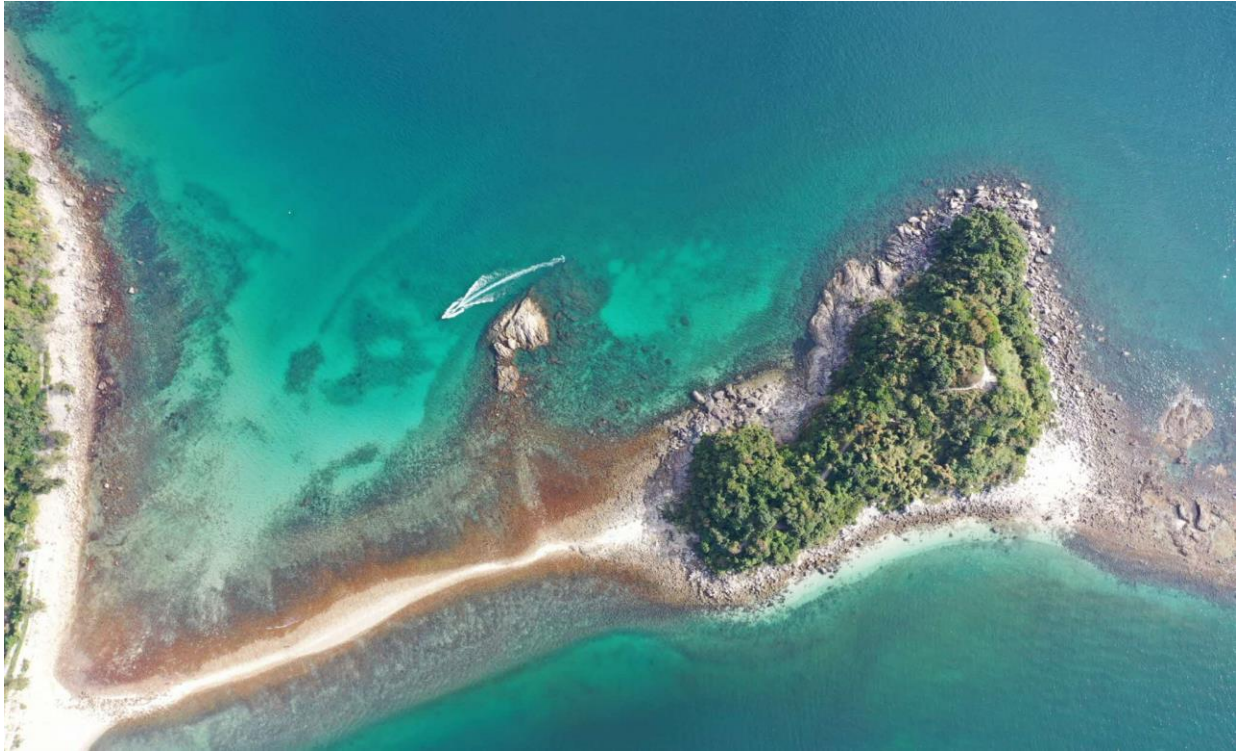


## A day in Sai Kung as we continue to explore and discover within



*Aero photo shoot over Sharp Island. Simply showed the beauty of Sai Kung. (Photo from Shutterstock)*

As the new wave of COVID-19 continues to hit Asia, many will remain to explore locally. Among the myriad of places in Hong Kong, Sai Kung offers the most possibilities to satisfy all, whether on land or at sea.

A well-shaded reservoir path of shorter distance may be a better option than mountain hiking for the hot summer days. Located in Sai Kung, High Island Reservoir fits the bill. Take a detour and you will hit the Sheung Yiu Country Trail. The highlight of the recent hotspot is a crescent-shape concrete embankment in Po Kwu Wan Bay, once used by villagers for fish farming. The long and narrow barrier was built in the center of the sea but has fallen into disrepair over the years. Extra care is recommended when walking on it.

Along the way is Hei Tze Wan, a deserted small pier excellent for photo taking. The route begins at Pak Tam Chung Nature Trail and takes only three hours to complete, making it suitable for an afternoon hike.



*During weekends, Pak Lap is full of beach lovers. (Photo by Mr. Miles)*

### **Over the Mountains and Ridges Just to Arrive at a Secret Beach**

There are many beautiful beaches along the branch route of High Island Reservoir. Pak Lap and Long Ke Wan are both hotspots for hikers. Accessible by public transportation, it only takes between thirty to forty minutes' walk after a taxi ride.

