

Going Places

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2026

HAKATA CITY

FUKUOKA

Bright ideas: a city ahead of the curve



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THROUGH THE RUSH, REMAIN UNRUFFLED

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2026

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Fukuoka's famed Christmas illuminations
Image by Shutterstock

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Dear guests,

As we approach the end of the year, I would first like to thank you, our passengers, for your continued trust and support. Your confidence in Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) drives us to improve, innovate and invest in a better experience.

It has been a challenging year for the aviation industry, with a changing global environment, volatile fuel prices and other pressures testing the sector. Yet, with the continued support of our passengers and the dedication of our people, we have continued to move forward and make meaningful progress across the Group.

I am pleased to see these efforts recognised through local and international awards. Most recently, Malaysia Airlines was named No 1 for Best Airline Staff in Asia at the 2026 World Airline Awards by Skytrax. It also ranked No 2 for World's Best Airport Services, No 3 for World's Best Cabin Crew and No 21 among the World's Top 100 Airlines, up from No 27 last year. These accolades reflect the care and commitment of our people, and the Malaysian Hospitality they bring to passengers every day.

Across our airlines, we are strengthening connectivity in response to evolving travel needs. Malaysia Airlines will reconnect Kuala Lumpur with Busan from December, while increased frequencies to Fukuoka, Brisbane and Surabaya will give passengers more choice across key regional markets. Meanwhile, Firefly will enter China with direct services to Kunming, further expanding our network and creating new opportunities for travel, tourism, business and cultural exchange.

We are also investing in the aircraft and capabilities that support this growth. Our new-generation A330neo has been deployed to Brisbane and is being progressively introduced across our network,

including Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Auckland, Bali and Tokyo (Narita). The aircraft brings a more modern cabin and enhanced comfort to more passengers. Its deployment on almost all our Australian routes also makes our fleet the youngest in the region. As our fleet evolves, our focus remains on ensuring that these investments translate into a better and consistent premium experience for our passengers.

Beyond our network and fleet, we continue to enhance the onboard experience. We have introduced more than 30 new Best of Asia meal offerings, including favourites such as vegetarian satay, signature nasi lemak and cendol ice cream. These additions bring greater variety to our in-flight dining while showcasing Malaysia's culinary heritage. Work is also underway on a new catering facility near KLIA to expand capacity and support greater consistency and quality as our network grows.

We are also introducing new offerings for families and younger travellers, including Malaysian safari activity packs, kids' headphones and baby blankets tailored to different age groups and flight durations. These are part of our ongoing efforts to make every journey more comfortable and enjoyable.

On behalf of everyone at MAG, thank you for choosing to fly with us. To those celebrating Christmas in December, I wish you a joyful celebration filled with meaningful moments and cherished memories with family and friends.

There is much more ahead. We remain committed to our ambition of making Malaysia Airlines one of the world's Top 10 global airlines by 2030. We look forward to taking that journey with you and continuing to deliver the warmth of Malaysian Hospitality.

Nasaruddin A. Bakar

President and Group CEO
Malaysia Aviation Group



Bold Flavours That Bring Us Together

A table made for sharing



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As the year winds down, there's a certain restlessness that sets in. Perhaps you've been stuck in a routine and simply want to spend a few days somewhere that feels different from the everyday. A change of scenery may be just what you need to reset and shake things up.

For some creative inspiration, look to Fukuoka. Japan's laid-back southern city is becoming an exciting creative hub, where contemporary art mingles with centuries-old traditions. You'll find Kenji Yanobe's metallic *Ship's Cat* sculpture out in the city, while at Nakamura Ningyo, traditional Hakata doll-making is being given a fresh spin with pop culture. It's an easygoing environment that seems to give artists and makers the freedom to experiment.

If what you need is some quality time with the family, Trivandrum may surprise you. Besides its temples, palaces and museums, Kerala's capital has a zoo that feels like a green park in the middle of the city, along with a Magic Planet, planetarium, scenic reservoir boat rides and coastal backwaters. There's plenty here to keep everyone entertained, with a good mix of culture, adventure and fun.

And with the festive season just around the corner, Manila is ready to celebrate. The Philippines is famous for getting into the Christmas spirit as soon as the "ber" months arrive, and by December, the cheer is in full swing. Our itinerary takes you from the Spanish-era walls of Fort Santiago to contemporary Manila's art, architecture, food and live performances, before ending in nature at its nearby georeserves.

There's plenty more to discover in these pages, from ticking off Paris' must-dos and checking into a historic hotel in Chiang Mai to exploring Surabaya's old quarters and seeing Seoul through a local's eyes. Wherever you're headed next, we hope you find something that inspires you. And to everyone celebrating, wishing you a joyous holiday season.



Go forth and wander!

Elizabeth Soong

Elizabeth Soong
Editor

Feed your wanderlust and catch up on past issues at

📸 [goingplacesmagazine](#) and 🖱️ [goingplaces.malaysiaairlines.com](#)

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Japan-based travel writer Leandra contributes to *Travel+Leisure*, *Wallpaper** and *Business Traveller*. She loves design hotels and nature lodges in far-flung destinations.



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Dian Pasquinal Kaur

Writer, "Out of the shadows", page 29

Kuala Lumpur-based Dian has spent over 20 years in publishing and enjoys chasing stories, exploring Malaysia's arts and culture scene and seeking out memorable meals.

Naturally Langkawi

Some moments are planned.
The best ones find you.

Colugo,
One of Langkawi's
Flying Five

You can plan the flights, the room, the table by the Andaman Sea.

Not the colugo on the tree, which even locals rarely see. Not the secret cave by the beach. Not the warung with no sign, three tables, and the best *pek nga* on the island.

That's the thing about Langkawi.
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17 REASONS TO LOVE MALAYSIA

Bold flavours, inspiring people and unforgettable places

1 Kuala Lumpur Creativity under one roof



In the heart of Bukit Bintang, **GMBB** is a 10-storey space for Malaysia's arts, culture and independent creative scene. Home to more than 100 artists, artisans and creative businesses, it brings together studios, galleries, artisanal craft stores, independent bookshops, creative retail concepts and local eateries. Workshops, exhibitions and events take place throughout the year, giving visitors plenty to browse, experience and explore. [@gmbb.kl](https://www.gmbb.kl)



2

Kuala Lumpur

A thorny good time

Just minutes from KLCC, **KLDEX** (Kuala Lumpur Durian Experience Centre) offers a multi-sensory introduction to Malaysia's king of fruits. Guided tasting tours cover different varieties and flavour profiles, alongside cultural performances celebrating local heritage. Gastronomy, storytelling and entertainment feature throughout, making this a fun way to spend the year-end holidays, especially if you love durian. kldex.my



Kuala Lumpur

Delve into life's meaning

Ahmad Zakii Anwar's first solo exhibition since 2019 brings together more than 75 works from 1995 to 2013, from the Steve Wong Art Collection. "**Sementara**", presented by GDP and R+, looks at life and impermanence through paintings of still life, portraits, dancers, animals and everyday scenes. See it at GDP Campus in Bukit Damansara from 11 October 2026 to 10 January 2027. Admission fees apply. gdparchitects.com



Pahang

4 A breath of fresh highland air

There's a new address in Tanah Rata: **Oakwood Cameron Highlands**, a 383-key serviced residence perched above one of Malaysia's oldest golf courses. Spacious residences, panoramic views and refined interiors make it a tranquil and comfortable base for families and leisure travellers. Oakbistro serves comforting fare, while Oaklounge offers afternoon tea overlooking the misty fairways. [@oakwoodcameron](https://www.oakwoodcameron.com)

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Langkawi

Your island,
your way

Langkawi is rewriting the tropical island playbook, pairing barefoot luxury with wild landscapes, restorative wellness and experiences shaped around the traveller. A morning yoga session might lead to a rainforest adventure, private dinner or slow afternoon by the sea. Beyond the beach, discover sophisticated resorts, personalised experiences, ancient geological formations, mangrove waterways and island exploration. Come to switch off, reconnect, explore or indulge – the journey is yours to design, at your own pace. naturallylangkawi.my

6

Sarawak

Wonder no more

Curiosity gets a five-storey playground at **Sarawak Science Centre** on Jalan Stadium, Kuching. Sarawak's first immersive science centre has 22 thematic galleries and more than 400 hands-on exhibits, where visitors can test ideas, explore STEM and discover how things work.

ssciex.org.my


7

Malaysia

Cash back on
the good stuff

Dining out, streaming or travelling abroad? The **Maybank Cash Back Mastercard Platinum Credit Card** gives 8% cash back on dining, online entertainment and digital lifestyle spending, with no annual fee. Cardmembers also get 0% FX mark-up when tapping or swiping in selected countries. Apply at maybank.my/platcashback

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Beautiful*



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8

Come,
Enter
into...

Kuala Lumpur

For
art's sake

At the heart of arts and lifestyle destination Ombak KLCC, **Galeri Petronas** occupies a purpose-designed space over 126,000 sqft, featuring Malaysia's first cantilevered art gallery. Its contemporary venue includes exhibitions, art talks and creative experiences, with a café and merchandise shop offering curated prints and specially crafted souvenirs for visitors to browse after. galeripetronas.com

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Penang

Relive history

Step into Penang's past at the **Penang History Gallery**, where 37 themed zones bring 1786–1957 to life through interactive displays, rare artefacts and recreated scenes. Explore colonial trade, secret societies and WWII, with Nyonya kebaya dress-up adding a playful touch. [@penang_history_gallery](https://www.penanghistorygallery.com)



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Kuala Lumpur

A piece of the action

Founded by husband-and-wife duo Kelvin Long Tze Chi and Chantelle Teoh Siok Koon, **A Piece of Malaysia** celebrates the country's quirky creative spirit. Housed in Pejabat Pos Besar Lama, it stocks Malaysian labels, homegrown products, graphic tees and playful souvenirs inspired by local culture, food and slang. apieceofmalaysia.com



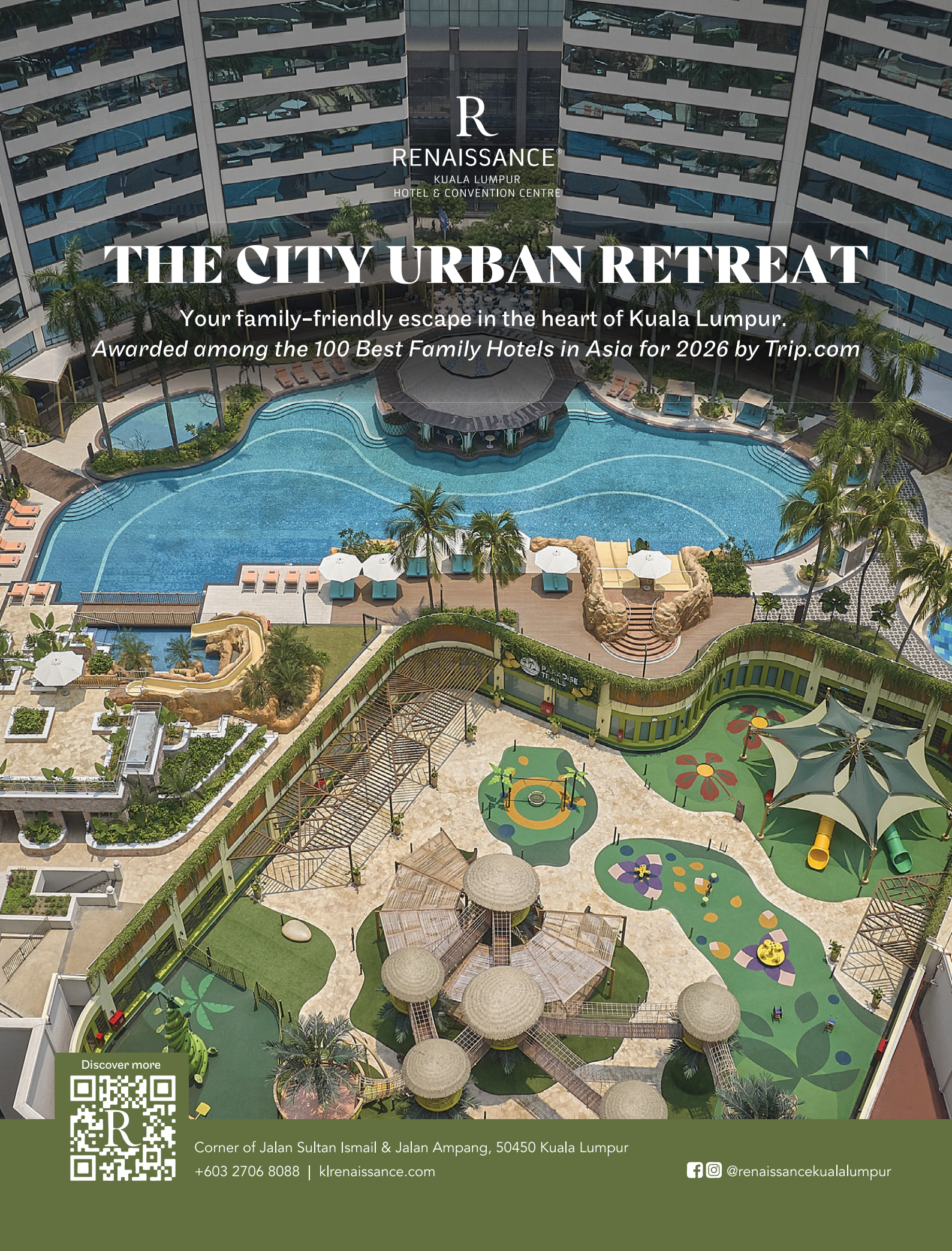
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Selangor

Arrive with confidence

Moving to a new country for university can be daunting, and having someone help you from the moment you land makes a difference. **Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS)** is there to help with student visas, immigration, transport, airport transfers and all-important first steps towards campus life. The agency, which promotes Malaysia as an international education destination, has just won the Student Support Award at The PIONEER Awards 2026, widely regarded as the "Oscars of international education". Look out for its International Student Arrival Centre at KLIA, which operates 24/7 to support international students on arrival. educationmalaysia.gov.my





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Kuala Lumpur

A campus of culture



Malaysia's story is written in many languages, cultures and histories, and one of the best places to see those threads come together is at **Universiti Malaya**. Turning 121 this year, the Kuala Lumpur campus has been part of the country's story since its beginnings in Singapore in 1905, before moving to its present home in 1962.

Now ranked 56th in the world, UM has educated generations of Malaysians, including five former prime ministers, ministers, judges and technocrats who have carried its influence far beyond its gates. Its anniversary theme, UM121: Weaving the Future, feels apt for an institution that has long connected local knowledge with the wider world.

That outlook runs across the university, from the Universiti Malaya Business School, where students are taught to navigate complexity and lead responsibly, to disciplines ranging from medicine and law to engineering and the arts. Their approach reflects Malaysia itself: diverse, layered and constantly evolving.



For travellers, there's plenty to explore beyond its lecture halls. The campus is home to several museums, including the Museum of Asian Art, Malay Ethnographic Museum, Medical Museum and Museum of Zoology, plus a Botanical Garden and leafy lakeside grounds. It makes for an easy afternoon detour from central Kuala Lumpur, and a chance to see a quieter, greener side of the city while discovering a place that has shaped Malaysia for more than a century. um.edu.my





The recipe behind the reputation

Loyal diners have trusted Village Park Restaurant's nasi lemak for 24 years, and now you can take its essence home in a jar

Plenty of restaurants earn a following. Village Park Restaurant has kept one since 2002. Founder Dato Sri Dr Mohd Shamil Ngoh Abdullah attributes this loyalty to a stubborn kind of consistency. Every plate of nasi lemak should taste the way it did the last time you came. This is why young families now bring their own children, and why those who moved overseas still head here first on their return.

Same plate, every time

That means no shortcuts, even as costs rise. The anchovies are blue-

eyed, the peanuts first grade and the cucumbers premium. Nothing is recycled and nothing is left over, and prices stay within reach of everyday diners. Dato Sri Shamil still cooks the sambal himself.

Signature flavours, now in a jar

That same discipline has now travelled beyond the dining room. Customers abroad have been telling Dato Sri Shamil how much they miss this nasi lemak when they're away. So Village Park, with ITP Foods, has bottled four staples into its first retail range.



Sambal petai, a chilli relish with stink beans, and *sambal ikan bilis*, its anchovy cousin, is made from fresh chillies and onions. The signature *kaya*, a coconut jam, is slow-cooked for around eight hours with fragrant pandan leaves, eggs and coconut milk, with a Musang King durian version for those who like their spreads bolder. There are no artificial preservatives, colouring or flavouring in any of them.

A souvenir worth carrying

If you're visiting Malaysia over the holidays, skip the generic souvenir aisle and get these jars for family back home or for yourself. They are gifts that taste like the trip itself, long after the festive season ends. The range is also available at the restaurant and selected Village Grocer outlets, with the Musang King Durian Kaya sold at selected outlets only.

Village Park Restaurant is open daily from 6.30am–5.30pm; 5 Jln SS 21/37, Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya.

Langkawi

Time for a reset

End the year on a quieter note at **Four Seasons Langkawi**, where The Geo Spa's mangrove setting frames everything from sound healing and hammock sessions to family spa treatments. New wellness immersions run from one to seven nights, while nature-led activities offer a more active reset, from mangrove safaris to cycling through villages and rice fields. [@fslangkawi](#)



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Malaysia

Drawing good fortune

Deepavali, meaning “row of lights” in Sanskrit, is celebrated on 8 November with centuries-old traditions and a message of hope. In Malaysia, homes are lit with *kuthu vilakku* oil lamps, while colourfully drawn *kolam* are believed to ward off negative energy. Families gather for oil baths, temple prayers, festive feasts and Deepavali bazaars.



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Penang

Literary speaking

Come curious and stay for the conversations. From 27–29 November, **George Town Literary Festival** brings writers, poets, translators and artists together to explore what makes a city truly cosmopolitan. Check out the line-up for programmes featuring National Laureate Muhammad Haji Salleh and novelists such as Tan Twan Eng. [georgetownlitfest.com](#)





Where sweetness meets nostalgia

Cili Kampung brings familiar local flavours into one kampung-inspired dessert

Sweetness on ice and everything nice, that's what Bukit Kelapa is made of. One of Cili Kampung's well-loved desserts is inspired by familiar kampung flavours, layering coconut ice cream, trickles of caramel-rich Gula Melaka and just enough nuts and honeycomb crunch to make you slow down between spoonfuls.

Ingredients like coconut and Gula Melaka have always turned up in traditional sweets sold at morning markets and drinks served at gatherings.

This familiarity is what Cili Kampung has built its name on. It began as a family kitchen in Langkawi, Kedah, cooking authentic Malay cuisine by hand with fresh, local produce. Its meals are

“

Bukit Kelapa is a genuine taste of Malaysia's food culture, and exactly what Visit Malaysia 2026 invites the world to discover”

built for sharing, and every diner at the table, whether local or visiting, eats like family. The same warmth and hospitality can now be found at the heart of Kuala Lumpur and in Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

With that kind of love and care, it's no wonder Bukit Kelapa feels like nostalgia wrapped in something decadent. It's proof that the most memorable dishes don't need to be complicated. They just need sincerity and the kind of patience passed down through generations of home cooking.

Bukit Kelapa is a genuine taste of Malaysia's food culture, and exactly what Visit Malaysia 2026 invites the world to discover.

After all, meaningful travel doesn't always start at a tourist landmark. Sometimes, it starts with a bowl of Bukit Kelapa and the curiosity to learn about its origins. The story behind it might tell you more about a place than any guidebook could.



Maybank Credit Card and Charge Cardmembers can enjoy a complimentary Bukit Kelapa with a minimum spend of RM250 in a single receipt. Offer is valid at participating Cili Kampung outlets across the Klang Valley and at AEON Mall Kota Bharu.



Sultan Abu Bakar
State Mosque



Sheraton Johor Bahru

Johor

Neighbourhood guide: Johor Bahru

More than Singapore's neighbour and one of the world's busiest land crossings, Johor Bahru's rising dining scene makes it a destination in its own right

❶ Hiap Joo Bakery

Established in 1919, this family-run bakery draws queues for its fluffy banana cake, baked in a traditional wood-fired oven. Grab a warm box alongside its old-school buns, breads and pastries. **13 Jln Tan Hiok Nee**

❷ Bev C and Sweet Blossom Coffee

Also on Jalan Tan Hiok Nee, Bev C is a multi-label select store stocking independent Malaysian designers including Behati and Motoguo. Sweet Blossom Coffee Roasters opened its second outlet

here in October 2025, serving hand-brewed filter coffee and espresso from beans sourced through blind tasting and roasted in-house. **54 and 56 Jln Tan Hiok Nee; @bevc_multilabel @sweetblossomcoffee**

③ Restoran Kacang Pool Haji

Kacang pool is a dish of fava beans slow-cooked with minced meat and spices, topped with a fried egg, diced green chilli and thick toast. The hearty Johor favourite is a staple at this long-running local institution. **12 Jln Dato Jaafar, Taman Dato Onn**

④ Taman Melodies

About 15 minutes from the city centre, this residential neighbourhood has become a notable stop for JB's independent food scene. Nooduo by Kioku serves handmade noodles in

French-style consommé from a converted car workshop, while Chaos is a cosy, candlelit spot known for handmade pasta and seasonal dishes.

