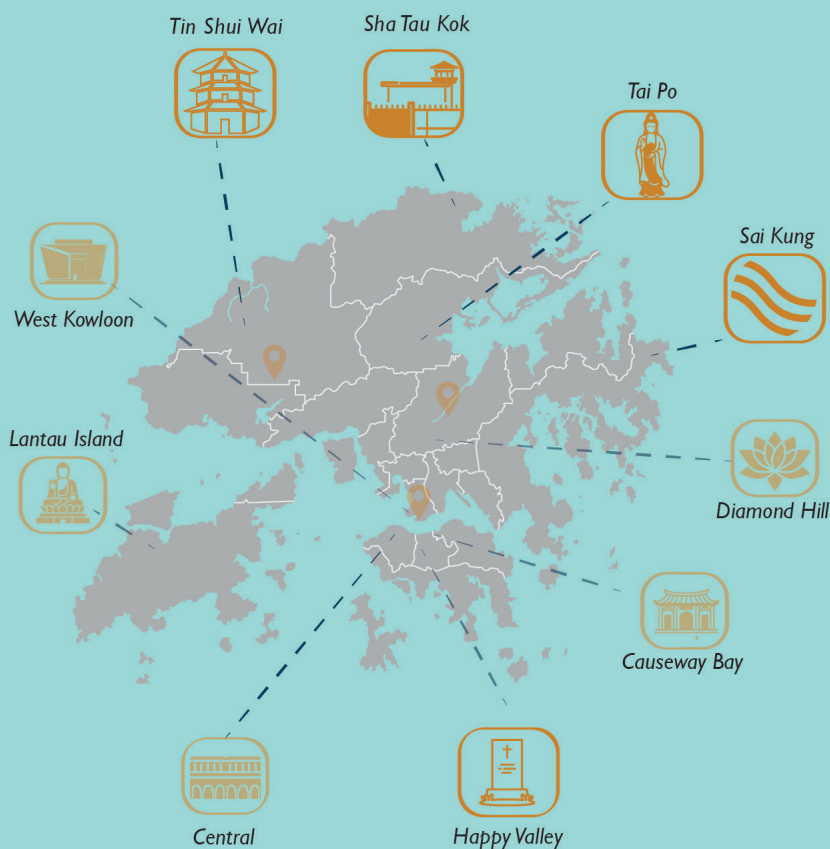


SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Cultural Depth Meets Digital Transformation

Victor Zheng & Sammantha S. P. Ho



Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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About the authors

Dr Victor Zheng is the Associate Director (Executive) of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Dr Sammantha S. P. Ho is the Research Associate of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

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Executive Summary

- Hong Kong's tourism industry is encountering new challenges, namely a growing preference for immersive experiential travel, lower levels of spending, and shorter stays.
- In-depth tourism can be regarded as presenting both challenges and opportunities to the tourism industry.
- Positioned as Asia's world city, Hong Kong is characterized by its unique fusion of Eastern and Western cultures, with abundant tourism assets to attract visitors from various backgrounds.
- The Hong Kong government should weave Hong Kong's fragmented tourism assets to form a coherent story to attract experience-driven travellers, attracting them to not only visit various sites in Hong Kong, but also to prolong their stay in Hong Kong.
- Thematic routes in Causeway Bay are proposed as a replicable model, covering consumer culture, the contribution of Chinese during the era of British governance, sports, religion and folklore, and maritime culture.
- It is suggested that digital humanities could be a powerful tool to transform raw materials into a visually appealing and interactive tourism information platform.
- Other suggestions include developing a potential model in Yau Ma Tei; creating a roots-seeking journey targeting overseas Chinese; and potential solutions to possible challenges in developing in-depth tourism.

Introduction

In the post-pandemic era, global tourism has been reshaped by a downgrade in consumption due to an economic downturn, the promotion of niche destinations through social media, changes in the preferences of travellers, and the popularization of online shopping platforms. These fundamental shifts can be observed in changes in tourist behaviour. Tourists are increasingly seeking authentic experiences over simple passive consumption. Their pursuit of immersive experiences is already fostering a shift towards a desire to make genuine connections to a place and culture. Consequently, cities that have built their reputation primarily on retail experiences risk becoming irrelevant.

Hong Kong's reputation as a shopping paradise is thus insufficient to meet the new demands. Although the number of visitors to Hong Kong is beginning to return to pre-pandemic levels, the industry is currently facing emerging challenges driven by the growing desire for experiential travel. This shift is observed more obviously among mainland Chinese travellers. Travel keywords such as “district tourism”, “Hong Kong culture”, “sports tourism”, and “free of charge” are trending as search keywords across major online platforms (Wisers, 2025), implying that cultural exploration and low-spending practices will take over from the previous emphasis on shopping.

Although the label of “shopping paradise” is no longer sufficient to meet the new demands, the shift can be viewed as not only a challenge but also as an opportunity for the government to open a new tourism market. Long-haul visitors, particularly those from Western countries, have conventionally shown a greater

motivation for cultural exploration than mainland Chinese tourists, because of the cultural distance between their cultures and Chinese culture (McKercher & Chow, 2001). Nevertheless, in-depth tourism is currently gaining popularity among Chinese tourists, who constitute the largest component of the tourism market. With the current change in the preferences of Chinese visitors, this emerging trend should be viewed not merely as a challenge, but also as an opportunity for Hong Kong to redefine its global appeal. When in-depth travel transforms into a mainstream market for tourists from various regions, a key strategy shift should involve rebranding the city from a luxury destination to one that emphasizes authenticity through the development of cultural and experiential tourism.

As mainlanders are the driving force behind visits to Hong Kong, their evolving preferences will play a decisive role in tourism policy-making. It can be observed that contemporary mainland tourists are increasingly drawn to local culture and hidden gems rather than to mass attractions and packaged tours. Hiking trails, local markets, and small restaurants have emerged as new tourism hotspots, particularly following their promotion on social media platforms such as Xiaohongshu. Such platforms not only enhance the popularity of destinations but also create new tourism hotspots and new behavioural patterns among tourists (Dewi et al., 2021; Duffett et al., 2019). Users of social media endeavour to attract followers and viewers by unveiling their elusive discoveries and distinctive experiences, which are not on conventional tourist routes (Si & Leou, 2024). This type of digital engagement facilitates the growth of in-depth tourism by encouraging more authentic and localized travel experiences.

By diversifying tourism offerings, the government has proactively initiated strategic tourism plans to respond to the new demands of tourists, including plans to promote cultural and heritage tourism, eco-tourism, and industrial tourism. Among these, Old Town Central was a programme developed in 2017, covering the

oldest developed urban area on Hong Kong Island. The former Yau Ma Tei Police Station and Kowloon City have emerged as popular “checking-in” (打卡) spots thanks to their appearance in television dramas and films. The government has also included these places in their new initiatives. The tourism industry found these initiatives encouraging, as more job opportunities can be generated with an increase in the number of tourist attractions (*Ta Kung Pao*, 2025).

However, the government should proactively uncover underrated places rather than passively responding to viral trends created by the mass media or social media. For example, Causeway Bay, long perceived largely as a shopping district, has been undervalued as a cultural destination because of its high level of commercialization. This underestimation is demonstrated on the website of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, where only brief tourism information about a place is provided. In fact, the district has a rich history of industrial, urban, and commercial life. While the government is promoting Old Town Central, Causeway Bay should also be considered for inclusion in the creation of a cultural heritage corridor along the northern shore of Hong Kong Island.

In addition to developing new tourism programmes, the promotion of new tourism initiatives is regarded as another critical issue. The government should provide more comprehensive and interactive information on online platforms, such as the website of the Hong Kong Tourism Board. Happiness or satisfaction catalyzed by travel occurs in three stages: the pre-travel anticipation stage, positive experiences during the travel stage, and the afterglow effect in the post-travel stage (Nawijn, 2011a, 2011b). Research has demonstrated that tourist satisfaction is not confined to the trip itself, but also includes the pre-travel anticipation phase (Wei et al., 2019). Other studies also agree that the search for information at the initial stage plays a vital role in the decision to travel to a place (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1998). Therefore, the pre-travel stage is critical in

catalyzing visitor intentions, which can be actively shaped by the promotion and circulation of travel information.

Digital humanities (DH) are a powerful tool for building up online databases with information technology to support the development of in-depth travel at both the pre-trip and on-site stages. Here, a well-designed digital tourist product, such as a website featuring an interactive map developed using DH methods, can play a vital role. By employing a multimedia approach to effectively visually convey the historical and cultural significance of various destinations, tools such as story maps and soundscapes can transform travel planning into an engaging and immersive experience. This approach will not only inform potential visitors, but also actively build up their sense of anticipation. Moreover, such online platforms can recommend hidden gems, enabling tourists to craft distinctive and personalized travel experiences. A variety of thematic journeys can be suggested, including gastronomy, classic Hong Kong cinema, and historical exploration. By disseminating comprehensive and captivating information, the government can strategically develop compelling tourism routes and sites to enhance visitor engagement.

Although the government has already made proactive moves consistent with current travel trends, some critical questions need to be addressed: From what innovative perspectives can internet and digital technology be used? How can the government extend the duration of stay of tourists? How can Hong Kong's unique characteristics be maximized to attract visitors to understand this city more deeply instead of merely creating photo-taking spots? It is already known that Hong Kong has rich tourism offerings with its "East meets West" background. The government should be more proactive at strengthening the narrative of Hong Kong's story rather than merely relying on observing viral trends on social media platforms. In fact, the government can increase the "depth" of travel experiences with further cultural and tourism policies.

While the *Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0 (Blueprint 2.0)* has identified the need to enhance experiential travel experiences, an implementation gap remains in how to achieve this. To promote meaningful cultural engagement, authorities should prioritize enriching the telling of stories about heritage sites and cultural events, rather than relying solely on popular social media-driven narratives, which risk oversimplifying the historical value of those sites and events. This research will bridge this gap by providing a feasible model for the cultural promotion of Hong Kong's tourist offerings.

To align with current travel patterns, this policy report will investigate the trend towards in-depth travel and propose how DH can be applied to encourage tourists to visit Hong Kong. "Reimagining Causeway Bay" will be proposed in this report, not only as a sample model configured by various themed cultural routes, but also as a replicable model that the government can use to operationalize the long-term, sustainable development of in-depth tourism. This research will also explicitly suggest how DH can be applied to tourism at both the pre-trip stage and the on-site travel stage to develop a comprehensive model for relevant stakeholders to follow. Last, but not least, the last chapter, titled "Other Policy Recommendations", will not be confined to tourism. Rather, it will leverage the initiatives for in-depth tourism empowered by DH to advance endeavours in education and social sustainability.

Overview of the Development of Tourism in the Post-pandemic Era: The New Normal Practice

As established in the introduction, the global tourism sector is undergoing a profound transformation. This chapter provides a detailed analysis of this shift, defines the key characteristics of the “new normal” in travel, and substantiates the need for a strategic pivot in destinations such as Hong Kong.

Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, total tourist arrivals in Hong Kong in the first half of 2019 increased by 13.9% over the previous year (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2020a, p.1). In 2018, per-capita spending by mainland overnight visitors was HK\$7.0k, of which 60.9% was on shopping activities (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2020b, p. 14). The shopping expenditures in Hong Kong of mainland overnight tourists grew constantly, and centred on luxury goods, cosmetics, electronics, and medicine due to lower prices, perceived authenticity, and a wider selection in Hong Kong than on the mainland (Huang & Hsu, 2005; Tsang et al., 2011). Such travel trends occurred in the backdrop of an economic boom in mainland China, which led to a rise in personal incomes (Bu et al., 2022).

