

# Friday Saturday Sunday in Kuala Lumpur



From raucous night markets to historic buildings and lush green parks, Malaysia's capital city is perfect for a mini-break. Helena Iveson outlines the perfect itinerary for one of Asia's most multicultural, food-obsessed cities





The Buffalo Club is a must-visit for foodies

## FRIDAY

**6PM** Kick off your weekend with a killer cocktail to go with the killer views of the sun setting over KL's beloved Petronas Twin Towers from **Sky Bar**, on the 33rd floor of Trader's Hotel. Getting close to the world's tallest twin towers is dazzling, but don't accidentally stagger backwards into the bar's full-size swimming pool. Try the espresso martini (RM30/\$\$XX/A\$XX) if you need an energy boost before dinner.

**8PM** Malaysia's ethnic blend of Chinese, Malays and Indians has made KL Asia's capital city of gastronomy, and your first stop should be night market Jalan Alor

where you can feast for a few ringgit on char siew barbecued pork or steaming plates of chilli fried squid. Try the **Jalan Alor Nasi Lemak Stall** for its meltingly rich beef rendang, or the fabulous Wong Ah Wah chicken stall – just look out for the queue of fans waiting for their wings.

**11PM** After the raucousness of Jalan Alor, finish your evening at the low-key and laidback **No Black Tie**, just a five-minute walk away. This atmospheric little Japanese restaurant and bar doubles as one of the best places to hear live music in KL, from smooth and serious jazz to show tunes belted out by drag queens.



The Breakfast Creek Hotel is a paradise



The Breakfast Creek Hotel is a paradise for pub lovers



Cru Bar and Cellar in New Farm; (below) The Zoo; (bottom) The Family

## BIG NIGHT OUT

You needn't look too far to find a lively watering hole in KL. Whether you're looking for slick and swanky or loud and lively, Malaysia's capital has shaken off its backwater reputation for good.

\* To live out your Arabian prince or princess fantasies, head to **Sultan Lounge** in the ritzy confines of the Mandarin Oriental. Book a booth, dress up and strike a pose. Mandarin Oriental Hotel, KLCC, tel: +60 (0)3 2179 8966

\* Much beloved by KL's hardcore clubbers, **Zouk KL** can accommodate 2,000 people in its four themed rooms, and on a hot-and-sweaty weekend night, especially if there's a world-class DJ behind the decks, you'll swear you've danced up against all of them. 113 Jln Ampang, KLCC, tel: +60 (0)3 2171 1997

\* Above one of KL's best French restaurants you'll find **Frangipani's** bar lounge and balcony, an upmarket venue where chic partygoers pose at the sleek bar and admire themselves in the lounge's blood-red mirrors. 25 Changkat Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2144 3001



## MY PERFECT FRIDAY

On those rare occasions when I have the weekend

off work, **Tamarind Hill** is my favourite destination for its softly-lit, tropical garden -- right in the city centre. There's also **Sage** for its outstanding French- and Japanese-inspired tasting menu. If I'm feeling energetic, I might head up to **Changkat Bukit Bintang** for some shots and dancing at **Twentyone kitchen + bar**. And on the very rare occasions when I pull an all-nighter, I often stop at any one of the 24-hour outdoor mamak stalls just around the corner on **Tengkat Tong Shin** for some fried noodles and teh tarik. Bagus (good) lah! Laura Kyle, Presenter, Al Jazeera English TV News Network



## SATURDAY

**9AM** Get a healthy start to the day by heading to KL's lungs, the Lake Gardens, which are walking distance from KL Sentral. Crowded from dawn to dusk with runners, tai qi fans, couples in white gowns and tuxes looking for a photogenic backdrop for their wedding photos, or city dwellers seeking a brush with nature, the **Lake Gardens** are the city's most popular park. Built around an artificial lake and spread over 920,000sqm, there are botanical gardens, a herb garden, two children's playgrounds, and rowboats for hire. Look out for the park's tribe of monkeys swinging in the trees, and the resident monitor lizards sunning themselves by the side of the lake.

**10:30AM** A twenty-minute walk (or a short cab ride) away is Brickfields, home to KL's vibrant Indian community. Among the sari stalls and sweet shops is **Annalakshmi**, a Southern Indian vegetarian restaurant where even the most ardent carnivore won't feel hard-done by. Flavourful chickpea curries sprinkled with coriander and vegetable fritters accompanied by tangy thin dal are served buffet-style. Perhaps best of all, diners can leave feeling both satisfied and virtuous as the restaurant is run by volunteers, with all money going to charity – you simply pay whatever you like.

