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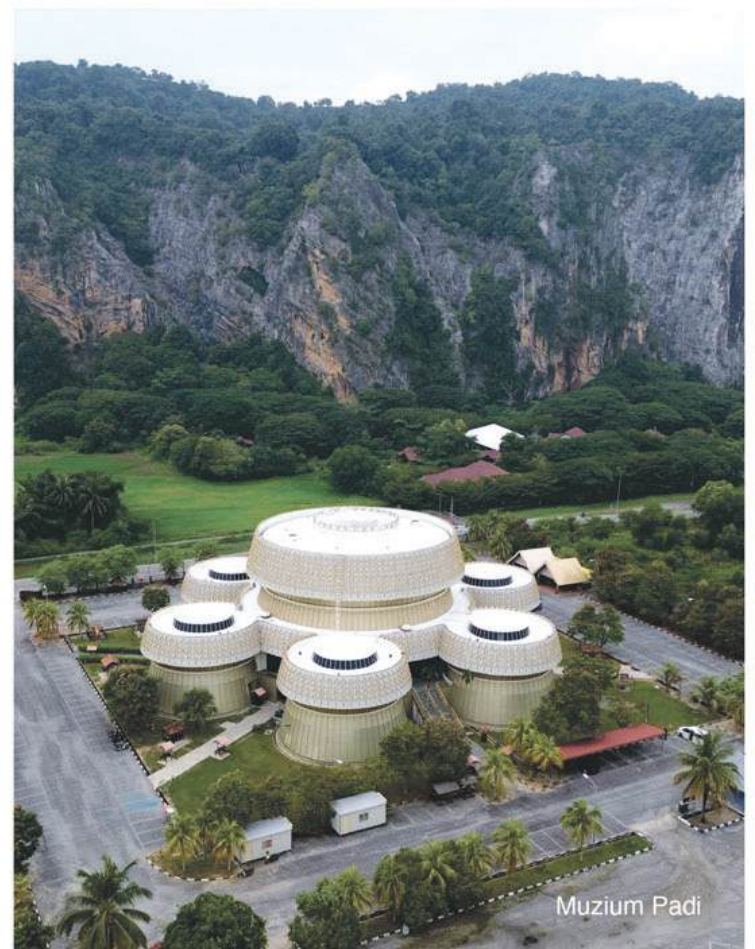
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Silat



Alor Setar Tower



Muzium Padi



Batik chanting



Langkawi Cable Car



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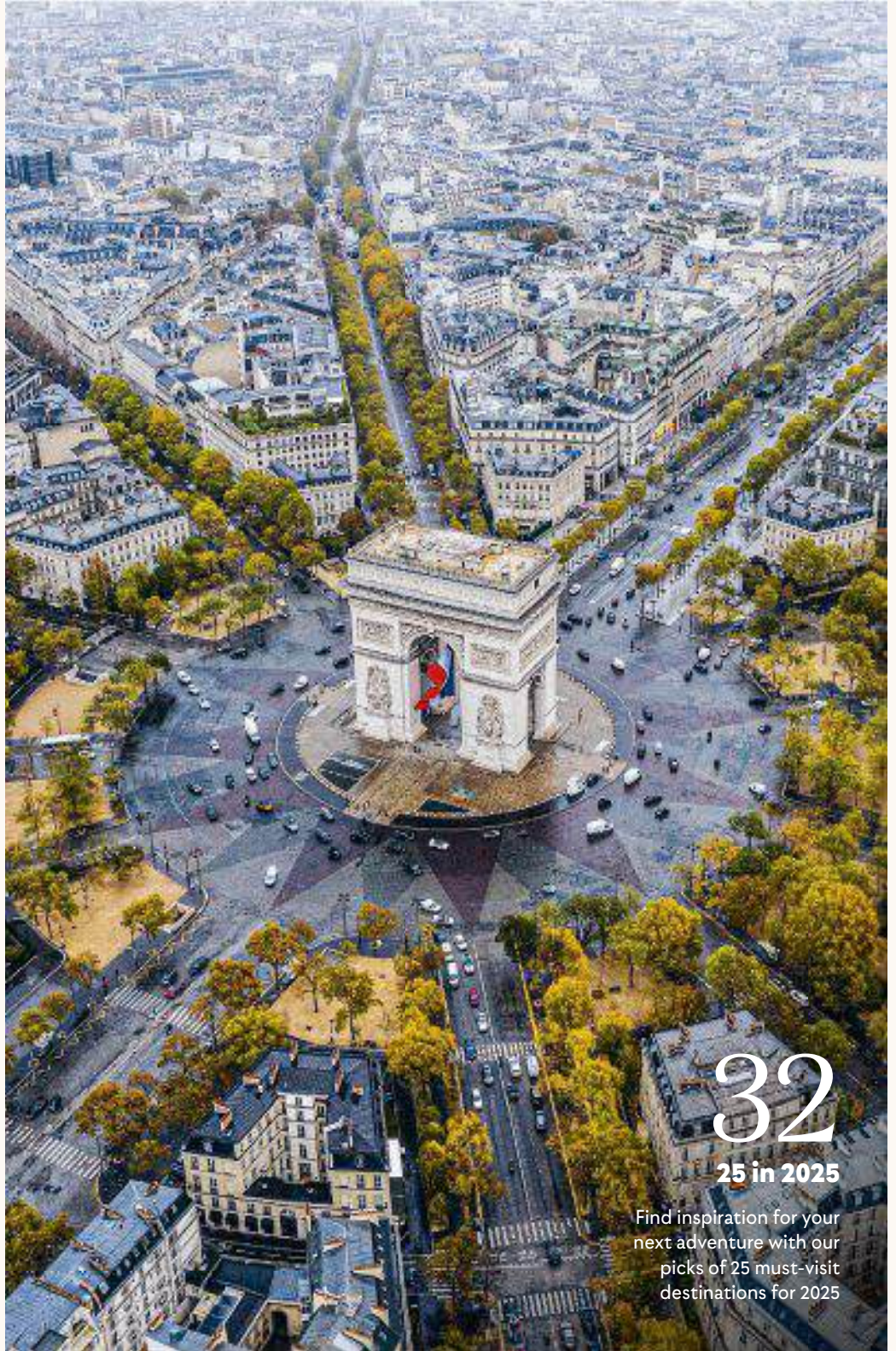
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JANUARY 2025

Contents



27

A perfect weekend in... Johor Bahru

Embark on a heritage walk, immerse in the city's history and discover the city's top attractions

32

25 in 2025

Find inspiration for your next adventure with our picks of 25 must-visit destinations for 2025

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK

CONTENTS

9 **13 reasons to love Malaysia**

Best new eats, fashion for Chinese New Year and new hotels to stay at

24 **A neighbourhood guide to...Jegi-dong**

Seoul's herbal medicine district is steeped in centuries-old practices of Korean healing and beauty

59 **This is Malaysian Hospitality**

MH launches the Young Explorers Club, MASkargo and Qatar Airways Cargo form a partnership and more

68 **Our network**

Travel around Malaysia and the world with Malaysia Aviation Group

75 **Now showing**

Be entertained with the latest in-flight movies, television shows, podcasts and music



19 **Elevate**

A tribute to Michael Jackson in Sydney, luxury hotels in Kochi and wellness in Tokyo



About the cover

View from Jerai Hill Resort, Kedah
Photo by Thinnesh Kumar

Editorial

Senior Group Editor
James P Ong
Editor
Shermian Lim
Branded Content Editor
Sarah Khan
Contributing Editor
Tara FT Sering
Subeditor
Arin Alycia Fong

Design

Senior Art Director
Jessica Santos
Contributing Art Director
Christian Subrata
Photo Director
Aaron Low

Sales

For advertising enquiries, please contact
ads.mh@ink-global.com

Publishing Director

Shalini Krishnan
Account Managers
Vivandra Jaisi
Danial Mohamad
Alishamathi Asohan
Zurina Hamzah
VP Travel Partnerships, APAC
Marie Yeo

Production

Head of Advertising Operations, APAC
Omar Mohamad Kassim

Ink

CEO
Michael Keating
Chief Operating Officer
Jim Campbell
Managing Director, Ink Studio
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Director of Strategy and Innovation
Ric Stockfis
Creative Director
Tan Parmar
Country Head, Malaysia
Lingesh Thayala



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Dear guests,

As we step into 2025, I would like to extend our warmest wishes to you and your loved ones for a joyful and prosperous New Year. Your unwavering support and trust in Malaysia Aviation Group's airlines have been our greatest source of inspiration, driving us to aim higher and deliver exceptional travel experiences. Every improvement we make – whether it's modernising our fleet, enhancing our services or crafting new experiences – is driven by our commitment to you.

This year marks an exciting chapter as we continue to strengthen our fleet, services and products to meet the evolving needs of our valued customers. We are starting the year off strong, having received two of our A330neo aircraft and five Boeing 737-8 to date. Our fleet modernisation initiative includes the introduction of 20 A330neo aircraft by 2028 and 25 Boeing 737-8 aircraft delivered through 2026, underscoring our commitment to a modern and sustainable fleet. While these advancements highlight our dedication to enhancing comfort, reliability and sustainability, we acknowledge the challenges the aviation industry continues to face, including delays in aircraft deliveries caused by global supply chain disruptions and shortages of both skilled workers and raw materials. Despite these hurdles, we remain steadfast in our efforts to deliver a world-class travel experience for our passengers.

We are also thrilled to expand your travel horizons with the reintroduction of two direct flights to two remarkable destinations: Kolkata, reinstated last month, and Paris, set to resume in March, nearly a decade after the route's last operation. Known as the "City of Joy", Kolkata enchants

visitors with its vibrant culture, colonial architecture and rich literary heritage. The reinstatement of this route further expands our footprint in India to 10 destinations, offering travellers seamless access to one of the country's most historic and culturally rich cities.

Meanwhile, the return of flights to Paris marks an important step in our continued expansion in Europe, offering a gateway to Paris' unique blend of romance, history and culture. With 4x-weekly flights, gradually increasing to daily flights, we are excited to offer more opportunities for travellers to experience the magic of this iconic city.

After earning numerous prestigious awards in 2024, we continue to strengthen our commitment to excellence by also focusing on creating a family-friendly travel experience. We are proud to introduce the MH Young Explorers Club, an initiative offering young travellers aged 12 and below a collection of exclusive experiences and personalised services. This programme extends our renowned Malaysian Hospitality to our youngest passengers, featuring dedicated priority check-in counters, family boarding privileges, specially curated kids' menus, tailored in-flight entertainment and a kids' activity pack. Our young travellers will also receive an exclusive passport to log their adventures.

As we embrace the New Year, we are filled with hope and excitement for what lies ahead. We are committed to making 2025 a year of enhanced travel experiences, bringing you the world-class service and warmth you deserve.

Thank you for choosing to fly with us. We look forward to welcoming you on board, creating unforgettable moments and sharing the journey of a promising year filled with new opportunities and adventures.

On behalf of everyone at Malaysia Aviation Group, we wish you a joyful and prosperous year ahead. Here's to a year of growth, inspiration and the unmatched sense of home wherever you go with Malaysian Hospitality.

Izham Ismail

Group Managing Director
Malaysia Aviation Group

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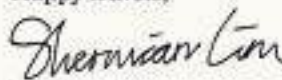
As we look ahead to 2025, our cover story brings you 25 destinations in the Malaysia Airlines network that you simply must visit. From the vibrant streets of Tokyo to the cultural riches of Amritsar, this feature highlights a range of must-see cities that promise unforgettable experiences. We also take a closer look at Malaysia, alongside exciting spots like Danang, Melbourne and Doha. Each of these destinations offers something unique, whether you're seeking adventure, relaxation or cultural discovery (p32).

In addition, we're thrilled to share a special feature on spending a perfect weekend in Johor Bahru (p27). This vibrant Malaysian city, with its fascinating mix of history, shopping and local cuisine, provides a perfect weekend escape for those looking to explore more of Malaysia beyond the usual tourist hotspots.

On a personal note, this marks my final issue as editor of *Going Places*. It has been my greatest pleasure to work on this publication and to bring you the latest updates on the most exciting destinations across Malaysia Airlines' network. I am deeply grateful to have been part of this journey and to have had the chance to share these stories with you – keep exploring the world through the pages of this cherished magazine!

Thank you for your support, and cheers to the many adventures still waiting to be discovered.

Happy travels,



Shermian Lim
Editor



This issue's contributors



Sulyn Chong

Writer, "A perfect weekend in Johor Bahru", p27

Educator by day, writer by night, Sulyn pens travel and lifestyle stories. She has worked for Malaysian publications such as *The New Straits Times* and *Men's Folio*.



Razlan Yusof

Photographer, "A perfect weekend in Johor Bahru", p27

Razlan began his photography career in 2012 and co-founded a boutique creative agency, Creative Match Studio, in Malaysia in 2018. While he has explored videography and motion design, photography remains his true passion.



Thinnesh Kumar

Photographer, "25 in 2025 - Kedah", p34

Thinnesh picked up photography in 2019 for the pleasure of chasing lights and seizing moments. Based in Kedah, he focuses on nature landscapes and street scenes.

