A SENSE OF PLACE

Being outdoors has important effects on our mental and physical wellbeing, especially when we are active — hiking or biking, for instance. Though Hong Kong is thought of as a concrete jungle, its density means that the wild outdoors is closer to downtown streets than it is in other parts of the world so those healthy escapes are easily attained.

Once there, you can open your senses wide. Gaze back at the city skyline seen from the mountains; listen to waves crashing on remote beaches; savour the taste of local dishes that connect you with Hong Kong’s cultural heritage; take a deep breath and absorb the smells of the forest, or of drying fish and shrimp paste in a traditional village; visit shorelines where you can touch rocks that bear the scars of a volcanic past.

Engaging your senses like this is a powerful way to create shared memories with friends and family. It also shows how Hong Kong’s countryside is not a secondary attraction but rather is key to the city’s appeal.
TIPS & GEAR

Check out these hiking tips and our recommended gear checklist to help you have a safe and enjoyable hike. Open your senses and go explore!

PACKING

Place light items at the bottom, heavier items in the middle, and the heaviest ones on the top. Pack less frequently used items in first and frequently used ones on the sides. Be sure weight is equally balanced on each side. It should not exceed one third of your body weight. The maximum weight should be 40lb / 18kg.

TIME

Plan to end your hike two hours before sunset.

BASICS

Walk with the entire soles of your boots touching the ground, to spread the load evenly across your feet. Free your hands or hold a trekking pole(s) to assist balance.

FOOD & DRINK

Never eat or drink while moving. Never drink untreated water from hill streams or eat any wild plants or mushrooms. Don’t consume icy drinks immediately after a long hike, when your body temperature is still high.

FOOT CARE

Wear suitable hiking shoes. Wear new shoes on level ground a few times before going on a serious hike. This will ensure the surface material is soft and the shoes are comfortably worn-in to the shape of your feet. Bootlaces should not be too tight.

UPHILL

Avoid climbing at high speed. Don’t rest too frequently or for too long. When you feel tired, reduce your speed instead of stopping.

DOWNHILL

Never run downhill. This may cause a dangerous fall. When moving down very steep slopes, move sideways and work down in a series of zigzags.

GEAR

- Sunglasses
- Cap / hat
- Torch
- Compass & map
- Watch
- Umbrella
- Whistle
- Mobile phone, charger & charging cable
- Outer garments & windproof jacket / rain jacket
- Shirt and trousers: wear sun protective / moisture-wicking / breathable long-sleeved shirt with collar to avoid sunburn on arms and back of neck, loose-fitting trousers
- Insect repellent
- Food
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Personal medications & first aid supplies
- Sunscreen
- Trekking pole(s)
- Gloves

 Courtesy steps for visiting country parks

- Treasure resources and reduce waste. Take your litter with you.
- Treasure wildlife. No disturbance and no picking.
- Treasure village culture. Respect villagers and do not damage private properties, crops and livestock.

Visit the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department website for more details.
Viewing the natural greenery of Hong Kong can calm and de-stress you, a welcome break from the urban jungle, while simultaneously taking your breath away as you cast your eyes over kilometres of epic mountains. There is almost no other major city in the world that is surrounded so starkly by the wonders of nature.

Hiking in Hong Kong gives you the best vantage from which to appreciate this. Walk for just a few kilometres, and you’ll find yourself shaded by subtropical forest, looking out across the famous skyline, often staring down at the skyscrapers that seem impossibly high from street level.
A CITY OF LAYERS

Award-winning landscape photographer Kelvin Yuen Sze-lok won his first photography prize at 19. The Hong Kong-born artist has travelled all over the world, but to him Hong Kong is a photographer’s paradise and a city unlike any other.

Kelvin Yuen never imagined winning the first photo competition he ever entered. With his eye on the prize of gear and an airline ticket, Yuen entered while in his first year at Hong Kong Baptist University and won first prize and an honourable mention in the youth division of National Geographic’s International Photo Contest 2015.

Five years down the line, the 23-year old photographer has been recognised in the International Landscape Photographer of the Year awards, and ranked second in 2019’s World’s Top 10 Landscape Photographers. He travels around the world for photo assignments and for leisure, but Hong Kong holds a special place in his heart.
Its public transport means it’s easy to move around the city and you get a wide range of spectacles, from cityscapes to mountains, waterfalls and dramatic nature scenes,” he says. Though Sai Kung is his favourite place to photograph for its rugged wilderness and view of the Milky Way at night, Yuen also likes the views from the Tsing Yi and Eagle's Nest Nature Trails, as well as from The Peak — a favourite with tourists.

Yuen says, “In the past few years I must have visited Lugard Road on The Peak over a hundred times. I love the perspective it offers me as I photograph the city below. It is layer after layer of district, mountain, district, mountain.” His preferred time to shoot is at dusk, when the lights of the city burst into life and the sky turns into a kaleidoscope of dark shades.

However, it is not easy to capture that perfect shot. “First, I visualise what I want to capture. Then, I will need to scout the location. Take a few draft photos, check the weather, understand the seasons and study the environment, then I go back and try to capture what I have in my mind’s eye. It is a lot of going back and forth before I get what I want.”

Lugard Road in springtime, when wind conditions permit, allows Yuen to capture the rising fog that blankets the city while skyscrapers and mountaintops pierce through. “You try to prepare for it but you don’t always get what you want because the weather can change very quickly.”

He proudly remembers a shot of the top of the ICC (International Commerce Centre), which came out as a gleaming island surrounded by a sea of clouds. “I was shooting on Lugard Road towards the end of day and the fog came up thick and then I saw a single building sticking out.”
As one of the landmarks on The Peak and with a century-long history, The Peak Lookout is a Grade II historical building-turned-restaurant.

