

ALLURING ASIA



DESTINATION

HONG KONG

TRAVELER'S GUIDE





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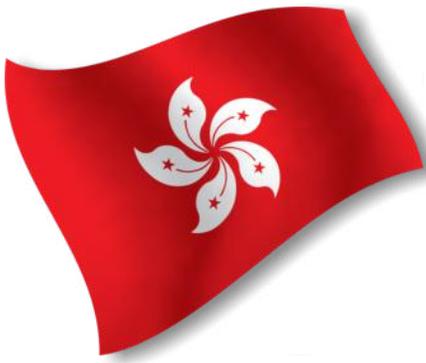
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Thank you.



POPULATION

The population of Honk Kong is 7.1 million, of which 95% are Chinese.

TIME

Observed at UTC+8 all year round. The Hong Kong Observatory is the official.

VISAS

A passport with a minimum of six months validity remaining and evidence of onward/return transportation by sea/air are required. A visa is not required for tourist visits of up to 90 days by U.S. citizens.

INSURANCE

You should not assume your U.S. or other existing health insurance will cover you while traveling abroad. Since the standard of emergency treatment is not always as high as in the West, it is advisable for travelers to take out an additional travel policy that includes evacuation in addition to their normal medical insurance.

HISTORY

PRE-COLONIAL HONG KONG

Dotted around Hong Kong are at least eight prehistoric - probably Neolithic - rock carvings. Many archaeological digs also have confirmed human settlement thousands of years ago. The earliest inhabitants were Yueh tribe's people, whose boat-people communities floated in Hong Kong's many sheltered, sandy bays. Today's Tanka fishing communities are thought to be their descendants.

The area around Hong Kong was absorbed by China about 2,000 years ago. Imperial Chinese records of a millennium ago refer to Tuen Munnaw a major New Territories New Town development. It was a garrison town, as was Tolo Harbor's Tai Po, now the location of another New Town. The troops' main function was to guard the pearls which were harvested from Tolo Harbor by aboriginal Tanka divers.

About 1,000 years ago, as a result of invasions and dynastic unrest in China, various northern Cantonese families began to move in to what is now Hong Kong. The dominant settle families, known as the "Five Great Clans", are still major landowners.

Eventually, the fertile plains of the New Territories became an extensively cultivated outpost of the province of Canton (now known as Guangdong). Other migrants included the Hoklo fishing people from eastern Guangdong province.

In the 17th century, China's new rulers - the Manchus' Qing dynasty - enforced an evacuation policy along the southern coastline, an area which included Hong Kong, to suppress rebellion and piracy. After a few years, when the policy was rescinded, a new wave of settlers from the north arrived in the under-populated territory; they were the Hakka (or "guest") people. Like the longer established Cantonese clans which controlled the market towns, they were primarily farmers. Apart from growing rice, the non-seafaring people of Hong Kong cultivated incense, tea and pineapples, and also panned for salt and produced lime.

Consequently, Hong Kong contains many long-established fishing communities and hundreds of small, centuries-old villages, many still protected by defensive walls, moats, and gatehouses. There are also hundreds of ancient Chinese temples, dedicated to Taoist and Buddhist deities, and many clan ancestral halls and other historical monuments and relics.

In 1949, the communist People's Republic of China was created and Hong Kong became a haven for millions of refugees. Mostly Cantonese, they also included many entrepreneurs and professionals from Shanghai and elsewhere who continued to maintain the old Chinese beliefs, traditions and lifestyles.

HONG KONG UNDER BRITISH RULE

Skills and capital brought by refugees of mainland China, especially from Shanghai, along with a vast pool of cheap labor helped revive the economy and at the same time many foreign firms relocated their offices from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Enjoying unprecedented growth, Hong Kong would transform into an industrial and manufacturing powerhouse. During the 1980's British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, hoped that the increasing openness of the PRC government and the economic reform in the mainland would allow the continuation of British rule. The resulting meeting led to the signing of a Sino-British Joint Declaration and the proposal of the One country, two systems concept by Deng Xiaoping.

On April 4, 1990, the Hong Kong Basic Law was officially accepted as the mini-constitution of the Hong Kong SAR, and on July 1, 1997 Hong Kong was handed over to the People's Republic of China by the United Kingdom.

HISTORY IN NAMES

Fragrant Harbor - Hong Kong's English name is derived from two Chinese characters, Heung and Gong, usually translated as "Fragrant Harbor". Originally it was only the name of a small settlement near Aberdeen, the main fishing and entre port on pre-colonial Hong Kong Island. Some historians suggest that Hong Kong's Chinese name was inspired by its export of fragrant incense.

Nine Dragons - The explanations for Kowloon's name is even more romantic. In Chinese, the peninsula's name is "Kow Lung", meaning "Nine Dragons". The name is thought to have been coined by Emperor Ping, one of two boy-emperors of the doomed Sung Dynasty whose court fled to Hong Kong eight centuries ago. He is said to have counted eight mountains in the area, and decided to name it "Eight Dragons" (in accordance with the ancient Chinese belief that every mountain is inhabited by a dragon).

The Emperor's tally of the peaks was corrected by a quick-witted courtier who pointed out that as emperors were also believed to be dragons, the place was really "Nine Dragons" - Ping being the ninth. The origin of Kowloon's name may be a legend, but is a historical fact that the boy-emperor's traveling palace stayed there.

GOVERNMENT

Under its constitutional document, the Basic Law, Hong Kong is an autonomous Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, except in defense and foreign affairs. The Basic Law guarantees that autonomy for 50 years, and designates a system of governance led by a Chief Executive and an Executive Council, with a two-tiered system of representative government and an independent judiciary.



