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Report Highlights:

Bite size local news, Post reports and activity summaries wrapped by ATO Hong Kong. In this issue: Hawaiian Coffee, USA Rice, and the Great State of Wyoming Showcase at Food Expo Pro Trade Show; ATO and U.S. Wheat Associates Help Hong Kong Bakers Discover Premium U.S. Ingredients, SPAM Hits Hong Kong's Café Culture; Hong Kong Attracts Mainland Food and Beverage Businesses Going Global; Restaurant Sales See Modest Increase in First Half 2026; Retail Food Sales Continue to Face Headwinds from Online and Cross Border Shopping Trends; and Macau Sees Returns on Non-Gaming Economic Diversification Strategy.

Bite Size Local News, Post Report and Activity Summaries

THE HONG KONG WONTON

wrapped by ATO Hong Kong

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Hawaiian Coffee, USA Rice, and the State of Wyoming Showcase Premium U.S. Products at Food Expo Pro Trade Show

On August 13, the Hawaii Coffee Association, USA Rice, and the State of Wyoming–Asia Pacific Trade Office made their debut at Food Expo PRO, to promote U.S. agricultural products to Hong Kong buyers and food industry professionals. Organized by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), the show provided a platform to raise the profile of U.S. agricultural products, develop new trade contacts, and assess market opportunities in Hong Kong. The Hawaii Coffee Association showcased premium Hawaii-grown coffee, USA Rice promoted the quality and versatility of U.S. rice, and the Wyoming office featured Wyoming beef and spirits. ATO Hong Kong supported the exhibitors through introductory business matchmaking, receipt of shipment samples, and assistance in arranging product demonstrations. Check out ATO Hong Kong's social media highlighting the show!

ATO Launches New Partnership with YMCA Culinary School




To expand awareness of U.S. ingredients among food service professionals, ATO Hong Kong partnered with U.S. Wheat Associates to conduct a U.S. ingredient baking seminar and hands-on workshop at YMCA College of Careers. The first-time collaboration with the organization's culinary training program was fully subscribed and established a foundation for future educational programs that can further promote U.S. agricultural products to Hong Kong's hospitality sector. In total, 29 hospitality students and industry professionals gained firsthand experience with the quality, versatility, and performance of U.S. ingredients in baking applications under the expert instruction of Chef Heinz Fischer. The technical instruction and preparation included two original recipes featuring U.S. wheat flour, raisins, pistachios, and eggs. See the culinary team in action here!

SPAM® Brand Promotes First Café Collaboration in Hong Kong

On August 25, ATO joined the U.S. Meat Export Federation's collaboration with Hormel Foods to support SPAM® brand's first café collaboration in Hong Kong. Running from August 21 to September 21, the neighborhood café *Pause It* has transformed its menu across its four outlets, reimagining the iconic, comforting flavors of U.S. luncheon meat into a series of creative, limited-edition dishes. Long established as an integral cornerstone of Hong Kong's vibrant café culture, the luncheon meat holds a nostalgic place in local dining. This collaboration offers patrons a fresh and exciting way to enjoy a household favorite. Amid a challenging retail landscape in Hong Kong, this dynamic first-time partnership serves as an inspiring model for the industry. By blending retail creativity with cross-brand marketing, the initiative successfully amplified efforts to energize the local foodservice sector, drive foot traffic, and spark consumer engagement. Take a look at the menu and promotion for this delicious collaboration!

ECONOMY

Hong Kong Serves as Launchpad for Chinese Mainland Food and Beverage (F&B) Companies Going Global [China Daily Hong Kong, Aug. 7]

A growing number of Chinese mainland food-and-beverage enterprises, such as Yeah Gelato and Chagee, are using Hong Kong as a launchpad for global expansion, drawn by its diverse consumer market and internationally aligned food safety standards. High rents and a tight labor market remain key challenges. To support this trend, the Hong Kong Government established the GoGlobal Task Force in 2025, while InvestHK aims to attract at least 1,200 mainland and overseas enterprises to the city between 2026 and 2027. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's role as a launchpad for mainland F&B enterprises fits a broader trend, with mainland firms increasingly favoring the city as their preferred platform for global expansion, especially into Belt & Road and ASEAN markets. Hong Kong's food quality standards and international market alignment help brands like Yeah Gelato and Chagee refine products and build global appeal before scaling further abroad. See below HRI and Retail sections for more information.