13 Jln Dedap, @nooduonoodlebar; 73 Jln Kemuning, @orderinchaos.my

⑤ Binchotan JB

With just 12 seats arranged around a counter, Binchotan offers an intimate, modern Japanese omakase experience centred on binchotan charcoal. The menu takes a creative approach to Japanese cooking, using seasonal ingredients and unexpected combinations. **15 Jln Kuning 2, Taman Pelangi; binchotanjb.com**

⑥ Solene

Perched on level 26 of SKS Tower, Solene is a rooftop restaurant with sweeping



Kacang pool

views of Johor Bahru and the Straits. Expect Latin-inspired flavours, live music and captivating performances – perfect for a lively night out. **Jln Storey, Bukit Senyum; @solene_jb**

⑦ Sheraton Johor Bahru

The first Sheraton in Johor Bahru opened in October 2025 in SKS Tower, a mixed-use development that brought new life to



A dish from Nooduo



the long-abandoned Pacific Mall site in Bukit Senyum. With direct access to SKS City Mall, the hotel sits near the Causeway, making it a convenient base for exploring the old town, heritage streets and residential dining neighbourhoods. **Jln Storey, Bukit Senyum; marriott.com**

⑧ Sultan Abu Bakar State Mosque

Built between 1892 and 1900, Johor's state mosque sits on a hill overlooking the Straits of Johor. Its distinctive architecture combines Victorian and Moorish influences, with four minarets modelled on 19th-century British clock towers and Roman-style columns inside. **Jln Gertak Merah**

Kens Apothecary

17

Season's pickings

A little something for everyone: festive stays, Christmas shows, gift ideas and feasts worth gathering for

Langkawi

❶ An enchanted Christmas

This year-end, **Temple Tree Resort Langkawi** gets into the festive spirit with a Christmas Eve Dinner on 24 December and an Enchanted Christmas Lunch the next day. Expect carols, a live band and a special appearance by

Santa Claus. Set among beautifully restored, century-old heritage homes in a coconut tree plantation, the resort also introduces new luxury suites as part of its Ipoh House Collection for an enchanted island escape. templetreetree.com.my

Pahang

❷ A taste of Old England

Cameron Highlands Resort welcomes the festive season with its Christmas Tree Lighting Weekend, from 20 to 22 November. This year, Old England takes centre stage. Sample chef Nathan's recreation of centuries-old Maids of Honour tarts served

during English Afternoon Tea at the historic Jim Thompson Tea Room, alongside scones, clotted cream and savouries. cameronhighlandsresort.com

Selangor

❸ A tropical Nutcracker

A Yuletide classic gets a Malaysian makeover as **Ballet Theatre Malaysia** presents *The Nutcracker: Adventures in a Tropical Forest* at D Theatre Malaysia, Hextar World, from 11–13 and 18–20 December. Swapping snow for rainforest, Clara and her magical Nutcracker doll encounter the Monkey King, alongside



Cameron Highlands Resort



tapirs, mousedeer, hornbills and tigers. Choreographed by JS Wong with a local creative team, the production retains Tchaikovsky's score while refreshing the 1892 classic. [@ballettheatre_my](#)

Malaysia

④ Gift a little glow

For beauty lovers, Christmas is the perfect excuse to indulge or surprise someone with a gift. At **Kens Apothecary**, the much-anticipated Advent Calendar returns, with exclusive skincare, fragrance and beauty treasures behind each door. For more festive finds, **Sephora Malaysia** has an extensive selection of makeup, skincare, fragrance and beauty favourites,

from stocking stuffers to statement gifts.

[@kensapothecary](#)
[@sephoramy](#)

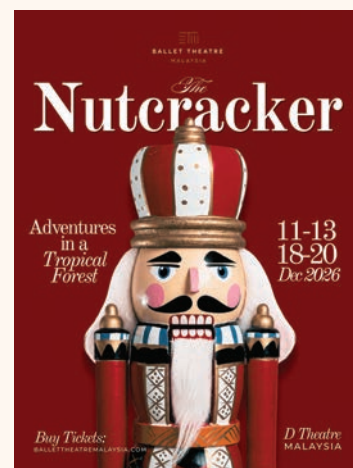
Kuala Lumpur

⑤ Cacao love

For a distinctly Malaysian Christmas gift, **Kakao Origin's** flagship chocolate drink bar at Kompleks Dayabumi offers single-origin cacao drinks and limited-edition bars in batik and songket packaging created with local designers. Chocolate flights feature cacao from Pahang, Perak and Sabah, while Terengganu Songket's handwoven installations floating above the tasting bar add a touch of Malaysian heritage. [kakaorigin.com](#)



Temple Tree
Resort Langkawi



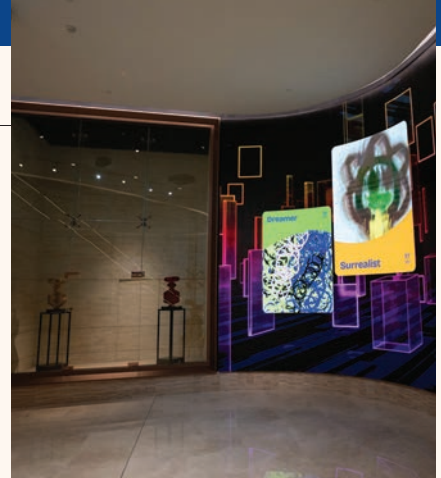
Kuala Lumpur

⑥ Gobble, gobble

This Thanksgiving, five-star hotel **EQ** brings its signature roasted turkey to the table, prepared by the culinary team for sharing. The turkey, sourced from Russia and supplied by Damate, is roasted to order with chestnut stuffing, roasted potatoes, cranberry sauce, giblet gravy and mixed vegetables. At Étoile, a BBQ buffet dinner takes place on 28 November, followed by a BBQ buffet brunch the next day. [@eqkualalumpur](#)



EQ Hotel



lived experiences and evolving identity through the eyes of some of Malaysia's most celebrated artists, offering a compelling reflection on what it means to be Malaysian today.

Art in action

Beyond the exhibitions, First Glimpse presents workshops, creative activities and conversations for audiences of all ages. Whether joining an art-making session, participating in a discussion or simply exploring the space, visitors are invited to experience art as an engaging and accessible part of everyday life.

Completing the experience is the GALERI Shop pop-up kiosk, offering exclusive merchandise inspired by the gallery's architectural and visual identity, providing a lasting keepsake of GALERI PETRONAS' journey.

The next chapter

As an anchor tenant at Ombak KLCC, GALERI PETRONAS is reintroducing itself to the public while offering a peek at the destination it is becoming. Through First Glimpse, the gallery invites visitors to discover its evolving identity before its permanent home opens at the end of 2027.

First Glimpse runs at Ombak KLCC until March 2027. Visit galeripetronas.com for more information.

Where art finds a new home

GALERI PETRONAS is moving to Ombak KLCC, and First Glimpse lets visitors watch it settle in

Kuala Lumpur's arts landscape is entering an exciting new chapter. Before GALERI PETRONAS opens the doors to its new home at Ombak KLCC at the end of 2027, visitors can experience what lies ahead through First Glimpse, a special activation running from August 2026 to March 2027.

First Glimpse offers an early introduction to GALERI PETRONAS' evolving vision as one of Malaysia's leading advocates for contemporary art. It invites both seasoned art enthusiasts and curious newcomers to discover how the gallery connects people, ideas and culture through meaningful artistic experiences.

A tapestry of stories

At the heart of the activation is the Germinate Power exhibition zone, where engaging displays and interactive experiences introduce the gallery's journey, aspirations, and role within Malaysia's and Southeast Asia's arts ecosystem.

Visitors can also view selected works from the PETRONAS Art Collection and the Aliya and Farouk Khan (AFK) Collection. The featured exhibition, "Memory and the Malaysian Identity", explores the nation's shared histories,



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Rendered photo of
BCKK expansion

Kuching has more going on than you think

From live entertainment and sporting events to international congresses, Sarawak's capital is becoming a destination for memorable gatherings

Kuching is well known for its food, culture and riverfront. But there's another side to the city that visitors may not be as familiar with. People come to Kuching for very different reasons – entertainment, business, sport, research and major international events.

One weekend, crowds might be cheering at a concert. The next, the same venue could be welcoming athletes, exhibitors or scientists from around the world.

At Borneo Convention Centre Kuching (BCKK), that variety is already part of the calendar. Beyond conferences and exhibitions, its halls

have welcomed concerts, sporting events, banquets and celebrations of all sizes.

The benefits extend beyond the venue. Every event brings visitors into Kuching, filling hotel rooms, supporting local businesses and introducing new audiences to Sarawak. For some, it's a first opportunity to explore the city or stay a little longer.

A different crowd, a different conversation

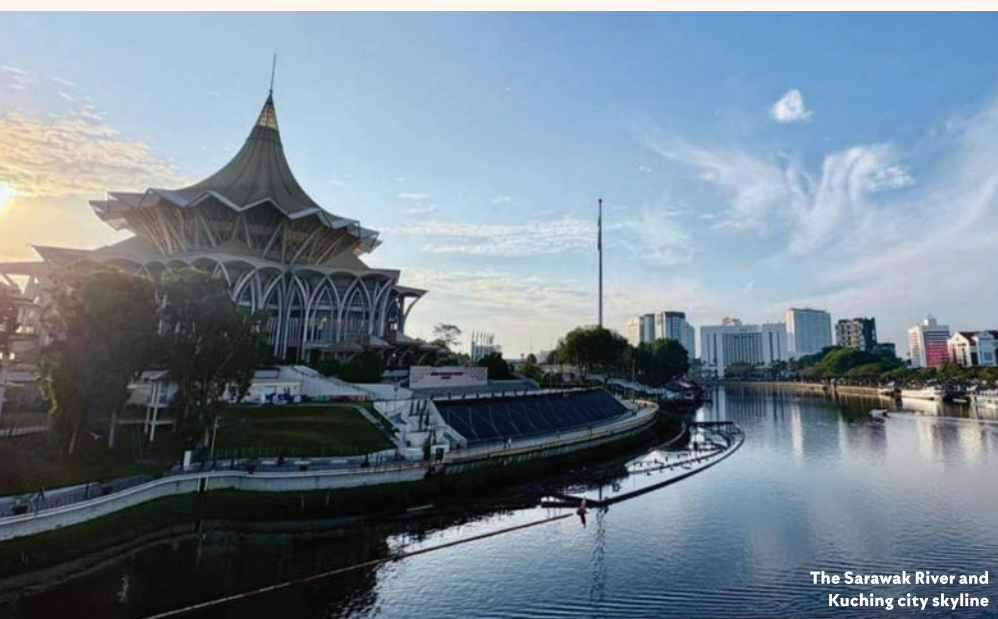
In 2027, BCKK will host muay thai and taekwondo competitions during the 34th SEA Games, bringing regional sporting action to a venue more commonly associated with conferences.

The calendar also reflects Sarawak's growing industries. EIC Connect Energy

Borneo arrives in February, followed by International Energy Week in July, bringing together companies, investors and industry leaders from across the energy sector.

Healthcare, science and public policy will also feature prominently, with international gatherings covering neuroanaesthesia and critical care, human genetics and science advice to governments.

More than just entries on an events calendar, these gatherings create opportunities for local industries, universities, researchers and professional communities to connect with international counterparts.



The Sarawak River and Kuching city skyline

What an event leaves behind

The value of an event isn't always measured by attendance.

At the 51st IUPAC World Polymer Congress (MACRO 2026), which welcomed more than 800 delegates, Sarawak's first Zero Food Waste to Landfill pilot demonstrated how international events can make a difference locally.

Carried out with Business Events Sarawak, the Malaysian Institute of Chemistry, Conference Partners Asia and BCKK, the initiative achieved 92% landfill diversion.

Suitable surplus food was redistributed locally, including

to Kuching Community Social Support Centre, while other food waste was composted.

The initiative demonstrated what can happen when organisations work together, with lessons now being carried into future events.

Making room for bigger ideas

As Kuching attracts a wider range of events, BCKK is preparing for its next chapter.

Targeted to be operational in 2028, its expansion will connect the existing centre with a new adjoining facility. The integrated events campus will feature two main

“

BCKK was purpose-built as part of Sarawak's wider development ambitions, and its impact should reach well beyond the venue itself”

halls, one multipurpose hall and 34 meeting rooms, accommodating up to 15,000 people at a time.

Beyond accommodating bigger crowds, the expansion will offer greater flexibility to host international exhibitions, congresses, sporting competitions, concerts and celebrations, including several events taking place simultaneously.

Among the major international gatherings already confirmed for Kuching in 2028 is the IWA World Water Congress & Exhibition, which will bring thousands of water professionals and companies to Sarawak.

“BCKK was purpose-built as part of Sarawak's wider development ambitions, and its impact should reach well beyond the venue itself,” says David Emir Bareng, COO of BCKK.

As more events come to Kuching, there is also an opportunity to encourage new hotels, hospitality businesses and other developments around the Isthmus, strengthening the wider destination.

For event attendees, Kuching offers more than what happens inside the venue, from local flavours and cultural experiences to a different side of Borneo waiting to be discovered.

And for organisers with an idea for a conference, exhibition, concert or sporting event, Kuching might just be the place to bring it to life.

The next big reason to visit Kuching could be yours. Event enquiries: sales.bckk@bckk.com.my



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Out of the shadows

Through contemporary characters, pop culture and multimedia, Fusion Wayang Kulit has taken Kelantanese shadow puppetry into new territory, while keeping its traditional foundations alive

BY DIAN PASQUINAL KAUR

Fusion can be a great lifeline for tradition or the point from which tradition begins to lose its identity. The challenge is knowing where innovation ends and dilution begins. ➡

IMAGES: COURTESY OF FUSION WAYANG KULIT

Clockwise from left:

Batman; a *Venom* wayang kulit show in a cinema; Pak Dain and Tintoy Chuo (standing, centre to right) at a *Star Wars* celebration in Japan; the master puppeteer and musicians behind the screen; Ed Sheeran; a Seri Rama character in the traditional wayang kulit style

Previous page: *Star Wars* wayang kulit featuring Darth Vader



Fusion Wayang Kulit (FWK), the award-winning Malaysian creative collective founded by Tintoy Chuo and Take Huat, has managed to gracefully walk this line. Since 2012, the duo has pushed wayang kulit, a traditional Malaysian form of shadow puppetry, into unexpected territory, blending contemporary characters, stories and multimedia with an art form rooted in centuries-old conventions.

For the uninitiated, wayang kulit is a form of theatre in which a Tok Dalang, or master puppeteer, manipulates intricately carved leather puppets behind a screen using light, movement and storytelling to bring the characters to life, while live musicians create rhythm and atmosphere.

FWK's repertoire ranges from *Star Wars* and DC superheroes to PlayStation characters and Japanese mecha, including what is believed to be the world's first transformable wayang kulit, inspired by the *Macross* anime series. Its Valkruda Seta puppet can shift between two forms using the thin wooden rods that support it: a fusion of the anime's Valkyrie concept and Garuda, a mythical bird in Kelantanese folklore.

Chuo would never have imagined that he would one day be championing a fading art form. The sought-after character designer admits he knew little about Malaysian wayang kulit when he first began exploring it in 2012.

The idea surfaced when his good friend and art curator Si Juan invited him to participate in an art exhibition at Publika Shopping Gallery. Chuo returned to a concept he had shelved in 2007, this time wondering if he



“

FWK's repertoire ranges from *Star Wars* and DC superheroes to PlayStation characters and Japanese mecha”

could use the visual language of wayang kulit to tell stories through a universe he knew intimately.

A lifelong sci-fi fan, he started with Darth Vader and a Stormtrooper. The rest of the *Star Wars* cast soon followed.

In the beginning

There was, however, one small problem: Chuo had no formal training in wayang kulit.

Pressed for time, he turned to art director Take Huat. Together, they began learning the tradition together through whatever they could find, from YouTube and

Google to a book they discovered at Kompleks Kraf Kuala Lumpur.

“That became our blueprint,” Chuo says. The book gave them their first real understanding of the visual language, construction and distinctive identity of Malaysian wayang kulit.

Their search eventually led them to Muhammad Dain Othman, better known as Pak Dain, a 13th-generation accredited Tok Dalang of traditional Kelantanese wayang kulit. He became FWK's main master puppeteer, advising and approving the crafts and stories the collective produces. “I'll say he is the most important person in our team,” says Chuo.



Cool culture

For Chuo, understanding that tradition was essential before he could begin pushing its boundaries.

He says, "The fundamentals of traditional wayang kulit must be maintained, such as design and costumes, how the puppet stands and moves, how the performance is conducted and how the storytelling is done."

That foundation has allowed FWK to take the art form somewhere few had attempted before. Chuo's choice of contemporary characters is deliberate: his primary audience has always been younger people familiar with science fiction and pop culture. This familiarity gives them a way to access an art form they might otherwise find distant.

The same idea has carried wayang kulit beyond Malaysia, giving international audiences a point of connection even when they know little about Malaysian culture.

"Nobody had really done shadow puppetry this way before. We were

crazy enough to try it. It wasn't easy because we didn't have much references to look at. We were creating something unique, and in a way, we have become a reference for others," says Chuo.

But experimentation still has its limits. "Whenever we introduce something new, we ask ourselves: Does it break the rules? Does it go against the principles of wayang kulit? If it doesn't, we can explore it. But there are lines we don't cross," says Chuo.

Into the light

FWK was in Melbourne in August for Tourism Malaysia's Visit Malaysia Year roadshow dinner before returning home for a special Merdeka Day performance at the new Ombak KLCC mall. The collective is also continuing its long-term collaboration with Sony PlayStation Studios, having already created a number of wayang kulit

puppets based on its game characters, with more currently in development.

Its growing list of collaborators – including Hermès, Telekom Malaysia, OPPO and National Geographic – suggests that the art form is finding relevance far beyond the traditional stage. "These local and international brands see the value and potential in what we

do. They come to us for projects, from Merdeka Day and Hari Raya campaigns to new product launches. To me, this shows that wayang kulit has a promising future and I want the next generation to understand and appreciate it."

There are about 20 countries around the world with traditions of shadow puppetry, each with its own distinct forms and styles. "I really hope more Malaysians will learn to recognise the differences and take pride in our culture," says Chuo.





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HOTELS

A grand old time

Lanna craftsmanship, a rooftop perch above the city and a stupa at its heart give this Chiang Mai address plenty of personality

BY ELIZABETH SOONG

A hotel with a sense of history. Just a short walk from Tha Phae Gate and close to the city's night bazaar, **InterContinental Chiang Mai The Mae Ping** is built around a 600-year-old stupa, with Lanna craftsmanship woven into its contemporary interiors. The result feels polished but not overly formal, with plenty of character. Hong's Sky Bar is an easy place to settle in as evening falls, with views towards Doi Suthep. There's more to come, too: its new wing Khlong Mae Kha Village, opening in late 2026, will add 49 rooms and suites, including pool-access rooms and private hot tubs, offering a more relaxed, residential stay. chiangmai.intercontinental.com



CITY GUIDE

Paris, anyway

Shirk the guilt over doing touristy things.
Here's how to do it properly, clichés and all

BY JIM YUSUFF JASMY



La Samaritaine

Everyone has an idea of Paris, the City of Love, whether they've visited or not. Wide boulevards flanked by Haussmannian buildings, bistros with matching awnings and chairs, and the Seine flowing through the city, a witness to a thousand proposals along its banks and bridges. For me, Paris is all of this and more.

No Paris itinerary skips the Louvre. But once you've spent half a day fighting the crowds for a glimpse of the *Mona Lisa* – or just to stand in the Galerie d'Apollon, scene of the 2025 jewel heist – it's worth spending your attention elsewhere. Across the river sits Musée d'Orsay, a grand building that is a work of art in itself. Originally a railway station built for the 1900 World's Fair, it was converted into a museum in 1986 and now houses one of the world's finest collections of Impressionist art, including Claude Monet's *Poppies* and Édouard Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass*.

One of the building's best features is the giant clock windows on the fifth floor, which offer an unbeatable view across the Seine to the Tuileries Garden and up to the Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Montmartre. Further down the river, the Grand Palais and Petit Palais round out the museum trail, each with permanent and temporary exhibitions and admission prices that vary by show.



