

Hong Kong Travelogue

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Hong Kong Stopover

For those of you travelling to Shenzhen, China, to attend the FDI Annual World Dental Congress, a visit to Hong Kong is a great way to start or end your trip. The most convenient way to travel between Hong Kong and Shenzhen is a 45-minute train journey on the Kowloon Canton Railway. Canadian passport holders are normally granted visa-free entry into Hong Kong for up to 90 days.

I find Hong Kong to be one of the safest cities in the world and people can walk alone with confidence, even at night. English is widely spoken and there is usually no problem communicating with people in most hotels, restaurants and taxis. In September, the weather in Hong Kong is generally mild and sunny, making it a wonderful time to visit this city famous for its shopping, nightlife and gastronomic delights.

Getting Around

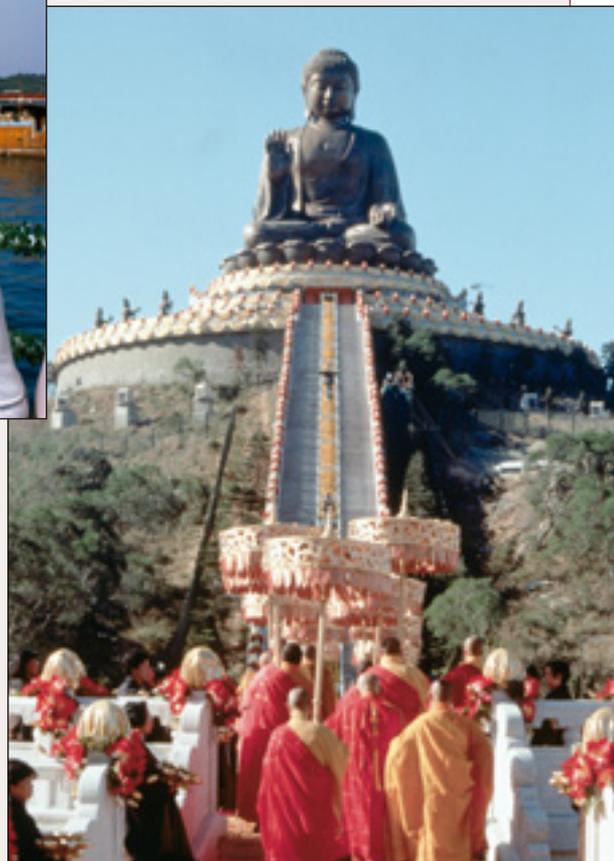
The geography of Hong Kong is such that islands, mountains, harbours and waterways dominate the landscape. Making your way between the islands and the mainland is all part of the travel experience. For instance, taking the Star Ferry is a great way to see both Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. This 8-minute ferry ride takes you right through one of the busiest harbours in the world.

Public transportation in Hong Kong is inexpensive, reliable and efficient and most of the population uses this method. The underground train, known as the MTR, will get you to most places in the city, and buses and minibuses run until late into the night. Another affordable way to see Hong Kong Island is by tram. Return journeys are on offer, running from east to west across the island.

Sampling the culinary delights of Hong Kong.
Photo courtesy of Hong Kong Tourism Board



The Star Ferry cuts its way through the Hong Kong harbour.
Photo courtesy of Hong Kong Tourism Board



Visit the Giant Buddha at the Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island.
Photo courtesy of Hong Kong Tourism Board

I also recommend finding time to visit 2 of the most scenic viewpoints of Hong Kong. Perhaps the most famous view of Hong Kong is enjoyed from atop Victoria Peak. A delightful way to reach the top is by the Peak Tram. You will also be spellbound by the breathtaking 360-degree view on the 5.7 km cable car ride to the home of the Giant Buddha at the Po Lin Monastery high atop the Ngong Ping plateau on Lantau Island.

Shopping Districts

Shopping is a major pastime in Hong Kong and there are plenty of stores to please most travellers. The elegant shops and boutiques of the major fashion labels are found within Hong Kong's central district and Kowloon's Tsim Sha Tsui district.

The variety of goods on offer and the level of excitement of the Ladies' Market will astound you. The Market's open-air shopping streets stretch from Kowloon's Tung Choi Street in Yau Ma Tei to Fa Yuen Street in Mongkok. The streets are alive with activity all day but are particularly colourful at nighttime. The Jade Market in Yau Ma Tei is the best place to purchase jade jewelry and souvenirs but it closes at night. Remember to bargain in the open market.

Causeway Bay and Tsim Sha Tsui offer the largest variety of camera and electronic equipment stores. If you are looking for shopping malls, there is the Landmark and Pacific Place on Hong Kong Island as well as Festival Walk, Ocean Terminal and Harbour City in Kowloon.

Restaurants and Nightlife

There is no shortage of restaurants in Hong Kong, as most people dine out at least once a day. For a glamorous and elegant dining experience, La Plume at the Hotel Intercontinental, Tsim Sha Tsui, serves some of the finest cuisine in the world and offers a wonderful view of Hong Kong Island. The best tables are by the window — diners sit side by side, seemingly floating on the water while looking at Hong Kong's central district and Victoria Peak.

From atop Victoria Peak, I would suggest dining at the Peak Restaurant or at the Café Deco at the Peak Galleria. Remember to ask for a table by the window at Café Deco for the best views of Kowloon.

Yung Kee restaurant on Wellington Street in central Hong Kong offers some of the tastiest Cantonese food and its barbecue goose is highly recommended. Across the street is the slightly less elegant Tsui Wah restaurant, famous for its Hainanese chicken rice and Cantonese club sandwich.

D'Aguilar Street is home to Delifrance, the best value for money when it comes to coffee and pastries. This street lies within the Lan Kwai Fong district, an area packed full of restaurants and bars and famous for its

bustling nightlife. Further uptown is Hong Kong's SoHo district (south of Hollywood Road) where it seems that every other storefront is a restaurant!

If you choose to venture south on Hong Kong Island, Stanley Market is a nice destination. Stanley was once a quiet fishing village, but a number of good restaurants and bars have opened recently. Finally, you can enjoy a memorable meal at the Jumbo restaurant located in Aberdeen. A short ride on a sampan takes diners out to this floating restaurant anchored just offshore.

Additional Activities

If you are travelling with children and looking for theme parks, try Ocean Park on Hong Kong Island or Disneyland on Lantau Island.

The Cultural Centre on Kowloon's Tsim Sha Tsui is a popular venue for artistic, musical and dramatic performances. The Centre is located on the Avenue of the Stars, which runs alongside the Kowloon harbourfront.

Birders will have a great time in Mai Po Marshes, renowned as a birdwatcher's paradise. In autumn and winter, thousands of migratory birds come to Mai Po, including over 70% of all Hong Kong bird species and one-third of all bird species in China. ✨

Dr. Wong is an FDI Councillor. She maintains a private orthodontics practice in Hong Kong.

Online Resources

Complete details about all of Hong Kong's delights can be found on the Hong Kong Tourism Board website at www.hkta.org.

Other websites that you may find useful include:

Kowloon Canton Railway: www.kcrc.com

Hong Kong Tramways: www.hktramways.com

Star Ferry Company: www.starferry.com.hk

Hong Kong Mass Transit Railway: www.mtr.com.hk

Hong Kong Mai Po Marshes: www.wwf.org.hk/eng/maipo

Lan Kwai Fong, bars and restaurants: www.lankwaifong.com

Victoria Peak shops and restaurants: www.thepeak.com.hk