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- + Top boutique hotels in Melaka

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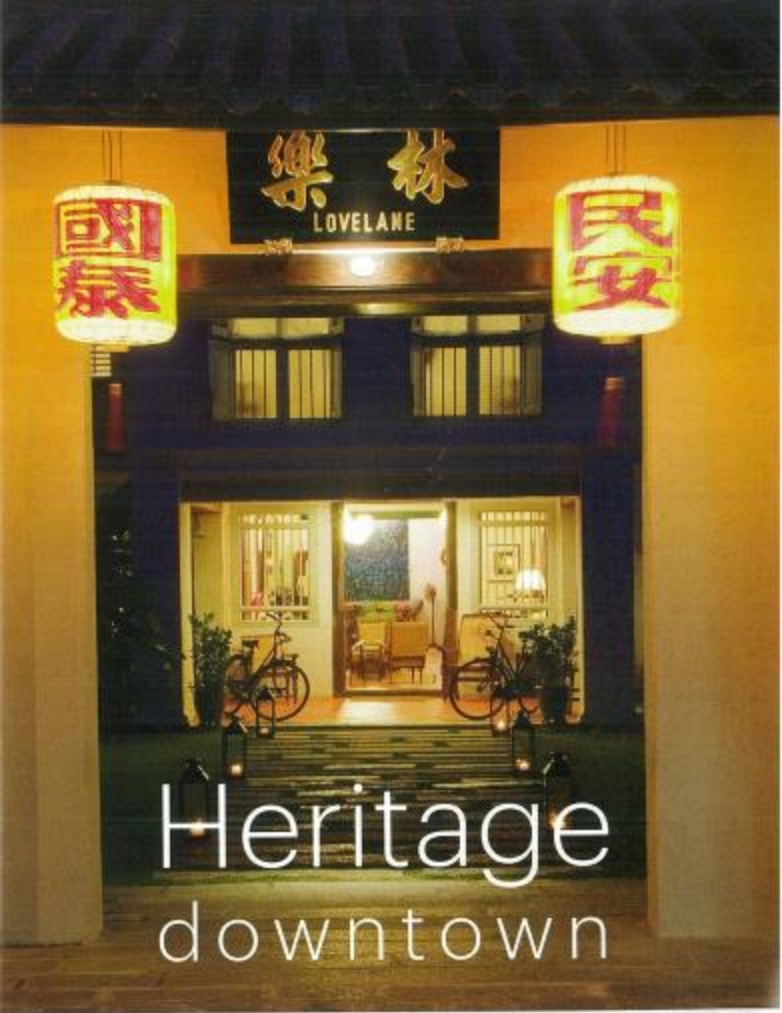
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Penang

Most people will head straight to the island of Penang, dropping by its mainland counterpart for a quick stop before venturing to an island unofficially known as the 'food capital' of the country. Penang is a state of many faces – there's the Unesco World Heritage Site that is George Town, the state's capital, and its dynamic amalgamation of culture and architecture; and then there's the country's smallest national park and thriving plantations. For more information, visit timeoutpenang.com.





Heritage downtown

Kebaya

Seven Terraces Hotel, 2-16 Lorong Stewart, George Town (+604 264 2333/+604 261 2862/kebaya.com.my).

The beautiful décor in this restaurant complements its appealing menu with the Nonya cuisine here prepared using French cooking techniques.

Child-friendly. Credit cards accepted. Daily, 6-10pm. \$\$\$

* Moh Teng Pheow Nyonya Kuih & Canteen

Jalan Masjid, off Lebuh Cinlia, George Town (Next to the back door of the Camera Museum) (+604 261 5832/tb.com/penangnyonyakuih). One of the oldest Nonya kuih

factories has converted a space into a café serving local dishes including nasi lemak, pai tee and laksa. The main draw here is their extensive selection of delicacies including *paht utai*, *haai tolem*, *ondoh-ondoh* and *paht tai tai*.

Tue-Sun, 10.30am-5pm. \$

Seafood

* Ocean Green Seafood & Restaurant

Paramount Hotel, 48F Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, George Town (+604 227 4530/+604 227 2681/paramounthotel.com.my).

