

zafigo

For women travellers in Asia



**YOUR ESSENTIAL
GUIDE TO
KUALA LUMPUR**



Travel is a very gendered business.

Women have to look out for many things that men may not have to. This is especially so in Asia and the Middle East, where social and cultural norms that affect women vary from one country to the next.

Zafigo is dedicated to helping you navigate that maze by making travel safer, better, easier, and more interesting for women. We offer dedicated city guides, tips, and stories that are written with women travellers in mind. We want to foster a community where women can connect with other women in the cities they are travelling to.

Find us at www.zafigo.com for travel ideas and inspirations, or to share yours.

zafigo *For women travellers in Asia*

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ON THE COVER

Illustration by Xin Xin Lee xin2lee.tumblr.com, featuring the Sultan Abdul Samad Building. See [pages 19-20](#) for this and KL's other top attractions.



For women travellers in Asia

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WELCOME TO Zafigo.com



YOUR ONE-STOP ONLINE DESTINATION FOR WOMEN TRAVELLERS TO ASIA.

Zafigo is dedicated to the woman traveller, whether she is on the move for work, leisure, or to settle into a new home. We offer city guides, local insights, lifestyle ideas and tips to make travel safer, easier, better and more interesting for women.

Zafigo covers a network of cities in Asia and the Middle East. We started with Kuala Lumpur as our base and have, in less than a year,

expanded to include Bangkok and New Delhi. Jakarta is next on our list, with many more cities to come. In each destination, we gather the best editors, writers and seasoned travellers who know their cities like the back of their hands, to give us the scoop on what women should know before they arrive and how to make the most of their time while there.

We produce original stories and city guides, and curate the most engaging contents across the Web to inspire conversations among women travellers. We want our readers to connect to women around the world through zafigo.com.



Marina Mahathir,
Founder of Zafigo

When I was packing for a meeting in Pakistan some years ago, I faced a dilemma. What is appropriate to wear in that country? Google yielded very little information. The episode made me realise that there is a gap of information for women travellers.

Travel is, after all, a very gendered business; female travellers have very different concerns from male travellers. I realise that my friends rely on me for tips on the various places I've visited. Why not share them with more women?

In case you're wondering, Zafigo is a play on 'Safe I Go', the main concern of women travellers everywhere. Ultimately, Zafigo hopes to become a global community of women travellers sharing their insights and supporting each other so that wherever we go, we can look up a Zafigo friend.

**“TRAVEL IS,
AFTER ALL,
A VERY GENDERED
BUSINESS; FEMALE
TRAVELLERS HAVE
VERY DIFFERENT
CONCERNS
FROM MALE
TRAVELLERS.”**

20 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT KL



KL IS AN UNAPOLOGETICALLY COLOURFUL HODGEPODGE OF RACES, CULTURE, LANGUAGES, AND FOOD WITHIN A FAST-PACED MODERN METROPOLITAN SETTING, LACED WITH A BUCOLIC SIDE OF LIFE. SWANKY, SHINY BUILDINGS FILL THE SKYLINE, SANDWICHING RUSTIC ENCLAVES AND HISTORICAL STREETS. THE NEW AND THE OLD COME TOGETHER IN A CAPTIVATING BALANCE OF EAST AND WEST, MAKING THIS CITY A WELCOMING HUB FOR PEOPLE THE WORLD OVER.

1. 'Muddy confluence' – not the most romantic a moniker, but that's what Kuala Lumpur means in Malay, so named as the city sits right at the junction of the Klang and Gombak rivers.

2. Locals call their capital city KL, an affectionate abbreviation that visitors take to just as easily.

3. KL, along with the suburbs that its borders touch within the neighbouring state of (including the satellite city of Petaling Jaya) form what is known as the Klang Valley. Many also simply refer to the entire area as 'greater KL', or simply loop them all in when speaking of KL.

4. Bahasa Malaysia, or Malay, is the official language of Malaysia. English is widely spoken, taught at national schools (British English), and used across popular media. You won't have problems communicating in English at establishments such as hotels, shopping malls, cafes and Western-style restaurants. Elsewhere, most

can grasp at least basic English. For an easy way to get your messages across, use our handy Zafigo Travel Cards. See [pages 41-43](#)

5. As a former English colony, we inherited many formal systems from the British, including on the roads – cars are driven on the left.

6. KL city centre refers to the areas surrounding the Petronas Twin Towers and nearby Bukit Bintang. The latter sits in the centre of what is known as the Golden Triangle, formed by the three main streets of Jalan Sultan Ismail, Jalan Raja Chulan and Jalan Imbi. This is where you'll find a smorgasbord of high-end shopping malls, 5-star hotels, fine dining restaurants and some of the city's best street food stalls. In short, this is where you want to be when visiting KL. See [pages 23-36](#) for tips on the city's top shopping, dining and nightlife spots

7. KL is connected by an increasingly efficient network of public transport, including taxi and private car services; public buses and free shuttles; monorail, Light Rail Transit (LRT) and inter-city trains. In recent years, the city centre has been made more pedestrian friendly, with covered walkways connecting core buildings. A bicycle lane was also introduced earlier this year. Turn to [pages 17-18](#) for our guide on getting around KL

8. Traffic congestion is part of life in KL – but it's far less notorious than Bangkok or Jakarta – not only during peak work hours but also on Fridays. Muslim men go to the mosques en masse for their Friday prayers, so lunch break on this day is two hours long (12pm-2pm) for them. When making an appointment on a Friday, take this into consideration and also factor in more time for travel.

9. Shops, restaurants, cafes and shopping malls generally open from 10am till 10pm – that's 12 full hours to explore and enjoy the city to your heart's content each day.

10. Where food is concerned, however, this city never sleeps; 24-hour *mamak* (Indian Muslim) restaurants and *kopitiam* (coffee houses) are a ubiquitous feature of the city. Find more 24-hour services in KL on [pages 37-38](#)

11. As a Muslim country, *halal* food is easily available and prayer rooms can be found at all shopping malls, transportation hubs and most office buildings.

12. Tipping is not expected, as most eateries impose a 10% service charge for dining in. Malaysia has also recently implemented a GST (Goods & Services Tax) of 6%.