Lugard Road snakes along the contours of Victoria Peak, offering a surreal feeling of being close to and removed from the city. About halfway, there is a perfect spot for Instagram pictures.

Ride the famous Peak Tram up. The steep slope presses you against your seat as the tram crawls up the hill.

Keep heading on, looking out for the India Rubber Tree. Arrive at Lung Fu Shan Country Park and head down Hatton Road. Walk downhill to Pinewood Battery, where World War II fortifications are found.

Hiking along The Peak Circle Walk is an incredible way to view the famous harbour, especially at night. Lugard Road gives you a unique sight of the city and of Lantau Island, perfect for Instagram shots of the sunset or night skyline. You’ll pass strange-looking plants too, like the India Rubber Tree.

There are plenty of shops and restaurants in The Peak Tower and The Peak Galleria. Please refer to No.1 on P.59.
TSING YI NATURE TRAILS

These trails take you up many steps, but it’s worth the climb for the sweeping views of the waters, bridges and lands surrounding Tsing Yi Island. There are many sitting-out areas along the way. Be sure not to overlook the wild flowers, such as Bougainvillea in vibrant fuchsia shades, and Trailing Lantana with small purple flowers.

LENGTH DISTRICT TIME
About 4 km Kwai Tsing About 2 hours

CHING HOM PATH
Climb the stairs up, look out over the Ting Kau Bridge and Tuen Mun Highway at Ching Hom Path. Keep right when you reach a pavilion, with its commanding views of the Tsing Ma Bridge and container ships.

PAVILION 1
You may want to stop to take in more views of the channels and high-rises below and mountains across the water.

Getting There
- From MTR Tsing Yi Station Exit A1, take bus 248M to the last stop at Cheung Wang Estate. Alight the bus and walk up Liu To Road, past the Fresh Water Service Reservoir to find the north entrance of the Tsing Yi Nature Trails on the right.
- You’ll arrive at Tsing Yi Road West, passing the archway announcing the south entrance to the Tsing Yi Nature Trails.
- When you exit the trails, turn left onto Tsing Yi Road West. Take bus 279X from Ching Wah Court Bus Stop to MTR Tsing Yi Station.

A convenience store and supermarket can be found in Cheung Wang Estate.

Sample Legend
- Start
- Finish
- Trails
- Pavilions
- Washrooms
- Bus Stops
- Information Boards
- Emergency Helplines

Map not drawn to scale
EAGLE’S NEST NATURE TRAIL

This shaded trail inside Lion Rock Country Park takes you just high enough for expansive views over the Kowloon Reservoir, the central New Territories mountain range, and bustling Kowloon Peninsula. Up close, see stunning flora and bird life — it is the roosting place for Black Kites — and some monkey business, too.

**LENGTH**

**DISTRICTS** Sha Tin and Sham Shui Po

**TIME** About 2 hours

Follow the signs and climb up the stone staircase to a pavilion. You can capture panoramic views of Kowloon sprawling below. Stay to the right to follow Eagle’s Nest Nature Trail.

Keep an eye out for the near-threatened Ailanthus tree, with long, pointed, dark green leaves and white to yellow fluffy clusters. You may also see the Shiuying Bamboo that has so far been found nowhere else in the world. Sharp-eyed hikers will spot the Silverback Artocarpus, a dark green leafy tree with clusters of inedible fruit that range in colour from green to orange.

Completed in 1910, it was the first reservoir in the New Territories and has a unique curved design. Climb up Golden Hill Road and Piper’s Hill Road until you reach Eagle’s Nest Nature Trail. Follow the trail next to the stream, keeping to the left, up an easy stone path continuing along MacLehose Trail Section 5.

KOWLOON RESERVOIR

BACK TO CIVILISATION

• From MTR Sham Shui Po Station Exit D2, walk up Tai Po Road and take bus 72 towards Tai Wo or 81 towards Wo Che. Alight at Shek Lei Pui Reservoir Bus Stop on Tai Po Road. Walk down Golden Hill Road to Kowloon Reservoir.

• Walk down Piper’s Hill Road back to the bus stop on Tai Po Road, keeping an eye out for monkeys and wild boars. Take bus 72 or 81 to Sham Shui Po or Sha Tin.

Vending machines for drinks can be found when you alight from the bus on Tai Po Road. Please refer to No.2 on P.59.
The sounds most associated with Hong Kong are honking horns and the buzz of busy streets. But those who live here know of another side to the territory. The city has some of the world’s most accessible country parks. Just a short trip from city streets, you can hear the gentle lapping of waves on beaches or the crash of swells meeting rocky shores, birds singing in the trees or cooling mountain-top breezes.

Hikes suitable for all take wanderers to these beautiful coasts and mountain ranges that feel isolated and remote but are easily explored on a day trip. Here are two routes to get you started, leading you over the hills to where you can be soothed by waves caressing long white sands or thrilled by secluded coves where the surf thunders in against the rocks.

Long Ke Wan is where Section 1 of the MacLehose Trail ends and Section 2 begins.
Sound therapies are a rising wellness trend and one of the most effective orchestras is the outdoors itself. Hong Kong artist Tsang Man-tung integrates nature into his singing bowl performances and says that simply stepping into the city’s countryside is akin to getting a detox sound bath.

Himalayan singing bowl artist, Tsang Man-tung has a special relationship with Hong Kong’s countryside. Raised by his maternal grandparents on Lamma Island, Tsang grew up with a strong affinity for nature and a life away from the hustle and bustle.

