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# Going Places

TAKE ME HOME *Going Places* is regularly refreshed, so everyone who flies can have a copy

NOVEMBER 2023

## Tokyo from the top

Leading luxury hotels  
serve up exclusive  
experiences in the city

### ULOS REVIVAL

A Sumatran textile  
gets a fresh, stylish  
treatment in Medan

### 24 HOURS IN KOTA BHARU

Markets, museums  
and tasty meals in  
Kelantan's capital



**15 reasons**  
to fall in love  
with Malaysia



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NOVEMBER 2023

# Contents

29

## **24 hours in... Kota Bharu**

Explore a women entrepreneurs market and traditional homestays in Kelantan's capital

34

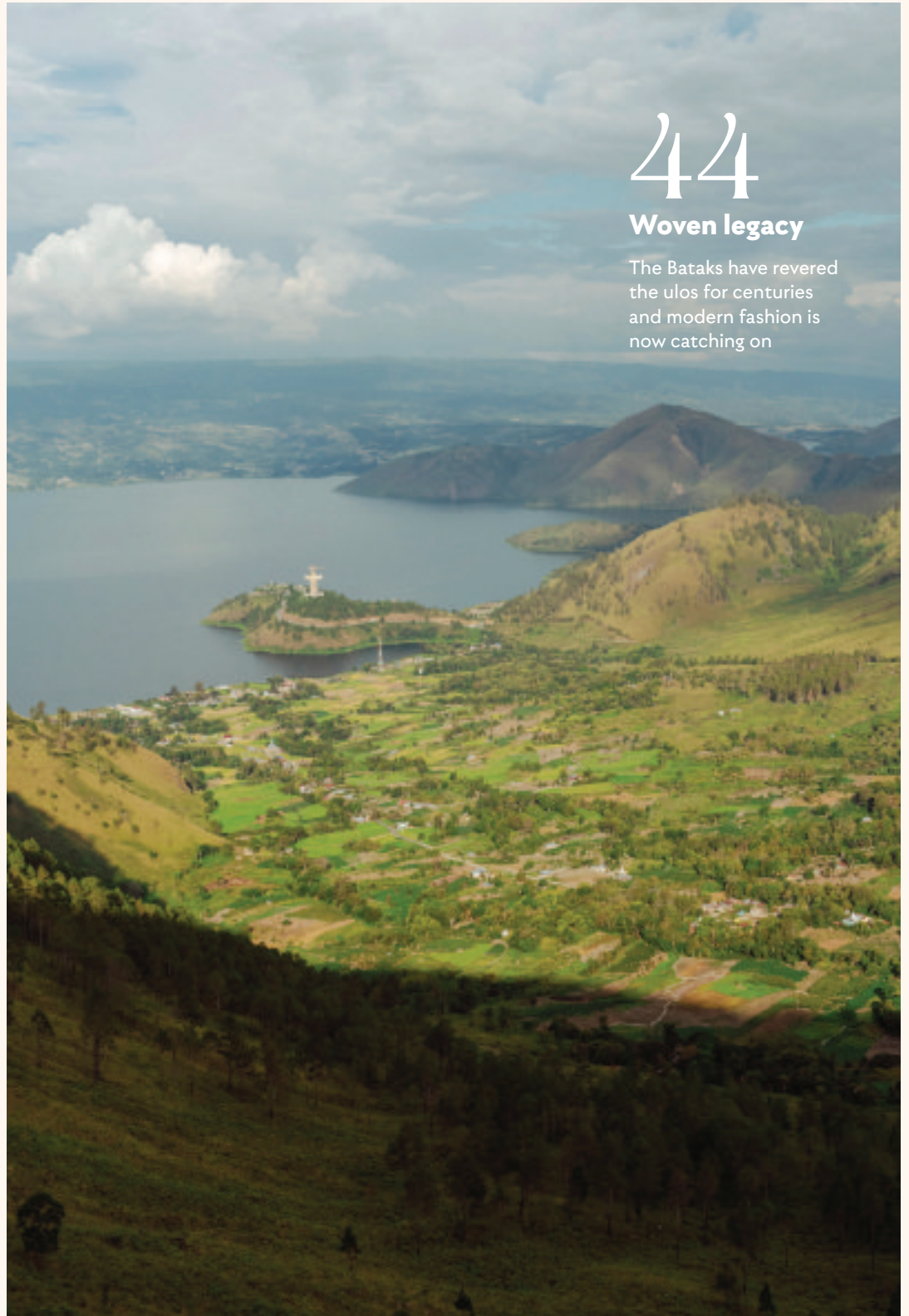
## **Keys to the city**

Tokyo hotels that offer a memorable immersion in Japanese culture

44

## **Woven legacy**

The Bataks have revered the ulos for centuries and modern fashion is now catching on



## CONTENTS

### 9 **15 reasons to love Malaysia**

A spine-chilling new haunted escape room; writers to meet at the George Town Literary Festival, and more

### 26 **A Malaysian in Sydney**

Alvin Quah, two-time participant of Masterchef Australia, shares his favourites in the city

### 69 **This is MH**

Malaysia Airlines to resume route between Kuala Lumpur and Kertajati, and other news from MAG

### 80 **Our network**

Travel around Malaysia and the world with Malaysia Airlines, Firefly and MASwings

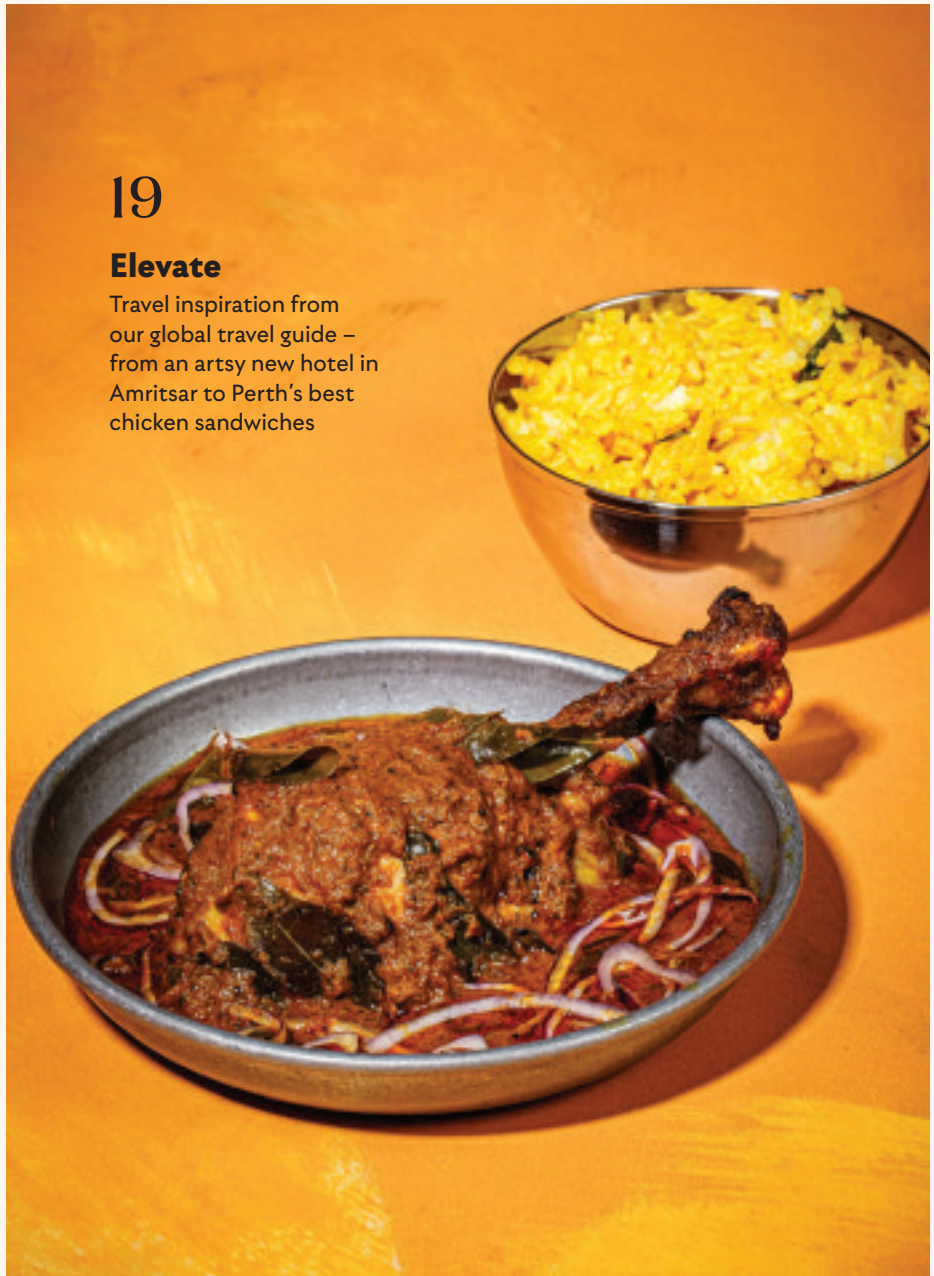
### 85 **Now showing**

Be entertained with the latest inflight movies, television shows, podcasts and music

### 19

#### **Elevate**

Travel inspiration from our global travel guide – from an artsy new hotel in Amritsar to Perth's best chicken sandwiches



**About the cover**  
Tokyo skyline during an autumn sunset.  
Photo: Shutterstock

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As the proud flag bearer of Malaysia, we recently reinstated flights from KUL to Kertajati (KJT), opening a gateway to the vibrant city of Bandung and the captivating landscapes of West Java. With this resumption, travellers can seamlessly connect to seven cities in Indonesia, including Jakarta, Denpasar, Medan, Yogyakarta, Pekanbaru and Surabaya. To ensure your journey is not just seamless, but also incredibly convenient, we have introduced a complimentary daily shuttle service for all our guests from Kertajati International Airport to Bandung city, which you can enjoy from now until 31 December 2023.

In addition to our expansion in Indonesia, travellers can also embark on adventures to more Indian cities as we launch two new routes to India this month: Amritsar and Trivandrum. And that's not all as we will also be commencing our direct flights to India's first UNESCO World Heritage City, Ahmedabad, in the following month. With these additions, the possibilities for exploration are boundless, all with the exceptional service of Malaysia Airlines. We invite you to

seize this golden opportunity to venture into new territories, all while benefitting from our extensive connectivity provided through our oneworld alliance, which connects you to over 900 destinations in 170 territories.

Beyond the excitement of planning your next vacation on these new routes, we are committed to ensuring that your onboard experience is nothing short of enjoyable. We will commence the deployment of our new Boeing 737-8 aircraft soon this month, specifically designed to serve our domestic routes and other networks across ASEAN and Asia. This is just the beginning, as over the next few years, we are set to welcome the full fleet of 25 brand-new Boeing 737-8 aircraft by 2026, alongside 20 of the wide-body Airbus A330neo, as part of our continuous efforts to modernise our fleet and provide enhanced comfort, enjoyment and experiences for our valued guests.

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These offerings are just a glimpse of the many exciting experiences we provide our guests. We are dedicated to ensuring you enjoy a wholesome end-to-end experience from the moment you book your flights with us through to your arrival destination. Once again, thank you for choosing to fly onboard Malaysian Hospitality and we hope to see you onboard in the near future. Safe travels!

### Izham Ismail

Group Managing Director  
Malaysia Aviation Group





Quinn, Malaysia

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**W**elcome to another exciting edition of our in-flight magazine, where we bring you exhilarating travel stories from destinations near and far. From where to find the best fried chicken sandwiches in Perth (p22) to award-winning writers to meet at Penang's George Town Literary Festival (p11), I hope you'll find plenty of travel inspiration in our pages this month.

First up on our exploration list is the extraordinary world of hotels in Tokyo, a city that effortlessly bridges tradition and modernity. Futuristic pod hotels and tranquil ryokans dot the landscape and make the stay wonderfully interesting. Then there are ultra-luxurious Tokyo properties going the extra mile to turn your stay into more than just a good night's rest. Read "Keys to the city" (p34) to discover the best hotels in Japan's capital city that offer a unique blend of luxury and innovation.

Closer to home, you can discover a traditional Batak textile known for its intricate patterns and cultural significance in Medan, Indonesia. Ulos, woven with precision and love, carries stories of the Batak people. In "Woven legacy" (p44), we explore the artistry behind the textile, the symbolism in each thread and how the heritage fabric is being kept alive by modern fashion labels in the form of everyday wear and high-street fashion.

Our adventure continues in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, where we embrace the cultural vibrancy of Kota Bharu in just 24 hours (p29).

From the historical Istana Jahar to the vibrant Pasar Siti Khadijah, Kota Bharu's unique charm and rich heritage is just waiting to be explored. Savour local delicacies like nasi ulam and experience a homestay with on-site activities like batik painting, river-fishing and even beekeeping. You might love it so much that you'll want to return for a longer stay.

Until next time, fellow wanderlust-filled souls, safe travels!



*Sherman Lim*

**Sherman Lim**  
Editor

## This issue's contributors



**Rusmailia Lenggogeni**  
Writer, "Woven legacy", p44

Based in Jakarta, Rusmailia Lenggogeni published *Bus Diaries: Jurnal Perjalanan Amerika Latin* in 2020, her memoir about travelling solo for six months across South America in 2009.



**Liew Sio Yean**  
Illustrator,  
"Reasons to love Malaysia", p9

Sio Yean teaches story development and animation at a local art academy. He also makes comics and animation. In his free time, he loves watching movies and tending to his plants.



**Muhammad Fadli**  
Photographer,  
"Woven legacy", p44

Muhammad Fadli is a documentary and portrait photographer based in Jakarta. His personal projects focus mostly on history, environment and social issues.





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as seen on



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# 15 REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places



Penang

## A piece of history

The iconic Lone Pine – the first hotel to grace the shores of Batu Ferringhi in 1948 – reopened as a Marriott Bonvoy Tribute Portfolio resort in July, getting a facelift that weds contemporary luxury with the romance of Penang's rich heritage. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the state's northern coast, Lone Pine pays homage to what it once was by capturing the sanctuary feel of a mid-century Malaysian mansion. The décor is a nod to founder Dr Albert Stanley McKern's passion for art collecting, with iconic vintage furniture pieces gracing the 90 rooms of the charming boutique hotel. [lonepinehotel.com](http://lonepinehotel.com)





2

Malaysia

## A second chance

Female-focused apparel brand Hanya puts out a stylish Birthday Collection to mark its fifth year, with flowing tops, bottoms and dresses to create that perfect silhouette. Hanya also dives headlong into transparency and sustainability with its Upcycle Collection, where unsold items are transformed into beautiful new pieces. [shophanya.com](https://shophanya.com)



3

Johor Bahru

## All fur love

Mid Valley Southkey will play host to the 5th Pet Expo Johor Bahru 2023 from 18 to 19 November, with over 120 booths selling kibbles, treats and everything in between to pamper your fur babies. The expo will also feature a cat competition, adoption drives and even a mini petting

ZOO. [instagram.com/petexpomalaysia](https://instagram.com/petexpomalaysia)

4

Penang

## Journey into the unknown

Arguably the most important date in the Malaysian literary scene, the George Town Literary Festival (GTLF) returns for its 13th edition from 23 to 26 November. Themed 'terra incognita', this year's GTLF ([georgetownlitfest.com](https://georgetownlitfest.com)) explores the unfamiliar in an uncertain future. Line-up standouts include:





# 5

Kuala Lumpur

## Spicing it up

Head to the rooftop of Avenue K mall for contemporary Indian cuisine with a glorious view of the city skyline. Le Mirch, which opened in August this year, serves up an array of craft cocktails and elevated takes on northern and southern Indian dishes. From chaat selections and fish Allepey on a bed of 'gunpowder' idli, to lamb shank cooked with spices from Jaipur and Hyderabad chicken briyani, Le Mirch offers the best flavours from the subcontinent. [instagram.com/lemirch.asia](https://www.instagram.com/lemirch.asia)



### Michelle de Kretser

The two-time winner of the Miles Franklin Literary Award is shortlisted for the prize again with her inventive work, *Scary Monsters*, with both halves of the diptych novel telling the tales of Asian migrants encountering the titular monsters of racism, misogyny and ageism.



### Shih-Li Kow

Coming off the back of her short story "Relative Distance" being shortlisted for this year's Commonwealth Short Story Prize, Malaysia's own Shih-Li Kow returns with her second collection of short stories, *Bone Weight*.



