

Hong Kong

Destination Guide To Hong Kong



Hong Kong

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Welcome to Hong Kong

Welcome to Hong Kong! We are glad to have you here.

i-RMS is delighted to assist you during your relocation to Hong Kong. We have the ability to support you in every aspect of your transition. Be it City Orientation, Home Finding, School Finding, Settling In (finding domestic help or opening a bank account, etc) or any other relocation related need, a dedicated consultant will gladly assist you.

We understand that relocating is a stressful process, so we are here to help. Your i-RMS Consultant will guide you through the process in order to minimize the stress for you and your family. I-RMS has designed this guide to get you familiarized with Hong Kong. We want to avoid overwhelming you with too many pieces of information; hence we have kept this guide short. You will find in this booklet: Useful contact numbers, Hong Kong's facts and figures, information on culture and life style, sightseeing and information on expatriate-oriented services. Use this booklet in conjunction with the information in your i-RMS Welcome Pack and you will have all you need to plan your move to this great city. Your dedicated consultant will be happy to assist with any questions you may have.

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Facts about Hong Kong

Hong Kong is situated on the southeastern coast of China and covers an area of 1,104 square kilometers (425 square miles). Hong Kong is divided into 3 main areas: Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, and the New Territories, including 262 Outlying Islands.

Hong Kong has been nicknamed “Pearl of the Orient” and has long served as an important gateway into China. Hong Kong was colonized by Great Britain in 1841 and reunified with China in July 1997. Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) and practices what commonly called “one country, two systems”, with a high degree of autonomy.

Both Chinese and English are official languages in Hong Kong. Being a cosmopolitan city and having tourism as one of the most important industry, you would find it relatively easy to navigate around Hong Kong because most signs are bilingual and almost all Hong Kong people speak some English.

Hong Kong has tropical monsoon weather so the changes in weather are quite mild. There are four seasons in Hong Kong, with long summer and winter. Winter normally is not extreme, with average temperature around 15 Celsius, though sometimes it may fall under 10 Celsius. One thing that newcomers often take time to adjust to is the high humidity in Hong Kong.

Few would imagine Hong Kong as a green city at first glance. It may be surprising to many that more than 70% of Hong Kong’s land mass remains rural, and much of it being reserved as country parks and nature reserves. The hilly landscape fills Hong Kong with scenic routes and makes it a great place for hiking. Also, Hong Kong enjoys very long coastlines so you can find beautiful beaches and all sort of water activities here.

Hong Kong is a vibrant city that has a lot to offer – it has something for everybody. You will find it to be a place with loads to explore.

Hong Kong**Hong Kong's Facts & Figures**

LAND AREA	1,104 sq km
POPULATION	Around 7 million
GOVERNMENT	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
TIME ZONE	GMT+8.
CURRENCY	Hong Kong Dollars
RELIGION	No official religion – religious freedom is a fundamental right. Catholicism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Muslim are common.
LANGUAGE	Both English and Chinese are official language. Local dialect is Cantonese and is commonly spoken. Most people can communicate in English. Mandarin is also gaining popularity.
CLIMATE	Relatively moderate. Summer is the rain season with frequent tropical cyclones (known as typhoons locally). Winter is relatively dry though humidity may be high on some days.
IMPORTANT LAWS AND REGULATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Fireworks, explosive, clasp-knives are prohibited for import❖ Import permit is required for shipping household pets such as dogs and cats. Quarantine may be waived depends on country of origin. All pets must be shipped as cargo.❖ Import of pet birds could be difficult due to avian flu.❖ Liquor normally is subjected to 100% duties, except wine and liquor will alcoholic strength less than 30% by volume measured at a temperature of 20 Celsius.

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Immigration

Government Regulations and Policies

Immigration very often is one of the first steps in relocation because it is important that you and your family have the appropriate visa before moving to Hong Kong. Hong Kong Immigration Department is efficient in processing work visa – normal applications would take 4 to 6 weeks to process after submission of required documents. Applications of newly set up companies tend to take a bit longer.

Newcomers who are aged 11 or above and are permitted to stay in Hong Kong for more than 180 days are required to register for Hong Kong identity cards within 30 days of arrival.

Types of Visa

Work visa: Under the work visa category, there are a few admission schemes, namely the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates (IANG), General Employment Policy (GEP) and Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals (ASMP).

Training visa: This type of visa is applicable to people who will be in Hong Kong for a limited period (not more than 12 months) of training to acquire special skills and knowledge not available in their country of domicile.

