



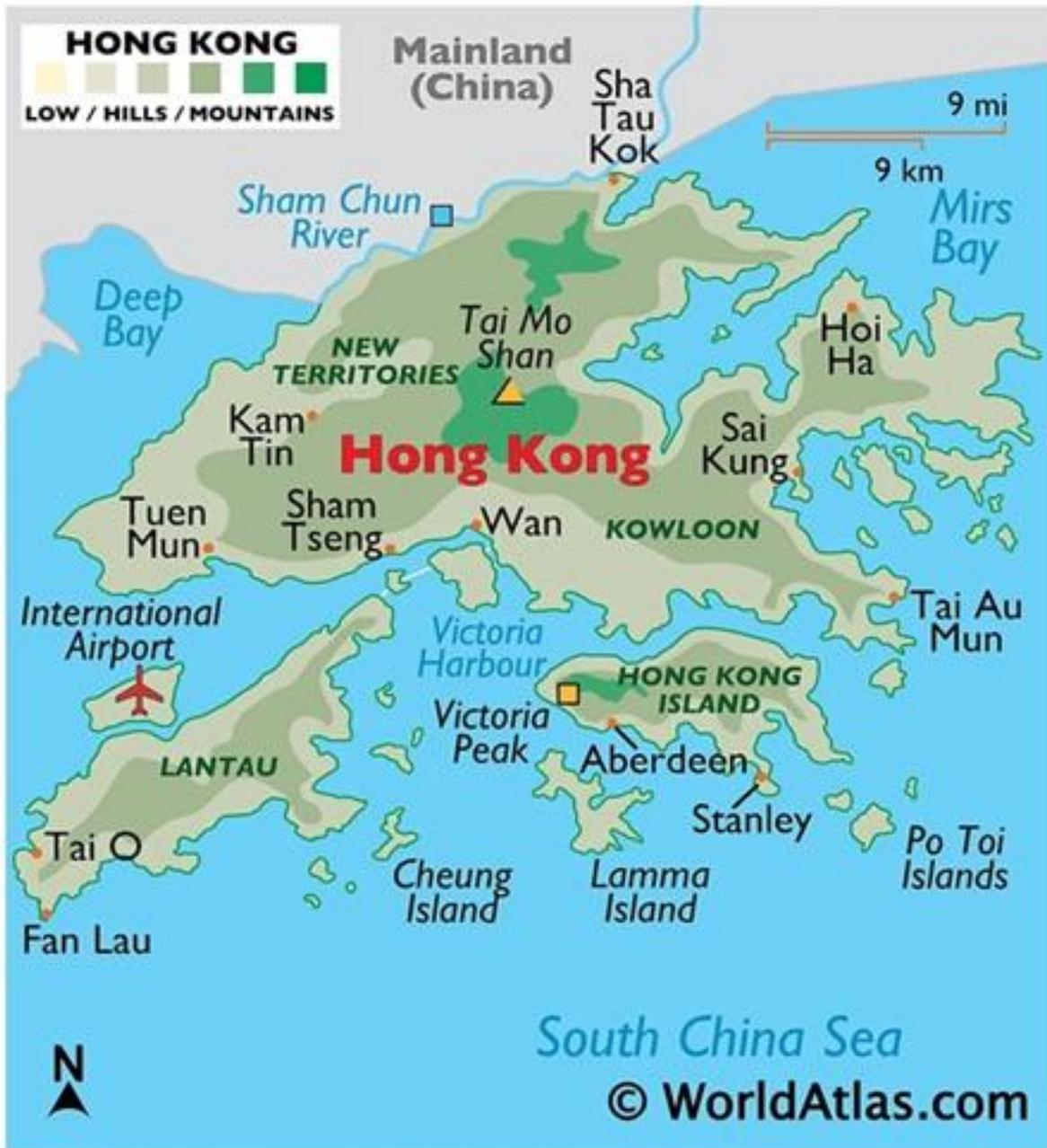
My Drift

Title: Hong Kong 香港

Written By: Jerry D. Petersen

Date: 10 Mar 2026

Article Number: (524-2026-7)





Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China. Situated on China's southern coast just south of Shenzhen, it consists of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. With 7.5 million residents in a 430 square mile territory, Hong Kong is the fourth-most densely populated region in the world.

