

HONG KONG

Every time you look outside you'll remember why you came to Hong Kong. The skyline is breathtaking – it's unbelievable how many sky scrapers they've managed to stuff between the sea and the top of the Peak, and the view never stops being thrilling. Hong Kong is the expat mecca, full of people away from their friends and families – and therefore available to hang out with you! Everyone is up for everything; this is a place where you will never be short of friends.

The local and expat communities seem to work together but play apart – unless your Cantonese is good you will mostly end up with other expats. That said, Hong Kong is a very English-friendly and taxi Cantonese will get you through a couple of years – but speaking the language will make a huge difference to your experience here.

Hong Kong is a big-spending place, and you will be shocked at how you spend your money. Suddenly you care about designer clothes, pop across to Bangkok for the weekend, and wonder if you should buy yourself diamonds. Families will have live-in maids, and you'll start to attend all-you-can-eat champagne brunches on weekends. It is possible to save if you don't get carried away though.

The surprising aspect of Hong Kong ... it's really outdoorsy. 60% of it is national park, and your weekends will be spent hiking, dragon boating and generally being active. Hong Kong is heaven for physiotherapists, as everyone plays sport much longer than they ought to and are regularly injured ...

Where will I live?

Hong Kong comprises 'the island', Kowloon and the New Territories – which head towards China – and dozens of smaller islands. Most new arrivals start off on the island – families gravitate to Pokfulam and the south side; singles head to Mid-Levels and Happy Valley. You can choose between small-and-new apartments or big-and-old ones – both will be uglier than you'd like, and won't have an oven. That said, you won't spend very much time there. Few people own cars – the public transport and taxi systems are so good that cars are superfluous.

How much will it cost for essentials?

A latte - HK\$26

A movie - HK\$45

A glass of wine - HK\$50-60

A 2 bedroom apartment - HK\$20,000-\$30,000 per month

Useful links...

<http://hongkong.asiaxpat.com/>

To convert your currency:

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