Pak Lap has always been touted as the 'Maldives' of Hong Kong. On top of its crystal-clear water and fine sandy beach, another selling point is the availability of bathroom rental and a convenient store. For hidden beach lovers, it takes a little mountain hike before one reaches the perfect spot with superior water quality and relatively few visitors. The only disadvantage is the absence of shower facilities. One has to get to the nearby campsite to wash up. Chek Keng is located in the second section of the MacLehose Trail. Along the way are picturesque mangroves and rocky beaches. When visiting with friends and families, bring along food, mats and a tent for a perfect picnic by the sea. The route is relatively easy to walk up to Wong Shek Pier where it becomes rocky but still suitable for families. A direct boat is available from Chek Keng to Wong Shek Pier on public holidays and the journey will be reduced by half.



*Yim Tin Tsai is a Hakka Village, but you will find the Catholic village chapel there. (Photo by Shutterstock)*

### Unique Surrounding Islands

There are many beautiful bays and uninhabited islands in Sai Kung. The easily accessible ones include Half Moon Bay (also known as Xiamen Bay) in Sharp Island, which takes 20 minutes by ferry from the pier in Sai Kung centre. The water quality of Half Moon Bay has consistently remained high and the bay comes complete with beach and leisure facilities. All you need is a swimsuit for a full day out. If heat is not an issue, you may hike over Black Hill and reach a tombolo known as Hong Kong's 'Moses Passage'. The 200-meter mid-sea trail will only appear during low tide. Be sure to check the timing before setting off.

Also accessible by ferry is Yim Tin Tsai, a former salt-making Hakka village. In 2000, local residents rebuilt the community and restored the salt fields by incorporating its unique nature, history and customs. Their effort was honoured with an Excellence Award at the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation in 2016. With advance appointment, visitors are able to check out the salt field in Yim Tin Tsai and participate in the sea salt production.



In recent years, Yim Tin Tsai has emulated the art festival Setouchi Triennale in Japan's Seto Inland Sea with its own art festival. This year's festival focuses on people and is a continuation of the theme of heaven and earth from the past two editions. With numerous new installations, the art festival is ongoing until July 16th.



*Canoeing is the best way to explore Sai Kung's nature. Green Egg Island has been a hot destination recently. (Photo by Shutterstock)*

To get closer to nature, an excellent option is to canoe to uninhabited islands. There are many itineraries for canoe trips in Sai Kung. The currently popular Green Egg Island and Clear Water Bay take only an hour of slow paddling to get to, with beautiful scenery along the way. Green Egg Island is a reef island with little plantation and no facilities. Visitors can enjoy a swim in the water after docking the canoe. For a half-day trip, it is highly advisable to bring along dry food and drinking water before departure.

For something more challenging, one can attempt Stand-up Paddleboarding (SUP)! The trick with SUP is to maintain balance while standing on a board and Hoi Ha Bay is the most ideal place for the sport. Hoi Ha Bay is a part of the Hong Kong Geopark. The water at the U-shape bay is calm and suitable for both beginners and experienced players.

Whether it is canoeing or SUP, risk is always there when engaging in water sports. Nowadays, travel agencies are introducing watersports itineraries, which may be a better option for a carefree excursion and group fun.



*Yan Chau Tong Area is well hidden. The crystal clear water, you can 'experience' even by eyes. (Photo by Mr. Miles)*

### **Enjoy the Coolness of Waters**

Snorkeling is the best choice for those who desire to be surrounded by water. Chek Chau north of Sai Kung and Wong Mau Chau, which is slightly further away, are excellent choices. Both located in the Yan Chau Tong area and well hidden, the water is free of pollution and offers crystal-clear vision. A variety of fish and corals can be found here, and the scenery is as good as some diving sites in Southeast Asia.

These well-hidden gems are accessible only by private boats that can be chartered. Tours offered by smaller travel agencies can also be found online. There is no shortage of boat charters to choose from, some of which include food and amenities such as large water floats and inflatable slides.

*This article was written by blogger, Mr. Miles. Mr. Miles enjoys traveling and has visited many countries to explore the hidden gems. He often shares stories on travels, the latest mileage and credit cards information with the readers via his blog.*

### Travel Through Food

Besides sun and sea, one can opt to soak in the exotic atmosphere at Sai Kung. From Mediterranean to Japanese, Thai style to expansive sea view, each restaurant in the area has its own unique characteristics and appeal. Spend a day enjoying the cool breeze, fine cuisine or browse through creative stalls at the weekend Sai Kung Waterfront Market, and pretend that you are vacationing in a foreign land for the time being!