

Gateway Hong Kong

香港

Hong Kong, a pulsating fusion of two cultures, is like no other city in China, and time has done nothing to diminish its ability to astonish. Even a decade after the return of Hong Kong from British to Chinese sovereignty, this 'meeting of east and west' continues to shake and stir into an invigorating cocktail of colour and aroma, taste and sensation. Hong Kong has something for everyone: shopping malls with bargains galore; romantic vistas across Victoria Harbour or down from the Peak; museums with rich collections devoted to local history and culture; stunning modern architecture; and a seemingly endless choice of restaurants and cuisines. And, despite its size and rapid urbanisation, Hong Kong has a surprising number of accessible beaches and natural retreats for lovers of the great outdoors. It's the perfect place from which to kick off or end a trip to China's Southwest.

For a whole lot more details, see Lonely Planet's *Hong Kong & Macau* guide.

FAST FACTS

- Telephone code: ☎ ###
- Population: ###
- Stat

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Hong Kong Book Centre (☎ 2522 7064; basement, On Lok Yuen Bldg, 25 Des Voeux Rd, Central; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 5.30pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun Jul & Aug only; MTR Central) Sister store to Swindon Books.

Swindon Books (展衝; ☎ 2366 8001; 13-15 Lock Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7.30pm Fri & Sat, 12.30-6.30pm Sun; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui) Swindon is one of the best 'real' bookshops in Hong Kong.

Emergency

Hong Kong is generally very safe but, as with anywhere, things can go wrong.

Ambulance, Fire & Police (☎ 999)

Police Crime Hotline (☎ 2527 7177)

Rape Crisis Line (☎ 2375 5322)

Internet Access

With the plethora of places offering low-cost or free wireless access, including most hotels and all of Hong Kong International Airport, you'll have no trouble accessing the internet with your own laptop. If you didn't bring yours

along, outlets of the Pacific Coffee Company, including its **Central branch** (☎ 2537 1688; www.pacificcoffee.com; ground fl, the Work Station, 43 Lyndhurst Tce, Central; ☎ 7am-midnight Mon-Thu, to 1am Fri & Sat, 8am-11pm Sun; bus 13 or 40M), offer free access with a purchase.

Maps

Decent tourist maps are easy to come by in Hong Kong, and even better, they're usually free. The Hong Kong Tourism Board hands out copies of the bimonthly (and somewhat limited) *Hong Kong Map* at its information centres (see opposite).

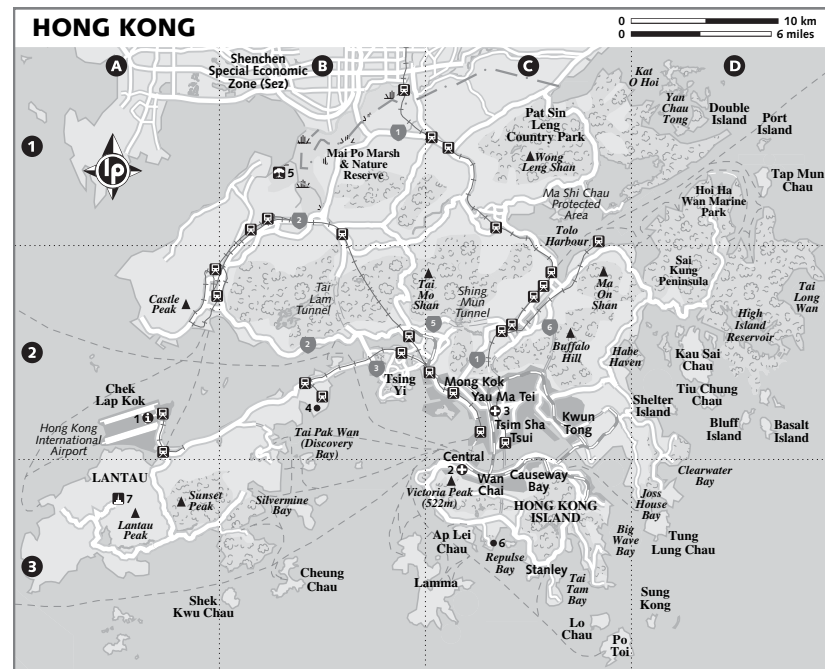
Universal Publications (www.up.com.hk) produces many maps of Hong Kong, including the 1:80,000 *Hong Kong Touring Map* (HK\$22) and the 1:9000 *City Map of Hong Kong & Kowloon* (HK\$25), available at most bookshops. **HK City Map** (www.hkcitymap.com) has detailed maps of Hong Kong down to street level, printable from the internet.

