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10 of the best places to visit in Malaysia: readers' travel tips

Guardian readers
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Winning tip: Forest trail in the Cameron Highlands

The Mossy Forest of the Cameron Highlands offers the chance to get among gnarled, moss-covered trees, exotic plants, orchids and extraordinary wildlife. Near a low mountain called Gunung Brinchang, there is [150 metres of wooden boardwalk](#) with platforms beginning by a clearing next to the road. At the end of the boardwalk is the two-hour hiking trail up to the top of Gunung Irau, the area's tallest peak (2,110 metres). The entrance to the trail itself is free but local operators run tours and, if you haven't hired a car, joining a tour is the easiest way to get up the very narrow mountain road.

Cameron Secrets' Mossy Forest tour £10, including tea factory visit

Paul Jones



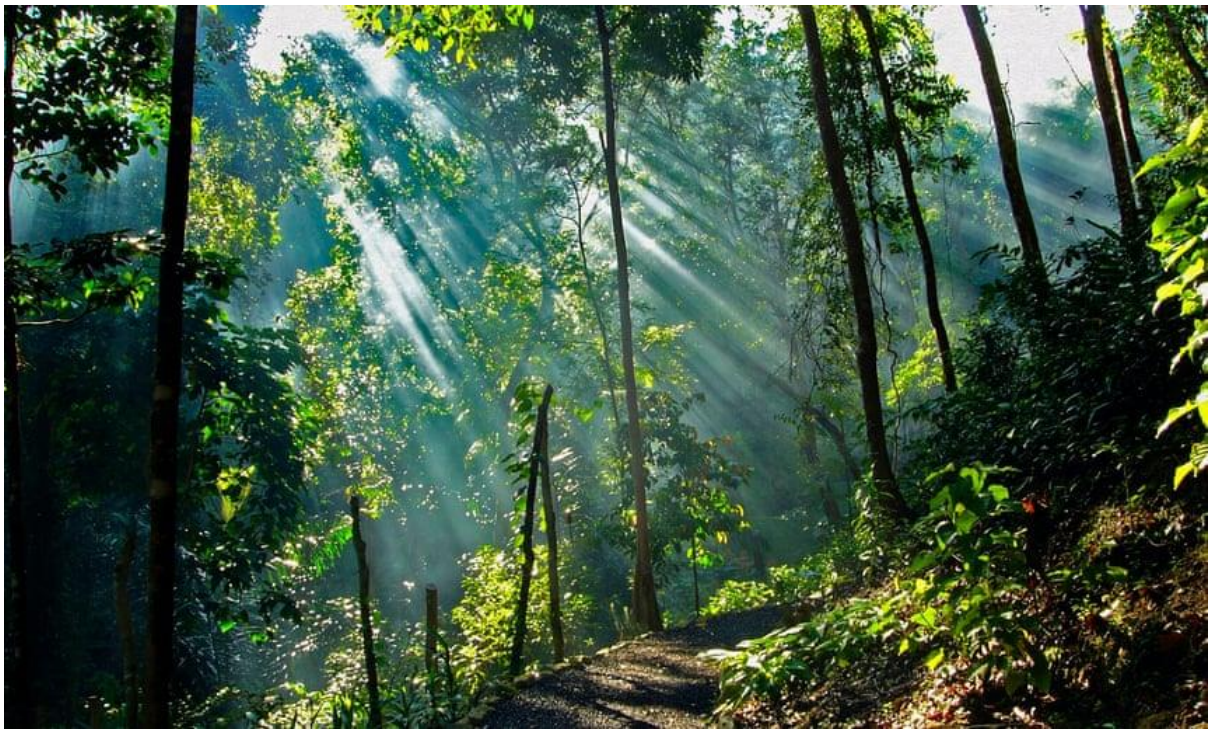
the Cameron Highlands boardwalk, Pahang, Malaysia. Photograph: Alamy

Beautiful gardens, Penang

The Tropical Spice Garden is in a secluded spot on the circular road around the island of Penang. The gardens are beautifully set out and tended, with plenty of information and provide a relaxing few hours away from the heat and bustle of the city. There are some bargains and lovely souvenirs in the shop on site, or you could try one of the regular cooking classes.