HONG KONG ISLAND AREAS

NORTHSIDE (Harbor side)

Today, a hundred thousand windows overlook the magnificent natural anchorage of Victoria Harbor from the northern shoreline of Hong Kong Island. In 1841, when Britain took possession of the island, the strips of coastal land, sheltered by a hilly range of peaks, were home to a few fishermen.

Today, the densely developed corridor of urban land contains a fascinating variety of districts, each possessing its own unique character and attractions.

Most of Hong Kong Island's 1.3 million inhabitants live in the richly varied coastal strip, and many other Hong Kong people commute to its office towers and businesses. A tram ride from Kennedy Town in the west to Shau Kei Wan in the east provides an excellent overview of the differing lifestyles and social conditions which exist within these various areas.

WESTERN DISTRICT

Hong Kong's most typical traditional "Chinatown" area is always teeming with activity. Vibrant Western is a hive of wharves and shop-houses, exotic markets and steep "ladder" lanes. This is where modern Hong Kong started; mushrooming around Possession Street, where the British fleet first planted its flag in 1841. Chinese migrants began to settle here in the same year, creating the raffish heart of 19th-century maritime Hong Kong. Now, as then, the district profits from its proximity to the harbor's Western approaches, where hundreds of cargo vessels moor.

Sightseeing highlights include the mid-19th-century Man Ho Temple. Dedicated to the Taoist Gods of Literature and War, it is packed with richly colored religious paraphernalia and coils of burning incense. Nearby are the antique and curio shops of Hollywood Road and the Cat Street area, and Hollywood Road Park.

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Formerly known as Hong Kong's capital (Victoria City), Central is the government headquarters, transportation hub, and financial and banking center. Central is a shimmering cityscape of skyscrapers and marbled shopping atrium's and malls. Amid the modernity, though, there are delightful parkland's and charming pockets of colonial architecture.

Take two side trips to gain revealing perspectives on Central's grandeur: board a Kowloon-bound Star Ferry for a spectacular view of the city skyline and return to ascend the Peak by the Peak Tram. The panoramic views from the Peak, and the rustic lanes that wind around it, include much of the country parkland and natural beauty. At the Bank of China Tower, you will find the Tsui Museum of Art which includes more than 2,000 Chinese antiquities (one of the best-known private collections of Chinese art in the world). Other sites in the Central District area include



the Government House, the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, the former French Mission Building, St. John's Cathedral (the oldest Anglican Church in the Far East), Flagstaff House - home to the Museum of Tea Ware (Hong Kong's oldest surviving colonial building), Hong Kong Park and City Hall.

CAUSEWAY BAY AND HAPPY VALLEY

Causeway Bay is a popular nightlife and dining area and a shopper's dreamland. Shops are open till 9:30pm or so, when the district is aglow with neon and spotlights. The chic Vogue Alley consists of two covered walkways of widely varied boutiques, and the latest attractions are the new shopping centers of Times Square and In Square.

The area's other wide open space is Victoria Park, where early risers practice t'ai chi and tens of thousands of people gather on such festive occasions as Chinese New Year and the Mid-Autumn Festival.

EASTERN DISTRICT

Queen's Road ends in Wan Chai; King's Road begins beyond Victoria Park and stretches eastward along the coast towards the ancient fishing harbor of Shau Kei Wan. The Tam Kung Temple there honors Hong Kong's "own" Taoist deity, a patron god of seafarers who reputedly lived in the region during his human boyhood.

HONG KONG ISLAND - Southside

Whereas the north Shore of Hong Kong Island is a densely populated city sector, the island's central and southern areas mainly consist of unspoiled countryside. A band of large country parks covers much of the wooded, hilly terrain, which is edged with sandy coves, fishing harbors and pockets of elite residential housing.

ABERDEEN

Despite extensive redevelopment and modernization, the ancient fishing port of Aberdeen (named after a British peer) is a scenic highlight of any Hong Kong Island Tour. Brightly decorated trawlers, which double as floating homes for Aberdeen's fisher folk, fill a sheltered harbor whose hillsides are decked with woodland, Chinese cemeteries and residential towers.

Also in the area is Ocean Park, Southeast Asia's largest entertainment and leisure complex. Its outdoor escalator system is one of the longest in the world. You can also ride up to the headland attractions via the cable car system where you will have a panoramic view of some of Hong Kong's 235 Outlying Islands and of Hong Kong Island's Riviera-like coastline.

SOUTH COAST

Beyond Aberdeen, along a scenic coastal road flanked by flame trees and imposing cliffside mansions, lies Deep Water Bay. Its public beach, one of the most attractive in Hong Kong, is situated alongside the Royal Hong Kong Golf Club's annex. A scenic coastal pathway winds eventually to Repulse Bay.

This is Hong Kong Island's most popular beach and is easily accessible by bus or taxi from Central or Admiralty, via the Aberdeen tunnel and Deep Water Bay, or via a hilltop road. Further on, passing other secluded, sandy coves, the road runs through a gap in the range of hills, suddenly revealing the panorama of Stanley - its fishing village, peninsula and bays. A major attraction in the old fishing village is Stanley Market. Cottages and chophouses have been converted into well-stocked boutiques selling a wide range of relatively inexpensive clothing, including factory overruns of locally made designed items. Porcelain, rattan ware and other hand-crafted items are also readily available at competitive prices.

