



Penang

George Town's Heritage Zone p157

Learn about the city's architectural heritage and its cultural life on a walking tour of the Unesco zone.

Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion p161

Get a virtual crash course in feng shui at this faithfully restored mansion that once belonged to a Chinese business magnate.

Hawker Food p166

Gorge on George Town's seemingly never-ending spread of edible delights at multiple street stalls and cafes.

Penang National Park p175

Hike through jungles to deserted beaches where monkeys scamper.

Penang Hill p178

Enjoy the cool breezes and fantastic views from atop the island's highest peak.

Explore

The island of Penang, 'Pearl of the Orient', is one of Malaysia's most tolerant, cosmopolitan and exciting destinations. Its historic capital George Town is a dynamic and atmospheric place that requires at least two days to explore. Here you'll find trishaws pedalling past watermarked Chinese shop-houses, blue joss smoke curling around ornate temples; gold-embroidered saris displayed in shop windows; mosques sending a call to the midday prayer; and delicious cuisine practically every other step.

There's more, however, to this 293-sq-km island, than just George Town. Hike through lush jungle to deserted beaches at Penang National Park, take a cooking course at the Tropical Spice Garden, or stand beneath the awesome goddess of mercy at the Kek Lok Si Temple – it's all part of the Penang experience.

The Best...

- ➔ **Giant Temple** Kek Lok Si Temple (p178)
- ➔ **Deserted Beach** Pantai Kerachut in Penang National Park (p175)
- ➔ **Off the Beaten Track** Kampung Pulau Betong (p180)

Top Tip

Penang is best visited during major festivals and events such as Chinese New Year and the George Town Festival, but book accommodation well in advance.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Air Bayan Lepas International Airport** (☎643 4411) Eighteen kilometres south of George Town.
- ➔ **Boat** Apart from the ferry to Butterworth, there are two daily services to Langkawi (adult/child one way RM60/45, return RM115/85; 1¼ to 2½ hours) offered by **Langkawi Ferry Service** (LFS; ☎264 3088; www.langkawi-ferry.com; PPC Bldg, Pesara King Edward; ☉7am–5.30pm Mon–Sat, to 3pm Sun) and other operators.
- ➔ **Bus** Long-distance buses to George Town arrive at the **Sungei Nibong Bus Station** (www.rapidpg.com.my; Jln Sungai Dua, Gelugor), just to the south of Penang Bridge; services to Kuala Lumpur (KL; RM35, five hours) run every 30 minutes from 7am to 1am and there are also frequent

GETTING TO & FROM BUTTERWORTH

Butterworth, the city on the mainland bit of Penang state (known as Sebarang Perai), is home to Penang's main train station and is the departure point for ferries to Penang island. Unless you're taking the train or your bus has pulled into Butterworth's busy bus station from elsewhere, you'll probably not need to spend any time here.

The cheapest way to get between Butterworth and George Town is via the **ferry** (per adult/car RM1.20/7.70; ☉5.30am–1am). The terminal is linked by walkway to Butterworth's bus and train stations. Ferries take passengers and cars every 10 minutes from 5.30am to 9.30pm, every 20 minutes until 11.15pm, and hourly after that until 1am. The journey takes 10 minutes and fares are charged only for the journey from Butterworth to Penang; returning to the mainland is free.

If you choose to take a taxi to/from Butterworth (approximately RM50), you'll cross the 13.5km Penang Bridge, one of the longest bridges in the world. There's a RM7 toll payable at the toll plaza on the mainland, but no charge to return.

services to Melaka (RM45, seven hours). A taxi from Sungei Nibong to George Town costs RM25. Buses to destinations in Malaysia can be boarded at Sungai Nibong and more conveniently, the **Komtar Bus Station** (www.rapidpg.com.my; Jln Penang, Georgetown); international destinations only at the latter.

- ➔ **Train** Penang's train station is next to the ferry terminal, bus and taxi station in Butterworth. There are three daily trains to KL (six hours, RM34 to RM67) and one to Hat Yai in Thailand (four hours, RM26 to RM108); check with www.ktnb.com.my for fares and schedules.

Getting Around

- ➔ **To/From the Airport** The fixed taxi fare to most places in central George Town is RM44.70. Taxis take about 30 minutes from the centre of town to the airport, while the bus takes at least an hour. Bus