

# Teaching in Macau

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## About Macau

Macau (or *Macao*), about 1 hour west of Hong Kong, consists of the Macau Peninsula and the small islands of Taipa and Coloane; all connected by bridge or causeway. While parts of Taipa and Coloane convey an old-fashioned image of China, many aspects of the three towns are very modern.

Macau is packed with skyscrapers, casinos, and tourists. In addition, the 9 square miles also includes several fortresses, an ancient palace, historic buildings and churches, monuments and friendly urban squares. There are also a wide variety of nightlife options, restaurants and casinos, and you've got a major tourist attraction that's growing in popularity. Macau is its major asset, as its Portuguese and Chinese cultures, the (*old*) boat-building yards, mansions and temples, and the (*modern*) beach resorts, casinos and restaurants blend together to offer a wide variety of interesting things to see and do for any traveler.

Despite all this activity, Macau is relatively safe. Even late at night, families and students are out and about without concerns. So there is no need to match your schedule to another instructor's schedule. This doesn't mean be reckless; simply be careful.

## Before you go

### *Documents*

- **Visa**—Single entry is enough to visit the neighboring islands, such as Hong Kong, Kowloon, etc. Multiple entrances is needed for mainland China. (You might want to say that you don't need any visa to China if the only place you're visiting is Hong Kong / and each person needs to make own decision if he/she thinks they'll visit Hong Kong or mainland China more than once. I personally think multiple entry is a good idea because mainland China is only 20 minutes away by bus and if so inclined one can go often and get a cheap massage / manicure pedicure / haircut etc.
- **Passport**—needed for travel to Macau, among the islands and throughout mainland China.

Visit your doctor within 2 months before you depart America. Depending on your current health record, shots may be required, such as Hepatitis A and B or tetanus shot. These shots are required at least two weeks to 15 days before you leave.

## The Packing

Ignore the guidebooks. The writers encourage you to bring all this extra stuff, like toilet paper, bug spray and money belts. 90% of the public bathrooms are Western bathrooms; occasionally, they run out of toilet paper. Keep your wallet thin and in a place you can feel it. If you prefer a purse, drape it over your head and shoulder and keep it in front of you. (Pick pocketing is a prevalent problem that neither of us have experienced). You need:

- An umbrella—helpful in rain or shine-which can be bought very cheaply in Macau

- Suntan lotion—few bugs will bite you, but the sunlight is a constant in Macau
- Sunglasses—again the sunlight is not forgiving here
- A hat
- A debit card/credit card—you receive a better rate than if you exchange your cash.
- There are several money exchange places in Macau close to the apartment.
- Light clothing—several shirts with a couple pairs of shorts, interchangeable skirts or pants—There is no need for any dressy clothing, no one gets dressed up.
- Essential toiletries—brush, toothbrush, and hair dryer (Do not bother bringing curlers. The curls will fall in minutes. You can buy American brands while you are there – but they will be expensive.)
- Utensils including a sharp knife – The following should be coordinated with prospective
- Dishes (cups are provided) housemates – no need to duplicate
- Hot plate, pan and pot
- Hangers (an iron is provided)
- Towels—2 is enough
- General medications such as aspirin, cold medication, and/or Pepto Bismol (the stores may sell these, but the instructions may not be English.)

### *Electrical Issues*

Converters should be used only with "electric" appliances. Electric appliances are simple heating devices or have mechanical motors. Examples are hair dryers, steam irons, electric toothbrushes, incandescent lamps, and small fans. Converters should not be used for more than three hours at a time. Because the voltage is different in Macau than in the U.S.A. a converter is an absolute necessity.

**Transformers:** are used with "electronic" appliances. Electronic appliances have a chip or circuit. Examples are cell phones, radios, CD players, shavers, battery rechargers, computer printers, fax machines, televisions, answering machines, and fluorescent lamps. Transformers can also be used with electric appliances and may be operated continually for many days. Macau Millennium College staff will assist with cell phones and other electronics.

Converters and transformers are available for appliances of different wattages. You can also purchase before the trip; they are also available at discount/appliances stores such as Target or Best Buy. To find the wattage of your appliance, look at the label located on the appliance or in the owner's manual. The label or manual will show the input voltage.

**Plug Adapters:** do not convert electricity. They simply allow a dual-voltage appliance, a transformer or a converter from one country to be plugged into the wall outlet of another country. The plug of an American appliance will not fit into outlets in most foreign countries without an adapter.

### *The dress*

Macau is incredibly casual. There are few opportunities to dress up, so please leave the great outfits at home. Instead, bring comfortable clothes that are lightweight and can be mixed and matched. Jeans and t-shirts are actually heavy for the hot, humid location. Bring thin, light materials and a jacket for air-conditioned buildings.

### **The Apartment**

The apartment consists of a common room, kitchen, bedrooms, and bathrooms. It is dormitory style living, no frills. There are also a fridge, microwave, washer and a dryer (which might not

work). Curtains and sheets are provided; however, towels are not.

A cleaning woman visits the apartment every 2 or 3 weeks. Her visits are arranged through the college staff, and someone must be present when she arrives. She collects soiled linens that will be returned in two weeks. If you bring your own sheets, be sure the woman knows your linen must be returned to you. She will also be present if the maintenance men must repair any appliances in the apartment.

### ***Travel to Macau***

The flight is long, but now EVA Airlines has a direct flight to Macau from D.C. The Macau Millennium College staff will meet you at the airport and take you to your apartment. If you travel to Hong Kong, you are only an hour from Macau. Follow the E2 signs to the Macau ferry. When you purchase your ferry ticket (Show your visa, and use US dollars or Hong dollars), hand over your luggage tickets. The ferry agents will transfer your luggage to the ferry.