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13

REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places



1

Kuala Lumpur

**Gearing up for
the new year**

The **Mell by Melinda Looi Melleagris** collection is the perfect complement for the Year of the Snake, with each piece embodying the mysterious allure of the snake and its connection to themes of rebirth – from Mandarin-collar cheongsam reimagined as crop tops, cutout dresses and handkerchief dresses, to knit slit skirts and palazzo pants, all in mesmerising shades of turquoise, sage green, pink and red. mell.com.my



2

Kuala Lumpur

Passport to luxury

The start of a new year often stirs the urge to explore. For those planning to venture out, the **Maybank World Elite Mastercard** offers seamless luxury and curated experiences for every travel adventure. Enjoy 16 complimentary visits to Plaza Premium, Plaza Premium First or Travel Club lounges nationwide. Flying to London or Paris? Extend your getaway with a complimentary night at Hotel Napoleon in Paris or Radisson Blu in Leicester Square, London, with a minimum one-night booking. At home, you can indulge in RMI20 nett set lunches for two at standout restaurants like Nobu KL at the Four Seasons Place and IL Bacaro at the Campbell House Penang. The Maybank World Elite Mastercard is your companion to making every journey of 2025 unforgettable. maybank.my/worldelite

3

Kuching

Flavours of Borneo

The first thing that greets you at Enzo, located in the Saradise township in Kuching, is the striking mural showcasing Sarawak’s rich cultural heritage. **Enzo**, which opened last July, specialises in infusing a touch of Borneo into everything it does – from the aromatic Sarawakian staple *bunga kantan* (torched ginger flower) in the Carbonanza bowl with black pepper chicken and the zesty Bornean Spaghetti, to the handcrafted traditional woven bags on sale in-store. [instagram.com/enzo_kuching](https://www.instagram.com/enzo_kuching)





4

George Town

Coming to life

With bold hues of orange and blue and Art Deco touches, **lyf** comes to George Town, with a range of stylish rooms for the modern traveller raring to soak up all that Penang has to offer. lyf George Town doesn't just reflect the city's culture; it brings creativity, connection and vibes – think Insta-worthy spots around every corner, and a long list of cultural events, like lyf's collaboration with artist Jahan Loh for the "Door of Cosmic Dreams" exhibition. [instagram.com/lyf.georgetown](https://www.instagram.com/lyf.georgetown)



Credit Card-i, **Bank Rakyat's** Shariah-compliant alternative to conventional cards, is the ideal companion for jet-setting travellers. Both the Explorer Credit Card-i and the Muslimah Credit Card-i offer up to 5% cashback on flights and hotel bookings, zero fees on currency exchanges for international transactions, exclusive deals at selected merchants and Rakyat Reward Points. The perfect fit for those looking for both values and amazing value. bankrakyat.com.my

5

Malaysia

Putting values first



Malaysia

Empowering communities

Orang Asli mothers face many challenges caring for their young children at home, including limited access to employment, which is among the reasons for the high school dropout rate in these communities. **The Asli Co** aims to do what it can to help, working with Orang Asli mothers in Selangor, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang to produce handmade soaps – like the *kuih* soaps shaped like your favourite desserts – tote bags, eye pillows and more. theasli.co

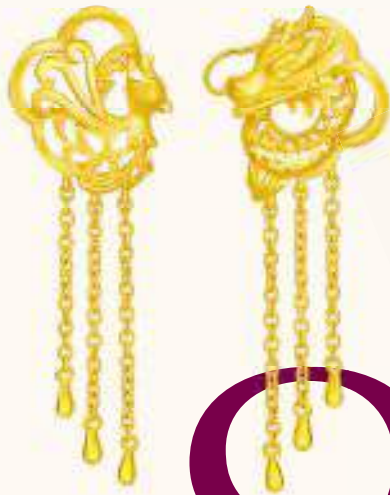


Kuala Lumpur

A taste of Korea's finest

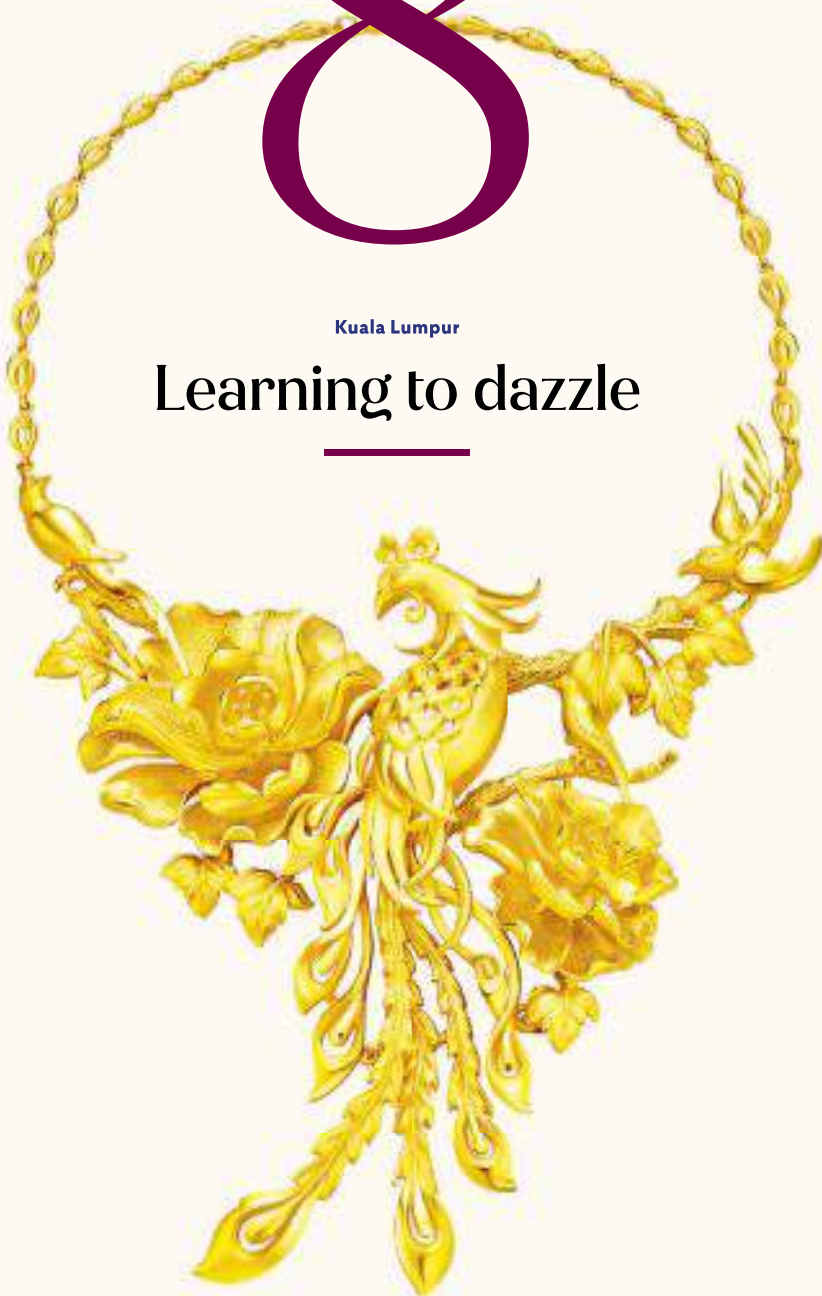
Steak lovers can now indulge in the rare MiGyeongSan Hanwoo beef, a Korean delicacy celebrated for its rich marbling and bold meaty flavour, rivalling Japan's wagyu. Revered as a cultural treasure, this exquisite beef was introduced to Malaysia last November at a special event featuring dishes crafted by Michelin-starred restaurant chefs Allen Suh and Jun Lee at Fritz Troika Sky Dining. This halal-certified Hanwoo beef comes from cattle fed a controlled diet and never calved, ensuring the highest quality. To celebrate the upcoming Chinese New Year, limited quantities are available at **Culina Shoppes at Four Seasons Place**, perfect for an unforgettable festive feast. culina.com





Kuala Lumpur

Learning to dazzle



TOMEI will release its Diamond Collection just in time for Valentine's Day this year, with 14k white gold pieces featuring trendy heart motifs in pendants, stud earrings and rings. TOMEI's marketing manager Kelvin Chen offers tips on how to pair jewellery for every festive season.

Chinese New Year

"Bold gold jewellery is a must to complement the vibrant hues of traditional red and gold," says Chen. He suggests choosing pieces that add a modern twist to the traditional, like intricate engravings and gemstone accents, or minimalist designs with high polish to match the rich tones of the cheongsam.

Valentine's Day

For Valentine's Day, Chen advises considering your partner's style – minimalist, bold or sentimental. Thoughtfully choose timeless, versatile jewellery, such as delicate pendants, elegant bracelets or diamond studs, which suit daily wear and diverse outfits. "These pieces," Chen says, "never go out of style and hold lasting sentimental value, showing care and attention to their preferences."

Eid

Chen points out that of late, *baju kurung* and *baju kebaya* are often paired with gold jewellery that marry classic elegance with modern design. For added depth, stack rings with different finishes, such as a mix of high-polish gold and diamond-cut designs, or choose layered necklaces with subtle pendants and bold statement earrings.

Christmas

"The season of joy is the perfect time to experiment with mixed metals," says Chen. Christmas calls for cheer, and the whimsy and individual touches of stacked earrings or even pieces featuring character designs can be balanced out by simpler, more understated pieces, like gold bracelets. etomei.com

9

Johor Bahru

Local bites with a global twist

Knocknock Café made a dramatic entrance into Taman Mount Austin's burgeoning food scene last year, with its majestic flower arrangements and vintage pieces, and its fusion of Malaysian spices and Western techniques. The Buttery Crab Fusion Rice brings together succulent crab and chicken in a fusion curry; the River Prawn Arrabbiata Pasta features river prawns and *tobiko* (roe) in a spicy arrabbiata sauce; while Happy's Laksa Ever puts a twist on the traditional dish with salmon fillet, white tuna and a special laksa SAUCE. [instagram.com/knocknock_cafe](https://www.instagram.com/knocknock_cafe)



10

Kuala Lumpur

Capturing KL's energy

Inspired by the capital city's evolution from a tin mining hub to a bustling metropolis, **Hyatt Centric City Centre Kuala Lumpur** dazzles with 312 rooms that bring together earthy tones, bold industrial lines and breathtaking art, including from local graffiti artist JeFr. Besides embodying its electric energy, Hyatt Centric City Centre's location in the beating heart of KL makes it the perfect launchpad to discover everything the dynamic city has to offer – from the architectural majesty of the Petronas Twin Towers and the serenity of the KL Forest Eco Park to the inimitable arts, culture, dining and nightlife scene. [instagram.com/hyattcentriccitycentre_kl](https://www.instagram.com/hyattcentriccitycentre_kl)





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From tropical paradises to iconic cityscapes, these stunning destinations offer the perfect backdrops for unforgettable selfies. Whether you're chasing panoramic views or unique landmarks, here are five of the newest and most exciting selfie spots to add to your bucket list.

1 Bali: Desa Potato Head

Opened in 2020, this creative village in Seminyak offers Instagrammable highlights at every turn, from its striking bamboo architecture to the infinity pool overlooking the ocean. Snap a shot by the iconic Potato Head façade

made from reclaimed wooden windows or unwind in the serene rooftop spaces.

2 Bangkok: Benjakitti Forest Park

A lush addition to Bangkok's cityscape, Benjakitti Forest Park, unveiled in 2022, has quickly become a haven for nature lovers and photographers. Elevated boardwalks wind through wetlands and greenery, offering spectacular skyline views. Stop by at sunrise or sunset for the perfect golden hour lighting to capture your selfies.

3 Tokyo: Shibuya Sky

Rising above the vibrant streets of Shibuya, this observation deck at Shibuya Scramble Square offers a fresh perspective on Tokyo's skyline. Opened in 2019, the

open-air Sky Stage delivers 360-degree views of the city, including glimpses of Mount Fuji on clear days. Its futuristic design contrasts beautifully with the bustling energy below, making it a must-visit for grid-worthy selfies.

4 Singapore: Museum of Ice Cream

Opened in 2021, this pastel wonderland offers sweet, photogenic backdrops with installations like a sprinkle pool and vibrant-themed rooms. It's a delightful mix of play and aesthetics, perfect for quirky Instagram shots.

5 Paris: Piscine Molitor

A glamorous nod to Parisian chic, Piscine Molitor is not only a luxe swimming pool but also a cultural icon revitalised in the Netflix hit *Emily in Paris*. Its Art Deco aesthetic, with bold colours and geometric designs, makes for a sophisticated, envy-inducing selfie spot.

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11

Kuala Lumpur

Where the heart is



Replacing the longstanding Leo's Dining Room in Bangsar's Jalan Bangkung last September, **Ed's Kitchen** specialises in food from the heart, with an eclectic selection of quintessentially Malaysian dishes. Start with a heartwarming herbal chicken soup before moving onto kulim oil fries using the "Southeast Asian truffle", *assam laksa* salad, Nyonya *assam pedas* grouper, juicy tomahawk steaks with beef fat char kway teow, and of course, their signature lobster noodles. edskitchen.my





12

Johor Bahru

Surf's up

It's peak surf season now on Malaysia's east coast, and **Anantara Desaru Coast Resort & Villas**, in partnership with Dash Outdoors, is offering surfing lessons for all levels on hidden-gem beaches. Beginners can catch the waves in the shallow waters and sandy breaks of Wild Boar Bay, while more seasoned surfers can revel in the playground of Tanjung Balau, all under the watchful eye of Dash Outdoors' expert instructors. anantara.com



13

Kedah

Making a splash

Just a stone's throw away from the banks of Sungai Merbok, the appropriately aquatic-themed **Reef Garden Coffee** adds a touch of colour to the town of Sungai Petani. With blue-lit aquariums around the café, and plant fixtures along the walls and ceiling to complete the underwater feel, Reef Garden Coffee features a fusion menu with Northern Malaysian touches, like the chicken grill with creamy *tomyam* sauce and *daging masak hitam* (beef in dark sauce), puff pastries, and of course, a long list of speciality coffees and yam drinks. instagram.com/reefgardencoffee



PUTRAJAYA'S FLAVOURScape

Flavourful Seafood Cuisine at Putrajaya Seafood Restaurant, Taman Botani Putrajaya

Located in the beautiful Taman Botani Putrajaya, Putrajaya Seafood Restaurant offers a delightful seafood dining experience with a focus on fresh, local ingredients. Surrounded by lush greenery and peaceful waters, it's the perfect spot for seafood lovers.

The menu features a variety of popular dishes made with sustainably sourced seafood, such as the flavourful Chilli Crab, the bold Black Pepper Crab, and the delicate Steamed Fish with Spicy Lime Sauce, while the Assorted Seafood Platters provide a mix of prawns, clams, and other fresh seafood.

The restaurant uses traditional Malaysian spices and herbs like lemongrass and coconut milk, adding rich flavours to each dish. Whether you're looking for a casual meal or a special celebration, Putrajaya Seafood Restaurant offers a memorable experience with delicious seafood in a scenic, relaxing setting.

Finest Cuisine at Pulse Grande Hotel, Putrajaya

Pulse Grande Hotel in Putrajaya offers a top-notch dining experience with a variety of delicious dishes, blending local Malaysian flavours and international cuisine. The hotel's restaurants are known for using fresh, high-quality ingredients to create memorable meals.

Elegant Dining Atmosphere

The hotel offers a stylish and welcoming dining environment, perfect for any occasion. Whether you're having a casual meal or celebrating a special event, the attentive service and comfortable setting ensure a great experience.

Together, both venues offer an unparalleled dining experience in Putrajaya, where fresh, high-quality ingredients, skilled preparation, and a warm atmosphere combine to create unforgettable meals for all occasions. Whether you're craving fresh seafood or global cuisine, Putrajaya Seafood Restaurant and Pulse Grande Hotel deliver exceptional dining that leaves a lasting impression.



