

Dhruti Patel

AVCE Travel and Tourism Worldwide Travel Destinations

Hong Kong

Task 1:

General information:

Hong Kong is a metropolis, which is a popular business centre and the Mecca of urban modernity. It is an exciting city as it has a British influence but the culture is pure Chinese and there are approximately six thousand people working and living on junks (wooden boats) in Aberdeen Harbour. The mountainous terrain has forced people to crowd into one-tenth of its total land area and even to reclaim land from its harbour. Hong Kong originated as a fishing village but is today one of the busiest international ports and business centres in the world. It was a British colony for more than one hundred and fifty years but still has a strong Chinese culture.

Hong Kong's population is made up of 6,097,000, while 1,276,301,000 is the Chinese population. The two main languages spoken are Cantonese and English but since 1997, Mandarin has become increasingly important as well.

Government:

Hong Kong was occupied by the UK in 1841, an agreement signed by China and the UK on 19th December 1988 made Hong Kong become the ***Hong Kong Special-Administrative Region (SAR) China***, on 1st July 1997. In this agreement China promised that it would be one country but have two systems. China's socialist economic system will not be imposed on Hong Kong and that Hong Kong would have a high degree of autonomy in all matters except foreign and defence matters for the next fifty years.

The government has a legal system based on the common English law. The constitution is made up of the basic law, which was approved in March 1990 by ***China's-National People's Congress*** and Hong Kong's "***Mini Constitution***". The chief head of state is the president of China, ***Jiang Zemin*** (since 27th March 1993), the head of government is ***Chief Executive, Tung Chee-Hwa*** and the cabinet consist of three ex-officio members, they are: ***Chief Secretary, Donald Tsan Yam-Kuen***, the ***Financial-Sectary, Anthony Leung*** and the ***Sectary of Justice, Elsie Leung***. There are ten other appointed members.

Time difference:

Hong Kong is eight hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+8 GMT), thirteen hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and sixteen hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time. Hong Kong does not observe daylight savings.

Currency:

Hong Kong's currency consists of the ***Hong Kong Dollar***, which is internationally recognized and separate from China's currency. The currency is also linked to the US-Dollar, at a rate of 7.8 Hong Kong Dollars per American Dollar. ATM'S dispense Hong-

Kong Dollars at the daily exchange rate and accept major foreign bankcards and credit-cards. Banks often offer a better exchange rate than hotels but they do charge an administrative fee. The standard unit of Hong Kong's currency is the Hong Kong Dollar, which comes in denominations of: **HK\$ 1,000, HK\$ 500, HK\$100, HK\$50** and **HK\$20**. There are also, **Cent 10, Cent 20** and **Cent 50** coins. The Hong Kong Dollar is trading at approximately: **£1 GBP = HK\$ 12.55**.

Type of destination:

Hong Kong is a cultural destination and is of interest to tourists who wish to understand the Chinese culture and religion. It is also a shopping nation for tourists who wish to buy electronics and the latest computer software.

Location of the country:

Hong Kong is in eastern Asia; the SAR region is 1,092 sq km in total but is 1,042 sq-km of land and 50 sq km of water. Its comparative size is six times the size of Washington DC. The **South China Sea** surrounds Hong Kong in an eastern, southern and western direction, while China is to the north.

Location of the destination within the country:

Hong Kong is an island, which is situated south of the tropic of cancer and is on similar lines of latitude as Calcutta, Havana and Hawaii, while sharing the same line of longitude as Wuhan in Central China, Bali and Perth. The southern coast is surrounded by the South China Sea. The crown colony of Hong Kong is made up of the **New-Territories** and **Kowloon Peninsula** on the Chinese mainland and has over two hundred islands. Hong Kong the island was an original British territory and today has the capital, **Victoria**. Hong Kong is a small island covering 1,095 sq km but there are currently reclamation projects under construction, which will expand the land area.

Hemisphere and continent:

Hong Kong is situated in the northern hemisphere on the Asian continent.

Long haul or short haul:

Hong Kong is a long haul destination when flying from the UK. Flying out to Hong-Kong from London's Heathrow Airport takes approximately eleven to twelve hours, with no stopover. This makes it a long haul destination.

Task 2:

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Task 3:

Climate:

Hong Kong experiences a tropical climate. In the summer it is hot and humid with temperatures reaching 35°C and humidity is close to 100%. From May to September, heavy rains are experienced, which make it a bad time to visit, typhoons can also occur and if the typhoon signal is eight or above (signals are one to ten), then all ferries/boats stop operating between the islands and the mainland. Temperatures tend to get cool from October and they drop to 20°C. The months of October and November experience clear sunny days and it is best to visit Hong Kong at this time because from December to February it is winter.

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As can be seen from the climatic graph above, Hong Kong averages between six to eight hours of sunshine a day. Temperatures range from 13°C in January, which is winter to 33°C in June and July. May, June, July and August experience the hottest temperatures, as it is the summer season. It also experiences the highest rainfall at this time, which would increase the humidity factor. From November to March, Hong Kong experiences very little rainfall.