Following the resumption of normal travel between mainland China and the world after the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism industry in Hong Kong started to recover, with a total of 44.5 million visitors in 2024, 30.9% more than 2023. Specifically, there was a year-over-year increase of 26.9% in the number of mainland visitors and 45.8% in the number of non-mainland visitors. Still, mainland visitors occupied the largest portion of the total number of tourists, at 76.4% in 2024. However, the per-capita spending of mainland overnight visitors dropped from HK\$7.0k in 2018 to \$5.0k in 2024.

For same-day mainland visitors, the drop was even more significant, from HK\$2.4k to \$1.3k (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2025a, pp. 8–9).

Although the number of tourists has returned to pre-pandemic levels, tour buses and luxury shopping no longer dominate. A gradual shift in spending patterns is an indication of a change in the purpose and motivation of visits, spending patterns, and thus itineraries and activities. Speedy tourism and city walks have emerged as the new themes in tourism. Compared to a preference for shopping, tourists are increasingly interested in the culture, history, and lifestyle of Hong Kong. Visitors, particularly the younger generation, prefer to experience local neighbourhoods and find hidden gems rather than visit traditional, iconic tourist sites. Their travel plans have become more personalized and fragmented, and are often inspired by social media trends. As one of the most influential social media platforms, where more realistic travel experiences are shared, Xiaohongshu has become a tourism guide for Chinese tourists. The viral trending videos and search keywords on the platform directly influence travel patterns. Keywords related to shopping are no longer the top keywords. Instead, those associated with photo-taking opportunities, such as vintage Hong Kong style, travel tips, and checking-in, have surged as the most popular keywords (Wisers, 2025).

Under these viral trends, niche and dispersed itineraries are being encouraged, including city walks where specific neighbourhoods can be explored on foot. For example, artistic streets in Sheung Wan, the old school vibe of Sham Shui Po, and trendy corners of Kennedy Town have become popularly known places outside of iconic landmarks. Some follow location shoots in Hong Kong films and television dramas (*People's Daily Overseas Edition*, 2024).

The former Yau Ma Tei Police Station, which recently emerged as highly popular spot among mainland Chinese tourists, is a typical example of how Hong Kong's film and television culture

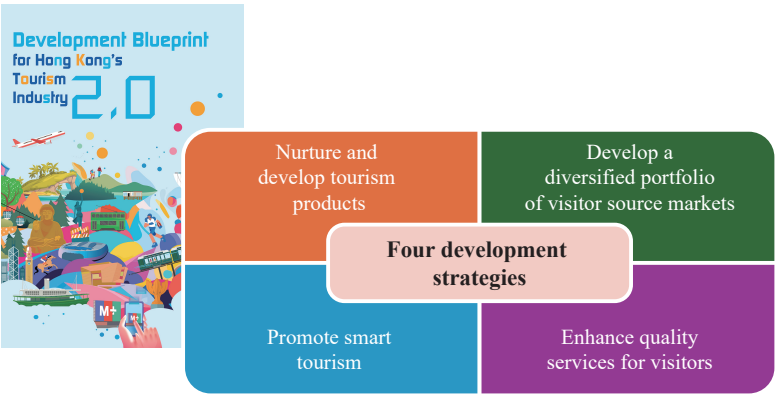
shaped vivid images such as the “Hong Kong Police”, “old district scenery”, and “a society governed by law”. These impressions were widely circulated in crime thrillers and urban dramas shown in the mainland in the 1980s and 1990s. The frequent appearance of police stations in these products contributed to the collective memory and impression of Hong Kong among mainland audiences. Moreover, its Western architectural style, historical background, and geographical location have made the Yau Ma Tei Police Station a highly symbolic site. In this regard, collective memory and impressions of Hong Kong shaped by popular culture can serve as a driving force for in-depth tourism.

Current Strategies for Developing In-depth Travel Experiences

Before in-depth travel became a popular tourism model, the government had already taken initiatives to formulate long-term tourism policies to leverage Hong Kong’s rich cultural resources to develop sustainable tourism.

As early as in October 2017, the government released the *Development Blueprint for Hong Kong’s Tourism Industry*, in which four long-term strategic directions were outlined to guide the development of tourism in Hong Kong. First, source markets should be diversified with a focus on attracting high value-added overnight visitors. Second, cultural, heritage, green, and creative tourism based on the local and international characteristics of Hong Kong should be the new tourism products. Third, smart tourism should be promoted. Finally, enhancing the quality of service in the tourism sector can be done by encouraging the adoption of good trade practices. Before the visible shift in travel patterns from shopping to experience-driven travel emerged, the government had already initiated the Old Town Central campaign in April 2017 (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2018). Touristic elements in Central, such as historical buildings,

Figure 1: Four Development Strategies in *Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0*



Source: Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (2024).

gourmet meals, arts and culture, were repackaged into tourist walking routes to promote the diverse tourism appeal of Central.

A new concept of “tourism is everywhere” was first established by the Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Xia Baolong (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2024). After affirming and putting the concept forward in the policy address of 2024, the Hong Kong government has been proactively promoting the deeper culture and history of the city by designing diverse tourism programmes. Promulgated in the same year, the *Blueprint 2.0* focuses on four strategies, including developing new tourism products with local and international characteristics, diversifying visitor source markets, promoting smart tourism, and enhancing quality services to meet the shift in post-pandemic travel patterns while maintaining Hong Kong’s competitiveness (Figure 1).

A key concern in current tourism trends is whether visitors are genuinely pursuing in-depth travel experiences or merely engaging in “check-in” tourism. It might be wondered whether tourists are largely focused on taking photographs at iconic sites and sharing them on social media. This superficial engagement often means that tourists fail to extend their duration of stay, deepen their cultural understanding, or contribute meaningfully to local spending. When tourists only briefly visit heritage sites or local restaurants without exploring their historical or cultural significance, the potential benefits of tourism are significantly diminished. Therefore, it is essential for promotion efforts to not only respond to existing tourist demands, but to shape them as well. As the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Rosanna Law emphasized, “culture is not a backdrop, nor is it simply a means to drive economic development; it is the essence of our collective identity, and it shapes the content of our storytelling and our exchanges with visitors” (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2025b). Cultivating an interest in Hong Kong’s rich history and culture is essential. Through the curating of compelling narratives and immersive cultural content, it is possible to inspire a deeper interest and foster more meaningful travel experiences in Hong Kong.

While embracing the new travel patterns and tourist preferences, the government announced nine strategic projects, involving the diversification of tourism offerings, to be implemented this year (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2025a). These projects include “Four Peaks” tourism (eco-tourism), in-depth travel in Kowloon City (a local neighbourhood experience), and the opening of the former Yau Ma Tei Police Station (a revitalization of a cultural heritage site). Resonating with the strategies laid out in *Blueprint 2.0*, the projects offer tangible opportunities to meet the various demands of a wider spectrum of tourists by focusing on experience-driven tourism. However, prior to

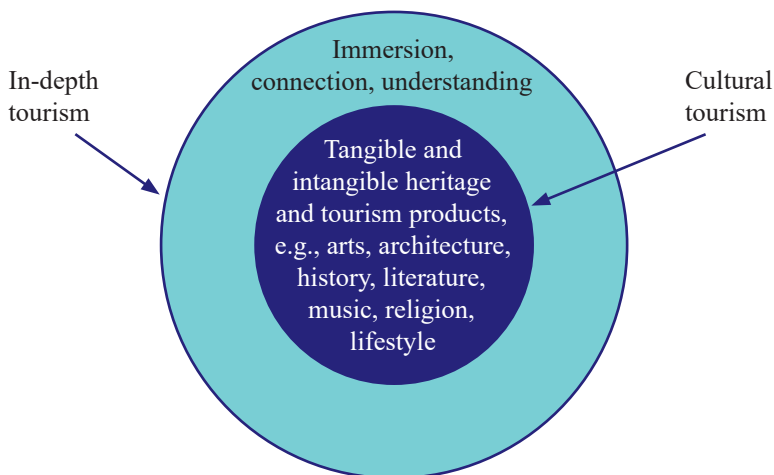
fully implementing this tourism policy, the meaning and marketing of in-depth travel should be examined with caution to avoid wrongly allocating resources. A more appealing narrative of Hong Kong stories should be developed to align with the current trend of in-depth tourism.

In-depth Tourism: Challenges and Opportunities

In-depth travel has become a prominent topic, as evidenced by recent shifts in tourist behaviour. However, it is important to distinguish between in-depth tourism and its closely related counterpart—cultural tourism, which is more commonly referenced in both the tourism industry and academic literature. Clarifying the conceptual boundaries between these two forms of tourism can contribute to more precise academic discourse and facilitate the development of tourism products that enhance visitor satisfaction and cultural engagement.

While the concept of cultural tourism and in-depth tourism are similar, interconnected, and partially overlapping, they describe distinct dimensions of travel. Cultural tourism emphasizes the cultural content and tourism products of a destination, whereas in-depth tourism focuses on the degree of immersion, connection, and understanding achieved during the travel experience. In-depth tourism offers a comprehensive approach to personalized learning and entertainment, in alignment with visitors' pursuit of knowledge-intensive goods and services (Chen et al., 2009; Smeral, 2003; see also Figure 2). Through participation in basic observations of natural and cultural resources during their visit, tourists can enrich their knowledge and feel a sense of connection to a place. This experiential engagement aligns with the core principle of in-depth tourism, which emphasizes meaningful interaction with and appreciation of local heritage.

Figure 2: Common View of Cultural Tourism and In-depth Tourism



The In-depth Tourism Market

Understanding the distinctions among different segments of the tourist market is essential for policymakers and stakeholders to design and implement effective strategies. The conventional understanding of the in-depth tourism market has long revolved around the concept of cultural distance. Earlier studies revealed that the greater the cultural differences between tourists and a destination, the greater the incentive to visit that destination (McIntosh & Goeldner, 1990; McKercher & Chow, 2001). Visitors from more culturally distant source markets tend to show a stronger interest in cultural tourism. For instance, research conducted in Hong Kong found that Western tourists were more inclined to explore local culture as a key motivation for their visit. In contrast, Asian tourists, particularly those from mainland China, often regarded cultural tourism as an incidental activity, with their primary motivations

being leisure, entertainment, and enjoyment (McKercher & Chow, 2001).

Although more recent data are limited, existing studies continue to offer valuable insights into tourism preferences and behaviour. A 1999 study found that Hong Kong's cultural appeal drew in a certain proportion of the market. Approximately one-third of the 2,066 tourists surveyed had participated in cultural activities. Among these, 82% engaged in sightseeing, photography-oriented activities, or sought a superficial understanding of Hong Kong's culture and heritage (McKercher, 2002, pp. 33–36). By distinguishing between nationalities, the survey discovered that a considerable proportion of Western tourists were classified as “purposeful cultural tourists” or “sightseeing cultural tourists”, indicating the high importance of cultural tourism in their decision to visit Hong Kong. This supports the notion that Western tourists are generally more motivated by novelty and cultural exploration than tourists from the mainland, due to a greater cultural distance between Hong Kong's culture and the cultures of Western countries.

A more recent study using Hong Kong Tourism Board statistics from 2018 to 2019 further supports this pattern. It found that travellers from culturally distant markets were less likely to visit mainstream entertainment attractions, such as Ocean Park, and more interested in exploring lesser-known sites such as Lamma Island (Gamor & Hon, 2025). Therefore, cultural distance has a direct effect on participation in cultural exploration.

Evolving Market Dynamics and New Demand Drivers

However, travel patterns are evolving in response to cultural shifts and economic development, rather than remaining static. While mainland tourists have traditionally shown a strong interest in shopping and entertainment venues, recent changes, such as the

rise of social media and the enhancement of educational levels, have begun to reshape their preferences towards cultural tourism. Increasingly, these travellers are expressing dissatisfaction with visiting only iconic attractions, and are manifesting a growing interest in lesser-known and locally distinctive sites (The Standard, 2024). This shift is driven by multiple factors, including reduced spending power due to the economic slowdown, and the influence of social media in promoting hidden gems and photogenic locations.

