

# Sand in my Curles

Select Page



## Penang: Where to Stay to Make the Most of Your Holiday



When you are planning your trip to Penang, where to stay is the most crucial feature that can make or break your holiday.

There are so many hotels in [Penang, Malaysia](#). And a lot of blogs list them off like Trip Advisor. But the ones I've picked for you below are special. Most of these hotels, especially the ones in Georgetown, are unique to Penang.

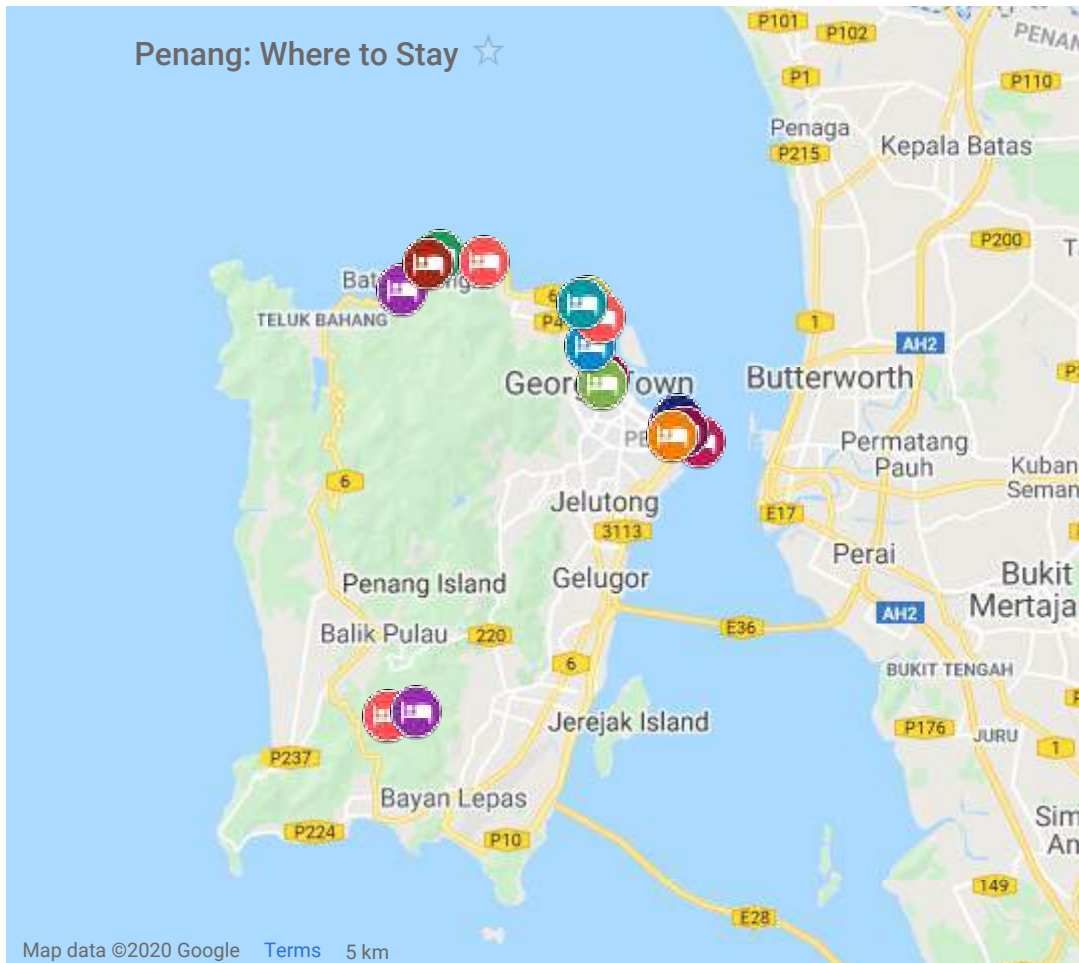
You can always find a cheap hotel in Penang. Some hostels are only RM20 a night. I haven't chosen by cheap, I've chosen by awesome! Some are affordable, some are expensive, choose your poison.

It's almost impossible to choose the best hotel in Penang. So I've chosen my faves... all 17 of them, across six neighborhoods. Each neighborhood I review is vastly different and not for everyone. I hope it helps because this blog was a whopper to write.

If you're not sure where to stay in Penang, you are in the right place. I'm an insider who knows this island like the back of my hand. Grab a glass of wine, settle in, and take notes. I've got you covered.

