

DESTINATION MALAYSIA

Going Beyond Kuala Lumpur

WORDS BY CRYSTAL CHONG
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This month, we're shining the spotlight on our beloved country, Malaysia. Whether you're visiting for the first time or call Malaysia home, here are four destinations to add to your wanderlust list this year.



Kek Lok Si Temple



Pinang Peranakan Mansion



Cendol

PENANG

With rich heritage, a vibrant street food scene and the beauty of nature blended into one sun-kissed state, Penang is a popular holiday destination for many Malaysians.

SEE AND DO

Marvel at the old-world charm of the capital, **George Town**, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. As you walk around, look out for the iconic street murals and soak up centuries of history and culture with visits to **Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion**, built in the 1880's, **Little India**, where fragrant spices fill the air, and **Pinang Peranakan Mansion**, a museum dedicated to Penang's Peranakan heritage - Peranakan refers to descendants of two diverse cultures, born from the marriages between Chinese immigrants and local Malay Muslim women.

Outside of George Town, Air Itam is where you can find **Kek Lok Si**, the largest Buddhist temple in Malaysia, and **Penang Hill**, which gives panoramic views of the island.

Before the end of your trip, head down to **Batu Ferringhi**, where you can relax by the beach and cool down with the water sports. Nature lovers will also want to visit **Penang National Park**, where unique flora and fauna flourish.

EAT AND SAVOUR

Home to Chinese, Malay, Indian and Nyonya cuisines, Penang is never short of good food. Head to the **Chulia Street Night Market** to sample a bit of everything, try the **Duck Kway Chap** (noodles in a braised duck soup) at Restoran Kimberly, indulge in **Char Koay Teow** (flat rice noodles stir-fried in a soy sauce mix) at Lorong Selamat and have a taste of the **Mee Sotong** (spicy noodles with squid) at Esplanade

Park Food Court. Another must-try is **Nasi Kandar** (rice served with curries and side dishes), which originated in Penang itself. Some of the most recommended restaurants for this beloved dish are Deens Maju and Hameediyah.

For dessert, the **Penang Road Famous Teochew Chendul** (shaved ice with creamy coconut milk, pandan rice noodles and palm sugar) and the **apom manis** (paper-thin pancake) are musts.

REST AND RELAX

Penang boasts a range of accommodations to suit all lifestyles, from the beachfront **Hard Rock Hotel** and **Lone Pine Hotel** to boutique hotels and hostels in George Town, such as **Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion**, **Areca Hotel** and the Peranakan-style **Ryokan Muntri Boutique Hostel**.



Fly to Penang



MELAKA

Often referred to as the historical capital of Malaysia, Melaka is known for its rich culture, Nyonya cuisine and architecture inherited from centuries of Portuguese, Dutch and British rule.

SEE AND DO

Take in the sights and learn about the history of the city's iconic structures, including the **Porta de Santiago**, a fortress built in 1511 by a Portuguese admiral, the **Baba and Nyonya Heritage Museum**, which gives a glimpse of the lives of wealthy Chinese families back in the 19th century, and the red-walled **Christ Church** and **The Stadthuys**, believed to be the oldest Dutch building in the East.

If you're tired of walking in the heat, hop onto the **Melaka River Cruise** boat for a smooth journey along old shop houses, bridges and Kampong Morten, a traditional

Malay village. A must-visit for anyone visiting Melaka for the first time is **Jonker Street**, where you can shop for antiques and souvenirs, as well as sample dishes from the hawker stalls. For views of Melaka city, ride the **Taming Sari Revolving Tower**, which goes up to 110 metres.

When you've explored all of the city, drive to **A'Famosa Resort** in Alor Gajah for an escape from the hustle and bustle, complete with a golf course, water theme park, safari park and accommodations.

EAT AND SAVOUR

Besides the hawker stalls at Jonker Street, a visit to Melaka isn't complete without trying the **Chicken Rice Ball** from Chung Wah, **Satay Celup** (meat and vegetables on skewers dipped in a simmering pot of peanut sauce) from Capitol, **Nyonya Laksa** (noodles in a

rich, coconut-based broth) from Jonker 88, **cendol** from Aunty Koh and **Peranakan** dishes from restaurants such as Nancy's Kitchen and Seri Nyonya Peranakan Restaurant.

REST AND RELAX

From budget travellers to those looking for a luxurious stay, Melaka has it all. Situated on the banks of Melaka River, **Casa Del Rio** is a five-star boutique hotel and only a 2 minute-walk to Jonker Street. For a charming place to call home, the **Gingerflower Boutique Hotel** is in a Peranakan townhouse protected by the UNESCO World Heritage. For those on a tighter budget, the **Ola Lavanderia Cafe** also has a hostel, with mixed dorm rooms and private rooms. For a quieter stay away from the city, **Philea Resort & Spa** in Ayer Keroh is a piece of paradise with lush greenery, calming waters and comfortable rooms.