### Lydia Kwa

Singapore-born Lydia Kwa weaves together Chinese myth and dystopian fiction in her latest novel, *A Dream Wants Waking*, which features half-human, half-fox spirit Yinhe moving through a city of the future watched over by artificial intelligence gone awry.



## 6

Kuala Lumpur

# Dark magic

Breakout has been an amazing success, with the escape room game operating around the country and being franchised overseas. But arguably the standout component of the brand is Hauntu – the immersive blend of live performance, roleplay, storytelling and good old-fashioned horror that debuted in The LINC and has now expanded to The Curve in Petaling Jaya.

Co-founder Johnny Ong wasn't all too surprised that Hauntu would go on to achieve what it did, especially given how embedded horror is in the national psyche. "There wasn't anything like this in Malaysia," he says. "We just tried to do our best, and turns out, people love it."

Hauntu at The Curve opened in late July, with an overarching storyline that is set in the sultanate era of old Malaya and revolves around a traditional Malay arts academy named Seri Panggung Academy. While the school specialises in "training" attendees in the traditional Malay artforms of *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), *kuda kepang* (horse dummy dance), and *mak yong* (Kelantanese dance theatre), would-be escape room participants will soon realise that a supernatural presence is afoot and have to embark on a quest to solve the mystery.

The immersion is immediate: players are greeted by the scent of sandalwood as they are ushered into the elaborately detailed Seri Panggung Academy set – expertly lit to maintain the shroud of mystery – and play alongside a cast of



The new Hauntu storyline draws on local folklore

“

**Hauntu will continue to draw from Malaysian culture and folklore for our storylines”**

actors to determine who will be bestowed the title of Seri Panggung, the all-powerful master of the academy.

All this requires a generous amount of suspension of disbelief and sleights of hand that former magician Ong just happens to have up his sleeve. "There is

a lot of choreography involved, mostly between the actors and the technical side. Every detail is important, as we need to sell the experience to the audience."

This idea also informed the choice to draw from Malaysia's rich folklore. "Malaysians are already familiar with these stories," Ong says, adding that this familiarity allows for immediate transport with as little exposition as possible.

The Seri Panggung Academy storyline will run for over a year, but what happens after? "Hauntu will continue to draw from Malaysian culture and folklore for our storylines," Ong says. It would be remiss not to, because "in Malaysia, we have a whole lot of good stories." [ihautu.com](https://www.ihautu.com)

IMAGES: RAZLAN YUSOF (HAUNTU)





Hauntu's co-founder  
Johnny Ong



The dressing room at Seri  
Pangung Academy

# 7

Kuala Lumpur

## Glitter and gold

The glitter of the sarees, scarves, kurtas and jewellery will be matched only by the glam of stage performances and international artists at the Deepavali Carnival, which takes place at the National Sports Complex, Bukit Jalil from 3 November right up until the eve of the Festival of Lights. [agendasuria.com](http://agendasuria.com)



# 8

Kota Kinabalu

## To the metal

Strap in for a celebration of car culture at CULT, which will see thousands of gearheads and their machines descend upon the Sabah International Convention Centre from 10 to 12 November. CULT will showcase not just restored and modified classic rides, but also the accessories that make car culture a lifestyle. [cult.com.my](http://cult.com.my)

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# 9

**Kuala Lumpur**

## As good as new

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Sustainability is the order of the day at the relaunched If Only, informing everything from the upcycled pillars and partitions to the zero-waste kitchen, where every part of every ingredient is used up. If Only serves up Australian food with a Japanese twist, like the crispy local fish don and grilled beef sando during the day, and an izakaya-inspired sharing menu at night. **instagram.com/ifonlykl**



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# 10

**Kuala Lumpur**

## Licence to thrill

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Adrenaline meets asphalt at the Sepang International Circuit as the Petronas Grand Prix of Malaysia returns from 10 to 12 November. MotoGP stars like Francesco Bagnaia, Marc Marquez and Fabio Quartararo will tear up the track alongside local hero Syarifuddin Azman, who makes his Moto3 professional debut. **sepangcircuit.com**



11

Kota Kinabalu

## Push it to the limit



On 12 November, Sabah Electricity lights up the streets of Kota Kinabalu with the Neon Night Run, which features five electrifying challenge stations on the 3.5 km route – the neon pillar, smoke and laser, paint and bubble, bubble and foam glow, and neon arch. The run makes up just one component of the XMultisport Challenge, which also includes a duathlon and triathlon for elite athletes. [xmultiport.com](http://xmultiport.com)

12

Malaysia

## Never out of style

Nyonya Kain is the brainchild of Dayana Reza, who was inspired to help city folk rediscover the beauty of Peranakan and batik textiles in their original form after a visit to Kelantan. The brand practises a zero-waste concept, maximising every

piece of usable fabric to make chic accessories. Clothing items like wraparounds, reversible kimonos and palazzo pants are the ideal complement to the reemergence of batik in contemporary local fashion. [nyonyakain.com](http://nyonyakain.com)



13

Kuala Lumpur

## Homegrown delights

The KLove Market takes over two floors of KLoé Hotel from 4 to 5 November, with one floor featuring local food and lifestyle brands like Tudòs chips, Bingka KL accessories, upcycled wood gifts from MUKK, and cakes from the Accidental Bakers, as well as unique pieces from Lêi Artworks, Tiny Human Store baby essentials and House of Antara fashion in the rooms

above. [instagram.com/tradersmarketkl](https://www.instagram.com/tradersmarketkl)



Malaysia

## What dreams are made of

Jimmy Choo is undoubtedly one of Malaysia's favourite sons, but not many know his origin story. For this month's World Children's Day celebrations, add some fun to your kids' bedtime with the story of *Jimmy's Shoes*, a children's book by Patricia Tanumihardja and Derek Desierto that was published in August this year. Available in major bookstores like MPH, Popular, Eslite and Kinokuniya, the book brings to life the tale of Jimmy, a Penang boy who makes the journey from his father's humble workshop to crafting glamorous slingback pumps for the world's who's who – including the late Diana, Princess of Wales. [bit.ly/45RsxO7](https://bit.ly/45RsxO7)



14



15

Penang

### Comfort zone

With its earthy tones and wooden window frames, Cantina by Javu has a laidback vibe that is ideal for family get-togethers. Opened on Love Lane this past March, this cosy restaurant has been serving delights like pork-free Spanish tapas and Mexican fish tacos, but will soon transform into a new concept to be announced soon. [instagram.com/cantina.javu](https://instagram.com/cantina.javu)



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# ELEVATE

A global guide to uplifting updates for work, rest and play



## SPOTLIGHT

### Common ground

This month, the National Gallery Singapore unveils the eagerly anticipated *Tropical: Stories from Southeast Asia and Latin America*, an exhibition that draws parallels between artistic narratives originating from Southeast Asia and Latin America, two distinct regions with a shared experience of struggling against colonial rule. The exhibit features several artists, including modernist Malaysian painters Patrick Ng Kah Onn and Latiff Mohidin. [nationalgallery.sg](http://nationalgallery.sg)

IMAGE: COURTESY OF NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE. WORDS: SHERMIAN LIM



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## BOOKS

## Bound to happen

These **global** libraries are turning over a new leaf, drawing visitors not only with their books, but with their architecture, IG appeal and some cool extras **BY ULRIKE LEMMIN-WOOLFREY**

### Hyundai Card Art Library

Seoul

Fifth in the Hyundai Card Library series – after the Design Library, Travel Library, Music Library and Cooking Library – the Art Library specialises in rare and modern books on – you guessed it – art. Opened in August 2022, the cultural space is located in Itaewon, the hip, multi-cultural neighbourhood buzzing with trendy restaurants and nightlife. Located on the second floor of the music store Hyundai Card Vinyl & Plastic, this is a relatively small affair and has an exclusive and old-fashioned private club feel to it, with herringbone parquet flooring and large tables on which to flip through covetable coffee table-style books. [dive.hyundaicard.com](https://diver.hyundaicard.com)

### Punggol Regional Library

Singapore

When is a library truly a shared space everybody can enjoy? When it is not only filled with books, but also with toys, costumes and games, as well as interactive spaces to try new experiences such as craft-making or using a 3D printing machine. The five-storey Punggol Regional Library, which opened in April 2023, is not only

Singapore's largest public library, it also caters to people with special needs, with wheelchair-accessible book-borrowing stations, assistive technology and a wide selection of books for people with disabilities and their caregivers. [nlb.gov.sg](https://nlb.gov.sg)

### William Warren Library

Bangkok

This library was named after the famed biographer and pre-eminent authority on Jim Thompson, the so-called "Thai Silk King" who is credited for revitalising Thailand's silk industry in the 1950s. Located within the Jim Thompson Art Center Building, this library is home to over 3,000 books on textiles and silk production. If there is a particular tome you'll like to cosy up with, head to the library's aptly-named Relaxation Corner. Within the library, there is also a space that hosts a regular rotation of art exhibitions. [fb.com/williamwarrenlibrary](https://fb.com/williamwarrenlibrary)

### Perpustakaan Jakarta Cikini

Jakarta

The Taman Ismail Marzuki – or TIM cultural centre – in the Cikini neighbourhood of central Jakarta is best known for its theatres, stages,



Punggol Regional Library



Hyundai Card Art Library

IMAGES: SPACKMAN ASSOCIATES (HYUNDAI CARD ART LIBRARY), AARON LOW (PUNGGOL REGIONAL LIBRARY), @RACHEL JOY WILLIAM WARREN LIBRARY, BRAMASTA PUTRA REDYANTANU (PERPUSTAKAAN JAKARTA CIKINI), @NULLNEM\_ (SUTAN)





Perpustakaan Jakarta Cikini



William Warren Library

cinema, planetarium and galleries. Since July 2022, it has been home to the revitalised Jakarta Library, designed by architect Andra Matin. It is an intriguing mix of raw concrete reminiscent of Brutalist architecture, with windows that allow a sense of privacy as well as keeping out the sun's glare using design elements that bring to mind Arabian mashrabiya screens. It's also a popular space for remote work, with multimedia rooms available to members. [perpustakaan.jakarta.go.id](http://perpustakaan.jakarta.go.id)

## Workspace in Tokyo



Travelling in Tokyo and looking for a quiet place to work for a few hours? The newest outpost of Tsutaya bookstores, located at the Marunouchi Building across Tokyo Station, has a pay-per-use lounge that can accommodate up to 220 people. Hourly and daily plans are available, as well as a buffet of snacks and drinks if you top up. [tsutaya.tsite.jp](http://tsutaya.tsite.jp)







## DINING

# Feeling peckish?

No time to sit down for a proper meal in **Perth**? Grab a trending chicken burger **BY GERARD WARD**

**Towering beef burgers held** together with a stress-tested toothpick are no longer what piques a Perthian's interest. Lately restaurants have been busy finding new ways to crumb, dust and cook poultry – and give it a breaded home. From kimchi- and gochujang-inflected inventions to Nashville-style sandoes that promise eye-watering heat, here are the best crunchy chicken burgers to sink your teeth into while visiting Western Australia's capital.

## Chimek

**The lowdown** Having ruled the Korean fried chicken game in Perth since 2015, Chimek tackles its décor – tiled tables and barstools surrounded by cartoon-style murals of a Hongdae neighbourhood – with the same passion as its array of flavours.

**What to order** The menu of half a dozen chicken burgers include Nashville hot and Korean sweet sticky chilli, but nothing tastes sweeter than the **Sweet Chick**. Crispy chicken paired with vanilla ice cream and maple syrup? This combination of salty and sweet, hot and cold is absolutely delicious.

[chimek.com.au](http://chimek.com.au)



Drasko's  
Signature Sando

## Big Rigz Burger Co

**The lowdown** Ex-cricketer Brett Dorey and fine-dining chef David Thompson formed this home for burger enthusiasts. Check out the graffiti-splashed walls of blues and purples, as well as the menu serving up beef, chicken and vegan options.

**What to order** The **Korean Flying Rigz** burger mixes kimchi, pickled daikon, cabbage and Korean gochujang (spicy paste) mayo. This free-range chicken burger stands tall, with a seeded, grill-crisped bun that is both somehow soft and sturdy.

[bigrigzburgerco.com](http://bigrigzburgerco.com)

## Drasko's Hot Chicken

**The lowdown** Heat is this restaurant's specialty – as you can probably deduce from the enormous fire-tipped chicken mural on the wall.

**What to order** Giving spice-hunters a choice, the Nashville-style **Signature Sando** comes with a question: How hot? Let the outdoor breeze cool you down as you devour juicy tenders and crispy wings.

[draskohotchicken.com.au](http://draskohotchicken.com.au)

## Hoodburger

**The lowdown** This burger joint is so popular that it has five locations spread across Perth. The no-frills US diner aesthetic puts the focus on the foods.

**What to order** The **Golden Curry Tender Sandwich** is really a "Don't knock it until you've tried it" experience. The Japanese staple of Golden Curry shares bun space with chicken tenders, American cheddar and pickles. One small recommendation: add mashed potato to it. [hoodburger.com.au](http://hoodburger.com.au)





Le Meridien Amritsar's pool



## HOTELS

## Arty Amritsar

A new luxury hotel in the Golden City wants to be your guide to **Punjab's** vast cultural riches **BY BINDU GOPAL RAO**

### A region that was once along the Silk

Route is bound to be paved with treasures, both ancient and new. Amritsar, near India's border with Pakistan, is one of Punjab's largest cities as well as its cultural heart, home to one of Sikhism's holiest sites, the Golden Temple.

Before the city was founded in 1574, the area was blanketed in thick forest, and horses were the main mode of transport. No surprise then that a colourful horse art installation proudly graces a spacious, light-filled lobby at the new Le Meridien Amritsar, connecting the city's history to its present. The hotel's arts and heritage theme continues in its design – a fusion of European chic with a distinctive local inflection – plus elegant art pieces scattered all over the property.

The luxury hotel, which opened in July, is located about 1.5km from the Sri Guru Ram Das Ji International Airport. With digital kiosks in the lobby offering travel ideas, it aims to be a guide for cultural explorations in the city through its Unlock Art Programme.

Once you're ready to explore Amritsar, all you will need is your Unlock Art room key – a keepsake, artist-designed key card – to gain access to a culture centre partner. Here are a few you shouldn't miss.



Le Meridien Amritsar's lobby

### Indian Academy of Fine Arts (IAFA)

Established in 1928, this prestigious art institution has a collection of paintings and sculptures dating back decades before the Partition of 1947. The institution also runs a restoration lab to preserve the region's fine arts heritage. [indianacademyoffinearts.com](http://indianacademyoffinearts.com)

MH now flies 2x weekly between Kuala Lumpur and Amritsar starting on 8 November 2023.

### Partition Museum

Across 14 galleries, the Partition Museum documents the impact of the Partition of 1947 – which created the separate nations of India and Pakistan – had on the lives of ordinary people. It houses artefacts such as utensils, clothes and trunks that were carried by Partition survivors as they found themselves suddenly displaced in one of history's largest mass migrations. [partitionmuseum.org](http://partitionmuseum.org)

### Central Sikh Museum

Started in 1958, the Central Sikh Museum features a rare collection of paintings of Sikh gurus, saints and warriors as well as a collection of coins, arms and ancient manuscripts. Look out for the *kangha* (wooden comb) of Guru Gobind Singh and rare pencil sketches here. <https://bit.ly/46t8cP3>



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DINING

## Tastes like home

Led by a Cordon Bleu-trained chef, a Malaysian restaurant in **London** is set to open a new outpost in trendy Clapton this month **BY VICTORIA KHROUNDINA**

### "Malaysian food

hasn't come as far as Southeast Asian cuisines like Thai or Vietnamese in London," says Abby Lee, the Cordon Bleu-trained chef at the helm of Mambow, one of London's first restaurants to spotlight regional Malaysian cuisines. Born in Singapore to Malaysian parents, and of Peranakan and Sarawakian heritage, Lee grew up savouring the pungent flavours of her family's cooking. During a trip back to Malaysia after completing her culinary degree and stints at

Michelin-starred restaurants across Europe, Lee scoured her grandma's old recipes, stirring up a desire to acquaint the public with the flavours of her childhood.

Nostalgia permeates Lee's cooking, but she likes to flirt with a concept of a traditional dish and create something that feels new. One of Mambow's inception dishes, a hot and sour fish curry, inspired by her grandma's *asam pedas* (a sour and spicy Malaysian stew), encapsulates this. Served with grilled mackerel, a lascivious amount

of tamarind and featuring Lee's favourite herb, *bunga kantan* (torched ginger), it's moreish, comforting and bombastic in flavour.