Let's dig in.

But first... a map.



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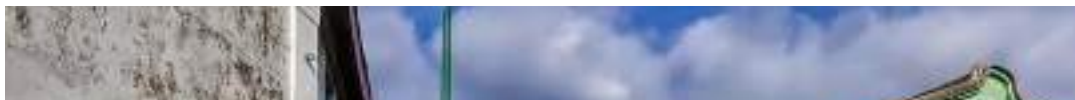
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Georgetown or George Town? It depends





Georgetown or George Town it depends on who is writing it. And both sides vehemently think they are right. I use both, so that means I AM definitely right!

Georgetown is the capital of Penang. It's trendy yet steeped in history. It's modern yet traditional.

In 2008, an area of George Town became a UNESCO heritage zone meaning the architecture and cultural landscape must remain as it was in the olden days. It's like an open-air museum. It feels like you are taking a step back in time when you wander the rabbit warren of streets.

So, get lost, meander down the narrow streets, talk to the locals, and you'll be treated to a feast for the senses.

George Town is the best area to stay in Penang if you only have a few days. Everything is within walking distance, there is an exciting concoction of modern skyscrapers and Hindu temples and everything in between.

And the food is TO.DIE.FOR. Not just the traditional hawker food but the cute little [cafes and high-end restaurants](#).

Staying in Georgetown means having everything at your fingertips without going too far.

## Georgetown is for you if you are a:

Culture craver

[Foodie](#)

Art lover

[Night owl](#)

## Georgetown is NOT for you if you are a:

Beach lover

Nature lover

Those are found elsewhere on Penang island. Don't worry, I'll get to that. Or better yet, hop a 17 minute plane the island of Langkawi. But first read [My Ultimate Langkawi Itinerary](#).



## What to see and do in Georgetown:

- Grab a street art map or wander the streets and find all the famous and not so famous murals.

- Step inside the [Khoo Kongsi](#), a Chinese clan house dating back to the mid 19th century.
- Eat. Then eat some more. Walk around. And then eat again.
- Visit all the religious sites: Kek Lok Si, Kapitan Keling Mosque,
- Check out the treetop walk at the [Habitat](#).
- Check out local artist's shops like Jonathan Yun, a jeweler that makes very cool sculptural jewelry inspired by nature. Right next door is Shop Howard, a local photographer. And then find Fuan Wong's glass studio where you'll find bowls and sculptures in every size and shape.
- Visit the historic mansions like the [Cheong Fatt Tze](#) and Peranakan Mansions.
- Follow your senses in Little India—between the blaring Bollywood music, the incense burning, and the fragrant curries cooking, you might go into sensory overload.



Where to eat in Georgetown:

1. Red garden Hawker Center
2. Chulia Street food stalls
3. Kimberly Street food stalls
4. What the Duck-for quack lovers
5. gēn 根 communal table for masterful fine dining (next to Prestige Hotel)
6. Kebaya at Seven Terraces for Nyonya fine dining

## Georgetown, Penang: Where to Stay

### [Seven Terraces \(\\$\\$\\$\\$\)](#)

This one gets my vote for the best hotel in Georgetown, Penang.



I know some people disagree and say it's the [E & O](#) (Eastern and Oriental Hotel \$\$\$\$), so let me compare them for you.

The E & O is a gorgeous, old colonial hotel that has just been through a major rehaul. It's one of the first luxury hotels in Penang and is almost 135 years old.



They have personalized butler service. They will pack and unpack for you. You could probably have someone pre-chew your food for you. It is the highest level of luxury you can find in Penang. You will want for nothing!



Everything about it is wonderful, and I suggest you stay there at some point in your life.

However, the reason why I love Seven Terraces is that I prefer smaller places. The E & O feels like a stunning resort to me. Seven Terraces feels like you are staying at your very extravagant, very wealthy, Auntie's home.

It has been lovingly restored using methods and furniture from a bygone era. It's like staying in a museum. When you walk in, you feel transported to a different time, one where opium dens were considered the norm, and every detail is opulent.

There is a small pool to relax by.

Seven Terraces doesn't have butler service level of luxury, it is less expensive, and has oodles of character. You can't go wrong with either choice. It's just up to your style. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

### [The Cheong Fatt Tze - The Blue Mansion \(\\$\\$\\$\)](#)



This one is another stunner. It's inside one of the most iconic mansions in Penang. It is history.