13. Travellers may be eligible for the Tourist Refund Scheme (TRS) and claim refunds on GST paid on goods that are purchased from an Approved Outlet – these are retailers who have been approved by the Royal Malaysian Customs Department, and are required to display the TRS logo/signage at their shops. Find more information: <http://gst.customs.gov.my/>

14. The inside joke among locals is that Malaysia is subject to four seasons a year: Hot, wet, haze and sales. It can be erratic but generally, KL is hot all year round but particularly from February-June, wet several months in a year, and hazy around August-October. There's always a good sale on, with one of the biggest being the 1Malaysia Year End Sale from November-December.





15. It's not a bad idea to keep a foldable umbrella handy, to shield from either the scorching sun (it's not considered silly in this part of the world) or torrential rain.

16. The local currency is Malaysian Ringgit, indicated as RM or MYR. Most places accept major credit cards (a minimum charge may apply) and money changers are easy to find – there's bound to be at least one at every mall, to start with. The ones at Mid Valley Megamall are known to offer among the best rates. Travellers' cheques are not recommended as the exchange rates can be quite dismal.

17. Besides banks, ATMs are often found at petrol stations and convenience stores, and most are compatible with MEPS, CIRRUS, PLUS and Western Union.

18. If you're planning to catch a movie at the cineplexes, located at the malls, go on Wednesdays as tickets are offered at a reduced price. Book ahead online or queue up early for your tickets to beat the crowd.

19. Shopping malls are integral to the KL lifestyle, and more are sprouting up. Locals go there for all their essentials and indulgences: Dining, groceries, facials, spas, bowling, archery, to catch a movie, banking... so whatever you need, chances are, you'll find it at a mall.

20. Locals find it endearing when foreigners attempt to use our lingo. *Terima kasih* (thur-ree-mah kah-seeh, meaning thank you) is the first one you should learn. Give the *lah* a go as well – just add it to the end of a sentence. If that happens to be in English, you would have spoken an example of Manglish, or Malaysian English. See [page 40](#) for more examples



STAYING CONNECTED

KL OFFERS EASY AND AFFORDABLE MOBILE AND INTERNET SERVICES.



WIFI ACCESS

You can almost take free WiFi for granted in KL, with most cafes, fast food outlets, coffee chains, and restaurants providing what locals consider an essential service. Just look for the familiar Wifi symbol that's typically displayed at the entrance, or ask the staff. Some shopping malls also provide complementary WiFi, as do service outlets such as hair salons and even reflexology centres.



INTERNATIONAL ROAMING

Malaysia has three main telcos – Maxis, DiGi and Celcom – and all have signed roaming agreements that pretty much guarantee that international roaming services on your mobile network should work in KL. To get the best deals, you may need to choose the carrier manually, based on your service provider.



SIM CARDS

Prepaid SIM cards are easy to procure (besides telco shops and kiosks at the malls, convenience stores like 7-11 sell them too) and at the airport, you can also buy SIM packs that are designed for travellers.



IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

WHO TO CALL FOR HELP.



POLICE AND EMERGENCY NUMBERS

The emergency number in Malaysia is 999 (112 on mobile phones). There are also several personal safety apps that you can install on your phone:

MYDISTRESS Alert the Malaysian police department (Selangor contingent) with just a click.

Download: [AppStore](#), [Google Play Store](#)

Watch Over Me Sends out emergency alerts when you fail to check in safely at a preset location, and activates an alarm just by shaking your phone.

Download: [AppStore](#), [Google Play Store](#)

Malaysia Hotlines Find listings of contact details for 12 categories of needs, including the police, emergency, embassies, local authorities and even public transport.

Download: [AppStore](#), [Google Play Store](#)



MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Should you require hospitalisation, note that while public hospitals are open to foreigners, there is usually a long waiting time. You will likely need a referral so visit a GP first instead of heading straight to the hospital. Private hospitals are usually more accommodating but they might require proof of funds so it would be wise to ensure you're properly insured.

For milder issues, KL has plenty of walk-in clinics and 24-hour clinics are also easy to find. Have at least RM100 on hand to cover consultation fees and medicine.

If you need medicines, you can find pharmacies at all shopping malls. Basic over-the-counter medicines such as aspirin, paracetamol and cough syrup can also be purchased at supermarkets and small sundry shops.



DO'S AND DON'TS



A QUICK GUIDE TO CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS AND BUSINESS ETIQUETTE.

In Malaysia, the mix of cultures and a predominantly Muslim population have resulted in a melting pot of influences that are reflected in local lifestyle practices and socially-acceptable norms. KL may be as modern as most major cities in the world, but it exists within the context of a society that is generally considered conservative. Here are some basic pointers to help you find your way around our cultural maze.

DO

remove your shoes at the door when visiting someone's home. Most mosques and some temples will require you to do the same. As an easy guide, if you see many pairs of shoes at the entrance, you should leave yours there too.

DON'T

display affections publicly. While it is acceptable for couples to hold hands and people to give each other quick friendly hugs, that's about as far as it goes where PDA is concerned.

DO

customise your food if you wish when dining at street stalls and hawker centres. Malaysians love our food and we know exactly how we

like them. "More chilli", "No egg", "Less bean sprouts", "*Kosong* (no sugar)"...ask and you shall receive.

DON'T

assume that all meetings and functions will start on time. The infamous 'Malaysian time' does come into play often, though not all the time. That doesn't mean you should aim to be late, however, but bring some reading materials to keep you company in case you need to wait.

DO

share a table when dining out. It is common practice at local eateries such as the *mamak* restaurants and Chinese *kopitiams* during peak hours. If you see an empty spot at a table, just ask the person next to it if it's available.

DON'T

bring pork to a Muslim home or an occasion where there are Muslim guests present, or eat non-*halal* food in an area that's frequented by many Muslims. At the shopping malls, you will notice that most food courts only serve *halal* fare. If pork is on the menu, those stalls would be parked in a separate area. Likewise, supermarkets have a separate section for non-*halal* food.



TIPS FOR WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Greetings

It is generally accepted to shake hands, even with members of the opposite sex, particularly in a business setting. However, some of the more religious Muslim men may prefer to refrain from doing so. If you're unsure, offer a smile and greeting, and let him take the lead.

English is widely spoken, but it doesn't hurt to learn a few words in Bahasa Malaysia. These are useful phrases to learn:

Apa khabar (aa-per car-bar):

How are you?

Khabar baik (car-bar ba-ihk): I am fine

Selamat pagi/petang/malam (sir-la-mutt parh-ghee/perh-tung/

mah-lum): Good morning/afternoon/evening or night

See more on [page 40](#)

How to dress

When going out and about in KL, it is fine to be casually dressed – shorts, sleeveless tops and skirts are all acceptable attire.