KOWLOON

The Kowloon Peninsula, ceded to Britain in 1860, covers an area of less than 11 square kilometers, but it is home to around two million people. The district of Mong Kok is one of the most densely populated in the world.



"Old" Kowloon's borderland with China lay along Boundary Street, which runs straight across the peninsula a few blocks north of Mong Kok M.T.R. Station. "New" Kowloon was formed in 1898, when Britain leased the land north of Boundary Street and south of the Shenzhen River.

TSIM SHA TSUI AND HUNG HOM

One of Hong Kong's major shopping, dining and entertainment areas, Tsim Sha Tsui ("Sharp Sandy Point") was a barely inhabited rural promontory at the beginning of the century. Nathan Road, named after the British Governor who designed it, runs directly up to Boundary Street, and was long scorned as a white elephant and dubbed "Nathan's Folly". In recent decades, it has been known as the "Golden Mile" because of the dazzling array of brightly lit, neon-decorated shops, hotels, restaurants and nightspots that flank the wide thoroughfare. The road's gilded magic now extends much further than a mile and represents a shopper's paradise, stretching up to Boundary Street and beyond and out to both sides.

An oasis in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui, the 14 hectare Kowloon Park stands on a small hill that used to be the site of a military barracks. One of its preserved colonial buildings houses the Hong Kong Museum of History, whose permanent exhibition is a fascinating introduction to the history of Hong Kong.

Other highlights in the Kowloon area are the Hong Kong Space Museum, Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Hong Kong Cultural Center, Signal Tower, Clock Tower and the Star Ferry Concourse.

NEW TERRITORIES

More than 2.5 million people live in the New Territories.

WAN CHAI AND NORTH WAN CHAI

"Old" Wan Chai, long loved as the fictional home of Suzie Wong retains much of its former image as a sailor's paradise. Its many bars, dance halls, hostess clubs and side streets of turn-of-the-century Chinese townhouses now co-exist cheerily with grand new shopping centers and a dazzling range of inexpensive ethnic restaurants.



On the reclaimed land of North Wan Chai, where the 78-storey Central Plaza (Asia's tallest building) rises, a host of glittering towers have given Hong Kong a new social and entertainment center. Arts-lovers flock to the Hong Kong Arts Center and the Academy of Performing Arts.

YAU MA TEI AND MONG KOK

This district is full of specialty shops and street markets which provide fascinating insights into traditional Chinese lifestyles. It can take a whole day to wander around Yau Ma Tei. The communal heart of Yau Ma Tei is the five-temple terrace of Tin Hau Temple, a fine example of rural Chinese architecture. Also of interest are the area's two famed markets, the Jade Market and the Temple Street Night Market.

On Tung Choi Street you will find the Ladies Market (open during the daytime) and the Bird Market located on Hong Kok Street.

NORTHWEST KOWLOON

Cheung Sha Wan, M.T.R. station is the nearest station to one of Hong Kong's most ancient monuments - The Lei Cheng Uk Tomb (now a branch of the Museum of History) which dates back to the Han Dynasty (202 BC-AD220).

The architectural and artistic glories of China's Sung Dynasty (AD960-1279) have been re-created in the Sung Dynasty Village, a walled township graced with willows. It is a "living" museum in which costumed villages illustrate the dynasty's lifestyles and crafts. Its other attractions include a nobleman's house, a restaurant and a wax museum. Your tour guide can easily arrange a visit to the Sung Dynasty Village.

NORTHEAST KOWLOON

Here you will find the Wong Tai Sin Temple. The Temple complex is a gloriously colorful spectacle, founded on the lower slopes of the Kowloon Hills more than a half century ago. Crucial family decisions are often resolved by reference to the deity, and the temple's host of fortune-tellers have helped to make this the territory's most popular temple.

A short bus or taxi ride beyond Kwun Tong M.T.R. station, the village of Lei Yue Mun perches beside the narrow channel separating Hong Kong Island and mainland Kowloon. Partly built on harbor side stilts, the old village - a former lair of pirates and smugglers - is a seafood-lover's offbeat destination. Visitors can wander at will along covered plank ways, purchase their own live seafood from the many market stalls, and take it to nearby restaurants to be cooked according to their own specifications.

TSUEN WAN AREA

An ancient harbor settlement, now a major residential and industrial center, Tsuen Wan is the terminus for one M.T.R. line. The area's historical treasures have been preserved splendidly in a restored, two-centuries-old walled village. SamTung Uk ("Three-Beam Dwelling") was a prosperous Hakka farmer's family compound comprising 12 houses set within defensive walls. It has been turned into a folk museum illustrating Hakka lifestyles. Tsuen Wan is also the preferred starting point for a fine side trip into Hong Kong's "medieval" past. The walled villages of Kam Tin are impressive evidence of the centuries-long prosperity and power of the Tang clan, the New Territories' major landowners. Of the six villages, the grandest is Kat Hing Wai, a large moated settlement strongly fortified more than 200 years ago.

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ASIA

OUTLYING ISLANDS

Although Hong Kong takes its name from one island, the territory as a whole contains 235 Outlying Islands dotted throughout the South China Sea.. They provide a scenic contrast to the hustle and bustle of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, presenting a more peaceful and traditional village environment in which beaches, mountains and harbors offer a soothing respite from downtown life.

Many of the Outlying Islands are tiny, unpopulated or inaccessible by public transport. But one of them, Lantau, is twice as large as Hong Kong Island, and another three- Cheung Chau, Lamma and Peng Chau are also major sightseeing attractions.

