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48 HOURS IN
HONG KONG

The Pearl of the Orient's iconic skyline



The ultimate insider itinerary, from the classic to the offbeat

There's more to Hong Kong than towering skyscrapers, dim sum and shopping (though visitors will find plenty of all three). Its emerald green parks are vast and teem with wildlife and subtropical flora. Its white sandy beaches—more than 100 in all—range from pristine to party. And this former British colony's neighborhoods—which hide an array of pop-up ice cream shops, rooftop cocktail bars, Michelin-starred restaurants, palaces and ancient temples—go unseen by lifelong residents. Here's the Ralph Lauren guide to the ultimate two-day excursion to the Pearl of the Orient—a visit to our just-opened flagship store included.

DAY ONE

8:00 A.M.

Nearly all the Hong Kong guidebooks recommend doing **Victoria Peak** at dusk, which is exactly why you should go first thing in the morning instead to experience its lush network of garden trails and

panoramic city views *sans* guidebook-clutching tourists. To access the 1,811-foot-high mountain park, take the **Peak Tram**, which starts service at 7 a.m. Morning joggers can opt for the more challenging series of covered stairs adjacent to the 800-meter-long **Mid-Levels Escalator** system (the world's longest), which runs downhill from 6 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Once atop, head to the wok-shaped **Peak Tower**, a multilevel galleria of cafés, shops and restaurants where you can grab breakfast, refuel on coffee or take free Tai Chi classes on the rooftop.



The guidebooks suggest visiting Victoria Peak at dusk, which is exactly why you should go first thing in the morning

12:00 P.M.

Wind your way down to Central for an affordable dim sum lunch at **Lung King Heen** (inside the **Four Seasons Hotel**), the world's first three-Michelin-starred Chinese restaurant and a 15-minute taxi ride from **Lee Gardens**. Chef Chan Yan Tak's ornate specialties include scallop and lily bulb dumplings, sautéed beef chuck with bitter melon, marinated jellyfish and baked abalone puffs. There's also an excellent selection of Chinese wines. If the weather is good, consider an after-lunch drink at the hotel rooftop bar (or, if you're a guest, a dip in the spacious rooftop pool) before heading back out to the city.



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The view from the world's first three-Michelin-starred Chinese restaurant, Lung King Heen inside the Four Seasons

2:00 P.M.

Wander from Central to Sheung Wan along the leafy stretch of Hollywood Road. Here, dangling tree

roots and Mandarin neon signs create a unique street atmosphere that's given rise to one-off shops on offshoot streets—like **Moustache**, purveyor of endearingly quirky tailoring founded in 2009 by two NYC transplants (which also publishes its own Hong Kong guidebook), and **Konzepp**, an orange-hued design homewares shop—which capture the spirit of Hong Kong's creative set. Finish your day at Lee Gardens, home to the just-opened **Ralph Lauren flagship store**, the first to feature both men's and women's clothing in Hong Kong.



Lee Gardens is home to the just-opened Ralph Lauren flagship store, the first to feature both men's and women's clothing in Hong Kong

5:00 P.M.

You might think that going to a beach in Hong Kong is a poor use of time in a city known for shopping, but Hong Kong's beaches are clean and vastly underrated. **Lamma Island's Turtle Cove Beach** in tiny Crescent Bay is a turtle sanctuary and popular with nature enthusiasts. Those craving human interaction should head to **Stanley's St. Stephen Beach**, where you can wash down an Aloha burger with a Pimms cocktail at **The Lanai Beach Café** during sunset.



Hong Kong's beaches—including Lamma Island's Turtle Cove Beach, pictured—are clean and vastly underrated

Emerald green parks teem with subtropical flora, while neighborhoods hide ice cream shops, rooftop bars, Michelin-starred

restaurants, palaces and ancient temples.

8:00 P.M.

Hong Kong after dark is a different city altogether. Delve into the neon canyon of Wan Chai for a memorable dinner at **Bo Innovation**, a 20-minute walk from **Lee Gardens**, which received its third Michelin star in 2014. Chef/owner Alvin Leung opened a London outpost in late 2012 and shows no signs of slowing down. His contrarian “X-Treme Chinese” cuisine is a take on gastro-molecular that riffs on culinary clichés with flavorful dishes like smoked quail egg in a taro nest, truffled baby food, blue lobster with Sichuan hollandaise and marshmallow with green onion oil.



Alvin Leung's Bo Innovation, home to what the chef-owner calls "X-Treme Chinese."

10:00 P.M.

Head to Tai Hang for a scoop of **Lab Made**'s nitrogen-cooled ice cream. The homegrown chain of pop-up shops is beloved by Hong Kong hipsters and features unusual flavors like green apple, moon cake, peanut with sesame crunch and treacle tart.



More evidence of the Hong Kong food scene's scientific method: the technicians working up ice cream at Lab Made

9:00 A.M.

