



Calender

Itinerary

Shanghai

Okinawa Island

Keelung, Taiwan

Hong Kong

Nha Trang

Ho Chi Minh City

Singapore

Bangkok

# Southeast Asian Cruise

- Oct. 5 - 21, 2009
- Diamond Princess 16 days

# Beijing

Oct. 2 -5, 2009

Beijing (pronounced [/beɪˈdʒɪŋ/](#) or [/beɪˈʒɪŋ/](#) in English; [Chinese](#): 北京; [pinyin](#): *Běijīng*, IPA: [pèitáin](#) (🔊<sup>ⓘ</sup> [listen](#)); [Wade-Giles](#): *Pei3ching1* or *Pei3-ching1*) (also formerly known in English as **Peking** ([/piːˈkiŋ/](#) (🔊<sup>ⓘ</sup> [listen](#)) or [/peɪˈkiŋ/](#))) is a [metropolis](#) in northern [China](#) and the [capital](#) of the [People's Republic of China](#). It is one of the four [municipalities of the PRC](#), which are equivalent to [provinces](#) in China's [administrative structure](#). The municipality of Beijing borders [Hebei Province](#) to the north, west, south, and for a small section in the east, and [Tianjin Municipality](#) to the southeast.<sup>6</sup> Beijing is one of the [Four Great Ancient Capitals of China](#).<sup>7</sup>

Beijing is [China's second largest city](#) after [Shanghai](#),<sup>8</sup> with more than 17 million people live in Beijing [municipality](#), a [province-level administrative unit](#) with [16 urban and suburban districts and two rural counties](#);<sup>9</sup> the city's urban area has about 13 million residents.<sup>9</sup> Beijing is a major transportation hub, with dozens of railways, roads and motorways passing through the city. It is also the focal point of many international flights to China. Beijing is recognized as the [political](#), [educational](#), and [cultural](#) center of the People's Republic of China,<sup>8</sup> while [Shanghai](#) and [Hong Kong](#) predominate in economic fields.<sup>101112</sup> The city hosted the [2008 Olympic Games](#).

Few cities in the world besides Beijing have served as the political and cultural centre of an area as immense as China for so long.<sup>13</sup> The [Encyclopædia Britannica](#) describes it as, "One of the world's great cities,"<sup>14</sup> and declares that the city has been an integral part of China's history for centuries, there is scarcely a major building of any age in Beijing that doesn't have at least some national historical significance.<sup>13</sup> Beijing is renowned for its opulent palaces, temples, and huge stone walls and gates.<sup>15</sup> Its art treasures and universities have long made the city a centre of culture and art in China.<sup>15</sup>

## Names

Beijing or Peking ([北京](#)) means "northern capital", in line with the common [East Asian](#) tradition whereby capital cities are explicitly named as such. Other cities that are similarly named include [Nanjing](#) ([南京](#)), China, meaning "southern capital"; [Tokyo](#) ([東京](#)), [Japan](#), and [Đông Kinh](#) ([Chinese](#): [東京](#), now [Hanoi](#)), [Vietnam](#), both meaning "eastern capital"; as well as [Kyoto](#) ([京都](#)), [Japan](#), and [Gyeongseong](#) ([京城](#); now [Seoul](#)), [Korea](#), both meaning simply "capital".

**Peking** is the name of the city according to [Chinese Postal Map Romanization](#), and the traditional customary name for Beijing in English (passports issued by the British Embassy are still printed as being issued by the "British Embassy, Peking"). The term Peking originated with French missionaries four hundred years ago and corresponds to an older pronunciation predating a subsequent [sound change](#) in [Mandarin](#) from *ki* to *te*<sup>16</sup> (*te* is represented in [pinyin](#) as *j*, as in Beijing). It is still used in many languages.

The pronunciation "Peking" is also closer to the [Fujianese](#) dialect of [Amoy](#) or [Min Nan](#) spoken in the city of [Xiamen](#), a port where European traders first landed in the 16th century, while "Beijing" more closely approximates the [Mandarin](#) dialect's pronunciation.<sup>17</sup>

The city has been [renamed](#) several times. During the [Jin Dynasty](#), the city was known as [Zhongdu](#) ([中都](#)), and then later under the Mongol [Yuan Dynasty](#) as [Dadu](#) ([大都](#)) in Chinese<sup>18</sup> and [Daidu](#) to Mongols<sup>19</sup> (also recorded as [Cambuluc](#)<sup>8</sup> by [Marco Polo](#)). Twice in the city's history, the name was changed from Beijing (Peking) to [Beiping](#) (Peiping) ([北平 Pinyin](#): Beiping; [Wade-Giles](#): Pei-p'ing), literally "Northern Peace". This occurred first under the [Hongwu Emperor](#) of the [Ming Dynasty](#), and again in 1928 with the [Kuomintang](#) (KMT) government of the [Republic of China](#).<sup>8</sup> On each occasion, the name change removed the element meaning "capital" (*jing* or *king*, [Chinese](#): 京) to reflect the fact the national capital had changed to [Nanjing](#). The city's name was also twice changed from [Beiping](#) (Peiping) to [Beijing](#) (Peking). This occurred first under the [Yongle Emperor](#) of the [Ming Dynasty](#), who moved the capital from [Nanjing](#) back to Beijing, and again in 1949, when the [Communist Party of China](#) restored Beijing as China's capital after the founding of the [People's Republic of China](#).<sup>8</sup>

[Yanjing](#) ([燕京](#); [Pinyin](#): Yānjīng; [Wade-Giles](#): Yen-ching) is and has been another popular informal name for Beijing, a reference to the ancient [State of Yan](#) that existed here during the [Zhou Dynasty](#). This name is reflected in the locally brewed [Yanjing Beer](#) as well as [Yenching University](#), an institution of higher learning that was merged into [Peking University](#).

*The history section below outlines other historical names of Beijing.*

## People's Republic



[Mao Zedong](#) proclaiming the establishment of the [People's Republic of China](#) in 1949

On 31 January 1949, during the [Chinese Civil War](#), Communist forces entered Beijing without a fight. On 1 October of the same year, the [Communist Party of China](#), under the leadership of [Mao Zedong](#), announced in [Tiananmen](#) the creation of the [People's Republic of China](#) and renamed the city back to Beijing.<sup>40</sup> Just a few days earlier, the [Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference](#) had decided that Beijing would be the capital of the new government.

At the time of the founding of the People's Republic, Beijing Municipality consisted of just its urban area and immediate suburbs. The urban area was divided into many small districts inside what is now the [2nd Ring Road](#). The [Beijing city wall](#) was torn down to make way for the construction of the [2nd Ring Road](#), which was finished by 1981 in accord with the 1982 city plan. That road was the first of a series of new ring roads intended for automobiles rather than for [bicycles](#).<sup>41</sup>

Following the [economic reforms](#) of [Deng Xiaoping](#), the urban area of Beijing has expanded greatly. Formerly within the confines of the 2nd Ring Road and the 3rd Ring Road, the urban area of Beijing is now pushing at the limits of the recently constructed 5th Ring Road and 6th Ring Road, with many areas that were formerly farmland now developed residential or commercial districts.<sup>42</sup>

According to a 2005 newspaper report, the size of the newly developed Beijing land was one and a half times larger than the land of old Beijing within the 2nd Ring Road.<sup>43</sup> [Wangfujing](#) and [Xidan](#) have developed into flourishing shopping districts,<sup>44</sup> while [Zhongguancun](#) has become a major centre of electronics in China.<sup>45</sup> In recent years, the expansion of Beijing has also brought to the forefront some problems of urbanization, such as heavy traffic, poor [air quality](#), the loss of historic neighbourhoods, and significant influx of migrants from various regions of the country, especially rural areas.<sup>46</sup>

On 13 July 2001, the [International Olympic Committee](#) selected Beijing as the host for the [2008 Summer Olympics](#).<sup>47</sup>

## Geography and climate

Main article: [Geography of Beijing](#)



[Beihai Park](#), an extensive imperial garden in the center of Beijing



The Beijing Botanical Garden



Beijing is situated at the northern tip of the roughly triangular [North China Plain](#), which opens to the south and east of the city. Mountains to the north, northwest and west shield the city and northern China's agricultural heartland from the encroaching desert steppes. The northwestern part of the municipality, especially [Yanqing County](#) and [Huairou District](#), are dominated by the Jundu Mountains, while the western part of the municipality is framed by the [Xishan Mountains](#). The [Great Wall of China](#), which stretches across the northern part of Beijing Municipality, made use of this rugged topography to defend against nomadic incursions from the steppes. Mount Dongling in the Xishan ranges and on the border with [Hebei](#) is the municipality's highest point, with an altitude of 2303 m. Major rivers flowing through the municipality include the Yongding River and the Chaobai River, part of the [Hai River](#) system, and flow in a southerly direction. Beijing is also the northern terminus of the [Grand Canal of China](#) which was built across the North China Plain to [Hangzhou](#). Miyun Reservoir, built on the upper reaches of the Chaobai River, is Beijing's largest reservoir, and crucial to its water supply.

The urban area of Beijing is situated in the south-central part of the municipality and occupies a small but expanding part of the municipality's area. It spreads out in bands of concentric [ring roads](#), of which the fifth and outermost, the [Sixth Ring Road](#) (the numbering starts at 2), passes through several satellite towns. [Tian'anmen](#) (Gate of Heavenly Peace) and [Tian'anmen Square](#) are at the centre of Beijing, and are directly to the south of the [Forbidden City](#), former residence of the emperors of China. To the west of Tian'anmen is [Zhongnanhai](#), residence of the paramount

leaders of the [People's Republic of China](#). Running through central Beijing from east to west is [Chang'an Avenue](#), one of Beijing's main thoroughfares.

The city's [climate](#) is a monsoon-influenced [humid continental climate](#) ([Köppen climate classification Dwa](#)), characterised by hot, humid summers due to the East Asian [monsoon](#), and generally cold, windy, dry winters that reflect the influence of the vast [Siberian anticyclone](#).<sup>48</sup> Average daytime high temperatures in January are at around 1 °C (33° F), while average temperatures in July are around 30° C (87 °F). The highest temperature ever recorded was 42 °C and the lowest recorded was -27 °C.<sup>49</sup> In 2005, the total [precipitation](#) was 410.77 mm; the majority of it occurred in the summer.<sup>6</sup>

 **Weather averages for Beijing** 

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	1 (33)	3 (38)	11 (52)	19 (67)	25 (78)	29 (85)	30 (86)	29 (85)	25 (78)	18 (66)	9 (49)	2 (37)	17 (63)
Average low °C (°F)	-8 (17)	-5 (22)	0 (33)	8 (47)	13 (57)	18 (66)	22 (72)	20 (69)	15 (59)	8 (47)	0 (32)	-5 (22)	7 (45)
<a href="#">Precipitation</a> cm (inches)	0 (0.2)	0 (0.2)	0 (0.3)	1 (0.7)	3 (1.3)	7 (3.1)	22 (8.8)	17 (6.7)	5 (2.3)	1 (0.7)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.1)	63.7 (25.1)

Source: [Weatherbase](#)<sup>50</sup> Feb 2007

## Air quality

Air pollution levels on an average day in Beijing are nearly five times above [World Health Organization](#) standards for safety.<sup>51</sup> Joint research between United States and Chinese researchers in 2006 concluded that a lot of the city's pollution comes from surrounding cities and provinces. According to the research, 34% of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and on average 35-60% of ozone can be traced to sources outside the city. [Shandong](#) Province and [Tianjin](#) Municipality have a "significant influence on Beijing's air quality."<sup>52</sup>



Heavy air pollution has resulted in widespread smog. This photo, taken in August 2005, shows the contrasting air quality in Beijing in days of difference

In preparation for the [2008 Summer Olympics](#) and after promising to cleanup the city's air, nearly US\$17 billion was spent to clean the air, and Beijing had implemented a number of air improvement schemes for the duration of the games. This included stopping work on all construction sites, closing many factories both in and around Beijing, closing some gas stations,<sup>53</sup>

and cutting motor traffic by half.<sup>54</sup> Two new subway lines were opened and thousands of old taxis and buses were replaced to encourage residents to use public transport. The Beijing government encouraged a discussion to keep the odd-even scheme in place after the Olympics,<sup>55</sup> and although the scheme was eventually lifted on 21 September 2008, it was replaced by new restrictions on government vehicles<sup>56</sup> and a new restriction making car owners use public transport once a week based on their license plate, coming into force in October.<sup>57</sup> In addition to the vehicle restrictions, staggered office hours and retail opening times have been encouraged to avoid the rush hour, parking fees increased, and 357,000 "yellow label" vehicles – those that have too high emission levels – will be banned in Beijing altogether from January.<sup>57</sup>

According to the [United Nations Environmental Program](#) (UNEP), China has spent 17 billion <sup>clarification needed</sup> over the last three years on a large-scale green drive. Beijing has added 3,800 natural gas buses, the largest fleet in the world. Twenty percent of the Olympic venues' electricity comes from renewable energy sources.<sup>58</sup> The city has also planted hundreds of thousands of trees and increased green space in an effort to make the city more livable.

## Dust storms

Dust from erosion of deserts in northern and northwestern China results in seasonal [dust storms](#) that plague the city; the [Beijing Weather Modification Office](#) sometimes artificially induces rainfall to fight such storms and mitigate their effects.<sup>59</sup> In the first four months of 2006 alone, there were no fewer than eight such storms.<sup>60</sup> In April 2002, one dust storm alone dumped nearly 50,000 tons

of dust onto the city before moving on to [Japan](#) and [Korea](#).<sup>61</sup>

## Cityscape

### Administrative divisions



The popular student hangout, [Wudaokou](#), in northwestern Beijing at night



Bookshops in the [Xidan](#) area



[Chaoyang Park](#) in Beijing's [Chaoyang District](#)



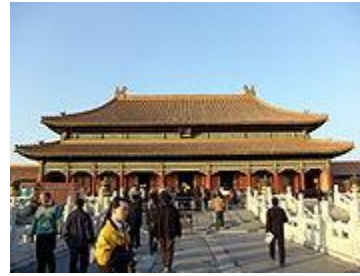
[Shichahai](#), located in the [Xicheng District](#), is traditionally one of Beijing's most beautiful and charming scenic areas



A garden park near the [Forbidden City](#)

Major neighbourhoods in urban Beijing include the following. Neighbourhoods may overlap across multiple districts (see below):

## Architecture



Inside the Forbidden City

Three styles of architecture predominate in urban Beijing. First, the traditional architecture of imperial China, perhaps best exemplified by the massive [Tian'anmen](#) (Gate of Heavenly Peace), which remains the People's Republic of China's trademark edifice, the [Forbidden City](#), the [Imperial Ancestral Temple](#) and the [Temple of Heaven](#). Next there is what is sometimes referred to as the "Sino-Sov" style, built between the 1950s and the 1970s, with structures tending to be boxy, bland, and poorly made.<sup>63</sup> Finally, there are much more modern architectural forms – most noticeably in the area of the [Beijing CBD](#) and [Beijing Financial Street](#).

Beijing of the early 21st century has witnessed tremendous growth of new building constructions, showing various modern styles from international designers. A mixture of both old and new styles of architecture can be seen at the [798 Art Zone](#), which mixes 1950s design with a blend of the new.

## Politics and government

Main article: [Politics of Beijing](#)

Municipal government is regulated by the local [Chinese Communist Party](#) (CCP) in issuing administrative orders, collecting taxes, and operating the economy. The local party authority is headed by the Beijing CPC Secretary (北京市委书记). The local CCP also directs a standing committee of the Municipal People's Congress in making policy decisions and overseeing local government. Local government figures include a [mayor](#), vice-mayor, and numerous bureaus focusing on law, public security, and other affairs. Additionally, as the capital of China, Beijing houses all the important national governmental and political institutions, including the [National People's Congress](#).<sup>64</sup>

## Economy



Beijing's CBD with [Jianwai SOHO](#), [Yintai](#), [CCTV Headquarters](#), Jinguang



[Wangfujing Street](#) is one of the busiest streets in Beijing, with nearly 100,000 visitors daily (August 2008).



[Zhongguancun](#) is a technology hub in [Haidian District](#)



[Beijing Financial Street](#), the economic centre of Beijing



Beijing is amongst the most developed cities in China with tertiary industry accounting for 73.2% of its GDP; it was the first [post industrial](#) city in mainland China.<sup>65</sup> Finance is one of the most important industries of Beijing.<sup>66</sup> By the end of 2007, there are 751 financial organizations in Beijing that generated 128.6 billion RMB revenue accounting for 11.6% of the total financial industry revenue of the entire country. It is also accounts for 13.8% of Beijing's GDP, the highest percentage of that of all Chinese cities.<sup>67</sup>

In 2008, Beijing's nominal GDP was 1.0488 trillion [RMB](#) (150 billion [USD](#)), a year-on-year growth of 9% from the previous year. Its GDP per capita was 63,029 RMB (9,075 USD), an increase of 5.2% from the previous year. In 2008, Beijing's primary, secondary, and tertiary industries were worth 11.28 billion RMB, 269.32 billion RMB, and 768.2 billion RMB. Urban [disposable income](#) per capita was 24,725 yuan, a [real](#) increase of 12.4% from the previous year. Per capita pure income of rural residents was 10,747 RMB, a real increase of 12.4%.<sup>68</sup> Per capita disposable income of the 20% low-income residents increased 16.7%, 11.4 percentage points higher than the growth rate of the 20% high-income residents. The [Engel's coefficient](#) of Beijing's urban residents reached 31.8% in 2005 and that of the rural residents was 32.8%, declining 4.5 percentage points and 3.9 percentage points, respectively, compared with 2000.

Beijing's [real estate](#) and [automobile](#) sectors have continued to boom in recent years. In 2005, a total of 28.032 million square metres of housing real estate was sold, for a total of 175.88 billion [RMB](#). The total number of cars registered in Beijing in 2004 was 2,146,000, of which 1,540,000 were privately owned (a year-on-year increase of 18.7%).<sup>69</sup>

The [Beijing CBD](#), centred at the [Guomao](#) area, has been identified as the city's new [central business district](#), and is home to a variety of corporate regional headquarters, shopping precincts, and high-end housing. The [Beijing Financial Street](#), in the [Fuxingmen](#) and [Fuchengmen](#) area, is a traditional financial centre. The [Wangfujing](#) and [Xidan](#) areas are major shopping districts. [Zhongguancun](#), dubbed "China's Silicon Valley", continues to be a major centre in [electronics](#)- and [computer](#)-related industries, as well as [pharmaceuticals](#)-related research. Meanwhile, [Yizhuang](#), located to the southeast of the urban area, is becoming a new centre in pharmaceuticals, IT, and

materials engineering.<sup>70</sup> Urban Beijing is also known for being a centre of pirated goods and anything from the latest designer clothing to the latest DVDs can be found in markets all over the city, often marketed to expatriates and international visitors.<sup>71</sup>

Major industrial areas include [Shijingshan](#), located on the western outskirts of the city.<sup>72</sup> [Agriculture](#) is carried out outside the urban area of Beijing, with [wheat](#) and [maize](#) (corn) being the main crops.<sup>48</sup> [Vegetables](#) are also grown in the regions closer to the urban area in order to supply the city.

Beijing is increasingly becoming known for its innovative [entrepreneurs](#) and high-growth start-ups. This culture is backed by a large community of both Chinese and foreign [venture capital](#) firms, such as [Sequoia Capital](#), whose head office in China resides in Chaoyang, Beijing. Though Shanghai is seen as the economic centre of China, this is typically based on the numerous large corporations based there, rather than as a centre for Chinese [entrepreneurship](#).

The development of Beijing continues to proceed at a rapid pace, and the vast expansion of Beijing has created a multitude of problems for the city. Beijing is known for its [smog](#) as well as the frequent "power-saving" programmes instituted by the government. Citizens of Beijing as well as tourists frequently complain about the [quality of the water supply](#) and the cost of the basic services such as electricity and natural [gas](#). To reduce air pollution, a number of major industries have been ordered to reduce emissions or leave the city. [Beijing Capital Steel](#), once one of the city's largest employers and its single biggest polluter, has been moving most of its operations to [Tangshan](#).<sup>73</sup>

Specially designated industrial parks in Beijing include: [Zhongguancun Science Park](#), Yongle Economic Development Zone, Beijing Economic-technological Development Area, and Tianzhu Airport Industrial Zone.

## Demographics



[Wangfujing Cathedral](#)

The population of Beijing Municipality, defined as the total number of people who reside in Beijing for 6 months or more per year, was 17.4 million at the end of 2007. There were 12.04 million people in Beijing Municipality who had Beijing [hukou](#) (permanent residence), and the remainder were on temporary residence permits.<sup>2345</sup> In 2006, a study by the Beijing Statistics Bureau estimated the total of all people living in Beijing (permanent, temporary, unregistered and others) to be "close to 20 million."<sup>74</sup> Recent statistics cited by China Daily put the number of migrant workers in the service and construction industries in Beijing at "more than 5.1 million."<sup>75</sup> In addition, there is a large number of [migrant workers](#) ([min gong](#)) who live illegally in Beijing without any official residence permit (or unregistered people).<sup>76</sup>

The population of Beijing's urban core (city proper) is over 13 million. After [Chongqing](#) and [Shanghai](#), Beijing is the third largest of the four municipalities of the PRC, which are equivalent to provinces in China's administrative structure.

Most of Beijing's residents belong to the [Han Chinese](#) majority. Other ethnic minorities include the [Manchu](#), [Hui](#), and [Mongol](#).<sup>48</sup> A Tibetan-language [high school](#) exists for youth of Tibetan ancestry, nearly all of whom have come to Beijing from [Tibet](#) expressly for their studies.<sup>77</sup> A sizable international community exists in Beijing, many attracted by the highly growing foreign business and trade sector, others by the traditional and modern culture of the city. Much of this international community lives in the areas around the [Beijing CBD](#), [Sanlitun](#), and [Wudaokou](#). In recent years there has also been an influx of [South Koreans](#) who live in Beijing predominantly for business and study purpose. Many of them live in the [Wangjing](#) and [Wudaokou](#) areas.<sup>7879</sup>

**Ethnic groups in Beijing, 2000 census**

<a href="#">Nationality</a>	Population	Percentage
<a href="#">Han</a>	12,983,696	95.69%
<a href="#">Manchu</a>	250,286	1.84%
<a href="#">Hui</a>	235,837	1.74%
<a href="#">Mongols</a>	37,464	0.28%
<a href="#">Koreans</a>	20,369	0.15%
<a href="#">Tujia</a>	8372	0.062%
<a href="#">Zhuang</a>	7322	0.054%
<a href="#">Miao</a>	5291	0.039%
<a href="#">Uyghur</a>	3129	0.023%
<a href="#">Tibetan</a>	2920	0.022%

Excludes members of the [People's Liberation Army](#) in active service.<sup>80</sup>

## Culture



A scene from a [Beijing opera](#)



The [National Centre for the Performing Arts](#)



The [Old Beijing Observatory](#)



A Chinese [cloisonné](#) dish from the Qing dynasty

People native to urban Beijing speak the [Beijing dialect](#), which belongs to the Mandarin subdivision of [spoken Chinese](#). [Beijing dialect](#) is the basis for [Standard Mandarin](#), the language used in mainland [China](#), [Taiwan](#), and [Singapore](#). Rural areas of Beijing Municipality have their own dialects akin to those of [Hebei](#) province, which surrounds Beijing Municipality.

[Beijing opera](#), or Peking opera (*Jingju* 京剧), is well-known throughout the national capital. Commonly lauded as one of the highest achievements of [Chinese culture](#), Beijing opera is performed through a combination of song, spoken dialogue, and codified action sequences, such as gestures, movement, fighting and acrobatics. Much of Beijing opera is carried out in an archaic stage dialect quite different from modern Standard Mandarin and from the [Beijing dialect](#).<sup>81</sup>

[Siheyuans](#) line [hutongs](#) (胡同), or alleys, which connect the interior of Beijing's old city. They are usually straight and run east to west so that doorways can face north and south for [Feng Shui](#) reasons. They vary in width – some are very narrow, enough for only a few pedestrians to pass through at a time.

Once ubiquitous in Beijing, siheyuans and hutongs are now rapidly disappearing, as entire city blocks of hutongs are leveled and replaced with high-rise buildings.<sup>82</sup> Residents of the hutongs are entitled to live in the new buildings, in apartments of at least the same size as their former residences. Many complain, however, that the traditional sense of community and street life of the hutongs cannot be replaced.<sup>83</sup> Residents, however, have limited control over their own property, as the government usually owns it.<sup>84</sup> Some particularly historic or picturesque neighbourhoods of hutongs are being preserved and restored by the government, especially for the 2008 Olympics.<sup>85</sup>

[Mandarin cuisine](#) is the local style of cooking in Beijing. The [Peking Roast Duck](#) is perhaps the most well-known dish. The [Manhan Quanxi](#) ("Manchu-Han Chinese full banquet") is a rare traditional banquet originally intended for the ethnic-[Manchu](#) emperors of the [Qing Dynasty](#); it remains very prestigious and expensive. The [Fuling Jiabing](#) is a traditional Beijing snack food, a pancake (*bing*) resembling a flat disk with filling, made from *fu ling* ([Poria cocos](#) (*Schw.*) *Wolf*, or "tuckahoe"), an ingredient common in traditional [Chinese medicine](#). [Teahouses](#) are also common in Beijing. Chinese [tea](#) comes in many varieties and some rather expensive types of Chinese tea are said to cure an ailing body extraordinarily well.

The [cloisonné](#) (or *Jingtai*, literally "Blue of [Jingtai](#)") metalworking technique and tradition is a specialty of Beijing's cultural art, and is one of the most revered traditional crafts in China.<sup>86</sup> Cloisonné making requires elaborate and complicated processes which includes: base-hammering, copper-strip inlay, soldering, enamel-filling, enamel-firing, surface polishing and gilding.<sup>8687</sup> Beijing's [lacquerware](#) is also well known for its sophisticated and intrinsic patterns and images carved into its surface, and the various decoration techniques of lacquer includes "carved lacquer" and "engraved gold".

Younger residents of Beijing have become more attracted to the [nightlife](#), which has flourished in recent decade, breaking prior cultural traditions that practically restricted it to the upper class.<sup>88</sup>

## Places of interest

“ ...the city remains an epicenter of tradition with the treasures of nearly 2,000 years as the imperial capital still on view—in the famed Forbidden City and in the city's lush pavilions and gardens... ”

— [National Geographic](#)<sup>89</sup>



Classical gardens in Beijing

At the heart of Beijing's historical centre lies the [Forbidden City](#), the enormous palace compound that was the home of the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties;<sup>90</sup> the Forbidden City also hosts the Palace Museum, which contains imperial collections of Chinese art. Surrounding the Forbidden City are several former imperial gardens, parks and scenic areas, notably the [Beihai](#), [Houhai](#), [Shichahai](#), [Zhongnanhai](#), [Jingshan](#) and [Zhongshan](#). These places, like the [Beihai Park](#) are described

to be masterpieces of [Chinese gardening](#) art,<sup>91</sup> and are popular tourist destinations with tremendous historical importance; [Zhongnanhai](#) during the modern era has also been the political heart of various Chinese governments and regimes and is now the headquarters of the Communist Party of China. From the [Tiananmen Square](#), which is located right across the Forbidden City, there are several notable sites, such as the [Tiananmen](#), [Qianmen](#), the [Great Hall of the People](#), [National Museum of China](#), [Monument to the People's Heroes](#), and [Mausoleum of Mao Zedong](#). The [Summer Palace](#) and the [Old Summer Palace](#) both lie at the western part of the urban city of Beijing; the Summer Palace, a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#),<sup>92</sup> displays a comprehensive collection of imperial gardens and palaces that functioned as the summer retreat for the Qing Dynasty emperors.

Among the best known religious sites in the city is the [Temple of Heaven](#) (*Tiantan*), located in southeastern Beijing, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site,<sup>93</sup> where emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties made visits for annual ceremonies of prayer to Heaven for good harvest; located in the opposite direction of the Temple of Heaven at the northern part of the city are the [Temple of Earth](#) (*Ditan*), and the [Temple of the Sun](#) (*Ritan*) and [Temple of the Moon](#) (*Yuetan*), both respectively located in the eastern and western parts of the urban area. Other well-known temple sites located in Beijing include the [Dongyue Temple](#), [Tanzhe Temple](#), [Miaoying Temple](#), [White Cloud Temple](#), [Yonghe Temple](#), [Fayuan Temple](#), [Wanshou Temple](#) and the [Big Bell Temple](#). The city also has its own [Confucius Temple](#), and a [Guozijian](#). The [Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception](#) was built in 1605, and is the oldest Catholic church in Beijing. The [Niuujie Mosque](#) is also the oldest mosque in Beijing, with a history over a thousand years old.



