

GLOBAL GUIDE

[Penang]

Penang has been on travellers' maps since the 1600s, when traders sought sanctuary in its sheltered harbours. It includes the eponymous island and a bridge-linked slice of the north-western Malaysian mainland.

Often a stop-off en route to beautiful beach islands such as Langkawi, there's plenty to warrant longer stays. Its main hub, Georgetown, exudes an old Asia charm with its network of narrow streets lined with shophouses, colonial mansions, churches and mosques.

Penang's national park incorporates pristine Pantai Kerachut beach, while an old port-town atmosphere pervades in the Chinese Weld Quay Clan Jetties. Take the cable car up the rainforested slopes of Penang Hill to see grand colonial mansions and sweeping views of the Straits of Malacca, then hit the streets to eat at some of Malaysia's best hawkers stalls.



MALAYSIAN MARVEL

Penang is the little island with big cultural charm, says Kate Simon

The **Eastern & Oriental Hotel** (above) has graced the Penang landscape since 1885 and continues to be one of Asia's supremely elegant lodgings. From March 2013, visitors will be able to check into the new Victory Annexe, a contemporary remodelling of a wing of the hotel that was first opened by its original owners, the Sarkies brothers, in 1923. Choose from 122 slick suites, all of which will have private balconies and sea views, and enjoy the luxury of the new spa, fully equipped gym, and a shopping arcade showcasing top-name brands.

www.eohotels.com

MUSIC, MAESTRO

Shangri-La Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa (right) is helping to keep Asia's musical traditions alive with its own gamelan orchestra.

The 10-strong ensemble entertains guests with ancient melodies once only heard at recitals in the royal houses of the region, played on an authentic collection of drums, xylophones and gongs. Performances are in the Garden Wing Lobby on Wednesdays and Fridays from 6.30pm.

www.shangri-la.com/penang



Past and presence



SPEED MERCHANTS

Check out the dream machines at the new **Harley-Davidson 3S** showroom in Penang. The store's September opening in Juru Auto-City, which also stocks essential accessories, from helmets to riding boots, marked the launch of two covetable new models of the classic motorbike, the Softail Slim and Sportster 72.

www.harleykualalumpur.com



WHITE NIGHTS

A striking example of Penang's colonial architecture has been given a sharp, contemporary makeover. **Macalister Mansion's** all-day restaurant, Dining Room, is already garnering approval for its fusion of Western and local fare. Next, the imposing white mansion will serve up eight suites for those who want to stay the night, too.

www.macalistermansion.com



HOME FRONT

Take a tour of the **House of Yeap Chor Ee**, the home of a Chinese immigrant who rose from being a humble barber to become one of the richest traders in Penang. A new permanent exhibition tells his story and also offers an insight into the development of Penang's Chinese community.

www.houseyce.com

NUMBER CRUNCH

Make a date for dinner at the new **Eighty Eight Restaurant**. Chef-owner Danny Ng is winning over Penang's foodie crowd with a bold menu that isn't afraid to balance delicate dishes such as scallop carpaccio with more robust offerings such as Spanish belly pork slow-cooked in wine and citrus with blackberry jus and truffle-oil infused cauliflower purée.

www.facebook.com/EightyEightPenang

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