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THE PERFECT 2-DAY PENANG ITINERARY (2024 TRAVEL GUIDE) 檳城自由行

January 1, 2024 by Bino – 8 Comments

One of Malaysia's most popular destinations, Penang has always beguiled travelers with its age-old shophouses, fantastic street cuisine as well as enviable beaches. I have been to Penang quite a number of times over the years and there is always something new to check out with each visit. Whether you are a history buff or a foodie, this island off the Andaman Sea will always have something to offer. For a mix of all that Penang is known for (food, history, new attractions, etc), here is a **well-balanced itinerary** that you can easily do over a weekend in Penang.

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DAY 1 – GEORGETOWN

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Georgetown is an excellent place to start in the island. Choc-full of colonial buildings, charming shophouses, temples, mosques and fantastic places to eat. People come here to do two things – to see the heritage buildings and street art or to eat some of Penang's specialties – so the amount of time you spend here will depend on your interest level in the two activities.

“ **Tip:** If you are arriving via Penang International Airport, you may wish to pre-purchase a **4G sim card** in order to save time and avoid potential queues. Prices are also slightly cheaper versus buying it on the spot.

Georgetown is generally walkable and should not take **more than 20 or 25 minutes** from one end to another. However, it can get searing hot especially during midday so you may want to take public transport. I personally take Grab. Point to point rides in Georgetown typically range from 3 to 5 MYR.



penang clan jetty by [justin lau](#)

The area around the Georgetown Ferry Terminal is a natural starting point for exploring Georgetown. Almost immediately to the west of it are the **Clan Jetties** – a series of villages floating on stilts by the coast. In total there are 7 villages here, each owned by a specific clan / family that still inhabit the houses on stilts to this day. The most popular of these villages is the **Chew Jetty** (although each jetty has its own attraction) which has its own temple as well as souvenir shops lining the narrow alleys.



wonder food museum (source: wonder food museum)

From the Clan Jetties, it is a short walk to the colorful **Wonder Food Museum** (49 Lebuh Pantai), a showcase of Penang's culinary heritage and over-sized versions of some local dishes. While the replicas are a feast for the eyes, the exhibition also gives one a better understanding of regional cuisines.



boy on motorbike street art in penang

The heritage zone also has plenty of street art and you can easily spend an entire day hunting them down. To the casual visitor, one of the most popular is the **Boy on Motorbike** (12 Lebu Ah Quee), a 3D artwork consisting of a painting of a boy against an actual motorbike. It's also a good idea to come here early in the morning before a small queue forms over those wishing to take a photo of the street art.



khoo kongsi georgetown by WIL | CC 2.0

Next, head to the nearby **Khoo Kongsi** (18 Cannon Square) for what is one of the most intricately designed clan houses in Southeast Asia. Similar in purpose to those found in places like Singapore, Hoi An, Melaka, etc – these clan houses served as the headquarters of family associations. There is an entrance fee of MYR 10 – pretty steep for a temple in Malaysia but worth it for the architecture. On certain evenings, Khoo Kongsi is also floodlit which makes the building's details stand out even more. Information on the evening light up schedule can be found [here](#).



kapitan keling mosque by Bex Walton | CC 2.0

From here, it is just a short walk to the **Kapitan Keling Mosque** (14 Jalan Buckingham), by far the most picturesque among Georgetown's Islamic buildings. The mosque was built in the 1800s by Penang's Tamil Muslim community and is today recognized as one of Malaysia's most prominent mosques.



penang's blue mansion

It is a short stroll to the **Pinang Peranakan Museum** (29 Church Street) which showcases a home typical of a wealthy family from Baba Nyonya origins that are unique to cities along the Straits of Malacca (Melaka, Penang, Singapore and Phuket to an extent). There are over 1,000 antiques inside and you can easily spend hours marveling at the house. For an insightful look into Baba Nyonya culture, join one of the free guided tours. Alternatively, you can head over to the photogenic **Blue Mansion**, another one of Georgetown's famous houses that's open to visitors. For the full heritage experience, you can also book a room stay there inside the mansion.



delicious nasi ulam at auntie gaik lean's

If you are feeling peckish by this time, I can't recommend **Auntie Gaik Lean's** enough for its delightful Baba Nyonya cuisine. The restaurant has been awarded a Michelin star during Michelin's inaugural listing in Malaysia. Top of my list of dishes to order is the **Nasi Ulam** (rice salad) and Sambal Fish. Make sure to try the refreshing **Nutmeg Juice** as well. Alternatively, **Sri Weld Food Court** down the road has one of the best nasi lemak in Penang.



eastern and oriental hotel penang

The searing afternoon heat gives you enough reasons to chill a bit at the plush and historic **Eastern and Oriental Hotel**. Similar to the Raffles Hotel in Singapore and The Strand in Yangon, the E&O was built by the Sarkies Brothers in the 1800s and is today undoubtedly the most luxurious hotel in Georgetown. Food here is pretty good. Purists may slam me for saying that I prefer the *char kway teow* here but the extra servings of cockles and extra large prawns really won me over.



fine views at the new observation deck in komtar

Sunset is a great time to head up to **Komtar** ([book here for tickets](#)), the tallest building in Penang and once a glaring white elephant. In recent years, a private company has turned it into a tourist attraction after building 2 extra floors and a rooftop observation deck with a section made in glass. It is a must-see during the blue hour – against the sunset, city lights and the lights coming up on the glass observation deck.

