

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING TO HONG KONG

SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Hong Kong has a sub-tropical climate with distinct seasons. The only predictable weather events that could have a significant impact on your travel plans are typhoons.
- Typhoon season is May - November. When a typhoon no. 8 signal is in place, most businesses and shops close down and flights may be cancelled.
- The best time to visit is October to April.
- Hong Kong's average climate ranges from 12°C in Winter and 33°C in Summer.

WHAT TO PACK

- Comfortable walking shoes for the city and countryside
- Light rain gear, mosquito repellent, sunscreen and sunglasses are essential in summer - a jacket may be required for air-conditioned facilities.

RETAIL HOURS

- Retail shops generally open from 10am to 10pm daily. Supermarkets are open from 9am to 10pm daily. Some are open 24 hours a day.
- Restaurants tend to stay open until around 11pm, while bars and clubs will close in the wee hours, with plenty of them operating all night.

MONEY MATTERS

- The local currency is the Hong Kong Dollar (HKD).
- International credit cards such as American Express, VISA, Diners Club and MasterCard are welcome at many hotels, retail shops and restaurants.
- You can exchange your currency for Hong Kong dollars at any authorised money exchanger.
- ATMs can be found almost everywhere. Many take international cards and some HSBC 'Electronic Money' machines provide 24-hour cash withdrawal (HK\$) facilities for Visa and MasterCard holders.

POPULAR SHOPPING OUTLETS

- Central: IFC Mall, Li Yuen Street East and West
- Causeway Bay: Jardine's Crescent Street Market, Sogo, Time Square
- Mongkok: Ladies' Market, Jade Market, Shanghai Street (Kitchenware), Langham Plaza
- Tsim Sha Tsui: Granville Road, Harbour City

DRINKING WATER

- To avoid any stomach upsets, avoid drinking local tap water. Bottled water is readily available everywhere.

TIPPING / PORTERAGE

- Most restaurants add 10% service charge to the bill. There's no obligation to leave more unless you want to reward your actual server. Be sure to check before being seated.
- Tipping a taxi driver is neither obligatory nor expected, beyond perhaps leaving behind the 50 cents you may be owed in change.
- Tourist guides HKD50-100 per day and HK20 for your transfer vehicle driver. Porterage is from HKD10.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

- Learn a few words of the local language so you know what's considered polite in terms of eating, greeting and local values.
- Appropriate behaviours by travellers helps ensure local communities continue to be hospitable and friendly.
- Respect other people's cultures and avoid imposing your beliefs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Chinese (Cantonese) and English is the official language. Mandarin is more widely spoken.
- South African passport holders do not require a visa.
- Time is 6 hours behind of South Africa.
- Smoking is prohibited in all indoor public places. The smoking ban is also implemented on public transport carriers, within public transport facilities, and in both the indoor and outdoor areas of some premises, including public beaches and swimming pools and escalators.
- The standard electrical voltage in Hong Kong is 220 volts AC, 50Hz. The majority of electrical outlets in Hong Kong take a three-pronged UK-style plug.

WHAT THINGS COST

- Costs vary from Local Supermarkets, Local Restaurants and retail shops. Always look for clearly marked prices, shop around before you buy.
- Average of local costs: Bottle of water HKD8; Soft Drink HKD10; Lunch HKD60; Dinner HKD150
- Plastic Shopping Bag Charge: From 01 April 2015, all retail businesses in Hong Kong are required to charge a minimum levy of HK\$0.50 for each plastic shopping bag provided to customers. It also applies to the airtight foodstuff packaging provided by restaurants. Avoid the levy and be environmentally responsible by bringing your own bag.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world, even at night when people can walk alone with confidence. Having said that, to ensure your stay is a pleasant one, always take extra care of your belongings at all times.
- Beware of parallel imports as they are not brought by official import agent. They are usually cheaper, as they often offer a restricted guarantee or limited after-sale service
- Beware of touts (street traders). Be cautious if you're approached by sales staff on the street. Don't buy from street touts, nor follow them into any warehouses or showrooms.