Tourism today is not only pursued for reasons of leisure or entertainment, but also for personal enrichment and the accumulation of what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1979/1984) described as *cultural capital* or *taste distinction*. The rise of experience-driven travel reflects broader societal changes, including increased social mobility, higher levels of education, and greater access to information (Richards & van der Ark, 2013). As personal wealth and leisure time grow (Smeral, 2003), travellers increasingly seek meaningful and immersive experiences. This is not a sudden trend, but is part of a larger transformation in travel motivations, which are shaped by a desire for individuality, artistic engagement, and transcendent experiences. This has led to an increased demand for heritage and cultural attractions (Brokensha & Guldberg, 1992; Konrad, 1982).

In the light of these evolving social dynamics, it is more important than ever to understand the motives of tourists, as these motives underpin choices about destination, type of trip, and length of stay. It also pertains to the design of tourism products. According to Pearce's Travel Career Pattern, core motives such as novelty, escaping/relaxing (being away from daily routines), and relationship building drive both experienced and inexperienced tourists alike (Pearce, 2011). However, shifts in consumer behaviour such as the widespread rise of online shopping have diminished the appeal of longstanding tourism draws. For example, Hong Kong's long-standing reputation as a "shopping paradise" has lost its allure, as

visitors can now purchase similar goods at a lower price in mainland China. The proliferation of shopping malls in Chinese cities has further reduced the novelty of Hong Kong's retail offerings. The urgent task for the relevant stakeholders is to create novelty for visitors by unveiling the lesser-known historical and cultural aspects embedded in physical space.

Authenticity as the Core Market Differentiator

In response to shifting expectations from travellers, the tourism industry is increasingly prioritizing experiences that offer genuine value and distinctiveness by placing authenticity at the heart of its offerings. The success of these cultural initiatives depends on a nuanced understanding of what constitutes “authenticity”. Bruner (1994) defined authenticity as encompassing historical verisimilitude, historical accuracy, originality, and certified authority. This framework encourages the exploration of cultural narratives beyond those relating to iconic landmarks and aligns with a growing recognition among tourism stakeholders that success depends not only on visitor numbers, but also on enriching the visitor experience itself (Garbani-Nerini et al., 2022).

Today's tourists increasingly seek destinations that stand apart from their daily environment and offer immersive, memorable encounters. At the core of in-depth tourism lies the promise of authenticity, which is characterized by realness, uniqueness, and cultural rootedness (Sharpley, 2018). Accurately presenting the past is fundamental to establishing this authenticity, as validated by Bruner's framework, which emphasizes the importance of conveying true and original stories supported by a credible authority.

In the context of Hong Kong, while mass attractions such as the Tsim Sha Tsui Promenade continue to draw large crowds, some visitors have come to prefer experiential travel. They are now demanding genuine local interactions, such as those that occur when

visiting lesser-known sites in the city, to create lasting memories. For example, the High Island Reservoir gained sudden popularity among mainland visitors during the May Golden Week. Similarly, the former Yau Ma Tei Police Station has been revitalized as a nostalgic hotspot and one that evokes memories of classic television dramas. A new interest in Kowloon City has been sparked, thanks to the success of a recent film set in the area.

Market Application: The Hong Kong Response

The government and the tourism sector have begun to acknowledge and address this emerging trend in tourism. The authorities and local businesses are increasingly offering specialized and experiential options that efficiently present Hong Kong's cultural richness. Efforts include curated walking tours, heritage trails, and cultural festivals such as the Old Town Central programme, to provide visitors with more meaningful ways to explore lesser-known neighbourhoods and experience the local culture. By sharing rich historical and cultural stories through immersive experiences, these activities encourage a stronger connection between visitors and the local community. These initiatives already reflect a broader trend where experience-driven travel no longer has a niche appeal to a minor group of tourists. Rather, it is a strategic differentiator in a competitive tourism market.

Although it is a cliché that Hong Kong is a city where East meets West, it should be clarified how this positioning can help Hong Kong to develop a distinctive tourism brand by strengthening narratives and storytelling. The integration of Chinese and Western cultures should not merely be presented as a unique feature, but as one that provides a suitable degree of cultural distance that effectively attracts tourists from both Asia and the West. This cultural distance allows travellers to experience something different without feeling completely alienated. For Western tourists, elements

of Western culture embedded in a Chinese context provide a sense of comfort, whilst Asian travellers may find resonance in shared cultural values or aesthetics. This balance fosters a welcoming environment for diverse audiences.

Recognizing the value of cultural distance in attracting diverse tourist groups can inform destination branding and urban planning strategies. Policymakers might consider preserving and highlighting culturally hybrid spaces to enhance cross-cultural engagement and broaden market appeal. Tai Kwun, as a centre for heritage and art, is a classic example that showcases not only Western buildings, but also local Hong Kong art reflecting Hong Kong's multi-layered identity. Sham Shui Po has become another popular tourism hotspot for its rich local history and hub of hybrid galleries and craft workshops. The essential initiative for the development of a tourism industry is not the creation of new tourist attractions but the marketing and management of existing tourism assets.

Furthermore, Hong Kong not only maintains features of traditional Chinese culture such as festivals, religion, and language, but also integrates the diverse cultures of overseas Chinese communities, including those in Southeast Asia and Anglophone countries. Such cultural integration transforms Hong Kong into an ideal destination to explore the evolution of Chinese identity, transcultural identity, and global Chinese networks.

With such potential to diversify tourism products to enlarge the tourism market, the initial action of the government should be to determine how to utilize Hong Kong's assets to establish a compelling story to attract visitors. Conveying destination brand narratives, storytelling serves as a powerful tool to capture the attention of travellers and encourage them to explore destinations (Can et al., 2025; Youssef et al., 2019). True and ethical storytelling can meet the demand for authentic and immersive experiences from the new generation of conscious travellers who seek authenticity, connection, and personal enrichment (Govers & Go, 2009). The

development of in-depth tourism is grounded in an understanding and reinterpretation of local elements. This in turn provides a solid basis for designing meaningful and context-rich travel experiences (Hsu, 2024). The following chapter will employ Causeway Bay as a replicable model for developing in-depth tourism in other districts.

Reimagining Causeway Bay for a New Form of Tourism

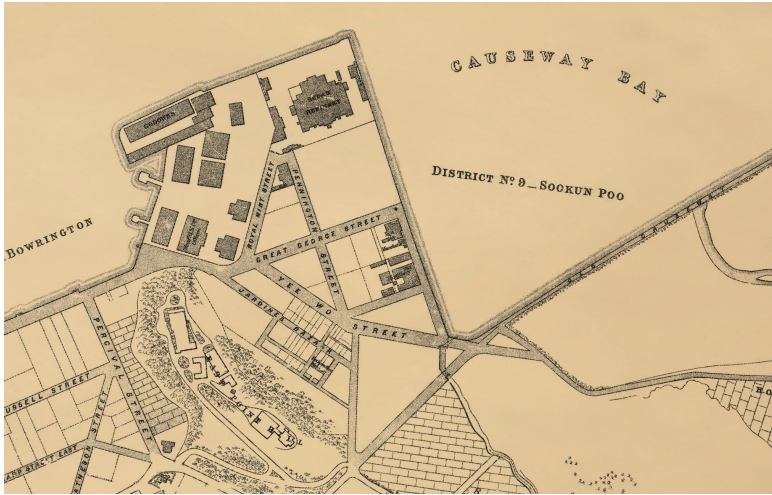
While areas such as Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon City, Central, and villages in the New Territories have been identified as hotspots for in-depth tourism, Causeway Bay, despite its prominence as a tourist destination, has been excluded from these programmes. Often labelled merely as a commercial shopping district filled with department stores, Causeway Bay is perceived by many visitors as one-dimensional. This narrow identity makes it particularly vulnerable to economic fluctuations and market competition. However, the area possesses rich cultural and historical layers that remain largely untapped. By uncovering and presenting these hidden dimensions, Causeway Bay can offer more resilient and diverse tourism experiences that avoid an overreliance on shopping and dining, and attract high-value, culturally motivated tourists. Its historical depth provides fertile ground on which to design thematic routes that explore aspects of religion, sports, entertainment, and local heritage.

Historical Background

Presenting the historical background of Causeway Bay serves not only educational purposes but also fosters a deeper understanding of the place, leading to a more multidimensional tourism product than the one currently on offer.

Within a few months after landing on Hong Kong Island in January 1841, the British authorities began auctioning off parcels of land. East Point (today's Causeway Bay) was bought by the trading firm Jardine, Matheson, & Co. (Ho, 2018). The building

Figure 3: Cropped Section of the “City of Victoria” Map (1889), Showing Causeway Bay



Source: Lands Department (2020b).

of headquarters, shipyards, warehouses, factories, shops, and the residence of the *taipan* (business executive or entrepreneur) signalled the area's growing importance. The area experienced its heyday of industrial development, with factories for the refining of sugar, production of ice, and manufacturing of textiles. Causeway Bay's existing street names, such as Sugar Street, Cotton Path, and Jardine's Bazaar, remind people of its industrial past.

In the 1920s, economic shifts and intensifying international competition led to the closure of factories. The purchase by the Chinese tycoon Lee Hysan of the Jardine's Hill (East Point Hill) property was a watershed in the development of Causeway Bay. With the establishment of Lee Garden Amusement Park, the property was turned into a popular entertainment destination with night markets and theatres.

The further development of the area in the post-war period

Figure 4: Causeway Bay in 1962



Source: Lands Department (2020a).

brought a retail boom in the 1960s as Japanese department stores arrived. During the vibrant 1980s, Daimaru, Matsuzakaya, Mitsukoshi, and Sogo maintained a strong presence in Causeway Bay (Wong, 2006). The transformation of Causeway Bay from an industrial centre into a commercial and recreational hub not only paved the way for the area to become the glitzy shopping district that it is today but also epitomized the overall development of Hong Kong.

This influx of commercial infrastructure and international businesses brought prosperity and vibrancy to the area, turning Causeway Bay into one of Hong Kong's earliest and most dynamic industrial and commercial districts. The legacy of this period laid the foundation for Causeway Bay's continued evolution into a bustling urban centre, even though many of its original historical buildings have since been demolished. This historical context highlights not

only the trajectory of the area's commercialization and urbanization, but also the contributions of the diverse individuals who lived and pursued careers here.

Design of Thematic Routes

Since many landmarks in the neighbouring areas are closely intertwined with the district's historical development, Causeway Bay should be expanded into the "Causeway Bay Cultural Circle". Such a definition would not only lead to the consolidation of tourism assets but also to the showcasing of the diversity of resources relating to local culture. Existing historical and heritage sites, such as museums, sports facilities, temples, and churches, could be curated into walkable thematic routes to appeal to a wide spectrum of visitors. Travellers can wander between several iconic sites and immerse themselves in different historical narratives and community memories. This narrative strategy seeks to rectify the stereotype of Hong Kong as a "former British-ruled city" by presenting a more comprehensive and inclusive account of its development, one that includes the contributions of both Chinese and non-Chinese ethnic groups.

The following recommendations consist of five routes encompassing 19 sites, with themes covering consumer culture, the footprints of Chinese communities during the era of British governance, the history of sports development, religious beliefs, and maritime culture (Figure 5). The design of the following routes is based not on the chronological order in which the buildings were constructed, but on their geographical locations along the routes. In designing these itineraries, it is essential to prioritize narrative coherence rather than merely clustering together buildings of similar architectural type. This approach enables visitors to engage with Hong Kong through a structured and meaningful storyline to avoid monotonous visits to places of the same category.

