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MARCH-APRIL 2026

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IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK



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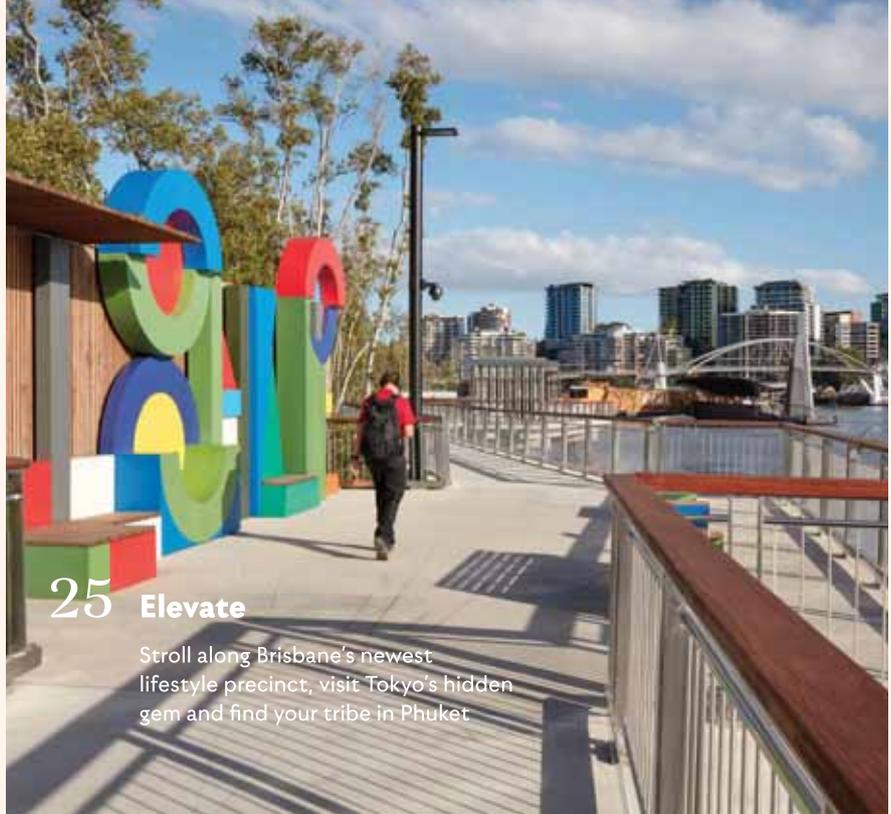
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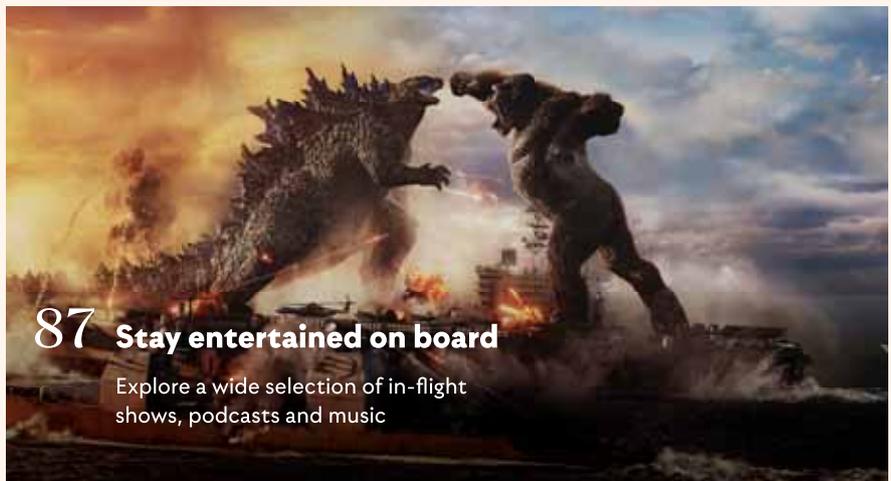
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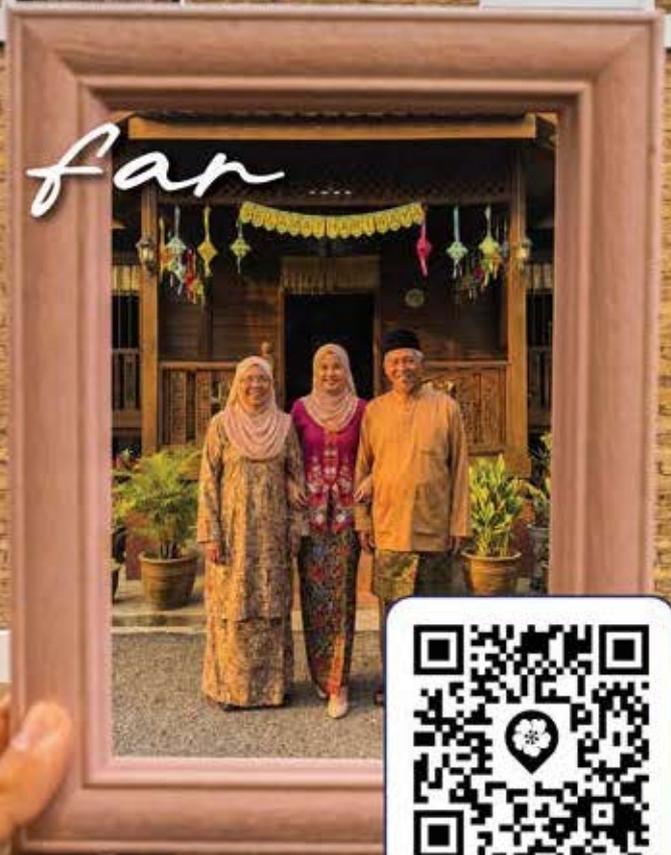
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Dear guests,

It is a great honour for me to assume the role of President and Group Chief Executive Officer of Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG), effective 1 February 2026. This also marks my first message to *Going Places* readers, and I am pleased to connect with you in this new capacity.

Over the past 30 years, I have had the privilege of working across many parts of MAG – from the airline to our subsidiaries, shaping strategic directions and driving transformation initiatives – which has given me a broad perspective on how we connect people, places and communities. These experiences have deepened my appreciation for our dedicated teams and the work that goes into delivering safe, reliable and memorable journeys. I am excited to support the next phase of MAG’s growth by bringing together our people, processes and technology to continually enhance the passenger experience.

Our top priority remains delivering outstanding experiences to our passengers every day. As Hari Raya Aidilfitri approaches, we extend our warmest wishes to everyone observing the fasting month and those celebrating Hari Raya. During this festive period, Malaysia Airlines and Firefly are committed to providing reliable operations and consistent service standards, ensuring smooth and comfortable journeys as travellers return home to reconnect with loved ones or take a well-deserved break. We will be deploying up to 2,700 flights during the festive period, with fixed fares from RM298 to make journeys more convenient. Our teams are dedicated to maintaining the highest standards so that every journey is seamless, safe and enjoyable.

Beyond ensuring seamless connectivity for our passengers, we continue to expand our global footprint through strategic partnerships that deliver greater value and strengthen our position in key markets. Malaysia

Airlines is proud to be the Associate Sponsor and Official Global Airline Partner of the Mumbai Indians, India’s most successful cricket team, underscoring our ambition to drive sports-led brand growth while reaffirming India as a key strategic market. In addition, Malaysia Airlines and Singapore Airlines have formalised a strategic joint business partnership, deepening commercial collaboration to enhance connectivity and flexibility for travellers between Malaysia, Singapore and beyond.

We are deeply honoured to receive the Gold Award in the Transportation, Travel & Tourism category at the Putra Brand Awards 2025. Malaysia Airlines is also proud to be recognised with the Airline Award at the First & Best Brands Chosen by Consumers 2025, hosted by South Korean newspaper *Chosun Ilbo*. These accolades reinforce our focus on strengthening connectivity and delivering greater value to our customers. Thank you for your continued trust in us.

At MAG, safety remains at the heart of everything we do. Firefly’s successful extension of its IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) Registry for two more years represents a significant milestone for the airline and its people, and also marks Firefly’s first IOSA Risk-Based Audit, highlighting regulatory compliance, operational discipline and teamwork. This accomplishment reinforces the Group’s commitment to the highest global safety standards, ensuring every journey is conducted with care, precision and the utmost confidence.

On behalf of MAG, I wish everyone celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri a joyous and blessed festive season. It is a privilege to be part of your journey, and we hope our Malaysian Hospitality makes each experience with us a meaningful one.

We thank you for choosing to fly with us and we look forward to welcoming you on board again soon.

Nasaruddin A Bakar

President and Group CEO
Malaysia Aviation Group



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There's something about spring that makes you want to move – to explore, get curious and see familiar places in new ways. This issue is all about rediscovery: returning, wandering and letting destinations surprise you again.

Our cover story takes you to Cebu, but not in the way you might expect. It's told through the eyes of a writer coming back to the island she was born on after years away. Instead of retracing old memories, she dives straight into adventure – canyoneering through rough terrains and waterfalls, swimming with clouds of sardines and drifting over coral gardens teeming with underwater life. Cebu feels raw, alive and deeply personal, the kind of place that reveals itself when you're willing to get wet and go a little off script.

Hyderabad shows another side of itself. Yes, its palaces and forts hold centuries of history but today, the city hums with new energy. Between heritage landmarks, you'll find late-night cafés, creative spaces and a growing crowd of young visionaries who are reimagining the city. It's a city in the middle of becoming, which makes now a particularly good time to visit.

Even Tokyo, one of the world's most familiar cities, has its quiet surprises. Beneath a 100-year-old railway viaduct lies a hidden stretch of restaurants, bars and shops that feels like a secret passage waiting to be explored.

Beyond that, we escape for a weekend in Kuantan, check out Brisbane's new Queen's Wharf precinct and wander lesser-known corners of Shanghai that recharge creativity and invite reflection.

However you travel this season, we hope these stories remind you that discovery doesn't always mean going far – sometimes it's about slowing down, returning differently and letting a place show you something new about itself, and about you.

Go forth and wander!



Elizabeth Soong
Editor



This issue's contributors



Chandra Joshua

Writer, "Surrender to the flow", p46

Chandra is a lifestyle and beauty writer based in South Cebu. Her work has been featured in *The Infatuation* and the Philippine editions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Esquire*.



Chandreyi Bandyopadhyay

Writer, "A city of two tales", p54

Chandreyi is a passionate communicator from India who uncovers unique links between nature and heritage, with travels focused on wildlife experiences and food.



Athul Prasad

Photographer, "A city of two tales", p54

Athul is a London-based travel and portrait photographer with an impressionistic approach, combining innovative image-making techniques with physical interventions in his work.

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A CLASS ABOVE

MALAYSIA



At the heart of this vibrant nation lies Sunway University, a leading institution recently recognised by QS as the world's most improved institution - located in Sunway City, a modern, integrated township offering world-class amenities, lifestyle conveniences and a safe, welcoming environment for students from around the globe.

Through collaborations with globally renowned institutions such as Harvard University, the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Arizona State University, Lancaster University and Le Cordon Bleu Paris, Sunway University offers world-class education that goes far beyond the classroom.

Begin your global journey with Sunway University – where world-class education meets opportunity without borders.

So much more than expected

Naturally
Langkawi

Great Hornbill

There are so many layers to Langkawi – the well-known and the not-so-well-known hidden treasures waiting to be unearthed and experienced. One such discovery is a new species of Gecko found in Langkawi's Gunung Raya, now and forever named the 'Roti Canai Gecko'.

Did you also know that the Oriental Pied Hornbill is one of the most regularly spotted birds on the island? Meanwhile, the Great Hornbill is regularly seen on Gunung Raya and Gunung Machinchang.

The calm and beauty of Langkawi awaits, as does its many experiences beyond the expected.

Nowhere like here.

14 REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places

1

Penang

Sleep in heritage luxe

Just opposite Penang's iconic Blue Mansion, **Cheong Fatt Tze – The Qing Suites** offers a quiet heritage revival. Once the servants' quarters built in 1904, the restored annexe is now a 13-suite boutique stay where history meets modern hospitality. With serene, designed interiors and locally crafted details, it feels like how the late tycoon Cheong Fatt Tze might host his most treasured guests. cheongfattzemansion.com





2

Penang

Feast for all senses

At **Umi Umi Penang**, the island's first dining theatre, dinner turns immersive. Its signature show, *The Chronicle of Penang*,

brings 200 years of history through live performance, music and heritage-inspired courses – a cultural, multisensory night out. [@umiumi_pg](#)



3

Kelantan

Precious threads

In Kota Bahru, **Cik Minah Songket** keeps Malaysia's rich weaving heritage alive, with skilled artisans crafting intricate, nature-inspired motifs that have defined Kelantan songket for centuries.

[@cikminahsongket](#)



4

Penang

Speak Penang Hokkien

Rooted in Fujian heritage and shaped by the island's multicultural rhythm, Penang Hokkien is a dialect full of colour, wit and local soul.

Speak Hokkien!, a phrasebook by Netherlands-born Luc de Gijzel, returns with a fresh cover by

acclaimed artist Tiffany Choong, featuring over 7,500 entries on daily life, festivals, grammar, expressions and cheeky slang. It perfectly captures Penang's everyday voice – an essential companion for curious visitors. [clarity8.com](#)



Kuala Lumpur

Rare creations

Designed for the modern connoisseur, each **Kaimirra** piece blends rarity with romance, offering jewellery that moves with you and stories that last a lifetime.

The only brand globally dedicated to spotlighting rare ammolite and extraordinary meteorite, Kaimirra transforms prehistoric fossils and celestial space into wearable art. Ammolite shimmers with iridescent hues born over 66 million years ago, while meteorites carry cosmic patterns from the dawn of our solar system.

Steeped in Malaysian heritage yet embracing a global vision, Kaimirra's creations are rich in provenance, emotion and individuality. Within this spirit of artistry, Kaimirra unveils Amour Fleur, a poetic collection celebrating love in all its forms.

Available at Isetan KLCC, Isetan Lot 10, Isetan The Gardens Mall, Parkson Elite Pavilion KL and online.

kaimirra.com





6

Malaysia

Pick-me-up

Here's a crunchy rice snack that proves wellness doesn't have to be boring.

A favourite among health-savvy eaters, ecoBrown's **Brice** is a crunchy, wholesome rice snack made for mindful munching. We catch up with the team behind the brand to learn why Brice is for "someone who snacks with attitude".
ecobrown.com

What kind of snack eater did you imagine when you first thought about Brice?

We pictured someone who snacks with attitude. The kind who rolls their eyes at boring options. They want something crunchy and satisfying, but they still care about what they put into their body.

When creating Brice, what took the longest to get right?

The texture of the rice puff matters. There aren't many snacks made from wholegrain rice puffs and getting the right crunch and mouthfeel is genuinely hard. We went through extensive R&D to create a puff that's tasty, satisfying and not too dry or cardboard-like.

What feedback from early tasters shaped the final product?

Early tasters couldn't believe it was made from wholegrain rice puffs. That reaction became a key signal for us. When people were surprised in a good way, we knew we'd solved the usual trade-off between healthier ingredients and snack satisfaction.

What do you think people are tired of when it comes to wellness food?

People are tired of wellness food that feels like punishment. Too many so-called "better-for-you" snacks are bland, oddly tasting or force you to compromise. Brice is the alternative: savoury, crunchy and genuinely enjoyable.

What's the biggest misconception about rice-based snacks?

The biggest misconception is that rice-based snacks are light and boring, or only for dieting. People assume they lack real flavour or crunch. Brice proves wholegrain rice puffs can be bold, savoury and seriously satisfying.

How do you see snacking habits changing right now?

Snacking is becoming more intentional. People snack at work, between meetings, while commuting and even as a reward, not just out of hunger. They want snacks that fit their lifestyle: convenient, satisfying and not overly heavy. They're reading labels more but still won't sacrifice taste. That's the gap Brice is built to fill.



7

Kuala Lumpur

High steaks

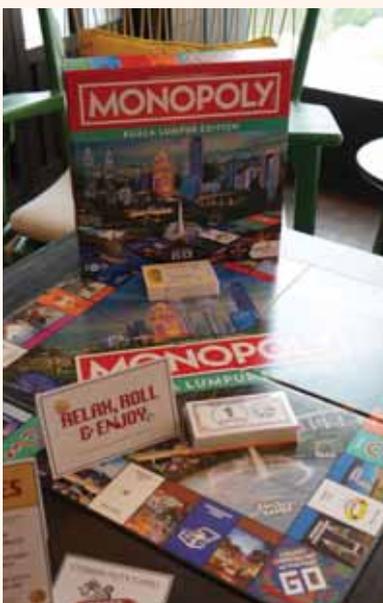
Craving a steak fix? **Firewood KLCC**, the Klang Valley debut of Penang's Michelin-selected open-flame grill, serves bold, smoky flavours and is Malaysia's only spot for Australian Stone Axe full-blood wagyu sirloin. Beyond their premium meat selection, the charred corn and cauliflower are crowd-pleasers, and the Lemon Posset Brulee makes for a perfect, sweet finish. Reserve a table at their Star Boulevard outlet on Jalan Yap Kwan Seng. firegroup.my

9

Pahang

Mangala's next act

Newsflash: Mangala Estate Kuantan will join IHG's Vignette Collection in mid-2026, ahead of a 2027 rebrand. As part of the collection, the 67-villa nature-inspired resort will feature all-day dining, a poolside bar serving farm-to-table creations and personalised dining experiences. frankyhoteles.com



8

Kuala Lumpur

Roll the dice

Whimsical and full of fun, **Hotel Indigo Kuala Lumpur** turns game night into a complete escape. Celebrating its spot as the only hotel featured on the Monopoly KL edition, the Stay & Play package brings the game to life with a dedicated play corner, themed amenities, handcrafted keepsakes and curated snacks – all infused with the hotel's signature local flair. [@hotelindigokualalumpur](https://www.instagram.com/hotelindigokualalumpur)



10

Kuala Lumpur

Get that Raya glow

As Hari Raya approaches with its calendar of open houses and family portraits, glowing skin becomes more than a beauty goal. For Eriyca Baiduri Abd Rashid, better known as Madammu, skincare should be simple, consistent and real.

She started health and beauty brand **Noir** from her home. Long before flagship stores, she gained a loyal following sharing honest beauty tips on Facebook Live as a full-time housewife.

"Inspiration for Noir comes from the real needs of women who want products

that actually work," she says. Radiant skin isn't about piling on luxury creams, she says. "I believe in disciplined skincare – proper cleansing, enough hydration and protection." Her secrets also include good sleep, stress control and balanced nutrition.

With Raya coming up and Noir's Pavilion Bukit Jalil flagship now open, Madammu recommends the Wrinkle-Corrector Rich Cream and the Wrinkle-Corrector Rich Serum for hydrated, protected skin. noirbeautyworld.com



12

Sarawak

Sun chasers

Kuching's **Borneo Cultures Museum** turns up the heat with "Helios: The Sun", an art installation celebrating life, humanity and hope, highlighting the sun's vital role. On view until 17 July.

[@borneoculturesmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/borneoculturesmuseum)



11

Kuala Lumpur

Nordic pizza twists

Double Zero Pizza

reimagines the classic with a Scandinavian twist – a 72-hour sourdough base topped with Nordic-inspired creations like Duck, Yeah! with rosemary duck

confit and Odin's Lox with beetroot-cured salmon. Natural sodas, kombucha and zero-proof wines round out this inventive Ampang dining spot.

