



Introduction

You're in for a fabulous adventure when you step into Hong Kong's glorious countryside. Few of the world's great cities can match Hong Kong for the sheer beauty of its natural environment or the diversity of wildlife that populate the rural areas.

On all sides, scenic verdant slopes rise almost a thousand metres. Hundreds of islands, large and small, dot Hong Kong waters. Glistening waterfalls dive into steep, wooded ravines. Sandy bays are sheltered by rugged headlands lined with ancient trails. Internationally important wildlife sanctuaries and sites of special interest are complemented by Hong Kong Wetland Park.

Many of Hong Kong's natural beauty spots are contained within a network of 24 country parks and four major hiking trails (Hong Kong, Wilson, MacLehose and Lantau) that crisscross Asia's world city. These natural wonders are easily accessible on the city's unparalleled public transport network. So whether you travel by bus, train, taxi, take a ferry to one of Hong Kong's delightful outlying islands or glide over mountain peaks and enjoy stunning green vistas via cable car aboard Hong Kong's unique attraction, Ngong Ping 360, you're in for a fabulous green experience.

Each corner of Hong Kong has its special attractions. This booklet introduces a few suggested routes to the green sides of Hong Kong, divided into geographical areas – Hong Kong Island, the New Territories East and West, and the Outlying Islands.

Visitors can happily combine hiking and dining, and sightseeing and shopping, in one day in this uniquely compact city. The daytime outdoor excursions outlined in the following pages leave plenty of time to explore Hong Kong's nightlife and shopping sensations!

Hong Kong is a destination to remember forever. Once you live it, you are sure to love it!

Please note: Hong Kong Tourism Board will be delighted to provide visitors with detailed information on their favourite outdoor pursuit, from bird watching and rock climbing to camping, kayaking and the many other activities that can be enjoyed in Hong Kong.





Hong Kong Island

In Hong Kong Island's bustling downtown districts, it can be difficult to see that you are in the middle of a very green and compact paradise. You truly are! Most of the island is dedicated country parkland, boasting mountain hiking trails with unforgettable ocean vistas and harbour views.

Keen hikers can plan to traverse the island's grassy heights and wooded valleys on the Hong Kong Trail. This booklet recommends a few easier, shorter trails for first-time explorers. On all of them, the rich diversity of Hong Kong's history and heritage can be spied.

There are coastal villages and towns that still illustrate how much of Hong Kong's past belonged to fishing and farming families. Centuries-old temples and other relics also remind us that the island's inhabitants worked, prayed and prospered long before British colonists took control in the middle of the 19th century.

Their island became a thriving imperial outpost, international entrepôt and financial centre. Reservoirs were created, roads sculpted, schools and mansions built. So was a great galaxy of country parks and public beaches that no other world-class city possesses. Take any of this section's trails to see and sense the happy contrasts of Hong Kong – ancient and modern, Chinese and Western, traditional and futuristic.





The Peak Circle Walk

Victoria Peak (The Peak) is Hong Kong's most popular attraction. On a clear day, its views of Hong Kong, the harbour and the South China Sea are breathtaking! It also offers great shopping and dining with The Peak Galleria and The Peak Tower being must-visits.

Visitors say that half the fun of any trip is getting there, and that is certainly the case with the Peak Circle Walk. Hop aboard the modernised Peak Tram at the Lower Peak Tram Terminus on Garden Road (if possible sit on the right-hand side) and watch in amazement as the famous funicular railway glides up the 373 metres to the top. The grade is so steep that the buildings outside seem to lean at a 45-degree angle!



You'll disembark at the Upper Peak Tram Terminus; around to the right of The Peak Tower is Lugard Road and the Peak Circle Walk. Walk along Lugard Road past trees and low-lying scrub for about 20 minutes, and you can enjoy some of the most beautiful picture-postcard views of any city anywhere in the world! Laid out beneath you are the world-famous Victoria Harbour and Kowloon. This is also a spectacular place to visit around dusk, as the city lights come on.