In June, he made a special trip to Shek O, a coastal ‘day out’ for families and hikers. Tsang, an avid hiker himself back in the day, has walked many of Hong Kong’s trails, including the MacLehose Trail, a spectacular 100 km route that cuts across Hong Kong’s New Territories district. Named by National Geographic as one of the world’s top 20 dream trails, it stretches from the eastern territory of Sai Kung, to the west in Tuen Mun. When asked whether he would experience Hong Kong trails entirely differently now, he says he would now enjoy the calming sounds of water, fauna and the wind rustling through the leaves on a deeper level.
Tsang stands on the rocky beach next to Shek O Village while the ocean waves break against smooth, red-hued boulders. It reminds him of his childhood years on Lamma Island. “The layers in the sounds are very nice and soothing,” he adds.

He believes in using nature’s own sounds as part of his performances. “When I perform outdoors it is not just for people, I perform for everything that is in the immediate environment,” Tsang says, encompassing everything from trees to frogs, and indicating that they in return will respond. “In that moment, nature is performing with you.”

Water is one of the most important sound elements to Tsang. He frequents a waterfall near his home in the mountainous terrain of Tai Po, New Territories and it inspires him with a “symphony of sounds,” he says. “The rushing sound of the waterfall makes you think they are giving you a [mental] cleansing. When the water hits the rocks, it reminds you of the sound of percussion instruments. Further down, from a high speed to a very slow stream, to me it resembles a heartbeat.”

“Though we have more greenery than urban area in Hong Kong, those who live in the city centre often forget how to wind down,” he says. “But you don’t have to do much... just go into nature and let it take care of you.” He likens the experience to taking a detoxing bath to cleanse mind and soul.

Tsang sometimes uses his singing bowls to mimic running water. “The bowl is always vibrating,” he says, like water, it flows and leads you down a path. But the bowl is also very susceptible to temperature changes, which alters sound quality. Made from copper and tin, the singing bowl is assembled from minerals and shaped through high heat; helping it generate many frequencies and variations of ‘overtones’.

There is nothing that Tsang would add if he were to give a performance in Shek O. Instead, he would try to guide the audience to hear what’s already there. “You have to respect the space and environment and keep things ‘pristine’,” he says.
Take in the sea views, then continue to Big Wave Bay. As you descend, listen to the thunderous sounds of swells pummelling craggy shores. Then take in prehistoric cave drawings before you reach the beach.

Continue towards one of Hong Kong Island’s most popular beaches, Shek O, famed for its great views. Listen to the sound of the waves lapping the shore to relax and refresh.

Start at Siu Sai Wan Promenade and head uphill via Leaping Dragon Walk, serenaded by birdsong, through lush canopy to the Pottinger Peak View Compass.

Walk along to the end of the peninsula via Shek O Headland Road. Hear the full power of nature from the rocky outcrop, as waves beat the exposed shoreline like a drum.

Follow the craggy shores of Hong Kong Island, which face out to the wide expanse of the South China Sea. Even on windless days, swells roll in and crash against the shore — the most spectacular cymbals in Mother Nature’s orchestra.

**GETTING THERE**
- From MTR Chai Wan Station Exit C, take minibus 47M to Siu Sai Wan (Island Resort). Walk towards Siu Sai Wan Promenade, where you can find the starting point of the Leaping Dragon Walk.
- Take bus 9 to MTR Shau Kei Wan Station.

**BACK TO civilisation**
- Take bus 9 to MTR Shau Kei Wan Station.

There are village stores near Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay. Please refer to No.3 on P.59.
MACLEHOSE TRAIL
(SECTIONS 1 AND 2)

The first two sections of the famous MacLehose Trail set a rhythm of alternating peak and beach. Let the waves refresh you before you turn your feet towards the next rise, where the sounds of the sea drop away again to leave you with your own laboured breathing.

**DISTRICTS**
Sai Kung and Tai Po

**LENGTH**
About 16 km

**GRADE**

**TIME**
About 6 hours

**HIGH ISLAND RESERVOIR EAST DAM**
Make sure you walk along the High Island Geo Trail to see the hexagonal rock columns formed over 140 million years ago. You can also take a detour to Biu Tsim Kok, which offers a view over the pristine white-sand beach of Long Ke Wan.

**SAI WAN**
Long Ke Wan is followed by a tough climb, affording sweeping views of the country park.

**HAM TIN WAN**
At Hong Kong’s most spectacular beach, often the waves are the only sound.

**LONG KE WAN**
Descend into Long Ke Wan, a secluded bay protected by stunning cliffs, silent save for a modest surf breaking on the sands.

**GETTING THERE**
- From MTR Diamond Hill Station Exit C2, take bus 92 to Sai Kung Town, then a taxi to East Dam.
- From Sha Tin New Town Plaza Bus Terminus, take bus 299X to Sai Kung Town, then a taxi to East Dam.
- From MTR Hang Hau Station Exit B1, take minibus 101M to Sai Kung Town, then a taxi to East Dam.
- From Pak Tam Au, take bus 96R to MTR Diamond Hill Station (Sundays and public holidays only).
- Take bus 94 or minibus 7 back to Sai Kung Town.

**BACK TO CIVILISATION**
There are a few cafes and village stores in Sai Wan and Ham Tin Wan. Please refer to No.4 and 5 on P.59.
Hong Kong is famed for its food. The long history of its fishing villages has seen them develop world-famous seafood dishes, full of flavours fresh from the region’s waters. Hike to and from these ancient villages and restaurants to share meals and memories with your companions.