Dependent visa: Applicants of work and training visas are allowed to bring in their spouse and unmarried children under the age of 18 to Hong Kong. Dependent of persons who are admitted for employment and training are allowed to take up employment in Hong Kong with their Dependent Visa i.e. they do not have to apply for a separate work visa.

Useful Links and Contacts

Hong Kong Immigration Department: <http://www.immd.gov.hk>

General information on HK identity card: <http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/immigration/idcard/hkic/geninfor.htm>

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Transportation

Air Travel

Hong Kong has an excellent and efficient international airport with frequent flights to many destinations in the world. You are only required to be at the airport 90 minutes before departure to check in. You can also check in at the Airport Express train stations at Kowloon and Hong Kong; some airlines even allow you to check in a day early there. If you have checked in online, then you only need to drop off your luggage 45 minutes before departure time at the airport counter.

Public Transport

Hong Kong is very well connected with public transportation and it is easy to get around with a store-valued smartcard called Octopus card. You can purchase them and add value to it at MTR (Mass Transit Railway) stations and convenience stores (7-11 & Circle K). You need to pay a \$50 deposit on the card and you can get it refunded when you return the card to MTR customer service center.

Train Services

The railway system is very well developed in Hong Kong. MTR's merger with KCR (Kowloon-Canton Railway) creates one of the most efficient and extensive railway networks in Asia. MTR Corporation also operates the Light Rail network in northwestern New Territories.

With its reliable service and convenience of avoiding the rush hour traffic jam, many opt for MTR instead of driving. Another discouraging factor in driving in Hong Kong is the expensive parking fee at business center.

Bus Services

The bus network in Hong Kong covers almost all of Hong Kong; even country parks are served by frequent bus service. There are several bus companies in Hong Kong – KMB (Kowloon Motor Bus), Citybus, and First Bus. You can pay by Octopus card or cash (exact fare) on bus.

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Taxi services

There are three types on taxis in Hong Kong: Red, Green and Blue. Red taxis can go anywhere in Hong Kong; Green taxis are restricted to New Territories (the restriction is not strictly by district, so it would be easier to just check with the driver if they can go to the destination you want); Blue taxis serve Lantau Island. Green and Blue taxis are cheaper than Red taxis. Taxi only accepts cash as payment.

Mini-bus Services

There are two types of mini-bus – Green and Red. Green ones has specific stops along the route while you can get on/off Red minibuses anywhere along the route, as long as the road regulations and conditions permit. Most minibuses have installed Octopus card machines, otherwise you can pay by cash. Red minibuses would give you change if you do not have exact fare, while Green minibuses would not.

Tram Services

Tram has been serving the Hong Kong Island since 1904. Despite its “slowness”, tram is one of the best loved transportation in Hong Kong. Not only due to nostalgic reasons, but also of practical reasons. Tram stations are conveniently located along the route, reaching locations that are not covered by MTR network. Its low fare and frequent service means you can hop on for just a few stations when your feet are too tired to make that short distance.

Ferry Services

There are 2 types of local ferry. One is crossing the Victoria Harbour, connecting the Kowloon Peninsula with Hong Kong Island; the other type is connecting Outlying Islands to city area.

The service between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island is operated by Star Ferry Company. Its low fare of crossing the harbor and the falling number of passengers once plunged this century-old company into financial trough. Established since 1880, a crossing of Victoria Harbor on a Star Ferry has been named by the National Geographic of Traveler as one of the "fifty places of a lifetime". The harbor view at night is especially stunning on the ferry.

There are also ferry services connecting Hong Kong with Macau and destinations along the coast of mainland China.

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Driving

If you hold an overseas driving license and wish to drive in Hong Kong, there are several ways to do so:

- Apply for a full driving license by direct issue without test;
- Apply for temporary driving license; or
- Driving on strength of your valid overseas driving license or international driving permits if you are visiting (i.e. not taking up residence) and not for a period exceeding 12 months.

Usually the first two options are applicable to expatriates and their families. You can check out more details on Transport Department website or check with your Consultant for more information.

Your i-RMS Consultant will be happy to help you arrange both short-term and long-term car leasing and driver if needed.

Drink driving is a serious criminal offence. The Police would do random breath test operations and has the power to demand a screening breath test from any driver who is involved in a traffic accident, committed a traffic moving offence, or is suspected of drink driving. The government discourages people to drive after drinking, and recommend people to take public transportation instead.

