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A zen state of mind at the Kenninji Temple in Kyoto
Photo courtesy of Mark Parren Taylor

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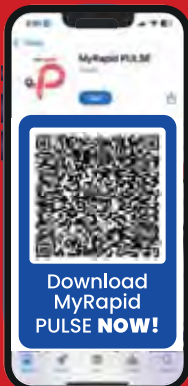
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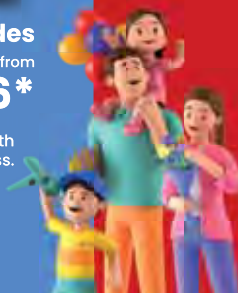
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Dear guests,

August holds special significance as we commemorate Malaysia's 68th National Day on 31 August – a moment to reflect on our shared journey as a nation shaped by diversity, resilience and unity.

At Malaysia Aviation Group, we are proud to play a key role in connecting Malaysia to the world. Through our collective efforts, we contribute to the nation's growth and global presence, while staying true to the values of Malaysian Hospitality. Our evolution – from humble beginnings to becoming a diverse aviation group – mirrors the determination and progress of the country we serve. As we reflect on how far we've come, we stand united in our commitment to a future shaped by shared purpose, resilience and national pride.

This shared spirit of progress is also reflected in the recent achievements of Malaysia Airlines in the 2025 Skytrax World Airline Awards. The airline advanced 12 places to rank 27th among the World's Top 100 Airlines, up from 39th last year. We also secured Top 10 global rankings in several categories: 6th for World's Best Airport Services, 8th for World's Best Airline Cabin Crew, 7th for Best Airline Staff in Asia, 9th for Best Airlines in Asia and 10th for Best Economy Class Airline Seats, along with 12th for World's Cleanest Airline and 16th for World's Best Economy Class. These accolades reflect not just targeted improvements, but our growing strength in areas like airport services and frontline excellence – true hallmarks of Malaysian Hospitality.

Just a few years ago, returning to the top seemed a distant goal. But through steady progress and bold, strategic steps, that vision is becoming a reality. With continued momentum, we aim to be recognised for the World's Best Business Class Onboard Catering by 2027 and to rank among the Top 10 Global Airlines and Top 5 in Asia Pacific by 2030. This proud

moment belongs to every member of the MAG family – on the ground, in the skies and behind the scenes.

These achievements reflect our ongoing focus on elevating service standards and enhancing the passenger experience across every touchpoint. From upgraded offerings to a more seamless customer journey, these improvements are the result of the dedication and professionalism of our people, and the continued trust of our passengers. These recognitions not only reflect the dedication of our teams but also reinforce the importance of continuous investment in every part of the customer journey – including our fleet.

As part of our long-term growth and network strategy, we recently announced an additional order of 20 A330neo aircraft as part of our fleet modernisation initiative. This reinforces our commitment to fleet renewal and network expansion, bringing our total A330neo order to 40 aircraft. With this, Malaysia Airlines becomes one of the largest A330neo operators by order volume among full-service carriers in the Asia-Pacific region – strengthening our position as a leading premium airline in one of the world's fastest-growing travel markets. This strategic investment reflects our dedication to building a future-ready operation that meets rising demand while elevating the premium travel experience through our enhanced cabin offerings.

This positive momentum continues as we proudly welcome our fourth A330 and the 13th Boeing 737-8, further enhancing our capacity, operational efficiency and ability to meet evolving passenger expectations. It also underscores our dedication to providing a modern, world-class travel experience tailored to the needs of today's travellers. With these latest additions, we are well-positioned to elevate our presence across both regional and global markets, reinforcing our role as a gateway to Asia and beyond.

Thank you for choosing to fly with us – it is truly our privilege to have you on board. We look forward to welcoming you and making your journey a memorable one, delivered with the warmth and care of Malaysian Hospitality. Wishing you safe travels and enriching journeys ahead.

Izhah Ismail

Group Managing Director
Malaysia Aviation Group



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LAI PO HEEN

When I travel somewhere new, there's always a thrill in ticking off bucket-list items – the landmarks, the must-try dishes, the photo-worthy spots. But I've come to realise that some of the most memorable moments happen when I stop planning and start wandering. Letting your feet lead the way, allowing yourself to simply be present can uncover unexpected gems that give your journey deeper meaning and purpose.

This month, we lean into the beauty of slow travel, beginning with our cover story in Kyoto. Here, travel becomes a contemplative experience – whether it's visiting the oldest tea caddy maker in Japan, where tea is a silent drink that invites quiet contemplation, or joining a traditional crafts workshop to witness firsthand the patience and precision of Japanese artisans.

Meanwhile, here in Malaysia, we find ourselves in Penang just in time for the George Town Festival. We explore a vibrant mix of street art, watch the iconic Macalister Mansion transform into a sun-drenched backdrop for Dioriviera's capsule collection, escape to Penang Hill's cooler ambience and of course, indulge in the island's unbeatable food offerings.

Also in this issue, we ask: have you heard of sober bars? These stylish, alcohol-free spaces are gaining popularity across major cities, offering creative, craft-level drinks without the buzz. We spotlight some must-try spots in Manila for those curious about mindful socialising.

Wherever you find yourself this August, may your travels be unhurried, your senses open and your heart full. Here's to finding magic in the quiet details.



Go forth and wander!

Elizabeth Soong

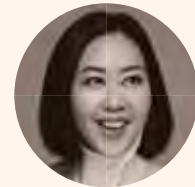
Elizabeth Soong
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This issue's contributors



Renyi Lim
Writer, "Threads that count",
page 21

Renyi is a Kuala Lumpur based journalist covering travel, luxury, wellness and dining – currently hunting for her first kebaya, ideally embroidered with Nyonya kueh.



Kissa Castañeda
Writer, "Nice and slow in
Kyoto", page 52

Kissa is a lifestyle journalist covering design, travel and food. A former editor-in-chief of *Tatler* Singapore, she's lived in six cities, visited over 60 countries and loves adaptive reuse hotels and city strolls.



Vidya Balachandar
Writer, "Weaving magic",
page 62

An award-winning writer and editor currently based in Manila, Vidya enjoys writing about the intersection of food, travel, culture and communities.

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12 REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places

1

Johor

Your own slice of paradise

Picture this: you wake up to the sound of waves and sip your sunrise coffee on the deck, the sea stretching endlessly before you. At your villa, a private chef-prepped lunch awaits. Later, you power through a few video calls in style – because here, even work feels like a holiday.

Tucked along a golden ribbon of sand and kissed by panoramic sea views, **Anantara Desaru Coast Residences** offers the ultimate coastal escape in Johor. Don't miss your final opportunity to own a piece of paradise: a fully furnished, four-bedroom beachfront villa where barefoot luxury meets world-class resort living in a sought-after location.

The villa is a private sanctuary designed for those who crave both serenity and sophistication. Two of the four beautifully appointed bedrooms open directly onto an expansive sun deck with an infinity pool. Inside, open-plan living and dining spaces are framed by floor-to-ceiling glass, inviting natural light and postcard-perfect views.

As an owner, you'll enjoy 24/7 butler service and full access to the Anantara Desaru Coast Resort and Villas' five-star facilities. There's also the option to join the hotel's rental programme, seamlessly managed by Anantara's expert team.

anantaradesaru-residences.com





4

Kuala Lumpur

Independence day!

Every 31 August, Dataran Merdeka comes alive with the **National Day Parade** – celebrating Malaysia's independence with military marches, cultural shows, marching bands, colourful floats and evening fireworks. Arrive early in the morning to secure a good spot, take public transport to avoid road closures, dress comfortably and bring water to stay hydrated. A patriotic spectacle not to be missed!

IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK (NATIONAL DAY PARADE), COURTESY OF KLFW (FASHION PHOTOS)



2

Selangor

Anime time

Mark your calendars, anime lovers and gaming enthusiasts – **AniManGaki** is back, bigger than ever! From 22 to 24 August, it will take over the Mines International Exhibition and Convention Centre with its signature riot of cosplay, comics and digital fantasy. Short

for anime, manga, games and *gaki* (Japanese for brat), AniManGaki is one of Malaysia's loudest ACG (animation, comics and games) celebrations. Think bold anime aesthetics, gaming tournaments and superhero showdowns, all under one roof. animangaki.com

3

Kuala Lumpur

Runway chic

Fashionistas, take note! **Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week (KLFW)** is turning up the heat from 4 to 10 August, bringing a bold dose of style to the outdoor park of Suria KLCC. This year's edition promises a mix of glamour and innovation, spotlighting homegrown labels from rising talents to big names like Tangoo and The Melium Group. Expect capsule collection debuts, fashion talks, celebrity appearances and influencer-heavy front rows, plus plenty of street-style moments. klfashionweek.website





Cili Kampung

5

Malaysia

Malaysian flavours, reimagined

This Merdeka, experience the soul of Malaysia through a new wave of kitchens reimagining tradition with bold creativity. Here are our top three favourites redefining what it means to *rasa* (taste) Malaysia today.

Cili Kampung

If fiery sambal and bold flavours excite you, head to Cili Kampung – a modern kampung kitchen with roots in Langkawi and outposts across Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

Nicknamed Cili Padi by fans, it's a love letter to Malay village cooking, served with urban polish. At Suria KLCC, rustic fish-trap lights and breezy kampung murals make it cosy for Sunday lunch, yet chic enough for an out-of-town guest you're hoping to impress.

Signature dishes like *masak lemak* hornshell (hornshell cooked in rich coconut gravy) and *asam pedas tenggiri* (fish stewed in a spicy and tangy gravy) are showstoppers – each one a masterclass in heat, depth and nostalgia. For something gentler, the *gulai nangka* with *pucuk manis* (jackfruit curry) hits all the right notes.

Drinks? Tropical cool-downs like lychee lime & rose keep things tropically refreshing. cilikampung.com



Akar Dining



OpenHouse

Akar Dining

Hidden away in Taman Tun Dr Ismail is Akar Dining, a 26-seater Michelin-selected gem where chef Aidan Low fuses French technique and Japanese precision with Malaysian soul. His tasting menu turns local ingredients like *gula apong* (palm sugar) and fresh mud crabs into centrepieces.

His menu moves from playful starters like x-dairy cow (beetroot tartare with caviar) and breadfruit bun to standout mains like aged duck with mulberry, slipper lobster in pumpkin jus and crab claypot rice a la *kamameshi*-style – first served dry, then poured over with rich broth. Even desserts surprise, with passionfruit-kombu sorbet, fig leaf ice cream and delicate riffs on *bahulu* (mini sponge cake) and *ondeh-ondeh* (pandan glutinous rice balls).

akardining.com

OpenHouse Conlay

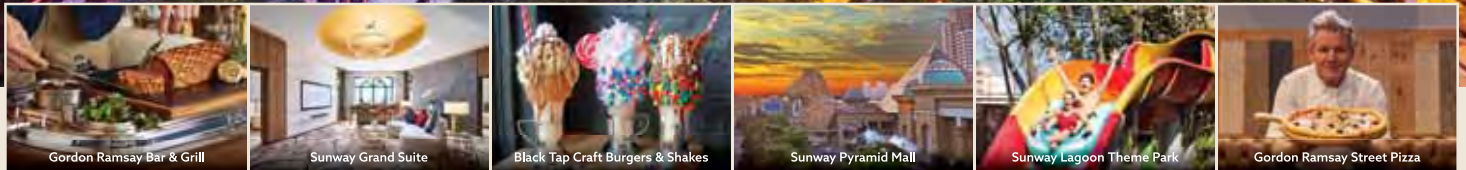
A chic, tropical escape on Jalan Stonor, OpenHouse blends botanical luxe with cheeky taxidermy birds. It feels like a jungle dinner party, but make it stylish.

Start with the Kudap Kudap Sambal Experience, a wild ride through six traditional sambals served with crispy *rempeyek* (peanut fritters) and fish crackers. Then indulge in elevated classics like satay, laksa Johor and *rendang tok*, a Perak-style, slow-cooked beef in spice-drenched, dry gravy. End on a high with their cult-favourite cempedak cheesecake.

openhouse.my

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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.



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6

Selangor

A new kind of teahouse

Two years after reimagining the grab-and-go tea scene, **Beca Tea** enters a new chapter with a refreshed flagship in Damansara Uptown. Designed by Wunderwall, the sleek, fluid space blends water features and generative art – modern Zen with an edge.

Run by fourth- and fifth-generation tea makers from one of KL's oldest tea families, Beca is rewriting the rules of tea culture. Its new "experience menu" trades tradition for play: choose from DIY Tea Mixology, co-created with award-winning mixologist Tracia Chan; Tea + Tisane

Pairings are brewed tableside, paired with bites like truffle mushroom pielette and vegan chocolate crumble; or an intimate Tea Omakase with CEO PC Koh himself.

Beca's mission? To make tea thoughtful, personal and undeniably cool. becatea.com



3 ways to enjoy your tea better

Sip slow

Don't rush. Let each sip linger to fully appreciate the full range of flavours.

Brew right

Great tea starts with the right brew to avoid bitterness. Cooler (around 70–80°C) for green, hotter (90–100°C) for black and oolong.

Pair well

Match your tea with the right bites, like jasmine with buttery pastries or pu-erh with dark chocolate, to elevate your experience.

7

Selangor

Luck be a lady



Janet Lee, Malaysia's Queen of Shanghai Jazz, marks 20 years on stage with Lucky Lee, a spirited, genre-blending concert from 15–17 August at the Damansara Performing Arts Centre. Directed by theatre maven Nell Ng and backed by jazz maestro Tay Cher Siang, the 100-minute show features live music, dance and multilingual storytelling with theatrical flair, tracing Lee's journey from Taiping to the stage. dpac.com.my



8

Malaysia

Concerts to go for this month

Jacky Cheung

Get ready, KL – Jacky Cheung returns with his 60+ Concert Tour at Axiata Arena, Bukit Jalil, 15–17 and 22–24 August. The show blends emotion and spectacle with a 53-piece orchestra, dancers, rain effects, vintage cars and stunning visuals. Don't miss it! **starplanet.com.my**

Richard Marx

For one night only on 16 August, Richard Marx brings on the nostalgia at Resorts World Genting's Arena of Stars. Expect timeless hits like "Right Here Waiting" and "Endless Summer Nights" that will have the crowd swooning from the first note. **rwgenting.com**

RIIZE

K-pop breakout group RIIZE brings their RIIZING Loud tour to IDEA Live Arena, Petaling Jaya on 16 August. The six-member act, fresh off their debut album *Odyssey*, is lighting up a 24-city Asian tour with bold dancepop, funkdisco beats and Y2K flair. **my.bookmyshow.com**

9

Kuala Lumpur

Stay, heal, shop

Planning a medical trip to Kuala Lumpur? **Maybank** Indonesia cardholders can enjoy a special stay at Grand Millennium KL from as low as RM400++ per night with a confirmed appointment at Pantai Hospital KL. This includes daily breakfast and complimentary shuttle service to and from the hospital. When you're ready to explore, head next door to Pavilion KL and redeem your Tourist Reward Card for exclusive deals, discounts and gifts from over 200 stores. Offer is valid till 24 December 2025. **maybank.my/pantai**





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10

Malaysia

Rewriting the batik rulebook

Proudly Malaysian, **Kapten Batik** fuses traditional craftsmanship with modern style. Founded in 2017 by ex-engineers Ekram Faiz and Farhan Omar, the brand reimagines batik for a new generation. Here, the founders share their journey and what modern Malaysian identity means to them.

