

Going Places

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Chiang Mai uncovered

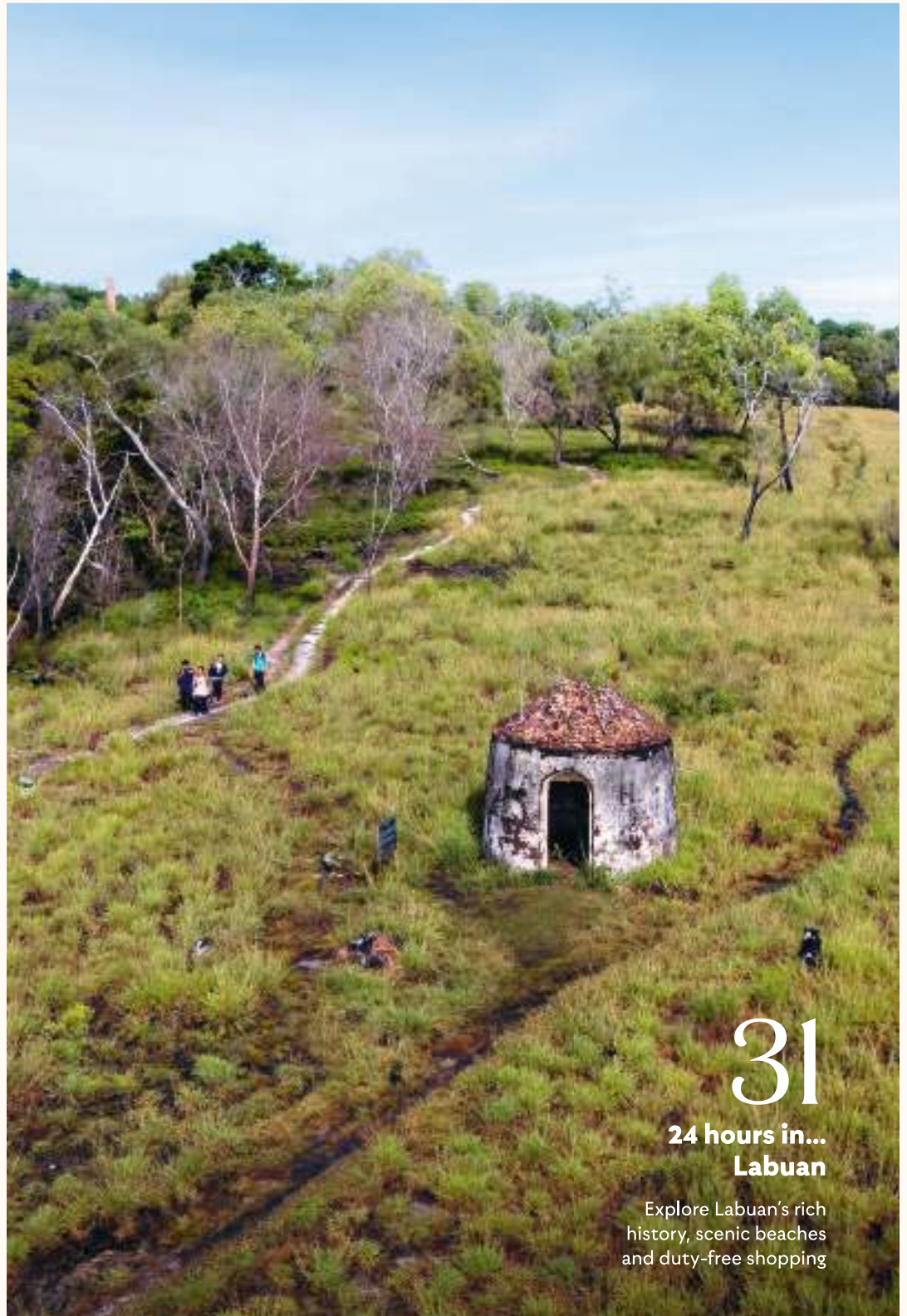
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Into the wild

Upscale safari adventures amid stunning wildlife and landscapes await at Sri Lanka's luxury game lodges

IMAGE: TRACIA GOH



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About the cover
Elephant Freedom Project in Chiang Mai.

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YOUR GUIDE TO SABAH'S Can't-Miss Events!

Timpohon Run

5 Oct | Kinabalu Park, Kundasang

Mount Kinabalu International Climbathon

6 Oct | Kinabalu Park, Kundasang

Xplore Sabah: The Great Outdoors Event

11 - 13 Oct | Sabah International Convention Centre, Kota Kinabalu

Sabah Community Based Tourism Fair

16 - 20 Oct | IOI City Mall, Putrajaya, Selangor

Borneo Bird Festival

26 - 27 Oct | Rainforest Discovery Centre, Sepilok, Sandakan

Borneo Safari 2024

27 Oct - 3 Nov | Sabah

Sabah International Fishing Tournament

16 - 17 Nov | IndraSabah Fishing Paradise, Tawau

Regatta Lepa 2024

22 - 24 Nov | Dataran Regatta Lepa, Semporna

Tropical Rainforest Run

24 Nov | Tawau Hills Park, Tawau

HobbyCon 2024

30 Nov - 1 Dec | Sabah International Convention Centre, Kota Kinabalu

Kiulu Adventure Challenge

1 Dec | Kiulu Town and RS Kamandus View, Kiulu



For More Information



Dear guests,

As we enter the final quarter of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude for your continued trust in Malaysia Aviation Group's airlines. Despite our current challenges that have resulted in a temporary network reduction, your unwavering support has been vital to our journey, and we strive to improve our services so you can continue to enjoy your travel experience with us.

With safety as our foundation, we are confident that these temporary adjustments will position us for a strong comeback in 2025. Our commitment to safety goes hand-in-hand with our aspiration to provide superior customer experiences, and we are steadfast in achieving both. By making these necessary changes today, we are setting the stage for an exciting future, with 2030 as our long-term horizon for success.

As part of these growth endeavours, we recently announced the resumption of Malaysia Airlines' direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Paris after nearly a decade of hiatus. This marks a significant milestone in our return to Europe, with the first flight scheduled for 22 March 2025. By resuming these direct services, we are reaffirming our position as a flagship airline on this route and further strengthening our role as the gateway to Asia and beyond. This route will be served by our state-of-the-art A350-900 aircraft, which already operates on key routes like London and Doha, delivering a world-class travel experience to our passengers.

We are also excited to begin receiving our new A330neo aircraft orders this quarter, with the inaugural flight to Melbourne scheduled for November. Be among the first to experience its modern, practical onboard products, including an enhanced business class cabin, award-winning economy seats and stellar in-flight entertainment. With up to 25% reduced fuel consumption and emissions, this aircraft also reinforces our commitment to operational efficiency and sustainability.

As we expand our network and enhance onboard services, I am pleased to announce an upgrade to our corporate offerings, designed to elevate the travel experience for our business partners globally. The MHcorporate programme, previously known as MHBiz TRAVEL, allows corporate customers to earn Enrich Points for both individuals and companies, which can be redeemed in various ways. It provides flexibility, upfront savings on Malaysia Airlines routes and customised solutions for both SMEs and large companies. The programme also offers a premium travel experience with dedicated support, special fares and valuable rewards, making it one of the most rewarding in the industry.

Once again, from the bottom of my heart, *terima kasih* for your continued support as we strive to deliver excellence in every aspect of your journey.

For those celebrating, wishing a joyous Deepavali to you and your loved ones.

We look forward to welcoming you on many more journeys with our Malaysian Hospitality.

Izham Ismail

Group Managing Director
Malaysia Aviation Group



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Asia has no dearth of rich wildlife experiences, luxurious retreats and unforgettable culinary delights and we're always up for an adventure. This month, we venture to Chiang Mai and Sri Lanka, channelling the spirit of intrepid travellers who love a deep dive into travel adventure and cultural exploration.

Over in northern Thailand, Chiang Mai – one of Malaysia Airlines' newest destinations – offers a special connection to nature through its iconic elephant sanctuaries. Experience ethical interactions with these majestic creatures, where conservation takes priority. Combine this with a food scene that's both vibrant and authentic, from tangy *khao soi* (curry noodle soup) to the aromatic panang curry. Exploring Chiang Mai's local markets and food scene is as much a cultural journey as it is a culinary one, providing a window into the influences of traditional northern Thai flavours (p36).

Meanwhile, in Sri Lanka, luxury game lodges provide an exceptional way to explore the island's rich wildlife. Imagine waking up to the sounds of the jungle in a five-star setting, then embarking on a safari to spot elephants, leopards and exotic birds. Sri Lanka's game lodges blend luxury with nature, allowing travellers to immerse themselves in wilderness without sacrificing comfort. Whether you're exploring Yala or Bundala National Park, the balance of opulence and adventure is second to none (p42).

Before signing off, I'd also like to wish all our dear readers who celebrate Deepavali a joyous month. Thanks to our diverse population, there's always something to look forward to in Malaysia, whether it's the colourful festivals, beach escapes (p9) or spending 24 hours exploring a new city (p31). Turn the page, get inspired and I hope you'll visit soon.

Happy travels,

Sherman Lim
Editor



This issue's contributors



Jason Ganesan
Writer, "Chiang Mai uncovered", p36

Jason worked for an indie publisher before becoming a writer and editor for hire. He lives in Petaling Jaya with his wife and seven cats.



Zinara Rathnayake
Writer, "Into the wild", p42

Zinara is a travel, food & culture writer who loves cafe-hopping and quiet mountain towns. She covers everything in Asia from Northeast India's root bridges to coffee culture in Laos.




Mervin Lee
Photographer, "Old favourite, fresh wave", p26

Based in Ho Chi Minh City, Mervin Lee is a photojournalist with a knack for finding obscure speciality cafés and forgotten street food gems with a story to tell.

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11 REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places



1

Kuching

Everything under the sun

After the successes of events in Sibu and Miri, **What About Kuching (WAK)** returns to liven up the capital with vibrant cultural programmes throughout October. This year's WAK will see community-driven, open access performances, workshops and marketplaces encompassing everything from arts, music, dance, fashion, literature, nature, craft and gastronomy, taking place around the city with an aim to promote local culture to a global audience. aboutkuching.com

2

Kuala Lumpur

Avant-garde wellness



Tucked within the tranquility of Sunway City Kuala Lumpur is the award-winning **Sunway MediSpa**, where traditional wellness practices meet state-of-the-art technology. Besides a host of body massages and facial treatments, Sunway MediSpa also offers body and aesthetic treatments using its patented Indiba Deep Care proionic technology, which is crafted to stimulate natural rejuvenation and enhance cellular metabolism. sunwaymedispa.com



Kuala Lumpur and Selangor

Self-care oases

The peach and pink interiors of **Lax. Retreat** at The LINC KL embody the serenity found within, with face, nail and body treatments that are individually tailored to the needs of customers, including a modern twist on the *lulur*, the traditional Malay skin cleansing and softening ritual. It is complemented by its sister outlet, **Lay. Retreat** at The Curve in Selangor, a boutique self-care sanctuary that is perfect for couples to decompress. layretreat.com; laxretreat.com





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4

Malaysia

Charge ahead

There's a certain freedom in travel – checking into that boutique hotel, indulging in a tasting menu or shopping for a designer bag. But with that freedom comes the all-too-familiar reality check when the bills arrive, interest quietly mounting in the background.

Bank Rakyat's Credit Card-i and Explorer Card-i offer a solution. Unlike interest-based credit cards where unpaid balances can accumulate compounded interest – leading to higher debt over time – these two use a fixed profit rate, so you know exactly how much you're paying.

The Explorer Card-i, in particular, caters to the frequent Malaysian traveller with up to 5% cashback on flights and hotels, without the hassle of minimum spend. It also rewards every RM10 spend with a Rakyat Reward Point. Now every Malaysian can navigate the pleasures of travel without the baggage of rising interest. bankrakyat.com.my



Selangor

Feeling the thrill

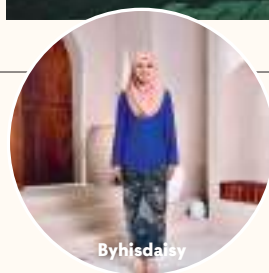
Nights of Fright (NOF) has been spooking audiences at Sunway Lagoon since 2013. The 10th edition, taking place from 20 October right up to Halloween, will resurrect its greatest scares with a haunted theatre, two show stages, four scare zones, eight haunted houses and 11 thrill rides. NOF10 also debuts "Hantu Hunters", bringing to life the ghost stories from Malaysia's most infamous horror haunts: the Karak Expressway and Kellie's Castle. sunwaylagoon.com/nof-10

6

Kuala Lumpur

Get ready, shop!

If your love language is gift giving, you'd be pleased to know that the **Bank Rakyat Year-End Carnival 2024** promises an exciting range of Muslimah products when it takes place at Mid Valley Megamall from 20 to 22 December, so pencil those dates in. Among the participating brands to watch out for are **Byhisdaisy** for beautifully embroidered kebaya tops and matching batik pario bottoms, **Atheena** for luxurious Cempaka Songket handbags and **Cakenis** for its exciting Nicole swimwear line – a three-piece set comprising a long-sleeved swimwear suit, swimming pants and a flowy chiffon kaftan. midvalley.com.my





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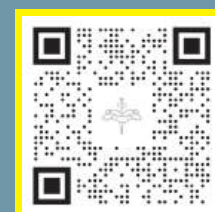
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7

Kuala Lumpur
A match made in heaven

Terra Dining collaborates with **Beca Tea** for its Zero-Proof Botanical Pairing, a degustation menu that ingeniously pairs Malaysian-inspired courses with the finest curated teas and tisanes. Terra's meticulously crafted slipper lobster with *osam* laksa bisque and *tahai* (smoked dried fish) oil is complemented by the tartness of Beca Tea's amber oolong with passionfruit, pineapple and kesum leaves; the "mystery fish" in a *masak*

lemak beure blanc sauce comes paired with a tieguanyin cold brew with *passiflora henryi* bark, mangosteen and bilimbi; while a Tuxedo No 5 Black Tea cold brew cuts through the third course, either a pureblood wagyu and melty beef cheek rendang or duck breast with Teochew braised duck jus that comes with a duck liver *ngo hiang* (rolls in beancurd skin). [instagram.com/terradining.k/](https://www.instagram.com/terradining.k/); [instagram.com/becateaofficial](https://www.instagram.com/becateaofficial)