A German postcard of Beijing from 1900

Beijing contains several well-preserved pagodas and stone pagodas, such as the towering [Pagoda of Tianning Temple](#), which was built during the Liao Dynasty from 1100-1120, and the [Pagoda of Cishou Temple](#), which was built in 1576 during the Ming Dynasty. Several historically important [stone bridges](#) are also located in Beijing, including the 12th century [Lugou Bridge](#), the 17th century [Baliqiao bridge](#) and the 18th century [Jade Belt Bridge](#). The [Beijing Ancient Observatory](#) displays pretelescopic spheres dating back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. The [Fragrant Hills](#) (*Xiangshan*) is a popular scenic public park that consists of natural landscape areas as well as traditional and cultural relics. The [Beijing Botanical Garden](#) exhibits over 6,000 species of plants, including a variety of trees, bushes and flowers, and an extensive [peony](#) garden. The [Taoranting Park](#), [Chaoyang Park](#), [Haidian Park](#) and [Zizhu Yuan](#) are all popular recreational parks that consist of a variety of natural landscapes. The [Beijing Zoo](#) is a center of zoological research that also contains rare animals from various continents, including the [giant panda](#) of China.

Beijing is also known for its [siheyuan](#) (courtyard houses) and [hutong](#) (alleys), although they are increasingly disappearing due to the growth of city constructions and are giving way to high-rises. The city has several well-preserved neighborhoods of siheyuan, including some of the more grand courtyard houses, such as the [Prince Gong Mansion](#). There are over hundreds of [museums](#) in Beijing,<sup>94</sup> and aside from the [Palace Museum](#) in the Forbidden City and the [National Museum of China](#), other major museums include the [National Art Museum of China](#), the [Capital Museum](#), the [Beijing Art Museum](#), the [Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution](#), the [Geological](#)

[Museum of China](#), the [Beijing Museum of Natural History](#) and the [Paleozoological Museum of China](#).<sup>95</sup>

Located at the outskirts of urban Beijing but within its municipality are the [Thirteen Tombs of the Ming Dynasty](#), the lavish and elaborate burial sites of thirteen Ming emperors, which have been designated as part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site "[Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties](#)".<sup>96</sup> The archaeological [Peking Man](#) site at [Zhoukoudian](#) is another World Heritage Site within the Beijing municipality,<sup>97</sup> and it contains a wealth of discoveries, including one of the first specimens of [Homo erectus](#), and an assemblage of bones of the gigantic [hyena Pachycrocuta brevirostris](#). There are several sections of the UNESCO World Heritage Site [Great Wall of China](#)<sup>98</sup> located in the municipality, most notably [Badaling](#), [Jinshanling](#), [Simatai](#) and [Mutianyu](#).

## Media

### Television and radio



The [CCTV Headquarters](#)

See also: [Beijing Radio Stations](#)

[Beijing Television](#) (BTV) broadcasts on numbered channels 1 through 10. Three radio stations feature programmes in English: *Hit FM* on FM 88.7, *Easy FM* by [China Radio International](#) (CRI) on FM 91.5, and the newly launched *Radio 774* on AM 774. [Beijing Radio Stations](#) is the family of radio stations serving the city audience; its stations include the music station on 97.4 FM as well as a series of other stations focused on news, sports, educational programming, and others.

### Press

The well-known [Beijing Evening News](#) (*Beijing Wanbao*) [newspaper](#) is distributed every afternoon, covering news about Beijing in Chinese. Other newspapers include *The Beijing News* (*Xin Jing Bao*), the *Beijing Star Daily*, the *Beijing Morning News*, and the [Beijing Youth Daily](#) (*Beijing Qingnian Bao*), as well as English-language weeklies [Beijing Weekend](#) and [Beijing Today](#) (the English-language ion of *Youth Daily*). [People's Daily](#) and [China Daily](#) (English) are published in Beijing as well. Nationally circulated Chinese newspapers are also available in Beijing.

Publications primarily aimed at international visitors and the expatriate community include the English-language periodicals [Time Out Beijing](#), [City Weekend](#), [Beijing This Month](#), [Beijing Talk](#), [That's Beijing](#).

The international press, including English and other languages' newspapers and magazines, are available in major international hotels and [friendship stores](#), and content often appears complete.

## Transportation

Main article: [Transportation in Beijing](#)

With the growth of the city following economic reforms, Beijing has evolved as the most important transportation hub in the People's Republic of China, and within the larger East Asian region. Encircling the city are five ring roads, nine expressways and city express routes, eleven China National Highways, several railway routes, and an international airport.



The Beijing Railway Station

## Rail

Beijing has long been the largest railway hub in China. There are [railway lines](#) from Beijing to [Shanghai](#), [Guangzhou](#), [Kowloon](#), [Harbin](#), [Qinhuangdao](#), [Baotou](#), [Yuanping](#), [Chengde](#), and [Tianjin](#). As of 1 May 2009, [Beijing Railway Station](#) has 177 trains stopping daily, while [Beijing West Railway Station](#) has 220 trains. These two railway stations serve as major transportation nodes in the city. The state-of-the-art [Beijing South Railway Station](#) re-opened in August 2008, and serves as the Beijing terminus for the [Beijing-Tianjin high-speed train](#), the fastest regular passenger train service in the world, as well as all other high-speed [CRH](#) trains. International trains to cities in [Mongolia](#), [Russia](#), [Vietnam](#) and [North Korea](#), all run through Beijing.

Several other railway stations in urban Beijing handle regular passenger traffic: [Beijing North](#), [Beijing East](#), [Fengtai](#) and other smaller stations. There are also a number of other stations serving suburban areas. Passenger trains in China are numbered according to their direction in relation to Beijing.

## Roads and expressways

See: [Ring Roads of Beijing](#), [Expressways of Beijing](#) and [China National Highways of Beijing](#) for more related information.



An air-conditioned articulated bus operating on Beijing Bus Rapid Transit Line 1

Beijing is connected via road links from all parts of China as part of the National Trunk Road Network. Nine [expressways of China](#) (with six wholly new expressways under projection or

construction) connect with Beijing, as do eleven [China National Highways](#). Within Beijing itself, an elaborate network of five ring roads has developed, but they appear more rectangular than ring-shaped. Due partly to its design as an ancient capital, roads in Beijing often are in one of the four compass directions.

Beijing's urban transport is dependent upon the five "[ring roads](#)" ([Chinese](#): 环路) that successively surround the city, with the [Forbidden City](#) area marked as the geographical centre for the ring roads. The 1st Ring road is not officially defined. The [2nd Ring Road](#) is fully located in Beijing's inner city areas. Ring roads tend to resemble [expressways](#) progressively as they extend outwards, with the [5th Ring Road](#) and [6th Ring Road](#) being full-standard National expressways - linked to other roads only with interchanges. Expressways to other regions of China are generally accessible from the [3rd Ring Road](#) outward.

One of the biggest concerns with traffic in Beijing involves its apparently ubiquitous traffic jams, although in recent years [ITS](#) has been implemented in many areas in attempts to alleviate the problem. Traffic in the city centre is often gridlocked, especially around rush hour. Even outside of rush hour, several roads still remain clogged up with traffic. Urban area ring roads and major thoroughfares, especially near [Chang'an Avenue](#), are normally cited as high-congestion areas.

Exacerbating Beijing's traffic problems is its relatively underdeveloped mass transit system. Frequently cited is the city's subway system which has 8 lines for its 17 million citizens. In comparison, [New York City](#) has 26 lines for its 8 million citizens. Beijing's urban design layout further complicates the situation of the transportation system.<sup>101</sup> Compounding the problem is patchy enforcement of traffic regulations, and [road rage](#). Beijing authorities claim that traffic jams may be a thing of a past come the [2008 Olympics](#). The authorities have introduced several bus lanes where, during rush hour, all vehicles except for public buses must keep clear.

[Chang'an Avenue](#) runs east-west through the centre of Beijing, past [Tian'anmen](#). It is a major through route of the city.<sup>102</sup>

## Air



[Beijing Capital International Airport](#)'s new Terminal 3

Beijing's primary airport is the [Beijing Capital International Airport](#) (IATA: PEK; [Chinese](#): 北京首都国际机场) near [Shunyi](#), which is about 20 km northeast of city centre. With renovations for the 2008 Olympics, the airport now boasts three terminals, with Terminal 3 being one of the largest in the world. Most domestic and nearly all international flights arrive at and depart from Capital Airport. Capital Airport is the main hub for [Air China](#). The capital links Beijing with almost every other Chinese city with regular air passenger service. It is linked to central Beijing by the [Airport Expressway](#) and is a roughly 40-minute drive from the city centre during good traffic hours. Prior to the 2008 Olympics, another expressway, the [2nd Airport Expressway](#), was built to the Airport, as well as a [light rail](#) system, which is now connected to the [Beijing Subway](#).

Other airports in the city include [Beijing Liangxiang Airport](#), [Beijing Nanyuan Airport](#), [Beijing Xijiao Airport](#), [Beijing Shahe Airport](#) and [Beijing Badaling Airport](#). Nanyuan serves as the hub for only one passenger airline, and these airports are primarily for military use and less well-known to the public.

## Public transit



Line 5 platform at Dongdan station, with [platform screen doors](#)

The [Beijing Subway](#) system opened in 1971, and only consisted of two lines until the opening of the northern arc [Line 13](#) in 2002. Due to recent expansion, the evolving system now has nine lines, four of which are underground, and five are above ground. [Line 1](#), along with its new eastern expansion known as the [Batong Line](#) crosses almost all of urban Beijing from east to west. [Line 5](#) serves as the north-south axial line. Fare is 2 yuan flat throughout. There is an extensive system nearly 700 [bus](#) and [trolleybus](#) routes in Beijing as of 2008, including three [bus rapid transit](#) routes.<sup>103</sup> All public transportation can be accessed with the [Yikatong](#) card, which uses radio frequencies to be scanned at subway stations and on public transit buses.

Registered [taxis](#) can be found throughout Beijing, although a large number of unregistered taxis also exist. As of 30 June 2008, all fares on legal taxis start at 10 [Renminbi](#) for the first 3 km and 2.00 [Renminbi](#) per additional kilometer, not counting idling fees. Most taxis are [Hyundai Elantras](#), [Hyundai Sonatas](#), [Peugeot Citroëns](#) and [Volkswagen Jettas](#). After 15 km, the base fare is increased by 50% (but only applied to the portion of the distance over 15 km, so that the passenger is not retroactively charged extra for the first 15 km). Between 11 pm and 5 am, the fee is increased by 20%, starting at 11 RMB and increasing at a rate of 2.4 RMB per km. Rides over 15 km and between 11 pm and 6 am apply both charges, for a total increase of 80% (120%\*150%=180%).

## Education



[Tsinghua University](#) is a top university in mainland China

Beijing is home to a great number of colleges and universities, including several well-regarded universities of international stature, such as [Peking University](#) and [Tsinghua University](#).<sup>8</sup> Owing to Beijing's status as the political and cultural capital of China, a larger proportion of [tertiary-level](#) institutions are concentrated here than in any other city in China, reaching at least 70 in number. Many international students from [Japan](#), [Korea](#), [North America](#), [Europe](#), [Southeast Asia](#), and elsewhere come to Beijing to study every year. The institutions listed here are administered by China's [Ministry of Education](#).

# Shanghai Fri. Oct. 9, 2009

Shanghai (Chinese: [上海](#)) is the [largest city](#) in [China](#) in terms of population and one of the [largest metropolitan areas](#) in the world, with over 20 million people.<sup>5</sup> Located on China's central eastern coast at the mouth of the [Yangtze River](#), the city is administered as a [municipality](#) of the [People's Republic of China](#) with [province-level](#) status.<sup>6</sup>

Originally a fishing and textiles town, Shanghai grew to importance in the 19th century due to its favourable [port](#) location and as one of the cities opened to foreign trade by the 1842 [Treaty of Nanking](#).<sup>7</sup> The city flourished as a center of commerce between [east](#) and [west](#), and became a multinational hub of finance and business by the 1930s.<sup>8</sup> However, Shanghai's prosperity was interrupted after the 1949 [Communist takeover](#) and the subsequent cessation of foreign investment. [Economic reforms](#) in 1990 resulted in intense development and financing in Shanghai, and in 2005 Shanghai became the world's largest cargo port.<sup>9</sup>

The city is a [tourist](#) destination renowned for its historical landmarks such as [the Bund](#) and [Chenghuang Miao](#), its modern and ever-expanding [Pudong](#) skyline including the [Oriental Pearl Tower](#), and its new reputation as a [cosmopolitan](#) center of culture and design.<sup>1011</sup> Today, Shanghai is the largest center of commerce and finance in [mainland China](#), and has been described as the "showpiece" of the world's [fastest-growing economy](#).<sup>12</sup>

## Etymology

上  
海

The two [Chinese characters](#) in the name "Shanghai", ([上](#), shàng; and [海](#), hǎi) literally mean "up, on, or above" and "sea". The earliest occurrence of this name dates from the [Song Dynasty](#) (11th century), at which time there was already a river confluence and a town with this name in the area. There are disputes as to how the name should be interpreted, but official local histories have consistently said that it means "the upper reaches of the sea". Due to the changing coastline, Chinese historians have concluded that in the Tang Dynasty Shanghai was literally on the sea, hence the origin of the name.<sup>13</sup> However, another reading, especially in [Mandarin](#), also suggests the sense of "go onto the sea," which is consistent with the seaport status of the city. A more poetic name for Shanghai switches the order of the two characters, *Hǎishàng* ([海上](#)), and is often used for terms related to Shanghainese art and culture.

Shanghai is commonly abbreviated in Chinese as *Hù* ([沪](#)). The single character *Hu* ([沪](#)) appears on all motor vehicle license plates issued in Shanghai today. This is derived from *Hu Du* ([沪渎](#)), the name of an ancient fishing village that once stood at the confluence of [Suzhou Creek](#) and the Huangpu River back in the Tang Dynasty.<sup>13</sup> The character *Hu* is often combined with that for *Song*, as in *Wusong Kou*, *Wu Song River*, and *Songjiang* to form the nickname **Song Hu**. For example, the Japanese attack on Shanghai in August 1937 is commonly called the *Song Hu Battle*. Another early name for Shanghai was *Hua Ting*, now the name of a four star hotel in the city.<sup>13</sup> One other

commonly used nickname *Shēn* (申) is derived from the name of *Chunshen Jun* (春申君), a nobleman and locally-revered hero of the [Chu Kingdom](#) in the 3rd century BC whose territory included the Shanghai area. Sports teams and newspapers in Shanghai often use the character *Shēn* (申) in their names. Shanghai is also commonly called *Shēnchéng* (申城, "City of Shēn"). The city has also had various nicknames in English, including "Paris of the East".

## History

During the Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279) Shanghai was upgraded in status from a village (cun) to a market town (zhen) in 1074, and in 1172 a second sea wall was built to stabilize the ocean coastline, supplementing an earlier dike.<sup>14</sup> From the Yuan Dynasty in 1292 until Shanghai officially became a city for the first time in 1297, the area was designated merely as a county (xian) administered by the Songjiang (松江) Prefecture (Songjiang Fu).<sup>15</sup>

Two important events helped promote Shanghai's development in the Ming Dynasty. A [city wall](#) was built for the first time during in 1554, in order to protect the town from raids by [Wokou](#) (Japanese pirates). It measured 10 meters high and 5 kilometers in circumference.<sup>16</sup> During the Wanli reign (1573-1620), Shanghai received an important psychological boost from the erection of a [City God Temple](#) (Cheng Huang Miao) in 1602. This honor was usually reserved for places with the status of a city, such as a prefectural capital (fu), and was not normally given to a mere county town (zhen) like Shanghai. The honor was probably a reflection of the town's economic importance, as opposed to its low political status.<sup>16</sup>

During the [Qing Dynasty](#), Shanghai became the most important sea port in the whole Yangtze Delta region. This was a result of two important central government policy changes. First of all, Emperor Kangxi (1662-1723) in 1684 reversed the previous Ming Dynasty prohibition on ocean going vessels, a ban that had been in force since 1525. Secondly, Emperor Yongzheng in 1732 moved the customs office (hai guan) for Jiangsu province from the prefectural capital of Songjiang city to Shanghai, and gave Shanghai exclusive control over customs collections for the foreign trade of all Jiangsu province. As a result of these two critical decisions, Professor Linda Cooke Johnson has concluded that by 1735 Shanghai had become the major trade port for all of the lower Yangzi River region, despite still being at the lowest administrative level in the political hierarchy.<sup>17</sup>

The importance of Shanghai grew radically in the 19th century, as the city's strategic position at the mouth of the [Yangtze River](#) made it an ideal location for trade with the West. During the [First Opium War](#) in the early 19th century, British forces temporarily held Shanghai. The war ended with the 1842 [Treaty of Nanjing](#), which saw the [treaty ports](#), Shanghai included, opened for international trade. The [Treaty of the Bogue](#) signed in 1843, and the [Sino-American Treaty of Wangsia](#) signed in 1844 together saw foreign nations achieve extraterritoriality on Chinese soil, the start of the foreign concessions.

1854 saw the first meeting of the [Shanghai Municipal Council](#), created in order to manage the foreign settlements. In 1863, the British settlement, located to the south of Suzhou creek (Huangpu district), and the American settlement, to the north of Suzhou creek (Hongkou district), joined in order to form the International Settlement. The French opted out of the Shanghai Municipal Council, and maintained its own [French Concession](#), located to the south of the International Settlement, which still exists today as a popular attraction. Citizens of many countries and all continents came to Shanghai to live and work during the ensuing decades; those who stayed for long periods – some for generations – called themselves "[Shanghaianders](#)".<sup>18</sup> In the 1920s and

1930s, almost 20,000 so-called [White Russians](#) and Russian Jews fled the newly-established Soviet Union and took up residence in Shanghai. These [Shanghai Russians](#) constituted the second-largest foreign community. By 1932, Shanghai had become the world's fifth largest city, home to 70,000 foreigners.<sup>19</sup>

The [Sino-Japanese War](#) concluded with the [Treaty of Shimonoseki](#), which saw [Japan](#) emerge as an additional foreign power in Shanghai. Japan built the first factories in Shanghai, which were soon copied by other foreign powers to effect the emergence of Shanghai industry. Shanghai was then the most important financial center in the [Far East](#).

Under the [Republic of China](#) (1911-1949), Shanghai's political status was finally raised to that of a municipality on July 14, 1927. Although the territory of the foreign concessions was excluded from their control, this new Chinese municipality still covered an area of 828.8 square kilometers, including the modern-day districts of Baoshan, Yangpu, Zhabei, Nanshi, and Pudong. Headed by a Chinese mayor and municipal council, the new city governments first task was to create a new city center in Jiangwan town of Yangpu district, outside the boundaries of the foreign concessions. This new city center was planned to include a public museum, library, sports stadium, and city hall.<sup>20</sup>

The [Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service](#) bombed Shanghai on 28 January 1932, nominally in an effort to crush down Chinese student protests of the [Manchurian Incident](#) and the subsequent Japanese occupation of northeast China. The Chinese fought back in what was known as the [January 28 Incident](#). The two sides fought to a standstill and a ceasefire was brokered in May. The [Battle of Shanghai](#) in 1937 resulted in the occupation of the Chinese administered parts of Shanghai outside of the International Settlement and the French Concession. The International Settlement was occupied by the Japanese on 8 December 1941 and remained occupied until Japan's surrender in 1945. According to historian Zhiliang Su, at least 149 "comfort houses" for [sexual slaves](#) were established in Shanghai during the occupation.<sup>21</sup>



Shanghai has seen massive development over the past 15 years

On 27 May 1949, the [Communist Party of China](#) controlled the [People's Liberation Army](#) and took control of Shanghai, which was one of only three former [Republic of China](#) (ROC) municipalities not merged into neighbouring provinces over the next decade (the others being [Beijing](#) and [Tianjin](#)). Shanghai underwent a series of changes in the boundaries of its subdivisions, especially in the next decade. After 1949, most foreign firms moved their offices from Shanghai to [Hong Kong](#), as part of an exodus of foreign investment due to the Communist victory.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Shanghai became an industrial center and center for revolutionary [leftism](#). Yet, even during the most tumultuous times of the [Cultural Revolution](#), Shanghai was able to maintain high economic productivity and relative social stability. In most of the history of the [People's Republic of China \(PRC\)](#), Shanghai has been the largest contributor of tax revenue to the central government compared with other Chinese provinces and municipalities. This came at the cost of severely crippling Shanghai's infrastructure and capital development. Its importance to China's fiscal well-being also denied it economic liberalizations that were started in the far

southern provinces such as [Guangdong](#) during the mid-1980s. At that time, Guangdong province paid nearly no taxes to the central government, and thus was perceived as fiscally expendable for experimental economic reforms. Shanghai was finally permitted to initiate economic reforms in 1991, starting the huge development still seen today and the birth of [Lujiazui](#) in [Pudong](#).

## Geography and climate

Main article: [Geography of Shanghai](#)



The urban area of Shanghai can be seen in this [false-color](#) satellite image.

Shanghai sits on the [Yangtze River Delta](#) on [China's](#) eastern coast, and is roughly equidistant from [Beijing](#) and [Hong Kong](#). The municipality as a whole consists of a [peninsula](#) between the [Yangtze](#) and [Hangzhou Bay](#), China's third largest island [Chongming](#), and a number of smaller islands. It is bordered on the north and west by [Jiangsu Province](#), on the south by [Zhejiang Province](#), and on the east by the [East China Sea](#). The city proper is bisected by the [Huangpu River](#), a tributary of the [Yangtze](#). The historic center of the city, the [Puxi](#) area, is located on the western side of the Huangpu, while a new financial district, [Pudong](#), has developed on the eastern bank.

The vast majority of Shanghai's 6,218 km<sup>2</sup> (2,401 sq mi) land area is flat, apart from a few hills in the southwest corner, with an average elevation of 4 m (13 ft).<sup>22</sup> The city's location on the flat [alluvial plain](#) has meant that new [skyscrapers](#) must be built with deep concrete piles to stop them sinking into the soft ground. The highest point is at the peak of [Dajinshan Island](#) at 103 m (340 ft).<sup>23</sup> The city has many rivers, canals, streams and lakes and is known for its rich water resources as part of the [Taihu](#) drainage area.



A park in the center of Shanghai

Public awareness of the [environment](#) is growing, and the city is investing in a number of environmental protection projects. A 10-year, US\$1 billion cleanup of [Suzhou Creek](#), which runs through the city center, is expected to be finished in 2008,<sup>24</sup> and the government also provides incentives for transportation companies to invest in [LPG buses](#) and [taxis](#). [Air pollution](#) in Shanghai is low compared to other Chinese cities such as [Beijing](#), but the rapid development over the past decades means it is still high on worldwide standards, comparable to [Los Angeles](#).<sup>25</sup>

Shanghai has a [humid subtropical climate](#) ([Koppen climate classification](#) *Cfa*) and experiences four distinct seasons. In winter, cold northerly winds from Siberia can cause nighttime temperatures to drop below freezing, and although not usually associated with [snow](#), the city can receive one or two days of snowfall per year. In contrast, and in spite of being the peak tourist season, summer in

Shanghai is very warm and humid, with occasional downpours or freak [thunderstorms](#). The city is also susceptible to [typhoons](#), none of which in recent years has caused considerable damage.<sup>26</sup> The most pleasant seasons are Spring, although changeable, and Autumn, which is generally sunny and dry. Shanghai experiences on average 1,778 hours of sunshine per year, with the hottest temperature ever recorded at 40 °C (104 °F), and the lowest at −12 °C (10 °F).<sup>27</sup> The average number of rainy days is 112 per year, with the wettest month being June.<sup>27</sup> The average frost-free period is 276 days.<sup>22</sup>

 Weather averages for Shanghai(1971-2000) 

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	8.1 (47)	9.2 (49)	12.8 (55)	19.1 (66)	24.1 (75)	27.6 (82)	31.8 (89)	31.3 (88)	27.2 (81)	22.6 (73)	17.0 (63)	11.1 (52)	20.2 (68)
Average low °C (°F)	1.1 (34)	2.2 (36)	5.6 (42)	10.9 (52)	16.1 (61)	20.8 (69)	25.0 (77)	24.9 (77)	20.6 (69)	15.1 (59)	9.0 (48)	3.0 (37)	12.9 (55)
<a href="#">Precipitation</a> mm (inches)	50.6 (1.99)	56.8 (2.24)	98.8 (3.89)	89.3 (3.52)	102.3 (4.03)	169.6 (6.68)	156.3 (6.15)	157.9 (6.22)	137.3 (5.41)	62.5 (2.46)	46.2 (1.82)	37.1 (1.46)	1,164.5 (45.85)
Sunshine hours	123.0	115.7	126.0	156.1	173.5	147.6	217.8	220.8	158.9	160.8	146.6	147.7	1,894.5

Source: [中国气象局 国家气象信息中心](#) 2009-03-17

## Politics

Main article: [Politics of Shanghai](#)



Shanghai municipal government building

Shanghai has been a [political](#) hub of China since the 20th century. The 1st [National Congress of the Communist Party of China](#) was held in Shanghai. In addition, many of China's top government officials in [Beijing](#) are known to have risen in Shanghai in the 1980s on a platform that was critical of the extreme leftism of the [Cultural Revolution](#), giving them the tag "[Shanghai Clique](#)" during the 1990s. Many observers of Chinese politics view the more right-leaning Shanghai Clique as an opposing and competing faction of the current Chinese administration under President [Hu Jintao](#) and Premier [Wen Jiabao](#). Shanghai's top jobs, the Party Chief and the position of Mayor, have always been prominent on a national scale. Four secretaries of municipal Party committee or mayors from Shanghai eventually went on to take prominent Central Government positions, including former President [Jiang Zemin](#), former Premier [Zhu Rongji](#), and current Vice-President [Xi Jinping](#). The top administrative jobs are always appointed directly by the Central Government.<sup>[citation needed](#)</sup>

The current Shanghai government under Mayor [Han Zheng](#) has openly advocated transparency in the city's government. However, in previous years a complicated system of relationships between

Shanghai's government, banks, and other civil institutions has been under scrutiny for corruption, motivated by faction politics in Beijing; these allegations from Beijing did not go anywhere until late 2006. Since Jiang's departure from office there has been a significant amount of clash between the local government in Shanghai and the [Central People's Government](#), an evolving example of *de facto* [Chinese federalism](#). The Shanghai government looks after almost all of the city's economic interests without interference from Beijing.

By 2006, Shanghai's actual level of autonomy has arguably surpassed that of any [autonomous regions](#), raising alarm bells in Beijing. In September 2006, the Shanghai Communist Party Secretary [Chen Liangyu](#), Shanghainese in origin and often clashing with central government officials, along with a number of his followers, were removed from their positions after a probe into the city's pension fund. Over a hundred investigators, sent by the Central Government, reportedly uncovered clues of money diversion from the city's pension fund to unapproved loans and investments. Chen's abrupt removal is viewed by many Chinese as a political manoeuvre by President [Hu Jintao](#) to further secure his power in the country, and retain administrative centralism. In March 2007 the central government appointed [Xi Jinping](#), who is not a Shanghai native, to become the Party Secretary, the most powerful office in the city. Xi would eventually be transferred to work for the central government in Beijing and was replaced by [Yu Zhengsheng](#) in November 2007.

## Economy



The [Bund](#) at night, the location of several major banking branches.

Shanghai is often regarded as the center of finance and trade in mainland China. Modern development began with the economic reforms in 1992, a decade later than many of the Southern Chinese provinces, but since then Shanghai quickly overtook those provinces and maintained its role as the business center in mainland China. Shanghai also hosts the largest share market in mainland China.

Shanghai has one of the world's busiest ports. Since 2005, Shanghai has ranked first of the world's busiest cargo ports throughout, handling a total of 560 million tons of cargo in 2007. Shanghai container traffic has surpassed [Hong Kong](#) to become the second busiest port in the world, behind [Singapore](#).<sup>28</sup>



The [Shanghai Stock Exchange](#) in the [Lujiazui](#) financial district.

