



DESTINATION REPORT

**HONG KONG S.A.R.**

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## GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) includes Hong Kong Island in the South China Sea, Lantau Island, and the Kowloon Peninsula. It has a subtropical monsoon climate with cool, humid winters, and hot, rainy summers. Typhoon season runs from July to October. Hong Kong has one of the world's busiest deep-water harbors, and one of the most vibrant economies.

The British occupied Hong Kong Island in 1841 amidst the first Opium War. China officially ceded the island in 1842 at the conclusion of the war. Kowloon Peninsula was ceded to the British in 1860 at the conclusion of the second Opium War, and in 1898 the United Kingdom signed an agreement to lease the territories from China for 99 years. On 1 July 1997, at the conclusion of this lease and pursuant to a 1984 agreement between China and the UK, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Hong Kong remains highly autonomous, if only semi-democratic. Under "one country, two systems" agreement, it is able to maintain the free market system implemented by the British, but its foreign and defense affairs are handled by the People's Republic of China. The Special Administrative Region designation will expire in 2047.

Hong Kong has a population of 7.3 million, and 95 percent are ethnic Chinese. The linguistic makeup of Hong Kong reflects its colonial history. Cantonese and English are the official languages. Almost 90 percent of the population speaks Cantonese, but most speak at least some English and an increasing number speak Mandarin. Most signs are written in both Chinese and English. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism are practiced by almost 90 percent of the population.



# SECURITY ASSESSMENT

## Security Risk Rating

Moderate

## Security Risk Overview

Visits to Hong Kong are generally free of major security concerns. Hong Kong has a low crime rate, a stable political system, and minimal official corruption. Most crimes in Hong Kong are non-violent and opportunistic in nature. There is a low threat of international and indigenous terrorist activity and there have been no attempted terrorist attacks in recent years. Police in Hong Kong are generally well equipped, well trained, and highly capable of responding to emergencies in a timely manner.

### Terrorism

There is a low threat of indigenous or international terrorist activity in Hong Kong. There have been no reported terrorist attacks in Hong Kong for the past five years.

### Civil Unrest

Demonstrations are common in Hong Kong. The annual day of protest in Hong Kong is 1 July and the event tends to attract hundreds of thousands of participants. Nevertheless, protests tend to be peaceful, and are generally limited to early July. Most political or social rallies are located in the central business district, near most government buildings. Although protests in Hong Kong rarely turn violent, the possibility of incidental violence should not be discounted. Police have used force and heavy-handed tactics to disperse protesters in the past. Localized traffic disruptions and road closures can be expected during these demonstrations.

A vigil attended by tens of thousands of people is held annually on 4 June to remember the victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre in the Chinese capital, Beijing, on 4 June 1989, where hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators were killed during a crackdown by Chinese troops. Media coverage of the massacre, particularly in mainland China, has been minimal to non-existent due to heightened restrictions imposed by the Chinese government. The vigil is often accompanied with heightened security.

Anti-mainland protests have occurred over the perceived influx of tourists and parallel-goods traders from mainland China. These protests have been attended by members of various radical groups and individuals, dubbed in the media as "localists," who share a strong anti-mainland sentiment. Most protests have taken place in the New Territories, which border mainland China. During such events, protesters have been known to clash with police.

Additionally, since mid-2014, a series of street protests and sit-in campaigns have been staged by pro-democracy activists in several key districts in Hong Kong, to demand electoral reform, the resignation of CY Leung, and the right for the people to govern Hong Kong without mainland Chinese government interference.

Since June 2019, a controversial bill that would allow criminals in Hong Kong to be extradited to mainland China has met strong resistance, with millions of protesters participating in large-scale protests and general strikes. Although the extradition bill was formally withdrawn on 23 October 2019, the protests have continued to demand the resignation of Chief Executive Carrie Lam,

recognition of Hong Kong's autonomy, and democratic reform. Various protests and strikes have been organized weekly since the bill's introduction, which have often resulted in violence and have affected public transportation, particularly at MTR stations and at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKG). Protests have also disrupted businesses and schools. On 7 August 2019, the US Department of State (DoS) raised its travel warning for Hong Kong from Level 1 ("exercise normal precautions") to Level 2 ("exercise increased caution") due to the escalating unrest. On 4 October 2019, Chief Executive Lam invoked emergency powers-which has not been used in the territory in the past 50 years-in order to implement a mask ban on 5 October 2019. Violence has since steadily escalated. At least two deaths have been reported as a direct result of the violent protests, in addition to thousands of injuries and arrests.

## **Personal Security**

Violent crime is rare in Hong Kong, but petty crimes such as pick-pocketing occasionally occur in crowded urban areas. These crimes tend to be non-violent and opportunistic in nature. There have been reports of robberies in Hong Kong's Country Parks, though the incidents have decreased after the Hong Kong police launched a crime prevention operation.