The Stadthuys and Christ Church

Fly to Melaka





Sipadan Island



Mount Kinabalu

SABAH

A playground for nature lovers and adventurous souls, the picturesque state of Sabah, located on the island of Borneo, is home to diving sites, lush rainforests, colourful cultures and the highest mountain in Malaysia.

SEE AND DO

In the charming capital of Kota Kinabalu, visit the **Atkinson Clock Tower**, the oldest structure in the city, shop for local arts and crafts at the **Handicraft Market** and go for a relaxing stroll in **City Park**. You could also consider a

trip to **Lok Kawi Wildlife Park**, where you can see and learn about rare plants, as well as residents such as tigers, proboscis monkeys, orangutans and Borneo pygmy elephants.

If your idea of a good time involves hiking up to the clouds, one to cross off the list would be **Mount Kinabalu**, which at a height of 4,095 metres is the highest mountain in the country. Offering a wonderland of ecological treasures and views unlike any other, this is an experience you will never forget.

Not to forget, Sabah is also a treasure trove of dive sites, with the **Mantanani Islands** and **Sipadan** boasting rich and diverse marine life waiting for you to discover.

EAT AND SAVOUR

Beyond its natural beauty, Sabah is also home to a variety of local food that visitors must try. The state's own version of **pork noodles**, for example, can be found at Kim Hing Lee Coffee Shop while **fresh seafood** can be savoured at restaurants around the state. Traditional dishes to look for at the local restaurants and street stalls include **Latok**, a type of seaweed which resembles mini grapes, and **Hinava**, a ceviche-like raw fish salad which originated from the Kadazan-Dusun tribe.

REST AND RELAX

Within the city, you can find a plethora of hotels, such as the five-star **Le Méridien**, the strategically located **Hotel Sixty3** and **Hotel Grandis**, located right next to the Suria Sabah shopping mall with views of the sea. A short speedboat ride from Kota Kinabalu will take you to **Gaya Island Resort**, a luxurious and tranquil sanctuary tucked amidst protected mangroves and sheltered coral reefs.



Mantanani Islands



Cat Statue



Kuching Waterfront



Gunung Mulu National Park



Sarawak Cultural Village

SARAWAK

Also on the island of Borneo is Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia. With breathtaking national parks, mystical caves and traditional longhouses open to visitors, Sarawak offers a host of new experiences.

SEE AND DO

In the capital of Kuching ("cat" in Malay), admire the architecture of the **Floating Mosque**, discover exhibits about cats from all over the world at the **Cat Museum** and visit **Fort Margherita**, built along Sarawak River to protect the city from pirates. In the evening, stroll along **Kuching Waterfront**, a popular esplanade dotted with street food hawkers and colonial-era buildings.

A 35-minute drive from Kuching will take you to Santubong, with the South China Sea on one side and popular hiking spot **Mount Santubong** on the other. Santubong is also where you can find the **Sarawak Cultural**

Village, which gives visitors a fascinating glimpse into the lives of Sarawak's indigenous groups.

The state also boasts hundreds of caves, such as the **Fairy Cave** and **Deer Cave**, the largest cave passage in the world and home to millions of bats. The Deer Cave is located in **Gunung Mulu National Park**, which is a playground for adventurers with a wealth of wildlife and challenging trails awaiting, including the **Pinnacles** trek, named so because of the razor-sharp limestone spikes that can be viewed.

Closer to Kuching city is **Bako National Park**, with diverse ecosystems from mangrove swamps and rocky cliffs to rainforests and sandy beaches.

EAT AND SAVOUR

A local dish to try is the **Sarawak Laksa**

(vermicelli in a shrimp-based broth with tamarind and coconut milk), and it is said Chong Choon Cafe is the place to go for it. Another dish to have is **Kolo Mee** (dry noodles tossed in a savoury pork and shallot mix) from Noodle Descendants. For the famous **Sarawak layer cake**, head to the stalls at the Main Bazaar.

If you'd like a taste of **indigenous cuisines** in Kuching, check out Lepau Restaurant for a wide range of Orang Ulu and Dayak dishes, and Tribal Stove for authentic Kelabit food.

REST AND RELAX

There's a variety of accommodation catering to all visitors, from the mixed dorms at **Sunset Homestay** and the stylish suites at boutique hotel **Ranee** to the rooms with beautiful river views at **Grand Margherita Hotel**. For a quieter stay away from the bustling city, go for the stylish seafront **Cove 55** in Santubong.

Fly to Kota Kinabalu, Sabah



Fly to Kuching, Sarawak