Few places and occasions impose dress codes; at mosques, they provide robes for you to cover up or you may want to bring a shawl to cover up with. Chinese and Indian temples don't have the same requirements.

In any case, common sense should always prevail, especially if you're travelling alone. Flashing too much skin may invite unwanted attention, and this applies anywhere in the world. Obviously, going braless in public is never a good idea in Malaysia.

In formal settings, it is best to dress conservatively – unless you're in an industry such as fashion, media, advertising or entertainment, where dress codes are a little more relaxed. Even then, you might find yourself needing to deal with government officials so keep a smart suit on standby.

Regular Western-style work wear is appropriate for most meetings. It is also acceptable for women to wear pants.

If you have a meeting or function at a government department or office, do remember this: Government offices may bar entry to those who are dressed inappropriately (shorts, sandals, sleeveless attire and skirts above the knee are all no-no's.

VOICES OF ZAFIGO

Women in KL share their best tips

"In place of business suits, you can also opt to wear traditional Malaysian outfits to meetings and formal functions. Try the Nyonya *kebaya*, a traditional Peranakan outfit for ladies that comes in many attractive colours, fabric and embellishments."

Maisie Sim, Senior Advertising Account Executive

Find more tips from KL women at www.zafigo.com (Voices of Zafigo)

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS AND OTHER THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR.





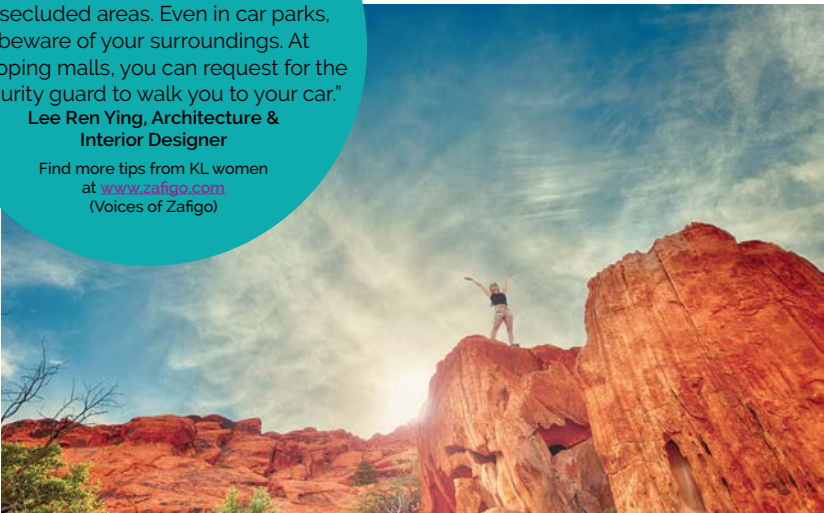
VOICES OF ZAFIGO

Women in KL share their best tips

"Do not walk alone at night, especially in secluded areas. Even in car parks, beware of your surroundings. At shopping malls, you can request for the security guard to walk you to your car."

**Lee Ren Ying, Architecture &
Interior Designer**

Find more tips from KL women
at www.zafigo.com
(Voices of Zafigo)



Personal safety

KL is generally a safe city but snatch thefts do happen. When walking on the streets, hold on bag on the side that faces away from oncoming traffic.

Watch out for pickpockets in crowded areas, always clutch your bag close to you and make sure that it is zipped.

When dining out, don't place your bag on the next chair or behind you. It's best to hold your bag in your lap.

If in a car, keep your bag on the floor in front of you or under the seat, as snatch thieves are known to break windows to steal bags left on seats.

At night spots, don't leave your drinks unattended. If you have to leave the table to use the washroom, for example, leave your glass behind but get a fresh drink on your way back.

Taking public transport

In general, buses, trains and taxis are all safe modes of transport although you should avoid being alone at a bus or taxi stand late at night. The KTM Komuter inter-city trains have women-only carriages.

In a taxi, the driver's information should be displayed on the front passenger seat and if it does not match the actual driver, give an excuse and ask to be dropped off.

See [pages 17-18](#) for more information on public transport in KL.

VOICES OF ZAFIGO

Women in KL share their best tips

"The KL city centre is extremely easy to move around by foot. Wear comfortable shoes and light, airy clothing. Don't forget your sun block and your raincoat or umbrella before heading out!"

Sarah Sofian, Copywriter

Find more tips from KL women
at www.zafigo.com
(Voices of Zafigo)

Out and about

If your day's itinerary includes visiting sacred sites, note that most will require you to leave your shoes at the door. It is thus most practical to don footwear that are easy to take off and put on.

KL's weather is typically hot, wet, or both. It is always a good idea to keep a light portable umbrella or a disposable raincoat in your bag. Packets of tissue and wet wipes are also handy items to have at all times.

Avoid walking along back lanes and dark alleyways, even during the day. Always opt for the most well-lit path, or a walkway where there are other people – even if that means taking a longer route.

GETTING AROUND KL

01

FROM THE AIRPORT



From KL International Airport (KLIA) and low-cost terminal KLIA2, take a taxi (buy your coupons before leaving the arrival hall) or the high-speed KLIA Ekspres (kliaekspres.com) that will take you right to KL Sentral station in just 28-33 minutes. For a cheaper and more scenic route, opt for an airport bus, which cost about a third the price of an KLIA Ekspres ticket but takes longer to reach the city.

02

WALKING



While KL has become more pedestrian-friendly in recent years, it is still more geared for vehicular traffic. Street pavements can be narrow so practice caution. Where there are overhead bridges, they are usually safer options than crossing the street – as long as it's not late at night and you're not alone.

03

TAXIS



Taxi stands are scattered around the city; you will always find one in front of a shopping mall or near a hotel. To call a cab, see the list of taxi companies listed under '[Call A Taxi](#)'. A 50% surcharge applies after midnight.

Another way to hail a ride in KL is by using these mobile apps:

MyTeksi Currently the most popular taxi booking app in Malaysia, they also have an on-demand chauffeur service called GrabCar that uses private vehicles.

Download: [AppStore](#), [Google Play Store](#)

EzCab With less options than MyTeksi, it is understandably less popular as well. But that can be a good thing – if you can't get a taxi on the other apps, try this.

Download: [Google Play Store](#)

Uber For many local women, Uber is the preferred choice as it's perceived to be safer and more comfortable. UberX is particularly in demand as the charges are less than those of regular taxis.