A mask ban was implemented by the government on 5 October 2019 in an effort to quell the ongoing protests. The ban will allow police to demand that anyone in the public remove their mask if it prevents identification. Exceptions can be made if the wearer can prove that the mask is being used for medical, religious, or professional reasons.

Military installations are controlled by the People's Republic of China and photographing these areas is prohibited. Fines can also be issued for spitting or littering.

Same-sex relations are not illegal in Hong Kong and the public attitude is increasingly tolerant towards same-sex couples. There have been no reports regarding harassment or discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) individuals in Hong Kong in recent years.

Typhoons commonly hit Hong Kong every year between July and September. An average of six typhoon warnings are issued each year by the Hong Kong Observatory. Typhoons often cause power outages, flight cancellations, train service suspensions, and other issues.

## **Law Enforcement**

Police are highly trained and professional. They are able to prevent, respond to, and investigate most crimes. Response time is generally less than five minutes for emergencies, and less than 10 minutes for non-emergency calls. Emergency operators speak English, Cantonese, and Mandarin. Police impunity and corruption is rare in Hong Kong.

Prisons in Hong Kong generally meet international standards. Detainees have access to potable water and medical care, though overcrowding can be an issue. The judiciary is considered independent and individuals are presumed innocent. In the event of an arrest, notify the relevant consulate as Hong Kong authorities may fail to do so.

## **Transportation**

**Air:** Hong Kong is rated Category 1 in the International Aviation Safety Assessment Program (IASA). This means that the country's civil aviation authority has been assessed by IASA inspectors and is found to license and oversee air carriers in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) safety standards.

**Bus:** Roughly 90 percent of Hong Kong's population relies on the public transportation network for

daily travel. Buses are widely available, clean, reliable, and inexpensive. Routes are well marked and stops are posted and announced in both Chinese and English on most bus lines. There are also red and green minibuses that pick up and drop off passengers; red buses have no fixed route, and green buses have fixed routes. Pickpocketing occasionally occurs on Hong Kong's public transportation network.

**Car:** Vehicles in Hong Kong travel on the left side of the road. Speed limits are 50 kilometers (31 miles) per hour in urban areas, 80 kilometers (50 miles) per hour on highways, and 110 kilometers (68 miles) per hour on expressways unless otherwise marked. Roads are well maintained and extensive but are often congested. Foreigners can drive in Hong Kong with a valid overseas license, insurance, and an international driving permit. All vehicles must carry third party liability insurance. All drivers involved in a traffic accident must undergo blood alcohol testing. The use of hand-held cellular devices while driving in Hong Kong is strictly prohibited and could result in a USD 260 fine.

**Taxi:** Taxis are plentiful and efficient. Taxi drivers may refuse to carry passengers who do not wear a seat belt. Only use properly marked taxis, and book through a hotel if possible. Do not get into a taxi if there is an unknown passenger sitting in the vehicle. If the direction in which the taxi is traveling is peculiar, speak calmly, yet firmly to the driver in conjunction with the hand gesture to stop in case there is a language barrier. If there is no positive response from the driver, exit the vehicle at the first opportunity.

**Train:** In addition to an efficient and widely utilized light rail system (the Mass Transit Railway or MTR), trains connect Hong Kong with Guangzhou every two hours, while trains travel between Beijing and Shanghai on alternate days. There are occasional accidents reported on the rail network, some of which have resulted in casualties.

Double-decker trams are available on the northern coast of Hong Kong. However, they are slower and less comfortable.

Traveling between Hong Kong and mainland China requires a Chinese visa.

**Water:** Ferries and jetfoils are widely utilized in Hong Kong, especially for travel between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island, and to access other outlying islands. They are generally well regulated and are less expensive than the MTR. Ferries will likely be canceled during extreme weather events.

Though fatal boat accidents are rare in Hong Kong, accidents have occurred in the past due to highly crowded waters.

### **Scams, Fraud, Corruption, and Extortion**

There are some scams in Hong Kong which have become common in recent years. Individuals may ask travelers to carry packages, which are usually full of drugs, with them in their luggage. Additionally, there has been an increase in fake property and time share scams. Common scams against foreigners, regardless of destination, include dating and marriage scams, false employment opportunities, and virtual kidnapping for ransom. Avoid giving out personal information at all costs, especially bank or credit card numbers.

Corruption, bribery, and government harassment are rare in Hong Kong. Travelers should report any incidents of corruption or bribery to their embassy or consulate.

## Security Advice

Be prepared. Make an effort to understand your destination environment before you travel: identify the possible threats and prevailing situation, understand your own vulnerabilities and take action to mitigate the risks.

Maintain a low profile and good situational awareness. Ensure you travel with reliable communications equipment, test your mobile (cellular) telephone upon arrival at your destination and keep it fully charged. Make note of emergency telephone numbers, including the police, fire department, ambulance, and embassy or consulate.

Avoid all protests and demonstrations to minimize the risk of exposure to incidental violence. Travelers should walk away or wait inside a shop or restaurant if it is not possible to leave the area. Plan alternate routes to circumvent potential protest locations. Seek the assistance of a local host, or travel with a local driver, where possible.