Mambow had an ill-fated start in Shoreditch due to Covid-related lockdowns. It reopened as a food-stall concept in the coworking space Market in London's southeast area of Peckham in June 2022. But this November, Mambow is set to move to a bigger, bolder and more permanent space in the trendy east London area of Clapton. The winter menu leans strongly on seafood, with a riff on prawn toast inspired by *otak-otak*

(a spiced fish cake wrapped in leaves), *rempah fish* (deep-fried seasonal fish stuffed with sambal), and *kam heong* mussels infused with pickled chilli and topped with prawn floss.

Mambow's strong sustainability focus is another drawcard. Most of the produce is locally sourced: line-caught fish from Cornwall, organic fruits and vegetables from UK farms, as well as hand-selected meat. "We're always turning offcuts and any by-products into specials or using them to enhance other dishes. Nothing goes to waste," explains Lee. It's another nod to her childhood spent eating her grandma's cooking and tasty regional morsels at Malaysian markets: the produce, environment and local culture enshrined in daily life, something Lee has successfully transported to her slice of home in London. **[mambow.co.uk](http://mambow.co.uk)**



Covent Garden now hosts the first permanent site for social enterprise Soda Club. Opened in December, the Tasting Room and Shop offers a curated selection of over 150 low-alcohol or alcohol-free drink brands to sample and take home. **[joinclubssoda.com/tasting-room](http://joinclubssoda.com/tasting-room)**





INSIDER TIPS

# A Malaysian in... Sydney

Alvin Quah, MasterChef Australia 2010 and 2022 crowd favourite, shares his favourite places to dine and explore in Sydney

BY TATYANA LEONOV



**I was born in a township called** Happy Garden in Kuala Lumpur. Mum is from Malacca, and Dad is from Penang. I personally think those are the two best states in Malaysia for food, so I guess you can say that my love for food is preordained. I moved to Melbourne, Australia, in 1994 to do a Bachelor of Science, and have been based in the country ever since.

In 2008, I got a job promotion that required me to move to Sydney. Shortly after that, I applied to take part in MasterChef Australia. I placed sixth, and after that managed to balance my work and cooking lives. Twelve years later, I decided to take part again – this time in *MasterChef Australia: Fans & Favourites* – and I haven't looked back. I love living in

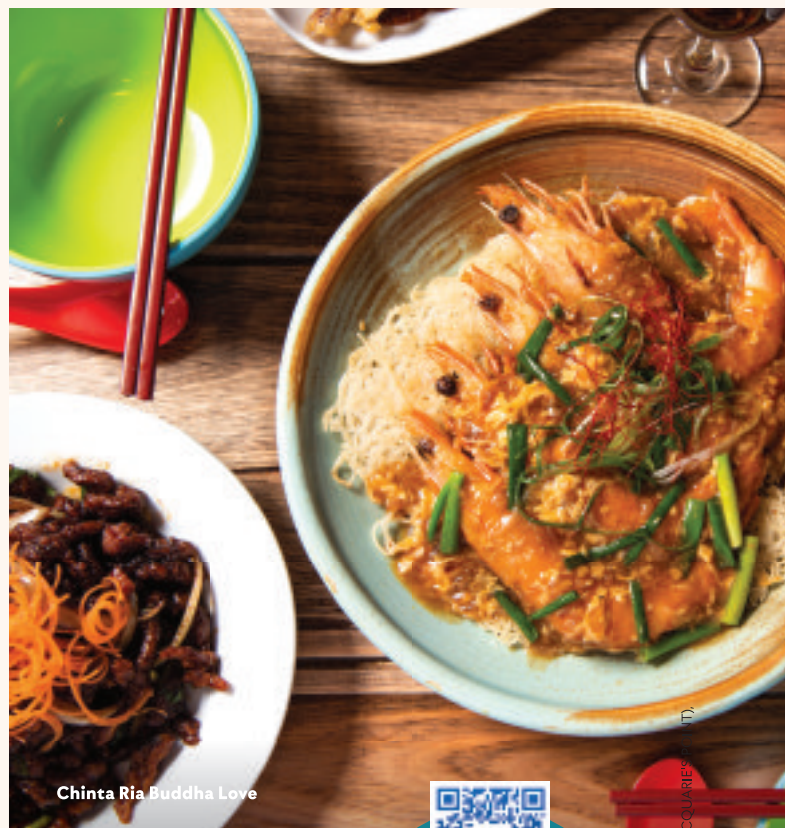
Sydney and am thrilled to be sharing some of my top picks... naturally, mostly food related.

## Sydney is big on café culture

There are many cafés all a stone's throw away from my home in Surry Hills that I often visit. There is a coffee place called **Artificer** that procures their own coffee beans and makes their own brew. Their coffees, depending on the blend you choose, have a variety of tasting notes. For instance, the Nicaragua Los Grandillos has a hint of nutmeg, while the seasonal blend combines a mix of beans that gives a more well-rounded espresso flavour. If I'm after hot chocolate, I go to **Veneziano Coffee Roasters**, and to French-style **Lavie & Belle Bakery** for the best almond croissant I've ever tasted! It has the perfect combination of fresh almonds and marzipan. If I'm craving savoury, the Aleppo pepper and Asiago cheese scroll from **A.P. Bakery** is my go-to. [artificercoffee.com](http://artificercoffee.com), [venezianocoffee.com.au](http://venezianocoffee.com.au), [laviebellebakery.com.au](http://laviebellebakery.com.au), [apbakery.com.au](http://apbakery.com.au)



Mrs Macquarie's Point



Chinta Ria Buddha Love



Discover Sydney's hidden gems with Malaysia Airlines' latest captivating destination film in YouTube

IMAGES: DESTINATION NSW (MRS MACQUARIE'S POINT), ELISE STRYDOM (ARTIFICER COFFEE)





Pellegrino 2000



## Dinner plans?

Sydney does Thai food well because we have Thai chefs and influencer powerhouses who have revolutionised the way we view Thai food. The likes of Palisa Anderson, David Thompson and Martin Boetz have all paved the way and helped make it accessible. For consistently good dishes, chain **Chat Thai** is my recommendation. I love their *yum naehm khao tod*, which is a rice pancake – rice cooked on the base of the pan over low heat until it's crispy, then loaded with fermented meat and aromatic herbs. When I miss Malaysian food, I head to **Chinta**

**Ria Buddha Love** located on the fringe of Chinatown. Their crispy noodles topped with an egg-like gravy, remind me of the hawker-style noodles Dad would take home for supper when we were kids. [chatthai.com](http://chatthai.com), [chintariabuddhalove.com](http://chintariabuddhalove.com)

## Taking friends out to eat?

If I have friends that I want to impress, I'll take them to eat Mediterranean or French food. Some of my favourites include **Parlar** in Potts Point (I suggest trying the anchovy churro and pan tomate) and **Armorica** in Surry Hills. I highly recommend ordering their steak frite, and definitely with the bone marrow butter for an extra kick. Italian fine diner **Pellegrino 2000** is another great choice. Last time we were there my partner, who is half-Italian, cried over a plate of fritto misto because it was so delicious...and I'm the emotional one! [parlar.com.au](http://parlar.com.au), [armorica.com.au](http://armorica.com.au), [pellegrino2000.com](http://pellegrino2000.com)

## Tell me about fashion

A few years ago, I realised that if I'm going to wear glasses, I might

as well make it a statement. I used to travel a lot for work and began buying a pair of glasses from most destinations I visited, and then had my optometrist, **George Skoufis Optometrist**, fit the lens. George Skoufis is based in Paddington and has a good range of eclectic eyewear featuring both local and international labels.

I've also just started a collaboration called **Alvin x Niloca** with my friends at Niloca Eyewear. They are based in Melbourne but the collection is available online and we'll be selling limited edition titanium frames in three different colours (rempah-red brick, custard yellow and not-so-ordinary blue) and eight models, each of which is named after a favourite Southeast Asian ingredient. [gso.net.au](http://gso.net.au), [niloca.com](http://niloca.com)

## Retail therapy

Glasses may be my fashion item, but for clothing I go to **Incu** as they stock a wide variety of clothes, from international names to emerging Australian labels. There are stores in Paddington and Chatswood, as well as an outlet in Rosebury. **Lab Nation** is a skin care range that I use and they are produced in Byron Bay. I love their Protect & Repair Body and Face Oil, as well as their Vitamin Serum Concentrate. [incu.com](http://incu.com), [labnation.com.au](http://labnation.com.au)

## The great outdoors

My partner and I walk everywhere, and we're lucky the **Botanic Gardens of Sydney** is so close to home. It's one of those places where you never get tired of the views of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House across the water... and that is always spectacular! I like spending time meandering through the themed gardens – such as the herb garden and succulent garden – or just taking in the lush greenness of it all. [botanicgardens.org.au](http://botanicgardens.org.au)



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24 HOURS IN

# Kota Bharu

Words **Nor Atikah Abdul Wahid** Photography **Thinnesh Kumar**



**Kota Bharu, the capital of Kelantan, is one of the key transit points en route to** Perhentian Island if you're travelling by bus from west coast Peninsular Malaysia to cities such as Kuala Lumpur or Penang. It's the perfect place to spend a day and get more bang out of your travel experience.

Located along the borders of Thailand and overlooking the South China Sea, Kota Bharu is a cosy getaway that offers a unique blend of modern businesses while retaining its small-town charm. Widely considered a rich, cultural centre among the Malay community with its strong Islamic influences, it offers many opportunities for immersing in the Kelantanese way of life.



# Saturday

🕒 7am

## Breakfast fit for royalty

Start the day at **Kopitiam Kita** for a breakfast of Kelantanese delicacies. This frills-free restaurant's claim to fame is its *roti titab*, a thick buttered toast topped with dollops of sweet kaya and a runny half-boiled egg. If you're hungry for more, grab a variety of ready-made packed rice meals available such as *nasi dagang* (rice with fish curry) and *nasi kerabu* (blue-coloured rice with dried fish or fried chicken).

Don't be fooled by its humble environment, as Kopitiam Kita's long list of famous clientele includes acclaimed Malaysian singer Datuk Siti Nurhaliza, travel writer Paul Theroux and even Kelantan's royal family. *Jalan Sri Cemerlang, Taman Desa Jasa, 15400*

🕒 9am

## The early bird catches great bargains

Walk off breakfast at **Pasar Siti Khadijah**, a bustling marketplace dominated by female entrepreneurs, an emblem of a distinctive Kelantanese lifestyle where local women are encouraged to pursue entrepreneurial activities. This retail therapy haven is iconic in Kelantan and named after Khadijah bint Khuwaylid, a successful Arabian businesswoman from the sixth century. She was also the first wife and first follower of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

Here, you can shop for everything from herbs and spices to fresh produce and dry goods like *keropok ikan* (fish crackers), and if you ask, sellers will provide samples of delectable local snacks such as *kuih akok* (pandan-flavoured pancakes). The upper floors of this four-storey building are where you'll find batik clothing, kitchen supplies and traditional handicrafts. *Jalan Buluh Kubu, 15000*



**INSIDER TIP**  
Visit Kopitiam Kita between 6:30am to 9am to avoid crowds.





Get to know Kota Bharu in the state of Kelantan

KELANTAN

Kota Bharu

## During

World War Two, Kota Bharu's Pantai Sabak served as the British army's defence forts against the Japanese army invasion

## At 40m

long, the reclining Buddha statue at Wat Phothivihan in Tumpat, Kelantan, is the biggest in Malaysia

## Kelantan

is one of the four states to have their weekends on Fridays and Saturdays to accommodate Friday prayers



### 🕒 12pm Tasty greens

Boost your energy with a healthy lunch of traditional Malay salad called **ulam** at **Restoran Nasi Ulam Cikgu**. Served raw or lightly blanched, ulam consists of assorted local herbs, shoots and vegetables. Ulam is best complemented with a plate of white rice and other hearty Kelantanese side dishes such as crispy fried catfish, served sizzling off the wok. The restaurant's prime location in the city makes it a convenient stop for visitors looking for a quick and filling meal. *Kampung Kraftangan, Jalan Hilir Kota, 15300*

### 🕒 2pm Blast from the past

Step back in time when you enter **Istana Jahar**, a 19th-century royal palace built during the reign of Sultan Muhammad II. Completed in 1887, it was transformed into a museum in 1992. For a small entry fee of RM4 (for international visitors), you can wander through the expansive halls of Istana Jahar to admire historical royal artefacts and learn more about the Kelantan Sultanate. For more history and culture, other museums like **Muzium Diraja Istana Batu** and **Handicraft Village and Craft Museum** are just within walking distance. *Jalan Sultan, 15000*







#### INSIDER TIP

While walk-ins are welcome, Min House Camp has a limited number of staff members onsite. Call and make arrangements before you visit.

🕒 **4pm**

### Bee one with nature

Wind down for the evening at the **Min House Camp**, a peaceful accommodation that focuses on agritourism. Located less than 20 minutes' drive from Kota Bharu, this nature-filled space is where you can learn more about organic farming, especially about harvesting honey from their *lebah kelulut* (stingless bees). Situated by the Lubuk Durian River, this centre also offers several outdoor activities, such as kayaking and clam digging. Take a scenic boat ride through a firefly garden at sundown and witness the clusters of bright lights emanating from fireflies. *Min House Camp, Lot 1287, Kampung Pulau, Kubang Kerian, 16150*



🕒 **8pm**

### Catch of the night

For dinner, indulge in a family-style feast at the **Four Seasons Restaurant**, the first halal Chinese restaurant in Kelantan. Seafood lovers will be spoiled for choice with the wide variety of fresh seafood available – from their signature fish head curry to the baked crab with salted eggs and the super-crispy oyster pancakes. *No. 5670 B/1, B/2 & B/3, Jalan Sri Cemerlang, 15300*

## Homestays in Kota Bharu



#### Tok Abah Cottage

This homestay is especially suited for small families. The picket-fenced white cottage includes modern amenities and sleeps four, and is in a large private compound with coconut trees and a mini playground for kids. *1801 Desa Baru Kedai Mulong, 16010*



#### Rumah Singgora

Built from reclaimed chengal wood and traditional Kelantanese clay tiles known as *atap singgora*, this charming homestay also serves daily meals of Kelantanese-style fried fish, curries and fresh greens. *fb.com/rumahsinggora*



#### Pasir Belanda Resort

Located in Kampung Kijang, a village just outside Kota Bharu city, Pasir Belanda Resorts offers a taste of kampung life with activities like river fishing or batik painting with local craftsfolk. *pasirbelanda.com*





# Sunday

🕒 7am

## Life's a beach

Spend the morning at the picturesque **Pantai Cahaya Bulan** with its long stretch of white sandy beach. While swimming is discouraged due to strong wave currents, this beach provides a gorgeous view and ample space for family picnics and kite-flying. If you're planning to eat by the beach, there is a long line of hawker stalls and *warung* (roadside stall) selling all types of seafood dishes, from *maggi ketam*, a Kelantanese spin on instant noodles served with crab, to deep-fried fish balls. *Pantai Cahaya Bulan, 15350*



🕒 12pm

## Say so long with shoyu ramen

Before you go, be sure to stop by **BrewbyATAS**, a new player in Kota Bharu's emerging café scene. With a stylish storefront that sports a creative use of exposed lightbulbs, this café opened in April 2023 with a fusion menu that includes handmade Japanese ramen and French pastries. Try the shoyu ramen and cap it off with a buttery croissant or a slice of Okinawa cheesecake paired with an espresso or matcha latte.

Yeo Teong Cheng, owner of BrewbyATAS and a proud Kelantan native, speaks of their bold approach: "We chose to open in Kota Bharu because we want to bring something fresh and exciting to the community, which has a growing interest in culinary experiences. Our fusion concept and diverse menu are a perfect fit for this blossoming city." *PT 1837, Kampung Cherang, 15200*



**Malaysia Airlines** flies between **Kuala Lumpur** and **Kota Bharu** 17x weekly.

**Firefly** flies between **Penang** and **Kota Bharu** 7x weekly, and between **Subang** and **Kota Bharu** 41x weekly.



Scan to book a guided tour in Kota Bharu or more places in Kelantan with Journify.

# Keys to

Words **Tom Miyagawa Coulton**  
Photography **Irwin Wong**







A truly extraordinary hotel can turn a regular holiday in Tokyo into an unforgettable immersion in Japanese culture. Here, we've mapped three standout examples of unique accommodations that take you straight to the heart of Japan's endlessly intriguing capital

# the city

# There's a sense of delight in unlocking Tokyo.

**Previous spread:**  
The dining room and  
the grounds at  
Auberge Tokito



After all, navigating the world's largest city – an exhilarating mix of futuristic design and technology, pop culture, age-old traditions and over 200 Michelin-starred restaurants – can be overwhelming, to say the least, and even more so if you've touched down for the first time.