Forgo the quasi-vintage junk boats, and cross the harbor to Tsim Sha Tsui on the legitimately vintage **Star Ferry**, which offers a ride that's just as scenic at a fraction of the cost. High tea at the venerable **Peninsula Hong Kong** is a mob scene of tourists snapping selfies and Instagramming shots of the string quartet and scones on Tiffany chinaware. A better bet is breakfast at the property's Verandah, where you'll have the elegant colonial lobby's rattan chairs, Corinthian columns and gilded plasterwork all to yourself.



The legitimately vintage Star Ferry crosses the harbor to Tsim Sha Tsui

11:00 A.M.

Hong Kong's history stretches back 30,000 years, and the **Hong Kong Museum of History** does a fine job documenting it in various dioramas, displays and extensive photos and exhibits on its dark past, including the Opium Wars, colonial British Hong Kong and a harrowing exhibit on Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation. The Hong Kong Museum of Art, Science Museum, and Space Museum are nearby for museum hoppers.



The Hong Kong Museum of History, home to 30,000 years of the city's history

1:00 P.M.

Hotel ICON's 28th-floor restaurant, **Above & Beyond**, is home to one of Hong Kong's best dim sum

lunches. It also offers spectacular island and Kowloon views from a crisp and airy dining room designed by Sir Terence Conran. Highlights include steamed elm fungus and mushroom dumplings, pan-seared Kagoshima pork belly with raisins and Osmanthus and scallop and pumpkin cheung fun. Admire the vertical gardens by Patrick Blanc inside the hotel's contemporary lobby on the way out.

3:00 P.M.

The beloved **Kubrick Café and Book Shop** (conveniently located next to the Broadway Cinematheque art house movie theater) is home to the city's best selection of English books and obscure magazines, and events like coffee-cupping workshops and chocolate-tasting seminars.



A pop into the Kubrick Café, where you'll find everything from obscure magazines to chocolate-tasting seminars, is a must

5:00 P.M.

Eastern Kowloon is markedly less frantic and home to several temples and sacred places. Among them is the bamboo-shrouded **Hau Wong Temple**, built in 1730 and home to a small garden ideal with walls decorated with vividly colored figurines made from Shek Wan pottery.



Find an escape at the Hau Wong Temple in Eastern Kowloon

8:00 P.M.

Go old school for dinner at **Spring Deer**, a Kowloon institution where uniformed waiters push trolleys stacked with northern Chinese delights like sautéed pig's esophagus, roast lamb brisket and, arguably,

the city's tastiest Peking duck.



The charming sign at Spring Deer—home to arguably the city's tastiest Peking duck—in Kowloon

11:00 P.M.

Hong Kong has no shortage of rooftop bars from which to admire its starchitecture-studded skyline, but **Aqua Spirit**, in the penthouse of One Peking in Kowloon, remains one of the chicest and most comfortable in the city. There may be a wait to get in, but its lounge-y vibe and craft cocktails, like limoncello martinis and an impeccable Sazerac, make it the perfect venue to kick back, relax and reflect on your visit—and perhaps plan your next one.



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Hong Kong has no shortage of rooftop bars, but Aqua Spirit, in the penthouse of One Peking in Kowloon, remains one of the chicest

ADDRESS BOOK

WHERE TO STAY

Four Seasons Hotel

District: Central

fourseasons.com

WHAT TO DO

Victoria Peak Tower

District: The Peak

Free Tai Chi Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,
8–10 a.m.

Hotel Icon

District: Kowloon

hotel-icon.com

WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

Lung King Heen

District: Central

<http://www.fourseasons.com>

Bo Innovation

District: Wan Chai

boinnovation.com

Above & Beyond

District: Kowloon

hotel-icon.com

Peninsula Verandah

District: Tsim Sha Tsui

peninsula.com

Spring Deer

District: Kowloon

+852 2366 4012

Lab Made Ice Cream

District: Tai Hang

labmade.com.hk

The Lanai

District: Stanley

hkclubbing.com/directory/bars/the-lanai

Aqua Spirit

District: Kowloon

aqua.com.hk

hepeak.com.hk

Star Ferry

District: Kowloon and Central

starferry.com.hk

Hong Kong Museum of History

District: Kowloon

hk.history.museum

Kubrick Café and Book Shop

District: Kowloon

kubrick.com.hk

Moustache

District: Sheung Wan

moustachehongkong.com

Konzepp

District: Sheung Wan

shop.konzepp.com

Ralph Lauren

District: Causeway Bay

global.ralphlauren.com/worldofralphlauren/hk

St. Stephen Beach

District: Stanley

lcsd.gov.hk

Turtle Cove Beach

District: Crescent Bay

lcsd.gov.hk

Hau Wong Temple

District: Kowloon

Junction of Tung Tau Tsuen Road and Junction Road

Adam H. Graham is an American travel journalist based in Zurich. He regularly writes for the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Monocle*, and *BBC Travel*.

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