

A photograph of a dense urban skyline in Shenzhen, China. The image is taken from a low angle, looking down a wide, multi-lane highway filled with cars and buses. In the background, numerous skyscrapers rise against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The most prominent building on the left is a tall, blue-glass skyscraper with two spires. Other buildings of varying heights and architectural styles fill the rest of the skyline.

SHENZHEN

SHENZHENPARTY.COM

THE BOOK

BY KAREN & TED RULE

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SHENZHEN: THE BOOK

By Ted & Karen Rule

SAMPLER

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book is based on the research of the author's and longtime Shenzhen residents Karen and Ted Rule. Compiling the information in this guide involved a significant amount of legwork and years of exploration throughout Shenzhen by these two Sinophiles with a passion for Shenzhen.

The guidebook will be updated on a regular basis as the city continues to transform at breakneck speeds, ensuring that it remains at the cutting edge of the Chinese imagination of a modern metropolis.

Ever since Shenzhen became China's first Special Economic Zone (SEZ), the city has grown at an unfathomable pace that makes even those who were born here dizzy.

For the most up-to-date information and latest events taking place in Shenzhen, to find housing and jobs, or to get questions answered on an active forum, there is no better place for English speakers to unravel the mysteries and opportunities Shenzhen has to offer than www.ShenzhenParty.com.

To really keep on top of the action, scan this QR code to follow Shenzhen Party on WeChat.



Throughout the book, where appropriate, you will encounter links that will bring you to the freshest information—updated regularly—on the ShenzhenParty website.

Please e-mail info@shenzhenparty.com to help correct any mistakes, inaccuracies or changes that would benefit readers in future updates.

On the whole, with the Shenzhen Guide as your companion and resource to this fascinating city, you'll quickly get to the heart of a place that remains elusive to travellers and expats who haven't had the fortune to grok Ted and Karen Rule's hard won Shenzhen wisdom.

[ShenzhenParty.com](#) ¹

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Over the next few weeks, keep an eye on you're e-mail, we'll be sending you some extra portions of *The Book* that we weren't able to include in this download.

Also note, many of the hotlinks that are active in the Kindle version of this guide are not functional in this sample.

Enjoy reading,

The Shenzhen Party Team

¹ Be an *insider*, get the latest Shenzhen tips delivered to your inbox, sign up [here](#).

FOREWORD

Man zou? Yes? Everybody knows that the Chinese for “goodbye” is “zai jian”.

Not in Shenzhen. When you’re taking your leave you’ll universally be sent on your way with a “man zou”.

“Man”, meaning “Slow”, take it slow; take it easy. We like that.

And “man” isn’t restricted to your departure. You’ll be exhorted to “man yong” (use easy) when you’re eating. Bon appetit! “Man he”, drink easy. Bottoms up! All of life’s pleasures are to be taken at your ease.

Of course nobody means this. The frantic pace of Shenzhen life continues as it has for 35 years: buying, selling, packing and despatching.

We first came to this wonderful place 40 years ago when there was nothing here. Since then, hardly a day has passed without us gasping in astonishment at some new and thrilling phenomenon. Allow this book to bring you to some of your own astonishing moments. Sit back, take it easy, and enjoy.

Man zou....

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INTRODUCTION

Discover Shenzhen before everyone else does. Few foreigners visit this mega-city. Chinese visit it by the millions each year. Chinese regard Shenzhen as one of the four *major* Chinese cities, together with Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

Shenzhen is unique. In our globalized times, with much of the world shrinking and becoming homogeneous, Shenzhen is different from any other place you will ever visit. A city of 14 million people and a place where the average age is 27, Shenzhen attracts people from all over China who come, like Dick Whittington to London, seeking streets paved with gold. Combined with neighbouring Hong Kong, the population of this mega-city exceeds 21 million people ².

Skyscrapers dominate the cityscape with futuristic buildings and some stunning architecture. With tropical parks and gardens and some beautiful mountains and countryside, Shenzhen is also a very green city. There are also beaches not far from the city centre and holiday resort areas such as Silver Lake (Yin Hu: 银湖). The golfing attractions are famous, built on a scale that only a country as large as China could envisage. Shenzhen has ancient history, too. In recent years the government has restored many historical sites, although there is still much to be done.

