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From glitzy department stores to artisanal soy sauce shops, vintage clothing meccas to gentleman’s haberdasheries, there’s no shortage of temptations for the savvy shopper.Frenchman Arnault Castel launched Kapok with the idea of bringing “future classics”—designers that savvy consumers should know about—to Hong Kong. The store’s highly curated selection of local and international indie brands has made it a favorite among design fiends. Look for small labels with cult hipster followings, such as wallets by Australian brand Bellroy, prints by Hong Kong-based Japanese design firm Ciaolink, raincoats by Swedish brand Rains, as well as Kapok’s own clothing brand, Future Classics.Since opening in 2008, Loveramics has become the posterchild for contemporary ceramics in Hong Kong. From bright and playful to sleek and minimalist, everything here is made by experienced craftspeople who respect the heritage of handmade pottery. Their designs are practical yet beautiful—the understated Tulip coffee cups, for example, are now the official standard cup of the World Latte Art Championships and can be found in restaurants and cafés around the city.You’ll find the entire range of products made by this ubiquitous local soy sauce producer at their only retail outlet, located in Hong Kong’s central business district. Everything is crafted using age-old methods: A batch of their best soy sauce, the Gold Label Light Soy Sauce, for example, ferments under the sun, untouched, for about three months. Gourmands also swear by their obscure products, like chu hau sauce, a spiced soy bean paste used for slow-cooked beef brisket.Nathalie Melville is a graduate of Central Saint Martins whose fine-jewelry brand focuses on sustainable, ethical, and traceable materials. Her entire line is made with conflict-free stones, and Melville is one of just a few jewelers in the world pioneering the use of fair-trade gold and platinum. Though she’s released several stunning ready-to-wear collections, fine-jewelry connoisseurs seek out her by-appointment-only studio, inside Hatton Studios, for bespoke pieces.Located inside PMQ, a studio-meets-retail complex for Hong Kong’s designers and creators, Three Artisans is a small shop that houses the work of—you guessed it—three designers. Classics Anew reinterprets traditional Chinese cheongsam (those embroidered, mock-neck column dresses) in a modern way; Absolute Vintage makes bespoke vintage-inspired eyewear; and Love in Tai Kok Tsui creates unique paper products. But all of them weave an air of Hong Kong nostalgia into their work.Whether you’re looking for authentic hand-painted snuff bottles, a piece of jade, a beautifully embroidered silk cheongsam, or just a set of good chopsticks, you’ll find them at this small chain of mini-department stores. They source high-quality, traditional products from Mainland China. And you don’t have to be a connoisseur of Chinese antiques to find proof that the phrase “Made in China” can still, in this day and age, be about legitimate craftsmanship.Susanna Soo, a graduate of Parson’s School of Design, cut her teeth in the ateliers of Diane Von Furstenberg and Anne Valerie Hash. She’s loved locally for her feminine, versatile ready-to-wear (think day-to-night pieces). But her couture sensibilities have also made her the secret weapon for Hong Kong style denizens, who seek out her custom-made ball gowns and party wear during the year-end, society-ball season.Focused on lifestyle goods, from jewelry to travel wallets and baby clothes, the Design Gallery is an initiative of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. As staid as that sounds, it’s actually a fantastic place to find emerging and established Hong Kong-based talent. Most of the goods aren’t made for the larger souvenir market, so you’ll find items that can be judged on their own design merits, rather than ones that rely on kitsch.You’ll have to make your way to the 12th floor of a commercial building in Central to find this edgy jewelry and accessories boutique. The founders are passionate about scouring the globe for vintage pieces and the next-great indie jewelry designers (which often have an ethos of sustainability). Aside from jewelry, there are bags, scarves, candles, even stationery that appeal to both the sleek minimalist and the all-out maximalist—all at affordable prices.Hong Kong’s most iconic luxury department store has been around since 1850, but its fashion, accessories, cosmetics, and homewares are entirely modern. It’s still the high-fashion destination for well-to-do Hongkongers. Footwear geeks will weep when they catch sight of the men’s and women’s shoe department, while beauty enthusiasts will feel like they’ve died and gone to Heaven when they check in for their appointment with the on-site beauty concierge.This bean-to-bar chocolate maker has a simple and truly tiny shop in front of its production kitchen. You