



HONG KONG



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	1	Contact Addresses
	2	General
	3	Passport
	4	Money
	5	Duty Free
	6	Public Holidays
	7	Health
	8	Accommodation
	9	Resorts & Excursions
	10	Sport & Activities
	11	Social Profile
	12	Business Profile
	13	Climate
	14	History and Government

1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Far East.

Note: Note: On 1 July, 1997 Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of China in an arrangement that will last for 50 years. Operating under a 'one country, two systems policy', Hong Kong maintains its own political, social and economic systems. English remains an official language and Hong Kong's border with China still exists.

Hong Kong Tourist Association

9-11th Floor, Citicorp Centre, 18 Whitfield Road, North Point, Hong Kong Tel: 28 07 65 43 or 25 08 12 34 (multilingual tourist information). Fax: 28 06 03 03. E-mail: info@hkta.org

Web site: <http://www.hkta.org>

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office

6 Grafton Street, London W1X 3LB

Tel: (020) 7499 9821 or (0891) 600 111 (recorded visa information; calls cost 60p per minute).

Fax: (020) 7495 5033 or 7493 1964 or (0891) 669 904 (visa section). E-mail: info@hketo.co.uk

Web site: <http://www.info.gov.hk>

Opening hours: 0900-1330 and 1430-1730 Monday to Friday.

Hong Kong Tourist Association

6 Grafton Street, London W1X 3LB

Tel: (020) 7533 7100. Fax: (020) 7533 7111. E-mail: hktalon@hkta.org

Web site: <http://www.hkta.org/uk>

UK Passport Agency

Clive House, 70-78 Petty France, London SW1H 9HD

Tel: (020) 7271 8552 (visa section) or (0990) 210 410. Fax: (020) 7271 8645. Opening hours:

0815-1600 Monday to Friday.

Applications in person only; do not use as a postal address.

British Consulate

2 GENERAL

1 Supreme Court Road, Central, Hong Kong

Tel: 29 01 30 00. Fax: 29 01 30 66 (general enquiries) or 29 01 30 08 (Press & Public Affairs enquiries) or 29 01 33 47 (visa enquiries).

E-mail: information@britishconsulate.org.hk

Web site: <http://www.britishconsulate.org.hk>

Embassy of the People's Republic of China

2300 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20008

Visa section: Room 110, 2201 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20007

Tel: (202) 328 2505-6. Fax: (202) 328 2582 or 338 6688 (visa section) or 625 3380 (commercial section). Email: webmaster@china-embassy.org

Web site: <http://www.china-embassy.org>

Consulates General in: Chicago (tel: (312) 803 0098), Houston (tel: (913) 524 7593), Los Angeles (tel: (213) 807 8088), New York (tel: (212) 330 7410) and San Francisco (tel: (415) 674 2925).

Hong Kong Tourist Association
115 East 54th Street, New York, NY 10022-4512
Tel: (212) 421 3382. Fax: (212) 421 8428. E-mail: hktanyc@hkta.org
Web site: <http://www.hkta.org>

Consulate General of the United States of America
26 Garden Road, Hong Kong
Tel: 25 23 90 11. Fax: 28 45 15 98.
Web site: <http://www.usconsulate.org.hk>

Embassy of the People's Republic of China
515 St Patrick Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 5H3
Tel: (613) 789 3434 or 789 9608 (visa section) or 789 0327 (24-hour recorded information) or 789 3512 (commercial section). Fax: (613) 789 1911 or 789 1414 (visa section).
E-mail: adoffice@buildlink.com or cooffice@buildlink.com (visa section)
Web site: <http://www.chinaembassycanada.org>
Consulates General in: Calgary (tel: (403) 264 3322), Toronto (tel: (416) 964 7260) and Vancouver (tel: (604) 734 7492).

Hong Kong Tourist Association
3rd Floor, 9 Temperance Street, Toronto, Ontario M5H 1Y6
Tel: (416) 366 2389. Fax: (416) 366 1098. E-mail: hktayyz@hkta.org

Consulate General of Canada
11-14th Floors, One Exchange Square, 8 Connaught Place, Hong Kong
Tel: 28 10 43 21. Fax 28 10 67 36. E-mail: hkong@hkong01.x400.gc.ca
Web site: <http://www.canada.org.hk/>

Country dialling code: 852.

General

Area: 1095 sq km (423 sq miles).

Population: 6,502,100 (1997).

Population Density: 5938.0 per sq km.

Geography: Hong Kong is located in the Far East, just south of the Tropic of Cancer. Hong Kong Island is 32km (20 miles) east of the mouth of Pearl River and 135km (84 miles) southeast of Canton. It is separated from the mainland by a good natural harbour. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain in 1842 by the Treaty of Nanking; and the Kowloon Peninsula (south of Boundary Street and Stonecutters Island) in 1860 by the Convention of Peking. The area of Boundary Street to Shenzhen River and a group of 260 islands, now known as the New Territories, were leased to Britain in 1898 for a period of 99 years. The New Territories (plus the 260 islands) comprise 891 sq km (380 sq miles). Shortage of land suitable for development has led to reclamation from the sea, principally from the seafronts of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.

Government: Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China since 1997. Head of Government: Chief Executive Tung Chee-Hwa .