Media & Internet Resources

HK Magazine (www.asia-city.com) is a comprehensive free magazine of entertainment listings available Fridays at restaurants, bars, shops and hotels. The free *bc magazine* (www.bcmagazine.net), a biweekly guide to Hong Kong's entertainment scene, is less useful.

Good local websites:

www.12hk.com Hong Kong's 'unofficial guide', with excellent links.



INFORMATION

HKTB Airport Information Centre	1	A2
Hong Kong Central Hospital	2	C3
Queen Elizabeth Hospital	3	C2

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Hong Kong Disneyland 香港迪士尼樂園	4	B2
Hong Kong Wetland Park 香港濕地公園	5	B1
Ocean Park 香港海洋公園	6	C3
Tian Tan Buddha 天壇大佛	7	A3

www.hkac.org.hk The Hong Kong Arts Centre's site includes *Artslink*, a monthly listing of performances, exhibitions and art-house film screenings.

www.hkclubbing.com Mandatory surfing before a night out on the town.

www.hkoutdoors.com Hong Kong's answer to the call of the wild.

www.hongkongnews.net Good start for local news.

Medical Services

Medical care is generally of a high standard, but public hospital facilities are stretched and private hospital treatment is expensive. The hospital general inquiry number is ☎ 2300 6555. The hospitals, right, have 24-hour accident and emergency departments or clinics.

Hong Kong Central Hospital (☎ 2522 3141; 1b Lower Albert Rd, Central; MTR Central) Private hospital on Hong Kong Island.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital (☎ 2958 8888; 30 Gascoigne Rd, Yau Ma Tei; MTR Yau Ma Tei) Public hospital in Kowloon.

Money

The unit of currency is the Hong Kong dollar (HK\$), which is divided into 100 cents. Travelers can withdraw funds from home accounts using just about any of the numerous ATMs scattered around the territory. The most widely accepted credit cards are Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and JCB.

Tourist Information

The **Hong Kong Tourism Board** (HKTB; www.discoverhongkong.com) distributes useful pamphlets and publications and has branches at Hong Kong International Airport (see p96; open 7am to 11pm), the Star Ferry Concourse (p96; open 8am to 8pm) in Tsim Sha Tsui, and near Exit F of the Causeway Bay MTR station (open 8am to 8pm). Alternatively, call the **HKTB Visitor Hotline** (☎ 2508 1234) between 8am and 6pm.

Travel Agencies

Concorde Travel (☎ 2526 3391; www.concorde-travel.com; 1st fl, Galuxe Bldg, 8-10 On Lan St, Central; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat; MTR Central) A long-established and highly dependable agency owned and operated by expats.

Phoenix Services Agency (☎ 2722 7378; info@phoenixtrvl.com; Room 1404, 14th fl, Austin Tower, 22-26 Austin Ave, Tsim Sha Tsui; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat; MTR Jordan) One of the best places in Hong Kong to buy air tickets, get China visas and seek travel advice.

Visas

Hong Kong visas are not required for citizens of the UK for stays of up to 180 days. Citizens of other European Union (EU) countries, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and the USA can stay for 90 days without a visa, while visitors from South Africa are allowed 30 days. Those holding other passports should check visa regulations on www.immd.gov.hk/ehml/hkvisas_4.htm beforehand. See the Directory chapter (p477) for information on getting a China visa in Hong Kong.

