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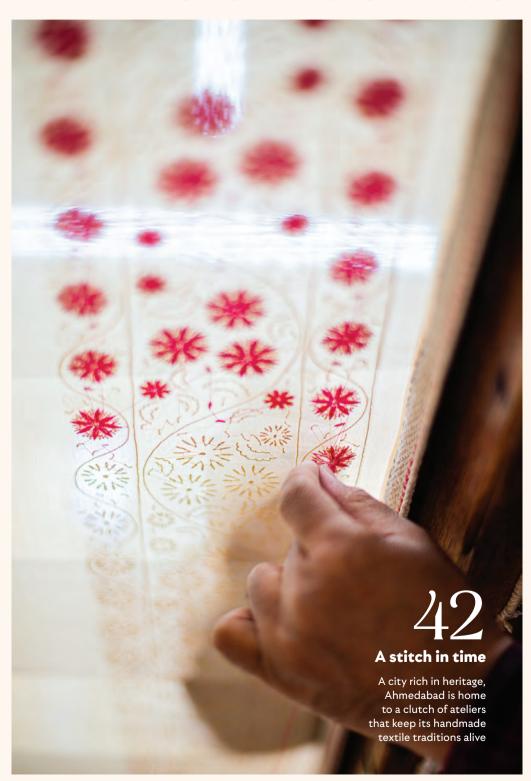
EXPERIENCE THE AUTHENTIC TASTE OF MALAYSIA'S ORIGINAL PENANG KAYU NASI KANDAR

WHERE MALAYSIAN PRIDE MEETS FLAVOUR



MAY 2025

Contents



27
A perfect weekend in...
Da Nang

Soak up the vibrant atmosphere of Vietnam's thriving seaside metropolis

34

Tipping the scales

Long known for its excellent seafood, Sydney reels you in with even more reasons to make the trip down under

9 13 reasons to love Malaysia

Treat mum this Mother's Day, plan your next adventure and discover things to do this May

53 This is Malaysian Hospitality

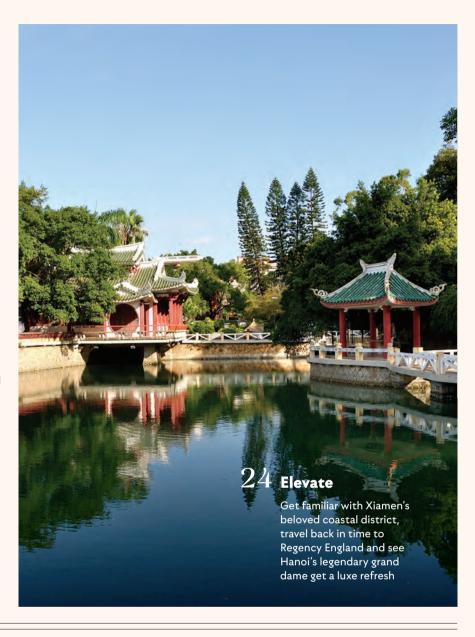
Malaysia Airlines introduces its Horizontal Fare Family (HFF) enhancement for Economy Class, designed to accommodate a range of travel styles and budgets

64 Our network

Travel around Malaysia and the world with Malaysia Aviation Group

69 Now showing

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





About the cover

Inside Bennelong restaurant, framed by a striking view of the Sydney Opera House Photo courtesy of Bennelong

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Dear guests,

Welcome aboard. It is a pleasure to have you with us, and as we journey through May together, we take this time to celebrate the values of dedication, kindness and progress - values that are close to our hearts at Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG).

This month, we honour Labour Day, a tribute to the dedication and hard work of individuals across all industries, including our own MAG family, who go above and beyond to make every journey smooth and memorable. May is also a time for reflection and compassion as we observe Wesak Day, a reminder that while dedication shapes our work, kindness and mindfulness enrich our lives. Whether in the skies or on the ground, generosity and understanding make every journey more meaningful.

At MAG, we believe that every journey should be more than just a trip – it should be an experience filled with care, comfort and a sense of home. That's why we're committed to making travel better, not just for those flying with us today, but for generations to come. To uphold this commitment, we will continue to invest in the modernisation of our fleet.

With the recent orders of the Boeing 737-8 and 737-10, we aspire to bring enhanced fuel efficiency, reliability and passenger comfort to our operations. With the 737-8 already in service since 2023 and the 737-10 set to join our fleet in the coming years, we are progressively phasing out older aircraft to build a streamlined, next-generation narrowbody fleet. The introduction of the Boeing 737-10 will also mark a significant milestone, as it will be the first narrowbody aircraft in our fleet to feature lie-flat Business Class seats - elevating the premium travel experience on regional routes. By 2030, Malaysia Airlines will operate 55 Boeing 737-8 and 737-10 aircraft, reflecting our dedication to providing passengers with greater comfort, connectivity and choice, while delivering the signature Malaysian Hospitality that makes every journey special.

We also recently announced our return to Brisbane, marking an important step in reconnecting Queensland to our global network while strengthening our dedication to the Australian market. This remains a key market for us, as evident in our decision to increase flight frequencies to Sydney and Melbourne, providing greater flexibility, seamless connections and enhanced travel options for passengers flying to and from Australia.

To bring greater flexibility and value to our passengers, we have also refined Malaysia Airlines' Economy Class fare options with the Horizontal Fare Family (HFF) enhancement. As part of this, our Economy Lite fare has been rebranded as Economy Value, joining Economy Basic and Economy Flex, each tailored to different travel needs. Economy Value offers a well-rounded travel experience with essential perks, including a 7kg cabin baggage allowance, complimentary meals, a 20kg checked baggage allowance and a 10% child fare discount. Passengers will also enjoy the flexibility to modify bookings (with applicable fees), ensuring affordability without compromising on comfort, convenience or the warm hospitality that Malaysia Airlines is known for.

Whether you are travelling to reunite with loved ones, explore new opportunities or simply take a well-deserved break, we hope your journey is filled with comfort, warmth and meaningful connections.

Thank you for letting us be part of your journey. Your trust means the world to us, and we will continue to uphold the warmth and care of Malaysian Hospitality. We look forward to welcoming you on board again soon.

Izham Ismail

Group Managing Director Malaysia Aviation Group

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ay is the perfect time to indulge in a little wanderlust. Whether it's coastal escapes, cultural immersions or culinary adventures, we let you in on hidden gems and exciting new openings to inspire your next getaway.

Start your journey in Sydney, where the vibrant seafood scene is taking on a new, innovative twist in Australia. Chef Josh Niland, the mastermind behind Saint Peter - one of the World's Best 50 Restaurants - has redefined what fresh seafood can be. Writer Rachel Lees had the pleasure of tasting his legendary dishes, and her experience will have you booking a table in no time. And with the opening of the new Sydney Fish Market at Blackwattle Bay, featuring star-studded eateries from chefs like Luke Nguyen, Junda Khoo and Joel Bennetts, we can't wait to see how the city's seafood scene evolves this year. Check out our cover story on page 34 for the inside scoop.

Next, hop over to Ahmedabad in India, where tradition and craftsmanship intertwine in the ateliers that are keeping the city's rich textile heritage alive (page 42). Here, we dive deep into the world of vibrant fabrics and intricate handiwork, learning not just about the artistry but the stories behind them. It's an experience that left us with a renewed appreciation for the skill and dedication that goes into every piece.

For those dreaming of Vietnam, we've got Da Nang on our radar. A weekend escape that offers a perfect blend of relaxation and adventure, follow our itinerary on page 27 to make the most of your short stay -

> ideal for first-timers like me who want to experience the charm of this coastal city.

> And, of course, we haven't forgotten the other incredible destinations awaiting you, both in Malaysia and beyond. Mark your calendars to get the best travel deals at the MATTA Fair - visit mattafair.org.my to find out when it's coming to your city.

Go forth and wander!



Editor





Ioshua Zukas Writer, "A perfect weekend in... Danang", p27

Joshua is a Hanoi-based writer covering travel, architecture, culture and innovation. He's written for Lonely Planet, The Economist and Wallpaper*.



Rachel Lees Writer, "Tipping the scales",

Rachel is an award-winning travel writer based in Sydney. Formerly the editor of an inflight magazine, she writes for Lonely Planet, Travel + Leisure and The Times.



Punita Malhotra Writer, "A stitch in time", p42

Punita's quest for history, heritage, food and fairytales has taken her to over 40 countries and across India. She writes for select publications from her home base in Delhi.





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Sunway City Kuala Lumpur is Asia's leading fully-integrated premier hospitality and entertainment destination. Sprawling 800 acres, the destination comprises award-winning facilities including world-class hotels – Sunway Resort Hotel, Sunway Pyramid Hotel and Sunway Lagoon Hotel, Sunway Pyramid shopping mall and Sunway Lagoon theme park.

Whether you're visiting for business or leisure, this integrated destination offers an amazing array of amenities tailored to your every need. Take comfort in Sunway Resort Hotel's reimagined new rooms while you discover the city's most sought-after dining experiences at Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill and Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes. Indulge in retail therapy or enjoy an adrenaline rush at the theme park, and with more than 360,000 square metres of world-class spaces and vibrant venues, it's no wonder some of Asia's most outstanding events are created in this multi-award-winning destination.



BOOK NOW



13

REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places





On 3 and 4 May, **Xterra Borneo Sarawak** makes its thrilling debut in Sematan, Lundu, just over 1.5 hours from Kuching. As the fourth stop on the Xterra APAC Tour, this off-road endurance race pushes athletes to their limits against Sarawak's breathtaking landscapes - dense rainforests, rugged trails and scenic coastlines. Backed by the Ministry of Tourism, Creative Industry and Performing Arts Sarawak, the event champions sustainability, community engagement and eco-tourism, reinforcing Sarawak's reputation as the ultimate adventure destination. xterraplanet.com

Selangor

Let it snow

With Malaysia's allyear-round summer, there's no better way to beat the heat than with a refreshing bowl of bingsu. Enter Snowforte Desserts in Damansara

Uptown, Petaling Jaya – the latest hotspot for Korean-style shaved ice that's as pretty as it is delicious. Since opening late last year, this dessert haven has been drawing fans with its creative, milk-based offerings, including the Taro x Sweet Purple Potato Bingsu and Guava Snow Ice.

instagram.com/snowfortedesserts





Discover lpoh's charm

Just a couple of hours away from Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh - a city shaped by its tinmining boom - brims with history, culture and adventure. Looking for a weekend escape just in time for the school holidays? Check out our handy guide.