Useful Links and Contacts

MTR: <http://www.mtr.com.hk>

Download MTR system map: <http://www.mtr.com.hk/jplanner/images/maps/routemap.pdf>

Hong Kong International Airport - <http://www.hongkongairport.com>

KMB: <http://www.kmb.hk/en/>

Citybus / First Bus: <http://www.nwstbus.com.hk>

Hong Kong Tramways: <http://www.hktramways.com>

Star Ferry Company: <http://www.starferry.com.hk>

CKS (Ferry to mainland cities): <http://www.cksp.com.hk/eng/home.html>

Transport Department: <http://www.td.gov.hk>

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Food

Hong Kong sometimes is coined as 'Food Paradise' because you can find almost any cuisines in Hong Kong. In addition to Cantonese dim sum restaurants, there are also many Chinese regional delicacies like Sichuan, Shanghai, Peking, etc, and international cuisines like Thai, Vietnamese, Italian, French, American, etc.

Local Food

Hong Kong people refers visiting dim sum restaurant (Cantonese Restaurant) as "yum cha", which literally means drinking tea. A cup of nice Chinese tea is great complementary to dim sum dishes. You may see people tap their fingers on the table while one of the fellow diners helps refill their cups. The gesture means "kowtow" (taking a bow with head touching the floor) – thanking the person for refilling their cups.

Dim sum are served only in the morning and afternoon, usually no dim sum is served at dinnertime. There are many excellent Cantonese restaurants around, and many have their own signature dishes, so have fun exploring!

City Hall's Maxim's Palace is often highlighted in travel books as the place to go for dim sum because it keeps the traditional "dim sum carts", which were wheeled around the restaurant and serve on request. The restaurant does not accept reservation, so if you are going and do not want to wait for seats, either go early or go after lunchtime to avoid the crowd.

Hong Kong is also famous for seafood because of its freshness and variety. The waterfront restaurants in Sai Kung, Lamma Island, Cheung Chau, and Lei Yue Mun have big tanks of live fish, prawns, crabs, clams and many other sea creatures – it is a lot of fun just by looking at them.

Street Food

There are a lot of street food stalls in Mongkok and some in Causeway Bay. Hawker stalls selling street food is less common these days since Government requires licensing of hawker.

Fish Ball: The most favorite street food of all time for Hong Kong people must be fish ball. You can find fish ball in noodle stalls, street stalls selling snack food and some Chinese Restaurants. At street stalls, fish balls

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are usually sold on a thin stick in 5 or 6. There are also many different kinds of fish balls – original, spicy, deep fried, etc.

Stinky Tofu: This tofu is soaked in fermented liquid to gain its loose texture and stinky smell, then the tofu is deep fried. While stinky tofu used to be a popular snack food at hawker carts, where you can smell it a block away, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find them. Stinky tofu is probably an acquired taste since some people have a hard time getting past the smell.

Cow Offal: At street stalls, it is usually sold in a Styrofoam bowl. The cow offal is stewed, sometimes with turnip so the turnip will soak up the soup. Usually the seller will cut the offal to small pieces with scissors so it is easy to eat.

Gai-daan-jai & Waffle: Gai-daan-jai is a kind of waffle made from egg, sugar, flour, and evaporated milk. The waffle iron is in honeycomb shape so the resulted waffle has many small spheres on it. The waffle is golden yellow in color. Stalls selling gai-daan-jai very often sell regular waffle as well – the seller would put peanut butter, white sugar, butter, and condensed milk on it and fold it in half.

Wonton Noodles: Wonton is a kind of shrimp dumpling that you can find in almost any noodles shops. There are a few famous ones with long tradition: Mak's Noodle, Ho Hung Kee, Chee Kee, and Tasty Congee & Noodle Wantun Shop; each has its own unique taste.

International Food

Soho refers to the area south of Hollywood Road (close to Lan Kwai Fong) in Central, and you can get there easily by the Mid-Levels escalator. There are a variety of restaurants – you can find Spanish, Italian, Mexican, Japanese, and more in one street. Soho may be quiet at daytime in weekdays, it surely is buzzing after 6pm when everyone is off work.

Table Etiquette

Mastering chopsticks takes time so do not get frustrated if you do not get it the first time. Actually many Hong Kong people do not hold chopsticks correctly and general opinion is that “as long as you could get the food into your mouth, then it is alright”. If you have much difficulty eating with chopsticks, just ask the waiter for a

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fork. While Chinese are impressed with foreigners with good chopsticks skills, they do not mind if you have to eat with western utensils. They are more concerned that you enjoy your meal!

Do not be surprised or offended when your Chinese friends order chicken feet, pig intestines, cow offal, etc. when they take you out for your first dim sum meal. All they are doing is introducing local delicacies to you. Chinese understand that those foods may look strange to you, and they appreciate if you would be open-minded and give it a try. Usually people would not be offended if you choose not to eat them.

