



HONG KONG HIKING MEETUP

## FAQ

### Hong Kong Hiking Meetup

香港遠足覓合團

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**HONG KONG HIKING MEETUP**

## 1. OUR ETHOS

Welcome to Hong Kong Hiking Meetup. We are a community of individuals who love to hike and enjoy organizing hikes for our members in order to show them the wonders of Hong Kong they may not normally get to see. We do this for fitness, friendship as well as to raise collective effort to support various local charities to make our community a better place.

If you promise to:

Read our event descriptions carefully, agree with our disclaimer, comply with our suggestions of what to bring (and what not to bring), ensure that you are sufficiently qualified by examining requirements of a hike diligently and finally lend us your eyes and ears so you can see the signs and listen carefully to our leaders.

We promise to:

Show you interesting and stunning parts of Hong Kong that can be suitable for beginner as well as wondrous places for the very adventurous. We have a comprehensive code of conduct for our leaders to ensure we perform our activities safely, honestly, respectfully as well as courteously to deal with issues fairly and with utmost integrity.

We are always craving for feedback:

If we are doing well and you have enjoyed your experience and want to compliment us with your praise, feel free to let our hosts know verbally or if you wish, you can do so anonymously:

[HKHMeetup+praise@gmail.com](mailto:HKHMeetup+praise@gmail.com)

If we have somehow failed you and have not lived up to our promise and your expectations, we are human and we do err from time to time but we will correct our faults brought to our attention. Feel free to approach our hosts or if you wish to remain anonymous, you may contact our executive team:

[HKHMeetup+complaint@gmail.com](mailto:HKHMeetup+complaint@gmail.com)

You must read thoroughly and accept the disclaimer before joining us.

**Disclaimer:** Hong Kong Hiking Meetup is an amateur hiking group that welcomes all hikers. By joining the hikes, all participants are deemed to have agreed to the terms and conditions contained in this disclaimer, and agreed to exonerate the event hosts and any other participants in our event from any liabilities, claims, including but not limited to liabilities and claims as a result of any injuries or deaths or damages arising thereof. Members joining our events are at their own choosing and at their own risk.

**A gentle reminder:** Membership with us is not a right but a privilege. You are expected to follow our suggestions above to behave congenially and respectfully to all others at all times in our events.

## 2. HOW ARE HIKES RATED?

We rate our hikes from 1 to 5 to give hikers an idea of whether to join or not. If you join us for the first time, please go for hikes rated 2 or below before committing to higher rated ones. We would like you to get to know our group so that you can decide if it's for you. Lower rated hikes will give you more time to learn about our group by chatting to fellow hikers, which is much harder in the high-rated ones where hikers spread out and talking is harder.

Our **PADS** rating is described below:



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### **Pace**

1. family walk, wimp walk and beginners – 3 km/hr or slightly faster on flats
2. regular hiking at a comfortable pace with regular breaks – 4 km/hr on flats.
3. fast walking; not many breaks – 5 to 6 km/hr on flats
4. serious speedsters; expect to jog some of the time – 7 to 9 km/hr or on flats
5. serious trail runners; expect to run most of the time – 9+ km/hr on flats

### **Ascent:**

- Only flat walks should be rated 1.0

- 1.4 - 100m
- 1.6 - 150m
- 1.8 – 200m
- 2.0 – 250m
- 2.2 – 300m
- 2.4 – 350m
- 2.6 – 400m
- 2.8 – 450m
- 3.0 – 500m
- 3.2 – 550m
- 3.4 – 600m
- 3.6 – 650m
- 3.8 – 700m
- 4.0 – 750m
- 4.2 – 800m
- 4.4 – 850m
- 4.6 – 900m
- 4.8 – 950m
- 5.0 – 1,000m or above

### **Distance:**

- 1.0 – there is no hike with this distance rating
- 1.5 – 2.5km
- 1.6 – 3.0km
- 1.8 – 4.0km
- 2.0 – 5.0km
- 2.5 – 7.5km
- 2.6 – 8.0km
- 2.8 – 9.0km
- 3.0 – 10km
- 3.5 – 15km
- 4.0 – 20km
- 5.0 – 30km over above

### **Surface**

1. all on paved / concrete paths
2. well-defined trails but with significant rocky bits and unevenness
3. less well-defined trail; not maintained; substantial unevenness
4. trail is undefined; bushwhacking; loose or slippery surface; footing sometimes obscured by undergrowth
5. the trail is undefined; you will need to use your hands; bordering on rock climbing



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To determine the overall rating, the host will sum the score from each category, and then divide it by 4.