Where to stay. Opened in January 2025, AC Hotel lpoh injects fresh energy into Perak's capital. Just a ten-minute drive from Ipoh Railway Station, this sleek retreat offers a blend of comfort, sophistication and convenience with

plenty of dining and entertainment options nearby. Inside, European-inspired elegance meets modern minimalism, with thoughtfully designed spaces for a relaxed stay. Business travellers will appreciate its proximity to corporate hubs, while leisure seekers can dive into Ipoh's hidden gems just moments away. marriott.com

What to do. Located along Perak's North-South corridor, the Lost World of Tambun theme park is set amid majestic limestone cliffs dating back millions of years. Make a splash at the water park, take a dip in natural hot springs and step into the mystical Luminous Forest, where giant magical creatures await. sunwaylostworldoftambun.com

Where to eat. Once shrouded in secrets and scandals. Concubine Lane has a history as colourful as its walls. Over a century ago, a wealthy tycoon gifted this street to one of his concubines. Today, it's a lively hub filled with Ipoh's best eateries, trendy cafés and dessert havens. Street artists have infused new life into the lane with vibrant murals, creating Insta-worthy photo ops at every turn.

What to see. Built in 1905 by the influential Kapitan Chung Thye Phin, Arlene House is a testament to the state's rich tin-mining heritage. Following a decade-long restoration, this architectural beauty has been meticulously preserved and restored to its former grandeur. It now houses Made in Ipoh, an edutainment gallery-museum that brings the city's past to life. madeinipoh.com



5

The Queen of Rock returns

Bask in the presence of Malaysia's Queen of Rock, Ella. as she takes centre stage at the Arena of Stars, Genting Highlands, on 17 May. The concert marks 30 years of Ella USA – Malaysia's bestselling album by a female artist. The 14-track album featured Japanese guitarist Kyoji Yamamoto, who lent his talents as producer, songwriter and musician. Fans can look forward to a setlist filled with timeless hits like "Waiting", "Glorious" and more. instagram.com/ellagminuddins



6

Selangor

Make new furry friends

Calling all animal lovers! Just Farm
by Just Pets, Malaysia's largest indoor
petting zoo, is now open at IOI Mall
Damansara. Spanning an impressive 99,000
square feet, this immersive space is where
you can get up close and personal with over 500
species and 3,000 live animals. From adorable alpacas,
playful wallabies and curious capybaras to fluffy black
sheep and mischievous raccoons, Just Farm offers a one-ofa-kind experience for visitors of all ages. justpets.asia





Perak

Challenge accepted

Adventure meets history on the private island of Pangkor Laut Resort as the annual **Chapman's Challenge** returns from 23 to 25 May. More than just a test of endurance, this race pays tribute to the late British Colonel Frederick Spencer Chapman, who, in 1945, made a daring escape across Emerald Bay after surviving behind enemy lines for over three years during World War II.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of his legendary feat. Participants will take on a 3.8km road run, a 2.4km trek through a two-million-year-old rainforest and a 1km open-water swim in the turquoise waters of Emerald Bay, culminating at Chapman's Bar. *pangkorlautresort.com*

Penang

Spectacular spectacle

Wesak Day, falling on 12 May, commemorates the birth, enlightenment and passing of Siddhartha Gautama. And if there's one place to witness the occasion in all its splendour, it's Penang. This year, over 10,000 devotees are expected to gather for the island's grand Wesak procession, a tradition dating back to 1949. As night falls, more than 20 elaborately decorated floats from various temples and associations will set off from the Malaysian Buddhist Association on Burmah Road, winding along a 7km route and illuminating the streets in a dazzling spectacle of light. mypenang.gov.my





Kuala Lumpur

Exclusive perks, elevated stays

Enjoy a host of premium privileges with Mandarin Oriental's **MO Club**. Designed for discerning travellers, it offers personalised service, fast-track immigration at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, flexible check-in and check-out, daily laundry services and preferred limousine rates. The state-of-the-art meeting rooms provide the perfect space for productivity. Finally, unwind at the MO Club Lounge, where a stunning city view sets the stage for continental breakfast, afternoon tea and evening cocktails. *mandarinoriental.com*



Delightful dim sum

Pavilion Hotel's Jade Pavilion invites you and your mum to savour The Art of Dim Sum, a handcrafted experience by dim sum master chef Dino Lee. Each delicacy is a showcase of precision, flavour and artistry, from delicate dumplings to pillowy buns and timeless Cantonese classics. Don't miss the steamed xiao long bao, where Alaskan scallop meets fermented garlic in a symphony of taste.

banyantree.com

Kuala Lumpur

Making mum merry

Twin treats to celebrate mum on Mother's Day, 11 May.

Tea and company

Throughout May, the Ritz-Carlton's Lobby Lounge presents Puttin' on a Ritz Afternoon Tea, available daily from 12pm to 6pm. This lavish affair serves up a delightful spread of pastries, premium coffee and fine teas, all in a sophisticated setting. ritzcarlton.com



A feast for the eyes

George Town's quirky Wonderfood Museum brings Malaysia's rich culinary heritage to life - literally - through giant replicas of beloved local dishes. Since opening in 2015, it has gained a reputation as one of the world's most unique food museums, drawing both foodies and culture buffs. Now celebrating its 10th anniversary, there's never been a better time to explore this Insta-worthy wonderland.

wonderfoodmuseum.com.my







Sustainable beauty

Malaysia's beauty scene is embracing sustainability like never before. More homegrown brands are prioritising ethical sourcing, responsible production and eco-friendly ingredients – proving that beauty and sustainability can go hand in hand. Here are three local brands leading the way.

Paloma

Founded in 2023 by KL-based entrepreneurs Koh Li Tim, Sheryl Oon and Howie Lee, Paloma is a love letter to Southeast Asia's rich biodiversity. Harnessing the power of superfruits, superfoods, herbs and adaptogens, the brand spotlights regional ingredients in its formulations. Its current line-up

features the 24/7 Repair Serum and Kind Cleanser, with a moisturiser on the horizon. *visitpaloma.com*

Commodité

For founder Kho Yit Wee, sustainability isn't just a buzzword – it's a mission.
Commodité ensures eco-conscious sourcing, avoiding deforestation and harm to wildlife. Its gender-neutral essentials range from scented sanitisers and fragrances to body wash. The latest addition? Magnesium Oil Spray, designed to soothe muscle pain and promote better sleep. *mycommodite.com*

Lum

Launched in 2020 by Chryseis Tan, this botanically powered skincare brand has a simple yet bold mission – to make radiant skin accessible to all. Passionate about effective, natural and cruelty-free beauty, Tan has created high-performance products that are as gentle on the skin as they are on the planet. *mylumibeauty.my*



PALOMA

Kuala Lumpur

Sunset sessions

Whether you're catching up with friends, enjoying the city skyline or simply winding down after a long day, the right setting can make all the difference. From sleek rooftop retreats to cosy corners with a welcoming vibe, here are the newest spots to relax, connect and socialise in style.

Located inside Menara Milenium. **Social Room** is the latest hotspot redefining after-work unwinding. Designed to spark effortless conversations, its spacious interior and cosy couches create an inviting setting for professionals to connect. As Karls Group marks a decade in the industry, its newest offering continues its legacy of crafting exceptional social experiences. instagram.com/ socialroom.kl

Escape the city chaos at Mesa on 51, the latest rooftop gem from the Marini's Group. Perched on Level 51 of Permata Sapura Tower, this elevated dining and entertainment destination offers panoramic views of KL's dazzling skyline as you indulge in classic Spanish flavours. From flavour-packed tapas and paellas to premium Picañha steaks, every dish is a celebration of Spain's rich culinary heritage. Pair your meal with sangria, cava or your favourite cocktail.

marinisgroup.com

Discreetly tucked away on the mezzanine floor of Courtyard by Marriott Kuala Lumpur South, At 137 is where modern elegance meets effortless charm. Sip on expertly crafted signature cocktails, savour premium spirits and nibble on refined small bites, all in a warm and inviting setting. With space for 55 guests, At 137 is ideal for intimate gatherings or lively social events. Meanwhile, the private room seats up to 10 guests, offering the perfect hideaway for special occasions. marriott.com









Imagine turning every ringgit you spend into rewards that bring you closer to the club you love. With the Maybank Manchester United credit card, you can do just that.

If you've ever worried about losing cash, a credit card can help ease that stress. It offers added security that cash simply can't. Transactions are also quicker – just tap, swipe or click.

Credit cards can make it easier to keep track of your spending, and they're handy to have in case of unexpected expenses. If you travel, the card's global reach means no more hassle with currency exchange or worrying about foreign rates.

Cardholder perks

For Manchester United fans, the Maybank Manchester United Visa Infinite Card adds an extra layer of excitement. You'll earn up to two TreatsPoints for every RM1 spent in Malaysia, and five TreatsPoints overseas. These points can be redeemed for a wide range of rewards, including household appliances, shopping vouchers and fitness equipment.

Additionally, the Maybank Manchester United cardholders enjoy a 10% discount on Manchester United merchandise at the Megastore, 10% off at Red Café and 20% off the stadium and museum tour at Old Trafford. The card also offers frequent flyers up to 15% off Malaysia Airlines flights, making it the perfect companion for both football and travel enthusiasts.

Snazzy designs

The Visa Infinite card features a sleek black background with striking visuals of global landmarks while the Visa credit card showcases the iconic Old Trafford stadium. Both designs are crafted to stand out in your wallet while reflecting your pride as a Red Devils supporter.

The ultimate Old Trafford experience

Cardholders get to participate in regular "spend and win" campaigns to win autographed Manchester United memorabilia and exclusive VIP tours of Old Trafford. Highlights of the tour include a visit to Carrington Training Centre, a meet-andgreet with former legends and the First Team, a behind-the-scenes stadium and museum tour, and premium seating at the Matchday Hospitality Suite, bringing you up close to the live match action.

Be part of the Manchester United legacy

Whether you aspire to cheer alongside 70,000 fans at Old Trafford or want to carry a piece of your football club with you, this card is your gateway to living your dreams.