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THEATRE

Thriller down under

The spectacular *MJ the Musical* will open in **Sydney** next month

BY TARA FT SERING

It's been 60 years since the late, great Michael

Jackson debuted as a five-year-old lead for the Jackson Five, and more than four decades since he moonwalked across the stage – an electrifying performance and a cultural moment. There's been no one like him since, so expect nothing less than a jaw-dropping extravaganza when curtains rise on *MJ the Musical* at the Sydney Lyric Theatre next month. The Tony Award-winning show – celebrating the man, his mesmerising moves and legendary music – debuted on Broadway in 2022. sydneylyric.com.au



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IMAGE: MATTHEW MURPHY

ELEVATE



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HOTELS

Ready, reset, go

Start the year right at the freshly rebranded **Park Regis by Prince Singapore**

BY MAYA CALICA COLLINS

If you’re looking to greet the coming Year of the Snake with a clean slate, a retreat to prime your mind, body and qi might be in order. And we’ve found the perfect setting for it – at a zen-like oasis in Singapore that’s also just had a transformation of its own.

The former Park Regis Singapore, now rebranded as Park Regis by Prince Singapore, is part of the Seibu Prince Hotels

& Resorts, a subsidiary of Seibu Group in Japan, and joins an impressive portfolio of over 80 hotels, 31 golf courses and 10 ski resorts in Japan and beyond. All 203 rooms and suites live up to the company’s vision of providing a “Guest-Centric Future”.

Begin your retreat with contactless check-in, so you can skip the line and go straight to your suite. Each of the contemporary studio-style rooms has that minimalist Japanese aesthetic Marie Kondo would approve of, and a biophilic design that connects you to nature. Want a truly private experience? Check into the Premier Queen room with direct access to the pool. Step out onto your patio surrounded by lush greenery – it’s the perfect spot to stretch, meditate and pray. Do unhurried laps in the 25m swimming pool with a waterfall, then settle into one of the semi-submerged sun loungers. Let the calming sounds of the waterfall melt away any residual stress in your body while you sip your drink of choice.



HOTELS

History lessons

Check in for guilt-free luxury and top-notch dining at **Kochi's** historical properties

BY MEENAKSHI J

Kerala, India's spice-laden treasure, has enticed traders and travellers for over a millennium. Amid its serene backwater towns and lush isles lies Kochi – an eclectic blend of cultures spread across five interconnected islands linked by bridges, sand bars and a shared love for the iconic banana fritters known as *pazham pori*. The city and its outskirts now champion eco-tourism, blending its storied heritage with sustainable practices and community-driven initiatives.

Leading the way in this transformation is CGH Earth, a seven-decade-old, family-owned legacy rooted in Kochi's man-made Willingdon Island, formerly known as the Casino Group of Hotels. The waterfront **Brunton Boatyard**, a 22-room boutique retreat in



the historic Fort Kochi neighbourhood, spearheads sustainability by using solar power and eliminating single-use plastics from the property. Built on the 1895 boatyard of George Brunton and Sons overlooking the Arabian Sea, dotted with fishing boats and sluggish cargo ships, the property's architecture seamlessly weaves together Portuguese, Dutch and British elements with the charms of the Malabar Coast – lofty ceilings, coved corridors, red-oxide floors, lime-plastered walls and warm wooden accents.

Start your day here with a sumptuous à la carte breakfast put together with locally sourced ingredients at the Armoury restaurant, where vintage arms adorn the walls. Feast on freshly baked millet croissants, cupcakes and local delights like fermented *appam* or steamed rice *puttu* with green gram or chicken curry, paired with piping hot filter coffee.

Later, immerse in Kochi's storied history on a guided heritage tour of Fort Kochi. Visit heritage sites and marvel at murals and royal relics in Mattancherry Palace; admire the historic Cochin

Thirumala Devaswom temple with its lotus-filled tank; and shop for antiques, perfumes and spices in Jew Town.

For lunch, indulge in Malabar-Dutch fusion at East Indies, the chic restaurant at CGH Earth's **Eighth Bastion**, which is near the historic Dutch Cemetery in Fort Kochi. Built on land that once held a fort with seven bastions under the Dutch East India Company, the site changed hands before CGH reimaged it into an elegant boutique property, with 19 thoughtfully designed rooms.

Vegetarians can relish a cashew cheese tart, coconut milk-based honey-roasted pumpkin soup, flavourful *paneer ghotala* and end with a baked coconut cheesecake or the bamboo rice and palm jaggery-based *mulayari payasam*.

For a truly regal experience in Kerala, stay at **Chittoor Kottaram** – a restored one-key palace hotel of CGH, with three exclusive bedrooms, just 45 minutes from Kochi airport. This heritage retreat is steeped in folklore and art reflecting the Cochin Royal Family's legacy that promises an intimate haven perfect for slow, responsible living and spiritual rejuvenation. cgheart.com



ELEVATE



DINING

The world on a plate

Indulge in a global gastronomic adventure in **Osaka**

BY KHURSHEED DINSHAW

If you need a quick break from your Japanese foodie adventure in Japan's kitchen, the international offerings in Osaka are just as enticing. Here's an amuse-bouche.

1 A taste of Thailand

Located in the Centara Grand Hotel Osaka, **Suan Bua** mirrors the lively atmosphere of Bangkok's night markets, with vibrant neon signs and the rich aroma of spices filling the air. Guests are welcomed by a charming tuk-tuk display at the entrance, setting the scene for a delightful journey through Thai cuisine's greatest hits, from *tom yum goong* with river prawns, lemongrass, chilli and mushrooms; a delicious pad Thai of stir-fried rice noodles with vegetables and deep-fried tofu; or Thai green curry with chicken or beef. Desserts range from homemade coconut ice cream to water chestnuts in coconut milk. centarahotelsresorts.com

2 French fare

Feeling a little French? **The-Moment Grill & Dining** at The Osaka Station Hotel serves the classics – think sole à la Dugléré featuring sole paired with seafood mousse, simmered in fish, white wine, and mushroom and shellfish stock, and served with aromatic vegetables. But beef is the main draw at this all-day restaurant, and among the more popular dishes are the Rossini-style wagyu



beef and foie gras with truffle sauce and a house speciality called The Moment Burger – a rich, quarter pound burger made with a rare 100% Kobe beef patty and homemade buns. Located on the 29th floor, it offers breathtaking city views from approximately 140m above ground. osakastation-hotel.jp

3 Cantonese classics

Helmed by Chef Raymond Wong, previously of the Michelin-starred Shang Palace in Hong Kong, the award-winning **Jiang Nan Chun** specialises in Cantonese cuisine. Feast on dim sum – shrimp dumplings with bamboo shoots and scallop dumplings with black truffle to

fried spring rolls with shredded chicken – or heavier mains such as deep fried crab shell, stuffed with fresh crab meat that's been blended with light coconut milk, deep-fried with the shell and served alongside crab-shaped vinegar and ginger jelly. For dessert, enjoy bean curd meticulously sliced into a thousand cuts and shaped to resemble a blooming flower floating in syrup.

The restaurant, located on the 37th floor offers panoramic views of Osaka, is perfect for dates and other special occasions such as Chinese New Year. Jiang Nan Chun, which means "the spring of south China", is inspired by the colour of spring, from the light green wallpaper and service staff uniform to a blossom-shaped centrepiece and chandelier. For even more of a visual feast, sneak a peek at two masterpieces of Japanese craftsmanship in the private dining room – flower motifs in lacquer, eggshell and aluminium.

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ARTS & CULTURE

Show time

This year's premier arts festival in **Adelaide** promises world-class performances celebrating love, art and the power of human connection

BY SMRITI DANIEL

Among the offerings that make the picturesque city of Adelaide a global arts hub, few garner more attention than the Adelaide Festival. Long celebrated for its bold programming and immersive cultural offerings, 2025 marks its 40th year of existence. And we've been promised a celebration of love in all its forms, set against the backdrop of the city's most iconic venues.

You'll be spoiled for choice across the festival running from 28 February to 16 March, so plan for a long trip. There are 11 world premieres, nine Australian

firsts and 15 exclusive performances – across various venues – each offering a unique exploration of love, from the universal to the deeply personal.

One of the highlights is Trent Dalton's *Love Stories*, where the bestselling Australian author brings to life a series of real love stories collected from his time spent on a Brisbane street corner asking strangers, "Can you tell me a love story?" Dalton captures the warmth, humour and deep emotion of the many ways love manifests in our lives. The stories on stage remind us of the power of human connection and the shared moments of joy, sorrow and everything in between.

If you're looking for even more immersive experiences, *Innocence* offers a gripping operatic journey. Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho's score sets the stage for this contemporary thriller, unfolding the complexities of guilt, redemption and memory. Set on a revolving two-storey stage, *Innocence* dives deep into a tragic event at an international school. Dance enthusiasts will be captivated by *Club Amour*, performed by the legendary Tanztheater Wuppertal dance company. Rooted in choreographer Pina Bausch's visionary work, this performance is a raw, poetic meditation on human relationships and



Family days at the festival

desire. Under new artistic director Boris Charmatz, the company brings a revitalised energy to Bausch's legacy, offering a visceral exploration of the human condition.

Beyond the performances, the 2025 Adelaide Festival is about the spaces it creates for audiences to come together. A striking addition this year is The Courtyard at the Festival Plaza, a vibrant meeting point offering nightly programming, food and drinks.

You can also participate in the world premiere of *MASS MOVEMENT* by the Stephanie Lake Company. With over 1,000 dancers of all ages coming together in Elder Park, this one-off performance is intended to bring the city together in a spectacular moment of collective artistry.

Under Artistic Director Brett Sheehy AO, the festival serves as a reminder that the richest moments in life come from art, not material things. As Sheehy says, "We reach our greatest enjoyment and satisfaction through experiences over things." In 2025, Adelaide promises an abundance of experiences that will stay with you long after the final curtain falls. adelaidefestival.com.au

IMAGES: CRAIG WILKINSON, SHANE REID



Trent Dalton's Love Stories



Writer's Week at the festival

Seoul Yangnyeongsi Herb
Medicine Museum



NEIGHBOURHOOD GUIDE

Jegi-dong

Discover Seoul's herbal medicine hub steeped in centuries-old practices of Korean healing and beauty **BY MAE YOUNG**

The first thing you notice at Jegi-dong, in the city's Dongdaemun district, is the scent of herbs, an aroma wafting from shops selling dried bark, peels, roots and fruits. The neighbourhood is home to over 1,000 speciality stores related to traditional Korean wellness, including the Yangnyeongsi Herbal Medicine Market. The city has officially designated the market as a cultural heritage site thanks to the Bojewon, a place where

travellers and the homeless were given lodging and treatment during the Joseon Dynasty. Today, the group of establishments sits on almost 300,000sqm and distributes 70% of the country's medicinal herbs. Here you'll find clinics offering traditional beauty treatments, oriental medicine immunity rooms and the multi-awarded Seoul Yangnyeongsi Herb Medicine Museum. When in Seoul, pop by these spots.

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW DELOBO IMAGES; CHRIS DA CAHNHA



Gyeongdong Market

ELEVATE



1 Gam Cho Dang Oriental Pharmacy

One of the area's biggest stores stocks an impressive selection of ginseng, an herb known for its ability to increase immunity, lower blood sugar and even improve male physical performance. This store sells it in syrup, powder, capsules and even jelly form.

1 Yangnyeongjungang-ro

2 Bit Haniwon

This clinic specialises in thermal therapy, which is believed to be an immunity booster. Their Herbal Detox Lab is made from mica minerals that are supposedly good for expelling toxins, and their Golden Immunity Room is made of Yanggu white clay and gold dye, said to improve blood circulation and raise one's immunity.

9 Yangnyeongjungang-ro

3 Won Sam Dang Oriental Pharmacy

While the other stores in this neighbourhood sell the herbs packed neatly in boxes, ready for gifting, Won Sam Dang sells them in bulk (attention wholesale shoppers). They also sell machines that extract the active ingredients from medicinal herbs and can even prepare a customised mix.

20 Yangnyeongjungang-ro

4 Sam Hong Dry Goods Bureau

When it comes to medicinal herbs, there are two critical things to note: where they are sourced and the credibility of the seller. This company has

taken pride in not having any disputes from both its online and offline buyers since it started 15 years ago. **892-45 Jegi-dong**

5 Seoul Yangnyeongsi Herb Medicine Museum

The museum displays 350 types of traditional herbal medicine and a diorama of a Bojewon, the royal hospital during the Joseon Dynasty, where travellers and the sick were given a place to stay. You can also don a costume of what the doctors used to wear during ancient times.

26 Yangnyeongjungang-ro

6 Chamdajeong

This oriental medicine café is a *hanok*, a traditional Korean home. They offer *hanbang* teas or traditional teas as well

as healthy traditional bites like *yakseon* lotus leaf rice, a traditional packed meal for travelling monks.

26 Yangnyeongjungang-ro

7 Life Oriental Medicine Clinic

A wooden medicine chest – filled with medicine to relieve, among others, rhinitis and digestion issues – takes up an entire wall at this clinic. Got a specific health issue? They can prepare a tonic for you. The clinic also offers non-surgical treatments that focus on slow and steady healing.

27 Yangnyeongdong-gil

8 Choi Hyuk Oriental Medicine Clinic

This clinic specialises in traditional beauty treatments such as facial acupuncture, a procedure which claims to naturally make the skin look younger and address the overall health of one's skin. The Ministry of Health and Welfare recognises the clinic as a Registered Medical Institution.

52 Yangnyeongdong-gil



Tea at Chamdajeong

9 Gyeongdong Market

This market has the most extensive collection of herbs and ginseng in the area. It is the go-to if you already know what herbs to buy. Hidden within is Starbucks Kyungdong 1960, a unique branch that used to operate as a theatre in the 1960s. Pop in on a less crowded weekday morning.

3 Gosanja-ro 36-gil



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A PERFECT WEEKEND IN

Johor Bahru

Words **Sulyn Chong** Photography **Razlan Yusof**

A weekend journey in Malaysia's southernmost city begins at point zero, is filled with history and delightful attractions, and ends with sunset at the beach

Sunlight glints off the water's surface, throwing a spotlight onto a row of buildings overlooking the Johor Straits.



Not far to my left is the Johor Bahru CIQ Checkpoint, managing traffic between Malaysia and Singapore, but my attention is drawn to a mid-sized, arrow-like structure in front of the General Post Office, crowned with a red inverted teardrop resembling a Google Maps pin. Its legs encase a triangular column bearing blue plaques printed with distances to various Malaysian cities. At its centre lies “0 KM” and the inscription “Titik Permulaan Ke Benua Asia” (The starting point to the Asian continent).

The landmark, known as the Kilometre Zero marker, serves as the traditional starting point for measuring distances in many countries. Often, it’s located in the capital city but uniquely, Malaysia’s Kilometre Zero is in Johor Bahru, Peninsula Malaysia’s southernmost city. This is because distances for three major highways – Federal Routes 1, 3 and 5 – are calculated from this central meeting point.