can pre-order custom-made chocolates in any size, shape, or form (the perfect gift), but it’s really all about the handmade chocolate bars and truffles. The cacao is sourced directly from an organic farming cooperative in Sri Lanka and then transformed into bars, infused with Chinese-inspired flavors like Sichuan chili or Osmanthus (a flowering plant) and longan (a lychee-like fruit).Tucked away in a nondescript arcade, Midwest has long been a secret among Hong Kong fashionistas and stylists. It’s all about vintage fashion here: well-selected, organized, with stockpiles of edgy workwear and a focus on denim. (If you’ve been hunting for those original Levi’s 501s, you might find them here.) They’ve also recently delved into creating their own collections out of deadstock fabrics and also carry new clothes from labels that have a vintage feel.Odd One Out acts as an artists’ agency as well as a gallery, selling affordable prints and original works of art by local and international talents. You’ll find everything from magazines to original hand-etched works on archival paper. Come during one of the events, such as live sketching, to meet the artists they represent. Or, stop in for an afternoon reprieve: The adjoining café is a quiet little oasis worthy alone of a visit.If you’re the type of fashionista who’s always on the lookout for the next great thing, you’ll likely find it at this under-the-radar incubator for cutting-edge Asian designers. Some of the pieces are more experimental than others, but daring dressers are bound to find a few new favorites, as well as be able to take a few mental notes for trends and designers that the rest of the world will hear about in five years.Founded in Hong Kong in 1994 by the late Sir David Tang, Shanghai Tang remains the standard bearer of modern Chinese luxury. That’s thanks to designs with understated elegance and influences from traditional Chinese clothing and craftsmanship. The flagship store, with its Shanghai Art Deco touches and chinoiserie, is the best way to experience the brand. Walking through it, you’ll find antiques and Chinoiserie, making it as much a cultural experience as it is a retail one.As one of Hong Kong’s most famous local design shops, there are G.O.D.s big and small all over the city. The brand is known for its smart, tongue-in-cheek designs that incorporate everyday Hong Kong sights, from photos of tenement buildings immortalized as placemats to mahjong tiles printed on tote bags and college t-shirts printed with the word, “Hongkie.” Although they make great souvenirs, Hongkongers proudly rock G.O.D. Thanks to the clever designs, nothing ever feels like tacky tourist tat.Both beginners and masters will find everything they need to practice Chinese calligraphy at this treasure trove of a store, tucked away in a diminutive commercial building on a small side street. There are brushes of all qualities and types, ink stones, specialized paper, prints from master artists, and books about calligraphy. If you’ve created your own work of art, they even have technicians who can mount and frame it for you.This gentleman’s haberdasher, inside the historic Peddler Building, looks like a private club on Savile Row. You’ll find Hong Kong’s dapper gentlemen shopping for menswear, shoes, and accessories, all made with meticulous attention to detail and superior craftsmanship. Classic Hong Kong tailors like Ascot Chang are on regular rotation, as are Spanish cobblers Carmina, and cult Japanese sock-makers Tabio. If you can’t find what you like on the racks, custom services also are available.As its name suggests, XO sauce—the moreish Hong Kong invention made primarily of dried seafood and air-dried ham—is the star product at Mrs. So’s XO Sauce. The flagship is the only place you’ll find (and be able to sample) the full range of sauces, many of which incorporate traditional Cantonese flavors, like Chinese olives and tangerine, pickled ginger, and sour mangosteen. Mrs. So’s also sells shrimp paste, vegetarian XO, and Hong Kong-style curry, all of which are locally made, preservative-free, and packed with high-quality ingredients.The warehouse of Hong Kong’s only remaining hand-painted porcelain factory is filled to the brim with fine china. “Specializing in the ‘‘Guang Cai’’ or Cantonese style of painted porcelain, the pieces here are all hand-painted, and you’ll often see the artisans at work in the warehouse. They sell everything from plates to vases, often painted with bright, intricate patterns. Several of the city’s high-end restaurants have bespoke designs produced here, as can you.Hongkongers love luxury brands, but they’re not too precious to sport designer look-alike shoes. You’ll find plenty of savvy shoppers at LIII LIII, from corporate executives to ladies who lunch, who come here to have their most gorgeous (most expensive) pair of designer shoes copied. But the experienced cobblers also produce their own high-quality