**NOON** Jump in a taxi and head to KL's atmospheric Chinatown and make your first stop at **Sze Ya Temple**, the city's oldest Chinese temple, which dates back to 1882. Located between old shophouses, this ornate and compact temple is surprisingly untouristy: most visitors are local devotees who come



PHOTOGRAPHY TOURISM QUEENSLAND

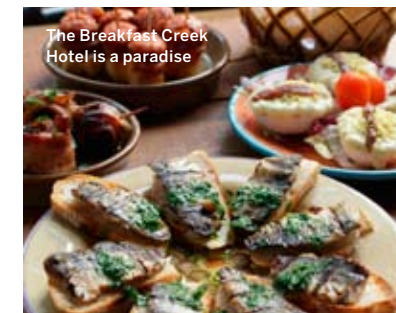


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to have their fortunes told or to leave offerings. Look out for the unusual twirls of burning incense hanging outside. After exiting onto Jalan Tun HS Lee, see clear evidence of KL's multiculturalism by visiting the **Sri Mahamariamman Temple**, back in the middle of Chinatown. This Hindu temple was built in 1873, and after you've left your shoes at the door and passed under its towering five-tiered gopuram tower, wander around the compound and marvel at the temple's most precious relic, a large silver chariot.

**3PM** Need a tea break? If so, combine some rest with a look around one of KL's most beloved homegrown stores **Peter Hoe Beyond**. Among the tropical coloured batik bags, cheerful snatches of material and locally made carvings and jewellery is an excellent café serving homemade cakes and freshly squeezed lime juice, which you can sip while reclining on huge silk pillows. The huge warehouse space is on the second floor of a nondescript office building: look out for a sign that reads Lee Rubber Building.

**5PM** Head to Changkat Bukit Bintang for the city's widest selection of watering holes, all on one long street. Oenophiles will love **Pinchos**, a small and friendly Spanish tapas bar, where you can sip

a glass of bone-dry fino sherry while nibbling on a plate of freshly carved jamon Iberico. Or for something livelier, **The Social @ Changkat** has old-school rock and a pool table to pose by.

**8PM** From the moment you climb up the lantern-lit pathway to the vast wooden door that marks the entrance to **Tamarind Hill** -- after which you're ushered to an outside table near a babbling brook -- it's as if you're world away from the city, despite the fact you're just a few metres from a busy thoroughfare. This gorgeous space is filled with antiques from Myanmar and Thailand, the same countries that inspire the food. Try the deep fried cod served with tender cabbage and carrots (RM40/



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### MY PERFECT SATURDAY



Nowadays it starts with a 6.30am hill walk behind **Taman Tun Dr Ismail**. After that it's a fortifying breakfast – perhaps a spicy nasi lemak at **Cengkih**. After a mid-morning snooze it's time for a perfect lunch: a gorgeous sour-fishy assam laksa at **O & S** in Paramount Garden. In the afternoon it's time for a spot of writing, and as dusk falls, I'll go for dinner with my friends. Lately we've been frequenting **Canton Fare** to indulge in Peking duck and their fantastic pumpkin coated in salted duck's eggs. **Honey Ahmad**, Founder of food website [friedchillies.com](http://friedchillies.com)

### 5 TOP SHOPPING MALLS

**1** The mall of the moment is the ritzy **Pavilion** in Bukit Bintang with its 450 outlets, ranging from Burberry to Billabong, making it a top destination for fashionistas. 168 Jln Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2118 8833

**2** The **Suria KLCC** mall beneath the Petronas Towers is perhaps the busiest place in the whole city, with its six floors home to hundreds of stores, a huge cinema, gigantic food court and art gallery and amusement centre. Jln Ampang, tel: +60 (0)3 2382 8448

**3** It's luxury all the way at **Starhill Gallery**: from international labels such as Bottega Veneta and Louis Vuitton to an exclusive line-up of fine dining restaurants such as Fisherman's Cove. 181 Jln Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2782 3855

**4** South of the city centre is the aptly named **Mid Valley Megamall** and its more upmarket sister shopping emporium, The Gardens, next door. While the Mega has high street brands galore and is always jam-packed, The Gardens is a more leisurely experience complete with helpful concierges and plenty of cafés where you can recharge between shopping expeditions. Mid Valley City, tel: +60 (0)3 2938 3333

**5** ??



## 3 IDEAS FOR 100 RINGGIT OR LESS

**1** Fish spas have taken KL by storm, and if your feet have taken a beating, a short session in which doctor fish nibble at your toes might be the answer. The little biters feed off dead skin cells, leaving your skin clean and smooth. There are plenty of spas to choose from, but Kenko has the best reputation. Costs RM38/S\$16/A\$XX for 30 minutes. Lot 5.01.09, Level 5, Pavilion, Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2141 6651