Topography:

Hong Kong is situated on a volcanic terra firma and the hills and mountains dominate the landscape. A crest running from the northeast to the southwest is the backbone of Hong Kong, while the Kowloon Peninsula and the northwestern New Territories are flat areas. 31% of Hong Kong's total land is used for agricultural purposes and this is mostly in the New Territories alluvial plains. A narrow piece of flat land between the mountains and the sea on the north shore in Hong Kong is where most of the country's population live, whereas the south shore is made up of sandy beaches. The highest peak is, ***Ta Mo-Shan***, which is 957m above sea level and is located in ***Central New Territories***. The lowest peak is, ***Lo Chau Mun*** at 66m above sea level. In total there are two hundred and thirty-four islands in the country but the island of Hong Kong is the most famous and populated. ***Lantau Island*** is the biggest of all the islands and is currently under construction for the new international airport.

Natural attractions:

The most famous landmark in Hong Kong is ***Victoria Peak***, which will give tourists a 360° view of Hong Kong Island. The best time to view the sights is at sunset when the lights from the islands can be seen and the sunsets below the horizon. Another natural

attraction is the **Hong Kong Park**, which has gardens, children's playground and waterfalls for tourists to enjoy.

Hong Kong has a number of picturesque beaches but the most famous one is **Repulse-Bay**, which is on the south side of Hong Kong Island, it has white sandy beaches and warm waters. There are a number of islands that are accessible for tourists to reach, many of which are still natural with little developments. **Lantau Island** has a number of walking tours and hikes, which are very popular amongst the tourists. There is also **Lamma Island**, which is a green oasis with beautiful beaches, this island does not allow cars to enter and has a laid back atmosphere.

Built attractions:

Hong Kong has a variety of built attractions that cater for a number of different age groups. The **Ocean Park and Middle Kingdom** is the biggest entertainment centre in Asia; it has a large reef aquarium, roller coasters, Kid's World and the Discovery of Asia. It is a huge centre that offers an insight into Chinese life over the past five thousand years.

The **Temple of Ten Thousand Buddha's** consists of twelve thousand and eight-hundred statues of Buddha and a mummified holy man embalmed in gold leaf is on display, but this attraction can only be reached after climbing four hundred and thirty-one steps. **The Big Buddha** is the world's largest outdoor-seated Buddha, which was opened in 1989. **Kat Hing Wai** is also known as the **Kam Tin Walled Village** and was the original tenth century homestead of the **Tang Clan**, they were the first of the Cantonese '**Five Great Clans**' to migrate to the New Territories. The village may be modern inside but a moat and walls with four-corner guardhouse towers surround it and tourists will have to join a tour to enter the village. **Sik Sik Yuen Wong Tai Sin Temple** is a traditional Chinese temple with multicoloured carvings and a red/gold roof. Tourists can visit this attraction in order to understand the Chinese religious culture.

Statue Square is an example of modern architecture; it is the head quarters for the **Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation**. **Time Square** is a vast temple complex that has nine floors of shops and was the venue for the millennium countdown in the year 2000. **Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware** is the oldest serving colonial building in Hong Kong and is now a museum of tea ware, seals and other ceramics. The Hong Kong Museum of History was opened in 2000 and now exhibits traditional costumes, photographs, replicas of old village houses and a Chinese medicine store. The exhibition covers the last six thousand years of history.

Star Ferries are green and white tub-shaped ferries that operate daily around Hong-Kong's harbour and islands, they give the best view of the city. **Noonday Gun** is a Hotchkiss three-pounder gun that overlooks **Causeway Bay** and is fired daily at noon. **Yuen Po Street Bird Garden** is Hong Kong's shrine to songbirds. There are seventy stalls, each have their own ornate and cage furniture with different songbirds. These birds are pampered and even fed honey-nectar to sweeten their song and perform for tourists.

Events:

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Food, drink and entertainment:

There are around eight thousand restaurants in Kowloon and on Hong Kong Island. Cantonese cuisine dominates all others but Hong Kong has plenty of restaurants that serve regional Chinese cuisines, from Beijing to Shanghai to Yunnan to Sichuan. Other Asian cuisines, such as, Thai, Indonesian, Malay and Japanese are also served.

Dim sum restaurants are traditional Chinese restaurants that serve favourite dim sum meals, such as, ***siu mai*** (small balls of pork wrapped in small cabbage leaves), ***ha gow*** (small dumplings with steamed prawns inside) and ***cha siu bao*** (steamed barbecued pork buns). For desert there is the ***daan tart*** (small custard filled pastry) or the ***coconut cake***, which is a tasty, creamy pudding served in small blocks.