I aim my phone at the monument and snap a quick photo, marking the start of my weekend in one of Malaysia’s fastest-growing cities. Johor Bahru is strategically located just across the Causeway from Singapore. It thrives as a hub for investments and cross-border trade, driving rapid urban and industrial development. The city is central to Iskandar Malaysia, an economic corridor that has sparked nationwide interest with its notable successes and occasional setbacks. Affectionately known as JB, the city’s affordable lifestyle also attracts many Singaporeans seeking residential and commercial opportunities. Tourism flourishes, with premium attractions like Desaru Coast, Legoland Malaysia and Johor Premium Outlets drawing visitors from far and wide.

Previous page:
Mural art in Austin Heights

Opposite page, clockwise from top right: JB Premium Outlets; a shop at Desaru beach; surfing at Desaru beach; Kilometre Zero

This page: JB Old City Centre



AS A JOHOREAN WHO GREW UP in Batu Pahat, a nearby town just a two-and-a-half-hour drive from JB, I’m continually impressed by the recent additions to JB’s growing roster of things to do and places to eat while revisiting old favourites. This weekend is no different, as I’ve already plotted out an itinerary of places to visit while in town. Despite the city’s average of 10 or more rainy days per month, the 30-degree heat prompts me to seek shade in the old city centre, just a five-minute walk from the Kilometre Zero marker. A carved arch on Jalan Tan Hiok Nee welcomes visitors to the Tan Hiok Nee Heritage Street,

its covered sidewalks offering much-needed shade. The street’s cobbled paving was recently refurbished to complement the preserved pre-war shophouses, including the eye-catching, red-and-white Marrybrown Peranakan Heritage Restaurant. Together with Jalan Dhoby and Jalan Trus, this area forms the “old” city centre, now bustling with cafés, bakeries and restaurants where tantalising aromas entice you to linger longer than planned.

Hiap Joo Bakery, nestled at the end of the street, has been a beloved institution since 1919. This wood-

JOHOR BAHRU



fired bakery is known for its traditional baked goods, including coconut buns and buttery cakes, which are neatly arranged on timeworn wooden shelves. The banana cake is its standout attraction, drawing a constant stream of customers eager to queue for a taste. Continuing through the old town centre, steeped in multiracial heritage, you'll find places of worship like Masjid An-Nur Kotaraya and the unique Arulmigu Sri Rajakaliamman Glass Temple, located just metres apart. Nearby, the Johor Bahru Chinese Heritage Museum offers an insightful look into the community's history and contributions to the city.

A short distance away, perched on Bukit Timbalan, is the Sultan Ibrahim Building – a solemn reminder of the value of peace. Completed in 1940, it was once Johor Bahru's tallest structure and served as a Japanese fortress during World War II, from which attacks on the British forces in Singapore were launched. Designed by the renowned British architecture firm Palmer and Turner, the building features both colonial and Malay architectural elements, with a Saracenic-style tower. Traces of damage from the Japanese invasion are said to be still visible, though public access is limited as the building is government-owned. I move on in search of a meal.

After a satisfying lunch of Johor laksa, I head to the Johor Zoo located just under 4km from the Sultan Ibrahim Building on Jalan Gertak Merah. Initially known as Kebun Binatang (animal garden), this 13ha zoo is one of Southeast Asia's oldest, established in 1928 by the late Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar. Originally serving as the Sultan's personal animal collection, it was handed over to the state in 1962. Following a major renovation during the pandemic, the zoo reopened on 31 August last year, and is now home to over 275 animals from 53 species, including mammals, birds, reptiles and fish. The elephants were particularly delightful, gently accepting sweets with their trunks. I continue my stroll through shaded enclosures until closing time at 6pm, reflecting on a memorable day.



This page clockwise from top: Hiap Joo Bakery; Chinese Heritage Museum; Legoland's SEA LIFE; the arch at JB Old City Centre

Opposite page from left: Sultan Ibrahim building; animal statues on the sidewalk in Austin Heights



INSIDER TIP

Johor laksa features creamy coconut curry, tofu slices, fish balls, cockles and noodles. Visit Tan Kee Cathay Laksa stall inside Restoran Shang Ji on Jalan Lumba Kuda or Restoran Yew Swee on Jalan Harimau Tarum.



THE NEXT DAY BEGINS WITH A 40-minute drive to explore Taman Mount Austin, one of JB's trendiest neighbourhoods. Known for its youthful vibe and lively café culture, the area was further revitalised last year with the addition of seven new rows of shoplots and a double-storey hawker centre. As I wander through the quarter, I spot plenty of colourful mural art and have a newfound sense of appreciation for the neighbourhood's appeal; within a one-kilometre radius are hotpot restaurants, pet cafés, an escape room, a family-friendly karaoke lounge and the Austin Heights Water & Adventure Park.

My next stop is Iskandar Puteri, Johor's new administrative capital, for a few hours of marine life appreciation at Legoland Malaysia. At the Lego MINILAND, rides and interactive attractions can easily fill a full day, but as it's not my first visit, I buy a separate ticket and head straight to SEA LIFE Malaysia, one of Legoland's newer attractions. The aquarium has 25 large display tanks, home to over 13,000 marine animals. Some tanks have dome-like walkways, offering a view

of magnificent sharks gliding above, leaving me in awe of their size. After spending over two hours exploring

SEA LIFE, I head north, arriving at Johor Premium Outlets in Kulai, a small town near Johor Bahru. This two-storey shopping haven offers 150 premium brands, including Jimmy Choo, Nike, Tumi and Balenciaga. Conveniently located near the Johor Bahru Senai International Airport and around 27km from the city centre, it's a hotspot for bargain hunters. I find a pair of street trainers at the Adidas store and am tempted to buy a blouse from British India. The food options are excellent; I enjoy nasi lemak at Madam Kwan's, finishing with a decadent Godiva ice cream – perfect for the humid weather.

At around 3.30pm, my phone beeps, reminding me of a sunset date with a friend. Desaru Beach, stretching 25km along the South China Sea, is a popular destination for sun and surf lovers. The strong winds here make it ideal for watersports and kite flying under a bright blue sky. The ocean's scent and the soothing sound of waves crashing on the shore provides the perfect backdrop for my social media reel about the weekend. We settle under the shade of a coconut tree, playing our favourite jazz tunes and sipping cold sodas from a nearby stall. We watch as families, couples and groups of friends picnic, fly kites and swim. Soon, the golden rays of sunset peak through the horizon, bidding a lovely goodbye to the weekend.

Bites of Johor

More local delicacies to try

Lontong kering

A dry version of the usual *ketupat* (compacted rice cake) with *kuah lodeh* (vegetable broth). This southern staple that Fatimah Nasi Campur is known for comes with a dollop of sambal, peanut sauce and shredded coconut. **Stall No 13, Anjung Selera Hutan Bandar**

Pisang goreng

Banana fritters are a common tea-time snack in Malaysia but in Johor, they're served with a twist. In some establishments like Pisang Goreng Mawar, they're accompanied by a savoury-sweet, sambal kicap dip. **888, Jalan Sungai Chat**



Uncover exciting things to do in Johor Bahru with Journify.

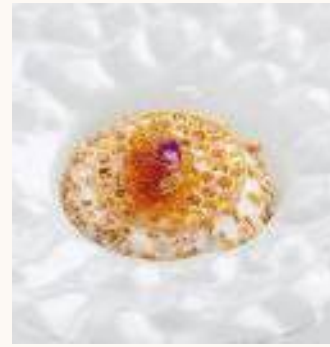


Malaysia Airlines flies from Kuala Lumpur to Johor Bahru 15x weekly.

2 5 in 2025

Sometimes a personal endorsement of a hometown or favourite city is all we need, so we turned to *Going Places* insiders across our network for the best places to visit this year





FOR SIX WONDERFUL YEARS, I called Kuala Lumpur home and made it my mission to visit as much of Malaysia as possible. Weekends were spent exploring George Town, Taiping, Cameron Highlands, Kedah and Langkawi. Longer trips were made to discover the national parks, culture

and wildlife of Sabah and Sarawak and to dive into the incredible islands off the east coast. Favourite trip? Cycling from Kuala Lumpur to George Town, via Ipoh and Taiping, with a detour to ride to the top of Gunung Jerai to take in those incredible views across Kedah.

SHARON CROWTHER IN MALAYSIA

1

Kedah

Just in time for Visit Kedah 2025, experience what curious travellers and adventure seekers love about this lush northern state



IMAGE: THINNESH KUMAR (GUNUNG KERANG)



“

**[In Kedah] the
Gunung Jerai
Paragliding Park
offers daredevils the
highest launch site in
Peninsular Malaysia ”**

Looking north from the summit of Gunung Jerai – 1,200m above sea level – Kedah’s paddy fields spread out like a patchwork quilt as far as the eye can see. To the left, the Andaman Sea shimmers. It is a view that’s attracting a growing number of tourists to drive, cycle or even hike to the summit of this impressive mountain, which is home to the popular Jerai Hill Resort and attractions.

Further down the slopes, the Gunung Jerai Eco Park, Tupah Recreational Forest and Titi Hayun nature reserve are becoming increasingly popular for hiking, waterfalls and natural swimming pools, nestled among spectacular old-growth rainforest. You’ll also find the Gunung Jerai Paragliding Park, which

offers daredevils the highest launch site in peninsular Malaysia.

Other natural wonders that are drawing crowds to Kedah include the natural hot springs of Ulong Legong in Kampung Kedah Ulu Legong in Baling, and Gunung Keriang, a 250-million-year-old limestone mountain, rich in local folklore, located just outside the city of Alor Setar. Shaped like an elephant’s head, the summit of this iconic hill is a short but steep climb away for adventure lovers.

Those looking for a less strenuous encounter with the outdoors may venture to the Seri Banian Malay Village in Pendang to experience dance, music and food customs in a traditional rural village setting.

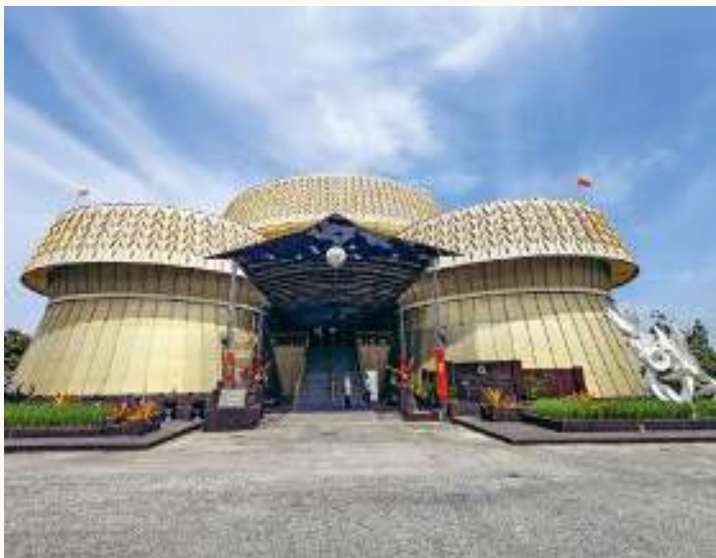
Five more ways to Experience Kedah

There's more to Kedah than the famed beaches of Langkawi – here are some must-visit highlights in the capital of Alor Setar and across the state



Kedah Paddy Museum

The Muzium Padi, or Paddy Museum, is a must-visit for those exploring Kedah, especially in Alor Setar. Nestled amidst the region's iconic paddy fields, the museum celebrates the deep-rooted history and cultural importance of rice cultivation in Kedah. Housed in a distinctive three-storey building shaped like bushels of rice stalks, it offers an engaging exploration of the area's agricultural heritage. Notable highlights include a stunning 360-degree mural, painted by 60 North Korean artists, stretching 103m long and standing eight metres tall. This masterpiece captures the serene beauty of Alor Setar's rural landscape, making the museum a fascinating blend of art, history and agriculture.



IMAGES: THINNESS KUMAR

Pekan Rabu Complex

This market is a must-visit when in Kedah, especially for those seeking traditional Malay crafts and unique souvenirs. Renowned across the state as the top destination for handcrafted items, local snacks, textiles and authentic Malay preserves, the complex boasts an array of vibrant stalls. Whether you're looking for decorative pieces or a taste of local culture, there's something for everyone. Don't miss the food court, where you can enjoy a variety of local dishes and even pack a lunch for your journey ahead. It's the perfect spot to experience Kedah's rich heritage and flavours.

“

Whether you're looking for decorative pieces or a taste of local culture, there's something for everyone”



Alor Setar Tower

Take it easy with a visit to Menara Alor Setar, also known as Kedah Tower. Standing at 165.5m, this iconic telecommunication tower offers breathtaking views of the city from multiple vantage points. Choose between the observation deck at 88m, the open deck at 105m or indulge in a unique dining experience at Starsky, the revolving restaurant at 94m. Whether you're savouring a meal or simply soaking in the panoramic scenery, Menara Alor Setar is a must-visit destination that combines modern charm with unforgettable views of Kedah's landscapes.

Beris Lake

A visit to Kedah is incomplete without a road trip to the serene Beris Lake. D' Puncak Beris Lake Resort is a peaceful spot that offers a perfect escape from the bustle of everyday life and welcomes visitors with its charming wooden chalets sitting gracefully along the water. For those seeking a more rustic adventure, there's the option to pitch a tent on the grassy meadow overnight and awaken to the gentle ripples of the lake. Kayaking to the lake's centre lets you enjoy the shimmering waters, while a barbecue dinner by the shore as evening falls completes the experience.

“

A visit to Kedah is incomplete without a road trip to the serene Beris Lake. This peaceful spot offers a perfect escape from the bustle of everyday life ”



Bujang Valley

Nestled in Kedah's peaceful landscapes, Bujang Valley is a gem for history lovers on a road trip through Malaysia. Known as the cradle of ancient civilisation, this archaeological site unveils the foundations of prehistoric settlements in Kedah and the remnants of a thriving Hindu-Buddhist kingdom dating back over a thousand years. As you journey through lush fields and charming villages, discover highlights like the Sungai Batu archaeological site and Candi Bukit Batu Pahat, an ancient temple ruin with intricate craftsmanship. The Bujang Valley Archaeological Museum offers further insight, displaying unearthed artefacts such as ceramics and statues.

“

Nestled in Kedah's peaceful landscapes, Bujang Valley is a gem for history lovers on a road trip through Malaysia”

Tioman Island

(PAHANG)



2

While it's always been a darling of the diving community, Tioman Island is now becoming the island of choice for upscale travellers seeking understated luxury and a place to disconnect. Located two hours by boat from Mersing, on Malaysia's east coast, this distinctive island is known for its dramatic mountainous silhouette, densely forested interior and curving white sandy beaches. In its surrounding sea, corals teem with life and reef sharks meander close to the surface.