Shanghai and [Hong Kong](#) are rivaling to be the economic center of the [Greater China](#) region. Hong Kong has the advantage of a stronger legal system, international market integration, superior

[economic freedom](#), greater banking and service expertise, lower taxes, and a fully-convertible currency. Shanghai has stronger links to both the Chinese interior and the central government, and a stronger base in manufacturing and technology. Shanghai has increased its role in finance, banking, and as a major destination for corporate headquarters, fueling demand for a highly educated and modernized workforce. Shanghai has recorded a double-digit growth for 15 consecutive years since 1992. In 2008, Shanghai's nominal GDP posted a 9.7% growth to 1.37 trillion yuan. The [Shanghai Stock Exchange](#) is the world's fastest growing, with the [Shanghai Composite Index](#) growing 130% in 2006.<sup>29</sup>

As in many other areas in China, Shanghai is undergoing a building boom. In Shanghai the modern architecture is notable for its unique style, especially in the highest floors, with several top floor restaurants which resemble flying saucers. *For a gallery of these unique architecture designs, see [Shanghai \(architecture images\)](#).*

The bulk of Shanghai buildings being constructed today are high-rise apartments of various height, color and design. There is now a strong focus by city planners to develop more "green areas" (public parks) among the apartment complexes in order to improve the quality of life for Shanghai's residents, quite in accordance to the "Better City - Better Life" theme of Shanghai's [Expo 2010](#).

Industrial zones in Shanghai include Shanghai Hongqiao Economic and Technological Development Zone, Jinqiao Export Economic Processing Zone, Minhang Economic and Technological Development Zone, and Shanghai Caohejing High and New Technological Development Zone (see [List of economic and technological development zones in Shanghai](#)).

## Demographics

The 2000 census put the population of Shanghai Municipality at 16.738 million, including the migrant population, which made up 3.871 million. Since the 1990 census the total population had increased by 3.396 million, or 25.5%. Males accounted for 51.4%, females for 48.6% of the population. 12.2% were in the age group of 0-14, 76.3% between 15 and 64 and 11.5% were older than 65. 5.4% of the inhabitants were illiterate. As of 2008, the population of long-term residents reached 18.88 million, including an officially registered permanent population of 13.71 million, and 4.79 million of registered long-term migrants from other provinces, mostly from [Anhui](#), [Jiangsu](#), and [Zhejiang](#) Provinces. According to the Shanghai Municipal Statistics Bureau, there were 133,340 foreigners in Shanghai in 2007.<sup>30</sup> In addition, there are a large number of people from [Taiwan](#) for business (estimates vary from 350,000 to 700,000). The average life expectancy in 2006 was 80.97 years, 78.67 for men and 82.29 for women.<sup>31</sup>



The pedestrian-only [Nanjing Road](#)

Most registered Shanghaiese residents are descendants of immigrants from the two adjacent provinces of [Jiangsu](#) and [Zhejiang](#) who moved to Shanghai in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, regions that generally also speak [Wu Chinese](#). In the past decade, many

migrants from other areas of China has come to Shanghai for work, often they do not speak the local dialect and therefore use Mandarin as a [lingua franca](#).

The [vernacular](#) language is [Shanghainese](#), a dialect of [Wu Chinese](#), while the official language is [Standard Mandarin](#). The local dialect is mutually unintelligible with Mandarin, and is an inseparable part of the Shanghainese identity. The modern [Shanghainese](#) dialect is based on the [Suzhou](#) dialect of Wu, the [prestige dialect](#) of Wu spoken within the Chinese city of Shanghai prior to the modern expansion of the city, the Ningbo dialect of Wu, and the dialect of Shanghai's surrounding rural areas now within the Hongkou, Baoshan and Pudong districts, which is simply called "Bendihua", or "the local dialect". It is influenced to a lesser extent by the dialects of other nearby regions from which large numbers of people have migrated to Shanghai since the 20th Century. Nearly all Shanghainese under the age of 40 can speak Mandarin fluently. A predominant religion in Shanghai is [Mahayana Buddhism](#), and [Taoism](#) is also followed by many Shanghai residents. Fluency in foreign languages is unevenly distributed. Most senior residents who received a [university](#) education before the revolution, and those who worked in foreign enterprises, can speak English. Those under the age of 26 have had contact with English since primary school, as English is taught as a mandatory course starting at Grade four.



[Longhua Temple](#)'s inner courtyard.

Due to its cosmopolitan history, Shanghai has a rich blend of religious heritage as shown by the religious buildings and institutions still scattered around the city. [Taoism](#) has a presence in Shanghai in the form of several temples, including the [City God Temple](#), at the heart of the old city, the [Wenmiao](#), dedicated to [Confucius](#), and a temple dedicated to the [Three Kingdoms](#) general [Guan Yu](#). [Buddhism](#) has had a presence in Shanghai since ancient times. [Longhua temple](#), the largest temple in Shanghai, and [Jing'an Temple](#), were first founded in the [Three Kingdoms](#) period. Another important temple is the [Jade Buddha Temple](#), which is named after a large statue of [Buddha](#) carved out of [jade](#) in the temple. In recent decades, dozens of modern temples have been built throughout the city. Shanghai is also an important center of [Christianity](#) in China. Churches belonging to various denominations are found throughout Shanghai and maintain significant congregations. Among [Catholic](#) churches, [St Ignatius Cathedral](#) in [Xujiahui](#) is one of the largest, while [She Shan Basilica](#) is the only active pilgrimage site in China. The city is also home to [Muslim](#), [Jewish](#), and [Eastern Orthodox](#) communities.

While [Beijing](#) is considered the educational center of China, Shanghai is also home to some of the [country's most prestigious universities](#), including [Fudan University](#), [Shanghai Jiao Tong University](#) and [Tongji University](#).

## Transport



The [Shanghai Metro](#) is one of the fastest growing systems in the world.

See also: [Public transport in Shanghai](#)

Shanghai has an extensive public transport system, largely based on buses, trolleybuses, taxis, and a rapidly expanding metro system. All of these public transport tools can be accessed using the [Shanghai Public Transportation Card](#), which uses radio frequencies so the card does not have to physically touch the scanner.

The [Shanghai Metro](#) rapid-transit system and elevated light rail has eight lines (lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9) at present and extends to every core urban district as well as neighbouring suburban districts such as [Songjiang](#) and [Minhang](#). According to the development schedule of the municipal government, by the year 2010, another 4 lines (numbers 7, 10, 11 and 13) will be built, while extensions are also underway for lines 2, 6, 8, 9. It is one of the fastest-growing metro systems in the world—the first line opened in 1995,<sup>32</sup> and as of 2009, the Shanghai Metro is the [11th busiest system](#) worldwide. Shanghai also has the world's most extensive [bus](#) system with nearly one thousand bus lines, operated by numerous transportation companies. Not all of Shanghai's bus routes are numbered—some have names exclusively in Chinese.<sup>33</sup> Bus fares are usually ¥1, ¥1.5 or ¥2, sometimes higher, while Metro fares run from ¥3 to ¥9 depending on distance.

[Taxis](#) in Shanghai are plentiful and government regulation has set taxi fares at an affordable rate for the average resident—¥11 for 3 km, ¥14 after 23:00. Before the 1990s, bicycling was the most ubiquitous form of transport in Shanghai, but the city has since banned bicycles on many of the city's main roads to ease congestion. However, many streets have bicycle lanes and intersections are monitored by "Traffic Assistants" who help provide for safe crossing. Further, the city government has pledged to add 180 km of cycling lanes over the next few years. It is worth noting that a number of the main shopping and tourist streets, [Nanjing Road](#) and [Huaihai Road](#) do not allow bicycles.

With rising disposable incomes, private car ownership in Shanghai has also been rapidly increasing in recent years. The number of cars is limited, however, by the number of available number plates available at [public auction](#). Since 1998 the number of new car registrations is limited to 50,000 vehicles a year.<sup>34</sup>



The [Maglev](#), with a top speed of 431 km/h (268 mph).

In cooperation with the Shanghai municipality and the Shanghai Maglev Transportation Development Co. (SMT), German [Transrapid](#) constructed the [first commercial Maglev railway in the world](#) in 2002, from Shanghai's Longyang Road subway station in Pudong to Pudong International Airport. Commercial operation started in 2003. The 30 km trip takes 7 minutes and 21 seconds and reaches a maximum speed of 431 km/h (267.8 mph). Normal operating speeds usually reach 431 km/h, but during a test run, the Maglev has been shown to reach a top speed of 501 km/h.

Two [railways](#) intersect in Shanghai: [Jinghu Railway](#) (Beijing-Shanghai) Railway passing through [Nanjing](#), and [Huhang Railway](#) (Shanghai-Hangzhou). Shanghai is served by two main railway stations, [Shanghai Railway Station](#) and [Shanghai South Railway Station](#). Express service to Beijing through [Z-series](#) trains is fairly convenient. A maglev train route to [Hangzhou](#) ([Shanghai-Hangzhou Maglev Train](#)) might begin construction in 2010. A [high-speed railroad](#) to Beijing is also in the works.

More than six national [expressways](#) (prefixed with "G") from [Beijing](#) and from the region around Shanghai connect to the city. Shanghai itself has six toll-free elevated expressways (*skyways*) in the urban core and 18 municipal expressways (*prefixed with "A"*). There are ambitious plans to build expressways connecting Shanghai's [Chongming Island](#) with the urban core. For a city of Shanghai's size, road traffic is still fairly smooth and convenient but getting more congested as the number of cars increases rapidly.

Shanghai has two commercial airports: [Hongqiao International](#) and [Pudong International](#),<sup>35</sup> the latter of which has the third highest traffic in China, following [Beijing Capital International Airport](#) and [Hong Kong International Airport](#). Pudong International handles more international traffic than Beijing Capital however, with over 17.15 million international passengers handled in 2006 compared to the latter's 12.6 million passengers.<sup>36</sup> Hongqiao mainly serves domestic routes, with a few city-to-city flights to Tokyo's [Haneda Airport](#) and Seoul's city airport. Hongqiao airport is about 10 kilometers west of the downtown. One of the airport's advantages is it is much closer to the city center than Pudong airport.

## Architecture



[The Bund](#) at night.

Shanghai has a rich collection of buildings and structures of various [architectural styles](#). The [Bund](#), located by the bank of the [Huangpu River](#), contains a rich collection of early 20th century architecture, ranging in style from [neoclassical HSBC Building](#) to the [art deco Sassoon House](#). A number of areas in the former foreign concessions are also well preserved, most notably the [French Concession](#). Despite rampant redevelopment, the old city still retains some buildings of a traditional style, such as the [Yuyuan Garden](#), an elaborate traditional garden in the [Jiangnan](#) style.



The lights of [the Bund](#) and [Puxi](#) skyscrapers at night.

In recent years, a large number of architecturally distinctive, even eccentric, skyscrapers have sprung up throughout Shanghai. Notable examples of contemporary architecture include the [Shanghai Museum](#) and [Shanghai Grand Theatre](#) in the [People's Square](#) precinct.



Renovated [shikumen](#) lanes in [Xintiandi](#), now a high-end restaurant and shopping center.

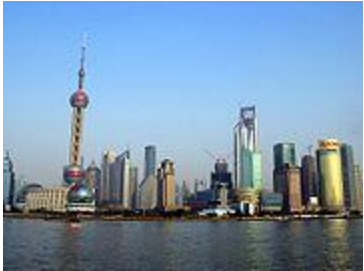
One uniquely Shanghainese cultural element is the [shikumen](#) (石库门) residences, which are two or three-story [townhouses](#), with the front yard protected by a high brick wall. Each residence is connected and arranged in straight alleys, known as a *lòngtang* (弄堂), pronounced *longdang* in Shanghainese. The entrance to each alley is usually surmounted by a stylistic stone arch. The whole resembles [terrace houses](#) or [townhouses](#) commonly seen in Anglo-American countries, but distinguished by the tall, heavy brick wall in front of each house. The name "shikumen" literally means "stone storage door", referring to the strong gateway to each house.

The shikumen is a cultural blend of elements found in Western architecture with traditional [Lower Yangtze](#) (Jiangnan) Chinese architecture and social behavior. All traditional Chinese dwellings had a courtyard, and the shikumen was no exception. Yet, to compromise with its urban nature, it was much smaller and provided an "interior haven" to the commotions in the streets, allowing for raindrops to fall and vegetation to grow freely within a residence. The courtyard also allowed sunlight and adequate ventilation into the rooms.



The Shanghai International Exhibition Center, an example of Soviet neoclassical architecture in Shanghai.

The city also has some beautiful examples of [Soviet neoclassical architecture](#). These buildings were mostly erected during the period from the founding of the [People's Republic](#) in 1949 until the [Sino-Soviet Split](#) in the late 1950s. During this decade, large numbers of Soviet experts poured into China to aid the country in the construction of a [communist](#) state, some of them were architects. Examples of Soviet neoclassical architecture in Shanghai include what is today the Shanghai International Exhibition Center. [Beijing](#), the nation's capital, displays an even greater array of this particular type of architecture.



Skyscrapers in Pudong

The [Pudong](#) district of Shanghai displays a wide range of supertall [skyscrapers](#). The most prominent examples include the [Jin Mao Tower](#) and the taller [Shanghai World Financial Center](#), which at 492 metres tall is the tallest skyscraper in [mainland China](#) and [ranks second](#) in the world. The distinctive [Oriental Pearl Tower](#), at 468 metres, is located nearby toward downtown Shanghai. Its lower sphere is now available for living quarters, at very high prices. Another tall highrise in the Pudong area of Shanghai is the newly finished [Development Tower](#). It stands at 269 meters. <sup>37</sup>

Also in Pudong, a third supertall skyscraper topping the other Shanghai buildings called the [Shanghai Tower](#) is under construction. With a height of 632 metres (2074 feet), the building will have 127 floors upon planned completion in 2014.

## Culture



The [Shanghai Museum](#), located in People's Square.

Because of Shanghai's status as the cultural and economic center of [East Asia](#) for the first half of the twentieth century, it is popularly seen as the birthplace of everything considered modern in China. It was in Shanghai, for example, that the first motor car was driven and the first train tracks and modern sewers were laid. It was also the intellectual battleground between socialist writers who concentrated on [critical realism](#) (pioneered by [Lu Xun](#) and [Mao Dun](#)) and the more "bourgeois", more romantic and aesthetically inclined writers (such as [Shi Zhecun](#), [Shao Xunmei](#), [Ye Lingfeng](#), [Eileen Chang](#)).

Besides literature, Shanghai was also the birthplace of [Chinese cinema](#) and theater. China's first short film, *The Difficult Couple* (*Nanfu Nanqi*, 1913), and the country's first fictional feature film, *Orphan Rescues Grandfather* (*Gu'er jiu zuji*, 1923) were both produced in Shanghai. These two films were very influential, and established Shanghai as the center of Chinese film-making. Shanghai's film industry went on to blossom during the early Thirties, generating Marilyn Monroe-like stars such as [Zhou Xuan](#). Another film star, [Jiang Qing](#), went on to become Madame [Mao Zedong](#). The talent and passion of Shanghainese filmmakers following [World War II](#) and the

[Communist revolution](#) in China contributed enormously to the development of the [Hong Kong film industry](#). Many aspects of Shanghainese popular culture ("Shanghainese Pops") were transferred to [Hong Kong](#) by the numerous Shanghainese emigrants and refugees after the Communist Revolution. The movie [In the Mood for Love](#) (*Huayang nianhua*) directed by [Wong Kar-wai](#) (a native Shanghainese himself) depicts one slice of the displaced Shanghainese community in [Hong Kong](#) and the nostalgia for that era, featuring 1940s music by Zhou Xuan.



Although often viewed as a modern metropolis, Shanghai still contains some picturesque rural suburban areas.

Shanghai boasts several museums of regional and national importance. The [Shanghai Museum](#) of art and history has one of the best collections of Chinese historical artifacts in the world, including important archaeological finds since 1949. The [Shanghai Art Museum](#), located near [People's Square](#), is a major art museum holding both permanent and temporary exhibitions. The [Shanghai Natural History Museum](#) is a large scale natural history museum. In addition, there is a variety of smaller, specialist museums, some housed in important historical sites such as the site of the [Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea](#) and the site of the First National Congress of the [Communist Party of China](#).



*No. 4 of Hundred Thousand Scenes* (十萬圖之四). Painting by Ren Xiong, a pioneer of the Shanghai School of Chinese art; ca. 1850.

The [Shanghai School](#) (海上画派 *Haishang Huapai* or 海派 *Haipai*) is a very important Chinese school of traditional arts during the [Qing Dynasty](#) and the whole of the twentieth century. Under efforts of masters from this school, traditional Chinese art reached another climax and continued to the present in forms of the "[Chinese painting](#)" (中国画) or *guohua* (国画) for short. The Shanghai School challenged and broke the literati tradition of Chinese art, while also paying technical homage to the ancient masters and improving on existing traditional techniques. Members of this school were themselves educated literati who had come to question their very status and the purpose of art, and had anticipated the impending modernization of Chinese society. In an era of rapid social change, works from the Shanghai School were widely innovative and diverse, and often contained thoughtful yet subtle social commentary. The most well-known figures from this school are [Ren Xiong](#) (任熊), [Ren Yi](#) (任伯年), [Zhao Zhiqian](#) (赵之谦), [Wu Changshuo](#) (吴昌硕), [Sha Menghai](#) (沙孟海, calligraphist), [Pan Tianshou](#) (潘天寿), [Fu Baoshi](#) (傅抱石) and [Wang Zhen \(Wang Yiting\)](#) (王震). In literature, the term was used in the 1930s by some [May Fourth Movement](#) intellectuals, notably [Zhou Zuoren](#) and [Shen Congwen](#), as a derogatory label for the literature produced in Shanghai at

the time. They argued that so-called Shanghai School literature was merely commercial and therefore did not advance social progress. This became known as the *Jingpai* (Beijing School) versus *Haipai* (Shanghai School) debate.

Songjiang School (松江派) is a small painting school during the [Ming Dynasty](#). It is commonly considered as a further development of the Wu School, or Wumen School (吴门画派), in the then cultural center of the region, [Suzhou](#). Huating School (华亭派) was another important art school during the middle to late Ming Dynasty. Its main achievements were in traditional Chinese painting, calligraphy and poetry, and especially famous for its Renwen painting (人文画). [Dong Qichang](#) (董其昌) is one of the masters from this school.

Also, KDS (宽带山) is a well representation of Shanghainese' resentments against people who are coming from outside of city.



Modernity meets tradition at [Jing'an Temple](#) in downtown Shanghai

Shanghai's parks offer some reprieve from the urban jungle. Due to the scarcity of play space for children, nearly all parks have a children's section. Zhongshan Gongyuan in Downtown Shanghai is famous for its monument of [Chopin](#), the tallest statue dedicated to the composer in the world. Built in 1914 as Jessfield Park, it once contained the campus of [St. John's University](#), Shanghai's first international college; today, it is known for its extensive rose and peony gardens, a large children's play area, and as the location of an important transfer station on the [city's metro system](#). One of the newest is in the Xujiahui District, Xujiahui Gongyuan, built in 1999 on the former grounds of the Great Chinese Rubber Works Factory and the EMI Recording Studio (today's glamorous La Villa Rouge restaurant), with entrances at Zhaojiabang Lu and in the west at the intersection of Hengshang Lu and Yuqin Lu. The park has a man-made lake with a sky bridge running across the park, and offers a pleasant respite for Xujiahui shoppers.



Two women wear Shanghai-styled [qipao](#) while playing [golf](#) in this 1930s Shanghai advertisement.

Other Shanghainese cultural artifacts include the cheongsam (Shanghainese: *zansae*), a modernization of the traditional Chinese/Manchurian [qipao](#) ([Chinese](#): 旗袍; fitting. This contrasts sharply with the traditional qipao which was designed to conceal the figure and be worn regardless of age. The cheongsam went along well with the western overcoat and the scarf, and portrayed a unique East Asian modernity, epitomizing the Shanghainese population in general. As Western fashions changed, the basic cheongsam design changed, too, introducing high-necked sleeveless dresses, bell-like sleeves and, the black lace frothing at the hem of a ball gown. By the 1940s, cheongsams came in transparent black, beaded bodices, matching capes and even velvet. And later, checked fabrics became also quite common. The 1949 Communist Revolution ended the cheongsam and other fashions in Shanghai. However, the Shanghainese styles have seen a recent revival as stylish party dresses. The fashion industry has been rapidly revitalizing in the past decade, there is on average one fashion show per day in Shanghai today. Like Shanghai's architecture, local fashion designers strive to create a fusion of western and traditional designs, often with innovative if uncontroversial results.

Shanghai has hosted a number of world events, including the [2007 Summer Special Olympics](#) and a [Live Earth](#) concert.<sup>38</sup> The [Shanghai International Film Festival](#) is annually held in the city. The city will be the host of the [Expo 2010 World's Fair](#) between May and October 2010. Shanghai is also home to a number of professional sports teams, including [Shanghai Shenhua](#) of the [Chinese Super League](#), the [Shanghai Sharks](#) of the [Chinese Basketball Association](#), and the [Shanghai Golden Eagles](#) of the [China Baseball League](#). The city has also hosted the [Formula One Chinese Grand Prix](#) at the [Shanghai International Circuit](#) every year since 2004.

## Okinawa Island Sun. Oct. 11, 2009

Okinawa Island (沖繩本島 *Okinawa-hontō*, or 沖繩島 *Okinawa-jima*) is the largest of the [Ryukyu Islands](#), and is home to [Naha](#), the capital of [Okinawa Prefecture](#). The island has an area of 1,201.03 [square kilometers](#) (463.7 [square miles](#)).

### History

It was the site of much of the land part of the [Battle of Okinawa](#) during [World War II](#), where American forces attempted to capture the island so it could be used as a springboard for the planned invasion of Japan. During this 82 day battle 100,000 Japanese and 12,000 American soldiers were killed, in addition to between 42,000 and 150,000 civilians, approximately one fourth of the civilian population of the island.

During the [American occupation of Japan](#), following the Imperial Japanese surrender after WW II, the [United States](#) controlled Okinawa Island (and other parts of Okinawa), which remained under U.S. governance until [June 17, 1972](#).

Since then, [United States Armed Forces](#) personnel have remained on Okinawa Island by invitation of the [Japanese government](#) as part of the [Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan](#).

## Population

In 1990, the total population of Okinawa Island was an estimated 1.22 million people, comprising [Ryūkyūans](#) (especially native Okinawans), [Japanese people](#), and [expatriates](#), as well as American military personnel and their families.

Whereas northern Okinawa Island is largely unpopulated, the south is markedly [urbanized](#)—particularly the city of [Naha](#), and the urban corridor stretching north from there to the city of [Okinawa](#). The island also houses six [gusuku](#), Okinawan fortresses most of which now lie in a state of [ruin](#).

## Geography and climate

The southern end of the island consists of uplifted [coral reef](#), whereas the northern half has proportionally more igneous rock. The easily eroded [limestone](#) of the south has many caves, the most famous of which is Gyokusendō in [Nanjō](#). An 850 m stretch is open to tourists.

The island's [subtropical climate](#) supports a dense northern forest and a [rainy season](#) occurring in late spring.

## Photo gallery



Cliffs at  
Manzamo



Gusuku wall



Okinawa Island is the  
home of Tsuboya-yaki,  
pottery in the Ryūkyūan  
tradition.



Okinawa Island from Space  
Shuttle Mission [STS-43](#) (Earth  
Sciences and Image Analysis,  
NASA-Johnson Space Center)



Gusuku Ruins



Bullfighting arena.  
Okinawa is the home of a  
form of bullfighting  
sometimes compared to  
[sumo](#)



Traditional Okinawan  
house



Map of Okinawa Prefecture  
showing location of Okinawa  
Island



In 1955 Isaac J. Hart was accused but not convicted of the [rape](#) and [murder](#) of six-year-old Yumiko. <sup>[citation needed](#)</sup> This is known as "The Yumiko Incident". Forty years later, on September 4, 1995, two [U.S. Marines](#) and a sailor [abducted](#) and raped a 12-year-old girl. At the time of [the incident](#), Japanese police could not arrest the men known to be involved because they had to remain with the United States Military until charged in a court, per the [U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement](#). Anti-military base emotions erupted in some of the largest [protests](#) in recent history.<sup>10</sup> Eventually through political pressure, the marines were tried and convicted in early 1996. As a result of this incident the Status of Forces Agreement, which was criticized for being too protective of U.S. servicemen involved in crimes, underwent revision. A movement to reduce the size of US military presence on Okinawa gained popularity. In November of 1995, a group called "Okinawan Women Act Against Military Violence" was organized to raise [awareness](#) of crimes alleged to have been committed by U.S. military personnel on the island. Sentiments against the United States military presence in Okinawa were inflamed further by the [Michael Brown Okinawa assault incident](#), in which a Marine Corps Major charged with attempted rape (and later convicted of the reduced charge of attempted indecent assault) was not turned over to the Japanese authorities at their request.<sup>11</sup> Okinawa authorities pressed for a modification of the Status of Forces Agreement in an effort to remove the military's unilateral right to determine whether it would turn over a servicemember charged with a serious crime.<sup>12</sup>

Tensions increased even more following allegations of an assault committed by an American serviceman against a minor<sup>13</sup>. A restriction was imposed to all U.S. military and Status of Forces Agreement eligible personnel at bases in Okinawa and Iwakuni in February, 2008. It has since been lifted.<sup>14</sup>

In April 2008 the U.S. Military charged a Marine with raping a 14-year-old girl in Okinawa, pressing ahead with a case that spurred protests against the U.S. presence on the island. U.S. military charges against Staff Sgt. Tyrone L. Hadnott include rape of a child under 16, abusive sexual conduct, making a false official statement, adultery and "kidnapping through inveigling," or trickery. Hadnott was later cleared of the charge of rape and kidnapping and convicted on the assault charge with a prison sentence of three years. <sup>15</sup>

The island of **Okinawa** normally has above 20°C weather for most part of the year. The island has a subtropical climate and the rainy season starts in late spring. This region has some of the best beaches in all of Japan. The northern part of the island is largely unpopulated, but the southern areas, especially Naha is considerably populated and urbanized. The island of Okinawa is a major producer of sugar cane, papayas, pineapples and other tropical fruits.

## See

- The City of [Naha](#) and surrounding areas:
  - **Kokusaidori Street**— Naha's main street filled with shops, restaurants, and nightlife.
  - **Shuri Castle Park**— Castle of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Also nearby is the **Shinkina Gardens**.

- **Mihama American Village**— An Americanized shopping and dining complex made to resemble an American beach such as Venice Beach, Santa Monica, etc. Popular among U.S. military members due to its close proximity to many U.S. Marine bases. The area has a ferris wheel, a few hotels, many clothing and souvenir stores and restaurants of various cuisine, and Sunset Beach. Plus there is live entertainment almost nightly.
- **Sefa Utaki**— In Nanjo, rock formations including a natural corridor through a giant boulder leading to a point overlooking Komaka Island, was once worshipped as the "island of the gods".
- The **Peace Memorial Park** and the **Himeyuri Monument**— where the Battle of Okinawa ended in World War II. The Peace Memorial Park includes the Peace Memorial Hall and the Cornerstone of Peace.
- **Cape Zanpa**— Peninsula on the western side of the island near Yomitan Village. Has a lighthouse and a beautiful beach. Also is where the famous beni-imo (sweet potato) flavored cookies are made.
- **Cape Kyan**— Southern most point of Okinawa Island.
- **Cape Hedo**— Northern most point of Okinawa Island, beautiful views from high cliffs.
- **Nago Bay**— Mid-island on the Western side.
- **Haneji Inland Sea**— Enclosed by Yayagi Island and the western peninsula. Beautiful especially at sunset.
- **Hamahiga Island**— East of Okinawa Island accessible by the Sea Road (a sight in itself). Hamahiga Island has many rock formations, many shaped like mushrooms.
- **Hiji Falls**— In the northern part of the island, a 45 minute hike from the visitors center taking you by a river dam, over a suspension bridge, and finally to the falls itself.

## Beaches

Being an island, there are plenty of beaches to choose from. The most highly recommended include:

- **Zanpa Beach**
- **Renaissance Beach**
- **Manzamo Beach**
- **Ikei Beach**

## Castle Ruins

With the ancient Ryukyu Kingdom which once ruled Okinawa, there were many castles located throughout the island.

- **Katsuren**— on the Eastern side near the Sea Road.
- **Zakimi**— on the Western side in Yomitan Village.
- **Nakijin**— on the Western side in Nakijin Village in the large peninsula.
- **Nakagusuku**— on the Eastern side in Nakagusuku Village.

## Do

- Go to the island's many **beaches**.

