

# Unmissable Things To Do In Penang, Where Cultures Collide And Flavours Delight

*From trekking up Penang Hill to visiting its religious spots, our list of the best things to do in Penang has something for everyone.*

BY ESHA DASGUPTA PUBLISHED: JAN 15, 2025 08:00 AM SGT 11 MIN READ



Penang Funicular | Image credit: Patrick Brunner/Flickr

Penang is one of the most popular places to visit in Malaysia, thanks to its natural beauty and fantastic capital, George Town. Comprising Penang Island, where the capital is, and Seberang Perai, connected by the iconic Penang Bridge, this place is ideal for nature lovers, adventurers, beach babies, shopping aficionados, and people from all walks of life. Expect a symphony of cultures and a melting pot of varied traditions, with Chinese, Malay, Colonial, and Indian influences visible in every aspect of daily life. The vibrant night markets, trendy bars and clubs, beach parties, and mouth-watering street food make for an intriguing exploration. Before you start planning a trip here, journey with us to explore some of the best things to do in Penang.

Check out our story on the **best time to visit Malaysia** for a wonderful experience.

## The best time to visit Penang



Dragon Boat Race, Penang | Image credit: hugolim.com/Flickr

Like most parts of Malaysia, Penang enjoys tropical weather throughout the year. However, for optimal chances for an enjoyable stay, the best time to visit Penang is from December to March, when the weather generally remains dry and pleasant. This is also when several local festivals take place, besides Christmas, New Year, and Chinese New Year.

Plan to visit Penang from March to May and September to November for smaller crowds and better offers. The annual Penang International Dragon Boat Regatta takes place at the end of November (dates for 2025 are yet to be announced). However, the rains might make you replan your sightseeing itinerary.

## RELATED STORIES



### NEWS

15 Guinness World Records You Probably Didn't Know Malaysia Held



### SOUTHEAST ASIA

A First Timer's Guide To The Charming Town Of Lahad Datu, Malaysia

## Things to do in Penang

Explore Penang's street art scene



Mural in Penang | Image credit: Chung Kevin/PxHere

The walls of several buildings in Penang come alive with vibrant colours and depictions of everyday life, fantasy, folklore, and more. From wall paintings to murals to steel sculptures to creating art out of waste, the streets of Penang are ideal to spot some of the most innovative designs and concepts. The perfect place to park your selfie-loving friend, indeed! Getting around George Town is best done on foot or by cycle, and for the rest of Penang, local cabs, cycle rickshaws, and buses are ideal.

### Enjoy stunning views from Anjung Indah Balik Pulau



View from Anjung Indah | Image credit: Stratman2/Flickr

Anjung Indah Balik Pulau is a mountainous park with many nature trails, food stalls, and stunning views. It is especially renowned for offering some of the best sunset views and delicious Durian snacks, including ice cream and fresh fruit. The main walking trail is a loop that remains open throughout the year, prompting nature lovers to go on hiking adventures or get their daily exercise.

### **Plan a day at Penang National Park**



Kerachut Beach, Penang National Park | Image credit: Gaurav Chandawale/Flickr

Covering nearly 3,000 acres of land and sea, Penang National Park is a must-visit for nature lovers. From pristine beaches to lush tropical forests to more than a hundred varieties of avian species, this place has it all. You can enjoy birdwatching or embark on adventurous hikes that loop through the park's shorelines and jungles.

Overlooking the Straits of Malacca, the national park is also home to a seasonal meromictic lake and mangrove forests. One of the most popular things to do in Penang is to spend a night camping in the national park. However, you can't just camp anywhere. There are specific sites for the experience, such as Kerachut Beach. For further details, check out their **website**.

### **Pick the perfect souvenir at Batu Ferringhi Night Market**



Batu Ferringhi Night Market | Image credit: Nurul Balqis/Flickr

The Batu Ferringhi Night Market is a must-visit for those looking for not just souvenirs but also beachwear, footwear, accessories, handicrafts, preserved food items, and home decor. Located close to Batu Ferringhi Beach, a little more than an hour away from George Town, this market opens around 7 pm every evening and stays open until at least midnight. You can choose from various keychains, fridge magnets, hand-crafted jewellery, speciality cookies, and novelty t-shirts to take back home.

## RELATED STORIES



DRINK

The Best Hidden Bars In Penang For You To Discover Now



FOOD

A Guide To The Best Fine Dining Restaurants In Penang

**Reserve a day for the religious spots of Penang**



Kon Hock Keong Temple, Penang | Image credit: Arne Mueseler / www.arne-mueseler.com, CC BY-SA 3.0 DE, via Wikimedia Commons

Penang is home to many religious places, such as Hindu and Buddhist temples, mosques, and churches. Many of them, dating back to colonial times, feature architecture and cultural elements that are truly remarkable, making them some of the most popular tourist attractions in Penang. Some of the best places to stop by include the Buddhist temple of Kon Hock Keong, Kek Lok Si Temple, Cathedral of the Assumption, Dhammikarama Burmese Temple, Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Temple, Nagore Dargah, and Khoo Kongsi.

### **Spend an evening at the shopping malls**



Gurney Plaza, Penang | Image credit: HundenvonPenang, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

One-stop shopping, dining, and entertainment spots, some of the biggest shopping malls in Penang, such as Gurney Plaza and Queensbay Mall, are ideal places to enjoy a day browsing shops, tucking into local Malay dishes, and finding unique experiences to make your day. Through utterly relaxing day spas to foot reflexology massages right in the lobby, the swankiest malls in Penang offer visitors the chance to escape the hustle and bustle of the markets outside.