Language: Chinese and English are the official languages with Cantonese most widely spoken. English is spoken by many, particularly in business circles.

Religion: Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist, with Christian and Muslim minorities, but there are also places of worship for most other religious groups.

Time: GMT + 8.

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50Hz.

Communications:

Communications: Telecommunications services are as sophisticated and varied as one might expect in an advanced Western-style economy (including radio-paging and viewdata).

Telephone: Directory enquiries services are computerised. For directory enquiries, dial 1081 (English) or 1083 (Chinese). Full IDD is available. Country code: 852. Outgoing international code: 001. Local public telephone calls can be made either with phonecards or coins. Local calls are free from private phones.

Mobile phones: GSM 900 and 1800 networks provide coverage on the mainland and throughout the island. Mobile telephones function all over the underground network, thanks to transmitters installed in the tunnels.

Fax: HK Telecom International Ltd and the post office provide services. Bureaufax and international services are also available.

Post: Regular postal services are available. Airmail to Europe takes three to five days. Poste Restante facilities are available. Post office hours: 0800-1800 Monday to Friday; 0800-1400 Saturday.

Press: English-language dailies include Asian Wall Street Journal, Eastern Express, Hong Kong Standard, International Herald Tribune and South China Morning Post.

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz21.6615.2811.945.99

Voice of America:

MHz17.8215.169.7606.160

3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	1	Yes
Australian	Yes	2	Yes
Canadian	Yes	2	Yes
USA	Yes	4	Yes
OtherEU	Yes	3	Yes
Japanese	Yes	4	4

Entry restrictions: All visitors must show evidence of sufficient funds to support themselves during their stay.

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for at least 1 month after the period of intended visit required by all.

VISAS: Required by all except the following:

- (a) 1. British Citizens for visits of up to 6 months (British Overseas Citizens, British Subjects, British Protected Persons and nationals of British Dependent Territories may stay for up to 3 months);
- (b) 2. nationals of Commonwealth countries for visits of up to 3 months (except nationals of Samoa, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Uganda for visits of up to 1 month, and nationals of Bangladesh, Cameroon, India, Lesotho and Mozambique for visits up to 14 days). Nationals of Grenada, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Solomon Islands do require a visa;
- (c) 3. nationals of EU countries for visits of up to 3 months;
- (d) 4. nationals of Andorra, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, Turkey, USA and Venezuela for visits of up to 3 months;
- (e) nationals of Argentina, Bolivia, Cape Verde, Costa Rica (except holders of a provisional passport and holders of 'Documento de Identidad Y Viaje' issued by the Costa Rican Government, who do require a visa), Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Korea (Rep. of), Mexico, Morocco, Paraguay, Peru (except for holders of Peruvian special resident's passports who do require a visa), Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay (except holders of passports issued under decree 289/90, who do require a visa) for visits of up to 1 month;
- (f) nationals of Algeria, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Rep. of), Congo (Dem. Rep. of), Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Federated States of Micronesia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Gabon, Guinea Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mongolia, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Rwanda, São Tomé e Príncipe, Saudi Arabia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Surinam, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Vatican City and Yemen for visits up to 14 days.

Note: For clarification or further information, contact the Hong Kong Immigration Department, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chan, Hong Kong (tel: 28 24 61 11; fax: 28 77 77 11; e-mail: enquiry@immd.gcn.gov.hk; web site: <http://www.info.gov.hk./immd/english/welcome/index.htm>). Their booklet 'Do you need a Visa for Hong Kong?' is also available from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London (see address section).

Application to: Chinese Consulate (or Consular Section at the Embassy), Hong Kong Economic Office or the Hong Kong Immigration Department.

Types of visa and cost: Tourist; Business (single- and multiple-entry); Transit: HK\$70. Visas generally cost HK\$135 (about £12), but this varies according to nationality and nature of visit. Enquire at the Chinese Consulate (or Consular section at the Embassy) or the Hong Kong Immigration Department for details.

Validity: 3 months. Extensions are possible. Enquire at the Immigration Department in Hong Kong or at the nearest Chinese Embassy (or Consular section).

Application requirements: (a) Application form. (b) Passport valid for at least 3 months. (c) Valid travel documents (onward or return tickets and accommodation bookings). (d) Sufficient funds to cover duration of stay. (e) 2 passport-size photographs. (f) For business visas, a letter of invitation from a ministry, firm or an official Hong Kong organisation is required.

Working days required: 5 (if the application is processed by a Chinese Consulate or Embassy); 4-6 weeks if the application needs to be considered by the Hong Kong Immigration Department. Note that there is no refund if the application is turned down.

4 MONEY

Currency: Hong Kong Dollar (HK\$) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of HK\$1000, 500, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of HK\$10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20 and 10 cents.

Currency exchange: Foreign currency can be changed in banks, hotels and bureaux de change. Banks usually offer the best rate of exchange.

Credit cards: MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club and Visa are widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other services which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Accepted almost everywhere. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling or US Dollars.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Hong Kong Dollar against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date Nov '99 Apr '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 £1.00 = 12.79 12.43 11.29 11.39 \$1.00 = 7.677 7.97 8.07 8.0

Currency restrictions: There are no restrictions on the import or export of either local or foreign currency.