- [Scuba diving](#) is one of the most popular activities on the island with an abundance of dive shops across the island. [Chatan](#) has good shore diving and [Reef Encounters](#) is the only dive shop in all Okinawa where all instructors are fluent in English.
- Spear fishing is another popular activity on the island.
- Take a glass bottom boat tour, offering views of corals and fishes.
- **Ocean Expo Park**— Will give you a better idea of the creatures native to the waters surrounding Okinawa Island.

## Buy

**Kokusaidori Street** in Naha and **Mihama American Village** have plenty of shops. One of the popular items to buy is an Okinawan shirt, similar to Hawaiian shirts, at the **Mango House**, which have various locations throughout the island, but most of them in Naha.

In Okinawa, pork is very popular. A must eat is the *tebichi* soba, which is pig's feet with noodles. Various other Okinawan pork products are popular there.

For sushi, Yoshi's is an excellent restaurant. It is located in Chatan off Hwy 22. The Yoshi Roll is definitely worth a try! CoCo Curry House is a great cheap alternative. Try it with cheese, it's great. Although it should be noted that Yoshi's sushi is geared more to American's tastes than traditional Japanese sushi. For more traditional Okinawan sushi, Fenutin in the Mihama American Village is an excellent choice. Try the sea grapes there. They also play traditional Okinawan music there which is worth listening to, and CD's are available for purchase.

American style fast-foods and diners are popular in Okinawa. One particular chain that can be found is **A&W**.

For desert, have a **Blue Seal** ice cream. Many flavors are available there, including *beni-imo* (sweet potato), the local flavor in Okinawa. Also, *beni-imo* flavored cookies are popular there and can be found just about anywhere.

## Get out

The other Okinawan islands including Ishikagi, Taketomi, Shimoji, Kume, Ie, Iriomote, and plenty of others in the archipelago.

## Keelung TAIWAN Nickname The Rainy Port Mon. Oct. 11, 2009

雨港

**Keelung City** (also: **Jilong** or **Chilung**) is a major port city situated in the northeastern part of [Taiwan](#). It borders [Taipei County](#) and forms the [Taipei-Keelung metropolitan area](#), along with the City and County of Taipei. Nicknamed the *Rainy Port* for its frequent rain and maritime role, the city is Taiwan's second largest [seaport](#) (after [Kaohsiung](#)). Keelung is currently administered as a [provincial city](#) of [Taiwan Province](#), [Republic of China](#).

The city of Keelung was known as **Kelung** or **Keelung** to the Western world during the 19th century. However, the Taiwanese people have long called the city *Kelang* ([Taiwanese language POJ](#): **Ke-lâng**, [Chinese characters](#): 雞籠, meaning rooster cage).

It has been proposed that the name Keelung was derived from the local mountain that took the shape of a rooster cage. However, it is more probable that the name was derived from the first inhabitants of the region, as are the names of many other Taiwanese cities. In this case, the [Ketagalan people](#) were the first inhabitants, and early Han settlers probably approximated "Ketagalan" with "Ke-lâng" (phonetics of the [Southern Min Language](#)).

In 1875, during [Qing Dynasty](#) rule, the Chinese characters of the name were changed to the more auspicious 基隆 (pinyin: Jīlóng; POJ: Ki-liông, meaning prosperous base). In [Mandarin](#), probably the working language of Chinese government at the time, both the old and new names were likely pronounced Kīlóng (hence "Keelung"). Under [Japanese rule](#) (1895-1945), the city was known to the west by Japanese readings of the new name: Kirun, Kiirun or Kīrun. In Modern [Standard Mandarin](#), the official language of the [Republic of China](#), the new name is read Jīlóng, although the locals have continued to call the city *Ke-lâng* throughout changes in government.

## History

Keelung was first inhabited by the [Ketagalan](#), a tribe of [Taiwanese aborigine](#). Its first contact with the west was with the Spanish in the early 17th century, who built a fort in Keelung as an outpost of the [Manila](#)-based [Spanish East Indies](#). From 1642 to 1661 and 1663-1668, Keelung was under [Dutch](#) control. The [Dutch East India Company](#) took over the Spanish Fort San Salvador at [Santissima Trinidad](#). They reduced its size and renamed it Fort Noort-Holland. The Dutch had three more minor fortifications in Keelung and also a little school and a preacher. When [Ming Dynasty](#) loyalist [Koxinga](#) (Cheng Ch'en-Kung) successfully attacked the Dutch in the South of Taiwan, the crew of the Keelung forts fled to the Dutch trading post in [Japan](#). The Dutch came back in 1663 and re-occupied and strengthened their earlier forts. However, trade with China through Keelung was not what they hoped it would be and, in 1668, they left voluntarily.

In 1863, the [Qing Empire](#) opened up Keelung as a trading port.

The [Keelung Campaign](#) was an important subsidiary campaign in the [Sino-French War](#) (August 1884 to April 1885). The French occupied Keelung from 1 October 1884 to 22 June 1885, and several battles were fought during this period between Liu Ming-ch'uan's Army of Northern Formosa and Colonel [Jacques Duchesne](#)'s Formosa Expeditionary Corps.

A systematic city development started during the [Japanese](#) Era, after the 8 May 1895 [Treaty of Shimonoseki](#), which handed all Taiwan over to Japan, went into force.

Keelung became a town in Keelung District, [Taipei Prefecture](#) in 1920 and was upgraded to a city of [Taipei Prefecture](#) in 1924. [Coal mining](#) peaked in 1968.

## Climate



A view of the [Port of Keelung](#)

 Weather averages for Keelung, Taiwan (1971-2000) 

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	18.0 (64)	18.2 (65)	20.3 (69)	24.1 (75)	27.1 (81)	30.4 (87)	32.6 (91)	31.9 (89)	29.5 (85)	26.1 (79)	22.7 (73)	19.7 (67)	25.1 (77)
Daily Mean °C (°F)	15.8 (60)	15.8 (60)	17.6 (64)	21.1 (70)	24.2 (76)	27.1 (81)	29.0 (84)	28.6 (83)	26.8 (80)	24.0 (75)	20.8 (69)	17.6 (64)	22.4 (72)
Average low °C (°F)	13.7 (57)	13.7 (57)	15.3 (60)	18.7 (66)	21.7 (71)	24.5 (76)	26.0 (79)	25.9 (79)	24.4 (76)	22.1 (72)	18.9 (66)	15.6 (60)	20.0 (68)
<a href="#">Precipitation</a> mm (inches)	335.8 (13.22)	399.1 (15.71)	332.3 (13.08)	240.9 (9.48)	296.1 (11.66)	286.7 (11.29)	150.4 (5.92)	212.8 (8.38)	360.8 (14.2)	413.4 (16.28)	394.7 (15.54)	332.1 (13.07)	3,755.1 (147.84)
Sunshine hours	54.5	48.0	65.6	83.4	90.3	125.4	203.0	192.5	149.1	94.3	58.7	52.6	1,217.4
% Humidity	81.2	82.5	83.6	81.6	81.7	79.6	75.1	76.7	78.6	79.2	79.0	78.5	79.8
Avg. precipitation days	21.0	19.6	21.1	17.2	18.8	14.2	9.2	11.5	15.0	17.7	19.9	20.1	205.3

Source: <sup>1</sup> 2009-06-07

## Culture

One of the most popular festivals in Taiwan is the Mid-Summer Ghost Festival. The Keelung Ghost Festival is among the oldest in Taiwan, dating back to 1851 after bitter clashes between rivaling clans, which claimed many lives before mediators stepped in. [The Ghost Festival of Keelung City](#) is a reflection of Taiwan's rich cultural history that is very much alive today. <sup>2</sup>

**Keelung**, also spelled Chilung (基隆; *Jīlóng*), <sup>1</sup> is a port city in the north of [Taiwan](#), near the capital, [Taipei](#).

## Get in



Downtown Keelung

Keelung can be reached from [Taipei](#) by either freeway bus or train along the same route, or a longer bus ride along the North coast. Both means of transport are very frequent, and stops for Keelung bound buses by various companies are located all across Taipei.

### By train

Probably the easiest way to get to Keelung from Taipei is by commuter trains, which ply the route every 15 to 20 minutes and stop at many stations. Travelers heading to Keelung should be aware that although the city lies on the extreme north end of the main Western Line it is **not** accessible on all trains running north, many of which are bound for the east coast and will not pass through Keelung but branch off at Badu. Only take trains with Keelung clearly shown as their final destination or you may accidentally find yourself on the train to [Taitung](#) - a six hour journey from Keelung! if this happens to you (usually on an express train), get off before the Badu station.

You can check the train time table [here](#)

### By bus

The bus from the East-West bus station of the Kuo-Kuang Bus company (the building also serves as the terminal for the Taipei - Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport service) just to the left of Taipei Railway station is the quickest way to get to Keelung. Buses leave every 10 minutes and go non-stop to Keelung harbor for NT\$ 55 one way, it is best to buy a ticket in advance. Journey time is around 35 minutes under good traffic conditions. The bus station and ticket booths are clearly marked in English. You can also use the 'Easy Card' that operates with the Taipei Metro and local buses. TOUCH on the sensor when you get on AND when you get off.

Several companies operate buses between Taipei and Keelung. The journey can range from between 35 minutes to two hours depending upon the route taken and traffic conditions. Because of the large number of bus routes and stops, the high potential for delay, and the limited English ability of most drivers, taking a bus from Taipei to Keelung is probably not a good idea. Unless you are familiar with the greater Taipei geography and can speak some Taiwanese or Mandarin, it is wiser to take a train and transfer to city buses, MRT (Mass Rapid Transit in Taipei) or taxi to reach your final destination.

### By boat

Keelung is one of the world's busiest container ports, second only to [Kaohsiung](#) in southern [Taiwan](#) thanks to its long deep water harbour. Regular domestic ferries to the outlying islands of [Kinmen](#) and [Matsu](#) are also available, though they are very basic and used mostly by military personnel. There is a nightly ferry service to [Matsu](#) leaving from the harbour at 11PM.

There are no longer any scheduled ferry services to [Okinawa](#), [Japan](#), but Keelung is a home port for Star Cruises [2](#), which offers cruises to both Okinawa and [Hong Kong](#).

### Get around

The downtown area is small enough to cover on foot.

Before you getting around you might visit the [Keelung City Tourist Information](#) Tel: (02)24287664

**Star Cruise** also provided a range of [cruising line](#) between Keelung and nearby major cities, you might see Keelung as the center of travel hub to plan your holiday.

### See



Keelung Islet

### East Keelung

- Keelung's **Miaokou Night Market** is famous throughout Taiwan for its large selection of food. It meanders through lanes and alleys in the downtown area surrounding the **Dianji Temple**

(奠濟宮). The night market is easily accessible on foot for most travelers arriving from other cities. From the Keelung railway station walk east straight along the street following the harbor in the direction of the Keelung Harbor Bureau (identifiable at night by its large orange neon sign). The night market is roughly one block from the point where you cross a freeway overpass.

- **Kanziding Fish Market** (Kanzihding) is the oldest continuously operated and largest fishery distribution center in Northern Taiwan. The market is open seven days a week from 3AM-6PM.
- **Zhongzheng Park** This white five story high **statue of Guanyin** (the Buddhist emanation of compassion and peace) overlooks the town and harbor from Zhongzheng Park.
- **Ershawan Fort**, also called *Haimen Tiansian* (海門天險), which means very dangerous gate to the ocean in Mandarin, built by the Qing government in 1840. This fort saw action in the 1884-85 Sino-French War. Visitors can view Keelung Harbor from the gun emplacement to feel its significance. Buses: 101, 103 from Keelung Train Station, get off Haimen Tiansian (海門天險) bus stop.



Heping Island

- **Keelung French Cemetery**, a remnant of the Sino-French War of 1884-85, is about 2 km from the train station, but still very close to the harbor.
- **Keelung Islet** is an easy-to-find islet outside Keelung City. One will see the islet from Keelung, the north coast or northeastern coast, which makes it an important landmark of Keelung.
- **Heping (Hoping) Island** was called *She-liao island* in the past, is the doorway island to Keelung Harbor. It was a main fort built by Spanish in 1626. Inside the park, you can see many eroded rocks and coasts have formed special shapes by the wind and sea. There is a Bridge connects the island to Keelung City, and you can also take bus 101 at Keelung Railway Station, get off at Hoping Island station and walk for about 5 minutes.

## West Keelung



### Gongzih Liao Fort

- **Gongzih Liao Fort**, built in the Qing Dynasty, Gongzih Liao Fort was located at the northeast of Keelung city. This old fort is as significant as the other forts considering its history or its architecture. In fact, after World War II, it was still being used as a military facility by the ROC government till a few year ago. This fort in Sinyi District was ranked to be provincial historic site. During the colonial period, the fort was renovated and garrison was placed here after Taiwan was returned to China. Then it was abandoned for a long time. Fortunately, the remains of the fort are well-kept. Walking up to the hill on the fort, one will see the scenes of the Hoping Island, Badouzhih, and Keelung Islet right in front of the hill. Walking straight ahead, you will see a complete fort for you to imagine all the wars occurred here.



### Dawulun Fort

- **Dawulun Fort** is a very important military base to safeguard the west side of Keelung Harbor. During the Opium War in 1840 and the Sino-French War in 1884, the court of Ching Dynasty sent military forces to guard this place. However, looking at the current structure and feature, the fort was probably renovated during the colonial period. The provincial historic site was located on Mount Tawulun. Located 231 meters above sea level, the fort looks down to Lovers Lake to the west, Dawulun Bay to the north, Keelung and East Sea to the east. Walking up on a pebble footpath full of falling leaves, one will see the original structure of the fort, chassis, mechanical belt and storage room. Walls were made from stones with arched windows. Since the platform is at the high point facing the ocean, there are lots scenes to view over northeastern cape from platform, such as Keelung Islet, Waimu Shan seashore and Badouzhih.



Baimiwong Fort

- **Baimiwong Fort** is located in the northwest of Keelung harbor, safeguarding the harbor with the fort on the east shore. It was an important military base since the Ching Dynasty. The rectangle-shaped fort facing the sea is comprised of three sections: barbette, control center and observation station with the control center on the west of barbette and the observation station on the right. Both places are great choices for visitors to overlook Keelung Harbor. The scenery is refreshing and beautiful; hence, it has become a popular sightseeing and leisure place for local residents. Find a nice summer evening to enjoy the lights on boats in the harbor, the bright stars and the breeze.



Shihciouling Fort

- **Shihciouling Fort**, built in 1884, this fort was constructed to enhance coast defense when the French attacked Taiwan for the Vietnam problem. Shihciouling is the highest fort among all the forts in Keelung. It is an essential place for the defense of the harbor. The fort was made with solid mountain rocks and the structure was kept well. It is important because it is the only remaining small fort built in late Ching Dynasty. Thanks to its ideal location, the fort offers a great view over the entire harbor of Keelung.



Waimu Shan seashore

- **Waimu Shan seashore** is the longest natural seashore remained in Keelung City with a total of 5 kilometers from Waimu Shan Fishery Harbor to Aoditong Village. The seashore includes open seashore and marine cliff to make a spectacular scenery. Swimming facilities are available near Waimu Shan Fishery Harbor for experienced swimmers to go scuba diving and



swimming. The beach near Aoditong Village is the only remaining sandy seashore in Keelung. In the summer, people often go to the beach and have fun swimming. For people who are afraid to swim in the sea, the nearby Octopus swimming pool is also a great



#### Lovers Lake

- **Lovers Lake** is located at the mountainside of Mount Dawulun at the

#### Do

- Sample some of the culinary delights at the night-market - especially the baked crabs and fish ball soup.
- Visit Taiwan's scenic northeast coast.
- Take a photo of the replica Statue of Liberty adjacent to the Golden Arches - an ironic statement of American culture taking over in Taiwan.

#### Buy

- Pineapple Cake

**Lee Hu Pastry Shop** (李鵝餅店), 90 Ren 3rd Road, near the Miaokou night market. In business since 1882, it is the most famous traditional pastry shop in Taiwan.

#### Eat

#### Miaokou Night Market [Map](#)

- Stinky tofu

choice for some fun. Besides, one should never miss the beautiful sunrise in the summer. The incredible sight makes people feel carefree and joyous. The seashore and the reef rocks sculptured by the ocean over a long period of time are also a must-see.

western part of Keelung. It is the only highland in Keelung with dense woods, beautiful lake and refreshing scenery. The park offers different facilities including kiosks, suspension bridge, observation platform, windmills and pathways for visitors to take a walk and enjoy the natural scenery, the beauty of plants and green shower. It is also a great choice to stand on the observation deck to see the seashore. In spring and summer of every year, insects, butterflies and migrating birds often gather here and your visit is mostly welcomed.

- Oyster omelet
- Pot-edged pancake soup
- Bubble ice
- Fried sandwiches
- Bean noodle thick soup
- Shrimp Taiwanese balls
- Tianbula (Taiwanese Tempura)
- Shaved ice (with different toppings)
- Chinese sausages

## Heping Island

- 35 Yuhuo Fish Market, Heping Island (turn right just after crossing the bridge). Excellent fresh seafood, the boats dock nearby. You choose the fish, they cook it for you. reasonable.

## Hong Kong Oct. 13-14, 2009

Hong Kong ([Chinese: 香港](#)), officially the [Hong Kong Special Administrative Region](#),<sup>6</sup> is a largely self-governing<sup>7</sup> [territory](#) of the [People's Republic of China](#), facing [Guangdong](#) to the north and the [South China Sea](#) to the east, west and south. Hong Kong is a [global metropolitan](#) and [international financial centre](#), and has a [highly developed capitalist](#) economy.

Beginning as a trading port, Hong Kong became a [crown colony](#) of the [United Kingdom](#) in 1842, reclassified as a [British dependent territory](#) in 1983, and remained so until the [transfer of its sovereignty](#) to the [People's Republic of China](#) in 1997.<sup>89</sup> Under the "[one country, two systems](#)" policy,<sup>10</sup> Hong Kong enjoys a high degree<sup>11</sup> of [autonomy](#) in all areas with the exception of foreign affairs and defence, which are the responsibility of the [PRC Government](#).<sup>7</sup> As part of this arrangement, Hong Kong continues to maintain its own [currency](#), [legal system](#), [political system](#), [immigration control](#), [rule of the road](#) and other aspects that concern its way of life,<sup>7</sup> many of which are distinct from those of [mainland China](#).<sup>12131415</sup>

Renowned for its expansive skyline and natural setting, its identity as a [cosmopolitan](#) centre where [the East](#) meets [the West](#) is reflected in its [cuisine](#), [cinema](#), [music](#) and traditions.<sup>16</sup> The city's population is 95% [Chinese](#) and 5% people of other ethnicities.<sup>17</sup> With a population of 7 million

people but land area of 1,108 km<sup>2</sup> (428 sq mi), Hong Kong is one of the most [densely populated areas](#) in the world.<sup>18</sup>

The name "Hong Kong" in the [English language](#) is an approximate phonetic rendering of the [Cantonese](#) or [Hakka](#) pronunciation of the [spoken Cantonese](#) name "香港", meaning "fragrant harbour".<sup>19</sup>

Before 1842, the name Hong Kong originally referred colloquially to a small inlet (now [Aberdeen Harbour](#)/Little Hong Kong) between the island of [Ap Lei Chau](#) and the south side of [the island which later became known as Hong Kong](#). The inlet was one of the first points of contact between British sailors and local fishermen.<sup>20</sup> The reference to fragrance may refer to the harbour waters sweetened by the fresh water esturine influx of the [Pearl River](#), or to the [incense](#) factories lining the coast to the north of [Kowloon](#) which was stored around Aberdeen Harbour for export, before the development of [Victoria Harbour](#).<sup>19</sup>

In 1842, the [Treaty of Nanking](#) was signed, and the name Hong Kong was first recorded on official documents to encompass [the entirety of the Island](#).<sup>21</sup> The [Convention of Peking](#) (1860) and [Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory](#) (1898) added the [Kowloon](#) peninsula and [New Territories](#) into Hong Kong's territory, which has remained unchanged until the present.

## History

Human settlement in the area now known as Hong Kong dates back to the late [Paleolithic](#) and early [Neolithic](#) era,<sup>22</sup> but the name Hong Kong (香港) did not appear on written record until the [Treaty of Nanking](#) of 1842.<sup>23</sup> The area's earliest recorded [European](#) visitor was [Jorge Álvares](#), a [Portuguese mariner](#) who arrived in 1513.<sup>2425</sup>

In 1839 the refusal by [Qing Dynasty](#) authorities to import [opium](#) resulted in the [First Opium War](#) between China and [Britain](#). [Hong Kong Island](#) became occupied by British forces in 1841, and was formally ceded to Britain under the [Treaty of Nanking](#) at the end of the war. The British established a [Crown Colony](#) with the founding of [Victoria City](#) the following year. In 1860, after China's defeat in the [Second Opium War](#), [Kowloon Peninsula](#) south of [Boundary Street](#) and [Stonecutter's Island](#) were ceded to Britain under the [Convention of Peking](#). In 1898 Britain obtained a 99-year lease of [Lantau Island](#) and the adjacent northern lands, which became known as the [New Territories](#).

During the first half of the 20th century, Hong Kong was a [free port](#), serving as an [entrepôt](#) of the [British Empire](#). The British introduced an education system based on their own model, while the local Chinese population had little contact with the European community of wealthy [tai-pans](#) settled near [Victoria Peak](#).<sup>26</sup>

In conjunction with its military campaign in [World War II](#), the [Empire of Japan](#) invaded Hong Kong on 8 December 1941. The [Battle of Hong Kong](#) ended with British and [Canadian](#) defenders surrendering control of the colony to Japan on 25 December. During the [Japanese occupation](#), civilians suffered widespread [food shortages](#), [rationing](#), and [hyper-inflation](#) due to forced exchange

of currency for military notes. Hong Kong lost more than half of its population in the period between the invasion and Japan's surrender in 1945, when the United Kingdom resumed control of the colony.<sup>27</sup>

Hong Kong's population recovered quickly as a wave of [mainland](#) migrants arrived for refuge from the ongoing [Chinese Civil War](#). With the proclamation of the [People's Republic of China](#) in 1949, more migrants fled to Hong Kong in fear of persecution by the [Communist Party](#).<sup>26</sup> Many [corporations](#) in [Shanghai](#) and [Guangzhou](#) also shifted their operations to Hong Kong.<sup>26</sup> The colony became the sole place of contact between mainland China and the [Western world](#), as the [Chinese communist government](#) increasingly isolated itself from outside influence.

As textile and manufacturing industries grew with the help of population growth and low cost of labour, Hong Kong rapidly industrialised, with its economy becoming driven by exports, and living standards rising steadily. The construction of [Shek Kip Mei Estate](#) in 1953 marked the beginning of the [public housing estate](#) program, designed to cope with the huge influx of immigrants. Trade in Hong Kong accelerated even further when [Shenzhen](#), immediately north of Hong Kong, became a [Special Economic Zone](#) of the PRC, and established Hong Kong as the main source of foreign investment to the mainland. The later decades of the 20th century saw the economy shift from textiles and manufacturing to mainly services-based, as the financial and banking sectors became increasingly dominant.

With the lease of the New Territories due to expire within two decades the governments of the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China discussed the issue of Hong Kong's sovereignty in the 1980s. In 1984 the two countries signed the [Sino-British Joint Declaration](#), agreeing to transfer sovereignty to the People's Republic of China in 1997,<sup>26</sup> and stipulating that Hong Kong would be governed as a [special administrative region](#), retaining its laws and a high degree of autonomy for at least fifty years after the transfer. The [Hong Kong Basic Law](#), which would serve as the constitutional document after the transfer, was ratified in 1990, and the [transfer of sovereignty](#) occurred at midnight on 1 July 1997, marked by a [handover ceremony](#) at the [Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre](#).<sup>26</sup>

Hong Kong's economy was affected by the [Asian financial crisis](#) of 1997 that hit many [East Asian](#) markets, and the lethal [H5N1 avian influenza](#) also surfaced that year. After a gradual recovery, Hong Kong suffered again due to an outbreak of [SARS](#) in 2003.<sup>28</sup> Today, Hong Kong continues to serve as an important global financial centre, but faces uncertainty over its future role with a growing [mainland China economy](#), and its relationship with the PRC government in areas such as democratic reform and universal suffrage.

## Government and politics

Main articles: [Politics of Hong Kong](#), [Government of Hong Kong](#), and [Elections in Hong Kong](#)





Top: The [Legislative Council](#), the [unicameral legislature](#) of Hong Kong.

Bottom: [Government House](#), the official residence of the [Chief Executive](#).

In accordance with the [Sino-British Joint Declaration](#), and reflecting the policy known as "[one country, two systems](#)" by the [People's Republic of China](#), Hong Kong enjoys a high degree of autonomy as a [special administrative region](#) in all areas except defence and foreign affairs.<sup>29</sup> The declaration stipulates that the region maintain its [capitalist economic system](#) and guarantees the rights and freedoms of its people for at least 50 years beyond the [1997 handover](#).<sup>30</sup> The [Basic Law](#) is the [constitutional document](#) that outlines executive, legislative and judicial authorities of government, although final authority for interpreting the Basic Law rests with the PRC government.<sup>31</sup>

The primary [institutions of government](#) are:

- **The executive:** The [Executive Council](#), headed by the [Chief Executive](#) who is elected by the [Election Committee](#) and then approved and appointed by the [Central People's Government](#);<sup>32</sup>
  - **The civil service:** A politically neutral body that implements policies and provides government services, where public servants are appointed based on [meritocracy](#);<sup>32</sup>
- **The legislature:** The [Legislative Council](#) with 60 members, half of which are directly elected by [universal suffrage](#) by [permanent residents of Hong Kong](#), and headed by the [President of the Legislative Council](#) who serves as the [speaker](#);<sup>32</sup>
- **The judiciary:** Hong Kong Judiciary, comprising the [Court of Final Appeal](#), the [High Court](#) (which includes the [Court of Appeal](#) and the [Court of First Instance](#)), the [District Courts](#), *et cetera*.<sup>33</sup> Judges are appointed by the CE.

The Basic Law and [universal suffrage](#) have been major issues of political debate since the transfer of sovereignty. In 2002, the government's proposed [Article 23 of the Basic Law](#), which required the enactment of laws prohibiting acts of treason and subversion against the [Chinese government](#), was met with fierce opposition, and eventually shelved.<sup>323435</sup> Debate between pro-Beijing groups and [pro-democracy](#) groups characterises [Hong Kong's political scene](#), with the latter supporting a faster pace of [democratisation](#).<sup>36</sup>

## Legal system and judiciary

Main articles: [Legal system of Hong Kong](#) and [Judiciary of Hong Kong](#)



[The Court of Final Appeal](#) in [Central](#)

In contrast to [mainland China's civil law](#) system, Hong Kong continues to follow the [English Common Law](#) tradition established during British rule.<sup>37</sup> Hong Kong's courts are permitted to refer to decisions ([precedents](#)) rendered by courts of other common law jurisdictions,<sup>38</sup> and judges from other common law jurisdictions are allowed to participate in proceedings of Hong Kong's [Court of Final Appeal](#) and sit as Hong Kong judges.<sup>39</sup>

Structurally, Hong Kong's court system consists of the [Court of Final Appeal](#), the [High Court](#), which is made up of the [Court of Appeal](#) and the [Court of First Instance](#), and the [District Court](#), which includes the [Family Court](#).<sup>33</sup> Other adjudicative bodies include the Lands Tribunal, the Magistrates' Courts, the Juvenile Court, the Coroner's Court, the Labour Tribunal, the Small Claims Tribunal, and the Obscene Articles Tribunal, which is responsible for classifying non-video pornography to be circulated in Hong Kong.<sup>33</sup> Justices of the [Court of Final Appeal](#) are appointed by Hong Kong's [Chief Executive](#).<sup>40</sup>

The [Department of Justice](#) is the largest legal institution in Hong Kong, and its responsibilities involve [legislation](#), judicial administration, prosecution, civil representation, legal and policy drafting and reform, and the legal profession.<sup>37</sup> Aside from prosecuting criminal cases, officials of the Department of Justice also appear in court on behalf of the government in all civil and administrative lawsuits against the government.<sup>37</sup> As protector of the [public interest](#), it may apply for [judicial reviews](#) and assign legal representation on behalf of the public to take part in such a trial.<sup>41</sup> The [Basic Law](#) protects the Department of Justice from any interference

## Geography and climate

Hong Kong is located on [China's](#) south coast, 60 km (37 mi) east of [Macau](#) on the opposite side of the [Pearl River Delta](#). It is surrounded by the [South China Sea](#) on the east, south, and west, and borders the [city of Shenzhen](#) in [Guangdong Province](#) to the north over the [Sham Chun River](#). The territory's 1,104 km<sup>2</sup> (426 sq mi) land area consists primarily of [Hong Kong Island](#), [Lantau Island](#), [Kowloon Peninsula](#) and the [New Territories](#) as well as some 260 other islands.<sup>46</sup>

As much of Hong Kong's terrain is hilly to mountainous with steep slopes, less than 25% of the territory's landmass is developed, and about 40% of the remaining land area is reserved as [country parks](#) and [nature reserves](#).<sup>47</sup> Most of the territory's [urban development](#) exists on Kowloon peninsula, along the northern edge of Hong Kong Island and in scattered settlements throughout the New Territories. The highest elevation in the territory is at [Tai Mo Shan](#), at a height of 958 metres (3,140 ft) above sea level. Hong Kong's long, irregular and curvaceous [coastline](#) also affords the territory with many bays, rivers and [beaches](#).