Hong Kong was established as a colony of the British Empire after the Qing dynasty ceded Hong Kong Island in 1841–1842 as a result of losing the First Opium War. The colony expanded to the Kowloon Peninsula in 1860 and was further extended when the United Kingdom obtained a 99-year lease of the New Territories in 1898. Hong Kong was occupied by Japan from 1941 to 1945 during World War II. The territory was handed over from the United Kingdom to China in 1997. Hong Kong maintains separate governing and economic systems from those of mainland China under the principle of one country, two systems.

Originally a sparsely populated area of farming and fishing villages, Hong Kong is now one of the world's most significant financial centers and commercial ports. Hong Kong is the world's third-ranked global financial center behind New York City and London, ninth-largest exporter, and eighth-largest importer. Its currency, the Hong Kong dollar, is the ninth-most traded currency in the world. Home to the third-highest number of billionaires of any city in the world, Hong Kong has the second largest number of ultra-high net-worth individuals. The city has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, although severe income inequality still exists among the population.

Hong Kong is the city with the most skyscrapers in the world, even though its housing is consistently in high demand. Hong Kong is the second most expensive residential property market in the world and is one of the most expensive cities in the world. Hong Kong is also one of the most visited cities in the world.

Hong Kong is a highly developed territory and has a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.955, ranking eighth in the world, and is currently the only place in Asia to be in the top ten. The city has the highest life expectancy (85.5 years – 83 for males and 88 for females) in the world.



The tallest building in Hong Kong is the International Commerce Centre (ICC), standing at 484 meters (1588 feet) with 118 floors. Completed in 2010 in West Kowloon, it is the 13th tallest building in the world and houses the Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong, one of the world's highest hotels.



Hong Kong Boat Harbor



Streets of Hong Kong



Hong Kong at Night

Amazing Fun Facts About Hong Kong

The Opium War turned Hong Kong from a fishing village into a financial juggernaut.

Hong Kong was once a sleepy fishing village off the coast of southern China. The city-state evolved into one of the world's most dynamic cities after the Opium War, a conflict rooted in the British trade of tea for Chinese opium. The British seized Hong Kong to gain a foothold in East Asia. In 1841, Queen Victoria famously dismissed the territory as a "barren rock."

The city's current success stems from its strategic location between mainland China and the rest of Asia. The "fragrant harbor" (which inspired its name, Hong Kong) and its position within the expanding Anglo-American markets

played a crucial role in the island's thriving economy. Over the years, Hong Kong became one of the world's most significant financial centers and a top business city

The flag of Hong Kong symbolizes the connection between China and Hong Kong.

The flag of Hong Kong features a white Bauhinia Blakean flower with five petals on a red background. Each petal contains a small red star, symbolizing the connection between Hong Kong and China.

The flag design highlights the "one country, two systems" principle that defines Hong Kong's relationship with China after British rule. The Hong Kong flag is relatively new, adopted in 1997, during the handover of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom to China.



Hong Kong is actually 263 different islands.

Hong Kong consists of more than Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula. It is 263 islands, with over 100 of them uninhabited. Some of the more remote islands are so isolated that they have developed their own unique dialects and customs.

Victoria Peak offers an amazing view.

Victoria Peak, also known as Mount Austin, is a famous lookout point in Hong Kong. Standing at 1,811 feet (554 meters) above the city, it offers breathtaking views of the skyline but isn't the highest peak in Hong Kong. That title of the highest peak in Hong Kong belongs to Tai Mo Shan, which reaches 3,140 feet (958 meters) in the New Territories. Known for its scenic hiking trails and natural beauty, Tai Mo Shan is a favorite among nature enthusiasts.

The International Commerce Centre offers the world's highest swimming pool.

Hong Kong's International Commerce Centre offers luxe travelers the chance to swim in the Ritz-Carlton infinity pool, located almost 1,640 feet (500 meters) above the city on the 118th floor.

Hong Kong is far greener than New York City.