What does Malaysian pride mean to you, and how is that reflected in Kapten Batik?

Ekram: Malaysian pride is about celebrating our diverse roots – cultures, languages, craftsmanship, heritage – while embracing the modern world. At Kapten Batik, that pride is sewn into every seam. Kapten Batik is more than fashion; it's our flag, our rhythm, our story.

How does Kapten Batik celebrate unity in multicultural Malaysia?

Farhan: At Kapten Batik, fashion is a canvas for unity and identity. Our motifs

are often inspired by the interplay of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Indigenous influences: think Peranakan tiles, Minangkabau curves and Indian block-print symmetry in one fresh, cosmopolitan shirt. We're redefining batik as Malaysia's modern uniform – something every Malaysian can wear with pride. It's not just traditional attire, it is Malaysian soul wear.

Can you share a moment when Kapten Batik connected people to their heritage?



Ekram: One of our most memorable moments was at a Hari Raya pop-up in Kuala Lumpur. A Chinese customer picked up a shirt from our Mainan collection and said it reminded him of the *mainan* [toy] he played with at his grandmother's kampung in Melaka. A nearby Malay couple shared similar memories from Kelantan – and just like that, the shirt became a bridge.

Kapten Batik isn't just about clothes, it's about weaving connections through personal stories and shared heritage.

Is there a special collection planned for Merdeka or Malaysia Day this year?

Ekram: Yes, this Merdeka, we're launching our first F&B collaboration: Kapten Batik x Kenangan Coffee. Themed Serumpun, it celebrates shared roots through fashion and coffee. Expect limited-edition products and events leading up to Merdeka and Malaysia Day. It's all about celebrating local culture, creativity and connection in a way that feels modern but deeply Malaysian. kaptenbatik.com.my

“Kapten Batik isn't just about clothes, it's about weaving connections through personal stories and shared heritage”

Farhan Omar and Ekram Faiz



Sabah

Soul food

Since arriving in Kota Kinabalu (KK) last April, Daniele Milliani, executive chef of **Shangri-La Rasa Ria**, has been infusing his Italian roots with Sabah's rich culinary traditions. A fan of local flavours, he's reimagining resort menus with native ingredients and leading sustainability efforts from the kitchen.

"At Rasa Ria, sustainability is part of everything we do," says Milliani. Ingredients are sourced from local farmers to ensure freshness, reduce carbon footprint and support the local economy. Glass bottles are recycled into sand through the hotel's EcoRia initiative, facilitating a circular waste

management. Water and energy usage are closely monitored as well.

What keeps him grounded in KK? "The people," he says. "There's warmth and community spirit that's rare. And it's inspiring to work alongside individuals who are passionate about preserving their heritage and environment."

Sabah, he says, is a chef's dream: from exotic fruits and herbs to fresh seafood and quality local meats. His favourite dish? Tuaran mee. "It's humble, hearty and packed with tradition – a must-try for anyone visiting." [IG.com/shangrilarasaria](https://www.ig.com/shangrilarasaria)



12

Malaysia

Taste the best of Malaysia

The **Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA)** brings the taste of Malaysia to Asia Fruit Logistica 2025 (3–5 Sept, Hong Kong), showcasing Malaysia's Best – a mark of premium quality, freshness and global appeal. If you love fresh produce and innovative food and beverages, visit AsiaWorld-Expo, Hall 3, Booth 3G57 to try the country's top tropical produce and agri-innovations from six Malaysian agropreneurs. [IG.com/fama.malaysia](https://www.ig.com/fama.malaysia)



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At Setia, we strive to set a new benchmark in creating well-designed spaces that incorporate the latest sustainability and landscaping innovations, for our communities and future generations.

Signifying a new milestone this year, we are honoured to receive two prestigious awards at the 15th Malaysia Landscape Architecture Awards (MLAA15), namely LakePoint Park, Setia AlamImpian for the MLAA15 Excellence Award 2025 in the Developer Category – Landscape Development Awards; and Setia Utama P11, Bandar Setia Alam for the MLAA15 Honour Award 2025 in the Developer Category – Landscape Development Awards.

To our community, our Team Setia, and everyone who has been a part of this meaningful journey, thank you for believing in us.

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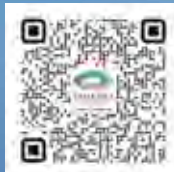
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MALAYSIAN ICONS

A celebration of cultural pride, heritage and timeless Malaysian craftsmanship

Threads that count

The **kebaya** is proudly worn by Malay and Peranakan communities in Malaysia, each generation adding its own touch to the rich heritage **BY RENYI LIM**

“Passion, patience and interest, that’s what you need to create a kebaya,” says Lim Yu Lin, a third-generation kebaya-maker preserving the art of these uniquely embroidered garments. In **Ang Eng**, Lim’s boutique in Ampang, it’s clear each Nyonya kebaya on display is a labour of love.

The Nyonya kebaya, traditionally worn by Straits Chinese women, is characterised by bright colours, sheer fabric, intricate embroidery and cutwork (*kerawang*) on the front panels, sleeves and lapels, as well as a figure-skimming princess line.

Lim’s grandmother established Ang Eng in Alor Setar in 1955, and today, Lim is one of the few artisans still making authentic kebaya by hand. Each piece begins with hand-sketched designs, traced onto the fabric – traditionally Swiss voile or rubia. Embroidery is done using a treadle sewing machine, followed by intricate cutwork that can take ➔



Previous spread:
A Merdeka motif
in Ang Eng's
kebaya creation

From left:
Lim Yu Lin's passion
for preserving the
Nyonya kebaya's
heritage is apparent
in her work; Henry
Bong's collection of
kebaya accessories;
Henry Bong at The
Pucuk Rebung Royal
Gallery-Museum



up to two weeks. The seams are then perforated (a process called *ketuk lubang*) using a double needle. A standard kebaya takes about one month to complete, while more elaborate designs may take up to three months.

Given the painstaking, time-consuming work involved, it's easy to see why Ang Eng's signature pieces range from RM2,800 (US\$658) to RM4,500 (US\$1,058), with custom orders costing more. Designs typically feature floral motifs, abstract geometrical patterns or symbolic designs like phoenixes and dragons, often used for Peranakan weddings. Ang Eng's more contemporary creations even incorporate kuih-kuih, *wau* kites and national celebrations like Malaysia's Independence Day.

Lim acknowledges the challenges of passing on this heritage. "It's hard to find young people willing to sit for eight hours using a manual sewing machine, with the hand skills needed to guide every single stitch and maintain control over the pattern," she says. Many also hesitate at the price, viewing the kebaya as

“

A standard kebaya takes about one month to complete, while more elaborate designs may take up to three months”

something worn for special occasions rather than every day.

Still, Lim sees hope in the renewed interest from younger generations and international clients. "I used to hear young people say the kebaya was for older women, but now that it's gaining attention on social media, they look at it differently," she notes. Perhaps it's proof that the kebaya's appeal transcends continents and generations. But one thing's for sure: Lim and her artisans at Ang Eng will keep sewing for years to come.

Although the Nyonya kebaya is arguably the most widely publicised style, variations exist across Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore

and Thailand – each reflecting the region's rich socio-historical fabric. Henry Bong, CEO, founder and curator of **The Pucuk Rebung Royal Gallery-Museum** in Bangsar, is eager to share his knowledge of the kebaya's deep-rooted cultural significance.

"It's a colourful outfit full of style and heritage, and it carries great civilisational grandeur and sophistication," says Bong, a 16th-generation Nusantara Peranakan. "The kebaya has deep roots in the older Malay world, when we were interconnected territories within the Malay Archipelago – reflecting layers of trade, travel, cultural assimilation and evolution."

Bong possesses an impressive collection of antique and vintage kebaya, many of which belonged to his grandmother and mother. These range from the longer *baju panjang* – a predecessor to the Nyonya kebaya worn in the 19th century – to the shorter *kebaya pendek*. Traditionally,

Did you know that...

The word "kebaya" traces its roots to the Portuguese *cabaya* (tunic), Arabic *qabaya* (vesture) and Persian *qaba* (robe of honour).

In 2024, the kebaya was inscribed on the Unesco Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Malaysia Airlines introduced the kebaya as a cabin crew uniform in 1963, featuring a chilli-red sarong kebaya with a *kutu baru* bodice and nine pleats.

The current Malaysia Airlines kebaya features floral designs with bamboo and *kelarai batik* motifs, showcasing Malaysian flora like champak, jasmine and hibiscus.



the outfit included a camisole, a hand-painted batik sarong from Pekalongan, ornate *kerongsang* brooches, a gold or silver belt, beaded slippers and jewellery.

Emulating the old-world glamour of the kebaya doesn't require antique gilded *kerongsang* or Javanese batik sarong – in fact, Bong notes it can be worn with Malaysian batik. What matters most is respecting the sarong kebaya and those who wore it. "I think you can style it well if you understand how it was originally worn," he says.

Vintage kebaya can still be found through specialist collectors, with particularly good pieces priced around RM4,000 to RM5,000 (US\$940 to US\$1,175). "Great pieces are very difficult to come by," Bong says, adding that one way to assess a vintage kebaya's authenticity is by examining the thread. "More recent copies of kebaya use fluffy, velvety thread. My mother's kebaya uses hard, durable thread that lasts."

Rocking the kebaya

Four Malaysian fashion designers on how the traditional top has inspired their own contemporary creations

Fern Chua

"As a batik designer, I was drawn to how well it complements batik, and wanted to push that further by making batik a central element, not just a supporting textile. The challenge was achieving visual balance, as bold batik patterns required careful attention to scale, composition, placement and contrast."

Khoon Hooi

"I wanted to pay homage to the countless kebaya found in my grandmother's closet while growing up as a child in Parit Buntar, Perak, and dreamt up a collection that marries tradition with modern flourishes. The designs reimagine the kebaya in various silhouettes, featuring hand-sewn sulam lace, delicate hand-beaded embellishments on sarong lace, graceful draping and rich brocades."

Rizman Ruzaini

"We updated the silhouette for contemporary wear by incorporating sulam tebuk-inspired motifs, new fabric blends and a mix of traditional and digital techniques for richness and everyday accessibility."

Alia Bastamam

"What I find powerful about the kebaya is its versatility – it can be regal, relaxed, delicate or strong. That flexibility makes it a constant source of inspiration and reinvention. In recent collections, we've explored nostalgic and modern takes, like split sleeves for a sense of movement and ease or robe-like silhouettes blending resort chic with traditional form."



From left:
Alia Bastamam,
Fern Chua, Rizman
Ruzaini, Khoon Hooi



The future starts now

ASEAN 2045 is the blueprint for a stronger, smarter and more united Southeast Asia

Community Vision 2045, charting a bold and inclusive direction for the region over the next two decades. Grounded in shared aspirations, the vision reaffirms ASEAN's commitment to building a resilient, innovative and people-centred community, one that safeguards peace and promotes sustainable progress.

At the heart of the vision is a simple yet powerful idea: ASEAN must serve its people. That means raising living standards through quality education, decent jobs, accessible healthcare and equitable development – especially for women, youth and rural communities.

Advancing future-readiness

From climate change to digital disruption, ASEAN is preparing for future challenges by investing in green and digital economies, enhancing disaster response and adopting new technologies to ensure sustainable, stable growth.

Digital transformation is a key focus, with initiatives to improve cybersecurity, expand access and build cross-border ecosystems. ASEAN envisions itself as a hub for smart cities, sustainable industries and innovation.

Ensuring strength in unity

Regional unity remains key to ASEAN's future. The 2045

vision calls for a more agile ASEAN Secretariat, stronger resource mobilisation and closer coordination across all pillars. It reaffirms ASEAN's central role in promoting peace, neutrality and multilateralism amid global uncertainty.

The vision also supports rules-based frameworks to address maritime and environmental challenges, while upholding human rights, good governance and the rule of law.

Empowering the next generation

Youth are vital to ASEAN's future. This master plan invites them to shape

policies, drive innovation, champion sustainability and foster cross-cultural understanding. It encourages cross-border collaboration to build regional identity and shared purpose.

Ultimately, ASEAN 2045 is a rallying call for collective action. With the right partnerships, leadership and citizen involvement, the region can build a more connected, inclusive and resilient future.

[Visit myasean2025.my](https://myasean2025.my) for more information on ASEAN 2045.





An Enchanting Rainforest Night Walk

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ELEVATE

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



HOTELS

Modern romance

Taipei's latest five-star stay is a sophisticated home away from home **BY TARA FT SERING**



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Taipei 7x weekly.

If you're the type to organise a trip around a must-try hotel, clear a weekend for the new **Capella Taipei**, an 86-key property designed as a "modern mansion" by design superstar André Fu. The interiors bear all the hallmarks of an André Fu masterpiece: a delicate balance of grandeur and personal touches, an East-meets-West aesthetic and custom-made details that evoke a strong sense of place. There's plenty of bespoke art and five dining outlets within the property, a glass-clad building with an Art Deco touch, located along the broad and leafy Dunhua North Road in the lively Songshan District. If you do manage to peel yourself away from the hotel, you'll find a walkable neighbourhood that's home to night markets, art galleries and other cultural attractions. capellahotels.com



Malaysia Airlines flies
between Kuala Lumpur
and Doha 14x weekly

“

As you enter Doha's fish market, a stream of blue and turquoise light envelops you, making you feel as though you're scuba diving in a reef”



Doha Corniche



ATTRACTIONS

Sea and be seen

Doha's Instagram-famous fish market is a real-life beauty worth checking out

BY ULRIKE LEMMIN-WOOLFREY

It sounds like an unlikely backdrop

for holiday snaps or social media stories, but Doha's fish market in the city's Mina District is as many have claimed: seemingly custom-made for rigorously curated social media feeds – in the best way.

In recent years, Doha's former **Old Port** has been reimagined and transformed from a dreary area, with nothing to charm anyone outside of the fish trade, into a highlight of every visit to the city. Located at the end of a long causeway

jutting out from Doha's Corniche, it now houses a futuristic cruise port that can handle two large cruise ships – or some 12,000 passengers in a day – and a pastel-hued neighbourhood filled with everything from trendy cafés and high-end shops, to boutique hotels and luxury properties like the Mandarin Oriental.

At the heart of it is a fish market designed to inspire awe. As you enter, a stream of blue and turquoise light envelops you. Everything from the mosaic floor tiles and glass-domed display pods to the arched doors is drenched in underwater hues. The pièce de résistance is a huge, stained-glass ceiling depicting an underwater scene of fish, seaweed and coral. Some 7,000 individual pieces of glass, coated in heat-resistant material to let in light but not the desert heat, make you feel as though you're scuba diving in a reef.

There isn't the slightest hint of a fishy smell in the air. Instead, the individual display stands are heaped with crushed ice, mounted with the day's catch from the Persian Gulf and

the Indian Ocean: hammour (a type of grouper), snapper, emperor fish, sea bream, tuna, together with crabs and prawns, octopus and cuttlefish. If you're more of an eater, head into **Chabrat Al Mina**, the fish restaurant attached to the market, where the turquoise underwater accents continue. Here, you can choose a fish or seafood item and discuss how you'd like to have it with the chef, before relaxing and looking out over the glimmering waters of Doha Bay. Opt for the hammour – either as a fillet or whole – a firm white fish that is best when simply grilled or pan-fried, with a side of steamed vegetables. odp.qa



CAFÉS

A cup of history

The perfect pause in **Phnom Penh**? Coffee in an icon's former home **BY JONATHAN EVANS**

The legacy of Vann Molyvann, known as the Father of Cambodian architecture, lives on in his former residence. For years since its construction in 1966, the multilayered, angular home on Mao Tse Toung Boulevard stood as a monument to his influential style, embracing modernism while preserving Khmer identity.