Jardin du Palais-Royal



View from the Musée d'Orsay clock window



The ever popular Angelina

“

Pick up a pain au chocolat or their signature escargot pistache-chocolat, then walk three minutes and sit on the banks of Canal Saint-Martin to people-watch”

Those with a sweet tooth will fight to snag tables at the ever-popular Angelina or Carette, or settle for the simpler Mamiche. Seek out any bakery that has been crowned best butter croissant of the year by the Greater Paris Bakers' Union; in 2026, that's Boulangerie du Sentier. All are worth the queue, but my favourite is Du Pain et des Idées in the 10th arrondissement. Pick up a pain au chocolat or their signature escargot pistache-chocolat, then walk three minutes and sit on the banks of Canal Saint-Martin to people-watch.

A trip to Paris is incomplete without a little bit (or a lot) of shopping. From the luxury brands on Avenue Montaigne to the niche boutiques along Rue du Faubourg, the vintage shops in Le Marais and the city's famed department stores, walking away empty-handed takes real discipline. Most visitors flock to the flagship Galeries Lafayette on Boulevard Haussmann, a solid choice for its panoramic rooftop views and the stunning Art Nouveau stained-glass dome in the central atrium. If your budget allows, try La Samaritaine by the Seine or Le Bon Marché on the Left Bank instead. Each department store has its own personality, so find the one that matches yours.

Once you've shopped and eaten your way through the city and all you want is a break, grab a café au lait, another pastry, maybe a book, and sit in one of the public squares or parks scattered around Paris. Place des Vosges and Jardin du Palais-Royal are my personal favourites. No one will judge you, and if they do, c'est la vie!



Mamiche bakery



Canal Saint-Martin



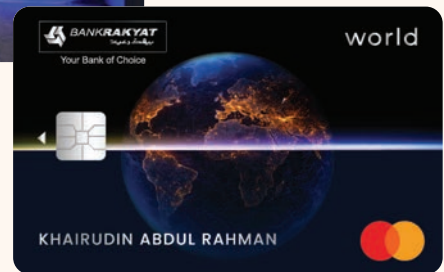
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From left: Bank Rakyat Chief Retail Banking Officer Khairudin Abdul Rahman; Mastercard Country Manager (Malaysia and Brunei) Beena Pothen; Bank Rakyat Chairman Datuk Mohd Irwan Mohd Mubarak; Group Chief Executive Officer Ahmad Shahril Mohd Shariff; and Mastercard Vice President and Account Manager Devesh Kuwadekar, at the official launch of the Bank Rakyat World Mastercard Credit Card-i

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CITY GUIDE

Made in Guangzhou

Explore the city through its
Cantonese flavours, creative
neighbourhoods and local rhythms

BY SOPHIE STEINER



Hairy fig



Hope & Sesame's
streetfront façade

In the heart of Guangzhou, behind the understated façade of a Cantonese *cha chaan teng* (Hong Kong-style café) is Hope & Sesame. Since opening in 2016, co-founders Andrew Ho and Bastien Ciocca have watched the neighbourhood around them evolve, from a quiet residential area into one of the city's creative hubs. Their decade in Guangzhou has given them a close-up view of a city that's increasingly finding new ways to express its Cantonese heritage while drawing on its traditions.

Hope & Sesame was named Best Bar in Asia 2026, but after their time in Guangzhou, Ho and Ciocca have plenty to say about the city itself, from its evolving creative scene and Cantonese food culture to its neighbourhoods and local rhythms.

Where old meets new

After graduating from École Hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland, Ho and Ciocca came to Guangzhou with the aim of creating a space that combined creativity

with five-star service. "Guangzhou gave us the safe space to experiment without judgement," says Ho. Unlike established regional hubs such as Hong Kong and Singapore, Guangzhou offered a more grounded environment with room to develop something over time.

"When we opened, Dongshankou was a quiet, historic residential area, which taught us how to respect the local rhythm," Ho notes. "As it developed into the vibrant creative hub it is today, it pushed us to become a cultural bridge."

That gradual transformation has shaped their own approach to the city. For Ho, Guangzhou's slower pace has also created opportunities for young

talent to develop, allowing people to find their footing and grow alongside the neighbourhood.

Today, Dongshankou is a mix of heritage architecture, independent businesses, galleries and creative spaces, yet its original character remains. Wandering its streets offers a different view of Guangzhou, a city often associated with commerce and industry.

A taste of Cantonese culture

Food is one of the most immediate ways to understand Guangzhou. The city's culinary traditions are woven into daily life, from morning yum cha to neighbourhood noodle shops and late-night *dai pai dongs* (open-air restaurants). For Ho and Ciocca, local ingredients and traditional flavours have also been a constant source of inspiration for their offerings.

They have watched Guangzhou become increasingly confident in taking familiar Cantonese traditions and giving them contemporary expression. "Our progression reflects a broader shift: moving from adopting Western trends to confidently exporting authentic local culture," Ho explains.

The local market remains an especially rich source of ideas. Humble ingredients such as hairy fig, a fruit commonly found in southern China, reveal the depth of flavours that can be found in everyday Cantonese cooking. For Ho and Ciocca, understanding where ingredients come from, and how they are used, is an important part of understanding the city itself.

Beyond the landmarks

While most first-time travellers often head straight for major sights such as Canton Tower, the Pearl River or Beijing Road, Ho and Ciocca believe the city's character is better discovered in its local wet markets,



Canton Tower



Beijing Road

neighbourhood yum cha spots and late-night eateries, particularly around Yuexiu District, the historic heart of Guangzhou.

"Whether it's sitting in an old-school tea house for morning dim sum or sharing sizzling wok-fried dishes at a bustling midnight eatery, these places are where you genuinely experience the authentic rhythm, gastronomic culture and daily life of Guangzhou," says Ho.

For those with 24 hours to explore, they suggest starting with morning yum cha at Yongli Fandian or Cantonese diner fare at Changlai Xiaoju, followed by a stroll through Luhu Lake Park. Later, stop for herbal tea at Gufang Liangcha or something sweet at Cantonese dessert shop Fenfang Tianpin.

A visit to a bustling local market for seasonal fruit is another must, before sitting down for a bowl of wonton noodles at Enning Liu Fuji or soup dumplings at Shi Hui Li Xiaolongbao. For those with bigger appetites, a Shunde-style seafood spread at Yuyi Ruyi makes for a fitting final meal, followed by late-night braised chicken hotpot at a buzzing *dai pai dong* such as Jilaorong.



Luhu Lake Park

“

Our progression reflects a broader shift: moving from adopting Western trends to confidently exporting authentic local culture”



Andrew Ho and Bastien Ciocca



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EXPLORE

Linger a while in Surabaya

Let old markets, historic quarters and sumptuous street food lead the way in the East Java capital **BY ADILA FIRANI**



Jembatan Merah

A day in Surabaya can be as much about wandering as it is about ticking off landmarks. Start off with local food and the bustle of an old market, then follow the streets into historic trading quarters and heritage buildings. Pasar Atom makes an easy entry point into the heart of Indonesia's second-largest city.

Experience old Surabaya

Once an informal trading ground in Surabaya's Chinatown, Pasar Atom became a formal commercial centre in the 1970s. Today, it has two wings: the original building and the newer Pasar Atom Mall, added in 2007. The original, designed by architect Harjono Sigit, features a floating staircase, one of the first of its kind in Surabaya at the time. Food counters sit alongside fashion, textiles, jewellery and electronics, and even a rooftop swimming pool. Stop for *cakue* (fried dough fritters) or *bubur madura* (sweet porridge) before heading towards the old city.



Bubur madura



Explore Kota Lama in a Toerwagen

Immerse in history through the river

From Pasar Atom, cross Jembatan Merah into the old trading quarter. Built to connect the European settlement west of the Kalimas with the Chinese quarter to the east, the bridge still connects both sides today. Pause at the railing and look west towards Jalan Rajawali for Dutch-era trading houses lining the road.

Wander Kota Lama

Let the afternoon unfold in Kota Lama, where heritage buildings frame streets made for lingering. Along Jalan Rajawali, old façades meet open public spaces and cafés, with visitors stopping for photographs. Rather than rush between landmarks, let the streets lead the way. A 30- to 45-minute ride in a Toerwagen, a vintage-style car, is another way to see the sights, including the Jembatan Merah area and the De Javasche Bank, now the Bank Indonesia Museum. If you go on foot, follow Jalan Mliwis to Siropen, a syrup factory established in 1923. Stop by the Willemsplein Gift Shop for locally made keepsakes.

Follow the sounds of Chinatown into the night

As daylight fades, cross back over the river to Kya-Kya, the Chinatown food street on Jalan Kembang Jepun. Its name comes from the Hokkien word for strolling, fitting for a street that fills with food stalls on Friday to Sunday evenings from around 6pm. Look out for a Bian Lian performance, the traditional face-changing art of Sichuan opera, and the occasional bout of casual karaoke among older diners. After a day spent moving through markets, bridges, and heritage streets, Kya-Kya brings everything back to the simple pleasures of good food, conversation and lingering a little longer.



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Postcards from Seoul

Seoul-based journalist Grace Moon finds pockets of serenity and sources of inspiration in one of the world's busiest megacities

BY MATT C CRAWFORD

South Korea went through a remarkable postwar transformation. Within just a few decades, Seoul has largely been rebuilt into a major global hub. One of my favourite things about the city is its interconnectedness with the surrounding nature. Streams flow through the city centre, libraries are nestled in the mountains and outdoor plazas are filled with public seating.

I also love how the city offers such a wide range of transportation options. It's fantastic for pedestrians, and you can quite easily cycle from any part of Seoul into the beautiful countryside. Public transportation – especially the high-speed rail system – is excellent. When I'm spending time with friends in Seoul, the experience of travelling somewhere is just as enjoyable as the destination itself.

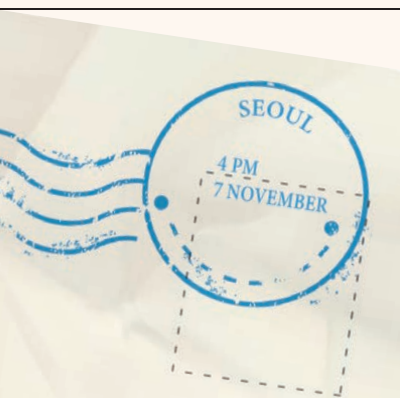
Dear Reader,

During my childhood, my family would fly from the Dallas suburbs to South Korea every few years to spend the summer with my grandparents. Under the scorching monsoon heat, my mother would bicker with shoppers at the market as she rummaged through piles of green chillies. That rambunctious energy of the past still lives on throughout the city, amid Seoul's growing number of lavish spas, modern cafes and futuristic architecture. I hope you'll experience the city's endearing side, as well as its jeong – the deep, unspoken sense of connection and warmth found in ordinary places and everyday interactions.

– Grace

330 Yeongdeu
Seoul 073





A relaxing day by the Han River



Gamja ongsimi (potato ball soup)

Seodong-ro
ngpo,
337



Anthracite Coffee



Kkwabaegi (twisted fried doughnuts)

Neighbourhood jaunts

I like to start the day at **Anthracite Coffee's** Seogyo-dong branch (11 World Cup-ro 12-gil; anthracitecoffee.com), near Mangwon Station. This atmospheric café occupies what was once a private residence with a garden. There are also plenty of laid-back cafés in trendy Yeonhui-dong, along with independent clothing designers and artists. On less busy days, I like to catch an indie film at **Laika Cinema** (18 Yeonhui-ro 8-gil; laikacinema.com), which has excellent acoustics. Sometimes, I also head further north to **Okcheonam** (1-38 Hongjimun-gil; okcheonam.com), a streamside temple where you'll find a stunning bodhisattva statue carved from rock.

Markets and comfort food

Many traditional markets are overcrowded these days, but **Dongnimmun Yeongcheon Market** (22 Dongnimmun-ro 3-gil) is still relatively quiet and pleasant. I've made it a routine to grab a bag of *kkwabaegi* (twisted fried doughnuts) in the morning.

In autumn, **Yeonseo Market** (850 Tongil-ro) is one of my go-to spots after a long hike in Bukhansan National Park. Nearby, you'll find **Bongpyeong Ongsimi Memil Kalguksu** (247 Yeonseo-ro), which serves *gamja ongsimi*, a thick, hearty soup with starchy balls made from freshly grated potatoes.

Closer to downtown at **Pobangteo Market** (43 Pobangteo-gil) is a restaurant run by a mother and son called **Eomeoniwa Adeul** (100-1

Hongseungjungang-ro), which serves the beloved Korean comfort food *dakbokkeumtang* (spicy braised chicken).

Mixology

Several of my favourite bars are located in an alleyway near Gyeongbokgung Station. **Cobbler** (16 Sajik-ro 12-gil; @cobbler_seoul) is a great spot for a relaxing *honsul*, or solo drink. Instead of offering a physical menu, one of the charismatic bartenders will ask about your flavour preferences to craft a personalised concoction. True to the bar's name, you'll also get to enjoy a slice of fresh cobbler filled with seasonal fruit.

Follow the flow

To get a sense of everyday life in Seoul, explore one of the streams that meanders through the city. **Hongjecheon Stream** (262-24 Yeonhui-ro, *Seodaemun-gu*) is great for all sorts of activities: strolling and daydreaming, running and cycling, duck-watching and even gazing at an artificial waterfall, which cascades over a rocky cliff. A classic way to end the day is by finding your own picnic spot at one of the parks along the Han River. Order some delivery food, like freshly fried chicken, and admire the majestic sunset.



Racing heart

Mia Sharizman's love of motorsport took him from Malaysia to Formula One, and he wants the next generation to follow



Renault Sport Academy featuring Mia Sharizman (standing, centre), Oscar Piastri (seated, far right)

The man who helped develop

Australian Formula One driver Oscar Piastri has never competed in a race himself. In fact, Mia Sharizman trained as a lawyer.

That didn't stop him from pursuing his passion for motorsport. His father instilled in him a love of watching sports, but motor racing has held a special place in his heart since primary school.

"My first recollection was when I went to the Batu Tiga Circuit in Shah Alam," Mia says of watching 500cc motorcycle races and the World Sportscar Championship. Over the years, he gained a deeper understanding of every aspect of motorsport and credits the people who taught him along the way.

From Dato' Azmi Murad, a former general manager of Sepang International Circuit, to Jeff Amin and the late F1 consultant Philippe Gurdjian, his mentors covered everything from managing people to the finest details of a race weekend.

His big break into F1 came in 2010, when

Malaysian entrepreneur Tony Fernandes launched Lotus Racing, later known as Caterham, and asked Mia to "help him out". The opportunity took him to the United Kingdom (UK), where he gained another mentor whom he still regards as an exceptional example of someone who knows how to inspire and lead others.

"I never called my superiors at that time 'bosses'; I called them mentors instead," he says. He would spend the next decade passing on what they had taught him.

It started at Caterham, where he signed drivers for its GP2 outfit, a rung below F1. In 2016, as head of Renault's new driver academy, Mia guided drivers from as young as eight to F1. Among them was Piastri, who won the FIA F3 and F2 titles in successive seasons.

Today, Mia advises young drivers and their families on their development, with an increasing focus on nurturing motorsport talent from Malaysia.

"There is so much talent coming from

“

We should all make a concerted effort to have more Malaysians on the world stage”

Malaysia in the motorsport field all over the world," he says. In 2026, Hakim Danish became Malaysia's first Moto3 winner in a decade. Zulfahmi Khairuddin was another milestone maker, becoming the country's first World Championship podium finisher.

Mia hopes to support emerging Malaysian talent by sharing his knowledge and experience. It's the kind of exchange MyHeart by TalentCorp was built for. Centred on mentoring and talent development, the platform links Malaysian professionals overseas with industries at home. It also builds partnerships around the world, just as Mia has done for nearly 30 years.

"We should all make a concerted effort to have more Malaysians on the world stage," he says. Ultimately, we look out for one another. *Kita jaga kita.*



Mia Sharizman with Jazeman Jaafar and Zulfahmi Khairuddin

Your people, all year round

The holidays bring reunions and promises to meet more often, while MyHeart by TalentCorp helps Malaysians abroad bridge those connections



The launch of the Returning Expert Programme (REP) Entry Permit Application Guideline at Salam Dari Malaysia Jakarta



Biruntha Mooruthi,
TalentCorp Group CEO



An Unplugged Session with the
Minister of Human Resources
(KESUMA), YB Dato' Sri
Ramanan Ramakrishnan

“Lepak again soon, ya?”

Any Malaysian will tell you how often they’ve heard this cheerful promise to hang out again. You might’ve made it a couple of times, too.

That’s the beauty of catching up with old friends and family, whether at home or abroad. The familiar stories and jokes bring back memories, making it feel as though no time has passed.

But life gets busy. As your calendar fills up, the next lepak drifts further and further away.

MyHeart by TalentCorp helps you keep that promise, by helping you stay connected to Malaysia and to one another long after the holidays are over.

Small world, big kampung

No matter where life takes you, there’s something comforting about finding a familiar connection to home. MyHeart helps Malaysians abroad find that sense of belonging, wherever they are.

Discover Malaysian diaspora associations and communities, and connect with fellow Malaysians

through events and initiatives. Build professional connections across industries, or catch up on the latest stories and updates from home.

What starts as a shared connection to Malaysia could grow into friendships and networks that make the world feel a little smaller.

Gotong-royong goes global

As you know, in any kampung, neighbours come together to lend a hand whenever it’s needed. That spirit of *gotong-royong* (community cooperation) doesn’t have to stop at the border.

MyHeart is a place where your friends can become collaborators, with professional opportunities to explore and room to offer your expertise and exchange ideas.

Together, what each person brings can add up to something bigger.

Everything you’ve learnt abroad is worth sharing, and MyHeart makes it possible to contribute to Malaysia’s growth from anywhere in the world.

All year, all heart

As the year draws to a close, raise your teh tarik to the people who made it special. Here’s to more connections with MyHeart in the year ahead. Lepak again soon, ya?



Visit myheart.my or scan the QR code to register and find your people across the world.



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Clockwise from left: YM Tengku Dato' Badlishah Shukri bin Tengku Ibrahim, CEO of TH Travel & Services, with the team; TH Travel & Services' CEO and GM Commercial receiving the Muslim-Friendly Tourism and Hospitality Assurance and Recognition (MFAR) award; YM Tengku Dato' Badlishah Shukri bin Tengku Ibrahim, CEO of TH Travel & Services, leading with a vision for innovation and service excellence

Crafting meaningful journeys rooted in care and inclusivity

TH Travel & Services welcomes everyone to experience its values-led hospitality



Picture sharing a steaming cup of tea in a historic town or watching the sunset over coastal trade routes with family, colleagues or fellow travellers. These moments turn sightseeing into meaningful encounters that bring people together.

For decades, TH Travel & Services has been synonymous with guiding Malaysian Muslims on Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages with care and reassurance. Today, the company is extending their warm hospitality to travellers of all ages, cultures and backgrounds.

This evolution opens up inclusive travel experiences for young explorers, families, corporate groups and retirees alike. Through cultural discovery and shared experiences, each journey aims to foster mutual respect and greater understanding.

"We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to discover the world through meaningful travel," says CEO YM Tengku Dato Badlishah Shukri Bin T Ibrahim.

"Travelling together does not require

everyone to share the same faith or perspective. It invites us to listen, learn and appreciate one another while remaining true to our own beliefs. A shared meal, a conversation with a local community or a visit to a heritage site can build understanding that lasts long after the journey ends."

As its offering expands, the organisation remains steadfast in its core values. Shariah-compliant travel remains central to its approach, including halal-certified food and careful safeguards against cross-contamination.

These arrangements support Muslim guests' religious needs while offering all travellers thoughtful, inclusive hospitality.

Driving this vision forward is an executive committee led by CEO YM Tengku Dato Badlishah Shukri Bin

Tengku Ibrahim, alongside Nik Zuraini Binti Zulkifli (head

of commercial), Saiful Alwi Bin Mat Desa (head of operations), Mazli Bin Abdul Malik (head of tours), Mohamad Firdaus Bin Ahmad Yatim (head of strategy), Helmi Bin Hassan Nordin (head of finance) and Mohd Faizal Irwan Bin Yusoff (head of flight management). Together, they ensure that sincerity, care and passion remain at the heart of every travel arrangement.

Rooted in faith and connected through culture, TH Travel & Services invites travellers to discover the world through meaningful experiences.

