DISCOVER THE REAL
HONG KONG
Discover a different and fast changing world...

Tour Code: 42800
Grade 4
Holiday Duration: 14 nights
HOLIDAY DATES
20th Dec 2019 - 3rd Jan 2020

Experience Hong Kong from a new perspective. Unspoilt hill country and outlying islands, far away from the crowds.

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS
Discover unspoilt hill country and outlying islands.

Enjoy fantastic walking in open countryside and along coastal paths.

Experience varied Hong Kong, in and around this metropolis.

Observe the harbour and skyline, plus ride the Star Ferry.
Experience Hong Kong from a new perspective with Ramblers Walking Holidays. Unspoilt hill country and outlying islands, where you walk through lush open countryside and along deserted coastal paths, far away from the crowds.

Hong Kong is a beguiling place to visit; a teeming metropolis with a harbour surrounded by skyscrapers but with the attraction of walking in the backdrop of the relatively remote and unspoiled New Territories. The Chinese metropolis is full of colour: markets, shopping precincts, streets flashing with illuminated signs and shops filled with strange goods and foods from mainland China. The harbour scenes are a myriad of ferries, sampans, junks and floating restaurants. A walk to the lofty heights of Victoria Peak overlooking all of this is a must!

Beyond the maze of streets and skyscrapers lies another world of unspoilt hill country and countless islands little changed for centuries. Numerous ferries ply these outlying islands, havens of peace far from the crowds. We'll wander across Lantau Island to find Tai O, a little village which seems to come out of the Middle Ages, and walk on car free Lamma Island. North of Kowloon towards the border with mainland China we come to the New Territories, protected by National Country Park status and crossed by the Maclehose Trail. The colonial Kowloon-Canton Railway gives easy access to mainland China – ideal for a 'free day' adventure (a visa is required if you decide to do this).

Hong Kong is a superb holiday destination and delivers far more than you might have imagined or believed possible.

**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- Return flights from Heathrow to Hong Kong (Cathay Pacific)
- Airport transfers
- Four-star accommodation
- Breakfasts taken at the hotel
- Dinners taken at the hotel or local restaurants (except on two evenings)
- All local transport costs.

This Grade 4 moderate holiday includes full and half day walks at a moderate pace over hilly terrain and is likely to include an element of sightseeing as well. Half day walking will probably include about 3 hours of walking, with full days having around 5 hours. Expect ascents and descents of up to about 600m. See the Walks & Excursions section for more information.
Proposed Itinerary

Our bottom line is happy travellers, and to that end we trust our tour leaders to use the itinerary below as a basis for providing you with a great holiday. We expect our leaders to make adjustments to the itinerary if the weather, group ability or other local conditions make that necessary. There are normally more options available to our leaders than those listed below and one or more of these options may well be chosen. All distances, heights & timings are approximate.

Key to Meals:
B - Breakfast, L - Lunch, D - Dinner.
In flight meals, if appropriate, will be advised in your final travel documents

Day: 1 - In flight (In-Flight)  Depart London Heathrow to Hong Kong.

Day: 2 - Hong Kong (D)  Having landed at a Norman Foster designed airport on Lantau Island we travel for approximately 40 minutes to our hotel – situated right in the centre of a district called Mong Kok in the province of Kowloon. This must be amongst the most intriguing areas that any of us will have visited. With its street markets, numerous food sellers, shops that seem to sell every possible requirement to the hustle and bustle of one of the most densely populated areas in the world. So on our first night we absorb the local atmosphere and make a visit to the 'Ladies Market'.

Day: 3 to 13 - Hong Kong (B,D)
For the following 11 days we will enjoy a varied programme of walks and sightseeing, including at least one free day for you to explore independently. Here is an example of some of the walks that we hope to include in our programme during our time in Hong Kong:

The following days may not necessarily take place in accordance with the order of this itinerary. This itinerary is intended to give you an idea about the areas and activities that we hope to include in this holiday. The order in which they will take place will be dependent on local conditions and may vary with each departure date.