When you are being invited for formal meals, do not start eating until your hosts take up their chopsticks, or invite you to tuck in or help you to food.

Useful Links and Contacts

Open Rice (Hong Kong Restaurants Guide): <http://www.openrice.com/english>

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Housing

Accommodation

Depends on how long of temporary accommodation you would need, you could stay in hotel or serviced apartment. Generally if you plan to stay more than 2 weeks it would be more cost efficient to stay in a serviced apartment than a hotel.

Permanent Housing

Most of the long term housing in Hong Kong is unfurnished. Rental prices in Hong Kong are one of the highest in the world and tend to vary greatly across areas. Generally per square feet rental is more expensive in Hong Kong Island and more affordable in the New Territories.

The typical lease is for 2 years, with a diplomatic clause of 2 months notice after the initial 12 month period. The landlord would normally ask for 2 months security deposit (some would ask for 3 months) and one month rental to be paid in advance. Government stamp duty, which is a percentage of the total annual rent, is shared equally with the landlord. The market norm is that the realtor agent will charge 50% of the first month rent as commission after signing of the lease.

i-RMS will gladly assist you according to your home finding needs. Please contact your consultant for further guidance.

Schools

International Schools

The demand of international school in Hong Kong is very high and often there would be waitlists for places. Having said that, there are many international schools in Hong Kong and the chance to get your children in the schools you prefer increases if you start applications early. We do recommend parents to make multiple applications so they would have a back up plan for their children in case they do not get their first choice school.

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With the exception of ESF schools, international schools receive no funding from government and rely on funding from individuals and corporations in the form of debenture and capital levy. In some schools, being a debenture holder would give you priority over other applicants.

i-RMS will gladly assist you through school search. Please contact your consultant for further guidance.

Useful Links and Contacts

American International School: <http://www.ais.edu.hk/>
Australian International School: <http://www.aishk.edu.hk/>
Canadian International School: <http://www.cdnis.edu.hk/>
Carmel International School: <http://www.carmel.edu.hk/>
Discovery Bay International School: <http://www.dbis.edu.hk/>
English School Foundation (ESF): <http://www.esf.edu.hk/>
French International School: <http://www.fis.edu.hk>
German Swiss International School: <http://www.gsis.edu.hk/>
Hong Kong Academy: <http://www.hkacademy.edu.hk/>
Hong Kong International School: <http://www.hkis.edu.hk>
Hong Kong Japanese School: <http://www.jis.edu.hk/>
Hong Lok Yuen International School: <http://www.hlyis.edu.hk/>
Independent School Foundation: <http://www.isf.edu.hk/>
International College Hong Kong: <http://www.ichk.edu.hk/>
Kellett School: <http://www.kellettschool.com>
Korean International School: <http://www.kis.edu.hk/>
Norwegian International School: <http://www.nis.edu.hk/>

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Medical Needs

Private Hospitals & Clinics

Hong Kong has many public and private hospitals. Medical charges at public hospitals are heavily subsidized so it is not surprising that waiting time at public hospitals is much longer than private ones. Expatriates often would opt for private hospitals.

Online resources for searching doctors: <https://www.finddoc.com/en>

Below are a few popular hospitals in Hong Kong:

Matilda International Hospital

Provide comprehensive medical care from Outpatient service, emergency care, surgical care, maternity care to wellness program. It also offers various health class covering topics such as pediatric first aid and CPR, antenatal parentcraft, child care course for domestic helper, etc.

Website: <https://www.matilda.org/en/>

Tel: (853) 2849 0111

Address: 41 Mount Kellett Road, The Peak, Hong Kong

Matilda Medical Center

As an integrated part of Matilda International Hospital, the center provides a full primary and preventative healthcare service, including acupuncture, dentistry, physiotherapy, etc.

Website: <https://www.matilda.org/en/>

Tel: (852) 2537 8500

Address: Suite 502, Prosperity Tower, 39 Queen's Road Central, Hong Kong

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Hong Kong Adventist Hospital

Located at Happy Valley, HKAH provides a wide range of medical services, with ancillary services of dental care, nutrition counseling and dietetic service, rehabilitation services, etc.

Website: <http://www.hkah.org.hk/new/eng/index.htm>

Tel: (852) 3651 8888

Address: 40 Stubbs Road, Hong Kong

Canossa Hospital (Caritas)

Provide comprehensive medical care. Additional services include dietetic services by a Registered Dietitian, pastoral care for the sick and their families, etc. Shuttle bus service is available at Admiralty and Central to the hospital from Monday to Saturday, including public holidays.