Luckily, a growing number of hotels are styling themselves as more than just a place to rest your head, but as an integral, tone-setting part of the experience. Whether you're interested in history, design and architecture, food or sumo-wrestling, these unique properties offer stays that are in themselves a satisfying deep-dive into Japanese culture.

**EVERY MAJOR DESTINATION HAS AT LEAST** one beloved landmark that captures the vibe of a whole era and presents a defining element to its personality. If you want to understand a city's aspirations, make a beeline for its grandest, most luxurious digs.

Tokyo has dozens of these, but mention The Okura and the Japanese will immediately visualise the grand hotel in the heart of Tokyo lauded for its design and architecture.

The Okura first opened in 1962, two years ahead of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. The Summer Games were a celebration of Japan's post-war renaissance, and the global spotlight was on all the incredible strides the country had made, particularly in technology. It was the first time the Games were broadcast internationally live via satellite. Ten days before the official opening, Japan launched the Shinkansen, its legendary bullet train.

The Okura fit right into this new scene. The hotel was modern, fresh and distinctly Japanese. Its iconic lobby, designed by Yoshiro Taniguchi, grand but understated, featured a soaring ceiling and traditional design elements such as lacquered tables and chairs arranged to resemble plum blossoms. It was a giant leap into the future, and it was considered as *the* example of Japanese modernist architecture.





**This spread:**  
The Okura's iconic lobby, known for its soaring ceiling, traditional Japanese design elements and chairs arranged to resemble plum blossoms









**This spread (clockwise from top left):**

The famous Okura lanterns at the hotel lobby; scallops with Ujio original seasoning, chef Yoshinori Ishii and counter seating, all at Auberge Tokito

Since then, the hotel has been the capital's meeting place du jour, hosting countless historic state banquets and gatherings. Its guest book reads like a who's who of the last half century, listing the Japanese Imperial Family, visiting foreign dignitaries and global celebrities – real or imagined (James Bond stayed here in 1967's *You Only Live Twice*).

When the hotel embarked on a full rebuild to modernise the structure in 2015, patrons, designers and architects alike were on edge. Many lamented the end of an era, the loss of an architectural icon, in particular the revered hotel lobby.

In the end, there was no need to fret. The Okura Tokyo reopened in 2019 to rave reviews. With painstaking precision, a team of designers and architects headed by Yoshio Taniguchi (son of the original architect), had rebuilt the lobby in its entirety, now housed inside the soaring Prestige Tower. It's such a faithful reproduction that some patrons think they are standing inside the original.

The new hotel – with 508 guest rooms across two main buildings – is both at the apex of modernity and a nostalgic homage to its former self. "The design of the building has always been integral to the experience of staying at The Okura," explains Kaori Wakui from The Okura Tokyo's Marketing department. "People come from all around to gaze at our interior designs."

**AT THE OTHER END OF THE SPECTRUM,** there's the intimate, impossibly understated affair born of personal passion. Among Tokyo's new hotels, none have created more buzz than Auberge Tokito when it opened its doors in Tachikawa, one of Tokyo's leafy western suburbs, this year. Located 36km west of The Okura, it's built on the former site of a century-old



The Okura symbolises the essence of Japanese culture. Guests are offered the opportunity for an exclusive "The Okura Prestige Tower Lobby Symbolic Design Tour" with detailed explanations of each motif and design element in the lobby. Included are the famous Okura Lanterns, the stunning ikebana flower arrangement in its hexagonal vase, the intricate kumiko latticework and the lacquered tables and chairs arranged to resemble a plum blossom. "The motifs in the lobby appear in so much Japanese artwork," says Kaori. "By joining this lobby tour, guests come away with a deeper appreciation of Japanese craft and design."



The Okura Prestige Tower Lobby Symbolic Design Tour, exclusive to hotel guests, runs 45 minutes and costs ¥1,500 per person. Reservations needed.



The Okura Tokyo  
2-10-4 Toranomon,  
Minato-ku;  
+81 3 35820111;  
[theokuratokyo.jp/en](http://theokuratokyo.jp/en)



## TOKYO

**This spread (clockwise from left):** Auberge Tokito's frontage; reception area and traditional bedroom, both at Asakusa Yokozuna Hotel

ryotei, a type of traditional restaurant so exclusive that in the olden days some would only accept customers by referral.

Tokito embraces the original French concept of an *auberge* – a small restaurant with some lodging – more ardently than other similar establishments in the city. But where the French version usually prioritises the food, with accommodations as an afterthought, Tokito has crafted rooms (all four of them) that are on par with the dining experience. Celebrated architect Shinichiro Ogata created its exquisite grounds and interiors, blending traditional ryokan elements with a modern, minimalist design. Each room comes complete with a private hot spring onsen bath, a spa treatment area and NASA-certified Tempur beds – all to help you decompress and unwind in the hours before dinner.

What sets Tokito apart is its stellar cast of in-house chefs boasting a constellation of Michelin stars. The team is led by the world-renowned chef Yoshinori Ishii, known for his work in Geneva, New York and in London's UMU *kaiseki* (a traditional multi-course Japanese dinner) restaurant – the first Japanese restaurant in Europe to receive two Michelin stars in 2015. He works alongside another Michelin-starred chef, Kenji Okawara, a friend and colleague he trained with during his formative years in Kyoto.

“We are all creators working at the top of our game, pushing each other and collaborating to heighten the experience for our guests,” explains Ishii. “This is what makes Auberge Tokito so special. Everyone who works here, whether in the kitchen or outside, is a consummate professional.”

Dinner begins at 7pm sharp in the Shokubo restaurant. Although the restaurant is also open for other customers, Tokito's guests are seated separately at an exclusive counter – the Japanese equivalent of the chef's table. When everyone is seated, the courses start to appear: 12 to 14 exquisitely prepared dishes in total. Whether it's a tuna with *fond de veau*, or a delicately arranged dish of scallops with *ujio* seasoning, all the dishes use the finest seasonal ingredients sourced from the top producers across Japan. All are handpicked by Ishii himself.







“

**Tokito embraces the original French concept of an *auberge* – a small restaurant with some lodging – with four rooms that blend ryokan elements with a modern, minimalist design, and a stellar cast of in-house chefs”**

A stay at the Auberge is to witness where Japanese cuisine in Tokyo is heading. Although Ishii, Okawara and the sous-chef all trained in Kyoto, they believe the key to upholding a tradition is found in evolution rather than preservation.

“For example, Japanese fishing boats need to head farther out to sea to source the bonito we use in dashi stock,” explains Ishii, who enjoys travelling around the country to meet producers and fishermen. “When I went to Hokkaido, I came across a fish called the oku-kajika that was being landed but mostly left unsold. It was a perfectly good fish, so we worked with the local fishery to develop a stock from oku-kajika that we can use like bonito. We always try to discover the best way to cook in the world we live in today.”

**IF YOU'RE IN TOWN FOR SOMETHING** uniquely Japanese – say, sumo wrestling – you’ll be glad to know there’s a themed hotel for that. Converted from the former Kokonoe Sumo Stable where for decades sumo wrestlers lived and trained every day, Asakusa Yokozuna Hotel opened its doors in December 2019 to much fanfare.



The experience of Tokito is the perfectly choreographed interplay between food, ambience and design – curated by the chefs themselves – from the moment you pass through the traditional Japanese front gate. The walk along the winding path, through the forested garden and into the softly-lit reception area dissipates any lingering thoughts of the world beyond. There’s an amuse-bouche waiting for you in the room, and that sets the tone for the rest of the evening.



Auberge Tokito is a stone’s throw from Nishi Kunitachi Station on the JR Nambu Line and a short taxi ride from Tachikawa’s main station.



Auberge Tokito  
1 Chome-24-26  
Nishikicho, Tachikawa;  
+81 42 5258888;  
[aubergetokito.com/en](http://aubergetokito.com/en)





“  
**Converted from the  
 former Kokonoe Sumo  
 Stable where for decades  
 sumo wrestlers lived  
 and trained every day,  
 Asakusa Yokozuna Hotel  
 opened its doors in 2019  
 to much fanfare”**

**This page:** An image of  
 a sumo wrestler  
 welcomes guests of  
 Asakusa Yokozuna Hotel

Ryogoku, the spiritual heart of sumo in Japan, is a quick train journey or 15-minute taxi ride from the hotel. For sumo fans, the best time to be in Tokyo is during the months of January, May and September when “sumo season” heats up. You might find yourself rubbing shoulders with apprentice sumo wrestlers on the subway as they travel to the tournament in Ryogoku Kokugikan Sumo Hall.

The country’s national sport can seem inaccessible, especially to tourists. Tickets (especially the better seats close to the ring) can be almost impossible to source and the etiquette for viewing morning training sessions hard to fathom. However, Asakusa Yokozuna Hotel’s Head of Marketing, Masaki Murata, says that change is on the way and soon hotel guests will be able to purchase a range of authentic sumo packages.

“As well as increasing the number of official goods on offer in the rooms, we are working with the Sumo Association to create optional tours and packages,” says Murata. “One idea in the pipeline is to include a *masu-seki* ticket plan (one of the best tickets in a sumo arena) for guests. The other is to collaborate with a local sumo stable to offer guests exclusive morning practice viewings followed by lunch with the wrestlers.” Presumably your plate will be a smaller portion. ■



As you can expect, everything in the Asakusa Yokozuna Hotel resonates with sumo. The floors are named after legendary sumo wrestlers of the past and classic sumo paintings and banzuke ranking lists, written in ornate Japanese calligraphy, hang on the walls. In the rooms, elevated tatami platforms resemble raised sumo rings and guests can enjoy amenities like “sumo tea” – a novelty teabag held in the cup by the burly arms of a sumo wrestler.



Asakusa Yokozuna  
 3-30-5 Asakusa,  
 Taito-ku;  
 +81 50 20187882;  
[en.stay-sakura.com/  
 yokozuna](https://en.stay-sakura.com/yokozuna)



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A close-up photograph of a person's hand weaving on a loom. The hand is positioned on the left, holding a red thread. The loom consists of several vertical red threads and horizontal white threads. The background is a blurred wooden surface. The word "Woven" is written in white serif font in the top left corner, and "legacy" is written in white serif font in the bottom right corner.

# Woven

legacy





For centuries, the Batak community in Medan has revered the ulos, a traditional woven textile. Now, modern fashion is catching on

Words **Rusmailia Lenggogeni** Photography **Muhammad Fadli**



**V**ilidius Siburian, an ulos expert and collector in his 30s, regularly scours markets and antique shops as far away as Bali to procure this traditional handwoven textile, but he says the ulos closest to his heart was his first. As he was preparing to leave home for university, his *opung boru* (maternal grandmother) bequeathed him a priceless family heirloom as a token of her love: a vintage ulos *surisuri* (“comb” in local dialect). With it, she also passed along its history, which she never told anyone, including her own children. When still in her teens, *opung boru* was visiting another village when a stranger—instantly smitten by her—proposed on the spot. She accepted. However, after five years of marriage and still no signs of a baby, her parents presented her with a piece of dark navy ulos with thin, vertical stripes that symbolised bringing forth good fortune in a long and neat manner. Not long after, Vilidius’ mother was born.

Vilidius’ collection has since grown to more than a thousand vintage and newer ulos, and he regularly loans his rarest pieces to museums. From a dedicated storage room for all his ulos in Jakarta, he proudly unfurled some of his collection to show me the different types of ulos. Once a practical cloth to ward off the chilly mountain air, ulos has long since evolved into an important ceremonial attribute. It is worn, displayed, or presented during rituals that mark rites of passage—pregnancy, birth of baby, marriage, death—and shows a person’s standing in society.

The Batak community, descendants of people who migrated from mainland Asia some 4,000 years ago and settled in the lush highlands of North Sumatra, is considered to be one of the oldest in Indonesia and it shows in their woven textile—it has unfussy geometric patterns and only four colours: black, blue, white and red. Ulos means “blanket” in the local Batak dialect. A *partonun* (weaver), traditionally a woman, is a combination of tailor and shaman—she would create a design based on her customer’s aura and gets her inspiration from nature. Despite looking deceptively simple, the process is slow (up to six months) and long (11 steps). Before the arrival of modern factories, all ulos were bespoke because each had particular hopes and prayers woven into it.

“An old-school *partonun* keeps her design in her head. She relies on her memory and

**Previous spread, left to right:** Weaving ulos in Lumban Sitohang, Samosir, Toba; ulos from Vilidius Siburian’s collection







**This spread (clockwise from top left):** Vilidius Siburian; finished ulos pieces by Tobatenun; raw natural dye material at Pematangsiantar; traditional weaving at Lumban Sitohang; natural dye threads



counting skills to translate the design into thread placement before they go into the loom,” explains Vilidius. “There are lots of unfinished and asymmetrical ulos that go to waste because the partonun miscounted or she forgot where she left off after taking a short break.” This is why when a partonun starts an ulos, she works long hours (12 to 14 hours a day is quite common) with minimal breaks.

Despite the significance of ulos in Batak culture, being a partonun is no longer considered a sustainable profession. It’s just too time-consuming. Demand for bespoke ulos has also plummeted as cheaper, machine-made versions and flashier alternatives from other regions flood the market. It’s one of the contributing factors to the extinction of some ulos patterns. Preservation becomes crucial, and this is where high-end fashion comes in.

**IN A QUIET RESIDENTIAL AREA** in Pematangsiantar, two hours away from Medan en route to the province’s primary tourist attraction of Lake Toba, sits a three-storey house that looks like others in the neighbourhood, except that one can see multiple women weavers coming and going every day. As I enter the reception area, the click-clacking sound of wooden looms mixed with chatter and laughter fills the air. It’s workshop day and the place is packed with women weaving, learning how to create a pattern.

The house is a community space built by Tobatenun, a social enterprise founded in 2018 by a Batak mother-and-daughter team, Kerri Na Basaria and Devi Pandjaitan, to





**This spread, left to right:** A Batak woman wearing ulos; view of Lake Toba from Bakkara



“

**A *partonun* (weaver), traditionally a woman, is a combination of tailor and shaman – she would create a design based on her customer's aura and gets her inspiration from nature”**







preserve the art of ulos. The scale of this new kid on the block is impressive – it produces its own dyes using organic waste from the area and plants grown in their garden, and it delivers annual couture and ready-to-wear collections, along with fashion accessories (hats, bags, obi) and home décor.

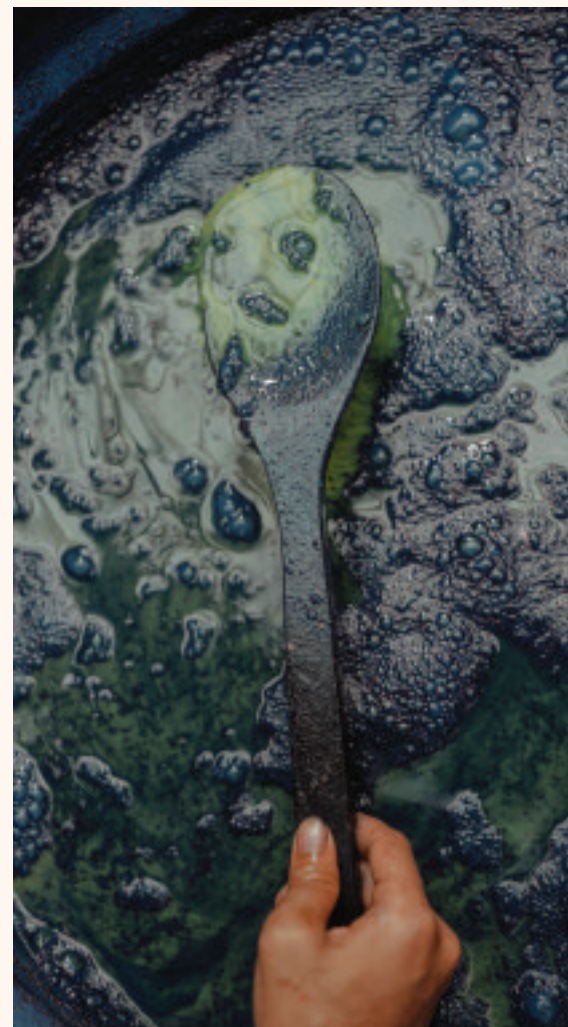
Tobatenun regularly does collaborations with other designers, most recently in April with Cahayalampu, a lighting designer for ulos lampshades. The Tobatenun team consists of three designers (including a textile designer) who work closely with more than 200 artisans, including weavers from Medan, Pematangsiantar and five villages. Their in-house textile designer develops contemporary motifs based on nature (recent collections drew their inspiration from raindrops and jewel stones), while their weavers are given creative freedom to give their own twist to traditional motifs.

