Tour Code
JHML

ADVENTURESABROAD

SINGAPORE & PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

with Jonathan Hodgson

12 days

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Day 1 Arrival in Singapore

Few airports announce a destination quite like Changi — a glimpse of the efficiency and ambition that defines this city-state before we've even left the terminal.

We transfer to our centrally located hotel and gather this evening for a welcome dinner at a nearby hawker centre. Singapore's street food culture is not an amenity; it is a social institution — and the hawker centre is its most democratic expression, where Chinese, Malay, Indian and Peranakan traditions share the same open-air tables. It is as good an introduction to this city as any museum could provide.

Overnight in Singapore

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Singapore: City of Reinvention

Few cities have remade themselves as deliberately — or as successfully — as Singapore. This morning we visit Gardens by the Bay, the extraordinary horticultural landmark that has become the emblem of modern Singapore: a city that does not merely adapt to its environment but reimagines it entirely. The Supertree Grove's vertical gardens and climate-controlled conservatories are as much a statement of national intent as they are a feat of engineering — nature curated, amplified, and put to work.

We continue to the Marina Bay precinct and ascend the Marina Bay Sands SkyPark for sweeping views across the harbour and skyline — a panorama that compresses decades of transformation into a single glance. The financial district's towers rise to the south; the colonial Padang and its cricket pitch sit improbably close to the water's edge below, a reminder of how recently this was a very different city. After lunch, we cross the Helix Bridge to the ArtScience Museum, whose permanent collection explores the intersections of human creativity and technological innovation. It is a fitting lens through which to understand Singapore's journey from 19th-century trading port to 21st-century global city-state — a transformation accomplished within a single generation.

Overnight in Singapore

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Singapore River & Colonial Echoes

This morning we join a scenic cruise along the Singapore River, tracing the waterway that served as the commercial lifeline of the colonial city. Godowns and trading houses have given way to restaurants and galleries, but the river's role as the city's connective tissue endures. We explore the Civic District on foot — St. Andrew's Cathedral, the old Supreme Court, the Victoria Theatre — before visiting Raffles Hotel, that enduring symbol of empire, where guests may enjoy an optional Singapore Sling at the Long Bar.

The afternoon brings a sharply different perspective on Singapore's story. We ascend The Pinnacle@Duxton skybridge for panoramic views and a conversation about one of the world's most successful public housing programmes — home to over 80% of the population, and a quiet rebuttal to those who assumed rapid modernisation could not coexist with genuine social equity. The Tanjong Pagar neighbourhood below tells its own version of that story: once a coolie enclave and red-light district, now one of the city's most vibrant dining precincts. We gather here this evening for our group dinner, the heritage shophouses and street-level energy providing an atmospheric close to three days in this improbable city.

Overnight in Singapore

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Singapore - Fly to Kuala Lumpur

A short morning flight carries us north across the Strait of Malacca to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's confident, layered capital. After transfer to our centrally located hotel, the afternoon takes in two landmarks that together frame the city's identity — where it has come from, and where it intends to go.

At Merdeka Square, the Union Jack was lowered on 31 August 1957 and a nation was born. The adjacent Merdeka 118 tower — among the tallest buildings on earth — speaks to what that nation has since become. The juxtaposition is deliberate; Malaysians understand it as such. We conclude the afternoon at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, whose collection of architecture, manuscripts, textiles and decorative arts provides the most coherent single introduction available to the reach and sophistication of Islamic civilisation. The calligraphy galleries alone repay close attention, and the architectural models tracing mosque design across a dozen cultures reframe what we will encounter throughout the peninsula — in royal towns, cave temples and merchant streetscapes — in the days ahead.

Overnight in Kuala Lumpur

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Kuala Lumpur - Cameron Highlands

Departing after breakfast, we head north through the foothills of the Main Range as the city gives way to plantation country and the air begins to cool. En route we stop at Kuala Kangsar, the royal capital of Perak state and one of the peninsula's most graceful small towns.

We continue into the Cameron Highlands as the road climbs and narrows through jungle-clad ridges, the temperature dropping noticeably with each bend. We arrive mid-afternoon at one of Southeast Asia's best-preserved British hill stations — a world of Tudor-style bungalows, tea gardens and cool highland air that feels improbably distant from the capital we left this morning. A relaxed orientation walk sets the scene before dinner.

Overnight in the Cameron Highlands

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Cameron Highlands

The British planted tea here in the 1920s and the highlands have never quite left that era behind — which is precisely part of their appeal. This morning we visit the BOH Estate, one of Malaysia's oldest and most productive tea plantations, where neat rows of Camellia sinensis bushes cover the hillsides as far as the eye can follow. A factory tour traces the full journey from freshly plucked leaf to finished cup, and tasting follows with views across terraced slopes that drop away into forest below. It is one of those rare experiences that is both genuinely informative and genuinely pleasurable.

We continue to the Mossy Forest boardwalk on the upper reaches of Gunung Brinchang, where the canopy gives way to a world of cloud, lichen and silence. Gnarled trees draped in moss, ferns and pitcher plants crowd the walkway; a guide interprets this fragile montane ecosystem — among the most biodiverse environments in the region — and the explanation enriches what the eye already finds extraordinary. The afternoon allows time to explore the local produce markets, where highland strawberries, honey, vegetables and cut flowers fill the stalls in seasonal abundance. Dinner at hotel.