pairs, which shoppers on a budget often pick up at one of LIII LIII’s many stores for a fraction of the fully custom price.Since it opened in the 1950s, Shing Fat has established a loyal following among local gourmands, who seek out the store whenever they need high-quality, affordable Asian spices. Whether you’re looking for amazingly fragrant Sichuan peppers, turmeric that’s still bright and full of flavour, or whole dried tamarind pods, Shing Fat will have it. It’s also one of the few places in Hong Kong where you can buy fresh coconut water, milk, and flesh. Skip to main contentIf you’re wondering where to begin amid the action and energy, here’s our list of what to do in this buzzing city.January 9, 2020Johnny LeungMore than 20 years after the 1997 handover of sovereignty from Britain to China, Hong Kong is seeing new infrastructure projects, such as a super-speed train link with Beijing. Some things haven’t changed: The twinkling skyline remains, the Star Ferry still plies the harbor day after day, dim sum is still a sacred weekend ritual, and once edgy districts like Wong Chuk Hang, Sai Ying Pun, and Shek Tong Tsui have found new momentum, thanks to major MTR (metro) expansions. Of course, there’s still plenty of old-world glamour to be found, whether you’re luxuriating over afternoon tea in the lofty lobby of The Peninsula or savoring a chilled silver tankard of beer at the Captain’s Bar in the Mandarin Oriental. If you’re wondering where to begin amid the action and energy, here’s our list of what to do when you’re in Hong Kong.Click the link to read our complete Hong Kong city guide.If you’ve seen postcards of Hong Kong then you’re probably familiar with the famous views from Victoria Peak, Hong Kong Island’s highest point and poshest neighborhood. If the mansions are any indication, this is where the city’s rich and famous reside. But most travelers don’t come to stalk celebrities or tycoons—they’re here for the views. This lofty vantage point overlooks the city’s dense skyline as well as the outlying islands to the south. Come, snap a few selfies, and take in the sights.Located on a pedestrian street just below Hollywood Road, the century-old Cat Street market is a dream come true for vintage treasure hunters. You’ll find a few bona fide jade stores alongside makeshift street stalls; the latter brim with everything from throwaway souvenirs to quirky memorabilia, vintage photography prints, and genuinely beautiful retro vases. A few contemporary restaurants, such as Bibò (French cuisine and contemporary art) and Man Mo Café (French-ified dim sum) provide worthy resting spots should you need to refuel.With its soaring classical columns, gilded plasterwork, gargoyles, and live band, the Lobby at the Peninsula sets the scene for Hong Kong’s most famous afternoon tea. Consider sampling the hotel’s loose-leaf teas, or order anything from Champagne to fresh juice to accompany your three-tiered Afternoon Tea set. It’s impossible not to feel a bit of wonderment looking at the beautiful pastries, homemade finger sandwiches, and assortment of raisin scones (complete with clotted cream and organic strawberry jam). It’s an ideal way to while away a lazy afternoon with friends, coworkers, or family.Couples, families, and solo travelers are equally likely to visit Victoria Dockside in hot pursuit of the epic views of Hong Kong’s famous skyline. Beyond the general waterfront appeal, this avant-garde urban village also lures architecture and design nerds seeking to peek into Hong Kong’s evolving cityscape, which increasingly integrates organic structures, high-tech features, and ample greenery. Victoria Dockside gets crowded on weekends, so if you’re even the tiniest bit agoraphobic, take a pass or visit best on a weekday.At the Chi Lin Nunnery and adjacent Nan Lian Garden you’ll stumble into a world of chanting nuns and meticulously pruned bonsai trees. Though it looks ancient, this Buddhist monastery complex was actually built in the 1930s and later renovated in 1998. Channeling ancient Chinese construction methods, the impressive wooden structure features a matrix of interlocking cypress wood beams—and not a single nail—making this one of the world’s largest handmade wooden buildings. Inside the structure, the Main Hall honors the founder of the Buddhist religion with an impressive statue.Short but incredibly scenic, Dragon’s Back begins in the photogenic Cape Collinson Crematorium in Chai Wan and is a favorite hike for families and athletic travelers. With the initial ascent of the hike behind you, you’ll follow the trail south along the undulating ridge, which resembles a dragon’s spine. It’s one of the prettiest treks in Hong Kong, flanked by ocean and reservoir views on either side. As you approach Shek O, you’ll see the photogenic golf course at the Shek O Country Club off to the left, a handful of empty beaches, and a few paragliders soaring above the hills.It’s a little tricky to