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Kuching

Local delicacies

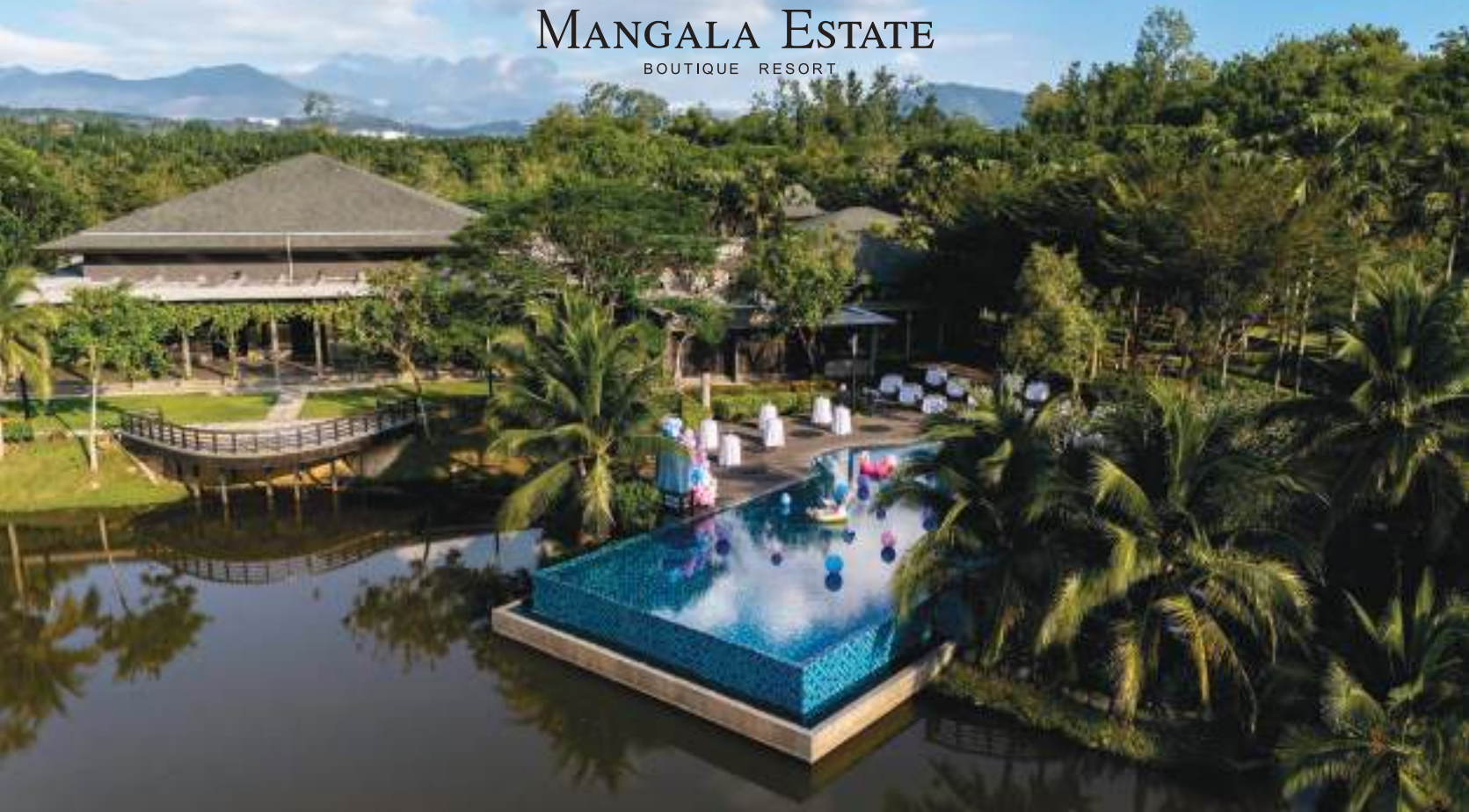
Nick Jansen aka Global Gibbon, the popular YouTuber known for his explorations of Borneo, pays tribute to Bidayuh culture with **Jak Ma'an** (which means "come eat") in the heart of Kuching's Carpenter Street. The cosy café, adorned with archival photos of the community on its walls, serves Bidayuh favourites from *ayam pansuh* (chicken cooked in bamboo stalk), *linut* (sago starch) with fermented durian *tempoyak*, to fried *ulat sago* (sago worms).

[instagram.com/globalgibbon](https://www.instagram.com/globalgibbon)



MANGALA ESTATE

BOUTIQUE RESORT



Celebrate Special Occasions and Milestones

Mangala Estate Boutique Resort, Kuantan; is an exclusive destination for private events, set in a serene estate with tropical contemporary interiors and refreshing landscape views. Whether you're planning an intimate gathering or a larger celebration, Mangala Estate provides the perfect backdrop for any occasion.



Contemporary Tropical Villas

The resort boasts 67 beautifully designed villas, each with its own unique character, offering lake or garden views and some with private pools. These tranquil retreats provide a perfect end to a day of celebration, combining comfort and style in an idyllic setting.



A Destination to Celebrate Milestones

At Mangala Estate, life's special moments are transformed into lasting memories. Whether it's a milestone birthday, wedding or anniversary, the stunning setting enhances every celebration. Located in the heart of Kuantan, surrounded by lush greenery and tranquil lakes, the estate offers a peaceful atmosphere that makes every event unforgettable.



Experiential Dining

Mangala Estate offers a dining experience that blends local East Coast flavours with a touch of the West. Whether you're enjoying an intimate lakeside dinner or a poolside gathering, our venues can be tailored to create a personalised setting for your special moments, ensuring that every meal becomes a cherished memory.



9

Malaysia

Riding in luxury

Belmond's Eastern & Oriental Express, which takes passengers across Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, now houses Dior's first spa in the region. The majesty of the cruise train is mirrored within the **Dior Spa Eastern & Oriental Express**' two treatment cabins. Choose from five tailor-made treatments, including the D-Jungle face and body treatment, that blend traditional Asian techniques with the opulence of Dior. belmond.com/trains/asia/eastern-and-oriental-express/dior-spa



10

Kuala Lumpur

Fermentation and fire

Fermentation and fire are the stars at **Pickle Dining**, the French-inspired venture by chef Danial Thorlby that has been revelling in age-old methods of infusing unique flavours since February. With jars of pickles in the 'laboratory' of the appropriately rustic interior, Pickle Dining features a tasting menu with dry-aged mangrove jack ceviche served alongside a coconut *nuoc cham* (dipping sauce) and fire-grilled sirloin with black garlic aioli. instagram.com/pickledining





The Datai



Ritz Carlton



Langkawi

Say yes to indulgence

The best time to visit **Langkawi** is the dry season between November and March, if you're planning a relaxing wellness break. Or even more significantly, if you're scouting locations for your special day. Here are the top five beaches and resorts to visit in Langkawi for that dream beach wedding.

Pantai Chenang

Perhaps the most popular of Langkawi's beaches, the 2km-long Pantai Chenang with its buzzing nightlife is perfect for those looking to make their wedding a party to remember. The beach is home to the Pelangi Beach Resort and Spa, which offers a picturesque, private beachfront setting, opulent wooden villas, lush gardens lined with palm trees and luxurious amenities, serving as an ideal backdrop for the big day. pelangiresort.com

Tanjung Rhu

The secluded Tanjung Rhu, located in the north of the island, boasts white sands fading into turquoise waters that are punctuated by limestone hills, and is one of the best places to view the pinks and oranges of the setting sun. Both the Tanjung Rhu Resort and the Four Seasons open up to Tanjung Rhu and are nestled within the Langkawi Unesco Global Geopark. tanjungrhu.com.my; fourseasons.com/langkawi

Datai Bay

Famed for once being chosen by *National Geographic* as one of its best beaches, Datai Bay is a pocket of paradise in Langkawi, with an impossibly pristine beach that curves into a crescent around the bay, perfect for an intimate beach wedding. Tucked within the imposing green wall of tropical

rainforest is The Datai, which offers bespoke wedding experiences coordinated by its on-site wedding specialist. thedatai.com

Pantai Kok

On the west side of the island lies the bay of Pantai Kok, home of the charming Perdana Quay Light House. The Danna Langkawi, with its timeless colonial and Mediterranean elegance, offers garden weddings that open up to the expanse of the Andaman Sea. The Ritz-Carlton, meanwhile, with its unmissable *bubu* (traditional fish trap) inspired designs, is ideal for special days with a local touch. thedanna.com; ritzcarlton.com

Pantai Beringin

On the south side of the island, close to the town of Kuah, is Pantai Beringin, home to the commanding St Regis Langkawi. With the magical touches to its gold and turquoise-accented interiors to match the waters outside, the hotel offers bespoke wedding services with in-house certified planners for a big day with a touch of luxury. [instagram.com/thestregislangkawi](https://www.instagram.com/thestregislangkawi)



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*Please refer to the makeup artist for free samples. Terms & conditions apply. Subject to stock availability.

SCAN TO SHOP



ELEVATE

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



URBAN SANCTUARIES

Suite indulgence

Check in for a weekend of pampering at the masterfully crafted, Three-Michelin-Key Palace Hotel in Tokyo

BY TARA FT SERING

The Japanese have been perfecting the art of hospitality ever since the first ryokan was established over a thousand years ago. The goal, it seems, is to send you off feeling full yet weightless with awe, and already making plans to return. It's a standard recognised by this year's inaugural Michelin Key Guide, which in July rated 108 hotels across the country

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ELEVATE



Estere

Among the rarefied Three Keys club of only six properties is **Palace Hotel Tokyo**, in the city's swish business district of Marunouchi. It stands as one of the storied landmarks alongside national icons, including the sprawling Imperial Palace and its grounds, a 3.5sqkm green lung, and Tokyo Station's brick-clad main façade.

Like all grand dames, the hotel has quite a story. First opened in 1961, it was one of several that rose in the heady years that culminated in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, a momentous occasion that showcased Japanese innovation and design, from the Kenzō Tange-designed National Stadium to the Shinkansen, the world's first bullet train. All through the 70s and 90s, Palace Hotel hosted foreign ambassadors presenting their credentials to the emperor, travelling the short distance from the hotel to the palace by horse and carriage.

Decades later, in 2009, the original 450-room structure

“

Thanks to considered design, there's an air of tranquility across Palace Hotel that feels quite soothing”

was torn down and rebuilt as a luxury property with fewer but more spacious guest rooms, 284 of them ranging from 45sqm to 250sqm. The sweeping, billion-dollar makeover also provided more than half the rooms with private balconies, a near-mythical rarity in the Japanese capital. Four years after reopening, the hotel earned the coveted Five-Star nod from the Forbes Travel Guide, a distinction it has maintained since.

Today a stay at one of Tokyo's fanciest addresses is a rewarding experience of Japanese refinement and craftsmanship, ideal for pampering holidays. The day might begin with a tone-setting, long and leisurely breakfast at the Grand



A view of the moat

Rest and repair



A 100-year-old company preaches the joys of *kintsugi*, or the art of fixing broken things

Along a quiet side street in Tokyo's Nihonbashi is **Mutoh**, wholesalers of high-quality glass and lacquerware, and advocates of Japanese artisan craftsmanship. Book a private workshop on basic *kintsugi* (gold-join), a ceramic-mending practice that began in the 1600s along with the rise of tea ceremonies as both hobby and habit among feudal lords and wealthy merchants. Even with the best of care, delicate ceramics often break,

so lacquerware craftsmen found a way of restoring broken pieces using lacquer and a sprinkling of gold, creating something beautiful and new in the process. At Mutoh, students spend two meditative hours learning the basics of this art: gluing pieces together, sealing the cracks with putty and sanding off the extra glue for a smooth surface. The final step is applying gold paint over the veins of cracks. **mutoh-corp.com**

Kitchen's outdoor terrace, which looks out onto the scenic palace moat.

True to its name, the 23-storey hotel is palatial in scale, with meeting rooms, a pillar-less ballroom that transforms into smaller banquet halls, a wedding chapel and even a Shinto shrine. But thanks to considered design, there's an air of tranquility across the property that feels quite soothing. The Michelin-starred **Esterre**, for instance, one of 10 dining outlets within the hotel, is bathed in neutral hues. A partnership with Ducasse Paris, the menu marries seasonal Japanese ingredients and French culinary techniques. Every day, chef Kei Kojima, who had spent 10 years at Alain Ducasse's three-Michelin-star Le Louis XV restaurant in Monte Carlo, handpicks fresh produce from his seaside hometown of Kamakura, an hour's bullet-train ride away from Tokyo.

For a truly relaxing stay, book a treatment at the award-winning **Evian Spa**

Tokyo, the only one of its kind in Japan, tucked discreetly on the hotel's fifth floor, where an immaculate colour palette makes you feel as though you've teleported somewhere in the French Alps. Ask for the Warew massage, which uses an unforgettably light and super-silky massage oil by the Japanese skincare brand.

As a base in the world's largest megacity, it's hard to top Palace Hotel's location. A discreet escalator in the lobby descends into an underground arcade leading to Otemachi Station, easy access to the rest of Tokyo's comprehensive rail network. On street level, it's an easy 15-minute walk to the shopping wonderland of Marunouchi Naka Dori. But the crowning glory of such a location could well be the views, possibly the best in the city: the Wakadura Fountain National Park and the Imperial Palace gardens by day – aflame in orange, red and russet in the fall, and bursts of sakura pink in spring – and the glittering Tokyo skyline by night. palacehotel.co.jp



RETAIL THERAPY

Style and substance

A **Manila**-based fashion brand launches a line of wearable art

It began with a challenge by Ana Lagon, founder of Philippine fashion brand **Bayo**, to Filipino artist-designer **Patricia Eustaquio** to design clothes with zero waste. The artist, whose works have been displayed around the world – from New York galleries and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris to the Singapore Biennale – has long been known for exploring the possibilities of material as well as for her own cool personal style. The result is a unique collaboration with Bayo Atelier, the brand's premium bespoke line that features the artist's artworks, all-natural fabrics printed in biodegradable ink, and designs that leave nothing for the bin.

It's style that travels very well – the collection of chic, comfortable and unique pieces include multi-way dresses, jackets, wide-leg trousers, versatile skirt-shorts and diaphanous silk tops that can go from day to night. The clothes look great and every purchase is bound to make you feel good – the brand supports multiple communities of weavers across the Philippines. artefinoph.com



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ELEVATE



COOL SPOTS

Hey, nice office

Jakarta's coworking spaces add pleasure to business trips **BY ANDRA NASRIE**

Finding the perfect

coworking space can be the key to your productivity. In a megacity like Jakarta, you're spoiled for choice. Whether you're a professional looking to impress or someone who enjoys working in a serene environment, the city's coworking scene has something for you. Here are five unique coworking spaces in Jakarta that cater to different types of business travellers.



