



Day Trips from Kuala Lumpur

Batu Caves p115

This dramatic limestone crag riddled with caverns is both a natural marvel and religious site with its holy Hindu shrines and colourful dioramas.

Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) p117

Switch track from the drone of city traffic and air-conditioning to bird-song and all-encompassing greenery at this jungle park.

Fraser's Hill (Bukit Fraser) p118

Breathe easy at this classic, colonial-era, high-altitude resort on the Selangor–Pahang border that is also a top bird-spotting destination.

Klang Valley p120

Travel from city to coast, pausing at a range of fun attractions and sights including a giant water theme park, a mega-mosque and Klang's vibrant Little India.

Putrajaya p124

Malaysia's administrative hub is a showboat of daring contemporary and Islamic heritage architecture arranged around a pretty, artificial lake.



TOP SIGHT BATU CAVES

One of Malaysia's national treasures, the venerable Hindu temples housed in and around these limestone caves have been a devotional sight for more than 120 years. It's always an atmospheric, colourful and fascinating place to visit but no more so than in late January or early February when a million pilgrims converge on the caves during the three-day Thaipusam.

History

The American naturalist William Hornaday is credited with 'discovering' the caves in 1878, but at least 15 years earlier Chinese settlers were collecting guano from here to fertilise their vegetable patches. Long before that indigenous peoples would also likely have used the caves for shelter.

Temple Cave

In 1891, K Thambusamy Pillai, founder of the Sri Mahamariamman Temple (p76) in KL, established a shrine in what is now known as the Temple Cave. During Thaipusam a statue of Murugan, also known as Lord Subramaniam, is transported in a silver chariot between the two temples.

A 42.5m golden statue of Murugan stands sentinel at the foot of a flight of 272 steps leading up to Temple Cave. Macaque monkeys scamper around the steps and shrines, which are dwarfed by the enormous cavern. A cable car to the cave entrance is planned for 2014.

Other Caves

At step 204, branch off to the **Dark Cave** (www.darkcavemalaysia.com; adult/child RM35/25; 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10.30am-5.30pm Sat & Sun, tours every 20 min) to follow a 45-minute guided tour around 800m of the 2km of surveyed passageways with seven different chambers. Dramatic limestone formations, two species of bat and hundreds of other life forms,

DON'T MISS

- ➔ Temple Cave
- ➔ Dark Cave
- ➔ Ramayana Cave
- ➔ Zoo Negara

PRACTICALITIES

- ➔ ☎03-6189 6284
- ➔ www.batucavesmuruga.org
- ➔ Temple Cave free, other caves admission charges apply
- ➔ ☀7am-9pm
- ➔ 🚗Batu Caves