To minimize the risk of becoming a victim of petty theft, travelers should maintain caution and exercise situational awareness at all times. Avoid overt displays of wealth. If confronted by a criminal, do nothing to antagonize the situation. Carry a "dummy" wallet if possible, and carry a passport photocopy at all times.

Carry handbags on the opposite side from passing traffic to reduce the risk of thieves on motorcycles trying to snatch them.

Avoid walking unless you are confident of the security situation. Do not walk by yourself at night in secluded or troublesome areas of the city. Do not take shortcuts away from main roads, which tend to be busy and provide a safer environment.

National holidays and public festivals tend to attract large crowds in some countries. Such public gatherings, despite a typically enhanced security presence, create a potential venue for disorder or violence. In addition, large crowds may well impede local transportation systems.

Do not buy counterfeit or any goods in violation of copyright laws. Doing so may be a violation of local laws and can carry hefty fines or even prison time.

Reduce risk of injury from car crashes by always wearing a seatbelt. Some countries have heavy fines for not wearing a seatbelt. Avoid drinking and driving. Be sure to travel with all appropriate documentation, including passport and visa photocopies. Individuals who intend on driving should be in possession of their International Driving Permit (IDP), vehicle registration, and proof of insurance at all times.

Travelers are subject to the laws of Hong Kong, even if they are not a citizen of Hong Kong. Individuals can also be prosecuted for violating their home country's laws while in a foreign country. Travelers should be aware of the laws and customs of the country they are traveling to in order to avoid prosecution.

# HEALTH ASSESSMENT

## Health Risk Rating

Low

## Travel Health Advice

Routine vaccines for preventable diseases, such as measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, chickenpox (or varicella), poliovirus vaccine, etc. are recommended for all travelers.

Protect against insect bites and insect-borne diseases, such as tick-borne encephalitis or malaria, by using insect repellent and wearing long pants, long sleeve shirts, boots, and hats if possible. See more detailed insect precautions below.

Prevent foodborne illnesses by avoiding undercooked foods and unpasteurized dairy products and washing hands, especially before eating. See more detailed food and beverage precautions below.

A comprehensive pre-travel health consultation with a travel health care provider is recommended for all travelers in order to optimize their health while traveling and to individualize their disease prevention strategies to best mitigate the health risks of any destination.

## Immunizations - Required for Entry

The following vaccines are required for travelers entering the country. Some vaccines may only be required for travelers arriving from specific destinations, or those who have previously traveled to specific destinations within a given time period. Travelers are advised to consult with their travel healthcare provider for traveler-specific requirements.

| Immunization | Notes                                                  |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| None         | There are no vaccines required for entry to Hong Kong. |

## Immunizations - General

The following immunizations are recommended for travel to all destinations.

| Immunization   | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <b>Routine</b> | Routine vaccines for preventable diseases, such as measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, chickenpox (or varicella), poliovirus vaccine, etc. are recommended for all travelers. |

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| <b>Hepatitis B</b>     | <p>Hepatitis B is spread through contact with infected blood, sexual relations, and contact with contaminated needles.</p> <p>There are several pre-exposure vaccination options available: PEDIARIX (pediatric formulation containing DTaP, HepA/B, and polio vaccines), TWINRIX (3 dose HepA/HepB combination series), ENGERIX-B, RECOMBIVAX HB (3 doses); Heplisav-B (2 doses). The full course of injections is recommended prior to travel. Unvaccinated travelers who have been exposed to HBV should seek medical attention immediately. They should receive a dose of Hep B vaccine within 24 hours of the exposure, and may benefit from treatment with Hep B immunoglobulin as well.</p> |
| <b>Influenza (Flu)</b> | <p>All types of Influenza are spread between humans by respiratory droplets through sneezing, coughing, and touching objects contaminated with the virus.</p> <p>There are 2 types of pre-exposure vaccinations available: Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (IIV), and Live Intranasal Influenza Vaccine (LAIV). IIV is injected into the upper arm or thigh, and LAIV is administered as a nasal spray. Components of the vaccine change yearly, depending on anticipated circulating strains of the virus, which vary by hemisphere. Vaccination is recommended annually for all persons at least 6 months of age, prior to transmission season.</p>                                                |

### Immunizations - Recommended for this Country

The following are vaccine preventable diseases present in this country. Some travelers may be at an increased risk of exposure to specific diseases. Travelers are advised to consult with their travel healthcare provider for traveler- and itinerary- specific recommendations.

| Immunization       | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| <b>Hepatitis A</b> | <p>The Hepatitis A virus is primarily transmitted through contaminated water and food such as shellfish and uncooked vegetables or fruit prepared by infected food handlers. It is also transmitted through person-to-person contact via fecal-oral exposure, or spread through sexual relations, blood transfusions, and needles.</p> <p>Several pre-exposure vaccination options are available: HAVRIX, VAQTA, TWINRIX (3-dose HepA/HepB combination series), and AVAXIM. The vaccine requires 2 doses, separated by a minimum of 6 months. Ideally, the traveler should complete both doses at least 2 weeks prior to travel. However, if there is insufficient lead time to travel, the first injection should be administered before departure and a booster after 6 months. Once both doses are completed, immunity is considered lifelong.</p> |