>

For the environmentally conscious
Greenhouse

As its name might suggest, Greenhouse combines nature with modernity and a strong focus on sustainability. This coworking space, located on a 25th floor penthouse, is designed to feel like a garden in the sky, featuring abundant greenery and natural light. The design promotes a sense of calm and focus, making it an ideal space for professionals who value sustainability and a healthy work environment. Hustlers may be happy to learn that Greenhouse is open 24/7. **25th floor, Multivision Tower, Jalan Kuningan Mulia Lot 9B, South Jakarta; flyspaces.com**

^

For the jet-setter
**Union Space
PIK Avenue**

Union Space PIK Avenue is strategically located just 15 minutes away from Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, making it a convenient stop for travellers with a short layover in Jakarta. If you're a jet-setter who'd rather not commit long-term, you can get a day pass here for just IDR150,000 (US\$9.70) that gives you entry to the modern, tech-friendly environment equipped with high-speed internet. **Level 6, PIK Avenue, Pantai Indah Kapuk, North Jakarta; unionspace.co.th**





IMAGES COURTESY OF WEWORK, GREENHOUSE



For the deal-closer
CEO Suite One Pacific Place

Seasoned dealmakers know that a great setting is key to creating a good impression. Located in the prestigious One Pacific Place, CEO Suite offers a coworking space that exudes class and professionalism. With its sophisticated design, high-end furniture and stunning city views, it's an ideal spot for formal business meetings and closing deals. The staff at CEO Suite are also known for their exceptional service. **15th floor, One Pacific Place, Senayan, South Jakarta; ceosuite.com**



For the influencers
WeWork Revenue Tower

If looking Instagram-ready is part of your daily grind, this is the place to be. Situated in the commercial heart of Jakarta, WeWork Revenue Tower stands out as one of the most visually appealing coworking spaces in the city. With its chic design, contemporary art and expansive windows offering panoramic views of the city, this WeWork location is the most likely to inspire you to be productive. The central location also means you're surrounded by some of Jakarta's best dining and entertainment options, making it easy to transition from work to play. **Revenue Tower, Jalan Jenderal Sudirman No. 52-53, Senayan, South Jakarta; wework.com**



For the escape artist
GoWork BSD Green Office Park

Of all the GoWork venues, this one is located in the tranquil environment of BSD City, a township on the outskirts of Jakarta. The coworking space's interior features calming natural elements, including lush greenery and spacious layouts that promote a sense of well-being. The location is a major plus, as BSD City offers all that Jakarta does while being far enough to be a serene refuge from the latter's bustling pace. **6th floor, BSD Green Office Park 1, BSD City, Tangerang; go-work.com**



Warung Pulau Kelapa



Little Ripper



Riung Rasa



Syrco BASÈ



SOUL FOOD

Where I eat

Claudia Sofia Von's personal dining guide to Bali

BY EVE TEDJA



If anyone knows the best tables in this tropical paradise, it would be the Peruvian culinary producer, **Claudia Sofia Von**, the powerhouse behind Desa Potato Head's progressive dining experiences. Claudia's career in food began with The World's 50 Best Restaurants, where she flexed her creativity, from curating pop-ups in the Alps and developing brands to staging projects with prominent chefs. Now she works on creative projects that connect food, travel and culture in Bali and beyond. Here, she shares her favourite spots on the island.

I'm loving this new fine dining restaurant... **Syrco BASÈ** by chef Syrco Bakker. He elevates Bali's dining scene with his flawless techniques and commitment to ingredients that can be traced to their source. sycobase.com

On a regular morning, I go to... **Hungry Birds Coffee Roaster** and **Umalas Brew Bar** for my morning caffeine fix. [@hungrybirdcoffee](https://twitter.com/hungrybirdcoffee); [@umalasbrewbar](https://twitter.com/umalasbrewbar)

A regular day ends at... M. Mason Bar | Grill for the smoked tuna dip or **Mosto** for their incredible wine and "not wine"



Batukaru Coffee Estate

selections and tasty bites. I also enjoy going to **Warung Pulau Kelapa** for hearty Indonesian fare and **Riung Rasa** for their sexy smoked meat specialities. masonbali.com; mostobali.com; warungpulaukelapa.com; [@riungrasa](https://twitter.com/riungrasa)

You can't miss this Bali classic... **Room4Dessert**. Chef Will Goldfarb and his immensely talented team keep a plant kingdom that beckons exploration and cleverly uses them in their imaginative tasting menu (five savoury dishes, five desserts and five petit fours). room4dessert.com

When I need a quiet meal, I head over to... Kedungu, a peaceful beachside area in Tabanan. I love having breakfast and catching up on my reading at **Little Ripper**. For lunch, I adore **Warung Kelapa**, a haven for simple and tasty Indonesian home-cooked meals. Don't miss their papaya leaves salad and homemade sambal. [@littleripper_bali](https://twitter.com/littleripper_bali); [@wrkelapa](https://twitter.com/wrkelapa)

When I have some time off...

I spend at least one night at **Batukaru Coffee Estate** in Jatiluwih – best known for the rice terraces – to unwind, drink coffee made with beans directly sourced from their farm and devour their plant-based food. batukarucoffeestate.com

For sweet cravings... I order the Vanilla Flan at **DOME** in **Desa Potato Head**. It's something that I can eat every day. I also keep a steady supply of HAS chocolate from **ACME Bakehouse & Coffee Roasters**. The chocolate bars are always dangerously available. seminyak.potatohead.co; [@haschocolate](https://twitter.com/haschocolate); [getmeacme.com](https://twitter.com/getmeacme.com)



Enjoy Bali's top activities with one pass. Buy now on Journify.



Vanilla flan at DOME

ILLUSTRATION: CHERYL OWEN



Shenzhen Zhongshuge Bookshop



BRAIN BOOST

Literary journeys

Find a bookshop paradise a hop-skip away from Hong Kong BY SARAH TIEN

Just 14 minutes on the bullet train takes you from Hong Kong's West Kowloon Station to the tech-hub of Shenzhen, China's third most populous city. It's a reading wonderland, thanks to a clutch of stunning bookshops. Here are three spots you shouldn't miss.

1 It hasn't been called China's most beautiful bookstore for nothing – the 14,000sqft **Shenzhen Zhongshuge Bookshop** in OH Bay Mall is Instagram-famous for its rotating bookshelves and labyrinthine design, emulating a journey through time where each turn unveils a new literary gem. Shopping for your next read just became a visually stunning experience. **Second floor, OH Bay Mall, Linhai Metro Station, Bao'an District**

2 The walls at **Yushin Bookstore** are lined with books and mirrors that create a kaleidoscopic effect. It's easy to lose track of time here, or get overwhelmed by the sheer assortment of genres and titles. But don't worry, quick relief is close by – right next door is a café with a serene vibe. **No. 16, 2nd Floor, Qianhai Yinli North Lane, No. 86 Zimao Street**

3 Tucked within Nanshan OCT Loft, **Old Heaven Books** is a quaint bookstore where a resident cat called Noodle oversees shelves stocked with vintage books and old records. The nostalgic décor creates a perfect sanctuary for curling up with a good read. The café in the adjoining room offers speciality coffee and intricately crafted desserts, including lightly toasted marshmallows, a side of fruit salad and artisanal chocolate to complement your brew. **2 Jinxiu North Street, Nanshan District**



HEARTY BITES

Meat-lover's special

American steak with a Korean twist in Singapore BY CLAIRE KNOX



The first outpost of the Michelin-starred **COTE Korean Steakhouse** outside of the US is among the top draws at the new COMO Metropolitan hotel. This upmarket version of a Korean barbecue joint is full of twists: neon lights and moody electro beats give a fun, club vibe; cuts of prime beef are centre-stage in a red-lit ageing room; while the jungle-themed cocktail bar mixes up excellent tipples. The star is, of course, the steak – diners will swoon over the Butcher's Feast (S\$98 per person): a chef's selection of prime cuts of Australian and Japanese A5 wagyu, black angus and more that are served from the leanest to the richest, and grilled at your table to perfection by experienced waiters. The set menu comes with Korean-inspired sides (kimchi stew, pickled veggies and velvety soufflé egg), cups of *gogi cha* (beef broth) and moreish caramel sundaes to finish off the meal. cotekoreansteakhouse.com



COFFEE BREAK

Old favourite, fresh wave

Hanoi's drink of choice gets a boost from trendy new cafés

BY MERVIN LEE



Vulab Coffee

Something interesting is brewing in Vietnam, the world's second-largest exporter of coffee, just a step behind Brazil. The once-ubiquitous scenes of dark robusta slow-dripping from an iconic phin filter are slowly vanishing from the streets. But in the capital, the traditional technique has found new and unlikely champions: the city's passionate purveyors of third- and fourth-wave coffee. Here, three speciality coffee shops in Hanoi are keeping the spirit of Vietnam's coffee culture alive.

Ta Ca Phe

21 Hang Thiec, Hang Gai Ward, Hoan Kiem District

Along Hang Thiec, a bustling street of metalworking shops once known as Rue des Ferblantiers, is a new and unlikely spot for takeaway coffee. Known for espresso-based drinks made with locally grown specialty arabica beans, Ta Ca Phe is gaining popularity with tourists in the Old Quarter and bolstering Vietnam's reputation as a high-quality coffee producer.

Guests can choose from arabica, fine robusta or the café's SONATA Signature Blend, and have their coffee in the form of Hanoi's dessert-like egg coffee, *nâu* (condensed milk coffee) and Italian espresso soda that founder Vu Thu Thuy has named Summer Cool.

Despite top-notch training, a resident roaster and fancy equipment that tantalises coffee nerds, Ta Ca Phe is cultivating the city's maturing love for specialty coffee at a market-friendly price – about VND50,000-60,000 (US\$2–2.50) per cup. tacaphe.vn

Third Wave Roastery

17 Yet Kieu, Nguyen Du Ward, Hai Ba Trang District

This speciality café located south of the Old Quarter is a true labour of love. Founded by Tran Tuan Linh, who gave up a career as a nanoengineer to become



Third Wave Roastery



Ta Ca Phe

IMAGES: MERVIN LEE



Vulab Coffee

a barista-roaster. His roastery and café are inspiring greater coffee diversity in the city by serving delightfully inventive concoctions. Specialties include yogurt topped with berry jam and a shot of Ethiopian-Colombian coffee and a fine brew of highland robusta – with tasting notes of whiskey – from Kontum Province.

It's the perfect stop for coffee geeks; the café embraces all manner of coffee making, from aeropress and V60 filter to the traditional phin. [facebook.com/ThirdWaveRoastery](https://www.facebook.com/ThirdWaveRoastery)

Vulab Coffee

30B Ngo Xom Ha Hoi, Tran Hung Dao Ward, Hoan Kiem District

This brightly lit café is tucked in a tiny, photogenic alley. Barista-owner Le Vu invites visitors to try Vietnamese robustas sourced from passionate producers experimenting with different processing techniques in a quest to improve its flavour offerings.

Vulab's fine robusta from Tan Ha commune, in Central Vietnam's mountainous Lam Dong province, is one-third the size of high-productive varieties (coffee varieties that produce a lot of cherries with each harvest), but they pack plenty of flavour: the long-lasting fruity sweetness with notes of banana and cedar are only slightly diminished by a pineapple-like aftertaste.

"My goal [is to showcase] the clarity of tasting notes in coffee [regardless of their origin]," says Le as he brews a Panama Geisha, premium beans with intense floral notes grown in the highlands of western Panama.

Stocking a list of high-quality beans from Ethiopia and South America, Le is able to keep costs down for consumers by sourcing foreign green coffee beans from traders based closer to Vietnam.

A coffee at Vulab ranges from a humble VND50,000 (US\$2) for an espresso to over VND200,000 (US\$8) for an outstanding pour-over. [facebook.com/VuLabCoffee](https://www.facebook.com/VuLabCoffee)



Ta Ca Phe

“

[Vulab offers] Vietnamese robustas sourced from passionate producers experimenting with processing techniques...”



Third Wave Roastery



Laser-sharp vision

With over a decade of excellence, IKONIK offers cutting-edge technology, personalised eye care and world-class service to deliver outstanding results

Ikonik Eye Specialist & General Health Centre is a trusted Malaysian brand synonymous with world-class eye care.

And with over a decade of experience, it has been recognised by respected authorities such as *Reader's Digest*, *The Star* and SME Corp.

With more than 10,000 Google reviews and an impressive 4.9-star rating,

this eye specialist centre is well-regarded by its patients, who come from different social and economic backgrounds. IKONIK offers a comprehensive range of services tailored to individuals of all ages, from children as young as five to seniors in their 70s.

Whether you're aiming to reduce your dependence on glasses or seeking advanced treatment for complex eye conditions such as cataracts, IKONIK is a trusted destination for exceptional eye care.

Cutting-edge technology

IKONIK's treatments are driven by the latest in eye care innovations as well as state-of-the-art technology.

It is equipped with the latest ophthalmic care facilities that

offer a range of treatments, including advanced laser procedures and minimally invasive surgeries.

To date, over a 100,000 patients have been treated using these treatments.

The clinic is also home to a team of highly skilled specialists that are dedicated to achieving your vision goals.

Recognising that each patient's needs are unique, IKONIK tailors its treatments to each individual.

The experienced team of specialists guide patients through every step of their journey.

From the initial consultation to post-treatment care, they ensure a stress-free experience to make patients feel comfortable and at home.

Effective treatments for all

IKONIK's key offerings are laser eye treatments and premium lens implantation, which can help patients reduce their reliance on glasses.

Adult patients between the ages of 18 to 49 can opt for a variety of procedures including Flapless Smart™, Flapless Trust™, Flapless Smart Signature™, LASIK and implantable phakic contact lenses.

For older patients, IKONIK also offers cataract surgery and lens options that can restore both nearsighted and farsighted vision.

Shortsightedness among children, which is increasing globally, can also be corrected with treatments like Ortho-K that can help kids as young as five years old.

Treatment options also range from affordable to premium.

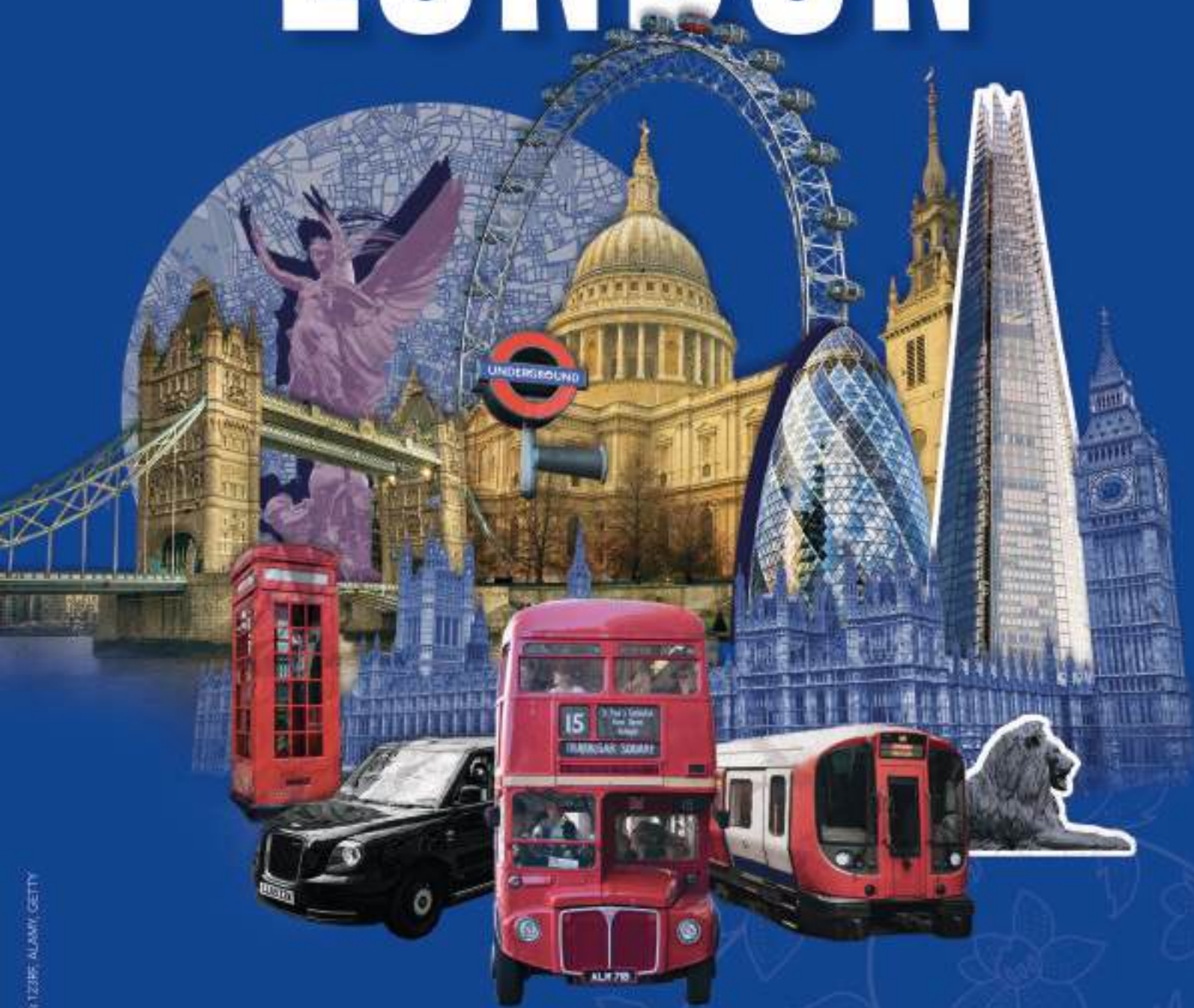
With IKONIK's advanced and effective treatments, patients of all ages can achieve clear vision and enjoy life with newfound confidence.