## Go beach-hopping



Penang National Park Beach | Image credit: Patrick Brunner/Flickr

A beach-hopping tour is a must in Penang, which has plenty of pristine beaches to choose from! Some of the best beaches to check out here include the white sandy stretches of Batu Ferringhi Beach where water sports abound, the rocky outcrops of Teluk Bahang Beach, Kerachut Beach with its turtle conservation centre, Jerejak Island with its protected rainforests, and the chance to enjoy a languid picnic at Tanjung Bungah Beach. For beach lovers and water sports enthusiasts, visiting these beaches is one of the best things to do in Penang.

**SHOP THE BEST TRAVEL EXPERIENCES HERE**

## Ride the funicular to the top of Penang Hill



Penang Funicular | Image credit: Patrick Brunner/Flickr

Riding the funicular to the top of Penang Hill is a must-do for the spectacular views from the top and the 10-minute ride to the summit. One of the oldest and longest funicular tracks in Asia, this is also one of the steepest. Visitors can get on the train from the Lower Station and get off at the Upper Station. However, a few intermediate stations are on the way, where the funicular train stops only on special request. A skywalk for views, a food court, a cafe, and a museum gallery grace the summit once you are done with the views and want to sit down for a while.

**Opening hours:** 6:30 am to 11 pm

**Ticket prices:** RM 8 (SGD 2.45) for children below 12 years and senior citizens over 60 years, RM 16 (SGD 4.85) for adults

### **Explore the walking trails of Penang Botanical Garden**



Lily pond at Penang National Park | Image credit: eythian/Flickr

Penang Botanical Garden is not just a park full of exotic plants and shrubs. It is one of the best places to enjoy lush walking trails that can take you to the top of Penang Hill, the quarry, the lilypond, and plenty of other smaller attractions. An ideal place for nature lovers and those looking to enjoy a couple of hours of serenity, the Penang Botanical Garden covers 71.6 acres. It's home to tropical plants, a burbling stream, a rich variety of indigenous plants, a Japanese Garden, and an Orchid House with more than 1,000 species of orchids. Spending time here is truly one of the most serene things to do in Penang.

**Opening hours:** 6:30 am to 7 pm

**Ticket prices:** Free

## **Best restaurants in Penang**



Orinea Restaurant, Penang | Image credit: orinea\_restaurant/Instagram

Penang is an ideal place to tuck into mouth-watering street food for lunch and enjoy a fancy dinner at a glitzy **fine-dining restaurant** at night. Some of the best restaurants in Penang include Restaurant Blanc Penang for a delicious multi-course meal, Orinea Restaurant for a decadent tasting menu, and Indigo Restaurant @ The Blue Mansion for multi-course tasting menus and meals.

Some of the must-try **Malaysian dishes** in Penang include Laksa (noodles and tuna flakes in a sweet, sour, and spicy broth), Wan Tan Mee (noodles in black soy sauce with barbecued meats), Rojak (a salad of fruits, vegetables, fried dough, and cuttlefish), and whole barbecued fish.

## RELATED STORIES



SOUTHEAST ASIA

Must-Visit Places In Kota Kinabalu, One Of Malaysia's Fastest-Growing Cities



SOUTHEAST ASIA

Exploring Klang Valley - A Guide To The Heart Of Urban Malaysia

## Shopping in Penang



Chow Rasta Market, Penang | Image credit: amanderson2/Flickr

Shopping in Penang is one of the most rewarding experiences. From exploring street markets to picking up high-end brands from swanky malls, you can do it all here. A must-visit market here is Chowrasta Market, one of the largest and oldest in the area, and a favourite among the locals for preserved and prepared meats, pickled fruits, casual apparel, and plenty of fresh vegetables and seafood. Explore other markets and malls, such as Macallum Street Night Market, Gurney Paragon Mall, and Little Penang Street Market. The best place to visit for vintage items is Lorong Kulit Flea Market.

Some must-buy items include dried nutmeg and nutmeg oil, batik apparel, Penang White Coffee, peanut candy, and Tau Sar Piah, a Chinese pastry stuffed with sweet or savoury fillings.

Where else to shop in Malaysia? Check out our guide to the **best shopping malls in Kuala Lumpur**.

## Best hotels in Penang

Penang, a popular tourist haunt, is home to many hotels, offering stunning views, seamless services, and all modern conveniences. Some of the best hotels in Penang include Shangri-La's Rasa Sayang Resort & Spa, Eastern and Oriental Hotel, Penang, and Angsana Teluk Bahang. For more insights, check out our story on some of the **top luxury hotels in Penang**.

**BOOK YOUR STAY AT SHANGRI-LA'S RASA SAYANG RESORT & SPA VIA BOOKING.COM**

**BOOK YOUR STAY AT SHANGRI-LA'S RASA SAYANG RESORT & SPA VIA AGODA.COM**

**BOOK YOUR STAY AT EASTERN AND ORIENTAL HOTEL, PENANG VIA BOOKING.COM**

**BOOK YOUR STAY AT EASTERN AND ORIENTAL HOTEL, PENANG VIA AGODA.COM**

## Insider tips to visit Penang



Trishaw in George Town, Penang | Image credit: Yeoh Thean Kheng/Flickr

George Town, the capital of Penang, is best explored on foot. Make sure to gear up with sturdy shoes.

For a unique way to travel around George Town, consider taking a traditional trishaw ride.

Try the local food to have an immersive experience of Malaysian culture.

Dress modestly when visiting religious sites.

Plan a couple of days to explore beyond George Town.

Learning a few basic Malay phrases can help you interact with the locals better.

*(Feature image credit: Patrick Brunner/Flickr)*