[@doublezero.pizza](https://www.facebook.com/doublezero.pizza)

13

Selangor

School break adventure

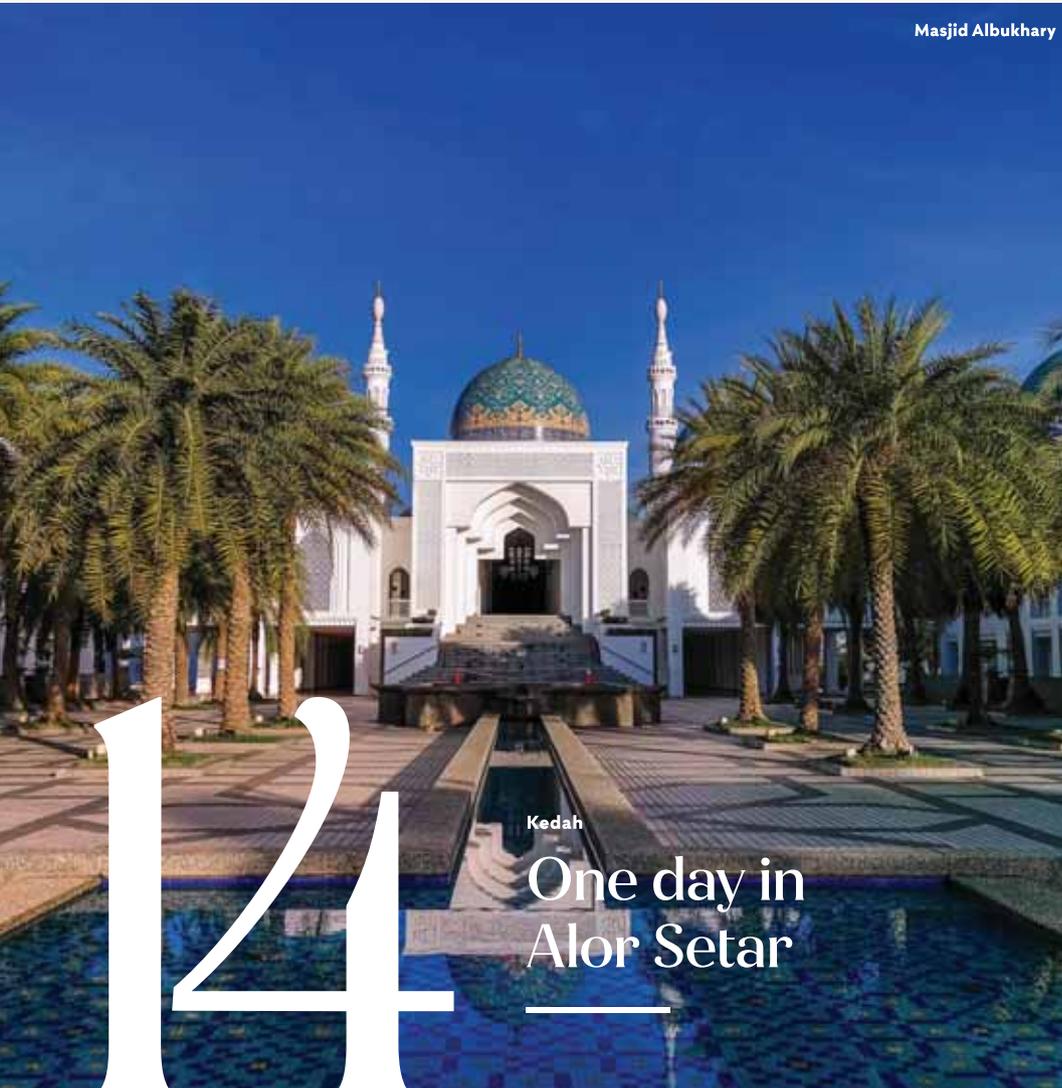


School holidays coming up? Here's a getaway that keeps both parents and kids happy. Designed with families in mind, **Sunway Resort Hotel** in Sunway City Kuala Lumpur offers spacious rooms such as the Waterventure Terrace, Family Terrace and Family Fun Suite, comfortably hosting two adults and two children with thoughtful in-room kids' amenities and access to dedicated facilities.

Keep the children entertained at Wonderland Explorers, an interactive kids' club with role-playing zones and tech rooms.

When they're ready for the outdoors, splash around at Waterventure, a water play area with shallow pools and playgrounds.

Parents can relax in the Premium Leisure Lounge with afternoon tea, cocktails and light bites. Meals range from an elevated breakfast at Gordon Ramsay Bar & Grill to a dedicated kids' buffet at Sunset Terrace and indulgent treats at Black Tap Craft Burgers & Shakes. With Sunway Lagoon and Sunway Pyramid mall right next door, everything's effortless, fun and memorable for the whole family. sunwayhotels.com



Masjid Albukhary

Albukhary (256 Bandar Alor Setar; masjidalbukhary.com.my). Explore the mosque grounds and take photos of its blue domes, sweeping arches and reflective pools framed by palm trees. Part of the wider Albukhary complex, which includes a university campus, the mosque features a rich mix of Islamic architectural influences inspired by Turkey, Iran and Morocco, making it one of the most photogenic spots in Alor Setar.

3 10am

Head towards **Kedah State Museum** (*Darul Aman Hwy; muziumkedah.gov.my*) about a 10-minute drive away. This is one of the best places to immerse in Kedah's story, from early civilisation and on through royal and colonial periods. Entry is free, and 45–60 minutes here gives you a rich cultural context for the rest of your day.

4 11am

Take a 5-minute drive to **Wat Nikrodharam** (*Tmn Tunku Habsah*), a serene Thai Buddhist temple just

Kedah's capital rewards the curious. Its charm lies in how close everything is: historic landmarks, cultural sites, local food and green spaces are all within a short drive or walking distance of one another, perfect for a day of gentle wandering.

Designed with culture, architecture and photography enthusiasts in mind, this itinerary explores the heart of Alor Setar in a day.

1 8am

Start your day at a local favourite, the **Alor Setar Breakfast Station** (24, 3, K8, *Tmn Puspa Kencana; @asbreakfaststation*), with their Oletto, a fluffy omelette with Australian cheese, wrapped in crisp roti jala and served with beef curry – a satisfying and unexpected breakfast twist.

2 9am

Drive 5 minutes along Jalan Langgar to **Masjid**



Tanjung Chali lookout tower



outside the city centre. Its intricate architecture and calm atmosphere offer a peaceful interlude, reflecting the cultural influence of nearby southern Thailand.

5 11.45am

For lunch, head to **Café Abang Adik** (*Jln Alor Mengkudu*), about 9 minutes by car. Savour authentic Malay dishes and opt for outdoor seating to enjoy views of paddy fields.

6 1.15pm

Drive into town and park your car near **Dataran Alor Setar**. From here, the rest of the itinerary works best on foot.

7 1.30pm

Begin with the **Kedah State Art Gallery**, just a 3-minute walk from the parking areas. Admission is free and the gallery showcases local Kedah art in a grand, historic building with Roman-inspired architectural details.

8 2pm

From there, it's an 11-minute walk to **Rumah Kelahiran Mahathir** (*18 Lrg Kilang Ais*). The birthplace and childhood home of Malaysia's fourth and seventh Prime Minister is now preserved as a museum. While it offers fascinating insights into Tun Dr Mahathir's early

life, the museum is an interesting example of a traditional kampung house.

9 3pm

Continue on foot (about 14 minutes) or take a short Grab ride to **Pekan Rabu** (*Jln Tunku Ibrahim*). This long-standing market complex is ideal for browsing local snacks, textiles and Kedah specialities for souvenirs.

10 4pm

Next, wander through Chinatown, a historic district with well-preserved shophouses, vibrant street murals and charming cafés. Head towards the scenic **Dataran Tanjung Chali** along the Kedah

River. The lookout tower here affords excellent views of the city and Alor Setar Tower. Once a busy harbour for boats travelling between villages, this area is particularly pleasant in the late afternoon for a leisurely stroll.

11 6pm

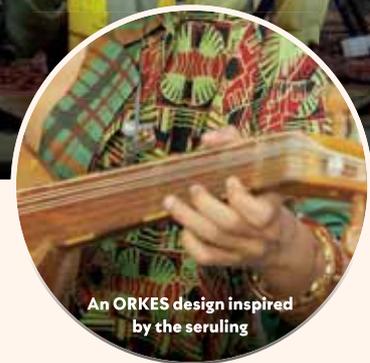
As the afternoon light softens, walk 5 minutes to **Thirty Four Café** (*141 Pekan Melayu; @the.thirtyfour*) for an early dinner. The café's rooftop area allows you to enjoy views of Masjid Zahir, and watch the sky change colour over one of Malaysia's most beautiful mosques. A calm, fitting way to end the day.

Agal Musik dressed in the ORKES collection

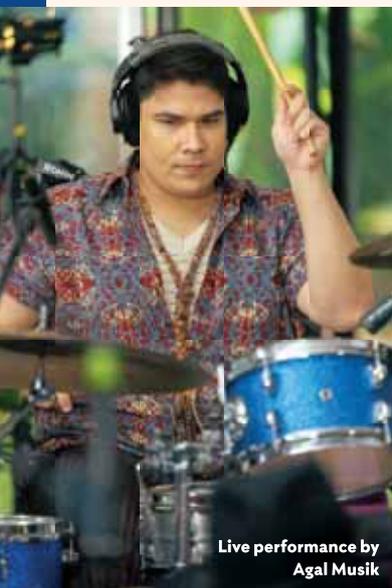


Batik finds its rhythm

In Kaptan Batik's latest collection, music becomes pattern, movement becomes motif and tradition takes on a new tempo



An ORKES design inspired by the seruling



Live performance by Agal Musik

travel, rise and linger, creating garments that feel considered rather than simply ornamental. Each piece is a reminder that batik, like music, is not static – it evolves with the people who wear it.

Crafted with purpose

ORKES joins Kaptan Batik's signature Masterpiece, Maharaja and Nusantara series, alongside a Linen line and the newly introduced Kurung Kedah sets. Available in Modern Fit and Slim Fit, with short-sleeve options, the collection is designed to move easily between moments: from power lunches and birthday celebrations to weekend getaways. These are garments crafted for those who travel with curiosity and dress with intention.

Standout designs include Nusantara Forest Melody, inspired by the *seruling* (a traditional bamboo flute from Southeast Asia). Its flowing motifs evoke sound drifting through a forest, creating a sense of belonging and calm. Masterpiece Strum and Storm strikes a louder note, reimagining the guitar's raw energy through fire, shadow and grungy floral forms – an expressive nod to the intensity and passion of rock music.

Sustainability remains central to the brand's philosophy. Every piece in the ORKES collection is OEKO-TEX® certified, reflecting a commitment

to responsible production, health safety and transparency, values that have become increasingly important to conscious consumers who purchase with intention.

Where art comes alive

As part of the campaign's creative direction, the ORKES collection was showcased through a visual concept uniting live music and traditional craft. A performance by Agal Musik played alongside batik artisans at work, echoing the collection's core idea: creativity thrives when disciplines intertwine.

In translating music into batik, Kaptan Batik offers more than a collection; it offers a way to carry culture forward, one thoughtful piece at a time.

Music and batik share a quiet resonance. Both are built by hand, guided by rhythm and carried forward through generations. ORKES, Kaptan Batik's newest collection, weaves together these two art forms, drawing on the character and cadence of musical instruments, and translating them into contemporary batik.

Drawing inspiration from both heritage and modern instruments, ORKES translates sound into visual language. Motifs echo the way melodies

Scan the QR code to explore the ORKES collection and enjoy 15% off with code ORKES15. Available online and in boutiques.



MALAYSIAN ICONS

A celebration of cultural pride, heritage and timeless Malaysian craftsmanship



Woven in gold

The threads of our past are the fabric of our future. Discover how Malaysian songket is proof that true artistry never goes out of style

BY RINA AHMAD SAPIUDDIN



In a world dominated by fast

fashion, the timeless art of weaving stands as a testament to cultural heritage and artisanal craftsmanship, with songket as a living example.

A masterpiece of patient hands and historical reverence, it is the preeminent symbol of Malay cultural identity. According to Tengku Intan Rahimah Tengku Mat Saman, director of the National Textile Museum in Kuala Lumpur, songket achieves its signature radiance through gold or silver threads painstakingly woven on a silk or cotton warp.

“The technique is an act of meticulous dedication,” says Tengku Intan Rahimah. “Metallic motifs – often inspired by local flora and fauna



– are individually inserted, which demands focus and skill far beyond plain weaving. Historically linked to royalty and ceremonial grandeur, songket embodies power, status and the textile traditions of the archipelago.”

“To wear this beautiful fabric is to carry a piece of heritage,” she adds. “It is a tangible narrative of craftsmanship preserved across generations from different states of the country.”

A masterpiece in motion

Each Malaysian state weaves its own story into songket, and the looms of Terengganu are renowned for their delicacy. According to a spokesperson from Terengganu State Museum, artisans distil nature into a visual language, transforming fruits like mangosteen and persimmon into the exquisite *tampuk manggis* and *tampuk kesemak* motifs.

The true beauty lies in the dyes. Some vintage masterpieces glow with the soft, enduring hues of the

Songket, up close

Three places to experience Malaysia's iconic weave

National Textile Museum

26 Jln Sultan Hishamuddin,
Kuala Lumpur

Open daily, 9am–5pm

muziumtekstilnegara.gov.my

Tanoti Store

Unit 1-05 GMBB Mall, 2 Jln
Robertson, Kuala Lumpur

Open daily, 11am–8pm

tanoticrafts.com

Terengganu State Museum

Bukit Losong, Kuala Terengganu,
Terengganu

Open Sat to Thu, 9am–5pm

museum.terengganu.gov.my



Previous page:
Songket from the Terengganu State Museum

Clockwise from left:
National Textile Museum in Kuala Lumpur; a songket showcase within the museum; Tanoti artisans at work



songket weaving from a fading cottage craft into a platform for rural empowerment. “From the start, we insisted weaving be a career, not just a hobby,” she says. By institutionalising the craft, Tanoti has moved artisans out of isolated villages and into a structured professional environment.

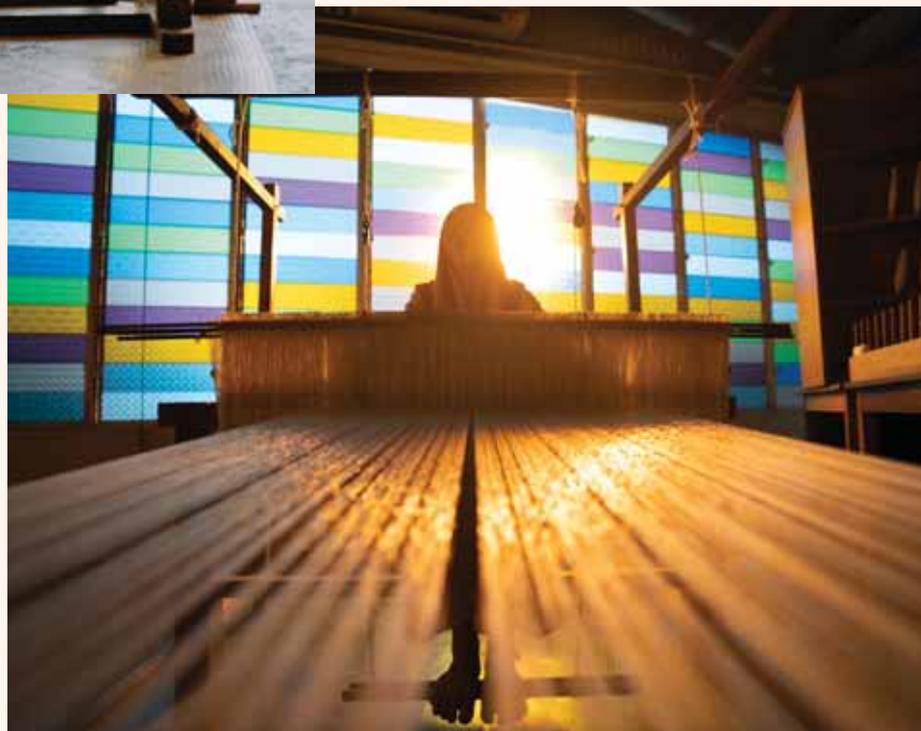
With 99% of artisans lacking formal education and many working alone, the industry needed systemic support. “We do a lot of advocacy and engage in policy-making to ensure these women aren’t just seen, but heard,” Fong explains.

Today, Tanoti has worked with over 800 artisans across 30 villages in Sarawak and Sabah, expanding their expertise far beyond songket. Alongside GMBB Mall in Kuala Lumpur, another retail store will open at Merdeka 118 in late 2026. Fong’s goal is bold: “I want them to experience real commercial returns. Most artisans operate below the poverty line. My intention is for them to earn enough such that they can start paying taxes.”

natural world. Using ancient recipes – turmeric for gold, indigo leaves for midnight blues and kesumba seeds for fiery reds – the weavers of old captured the essence of the earth.

A traditional songket tells its own narrative, rooted in the diverse communities that create it. Tengku Intan Rahimah notes that the value lies in its “woven stories” – from the structural precision of the *kepala kain* (head panel) to the deliberate elegance of the *pengapit* (flanking border). “The structural design composition of the fabric, even in how you wear it, shows the best of its design,” she says. “This isn’t just fabric; it’s a visual language of identity.”

Survival, however, requires more than admiration. Jacqueline Fong, founder and CEO of Tanoti, has spent 13 years transforming Sarawak’s



IMAGES: RAZLAN YUSOF (INSTITUT KRAF NEGARA, NATIONAL TEXTILE MUSEUM); COURTESY OF TANOTI AND TERENGGANU STATE MUSEUM

“

Malaysia’s weaving heritage is being reimagined. It’s no longer just about looking back; it’s about weaving these stories into the fabric of modern life”



From top:
Terengganu State Museum’s display of vintage songket; at the National Craft Institute, students learn vital skills to preserve Malaysia’s heritage textiles



Teaching tradition to the next generation

Traditional weaving is often seen as a relic rather than a career. At the National Craft Institute (Institut Kraf Negara) on Jalan Ipoh, the rhythmic clack of the loom is being re-tuned for the 21st century. Since 2001, its Diploma Programme in Weaving has nurtured a new generation of artisans. The stakes were raised with the integration of the Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM) Level 3 for Songket and Daster alongside the introduction of the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) for Heritage Weave Production.

This official competency framework recognises the weaver as a vital part of the economy. By formalising these skills with professional standards, heritage fabrics like songket are no longer just “village crafts”. As the institute sharpens its students’ marketability, it proves that being an artisan isn’t just about preserving the past – it’s about owning the future.

Mixing heritage with a fun twist

Traditional craft is breaking out of the museums and onto retail shelves, proving that heritage can be both high-brow and highly accessible. Take the Boh Seri Songket tea series, widely available at groceries across the country. By pairing exotic fruits and spices with songket-inspired packaging, it turns a simple cup of tea into an introduction to Malaysian art.

Last year, premium beverage brand Chagee introduced its Songket Series, a limited-time postcard collection with Loka Made, a creative brand celebrating local culture. More than a collaboration, it was a tapestry of shared values, blending the artistry of tea-making with traditional motifs, from Rafflesia and wau to the Iban shield. Each woven postcard – and even embroidered keychains shaped like Chagee cups – offered a tangible connection to Malaysia’s rich heritage.

Whether through rigorous professional certification, institutionalised reforms or a trendy cup of tea, Malaysia’s weaving heritage is being reimagined. It’s no longer just about looking back; it’s about weaving these stories into the fabric of modern life.





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Lobby



Deluxe Room



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The luxury of slowing down in Langkawi

Where space, time and nature renew the senses



Pantai Chenang



Tanjung Rhu

Set within the Malaysian state of Kedah, Langkawi is an island where time moves differently. Recognised as Southeast Asia's first UNESCO Global Geopark, its rainforests, limestone formations and coastal waters – shaped over millions of years – create a natural rhythm that invites you to slow down. From the moment you arrive, you begin to feel a shift in pace. Here, luxury is not defined by excess, but by having the space and time to breathe.

Breathe

Days unfold easily, beginning along calm shores such as **Pantai Kok** or the rainforest-fringed sands of **Datai Bay**. Mornings are quiet, afternoons stretch unhurriedly, and evenings arrive without rush. Langkawi invites you to linger rather than

tick off sights, following a rhythm shaped by nature, not schedules.

Wander

In Langkawi, nature always feels within reach. A smooth ascent aboard the **Langkawi SkyCab** lifts you gently above the rainforest canopy, where expansive views unfold with ease. A short stroll across the **Langkawi SkyBridge** reveals sweeping panoramas of forest, sea and sky – an experience that feels effortless and deeply memorable.

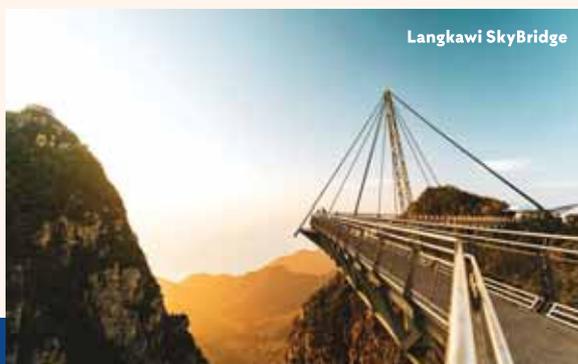
Elsewhere, the island invites gentler encounters on the ground. A shaded forest walk at **Durian Perangin Waterfall** surrounds you with cool air and flowing water without the need for strenuous effort, while a relaxed boat ride to **Pulau Dayang Bunting** offers an immersion in folklore and stillness. The ancient presence of **Gunung Machinchang** quietly anchors it all – a reminder of time measured not in minutes, but in millennia.

Restore

Wellness in Langkawi follows the same unhurried philosophy. Spa rituals draw from natural elements and island traditions, while **Ayer Hangat Village** offers restorative moments rooted in heritage and warmth. Encounters with fishing communities around **Pulau Jemuruk** further reflect a way of life shaped by patience.

What begins as a mindful getaway often turns into something else entirely – a lingering sense of ease, a reluctance to return to hurried routines, a quiet understanding that this may be how life is meant to feel. In Langkawi, the greatest luxury may be realising that you are in no hurry to leave at all.

Follow @naturally_langkawi for slow island stories, or visit naturallylangkawi.my to explore experiences and plan your next visit.



Langkawi SkyBridge

ELEVATE

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



CITY WALKS

Wharf's up

Brisbane's newest precinct blends heritage, nature and delicious bites into a walkable, riverside playground

BY CATHERINE BOUCHER

Brisbane's hottest new precinct, Queen's Wharf, is ripe for exploration. Situated between the Central Business District and the Brisbane River, the AUD3.6 billion (RM9.8 billion) development is the latest addition to the city's evolving landscape. In a harmonious blend of old and new, heritage buildings have been restored and repurposed alongside bold contemporary designs.