Explore diverse travel offerings at thts.com.my



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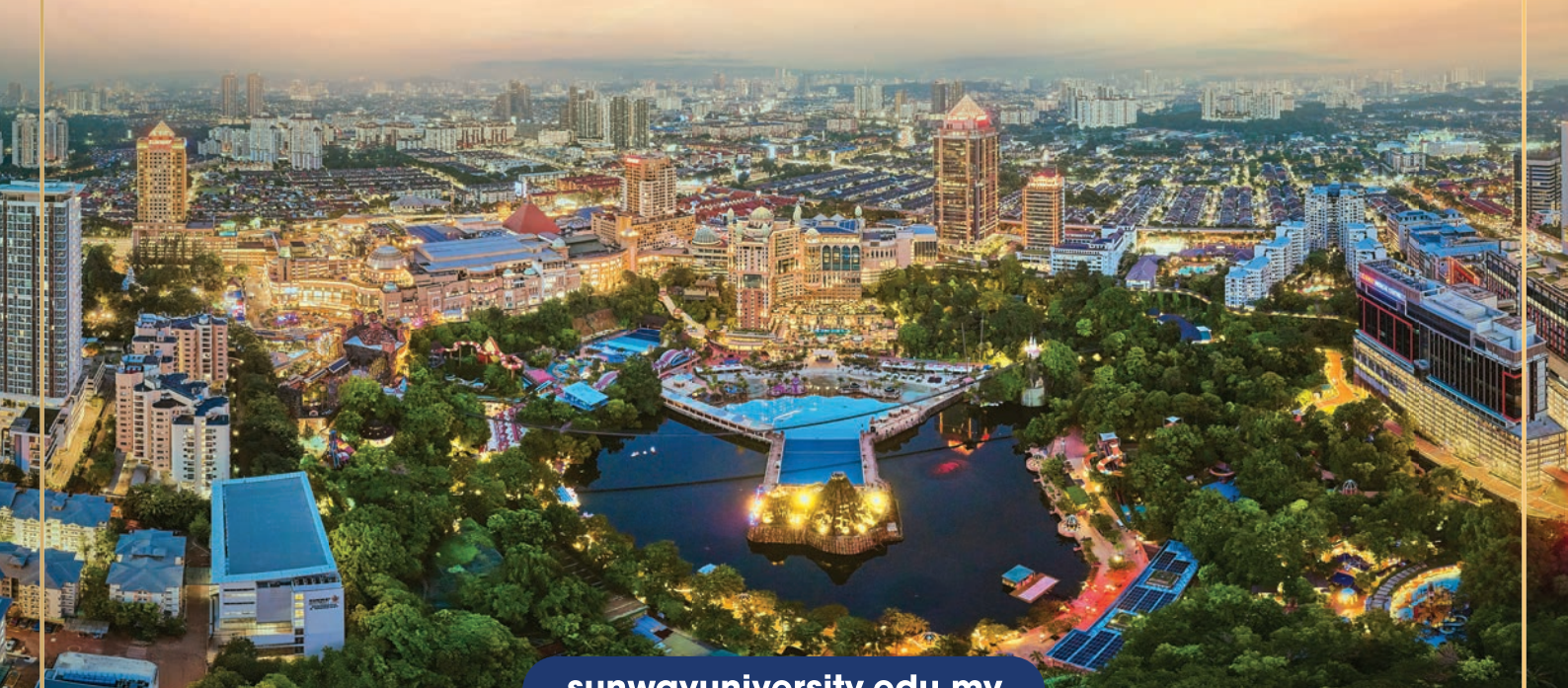
A CLASS ABOVE

Most Universities have a Campus, Sunway University Malaysia has a City

Studying abroad offers a transformative experience that builds global perspectives, independence and career-ready skills. Malaysia, known for its warm hospitality and cultural diversity, has become a hugely popular destination for international students seeking the finest overseas educational adventure.

Sunway University, located within the vibrant Sunway City, which offers a wide variety of world-class amenities at the heart of this proud nation. It is home to students from over 90 countries and partners with renowned global institutions such as Lancaster University, Arizona State University and Le Cordon Bleu Paris.

Sunway University, recognised by QS as the world's most improved institution, delivers world-class education in a dynamic, inclusive environment that goes far beyond the classroom.

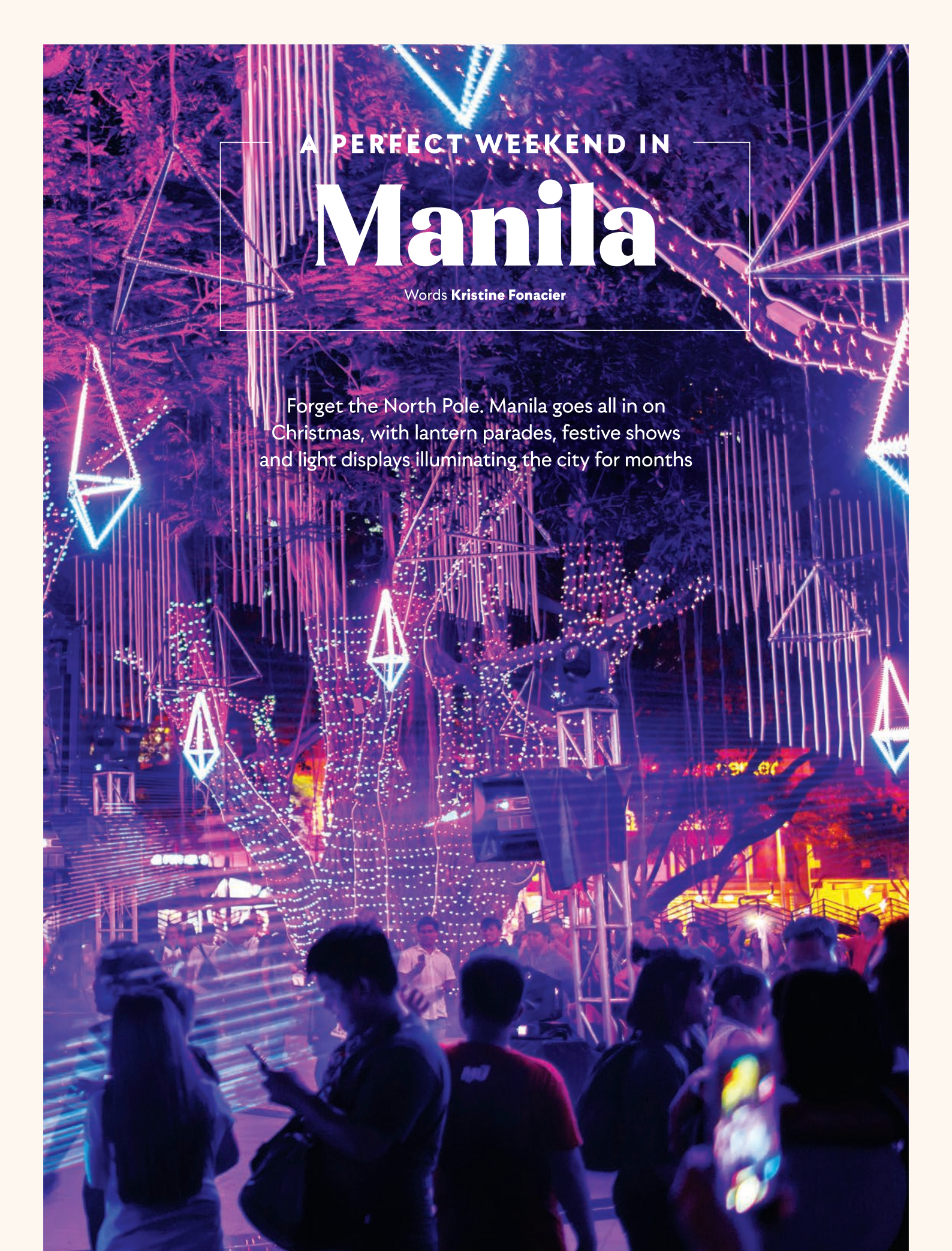


sunwayuniversity.edu.my



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A PERFECT WEEKEND IN

Manila

Words **Kristine Fonacier**

Forget the North Pole. Manila goes all in on Christmas, with lantern parades, festive shows and light displays illuminating the city for months

The Greater Manila Area, comprising Metro Manila and its neighbouring provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal, does Christmas in superlatives: biggest, brightest, busiest.

By December, Filipinos are already four months into celebrating the world's longest Christmas season, and the city is at peak cheer: streets glow with lanterns, holiday shows fill theatres and arenas, and neighbourhoods compete in light, music and spectacle. The season is taken seriously here, but rarely solemnly.

There is plenty beyond the festivities, too. Metro Manila layers Spanish-era fortifications, Chinese-Filipino communities, modern art and architecture, and some of the country's liveliest food cultures across a sprawling urban landscape. This three-day itinerary begins in the old city, moves through contemporary Manila and gives you time to unwind near nature.

Friday

Morning. Begin in the past, in the walled city of Intramuros, once the centre of Spanish colonial rule. Start at **Fort Santiago** (*Santa Clara St corner General Luna St*), where ramparts overlooking the Pasig River contain sites associated with national hero José Rizal, who was imprisoned here in 1896.

From there, walk south to **San Agustín Church** (*General Luna St*). Built in the late 16th century, it is part of the

Previous page:

Holiday cheer in Parañaque

Clockwise from top:

National Museum of Natural History; Fort Santiago; Friuli Trattoria; University of the Philippines Diliman; San Agustín Church; Bonifacio High Street in BGC



Unesco-listed Baroque Churches of the Philippines and the only church in Intramuros to survive the destruction of the Battle of Manila during World War II.

Allow time to simply wander through plazas, reconstructed colonial-era houses and cobblestone streets, perhaps taking a ride in a horse-drawn calesa. For lunch, stop at **Ilustrado** (744 Cabildo St corner Recoletos St; ilustradoreastaurant.ph) for a Spanish-Filipino meal.

Afternoon. Cross Rizal Park to the **National Museum of Fine Arts** (Padre Burgos Ave, Ermita; nationalmuseum.gov.ph), where galleries trace several centuries of Philippine art. Start with Juan Luna's *Spoliarium*, then explore the galleries devoted to colonial and religious art, portraiture, sculpture and Philippine modernism.

Alternatively, visit the neighbouring **National Museum of Natural History** (Teodoro F Valencia Cir, Ermita; nationalmuseum.gov.ph), with 12 galleries exploring the country's geology and biodiversity. Highlights include prehistoric fossils and real megalodon teeth beside a replica of the giant shark's jaw. The building itself is stunning, with its soaring glass-and-steel "Tree of Life" canopy covering the central courtyard.

Evening. Head north to the **University of the Philippines Diliman** in Quezon City (Roxas Ave, Diliman; upd.edu.ph). Walk around the acacia-lined Academic Oval and the Sunken Garden, then visit the **UP Vargas Museum** (@upvargasmuseum) for



its collection that spans Philippine art from the late 19th to the 20th century.

Architecture lovers can detour to the **Parish of the Holy Sacrifice** (JP Laurel Ave corner Apacible St, UP Diliman; parishoftheholysacrifice.ph), a circular concrete church designed by National Artist Leandro Locsin. Nearby, the **UP Carillon Tower** (Magsaysay Ave, UP Diliman), a historic bell tower, is worth a look on the way back towards the Oval.

If you are here on 18 December, come for the Lantern Parade, one of the university's best-loved holiday traditions. First held in 1922, the parade has evolved from a simple procession into a campus-wide celebration of floats, costumes, music and performances, with entries often reflecting social and political issues.

MANILA

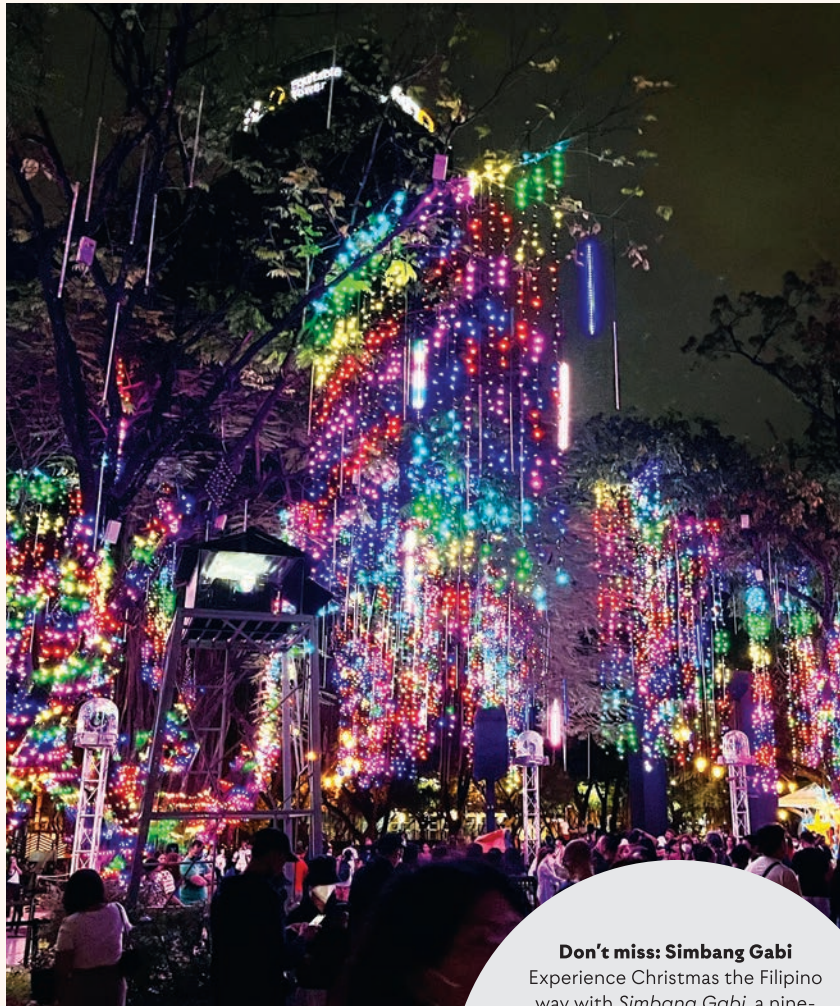
Finish with dinner on nearby Maginhawa Street, a popular dining hotspot with plenty of Filipino and international options. **Provenciano** (110 Maginhawa St) is a good choice for regional Filipino dishes, while **Friuli Trattoria** (79A Maginhawa St) is a favourite for Italian food.

Saturday

Morning. Start at the **Salcedo Weekend Market** (Jaime C Velasquez Park, Salcedo Village, Makati; Facebook/ SalcedoCommunityMarket), an open-air farmers market that takes over the park every Saturday from 7am to 2pm. Come hungry: alongside fruit, flowers and artisanal produce are stalls selling Filipino breakfasts, regional delicacies, baked goods and dishes from Manila's many immigrant communities. Sample as you go and look out for *kakanin* (sticky-rice cakes), *kesong puti* (fresh white cheese) and other seasonal treats.

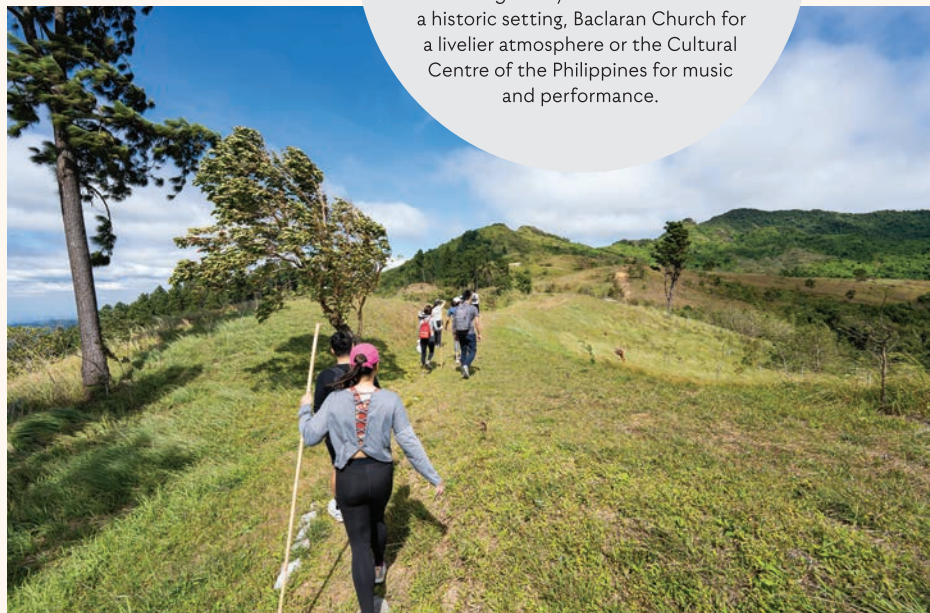
From there, head to **Ayala Museum** (Makati Ave corner De La Rosa St, Greenbelt Park, Makati; ayalamuseum.org), which opens at 11am. Its Diorama Experience traces Philippine history through 60 handcrafted scenes, while Gold of Ancestors showcases more than 1,000 precolonial gold objects and their connections to wider Southeast Asian trade networks.

Afternoon. Cross into Bonifacio Global City (BGC) and visit the **Metropolitan Museum of Manila**, or The M (MK Tan Centre, 30th St, Taguig; metmuseum.ph). The museum focuses on modern and contemporary Filipino and international art, and it's open from 10am to 6pm on weekends.



Don't miss: Simbang Gabi

Experience Christmas the Filipino way with *Simbang Gabi*, a nine-day, pre-dawn tradition from 16–24 December. Linger outside a church, then join the crowds for hot chocolate and freshly steamed cakes *puto bumbong* and *bibingka*. Try Manila Cathedral for a historic setting, Baclaran Church for a livelier atmosphere or the Cultural Centre of the Philippines for music and performance.



Clockwise from top left: Ayala Triangle Gardens; Pintô Art Museum; Masungi Georeserve; a couple of Ronald Ventura sculptures at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila



Then wander over to the **BGC Arts Centre** (26th St corner 9th Ave, Taguig; bgcartscenter.org), where the BGC Art Mart brings together local artists and makers selling original art, prints and crafts, accompanied by live performances. Check their website for the latest schedule.

Evening. Stay in the neighbourhood for Ballet Philippines' *The Nutcracker* at the **Maybank Performing Arts Theatre** (BGC Arts Centre; ballet.ph), running from 18–20 December. After the show, have dinner around **Bonifacio High Street**, or return to Makati for the Festival of Lights at **Ayala Triangle Gardens** (Paseo de Roxas St corner Makati Ave, Makati).

If you still have energy, cap the night off at nearby **Poblacion**, Makati's trendy, bohemian after-hours district. It's a change of register after the polish of BGC and Ayala.

Sunday

Morning. Leave Manila early for **Masungi Georeserve** (Km 47 Marcos Hwy, Baras, Rizal; masungioreserve.com), a conservation area of forest and limestone karst on the foothills of the Sierra Madre. Its Shared Discovery Trail starts in the morning and takes around three to four hours, winding through the reserve via stone paths, rope courses and viewing platforms. Alternatively, schedule Masungi for the evening and

join the Celestial Nights stargazing hike, which runs in the evenings through December. Booking is essential.

Afternoon. Continue to Antipolo, about an hour's drive away, for **Pintô Art Museum** (1 Sierra Madre St, Grand Heights Rd, Antipolo; pintoart.org), where modern and contemporary Philippine art fills a complex of whitewashed galleries surrounded by a 2-hectare botanical garden. The museum stays open until 6pm on Sundays.

Before heading back, stop at **Antipolo Cathedral** (P Oliveros St, Antipolo; [Facebook/antipolocathedralph](https://www.facebook.com/antipolocathedralph)). Long associated with travellers and pilgrims, the church became the Philippines' first international shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in 2024.

Evening. For a final view of the city, stop at **Cloud 9 Sports and Leisure Club** (23 Sumulong Hwy, Brgy Santa Cruz, Antipolo) around sunset. Then have dinner at **Tahanan Bistro** (22 Loresville Dr, Lores Farm Subdivision, Antipolo; tahananbistro.com), a family home built from reclaimed Philippine wood and converted into a restaurant overlooking gardens and Laguna de Bay. Reservations are required.



Malaysia Airlines flies between Kuala Lumpur and Manila 28x weekly.