AI Boom will Sustain Hong Kong's Export Surge, Lift Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Outlook, Economists Say [SCMP, Jul. 29]

Hong Kong's exports rose by 53.4 percent year on year in June, the highest monthly growth rate since 1984, driven by global demand for AI-related electronics. Economists noted that demand has broadened beyond Nvidia's graphics processing units to a wider hardware ecosystem, including memory chips, photovoltaic modules, and motherboards, boosting Hong Kong's exports and re-exports from mainland China. A relative easing in China-US trade tensions has further supported this re-export growth. **ATO Notes:** Beyond hardware, AI's economic impact is also reaching Hong Kong's catering and food delivery sector, where operators are applying it to demand forecasting, menu management, logistics, and marketing to cut costs and improve decision-making – extending impact beyond trade into tangible operational gains across everyday commerce.

Shipping Container Farming System in Yuen Long Boosts Fish Yields Threefold [The Standard, Aug. 16]

The container-based eco-culture system piloted at the Au Tau Fisheries Office in Yuen Long yielded three times as much as traditional fishponds, backed by $179,489 (HK$1.4 million) in government funding covering three 20-foot shipping containers, four ecological ponds, and related infrastructure. Biodiversity also increased by more than 40 percent, with nearly 80 animal species recorded across the four ecological ponds. A smart aquaculture management platform with remote monitoring capabilities was introduced to track farming conditions and equipment performance, enabling 24-hour water quality monitoring, precise feeding, and stable water conditions. **ATO Notes:** Beyond the infrastructure investment, the Agriculture, Fisheries, and Conservation Department (AFCD) is also budgeting for farmer capacity-building, having invited local fishermen to visit the system, with formal training and briefings planned for next season to support wider adoption. This reflects the government's ongoing push to modernize domestic aquaculture, though Hong Kong's agricultural sector remains small relative to its economy, and the city continues to rely overwhelmingly on imported food to meet consumption needs.

Arts, Cultural Creativity and Mega Events [Financial Secretary Office of HKSAR, Aug. 9] and Financial Secretary Hails $744 Million (HK$5.8 Billion) Mega-Event Economic Lift [RTHK, Aug. 9]

Financial Secretary Paul Chan said Hong Kong's mega events have lifted the local economy, with over 130 events in the first half of the year drawing 1.75 million visitors, generating $744 million in spending, and contributing $423 million (HK$3.3 billion) in economic value, helping drive 14 consecutive months of retail growth (up 9.6 percent in the first half). Looking ahead, Chan noted Hong Kong will host its first-ever APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting this October, calling it a "golden opportunity" to showcase the city as both a premier financial hub and a dynamic destination for arts, sports, and lifestyle. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's first-ever hosting of the APEC Finance Ministers' Meeting in October 2026 will bring senior political and business leaders to the city, reinforcing its financial hub credentials while showcasing its arts, sports, and lifestyle offerings. As with the Hong Kong Football Festival, which lifted nearby restaurant business by 20 percent, the meeting is likely to generate similar spillover for retail and hospitality.

HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Provisional Statistics of Restaurant Receipts and Purchases for Second Quarter of 2026 [HKSAR, Aug. 4]
The total receipts of the restaurants sector in the second quarter of 2026 increased by 0.4 percent over a year earlier. Over the same period, the provisional estimate of the value of total purchases by restaurants increased by 2.5 percent. Total receipts of Chinese restaurants increased by 1.5 percent in value. Total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants increased by 1.6 percent in value. Total receipts of fast-food shops decreased by 1.5 percent in value. Total receipts of bars decreased by 3.8 percent in value. A Government spokesman said that business of restaurants was largely steady recently. **ATO Notes:** Diverging sales across restaurants, fast food establishments and bars highlights the uneven performance of Hong Kong's food service sector and continued headwinds despite an improving visitor and economic outlook.

