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TRAVEL
ON A SHOESTRING

New hostels help you explore mainland China

LUCY DION

For the curious traveler

For budget travelers who want to explore mainland China via Hong Kong, there are three new youth hostels recently opened in the neighboring province of Guangdong.

Guangzhou, with its 10 million inhabitants, is the gateway for trade and tourism for southern China. It's considered the richest mainland province. Hostelling International has announced three new affiliate locations, which have been opened under the hotel management division of the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Bureau.

Each will provide dormitory accommodation for budget travelers for up to 12 per night, including breakfast, dinner and laundry.

Guangzhou's capital city, Guangzhou (formerly known as Canton) has over four million inhabitants. It can be reached from Hong Kong by jet-powered container, train or bus in less than four hours. The so-called Guangzhou City Youth Hostel is located at 777 Huashan Xi Road, tel. (86) 866-6864, fax (86) 866-9977, opposite the main railway station. The hostel has air-conditioning, en-suite facilities, and 24-hour access.

You can travel to Zhuhai from Hong Kong by jet-powered container in about 70 minutes. The 200-bed Zhuhai Hostel is inside the Zhuhai Holiday Resort, which is located in the city center, a 10-minute walk from the jet which has ferry service to Hong Kong.

The hotel guests, staying in the former holiday villas, are entitled to use the several recreational facilities, which include bowling, tennis, a swimming pool etc. There is a direct bus service between the airport and the Meixian Container Office.

The Mt. Dinghai International Hostel, tel. 791-6066, fax 791-6066, is located at Zhongshan, 300 km from

Guangzhou. Situated in a nature reserve that has been recognized by UNESCO, the hostel can accommodate up to 200 people. Hostel guests will have their entry fee to the reserve refunded.

Future plans call for a youth information service with a link to the Hostelling International (HI) reservation system, to open in Shanghai, a city and historic section of Guangdong.

Hostelling International also hopes that the three youth hostels in Guangdong, which will serve domestic and international travelers, will set an example for other provinces in China for developing international youth hostels in their own regions.

Details on these hostels will be published in the next edition of the Hostelling International Handbook for Africa, America, Asia and the Pacific. When you are traveling in the region you can check with the affiliated Hong Kong Youth Hostel Association, Room 20, Block 10, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon, Hong Kong, tel. (86) 231 1111, fax (86) 231 1111.

The Canadian Government recently passed a Travel Indemnity insurance plan to protect travelers from financial loss in the event of a disaster. The plan is designed to help travelers in the event of a disaster, such as a natural disaster, which has caused them to be stranded in a foreign country.

Travelers in this situation should call Disaster Relief Canada at 1-800-387-2222 for more information. The plan is designed to help travelers in the event of a disaster, such as a natural disaster, which has caused them to be stranded in a foreign country.

The guidebook series Rough Guides has announced the launch of The Rough Guide to Travel Online at www.roughguides.com.

In addition to providing and selling their books, the site features information on more than 4,000 world destinations, trip planning advice, details on accommodation, nightlife and sightseeing opportunities, and a knowledge travel magazine called Rough Talks.

The site also includes a section called RoughJournal where it's possible to post questions about specific destinations and get answers from other travelers. Photocopying your travel plans is also possible.

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