SIGHTS

From **Central** (中環) your first port of call should be the **Victoria Peak** (山頂); at 552m it's the highest point on Hong Kong Island. The best way to get there is via the thrilling **Peak Tram** (山頂纜車; ☎ 2522 0922; www.thepeak.com.hk; one-way/return adult HK\$22/33, child & senior HK\$8/15; ☎ 7am-midnight), a funicular running every 10 to 15 minutes from the lower terminus behind St John's Building at 33 Garden Rd, Central, to the recently renovated **Peak Tower** (凌霄閣) at the top. The views in clear weather and at night can be spectacular.

The **Hong Kong Zoological & Botanical Gardens** (香港動植物公園; ☎ 2530 0154; www.lcsd.gov.hk/parks/hkzbg; Albany Rd, Central; admission free; ☎ terrace gardens 6am-10pm; bus 12 or 40M) is a pleasant assembly of fountains, sculptures, greenhouses, a zoo and aviaries. In nearby **Hong Kong Park** (香港公園; ☎ 2521 5041; www.lcsd.gov.hk/parks/hkp/en/index.php; 19 Cotton Tree Drive, Admiralty; admission free; ☎ 6am-11pm; MTR Admiralty) you'll find the splendid **Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware** (茶具文物館; ☎ 2869 0690; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon) in a colonial structure built in 1846.

Other must-see destinations in Central are the 800m-long **Central Escalator** (中環至半山自動扶梯; ☎ 2523 7488; admission free; ☎ 6am-midnight; MTR Central), the longest in the world, which transports pedestrians up to the Mid-Levels

in 20 minutes and, to the west, **Man Mo Temple** (文武廟; ☎ 2540 0350; 124-126 Hollywood Rd, Sheung Wan; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm; bus 26), one of the oldest Chinese houses of worship (1847) in Hong Kong. Don't miss **Lan Kwai Fong** (蘭桂坊) by night, Hong Kong's best and most complete bar strip. More of a restaurant scene is nearby **Soho**.

The southern coast of Hong Kong Island is dotted with decent beaches and other recreational facilities, especially at **Stanley** (赤柱). Here you'll also find busy **Stanley Market** (赤柱市集; Stanley Village Rd; ☎ 9am-6pm; bus 6, 6A, 6X or 260), a covered maze filled with cheap clothing, toys and bric-a-brac. To the west at **Aberdeen** (香港仔) is **Ocean Park** (香港海洋公園; ☎ 2552 0291; www.oceanpark.com.hk; Ocean Park Rd; adult/child HK\$185/93; ☎ 10am-6pm; bus 6X, 73 or Ocean Park Citybus 629), a huge amusement park and educational theme park, complete with roller coasters and other rides, the world's largest aquarium and an impressive atoll reef.

Start exploring **Kowloon** from **Tsim Sha Tsui** (尖沙咀) at the peninsula's southern tip. Renowned for its shopping, particularly along **Nathan Road** (彌敦道), this area also boasts the lion's share of Hong Kong's best museums, including the **Hong Kong Museum of Art** (香港藝術博物館; ☎ 2721 0116; http://hk.art.museum; 10 Salisbury Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; adult/child & senior HK\$10/5, admission Wed free; ☎ 10am-6pm Sun-Wed & Fri, to 8pm Sat; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui), with Chinese antiques, historical paintings and contemporary art, and the **Hong Kong Space Museum** (香港太空館; ☎ 2721 0226; http://hk.space.museum; 10 Salisbury Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; adult/child & senior HK\$10/5, admission Wed free; ☎ 1-9pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10am-9pm Sat & Sun; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui), with exhibition halls and a planetarium called Space Theatre (adult HK\$24 to HK\$32, child and senior HK\$12 to HK\$16) showing between Omnimax films.

The waterfront **Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade** (尖沙咀海濱長廊), whose **Avenue of the Stars** pays homage to the Hong Kong film industry, leads to **Tsim Sha Tsui East** (尖東) and the **Hong Kong Museum of History** (香港歷史博物館; ☎ 2724 9042; http://hk.history.museum; 100 Chatham Rd South, Tsim Sha Tsui East; adult/child & senior over 60 HK\$10/5, admission Wed free; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon & Wed-Sat, to 7pm Sun; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui), which takes visitors on a fascinating wander through Hong Kong's past.