In April, the residence was transformed into a flagship outlet for **Brown Coffee**, the country's best-known coffee chain, acclaimed both for its interiors and its brews. Although no two branches look the same, all outlets carry the same design-led DNA.

The new flagship store strikes a balance between vibrant modernity and honouring the past. For architect Hok

Kang of HKA & Partners, renovating the designer's historic home had been a long-held dream. For years, Kang drove past the house, visualising what it would be like to preserve and repair this national architectural treasure. He'd envisioned a café with an upper-floor museum dedicated to Molyvann's work. Now, all that has become a reality.

Come for the coffee, stay for the history and browse the permanent exhibition on Molyvann's life, featuring rare artefacts like original blueprints, conceptual designs and photographs. His iconic buildings include the Independence Monument, Chaktomuk Conference Hall, several buildings within the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the National Sports Complex (aka the "Olympic Stadium"), built for the cancelled 1963 Southeast Asian Peninsular Games and most recently used during the 2023 SEA Games.

Molyvann led an illustrious life, fleeing to Switzerland during the civil war and later becoming known for pioneering New Khmer Architecture, appointed by King Norodom Sihanouk himself. Since his passing in 2017, many of his iconic buildings have faced threats from neglect and rapid development. Brown's latest adaptive reuse project signals a shift towards valuing heritage by giving historic spaces contemporary relevance. browncoffee.com.kh



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Phnom Penh 14x weekly.

UR—MU

Urban Museums Of Contemporary Art

UR-MU is a trio of art museums in Kuala Lumpur's city centre, showcasing the region's largest private collection of unique contemporary art. Housed in refurbished heritage buildings with sculptures and rooftop gardens, it offers an inspiring, entertaining and insightful experience into Malaysia's dynamic art scene and evolving architectural landscape

www.ur-mu.com



UR-MU @ Bukit Bintang
A Quirky Contemporary Art Museum



UR-MU @ Toffee, Raja Chulan
Thought-provoking; conversation-sparking



+n by UR-MU @Tun HS Lee
The Art of Protest and Resistance



Scan here for Tickets & Information

August

IN GOOD TASTE

2025

Exploring Malaysia through its most inviting tables and stunning stays



Get all dolled up at Dolly Dim Sum

Loved by locals, Dolly Dim Sum is the go-to spot for a sumptuous contemporary Chinese tea house experience. Blending tradition with a modern twist, this halal-certified spot serves must-tries like har gao, Szechuan dumplings, egg custard buns and belacan crab fried rice. With 15 outlets across Malaysia, there's always a Dolly nearby to satisfy your cravings.

Visit dollydimsum.com or follow [@dollydimsum](https://www.instagram.com/dollydimsum) on Instagram



A taste of Italian summer at Bottega

Think slow afternoons, hand-rolled pasta, wood-fired pizzas and sauces made just like in Italy at this neighbourhood café and grocer.

Linger over seasonal specials or bring home house-made olive oils and pantry favourites, or enjoy their Happy Hour drinks from 4pm to 7pm daily at any of their outlets in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, Penang or Johor Bahru.

Make reservations at bottega.my or follow [@bottegajb](https://www.instagram.com/bottegajb) on Instagram



Celebrate 10 years of Nobu Kuala Lumpur

From romantic dinners to corporate soirées, Nobu Kuala Lumpur has set the stage for elevated dining for a decade.

Now located at Four Seasons Place overlooking KLCC Park, it offers bold Japanese-Peruvian flavours, impeccable service and anniversary exclusives. Indulge in signature dishes and skyline views for an experience to remember.

For reservations, visit noburestaurants.com

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NIGHTLIFE

Mocktail mania

Take a sip of **Manila's** growing options of sober bars and dry menus **BY KRISTINE FONACIER**

For the full experience

Cosy and welcoming, **Gnostic** is the Philippines' first fully dry (and, not coincidentally, fully vegan) bar – and the undisputed poster child for Manila's sober scene. Tucked away in a fourth-floor space in the middle of Makati's Poblacion district, Gnostic manages to literally and figuratively rise above the noise, managing a curious balance of neon-washed energy and meditative calm, inviting patrons to linger and connect. It's clear-headed, quiet revelry at its best.

Everything on the broad drinks list is flavourful and intriguing, but the bar puts its Lychee Haze margarita front and centre for good reason. And can you really leave without trying the Sinigang Caustic and the Tinola Tonic shots? (No, you can't.) **4/F 4980 P Guanzon, Poblacion, Makati; IG.com/gnosticphilippines**

For an award-winning immersion

While not an exclusively dry bar, **The Curator** proves why it belongs on Asia's Best Bars list and why it has been the best bar in the Philippines for a number of years now. Lauded for its acclaimed cocktail programme, The Curator extends that same commitment to quality to its non-alcoholic selections. Its careful, intelligent concoctions makes it a premium choice for those seeking a sophisticated "dry" experience within a

traditional bar setting. The bar list is refreshed regularly, so have a chat with the bartender for the latest dry options or have them make a bespoke drink made to your sober specs. **34 Legazpi Street, Legazpi Village; IG.com/the curator**

For sipping solo

Fat Cat is a jazzy hangout reminiscent of Japanese kissa – apt, as this hidden gem is found within Makati Cinema Square, in the city's tiny "Little Tokyo" neighbourhood. This den for cool cats is a top choice for both solo patrons who wish to unwind to a classic jazz soundtrack or for small groups looking for a conversation-friendly venue. Fat Cat's mocktail list might be short, but it nevertheless feels thoughtful (and tasty): the Yuzu Espresso Tonic and the Tropicana Sour promise classic, zingy flavours, while the Chai Fizz offers a bit more punch. **Makati Cinema Square, Amorsolo St, Pio Del Pilar; fatcatph.com**





DESIGN

Terminal or terrarium?

How Kempegowda International Airport's T2 in **Bengaluru** creates a refreshing garden experience for travellers

BY ANURAG MALLICK & PRIYA GANAPATHY

As India's first and only 5-star-rated airport terminal with twin runways, Kempegowda International Airport's Terminal 2 proves that airports can be much more than just transit points. They can be where journeys begin, pause and transform, making travel more meaningful. Named after Kempe Gowda I, the founder of Bengaluru, T2 began operations in 2023, welcoming travellers into a gorgeous and serene space that's a nod to India's "Garden City". Here's what to look out for.

Tech for the people

Paperless Digi Yatra check-ins, next-gen immigration and customs facilities and a new Fast Track Immigration Programme ensure you have more



Terminal 2

time to enjoy the airport. Art and plant specimens are QR-coded for more information via the BLR Pulse app, which also gives real-time flight updates, navigation assistance, restaurant reservations and exclusive retail offers.

Natural effects

Hanging from a massive grid of treated bamboo that supports the skylight, the Bells & Veils ceiling garden features over 500 decorative planters and lights inspired by traditional temple bells and bulbous onion baskets. Natural light pours into every zone, beautifully fusing bamboo architecture, endemic flora, water features and curated art. Draped in 24,000m² of boardwalks, waterfalls, century-old dragon trees, a desert garden with a 600-year-old olive tree and a sunken garden that recreates a rainforest cascade, it feels less like a terminal and more like a terrarium.

Lounges that make you linger

The 080 Lounge (after Bengaluru's area code) is a visual treat reflecting the city's heritage with private cubicles, workstations with high-speed connectivity, the Haveli Salon & Spa inspired by India's timeless architecture and a fine selection of gourmet refreshments curated by India's top chefs Ranveer Brar and Abhijit Saha.

Art everywhere

T2's Art Programme, launched in 2023,

focuses on Karnataka's cultural heritage. Over 60 permanent artworks by 43 artists have been thoughtfully curated for the space, including LN Tallur's dramatic bronze Vimana that fuses a temple spire with a flying craft and Madhvi Subrahmanian's monumental 40×20ft mural depicting airports as living organisms. More recently, a new Museum of Art & Photography (MAP) has opened – with galleries that double as souvenir stores – in both domestic and international areas.

Inclusive travel

T2 has a dedicated Sensory Room, a calm, low-stimulation space designed to help travellers with special needs – especially children – rest, regulate and reset. Signs in Braille and tactile flooring have been designed for the visually impaired. The Sunflower Lanyard Programme allows passengers needing extra support to discreetly signal for assistance. bengaluruairport.com



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Bengaluru 10x weekly.



The 080 Lounge



London's most electrifying destination

Battersea Power Station delivers an energetic blend of history, culture and style

Once a dormant giant on the Thames, Battersea Power Station is now one of London's most exciting lifestyle destinations. This Grade II-star listed icon – once powering Buckingham Palace and featured on Pink Floyd's *Animals* album – now anchors a bold new riverside neighbourhood.

A 42-acre regeneration of British and Malaysian vision, it's been reimagined as a buzzing riverside hub of shops, eateries, public spaces and cultural attractions.

Pulsating energy

Step into the awe-inspiring Power Station and experience Lift 109 – a one-of-a-kind glass elevator that whisks visitors up the northwest chimney for sweeping London views.

Shop over 150 brands from designer icons to high street staples and indie finds. On Sundays, the River Walk Market adds local flavour with artisan goods and live performances, running until 31 August.

Hungry? Head to the 24,000ft² Arcade Food Hall, with 13 global cuisines and top picks like Bao and Manna. Then wind down in the beautifully restored Control Room B – reimagined as a 1950s-inspired cocktail bar.

Perfect for all ages

Battersea Power Station is a playground for all ages. Children can explore Jurassic World: The Exhibition or roam the six-acre riverside park.

The neighbourhood offers over 50 places to eat and drink that includes casual bites at Gordon Ramsay Street Pizza to fine dining on the River Thames at Fiume. If you want to stay the night, check into the art'otel with its stunning rooftop infinity pool.

From 5–7 September, **celebrASIA** lights up London with Southeast Asian street food, live acts and more.

Connection made effortless

With its own Zone 1 Underground station on the Northern Line, river bus pier and great bus links, Battersea Power Station is just 15 minutes from the West End and the city.

Whether shopping, dining, exploring or simply soaking in the views, it's a standout day in a reimagined London landmark.

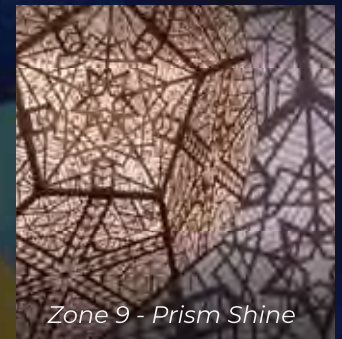
Ready to visit? Head to
batterseapowerstation.co.uk



Introducing Malaysia's **Trending** Immersive Attraction

At **immersify Kuala Lumpur**, art is no longer just something to look at. It breathes, dances, and evolves around you with every step.

As **Malaysia's first permanent purpose-built** media art gallery, immersify KL delivers an authentic and awakening immersive experience that seamlessly fuses art, technology, and Malaysia's rich cultural tapestry. Whether you are exploring with loved ones or adventuring on your own, this **30,000 sq.ft. space** features eleven uniquely crafted zones that are designed not only to entertain but to inspire wonder, creativity, and discovery for people from all walks of life.



Bask in a glimmering garden, explore a lush neon Malaysian rainforest, and watch your creativity come to life on a vast marine canvas — evoke a myriad of emotions all in one magical space. From the embrace of the great artists Vincent Van Gogh, Claude Monet, and Gustav Klimt to SEA's first **360° two-storey immersive zone**, the gallery invites locals and tourists alike to embark on a multi-sensorial journey where you are part of the art, where you are the story.

Lose yourself, find yourself, and experience a **Journey Beyond Imagination**.

*The Labs, Bukit Bintang City Centre,
No 2 Jalan Hang Tuah, 55100 Kuala Lumpur*

Scan the QR code to visit our website



“



*"Magnetic, poetic, inspiring,
but also educational"*

- Google Review



*"My child was absolutely
thrilled, but honestly - I was
just as amazed"*

- Google Review

”





INSIDER TIPS

A Malaysian in... Singapore

Mano Thevar, chef and owner of two Michelin-starred Indian restaurant Thevar, shares a personal map to his adopted home city

BY ANANDHI GOPINATH



I was born in Penang, where food isn't just part of life – it's a language of love. The layers of Indian, Malay and Chinese influences shaped my understanding of flavour. Later on, I trained in fine dining and worked in top kitchens, but I always wanted to tell my own story, one rooted in heritage yet looking ahead.

Singapore gave me that chance. It's a city that respects craft and constantly pushes you to raise the bar. Since opening Thevar in 2018, a restaurant that puts a modern spin on heritage Indian cuisine, the journey has been incredible. Being awarded two Michelin stars has been a huge honour, and it has pushed me to keep evolving. In June, Thevar moved to Mohamed Sultan Road, a historic enclave once known for its trading roots and colonial-era architecture,

now transformed into a vibrant lifestyle district full of energy, culture and character.

Everyday flavours

A perfect day in Singapore begins with a classic comfort breakfast at a hawker centre: kaya toast and *yuan yang siew dai* (coffee-tea, less sugar). For something more substantial, **Da Dong Prawn Noodles** (354 Joo Chiat Rd) does a broth that's rich and full of depth. If I'm craving something classic, **Tanjong Pagar Plaza Market** (6 Tanjong Pagar Plaza) has great chicken rice stalls with perfectly balanced chilli and ginger sauces.

Little India is a must. I love walking through **Tekka Market** (Bukit Timah Rd and Serangoon Rd) for the spices, the noise, the colours. It keeps me connected to my roots and often sparks ideas for the kitchen. In the heart of Little India, cult-status retail haven **Mustafa Centre** (145 Syed Alwi Rd) is another favourite because it's open 24/7 and sells pretty much everything you could possibly need. There's peace within the chaos: you go in for coriander and leave with something completely unexpected.



Candlenut



Botanical Gardens

Designed to impress

When friends visit from out of town, I love starting them out at **Whampoa Food Centre** (91 Whampoa Dr) for breakfast. It's got that old-school charm and really solid local food – chicken rice, rojak and satay bee hoon, among others. For lunch, I'd take them to **Samy's Curry** (samyscurry.com; 25 Dempsey Rd) – there's just something special about eating curry off banana leaves with your hands. After that, it's a walk around Dempsey Hill to soak in the atmosphere, and if they're up for it, I'd take them to



Mysore spiced rack of lamb at Thevar



Shophouses along Mohamed Sultan Road



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore 65x weekly



Firefly flies between Subang and Singapore (Changi) 3x weekly, and between Subang and Singapore (Seletar) 42x weekly

Candlenut ([IG@candlenutsg](#); 17A Dempsey Rd) for some Peranakan desserts, especially their amazing *kuih salat*, made of sticky glutinous rice layered with pandan-flavoured coconut egg custard.