Leading Mainland Bar-Restaurant Chain Commune Opens Flagship Store in Hong Kong to Power Overseas Expansion [HKSAR, Aug. 5]
Invest Hong Kong announced that Commune, a leading bar-restaurant chain from mainland China, has opened its first store in Hong Kong, marking a significant step in its global expansion. The brand will establish its regional headquarters in Hong Kong to steer overseas growth. Located at Lee Garden Three in Causeway Bay, the store serves as the group's flagship location in Hong Kong. The Co-Founder of Commune said Hong Kong's international clientele, excellent business environment, and robust legal framework provide the ideal foundation for them to build their brand and expand across Southeast Asia. **ATO Notes:** Commune's flagship opening in Hong Kong underscores the city's vital role as a springboard for global market expansion. According to a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) between January and February 2026—which polled over 2,000 mainland Chinese companies across various sectors—more than 90 percent of enterprises plan to expand overseas within the next two years, with over 80 percent aiming to use Hong Kong as their launchpad into Southeast Asia.

Hong Kong Netizens Debate whether Traditional Cafes Serve as a Peaceful 'Harbor for Men' [The Standard, Aug. 15]
A social media post has sparked online debate after a netizen shared observations about traditional local cafes, known as cha chaan tengs (or tea restaurants), describing them as a unique 'harbor for

men' escaping life's pressures. Supporters pointed to affordable prices, the absence of service charges, freshly cooked food made with simple ingredients, and cozy booths as reasons for their popularity among working-class men from all walks of life. Critics, however, argued that times have changed for the worse, noting that many modern cha chaan tengs have become overpriced, offer poor seating, and are staffed by impatient servers. Others complained about rushed service and raised hygiene concerns. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong's local foodservice sector has faced internal economic headwinds alongside growing external competition from across the border. At the same time, ongoing criticisms regarding cramped seating, impatient staff, and aggressive table-turnover policies continue to weigh on the dining experience.

RETAIL

Provisional Statistics of Retail Sales for June 2026 [HKSAR, Aug. 4]
A Hong Kong government spokesman said that the latest retail sales figures indicate that the retail sector remains on a positive trajectory. The value of total retail sales increased for the 14th consecutive month in June, recording a growth rate of 4.6 percent. Cumulatively, total retail sales in the first half of the year was 9.6 percent higher than a year earlier. The largest increase was recorded in the value of sales of jewelry, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts, which grew by 20.1 percent. **ATO Notes**: Overall retail sales continued to show healthy growth, supported by improving domestic demand, rising local incomes, and increasing visitor arrivals. However, supermarket sales declined 1.1 percent year-on-year in June, in contrast to the 2.5 percent increase in sales of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco. The mixed performance suggests that while consumer spending is recovering, supermarket operators may continue to face strong price competition and changing shopping patterns.

Mainland Home-Dining Ingredient Brand GQ Homepot Opens Hong Kong Flagship Store to Expand International Business [HKSAR, Aug. 19]
GQ Homepot, a leading home-dining ingredient brand in mainland China, has opened its first retail store outside the Chinese mainland in Hong Kong. GQ Homepot specializes in ready-to-eat, ready-to-heat, ready-to-cook, and ready-to-prepare home-dining ingredients. It has launched a "community central kitchen" retail concept, offering high-value-for-money ingredients that cater to consumers' needs across all three daily meals and a variety of dining occasions. GQ Homepot regards Hong Kong as the first cornerstone of its internationalization strategy and will progressively expand into key markets across Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. **ATO Notes:** GQ Homepot's entry into Hong Kong highlights the growing demand for convenient, affordable, and ready-to-prepare food products and demonstrates Hong Kong's role as a testing ground for mainland Chinese food brands seeking international expansion. The company's "community central kitchen" concept also reflects evolving consumer preferences toward convenience and diverse home-dining options.

