

Kuala Lumpur

An Ideal Stop Over

By: Derick McGroarty

Less than 13 hours flying time by Malaysian Airlines direct services, Kuala Lumpur is a worthwhile, attractively priced stop-over. The Light Rail Transit takes only 26 minutes from the airport to the city centre.



Royal Horseguard

الحرس الملكي

At 1453 feet, the tallest twin tower building in the world, the Petronas Towers are linked by a sky-bridge at the 42nd floor. Public access to the towers is limited and then only to the bridge. Rather than queue for this, I recommend the KL Tower, another high point, where you fully appreciate the scale of Petronas Towers and the reason KL is called a garden city. There are 2058 stairs but I preferred the 22 km per hour lift which whisks you to the all round viewing platform!

I stayed, in the heart of the city, at the five star Shangri La Hotel. Luxury is a big attraction in an equatorial climate. It has a "tropical oasis" atrium, a lobby lounge with extensive foliage and wide choice of ethnic and international dining. My spacious air conditioned room, with a view of Petronas Towers.

A city tour with Inter Pacific Tours is recommended. Much Moorish architecture



KL Light Rail Transit

القطار السريع

remains as well as a masterpiece of colonial architecture - KL railway station! Built in 1910 with an exterior Islamic style, the inside is an iron and steel British Victorian construction. A visit to the Jamek Mosque with its triple domes and two minarets is followed by a drive through Chinatown. After watching the changing of the guard at the Royal Palace and viewing the National Museum you drive through the modern district with its spectacular architecture.

The very modern Islamic National Mosque is a symbol for the whole country. The prayer hall has a star shaped dome with 18 points representing the 13 states and the five pillars of Islam. The square minaret is 75 metres high. Nearby the Islamic Art Museum shows the history, heritage and struggle of Islam laid out in a logical and comprehensive manner. Exhibits include scale models of famous mosques, such as the one in Mecca. Another half-day tour with Inter Pacific visits a rubber plantation, a batik factory and the

Royal Selangor pewter factory. A mixture of tin, copper and antimony, Malaysian pewter has many attractive designs both modern and traditional. Finally a short drive, outside the city to the limestone hills and the Batu Caves - 272 steps! The caves contain Hindu shrines set in deep grottos.

Tourism Malaysia can supply useful leaflets. INSIGHT (Malaysia) is a comprehensive guide covering the whole country. The pocket version slipped easily into my camera bag and the full version is good in-depth reading with excellent pictures. Both can be recommended.

Contacts Asia Overland Tours

www.asiaoverland.com

Insight Guides E-mail -
insight@geocenter.co.uk

Tourism Malaysia

www.malaysiatrulyasia.co.uk

Shangri La Hotels : www.shangri-la.com ■