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| <p><b>Typhoid Fever</b></p>   | <p>Typhoid is a bacterial infection spread through the ingestion of contaminated food or water.</p> <p>Vaccination should be completed 1-2 weeks before travel, depending on the form of the vaccine given. Two forms of the vaccine are available: an inactivated shot (1 dose), and a live oral vaccine (4 capsules given over 8 days). Booster doses of vaccine are needed for ongoing protection. The interval will vary depending on the form of the vaccine and the traveler's country of vaccination. Vaccination recommendations vary by country, activities, and specific itinerary. Consult a travel health professional for individual advice.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>Rabies</b></p>          | <p>Rabies is spread through the bite or scratch of an infected animal. All mammals are susceptible, but dogs and other wildlife (particularly bats) are the most common vectors. In this country, rabies is found only in bats.</p> <p>A 3-dose pre-exposure rabies vaccine is recommended for travelers involved in adventure or outdoor activities in remote areas who could be exposed to bats. Children are at higher risk and have a lower threshold for pre-exposure vaccination. The first dose of the vaccine should be administered at least 21 days before travel.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Influenza (Flu)</b></p> | <p>Classic, or seasonal, influenza, is a highly contagious respiratory infection, caused by 2 types of virus: A and B. All types of Influenza are spread between humans by respiratory droplets through sneezing, coughing, and touching objects contaminated with the virus.</p> <p>There are 2 types of pre-exposure vaccinations available: Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (IIV), and Live Intranasal Influenza Vaccine (LAIV). IIV is injected into the upper arm or thigh, and LAIV is administered as a nasal spray. Components of the vaccine change yearly, depending on anticipated circulating strains of the virus, which vary by hemisphere. Vaccination is recommended annually for all persons at least 6 months of age, prior to transmission season.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## Health Risks

The following are health risks present in the country. Some of these health risks are widespread, while others may only affect travelers in specific areas or those engaging in specific activities. Travelers are advised to consult with their travel healthcare provider for traveler- and itinerary-specific recommendations.

| Health Risks         | Notes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>Air Pollution</b> | <p>Air pollution refers to the potentially hazardous mix of particulate matter, chemicals, and other materials that infiltrates the air and causes acute symptoms and chronic conditions. Acute symptoms include itching of the eyes, nose, and throat, as well as wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, chest pain, headaches, nausea, and upper respiratory infections (bronchitis and pneumonia). Air pollution is increasing in low- and middle- income countries and has become a major concern for travelers.</p> <p>Travelers with chronic lung conditions such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease COPD should consult with their physicians prior to travel to areas with poor air quality, and these populations should reduce outdoor exertion. Elderly travelers and infants are also more at risk for respiratory consequences of exposure to air pollution. All travelers should comply with air pollution advisories. Levels of air pollution will vary by city and region; check current levels prior to travel to appropriately target preventive measures.</p>                                |
| <b>Chikungunya</b>   | <p>Chikungunya is a viral infection acquired by humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Chikungunya has been a predominately urban/suburban disease, but expanding development is encouraging spread into more rural areas. Not all infected persons exhibit symptoms, but persons may experience sudden joint pain and fever, as well as headache, rash, and vomiting.</p> <p>Chikungunya is spread through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito. Highest risk occurs during the rainy season. The Aedes mosquito is day-biting, with particular activity 2-3 hours after dawn, and from mid-to-late afternoon.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent against Chikungunya, but taking proper precautions against mosquito and insect bites may help prevent against transmission (see Insect Precautions below). No specific treatment exists for Chikungunya infection, but supportive care can be helpful to ease the symptoms. Seek medical attention if Chikungunya is suspected, as it is important to rule out other treatable or more serious infections that might be present, such as dengue or malaria.</p> |