Every time we have visitors, we take them on a tour of this elegant mansion. Cheong Fatt Tze played a vital role in making Penang what it is today. He was the Rockefeller of the East! He established banks, became Deputy Minister, and a senator in parliament.

There are only 18 rooms with ornate furniture from the 19th century. Each room has art and antiques from the Cheong Fatt Tze family.

It's another place that makes you feel like you're are stepping back in time.

The hotel and outdoor swimming pool portion of the mansion are roped off to the public, so you won't find randos hanging out near your room.

There is a bar that is seriously stunning and a restaurant called Indigo that is delicious. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

### [Prestige Hotel Penang \(\\$\\$\)](#)



It's unlike any other hotel in Penang.

It's where to stay in George Town, Penang if you don't give a rat's a\*\* about staying in a heritage house. It's cool, it's sexy, it's Instagram-able if you're into that kinda thing. Even their 24-hour gym is chic – it has chandeliers.

It's ultra-modern. It has brass and pastel everything, with pops of jungle green in the wallpaper and glorious plants. There is a real glamour to the place that blends old world accents with modern touches. I can totally imagine Marilyn Monroe or Sophia Loren sipping cocktails in the pool.

They have a saltwater rooftop infinity pool to cool down after a long day of exploring the UNESCO world heritage area just outside your doorstep.



There are four different types of rooms, but if money were no object, and I was a lady-baller, I'd stay in the Loft Suite. It's a duplex: the lounge is on the main floor, and the bedroom is upstairs with what appears to be a levitating bed.

What can I say? I'm obsessed! [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

### [The ATTIC Hotel \(\\$\)](#)





It's a cute little hotel with 17 completely renovated rooms, right in the thick of it all. It's quirky, it's colorful, and it's perfect for a quick stay in Penang. The room is a bit smaller than the others on this list, but so is the price.

All the rooms have walk-in showers and mini-bar. It's cute but basic, and some of the rooms have little balconies to sit on and enjoy the breeze. If not, you can take your coffee out on the charming sundeck and watch the world go by. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

Now you know where to stay in Georgetown. Let's move north to an area called Persiaran Gurney, otherwise known as Gurney Drive.

### Gurney Drive



This area is all about shopping, eating, and convenience. There are two major shopping malls – Gurney Plaza and Gurney Paragon – basically right next to each other, with grocery stores, gyms, movie theaters, and shopping galore.

I personally don't think Gurney is the best place to stay in Penang, especially if you only have a few days. There really isn't a lot of culture there, but it only takes a few minutes to get into town with a Grab.

However, it is perfect if you are a shopper and need those kinds of conveniences within walking distance.

### Gurney Drive is for you if:

- You are a shopaholic
- You'd rather go to movies than explore the city

### Gurney Drive is NOT for you if:

- You want an authentic experience of Penang

### What to see and do in Gurney Drive:

- [Shop](#), of course
- Find a spa in one of the malls to get pampered
- See a Chinese, Hindu, Malay movie with English Subtitles
- Check out the [Thai Wat Chaiya Mangkalaram](#) and [Dharmikarama Burmese Temples](#) nearby

### Where to Eat in Gurney Drive

1. Coco Island
2. Gurney Hawker Food Stalls near the roundabout
3. Inside Gurney Plaza, there are a bunch of restaurants in the basement.
4. Inside Gurney Paragon, there is a food court on the 5th floor.
5. Bali Hai for dim sum in the morning

## Persiaran Gurney, Penang: Where to stay

There are two G Hotels in the Gurney drive area. They are right behind one another and have a killer location next to the malls. If you've come to shop, this is where to stay. In my opinion, the G's are the only place to stay in the area, but in no way a bargain.

There are other hotels, but they are rather run-down, so I am not suggesting them here. If you stay at one, you can use the facilities of the other so you can explore both hotels.

## The G Hotel Gurney (\$\$\$)



This hotel is a luxurious five-star property to chill out in for a few days. They received the Style & Innovation Hotel of the Year in 2019, and they deserve it. Even the lobby is well designed with unique touches. They have 312 rooms and suite, a fully equipped gym, and you can join their yoga, fitness, and weight classes.

The 25-meter infinity swimming pool has city views and a bar. The Danai Spa is a high-end spa that provides top-notch services. They also have an art gallery with rotating exhibitions.