Have a relaxing evening at **Love Lane**, a small alley containing plenty of bars, restaurants and backpacker guesthouses.

DAY 2 – PENANG HILL, KEK LOK SI AND BATU FERRINGHI

Spend your second day exploring attractions further afield, namely Penang Hill, Kek Lok Si as well as Batu Ferringhi.

canopy walk at the habitat in penang hill

Start the day early and head up to **Penang Hill** before the crowds do. The typical way up for most visitors is via the train which costs MYR 30 per adult and MYR15 per child (foreigners). Malaysians can go up for MYR 10 per adult and MYR 4 per child. Do note the train runs from 6:30AM to 9PM daily. The top affords stunning views of the entire island. For an even higher view, head up to the new attraction called "**The Habitat**" for an educational guided tour of the local flora as well as the treetop walk and canopy walk. While up here, grab a cup of coffee or have a meal at the **David Brown** restaurant and appreciate fine views of the island. If you prefer to have someone else arrange these trips to the outskirts, you can also book a private tour that will pick you up from your hotel and take you to both Penang Hill and Kek Lok Si. The main benefit is you do not need to worry about how you can get a cab once you're in those locations. You can [book the tour here](#).

“ **Tip:** Alternatively, for a taste of Penang's coffee culture, head to Mugshot Cafe at Chulia Street. Aside from coffee, the venue is also known for its freshly-made bagel muffins.

kek lok si temple by Michael Coghlan | CC 2.0

Afterwards, head to **Kek Lok Si** (you might want to use a ride sharing service such as Uber or Grab or book the private tour). While there is certainly no shortage of temples in Penang or in Southeast Asia in general, this particular temple is a must-see for its hillside setting. The highlight of the temple is the hard-to-miss seven storey pagoda containing 10,000 statues of Buddha.

“ **Tip:** There is an endless list of hawker food to try in Penang including char kway teow and fried oysters. The best fried oyster place in Penang is said to be at Seng Thor Coffee Shop at Carvarvon Street.

batu ferringhi by [mikhail kotykhov](#)

It'll well be mid-afternoon by the time you finish which is good enough reason to end your day at **Batu Ferringhi** – the most accessible stretch of beach in Penang. The area is lined by several resorts and I would personally recommend having dinner while watching the sunset. Do note that sunset in Penang occurs pretty late, at around 7:30PM usually. Alternatively, if you are looking for a family-friendly activity around the area, check out **[Entopia by Penang Butterfly Farm](#)**. The highlight here is the enclosed garden area with more than 15,000 butterflies flying around you. It's truly a sight to behold and something that kids will definitely love. You can book discounted tickets [here](#).

If you are heading to Kuala Lumpur as well, check out this [suggested itinerary for Kuala Lumpur](#). If you are heading to Melaka, check out my [Melaka travel guide](#).

TRAVEL TIPS FOR PENANG

- **Travel Insurance:** I buy **travel insurance** to be safe in this era of viruses, flight cancellations/delays and last minute changes. If you reside in Singapore, check out **[Starr Travelead](#)**, one of the cheapest travel insurance. They have a promotion that comes with S\$10 cash rebate that helps to cover the insurance cost.

- **Transport:** In Penang, you don't have to worry even if you are not staying in the city center. Ride-sharing apps such as Grab allow you to book a "cab" at the local price. Even if you stay in Batu Ferringhi for instance which is a 15 minute drive from the old town, the fare is only around 10 – 15 Ringgit.
- **Car Rentals:** In the post-pandemic era that we are in, some folks prefer to avoid public transport in order to minimize interactions with strangers. Car rentals have become more popular nowadays. You can check out deals [here](#)
- **Dining Culture:** The local cuisine is really one of the highlights in Penang. While the ambiance of most local eateries may be lacking, the food is superb. In this city, each eatery tends to specialize in just one dish – be it laksa, *char kway teow* (fried noodles), carrot cake, fried oyster, etc. Since the local taxis are so cheap, the idea of taking a cab from one eatery to another for multiple small bites isn't at all far-fetched and is actually being practiced by many tourists in the know.