find Maxim’s Palace, which is located on the second floor of Hong Kong’s City Hall in Central. But as you ascend the escalator, the noisy crowds waiting to be seated should give it away. Established in 1980, Maxim’s is among Hong Kong’s most famous dim sum halls, decked out with elaborate pillars, dragon motifs, and glitzy chandeliers. Fair warning: The high-end address doesn’t take reservations, so it’s common to queue for at least 30 minutes if you come at peak hours, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on weekends. But for an old-school dim sum feast, Maxim’s delivers in spades.Aqualuna’s Symphony of Lights Cruise, which coincides with the city’s multimedia laser and lights show, is a perfect way to unwind before dinner or after a long day of touring. The experience is all about enjoying a glass of complimentary wine or a cocktail while admiring the neon-lit skyscrapers. From this vantage point, it feels as if you’re being hugged by Victoria Harbour on all sides. Get your camera ready—as soon as the Symphony of Lights show begins, most guests are busy taking photos.Home to one of the most expensive real estate markets in the world, Hong Kong never wastes a square foot. Which is why it’s so refreshing to come across a place like Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage and Arts. Open off Hollywood Road in 2018, this landmark heritage regeneration project welcomes visitors with a massive courtyard surrounded by 16 historic colonial-era buildings and leafy trees. It’s a free, open, and relaxed space—a unicorn in Hong Kong—that delivers big on its promise of arts, culture, dining, and shopping experiences.Whether you’re lounging on the secret garden terrace or pausing for a power lunch in the main dining room, Duddell’s masters the art of hospitality. Executive chef Fung Man-IP is a specialist in traditional Cantonese cuisine and composes classic dishes with meticulous attention to detail and only the best ingredients. Come for the heartfelt Cantonese dishes, stay for the surprising wine pairings and revolving art exhibitions.When the sun’s out, there’s nothing better than a quick ride on the Star Ferry. It’s a relaxed and civilized way to travel, particularly if you make your way to the top deck where you’ll find slightly nicer furnishings and working air-conditioning. But even with its imperfections, the old boats provide an enjoyable ride, and taking a ride on them is considered a must-do in Hong Kong. It’s a quick but memorable trip that frames the city’s skyline from every angle. Families love it, as do couples of all ages—really, anyone who appreciates a cheap thrill and terrific views.Just 20-to-30 minutes away from Hong Kong Island by ferry, Lamma Island is a natural wonderland, not to mention one of the city’s coolest outlying islands. You’ve got the best of everything: excellent seafood, nature trails, chill cafes, waterfront bars, local markets, and beaches. You can make your own adventure. If you’re a foodie, head to Main Street for delicious vegan fare at Bookworm Cafe, or try some local craft beers at Yardley Brothers Beer Shack. Swing by Lamma Rainbow, an institution, for top-notch garlic scallops, black bean clams, and juicy prawns.A sartorial institution in Hong Kong, W.W. Chan & Sons is where taipans (business tycoons) go when they need impeccable suits, vests, and accessories. The famed outfit is among an elite set of “Red Gang” Shanghainese tailors—a term that’s synonymous with superlative craftsmanship and timeless style. Flash forward nearly 70 years, and W.W. Chan continues to stay true to traditional techniques. The tailors take all measurements by hand, create dummy jackets to check the client’s posture, and meticulously stitch using only pure silk.Blue House, a Grade I historic building, has stood the test of time. The name is a bit of a misnomer: It’s not just one house, but a cluster of four interconnected tenement-style residences and shophouses in a rainbow of shades—blue, orange, yellow, and gray. The Blue House is the most famous, thanks in part to its head-turning cobalt facade, and has played host to all kinds of businesses—a hospital, temple, and even a kung fu studio. It currently serves as a residence for local Hongkongers and a few businesses.One of Hong Kong’s most famous urban temples, Man Mo Temple is an excellent example of Qing dynasty architecture and a great place to experience a slower, more spiritual side of Hong Kong. Free to enter, visitors are welcome to wander around the main temple at leisure. As intense, eye-watering smoke wafts from incense coils hanging overhead, stop to admire golden deities, murals, and Chinese wood carvings. There’s also a fortune-telling area off to the right—a traditional practice at Taoist temples. Those fascinated by the history of the Walled City—and what it might have been like to live there—will enjoy a visit to the peaceful Kwloon Walled City Park, where they can peruse the