



Steph's Quick Budget Fact Sheet

Malaysia - Penang

Quick Facts

- ✓ **Capital:** Kuala Lumpur
- ✓ **Language:** Malay
- ✓ **Population:** ± 1.7 mln
- ✓ **Sq km:** ± 1,048
- ✓ **Currency:** Ringgit (RM)
- ✓ **Country code:** +60 (4)
- ✓ **Visa:** Few countries, [check!](#)
- ✓ **Alarm codes:** 999 (*emergency*), 994 (*fire*)
- ✓ **Vaccinations:** DTP / Hep-A / Hep-B / Typhoid / Japanese Encephalitis / Malaria prevention



History Recap Over 1 Drink

1400s: Prince Parameswara founds Melaka. 1511: Portuguese capture Melaka: center East-Indian spice trade. 1641: Dutch took over. 1786: British Captain Francis founds Penang. '24: Anglo-Dutch treaty spice trade: Melaka British → Colony of Straits Settlements. Indian/Chinese working immigrants. Protectorates over Malay Sultanates. '95: Federated Malay States. 1942-'45: Japanese occupation. '48: Federation of Malaya (British-ruled Malayan territories). '57: Independent from UK. Rahman Prime Minister (PM). '65: Singapore withdraws from Malaysia. '69: Anti-Chinese riots (frustration over their economic success). '70: Razak PM: National Front coalition. '71: Min. quotas Malays in business. '78-'89: Unrestricted Vietnamese asylum. '81: Mohamad PM. '89-'90: Communist insurgents sign peace accord with government. '93: Sultans lose legal immunity. '97: Asian financial crisis. 2001: Ethnic clashes between Malays & Indians. '02: New laws against illegal immigrants → exodus. '03: Badawi PM. '09: Ban recruitment foreign workers. Razak PM. 2010: First Islamic punishments: flogging women for extra-marital sex, allow underage marriage in Melaka. '14: MH17 flight from Amsterdam to KL crashes in Ukraine: shot down. '15: Razak took \$700m from sovereign wealth fund (1MDB) / corruption scandal. '16: Sultan Muhammad V new king.

Travel Seasons

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Wet									coolest	wettest		
Dry	driest	warmest										
Best												
Budget												

Altitude: 3m. Climate: Tropical Rainforest Climate (Af).

Bucket List For Free

- ☺ **Sights:** Street art in Penang, Armenian / Chulia / Queen Street, Old Protestant Cemetery, [Botanical Garden](#), Town Hall, Kapital Keling Mosque, Floating Mosque, a wide variety of temples (Snake Temple!).
- ☺ **Penang National Park** is entirely free of charge. *They lie about inaccessible trails to sell you boat rides.*
- ☺ **Other walks:** Penang Hill can be reached for free walking, the [train costs money](#); Penang Longest Trail (*more info [here](#)*), Chin Farm Waterfall, Bukit Hijau.
- ☺ **Beaches:** Batu Ferringhi, Teluk Bahang (*jellyfish!*).

Worth The Extra \$€¥

- 👍 **Experiences:** Cooking class (*recommended: [Farm2Plate](#)), [Escape](#), [Ghee Hup Nutmeg Factory](#) (store), Bicycle Countryside Tour (via [Air BnB](#))*, Penang Avatar Secret Garden, Jerejak Island, Aman Island.
- 👍 **Museums:** [Pinang Peranakan Mansion](#), [Penang House of Music](#), Colonial Penang Museum, [Sun Yat Sen Museum](#), [Camera Museum](#), [Penang State Museum](#), [Batik Painting Museum](#), [Asia Comic Cultural Museum](#), [Teochew Puppet and Opera House](#) & many more.

All activities not listed are considerate too expensive for the experience or unauthentic to the place, therefore considered the lowest priority.

Budget Bites

⌘ **Big supermarkets:** Tesco, Giant, Sunshine, Cold Storage, Eonsave.

⌘ **Markets:** Tanjung Bungah Market,, Farlim Pasar Malam, Little Penang Street Market, Cecil Street Market, Penang Bazaar, Chowrasta Bazaar& more.

⌘ **Local food:** Nasi Lemak, Nasi Goreng (*rice dishes*), Satay (*skewer*), Cendol (*cold dessert soup*), Roti Canai (*Indian*), Laksa (*soup*), Fish Head Curry, Chicken Curry, Roti Jala (*netlike crepes*), Popiah (*spring rolls*), Mee Goreng (*noodles*), Beef Rendang (*curry*), Ikan Bakar (*grilled fish*), Bak Kut Teh (*pork ribs broth*), Sambal Udang (*spicy shrimp*), Rojak (*fruit & veggie salad with fish*), Chee Cheong Fun (*rice noodle rolls*), Lok Lok (*hot pot*), Durian, Otak Otak (*fish cakes*), Bee Hoon (*rice noodles*), Banana Leaf Rice (*Indian*), Murtabak.

⌘ **Go vegan:** Being vegan is very easy and cheap in Malaysia and especially in food capital Georgetown. Every bigger supermarket has vegan products and there are many vegetarian and vegan restaurants... check them on [Happy Cow - Penang](#).

Mama Said

☠ Penang is generally safe, but always be aware of pickpockets and bag-snatching. As in most places, don't walk alone at night.

☠ Pedestrians have a hard time in Penang. There are hardly any sidewalks and when there are, they're used as parking spot or extension of a store. You'll have to walk on the street, but that doesn't mean cars and motorbikes give you space. Be careful and have eyes everywhere!

☠ Boycott zoos like Entopia, Penang Bird Park and Audi Dream Farm where animals are held in captivity in unethical conditions.

☠ Tap water is not drinkable.

☠ Only use licensed cabs or take an Uber / Grab.

☠ Only cash out inside of banks, not on street ATMs.

Next?

➔ In Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi.

➔ International destinations close by: Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore.

Sleep Cheap

❖ Hostels and hotels are very cheap in Malaysia. Be aware that there are scams with Air BnB and booking-websites, so book directly via hotel or verify first via reviews.

❖ Go [Couchsurfing](#) or [house-sitting](#)! Also check [WorkAway](#).

Festivals

☼ Thaipusam: Hindu, Jan-Feb.

☼ George Town Festival: Culture, Aug-Sep.

☼ Hungry Ghost Festival: Chinese, Aug-Sep.

Nights Best Spent

◆ **Nightlife areas:** Georgetown (Love Lane / Upper Penang Road), Batu Ferringhi's beach bars.

◆ **Theatres:** [The Majestic Theatre](#), [Penangpac](#).

Free-Riding?

■ It will take a few hours by car to drive around Penang Island, but within the separate city centres or suburbs most things are within walking distance. It is always humid and hot, so you won't want to walk very long distances unless you specifically go on a hike.

■ Public transport comes in buses, for which the [Moovit app](#) is very helpful to determine routes and bus lines to take. Sometimes stops change without prior notice (*just have a Plan B for if you waited over half an hour without something showing up.*) Intercity buses coming from Kuala Lumpur usually go as far as Butterworth or Sungai Nibong from where you have to take a cab, Grab or city bus to your final destination. There are buses to KL leaving from Georgetown's Komtar bus station, but they have to be bought at agencies.

■ Download the [Grab app](#) (*local Uber*) to book cheap private rides less than half the price of a taxi. You need a simcard for internet or public wifi to use this.

■ Airport: Penang International Airport (PEN).

■ Affordable ferry services connect Penang with Langkawi (*from Swettenham Pier*) and Butterworth (*from Georgetown*).

■ Hitch-hiking is possible, locals are very willing to take a foreigner and have a chat.

The Earth Becomes My Throne