In **Yau Ma Tei** (油蔴地), the **Jade Market** (玉器市場; Kansu & Battery Sts, Yau Ma Tei; ☎ 10am-6pm; MTR Yau Ma Tei) has scores of stalls that sell all varieties and grades of jade. Nearby is the

famous **Temple St Night Market** (廟街夜市; Temple St btwn Jordan Rd & Man Ming Lane, Yau Ma Tei; ☎ 4pm-midnight; MTR Jordan or Yau Ma Tei), the liveliest place in town to bargain for cheap clothes, fake name-brand goods and knockoff CDs and DVDs.

Further north in **Mong Kok** (旺角) is the delightful **Yuen Po Street Bird Garden** (園圃街雀鳥花園; Flower Market Rd, Mong Kok; ☎ 7am-8pm; Mong Kok KCR East Rail), where birds are 'aired', preened, bought and sold.

If time allows, consider an excursion further afield, perhaps to one of the Outlying Islands or the New Territories. **Lantau** (大嶼山), Hong Kong's largest island, is home to some fine beaches, excellent hiking trails and sights as disparate as the **Tian Tan Buddha** (天壇大佛; Ngong Ping; admission free; ☎ 10am-5.30pm; Lantau ferry to Mui Wo & bus 2), the largest outdoor Buddha statue in the world, and **Hong Kong Disneyland** (香港迪士尼樂園; ☎ 1-830 830; www.hongkongdisneyland.com; adult/child Mon-Fri HK\$295/210, Sat & Sun HK\$350/250; ☎ 10am-9pm Apr-Oct, to 7pm Nov-Mar; MTR Disneyland Resort). A worthwhile destination in the New Territories, a mixed bag of congested 'New Towns' and some surprisingly unspoiled areas and country parks, is **Hong Kong Wetland Park** (香港濕地公園; ☎ 2708 8885; www.wetlandpark.com; Wetland Park Rd, Tin Shui Wai; adult/child HK\$30/15; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon), a large ecological park near the mainland border with trails, viewing platforms and bird hides as well as cutting-edge exhibition galleries. To get there, take the KCR West Rail to Tin Shui Wai then Light Rail 705 or 706, or catch bus 967 from Admiralty station.

SLEEPING

It's not a hard-and-fast rule but the greatest choice of budget accommodation is in Kowloon.

Hong Kong Hostel (香港旅館; ☎ 2895 1015; www.wangfathostel.com.hk; Flat A2, 3rd fl, Paterson Bldg, 47 Paterson St, Causeway Bay; dm HK\$120-150, s/d/tr HK\$340/400/500, with shared bathroom HK\$250/340/480; MTR Causeway Bay; ☎ ☎ ☎) This excellent series of ever-expanding hostels and guesthouses with 120 rooms is just about the best deal on Hong Kong Island. It's quiet and clean and most of the rooms have private phones, TVs and fridges.

Rent-a-Room (港龍酒店; ☎ 2366 3011; www.rentaroomhk.com; Flat A, 2nd fl, Knight Garden, 7-8 Tak Hing St, Tsim Sha Tsui; dm HK\$155-220, s/d/tr/q from HK\$360/460/710/920, with shared bathroom from HK\$310/370/490/615; MTR Jordan; ☎ ☎ ☎) This fabulous

place has 50 positively immaculate rooms just around the corner from the Jordan MTR station. Each room has shower, safe, TV, telephone and fridge.

The Salisbury (香港基督教青年會; ☎ 2268 7000; www.ymcahk.org.hk; 41 Salisbury Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; dm HK\$230, s HK\$760, d HK\$860-1060; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) If you can manage to book a room at the YMCA-run Salisbury, you'll be rewarded with professional service and excellent exercise facilities, including a six-lane swimming pool and fitness centre. The 365 rooms and suites are comfortable but simple so keep your eyes on that five-star harbour view.

