

Tips On Trips

Shop In Style—Hong Kong

(NAPSA)—Skip the outlet malls this year, head for the airport and take a truly new approach—go shopping in Hong Kong! Sure, a passport and a different kind of “visa” are required, but with the money you’ll save, a Hong Kong vacation can pay for itself. Travelers on shopping expedition will thrill to Hong Kong’s year-round festivals and events, but more on that later. First, let’s shop, Hong Kong style.



Hong Kong has long been recognized as a shopping paradise, and recent economic challenges have enhanced Hong Kong’s values even further. As always, goods in Hong Kong are sold duty-free, but it’s not just about price. Hong Kong offers Asia’s most comprehensive marketplace, ranging from one of a kind works of art to designer fashion and accessories, high-end electronics, and precious jewelry. The selection is astounding, and shopping in Hong Kong’s cosmopolitan and dynamic setting is truly an urban safari where the thrill of discovery is priceless. See the Hong Kong Tourism Board’s official Web site, www.discoverhongkong.com, for Hong Kong “Must Buy” products chosen by residents and visitors alike.

A designer-style handbag with a \$200 price tag in San Francisco or New York can be had in Hong Kong for \$20. A man’s wallet and belt set, artisan-crafted in Europe, sells for similar value—\$25 in Hong Kong, more than \$200 in London or New York. A two-sided silk scarf, perfect for Paris, is no

more than \$40 in Hong Kong—a fraction of its ticket at a French boutique.

The bargains go on. Designer-style polo shirts—five dollars each. A gift box of fine tea cups with exquisite prints of Chinese zodiac signs, ready for display as interior design accents, is widely available for \$15 or less. A carved wooden gift box of top-quality tea is less than \$10.

Teens will go wild for Hong Kong’s young-at-heart style. Designer-style European backpacks, \$30; hand-beaded jeans, “licensed to thrill,” for \$15—try finding either for that price at an American mall! Younger tykes will delight for educational toys, cute accessories for dress-up, and unique stuffed animals and dolls.

How does Hong Kong do it? Many gifts are manufactured or designed by Hong Kong companies, who then set aside quantities for the China market. European goods find their way to Hong



Kong as well, thanks to the unparalleled trading skills of Hong Kong’s wholesalers. Either way, the values handsomely reward American travelers who think “outside the big box” and go shopping in Hong Kong.

There are incredible festivals throughout the year to enhance a shopping spree. Hong Kong decks out for WinterFest, when Statue Square is transformed into a “Christmas Wonderland” with a towering Christmas Wishing Tree. Holiday dining and shopping promotions are incredible, and each night Hong Kong’s glittering harbor is center stage for the “Symphony of Light,” a synchronized music, light and pyrotechnic show. Chinese New Year (January 22, 2004 and Feb-

ruary 9, 2005) revelries last 16 days with a host of festivities, including for the first time ever, an International Chinese New Year Night Parade. It’s a great time to partake in Hong Kong’s sumptuous cuisine, electrifying nightlife and Chinese New Year sales.



On the fifth day of the fifth moon (June), the Dragon Boat Festival appeases the dragon that controls the waters surrounding Hong Kong. Exotic boats with dragon heads and tails race around Hong Kong; onshore, the sales are legendary. Long established as a major international arts festival and the premier arts event in the Asia-Pacific region, the annual Hong Kong Arts Festival presents events of the highest standard from around the world, together with leading artists from the mainland and Hong Kong. This year’s event takes place Feb. 3-March 7, 2004, and highlighting the festival schedule will be the English Touring Theatre offering their version of the world’s most famous love story, *Romeo and Juliet*. Also on the bill is the London Symphony Orchestra, celebrating its 100th anniversary.

Goddess of the Sea, Tin Hau’s Birthday (celebrated in late April or early May, depending on the Lunar Calendar), the Cheung Chau Bun Festival (April/May), and the Mid-Autumn Festival are additional opportunities to shop and marvel at Hong Kong’s vibrant cultural scene.

Find value-packed Hong Kong vacation packages, and a complete calendar of festivals and events, at www.discoverhongkong.com/usa/, the Hong Kong Tourism Board’s official Web site.