Kowloon Park, Coastal Walk along the Avenue of Stars & the 1881 Heritage Building

Not a park as we might expect – but a visit to Kowloon Park where there are flamingos, modern statues, indigenous plants, Chinese garden and probably Tai chi dancers. Then on to Nathan Road where there are skilled tailors ready to make overnight made to measure dresses, suits or shirts. We head to the coast to walk along the Avenue of Stars and to watch the busy shipping lanes across Victoria Harbour. Next to the Ocean Terminal where food courts supply meals from numerous nationalities and where the locals eat. The "1881" Heritage building is a must to visit – built nearly 140 years ago for the Marine Police Headquarters – it retains a Greenwich Meantime ball tower, records of Japanese occupation and history of Hong Kong. Nearby there are the Space and Art museums. On the way back to our hotel the flower and bird markets are visited. Come evening we return to Victoria Harbour to view, according to the Guinness Book of Records, the finest illuminated waterfront in the world – with a laser show timed to music.

Star Ferry, Hong Kong Park & Tram to The Peak

A must for any visitor is a trip across Victoria Harbour on the Star Ferry. We walk past some of the finest high rise buildings to visit the colonial era, of 1847, St John’s Cathedral (once the tallest building on Hong Kong and now like a model!). Near the Cathedral is Hong Kong Park with an intriguing tea museum housed in a British Army Officers' building. An aviary so large that numerous birds can fly within its protective cover is a must to visit before taking the vernacular tram to The Peak. At The Peak there are iconic views across Hong Kong island. We take in the views before returning to central Hong Kong for a tram ride to the Western Central Market (a traditional British food market) followed by viewing Chinese medicine and dried fish markets. After dinner a visit to a night market in Temple Street completes the day’s activities.

Sai Kung Country Park & Kung Shek
A day of coastal, woodland and paddy field trails. We walk in the National Sai Kung Country Park for a beach walk with some fine coastal views. Then into woods before reaching areas previously used as rice paddy fields. A ferry boat then whisks us to Wong Shek before making a tour of the fishing town of Sai Kung. This evening dinner is at a local restaurant. This walk is 6.5 miles (10 kms). - along concrete paths, coastal sandy beaches, woodland, disused paddy fields, sections of steps and a steady hill trail. Descents and ascents: 150m.

Tai Tam & the Dragon's Back Trail

Victorian engineering splendour is reflected in the area of Tai Tam, Hong Kong Island's largest 'green lung', where a pleasant walk takes a route past a major water catchment area of dams, bridges, pump houses and reservoirs. Followed then by a tourist "essential" visit to Stanley Market. A second trail along the Dragon's Back (said to be the finest urban hike in Asia) allows for island and city views. Tai Tam Victorian water catchment area - we walk for 2.5 miles (4 kms) down a roadway system for a descent of 150m. Dragon's Back - we walk for 3 miles (5 kms) with hill climb and descent of 180m.

Aberdeen Harbour & Lamma Island Coastal Walk

No visit to Hong Kong can be complete without taking a sampan out on Aberdeen Harbour. Following Aberdeen we take a ferry boat to Lamma Island for a coastal walk with a chance to swim in the South China Sea. After dinner on the island a night ferry trip takes us back to Hong Kong. Todays walk is 6.5 miles (10 kms) with ascents and descents of 100m.

Bride's Pool Walk, Hakka Village & Plover Cove Country Park

Bride's Pool walk – about which your tour leader will explain the mythology, passes rocky trails, streams and pools before taking a wooded route and then on to our first view of China as we overlook the City of Shenzhen. Next comes a Hakka (refugees from China) village – now mainly abandoned with ghostly dwellings. This area within the Plover Cove Country Park offers some of the finest country scenery of the tour. Bride's Pool: Walk is 10 miles (16 kms) along trails that include steep paths, wooded areas, open countryside and stone steps. Ascent and descent of 300m.