Shenzhen has something to offer everyone: interesting art, architecture and cultural exhibitions; countryside walks and botanical gardens; state-of-the-art electronics; tailoring and shopping for local artefacts; family theme parks and miles of 'eat streets' with cuisine from all over China. The bustling city centre with impressive new buildings, historical sites, beautiful city gardens, scenic places for hiking and eco-tours and cultural attractions all provide opportunities for a unique travel experience. Perhaps more than anything, a visit to Shenzhen gives you a chance to witness China's amazing transformation.

Welcome to Futureland, with Chinese characteristics.

² Depending on the source, the population of Shenzhen and its demographic attributes are shifty. This is due to the hukou system and the migrant labor that serves the thousands of factories in the area. In any case, Shenzhen is constantly growing and the population is increasing. At the time of publication the stated numbers are the latest best estimates from both Chinese Government Census and International Organizations.

CHINESE SAYINGS ABOUT SHENZHEN

“You think you’re brave until you go to Manchuria, you think you’re well-read until you reach Beijing and you think you’re rich until you set foot in Shenzhen.”

“If you love him, send him to Shenzhen. Heaven’s there. If you hate him, send him to Shenzhen. Hell’s there.”

“When a leaf falls off a tree, it passes three politicians in Beijing, three doctors in Shanghai and three general managers in Shenzhen.”

“In Beijing, you can smell the politics. In Shenzhen, you can smell the money.”

TOP PLACES TO SEE IN SHENZHEN

TOP CITY VIEWS

[Meridian View Centre](#) (Di Wang Da Sha: 地王大厦顶层) The Meridian View Centre is on the top floor of the Diwang, one of the highest buildings in Shenzhen. Located at Da Ju Yuan Metro station, it offers a panoramic view of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border.



[SEG Plaza](#) (Sai Ge Guang Chang: 赛格广场), at bustling Huaqiang Bei, is also a great place to see all of Shenzhen laid out before your eyes from the top floor of the 72-story building.

Shennan Avenue (Shennan Da Dao: 深南大道) A drive along Shenzhen's main boulevard gives a view of state-of-the-art buildings like the Civic Centre and many of Shenzhen's famous buildings. In the evening, the city lights along Shennan Avenue are so dazzling that the bus company puts on a special night tourist bus.

[St. Regis Hotel Bars and Lounges](#) (Rui Ji Jiu Dian: 瑞吉酒店) The St. Regis Hotel occupies the top floors of the one hundred storey KK 100 building. There's a lounge on the 96th floor and bars above. The views are unbelievable.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS: HIKING, MOUNTAINS AND SCENIC PLACES

Shenzhen's mountains were bare thirty years ago, but now they have been successfully revegetated. Hiking through lush tropical forests and sparkling mountain streams is a must.

Make sure you don't miss:

[Wutong Mountain](#) (Wu Tong Shan: 梧桐山) – climb to the peak and take in stunning views of the city right through to Hong Kong.

[Yangtai Mountain](#) – climb this famous mountain in Bao'an and take in views right back to Dongguan in the north.

Guangdong Greenway (Zhu Jiang San Jiao Zhou Lv Dao Wang: 珠江三角洲绿道网) – This scenic walk winds its way through Shenzhen's mountains and forests. We recommend the **Meilin Reservoir** walk, an approximately two hour walk through scenic forest along the former boundary fence of the SEZ.

[Lianhua Mountain Gardens](#) (Lian Hua Shan Gong Yuan: 莲花山公园) – on a Sunday morning watch the kite fliers, the ballroom dancers, the revolutionary opera singers. Walk to the top of the mountain for a view over Shenzhen and shake hands with Deng Xiaoping's statue.

[Xian Hu Botanical Garden](#) (Xian Hu Zhi Wu Yuan: 仙湖植物园) – Watch worshippers in one of China's newest but most famous Buddhist Temples in the folds of Wutong Mountain. Sip tea by a lake amid groves of bamboo. Walk through a forest of petrified trees.