Banking hours: 0900-1630 Monday to Friday, 0900-1230 Saturday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Hong Kong without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco; 1-litre bottle of wine or spirits; 60ml of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette.

Note: (a) If arriving from Macau, duty-free imports for Macau residents are limited to half the above cigarette, cigar and tobacco allowance. (b) The import of animals is strictly controlled.

Prohibited Items: Firearms, narcotics, copyright-infringed goods; endangered species and products deriving from them.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Jan 24-27 Chinese New Year. Apr 5 Ching Ming Festival. Apr 13 Good Friday. Apr 16 Easter Monday. Apr 30 Lord Buddha's Birthday. May 1 Labour Day. Jun 25 Tuen Ng (Dragon Boat) Festival. Jul 2 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day. Oct 1 National Day. Oct 2 Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. Oct 25 Chung Yeung Festival. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 27 Public Holiday. Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Jan 12-14 Chinese New Year. Mar 29 Good Friday. Mar 30 Public Holiday. Apr 1 Easter Monday. Apr 5 Ching Ming Festival. May 1 Labour Day. May Lord Buddha's Birthday. Jun 15 Tuen Ng (Dragon Boat) Festival. Jul 1 Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day. Sep 21 Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival. Oct 1 National Day. Oct 14 Chung Yeung Festival. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Public Holiday.

Note: Religious festivals are timed according to the lunar calendar and variations may occur.

7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
Yellow Fever	No	No
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	Yes	-
Malaria	1	-
Food and Drink	2	-

1: There may be an occasional risk of malaria in the rural areas of the New Territories near the Chinese border.

2: All water direct from government mains in Hong Kong exceeds the United Nations WHO standards and is fit for drinking. However, all hotels also provide bottled water in guest rooms. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat.

Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek immediate medical advice. For more information, consult the Health appendix. Hepatitis A and haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome may be common.

Travellers to rural areas should consider immunisation against Japanese encephalitis and hepatitis B.

Health care: Charges are made for all services and treatment. All visitors are advised to take out private health insurance. Hotels have a list of government-accredited doctors. First-class Western medicine is practised. Excellent dental care is available.

Travel - International

AIR: Hong Kong's major international airline is Cathay Pacific (CX), which flies to Hong Kong twice daily from London Heathrow, Los Angeles and Vancouver, and once a day from New York and Toronto. Cathay Pacific's associated airline for flights to and from mainland China is Dragonair. Other airlines operating to Hong Kong include Air Canada, British Airways, China

Airlines, Japan Airlines, KLM, Lufthansa, Philippine Airlines, Qantas, Singapore Airlines, United Airlines and Virgin Atlantic.

Important note: Some civilian air routes over Afghanistan are threatened by military activity. Some airlines continue to use these routes to fly to destinations including Hong Kong. Others, including all British airlines, use alternative routes, on which the threat is assessed as minimal. Travellers should check their routes directly with either travel agents or airlines when booking flights.

APPROXIMATE FLIGHT TIMES: From Hong Kong to London is 12 hours 50 minutes, to Los Angeles is 14 hours 15 minutes, to New York is 17 hours, to Singapore is 3 hours 40 minutes, to Sydney is 9 hours and to Tokyo is 4 hours 20 minutes.

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: Hong Kong International Airport (HKG) (Chek Lap Kok) (web site: <http://www.hkairport.com>) is located on Lantau Island, 34 km (21 miles) from central Hong Kong. It opened on 6 July 1998 (replacing the existing Kai Tak airport) and could handle 117,000 passengers a day even before the opening of its second runway in 1999. Rail, bus and taxi links from Hong Kong International Airport to central Hong Kong leave from the Transportation Centre adjacent to the passenger terminal and cross the Tsing Ma bridge to the mainland New Territories. The easiest connection is via the Airport Express Line (AEL), an all-seater business class high speed train, which leaves the airport every ten minutes; it is a 23-minute journey to Hong Kong station, also stopping at Kowloon (tel: 2881 8888), with free shuttle buses running from the rail stations to various hotels (a single ticket costs HK\$70 for adults and HK\$30 for children). The AEL is operated by the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC). Citybus's frequent, wheelchair-accessible luxury Cityflyer coaches serve major destinations in Hong Kong, Kowloon and the region day and night on four routes (tel: 2873 0818). High speed ferries (tel: 2987 7351) run between the airport and Tuen Mun, with a shuttle bus from the terminal to the Chek Lap Kok Ferry Pier. There are also 18 pick-up bays for coaches providing group and organised tour hotel transfers, and a car park for more than 3000 vehicles. Taxis to Hong Kong are readily available. MTR Travel Services (tel: 2993 2211) and a number of other coach companies offer a variety of travel services for journeys to mainland China or Macau. Facilities at Hong Kong International Airport include tourist information desks and computer kiosks, several currency exchange counters, banks and ATMs, 24 hour food and drink outlets, a post office and medical centre, good physical accessibility for passengers with disabilities and a large Hong Kong Sky Mall shopping centre with duty free shopping available.