Po Lin Monastery, Asia's Largest Buddha & Tai O Trail

A cable car trip to Hong Kong's second highest (934m) peak for a visit to Po Lin monastery – where monks are likely to be heard chanting. Time to take a vegetarian lunch at the monastery and wander up to the largest Buddha in Asia. Next we take a hilly trail that leads to Tai O – amongst the last of traditional stilted fishing villages remaining and a photographers paradise! Then across the island for dinner before returning to our hotel. This walk is 9 miles (14 kms). The trail is taken partly on roads and for most of the route by footpaths - covering three hills of about 50m climb each over a height of about 400m with descent to sea level.

Central Hong Kong, Man Mo Temple & Cheng Chau Island

A second opportunity to visit the central area of Hong Kong where we start at Possession Street where the British navy first landed. Followed by a walk along the original 'Hollywood' Road to visit a traditional Chinese temple: the Man Mo Temple. Once a place of intrigue as the British listened into conversations by Chinese seeking to cause insurrection. The route then goes along Gough Street where there are many shops selling old and new 'antiques'. The longest escalator in the world is then followed down to the ferry piers for a boat to Cheung Chau Island for a coastal walk, swim opportunity and dinner on the island.

Ping Shan Heritage Trail, Yuen Long & the Wetland Park

Having seen modern Hong Kong, buildings of the colonial era and much of the countryside we now have an opportunity to visit traditional Chinese buildings and to appreciate their culture and education. We follow a heritage trail at Ping Shan – pass the largest Pagoda in Hong Kong then visit the town of Yuen Long. For the afternoon a visit to the Wetland Park where there are board walks and hides to view migratory birds together with butterflies.

Day: 14 - In flight (B)  We have a free day before our evening transfer to the airport for an overnight flight to London Heathrow.

Day: 15 - - (No Meals)  Arrive at Heathrow in the early morning.

Walks & Excursions

This holiday is graded 4/L. Note: Some walks are at the top of the Grade 4 level.

Each evening the leader will discuss with you the programme for the following day.

Should you not wish to join the party, please let the leader know. Our walks will be on moderately hilly,
occasionally steep terrain, with average walking times of around five hours.

Optional Excursions
A range of local excursions and activities may be available to book at your destination through a local operator. We have no involvement in such activities or excursions which are not run, supervised or controlled in any way by us. Your contract will be with the local activity supplier and we accept no responsibility for their actions or omissions.

Leaders Evening Briefing
Each evening, your tour leader will discuss with you the programme for the following day. If you do not wish to join the organised group programme, please let the leader know.

Local Transport Costs
All local transport costs in conjunction with the advertised activity programme are included in the holiday cost.

Personal Expenditure

Budgeting for Extras
When budgeting for your holiday, you will need to consider drinks, any meals not included in the holiday price, non-included entrance fees, optional excursions you may choose to participate in locally and any souvenirs or additional services such as laundry. A general guideline for lunches and drinks is £10-£20 per person per day.

Tipping:
Tipping expectations are relatively high. The local guides, drivers and hotel staff often prove to be of great assistance in all aspects of the holiday. Should you wish to tip our Chinese colleagues, you may wish to consider an allowance of 50p per person per day. It must be stressed however, that such tips are at your own discretion.

Tipping
Although entirely at your own discretion, tipping is an important aspect of tourism and hospitality life and expectations are fairly high. In order to simplify tipping, we strongly recommend that you allow your leader to take care of making sure tips are given to hotel and restaurant staff & to local guides and drivers. This will be done using some funds provided by us together with, if you wish, a contribution from you, which he/she will collect during the holiday.

Small Groups
Coming from all walks of life your fellow travelling companions will share your desire to discover great things and have a wonderful holiday. Enjoy their infectious enthusiasm, camaraderie and great dinner conversation.

These small-group guided holidays usually have a group size of 10 - 22 people for walks upto grade 4.