Continue along Lugard Road until you come to Harlech Road, where you have a choice of either following Harlech Road past a pretty waterfall, which is about 15 minutes from the end of your walk back to the Peak Terminus. Alternatively, from the junction of Harlech and Lugard roads, you can turn right and head down Hatton Road to the historic Pinewood Battery, part of Hong Kong's defences during WWII. This spot commands a panoramic view of the western approach to Victoria Harbour. Follow Hatton Road down to Pok Fu Lam and the area around the University of Hong Kong. You can take bus 13 at Kotewall Road back to Central.

How to get there: The Peak Tram is surely the way to travel here, providing a unique and exciting journey to the top. Take bus 15 from Exchange Square or walk from MTR Central Station Exit J2 to the Lower Peak Tram Terminus on Garden Road. For more thrills when returning to Central, take bus 15, preferably a seat upstairs at the front.

Travelling time: Up to 45 minutes **Difficulty:** Easy

Length: 3.5 km **Hiking time:** 1.5 hours

Other points of interest

1. From the junction of Lugard and Harlech roads, you could also take a side excursion up High West Hill. Cross the grassy area to find a simple trail through trees, and then climb concrete steps up scrubby hillside. After 10 minutes or more, you arrive at the summit, with panoramic views across Hong Kong Island, the harbour and islands including Lamma.
2. From opposite the car park by the Peak Tram Terminus, walk down Pok Fu Lam Reservoir Road to the reservoir. From here, you can return to Central by bus 71 or 91 at Pok Fu Lam Road.
3. For a memorable shopping and dining experience with great views, try The Peak Galleria and The Peak Tower.



Look out for

The historic 'Governor's Walk'. Stroll along it, after a short walk up Mount Austin Road to Victoria Peak Gardens. This is where Mountain Lodge was located, providing hilltop relief for British Governors from the city's summer heat and humidity. Only its Gate Lodge guard post and masonry platform survive. The Governor's Walk has a special ambience, evoking colonial times in its historical setting.

The Peak Circle Walk 山頂環迴步行徑



The Peak Galleria



University of Hong Kong

The Peak Tower





Wong Nai Chung Gap Trail

Wong Nai Chung Gap Trail features green and heritage attractions. It was here on 19 December 1941 that one of the bloodiest days of fighting took place in the short but brutal struggle for Hong Kong during WWII. The trail connects some of the defensive positions, with explanations provided by information boards.

From the petrol station on Wong Nai Chung Gap Road, walk uphill along Tai Tam Reservoir Road for about 10 minutes until you reach a car park and nearby is Station 1 (Starting Point). Follow the trail to a small hilltop where you'll find the ruins of an anti-aircraft gun position that shot down a Japanese aircraft.

The trail runs along a narrow catchwater offering views across northeast Hong Kong Island and southwest through the gap to Aberdeen and Ocean Park, one of Hong Kong's top attractions for families. Here, you can learn about the strategic importance of Wong Nai Chung Gap. At a junction, there's a pillbox close by the trail and information boards telling all about the fierce fighting.

Follow the catchwater until you come to more information boards telling of battles fought and lives lost. As the trail drops down the hillside, you might just see a cricket match going on below. Leaving the wooded hillside, the trail drops again to the highway. Go down to the pedestrian crossing across from the petrol station, and you will find the remains of three bunkers that were the headquarters of a Canadian brigade. The nearby final station tells of over 1,000 men being killed at Wong Nai Chung Gap on 19 December 1941. Hong Kong fell seven days later.



How to get there: Take bus 6 or 66 from Exchange Square, Central up to Wong Nai Chung Gap – the stop is just after the cricket club at the petrol station. To reach the starting point, walk up a flight of steps then up the Tai Tam Reservoir Road for about 10 minutes, and look for the first trail information board, by a small car park on the left. Or, MTR Causeway Bay Station Exit A, then take a taxi to HK Parkview.