There are 3 bars and a restaurant on site. The lobby bar has an excellent happy hour special: buy one/free one mixed drinks, beer, and wine.

Miraku is a privately owned Japanese sushi place inside the hotel. On Saturdays, they have a sushi buffet that is drool-worthy.

They have free bicycles to explore the area, and the world heritage site of Georgetown isn't far away. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

### [G Hotel Kelawai \(\\$\\$\\$\)](#)



This is a smaller hotel with only 208, luxuriously appointed rooms. The rooms are very sleek and modern, it's the younger sister of the G on Gurney.



There is a rooftop infinity pool with insane views of half of the island. It also where you'll find the Gravity Bar, a very cool place to spend the evening. Enjoy sundowners while listening to some chill music by the bar. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

Let's keep moving north to the next couple of burbs–Tanjung Tokong and Tanjung Bungah. Both of these neighboring burbs are about 15-20 minutes from Georgetown.

### Tanjung Tokong /Tanjung Bungah



Let me start off by saying I live in Tanjung Bungah. It's a great place to live, but I miss having the liveliness of Georgetown at my doorsteps. However, the trade-off is the ocean. We couldn't move to an island, across the planet, and not see the sea daily. Living in Georgetown means no oceanfront condos, so it wasn't a choice for us.

I get to wake up every morning to birds chirping, monkeys playing, and the ocean meeting the bluest of skies. It feels like paradise, and not a day goes by when I don't recognize that.

That being said, it's a sleepy little town to stay in. However, it is very central to both Batu Ferringhi and Georgetown. Only about 15 minutes in either direction gets us to town or the beaches of Batu.

Even though it is a nice place to stay in Penang, there aren't a lot of nice hotels here. It's not touristy. This area is chock full of expats, locals, and families. It's a good area to stay in if you are wondering what expat life could look like.



Tanjung Bungah is about 45 minutes away from the Penang International Airport.

There are a lot of serviced apartments that are new. Most are more upscale than the hotels in the hood, but the prices aren't. A serviced apartment is similar to a hotel, but you don't get daily cleaning service. It's more likely to be weekly.

If you are that messy or high-maintenance, and need someone to clean up after you daily, then stay in a hotel.

Tanjung Tokong/Bungah is for you if:

The beach and water sports are essential for you  
You want to be near things but not in them

## Tanjung Tokong/Bungah is NOT for you if:

You like a lot of action

If you want attractions nearby

## What to see and do in Tanjung Tokong/Bungah:

- [Avatar Gardens](#)
- Sea Pearl Temple
- Kayak to Pulau Tikus from the Penang Water Sport Center
- Jet ski from one of the hotels
- Visit the Floating Mosque
- Check out the ships at [Straits Quay Marina](#)



## Where to eat in Tanjung Tokong/Bungah:

1. Homestyle
2. Viva Foodcourt
3. Fu Shen food court
4. Sri Ananda Bawan
5. Let's Meat
6. Howaitokuren Japanese

## 7. The Wine Shop

Tanjung Tokong, Penang: Where to Stay

[Jazz Hotel \(\\$\)](#)



This one's a newbie on the scene. It is located right next to Tesco, a large grocery store. It is also a hop away from Straits Quay Marina, which has restaurants, bars, and some shops.

Right when you walk in the lobby, you'll feel the jazzy vibes. There are musical references and quotes all around, but not in a cheesy way. It is rather modern and fresh.

They have a rooftop infinity pool, a sea view gym, and a couple of bars. There are 2 restaurants: Jazz Feast has all-day dining, and Kitano is Japanese.

Some nights they have free live jazz in their lounge with really great local acts that pack the house. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

## [The Landmark \(\\$\\$\)](#)



It's a serviced apartment. It is in the Tanjung Tokong area. It's centrally located to a ton of restaurants, a grocery store, food stalls, and a short hike to Gurney Plaza to get your shop on.

They have studios and 2 and 3 bedroom apartments with all the amenities of a hotel. They have a rooftop garden and playground, a yoga cabana, a gym, a reading room, and an infinity pool. The studios are big here, around 800 sqft and have a full kitchen with a seating area, a separate living area, and a balcony (some have views of the sea).

**[Check here for the latest prices](#)**

Ok, let's keep moving north-northwest to Tanjung Bungah.