Tobatenun also has a unique place in the world of business. While most artisans are women, the business is usually run by men. As a female-led business with mainly female employees, Tobatenun acts a platform for the artisans to strengthen their place in society. “The aim of Tobatenun is to put a spotlight on women in textile art. Historically and culturally, this is a female space,” explains Mariana Christine, Tobatenun’s brand communications officer. “*Adat* (customary law) in Batak society is a man’s domain, but it won’t run without the most important adat tool – an ulos, that is woven by a woman.” This is why, on top of workshops on rare motifs, Tobatenun offers counselling and regular health screenings for their artisans.



**This spread (clockwise from top left):**

Traditional Batak house in Samosir; Merdi Sihombing, fashion designer; natural indigo dye at Jabu Borna; Melvi Tampubolon, COO of Tobatenun







## Where to buy ulos in Medan

These traditional markets have dozens of ulos sellers, with their own curation of ulos bought from weavers from villages in North Sumatra. Bargaining is welcome.



### Pasar Petisah

Jl. Kota Baru 3, Petisah  
Tengah, Medan 20111

### Pasar Sentral

Jl. Pusat Pasar,  
Medan 20112



### Pajak Ikan Lama

Jl. Stasiun Kereta  
Api, Kesawan,  
Medan 20112



**MERDI SIHOMBING, A BATAK** fashion designer who has incorporated ulos into his own designs, also believes that ulos should empower the community. His main interest is sustainability – both in design and livelihood for artisans. Merdi points out that, “More demand from within and outside the Batak community helps build an ecosystem of artisans from indigenous communities, and this would revitalise the ulos industry”. Thus, innovation and flexibility are crucial. Instead of having a partonun work on an ulos exclusively, a piece of Merdi ulos is produced by up to eight artisans. As a result, production time is dramatically reduced and he gets to provide work for as many people as possible.

For his Spring/Summer 24 collection at New York Fashion Week in September he showcased modern, polished designs utilising ulos that were woven from soft, breathable threads. In 2008, Merdi was the first Batak designer to produce the traditionally heavy ulos in a lightweight version using micro tencel threads, making it more attractive for everyday use. He also gets creative with existing motifs, saying, “Urbanites and the international market

prefer a simpler, more elegant aesthetic.” Noticing that Batak socialites gravitate towards songket (a fancier woven textile from South Sumatra with gold and silver threads) for parties, Merdi started producing silk songket with ulos motifs. He also worked with Swarovski for a remake of a limited edition, jewel-encrusted ulos that has gone extinct since the 19th century.

To sustain the traditional, one has to adapt and modernise. Ulos advocates like Merdi, Vilidius and Tobatenun feel hopeful that ulos is here to stay – and will continue to grow outside of its use in traditional rituals as its increasing prominence outside of the Batak community. Ultimately, ulos is an expression of love, respect and solidarity. And that’s universal. ■



**Malaysia Airlines flies from Kuala Lumpur to Medan 14x weekly.**

**Firefly flies from Penang to Medan 7x weekly.**





# The beauty of batik

Experience this timeless fusion of culture and style with Emmer Zecna

Fashion is not just about clothing; it's a reflection of tradition, history and personal expression. One striking example of this marriage of culture and style is the art of batik. This ancient textile tradition, originating from maritime Southeast Asia, has transcended borders and continues to make a significant impact on contemporary fashion.

Emmer Zecna is a proudly Malaysian brand dedicated to preserving and innovating on this time-honoured art. Whether you're a purist who gravitates towards traditional fabrics or a fashion maven who embraces the latest trends, Emmer Zecna offers a little something for everyone.

## Why batik?

In recent years, batik has seen a remarkable resurgence in men's fashion, breaking free from traditional boundaries and becoming a symbol of elegance and sophistication. Embraced by fashion designers and enthusiasts worldwide, batik's appeal lies in its versatility. From formal events to casual outings and even daily wear, batik shirts effortlessly blend tradition with modernity.

## A cut above the rest

Priding themselves as the best menswear online shopping store in Malaysia, Emmer Zecna presents an array of meticulously crafted batik shirts designed to cater to the modern man's tastes and preferences. Their collection includes both traditional and modern designs, each with its own unique charm.

For those who appreciate timeless elegance, the Emmer Zecna Men's 100% Polyester Batik Regular Fit Long Sleeve shirt offers a blend of classic batik motifs in a comfortable and durable polyester fabric. The easy-to-iron and quick-drying fabric functionalities are an added bonus.

If you gravitate towards contemporary styles, the Emmer Zecna Men's 100% Cotton Modern Fit Short Sleeve shirt is the epitome of modern batik fashion. Made from breathable 100% cotton print fabric, this shirt is both stylish and comfortable, and perfect for Malaysia's humid weather. Its sleek silhouette, button fastening and open chest pocket add a touch of sophistication to your look.

## The Emmer Zecna experience

Shopping at Emmer Zecna goes beyond buying a new outfit; it's about embracing a cultural heritage and making a style statement that cuts across time and trends. The brand's commitment to quality and attention to detail ensures that each piece is a work of art.



Learn more and shop online at  
[emmerzecna.com.my](http://emmerzecna.com.my)  
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When it comes to securing admission at top universities, competition is stiff. So how can one stand out?

Introducing Charterhouse Malaysia, a pre-university specialist in Kuala Lumpur with a rich UK heritage. From its humble beginnings in London, where it provided opportunities for 40 “poor scholars” to its present-day status as one of England’s most esteemed schools, Charterhouse has adapted to meet the evolving needs of learners for over 400 years.

At Charterhouse Malaysia, founding graduates have received interviews and offers from renowned institutions such as University of Oxford, University of Cambridge and London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), as well as from Ivy League institutions in the United States and other top universities around the globe.

These achievements reflect the rigorous and holistic education students receive at Charterhouse Malaysia.

## IGNITE: Your pathway to success

Charterhouse Malaysia’s IGNITE is a flagship Future Pathways programme designed to provide exceptional university and career guidance. More than just traditional career advice, IGNITE creates a roadmap to success, tailored to each student’s individual passions, skills and aspirations.

The IGNITE programme provides a wealth of learning opportunities such as insightful webinars, in-depth seminars, practical workshops and inspirational lectures from industry experts

that offer unique insights into various disciplines. Furthermore, students benefit from internships that offer invaluable real-world experiences and university fairs that provide direct interaction with representatives from top universities around the globe. These opportunities help to bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional environments.

## Digital tools for success

The bedrock of the IGNITE programme is the Charterhouse Portfolio. This innovative online platform provides students with a

structured space where they can set realistic goals, monitor their progress and reflect on their achievements. By documenting their academic and personal growth, students create a powerful record of their journey that enables them to make strategic decisions about their future.

Charterhouse also uses the UNIFROG platform, a comprehensive tool that aids students in exploring potential career paths, understanding the landscape of global universities and crafting high-quality university applications. With UNIFROG, students can make well-informed decisions about their next steps, guided by a wealth of data and personalised support.

In essence, IGNITE is more than a programme – it’s a catalyst that accelerates students’ journeys to success at the world’s top universities and in careers of their choice.



Send an email to [admissions@charterhouse-htms.edu.my](mailto:admissions@charterhouse-htms.edu.my) to find out more.



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# SABAH HEBAT!

Unforgettable adventures, wildlife encounters and bucket-list attractions – Sabah has it all

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## A state of greatness

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Located on Borneo, Sabah is renowned for its blend of nature and culture, making it a truly *hebat* (great) destination. Stunning landscapes abound, from the majestic Mount Kinabalu to centuries-old rainforests alongside the Kinabatangan River, which teem with wildlife such as orangutans, sun bears and proboscis monkeys.

Sabah is also home to Sipadan Island, which has some the world's best-loved diving spots, such as Barracuda Point and Hanging Gardens.

Sabah's welcoming people contribute to the state's greatness. Indigenous groups like the Kadazandusun, Bajau and Murut love to share their languages and customs with those keen to explore.

Moreover, Sabahan ingenuity combines traditional know-how and modern entrepreneurship, as you will see in this special section. Sabahans' drive to create opportunities in modern economic sectors, such as food and hospitality, contribute to the prosperity of Malaysia.

## Unique stays in Sabah



### **For a lush escape: Bungaraya Island Resort**

Set on a jungle-swathed hillside perch on Gaya Island, Bungaraya Island Resort is a luxury getaway that promises seclusion. Its collection of 48 villas take design cues from traditional Bornean architecture and offer stunning coastal views.

The Bungaraya Island

Resort provides a haven for nature and adventure lovers. During your stay, you may be lucky to spot the elusive proboscis monkeys who inhabit the surrounding jungle or encounter a whaleshark during a diving trip off the island.

**Polish Bay, Gaya Island, Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, Kota Kinabalu | [echoresorts.com](http://echoresorts.com) | IG: @bungarayaresort | +60-88 380 390**

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### **For contemporary interiors: Signel Poshtel**

Set in the heart of Kota Kinabalu, Signel Poshtel is a splendid base from which to explore this lively city. Just beyond Poshtel lies Jalan Gaya, home to a wide array of street food vendors and bustling weekend markets. Check into Poshtel's sleek, stylish and modern, rustic bunk

beds, delivering authentic, design-led experiences. It's definitely the ideal spot to hang out and socialise with other posh packers. Whether you're travelling solo or with your loved ones, you're bound to enjoy your stay at this rare gem of North Borneo.

**Levels 1 to 4, Lot 120, Jalan Gaya, Kota Kinabalu | IG: @signelposhtel | +60-88 221 168 | +60-11 5877 2391**

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## Back to nature

Borneo Sepilok Rainforest Resort is a haven for travellers looking to embrace the great outdoors



Nestled within the heart of one of the world's oldest rainforests, Borneo Sepilok Rainforest Resort offers the perfect blend of natural beauty and modern comforts. Surrounded by wild, tangled greenery and conveniently located less than 10 minutes away from the Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre and the Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre, this resort is the perfect base for those seeking a true Bornean adventure.

### Nature at your doorstep

You'll be spoiled for choice when it comes to nature activities. Guided jungle treks reveal diverse wildlife and a unique perspective of the rainforest's beauty, while birdwatchers will delight in the

chance to spot rare and colourful avian species in their natural habitat.

### Modern comforts

At the resort, guests can choose from a range of accommodations, from spacious dorms to luxurious villas. Its deluxe chalets even come with a private balcony so you can unwind while drinking in the sumptuous beauty of your surroundings. Modern amenities such as air conditioning, Wi-Fi connectivity and well-equipped bathrooms ensure guests enjoy a restful retreat after a day of exploring. You don't have to stray far for food either as the resort has a massive on-site restaurant that offers a wide variety of cuisines, including traditional Bornean flavours, with vegan and vegetarian options available.

Borneo Sepilok Rainforest Resort is more than just a place to stay; it's an invitation to explore and connect with the incredible natural wonders of Borneo. Whether you're an avid nature enthusiast or are simply in search of a tranquil escape, this rustic retreat has something special to offer every visitor.

## 3 day trips to take

### Sepilok Orangutan Rehabilitation Centre

Learn more about orangutan conservation efforts and why it's so important to preserve these endangered species.

### Bornean Sun Bear Conservation Centre

Home to 44 orphaned and rescued ex-captive sun bears, this rescue and rehabilitation facility offers visitors a chance to witness these bears on the road to recovery.

### Labuk Bay Proboscis Monkey Sanctuary

Located a 25-minute drive away from the resort, this sanctuary is home to "the biggest nose in Borneo" along with other displaced wildlife such as Silvered-Leaf Langurs and Oriental-Pied Hornbills.

**For more information on Borneo Sepilok Rainforest Resort, visit [borneosepilok.com](http://borneosepilok.com)**



# Empowering local communities

The Sabah Land Development Board strives to uplift rural residents through agricultural initiatives

For many decades, the Sabah Land Development Board (SLDB) has remained steadfast in its mission to promote socio-economic development in rural Sabah. It has empowered some 7,000 settlers across Sandakan, Tawau, Kunak, Semporna, Lahad Datu, Beaufort, Keningau and Nabawan.

The board leads this change with government-initiated programs in commercial land development using modern agricultural technologies. In 2021, SLDB's palm oil production experienced a significant growth of 22%. During the same year, RM21 million in income and dividends were handed over to the smallholders and participants involved in the project.

SLDB's developing project SHAPE (Sipitang Halal Agri Plantation Economic Development Hub) covers 2,000 hectares in Kampung Iburu, Sipitang and is deemed to offer a solution to food security concerns, enhance GDP growth, and decrease the state's import reliance. Besides its economic impact, the initiative is expected to create new

jobs and agropreneurship opportunities, benefiting about 2,500 local residents.

SLDB has an unwavering commitment to becoming the leading catalyst and executor of rural land development in Sabah, with a focus on the food industry. Apart from its successful ventures in palm oil, dairy farming and food production, SLDB has also diversified its businesses into other agricultural food-based products such as chillies, Bentong ginger, stingless bee honey, MD2 pineapple, pandan, coconut and peppers. This diversification enriches the community with new income opportunities and fosters a resilient agricultural landscape for sustainable growth.



For more information on Sabah Land Development Board's efforts, visit [sldb.com.my](http://sldb.com.my)

## SLDB's impactful ventures

**Program Hari Muhibbah Bersama Peneroka / Peserta SLDB 2023** with SLDB Settlers stands as a significant occasion to acknowledge and appreciate the unwavering efforts of the settlers. This gathering serves as a platform for settlers to come together and engage with SLDB Management.

The event is a manifestation of one of SLDB's core objectives, which is to enhance the overall well-being of settlers, facilitate their social mobility, strengthen familial bonds and encourage active participation in community activities, all of which are pivotal components of SLDB's comprehensive roadmap for progress and prosperity.

**Here's a look at some of their recent community gatherings:**

**Sg Manila, Sandakan**  
20 July 2023

**Apas Balung, Tawau**  
21 July 2023

**Nabawan, Keningau**  
23 September 2023





*Chef DR. Alan Voo*

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No. A-G-2, Ground Floor, Block A Phase 1, Lorong Sutera,  
Sutera Avenue sembulan, 88100, Sutera Avenue,  
88000 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah  
Tel: +6012-803 5757 / +6088-252 255





# Time to feast

The best spots to eat while in Kota Kinabalu



## Happy Place Restaurant

Happy Place prides itself on culinary excellence. Steak lovers will be pleased by the choices on offer, from the Black Angus sirloin and ribeye to the PS prime rib. Barbecue fans should try the smoky, finger-licking BBQ ribs, while lamb enthusiasts will find a symphony of herbs and spices in the grilled rack of lamb. Not into red meat? The chicken leg is grilled to moist, golden perfection. Whether it's a special occasion or simply a night out, there's something for every craving.

**Kompleks BSA, Off Miles 5.5, Jalan Tuaran Kolombong, Kota Kinabalu | FB: @happyplacebsa | +60 11-3668 7552**



## Times Three Café

From hearty breakfast sandwiches and sourdough burgers to lighter salads, Times Three Café is a great Muslim-friendly spot in Kota Kinabalu to recharge between your jaunts into the city. Must-try dishes include the deeply flavoured balsamic smoked duck linguine and their unique fusion-style asam pedas prawn pasta. More than a just a dining venue, its light-filled, minimalist space is also perfect for special occasions. In addition to robust coffees and delicately flavoured tea, you'll find refreshing beverages like matcha lattes and desserts like the indulgent chocolate tart and classic tiramisu.

**G-06, Ground Floor, JQ Central, Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens, Kota Kinabalu | IG: @timesthree\_ | +60 88-746 739**



## Souq Garden Restaurant

Set within the Raia Hotel Kota Kinabalu, in an ornately designed space, Souq Garden will entice you with a lavish selection of Middle Eastern dishes. The halal restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, and offers speciality dishes like biryani and mandi served with ample portions of chicken or lamb shank. You'll also find Malaysian favourites like a slow-cooked asam pedas oxtail served with fragrant jasmine rice, Tawau curry mee and Tuaran fried noodles.