The tender steamed fish, fried prawns dipped in dark sweet and sour sauce, and crunchy deep-fried squid will imprint themselves on your taste buds. Never again will you be able to eat seafood without being cast back to your time in Hong Kong and the friends you made there.

The hikes of Hong Kong let people of all abilities ramble through the forests and along the shorelines of the famous region, taking you to restaurants unlike any others in the world.

Yung Shue Wan is the biggest village on Lamma Island.
Celebrity chef Christian Yang strolls back in time to relish the flavours of traditional Hakka cuisine in rural Sai Kung.

For day trippers, Sai Kung offers exhilarating ways to enjoy the contrasting facets of Hong Kong. Growing up, celebrity chef Christian Yang has fond memories of the city’s country parks. He traces his love for nature and barbecues in the open air to his formative years as a Boy Scout. Typically at the end of a long walk, Yang will indulge in a cold thirst-quencher.

“Our trails are so hilly — it is always straight up and then straight down,” Yang recalls. “Tuck shops are lifesavers on a hot day. They usually have an old-school fridge filled with iced drinks where I can grab a soda. I think of it as my reward earned after the hard work of getting there. That was the best part of the walk.”

As he makes his way to Sham Chung Manor from Ma Liu Shui Pier, Yang is delighted to see one such fridge. He goes for a cream soda in a chilled glass to immediately quench his thirst before perusing the menu provided by the shop’s owner Michael Li. A descendent of Hakkas living in the village of Sham Chung, Li grew up in New York. He returned to his ancestral village and took over Sham Chung Manor five years ago after his uncle retired. His cousin Jimbo Wong mans the stove, after extensive experience working as a chef in Ireland.

Celebrity chef Christian Yang savours the signature dishes, Hakka stewed pork and an oyster omelette, of Sham Chung Manor.

TASTE OF HOME

Celebrity chef Christian Yang strolls back in time to relish the flavours of traditional Hakka cuisine in rural Sai Kung.
Next up is an oyster omelette bursting with green onion and cilantro that lend it freshness. The oysters are given a toss in the wok with the green onions prior to adding a combination of duck and chicken eggs. Li explains that historically, ladies gathered plump oysters from the pier and sold them in the morning. The oyster omelette became a signature dish.

“We cannot take it off the menu,” Li smiles with a shrug. “But we now get the oysters from the wet market as there are no longer any old ladies to gather them from the sea nearby.”

With its pitched roof and plaque that dates it to 1936, as many as 20 members of Li’s family used to live at Sham Chung Manor at one point. Although they are now scattered across the globe, Hong Kong is still where they call home. Since he has taken over the premises, Li has been slowly renovating it to bring it up to 21st-century standards. “It is challenging, as bringing in materials from the city takes some effort,” he reveals.

After finishing his meal, Yang sits back with a sigh of contentment as he continues to gaze upon the landscape. “This is a wonderful opportunity to listen to trees swaying and water running — it is a luxury to be able to afford this kind of time,” he admits. “We live in such a technology driven, fast-moving place. Yet Hong Kong is unique because it also has so many beaches and mountains.”

“<i>I love the food that you can only get in Hong Kong’s countryside. Noodles, tofu custard — these dishes are part of our culture. ”</i>

“I want to pass the experience of eating them in nature onto my two children. Whenever I go hiking, my expectation is that the cuisine will always be spot on. The food always reflects the chef or the location, and many restaurants have a story. Part of the appeal of countryside dining is listening to what day-to-day life is like for the people who live here,” he says.
The kaito (small ferry) runs twice daily services from Sham Chung to Ma Liu Shui and Wong Shek on weekdays, with a third service added during weekends (no stop at Wong Shek).

- You can walk from Sham Chung to Sai Sha Road (around 7 km, 1.5 hours) for bus connections to Sha Tin and Sai Kung.
- Catch a taxi, bus 94 or 96R from Sai Kung Town to Pak Tam Chung.

Keep your energy levels up with snacks and drinks at the entrance to Sai Kung Country Park. Head east from Pak Tam Chung, following Tai Mong Tsai Road. Then turn left to Pak Tam Road. The entrance to the Pak Tam Chung Family Walk is on the left.

- Stock up on snacks and drinks at the entrance to Sai Kung Country Park. Head east from Pak Tam Chung, following Tai Mong Tsai Road. There, turn left to join the Cheung Sheung Country Trail, then follow the signs to Yung Shue O.
- At Yung Shue O, follow the paved coastal footpath to Sham Chung, where a few village houses are located. There is a cafe, famed for its Hakka stewed pork and oyster omelette.

Sai Kung Country Park is stunning, lush and green, but few know of its hidden gastronomical treats, like tofu desserts, Hakka snack, cha kwo, stewed pork and more.
LAMMA ISLAND

Lamma is Hong Kong’s third largest island and is packed with restaurants — from traditional seafood to modern Western cuisines. A short and easy hike will deliver a symphony of flavours.

**SOCKET WU WAN**
A sheltered bay of mariculture raft with just a few hundred residents, and seafood restaurants serving freshly steamed scallops, crunchy deep-fried squid and juicy lobster.

**HUNG SHING YEH BEACH**
The trail passes beaches and barbecue areas before arriving at Hung Shing Yeh Beach, where you can find smoky barbecue corn, refreshing frozen pineapple and family-run stores.

**TIN HAU TEMPLE**
Just after the seafood strip stands one of three Tin Hau (goddess of the sea) temples on Lamma, this one was originally built in the 19th century and refurbished in 2004.