Website: http://www.canossahospital.org.hk/index_en.htm

Tel: (852) 2522 2181

Address: 1 Old Peak Road, Hong Kong

Hong Kong Sanatorium Hospital

Located opposite the racecourse in Happy Valley, Hong Kong Sanatorium has very good reputation with its maternity ward. The hospital also operates 24-hour clinic service and many specialist services in the same building.

Website: <http://www.hksh.com/en/index.html>

Address: 2 Village Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2835 8600

St. Teresa's Hospital

St. Teresa's Hospital as founded in 1940 and is a very reputable private hospital on Kowloon side in Kowloon City. It provides 24-hour clinic service and many specialist services under one roof.

Website: http://www.sth.org.hk/index.asp?lang_code=en

Address: 327 Prince Edward Road, Kowloon

Tel: (852) 2200 3434

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Hong Kong Baptist Hospital

Located at Kowloon Tong, HKBH provides a wide array of services.

Website: <http://www.hkbh.org.hk/eng/home.php?>

Address: 222 Waterloo Road, Kowloon

Tel: (852) 2339 8888

Dental Care

The level of dental care in Hong Kong is very high. The Hong Kong Dental Association (<http://www.hkda.org>) provides a directory of dentists in Hong Kong. Of course, as with anywhere in the world, the easiest way to find a good dentist is by asking your friends and colleagues!

Traditional Chinese Medicine

Chinese medicine is growing in popularity in Hong Kong; some insurance plans provide coverage over treatments by Chinese herbalist and Chinese bonesetter. The best way to find good Chinese herbalist or bonesetter probably is by referral. Some hospitals also have their own Chinese medicine clinic.

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Daily Needs

Banking

Hong Kong Dollar is the currency in Hong Kong and its symbol is HKD. Chinese Yuan (CNY or RMB as in Renminbi) is also accepted in many chain stores in Hong Kong with varied exchange rates. Hong Kong Dollar can be used in Macau as well.

The Hong Kong Dollar is pegged to the US Dollar at a rate of around USD 1: HKD 7.80. Hong Kong banknotes (\$20, \$50, \$100, \$500, \$1000) are issued by 3 banks (HSBC, Standard Chartered, and Bank of China), each with different designs. The Hong Kong Government also issue banknote in the denomination of \$10. The denominations of coins are \$10, \$5, \$2, \$1, 50 cents, 20 cents and 10 cents.

Banking services are well-developed in Hong Kong. Below are some major banks in Hong Kong:

HSBC	http://www.hsbc.com.hk
Heng Seng Bank	http://www.hangseng.com
Standard Chartered	http://www.standardchartered.com.hk
Bank of China	http://www.bochk.com
Citibank	http://www.citibank.com.hk
DBS	http://www.dbs.com.hk
Bank of East Asia	http://www.hkbea.com

HSBC and Heng Seng Bank share a network of ATM machines while other banks share another network called Jetco.

Generally, documents required to open bank account are passport, proof of address (recent utility bills – overseas one would suffice), and minimum deposit. Some banks may also request for second photo ID. Check with your preferred bank for requirements in advance.

Credit card: Visa and Master are widely accepted in Hong Kong. American Express is less popular that

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some shops or restaurants do not accept it.

EPS (Easy Payment System): Shops can debit payment amount directly from your bank accounts with your ATM card. Some shops charge a processing fee but most accept it without any additional charge.

Octopus card: Octopus card is a rechargeable stored value smartcard initially designed for transportation payment (except taxi and some mini-buses). Its use is now widespread – you can use it to pay at vending machines, convenience stores, chain bakeries, supermarkets, etc.

NOTE: Cheques are typically not accepted by shops and restaurants.

Utilities & Telecommunications

Application for utilities is convenient, with most utility companies accepting application online or by fax. Depends on the set up of your new home, stove and water heater may be powered by electricity, gas and/or Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). Water is supplied by the government.

There is a great range of choices when it comes to residential phone, mobile phone, and broadband services in Hong Kong. Telecommunication providers have many different packages, so it would be advantageous to do some research to see which one fits your needs better.

Utilities and telecommunications bills are usually sent to you by post or email. You can settle them easily by Autopay, ATM machines, convenience stores, post offices, PPS (<http://www.ppshk.com>) or cheques.