Popular with locals and visitors, the precinct embraces Brisbane's subtropical climate and boasts an impressive calendar of festivals and events. Public artworks, farmers' markets and seasonal celebrations complement lush green spaces, abundant walkways and impressive food and beverage offerings. Take your time to explore and soak up the best of this ever-changing city. queenswharfbrisbane.com.au →



Previous page: Being Swallowed by the Milky Way statue

Clockwise from left: Babblers all-day dining at Sky Deck; an aerial view of Queen's Wharf and Neville Bonner Bridge; farmers' market at Brisbane City Markets



Sky Deck

Sitting atop the striking arc-shaped Star building, Brisbane's Sky Deck is a must-see. Free to visit and open every day, visitors can revel in sublime panoramic views of the city and beyond. A glass-floored viewing section sits on the South Bank side, tempting daredevils to peer 100m below. Grab a seat in one of three dining venues and linger long enough to catch the impressive sunset. star.com.au



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Brisbane 5x weekly.

Public art

Ten works by local and international artists infuse the precinct with colour and depth. *Being Swallowed by the Milky Way*, a captivating 8m-tall bronze sculpture by Lindy Lee, is illuminated at night in a dazzling display depicting a galaxy of stars. For those keen to delve into the stories behind each piece, the Museum of Brisbane offers 90-minute walking art tours twice weekly. museumofbrisbane.com.au

Commissariat Store Museum

Queensland's most significant heritage building now houses rotating and permanent exhibitions of the region's past. On your way in, pause to admire the bottom two levels, constructed from local stone by convicts in 1828. Staffed by enthusiastic volunteers, guests can join guided tours of the collections. commissariatstore.org.au

Brisbane City Markets

Let your nose lead the way on Thursdays between 8am and 2pm, when Queen's Wharf hosts a lively farmers' market. Grab delicious snacks – think naan tacos, loaded cinnamon scrolls or a tub of silky pistachio tiramisu – and bask in a sun-drenched spot. Afterwards, enjoy a coffee as you shop handmade crafts, native flowers and bespoke jewellery pieces. [@brisbanecitymarkets](https://www.facebook.com/brisbanecitymarkets)

Mangrove Walk

A 450m dedicated pedestrian boardwalk along the Brisbane River provides an oasis of calm, with plenty of seating options. Immerse in the stories and culture of local Indigenous communities with totems and interpretive signs along the trail. Twitchers will be delighted to find a bright blue Sacred kingfisher statue and speakers transmitting local bird calls along the walk.

Neville Bonner Bridge

Named after Australia's first Aboriginal parliamentarian, the Neville Bonner Bridge spans 320m across the Brisbane River to connect Queen's Wharf with South Bank. For foot traffic only, you can perch midway to watch ferries, boats and kayaks glide up and down the wide, snaking waterway. Although the bridge was not designed specifically to represent a boomerang, some locals see a resemblance to the significant Indigenous object.

North Quay

With 50-cent (RM1.36) public transport fares across Brisbane, hopping onboard a ferry is an attractive proposition. Head to the North Quay ferry terminal and choose either direction – you can't go wrong. Brisbane is blessed with endless green open spaces and a vibrant mix of neighbourhoods to explore.

IMAGES: REUBEN NUTT (QUEEN'S WHARF AND NEVILLE BONNER BRIDGE); JESSE LINDEMANN (SKY DECK)



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ELEVATE



HOTELS

Plug in, chill out

Experience **Phuket**'s infectious energy with a design-led stay in this new lifestyle hotel

BY ARIN ALCIA FONG

Stepping into Tribe Phuket Patong

is like walking into a social hub, a co-working space and a trendy nightlife spot all at once. Opened in July 2025, Accor's fourth property in Asia buzzes with youthful energy that defines the island.

Just a 10-minute walk to Patong Beach and 15 minutes from Banzaan Fresh Market and the bustling Bangla Walking Street, Tribe brings a refreshing vibe to the party town with a strong dining concept, hang-out spaces and curated DJ nights and cocktail parties open to hotel guests and curious travellers alike.

From the moment you enter, the hotel's warm staff greets you with banter and a laidback chumminess that feels like you're visiting friends. Featuring a blend of Sino-Portuguese architecture, textured walls, vibrant geometrical prints and sleek, functional décor, the interiors create a warm and inviting ambience. If you listen closely, the air is filled with the sounds of the hotel's in-house radio, playing a tasteful mix of indie pop, house and popular hits.



Clockwise from bottom left: The hotel's welcoming lobby; Essential King room; expect lavish spreads of Middle Eastern, Thai and Italian flavours at 3 Uncles; Kevin Murphy in-room toiletries; tempting drinks from the Barman



Designed with digital nomads in mind, silent workspace pods are tucked in the corner of the lobby. At the onsite restaurant, bar-top counters and the buffet breakfast table convert to work-friendly spaces equipped with charging points. Whether you're here for business, leisure or both, you can always squeeze in some work time while still feeling immersed in Tribe's infectious social atmosphere.

The brand prides itself on offering functional, design-led luxury at affordable prices, and its 187 rooms – both king and twin – reflect that ethos. Across five categories, from

Tribe Essential to the spacious Tribe Max Suites, each room is furnished with USB and USB-C wall outlets, blackout curtains, a balcony with a mini clothes rack, a 55-inch smart TV, a rain shower, eco-conscious Kevin Murphy toiletries and a very Instagrammable vanity mirror. Every amenity feels intentional and tailored to the needs of a savvy modern traveller.

Stay consistent with your fitness goals at the 24/7 Fitspace, decked out with Technogym equipment. If you're feeling social, head down to the lobby to play a game of pool or kick back at the pool bar and order snacks, beers and cocktails. Every space feels wired for connection and a good time.

Possibly the biggest draw of the property is its restaurant, 3 Uncles and a Barman, a homage to Thai, Italian and Middle Eastern flavours. This isn't just a fusion spot; each category is led by a head chef who ensures top-notch quality and authenticity in their respective cuisine. You may even get to say hi to them at breakfast as you sample a rotating menu of classic European staples and signature favourites from all three "uncles".

You'll be spoilt for choice at lunch and dinner, but these are standouts: the



refreshingly tangy *yum som-o-goong* (prawn and pomelo salad) and spicy *khao soi*, noodles in a thick chicken curry broth; the pizza burrata and spaghetti pesto shrimp, satisfyingly hearty; and the cold mezze platter with mutabal, hummus, muhammara and tabouleh, served with pita bread.

Not forgetting the Barman, expect a strong oat flat white in the day and punchy drinks at happy hour: order the Hugo Spritz or a mocktail like the Hugo Spritz or a mocktail like the 3 Uncles Tri-Berry Temptation. And from Wednesdays to Sundays, 7 to 9pm, live DJ sets give you a refreshing taste of Phuket nightlife.

True to the Tribe identity, this is a lifestyle hotel with a bold personality that leaves a lasting impression on your memory of the island. all.accor.com



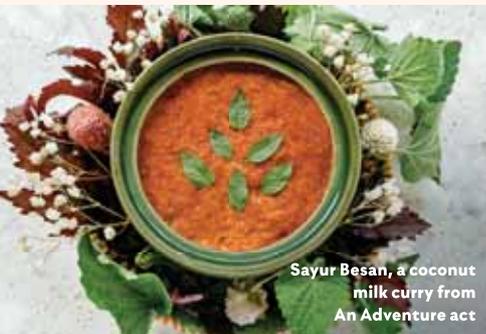
Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Phuket 21x weekly.



ELEVATE



Chef's table



Sayur Besan, a coconut milk curry from An Adventure act



DINING

Moments on the plate

In **Jakarta**, a tasting menu transforms memory into taste, inviting diners to uncover each story course by course

BY CHERYL MARELLA

At Esa Restaurant, one of Jakarta's most celebrated spots for contemporary Indonesian dining, a meal feels quietly personal. The restaurant's latest seasonal tasting menu, Moments, unfolds as a meditation on memory – not as something fixed, but as something fluid, shaped by time, place and feeling.

Conceived by chef Aditya Muskita, Moments is designed as a four-act progression: The Journey Home, An Adventure, Memories and Festivity. Rather than narrating

memories outright, the menu gestures towards them through familiar aromas, comforting textures and techniques that surprise. “Memories aren't linear; they're a collection of bubbles,” Muskita says, and the menu reflects that idea, moving freely between nostalgia and curiosity.

Each act draws from lived experience. The Journey Home recalls childhood rituals and after-school comforts. An Adventure looks beyond Jakarta, reworking flavours inspired by weekend road trips, like the unassuming pairing of lamb satay and sweet iced tea. Memories, the most introspective chapter, is shaped by Muskita's time abroad, with dishes such as Memories of Copenhagen, a Nordic-inspired palate cleanser. The sequence ends with Festivity, a nod to cultural heritage, family gatherings and the pleasure of sharing food at the table.

Storytelling extends beyond the plate. Esa's collaboration with Balinese artist Gede Sukarya brings cowhide artworks into the dining room, grounding the space in family, tradition and remembrance.

Set in the Sudirman Central Business District (SCBD), Esa offers a calm escape from the urban rush. Warm, understated interiors with soft lighting, natural textures and carefully placed art create a gallery-like ambience. It's a space for slow conversations, where details unfold over time and the experience, like the menu, resists being rushed. [@esarestaurant](#)



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta 49x weekly.



Chef Aditya Muskita

Chill after dark

Fresh faces, bold flavours, late-night energy

Jakarta's nightlife rarely slows, but at Congo, change arrives with quiet confidence. The venue's evolving identity is being shaped by two new faces: chef Aisya Ratnasari and head mixologist Theo Fillio, who bring a confident mix of creativity, comfort and playfulness to one of SCBD's favourite after-dark destinations.

Ratnasari brings a grounded, thoughtful sensibility honed during her time at Esa. Her Snacks & Bites menu centres on familiar flavours, reworked with subtle surprises to create dishes well suited to sharing late into the night.

Behind the bar, Fillio takes the helm with a cocktail programme rooted in classic foundations, layered with modern technique. The drinks arrive with an easy simplicity, before gradually revealing depth, ingenuity and character.

With this duo onboard, Congo ushers in a new chapter of inventive menus, shared moments and nights buzzing with life. [@congo.jkt](#)



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DESIGN

Beneath the arches

A 100-year-old viaduct is now Hibiya Okuroji, **Tokyo's** quiet new destination for craft, cuisine and considered design

BY ANANDHI GOPINATH

Tokyo's latest hidden gem isn't a towering skyscraper or a themed entertainment district. It's a 300m stretch of brick arches tucked beneath the railway tracks between Yurakucho Station and Shimbashi Station – a place called Hibiya Okuroji (1-7-1 Uchisaiwaicho, Chiyoda). Once part of Tokyo's industrial-age infrastructure, this century-old viaduct has been beautifully repurposed into a lively shopping and dining promenade that feels both timeless and modern. Easily reached on foot from either station,

the promenade invites exploration at a leisurely pace.

The very name *okuroji* hints at its charm – *oku* meaning “inner” or “depths”, and *roji* meaning “alley”. Step inside and the city's usual bustle falls away: footsteps echo softly on well-worn brick, shadows and light play under the arches, and the subtle scents of coffee and cooking linger in the air. Some 40 shops and restaurants are nestled under its historic arches, but the atmosphere is never crowded or chaotic.

For food lovers, it's a quiet paradise. Start with Sumiyaki Unafuji (*sumiyaki-*



IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK/YURAKU CONCOURSE



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

“

Despite its central location, Hibiya Okuroji feels like a secret corridor in Tokyo waiting to be discovered – where travellers can wander, discover and savour the city’s nuanced rhythms ”

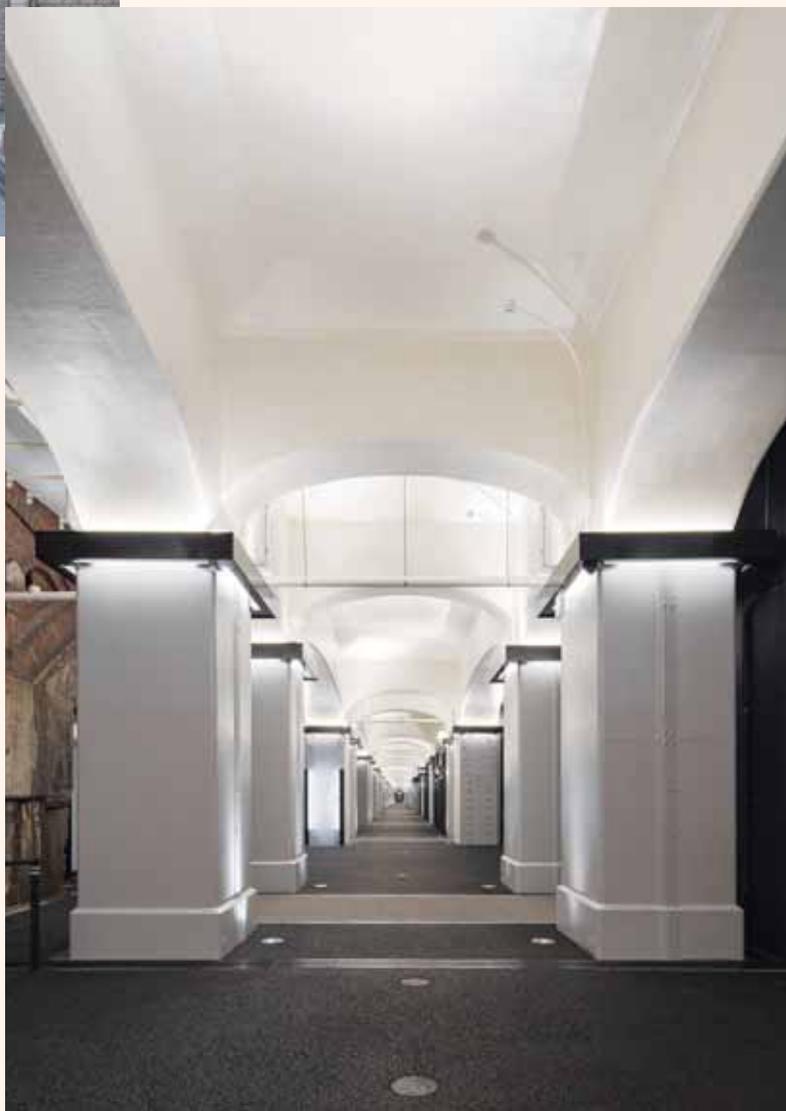
unafuji.com), a Nagoya-style grilled eel specialist with a Michelin Bib Gourmand nod. Its smoky hits of umami are best enjoyed in silence. Toritama (*toritama.global*), known for its yakitori, offers skewers that are anything but ordinary – think grilled chicken neck and rare cuts, perfectly charred. There’s also Ramen Kamo to Negi (*kamotonegi.com*), which takes duck-based ramen to surprising, savoury heights.

Cafés and bars tucked into the arches add to the sense of discovery. Bar Rumba pours expertly crafted cocktails in a moody, wood-lined setting, while Hibiya Bar Whisky-S II (*hibiya-bar.com*) caters to whisky enthusiasts with its arsenal of rare Japanese and international labels. Café Kaldino (*kaldi.co.jp*) is perfect for a casual coffee pit stop, but linger long enough and it might turn into a quiet evening of people-watching over a latte.

Alongside food, a surprising array of design and lifestyle stores brings creative flair to the space. Tokyo Noble (*tokyo-noble.com*) is a bespoke umbrella and lifestyle shop where visitors can customise umbrellas in striking colours and patterns. Tideway (*tideway.sanki-net.co.jp*) showcases quality leather goods in a range of hues and finishes, and Glen Clyde Sockclub Tokyo (*sockclub.shop*) offers crafted socks full of personality.

For the ultimate souvenir, build and personalise your own watch at Renautus (*renautus.com*); they will ship it home if you’re not there long enough to wait until it’s ready. There’s also Gifu Tokyo (*gifutokyo.com*), a regional speciality store promoting artisan food products, sake and souvenirs from Gifu Prefecture.

Despite its central location, Hibiya Okuroji feels like a secret corridor in Tokyo waiting to be discovered. Its red brick and gently arching shadows frame a different side of the city: reflective, refined and quietly adventurous. In a metropolis defined by the cutting edge, this is where history and craftsmanship intersect to create new urban life – a place where both travellers and locals can wander, discover and savour Tokyo’s nuanced rhythms.





Postcards from Shanghai

Designer Benjamin Tan reflects on life in China's most future-forward city, where riverside walks, Malaysian food and multiculturalism shape everyday life **BY ANANDHI GOPINATH**

Shanghai has taught me to think even bigger, live bolder and always be ready to adapt. Here, global architects shape public spaces, every district feels like a design case study and no one blinks if you don't speak the local language. Life here is diverse, open and always moving forward. Even after 17 years, each day still feels like a new beginning.

The city's softer edges

What I love about Shanghai is how it reflects the city's vision of blending private development with public benefit. Some of my favourite spots are free: leafy public parks, scenic riverside walks and cultural spaces that invite you to simply be. I often stroll along the riverside paths in both Pudong and Puxi – it's where I think,

Dear Reader,

I came to Shanghai in 2007 looking for a fresh start, and like many, I never quite left. Back then, Shanghai wasn't nearly as polished as it is today, but its energy was unmistakable. In many ways, it reminded me of Malaysia with its diversity and openness, just expressed at a different scale and pace.

Today, I run New Green Ink, a platform that connects design with technology, sustainability and culture. The projects we take on, including global conferences, have taught me to look beyond just interiors or staging; I must consider design as a system that reflects people, places and values. Shanghai, with its progressive approach to urban planning, has become an unexpected mentor in that process.

– Benjamin Tan

Shanghai cityscape





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

G3 Chang Yang Can
Yangpu District
Shanghai



reflect and catch my breath. There's a certain rhythm to the water and cityscape that inspires me every time.

One of my go-to cafés is **Mona Café** (127 Guangfu Rd; @mona.by.fotografiska) on Suzhou Creek. It's unassuming yet well designed – a great place to let ideas flow, whether I'm sketching out concepts or watching the light change through the windows. For a longer reset, I head to Fuxing Island in Yangpu, a former industrial area that is being transformed into a hub for innovation, technology and urban experimentation.

Weekends are for exploring neighbourhoods that are evolving beautifully. **Columbia Circle** (Yan'an West Rd) in Puxi is one of my favourites – it's a creative community space built into a former private club, now filled with design studios, food outlets and exhibitions.

Over in Pudong, **Eka** (18 Caoxi Rd, Xuhui) shares a similar creative energy, with its repurposed warehouse feel and thoughtful layout. The newest addition, **Gate M** (2266 Longteng Ave, Xuhui), combines design-forward retail with open-air public space.

Design meets daily life

Design here shapes how people live, work and even dine. I'm particularly fond of **One Step Garden** (@onestepgarden_china), a café chain where each outlet is uniquely connected to nature.

For visual inspiration, I often visit the **Museum of Art Pudong** (2777 Binjiang Ave; museumofartpd.org.cn), which hosts global-calibre exhibitions in a striking contemporary building. **Sinan Books** (517 Fuxing Rd, Huangpu) by **Wutopia Lab** (wutopialab.com) is great for quiet reflection and poetry browsing.

When it comes to food, **Orchard CRC** (1788 Xinzha Rd, Jing'An) is where I get my Malaysian fix. For an indulgent night out, **Villa Le Bec** (321 Xinhua Rd, Changning; lebec.com.cn) and Shangri-La's **1515 West Chophouse & Bar** (1218 Middle Yan'an Rd, Jingan; @1515_west_chophouse_and_bar) are reliable favourites for French food and Australian beef, respectively. If I'm craving comfort food, **Yunhe Restaurant** (188 Penglai Rd, Huangpu) delivers hearty noodle bowls.

Luxury in motion

The new TUMI Alpha pairs thoughtful design with real-world performance, crafted for those who value precision in every journey

For many professionals today, the lines between work, travel and leisure have softened. A morning flight unfolds into an afternoon meeting, followed by a workout, dinner or a short escape outside the city. Days are fluid, schedules are dense. Movement is constant and expectations are high.

This reality lies at the heart of the latest evolution of TUMI Alpha.

“Alpha represents a blueprint for modern movement,” says Mr Victor Sanz, global creative director at TUMI. “We look at how people move, what they carry and how design can support that journey.”

Designed for real life

TUMI Alpha is designed for those who move between work and leisure, across cities and time zones, without wanting to pause and fret over what they carry.

The value of intentional design reveals itself over the course of the day. A laptop neatly tucked away before take-off. Travel essentials within easy reach mid-flight. On arrival, everything remains exactly where it should be – allowing attention to shift from logistics to the day’s agenda.

Of course, not every journey runs according to plan. From early presentations to unscheduled extra nights, Alpha is designed to keep pace with life, to adapt to both routine and the unexpected.

Built for movement

What defines Alpha isn’t any single feature, but how naturally everything works together. Refined through years of real-world travel, the collection is constructed from TUMI’s signature, ultra-durable ballistic nylon

TUMI Global Brand Ambassador Lando Norris with the Alpha Brief Pack™ in Black and Alpha Dual Access Expandable 4-Wheeled Carry-On in Black



With the Alpha Double Expansion Duffel in Black

and complemented with refined leather accents.

Details such as streamlined pocketing, silent magnetic closures and intuitive access points work subtly in the background, allowing travel to feel smooth and uninterrupted.

Beyond functionality, the new Alpha impresses with new colours and silhouettes that bring a distinctly

contemporary feel, while personalisation and a comprehensive warranty speak to its longevity.

This is a design intended for repeat journeys, for moving with life as it unfolds, no matter what comes next.