Tour Leaders
Your tour leader makes the world of difference to your holiday and ours are as passionate about discovering the world on foot as you are. They're resourceful, organised and widely travelled. They will handle all the local administration and other needs that might arise to ensure that you don't have to worry about planning your days and you can enjoy your holiday. Although leading group holidays, they won't forget that every group is made up of individuals. Each tour leader has their own individual style, talents and professional backgrounds and all are trained, qualified, experienced and dedicated to making your holiday as enjoyable, interesting and inspiring as possible.

On some holidays of 7 nights and over, the tour leader may have one day's break a week, enabling you to have a 'free' day too!
Travel Details
London Heathrow to Hong Kong and return with Cathay Pacific.

Arrival transfer by road is approximately 30 minutes but may be longer depending on traffic. We'll make our way around Hong Kong and into the New Territories by a wide variety of public transport. Our pre-paid 'Octopus Card' can be used on buses, underground rail (MTR), mainline rail and on the famous Star Ferry as well as ferries to outer islands.

If you are joining and leaving in Hong Kong, it is assumed, unless you have advised us otherwise, that you will meet and leave the party at the Metropark Kowloon Hotel. If this is not your plan, please let us know in writing at least 5 weeks before departure.

For all those booking a flight or rail inclusive holiday, details of your travel arrangements and baggage allowance will be confirmed in your travel documents, sent to you approximately 10 days prior to departure.

Land Only
If you are joining and leaving at your holiday overseas we assume, unless you advise us otherwise, that you will join and leave the holiday from your hotel.

Although airport transfers are not included for those making their own independent travel arrangements, if you wish to join the group at the overseas airport, depending on your flight arrival time, you may be able to be included on the group's transfer. Please contact us at least 5 weeks before departure for more details.

Please note that your flight must arrive within 30 minutes of the group flight to be able to join the group transfer. We also need your flight number, arrival time and departure point so that the group leader is able to meet up with you.

If you wish to organise your own flights from a non-UK or provincial airport or travel by rail or car to your holiday destination, 'no-travel' reductions are often available. Please contact us for details.

Before finalising any independent travel arrangements, please check with us first - especially if doing so 12 weeks or more before your intended date of travel.

If you do intend to join your holiday locally please do tell us at least 14 weeks in advance.

Passports and Visas
Although Hong Kong is now part of the People's Republic of China, it remains a Special Administrative Region with its own immigration controls. You can visit Hong Kong for up to 6 months without a visa. Your passport should be valid for at least one month after the date of your departure from Hong Kong. If you plan to work or study in Hong Kong, or stay for a period of longer than 6 months you will need to get a visa.

If you are travelling to mainland China via Hong Kong you must get a Chinese visa before arrival at the border. Visas are not available on arrival at the Chinese border for British passport holders. If you are entering Hong Kong via mainland China and leaving again via the mainland you will need a double or multiple entry visa for mainland China.

General Passport & Visa Advice
It is a good idea to carry photocopies of the personal details pages of your passport. Should you lose your passport, this may assist with the issue of replacement documents and your return to your home country.

Passport and visa requirements can change at any time. It is your own responsibility to ensure that you inform yourself from a professionally qualified source on, and comply with, such requirements.

Accommodation

Hotel Metropark
75 Waterloo Road
Kowloon
Hong Kong
China

Phone: +852 2761-1711
Web:
http://hongkonghotel.metroparkhotelkowloon.com
Email: hotel.hkkl@metroparkhotels.com

We stay in the excellent four-star Hotel Metropark. This modern hotel is ideally located in the city as it is close to the subway and railway stations and the main attractions of Hong Kong. You can enjoy beautiful harbour views from the hotel. The hotel has a fitness room, sauna, jacuzzi, a rooftop outdoor swimming pool (closed December – February for maintenance), a restaurant and pub.

We stay in twin bedded and single rooms with bath or shower and wc. Rooms have air conditioning, a fridge, a hairdryer, tea and coffee making facilities, a safe and free WIFI. Please be aware that the tap water is not drinkable. The electricity supply is 220/240 volts.