Groceries

Supermarket

Supply of fresh products is in abundance in Hong Kong, no matter what you are looking for are from China, other Asia countries or the rest of the world. Many supermarkets have a fresh products section selling fresh produce, fish and meat. Supermarkets usually have free home delivery service to nearby areas after reaching a certain spending amount.

You can find the website links of some popular supermarkets in Hong Kong on page 27. Some of them provide online shopping so you can even order your groceries without stepping out of your home!

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Wet Market

The traditional wet markets sell fresh products from Hong Kong and China. Things usually are cheaper in wet markets because competition is keen. Shopkeepers may not speak much English but they usually can find a way to communicate with you. It may be a bit intimidating to go there by yourself at first, so get a local friend to introduce and show you around the first time.

BYOB (Bring Your Own Bag)



In view of the serious waste problem, the Government encourages people to bring their own bag for shopping by imposing an environmental levy of 50 cents for each plastic bag given out at registered retail outlets. Typical examples include supermarkets, convenience stores, personal health and beauty stores, drugstores, etc.

Domestic Help

Many expatriate families in Hong Kong hire a live-in or part-time helper to help with taking care of children, cooking, cleaning, etc. The domestic helpers may be Chinese maids (amah) or foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) from countries such as Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. Domestic helpers are also very common among local families, so you can get some useful tips and referrals from both your expatriate and local friends on hiring a helper. It is less common for couples to hire live-in maid, more often they would hire some hourly paid maids to clean up their apartments or help with cooking a few times per week.

FDHs are protected by labor legislations in Hong Kong. They also enjoy additional protection, such as free medical treatment and free accommodation by employers, as set out in the Standard Employment Contract. You should sign the Standard Employment Contract (ID 407) with you FDH. It is the only document recognized in Hong Kong for the purpose of employing a FDH. FDHs are not allowed to take up part-time or unauthorized work.

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Employers must pay FDHs a salary that is not less than the prevailing Minimum Allowable Wage (MAW) at the time of signing the contract. The current MAW for FDHs is \$4,410 per month.

There are agencies to assist with hiring a foreign domestic helper. The agencies would help with the selection, contract, visa application, etc. It is not a must to go through an agency; sometimes you can find referral from friends and acquaintance.

10 Tips on Hiring a Foreign Domestic Helper

1. The best way to find a helper is through referrals. Some bad maid agencies do little to filter their candidates and may even help the candidates to lie in interviews.
2. Always call on the maid's referees for information if possible; even if the maids have excellent reference letters. Very often former employers are reluctant to write a bad reference letter because the maid would read it. However, if you discuss with them on phone, they often would give you a good review of what the maid really is like.
3. Ask open-ended questions during the interviews with the maids. You can get more information and know better about them than asking yes or no question.
4. Ask behavioral questions – give the candidates some real life scenarios and ask them how they would handle the situations
5. Prepare for culture difference and adjustment – the maid would very likely come from a very different background and culture than yours. Also, very often expatriate families do not have a live-in maid in their home country, and it will take some time and effort to adjust to having a live-in maid.
6. Do not assume that she would do things your way – you should be explicit and clear in giving instructions. If you would like her to clean the kitchen every day, then explain clearly how it should be cleaned.
7. Be patient in giving instructions. Repeat and demonstrate a few times when you are teaching her something new. Taking the cultural and language barriers into consideration, things are not as straightforward as you think they are. Some maids do not have high proficiency in English so do not assume she can read the labels or instructions on the cartons/bottles.
8. Do not discuss your maid in front of other maids or drivers. The words would get to your maid in no time – and very often with erroneous additions or twists.

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9. Like everyone, maid would like to be appreciated and respected. Do show your maid recognition if they are doing a good job.
10. Assign a day in the week as rest day for your maid. If you and your maid agree to have a floating rest day, set the schedule before beginning of each month. Avoid making frequent changes to your maid's holiday. Your maid needs sufficient rest to maintain efficiency. It also saves you the hassle in arranging other days as substitute.

Maternity & Childcare Services

Sometimes you just want someone to look after the children while you are busy, and do not necessarily need a full-time maid. There are a couple of English speaking maternity and childcare services in Hong Kong.