Where to stay



Shangri-La The Fort, Manila
In BGC, this luxury hotel puts restaurants, shops, galleries and performing-arts venues within easy reach. Rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows and city views, while the complex also houses Kerry Sports Manila, a fitness and lifestyle club. shangri-la.com



The Peninsula Manila
A Makati landmark since 1976, The Peninsula overlooks Ayala Triangle Gardens. Its grand lobby hosts a 45ft Christmas tree, while festive concerts with the Manila Symphony Orchestra and a New Year's Eve gala add to the celebrations. peninsula.com



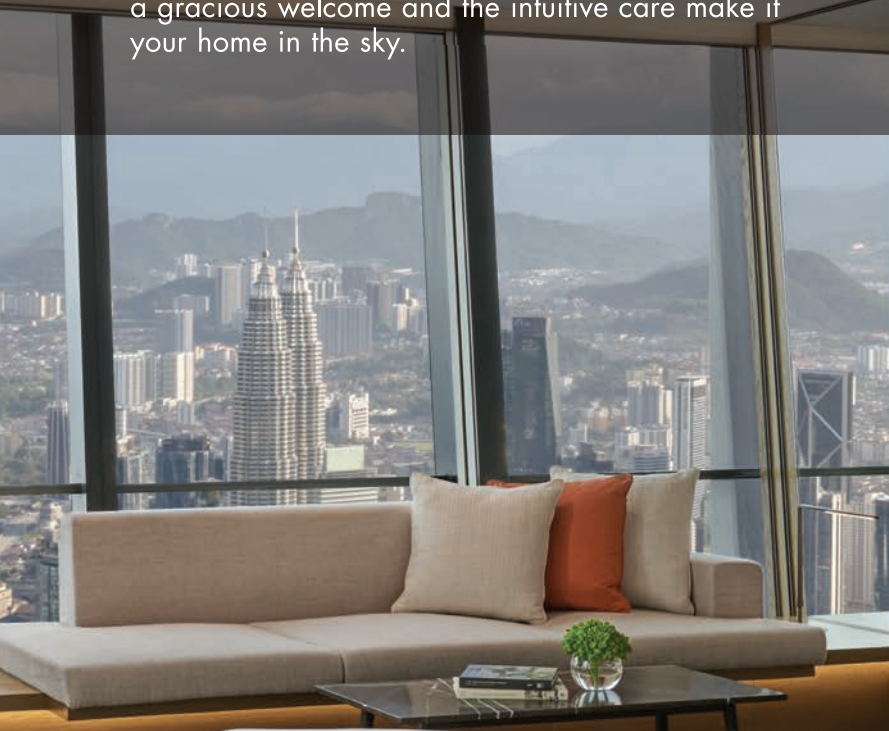
Seda Vertis North
A convenient base for exploring Quezon City, this hotel sits beside Ayala Malls Vertis North and close to Trinoma, with UP Diliman a short drive away. There's an infinity pool, spa and rooftop bar with views over Quezon City. sedahotels.com



Novotel Manila Araneta City
In Araneta City's entertainment district, this hotel is next to Smart Araneta Coliseum, with Gateway Malls plus LRT and MRT stations nearby. Interconnecting rooms, a children's pool and a variety of dining options suit families. novotelmanilaaranetacity.com

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Dry-aged delights

With beef aged in-house and a refined European menu, D Empire sets the standard for steak in Kuala Lumpur

Dry-aged beef meets European finesse at D Empire. This sleek, intimate steakhouse in the heart of Kuala Lumpur serves beautifully plated French and Italian dishes in an understated setting.

Owner-chef Dallan Tan's exacting eye for ingredients shows on every plate, from crisp hydroponic salad greens and fresh prawns in linguine to a bordelaise sauce reduced from scratch. While the menu ranges from stuffed escargots to braised Australian lamb shanks, the steak takes centre stage. Whether you choose premium Australian Black Angus, Westholme Wagyu or Japan's Miyazaki Wagyu, each cut is handled with the same precision.

Large cuts, bone and fat intact, rest in rooms where temperature, humidity and airflow are precisely controlled, allowing the meat to mature without

READER SPECIAL:

Snap a photo of this page and present it at your table to redeem a mystery treat worth RM40.

spoiling. Tan insists on at least 21 days, and as many as 150 for select cuts.

The crust that forms during ageing is trimmed away to reveal concentrated flavour: rich, nutty and remarkably tender. So much is lost to the trim that what remains is all the more precious.

Tan finishes each steak on a lava-stone charcoal broiler and serves it with homemade black pepper gravy and seasonal vegetables. The result is a beautifully seared crust giving way to a juicy, tender, well-marbled centre.

Beyond its exceptional steaks, D Empire offers a tempting selection of pasta, pizza and starters, each equally worth discovering. Whether you're a devoted steak lover or simply seeking a refined evening out, it's the place to indulge, savour and leave already anticipating your next visit.

D EMPIRE LOCATIONS:

Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, Lot 6.33, Level 6

Pavilion Damansara Heights, Lot 5.32, Level 5



D EMPIRE
Dry Aged Steakhouse

Scan the QR code to reserve your table.



Small state, big discoveries

With stunning landscapes and rural-town charm, Perlis offers a quiet yet expansive experience of northern Malaysia



Wang Kelian View Point



Gue Kelam



Scenic route to Wang Kelian

Along Malaysia's northern edge, Perlis brings together limestone landscapes, rural communities and border-town life. Compact and easy to explore, the state offers plenty to discover.

Across the landscape

Begin at Gua Kelam, where a walkway winds through a limestone cave shaped over millions of years. Once part of the area's tin-mining history, the cave is one of several geological heritage sites that reveal the formations and landscapes of Perlis.

From Wang Kelian View Point, take in sweeping views of the surrounding hills, while Timah Tasoh Lake, backed by the Nakawan Range, offers a quieter change of pace by the water.

Another distinctive stop is Taman Ular, where visitors can learn about a variety of snakes and other reptiles.

Experience village life

At Kampung FELCRA Lubuk Sireh in Padang Besar, agriculture shapes daily life. Beyond its paddy fields, the village has a tradition of making local treats such as *kuih peneram* (deep-fried rice flour doughnuts) and *kuih loyang* (crispy, flower-shaped snacks), alongside activities centred on farming and community life.

Part of the Ministry of Rural and Regional Development's (KKDW) Desa Kirana initiative, the village showcases

rural traditions and local enterprises. The programme aims to strengthen rural tourism while creating economic opportunities for communities.

Border-town finds

Near the Malaysia-Thailand border, Arked Niaga Padang Besar is a popular shopping stop. Browse stalls selling local snacks, clothing, handicrafts and other goods while taking in the atmosphere of this lively shopping hub.

From caves and lakes to villages and markets, Perlis offers plenty to experience within Malaysia's smallest state.

GETTING TO PERLIS



By air

Sultan Abdul Halim Airport in Alor Setar is the nearest airport, about a 45-minute drive from Kangar.



By rail

KTM ETS trains connect Arau and Padang Besar with major cities.



By sea

Ferries connect Langkawi with Kuala Perlis.



Discover Desa Kirana destinations at rurallink.gov.my/desa-kirana/english or scan the QR code



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A SKY JOURNEY
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A crossroads of creativity

By **Leandra Beabout**
Photography by **Yasuhiro Hagi**



Fukuoka has always looked outward. Now, artists, designers and craftspeople are turning its long history of cultural exchange into a creative identity of its own



Fukuoka Growth
Next

ご注意ください

大石の大型で、
小さな子どもが遊ぶ場所、
周囲の安全を確保するため、
ようすに注意いたします。

Fukuoka sits on the northern shore of Japan's southern Kyushu island. Its proximity to mainland Asia means that a blend of cultural influences is woven into the fabric of daily life.

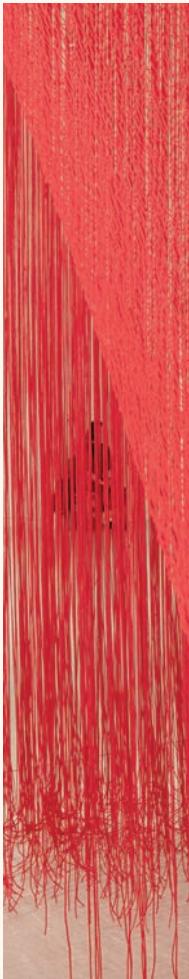


Slowly, and thanks to annually held city-wide initiatives like Fukuoka Art Next, Art Fair Asia Fukuoka and the Fukuoka Citizens' Arts Festival, Fukuoka is also becoming one of Japan's most exciting creative hubs.

That new identity is on my mind as I head to Artist Cafe Fukuoka, a former junior high school now restored as a community hub, gallery and studio space. I'm here to meet Ian Tee, a Singaporean artist currently in residence through the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum's Artist in Residence Programme. "Before it was widely known as Fukuoka, it was Hakata, a trade city," he says. "The historic connections, I suspect, are why the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum is here."

Over the next few days, Fukuoka's roots as a trade city come up often – not only through the exchange of goods, but of ideas. This history of cultural exchange comes into sharp focus when I check into Il Palazzo Fukuoka. Its East-meets-West design, created by Italian architect Aldo Rossi and Japanese designer Shigeru Uchida, was hailed as Japan's first design hotel at its 1989 opening. In front of the red travertine and verdigris-green façade, I watch the sliding glass doors open to reveal a shocking electric-blue entrance adorned with a single rose. It is an obvious, almost audacious, nod to Japan's "Bubble-era" style.

I leave the hotel bound for Ohori Park, where couples and young families pedal swan boats across the pond. A tree-lined path leads to the sprawling red-brick Fukuoka Art Museum. Yinka Shonibare's 7m-tall *Wind Sculpture* towers over me at the entrance. Once inside, my breath catches at the new exhibition by Fukuoka-based artist Terue Yamauchi. "The Shore of Living and Dying" immerses me in the sounds of waves and a woman's slow inhale and exhale as I take in Yamauchi's work, created during her time with Japan's *ama*, or "sea women". Through photographs and stories, she beautifully captures the freedivers' otherworldly connection to the water.





Previous spread, from left: Artworks in Fukuoka Asian Art Museum; Hiromine Nakamura's *Daimyo's Large Komainu* in Daimyo Garden City

Clockwise from far left: Il Palazzo Fukuoka; Artist Cafe Fukuoka; Tetsuaki Miura, director of Fukuoka Art Next; Fukuoka Art Museum

A FOCUS ON ASIAN ART

Back across the confluence of the Naka and Hakata Rivers, I find the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, the world's only museum dedicated exclusively to modern and contemporary Asian art. "Our museum is smaller than those in Tokyo or Yokohama, but they are not focused only on Asian art," says chief curator Yuko Yamaki. The museum's reputation has spread well beyond Fukuoka, with up to 900 applications for its artist residency this year.

Next to the museum's gift shop, I step into a light-filled café, where visitors sip Indonesian kopi luwak, Chinese flowering tea and local juices beside bookcases stocked with 10,000 books and magazines on Asian art and culture. When I ask Yamaki where she goes for inspiration on a day off, she smiles. "Tochoji Temple." The shady grounds of the region's oldest Shingon Buddhist temple offer a serene resting place – a balm for whirring creative minds, it seems – in the heart of old Hakata.

The next day, I decide to visit Tochoji Temple myself. I pause in the courtyard to peer up at a gleaming red five-storey pagoda built only 15 years ago. Japanese monk Kobo Daishi founded the main temple in 806 after his studies in China. Inside, I savour the rich aroma of hinoki cypress. As I watch fat white candles flicker along the walls surrounding a 30-tonne wooden seated Buddha, I realise that even here, the old and the new – and Japan and continental Asia, too – sit side by side.

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS, REIMAGINED

In old Hakata, temples and traditional craft shops coexist with new art, like Kenji Yanobe's metallic *Ship's Cat* sculpture, and modern boutiques. At Maison Hakoshima, a minimalist clothing boutique, the focus is on reviving Hakozaiki-shima, a striped textile that virtually disappeared for 70 years. Co-owner and designer Mai Hayashi tells me the cloth is unusual because it is woven from a single, untwined thread. She and her partner, Keisuke Obata, now create Hakozaiki-shima clothing for everyday wear.

Fourth-generation Hakata dollmaker



“

In old Hakata, temples and traditional craft shops coexist with new art, like Kenji Yanobe's metallic *Ship's Cat* sculpture, and modern boutiques”

Hiromine Nakamura is also reimagining a traditional craft. "There are many artists in Fukuoka, but contemporary artists, not so much," he says as he shows me around Nakamura Ningyo, the family's Hakata doll-making studio in the residential area of Sakurazaka. "I want to be a bridge between both worlds."

While a lineup of traditional Hakata dolls might include samurai, geishas and loincloth-clad festival runners, Nakamura's collection features baseball players, electric guitarists and other pop-culture icons. He sees laid-back, affordable Fukuoka as an apt incubator for artists. "Tokyo? It's a very speedy, high-pressure city," he says.

As afternoon fades into evening, I leave

Clockwise from top:
Inside Fukuoka Asian Art Museum: *Home* 1998 by Sudarshan Shetty (India); *The Best Has Already Come* 2017 by Bu Hua (China); chief curator Yuko Yamaki







“

It has taken a group effort, with the private and public sectors working together, to create the conditions for creatives to flourish”



Clockwise from top left: Canal City Hakata; Nakamura Ningyo Hakata doll-making studio; *Lucky Frog* sculpture by Hung Yi; Hiromine Nakamura in his gallery in Sakurazaka; paintings by Jitish Kallat (India) at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum



old Hakata, strolling past Taiwanese artist Hung Yi's bug-eyed *Lucky Frog* sculpture outside Canal City Hakata, a commercial complex where visitors can enjoy a fountain show. My sights are set on Daimyo, a trendy neighbourhood where the towering Daimyo Garden City, a mixed-use skyscraper topped by the Ritz-Carlton, rises above streets lined with vintage clothing shops, record stores and third-wave coffee shops. Korean and Chinese greetings mingle with the buzz of Japanese conversation around me.

Within this gentle hum of activity, I realise that, unlike the Hakozaki-shima textile, no single thread ties together Fukuoka's creative identity. It has taken a group effort, with the private and public sectors working together, to create the conditions for creatives to flourish. At the forefront are people like Tetsuaki Miura, director of Fukuoka Art

Next, a city government initiative. "We are becoming an art city," he emphasises. "Building a culture takes time."

On my last morning, I wander down a narrow alley towards Manu Coffee. Less than 12 hours earlier, the artsy café was buzzing with a youthful crowd fuelling up on banana shakes and espresso. Now I'm the only customer. The young barista asks about my coffee preferences, then recommends a pour-over of Dark Side of the Moon, the signature roast. I take a seat and watch a disco ball spin languidly overhead. The acid-yellow walls are punctuated with drawings by local artists. What looks to be a Sharpie-drawn girl in fishnet stockings winks at me from the corner.

The room slowly fills: a remote worker sets up her laptop, a mother hushes her baby while waiting for a takeaway order, a man in slouchy streetwear and sunglasses heads up to the counter.

Taking a sip of the deep, chocolatey brew, I wonder if Fukuoka is simply a city with a relaxed enough rhythm and cultural awareness for artists to want to come and stay. Perhaps that's the appeal: an open-armed city where, unlike in tradition-bound Kyoto or high-octane Tokyo, the creative and the curious can step into a centuries-old confluence of cultures and still leave their own ripple.



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Where to stay in Fukuoka City



The Knot Fukuoka Tenjin

Tucked between Tenjin and Daimyo, this hotel calls itself "a restaurant where you can stay". The airy, all-day Morethan serves wood-fired pizzas and tapas made with farm-sourced Kyushu ingredients. Rooms are compact but quiet. hotel-the-knot.jp



The Ritz-Carlton Fukuoka

Spacious rooms and suites, a rooftop bar serving signature mocktails and cocktails, a 24th-floor pool and sushi fine dining at Genjyu. Guests can also book craft experiences, including a *Hakata-ori* (silk weaving) workshop. ritzcarlton.com



Il Palazzo Fukuoka

Refreshed in 2023, this design hotel makes a bold first impression. In the colourful lounge, guests enjoy a freshly made breakfast spread and afternoon nibbles. The rooms, finished in cream and oak, are cosy, simple and well appointed. ilpalazzo.jp



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Kopi, kaya and everything in between

Hock Kee Kopitiam gives the Malaysian coffee shop a modern refresh, with breakfast, snacks and flavours to take home



The kopitiam is an institution in every city and small town in Malaysia. An always dependable spot for the classic Malaysian breakfast of rich local coffee, *kaya* (coconut jam) toast grilled over charcoal and soft-boiled eggs done just right, these humble coffee shops are part of the national identity and landscape. It's where community is built, and the easiest way to settle into Malaysia's rhythm.

Enter Hock Kee Kopitiam, a modern, halal-certified kopitiam founded in Johor Bahru with the philosophy of bringing people together through familiar Malaysian flavours. Its mains cover the classics, from curry laksa and prawn noodles to nasi lemak and chicken rice, with a nod to its roots in Johor delicacies such as *mi rebus* (noodles in a thick, spiced sweet-potato

gravy) and *laksa* Johor (spaghetti in a fish-based curry gravy). There's also a generous vegetarian section, so no one misses out.

Where Hock Kee Kopitiam stands out is its extensive and regularly refreshed menu of snacks to satisfy your cravings between meals. Think polo buns with coffee butter, matcha egg tarts, Nyonya cendol shaved ice and peanut butter French toast, all paired with its classic kopi or tea.

And the kopitiam experience doesn't have to end at the restaurant. You can bring home the nostalgic flavours of Malaysia with Hock Kee Kopitiam's range of delicious souvenirs: from ready-to-cook kolo mee (Sarawak-style dry noodles) to pineapple tarts and *gula Melaka* (palm sugar) coffee. The latest addition, durian white coffee, blends locally roasted white coffee with the lightly sweet notes of durian for a smooth, layered taste. These food-themed souvenirs are thoughtfully packed and travel well – and best of all, they let you relive the trip at home.



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Since 2005, the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre has hosted close to 29,000 events and welcomed 31.5 million visitors and delegates, generating an estimated RM14.5 billion in economic impact. It's 38,670m² of flexible space spanning eight exhibition halls, three conference halls, 28 meeting rooms, auditoria and ballrooms, giving organisers the freedom to build an event around their needs.

Trusted with major occasions

The Centre has hosted three ASEAN summits in 2005, 2010 and 2025, welcoming heads of state, ministers and international delegations to Kuala Lumpur. Delivering events of this scale has taken meticulous planning, coordinated security and operational precision. Yet the same spaces transform just as easily for a gala dinner, concert or fashion show.

Kuala Lumpur, right outside the door

Set within the KLCC precinct, the Centre overlooks the Petronas Twin Towers and KLCC Park, with restaurants, shopping and public transport nearby. More than 20,000 hotel rooms lie within walking distance, including close to 2,500 right

beside the venue, making it easier to house large delegations on different budgets.

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E: sayhello@designvillage.com.my
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Waze Map



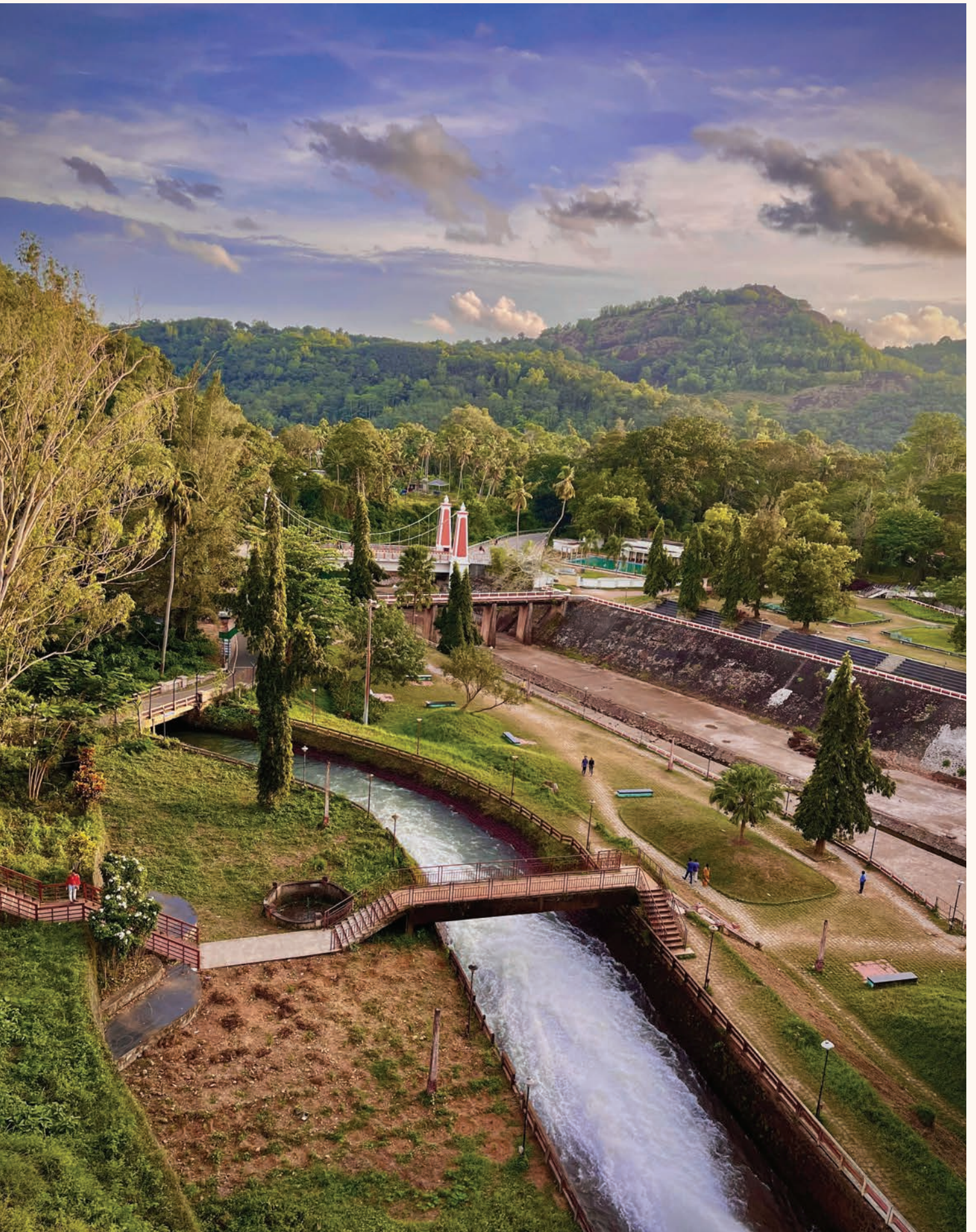
Design Village Penang



Not just for grown-ups

Trivandrum may not be the obvious choice for a family holiday, but spend a few days here and the city reveals a surprisingly playful side

By **Kalpana Sunder**



Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala's leafy capital also known as Trivandrum, sits on the southwestern coast of India.