CHEUNG CHAU

Chau means "island" in Chinese and Chueng means "long", but this very popular island is actually dumbbell-shaped and relatively small, at just 2.4 square kilometers. Over the centuries, the sandbar township between its two hilly ends has become the most densely populated of all the island communities. Charming and picturesque, the narrow lanes township is home to most of Cheung Chau's 40,000 inhabitants.

The island's western bay has a magnificent typhoon shelter, in which hundreds of fishing junks lie at anchor, festooned with colorful bunting at festival times. The communal heart of Cheung Chau is the Pak Tai Temple. Built in 1783, the temple is dedicated to Pak Tai, the Taoist "Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven". The temple is a gloriously colorful antiquity whose inner treasures include a Sung Dynasty sword and an antique sedan chair.

PENG CHAU

Highlights of Peng Chau include an attractive fishing harbor, a two-century old Tin Hau Temple, a morning fish market and a small township whose warren of lanes reveals many aspects of traditional rural life. Hand-painted porcelain is a true cottage industry here.

LANTAU

Lantau is steeped in history and blessed with magnificent mountains and fine beaches. Located in the far northwest corner of Lantau, Tai O fishing village is a rare example of a Chinese stilt-house community. Its Tanka boatpeople do not feel safe on land; they mostly live in tidy homes built on stilts in the creeks and tidal waters flanking Tai O's offshore inlet. Their world is enchanting. Sights to see include animist shrines (whose origins are prehistoric), a rope-railed drawbridge, and a photogenic three-centuries-old Hau Wong Temple, set on a cove-sided foreshore at the foot of a knoll of trees beyond a short causeway.

On the northern coastline you will find the ancient fishing village of Tung Chung. The last Sung Dynasty emperors and their "traveling palace" stayed for a while in its farmer's valley. Historic monuments include a renovated early 19th-century Qing Dynasty fort (whose cannon-decked walls now contain a village primary school), a harbor-side Qing dynasty battery (erected to combat pirates as well as foreigners), and another ancient Hau Wong Temple, dedicated to the minister who remained loyal to the Sung Dynasty to the fatal end.

The most popular destination on Lantua is Po Lin Monastery on the 520-metre-high plateau of Ngong Ping. Originally founded in 1921 as a monastic retreat, it is now a major religious enterprise, blessed with brightly decorated temples and floral gardens. There are three large bronze statues of Buddha in its main hall, but the monastery's outdoor, hill-top, 250-tonne Giant Buddha is more breathtaking: it is the world's largest, seated, outdoor bronze statue of Buddha, at 34 meters high (approximately 112 feet).

LAMMA

Hong Kong Island's major offshore island, Lamma boasts two attractive fishing harbors. Sok Kwu Wan and Yung Shue Wan are both famed for their seafood restaurants. Yung Shue Wan features a quaint, lively village and a Tin Hau Temple, built more than 100 years ago. There are two good beaches, Hung Shing Yeh Beach and Lo So Shing Beach.

LANGUAGE

Chinese and English are the official languages. Historically, English was the sole official language of Hong Kong from 1883 to 1974. Only after numerous demonstrations and petitions from the locals demanding an equal official status of Chinese as that of the English language. The majority of the population in Hong Kong are descendants of migrants from Mainland China and therefore mostly speak Chinese, however most people speak some English in the shops, hotels and restaurants.

COMMON PHRASES in CHINESE

Hello	Ni hao
How are you?	Ni hao ma?
Thank you	Xiexie
You're welcome	Bu keqi
Goodbye	Zaijian
Please	Quing
I'm sorry	Duibuqi
What is your name?	Ni jiao shenme mingzi?
My name is _____	Wo Jiao
Yes	No word in Chinese language for yes
No	No word in Chinese language for no
Where is the toilet?	Cesuo zai nail?
How do I get to _____?	Zenme qu
Water	Naam plao
How Much?	Cudie a?

Mandarin does not have specific words for saying "yes" and "no." Instead, the verb which is used in the Mandarin question is used to make a positive or negative reply.

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CLIMATE

Hong Kong has a subtropical climate:

Spring (March-mid-May): Temperature and humidity rising. Occasional mist and rain showers; have sweaters and waterproof jackets ready. Average temperature 73F, humidity around 82%.

Summer (late May-mid-September): Hot and humid.

Traditionally the beach-going and swimming season, with heavy rain at times during the typhoon season (usually July-September); short sleeves and cotton dresses for outdoor wear on sunny days. Hong Kong has an extremely efficient early-warning system for approaching typhoons, which rarely pass directly over Hong Kong. Average temperature 82F, humidity 80%.

Autumn (late September-early December): Sunny and clear, ideal walking weather. Light clothing for the day, and sweaters and light jackets for the evenings. Average temperature 73F, humidity 72%.

Winter (mid-December - February): Sunny, bright and cool. Bring suits and some warm clothing; overcoats and gloves may be needed on a few days. Average temperature 62F, humidity 72%.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURE & RAINFALL

Hong Kong	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Rainfall(inches)	1.2	1.9	3.3	6.3	11.8	15.5	14.4	14.4	10.7	4.3	1.4	1.0
Min Temp (F)	57	57	63	68	75	81	81	79	79	73	66	59
Max Temp (F)	66	66	70	77	84	86	90	88	86	82	75	70



THE LAND

Hong Kong island sits just south of the Tropic of Cancer on similar latitudes as Calcutta, Havana, and Hawaii, and sharing the same longitude as Wuhan in central China, Bali, and Perth. Surrounding the country's southern coast is the South China Sea.

