



WEEKEND AWAY KUALA LUMPUR

APRIL 1, 2011



Kuala Lumpur is one of my top ten favourite cities. One of my closest friends lives over there, and so, before kids, I used to visit almost once a year. Kuala Lumpur is such a great mix between a modern metropolitan city and an ethnically diverse melting pot, full of history and buzzing with energy.

We are very lucky to have Vivien, a mom of two and a KL local, do a write up for us of her favourite child-friendly places in and around Kuala Lumpur. Vivien works with Irene Hoofs on one of our favourite blogs [Bloesem Kids](#). She lives with her two daughters and husband in KL. Do let us know if you have other great ideas of things to do in KL.



EAT:

Most eating-places in Kuala Lumpur are child-friendly so if you are traveling with young children, don't hesitate to ask for a high chair. Restaurants will indicate if they are 'halal' (kosher) as Malaysia's population is largely Muslim so don't be perplexed when you see this sign on restaurant doors! Eating out is very popular in Malaysia and there is a wide range of cuisine, and is generally inexpensive.

Annalakshmi – Temple of Fine Arts, 116 Jalan Berhala, Brickfields - This Indian buffet restaurant is located in what is now known as the second Little India and serves exceptional South Indian vegetarian food and is run by the charitable Temple of Fine Arts. Shorts are not allowed, but a piece of fabric will be lent to you to wear like a sarong, if you do arrive in shorts. You pay what you think your meal was worth! The proceeds help fund the work of the foundation.

DELICIOUS - Located on Jalan Tun Razak across from the American Embassy, Delicious started off as a cozy little tearoom but now is known for its consistently delicious (excuse the pun) range of local and western favorites. It has a kid's menu and yummy cakes and desserts for the indulgent. It's also open for breakfast (but I would recommend a 'roti canai' at local restaurants dotted all over the city). On the lower floor is Dish, which is Delicious' fine(r) dining restaurant. The Sunday champagne brunch is amazing value for money and though your kids may not appreciate the champagne as much as you do, they do enjoy the live music upstairs.

SOO KEE MEE 14 JALAN Imbi, Kuala Lumpur - Located in the heart of the Golden Triangle, this restaurant has been here for ages and kind of looks like its been here for ages. But don't be put off by its lack of interior styling: head here for something local. English is spoken and in fact, don't be surprised by a Caucasian man serving you (he is married to one of the owners). This is a typical casual Chinese restaurant. The kitchen is open and is at the very front of the restaurant. 'Tai Chau' which literally means 'Big Fry' in Cantonese is the style of cooking using big woks and even bigger roaring fires. The specialty here is the beef noodles. Order the paper-wrapped chicken too. Satay is also available from a separate vendor. As a child, satay (coal-barbecued chicken or beef skewers served with peanut sauce or sans) was always a treat when going out to eat.

OLD CHINA CAFÉ - This restaurant serves Peranakan or Nonya cuisine unique to Malaysia (Peranakan cuisine is a combination of immigrant Chinese and local Malay cuisine influences), and located in Chinatown, this little find is a place you will remember not only for the food but for the atmosphere and its very old world charm. There is also an antique gallery upstairs.

PETER HOE BEYOND 145 Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, second floor - Okay, this is not a restaurant but it is a store, and a very special one too! But it has a small café within it. My daughters learnt to eat their carrots here and the white chocolate cheesecake is their ultimate favorite dessert. It is parallel to Petaling Street or Chinatown and is a wonderful escape after your bargaining sessions at Chinatown or your visits to the Chinese and Indian temples on the same street. The menu is small but the salads and quiches have never known to disappoint. The cakes neither!!

FOOD COURTS

You want chicken rice, he wants sushi, junior wants noodles... what do you do? A food court is the answer. They are inexpensive and a dime a dozen and can be found everywhere, especially in shopping malls. Each vendor sells something different and it is self-service.

My children's top favorite eating-places: sushi bars (plenty everywhere) and Peter Hoe Beyond.