The latest low-key luxury resort to open is The Boathouse, a serene escape reached by the resort's private boat, with its own secluded beach. Unfussy and effortlessly chic, The Boathouse focuses on simple pleasures, a slower pace and reconnecting with nature.

Taiping

(PERAK)

3

An hour north of foodie haven Ipoh lies the bustling heritage town of Taiping. Though often overlooked in mainstream tourist itineraries, Taiping is a destination that holds its own when it comes to sites of historical significance. In fact, the town is proudly home to no less than 40 "firsts" in Malaysia that are attracting a growing number of landmark-loving tourists to explore its popular Heritage Trail.

Visit the Aun Tong Coffee Mill, the oldest in Malaysia; the Perak Museum, the first one in the country; and the Taiping Railway Station, home to Malaysia's first modern railway line. You can even visit Malaysia's oldest prison where there's a gallery selling arts and crafts made by inmates. The latest addition to Taiping's heritage trail is the town's 140-year-old market, the oldest in Malaysia, which was recently restored to its former glory and reopened at the end of 2024.



“

Taiping is a destination that holds its own when it comes to sites of historical significance”

IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK (TAIPING, RANAU)

In the highlands of Sabah, the mountain town of Kundasang in Ranau has grown a reputation as a welcoming host for hikers tackling Malaysia's highest peak, Mount Kinabalu, or visitors who simply want to view the landmark up close. But those who come for the mountain now stay for the area's thriving adventure sports scene.

Tackle the world's highest Via Ferrata on Kota Kinabalu's Panalaban Rock Face, ride an ATV through the Kundasang Highlands, go whitewater rafting on the Mokodou River, soar over rainforests and valleys with a paragliding operator or head to the nearby tourist resort of Poring for canopy walks and hot springs.

Ranau is also home to a growing cross-country and downhill mountain biking community, with numerous trail sites being

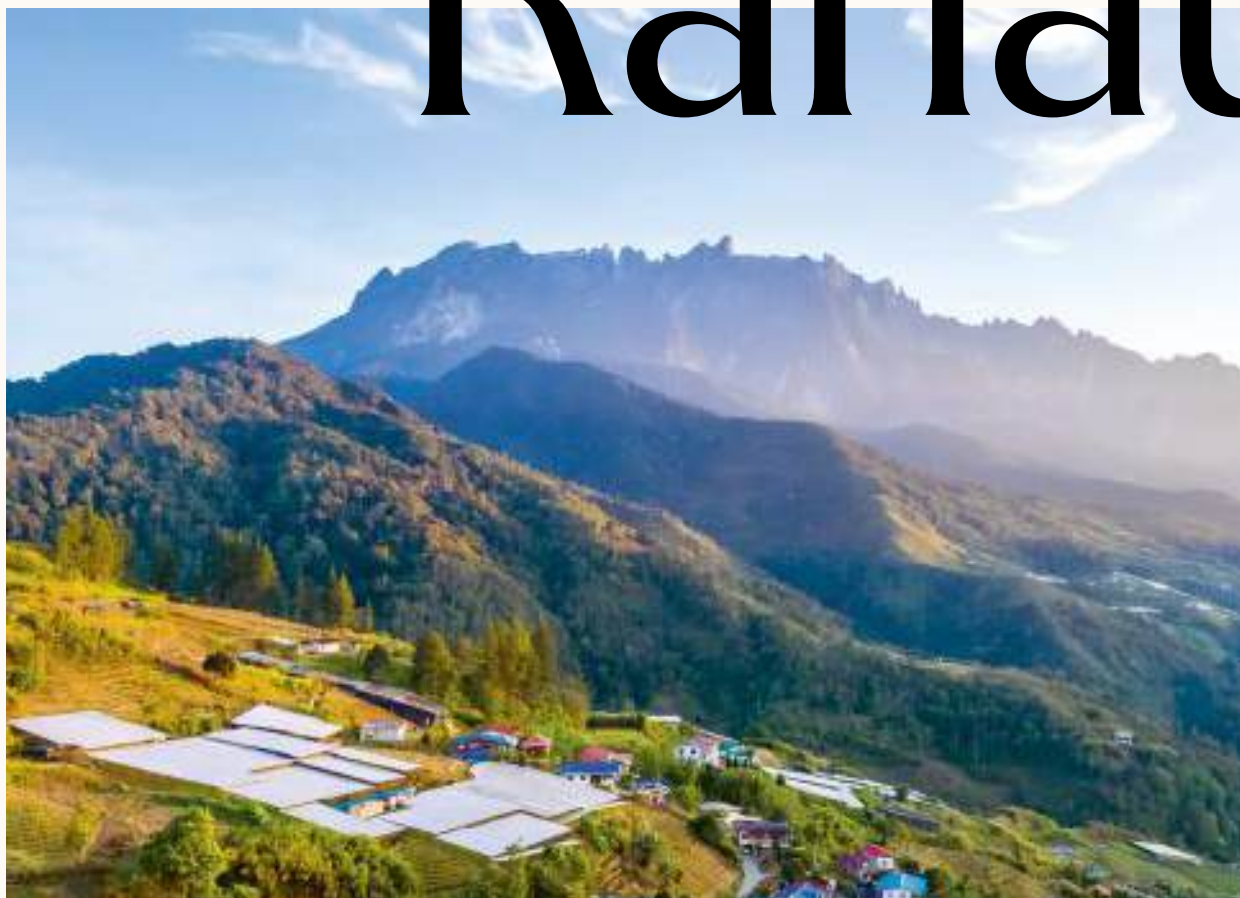
developed for tourism and competition. At the centre of the movement is Kampung Kilimu and Kilimu Adventure Park, Ranau's first downhill mountain bike park. Featuring fast descents and technical inclines through spectacular mountain scenery at every turn, Kampung Kilimu is quickly making a name for itself as an up-and-coming destination for trail-seekers. The adventure park recently hosted the Sabah Enduro Mountain Bike Race which attracted riders from across Southeast Asia.

“

Ranau is also home to a growing cross-country and downhill mountain biking community, with numerous trail sites being developed for tourism and competition”

4

Ranau (SABAH)





5

Cameron Highlands

(PAHANG)

Realising that tea plantation tourism will only get you so many visitors, Cameron Highlands has reinvented itself as Malaysia's most surreal and insta-worthy destination. From a butterfly garden to an alpaca sanctuary, experiences and photo opportunities abound in Pahang's hilltop tourist hotspot. Enjoy a vintage afternoon tea amidst a carpet of blooms at Cameron Highlands Flora Park, wander among a hundred succulents in Cactus Valley, or step into a whimsical Hobbit village from *The Lord of the Rings*, the area's newest picture-perfect attraction. Opened in 2024, Hobbitoon is home to a collection of charming replica hobbit houses, straight out of The Shire, that makes a magical background for photoshoots with friends and families.

George Town

(PENANG)

6

Foodie-focused travel is nothing new in George Town – the city has been welcoming street food lovers to its hawker stalls and kopitiam for years. But the tides are shifting in this colourful coastal community as increasing numbers of business travellers bring an appetite for contemporary dining options.

The most recent addition, Peninsula House, is without doubt the most exciting restaurant to open in George Town in years. Located in India House, a once derelict historical building with an imposing façade, Peninsula House is an airy, open-concept dining room and kitchen with a contemporary global menu. On the same street, Beach St Bistrot is another relatively new addition to George Town's dining scene and offers modern European fare in a modern, minimalist setting.

While contemporary fine dining restaurants are a growing concept in George Town, they're not entirely new either. Restaurant au Jardin opened its doors in 2019 and attained a Michelin Star in 2022, proving that there's more to George Town's culinary credentials than char kway teow and hokkien mee.



IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK (CAMERON HIGHLANDS, KUALA LUMPUR, MIRI)



Kuala ⁷ Lumpur

While there are hundreds of reasons to visit Malaysia's capital, retail therapy is quickly rising to the top of many travellers' itineraries. With just the right mix of designer labels, Western and Asian high street brands, and quality local couture, all housed inside sprawling world-class malls, it's easy to see why visitors from all over the world flock to this shopping haven.

Pavilion, Suria KLCC and Mid Valley Megamall are all retail hotspots with their own unique mix of outlets, entertainment and restaurants. The Exchange TRX is the latest mega mall to open its doors and encompasses more than 400 retailers and over a million square feet of retail space, right at the heart of the city.

“

The Exchange TRX is the latest mega mall to open its doors and encompasses more than 400 retailers”

In 2024, Sarawak's Niah National Park became Malaysia's newest designated Unesco World Heritage Site due to its rich archaeological significance which, until recently, had gone largely unrecognised. Now, the site of the oldest human remains in Southeast Asia is achieving global attention and the town of Miri is preparing to welcome visitors from all over the world.

The park has multiple impressive cave sites including Great Cave, Moon Cave, Painted Cave and Traders' Cave, each with its own unique story. Take Painted Cave – once a burial site filled with boat-shaped wooden coffins, its walls are adorned with figures painted by prehistoric inhabitants. The paintings, graves and artefacts are on display for visitors to see.



8 Miri (SARAWAK)

9

ULRIKE LEMMIN WOOLFREY

Doha

The Qatari capital has been my adopted home twice over, and my second stint, now in its third year, is a very different experience to my first in the early 2000s. Over the last two decades, Doha has emerged as a powerhouse of art and design – art installations can be found across the city and even in the desert, and design and innovation is being actively fostered through events such as the Design Doha biennial, which was inaugurated in 2024. World-class museums, including the IM Pei-designed Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), and the National Museum of Qatar, designed in the shape of the gypsum formation called the desert rose, are on every visitor's must-see list. The M7 Design Hub and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art also curate superb exhibitions each season. And in 2025, the choices are diverse, thrilling, as well as chilling. Here are three of the best:

Ellsworth Kelly at 100, M7

The Middle East's first-ever retrospective of this American painter, sculptor and printmaker brings together 70 works of colour and abstract design celebrating what would have been the artist's centennial. Whether it's pencil-drawn sketches, blocks of bright colours, or a simple yellow shape set in its very own room, this is a truly celebratory exhibition. Until 25 February; m7.org.qa

Splendours of the Atlas: A Voyage through Morocco's Heritage, MIA

Part of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture, this exhibition brings together some 200 artifacts, manuscripts, photographs and musical instruments, some of which have never been displayed before. Some of the jewellery, including an Alawite headdress, are truly stunning. Until 8 March; mia.org.qa

Everything is red and grey: Forensic Architecture, Mathaf

Presented by Forensic Architecture, a research agency that exposes state violence, this poignant exhibition features two Palestinian villages that were systemically wiped by Israel in 1948. Incredible scientific investigations, and sadly still so relevant today. mathaf.org.qa



10

PARISA PICHITMARN

Bangkok



Growing up in Bangkok long before the *Hangover* hype, my childhood wasn't set against a glitzy cityscape. But in the blink of three decades, my city of noodle shophouses transformed into a capital of glossy skyscrapers. I love the duality of Bangkok, there's plenty of traditional culture alongside all these towering marks of progress. Today, there's a dizzying number of gorgeous rooftop bars, but the latest one which opened in 2024, is the first to offer upscale Thai cuisine without a sky-high price tag. Helmed by Thitid Tassanakajohn of Michelin-starred Le Du, Le Du Kaan (Jedukaan.com) sits on the 56th floor of the Empire Building and serves modern Thai share plates, uninterrupted 360-degree views and a gorgeous garden. Throw in a gold mosaic pool in the sky, and you've got something worth flying for.

STEPHEN O'CONNELL

Hong Kong

11

My life follows a familiar trajectory – from the initial plan of two years, I've now been living in Hong Kong for 10 years and counting. I love how compact and convenient it is. I can go for a swim at Repulse Bay in the morning, enjoy a great lunch at a trendy new restaurant, hike the Dragon's Back or The Twins in the afternoon, and end the day with an evening cocktail at a rooftop bar overlooking Victoria Harbour. Known internationally more as a finance, foodie and shopping metropolis, Hong Kong has recently invested massively in art and culture. With new world-class museums such as M+ and the Palace Museum, as well as numerous local galleries and studios, the art scene is thriving. Surprisingly, Hong Kong has never had a truly world-class stadium – until now. The futuristic 50,000-seat Kai Tak Sports Park at the old airport will open in the first quarter of 2025, with Coldplay as the inaugural international act performing in April.



All through my life, David Bowie's extraordinary creativity across multiple artforms has been a major inspiration, and I'm proud that this vastly influential, London-born legend once graced this metropolis that pulsates with artistic activity, especially envelope-pushing music. As a London resident for 14 years until 2007, I witnessed fantastic, left-field acts in intimate or larger venues often twice a week. Next April, I'll be watching two of my favourite artists within eight days. On 13 September, the V&A's (Victoria & Albert Museum, vam.ac.uk) new, free-entry V&A East Storehouse at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford opens its David Bowie Centre, showcasing 90,000 priceless items from the transformative singer/songwriter's personal archives; I'm sure I'll be one of the exhibition's first patrons.



London

12

JONATHAN EVANS



My hometown is nicknamed the City of Sails for good reason: right at its doorstep sits the Hauraki Gulf, a coastal wonderland studded with over 50 islands, beautiful bays and safe anchorages that sailors dream of. The city is also home to over 1.5 million boats, including *Wish You Were Here*, our 34-foot Beneteau yacht.

For 12 years and counting, my husband and I have cast off from Westhaven Marina in pursuit of adventures. Regardless of where we went, there was always the thrill of seeing dolphins, Bryde's whales and little blue penguins

along the way. We've hiked up a volcano on Rangitoto Island, marvelled at near-extinct native birdlife on Tiritiri Matangi Island and snorkelled alongside manta rays around Great Barrier Island. When all we want is wine, cheese and a great view, we sail towards Waiheke Island. Race fans will flock to Auckland for the high-octane ITM New Zealand Sail Grand Prix on 18 and 19 January. But if you're yearning for more than a spectator sport, check out Viaduct Harbour Marina (viaductharbourmarina.co.nz) to hire a charter boat or book a cruise to the islands.

13 MAYA CALICA COLLINS

Auckland



Chiang Mai

14

CRAIG SAUERS

I've spent weeks or months in Chiang Mai each year since 2011, and I've seen it transform from a tourist hub into Thailand's true second city. The shift really accelerated after 2020, when Bangkok residents moved north to enjoy a slower pace of life. With international tourism at a standstill, locals reimagined their offerings for a more discerning domestic crowd. Some suburban immigrants stayed and started businesses, too.

Now Chiang Mai has a palpable new energy. The nightlife scene has flourished with bars like Bitter Truth, jazz club Noir, and Moai and Easter, a café by day, cocktail bar by night. Projects like Neighborhood, an artisanal food court-slash-social hub, have given Chiang Mai a cosmopolitan edge. The coffee scene, led by enterprises like Indigenous-owned Akha Ama is world class. Factor in familiar selling points – great food, wild jungles, mountain villages – and it's clear that Chiang Mai stands out on the global stage.