WHERE TO STAY IN PENANG

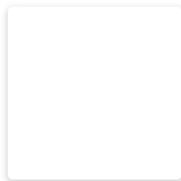
Penang's hotels are usually quite affordable even in the 4-star or 5-star categories so I would suggest splurging a bit for a more refined stay. Here are my recommendations after visiting Penang a number of times:

In Georgetown, staying at [Eastern and Oriental Hotel](#) is like hitting two birds with one stone. It is in itself a tourist attraction. At the same time, you get to bask in colonial luxury. Stay in the newer Victory Annex for some fine seaside views. Among midrange options, [Campbell House](#) offers one a colonial living experience, complete with antique phones in the guestrooms as well as Peranakan accents in the bathroom. For a budget option in Georgetown, you can check out [SAVV Hotel](#) which has been renovated recently. You can also check out other hotel options in Penang, including cheaper options [here](#).

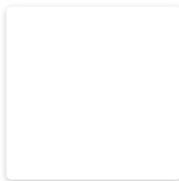
the parkroyal penang resort

In Batu Ferringhi, the **Parkroyal Penang Resort** is a good family-friendly midrange option. The **Shangri-la Rasa Sayang Resort** is the place to go if you're looking to stay at Penang's most luxurious hotel. The Rasa Wing in particular is noted for having a gigantic outdoor tub!

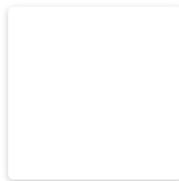
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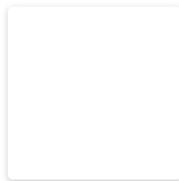
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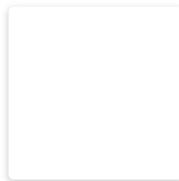
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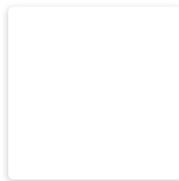
The Grandeur of Penang's Eastern and Oriental Hotel



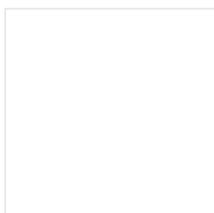
Hotel Review: Parkroyal Penang Resort - Newly Renovated in Batu Ferringhi



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COMMENTS

[Hajar - Rinjani Planner](#) says

[March 15, 2018 at 3:21 pm](#)

Hello Bino... I stayed 4 years in Malaysia but never come to Penang. So pitty that time just got busy to work.

[REPLY](#)

[Olivia Tan](#) says

[August 8, 2018 at 12:55 am](#)

thank you very much for the recommendation Bino. Definitely will go to Penang this August with your itinerary,

[REPLY](#)

Janti says

[September 25, 2018 at 10:09 am](#)

What is the best transportation to reach from one place/to other place as your recommendation?

[REPLY](#)

[Bino](#) says

[September 28, 2018 at 11:14 am](#)

I usually take a ride share service like Grab when in Penang. It's inexpensive.

[REPLY](#)

nadir says

[April 6, 2019 at 4:38 am](#)

I am considering to visit Penang.

Please whats is best way to travel to Penang from Kuala Lumpur Any tour guide recomendation and contact.

What to see in 2 days period.

[REPLY](#)

[Bino](#) says

[April 6, 2019 at 10:16 am](#)

That is already what this article is about – what to see in Penang in 2 days.

To get from KL to Penang, you can fly domestic.

[REPLY](#)

Augie says

[September 1, 2019 at 5:59 pm](#)

Thanks for such a helpful and useful 2 days itinerary . Definitely go to Penang tomorrow.

[REPLY](#)

Lorele says

[January 20, 2020 at 11:48 pm](#)

Thank you for sharing your ITI..Im a solo traveler and thinking to go to Penang this coming Jan 31, 2020.

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Hi, I'm Bino, a part-time wanderer and a travel

blogger. In this site, I share with you my top travel itineraries. Along the way, I also provide travel guides and tips, recommendations on awesome food to try and

impressive hotels to stay!
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The screenshot shows the SingSaver website's 'Compare Travel Insurance Plans' section. At the top, the SingSaver logo is displayed. Below it, the title 'Compare Travel Insurance Plans' is shown. The trip details are: 'Single Trip | Thailand', '22/01/2024 - 24/01/2024', and '1 Adult'. There are three insurance plans listed:

- Starr TravelLead Essential with COVID-19 Coverage (Bronze Plan)**: Price is S\$9.67, which is 38% off the original price of S\$15.60. A 'Buy Now' button is present.
- Allianz Travel Insurance Bronze Plan**: Price is S\$20.80, which is 48% off the original price of S\$40.00. A 'Buy Now' button is present.
- MSIG Standard Plan**: The price is not fully visible.

Each plan card includes the company logo and a 'Buy Now' button. The interface also features a vertical scrollbar on the right and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom.

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