**Raia Hotel, Jalan Sembulan Lama, Kota Kinabalu | raiahotels.com.my | IG: @raiahotelkotakinabalu | +60 88-230 777**



November

# BEST SPOTS IN MALAYSIA

2023

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



## For solid Italian in a modern setting: Alta Pizza

Chef Christian Recomio, who helms Alta Café, Alta Burger and modern dining establishment Studio with business partner Jenifer Kuah, now has a brand new eatery, this time focused on the joys of simple pizzas, handmade pastas and delicious vegetables. But beware, this isn't an old-timey, red and white chequered tablecloth kind of pizza parlour. Alta Pizza is a modern, sun-drenched, pork-free space in bustling Bangsar with a beautiful Stefano Ferrara pizza oven taking pride of place. The Neo Neapolitan-style pizzas are a beautiful canvas for made-fresh-daily cheese and seasonal local produce, while the drinks list comprises natural wines, classic cocktails and a house-made limoncello, distilled from Amalfi lemons.

**38, Jalan Kemuja, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur** | [altapizza.co](http://altapizza.co) | IG: [alta\\_pizza\\_](#)  
| +60 16-425 0773



## For delicious all-day dining: Café Deli by El Mesón

This charming spot in trendy Bangsar is a top choice for delicious all-day dining, from hearty breakfasts and quick business lunches to sumptuous dinner dates. Set amid a soothing pastel green space with terracotta tiles and potted plants, Café Deli by El Mesón serves delicious breakfast fare such as eggs Benedict and French toast, as well as a bang-for-your-buck lunch set where you can pair your main course with tapas such as croquetas or a hearty prawn bisque. A Jospier grill also cooks up succulent and grilled-to-perfection dishes such as burgers, lamb chops and Argentinian Black Angus ribeye. Don't forget to order an authentic paella with your meal, and enjoy a free coffee or tea when you show your Malaysia Airlines boarding pass.

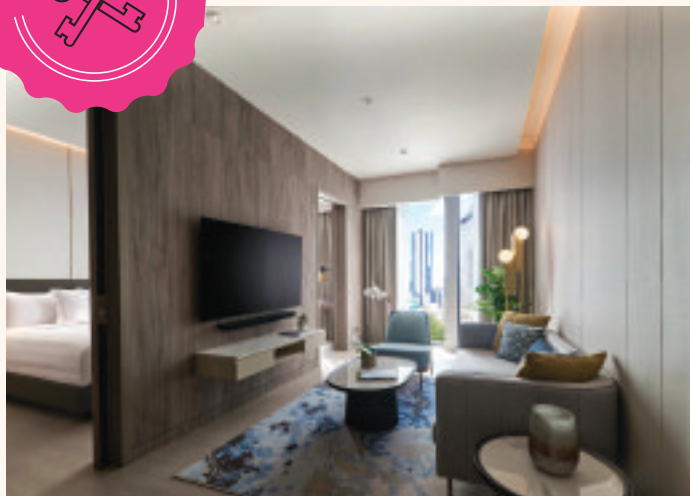
**61, Jalan Telawi 3, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur** | [cafedeli.com.my](http://cafedeli.com.my) | IG: [cafedeli.my](#) | +60 3 2282 8290



## For Southeast Asian fusion: Manja Kuala Lumpur

Manja KL offers a captivating and unique environment that seamlessly blends the charm of history with modern elegance. Situated in a beautifully restored colonial-era building in the heart of Old Malaya, Manja Kuala Lumpur exudes a sense of nostalgia and authenticity, with vintage touches and architectural details that pay homage to its rich heritage. Indulge in the juicy Sarawak Black Pepper Ribeye and experience the delightful layering of flavours in this grass-fed, antibiotic-free steak. Other standout menu items include lemon butter scallops and saffron snapper ravioli, featuring large Hokkaido scallops paired with our secret saffron sauce. Pair your meal with a curated list of wines, cocktails and mocktails.

**6, Lorong Raja Chulan, Kuala Lumpur** | [manja.com.my](http://manja.com.my) | IG: [manjakualalumpur](#)  
| +60 12-373 7063



### Pan Pacific Serviced Suites, Kuala Lumpur

With spacious suites and a central location in the city, this property is perfect for business trips and family vacations. Check into ultimate comfort with luxuries including a rain shower and Balmain Paris bath products. After a long day, travellers can take advantage of PARKROYAL COLLECTION Kuala Lumpur's facilities and enjoy a rejuvenating massage at St. Gregory Spa, a hearty meal at Thyme or a refreshing beverage at The Botanist Lounge & Bar.

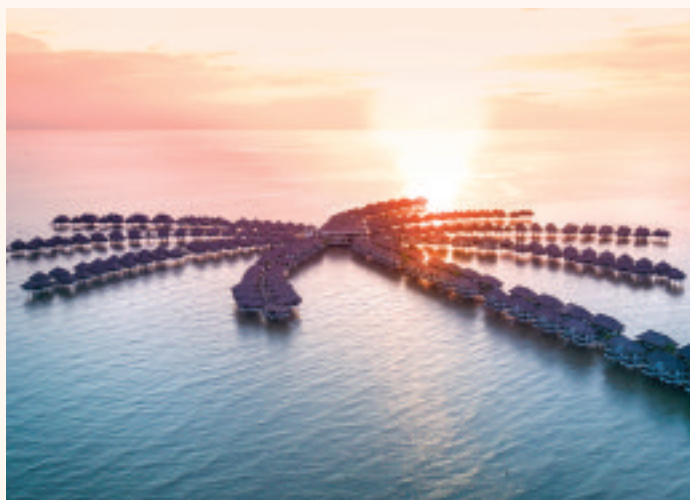
[panpacific.com](http://panpacific.com) | +60 3-2706 8688



### Mangala Estate, Boutique Resort

Experience the joy of the holiday season with a memorable family getaway at Mangala Estate. Immerse yourself in the peaceful ambience of nature-inspired villas, indulge in delectable festive delicacies, unwind with rejuvenating spa treatments and partake in enjoyable activities amidst the beautiful natural surroundings. Over the New Year, celebrate with a breathtaking fireworks display that you and your family will cherish.

[frankyhoteles.com/mangalaestate](http://frankyhoteles.com/mangalaestate) | +60 9 505 7788



### Avani Sepang Goldcoast Resort

This five-star, Polynesian-inspired resort is Malaysia's only palm tree-designed, over-water resort. Situated just 1.5 hours away from KLIA, and surrounded by diverse flora and fauna, it is an ideal destination for a romantic or family weekend. Each of its 315 over-water villas features a private balcony, allowing guests to enjoy breathtaking sunrises and sunsets. Use code **GOINGAVANI** to save up to 25% on bookings directly on their website and join the free GHA Discovery loyalty programme to enjoy more privileges.

[avaniresorts.com/en/sepang](http://avaniresorts.com/en/sepang) | +603 3182 3600



### DoubleTree by Hilton Putrajaya Lakeside

Nestled in the lush landscapes of Malaysia's administrative capital, and located 25 minutes from KLIA, this lakeside hotel is perfect for business travellers and families seeking a stay in the city's hub. It boasts 14 thoughtful room categories, with spacious rooms offering breathtaking views of the city's iconic landmarks. Guests can indulge at Makan Kitchen, where the finest Malaysian flavours are masterfully curated. Its serene infinity pool and state-of-the-art spa and fitness centre promise moments of respite in the bustle of the city.

[putrajayalakeside.doubletreebyhilton.com](http://putrajayalakeside.doubletreebyhilton.com) | +603 8890 0000





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# Building a greener, promising future

With a refreshed vision and mission, S P Setia, Malaysia's leading real estate giant, is paving the way for sustainability and community empowerment

At the core of S P Setia's operations is a strong focus on sustainability. Their framework encompasses the economic, environmental and social dimensions, aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and guides their key business processes.

## Building a greener future

Setia eGreen Living, with its nine green features, also demonstrates their bold commitment to sustainable development. Future products are targeted to align with guidelines including integrating green switches, solar PV conduit ready, electrical vehicle (EV) port ready and a rainwater harvesting system, ensuring sustainability is at the forefront of their offerings.

One of their boldest initiatives is addressing Scope 2 greenhouse-gas emissions resulting from energy use. Through a Memorandum of Understanding with Tenaga Nasional Berhad, S P Setia is installing solar panels on designated assets to reduce Scope 2 emissions. This venture aims to source electricity from renewable energy sources, contributing to a greener future.

## Net Zero emissions by 2050

The real estate giant is also diligently identifying and addressing greenhouse

gas emissions across Scopes 1, 2 and 3. It recognises the importance of focusing on Scope 3 emissions and is actively working to reduce them, aiming for true Net Zero status before 2050. They've also developed a landscape strategy that prioritises biodiversity preservation, including guidelines for strategic tree planting and carbon sequestration.

## Empowering communities

Beyond their dedication to sustainability, the company is deeply committed to making a positive impact on communities. Through its charity arm, S P Setia Foundation, they advance social initiatives that cater to the needs of disadvantaged individuals in Malaysia. Programmes like the Setia Healthcare & Well-Being Assistance Programme, Setia Youth Unity Programme and Setia Volunteer Weekend provide support to underprivileged communities, empowering and uplifting those in need. The S P Setia fabric recycling programme in collaboration with local social enterprises is not only aligned with its sustainability mission, but also empower single women and mothers by upskilling them with tailoring skills.

S P Setia's sustainable initiatives and community programmes reflect their vision of a brighter future. Through their unwavering commitment to sustainability and community empowerment, they are paving the way for a promising future in the real estate industry.

For more updates on their latest developments and programmes, visit [spsetia.com](https://spsetia.com).



# The all-American experience

From New York City to Sunway City, Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes is both delicious and Instagrammable



There's much more to Sunway Resort Hotel's massive \$60 million transformation than amazing suites and top-notch amenities. Located within Sunway City in Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur's first fully integrated green township, the resort's new collection of world-class restaurants has made it a destination for locals and visitors alike.

## Straight from New York

One such acclaimed eatery is Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes, famous for its finely crafted and highly Instagrammable burgers and milkshakes. Originally from New York, this exciting restaurant now has outposts across the US and the world, in Bahrain, Singapore, Switzerland and the UAE. The outpost at Sunway Resort Hotel is the first and only one in Malaysia.

## Juicy, indulgent burgers

Look forward to a mouthwatering array of creative gourmet burgers, including the Kimchi Shrimp Burger and the Thai Green Curry Chicken Burger. Beef lovers should try the triple-award-winning Greg Norman, which features half a pound of wagyu beef with a luscious buttermilk-dill sauce and blue cheese.

If your tastes lean more herbivorous, fret not. There are plenty of vegan options on the menu as well, such as the Black Bean Vegan Burger, Vegan Black Bean Salad and the Vegan Black 'N White CAKESHAKES®. There are also local flavours created exclusively for Black Tap Malaysia, including the moreish Percik Grilled Chicken Sandwich.

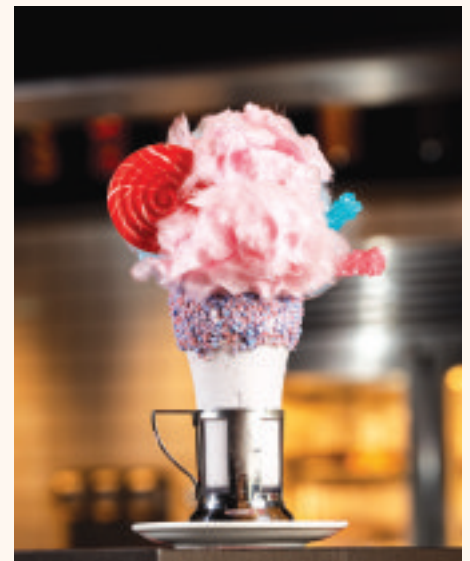
## Milkshakes made for Instagram

Be sure to leave room for Black Tap's famous CRAZYSHAKE® milkshakes. These gravity-defying, multi-coloured dessert creations taste as good as they look. There's the delightfully colourful Cotton Candy shake with cotton candy, blue and pink rock candy and a pink and white whirly pop, the Cookie Shake, a vanilla shake that comes with cookie crumbles and topped with a "cookiewich", and the Sweet 'N Salty, a peanut butter shake stacked with a sugar daddy candy, pretzel rods and a chocolate covered pretzel. Yum!

## A modern vibe for any occasion

Whether you're celebrating an anniversary, a birthday or just want a fun time out, the lively vibe at Black Tap Malaysia is sure to please. Inspired by the classic New York diner, the façade and restaurant interiors feature eye-catching monochromatic mural art from famous Malaysian street artist Kenji Chai. This stylish ambience is further enhanced by a top-notch soundtrack of '80s and '90s hip-hop and pop hits.

So if you are looking for a new and unique dining experience while in KL, be sure to swing by Black Tap Malaysia.





# Mesmerising *Putrajaya!*



Putrajaya – the Malaysian government's federal administration centre – mesmerises anybody who sets foot in the city since it peacefully nestles amidst natural tropical surroundings. Easily connected by roads and rails from Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley region, this incredibly well-planned city beckons all from near and far, especially when it is also the destination for national and world-class events, particularly relating to culture, recreation and lifestyle.

A model of Malaysian modern urban planning, Putrajaya's skyline is a work of art. Follow along Putrajaya Boulevard to admire the iconic **Putrajaya International**



**Convention Centre, Putrajaya Corporation, Palace of Justice, Masjid Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin (Iron Mosque), Masjid Putra, and Perdana Putra**, which houses the Prime Minister's Office.

The bridges of Putrajaya are also visual feasts, whereby each of them has its own unique charm, from the futuristic **Seri Wawasan Bridge** to the romantic European flair of **Seri Gemilang**. At night, the lights transform these bridges into stunning showpieces.

Though Putrajaya is replete with man-made wonders, it is not called the garden city for nothing. The city has 13 metropolitan parks; the mother of them is the **Putrajaya Botanical Garden**, home to more than 700 species of flora from around the world. Take a leisurely stroll down Canna Walk, Floral Steps, or Hibiscus Walk, and culminate at the Moroccan Pavilion, which transports you to the imperial cities of Fez, Meknes, Rabat, and Marrakech. You could also feel transported to China when stepping into the **China-Malaysia Friendship Garden**, a serene oasis with traditional pavilions, weeping willows, and ancient Qilin statues inspired by Lingnan gardens. Those who love to jog or cycle should do so in the English-inspired and picturesque **Saujana Hijau Park** that has





Malaysia is a culinary destination, and Putrajaya lives up to that expectation. From ready-to-eat dishes to fresh produce, feast your way through **Putrajaya Farmers Market** open on Tuesdays and Fridays. Foodies should also explore the culinary wonders of Putrajaya at the **Food Truck Hotspots** in Precinct 2 and Precinct 14 that serve delicious quick bites and authentic local delicacies. Craving for international fare like Thai or Middle Eastern cuisine? If so, the gastronomic, waterfront hub that is **Ayer@8** and the Diplomatic Enclave Commercial Centre in Precinct 15 have you covered. These culinary hot spots are teeming with visitors especially on Friday nights, throughout weekends and public holidays. Other must-visits are the food courts in Precinct 8, Precinct 9, Precinct 11, and Precinct 16 that boast stalls selling an array of Malaysian classics and Western dishes, including *nasi kerabu* and *nasi dagang* from Terengganu, Johor *mee rebus*, Penang *char kuey teow*, *nasi lemak*, *apam balik*, and even *kacang pool*.

So come to Putrajaya today, where you can discover myriads of nature, excitement, challenge, flavours, culture, serenity, and peace, leaving you truly mesmerised...



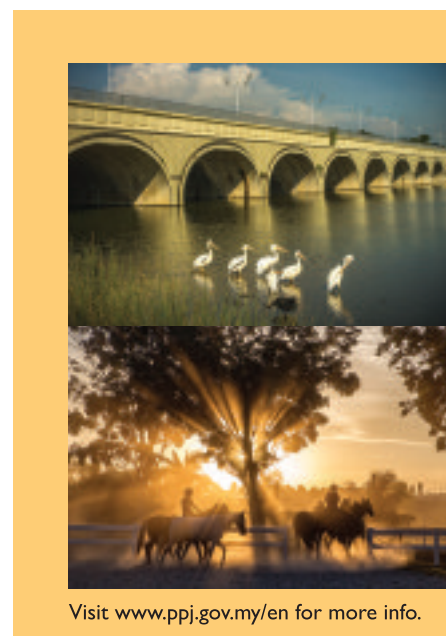
well-kept pathways, shady pavilions, and reliable facilities. Next, channel your inner cowboy (or cowgirl) with therapeutic horse-riding sessions at **Putrajaya Equestrian Park** or tuck into delicious comestibles at **Ekues Cabin Cafe** while watching the majestic creatures. Come nighttime, immerse yourself within the dream-like illuminated landscape of **Putra Perdana Secret Garden**.