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| <p><b>Dengue Fever</b></p>               | <p>Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection. Symptoms include headache, sudden-onset fever, rash, and joint pain. Some cases progress to severe dengue, when significant bleeding, fluid shifts, and end organ damage can appear.</p> <p>Dengue fever is spread through the bite of an infected Aedes mosquito. The Aedes mosquito, which carries dengue fever, typically lives indoors in dark, cool places like closets, under beds, bathrooms, and behind curtains, as well as around standing water. Aedes are daytime biters, with highest activity 2-3 hours after dawn and mid-to-late afternoon. Aedes mosquitos are active in both urban and rural environments.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent dengue fever. Use daytime insect precautions (see Insect Precautions below). Although there is no specific treatment for Dengue Fever, persons with suspected illness should seek medical care for definitive diagnosis. Dengue Fever does not usually require hospitalization; however, close clinical monitoring is needed to allow early intervention if complications occur.</p> |
| <p><b>Hepatitis E</b></p>                | <p>Hepatitis E is a viral infection causing liver inflammation. Most of those infected are asymptomatic or have only mild symptoms, which can include non-specific gastrointestinal symptoms, jaundice, dark urine, and fever.</p> <p>In developing countries, Hepatitis E is transmitted through the fecal-oral route, most often through contaminated water. Other modes of transmission include consuming raw or undercooked pork or game meat, and shellfish. Human-to-human transmission is uncommon. Pregnant women, those with liver disease, and immunosuppressed persons are at risk of more severe and chronic infection.</p> <p>There is a vaccine to prevent against Hepatitis E, but it is only available in China. Adhere to recommended food and water precautions (see below). Only eat meat that has been cooked well and thoroughly. Practice good hand washing and body hygiene. No specific antiviral medication is available to treat Hepatitis E. Supportive care is usually sufficient while the infection resolves.</p>                                                              |
| <p><b>Japanese Encephalitis (JE)</b></p> | <p>Japanese encephalitis is a viral infection transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito.</p> <p>Vaccination is not recommended for travelers to Hong Kong, but travelers are advised to check with a travel health professional for individual circumstances. One vaccine is available in the US, with several additional vaccines in use in other countries Dosing and timeline vary based on type of vaccine. Preventive measures include observing insect precautions from dusk to dawn, and treating clothing, boots, tents, sleeping bags, and bed nets with permethrin.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| <p><b>Sexually-Transmitted Infections (STIs)</b></p> | <p>STIs are a concern for travelers worldwide, and are likely underreported as a travel-related infection. STIs are caused by viruses, bacteria, and parasites, the same potential pathogens as are present in the traveler's home environment. However, certain infections like chancroid, LGV, and Granuloma inguinale are more common in less industrialized countries, and other areas of the world have higher incidence of HIV and Hepatitis B and C than others. Symptoms vary widely depending on the specific infection, and can include both local and systemic symptoms.</p> <p>STIs are spread between humans by unprotected sexual contact (oral, anal, or vaginal), and skin-to-skin genital contact. Some STIs can also be transmitted through exposure to blood and other bodily fluids. Travelers are at higher risk if engaging in sex with sex workers, traveling for sex tourism, or certain higher risk behaviors. Healthcare workers are at higher risk for certain blood-borne infections.</p> <p>Preventive measures focus on decreasing exposure to STI pathogens. Adhere strictly to safe sex practices: use a condom correctly and consistently, or abstain from intercourse, and use an external condom or dental dam for oral exposures. Travelers should pack external and/or internal condoms, as the quality of condoms available in some areas is not reliable. Avoid behavior that increases the risk of contracting an STI such as casual sex with a stranger or a sex worker. Drinking heavily or taking mind-altering drugs will impair judgement and inhibitions during a sexual encounter, increasing the risk of making unsafe choices. Seek medical attention promptly if an STI is suspected.</p> |
| <p><b>Travelers' Diarrhea</b></p>                    | <p>Travelers' diarrhea (TD) is the most common health problem for travelers, affecting up to 70% of travelers going to developing countries. TD is caused primarily by pathogenic bacteria and less commonly by protozoa or enteric viruses. Symptoms include diarrhea, fever, abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting. More severe forms of TD include dysentery and diarrhea with blood and mucus present.</p> <p>TD is transmitted to humans by the ingestion of contaminated food and water. Individuals at higher risk for TD or adverse consequences include adventurous eaters, immunocompromised persons, persons with inflammatory bowel disease or diabetes, and those taking medications that decrease gastric acidity.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent TD. Following food and beverage precautions may reduce the likelihood of illness (see below). Travelers should carry loperamide for self-treatment of diarrhea and azithromycin to add if diarrhea is severe.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