Hong Kong has a variety of different restaurants with different cultural influences, such as Asian. Some of the Asian restaurants that are popular with the locals as well as the tourists are, ***Felix***, who specialise in asian seafood, ***Indochine 1929***, this is a Vietnamese restaurant that serve favourite dishes like, deep fried soft shell crabs, Hanoi-style fried fish and fresh spring-rolls. The ***Ashoka*** restaurant serves Indian dishes, such as, ***Thali***, this is a platter of different kinds of curries, vegetables, somosas, naan breads and sweet deserts. Continental influences can be found at restaurants such as, ***The Mandarin Grill***, which is known for its meat dishes. ***The Verandah*** is one of Hong Kong's most romantic restaurants, which serves dishes like eggs with caviar, beef or lamb. French restaurants include, ***Au Trou Normande***, this is a long established restaurant known for its wine list and French dishes such as, ***escargots***, this is a grilled trout or lamb with mushrooms. ***Le Nouveau Papillion*** serves house specials such as pan-fried goose liver. ***Fat Angelo's and Rughetta*** are two examples of fine Italian restaurants that serve traditional foods. Hong Kong also has a number of smaller restaurants located throughout the city; they offer seafood dishes and traditional noodles at a variety of prices to suit every pocket.

Hong Kong's nightlife and entertainment are located in the hot spots of ***Lang Kwai-Fong*** and sotto areas in ***Wanchai*** and ***Kowloon Tsim Sha Tsui***. In these areas there are many different pubs and clubs but tourists should be wary of the "hostess" clubs that charge exorbitant prices for drinks and karaoke. ***Barco*** is a stylish bar that attracts locals and tourists. ***Carnegie's*** is a pub that has live rock on Thursdays and Saturdays, there is also dancing most other nights. ***Mad Dogs*** is a traditional English pub that is located in a basement, while ***Petticoat Lane*** is Hong Kong's first open gay and lesbian bar and clubs like the ***Music Room Live***, ***Fringe Club*** and ***The Wanch*** offer live music.

Types of accommodation:

The three most popular types of accommodation available in Hong Kong are, hotels, hostels and apartments. There is a strong emphasis on quality accommodation for tourists, therefore hotels range from cheap, two-stars through to expensive five-stars. The four most popular hotels in Hong Kong that are used by tourists are, ***The Ritz Carlton-Hotel***, ***Regal Hong Kong Hotel***, ***Eaton Hotel Hong Kong*** and the ***Guangdong-Hotel***. These hotels offer a range of services such as, room service, laundry service, maids and catering facilities, such as, bars and restaurants.

Hostels are another popular option as they cater for backpackers and tourists who are on a budget regardless of their age. ***Wang Fat Hostel***, ***Noble Hostel***, ***Ibis North Point***

and Garden View International House are the most reputable places to stay. The last option is to rent an apartment privately, should tourists wish to stay in Hong Kong for a long period of time.

Types of transport:

Public transport is the best way to get around Hong Kong, as it is cheap, fast and efficient. There is an extensive bus, rail, tram, ferry, hover ferry and taxi service available. Buses are the most efficient way to explore the south and the New Territories, while Kowloon and the north are better served by the mass transit railway or the double-decker trams. The mass transit railway is modern and efficient, another railway is the ***Kowloon-Canton Railway***, which is a quick way to get to the New Territories and it runs from the main station, ***Hung Hom Railway Station*** every five to ten minutes. Double-decker buses operate along an extensive network of roads but the best way to cut across the harbour is by ferry, just so that tourists can see the spectacular views. The ferry lines have several routes operating from Hong Kong to the islands and the main terminals are at ***Central Wanchai*** and ***Tsim Sha Tsui***. Taxi drivers speak some English but it is best that tourists have their hotel receptionist write their destination down in Chinese to ensure that they get to their destination.

Accessibility to the travel and tourism gateways:

There are various methods of arriving in Hong Kong; tourists can either come by air, sea or through mainland China. Hong Kong International Airport serves the area with international and domestic flights. The airport is located 40km west of the city. It is a busy airport as it serves not only Hong Kong but also China and South East Asia. All passenger flights connect to one super terminal, which is said to be the largest enclosed space in the world. The airport's one passenger terminal is 1.27km long and handles all the flights and there is an international shuttle train, which runs between the east hall and the west hall. The international airport has limousine/car rental service counters and offers four car parks. The railways connect Hong Kong with China's railway system at the Hong Kong/China boarder. This railway connection has only been open since 2001. Hong Kong's ports and harbour allows cruise ships and berthing rights for short stays. During these short stays tourists will leave the ship to explore Hong Kong.

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Hong Kong International Airport is the gateway to China and South East Asia. The airport serves to both domestic and international airlines. There is only one terminal, which means all tourists have to go through one exit point and entry point. The airport is served by both car rental agencies and for those who wish to travel by limousine. There is a direct rail link between the airport and the city, which offers fast and efficient travel. There are a number of taxis available to take tourists to their destinations, while some hotels offer a bus shuttle service. Air transport to Hong Kong from the UK takes eleven to twelve hours but it is the quickest and most comfortable form of transport. Tourists can choose which class to travel by, they are also served food and provided with in-flight entertainment to make the journey more enjoyable, the only drawbacks is that tickets might be expensive and there is a limit on luggage weight. Should tourists travel by cruise ship, it will take approximately two weeks to travel from the UK via The Mediterranean Sea and the Suez Canal, although tourists travelling by cruise ship are at an advantage as they can get to see different parts of the world, experience new culture and all food and drink are inclusive within the cruise. A drawback would have to be, if tourists suffer from seasickness, tours can be expensive and it can take time to arrive at the destination.

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