Discover the new TUMI Alpha collection at [TUMI.com](https://www.tumi.com) and in TUMI stores worldwide.



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Amusement



Dining



Resort



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The Selangor Tourism Awards 2025
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"Truly Malaysia's best all-in-one resort with fun attractions and food!"
- Google Review



"We absolutely loved it! Fun spots and great food, perfect for families!"
- Google Review



"Our kids loved it! All-in-one family spot in KL!"
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Lot 683, Jalan Persiaran Bukit Enggang Sg Long Hill, Sungai Long, 43200 Cheras, Selangor

Built for the journeys that matter most

Engineered for composed performance and shared comfort, the GWM WEY G9 delivers a steady, confidence-inspiring drive that feels first class for all

In families who spend a lot of time on the road, reliability isn't something you talk about. It's something you feel. The **GWM WEY G9** carries a quiet sense of dependability, handling the demands of daily driving without asking for attention. On familiar streets and in predictable traffic, the **Hi4 all-wheel-drive** system keeps everything steady and composed, smoothing out sudden stops and changes in pace. Inside, the cabin remains calm enough for conversation or music, allowing the drive to stay controlled and unobtrusive.

Steady performance, wherever you're headed

When travel plans stretch beyond daily routines, the transition feels seamless. Highways replace side streets, distances grow longer, and the GWM WEY G9 settles into an easy rhythm. With a **total driving range of over 1,000km**, there's no need to count stops or plan around the drive.

Comfort on the road, all-ages access

Built on an **MPV-dedicated platform**, the cabin is arranged around shared comfort. The **Zero-Gravity second**

row seats offer a place to rest, while the **third row is designed for adults** to enjoy the drive fully. Easy access makes every stop simple, welcoming passengers of all ages without fuss.

Quiet support along the way

As the scenery changes, the cabin remains calm. Road noise softens, music feels fuller and conversation stays easy. Technology works quietly in support, keeping devices charged and daily needs taken care of, without pulling attention away from the moment.

Reassurance, mile after mile

Safety underpins every journey. With **83.01% high-strength steel** forming its structure, the GWM WEY G9 brings a sense of reassurance that allows families to focus on time together, in complete confidence. Priced at an attainable **RM269,800** and backed by a comprehensive long-term warranty and ownership package, the GWM WEY G9 is a vehicle families can rely on. Not just for where they go, but for how comfortably they travel together.

Find out more at gwm.com.my or visit the nearest GWM showroom to book a test drive today.



First class driving powered by Hi4 Technology



Spacious Zero-Gravity second row seat

A PERFECT WEEKEND IN

Kuantan

Words **Mabel Ho** Photography **Razlan Yusof**

Pahang's capital offers a lively mix of sights, flavours and easygoing activities, a wonderful spot for families, couples or friends



IMAGE: RAZLAN YUSOF

Kuantan officially achieved city status in 2021 but retains the undeniable charm of smaller towns

along the eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia. With azure waters and soft sands along this coastal city, Kuantan's early reputation as a fishing village has evolved into a beach holiday town with fun activities and delicious meals. If you're here for the perfect weekend vacation, these are the highlights to hit up.



Saturday

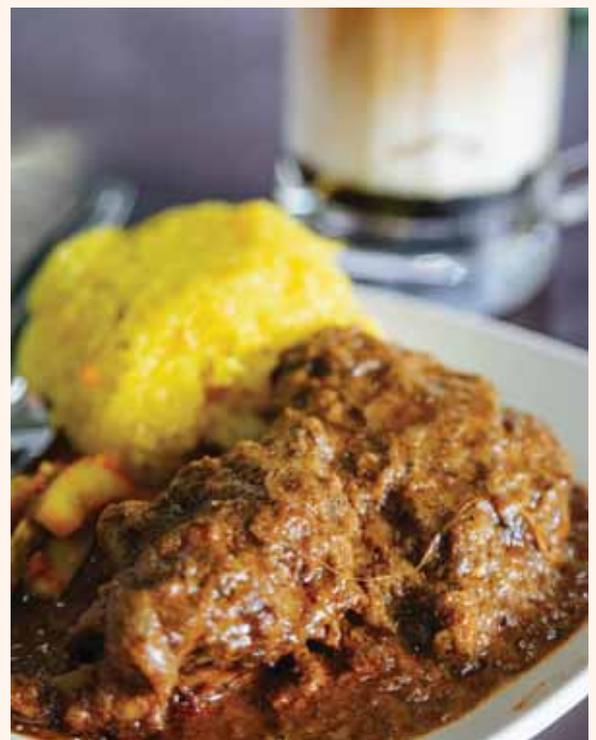
Morning. Start your day on a high note with an early morning hike up the **Pelindung Hill Loop** to admire the sweeping panoramic views of the city. You may also be able to spot the dusky leaf monkey which is native to the area. At approximately 5km long, the hike takes up to two hours to complete depending on your pace.

The entrance to the trail is accessible from the city centre, near the Tengku Ampuan Afzan Secondary School. The trail is not particularly technical but requires a reasonable level of fitness and proper footwear to navigate a combination of uphill and downhill sections and some uneven terrain.

Now you're ready for breakfast. Like most Malaysians, the people of Kuantan take their breakfasts seriously, especially at **Muar-E Kopitiam** (A643, 2 Jln Beserah; @muar_e_kopitiam) which sells out on busy weekends. Order the *mee tepung goreng* (stir-fried

Previous page:
Menara Kuantan 188

Clockwise from top:
Kuantan Art Street;
Pelindung Hill Loop;
Kuantan Pickers & Kedai Kopi; rendang and nasi kunyit at Muar-E Kopitiam





noodles), *nasi kunyit* (turmeric rice) or *roti stim* (steamed bread). Wash it down with a refreshing *muar teh ais* (iced tea) or *kopi ais* (iced coffee) for a strong caffeine kick.

There's been a street art renaissance around Malaysian cities – city backlanes once marred by unsightly graffiti are now converted into walkable streets with beautiful wall art. Check out the **Kuantan Art Street** (*Jln Teruntum*) and you'll find a variety of colourful murals depicting wildlife such as the Malayan tiger or *buaya* (crocodile) and 3D art with playful effects that encourage you to interact with it.

Not far from the street art is **Menara Kuantan 188** (*Jln Besar*). Ride up the tallest observation tower on the East Coast (and second tallest in Malaysia) to take in sweeping views of the city and Kuantan River. For thrill-seekers (and those who aren't afraid of heights), there's a skywalk where you can take a harnessed walk along the perimeter of the tower.

Afternoon. Have lunch with a side of nostalgia. Well-known in the Kuantan café scene is **Kuantan Pickers & Kedai Kopi** (22 *Jln Besar*; @kuantantpickers)



Clockwise from left:
 Sungai Pandan Waterfall;
 Ana Ikan Bakar Petai's
 mouthwatering fare; Puteh
 Beach Bar; Bazar Serambi
 Teruntum



– a spot that serves local fare against the backdrop of old-school knick-knacks and vintage posters. On some days, a busker serenades diners with classic feel-good tunes as they enjoy dishes like *roti goyang* (toast topped with a runny half-boiled egg) or the Ah Lee *mee rebus* satay (a sweet noodle dish served with thick peanut sauce and three satay sticks).

Drive 35 minutes from the Kuantan city centre to **Sungai Pandan Waterfall**. Nestled within a lush rainforest, this is an ideal spot for picnics, swimming or simply immersing in the sights and sounds of nature. While you have the option to hike to the top of the waterfall, the picnic area is easily accessible from the parking lot.

Evening. As a seaside city, fresh seafood is a must-have in Kuantan. Visit **Ana Ikan Bakar Petai** (*Jln Tanjung Lumpur*) for their signature Kuantan-style *ikan bakar* – grilled fish and *petai* (bitter bean) with a fragrant sauce. Other dishes to try would be the *sotong goreng tepung* (fried battered squid) or *kailan ikan masin* (Chinese broccoli with salted fish).

After a nourishing feast, wind down with a pleasant stroll on the beach at **Teluk Cempedak**. This is a popular night-time spot for families, couples





and groups of friends. Here, street vendors sell snacks, bubble guns and other toys. Buskers singing top 40 covers add to the vibrant atmosphere.

Sunday

Morning. Tuck into some hearty Malay fare such as *nasi kukus* (steamed rice) along with dishes like freshly fried chicken or *ikan bawal goreng berempah* (fried pomfret), *kari kambing* (mutton curry) and *gulai kawah daging* (beef curry) at **Warung Mazenah Nasi Kukus** (Lot 78 Off, Jln Besar).

Afterwards, go for the **Kuantan River Cruise** (Jeti Shahbandar, Jln Tanah Putih; @kuantanrivercruise) where you can learn more about the flora and fauna of a 500-year-old mangrove forest. This two-hour boat ride is led by a licensed nature guide who will share about the city's fishing history and industry as well as the river animals and seabirds found here.

Afternoon. Head to **Bazar Serambi Teruntum** (Jln Tanjung Lumpur; @serambiteruntumkuantan), where you'll find an array of hand-woven products and other handcrafted goods from across the state of Pahang. You can also grab traditional Malay snacks like *serunding* (dried shredded meat), cookies and *kuih muih* (glutinous rice cakes) for the ride home.

Have lunch at the food court, which features an array of culinary delights. Try Lemang To'ki's delicious *lemang* (glutinous rice cooked in a hollow bamboo tube) and Calong Serambi's famous *mee calong* (fish ball noodle soup).

Later, take a gander at **Muzium Pahang**, also known as Muzium Sultan Abu Bakar (Jln Sultan Ahmad), which is housed in a restored colonial building from the 1910s. Get an up-close look at Pahang's arts and culture, such as traditional Malay wood carving, driftwood animal sculptures and Tenun Pahang woven fabrics.

With comfy couches, trendy viral swings and fun party tunes, **Puteh Beach Bar** (Pantai Batu Hitam; @putehbeachkuantan) is an ideal spot to kick back, feel the salty sea breeze and watch the sun go down. Snack on pizza or fajitas and sip on a refreshing Puteh Signature Mocktail (made with longan, assam, lemongrass, syrup and soda).

Evening. Sample Chinese-style cooked seafood and dishes at crowd-favourite **Restoran HLS** (2092 Jln Besar). Helmed by an award-winning chef known for his innovative dishes like crab seafood porridge and abalone fried rice with tobiko, this restaurant can often be packed, so plan ahead.

After a hearty dinner, take a stroll along **The Esplanade** by the Kuantan River (Jln Tanah Putih) and enjoy the calm night air and sea breeze.

Where to stay



Club Med Cherating

Set in an 80-hectare jungle, 50 minutes from Kuantan, this all-inclusive retreat blends nature and comfort with refreshed rooms, outdoor experiences and space to slow down.

@clubmedcherating



Mangala Resort & Spa

A boutique private estate resort 45 minutes from Kuantan, with luxurious garden and water villas, a spa, horse riding and pre-booked picnics using homegrown produce. frankyhoteles.com



Swiss-Belhotel Kuantan

Set in Kuantan Waterfront Resort City, this hotel is steps from Tanjung Lumpur's dining, marina walks, shops and waterpark.

swiss-belhotel.com.my



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



Navigating financial disputes

Issues involving money can arise unexpectedly but FMOS offers clarity when things feel uncertain

Many of us encounter financial issues that feel far more complicated than they should be. It could be a bank transaction you don't recognise, an insurance or takaful claim that seems to go in circles, or an investment matter that leaves you uncertain of what to do next. You may have raised the issue, followed the required steps and waited for a response – only to feel like the situation has stalled.

If that sounds familiar, know that you are not out of options.

Help is at hand

The Financial Markets Ombudsman Service (FMOS) offers a free and impartial avenue for you to seek resolution when a dispute with a financial institution or capital market intermediary cannot be resolved directly.

Established by Bank Negara Malaysia and the Securities Commission Malaysia, FMOS provides a fair and accessible alternative to court proceedings. It handles disputes involving direct financial losses of up to RM250,000, allowing consumers and investors to pursue resolution without the high costs, complexity or formality often associated with legal action.

How it works

FMOS is open to individuals, sole proprietors and micro businesses using banking or digital banking services, payment instruments, insurance or takaful products, or capital market services. It covers disputes involving banks, insurers, takaful operators, financial advisers, stockbrokers, fund managers and other regulated intermediaries.

To begin, submit a complaint to the relevant financial institution. If

the response does not address your concerns, or if no response is received within 60 days, you may then refer the matter to FMOS within six months.

Once your case is accepted, a Case Manager will work with both parties to try to seek a mutually agreeable settlement through mediation. If a settlement cannot be reached, a recommendation will be issued. Should you choose to reject the recommendation, you may opt to have your case adjudicated by an Ombudsman, who will independently assess the matter and issue a final decision within 14 days. Once accepted, this decision becomes binding on the financial institution.

In moments of uncertainty brought about by financial disputes, clarity can make all the difference. FMOS provides a free, fair and independent process to help you understand your options and move forward with confidence.

Scan the QR code to visit the FMOS website and find out more about its services.





Need Help Resolving a Financial Matter?

Financial disputes can be overwhelming, but legal action isn't the only option. There's a better way.

The Financial Markets Ombudsman Service (FMOS) provides a centralised avenue for financial consumers and investors nationwide to seek fair and free resolution of their concerns.

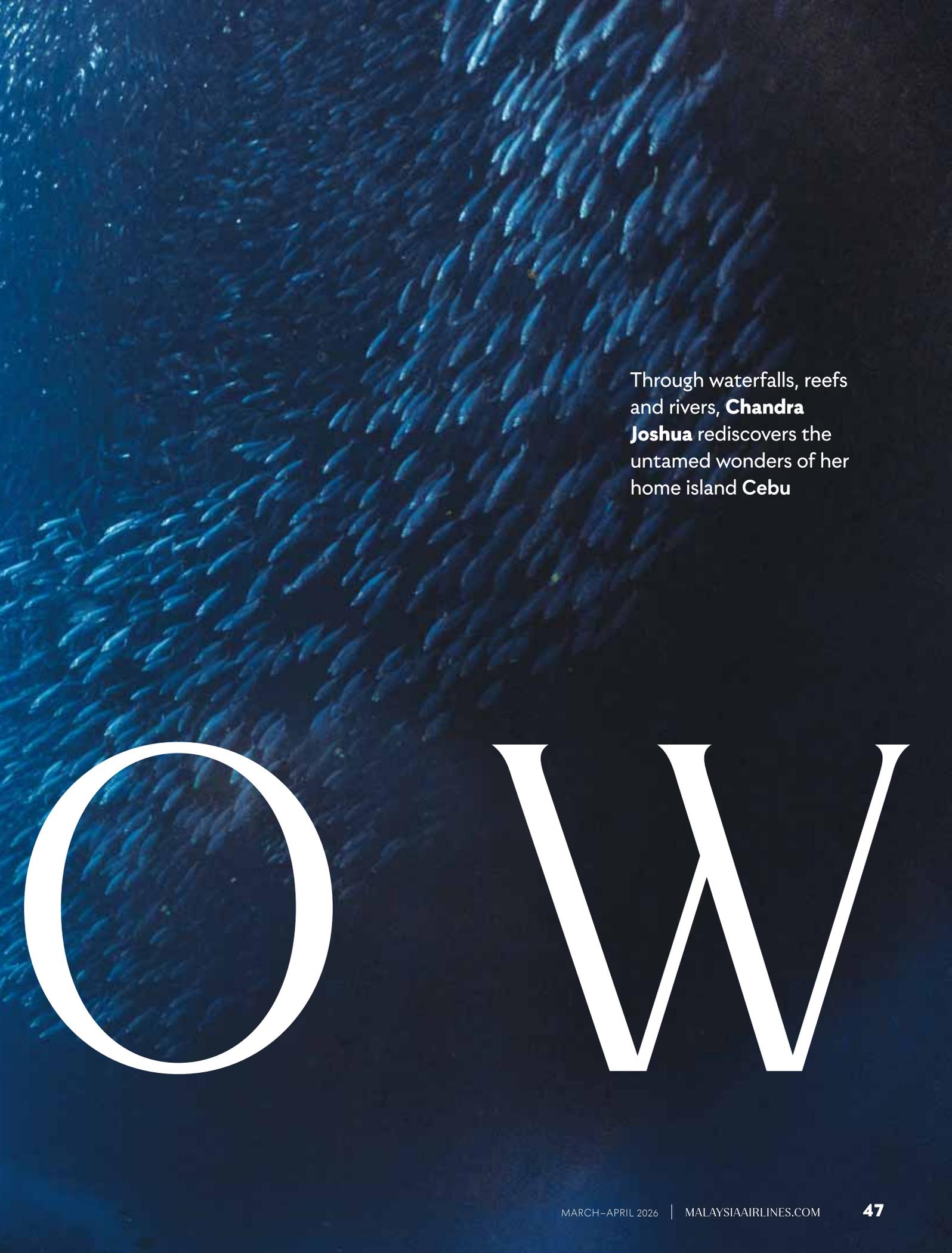


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Surrender to the
FIL



Through waterfalls, reefs
and rivers, **Chandra
Joshua** rediscovers the
untamed wonders of her
home island **Cebu**

O W



When I found myself on the precipice of a 10m waterfall, every instinct told me to freeze – but that, our tour guide reminded us, is precisely when you jump.



At Kawasan Falls in Badian, Cebu, the only way out is through. Navigating its rugged gorges and cascading cliffs demands surrendering to the flow, because Cebu was shaped by forces like these: currents, tides and ripples that always required a leap of faith.

Situated at the centre of the Philippine archipelago, Cebu – derived from *sugbó*, or “to wade into the water” – is the long, narrow island that pulses like a central artery. It’s my birthplace: the site of the country’s oldest street, the cradle of Christianity in the region and the early seat of Spanish rule.

But long before colonisation, in 1521, it was on Cebu’s Mactan Island that my ancestors brought down Ferdinand Magellan, leader of the first expedition to circumnavigate the world. Spanish boats tried to intimidate the natives into submission with muskets and cannons fired from offshore, but the surrounding natural reefs blocked their artillery. The people defended the island, and the



Previous spread:
The famed sardine
run in Moalboal

**Clockwise from top
left:** Kawasan Falls;
Cebuano hero Lapulapu

island protected its people. In nearly every depiction of Magellan's death, he stands ankle-deep in water, felled by a final blow from Lapulapu, the defiant Cebuano chieftain and the Philippines' first national hero.

Rey's voice, one of our guides, snapped me back to the present. "This first jump is just 3m," he shouted over the roar of rushing water. The pool was the brightest, most impossible shade of blue. "Be brave, they get higher from here!"

This was my first real adventure since moving back to the island where I was born and raised. After 15 years in landlocked corporate ennui in Manila, being surrounded by water again felt jarring. I felt incapable, exposed. My companions, Auntie Jethel and Uncle Uyclird – both certified lifeguards – were already well ahead of me. When other tourists began gathering for their turn, I shut down my thoughts and leapt. Water shot up my nostrils as I plunged into the deep. Panic



“

Found just off Panagsama Beach,
Moalboal is one of the few places
in the world where you can swim
up close to the fish, no freediving
experience required”



This spread: Scenic scenes, above and below the waves, from Moalboal, now a thriving seaside hub

seized me for a second, and then I remembered: even with a life vest, I had to kick myself back to the surface.

That first jump was only the beginning. The four-hour canyoneering route swept us onward, pulling us through a shifting mix of terrain – sliding backwards into natural basins, swinging from ropes, wading through rock caverns – my nervous system perpetually on edge. By the time we reached the final 10m drop, I chose to stay at the foot of the waterfall instead, my journey done and dusted. The water swashed against me, as if to pat me on the back.