For example, if the Host assigns each rating above as follows:

**P** – 2; **A** – 2.6; **D** – 3; **S** – 2, the overall rating will be  $(2+2.6+3+2)/4=2.4$

Event hosts will usually round up rather than down if the overall rating runs into the second decimal place.

**Our hikes are also described by levels of difficulty according to their difficulty levels as follow:**

1.0 to 2.3 **Easy**

2.3 to 3.0 **Moderate**

3.0 to 3.6 **Hard**

3.6 to 4.3 **Very Hard**

4.3+ **Extremely Hard**

### 3. WHAT IS THE POLICY FOR LATECOMERS?

The group will not wait after the meeting time. You may phone the Host and try to catch up, but often this is impractical. Aim to arrive 5 to 10 minutes early to avoid disappointment.

### 4. HOW ARE NO-SHOWS (SIGN UP BUT DON'T SHOW UP) TREATED?

If you sign up for a hike, either show up or change your RSVP. We have no tolerance for people who sign up for hikes but don't show up. It's rude, inconsiderate, and difficult for hosts to manage. It also prevents others from joining hikes where there is a waitlist. Persistent "No-showers", usually at 2 or more no-shows within a 3-month period, will be removed from the group. If you sign up for an event but are prevented from attending at the last minute, you must inform your host (phone, email, text) or you will be accorded a no-show for the event.

If you are removed because of your no-show record, you can apply for reinstatement by paying an administrative fee of HKD200, which will become part of our Foundation Fund for charities.

### 5. WHAT LEVEL OF PHYSICAL FITNESS IS REQUIRED FOR OUR HIKES?

Hikes rated 1 to 2 hikes are usually for beginners. However, note that a "Beginners hike" is not carried out at "wandering around shopping centres" pace. Even low-rated hikes include ups and downs that could stop you from enjoying it if you are not fit. So what is the fitness required for scheduled hikes? We cannot answer this for you – you will need to come on a hike and calibrate the ratings with your own fitness. As a rule, don't register for hikes rated 3 or higher if you haven't done 2 or 2.5-rated ones with us before.

As the group becomes larger, we notice some hikers suffer fatigue more easily than others, particularly after ascending flights of stairs. Most our hikes are aiming for a view – which does not occur at ground level – and thus are purposely scheduled in places with long flight of steps! You will need to build up some stamina before entering to rated 3 or above hikes – otherwise you won't enjoy the hike and will be unable to complete it besides causing significant disruption for the rest of the hikers as the hike leader will need to to get you off the hills safely.

RESPECT your fellow hikers – KNOW your own level and CHOOSE your hikes accordingly.

## **6. WHAT HIKING GEAR SHOULD I BE EQUIPPED WITH?**

AT MINIMUM you must wear a pair of proper hiking or trekking shoes, not sneakers or trainers unless the hike is entirely on paved paths, i.e. Surface rating: 1.

### **6.1 SUMMER HIKING**

In summer it is hot and very humid. You will need clothing that breathes and keeps you cool. Different people have different views as to what this entails, but these days all sports shops make available hiking wear and apparel with fashionable designs to suit whatever you need. There are no universal guidelines. Usually whatever makes you comfortable will do.

Consider, however, the transport home. If you are wet with sweat or rain from a hike, sometimes the air-conditioning on buses and MTR can be very cold, so a lightweight jacket can be most useful.

### **6.2 WINTER HIKING**

In winter it is better to carry a number of light layers than one big jumper or down-style coat. This is because you will get warm while hiking and will want to add and remove layers to suit the temperatures, which get lower as you go higher up the hill. It is also a good idea to carry a good quality waterproof (ideally breathable) windbreaker in the colder hiking months as this can act as a wind-stopper as well as keep you dry if it rains.

Please ensure clothes are of quick drying and wicking material – NOT cotton and NOT JEANS. In winter, cotton can get wet very easily and when wet makes you cold, it can be dangerous even in the relatively mild Hong Kong winter. Hosts will often give advice as to what to wear or bring on a specific hike in their write-up. Please read the event write-up carefully to see if any specific items are mentioned.