**YUNG SHUE WAN**
Soon you pass Ah Po Tofu, a little traditional tofu dessert spot, and you are close to the end. At Yung Shue Wan, your food options are limitless from dim sum to tapas — why not sit and enjoy the sunset.

**GETTING THERE**
- Take a ferry from Central Pier No. 4 to Sok Kwu Wan. It takes about 30 minutes.
- Take a ferry from Yung Shue Wan to Central or Aberdeen.

There are some stores at Hung Shing Yeh Beach and plenty of restaurants and shops near the ferry piers of Sok Kwu Wan and Yung Shue Wan. Please refer to No.6 on P.60.

**BACK TO CIVILISATION**
- Take a ferry from Yung Shue Wan to Central or Aberdeen.

ALTITUDE (m)

DISTANCE (km)

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Nothing evokes fond memories as readily as smell. Catch a whiff of a familiar scent and you are cast back to the exact time and moment it first crossed your nostrils.

Hong Kong is full of evocative smells that imprint themselves on your mind as testament to your time here. None are more memorable than the signature scents of Hong Kong’s ancient fishing villages, an olfactory homage to Hong Kong’s humble beginnings.

Hikes across Hong Kong take you to these villages, offering varied food and glimpses into Hong Kong’s cultural heritage. Meander the markets and food stalls, and allow the smells to drift over you.

Tai O village is famed for its generations of fisherfolk who build their houses on stilts above the tidal flats of the western end of Lantau Island.
THE NOSE KNOWS

Veteran Tai O shrimp paste maker Cheng Kai-keung claims that he can smell when his famed condiment is ready for bottling.

Lantau Island is the green and rural counterpoint to the urban expanse of Hong Kong. With its stretches of sandy beach and kilometre-high peaks, it remains largely unspoiled.

On a clear day, you can see Macao from Tai O, a traditional village with stilt houses in western Lantau. Yet Tai O's farming and fishing way of life has remained much the same since its first settlers made it home more than three centuries ago.

Founded in 1920, Cheng Cheung Hing Shrimp Paste Factory's proprietor Cheng Kai-keung hails from ancestors who have lived in Tai O for more than 160 years. Cheng is his family's fourth generation of shrimp paste makers. He apprenticed in the authentic food processing trade under his father after working as a fisherman in Asia and the Middle East. "I came home to help with the family business after unrest began in the Middle East," he explains.
The stirring of the shrimp paste gives Tai O its familiar whiff of intensely briny aroma that some find delicious while others find nauseating.

“Once time, a mother with her young son came by and wanted to watch me work,” Cheng recalls. “Once I began stirring, the boy immediately proclaimed that shrimp paste stinks. Though his mother reprimanded him for being naughty, I said that it was no problem for the boy to have an opinion. Shrimp paste is not for everyone. Yet shrimp paste is part of our dining culture. It is critical to many dishes in Southern China and Southeast Asia. It is part of our heritage.”

I can tell when the paste is ready from its smell; usually it takes three months of working it daily in the sun before it is ready to be bottled.

The most important aspect of making shrimp paste is exposure to sunlight and air, to transform its texture while eliminating its fishy smell. The process involves agitation of the paste every 45 minutes and spreading it thinly on wicker trays exposed to direct sunlight from early morning to early afternoon.

Shrimp paste is Tai O’s most famous culinary export, though it is a remarkably simple product. “We only use shrimp and salt,” Cheng reveals. “For shrimp paste, in the past we used a ratio of 100 parts shrimp to 17 parts salt, but more recently we have reduced the salt to 13 parts as people are more health conscious nowadays. For shrimp blocks, we use 100 to seven. The months between May and October are the best time for shrimp paste, and we employ several contract workers for a total of six people to take care of our 200 baskets.”

In his spare time, he enjoys walks with old friends and family north to Tung Chung or south along the many trails in Lantau South Country Park. In fair weather, he heads out in his open-air motorboat to fish. In foul weather, he joins villagers in a game of mahjong and other rural pastimes. In recent years, he has witnessed a resurgence of life in Tai O, with local tourists keen to soak in the village atmosphere on weekends and holidays. “Tai O Heritage Hotel has been a big draw, mostly for its colonial architectural design and tranquil way to spend a night viewing our beautiful sunsets,” he states.

Cheng is grateful for the livelihood that Tai O’s shrimp paste industry has provided his family over the generations and proud of what his brand has accomplished. “Our shrimp paste will prevail in the memories of anyone who appreciates traditional Cantonese cuisine.”
Tai O is one of Hong Kong's oldest fishing villages. This hike transports you to ground zero of Hong Kong's cultural heritage, heavy with pungent smells. Hong Kong owes its origins to villages like Tai O, and the aromas recall almost-gone eras of its history.

LENGTH DISTRICT TIME
About 14.5 km Islands (Lantau Island) About 4.5 hours

Getting There
- From MTR Tung Chung Station Exit B, take bus 3M, 11 or 11A at Tung Chung Town Centre Bus Terminus and get off at Ha Ling Pei. Follow the signs to Tung Chung Fort.

Back to Civilisation
- Take bus 11 back to MTR Tung Chung Station.
- A ferry is available from Tai O to Tung Chung and Tuen Mun. From these points, public transport is available to other destinations.

There are stores at Sham Wat Wan. Plenty of shops can also be found near MTR Tung Chung Station and Tai O Market. Please refer to No.7 and 8 on P.60.

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Tai O Ancient Trail starts at Tung Chung Fort, built in 1832. The site became a naval headquarters in 1898, then turned into a police station and later a school.