[Mangrove Walk](#) (Hong Shu Lin: 红树林 [Shenzhen Mangrove Nature Reserve]) – Walk while taking in seemingly endless views of Shenzhen Bay and Hong Kong's mountains backed by a lush tropical park. You could also hire a bike.

CUISINE: AUTHENTIC FOOD FROM ALL OVER CHINA AND ALL OVER THE WORLD

From night stalls and eat streets to modern open-kitchen fusion or luxury dining, Shenzhen is a leading food city. The diversity of a migrant population provides an abundance of different culinary traditions – authentic cuisine from all over China: Hunan, Henan, Hubei, Sichuan, Shanghai and Beijing. Westerners have brought Italian, Brazilian and French dining. You'll often find you can eat out for less than your grocery bill for a meal at home.

- Eat snake and game at **Bagua First Road Eat Street (Ba Gua Yi Lu Mei Shi Jie: 八卦一路美食街)**.

- Choose your own live seafood at **Yantian Bay** and [Daya Bay](#).
- Sample Cantonese dim sum beside a peaceful lake at **Portofino**.
- Enjoy the passing sights in **Shekou's** main square as you partake of Brazilian barbecue.

HISTORICAL SITES

It's a new city but it also has a past, often related to the great Chinese migrations of the thirteenth century. See:

Chiwan Scenic Spot (Chi Wan: 赤湾), the tomb of the last Emperor of the Southern Song Dynasty: see also China's greatest [Tin Hau Temple \(Tian Hou Gong: 天后宫\)](#). The great eunuch admiral Zheng He who sailed the Indian Ocean in the fifteenth century inspired its construction.

[Xin'an \(Nantou\) Ancient City \(Nan Tou Xin'an Gu Cheng: 南头新安古城\)](#), site of a city since the fourth century and the military command centre at the mouth of the Pearl River. See a silver shop (the predecessors of banks), ancient temples, an opium den and even a brothel. Watch Cantonese street life going on as it has for a thousand years.

[Dapeng Fort \(Da Peng Suo Cheng: 大鹏所城\)](#), one of the best preserved Ming Dynasty forts in China and a base for naval operations during the Opium War.

Hehu New Residence (He Hu Xin Ju: 鹤湖新居), China's biggest Hakka fortified village.

[Shenzhen Museum \(Shen Zhen Bo Wu Guan: 深圳博物馆\)](#) – Not to be missed, the top floor covers the history of Reform and Opening and the middle floor is a historical museum of the district. Free admission. Closed on Mondays.

BEACHES

Chinese magazines describe the [Dapeng Peninsula \(Da Peng Ban Dao: 大鹏半岛\)](#) as one of China's most beautiful coastlines.

- Swim at [Dameisha's \(Da Mei Sha: 大梅沙\)](#) golden sands.
- Surf in season at [Xichong \(Xi Chong: 西冲\)](#).
- Eat fresh seafood at the seafood streets in [Nan'ao \(Nan Ao: 南澳\)](#) and Daya Bay (**Da Ya Wan: 大亚湾**)
- Experience finest dining at the [Sheraton Dameisha \(Da Mei Sha Jing Ji Xi Lai Deng: 大梅沙京基喜来登\)](#) looking over the ocean to the peaks of Hong Kong.

ART AND CULTURE

Shenzhen is one of the leading centres of China's art and culture³.

³ Be an *insider*, get the latest Shenzhen tips delivered to your inbox, sign up [here](#).

- Wander through the lanes of the unique [Dafen Oil Painting Village](#) (**Da Fen Cun: 大芬村**). Have a family photograph painted in oils by an artist.
- See the most avant of China's art avant garde at [He Xiangning Mei Shu Guan: 何香凝美术馆](#) and [OCT Art and Design Gallery](#) (**Hua Mei Shu Guan: 华美术馆**).
- Sip coffee among the boho set in the cobbled streets of the [OCT Loft](#) area (**Hua Qiao Cheng Chuang Yi Yuan: 华侨城创意园**).
- Take in a concert by an international orchestra at Arata Isozaki's glass wrapped [Shenzhen Concert Hall](#) (**Shenzhen Yin Yue Ting: 深圳音乐厅**)

SHOPPING

Retail in detail.