Figure 5: Itineraries for In-depth Cultural Explorations in Causeway Bay

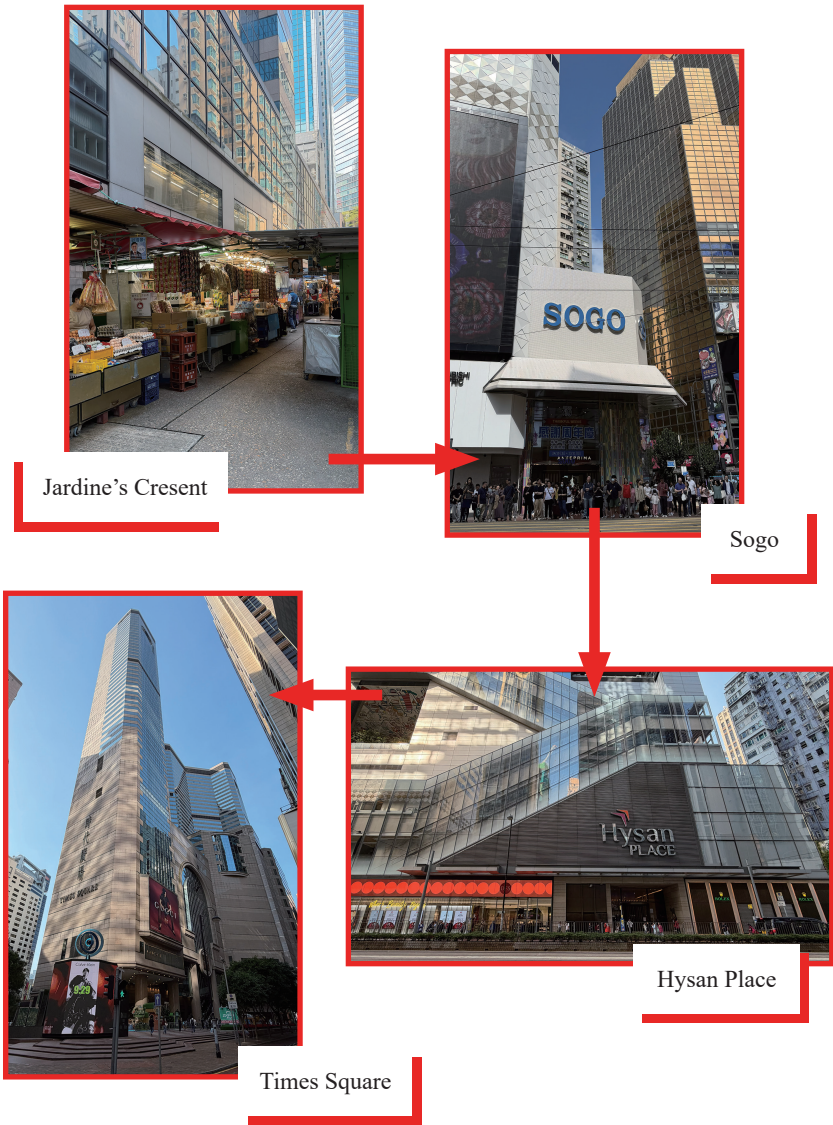


Route 1: Causeway Bay Day and Night: An Exploration of Entertainment and Consumer Culture

This route offers a deep dive into the vibrant consumer culture that defines Causeway Bay through visiting **Jardine's Crescent**, **Sogo**, **Hysan Place**, and **Times Square**. Apart from shopping, visitors can explore the evolution of Hong Kong's retail landscape, from the luxury boutiques of Lee Gardens to the bustling bargain stalls of Jardine's Crescent.

The route begins at **Jardine's Crescent**. Named after the founder of Jardine Matheson, the largest of the foreign trading conglomerates in the mid-nineteenth century as well as the earliest developer of Causeway Bay, Jardine's Crescent is tucked away in

Figure 6: Travel Path and Featured Sites of Route 1



the bustling heart of Causeway Bay. The street is lined with packed stalls selling accessories, clothing, toys, and everyday goods, and exudes a vibrant grassroots culture that differs from the rest of the attractions in this route.

The second stop, **Sogo**, established by Japanese retailers, tells of the golden age when Japanese department stores, including Daimaru and Matsuzakaya, flourished in Causeway Bay in the 1980s. Representing one of the last major Japanese-style department stores left in Hong Kong, Sogo is a key part of Hong Kong's retail heritage. Beyond shopping, visitors can experience distinctive Japanese-style retail services and consumer culture here.

Navigating onwards towards **Hysan Place**, visitors will encounter another shopping mall, but one that was developed through Chinese enterprise. Its location was originally Jardine's Hill, which had been owned by foreign traders. Chinese tycoon Lee Hysan purchased the land and reconstructed the landscape into an amusement park. In the late 1970s, the hill was completely levelled, and in 2012 Hysan Place, a modern high-rise structure featuring a sustainable green design, was built on the site. Hysan Place is a microcosm of historical transformation, reflecting the shift from foreign traders to Chinese entrepreneurs as landowners, and the evolution from a barren hill to a bustling entertainment hub, and finally to a modern commercial skyscraper.

The route's final stop is at **Times Square**, the former Hong Kong Tramways depot and a major landmark in Hong Kong. Beyond shopping experiences, travellers can explore the cultural offerings available in monthly special events held in venues within Times Square, from art exhibitions, cultural programmes, movie promotions, and charity events to new product launches (Hong Kong Times Square, 2025).

This itinerary is suitable for general tourists, as it offers a relaxed shopping experience while encouraging tourists to uncover the stories behind Hong Kong's prosperity.

Route 2: Footprints of the Chinese: Stories of the Chinese Community

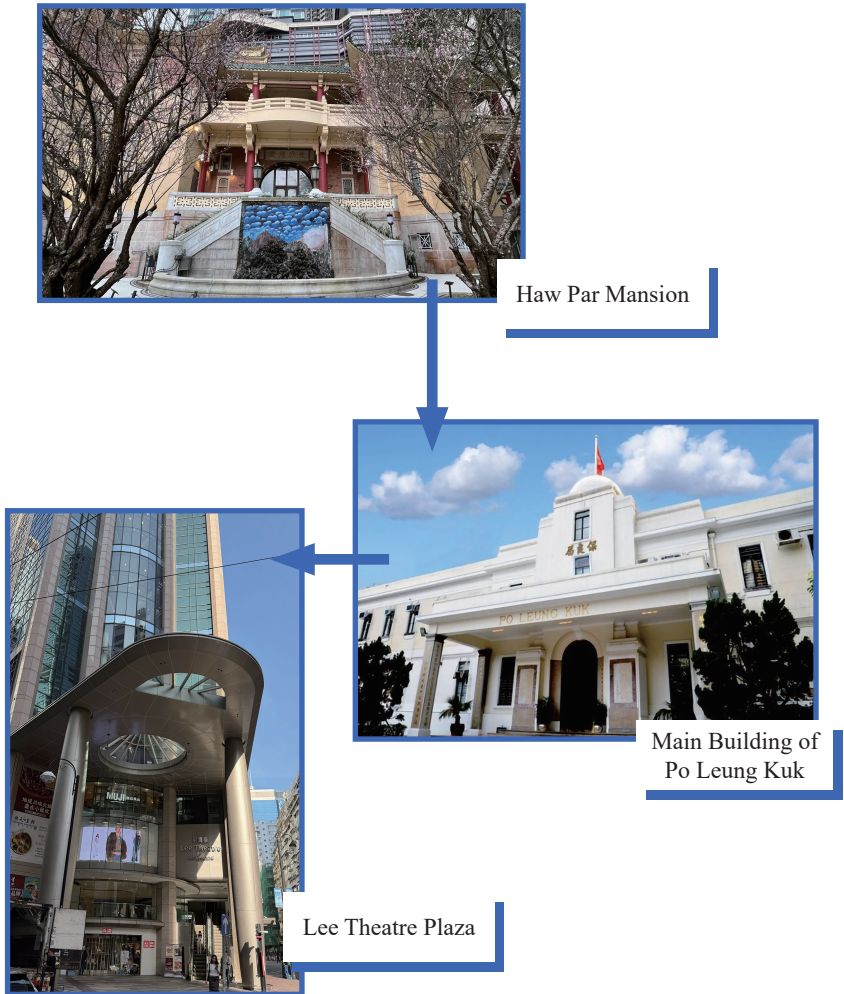
This route includes the **Haw Par Mansion** (the home of an overseas Chinese businessman in Hong Kong), the **Po Leung Kuk Museum** (which showcases the contributions of the Chinese elite in safeguarding people in need), and **Lee Theatre Plaza** (the commercial development journey of the Lee family).

The journey starts at **Haw Par Mansion**. There, the building's architectural merits and the life history of the former residence of the overseas Chinese entrepreneur Aw Boon Haw are presented. Built in 1936, the mansion was constructed in the Chinese Eclectic style, which involved Western methods of construction and decorations with architectural features borrowed from traditional Chinese architecture (Antiquities and Monuments Office, 2014). Visitors can gain insight into the zeitgeist of the 1930s by viewing an unparalleled architectural design as well as hearing the story of Aw Boon Haw.

The second stop is the **Po Leung Kuk Museum**, which preserves the legacy of one of Hong Kong's oldest charitable organizations. A strong sense of Chinese identity is reflected in the worship of Kwan Ti by the founders of the organization, and in the displaying of commemorative couplets (Antiquities Advisory Board, n.d.). The museum displays the history of the development of social welfare services in Hong Kong led by Chinese elites, as well as the real-life conditions of the population in earlier periods of Hong Kong's history. Through these exhibits, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of issues concerning the wellbeing of women and children amidst Hong Kong's economic prosperity.

The final destination is **Lee Theatre Plaza**, the original site of the "finest house of entertainment" in the era of British governance (Lau & Chow, 2023). The decision of Lee Hysan to build a grand theatre was a cultural investment, which became a symbol of Chinese entrepreneurial ambition. Although it was later demolished and redeveloped into a modern shopping centre in the 1990s, the

Figure 7: Travel Path and Featured Sites of Route 2



Note: The photo of the main building of Po Leung Kuk (housing the Po Leung Kuk Museum) is from Po Leung Kuk (2026).

name “Lee Theatre Plaza” pays homage to this renowned landmark. The location also preserves the legacy and cultural memory of an entertainment space.

These sites outline the struggles and achievements of the Chinese community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They not only introduce travellers to lesser-known aspects of Hong Kong’s history but also highlight the important role played by Chinese elites in the development of Hong Kong. Furthermore, they feature historic buildings that have been preserved or revitalized: Po Leung Kuk’s as a Grade I historic building; Haw Par Mansion’s ornate interiors and Chinese-Western architectural blend; and Lee Garden’s integration of the old structure with a modern design.