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| <p><b>Scrub Typhus</b></p>                         | <p>Scrub Typhus is an insect borne infection caused by a bacteria related to, but distinct from, the rickettsial group. Symptoms are non-specific and include, fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, enlarged lymph nodes, malaise, and anorexia. An eschar (dead, black skin) often develops at the site of the bite, and about half of those infected develop diffuse rash as well. Progression to more severe form of disease can occur, which potentially involves the kidney, lung, heart, and brain.</p> <p>Scrub typhus is spread by mites found in dense areas of scrub vegetation. Those engaging in outdoor activities in affected areas are at risk.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent against scrub typhus. Preventive measures include observing insect precautions (see below), and wearing protective clothing. DEET- or permethrin-treated clothing is highly effective at decreasing infection. Prophylactic antibiotics are recommended for those with exposure in endemic areas. Treatment of scrub typhus is with antibiotics.</p> |
| <p><b>Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD)</b></p> | <p>HFMD is caused by a number of enteroviruses. Symptoms commonly include fever, sores in the mouth/throat, and rash, classically located on the palms and soles. Severe disease can occur and includes encephalitis, meningitis, and paralysis.</p> <p>HFMD is spread between humans through contact with infected secretions, including saliva, respiratory droplets, feces, and blister fluid. Children in group settings (day care, school) most commonly acquire the infection, but any non-immune person can become infected.</p> <p>Although a vaccine is available in China for young children, use in travelers is not recommended. Travelers should avoid contact with infected persons and wash their hands thoroughly. There is no medication to treat HFMD disease. Symptoms are treated as they arise.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Ciguatera Fish Poisoning</b></p>             | <p>Ciguatera poisoning is caused by a toxin that accumulates in fish, particularly large carnivorous reef fish such as grouper, snapper, amberjack, and barracuda. Symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms and can progress to neurologic and cardiac symptoms.</p> <p>People become sickened after consuming fish with accumulated toxin in their tissues. Ciguatoxin is heat stable, tasteless and odorless; it is not eliminated or deactivated by any food preparation, including cooking, freezing, salting, drying, smoking, or marinating.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent against ciguatera poisoning. The only effective prevention is to avoid consumption of potentially affected species of fish in endemic areas. Specifically, avoid eating large reef fish or filets (generally over 2.7 kilograms or 6 pounds), and do not eat the liver, intestines, heads, and roe of smaller reef fish. There is no specific treatment for ciguatera poisoning; Seek medical attention for supportive care if symptoms are significant.</p>     |

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| <p><b>Soil-Transmitted Helminths</b></p> | <p>Soil-transmitted helminths include the human hookworms <i>Ancylostoma</i> and <i>Necator</i>, and <i>Strongyloides</i>. These helminths penetrate the skin, then migrate through the body through species-dependent pathways to end up settling in the GI tract. Many of those infected have no symptoms. If present, symptoms vary depending on the phase of life cycle within the human host: rash and skin lesions, mild cough, and non-specific gastrointestinal symptoms.</p> <p>Transmission occurs through skin penetration by infective larvae found in fecally contaminated soil and sand in affected areas, usually when walking barefoot or lying directly on the ground. Transmission is more common in areas with poor sanitary practices. Travelers are at higher risk in moist, jungle environments and along the shoreline of tropical and subtropical beaches.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent against helminth infection. Travelers are advised to avoid walking barefoot on beaches or other soil, wash feet after contact with sand, and to always sit on a protective surface to avoid contact between skin and sand/soil. Treatment is with anti-helminthic medication and symptomatic care.</p> |
| <p><b>Marine Hazards</b></p>             | <p>Marine hazards are varied and include exposures to challenging tides and currents, hazards of watersports and boating, as well as contact with plants and animals that can injure humans. Most commonly seen in travelers are envenomation or stings from jellyfish, sea urchins, certain corals, stonefish, sting rays, and sea urchins.</p> <p>Travelers should seek out and heed posted warnings and refrain from bathing or other aquatic activities at unmarked, unpatrolled beaches.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <p><b>Snakebites</b></p>                 | <p>Snakebites are an important cause of morbidity and mortality for rural populations in tropical and subtropical areas. Risk of snakebites exists in areas with dense vegetation or rock formation, and snakes are more active in warm weather. Despite this prevalence in resident populations, travelers rarely experience snakebites. Symptoms of snakebites depend on the degree of envenomation, which varies based on species of snake, the volume of venom injected (many bites from venomous snakes are dry), and the weight and size of the victim.</p> <p>Avoid close contact with snakes and do not attempt to handle them. Back away if a snake is disturbed and wait for it to move away. When hiking or trekking in a high risk country, travelers should wear boots and long pants, avoid tall grass if possible, walk slowly, and use a stick ahead to beat the vegetation. Do not reach into holes or cracks between rocks. Sleep under a bed net when camping. Use a flashlight if walking after dark. Seek medical attention immediately after any snakebite. Immediate first aid includes keeping the victim calm and quiet, and immobilizing the limb involved.</p>                                       |

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| <b>Avian Influenza</b> | <p>Avian flu is caused by several subtypes of influenza A virus found in birds and domestic poultry. Travelers are at risk when visiting areas where avian flu is present, especially if in direct contact with birds/poultry, visiting live bird markets, or consuming undercooked poultry.</p> <p>Humans become infected through direct contact with sick or infected birds or their droppings. No evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission exists.</p> <p>There is no vaccination to prevent avian flu. Travelers to affected areas should avoid direct contact with birds (including domestic poultry), live animal markets and poultry farms, and avoid consumption of poultry. Observe hand and respiratory hygiene.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Melioidosis</b>     | <p>Melioidosis infection is caused by Burkholderia bacteria found in soil and water. Acute symptoms include fever, cough, chest pain, and shortness of breath. Localized skin infections also occur, as well as systemic forms of infection. Melioidosis can be fatal.</p> <p>Melioidosis is spread through direct contact with sources, usually water and soil, that are contaminated with the bacterium. Transmission occurs primarily through direct inoculation through the skin, contamination of wounds, and inhalation and aspiration, most often in the setting of recent rains, floods, or severe weather events. Ecotourists, adventure travelers, and persons working in agriculture, mining, and construction are at risk.</p> <p>There is no vaccine to prevent melioidosis. Avoid contact with pools of standing water, soil, or mud in endemic areas. Wear long pants, boots, and gloves if in contact with soil or an area of standing water. Clean wounds thoroughly and use an antiseptic cleanser. Seek medical care promptly if melioidosis infection is suspected for antibiotic treatment and other effective care.</p> |

