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Travel & Food

4 luxury heritage hotels in George Town, Penang, that will transport you back in time

An authentic experience at the Eastern & Oriental, Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, The Edison George Town or the Seven Terraces will transport you back to Penang's British Malaya

Topic | Luxury Hotels**Julia Low**

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Whether you're a local or a tourist, Penang is always a good idea. The historical Malaysian state oozes culture and charisma, embracing modernity while preserving its colonial heritage with pride. Wildly popular for its delicious street food and traditional architecture, George Town, the vibrant capital city of Penang, is also a famed Unesco World Heritage Site. The next time you're in town for a visit, be sure to check in to one of these charming heritage hotels for an authentic experience that will transport you back to Penang's British Malaya past.




Wildly popular for its delicious street food and traditional architecture, George Town, the vibrant capital city of Penang, is also a famed Unesco World Heritage Site

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Eastern & Oriental Hotel





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Established in 1885 by the Sarkies Brothers, this ocean-facing accommodation offers five-star luxuries in a prime location along Farquhar Street. Fondly known as the E&O, the cherished hotel is steeped in history, having been a steady presence in Penang throughout the two world wars, the wane of the British Empire, and the birth of Malaysia. The E&O also once counted literary legends Rudyard Kipling, Mary Pickford and Hermann Hesse as guests.

