

An aerial photograph of Macau, China, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous high-rise buildings. The skyline is dominated by the Macau Tower, a tall, slender structure with a distinctive golden, tiered top. Other prominent buildings include the Grand Lisboa, a large, ornate hotel with a golden facade, and the Venetian Macao, a massive complex with a Venetian theme. The city is situated on a peninsula, with the sea visible in the background. The sky is clear and blue.

The Fun of being Tourists in Our Own City

Cornelia Ho



The summer vacation has just started and normally this is the time of the year when families are getting set for trips abroad. Yet, this summer is doomed to be different. The current global pandemic situation of COVID-19 has made it unlikely for trips to be made beyond the border, catastrophically affecting the tourist industry in Macau. In order to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on local tourism, to resume economic activities, and to divert residents from the boredom of social distancing, the SAR Government has launched a local tour project – Macau Ready Go! Local Tours. Macau residents are each subsidized up to 560 patacas to join two local tours. The tour fees cover sightseeing, catering, tour guide service, insurance and so forth. The first phase of the project involves a total of 15 itineraries in two categories, namely “Community-based Tours” and “Leisure Tours”. I signed up for one of the Community-based Tours with my family. The itinerary included Cunha Street, the Seac Pai Van Park, the old town of Coloane and a boat ride.



We first arrived at Cunha Street, where we were brought into a famous bakery with traditional almond cookies as its signature product. Cunha Street was not new to us. Neither were almond cookies. Yet, it was really our first attempt at making almond cookies by ourselves. To our delight, the trip deepened our understanding of this must-buy and must-eat of Macau. Of course, we saw it as a good chance to take photos for Facebook check-ins too.

After lunch in Cunha Street, we were taken to Seac Pai Van Park. Our past visits to the park had been mainly for the purpose of seeing giant pandas and other animals. This time, the highlight was its Ecological Trail Garden of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants. None of us had been to this newly-built section in the park. There we could find over three hundred species of medicinal plants such as Ivy Tree, Chinese Chrysanthemum, Hairy Fig, Sweet Osmanthus, and Hilo Holly. Besides the local species, there were

some unique species from other provinces. Never having seen the fresh herbs before, we used to see Chinese medicine as a mere bowl of dark bitter liquid. The short walk was indeed educational and thus very much worth our sweat under the sun.

We then headed for the old town of Coloane, also known as the Coloane Village. What first came into sight was the famous Lord Stow Bakery. The aroma of its Portuguese egg tarts made our mouths water. Who could resist such temptation? Out of the bakery was a historic lane. It was good to have a stroll there to burn the calories of the egg tarts in our stomachs. There were a few old temples along the lane. We had never realized their existence before. At the end of the lane was the old Coloane Pier. It was where we boarded a boat back to Macau. I bet few had ever tried such a boat trip before. In fact, when Coloane was still an outlying island quite many years ago, people could only commute between Coloane and Macau by boat. It was a rare chance for us to experience this sea route. During the 45-minute boat ride bound for the Inner Harbour of Macau, all people in the group were excited and busy taking photos of the coastal scenery. In this way, the boat ride marked a perfect end of our tour.

It was fun being a tourist in our own city. Though it was only a short half-day tour, we experienced something, saw something and did something that we had never tried before. Thanks to the project “Macau Ready Go! Local Tours”, we have discovered many hidden gems of our own hometown and learned more about Macau’s geography, history and culture. In the future, we will all probably be able to serve as sightseeing ambassadors to help promote Macau to the world.



VOCABULARY

1.pandemic	1. 大流行
2.catastrophically	2. 災難性地
3.alleviate the impact	3. 減輕影響
4.resume economic activities	4. 恢復經濟活動
5.subsidized	5. 補貼
6.itinerary	6. 行程
7.signature product	7. 招牌產品
8.aroma	8. 香氣
9.commute between ...	9. 往返……之間
10.sightseeing ambassadors	10. 觀光大使

GRAMMER POINT

1.“divert ... from” (paragraph 1 ... line 8)

divert (someone or something) from (someone or something)

To induce someone or something to change course or direct their attention to something else.

Examples:-

The traffic policeman tried to divert the vehicles from the main road onto the side street.

The parents find it hard to divert their children from the electronic games.

2.“It was fun being ...” (last paragraph ... line 1)

adjective + gerund

If something is fun, it is pleasant, enjoyable, and not serious.

Example:-

It's fun working for him.

It's fun talking with the man as he has a strong sense of humour.