Travelling time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 3 km

Hiking time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Other points of interest

1. At Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park take a break at the terrace cafe, near where you can rent a pleasure boat. The reservoir was completed in 1899 and was the third reservoir built in Hong Kong. In view of its small capacity and high operational cost, it ceased operation as a reservoir and instead was converted into a recreational park in 1986.
2. Go on the Tai Tam Country Trail to visit Violet Hill, then follow the signs and walk along Wilson Trail to complete the circuit. There is some hill climbing involved, but the views are great.
3. There are also convenient buses 6 or 66 along Wong Nai Chung Gap Road to get you to Stanley for a bite to eat and for some sightseeing and shopping.

Wong Nai Chung Gap Trail 黃泥涌峽徑



Tai Tam Country Park Entrance



Dragon's Back

Once voted Asia's favourite hike by *Time* magazine, the Dragon's Back is the aptly-named spine of a headland on the east coast of Hong Kong Island. It offers hiking enthusiasts views of majestic hills, dazzling coastline and distant islands – all within easy reach of the city. And at the end of your excursion, you can relax in Shek O, where there's a great beach and fun restaurants.



Tai Tam Bay

Get off the bus at the Cape Collinson stop on Shek O Road. Look for the sign: Shek O Country Park, walk up the steps next to the sign and take the narrow road to another signpost: Shek O Peak. The Dragon's Back is to the right, along the footpath. The winding path takes you through woodland; you cross a couple of small streams, which can dry up entirely in winter. As the trees thin out, you can see a lovely view of Tai Tam Bay below. But it gets even better.

At the next junction, turn left and proceed uphill. The woodland gives way to wilder-looking scrub. At the crest of the ridge, fantastic new vistas are revealed. The shimmering waters of the South China Sea, outlying islands and Clear Water Bay Peninsula of eastern Hong Kong spread out before you.

Now the trail climbs to the right, and you can soon pause and look out over Big Wave Bay, popular with local windsurfers.



Then it's on to Shek O Peak, which at 284 metres is the highest point along the route. From here you'll enjoy views of Shek O Village, a fine place to visit after hiking the Dragon's Back. Follow the trail down to Shek O Road (To Tei Wan Village), and then take the bus back to Central or Shek O Village.



How to get there: MTR Shau Kei Wan Station Exit A3; take bus 9 or a taxi. Then get off at Cape Collinson bus stop (the bus will pass a wooded hillside, then a tiny roundabout. Alight at the stop just after this).

Travelling time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 4.5 km

Hiking time: 2 to 2.5 hours

Other points of interest

The village of Shek O is well worth a visit. Take bus 9 on Shek O Road at the end of the hike. The area is favoured by expats because of its more laid-back lifestyle. It has great little restaurants and a popular beach. Other things to do are rent bicycles for a spin around the area, visit the Tin Hau Temple, and stroll out to the tip of the headland and across the footbridge to an islet affording majestic coastal views.