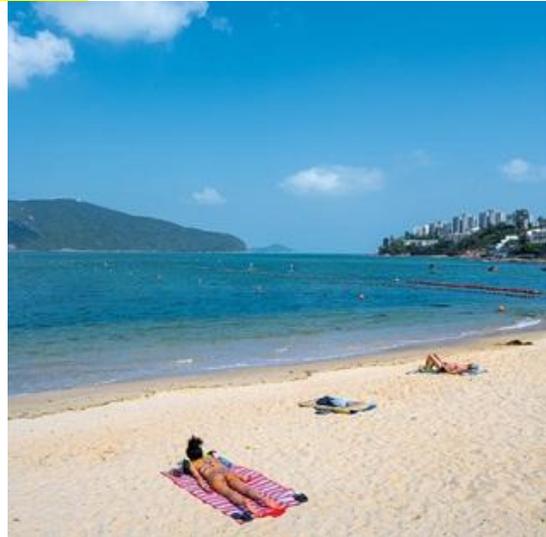
Hong Kong is known for its urban areas, but over three-quarters of Hong Kong is made up of rural areas, and 40% consists of nature reserves and parks. This interesting fact makes Hong Kong one of the greenest cities in Asia while being one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

Hong Kong flushes its toilets with sea water.

Hong Kong has beaches that rival the Caribbean.

Hong Kong has 50 beaches on its 284-mile-long coastline (456-kilometer). You can surf on one side of Hong Kong Island while enjoying calm waters perfect for paddleboarding on the other.

Hong Kong has Asia's strictest water quality standards, with real-time water monitoring at all beaches. During the warmer months, you can go midnight swimming at some beaches and watch natural light from the bioluminescent plankton.



Dragons dominate the Hong Kong skyline.

Feng Shui influences the design of Hong Kong's skyscrapers. Many buildings feature "dragon gates," openings that allow dragons to fly through the mountains to the water. Some buildings even consult Feng Shui masters during their construction.

One building that didn't consult the expert was the Bank of China Tower, built between 1985 and 1989. It became the tallest skyscraper in the Hong Kong region but was criticized for its sharp edges, which locals believed would bring bad luck.



The Tsing Ma Bridge is longer than the Golden Gate Bridge.

The Tsing Ma Bridge that connects Lantau Island to the mainland, is the world's longest road and rail suspension bridge. It's longer than San

Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge and built to withstand typhoons that occur from May to November.



Hong Kong locals speak three languages but write in one.

Chinese and English are both official languages in Hong Kong, but most residents primarily speak Cantonese in their daily lives. Chinese serves as the written language. About half of the population is trilingual, switching between Cantonese, English and Mandarin.

This is where real kung fu masters train.

The martial arts culture in Hong Kong goes beyond the movies like Enter the Dragon. Traditional Kung fu schools, called 'kwoon,' have been operating for generations, with some masters tracing their teaching lineage back 300 years.

Each morning, Hong Kong's public parks turn into outdoor training grounds. Elderly masters practice wing chun, businesspeople do tai chi and students learn ancient techniques.



Bruce Lee

Bruce Lee is Hong Kong's most famous martial artist. He learned his first moves in Hong Kong's parks. His original kung fu school in Kowloon still stands today.

Hong Kong hosts the world's largest outdoor seated Buddha.



The Tian Tan Buddha is a 112 foot (34 meter) tall bronze big Buddha statue on Lantau Island that sits on the ancient Tea Route. The Buddha's right hand is raised to deliver a blessing to all who climb the 268 steps to reach it.

Hong Kong Protests

Five Demands, Not One Less is a 2019-2020 political slogan and set of protest goals that emerged during the Hong Kong anti-extradition bill protests.



Protest during a 2019 New Year's Eve countdown event

Initially, the primary target of the protesters' demonstrations was the extradition bill, with "anti-extradition" as the main slogan. Subsequently, the Civil Human Rights Front and protesters articulated five key demands: (1) complete withdrawal of the extradition bill, (2) retraction of the "riot" designation for protests, (3) release and dropping of charges against arrested protesters, (4) establishment of an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of police brutality, and (5) resignation of Chief Executive Carrie Lam.

Conclusion

During my many TDY trips to the Far East (South Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Philippines, and Thailand) I thought about going to Hong Kong but never made it.

Oh well, that's just one place on my list of places I wanted to visit but never made it. Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia are at the top of the list.

Bigdrifter44@gmail.com

Bigdrifter.com