To learn more, visit ikonik-eyecentre.com or call +60 3-9765 1368



Discover

LONDON



Discover London's most iconic landmarks

1. THE LONDON EYE

A giant Ferris wheel on the South Bank of the Thames, offering panoramic views of London. Opened in 2000, it's a major tourist attraction and iconic landmark.



4. BOROUGH MARKET

The most well-known food market offering diverse culinary delights, fresh produce and artisanal goods. A must-visit for the foodies.



5. 10 DOWNING STREET

The UK Prime Minister's official residence. Spot Larry the Cat, the Chief Mouser, managing the rodent population.



2. THE SHARD

A 95-storey skyscraper, the tallest in the UK, offering stunning views, luxury restaurants, a hotel and offices. It's an architectural marvel.



3. TOWER BRIDGE

Historic bascule and suspension bridge spanning the Thames, opened in 1894. Offers stunning views and an exhibition on its history and mechanics.

6. WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Historic Gothic church in London, renowned for royal coronations, weddings and burials. It houses the tombs of British monarchs and notable figures.



7. BATTERSEA POWER STATION

A national landmark that is an iconic part of London's skyline, Battersea Power Station recently had an electrifying makeover into a mixed-use development which is now the city's buzziest neighbourhood.

Commissioned in the 1930s, this iconic symbol of industrial architecture is one of Europe's largest brick buildings and once supplied one-fifth of London's power.

Today, it has transformed into a vibrant cultural and culinary hub, embodying London's dynamic evolution. Its charming Art Deco façade, towering chimneys and striking interiors, restored by leading architectural practice WilkinsonEyre, still reflect the station's industrial heritage.

Read on for our top picks of things to do while you're in the area.



Experience London like a local

London's most exciting new destination!

BATTERSEA POWER STATION

FESTIVE FANFARE

Battersea Power Station is one of London's most magical destinations during the Christmas season. The historic turbine halls and the wider riverside neighbourhood shines with sparkling lights and bedecked Christmas trees of all shapes and sizes. Watch out for a series of festive markets featuring small businesses – perfect for those looking for a unique stocking stuffer. There's arts and crafts sessions, children's workshops and games.



London's only riverside ice rink, **Glide**, returns from 8 November to 5 January, offering unforgettable open-air skating.

RIDE A GLASS ELEVATOR

Board **Lift 109**, a spectacular glass elevator experience housed within one of the power station's iconic chimneys. It will take you 109m to the top where you can enjoy breathtaking 360-degree views of London's skyline.



Learn more batterseapowerstation.co.uk

WATCH A FILM OR MUSICAL

Battersea Power Station has long been a source of inspiration for artists, musicians and filmmakers, so there's no better place to catch the latest blockbuster or musical. Enjoy luxurious screens at **The Cinema in the Power Station**, or discover a new piece of theatre at **The Turbine Theatre**.

SHOP ICONIC BRITISH BRANDS

With more than 140 British and international brands at Battersea Power Station, you can stock up on the latest fashions and unique



souvenirs. Shop high-street favourites like **ZARA** and **Uniqlo**, the latest tech from **Apple**, and beauty products from **Chanel** and **Space NK**.

SAVOUR GLOBAL FLAVOURS

Diners can enjoy 13 types of cuisines at the expansive 24,000 square foot **Arcade Food Hall & Bar**, offering everything from fiery Thai to authentic Italian gelato. For inventive dishes like a biryani-inspired chicken berry Britannia, check out the buzzy Mumbai-inspired **Dishoom**.

WESTBOURNE PARK

SHOP FOR VINTAGE LUXURY AT RELLIK

Glass panels and two bright red benches mark the entrance to this cosy shop filled with preloved treasures. Finds may include extravagant shoes with sky-high heels from Lanvin or a Jean Paul Gaultier bodysuit – if you're lucky.



BAKER STREET

FIND LITERARY GEMS AT DAUNT BOOKS

This independent bookstore's attractive and cosy space – oak-panelled shelves, wood parquet floors and a lovely skylight – will inspire bookworms to spend ages browsing bestsellers and the classics.



TOTTENHAM COURT RD

ENJOY LIVE MUSIC AT THE LOWER THIRD

London's beloved 12 Bar Club was reborn as The Lower Third in the summer of 2022. Enjoy a sleek space that champions emerging acts like DJ/producer Austin Millz, TikTok star Dani Sylvia and Latin Grammy nominee J Noa.



BOND STREET

PICK UP BAKED GOODS AT ARÔME BAKERY

Crafted with French techniques and Asian ingredients. Tickle the taste buds with trendy and intriguing fare like sesame miso caramel cake and Japanese BBQ croissants. Go early to grab the good stuff.



CHARING CROSS



DINE AT THE RAFFLES LONDON

Formerly the OWO, the magnificent Edwardian baroque building has now transformed into a luxury hotel and gastronomic destination. From classic European to modern pub fare, nine restaurants and three bars cater to various cravings.



© PLAN

Prepare for the perfect holiday

Planning a perfect holiday involves anticipating potential issues like cancelled flights or lost luggage. Whether in Kuala Lumpur or London, preparation is key for a smooth journey. Here are tips from leading insurance provider **Berjaya Sompo** to ensure a memorable trip.



LOCATION IS KEY

Look for a hotel that is easily accessible and close to a clinic in case of emergencies. Medical emergencies overseas can lead to unexpected costs. With coverage from **Berjaya Sompo's** SOMPO TravelSafe+ insurance, you can focus on enjoying your trip rather than worrying about finances.



PLAN AHEAD

Look for advance purchase discounts for popular shows and attractions to save you money and to also guarantee your spot at sought-after events. But if something happens beyond your control and you need to cancel your plans, having travel insurance can save you from a lot of stress and expense.



PACK SENSIBLY

Pack a separate carry-on bag with essentials like a change of clothes and important documents. This way, you're prepared for any unexpected delays or lost luggage. If that does happen, **Berjaya Sompo's** travel insurance can compensate you for lost or delayed luggage, keeping your travels stress-free.

It's not too late to get coverage.

Secure your travel insurance today with **SOMPO TravelSafe+ by Berjaya Sompo** for peace of mind! Check out our website for exciting promotions.

Visit berjayasompo.com.my/product/sompo-travelsafe

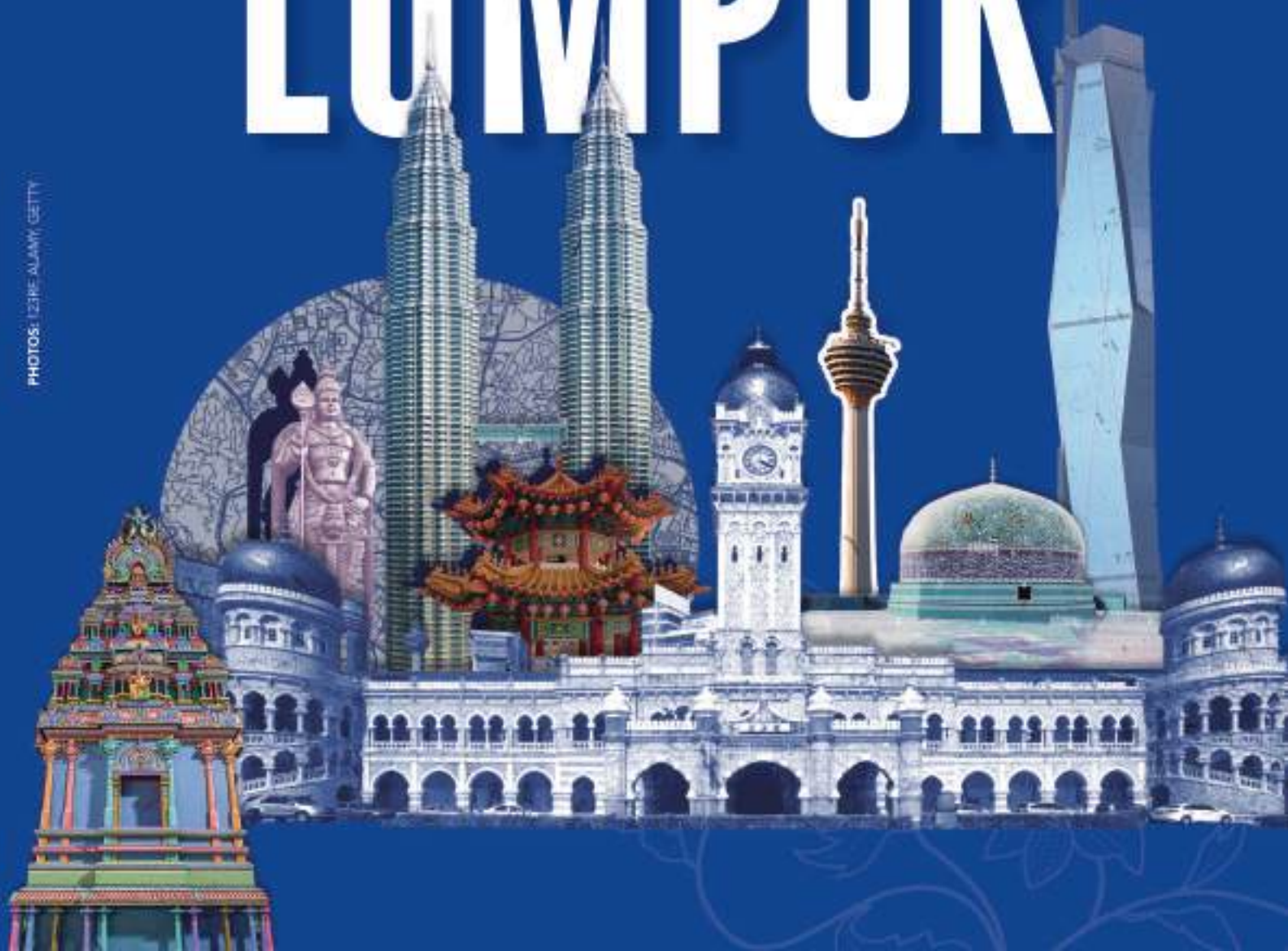


PHOTOS: GETTY

Discover

KUALA LUMPUR

PHOTOS: IZHE ALAMY, GETTY



DISCOVER

Explore KL's vibrant cultural hotspots



1. MERDEKA SQUARE

Merdeka Square (Dataran Merdeka) is a symbol of Malaysia's independence. On 31 August, 1957, the Malaysian flag was raised here for the first time as the country's first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, declared independence. The square is surrounded by colonial-era landmarks like the Sultan Abdul Samad Building and remains a popular venue for national celebrations, cultural events and a testament to Malaysia's rich history.



2. ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM

Over 7,000 artefacts are housed in this beautiful museum, with permanent and seasonal exhibitions of Islamic art from around the world – including textiles, ceramics and manuscripts.



3. CENTRAL MARKET

This historic market in a beautiful Art Deco building serves as a hub for a variety of local crafts, textiles and artworks. You can also witness traditional performances and taste delicious local cuisine here.

4. SRI MAHA MARIAMMAN TEMPLE

KL's oldest Hindu temple features a stunning Dravidian architecture with intricate carvings. It hosts vibrant festivals, including the annual Thaipusam procession that attracts thousands.

5. MERDEKA118

KL's newest skyscraper is a striking 118-storey building that stands at 678.9m. Merdeka118 is the second-tallest building globally, symbolising Malaysia's progress. Visit the observation deck on level 116, the highest in Southeast Asia.



Experience KL like a local

LEARN TO COOK LOCAL DISHES AT LAZAT

Impress family and friends back home by whipping up some tasty Malaysian food. Lazat Cooking School offers hands-on Malaysian cooking classes in a traditional village setting. Led by expert chefs, food enthusiasts can choose classes on making street food dishes, curries and desserts.

EXPLORE CONTEMPORARY ART AT ILHAM

Ilham Gallery showcases modern Malaysian and Southeast Asian art through rotating exhibitions, public programmes and forums on art, culture and current issues in the region.



After exploring the gallery, stop by at the curated gift shop and café – art books, prints, stationery – featuring over 50 unique Malaysian brands.

BRING HOME A BINGKA KEEPSAKE

Bingka KL's lifestyle products showcase locally inspired themes, from drawings of everyday scenes of Malaysian life to favourite street snacks and Peranakan tile motifs. Pick up silk-screen printed tea towels, handmade bags and pouches or unique stationery. Explore the full range of products at their new studio in Wisma Maluri.

BREAKFAST AT THE HISTORIC YUT KEE COFFE SHOP

Yut Kee, a beloved and historic kopitiam in the Chow Kit neighbourhood, has been serving Malaysian Hainanese coffeeshop favourites since 1928. Its charm lies in the old-school tiled floors, marble-topped tables and solid wood chairs. Yut Kee is famous for its Hainanese chicken chop, kaya toast and aromatic local coffee.



BUY A PERSONALISED PLANNER FROM ANA TOMY

Ana Tomy, a stationery brand known for its customisable planners and notebooks, is tucked away on the ground floor of Zhongshan, a creative hub in Kampung Attap. It's the perfect spot to pick up a thoughtful, handcrafted-in-Malaysia gift for the well-organised loved one in your life.