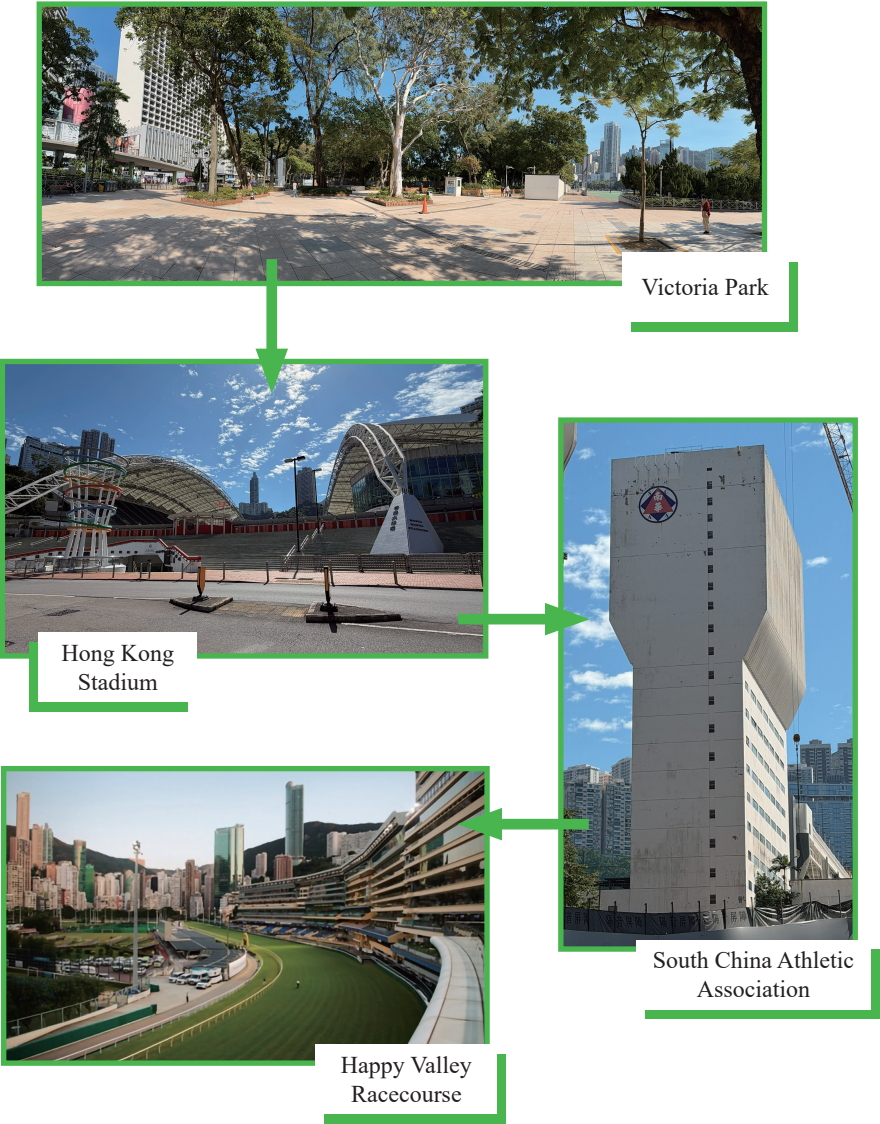
Route 3: City and Sports: Stories of Athletics and Public Spaces

The historical trajectory of sports development in Hong Kong is unfamiliar to many visitors. Nevertheless, Hong Kong holds a distinguished position as one of the first regions in Asia to adopt and institutionalize Western athletic practices. This route covers locations such as the **South China Athletic Association (SCAA)**, **Hong Kong Stadium**, the **Happy Valley Racecourse** and the **Race Course Fire Memorial**, and **Victoria Park**.

The route begins at **Victoria Park**, which is adjacent to a bustling shopping area. Visitors can observe locals engaging in various forms of exercise, including elderly people practising *Tai Chi* in the morning and school children playing basketball after school. It offers a glimpse into the everyday wellness routines of Hong Kong’s citizens.

The journey then moves to **Hong Kong Stadium**, which, in contrast to the everyday wellness routines seen in Victoria Park, is the venue for the city’s grand sporting events. Built in 1952, the construction of the stadium symbolizes the vitality and vibrancy of Hong Kong as a cosmopolitan city. Hosting many international

Figure 8: Travel Path and Featured Sites of Route 3



Note: The photo of Happy Valley Racecourse is from Hong Kong Tourism Board (2026).

events, such as the Hong Kong Sevens, it is more than just a venue, but also a cultural landmark that reflects the evolution of sports, community, and global identity in Hong Kong.

While Hong Kong Stadium represents the city's capacity to host international sporting events, the story of the development of local athletics cannot be told without mentioning the **South China Athletic Association**. Set up in 1908 under its former name, the Chinese Football Team, it is the first sports club in Hong Kong to have been founded by Chinese. Thus, the establishment of the SCAA not only marked the beginning of active Chinese participation in sports, but also the breaking of the monopoly on local sports by foreigners. It ushered in a new chapter of diversification and localization in Hong Kong's sporting landscape.

The journey will stop at the **Happy Valley Racecourse**, which has the longest history among all sports grounds in Hong Kong. Established in the mid-nineteenth century, this historic site reflects Hong Kong's early engagement with organized sports under Western influence. More than just a racing ground, it became a social hub where East met West after it was opened to Chinese residents. By intertwining leisure and sports, horse racing presents a dynamic image of the city to tourists.

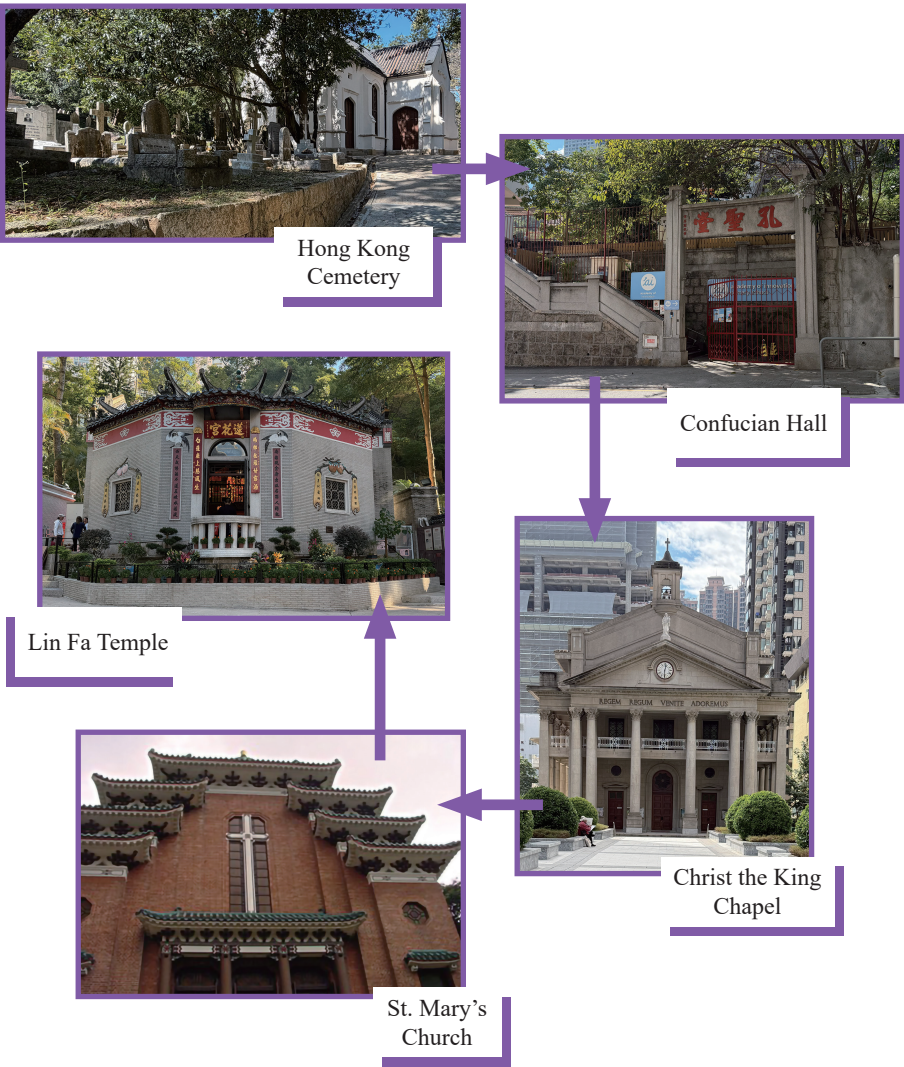
This travel route, which revolves around public spaces relating to urban sporting activities, allows visitors to understand the multiple roles that Causeway Bay has played in the history and promotion of sports in Hong Kong. From the everyday rhythm of exercise to international mega events, a lesser-known dimension of Causeway Bay that is seldom explored is unveiled to visitors.

Route 4: The Journey of Life and Faith

This route features **Hong Kong Cemetery**, the **Confucian Hall**, **Christ the King Chapel**, **St. Mary's Church**, and **Lin Fa Temple**. It highlights the roles and cultural influence of various religions and faiths within the community.

The route begins at **Hong Kong Cemetery**, the city's oldest,

Figure 9: Travel Path and Featured Sites of Route 4



Note: The photo of St. Mary's Church is from HKSKH St. Mary's Church (n.d.).

which was established in 1845. Over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became the final resting place for European Protestants, nonconformists, Chinese, Japanese, and Russians. Reflecting Hong Kong's ethnic diversity, the cemetery, which includes a chapel, fountain, and sundial, is also the only site in the city where elements of architectural styles from 1845 to the present day can all be observed (The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, 2017).

The second stop, **Confucius Hall**, presents the enduring legacy of Confucian values amidst Western religious and academic influences. It served as a platform for renowned intellectuals such as Jao Tsung-i, Du Wei-ming, and Chi'en Mu to deliver lectures and promote Chinese classic literature and ethics (Antiquities and Monuments Office, 2024). Before the opening of Hong Kong City Hall in 1962, it also functioned as a key community gathering space (Hong Kong Resource Centre for Heritage, 2021).

The journey continues to **Christ the King Chapel** and **St. Mary's Church**. Tourists would first notice their architectural features: the Romanesque design of Christ the King Chapel evokes a sense of solemnity, while St. Mary's Church, with its Chinese architectural style, reflects the indigenization of Christianity in the 1930s. A realization of the deeper social significance of these buildings would further enhance their impression on visitors, especially when they see how faith is expressed through daily life and community service. Both institutions have long provided shelter and care for the sick, elderly, women, and children. Such contributions embody the integration of religious values into social support.

The final destination is **Lin Fa Temple**, notable for its signature octagonal front hall and dual staircases on the left and right ends of the building, which offer special access to the temple, a feature that is rare in Hong Kong (Chinese Temples Committee, 2025). In addition to its architectural charm, visitors can also enjoy the vibrant Fire Dragon Dance of Tai Hang held annually on the fourteenth

day of the eighth lunar month. Placed on China's National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2011, this dance has been performed since the late nineteenth century.

This itinerary traverses key religious and cultural landmarks that show features of both Eastern and Western influence. Tourists will come to understand how faith, architecture, and community care are intertwined to shape both personal and collective identities. From divine protection and missionary service to ancestral remembrance and moral education, each site contributes to a broader narrative of resilience, belonging, and the search for meaning in the urban landscape.

Route 5: Harbourfront Histories: Maritime Culture in Causeway Bay

As Hong Kong transformed from a fishing village to an entrepôt for trade, the sea played a vital role in shaping its history, and the livelihoods and spiritual life of its people. On this journey, the **Jardine Noonday Gun**, the **Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter**, and **Tin Hau Temple** offer visitors a glimpse of Hong Kong's rich maritime heritage, rooted in both Chinese and Western traditions.

The journey begins with the **Jardine Noonday Gun**, a timekeeping tradition dating back to the 1860s (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2025b). It was not Chinese ritual, but a Western one. The practice of gun salutation originated as a way to welcome the arrival by sea of Jardine Matheson's *taipan*. After a British naval officer objected to the practice, the company was ordered to fire a single shot every day at noon. This ritual continues to this day. The gun fires every day from 12:00 to 12:30, and on New Year's Eve, symbolizing a continuous maritime legacy.

Next, the **Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter** serves as a living heritage of the city's maritime history. It offers a glimpse into a place once inhabited by the floating population, once a major community in Hong Kong. Although the current structure is not the original one

Figure 10: Travel Path and Featured Sites of Route 5



built in the late nineteenth century, it remains a vital docking site for fishing boats and a symbol of Hong Kong's past.