Download: [AppStore](#), [Google Play Store](#)

KL PROVIDES ITS VISITORS WITH MANY PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPTIONS.

04

TRAINS



KL city centre is served by the [KL Monorail](#), a short electric train service whereas the [LRT \(Light Rail Transit\)](#) extends further out, covering more places in the Klang Valley, including suburban areas and the neighbouring city of Petaling Jaya. Service is reliable and frequent, with rides starting from RM1.60. For inter-city travels, [KTM \(Keretapi Tanah Melayu\)](#)'s rail network traverses the entire Peninsular Malaysia. Within the Klang Valley, it offers the KTM Komuter service.

Note All of KL's train services converge at [KL Sentral](#), the city's transportation hub



Read [how to get around KL like a pro](#) at [zafigo.com](#)



Read more at [zafigo.com \(Kuala Lumpur/Getting There & Around\)](#)

05

BUSES



There are several companies providing bus services in the Klang Valley; the most commonly seen on the roads these days are MyRapid buses, which are linked to the LRT service.

Within the city centre, you can also take advantage of the free GO-KL City Bus service, which covers four different routes and stops at popular landmarks along the way. The buses operate from 6am-11pm daily, and there is even free WiFi on board. Go to [www.gokl.com.my](#) for more details.

CALL A TAXI

Public Cab
03-6259 2020

Sunlight
1300-800-222

Comfort Radio Taxi
03-8024 2727

Supercab
03-2095 3399

Mesra Cab
03-4043 0659

UpTown Ace
SuperCab
03-9283 2333

DON'T LEAVE KL WITHOUT VISITING...



Petronas Twin Towers and KL Tower

ARTWORK BY I AM MAY I AM MAY TUMBLR.COM

Petronas Twin Towers

The twins need no introduction, but did you know that they have a sibling? Tower 3 opened last year, housing more upscale boutiques and some of the city's best meals with the loftiest views – including Nobu KL. KLCC Park, at the foot of the towers, is a great spot to seek respite in the evenings and watch scores of runners making good use of the cushioned tracks.

www.petronastwintowers.com.my

Kuala Lumpur City Gallery

Stroll through the Kuala Lumpur of yore through classic photos, marvel at a miniature of Dataran Merdeka, view a wooden mural that captures the city's skyline, and sign up for craft workshops. If you really want to get to know the city, make this your first stop before sightseeing the adjacent Dataran Merdeka and Sultan Abdul Samad Building.

www.klcitygallery.com

FROM PRE-WAR BUILDINGS TO ELABORATE TEMPLES AND THE WORLD'S TALLEST TWIN STRUCTURES, THERE ARE SOME KEY LANDMARKS WORTH MAKING TIME FOR WHEN IN KL.

IMAGE COURTESY OF
TOURISM MALAYSIA



Batu Caves

A majestic 42.7m-tall statue of Lord Murugan beckons from the foot of this iconic site. Wear good walking or sports shoes as you'll need to scale 272 steps to reach the Hindu temple and shrines located within three caves. Watch out for monkeys along the way. zafigo.com/batucaves

KL Tower

The city's highest vantage point is also where you'll find one of two of its revolving restaurants (the other is at Federal Hotel). At the foot of the tower is a pathway that leads to Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve, also known as the KL Forest Eco Park, the world's only urban forest reserve. www.menarakl.com.my

Perdana Botanical Gardens

The city's oldest recreational green lung is made up of five different gardens and wildlife parks, including the world's largest free flight aviary that's home to over 3,000 birds. You



can rent a bicycle to pedal your way around its 227-acre grounds, or hop aboard the shuttle trams. Free guided walks are available on weekday mornings, with prior bookings.

www.klbotanicalgarden.gov.my

Old National Palace

When the King was still in residence, up until 2011, tourists were never allowed past the closely-guarded gates. Now, the former palace is the Royal Museum that not only welcomes visitors but you can even rent traditional costumes to pose for photos.

