

**Title:**

Tourism Highlights of Hong Kong, the City of Life

**Word Count:**

1059

**Summary:**

An overview of the many tourism highlights of Hong Kong.

**Keywords:**

hong kong, asia, china, chinese, kowloon, travel, tourism, tours

**Article Body:**

They call Hong Kong the 'City of Life' because it has always been so vibrant and full of energy. It's a city that's both exotic and cosmopolitan making it a perfect destination for first time travelers to Asia. Being a former British colony, there's enough English signs and people able to speak the language there to make it a user friendly place. At the same time, it's foreign enough that tourists will definitely feel that they are not on a typical beach vacation. Even after the U.K. gave Hong Kong back to China, this Chinese government designated 'Special Administrative Region' has not lost its dynamics. The communist government realizes the importance of Hong Kong as an economic giant and is so far adhering to a two system coexistence for China. 'Hong Kong' means 'sweet harbor' in the Chinese Cantonese dialect which is fitting as there's so much in the city to stimulate all of the senses.

There are actually two main areas of Hong Kong. One being the Hong Kong island itself and the other being the Kowloon peninsula which is on the mainland across the harbor. The new international airport is yet on another island and transit to the city can be via train, bus or auto. The bridge that connects to Kowloon is the world's longest road and rail bridge.

Once in the city, one will realize that Hong Kong is a very busy place with people everywhere. It has one of the densest populations as most of the 6.5 million inhabitants live in high-rise buildings due to the lack of land available. In fact, one reason why there seems to be people on the streets during all hours including the evenings is because people there want to take a break from their tiny apartments and get outside for some space. Hotel accommodations are in every budget range on both the Kowloon and Hong Kong island sides. Getting across the harbor is fairly easy. One can take the harbor ferry which actually has different class levels (the higher levels are

slightly more expensive but the views are better). There's also an underground tunnel that taxi cabs can take and like many other major cities around the world, Hong Kong also has an underground subway transit system. This subway also goes underground beneath the harbor connecting the island to Kowloon. There are double decker buses in Hong Kong as well as double decker rail street cars over on the island. One way to see the various commercial districts on the island is to stay on the streetcar for an entire loop which will take riders right across the downtown areas including some of the street markets.

Hong Kong is a contrast of old and new. There are old temples and monasteries scattered throughout. But there is also that gigantic modern skyline of tall skyscrapers that will make most North American cities appear small. There's even the world's longest outdoor escalator here. A must do in Hong Kong is to go to the top of the mountain of Victoria Peak on the island either by bus, auto or a special tram they have there to see spectacular views of the entire region. There are also tours of the boat village where a local will take tourists around the bay in one of their boats. One thing that is very interesting to see in Hong Kong is the early morning exercise sessions in some of the local parks. Every morning, there are crowds of locals, many of them seniors, who meet up at the parks to exercise and do tai chi.

With over 9,000 restaurants, dining in Hong Kong is also an exciting experience. There are all types of international cuisine but of course, the Chinese fare is what most visitors come here for. From elegant dining to busy dim sum houses to street stalls, there's so much variety of food that it's impossible to sample everything. There are even the large floating restaurants which serve the freshest seafood catches.

Of course, there's the shopping experience in Hong Kong. Being a duty free port, there are many bargains in Hong Kong especially for textiles and electronics. Hong Kong is famous for its custom tailors who can make up a new suit within a day or two. As for electronics, for some reason Hong Kong always receives the latest models first even before North America does. Browsing through the many outdoor markets for souvenirs is another favorite activity. Be aware that bargaining is common in the markets so it is recommended to get an idea of typical prices from the retail stores first before going for deals at the markets. Kowloon has a few specialty markets worth visiting including the jade market, bird market and flower market. One must be extra careful at the jade market because if the prices are too good to be true, the pieces are probably not real jade. The night market which operates only during evenings is also fun where there are all sorts of merchandise available from clothing to toys to gadgets. There may also be entertainment such as Chinese opera on the streets during the night.

The Po Lin monastery on Lantau Island near the airport has the world's largest outdoor Buddha. Visitors climb the steps up to the statue and there are some nice views of the scenery up top. Lantau Island can be reached by ferry via local tour companies who will also take tourists to local fishing villages. Hydrofoil crafts can take casino enthusiasts to Macau which has also been returned back to the Chinese government. There are also tours into the New Territories beyond Kowloon to see more secluded temples and countryside farms as well as other shopping opportunities located in nearby Chinese mainland towns.

It's incredible how much there is to see and do in Hong Kong even within its relatively compact geographical area. There are so much more exotic sights and cuisine there that one simply cannot experience at the usual North American Chinatowns. At the same time, Hong Kong is so easy to get around with its efficient modes of transportation and wide range of services available in English. Tourists will never feel too lost even in a high activity place like Hong Kong.