A century on, the distinguished grandeur of the E&O remains evident throughout expansive property, complete with 24-hour butler service, state-of-the-art conveniences, and stunning views of the Andaman Sea. While the original Heritage Wing is closed for renovations until December, guests can continue to enjoy modern comforts afforded by the plush, colonial-style guestrooms in the Victory Annexe that boasts 132 suites with grand marble bathrooms. Business travellers will appreciate the fully equipped business centre as well as front desk help for courier services, currency exchange and limousine transfers.

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Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion



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A different kinda breakfast view. Thanks
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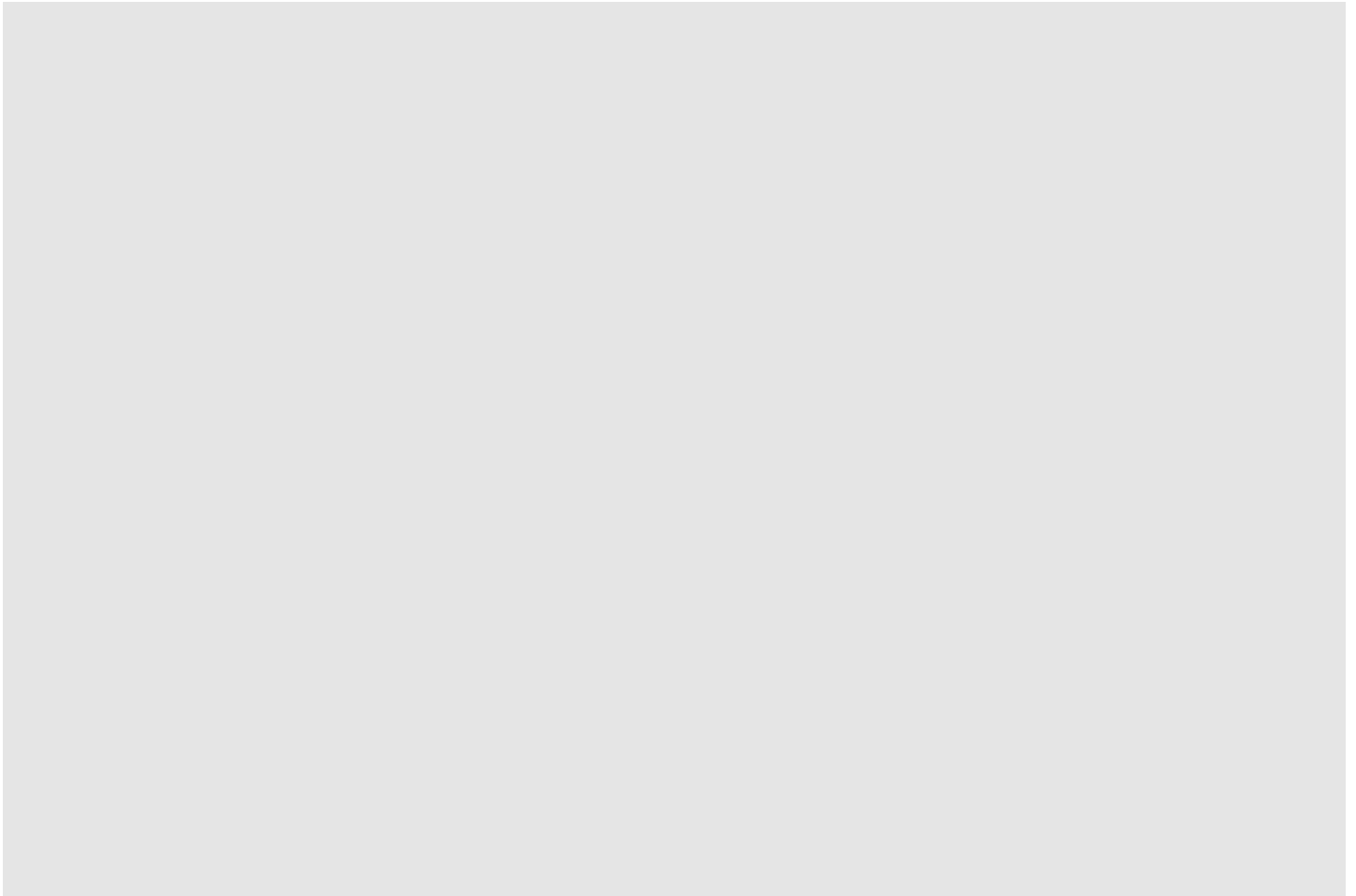
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Time stands still within the indigo walls of the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, also known as the Blue Mansion. Built in the 19th century by businessman and politician Cheong Fatt Tze, the majestic property seamlessly melds Chinese and Western architecture to create an arresting look that showcases fine Hakka and Teochew artistry. In the past, the mansion served as a home for Cheong Fatt Tze's family and a base for his commercial enterprises. Today, it is a beautifully restored historical attraction with daily guided tours as well as one of George Town's most iconic boutique hotels.