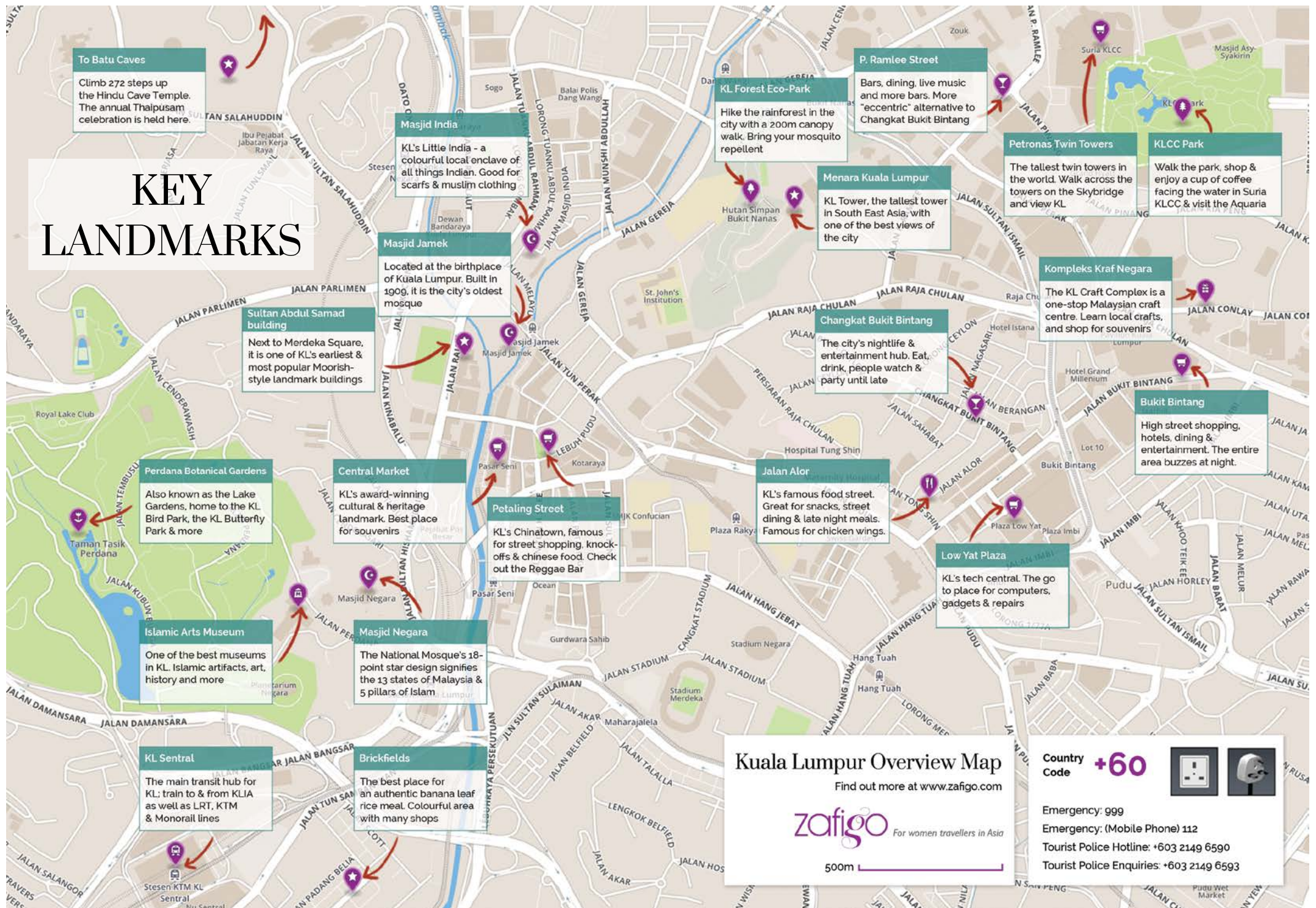
Klang River murals

The river is still muddy but at least the once-bare grey walls flanking it are now a riot of colours that bear the creative expressions of local street artists. Most sections of the riverbanks are not accessible to the public; the best views of the murals are from the Pasar Seni LRT station.



See more key KL landmarks on the next page; find other places of interest in the city on zafigo.com ([Kuala Lumpur/More on the City/See](#))

KEY LANDMARKS



Kuala Lumpur Overview Map

Find out more at www.zafigo.com

zafigo For women travellers in Asia

500m

Country Code **+60**



Emergency: 999

Emergency: (Mobile Phone) 112

Tourist Police Hotline: +603 2149 6590

Tourist Police Enquiries: +603 2149 6593

7 UNDER-THE-RADAR KL ATTRACTIONS



IMAGE BY SOFIA SHAMSUNAHAR

One Mic Stand

KL HAS SO MUCH TO OFFER THAT IT'S EASY TO LOSE TRACK OF THESE GEMS.

Join a free guided heritage walk

Sure, you can leg it around on your own but when you join a guided tour, you learn so much more beyond the oft-crumbling facade of heritage buildings and historical landmarks. Free walks are available around Dataran Merdeka, Pudu, and Brickfields. www.visitkl.gov.my

Meet and mingle with local artists and artisans

Kompleks Kraf Kuala Lumpur is not just a place to shop for or view traditional handicrafts; at the Craft Village, witness master craftsmen at work and learn from them. Chat with professional artists at the Artists' Colony while watching them put paint to easel. www.kraftangan.gov.my

View regional artworks

Hiding in plain sight, the ASEAN Sculpture Garden is just across the road from the entrance to Perdana Botanical Gardens, on Persiaran Sultan Salahuddin. Scattered around this neatly landscaped garden are prize-winning sculptures made of wood, marble, iron and bamboo.

Raise the Jalur Gemilang

Dataran Merdeka is significant in Malaysian history as that was where the national flag was first flown. A

100m-tall flag pole now stands in that very same spot. Every Monday morning, the weekly flag raising ceremony takes place at 10am, performed by guards on horseback.

Trace the history of Malaysian fabrics

Part of the stunning Sultan Abdul Samad Building, the National Textile Museum is a charming gallery that documents the history of traditional Malaysian fabrics since pre-historic times and traces their evolution through the centuries. www.muziumtekstilnegara.gov.my

Mix art with money

In 2011, Bank Negara set up Sasana Kijang as a centre of learning and it's not just numismatic enthusiasts who have been flocking there but art lovers too: The Art Gallery within displays the national bank's archive of more than 1,500 contemporary Malaysian and ASEAN art. www.bnm.gov.my

Tickle your funny bones

Stand-up comedy acts have been gaining popularity in recent years, unsurprisingly given Malaysians' great sense of humour and the amount of fodder provided by local headlines. One Mic Stand presents a live show every Tuesday evening. www.facebook.com/1MicStand



10 MALAYSIAN FOOD YOU SHOULD NOT MISS



01

NASI LEMAK

The rice is cooked in coconut milk for a creamy fragrance, and served with spicy *sambal*, crispy *ikan bilis* (small anchovy-like fish), hard-boiled egg, and cucumber slices. That's just the '*biasa*' or basic offering; you can pile curries and meat dishes on top of that.

02

TEH TARIK

This famous beverage is loved for its fragrance and milkiness. Watching it being prepared is a visual treat in itself - the thick liquid is 'pulled' between two mugs repeatedly until the desired frothiness is achieved.

IT'S HARD TO CHOOSE AMONG MALAYSIA'S ENDLESS FOOD OFFERINGS. WE'VE NARROWED IT DOWN TO 10 TO GET YOU STARTED.

03

ROTI CANAI

An Indian flat bread that can be enjoyed several ways: With curry, or slices of bananas (*roti pisang*) or sardines in tomato sauce (*roti sardin*) folded within. Try it dipped in dhal and sugar, a Malaysian childhood classic.



04

CURRY LAKSA

Noodles in a spicy broth enriched with coconut milk and garnished with bean sprouts, long beans, juicy cockles, fish cakes, tofu puffs and chicken slices. At the more indulgent stalls, you get crispy skin roast pork too.



05

PISANG GORENG

We love our bananas, we love them even more battered and deep-fried. Sold at street stalls, the current fad sees the fritters being topped with a variety of sauces, from cheese to chocolate, strawberry and butterscotch.



06

CENDOL

Jelly-like with a bright green or emerald hue, the *cendol* swims in coconut milk sweetened with *gula Melaka* (coconut palm sugar) syrup under a heap of crushed ice. Creamed corn, boiled red beans and glutinous rice can be added to this dessert.

07 DURIAN

The indisputable King of Fruits is a divisive subject – you'll either love it and can't get enough of it, or abhor it and run at the first whiff. The only way to find out is to give it a try. It also features popularly in desserts such as cakes, cream puffs, added to *cendol*, and made into a sticky cake called *dodol*.