STAY

Relax and unwind in an urban oasis

Nestled within KL's vibrant city centre, the Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur offers a serene sanctuary with an impressive range of amenities that promise a fulfilling stay without venturing far from the hotel. Guests can enjoy professional tennis coaching, a delightful dim sum brunch and the MO Club for an elevated level of luxury and convenience.



SKYLINE VIEWS FROM YOUR BEDROOM

This urban resort offers unbeatable panoramas of the iconic Petronas Twin Towers and KLCC Park. The Twin Towers and City View Rooms showcase the glittering skyline, while Park View rooms offer lush views of KLCC Park.

SUMPTUOUS FEASTS

For expertly prepared prime cuts, visit the Mandarin Grill, featuring a Josper oven-grilled menu with intense smoky flavours and perfectly charred finishes.

Alternatively, sit down for a delightful meal at Mosaic, where international classics meet local favourites, or tuck into sophisticated dim sum at Lai Po Heen.

GAME, SET, MATCH

As the only hotel in KL with two world-class tennis courts, the Mandarin Oriental offers an experience for tennis enthusiasts. The Peter Burwash International (PBI) Tennis Centre caters to players of all skill levels, featuring



quality programmes led by the hotel's resident professional coach.

A LIMO AIRPORT TRANSFER

From January 2025, guests will experience added conveniences when booking an MO Club room or suite. These services include airport fast track services, limo transfer from the airport to the hotel and flexible check-in and check-out options.

Book your stay

[mandarinoriental.com/en/kuala-lumpur/petronas-towers](https://www.mandarinoriental.com/en/kuala-lumpur/petronas-towers)

Kuala Lumpur City Centre, 50088
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



"An urban resort with unbeatable views of the Petronas Twin Towers and KLCC Park"

A BOOKSTORE SPEAKEASY

Tucked behind an unassuming bookshelf in Bukit Damansara, **The First Chapter Speakeasy** is a sleek and stylish bar perfect for an intimate nightcap with friends. Sip on creative cocktails like the Rhum Brûlée or Kopi O' Mexicana, made with premium spirits and ingredients like pistachio orgeat and kopi.

Tip: Visit between Tuesday and Saturday to enjoy three drinks of your choice for RM90 all night. Plus, ladies receive free cocktails on Wednesdays during Ladies' Night.

Get in touch

+60 12 239 1738; [instagram.com/thefirstchapterspeakeasy](https://www.instagram.com/thefirstchapterspeakeasy)



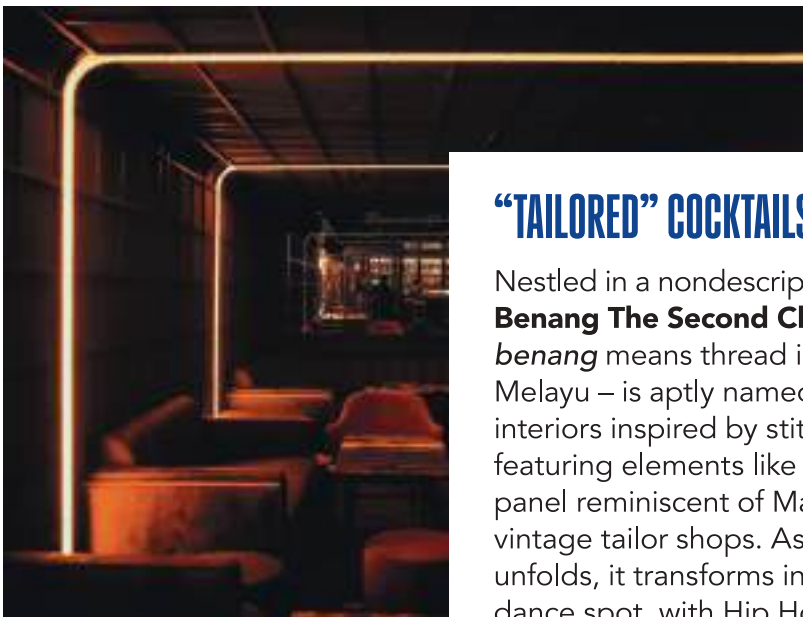
DRINK

Soak up KL's speakeasy scene

These hidden gems in Bukit Damansara boast unique interiors, inventive cocktails and a lively atmosphere, elevating KL's thrilling dining scene.

10% discount
for all Malaysia Airlines' passengers
when you present your boarding pass. Valid until December 31, 2024.

DELICIOUS DEALS



“TAILORED” COCKTAILS

Nestled in a nondescript alleyway, **Benang The Second Chapter** – *benang* means thread in Bahasa Melayu – is aptly named for its interiors inspired by stitching, featuring elements like a cloth panel reminiscent of Malaysia's vintage tailor shops. As the night unfolds, it transforms into a lively dance spot, with Hip Hop and

RnB tunes keeping the energy high. Park yourself here on Wednesdays for RM25+ drinks. Or sip on complimentary cocktails for ladies n Ladies' Night every Thursday.

Get in touch

+60 11 1400 9621; [instagram.com/benangthesecondchapter](https://www.instagram.com/benangthesecondchapter)

DINE

Enjoy a meal with KL's unparalleled skyline view

Troika Sky Dining hosts four must-visit restaurants and bars, making it one of KL's go-to spots for sunset drinks and evening get-togethers. Located on the 24th floor of Norman Foster's The Troika, this well-established venue packs them in nightly.

Mr Chew's Chino Latino Bar offers fun and inventive food and drinks, featuring dishes like salmon nori tacos, Mr Chew's Almost Famous Chicken Wings and banana burritos – a cheeky nod to Asia's phenomenal street food with a dash of Latin American flair.



The open terrace at **Fuego** promises sunset skyline views paired with delicious sharing plates inspired by the Americas.

Think extra spicy guacamole, ceviche, charcoal-grilled lamb ribs, seafood moqueca and the best churros on this side of the world.

Wash it all down with a Fuego mojito.

For intimate, casual evenings, **Strato's** handmade pasta and pizzas embody the spirit of "La Cucina de la Nonna".

Here, it's all about delicious comfort food, good drinks and great company.

In a beautifully elegant space, **Fritz** serves up classic French fare, including show-stopping seafood platters. For a touch of nostalgia, the steak au poivre and crêpe suzette, flambéed at your table, are must-haves. And don't miss the signature Pommes Fritz!



Learn more
troikaskydining.com

"The magic of Troika is in the entire experience – the buzz of energy when you arrive and the excitement of the meal being served with the sweeping KL city skyline right before you"





NEVER MISS A TRAVEL TIP

Go to goingplaces.malaysiaairlines.com





of the hill is a wooden platform where visitors can rest and enjoy a bird's-eye view of the verdant Kampung Kauluan.

Sosodikon Hill is managed and maintained by Koperasi Sosodikon Ranau Berhad (KOPSODIK) – a co-operative that's wholly managed by the villagers of Kampung Kauluan. Established in 2021, KOPSODIK was initiated to encourage sustainable living and self-sufficiency amongst its villagers.

Empowering local communities with Desa Lestari

In 2022, KOPSODIK was nominated by the Malaysia Co-operative Societies Commission (SKM) to represent Sabah to vie for grant assistance from the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development (KKDW). After being selected, they took home a one-time grant worth RM750,000 under the Desa Lestari (sustainable villages) Programme.

Since being awarded the grant, KOPSODIK has done its best to develop Kampung Kauluan as an emerging ecotourism destination. Like many rural areas in Malaysia, Kampung Kauluan has experienced high youth migration due to the limited available opportunities to make a living back home. With Sosodikon Hill as the main ecotourism attraction, the village's youths now have the chance to thrive as entrepreneurs, auto mechanics and tour guides.

In addition, KOPSODIK also aims to empower its women and encourage financial independence. In addition to being full-time homemakers, the women of Kampung Kauluan also have the opportunity to become entrepreneurs, homestay managers and caterers.

Set amidst the picturesque hillside with its refreshing mountain air, crystal clear rivers and Mount Kinabalu as a backdrop, Sosodikon Hill makes an excellent destination for camping, admiring sunflowers, jeep tours and ATV riding. All of these activities are managed by members of the KOPSODIK co-operatives themselves and revenue from tourism is put towards the village community.

Follow @sosodikonhill on Instagram and Facebook.

The heart of Ranau's ecotourism

Get closer to nature in this Sabah town while supporting a local collective

If you are researching places to visit in Ranau on a day trip, chances are you will come across Sosodikon Hill, one of the newest attractions and a hidden gem in the area. Located at Kampung Kauluan, Kundasang, approximately a 15-minute drive from Kundasang Town, Sosodikon Hill derives its name from the Dusun word, "sodik", which refers to a type of trap. Back in the 1950s and 60s, the hill used to be a hunting ground where villagers would set up their sodik to catch squirrels and birds.

Today, Sosodikon Hill has become increasingly popular as a short hiking destination because of its easy, child-friendly 800m trail that takes less than 15 minutes to complete. At the peak



24 HOURS IN

Labuan

Words **Atikah Wahid** Photography **Tracia Goh**

Just a few kilometres off the coast of Sabah lies Labuan, one of Malaysia's three federal territories (alongside Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur), a little-known gem even to the most seasoned beachgoers.

Since being designated as a free-trade zone and international off-shore financial centre in 1990, Labuan has gained recognition as a financial hub and a key player in the deepwater oil and gas industry. However, for travellers seeking an off-the-beaten-path destination, Labuan offers idyllic island-hopping,

fun seaside activities and thrilling underwater adventures. Beyond its crystal-clear waters, Labuan's rich history – as a pivotal World War II battleground in Southeast Asia – is preserved in various museums and historical sites throughout the city. The island also hosts the annual Borneo Arts Festival, celebrating the diverse cultures and traditions of Borneo's tribes.

To help with exploring one of Malaysia's most underrated island getaways, here's our recommendations for a weekend itinerary.

Saturday

🕒 6am

Let nature be your guide

Embark on the perfect start to your weekend adventure on the **Labuan Chimney Walking Trail**. This moderately challenging trail takes you to a towering cliff overlooking the shimmering South China Sea – the best spot to witness a breathtaking sunrise. Along its 2.7km loop, explore Labuan’s diverse ecological offerings, from its scenic rolling hills to the prehistoric sandstone formations by the beach and an undisturbed sea cave. Stumble upon historical relics along this path, such as the **Gedung Ubat**, a Japanese WWII ammunition storage structure, an abandoned coal mine and a British graveyard dating back to the mid-19th century, among others. *Tanjung Kubong*



🕒 9am

Eat like a local

Refuel after your hiking excursion with a local favourite: crispy fried fish soup from **Loong Fish Head Soup**, a beloved Labuan kopitiam. This humble dish comprises fresh fish fried in a crispy batter, served in a flavourful broth, perfect for a light breakfast. Some regulars also rave about their *kolo mee* (savoury dry noodles) and proclaim it to be the best in town.

For adventurous eaters, try a Bornean delicacy called *ambuyat* at **Pondok Cahaya Mentari**, a lively beachside restaurant that opens only on weekends and public holidays. Made from sago palm starch, *ambuyat* is cooked into a sticky, gooey texture and is best eaten by twirling it into a dollop using special bamboo chopsticks before swallowing it whole. Sample this unique traditional dish with a variety of sauces such as *cacah mangga* (mango dip) and delicious side dishes like *ikan pari salai* (grilled stingray fillet). *Bandar Labuan; Tanjung Aru Nelayan*



INSIDER TIP
Head down to the **Chimney Museum**, located by the entrance of the walking trail to learn more about the mystery surrounding Labuan’s Chimney Tower.





LABUAN

Facts about Labuan

Duty-free island

Labuan is one of the four duty-free islands in Malaysia, apart from Langkawi, Pangkor Island and Tioman Island

Labuan War Cemetery

is the final resting place of more than 3,900 World War II soldiers from Malaysia and Allied forces

The Big Four

in Labuan refers to the four shipwrecks found in the seabed of Labuan, popular amongst wreck divers



🕒 10am

Museum-hop around town

Located in the heart of town, step back in time at the **Labuan Museum** with over 700 fascinating artefacts housed in a pre-war colonial building. Explore detailed exhibits and dioramas displaying the island's journey from prehistoric times up to its multicultural modern-day society.

The **Labuan Marine Museum** boasts 14 aquariums, providing an up-close view of local marine life. Experience hands-on encounters with starfishes, stingrays and even sharks at the museum's interactive touch pool. Learn about Labuan's vibrant coral reefs and marvel over the museum's 572 collections of marine specimens, especially its star attraction – an awe-inspiring 100-year-old Indian Fin whale skeleton display that spans 42ft. *Jalan Dewan, Bandar Labuan; Kompleks Sukan Air Antarabangsa Labuan, Jalan Tanjung Purun*

🕒 12pm

Have an easy breezy lunch

Take a break from sightseeing and make your way to the harbour-front **Deep Sea Raff Restaurant**, a popular lunch spot with a view of the Labuan Jetty. Unwind with delectable Malay cuisine buffet-style, featuring everything from the sweet zesty blend of *nenas pajori* (pineapple salsa) to soul-warming *sup tulang* (bone broth). Sip on a refreshing coconut as you enjoy the gentle sea breeze and watch fishing boats sail by. *Bandar Labuan*

🕒 4pm

A walk to remember

Enjoy a quiet stroll through the **Peace Park**, a beautifully curated WWII memorial park. Funded by the Japanese government, the park symbolises postwar reconciliation between the two countries. A striking centrepiece is the

LABUAN

raised memorial mound bookended by two massive, arched concrete walls – a powerful statement about the consequences of war.