Pre-dinner cocktails at **Nutmeg & Clove** ([nutmegclove.com](#); 8 Purvis St) are a must. They nail the locally inspired drinks: Pasar Punch, for example, combines gin, cucumber, passionfruit, beef stock, lemon and clarified milk. We'd end the night at **Newton Food Centre** (500 Clemenceau Ave North) for chicken wings, satay and a couple of cold beers. It's the perfect progression

through Singapore's food culture.

There are dishes in Singapore I didn't grow up with but have learned to love. Hokkien prawn mee is one of them. I think **YouFu Fried Hokkien Prawn Noodle** (505 Beach Rd, Golden Mile Food Centre, #01-57) does it best. It's got that perfect *wok hei*, the smoky flavour you get from cooking over a blazing hot wok. They're super generous with the ingredients, and I really respect that it's run by a young hawker, Andre Ong. He's doing great things, and I'm always happy to support young hawkerpreneurs.

SG unplugged

I find inspiration in quiet places. A morning stroll through the **Botanic Gardens** (1 Cluny Rd) with my wife clears my mind. Poking around vintage furniture shops near Jalan Besar helps me think about design, which influences how I think about plating, space, even lighting.

When I need a proper break from food, I go to **East Coast Park** for the long coastal cycling route that goes all the way to Changi Village. There's something really calming about the sea breeze, the open spaces and just being out on the bike, away from the buzz.

Hidden treasure

Something I think is completely underrated in Singapore is antique shops and second-hand treasure spots. People always talk about the latest restaurants, cafés and luxury stores, but we've got these quiet pockets around the city, hiding in plain sight, that are full of history and charm, if you know where to look. For example, **Peninsula Shopping Centre** (3 Coleman St) feels like stepping into a different era. You'll find shops that specialise in vintage cameras, old film equipment and quirky collectibles. There's something special about picking up an object that's lived another life – it's got character, a story. It's the total opposite of the fast, shiny pace we usually associate with Singapore.

There's also **Golden Mile Tower** (6001 Beach Rd), which has been synonymous with cinema since the 1970s, once housing the iconic 1,500-seat Golden Theatre. Today, its legacy lives on through indie cinema The Projector and Rex Cinemas, keeping Singapore's film culture alive with a mix of nostalgia and new energy. These places remind me that Singapore isn't just about the future, it's also about the fragments of the past we sometimes overlook.



East Coast Park



Home is where the heart is

Shahida Azad Jamaludin brings her global experience to Malaysia as a returning expert

After over three years in Singapore, Shahida Azad Jamaludin made the decision to return home to Malaysia in 2021 for the sake of her family. At the height of the pandemic, the distance from her young son became too great a burden. “I didn’t want to be a parent through a screen. I wanted to be present,” she says. The choice was clear. “Career was important, but family came first. I was determined. I searched every day, reached out to every network in Malaysia, followed every lead – just to find a way home.”

At the time, Shahida was working as a Segment Marketing Manager at Singapore Telecommunications. She made herself a promise: “The first job offer I get in Malaysia, I’ll take it.” That turned out to be Viu Malaysia – an opportunity that not only brought her home, but also transformed her professionally. Now Director of Marketing and Partnerships, Shahida channels her regional experience into high-impact campaigns, including the acclaimed Viu Upfronts in 2023 and 2024 – events she envisioned and brought to life locally. “It was my vision of what a B2B event should look like, bringing content to life, and I finally made it real in Malaysia.”

Her transition was made smoother through TalentCorp’s Returning Expert Programme (REP), which she credits for its clarity and efficiency. “Everything was super clear,” she says. “All communication was done via email and I got prompt responses every time; no guesswork, no confusion. When you’re relocating your whole life, that kind of clarity really matters. It gave me confidence that someone had their act together on the other side.”

Shahida was recently featured in a recent MyHeart campaign to promote REP among Malaysians abroad. “I hope people take away one thing: it’s okay to step out of your comfort zone. Go abroad, grow and get that experience but don’t forget that coming back can be part of that journey too. You come back stronger, with something to offer.”

Through her work, Shahida is helping to shape the next chapter of Malaysia’s entertainment industry with confidence and perspective, guided by her unique global experience. She says, “As marketers, we’re in a unique position to set the trend. I believe in testing new tools, learning through trial and error and applying what truly works. If we get it right, we don’t just adapt to change. We become the benchmark for other industry players to follow.”



Register on myheart.my
to be part of the global
Malaysian community

Return easier with MyHeart

Your next chapter begins with the Returning Expert Programme by TalentCorp

No matter how far Malaysians go in the world, one thing often lingers at the back of their minds: home. Whether it's the memory of hometown flavours, the familiar banter of Manglish or the warmth of family, Malaysia always calls.

A platform built for Malaysians abroad

For professionals and business owners living abroad, returning home can feel like both a dream and a daunting decision. That's where MyHeart by TalentCorp comes in.

Short for 'Malaysia at Heart', MyHeart is a purpose-driven platform that connects Malaysians abroad with opportunities to collaborate, give back and stay engaged.

Ease your transition home

The Returning Expert Programme by TalentCorp (REP) helps Malaysian professionals come home with confidence.

REP provides special incentives such as a flat tax rate, exemptions on import duties for a car and personal belongings, and benefits for foreign spouses and children. To be eligible, applicants must have at least three years of high-skilled work experience abroad.



Dato' Seri Rosman Mohamed
Saudi Arabia



Dr Prasanna Supramaniam
UK



Dr Kenneth Kok & Dr Melissa Ley-Hui Tan
UK



Dr Ngoi Soo Mun
USA

Make your return a purposeful one

This Merdeka, let's celebrate not just where we come from, but where we can go together. Whether you're a corporate leader, entrepreneur or a researcher abroad, your experience can help shape Malaysia's future.

With MyHeart, come home with purpose, pride and support.

Visit myheart.my to explore REP benefits and read returnee stories.



Umar Zakir
Sweden

REP benefits and incentives

- 15% flat tax rate for five consecutive years on chargeable employment income
- Tax exemption on personal belongings brought home (one shipment)
- Exemption on excise duty for one locally manufactured car (up to RM100,000)
- Permanent Resident (MyPR) eligibility for foreign spouses and children under 18



TalentCorp
GROUP OF COMPANIES





Malaysia's jackfruit goes global

Bold, versatile fruit with rising demand and strong export potential

Often overshadowed by its spiky cousin, the durian, jackfruit is fast emerging as one of Malaysia's most exciting tropical fruit exports. With its golden flesh, sweet flavour and meaty texture, this versatile fruit is not only delicious but also nutrient-rich and highly sustainable.

A fruit full of benefits

Among Malaysia's jackfruit varieties, the honey jackfruit stands out for both its flavour and functional benefits. Beyond its culinary appeal, this variety is also valued in traditional wellness for its health and beauty properties. Its seeds are rich in phytonutrients believed to support the body's natural defences, including anti-cancer properties. Jackfruit seed blends have long been used in home remedies to improve

skin texture, reduce fine lines and even promote hair growth. Tasty, nourishing and glow-worthy, this is a fruit that goes the extra mile.

Championing Malaysian agro-food

At the forefront of this global movement is the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. As the lead agency for Malaysia's agro-food branding, FAMA is spearheading its 2025 campaign, Malaysia's Best: Authentic Malaysia, The Best Quality, with jackfruit as a flagship product. Through grower training, export standards and access to trade platforms, FAMA ensures Malaysian jackfruit meets global expectations while uplifting rural communities

and strengthening Malaysia's regional leadership in tropical fruit exports.

From orchard to opportunity

In 2023, Malaysia exported over 28,000 tonnes of jackfruit worth US\$289 million. With China driving demand and growing interest from ASEAN and beyond, the market is expanding fast. Jackfruit offers strong investment potential across fresh produce, snacks and plant-based foods. As climate-conscious eating grows, it stands out as a sustainable choice.

FAMA also champions agro-tourism, inviting travellers to discover jackfruit's journey from orchard to table.

Email pasaranantarabangsa@fama.gov.my or visit fama.gov.my and follow [@fama.malaysia](https://www.instagram.com/fama.malaysia) to explore agro-tourism and trade initiatives.



11 Fun Facts About Jackfruit



Ripe jackfruit is eaten as a fruit, while unripe jackfruit is prepared as a vegetable



A sticky, rubbery substance collected from the jackfruit tree is used in latex products



The tree's bark has an orange pigment used to dye monks' robes



Jackfruit trees belong to the mulberry family



Seeds from ripe jackfruit can be washed, cleaned, and boiled with salt water for consumption



Jackfruit is composed of 80% water



For vegetarians, jackfruit serves as a meat substitute



Every part of the jackfruit tree, including its bark, leaves, fruits, and roots, has medicinal uses



Jackfruit trees cannot survive in cold climates and may not withstand temperatures below 0°C



A mature jackfruit tree can produce approximately 20 fruits per year



Jackfruit trees have a long lifespan, living up to 70 years on average

Benefits of Malaysia's Best



Establishes a national brand for Malaysia's agricultural produce



Enhances consumer confidence in the quality and safety of Malaysia's agricultural produce



Creates a positive image and adds value to Malaysia's agri-food produce



Helps expand the agrifood market by meeting local and international standards and requirements



Increases the usage and demand for Malaysia's agricultural produce



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AK HOSPITALITY
HOTEL MANAGEMENT



A PERFECT WEEKEND IN

Penang

Words William KC Kee

Summer never ends in sun-drenched
George Town, where culture, delicious cuisine and
contemporary style come together



Part heritage town, part art-fuelled creative hub and laidback tropical hideout, Penang

Previous page:
Colourful lanterns at
Kek Lok Si Temple

Clockwise from top:
Lush rainforest views at
The Habitat Penang Hill;
the Dioriviera pop-up
at Macalister Mansion;
Ernest Zacharevic's
Children on a Bicycle;
modern Peranakan fare
at Kebaya Dining Room;
after-hours sips at
Cocktails & Shots

is a perfect blend of city conveniences and island charm, and the pace of life here is more relaxed compared to most big cities. Hotelier Rina Teoh says, "Penangites are generally a warm and laid-back lot, so there's a strong sense of community. Maybe it's because we are all on an island together with that 'no rush' vibe. It's the best of both worlds."

There's no better time to visit than this month when George Town Festival (2 to 10 August) takes over the Unesco-listed capital city. With street eats that rival fine dining and a new wave of boutique stays, this island punches way above its weight. Here's how to make the most of a long weekend in Penang.

Day 1 Art attack

Morning. Begin at **China House** (153 Beach St; chinahouse.com.my) for breakfast. This beloved George Town mainstay – a maze-like mashup of café, bakery, art gallery and old-school charm – is the perfect place to start an art-filled day. Its morning menu offers toast slathered in house-made jam and walnut butter, Laos-style minced chicken omelette and earthy mushroom bruschetta.

Grab a George Town street art map and track down Ernest Zacharevic's now-iconic murals: *Children on a Bicycle* and *Boy on a Bike*. "It's humbling and a little surreal to see something you made take on a life of its own," muses the Penang-based Lithuanian artist.

After the requisite street art photo-ops, head over to **Cultprint by Zach Studio** (35 Lebuhraya; cultprint.co), the art gallery/studio/creative community founded by Zacharevic and his wife Sheena Liam (*Asia's Next Top Model 2* winner-turned-embroidery artist) during the pandemic. "We started working more from Penang and collaborating with friends and artists in the area. It slowly grew into a community of artists, producers, collectors and creatives," explains Liam.

"Cultprint allows me to expand that conversation beyond murals, giving people – both Penangites and visitors



– a way to engage with my work and the broader community of artists we support,” adds Zacharevic.

Afternoon. Take a peek inside the **Macalister Mansion** (228 Jln Macalister; macalistermansion.com), the perfect site for Dioriviera, a dreamy jungle-themed pop-up for Dior’s capsule collection of summer essentials: breezy ready-to-wear, handbags, sandals and statement accessories (ends 11 August). Originally built in 1880 for an Indian moneylender and later owned by Hokkien tycoon Choong Lye Hock, Macalister Mansion once featured 41 rooms, a tower and a grand spiral staircase. In 2010, following a 20-month restoration led by Singapore’s Ministry of Design, the mansion reopened as

Malaysia’s first Design Hotels member – celebrating Anglo-Indian architecture and contemporary design minimalism – offering just eight artful suites.

Evening. Slip into comfortable shoes and go on the **George Town Night Trail**, a guided walking tour that explores the city’s architectural and cultural highlights. It’s offered by Penang Global Tourism and typically takes place on the last Friday of the month. Alternatively, check out **Dark Mansion** (145 Lebuhraya Kimberley; IG.com/darkmansionpenang_official), the first and only glow-in-the-dark museum in Malaysia which transforms 2D paintings into 3D images.

For dinner, book a table at **Auntie Gaik Lean’s Old School Eatery** (1 Bishop St; IG.com/auntiegaiklean). The heritage gem, tucked in a colonial-era shophouse, has earned a Michelin star for its soul-stirring Peranakan fare. Wash the meal down with drinks at **Cocktails & Shots** (102 Lebuhraya Cintra; IG.com/cocktailsandshotspg); look for the speakeasy’s entrance hidden behind a library bookcase. Order the signature mocktail, Nutmeg Fizz, an intriguing concoction of nutmeg cordial, seltzer and pickled nutmeg.

Day 2 Hilltop escapes

Morning. Trade city streets for hilltop serenity with an early ascent up Penang Hill – take the funicular railway if you’re feeling relaxed or hike the Heritage Trail for bragging rights. You can purchase the sunrise railway ticket on-site at the lower station counter, available from 6.30am to 8.30am. Hikers, on the other hand, can start as early as 6am to get to the top by 8am.

High above the city heat, **The Habitat Penang Hill** is a lush playground perched within a Unesco biosphere reserve. You can start your journey on the Langur Way Canopy Walk, a jaw-dropping 230m-long stressed ribbon bridge suspended 40m above the forest floor. Fun fact: it’s the longest of its kind in the world. Breakfast awaits at **David Brown’s Restaurant & Tea Terrace** (Penang Hill; penanghillco.com.my) an English-style garden café serving scones,

PENANG

smoked salmon and pots of Earl Grey overlooking the city below.

Afternoon. Tuck into Penang's rich cultural tapestry with a visit to the **Pinang Peranakan Mansion** (29 Church St; pinangperanakanmansion.com.my) where emerald-green tiles and gold-leaf woodwork tell stories of the opulent Straits Chinese lifestyle. Then wander over to the **Blue Mansion** aka Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion (14 Lebu Leith; cheongfattzemansion.com), a striking heritage building that fuses Eastern philosophy with Western aesthetics.

When the midday heat hits, duck into **Kebaya Dining Room** (14A Stewart Ln; kebaya.com.my) at Seven Terraces for lunch. This modern Peranakan restaurant does set menus with an upscale twist – think duck confit in tamarind reduction and slow-cooked beef rendang.

Next stop: **Kek Lok Si Temple** (Jln Balik Pulau; kekloksitemple.com), one of Southeast Asia's largest Buddhist temples. The soaring Goddess of Mercy statue, intricate pagodas and vibrant tilework offer photo ops galore and a surprising sense of calm.

Evening. Take a sunset stroll along Gurney Drive and skip the malls for **Gurney Bay**, a new seafront park where locals jog, picnic or just enjoy the sea breeze. Grab an icy coconut shake from a roadside stall and soak up the view. To enjoy the island's much-vaunted street eats, make your way to the

lesser-known local favourite, **Sungai Pinang Food Court** (Lebuh Sungai Pinang Jelutong) for delicious char kway teow, tangy asam laksa and an oyster omelette cooked to gooey perfection.