Hong Kong is a small-sized island covering 1,095 sq. km (423 sq. miles). However, there are currently many reclamation projects at hand, thus expanding the land area. Hong Kong never used to be as big as it is now. From 1851 to 1997, the total area of land reclaimed from the sea measured to 60 sq. km (23 sq. miles). In area, the island of Hong Kong is 80 sq. km (31 sq. miles), Kowloon peninsular is 47 sq. km (18 sq. miles), the New Territories is 794 sq. km (306 sq. miles), and the remote islands total 175 sq. km (67 sq. miles).

The country consists of a peninsular protruding from southeastern China and hundreds of islands scattered off the coast. Kowloon and the New Territories make up the peninsular, while south off the mainland is Hong Kong Island and various other remote islands.

Deep waters surround Hong Kong, and with its wide harbors protected by mountains in the north and south, the region is favorable as a passing point for ships. Its geographical location between the Taiwan Straits, the South China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean make it a strategic channel for sea traffic in Asia and the world.

Topography

Hong Kong stands on volcanic terra firma, with its landscape dominated by hills and mountains. A crest lining from the northeast to southwest forms the backbone of Hong Kong. Kowloon peninsular and the northwestern New Territories are mainly flat areas. Three percent of Hong Kong's total land area is agriculturally cultivated and this is mostly at the New Territories large alluvial plains.

A narrow piece of flat land between the mountains and the sea along the north shore in Hong Kong is vacated by most of the country's population, whereas the south shore has luxury residential buildings and some nice beaches, such as Stanley and Repulse Bays. There is a tunnel that was built through the mountains, which links the north and south shores.

The highest peak is Ta Mo Shan, located in central New Territories at 957 meters (3,140 ft) above sea level, while the lowest is Lo Chau Mun at 66 meters (217ft). Victoria Peak, or 'The Peak', is only 552 meters (1,811ft) but its spectacular view of Victoria Harbour, Kowloon, and the Central and Wan Chai strip of Hong Kong Island has made an international reputation for itself.

In total, there are about 234 outlying islands in the country, with the island of Hong Kong being the most famous and populated. Even then, Hong Kong is not reputed to be the largest island around. Lantau Island is by far the biggest of Hong Kong's islands. It has now surfaced from its remoteness to becoming the site of the new, high-tech Chek Lap Kok international airport.

Although Hong Kong dwells on volcanic plains, there are only minor seismic activities, occasionally causing tremors. To date, no major earthquakes have been reported, but the last that occurred in the region was back in 1874, with a magnitude of 5.75 on the Richter scale, which caused only minor damages.



CURRENCY

The monetary unit of Hong Kong is the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD), which is divided into cents. Foreign currencies and travelers checks can be changed all over Hong Kong, in banks, hotels and moneychangers. The banks usually offer the best rates and always check the rates before entering into a transaction with a moneychangers.

CHANGING MONEY

HKD is the eighth most traded currency in the world. There are numerous currency exchange locations throughout Hong Kong. Credit/Debit Cards such as American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in Hong Kong. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travelers are advised to take traveler's checks in US Dollars.

CREDIT CARDS

All major credit cards accepted throughout Hong Kong and surrounding areas. Not in smaller villages if traveling out of the city into Mainland China

SAFETY & CRIME

Crime in Hong Kong is relatively low for a city its size but crime does exist and you should exercise the same caution you would visiting any other large city in the world. Perhaps the most common crime is the usual pickpocketing in crowded public places and on public transportation. Fortunately there is very little violent crime in Hong Kong but it does have a major problem with organized crime.

TIPPING

Service charges of 10% are often added to bills in most leading hotels and restaurants. Where it is not included, a tip of 10-15% of the bill would be appropriate.

Airport porter/hotel bellboy:

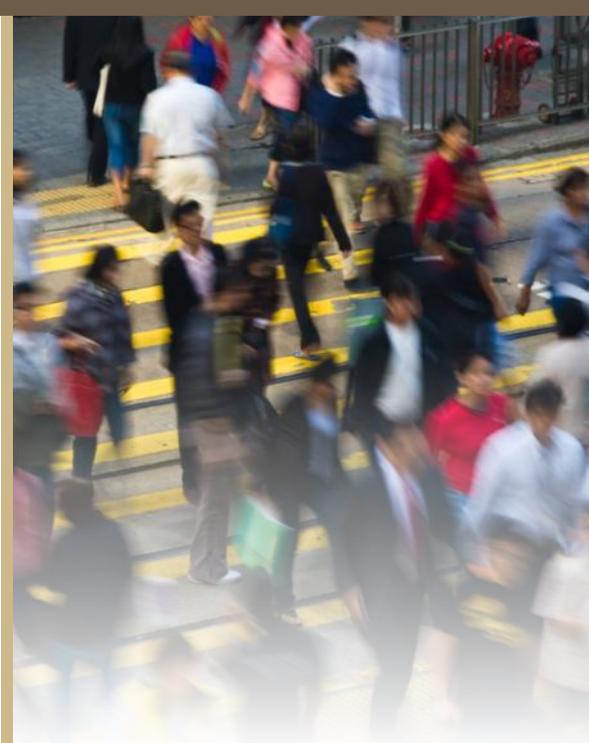
\$1.00 - \$ 2.00 US per bag.

Your tour guide:

\$10.00 - \$ 12.00 US per person per day.

Driver/assistants:

\$ 6.00 - \$ 7.00 US per person per day.