Adjacent to this park is the **Surrender Point**, another historical site marking a pivotal moment in Labuan's history. Here, the commander of the Japanese military officially surrendered to the Allied forces, signalling the end of the Japanese occupation. *87000 Labuan*

🕒 **6pm**

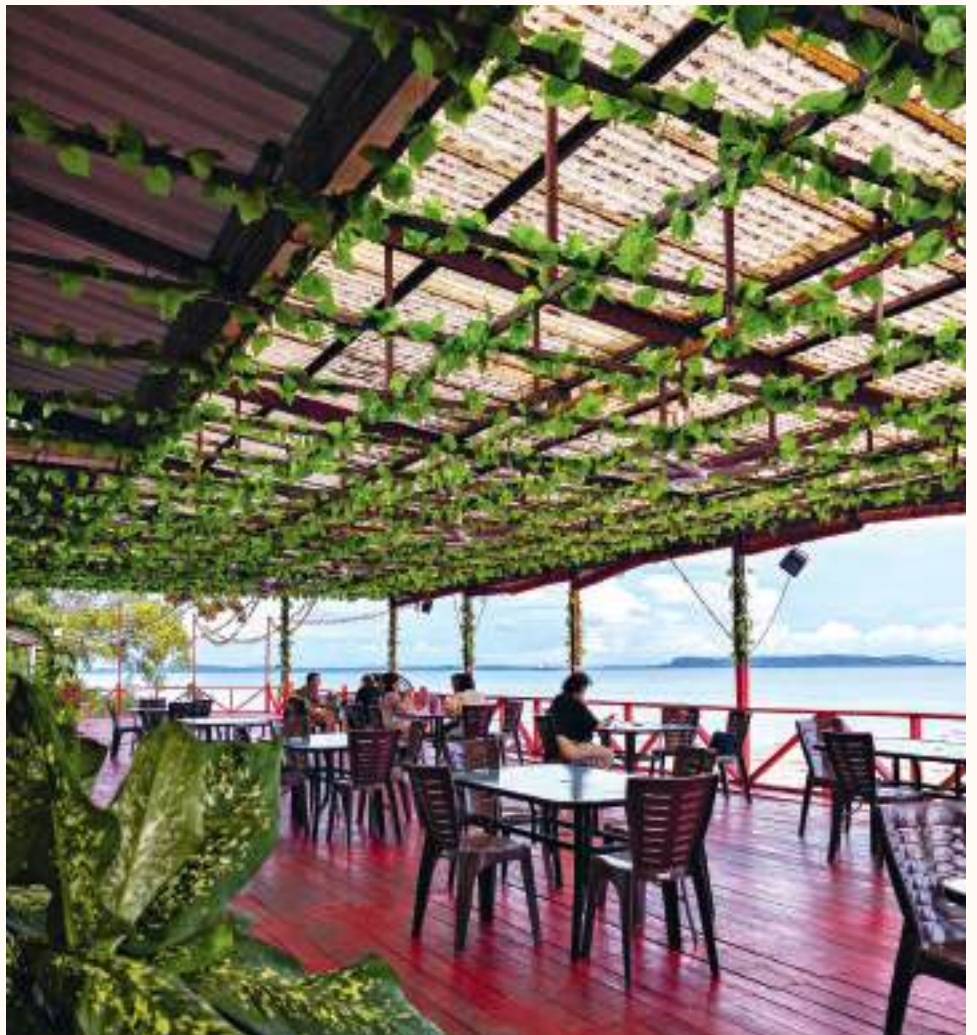
A seafood feast at sunset

End your day in Labuan with fresh seafood served in delicious Asian fusion cuisine at the crowd-pleaser **Mawilla Yacht Club Restaurant**. Sate any seafood craving by choosing your catch – from crunchy fried silver fish to tender steamed grouper – prepared to your liking. Snag a table on their outdoor deck and watch as the colours of the sunset wash over you, along with the rhythmic sound of crashing waves. *Jalan Tanjung Batu*



INSIDER TIP

Need to cool off from the heat? Saunter over to **Pantai Layang-Layangan**, just a few steps away from the Peace Park, for a quick dip in the sea.





Sunday

🕒 8am

Say goodbye with a splash

No island getaway is complete without an island-hopping adventure and Labuan is no different. Explore the wonders of Labuan's stunning neighbouring islets and their vibrant underwater marine life. The sole operator of Labuan's island-hopping tour, **Labuan Rusukan Besar Resort** offers a day-long tour package starting at RM250 per person. Spend up to seven exciting hours on this tour with activities such as snorkelling in the vibrant coral gardens of **Pulau Rusukan Kecil**, exploring Malaysia's longest sand spit that is **Pulau Kuraman**, and indulging in a delicious complimentary beachside lunch back on **Pulau Rusukan Besar**. *Lot 31831, Pulau Rusukan Besar*



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Labuan 8x weekly.

Luxury stays



Tiara Labuan Hotel

This sprawling resort hotel provides ample space for couples and families, from deluxe timber chalets to five-bedroom villas. tiaralabuan.com



Palm Beach Resort & Spa

Escape the city to this beachfront resort which offers luxury sports amenities like horse riding, mini golf and a tennis court. palmbeachresortspa.com



Dorsett Grand Labuan

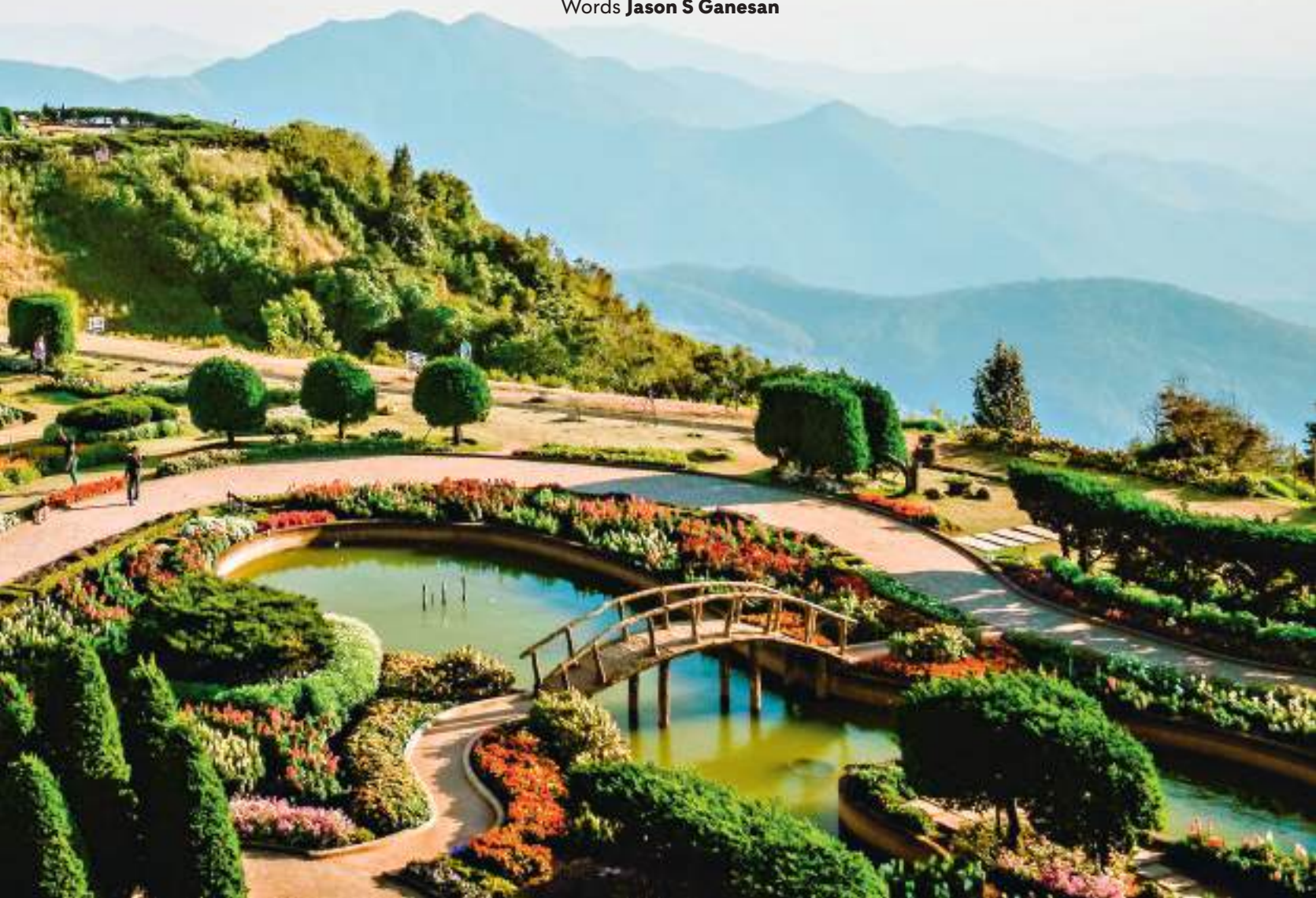
This elegant five-star hotel is conveniently located in the heart of Victoria, Labuan's capital, for easy access to duty-free shopping. dorsetthotels.com



Chiang Mai uncovered

In a fresh collaboration with Malaysia Airlines, Darren Chin, chef and owner of Michelin recognised restaurants, celebrates the authenticity, diversity and flavours of Chiang Mai's cuisine

Words **Jason S Ganesan**



Thailand's northern jewel, Chiang Mai, is famed for panoramic mountains, magnificent temples and indigenous handicraft.



Located about 700km north of Bangkok, it is Thailand's second largest city and was once the capital of the ancient Lan Na Kingdom. It's also home to diverse and vibrant cultures, with many ethnic minority groups and subgroups originating from other parts of Asia settling on its verdant hills.

It was in Chiang Mai that Malaysian chef Darren Chin, met Pachita "Nana" Kitikornchalowemwong, who grew up in Mae Ai, a village in the hilly province, and is now his wife. It is also where the chef recently embarked on a culinary adventure with Malaysia Airlines to discover Thai cuisine.

Trained in France, Darren is behind the Michelin-starred DC Restaurant in Kuala Lumpur, as well as Brel by Darren Chin and Gai by Darren Chin, which are both on the Michelin Guide. But his recent assignment took him out of his comfort zone to play host for *Time for Chiang Mai*, the four-episode travel series that forms part of his collaboration with Malaysia Airlines. The series follows Darren as he explores the flavours of the region, from traditional cuisines, street food and modern fare, as well as visit hill tribe villages, cultural sites and an elephant sanctuary. The show, launched in August this year, celebrates the airline's KL-Chiang Mai route. The northern Thailand city is one of three new destinations – including the Maldives and Da Nang, Vietnam – added to the airline's international network in the last few months.

Darren had already been seeking to evolve his craft when Malaysia Airlines came knocking. This collaboration was a chance for Darren to really get to know the culture and cuisine of the region – a multi-sensory culinary journey that would allow him a deep dive into the city and province, and its relationship to food.

"THERE IS SO MUCH ORIGINALITY HERE AND NO pretence; so much subtraction, so much restraint," says Darren, who found Chiang Mai's cultural diversity so remarkable. While there, he visited the Mueang Luang Nuea Tai Lue community and the Hmong Doi Pui Village to learn how these communities keep their traditions alive by living off the land. Visitors to the Tai Lue village can experience traditional ways of life first-hand through activities like decorating bags, making desserts and Phaya Luang dolls, while the Hmong village offers a glimpse of its rich heritage through intricate handicraft and agricultural bounty, especially its famous coffees and teas.

"These ethnic micro communities have been cultivating and living off the land for the last 300 years," he says. "This way of organic living is truly inspiring to witness

Previous spread:

On the top of Inthanon mountain in Chiang Mai

This spread (clockwise from left):

A variety of local herbs at Green Gardens; Darren Chin (left) harvesting bamboo shoots; Anusarn Market; women grilling sticky rice in Mueang Luang Nuea; feeding time at the Elephant Freedom Project



and experience first-hand. I want to celebrate the biodiversity [that shapes] traditions.”

He describes the local cuisine as “a true expression of terroir” – and terroir is vital to Darren; it is the third of the five tenets of his philosophy of culinary excellence, where every dish is a tribute to the land, a celebration of unique and distinct local flavours.

“This is the third cycle of my evolution through my food,” he explains. “This collaboration with Malaysia Airlines played a very important role in this. It is difficult to reinvent yourself when you are good at something. But rather than reinventing, you can evolve.”

Darren was especially taken by the Tai Lue community in Mueang Luang Nuea that live sustainably and in complete harmony with the land, with food cultivated on their own farms cooked using handmade stoves and other traditional methods. “Today we are talking about climate change and environmental issues, but these micro communities have been living this way for a very long time,” he says. “Their adaptation [to] their own food culture is woven into the tapestry of what Chiang Mai food represents.”

AN EXPLORATION OF CHIANG MAI’S FOOD SCENE

would not be complete without examining what constitutes modern Thai cuisine. In *Time for Chiang Mai*, Darren samples the nightlife and street food at the Anusarn Market, famed for its vendors selling everything from clothing to food and souvenirs. He also pops into Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurants Magnolia Café and Rasik Local Kitchen to learn their techniques, particularly their reinterpretations of traditional dishes.

For Darren, cooking alongside Rasik’s Chef Waii was particularly fruitful. “He taught me the concept, theory and mindset of his composition of dishes,” he says. “[Chef Waii] makes these dishes very original, but still not so different from the original values they represent.”

Darren also soaked up traditional Lanna music and dance performances while having a *khantoke* dinner, where *kaeng hang lay* (traditional curry), *pla tabtim todd* (fried tilapia with herbs), and other dishes come accompanied by various dips on a small pedestal, at the Old Chiang Mai Cultural Centre. He also made time for the Elephant Freedom Village, a sanctuary that provides ethical elephant experiences such as feeding and interacting with the gentle giants at a waterfall to gain insight into their special place in Karen culture. There he helped bathe elephants, something he’d never done before. “They are magnificent animals,” he gushes. “It was quite mesmerising to get that close to [them].”

For Darren, Chiang Mai’s unique mix of its diverse communities preserving their traditions, along with up-and-coming chefs in the city putting their own spin on those traditions, is what will make Chiang Mai the next food capital of Thailand.



EVERYTHING DARREN LEARNED IN CHIANG MAI

turned up on the plate at an epic gala dinner dubbed “An Epicurean Journey Through Chiang Mai”, held at M Resort and Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. The formal, five-course dinner, held in celebration of the airline’s new KL-Chiang Mai route, gave KL’s travel glitterati, KOLs and celebrities like tv personality Daphne Iking and fashion entrepreneur Christy Ng a taste of the airline’s new destination.

Darren opened the special dinner menu with chicken *khao soi gai* (egg noodle soup in curry broth) created with the Malaysian palate in mind. The dish was inspired by the *khao soi* he had in the Hmong village, made by a Muslim cook of Indian heritage – in Darren’s view, hands down the best *khao soi* in Chiang Mai.

As a second course, he created a northern kingfish *larb* (meat salad), served with a glutinous rice cracker, a homage to the Tai Lue community’s embrace of

This spread (clockwise):

Darren Chin’s northern Kingfish larb salad; wild coral trout in hor mok; Darren Chin with Malaysia Airlines’ flight attendants at An Epicurean Journey Through Chiang Mai gala dinner



“

[Darren Chin believes that] when you travel, you expose yourself to new things. You taste new things, new flavour combinations; learn new techniques, new ideas”



Watch the *Time for Chiang Mai* series on youtube.com/MalaysiaAirlines



Malaysia Airlines flies from Kuala Lumpur to Chiang Mai 5x weekly. Book your flight now at malaysiaairlines.com

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Buy a Chiang Mai pass on Journify and explore the city's top attractions.

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every aspect of rice. After a fried banana blossom with marinated shrimp and roasted coconut cream, guests were treated to wild red coral trout in *hor mok* (steamed curry) stuffing. Darren also used his mastery of French technique to infuse spices with the Songkhla river prawn, served with yellow curry bisque sauce and bue kee salad, as well as the aged duck supreme in northern spice.

Interestingly, *bue kee*, the variety of wild rice cultivated by the Pakakayor community in Chiang Mai, is traditionally kept within the tribe and is almost never exported out. “Showcasing such a rare variety of rice was a true testament to celebrating biodiversity and enhancing the rich [culinary] heritage of Chiang Mai,” Darren says. The course ended on a high note, with a rich pandan pudding in coconut cream and an egg custard *sangkaya* (coconut custard).