Look out for the Manchester
United first team in Kuala Lumpur
for a friendly match on 28 May
2025. For more information, visit
maybank.my/manutd. Football
fans in Singapore, Indonesia, the
Philippines, and Cambodia can
check their local Maybank sites
for similar offers



ELEVATE

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





HOTELS

The legend lives on

Hanoi's grandest and most storied accomodations get an extra luxe refresh BY JONATHAN EVANS

A short stroll from the Hanoi Opera House, the 364-room Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi is one of Indochina's enduring luxury stays - with Cambodia's Raffles Hotel Le Royal being another - that has witnessed and shaped its country's history. Its illustrious guest list includes former world leaders such as Bill Clinton, Fidel Castro and Ho Chi Minh, as well as Hollywood legends like Robert De Niro and Catherine Deneuve.

Like a mirror reflecting Vietnam's turbulent 20th century, the hotel has witnessed historic transformations over the decades. It has changed its name four times, served as a motion picture venue - the first in the region - and sheltered embassies and UN agencies during the Vietnam War. An air-raid shelter, built in 1964, was only rediscovered in 2011 beneath the Bamboo Bar - one of the hotel's six restaurants and bars that are epicurean destinations in their own right.

Even grand icons require refurbishment as time takes its toll. and as the Metropole marks its 124th year, it has undergone a meticulous restoration and renovation, courtesy of Singapore-based David Grace Designs International. The most notable changes are in the Heritage Wing's lobby and 103 guestrooms and suites - three of which are named after past guests: The Quiet American author Graham Greene, William Somerset Maugham and Charlie Chaplin. While the Franco-Vietnamese aesthetic remains, the refreshed interiors introduce modern comfort, advanced technology and vibrant colours. Sixty per cent of the guestrooms' wooden floors have been



renewed or replaced. The rooms now feature new beds, colourful curtains, desks, side tables and sofas, while Italian marble surfaces and flooring grace the bathrooms. Luxurious carpets add warmth to rooms and corridors.

The layout remains largely untouched, but six pairs of connecting rooms have been converted into spacious suites. Modern enhancements include sound bars, mood lighting and dedicated Wi-Fi routers for seamless connectivity. The Heritage Wing lobby now boasts an artisanal antique mirrored ceiling, while silverleaf-gilded, hand-painted artworks adorn the elevator car. Contemporary reception desks and furnishings subtly modernise the space without compromising its nostalgic charm.

"Our aim was to transcend mere design and create a timeless sanctuary of luxury and understated elegance," says Grace Soh, managing director of David Grace Designs International. "We aspired to craft an environment that appeals to the senses and leaves an indelible mark, capturing the essence of refined living and evoking days gone by." **sofitel.accor.com**





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EXPERIENCES

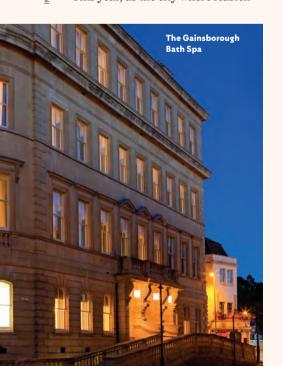
Past lives

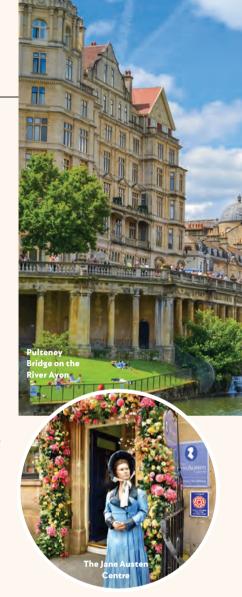
Travel back in time to Jane Austen's England, just over an hour's train ride from **London**BY ULRIKE LEMMIN-WOOLFREY

The Romans put Bath Spa on the

map more than 2,000 years ago, building baths to take advantage of the city's hot springs. Today, the Unesco-listed World Heritage Site, with its perfect honeyhued Georgian architecture, is also known as the setting for Jane Austen's six novels – including the oft-adapted *Pride and Prejudice* – all classics of Western literature.

Austen's 18th-century world, a period known as Regency, was all about frocks and bonnets, balls and country mansions, and strict observance of social etiquette. It has long captured the world's imagination, spawning TV series such as *Bridgerton* and *Sanditon*. This year, as the city where Austen





lived and worked celebrates her 250th anniversary, expect more events than usual at the annual Jane Austen Festival (between 12 and 21 September) – a costumed promenade, a summer ball, theatre performances, talks, workshops and more.

Make sure to book a stay at YTL Hotels' **The Gainsborough Bath Spa**, a luxury hotel with access to thermal baths that also leans into Austen's world. Enjoy their History & Heritage Afternoon Tea, something Jane Austen and her heroines indulged in regularly. Over freshly made scones and clotted cream, you will learn more about the local history.

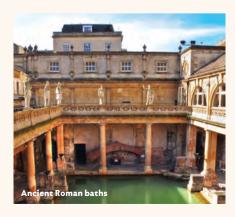
For die-hard fans, plan a visit between 13 and 18 October, when the hotel celebrates the beloved author with a series of events, from curated talks by Jane Austen experts and Regency dance workshops to excursions to the Austen family home outside Bath and walking tours of historic landmarks.

Visit Sally Lunn's, Bath's oldest building (dating back to the mid-1400s), and a historic bakery, renowned since the mid-1600s for its delectable Bath Buns – a sugary sweet roll that had Austen in raptures. Take a peek into the Jane Austen Centre, the iconic building where the Austen family once lived and where you can learn more about the author, dress up in era-appropriate outfits – and yes, parasols – before embarking on a stroll to various Austen-associated locations, such as the Assembly Rooms, the scene of many balls. *thegainsboroughbathspa.co.uk*

Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and London 14x weekly.



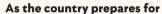
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Fab four

Must-try restaurants redefining Modern Filipino cuisine in Manila BY KRISTINE FONACIER



the Michelin Guide Philippines' debut next year, a few names in the capital have already begun to rise above the crowded field. They're not just following trends - they're shaping what the future of Filipino dining could look like. From artful tasting menus to daring à la carte dishes, these four restaurants reflect a culinary scene coming into its own, rich with personality, technique and a deep respect for heritage.



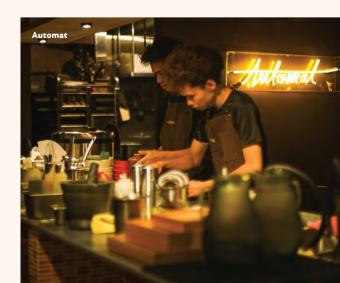
Bold servings

Perched just above its fine-dining sibling Metiz - the critically acclaimed mainstay of "best of" lists - Automat channels the same thoughtful, inventive spirit of chef Stephan Duhesme, but in a more relaxed, à la carte setting. Here, fermentation, local produce and precise technique still anchor the menu, but the mood is lighter, the portions heartier and the flavours often bolder. With its communal, family-style tables and playful approach to food, Automat captures the dynamic, ever-evolving energy of modern Manila dining.

Prepare to be pleasantly, deliciously confused here, as Duhesme and his team manage to find truly novel flavours. The offerings defy easy description: octopus with a sauce simmered in vinegar and a hint of mechado jus (a kind of braised beef dish), for example, or their signature Automanila cocktail, a gin-based drink that somehow incorporates a fermented carrot and bell pepper cordial, mango granita and white vermouth. (Not to worry, though, there are also classic dishes on the menu for diners who prefer good ol' comfort food.)









Originally launched with a prix fixe menu, Automat has since evolved into a laid-back spot where bold flavours and generous servings take centre stage. It's an ideal entry point for those curious about the new wave of Filipino cuisine – innovative yet approachable. instagram.com/automat.mnl

Local style

Likewise tucked within the creative hub that is the Karrivin in Makati, Inatô is a thoughtful and intimate Filipino restaurant led by chef Jepe Cruz, formerly the sous chef at the top-ranked Toyo Eatery – which, not coincidentally, is right next door.

The name, which means "our way" in Binisaya, tells you how best to approach the dining experience here: by letting go and allowing the kitchen to take the wheel. There is an à la carte menu, but the fun is in the Bahala Na (an untranslatable

term of surrender to fate) set menu, which changes according to the season, the availability of the produce and catch, and the chef's inspiration.

The minimalist interiors incorporate indigenous materials like banana fibre and oyster shells, creating a space that's warm, refined and rooted in place. With only eight seats at a communal counter and a private dining room for six, it is the perfect setting for a personal dining experience centred around seasonal ingredients, local and international flavours, and modern technique. *instagram.* com/inato.ph

Across the archipelago adventures

Hapag's new and more central location in Makati has opened up new horizons for the ambitious restaurant, with its first iteration in Quezon City earning the attention of food critics and serious diners alike. Now on the seventh floor of the luxurious Balmori Suites in Makati's upscale Rockwell Centre, the setting finally matches Hapag's sophisticated and bold spirit while welcoming a broader audience.

The trio behind Hapag – head chefs Thirdy Dolatre and John Kevin "Nav" Navoa, and Erin Recto, their head of operations and sommelier – continue to present thoroughly modern (and occasionally controversial) interpretations of Filipino cuisine through a meticulous, intellectually curated tasting menu. The themes so far have invited diners to explore Philippine culture, geography and culinary heritage, turning the meal into an educational journey.

The restaurant's interiors enrich this experience through thoughtful details: guests

Hapag



Beyond the plate

Celera, tucked inside Comuna, a new creative hub on the fringes of the Makati business district, is the latest venture from chefs Nicco Santos and Queenee Villar – both widely respected for their modern interpretations of Asian cuisine. At Celera, the duo draws from their buzzy portfolios and independently creative sensibilities to offer a refined, evolving menu.

Its location within Comuna is fitting, because the building itself is such a character: young, contemporary, thrumming with artistic energy. Celera blends right in with this diverse community that includes a design studio, an indie publishing house, an art gallery and a taproom. Found on the third floor, Celera feels like a secret attic one might retreat to: the interiors are dark but inviting, spare but warm. Likewise, the food bridges the gap between elevated-casual and fine dining, offering familiar dishes and flavours, but with a healthy dash of audacity to keep things exciting. Whether you're enjoying a thoughtfully composed tasting menu or exploring dishes à la carte, dining at Celera is a nuanced, satisfying experience.

restaurantcelera.com





Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Manila 20x weekly.