The final stop is the **Tin Hau Temple**, which is dedicated to the Goddess of the Sea and the patron deity of seafarers. Believed to have been constructed in the early eighteenth century, the structure remains well-preserved in its original form (Hong Kong Memory, 2012). Its traditional architectural features and enduring ritual activities offer a living testament to Hong Kong's historical identity as a fishing village. For generations, it has been a spiritual haven for those whose lives were closely tied to the sea. The deep cultural and religious connections between Hong Kong's people and its waters is embedded in the physical structure of the temple.

Together, these sites weave a rich tapestry of Hong Kong's maritime past. The Western rituals, floating communities, and enduring spiritual traditions add value to Causeway Bay as a meaningful destination for the exploration of maritime culture, an important element in Hong Kong's history.

Conclusion

These five in-depth travel routes cover themes to cater to the different interests and demands of travellers. Each route invites visitors to explore layers of history, community, and identity embedded in urban spaces. They display not only multiple facets of Causeway Bay but also of the development of Hong Kong. This narrative reshapes an understanding that goes beyond stereotypes such as "former British administered region" and "shopping paradise". Travellers are allowed to gain a deeper understanding of Hong Kong's standout qualities to add value to their visit. Following these cultural itineraries, visitors can move from passive observation to active interpretation by gaining more insights into what makes Hong Kong people so resilient.

Figure 11: Yee Wo Street, Causeway Bay, Featuring the Iconic Circular Pedestrian Bridge



Practical Use of Digital Humanities in Tourism

While the previous chapter introduced five cultural routes as a model that showcases the multi-faceted history of Causeway Bay, the challenge now lies in translating this culture-driven content into actionable tourism experiences. DH integrates humanities scholarship with digital tools such as Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and multimedia storytelling to curate and present information in meaningful and interactive ways. This methodology offers powerful tools to support this process to enable the development of in-depth tourism, not only during the trip but also at the crucial pre-trip planning stage.

Information plays a vital role in both the pre-trip and on-site stages, making utilization of DH essential. First, tourism is an experience-based service that differs from tangible products, which can be physically examined. This makes the provision of pre-trip information to travellers critical for reducing their feelings of uncertainty, helping them to make decisions on the choice of destination, and shaping their expectations about value (Cheng et al., 2019). To minimize risk, travellers actively seek information on various information platforms to visualize their experiences and compare options. Once the journey begins, information becomes a tool to enrich the experience of visitors, as they move from superficial sightseeing to experiential travel. By leveraging DH, the experience of travelling is transformed from the reading of static brochures to dynamic and experiential experiences that align with the desire of travellers for authenticity and engagement. Therefore, understanding how DH can structure and deliver cultural

information is crucial for enhancing both pre-trip planning and on-site experiences.

Digital Humanities: Integration of Knowledge and Technology

In an increasingly competitive global tourism market, modern travellers seek more than landmarks, which has created the trend of in-depth tourism. Travellers demand authenticity and deep, experience-driven travel. To unlock this potential for Hong Kong requires the government and the tourism sector to move beyond surface-level attractions to reveal the city's hidden stories. While authenticity in tourism is intrinsically linked to historical and cultural elements, unveiling a city's deeper narrative layers requires systematic engagement with scholarly research.

Simultaneously, the emergence of DH, which incorporates computational tools and digital methods with humanities content, provides a transformative solution to the issue of in-depth tourism. This methodology not only preserves and interprets complex human knowledge contained in academic writing, but also disseminates it through interactive, engaging, and accessible digital platforms.

DH is not merely about producing aesthetically pleasing maps or curating historical photographs. Rather, it entails leveraging computational technologies to extract and systematize the historical trajectories embedded within documentary sources, and subsequently employing digital tools to visualize and critically analyse these patterns. DH provides historical and cultural interpretation to co-create tourism products. For instance, GIS mapping enables the spatial distribution of historical buildings and heritage sites to be analysed, thereby facilitating an understanding of geographical evolution in relation to human activities. This method can be applied to historical figures, such as Sun Yat-sen and prominent traders,

to display the traces they have left in Hong Kong and their link to Hong Kong's evolution.

By presenting cultural information with the help of DH, the compelling content can capture the imagination of potential visitors and position Hong Kong as a destination for in-depth cultural explorations. This proactive approach offers the tourism industry a way to reshape the image of Hong Kong, rather than relying on viral trends in social media platforms.

The practical application of DH in tourism is not merely about digitizing existing materials but also about delivering accurate information while fulfilling a vital guiding role. It involves the setting up of a strategic framework to transform scholarly knowledge into public-facing content. Fragmented and complex scholarly knowledge can be transformed into coherent and accessible presentations, such as layered maps, soundscapes, and themed itineraries featuring historical photographs. Therefore, the application of DH in tourism promotion can be regarded as a work of collaboration between historians, technicians, and graphic designers.

The framework of a DH presentation can be conducted in three interdependent stages: digitalization, curation, and contestation; spatial and narrative visualization; and augmented hermeneutics and embodied experience. It is commonly known that the initial step that needs to be taken is the digitizing of heterogeneous sources, such as historical maps, photographs, architectural blueprints, biographies of historical figures, oral history, and literary texts. However, the curation and systematic organization of the sources into thematic collections requires intellectual labour. If scholarly expertise is employed for the application of metadata, creation of annotations, and drawing of connections between disparate items, then structured and coherent content can be prepared for interpretation and presentation.

Application of Digital Humanities in In-depth Tourism

Pre-trip Phase

Various forms of digital storytelling methods can be strategically employed in two distinct phases of the tourism experience: the pre-trip phase and on-site travel phase. Beginning with the pre-trip phase, a tourism web employing DH tools can provide tourists with enriched and appealing information about a destination. In addition to iconic mainstream attractions, lesser-known sites can be introduced through one-minute videos, a format that has become increasingly popular. Condensed, critical historical and cultural information can be presented in the videos to offer an essential and engaging introduction to a place. Furthermore, the webpage can suggest thematic routes to provide visitors with a coherent narrative. In these ways, their initial decisions about trip length and type can be influenced.

Role of Pre-trip Information

Research on travel behaviour has identifies three central questions: why people travel, how people make the decision to travel, and how they choose where to travel (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1998). The Stages of Change Model (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986) describes a progression in which people move from making a decision to performing a specific action. The stages include the pre-contemplative, contemplative, ready for action, action, and maintenance phases. The search for information, such as commercial information and personal sources, plays a decisive role in the initial decision to take a trip, including the type of trip and the destination.

While collecting information, potential travellers can foster a sense of satisfaction and create a desired reality by enhancing their knowledge about a place and their aesthetic enjoyment of

it (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). In another study, Mackay and Fesenmaier (1998) proposed a five-stage travel behaviour continuum in which the pre-contemplation stage denotes the foremost point of the formation of a travel intention or behaviour. Potential travellers are not yet engaged in any travel activity, but judge the pros and cons of a particular travel experience (Courneya et al., 2001). Therefore, in the initial stage, the travel information that the visitor obtains is the determinant factor.

Current Challenges

The search for information is therefore a decisive stage for planning not only the destination but also the type of trip and length of stay. With a properly curated, informative, and aesthetically visualized platform, public agencies can select and present essential content to tourists. In this way, the challenges that the tourism industry is currently facing, such as lower spending levels and shorter stays, can be effectively addressed. It has become crucial for official tourism platforms to provide rich, engaging, and detailed cultural information. Therefore, that pre-trip stage is a critical moment for shaping expectations and influencing choices.

A salient behavioural insight for tourism promotion is social proof and the fear of missing out (FOMO). Tourists often follow what others are doing, especially when attractive visuals of destinations or activities are widely shared on social media. This tendency can lead to superficial “check-in” tourism, even though these activities take place at lesser-known sites. When visitors prioritize photo opportunities, the meaningful cultural depth of the destination would be overlooked. To counter this, if promotional content highlights meaningful cultural experiences as popular or trending, it can nudge tourists towards deeper engagement. For instance, rather than simply showcasing a photograph of a historic temple, the website could feature a short story or video. This not

only adds emotional depth but also creates a sense of authenticity and connection, encouraging tourists to seek similar experiences themselves.

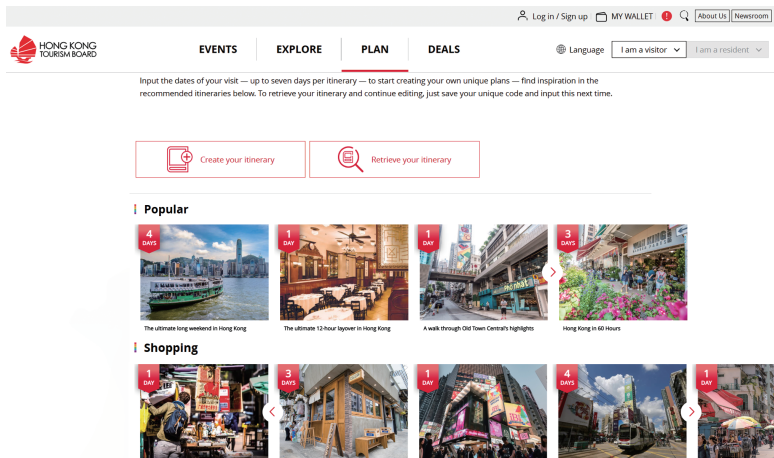
Unfortunately, the Hong Kong Tourism Board's website currently fails to capture visitors' attention in this regard. Its simplified content and lackluster layout fail to present Hong Kong's rich cultural offerings, and potentially diminishes the interest of tourists during the planning phase. To better support travellers and enhance Hong Kong's appeal, the website should present comprehensive, visually engaging, and culturally immersive information that resonates with the motivations and expectations of modern tourists.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board Trip Planner features 30 one-day or multi-day day plans with diverse themes (see Figure 12). Examples include a single-day itinerary involving "a treasure hunt in Qld Town Central", a "two days in the islands" itinerary, and a four-day "families with teens" itinerary. The webpage employs an interactive cartographic interface with numbered markers denoting key landmarks. Users can engage with each marker to access detailed site-specific information and generate tailored travel itineraries to enjoy efficient navigation and cultural engagement. However, the depth of the information that is given is uneven. Some entries offer rich historical context and insider tips, while others are limited to superficial details. This inconsistency in the depth of information may hinder user engagement.

Strategies for Improvement

To address the above problems, the content should be standardized and enriched to ensure uniform depth of information across all landmarks. Incorporating historical context, stories, cultural significance, and visitor tips for each site can foster deeper engagement and educational value. It may present a more

Figure 12: Online Trip Planner on the Hong Kong Tourism Board's Website



Source: Hong Kong Tourism Board (2025c).

meaningful story to visitors rather than a superficial image of an East-West infusion city.

A clear layout is essential and a monotone design and limited multimedia presentations should be avoided, as these reduce the appeal of the attractions. Therefore, soundscapes, historical photographs, and videos can be integrated into the design to heighten immersion. The Smart Seoul Map developed by the Seoul Tourism Organization is a good example of how numbered landmarks and interactive pop-ups can facilitate intuitive navigation, even though dense layouts may impede usability for some audiences.

Furthermore, the authority should utilize short videos, which have become very influential in tourism promotions. Government strategies should evolve accordingly with greater creativity and appeal. Promotional videos should avoid being formulaic; instead, the government could consider inviting internationally recognized

local celebrities to serve as tourism ambassadors to attract attention and traffic in the short videos published on the website.

