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Lonely Planet Hong Kong, Macau & Guangzhou (8th Ed)



Synopsis

A comprehensive guide to Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou, this book provides historical and cultural background notes, three language sections, and information on eating out, accommodation, transport and outdoor activities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I found this book to be extremely helpful in covering all the bases of transport, taxes, tipping, typical business hours, history, background, and a good overview of what's where, and how to get there.

Often times, we'd have questions about things like poverty level, health coverage, average income, quality of water -- and found that the guide pretty much answered all of those, and more. The maps aren't super, and because of the size of the book, it made it difficult to carry. Besides, if you're asking a local for directions, you'd want a bilingual map, as the English names of cities/stations drive them crazy. (ie, Mandarin romanizations in a Cantonese city) I do give it credit for accurately pointing out the numerous obscure markets in Tsim Sha Tsui, as well as the various shops in Hong Kong City. The walking guides were surprisingly useful. The reason why I give it 4 stars is because HK is all about food and shopping, and the book came up seriously short on the food portion. (no pun intended) Despite it being only 3 months since publication (12th edition, Jan 2006) literally **every** restaurant this book recommended (of which we attempted to find) turned out to be non-existent, had changed ownership and had turned into some other shop. I attribute some of this to bad luck, but I seriously doubt the restaurants didn't **all** go out of business in the last 3 months, but rather that the information on the guide was a little outdated. The section on food is one part I really relied upon to book to help me out, and was pretty disappointed when it didn't come through for me, as the alternatives to an English guidebook aren't great. The alternatives are to ask the hotel clerk (who will recommend the hotel restaurant), or a random stranger (who will recommend his friend/family's restaurant), or read a weekly magazine about which eateries are good (which require Chinese reading skills). Despite my frugal 4 stars, this guide is considerably better than most, and is worth the small change to purchase, especially when compared to the amount of money you spent to book your vacation.

If you're looking for a book with good background information and history lessons this is the one for you. It is not the book to take to walk around the city with. It is simply too heavy. Your best bet is to just cut out the walking maps to take with you before leaving your hotel room. I liked the little walking tour of the bird market, flower market and fish market in Kowloon. As far as the restaurant recommendations are concerned...don't bother looking at the book. Most of the listings are somewhat expensive by local standard and don't offer the best food. All you have to do to find a good meal is to walk around and go to one that's packed with locals. Restaurants are everywhere and most of them open until the wee hours of the morning. There's no fear of not getting good food in Hong Kong. Go ahead, try something you can't find at home.

Disregard 's reader reviews that precede this one. The earlier comments aren't based on this book at all, but were simply ported to this page from the previous edition's. The well-deserved complaints

about "Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou," Ninth Edition, do not apply to "Hong Kong and Macau," 10th Edition. Note that "Guangzhou" was dropped from the title. I never go on vacation somewhere without first buying the Lonely Planet travel book on the destination. So it's been with some frustration that for the last three years, the Hong Kong book has been among the weakest of the series, at least among those I've bought. But the long-awaited update has some badly needed changes and updates. The previous edition came out in January 1999, several months after Lonely Planet had released another, entirely different Hong Kong book titled simply "Hong Kong." The "Hong Kong" book was pretty skimpy, including a mere 10 pages or so on Macau. But it did have some helpful color maps at the back of the book. When "Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou" came out, it included some badly needed material on Macau, as well as the Chinese border cities of Shenzhen and Zhuhai. Unfortunately, the book also lumped in about 90 pages on Guangzhou, and another eight-page supplement on "Hong Kong Film." For 99-plus percent of the people who are visiting the Hong Kong area, these pages were only dead weight. Virtually nobody visiting Hong Kong plans to visit Guangzhou, and why should they? It's a long trip, and by the book's own admission, there's nothing there for tourists anyway. Even worse, this book was out of date from the moment it hit the streets. Both the "Hong Kong" and "Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou" books gave the location of the Hong Kong Museum of History as Kowloon Park. But the museum had already moved when I visited Hong Kong in November 1998, when the "Hong Kong" book had just come out. And so I was more than a little surprised that "Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou" repeated the same mistake in its January 1999 printing! But what *really* annoyed me was that "Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou" didn't have the easy-to-read, easy-to-find color maps of the earlier "Hong Kong" book. Instead, the larger book had ugly, hard-to-read black-and-white maps scattered willy-nilly throughout. This has changed under the book's all-new author, Steve Fallon. (Damian Harper does not get credit in this edition, despite what says.) Fallon has dropped the Guangzhou section and other useless padding, making the book a lot more portable. The Museum of History's current address is in there now. And the color maps from the slim "Hong Kong" book also are in the back of the new "Hong Kong and Macau." The new book still uses the hard-to-read, hard-to-find B&W maps for the border towns and Macau's islands, but that's a quibble I can live with. Other general information throughout also seems to be current. I've been looking over the new book for several days now, and overall, it seems that while the worst parts disappeared, the best stuff carried over to the new edition. For instance, I was glad to see that the map of Shenzhen still has the names of landmarks and hotels in Chinese, as well as English. Showing the Shenzhen taxi drivers the Chinese name of where you want to go is usually the only way for non-Chinese-speaking

tourists to communicate their intended destination. While the new edition is a great improvement, it was at least a year overdue. Three years is a long time to have to wait for an update when so much has changed here, given the change in sovereignty in both Hong Kong and Macau. The ninth edition came out just a couple of months after the Hong Kong handover, and *before* the Macau handover, for crying out loud. I don't know if I could have honestly recommended the ninth edition of "Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou," but I certainly can do so for the 10th edition of "Hong Kong and Macau." Even if you don't plan on visiting here in the immediate future, it's an interesting read.

Great resource for planning a trip to Hong Kong and Macau

I returned from HK/Macau less than a week ago where my traveling companion had this book. It is full of useful and accurate information on Hong Kong. We found a number of restaurants listed in this book and were pleasantly surprised, however, the Macau sections were next to worthless. I'm convinced that there doesn't exist **anywhere** an accurate map of Macau. We planned to follow the walking tour of Macau AND tried to, but were unable to follow the instructions - we are both engineers (MIT and former Rocket Scientist) so following directions isn't usually a problem for us. Bottom line - good for HK, not so much for Macau. I had *Fodor's Hong Kong's 25 Best, 5th Edition (25 Best)* and found it less useful for our 13 day trip. It would be fine for 2-3 days however. The Fodor's included a pull out map that was much better than LP provided.

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