Manila

15

PIERRA CALASANZ LABRADOR

The Philippines is in a golden age of celebrating its own rich and diverse heritage, and in the capital city, you'll find numerous fairs that spotlight Filipino traditions, craftsmanship and ingenuity. Don't miss exquisite crafts, fashion and gourmet finds at ArteFino (at Power Plant Mall); handcrafted gifts, slow fashion and vintage Filipino jewellery at MaArte Fair (at Peninsula Manila Hotel); and a curated mix of traditional handloom weaves and artisan offerings at Habi Market Fair (Glorietta Activity Centre).

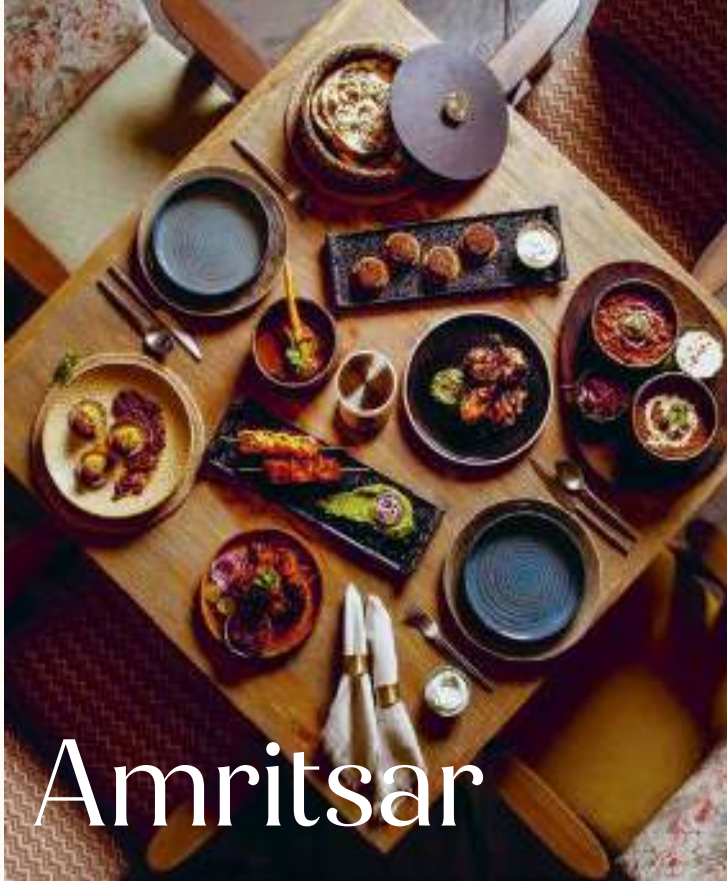
A government initiative, the National Arts & Crafts Fair at SM Megamall brings together cooperatives and artisans from across the Philippines to showcase their heritage handicrafts, with a special focus on the country's master artisans called "national living treasures". The Katutubo Pop-Up Market (at the Bench Tower, in Bonifacio Global City or BGC) held every other month offers a rotation of proudly local décor,



accessories and fashion – especially great for modern Filipiniana additions to your wardrobe. Manila FAME at the World Trade Centre showcases export-worthy furniture, fashion and handicrafts, while the indie PURVEYR Fair at the Metrotent Convention Centre highlights emerging artists and designers, making it incredibly popular with the young and cool crowd.

Many of the fairs happen in August (heritage month), as well as October and December. No matter which fair you catch, every event feels like an island-hopping, shopping adventure across the Philippines.





Amritsar

16 PUNITA MALHOTRA

This city is hands-down one of India's most electrifying culinary destinations. Over the years, my admiration for the Amritsar's rich tapestry of flavours has only deepened – from the sizzling Amritsari *kulcha* (stuffed leavened bread) and decadent *chole bhature* (a spicy chickpea curry) to the soul-stirring communal *langar* meal at the Golden Temple, where I was one among thousands of devotees. Lately, a bold gastronomic revolution has been reshaping the food scene as upscale and innovative establishments raise the stakes. Yes, there's delicious food everywhere, but if you want to take the experience up to luxurious heights, you can delight in authentic Indian cuisine at The Bagh (thebaghasr.com), a stunning gourmet dining destination, or at Elgin Café (elgincafe.in), for the vibrant and avant-garde creations of chef and cookbook author Suvir Saran, amid a decorator's fantasy (picture a Victorian-era glasshouse with a soaring ceiling, heavy drapery and loungers in striking patterns).



You can live all your life in Tokyo and still find something to discover.

The world's largest city is home to over 37 million residents, who lend Japan's capital with an energy that's unmatched by anywhere else. I first moved to Tokyo in 2007 to study at Waseda University, and since leaving in 2011, I return at least once a year to my second home.

Still the city with the greatest number of Michelin stars, foodies will be happy to know there's even more to look forward to in Tokyo. Boredom

isn't an option here, with over 137,000 restaurants

found in subway basements to swanky rooftops including Asia's top restaurant, SÉZANNE, which was recently awarded three Michelin stars. In 2025, take some time to visit the newly expanded teamLab Planets (10 new exhibitions will be revealed this year) as well as the rebirth of the iconic Sony Building into the Ginza Sony Park, which finally opens to the public in January.

17

KISSA CASTAÑEDA MCDERMOTT

Tokyo

I've been an expat in this cosmopolitan city for a decade and one of the things that keeps the adventure exciting is the culinary scene, a captivating fusion of tradition and innovation. From Michelin-starred restaurants such as Ultraviolet to the vibrant energy of local eateries, the city offers a diverse range of dining experiences. Think iconic dishes like *xiaolongbao* (soup dumplings), *shengjian bao* (pan-fried buns) and *congyoubing* (scallion pancakes), best enjoyed at the bustling food stalls of Yuyuan Garden. For a contemporary take on Chinese cuisine, Lotus Eatery in Zhongshan Park offers a modern twist on Yunnanese flavours, while Sichuan cuisine powerhouse Haidilao Hot Pot is an experience you will remember for years to come.

Before you go, pick up Fuchsia Dunlop's bestselling *Invitation to a Banquet: The Story of Chinese Food* (Penguin, 2024), a satisfying, erudite and very readable deep dive into the remarkably varied cuisine.

18

KUSHBOO KANNA

Shanghai



Born in Sri Lanka, I moved to Colombo nearly a decade ago for school and the city has since become my home. I love the city for its pockets of greenery that wrap around canals, streams and waterways, concealing fishing cats and vibrant birdlife. The sunsets on Marine Drive are straight out of a picture book, and the city is home to design-led, contemporary art spaces.

As the country returns to its past tourism glory, the last couple of years saw Colombo's gastronomy scene evolve, with the return of weekend organic markets serving island fare, local barista-run speciality coffee shops, international restaurants and speakeasy bars highlighting local spirits like arrack. Try progressive South Indian fine dining at Avartana housed inside the city's newest luxe hotel ITC Ratnadipa (itchohels.com) and don't miss the stunning MAYs Table ([@mays.table.cmb](https://mays.table.cmb)) serving authentic Thai dishes.

Colombo is a gateway to some of the most spectacular wildlife adventures on the planet. Make 2025 the year to see Sri Lanka's Big Four – leopard, elephant, sloth bear and blue whale – in their natural habitat.

ZINARA RATHNAYAKE

Colombo

19



20

SHANNON HARTONO

Jakarta

My home for 38 years has an incredible art scene, with globally acclaimed artists, events such as ARTJakarta (3 to 5 October) and Jakarta Illustration + Creative Arts Fair (JICAF, 18 September to 5 October) and fabulous museums. The newly renovated National Museum reopened its doors and is always worth a visit, as is the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Nusantara (MACAN) which showcases extraordinary collections by Indonesian and international artists. Visit by 6 April to catch Korakrit Arunanondchai's "Sing Dance Cry Breathe", exhibiting for the first time in Indonesia. Along with exciting art, the culinary scene is another Jakarta charm, with restaurants like August claiming the #46 spot on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list. Lush greenery is rare in the densely populated Jakarta but Hutan Kota Plataran offers an urban forest dining experience in the heart of the CBD. For a fine-dining modern take on classic Jakarta favourites, ESA in SCBD has an 8- or 12-course tasting menu that blows you away.

IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK (TOKYO, SHANGHAI, JAKARTA)



21

CLAIRE KNOX

Melbourne

Check out Gen Z queen Charlie XCX at St Jerome's Laneway festival in February; the same month sees The Prodigy and Kylie Minogue perform stadium shows. In March, there's Green Day, Roxette and the fabulous Port Fairy Folk Festival (in a coastal town a three-hour drive from Melbourne along the picturesque Great Ocean Road); in April the Libertines; in October it's all about Oasis; and in November Metallica will play. Plan your music travel well ahead – the big-name touring acts tend to sell out in a flash, so it's wise to also get on pre-sale lists and sign up with major ticketing outlets.

Like most of my generation in Melbourne, the soundtrack to my formative years included a vast and diverse list of excellent live music, soaked up at small and intimate pub band rooms and theatres; storied concert halls; mammoth stadiums; and sunny outdoor spaces such as the Sidney Myer Music Bowl and Botanic Gardens. In the summer, we'd pack up our tents and drive a few hours out of Melbourne for days-long festivals that had taken over wineries, farms and bushland.

The annual Big Day Out, held at the Melbourne Showgrounds from the early 90s through to 2014, was a rite of passage in our youth, allowing

us antipodeans the chance to see transformative artists from Björk and Beastie Boys to Rage Against the Machine and Pearl Jam. Any night of the week you can catch a gig, big or small, in Melbourne; the city's musical DNA was even officially recognised in 2019, when it was crowned the live music capital of the world for having more live music venues per capita than any other city in the world – even more than London, New York and Los Angeles.

After a crippling, pandemic-induced slowdown, 2024 saw a major revival of the scene. In October, the state government injected \$3.9 million into a "Victorian Gig Fund" that will benefit

the city's music industry and provide a lifeline to musicians, venues and festivals. Funding was also earmarked for emerging regional musicians, culturally and linguistically diverse artists, event producers and young performers. And the federal government allocated \$8.6 million in its 2024–25 budget to a "Revive Live" programme. The result is that 2025 is shaping up to be Melbourne's live music scene's great big renaissance. Scores of smaller and intimate venues are thriving again. And we can look forward to major headlining shows, smaller gigs and festivals.

I've lived in Mumbai all my life and recently I developed a newfound affinity toward this sprawl by the sea that is a leveller on many fronts. Its dense streets welcome migrants from across cultures and communities; its last few surviving Art Deco cinemas draw audiences that slither and slide between languages; a street-facing table at an Irani café awaits a patron who will seek delight in dunking *bun-mask* in sweet, milky tea. And if you have nowhere to go, you will always find refuge by the Arabian Sea. Long after its seven islands coalesced to form the metropolis, Mumbai – a port, a fishing dock, even housing a mausoleum in the middle of the sea – is best discovered on water. From sundowner sails and a boat ride with a maritime historian, to trying your hand at sailing and perhaps getting lucky with spotting dolphins, The Bombay Gypsea offers experiences that will make you look at the otherwise frenzied city in a whole new light.



22

KHORSHEDE DEBOO

Mumbai

IMAGES: MACLAY HERIOT (MELBOURNE), SHUTTERSTOCK (MUMBAI, PARIS, DANANG), COURTESY OF MANAVA (PHNOM PENH)

Phnom Penh

23

TARA FT SERING

Over the past several years, one of the region's fastest-growing cities has witnessed a building boom and creative renaissance – from food and fashion to art and design – fuelled by young and entrepreneurial talent. I especially love how many homegrown brands have taken centuries-old craft traditions such as ceramic-making, weaving and basketry and given them a stylish and contemporary spin. After five years of living in the country, I have my favourites: soft blankets and sturdy rugs by

Fair Weave and rattan homeware and accessories by Manava, handwoven by villagers in Siem Reap. You can find all these and many more in stylish Phnom Penh boutiques such as The Weaver's Tale along Street 240 and For Someone I Like on Street 464. Talk about a win-win situation: these brands support local artisans with a living wage and keep craft traditions alive, and we get all these gorgeous pieces of functional art.



24

Danang

MERVIN LEE

As a photographer based in Vietnam, I've witnessed Danang make a name for itself for an impressive array of architectural marvels. There's the country's tallest statue of Lady Buddha, the legendary-on-Instagram Giant Hand Bridge and the fire-breathing Dragon Bridge. And did you know the city hosts a waterfront international fireworks festival every June? But Danang is also primarily a foodie town with beach access and long, mild summers. In other words, it's laidback and ideal – you can gorge on street food then walk it all off with a stroll along the Hàn River where you can grab a cup of that legendary Vietnamese coffee.

NEW DESTINATION



Paris

25

In March, Malaysia Airlines will begin direct service between Kuala Lumpur and the city of art and haute couture, the Louvre and the newly reopened Notre Dame. And we've got the perfect guide for you! Check out *Going Places* in March 2025 to see where we're off to around the City of Lights.

Choose your own adventure

The brand-new Hyatt Centric City Centre Kuala Lumpur is inspiring guests to venture off the beaten path and explore Malaysia's vibrant capital city like a local



With its modern interiors, distinctive dining concepts and wall art by Malaysia's hottest graffiti artist, JeFr, the five-star, 21-storey Hyatt Centric City Centre Kuala Lumpur (KL), the first of its kind in Peninsular Malaysia, is no ordinary Hyatt hotel.

Dedicated to bringing travellers closer to authentic experiences, local flavours and neighbourhood gems that make Kuala Lumpur one of Southeast Asia's most visited cities, it is seamlessly bridging the gap between big-brand appeal and boutique charm. The hotel also pays homage to the city's evolution from a tin mining town to a bustling metropolis.

Located right at the heart of the action, in KL's Golden Triangle, Hyatt Centric City Centre KL is close to all the city's main attractions. From here, it's easy to stroll to the KL Tower and the world-famous Petronas Twin Towers, enjoy a canopy walk in an urban jungle in KL Forest Eco Park or browse the city's world-class shopping malls. To discover KL's hidden gems, wander through the city's colourful laneways and street art displays.

At the end of a long day spent exploring, guests can relax in one of 312 individually designed rooms and suites, sip a cocktail at our rooftop bar @21 or grab a bite to eat in one of the hotel's unique restaurants including

TanBuri, which offers authentic Tandoori cuisine in donburi style, and IL Forno, an Italian trattoria serving fresh pasta and handmade pizzas.

Still hungry for adventure? The team at Hyatt Centric City Centre KL will be happy to share recommendations for their own favourite spots around the city.

