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#JOM! STAY: Oriental enchantment

By [Syida Lizta Amirul Ihsan](#) - July 6, 2020 @ 12:33pm

WITHIN an hour of the announcement on June 7 that allowed inter-state movement during the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO), I made an online booking to stay at the Eastern & Oriental Hotel, Penang.

It is a no-brainer that our first out-of-Kuala Lumpur trip as a family would be to this northern island. The food makes us full and happy—whether it's fried noodles with cuttlefish or pasembur or nasi kandar. We come to Penang to eat and we always leave happy.

The Eastern & Oriental Hotel, however, is a new choice. It's a place I have always wanted to stay in and there's no better time than now because hotels are offering booking flexibility—no more non-refundable, pay-now policy—so you can book and shop around for better deals and only decide closer to your trip where to stay.



The bedroom window overlooks the sea, the perfect view every morning.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

We are greeted upon arrival by the hotel's friendly bellman and check-in is done in the suite. All rooms at the E&O are suites, overlooking either the city or the sea which make this property a brilliant hybrid between a seaside resort—minus the beach— and a city hotel.

At night, my Straits Suite is utterly silent I sometimes forget that I am right smack in the middle of a vibrant city. And as my first vacation since January, I could not have made a better choice.

The room is large and comfortable for anyone to stay in without feeling cooped up. Use the tea presser and make yourself a Harney & Sons tea or have a fine cup of espresso—in a Narumi cup, no less— with Nespresso's Roma variety or the Arpeggio decaf that the hotel gives in the room.

I like the small, wooden touch the hotel makes. The key card is wooden and the toothbrush is wooden too. There are two wash basins in the big bathroom so two person can brush their teeth and talk instead of having

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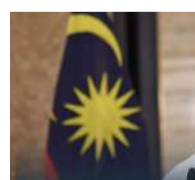
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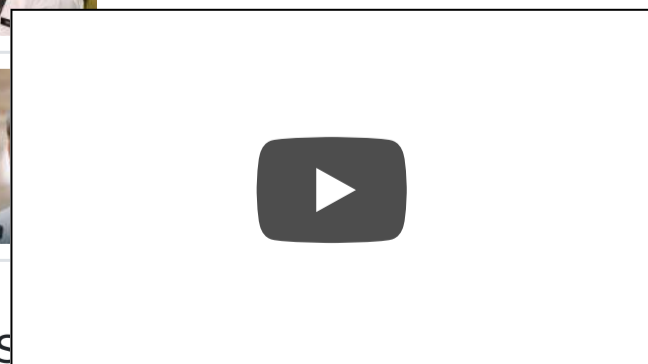
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bathroom so two person can brush their teeth and talk instead of having to huddle and share a sink.

The vintage claw and ball long bath is deep, but not wide, and the accompanying bath salts helps one relax and de-stress. I can only manage a ten-minute soak in-between managing a toddler, but that's good

enough.



The Heritage Wing pool has an astounding view.

MISSING OUT

At least two people have reminded me to have its buffet breakfast—one friend asked me to eat the char kuey tiau and the other said its bread and butter pudding is "the best thing ever".

No thanks to Covid-19, Palm Court's buffet breakfast is scrapped—hopefully temporarily—so we are just given a short list of things to order from.

I like buffet for its variety. I can eat many things in small portion, but when you have to order from the menu, each one comes in full serving (unless you request for a smaller portion) so you lose out on variety.

Even standard items like green salad, bread loaves, cold cults and bread and butter pudding are no longer there. I can only hope that the buffet comes back soon, so I can try what I miss during this trip.

Thankfully, the hotel is just within walking distance to my favourite food joints. So one evening, we walk to Esplanade for *mee sotong*, and another evening, we are at Tajudin Hussain in Lebu Queen for capati and its famous *kambing ros* and *ayam bawang*.

Oh, and if you are a fan of hot chocolate, Constant Gardener, a coffee joint in Lebu Light, serves excellent ones ranging from 50 to 70 per cent cocoa content, sourced from Malaysia or from other countries. It's so good I get at least a cup every time I am here.



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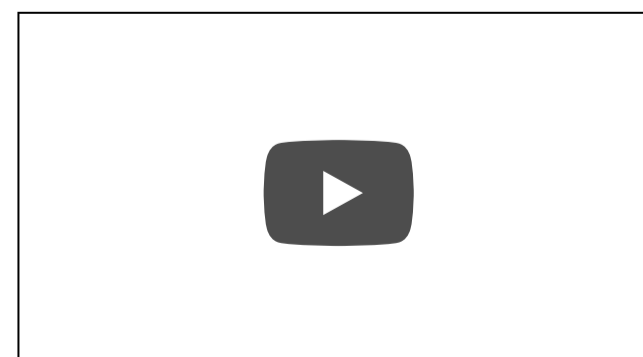
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The Straits Suite living room is spacious, with a separate toilet for guests.

STAY HERE NOW

Until Aug 31, the E&O is having promotions for Malaysian citizens and residents as movement controls are loosened and industries are gearing up to boost local tourism since international borders are still closed.

The Stay Safe is RM460+ per suite (for Georgetown, Deluxe and Superior suites) per night inclusive of breakfast for two while the E&O Indulgence Stay is RM520+, including breakfast and one dinner.

At RM720+, you get breakfast, one dinner, late check-out and cocktails and canapes and the Cornwallis.

Someone told me during my stay, that the E&O is on most people's bucket list in Penang. To me, it's more than just a hotel you tick off. I think I have just found my favourite George Town joint and I'll be back.

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The E&O's Heritage Wing facade.

FAST FACTS

EASTERN & ORIENTAL HOTEL, PENANG

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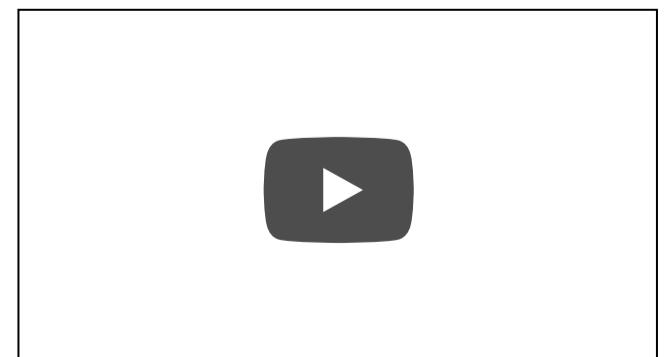
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STAY Come here if you love spacious rooms. There are 100 suites at the Heritage Wing and 132 suites at the Victory Annexe wing. The rooms start from 55sq m (that's double the space of a deluxe hotel room) to a super spacious 522sq m for the E&O Suite.

EAT Breakfast is served at Palm Court or the Cornwallis, Sarkies or Planters Lounge. The English afternoon tea, a tradition that dates back to 1885, is also something not-to-be-missed here.



GO The hotel is just 10 minutes away on foot from my favourite food joints like Tajudin Hussain at Lebuq Queen for nasi kandar and Esplanade for mee sotong. If it's too hot, Grab fare is only RM5 to most spots in the city.

DO Have a dip at the pool, or a drink by it and enjoy the sea view. Some suites have balconies where you can sit with a good book and savour the view.

HIGH The ambience, thanks to its history and preservation, makes the hotel very special. Service from its staff is great too.

LOW The hi-speed internet access isn't speedy and some bathroom amenities like hairbrush or haircomb and mouthwash are not included.

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