Non-manipulation for the purpose of claiming a preferential tariff under the China-Peru Free Trade Agreement for cargoes from the mainland transshipped to Peru via Hong Kong. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong Customs expanded its Free Trade Agreement Transshipment Facilitation Scheme to cover China-Peru trade, enabling traders to claim preferential tariffs under the China-Peru FTA. Hong Kong Customs is expected to extend the scheme to help more mainland goods access global markets and reinforce Hong Kong's position as a leading logistics hub. The FTA Scheme covers transshipment cargo under 23 Free Trade Agreements and Preferential Trade Agreements for cargo destined for Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Myanmar and Australia.

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## MACAU

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### **Macau Tourism Shatters all Previous Records [[Travel Weekly Asia](#), Jan. 19]**

Macau achieved record visitor arrivals of 40.06 million in 2025, surpassing pre-pandemic levels, driven by mainland China and the Greater Bay Area, with strong growth from South Korea, the Philippines, and Japan. New visa arrangements enabling multi-day movement between Macau and Hengqin support a master plan to position the Greater Bay Area as a unified tourism destination. However, with 60 percent of visitors remaining day-trippers, the industry is focusing on better packaging luxury hospitality, dining, heritage, and entertainment offerings to encourage longer stays. **ATO Notes:** Foreign nationals visiting Macau reached 2.76 million in 2025 (+13.7 percent year-on-year), accounting for 6.87 percent of total arrivals. However, same-day visitors surged 24.6 percent to 23.5 million while overnight visitors grew only 3.1 percent, reducing average stay length to 1.1 days, with 82.6 percent arriving by land primarily from the Greater Bay Area. This trend indicates Macau faces challenges in converting high visitor volumes into extended stays and deeper spending, potentially limiting opportunities for food service and hospitality sectors despite record arrivals.

### **Locals Shop, Dine Across Border as Macau Eateries Feel Mixed Impact [[The Macao News](#), Jan. 21]**

Macau's food and beverage sector is under pressure as more residents travel to Zhuhai for cheaper dining and shopping, causing some restaurants to see business drop by up to one-third compared to pre-pandemic levels. While niche establishments serving specific communities like Filipino restaurants and health-focused cafés remain relatively stable, mainstream eateries are struggling with weakened local spending power and increased competition from mainland businesses offering lower prices and better service quality. **ATO Notes:** In 2025, Macau's economy grew 4.2 percent year-on-year, with tourism and private consumption playing key roles. The government's 2026 policy agenda, focused on economic diversification, business environment improvements, and talent attraction, may help support local food and beverage businesses that have not shared in the overall growth.

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## ATO EVENTS CALENDAR



## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>Jan. 2026</b>	Jan. 23 - 25	Vegetarian Food Asia
	Jan. 29 – Feb. 1	Pet Show 2026
<b>Feb. 2026</b>	Feb. 9	Poly U: The History and Evolution of American Cuisine Lecture (ATOHK)
	Feb. – Mar.	Washington Apple Retail Promotion
<b>Mar. 2026</b>	Feb. – Mar.	Washington Apple Retail Promotion
	Mar. 12 – Mar. 14	Hong Kong International Fur & Fashion Fair
		Asia Pacific Leather Fair 2026 (LHCA)
	Mar. 23	Poly U: American Cuisine Guest Chef Demonstration (ATOHK)
<b>Apr. 2026</b>	Apr. 14	U.S. Men’s and Women’s National Team Rugby Sevens Reception

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**May 2026**

**May 26 – 28**

**Vinexpo Asia (CWI, OWB)**

**May 29**

**The 1976 Judgment of Paris Blind Tasting –  
50th Anniversary Celebration (CWI)**

Hungry for more information about the Hong Kong and Macau markets?

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## **Attachments:**

No Attachments.