Alisan Guest House (阿里山賓館; ☎ 2838 0762; http://home.hkstar.com/~alisangh; Flat A, 5th fl, Hoito Ct, 23 Cannon St, Causeway Bay; s HK\$280-350, d HK\$320-410, tr HK\$390-500; MTR Causeway Bay; ☎ ☎ ☎) The 21 well-equipped rooms in this family-run place are spotlessly clean and the multilingual owners are always willing to please.

Booth Lodge (卜維廉賓館; ☎ 2771 9266; http://boothlodge.salvation.org.hk; 11 Wing Sing Lane, Yau Ma Tei; s & d incl breakfast HK\$420-1500; MTR Yau Ma Tei; ☎ ☎ ☎) Run by the Salvation Army, this 53-room place is austere and clean but excellent value, especially off-season. Reception is on the 7th floor.

Bishop Lei International House (宏基國際賓館; ☎ 2868 0828; www.bishopleihl.com.hk; 4 Robinson Rd, Mid-Levels; s HK\$600-1040, d & tw HK\$720-1210; bus 23, 40; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This 203-room hotel is hardly luxurious but it's just a short walk to the Zoological & Botanical Gardens and it has its own swimming pool and gym.

Stanford Hillview Hotel (仕德福山景酒店; ☎ 2722 7822; www.stanfordhillview.com; 13-17 Observatory Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; s & d HK\$1000-1600; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This 163-room hotel at the eastern end of Knutsford Tce is a very good choice. It's set back from Nathan Rd in a quiet, leafy little corner of Tsim Sha Tsui, but is close to bars and restaurants.

Hotel LKF (蘭桂坊酒店; ☎ 2850 8899; www.hotel-kf.com.hk; 263 Hollywood Rd, Central; s & d HK\$3000-4500; MTR Central; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This stunning 95-room boutique hotel boasts an enviable location just above Lan Kwai Fong (thus the name). Corner rooms (ending in 09) overlook Government House and its gardens and are among the best.

EATING

If you're on a budget, head for the noodle shops of Wan Chai on Hong Kong Island or the Indian 'messes' in Chungking Mansions (36-44 Nathan Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; metro Tsim Sha Tsui) over in Kowloon. For a more up-market dining experience and greater choice, check out the Soho neighbourhood. There the world really is your oyster.

Branto Pure Vegetarian Indian Food (☎ 2366 8171; 1st fl, 9 Lock Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; dishes HK\$30-59; ☎ 11am-3pm & 6-11pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui; ♿)

This cheap and cheerful Indian club is where to head if you want to try South Indian vegetarian dishes. Order a *thali*, a steel tray of *idlis* (soft rice cakes) and *dosas* (rice pancakes) with dipping sauces.

Spring Deer (鹿鳴春飯店; ☎ 2366 4012; 1st fl, Lyton Bldg, 42 Mody Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui; mains HK\$60-320; ☎ 11.30am-3pm & 6-11pm; MTR Tsim Sha Tsui) This is probably Hong Kong's most famous Northern Chinese restaurant and serves some of the crispiest Peking duck (HK\$280) in town.

Yung Kee (鏞記酒家; ☎ 2522 1624; 32-40 Wellington St; mains HK\$78-180; ☎ 11am-11.30pm; MTR Central) This institution is probably the most famous Cantonese restaurant in Hong Kong. Yung Kee's roast goose has been the talk of the town since 1942, and its dim sum is excellent.

Lin Heung Tea House (蓮香樓; ☎ 2544 4556; 160-164 Wellington St, Central; meals HK\$125; ☎ 6am-11pm; MTR Central) This old-style Cantonese restaurant is definitely worth a visit for the tableau it offers visitors – old men reading the newspaper, extended families kibitzing and noshing – and for the authentic dim sum served from trolleys.