- Pick up designer bags at chain store prices at **Luohu Commercial Centre (Luo Hu Shang Ye Cheng: 罗湖商业城)**; get a suit custom-made by a Shanghai tailor. DVD? Golf gear? Massage?
- Buy Ming and Qing style furniture to your order at [Yizhan Zhongxin](#) (**艺展中心**). Hand painted tissue boxes? Life-like artificial flowers? Crystal glasses? Cocktail shakers? This is where their manufacturers go for direct sales.
- Browse for antiques at **the Curio Market (Gu Wan Cheng: 古玩城)**, where you can bargain for prices that are far better than Beijing or Shanghai.
- Have fun choosing paintings and artifacts at **Dafen (大芬)**. Have your pictures framed for nearly free.
- Have curtains and sofas made in "Curtain Street" – **Nanyuan Road (Nan Yuan Lu: 南园路)**.
- Buy legal DVDs at [Book City](#) (**Shu Cheng: 书城**). Buy cheap CDs of internationally known artists.
- Buy electronics close to their place of manufacture at the electronics markets at [Huaqiang Bei Lu](#) (**华强北**).

BRILLIANT ARCHITECTURE

Some of the world's great architects work in Shenzhen.

See:

- [Shenzhen Civic Centre](#) (**Shi Min Zhong Xin: 市民中心**), half a mile of glass podium covered by a great wing of a roof supported by silos in bright primary colours

- **The City Library and Concert Hall (Shenzhen Tu Shu Guan, Yin Yue Ting: 深圳图书馆, 音乐厅)**, one wall solid black granite, the other wall covered in great folds of glass
- **[Poly Theatre](#) (Bao Li Ju Yuan: 保利剧院)**, a large silver egg
- **[Diwang Building](#) (Di Wang Da Sha: 地王大厦)**, one of the world's three tallest buildings when it was built. Not just tall - slim, elegant and stylish with great views on a fine day
- **Shenzhen Press Building** (Shenzhen Special Zone Press Tower) with its Daily Planet globe
- **Shenzhen Media Group's (Shenzhen Guang Bo Dian Ying Dian Shi Ji Tuan: 深圳广播电视集团)** 40 storey ellipse
- **[Shenzhen Airport Terminal](#) (Shenzhen Ji Chang: 深圳机场)** building, a dazzling white curve
- **[Shenzhen Bay Sports Stadium](#) (Shenzhen Wan Ti Yu Zhong Xin: 深圳湾体育中心)** known as the "Cocoon"

CHINA'S "REFORM AND OPENING"

China's *Reform and Opening* is one of the great economic success stories of history and it all started in Shenzhen.

Don't miss:

- **Deng Xiaoping (邓小平)** billboard at Lychee Park and his statue on top of Lianhua Mountain. These commemorate the genius and driving force behind China's great transformation.
- **Shenzhen Stock Exchange Buildings (Shenzhen Zheng Quan Jiao Yi Suo: 深圳证券交易所)**— Shenzhen Stock Exchange is one of China's first. Its former home is a distinctive building with a statue of a bronze bull, which is one of the not-to-miss sights of the city.
- The first real shareholding company in China, the **Shenzhen Development Bank (Shenzhen Fa Zhan Yin Hang: 深圳发展银行)** is housed in a brilliant modern building next to the former Stock Exchange.
- The newer Stock Exchange Building is a stark building by architect Rem Koolhaas in the Futian CBD.
- The electronics industry is one of the drivers of the economy. The **[Shenzhen Hi-tech Zone](#) (Shenzhen Gao Xin Qu: 深圳高新区)** at Nanshan houses many of the world's leading electronics companies.
- Huawei, the world's second largest telecoms equipment company is housed in a green campus in Bantian.
- **Huaqiang Bei (华强北)** has a unique wholesale electronics market plus floor after floor of retail electronics.

[Click here to download complete book on Amazon.com](#)

- The **Shenzhen Talent Market (Shenzhen Ren Cai Shi Chang: 深圳人才市场)** in Bao'an Bei Lu was China's first labour market.