Visit [hyattcentriccitycentrekl.com](https://www.hyattcentriccitycentrekl.com) to book your stay



Your passport to Kuala Lumpur

By combining high-speed airport transfers with unlimited rides on the capital city's extensive train network, KL TravelPass ensures you can move around effortlessly

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Planning a visit to the Petronas Twin Towers? Eager to uncover the street art of Pasar Seni or shop in Bukit Bintang? Simply hop on the nearest train and arrive at your destination stress-free. With



the KL TravelPass, getting around is as exciting and convenient as the destinations themselves, whether you're a history buff, a shopaholic or a foodie.

This all-in-one pass ensures that your time in KL is seamless and worry-free. At RM81 for a single trip or RM126 for a return for Malaysians (slightly higher for non-Malaysians), the KL TravelPass represents significant savings over individual tickets. Plus, with the flexibility of purchasing it online or via an app, it's even easier to plan your adventure.

Visit www.kliaekspres.com to purchase your KL TravelPass today and start discovering Kuala Lumpur



Malaysia's wonderland

Sunway City Kuala Lumpur is a sprawling purpose-built entertainment and hospitality destination that attracts millions of visitors to Malaysia every year, and its luxury flagship resort just got a major glow-up

Located just 20 minutes from the city centre and 30 minutes from KLIA, Sunway City Kuala Lumpur is an 800-acre integrated township built on principles of sustainability and legacy.

Here, Sunway Lagoon theme park has been serving up good times for more than 30 years, as the squeals of thrill-seekers that echo throughout the grounds will attest to. From the top of the Vuvuzela, the world's tallest vortex water slide, to the waves of the world's largest surf pool and more than 90 other attractions, Malaysia's largest theme park continues

to push the boundaries of entertainment with bigger, faster and more exciting rides every year.

Nearby, also within the city, a towering Egyptian pyramid and a giant replica of the Great Sphinx of Giza stand at the entrance to Sunway Pyramid Mall, one of Malaysia's largest retail destinations. Home to more than 900 retail stores and 250 dining options, this 4.3 million square feet entertainment complex includes an ice rink, a 48-lane bowling alley and an 11-screen movie theatre.

Part of the township's unwavering appeal is that its



vast suite of entertainment options is directly connected to more than 1,000 luxurious rooms and suites in three iconic hotels, including the recently rejuvenated Sunway Resort Hotel.

Thanks to a US\$60m, 4-year transformation, Sunway Resort Hotel is now equipped to offer bespoke room categories to meet the needs of every traveller. Waterventure Terrace rooms give families direct access to an impressive children's aquaplay zone while the Wellness Suite is furnished with state-of-the-art fitness equipment and in-room



ambient sound and light. There is even a Family Fun Suite, complete with game consoles and a karaoke machine, and a Premier Leisure Lounge where parents can relax while watching their little ones play at the Wonderland Explorers kids club.

The hotel's revitalisation is complete with a brand-new spa and a slew of new dining options, including Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill, the first of its kind outside the UK, and Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes, known for their legendary CrazyShake® milkshakes.

Billed as a "once-in-a-generation" transformation, this impressive refurbishment will ensure Sunway City Kuala Lumpur and its attractions continue to wow visitors for years to come.

To experience this wonderland, visit sunwayhotels.com/sunway-resort and book your stay at Sunway Resort Hotel





Clear as day

A non-surgical solution offered by IKONIK, Ortho-K's overnight contact lenses improve a child's eyesight throughout the day

Good eyesight is essential for the growth of children and teenagers. It allows them to socialise with others and participate in activities – creating happy memories and essential developmental skills. Young people with poor eyesight, however, are hesitant to join in the fun with their peers. If they have a hard time tracking things visually, they may appear uncoordinated and could feel insecure about themselves.

Eyeglasses or contact lenses may be the obvious solution, but not everyone likes wearing them. Children and teenagers would rather run around and enjoy their hobbies free from corrective eyewear.

Spectacle wearers don't have to worry about misplacing, dropping or breaking their eyeglasses. Contact lens wearers won't have to deal with eye irritation, redness and dryness.

A unique way to see the world clearly

If you're struggling to make your child aged five to 17 years old wear their eyeglasses or contact lenses daily, there's another alternative to give them clear vision.

Ortho-K, or orthokeratology, uses a special set of contact lenses customised for its wearer. Worn overnight, these

safe, non-invasive lenses gently mold the shape of the cornea, the eyes' clear, dome-shaped outer layer. Think of them as retainers for the eyes that correct refractive errors that cause blurry vision.

After wearing them throughout the night, your child can read and see nearby objects all day without ocular assistance. Studies have shown that Ortho-K can even slow down the progression of nearsightedness by 50%. Beyond visual acuity, wearing Ortho-K at an early age can boost your child's learning, development and confidence.

Happy patient

As the leading centre for children's refraction error correction in Malaysia, IKONIK recommends Ortho-K to its younger clientele. Highly trained clinical optometrists start off by conducting a precise, thorough assessment to determine the patient's most accurate eye power using appropriate medication and cutting-edge equipment.

"The clinical optometrist's assessment was extremely detailed and professional, ensuring that we understood every step of the process," says Puan Abidah,



sharing about her son's journey with Ortho-K.

"I'm extremely grateful to IKONIK for helping my son improve his vision with Ortho-K lenses. After just a month of use, we've noticed amazing results. The lenses are safe and comfortable for him to wear every night. His myopia has remained stable, which gives us peace of mind."

The solution also helped improve her son's focus in class. "He recently scored high marks in his monthly quizzes. He's also enjoying greater freedom in sports, no longer held back by glasses. I highly recommend IKONIK to any parent considering vision correction for their child," Puan Abidah says.

Through Ortho-K's non-surgical and reversible lenses, your child could also experience freedom from eyeglasses and contact lenses. Even better, you won't have to buy new eyeglasses every time your child's eye prescription changes. Say goodbye to unnecessary spending after a one-time investment in Ortho-K.

Curious to know if your child is fit for Ortho-K? Visit ikonik-eyecentre.com or call +60 3-9765 1368 to schedule a detailed eye evaluation.

January

BEST SPOTS IN MALAYSIA

2025

The best hotels and restaurants to stay and dine in across Malaysia this month



Sumptuous steaks at Firewood in Penang

Located on the ground floor of a heritage building in Penang's capital, George Town, **Firewood** is where young Malaysian chef Ker Yang Hao serves up perfectly charred, flavourful steaks, seafood and vegetables on an open-fire grill. Recently named a 2025 Michelin Selected Restaurant, Firewood showcases the chef's nine years of kitchen expertise, including a notable stint at Gordon Ramsay's Bread Street Kitchen in Singapore. firegroup.my

Rock Salt Restaurant

Discover unique flavours at Rock Salt, a Mont Kiara restaurant serving European fusion cuisine with a Mongolian theme in a casual, modern setting. The restaurant's signature dishes are cooked tableside on 260°C Himalayan salt blocks, infusing a distinct flavour while keeping dishes perfectly warm throughout the meal. Must-tries include the tender Tokushima A5 wagyu steak, Mongolian fried rice and the restaurant's signature Caesar salad that also comes served on a rock salt slab. instagram.com/rocksaltkualalumpur



FirePitz

Located in Horizon Hills, Johor Bahru, **FirePitz** offers a unique open-flame dining experience, featuring premium Japanese wagyu, halal Hanwoo and Kobe beef. Founded by Chef Lew Jia Jiun, formerly from Gordon Ramsay's Singapore restaurant, FirePitz offers guests the exclusivity of selecting their preferred meat cuts on the spot. Enjoy a complimentary glass of wine with any premium steak order using promo code **MASFP2025** until 15 April 2025. instagram.com/firepitz_restaurant

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Sutera, Johor Bahru | Kuching | Kota Kinabalu

*For suitable candidates only.

KKLIU: 2913/EXP 31.12.2026

THIS IS MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY



Welcome aboard Malaysia Aviation Group's (MAG) airlines! This month, see what we have on offer to ensure that you have a safe, seamless and fuss-free journey with us.

60

**Inside
our airlines**

News and updates
from MAG Airlines

68

**Discover our
network**

See where
MAG Airlines can
take you, around
the country and
around the world

75

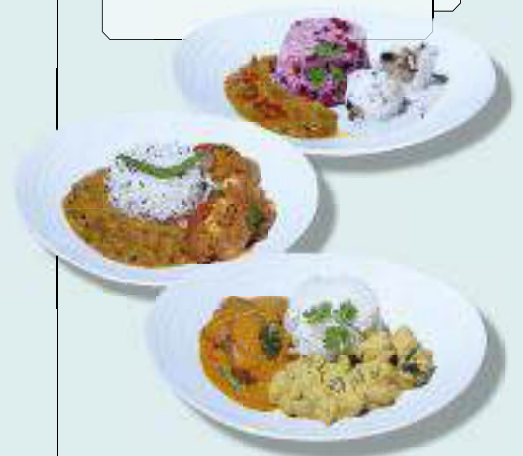
**Onboard
entertainment**

Keep yourself
entertained with
our latest releases of
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TV shows and music



Malaysia Airlines partners with the Oberoi Group to enhance South Asia in-flight dining

Malaysia Airlines is elevating in-flight dining on South Asia routes by partnering with the Oberoi Group, bringing refined culinary experiences to flights departing from Kolkata, New Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai. Renowned for exceptional service since 1934, the collaboration blends world-class dining with enhanced comfort and elegance. This partnership underscores Malaysia Airlines' commitment to enriching journeys and delivering exceptional hospitality, ensuring a memorable journey for passengers.



MASkargo and Qatar Airways Cargo strengthen services with partnership

MASkargo, a subsidiary of Malaysia Aviation Group, has partnered with Qatar Airways Cargo to enhance global air freight connectivity. Since 1 October 2024, the alliance has moved 2,400 tonnes of cargo, including perishables and pharmaceuticals. Twice-weekly Boeing 777 flights from Doha to Kuala Lumpur add over 200 tonnes of capacity, with further links to Sydney and Melbourne via Airbus A330 freighters. This collaboration strengthens access to Europe, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Levant, Africa and Asia Pacific markets.



A330neo



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T&Cs apply.



Malaysia Airlines launches the MH Young Explorers Club

Malaysia Airlines is thrilled to announce the launch of the MH Young Explorers Club in honour of World Children's Day. This new programme is designed just for children aged 12 and under, offering them cool perks and special services to make their travels extra fun and memorable.

With the MH Young Explorers Club, we're doubling down on our mission to provide families with amazing travel adventures that's all about comfort, luxury and creating unforgettable moments together.

"Travelling with children requires extra care and thought," said Ahmad Luqman Mohd Azmi, Chief Executive Officer of Airlines, Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG). "That's why we created this club – to make family trips smoother, more exciting and

a little less stressful for everyone, whether you're a parent or a little adventurer. It's all part of our promise to ensure every passenger feels special from check-in to touchdown."

So, what's in store? Members of the MH Young Explorers Club get access to:

- Priority check-in counters and family boarding perks
- Special kids' menus and tailored in-flight entertainment
- Goodies like an exclusive kids' passport to track their travels, a fun activity pack and a Joey & Mom washcloth for babies
- Extra perks at the Golden Lounges in KLIA Terminal 1

And that's not all – our Enrich Junior programme is also getting a big boost! It's part of our loyalty programme for young travellers, letting them rack up points from an early age to unlock cool rewards and experiences with Malaysia Airlines and our partners.

"We want to build lifelong connections with our young passengers," Luqman adds. "With the MH Young Explorers Club and Enrich Junior, we're setting the stage for a new generation of globetrotters while making Malaysia Airlines the go-to choice for family travel."

Ready to explore? Check out all the details about the MH Young Explorers Club and Enrich Junior programme today!



▶
**SCAN HERE
FOR MORE**



Enrich recognised at the Marketing Excellence Awards 2024

Enrich, Malaysia Airlines' travel and lifestyle loyalty programme, won five prestigious awards at the Marketing Excellence Awards 2024, including Gold for Excellence in Customer Engagement. Its campaign, "The Love Language of Loyalty: Winning the Hearts of Enrich Members" impressed with its innovative consumer engagement. It also secured the following four Silver Awards:

- Excellence in Customer Insight/Market Research
- Excellence in Data-Driven Marketing
- Excellence in Relationship Marketing
- Excellence in Loyalty Marketing





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Check your eligibility via the QR code at least 72 hours before departure. Alternatively, you automatically qualify to place an offer if you received an email invitation from MHupgrade.

Find out more at malaysiaairlines.com/mhupgrade



malaysia
airlines

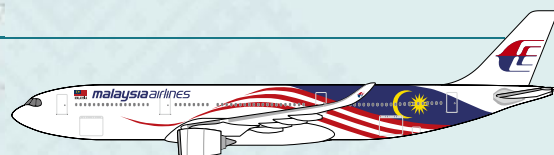
Image is for illustration purposes only. Cabin upgrade features may differ from aircraft to aircraft and are dependent on the flight route. Other T&Cs apply.


THIS IS MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY
Our fleet



A350-900  



No. of Aircraft **7** | Passenger Seating **286**
Length **66.80m** | Wingspan **64.75m** | Height **17.05m**
Max. Cruising Speed **944km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



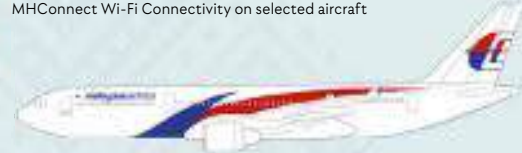
A330-900  



No. of Aircraft **1** | Passenger Seating **297**
Length **63.689m** | Wingspan **64m** | Height **16.788m**
Max. Cruising Speed **980km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-300  

No. of Aircraft **15** | Passenger Seating **290**
Length **63.66m** | Wingspan **60.30m** | Height **16.79m**
Max. Cruising Speed **980km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-200  

No. of Aircraft **6** | Passenger Seating **287**
Length **58.82m** | Wingspan **60.30m** | Height **17.39m**
Max. Cruising Speed **880km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



B737-800 NG

No. of Aircraft **42** | Passenger Seating **160, 166, 174**
Length **39.5m** | Wingspan **38.5m** | Height **12.50m**
Max. Cruising Speed **857km/h**



B737-8

No. of Aircraft **4** | Passenger Seating **174**
Length **39.52m** | Wingspan **35.90m** | Height **12.30m**
Max. Cruising Speed **976km/h**



ATR 72-500

No. of Aircraft **9** | Passenger Seating **72**
Length **27.05m** | Wingspan **27.17m** | Height **7.65m**
Max. Cruising Speed **510km/h**



B737-800 NG

No. of Aircraft **5** | Passenger Seating **189**
Length **39.5m** | Wingspan **38.50m** | Height **12.50m**
Max. Cruising Speed **857km/h**



A330-200F

No. of Aircraft **3** | Maximum Cargo Capacity **65 (70) tonnes**
Length **58.82m** | Wingspan **60.30m** | Height **16.88m**
Max. Cruising Speed **1,021km/h**



ATR 72-500

No. of Aircraft **8** | Passenger Seating **68**
Length **27.05m** | Wingspan **27.17m** | Height **7.65m**
Max. Cruising Speed **510km/h**



Viking DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400

No. of Aircraft **6** | Passenger Seating **19**
Length **15.77m** | Wingspan **19.80m** | Height **5.94m**
Max. Cruising Speed **337km/h**



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COVID-19 COVERAGE



Emergency Medical Hospital Expenses benefit of up to MYR 30,000 (domestic) & MYR 500,000 (international)

Quarantine Allowance benefit of up to MYR 3,500 (domestic & international)

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ON-TIME PERFORMANCE
Our check-in counters close 60 minutes before departure. Please allow at least 45 minutes for immigration and security clearance. Boarding gates will close 30 minutes prior to departure.