**2** You can't ignore the **Petronas Twin Towers**, either literally or metaphorically as they are visible just about everywhere you go. For a change of perspective, grab a set of the free tickets that allow you to stroll on the 41st-floor sky bridge that connects the two towers. A limited number of tickets are issued each day on a first-come-first-served basis – go early. Tel: +60 (0)3 2051 1320

**3** Decadence is on the menu if you choose to have afternoon tea at **Carcosa Seri Negara**, the former residence of the British Consul which is now a luxury hotel. Take a seat in the original drawing room where white-gloved butlers serve up authentic English afternoon tea, complete with scones and cucumber sandwiches (RM60/S\$25/A\$XX), or try the Malaysian version (RM65/S\$28/A\$XX) with dainty sticks of satay and traditional kuah cakes. Available from 3pm–6pm. Taman Tasik Perdana, tel: +60 (0)3 2295 0888



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## SUNDAY

**10AM** Dark and moody thanks to drapes that remain drawn regardless of conditions outside, chic Chinese restaurant **Reunion** in Bangsar serves up steamer after steamer of delicious dim sum (served daily 10am – 3.30pm). Plump har kow, or prawn dumplings (RM9/S\$XX/A\$XX), vie with the fluffy char siu pau, or barbecued pork buns (RM7/S\$XX/A\$XX) for the title of dim sum champ, while the combo platters of siew-yoke (roast pork), char siu and roast

### MY PERFECT SUNDAY



If my husband and I are feeling particularly energetic, we'll head out for a power walk around our neighbourhood, followed by breakfast at one of our local coffee shops in Bangsar – **Rocky** for prawn mee or **Pelita** for Thosai. When **Frangipani** has their fabulous "Lazy, Sunday Brunch" we get a table together with good friends in their gorgeous, sun-drenched dining room. On Sunday evenings we try to extend the weekend with sundowners and nibbles at home followed by a simple seafood dinner at **Green View**, known for its mouth-watering Sang Har Mein (fresh-water prawn noodles). To die for! **Lim Wei-Ling**, Founder and Managing Director of Wei-Ling Gallery

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duck are a feast for the eyes and taste buds.

**NOON** You're already in one of KL's most exclusive shopping centres, so it's worth browsing the shops in **Bangsar Village** as well as the small streets that surround it. In the mall you'll find mainstream brands like **Ted Baker**, **Zara** and **Aldo**, as well as quirky fashion boutiques like **Envee** and **Kitsch**. Outside the mall, look out for **Luxury Vintage** where price-conscious fashionistas can rummage through a wide selection of pre-loved designer



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bags, sold at great prices.

**4PM** KL's best museum bar none, the delightful Islamic **Arts Museum** is a must-see, not only for its collection of 7,000 artefacts that offer fascinating insights into the world of Islamic art, but also for the serenity of the building itself. Make it a point to visit the excellent gift shop for some last-minute souvenirs before jumping in a taxi for the 5-minute ride to KL Sentral, from which you'll make your way to the airport.



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## WHERE TO STAY

### BUDGET

**Sekeping Tenggiri Guesthouse**  
Located on quiet leafy street in Bangsar, this cute and fashionable B & B -- which opened this year -- instantly filled the gaping hole in the market for an accommodation that is both interesting and affordable. With just seven industrial-chic guestrooms encircling a small pool, this is a relaxing and unusual place to lay your head. Room rates start at RM200/S\$85/A\$XX per night.  
● 48 Jln Tenggiri, Taman Weng Lock, Bangsar, tel: +60 (0)17 207 5977, www.tenggiri.com

### MID RANGE

**Hotel Maya**  
Situated in the heart of the KL City Centre and offering views of the Petronas Twin Towers, this sleek hotel markets itself as a boutique property (albeit with 207 rooms) and its modern design, luxuriously deep baths and rain showers inspire plenty of repeat visits. Rates include airport transfers and breakfast. Room rates start at RM700/S\$300/A\$XX per night.  
● 138 Jln Ampang, KLCC, tel: +60 (0)3 2711 8866, www.hotelmaya.com.my

### BLOW OUT

**Mandarin Oriental**  
The grand dame of KL hotels is also the most luxurious, boasting elegant Old World interiors that include Nyonya gold-leaf screens, over-stuffed cushions and chaise lounges, and custom-carved door handles in every room. Splash out on a premium city view room to enjoy the awe-inspiring sight of the Petronas Twin Towers. Room rates start at RM900/S\$385/A\$XX per night. Kuala Lumpur City Centre, tel: +60 (0)3 2380 8888, www.mandarinoriental.com/kualalumpur