08 ASSAM LAKSA

Spicy, sour, spicy, savoury...this tamarind-based soup noodles with chunks of fish is an explosion of flavours that's bound to make you sweat, and want more.

09 RAMLY BURGER

There is no shortage of fast food in KL but sometimes, nothing beats a good old Ramly burger – Malaysia's quintessential street burger, grilled and flipped upon order. Customisation is encouraged: Double patties (chicken, beef or lamb), cheese, eggs?

10 BANANA LEAF RICE

Steaming hot rice served on a banana leaf, with at least two types of vegetables, cucumber *raita*, your choice of protein, and ladles of curries to douse the grains in. You don't eat the leaf, but everything on it will be highly satisfying.

 Find more good Malaysian eats at zafigo.com ([Kuala Lumpur/More on the City/Eat](https://zafigo.com))

 Read [Top Must-Try Food in Kuala Lumpur – Malay](https://zafigo.com) at zafigo.com

ON THE FOOD TRAIL



GOOD FOOD LIES AROUND EVERY CORNER OF THE CITY, AND WHAT A FEAST AWAITS!

It's hard to know where to begin when it comes to eating out in KL. Malaysian cuisine alone presents an array of delights from various cultures and in KL, major international fares are readily available as well. From open-air food stalls and food trucks to air-conditioned cafes and restaurants, shopping mall food courts to fine meals with a view, KL is truly a gourmet's mecca. These three are among the best spots to head to on an empty stomach.

If you're hankering for Malay

Go to One of the earliest Malay settlements in KL is Kampung Baru, which means 'new village' and it has stayed true to its bucolic roots, with traditional wooden houses on stilts still standing strong next to more modern apartment blocks. Countless open-air food stalls, known as *warung*, serve a smattering of rice, noodles, soups and Thai-influenced dishes that are typical of Malay cuisine.

Try Nasi Lemak Antarabangsa (opens 6pm-5am) is the most famous stall here, doling out countless plates of Malaysia's unofficial national dish from night till dawn.



Read [Top Must-Try Food in Kuala Lumpur – Chinese](#) at [zafigo.com](#)



Read [Top Must-Try Food in Kuala Lumpur – Indian & Pakistani](#) at [zafigo.com](#)

RETAIL THERAPY AT ITS BEST



THERE IS CERTAINLY NO SHORTAGE OF PLACES AND REASONS TO SPEND YOUR RINGGIT WHILE IN KL, AND HERE'S A GUIDE TO WHERE YOU SHOULD GO.



Trawl the malls

We've lost track of the number of shopping malls in KL but it's in the tens, at least. Well designed, equipped with a plethora of facilities, and home to many international brands, they cater to practically every need.

Tip Some of the city's malls (Suria KLCC and Pavilion Kuala Lumpur among them) offer discount or privilege cards for tourists – just flash your passport at the information counter.

Night market

Woven into the lifestyle fabric of Malaysians is the ubiquitous *pasar malam*, open-air night bazaars that draw crowds from all walks of life. From wok-fresh street food to cooking ingredients, trendy apparel to the latest mobile

and fashion accessory, the variety of goods sold rivals that of the malls.

Tip There's at least one *pasar malam* taking place every night of the week - ask your hotel to point you to the nearest one.

Chinatown/ Petaling Street

If you're not too concerned about authenticity but simply want a good bargain (and an avenue to sharpen your haggling skills), this is the place to go. Bags and shoes are among the bestsellers.

Tip While the shops and some stalls are open from morning till night, it can get very stuffy during the day. It's best to head there in the early evening and have dinner at the numerous hawker stalls before starting your shopping.

Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman

This strip is favoured by the Muslims when shopping for their Eid ul-Fitr wardrobe, thanks to its high concentration of street-front fabric stores and Muslim fashion boutiques.

Tip GS Gill is an institution here, known for its extensive selection of sporting goods. You can also buy affordable winter gear from several mom-and-pop style stores.

Brickfields

In between restaurants serving authentic Indian cuisine and spice shops, KL's Little India is filled with festive stores selling sarees and accessories to match.

Tip Traditional plastic bangles, usually worn by the armfuls, make for great souvenirs too.



BRING A PIECE OF KL HOME

YOU CAN BUY KEY CHAINS AND
FRIDGE MAGNETS EVERYWHERE; FOR
SOUVENIRS THAT SAY MORE THAN
JUST 'BEEN THERE, DONE KL', PUT
THESE MALAYSIAN BRANDS ON
YOUR SHOPPING LIST.



Postcards by The Alphabet Press





Peter Hoe

IMAGE BY THISBUNNYHOPS.COM

Royal Selangor This respected centennial brand has not only stood the test of time with their fine homewares and gift items, but has made pewter hip again with designs that are relevant to today's customers – including Star Wars figurines. www.royalselangor.com

ARCH Collection translates Malaysia's cultural heritage into laser-cut and etched wooden art pieces that capture the country's built heritage, including many of the capital city's architectural gems. www.archcollection.com

Lewré will keep you well-heeled for every occasion with their fine selection of ladies' shoes, from casual slip-ons to dainty stilettos. Men's designs are part of their offerings, as is a couture collection. www.lewre.com

Peter Hoe is a Petaling Street stalwart that has managed to remain under the radar, yet is wildly successful. His boutique is a maze of gorgeous designs – everything from apparel to

home decor – that you'd be happy to get lost in. [Read more](http://zafigo.com) at zafigo.com.
2nd Floor, Lee Rubber Building, 145
Jalan Tun HS Lee, KL Tel +603 2026 9788
Opens 10am-7pm daily

thirtyfour made leather handsome again by keeping their designs minimal (and therefore, timeless) to let the workmanship shine through. Bespoke services are available at their Publika outlet, and there's a jewellery line too. www.thirtyfour.net

The Alphabet Press is reviving the ancient art of letterpress printing through contemporary applications and creative expressions of Malaysian elements, such as hand-printed postcards depicting popular local eats. www.thealphabetpress.com

Innai is the first name that KL's fashion-loving crowd throws out when it comes to exquisite women's wear featuring the batik, a traditional fabric, that the label has given creative updates. www.innaibatik.com



Find more shopping tips at zafigo.com ([Kuala Lumpur/More on the City/Shop](#))

TOP-TO-TOE PAMPERING



IMAGE COURTESY OF YTL HOTELS WWW.YTLHOTELS.COM

FROM A SIMPLE BLOW AND DRY TO AN INDULGENT SPA TREATMENT THAT LASTS HOURS, KL PRESENTS A SMORGASBORD OF THERAPIES FOR EVERY NEED AND BUDGET.