One of the oldest seafood restaurants in town, it's popular with locals who have been coming here for years and always seem to order the same

dishes – scuffed crab with cheese, tiger prawns, deep-fried salt and pepper mantis prawns and chilli crab.

Child-friendly. Credit cards accepted. Daily, 12noon-2.30pm & 6-10.30pm. \$\$

South American

Grumpiez Green Pepper Mexican Cantina

27 Jalan Sungai Kedondong, Tanjung Bungah (+6017 448 0250). Chimichangos, chicken fajitas and spicy pork tacos are hard to come by in Penang, which makes Grumpiez a gem in the rough. Grab seats on the patio to enjoy a nice breeze.

Tue-Sun, 12noon-10pm. \$\$

23LOVELANE

Set within a walled courtyard in the Unesco World Heritage Site of George Town, 23LoveLane is a boutique heritage hotel that exudes a relaxed charm. The hotel is housed in a carefully restored property that dates back to the 1800s, and there's a stylish mix of antique furniture and contemporary artworks dotted around the space.

Accommodation at 23LoveLane chiefly consists of four wings – the Anglo Indian Bungalow, the Straits Eclectic Building, the 1920's Jack Annex and the Indian Shop House. There are also additional suites – Muntri Suites and the Stewart Suite – that are situated in pre-war shophouses within walking distance of the main building.

All the rooms are outfitted with modern amenities (yes, WiFi is available) and are delightfully decorated with plenty of space and tranquil views of the garden. There's also a small library



and common area upstairs in the main building for guests to hang out and relax. Should hunger strike, dine at SteakFrites@23. It's located in a charming pre-



war shophouse right next door and serves what are arguably the finest steaks in town. And if you fancy a nightcap, head to the lobby bar where you'll find tropical cocktails and bar snacks.

The hotel lies a mere stone's throw away from various attractions in town, so it's ideally situated if you want to spend the day sightseeing. A tasteful mix of the old and new, 23LoveLane is a gorgeous hotel that's definitely worth the slightly upscale price.

23LoveLane 23, Love Lane, George Town, Penang (+604 262 1323/23lovelane.com).

love the products, as many designs cleverly allude to Penang culture and go heavy on puns.
Mon-Tue, 10am-7pm; Fri-Sun, 10am-10pm.

Pestle & Mortar Clothing

79 Jalan Nagore, George Town (+604 226 5402/pestlemortarclothing.com).
 A labour of love by friends with a shared passion for fashion, Pestle & Mortar produces made-in-Malaysia apparel for trendy urban youth. Comparable to the US's OBEY Clothing but with a dash of Malaysian aesthetics, P&M does our fashion scene proud by encouraging fashionistas to buy local.
Daily, 1-10pm.

Sam's Batik House

183 & 185 Jalan Penang, George Town (+604 262 1085/samsbatikhouse.com).
 This Penang institution has a massive selection of batik, pashmies, bedspreads, bedded purses, bawabs, bags and accessories in every size and colour. There's also an in-house tailoring service for adjustments.
Mon-Sat, 10.30am-8pm.

The Swagger Salon

37 Jalan Gaharu, George Town (+604 226 3081/theswaggersalon.com).
 Hipster culture meets bad boy appeal at The Swagger Salon. We love the local vibes channelled through their apparel emblazoned with local Cantonese slang such as 'yauw' (head honcho, boss man or original gangster) and 'lauw' (stuck up or proud).
The Fri, 12noon-8pm; Sat-Sun, 12noon-8pm.

Malls

Gurney Paragon

Persiaran Gurney (+604 228 8266/gurneyparagon.com).
 Gurney Paragon is a nine-storey premiere shopping mall housing international labels such as Debenhams, Michael Kors, Victoria's Secret and Harvey Norman. The food court has a good selection of stalls and there are a host of other eateries to cater to every food craving.
Daily, 10am-10pm.