In the digital era, some new types of travel companies no longer confine themselves to offering face-to-face guided tours. Global tourists are also provided with paid virtual tours to enjoy immersive, low-commitment, and high-fidelity experiences. In this regard, virtual tours act as a marketing funnel or soft entry point that can reduce the perceived risk of international travel. This strategy allows the authorities to cultivate interest in Hong Kong by showcasing diverse narratives related to local heritage, sustainable culture, and community life, beyond the activity of conventional shopping and a mainstream itinerary. The building of a stronger emotional connection with a place could encourage travellers not only to visit but also to prolong the duration of their stay. This approach could significantly contribute to encouraging deeper engagement with the local context, thus leading to economic benefits for Hong Kong.

On-site Phase

In the on-site phase, visitors can follow the thematic routes identified during the pre-trip stage, with support from quick response (QR) codes posted at key locations. These codes can provide access to photographs, an oral history audio, and diverse historical content integrated with GIS and interactive digital installations. The key locations can align with photo-taking spots such as the entrance of a temple.

Some may criticize the offering of textual information as burdensome, and question the willingness of tourists to scan QR codes. To address these problems, QR codes or audio guides can be installed at specific sites, allowing visitors to engage with stories through various media formats. That said, such guides should not rely solely on traditional textual presentations but rather be redesigned and repackaged. For example, a “micro-narrative”

approach could be used, where each site offers a concise yet engaging story snippet, prioritizing visual and audio elements to enhance appeal. Travellers can absorb these short stories during “fragmented moments” such as when waiting, strolling, or taking photographs.

In addition, QR code stations should be creatively designed and incorporate photo-worthy features, such as iconic neon light billboards, a silhouette wall with pictures of famous football players, and the historical buildings themselves. Visitors would then be more likely to pause and explore, thereby deepening their interest and participation in local history and culture. Moreover, interactive technologies, including GIS mapping, augmented reality (AR), and digital installations, can further support participatory experiences. Being active explorers rather than passive observers, visitors can enhance the educational value of their visit and their overall satisfaction with it by increasing their engagement during their trip.

Table 1 illustrates how different DH technologies serve distinct purposes across the two critical phases of the tourism experience. **Interactive websites** primarily support the pre-trip stage by providing destination awareness and enabling itinerary planning. **Short videos** can be implemented in both phases: before the trip, travellers can be inspired by the visual storytelling to make travel decisions; during the trip, they can gain insights to complement their real-time experiences. **QR codes** function by giving access to multimedia content at specific locations. Finally, **GIS** and **AR** allow map-based exploration for trip planning and deliver immersive navigation and participatory experiences on-site. Each tool is strategically aligned with the behavioural and experiential needs of travellers at different stages.

In addition to the designing of routes, the on-site experience can be strengthened by transforming the way heritage sites are experienced. With advanced 5G and AI technologies, travellers can point their devices at architectural features to capture details, view

Figure 13: Microsoft Copilot (2025, <https://copilot.microsoft.com/>).
Mobile Phone App Interface Featured with a GIS Map
[Generative AI Image]

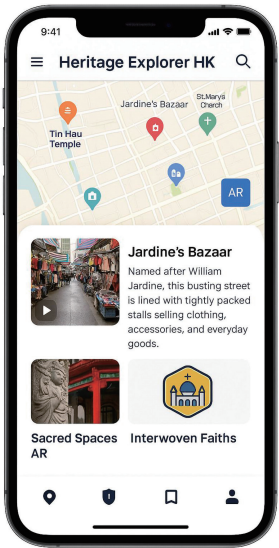


Table 1: Mapping of Digital Humanities Tools to Pre-trip and On-site Objectives

DH tool	Pre-trip objectives	On-site objectives
Interactive website	Destination awareness, itinerary planning	N/A
Short videos	Visual storytelling, emotional engagement	Quick cultural insights
QR codes	N/A	Access to multimedia, micro-narratives
GIS and AR	Map-based exploration previews	Immersive navigation, participatory experiences

pop-up information, and enjoy high-resolution views from afar. Intelligent zoom functions further allow users to explore carvings and structural elements with clarity. Advanced technology will transform the way cultural heritage is experienced by making the experience deeper and more immersive.

Application to the Causeway Bay Model

Building on the theoretical framework for utilizing DH established in the preceding discussion, this section explicitly links those tools to the five cultural routes developed for Causeway Bay. The raw historical data, including historical photographs, stories, and oral history interviews, serve as the foundational content that must be transformed to meet the expectations of in-depth tourism travellers.

Pre-trip Phase

Beginning with a pre-trip strategy focused on the interactive Causeway Bay web portal, the featured short videos, interactive GIS maps, and virtual tours of the proposed routes not only offer easy access to information but also highlight meaningful experiences as trending activities. As visitors interactively select different locations on the map, contextual cultural information will instantly appear in multimedia formats, such as audio clips, videos, and historical photographs.

As a key methodology of DH for visualizing historical changes, the GIS map allows visitors to preview the historical context of landmarks by, for instance, presenting stories of the rise of Chinese entrepreneurs or by providing audio recordings from interviews with stall owners in Jardine's Crescent. Furthermore, an interactive timeline can be inserted to show the historical evolution of the area, tracing Causeway Bay's transformation from a fishing village to a modern shopping district. Ultimately, this DH-powered approach

elevates the anticipation from traditional sightseeing to an immersive cultural journey.

Virtual tours can be applied in Causeway Bay to help potential travellers anticipate their trip to Hong Kong. A good virtual tour typically features a high-resolution video to create a realistic experience, and incorporates soundscapes to enhance immersion. In the case of the Happy Valley Racecourse, video clips of horse racing, and the sound of hooves pounding the ground at full speed and the cheers of the spectators can be included to realistically imitate the exciting vibe at the site.

On-site Strategy

During the on-site phase, AR technology enables visitors to utilize their smartphones to visualize historical reconstructions of former streets overlaid on the contemporary urban environment. Lee Gardens and Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter serve as illustrative locations for the transformation of the landscape. Lee Gardens exemplifies the urban redevelopment of Jardine's Hill, which was marked by a shift in land ownership from foreign traders to a Chinese tycoon. Meanwhile, the Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter demonstrates the physical evolution of the coastline. Sounds of a bustling audience gathered in front of the theatre can be featured alongside historical photographs to enhance the experience. Additionally, QR codes or near field communication (NFC) tags installed at religious or historical landmarks, such as the Hong Kong Cemetery, provide immediate access to rich multimedia narratives. Visitors may engage with audio content via personal earphones to explore the biographies of notable individuals interred at the site.

For demolished buildings and structures, such as the Lee Theatre, visitors can use their smart devices to view its original structure by scanning the QR codes installed at Lee Theatre Plaza. An interactive timeline can also illustrate the physical transformation of the landscape alongside the growth in the area's population. By

hovering over the timeline featured on the interface, users can view the dramatic changes that occurred from the area's transformation from Jardine's Hill to Lee Garden Hill, culminating in a level expanse of commercial land dominated by towering skyscrapers.

Conclusion

Studies have found that a good travel experience should have escapist, educational, aesthetic, and entertainment components (Duan et al., 2018), which will foster interest, joy, and contentment in individual travellers. Therefore, in-depth tourism can provide the components to construct good travel experiences. To achieve this goal, integrating DH into tourism provides travellers with exclusive experiences and offers educational opportunities to seekers of culture. In particular, DH offers not only information dissemination but also the visualization of historical, spatial, and cultural analyses.

This integration not only enriches the storytelling aspect of tourism but also fosters deeper emotional connections between visitors and the destination. By leveraging DH tools, such as AR, interactive maps, and multimedia archives, tourists can engage with layered narratives that reveal the cultural, historical, and social dimensions of a place. While using the DH tools during the trip, this participatory experience, shaped by DH methods, ensures that tourism products are rooted in historical and cultural interpretation. As a result, both educational value and overall satisfaction are enhanced. Ultimately, the fusion of DH and tourism opens up new possibilities for sustainable cultural tourism, preserving intangible heritage while adapting to the evolving expectations of modern travellers.

DH can be a valuable tool for promoting the sustainable development of in-depth travel. As its name implies, cross-sector collaboration should be actively promoted, particularly between people in academia, the information technology sector, and the

tourism industry. Academics can provide solid historical data and cultural context, laying the foundation for designing the narrative, while the latter two groups can offer design direction based on market trends and traveller preferences. This collaboration can effectively integrate these narratives into travel itineraries, guided tours, and cultural activities, to enhance the depth and appeal of the travel experience.

Figure 14: Perplexity AI (2025, November 5, <https://www.perplexity.ai/>). Illustration of an Interactive Timeline Showing the Physical Transformation of a Landscape from a River Valley with Early Settlements to a Modern City [Generative AI Image]



Other Policy Recommendations

In-depth tourism encompasses a broad functional dimension. Empowered by DH, it not only attracts cultural explorers to visit Hong Kong but also enriches the city's uniqueness for both locals and international tourists by providing cultural depth and educational value. The application and content of in-depth tourism can be extended to all 18 districts of Hong Kong, to historical and cultural education, the construction of a sense of belonging, and international promotions.

Causeway Bay Cultural Routes as a Replicable Model

Developing in-depth tourism is not limited to niche travellers. Rather, its full potential would be realized by designing different levels of experience that meet the needs of visitors with varying degrees of interest in culture. These levels might range from introductory themed walks to specialized workshops. The cultural routes suggested in Chapter 4 serve as a replicable model for other districts, and are suitable for both general travellers and those in pursuit of cultural experiences. In addition to themes, the routes also demonstrate the importance of the use of coherent narratives and storytelling to promote Hong Kong's cultural diversity. This is a critical component in transforming a collection of fragmented sites into a meaningful journey. It should be implemented across all 18 districts. It will not only unlock potential tourism resources, but also promote the more balanced development of tourism throughout the territory.

Following the model of Causeway Bay, Yau Ma Tei possesses significant potential for the development of in-depth tourism due to its diverse and historically rich assets. These attractions are proposed as the core sites for developing themed routes:

- **Films and TV dramas:** Old Yau Ma Tei Police Station, Broadway Cinematheque;
- **Commerce and quotidian life:** Jade Market, Temple Street, Wholesale Fruit Market;
- **Religious heritage:** Tin Hau Temple Complex;
- **Community cultural venue:** Yau Ma Tei Theatre, King George V Memorial Park, Kowloon.

The value of these sites lies not just in their existence but in their capacity to be woven into a coherent narrative by being organized into different thematic routes. For example, these themes could include religion, the historical era of British presence, or the evolution of local civic life. This segmentation allows the district to offer multiple entry points for diverse traveller interests.

Importantly, the model of Causeway Bay directly addresses the problem of shorter visitor stays. By presenting a “narrative of discovery” through cohesive and thematic itineraries, visits of longer durations can be encouraged as the travellers explore the various interconnected sites within a single area. This approach could transform a brief stop into a multi-day exploration of the entire district. By highlighting the special local culture and traditions of each district, diverse tourism assets are brought to the forefront. This fosters a deeper understanding during the visit and resonates with the concept of “tourism is everywhere in Hong Kong”.

Although the Home Affairs Department’s website “Hong Kong Fun in 18 Districts” (2025) provides tourism information for attractions across all districts, it lacks a compelling narrative to convey the authentic cultural flavour of each area because it merely targets local travellers. Visitors struggle to appreciate the

uniqueness of these districts because suggested attractions appear fragmented and are merely grouped under generic categories such as “*Sightseeing*”, “*Dining and Entertainment*”, and “*Shopping*”. This overly simplistic presentation fails to guide visitors towards experiencing the cultural depth and diversity that each district offers. The website can be enhanced with a more coherent approach to storytelling that leverages the city’s rich tourism assets. This approach will weave fragmented attractions into a vivid and distinctive image for the visitors rather than reducing the experience to a mere checklist of attractions.