Spas

You arrive jetlagged and have an early meeting the next day. What better treat than to sink into a floral bath, then surrender to an aromatherapy massage? Mid- to high-end spas are aplenty (KL's 5-star hotels have some of the best), providing top notch services within well-appointed settings, and a wide variety of treatments.

Try The Majestic Spa at Majestic Hotel Kuala Lumpur, with treatments inspired by quintessential English experiences. www.majestickl.com

Massage and reflexology centres

At the end of a long day out and about, relax your weary limbs with a Chinese- or Thai-style rubdown at the many small, fuss-free massage centres dotted around the city. Prices start from RM30 for a one-hour reflexology that will leave you with a spring in your step. Chinese *tuina* massages are particularly helpful for sore muscles.

Try Reborn is a chain of reflexology centres based at the malls and popular lifestyle areas. www.reborn.com.my

Fitness studios

Whether it is to beat jetlag or to balance up all the eating you're bound to be doing in KL, heading to the gym for a workout is never a bad idea. Most fitness centres in the city offer one-day passes, and there are countless yoga and Pilates studios who welcome walk-in customers too.

Try Popular gyms include Fitness First, Celebrity Fitness and Anytime Fitness (see also '24-hr KL' on [pages 37-38](#)), each with several outlets around the Klang Valley.

Beauty, hair and nail salons

There's nothing a good hair day can't fix; sometimes, a simple blow and dry is all you need to perk yourself up. You'll find hair salons at every mall, as well as nail parlours and beauty centres, and most are open till 10pm. Many hair salons also offer nail services.

Try A Cut Above is one of the city's most well established salons (acutabove.com.my); champagne, macarons and manicures go hand-in-hand at Boudoir Nail Spa (Bangsar Village II, Bangsar Tel +603 2282 5972 Opens 9.30am-9.30pm)



WINE AND DINE

FOR A POST-DINNER TIPPLE OR NIGHT CAP, THESE WINE BARS WILL SATISFY EVEN THE MOST DISCERNING PALATES.



Nobu Kuala Lumpur

Claret Wine Bar, Troika Sky Dining

A stone's throw away from KLCC, Claret is one of three food & beverage outlets that take up the entire 24th floor of swanky residential towers, Troika. The drinks menu is extensive and cocktails are presented beautifully, complementing the breathtaking views from the patio. www.troikaskydining.com

Tate, The Intermark

Look for a hat placed randomly on a wall, push through the door and step into the roaring 20s. Inspired by the speakeasies of the time, this bar is dressed in dark wood with leather chairs. Drinks are made strong so merriment starts early. thebiggroup.co/bignightout/tate.

Nobu Kuala Lumpur

The Nobu empire expanded to KL this year, in a location as lofty as their worldwide reputation – on the 56th floor of Tower 3, KLCC. At the bar, imbibe signature cocktails and localised mocktails, paired with their proprietary Japanese-South American bar bites. www.noburestaurants.com/kualalumpur

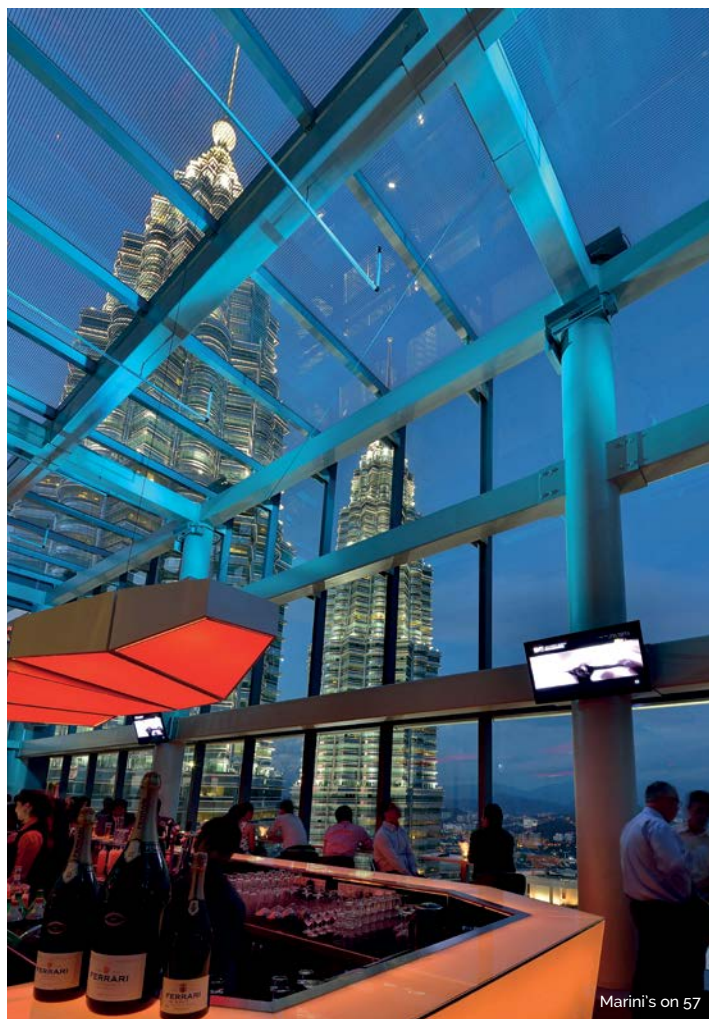
Heli Lounge Bar

Located on the 34th floor of Menara KH, this aviation-themed bar has a helipad that's active during the day, and features a DJ console constructed from plane parts. Drink to 360-degree views of the city. 34th Floor, Menara KL, Jalan Sultan Ismail
Tel +603 2110 5034

Marini's on 57, KLCC

Taking up the top floor of KLCC's Tower 3, you get amazing views of the Petronas Twin Towers and is a great spot to watch the city transform

from day to night. Sip their signature cocktails or whiskies; they also have a great selection of whites, reds and Champagne. Wednesdays are ladies' nights. www.marinis57.com



Marini's on 57

HOT SPOTS

The heart of KL's nightlife is Changkat Bukit Bintang, a trendy strip filled with bars and Western restaurants that draws a sizeable number of the expatriate population. Jalan P Ramlee is where you'll find the most happening clubs, while the current 'it' night spot is the newly-reopened Zouk at [TREC](#) on Jalan Tun Razak. Another great option is Jalan Telawi in Bangsar, which has plenty of cafes, restaurants and bars. It's also favoured by the expatriate community, as is Mont Kiara and nearby [Publika](#). On Fridays and Saturdays, bars start filling up from 10pm and at the clubs, between 11pm-3am.