THE PEOPLE

The Majority of Hon Kong's population is Han Chinese (95%), mostly of Cantonese ancestry, though there are also sizeable numbers of other Chinese groups such as Chiuchao, Shanghainese and Hakkas. A significant number of Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese live here too, and many have families that have lived in Hong Kong for several generations. The largest groups of non-Chinese immigrants are Filipinos, Indonesians and Thais, of which most are employed as domestic helpers. On Sundays, being the free day of the domestic workers, they congregate in their thousands - mostly Filipinas - in Central and Admiralty and spend the day there together, sitting talking, eating and drinking wherever there is free room. Lately whole streets have been blocked off for them. The territory is also home to a significant number of people hailing from Australia, Europe, Japan, and North America, making it a truly international place.

HEALTH

There are no required vaccinations for entry into Hong Kong or Macau unless you have traveled from a country infected with yellow fever. In this case, you will have to show your yellow-fever vaccination certificate. Hong Kong is a highly developed city and as such immunizations are not really necessary unless you will be traveling on to the mainland or elsewhere in the region.

DRUGS

Prescription drugs - It is recommended to travel with prescriptions for any drugs you are required to travel with for your personal health.

ETIQUETTE

Handshaking is very common in Hong Kong. It is important to note that a Hong Kong Chinese handshake is not as firm as a Western handshake.

In China, the family name is always mentioned first. It is customary to arrive a little early if invited out socially.

When dining, guests should wait until their seat is allocated and not begin eating until indicated to do so.

If using chopsticks, do not position them upright in your rice bowl as the gesture symbolizes death.

Conservative casual wear is generally acceptable everywhere and revealing clothes should be avoided since they may cause offense. Visitors should avoid expressing political or religious opinions.

Hong Kong Chinese may stand relatively close when talking, however, they are reserved and uncomfortable with body contact. Do not hug, kiss or pat people on the back.

Winking at someone is considered a very rude gesture.

To beckon someone, extend your arm, palm down, and make a scratching motion with your fingers.

Never point with your index finger, this is used only for animals, point with your hand open.

Lay your chopsticks on your chopstick rest or neatly on the table when you are finished eating. Never stick them in a bowl of rice.

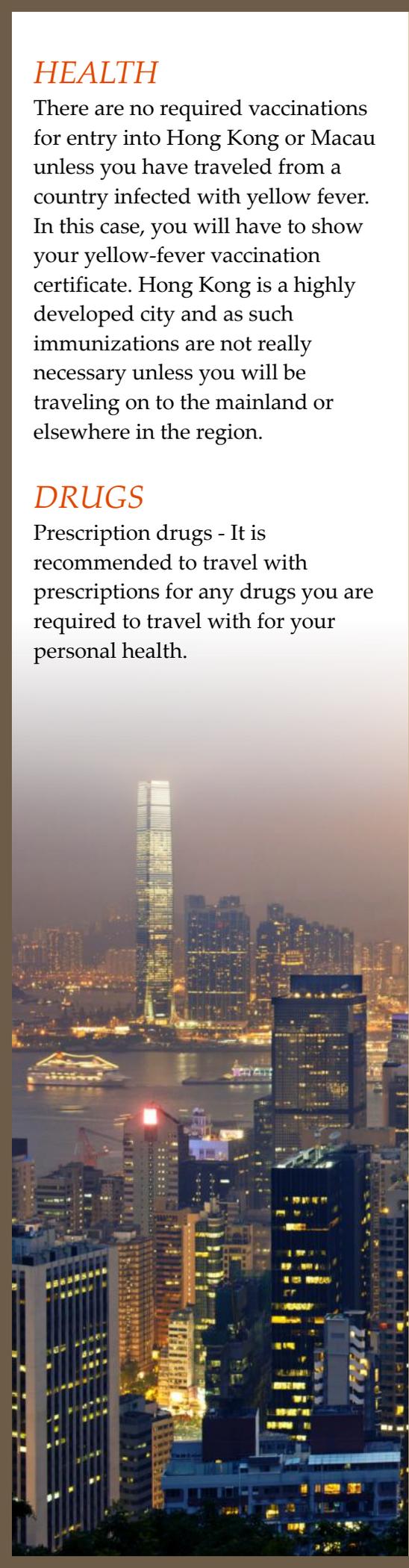
Don't be afraid to dirty the tablecloth. Bones, shells, etc. are put on the table. Do not put them in your rice bowl.

The Chinese are famous for communicating by "Saying it without saying it." You will have to learn to read between the lines.

You may be referred to as "Gweilo" (foreign devil). While perhaps insulting, it is generally not a personal attack.

It is polite to ask permission before taking photographs, Some people may take offense.

Avoid wearing blue or white in social settings. These colors tend to be for mourning.



COMMUNICATIONS

Telephone

Country code: 852. Public telephones are available in post offices, hotels and shops displaying a telephone unit sign and at roadside kiosks. To call Hong Kong from the USA/Canada dial 011 + 852 + Phone Number.

Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with most major international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good in most areas.

Internet

Internet is available throughout Hong Kong in major hotels and there are Internet cafes where you can access your email as well.

Post

Postal service in Hong Kong is modern and efficient. Hours at many Hong Kong Post offices are Mon to Fri 9:30am - 5pm and 9:30am - 1pm on Saturdays.

Media

Hong Kong has two broadcast television stations, ATV and TVB which are free for viewers. Broadcast news is available from several stations, one of which is government run.

ELECTRICITY

Pack a power outlet adapter. The Hong Kong outlet style is not used in most countries, so to use any appliances, such as hair dryer or electric razor, you will require a special adapter. These are available in most hardware stores. 220 Voltage, 50 cycles. Some hotels may provide adapters.