CABIN LUGGAGE HANDLING
Passenger and crew safety on board our flights are our highest priority. In compliance with the airline's policy and in observing Occupational Safety and Health Regulation requirements, cabin crew are no longer required to stow passengers' hand luggage in the overhead stowage compartments. This is to minimise occupational hazards and ergonomic risks faced by cabin crew in the aircraft. Cabin crew on duty will, however, assist passengers travelling with infants, young passengers travelling alone, the elderly and passengers with reduced mobility. Passengers who are fit and in good health must carry, stow and secure their hand luggage on board. Hand luggage exceeding the 7kg weight limit must be checked in before boarding.

PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDs)
For safety reasons, in line with the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia guidelines, mobile phones and small PEDs can be used throughout your journey in "Flight Mode". Large devices with screen size above 12 inches are not allowed to be used during takeoff and landing. Whilst cruising, all devices can be used in "Flight Mode". Devices transmitting cellular signals to satellites must remain switched off throughout the flight, until disembarkation. The Captain may prohibit the use of devices if there is any interference with the aircraft's system.

LITHIUM BATTERIES
Lithium metal or lithium ion cells or batteries for portable electronic devices (PEDs), including medical devices, must not exceed 2g for lithium metal batteries and 100Wh for lithium ion batteries. All spare batteries, including lithium metal or lithium ion cells or batteries for PEDs, must be carried in passengers' carry-on baggage only. These batteries must be individually protected to prevent short circuits. PEDs containing non-spillable batteries must be 12V or less or 100Wh or less. Passengers are allowed to carry a maximum of two spare batteries onboard. These batteries must be individually protected to prevent short circuits.

NO-SMOKING & VAPING POLICY
Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is prohibited on all flights. Electronic cigarettes must be carried in carry-on baggage only. Recharging of the device inflight is not permitted.

COMFORT & CARE
Personal care, baby paraphernalia and first-aid treatment are available upon request.

BAGGAGE FOR TRANSIT PASSENGERS
Transit passengers in KLIA are encouraged to reconfirm their final baggage destination at the Transfer Desk to ensure that their checked luggage is identified and loaded accordingly. Just present your baggage identification tag at the desk.

ZERO TOLERANCE OF ABUSE
We value courteousness. Any form of threat, verbal abuse or violence towards our staff will be taken seriously. We are committed to supporting anyone who has been the victim of an assault.

IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT
Movies, TV and Music On-Demand are available on selected flights either on seatback inflight

entertainment systems or streaming via personal electronic devices. Unlimited complimentary Wi-Fi internet service is available on selected aircraft regardless of cabin class or loyalty tier.

ONBOARD CHARGING
Laptop power points are fitted on Business Suite, Business, Premium Economy and selected Economy Class seats. USB charging is available on selected aircraft.

FOOD & BEVERAGE
All food served onboard is halal. Special dietary meals can be prepared with 24-hour notice through "Manage My Booking" on malaysiaairlines.com. Business Suite, Business and Economy Class passengers may use the Chef-on-Call service to pre-book their meals 24 hours prior to departure on selected flights. Alcoholic drinks are available on flights above three hours for passengers above the age of 21. Our cabin crew reserves the right to decline serving and selling alcohol to any passenger who appears intoxicated. Consumption of personal alcoholic drinks is prohibited.

FRESH & FROZEN SEAFOOD
Fresh and frozen seafood is strictly not permitted in check-in baggage. It may be accepted in cabin baggage, subject to the destination's

quarantine regulations. It must be properly packed and should meet the cabin baggage weight and size requirements. If dry ice is used, a maximum of 2.5kg per passenger is allowed. We reserve the right to refuse carriage if the items are not properly packed.

PEANUT & NUT ALLERGIES
Meals containing nuts may be served throughout the aircraft. We cannot accommodate requests for peanut/nut-free zones in the aircraft and strongly encourage those with allergies to take the necessary medical precautions before flying, including travelling with medications in their hand luggage.

WHEELCHAIR ASSISTANCE
Wheelchair requests must be made through the Global Customer Contact Centre, the Ticket Office and/or Malaysia Airlines appointed travel agents at least 48 hours prior to departure. Contact the call centre at 1-300-88-3000 for more information.

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We provide assistance to children aged 5 to 15 years old travelling alone, with a 24-hour advance request.

+ For more information, visit malaysiaairlines.com

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FAST-CHECK SELF-SERVICE KIOSK
Check in online at malaysiaairlines.com and self-print your boarding pass.



CITY CENTRE COUNTER CHECK-IN
Available at KL Sentral in Kuala Lumpur.

*Terms and conditions apply, which are correct at the time of printing. Visit malaysiaairlines.com for more information.



OUR NETWORK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELEN WINATA

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Malaysia Airlines, Firefly and MASwings have an average of 436 daily flights to 79 destinations around the world from their hubs in Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Kota Kinabalu



- Malaysia Airlines
- ◆ Firefly
- MASwings
- Amal
- ▲ MASKargo

*THE ROUTE MAP IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY AND IS NOT DRAWN TO SCALE
IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK (KUALA LUMPUR, KUANTAN)



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02 Travel the world for free and indulge in treats.

Pay for flight tickets, and hotel stays via enrichhotels.com, with your Points. You can even shop with Enrich GiftCards, dine and enjoy rewarding experiences with our host of lifestyle partners that includes renowned brands.



03 Access your rewards and more on mobile.

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Download now



04 Earn Elite Points to unlock Elite tiers for greater privileges.

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Experience unparalleled Malaysian Hospitality with unlimited complimentary Wi-Fi* for a seamless and hassle-free journey. Whether you're flying Economy Class, Business Class or Business Suite, stay connected with loved ones, work from the sky or keep up-to-date with the latest news.

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"Flight Mode"



Step 2

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mhconnect.malaysiaairlines.com
to be directed to the home page



Step 3

Click on the **"Go Online"** tab
(not applicable for A330-900)



Step 4

Click on the
"Connect" tab



Step 5

Enter your email address and click the
"Continue" tab (not applicable for A330-900)



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You can now surf the
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Step 2

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Step 3

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*Wi-Fi service (with internet connectivity) is available on B737-8 aircraft operated by Malaysia Airlines.

**The availability of in-flight entertainment (IFE) programmes will vary depending on the aircraft model, flight routes, and current availability. Please note that these offerings are subject to change without prior notice.



NOW SHOWING

 MOVIES p76  TELEVISION p85  AUDIO p87



Fly Me to the Moon

Check out our **Chinese New Year** Special on page 78!



The One



Across the Furious Sea



Shining for One Thing



Crazy Rich Asians

DISCLAIMER: IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT IS EXCLUSIVE TO MALAYSIA AIRLINES PASSENGERS



Fly Me to the Moon

Fly Me to the Moon is a romantic comedy-drama directed by Greg Berlanti

Set against the backdrop of the Apollo 11 mission, it follows marketing specialist Kelly Jones as she navigates the challenges of publicising NASA's historic moon landing. When a shady government agent tasks her with preparing a fake moon landing in case of failure, tensions rise between her and launch director Cole Davis. The film blends humour and historical drama, exploring themes of ambition and deception while highlighting the high-stakes environment of the space race.

Hollywood Latest



A distinguished art dealer faces unexpected life changes, navigating family, ambition and legacy. Set in the high-stakes art world, **Goodrich** reveals the delicate balance between passion and responsibility.



Joker: Folie à Deux takes audiences deeper into the chaotic psyche of Arthur Fleck as he partners with the enigmatic Harley Quinn. This dark, daring musical sequel blends humour, emotional depth and mesmerising performances, redefining Gotham's most infamous duo.



A couple's world is shaken in **Reawakening** when their daughter, who vanished years ago, mysteriously reappears. As they navigate the emotional turmoil, unsettling secrets and tensions from the past resurface, threatening to tear them apart.



A former DEA agent and an ex-undercover operative reignite their romance during a **Weekend in Taipei**, unaware that their past operations are catching up with them, threatening their reunion with dangerous consequences.



Sing Sing is a powerful prison drama highlighting the journey of redemption as inmates find purpose and connection through theatre performance.



In a quiet island town, the discovery of a hidden fortune and a brutal murder in **Greedy People** ignite a chain of reckless decisions, unravelling the once-peaceful community with greed, betrayal and a thirst for power.

MOVIES & TELEVISION

Chinese New Year Special

Chinese Movies



In *Across the Furious Sea*, Lao Jin embarks on a desperate quest for vengeance after his daughter is brutally murdered. With his suspicions falling on her boyfriend, Li Miaomiao, a tense pursuit unfolds, testing the limits of grief and justice.



A poignant tale of love and destiny, *Shining for One Thing* follows Zhang Wansen, who, after a tragic concert accident resets his summer, seizes a second chance to confess his feelings to Lin Beixing, hoping to change his fate.



In *I Not Stupid 3*, a witty and heartwarming comedy, the rivalry between two students intensifies as the PSLE exam nears. With mounting pressure and the fight for first place at stake, the battle becomes more than just a test of academics.



Chinese TV



CNY Fengshui Special



150+

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Crazy Rich Asians



Boss Level



Tomorrow Never Dies



Mr Nice Guy



Romeo Must Die



The One



Batman Begins



The Dark Knight



The Dark Knight Rises



Dumb Money



The Great Gatsby



New Year's Eve



This is Where I Leave You



House of Gucci

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Now Showing

MOVIES & TELEVISION

Kids Movies & TV



Tom and Jerry: The Fast and the Furry

Everyone's favourite cat-and-mouse duo hit the road in a global race packed with laughs, thrills and their signature antics. A high-octane adventure perfect for fans of all ages.



Scooby-Doo! and WWE: Curse of the Speed Demon

Scooby-Doo and the gang team up with WWE superstars to solve a mystery involving a cursed race car and a legendary Speed Demon. Get ready for a high-speed, action-packed adventure.

TV Shows



Beware the Batman

This dark and gritty animated series follows Batman as he battles both familiar and new foes, including the mysterious and dangerous villains lurking in Gotham, all while trying to uncover a conspiracy that threatens the city.



Xiaolin Showdown

In this action-packed animated series, four young monks with mystical powers battle to protect the world from evil, facing off in epic showdowns to collect powerful artifacts in their quest for balance and harmony.



Looney Tunes: Back in Action



Lego DC Comics Super Heroes: Justice League Gotham City Breakout



Pil's Adventures



Trouble



Pokémon Detective Pikachu



Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase

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MOVIES

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Malay



Jodoh Geng G



Dania



Langgar Pantang

Japanese



All the Long Nights



In an Isolated Cottage on a
Snowy Mountain

Korean



Holy Punch



Troll Factory

Hindi



Tiger 3



Trial Period

Tamil



Rathnam

Malayalam



Premalu

Telugu



Alanaati Ramachandrudu

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Now Showing

TELEVISION

Comedy



People of Earth



The Middle

Drama



DC's Legends of Tomorrow



iZOMBIE

Hindi



Crime Patrol 2.0

Tamil



Kalyanam to Kadhal

Chinese



Half Bright and Half Rain

Japanese



New Ninja Hattori (Season 1-6)

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Delicious Bites

for a Prosperous Flight

Lunar New Year travels with Firefly are a special occasion. Tuck into our deliciously festive in-flight meal* and get exclusive MAG angpao packets* for extra good fortune from 13 Jan – 12 Feb!

Pre-order your meal today for your next flight to enjoy additional auspicious savings.

Salted egg popcorn chicken with rice

Heaven & Earth Jasmine Green Tea (can)

Carrots and French beans



RM **30**
nett

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*Subject to availability.
Available on Firefly jet-operated Boeing 737-800 routes only.



Cantonese



Mandarin



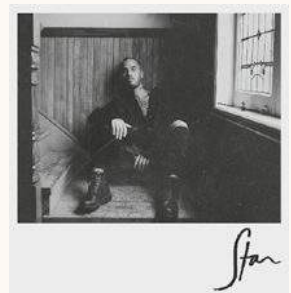
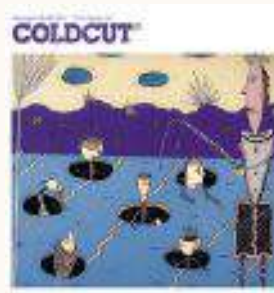
June's MENU by June Pan brings Cantonese tunes that mix traditional roots with a modern twist, creating a rich, emotional listening experience. A\$layer's *ATLAS* is a journey through electronic and Mandarin sounds, with beats and lyrics exploring themes of self-reflection and human connection. *Close Observation* by Ghostnote+ offers thoughtful Mandarin lyrics and atmospheric sounds, reflecting on life's changes, love and personal growth. Each album invites listeners to connect with their unique stories and melodies.



The Hits



Memories



DISCLAIMER: IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT IS EXCLUSIVE TO MALAYSIA AIRLINES PASSENGERS

R&B



Club



Japanese



Korean



Hindi



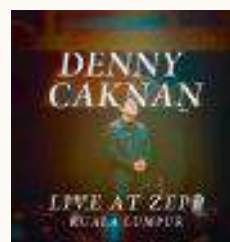
Tamil



Malaysian



Indonesian



Kids



Ride the skies

If you're seeking a fresh adventure in 2025, Mont K Skybike in Ranau offers a daring new experience. This attraction invites visitors to cycle 30m above ground along a 100m aerial path, surrounded by stunning views of Sabah's natural beauty.

Riders can embark alone or share the thrill with a friend, making it ideal for both solo adventurers and duos looking to try something different. The highlight? A breathtaking backdrop of Mount Kinabalu, perfect for unforgettable photos snapped by the operators.

Just two hours from Kota Kinabalu, Mont K Skybike combines adrenaline and serenity in one unique package. Whether you're a seasoned thrill-seeker or simply curious about trying something new, this sky-high cycling experience promises to make your Sabah trip truly unforgettable. facebook.com/MontKSkybike





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