With its low coastal hills, the city has long been part of the Indian Ocean's spice trade. Today, Trivandrum is best known for the Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, as well as its palaces, museums and arts scene. But look beyond the historic sights and there's plenty to keep younger travellers interested too.

CULTURE AND CURIOSITY

Start in the historic East Fort area, where palaces, temples and old neighbourhoods offer a quick lesson on Trivandrum's years as the capital of Travancore, a former princely state that encompassed much of southern Kerala. At its heart is the imposing Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, dedicated to Lord Vishnu, with its distinctive seven-storey gopuram rising above the surrounding streets. The temple itself is open only to Hindus, but even without going inside, walking around the complex and its surrounding streets gives you a sense of the city's royal past.

Not far away is Kuthiramalika Palace, also known as Puthenmalika Palace Museum, a former royal residence built in the 1840s by Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma, the musician-maharaja of Travancore. Its sloping roofs, intricate woodwork and 122 carved horses are among its most distinctive features, while inside, the museum displays royal objects, paintings, weaponry, Belgian mirrors, sculptures and Kathakali figures in traditional dance costumes. Older children interested in architecture or royal history will find plenty to admire.

For a glimpse into Kerala's ancient martial art, Kalaripayattu, head to CVN Kalari Sangham. The training centre attracts both local and international students, and visitors can watch daily practice from the gallery between 7am and 8.30am. On the red sand floor, students work through strikes, kicks, grappling and traditional weapons.

Previous spread:

Neyyar Dam and its surrounds

Clockwise from top:

Kalaripayattu, the traditional martial art of Kerala; Kuthiramalika Palace; sambar deer at Thiruvananthapuram Zoo; zoo entrance



“

**Look beyond the historic sights
and there's plenty to keep
younger travellers interested too”**







“

The Napier Museum is part of a larger complex that also includes the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo and Natural History Museum, making it easy to combine several attractions in one visit”



Opposite page:
Aerial view of
Napier Museum
From top: Mall of
Travancore complex;
white-throated
kingfisher found
in Poovar

Nearby, the Napier Museum is housed in a salmon-pink Indo-Saracenic building with Gothic roofs, minarets, stained glass and elaborate wooden detailing. Its collection ranges from bronze and stone sculptures to ivory and wood carvings, textiles, ancient musical instruments and Kathakali figures. The museum is part of a larger complex that also includes the Thiruvananthapuram Zoo and Natural History Museum, making it easy to combine several attractions in one visit.

Swap royal history for a little whimsy at Magic Planet in Kazhakkootam, a theme park devoted to the art and science of magic, founded by magician Gopinath Muthukad. Families can wander through a mirror maze, watch street magic and acrobatic performances, and explore galleries devoted to the history of magic.

FAMILY FUN

When everyone needs a break from sightseeing, Trivandrum has plenty of ways to change up the pace. Lulu Mall offers much more than shopping, with a bowling alley, a climbing wall, trampolines and an indoor roller coaster alongside its restaurants and entertainment. Mall of Travancore, close to the airport, is another option, with amusement rides, indoor activities and a large food court.

The Thiruvananthapuram Zoo, in the same complex as the Napier Museum, is one of the oldest zoos in the country. Established in 1859, it occupies 30 acres of landscaped grounds and is home to a wide range of mammals, reptiles, birds and butterflies. Its shady trees and gardens make it an easy place to spend a few hours outdoors.

There is also the Kerala State Science and Technology Museum and Priyadarsini Planetarium, where galleries cover subjects such as automobiles, computers, mechanics and popular science. The planetarium's 3D shows bring the wonders of the universe to life, entertaining both children and adults.

For something more low-key, wander around East Fort and see a little more of everyday Trivandrum. Stop for a snack, watch local life unfold or let the children sketch and photograph whatever catches their eye. It's a simple way to explore the city without turning every hour into a sightseeing stop.



Stays to suit different budgets



Uday Suites, An Airport Hotel

A relaxed stay near Shankumugham Beach, with spacious rooms, a pool and easy access to the beach and airport. udshotels.com



Hilton Garden Inn Trivandrum

A convenient city base on Punnen Road, with an outdoor pool, connecting rooms, restaurants and close to the city's museums, temples and other sights. hilton.com



Hyatt Regency Trivandrum

A polished city stay on CV Raman Pillai Road, with an outdoor pool, separate children's pool, spa and restaurants serving Pan-Asian and South Indian cuisine. hyatt.com



LOCAL FLAVOURS

Trivandrum is an easy city in which to eat with children, whether you're after a quick bite or somewhere to linger over dinner.

For a special meal, Villa Maya is a heritage restaurant set in a restored 18th-century Dutch manor on Palayam Airport Road, with garden courtyards and fountains. The extensive multi-cuisine menu draws on dishes from across India, alongside dishes from Morocco, Turkey and Italy. Try the zaatar and sumac paneer tikka, crispy fried prawns and Kerala paratha.

For something more casual, Paragon Restaurant at Lulu Mall offers familiar favourites including Malabar biryani, fish curry and mutton pepper roast. For a classic South Indian breakfast, try Ariya Nivaas near Thiruvananthapuram Central railway station. The vegetarian menu includes a range of dosas, including its signature Rocket Dosa.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

About 35km from the city, Poovar is a small coastal destination known for its backwaters, where the Neyyar River meets the Arabian Sea. The best way to experience it is by boat, winding through narrow waterways fringed by mangroves and coconut palms, with birdlife and glimpses of fishing-village life along the way. It's a peaceful change of pace from the city, and an easy outing for families who want to spend a few hours on the water.

For a closer look at Kerala's wildlife, head to Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuary and Neyyar Dam, about 32km east of the city. Set against the Western Ghats, the sanctuary is a mix of forested hills and reservoir, with trekking trails and boat trips that take you deeper into the landscape. Elephants, deer and Malabar giant squirrels are among the wildlife found

in the area, while the wider forest is also home to leopards and tigers. The reservoir boat ride is particularly scenic, with views of the surrounding hills and forest.

Back in the city, Shankhumugham Beach is an easy option for an evening outdoors. Close to the airport, it's particularly pleasant around sunset, when locals and visitors come to stroll along its shores, sit by the sea and stop at the food stalls.

Perhaps that's the appeal of Trivandrum. It has a rhythm of its own, but there's more to discover for all ages than you might expect.



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

Opposite page:
Villa Maya entrance
Clockwise from top
left: A dish from
Villa Maya and its
scenic courtyard;
Neyyar Dam tower



“

Trivandrum is an easy city in which to eat with children, whether you're after a quick bite or somewhere to linger over dinner”



Firewood's search for a better steak

Chef Ker Yang Hao travels to Australia to discover the people and processes behind the beef

After years of working with different beef producers, chef Ker Yang Hao found himself wanting to look beyond brand names and marble scores. At Firewood, a Michelin Selected restaurant for 2026, he knew how the meat behaved over fire. But to really know what he was cooking, he needed to see where it came from.

That curiosity took him from Malaysia to Australia and onto the farms where the cattle are raised. There, he looked more closely at breed and genetics, feeding and farming practices, and the many decisions that shape the quality and character of the meat.



Consistency was just as important. If a particular type of beef was going on Firewood's menu, Ker wanted to know what he was working with and to feel confident putting his name behind it.

Beyond the marble score

Breed, marbling and feeding were already familiar considerations. Seeing the process first-hand was different. Meeting the farmer struck him to know just how much work had gone into the beef before it reached Firewood.

It also made Ker think about what happens next. Once the beef reaches his kitchen, the farmer's work is in his hands – and it is up to him and his team to make the most of it.

From Australia to Malaysia

Back at Firewood, the beef meets Binchotan charcoal and Malaysian

mangrove wood. How the fire is built, managed and used brings another layer of flavour to the meat.

For Ker, this is where the restaurant's character comes through: Australian beef cooked with Malaysian wood, in Firewood's own way.

He went to Australia looking for better beef. He came home knowing more about where it begins, who is behind it and what it takes to turn a carefully raised ingredient into a steak worth serving.

Firewood Penang
15 Jln Masjid Kapitan Keling,
George Town, Penang.

Firewood KLCC
SR-05-05 Star Boulevard KLCC,
Jln Yap Kwan Seng, Kuala Lumpur.



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UR-MU, or Urban Museum Kuala Lumpur, is a private contemporary art museum which provides a platform for Malaysian visual art across three spaces.

The latest expansion, NX at **UR-MU Bukit Bintang**, features recent acquisitions spanning human-animal hybrid sculptures and photography,

alongside creative events and public programmes.

At **UR-MU @ Toffee**, the new exhibit “Tubuh II” presents selected works by 29 Malaysian artists from Pakha Sulaiman’s collection, which explores the evolution of Malaysian figurative art and the collector’s journey.

Meanwhile, **+n by UR-MU** recently presented “Strategies of Dissent”, which features works on Malaysian social and political commentary, including the Reformasi era. The space will welcome a new collection next year.

Open Tuesday–Sunday, 11am–7pm.
Book at ur-mu.com or walk in.



NX space at UR-MU Bukit Bintang



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The Brand Laureate Brand of The Year Award 2025-2026
Monkeys Canopy Resort
Best Integrated Theme Park & Resort



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"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!"
- Google Review



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THE BIG INTERVIEW

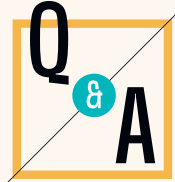
| SÉBASTIEN BAZIN |

ACCOR CEO



'Accor has always been 20 years late to the party – but, finally, we're ahead of the game'

Hannah Brandler sits down with Accor's CEO to hear about his 13 years of leadership, the power of loyalty schemes and India's huge potential



You've been at the helm of Accor for over a decade. What shifts have you seen in the hospitality industry over that time?

The first is choice. Accor has gone from 11 to 48 brands in my time. We have listened to the market and offered more brand diversity. We've also entered territories where our competitors haven't gone yet.

The second is the rising popularity of non-branded hotels. Twenty years ago, the majority of demand was channelled through branded hotels – non-branded hotels were virtually unknown on any distribution channel.

Changing lifestyle priorities are also prominent. Accor has always been 20 years late to the party – we've been late on distribution, loyalty, so many things. But finally in this niche – lifestyle – we're ahead of the game. We're in the premier league now.

Which of Accor's brands are most popular with business travellers?

Before Covid, Accor's customers were 60 per cent business, 40 per cent leisure. Today it's exactly the opposite. Business travel is back but has slowed down for large groups – 1,000-people seminars are less frequent. Interestingly, no hotels with more than 600 rooms have been

Continued from overleaf

built in America in the past two years. We see a lot of small groups now. The Novotel, Mercure, Mövenpick, Swissôtel and Pullman brands are perfectly fitted for bleisure.

When you travel for business, what do you look for in a hotel stay?

It needs to be buzzing. It's difficult to travel on business – you don't want to end up in an empty place. You want to see people at the bar, at breakfast. It's much more important than a spa.

Ennismore has managed to do this with 25hours [the brand] and The Hoxton [in London] – they're full of people during the day, and 80 per cent are locals. The recipe for success is that mix of local and business travellers.

On top of this, you want cleanliness and water pressure. Some 80 per cent of business travellers are going to order four things: pasta, pizza, burger, and Caesar salad. Do those super well and you're home free.

Tell us about Accor's growth in the ultra-luxury segment.

Ultra-wealthy individuals (above US\$2 billion) have an enormous appetite to live, to enjoy and share with their families. But there's a lack of product.

The ultra-rich Americans do the same thing every year – it's a ritual. They land privately at Nice Airport, spend two days at Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, Cap D'Antibes, two days at Hôtel de Paris Monte-Carlo, two days in St Tropez, and two days in Capri. They pack, they unpack, they drive, unpack, pack, drive.

Why do we push customers to go to the



BIOGRAPHY

Sébastien Bazin was appointed chairman and CEO of Accor in 2013, having joined the group's board of directors in 2005. Prior to Accor, he headed up the European branch of private real estate investment firm Colony Capital, where he led acquisitions in the sector including Fairmont and Raffles. He is also a board member of GE Aerospace and The Riyadh School of Tourism and Hospitality.

THIS PAGE: Accor partners with IndiGo, launches an ultra-luxury yacht and refines room service basics
OPPOSITE: 25hours Hotel Indre By, Copenhagen

product they like? Can we inverse it and bring the product to them? I told the board: I'm going to create the best hotel ever built outside of Nice Airport – the *Orient Express Corinthian* yacht. Travellers will have the best suite; the boat will dock in Monaco, St Tropez and Capri; and guests can invite friends on board for a black-tie dinner. It's the same ritual, except you're eliminating the constraint.

For the yacht, we're probably going to have a "club" model, so you're not on the boat by accident. It's the team's job to curate and select who's going to be on board. Can we do it? I have no idea. Should we do it? Yes. People don't mix well unless they relate to another guest. How do the crypto guys cope with the Vanderbilt family of New York? We'll learn by walking, but it will be interesting.

What markets are you looking to expand to next?

There are three places where we have 70 per cent of network expansion: Middle East, India and Southeast Asia. The biggest opportunity by far is India, but this is also where you have the biggest complexity. I'm a big fan, and I go every five weeks. India will be a smashing success.

We've announced a joint venture with IndiGo. The collaboration between

IndiGo's BluChip Rewards and ALL – Accor Live Limitless loyalty programmes – will enable members to earn and redeem points across flights, stays and experiences.

Additionally, India will have approximately 240 airports by 2030. These are perfect for Novotel and Mercure properties.

How is Accor meeting the needs of Gen Z and Gen A guests?

The average age of Accor customers is around 48 years old. I'm not sure Accor is there yet with the 18-30 category – do we address them properly? Do they know us?

Ennismore permits Accor to exist in the minds of those new generations. The average guest age for these brands is 32, but younger (around 26) for those using its public spaces.

At The Hoxton in London, we accept students working in the public spaces free of charge. The only thing we ask is that they leave the space from noon to 2pm, so those spaces can be used for lunch by paying customers.

Are you looking to grow ALL's partnerships?

We have to be extremely open-minded when it comes to loyalty partnerships. The value of a partnership is the frequency of usage – if you can use it on a daily or

CHANGE OF FAITH



WHAT IS DIS-LOYALTY?

Ennismore's playful take on a loyalty scheme rewards members who discover its new hotels and restaurants instead of returning to the same tried-and-tested venue. Described as a "travel and food membership that beats boring", members access greater discounts when visiting new venues across Ennismore's portfolio.

WHICH BRANDS DOES IT INCLUDE?

Ennismore has more than 120 hotels and 200 restaurants and bars across its 11 brands – including The Hoxton, 25hours Hotels, Mama Shelter, Mondrian and SLS.

HOW DO YOU JOIN?

Dis-loyalty is a paid membership model, costing US\$18 per month. All memberships are for 12 months.

WHAT ARE THE PERKS?

50% OFF hotels in the first three months of opening

20% OFF every first-time stay and **10% OFF** return stays

10% OFF F&B at any of the brand's restaurants, bars and coffee shops

A **FREE** barista-made drink every day of the year

Weekly limited-time OFFERS, experiences and collaborations (known as "Drops")

weekly basis then you win.

You can't be too picky on the partners – make sure you have common values, and they have a quality, affordable product – but the name of the game is the frequency of usage.

People have the wrong perception that loyalty members aren't the ones you want for ultra-luxury properties. This is rubbish. The ultra-rich get the loyalty system – they might not use it themselves, they may give it to employees or family members. But there's pricing and value across all segments for Accor Live Limitless.

We have 120 million loyalty members, and 13 million new members every year – that was 7 million four years ago. Loyalty is one of the biggest drivers for us in terms of direct bookings. It's a fabulous success.

How do you keep a healthy work-life balance as a CEO?

I travel 250 days a year and spend probably 100 nights on an aeroplane. I exercise every day for 45 minutes wherever I am, and I never close the curtains. I want to see when it's dark. You also need to be draconian on your discipline. But I enjoy it – it's fun! **BT**



PERSONAL BRANDING

NOT KNOWING THE RULES

By challenging industry norms, Sharmeen Looi helped turn iMotorbike from a simple classifieds site into a regional platform for buying and selling pre-owned motorcycles



S

HARMEEN LOOI ENTERED the motorcycle trade without the background most founders might consider essential.

She was not a dealer, mechanic or long-time enthusiast. What she did have was a clear view of a large market where poor service and a lack of trust had become accepted as normal.

Together with CEO Gil Carmo, Looi co-founded iMotorbike in Kuala Lumpur. Back in 2020, Malaysia had approximately 14.9 million registered motorcycles on the road. Yet the process of buying or selling one

remained, in her words, “frankly broken”. Prices were inconsistent, vehicle conditions were difficult to verify and transactions were vulnerable to scams.

A year later, Looi and Carmo pivoted iMotorbike from a classifieds website into a full-service platform for pre-owned motorcycles. Instead of merely linking buyers and sellers, the company began taking responsibility for inspections, valuations and transactions.

That decision changed the trajectory of the business. In 2025, iMotorbike closed a US\$10 million Series A led by venture capital firm Headline. Headquartered in Singapore, iMotorbike now

ABOVE: Sharmeen Looi co-founded iMotorbike in Kuala Lumpur in 2020

OPPOSITE PAGE: iMotorbike's growing team

operates in Malaysia and Vietnam, with a Taiwan office to follow.

Fix the broken process

According to Looi, the opportunity in motorcycles was not simply the size of the market. It was the gap between the importance of two-wheelers and the poor experience surrounding their resale. “No one was addressing the real pain points in motorcycle trading,” she says. “It’s fragmented, unreliable, time-consuming and, above all, lacking trust.”

Malaysia offered a practical launch market. Both founders were based there, the trading infrastructure was relatively mature and consumers were already

comfortable with e-commerce.

But the original classifieds model left the hardest parts of the transaction untouched. Buyers still had to judge condition and value for themselves, while sellers remained exposed to an inconsistent and informal process.

The 2021 pivot was therefore not simply a product expansion. It was a decision to take responsibility for the entire transaction.

Make trust tangible

Looi's clearest insight came from experiencing the market's opacity herself. On one occasion, she was charged RM200 for a vehicle name transfer that cost RM8 through the government portal. "I was overcharged simply because they could," she says. "I told myself: with iMotorbike, transparency isn't optional."

The company introduced fixed pricing, a standardised four-level

Traditional dealers often relied on informal networks and relationships developed over years. That model could work locally, but it was difficult to scale. iMotorbike's systems were designed to deliver a consistent experience whether a customer was buying a first motorcycle or selling one owned for a decade.

Looi still visits the showroom floor to sell motorcycles and assist customers, keeping her close to where the process works and where it does not.

Use an outsider's advantage

Looi's lack of motorcycle-industry experience initially appeared to be a disadvantage. Instead, it allowed her to question practices insiders had stopped examining. "I wasn't bound by the industry's existing assumptions," she says. "Sometimes innovation comes from questioning why something has always been done a certain way."

'You can't control what assumptions people walk in with. What you can control is how you respond'

inspection process, full condition reports, warranties of up to 12 months and a 6-day return policy.

Together, these measures made the process more predictable and reduced the need for customers to rely on a dealer's word alone. "We're not really in the motorcycle business," Looi says. "We're in the business of trust."

Her earlier life had already trained her to work around constraints. To help fund her Mass Communication degree, she entered beauty pageants with a deliberate strategy: focus on the question-and-answer and talent segments, where she believed she would thrive. She won 12 titles and sold the non-cash prizes.

"There's always a way," she says.

"You just need to use your skills to your advantage."

That instinct carried into iMotorbike. Rather than copying existing dealers, Looi and Carmo identified what customers distrusted and rebuilt the process around it.