NOTE: The Hong Kong International Airport at Chek Lap Kok is one of ten Airport Core Programme (ACP) projects, one of the largest infrastructural projects ever undertaken in the world. It includes the 2.2km (1.4 miles) Tsing Ma Bridge, the world's largest road and rail suspension bridge, linking Lantau Island to the mainland New Territories. About three quarters of the 12,480 sq km (7800 sq miles) airport site was constructed from land reclaimed from the sea, with the rest formed from the excavation of the existing islands of Chek Lap Kok and Lam Chau. The new airport terminal building, designed by the British architect Sir Norman Foster, is Hong Kong's largest single building and its wing-like roof and glass walls have been hailed as a landmark in modern architecture.

DEPARTURE TAX: HK\$50; children aged 12 and under are exempt.

SEA: Lines serving the port of Hong Kong are as follows: Norwegian America, Royal Viking, CTC, Sitmar and Lindblad Travel. Hovercrafts link Hong Kong with China; there are also a number of ships sailing to major Chinese ports, although these are less frequent. Enquire locally for details.

TRAVEL TO MACAU: Journey times: by jetfoil - 55 minutes; by hydrofoil - 75 minutes. See also the section on Macau.

RAIL: The Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) operates a service jointly with Chinese Railways from Kowloon to Canton (Guangzhou), four times a day. There are also services from Hong Kong to Foshan and Changping. Restaurant cars are only available if travelling first class. Local KCR trains run regularly (every 5-10 minutes) to Lo Wu, the last stop before the Chinese border. It is then possible to cross the border to Shenzhen, the first city in China over the border. To go as far as Lo Wu, travellers must hold a visa for China, otherwise it is only possible to get to Sheung Shui. Children under 3 travel free. Children aged 3-9 pay half. For more information, contact the KCR information line (tel: 26 84 86 23).

Travel - Internal

SEA: Cross-harbour passenger services (shortest route 7-10 minutes) are operated by Star Ferries (sailing every 5 minutes) from 0630-2330. There are frequent passenger and vehicle services on other cross-harbour routes. Wallah wallahs (small motorboats) provide 24-hour service. The outlying islands are served daily by ferries and hydrofoils. However, the opening of the Cross Harbour Tunnel means that wallah wallahs are decreasing in popularity. Tours of the harbour and to Aberdeen and Yaumatei typhoon shelters are available by Watertours junks, and visits to outlying islands are possible by public ferry. Weekdays are the best time to go, since ferries tend to be very crowded at weekends. During the typhoon season (May-November), all ferry services may be suspended during bad weather.

RAIL/METRO: Mass Transit Railway (MTR) has four lines and provides a cross-harbour line. It is more expensive than the ferry, but quicker, particularly for those travelling further into Kowloon than Tsimshatsui. An MTR Tourist Ticket, valid for 2 single journeys, is available at a cost of HK\$35. The price includes a map and souvenir ticket. For visitors staying for a week or more it is worth getting an Octopus Card, an electronic ticket from which the cost of the journey is automatically deducted when it is placed on a sensor. The card costs HK\$150, which includes a refundable deposit of HK\$50. Any other credit remaining is also refunded when the card is handed in. At present, the card may be used on MTR services, as well as on the Kowloon-Canton Railway, major bus routes and some ferries. Plans are underway to extend its use to other routes and means of transport as Hong Kong's transport system becomes more and more integrated. For further details, contact the MTR information line (tel: 29 93 33 33). The only other railway line is the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) which has 13 stations within Hong Kong. Trains run between 0552-0012 (see Travel - International section for more information). ROAD: Traffic drives on the left. Bus: Routes run throughout the territory, with cross-harbour routes via the tunnel. These, however, are often very crowded. Exact change is required. Air-conditioned coaches operate along certain Hong Kong and Kowloon routes. Maxicabs, however, operate on fixed routes without fixed stops. Minibus: These can pick up passengers and stop on request except at regular bus stops and other restricted areas. Trams: Only available on Hong Kong Island. Peak Tram on the Island is a cable tramway to the upper terminus on Victoria Peak, 400m (1300ft) high. Taxi: These are plentiful in Hong Kong and Kowloon. There is an extra charge (HK\$20) for the Cross Harbour Tunnel. Red taxis serve Hong Kong Island and Kowloon, green ones the New Territories, and blue ones Lantau Island. Many drivers speak a little English, but it is wise to get your destination written in Chinese characters. Rickshaws: These are gradually disappearing and are now purely a tourist attraction. It is advisable to agree the fare in advance. Car hire: A wide selection of self-drive and chauffeur-driven cars are available, although car hire is not that popular in Hong Kong. Documentation: An International Driving Permit is recommended, although it is not legally required. A valid national licence is accepted for up to 12 months. Minimum age is 18 years. Third Party insurance is compulsory.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from the Hong Kong Island terminals to main tourist districts and outlying islands.