Gurney Plaza

Persiaran Gurney (+604 222 8111/gurneyplaza.com.my).
 This is yet another gurneytown mall with high street labels, a

well-stocked supermarket, cineplex, bustling food stalls and restaurants, and even a karaoke joint should you wish to test your pop star potential.
Daily, 10am-10pm.

Queensbay Mall

100 Persiaran Bayan Indah, Bayan Lepas (+604 619 8988/queensbaymall.com.my).
 This five-storey mall is located just a short distance away from the Penang Bridge. There's a comprehensive selection of brands both local and international that ranges from fashion and sports to lifestyle and entertainment. If tummies start growling, there's no shortage of dining choices as well.
Daily, 10.30am-10.30pm.

Markets

★ Air Itam Market

Jalan Pasar, Air Itam.
 The number of fruit and vegetable vendors at Air Itam Market has grown significantly in recent years. Shop here for fresh spices, street food, apparel and Chinese medicine. This market is also home to several popular Penang assam laksa vendors and the celebrated Sisters' Curry Mee.
Daily, 7am onwards.

Batu Ferringhi Night Market

Jalan Batu Ferringhi, Batu Ferringhi.
 Be prepared to haggle at this night market where most goods are sold at 'tourist prices'. This is kitsch at its worst (or best depending how you look at it). It warrants a quick stroll through but no more than that.
Daily, 5pm-late.

Chowrasta Bazaar

Jalan Penang, George Town.
 In operation since 1963, Chowrasta Bazaar has been tempting locals and travellers with its traditional goods, local snacks and street eats. Head to the second floor where stacks of secondhand and comic books are arranged in ceiling-high piles.
Daily, 8.30am-10pm.

Little Penang Street Market

Upper Penang Road, George Town (+6012 475 9079/fb.com/littlepenangcommunity).
 This monthly market serves as a platform for locals who want to sell their arts and crafts, books, clothing and jewellery. It's a fun way to spend the weekend afternoon.
Last Saturday and Sunday of every month, 10am-4pm.

Lorong Kulit Flea Market

Jalan Dato Keramat, George Town

(fb.com/lorongkulit).

This market was once known as 'Thieves' Market since much of the wares were 'illegally procured' and its bad reputation preceded it. Today, the market is less dodgy but also less exciting with eclectic antiques replaced by cheap knick-knacks.
Daily, 6am-1pm.

Occupy Beach Street

Leboh Pantai, George Town (+6017 420 7942/fb.com/occupybeachstreet).
 Endorsed by the Penang State Government, this family-friendly market is a riot of colours and sounds. Look out for the drummer who bangs out tunes on old Milo tin cans.
Every Sunday, 7am-1pm.

Stay

Deluxe

23 Love Lane
 23 Love Lane, George Town (+604 262 1323/23lovelane.com).
 Formerly a private family residence, this boutique hotel is best described as a labour of love, from the detailed renovation works undertaken to restore the original buildings' architecture to the inclusion of the owner's personal collection of Southeast Asian art and antiques. We like the brightly decorated library, which is the ideal place to relax after a day of exploring.

Eastern & Oriental Hotel

10 Leboh Fargahar, George Town (+604 222 2000/ehotel.com).
 The Sarkies brothers were hoteliers who knew that luxury accommodation was necessary in the major entrepôts of Asia. Their first property was the E&O in Penang followed by The Raffles in Singapore and The Strand in Rangoon. Rooms here hark back to an opulent British past but are enhanced with every conceivable mod con.

The Edison

16 Leboh Little, George Town (+604 262 2393/theedisonhotel.com).
 Now a luxury hotel, the building has gone through several drastic changes from being a tycoon's private estate to a brothel and opium den, and even a dance hall. It's now The Edison with tastefully decorated rooms, Appelles Apothecary & Lab toiletries, and complimentary nougat and orange-infused water delivered to the rooms. Hand-woven bags are placed in each room for guests' use – an eco-friendly initiative to eliminate the use of plastic bags, which is another plus point of this hotel.

G Hotel Gurney

168A Persiaran Gurney, George Town (+604 228 0000/ghotel.com.my).