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Penang 42x weekly





Clockwise from far left: Chilled out afternoons at Hin Bus Depot; the stunning Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion; sunset at Gurney Bay; the mood-lit Backdoor Bodega

Day 3 Life's a beach

Morning. Make an early start and hire a boat from Teluk Bahang for some light island-hopping to **Pulau Tikus, Monkey Beach** or the more serene **Pantai Kerachut** within Penang National Park, where you can hike to a rare meromictic lake (a combination of salty sea water and fresh water) – one of only three in Asia.

Head over to **Ferringhi Bay** (ferringhibay.com) for more refreshing water views. Just off Batu Ferringhi's golden shoreline, this is Malaysia's longest beachfront container boulevard. Here, over 50 stylish container outlets serve up cold brews and local bites.

Afternoon. Head back to town, making a quick pitstop at **Straits Quay Marina** (*Seri Tanjung Pinang; straitsquay.com*) for a coffee or shopping – handicrafts at The Crafteteria, pewter goods at Royal Selangor or speciality coffee at Full Of Beans – by the waterfront.

For lunch, drop by **Beast & Butterflies** (*523 Jln Tanjung Bungah; msocial.com*), M Social Resort Penang's signature Peranakan-fusion restaurant, for a playful, shareable menu that fuses authentic Penang flavours with global finesse.

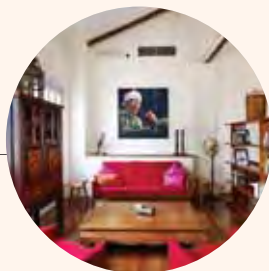
Walk lunch off at **Hin Bus Depot** (*31A Jln Gurdwara; hinbusdepot.com*), a repurposed bus station turned creative hub. Check the website for rotating art exhibitions or pop-up craft markets

(weekends only). The industrial-cool setting is perfect for browsing artisan wares or sampling local snacks. Still have time to kill? **The Top at Komtar** (*1 Jln Penang; thetop.com.my*) offers an adrenaline rush at its Rainbow Skywalk, a glass-bottomed observatory bridge 68 floors up.

Evening. Wrap up your trip with a memorable dinner at **Firewood** (*15 Jln Masjid Kapitan Keling; firegroup.my*), tucked away in a 95-year-old heritage building. The restaurant is Penang's first dedicated open-flame steakhouse – a Michelin-selected hotspot known for bold flavours and visual flair.

Grab a nightcap at **Manchu** (*38 & 40 Jalan Pintal Tali; IG.com/manchupenang*), a speakeasy hidden behind a sliding Chinese herb shop door. Inside, it's all moody lighting, plush velvet and theatrically crafted drinks. For something sultrier, **Backdoor Bodega** (*37 Jalan Gurdwara; backdoorbodega.com*) is an award-winning cocktail bar run by a team of self-taught bartenders.

Penang doesn't try to impress. It seduces you slowly, with steaming bowls of noodles, coastal sunsets and charmingly patinaed shophouses. When you leave the island, it's with a sun-kissed face, a heart full of memories and the quiet conviction that you'll be back.



23 Love Lane

A stay at this 10-room hotel – set within a cluster of heritage buildings restored by a team of conservationists, architects and consultants – doubles as a journey through the city's architectural eras. 23lovelane.com



The Edison George Town

With just 35 rooms, this beautifully restored 1906 mansion merges colonial-era grandeur – think marble floors and dragon-fountain courtyards – with contemporary comforts. theedisonhotels.com



Angsana Teluk Bahang

This vibrant beach resort showcases Peranakan-inspired design by the talented Omar Khan. With 228 seaview rooms and suites, three dining outlets and a bespoke wellness programme, you won't want to leave! angsana.com

Where to stay



From mangrove to masterpiece

How Firewood Penang's local bakau charcoal shapes its world-class steaks



At Firewood Penang, every dish begins not on the plate, but in the fire. It's here, over glowing embers of locally sourced bakau charcoal, that the restaurant's signature flavour is born.

"We source our bakau charcoal from Taiping," says chef Ker Yang Hao, founder of the Michelin Selected steakhouse in George Town. "Malaysia is one of the biggest producers of bakau wood, and the quality of the charcoal makes all the difference."

More than just fuel, bakau charcoal is the soul of Firewood's open-flame

kitchen. Dense and long-burning, it delivers intense, steady heat, ideal for searing thick cuts of steak while locking in juices. But it's the clean, lingering smokiness that sets it apart. You'll taste it in their Stone Axe Australian Full Blood Wagyu Sirloin – subtle, distinctive and deeply satisfying.

This isn't imported binchotan or mass-market briquettes. Proudly Malaysian, bakau charcoal carries the character of its landscape and the legacy of its makers. By sourcing locally, chef Ker elevates

his dishes while supporting Taiping's long-standing charcoal makers, many of whom have perfected their craft over generations.

The result is a menu that feels grounded in place yet globally recognised. Firewood remains the only Malaysian restaurant on the World's 101 Best Steak Restaurants list, a testament to the care and precision behind every flame-touched plate. Step into Firewood and you'll experience the quiet rhythm of craft and fire: through the aroma of mangrove smoke wafting from the kitchen and the

sizzle of steak hitting the grill.

It's not just about what's served. It's about the care for every element, from the charcoal to the flame. At Firewood, each plate reflects patience, precision and a deep respect for where it comes from.

Firewood Penang is at 15 Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling, George Town. Call +60 17 989 9246 or visit firegroup.my for reservations.

Local charcoal, global appeal



What is bakau?

Mangrove wood that is dense, slow-burning, perfect for open-flame cooking.

Where is it from?

Taiping, Perak – where charcoal kilns have been operating for generations.

Why is it better?

Bakau burns hotter, lasts longer and produces less ash than commercial charcoal. Its clean, aromatic smoke enhances flavour without overpowering the steak.

Why does Firewood use it?

It adds depth, supports local tradition and brings a bold Malaysian identity to the grill.

Naturally Langkawi


*Are you a lover
or a fighter?*

When you're a fiddler crab, you can be both.



Male fiddler crabs use their oversized claw to fight — or flirt. Spot these tiny critters on Langkawi's muddy shores, putting on a wild, mesmerising show. And if something this small can surprise you...

Just imagine what the rest of the island can do. There's nowhere like here.

 Kilim Karst Geoforest Park

naturallyLangkawi.my



Langkawi beyond the beach

**Come for the waters,
stay for the rainforests
and leisurely nature trails**

Located in the Malaysian state of Kedah, the entire archipelago of Langkawi was named Southeast Asia's first Unesco Global Geopark in 2007 and is easily Malaysia's most beloved island getaway.

Comprising of three distinct Geoforest Parks (Kilim Karst, Machinchang and Dayang Bunting) plus the Kubang Badak BioGeoTrail, it boasts ancient mountains, tropical rainforests and sea-carved limestone formations.

One of three natural attractions that make up the unofficial "Unesco Nature Triangle" in Malaysia – alongside Kinabalu Park in Sabah and Gunung Mulu National Park in Sarawak – Langkawi is also the easiest to reach, with nature just a short walk, boat ride or cable car away.

In Langkawi, you can go on a rainforest walk and spot rare birds without venturing deep into the jungle.



An oriental pied hornbill



Gunung Machinchang

You don't need to be a hardcore hiker or adventurer to experience its beauty.

Kilim Karst Geoforest: Explore mangroves and nature up close

Start with a slow cruise through **Kilim Karst Geoforest Park**, where mangrove forests stretch between limestone cliffs and hidden caves. Glide through calm waterways, visit a bat cave and listen for sea eagles overhead.

Perfect for travellers who want a deeper connection without the muddy boots, you can even hire a local guide who will gladly share fascinating insights about the fragile ecosystem.

You can also watch hornbills, kingfishers and sea eagles from the boat as your guide points out macaques, flying foxes and orchids along the banks.

Machinchang Geoforest Park: Elevated views and ancient stone

After your Kilim Karst adventure, hop over to **Machinchang Geoforest Park**, where you can admire some of the oldest

Pulau Dayang Bunting





rock formations in Southeast Asia.

Explore a short, shaded trail to a scenic lookout or hop aboard the **Langkawi SkyCab** – one of the world's steepest cable cars – for a smooth ride to the **SkyBridge**, a curved suspension walkway hanging above the treetops

From there, the views of the rainforest and sea are nothing short of magical.

Kubang Badak BioGeoTrail: Paddle, cruise or float through culture and community

Meanwhile, water lovers can explore Langkawi's wild side by blending nature, culture and comfort with ease.

At **Kubang Badak BioGeoTrail**, you can kayak through the calm mangrove

estuaries or visit floating seafood restaurants and traditional fishing villages around **Pulau Jemuruk**.

Langkawi may be famous for its serene beaches, but beyond the lure of its waters, the Jewel of Kedah invites those who come for the sea to stay and discover a lot more.

Get inspired at [@naturally_langkawi](#) or visit [naturallylangkawi.my](#) to start planning your trip.

Did you know?

Quick facts that make Langkawi more than just a beach escape



- The **SkyBridge** stretches 125m across untouched rainforest
- **Gunung Machinchang** holds Malaysia's oldest rock formations, dating back 550 million years
- **Tasik Dayang Bunting**, or the Lake of the Pregnant Maiden, is said to bless swimmers with fertility
- Langkawi is known as the Island of Legends, with stories woven into its landscapes, mountains and lakes

A person with short dark hair, wearing a dark, long-sleeved dress, is seen from behind, standing at a long wooden table. They appear to be working with various containers and tools on the table. The room has a traditional Japanese aesthetic with dark wooden beams, a large white paper lantern hanging from the ceiling, and a wall-mounted shelf with various objects. The lighting is warm and focused on the work area.

Nice and slow in

Y

K



O

Savouring the true essence of Japan's former imperial capital requires a change of pace – surrender your travel checklist and let serendipity guide the way

Words **Kissa Castañeda**

T

O

The sun was
starting to peep
through the
fluffy cumulus
clouds when I
put on my helmet
and tucked my
toddler into
the back of a
mamachari –

Previous spread:

Earthen Wall Workshop
at Maana Atelier;
Maana's forest retreat
experience

This spread:

The crimson torii gates
at Fushimi Inari Taisha;
cycling along the banks
of the Kamo River, with
The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto
in the background

a type of bicycle equipped with a child seat, so named because it's used by mothers all over Japan. It was 7am and our family of three was setting off on a relaxed ride along the Kamogawa, a tranquil river running through Kyoto that was once the city's main source of drinking water.

Today, Kamogawa is a social hub, with the wide paths along the riverbanks designed for easy strolls, leisurely cycles and impromptu picnics. Guided by the affable Gerry from The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto, we pedalled past locals doing their morning workout as well as smartly uniformed children off to school. A short 15-minute ride later, we stopped at a *torii* – a gate standing tall among the tiny houses – signalling we've arrived at Shimogamo Jinja.

A Unesco World Heritage Site, Shimogamo Jinja dates back to the 7th century, making it one of the oldest Shintō shrines in Japan. We parked our bicycles and walked through Tadasu-no-Mori, a leaf-strewn path lined with 600-year-old trees towering above us. At this hour of the morning, the sunlight filtering through the leaves creates a serene, almost sacred mood, a phenomenon that the Japanese call *komorebi*.

The quiet atmosphere was broken by my toddler's dash to a shrine that, intriguingly, features a rugby ball. Much to my husband's delight – he's a hardcore rugby fan – it turned out to be a shrine dedicated to the sport, so he grabbed a few *omamori* (lucky charms in decorative pouches) to take home. For my benefit, we stopped by Kawai-jinja, another subsidiary shrine frequented by women praying to the goddess of health and beauty. We spent an hour in Shimogamo Jinja, happy to be one of the handful of visitors experiencing it the way it was intended: taking our time without having to fight for space.

Think of Kyoto, and the shimmering golden Kinkaku-ji, the soaring wooden Kiyomizu-dera and the crimson torii passage of Fushimi Inari Taisha immediately come to mind. Along with them are images of crowds of kimono-clad tourists wielding selfie sticks. Last year, Kyoto welcomed over 10 million foreign travellers, which is 25 percent more than the total number of international tourist arrivals in Australia.







“

Slow travel is about presence, not productivity. Choose one area, take your time and let yourself get a little lost”



Overtourism is a real challenge in Kyoto, so embracing a slower way of travelling is more crucial than ever. Visiting temples at sunrise offers a relaxed way to experience these revered sites, but if you're looking to escape the throng altogether, forgo the bucket-list and head to lesser-trodden paths. With over 1,600 temples and 400 shrines in Kyoto, there's plenty to explore far from the madding crowds.

SLOW TRAVEL ISN'T ONLY ABOUT DIALLING DOWN the pace, but also about creating a mindful, more thoughtful itinerary that immerses you in the destination. As the ancient capital of Japan, Kyoto is defined by its culture of craftsmanship – almost every corner has a story to tell.

One spot to take this all in is Kaikado, the oldest tea caddy maker in Japan established in 1875. Even if you're not an avid tea drinker and have no practical need for the beautifully handcrafted vessels, their outpost, Kaikado Café, offers a peek into Japanese *kogei* (crafts). Housed in a century-old building, it's the kind of place where you can see – and feel – the power of the human touch.

“We try to serve a crafts-minded menu. With both tea and crafts, you need a slower experience to truly understand it – not through words but through feeling,” says Takahiro Yagi, a sixth-generation metal artisan at Kaikado. “For us, tea is a ‘silent drink’. We have to lean into the intimacy of the experience and be in the present.”

From yuba to matcha, Kyoto has distinct food and drink specialities. Myriad kaiseki restaurants offer a window into the city's culinary riches but nowhere is as detailed and meticulous as Chef's Table by Katsuhito Inoue. Drawing inspiration from *shichijuni-ko* – the traditional Japanese calendar of 72 micro seasons, each

This spread: Maana Kiyomizu is filled with soulful objects collected over time; a traditional work station at Kaikado, Japan's oldest caddy maker; Cafe Kissa Kishin

at Maana Kiyomizu; chef Katsuhito Inoue of Chef's Table; the menu at Chef's Table by Katsuhito Inoue is inspired by Japan's 72 micro seasons



lasting about five days – the restaurant allows guests to taste the subtle transitions of each fleeting period.

I entered a small room anchored by a communal table decorated by an artistic tableau of twigs, leaves and moss, an arrangement that looked as aesthetically pleasing as the rock gardens of Ryoan-ji. Chef Inoue was smiling at the counter at the end of the room, and we were joined at the table by a Japanese couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. There were only four of us diners and around the same number of chefs – giving a sense of how many hands would create this masterful meal. There was no menu but rather a procession of beautifully plated dishes that signified a taste of Kyoto on that very day. It was here I tried the purest and freshest *takenoko* (bamboo shoot), a flavour so intense that every other version I had before paled in comparison.



From left: The retail space at Maana Kiyomizu; Maana Atelier's refreshed machiya exterior; The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto's Zen rock garden is perfect for quiet contemplation



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“One of the micro seasons is *takenoko shozu*, referring to the brief moment when bamboo shoots begin to emerge from the ground,” explains Inoue-san. “We fill bamboo tubes with bread dough and bake them, allowing the bamboo aroma to infuse the bread.”