It’s clear to see how much pride the chef takes in the partnership of shared values – what the airline sums up as Malaysian Hospitality is also how the chef defines world-class service, and the warmth and beauty of its people. It’s a collaboration that has allowed him to discover new things about familiar places. “Working alongside Malaysia Airlines has opened my mind and soul,” Darren says. “This experience has given me the opportunity to see above and beyond my craft. The cross-culinary cultures have broadened my perspectives on sustainable living. Taking time to enjoy these moments is sheer luxury.”

The entire experience in Chiang Mai, from filming the video series and creating a multi-course menu that took guests on a culinary adventure through northern Thailand, reaffirmed for Darren that indeed the only way to learn is to travel. “When you travel, you expose yourself to new things. You taste new things, new flavour combinations; learn new techniques, new ideas. You see the origins of food – how it is grown, how it is sourced and how it is used.”



As demand for wildlife tourism revives Sri Lanka as a top travel destination, luxury safari lodges offer immersive jungle experiences and modern comforts

Words **Zinara Rathnayake**

Into



the

wild

“That’s Gemunu,” says Darshana Mohan, a ranger at Wild Coast Tented Lodge, pointing to a majestic wild tusker elephant guzzling water

at the edge of a lake. We watch the scene from the back of our safari vehicle, awestruck. A flock of birds glides through the skies. Mohan adds, “All tuskers [in Sri Lanka] are named after ancient kings to signify their dominance.”

I am with a handful of other travellers on safari at Yala National Park in southeastern Sri Lanka, a mixed terrain dotted with shrubs, grasslands, lagoons, marshes and dunes that roll into the Indian Ocean. In the next few hours, as Mohan continues supplying quirky facts about the local wildlife, we spot a couple of resting mugger crocodiles with their mouths wide open, solitary wild buffaloes, rare black-and-white kingfishers and the elusive leopard chasing after a flock of spotted deer – it’s a mama with two cubs, he tells us.

Although Sri Lanka was Lonely Planet’s top destination in 2019, a series of disasters – including the pandemic and the country’s worst-ever economic crisis in 2022 – put the island’s tourism industry to a halt. Now, however, things are changing. As of July, Sri Lanka has received over one million tourists.

“We’ve seen 184% growth in Sri Lanka bookings since 2023,” says Brett Mitchell, general manager for Australia and New Zealand at Intrepid Travel, an adventure outfitter and travel company. Attractions like national parks and activities such as wildlife safaris certainly contribute to the growth of Sri Lanka’s tourism. Mitchell says that “there’s an increase in demand – nearly 94% – for wildlife experiences” such as Intrepid’s

12-day wildlife safari across Sri Lanka’s national parks and interiors that includes stays in tented camps and safari lodges.

At Yala, there’s a high chance of seeing a herd of wild Asian elephants against the backdrop of the ocean or two playful leopard cubs, Mohan says. He’s quick to add that luxury resorts in the surrounding areas help draw high-end travellers who are also looking for a relaxing getaway.

These safari-style game lodges and resorts like the Wild Coast Tented Lodge within the bounds of Yala indeed offer an immersive experience to visitors. They allow travellers to safely enjoy and appreciate Sri Lanka’s wildlife without having to give up creature comforts.

Returning from our evening game drive – included in all stays at Wild Coast – we make our way through a lantern-illuminated pathway for sundowners at the beach with other guests, mostly families with kids and groups of friends. At the resort’s Ten Tuskers Bar by the pool overlooking the Indian Ocean, a mixologist creates drinks that combine native spirits with hyperlocal ingredients like *kochchi* (scotch bonnets), king coconut water, *narang* (calamansi) and sour tamarind.

The drinks pair perfectly with the dinner menu that includes a mix of international and “thoroughly local” dishes like *kottu*, chopped flatbread tossed with fresh vegetables, spices and protein of your choice like prawn, fish or chicken. There’s also local reef fish baked in lotus leaf and Sri Lankan rice and curry, served with condiments like *pol sambol*, a grated coconut, chilli and lime condiment.

The restaurant and bar, with mud-built seating and stunning bamboo chandeliers, are both in the eye-catching main building. The boulder-like pavilions here – crafted by the local community using bamboo and teak shingles – resonate with the rocky outcrops of the arid, dry terrain, merging smaller domes with large, arched and airy openings to house the waterfront bar and the air-conditioned library. The nature-driven design continues with the accommodations – the resort’s impressive 36 tents, some featuring private plunge pools, are tucked into the form of a caterpillar-inspired cocoon with arched interiors.

THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR SAFARIS HAS LED TO new luxury hotels in the region. Mayur Lodge by Nyne Hotels, for instance, is a private, exclusive two-villa accommodation that opened in April. *Mayur* – “peacocks” in Sanskrit – hints at the colourful birds foraging in





Previous spread: The Jetwing lounge; a *rilawa*, or toque macaque, endemic to Sri Lanka. **This spread (clockwise from top):** A wild elephant at Yala National Park; Wild Coast Tented Lodge's dining hall; the lodge's safari 4x4; Wild Coast's luxury tent with a private plunge pool

“

These safari-style game lodges and resorts... allow travellers to safely enjoy and appreciate Sri Lanka's wildlife without having to give up creature comforts ”





This spread: The impressive Jetwing lobby; soothing earth tones at Mayur Lodge

the 1.6ha garden with natural vegetation, which you can explore with their on-site naturalist.

Here, a large, centuries-old tamarind tree provides a magical setting for private outdoor dining at night surrounded by fireflies. There's local cuisine on offer, like *pol roti*, shredded coconut flatbread and *pittu*, steamed cylindrical ground rice layered with grated coconut. These carb dishes are paired with rich, coconutty chicken and dal curry, flavoured and scented with herbs and aromatics like curry leaves, pandan and cinnamon.

While this luxurious lodge offers modern comforts, the architecture blends with the surrounding garden, emphasising open spaces where natural light filters in. There are rustic and heritage Sri Lankan accents, like the common lounge with cement-built seating spaces and cane armchairs opening up to the swimming pool.

Although the lodge seems ideal for families or groups looking for a more tailored nature-focused experience with wildlife safaris to Yala, their personalised experiences and intimate atmosphere also attract couples looking for a secluded holiday.

"Yala is renowned for its high density of leopards, elephants and diverse bird species which makes it a popular destination," says Praveen Meegoda, sales, marketing and reservations manager at Nyne Hotels. Meegoda also has a tip for safari enthusiasts: organise a safari with an experienced naturalist and tracker who can boost your chances for close encounters with animals. They can also share insights about flora and fauna.

WHILE I LOVE THE IDEA OF BEING PAMPERED AT THESE high-end safari lodges, there are more affordable options in Sri Lanka's deep south. The five-star, 80-room luxury hotel Jetwing Yala offers comfort and experiences that don't break the bank. Designed by the Sri Lankan architect Murad Ismail, the hotel's architecture is a mix of modern, contemporary styles and natural elements, like the rustic red and green colours that





This page:
Semi-alfresco lounges at Mayur Lodge; the colourful spread at Wild Coast Tented Lodge.
Opposite page: Post-safari, dive into Mayur Lodge's inviting pool

reflect the warm, earthy tones of the landscape. There are soaring glass windows, open balconies and terraces throughout the hotel, cultivating a deep connection with the outdoors.

Although many hotels adjoining the national park are located along the rugged coastline, most of these beaches are not safe for swimming due to the rocky seashore and rough sea conditions. At Jetwing Yala, however, there's direct access to a deserted beach with sprawling sand dunes that's swimmable from October until March. Most of the hotel's five restaurants and bars also open up to the stunning views of the Indian Ocean. For those looking for a romantic dining experience, there's dune dining where the soft, dim glow of lanterns light up the late evening atmosphere with the gentle sea breeze.

The property specialises in organising bird-watching tours with their naturalist to nearby Bundala National Park, which is ideal for a wildlife safari away from the crowds. With thorny scrub, marshes and waterways, thousands of migratory birds frequent Bundala during the winter months from November to March. There are about 200 bird species, like beautiful and tiny green bee-eaters, waterfowls and long-legged grey herons. During an early morning drive to the park back in January, I also had the chance to see a pack of skittish mongoose, mudbathing wild buffaloes and marshy crocodiles. The park's landscapes are stunning, too, particularly along its coastal stretch. The beach at Bundala is also home to sea turtles coming to lay eggs. It's worth noting that five out of seven marine turtle species in the world – Olive Ridley, Leatherbacks, Loggerheads, Hawksbills and Green Turtles – swim ashore to Sri Lankan beaches.

These animal encounters at both Yala and Bundala remind me of what Intrepid Travel's Brett Mitchell says about Sri Lanka. "With safaris on land, water and by foot, you'll have the best chance of spotting the island's iconic wildlife. Couple these with a cruise on a natural lake, some delicious local food and a night spent in an eco-lodge among the sounds of nature, you'll delight in one of Asia's best selections of jungle and forest."



 Malaysia Airlines flies from Kuala Lumpur to Colombo 7x weekly.





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Excellence beyond the classroom

Garden International School, a highly respected educational institution in Kuala Lumpur's Mont Kiara neighbourhood, equips students with the skills to thrive in the real world



Established in 1951, Garden International School (GIS) is one of the first British international schools in Malaysia. Located in Mont Kiara, a suburb northwest of downtown Kuala Lumpur that is popular with expatriates and locals alike, GIS offers a British-based curriculum from early childhood to Sixth Form and currently enrolls students from over 65 nationalities. In its 73-year history, GIS has remained one of the country's most respected educational institutions, known for its commitment to academic excellence and holistic development within and beyond the classroom.

Emphasis on personalised learning
GIS boasts an impressive track record, with students consistently gaining admission to world-renowned universities such as Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard. This success stems from the school's focus on personalised learning, where teachers nurture each student's strengths and potential, guiding them to achieve their full academic capabilities.

The school's recognition extends beyond universities. The THRIVE Internship Programme partners with renowned organisations like Bufori Motor Car Company and Prince Court Medical



Centre. Through this four-week programme, students gain practical experience in their chosen fields while collaborating with seasoned industry professionals to solve real-world challenges.

Growing beyond the classroom

In addition to academics, GIS emphasises the importance of a well-rounded education. With over 200 co-curricular activities – including sports, music and performing arts – students have ample opportunities to explore

their interests and develop a balanced skill set.

Service learning, camps and field trips further enrich students' experiences, enhancing social skills, leadership, emotional development and cultural understanding. Whether through team sports, music ensembles or community service, students are equipped with the confidence, leadership and communication skills essential for the real world.

For more information visit gardenschool.edu.my

Invest in the next generation of leaders

Located in Cyberjaya, Abedeen Academy offers world-class programmes to help kids grow up to be globally-minded adults



Home to expats from all corners of the globe, Kuala Lumpur is a popular choice for families with kids. This vibrant city has plenty of neighbourhoods to choose from – but if you're relocating with your little ones in tow, here is why Cyberjaya is a great base for your new chapter in Malaysia's capital city.



Finding the right neighbourhood

When relocating to KL, think about crafting a lifestyle that suits your family's needs. Just a 20-minute drive from the city centre, Cyberjaya offers a serene escape from the urban rush. Here, families will enjoy a community close enough to the action in KL but with ample green spaces, outdoor recreational areas and a peaceful atmosphere ideal for raising children.

Top-notch schools

Cyberjaya is home to top-tier schools like Abedeen Academy, ranked among the top three international schools in KL. Since its establishment in 2017, it has been a standout choice for K-12 education in the area, offering both the Malaysian National and the prestigious Cambridge Curriculum.

Multi-cultural environment

Relocating to a new city can be an adjustment for children, and schools can be integral in helping that transition. With a diverse student body



representing 30 nationalities, Abedeen Academy is one of Malaysia's most diverse international schools. With eight world-class programmes that emphasise rigorous academics, character development and multicultural understanding, families can trust that their kids will grow up to be globally minded, well-rounded adults.

Learn more: abedeen.edu.my; [instagram.com/abedeen.academy](https://www.instagram.com/abedeen.academy)

Your first-class ticket to the world

Studying abroad is an invaluable experience that creates a gateway from the classroom to the world

An education overseas is an enriching opportunity to explore new cultures, gain international exposure and develop a global network that sharpens one's edge in the job market. Studying abroad in a uniquely different environment from home also fosters a sense of independence and adaptability while broadening one's worldview.

Renowned for its safety and stability, Malaysia is an excellent option for international students who want to experience the diversity of Southeast Asian cultures.

Beyond the classroom, the country's stunning natural beauty – from tropical beaches to lush rainforests – offers plenty of opportunities for leisure and exploration. Malaysian cuisine, celebrated for its variety and flavours, is another highlight that will thrill adventurous gourmards.

Globally recognised excellence

Sunway University has established prestigious partnerships with leading global institutions, including Lancaster University, the No. 1 UK degree in Malaysia; Le Cordon Bleu Paris, a renowned culinary institution; and Arizona State University, No. 1 in the US for innovation. These collaborations allow students to earn internationally recognised degrees while benefitting from Sunway's vibrant campus life in Malaysia.



Sunway University's commitment to academic excellence is also reflected in its accolades. It is ranked No. 1 in Malaysia for Graduate Employability (2024) by Talentbank for the third consecutive year and is recognised as the top Private University Ranking for ASEAN countries in 2024 by AppliedHE.

Ranked by the distinguished Times Higher Education as the Top Private Malaysian University for 2024, Sunway also holds the unique position of being the only institution in ASEAN to be ranked in all three of the world's top university rankings – QS, Times Higher Education and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU).

Comprehensive programmes and facilities

In addition to a wide range of programmes catering to a variety of academic interests, the campus is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities including modern sports complexes, cutting-edge laboratories and a comprehensive library. Sunway University is located in the modern and well-connected township of Sunway City, ensuring easy access to

nearby amenities such as shopping malls, a theme park, a medical centre and affordable student housing options.

A diverse and inclusive community

Sunway University is home to a global community of students from over 90 countries, providing an exciting and inclusive environment for cultural exchange and learning. Studying at Sunway University is more than just a world-class education, it's an enriching life experience that goes beyond the classroom.