But greenery would not be able to survive without water – the source of life – and Putrajaya has that in abundance. To understand how water makes its way to the city, proceed to **Putrajaya Wetlands Park**, a crown jewel of Putrajaya, to uncover the secrets of this vital ecosystem at the Nature Interpretive Centre. Don't forget your binoculars for fantastic birdwatching and wildlife-spotting too. Afterwards, check out the edutainment theme park, **Wetland Studios Putrajaya**, which brings nature to life in the form of mechanised replicas of creatures like dinosaurs, mammoths, and giant insects, including an LED-lit magic tree reminiscent of Avatar's Tree of Souls. Get some shut-eye and spend the night at **Glamping @ Wetland Putrajaya** for an extraordinary camping experience; apart from cosy tents, challenge yourself at the adventure park, ATV or try your hand at archery. When the stars come out, get ready for a buffet

barbecue dinner, spectacular fire show, and karaoke showdown.

The water from the wetland feeds into Putrajaya Lake - a 650-hectare man-made lake and a UNESCO ecohydrology site. You can sail on either a sleek yacht or a traditional wooden *perahu* named *Dondang Sayang* courtesy of Cruise Tasik Putrajaya to appreciate Putrajaya's landmarks from a different perspective. For more active pursuits, rent a kayak or a bike from the **Putrajaya Lake Recreation Centre**. Further down the lake, sink your toes into the sand at Floria Putrajaya's newest attraction, **Floria Beach**, with its 100-metre beachfront, water fountains, and cosy seating areas.

As you explore the lake and its banks, stop by at **Souq Putrajaya** to check out **Putrajaya Story Gallery**, an interactive and educational exhibition gallery complete with dioramas, mural paintings, and 3D exhibitions regarding Putrajaya's rich history and landmarks. Next door, **Chocolate Souq Shoppe**, **Klang Valley's largest chocolate store**, awaits. Here, you can snap pictures of the fantasy wonderland set within the store, and purchase local and international chocolate brands. For more shopping choices, head to **Alamanda Shopping Centre** that carries over 100 exclusive brands and serves as a one-stop destination for fashion, accessories, books, and home décor.



Visit [www.ppi.gov.my/en](http://www.ppi.gov.my/en) for more info.

# Where style meets sustainability

Travel in style with Kapten Batik's new eco-friendly Pulao shorts collection, designed in collaboration with luxury hotel The Datai Langkawi



With a mission to preserve the rich heritage of traditional batik while adapting it into timeless apparel, Kapten Batik has revived this highly-technical fabric with its latest Pulao collection. This eye-catching collection of printed swim shorts that are a delightful blend of modernity, style and sustainability. Inspired by a spirit of exploration and travel, it's no wonder that the distinctive designs in the Pulao collection have gained popularity among resort wear enthusiasts.

## Eco-friendly and eye-catching

Drawing inspiration from the various cultures that make up Malaysia's social fabric through its eye-catching motifs, the shorts in the Pulao collection celebrate a fusion of cultures and the beauty of the world. The shorts are crafted with innovative Repreve® fabric made from recycled plastic bottles, and offer durability, softness and versatility while making an eco-friendly fashion statement. The quick-drying lightweight material, along with its high resistance to chlorine and sunlight, thoughtfully considers the practicalities of your swim. Like Kapten Batik's previous collections, Pulao pays meticulous attention to details with its signature eyelets and metal-tipped drawstrings.

## The KB x THE DATAI collection

The Datai, one of Malaysia's most sought-after luxury destination resorts, offers guests nature and culture-based experiences that showcase Malaysian hospitality to the world. In their first collaboration, the KB x THE DATAI collection presents an impressive and stylish beachwear range exclusively for hotel guests. This partnership truly reflects the luxury and sophistication of both brands.

Shop Kapten Batik's new Pulao collection, exclusively available at Kapten Batik's stores and selected hotels like The Datai Langkawi, Four Seasons KL and Mandarin Oriental KL.

Discover the Pulao collection at [kaptenbatik.com.my](https://www.kaptenbatik.com.my).



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# THIS IS MH

(MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY)



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

**71**

**Inside  
our airlines**

News and updates  
from MAG Airlines

**80**

**Discover our  
network**

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

**85**

**Onboard  
entertainment**

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



# Escape to paradise

Discover a quieter, more charming side of Bali's Kuta Beach at Wina Holiday Villa

Nestled in the magical allure of Bali, Kuta Beach exudes a captivating charm, where golden sands and rolling waves entice both sunbathers and surf enthusiasts. The consistent waves attract surfers of all skill levels, while the stunning sunsets provide a perfect backdrop for romantic moments.

Kuta Beach also boasts a lively atmosphere with beachfront bars, restaurants and shops. Its accessibility from Ngurah Rai International Airport and proximity to cultural attractions make it the ideal gateway for those eager to explore the mystical Island of the Gods.

If you're seeking a respite from the bustling tourist scene, consider a stay at Wina Holiday Villa. Nestled in the heart of Kuta, this four-star resort beautifully retains an idyllic Balinese charm. Here are three compelling reasons why Wina Holiday Villa stands out as the perfect choice for your Bali escape:

## Beautifully furnished rooms and facilities

Whether you're on a solo adventure or a family vacation, Wina Holiday Villa offers cosy rooms and spacious accommodations with modern conveniences to cater to every need. Each room is thoughtfully decorated with Balinese aesthetics, featuring wooden accents and indigenous artwork, crafting a warm and inviting ambience. The resort also offers two swimming pools, a gym, a library and a relaxing Balinese spa.

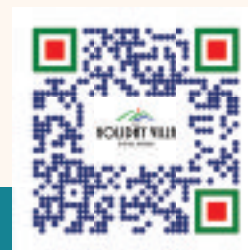
## Delicious dining options

While the resort is just 100m from Kuta Beach, surrounded by many dining choices, you can indulge in delightful offerings right on the resort. Legenda Restaurant presents an enticing variety of international and local classics, with the added allure of a poolside dining experience.

## Wide selection of activities

Engage in a diverse range of thoughtfully curated activities. Participate in invigorating yoga classes, immerse yourself in Balinese culture and commemorate the moment with a memorable photo shoot in traditional Balinese attire. Additionally, you can take lessons on the *rindik* (a traditional Balinese instrument) or traditional Balinese dance.

With its captivating blend of Balinese charm, modern amenities and proximity to Kuta Beach, Wina Holiday Villa is the quintessential choice for those seeking a relaxing and culturally rich getaway.



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## Malaysia Airlines to resume route between Kuala Lumpur and Kertajati

Malaysia Airlines bolsters its Indonesian presence with the resumption of a direct flight from Kuala Lumpur (KUL) to Kertajati (KJT) starting this 30 October, extending its reach to Bandung and West Java. This move strengthens the airline's direct routes to seven Indonesian cities. The airline also offers a complimentary shuttle service from Kertajati International Airport to Bandung City between 30 October and 31 December. The resumption of this route provides travellers with easy access to explore beautiful destinations in West Java, all operated with the airline's Boeing 737-800NG aircraft.

## MAG and MAHB unveil first e-GSE Infrastructure at Selangor Aviation Show 2023



MAG and Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) have made history by unveiling the country's pioneering Electric Ground Support Equipment (e-GSE) infrastructure at the Selangor Aviation Show 2023 at SkyPark RAC Subang.

YAB Dato' Seri Amirudin bin Shari, Chief Minister of Selangor, was a distinguished guest at the launch event.

This groundbreaking initiative, known as the Electric Ground Power

Unit (e-GPU), aims to reduce carbon emissions and noise pollution in the aviation sector, while also establishing the first e-GSE infrastructure at the Subang Airport and soon at KL International Airport (KLIA).

The collaboration between MAG and MAHB shows a strong commitment to sustainability and a greener aviation future, making a significant contribution to the industry's goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.



## MAB Engineering leases Hangar 4 at Subang Airport

MAB Engineering, a subsidiary of MAG, has signed an agreement with Impeccable Vintage Properties (IVP), a subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, for the lease of the Hangar 4 airframe maintenance facility located at the Subang Airport (SZB). This move signifies MAB Engineering's commitment to providing high-quality Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul

(MRO) services to the aviation community globally. IVP will refurbish Hangar 4's MRO infrastructure and facilities. This strategic initiative aims to create a dynamic aviation hub in line with the national aviation goals. MAB Engineering seeks to enhance its position in the global MRO market and continue its growth as a key player in the aviation industry.

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### A350-900



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Max. Cruising Speed **944km/h**  
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity



### 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

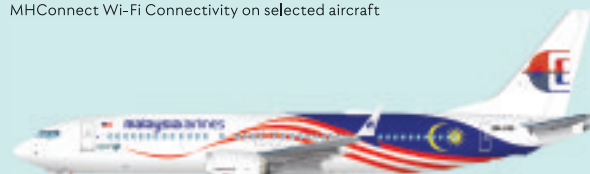


No. of Aircraft **6** | Passenger Seating **287**  
Length **58.82m** | Wingspan **60.30m** | Height **17.39m**  
Max. Cruising Speed **880km/h**  
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



### B737-800NG

No. of Aircraft **39** | Passenger Seating **160, 166, 174**  
Length **39.5m** | Wingspan **38.5m** | Height **12.50m**  
Max. Cruising Speed **857km/h**



### B737-8

No. of Aircraft **1** | Passenger Seating **174**  
Length **39.5m** | Wingspan **35.90m** | Height **12.30m**  
Max. Cruising Speed **839km/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**



### B737-800NG

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**



#### 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 Regulations 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 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 and 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, they 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.



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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 in flight is not permitted.



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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.



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entertainment systems or streaming via personal electronic devices. Wi-Fi internet connectivity is also available on selected aircraft (A350-900, A330-200 and A330-300) for a fee.



#### ONBOARD CHARGING

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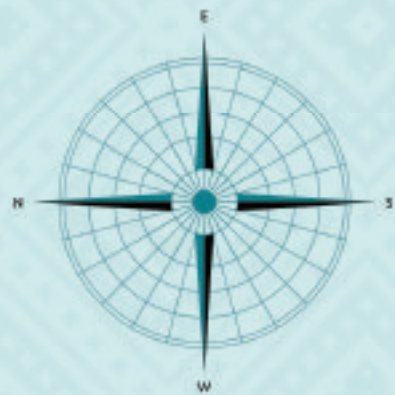


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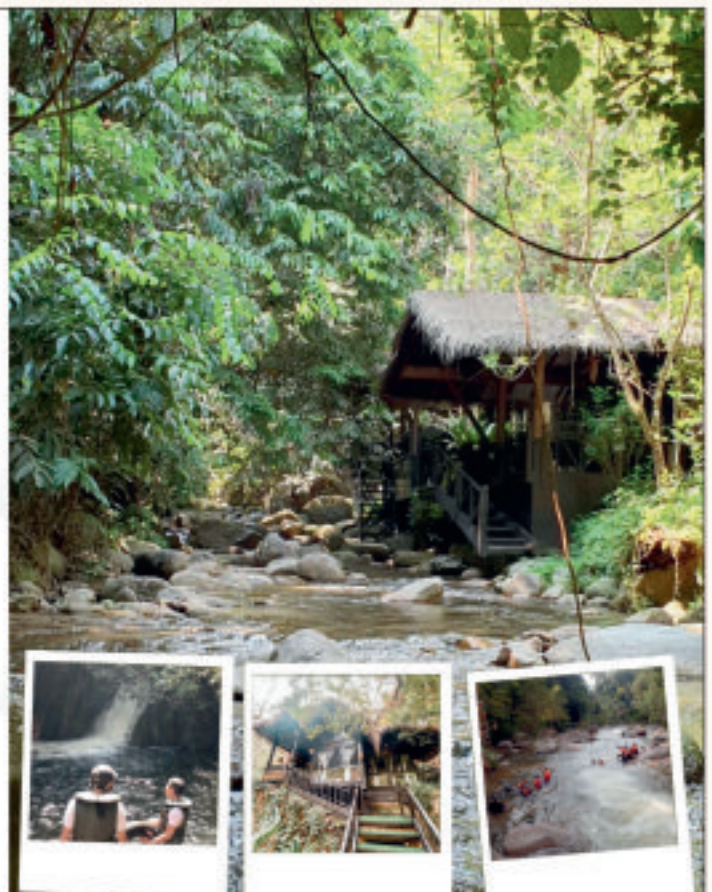
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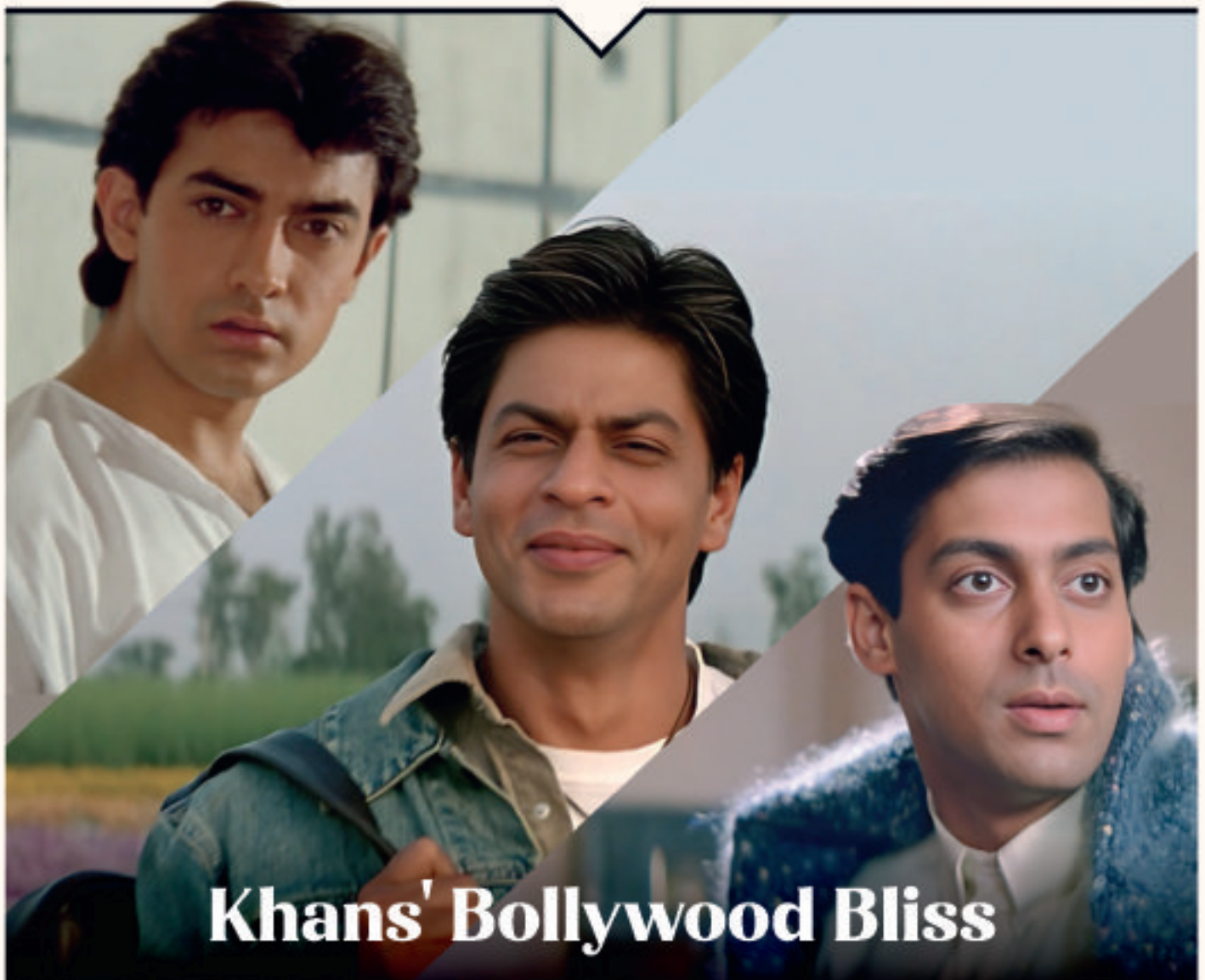
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# NOW SHOWING

 MOVIES p86  TELEVISION p93  AUDIO p95



## Khans' Bollywood Bliss

Check out our **Deepavali Special** on page 88 and **Children's Day Special** on page 90!