Grow by widening the market

Expansion has also required iMotorbike to question who the category is for. Looi argues that Southeast Asia's motorcycle market is often treated as overwhelmingly male, despite increasing participation by women and younger riders.

A 2026 study by the UN Global Compact Network Singapore, Grab and Kantar estimated that female drivers and riders on platforms such as Grab could generate up to US\$800 million in economic value across the region. Women also currently account for 20 per cent of iMotorbike's workforce, a figure she wants to increase.

As chief marketing officer, Looi has helped the company reach new customers through social media. iMotorbike has approximately 500,000 followers across its platforms, while its TikTok content has accumulated 1.7 million likes.

The content explains motorcycle ownership and the buying process in accessible terms, helping the company reach customers who may feel out of place in a traditional dealership.

Let visibility follow execution

Looi's public profile expanded alongside the business through conferences, interviews and LinkedIn. She uses these platforms to explain iMotorbike's model, share lessons and challenge assumptions about leadership in the motorcycle trade.

Early in the company's life, she attended an investor meeting where she was asked to wait outside while Carmo was invited into the room. She had been mistaken for his assistant or guest rather than his co-founder.

"You can't control what assumptions people walk in with," she says. "What you can control is how you respond." She kept presenting her ideas until the company's results established her authority. "Your knowledge, character and ability to execute are what earn long-term respect. I would rather be recognised for the impact we've created at iMotorbike than for any personal profile I've built," she says.

BY THE NUMBERS

30,000+
transactions
facilitated

6,000
motorcycle
capacity across
the network

4,348
sqm
largest
showroom,
in Glenmarie,
Selangor

500,000
approximate
number of
followers across
social-media
platforms

1.7M
TikTok likes



IMAGES IMRAN SULAIMAN / FIRSTCLASSE MALAYSIA (PORTRAIT)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Building a serious collection? These independent Asian watch brands deserve a closer look



Phoenix by Minase Japan

Born from Kyowa, a precision tool and watch-case manufacturer in Akita, Japan, Minase has built its reputation on Zaratsu-polished cases of extraordinary complexity since 2005. The Timeless Japanology collection takes that ambition further with a 39mm pocket watch offered in stainless steel or yellow gold that unites two of Japan's most revered craft traditions. The Phoenix dial is hand-painted in Wajima maki-e lacquer by a master artisan, who spends months rendering the mythical bird in gold powder and coloured pigments. The caseback and bow are forged from *tamahagane*, the steel of traditional samurai swords that develops a black patina over time.





Watch 1 by LOTH Singapore

Founded by Tristan Ho in 2024, LOTH is Singapore's first commercially available watch brand, born from the biomedical researcher's obsession with traditional watchmaking crafts. Entirely self-taught, Ho executes every finishing technique on the 40.5mm Watch 1 himself, including the hypnotic mosaic-patterned German silver dials that develop a warm patina over time. Each one requires about 150 hours of work – and with every dial finished by hand, no two are alike. The 12-piece limited edition is driven by the LOTH First Calibre, a manual-winding movement featuring a Unitas 6498 base with custom German silver bridges.



Perception V3 by Atelier Wen Hong Kong

Independent brand Atelier Wen – founded in Hong Kong in 2018 by French watch enthusiasts Robin Tallendier and Wilfried Buiron – has quickly built a following among collectors for its combination of Chinese craftsmanship and French watchmaking.

Perception V3, its latest model, marks a new high point for the brand. The 40mm watch features hand-turned fish-scale *guilloché* dials by Cheng Yucai – China's first and only master *guillocheur* – paired with a French-made Pequignet movement and finished with Chinese-inspired detailing.

Three dial variants are offered, including a new bamboo-green colour, Yun.



The Baagh III by Jaipur Watch Company India

India's first luxury watch microbrand, Jaipur Watch Company was founded in 2013 in Rajasthan by entrepreneur Gaurav Mehta. It has built its reputation on turning pieces of the country's history into wearable collector's items.

The Baagh III is the final instalment in a trilogy inspired by India's 1947 coin set.

At its centre is a 1947 half rupee coin, among the last currency minted under British rule, with its tiger motif rendered in traditional enamel and sealed beneath sapphire crystal. A 43mm stainless-steel case with an open caseback houses a Miyota automatic movement.



29.06 Peep Show by MING Malaysia

Collectors have been watching Kuala Lumpur-based MING closely ever since the independent brand – co-founded by Malaysian photographer and designer Ming Thein – began winning GPHG awards, often called the Oscars of watchmaking. The 29.06 Peep Show demonstrates why the accolades are deserved. Limited to 50 pieces, the titanium watch uses polarised sapphire discs built into the hands to make the *guilloché* dial appear and disappear by alternating between a black mirror finish and iridescent purples, blues and greens every 15 minutes. A 40mm titanium case and Schwarz-Etienne automatic movement complete the 50-piece limited edition.





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THIS IS MALAYSIAN HOSPITALITY



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

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Inside our airlines

News and updates
from MAG Airlines

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Discover our network

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

109

Onboard entertainment

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



Malaysia Airlines earns top honours at 2026 Skytrax Awards

Malaysia Airlines earned recognition across multiple categories at the 2026 Skytrax World Airline Awards, reflecting its performance in overall rankings and customer experience. The airline was ranked No 1 for World's Best Airline Staff in Asia, while its cabin crew placed third globally, up from eighth in 2025. It also climbed to No 21 in the World's Top 100 Airlines, with further accolades for its service and onboard offerings.

Malaysia Airlines' 2026 Skytrax highlights:

- No 1 – World's Best Airline Staff in Asia
- No 2 – World's Best Airport Services
- No 3 – World's Best Cabin Crew
- No 10 – Top 10 Airlines in Asia
- No 11 – World's Cleanest Airlines
- No 12 – World's Best Economy Class Airlines
- No 18 – World's Best Business Class Airlines
- No 21 – World's Top 100 Airlines

This recognition reflects Malaysia Airlines' continued focus on enhancing its customer experience through investments in its people, product, fleet, network and service delivery.

Busan returns as MAG expands regional connectivity

Malaysia Aviation Group is expanding its regional network, with Malaysia Airlines set to resume flights to Busan in December 2026, reconnecting Kuala Lumpur with South Korea's second-largest city. The route will operate four times a week, while increased flight frequencies to Brisbane, Surabaya and Fukuoka will give travellers more options across key markets. Sister airline Firefly will also introduce direct flights to Kunming, extending MAG's reach into Southwest China.



Chase the sun-soaked days of SUMMER

Explore Australia's most vibrant summer capitals

📍 Sydney

Summer starts at Bondi beach, its golden curve of sand opening onto the clifftop walk that follows the coast toward Bronte. Come Boxing Day, there's the annual Hobart Yacht Race, where thousands of spectators crowd the harbour to watch the billowing spinnakers set off, bound for Constitution Dock and The Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Sandy Bay.

For most people, this time of the year is reserved for Christmas tree hunting, present shopping, and cosy nights with a warm drink. But in Australia, the East Coast eagerly welcomes the sun.

The days here stretch longer as the coastline calls, drawing tourists and locals alike out of doors and into the water. Aside from the sunny beaches and blue seawaters, streets fill with the buzz of cricket season, and the harbours host their long-awaited yacht races, a spectacle that sends the year off in style.

📍 Brisbane

Just a short ferry ride away, Moreton Island turns a day trip into an adventure of its own. Kayak or paddleboard across Moreton Bay's clear waters, snorkel the Tangalooma Wrecks, or race down the dunes on a sandboard. Come evening, gather at the jetty to watch wild dolphins arrive for their nightly feed.

📍 Melbourne

Head to St Kilda, Melbourne's famous beachside suburb for a swim or a walk along the pier. If you linger past dusk, it's likely you'll catch a glimpse of the little penguins that call the breakwater home. Inland, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, one of the world's largest stadiums, hosts the standout match of Australia's cricket season every Boxing Day, and people of all ages pack the stands from morning through to evening.



Discover Sydney, Melbourne, and
Brisbane with Malaysian Hospitality.

Scan to book now or
visit holidays.malaysiaairlines.com



MHolidays



Malaysia Airlines named World's Best and Asia's Best MICE Airline for 2026

Malaysia Airlines has been named World's Best MICE Airline and Asia's Best MICE Airline at the 2026 World MICE Awards, marking its first wins in both categories. The accolades add to Malaysia Aviation Group's growing portfolio of awards, reflecting progress in customer service, commercial offerings and operational performance.



Malaysia Airlines deepens engagement across China and India

Malaysia Airlines continued to deepen its engagement in China and India through strategic partnerships and travel trade initiatives. The airline hosted its annual Trade Gala Dinners in both markets, recognising key industry partners, while collaborations with Huawei, Weixin Pay and TravelSky in China, and PayU, Times Black and Jio Network in India further expanded its customer engagement initiatives.



Malaysia Airlines and China Southern Airlines broaden codeshare network

Malaysia Airlines and China Southern Airlines have expanded their codeshare cooperation to five more cities in China, strengthening connections between Malaysia and the country. The expanded partnership connects Kuala Lumpur with Shenzhen, Changsha, Xiamen, Chengdu and Zhengzhou, giving travellers easier access to major commercial, cultural and economic centres.

Building on their codeshare cooperation since 2023, the partnership brings the two airlines' networks closer together and provides more travel options between Malaysia and China, supporting growing tourism, trade and business ties.

From sail-filled harbours to quiet city corners, let Auckland unfold at a slower pace

The largest city in New Zealand, Auckland has more than urban energy in store. Here on the North Island of Aotearoa, there is a slower pace that unfolds among the sails and shorelines, shaped by proud Māori heritage.

Auckland is also known as the City of Sails, lying between the Waitematā and Manukau harbours. It has one of the highest rates of boat ownership per capita in the entire world, which becomes apparent as you stroll along the shorelines. There is little need to hurry as you explore these harbours, as a sense of calm fills you while you enjoy a meal to the sight of colourful sails bobbing up and down atop lapping waters.

A short ferry ride away from the city centre, Devonport offers another reason to take things slowly. This laid-back seaside village is lined with picturesque streets, local cafés and an unforgettable view of the city from across the harbour. Spend an afternoon exploring at your own pace before returning to the city, leaving the sails behind for more discoveries.

Back on the mainland, away from the hustle and bustle, the city has its own quieter corners. Art galleries and museums reveal another side of Auckland, while a walk through Cornwall Park offers trails and open green spaces, where the pace of the city feels a world away.



And for those with more time, Auckland is also the gateway to adventures beyond the city. Take a drive out to the cinematic landscapes of Hobbiton, the underground formations of Waitomo Caves and more across the North Island.

For many, a trip to Auckland is a long-haul voyage to the Southern Hemisphere, but the feeling of unwinding can begin long before you arrive. On board Business Class in the Malaysia Airlines A330neo, you enjoy a space to spend the hours in elevated comfort, arriving ready to greet Auckland with an energetic "kia ora".

Be among the first to board and settle into Collins Aerospace Elevation seats, with built-in wireless charging and direct aisle access for your convenience. Inside, make the time your own with immersive 4K in-flight entertainment, as well as unlimited complimentary Wi-Fi for leisure

and productivity.

Tuck into Chef-On-Call meals along the way, each a gourmet dining experience you can pre-order before your journey. When you need to recharge, close your seat's individual privacy door and settle down in your fully flat bed, so you land refreshed for your Auckland adventure.

Discover serenity on your next getaway to Auckland with Malaysia Airlines, flying **10x weekly** via Kuala Lumpur. And if you have already booked your trip, there's still an opportunity to experience elevated comfort in the skies with MHUpgrade. Make an offer for a chance to upgrade and enjoy the A330neo Business Class experience on your way to the City of Sails, up to 72 hours before departure.

Book today at malaysiaairlines.com.



From left: See both sides of Auckland on the shores of Devonport; enjoy a change of scenery under lush canopies in Cornwall Park; marvel at caverns dotted with glowing worms in Waitomo Caves.

Information is accurate at the time of printing.



A taste of home, a taste of the season

Some flavours remind us of home, while others capture the spirit of a season. As the year draws to a close, Malaysia Airlines invites guests to savour both through two specially curated dining experiences. From the rich culinary heritage of Negeri Sembilan to classic Christmas fare, the November and December menus highlight local and seasonal favourites onboard.

Negeri Sembilan's best

In November, the Best of Malaysia series brings the flavours of Negeri Sembilan to guests travelling from Kota Kinabalu and Kuching to Kuala Lumpur.

In Business Class, *Daging Salai Masak Lemak* with *Nasi Nanas* features smoked beef cooked in a creamy *masak lemak* (rich coconut-based gravy) with aromatic spices, served with fragrant pineapple rice that adds a subtle sweetness. Seasonal vegetables round up the dish, making

for a satisfying combination of the region's bold and comforting flavours.

In Economy Class, *Ayam Masak Lemak* with steamed rice offers another taste of the same culinary tradition. Tender chicken is simmered in creamy *masak lemak* gravy with fragrant spices, then served with rice and vegetables for a familiar taste of Negeri Sembilan cuisine.

Christmas classics

Come December, the mood turns festive as Malaysia Airlines welcomes the holiday season with a specially curated Christmas menu. Available on selected flights from Kuala Lumpur to Europe, North Asia, Australia and New Zealand, it features classic festive favourites.

In Business Class and Business Suite, herb crusted chicken with brown sauce and cranberry jam features a succulent chicken roulade filled with sautéed mushrooms

Clockwise from top left:

Herb crusted chicken roulade; *Daging Salai Masak Lemak* with *Nasi Nanas*; roasted chicken leg; *Ayam Masak Lemak* with *nasi putih*

and spinach, wrapped in a fragrant pistachio herb crust. It is served with potato dauphinoise, seasonal vegetables and a rich brown sauce, with cranberry jam on the side.

For Economy Class, roasted chicken with mushroom brown sauce and cranberry jam pairs tender roasted chicken leg with parsley potatoes and vegetables. A touch of tangy cranberry jam adds a festive finish.

From Malaysian heritage to Christmas favourites, the menus add a seasonal touch to the journey. Selamat menjamu selera!

An evening with Enrich

Enrich members were treated to an unforgettable evening of fine dining, classical music and sweeping city views at Sabayon, EQ Kuala Lumpur

Perched 51 floors above the city, Sabayon set the scene for an exclusive Enrich evening, with sunset drinks followed by an intimate culinary experience. The highlight was a dinner by chef Charles Coulombeau, held as part of his seven-night residency from 23 to 29 July, a collaboration between EQ and Malaysia Airlines through the Enrich programme. With Enrich leadership present, the event underscored the programme's role in curating lifestyle privileges and connecting directly with its members.

For many, it was a first introduction to the chef's distinctive style, which blends classical French technique with Japanese influences. Coulombeau shared stories from his culinary journey and the restaurants that earned him Michelin recognition, including La Maison dans le Parc in Nancy and Yozora in Metz.

A journey through flavour

Created exclusively for Sabayon, the five-course menu highlighted refined techniques and exceptional ingredients. It began with avocado, sake and pear, followed by hamachi with cucumber and coriander. Tamagoyaki with caviar and yuzu reflected Japanese flair, while Pulau Ketam grouper with nori and Cameron Highlands carrots celebrated Malaysian produce.

Guests then chose between duck or Wagyu beef, paired with sushi rice



and blackberries. Dessert brought the evening closer to home with Harumanis mango and Cameron Highlands herb sorbet. As a final touch, each guest received a box of nougat and bergamot de Nancy, a nod to the chef's hometown. Optional wine pairings were thoughtfully curated to complement each course.

Adding to the ambience, a string quartet performed classical favourites as the Petronas Twin Towers shimmered in the background. Blending fine dining, music and conversation, the evening offered Enrich members a lifestyle experience that went beyond travel – a true reflection of LifeEnriched. Members also enjoyed an exclusive 15% dining privilege throughout the residency.



A350-900



No. of Aircraft **7** | Passenger Seating **286, 300**
Length **66.80m** | Wingspan **64.75m** | Height **17.05m**
Max. Cruising Speed **910km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-900



No. of Aircraft **10** | Passenger Seating **297**
Length **63.69m** | Wingspan **64m** | Height **16.79m**
Max. Cruising Speed **880km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-300



No. of Aircraft **13** | Passenger Seating **290**
Length **63.66m** | Wingspan **60.30m** | Height **16.79m**
Max. Cruising Speed **880km/h**
MHConnect Wi-Fi Connectivity on selected aircraft



A330-200



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



Boeing B737-800 NG

No. of Aircraft **37** | Passenger Seating **160, 166, 174**
Length **39.47m** | Wingspan **35.79m** | Height **12.62m**
Max. Cruising Speed **840km/h**



Boeing B737-8



No. of Aircraft **19** | Passenger Seating **174**
Length **39.5m** | Wingspan **35.92m** | Height **12.45m**
Max. Cruising Speed **840km/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**



Boeing B737-800 NG

No. of Aircraft **5** | Passenger Seating **189**
Length **39.47m** | Wingspan **35.79m** | Height **12.62m**
Max. Cruising Speed **840km/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**



ON-TIME PERFORMANCE

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



CABIN LUGGAGE HANDLING

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



PORTABLE ELECTRONIC DEVICES (PEDs)

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



LITHIUM BATTERIES

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



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 in flight 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*



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



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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.

Beyond the boarding pass

On the quiet privileges, considered rewards and rarer possibilities that accompany every Enrich journey.

To many, Enrich is the loyalty programme of Malaysia Airlines. To those who know it well, it is something more: a companion to the way they travel, and to the way they live between journeys.

Rewards accrue not only in the air, but in the hotels where you rest, the purchases you make each day and the partners you already favour. For the seasoned member and the newly curious alike, what follows is a guide to drawing more from every journey.

First, an understanding of Points

Enrich recognises two kinds of Points, each with its own purpose.

Enrich Points are the currency of membership. They are earned when you fly with Malaysia Airlines and participating airline partners, and equally through selected hotel stays, bank card spending, lifestyle partners and other eligible activities.

When the moment comes to spend them, Enrich Points open the way to flights, seat upgrades, airport and travel privileges, gift cards, experiences and more.

Elite Points, by contrast, are not for spending. They chart your ascent through **Silver, Gold and Platinum** status, and the privileges that unfold at each tier.

Elite Points are earned on qualifying Malaysia Airlines flights and on selected qualifying flights with **oneworld® Alliance member airlines**, so every journey, wherever it leads, carries you closer to the next tier. With status comes **preferential treatment**, from priority services to a more personal recognition across the **oneworld®** network

A NOTE ON POINTS

Enrich Points reward. Elite Points distinguish. To understand both is to enjoy each to the full.



The journey continues on the ground

A journey need not be under way for your balance to grow.

Everyday spending, hotel stays and partner experiences all quietly add to your Enrich Points between flights.

With the **AmBank Enrich Visa Credit Cards**, eligible spending earns Enrich Points directly. Points already gathered through participating bank credit cards may also be **converted into Enrich Points**.

For a weekend retreat or a longer stay abroad, reserve through **Enrich Hotels** and earn **up to 15,000 Enrich Points per night**.

A SWIFTER ASCENT

AmBank Enrich Visa Credit Card cardholders enjoy a 30% reduction in the Elite Points required to reach their next tier.



Every Point, well placed

With **Points Pooling**, family members may bring their Enrich Points together in a single shared pool, building towards rewards enjoyed together.

A flight, an upgrade or an afternoon spent as a family: each member's Points contribute to the same aspiration.

Through **Invite and Earn**, introducing eligible friends and family to Enrich earns Points of your own.

With **EnrichMoney**, eligible transactions earn EnrichMoney Points, to be spent through the EnrichMoney app or converted into Enrich Points.

Flights, hotel stays, cards, partners and introductions: each plays its part in the balance you build.

Where your Points may lead

Redeem **flights to more than 900 destinations in 170 territories**, on Malaysia Airlines, its airline partners and across the **oneworld®** Alliance network.