WHAT TO PACK

Bring English to Cantonese dictionary. Though the primary languages of Hong Kong are both English and Cantonese, not everyone will speak English fluently. English to Cantonese dictionaries will help you when communicating with natives of Hong Kong.

Dress for weather. Depending on in which time of year you will be traveling to Hong Kong, you will need different articles of clothing. If traveling during the winter months, you should pack sweaters and light jackets. The temperature averages around 60 degrees Fahrenheit, 18 degrees Celsius in the winter, and around 82 Fahrenheit and 28 Celsius in the summer. Hong Kong is in a humid area, and rain anywhere from drizzle to thunderstorms can be expected in the summer. Pack a rain coat, an umbrella, and cotton clothes.

Pack comfortable shoes. If you are planning on doing any sightseeing or touring, this is a must.

Bring formal attire. Hong Kong has a wide range of luxury tourist attractions available, from cruises on Victoria Bay to fine dining establishments to concerts at the famous Hong Kong Coliseum. Bringing a few articles of formal attire will ensure that you are dressed for any occasion.

Bring swim wear. Hong Kong has many public swimming pools, and most hotels have a guest pool. In addition, Hong Kong also has many beautiful beaches along the coastline.

Bring an extra suitcase. Hong Kong is one of the most popular cities in the world for shopping. It is a good idea to be prepared for this, and bring a spare bag to store any new purchases.

SHOPPING

When searching for the perfect Chinese gifts to take home, shoppers usually find what they are seeking in Hong Kong.

Handicrafts: Chinese and Asian artifacts, Jade, Ivory, art, textiles, crafts and other Chinese traditional goods remind the visitor of a their trip.

Chinese clothing: Chinese clothing has always had a distinct style and fashion sense, from the sexy cheongsam dresses, mandarin style jackets and tops, to decorative silk robes and other fine fabric clothes.

Chinese Tea: Chinese black tea and herbal tea is traditionally associated with China and Hong Kong, as well as Pu-erh tea, Oolong tea and Dragon Well tea, among other famous types of tea.

Gold Jewelry: Hong Kong's unsurpassed selection of modern and traditional gold jewelry, accessories and ornaments at unbeatable tax-free prices.

Chinese Assorted Cakes: Decorative Chinese pastry cakes filled with winter melon, red bean, black bean or lotus seed paste are popular around traditional festivals. Chinese cakes often come in decorative tins for easy packing and transport home.

Chinese Tableware: Chinese dinner service tableware is world-famous for its beauty and durability. Porcelain and bone china products are imported from the Mainland to dozens of Hong Kong shops and department stores.

Words of Wisdom-Buyer Beware

Bring your purchases home with you. Unless you are prepared to wait up to a year to receive your merchandise, do not have it shipped -- not even by air freight.

Do not purchase expensive goods of supposed high quality unless you are absolutely sure of what you are buying .

Unless you are an expert in gems, antiques, artifacts, etc., you should not assume that it is of the highest quality or value.

Always take the time to read the charge slips for credit card purchases before you sign them. This may seem obvious; but in the excitement of making a foreign purchase, travelers sometimes overlook this and are unpleasantly surprised when they return home and are billed by the credit card company. Taking a few moments to review the charge slip before signing it (and computing the exchange rate to be sure you are charged the right amount) can save you headaches later.

BARTERING/BARGAINING

Bartering or haggling is acceptable and often expected when shopping in local markets and from local vendors in Hong Kong. Whether you are looking for trinkets or treasures, feel free to haggle away. It is advisable to know the current exchange rate and currency conversions - if you make an offer too low it might be perceived as insulting and then the fun is over. Shopping in Hong Kong is world famous and should be an enjoyable experience.

CUSTOMS

Customs regulations allow, per adult, a maximum of 1 liter of wine or spirits, 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 100 grams of tobacco and a reasonable amount of perfume.



FOOD

Hong Kong's multiethnic society has created a gourmet's paradise, which offers the best Chinese food in the world, as well as a superb range of specialties from many Asian and Western cuisines. Dining out is a way of life in Hong Kong - the territory's many eating establishments are usually full at breakfast, lunch and dinner. Visitors will be delighted to discover that the choices are endless. Standards of food and service are extremely high.

Cantonese - Natural flavors are brought out by fast cooking at high temperatures. Ingredients, especially seafood, beef, pork, vegetables, mushrooms and inland river fish from Guangdong (Canton) province, are brought fresh from the markets every morning.

Hakka - The northern Hakka people salted down much of their food to sustain them on their wanderings south, and this practice is reflected in many of the region's specialties. Chicken immersed in rock salt and baked, pork with preserved cabbage and the many bean-curd dishes are recommended.

Shanghainese - This cuisine is especially appreciated in the winter as it is more starchy and "warming" than Cantonese food. Specialties include steamed meat dumplings and eels cooked in wine with garlic.

Pekingese - Try one of the best-known Chinese dishes, Peking duck. It consists of thin slivers of meat wrapped in a pancake with spring onion, cucumber and plum sauce. Other recommended Pekingese dishes are wheat dumplings, lamb with spring onion and beggar's chicken.

Szechuan - The spiciest of all Chinese cuisines, Szechuan food usually features garlic, fennel, coriander and peppers. Cooking methods include steaming, simmering and marinating, as in the popular smoked duck fish, which is made with peppercorns, ginger, cinnamon and orange peel.

ALLURING

A S I A

COFFEE & TEA

Although tea comes from China and has been part of the culture for many thousands of years, Hong Kong developed its very own distinctive tea culture as part of the British Empire.