When you arrive in the Macau ferry terminal, you must traverse Immigration, which rarely questions why you are visiting Macau. So have your passport and completed health form ready. Beyond Immigration, there is an open area to your right. Wait there and have your luggage claim ticket ready. The baggage claim window sits a few feet away, but the baggage carts are dragged to the open area where you can collect your luggage and hand over your claim ticket(s).

**Note:** If you are 65 or older or disabled, get in the Disabled/65 and over line at Immigration – it's a much shorter line.

#### *More than 30 days*

Once Immigration stamps your passport, you have 30 days teach in Macau (Don't panic about the visa limitation. If you must stay longer than 30 days, visit the Immigration office across from the Golden Dragon (see map). You can request an extension for additional days. But be sure to bring a copy of your return flight itinerary, 2 copies of ALL the pages in your passport.

Or take a trip, your time in Macau is automatically extended when you return to Macau after a few days away. This option will not work for multiple repeated trips to Hong Kong and back. Feel free to travel outside Macau as often as you like. If you want to travel while in Macau, talk to a travel agent in America. There are few travel agents in Macau and fewer who speak English. Just confirm that your visa has not expired. There is a travel agency called Amigo in the Hotel Lisboa and another agency in the Venetian Hotel, where the employees speak English but are not always knowledgeable on travel to an unusual destination (i.e. Vietnam)

### ***Once you arrive***

Someone from the college will meet you at the ferry terminal. Just e-mail them ahead of time with your itinerary of plane schedule. People we contacted in summer 2009 were Kevin Lei: [Kevin@mmc.edu.mo](mailto:Kevin@mmc.edu.mo) and Flora Long: [flora@mmc.edu.mo](mailto:flora@mmc.edu.mo) A car and a driver and someone from college who speaks English take you to the apartment. The apartment from the ferry terminal is about 10 minutes away by car, and it is 20 minutes walking by most.

#### *The Weather*

The summers are incredibly hot and humid (often 80% humidity). Summer in Macau is typhoon season, but don't panic. Typhoons are mild hurricanes: heavy rain and wind. The

school advises you and students if classes are cancelled due to a level 8 typhoon. Yet this does not occur often.

The advantage: it's cooler after the rains.

A compact travel umbrella is perfect for Macau. During the first half of your stay, it is incredibly hot. Guide books suggest wearing a hat. Most of your body is still exposed to sunlight. As an alternative, follow the natives' example. Use an umbrella. The shade keeps you cooler and out of direct sunlight.

### ***The College***

Macau Millennium College sits on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor of China Civil Plaza (see map). It is a very small school that teaches largely to casino staff and a small number of high school graduates or Macau professionals. Many students are paid to attend the courses, but some pay their own tuition.

Motivation is closely tied with interest. If they sit and are inactive, they are quickly bored. If the assignments/activities are not graded, they will put little effort into the work. Visual materials and high interest U.S. culture topics are recommended with the MMC beginning level learners of English in an environment where they do not have the opportunity to practice their language skills in a naturalistic setting.

*The Staff*

The staff is wonderful, very helpful, and reliable. They will assist you and try to help as you navigate the city the course. If you have any questions or needs, do not hesitate to ask. For instance, they did set up the internet access upon request. They were flexible about schedule changes. They would make photo copies and research information or destinations. Just ask. If you find that you have a teaching schedule that you are not completely happy with – speak to the staff and see if the schedule can be changed.

The college will also provide an unlocked cell phone that simply requires a SIM card and minutes. A SIM card is a prepaid card that can be purchased at any grocery store, electronic store, and even 7-11, a number of which are located close to the apartment and the school.

Bring a converter or be sure to ask the college for converters. The converter adjusts the American 120 wattage to Chinese 220 wattage without destroying your appliances.

*The Students*

Just like our American students, the MMC students want to do as little as possible and still pass. So, they will suggest easier assignments, reading, homework, etc. However, they are very capable. I recommend beginning at an easy level then steadily increase the level of difficulty.

The easy level is for you rather than for them. There are several levels of comprehension in each class. Some speak well but have difficulty writing. Others have trouble understanding your speech but write clearly. Some are ready for university; still a small group of students understands nothing you say. For this reason, do not discourage Chinese in the class-or the use of dictionaries or electronic devices. The stronger students often help the weaker students with translation or explanations.

There is a discrepancy in comprehension, English, and communication levels and competency. EN 85 and EN 101 are not the same level of competency as MC standards. Prepare to teach EN 101a to students whose levels are EL 101 and RD 101.

They prefer speaking to grammar. They want conversation practice.

The students are very polite and respectful. Still they usually arrive to class late because of work schedules. You will teach for three hours in the morning, and then you must teach the same lecture in the evening. Some students will come in the morning and others in the evening. Occasionally, some might leave class early to go to work.

*Asking questions:* The students often cover their mouths when speaking. They are shy and concerned that they will make mistakes. The class will move faster if you select people to answer your questions. When you ask the class a question, no one will answer. After a few weeks, only the stronger, more comfortable students will answer your questions. However, if you ask an individual (tap his/her desk or shoulder), s/he can often ask the question or will ask a stronger student for clarification.

They should not be open-ended questions, such as tell me what the story is about.

*Cheating:* Cheating and plagiarism are big issues in the courses. They tend to help each other during the exam. Students will download writing from the internet. So make

sure you walk around and monitor during tests. However, be sure the student is cheating. Some students will ask others for clarification rather than asking you.

*For more travel information, visit*

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_955.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_955.html)