Z Experience more of KL's nightlife at zafigo.com ([Kuala Lumpur/](#)[More on the City/Do](#))

24-HOUR KL

IN SOME RESPECTS, KL IS A CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS. THESE ARE SOME OF THE OUTLETS AND SERVICES YOU CAN COUNT ON 24/7.





If you are Hungry

Good food is available round the clock in KL. Your options include fast food, *kopitiam*, *dim sum*, *mamak* restaurants, *nasi kandar*, bakery, Kelantanese Malay cuisine... ask your hotel to recommend the nearest (and safest) spots.

If you are Tired and want a massage

Lavish Spa offers a menu of body treatments to loosen tight muscles and help you relax into better sleep. Their facilities include a swimming pool, sauna and an in-house cinema. Level 5, Fahrenheit 88, Jalan Bukit Bintang
www.lavishspa.my

If you are Too energetic to sleep!

Get on the treadmill or elliptical, hold your plank, lift some free weights – exercise is one way to beat jet lag (by tiring yourself out!) and Anytime Fitness lives up to its name by never closing its doors.

There are 10 outlets in the Klang Valley
anytimefitness.my

If you are Unwell and need medical attention

You pay extra after midnight but thankfully, 24-hour clinics are quite easy to find in KL. Get your hotel's

help to locate one, and ask them to call ahead for you. It's also wise to use only taxis that were arranged through the hotels instead of calling a random one.

If you are Missing the news or a good read

Besides 7-Eleven, newsstand-cum-convenience store mynews.com has multiple outlets in KL where you can grab a beverage or snack, magazines and dailies, as well as top-up credit on your prepaid SIM cards. www.mynews.com.my

If you are Running out of clean clothes

Coin-operated laundry began appearing in KL like mushrooms after the rain since last year. They're cheap, easy to use, reliable and most outlets also provide free WiFi so you can keep yourself occupied while waiting for your clothes to wash and dry.

If you are Short of assistance

Need an extra pair of hands or two? GoGet.my is available for practically any errand, with 24-hour GoGetters available at various locations around the Klang Valley. Post your jobs on their website, wait for a GoGetter to 'claim' it, and pay cash upon delivery.

SCAMS TO AVOID

TRAVELLERS CAN BE EASY PREY FOR THE UNSCRUPULOUS. BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THESE COMMON TRICKS.

Budget or premier?

At the KL International Airport (KLIA), you need to buy a coupon at the taxi counters inside the arrival hall (don't be swayed by the taxi touts!) before joining the queue outside. There are three categories of taxis: Budget, premier, and family. Some operators will try to convince you to take the latter two, so they can charge you more.

As a guide, budget taxis can fit two to three people and up to two pieces of big luggage in the trunk, while family vehicles can accommodate up to six adults comfortably. If your group is no bigger than that, insist that you only need a budget vehicle.

What you can do The person behind the counter may argue and tell you that the drivers will refuse to let you board their taxis. Tell him/her that you are willing to take the risk.

Unmetered taxis

At popular landmarks, where taxis can be in high demand, cabbies are known to switch off the meter and charge a flat (and inflated) fee. If you don't agree with the price quoted, don't pick a fight. Just say no and walk away.

What you can do Hail a taxi using mobile apps like MyTeksi and Uber, or try other public transportation options.

See [pages 17-18](#)

The 'poor me' lie

This has been known to happen at transportation hubs like KL Sentral. A stranger approaches you, claiming to have lost all his belongings and asking if you can spare money for his ticket home.

What you can do Just say no, pretend not to understand what they say, or suggest that they go to the police.



Read up on other scams at [zafigo.com](#) ([Kuala Lumpur/City Guide/Dangers & Annoyances](#))



SPEAK MALAYSIAN LAH!

USEFUL AND POPULAR PHRASES TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE CULTURAL MAZE THAT IS MALAYSIA, WHERE MANY LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN AND OFTEN, WITHIN THE SAME SENTENCE.



Learn our national language

Bahasa Malaysia is fairly easy to pick up as most words are pronounced exactly as they are spelled. These are some basic words and phrases that can help you go a long way – or at least endear you to the locals.

Terima kasih (*tehr-ree-mah kah-seeh*): Thank you

Maaf (*mah-ahf*): Sorry

Tak/Tidak (*tahk/tee-dahk*): No

Boleh (*bow-lay*): Can

Bukan (*boo-kahn*): Not

Kiri (*kee-ree*): Left

Kanan (*kah-nahn*): Right

Terus (*tehr-roos*): Straight on

Nak (*nahk*): Want

Lapar (*lah-pahr*): Hungry

Saya (*sah-yah*): I, or me

Anda (*ahn-dah*): You

Dia (*dee-yah*): He/she

[Read more](#) at [zafigo.com](#).

Try some Manglish

In KL, English is just as widely spoken as Bahasa Malaysia or to be more accurate, it's Manglish that you are likely to hear us speak. Malaysian English, like its moniker suggests, is a mangled form of the language that can be confusing at first but once you get the hang of it, you'll likely find it funny and even practical. Manglish is mostly standard

English though it shares some similarities with pidgin English, with little added suffixes and local colour.

Tip A special note to English speakers: Ninety per cent of the time, 'a' is pronounced as in fah-ther and not 'a' as in that. The 'e' is usually pronounced as in the, and only very occasionally as the 'e' as in they.

Practice One of the simplest forms of Manglish is the addition of the suffix 'lah' (with the 'a' as in father) to the end of sentences. For example: Can *lah* (Sure, fine by me) or no *lah* (No, of course not).

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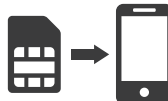


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WIFI



WIFI PASSWORD

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SUBWAY/METRO



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TAXI

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TEA + MILK



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SOYA MILK



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CHURCH

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A person with long dark hair, seen from behind, is walking away on a path through a forest. They are wearing a light-colored, multi-pocketed backpack with brown leather straps and buckles. The forest floor is covered in fallen leaves, and the trees in the background are out of focus. The entire image has a dark purple overlay.

“i haven't been

EVERYWHERE

but it's on my list”


Susan Sontag




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