

MALAYSIA

Flight time from UK:
12hr



Currency:
£1=6.66
Malaysia ringgits

Health:
Small risk of malaria in some areas.
Check with your GP

Climate:
Warm weather all year round,
temperatures 21C-32C

Find out more:
www.tourism.gov.my

From hip hotels to the best in retail therapy, **MAXINE CLAYMAN** is your guide to Kuala Lumpur's attractions

In Kuala Lumpur, you're spoilt for choice when it comes to finding a place to stay, shop and eat. We pick some of the best:

Where to stay

The Carcosa Seri Negara Hotel (00 603 2282 1888, www.carcosa.com.my), set in tropical gardens, is the former residence of the governor of the Malay states and its 13 suites retain a colonial feel. A junior suite starts from £130, plus 10% service charge and 5% government tax.

With the Petronas Twin Towers across the road, the five-star Maya hotel (00 603 2711 8866, www.hotelmaya.com.my) has stunning views of the city skyline. Studios start from about £60. Handily located for visiting the walkway that connects the Petronas Twin Towers on the 41st and 42nd floors. It is 170m high and gives a breathtaking view of KL. Entry is free (Skybridge, 00 603 2331 8080).

Where to shop

In the heart of lively Bukit Bintang, the Starhill shopping centre (00 603 2782 3855, www.starhillgallery.com) oozes glamour, with luxury brands such as Dior and Louis Vuitton. You can also indulge at the spa facilities in the Pamper Zone or grab a coffee at the recently opened Jackie Chan's Cafe, owned by the martial arts legend.

Hop in a cab to Mid Valley Gardens

(www.midvalleygardens.com.my); the new luxury annexe of the huge one-stop shop Mid Valley Megamall (00 603 2938 3333, www.midvalley.com.my). Its exclusive outlets won't break the bank. Try the Lewré Couture store (00 603 2283 1373), an affordable alternative to Jimmy Choo.

The trendy Suria KLCC (00 603 2382 8448, www.suriaklcc.com.my) between the Petronas Twin Towers isn't cheap, but it's easily accessible and has a broad range of shops.

One of the latest additions to the KL shopping scene is Malaysia's biggest mall, Pavilion (00 603 2716 1088,

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The dizzying 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers and a colourful food market at street level

bags (00 603 2031 0339, www.centralmarket.com.my).

Discerning shoppers can bag themselves bargains at the Sungei Wang Plaza (00 603 2144 9988, www.sungeiwang.com), popular with locals and tourists alike.

Once you pass through the red and green oriental marble arch into Chinatown's Petaling Street, be prepared to haggle. Its colourful and crowded night market plays host to energetic street vendors selling their wares of mainly cheap bags, trainers, jeans and DVDs.

Where to eat

Enjoy a panoramic view of the skyline at night at KL's revolving restaurant Seri Angkasa di Menara (00 603 2020 5055, www.serimelayu.com) in the tallest telecommunications tower in southeast Asia.

With its candlelit tables and wooden decor, Bi Jan (00 603 2031 3575, www.bijanrestaurant.com) serves traditional dishes in a sophisticated environment, or you can dine al fresco on the patio.

For a flavour of authentic Malay food, hawker food stalls are dotted throughout the city. Jalan Alor comes alive after 7pm, dishing up some of the best Chinese food in KL. Malaysian satay is also a must, Wong Ah Wah is famous for its chicken wings (£2.50) and for the adventurous, try the frog porridge stall (£1).

Tucked away from the frenetic pace of the main drag of Chinatown, step back in time to the Old China Cafe (00 603 2072 5915, www.oldchina.com.my), whose main speciality is laksa, a coconut-milk soup.



How to live the high life

www.pavilion-kl.com). Its 450 retail outlets mix designer chic with high-street labels such as Zara and Banana Republic.

For souvenirs, Central Market's many arts and handicrafts shops showcase work from local artists, specialising in batiks, beading and