Café Too (☎ 2820 8571; 7th fl, Island Shangri-La Hong Kong, Pacific Place, Supreme Court Rd, Admiralty; buffet lunch/dinner Mon-Sat HK\$258/358, Sun HK\$298/398; ☎ 6.30am-1am; MTR Admiralty) This beautifully designed food hall has a half-dozen kitchens preparing dishes from around the world and one of the best buffets in the territory.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

While neighbouring Guangdong province is well served by bus, train and ferry from Hong Kong, the only way to reach China's Southwest directly is by airplane.

Air

At least one flight a day links Hong Kong International Airport with every major city in China's Southwest. Sample round-trip fares, excluding tax and fuel surcharge (for which you should add about HK\$480 return), are Chéngdū (HK\$2400), Kūnmíng (HK\$2100), Chóngqìng (HK\$2400) and Guǐlín (HK\$1480). There are also cheaper deals, depending on when and whom you fly, length of stay etc, but fares will be cheaper still – at least 50% less than those in Hong Kong – if you travel to Guǎngzhōu or Shēnzhèn over the border in Guangdong province. Shēnzhèn's Huangtian International Airport in particular is easily

reached by bus from Hong Kong and has flights to just about everywhere in China's Southwest.

Bus

Several transport companies in Hong Kong offer bus services to Guǎngzhōu (HK\$80 to HK\$100) and Shēnzhèn airport (HK\$110), where you can board flights to the Southwest. These include **CTS Express Coach** (☎ 2365 0118, 2261 2472; <http://ctsbus.hkcts.com>) and **Eternal East** (☎ 3412 6677, 2261 0176; www.eebus.com).

Train

Reaching Shēnzhèn over the border in mainland China is a breeze from Hong Kong. Just board the Kowloon–Canton Railway's East Rail at Hung Hom station and ride it for 40 minutes to Lo Wu (1st/2nd class HK\$66/33); Shēnzhèn is a couple of hundred metres away. Its airport is 36km west of the city; a taxi will cost Y150.

The **Kowloon–Guangzhou express train** (www.kcr.com) departs from the Hung Hom station a dozen times per day; the journey takes 1¾ hours and costs passengers from HK\$180. Tickets can be booked in advance at KCR stations in Hung Hom, Kowloon Tong and Sha Tin; from China Travel Service (CTS; 中国旅行社) agents; or over the phone through the **Intercity Passenger Services Hotline** (☎ 2947 7888).

GETTING AROUND

The easiest way to get around Hong Kong is via the **MTR** (Mass Transit Railway; ☎ 2881 8888; www.mtr.com.hk) metro system. Tickets cost HK\$4 to HK\$26 (slightly less if purchased with a stored-value Octopus card). Trains run every two to 10 minutes from around 6am to sometime between 12.30am and 1am daily on seven lines, including the Airport Express (see opposite).

The **Star Ferry** (☎ 2366 2576; www.starferry.com.hk) was once a cheap and easy way to cross between Central and Tsim Sha Tsui. It's still the former (HK\$1.70/2.20 on the lower/upper deck), but having moved to a new home at Pier 7 of the outlying islands ferry terminal in late 2006 it is no longer very convenient.

Hong Kong taxis are a bargain. Flagfall on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon is HK\$15 for the first 2km and HK\$1.40 for every additional 200m. It's slightly less elsewhere in the territory.

To/From the Airport

Airport Express (☎ 2881 8888; www.mtr.com.hk) trains depart from Hong Kong station (HK\$100) in Central every 12 minutes from about 6am to just before 1am daily, calling at Kowloon station (HK\$90) in Jordan and at Tsing Yi Island (HK\$60) en route; the full trip takes 24 minutes.

Most major areas of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories and Lantau

are connected to the airport by bus. Buses A11 (HK\$40) and A12 (HK\$45) serve major hotel and guesthouse areas on Hong Kong Island, and the A21 (HK\$33) does similar areas in Kowloon. Buses run every 10 to 30 minutes from about 6am to between midnight and 1am; the 'N' buses follow the same routes after that.

A taxi from the airport to Tsim Sha Tsui/Central costs around HK\$270/340.

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