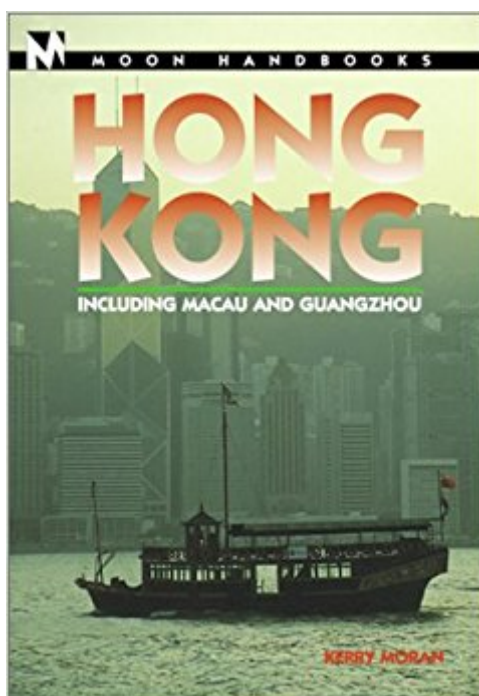


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Hong Kong: Including Macau And Guangzhou (Moon Handbooks Hong Kong)



Synopsis

With Moon Handbooks: Hong Kong, you'll find your way through city streets, neighbourhoods, and sights, while taking a deeper exploration of Chinese culture. Learn about feng shui, dragons, tea, street markets, festivals, and more in this completely revised edition that also includes all of the practicalities you'll need for your trip to this bustling metropolitan port city.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you're keen on delving into Hong Kong's culture, you'll do well with Moon Handbooks' guide (which also includes chapters on Macau and Guangzhou). Moon offers an amazingly thorough look at this vibrant city--from its historical beginnings under the Tang Dynasty to its dramatic hand over to China in 1997. Throughout, there are sidebars on a variety of topics, from Confucianism to Chinese medicine to mahjong. The "Food & Restaurants" section will intrigue (or perhaps repulse) readers with its descriptions of meals made from snake, dog, and shark's fin. There is also a chapter on shopping (from the best street markets for Chinese crafts to tailors who will custom-make silk shirts for a song). The body of the book discusses the major tourist areas (Hong Kong Island, New Kowloon, the New Territories) and lists not-to-miss sights such as a ride on the Star Ferry and afternoon tea at the Peninsula Hotel. There are also plenty of tips to make your trip as seamless as possible, from translations of place names into Chinese, Cantonese phrases (simple greetings, foods, etc.), a glossary, and an extensive booklist (from James Clavell's *Tai-Pan* to Suzy Gershman's *Frommer's Born to Shop: Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing*). --Jill Fergus

"...full of well-researched historical and cultural information and includes the practicalities of accommodations, places to eat, shopping, and getting around." -- Transitions Abroad"

As someone who lived in Hong Kong in the 90s and revisited on business since, I'd like to point out that this is a good guide book for the basics :Where to stay, what places to eat at, how to get around. It gives good coverage of the hikes in the unspoiled northern New Territories (Plover Cove, The Hunchbacks-Ma On Shan area, Stanley Mound - these are some of the most scenic walks in the world). You will be able to fit your budget with this guide. But where it is not so helpful is in the practical realities of life in Hong Kong - what you have to put up with in this crowded, not very happy city in China. Many tourists and expats are shocked by the not very gentle, wall-to-wall crowds of people in Hong Kong, a legacy of the terrible flood of millions of Chinese refugees who poured into China in the decades after the Chinese Revolution, swamping the tiny British colony. Much of Hong Kong's urban parts consist of miles of 40-storey tower blocks of shabby concrete. *Other books* (see below) will help you get a handle on these issues, which dominates all levels of life in Hong Kong, including especially the level of your comfort. Hong Kong people are understandably reluctant to talk about their refugee past; it is considered rude to refer to the shabbiness of much of urban Hong Kong (it causes loss of "face" in Chinese society), but, since it has such an impact on the visitor's stay today, knowing about such essential basics of Hong Kong will help make your trip/domicile more pleasant and rewarding. Jan Morris's book, Hong Kong, has all the history and colourful anecdotes you'll want to know, brilliantly told in a good narrative. She goes into a lot of detail about the sad story of all those millions of refugees, how they survived, exploiting each other in a sweat-shop environment under a thin veneer of British law, which made Hong Kong so different from the dictatorships around it. There's also the whole story of the British, with lots of good anecdotes. Since she's a Westerner she does not have the obsession with "losing face" that is such a dominant part of Chinese culture (she explains it very well, though) and can lead to denying the truth when it comes to the realities of Hong Kong. Timothy Mo's The Monkey King is a great story about a Hong Kong Chinese family through several generations. As a Westerner I was astonished at how helpful this book was in "preparing me" for the interesting types of locals I met again and again. Bo Yang's The Ugly Chinaman and the Crisis in Chinese Culture is a harder, unblinking look at the underbelly of Chinese society - the pushy crowds, the harsh language, the public spitting that Hong Kong is unfortunately well-known for. If you're bringing young family to Hong Kong, pick this book up along with Jan Morris's. It will help you deal with your kids' reaction to some (to us) bizarre

aspects of Chinese society - the drug stores selling Chinese natural medicines made from animal reproductive parts, ...and can help you talk to your children the first time they see locals spit, belch and break wind in public. Bo Yang's book goes into the long history of stultification of society in Chinese history under the centuries of repressive rulers. It is a sad but enlightening read, and will make you appreciate more the classics of Chinese culture: the poetry of Li Po and Tu Fu, the novel The Story of the Stone, Confucius, etc. Paul Theroux's Kowloon Tong is a fascinating novel of the Handover period that neatly captures many Hong Kong types - Chinese, British, even American. A great Graham Greene-ish novel that is also a great guide to Handover Hong Kong and beyond. And Austin Coates' Hong Kong classic, Myself a Mandarin, tells the illuminating, often hilarious tale of a 1950s British Magistrate dealing with Chinese culture in the (then) unspoilt countryside of the New Territories, and the inevitable clash (What do you do when there's no real concept of "libel" in Chinese thought?). Still relevant to today. Many people wish Hong Kong to succeed since its handback to China, but the Western visitor/expat will be better served by learning what he or she is actually in for, than to be given essentially a tourist bureau pamphlet, as some of the following reviews seem to do. The books above, along with the Moon Guide, will help prepare you for what you'll actually experience. Good voyage!

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