



# Penang

## **George Town p159**

Exploring the World Heritage Zone, staying in a boutique heritage hotel and digging into delicious hawker food.

## **Penang National Park p179**

Hiking through rainforest to beaches where monkeys scamper.

## **Tropical Spice Garden p173**

Becoming familiar with the contents of your spice rack at this wonderful hillside garden.

## **The Habitat p182**

Encountering nature and enjoying cool breezes and fantastic views of the island from atop Penang Hill.

## **Art & Garden by Fuan Wong p179**

Marvelling at this outdoor gallery of incredible plants, glass sculptures and contemporary art.

## Explore

If there's a better microcosm of the exotic east than Penang, we've yet to find it. Located at the intersection of Asia's great kingdoms and Europe's powerful colonial empires, Penang has long served as the link between Asia's two halves and an important outlet to the markets of Europe and the Middle East.

This is one of Malaysia's most diverse, cosmopolitan and exciting cultures. It culminates in George Town, Penang Island's main city and an urban centre that delivers old-world Asia in spades; think trishaws pedalling past watermarked Chinese shophouses and blue joss smoke perfuming the air.

Yet it would be a shame to neglect the rest of the island's tropical abundance, its palm-fringed beaches and fishing villages, its mountainous jungle and farms growing exotic produce such as nutmeg and durian.

## The Best...

- **Temple** Kek Lok Si Temple (p183)
- **Beach** Pantai Pasir Panjang (p184)

## Top Tip

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

## Getting There & Away

- **Air Penang International Airport** (Map

p158; ☎04-252 0252; [www.malaysiaairports.com.my](http://www.malaysiaairports.com.my); 11900 Bayan Lepas; ☐401), 18km south of George Town.

- **Boat** There are two daily ferries (LFS; ☎04-264 2088, 016-419 5008; [www.langkawi-ferry.com](http://www.langkawi-ferry.com); PPC Bldg, Lebuhring King Edward; adult/child one way RM70/51.30; ☀7am; 5.30pm Mon-Sat, 7am-3pm Sun) connecting George Town with the beach resort island of Langkawi in Kedah, 120km north of Penang.

- **Bus** There are plenty of long distance buses to both Butterworth on the mainland and **Sungai Nibong Bus Station** (Map p158; ☎04-659 2099; [www.rapidpg.com.my](http://www.rapidpg.com.my); Jln Sultan Azlan Shah, Kampung Dua Bukit; ☐401, 303) on Penang Island.

- **Train** Penang's train station, next to the ferry terminal and bus and taxi station in Butterworth, has services to and from Kuala Lumpur and Hat Yai in Thailand. Check with [www.ktmb.com.my](http://www.ktmb.com.my) for fares and schedules.

## Getting Around

- **To/From the Airport** Bus 401 runs to and from the airport (RM4) every half-hour between 6am and 11pm daily, and stops at KOMTAR and Weld Quay, taking at least an hour. The fixed taxi fare to central George Town is RM44.70; expect the journey to take around 30 minutes depending on traffic.

- **Bus Rapid Penang** (☎04-238 1313; [www.rapidpg.com.my](http://www.rapidpg.com.my)) runs public transport buses around the state. Fares range from RM1.40 to RM4. Most routes originate at Weld



## GETTING TO & FROM BUTTERWORTH

Butterworth, the city on the mainland bit of Penang state (known as Seberang 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 to George Town is via the **ferry** (Map p158; foot passenger/bicycle/motorbike/car RM1.20/1.40/2/7.70; ☀5.20am-0.40am); the Pangkalan Sultan Abdul Halim Ferry Terminal is linked by walkway to Butterworth's bus and train stations. Ferries take passengers and cars every 10 minutes from 5.20am to 9.30pm, every 20 minutes until 11.15pm, and hourly after that. The journey takes 10 minutes and fares are charged only for the journey from Butterworth to Penang; returning to the mainland is free.

Taxis to/from Butterworth (approximately RM50) cross the 13km Penang Bridge. There's a RM7 toll payable at the toll plaza on the mainland, but no charge to return. If self-driving to or from Kuala Lumpur, the 24km Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah Bridge, joining Batu Maung at the southeastern tip of Penang Island to Batu Kawan on the mainland, is a more convenient route. The toll here is RM8.50.