# Hong Kong’s islands, biggest to smallest

## 香港214個島嶼，由大到小

All 214 islands, ranked by area and plotted as their own shapes. From Lantau down to the smallest rocks they fall along an almost straight line on these axes: the signature of a power law, where a few giants hold most of the land and a long tail of tiny islands holds very little.

How to read the axes: both are logarithmic, so each gridline step is ten times the last, and a power law draws a straight line.

**Area** 面積

100 km²

10 km²

1 km²

0.1 km²

10,000 m²

1,000 m²

**Lantau Island** 大嶼山
#1 · 149.3 km²

**Hong Kong Island** 香港島
#2 · 78.6 km²

**Two giants, then a cliff**
Lantau and Hong Kong Island hold 71% of the land of all 214. Hong Kong Island is 3.7× the next island and 5.6× Lamma, the next natural one.

**Lamma Island** 南丫島
#4 · 13.9 km²

**Tsing Yi** 青衣
#5 · 10.7 km²

**Kau Sai Chau** 滘西洲
#6 · 6.4 km²

**Chek Lap Kok** 赤鱲角
#3 · 21.1 km²

**Po Toi** 蒲台島
#7 · 3.7 km²

**A shelf**
13 islands between 1 and 2.5 km², ranks 8–20, from Cheung Chau to Sharp Island: the curve flattens before it falls again.

**Made, not found**
Chek Lap Kok was a 3.0 km² hill island until the airport works of 1992–96 levelled it and swallowed Lam Chau. Left as nature made it, it would rank 7th. Built out to 21.1 km², it sits within 1% of the line through the top 36: exactly the size a natural #3 “should” be.

**Colour = kind** 類別
- island 174
- tidal island 18
- rock 10
- rock cluster 9
- man-made island 3

**Not to one scale** 非同一比例
Each shape is the island’s true outline, north up. True scale is impossible here: if Lantau were drawn this size the smallest rock would be 0.1 mm across. So width grows with the fourth root of area: 10,000× the area is drawn 10× wider. The strip at the bottom shows them truly to scale.

**The bend**
Two straight lines fit better than one, meeting between ranks 36 and 37 (about 0.4 km²). Above the bend each doubling of rank leaves 33% of the area (exponent −1.61); below it, only 12% (−3.02).

**I·PARK1** 綜合廢物管理設施第1期
#45 · 143,438 m²

**Blue Dolphin Island** 藍海豚島
#44 · 144,060 m²

**Rocks take over**
The 116 biggest include no rocks at all. The first rock cluster is #117, the first single rock #156; from there on 16 of the last 59 are rocks, and the curve is at its steepest.

**Unnamed 55**
#214 · 1,011 m² · the smallest; the list stops at 1,000 m²

1 2 3 5 10 20 30 50 100 200 **214**

**Size rank** 大小排名 1 = the largest island, 2 = the second largest, and so on

The fitted law

$$\text{area} \propto \text{rank}^{-2.47}$$

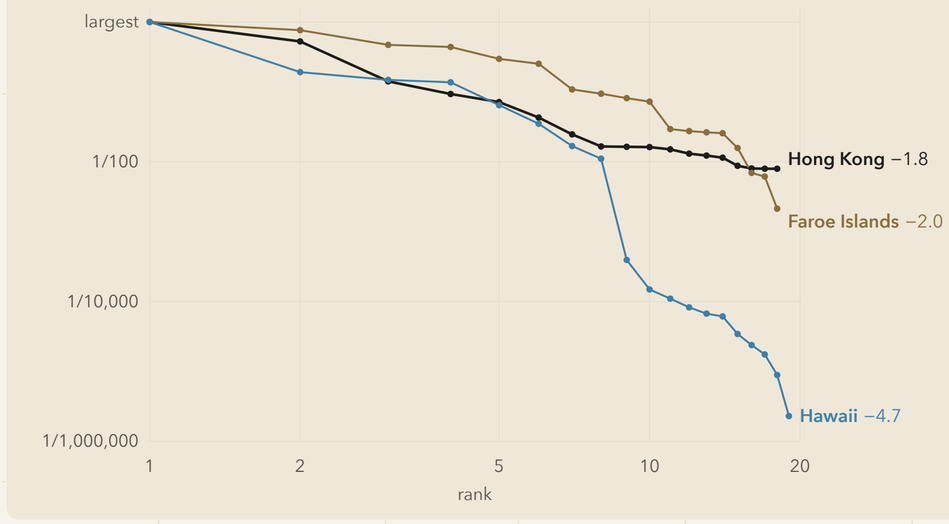
**exponent −2.47 · $R^2$ = 0.97**
(∝ means “in proportion to”)

In plain words: double the rank and the area shrinks to about 18%, roughly 1/6. On the line, the 10th island is about 1/300 of the 1st, and the 100th about 1/89,000.

$R^2$ = 0.97: the line accounts for 97% of the spread in (log) area. Least-squares fit to all 214 points; it is the dashed line.

So there is no fixed “each island is x% of the one before”: Hong Kong Island is 53% of Lantau, while out among the rocks neighbours differ by about 1%.

**Elsewhere** 其他群島
The top islands of two other archipelagos, each as a fraction of its own largest island; the number is that curve’s exponent. Faroe’s islands are more even (#2 is 76% of #1; Hong Kong 53%). Hawaii falls off a cliff after its eight main islands.




**The same 214 islands, truly to scale** 按真實比例
In rank order, all at 1:417,000 (on A1). The curve above is made of these, redrawn so the small ones can be seen.




Shapes © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL); Island Hunt, mattandliora.com/islands. 214 islands of 1,000 m² or more; areas from the drawn shapes (EPSG:2326).
Elsewhere: Faroe Islands, Hagstova Føroya (Statistics Faroe Islands) StatBank table UO01010, “Island in km²”, statbank.hagstova.fo. Hawaii: State of Hawaii Data Book 2023, Table 5.10 “Land area, by island: 2010” (DBEDT, from the U.S. Census Bureau); Maro Reef, awash, left out. Chek Lap Kok history: Wikipedia, “Chek Lap Kok”. All fetched 3 November 2026.