12 Breakfasts and 11 dinners are included whilst in Hong Kong. Dinners on days 9 and 14 are not included in the holiday cost, this provides you with more flexibility on your free days. Dinners will be taken either at local restaurants in Kowloon or at the end of the day's walk. Dinners taken on the outlying islands will be enhanced by the night time return by ferry to the centre of Hong Kong with its nightly 'light show'.

Lunches are not included in the holiday cost. There are shops near the hotel that you can purchase food for picnic style lunches during our walks.
Footwear
Lightweight waterproof walking boots with a good moulded rubber sole (such as Vibram or similar) and a deep tread which provide ankle support are strongly recommended and may be essential for some walks. If you are an experienced walker with strong ankles a good quality pair of trail or approach shoes may well be suitable for some walks. We recommend that you either wear your walking boots or shoes or pack them and some waterproofs in your hand luggage as in the unlikely event that your hold luggage is delayed, you will still be able to participate in the holiday programme.

Trekking Poles
Many of our clients find walking poles hugely beneficial when walking. They can both reduce stress on the knees and aid confidence.

Water-to-Go
An alternative to bottled water from single-use sealed water bottles is filtered water from a refillable bottle containing its own water filter such as a Water-to-go bottle available from www.watertogo.eu. Just fill up from any water source and save the environment from disposable plastic bottles.

We have negotiated an exclusive 15% discount with our partners Water-to-Go for you as a thank you for helping the environment. Please go to their website at www.watertogo.eu and enter the code RWH17 when ordering. In addition, Water-to-Go will match the discount with a donation to our charity, Heart & Sole, which will allow us to continue to make a difference in the countries you visit on our holidays.

Kit List
Outdoor activities are always more enjoyable if you are prepared. The following list is a basic guideline that will enhance your experience. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

A basic kit list is likely to include:
- Waterproof jacket (Goretex or similar) and trousers
- Lightweight, quick drying trousers
- Several polo shirts, T-shirts or specialist walking shirts
- Fleece jacket
- Comfortable walking socks
- Warm hat and gloves (if appropriate)
- Sun hat, sunglasses, lip salve and high SPF sun block
- Swimwear (if appropriate)
- Day sack (25 litre capacity) to comfortably carry the kit you’ll take out for the day
- Strong polythene bags to keep the contents of your daypack dry
- Water bottle(s) - at least 1 litre capacity
- Basic first aid kit (plasters, blister treatment, antiseptic etc)
- Insect repellent
- Plastic container and reusable cutlery for your picnic lunches
- Walking/trekking poles (if applicable)

Travel Document Checklist
Documents and Information to take with you:
- Your passport (make sure it’s valid and it’s yours)
- Your travel tickets or e-ticket itinerary
- Any visa or electronic travel authorisation (if required)
- Holiday money
- Credit or debit cards (and separate details of who to call if lost)
- Car parking ticket and car park directions (if prebooked)
- Coach or rail travel tickets (if prebooked)
- Your holiday Booking Confirmation document
- Your travel insurance details
- Alternative form of identification (such as a driving licence)
- Photocopy of the personal details pages of your passport
- A valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) if relevant
- Details of any medical condition or allergy your holiday leader should know about
Maps, Guidebooks & Advice

Maps & Books:
Maps and books Hong Kong may be obtained before departure from specialist map sellers such as Stanfords

Gweilo: Memories of a Hong Kong Childhood – Martin Booth (this autobiography features many of the places that we visit on the tour)

Websites:
Hong Kong Tourist Board: www.discoverhongkong.com
China National Tourist Office: Web: www.cnito.org.uk

Maps and guidebooks relating to your holiday may be obtained before departure from:
The Map Shop (www.themapshop.co.uk)

Weather and Climate
Visit the following websites for an idea of the climate in your destination:
Weather2 www.myweather2.com
BBC Weather www.bbc.co.uk/weather
Currency
Hong Kong Dollar. There are numerous banks in Hong Kong with ATM facilities and using your debit or credit card is a good way of accessing money whilst in Hong Kong. The hotel also accepts most major credit cards. There is generally no limit on the amount of foreign currency that can be imported or exported. Visa, MasterCard and American Express credit cards are widely used in Hong Kong.