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| <p><b>Tuberculosis (TB)</b></p> | <p>TB is caused by infection with the Mycobacterium tuberculosis bacteria. Over 95% of cases occur in developing countries, and infection is strongly associated with poverty, overcrowding, and malnutrition. TB infection can be latent, with no symptoms, for many years. The most common clinical presentation of active TB is pulmonary TB, with symptoms of cough, night sweats, weight loss, bloody sputum, and fatigue.</p> <p>Tuberculosis is spread through contact with the respiratory secretions of an infected person. It can also be acquired by eating unpasteurized dairy products in areas where the bovine form of TB is endemic.</p> <p>The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine has historically been used at birth in most developing countries to prevent against TB. Results in adults have varied with effectiveness of between 0-80 percent. It is not recommended for travelers. The BCG vaccine is also reported to interfere with TB testing in some cases. Individuals who anticipate prolonged exposure to TB areas should undergo the tuberculin skin test (TST) or interferon-γ release assay (IGRA) both before leaving the US and 8-10 weeks after returning from travel. Treatment for TB is complex; seek medical care for concerns of TB infection.</p>      |
| <p><b>Hantavirus</b></p>        | <p>Hantavirus Infection is a zoonosis associated with rodents. There are multiple different hantaviruses circulating worldwide, but they divide into 2 groups, each group causing a distinct clinical syndrome: the European and Asian group of viruses causes hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS), and the American group causes hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome (HCPS). HFRS begins with fever, muscle aches, nausea, and headache, and progresses to blood and renal system involvement. HCPS is more severe and progresses to heart and lung complications leading to respiratory failure and shock. Case fatality of HCPS ranges from 25-40%.</p> <p>Hantavirus is spread through the inhalation of contaminated rodent waste matter. Person-to-person transmission can occur but is rare. Those at risk include agricultural workers, campers, trekkers, and those sleeping on the ground or staying in rodent-infested cabins.</p> <p>A vaccine for 1-2 strains of hantavirus is available in China and Korea, but the cost limits its use. No other vaccine is currently in use. Limit contact with rodents and their droppings in affected areas. Hantavirus progresses quickly, even with treatment. Those affected by hantavirus should receive immediate hospital care.</p> |

**Medical Facilities and Services**

Hong Kong has a number of high-quality medical facilities staffed by qualified Western-trained physicians. Some medical professionals also practice traditional Chinese medicine. Emergency medical service is reliable. Some hospitals may expect cash payment before providing medical care. Pharmacies are well-supplied and most prescription drugs are available in Hong Kong.

**Food and Water Safety**

Avoid eating raw or undercooked meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs. Avoid eating unwashed or unpeeled fruits/vegetables, fruits/vegetables that have been washed with contaminated water,



unpasteurized dairy products, and bush or game meat. Avoid eating food that is not properly refrigerated or cooled, or that has been left standing and uncovered. Avoid eating leafy or uncooked vegetables and salads.

Tap water in Hong Kong is generally held to high sanitary standards. Nevertheless, it is preferable to stick to bottled, boiled, or otherwise purified water. Only drink water that has been filtered or boiled, or has come in a sealed bottle. Avoid drinking any well water unless you can verify its quality. Do not drink beverages that contain ice unless you can confirm that the ice is from purified water. Do not drink unpasteurized milk or juice, or anything mixed with contaminated water. Hot coffee or tea is usually safe to drink.

Wash hands with soap or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer prior to eating. Do not use tap water to brush teeth unless you can verify the quality of the water. Avoid sharing beverages or utensils with others.

### **Insect Precautions**

Use insect repellent: DEET 20 - 30% or Picaridin 20% on exposed skin. Re-apply per manufacturer's directions.

Avoid scented soaps, hair products, deodorants, perfumes, and shaving products.

Wear long sleeves and pants tucked into socks. Wear neutral colors (beige, light gray). Always wear shoes, both indoors and outdoors.

Treat outer clothing with permethrin.

Remove any containers holding water, both inside and outside any building.

Avoid insect exposure using additional various methods depending on the insect:

- For nighttime flying insects, sleep under bed nets, preferably insecticide impregnated.
- For ticks, hike in the middle of the trail and avoid tall grasses and shrubs, use a tarp when sitting on grass, perform regular tick checks on your body and clothing.
- For other insect vectors, avoid direct contact with animals, and avoid overcrowded, unsanitary conditions to reduce risk of exposure to body lice, mites, fleas, and rodents.