During your stay, you must not miss the locally brewed "milky tea". It takes a unique blending of tealeaves and superb tea-making skills to make a perfect cup of smooth Hong Kong-style tea.

'Milky tea' is a fascinating fusion of cultures. Various tea blends are boiled and then kept brewing in a meter-tall metal container for hours, ensuring its extraordinary strength and smoothness. A silk-like cotton bag filters the tea before milk or condensed milk is added.

Yuan yang or Coffee with tea is a popular beverage in Hong Kong made of a mixture of coffee and Hong Kong-style milk tea. It can be served hot or cold.

WATER

All water direct from government mains in Hong Kong satisfies the United Nations World Health Organization standards. Bottled water is widely available in hotels and supermarkets. If in doubt, always drink bottled water.



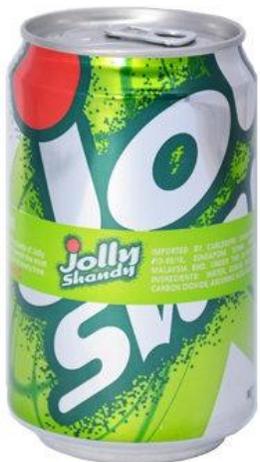
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Beer: History of beer in Hong Kong dates back to the mid-19th century. Currently the best selling beer is San Miguel, brewed by San Miguel Brewery Hong Kong. San Miguel has been brewed in Sham Tseng since 1948, and later moved to Yuen Long until 2007. The brewery was reopened in 2009.

Carlsberg was also brewed in Tai Po since the 1980s until recently. Blue Girl, a brand owned by the Hong Kong-based trading and distribution company Jebsen & Co., is brewed in South Korea under supervision of Jebsen & Co.

Other notable brands include Tsingtao, Corona. Jolly Shandy is also fairly popular among women and youngsters.

Wine: The residents of Hong Kong consumed the most wine on average in Asia on a per capita basis, downing an average of 6.3 bottles per person in 2010, the most recent year studied. Now Hong Kong has even started making wine, using imported grapes.



Chiu Chow - Strong Iron Buddha tea is the traditional drink taken before a Chiu Chow meal, which may include shark's fin soup, goose in soy sauce, bird's nest soup, rich chicken dishes and special noodles.

Hunan- Culinary specialties from this province, like those of Sichuan, tend to be spicy. Hunan dishes include consommé with mashed pigeon, duck tongues served with mustard sauce, and fish coated with preserved bean paste.

Taiwanese - Originating from an island, Taiwanese cuisine features many seafood specialties, and like Chui Chow food, is full flavored and satisfying. Fish and other seafood cooked in hotpots and enhanced with chili and sesame oil are popular.

Vegetarian - The Chinese opt for vegetarian cuisine once in a while to clean out their systems. Dishes consist of a variety of greens, bean curd, peas, corn, bamboo shoots, beans, mushrooms and other fungi.

Dim Sum - A vital part of a uniquely Cantonese tradition which dates back to the 10th century, dim sum forms part of the yum cha (drink tea) meals which can take place any time from the morning until mid-afternoon. Small bite-size delicacies, made of meat, seafood and vegetables are served in bamboo steamers, often from a trolley.

ALLURING
ASIA

CULTURE & THE ARTS

ART:

The art scene in Hong Kong is lively and covers a broad range of styles but contemporary Chinese modern art tends to dominate many galleries in Hong Kong's most fashionable areas. Hong Kong has been in a kind of competition with Singapore to be the dominant force and hub on the Asian art scene. Hong Kong is already the third largest art-auction market in the world.

MUSIC:

In colonial Hong Kong, the pipa was one of the instruments played by the Chinese, and was mainly used for ceremonial purposes. Western classical music was, on the other hand, the principal focus amongst British Hong Kongers with the Sino-British Orchestra being established in 1895.

In the beginning of 20th century, Western pop music became popular. Mandarin pop songs in the 1920s were called Si Doi Kuk. They are considered the prototype of Chinese pop songs.

In 1949 the People's Republic of China was established by the communist party. One of the first actions taken by the government was to denounce popular music as pornography. Beginning in the 1950s massive waves of immigrants fled from Shanghai to Hong Kong. Along with it was the Pathé Records (Hong Kong) record company, which ended up becoming one of the most significant popular record companies in Hong Kong.

The 1960s was marked by the rise of Hong Kong English pop which peaked until the mid-1970s among both British and Upper Middle/Upper class ethnic Chinese Hong Kongers. After the Chinese language had become an official language in 1974, Cantopop's popularity increased sharply due to the improved status of the language and the large Cantonese Chinese population in the city. Traditional Chinese Huangmei opera, on the other hand, had peaked in the 1960s amongst the general Chinese population.

DANCE:

Like music, dance is also considered as a very important section of the tradition of Hong Kong. Various western genres of dance are taught in the city of Hong Kong, which is a global city and has a thriving nightlife. Ballet is a very famous traditional dance form in Hong Kong.

ALLURING
ASIA

RELIGION

Spiritual beliefs and superstitions still abound in Hong Kong. The Chinese worship both Buddhist and Taoist deities, as well as their ancestors' spirits in the hope of pacifying everyone and thus ensuring good fortune. Ancient rites and customs thrive in more than 600 temples, and many thousands of small shrines are tended in homes, shops, and offices. A number of temples offer fortune-telling services for a small fee. During major festivals, households can be seen burning paper tributes in the street and lighting extra joss sticks to ward off evil spirits.