## Tanjung Point (\$\$)



This serviced apartment that is relatively new to the Tanjung Bungah scene. They have a total of 98 rooms, so it's not massive. You can choose from a studio, a 2-bedroom, or a 3-bedroom apartment.

The studio is like a traditional hotel room with a little sitting table to work or eat on.

The 2-bedroom has 2 bathrooms and a kitchen.

The 3-bedroom has three baths so you'll have plenty of privacy.

Some units have balconies overlooking the ocean, and there is a massive infinity pool overlooking the beach. There are a laundry room and a health club, as well as a convenience store on-site. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

## Hompton By The Beach \$\$



This 4-star property was built in 2018. It is directly on the beach. Across the street is one of the largest hawker centers in the area; you'll never go hungry.

They are 240 rooms that are all sea view. All the rooms are modern, with clean lines and pale grey accents; its very chic. The bathroom is all glassed in so you can shower while looking at the view. But if you want privacy, draw the shades, so no one sees you doing your "business."

There are somethings that I never want Mark to see, so I'm thankful for those shades! [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

Drive about 15 minutes west along the coast, and you'll get to Batu Ferringhi.

## Batu Ferringhi Beach





Batu Ferringhi Beach is where to stay for beaches. Let me preface that by saying Penang is not known for its wonderful beaches. However, if you need a fix, this is where to go.

It's about an hour from the Penang International Airport. Some hotel websites tell you it's less, but that's a lie.

Batu Ferringhi is for you if:

- All you want is beaches
- You'd rather have the ocean than the city

Batu Ferringhi is NOT for you if:

- You want to see all the stuff in George Town

What to see and do in Batu Ferringhi







- Sundowners on Ferringhi Beach at Bora Bora and Frandy's. If you're feeling swanky, then go to the Shangri-La's Rasa Saya Resort.
- Night Market
- Get bespoke clothes made at any number of tailors

These next few places aren't IN Batu Ferringhi, but they aren't more than a 15-20 minutes' drive.

- [Escape Theme Park](#)
- [Entopia Butterfly Garden](#)
- Penang Batik Factory
- Penang National Park
- [Tropical Spice Garden](#)

### Where to eat in Batu Ferringhi:

1. The Living Room
2. Ferringhi Garden
3. I Love You Hawker Center

Batu Ferringhi, Penang: Where to Stay:

[Rasa Sayang \(\\$\\$\\$\)](#)



It's a Shangri-La property, so you know it's good. It's a luxurious five-star resort right along the Batu Ferringhi beachfront. It's rather large with 304 rooms, but the property is expansive, so you never feel like you're on top of your neighbor (unless you're into that sort of thing).

There are five restaurants and bars to choose from. A large swimming pool to relax in and a daily shuttle to George Town for exploring. But I wouldn't blame you if you never left the lush grounds. Chi, The Spa, has the pampering side of your holiday down. They offer services you never knew you needed. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

## [Hard Rock Hotel Penang: \(\\$\\$\)](#)



This is precisely what you'd expect from a Hard Rock Hotel. All the rock n roll memorabilia you've been missing. There are 250 stylish rooms not to be outdone by the 26,000 square feet of swimming pools and water slides for the kiddos.

There is the right mix between catering to the adults and the kids. The Roxity Kids Club for the youngsters, the Tabu Teens Club for the next gen, and the bar and spa for the rest. If you're into yoga, you can get a Rock Om yoga mat delivered t your room, free of charge. Flip on your TV to one of the three yoga on-demand channels and get zen. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

## [Lone Pine Boutique Hotel: \(\\$\\$\\$\)](#)



If you've been reading my blog, you know I'm a fan of this place. I wrote an extensive [review of the hotel](#) and the [Pure Energy Spa](#), so I won't get into that much detail here.

But suffice to say, this is my FAVE place in Batu Ferringhi. It's small, with only 90 spread out rooms, and it feels like you're back in colonial times when you're swinging in the hammock on the lawn.

Oh, and the best part of the rooms? The bathtub on the balcony! Yep! You read that right! [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

## [DoubleTree Resort by Hilton \(\\$\\$\)](#)



This resort is where to stay in Penang with the family. They have a large family room that has a king bed and a twin bed, so there is plenty of room. They offer babysitting services as well.

But the cherry on top of the sundae is (drumroll please) Teddyville, a teddy-bear themed museum. I know this is going to shock you, but it's Malaysia's first teddy bear museum. Surprisssee!