Tai O Ancient Trail
The mostly concrete, gently undulating trail takes you past centuries-old villages, vestiges of Lantau's traditional agricultural and fishing life — you may catch a whiff of incense from an old temple or of drying seafood and freshly stirred shrimp paste.

Tung O Ancient Trail starts at Tung Chung Fort, built in 1832. The site became a naval headquarters in 1898, then turned into a police station and later a school.

Tai O Ancient Trail
The mostly concrete, gently undulating trail takes you past centuries-old villages, vestiges of Lantau's traditional agricultural and fishing life — you may catch a whiff of incense from an old temple or of drying seafood and freshly stirred shrimp paste.

The concrete path eventually turns into a mountain trail as the distinct stilt houses of Tai O appear in the distance, sitting above the water as they have for generations.

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Tai O Ancient Trail
The mostly concrete, gently undulating trail takes you past centuries-old villages, vestiges of Lantau's traditional agricultural and fishing life — you may catch a whiff of incense from an old temple or of drying seafood and freshly stirred shrimp paste.

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Leave the city behind and Hong Kong feels surprisingly wild, full of varied topography and diverse plant and animal species. The bland features of a concrete pavement or wide tarmac road belie the true Hong Kong. Let the trails underfoot tell their own story: from stone-paved ancestral paths in use for centuries to eroded dirt routes leading up every hill of note and forest trails carpeted with leaf litter.

Hong Kong has more than 200 islands, and many of the smaller ones have a wonderfully remote feel. Ride out on a scheduled ferry, or book your own if needed, and you quickly sense a rising excitement — in a place renowned for its cityscape, nature’s own skyline still holds the power to thrill.
Ngai Chau-kei is no stranger to feeling grounded. It should come as no surprise that the 2013 International Yoga Sports Federation Champion understands the importance of feeling connected to nature and to the elements.

“Yoga is about connection. It focuses on internal awareness and it connects you to your breath and to your surroundings,” Ngai explains. She had just finished demonstrating a variety of yoga poses, also known as asanas, at Kang Lau Shek on Tung Ping Chau to a crowd of hikers, fishermen and day trippers who had boarded the 1.5-hour ferry from Ma Liu Shui Pier to come to this hidden gem for the day.

Under the blazing summer sun and against the crashing of the waves, the ease and elegance with which Ngai moved barefoot atop the rocks was mesmerising. The yogi chose to go shoeless so she could truly feel the earth, one toe at a time.
“When you go barefoot, you can feel the texture of the rocks, the texture of the grass.”

“It teaches you to appreciate the grass and the earth more,” she says.

While asanas — especially those such as tree pose and mountain pose — are grounding in their name and in their posture, the art of having them flow into one another requires freedom, creativity and an openness. Ngai is the perfect embodiment of them all.

Not only is she a social media influencer boasting a beautifully curated Instagram feed with over 75,000 followers, she also dabbles in photography and other creative outlets. From the moment we stepped off the ferry and immersed ourselves in the island, Ngai was admiring the view and quickly found her camera to capture the memories.

Without a doubt, she said, she will bring friends back so they too can experience it.

Our day trip was the first time Ngai had ventured to Tung Ping Chau. Serendipitously, Ngai discovered the island a month ago, while watching television. It quickly made its way onto her bucket list of places to visit in Hong Kong. “I like to go off the beaten track,” says Ngai. She was referring to her favourite routes around Hong Kong and also what she loved most about the walk around Tung Ping Chau, an island which is made up of sedimentary rocks naturally eroded by wind and waves. Another off-the-beaten-track route which came to mind was Sunset Peak on Lantau Island.

“There is a sense of freedom,” says Ngai in the “rawness” of these natural wonders. The ‘raw’, as Ngai describes, beauty of the island is evident in photos, but it is even more apparent when you are there to experience it in person. While the reflection of the sun in the clear blue sea and the striking shades of burnt orange, beiges and browns from the island’s shale rocks can be shown in pictures and video, the feeling of dipping your toes into the icy water and caressing the smooth wave-carved rocks is something which simply cannot be translated through pictures or words alone.

Indeed, there are many natural wonders around the island. A rough three-hour 5 km hike will take you to many of the marvels of Tung Ping Chau. Besides Kang Lau Shek and the rock pools, other rock formations include A Ma Wan, Lung Lok Shui and Cham Keng Chau; each a natural wonder of its own and each formed naturally from the action of ceaseless erosion.

As our day trip came to a close, Ngai’s smile is contagious. “My feet are happy,” she says brightly. “I am happy.”
Hong Kong is home to a mind-blowing UNESCO World Heritage area, with rugged islands dotted around the coast. You can take ferries or hire boats to visit most of the beaches and observe up close and touch the striking rock formations. Some are so wild, it is only possible to view them from the safety of the craft.

**Please scan the QR code for more information:**

1. **TUNG PING CHAU**
   - This island is as remote as you can get in Hong Kong, on the far side of Mirs Bay. Get a ferry from Ma Liu Shui, and leave your footprints across the empty beaches and rocky shores of this outpost.

2. **PORT ISLAND — BLUFF HEAD**
   - Take a ferry to Bluff Head from Ma Liu Shui. Here you can see an unusual rock, Devil’s Fist (left).
   - In the distance, you can see uninhabited Port Island, with its distinctive red rock.

3. **DOUBLE HAVEN**
   - This pristine group of islands, surrounded by clear waters, feel more like the South Pacific than Hong Kong. Get a ferry from Ma Liu Shui to Kat O to start exploring.

