



The stalls of Graham St Market show the diversity of Cantonese cuisine

MINI GUIDE

SHOPPING IN HONG KONG

For variety and competitive consumerism, Hong Kong wins hands down. Local edibles, souvenirs, unusual gifts, period pieces – it's all here, and it's all well worth your conspicuous consumption.

Central & Sheung Wan

📍 LOCKCHA TEA SHOP 1

This Hong Kong favourite sells Chinese teas of more varieties than you possibly ever dreamed existed, as well as tea sets, wooden tea boxes and gift packs of various cuppas. A great bonus is that you can taste before you buy, and they host weekly tea classes: English is widely spoken by the staff (lockcha.com; Ground Flr, 290A Queen's Rd Central; teas from £1.20).



Hanart TZ Gallery focuses on art from China and Taiwan

📍 CAT STREET MARKET 2

Head to Upper Lascar Row – the official name for what's become known as Cat Street – a pedestrian-only laneway with dozens of stalls offering the singular and the strange: antiques, curios, cheap jewellery, ornaments, carvings and newly minted 'antique' coins. It's a fun place to trawl through for a trinket or two, but expect some rough diamonds before you find the good stuff (Upper Lascar Row; ornaments from £5).

📍 HANART TZ GALLERY 3

This gallery may be tiny, but it's one of the most influential and innovative art spaces in Hong Kong, and has been instrumental in introducing contemporary Chinese art to the wider world. It exhibits, promotes and sells pieces from a huge stable of figurative and conceptual painters, sculptors and video artists, many of whom are based in Hong Kong (hanart.com; 401 Pedder Bldg, 12 Pedder St; paintings from £3,000).

Lan Kwai Fong & Soho

📍 GRAHAM ST MARKET 4

The stalls, stores and open-air canteens lining Graham St south of Queen's Road Central to Hollywood Road are positively heaving with high-quality vegetables and fruit, as well as meat, seafood (wriggling or on ice) and other comestibles. If you visit only one wet market in the city, make it this one (Graham St; pounds of fruit around 50p).



Century eggs are an acquired taste for visitors to Hong Kong

📍 KOWLOON SOY COMPANY 5

This is unquestionably the best place in town for artisanal soy sauce and Chinese condiments. Hidden away between other shops, this 95-year-old store's a treasure trove of flavours of the Orient: along with handmade, sun-dried soy and other sauces, it also does a great line in pickled ginger and the Cantonese favourite pei dan – preserved eggs, also known as century eggs (kowlonsoy.com; 9 Graham St; closed Sun; quality soy sauce £7).

📍 AMOURS ANTIQUES 6

On a street corner in the neighbourhood of Soho (an abbreviation of 'south of Hollywood Road'), this wonderful shop stocks rhinestone jewellery, frocks and a clutch of beaded and tapestry bags dating from the early 20th century. There are also vases, candle holders, porcelain sets and bronze Buddha figurines: ideal territory if you're in need of authentic gift-shopping inspiration (00 852 2803 7877; 45 Staunton St; gifts from £15).

Kowloon

📍 PAGE ONE 7

The small Harbour City branch of this bookstore chain holds one of Hong Kong's best selections of art and design magazines and books, and it's also strong on photography, literature, film and children's titles. There is plenty in English here about Hong Kong and the wider region (pageonegroup.com; Shop 3002, Harbour City, Canton Rd; children's books from £5).



Pick up reading material for the flight back at Page One

📍 INITIAL 8

This attractive concept store and café carries stylish urban wear with Japanese and European influences. Clothes created by local designers are complemented with imported shoes, bags and costume jewellery. The store itself has the air of a 1940s curiosity shop about it, with its second-hand furniture, sit-up bicycles and jazzy soundtrack (initialfashion.com; Shop 2, 48 Cameron Rd; jackets from £80).

📍 MONG KOK COMPUTER CENTRE 9

Three floors of computer shops make up this busy complex in the densely populated Mong Kok district. In general, the shops are geared towards the Cantonese-speaking market, so English may not be widely spoken, but you can normally get better deals here than in the more international shops of Tsim Sha Tsui (mongkokcc.com; cnr Nelson St & Fa Yuen St; laptops from £100).

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Hong Kong essentials

TRANSPORT

Hong Kong is served direct by Air New Zealand, BA, Cathay Pacific and Virgin Atlantic from Heathrow (from £620; airnewzealand.co.uk). The trip from airport to city centre on the Airport Express train takes 24 minutes (single tickets £8.20; mtr.com.hk). Public transport is the only way to get around quickly and with relative ease in Hong Kong: buses and taxis can take you just about anywhere, while the MTR subway is best for longer journeys (tourist day passes £4.50; mtr.com.hk). Octopus smart cards are recommended for reduced fares on public transport (deposit and initial value £12; octopus.com.hk).

WHERE TO STAY

1 Hop Inn on Carnarvon's small but bright rooms are designed by local artists. There are also foosball tables and a rooftop terrace that allows for some impressive views (hopinn.hk; 33–35 Carnarvon Rd; from £45, excl breakfast).



Book a room with harbour views at the Lan Kwai Fong Hotel

2 Butterfly on Hollywood is a boutique hotel that's incredibly well priced for Hong Kong. Its 142 design-conscious rooms have large windows, and staff can offer tour assistance (butterflyhk.com; 263 Hollywood Rd; from £100).

3 The superb Lan Kwai Fong Hotel is a high-rise in central Hong Kong. The Asian décor has a cool contemporary edge and the rooms are reasonably sized (lankwaifonghotel.com.hk; 3 Kau U Fong; Harbour View Suites from £260).

The know-how

SHOP TALK

Some easy Cantonese language tips for making purchases in Hong Kong:

Lei ho ma?

Hello, how are you?

Joi gin/Baai baai

Goodbye.

Ng goi (saai)/Daw je (saai)

Thank you (very much).

Ng sai haak hei

You're welcome.

Lei sik ng sik gawng ying man aa?

Do you speak English?

Ngaw ng ming

I don't understand.

Gei daw chin aa?

How much is this?

Taai gwai lai!

That's too expensive!



TOP TIP

There's no sales tax in Hong Kong, and credit cards are widely accepted, except in markets. Sales assistants in chain and department stores rarely have leeway to give discounts, but you can try bargaining in markets and owner-operated stores.

FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Hong Kong Encounter* (£7.99) is ideal for short stays, while *Hong Kong & Macau* (£14.99) offers more extensive coverage. *Hong Kong: Epilogue to an Empire* by Jan Morris is an anecdotal and enjoyable history (£16; Faber and Faber). For modern Hong Kong on the big screen, *Infernal Affairs* (£10; Tartan) is a gripping thriller that was remade and relocated to the US by Martin Scorsese as *The Departed*.

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