Anyway, I digress.

There are 316 rooms, some have ocean view balconies. There is a large outdoor pool, a spa, and a health club to keep you busy. There are three food options to choose from, but you can walk across the street to the beach and a load of food stalls. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

And now for the most remote part of the island called Balik Pulau. Start driving south from Batu, and you'll end up in the "back of the island," otherwise known as Balik Pulau.

It's really not remote, but compared to the rest of the island, it's like night and day. There are rice paddies, jungles, and fishing villages, no high rises, and fancy malls.

### Balik Pulau



This area is very local and doesn't get much tourism apart from a couple of day tours. It is the real daily life of Penangites. We take people there for scooter tours and to show them another side of Penang.

Both of the hotels I'm recommending are for truly getting away. I don't suggest them if you have three days here because the sites are all in Georgetown, 45 minutes away. However, Penang International Airport is only 25 minutes away.

## Balik Pulau is for you if:

You want to hide away in the jungle  
You want to be at one with nature

## Balik Pulau is NOT for you if:

You hate bugs  
Want to see all the sites in Georgetown  
You get bored easily

## What to see and do in Balik Pulau

- Visit the durian farms
- Pet baby goats at the [Saanen Dairy Goat](#) farm
- Take a bike tour with [Matahari Cycle](#) tours
- Go to the nutmeg factory

## Where to eat in Balik Pulau

1. Jia Siang Seafood; buy your seafood at the market across the street, and they'll cook it for you.
2. Hilltop Thai – food with a view
3. Kim's Laksa – it's only open during the day

## Balik Pulau, Penang: Where to Stay

### [Fig Tree Hill Resort \(\\$\\$\\$\\$\)](#)



A full-on hideaway from the hustle and bustle of the real world. There are six luxurious two-bedroom villas, built on top of a tropical hill. Each one is thoughtfully designed to look like a traditional wooden Malaysian home. They look traditional but have all the modern amenities you could want, including robes, slippers, outdoor rain showers, and bathtubs. There is a large mountain-water fed pool.

They have a complimentary shuttle to and from the airport. There isn't much to do there other than relax. If that is what you are looking for – paradise found! [Check here for the latest prices.](#)



## [Malihom, Penang \(\\$\\$\\$\)](#)



Another hidden gem on the island. And def the most unique hotel in Penang, Malaysia. This has more of Thai feel than Fig Tree Hill. It's tucked away in the middle of 40 acres of rainforest. The villas are Thai Lanna Rice Barns that have been converted into one-bedroom villas.

The teak barns were disassembled in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and shipped to Penang. It took them seven years to build the property. The pool is fed from their natural spring. There is a spa on-site to indulge your senses.

Again, you are kind of sequestered there until you get a Grab out. They offer bed and breakfast or full board options.

This is the best place to stay in Penang for a couple, especially if you want a romantic getaway that is peaceful and quiet. [Check here for the latest prices.](#)

## My Final Thoughts





If you been asking yourself, “Where should I eat, travel, and stay in Penang,” all your prayers have just been answered. BOOM! It’s like I read your mind.

A lot of people ask me, “How long to stay in Penang?” And the truth is you could see a lot in three days, but you can see even more in three months, profound, right? But seriously, it all depends on you.

With three days, your time in Penang will be packed and limited to George Town. With any longer, you could venture off a bit and go deeper. See what makes Penang tick. If I had a week, I’d stay in Georgetown and Balik Pulau. They are the two areas, unlike anywhere else in Malaysia.

If you are planning to travel here, reach out. I am happy to help in any way I can. If I’ve missed a hotel or you disagree, let me know! I can handle it 😊

XO,

K❤️

*Disclaimer – If you book through any of these links, I'll earn a small commission at no extra cost you. This helps remind me that someone besides my mom is reading this and that my site is actually helpful to someone. And that makes me super happy. So thank you in advance for your support! ❤️*





## 1 Comment



**Wendy Addinsall** on February 9, 2020 at 8:15 am

Wow, great job Kirsten, this post is chock full of awesome info! I've not even heard of half the hotels, we should def check them out and do a staycay in GT. Our fave is currently the Corner Suite in the E&O, but the G was great too and our apartment in Landmark the first time we visited was nice. Thanks for continuing to educate me on my new home! x

[Reply](#)