For more information on programmes and admissions, visit sunwayuniversity.edu.my

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

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**Inside
our airlines**

News and updates
from MAG Airlines

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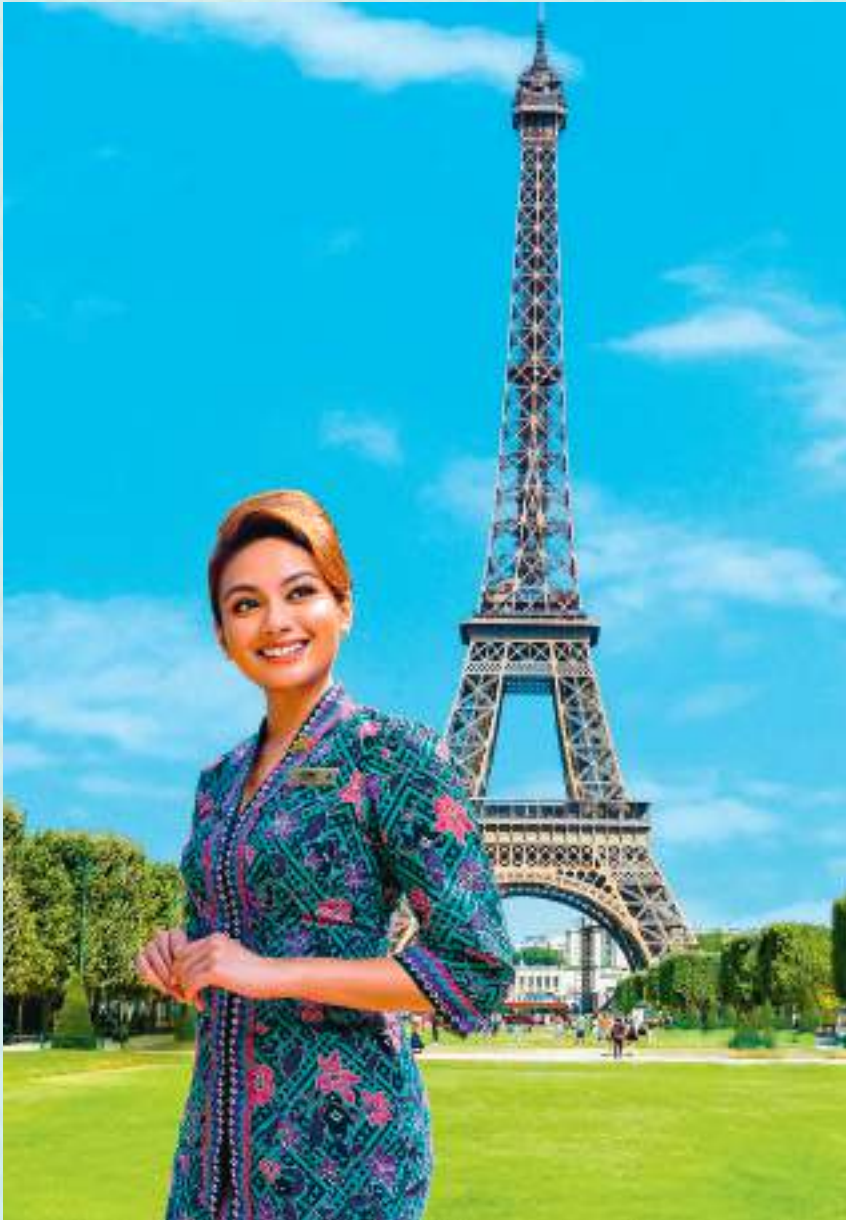
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the country and
around the world

71

**Onboard
entertainment**

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TV shows and music



MAG unveils travel innovations and celebrates unity at Malaysia's premier international travel fair

Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) made a remarkable impact as the Official Airline Partner and Premier Sponsor at MATTA Fair 2024 in September, held at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre (MITEC). Spanning an impressive 11,000sqft, MAG showcased its largest-ever participation with a range of travel promotions and cutting-edge innovations, including the debut of Google Gemini's AI technology. Visitors enjoyed an immersive A330neo cabin experience in Virtual Reality, met Manchester United Legends and utilised an AI-powered photobooth to visualise dream destinations and craft personalised itineraries. The event highlighted MAG's dedication to enhancing the travel experience and strengthening industry partnerships.



Explore the City of Lights: Malaysia Airlines will fly to Paris in 2025

Malaysia Airlines is excited to announce the launch of direct flights to Charles de Gaulle Airport (CDG) in Paris, beginning 22 March 2025. As the airline's 68th destination, this route underscores Malaysia Airlines' expanding European network. To celebrate the return of this route after nearly a decade, the airline has launched the "Time for Paris" campaign. Starting

6 September 2024, enjoy an exclusive introductory return fare of RM3,699. Initially operating four times a week and increasing to daily flights from 29 March 2025, our A350-900 service offers seamless access to Paris' iconic landmarks, world-class cuisine and vibrant cultural scene. Embark on an unforgettable journey with Malaysia Airlines to the City of Lights.



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Malaysia Airlines and Air Mauritius resume codeshare flights

The two airlines have reinstated their codeshare flights, offering passengers enhanced travel options to explore destinations across Malaysia, Asia, Australia, Africa and beyond. By using their flight codes – “MH” for Malaysia Airlines and “MK” for Air Mauritius – on key routes, these airlines improve connectivity, making it easier for travellers to explore a variety of destinations and cultures. Malaysia Airlines customers will enjoy access to a broader network beyond the airline’s current offerings through Air Mauritius, including direct flights from KL International Airport Terminal 1 (KUL) to Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (MRU), where they can soak in the tropical paradise of Mauritius for their next beach holiday, or explore the captivating landscapes of Johannesburg, South Africa (JNB).

Malaysia Airlines takes off to the Maldives



Malaysia Airlines brings the Maldives closer than ever to Southeast Asia with the launch of its direct daily flights. This route, now the airline’s 13th destination in South Asia, offers effortless access to the Maldives’ stunning beaches, crystal-clear waters and vibrant marine life. With direct flights returning after a hiatus since 2017, travellers can now enjoy seamless connections to this tropical paradise, making it easier than ever to soak up the sun and explore the enchanting beauty of the Maldives.



Discover fresh flavours with Chef-on-Call and Economy Pre-Order Meals

Malaysia Airlines is thrilled to unveil its refreshed menu for Chef-on-Call and Economy Pre-Order Meals (EYPOML) on selected flights. Delight in an array of exquisite options including Nasi Lemak Chicken Rendang, Nasi Daging Utara and Laksa Johor, as well as Ayam Sambal Bali, Ikan Masak Lada Melaka and Malai Tandoori Chicken. Enjoy seafood choices like Grilled Snapper and Teochew Steamed Fish or opt for hearty fare with Grilled Beef Medallion and Scallop and Prawn Fettucine. For vegetarians, savour Pumpkin Pearl Spelt Risotto, Palak Paneer and Grilled Paneer Tikka, or for a fresh, unique twist, try the Lemon Mascarpone Tortellini. For the complete list of menu options and available sectors, visit the Malaysia Airlines website. Embrace the upgrade and enjoy these delectable meals on your next flight.



HALAL NUTRITIONAL SPORTS SUPPLEMENT



Founded in 2015, Agym Nutrition Sdn. Bhd. has quickly established itself as a leader in the sports nutrition industry, both in Malaysia and internationally. The company specialises in manufacturing and retailing premium sports nutrition supplements, known for their high quality, innovation, and performance. Agym Nutrition has expanded beyond Malaysia into key international markets, including China, Thailand, Singapore, and Brunei, earning a reputation for excellence.

A significant driver of the company's success is its focus on in-house research and development. By 2022, Agym Nutrition had introduced 14 products with 45 variations, all developed in its cutting-edge laboratories. These products are designed to meet the specific needs of athletes, fitness enthusiasts, and health-conscious individuals, with offerings such as Whey Protein, Mass Gainer, Fat Burner, and Energy Booster, each formulated to enhance muscle growth, aid fat loss, and boost energy levels.

Agym Nutrition's commitment to quality is exemplified by its 30,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Semenyih, Malaysia. The facility adheres to the highest standards of food safety and quality management, holding certifications from internationally recognised bodies, including ISO 9001:2015, ISO 22000:2018, HACCP Codex Alimentarius, and GMP Codex Alimentarius. The company is also certified Halal by JAKIM, ensuring its products meet both global standards and religious dietary requirements.

With a strong focus on innovation and quality, Agym Nutrition continues to grow as a trusted brand in the global sports nutrition market.

CONTACT US

AGYM NUTRITION SDN BHD
(1285462-K)
No 16, Jalan Hi- Tech 7/1,
Kawasan Perindustrian Hi-Tech 7
43500 Semenyih, Selangor, Malaysia

hq@agymnutrition.com

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



A330-300 MHconnect

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 MHconnect

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



B737-800 NG

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



B737-8

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



ATR 72-500

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



B737-800 NG

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



A330-200F

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



ATR 72-500

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



Viking DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400

No. of Aircraft **6** | Passenger Seating **19**
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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 must be 12V or less or 100Wh or less. Passengers are allowed to carry a maximum of two spare batteries onboard. These batteries must be individually protected to prevent short circuits.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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- ◆ Firefly
- MASwings
- Amal
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Our network
Sea of Okhotsk



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



NOW **SHOWING**

 MOVIES **p72**  TELEVISION **p82**  AUDIO **p83**



Boy Kills World

Check out our Deepavali Special on page 74!



Manjummel Boys



Family Star



Phone Bhoot



Jailer

• DEEPAVALI SPECIAL •

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Boy Kills World

A dystopian, adrenaline-fuelled action film that centres on Boy, a deaf mute with boundless imagination.

A high-octane action film set in a dystopian future where a deaf mute boy named Boy, after witnessing the brutal murder of his family, is trained to become a highly skilled assassin. With a blend of surreal visuals and intense martial arts, the movie delivers a relentless journey of vengeance as Boy takes on a corrupt system. As he carves his path through a chaotic world, the film explores themes of loss, survival and the quest for justice in a society devoid of compassion.

Hollywood Latest



Sight is a gripping psychological thriller that explores the blurred lines between reality and perception. When a woman begins experiencing unsettling visions that challenge her understanding of the world around her, she must confront her deepest fears to uncover the truth.



The Dead Don't Hurt is a Western drama that tells the story of a couple navigating love and survival in the harsh frontier. Set against a backdrop of rugged landscapes, the film explores themes of resilience, morality and the unbreakable spirit of two people bound by love.



The Idea of You is a romantic drama that follows a woman who, after a chance encounter with a younger man, embarks on a passionate relationship that challenges societal norms and expectations. The film explores love, age and the courage to defy conventions.



Force of Nature: The Dry 2 is a suspenseful crime thriller that continues the story of Aaron Falk as he investigates a new mystery in a small town plagued by secrets. With its gripping narrative and complex characters, the film delves deeper into the dark underbelly of rural life.



The Watchers is a supernatural thriller that follows a group of individuals who must face their darkest fears when they become trapped in a mysterious and haunted location. The film explores the terror of the unknown and the power of facing one's inner demons.



Fresh Kills is a crime drama set in the world of organised crime, focusing on a family's struggle to maintain power and protect their legacy. The film dives into the complexities of loyalty, betrayal and the cost of ambition in a world where trust is a luxury.



Good Side of Bad is a powerful drama that examines the complexities of family relationships, mental illness and redemption. It follows two estranged siblings who must reconcile their differences when their mother falls ill, forcing them to confront their past and seek a new path forward.

Now Showing

MOVIES



Tamil

Jailer is an action-packed film centred around a retired cop who returns to confront his past and take down a dangerous criminal gang.



Hindi



Satyaprem Ki Katha follows Sattu, a kind-hearted but aimless young man who failed his LLB, who dreams of marrying Katha, a woman far beyond his reach.



Phone Booth is a tense thriller set entirely in a phone booth, where a man finds himself trapped and manipulated by a sniper who tests his morality.

Malayalam



Manjummel Boys is a lighthearted comedy about a group of friends from a small town navigating life, love and their dreams in a rapidly changing world.

Telugu



Family Star is a touching family drama that explores the dynamics of a multi-generational household as they come together to face life's ups and downs.

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MOVIES

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Halloween Special

Dive into spine-chilling movies with our Halloween special, featuring terrifying tales like *The Nun*, *Annabelle Comes Home*, *It Chapter Two*, Stephen King's *Doctor Sleep* and the hilariously spooky *What We Do In The Shadows*.



The Expendables 3



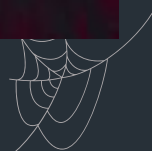
The Meg

Meg 2: The Trench



SHERLOCK HOLMES

SHERLOCK HOLMES A GAME OF SHADOWS



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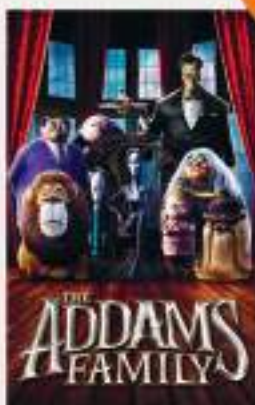
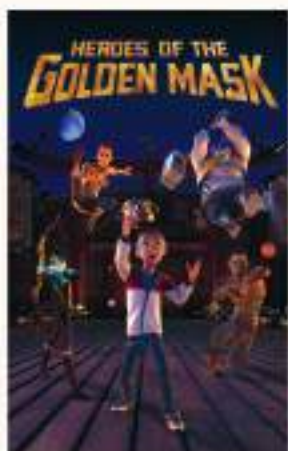
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MOVIES & TELEVISION

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MOVIES

Chinese



Fly Me to the Moon

In this Chinese comedy-movie, a wealthy hotel heir and an airline stewardess enter a marriage contract, sparking chaos and heartfelt moments.

Japanese



April, Come She Will

A poignant love story unfolds as two strangers find solace in each other's company, discovering the healing power of connection.

Korean



Alienoid: Return to the Future

A thrilling sci-fi adventure where a group of misfits travels through time to prevent an alien invasion and save humanity.

Malay



Merewang Keluarga Pak Awang

Follow the heartwarming journey of Pak Awang and his family as they navigate life's ups and downs with humour, love and tradition in **Merewang Keluarga Pak Awang**.

Indonesia

Petualangan Anak Penangkap Hantu

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TELEVISION



Drama



Chilling Adventures of Sabrina



For Halloween, immerse yourself in *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*'s witchy horrors, *Castle Rock*'s eerie Stephen King universe and *iZOMBIE*'s zombie crime-solving fun – three thrillingly spooky shows.



Malay

Puaka Cuti Semester takes college students on a vacation gone wrong, as eerie encounters and supernatural chills haunt their trip. A spooky yet hilarious adventure unfolds, where survival and laughter go hand in hand.



Comedy



Tamil

Hindi



Nature & Wildlife



Planet Earth III

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Hindi

Anirudh Ravichander's *Hindustani 2* brilliantly blends classical Indian ragas with modern beats, creating a dynamic and innovative sound that showcases his talent for merging traditional and contemporary musical styles.

Club



Japanese



The Hits



Korean

Memories



R&B



Tamil



Malay



Indonesian



Cantonese



Mandarin



KIDS



Drumbeats and dragons

To usher in the Year of the Dragon, the Sarawak Tourism Board commemorated the Sarawak International Dragon Boat Regatta (SIDBR) on its angpow packets earlier in 2024, paying tribute to both the ancient, cultural origins of dragon boat races and its evolution into an international sport, one that has become a mainstay of the state. With 60 teams from 20 countries participating last year, this 10th anniversary edition of SIDBR promises to be bigger and better, with paddlers from all over the world rowing to the pulsating beat of drums to compete for prizes in male, female and mixed categories of 12- and 20-crew boats – including a special category for cancer survivors. Taking place at Kuching Waterfront from 25 to 27 October, paddlers will tear through the waters of the Sarawak River for the 300m dash, with the iconic New Sarawak State Legislative Assembly Building in full view – a perfect opener before the cultural extravaganza of the Sarawak Regatta in November. facebook.com/sarawakdragonboatregatta



WORDS: JASON S. GANESAN. IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK



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STAY LONGER HAVE A BLAST!

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