4. **MA SHI CHAU**
   - Accessible by foot, this island (right) will give you a true understanding of how vast Plover Cove is, with the mountains towering over you. The sandstone on the island exhibits ripple marks in the flaser bedding.

5. **SHARP ISLAND**
   - You can rent a kayak from Sha Ha Beach and paddle over to one of its many beaches for a relaxing day lazing on the silky sand and soaking your feet in the clear blue water.

6. **HIGH ISLAND**
   - No longer an island, this is now connected to the bulk of the peninsula by two dams. This makes it very accessible by taxi from Sai Kung, with a simple hike around to clamber among the amazing ranks of hexagonal rock columns.

7. **UNG KONG GROUP**
   - These islands offer varied landscapes, from ethereal rock arches and high cliffs, to sandy beaches. You can hire a boat from Sai Kung, or battle the swells yourself on a guided kayak tour.

8. **NINEPIN GROUP**
   - This small group of islands feels the full force of typhoon, and so the sea-facing shore is a fascinating tale of rock broken by wind and sea. Hire a boat to take you along the coast.
SUNSET PEAK

Sunset Peak is Hong Kong’s third highest mountain, and very accessible to hikers. The views and flora are stunning while you can also feel the sea of grass brushing against your legs.

DISTRICT
Islands (Lantau Island)

LENGTH
About 9 km

GRADE

TIME
About 4.5 hours

1 SUNSET PEAK
Sweeping views of bays and beaches open up to your right. Run your hand through the trailside Miscanthus or Silvergrass, a signature feature of Lantau’s high peaks.

2 LANTAU MOUNTAIN CAMP
Cresting the shoulder of the peak, savour the welcome breeze and stop for a moment to enjoy the old mountain huts dotted across the plateau below. They make the perfect backdrop for a picture, in late afternoon sun.

3 YI TUNG SHAN
Continue down, passing the old mountain huts, and you skirt round the north side of Hong Kong’s ninth highest peak, Yi Tung Shan.

4 LUK TEI TONG WATCH TOWER
Walking through Nam Shan, a wide picnic area, turn left down the ancestral trail. Eventually, you will reach Luk Tei Tong Watch Tower, a relic from the 20th century.

GETTING THERE
• From MTR Tung Chung Station Exit B, take bus 3M, 11, 11A or 23 at Tung Chung Town Centre Bus Terminus and get off at Pak Kung Au.
• At Mui Wo Bus Terminus, take bus 3M to MTR Tung Chung Station.
• Take the ferry from Mui Wo to Central.

BACK TO CIVILISATION
A cluster of shops can be found near the Mui Wo Ferry Pier.

Refuel
Stay

LENGTH
DISTRICT
TIME

About 9 km
Islands (Lantau Island)
About 4.5 hours

Sweeping views of bays and beaches open up to your right. Run your hand through the trailside Miscanthus or Silvergrass, a signature feature of Lantau’s high peaks.

Cresting the shoulder of the peak, savour the welcome breeze and stop for a moment to enjoy the old mountain huts dotted across the plateau below. They make the perfect backdrop for a picture, in late afternoon sun.

Walking through Nam Shan, a wide picnic area, turn left down the ancestral trail. Eventually, you will reach Luk Tei Tong Watch Tower, a relic from the 20th century.

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A cluster of shops can be found near the Mui Wo Ferry Pier.

Please refer to No.6 and 7 on P.60.
Major towns in the New Territories have networks of cycle tracks. Take full advantage of this intimate way to get around and connect with aspects of Hong Kong culture that motorists miss: tiny hidden beaches, quiet villages off the main routes and old temples neglected by the tour groups. Stop for a cooling drink or some noodles at a trailside cafe to give these small businesses some welcome custom.

Cycling is a great way to cover more ground while absorbing the sights, sounds and smells of less celebrated spots.
From the centre of Yuen Long, this easy ride to the seaside at Tuen Mun offers an encounter with Hong Kong’s countryside and new towns, taking in the area’s cultural heritage on cycle tracks almost all the way.

**LENGTH**

**DISTRICTS**

**TIME**

About 14 km

Yuen Long and Tuen Mun

About 3 hours

**BACK TO CIVILISATION**

**GETTING THERE**

There are vending machines and shops along the cycle track. Also, kiosks can be found in Wu Shan Recreation Playground and Butterfly Beach Park.

**WU SHAN RECREATION PLAYGROUND**

This dedicated cycling circuit invites you to take a spin, as the beckoning sea air wafts through the trees.

**BUTTERFLY BEACH**

Beyond the delightful Butterfly Beach Park lie the sands and rolling waves of Butterfly Beach itself. After the scenic ride, return your bike at Wu Shan Recreation Playground.

**HAU KOK TIN HAU TEMPLE AND FA PAU EXHIBITION HALL**

Take in the rituals and scents of this ancient temple site at Tin Hau Temple Plaza, as worshippers pay respect to the popular sea goddess Tin Hau. You can also see the extravagant floral paper fa pau at the adjacent Fa Pau Exhibition Hall.

**PING SHAN TANG CLAN GALLERY CUM HERITAGE TRAIL VISITORS CENTRE**

Up a short, steep hill is this charming display of artefacts and information about local village culture, housed in the Old Ping Shan Police Station, which was originally built in 1900.

**TUEN MUN CYCLING ENTRY / EXIT HUB**

Crossing via a footbridge, you can rest and refresh at these dedicated cycling facilities.

**BUTTERFLY BEACH**

Beyond the delightful Butterfly Beach Park lie the sands and rolling waves of Butterfly Beach itself. After the scenic ride, return your bike at Wu Shan Recreation Playground.