1 Tangtao Yard Hostel (Xiamen Gulangyu Fuxing Castle)

Much of the island's charm comes in the form of its wellpreserved historic architecture and colonial-era villas, many of which have been transformed into Chinese-style guesthouses like the charming Tangtao Yard Hostel. Here. "hostel" is a misnomer: this rustic-chic boutique hotel greets guests with exposed brick arches, reclaimed wood and subtropical charm, with outdoor courtyards and gathering areas lush with greenery. It's a tranquil hideaway from the island's tourist crowds, while still being an easy walk to all the attractions. 13 Fuxing Rd

2 Longtou Road Commercial Street

All destinations in China have their shopping streets, and Gulang Island is no different. Though undeniably touristy, Longtou Road is a must-visit, and just a 10-minute walk from the ferry dock. A stroll along the 1km stretch allows you to sample a variety of local snacks, browse cute shops and pick up all kinds of souvenirs – it's also a great place for an evening drink as the area really comes alive at night. Longtou Rd

3 Haoyue Park

Situated on the western side of the island, Haoyue Park offers

serene views and a salt-laced breeze from a series of pathways and bridges built along the sea, leading to a towering statue of celebrated 17th-century Chinese military hero Zheng Chenggong. The park is also a great backdrop for holiday photos. 3 Zhangzhou Rd

Shuzhuang Garden

Gulang Island is home to some stunning natural scenery and equally spectacular landscaping; no surprise it's also nicknamed "Garden by the Sea". Shuzhuang Garden, originally built in 1913 as part of a private residence, is a traditional Chinese garden that incorporates the natural landscape into its design, with a series of paths, pavilions, ponds and classic architecture offering views of mountain and sea from unique perspectives. The area also houses the renowned Gulangyu Piano Museum, which boasts an extensive collection of vintage pianos from across the world – leading to another nickname. "Piano Island".

Tianwei Rd



Sunlight Rock

One of the island's most popular attractions, Sunlight Rock encompasses a large rock formation and the namesake Ming Dynasty-era Buddhist temple, located on the southern tip of the island and its highest point. It's a spectacular spot for sweeping views of the island, downtown Xiamen and the surrounding seascape – and at only 40m, an easy hike to the peak.

Kang Family Oyster Omelette

This no-frills family-owned stand does one thing and one thing only: a regional speciality of wok-fried eggs with oysters, which gets its signature crispyoutside, chewy-inside texture from the addition of potato starch. *4 Longtou Rd*

Lin's Shacha Noodles

Hit up this mom-and-pop shop for a bowl of shacha mian, arguably Xiamen's most iconic dish. This delightfully rich, savoury soup noodle is a brilliant fusion of Southeast Asian and Chinese flavours, with thin noodles swimming in



aromatic satay-sauce-based broth and topped with a combo of meat, seafood, tofu and veggies.

322 Neicuoao Rd

3 Zhangsanfeng Milk Tea

Named after a beloved island cat, this popular milk tea shop offers premium quality teas with your choice of milk, flavours and add-ons: try local favourites like island coconut, oolong bubble milk tea, matcha smoothie or a seasonal fruit tea.

131 Longtou Rd



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Summer is here, bringing sunshine to lush peninsulas, ancient relics and vibrant city life in Vietnam's most liveable city







Glossy on the surface but rich in depth, first impressions of Da Nang can be deceiving.

> Located on Vietnam's central coast, this mini seaside metropolis features incandescent bridges that contrast with fine dining restaurants and modern galleries, while polished skyscrapers tower over hipster cafés and lively beach bars. Yet behind the glamour lie historical remnants spanning centuries, including pre-colonial forts, redolent cave temples and relics of an ancient civilisation.

> Come prepared: summer in Da Nang is hotter than a puff from the city's fire-breathing dragon (yes, this really is a thing). But unlike Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang benefits from a near-constant coastal breeze - and a refreshing dip in the sea is never more than a short taxi ride away. Here's how to spend three days unearthing the city's layered history while making the most of its sun-drenched shores - without overheating.

Day 1 City slick

Morning. Start the day with an early morning stroll along Da Nang's broad seaside boulevard, where courting couples gaze out to sea and sprightly mums move to the beat in aerobics classes. Begin in front of the biophilic Chicland Hotel, designed by awardwinning Ho Chi Minh City-based architect Võ Trong Nghĩa in 2019, then head south and meander through palmfringed parks, sea-facing plazas and outdoor gyms.

When it's time for a cuppa, venture inland to Roost Coffee Roasters, set within a repurposed modernist house with a lush garden. Then call a Grab and cross the river to the Da Nang Fine Arts Museum, a tranquil (and air-conditioned!) retreat showcasing softly lit displays from some of central Vietnam's most notable artists.

Afternoon. Enjoy lunch in the chic dining room of Luk Lak, where the menu highlights lesser-known Vietnamese dishes from the country's mountainous subregions, such as grilled chicken with sticky rice and pan-seared duck with pickled bamboo.

To escape the sizzling afternoon heat, retire to a nearby coffee shop: Long **Coffee** has been serving classic $c\grave{\alpha}$ $ph\hat{e}$ sua đá (Vietnamese iced coffee with condensed milk) for decades, while

Previous page: The vibrant city of Da Nang

Clockwise from top: Roost Coffee Roasters' lush gardens provide a welcoming respite; Long Coffee's classic cà phê sua đá is a must-trv: Dien Hai Citadel dates back to the pre-colonial era; watch the Dragon Bridge breathe fire on weekend nights; Da Nang Fine Arts Museum









Explore Da Nang and beyond with Journify's Destination Pass.







Download Grab before you arrive – the ride-hailing app is the easiest way to get around the city.



Heading out of town? Rent a motorbike or hire a car with a driver – most hotels can arrange this.



Bring headphones for audio guides at museums and the My Son archaeological site. **Ala Café** is a quirky spot offering iced lattes and rooftop seating.

As the city cools, visit the nearby **Dien Hai Citadel**, a fascinating remnant from the pre-colonial era. Originally built in 1813 by King Gia Long of the Nguyen Dynasty (1802–1945), the moated fort played a key role in repelling France's first attacks on Vietnam in the mid-19th century.

Evening. Amble a block east to the Han River, where a dazzling sequence of cantilever bridges stretches across the water. Start at the west bank of the Han Bridge, then stroll south towards Da Nang's iconic **Dragon Bridge**, which shimmers with colour after dark. Completed in 2013 and modelled on a Lý Dynasty (1009–1225) dragon, the bridge symbolises Da Nang's economic fortitude. You'll spot its golden, firebreathing head on the opposite bank – save this spectacle for tomorrow.

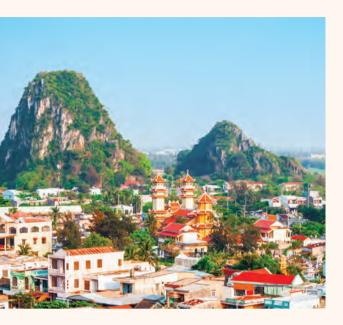
Before calling it a night, swing by **Xi Nê Bistro & Jazz**, a repurposed 1970s cinema that now hosts regular live music performances.

Day 2 Jolly jaunts

Morning. Book a Grab and head south to the Marble Mountains, a striking cluster of karst formations less than 10km south of the city centre. Each mountain represents one of the five East Asian elements – fire, water, earth, wood and metal – but Water Mountain boasts the largest concentration of cave temples. The complex may feel somewhat cluttered, but it is aesthetically captivating and steeped in legend. Keep your eyes peeled for serpentine dragons, fierce ethereal warriors, hellish demons and hidden shrines carved into the rock.

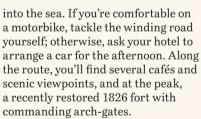
When hunger strikes, head back into the city for mi Quang at **Nu Do**, founded by local *Masterchef* star Tuyet Pham. The restaurant serves an elevated take on Da Nang's signature noodle dish, served with your choice of meat, seafood or fish.

Afternoon. After lunch, head north to ascend the **Hai Vân Pass**, where jungle-clad mountains plunge dramatically









On the way back to the city, stop by My Khe Beach for a refreshing dip in the sea and a fresh coconut.

Evening. In the evening, feast on another Da Nang speciality - seafood. While the seafront is lined with seafood restaurants, they can be pricey, so venture into the backstreets for a more local experience at spots like Nhà Hàng Bien Viet or Thêm Hai San.

If you'd like to see the Dragon Bridge breathe fire, you're now on the right side of the river. Arrive on the east side of the bridge before 9pm (Saturdays and Sundays only) and find a good spot to watch the fiery spectacle.





Day 3 Cham charm

Morning. Until the late 15th century,
Da Nang was part of Champa, a network
of kingdoms that once ruled the coastal
plains of present-day central Vietnam.
To connect with this often-overlooked
history, head to My Son, located about
40km southwest of the city centre.
Champa's civilisation was heavily
influenced by India, and here you'll find
Hindu temples dating from the 4th to
the 13th centuries.

To beat the heat and the crowds, arrive as early as possible (the site opens at 6am). For added context, purchase the audio guide, which you can download to your phone (remember to bring your headphones).

Afternoon. While My Son is Vietnam's most significant archaeological site, Da Nang's Museum of Cham Sculpture houses the world's largest collection of Cham artefacts. Built in 1919, the museum still occupies its original Indochinese-style building and offers a fascinating glimpse into Cham spirituality. Highlights include the Nataraja (Shiva's cosmic dance of destruction) and apsaras (female celestial dancers). There's plenty here to fill an afternoon, but if you need a pre-museum pick-me-up, stop by Nam House, a retro-style coffee shop just a block north.



Evening. End your trip with a bang at **Nén Danang**, a fine dining restaurant led by chef-patron Summer Le, who tells personal stories through her creative tasting menus. Last year, Nén earned a rare Michelin Green Star for its sustainability efforts, thanks in part to the farm next door, where Le grows fresh produce and carries out community activities with a local school. A relaxed, multi-course meal here is the perfect way to reflect on your trip – and start planning your return to Da Nang.



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Da Nang 7x weekly.

Where to stay



Wink Icon Danang Riverside

Building on the success of its sister hotel across the river, this newer Wink exudes hip holiday ribes, designed with millennial and Gen Z travellers in mind. Highlights include a rooftop swimming pool, a 24/7 gym and three floors of bars and restaurants. wink-hotels.com



Signature by M Village Da Nang Heritage

Heritage hotels are a rarity in Vietnam, making this newly opened, beautifully restored, century-old colonial building a delightful find. Even better, it's just a short stroll from the citadel, art museum and Han River. mvillage.vn



Fusion Resort & Villas

Fusion's new flagship property graces Da Nang's sweeping coastline, just 13km south of the city centre. Offering luxurious beachside villas, it's the perfect blend of a city break and seaside escape. fusionresorts.com

Grilled goodness, served with heart

Every meal at Firewood Penang tells a story - one that's charred, shared and unforgettable



Whether you're a steak lover or looking for a family-friendly steak house, this 2025 Michelin Selected Restaurant, located in Unesco-listed George Town, delivers an open-flame experience that feels just like home.