[Click here to download complete book on Amazon.com](#)

Hong Kong to Shenzhen

A cold January morning, 1975.

We are rugged up against the Siberian wind under the pillars of the old Kowloon Railway station at the Hong Kong Star Ferry. A China Travel Service guide is busy tagging our luggage. There is no independent travel to China in the 1970s. A China Travel guide must accompany everybody and China Travel is a branch of the Ministry of Public Security.

We are *en route* to Beijing. There are no direct flights between Hong Kong and any city in China. If you want to fly to Beijing you have to do it via Tokyo, Rangoon or Karachi. Sensible people take a train to Lowu (Luohu) on the border, cross the border and take a further train to Canton. From there they can either fly – there is one flight per day – or catch a further train to Beijing.

China travel herds its charges to the border at Lowu once per day. There are never many of them. Along with us there are two mysterious Chinese officials in Mao suits and the young wife of a British diplomat.

We walk along the platform of the Edwardian building. The smell of diesel and the throbbing of engines. The Kowloon-Canton Railway is still unelectrified. We board the train. The carriage is deep green steel from another era. We are in first class and a white-coated attendant waits to take our order for an early morning heart starter. Perhaps a gin and tonic?

We set out. Once through the Lion Rock Tunnel we are in a land of paddy fields, conical straw hats and water buffalo. We stop at numerous whistle stops; only Taipo is big enough to class as a large town. The Chinese officials remain deeply engrossed in mysterious conversation. A young wife bemoans her fate rotting away in Beijing. We are bemused. The China Travel guide smiles condescendingly.

We arrive at Sheung Shui, the last station before the border and the beginning of the border controlled zone. The train empties as if by magic. Beside the station, stinking cattle hides are hung-up to dry. The river is stained blue.

We pull into Lowu station and disembark.

At the end of the platform, sitting at a table, there is an official in a navy blue Hong Kong Immigration uniform. He does not appear overworked. Rarely more than four or five people per day cross the border. He stamps our passports.

We walk onto the famous bridge, cautiously because there is no real floor, just railway sleepers. In the middle of the bridge is a soldier dressed in the baggy green uniform of the People's Liberation Army. He is carrying an AK-47 with a fixed bayonet and he looks like he will brook no

argument. We walk to another small table with another uniformed official, this time once again in the baggy green of the PLA. He is quick to stamp our passports – we subsequently discover that, while we were sitting, our photo had secretly been taken.

We look around the border area. A grey concrete railway station lined with mature banyan trees, to the right, a four storey grey concrete military barracks. Otherwise, we glimpse nothing but paddy fields.

We are taken to a waiting room. The daily train to Guangzhou leaves at 1.30 so we are given lunch. Miraculously the Chinese officials disappear. We are seated. The laments of the young British diplomat's wife continue to our amusement. We later discover that this is not accidental. Lunch groups are arranged strictly according to a strange Chinese political protocol whereby we are considered appropriate company for the British. But woe betides us if we stray or attempt to eat at the tables set aside for Moslems, Africans, or, indeed—Chinese. Those way serious accusations of deviationism lie.

Lunch finishes.

We are herded into what we later discover is the waiting room for first and second world non-Moslems.

Silence reigns everywhere.

It has been decreed to be afternoon, thus *xiuxi*, or naptime. Everybody is suffering from minor malnutrition; so, nobody has much stamina for anything but sleep. And so they sleep, in corridors, on benches on the station, at their desks.

Long rolling snores fill the air.

Finally, we are called to board the train and continue our journey to Canton.

The 90-mile journey, by the time we arrive in Canton, will have taken eight hours.

THE SHENZHEN STORY

HISTORICAL SKETCH

EARLY HISTORY

The history of Shenzhen is the history of a county, or prefecture, bounded in the north by the East River and stretching to the Hong Kong islands in the south. It has been known variously as Dongguan, Bao'an and Xin'an. Its administrative headquarters have moved between Dongguan, north of modern Shenzhen, and Nantou in the east of the modern city. Shenzhen village only became the administrative centre of the area in 1953 when the closure of the Hong Kong border made the railway an area of strategic importance.