Tours from about £5, tropicalspicegarden.com

Denisa Herel



Pulau Gemia – an island gem

As a former Malaysia resident, I advise visitors to go to Pulau Gemia, a private island resort that, at about £70 a night, won't blow your budget. With turtles, sharks and rays in surrounding crystal clear waters, Gemia is similar to Perhentian Kecil but without the crowds. The quiet beach opposite, a short kayak trip across to neighbouring island Kapas, has puffy flour-like sand.

gemisland.com

Matthew Brady



Penang street food

The island of Penang is one of best places in the world for street food. It's likely you already know this. However, head towards the national park on a Friday to [Kafe Alaf Sejahtera](#) for the most delicious meal of the week. You'll need to be there by 12, before prayers finish and the locals stream in, otherwise you could miss out. The ray fish curry is a standout. It's easy to get to on the no 1 bus from Georgetown, or by taxi from the beaches of Batu Ferringhi.

Emily Jones



Kuala Lumpur's Little India

My father used to live in Kuala Lumpur and I always returned to Little India, in the Brickfields district, yet would constantly be surprised by it. Hundreds of shops selling traditional spices, clothes, materials and all sorts can be found. Visitors can also get a great massage in this area but my tip is [Shujin Therapy Zone](#). All the therapists are blind, yet show a level of hospitality that surpasses all expectations. The food is yet another reason to visit: although it's not on Google maps, just behind [Indian Spices Village](#) is a street stall that serves a fantastic array of Indian delights – you won't be disappointed.

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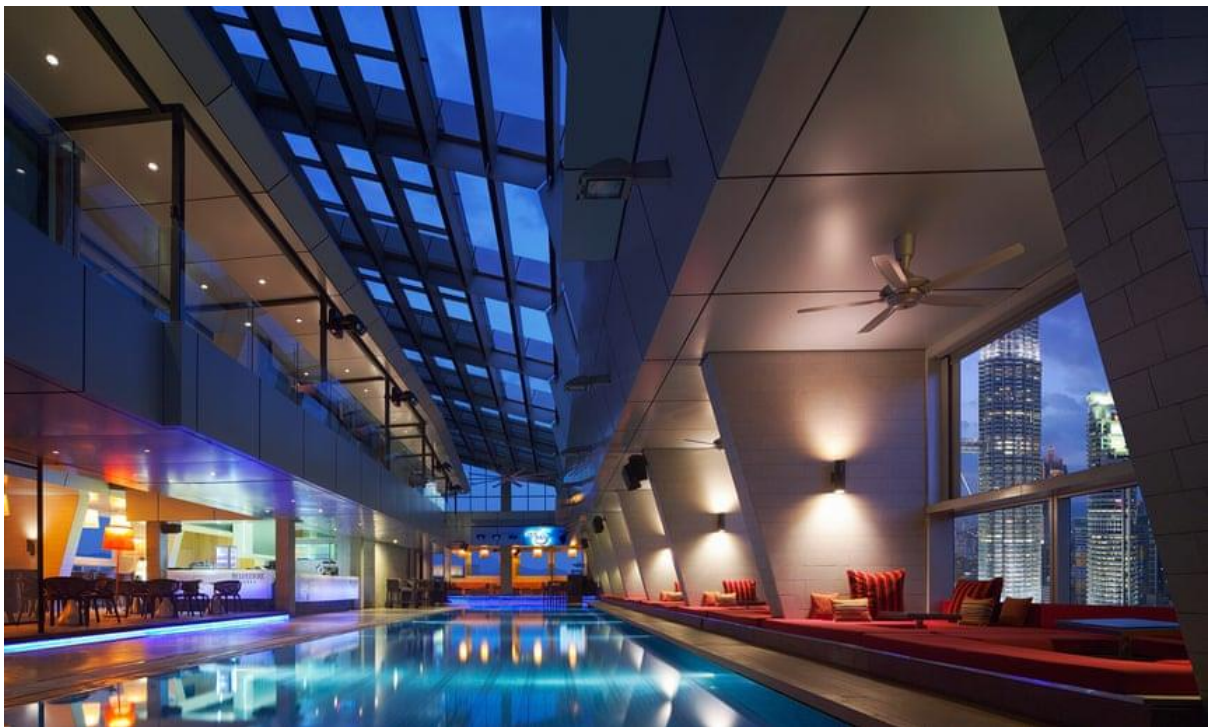