### **6.3 WHAT ELSE SHOULD I BRING ON THE HIKE?**

Suggested gear and items to bring along may include: fully charged cell phone, trekking shoes, water, towel, walking stick, whistle, camera, headlight, pen knife, gloves, plasters, antiseptic cream, sun block, hat, umbrella, a few sandwiches, snacks and some fruit, and personal hygiene items etc.

It is very important to bring sufficient water for the duration of the hike. Read the instructions carefully and bring a little more than you think you need – running out of water on a summer hike can be very dangerous.

## **7. CAN I BRING FRIENDS ALONG?**

Although we welcome your friends or guests, we need your friends and guests (if they are over 18) to register as members and RSVP to an event separately so they will read the disclaimer and hike information like you. This manages our liability and ensures your friends are well prepared.

## **8. CAN I BRING MINORS ALONG?**

Yes, you can but the host's permission must be obtained first. Minors will be under your watch at all times and the event host will not take responsibility for their behaviour. These minors do not need to be members nor sign up to the event separately but must be accompanied by parents or guardians who will take sole responsibility and declare so by commenting in the particular event page. Hike hosts may also set a minimum age for children to join their hikes.



## **9. SHOULD I CALL THE HOST WITH ANY QUESTIONS?**

The first avenue for questions is to put a comment in the comments section of the event or send an email to the host. If there is no answer, or if it is too close to the start time, then of course, please call whoever organizes the hike for more information. The host will usually leave his or her number for contact purposes. Since we have a number of active hosts, please note the number of the host for your event to avoid calling the wrong one. However, before asking questions, make sure their answers cannot be found in the event description or your questions will not be answered. Search the Internet for travelling means to the meetup place yourself.

## **10. SHOULD I GO IF THE WEATHER TURNS BAD?**

The host will normally make an announcement about the status of the hike. Please check your email and/or look in the comments section of the event page. If you do not hear from him or her, the hike will still be on. As a rule, we will go if it is raining but not if there is a thunderstorm. But you need to make your own decision whether you want to go. It's YOUR choice. And prepare your gear accordingly.

## **11. WHEN CAN I RSVP BEFORE A SCHEDULED HIKE?**

You can RSVP generally from two weeks prior to the event day to 9:00 pm the night before for morning events, 9:00 am for afternoon hikes and 5:00 pm for night hikes on the day of the hike. Some hosts set an RSVP deadline that may be different from the above for their hikes. If you have RSVP'd 'Yes' and then changed your mind about coming, please change your RSVP to 'No' before this RSVP deadline.

## **12. CAN I SIGN UP FOR MORE THAN ONE HIKE ON THE SAME DAY STARTING AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME?**

No. Most of our hikes are popular and have a long waitlist. For hikers to pick and choose hikes happening on the same day at about the same starting time will not be fair to those on the waitlist. The Organizer will temporarily remove you as a member of the Group and will ask you to reregister. In this case, you will lose all events that have been RSVP-ed yes.

## **13. CAN I REDUCE EMAILS FROM THIS GROUP OR LEAVE THE GROUP ALTOGETHER?**

Yes, you can do it anytime by just going to the home page under:  
Home page>My profile>Email Setting or Leave this Group>Submit.  
Really it's that easy. No need to send emails asking how.

## **14. IS THIS HIKING MEETUP A PROFIT-MAKING ENTITY?**

No. It's only a voluntary hiking platform to bring hikers together. In fact, hosts donate their time to lead.



## 15. CAN I BE A HOST OF SCHEDULED EVENTS?

We are always keen to welcome new Event Hosts provided they are well qualified. The qualifications are set out below:

- any hiker who has hiked more than 30 times with the Group can be an AO without becoming an Event Host (EH) if recommended by the Organizer
- any hiker who has hiked with this Group 10 times or more can be an Event Host.
- any Event Host who has organized 10 outings can be an Assistant Host (AO), each organized outings is equivalent to 3 outings
- any Event Host who has organized a minimum of 5 outings can become an AO by joining enough outings to fulfil the equivalent 30 outings required
- If there are two or more hosts in an event, only the primary host will be accorded with having completed it as an EH.
- In addition, becoming an AO requires sponsorship of 3 members of the leadership team.
- Members wanting to become EH or AO must complete corresponding training without any objection by other members. When objected, the potential EH or AO will be informed and may qualify again when the issues opposing them are resolved.