RoadMetroSea
Kai Tak0.35--
Kowloon0.200.040.10
Causeway Bay0.10--
Lantau Is.--1.00
Aberdeen0.20--
Cheung Chau--1.00

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS: Hong Kong offers a wide range of luxury hotels with all the major international chains represented. Smaller hotels specialising in 'family style' hospitality can be a cheaper alternative. There are also a number of fairly new hotels in the New Territories, providing a range of recreational facilities. Guest-house accommodation, with good standards and facilities, is also available. In spite of the large number of hotel rooms available in Hong Kong (about 40,000), visitors are strongly advised to make an advance booking, especially during the peak season (May until November). There is a Hotel Reservation Centre at Hong Kong International Airport on Chek Lap Kok island (open daily from 0700-2400) which can offer assistance. A 10% service charge and 5% government tax are added to the bill. Many hotels are members of the Hong Kong Tourist Association (see address section) and 94 hotels belong to the Hong Kong Hotels Association, 508-511 Silvercord Tower II, 30 Canton Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon (tel: 23 75 38 38; fax: 23 75 76 76; e-mail: hkha@att.net.hk; web site: <http://www.hkta.org/hkha>). Grading: Though there is no grading structure as such, hotel members of the HKTA fall into one of four categories: High Tariff A Hotels (18 members); High Tariff B Hotels (25 members); Medium Tariff Hotels (33 members); Hostels/Guest-houses (12 members).

SELF-CATERING: Resort houses on the outlying islands can be hired.

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Permitted in the countryside, though permission is required within the Country Park protection area.

Youth Hostels: There are four main YMCA/YWCAs in Hong Kong. The YMCA in Kowloon is at 41 Salisbury Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon (tel: 23 69 22 11; fax: 27 39 93 15; e-mail: room@ymcahk.org.hk; web site: <http://www.ymcahk.org.hk>). For further details, contact the Hong Kong Tourist Association (see address section). There are numerous youth hostels in Hong Kong, all of which are outside the city. Contact Hong Kong Youth Hostels Association Ltd, Room 225-226, Block 19, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Shamshuipo, Kowloon (tel: 27 88 16 38; fax: 27 88 31 05; e-mail: hkyha@datainternet.com; web site: <http://www.yha.org.hk>).

9 RESORTS & EXCURSIONS

Hong Kong is a major tourist destination as well as being one of the world's major business centres. This tax-free, bustling port and commercial centre has many luxury hotels and lesser hostelries which are used as bases to explore Hong Kong, the New Territories and the many outlying islands. Transportation is modern and well organised and most tours and sightseeing trips are completed in time for the tourist to be back in Hong Kong the same day. A tour of the

New Territories takes about six hours, one of Hong Kong Island about four. Other popular excursions include sport and recreation tours and night tours, such as a dinner cruise and a tram **tour with cocktails served. Places worth visiting include:** Tsimshatsui - shops, restaurants and a space museum in a vast complex; nightly planetarium 'sky shows'; the harbour and its magnificent skyline (tours of the harbour can be made by junk, while small traditional sampans ply smaller waterways from the Aberdeen waterfront); The Peak - take a tram rising 373 metres in 8 minutes to the 'top' of Hong Kong Island for exceptional views, an hour-long stroll around the summit, and the Peak Tower at the tram's upper terminus with restaurant and coffee shop; the night markets; Ocean Park, with performing dolphins and killer whales; the floating restaurants; Repulse Bay, with the Tin Hau Temple overlooking the beach; Stanley Market; the New Territories countryside; tranquil rural beauty near the Chinese border; the Wishing Tree in Lam Tuseu; the Chinese markets; Miu Fat Monastery, Ching Chung Koon and many other splendid Chinese temples; fishing villages such as Aberdeen, now a thriving town with excellent floating seafood restaurants; Sea Ranch - a luxury resort and country club with beaches on Lantau Island and the splendid Po Lin Monastery, also on Lantau Island. Many of the islands have delightful beaches to escape the hubbub of the city - Lantau, Lamma and Cheung Chau are just three of these.

Special Interest Tours: A wide variety of these are available, and the Hong Kong Tourist Association provides a booklet giving details. Contact the Tourist Association in London, or in Hong Kong (see address section).

10 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Horseracing: Horseracing is the most popular sport among local people. Race meetings, at which vast sums of money change hands, are held from September to May, Saturday or Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening. The two main racecourses are at Happy Valley (Hong Kong Island) and Shatin (New Territories). For details, contact the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club (hotline: 1817). The tourist board organises horseracing tours which allow visitors to enjoy the races from the members-only enclosures.

Hiking and wildlife: Hiking and wildlife: In 1841, Lord Palmerston who was then foreign secretary wrote that Hong Kong was 'nothing but a barren island without a house upon it'. Today, the situation is different, although many people will be surprised to learn that less than 30% of the territory's land area is developed. Owing to the foresight of a former Governor, many of Hong Kong's natural areas have been protected, and there are 22 country parks which cover approximately 110,000 acres (40,000 hectares) of land. There are 4 long-distance hiking trails. The MacLehose Trail, the longest of these at 100km (62 miles), crosses the New Territories, taking in Hong Kong's highest peak, Tai Mo Shan (985m/3231ft). It can be joined at 10 different points, all of them accessible by public transport, and is recommended for experienced hikers. The 70-km (43-mile) Lantau Trail runs around Lantau Island, via Lantau Peak (934m/3064ft) and Po Lin Monastery, home to the world's tallest seated Buddha. The Hong Kong Trail runs through 5 country parks on Hong Kong Island, and the Wilson Trail runs for 78 kilometres from the south of Hong Kong Island to the north of the New Territories, necessitating a ferry ride across the harbour. On these trails and on other walks, visitors can escape from the urban bustle that characterises the rest of the territory and enjoy tranquillity and beautiful views. There is a wide variety of vegetation, including native and imported species of trees. Although there are no longer large mammals such as tigers and elephants to be seen, it is possible to spot macaque monkeys, wild boar, civet cats, barking deer and the Chinese pangolin, a scaly mammal which resembles an armadillo. A popular walk is the Dragon's Back on Hong Kong Island, which follows a ridge, giving spectacular views. This can be ended off with dinner in one of the restaurants in Shek-O village. Cyclists will enjoy the Tolo Harbour Cycling Track, running from Sha Tin to Tai Po,