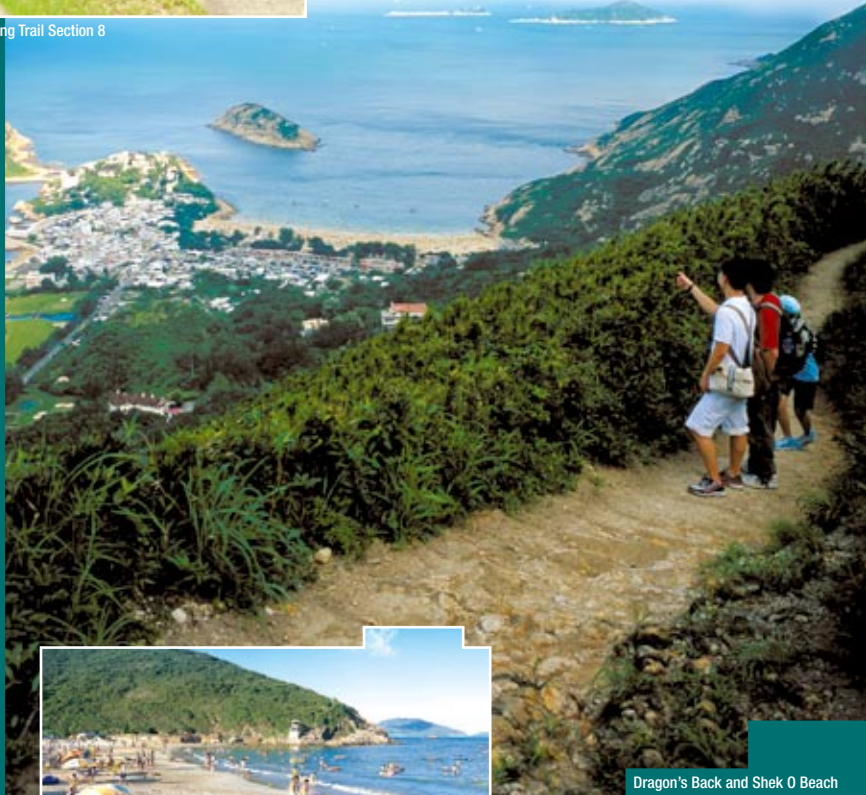
Look out for

The reason why local villagers called their undulating ridge-topping trail a 'Dragon's Back' is easy to guess – its ups and downs made them think of a dragon's spine!

Dragon's Back 龍脊



Hong Kong Trail Section 8



Big Wave Bay Beach

Dragon's Back and Shek O Beach





Jardine's Lookout

This classic Hong Kong walk in the central part of the island offers fantastic views of the city and lovely reservoirs – an extraordinary contrast. Enjoy picnic spots, beautiful surroundings and the brilliant blue waters of the reservoirs. Stop at the viewpoints and soak up the atmosphere!

Begin your hike at the petrol station at Wong Nai Chung Gap, where the historical road slices through the upper hills of the island. Head up the signposted path where the trail starts opposite to HK Parkview. Continue along the route

(Hong Kong Trail) and follow the signs to Jardine's Lookout. It's a fair climb, but well worth it! The climb eases as you reach the top of Jardine's Lookout. You are right above the green slopes of eastern Hong Kong Island, looking southeast down to reservoirs amidst woodland, the coastline and the sea beyond.



Take a short side trail to the left and hey presto, you're suddenly right over the city. Far below is Happy Valley in the northwest, famed for its racetrack. Beyond are the glistening high rises and shopping malls of trendy Causeway Bay, Wan Chai and Central. On a clear day, you can enjoy stunning views of Kowloon and the hills of the New Territories. This is surely one of Hong Kong's finest vantage points.

Back to the main trail, which now drops to the east and it's soon time for another steep climb. Once again, you're in for picture-postcard views. Stay on the Hong Kong Trail and you soon climb Mount Butler, where the trail tunnels through woodland and bamboo before emerging at another great viewing spot.

From here, it is downhill – Jacob's Ladder to Quarry Gap, then follow Mt. Parker Road. Still following the Hong Kong Trail, head right to pass Tai Tam Reservoir, and turn right again to pass the Tai Tam Upper Reservoir dam, and then follow the shore of Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir – the largest reservoir on Hong Kong Island.

How to get there: Take bus 6 or 66 from Exchange Square, Central up to Wong Nai Chung Gap – the stop is just after the cricket club at the petrol station. Or, MTR Causeway Bay Station Exit A, then take a taxi. Returning from Tai Tam Road, there are stops for buses heading for MTR Shau Kei Wan Station (on the left).

Travelling time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 8.5 km

Hiking time: 3 to 4 hours

Other points of interest

At the end of the trail, cross Tai Tam Road and take bus 14 or 314 to world-famous Stanley, with its not-to-be-missed market, trendy bars and restaurants featuring fine alfresco dining and a wonderful Mediterranean ambience. It's truly magical!



Did you know?

Jardine's Lookout is named after William Jardine, a co-founder of Jardine Matheson & Co, the British trading house. Standing here, its staff used to watch for the safe return of their trading ships through the harbour entrance far below.

Jardine's Lookout 渣甸山



Hong Kong Trail Section 5 Starting Point



Tai Tam Tuk Reservoir



Jardine's Lookout