Potential Challenges of In-depth Tourism and Solutions

It has been observed that host-guest friction in well-developed destinations such as Tsim Sha Tsui and Mongkok has become increasingly common because of overtourism. Tourists complain about the commodified and eroded unauthentic local culture, whilst locals are upset about overcrowding caused by the tourists. Promoting the development of under-visited sites is an effective strategy to mitigate overcrowding in mainstream tourism hotspots.

Nevertheless, concerns have been raised about in-depth tourism diverting tourist flows to other non-tourist areas. As these locations were not initially intended for tourism, environmental and local resources may be at risk due to the increase in visits and pressure on infrastructure. Tensions between residents and tourists will intensify as the problem spreads beyond traditional tourism hotspots. In-depth tourism is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it requires complementary measures to prevent potential problems.

To solve the above problems, prior to promoting a place, the authorities should evaluate the capacity of the attractions and the impact on the environment that could be brought about by tourism. Additional facilities, such as public toilets, should be developed in

non-tourist areas. More frequent transportation services should also be provided to accommodate the growing number of visitors. In addition, time-slot systems or reservations would effectively reduce peak-time congestion and alleviate pressure on local infrastructure. Another key step is to integrate both popular and lesser-known sites into tourism routes. This can help to evenly distribute visitor flows across different areas, minimizing concentration in a single location. These measures would not only facilitate accessibility, but also reduce the conflict between visitors and locals. However, the outcome still depends on the cooperation of visitors.

Promotion and education play a vital role in guiding tourists to respect the local culture and lifestyle. Signs can be displayed at sites to remind people to engage in “responsible travel” by, for example, keeping silent, not taking photographs at private residences, not littering, and so on. The Hong Kong Tourism Board can collaborate with non-governmental organizations to develop guided tours. Simultaneously, community-based tourism models can be adopted by encouraging residents to take ownership of tourism activities, such as by offering guided tours and cultural workshops. Their role can be shifted from that of passive recipients to active stakeholders in tourism. With the active participation of local residents, not only can the community’s original environment be better preserved, but micro-economies can also be fostered within the district.

Expanding Horizons Beyond Tourism

In-depth Tourism as a Tool for Experiential Learning

As suggested in the *History Curriculum Guide (Secondary 1–3)*, community resources can be transformed into learning and teaching resources (Curriculum Development Council, 2019). By presenting the history and culture of various districts, in-depth tourism empowered by DH can serve as ideal material for educating visitors

about the history of a locality. In particular, since Hong Kong students usually attend schools within their own neighbourhoods, they have limited opportunities to explore and learn about other districts. Observing the historical development of a familiar neighbourhood can help students to build a stronger emotional link to the places that shape their everyday experiences.

Digital sources developed for in-depth tourism, which use various formats such as virtual tours, soundscapes, short biographies of historical figures, and 3D digital representations of architecture, can be utilized to provide engaging teaching materials. This would not only reduce the time required for teachers to prepare teaching materials, but also encourage independent learning. By becoming engaged in the heritage of their local community, students will be encouraged to raise their awareness of cultural conservation. Furthermore, if these sources are made openly available online, culture enthusiasts among the public can also benefit from this educational opportunity.

Building a Sense of Belonging Through In-depth Tourism

In-depth tourism (or cultural tourism) serves as a mechanism for activating and reconstructing a sense of belonging among local residents. As the rapid urban transformation occurring in places like Hong Kong continuously erodes tangible memories, this form of tourism encourages people to engage with and preserve a city's past. Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) argues that places, objects, or symbols act as repositories of collective memory (Nora, 1989). The cultural routes (such as those previously suggested for the development of tourism in Causeway Bay) transforms mere sightseeing paths into symbolic sites of memory where Hong Kong's history, traditions, and memories are preserved and reinterpreted. Preserving the city's memory is also a way of

paying tribute to its past, as it is a commemoration of its evolution from a fishing village into an industrial and commercial district.

Therefore, the in-depth tourism market should target not only overseas tourists but also local residents, as these routes become critical anchors for the construction of a sense of belonging. Promoting cultural routes as sites of collective memory encourages the internal consumption of heritage as local residents become a crucial segment of the market. Educational institutions can leverage these cultural itineraries as teaching and learning activities in their humanities subjects. Students will be able to develop a deeper understanding of local history and culture by observing buildings and other aspects of the physical environment. Furthermore, by volunteering as tour guides, senior students could become active interpreters of their own history. This entire process fosters a renewed and grounded sense of belonging in the modern era, where rapid modernization risks erasing precious memories.

Strategies for Rebranding

Roots-seeking Journey/Exploring Cultural Roots

Beyond the narrative of “East meets West”, there is another authentic part of Hong Kong’s identity that would benefit from attracting a specific, high-value market of travellers interested in history and culture. The government can develop a multi-dimensional narrative to present the city’s dynamic past. For example, Hong Kong was a transport centre and a sojourning place for overseas Chinese since the mid-nineteenth century. This is a story of migration, trade, family, and cultural exchange.

Another potential area for developing in-depth tourism in Hong Kong lies in its geographical, historical, and cultural connections with mainland China and the global Chinese diaspora. This potential aligns with a growing trend among global Chinese communities to

seek meaningful travel experiences rooted in personal and cultural heritage, for example, roots-seeking tours organized by clan associations (宗親會). The tourists are driven by a desire to (re) visit places to connect with their life or ethnic communities, and to re-experience a sense of belonging. This memory-driven travel has been called “roots tourism”, “homesick tourism”, “genealogy tourism”, “personal heritage tourism”, and “personal memory tourism” (Pfoser & Stach, 2025).

Located in the southern coast of mainland China, Hong Kong has long served as a transport hub between mainland China and Southeast Asia. After World War II, a significant number of Hakka people migrated from villages in the New Territories to overseas countries, particularly the United Kingdom. In recent years, second- and third-generation Hakka descendants, driven by a sense of cultural curiosity and emotional attachment to their ancestral homeland, have returned to Hong Kong to visit ancestral homes, clan halls, and genealogical archives. Some villages have made an effort to reconstruct familial memories and re-establish cultural connections. For example, in Yung Shue Au, known as one of the most remote settlements in the northeastern New Territories, overseas villagers have actively initiated revitalization projects. This resurgence of interest in ancestral heritage underscores the growing significance of “roots-seeking” as a driving force in the cultural reconstruction of New Territories villages. It presents a valuable opportunity for the government to develop innovative tourism products and expand the cultural tourism sector.

Yet, the concept of “roots-seeking journey” is not marketable in its raw and academic form as it is not immediately appealing as a tourism product in Hong Kong. The focus must shift from data visualization to interactive, personalized, and narrative-driven storytelling. For instance, a guided digital tour enables users to navigate to their ancestral village before their physical visit to Hong Kong. This method can initially foster an immediate and powerful

emotional attachment to the place. Furthermore, specific routes can be packaged and marketed towards international Chinese schools and universities as educational field trips, focusing on the history of migration and identity construction that validates their cultural heritage.

Transcending Geography: Digital Platforms

As the internet becomes increasingly influential and indispensable, Hong Kong should transform its image from a “city of consumption” to a leader in cultural technology by utilizing DH to enhance the pre-trip, on-site, and post-trip experiences. Through 3D reconstructions of heritage sites, 360-degree tours, and digitized art collections, virtual tourism could offer tourists an accessible preview before their physical visit. Digital platforms specifically tailored for in-depth tourism also enable the instant delivery of information in multiple languages. Tourists could be provided with varying levels of detail, from simple tour guide facts to comprehensive archival notes. More personalized and in-depth narratives would ensure that the cultural message is conveyed clearly and powerfully.

The post-visit stage, which is often neglected, is crucial for nurturing long-term loyalty and repeat visits. Personalized, annotated digital maps would be a tool to foster a stronger connection between travellers and destinations. By scanning the QR code installed at heritage sites, tourists can generate a personal digital map powered by GIS tools that showcase the specific route that they followed. They can enrich this map with a textual description of their own experiences, videos, and photographs to create a memorable, shareable story map for social media content. This would not only foster authentic engagement but also keep the destination top of mind after a visit.

Conclusion

An investment in in-depth tourism with the application DH infrastructure could elevate Hong Kong's cultural image while effectively presenting the city's cultural depth. By transforming rich yet often inaccessible cultural assets into scalable, high-value in-depth tourism products, the strategies outlined above can reposition Hong Kong, moving it beyond a superficial "East meets West" narrative to one that reveals its diverse cultures and complex history. In highlighting Hong Kong's distinctive historical and cultural character, its broader significance is reinforced.

Figure 15: Victoria Harbour Skyline Viewed from Hong Kong Island, Featuring the International Commerce Centre (ICC) and West Kowloon



Figure 16: The Chung Ying Street Checkpoint at the Border Between Sha Tau Kok, Hong Kong, and Shenzhen



Conclusion: In-depth Tourism as a Sustainable Tourism Model

As urban tourism continues to expand globally, cities like Hong Kong face increasing pressure to balance economic development with cultural sustainability. In this context, innovative approaches are needed to ensure that tourism contributes positively to heritage conservation and community well-being. While sustainability has become a core value for every sector of society, sustainable tourism has also emerged as a strategic priority for the global tourism sector.

As defined by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Tourism Organization (2005), sustainable tourism is about a holistic consideration of long-term economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts while balancing the needs of visitors, the tourism industry, local communities, and the environment. Crucially, it represents a conceptual shift: moving from simply minimizing negative impacts to actively preserving cultural heritage, ensuring socio-cultural authenticity, and delivering equitable economic benefits directly to the local stakeholders. Within this context, cultural heritage tourism, defined as “travel concerned with experiencing the visual and performing arts, heritage buildings, areas, landscapes, and special lifestyles, values, traditions and events” (Jamieson, 1998, p. 65), becomes an indispensable practice. In-depth tourism, which emphasizes immersion, connection, and understanding, facilitates the achievement of sustainability. By focusing on the singular cultural fabric of a location, it contributes to the conservation of local identity and heritage, and achieves the goal of sustainability.

Adopting sustainable tourism is a long-term strategic imperative for Hong Kong. It serves as a long-term strategy of development

since it stresses the maintenance of the original character of the destination. It allows an attraction, a community or a region to play host to visitors without impairing the local culture and environment. It also ensures that the host destination will be able to attract more return visitors (Marafa, 2004). It especially pertains to the emerging trend of experience-driven travel. Although Hong Kong has successfully generated high visitor numbers, immense strain has often been felt in certain districts and there has been a strong reliance on shopping. A new approach is needed to ensure that the industry remains resilient and that the city's character is maintained. An entertaining experience, with a combination of culture, history, and nature, which is a key demand of today's experience-driven travellers, could enrich the visitor experience by imparting it with a unique sense of locality (Marafa, 2004).

Our proposed Causeway Bay cultural routes, powered by DH, directly responds to this imperative. Economically, the model encourages visitors to stay longer to fully explore and enjoy an immersive tourism experience in the area. It also directs travellers' spending towards local and independent businesses. Culturally, it safeguards both tangible and intangible heritage by preserving the vital stories and craftsmanship of the area for future generations. From a social perspective, the model strengthens community pride and shapes a shared identity by creating a platform for residents to share their authentic culture with the visitors. Environmentally, the routes promote low-impact, pedestrian-focused exploration. By conserving and celebrating the district's distinctive characteristics, this initiative serves as a practical and replicable blueprint for developing a more sustainable tourism future for Hong Kong.

To achieve sustainable in-depth tourism, essential considerations involve not only enhancing economic profits, but also maintaining historical accuracy and combating over-commercialization to ensure that the development of tourism benefits rather than disrupts local communities. All of this is made

possible through cross-sector collaboration involving academic institutions, private enterprises, non-profit organizations, and the government. As Hong Kong continues to redefine its tourism identity, success will depend on balancing economic interests with the preservation of cultural heritage and the delivery of meaningful, authentic experiences.

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