Inoue-san is also guided by the philosophy of *shimatusu-no-kokoro*, the idea of being grateful to nature and using every part of the ingredient. Inspired by the Basque dessert *cujada*, he also creates a dish using bamboo containers. “We gently set milk and rennet in bamboo containers, solidifying them slowly over candlelight. These are accompanied by freshly harvested vegetables from Kyoto, offering a sensory experience that reflects the breath of nature.”

WHERE YOU CHECK IN SHAPES YOUR PERSPECTIVE OF a place. During my week in Kyoto, I stayed two nights at Maana Kiyomizu, a row of four former teahouse buildings that have been carefully renovated. When Maana Homes co-founders Irene Chang and Hana Tsukamoto first found them, they were in a severe state of disrepair. Together with Shigenori Uoya Architects and Associates and Ikei Takeshi Architects, they breathed new life into these forgotten spaces, resulting in a compound housing three self-contained suites, a café and a homeware shop. “Maana’s intention had always been to encourage people to slow down and reconnect with themselves and their environment. Our homes were designed as sources of inspiration for everyday life – spaces filled with soulful objects, rituals and lessons we’ve gathered in Kyoto,” says Chang.



Maana Homes

Want to live like a Kyoto local? Maana Homes offers the experience of staying in a sensitively restored machiya. Minimalist in style and designed for quiet reflection, these standalone machiya homes showcase a creative's perspective of Kyoto. Find like-minded travellers at their satellite location, Maana Atelier, which offers craft workshops, a larger retail space and culinary events. maanahomes.com

One afternoon, I ventured to Maana Atelier, a crafts workshop space housed in a striking renovated *machiya* (townhouse) in Nishijin, a district of Kyoto known for textile craft. I signed up for the Earthen Wall workshop, run in partnership with the Kyoto Research Institute, an independent group that conducts interdisciplinary research on heritage Japanese materials. There, I learned about the art of *sakan*, a 1,300-year-old technique for plastering walls using natural materials such as sand, clay and soil. It was designated a Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2020.

It was an afternoon of mixing natural pigment with water, putting in some sand and straw then decorating the canvases – a brief insight into the painstaking work and artistry required of *sakan* artisans. With my original creation in hand, I wandered around the area, catching the last of the sakura blooms. I was overcome by a melancholy feeling, thinking about how this once-thriving district of kimono-makers had been whittled down to just a few surviving shops. We all travel to see a different view of the world, and so each considered step helps ensure unique traditions live on – even in the time of AI.

I continued walking leisurely in the general direction of my hotel, and it was among the most pleasant hours I spent in Kyoto. Slow travel is not about the length of time you spend in the place; it's an approach. It's giving yourself the time to breathe and create space for serendipitous finds. As Chang says, "Slow travel is about presence, not productivity. Choose one area, take your time and let yourself get a little lost."

Thoughtfully crafted stays with a distinct point of view



The Ritz-Carlton, Kyoto

Located on a site favoured by Japanese nobility since the 17th century, this is the city's first big-name luxury hotel. This ryokan-style property at the banks of the Kamo River is all about intimacy – there are only seven floors, 134 rooms and over 100 pieces of art. More than just a room for the night, the hotel offers insider experiences like Kyo-Karakami paper craft workshops and cycling excursions to lesser-trodden paths. ritzcarlton.com



Hoshinoya Kyoto

Set in the lush Takagamine mountainside near Arashiyama, the property transports you to the serene period of the Heian era. The arrival experience is unparalleled – you board a boat on Togetsukyo Bridge and it winds through the river until you reach this luxury ryokan. Housed in a century-old structure, spend the day gazing into the picturesque expanse of forest and river – best enjoyed while savouring their epic Japanese breakfast spread. hoshinoresorts.com



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Osaka 7x weekly. Kyoto is 30-75 minutes away by train



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Weaving





If you're looking for
enchantment in **Bali**,
the intricately woven
handiwork of its traditional
ikat artisans may provide
just what you need

Words **Vidya Balachander**
Photography **Putu Sayoga**

magic



The first time I came to Bali, I found a deeply embedded culture of spirituality existing alongside a clamour of surface pleasures.

On the traffic-choked backstreets of Ubud, I was struck by the profuse, public evidence of faith placed on every pavement and street corner. Encased in small baskets woven out of palm leaves, these ritual offerings – known as *canang sari* – include items from everyday life, such as temple flowers, incense sticks, eggs, biscuits and coins. Yet, this inner world of the Balinese felt cordoned off from the average tourist.

In its place, what was readily on offer was a kind of spirituality lite, fuelled by Reformer Pilates classes, organic food cafés and fancy coffee shops that promised to take the sting out of existential searching. The creature comforts turn Bali outwards, but I wanted

nothing more than to be ensconced in its intimate interiority. I wanted to understand the discipline of the devout. How does a civilisation choose to place its faith in the realm of the unknowable and reaffirm that faith every single day?

My years as a journalist have taught me that expecting neat answers is often a fool's errand, but they have also sharpened my appreciation for the power of questioning. So when I returned to Bali in September, it was to inquire about devotion – except through a different lens. This time around, I tried to look at faith as it is expressed in – and through – some of Bali's ancient textile arts, including ikat and batik. To my mind, textile dyeing and weaving demand not just skill but also an obliteration of doubt and a steadfast faith in the process. You could call them acts of worship honed through decades of persistent practice. Textiles tell stories, and I have always been drawn to how a yard of cloth can encapsulate the finer nuances of a whole culture.

TEXTILES HAVE AN INTIMATE AND RESPECTED place in Balinese culture, but also in Indonesia at large. Several parts of the country, including the islands of Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Java, are



Previous spread:
Wayan Sri spins cotton
into thread using a
traditional spinning
wheel in Tenganan
village; geringsing fabric

**Clockwise from top
left:** Young women
in traditional outfits

in Tenganan village;
Tegallalang rice
terraces, near Ubud;
batik-making workshop
at Threads of Life;
traditional tools used
in the batik-making
process; batik cloth
hung to dry under
the sun



renowned for their ikat, a prized textile with intricate motifs that is created by resist dyeing yarn before it is woven into cloth.

In Bali, ikat is used in religious rituals and for important life events, such as birth and funerals. Batik, a form of resist dyeing, is more ubiquitous. Machine printed versions of batik cloth are worn as sarongs and as head gear, and mass-produced iterations of the craft can be found at souvenir stores. But as I discovered during a half-day batik printing class organised by Threads of Life, an organisation that does critical work in promoting and preserving Indonesian textiles, traditional, hand-drawn batik requires an expansiveness of the imagination counter balanced with razor-sharp focus and steady hands – all three of which, it became quickly clear to me, require a lifetime of dedication to hone.

Humbled by my attempt at using a *celuk*, a sharp, nib-like tool that allows one to drop wax onto cloth in order to create intricate batik patterns, I then journeyed to Tenganan Pegringsingan, a village in east Bali that produces double ikat. Known as *geringsing* in Balinese, double ikat is a technically complex and visually arresting



form of ikat weaving. Highly prized all over the world yet produced only in parts of India, Japan and Indonesia, double ikat is created by individually dyeing the weft (the horizontal threads) and warp (the vertical ones), before they are woven into cloth. This is a simplistic explanation for an inexplicably complex practice. Made Kodok, the son of an ikat artist from Tenganan who now leads small tour groups to the village, spent an afternoon helping me wrap my head around it.

To understand the *geringsing* produced in Tenganan, and how it is virtually inextricable from life in the village, let me set it in context.

From left:

Drying batik fabric at the Threads of Life studio in Ubud; Made Kodok poses for a portrait; making a piece of *geringsing* or double ikat fabric

Shop ikat in Bali



Manik Bali

Located along a busy shopping street, this store stocks a charming selection of colourful ikats from across the country. For something truly unique, buy fabric from the store and have it tailored in-house. *Jln Raya, Ubud*

Threads of Life

Looking for a gift to self? The organisation's retail outpost carries a priceless (and pricey!) selection of rare ikat textiles, including gorgeous double ikat runners and ceremonial cloth from Tenganan. threadsoflife.com

Sidemen

A village tucked away in the hills of east Bali, Sidemen has several workshops selling colourful and reasonably priced single ikat fabric. If you visit Tenganan, Sidemen can make for a fun detour.



“

Known as geringsing in Balinese, double ikat is a technically complex and visually arresting form of ikat weaving, highly prized all over the world yet produced only in parts of India, Japan and Indonesia”

Tenganan, a village of perhaps a few hundred people is not so much lost in time as it has held steadfastly to the passing of it. Believed to be a Bali Aga village, or occupied by the original inhabitants of Bali, it is a tidy and picturesque collection of homes lying in the shadow of Mount Agung, Bali's most sacred peak. Every aspect of life in Tenganan is governed by a complex set of rules. "You are only allowed to marry within the [families in the] village," said Kodok, explaining that land ownership in Tenganan is preserved through endogamous marriage practices.

Besides, there is a great emphasis on balance and harmony in one's everyday life – a concept that is reiterated through the architectural layout of the village. All the homes are laid out in the shape of a chakra or cross, which is intended to reflect this philosophy of balance. Kodok tells me that this key teaching is believed to belong to the Indra sect: a subgroup of Balinese Hindus who revere the Hindu lord of storms and warfare. The geringsing woven in Tenganan is also a representation – and a material extension – of these beliefs. "All our cloth motifs are also in the form of a chakra," says Kodok, helping me understand why the provenance of this fabric is so unique.

WHEN KODOK AND I WALKED AROUND THE VILLAGE, I saw hens pecking at the dirt, village elders huddled together and a few women weavers working on backstrap looms attached to their bodies. I followed Kodok into darkened rooms where the years-long process of weaving unspooled in an ancient rhythm that seemed to continue with the acceptance that exquisite things take time.

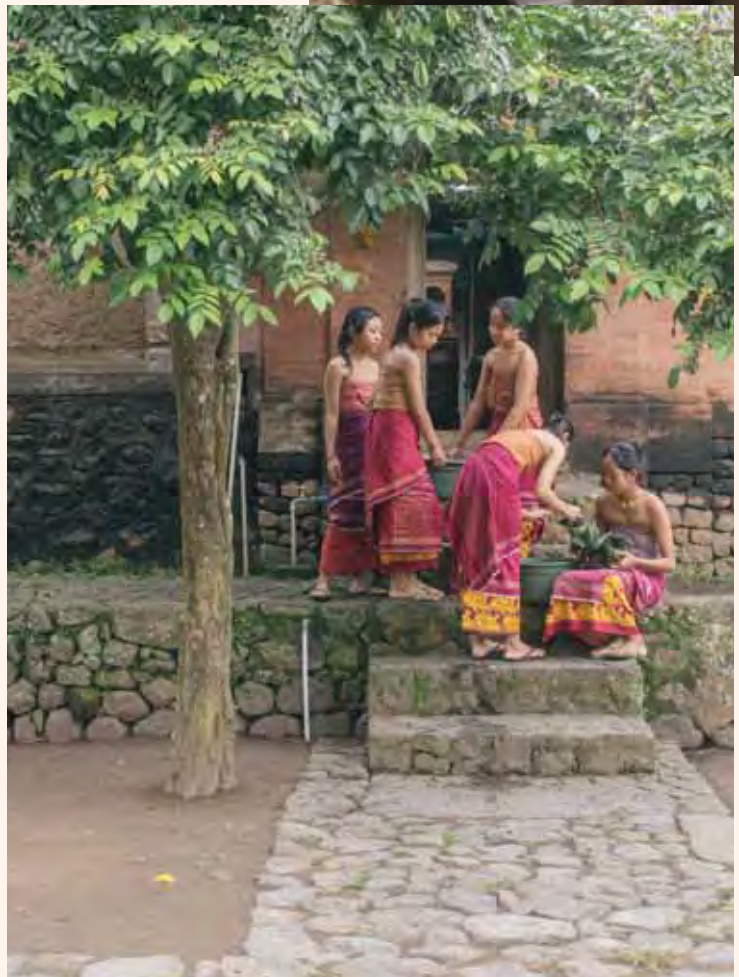
In the village, I learned that weaving isn't a flight of fancy. Instead, it is deeply mathematical – a certain number of weft (or horizontal) threads are dyed a specific number of times before they can be deemed worthy of spinning into cloth. The warp thread is usually one continuous, uncut piece. At Tenganan, the yarn is dyed using the traditional method of soaking it in candlenut oil mixed with ash water. It is then dried until the oil has evaporated, and the process is repeated over several months until the yarn is supple enough.

Kodok points to yarn on a frame; it has been dyed four times over two years, and further work on it has still not begun. Seeing the process unfold in bits and pieces, it's tough to imagine a completed textile – and even harder to wrap my head around how a weaver can remain committed to their vision for such lengths of time.

But perhaps it becomes easier to fathom when you look past this fabric as a marketable commodity and recognise its place in the customs and practices of the community. The most valuable geringsing woven in Tenganan is usually not sold; it is held and passed down within families and used during important religious ceremonies.

"It is believed that the cloth can protect us from negative influences or evil spirits," says Kodok. "Many

From left: Tengananese girls prepare offerings in front of a house; Wayan Sudiati weaves geringsing cloth using a traditional backstrap loom; dried indigo leaves used in the natural dyeing process





people outside Tenganan believe that the cloth can protect them from the influence of magic, such as when they perform a tooth-filing ceremony (a traditional coming-of-age ritual). During that period of transition, it is easy to be influenced by evil spirits and the cloth is used to protect them.”

In Tenganan, the motifs woven into the cloth serve as a visual reference of the village's foundation. “The chakra sign is called *jaga satru* (guarding against your enemies),” says Kodok. “In this case, it refers to the enemy within ourselves.” He shares a photograph of his son and himself draped in geringsing sarongs for a ceremony. It strikes me how seamlessly the brick red sarong seems to belong in its cultural context, reflecting the soil and the mountains surrounding the village.

It makes sense that the geringsing from Tenganan is considered a collector's item. Dyed in muted shades of ochre red, black

“

Textiles tell stories, and I have always been drawn to how a yard of cloth can encapsulate the finer nuances of a whole culture”

and white, the finished textiles bear the tactile imprint of their maker. Besides, as Kodok explained, the motifs in Tenganan double ikat are always the same; they tell the story of the village through geometric patterns that mirror the layout of the village. They age gently, the colours maturing and deepening over time. I didn't have the budget to buy a Tenganan double ikat piece, not yet anyway, but I left the gentle, palm-fringed coast of east Bali with a full heart. I can never be privy to the dedication that weavers in Tenganan pour into their creations, but being a bystander is its own kind of spiritual journey.



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Hainanese chicken rice

Ask any Singaporean what dish best represents their nation, and chances are you'll hear this: the Hainanese chicken rice. Poached or roasted chicken, fragrant rice cooked in stock and that perfect trio of chilli, garlic and dark soy sauce – simple, comforting and deeply satisfying.

Brought by Hainanese immigrants and refined over decades, the Hainanese chicken rice is a study in technique. The chicken must be tender but not mushy. The rice, never greasy, must carry the aroma of ginger and pandan. And the sauces? Balanced, bold and optional – but you'll want all three.



Le Cheng Kampong Hainanese Chicken Rice

Free-range kampong chicken is gently poached and chilled before it is served with fragrant rice, house-made chilli and ginger sauce. At Le Cheng, expect a deeply flavoured, perfectly textured take on Singapore's most iconic dish.

