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TRAVEL ([HTTPS://MEGFABULOUS.COM/TRAVEL/](https://megfabulous.com/travel/)), / 📍 PENANG, MALAYSIA

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## 48 HOURS IN PENANG



The island of Penang, best known for its food, was the second stop on our Malaysian adventure. It was clear skies and sunshine when we landed, a welcome change from the heavy rain showers in Kuala Lumpur. Once again we made use of the free airport Wi-fi and ordered a Grab to the hotel for a grand sum of RM25 (£5/6 USD). Eager for food and a nice tan, we debated where to eat and what time to hit the pool during the 30-minute drive to our hotel.

The service in Malaysia is amazing which I love as 'acts of service' is my second love language. We checked into the Eastern & Oriental hotel which is absolutely *stunning*. We stayed in the Victory Annexe Wing as the Heritage Wing is currently being renovated. Our rooms were spacious with sea views from the balcony and a large bathroom with a rolltop bath and double sinks. Hospitality at the front desk is amazing and they accommodated our request for neighbouring rooms. I disliked a few things about the hotel such as the slow-to-respond wait staff at breakfast but I would definitely stay here again.





We wandered around the local area in search of food and ended up at an Indian restaurant due to the Nigerian waiter catching our eye – not like that, we were just happy to see one of *us*. The owner insisted we try his infamous Tandoor Chicken, claiming it's the best on the island. I never eat Indian food but he was 100% right. Not only did he give us a complimentary starter to try but he recommended the lamb chops and suggested we order food to share. I still dream about that garlic naan bread every night!

On our way back to the hotel we stumbled upon Ri Cafe at Bahari Parade, enticed by a chalkboard with the word 'cake'. One thing that pleasantly surprised me about Malaysia is how good the cake is *everywhere*. The scent of fresh banana bread greeted us as we walked through the door. The owners are super friendly and hospitable. We got to know them and discovered their individual baking specialities as we ordered dessert. Ais and Diane welcomed us back on our subsequent visits throughout our stay. If you visit Penang, you have to go here!









After dessert, it was straight to the poolside to catch the sunset over a cocktail. The Lychee Martini was to die for and definitely the best drink I had during my entire trip. The E&O isn't the most family-friendly hotel which means the pool is pretty quiet. I mostly observed an older clientele which I didn't mind. We stayed until it was time for dinner, watching the sky turn into the most beautiful shade of pink. Unlike nearby Singapore, the sunsets lasted longer than 3 minutes which was cool.





For dinner, we visited a local Chinese restaurant for dinner recommended by the owner of the Indian restaurant before doing drinks by the sea at Beach Blanket Babylon. The view was nice and the dessert was amazing but the cocktails were lacklustre. After a few sips, I left the girls and headed back to the room for a luxurious bath in the gorgeous tub before heading to bed.

I woke up (was dragged out of bed by my cousin) the next morning to do yoga before breakfast. Hatha yoga is not for me, but at least I finally made use of a hotel exercise class. Breakfast, however, was amazing. The spread was plentiful, a mixture of Western and Asian cuisine. My favourite thing was the made-to-order noodle station with a Chef who made an amazing Char Kwey Teow. I also lived for the fresh fruit and fruit juice and helped myself to a slice of banana cake from the pastry section on the way out. I could have sworn I saw ice cream available too!



The intense heat brought out our lazy side and all we wanted to do was lounge by the pool and sip on cocktails. We all appreciated the joy of doing nothing besides eating and popping bottles by the pool given our busy lives back home. I especially valued the joy of nothingness having spent most if not all of my recent trips on the go. It reminded me that there is no single way to enjoy travel and relaxation is everything. That's another reason why I love multi-centre trips, you can have variety and adjust the pace accordingly. ▲

For the final night of our short stay in Penang, we visited yet another Chinese restaurant. It was very unassuming from the outside but super busy. It was our best meal in Penang and a strong contender for one of the best meals during our trip. We ate like Queens, even ordering extra food (fried rice) without breaking the bank.

We definitely didn't explore Penang as much as we could have but we did make the most of our fabulous hotel. It was a great experience but we were also super excited to move on to our third and final destination...Terengganu.

## TOP TIPS FOR YOUR TRIP TO PENANG:

- We spent two nights in Penang but three would have been ideal. I don't think you need to stay much longer as there are so many other places to see in Malaysia.
- Honestly, I don't know if I would recommend travelling solo here as a Black woman. There was a lot of staring and attempted photo taking.
- Unlike Kuala Lumpur, they don't weigh your bags at Penang airport. We learnt the hard way after strategically repacking our luggage the night before a 6 am wake up call.
- When connecting on a domestic flight in KLIA2, you arrive at one gate and simply walk to the gate where your next flight departs from. This means you could book connecting flights with just an hour gap in between but you'd need to have your boarding passes printed.
- You can't download an e-boarding pass via the AirAsia app if there's more than one person on the booking. It's super annoying and illogical given this functionality exists elsewhere. Keep this in mind and pre-print boarding passes where possible or factor in time to print them at the kiosks.

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