From the moment you step into the steakhouse, the warm glow of flames, the inviting aroma of charred meats and the hum of lively conversation sets the stage for a memorable meal.

At the heart of it all is 31-year-old chef Ker Yang Hao, whose passion for wood-fire cooking was sparked by the humble, open-flame eateries he encountered while holidaying in Bali. These weren't fancy restaurants, but cosy neighbourhood joints where food brought people together. Inspired by that same homely spirit, he created Firewood Penang – a place where great food and heartfelt hospitality go hand in hand.

The attentive staff ensures every guest feels welcome, striking the







perfect balance between warmth and professionalism. What sets Firewood apart is its family-friendly ethos – every staff member is great with kids, making it an ideal spot for those dining with children.

If you're visiting in a group, Ker recommends ordering from Firewood's à la carte menu – the perfect way to share an array of flame-grilled dishes. Although the restaurant specialises in steaks, the menu is designed with variety in mind, reflecting what Ker's own parents or young children might enjoy.

From the Nyonya-inspired Firewood Risotto, cooked in rich coconut cream with lemongrass and French beans and topped with grilled prawns, to the signature Firewood Sirloin MB6-7 seared to perfection and the indulgent Japan A5 Miyazaki Ribeye that melts in your mouth – each dish is a journey into the magic of open-flame cooking. If you can't decide which steak to sink your teeth into, the hosts will happily help you choose the perfect one.

Beyond the food, the atmosphere is unmatched. Guests can watch the chefs working the flames, transforming ingredients into dishes that are both rustic and refined. At Firewood Penang, every bite tells a story, and every guest is treated like family. Because here, fire isn't just for cooking - it's for bringing

people together.

Firewood Penang is at 15 Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling, George Town, Penang. To explore the menu or make a reservation, visit firegroup.my or call +60 17-989 9246.























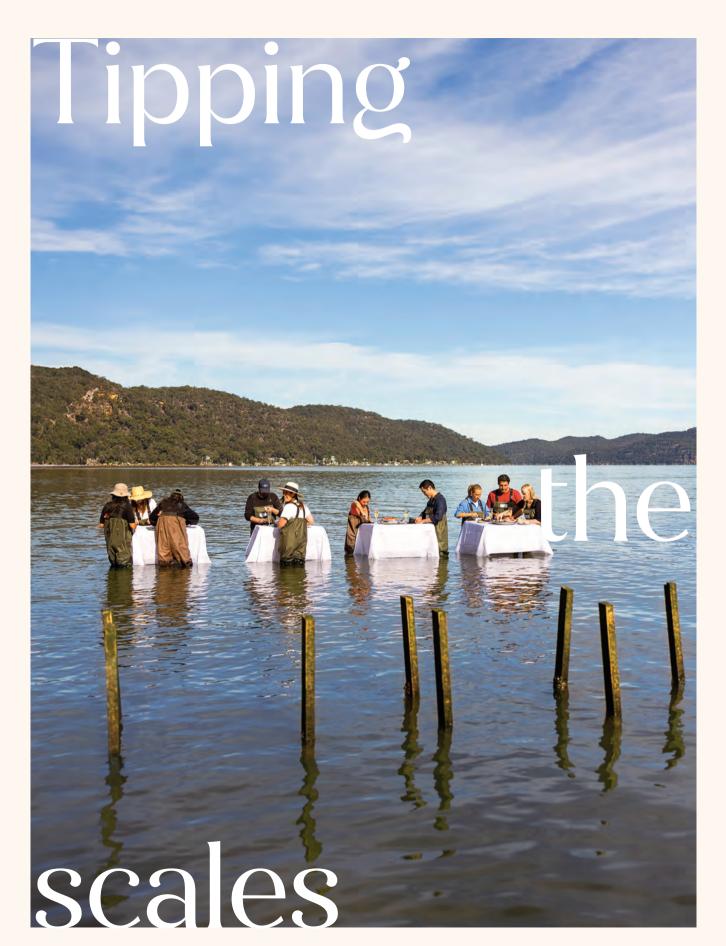


@ecoBrownsrice











This is a story about seafood, but it starts, as many Sydneysiders' days do, with the sunrise.





Australia's beloved harbour city, Sydney, is renowned for its superlative breakfasts - a claim to fame that arguably began when the late Australian chef Bill Granger first dished up his glossy scrambled eggs and avocado on toast at his restaurant, Bills, back in 1993. Now, three decades on, Sydney's breakfast bar has been raised again.

On a sun-splashed morning in the backstreets of Paddington, an inner-city neighbourhood of narrow, tree-lined streets and terrace houses. I'm the only diner in the bar of the 14-room Grand National Hotel. which opened in January this year. Here, Sydney's most exclusive breakfast is served each morning to guests of the hotel, and no one else. The sweet flesh of a perfectly poached whole marron - a crayfish from Manjimup, Western Australia – is laid bare on a bed of scrambled eggs before me. The shell of its head holds a not-too-rich hollandaise sauce.

It's the highlight of a three-course breakfast that has all of Sydney talking, and is exactly what you'd expect from chef Josh Niland, the man who sparked a culinary revolution and pioneered whole fish butchery - complete





Previous spread, from left: Sydney Oyster Farm Tours offers an in-water dining experience; Saint Peter's interiors

This spread, clockwise from left: The Grand National Hotel; Josh Niland in the kitchen; a lobster dish at Saint Peter's; golden hour at Bennelong

with custom-designed cool rooms and a creative use of offal - when he opened his fish restaurant, Saint Peter, in 2016. Back then, his innovative degustation experience was an intimate affair; diners sat at a long marble bar counter inside a modest shopfront on a quiet stretch of Oxford Street in Paddington.

However, last year, Saint Peter - which made the World's 50 Best Restaurants longlist in 2024 - relocated to the beautifully restored Grand National Hotel. Diners now enjoy their meals in an elegant 40-seat dining room featuring an atrium and a buzzy open kitchen. Niland's nine-course menu continues to showcase his greatest hits, from a reinterpretation of spaghetti bolognaise made with southern calamari noodles and yellowfin tuna 'nduja (a spicy, spreadable salami) to the moreish lemon meringue tart. The 30-seat front bar is also impressive. A more casual affair, bookings aren't required, and the bar snack menu includes swordfish empanadas, Australia's best oysters and the standout: a yellowfin tuna cheeseburger.

This is seafood worth travelling for, but for a lucky few, the journey now takes mere

minutes. There's no more decadent way to end a meal at Saint Peter than when the waiter walks me just a metre from the restaurant and summons the lift to take me one floor up to my hotel suite. Once a beloved neighbourhood pub, the original structure of the Grand National Hotel dates back to 1890, and in their first venture as hoteliers, Niland and his wife Julie haven't merely revived the place, they've turned it into a destination in its own right.

Interiors were designed by Belinda Chippindale and Dimity Chitty of Sydney's Studio Aquilo, with extensive input from the Nilands, and the result is exquisite. The hotel's sophisticated, modern Art Deco rooms could just as easily exist in New York or Paris, save for their all-local line-up of personal touches: art curated by Olsen Gallery, including works by Ken Done; toiletries by Australian luxury brand Aesop; and bedding by Melbourne's sustainable doona makers, Bonny, among others.

There are subtle nods to seafood, too. Above the original marble fireplaces, convex mirrors provide a fish-eye view of the room; fish fat candles and soap bars grace the bedrooms; and ceramic mugs are made from fish bones. Even the marron at breakfast is served on a plate decorated with a fish-scale border.

OF COURSE, SAINT PETER AND THE GRAND

National Hotel aren't the only ones redefining Sydney's seafood landscape - or using fish scales or shells as inspiration. Since 2015, Bennelong, the acclaimed dining institution helmed by chef Peter Gilmore, has been serving seafood-forward dishes - appetisers of Aquatir Belugar caviar and rock oysters, mains of barramundi and Eastern Rock lobster - with equally fabulous views of the harbour from its incredible location within



the iconic Sydney Opera House, a building inspired by sails and seashells, among others.

Over in Blackwattle Bay, an emerging harbourside precinct in Sydney's inner-west, the finishing touches are being put on the new Sydney Fish Market, an AUD\$800 million development expected to open later this year. Designed by 3XN Architects, the market has a 200m-long, wave-shaped roof resembling fish scales and, with a working fish market, seafood cooking school and restaurants, it's set to become one of the city's major tourist destinations.

Celebrity chef Luke Nguyen will open a Southeast Asian seafood restaurant here, while Malaysia-born Junda Khoo of Ho Jiak is planning a casual-to-mid-range eatery serving everything from kingfish assam laksa and chilli crab har gow to XO pippies and lobster. The market will also house the largest sushi train in Australia, along with outlets from local favourites such as family-run gelateria Cow and the Moon; cheerful inner-west café Dirty Red, known for its cocktail-fuelled brunches; and Vietnamese street food outlet Banh Mi & Phin.

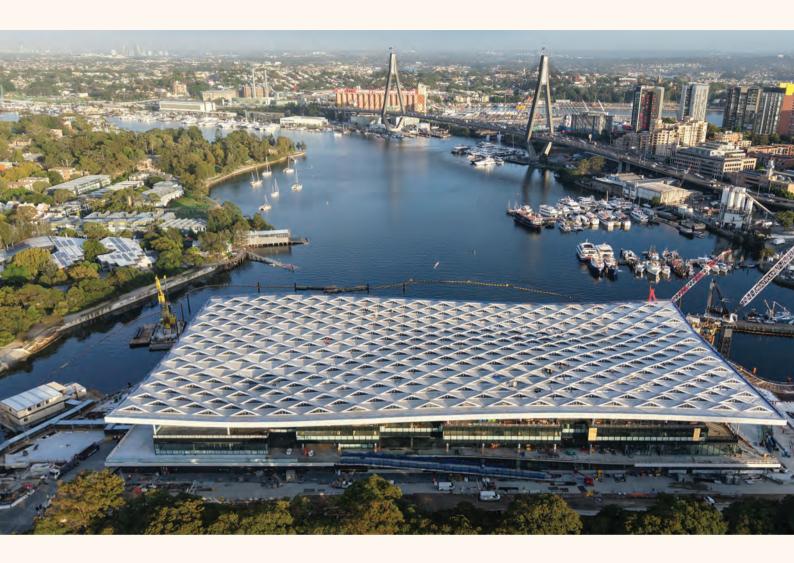
The largest venue is expected to be an as-yet-unnamed, 280-seat Mediterranean-style restaurant led by Turkish celebrity chef Somer Sivrioğlu, who studied in Australia and co-owns restaurants Anason in Barangaroo and Maydanoz in the CBD. But the highlight may prove to be Sivrioğlu's takeaway kiosk, serving balik ekmek (Turkish fish sandwiches).