Open daily, 10AM–12AM; 389 Changi Road
 © [lechengsg](#)



Boon Tong Kee

Returning to its roots in Chinatown where it started in 1979, Boon Tong Kee's Smith Street outlet serves nostalgic Cantonese fare. Signature sweet and sour meat joins its famed chicken rice in a sleek, modern setting. **Open Thu–Tue, 11:30AM–10:45PM; 11 Smith Street**
 © [boontongkee_sg](#)

Nasi lemak

Long considered Malaysia's national dish, *nasi lemak* is a testament to the rich Malay culinary heritage that extends across the region. Served wrapped in banana leaf or on a plate, it comprises coconut milk-infused rice, sambal, fried anchovies, peanuts, boiled egg and cucumber. Some also add fried chicken, *otak-otak* (grilled fish cake) or even *rendang*.

Nasi lemak is known for its balance of flavours. The rice is creamy and aromatic, while sambal is spicy, sweet and smoky. Pile on an interplay of textures such as crunchy *ikan bilis* (anchovies) and runny egg yolk, no wonder this is considered the breakfast of champions, or for supper.



WHERE TO GET NASI LEMAK IN SINGAPORE



Penang Culture

This halal-certified nasi lemak features fluffy coconut milk-infused rice, crispy chicken and sweet-spicy sambal. A comforting, balanced dish served all day across outlets – from Sengkang to Changi. **Visit Instagram for outlet locations and operating hours.** @penangculturesg



97 Nasi Lemak

Born at Old Airport Road, 97 Nasi Lemak serves heritage-rich plates with fragrant rice, crispy wings and bold sambal. Side dishes like *rendang* and sambal brinjal round out the spread. **Open Tue–Sun, 7AM–2:30PM; #01-96/97 Old Airport Road Food Centre @ 97nasilemak**



Wild Coco

Wild Coco's nasi lemak features fresh, MSG-free ingredients – including 24-hour marinated fried chicken, small-batch sambal and rice steamed with freshly squeezed *santan* (coconut milk). Every plate is rich, fragrant and cooked with care. **Various outlets.** @wildcoco.sg



Ming Yen BBQ Seafood's chilli crab

Chilli crab

Messy, bold and worth every wet tissue – chilli crab is Singapore's most theatrical dish.

Mud crab is stir-fried in a thick, spicy-sweet gravy made from tomato paste, egg and sambal, best mopped up with golden mantou buns.

Though it sounds fiery, it's more tangy than spicy – a dish built on contrasts. The shell-on experience is part of the charm, cracking claws and licking sauce-drenched fingers.

First popularised in the 1950s, chilli crab now defines Singapore seafood dining, the kind you save for special nights and visiting friends. It's not just a dish – it's a ritual, best eaten with hands.

WHERE TO GET CHILLI CRAB IN SINGAPORE



Hong Kong Street BBQ Live Seafood

Part of the Hong Kong Street Old Chun Kee group, this lively Lau Pa Sat stall serves charcoal-grilled seafood, smoky satay and classic *zi char* (stir-fry) till late. Their chilli crab is rich, eggy and bold. **Open daily, 5PM–1AM; #51–53 Lau Pa Sat, 18 Raffles Quay @ hkstreet_old_chun_kee**



Mellben Signature

Served with homemade sambal and silky egg whites, Mellben's chilli crab balances sweet heat and luscious texture. Trusted since 1988, crabs are cooked to order. **Open daily, 11:30AM–2PM, 5PM–11PM; #01-105, 7 Tanjong Pagar Plaza @ mellbensignaturesg**



Ming Yen BBQ Seafood

A crowd favourite for over 30 years, Ming Yen's chilli crab hits the sweet spot between value, flavour and nostalgia. Not too spicy or mild, every bite leaves you wanting more. Best enjoyed with crispy mantou. **Open daily, 5PM–1:30AM; #67–68 Lau Pa Sat, 18 Raffles Quay**

Laksa

A beloved dish across Southeast Asia, laksa is the ultimate bowl of comfort – rich, spicy and slurp-worthy. At its heart: rice noodles swimming in a creamy coconut milk broth flavoured with sambal, dried shrimp and herbs. Topped with prawns, fishcake, cockles and a halved egg, laksa is a satisfying blend of texture and taste.

Whether it's the Katong-style with thick vermicelli or the tangy Penang-style assam laksa from Malaysia, made with tamarind, every bowl tells a story of cultural fusion and local pride. It's a dish that comforts the homesick, delights the curious and always hits the spot – rain or shine.



WHERE TO GET LAKSA IN SINGAPORE



Coffee Hive / Kopi Korner

Creamy, fragrant and generously topped, this coconut-based laksa is comfort in every spoonful. Served in a cosy café setting, it's a go-to for classic flavours with a fuss-free, contemporary twist. **Various operating hours and branches islandwide**
 @ coffeehiveofficial f CoffeeHive
 @ kopikornersg f KopiKorner



Hup Hup Mee Siam

Using a grandmother's recipe and fresh coconut milk squeezed daily, Hup Hup's laksa is simmered for hours and has a rich, deep flavour. It has also been consistently ranked as one of the Little Red Dot's best. Regulars say it tastes just like the old days. The broth is creamy yet light, with a nostalgic aroma that lingers. **Open Wed–Sun, 6AM–2:30PM, 80 Circuit Road, #02-14 @ huphup.co**



KANTIN at Jewel Changi

Nominated as one of Asia's Best New Restaurants, this Bornean eatery is the go-to spot for Sarawak Laksa – a Sarawakian classic famously known as the "Breakfast of the Gods". Rich prawn broth, simmered with over 30 spices, is ladled over delicate vermicelli and topped with prawns, shredded chicken and egg. **Open daily, 11AM–10PM; Jewel Changi #05-206/207 @ kantinjewel**



Roti prata

Crispy on the outside, soft and stretchy on the inside – roti prata is both a breakfast staple and a late-night comfort. Often paired with a bowl of curry or a dusting of sugar, it's a dish that can be sweet or savoury, depending on your mood. Brought over by Indian immigrants, prata is made by flipping and stretching dough until it is paper-thin, then folding and frying it on a hot griddle. Watching a prata master at work is half the experience. Whether plain, filled with egg or stuffed with cheese, mushroom or even chocolate, prata remains a deeply satisfying staple of Singapore's food scene.

WHERE TO GET ROTI PRATA IN SINGAPORE



Al-Tasneem

Since 2005, Al-Tasneem has served crisp hand-flipped prata, aromatic dum briyani and hearty, golden murtabak. Bold spices, slow-cooked methods and homestyle flavours make this a Kampong Glam icon a go-to for comfort and tradition suitable for all palates. **Open 24/7; 709 North Bridge Road @ [altasneemrestaurant.sg](https://www.altasneemrestaurant.sg)**



Casuarina Curry Restaurant

Crisp outside, fluffy inside – Casuarina's plain prata is the gold standard. Made daily by long-time chefs, it's "Singapore's answer to the croissant" and comes in over 100 variations. **Open Sun-Thu 7AM-11PM, Fri & Sat 7AM-11:30PM; 136-138 Casuarina Road @ [casuarinacurry](https://www.casuarinacurry.com)**



Chindamani Indian Restaurant

Hot, golden and crisp, Chindamani's plain prata is based on a recipe from the owner's hometown of Kollangudi in Madurai. Made fresh to order and best paired with fish curry, it delivers a satisfying crunch around the clock. **Open 24/7; #01-1263, Blk 108 Hougang Ave 1 @ [chindamani.sg](https://www.chindamani.sg)**



PRATA ALLEY

Voted in 2023 as Singapore's No. 1 Prata by Class95, PRATA ALLEY serves freshly made prata cooked with olive oil. Balancing authenticity, nutrition and flavour, it is rooted in family tradition. **Open daily, 8AM-10:30PM; 321 Alexandra Road, Alexandra Central #01-07 @ [prataalley](https://www.prataalley.com)**

Desserts



Tian Wang

Known for its rich, comforting bubur cha cha, this Keong Saik spot blends tradition with a modern touch. Creamy coconut, soft taro, sweet potato and chewy tapioca deliver texture, nostalgia and just the right sweetness. **Open Mon–Fri, 5PM–2AM, Sat 3PM–2AM, Sun 3PM–1AM; 50 Keong Saik Road, Chinatown Point @ tianwang.sg**



Marie's Lapis Café

Marie's Lapis Café serves heritage Peranakan kuehs (traditional cakes or desserts) made with fresh coconut milk and care. Crowd favourites include the best kueh salat, kueh kosui and their signature lapis – known as the "Four Heavenly Kuehs". **Open Tue–Sun, 10AM–9:30PM; 537 Bedok North Street 3, #01-575, with branches islandwide @ marieslapis**



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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.

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our airlines**

News and updates
from MAG Airlines

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**Discover our
network**

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

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**Onboard
entertainment**

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



Amal by Malaysia Airlines expands in Indonesia to make Umrah travel even smoother

Amal by Malaysia Airlines is making it easier than ever for Indonesian pilgrims to embark on their Umrah journey. Teaming up with three trusted Indonesian travel agencies – PT Megatrans Universal (MTU), PT Syifa Wisata Jaya Persada (SJWP) and PT MKM Ticketing Travel & Tours Indonesia (MKM) – Amal is strengthening its presence just in time for the 1447H season.

The partnerships were officially sealed in Balikpapan and Makassar, with nearly 100 local agents in attendance, joined by Amal's COO Muhammad Najmi Mansor. The goal? To tap into local know-how and offer pilgrims a more accessible,

personalised Umrah experience.

MTU and SJWP will support travellers from Balikpapan, while MTU and MKM will focus on Makassar – giving more Indonesian Muslims access to Amal's thoughtful, spiritually centred service. With confirmed seat allocations, tailored Umrah packages and premium onboard offerings via Kuala Lumpur, the journey to Madinah or Jeddah just got a lot easier.

And with new direct flights from Balikpapan and Makassar launched in late 2024, Amal's commitment to its signature "Mesra Ibadah" experience means every step of the pilgrimage is designed to be seamless, meaningful and stress-free.



See more of Malaysia with Malaysia Airlines' Bonus Side Trip

Planning a trip? Now you can explore even more – for free. Malaysia Airlines has just expanded its Bonus Side Trip programme, giving international travellers a chance to add a little extra adventure to their journey. When you book a return international flight to Malaysia, you'll score a complimentary one-way domestic flight to one of seven local destinations.

New to the list are charming spots like Alor Setar, Kuala Terengganu and Kuantan – perfect for soaking up Malaysia's unique culture, natural beauty and local flavours beyond the typical tourist trails.

It's all part of Malaysia Airlines' mission to help you experience the heart and soul of the country, just in time for Visit Malaysia Year 2026. More discovery, more value and more reasons to make your trip unforgettable.

Golden Bridge, Da Nang

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Malaysia Airlines brings global delegates to Langkawi for Trade Elevation Summit 2025

Malaysia Airlines recently hosted over 300 international delegates in stunning Langkawi for the second edition of its Trade Elevation Summit (TES): a three-day event that mixed business with a nice touch of island charm. Held from 10–12 June, the summit was a collaborative effort with the Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB)

and the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA).

Set in Langkawi's Unesco Global Geopark, TES offered a unique blend of curated showcases, strategic forums and high-level networking – all with the goal of building stronger aviation ties and highlighting Malaysia Airlines' growing network, tech upgrades and destination offerings.

Malaysia Aviation Group welcomes Laura Mercier as official cosmetics partner

Get ready to fly in style – Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) is bringing a touch of glamour to your journey through its new partnership with renowned cosmetics brand Laura Mercier. From July onwards, you can look forward to beautifully curated in-flight moments, limited-edition amenity kits and co-branded treats in Malaysia Airlines' premium cabins.

With Laura Mercier's signature effortless elegance and MAG's warm Malaysian Hospitality, travel is set to feel a little more special, more personal and a lot more memorable.

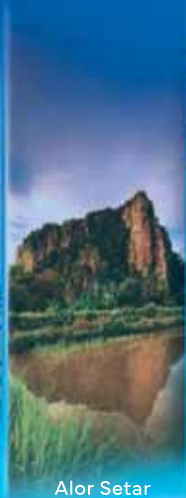


BONUS SideTrip

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Bharu



Alor Setar



Penang



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Special menu highlight: Nasi hujan panas with ayam masak merah

A taste of Merdeka in the skies

From 1–31 August, Malaysia Airlines is serving up something truly special to celebrate Malaysia's 68th National Day: a festive in-flight menu that's all about flavours close to home and heart.

Passengers flying in Business Suite, Business Class and Economy Class on selected routes from Kuala Lumpur to Sabah, Sarawak, the Middle East and Europe can enjoy a nostalgic Malaysian favourite: nasi hujan panas with ayam masak merah.

Often served during weddings and celebrations, *nasi hujan panas* – or "rainbow rice" – is instantly recognisable by its colourful grains and rich, buttery aroma. Cooked with aromatic spices, butter and milk, the rice is a symbol of unity, hope and joy: the very spirit of Merdeka.

Complementing the rice is the ever-comforting *ayam masak merah*, tender chicken simmered in a fragrant, tomato-based gravy that's slightly sweet, a little spicy and full of warm spices like cinnamon, star anise and lemongrass. It's the kind of dish that feels like home, wherever you're headed.

To round out the meal, enjoy the zesty crunch of *acar rampai* (pickled vegetables) and the sweet-spicy kick of *acar nenas* (pineapple relish), adding a burst of freshness to every bite.

This special menu is a heartfelt nod to Malaysia's diverse food culture and the traditions that bring us together. So, as you take to the skies this Merdeka month, sit back, tuck in and celebrate our nation's flavours – one delicious bite at a time.

Selamat menyambut Hari Merdeka from all of us at Malaysia Aviation Group!



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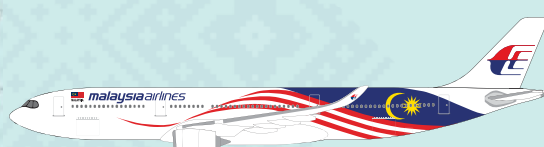


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A350-900

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



A330-900

No. of Aircraft **6** | Passenger Seating **297**
Length **63.689m** | Wingspan **64m** | Height **16.788m**
Max. Cruising Speed **980km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-300

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



A330-200

No. of Aircraft **4** | 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 **35.8m** | Height **12.50m**
Max. Cruising Speed **857km/h**



B737-8

No. of Aircraft **14** | Passenger Seating **174**
Length **39.52m** | Wingspan **35.90m** | Height **12.30m**
Max. Cruising Speed **976km/h**



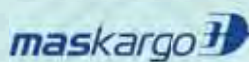
ATR 72-500

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 **35.8m** | Height **12.50m**
Max. Cruising Speed **857km/h**



A330-200F

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



ATR 72-500

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



Viking DHC-6 Twin Otter Series 400

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



ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

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



CABIN LUGGAGE HANDLING

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



PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDs)

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



LITHIUM BATTERIES

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



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Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes, is prohibited on all flights. Electronic cigarettes must be carried in carry-on baggage only. Recharging of the device inflight is not permitted.



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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.