an easy ride through scenic countryside. Bikes are available for rental near KCR stations. Most of the outlying islands do not allow cars, and are therefore very peaceful. They are best visited in the week because they attract many visitors at weekends. Hong Kong's prime birdwatching site is at the Mai Po marshes near Yuen Long in the east of the New Territories. The area is now administered by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and visitors are required to obtain a permit to enter. Black-headed gulls, Saunders gull, osprey, Dalmatian pelicans and Chinese pond herons all visit the site to feed on the fish in the mud flats and mangroves there, and many other species can also be seen. Hong Kong's waters are home to the Chinese pink dolphin, which can be observed near Lantau Island.

Golf: All golf clubs and their facilities in Hong Kong are for members only, although visitors can play for a limited time at an extra cost. Major tournaments are held at the renowned Hong Kong Golf Club in Fanling, which also allows visitors to join as day members. The Jockey Club Kau Sai Chau public golf course, beautifully located on an island, was designed by Gary Player. The Hong Kong Tourist Association (tel: 28 07 63 90) organises sports and recreation tours on Tuesdays and Fridays which include trips to various golf courses.

There are over 30 highly-acclaimed beaches throughout the territory. Excellent skindiving, water-skiing and sailing, kayaking and windsurfing are available. Watersports equipment can be hired from beaches and hotels in Stanley and Sai Kung, and from other centres. Spectator sports such as soccer, rugby and cricket are also popular. Jogging facilities are provided by some hotels. The Clinic at Adventis Hospital holds jogging sessions every Sunday. There are also good facilities for squash, tennis, riding, bowling and ice skating, as well as health-centre facilities.

11 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Hong Kong is one of the great centres for international cooking. Apart from Chinese food, which is superb, there are also many Indian, Vietnamese, Filipino, Singapore/Malaysian and Thai restaurants. It is the home of authentic Chinese food from all the regions of China, which may be sampled on a sampan in Causeway Bay, on a floating restaurant at Aberdeen, in a Kowloon restaurant, in a street market or at a deluxe hotel. Hotels serve European and Chinese food but there are also restaurants serving every type of local cuisine. Chinese regional variations on food include Cantonese, Northern (Peking), Chiu Chow (Swatow), Shanghai, Sichuan and Hakka. Cantonese is based on parboiling, steaming and quick stir-frying to retain natural juices and flavours. The food is not salty or greasy and seafoods are prepared especially well, usually served with steamed rice. Specialities include Dim Sum (savoury snacks, usually steamed and served in bamboo baskets on trolleys). These include Cha siu bao (barbecue pork bun), Har gau (steamed shrimp dumplings) and Shiu mai (steamed and minced pork with shrimp). The emphasis in Northern food is on bread and noodles, deep-frying and spicy sauces. Specialities include Peking duck and hotpot dishes. Shanghainese food is diced or shredded, stewed in soya or fried in sesame oil with pots of peppers and garlic. Chiu Chow is served with rich sauces and Hakka food is generally simple in style with baked chicken in salt among the best **dishes. Sichuan food is hot and spicy with plenty of chillies. A speciality is barbecued meat.** **Drink:** The Chinese do not usually order a drink before dinner. Popular Chinese wines and spirits are Zhian Jing (a rice wine served hot like sake), Liang hua pei (potent plum brandy), Kaolian (a whisky) and Mao toi. Popular beers are the locally brewed San Miguel and Tsingtao (from China) with imported beverages widely available.

Nightlife: There are many nightclubs, discotheques, hostess clubs, theatres and cinemas. Cultural concerts, plays and exhibitions can be seen at Hong Kong's City Hall which also has a dining room, ballroom and cocktail lounge. The Hong Kong Cultural Centre, including a 2100-seat Concert Hall, 1750-seat Grand Theatre, a studio theatre with 300-500 seats and restaurants, bars

and other facilities, has become the major venue for cultural concerts, plays and operas. Hong Kong Art Centre in Wan Chai supplements the City Hall's entertainment with culture in the form of Chinese opera, puppet shows, recitals and concerts. American, European, Chinese and Japanese films with subtitles are shown at a number of good air-conditioned cinemas. Two daily papers, the Hong Kong Standard and the South China Morning Post, contain details of entertainment. An unusual event to watch is night horse-racing held Wednesday nights from September to May. For further details, contact the Hong Kong Tourist Association.

Shopping: Whether one is shopping in modern air-conditioned arcades or more traditional street markets, the range of goods available in Hong Kong is vast. Many famous-name shops have opened in Hong Kong, bringing the latest styles in great variety. Places that display the HKTA sign (Hong Kong Tourist Association) are the best guarantee of satisfaction. Bargaining is practised in the smaller shops and side stalls only. There are excellent markets in Stanley on Hong Kong Island, which is in a beautiful setting in a small village on the coast, and in Temple Street, Kowloon, which is a night market. Tailoring is first class. Except for a few items such as liquor and perfume, Hong Kong is a duty-free port. Shopping hours: Hong Kong Island (Central & Western): 1000-1800 (1000-2000 along Queen's Road). Hong Kong Island (Causeway Bay & Wan Chai): 1000-2130. Kowloon (Tsimshatsui & Yau Ma Tei): 1000-2200. Kowloon (Mongkok): 1000-2200. Many shops are open Sunday.