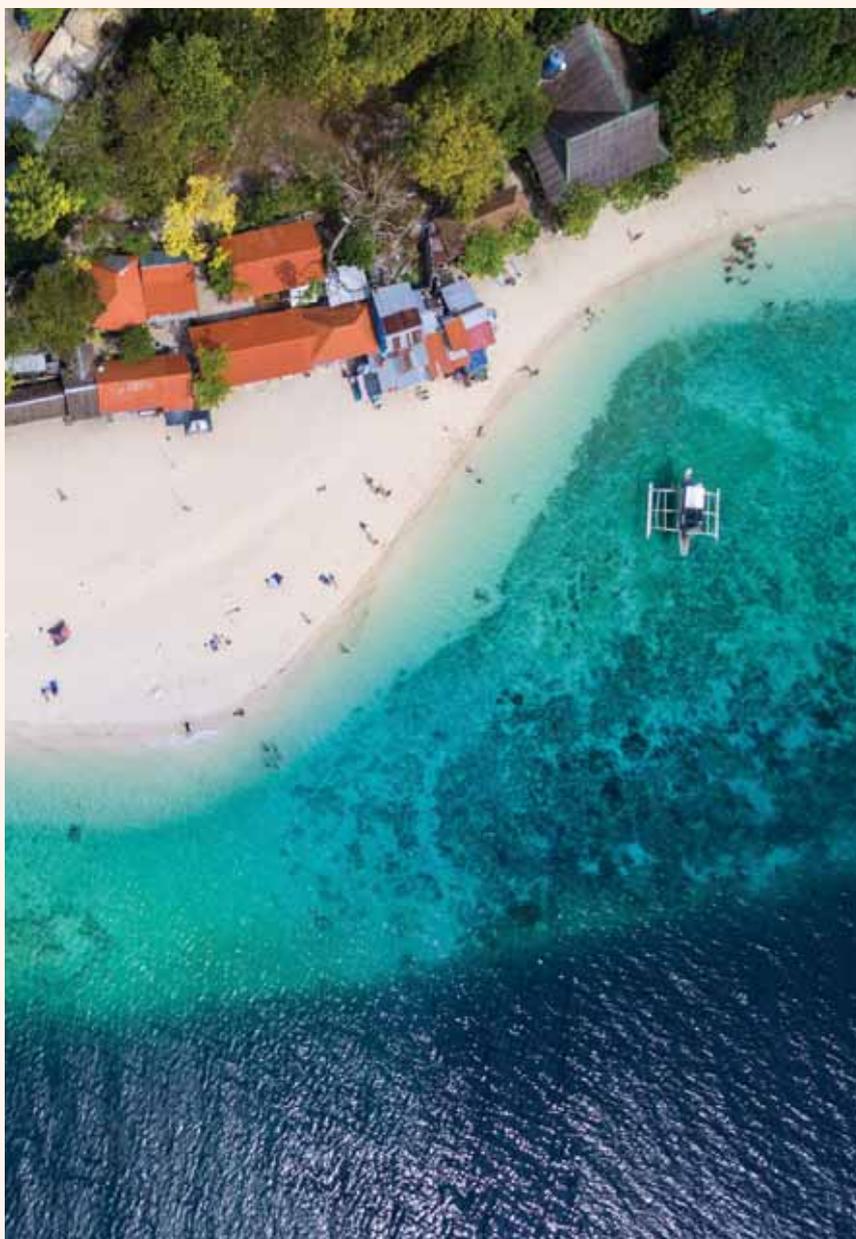
MY FAMILY'S 1960S ANCESTRAL HOME IS IN Malabuyoc, a quiet municipality in Cebu's southwest region. Set within easy reach of the island's many highlights, it became a natural base for exploring this side of Cebu. One morning, my husband and I set off early for Moalboal, a once-sleepy fishing town that has grown into an energetic seaside hub filled with cafés, dive shops and weekend adventurers.

On the motorcycle ride there, I realised how much of my own island I had yet to see, after years of visiting only long enough to be with family. Now that I was here for good, I was determined to change that.

Moalboal's biggest draw is its famed sardine run, an astonishing, year-round spectacle of thousands of shimmering fish swirling in a massive bait ball. Found just off Panagsama Beach, it's one of the few places in the world where you can swim up close to the fish, no freediving experience required. Our guide, Kian, assured us we'd come at the perfect time as sardines prefer the colder morning water; it's also when they tend to stay closest to shore.

Expecting a boat, I was surprised when Kian handed us a lifebuoy and simply towed us to where he knew the fish would be. Breathing through the snorkel didn't come naturally, but once I stopped overthinking it, everything became easier. We'd been in the water for what felt like only a minute when I heard humming to my left. Before my brain could register it, a cloud of sardines enveloped us, their scales catching the morning light, their movement fluid and electric.

Suspended above that shifting silver mass, everything felt still. In that moment, I was reminded of how small we are in a world so dense with life. In that pocket beneath the surface, where I should have been holding my breath, I found the space to finally exhale.





This spread: In paradisaal Sumilon, surrounded by turquoise waters, spot coral gardens teeming with life and cool creatures like the lionfish

FROM BANGCOGON, A BARANGAY (ADMINISTRATIVE unit) near Cebu's southern tip in Oslob, I joined cousins and family friends on a small boat cutting across calm waters toward Sumilon, a tiny island tucked against the southeastern coast. Famous for its white sandbar that appears and shifts with the tides, my companions – well-versed in moon phases and tide levels from consulting old-school paper calendars – knew exactly when the sandbar would emerge long enough to walk.

When we reached shore, two boatmen steadied a bamboo pole between them, creating a makeshift handrail as we stepped off the gangplank. Moments later, the sandbar came into view. I took off my slippers and wiggled my toes as my feet sank into the grains, the shallow water lapping at my ankles. How could something be here one hour and gone the next?

As if on cue, snorkels and goggles were handed out. At the designated exploration zone, we glided into turquoise water above coral gardens alive with lionfish, clownfish, angelfish and countless others I couldn't name. Laughter rippled each time someone pointed out a particularly silly-looking fish. I flinched when a sea snake slithered past. We drifted for what felt like ages, scanning in every direction, unwilling to miss a single moment.

By the time we returned to the main island, we were starving. We pried open packed containers of grilled *tanigue* (Spanish mackerel) and *puso* (rice wrapped in palm leaves), eating with our hands, our fingers still salty from the sea.

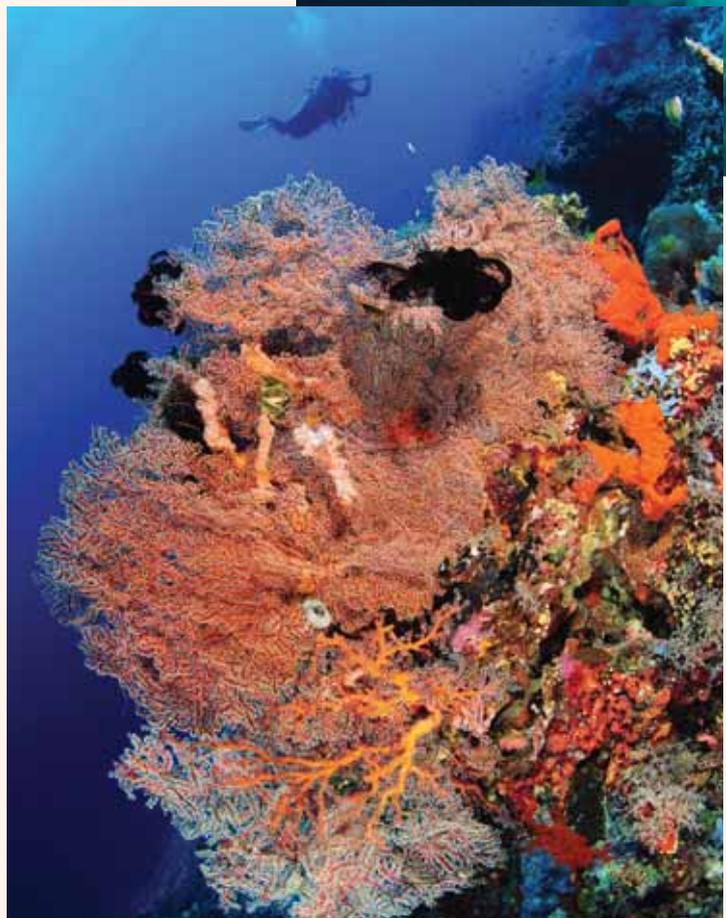
My ancestors were *isog* – fierce, strong and formidable. Surrounded by sea, they built generations and weathered every storm that came their way. In these same waters, I wasn't nearly as brave. But I felt myself softening, as skin does during prolonged submersion. The water had reclaimed her daughter, reminding me that courage isn't the absence of fear, but the choice to press forward, leap and swim in spite of it.



Save up to 30% by booking your flight and hotel together.



Firefly flies between Kuala Lumpur and Cebu 5x weekly.



IMAGES: SHUTTERSTOCK



Island paradise resorts

The Shangri-La Mactan

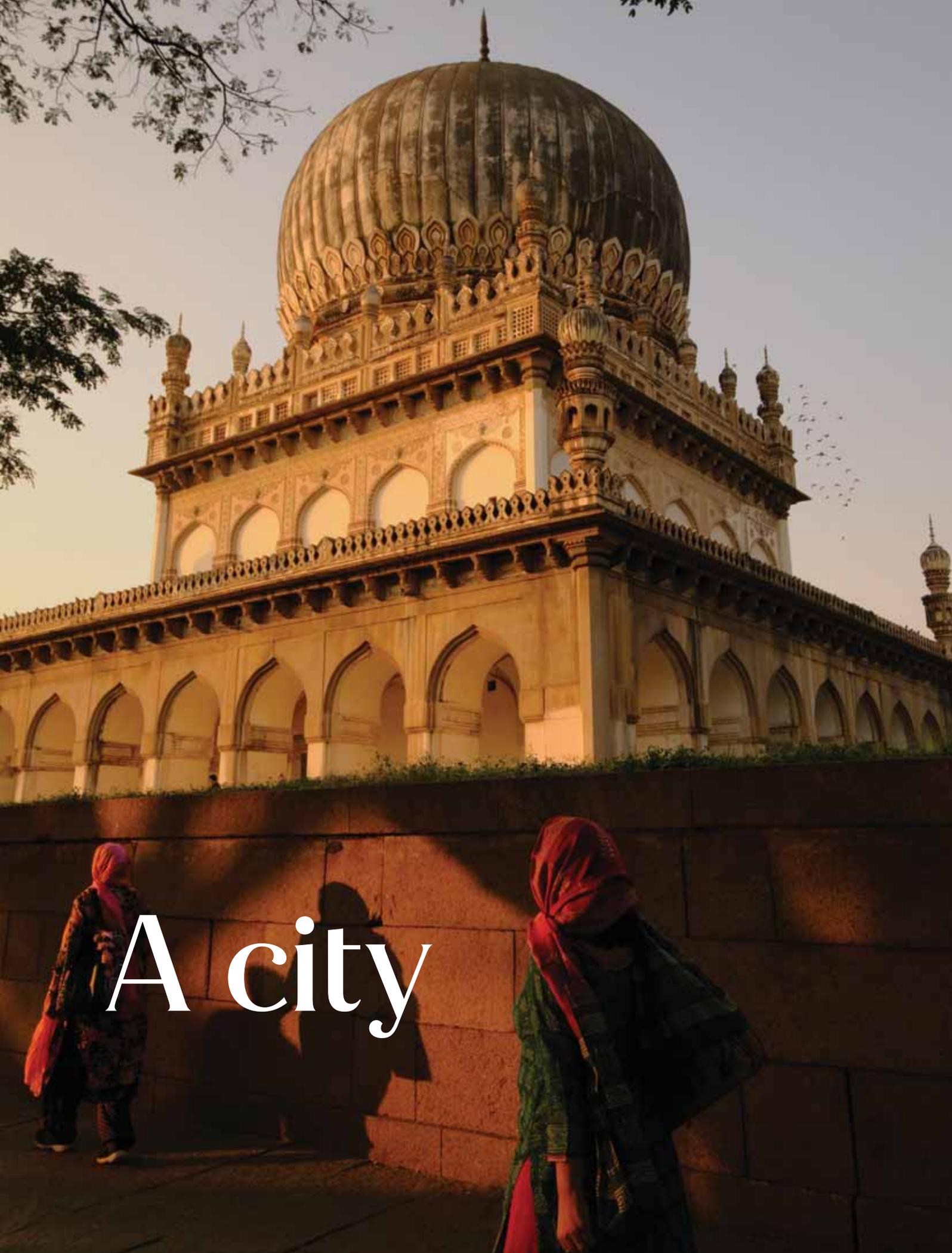
This five-star resort has a private beach, luxurious rooms and Ocean Wing Panorama suites overlooking Mactan Channel. Chi Spa reflects its mythical paradise namesake, and between treatments you can take a dip in the pool and relax in the garden. shangri-la.com

Turtle Bay Dive Resort

This Mediterranean-inspired resort sits across Moalboal's reef, home to the eponymous turtles. Follow dive instructors to the town's top dive spots or simply relax in plumeria-scented gardens, away from the town's bustle. turtlebaydiveresort.com

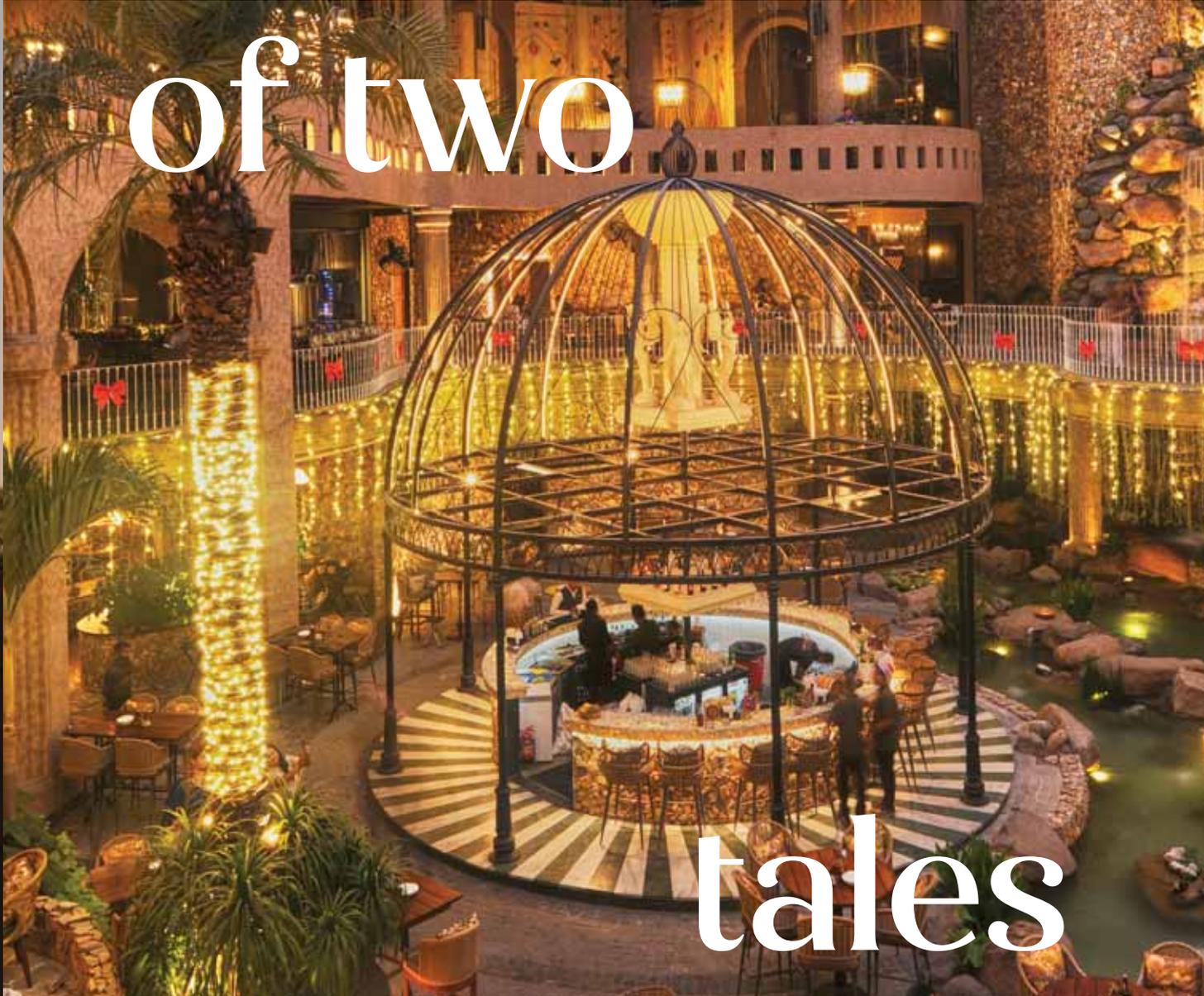
The Nustar Hotel

In the heart of Cebu City, this premier integrated resort lets you soak in ocean views from a freestanding bathtub. Explore designer boutiques at The Mall and dine at the award-winning Mott 32 by the casino. nustar.ph



A city

Rooted in history yet shaped by change, Hyderabad reveals its duality as new energy runs through its reimagined cosmopolitan spaces



of two

tales

Words **Chandreyi Bandyopadhyay** Photography **Athul Prasad**



The “City of Pearls” has long held an undeniable charm.

Over centuries, the Nizams – the ruling dynasty – cultivated a legacy of refined craftsmanship, rich culture and culinary prowess. I have been visiting Hyderabad for decades, and while it has surged into a bustling cosmopolitan hub, the city’s growth has done little to dampen its old soul. Today, it is a magnet for young professionals, ranking high for its livability and career growth opportunities.

For the first-time visitor, the essence of Hyderabad lies in this duality: a centuries-old grace that persists even as the city embraces an ambitious modern façade. It is a city of stark, beautiful contrasts. In one corner, Irani cafés serve milky, aromatic tea and freshly baked biscuits in the shadow of historic domes and minarets; in another, sleek clubs and breweries showcasing brutalist architecture define the skyline.

Since my last visit, the city has seen the launch of exciting new F&B venues like Loqa, Oxymorons and Bar Kin-Rü.

Hyderabad doesn’t just endure change – it embraces it with respect.

Navigating the rush-hour traffic from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, my friend Rajveer Kaur points out the latest addition to the city’s skyline: the massive Babylon Brewery & Club. At Babylon 2.0, located in the financial district, nightlife is reimagined across a sprawling 100,000sqft destination. Diverting from the brutalist design of its predecessor, this new space features towering stone arches, cascading water features and colossal domed ceilings. “It’s a tribute to a city of ambition,” says Anil Bung, the visionary co-founder of Babylon.

Located in southern India, Telangana is an agriculturally rich state where the results of great produce can be seen aplenty in the capital. From mulberries topped with cream sold in Charminar Bazaar to modern restaurants like Terräi, food is the language of love here.





Previous spread:
Qutub Shahi Tombs;
Babylon Brewery & Club

This spread: Scenes
from Black Fuel
Roastery, tucked away
in Jubilee Hills, one
of Hyderabad's posh
neighbourhoods



Shahzad Designer



UHAG FASHION

MAHARAJA

DIAMOND

Rajveer and I head to Black Fuel Roastery, tucked away in a quiet lane in Jubilee Hills, a posh, must-visit neighbourhood. My friend insists I try their cold brew as she tells me about the city's inaugural regional showcase of the India Art Fair, a city-wide cultural exchange that culminated in February, which blends art, architecture and culinary experiences.

Next, she drives me to chef Chalapathi Rao's Simply South on Road No 10, where I take refuge in the comfort of *Mamsam Charu*, a flavourful mutton broth, and a plate of steaming rice paired with dishes highlighting the tangy sorrel leaves favoured by the Telugu palate. And just like that, it feels like coming home again.

DESPITE ITS MODERN APPEAL, THE HEART of Hyderabad's pride remains rooted in its history. It lives in the ruins of Golconda Fort, dating back to the 11th century and built atop a 120m-high granite hill surrounded by stunning ramparts; in the majolica-tiled tombs of the Qutub Shahi dynasty at the Ibrahim Bagh necropolis; and beneath the regal arches of Chowmahalla Palace, where the Nizams once lived.

Overlooking the old city, Falaknuma Palace remains one of Hyderabad's most enduring landmarks. Built in 1894, its name translates to "Mirror of the Sky", capturing its lofty ambitions accurately. A seamless blend of Tudor and Italianate design, the palace's marble staircases, ornate chandeliers and frescoed halls speak of an era that prized intellect and elegance in equal measure.

For over a century, heads of state, scholars and diplomats have walked its Windsor-inspired library, polished parquet floors and ceremonial spaces. Today, as a Taj hotel, it still welcomes guests on horse-drawn carriages, with rose petals scattered underfoot, before they dine in the famed 101-seat dining hall, where even a whisper travels from one end to the other.

This spread: Everyday life at Charminar, Hyderabad's 16th-century "Four Minarets" in the heart of the bustling old bazaar

“

For the first-time visitor, the essence of Hyderabad lies in this duality: a centuries-old grace that persists even as the city embraces an ambitious modern façade”



HYDERABAD

Revathi Kodalli, a local resident, feels the city is rapidly transforming into a cultural melting pot – reminiscent of what Bengaluru was two decades ago. “What makes Hyderabad so interesting is the balance between its Dakhni-Telugu traditions, from festivals like Bathukamma, and its Nizami heritage of palaces and monuments,” she tells me over a meal at Terrāi, a 12,000sqft restaurant in HITEC City’s Sattva Knowledge Park. Serving neo-Telangana cuisine, the Sona Reddy Studio-designed space showcases regional craft with ikat-inspired stone floors, terracotta walls, Dokra-influenced details and Bathukamma-inspired lighting.

SPACIOUSNESS HAS BECOME A HALLMARK of Hyderabad’s new architecture, from sprawling breweries and cafés to expansive retail spaces. It is perhaps why Chaitanya Muppala didn’t hesitate to build Manam Chocolate, an evocative expression of craft confectionery made from cacao grown in the West Godavari region, just a few hundred kilometres from Hyderabad.

The *karkhana* (factory), sitting proudly on a busy Banjara Hills road, represents the city’s biggest success story of late. Behind an unimposing yet creative façade, the 10,000sqft experiential space invites guests of all ages to be curious about crafting exotic chocolate, made from traceable beans harvested by farmers working directly with the brand.





Clockwise from far left: Manam's vast complex includes tasting workshops, chocolate-making tours and an all-day café; Roast CCX is frequented by young professionals who enjoy its artisanal coffee and bakes



Listed by *TIME* magazine as one of the World's Greatest Places in 2024, Manam offers a vast array of over 300 products alongside tasting workshops, a DIY chocolate-bar counter, an all-day café and an interactive tour of the chocolate-making process.

Another business that perfectly captures the city's innovative pulse is Roast CCX. With its artisanal coffee, inventive bakes, chef's tables and a private screening room, the 60,000sqft space is frequented by entrepreneurs, artists and young professionals who treat it as both a work and social hub.

