

## Apps:

- WeChat
  - a. Used for train bookings, general payments, taking transport etc.
    - i. If you are using an international wallet on your WeChat, you can do payments at restaurants etc. However, paying RMBs to street vendors or another person is not always smooth.
- AliPay (not AliPayHK)
  - a. Similar to WeChat. More convenient when using public transport.
  - b. AliPayHK is currently supported in Shenzhen, Foshan, and Zhongshan. For other cities, use AliPay
- DiDi
  - a. Taxi hailing
- Meituan
  - a. Good to find the menus of food outlets
  - b. Food ordering (can also deliver to your train seat if ordered in advance)

## Maps and Navigation

- Baidu maps
  - a. Alternative to Google maps. Ofcourse one needs a translation app with it
  - b. Useful because
    - i. Some places are not present on Google maps
    - ii. Public transport options etc. also not very updated on Google maps
- Amap <https://www.amap.com/>
  - a. Additional information on maps, often a combination of amap and baidu works best for navigation.
  - b. Can also order taxi/didi from amap
- Apple Maps
  - a. For navigation etc, apple maps works without the use of GPS, and most common landmarks are available on apple maps.

## Translation app

- b. Google translate is good as long as one has a data package and a VPN-enabled SIM
  - c. Apple's default translation app works without vpn and is pretty good.
  - d. Bing translator also works without vpn.
  - e. Most of the apps are also available as mini-programs in WeChat. Some of them have a translation feature.
- Except for Baidu maps, perform real-name registration and connect a credit card with the apps while in HK
- If you have more than 1 credit card, it's better to connect more. It can happen that one credit card gets locked because of multiple transactions outside HK, and it will be difficult to get it restored from there

## SIM:

- HK-based SIMs might not work there
- One option is to buy a VPN-enabled data SIM. These provide internet access and are able to access blocked apps there. These cannot send-receive calls/SMS
- This shop has good options  
[【即插即用&中國移動網絡】中國內地澳門4G/3G無限上網卡3日 5日 8日 10日 15日 30日 365日\(多種套餐可供選擇\)](#)

Addresses are:

### Mongkok store

Room 01A, 14th Floor, President Commercial Building, 608 Nathan Road, Mongkok  
(Next to Sino Center at the junction of Nathan Road and Soy Street, Mong Kok (above the Bank of China))

Business hours: Monday to Sunday 12:00 - 21:00 (open as usual on holidays)

### Causeway Bay Store

Shop 601, 6/F, Electric City, 505 Hennessy Road, Causeway Bay  
(Causeway Bay MTR Exit B, upstairs of Bank of China)

Business hours: Monday to Sunday 12:00 - 21:00 (open as usual on holidays)

- One can also buy a SIM from the stalls in Apliu street in Sham Shui Po

## Train:

- Book both journeys at least 2 days in advance, especially when going at the time of public holidays
- If there isn't a direct train from HK, check for a train from Shenzhen Bei station. It might have more options. Can take a direct train from HK to Shenzhen Bei, and then switch to a train to the intended destination
- In HK, one needs to be at the station at least 1.5 hours before the departure time

## Hotel:

- Trip.com has hotels at reasonable rates
- One can also book via WeChat and AliPay, but one needs to understand Chinese or use a translation app
- Some hotels only accept people from Mainland China, so please ensure you don't book those
  - When booking through trip.com, one can see the hotel policies and it is usually mentioned there if they accept foreigners/ people with residence permit/ or only Chinese citizens.

## Chinese SIM:

- 2 hotels I visited required a Chinese phone number to give the WiFi password. One hotel generated a dummy password, the other did not
- Flying a drone weighing more than 250g also requires registration via a Chinese phone number

- For everything else, the HK data sim worked fine
- One can decide to buy or not buy one based on this information

### Masajid:

- Search 清真寺 on Baidu maps
- Masajid might have limited opening hours, so keep those in consideration
- Might be able to find Halal food shops around masajid

### Halal food:

- Search for the word 清真 on Baidu maps, it'll show a list of Halal food places
- Copy-paste the name of one of the places in Meituan to explore the menu
- As of Dec 2023 in Hangzhou, average prices were
  - BBQ lamb skewer 5-6¥
  - Naan 5-7¥
  - Egg-fried rice with beef 20¥ (enough for 2 people)
- One might be able to find international food places, but those might be more expensive
- Can also use Meituan to deliver food to own hotel instead of visiting

### Restaurants:

- When going to restaurants, generally one will find a QR code on the table
- Scan the QR code via WeChat or Alipay, and enter the number of guests
  - Multiple people can select 1 guest on the same table, and can easily order per person.
- A menu will appear from which one can choose what to order (translation app would be required to understand, or just use the food photos)
- After finalizing the menu, check out and pay via the app
- Food will be delivered to the table
- Ofcourse one can choose to avoid the QR code based method, and instead ask for a paper menu and pay via cash, but that could take longer, especially when the staff are overworked during rush hours

### Public transport:

- One requires a local QR code for public transport, which is different from AliPayHK in HK
- In AliPay, switch the location to the city, go to transport, and activate the pass for the MTR and buses
- Scan the QR code when entering and exiting the MTR stations/buses, and it will deduct the fare
- In most cities, the metro has a transport card that can be recharged and used for travel.
  - In Guangzhou city, the metro card can be recharged from kiosks at the metro stations with mainland wallets, or at 7-11 with cash.