Petronas view, Kuala Lumpur

The [Petronas Towers](#) is the most iconic landmark in Kuala Lumpur. A ticket to the top costs about £15. But my recommendation is to visit the Traders Hotel Sky Bar on the opposite side of KLCC Park. It's free to get to the top: just walk in and take the elevator to Level 33. The bar is surrounded by windows with clear views of the Twin Towers and you can stay for as long as you want. Get a cocktail in happy hour and it's half the price of a Petronas Twin Towers ticket!

shangri-la.com

Emily Speakman



Vegetarian monastery meal, Kuala Lumpur

On the walk from Kuala Lumpur city centre towards Ampang Park there is a peaceful haven – the [Dharma Realm Guan Yin Sagely Monastery](#). From the outside you might not expect it to be a place for lunch but go around the back and prepare for a feast! It's a workers' canteen, but not as you know it; it's vegetarian and MSG-free – a rarity in Malaysia. Grab a plate and join the queue as near to midday as possible as it's busy but the line moves fast. A steal at around £1.20 for lunch.

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Village in the hills, near Kuala Lumpur

Just a 45-minute taxi ride outside of Kuala Lumpur is the friendly village of Janda Baik (literally “the good widow”). It is a small village built across a hillside, and one which is steadily growing in its small-scale, friendly tourist provision. This is Malaysia in the hills, feeling a lot further from the city than it really is. Small roads wind through the village, taking you past family eateries, boutique hotels and to stops at the side of the road with views across the valley, where the tallest things you see are the trees and the loudest things you hear are the monkeys. Walk through jungle to waterfalls, rent a bicycle and hit the hills, or just sit and breathe the clean air. [Airbnbs](#) from £30. Hotels up to around £60.

Mike Groves



Sandakan Memorial Park, Borneo

This park marks the site of infamous second world war death marches, which started from this Japanese POW camp. Of 2,700 Australian and British troops imprisoned, only six Australians (all escapees) survived. The short video with survivor recordings in the small museum is particularly moving. Also worth visiting is the [Agnes Keith House](#), full of mementoes of a bygone era. Agnes was an American whose English husband's work took him to Sepilok. She wrote a book, *Three Came Home*, about her captivity with her young son during the second world war. She kept notes which she hid in her son's stuffed toys.

sabahtourism.com

Gwen Kinghorn



Malacca guesthouse

The Old Town Guesthouse in Jalan Temenggong, Malacca, is run by a lovely old couple who made us feel incredibly welcome. They recommended countless restaurants and attractions that were always fantastic and not touristy. The walls are covered in paintings, the sitting area is airy and bright with great seats and there was an endless supply of free tea and coffee. On our last night they took us to a local market where we bought some food and brought it back, only to discover that everything they had bought was for us, too.

Doubles £11 a night for a huge room, melakaguesthouse.com

Ciara Hill



Reference

Guardian News and Media. (2017, December 14). *10 of the best places to visit in Malaysia: Readers' travel tips*. The Guardian. Retrieved November 10, 2021, from <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2017/dec/14/10-best-places-to-visit-malaysia-penang-kuala-lumpur-readers-tips>.