**Maaveeran**



**Samrat Prithviraj**



**Miracles from Heaven**



**The Young and  
Prodigious T. S. Spivet**



## Veer Zaara, Hum Aapke Hain Kaun, Hum Hain Rahi Pyar Ke

Films that not only shaped the careers of the Khans but also became Bollywood greats

In the vast history of Bollywood, three remarkable stars shine brightly: Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Aamir Khan. Their names are synonymous with love and admiration, and their contributions to Indian cinema are etched in its history. Their journey to stardom is a remarkable tale of talent, hard work and determination. With their charming personas and remarkable acting skills, the Khans have captured the hearts of millions.

In 2004, **Veer Zaara** emerged as a cinematic masterpiece, a love story that transcended borders. Directed by Yash Chopra, the film featured Shah Rukh Khan as Veer Pratap Singh, an Indian Air Force officer. This role was a departure from his usual romantic hero characters, showcasing his incredible versatility. Shah Rukh Khan's portrayal was intense and emotional, reaffirming his status as the "King of Romance." The film's global appeal was heightened by the chemistry between Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta, who played Zaara, cementing his position as an adored icon.

A decade earlier, in 1994, **Hum Aapke Hain Koun**

marked a turning point for Salman Khan. Directed by Sooraj R. Barjatya, the family drama featured Salman Khan as Prem, a character known for his charm and kindness. Prem's heartwarming love story with Nisha (Madhuri Dixit), his brother's intended bride, struck a chord with audiences. Salman Khan's star was already rising, but this film catapulted him into the stratosphere of stardom. His magnetic charisma and endearing presence were irresistible, and the film's music, especially "Didi Tera Devar Deewana," became anthems nationwide. **Hum Aapke Hain Koun** remains one of Bollywood's highest-grossing successes.

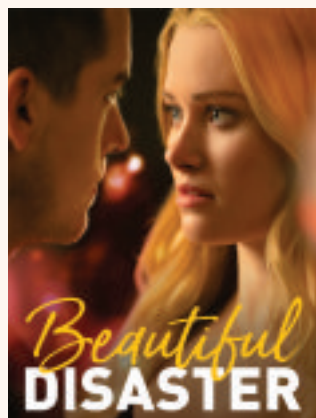
In 1993, **Hum Hain Rahi Pyaar Ke** showcased Aamir Khan in a delightful romantic comedy directed by Mahesh Bhatt. Aamir played Rahul Malhotra, a guardian to a group of mischievous children, with a lovable and relatable charm. Aamir Khan, known for his versatility and willingness to tackle challenging roles, solidified his reputation as one of Bollywood's most flexible actors. This film came after earlier hits like *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* and *Dil* already established him as a star.





Prepare for an epic summer thrill with **Meg 2: The Trench**, an action-packed sequel directed by Ben Wheatley that takes the 2018 hit to new heights and depths. Jason Statham and Wu Jing lead an intrepid research team on a deep-sea dive, but their mission turns chaotic when a malicious mining operation jeopardises them.

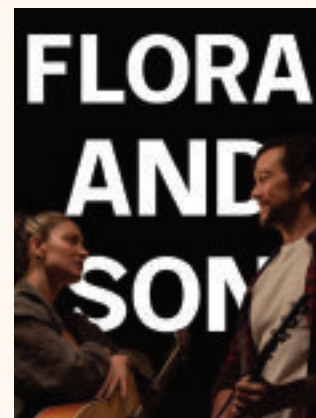
## Hollywood Latest



**Beautiful Disaster**, a 2023 American romantic drama directed by Roger Kumble and co-written with author Jamie McGuire, breathes life into McGuire's 2011 new adult novel of the same name. Meet Travis Maddox, the quintessential college bad boy, who thrives as an underground boxer by night and a campus charmer by day.



**Brother**, a 2022 Canadian drama movie penned, produced and helmed by Clement Virgo, is an adaptation of David Chariandy's novel. It revolves around the bond between two Black Canadian siblings, Francis and Michael, as they navigate their upbringing in Toronto's Scarborough area during the early 1990s.



**Flora and Son** is a 2023 musical comedy-drama directed and written by John Carney, featuring original songs composed by Carney and Gary Clark. The film's cast includes Eve Hewson, Jack Reynor, Orén Kinlan and Joseph Gordon-Levitt. Set in Dublin, the story revolves around Flora, a single mother, and her troubled son, Max.



**Stars Fell Again** is the sequel to the rom-com *Stars Fell on Alabama*, starring James Maslow and Ciara Hanna. Hollywood agent Bryce Dixon (Maslow) is ready to propose to his girlfriend Madison (Hanna) during a Christmas visit to her family. But then, her sister Harper's spontaneous engagement and wedding disrupt their plans.



In **The Adventures of Jurassic Pet 2: The Lost Secret**, a teenager, Wendy, and an orphan, Curtis, unite to save their town from criminals and return a baby dinosaur named Junior to its world. Wendy and her grandmother guard a mystical portal to a land of dinosaurs, and when Junior decides to stay in their world, chaos ensues.



Director Sophie Kargman's **Susie Searches** follows a college student with a failing true-crime podcast. Life takes a turn when she investigates the disappearance of Jesse, a campus heartthrob. As her podcast gains traction, Susie delves deeper, leading to a perilous revelation. Stars Kiersey Clemons, Alex Wolff and Jim Gaffigan.



**Heroes of the Golden Masks**, a 2023 Canadian animated gem directed by Sean O'Reilly, stars Patton Oswalt, Byron Mann and Ron Perlman, featuring Christopher Plummer in his final role. It follows the adventures of quick-witted orphan Charlie, who joins Chinese superheroes to save their city, while secretly planning to steal their empowering golden masks.

Now Showing

# MOVIES



## Deepavali Special



In the 2023 Tamil film **Maaveeran** directed by Madonne Ashwin, Sivakarthikeyan stars as Satya, a timid cartoonist. When he moves into a faulty apartment built by MN Jeyakodi (Mysskin), Satya's life takes a dark turn. But after a near-tragic accident, he starts communicating with Maaveeran, his comic book character, and transforms into a courageous individual.



**Pathu Thala** (2023) is an Indian Tamil neo-noir action thriller starring Silambarasan, Gautham Karthik, Priya Bhavani Shankar and Gautham Vasudev Menon. The plot centres on an undercover cop who, after discovering the crime lord's noble intentions and personal challenges, faces a moral quandary that could reshape their destinies.



**Momo in Dubai** (2023) offers a delightful cinematic experience for children, brimming with heartwarming moments. In this enchanting tale, a determined father, striving to secure a brighter future for his family by seeking work in Dubai, while sharing in the dreams of his youngest son, Momo, who envisions scaling the heights of the iconic Burj Khalifa.



**Sir Madam Sarpanch** stars Seema Biswas, Ajay Chourey and Jyoti Dubey. It tells the story of Ana, a US-raised Indian, who tries to start a library in her ancestral Indian village. This sparks political and bureaucratic chaos, highlighting the subversive power of books in India. Ana's journey continues as she enters Village Council elections, encountering further absurdities.



**Ranga Maarthanda**



**M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story**

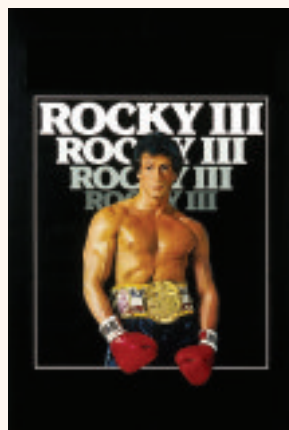


**Samrat Prithviraj**





## International Men's Day



The **Rocky** film series, starring Sylvester Stallone as Rocky Balboa, is an iconic Hollywood franchise known for its underdog narrative, vivid characters, and gripping boxing scenes. The series includes "Rocky" (1976), directed by John G. Avildsen, where Rocky, a Philly boxer, battles heavyweight champ Apollo Creed. "Rocky II" (1979), directed by Stallone, portrays Rocky's return for a rematch with Creed. "Rocky III" (1982), also directed by Stallone, sees Rocky facing Clubber Lang and seeking help from Apollo Creed to reignite his fighting spirit.

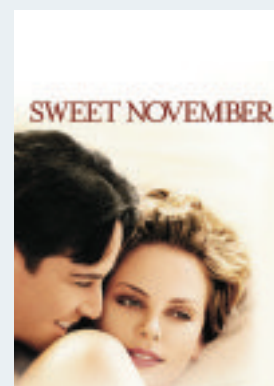


**The Shawshank Redemption** is a 1994 American drama film directed by Frank Darabont. It stars Tim Robbins as Andy Dufresne, a banker wrongly convicted of murder, and Morgan Freeman as Red, his fellow inmate. The film explores their friendship and Andy's quest for freedom. It's known for its themes of hope, resilience and redemption, and has become a beloved classic in cinema history.

**Michael Clayton** is a 2007 legal thriller film directed by Tony Gilroy. It stars George Clooney as the titular character, a "fixer" at a prestigious law firm. Clayton becomes embroiled in a high-stakes case involving a major agrochemical company and a class-action lawsuit. The film delves into themes of moral ambiguity, corporate corruption and personal redemption, earning critical acclaim for its gripping storytelling and Clooney's performance.



## World Cancer Awareness Day



In **The Bucket List** and **Sweet November**, cinema's brush paints a vivid canvas of life's fragility and beauty. These films remind us that the process of managing cancer is not just a battle but an awakening, urging us to cherish every moment, embrace love, and turn adversity into a journey of growth. On World Cancer Awareness Day, we unite to stand against the shadows of cancer, letting hope and togetherness light our path.

Now Showing

# MOVIES



## World Children's Day Special



***Miracles from Heaven*** is a 2016 Christian drama directed by Patricia Riggen, based on a true story. It follows Annabel Beam, a girl with a rare illness who experiences a near-death encounter with heaven. Her miraculous recovery astonishes her family and doctors, exploring themes of faith and hope. The film stars Jennifer Garner and Kylie Rogers.



***The Pink Panther*** is a 1963 comedy film directed by Blake Edwards. It stars Peter Sellers as the bumbling French detective, Inspector Jacques Clouseau, who is tasked with solving the murder of a famous soccer coach and recovering the stolen Pink Panther diamond. The film is known for its slapstick humour and iconic performance by Sellers.



***The Young and Prodigious T.S. Spivet*** (2013) is an adventure drama directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, based on Reif Larsen's novel. It follows young inventor T.S. Spivet's journey from Montana to the Smithsonian in D.C. after winning an award. The film explores family and self-discovery through encounters with eccentric characters.



***The Powerpuff Girls Movie*** (2002) is an animated film based on the TV series. It explores the origin of Blossom, Bubbles, and Buttercup, kindergarten-aged girls with superpowers created by Professor Utonium. They battle the villain Mojo Jojo to protect Townsville. The film combines action and humour, making it appealing to fans of the series and newcomers alike.





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## Thai



## Japanese



In 2021, the Japanese animated film **Gintama: The Very Final**, also titled **Gintama: The Final** in Japan, was brought to life by Bandai Namco Pictures. This cinematic masterpiece concludes the beloved Gintama manga and anime saga, under the guidance of Chizuru Miyawaki, the anime series director.

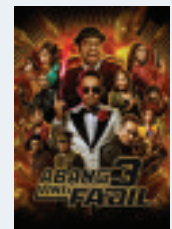
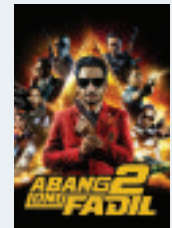
## Chinese



In 2023, Chinese filmmaker Frant Gwo returns with **The Wandering Earth 2**, a science fiction action-adventure. This prequel to the 2019 hit, *The Wandering Earth*, features a stellar cast including Andy Lau, Wu Jing and Li Xuejian. Drawing inspiration from Liu Cixin's story, the film envisions a desperate quest to find a new home. As humanity's survival hangs in the balance, a group of courageous young heroes embarks on a perilous journey through the cosmos to rescue our beloved Earth.

## Malay

The **Abang Long Fadil** trilogy, a Malaysian cinematic triumph, takes audiences on a wild ride through the action-packed world of Fadil, a lovable small-time crook turned accidental hero. In the first installment, Fadil stumbles into a criminal underworld, setting off a hilarious chain of events. The sequel propels him deeper into the chaos, balancing heart-pounding action with sidesplitting humour. In the thrilling conclusion, Fadil's journey reaches a crescendo.



## Korean



In **Love My Scent** (2023), a whimsical South Korean romantic comedy conjured by the brilliant Lim Sung-yong, Yoon Shi-yoon and Seol In-ah twirl into an unconventional love story. He's allergic to work and romance, while she's seemingly got it all except love. But when the enchanting aroma of a perfume weaves its spell, an extraordinary romance unfurls, and fragrances speak louder than words. This scented tale is pure magic.





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### Comedy

**Me, Myself & I**, a sitcom crafted by Dan Kopelman, boasts an ensemble cast including Bobby Moynihan, Jack Dylan Grazer, John Larroquette, Brian Unger, Jaleel White, Kelen Coleman, Mandell Maughan, Christopher Paul Richards, Reylynn Caster and Skylar Gray. The series revolves around Alex, a 40-year-old who yearns to break free from corporate life and rekindles a romance from his youth as part of his reinvention journey.

### Drama



### Science & Tech



### Malay



### Chinese



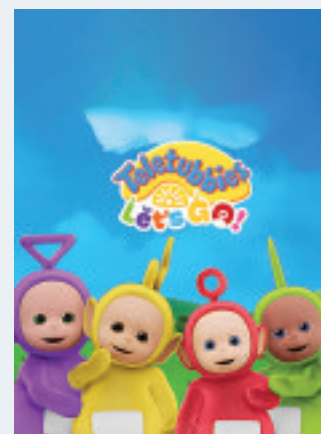
### Japanese



### Korean



### Kids



**Young Justice: Invasion** catapults viewers into a riveting world of teenage superheroes grappling with complex issues while protecting the Earth. This animated gem explores their growth, both as individuals and as a team, amidst a storm of intergalactic threats.

Meanwhile, **Teletubbies Let's Go** is a whimsical voyage into a colourful landscape, where the Teletubbies charm preschoolers with playfulness. These shows captivate young hearts, one through epic heroics and the other through innocent, imaginative delight.

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Hindi music albums are not just a collection of songs; they are melodic journeys that resonate with the soul. **Jab Harry Met Sejal** serenades listeners with love-struck ballads, encapsulating the essence of romance. **Ok Jaanu** brings youthful vibrance, celebrating love in the bustling cityscape. In **Jodhaa Akbar**, historical grandeur meets timeless melodies, transporting us to an era of regal romance. And in **Hits Of Darshan Raval**, the contemporary musical sensation's soulful voice weaves tales of passion and longing. These albums are not just music; they are emotional canvases, painting stories of love, history and modern beats, all in the rich tapestry of Hindi music.



### The Hits



### Korean



### Tamil



### Memories



### Malay



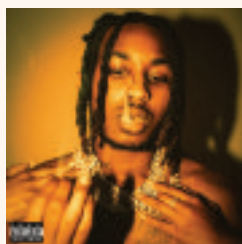
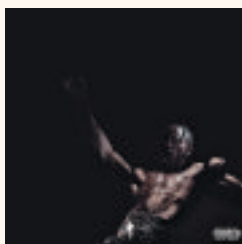
### Mandarin



### Soundtrack



### R&B



### Club



### Japanese



### Relax





# Golden presence

Since its unveiling in 2006, the towering Batu Caves Murugan Statue has become one of the most recognisable symbols of multicultural Malaysia. At 42.7m tall, the golden statue presides over visitors and devotees who flock to Batu Caves annually for various Hindu festivals, including Thaipusam earlier in the year and Deepavali, happening on the 12th of this month. “Deepavali at Batu Caves is a time of joy, spirituality and cultural celebration, with special *puja* (offerings) to seek blessings from Lord Murugan,” says Sivaraj Nithiananthan, the award-winning drone photographer behind Raj Photography Langkawi. It’s also a busy time for the holy site. “During [festivals like] Thaipusam and Deepavali, I can’t fly my drone because there are so many in the air,” Sivaraj says, adding that he waited until dusk to capture the magnificence of the statue against the vibrant rainbow-coloured stairs and the profound beauty of the surrounding limestone flora. [instagram.com/rajphotographylangkawi](https://www.instagram.com/rajphotographylangkawi)



IMAGE: SIVARAJ A/L NITHIANANTHAN. WORDS: JASON S. GANESAN



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