

MALAYSIA | Review of the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, Penang

Last updated on 15 June 2020 by [Leyla Kazim](https://www.thecutlerychronicles.com/about/) (<https://www.thecutlerychronicles.com/about/>).



the infinity pool with a view of the Andaman Sea at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia

In a nutshell

For well over a century, this hotel has been regarded as one of the Far East's most prestigious and historic, known simply as 'The E&O' to generations of travellers, standing as a testament to the grand elegance of the British colonial era.

Where is it?

You'll find it in [George Town in Penang](https://www.thecutlerychronicles.com/2015/05/week-20-malaysia-penang-borneo.html) (<https://www.thecutlerychronicles.com/2015/05/week-20-malaysia-penang-borneo.html>) – declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008 – at the intersection of Farquhar Street and Penang Road. The Eastern & Oriental Hotel is 20km from Penang International Airport, and a leisurely saunter from all the eateries and entertainment outlets of downtown George Town.



Studio Suite in the Victory Annexe at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia



grounds at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia

Style and character

The Eastern & Oriental Hotel is split into two main sections. Making up its historical heart is *The Heritage Wing*, built in 1885. It's heavy with storied old-world charm, Moorish minarets and a soaring echo-dome lobby. Doormen are clad in khaki and pith-helmeted bellhops, ready to welcome guests to its 100 plush suites.

Then in 2013, the *Victory Annexe* opened its doors to patrons, playing host to the other, modern-classic half of the hotel. The addition boasts 119 Studio Suites (pictured, and what I stayed in) and ten Corner Suites. The sophisticated and graceful elegance of the interiors very cleverly manage to retain the essence of the hotel's rich heritage and identity, whilst offering the state-of-the-art conveniences a business traveller would expect. The Studio Suites have balconies with cornered sliding doors that when fully open, bring the whole of the outside, in. It feels like a villa on the beach.

I visited the hotel's infinity pool as the sun was calling it a day, the light playing with the surface of the water so well, it was difficult to determine where the pool ended and where the Andaman Sea began. Such a pleasure to photograph.

What's unique?

In its long and colourful history, the Eastern & Oriental Hotel has seen two World Wars, the wane of the British Empire, as well as the birth of Malaysia. And there aren't many properties that can claim that.



grounds at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia

Who goes?

The Eastern & Oriental Hotel has welcomed the glitterati of the literary and entertainment worlds, including Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Noel Coward, Rudyard Kipling, Somerset Maugham and Hermann Hesse.

Rudyard Kipling would always request the same room in the hotel on his frequent visits, and that room has since been named the Rudyard Kipling room. You can request to stay in it if you want; and how cool would that be. I wonder if he did any writing there..

I also recall watching esteemed British chef Rick Stein stay during his TV series *Rick Stein's Far Eastern Odyssey* (excellent, by the way), particularly revelling at the local dishes on offer at breakfast. Watching that episode made me realise I had to stay in this hotel.

In terms of guests without fame, most of the clientèle are from Australia, America, the UK, Japan, and a quickly growing Korean market. I was told the Japanese like to stay in *The Heritage Wing* as they prefer the smell of old wood to new, apparently.

Breakfast

Served in the bright and airy all-day dining restaurant *Sarkies* – one of the six drink and dining options available within the property – and recognising their diverse client base, breakfast at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel is an international offering.

Expect the likes of sushi, pastrami, sliced turkey ham, cereals, French cheeses and crackers, salad, breads and pastries. There's bread and butter pudding, oats, miso, baked beans, hash browns, chicken sausage, tomatoes.

There's also roti canai, dhal curry, an egg station making them to order, noodles, congee with all the toppings including century egg. There was a fantastic coconut Indian crepe with crisp edges and a soft spongy middle, and a whole lot more.

The atmosphere was very relaxed – not at all hectic as is so often the case at breakfast in hotels – with the space being about half full at 9.30am.



breakfast at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia

Service

All the staff members were wonderful, and service was of the highest order, as you would expect from such an esteemed hotel name.

Liked lots / liked less

Liked lots – The balcony of our Studio Suite did it for me. It's not easy to make a room in Asia feel cool and airy with the doors open to the outside, and the AC turned off. But this place manages it. Also, the roll top bath and all that marble was glorious.

Liked less – Struggling to think of something to be honest.



grounds at The Eastern & Oriental Hotel in Penang, Malaysia

Price point

Prices from £115 for a Studio Suite to £210 for the Writer's Suite, including breakfast.

Contact

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www.eohotels.com (<http://www.eohotels.com/>).

Note: I stayed as a guest of this hotel as part of a media package. All views remain my own.

Related links

Week 20: MALAYSIA – Penang → Borneo (<https://www.thecutlerychronicles.com/2015/05/week-20-malaysia-penang-borneo.html>)

MALAYSIA: Review of the Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa, Penang (<https://www.thecutlerychronicles.com/2016/03/malaysia-review-of-shangri-las-rasa.html>).



Leyla Kazim

Spending most of my time either eating or travelling. Constantly in awe of nature and on a mission to seek the joy in every moment. Please feel free to leave a comment below, I love hearing from you all!

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