The area comes into Chinese history in about the third century BC when the first Emperor of unified China, Qin Shi Huangdi, conquered the "barbarian" Nan Yue kingdom based around Guangzhou. From the evidence available to us, the Nan Yue people seem to have been Thais. Qin ensured the area's ethnic future by exiling half a million Chinese to the Pearl River.

Human habitation in the Shenzhen area is much older than this. The earliest archaeological remains so far unearthed are 7000-year-old shards from a site at Xiantouling on Mirs Bay. This was described as one of China's six greatest archaeological discoveries of 2006.

From the Han Dynasty (third century BC) onwards, the area around Shenzhen was a centre of the salt monopoly, thus meriting special Imperial protection. Salt pans are still visible around the Pearl River area to the west of the city and are commemorated in the name of the Yantian container terminal (Yantian meaning "salt fields").

The settlement at Nantou was the political centre of the area from early antiquity. In the year 331 AD, six counties covering most of modern south-eastern Guangdong were merged into one province or "jun" named Dongguan Jun with its centre at Nantou. As well as being a centre of the politically and fiscally critical salt trade, the area had strategic importance as a stopping off point for international trade. The main shipping route to India, Arabia and the Byzantine Empire started at Guangzhou. As early as the eighth century, chronicles record the Nantou area as being a major commercial centre, and reported that all foreign ships in the Canton trade would stop there. It was also as a naval defence centre guarding the southern approaches to the Pearl River.

FAMOUS HISTORICAL EVENTS

Shenzhen merits a specific mention in relation to three major historical incidents. They are the events surrounding the end of the Southern Song Dynasty (thirteenth century), the depopulation of the area after pirate incursions in the Ming and early Qing Dynasties (seventeenth century), and the Opium War (nineteenth century)

EATING IN SHENZHEN

ORDERING A CHINESE MEAL

	
梅菜扣肉煲 28元 Mei Cai Kou Rou pot	香芋南瓜煲 23元 Taro pumpkin pot
	铁板什菌 30元 Iron bacteria even
咸骨大芥菜煲 30元 Ham Bone big mustard pot	铁板金钱扣 38元 Iron buckle money
	铁板豉椒竹肠 38元 Intestinal Iron Bamboo Black Bean Sauce
金针菇玉子豆腐煲 28元 Mushroom egg tofu pot	铁板猪杂 30元 Pig iron complex
	铁板锡烧茄子 26元 Iron tin eggplant
铁板杏包菇 30元 Iron mushroom apricot package	鲜淮山咸骨煲 32元 Ham bone pot of fresh yam
	鱼香茄子煲 26元 Fry eggplant
	干捞海皇粉丝煲 28元 Neptune Orient fans to burn dry fishing
	海皇豆腐煲 26元 Clay Pot Tofu pot Hoi Wong

Many people find ordering a Chinese meal something of an ordeal. Menus are enormous and names are often unfamiliar. This is compounded in Shenzhen by the fact that menus are usually only in Chinese. But this should not put you off. Most menus have pictures of the main dishes and, by following a few simple rules, you can quickly become an expert orderer.



Rule 1: Chinese meals are eaten in common. You order a number of dishes that are placed together in the middle of the table. Don't expect to order a dish to be exclusively eaten by you. The waiter will not understand what you're talking about. This usually means that one person will do all the ordering although obviously in a casual meal everybody will have a view on what should be ordered.



In a formal meal, the courses will often be brought one by one, but this does not apply in a casual meal where the dishes will appear in no particular order. Thus the concept of entrees, main courses, etc., does not exist in traditional Chinese eating.

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Rule 2: A simple rule of thumb is one dish for each person plus a soup and a bowl of rice per head...

Want More?

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We love Shenzhen. We live here, the most exciting place on earth.

Ultimately, Shenzhen has caught you in its spell in one way or another. Let us help you get into it more. We're here to provide you guidance and community to bring your relationship and understanding of this place to the next level, no matter if you've never been here or are a long time expat or local.

Explore and enjoy!

~The Shenzhen Party Team

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