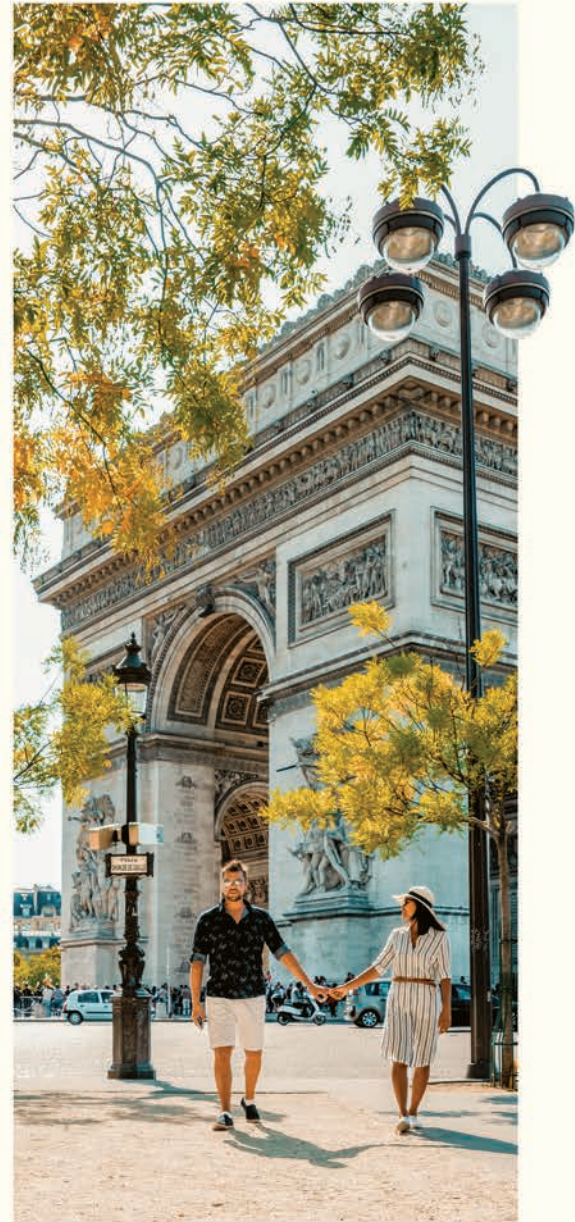
With **Points + Cash**, Points and payment combine to secure flights on Malaysia Airlines.

For a more comfortable passage, Enrich Points may be redeemed for a **seat upgrade**.

And beyond the cabin, Points unlock selected lifestyle rewards, experiences and travel privileges.

FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW

Converting bank points is among the most rewarding ways to grow your Enrich Points. Watch for campaigns that offer Bonus Points on conversion.



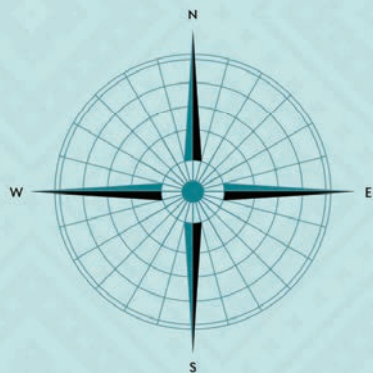
More ways to journey, more ways to savour

Whether you fly often, travel by choice or simply expect more from the things you already enjoy, Enrich offers many ways to earn, redeem and savour its rewards.

Members are invited to explore the full measure of their membership.
For those yet to join, there is no finer moment to begin.

Discover where your
Points may take you.





OUR NETWORK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELEN WINATA

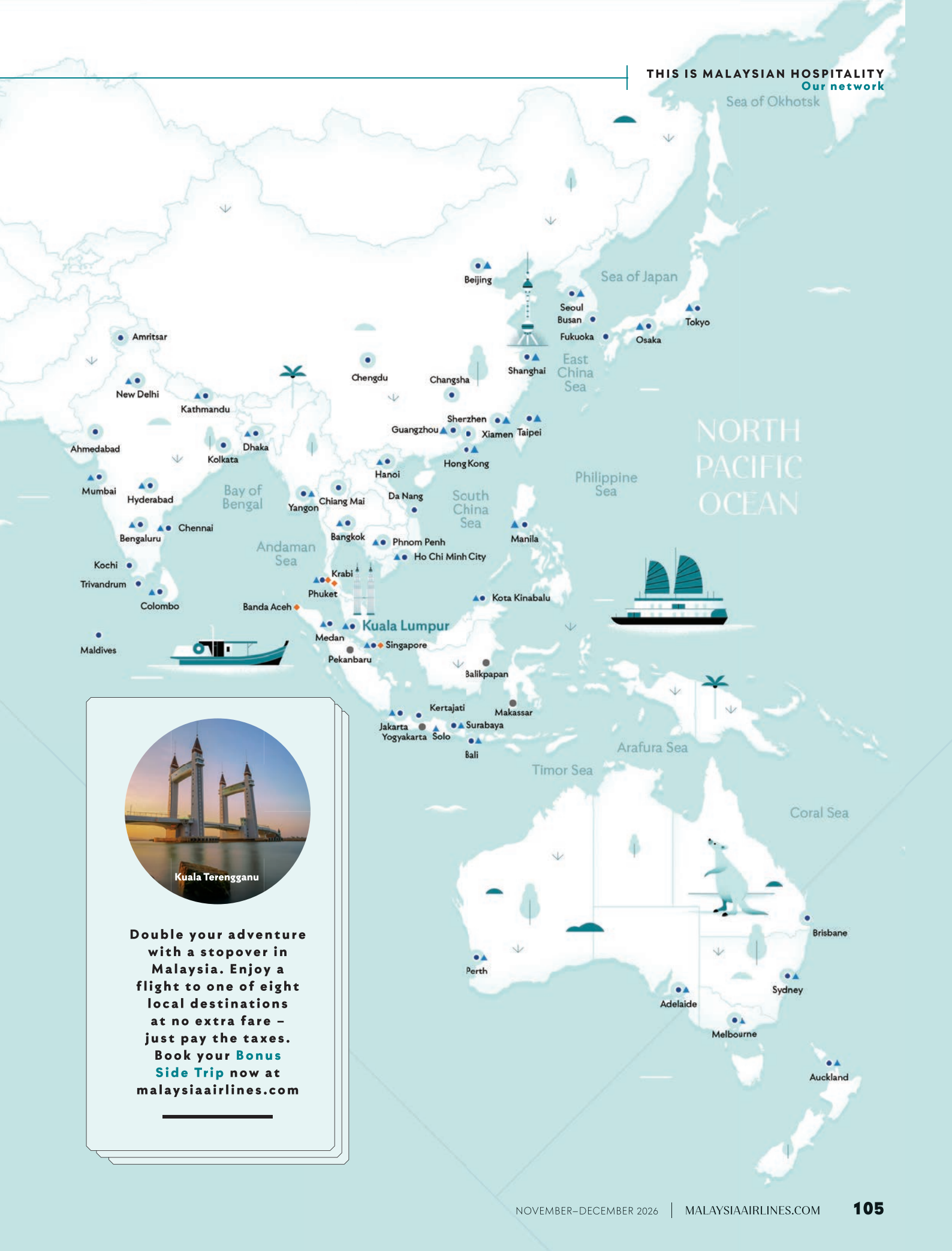
SOUTH
ATLANTIC
OCEAN

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
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Kota Kinabalu
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Labuan
Lahad Datu
Tawau
Ba'kelalan
Long Seridan
Bario
Long Akah
Long Banga
Long Lellang
Miri
Mulu
Bintulu
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Sibu
Tanjong Manis
Kuching

- Malaysia Airlines
- ◆ Firefly
- ▲ MASkargo

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IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK (CAPE TOWN)



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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.

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Step 1

Switch to
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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.



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Step 1

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Flight Mode



Step 2

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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

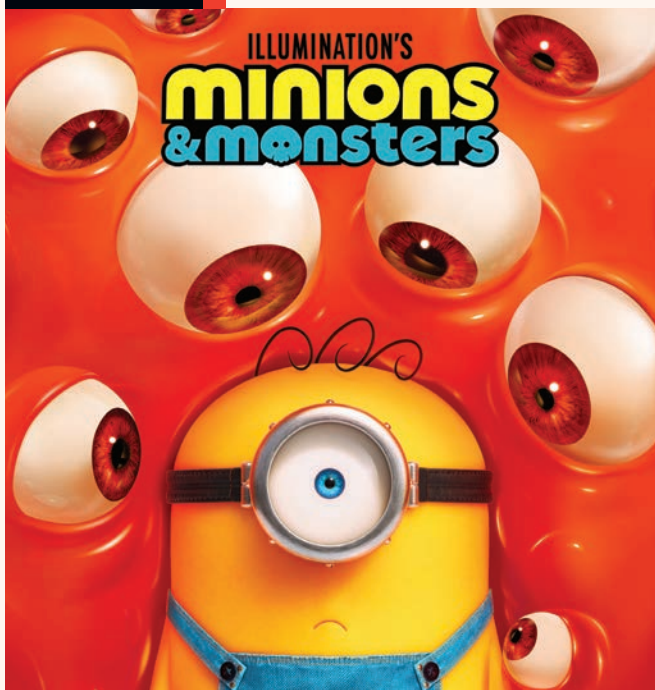
+ INSIDE

MOVIES

TELEVISION

ALBUM
HIGHLIGHTS

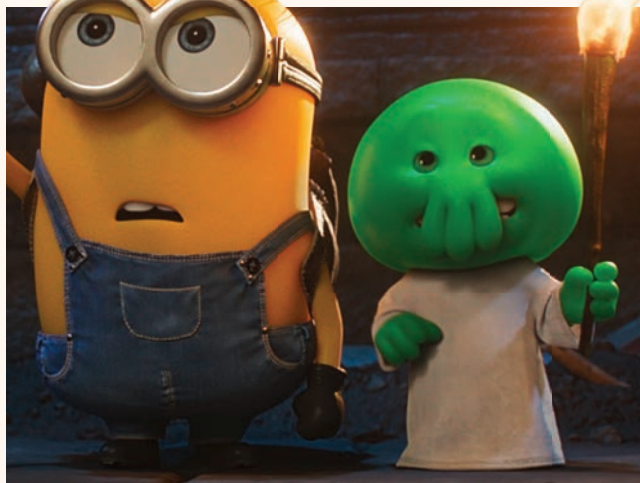
NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



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Minions & Monsters

The Minions are back for another hilarious adventure! Kevin, Bob, Stuart and their banana-loving friends face new villains, unexpected challenges and plenty of mischief in an exciting journey filled with fun, friendship and laughter for the whole family.



Merv

Russ and Anna share custody of their dog Merv, who's been unhappy since their breakup. When Russ takes him to a Florida dog hotel, Anna follows. The trip revives old feelings, but jealousy and painful truths threaten their chance of getting back together.

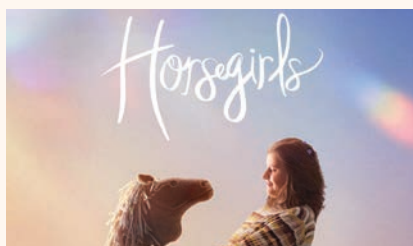
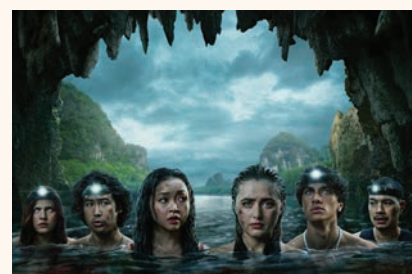
Masters of the Universe

Fifteen years after discovering the Sword of Power, Adam returns to Eternia, now ruled by the ruthless Skeletor. With Teela and Duncan by his side, Adam must embrace his destiny as He-Man, unlock his true power and fight to save his world and those he loves.



I, Object

After losing his father, ten-year-old Tom finds comfort in a magical world where objects come to life. When his stepfather sends them to a junkyard, Tom and new friend Allie set out to rescue them.



The Devil's Mouth

Five friends embark on one last adventure along Thailand's coast, exploring a remote cave system known as The Devil's Mouth. When they discover a deadly creature lurking in the flooded tunnels, their thrilling trip turns into a desperate fight for survival.

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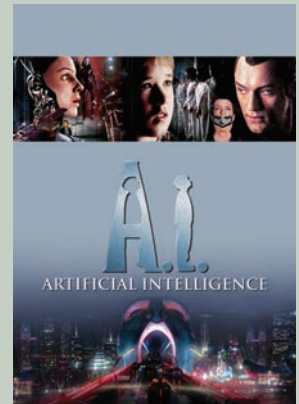
Blackberry

Mike Lazaridis and Douglas Fregin set out to revolutionise communication by creating the world's first smartphone. As their ambitious venture grows, they face fierce competition, personal struggles and unexpected challenges that put their groundbreaking dream to the test.



Dune: Part Two

Paul Atreides joins forces with Chani and the Fremen as he seeks revenge against those who destroyed his family. Torn between his love for Chani and the fate of the universe, Paul must embrace his destiny and fight to prevent a devastating future that only he can foresee.



Kids



Panda Bear in Africa

A brave panda journeys from China to Africa to rescue his kidnapped dragon friend. Along the way, he faces dangerous hippos, hyenas and gorillas while making new friends and joining forces to protect their jungle home.



Grand Prix of Europe

Edda, a young mouse dreaming of becoming a race car driver, gets her chance to save her father's struggling fairground business during the European Grand Prix. Inspired by her racing idol, she bravely takes the wheel herself.



DEEPAVALI SPECIAL

Hindi



Telugu



Tamil



Malayalam



Malay



Mandarin



Japanese



Korean





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Comedy



Drama



Kids



Kids



Travel



Malay



Hindi



Tamil



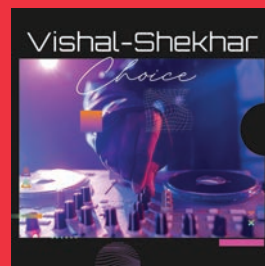
Hits



Club



Hindi



Tamil



French



Japanese



Korean



Relax



EXPERIENCE KUALA LUMPUR AND EVERYTHING JUST BEYOND IT.



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Then there's the one that rewards a little wandering, the kind that turns a regular day into your next favourite memory.



START THE DAY UNDERWATER, END IT ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Aquaria KLCC brings you face to face with marine life just steps from the city centre, while KL Tower lifts you high above it for a skyline view.

Two easy stops for one first day in the city!



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Craving a sunny day out? SplashMania is the answer!

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CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Hollywood Favourites



Kids



Hollywood Favourites



Weapons

When nearly every child in a classroom mysteriously disappears on the same night at exactly the same time, a shocked community is left searching for answers. As fear and suspicion spread, the question remains: who – or what – is responsible for the children's disappearance?



Dog

US Army Ranger Jackson Briggs sets out with Lulu, a spirited military dog, to attend her handler's funeral. Their journey soon descends into chaotic encounters as the unlikely pair clash, break rules and test each other's patience, gradually forming an unexpected bond that challenges them both.

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?

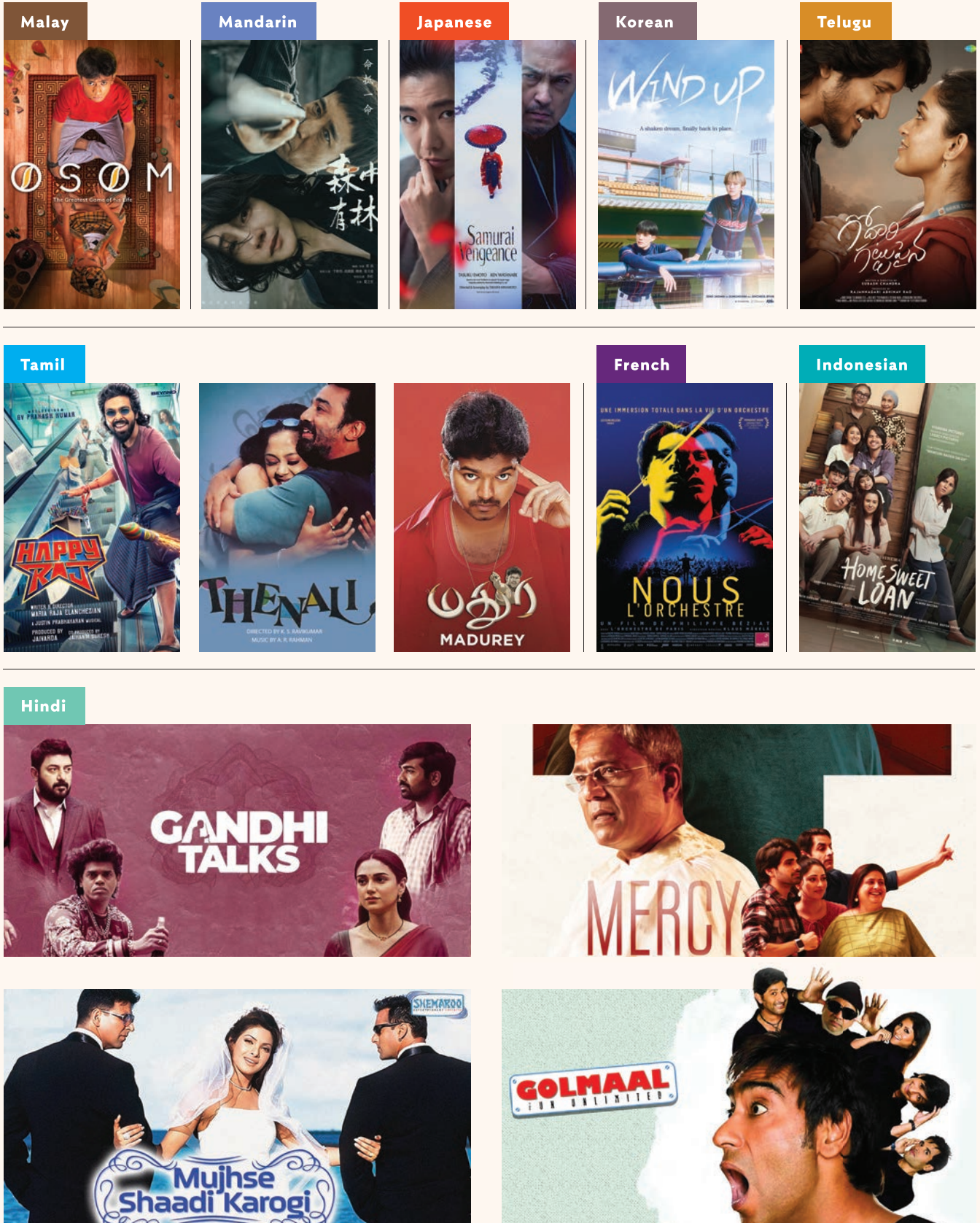
Scan to explore MHinsure's
range of travel protection plans.

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



Kids



Kids



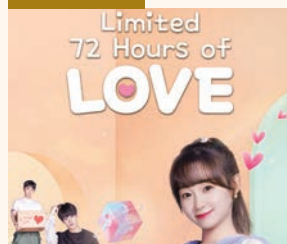
Sports



Lifestyle



Chinese



Hits



R&B



Pop



Holiday Pop



Mandarin



Tamil



Hindi



Kids



Japanese



Korean



Take your journey further, from one city to the next



Go beyond London, Paris or Seoul
with air and rail in one booking



Sometimes, one city is only the beginning. You might arrive in London with Manchester already on your mind, or land in Paris knowing there's more of France you want to see. Turning those ideas into a multi-city trip can mean comparing flight and train schedules, working out connections and keeping track of separate bookings.

That's where MHrail comes in. You can book your Malaysia Airlines flight and connecting train in one single booking, so moving from one city to the next feels much simpler.

Keeping your plans on track

Having your flight and train details sorted means one less thing to worry about, giving you greater peace of mind. If you're unable to catch your booked train due to a change in your flight schedule, Malaysia Airlines can arrange for you to take the next available train, subject to availability.

And if your train journey doesn't go quite as planned, you can still look forward to a smooth onward journey, with rebooking on the next available flight if you miss your connection.

On selected journeys, you can also include the rail connection from the airport to the station you need to start your journey, such as London Underground tickets, or the AREX service between Incheon International Airport and Seoul Station.

Travel beyond London, Paris and Seoul

MHrail gives you the freedom to see more. From London, spend a few days in Manchester exploring its football heritage, music and cultural scene, head to Liverpool for its legendary music history and waterfront or continue to Cardiff to explore its majestic castle and stunning landscapes.

From Paris, head to Strasbourg for its canals and historic architecture, Marseille for its Mediterranean character or Bordeaux for its food scene and elegant riverside setting. In South Korea, continue from Seoul to Busan for coastal sights and markets or venture further to Daegu and Gwangju for a different side of the country.

These routes are available through rail partners including Avanti West Coast, London North Eastern Railway, Great



Western Railway, SNCF Voyageurs and KORAIL.

More cities, more adventures

With MHrail, planning a multi-city trip can be simpler. Whether you're adding another city to your plans or building an adventure across a country, you can spend less time managing the details and more time looking forward to what's next.



MHrail

Scan here to learn more
Terms and conditions apply.



Hats off!

Did you know Bintulu's most distinctive building was inspired by traditional headgear? Wisma Bintulu, headquarters of the Bintulu Development Authority, has a tiered, conical shape that locals and visitors have likened to a giant spaceship. Its design draws on the *terendak*, a traditional sun hat worn by the Melanau people native to the coastal wetlands of Sarawak. Set among trees along Jalan Tanjung Kidurong, it has become a popular photo stop. Look closely and you'll spot the *terendak* form elsewhere around Bintulu, too, including the conical roofs of park shelters and the neighbouring Pasar Utama and Tamu Bintulu markets. bda.gov.my



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*Artist's Impression Only



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