Rent-A-Mum

Contact person: Shirley Robinson

Tel: (852) 2523 4868

Email: rentamum@netvigator.com

Website: <http://www.rent-a-mum.com/>

In Safe Hands

Tel: (852) 2323 2676 / (852) 9820 3363

Website: <http://www.insafehands.com.hk/>

Hong Kong**Useful Links and Contacts**Utilities

Water Supply Department

Website: <http://www.wsd.gov.hk>

Tel: (852) 2824 5000

Towngas

Website: <http://www.towngas.com>

Tel: (852) 2880 6988

HK Electric Co. Ltd. (Hong Kong Island and
Lamma Island)

Website: <http://www.heh.com>

Tel: (852) 2887 3411

China Light & Power (Kowloon, New Territories,
other Outlying Islands)

Website: <https://www.clponline.com.hk>

Tel: (852) 2678 2678

Telecommunications

1010

Website: <http://1010.hkcsl.com/jsp/home>

Tel: (852) 2888 1010

PCCW

Website: <http://www.pccw.com>

Tel: (852) 1000

Smartone-Vodafone

Website: <http://www.smartone-vodafone.com>

Tel: (852) 2281 8888 (Sales) /

(852) 2880 2688 (Customer service)

3

Website: <http://www.three.com.hk>

Tel: (852) 3166 2222 (Sales) /

(852) 3166 3333 (Customer Service)

One2Free

Website: <http://one2free.hkcsl.com>

Tel: (852) 2512 3123

iCable

Website: <http://service.i-cable.com>

Tel: (852) 183 2832

Supermarket

Park n Shop: <http://www1.parknshop.com>

Wellcome: <http://www.wellcome.com.hk/en/index.html>

Marketplace by Jasons: <http://www.marketplacebyjasons.com/>

ThreeSixty: <http://www.threesixtyhk.com/>

Hong Kong

City'Super: <http://www.citysuper.com.hk/>

Foreign Domestic Helper

Practical Guide for Employment of Foreign Domestic Helper (Labor Department)

<http://www.labour.gov.hk/eng/plan/iwFDH.htm>

Guidebook for Employment of Domestic Helper (immigration Department)

http://www.immd.gov.hk/ehtml/hkvisas_5.5.htm

Foreign Domestic Helper Agency**AsiaXpat**

Contact Person: Evelyn Reyes

Tel: (852) 3579 5375

Email: evelyn@asiaexpat.com

You can find info of helpers on their website: <http://hongkong.asiaexpat.com/helpers/>

ACJ International Recruitment Services

Rm B, 8/F, Golden Sun Center

59-67 Bonham Strand West

Sheung Wan, Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2377 2890 Fax: (852) 2377 2935

Email: acjrecruitmentservices@yahoo.com

Hong Kong

Cultural Norms

Hong Kong people are generally friendly and helpful. The pace in Hong Kong is very fast compared with many cities in Europe and America. Although people may look very hurried, most people are willing to help if you ask.

Culturally Hong Kong Chinese are more reserved and would not take initiative to speak with newcomers. You would be surprised by how quickly they would accept you as part of their community if you take the initiative to reach out to them.

One thing that traditional Chinese pay a lot of attention to is “save face”. It is not common for Chinese to criticize people publicly because it will make the other person “lose face”. It is likely that the person being criticized will hold grudge against you if you do that; and others around would think you as an unkind person. It is not that you cannot criticize Chinese, just do it privately and politely.

Hong Kong also has a “yes” culture. Many Chinese has the mentality that they do not want to disappoint others by turning them down. So if you ask your Chinese colleagues if they can do a million things for you in a week, they probably will be reluctant to turn you down even they know it is impossible. Again, this is related to “saving you face” by not rejecting you, but do not be surprised when they cannot deliver. Therefore, asking open-end question would get you more accurate information. For example, “What do you think if we set the deadline for this project to be next Friday?” or “When do you think this can be completed?”

Do remember above is a very broad generalization and every person is different. Very often, it is common sense, staying open-minded and respect that would help you learn how to adapt and live with an unfamiliar culture. We have prepared a Cultural Dos & Don'ts list for your quick reference.

Hong Kong

Cultural Do's & Don'ts

DOS	DON'TS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Learn some basic words, greetings and introductions in Cantonese will be useful. Locals will also appreciate the effort. ✓ Do speak slower to people who are not fluent in English. This would help you communicate better with them. ✓ Do be prepared for lots of loud voices and animated behavior during friendly conversation. Cantonese is quite a lively dialect. ✓ Do arrive 5 minutes or so early if it is business meeting. Time is money in Hong Kong and people would see you being disrespectful if you are late. ✓ Do give out red packets ("lai see") if you are married; to single colleagues, friends, or your friend's kids during Chinese New Year. Locals would see you as being stingy if you don't. If you are at management level, your staff (especially your secretary) would also expect red packets even you are not married. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Don't criticize people in public because you make the other person "lose face". ✗ Don't insist on your own way all the time. Try to understand why things are done that way locally. ✗ Don't be surprised if people do not let you get off the elevator/train before entering. It is just the way things are and don't take it personally. ✗ Don't smoke in buildings or covered bus terminals. You cannot smoke in most restaurants and bars either. It is against the law. ✗ Don't be offended if people suddenly speak Cantonese to each other during a conversation. Normally they are not talking bad things about you. There is a high chance that they are not used to holding conversation all in English. ✗ Don't eat on the plate while being in Chinese restaurants where they give you a small bowl and plate. The plate is for placing bones and waste. ✗ Don't be surprised by the number of places that pet dogs cannot go. Most parks and many new apartment buildings do not allow dogs.