Australians have a special reverence for sandwiches. In local slang, an "Aussie battler" refers to an ordinary, working-class Australian, respected for relentlessly persevering in the face of adversity. And the humble workman's lunch? It's often a sandwich. But in a multicultural nation like this one, that can mean anything from balik ekmek and banh mi to cheese toasties or a Vegemite triple decker. For Sydney chef Joel Bennetts, a more modern take might be the fish burger, laden with fermented chilli, that earned him a cult following at Fish Shop in Bondi.

This spread: Refined, sumptuous offerings you can expect at Saint Peter in The Grand National Hotel 66

Regardless of where you choose to be, one thing is certain: Sydney and its innovative chefs know how to reel travellers in and keep them coming back for more"





A five-minute walk from Sydney's most iconic beach, Fish Shop - which opened in 2021 and closed last March - was an elevated interpretation of the classic suburban fish 'n' chip joint by Nathan Dalah and Nic Pestalozzi. Along with Casper Ettelson, they are the men behind Fishbowl, a healthy salad bowl chain with more than 40 locations across Australia, which recently opened as Thisbowl in New York.

Not content to sit back and enjoy their extraordinary success, Dalah and Pestalozzi opened another venture with Bennetts in 2023, in the storefront next door to Fish Shop. The same concrete, glass and terrazzo interiors appear at the 30-seat Burger Park, which offers a menu of just four hamburgers - five, if you count the "secret" cheeseburger - made using only good quality, fresh ingredients. The place







This spread, clockwise from left: The new Sydney Fish Market is set to become a must-visit attraction; shuck oysters any way you like with Sydney Oyster Farm Tours; its founder, Sheridan Beaumont; her dad at the oyster farm

is buzzing, there's even live jazz on the first Friday of every month. But on any other day, the hot tip is to order your burger – try the crumbed barramundi with green goddess tartare – to-go and enjoy it with your toes in the water at Bondi Beach.

FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GET OUT ON

the water, it's worth making the one-hour drive north to Brooklyn on the outskirts of Sydney. Bordered by eucalyptus bushland, Kangaroo Point Boat Ramp is the pick-up location for those joining Sydney Oyster Farm Tours, a family-run enterprise on the expansive Hawkesbury River. During a boat ride and guided tour of the farm, guests learn about the evolution of the industry and see how oysters are cultivated.

Afterwards, shuck fresh Broken Bay, Sydney Rock and Pacific oysters in one of three ways. Depending on the tour you choose, that could mean slurping the tasty molluscs on the boat; donning a pair of waders and eating them at a table in the water; or sitting down to a gourmet, white tablecloth lunch on the sand.

Regardless of where you choose to be, here or elsewhere in Sydney, one thing is certain: this city and its innovative chefs know how to reel travellers in and keep them coming back for more.

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Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Sydney 14x weekly.



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Where to stay



The Eve Hotel is the centrepiece of the new AUD\$500 million Wunderlich Lane precinct on the border of Surry Hills and Redfern. Its retro-cool rooms and suites impress, but the 20m rooftop pool steals the show with guests and locals alike. theevehotel.com.au

Set in the historic Sydney Water Board headquarters, the 172-room **Kimpton Margot** evokes Art Deco glamour. The lobby houses chef Luke Mangan's flagship, Luke's Kitchen, serving modern Australian fare, plus it even has its own caviar cart. *kimptonmargotsydney.com*

The new *W Sydney*, the chain's largest with 588 rooms, overlooks Darling Harbour. With five restaurants, a 30m indoor infinity pool, a luxe spa and a 24-hour gym, you may not want to leave. Rooms feature blue furnishings and shark-shaped pillows. *wsydney.com*

Directory

Grand National Hotel saintpeter.com.au

bills.com.au

sydneyfishmarket.com.au

bennelong.com.au

fishbowl.com.au

instagram.com/burgerpark

sydneyoystertours.com

A stitch in time

In Ahmedabad, a city wrapped in rich heritage, a clutch of ateliers are devoted to keeping India's handmade textile traditions alive

Words Punita Malhotra Photography Pankaj Anand













My first time in Ahmedabad was a whirlwind of everything grand and beautiful.

In the capital of the western Indian state of Gujarat and India's first Unesco World Heritage City, I wandered through jewel-box mansions, stared awestruck at façades filigreed with delicate carvings and descended ornate stepwells carved like inverted temples.

Centuries of trade and migration had left its imprint on this city; Persian, Central Asian and Islamic influences are visible in the exquisite details. I saw these imprints in the patterns, geometry and symbolism etched in fabric at the Calico Museum of Textiles: the lustrous sheen of Mashru, a handwoven fabric of silk and cotton; the fluid strokes of the Gujarati art of cloth printing known as Rogan painting; the bold motifs of Rabari embroidery. Artistic expression, regardless of medium, shared a common language. And it was dazzling.

When Shilpa Sharma, founder of Breakaway – a Delhi-based special interest tour company that connects travellers with India's rich craft and textile culture – described Ahmedabad as "a perfect teaser to the state's craft legacy", I knew it was time to return. A whole day of diving deep to uncover the nuances of Gujarat's craft heritage was impossible to resist.

The trail begins in the quiet residential neighbourhood of Paidi, not far from the Sabarmati Riverfront, where RaasLeela Textile, a studio that specialises in slow fashion, is located. Here, clothes made of raw, unprocessed cotton are completely stitched by hand. According to designer and founder Hetal Shrivastav, the brand is deeply committed to using sustainable resources, and investing in craft revival and inclusive growth for artisans connected to the land.

A hum of focused activity fills the space. Here, women artisans are deeply immersed in their work, stitching seams, buttonholes and hems. They select fabric scraps, arrange them into patterns and secure them with tiny, precise stitches. There are no machines, only the quiet rhythm of skilled hands preserving an ancient craft known as katab.

Katab is an age-old appliqué technique practised for generations in Gujarat, where fabric scraps are layered and stitched into quilts and clothing. For centuries, it has been an artful way to mend clothes, extend the life of garments and ensure zero waste. It celebrates imperfections – I watch as the studio artisans follow

Previous spread, left to right: Artisanal craftsmanship passed down through generations is on full display at the workshops of Sanjay Chitara and Asif Shaikh, respectively

This spread:

Specialising in slow fashion, RaasLeela Studio ensures every piece is stitched by hand – requiring precise needlework and plenty of patience



Ritual cloth paintings depict mythological scenes from Hindu epics, goddess manifestation and celestial beings engaged in cosmic battles"

different motifs and stitching styles, each with a unique rhythm of needlework. When I pick up a needle to try my hand at stitching, I quickly realise how much patience and precision this craft demands. Katab is no regular mending routine; it's storytelling.

RaasLeela's production model produces only 50 to 80 pieces a month (a mix of garments and home décor) ensuring that every stitch carries the weight of timehonoured skills. Many of these handcrafted pieces find their way to global showcases such as XTANT in Mallorca, Spain and the International Folk Art Market (IFAM) in Santa Fe, New Mexico, or the shelves of Suno & Morrison in Japan, Cottage Industry in Australia and Loom & Stars in the US. As I trace my fingers over an ecru appliqué fabric, it strikes me that the real story isn't about where these pieces find a home but in the hands that shape them. These artisans breathe new life into an age-old craft that refuses to be lost.

THE NEXT STOP OF THE TOUR IS A VISIT

with Sanjay Manubhai Chitara, a National Award-winning artisan and one of the last surviving masters of a 300-year-old sacred textile tradition, Mata ni Pachedi or ritual cloth paintings. Often called the Kalamkari of Gujarat, Mata ni Pachedi (which means "behind the Mother Goddess" in Gujarati) originated as temple hangings for communities that have historically been denied entry into mainstream temples. These intricate cloth panels serve as portable shrines, allowing devotees to venerate the goddess in makeshift sacred spaces. Every artwork depicts mythological scenes from Hindu epics, goddess manifestation and celestial beings engaged in cosmic battles. Today, the art form holds deep ritualistic significance while finding a place in museums, homes and luxury hotels as a revered heritage art form.

Amid rolls of cloth and bowls of natural pigments, Chitara effortlessly traces intricate forms of the Mother Goddess onto cotton fabric using bamboo brushes. The alchemy of colour-making is intriguing – black comes



This spread: At Sanjay Chitara's workshop, each ritual cloth painting is created through a meticulous process that takes several days to complete from fermented jaggery and rusted iron, yellow from turmeric, pink from madder root, blue from indigo and brown from catechu. Each stroke follows a meticulous sequence, first outlining the figures in black before gradually filling them with natural hues, each colour symbolising divine elements: red for power, black for protection and white for purity.

The master artisan explains how Mata ni Pachedi remains within a handful of close-knit Chitara families, passed down through generations. He learned the craft from his father, and now his children continue the tradition. The process is painstaking: a 2-feet by 3-feet piece takes about a month to create, and supersized pieces sold for up to three lakh rupees (USD\$3,500), demand even more time and precision.

Yet, hurdles loom. The newly built Sabarmati Riverfront, once essential for dyeing, is now off-limits, challenging traditional fabric washing. Still, Mata ni Pachedi remains a living legacy, resilient and deeply intertwined with faith.

AT ASIF SHAIKH'S PRIVATE EMBROIDERY

studio, the final stop of the day, I am transported to a bygone world of opulence. Visions of the Silk Route, along which luxury textiles criss-crossed continents, flash through my mind. The Ahmedabad-based textile and fashion specialist has spent five decades researching endangered crafts and elevating embroidery, particularly miniature work, to global recognition with an almost contagious passion.

I learn about his prestigious commissions for institutions - such as the Aga Khan Museum and Humayun's Tomb in Delhi, and the V&A Museum in London - and about how his work has taken him to international forums, from SOAS in London and the World Eco-Fiber and Textile Forum in Malaysia to IFAM.