2026 Hong Kong Shopping Festival kicks off with 220+ Restaurant, Supermarket and Retail Store Limited Offers [The Standard, July 20]
The 2026 Hong Kong Shopping Festival, organized by the Hong Kong Retail Management Association (HKRMA), runs from July 1 to August 31. It involves retailers, shopping malls, catering businesses, hotels, logistics companies and payment platforms, with the goal of attracting both residents and visitors through shopping privileges and special offers, participating merchants include Wellcome and PARKnSHOP Supermarket, making this directly relevant to grocery retail. The festival features discounts and promotions intended to encourage consumer spending. **ATO Notes:** The Hong Kong Shopping Festival provides an important platform for retailers and food businesses to stimulate consumer spending through discounts, vouchers, and value-oriented promotions. The strong focus on promotions highlights continued competition for consumer spending and the importance of value in Hong Kong's retail market**.**

TRADE AND POLICY

Impact of U.S. Trade Policy Shifts on Hong Kong 'Primarily Psychological': Paul Chan [SCMP, Aug. 16]
Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said shifts in U.S. trade policy and interest rates will affect Hong Kong mainly through market volatility rather than direct economic harm, noting the U.S. is only the city's fourth largest export market. His comments followed the government's upward revision of its 2026 growth forecast to 3.5-4.5 percent, after first-half GDP grew 5.1 percent, the strongest half-yearly performance in nearly five years. **ATO Notes:** Chan's remarks point to continued economic resilience in Hong Kong, with strong retail, property, and private investment activity, particularly in AI and advanced manufacturing, supporting sustained demand. Catering remains soft due to shifting local spending patterns, but rising visitor arrivals (31 million in the first seven months, up 12 percent year-on-year) point to continued opportunities in food service and retail tied to tourism.

MACAU

MICE Attendance, Spending Rise in 1H despite Flat Event Numbers [Macau Daily Times, Aug. 17]
The number of MICE events held in Macau in the first half of this year remained broadly the same year-on-year at 918. Still, the number of participants and attendees at such events increased by 16 percent to 494,000. Moreover, MICE-driven receipts in the non-gaming industries in Q2 increased 54.8 percent year-on-year to MOP1.59 billion. The increase was driven by growth in the number of non-local

participants and attendees, as well as higher per-capita spending by MICE visitors. **ATO Notes:** The surge in non-gaming revenue—fueled by an influx of non-local attendees and increased per-capita spending—underscores Macau's strategic pivot from traditional gaming toward high-value business tourism.

ATO EVENTS CALENDAR

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

DELICIOUS USA

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sep 2026	**Sep. 1 - Sep. 30**	**Foodservice Promotion with Ninoen Group (USRPA)**
	Sep. 1 – Sep. 3	**Restaurant, Bar & Café 2026 (Food Export USA Northeast)**
	Sep. 1 – Nov. 30	**USA Rice Deli Fest (USA Rice)**
	Sep. 2 - Sep. 4	**Asia Fruit Logistica 2026 (ATO HK)**
	Sep. 3 - Sep. 30	**JEBN Taste of America 250: US Food Fair (ATO HK)**
	Sep. 4	**PolyU U.S. Summer Nut Fruit Desserts and Snacks Demo Workshop (ATO HK)**
	Sep. 12 & 19	**Table Grape Mascot Performance at Taste Supermarket (CTGC)**
	Sep. 30	**PolyU Hands-on Cooking & Wine Pairing Workshop (ATO HK)**
Oct 2026	**Sep. 1 – Nov. 30**	**USA Rice Deli Fest (USA Rice)**

	Mid-Oct - Nov	U.S. Seafood Menu Promotion (ASMI / FoodExport NE)
	Oct. 27	The Great American Texas BBQ 2026 (USMEF, ATO HK)
	Oct. 31 - Nov. 1	Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival (ATO HK)
Nov 2026	Sep. 1 – Nov. 30	USA Rice Deli Fest (USA Rice)
	Mid-Oct - Nov	U.S. Seafood Menu Promotion (ASMI / Foodexport NE)
	Nov. 5 - Nov. 7	HKTDC Hong Kong International Wine & Spirits Fair (ATO HK)
	Nov. 9 – Dec. 20	Hong Kong Liquor Store U.S. Spirits Promotion
	Nov. 13 – Nov. 29	American Whiskey Trail Hong Kong (ATO HK)

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Attachments:

No Attachments.