Kodalli notes that this buzzing atmosphere is what draws those coming to the city in search of a lifestyle, not just jobs. She points to Communitie, a people-driven organisation that hosts book clubs, cooking groups and pickleball meet-ups. "It's like Reddit in real life," she says. "A great way for newcomers to make friends and truly feel part of the city."

Sporting green pockets around Jubilee Hills, KBR Park, the lakeside stretch of Hussain Sagar and the quieter corners of Banjara Hills, Hyderabad also offers soothing trails and open spaces to breathe. A growing fitness culture thrives here, with running clubs, cycling routes and community-led wellness groups shaping an active urban lifestyle. Beyond shopping at local bazaars for *attar* (natural essential oils) and pearls, visitors can browse the vibrant, year-round craft village at Shilparamam, showcasing ceramics, Kondapalli toys, textiles and artisan-made treasures from across the state.

Just like it has for me, let Hyderabad surprise you. In its seamless blend of heritage, warmth and vibrant new energy, the city reveals a version of itself that feels timeless and yet entirely its own.



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



Taj Falaknuma Palace

One of the most storied and luxurious stays by the Taj Hotels, it offers a bird's-eye view of the Old City in opulent settings. From historian-led palace walks to soulful Sufi nights, the experience here is distinctly memorable.

@tajfalaknuma



The Park Hyderabad

Blending lakeside luxury with contemporary design, the hotel offers chic rooms and a high-energy nightlife, complemented by Mixology Studio's cocktail menus – a stylish base for exploring the city's modern pulse.

@theparkhyderabad



The Leela Hyderabad

Newly opened, the hotel pairs heritage charm with modern ease. Under the renowned Leela brand, it features global culinary experiences at Raen's Studio and inventive mixology at The Library Bar.

@thelelahyderabad

Luxurious stays

Beyond the heritage streets: Lin Xiang Xiong Art Gallery

Penang's new cultural landmark is where art promotes peace and architecture invites contemplation



Professor Lin Xiang Xiong



The gallery inspires with its curated exhibitions



Lin Xiang Xiong Art Gallery's captivating lobby



Low-impact architecture with a modern interior

Located at The Light Waterfront in Penang, the **Lin Xiang Xiong Art Gallery** offers a distinctive and meaningful addition to the island's contemporary cultural landscape. Built directly over the sea, it is the first privately founded art gallery of its kind in Penang, conceived as a space for reflection, dialogue and cross-cultural understanding.

Founded by renowned Singaporean artist and humanitarian Professor Lin Xiang Xiong, the gallery embodies his lifelong belief in art as a

force for peace. His works – spanning Eastern and Western artistic traditions – are shaped by decades of cultural exchange,

social reflection and a deep concern for humanity, engaging audiences through both technique and message.

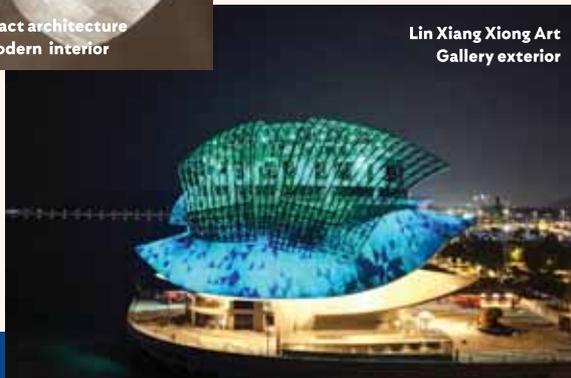
The gallery's modern, low-impact architecture integrates harmoniously with its coastal surroundings, offering visitors a rare experience where art, sea and sky converge. Its exhibitions are thoughtfully curated around universal themes such as identity, coexistence and the human condition.

Whether you are a seasoned art lover or a curious traveller, the gallery invites quiet contemplation and meaningful engagement.

For those seeking a different perspective of Penang – beyond its celebrated cuisine and historic streets – the Lin Xiang Xiong Art Gallery presents a serene and inspiring destination by the sea.

As an emerging cultural landmark, it encourages visitors to see art not only as an expression, but also as a bridge connecting cultures, ideas and people.

Plan your visit at lxxartgallery.com and follow the gallery on Facebook for the latest updates on exhibitions and opening hours.



Lin Xiang Xiong Art Gallery exterior

BUSINESS TRAVELLER

Bold insights for the world's movers and makers



PERSONAL BRANDING

HOW I BECAME THE QUEEN OF MATCHA

How a Covid-lockdown interest led **Jacque De Borja-Medestomas** down an entrepreneurial path

FOR MOST OF my career, I worked in digital publishing and production, far from anything related to F&B in the Philippines. Matcha was simply a personal interest. I drank it, learned about it and documented it during the quiet months of the pandemic. When

travel resumed, my trips to Japan would always include activities related to tea.

Friends in Manila began calling me the “Matcha Queen”. Strangers asked for recommendations. In 2023, I launched @jacqueandmatcha_ to separate my hobby from

my personal account. The response was immediate. People started recognising me online and offline as the “matcha girl” – even though I had never set out to build a brand.

Formal study and an intentional approach

Around this time, I joined the Urasenke Tankokai Manila Association to study Chadō. Learning the Way of Tea sharpened how I talked about matcha and reframed how I approached content.

With the global matcha boom creating a crowded and often inaccurate space, going intentional became essential; anything I shared needed to add clarity, context or cultural understanding.

Last spring, while harvesting tea leaves in Japan, I understood that this was more than a passing interest. It was work that I wanted to pursue long-term.

Building visibility through consistent digital presence

Instagram became my primary platform – from matcha diaries to café finds, pottery and recipes. Consistency led to pop-ups and my first café takeovers. TikTok was less structured, yet the matcha content still resonated. I talked about matcha in a grounded, unpretentious manner, which made me more accessible to followers. People would tell me they had seen – and enjoyed – my photos and videos, which reinforced

how digital platforms shape credibility today.

Turning expertise into opportunities

By late 2024, collaborations with cafés arrived, followed by hotels and workshop organisers. Teaching pushed me to deepen my understanding of farming, milling and broader tea culture. Last year, at a two-day pop-up coffee event in Manila that featured a matcha section, my booth sold out within hours. Soon after, a major lifestyle platform featured me and coined me ‘the queen of everyone’s preferred green drink’. What began as a casual label became a recognised identity.

The leadership lesson behind the label

The visibility opened doors to communities and brands I never expected to reach. It also created pressure, which I used as motivation to keep learning.

If there is one principle this journey affirmed, it is this: personal branding begins with clarity. When you understand your values and your point of view, you can navigate noise with purpose.

People may replicate what you do but never why you do it. Authenticity is the true differentiator – and sometimes it is the catalyst that transforms a personal pursuit into a professional platform.

M E E T A S I A ' S

CUTEST

C A P I T A L I S T S

BEHIND THE WIDE EYES
AND PLUSH COSTUMES OF
MASCOTS LIES A BILLION-
DOLLAR PLAYBOOK -
SHOWING HOW EMOTION,
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
AND IDENTITY DRIVE ASIA'S
SOFT-POWER ECONOMY

WORDS PARISA PICHITMARN
ILLUSTRATIONS ANDRÉ WEE



It's 2pm on a sweltering Saturday in Bangkok, but the crowd at the high-end EmSphere mall near Phrom Phong BTS Skytrain station isn't here for a sale or a pop concert. Hundreds of fans – some clutching plush bears, others in pastel headbands with tiny golden ears – are chanting in unison: "Butterbear! Butterbear!"



When the golden bear finally appears on stage, doe-eyed and clad in a pink tutu, the sound that erupts is pure Beatlemania. Children scream, grown adults tear up and phones rise like a forest of torches.

But Butterbear isn't a pop star – not technically, at least. She began in 2023 as the logo for Butterbear café, which sells butter cookies. But in just a few short years, the bear has become a pop idol, fashion muse and cultural magnet, with Chinese tourists lining up at 4am in the hope of a selfie. What they're really buying isn't a cookie or a concert ticket – it's the feeling of joy that comes with her carefully crafted sweetness.

Across Asia, this brand of "engineered cuteness" has become big business. Mascots, once confined to packaging, have evolved into corporate powerhouses that drive engagement, loyalty and, increasingly, profit. At times, they even expand into products and experiences that go well beyond the core business.

"Studies show that brands with distinctive brand assets like mascots achieve stronger recognition and recall, contributing to loyalty, repeat purchases and greater resilience in competitive markets," says Alex Haigh, managing director of Brand Finance Asia-Pacific, a marketing consultancy based in Singapore. "Although the impact may vary across industries, mascots consistently strengthen trust and familiarity, increasing customer lifetime value over time."

As Asia's consumer landscape matures, mascots are also proving themselves recession-proof. They scale globally, live forever online and never get caught in scandals. "Unlike

human celebrities, their contracts don't end and they don't call in sick," says Pimpicha Utsahajit, CEO of Bangkok-based Vithita Animation, which has worked with more than 100 mascots. "They're loyal assets – for as long as your company stands."

BUTTERBEAR: BANGKOK'S VIRAL SWEETHEART

Few pandemic-era inventions have aged as well as Butterbear. Conceived by Thanawan Vongcharoenrat in 2023 as a way to "spread cheer" via cookie boxes, she went viral in January 2024 when a video of her dancing on Thai Children's Day exploded on Chinese social media. With her background as a teen pop singer and daughter of the founder of Coffee Beans by Dao, Vongcharoenrat knows how to blend sweetness and showbiz. She organised fan meets, launched music videos and built a mascot empire from scratch.

Butterbear's demure dance routines and child-like charm quickly won hearts – and corporate partners. According to Thailand's Department of Business Development, Butterbear's revenue soared from 7.4 million baht (US\$230,000) in 2023 to 545 million baht in 2024, with profits hitting 212 million baht. The mascot has since starred in collaborations with Zara and 7-Eleven; she's even performed alongside Hong Kong pop icon Jackson Wang.

Butterbear also fronted a campaign for the Tourism Authority of Thailand in 2024 to attract her fan base of approximately 1 million Chinese. That year, 6.7 million →

BEAR WITNESS
Butterbear began as a logo and has since grown into a mascot with enough pull to generate billions of baht in revenue

→ tourists from mainland China visited Thailand – the largest share among the country’s 35.5 million international arrivals.

Butterbear’s “Narak Mhai Mai Roo” single has over 21 million YouTube views, while her 50 million baht pastel-themed exhibition, “Buttery World”, drew thousands to Siam Paragon mall early last year. When her pop-up at Shanghai’s Grand Gateway 66 opened in May 2025, foot traffic jumped by 30 per cent and weekly sales by 36 per cent. By October, her workshop in Wuhan doubled tenant sales during Golden Week. For both Thailand’s tourism board and Chinese mall operators, the message is clear – cuteness converts.

“People don’t buy rationally,” Utsahajit explains. “Mascots offer emotional appeal that instantly differentiates products. They’re cheaper than new R&D – and often far more effective. When products are more or less the same, having a mascot character immediately makes your product stand out.”

LINE FRIENDS: FROM STICKERS TO SUPERSTORES

When the LINE messaging app launched in Japan in 2011 with its signature “ding-dong” notification sound, it changed how Asia chatted. Its cartoon stickers – Cony the rabbit, Brown the bear and Moon the salaryman – made digital conversations more expressive and emotional.

At a time when free texting and voice calls over Wi-Fi and 3G were just catching on, LINE stood out with its original stickers: chubby, boldly outlined characters that could be sent like oversized emojis. Designed by Korean illustrator Kang Byeong Mok, these vividly expressive figures, known as LINE Friends, became instant hits for saying what words could not – from Cony’s drooling euphoria to Boss’s weary office-life despair.

Today, 510 million LINE stickers are sent daily, and the characters have leapt from screens into physical stores, cafés and theme parks across Tokyo and Seoul to as far as Los Angeles. With 200 million active users worldwide, according to the company’s website, LINE dominates Japan with 97 million users and remains a top-five app in Thailand and Taiwan. Its parent company, LY Corporation – a joint venture between South Korea’s Naver and Japan’s SoftBank – generated ¥38 billion (US\$245 million) mainly from advertising, stickers and gaming revenue outside Japan in the second quarter of 2025 alone.

“Stickers make LINE more fun, but they also let users express identity,” Utsahajit says. “You can tell a lot about someone by their sticker choices. And if users send your branded stickers, your brand becomes part of their everyday conversation.”



That stickiness has become a masterclass in intellectual property expansion. LINE Friends (now rebranded as IPX Corporation) licenses its characters to more than 1,300 brands – from Bang & Olufsen to Converse – while operating retail flagships that see queues around the block. As IPX positions itself as a “creative studio for online-offline experiences,” the characters remain among Asia’s most lucrative soft-power exports, especially among millennial and Gen Z consumers.

JOLLIBEE: THE BEE THAT BUILT A BILLION-DOLLAR BRAND

In the Philippines, Jollibee isn’t just a mascot – it’s a national symbol. Created in 1978 when an ice-cream parlour pivoted to fast food, the red bee in a chef’s hat represents the Filipino virtues of family, joy and grit. Today, with more than 1,700 outlets worldwide, Jollibee’s brand is valued at US\$2.5 billion, according to Brand Finance’s 2025 annual report on the most valuable and strongest brands in Southeast Asia.

It’s not only nostalgia fuelling growth. In 2025, *USA Today* crowned Jollibee’s Chickenjoy the best fried chicken in America – for the second year in a row. But the bee’s real power lies in emotional resonance: the mascot’s birthday dances, TikTok hijinks, and *Jollitown* TV episodes evoke the kind of joy that no algorithm can replicate. On TikTok, clips of Jollibee hugging homesick overseas workers or gate-crashing weddings have drawn more than a billion views.

In Vietnam – Jollibee’s second-largest market – all 218 stores are frequented almost entirely by locals, outselling KFC and Lotteria despite their larger footprints. “They localised flavours and built emotional connection through their mascot,” says food blogger Nhan Hien Nhi. “The bee shows up in schools, community events – people feel like it’s part of their lives.”

In August 2025, Jollibee became the first Philippine brand granted “Well-Known Mark” status by the country’s Intellectual Property Office, giving its logo and mascot stronger global protection. “This recognition grants the mascot stronger legal protection across goods, services and jurisdictions,” Haigh says. “It also reflects the brand’s confidence in the mascot as a globally exportable asset rather than merely a local marketing symbol.” For a major home-grown brand with global reach, this recognition is a source of national pride, propelling Jollibee’s cultural significance and success in the years to come. **BT**

FROM TOP: Jollibee birthday parties are always in demand; the LINE Friends store in Seoul moves serious merch across every category

IMAGES: GETTY IMAGES; SHUTTERSTOCK



From coastal roots to city heights

From Penang to KL, Firewood exclusively brings Stone Axe wagyu to Malaysia

After winning over George Town with its wood-fired mastery, **Firewood** now brings the heat to Suria KLCC, offering Kuala Lumpur diners a bold new expression of modern Malaysian cuisine.

At the heart of Firewood's offering is a commitment to heritage, flavour and fire. Nowhere is this more evident than in its standout Australian Stone Axe full-blood wagyu sirloin – a cut so exclusive, Firewood is the only restaurant in Malaysia to serve it. Rich, tender and deeply marbled, it's a showstopper worthy of the journey alone.

Beyond the grill, the menu is a showcase of globally inspired, flame-kissed favourites like pan-seared French foie gras and Firewood's homemade 6oz wagyu burger, while new KLCC exclusives including crispy buttermilk chicken wings and Firewood duck breast – bring added flair and variety.

Designed with sleek, warmly minimalist interiors and views of the

Petronas Twin Towers, the KLCC location offers a refined yet welcoming atmosphere – perfect for date nights, business dinners or elevated everyday indulgence. Paired with an expertly curated wine list and attentive service, Firewood continues to set the standard for modern Malaysian dining.

Whether you're a loyal fan or first-time guest, this is where bold flavours meet impeccable execution – served with soul, smoke and sophistication.

Firewood Penang
15 Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling, George Town;
+60 17 989 9246

Firewood KLCC
SR-05-05 Star Boulevard KLCC, Jalan Yap Kwan Seng, Kuala Lumpur;
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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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**Inside
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
Hollywood movies,
TV shows and music

Malaysia Airlines teams up with Mumbai Indians to accelerate growth in India and beyond

Malaysia Airlines has teamed up with Mumbai Indians, India's most celebrated cricket franchise, as its Associate Sponsor and Official Global Airline Partner. This exciting partnership brings together world-class cricket and premium travel, connecting fans across India

and beyond with the airline's signature Malaysian Hospitality. With India being one of Malaysia Airlines' key growth markets, the collaboration creates new opportunities to engage millions of passionate fans while strengthening cultural and travel ties between the two nations.



Shangri-La KL and Malaysia Airlines celebrate Malaysian Heritage Cuisine at KLIA Golden Lounges

Malaysia's rich culinary heritage takes centre stage at KLIA through a collaboration between Malaysia Airlines and Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur. Available during major festive seasons, the curated menus at the airline's Golden Lounges showcase authentic local flavours with

refined presentation, offering travellers a memorable taste of Malaysia before they fly. This collaboration also supports Visit Malaysia 2026, positioning the country as a destination where culture, cuisine and premium travel experiences come together.



Firefly secures IOSA extension, raising the bar for safety excellence

Firefly has successfully extended its IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) Registry for another two years until February 2028, reaffirming the airline's commitment to the highest global safety and operational standards. This milestone is especially significant as it marks Firefly's first IOSA Risk-Based Audit (RBI), completed with strong compliance, disciplined operations and seamless teamwork across the airline. The audit reflects Firefly's continued focus on safety, quality and reliability, ensuring every journey is supported by robust processes and a dedicated team working behind the scenes.

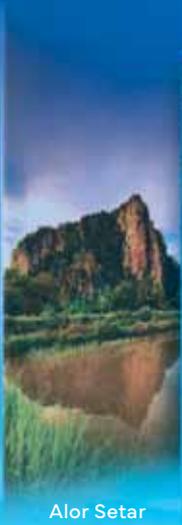


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Kota Bharu



Alor Setar



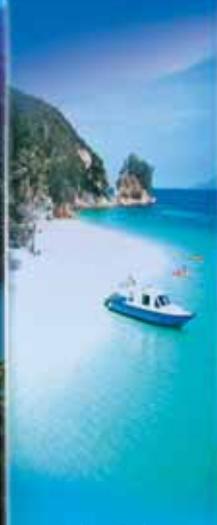
Penang



LANGKAWI



MELBOURNE



Johor Bahru



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Malaysia Airlines and Singapore Airlines formalise strategic joint business partnership

Malaysia Airlines and Singapore Airlines have formalised a strategic joint business partnership, paving the way for deeper collaboration between two of Southeast Asia's leading carriers. Designed to enhance connectivity and flexibility, the partnership will progressively introduce coordinated schedules, joint fare products and improved travel options between Malaysia and Singapore. For travellers, this means smoother journeys, greater choice and enhanced value across both airlines' networks.



MAB Academy sets new standard with state-of-the-art Simulator Building

MAB Academy reinforces Malaysia's position as a regional aviation training hub through its new state-of-the-art Simulator Building. Featuring advanced full-flight simulators and Malaysia's first aviation water survival training pool, the facility supports

rigorous, real-world training for aviation professionals. As a Green Building Index-certified centre, it also reflects a strong commitment to sustainability, ensuring the next generation of talent is trained with excellence, discipline and responsibility.

For first-timers and those coming back for

MORE



2026 marks Visit Malaysia Year. Where will wanderlust take you?

For tourists and locals alike, the diversity of landscapes, flavours, and traditions reveals a country brimming with personality and character. Discover your next destination and immerse yourself fully in it.

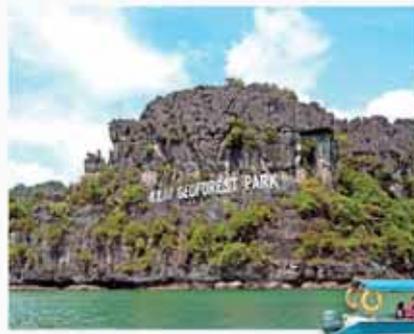
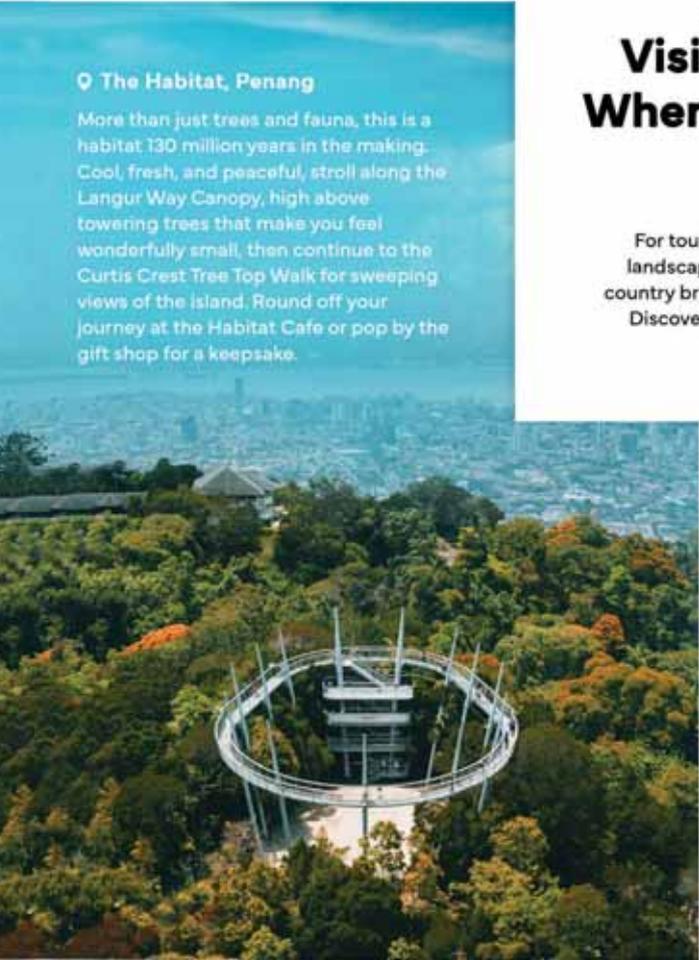
◊ The Habitat, Penang

More than just trees and fauna, this is a habitat 130 million years in the making. Cool, fresh, and peaceful, stroll along the Langur Way Canopy, high above towering trees that make you feel wonderfully small, then continue to the Curtis Crest Tree Top Walk for sweeping views of the island. Round off your journey at the Habitat Cafe or pop by the gift shop for a keepsake.