Health
No compulsory immunisations are required for visits to Hong Kong.

You should be up to date with the usual immunisations recommended in the UK.

Hepatitis A immunisation is recommended. You might also like to consider immunisations against Tetanus and Hepatitis B.

There is a low to no risk of malaria in all parts country. Dengue fever exists in China; please take normal precautions against mosquito bites.

Health requirements can change at any time. It is your own responsibility to ensure that you inform yourself from a professionally qualified source on, and comply with, such requirements at least 6 to 8 weeks before departure. Advice on vaccinations is available from your GP.

Further Travel Health Advice
For further advice please visit:
- The National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) travel health website at www.travelhealthpro.org.uk
- The NHS 'Fit for travel' website at www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk
- The Foreign Office Office Travel Advice Website at www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.
- Or a local travel health clinic.

You might wish to take a small bottle of antibacterial hand gel with you for times when you're unable to wash your hands.

Language
Chinese. English is widely spoken.

Insurance

Travel Insurance
You must be adequately insured to join our holidays. We do not insist that you insure with us but we require that you are adequately insured for the nature of your holiday. You will be unable to participate in our local walking and other activity programmes without being able to demonstrate that you have valid travel insurance.

Please ensure that as a minimum your travel insurance policy covers you for travel to your holiday destinations (country and geographical region) and for medical expenses, mountain rescue (including helicopter rescue) and emergency repatriation to your home country in the event of illness or injury. Your policy should also provide adequate cover for the activities, included and optional, you are likely to participate in during your holiday.

See our brochure or website for further advice regarding holiday insurance.

Whoever you insure with, please ensure that you take full details, and ideally the policy itself, with you on holiday and provide our tour leader with your insurer's name, the policy number and emergency assistance contact numbers.

Please note that it is very difficult to obtain travel insurance once your holiday arrangements have started.

Personal Safety
The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office provides up to date information on security and local laws for travellers, together with current passport and visa information, at www.gov.uk/travelaware. Please take a few minutes to look at the current advice on your planned destination.
Please be aware of what’s going on around you, take sensible precautions with your credit cards and passport and avoid displays of wealth such as wearing expensive jewellery or watches. Do not carry more cash on you than you will need for each day, and we recommend that a money belt is used.

**Cultural Awareness**

**Responsible Travel**
We’re committed to ethical tourism in all our destinations. Our holidays are designed for you to discover the essence of the country you are visiting. Travelling in small groups not only gives you an up close and personal experience of your destination, but minimises your impact on the immediate environment. We feel that the most important starting point to protect the environment is to be out in it. For more details visit our website.

**Heart & Sole**
We appreciate that we are in a fortunate position to be able to use our profits to help make a difference to people’s lives. Heart & Sole is a venture managed by our office staff, whose aim is to reach the heart of the communities in the countries we visit. Through Heart & Sole, we hope to make more of a long term, direct impact to these communities, particularly in less developed countries where even a small amount goes a long way. See our website for more information and details of some of the projects we support.

**Communication**

**Mobile Phones**
Please do provide us with a mobile phone contact number. We will only use this to contact you with important information relating to your holiday arrangements.

Please do keep your mobile phones switched on and readily available when travelling to the airport or if delayed in transit so that we can contact you with any last minute information relating to your travel arrangements.

As a matter of courtesy, please switch off your mobile phone during walks, or endeavour to minimise its use. Please also try to minimise the use of mobile devices during group meals.

**Feedback**
We welcome all comments about our holidays and value ideas for the future. If you have provided us with an email address we will invite you to complete an online questionnaire or to add feedback to our page on independent review site ‘Feefo’.

**Important Information**
Please note that this Holiday Information sheet may be periodically updated and reissued.