Despite Hong Kong's reputation of being intensely [urbanised](#), the territory has made much effort to promote a green environment,<sup>48</sup> and recent growing public concern has prompted the severe restriction of further [land reclamation](#) from [Victoria Harbour](#). Awareness of the environment is growing as Hong Kong suffers from increasing [pollution](#) compounded by its geography and tall buildings. Approximately 80% of the [city's smog](#) originates from other parts of the Pearl River Delta.<sup>49</sup>

Situated just south of the [Tropic of Cancer](#), [Hong Kong's climate](#) is [humid subtropical climate](#) ([Köppen climate classification Cwa](#)). Summer is hot and humid with occasional showers and [thunderstorms](#), and warm air coming from the southwest. It is also the time when [typhoons](#) are most likely, sometimes resulting in [flooding](#) or [landslides](#). Winter weather usually starts sunny and

becomes cloudier towards February, with the occasional [cold front](#) bringing strong, cooling winds from the north. The most pleasant seasons are spring, although changeable, and autumn, which is generally sunny and dry.<sup>50</sup> Hong Kong averages 1,948 hours of sunshine per year,<sup>51</sup> while the highest and lowest ever recorded temperatures at the [Hong Kong Observatory](#) are 36.1 °C (97.0 °F) and 0.0 °C (32.0 °F), respectively.<sup>52</sup>



The hilly terrain of [Kowloon](#) and [Hong Kong Island](#)

☀️ Weather averages for Hong Kong 🌧️

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	18.6 (65)	18.6 (65)	21.5 (71)	25.1 (77)	28.4 (83)	30.4 (87)	31.3 (88)	31.1 (88)	30.2 (86)	27.7 (82)	24.0 (75)	20.3 (69)	25 (77)
Average low °C (°F)	14.1 (57)	14.4 (58)	16.9 (62)	20.6 (69)	23.9 (75)	26.1 (79)	26.7 (80)	26.4 (80)	25.6 (78)	23.4 (74)	19.4 (67)	15.7 (60)	21 (70)
<u>Precipitation</u> mm (inches)	24 (0.94)	52 (2.05)	71 (2.8)	188 (7.4)	329 (12.95)	388 (15.28)	374 (14.72)	444 (17.48)	287 (11.3)	151 (5.94)	35 (1.38)	34 (1.34)	2,382 (93.78)





[International Finance Centre](#), the pinnacle of [high-rise architecture in Hong Kong](#)

## Economy

Hong Kong is one of the world's leading financial centres.<sup>54</sup> Its highly [capitalist economy](#) has been ranked the freest in the world by the [Index of Economic Freedom](#) for 15 consecutive years.<sup>555657</sup> It is an important centre for international finance and trade, with one of the greatest concentration of corporate headquarters in the [Asia-Pacific](#) region, and is known as one of the [Four Asian Tigers](#) for its high growth rates and rapid industrialisation between the 1960s and 1990s.<sup>58</sup> The [Hong Kong Stock Exchange](#) is the [sixth largest](#) in the world, with a [market capitalisation](#) of [US\\$2.97 trillion](#) as of October 2007, and the second highest value of [initial public offerings](#), after [London](#).<sup>59</sup> The currency used in Hong Kong is the [Hong Kong dollar](#), which has been pegged to the [U.S. dollar](#) since 1983.

The Government of Hong Kong plays a passive role in the financial industry, mostly leaving the direction of the economy to market forces and the private sector. Under the official policy of [positive non-interventionism](#), Hong Kong is often cited as an example of [laissez-faire capitalism](#). Following [World War II](#), Hong Kong industrialised rapidly as a manufacturing centre driven by exports, and then underwent a rapid transition to a service-based economy in the 1980s. Hong Kong matured to become a financial centre in the 1990s, but was greatly affected by the [Asian financial](#)

[crisis](#) in 1998, and again in 2003 by the [SARS](#) outbreak. A revival of external and domestic demand has led to a strong recovery, as cost decreases strengthened the competitiveness of Hong Kong exports and a long deflationary period ended.

The territory has little arable land and few natural resources, so it must import most of its [food](#) and raw materials. Hong Kong is the world's eleventh largest trading entity,<sup>60</sup> with the total value of [imports](#) and [exports](#) exceeding its [gross domestic product](#). Much of Hong Kong's exports consist of re-exports, which are products made outside of the territory, especially in [mainland China](#), and distributed via Hong Kong. Even before the [1997 handover](#), Hong Kong had established extensive trade and investment ties with mainland China, and its autonomous status now enables it to serve as a point of entry for investment flowing into the mainland. At the end of 2007, there were 3.46 million people employed full-time, with the unemployment rate averaging 4.1%, the fourth straight year of decline.<sup>61</sup> Hong Kong's economy is dominated by the [service sector](#), which accounts for over 90% of its [GDP](#), while industry now constitutes just 9%. Inflation was at 2% in 2007, and Hong Kong's largest export markets are mainland China, the [United States](#), and [Japan](#).<sup>62</sup>

## Military

Residents of Hong Kong are sometimes referred to as [Hongkongers](#). The territory's population reached 6.99 million in 2006.<sup>65</sup> Hong Kong has a [fertility rate](#) of 0.95 children per woman,<sup>66</sup> one of the lowest in the world and far below the 2.1 children per woman required to sustain the current population. However, the population in Hong Kong continues to grow due to the influx of immigrants from [mainland China](#), approximating 45,000 per year. [Life expectancy](#) in Hong Kong is 81.6 years as of 2006, the sixth highest in the world.

About 95% of the people of Hong Kong are [Chinese](#) by ethnicity, the majority of which is [Cantonese](#) or from linguistic groups such as [Hakka](#) and [Chiu Chow](#). The remaining 5% of the population is composed of non-ethnic Chinese forming a highly visible group despite their smaller numbers. A [South Asian](#) population of [Sindhis](#), [Indians](#), [Pakistanis](#) and [Nepalese](#) are found. Some [Vietnamese refugees](#) have become permanent residents of Hong Kong. There are also a number of [Europeans](#) (mostly [British](#)), [Americans](#), [Australians](#), [Canadians](#), [Japanese](#), and [Koreans](#) working in Hong Kong's commercial and financial sector.<sup>67</sup> Most British left after handover to China in 1997.<sup>68</sup>

Hong Kong's [de-facto](#) official language is [Cantonese](#), a [Chinese language](#) originating from [Guangdong Province](#) to the north of Hong Kong (of which Hong Kong was part of before British colonial rule), and is spoken by 95% of the population as a first language. [English](#) is also an official language, and according to a 1996 by-census is spoken by 3.1% of the population as an everyday language and by 34.9% of the population as a second language.<sup>69</sup> Signs displaying both Chinese and English are common throughout the territory. Since the [1997 handover](#), an increase in immigrants from [mainland China](#) and greater integration with the mainland economy have brought an increasing number of [Mandarin](#) speakers to Hong Kong.

[Religion in Hong Kong](#) enjoys a high degree of freedom, guaranteed by the [Basic Law](#). 90% of Hong Kong's population practises a mix of local religions,<sup>70</sup> most prominently [Buddhism](#) (mainly [Chinese Mahayana](#)) and [Taoism](#).<sup>717273</sup> A [Christian](#) community of around 600,000 exists,<sup>7475</sup> forming about 8%

of the total population, and is nearly equally divided between [Catholics](#) and [Protestants](#), although other, smaller Christian communities exist such as [Latter-Day Saints](#)<sup>76</sup> and [Jehovah's Witnesses](#).<sup>77</sup> There are also [Muslim](#), [Jewish](#), [Hindu](#), [Sikh](#) and [Bahá'í](#) communities.<sup>74</sup> Concerns over a lack of [religious freedom](#) after the 1997 handover have largely subsided, with [Falun Gong](#) adherents free to practice in Hong Kong, and the [Anglican Church](#) and [Roman Catholic Church](#) each freely appointing its own bishops, unlike in [mainland China](#).



☞ Hong Kong is one of the [most densely populated areas in the world](#), at 6,200 people per km<sup>2</sup>.



☞ The [Tian Tan Buddha](#) on [Lantau](#) Island

## Culture



☞ A statue on the [Avenue of Stars](#), a tribute to [Hong Kong cinema](#)



☞ Gateway to Ying Sin Koon Temple in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is frequently described as a place where [East](#) meets [West](#), reflecting the culture's mix of the territory's Chinese roots with the culture brought to it during its time as a British colony/[territory](#).<sup>84</sup> Although over a decade has passed since the handover, Western cultural practices remain, and coexist seamlessly with the traditional philosophy and practices of [Chinese culture](#).

One of the more noticeable contradictions is Hong Kong's balancing of a modernised way of life with traditional Chinese practices. Concepts like [feng shui](#) are taken very seriously, with expensive construction projects often hiring expert consultants, and are often believed to make or break a business. Other objects like [bagua](#) mirrors are still regularly used to deflect evil spirits, and buildings often lack any floor [number that has a 4](#) in it, due to its similarity to the word for "die" in

the Chinese language. The fusion of east and west also characterises Hong Kong's cuisine, where [dim sum](#), [da been lo](#) and [fast food](#) restaurants can all be found side by side.

While Hong Kong is a recognised global centre of trade, its most famous export is its entertainment industry, particularly in the [martial arts](#) genre which gained a high level of popularity in the late 1960s and 1970s. Several [Hollywood](#) performers have originated from [Hong Kong cinema](#), notably [Bruce Lee](#), [Chow Yun-Fat](#), and [Jackie Chan](#). A number of Hong Kong film-makers have also achieved widespread fame in Hollywood, such as [John Woo](#), [Wong Kar-wai](#) and [Tsui Hark](#). Homegrown films such as [Chungking Express](#), [Infernal Affairs](#), [Shaolin Soccer](#), [Rumble in the Bronx](#), and [In the Mood for Love](#) have gained international recognition. Hong Kong is also the world's centre for [Cantopop](#) music, which draws its influence from other forms of [Chinese music](#), and more international styles including [jazz](#), [rock and roll](#), [rhythm and blues](#), [electronic music](#), [western pop music](#) and others, and has a multinational fanbase.



Hong Kong provides many opportunities for [hiking](#) and [swimming](#).

The Hong Kong government supports cultural institutions such as the [Hong Kong Heritage Museum](#), the [Hong Kong Museum of Art](#), the [Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts](#), and the [Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra](#). Also, the government's [Leisure and Cultural Services Department](#) subsidises and sponsors international performers brought to Hong Kong. Many international cultural activities are organised by the government, consulates, and privately.

Hong Kong has two [broadcast television](#) stations, [ATV](#) and [TVB](#). [Cable and satellite services](#) are also widespread. The production of Hong Kong's soap dramas, comedy series and [variety shows](#) have reached mass audiences throughout the Chinese-speaking world. Magazine and [newspaper](#) publishers in Hong Kong distribute and print in both Chinese and English, with a focus on [sensationalism](#) and celebrity [gossip](#). [The media](#) is relatively free from government interference compared to [that of mainland China](#). Hong Kong is also one of three [CNN International](#) headquarters.

Hong Kong offers wide recreational and competitive sport opportunities despite its limited land area. Internationally, Hong Kong participates in the [Olympic Games](#), and numerous other [Asian Games](#) events, and hosted the equestrian events for the [2008 Summer Olympics](#) in [Beijing](#). There are major multipurpose venues like [Hong Kong Coliseum](#) and MacPherson Stadium. Hong Kong's steep terrain make it ideal for [hiking](#), with expansive views over the territory, and its rugged coastline provides many beaches for [swimming](#).

## Architecture

Hong Kong has the world's greatest number of [skyscrapers](#), at 7,650.<sup>85</sup> The high [density](#) and tall [skyline](#) of Hong Kong's [urban area](#) is due to a lack of available [sprawl](#) space, with the average distance from the harbourfront to the steep hills of [Hong Kong Island](#) at 1.3 km (0.8 mi).<sup>86</sup> This lack of space causing demand for dense, high-rise offices and housing, has resulted in 36 of the world's

100 tallest residential buildings being in Hong Kong,<sup>87</sup> and more people living or working above the 14th floor than anywhere else on [Earth](#), making it the world's most vertical city.<sup>88</sup>

A downside to the lack of space and demand for construction is that few older buildings remain, the city instead becoming a centre for [modern architecture](#). The tallest building in Hong Kong, [topped out](#) but still under construction, is the [International Commerce Centre](#), at 484 m (1,590 ft) high. The tallest completed building is [Two International Finance Centre](#), at 415 m (1,360 ft) high.<sup>89</sup> Other recognisable skyline features include the [HSBC Headquarters Building](#), said to be easily dismantled and rebuilt elsewhere, the triangular [Central Plaza](#) with its pyramid-shaped spire, [The Center](#) with its nighttime multi-coloured neon light show, and I M Pei's [Bank of China Tower](#) with its sharp, angular [façade](#). The city has been rated as having the best skyline in the world.<sup>90</sup> Notable remaining historical assets include the [Tsim Sha Tsui Clock Tower](#), the [Central Police Station](#), and the remains of [Kowloon Walled City](#).

There are many development plans in place, including the construction of [new government buildings](#),<sup>91</sup> waterfront redevelopment in [Central](#),<sup>92</sup> and a series of projects in [West Kowloon](#).<sup>93</sup> More high-rise development is set to take place on the other side of [Victoria Harbour](#) in Kowloon, as the 1998 closure of the nearby [Kai Tak Airport](#) lifted strict height restrictions<sup>94</sup> Hong Kong's tallest tower and also the third tallest in the world, the [International Commerce Centre](#), is being built in Kowloon.<sup>95</sup>

## Transport



Hong Kong's [tram system](#) is the only one in the world that runs exclusively with [double-deckers](#).

Hong Kong has a highly developed [transportation](#) network, encompassing both [public](#) and private transport. Over 90% of daily travels (11 million) are on public transport,<sup>96</sup> making it the highest percentage in the world.<sup>97</sup> The [Octopus card](#), a stored value [smart card](#) payment system, can be used to pay for fares on almost all railways, buses and ferries, and also for parking and purchases at convenience stores, supermarkets, and fastfood restaurants.<sup>98</sup>

The city's [rapid transit](#) system, [MTR](#), has 150 stations and serves 3.4 million people a day.<sup>99</sup> A [tramway system](#), serving the city since 1904, covers the northern parts of Hong Kong Island and is the only [tram](#) system in the world run exclusively with [double deckers](#).<sup>100</sup> [Double-decker buses](#) were introduced to Hong Kong in 1949, and are now almost exclusively used, with single-decker buses remaining in use for routes with lower demand or roads with lower carrying capacity. Most normal franchised bus routes in Hong Kong operate until 1 am. [Public light buses](#) run the length and breadth of Hong Kong, through areas where standard bus lines cannot reach or do not reach as frequently, quickly, or directly.



The iconic [Star Ferry](#) on one of its nine-minute voyages across [Victoria Harbour](#)

The [Star Ferry](#) service operates four lines across [Victoria Harbour](#) and has been in operation for over 120 years, providing a panoramic view of Hong Kong's skyline for its 53,000 daily passengers.<sup>101</sup> It is considered one of the city's most treasured cultural icons and has been rated as one of the most picturesque ferry crossings in the world.<sup>102</sup> Other [ferry](#) services are provided by operators serving [outlying islands](#), new towns, [Macau](#), and cities in mainland China. Hong Kong is also famous for its [junks](#) traversing the harbour, and small [kai-to](#) ferries which serve remote coastal settlements.

Hong Kong's steep, hilly terrain calls for some unusual ways of getting up and down the slopes. The [Peak Tram](#), the first public transport system in Hong Kong, has provided vertical rail transport between [Central](#) and [Victoria Peak](#) since 1888 by steeply ascending the side of a mountain. In [Central and Western district](#), there is an extensive system of [escalators](#) and [moving pavements](#), including the longest outdoor covered escalator system in the world, the [Mid-Levels escalator](#).

[Hong Kong International Airport](#) is a leading air passenger gateway and logistics hub in Asia and one of the world's busiest [airports](#) in terms of international passenger and cargo movement, serving more than 47 million passengers and handling 3.74 million tonnes of cargo in 2007.<sup>103</sup> It replaced [Kai Tak Airport](#) in [Kowloon](#) in 1998, and has been rated as the world's best airport in a number of surveys.<sup>104</sup> Over 85 airlines operate at the two-[terminal](#) airport and it is the primary hub of [Cathay Pacific](#), [Dragonair](#), [Air Hong Kong](#),

## Nha Trang Oct. 16, 2009

Nha Trang ⓘ [pronunciation](#) ([help](#)·[info](#)) is a coastal city and capital of [Khánh Hòa province](#), on the [South Central Coast](#) of [Vietnam](#). The city has about 300,000 inhabitants, a number which is projected to increase to between 500,000 and 600,000 inhabitants by 2020<sup>[[citation needed](#)]</sup> according to an estimation of Nha Trang Administrative Board Statistics.

Nha Trang is well known for its pristine beaches and excellent [scuba diving](#) and is fast becoming a popular destination for international tourists, attracting large numbers of [backpackers](#) as well as more affluent travelers on the [Southeast Asia](#) circuit. It is already very popular with Vietnamese tourists. *Nha Trang Bay* is widely considered as amongst the world's most beautiful bays. Tourists are welcome to participate in the Sea Festival, held every 2 years. Nha Trang was the site of the [Miss Universe 2008](#) Pageant on July 14, 2008.

Historically, the city was known as **Kauthara** under the [Champa](#). The city is still home to the famous [Po Nagar](#) Tower built by the Champa. Being a coastal city, Nha Trang is a center for [marine science](#) based at the [Nha Trang Oceanography Institute](#). The [Hon Mun](#) marine protected area is one of four first [marine protected areas](#) in the world admitted by the [IUCN](#).

Commercial flights to Nha Trang no longer use the city's municipal airport, but fly to the larger [Cam Ranh International Airport](#), a former U.S. Air Force Base (built during the Vietnam War) located approximately 35 km south of Nha Trang (see the Transport section below for additional details).

The French-Swiss bacteriologist [Alexandre Yersin](#) (who discovered the [Yersinia pestis](#) bacterium) identified himself with Nha Trang's life for 50 years (locals referred to Yersin as *Ông Năm*). He established the Indochina Pasteur Institute (now known as the [Nha Trang Pasteur Institute](#)) devoted to research on the [bubonic plague](#). Yersin died in Na Thrang on March 1, 1943. A street in the city is named after him, there is a shrine located next to his tomb, and his house has been converted into the [Yersin Museum](#).



 The fishing harbour in Nha Trang.



 Nha Trang's beach

## Geography

Nha Trang city has a metropolitan area of 251 km<sup>2</sup> and population of about 500,000 (as of 2007). It borders [Ninh Hòa](#) town by the north, [Cam Ranh](#) city by the south, [Diên Khánh](#) town by the west and the [South China Sea](#) to the east. The city is located on the beautiful Nha Trang Bay, which was chosen by Travel and Leisure in two succeeding years as one of 29 most beautiful bays in the world. Nha Trang is surrounded on all three sides by mountains and a large island on the fourth side (in the ocean directly in front of the city's main area), blocking major storms from potentially damaging the city.

## History

From 1653 to 19th century, Nha Trang was still a deserted area and was an area rich in wildlife animals like [tigers](#), and was a part of Hà Bạc, Vĩnh Xương County, Diên Khánh Province. After just 2 decades of early 20th century, Nha Trang underwent a rapid change. On 30 August 1924, the [Governor-General of French Indochina](#) (Gouverneur-General de l'Indochine) by a decree, establish Nha Trang as a townlet (centre urbain)<sup>[2]</sup>. Nha Trang Townlet was established from ancient villages of: Xương Huân, Phương Cầu, Vạn Thạnh, Phương Sài, Phước Hải.

During [French Indochina](#), Nha Trang was seen as [de facto](#) capital (chief lieu) of Khanh Hoa Province. The colonial administration offices like Envoy Office, Commanding Office, Trade Office, Post Office....were situated in Nha Trang. However, local royal offices like: Province Chief, Provincial Judge, Military Commander...are situated in [Diên Khánh city](#) (a walled military city located 10 km south-west of Nha Trang). On 7 May 1937, the [Governor-General of French Indochina](#) by another decree upgraded Nha Trang Townlet to town (French: commune)<sup>[3]</sup>. At this time, Nha Trang Town had 5 wards: Xương Huân was the first ward, Phương Cầu was the second ward, Vạn Thạnh was the third ward, Phương Sài was the fourth ward, and Phước Hải was the fifth ward.

On January 27, 1958, the president of the [Republic of Vietnam](#), [Ngô Đình Diệm](#) by Decree 18-BNV abrogated the town status of Nha Trang and divided Nha Trang into two rural communes: Nha Trang Đông (Eastern Nha Trang) and Nha Trang Tây (Western Nha Trang), under the administration of Vĩnh Xương County.

On October 22, 1970, the government of the [Republic of Vietnam](#) by Decree 132-SL/NV reestablished Nha Trang Town on the ground of Nha Trang Đông and Nha Trang Tây and other rural communes, namely Vĩnh Hải, Vĩnh Phước, Vĩnh Trường, Vĩnh Nguyên, and villages: Phước Hải (Vĩnh Thái Commune), Vĩnh Diêm Hạ (Vĩnh Hiệp Commune), Ngọc Thảo, Ngọc Hội, Lư Cầm Villages (Vĩnh Ngọc Commune) under the administration of Vĩnh Xương County, together with islands: Hòn Lớn, Hòn Một, Hòn Mun, Hòn Miếu, Hòn Tằm. Nha Trang Town was made the capital of Khanh Hoa Province. The town included 2 districts: district 1 and district 2. District 1 covered communes: Nha Trang Đông, Vĩnh Hải, Vĩnh Phước, and villages: Ngọc Thảo, Ngọc Hội and Lư Cầm of Vĩnh Ngọc Commune, Vĩnh Diêm Hạ village of Vĩnh Hiệp Commune; district 2 covered communes: Nha Trang Tây, Vĩnh Trường, Vĩnh Nguyên (inclusive of islands of Hòn Tre, Hòn Một, Hòn Mun, Hòn Tằm), Phước Hải village of Vĩnh Thái Commune.

Following that establishment, the government by Decree 357-ĐUHC/NC/NĐ dated June 5, 1971 divided Nha Trang into 11 urban zones, of which, district 1 covered urban zones of Vĩnh Hải, Vĩnh Phước, Ngọc Hiệp, Vạn Thạnh, Duy Tân; district 2 covered urban wards of Vĩnh Nguyên, Vĩnh Trường, Phương Sài, Tân Phước, Tân Lập, Phước Hải. Decree 553-BNV/HCĐP/NV dated 22 August 1972 renamed urban zones into urban wards. Decree 444-BNV/HCĐP/26.X dated September 3, 1974 merged islands of Hòn Một, Hòn Cậu, Hòn Đụn, Hòn Chóp Vung, Hòn Đỏ into Vĩnh Hải ward (district 1) and Hòn Ngọc into Vĩnh Nguyên ward (district 2) of Nha Trang Town.

On April 2, 1975, communist ([NLF/PRG/VPA](#)) forces captured the city. On April 4, 1975, [Khanh Hoa Military Commission](#) (*Ủy ban Quân quản Khánh Hòa*) divided Nha Trang into 3 administrative: District 1, District 2 and Vĩnh Xương District.

In September 1975, District 1 and District 2 were merged to become one entity, the town of Nha Trang.

On March 30, 1977, the Council of the Government (now the cabinet) of the [Socialist Republic of Vietnam](#) by Decision 391-CP/QĐ upgraded Nha Trang to city status, a county-level city under the administration of [Phu Khanh Province](#) (a province created by merger of now [Phú Yên Province](#) and [Khánh Hòa Province](#)). 7 Communes of former Vĩnh Xương County, namely Vĩnh Thái, Vĩnh Ngọc, Vĩnh Hiệp, Vĩnh Lương, Vĩnh Trung, Vĩnh Thạnh, Vĩnh Phương was split from Khánh Xương County to become Nha Trang City territory.



City hall



Trầm Hương tower, a city's icon

On March 27, 1978, the provincial government by Decision 54-BT founded Phước Đồng Commune under Nha Trang City.

On July 1, 1989, Khanh Hoa was split from Phu Khanh Province to become [Khanh Hoa Province](#) as it was before, Nha Trang was made the capital of Khanh Hoa Province.

On 22 April 1999, the prime minister by Decision 106/1999 recognized Nha Trang City the second class municipal city.



## Origin of the name

According to some researches, the name *Nha Trang* derives from a false Vietnamese spelling of a geographical name in the [Cham language](#) of the site *Ya Trang* (lit. *Reed River*), the name of the now Cai River as referred to by the Cham people). From the name of this river, the name was adopted to call what is now Nha Trang, which was officially made Vietnam's territory in 1653.

As far as the recorded naming of *Nha Trang* is concerned, in *Toàn tập Thiên Nam Tứ Chí Lộ Đồ Thư*, a geographical book written by a Vietnamese scholar with the family of Đỗ Bá in the second half of the 18th century, the name *Nha Trang Môn* ("Nha Trang gate") was mentioned<sup>[4]</sup>. In another

map dating to the 17th century, known as *Giáp Ngọ Niên Bình Nam Đồ* by a noble called Đoàn Quận công Bùi Thế Đạt, the name *Nha Trang Hải môn* (Nha Trang Sea Gate) was also cited<sup>[4]</sup>. In Vietnamese recorded historic bibliographies, these books are perhaps the earliest ones that mentioned this place name.

In a work by [Le Quy Don](#) called *Phủ biên tạp lục* (1776), many Nha Trang-related names were also mentioned, such as *đầm Nha Trang*, *dinh Nha Trang*, *nguồn Nha Trang*, and *đèo Nha Trang*.

## Transport



A popular fishery boat and a round bamboo coracle in Nha Trang.

When [Cam Ranh Bay](#) used to be an important naval base, [Nha Trang Airport](#) was the main airport of the city. This airport was used by the United States Air Force and South Vietnam Air Force during the [Vietnam War](#). When part of Cam Ranh Bay was made an economic development zone by the Vietnamese government, [Cam Ranh International Airport](#) (also a military airport built by the United States during Vietnam War) was made the new civilian airport of the city. This airport is located by Cam Ranh Bay, 45 km (28 miles) south of the city and is currently (as of 2007) the fifth busiest airport in terms of passenger traffic in Vietnam serving more than 500,000 passengers in 2006.

The city is located next to the [National Road 1A](#), the backbone north-south road of the country. The [Reunification Railway](#) also crosses the city and stops at [Nha Trang Railway Station](#). The construction work of [Van Phong Port](#), north of the city, a deep-water project capable of handling ships up to 100,000 tonnes, and with a capacity of 100 million tonnes of cargo per annum, is under progress by a consortium of Japanese corporations. The estimated investment capital for this port-city complex project is expected to reach US\$15 billion.

## Tourism



Nha Trang Bay

Nha Trang is one of the most important tourist hubs of Vietnam, thanks to its beautiful beaches with fine and clean sand and the clear ocean water with mild temperatures all year round. There are several resorts - such as *Vinpearl*, *Diamond Bay* and *Ana Mandara* - and amusement and water parks, both in the city and on islands off the coast. The possibly most beautiful street of Nha Trang

is [Tran Phu Street](#) along the seaside, sometimes referred to as the [Pacific Coast Highway](#) of Vietnam.

Lying off Nha Trang is the [Hon Tre Island](#) (Bamboo Island), with a major resort operated by the Vinpearl Group. A motorized chair lift system, reportedly the longest in the world, links the mainland to the five-star resort and theme park on Hon Tre Island.

