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## THE PERFECT 2-DAY ITINERARY FOR PENANG

February 24, 2018 by Bino — [Leave a Comment](#)

One of Malaysia's most popular destinations, Penang has always beguiled travelers with its age-old shophouses, fantastic street cuisine as well as enviable beaches. I have been to Penang quite a number of times over the years and there is always something new to check out with each visit. Whether you are a history buff or a foodie, this island off the Andaman Sea will always have something to offer. For a mix of all that Penang is known for (food, history, new attractions, etc), here is a well-balanced itinerary that you can easily do over a weekend in Penang.

### DAY 1 – GEORGETOWN

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Georgetown is an excellent place to start in the island. Choc-full of colonial buildings, charming shophouses, temples, mosques and fantastic places to eat. People come here to do two things – to see the heritage buildings and street art or to eat some of Penang's specialties – so the amount of time you spend here will depend on your interest level in the two activities.

Georgetown is generally walkable and should not take more than 20 or 25 minutes from one end to another. However, it can get searing hot especially during midday so you may want to take public transport. I personally take UBER or Grab. Point to point rides in Georgetown typically range from 3 to 5 MYR.



*boy on motorbike street art in penang*

The heritage zone has plenty of street art and you can easily spend an entire day hunting them down. To the casual visitor, one of the most popular is the **Boy on Motorbike** (12 Lebuh Ah Quee), a 3D artwork consisting of a painting of a boy against an actual motorbike. It's also a good idea to come here early in the morning before a small queue forms over those wishing to take a photo of the street art.

Next, head to the nearby **Khoo Kongsi** (18 Cannon Square) for what is one of the most intricately designed clan houses in Southeast Asia. Similar in purpose to those found in places like Singapore, Hoi An, Melaka, etc – these clan houses served as the headquarters of family associations. There is an entrance fee of MYR 10 – pretty steep for a temple in Malaysia but worth it for the architecture. On certain evenings, Khoo Kongsi is also floodlit which makes the building's details stand out even more. Information on the evening light up schedule can be found [here](#).

From here, it is just a short walk to the **Kapitan Keling Mosque** (14 Jalan Buckingham), by far the most picturesque among Georgetown's Islamic buildings. The mosque was built in the 1800s by Penang's Tamil Muslim community and is today recognized as one of Malaysia's most prominent mosques.



*penang's blue mansion*

It is a short stroll to the **Pinang Peranakan Museum** (29 Church Street) which showcases a home typical of a wealthy family from Baba Nyonya origins that are unique to cities along the Straits of Malacca (Melaka, Penang, Singapore and Phuket to an extent). There are over 1,000 antiques inside and you can easily spend hours marveling at the house. For an insightful look into Baba Nyonya culture, join one of the free guided tours. Alternatively, you can head over to the photogenic **Blue Mansion**, another one of Georgetown's famous houses that's open to visitors.





*delicious nasi ulam at auntie gaik lean's*

If you are feeling peckish by this time, I can't recommend **Auntie Gaik Lean's** enough for its delightful Baba Nyonya cuisine. Top of my list of dishes to order is the **Nasi Ulam** (rice salad) and Sambal Fish. Make sure to try the refreshing **Nutmeg Juice** as well. Alternatively, **Sri Weld Food Court** down the road has one of the best nasi lemak in Penang.

The searing afternoon heat gives you enough reasons to chill a bit at the plush and historic **Eastern and Oriental Hotel**. Similar to the Raffles Hotel in Singapore and The Strand in Yangon, the E&O was built by the Sarkies Brothers in the 1800s and is today undoubtedly the most luxurious hotel in Georgetown. Food here is pretty good. Purists may slam me for saying that I prefer the *char kway teow* here but the extra servings of cockles and extra large prawns really won me over.



*fine views at the new observation deck in komtar*

Sunset is a great time to head up to **Komtar**, the tallest building in Penang and once a glaring white elephant. In recent years, a private company has turned it into a tourist attraction after building 2 extra floors and a rooftop observation deck with a section made in glass. It is a must-see during the blue hour – against the sunset, city lights and the lights coming up on the glass observation deck.

Have a relaxing evening at **Love Lane**, a small alley containing plenty of bars, restaurants and backpacker guesthouses.



## DAY 2 – PENANG HILL, KEK LOK SI AND BATU FERRINGHI

Spend your second day exploring attractions further afield, namely Penang Hill, Kek Lok Si as well as Batu Ferringhi.





*canopy walk at the habitat in penang hill*

Start the day early and head up to Penang Hill before the crowds do. The typical way up for most visitors is via the tram. The top affords stunning views of the entire island. For an even higher view, head up to the new attraction called “The Habitat” for an educational guided tour of the local flora as well as the treetop walk and canopy walk.

“ For a taste of Penang’s coffee culture, head to Mugshot Cafe at Chulia Street. Aside from coffee, the venue is also known for its freshly-made bagel muffins.

Afterwards, head to Kek Lok Si (you might want to take a ride sharing service such as Uber or Grab). While there is certainly no shortage of temples in Penang or in Southeast Asia in general, this particular temple is a must-see for its hillside setting. The highlight of the temple is the hard-to-miss seven storey pagoda containing 10,000 statues of Buddha.

“ There is an endless list of hawker food to try in Penang including char kway teow and fried oysters. The best fried oyster place in Penang is said to be at Seng Thor Coffee Shop at Carvarvon Street.

It’ll well be mid-afternoon by the time you finish which is good enough reason to end your day at Batu Ferringhi – the most accessible stretch of beach in Penang. The area is lined by several resorts and I would personally

recommend having dinner while watching the sunset. Do note that sunset in Penang occurs pretty late, at around 7:30PM usually.

## WHERE TO STAY IN PENANG

Penang's hotels are usually quite affordable even in the 4-star or 5-star categories so I would suggest splurging a bit for a more refined stay. Here are my recommendations after visiting Penang a number of times:

In Georgetown, staying at **Eastern and Oriental Hotel** is like hitting two birds with one stone. It is in itself a tourist attraction. At the same time, you get to bask in colonial luxury. Stay in the newer Victory Annex for some fine seaside views.

In Batu Ferringhi, the **Parkroyal Penang Resort** is a good family-friendly midrange option. The **Shangri-la Rasa Sayang Resort** is the place to go if you're looking to stay at Penang's most luxurious hotel. The Rasa Wing in particular is noted for having a gigantic outdoor tub!

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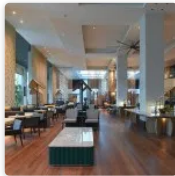
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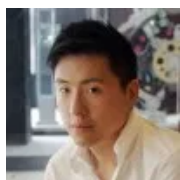


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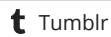
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