Special Events: For a complete list of special events contact the Hong Kong Tourist Association (see address section). The following is a selection of the major festivals and special events celebrated in Hong Kong during 2001:

Jan 5-28 2001 City Festival (web site <http://www.hkfringe.com.hk>). Jan 24-26 Chinese New Year; Parade of Dragons; New Year Fireworks Display. Jan 26 Birthday of Che Kung. Jan 28 Hong Kong Power Boat Grand Prix. Feb 7 Spring Lantern Festival. Feb/Mar Hong Kong Arts Festival. Mar 30-Apr 1 Hong Kong Sevens. Apr 5 Ching Ming Festival. Apr Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea) Festival. May 7 Birthday of Lord Buddha. Jun 25 Tuen Ng (Dragon Boat) Festival. Jun Birthday of Kwan Tai. Sep 1 Hungry Ghosts Festival. Sep Monkey God Festival. Sep/Oct Birthday of Confucius. Oct 2 Mid-Autumn Festival. Oct 25 Chung Yeung Festival. Dec 31 New Year's Eve Family Fun Carnival.

Note: A festival in Hong Kong is a major event on a scale hardly understood in the West. During Chinese New Year festivities, there is total disruption of everyday life.

Social Conventions: Handshaking is the common form of greeting. In Hong Kong the family name comes first, so Wong Man Ying would be addressed as Mr Wong. Most entertaining takes place in restaurants rather than in private homes. Normal courtesies should be observed when visiting someone's home. During a meal a toast is often drunk saying Yum Sing at each course. There may be up to 12 courses served in a meal, and although it is not considered an insult to eat sparingly, a good appetite is always appreciated and it is considered cordial to taste every dish. It is customary to invite the host to a return dinner. Informal wear is acceptable. Some restaurants and social functions often warrant formal attire. Smoking is widely acceptable and only prohibited where specified. Tipping: Most hotels and restaurants add 10% service charge and an additional 5% gratuity is also expected. Small tips are expected by taxi-drivers, doormen and washroom attendants.

12 BUSINESS PROFILE

Economy: The mainstays of Hong Kong's economy are light manufacturing, shipping and financial services. The last of these is now the most important as Hong Kong has developed into

a major international financial centre. Manufacturing is concentrated in textiles, consumer electronics and other consumer goods (Hong Kong is the world's largest producer of children's toys). The shipping industry is assisted by Hong Kong's natural deep-water harbour, probably the best in the region. Much regional entrepôt trade is still conducted through Hong Kong. The territory's reversion to China in 1997 as a Special Administrative Region has dominated the thinking of the business community in recent years. However, within months of the handover in July that year, the financial crisis which has since taken over the economic agenda of the whole region started to take hold. With a more mature and stable banking system than most of the rest of the region, Hong Kong showed few immediate ill-effects. However, the severe impact on many of the territory's major trading partners and the depression of the regional economy was certain to have caused some damage. 1999 figures show an annual GDP fall of 7%, a decline of 10% in industrial production and a negative trade balance. Current prospects are quite good, especially in view of the speed with which the region as a whole has recovered from the crisis. The US, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore and Germany are Hong Kong's main trading partners.

Business: Business people are generally expected to dress smartly. Local business people are usually extremely hospitable. Appointments should be made in advance and punctuality is appreciated. Business cards are widely used with a Chinese translation on the reverse. Most top hotels provide business centres for visiting business people, with typing, duplication, translation and other services. Office hours: 0900-1300 and 1400-1700 Monday to Friday, 0900-1300 Saturday. Some Chinese offices open earlier than 0900 and close later than 1700.

Commercial Information: The following organisations can offer advice: Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 16 Upper Grosvenor Street, London W1X 9PB (tel: (020) 7616 9500; fax: (020) 7616 9510; e-mail: london.office@tdc.org.hk; web site: <http://www.tdctrade.com>); or Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, 22nd Floor, United Centre, 95 Queensway (tel: 25 29 92 29; fax: 25 27 98 43; email: chamber@chamber.org.hk; web site: <http://www.hkgcc.org.hk>); or Immigration Department of the Hong Kong Government, 7 Gloucester Road (tel: 28 24 61 11; fax: 28 77 77 11; e-mail: enquiry@immd.gcn.gov.hk; web site: <http://www.info.gov.hk/immd/>).

Conferences/Conventions: The Hong Kong Convention and Incentive Travel Bureau is a division of the Hong Kong Tourist Association, which specialises in promoting Hong Kong as a leading venue with a special East/West position; it publishes lavish and detailed brochures showcasing the region for conference and incentive planners, together with a glossy catalogue of promotional material and a directory of associations and societies in Hong Kong. There are venues with seating for up to 12,500 persons. Leading hotels are offering substantial room and function space savings (up to 50%) for conference, convention and incentive travel organisers until the end of the year 2000. For further information, contact the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1 Expo Drive (tel: 25 82 88 88; fax: 28 02 72 84; e-mail: info@hkcec.com.hk; web site: www.hkcec.com.hk).