Nha Trang is a stopover for annual yacht races starting in [Hong Kong](#). In recent years, the city has welcomed many five-star sea cruises. In addition to sail boat racing, Nha Trang provides a rich variety of tourist activities for visitors. Island hopping, scuba diving, water sports and other sporting activities can be enjoyed in the city. The Nha Trang Tourist Information Center (a non-governmental organisation), located near the [Cho Dam Market](#) has been set up to provide information for visitors <sup>[5]</sup>.

The local cuisine is most famous for fresh seafoods and barbecued pork rolled in rice paper. The area's [Bird's nest soup](#) is deemed one of the best in Vietnam. Bird's nests are collected in the wild, on bird farms on the islands off the coast and even in some houses in the inner city. The farmed bird in question belongs to the [swiftlet](#) group, popularly referred to as *yến hàng* ([Aerodramus fuciphagus germani](#)).

## Recreation and nightlife

There is a lot of good and inexpensive fun to be had in Nha Trang. Scuba diving costs around \$40-\$50 per trip, and there are several competing dive shops offering different dives to suit your taste. Most also offer the option to gain PADI certification. Kite boarding is available, but this will hardly be as great as in [Mui Ne](#) further down the coast. Catamaran sailboats are available for hire at around \$25 for an hour, and instructors from the rental shops will go out with you if you're not an experienced skipper. Winds are steady but don't expect to get up on one hull too often (if at all).

The nightlife is limited, but near the *Biet Thu* tourist district, the nightlife can go on beyond 2am. The nightlife is therefore known as superior to other coastal towns such as Mui Ne, [Da Nang](#) and [Vung Tau](#). It is usually busiest around the [Vietnamese New Year](#) period, but can still be worth visiting any time of year, with the possible exception of the rain period (especially November). A lot of tourists are enjoying the *Nha Trang River Cai* boat ride (locally known as *Song Cai*, as "song" means "river" in the Vietnamese language). However, if high tides keep rising as expected another meter in next 20 years (as a consequence of world climate changes), much of Na Thrang could disappear since the city is ringed by mountains leaving little soil left above high tide.

## Tourist attractions

- [Alexandre Yersin Museum](#)
- Boat tour on Cai River, visiting islands off the coast and Ba Ho Waterfall.
- Palace of Emperor [Bao Dai](#)
- Thap Ba Hot Spring (Lady Tower hot spring)
- Nha Phu Lagoon

- Hoa Lan Stream (Orchid Flower stream)
- Monkey Island
- Sạn Beach
- Hòn Tằm Island (Silkworm island)
- Hòn Mun Island (Ebony island)
- Hòn Con Sẻ Tre Island (Bamboo Sparrow island)
- Hòn Ông Island
- Đảo Yến Island (Swiftlet island)
- Hòn Tre Island (Bamboo island)
- Suối ĐỒ Stream
- Suối Tiên Stream (Fairy stream)
- Hòn Bà Island
- Yangbay Waterfall
- Tháp Bà Pô Nagar Nha Trang (a Champa Tower)
- Chùa Long Sơn (Long Son Pagoda- literal: The Dragon Mountain pagoda or White Buddha Pagoda)
- [Nha Trang Oceanography Institute](#), the largest of its kind in [Indochina](#) where thousands of oceanic life samples, exhibits are on display. It is also home to the largest oceanic library in Vietnam.
- Chánh Tòa Church (or Mountain Church)
- [Nha Trang Pasteur Institute](#)
- Trí Nguyễn Aquarium (an aquarium where hundreds of rare oceanic species are fed)
- VinPearl

## Ho Chi Minh City Oct. 17, 2009

Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) ([Vietnamese](#): Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh ◀[pronunciation](#) ([help·info](#)) ) is the largest [city](#) in [Vietnam](#). It was known as Prey Nokor ([Khmer](#): ប្រទេស) before being annexed by the Vietnamese in the 17th century. Under the name Saigon (Vietnamese: Sài Gòn; ◀[pronunciation](#) ([help·info](#))), it was the capital of the French colony of [Cochinchina](#) and later of the independent state of [South Vietnam](#) from 1954 to 1975. In 1976, Saigon merged with the surrounding province of Gia Định and was officially renamed Hồ Chí Minh City (although the name *Sài Gòn* - formally known as District 1 - is still commonly used.)<sup>[1]</sup>

The city center is situated on the banks of the [Saigon River](#), 60 kilometers (37 mi) from the [South China Sea](#)<sup>[2]</sup> and 1,760 kilometers (1,094 mi) south of [Hanoi](#), the capital of Vietnam.

The metropolitan area, which consists of Hồ Chí Minh City metro area, [Thủ Dầu Một](#), [Di An](#), [Bien Hoa](#) and surrounding towns, is populated by more than 9 million people,<sup>[3]</sup> making it the most populous metropolitan area in [Vietnam](#) and [Indochina](#). The [Greater Ho Chi Minh City Metropolitan Area](#), a [metropolitan area](#) covering most part of [Dong Nam Bo](#) plus [Tien Giang](#) and [Long An](#) provinces under planning will have an area of 30,000 square kilometers with a population of 20 million inhabitants by 2020.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Traditional Vietnamese name

After Prey Nokor was settled by Vietnamese refugees from the north, in time it came to be known unofficially as **Sài Gòn**. There is much debate about the origins of the Vietnamese name, *Sài Gòn*, the etymology of which is analyzed below.

It should be noted, however, that before the French colonization, the official Vietnamese name of Saigon was **Gia Định** (**Chữ Nôm**: 嘉定). In 1862, the French discarded this official name and adopted the name "Saigon", which had always been the popular name, although it was still written as 嘉定 on [sinitic](#) maps until at least 1891.<sup>[6]</sup>

The Vietnamese name, Sài Gòn, is written in two words, which is the traditional convention in Vietnamese spelling. Some people, however, write the name of the city as SaiGon or Saigon in order to save space or give it a more Westernized look.

## Sino-Vietnamese etymology

A frequently heard, and reasonable, explanation is that Sài is a Chinese [loanword](#) (**Chinese**: 柴, pronounced *chái* in [Mandarin](#)) meaning “firewood, lops, twigs; palisade”, while Gòn is a another Chinese loanword (**Chinese**: 棍, pronounced *gùn* in Mandarin) meaning “stick, pole, bole”, and whose meaning evolved into “cotton” in Vietnamese (*bông gòn*, literally “cotton stick”, i.e. “cotton plant”, then shortened to *gòn*).<sup>[6]</sup>

Some people say that this name originated from the many cotton plants that the [Khmer people](#) had planted around Prey Nokor, and which can still be seen at Cây Mai temple and surrounding areas.<sup>[6]</sup>

Another explanation is that the etymological meaning “twigs” (*sài*) and “boles” (*gòn*) refers to the dense and tall forest that once existed around the city, a forest to which the Khmer name, Prey Nokor, already referred.

In Chinese, the city is referred to as 西貢, pronounced "sai gung" in Cantonese and Xīgòng in Mandarin. This represents "Saigon" written phonetically.

## Cantonese etymology

Another reasonable etymology was offered by Vương Hồng Sển, a Vietnamese scholar in the early 20th century, who asserted that *Sài Gòn* had its origin in the [Cantonese](#) name of [Cholon](#) (Vietnamese: [quoc ngu](#) Chợ Lớn; [chu nom](#) 帶嶺), the Chinese district of Saigon. The Cantonese (and original) name of Cholon is "Tai-Ngon" (堤岸), which means "embankment" (French: *quais*). The theory posits that "Sài Gòn" derives from "Tai-Ngon".

## Khmer etymology

Another etymology often proposed, although held now as a least likely etymology, is that “Saigon” comes from “Sai Côn”, which would be the [transliteration](#) of the Khmer word, *prey kor* (ប្រៃករ), meaning “god or heavenly”. *Nokor* is a Khmer word of Sanskrit origin meaning “city, land”).

This Khmer etymology theory is quite interesting given the Khmer context that existed when the first Vietnamese settlers arrived in the region. However, it fails to completely explain how Khmer "prey" led to Vietnamese "Sài", since these two syllables appear phonetically quite distinct and as the least reasonable and least likely candidate from the khmer etymology.

## Current Vietnamese name

Immediately after the communist takeover of [South Vietnam](#) in 1975, a provisional government [renamed the city](#) after [Ho Chi Minh](#), a former [North Vietnamese](#) leader. The official name is now *Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh*, abbreviated Tp. HCM. In [English](#) this is translated as [Ho Chi Minh City](#), abbreviated HCMC, and in [French](#) it is translated as [Hô Chi Minh Ville](#) (the [circumflex](#) is sometimes omitted), abbreviated HCMV. *Sài Gòn* is still the most common way to refer to the city in conversation inside Vietnam. *Sài Gòn* is used officially to refer to District 1, for example in bus destinations. The name is also found in company names, book titles and even on airport departure boards (the code for [Tan Son Nhat International Airport](#) is SGN). Also, most Vietnamese that fled the country during the communist takeover do not recognize the name "Ho Chi Minh City", and will only refer to the city as Saigon.

## Capital of South Vietnam

Former Emperor [Bảo Đại](#) made Saigon the capital of the [State of Vietnam](#) in 1949 with himself as head of state. After the [Vietminh](#) gained control of [North Vietnam](#) in 1954, it became common to refer to the Saigon government as "South Vietnam." The government was renamed the [Republic of Vietnam](#) when Bảo Đại was deposed in 1955. Saigon and Cholon, an adjacent city with many Sino-Vietnamese residents, were combined into an administrative unit called *Đô Thành Sài Gòn* ("Capital City Saigon"). Post-Vietnam War and today

At the conclusion of the [Vietnam War](#), on April 30, 1975, the city came under the control of the [Vietnamese People's Army](#). In the [U.S.](#) this event is commonly called the "[Fall of Saigon](#)," while the communist [Socialist Republic of Vietnam](#) call it the "Liberation of Saigon."

In 1976, upon the establishment of the unified communist Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the city of Saigon (including Cholon), the province of Gia Định and 2 suburban districts of two other nearby provinces were combined to create Hồ Chí Minh City in honour of the late communist leader [Hồ Chí Minh](#). The former name *Saigon* is still widely used by many Vietnamese, especially in informal contexts.<sup>[8]</sup> Generally, the term *Saigon* refers only to the urban districts of Hồ Chí Minh City. The word "Saigon" can also be found on shop signs all over the country, even in [Hanoi](#).

## Landmarks



Reunification Palace



A squirrel at Dam Sen Amusement Park

Today, the city's core is still adorned with wide elegant boulevards and historic French colonial buildings. The most prominent structures in the city center are [Reunification Palace](#) (*Dinh Thống Nhất*), City Hall (*Ủy ban hân dân Thành phố*), [Municipal Theatre, Ho Chi Minh City](#) (*Nhà hát thành phố*), *City Post Office* (*Bưu điện thành phố*), *State Bank Office* (*Ngân hàng nhà nước*), *City People's Court* (*Tòa án nhân dân thành phố*) and [Notre-Dame Cathedral](#) (*Nhà thờ Đức Bà*). *Some of the historic hotels are the [Hotel Majestic](#), dating from the French colonial era, and the [Rex Hotel](#), Caravelle hotel some former hangouts for American officers and war correspondents in the 1960s and 1970s.*

The city has various museums, such as the [Ho Chi Minh City Museum](#), [Museum of Vietnamese History](#) and concerning modern history the Revolutionary Museum (*Bảo tàng cách mạng*) and the [War Remnants Museum \(Ho Chi Minh City\)](#). The [Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens](#) dates from 1865.

### Population and new urban areas

Ho Chi Minh City is home to a well-established ethnic Chinese population. [Cholon](#), which is made up of District 5 and parts of Districts 6, 10 and 11, serves as its [Chinatown](#).

With a population now exceeding 7 million (registered residents plus migrant workers as well as a metropolitan population of 10 million), Ho Chi Minh City is in need of vast increase in public infrastructure.<sup>[9]</sup> To meet this need, the city and central governments have embarked on an effort to develop new urban centers. The two most prominent projects are the Thu Thiem city center in District 2 and the [Phu My Hung Urban Area](#), a new City Center in District 7 (as part of the [Saigon South](#) project) where various international schools such as Saigon South International School, the Japanese school, Australia's [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology](#), the Taiwan and Korea schools are located. In December 2007, Phu My Hung New City Center completed the 17.8 km 10-14 lane wide Nguyen Van Linh Roadway linking the Saigon port areas, Tan Thuan Export Processing Zone to the National Highway 1 and the Mekong delta area. In November 2008, a brand new trade center, Saigon Exhibition and Convention Center, also opened its door. Other projects include Grandview, Waterfront, Sky Garden, Riverside and Phu Gia 99. Phu My Hung New City Center received the first Model New City Award from the Vietnamese Ministry of Construction.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Geography and climate



City provincial area in Vietnam



River boat in Ho Chi Minh City



### The World's [biosphere reserve Can Gio Mangrove Forest](#)

Ho Chi Minh City is located at 10° 45'N, 106° 40'E in the southeastern region of Vietnam, 1,760 km (1,094 miles) south of [Hanoi](#). The average elevation is 19 meters (63 ft) above sea level. It borders [Tay Ninh](#) and [Binh Duong](#) provinces to the north, [Dong Nai](#) and [Ba Ria-Vung Tau](#) provinces to the east, [Long An](#) Province to the west and the [South China Sea](#) to the south with a coast of 15 km in length. The city covers an area of 2,095 km<sup>2</sup> (809 sq mi) (0.63% of the surface of Vietnam), extending up to [Cu Chi](#) (12mi/20 km from the Cambodian border), and down to [Can Gio](#) on the East Sea coast. The distance from the northernmost point (Phu My Hung Commune, Cu Chi District) to the southernmost one (Long Hoa Commune, Can Gio District) is 102 kilometers (63 mi), and from the easternmost point (Long Binh Ward, District Nine) to the westernmost one (Binh Chanh Commune, Binh Chanh District) is 47 kilometers (29 mi).

he city has a tropical climate, with an average humidity of 75%. A year is divided into two distinct seasons. The rainy season, with an average rainfall of about 1,800 millimetres (71 in) annually (about 150 rainy days per year), usually begins in May and ends in late November. The dry season lasts from December to April. The average temperature is 28 °C (82 °F), the highest temperature sometimes reaches 39 °C (102 °F) around noon in late April, while the lowest may fall below 16 °C (61 °F) in the early mornings of late December.

 **Weather averages for Ho Chi Minh City** 


Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average high °C (°F)	32 (90)	33 (91)	34 (93)	34 (93)	33 (91)	32 (90)	31 (88)	32 (90)	31 (88)	31 (88)	30 (86)	31 (88)
Average low °C (°F)	21 (70)	22 (72)	23 (73)	24 (75)	25 (77)	24 (75)	25 (77)	24 (75)	23 (73)	23 (73)	22 (72)	22 (72)
<u>Precipitation</u> mm (inches)	14 (0.55)	4 (0.16)	12 (0.47)	42 (1.65)	220 (8.66)	331 (13.03)	313 (12.32)	267 (10.51)	334 (13.15)	268 (10.55)	115 (4.53)	56 (2.2)

Source: Embassy of Vietnam, London<sup>[11]</sup> 2008-02-26



 [Ho Chi Minh City Hall](#)




 [Ho Chi Minh City Hall](#) and Statue of Ho Chi Minh



 Main Post Office in Ho Chi Minh City in District 1




 Tuệ Thành meeting house in [China town](#) in District 5



 Stork garden in District 9



 Saigon skyline

### Economy



 Downtown Ho Chi Minh City as seen from Saigon River

Ho Chi Minh City is the most important economic center in Vietnam as it accounts for a high proportion of Vietnam's economy. Ho Chi Minh City plays an important driving impetus of [Economy of Vietnam](#). This city just accounts for 0.6% land area, 7.5% population of Vietnam nevertheless accounts for 20.2% [GDP](#), 27.9% industrial output and 34.9% [FDI](#) projects in this country in 2005<sup>[12]</sup>. In [2005](#), this city had 4,344,000 labors, of which 130,000 ones are over labor age norm (in Vietnam

it's 60 for male and 55 for female worker)<sup>[13]</sup>. In [2007](#), GDP per capita reached 2,100 [USD](#), compared to this country's average level of \$US 730 in [2006](#)<sup>[14]</sup>.

The economy of Ho Chi Minh City covers different fields, from [mining](#), seafood processing, [agriculture](#), [construction](#) to [tourism](#), [finance](#), [industry](#), [trading](#). The state-owned sector makes up 33.3%, private sector of 4.6%, the other remaining percentage lays in foreign businesses. As far as economic structure is concerned, service sector accounts for 51.1%, industry and construction accounts for 47.7%, forestry, agriculture and others make up just 1.2%.<sup>[15]</sup>



As of June of [2006](#), this city is home to 3 Export Processing Zones, 12 Industrial Parks.<sup>[16]</sup> Ho Chi Minh City is the leading FDI absorber of Vietnam, with 2,530 FDI projects, 16.6 \$ billion at the end of [2007](#).<sup>[17]</sup> In 2007, it got over 400 FDI projects with \$US 3 billion.<sup>[18]</sup> In 2008, it attracted \$US 8.5 billion from FDI.<sup>[19]</sup>

The consumption demand of Ho Chi Minh City is much higher than other [provinces and municipalities](#) of Vietnam, 1.5 times higher than that of [Hanoi](#).<sup>[20]</sup>

Some 300,000 businesses, including many large enterprises, are involved in high-tech, electronic, processing and light industries, also in construction, building materials and agro-products. Also [crude oil](#) is a popular economic base in Ho Chi Minh City. Investors are still pouring money into the city. Total local private investment was 160,000 billion dong (\$10 billion) with 18,500 newly founded companies.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Investment is trended to hi-tech and services, real estate projects. Currently, the city has 15 industrial parks and export-processing zones, in addition to the [Quang Trung Software Park](#) and the [Saigon Hi-Tech Park](#). Intel invested about 1 billion dollars in a factory in the city. There are 171 medium and large scale markets, several supermarket chains, shopping malls, fashion, and beauty centers. Additional malls and shopping plazas are being developed within the city. Over 50 banks with hundreds of branches and about 20 insurance companies are also located inside the city.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The [first stock exchange in Vietnam](#) was opened in the city in 2001.

Quang Trung Software Park is a software park situated in District 12. The park is approximately 15 km from down town Saigon and hosts software enterprises, dot.com companies. The park also includes a software training school. Dot.com investors here are supplied with other facilities and services such as residences, high speed access to internet as well as favorable taxation. Together with the [Hi-tech Park](#) in [District 9](#) and the 32 ha. software park inside Tan Thuan Export Processing Zone in District 7 of the city, Ho Chi Minh City is ambitious to become an important hi-tech city of the country and the [South-East Asian](#) region. This park helps the city in particular and Vietnam in

general to be an [outsourcing](#) place for other enterprises in [developed countries](#) as [India](#) has performed.



 [Ben Thanh Market](#)

In 2007, the city's Gross Domestic Product was estimated at \$14.3 billion, or about \$2,180 per capita, (up 12.6 percent on 2006) and accounting for 20 percent GDP of the country. The GDP adjusted to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) reached \$71.5 billion, or about \$10,870 per capita (approximately 3 times higher than the country's average). The city's Industrial Product Value was \$6.4 billion, equivalent to 30 percent of the whole nation. Export - Import Turnover through HCMC ports accounted for \$36 billion, or 40 percent of the national total, of which, export revenue reached \$18.3 billion (40 percent of Vietnam's total export revenues). In 2007, Ho Chi Minh City contribution to the annual revenues in the national budget increased by 30 percent, accounting for about 20.5 percent of the total revenues. <sup>[21]</sup>

In 2007, 3 million foreign tourists, about 70 percent of total number of tourists to Vietnam, visited the city. Total cargo transport to Ho Chi Minh City's ports reached 50.5 million [metric tonnes](#), nearly one-third of the total for Vietnam.<sup>1</sup>

## Transportation

A masked mother and child



[Tan Son Nhat International Airport](#), a joint civilian and military airport, is located 4 mi (6 km) north of the city center (District 1). The Tan Son Nhat International Airport located in Tan Binh District. The government expanded the Tan Son Nhat Airport in 2007, with improvements to the international airport. Taxi and bus services are available for travel to and from the airport and within the city. Because of the rapid growing number of air-passengers and Tan Son Nhat Airport's proximity to the center of the city, the Vietnamese Government has prepared to build a new international airport near Long Thanh Township, Dong Nai Province about 25 mi (40 km) to the northeast.



"World capital of motorbikes"

Ho Chi Minh city's road system is in improvable condition. Many of its streets are riddled with potholes. This is especially true of the city's numerous back streets and alleys, which are sometimes little more than dirt paths. City buses are the only public transport available, although the city is seeking financing sources for building metro (subway) and elevated train projects, including the [Ho Chi Minh City Metro](#) planned for completion in 2020. Recently, the number of motorcycles has increased to about 4 million. There are also over 500,000 automobiles, packing the city's arterial roads and making traffic congestion and air pollution common problems. While [Beijing](#) used to be called "the City of Bicycles", Ho Chi Minh City is "the Capital of Motorbikes". Motorcycle-taxi (*xê ôm*) is a popular means of transport; foreigners are often greeted with the cry, "Motorbike!" Visitors should consider the city's streets as dangerous due to the motorists' lack of behavior and the city's lack of traffic law enforcement. Drivers can be seen driving the wrong way up one-way streets, ignoring red lights, not stopping for pedestrians on marked crossings and driving on the footpaths.<sup>[25]</sup> From 2008, this has improved somewhat, with more traffic lights, greater adherence to traffic light signals, and motorcycle helmets being worn.



City buses in Ho Chi Minh City. Usual fare is 3000 dong.

The city is the terminal hub of the North South Railroad of Vietnam. Passengers can travel to [Hanoi](#) and the Chinese border, about 1,212 mi/1,950 km to the north. There are many harbours along the Saigon and [Dong Nai](#) Rivers, such as: Saigon Port, Newport, Ben nghe Port and VICT Port. They account for the annual 40 percent export-import cargo output of Vietnam.

From Ho Chi Minh City, one can travel to many places in Southern Vietnam and to Cambodia by road or waterway. The city is linked to the Central Highlands by National Highways 14 and 20, to the Central Coast and the north by National Highway 1 and to the [Mekong River Delta](#) by National Highways 1 and 50. Two expressways are being built to connect the city to [Can Tho](#), the capital of the Mekong River Delta, and to [Dau Giay](#) Township, [Dong Nai](#) Province, 70 km to the northeast.

## Media, Culture and Entertainment



Typical housing in Ho Chi Minh City.



Entrance to the Fine Arts Museum.



Ben Thanh Markets.



Municipal Theatre

The city's media is the most developed in the country. At present, HCMC has 7 daily newspapers: [Sai Gon Giai Phong](#) (Liberated Saigon) and its Chinese, investment and finance, sports, evening and weekly editions; [Tuoi Tre](#) (Youth), the highest circulation newspaper in Vietnam; Thanh Nien (Young Men), the second largest circulation in the south of Vietnam; [Nguoi Lao Dong](#) (Labourer); The Thao (Sports); [Phap Luat](#) (Law) and the Saigon Times Daily, the business newspaper in English, and over 30 other newspapers and magazines. HCMC Television (HTV) is the second largest television network in the nation, just behind the national Vietnam Television (VTV), broadcasting 24/7 on 7 different channels (using analog and digital technology). The Voice of HCMC People is also the largest radio station in the Southern region. The major international TV channels are provided through two cable networks (SCTV and HTVC), with over 500,000 subscribers of satellite TVs. [\[citation needed\]](#)

Ho Chi Minh City is home to hundreds of cinemas and theatres, with cinema and dramatic ticketing revenue accounts for 60-70% of Vietnam's total revenue in this industry. Unlike other dramatic teams in Vietnam's provinces and municipalities, those in Ho Chi Minh City live on their own income and keep their theaters active everyday, and are not subsidized by the Vietnamese government. [\[26\]](#).

The city has over 1.7 million fixed telephones and about 6.6 million cellular phones (the latter growing annually by 20%). The Internet, especially through ADSL connections, is also rapidly expanding with over 1,200,000 subscribers and around 4.5 million frequent users. <sup>[*citation needed*]</sup>

The city has hundreds of printing and publishing houses, many bookstores and a widespread network of public and school libraries. The HCMC General Library with over 1.5 million books, is a beautiful architectural building. One can visit the Museum of History, the Museum of Revolution, the Museum of Southern Women, the Museum of Southeastern's Armed Forces, the Museum of Fine Art, the Gallery for War Remnants, the Nha Rong Memorial House, the Ben Duoc Relic of Underground Tunnels and many private art galleries. Besides the Municipal Theatre, there are other great places of entertainment such as: the Bến Thành and Hòa Bình Theaters and the Lan Anh Music Stage. The Đầm Sen Tourist and Cultural Park, [Suoi Tien Amusement and Culture Park](#), and the Can Gio Eco beach resort are three recreational sites inside the city which are popular with visitors.

There are many Pho chains in the city to enjoy which are very inexpensive. The city has hundreds of ranked hotels with over 18,000 rooms, including ten luxury 5 star hotels. However, backpacking travelers frequent the "Western Quarter" on [Pham Ngu Lao street](#) in District 1.

## Singapore Oct. 19, 2009

**Singapore** (Chinese: 新加坡; pinyin: *Xīnjiāpō*; Malay: *Singapura*; Tamil: சிங்கப்பூர், *Cingappūr*), officially the **Republic of Singapore**, is an island city-state located at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, lying 137 kilometres (85 mi) north of the equator, south of the Malaysian state of Johor and north of Indonesia's Riau Islands. At 710.2 km<sup>2</sup> (274.2 sq mi),<sup>[7]</sup> Singapore, a microstate and the smallest nation in Southeast Asia, is by orders of magnitude larger than Monaco and Vatican City, the only other surviving sovereign city-states.

Before European settlement, the island now known as Singapore was the site of a Malay fishing village at the mouth of the Singapore River. Several hundred indigenous Orang Laut people also lived along the nearby coast, rivers and on smaller islands. In 1819, the British East India Company, led by Sir Stamford Raffles, established a trading post on the island, which was used as a port along the spice route.<sup>[8]</sup> Singapore became one of the most important commercial and military centres of the British Empire, and the hub of British power in Southeast Asia.

During the Second World War, the British colony was occupied by the Japanese after the Battle of Singapore, which Winston Churchill called "Britain's greatest defeat".<sup>[9]</sup> Singapore reverted to British rule in 1945, immediately after the war. Eighteen years later, in 1963, the city, having achieved independence from Britain, merged with Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak to form Malaysia. However, the merger proved unsuccessful, and, less than two years later, it seceded from the federation and became an independent republic within the Commonwealth of Nations on August 9, 1965. Singapore was admitted to the United Nations on September 21 of that year.

Since independence, Singapore's standard of living has risen dramatically. Foreign direct investment and a state-led drive to industrialization based on plans drawn up by the Dutch economist Albert Winsemius have created a modern economy focused on industry, education and

urban planning.<sup>[10]</sup> Singapore is the 5th wealthiest country in the world in terms of GDP (PPP) per capita.<sup>[11]</sup> In December 2008, the foreign exchange reserves of this small island nation stood at around US\$174.2 billion.<sup>[12]</sup> The Singapore government had for the first time in history tapped into her official reserves and withdrew some S\$4.9 billion with the approval of the President. The funds were then used as part of the S\$20.5 billion resilience package unveiled by Finance Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam on 5 February 2009. As of January 2009, Singapore's official reserves stands at US\$170.3 billion.

