



Outlying Islands

Lamma p196

The quickest island escape from downtown Hong Kong, laid-back Lamma exudes a bohemian charm and is home to many a commuter who prefers more space and greenery.

Lantau p201

The largest of the islands boasts bountiful sights and recreational possibilities: country parks, hiking trails, fishing villages, beaches, monasteries and the unmissable Big Buddha.

Cheung Chau p213

Think seafood and seafaring culture on this bustling isle of great wind-surfing beaches and temples dedicated to water deities. The annual Bun Festival is a highlight.

Worth a Detour

At **Peng Chau** (p211), glimpse the last echoes of traditional village life in Hong Kong. **Po Toi** (p213) is the southernmost island of Hong Kong, and offers scenic walks and delicious seafood. Camping, rock climbing and stargazing are the drawcards of 'East Dragon Island', **Tung Lung Chau** (p217).



TOP SIGHT NGONG PING PLATEAU

No trip to Hong Kong is complete without visiting Ngong Ping Plateau for the seated Tian Tan Buddha statue, the biggest of its kind in the world. It can be seen aerially as you fly into Hong Kong, or on a clear day from Macau, but nothing beats coming up close and personal with this much-loved spiritual icon sitting at over 500m up in the western hills of Lantau.

Commonly known as the 'Big Buddha', the 202-tonne **Tian Tan Buddha** (天壇大佛; ☎10am-6pm) **FREE** is a representation of Lord Gautama some 23m high (or just under 34m if you include the podium and lotus). Unveiled in 1993, it still holds the honour as the tallest seated bronze Buddha statue in the world. It's well worth climbing the 268 steps for a closer look at the statue and the surrounding views. The large bell within the Buddha is controlled by computer and rings 108 times during the day to symbolise escape from what Buddhism terms the '108 troubles of mankind'.

Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺; ☎2985 5248; Lantau; ☎9am-6pm), a huge Buddhist complex built in 1924, is more of a tourist honeypot than a religious retreat today, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors a year, and it's still being expanded. Most of the buildings you'll see on arrival are new, with the older, simpler ones tucked away behind them. **Po Lin Vegetarian Restaurant** (寶蓮禪寺齋堂; ☎2985 5248; Ngong Ping; set meals regular/deluxe HK\$60/100; ☎11.30am-4.30pm) in the monastery is famed for its inexpensive but filling vegetarian food.

The most spectacular way to get to the plateau is by the 5.7km **Ngong Ping 360** (昂坪360纜車; adult/child/concession one way HK\$86/44/70, return HK\$125/62/98; ☎10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6.30pm Sat, Sun & public holidays), a cable car linking Ngong Ping with the centre of Tung Chung. The glassed-in gondola journey over the bay and the mountains takes 25 minutes. The upper station is at the skippable theme-park-like **Ngong Ping Village** just west of the monastery.

DON'T MISS

- ◆ Tian Tan Buddha
- ◆ Po Lin Monastery
- ◆ Ngong Ping 360

PRACTICALITIES

- ◆ Map p202
- ◆ ☎3666 0606
- ◆ 11 Tat Tung Rd
- ◆ admission free
- ◆ 🚶2 from Mui Wo, 21 from Tai O, 23 from Tung Chung or cable car