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- From MTR Yuen Long Station Exit J, walk to Long Wo Road, where you’ll find a bike rental shop. Then walk along Long Wo Road and arrive at Long Yip Street to join the cycle track.

- After returning your bike at Wu Shan Recreation Playground, go to MTR Siu Hei Light Rail Stop, where you can take Light Rail Route 507 to Tuen Mun and connect with the MTR West Rail Line.

- To enjoy seafood, go to Sam Shing Estate by taking Light Rail Route 507 at MTR Siu Hei Light Rail Stop and interchange at MTR Siu Lun Light Rail Stop for Light Rail Route 505.

Please refer to No.9 and 10 on P.60.
Serendipitously located beside trails, these hostels and hotels are ideal for a relaxing stay before or after a hike / ride. Some of them are even post-war heritage gems that make your stay one of cultural discovery.

1. **THE MURRAY, HONG KONG**
   - +852 3196 8888
   - fourseasons.com/hongkong
   - 22 Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hong Kong Island

2. **YHA MEI HO HOUSE YOUTH HOSTEL**
   - +852 2788 1638
   - yha.org.hk/en/hostel
   - Block 41, Shek Kip Mei Estate, 70 Berwick Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

3. **Y LOFT, YOUTH SQUARE**
   - +852 3721 8989
   - youthsquare.hk/stay
   - No. 238 Chai Wan Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong Island

4. **PENTAHOTEL HONG KONG, KOWLOON**
   - +852 3112 8222
   - pentahotels.com
   - 19 Luk Hop Street, San Po Kong, Kowloon

5. **ROYAL PARK HOTEL**
   - +852 2601 2111
   - 8 Pak Hoi Ting Street, Sha Tin, New Territories

6. **FOUR SEASONS HOTEL HONG KONG**
   - +852 3196 8888
   - fourseasons.com/hongkong
   - 8 Finance Street, Central, Hong Kong Island

7. **NOVOTEL CITYGATE HONG KONG**
   - +852 3602 8888
   - novotelcitygate.com
   - 51 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung, Lantau Island, New Territories

8. **TAI O HERITAGE HOTEL**
   - +852 2985 8383
   - taioheritagehotel.com
   - Shek Tsai Po Street, Tai O, Lantau Island, New Territories

9. **PENTAHOTEL HONG KONG, TUEN MUN**
   - +852 3112 1138
   - pentahotels.com
   - 6 Tuen Wan Road, Tuin Mun, New Territories

10. **HOTEL COZI - RESORT**
    - +852 3899 9288
    - hotelcozi.com/resort
    - 4 Kin Fung Circuit, Tuen Mun, New Territories
TRAIL RUNNING EVENTS

Selected Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc (UTMB) qualifying races held between October 2020 and March 2021 in Hong Kong.

2020

OCTOBER
17–18
Raleigh Challenge–Wilson Trail (RCWT)
raleighwilsontrail.hk

24
HK50–Hong Kong Island (Race 1 of HK50 Series)
actionasiaevents.com/our-events/2020-hk50-hong-kong-island/

NOVEMBER
1
Sowers Action Challenging 12 Hours Charity Marathon
c12hrs.sowers.hk

7
TGR Summits@Mui Wo
tgr.run/summits

27–29
HK168 (2020)
hk168.com.hk

DECEMBER
5
Lantau 50
(Race 2 of HK50 Series)
actionasiaevents.com/our-events/2020-lantau-50/

2021

JANUARY
1
New Year N.E. Mountain Race 2021
xterace.com/NE-Mountain-Race-2021

3
TGR Trail@Braemar
tgr.run/races

2–4
Ultra-Trail® Tai Mo Shan
ultratrailtmt.com

9
Hong Kong 50 WEST
(Race 3 of HK50 Series)
actionasiaevents.com/our-events/2021-hk50-west/

FEBRUARY
6–7
The 9 Dragons Ultra
the9dragons.asia

29–31
Oxfam Trailwalker Hong Kong
oxfamtrailwalker.org.hk

MARCH
7
Race For Water
raceforwater.adropoflife.org

The information contained herein is accurate as of 27 August 2020. The listed events may be cancelled or rescheduled, please visit the event’s website for further details.

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LOCAL TOURS

Check out the local operators below for guided tours to enrich your travels and gain a greater appreciation of the nature of Hong Kong.

BASALT ISLAND
Part of Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark, Basalt Island is a hidden gem east of the city where you can marvel at beautiful bays, spectacularly steep cliffs and distinctive rock formations.

Eco Travel
+852 3105 0767
ecotravel.hk/en

TUNG CHUNG & TAI O
Explore Tung Chung North Park which has been opened to the public since 2010 and tour around Tai O to experience the lifestyle of a traditional local fishing village.

Instant Travel
+852 2780 3233
articket.com.hk/index_eng.asp

NINEPIN GROUP
Some of the world’s rarest landforms can be found in the Ninepin Group (Kwo Chau Islands) - located east of Clear Water Bay - formed 140 million years ago.

Eco Travel
+852 3105 0767
ecostudent.hk/en

WILDLIFE NIGHTWALK – LUNG FU SHAN
Despite its close proximity to urban areas, much of Hong Kong’s interesting wildlife can be found here, such as East Asian porcupines, wild boars, Green Cascade Frogs and much more.

Walk Hong Kong
+852 9187 8641
walkhongkong.com

Useful Phone Numbers

24-hour Emergency Helpline
999 / 112

Transport Department
+852 1823

Hong Kong Observatory
+852 1878 200

Hong Kong Tourism Board
Visitor Information Services

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