In 2009, the Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Singapore the tenth most expensive city in the world in which to live—the third in Asia, after Tokyo and Osaka.<sup>[13]</sup> The 2009 Cost of Living survey, by consultancy firm Mercer, has ranked Singapore similarly as the tenth most expensive city for expatriates to live in.<sup>[14]</sup>

The population of Singapore is approximately 4.86 million.<sup>[5]</sup> Singapore is highly cosmopolitan and diverse with Chinese people forming an ethnic majority with large populations of Malay, Indian and other people. English, Malay, Tamil, and Chinese are the official languages.<sup>[15]</sup>

Singapore is a parliamentary republic, and the Constitution of Singapore establishes representative democracy as the nation's political system.<sup>[16]</sup> The People's Action Party (PAP) dominates the political process and has won control of Parliament in every election since self-government in 1959.<sup>[17]</sup>



## Etymology

Main article: Names of Singapore

The English language name Singapore comes from Malay *Singapura*, "Lion-city", but it is possible that one element of its name had a more distant original source.<sup>[18]</sup> *Pura* comes from Sanskrit *puram*, "city, fortress", and is related to Greek *polis*, "citadel, city". *Singa-* comes from Sanskrit *simha*, which means lion. Today the city-state is referred to as the **Lion City**.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Recent<sup>[when?]</sup> studies of Singapore indicate that lions probably never lived there, not even Asiatic lions; the beast seen by Sang Nila Utama, the founder of Singapore who gave it the name meaning "Lion City", was most likely a tiger, probably the Malayan Tiger.<sup>[19][20]</sup> Alternatively, it could simply be a reference to the ancient Sinhapura as described in the Mahabharata.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## History

### First settlement

Main article: Early history of Singapore

The first records of settlement in Singapore are from the 2nd century AD.<sup>[21]</sup> The island was an outpost of the Sumatran Srivijaya empire and originally had the Javanese name *Temasek* ('sea town'). Temasek (Tumasek) rapidly became a significant trading settlement, but declined in the late 14th century. There are few remnants of old Temasek in Singapore, but archaeologists in Singapore have uncovered artifacts of that and other settlements. Between the 16th and early 19th centuries, Singapore island was part of the Sultanate of Johor. During the Malay-Portugal wars in 1613, the settlement was set ablaze by Portuguese troops.<sup>[22]</sup> The Portuguese subsequently held control in that century and the Dutch in the 18th, but throughout most of this time the island's population consisted mainly of fishermen.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

### Colonial rule

Main article: Founding of modern Singapore



Statue of Thomas Stamford Raffles by Thomas Woolner, erected at the location where he first landed at Singapore. He is recognised as the founder of modern Singapore.

On 29 January 1819, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles landed on the main island. Spotting its potential as a strategic geographical trading post in Southeast Asia, Raffles signed a treaty with Sultan

Hussein Shah on behalf of the British East India Company on 6 February 1819 to develop the southern part of Singapore as a British trading post and settlement. Until August 1824, Singapore was still a territory controlled by a Malay Sultan. Singapore only officially became a British colony in August 1824 when the British extended control over the whole island. John Crawfurd, the second resident of Singapore, was the one who officially made Singapore a British possession. He signed a treaty with Sultan Hussein Shah on 2 August 1824 in which the Sultan and the Temmenggong handed over the whole island to the British East India Company thus marking the start of the island's modern era. Raffles's deputy, William Farquhar, oversaw a period of growth and ethnic migration, which was largely spurred by a no-restriction immigration policy. The British India office governed the island from 1858, but Singapore was made a British crown colony in 1867, answerable directly to the Crown. By 1869, 100,000 lived on the island.<sup>[23]</sup>

The early onset of town planning in colonial Singapore came largely through a "divide and rule" framework where the different ethnic groups were settled in different parts of the South of the island. The Singapore River was largely a commercial area that was dominated by traders and bankers of various ethnic groups with mostly Chinese and Indian coolies working to load and unload goods from barge boats known locally as "bumboats". The Malays, consisting of the local "Orang Lauts" who worked mostly as fishermen and seafarers, and Arab traders and scholars were mostly found in the South-east part of the river mouth, where Kampong Glam stands today. The European settlers, who were few then, settled around Fort Canning Hill and further upstream from the Singapore River. Like the Europeans, the early Indian migrants also settled more inland of the Singapore River, where Little India stands today. Very little is known about the rural private settlements in those times (known as *kampongs*), other than the major move by the post-independent Singapore government to re-settle these residents in the late 1960s.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## World War II

Main article: Japanese occupation of Singapore



The Japanese Army marching in downtown Singapore

Years before the rise of the Japanese, the British noted that Japan was building its forces rapidly. Wanting to protect its assets in Southeast Asia, the British decided to build a naval base on the Northern end of Singapore. However, due to the war with Germany, all warships and war equipment were brought over to Europe.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

During World War II, the Imperial Japanese Army invaded Malaya, culminating in the Battle of Singapore. The ill-prepared British, with most of their forces in Europe, were defeated in six days, and surrendered the supposedly impregnable fortress to General Tomoyuki Yamashita on 15 February 1942. The surrender was described by the British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, as, "the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history."<sup>[24]</sup> The British naval base (see above) was destroyed before the Japanese could take over the base and make use of it. Widespread

indiscriminate killing of the Chinese population occurred (see Sook Ching massacre).<sup>[25]</sup> The Japanese renamed Singapore *Shōnantō* (昭南島?), from Japanese "Shōwa no jidai ni eta minami no shima" ("昭和の時代に得た南の島"), or "southern island obtained in the age of Shōwa", and occupied it until the British repossessed the island on 12 September 1945, a month after the Japanese surrender.<sup>[26]</sup> The name *Shōnantō* was, at the time, romanised as "Syonan-to" or "Syonan", which means "Light of the South".<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

## Independence

Main article: History of the Republic of Singapore

Following the war, the British government allowed Singapore to hold its first general election, in 1955, which was won by a pro-independence candidate, David Marshall.

Demanding complete self-rule, then Chief Minister David Marshall led a delegation to London, but was refused by the British. He resigned upon return, and was replaced by Lim Yew Hock, whose policies then convinced the British. Singapore was granted full internal self-government with its own prime minister and Cabinet overseeing all matters of government except defence and foreign affairs.

Elections were then held on 30 May 1959 with the People's Action Party winning a landslide victory. Singapore eventually became a self-governing state within the British Empire on 3 June 1959 and Lee Kuan Yew was sworn in as the first prime minister of Singapore two days later.<sup>[27][28]</sup> Then Governor of Singapore, Sir William Allmond Codrington Goode, served as the first Yang di-Pertuan Negara from 3 June 1959 until 3 December 1959. He was succeeded by Yusof bin Ishak, who would later become the first President of Singapore.

It declared independence from Britain unilaterally in August 1963, before joining the Federation of Malaysia in September along with Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak as the result of the 1962 Merger Referendum of Singapore. Singapore left the federation two years after heated ideological conflict between the state's PAP government and the federal Kuala Lumpur government. Singapore officially gained sovereignty on 9 August 1965.<sup>[4]</sup> Yusof bin Ishak was sworn in as the first President of Singapore and Lee Kuan Yew became the first prime minister of the Republic of Singapore.

While trying to be self-sufficient, the fledging nation faced problems like mass unemployment, housing shortages, and a dearth of land and natural resources. During Lee Kuan Yew's term as prime minister from 1959 to 1990, his administration tackled the problem of widespread unemployment, raised the standard of living, and implemented a large-scale public housing programme.<sup>[29]</sup> It was during this time that the foundation of the country's economic infrastructure was developed; the threat of racial tension was curbed; and an independent national defence system centering around compulsory male military service was created.<sup>[30]</sup>

In 1990, Goh Chok Tong succeeded Lee as Prime Minister. During his tenure, the country faced the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, the 2003 SARS outbreak, and terrorist threats posed by Jemaah Islamiyah after the September 11 attacks in the United States. In 2004, Lee Hsien Loong, the eldest son of Lee Kuan Yew, became the third prime minister.<sup>[31]</sup> Amongst his more notable decisions is the plan to open casinos to attract tourism.<sup>[32]</sup>

## Government and politics



Parliament House

Main article: Politics of Singapore

See also: Law of Singapore

Singapore is a parliamentary democracy with a Westminster system of unicameral parliamentary government representing different constituencies. The bulk of the executive powers rests with the Cabinet, headed by the Prime Minister, currently Mr Lee Hsien Loong. The office of President of Singapore, historically a ceremonial one, was granted some veto powers as of 1991 for a few key decisions such as the use of the national reserves and the appointment of judiciary positions. Although the position is to be elected by popular vote, only the 1993 election has been contested to date. The legislative branch of government is the Parliament.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

Parliamentary elections in Singapore are plurality-based for group representation constituencies since the Parliamentary Elections Act was modified in 1991.<sup>[33]</sup>

The Members of Parliament (MPs) consist of either elected, non-constituency or nominated Members. The majority of the Members of Parliament are elected into Parliament at a General Election on a first-past-the-post basis and represent either Single Member or Group Representation Constituencies (GRCs).<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The elected Members of Parliament act as a bridge between the community and the Government by ensuring that the concerns of their constituents are heard in the Parliament. The present Parliament has 94 Members of Parliament consisting of 84 elected Members of Parliament, one NCMP and nine Nominated members of Parliament.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>



The Istana, the official residence and office of the President of Singapore.

The People's Action Party (PAP) has been the ruling party in Singapore since self-government was attained.<sup>[34]</sup> There are several opposition parties in Singapore, the most notable being the Workers' Party of Singapore, the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) and the Singapore Democratic Alliance (SDA). The Economist Intelligence Unit describes Singapore as a "hybrid regime" of democratic and authoritarian elements.<sup>[35]</sup> Freedom House ranks the country as "partly free".<sup>[36]</sup> Although general elections are free from irregularities and vote rigging, the PAP has been criticized by some for manipulating the political system through its use of censorship, gerrymandering, and civil libel suits against opposition politicians.<sup>[37]</sup>

Singapore has a successful and transparent market economy. Government-linked companies are dominant in various sectors of the local economy, such as media, utilities, and public transport. Singapore has consistently been rated as the least corrupt country in Asia and among the world's ten most free from corruption by Transparency International.<sup>[38]</sup>

Although Singapore's laws are inherited from English and British Indian laws, and includes many elements of English common law, the government has also chosen not to follow some elements of liberal democratic values. There are no jury trials and there are laws restricting the freedom of speech that may breed ill will or cause disharmony within Singapore's multiracial, multi-religious society. Criminal activity is often punished with heavy penalties including heavy fines or caning and there are laws which allow capital punishment in Singapore for first-degree murder and drug trafficking. The Singapore government argues that Singapore has the sovereign right to determine its own judicial system and impose what it sees as an appropriate punishment, including capital punishment for the most serious crimes.<sup>[39]</sup>

## Geography and climate



Singapore Downtown as seen from the DHL Balloon

Main article: Geography and climate of Singapore

Singapore consists of 63 islands, including mainland Singapore. There are two man-made connections to Johor, Malaysia – Johor-Singapore Causeway in the north, and Tuas Second Link in the west. Jurong Island, Pulau Tekong, Pulau Ubin and Sentosa are the largest of Singapore's many smaller islands. The highest natural point of Singapore is Bukit Timah Hill at 166 m (545 ft).<sup>[citation needed]</sup>

The south of Singapore, around the mouth of the Singapore River and what is now the Downtown Core, used to be the only concentrated urban area, while the rest of the land was either undeveloped tropical rainforest or used for agriculture. Since the 1960s, the government has constructed new residential towns in outlying areas, resulting in an entirely built-up urban landscape. The Urban Redevelopment Authority was established on 1 April 1974, responsible for urban planning.<sup>[citation needed]</sup>



Singapore Botanic Gardens, a 67.3-hectare (166 acre) Botanic Gardens in Singapore that includes the National Orchid Garden, which has a collection of more than 3,000 species of orchids.

Singapore has on-going land reclamation projects with earth obtained from its own hills, the seabed, and neighbouring countries. As a result, Singapore's land area grew from 581.5 km<sup>2</sup> (224.5 sq mi) in the 1960s to 704 km<sup>2</sup> (271.8 sq mi) today, and may grow by another 100 km<sup>2</sup> (38.6 sq mi) by 2030.<sup>[40]</sup> The projects sometimes involve some of the smaller islands being merged together through land reclamation in order to form larger, more functional islands, such as in the case of Jurong Island.

Under the Köppen climate classification system, Singapore has a tropical rainforest climate with no distinctive seasons. Its climate is characterized by uniform temperature and pressure, high humidity, and abundant rainfall. Temperatures range from 22 °C to 34 °C (72° to 93 °F). On average, the relative humidity is around 90% in the morning and 60% in the afternoon. During prolonged heavy rain, relative humidity often reaches 100%.<sup>[41]</sup> The lowest and highest temperatures recorded in its maritime history are 19.4 °C (66.9 °F) and 35.8 °C (96.4 °F) respectively. June and July are the hottest months, while November and December make up the wetter monsoon season. From August to October, there is often haze, sometimes severe enough to prompt public health warnings, due to bushfires in neighbouring Indonesia. Singapore does not observe daylight saving time or a summer time zone change. The length of the day is nearly constant year round due to the country's location near the equator.

About 23% of Singapore's land area consists of forest and nature reserves.<sup>[42]</sup> Urbanisation has eliminated many areas of former primary rainforest, with the only remaining area of primary rainforest being Bukit Timah Nature Reserve. A variety of parks are maintained with human intervention, such as the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

## Economy

Main article: Economy of Singapore

Singapore has a highly developed market-based economy, which has historically revolved around extended entrepôt trade, in other words an export driven economy hugely dependant on export of goods to other countries. Along with Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan, Singapore is one of the Four Asian Tigers. The economy depends heavily on exports and refining imported goods, especially in manufacturing. This explains why the country is faring so badly in the current recession scenario. Manufacturing constituted 26% of Singapore's GDP in 2005.<sup>[43]</sup> The manufacturing industry is well-diversified with significant electronics, petroleum refining, chemicals, mechanical engineering and biomedical sciences manufacturing sectors. In 2006, Singapore produced about 10% of the world's foundry wafer output.<sup>[44]</sup> Singapore has one of the busiest ports in the world and is the world's fourth largest foreign exchange trading centre after London, New York City and Tokyo.<sup>[45]</sup>

Singapore has been rated as the most business-friendly economy in the world,<sup>[46][47]</sup> with thousands of foreign expatriates working in multi-national corporations. Singapore is also considered to be one of the top centres of finance in the region and the world. In addition to this, the city-state also employs tens of thousands of foreign blue-collared workers from around the world.



Alternate view of Singapore's Central Business District (CBD)

As a result of a global recession and a slump in the technology sector, the country's GDP contracted 2.2% in 2001. The Economic Review Committee (ERC) was set up in December 2001, and recommended several policy changes with a view to revitalising the economy. Singapore has since recovered from the recession, largely due to improvements in the world economy; the Singaporean economy grew by 8.3% in 2004, 6.4% in 2005<sup>[48]</sup> and 7.9% in 2006.<sup>[49]</sup> On 19 August 2007, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced in his National Day Rally Speech that Singapore's economy is expected to grow by at least 4-6% annually over the next 5-10 years.

The per capita GDP in 2006 was US\$29,474.<sup>[50]</sup> As of September 2007, the unemployment rate is 1.7%, which is the lowest in a decade, having improved to around pre-Asian crisis level.<sup>[51]</sup> Employment continued to grow strongly as the economy maintained its rapid expansion. In the first three quarters of 2007, 171,500 new jobs were created, which is close to the figure of 176,000 for the whole of 2006.<sup>[51]</sup> For the whole of 2007, Singapore's economy grew 7.5% and drew in a record S\$16 billion (US\$10.6b, €8.3b) of fixed asset investments in manufacturing and projects generating S\$3 billion (US\$2b, €1.6b) of total business spending in services.<sup>[52]</sup>



Orchard Road is decorated for Christmas, 2005.

Singapore introduced a Goods and Services Tax (GST) with an initial rate of 3% on 1 April 1994 substantially increasing government revenue by S\$1.6 billion (US\$1b, €800m) and stabilising government finances.<sup>[53]</sup> The taxable GST was increased to 4% in 2003, to 5% in 2004, and to 7% on 1 July 2007.<sup>[54]</sup>

Due to the economic recession, Singapore's economy expanded by only 1.1% in year 2008, much lower than the expected 4.5% to 6.5% growth, while the unemployment rate was at 2.8%.<sup>[55]</sup> The economy is expected to contract greatly by up to 8% in 2009 and unemployment could rise to 5% this year as forecast by several private sector economists.

The Economic Development Board is a statutory board of the Government of Singapore. It has been tasked to plan and execute strategies to sustain Singapore as a leading global hub for business and investment.

## Currency

Main article: Singapore Dollar

The currency of Singapore is the Singapore dollar, represented by the symbol **S\$** or the abbreviation **SGD**. The central bank of Singapore is the Monetary Authority of Singapore, responsible for issuing currency. Singapore established the Board of Commissioners of Currency, Singapore, on 7 April 1967<sup>[64]</sup> and issued its first coins and notes.<sup>[65]</sup> The Singapore dollar was exchangeable at par with the Malaysian ringgit until 1973.<sup>[65]</sup> Interchangeability with the Brunei dollar is still maintained.<sup>[65][66]</sup>

On 27 June 2007, to commemorate 40 years of currency agreement with Brunei, a commemorative S\$20 note was launched; the back is identical to the Bruneian \$20 note launched concurrently.<sup>[66][67]</sup>

## Foreign relations

Main article: Foreign relations of Singapore

Singapore maintains diplomatic relations with 175 countries,<sup>[68]</sup> although it does not maintain a high commission or embassy in many of those countries. It is a member of the United Nations, the Commonwealth, ASEAN and the Non-Aligned Movement. Due to obvious geographical reasons, relations with Malaysia and Indonesia are most important but the domestic politics of the three countries often threatens their relations. On the other hand, Singapore enjoys good relations with many European nations, including France, Germany and the United Kingdom, the latter sharing ties via the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) along with Malaysia, Australia and New Zealand. Good relations are also maintained with the United States, a country perceived as a stabilising force in the region to counterbalance the regional powers.

Singapore supports the concept of Southeast Asian regionalism and plays an active role in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Singapore is a founding member. Singapore is also a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which has its Secretariat in Singapore. Singapore also has close relations with fellow ASEAN nation Brunei and maintains Army training facilities in the Sultanate.

## Disputes

Singapore has several long-standing disputes with Malaysia over a number of issues:

- Water deliveries to Singapore<sup>[69][70]</sup>
- Mutual maritime boundaries
- Air routes between Singapore Changi Airport and Kuala Lumpur International Airport





The dispute over the ownership of Pedra Branca, an outcrop of rocks, was resolved on 24 May 2008 (Singapore time) by the International Court of Justice between Singapore and Malaysia (see text).

- The Singapore island known as Pedra Branca in Singapore and as Pulau Batu Puteh in Malaysia (names mean "White Rock" in Portuguese and "White Rock Island" in Malay respectively), is located 24 nautical miles (44 km) off the east coast of Singapore with a land area of 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> (2,392 sq yd). The island also comprises Middle Rocks owned by Malaysia which are two clusters of rocks situated 0.6 nmi (1.1 km) south of the main island. Both countries had staked a claim on the island and were unable to settle the dispute themselves. The case was heard at the International Court of Justice in 2007, with both parties presenting their case. The court delivered its judgment on 23 May 2008 with Singapore having ownership of Pedra Branca and Malaysia owning Middle Rocks. Ownership of South Ledge, a nearby rock formation which can be seen only at low tide is still disputed [1].
- Relocating the Singapore station of Malaysia's Keretapi Tanah Melayu from Tanjong Pagar to Bukit Timah (see Malaysia-Singapore Points of Agreement of 1990) and moving Malaysia's immigration checkpoint from the railway station to the Causeway.
- Not allowing laid off workers, employed in Singapore shipyards in 1998, to receive their Central Provident Funds (CPF) contributions, which are estimated to be RM2.4 billion.

## Religion



In Singapore, Diwali is marked by 2 kilometres of lights across the Little India area.

Main article: Religion in Singapore

Religion in Singapore		
religion		percent
Buddhism		42.5%
No religion		14.8%
Christianity		14.6%
Islam		13.9%
Taoism		8.5%

Hinduism		4%
Others		1.6%

Singapore is a multi-religious country. According to *Statistics Singapore*, around 51% of resident Singaporeans (excluding significant numbers of visitors and migrant workers) practice Buddhism and Taoism. About 15%, mostly Chinese, Eurasians, and Indians, practice Christianity - a broad classification including Catholicism, Protestantism and other denominations. Muslims constitute 14%, of whom Malays account for the majority with a substantial number of Indian Muslims and Chinese Muslims. Smaller minorities practice Sikhism, Hinduism and others, according to the 2000 census.<sup>[81]</sup> Some religious materials and practices are banned in Singapore. The Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, are prohibited from distributing religious materials<sup>[82]</sup> and are sometimes jailed for their conscientious refusals to serve in the Singaporean military.<sup>[83]</sup>

About 15% of the population declared no religious affiliation.

## Languages



Construction site sign showing Singapore's four official languages: English, Chinese (in Traditional Script), Tamil, and Malay.

The official languages are English, Malay, Chinese (Mandarin) and Tamil.<sup>[15]</sup> The national language of Singapore is Malay for historical reasons,<sup>[15]</sup> and it is used in the national anthem, "Majulah Singapura".<sup>[91]</sup>

English is the main language of Singapore and has been heavily promoted as such since the country's independence. The English used is primarily based on British English, with some American English influences. The use of English became widespread in Singapore after it was implemented as a first language medium in the education system, and English is the most common language in Singaporean literature. In school, children are required to learn English and one of the three other official languages. By law, all signs and official publications are required to be primarily in English, although they are occasionally translated versions into the other official languages. However, most Singaporeans speak a localised hybrid form of English known as Singlish ("Singapore English"), which has many creole-like characteristics, incorporating vocabulary and grammar from Standard English, various Chinese dialects, Malay, and Indian languages.

The second most common language in Singapore is Mandarin, with over seventy percent of the population having it as a second language. Most Singapore Chinese are, however, descended from immigrants who came from the southern regions of China where other dialects were spoken, such as Hokkien, Teochew and Cantonese. Mandarin use has spread largely as a result of government efforts to support its adoption and use over the dialects.

# Bangkok Oct. 21-24, 2009

The city of **Bangkok** is the capital, largest urban area and primary city of Thailand. Known in Thai as *Krung Thep Mahanakhon* (Thai: กรุงเทพมหานคร, pronounced [krūŋtʰê:p máhǎ:nákʰɔ:n] (listen)), or กรุงเทพฯ *Krung Thep* (listen) (help·info) for short, it was a small trading post at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River during the Ayutthaya Kingdom. It came to the forefront of Siam when it was given the status as the capital city in 1768 after the burning of Ayutthaya. However, the current Rattanakosin Kingdom did not begin until 1782 when the capital was moved across the river by Rama I after the death of King Taksin. The Rattanakosin capital is now more formally called "Phra Nakhon" (Thai: พระนคร), pertaining to the ancient boundaries in the metropolis' core and the name Bangkok now incorporates the urban build-up since the 18th century which has its own public administration and governor.

In the span of over two hundred years, Bangkok has grown to become the political, social and economic center of not only Thailand but for Indochina and South East Asia. Its influence in the arts, politics, fashion, education and entertainment as well as being a business, financial and cultural center of Asia has given Bangkok the status of a global city.

Bangkok is the world's 22nd largest city by population with approximately 8,160,522 registered residents (July 2007). However, similar to most regional centers, due to large unregistered permanent migrants from the North East of Thailand and other Asian nations in combination with those who commute to Bangkok during the day for work, the population of greater Bangkok is estimated to be closer to 15 million people.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> This has in turn shifted the country from being a rather homogeneous Thai population to an increasingly vibrant mix of Western, Indian and Chinese people, in doing so, giving the city a cosmopolitan status. The capital is part of the heavily urbanized triangle of central and eastern Thailand which stretches from Nakhon Ratchasima along Bangkok to the industrialized eastern seaboard—it is the most built-up area mainland-South East Asia.

The Bangkok Province borders six other provinces: Nonthaburi, Pathum Thani, Samut Prakan, Samut Sakhon and Nakhon Pathom, and all five provinces are joined in the conurbation of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area.

## History

The town of Bang Kok (Thai: บางกอก (listen) (help·info)) began as a small Khmer fishing village<sup>[citation needed]</sup> on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River before the establishment of the Ayutthaya Kingdom, the precursor of modern Thailand which existed from 1350 to 1767. The etymology of the town's name is unclear. *Bang* is the Central Thai name for a town situated on the bank of a river. It is believed that "Bangkok" derived from either *Bang Kok*, *kok* (กอก) being the Thai name for the Java plum (*makok*, มะกอก), one of several trees bearing olive-like fruits); or *Bang Koh*, *koh* meaning "island," a reference to the area's landscape which was carved by rivers and canals.

After the fall of Ayutthaya to the Burmese Kingdom in 1767, the newly declared King Taksin established a new capital in the area of then-Bangkok, which became known as Thonburi. When Taksin's reign ended in 1782, King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke reconstructed the capital on the east bank of the river and gave the city a ceremonial name (see below) which became shortened to its

current official name, *Krung Thep Maha Nakhon*. The new city, however, also inherited the name Bangkok, which continued to be used by foreigners to refer to the entire city and became its official English name, while in Thai the name still refers only to the old district on the west bank of the river. The city has since vastly modernized and undergone numerous changes, including the introduction of transportation and utility infrastructure in the reigns of King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, and quickly developed into the economic center of Thailand.



[Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall](#)



Skyline view of Bangkok

The full ceremonial name of the city given by King Buddha Yodfa Chulaloke, and later edited by King Mongkut, is:

*Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Yuthaya Mahadilok Phop Noppharat Ratchathani Burirom Udomratchaniwet Mahasathan Amon Phiman Awatan Sathit Sakkathattiya Witsanukam Prasit* (Thai: กรุงเทพมหานคร อมรรัตนโกสินทร์ มหินทรายุธยา มหาดิลกภพ นพรัตนราชธานีบูรีรมย์ อุดมราชนิเวศน์มหาสถาน อมรพิमानอวตารสถิต สักกะทัตติยะวิษณุกรรมประสิทธิ์ 🔊(listen) (help·info)).

This ceremonial name is composed in combination of two ancient Indian languages, Pāli and Sanskrit. According to the romanisation of these languages, it can actually be written as *Krung-dēvamahānagara amararatanakosindra mahindrayudhyā mahātilakabhava navaratanarājadhānī purīramya utamarājanivēsana mahāsthāna amaravimāna avatārasthitya shakrasdattiya vishnukarmaprasiddhi*. It translates to "The city of angels, the great city, the eternal jewel city, the impregnable city of God Indra, the grand capital of the world endowed with nine precious gems, the happy city, abounding in an enormous Royal Palace that resembles the heavenly abode where reigns the reincarnated god, a city given by Indra and built by Vishnukarm".

Local school children are taught the full name, although few can explain its meaning because many of the words are archaic, and unknown to all but a few. Most Thais who do recall the full name do so as a result of its use in a popular song, *Krung Thep Mahanakhon* (1989) by Asanee-Wasan Chotikul and will often recount it by recalling the song at the same time, much in the same way that English speakers might sing the alphabet song while reciting the English alphabet.

The full name of the city is listed by Guinness Book of Records as the world's longest place name.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Geography

### Topography and climate

The Bangkok special administrative area covers 1,568.7 km<sup>2</sup> (606 sq mi), making it the 68th largest province in Thailand. Much of the area is considered the city of Bangkok, therefore making it one of the largest cities in the world.<sup>[3]</sup> The Chao Phraya River, which stretches 372 km (231 mi), is Bangkok's main geographical feature. The Chao Phraya River basin, the area surrounding Bangkok, and the nearby provinces comprise a series of plains and river deltas that lead into the Bay of Bangkok about 30 km (19 mi) south of the city center. This gave rise to Bangkok's appellation as the "Venice of the East" due to the number of canals and passages that divide the area into separate patches of land. The city once used these canals, which were plentiful within Bangkok itself, as divisions for city districts. However, as the city grew in the second half of the 20th century, the plan was abandoned and a different system of division was adopted.

Bangkok lies about two meters (6.5 ft) above sea level, which causes problems for the protection of the city against floods during the monsoon season. Often after a downpour, water in canals and the river overflows the banks, resulting in massive floods. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has recently installed higher banks alongside some canals to keep water levels from reaching street level. There are however some downsides for Bangkok's extensive canal routes, as the city is rumored to be sinking an average of two inches a year as it lies entirely on a swamp.<sup>[4]</sup>

Bangkok has a tropical monsoon climate under the Köppen climate classification system. Average temperatures in the city are about 2 °C (3.6 °F) higher than the ones shown for the Don Mueang Airport during the 1960-1990 period. The highest recorded maximum temperature is 40.8 °C (105.4 °F) and the lowest recorded minimum temperature is 9.9 °C (49.8 °F). The coldest temperatures were recorded in January 1924, January 1955, January 1974 and December 1999. The coldest daytime maximum temperature was 22.3 °C (72 °F), recorded in December 1999. Hailstorms are virtually unheard of in the city, with only one having been recorded in the past fifty years<sup>[5]</sup>



A satellite image showing Bangkok's urban sprawl and its many suburbs.



Bangkok at night



Chinatown (Yaowarat)



The Baiyoke Tower II, the tallest building in Bangkok and Thailand

Throughout the years, Bangkok has grown from a city scattered along the river to a metro area that spans as many as six provinces. The city's main business districts and residential areas are continuously expanding. The influx of foreigners from Western countries as well as immigrants from neighboring Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia and many other Asian countries along with the growth of the Thai population has stemmed hundreds of housing projects around the metro area, developing communities along the outskirts. Within years, these communities are engulfed by the greater Bangkok and become another part of this urban jungle.