The heritage building features 18 boutique rooms and suites elaborately furnished according to four themes: Liang, Ming, Tang and Han. While some are decorated with memorabilia from the 50s, others are adorned with precious heirlooms from the Cheong family's private collection. The Tang suites come equipped with a jacuzzi and direct access to the outdoor pool – either is perfect for a relaxing dip any time of the day. What really put Cheong Fatt Tze on the map though is of course, [its glitzy appearance in the film *Crazy Rich Asians* \[11\]](#) .

The Edison George Town



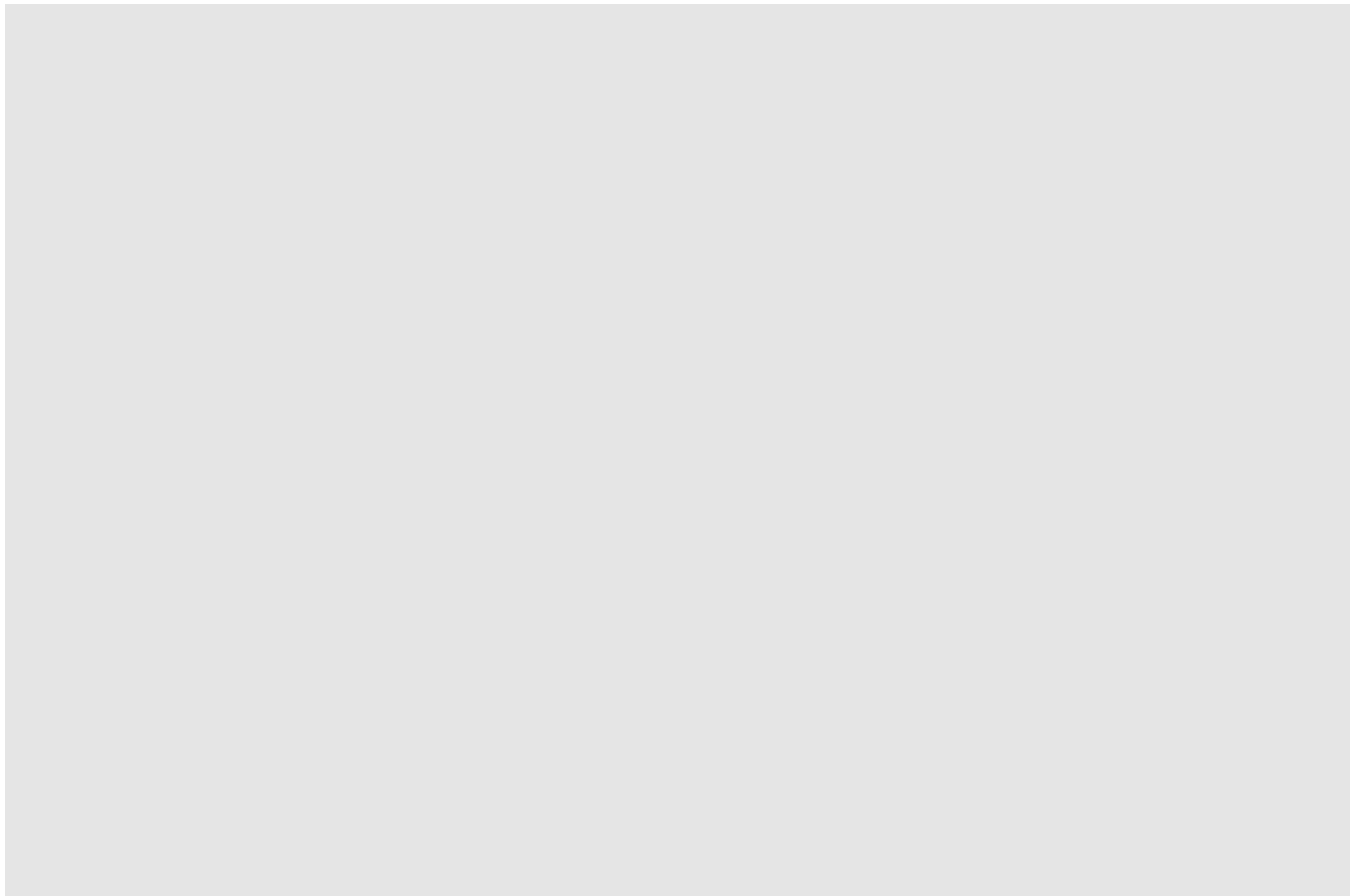
The Edison. Photo: Facebook

Nestled on the edge of the Unesco World Heritage Site and on one of Penang's oldest streets, The Edison offers a serene stay just a short distance from the bustling tourist spots. Like several other properties in the area where wealthy Hakka tycoons used to live (the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion is nearby), The Edison was built as a residence for businessman Yeo Wee Gark in 1906. It was converted into a hotel after World War II and underwent several refurbishments over the years under different hands. The hotel, as it stands today, is the result of a meticulous restoration carried out from 2014-2016, which breathed new life into its decor and facilities while retaining the original architecture and fixtures, such as the cast iron columns, marble flooring and colourful Peranakan tiles. Now an indulgent retreat where guests are treated to pre-dinner wine and chocolates on their pillows, The Edison will make you feel like royalty.

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Seven Terraces



Seven Terraces

Situated along Stewart Lane is a row of interlinked shophouses that make up Seven Terraces, a classic beauty in its own right and labour of love by hotelier Christopher Ong. A fifth-generation Peranakan baba, Ong acquired the dilapidated building and transformed it into an impressive establishment that consistently tops the lists of best heritage hotels. The Anglo-Chinese building evokes a sense of nostalgia as soon as you step in, the rosewood furniture, blue-and-white porcelain ware, and precious antiques all contributing to the space that artfully doubles as a repository for Peranakan culture.

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The flats and duplex suites boast spacious living areas and modern amenities, including rain showers and Bose speakers. There are plenty of places to unwind, from the open-air courtyard to the library lounge and lap pool. Round off the cultural experience by dining at the hotel's Kebaya restaurant that specialises in delicious baba Nyonya food.

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