Overnight in the Cameron Highlands

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Cameron Highlands - Ipoh

We descend from the highlands after breakfast, the road unwinding through tea estates and jungle before levelling out onto the broad Perak plain. By late morning we arrive in Ipoh — the former tin-mining capital that boomed in the colonial era and has since aged, gracefully, into

one of the peninsula's most characterful cities. Its old town has survived intact in a way that more prosperous cities rarely manage, and that survival is its greatest asset.

A heritage walking tour takes in the old town's ornate shophouse streetscapes, the magnificent colonial-era railway station — a Moorish Revival confection that locals affectionately call the Taj Mahal of Ipoh — and the Birch Memorial Clock Tower, a monument whose history invites an honest conversation about the nature of colonial patronage. The afternoon is given to Perak Tong, a cave temple hollowed into a limestone karst outcrop north of the city. Its interior murals and resident deity shrines have accumulated over more than a century of continuous devotion, creating an atmosphere that no purpose-built attraction could replicate.

Dinner this evening features Ipoh's celebrated local cuisine — bean sprout chicken and silky flat rice noodles among the specialities that have made this city a quiet pilgrimage destination for food travellers across Malaysia.

Overnight in Ipoh

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Ipoh - Penang & George Town

We leave Ipoh after breakfast and travel north through Perak toward the coast, the limestone karst formations that define this part of the peninsula rising abruptly from the flat plain on either side of the highway. The Penang Bridge carries us across the strait to George Town — a city that wears its layered history more visibly, and more proudly, than anywhere else on our journey.

The afternoon is devoted to a guided walking tour of George Town's UNESCO-listed historic core, where Chinese clan houses, Hindu temples, mosques and colonial administrative buildings occupy the same streets in an arrangement that is not merely multicultural but genuinely interwoven. The multicultural tapestry introduced at Singapore's hawker centres and deepened at the Islamic Arts Museum in Kuala Lumpur finds its fullest urban expression here — a living city rather than a preserved one, where heritage and daily life have not yet been separated. We conclude at the Blue Mansion — the indigo-walled Cheong Fatt Tze estate, a Straits Chinese masterpiece whose story tracks the arc of Chinese mercantile ambition in colonial Malaya. Entry is by guided tour at set times; scheduling will be confirmed in advance with the local operator. Dinner features Penang specialities.

Overnight in George Town

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Penang Highlights

This morning we ascend Penang Hill by funicular railway, rising above the city to a hilltop station where colonial bungalows peer through forest and the strait stretches toward the mainland. The views across George Town and the channel reward the ascent; the cooler air at 830 m/2,723 ft rewards it further. The hill has been a retreat from the heat of the city since the earliest days of British settlement, and something of that unhurried atmosphere persists.

We continue to Kek Lok Si, the largest Buddhist temple complex in Malaysia, its tiers of pagodas, pavilions and a 30-metre bronze Kuan Yin statue climbing the hillside above Air Itam. The complex blends Chinese, Thai and Burmese architectural traditions in a way that mirrors the broader cultural conversation of the peninsula — nothing here arrived in isolation, and nothing exists in isolation now.

NOTE: Penang Hill and Kek Lok Si together involve considerable uphill walking and steps. Guests with mobility considerations may prefer to focus on one rather than both — please advise your Tour Leader accordingly.

The afternoon returns us to George Town for guided exploration of the city's multicultural neighbourhoods — Chinese clan heritage sites, the Little India precinct and the colonial landmarks of the Esplanade. Evening group dinner.

Overnight in George Town

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Penang - Langkawi

We depart George Town by coach, heading north along the coast through Kedah state to Kuala Perlis jetty, with a comfort stop en route. The ferry crossing to Langkawi takes approximately one hour, the island's forested granite peaks — among the oldest geological formations in Southeast Asia, some 500 million years in the making — rising from the Andaman Sea as we approach.

Transfer to our seaside hotel is followed by a late afternoon coastal orientation walk, an unhurried introduction to an island that consistently rewards the unhurried. After the density and layered history of George Town, Langkawi's quieter pace and open coastline come as a welcome change of register.

Overnight in Langkawi

Included Meal(s): Breakfast

Day 11 Langkawi: Mangroves & Island Heights

This morning's mangrove and wildlife cruise (approximately 3 hours) explores the network of tidal channels and limestone karst formations that fringe Langkawi's eastern coast. A naturalist guide provides commentary on coastal ecosystems, birdlife habitats and the geological processes — some 500 million years in the making — that produced these dramatic formations. Brahminy kites ride the thermals overhead; monitor lizards move through the mangrove roots below. The pace is unhurried, the observation rewarding.

The afternoon takes us to the Langkawi Sky Bridge, a curved pedestrian walkway suspended 700 m/2,300 ft above sea level between two mountain peaks, with views extending to the Thai coast on clear days. It is a fittingly elevated conclusion to our journey through the peninsula — quite literally the highest point of a tour that has moved from city skylines to highland mist to open sea.

This evening we gather for a farewell dinner, a final shared table after twelve days of travel through one of Southeast Asia's most rewarding and richly layered destinations.

Overnight: Langkawi

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Depart Langkawi

After breakfast, we transfer to Langkawi International Airport for onward travel. Twelve days, four states, and a peninsula's worth of contrasts held in balance — gleaming city-states and highland mist, colonial shophouses and cave temples, hawker stalls and hill station tearooms.

Selamat jalan — safe travels!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast