



HONG KONG

CHINA

Hong Kong is more than just a shopping mecca. Its bustling harbor, towering skyscrapers and row upon row of shops may be its most familiar images, but Buddhist monasteries, terraced rice paddies and a 17th century walled village are equally important to its identity. In fact, most of Hong Kong's land is in the "New Territories," which are rural in character, and in addition, Hong Kong administers more than a dozen islands that provide a pleasant contrast to what's found in the densely populated urban areas.

In Cantonese, Hong Kong means "Fragrant Harbor." Hong Kong's 413 square miles (1,070 sq km) is divided into four main areas: Kowloon, Hong Kong Island, New Territories and the Outlying Islands. It is located off the southeast coast of China, just to the south of the Tropic of Cancer. In spite of its location, Hong Kong is not tropical. Summers are usually hot and humid, while winters are quite chilly. At present, Hong Kong has a population of approximately 5.8 million. This interesting city reverted back to Chinese rule at midnight on 30 June 1997. A vibrant mix of East and West, old and new, Hong Kong offers excellent shopping, restaurants and nightlife.

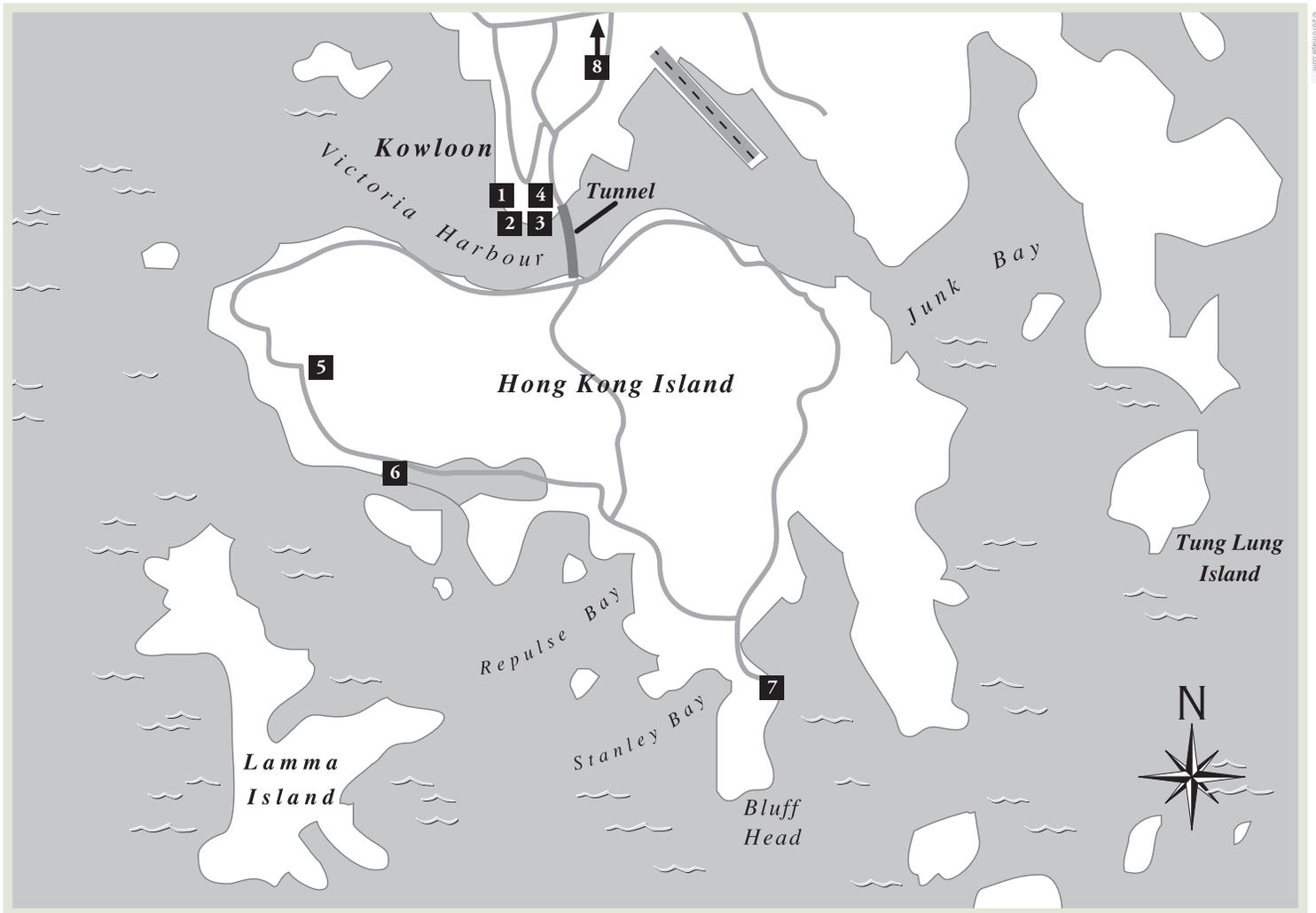


HISTORY

Hong Kong's history began upriver, in the city of Canton (Guangzhou), where the British had begun trading with China in the late 17th century. The first trade attempts by the British were rebuffed by the Chinese, but Canton was finally opened to trade in 1685. By the end of the 17th century, the British, French, Dutch, Danes, Swedes and Americans had a firm foothold in the region. Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula were ceded "In Perpetuity" to the British by the Chinese in 1841 and 1860, respectively, after China's defeat in the Opium Wars.

The New Territories were leased to Great Britain for 99 years in 1898. The colony soon became a center of thriving commerce and served as the main conduit for trade between China and the world. After 156 years of British colonial rule many, especially in the business community, feared that the 1997 British handover of Hong Kong to China would bring about a mass exodus of people and capital, in effect, the death of this great city. Those fears have proved to be unfounded. China has been faithful to its promise of "one country, two systems".

Today Hong Kong is still one of the most dynamic, energetic and business minded cities in the world.



HONG KONG PLACES OF INTEREST

1 Ocean Terminal is a long wharf/building which juts out into Victoria Harbour. Within this complex you will find Ocean Centre, an upscale shopping mall. Along the waterfront is a small park which has benches and good views of the water.

2 Star House is a shopping mall located across from the Star Ferry Terminal. The Chinese Arts & Crafts store is located here. Many fast food outlets are to be found in this area.

3 Hong Kong Cultural Centre is adjacent to the Star Ferry Pier and is one of Hong Kong's landmarks. The complex contains a concert hall, a theater, an arts library, a garden and two restaurants. The Hong Kong Museum of Art is now incorporated into the Cultural Centre and houses a collection of paintings, calligraphy, rubbings, lacquerware, embroidery and jade. The Space Museum shaped like half a golf ball, is located at 10 Salisbury Road, adjoining the Cultural Centre. Here you will find the Space Theater (planetarium), the Hall of Space Science and the Hall of Astronomy.

4 Kowloon Park was once the site of the Whitfield Barracks for British and Indian troops. The park is hidden behind Yue Hwa's Park Lane Store on Nathan Road. The park is now basically "artificial," but the highlights include the Sculp-

ture Walk, aviary, an indoor sports hall, fountains, concrete plazas, a museum and multiple swimming pools.

5 Victoria Peak has been the place to live ever since the British moved in. The top of the tram line is 1,312 feet (400 meters) above Hong Kong and offers spectacular views and the three-level Peak Galleria, an excellent shopping mall. To reach Victoria Peak you should take the Peak Tram located at Garden Road, Central, behind the Hilton Hotel, .5 mile (650 meters) from the Star Ferry Terminal on Hong Kong Island.

6 Aberdeen was once a quiet fishing village. Today this area houses a community of 6,000 people who live or work on junks anchored in the harbor. There are also three large floating seafood restaurants.





7 Stanley was home to 2,000 people when the British took possession in 1841. Stanley Market is the main attraction here and is open daily from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm.

8 The New Territories is considered to be Hong Kong's bedroom community. About one third of Hong Kong's population lives in this area in new towns which have been under construction since 1972.

SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Hong Kong and surrounding areas, we suggest you take one of the organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult azamaracruises.com or contact the onboard Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, guests are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

LOCAL CUSTOMS

Bargaining: Bargaining is expected in Hong Kong's tourist districts, but less so elsewhere. In an honest shop, you shouldn't be able to bargain more than a 10% discount, if they will bargain at all. Price tags should be displayed on all goods. If not, watch out for price gouging.

Tipping: Historically the Chinese never had the habit of tipping, but Westerners introduced the custom and it stuck. Tips for hotel bellhops and airport porters are a must. Taxi drivers generally expect a gratuity. Good hotels and restaurants generally add a 10% service charge, but waiters and waitresses usually expect more.

Dress Code: Hong Kong is a very fashion conscious city and very cosmopolitan. Most items of clothing are accepted here. Flip-flop sandals should not be worn outdoors.

Avoiding Offence: Nude bathing at beaches is not allowed. Do not give a gift of white flowers except at funerals. Do not write anything in red ink as this conveys anger and hostility. Leaving chopsticks sticking vertically in a bowl is a bad omen as it resembles incense sticks in a bowl of ashes, a death sign. When handing someone an item, present it with both hands as a sign of respect.

LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Rice is an inseparable part of the Chinese culture and wasting it is practically a sin to older Chinese. Chinese meals are social events. Typically, four or five people eat together at the same table. The idea is to order many dishes and then share. There are many different styles of Chinese cooking: Beijing-Shandong, Sichuan-Hunan, Shanghaiese and Cantonese-Chaozhou. Cantonese is the southern variety and is what Hong Kong is famous for. Specialties are *abalone*, *shark's fin soup*, *roast pig*, *snake* and *pigeon*. *Dim sum* is a snack like variation consisting of small delicacies. Items are normally steamed in a small bamboo basket. You pay by the number of baskets you order. International restaurants abound in this food conscious city. Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Malaysian, Indian, Italian, French, etc. are all easily found. European and American fast food restaurants are also readily available.

In Chinese restaurants tea is often served free of charge. Coffee is seldom available except in Western restaurants or coffee shops. There are three main types of tea to be found: *Green*, or unfermented; *Bolai* or fermented (black tea); and *Oolong* which is semi-fermented. Most major brands of imported alcohol can easily be found in Hong Kong. Rice wine is more similar in strength to whiskey or rum than wine. *Siu Hing* is a rice based wine, *Go Leung* is distilled from sorghum and *Mao Tai* is made from millet. Excellent beer is available everywhere and *San Miguel* even has a brewery in Hong Kong. Bottled water is recommended.

SHOPPING

The main shopping areas in Hong Kong are found in the tourist zone of Tsimshatsui. Ocean Terminal, Ocean Centre and Harbour City are three of the largest complexes. The New World Centre is found adjacent to the New World Hotel on Salisbury Road. Stanley Open-Air Market is well known for its bargains in clothing, toys, luggage, souvenirs, and Chinese arts and crafts.

Specialties of the area include antiques, curios, appliances, electronics, carpets, clothing, jade and jewelry. Ivory is a popular seller, but be fore-warned that it is forbidden to bring ivory into the U.S., Canada and many European countries. Beware