remaining artifacts and explanatory plaques telling the story of what was once one of the world’s largest slums. Everyone else will enjoy the fresh air, bamboo groves, pavilions, Qing Dynasty–style Chinese gates, flower gardens, and pretty ponds. Ironically, this is now one of the most pleasant corners in Hong Kong.Smack in the middle of Soho, PMQ is one of the only places in Hong Kong that’s fully dedicated to indie design. This major heritage revitalization project debuted in 2014, and you can expect cool architecture alongside a groundswell of creativity. It’s not a single boutique, but rather a complex of dozens of buzzing workshops, studios, and ateliers from the coolest labels in town. Look for more than 100 local shops, several excellent dining options, and a wide-open courtyard that comes alive on weekends with seasonal markets, pop-ups, and art installations.One of the most convenient options for a foot massage in Central is Gao’s, located just a few steps from the MTR inside a commercial tower in Lan Kwai Fong. This no-frills massage parlor feels fairly traditional—picture black or red leather chairs, lattice woodwork, and a soundtrack of birds chirping. Most of the men and women who perform the foot massages are incredibly experienced, with an uncanny ability to zoom in on a trouble spot within minutes and massage away the pain and strain. Whether or not you believe in traditional Chinese reflexology, you will walk out on refreshed feet and legs that feel balanced and energized.If you love the call of the wild, calm seas, and simple pleasures, then you’ll love a side trip to Tai Long Wan—a beautiful bay hugging the eastern side of the Sai Kung Peninsula. Tai Long Wan (meaning “Big Wave Bay”) is made up of four distinct, white-sand beaches—Sai Wan, Ham Tin, Tai Wan and Tung Wan—each separated by hilly formations. The easiest to reach is Sai Wan, but the more remote beaches are the most idyllic. We’d recommend setting off early in the morning in order to enjoy the afternoon at one of these far-flung beaches—heading back a few hours before sunset.Holding court on the 49th floor of ultra-luxe Upper House hotel in Admiralty, Café Gray Deluxe sets the tone with a long, Champagne-hued corridor that feels more like a spa than a dining establishment. Round a corner and the pièce de résistance comes into full view: wall-to-wall windows framing uninterrupted panoramas of Hong Kong’s famed Victoria Harbour. On a clear night, this is one of the best views in town, especially if you manage to snag a corner table or one of the purple banquettes lining the windows.Dedicated to Hong Kong’s history, art, and culture, Hong Kong’s Heritage Museum houses 11 different galleries that will transport you through various dynasties and artistic epochs, from the Cantonese opera exhibits to literature, photos, and masterful Chinese paintings. The Cantonese Opera Heritage Hall is particularly impressive, with life-size stage setups, colorful floral backdrops, and more than 30,000 artifacts from past performances—and don’t miss the ongoing Bruce Lee exhibition. The monastery will lift your spirits from the moment you start your trek in the hills of Sha Tin. Ginning gold buddha statues will guide you to the top of the hill, and once you peek into the main Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall, you’ll see rows and rows of tiny buddhas that glow when they catch a ray of sunlight. Elsewhere around the grounds, there are several smaller temples, a nine-story pavilion, pagodas, and verandas. Keep climbing higher and you’ll find more temples and even better views.Hong Kong’s top craft brewery, Young Master Ales, recently expanded into a larger space in Hong Chuk Hang—an industrial district on the south side of Hong Kong Island that’s now connected to Central via MTR. Once you enter the eclectic space, you’ll feel like you’ve been transported to Brooklyn—picture two bars with about eight taps, knotty wood counters, communal picnic tables, and some retro-chic couches. Just beyond, you can see the steel vats where the magic happens. If you’re a beer enthusiast or you simply love to experience homegrown brands when you travel, visiting the brewery will be a memorable Saturday afternoon. Plus, you’ll get to see a more industrial side of Hong Kong—often overlooked by those who stick to Central and Tsim Sha Tsui districts.The humble homes, restaurants, and shops of Tai O provide a very different image that what many travelers expect of Hong Kong. There’s not a skyscraper in sight—just open ocean, a few outlying islands, and relatively small one or two-story houses. Exploring the tranquil town takes no more than two or three hours, even with a stop for lunch, but it’s a pleasant side trip—particularly when combined with a visit to the Big Buddha (which sits atop a mountain peak about 15 minutes away by bus) or Upper Cheung Sha Beach to the east.

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