# DESTINATION DETAILS

## Time Zones

From 1 January to 31 December, Hong Kong Time (HKT): GMT+8 Hours  
Hong Kong does not observe Daylight Saving Time.

## Currency

Hong Kong Dollar (HKD)

## Credit Cards

Most shops, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses in Hong Kong accept credit cards. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Diner's Club Cards are accepted almost everywhere. Travelers should always notify their bank of their travel plans to avoid having their account frozen.

### ATMs

ATMs are widely available in Hong Kong. Most are linked to international networks and have signs indicating the types of cards that they accept. Travelers should check with their bank before their trip about any fees that might be charged with ATM use.

## Banking Hours

From Monday to Friday 09:00-16:30 and Saturday 09:00-12:30.  
Hours may vary with bank and location.

## Major Holidays

Services and transportation may be affected on/around the following holidays:

| Date            | Holiday                                                   |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 01 January 2020 | New Year's Day                                            |
| 25 January 2020 | Chinese Lunar New Year (Day 1)                            |
| 27 January 2020 | Chinese Lunar New Year (Day 3)                            |
| 28 January 2020 | Chinese Lunar New Year (Day 4)                            |
| 04 April 2020   | Tomb Sweeping Day                                         |
| 10 April 2020   | Good Friday                                               |
| 11 April 2020   | Holy Saturday                                             |
| 12 April 2020   | Easter Monday                                             |
| 30 April 2020   | Budhha's Birthday                                         |
| 01 May 2020     | Labor Day                                                 |
| 25 June 2020    | Dragon Boat Festival                                      |
| 01 July 2020    | Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day |

|                  |                                                |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 01 October 2020  | National Day of the People's Republic of China |
| 02 October 2020  | Day after Mid-Autumn Festival                  |
| 26 October 2020  | Chung Yeung Festival                           |
| 25 December 2020 | Christmas Day                                  |
| 26 December 2020 | Boxing Day                                     |

**NOTE:** Legislative elections are scheduled to be held in September 2020.

## Voltage Information

220V, 50Hz - Plug Type G, D, M

## International Airports

| Airport Name                    | Airport Code | Airport Location |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Hong Kong International Airport | HKG          | Hong Kong        |

## ENTRY & EXIT REQUIREMENTS

The following information is for citizens of the United States. If you are a citizen of a country other than the United States, contact an embassy or consulate for up-to-date requirements. For additional questions regarding entry/exit requirements, contact Global Rescue at (+1) (617) 459-4200.

A passport valid for at least one month beyond the intended departure date, proof of sufficient funds for the duration of your stay, and an onward or return ticket are required for travel to Hong Kong. A visa is not required for trips lasting less than 90 days. Travelers planning to stay longer than 90 days must apply for a visa prior to departing the United States. A visa extension can be obtained at the Immigration Department of Hong Kong SAR. Applications for Hong Kong and mainland China visas must be carried out separately. Failure to produce the required documents may result in denial of entry.

Note: Many neighboring areas to Hong Kong require a valid passport for at least six months beyond the date of entry. If planning on regional travel beyond Hong Kong plan accordingly.

### IMPORT RESTRICTIONS

**The following items are permitted:** 19 cigarettes OR 25 cigars OR 25 grams of tobacco and one liter of alcohol above 30 ABV.

**The following restrictions apply:** Weapons, explosives, and ammunition require a license from the Hong Kong Police Department. Plants and their products must have a license from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Pets must have a veterinary health certificate, proof of inoculation, and import permit from the Veterinary Officer of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department. Medicine must have a doctor's prescription.

**The following items are prohibited:** Illegal drugs, knives, deadly weapons, controlled chemicals, endangered species and their products, radio transmission equipment, uncut diamonds, meat, poultry, counterfeit goods, strategic commodities, and pornography.

### EXPORT RESTRICTIONS

**The following restrictions apply:** Weapons, explosives, ammunition, plants, and their products must have a license. Medicine must have a doctor's prescription.

**The following items are prohibited:** Illegal drugs, knives, deadly weapons, endangered species and their products, radio transmission equipment, controlled chemicals, uncut diamonds, meat, poultry, powdered milk formula, counterfeit goods, and pornography.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| <b>Intl. Country Code</b> | +852 |
| <b>Fire</b>               | 999  |
| <b>Police</b>             | 999  |
| <b>Ambulance</b>          | 999  |

### Contact Information for Select Embassies

#### **US Consulate General in Hong Kong SAR**

26 Garden Road, Central  
Hong Kong  
Telephone: (+852) 2841-2211  
Emergency After-Hours Telephone: (+852) 2523-9011

#### **UK Consulate General in Hong Kong SAR**

1 Supreme Court Road, Admiralty  
Hong Kong  
Telephone: (+852) 2901-3000

#### **Australian Consulate General in Hong Kong SAR**

23th Floor Harbour Center  
25 Harbour Road  
Wanchai, Hong Kong  
Telephone: (+852) 2827-8881

For other embassies, contact Global Rescue at (+1) (617) 459-4200.