◊ Mt. Kinabalu, Sabah

Rising within Kinabalu Park, Malaysia's highest peak is majestic and formidable, offering breathtaking sunrises and views. A haven for hikers seeking a challenge, it rewards effort with a true sense of achievement. Beyond the climb, discover a UNESCO-listed rainforest and the rare Rafflesia, a fleeting bloom that appears for just days.



◊ Kilim Geoforest Park, Langkawi

The first UNESCO Global Geopark in Southeast Asia, this natural wonder feels like a scene from another world. Glide past dramatic limestone formations on a boat tour, then explore mangrove forests, even by kayak if you wish. Spot wildlife along the way, then step into the Bat Cave to see thousands of bats overhead or escape to secluded lagoons to swim and unwind.



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A taste of Raya, up in the air

This March, Malaysia Airlines brings the warmth of Hari Raya onboard with a festive menu that celebrates tradition while elevating the in-flight dining experience. Available from 21 to 31 March 2026 on selected flights to Sabah, Sarawak, the Middle East, South Asia (Dhaka and Maldives) and Europe (London and Paris), this limited-time offering pays tribute to cherished festive flavours.

In Business Suite and Business Class, guests can enjoy Nasi Jagung Rendang Tok Ayam, featuring tender boneless chicken thighs slow-braised in Perak's signature rendang tok. Patiently cooked with toasted spices, coconut and aromatics, the dish delivers deep, rich flavours, paired with fragrant nasi minyak jagung infused with corn essence, ghee and warm spices, alongside comforting vegetable dalca and crispy fried turmeric leaf.

Economy Class guests can savour Nasi Minyak Rendang Tok Ayam, featuring richly spiced boneless chicken, aromatic rice and hearty vegetable dalca.

Wherever you are headed, let the warmth and flavours of Hari Raya travel with you.

Selamat menjamu selera.

malaysia airlines

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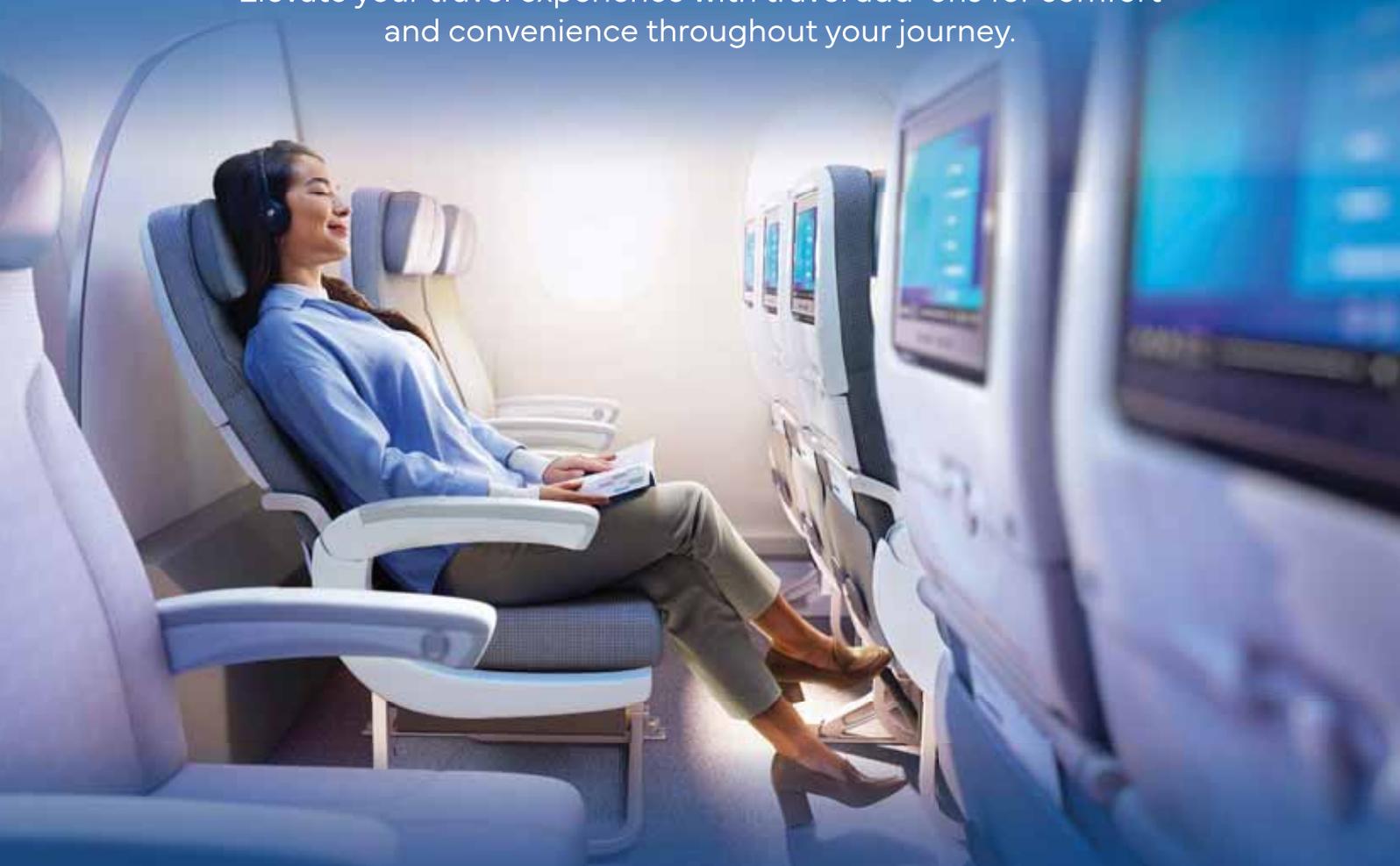
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A350-900  MHconnect

No. of Aircraft **7** | Passenger Seating **286**
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Max. Cruising Speed **944km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-900  MHconnect

No. of Aircraft **9** | 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  MHconnect

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



A330-200  MHconnect

No. of Aircraft **3** | 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 **40** | Passenger Seating **160, 166, 174**
Length **39.5m** | Wingspan **35.8m** | Height **12.50m**
Max. Cruising Speed **857km/h**



B737-8  MHconnect

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**

Discovering Malaysia through modern contemporary art

In the heart of Kuala Lumpur, **UR-MU** offers an introduction to the art scene in Malaysia and Southeast Asia. Designed for curious global travellers, the contemporary art museum

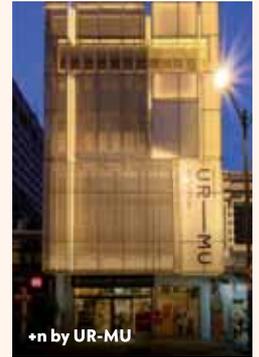


Nadiah Bamadhaj,
Adorned (2020)

brings together visual art, architecture and urban culture within thoughtfully curated spaces. Housed in beautifully restored city locations across Bukit Bintang, Jalan Raja Chulan and Jalan Tun HS Lee, UR-MU showcases works that reflect the region's social history, creative voices and evolving lifestyles – inviting visitors to see Malaysia through an artistic lens. A contemporary

destination where curiosity and conversation connect art lovers and creatives.

Visit ur-mu.com to explore UR-MU's exhibitions and cultural offerings.



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PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDs)

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



LITHIUM BATTERIES

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



NO-SMOKING & VAPING POLICY

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



COMFORT & CARE

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



BAGGAGE FOR TRANSIT PASSENGERS

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



ZERO TOLERANCE OF ABUSE

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



IN-FLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

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

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



ONBOARD CHARGING

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



FOOD & BEVERAGE

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



FRESH & FROZEN SEAFOOD

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

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



PEANUT & NUT ALLERGIES

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



WHEELCHAIR ASSISTANCE

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



UNACCOMPANIED MINOR (UMNR)

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

+ For more information, visit malaysiaairlines.com

IN ADDITION TO AIRPORT CHECK-IN, HERE ARE OTHER OPTIONS*



WEB
Check in online at malaysiaairlines.com and self-print your boarding pass.



WEB-TO-MOBILE
Check in online. Your boarding pass will be sent to your mobile phone. Mobile boarding passes can be scanned at airport security and at the boarding gate.



MALAYSIA AIRLINES APP
Visit malaysiaairlines.com to download the Malaysia Airlines App to perform mobile check-in.



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



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

HOW FULL IS YOUR JAR OF MEMORIES?



Don't wait to explore.

LIFE'S BEST MOMENTS ARE READY WHEREVER YOU ARE.

Think back to a holiday or excursion that made your heart swell with joy and put a grin on your face. Here's a friendly nudge to create more of those moments, plus simple tips to make the most of it all.



ITINERARIES MADE EASY WITH TRAVEL PASSES

A little prep goes a long way. Pick a pass that keeps your flights flexible all year, or one that bundles top attractions in Chiang Mai, London, or Tokyo, so you can dive right into the fun.



AIRPORT SERVICES FOR COMFORT AND EASE

Whether you realise it or not, the airport is the start of your adventure. Relax in lounges, breeze through priority lanes, or recharge in a sleeping cabin to make your time more enjoyable.



UNLOCK MORE EXCITEMENT WITH TOURS AND ATTRACTIONS

Not every escape needs to be a week-long affair. Spontaneous outings, quick city breaks, or curated local experiences can be just as rewarding, helping you recharge and discover something new.

Discover more



Earn in Sydney, Redeem in Cebu.

Travel. Lifestyle. Rewards.



Earn Enrich Points when
you fly to Sydney.



Get the best exchange rates
across 20 currencies.



Earn Enrich Points when you
book a stay, choosing from more
than 600,000 hotels worldwide.



Redeem a flight to Cebu
with your Enrich Points.

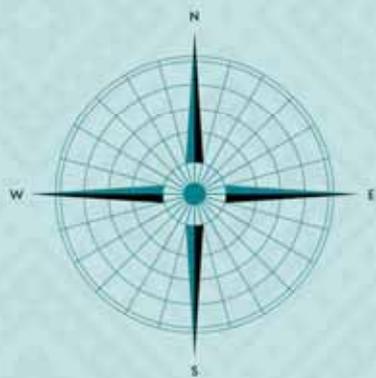


Redeem tours, lounge
access or airport transfers.

 Cebu, Philippines



Sign up and become an
Enrich member today.



OUR NETWORK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELEN WINATA

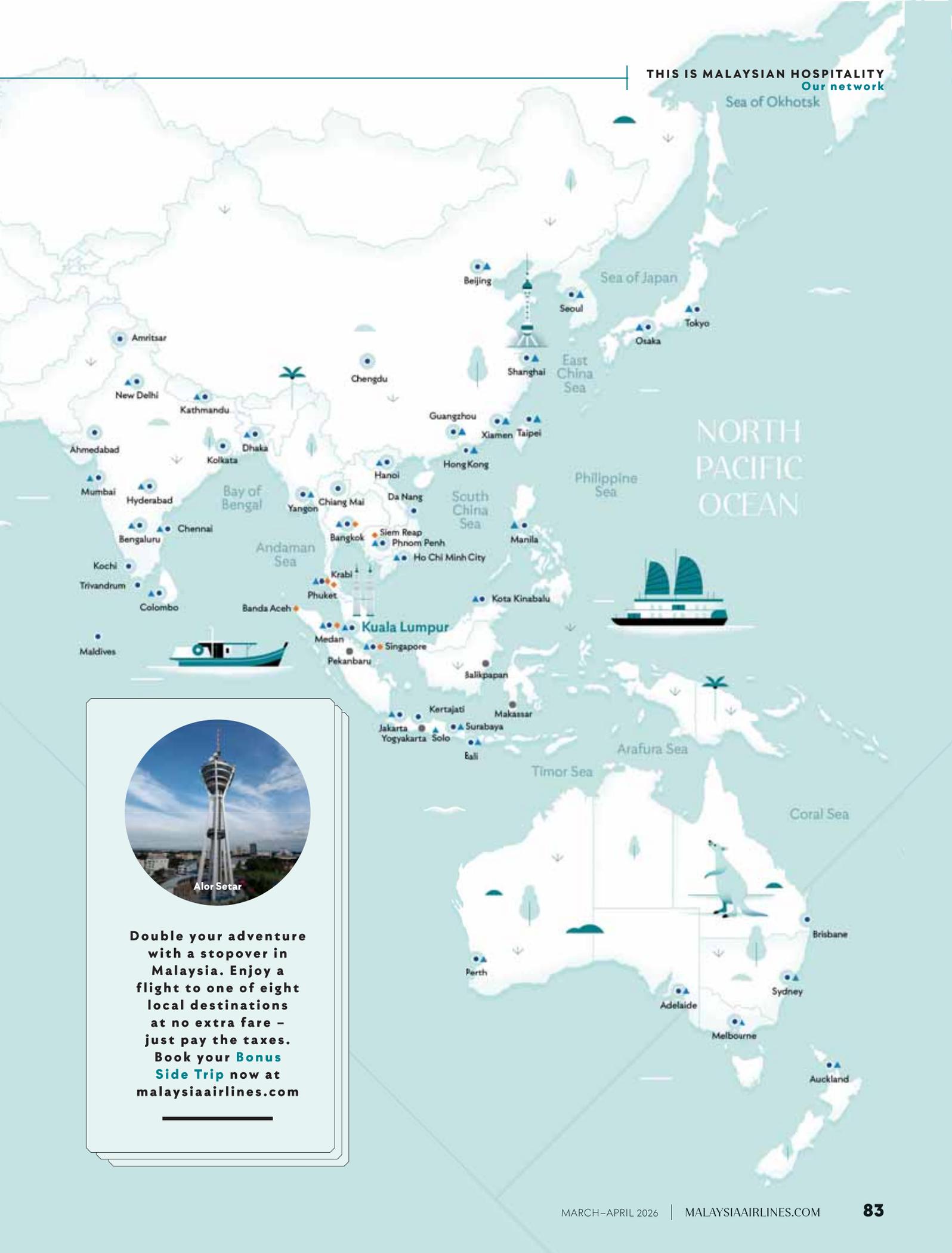
SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

Malaysia Airlines and Firefly have an average of 244 daily flights to 70 destinations around the world from their hubs in **Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Kota Kinabalu**



- Malaysia Airlines
- ◆ Firefly
- Amal
- ▲ MASkargo

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



Alor Setar

Double your adventure with a stopover in Malaysia. Enjoy a flight to one of eight local destinations at no extra fare – just pay the taxes. Book your **Bonus Side Trip** now at malaysiaairlines.com

EXPLORE MALAYSIA



Connect and travel to more than 900 destinations in 170 territories across the globe when you travel with Malaysia Airlines, a **oneworld** member since 2013



Tianjin

- Malaysia Airlines
- ◆ Firefly
- ▲ MASkargo

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK (TIANJIN)



● oneworld destinations



Stay connected with **MHconnect**

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

Stay connected in 5 easy steps:



Step 1

Switch to
"Flight Mode"



Step 2

Connect to **MHconnect**
iOS: You will be directed to the home page**
Android: Enter the URL
mhconnect.malaysiaairlines.com
to be directed to the home page



Step 3

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



Step 4

Click on the
"Connect" tab



Step 5

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



You are connected

You can now surf the
web with **MHconnect**

*MHconnect Wi-Fi service is available on selected A350 and A330 aircraft operated by Malaysia Airlines.

**If iOS is not automatically redirected, enter URL mhconnect.malaysiaairlines.com to be directed to the homepage. Other T&Cs apply.



Enjoy in-flight entertainment with **MHstudio**

Enjoy over 150 movies, 400 TV shows and more on our in-flight entertainment system with the convenience of using your own headphones. Available on selected aircraft.

Stay connected in 3 steps:



Step 1

Switch to
Flight Mode



Step 2

Activate Wi-Fi and
select **MHstudio**



Step 3

Scan the QR code or enter the URL (as per decal)
http://mhstudio.malaysiaairlines.com or
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

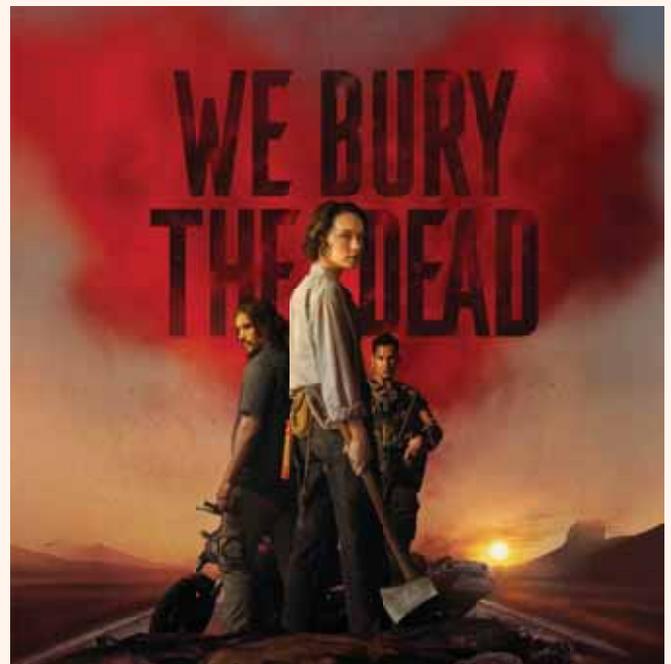
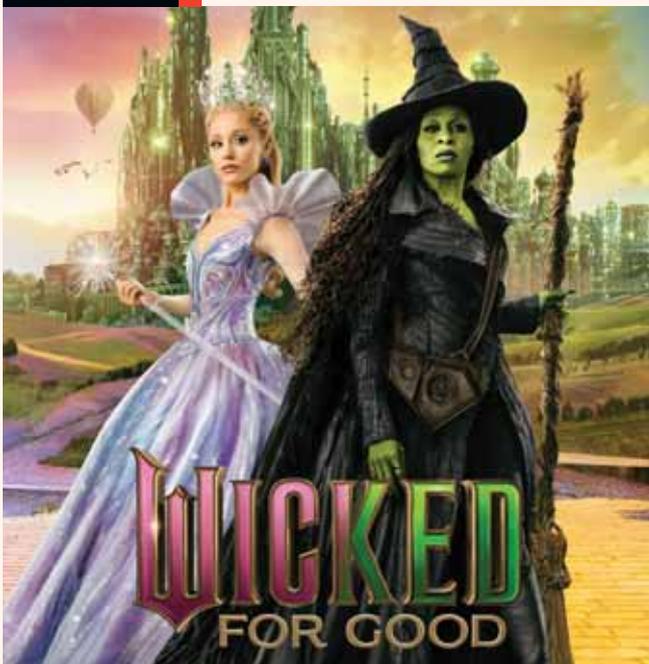
+ INSIDE

MOVIES
TELEVISION
ALBUM
HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH

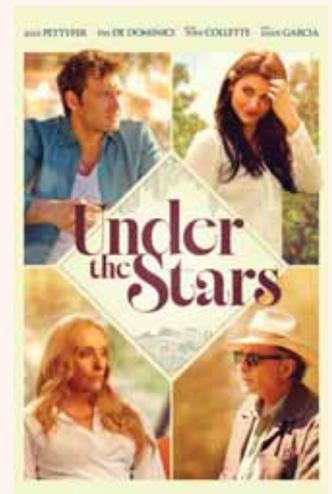
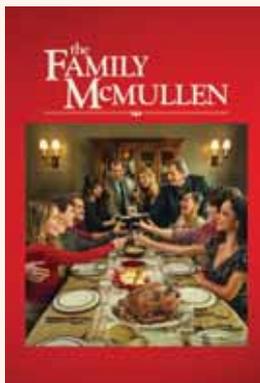
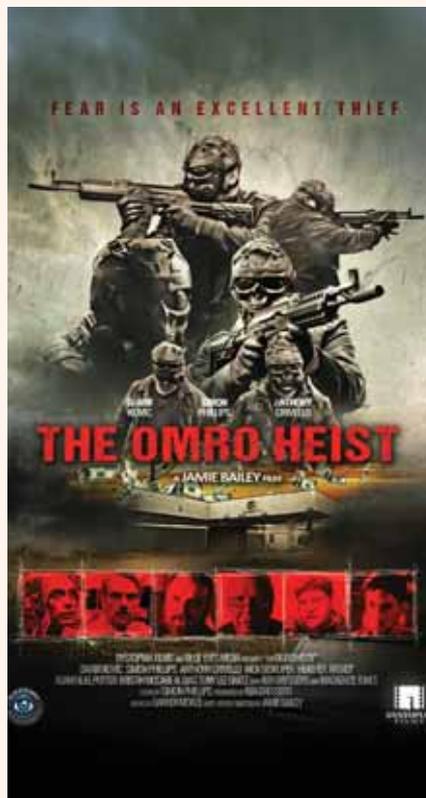
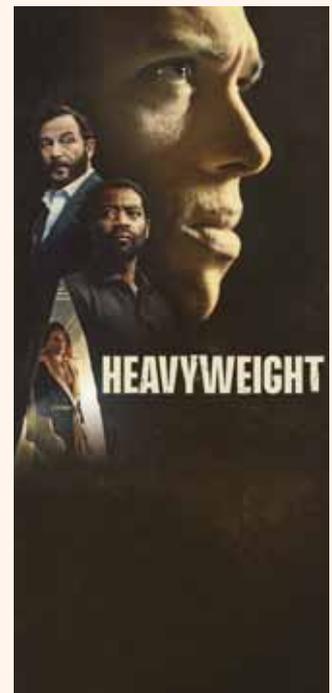
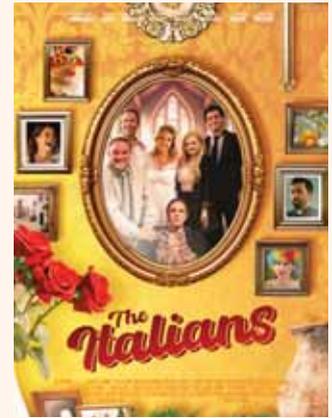


APRIL



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HOLLYWOOD'S LATEST



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TOP MOVIE PICKS

150+
more movies on
your IFE player

Hollywood Favourite

Wonder Woman

An Amazon princess leaves her hidden island to stop a world war. Along the way, she discovers her destiny and power while fighting for peace and justice in a dangerous world.