Shaikh helps me decode the artistry of Zardozi, or intricate gold and silver threadwork - originally from Persia, modern-day Iran - and Aari, a delicate chain-stitch technique. Both crafts flourished in India under Mughal rule from the early 16th to the mid-18th century, nurtured in royal karkhanas (workshops). Once reserved for imperial garments and ceremonial décor, these exquisite techniques have found new patrons in heirloom pieces and rarefied couture.



66

Ahmedabad's ateliers will continue weaving the warp and weft of memories with modernity as long as we cherish their worth"

Where to stay



House of MG

Heritage boutique stay where vintage meets comfort. Think handcrafted interiors, grand courtyards and oldworld charm wrapped in modern hospitality. houseofmg.com



ITC Narmada

A luxe escape that blends Gujarat's cultural essence with contemporary elegance. Expect refined design, sustainable luxury and impeccable service. itchotels.com



Tai Skyline

Sleek high-rise retreat with chic interiors, panoramic city views and top-tier amenities. A seamless blend of luxury and timeless heritage. tajhotels.com





Inside the workroom, I sift through hundreds of embroidered samples, bedecked with peacock feathers, beetle wings, actual gold-plated silver thread and precious stones such as rubies, emeralds and pearls. Bent over their frames, artisans who had been personally trained by Shaikh – having spent years perfecting classical motifs – bring elaborate designs to life with nimble fingers and practised precision.

But Shaikh's influence extends far beyond his bespoke finery. As one of the three custodians of the Craft Design Society Art Foundation, a group that works to preserve, nurture and promote India's rich textile traditions, he's at the forefront of safeguarding this inheritance, fostering collaborations between artisans and designers to create fashion that bridges past and present.

"If we lose craft, we lose culture," he insists. His words linger, gleaming like gold thread in the light. Ahmedabad's ateliers will continue weaving the warp and weft of memories with modernity as long as we cherish their worth. Heritage isn't just a relic of the past; it's a story we keep telling.





Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Ahmedabad 4x weekly.



A culture in their keep

The Calico Museum of Textiles,

housed in a 17th-century mansion in Ahmedabad, is one of India's most renowned textile museums. It features an extensive collection of rare and historic textiles, including Kashmiri shawls, Patola saris, Mughal-era tapestries and religious cloth paintings. The museum showcases various textile-making techniques, like block printing, embroidery and weaving, and displays of natural dyeing processes and traditional craftsmanship. Guided tours provide in-depth insights into India's textile heritage and entry is limited to small, pre-booked groups for a focused, immersive experience. Morning tours run from 10.30am to 12.30pm, while afternoon tours are from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. The museum is open Tuesday to Sunday. calicomuseum.org







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THIS IS MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY



Welcome aboard Malaysia Aviation Group's (MAG) airlines. This month, see what we have on offer to ensure safe, seamless and fuss-free journeys. 57

Inside our airlines

News and updates from MAG Airlines

64

Discover our network

See where MAG Airlines can take you, around Malaysia and around the world **69**

Onboard entertainment

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

MAG elevates regional travel with a sleek new Boeing fleet



Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) is taking its fleet to new heights with the acquisition of 30 new Boeing aircraft, reinforcing its commitment to modern, efficient and premium air travel. The order includes 18 Boeing 737-8 and 12 Boeing



737-10 aircraft, all powered by CFM International LEAP-1B engines. This positions MAG as a leader in regional connectivity while offering travellers an enhanced experience. Notably, the Boeing 737-10 will introduce lie-flat Business Class seats to its narrowbody fleet for the first time, redefining comfort on regional routes. MAG will gradually phase out the older generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated by Malaysia Airlines, transitioning to a sleek, fuel-efficient fleet of 55 Boeing 737-8 and Boeing 737-10 by 2030 and charting a bold course for the future of air travel.

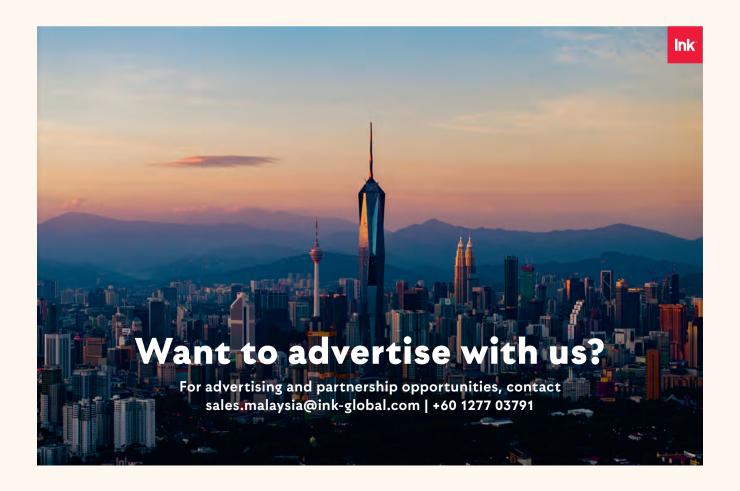


MAG named official airline and premier sponsor of MATTA Fair 2025

Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) – the parent company of Malaysia Airlines, Firefly, MASwings, AMAL. Enrich and Journify - was named the official airline partner and premier sponsor of MATTA Fair 2025.

MAG's presence at the fair offered a thoughtfully curated experience through its inviting pavilion, designed to reflect the group's commitment to seamless travel and lifestyle offerings. Visitors explored a range of exclusive fare deals and joined interactive contests and giveaways. A standout feature was the AI-powered destination showcase, which gave participants a fresh and engaging way to plan future journeys. Adding to the buzz, a special appearance by the Manchester United Legends drew steady crowds, especially among football fans.









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More choice and value with Malaysia Airlines' new economy fares

Malaysia Airlines has introduced a refreshed Economy Class experience with the rollout of its Horizontal Fare Family (HFF) enhancement, offering travellers more choice and flexibility tailored to their needs.

As part of this update, the former Economy Lite has been rebranded as Economy Value, joining Economy Basic and Economy Flex in a lineup designed to suit a range of travel styles and budgets.

Economy Value offers a well-rounded travel experience, including 7kg cabin baggage allowance, complimentary meals, 20kg checked baggage, a 10% discount for child fares and the option to modify bookings for a fee. The updated fare structure is ideal for travellers who want flexibility, with all the essentials included.



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Beyond the cabin: shaping global perspectives

Crew members Soh Chiew Yong and Mohd Azhar bin Zainuddin share how flying with Malaysia Airlines has broadened their worldview

"I don't see this as a duty, but a calling"

by Soh Chiew Yong

I began my journey with Malaysia Airlines over 20 years ago, seeing flying as just a job - a structured path with clear responsibilities. But with each flight, every destination and the countless faces I encountered, my perspective has shifted. I have realised this profession isn't lives along the way.

Over the years, I've grown through both challenges and meaningful moments. I've had the honour of calming anxious mothers-to-be, my team through unpredictable situations. One memory that has stayed with me is receiving a on a flight from Dubai to Istanbul in 2009. They



exceptional care. That's why we're known for our tagline: Malaysian Hospitality.

I've learned to listen patiently when problems occur, to validate our customer's feelings and to offer reassurance when it's needed most. Those small gestures matter, especially when they come

Malaysia Airlines' values - Genuine, Efficient, Progressive – clearly define respect, warmth and professionalism. I strive to embody these values and they've shaped my leadership style and personal growth. Today, I'm proud to pass on what I've learnt to the younger crew. encouraging them to see this not just as a duty,

It's about being the familiar face you see when





"I believe in enhancing our customer's overall experience" by Mohd Azhar bin Zainuddin

by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir

my horizon and deepened my understanding of global cultures.

Now, as a cabin crew with Malaysia Airlines, I bring that international experience and cultural sensitivity to my role, ensuring a warm and welcoming atmosphere for passengers from all walks of life.

My time in Japan equipped me with valuable skills and a global perspective that I am proud to share with others. I developed strong communication skills in Japanese, adaptability and a deep respect for different cultures. The discipline and organisational skills I gained during that time have served me well in my 25 years as a flight steward, helping me maintain high standards of inflight service and remain calm in the face of any challenge.

As a Japanese-speaking crew member, I am able to assist Japanese passengers with everything from translating important information to handling special requests, helping them feel more comfortable and truly cared for. It's a service I'm proud to offer, and one that enhances the overall experience for our passengers.

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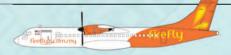
B737-800 NG

No. of Aircraft 42 | Passenger Seating 160, 166, 174 Length 39.5m | Wingspan 35.8m | Height 12.50m Max. Cruising Speed 857km/h



No. of Aircraft 11 | Passenger Seating 174 Length 39.52m | Wingspan 35.90m | Height 12.30m Max. Cruising Speed 976km/h





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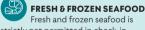
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strictly not permitted in check-in baggage. It may be accepted in cabin baggage, subject to the destination's quarantine regulations. It must be properly packed and should meet the cabin baggage weight and size requirements. If dry ice is used, a maximum of 2.5kg per passenger is allowed. We reserve the right to refuse carriage if the items are not properly packed.