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



IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

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

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



ONBOARD CHARGING

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



FOOD & BEVERAGE

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



FRESH & FROZEN SEAFOOD

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

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



PEANUT & NUT ALLERGIES

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



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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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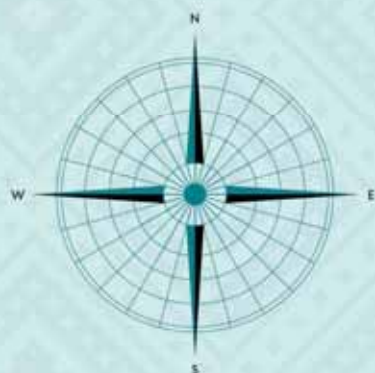
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OUR NETWORK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELEN WINATA

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Malaysia Airlines,
Firefly and MASwings
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destinations around the
world from their hubs in
Kuala Lumpur, Penang
and **Kota Kinabalu**



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

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



Kota Bharu

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IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK (LISBON)



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Step 3

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(not applicable for A330-900)



Step 4

Click on the
"**Connect**" tab



Step 5

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



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Step 2

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<http://mhstudio.streamonboard.com>

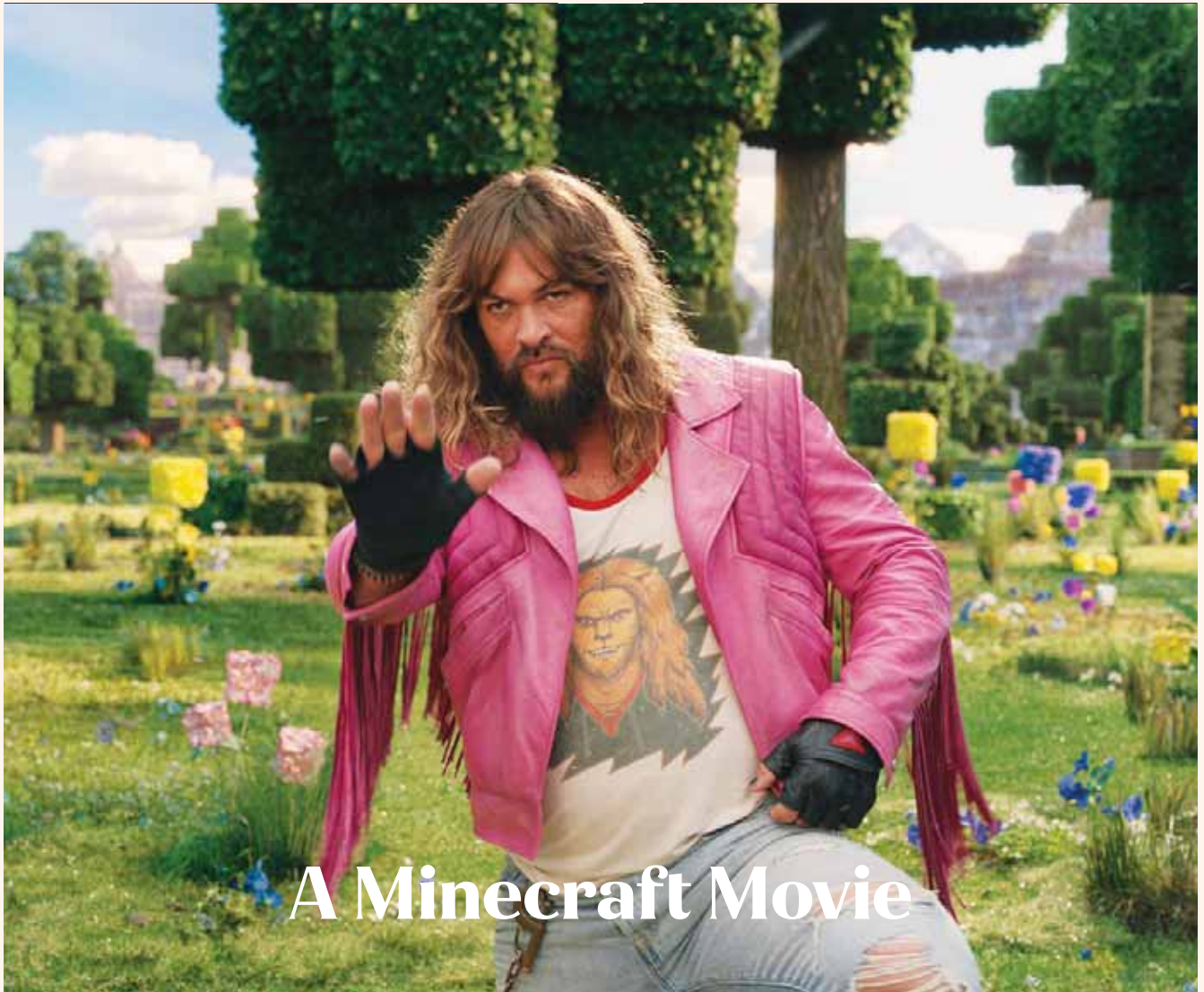
*Wi-Fi service (with internet connectivity) is available on B737-8 aircraft operated by Malaysia Airlines.

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



NOW SHOWING

 MOVIES **p98**  TELEVISION **p107**  AUDIO **p110**



A Minecraft Movie

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Check out our **Malaysia Independence Day Movie Collection** on page 102!



**Air Force the Movie:
Selagi Bernyawa**



War on Terror: KL Anarchy



Takluk: Lahad Datu



Ola Bola



A Minecraft Movie

In this imaginative big-screen adventure based on the global gaming phenomenon, four unlikely teens are pulled through a mysterious portal into the Overworld, a strange and enchanting land built entirely of cubes. There, they meet Steve, a surprisingly skilled (and slightly quirky) guide who leads them through magical forests, menacing monsters and the unspoken rules of a world shaped by creativity. To find their way home, they'll need to learn the ropes, build with purpose and believe in the power of teamwork. A thrilling, family-friendly quest where survival depends on imagination.



The Accountant 2

Forensic accountant Christian Wolff reunites with his lethal brother to unravel a string of mysterious assassinations that blends brains, bullets and buried family secrets.



Day of Reckoning

With his badge on the line, a small-town sheriff and a tough US marshal chase a cunning outlaw. But what begins as a routine manhunt turns into a test of loyalty, law and redemption.



The Ballad of Wallis Island

When former bandmates – and lovers – reunite for an intimate performance on a secluded island, the night blurs into a haze of memory, music and unresolved heartbreak.



Bob Trevino Likes It

Inspired by true events, this heartwarming story follows a lonely woman who finds comfort and connection through an unexpected online friendship with a kind stranger. It's an uplifting film about how one click can change everything. Starring Barbie Ferreira and John Leguizamo.



Holland

In a picture-perfect town, teacher Nancy Vandergroot uncovers something sinister lying beneath the surface. A chilling domestic thriller where nothing is as it seems.



Kid Snow

Set in the world of tent boxing, washed-up boxer Kid Snow gets a shot at redemption – and a life beyond the ring – after meeting a single mother with dreams of her own.



Ash

Riya wakes on a remote planet, her crewmates dead and danger lurking in the shadows. When a stranger claims to be her rescuer, the nightmare deepens in this sci-fi survival thriller.



Until Dawn

A carefree getaway turns into a nightmare as seven friends fight to survive the night at a remote mountain lodge – where every choice could be their last.



Dog Man

He's part dog, part man and all hero! In this hilarious animated adventure, Dog Man must stop Petey the Cat and embrace his true identity. A family-friendly romp with a tail-wagging twist.



FRIENDSHIP COLLECTION

Hollywood Favourite Movies



Rush Hour



Rush Hour 2



Rush Hour 3



The Hangover



The Hangover Part II



The Hangover Part III



Knox Goes Away



No Time to Die



Chitty Chitty Bang Bang

Kids



The Powerpuff Girls Movie



Journey to the Centre of the Earth



Maya the Bee: The Honey Games

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MALAYSIA INDEPENDENCE
DAY COLLECTION

Malay

**Air Force the Movie: Selagi Bernyawa**

When a Malaysian Air Force unit is trapped in war-torn Namburi, a bold and dangerous rescue mission tests loyalty, sacrifice and brotherhood in this patriotic military drama packed with heart-pounding aerial action.

**Matinya Seorang Patriot**

The death of a beloved nationalist sends shockwaves through a quiet village, inciting political unrest and eerie changes. A haunting tale of legacy, loss and ambition with dark consequences.

Hindi

**Baby John****Wild Wild Punjab**

Malayalam

**Bramayugam**

Tamil

**2K Love Story****Bloody Beggar**

STAND OUT FROM THE REST

Explore the way you want to.

Hit pause and take the holiday you've been dreaming of, not to escape, but to reconnect. Step away from your routine and remember who you are beneath it all.

Chase the sunrise from a hidden rooftop, coffee in hand and the city still quiet beneath you. Get lost in weekend markets filled with colour, laughter, and the thrill of finding something unexpected.

Dance under fairy lights at a street festival where no one knows your name, but everyone shares your joy. Take the long way back to your hotel just to catch a glimpse of the stars you never have time to notice at home.

Travel doesn't always have to be loud, it just has to feel real. Sometimes, it's the warmth of a smile, the calm of a slow morning, or the freedom of having nowhere to be that brings you back to yourself.



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Discover tickets & packages to the best experiences.

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Book lounge passes, fast track privileges & more.

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How the smallest moments ground you, how distance brings clarity. You don't need a perfect plan, just space to feel something different.

To walk unfamiliar streets with no agenda. To listen instead of scroll. To be in a place that asks nothing from you but presence.

This isn't about ticking boxes, it's about choosing experiences that matter.

Let your next trip be intentional. Not just a break, but a return to what's important. Start where you are, go where it feels right and plan your next journey with us.

Explore thoughtfully curated packages, seamless services, and everything you need to make your holiday, yours.

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JACKIE CHAN COLLECTION

Chinese



Rob-B-Hood



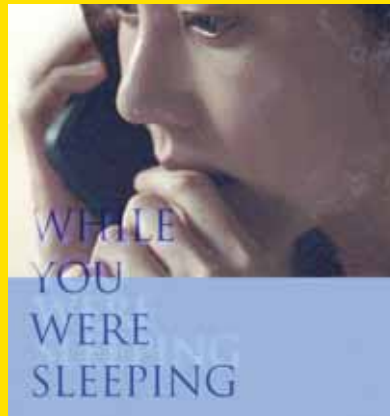
Police Story 3: Super Cop

Chinese



A lazy restaurant worker stumbles into success, only to face betrayal and family turmoil. With a little help from an AI home assistant, he learns that true leadership takes more than luck. A heartwarming Malaysian dramedy.

Korean



Joon-seok and Deok-hee's peaceful life shatters after tragedy strikes. As Deok-hee grapples with grief and amnesia, hidden truths come to light in this emotional Korean drama about love, memory and loss.

Japanese



Renowned director Takashi Miike returns with a martial arts drama full of bold action, vivid characters and intense fight scenes – a fresh take on classic Japanese cinema, enriched by strong storytelling.

Chinese



The Unwavering Brotherhood

Korean



Spring Garden

Japanese



Snowflowers: Seeds of Hope

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Malay

MALAYSIA INDEPENDENCE DAY COLLECTION



Family Feud Malaysia Edisi Merdeka

Get ready for laughs, surprises and national pride in this special Merdeka edition of **Family Feud Malaysia**. Hosted by the ever-charismatic Nabil Ahmad, two families go head-to-head in a fun, unity-filled trivia showdown.



Sepahtu Reunion Live Merdeka



Ceria Megastar Merdeka Episode 2

Chinese



Amid the chaos of the Eastern Han Dynasty, warlord Lü Bu kidnaps the emperor, forcing rival factions to unite in this gripping saga.



Japanese



Join Hattori, the ever-reliable young ninja, as he and his brother protect their friend Kenichi from trouble – armed with stealth, loyalty and humour. Whether in the city or the Iga mountains, **Ninja Hattori** delivers laughs, lessons and plenty of ninja action for all ages.

Korean



M Countdown

Hindi



Crime Patrol 2.0



Worst to First: A Teen Baseball Miracle

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Now Showing

TELEVISION

Podcast/Lifestyle



**Game of Impossible:
The Global Effect of the US-
China Tariff War**



**Game of Impossible:
Boomers. Millennials. Gen Z.
Who's Getting Work Done?**

Malaysia Airlines proudly introduces a brand-new in-flight entertainment experience with the launch of our first-ever video podcast – **The Game of Impossible**, hosted by the dynamic father-son duo, Dato' Sri Idris Jala and Leon Jala. This insightful series tackles bold topics ranging from global trade tensions to Gen Z dynamics in today's workplace, offering fresh, thought-provoking content with a strong Malaysian voice for passengers to enjoy at 30,000 feet.

Nature & Wildlife



Nature's Newborns

Drama



You



Kids



Sonic Prime



**Scooby-Doo and
Guess Who?**

Comedy



**The Big Bang
Theory**



FRIENDSHIP COLLECTION

Comedy



The Kominsky Method

Michael Douglas stars as Sandy Kominsky, an ageing actor turned acting coach, navigating life's later years with his best friend and agent, Norman (Alan Arkin). Warm, funny and bittersweet, the show won a Golden Globe for Best Comedy Series.

Drama



Sweet Tooth

In a world reshaped by a mysterious virus, a half-human, half-deer boy sets off on a dangerous journey to find his mother – and his place in the world – in this fantasy, adventure and post-apocalyptic drama.

Kids



Bluey

Meet Bluey, the curious and energetic Blue Heeler pup who turns everyday life into epic adventures. A heartwarming, imaginative series loved by kids and adults alike.



The Hits

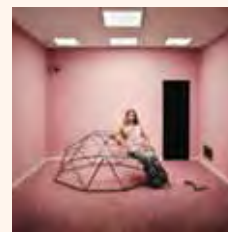
Take That's iconic 1995 album **Nobody Else** returns, remastered and refreshed. Featuring classics like "Back for Good", this anniversary edition is a nostalgic treat, packed with timeless pop and bonus gems for fans old and new.



Mandarin

Zhijia Liu delivers heartfelt melodies and emotional depth in this soulful Mandarin album. **Moments** is a gentle, beautifully sung journey through love and reflection.

Club



Japanese



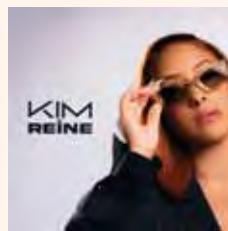
The Hits



Memories



French



Korean



R&B



Malay



Tamil



Hindi



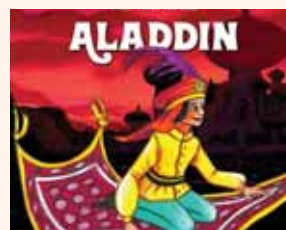
Indonesian



Cantonese



Kids





**Momentum does not
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The eagle has landed

It's not a proper visit to Langkawi without an exhilarating SkyCab ride to the top of Gunung Machinchang, home to one of the oldest rock formations in Southeast Asia. The adventure begins at the Oriental Village near Pantai Kok, where a cable car takes you to the peak for panoramic views of the island's unique highland flora and forested valley, stretching all the way to the glistening Andaman Sea. On your way to the popular SkyBridge, make a stop at the often-overlooked Middle Station for the Eagle's Nest SkyWalk, a stunning new attraction 650m above sea level. It features a majestic eagle head – a nod to Langkawi's iconic reddish-brown eagle – standing guard over a 38m-long, glass-bottom platform that extends dramatically from the mountainside. It's not for the faint of heart, but it makes for the perfect photo op, complete with a nest of three giant eggs. panoramalangkawi.com



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