SHOP:

PETER HOE BEYOND 145 Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, second floor - This is my favorite one-stop store when I am looking for gifts to bring abroad when visiting friends. Granted, most things in the store are not made in Malaysia but come from all over Asia. But it is still one of the most interesting stores in KL, with an explosion of colors and abundant gift ideas... from jewelry to lamps to cutlery and napkins.

Young budding designer Justine Yap also has his atelier here but if you're on a short visit, you may not have time to have him design something for you. You may be able to only find some items off the rack, which is not a bad option!

CHINATOWN - I don't like to promote counterfeit goods and there are lots of those in Chinatown, but it is worth a visit anyway. Traders sell everything from fake Gucci bags and perfumes to roast duck and fresh lycees. Be sure to hunt down the old Chinese

medicine halls and haberdashery found behind the bustling stalls. Also a good place to sample (paying of course) tropical fruits like rambutans, mangosteens, lychees, and if you're really adventurous, durians. Locals revere it as the king of fruits, but foreigners avoid it for its overpowering (read offensive) smell. So offensive it is banned from hotels and public transportations...

LITTLE INDIA - A walking distance from Chinatown, Little India also has interesting wares to offer. Sequined shiny outfits for children will add lots of Bollywood glamour to any dress up box. Add bangles, anklets, hair accessories, henna, colorful fabrics.

Malls are plenty in Kuala Lumpur, and in the city centre, **Suria KLCC** (where the Petronas twin towers are) and the **Pavilion** are amongst the best ones. For a bit of madness, visit **Sungai Wang Plaza**.

SEE:

BATU CAVES - is a limestone hill and takes 272 steps to reach. It has a series of caves and cave temples. Located 13km north of Kuala Lumpur, the cave is a popular Hindu shrine and attracts more than a million devotees each year during the Thaipusam festival, where pilgrims young and old pay homage to Lord Muruga, carrying heavy Kavadis or have spikes through their cheeks or hooks on their backs.

ROYAL SELANGOR PEWTER FACTORY - The Visitors' Centre and the School of Hard Knocks at the world's largest pewter (an alloy of tin and antimony) factory are fun and educational for children and adults alike. Kuala Lumpur prospered in the old days from tin mining, and although it no longer is the world's largest producer of tin, Royal Selangor continues to be known as the world's finest pewter makers.

ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM - Housing one of the best collections of Islamic art in the world, the Islamic Arts Museum is a beautiful building of striking Islamic architectural details. Its proximity to the National Mosque and the Lake Gardens, Bird Park and Butterfly farm in the surroundings could make a full day out.

KL TOWER and BUKIT NANAS FOREST RESERVE - Visit the 421m KL Tower first which stands atop this jungle in the middle of the city. There is a series of nature trails and there is an interesting array of plants and animals commonly found in lowland forests. Free-guided tours leave from the base of the KL Tower.

PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS - Iconic and impressive, the Petronas Twin Towers houses the headquarters of the national oil and gas company. The towers are the focal point on the enormous Kuala Lumpur City Centre development which includes a world class concert hall (check for kids-friendly Family Fun Day concerts usually on weekends), a huge park with splash pools, an aquarium, a fantastic science centre and of course, a shopping mall. They may no longer be the tallest buildings in the world, but they sure remain stunning. Visitors can go up to the 41st floor Skybridge – get your free pass before 9 am as they run out very quickly!

STAY:

Hotels are relatively inexpensive in this part of the world. There are plenty of choices and it's hard to narrow them down!!

KL HILTON – Conveniently located near the Sentral train station, the KL Hilton is an easy choice for quick stopovers in the city. The fast train from the airport takes 25 minutes and takes you almost to the hotel doorstep.

TERASEK BRICKHOUSE – 42A, Jalan Terasek, Bangsar Baru., Kuala Lumpur

This house provides a cozy home stay in a convenient location for a very affordable price. The minimalist back-to-nature concept of landscape architect Ng Sek San is evident here (as with his other properties). The rustic simplicity of the Terasek Brickhouse and its location in a local neighborhood makes it a nice change from your chain hotels.

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