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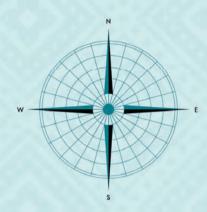
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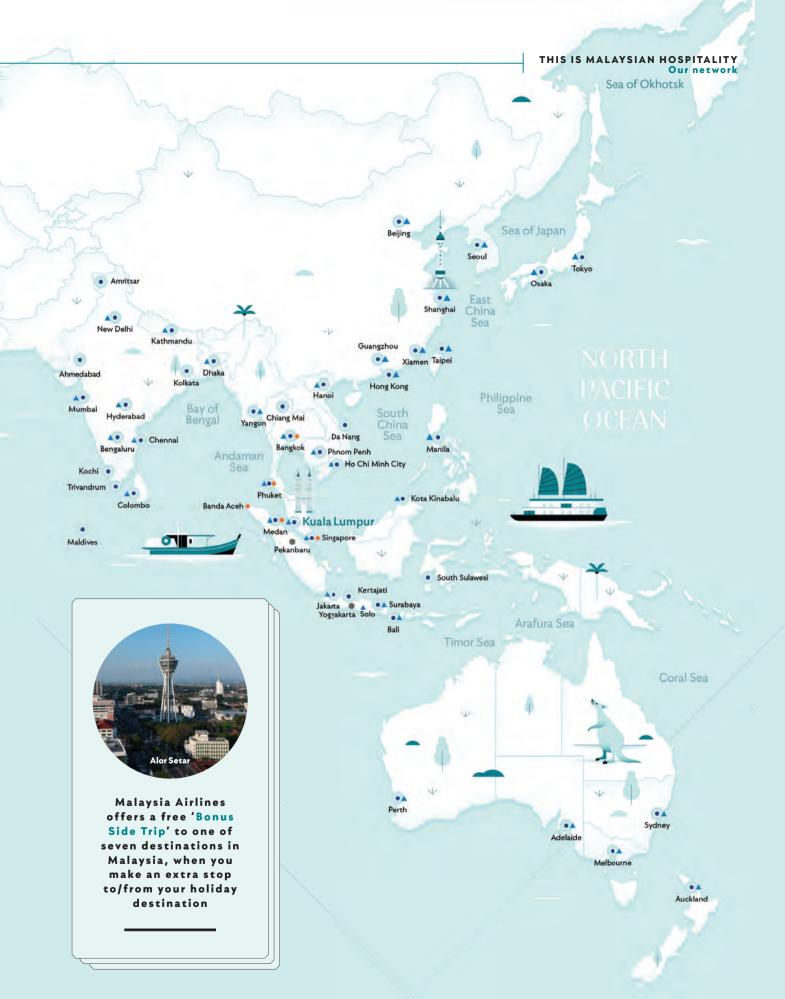
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MOVIES





Paddington in Peru

Paddington



Paddington 2



From the deepest jungles of Peru to the bustling streets of London, Paddington Bear has captured hearts worldwide. In *Paddington*, he finds a home with the Browns while evading a villainous taxidermist. *Paddington 2* raises the stakes as he is wrongly imprisoned, setting off a heartwarming quest for justice. Now, *Paddington in Peru* takes him back to his roots for a thrilling Amazonian adventure. With charm, humour, and, of course, plenty of marmalade, Paddington's cinematic journey is a delightful celebration of kindness, family and adventure. Whether in London or the rainforest, one thing is certain – wherever Paddington goes, mischief, heart and a whole lot of fun is sure to follow!

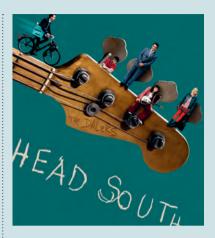




Indie gem Danny Goes Aum follows a British video editor's journey to Goa, where he explores his parents' hippie roots and his own self-discovery.



Night Call follows Mady, a studentturned-locksmith drawn into a dangerous manhunt - a gripping tale of survival, morality and suspense.



A nostalgic dive into Christchurch's post-punk scene, Head South is a raw, endearing coming-of-age tale set to a pulsing underground soundtrack.



Unstoppable is the inspiring true story of one-legged wrestler Anthony Robles, who defied all odds to become a champion. A powerful tale of resilience, triumph and strength.



William Tell follows a noble huntsman whose world is upended by an Austrian invasion. Refusing to submit, he becomes the unlikely hero of a revolution shaping Switzerland's fate.



Get ready to laugh out loud! You're Cordially Invited hilariously navigates the chaos of two double-booked weddings, starring Will Ferrell and Reese Witherspoon.



In Midas, a college dropout joins an insurance firm and recruits his friends for a heist. Their plan unravels when they uncover a sinister scheme, testing their greed and loyalty.

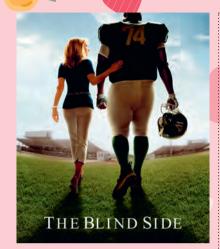


In Werewolves, two scientists work to prevent another mutation after a pandemic turned people into monsters. But when their experiment fails, chaos threatens humanity again.

MOVIES

MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL

Hollywood Favourite Movies



A heartwarming true story starring Sandra Bullock, The Blind Side follows Michael Oher, a homeless teenager who finds both a home and a future with the Tuohy family.



A poignant drama about three women connected by adoption, Mother and Child explores love, loss and the complexities of motherhood, brought to life by an incredible ensemble cast.



Best friends Alice and Celine's perfect lives shatter after a tragic accident. As guilt and paranoia take hold, their bond unravels in Mother's Instinct, exposing buried secrets.



A hilarious clash of personalities, Monster-in-Law pits Jennifer Lopez against Jane Fonda in this laugh-out-loud comedy, packed with witty banter and outrageous antics. It's the ultimate showdown of love versus family drama.



A futuristic sci-fi thriller, I Am Mother explores the bond between a robot "Mother" and her human child. With stunning visuals and thought-provoking twists, it's a gripping tale of trust, morality and what it means to be human.



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Kaamatan - The best possible time to visit Kota Kinabalu!

Sabah, also known as The Land Below The Wind, is a vast, rich land of culture, history, food and people. With the harvest festival coming up, there's no better time to plan a trip.

Head to its capital city, Kota Kinabalu, which is nestled between both ocean and mountain. See beaches for miles, and take a 2-hour drive to the highlands of Kundasang and consequently, the iconic Gunung Kinabalu, the highest peak in Southeast Asia.

Year-round, activities are aplenty in Kota Kinabalu. Go island-hopping by speedboat, dine on the freshest seafood, and explore vibrant nightlife along the city's waterfront.

Experience all these and more, amped up during Kaamatan, which happens every year at the end of May.



Discover tickets & packages to the best experiences.

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A trip to rem aber

awaits you during Sabah's annual harvest festival, Pesta Kaamatan, the perfect time to experience quintessential Sabahan culture.

The perfect place to take in the electrifying energy is at the Harvest Festival Bazaar at KDCA. Enjoy live entertainment and browse food stalls galore. Taste the best of authentic Sabahan food, like Kadazan hinava, traditional raw fish salad, latok, grape seaweed, or, don't knock it 'til you try it, butod, sago grubs.

Airport Services

Kota Kinabalu is a city that leaves you wanting more, and Kaamatan is the perfect time to take it all in.

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MOVIES

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Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows - Part 1



Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2

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MOVIES



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MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL

Malay



Ibu Pinjaman

Rizal and Aunt Rokiah bond at an old folks' home, both longing for love - he for a mother, and she for her lost child. Their Raya celebration is tested when Aunt Rokiah's son threatens Rizal. A story of love, loss and enduring bonds.



Bintang Hati Umi

Suria, a struggling widow, sells fish to support her children, gifting them simple cupcakes on their birthdays. Her eldest son, Amar, rebels against their hard life, runs away and dreams of marrying Dalina, a wealthy girl.



Hilangnya Doa Seorang Ibu

Laila's success makes her disrespectful towards her struggling family. She asks her mother to pray for her but mysteriously falls ill while Zubaidah is on Umrah. A powerful story about family and the consequences of pride.

Chinese



Be My Friend

Li Jinbu travels back in time to her mother's teenage years and joins her high school gang. Determined to rewrite her mother's future, she plans to swap her father for the school's star student.

Hindi



Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham

A Bollywood classic about love and sacrifice. When Rahul marries Anjali against his father's wishes, he is disowned, causing heartbreak. Years later, his brother Rohan sets out to reunite the family.

Tamil



Sembi

This powerful drama follows an elderly woman and a young girl who flee after facing injustice, killing a corrupt police officer in self-defense. Boarding a bus to escape, they find unexpected support from the passengers.

Malay



Zero to Millionaire

Indonesian



Srimulat: Hidup Memang Komedi

Malayalam



Kishkindha Kaandam

Telugu



Prabuthwa Junior Kalashala

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Tamil









A Place Called Silence

Meiyazhagan

Rasavathi

Japanese



We Don't Know Love Yet



6 Lying University Students

Chinese



A Frozen Rage

Korean



Thunderstruck Cop



Dirty Money



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TELEVISION

Comedy



•••••

Young Sheldon

Drama



Kids



Teen Titans Go!

History



Curse of the Ancients

Sports



Driver61

Malay

Beware the Ratman

.....



Travel with Mommy: Misi **Anak Mak**

Chinese



Rock Sugar Summer

Japanese



Ninja Hattori (Season 1-6)

Korean



M Count Down

Hindi



Crime Patrol 2.0

Comedy



Mom

In this comedy-drama, Christy, a single mother, navigates sobriety, parenting and her strained relationship with her mom, Bonnie. Filled with humour and heart, the show explores family dynamics, recovery and the challenges of rebuilding one's life.

Drama



Maid

Single mother Alex escapes abuse while working as a maid to support her daughter. The raw, emotional series explores resilience, poverty and the fight for a better future.

Lifestyle



Diana, Our Mother: Her Life and Legacy

This documentary honours Princess Diana through intimate stories from Prince William and Prince Harry, celebrating her warmth, humanitarian work and lasting legacy as a beloved mother and public figure.



French

Premier Pétale, Candice's captivating album released in 2025, features eight enchanting tracks, including collaborations with artists like Tsew The Kid. Blending R&B melodies with heartfelt lyrics, it creates a beautiful listening experience exploring love and vulnerability.

Club



Japanese



The Hits





Memories



.....



Korean



R & B





Malay





Tamil



Hindi



Indonesian



Cantonese



Mandarin



Kids





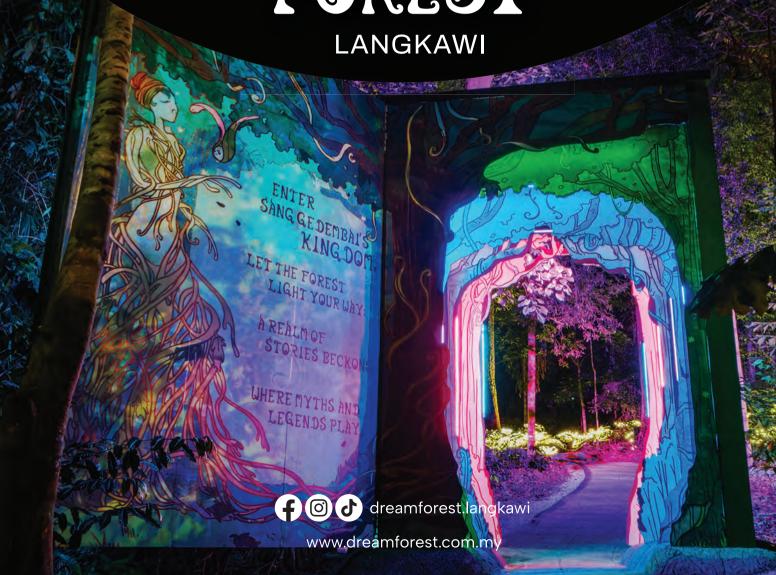


An Enchanting Rainforest Night Walk

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