The most important business districts of Bangkok include Silom, Bangrak, Pinklao, Sathon, Phra Ram 2, Phetchaburi, Phra Nakhon, Pathumwan, Chatuchak (new central business district), and Phra Ram 3 (new financial center).

As the city expanded on the outskirts, the inner city has nowhere to grow but up. The city has a registered 1,000 skyscrapers and ranks 17th as the world's tallest city.<sup>[6]</sup> This does not include hundreds of new buildings predicted as part of the construction boom in 2007 and the coming years. Areas such as Silom-Sathon and Asok have for decades been Thailand's business center. From 1985 to 1996, Thailand experienced the world's highest growth rates and underwent an economic transformation, Bangkok went through dramatic changes.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The Ratchadaphisek area was turned into a business district which continued through the Asok area up north for five kilometers (3 mi). The Sukhumvit area, stretching 15-20 km (9-12 mi), gradually turned into a mixed commercial and residential area. Wireless Road and Chitlom are where some of Bangkok's most expensive land plots exist. Part of the British Embassy on the corner of Wireless and Rama I Roads, nine rai or approximately 14,400 m<sup>2</sup> (155,000 sq ft) in area, was sold for USD 92 million or THB 3.24 billion.

Bangkok's Phra Nakhon district alongside Dusit is where most governmental agencies and ministries have their offices. Most of the well-known tourist attractions are also in this particular area due its cultural & historical heritage. This part of Bangkok is perhaps the most popular for tourists as most notable attractions such as the Grand Palace, Wat Pho, the Democracy Monument, the Giant Swing, Sanam Luang and other venues are located here. Thon Buri also has its fair share of historic monuments mainly located near the river, such as Wat Arun. The Victory Monument in Bangkok is one of the city's biggest bus destinations. Although not officially a bus depot, its location in the center of city transits as many as 20 bus lines as well as a BTS Skytrain station. Starting from Victory Monument, Phahonyothin road early sois are occupied by ministries, government agencies, commercial buildings as well as upper-middle class residential areas. Further to the north, after the Lat Phrao/Phahonyothin intersection, the Northern Corridor is an expanding business district, where the famous Elephant Building can be found.

Bangkok's north and eastern areas are primarily residential areas for middle class residents of Bangkok. Whereas the inner city often has small apartments and low rises for poor immigrants, Lat Phrao and Si Nakharin offer residential compounds and townhouses. The two areas cover as much as 100 km<sup>2</sup> (40 sq mi) to 150 km<sup>2</sup> (60 sq mi) each, and have turned into what is now part of Bangkok as more suburban housing developments sprawl further out to the east and north. The west of Bangkok in Thon Buri is another growing area, approaching the degree of development experienced by the north and east. Suvarnabhumi Airport in the east is seen as a jump start for the eastern expansion of Bangkok as Don Mueang was for the north.

Ratchaprasong is at the forefront of Bangkok's shopping scene. The newly renovated Central World Plaza intends to serve as a square to Bangkokians. Just up the street is Siam Square, similar to Shinjuku in Tokyo and Oxford Street and Piccadilly Circus in London. The Sukhumvit area also serves as a shopping district for foreigners. The popular Chatuchak Weekend Market in the north of the city is where many people head for cheap, used and high quality products.

Bangkok's poorest districts are spread throughout the city. However, the most concentrated area is just north of the Port of Bangkok at the turn of the Chao Phraya River. For an area of 10 square kilometres (4 sq mi), the Khlong Toei district houses one of the poorest areas in the country with half-built houses and midrises for immigrants and workers from the northeast Isan provinces.

## Green zones and major parks



Lumphini Park appears as an oasis of greenery among Bangkok's skyscrapers.

Bangkok has large sections of greenery either preserved by the Department of National Forestry or designated as green zones. The city however, continues to lack a green belt development as economic activity continues to pour into the capital, resulting in massive housing projects along the suburbs.

Bangkok is known for its large green sections within the city centre, including the large forest park between Yannawa and Samut Prakan. This part of the city covers an area of over 50 km<sup>2</sup> (19 sq mi). and is intended to buffer the CBD from the large industries of the west and south of Metropolitan Bangkok. Other areas include Bung Makkasan, an urban city buffer for residences, sections of many major roads which have unbuilt swamps and green fields. Some of these areas are intentionally undeveloped for protecting against urbanization, while others are land lost during the Asian Financial Crisis.

Lumphini Park is regionally famous. Renowned as Bangkok's Central Park, it was built in the early 1920s by Rama VI with this intent. It has since been used to hold grand pageants, ceremonies of the Thai constitution, and was a camp for Japanese soldiers during World War II. On Sundays, the western gates are open for runners to run on to Silom Road. The park is normally closed at night due to the incidences of vandalism, robberies and murders reported. Chatuchak Park and Rama IX Park are two of Bangkok's largest parks. The two, built in the past 50 years cater to Bangkok's suburban population are enormous and include botanic gardens, sports clubs and complexes, English/French/Japanese gardens and parks as well as large ponds and lakes. Other famous parks include Queen Sirikit Park near Lat Yao, Benchasiri Park on Sukhumvit, Saranrom Park across the Grand Palace, Sanam Luang, Suan Romaneenat, and Dusit Park.

Bangkok is the economic center of Thailand, dominating the country's economy and dwarfing other urban centers. Development continues to pour in to Bangkok mostly neglecting the rest of the nation. In 2005, it produced a GDP (PPP) of about USD 220 billion, which accounts for 44 percent of the country's GDP. Its GDP (PPP) per capita is well over USD 20,000, one of the highest in Southeast Asia, although statistics do not reveal the extent of the vast differences in wealth between haves and have nots. The Stock Exchange of Thailand is located in Bangkok with over 536 listed companies and combined market capitalization of about THB 6 trillion (USD 200 billion) as of 31 January 2007. Due to the large amount of foreign representation, Thailand has for several years been a mainstay of the Southeast Asian economy and a key center in Asian business. In the recent mini-crash known as Black Tuesday, the SET lost over THB 800 billion or USD 25 billion in value, causing markets in the Asia-Pacific to fall and causing a global impact on 17 December 2006. The loss of market valuation evoked fears of a repeat of the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997; however, a partial policy reversal saw market gaining back nearly all of the value lost.

Bangkok is home to the headquarters of all Thailand's large commercial banks and financial institutions; 27 financial institutions hold at least USD 1 billion in total assets. Their bank deposits totaled approximately THB 9.6 trillion (USD 314 billion) at the end of the third quarter in 2007. Many multinational corporations have their regional headquarters in Bangkok because the cost of

operation in the city is less than in most cities in Asia. Thirteen Bangkok-based companies are on the Forbes 2000 list, including the largest Thai bank, Bangkok Bank, and the country's largest energy company PTT.

Tourism is a significant contributor to Thailand's economy, providing about 5 percent of GDP. Bangkok is Thailand's principal international gateway and a destination in its own right.

Income inequality of Bangkok's residents is significant, especially between relatively unskilled lower-income immigrants from rural provinces in Thailand and neighboring countries and middle class professionals (45% of registered residents), business elites, and retired and working foreign expats. About 7 percent of Bangkok's population (excluding illegal immigrants who constitute about 5-8 percent of population) lives below the poverty line compared to the national average of 9 percent.

Thai Airways International, Bangkok Airways, Orient Thai Airlines, and One-Two-GO Airlines are headquartered in Bangkok.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

And the new one of shopping complex with Ultra Technology named "**Siam Digital Gateway**" was constructed in Siam Square and will be opened in Last of 2009. After opening, it will be the most modern gateway shopping complex in Southeast Asia with the most ultra technology as: Extra Enormous LEDs and LCD screen, HD video wall, Escalator Wrap, Balcony Ad, Elevator Wrap and Digital Tunnel. Siam Digital Gateway, has 4 floors with Digital Convention Hall and Electronic zone center with Digital Park, phenomenon waterfall and fountain park.



information. (March 2009)



[MBK Center](#) shopping complex with several shop and type of goods also has MegaSale everyday.



[Siam Square](#) Bangkok fashion shopping street.



[Siam Paragon](#) one of the most luxurious shopping mall in Asia with 5 stars Theatre and Convention Hall also with largest aquarium in Southeast Asia.

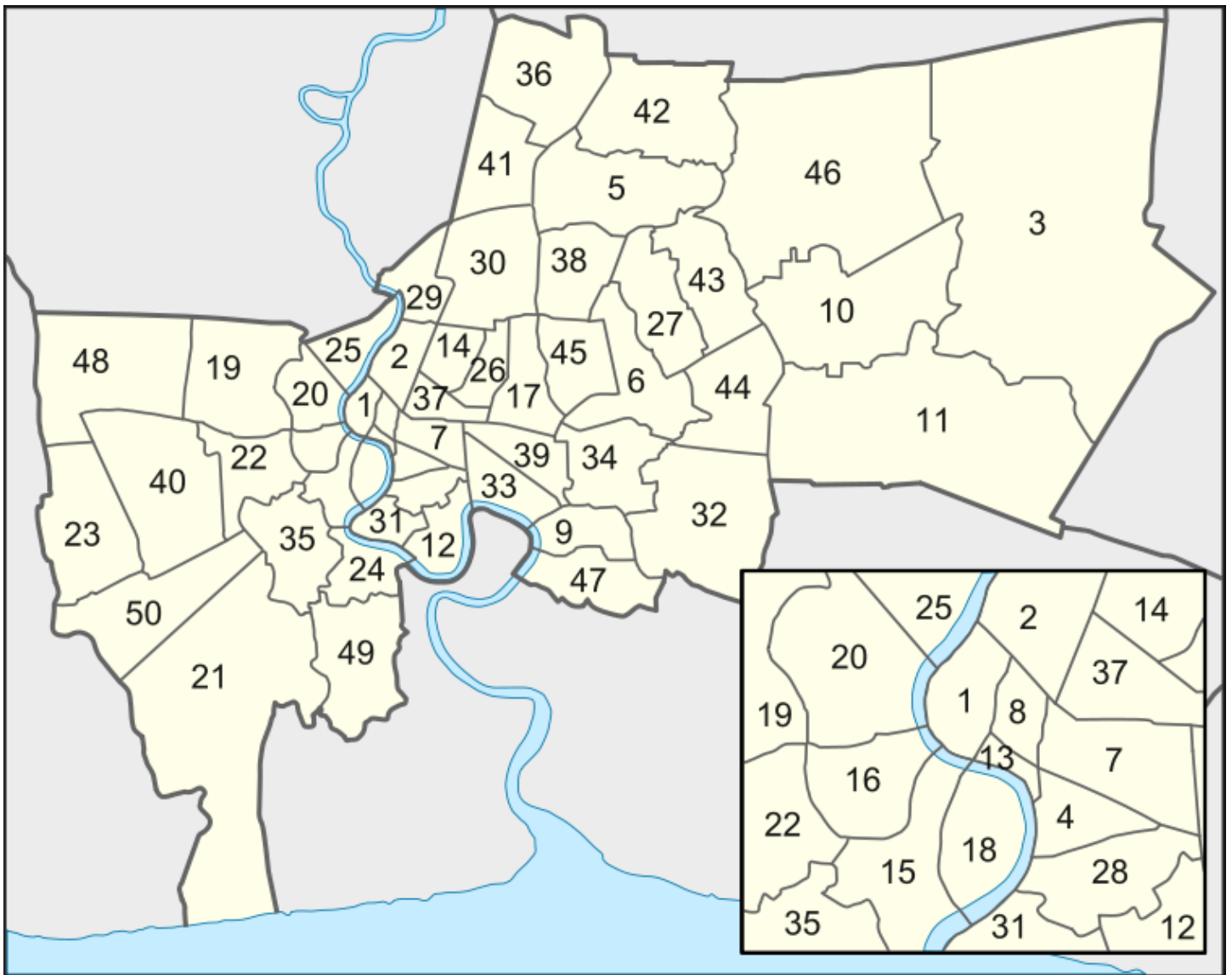


[CentralWorlds](#) the

largest shopping mall complex in Southeast Asia.



[Bangkok Art and Culture Centre](#) the 8 floor-art gallery with theatre and exhibition hall in City Center next to [Siam Square](#)



- |   |                                     |                                    |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <a href="#">Phra Nakhon</a>          | 19. <a href="#">Taling Chan</a>     | 36. <a href="#">Don Mueang</a>     |
| 2. <a href="#">Dusit</a>                | 20. <a href="#">Bangkok Noi</a>     | 37. <a href="#">Ratchathewi</a>    |
| 3. <a href="#">Nong Chok</a>            | 21. <a href="#">Bang Khun Thian</a> | 38. <a href="#">Lat Phrao</a>      |
| 4. <a href="#">Bang Rak</a>             | 22. <a href="#">Phasi Charoen</a>   | 39. <a href="#">Watthana</a>       |
| 5. <a href="#">Bang Khen</a>            | 23. <a href="#">Nong Khaem</a>      | 40. <a href="#">Bang Khae</a>      |
| 6. <a href="#">Bang Kapi</a>            | 24. <a href="#">Rat Burana</a>      | 41. <a href="#">Lak Si</a>         |
| 7. <a href="#">Pathum Wan</a>           | 25. <a href="#">Bang Phlat</a>      | 42. <a href="#">Sai Mai</a>        |
| 8. <a href="#">Pom Prap Sattru Phai</a> | 26. <a href="#">Din Daeng</a>       | 43. <a href="#">Khan Na Yao</a>    |
| 9. <a href="#">Phra Khanong</a>         | 27. <a href="#">Bueng Kum</a>       | 44. <a href="#">Saphan Sung</a>    |
| 10. <a href="#">Min Buri</a>            | 28. <a href="#">Sathon</a>          | 45. <a href="#">Wang Thonglang</a> |
| 11. <a href="#">Lat Krabang</a>         | 29. <a href="#">Bang Sue</a>        | 46. <a href="#">Khlong Sam Wa</a>  |
| 12. <a href="#">Yan Nawa</a>            | 30. <a href="#">Chatuchak</a>       | 47. <a href="#">Bang Na</a>        |
| 13. <a href="#">Samphanthawong</a>      | 31. <a href="#">Bang Kho Laem</a>   | 48. <a href="#">Thawi Watthana</a> |
| 14. <a href="#">Phaya Thai</a>          | 32. <a href="#">Prawet</a>          | 49. <a href="#">Thung Khru</a>     |
| 15. <a href="#">Thon Buri</a>           | 33. <a href="#">Khlong Toei</a>     | 50. <a href="#">Bang Bon</a>       |
| 16. <a href="#">Bangkok Yai</a>         | 34. <a href="#">Suan Luang</a>      |                                    |
| 17. <a href="#">Huai Khwang</a>         | 35. <a href="#">Chom Thom</a>       |                                    |
| 18. <a href="#">Khlong San</a>          |                                     |                                    |

## River and canals network

An elaborate network of canals known as *khlongs* gave Bangkok the nickname "Venice of the East" at a time when most transportation was by boat. Today, nearly all of the canals have been filled in and converted into streets. While many khlongs still exist with people living along them and markets often being operated along the banks, most are severely polluted.<sup>[12]</sup> A notable khlong market is the floating market in Taling Chan district. Through downtown Bangkok runs the Khlong Saen Saeb, which has a canal boat service, the most extensive of which is the Chao Phraya Express Boat with as many as thirty stops along the both banks of the Saen Saeb. However, there are limitations as the further north the route is the farther apart the stations are, impeding the ability of this water taxi to function as a true mass transit system.



Rama VIII Bridge

## Roads

Several elevated highways, newly rebuilt intersections, and many partially finished road and rail projects dot the landscape around greater Bangkok, but have done little to overcome the notorious traffic jams on Bangkok's surface roads as private vehicle usage continues to outstrip infrastructure development.

Bangkok also includes many shopping and business roads like the Sukhumvit Road which includes highrise business buildings, apartments, and shopping malls, Sukhumvit Road is where many foreigners like to come shopping. The Wireless Road or Thanon Wittayu include the Stock Exchange of Thailand and many business buildings like the All Seasons Place Complex which includes the Conrad Bangkok, a shopping mall, and many other business offices. The Thanon Khaosan or Khaosan Road is also well-known by foreigners. One of the popular shopping roads for teenagers is Rama I road, which has the Siam Paragon, Siam Square, and the Siam Discovery Center.

## Inner-City Buses

A regular bus service is provided by the Bangkok Mass Transit Authority (BMTA) and it operates throughout Bangkok as well as to adjoining provinces around the clock on certain routes. Public buses are plentiful and cheap, with a minimum fare of 7 baht to most destinations within metropolitan Bangkok. Air-conditioned buses have minimum and maximum fares of 11 and 24 baht, respectively. Air-conditioned micro-buses charge a flat fare of 25 baht all routes. A Bus Route Map is available at bookshops.

## Rail systems



BTS, Skytrain over Sala Daeng Intersection



Entrance to the Huay Kwang station of the Bangkok subway system



MRT,  
Bangkok  
subway  
with  
Platform

### Bangkok Rapid Transit System

BTS Sukhumvit Line

BTS Silom Line

MRT Blue Line

Airport Link (under construction)

MRT Purple Line (under construction)

MRT Orange Line (planned)

SRT Dark Red Line (planned)

SRT Light Red Line (under construction)

MRT Yellow Line (planned)

MRT Brown Line (planned)

MRT Pink Line (planned)

screen doors at all platforms and stations



Suvarnabhumi Airport Link will be opened in 5 Dec 2009. It links from Suvarnabhumi Airport to City Center



Suvarnabhumi Airport Link Express. It shuttle links from Suvarnabhumi Airport to Makkasan City Air Terminal

On the birthday of HM King Rama IX, 5 December 1999, an elevated two-line Skytrain (officially called BTS) metro system was opened. The remains of the failed BERTS (Hopewell) project can still be seen all the way from the main railroad station out towards Don Mueang Airport. Due to the Asian financial crisis of 1997 construction was halted and the concrete pillars were left unused.

The MRT subway system opened for use in July 2004. The MRT connects the northern train station of Bang Sue to the Hua Lamphong central railway station near the city centre, while also going through the eastern part of Bangkok. It connects to the BTS system at BTS stations Mo Chit, Asok, and Sala Daeng.

Currently, transit and development projects initiated by ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin are gaining in popularity with the currently elected government, and have a possibility of being resumed and extended.

A new high speed elevated railroad called the Suvarnabhumi Airport Link, currently under construction, will link the city with the new Suvarnabhumi Airport. The announced opening date has been pushed to back to 2009. The Airport Express railway is to be operated by the State Railway of Thailand. It will provide a 28.5 km (17.7 mi) link between the new airport and the City Air Terminal (CAT) at Makkasan with connections to the BTS at Phaya Thai and MRT at Petchburi. There are plans to extend the line to Don Mueang and Rangsit, but again, this is very dependent on the political situation.




Plans have been approved for a further extension of the BTS Silom line from Wong Wian Yai to Bangwah (4.5 km/2.8 mi), Sumrong to Samut Prakarn (8 km/5.0 mi), Mo Chit to Saphan Mai (11.9 km/7.4 mi) and the National Stadium to Phran Nok (7.7 km/4.8 mi). This includes five underground stations in the Rattanakosin area. The State Railway of Thailand has also been given approval to complete the Dark Red and Light Green lines. Alongside, MRT has also begun construction on two new lines, the Purple line from Bang Yai to Bang Sue, and the Blue line from Hua Lamphong to Bang Khae and Ta Pra.

For intercity travel by train, most passengers begin their trips at Hua Lamphong at the southern end of the MRT. Here, trains connect Bangkok to Malaysia in the south, Chiang Mai to the north, and Nong Khai to the northeast and beyond to Laos.

Bangkok rail transit system map (showing State Railway, BTS, MRT and SARL lines)

[Legend](#)



Krung Thonburi			Thong Lo
Wongwian Yai			Ekkamai
			Phra Khanong
			On Nut

## Bus service

Virtually all cities and provinces are easily reached by bus from Bangkok. For destinations in the southwest and the west, buses leave from the Southern Bus Terminal, west of the city in the Thonburi area. For destinations in the southeast, such as Pattaya, Ko Samet and Ko Chang, buses leave from the Eastern Bus Terminal at Ekkamai. For all destinations north and northeast, the Northern Bus Terminal is at Mo Chit. Bangkok's less accessible southern terminal was recently moved even farther out. Though Bangkok is well connected to other cities, getting to the bus terminals often are a challenge in themselves

## Bus (Bangkok Mass Transit Authority)



EURO II Air-con Bus Hino RU1J BMTA Bus Line 4



Daewoo BH115 Line 36



Non-air condition Bus Hino Line 2 (Is Free Bus From Tax Show Word รถเมล์ฟรี จากภาษีประชาชน)

The Bangkok Mass Transit Authority service area covers Bangkok Metropolis and its suburban areas in the adjacent provinces of Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan, Pathum Thani, Nakhon Pathom, and Samut Sakhon. It serves approximately 3 million passengers per day. The service hours are 05.00-23.00 hrs, except 24-hr night-owl service on some routes. In September 2005, BMTA owns a fleet of 3,579

buses—comprising 1,674 ordinary buses and 1,905 air-conditioned buses. In addition to BMTA-owned buses, there are 3,485 private-own contract buses, 1,113 contract minibuses, 2,161 side-street songthaews, and 5,519 vans. In total, there are 15,857 buses and vans over 427 routes across 8 zones.

- Zone 1: North (Hubs: Rangsit, Bangkhen)
- Zone 2: Upper East (Hubs: Bangkapi, Minburi)
- Zone 3: Lower East (Hubs: Samrong, Samut Prakan)
- Zone 4: South Central (Hubs: Khlong Toey)
- Zone 5: Southwest (Hubs: Dao Khanong, Phra Pra Daeng)
- Zone 6: West (Hubs: Bangkhae, Thonburi)
- Zone 7: Northwest (Hubs: Nonthaburi, Pak Kret)
- Zone 8: Central (Hubs: Huay Khwang)

## Airports



Departures Hall Suvarnabhumi Airport

Bangkok is one of Asia's most important air transport hubs. In 2005, more than ninety airlines served Don Mueang International Airport (IATA: **DMK**; ICAO: **VTBD**). It was the 18th busiest airport in the world, second busiest in Asia by passenger volume, 15th busiest in the world and fourth busiest in Asia in international passenger volume. Don Mueang consistently ranked 19th in the world in cargo traffic, and seventh in the Asia-Pacific region. Don Mueang is considered to be one of the world's oldest international airports, its opening in March 1914 making it almost twenty years older than London Heathrow. It has three terminals and is located about 30 km (19 mi) north from the heart of Bangkok.

On 28 September 2006, Suvarnabhumi Airport (IATA: **BKK**; ICAO: **VTBS**), became Bangkok's official international airport, replacing Don Mueang. Pronounced Suwannaphum (RTGS), or loosely *Su-wanna-poom*, the airport is located southeast of the city center in Bang Phli district, Samut Prakan Province. The progress of Suvarnabhumi Airport dates back to the early 1970s when a large plot of land 8,000 acres (3,237 ha) (32 km<sup>2</sup>) was bought. A student uprising in October of the same year prevented further progress with the development when the military government of Thanom Kittikachorn was subsequently overthrown. After several military coups and the Asian financial crisis of 1997, construction finally began in 2002, after five years of clearing the site. The first flights landed in September 2006, shortly after another military coup. Its two parallel runways are connected by the five concourses of the main terminal building. The airport features a 132.2-metre (434 ft)-tall control tower, the tallest in Asia and one meter (3.2 ft) taller than Kuala Lumpur International Airport control tower. It is the tallest stand alone purpose built control tower in the world. <sup>[13]</sup> Airports of Thailand Plc. (AoT) have announced another terminal to accommodate a further fifteen million passengers. This will be part of Phase 2 of the airport, which is expected to begin construction in three to five years. The main airline of Suvarnabhumi is Thai Airways International.



Travelers are being scanned at Suvarnabhumi Airport to prevent the spreading of swine flu

Much of the construction of Suvarnabhumi Airport took place during the premiership of Thaksin Shinawatra, who took personal responsibility for its timely completion. Despite a "ceremonial" opening on the planned date, construction was over a year late. Continuing controversy surrounds the quality of planning and construction; accusations include cracks in the runway, overheated buildings, a severe shortage of toilet facilities and lengthy passenger walks to departure gates. The fact that the airport is already overcrowded and near its maximum capacity less than a year after opening is another concern.

Don Mueang remains in use as a base of the Royal Thai Air Force. Thai Airways and most of the low-cost airlines now use the airport for domestic flights, in an effort to ease congestion at Suvarnabhumi, until the next terminal is opened.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Transport network

- Khlong Saen Saep Express Boat
- Chao Phraya Express Boat
- Bangkok Noi Longtail Express Boat
- Sathon-Khlong Toei Express Boat
- Sathon-Wat Dao Khanong Express Boat
- Sathon-Samut Prakan Express Boat
- Khlong Phasi Charoen Express Boat (Under new testing)
- Khlong Lat Phrao Express Boat (Under new testing)
- Khlong Prem Prachakhon Express Boat (Under new testing)
- Khlong Phadung Krung Kasem Express Boat (Under new testing)
- BTS or Bangkok Skytrain
- MRT or Bangkok Metro
- SRT or State Railway of Thailand
- BRT (Bangkok) or Bus Rapid Transit
- BTS Links
- BMTA or Bangkok Bus
- Suvarnabhumi Airport Link (finished, open 12 August 2009)
- SRT Lines (Proposed, finish 2012)

## Taxis



A typical Corolla taxi operated among the Bangkok taxi services.

These three-wheeled 'open-air' motorised taxis (called tuk-tuks) are popular for short journeys.

River taxis can be used on the Chao Phraya River. Some are just cross river ferries, but others serve the many landing stages on both banks and cover a route that goes up as far as the northern suburb of Nonthaburi.

## October 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b> United 6012 B'ham -Chicago 0851 Chicago to Beijing	<b>2</b> Radisson SAS Hotel Beijing	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> NG (XINYANG), CHINA	<b>6</b> at sea	<b>7</b> at sea	<b>8</b> SHANGHAI, CHINA 7AM- 6PM	<b>9</b> at sea	<b>10</b> OKINAWA, JAPAN 7AM- 2PM
<b>11</b> KEELUNG, TAIWAN 9AM- 6PM	<b>12</b> at sea	<b>13</b> Hong Kong, China 8AM	<b>14</b> Hong Kong, China - 6PM	<b>15</b> at sea	<b>16</b> NHA TRANG, VIETNAM 8AM-5:30PM	<b>17</b> HO CHI MINH CITY (PHU MY), VIETNAM 7AM- 5:30PM
<b>18</b> at sea	<b>19</b> SINGAPORE 7AM-4PM	<b>20</b> at sea	<b>21</b> BANGKOK (LAEM CHABANG), THAILAND 7AM	<b>22</b> Amari Boulevard Hotel - Bangkok	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 0890 Bangkok to Tokyo 0882 Tokyo to Chicago 6040 Chic to
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

1-Monday	Oct 05 2009	NG (XINYANG), CHINA	CHECK IN 1:00PM- 6:00PM	07:00PM
2-Tuesday	Oct 06 2009	At Sea		
3-Wed.	Oct 07 2009	At Sea	12:00PM	06:00PM
4-Thursday	Oct 08 2009	SHANGHAI, CHINA	7:00 AM	06:00PM
5-Friday	Oct 09 2009	At Sea		
6-Saturday	Oct 10 2009	OKINAWA, JAPAN	07:00AM	02:00PM
7-Sunday	Oct 11 2009	KEELUNG, TAIWAN	09:00AM	06:00PM
8-Monday	Oct 12 2009	At Sea		
9-Tuesday	Oct 13 2009	HONG KONG, CHINA	08:00AM	
10-Wed.	Oct 14 2009	HONG KONG, CHINA		06:00PM
11- Thursday	Oct 15 2009	At Sea		
12-Friday	Oct 16 2009	NHA TRANG, VIETNAM	08:00AM	05:00PM
13-Saturday	Oct 17 2009	HO CHI MINH CITY (PHU MY), VIETNAM	07:00AM	05:30PM
14-Sunday	Oct 18 2009	AT Sea		
15-Monday	Oct 19 2009	SINGAPORE	07:00AM	04:00PM
16-Tuesday	Oct 20 2009	At Sea		
17-Wed.	Oct 21 2009	BANGKOK (LAEM CHABANG), THAILAND	07:00AM	