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## KL FOR KIDS



\* More than 2,000 exotic and colourfully plumed birds rule the skies at **KL Bird Park**, the world's largest free-flight walk-in aviary. Time your visit with one of the many feeding times and you'll have parrots and peacocks literally eating out of your hands. The cost is RM42/S\$18/A\$XX for adults and RM32/S\$14/A\$XX for kids aged 3-12 (free for kids under 3). 920 Jln Cenderawasih, tel: +60 (0)3 2272 1010



\* Fulfill your Indiana Jones fantasies at the **Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM)**, a nature reserve 20 minutes out of town, but a world away in feel. The reserve has well-marked nature trails which take visitors through some spectacular jungle, but don't miss the chance to get above it all on the thrilling **Canopy Walk**, set 30m up in the tree line. The walk costs RM10/S\$4/A\$XX for adults, RM1S\$X/A\$XX for children aged 7-12. Park entry is RM1S\$X/A\$XX. The canopy



\* Cool the kids down at **Sunway Lagoon**, where the Water Park has relaxing tube rides, or enjoy a surfing lesson at Sunway Surf Beach. There's also a **Scream Park** which lives up to its name with ghost rides and attractions that will send shivers down your spine. For something gentler, visit the **Animal Park** for the chance to get acquainted with some furry friends. The cost is RM100/S\$40/A\$XX per adult,

**t** Tiger Airways flies to Kuala Lumpur from Singapore. Book flights at [www.tigerairways.com](http://www.tigerairways.com)

## CONTACT BOOK

### FRIDAY

- Sky Bar, Level 33, Traders Hotel, KL City Centre, Jln Alor, Off Jln Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2332 9888
- No Black Tie, 7 Jln Mesui, Off Jln Nagasari, tel: +60 (0)3 2142 3737

### LAURA KYLE'S FRIDAY NIGHT

- Tamarind Hill, 19 Jln Sultan Ismail, tel: +60 (0)3 2148 3200
- Sage, 6F, The Gardens, Mid Valley City, tel: +60 (0)3 2268 1328
- Twentyone kitchen + bar, 20-1 Changkat Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2142 0021

### SATURDAY

- Lake Gardens, Jalan Perdana (also accessible on foot from KL Sentral and the National Museum), tel: +60 (0)3 2691 6011
- Annalakshmi, Temple of Fine Arts, 114-116 Jln Berhala, Brickfields, tel: +60 (0)3 2272 3799

- Sze Ya Temple, 4A Lebu Pudu, tel: +60 (0)3 2072 9593
- Sri Mahamariamman Temple, 163 Jln Tun HS Lee, tel: +60 (0)3 2078 3467
- Peter Hoe Beyond, 2F, Lee Rubber Building, 145 Jln Tun HS Lee, tel: +60 (0)3 2026 9788
- Pinchos, 18 Changkat Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2145 8482
- The Social @ Changkat, 22 Changkat Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2142 8260
- Tamarind Hill, 19 Jln Sultan Ismail, tel: +60 (0)3 2148 3200
- Luxe Lounge, 19 Jln Sultan Ismail, tel: +60 (0)3 2148 3700

### HONEY AHMAD'S SATURDAY

- Cengkih, 6 Jln Tun Mohd Fuad, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, tel: +60 (0)3 7725 0975
- O&S Restoran, 55 Jln 21/14, Paramount Garden, Petaling Jaya, tel: +60 (0)3 7873 5703
- Canton Fare, 71G Jln Medan Setia 1, Plaza Damansara, Bukit Damansara,

tel: +60 (0)3 2093 5279

### SUNDAY

- Reunion, 2F, Bangsar Village II, Jln Telawi Satu, Bangsar, tel: +60 (0)3 2287 3770
- Bangsar Village II, Jln Telawi Satu, Bangsar, tel: +60 (0)3 2288 1200
- Luxury Vintage, 152 Jln Maarof, Bangsar, tel: +60 (0)3 2095 6266
- Museum of Islamic Arts, Jln Lembah Perdana, tel: +60 (0)3 2274 2020

### LIM WEI-LING'S SUNDAY

- Rocky, 15 Jln Telawi 5, Bangsar Baru, tel: +60 (0)3 2284 4203
- Nasi Kandar Pelita, Tingkat G, 2 Jln Telawi 5, Bangsar Baru, tel: +60 (0)3 2282 5532
- Frangipani, 29 Jln Changkat Bukit Bintang, tel: +60 (0)3 2144 3001
- Restoran Green View, 6 & 8, Jalan 19/3, Petaling Jaya, tel: +60 (0)3 7958 1076