## 16. WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO BE IN GROUP PICTURES AND VIDEO CLIPS?

This is an open platform. We take pictures and short videos as a way to promote hiking and fellowship. If, for whatever reason, you do not want to be included in the pictures and videos the best option is to choose hiking with private groups instead of large public group like this one. There are many things our hosts need to administer and they are not in a position to entertain requests such as selective pictures or video taking in the process. We hope you will understand.

## 17. SUMMARY: PREPARING FOR A HIKE

### BEFORE A HIKE

1. Jot down the host's phone number. Read the hike description thoroughly and follow suggestions regarding preparation, gear, food and water. Study, download and print relevant maps if so requested.
2. Heed the hike rating and do not sign up for hikes requiring fitness and skills far beyond yours. Some hosts 'research' profiles of hikers they do not know. If in their opinion you have signed up for a hike beyond your reach you may be persuaded to withdraw. If you cannot be contacted or do not reply, your host may change your RSVP for you. Please do not take such actions personally – they are for your own and the Group's good.
3. Before asking questions look for the answers yourself first through online search engines, particularly regarding the meeting point. There are many transport related websites that can assist with travel times to various locations – including:

MTR: [http://www.mtr.com.hk/eng/homepage/cust\\_index.html](http://www.mtr.com.hk/eng/homepage/cust_index.html)

Transport website: <http://hketransport.gov.hk/index.aspx?lang=en>

4. Plan your travel to the meeting point with some time to spare. Most hosts have no-show rules and are reluctant to make the majority wait for the minority of latecomers. Do not double-book. Unless an host browses the 'Yes' RSVPs of hikes on the same day, double-bookings may not be discovered and you may unwittingly become a no-show in one of the hikes you book.



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5. Regardless of the difficulty of a hike, you must have at least 6 hours of sound sleep the night before and a full breakfast the morning of the hike day. This is to prevent your becoming a weak sleep-walker half-way through the hike, causing danger to yourself, a burden to the event host(s) and others hiking with you.
6. Check the hike's webpage the night before or morning of the hike to see last minute changes re meetup time, place or cancellation, if any.
7. After arriving at the meetup point, **do not expect** the group to wait for you while you buy the water and food you need, which should have been packed with you before your leaving home.

### DURING A HIKE

8. Listen carefully to the host's pre-hike briefing regarding stops, turns, exits, etc.
9. Introduce yourself to and befriend others; this is the basic idea of meetups.
10. Unless a hike is clearly stated as self-guided and you can go at your own pace with a buddy, stay within the group. If for any reason you take an early exit let the host know or ask others to relay it to the host. If you find yourself alone on an unfamiliar trail, slow down or catch up with someone else, i.e. try not to hike alone. This is particularly important for night hikes or those under our blazing summer sun. If you are lost or have taken an unplanned turn to exit, let the host know as soon as you can by phone.
11. Do not litter or pick plants and flower.
12. Do not feed wild animals, particularly monkeys in the NT areas. This will make them very aggressive.
13. Be polite to others you meet on the trail. Let runners and fast hikers pass by slowing down to one side, usually the safe (uphill side) side.
14. If you want to pass slower hikers tell them you want to do so clearly; such as "Passing on your right, or left please." (Ng Goi Yau / Jaw [right / left] Bin Pa Tau) Usually the passer takes the less safe side (downhill) to pass.
15. When hiking through villages, keep your voices low to minimize disturbance to the residents. Do not taunt any barking dogs. This is particularly important at night.
16. If you like to listen to music while hiking, use earphones. Similarly, if you find hikers playing music out loud on a trail annoying, you may ask them politely to use earphones, turn the volume down or off. That usually works.
17. Let the host or someone know any discomfort you encounter during a hike or if you are concerned with the way it is going. Do not be a hero or suffer in silence. Communication can prevent misunderstanding and resentment to resolving problems.
18. Beware of heat exhaustion and heat stroke during summer hikes, doubly so for new arrivals who are not used to extreme heat and humidity in the tropics. If unchecked, they can be life-threatening / fatal.
19. Observe how an host handles a hike in case you want to become an host yourself.
20. If you see any activities or events, such as illegal feeding of animals, felling of trees, landslide, etc., that should be reported, take photos and call the government hotline 1823. Life-threatening or criminal events can be reported to 999.

### AFTER A HIKE

21. Comment honestly on your feelings, views and suggest improvements if you think there are any. Hosts welcome sincere feedback to make hikes better.
22. Review how the host handles a hike as a foundation for you to build on if you want to become an host.