Hollywood Favourite

Shazam! Fury of the Gods

A group of foster kids with superpowers must team up to stop three ancient, angry gods. They have to learn to work together as a family to save their city from destruction.



Hollywood Favourite

Barbie

Barbie leaves her perfect world for the real one, discovering her true purpose in a colourful adventure about being human.



Hollywood Favourite

The Last Stop in Yuma County

A travelling salesman is trapped in a remote diner with two dangerous bank robbers. All await a fuel truck that could change everything.



Kids

Max 2: White House Hero

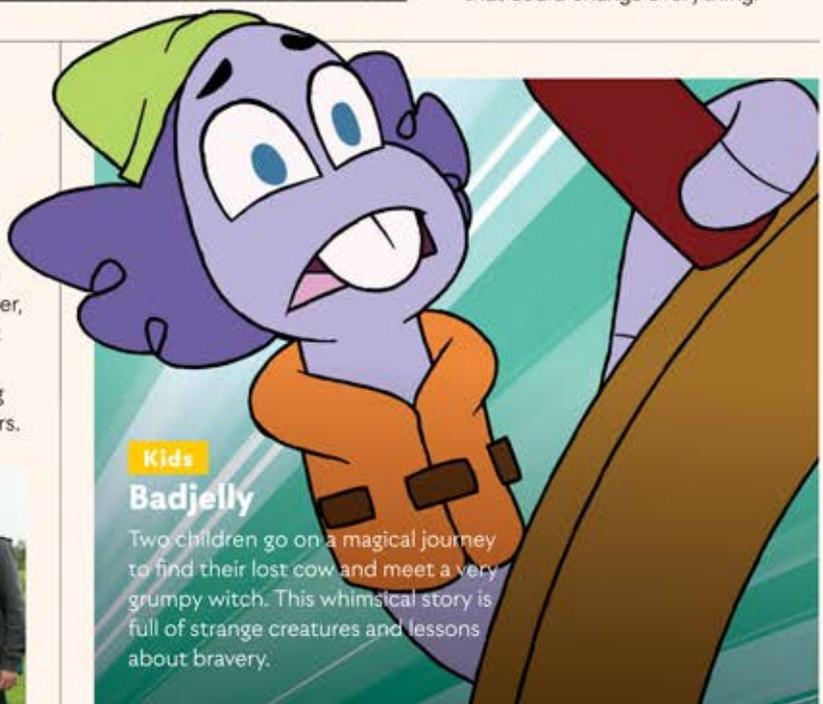
A brave service dog is sent to protect the president's son at the White House. Together, they uncover a secret plot that could ruin an important meeting between world leaders.



Kids

Badjelly

Two children go on a magical journey to find their lost cow and meet a very grumpy witch. This whimsical story is full of strange creatures and lessons about bravery.

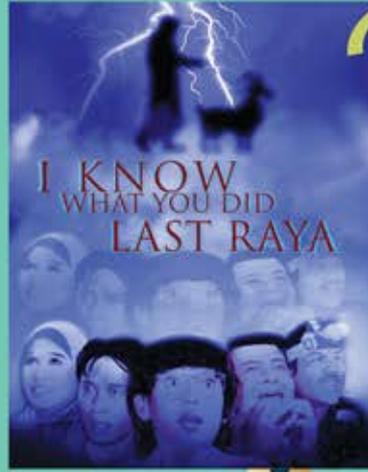
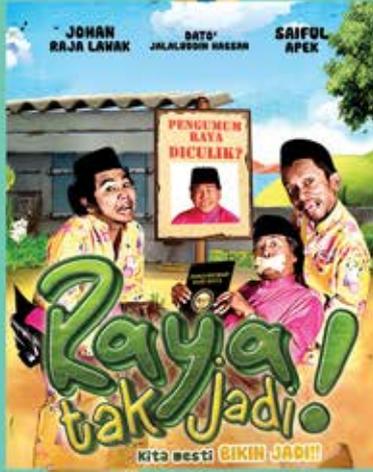


Kids

Wolfwalkers

A fierce young hunter travels to Ireland to help her father but befriends a girl who can turn into a wolf. She discovers a magical world and must choose between her duty and her new friend.

Malay



Hindi



Thai



Korean



Indonesian



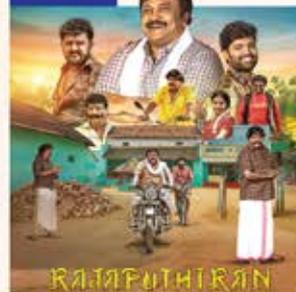
Chinese



Japanese



Tamil



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MHcorporate™

Discover Malaysia Airlines' suite of corporate travel solutions, supporting organisations through exclusive benefits delivered with the warmth of Malaysian Hospitality.

Your Gateway to Asia & Beyond



Tailored solutions for maritime and energy sector mobility

MH corporate™ MARINE



Seamless planning of meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions globally

MH corporate™ EVENTS



Take control of corporate travel with a self-managed platform with exclusive benefits

MH corporate™ SME



Scan to learn more or visit malaysiaairlines.com/mhcorporate

For direct enquiries, kindly contact us at mhbiztravel@malaysiaairlines.com



Kids Show

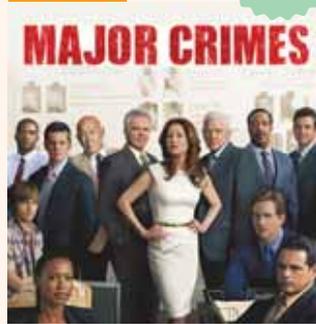


A master thief who uses her skills for good, Carmen Sandiego travels the world to stop the evil plans of the criminal group V.I.L.E. With the help of her smart sidekicks, she stays one step ahead of the villains to protect the world's treasures.

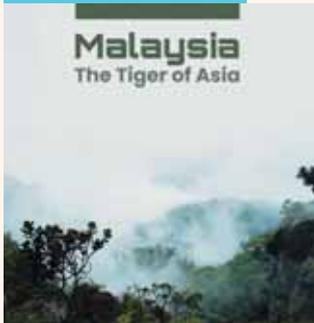
Comedy



Drama



Nature & Wildlife



Malay



Tamil



Hindi



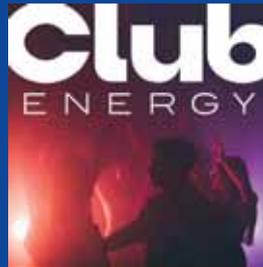
Hits



Malay



Club



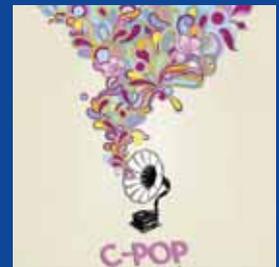
Memories



Hindi



Mandarin



Light & Easy



French



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Amal Mobile App

An application for your spiritual and travel needs.



Flight ticket bookings, Check-in, and Manage Bookings



Prayer times, Qibla direction, and Tasbih



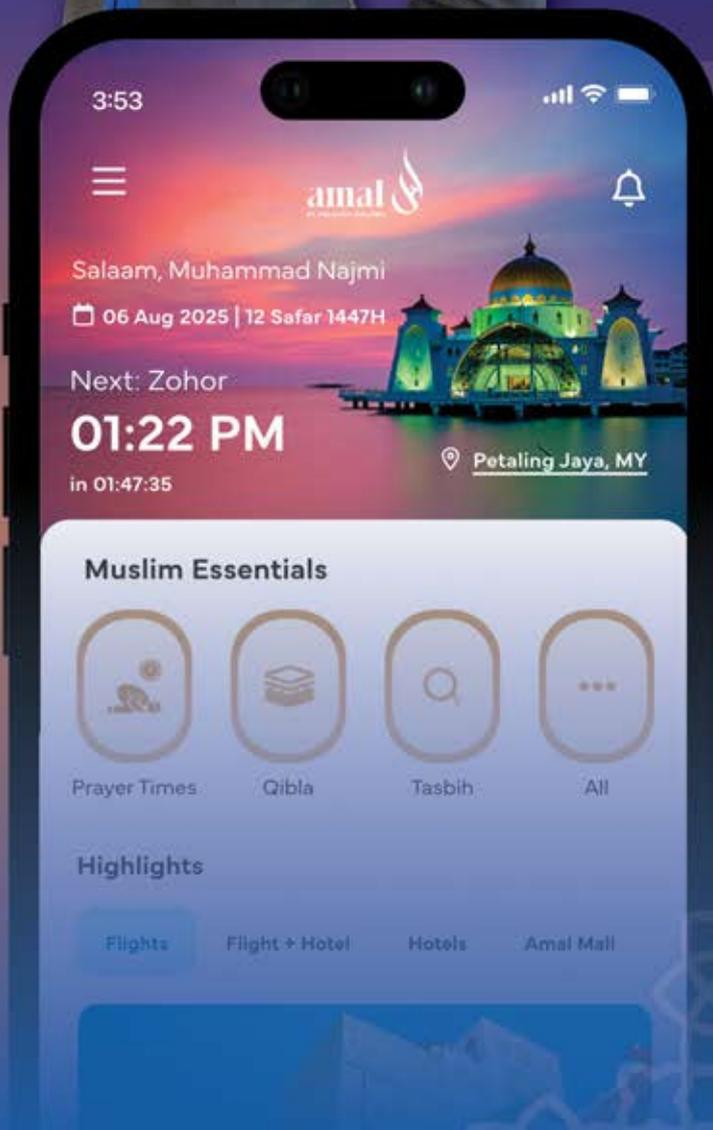
Collection of Duas and Hadiths



Halal dining spots and places of interest



Zakat, Charity, Aqiqah, Qurban, and much more...



Scan the QR code below to download



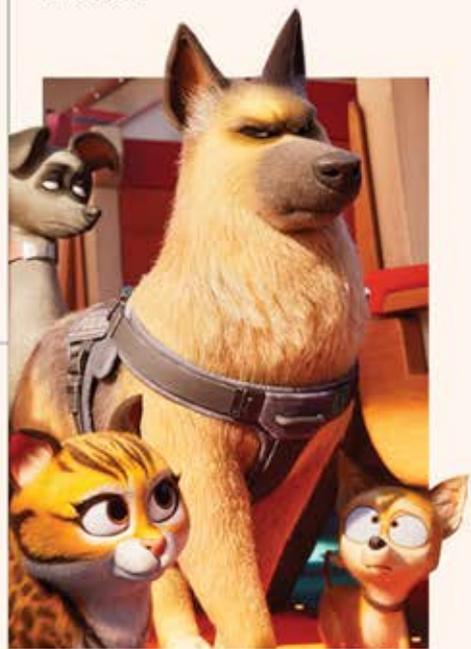


We Bury the Dead

A woman searching for her missing husband takes a job handling the deceased after a major disaster. She soon discovers that the bodies are coming back to life and must fight to survive.

Pets on a Train

A group of brave pets must navigate a long, dangerous train journey to find their way home. They work together to solve puzzles and avoid being caught by the humans on board.



Wicked: For Good

In this epic movie, Elphaba fights to protect animals while in hiding, as Glinda faces pressure from a corrupt ruler. The former friends must confront their choices and the Wizard's power to decide the future of the land of Oz.



Greenland 2: Migration

After a global disaster, a family must leave their safe bunker to find a new home in a frozen world. They face dangerous obstacles as they trek across a ruined landscape to reach safety.

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TOP MOVIE PICKS



Hollywood Favourite

Meg 2: The Trench

A research team explores the deepest part of the ocean and discovers giant prehistoric sharks. They must fight for their lives against massive predators – and greedy criminals.



Hollywood Favourite

A Minecraft Movie

A group of friends is pulled into a magical, blocky world and must protect it from a dark force. Using their creativity and building skills, they fight to survive and find a way back home.



Hollywood Favourite

Godzilla vs Kong

Two giant monsters fight a massive battle for dominance as the human world watches in fear. While the titans clash, a secret plan is revealed that could change everything for everyone.



Hollywood Favourite

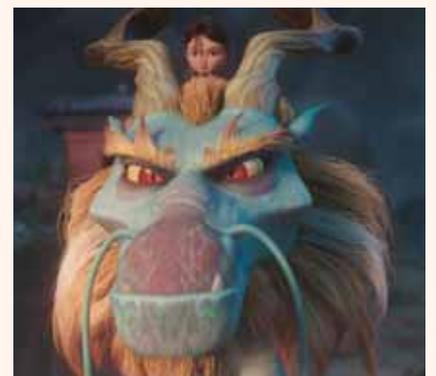
What We Do in the Shadows

A film crew follows the lives of four vampires who share a house in the modern world. They struggle with everyday problems, from paying rent to fitting in with humans.

Kids

Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole

A young owl is captured by an evil army but escapes to find the legendary protectors of the sky. He must lead a battle to save the owl kingdom from destruction.



Kids

Dragonkeeper

A young girl in ancient China rescues the last dragon and goes on a dangerous quest across the country. The two of them must work together to protect a magical egg and fulfil an ancient prophecy.

Hindi



A hot-headed singer and a soft-spoken writer find a deep connection through their shared love for music. Their bond faces a heart-wrenching challenge when a tragic illness threatens to steal their memories and the life they built together.

Mandarin



After a tragic accident leaves a rookie cop disabled, he goes undercover as a beggar to infiltrate a dangerous gang of pickpockets. To take down the syndicate, he must master the art of theft and overcome his own physical limits to prove he is still a true hero.

Japanese



Korean



Indonesian



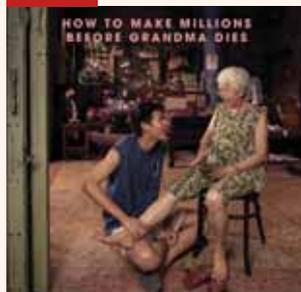
Tamil



Malayalam



Thai



Telugu



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MHinsure

A Family's Guide to Worry-free Travel

“WHAT IF
our luggage gets
lost? What if one
of the kids falls
sick overseas?”

The trip had been a dream for months, but for Emily, a mother of three, the excitement was real. She planned every detail, from securing the flights to crafting the perfect itinerary for a week of family fun. She knew that covering every detail meant planning for both the fun and the unexpected.

For many parents, questions like “What if our luggage gets lost? What if one of the kids falls sick overseas?” can trigger real anxiety. But Emily had already answered those questions. She had taken proactive steps to ensure that these unknowns were managed.

Knowing she had a safety net in place allowed her to focus on the joy of the trip—making incredible memories, not the possibility of a travel hiccup.

*Peace of mind,
found in the pages of
a magazine*

Emily recalled that she had seen an MHinsure ad that spoke directly to her concerns, highlighting how their travel protection plans could cover those “what ifs” that had kept her up at night.

Knowing that her family was covered **up to MYR 1 million** in medical care instantly removed her biggest overseas fear.

Similarly, the generous luggage and personal effects coverage of **up to MYR 7,500** quieted her worry about lost bags. She immediately decided to buy the policy.

Months later, when an unexpected illness required a doctor's visit mid-vacation, Emily experienced the true value of her decision. The peace of mind offered by MHinsure wasn't just a concept—it became a tangible reality when the medical bills were seamlessly covered under their policy.

For Emily, this was proof that she had made the right decision and would continue this practice for all future trips.



Inspired by Emily's foresight?

Scan to explore MHinsure's range of travel protection plans.

The benefit(s) payable under eligible product is(are) protected by PIDM up to limits.

Please refer to PIDM's TIPS brochure or contact Etiqa General Insurance Berhad or PIDM (visit www.pidm.gov.my).

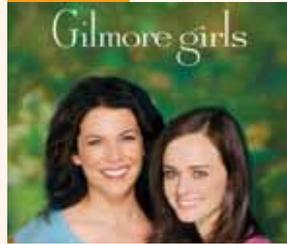


Underwritten by
eTiqa
General Insurance

Comedy



Drama



Travel



Lifestyle



Kids' Shows



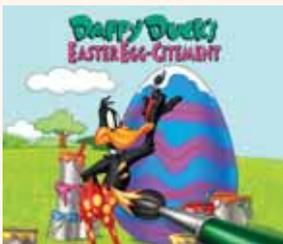
Japanese



Korean



Malay Religious



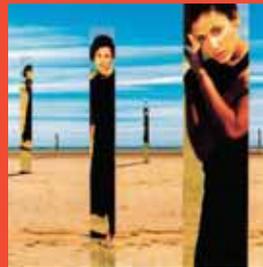
Hits



Malay



Memories



French



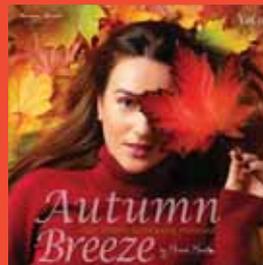
Tamil



World



Relax



Kids



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FROM SKIES TO RAILWAYS – EVERY MILE BRINGS A NEW DISCOVERY

There is something special about watching the landscape unfold through a train window after stepping off a flight – quiet villages, rivers winding through valleys, towns with histories whispered through their lanes. These are the parts of travel that linger in the heart, not just the arrival, but the journey between.

You land in a major city, suitcase in hand, but your destination is somewhere off the beaten path – a coastal town, a university city tucked away, a place where the pace slows and every corner feels like a discovery. Perhaps you meet locals in a station café or share stories with fellow travellers as the countryside passes by your window. These moments remind us that travel is more than airports and scheduled flights, it is about the surprises between the hubs.

For students, for travellers hungry for culture, for families seeking authentic stories, there is joy in every mile of the path less travelled. **The changing landscapes, the different dialects, the switch from air to rail, all of it**

opens your senses in ways that only travel can.

MHrail understands this longing to explore beyond the obvious. It is designed for people like you who want more than just a connection between two airports. With MHrail, your journey does not stop at the runway – it continues on the rail, beyond the borders of big cities, into hidden gems and places with character. It is a unique Malaysia Airlines service that connects your flight to trusted rail partners like Avanti West Coast, London North Eastern Railway (LNER), Great Western Railway (GWR) and KORAIL, giving you access to over 100 towns and cities across the UK and South Korea – all with just one ticket.

So the next time you book with Malaysia Airlines, don't just stop at the city. Go further, see more and let every mile of the journey tell its story.

Begin your journey beyond the airport at malaysiaairlines.com/MHrail

Grace in stone

You'll notice Putrajaya's Pink Mosque, officially Masjid Putra, before you reach it; its rose-tinted granite dome and walls stand proudly on the edge of Putrajaya Lake.

Completed in 1999, its design draws from Persian Islamic architecture, with symmetrical forms, geometric detailing and balanced proportions. While its arches and open colonnades may remind some visitors of places like Spain's Alhambra, its inspiration is rooted more firmly in Middle Eastern traditions: the 116m minaret

nods to Baghdad's Sheikh Umar Mosque while parts of the lower structure echo Morocco's Hassan II Mosque.

The mosque sits beside Putra Square and opposite Perdana Putra, the Prime Minister's office. And with the Putrajaya Botanical Garden nearby, it's easy to have a walk around the precinct.

It is open to visitors outside prayer times; modest dress is required, and robes are provided. Visit early morning or late afternoon for softer light and fewer crowds.

masjidputra.gov.my





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MALAYSIA

@ Perdana Botanical Garden
Kuala Lumpur City Centre

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Free-flight Walk-in Aviary



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