Hong Kong

Networking

There are many social clubs and business associations where you can meet with other expatriates and extend your network. If you are interested in volunteering, there are also plenty of opportunities out there for non-Chinese speakers. Check with your favorite organizations if they need any help.

If you have children in schools, the easiest way to expand your social network would be participating actively in the PTA. Many families in international schools are expatriates and they would welcome you with open arms because they have been in your position too!

Useful Links and Contacts

Social Clubs & Associations

American Women's Association

- Open to all women living in Hong Kong regardless of nationalities

Tel: (852) 2527 2961

Website: <https://www.awa.org.hk>

Asociación de Mujeres de Habla Hispana De Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2219 6164

Website: <http://www.amhh.org.hk/>

The Australian Association of Hong Kong

- Open to all nationalities

Tel: (852) 2530 4461

Website: <http://www.ozhongkong.com>

Hong Kong Japanese Club

- Open to all nationalities

Tel: (852) 2577 3669

Website: <http://www.hkjapaneseclub.org>

Hong Kong

The Malaysian Association of Hong Kong, SAR

Email: admin1@msiahk.com

Website: <http://www.msiahk.com/>

The Singapore Association

- Open to all nationalities

Tel: (852) 2366 3982

Website: <http://www.sahk.com>

Volunteering

Hong Kong YWCA (English Speaking Member Department)

Tel: (852) 3476 1340

Website: <http://www.esmdywca.org.hk>

The Samaritans

Tel: (852) 2896 0000

Website: <http://www.samaritans.org.hk/>

Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care

Tel: (852) 2868 1211

Website: <http://www.hospicecare.org.hk/eng/about.html>

Animal Asia Foundation

Tel: (852) 2791 2225

Website: <http://www.animalsasia.org/index.php>

Hong Kong Dog Rescue

Website: <http://www.hongkongdogrescue.com>

Hong Kong

Emergency Contacts

Police, fire, ambulance	999
Emergency fax for deaf	992
General Police Enquires	(852) 2527 7177
Weather (Dial-a-Weather)	(852) 1878 200
Tropical Warning Signals Enquiries (Signal No. 3 or above)	(852) 2835 1473
Hong Kong Immigration Department	(852) 2824 6111
Department of Health	(852) 2961 8989
Consumer Council	(852) 2929 2222
Hongkong Post	(852) 2921 2222
Telephone Directory Enquiries	(852) 1081
International Enquires Service (Country Codes & World Time Inquiries)	(852) 10013
1823 Call Center (General enquiries for 20 government departments and	(852) 1823
Transport Department (Licensing Information)	(852) 2804 2600
Hong Kong International Airport	(852) 2181 8888
Crime Hotline	(852) 2527 7177
Dangerous slopes	(852) 2135 2525
Gas (Emergency Hotline)	(852) 2880 6999

Hong Kong

HK Electric Co. Ltd (Emergency Hotline)	(852) 2555 4000
China Light & Power (Emergency Service)	(852) 2728 8333
HK St. John Ambulance Hotline	(852) 2524 4888
Samaritans (crisis intervention)	(852) 2896 0000
Hospital Authority	(852) 2300 6555
Inland Revenue Department	(852) 187 8088
Labor Department (Hotline – handled by 1823 Call Center)	(852) 2717 1771
Taxi On-Call (Hong Kong Island)	(852) 2574 7311
Taxi On-Call (Kowloon)	(852) 2760 0411
Taxi On-Call (New Territories)	(852) 2457 2266
Taxi On-Call (Lantau Island)	(852) 2984 1328
Taxi Union Lost Report Hotline	(852) 2385 8288
Mini Van Booking – Total Recall Transportation Centre	(852) 2396 6666
SPCA	(852) 2802 0501
SPCA (Lost & Found Animals)	(852) 2232 5553
SPCA (24-hour Emergency Hotline)	(852) 2711 1000
Agriculture, Fisheries & Conservation Department (Reporting lost pets)	(852) 1823