13 CLIMATE

Climate

Hong Kong experiences four distinct seasons, with the climate influenced in winter by the north-northeast monsoon and in summer by the south-southwest monsoon. Summers are very hot, with the rainy season running from June to August. Spring and autumn are warm with occasional rain and cooler evenings. Winter can be cold, but most days are mild. There is a risk of typhoons from July to September.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens are worn during warmer months, with warmer clothes for spring and autumn evenings. It should be noted that even during the hottest weather, a jacket or pullover will be required for the sometimes fierce air-conditioning indoors. Warm mediumweights are best during winter. Waterproofing is advisable during summer rains.

14 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Hong Kong came under British administration as a direct result of the Opium Wars of the last century. When peace terms were drawn up in 1841 at the Treaty of Nanking, the Emperor of China agreed that Britain should have an insular trading base, but the name of the island was left blank until ratification in the following year, by which time Hong Kong was already a thriving British-run harbour. The Kowloon peninsula was ceded under the Convention of Peking in 1860, and in 1898 the New Territories were leased from China for 99 years. The British controlled Hong Kong from then - apart from a 4-year period during the Second World War when the territory was occupied by the Japanese - until the territory was handed back to the Chinese in July 1997. The terms under which the reversion took place were settled at an agreement signed by the British and Chinese Governments in December 1984. As well as confirming the terms of previous agreements, the 1984 agreement contained guarantees on the subsequent future of Hong Kong, specifically that the territory would enjoy a high degree of autonomy, especially in the economic field where its existing system would be largely left intact. The slogan 'one country, two systems' was coined by the Chinese to describe the future regime and its relationship with mainland China. Only in the fields of foreign affairs and defence would the new Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong be subject to the diktat of Peking. The main point of contention in the period leading up to handover was political representation. Under the colonial regime, democratic representation had historically been kept to a minimum. While executive powers were firmly retained by the Governor, the Legislative Council ('LegCo'), a small proportion of whose 60 members have long been elected, has been the only semblance of democratic representation. The Chinese (who intend to abolish LegCo at the earliest possible opportunity) were content to leave it in this state, as were the British, with the exception of the colony's last Governor, the former Conservative minister, Chris Patten. Patten, who took over in 1992, was supported in this aim and subject to pressure from an increasingly influential coterie of democrats including individuals such as Martin Lee and Emily Lau. Patten chose to reform LegCo to make all 60 seats open for election, albeit under a somewhat skewed electoral system designed to exclude opponents of the colonial authorities from assuming significant influence. The poll held in September 1995 was a straight fight between the territory's two main political forces. On one side was the Democratic Party, an alliance comprising the bulk of Hong Kong's pro-democracy campaigners (including its leader, Martin Lee) - many of whom had been fighting political battles with the colonial government for decades and whose ultimate objective was the creation of a Western-style pluralistic system in a preferably independent Hong Kong. On the other side was an amorphous group of communists, pro-Beijing activists and members of the business community who had concluded that co-operation (rather than confrontation) with Beijing was the best course of action; their political vehicle was the Democratic Party for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB). Lee's democrats won a decisive victory, taking 54% of the vote against 37% for DAB (the other 9% went to smaller parties of various shades). However, this did not allow for the peculiarities of the LegCo electoral system (see below) which gave DAB a slim working majority. With the election out of the way, the Chinese resumed their preparations for the July 1997 takeover. A 'preparatory committee' was set up to pave the way for the handover. The identity of Beijing's selection for the chief minister of the future province now became the main point of interest. From several candidates, including the British preference, the senior civil servant Mrs Anson Chan, it gradually became clear that the shipping tycoon Tung Chee Hwa was Beijing's candidate. Once installed as Chief Executive after the handover, which took place as

scheduled in a ceremony attended by several thousand dignitaries from throughout the world, Tung announced that elections for a new Legislative Council would take place in May 1998. The DAB, which broadly supports the Chief Executive, gained a majority of the seats under the electoral system which closely followed that used by the British. The leader of the Legislative Council is now Mrs Rita Fan. Other than a few inadvertent scares, such as the sudden and unannounced appearance of several thousand troops from the People's Liberation Army in Hong Kong shortly before the election, the Special Administrative Region has carried on very much as before. The major preoccupation since the handover has been the economy and the effect of the Asian financial crisis. The strength and comparative probity of the Hong Kong economy prevented significant damage to the economy, which has adjusted fairly comfortably to government from Beijing.

Government: Hong Kong is now a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Under the Basic Law which is the governing instrument of the region, executive power is held by a Chief Executive, who is appointed by a 400-strong Selection Committee. The Chief Executive is answerable to the State Council of the PRC (see the China section for details of the State Council) and serves a five-year term. The Chief Executive appoints a 15-member Executive Council to assist in the administration of the Region. Hong Kong's legislature is the 60-member Legislative Council: 20 members are directly elected in geographical constituencies; 30 members are elected by 'functional constituencies' (mostly professional bodies and business interests) and the remaining 10 by an Election Committee composed of 800 'representatives of the community'.

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