

## WELCOME TO KUCHING!!!

**Kuching** is the capital and largest city of the East Malaysian state of Sarawak <sup>[1]</sup> and the district of Kuching, as well as the largest city on the island of Borneo <sup>[2]</sup>.

Once the capital of the White Rajahs of Sarawak, now with a population of some 600,000, Kuching is small enough to walk around but interesting enough to keep you there for several days, and a good base for exploring Sarawak. It's safe and relatively clean. The name of the city, Kuching, is thought to derive from the Malay word *kucing*, meaning **cat**. Many of the locals refer to Kuching as the "Cat City" but it more likely comes from the Chinese word for port ("cochin") coupled with the Malay name *mata kucing* (cat's-eye) for the *longan* fruit, a popular trade item. From verbal local history sources: "There was a small tributary of the Sarawak river called Sungei Kuching. It was from this stream that Kuching got its name. However, the stream has since been filled in and built over." The people of Kuching take pride in being the cleanest city in Malaysia and their diverse cultures, so be prepared for a totally different experience from that of West Malaysia.



Kuching Skyline

### History

Sarawak was a part of **the Sultanate of Brunei** 200 years ago but as a reward for help in putting down a rebellion, it was ceded to the British adventurer **James Brooke** who ruled it as his personal kingdom. Kuching was made his capital and headquarters. The Brooke Administration was given the status of Protectorate under **Rajah Charles Brooke's** rule and

was placed behind the Indian Rajs and Princes. The Brooke family ruled Sarawak until the Japanese occupation in December 1941.

Kuching was surrendered to the Japanese forces on 24 December 1941, and Sarawak was part of the Japanese Empire for three years and eight months, until the official Japanese surrender on 11 September 1945 on board the Australian naval vessel HMAS Kapunda at Kuching. From March 1942 the Japanese operated a POW and civilian internee camp at Batu Lintang, 5 km (3 ml) outside Kuching.

After the end of World War II the third the last Rajah, **Sir Charles Vyner Brooke** ceded Sarawak to the British Crown in 1946. Sarawak and the British Commonwealth fought an "Undeclared War" with Indonesia to keep Sarawak from being absorbed into Sukarno's Indonesia. The British gave Sarawak independence in 1963 and together with North Borneo, Sabah and Singapore, helped form Malaysia on 16 September 1963. Singapore became an independent nation in 1965.

## **People**

Kuching prides itself on being one of the most multi-racial cities in Malaysia. The Chinese speak Hokkien, Hakka and Foochow. Other notable "dialect" groups among the Chinese include the Cantonese, Teochew, Hainanese and Heng Hua. The Malays, who are comprised of Kuching's original inhabitants as well as migrants from neighboring Indonesia, form only slightly less of the population than the Chinese, while Ibans form about 5% of the population. There are also original Indian migrants who have lived in Kuching for many decades. The Indians are divided evenly between Tamils, Sikhs and Punjabis. The remainder are other indigenous races, most notably the Bidayuh, Melanaus, Javanese and Orang Ulu settlers. What makes Kuching city unique from other towns in Sarawak is, Kuching city population does not reflect the true demography of the whole Sarawak.

Most people of Chinese descent live in South Kuching area, like Padungan and Pending. The Malay mostly live at North Kuching area, and are spread evenly throughout South Kuching area. Other races like Iban, Bidayuh, Melanau and Orang Ulu are spread evenly throughout Padawan and some at South and North Kuching. Indian communities of Tamil descent mostly live at Batu Lintang and Gita area, while Javanese communities mostly live at Mile 20 Kuching-Serian Road, Rantau Panjang

(Batu Kawa) and Kg. Kolong at Matang.

## Climate

Kuching enjoys sunshine throughout the year as any other tropical cities. Rains and heavy showers occur occasionally which always due to precipitation and monsoon season. Hail might sometimes happen in Kuching. However, strong winds, tremors and heavy thunderstorms are very unlikely to occur. It is recommended to visit Kuching during hot season which is from March to October every year. Monsoon season normally occur between November to February. However, the monsoon does not hinder too much of the tourists' activities.

## Holidays[edit <sup>[4]</sup>]

Kuching, and Sarawak as a whole celebrate all Federal holidays except Deepavali. Sarawak has also declared holiday for Good Friday (1 day) and Gawai Day (2 days). Unlike other states in Malaysia, not all Islamic events are declared as a holiday other than; Hari Raya Aidilfitri (2 days), Hari Raya Aidiladha (1 day), Maulud Nabi (1 day) and Awal Muharram (1 day).

Avoid touring to the Santubong area during first day of Hari Raya Aidilfitri as heavy traffic occurs at Petra Jaya. Tourists can expect a large local celebration for major holidays such as Chinese New Year, Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Gawai Day . Gawai is a local ritualistic celebration similar to a *harvest celebration* with proceedings commencing around sunset on the evening of 31 May. It is an officially recognised holiday only in Sarawak and the subsequent celebrations may last for several days.

## Orientation

Kuching city can be divided into a few areas:

- **Padawan** - It's a small town at the outskirts of Kuching city. It's popular with its traditional Bidayuh kampungs and longhouses. This area is home for multiracial communities such as Bidayuh, Javanese, Malay, Chinese and Iban & Orang Ulu settlers.
- **Kota Sentosa** - Before being named Kota Sentosa, Kota Sentosa was called (now colloquially) 'Batu Tujuh' or 7th Mile. This area is a commercial hub for people from Batu Kitang, Kg. Haji Baki and surrounding areas. Sarawak Mental Hospital is also located here. Kota

Sentosa has also grown its importance due to its vicinity of Army Camps.

- **BDC** - BDC was long time ago a remote housing area. However, today it has grown importance as a commercial hub for Stutong and Tabuan Heights area and also a growing elite housing areas.
- **Tabuan Jaya** - Tabuan Jaya, like BDC, was long time ago a remote housing area. Today, it has emerged into Kuching satellite city. It is also well connected to other important areas in Kuching such as Pending, BDC, Muara Tabuan Industrial Estate and Demak Jaya Industrial Estate.
- **Pending** - Pending is an industrial area with connecting wharf, ports & harbour. It is a mostly Chinese majority populated area of the white & blue collar middle working class, living in sub-areas of Kenyalang Park & Bintawa. Major industrial players here with their factory setup, among them are Komag, CMS Concrete, Taiyo-Yuden, Kuching Plywood, Gold Coin Fertilizer and Sarawak Clinker Plant. Pending is connected to Kuching city centre via Padungan.
- **Batu Kawa** - Batu Kawa got its name from volcano crater found at Gunung Serapi. It has now emerged into important satellite city of Kuching, which consist of MJC Commercial Area (with condominium housing, elite housing areas and shoplots), Sg. Maong and Pekan Rantau Panjang.
- **Matang** - Matang is another emerging town under Kuching. Among its prominent attraction is Matang Jaya and Gita.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Mile** - An emerging commercial area once the home to Sunny Hill School, Sarawak's first private school, and also an old-fashioned cinema, Capitol Cinema. 3<sup>rd</sup> Mile was once an important train route in Kuching.
- **Padungan** - Padungan is the oldest commercial & shopping hub in Kuching. Chinatown is located here. It's also an important area for nightlife and clubbing, 4-5 star hotels such as Crowne Plaza, Grand Margherita (formerly Holiday Inn), Hilton, Pullman, Somerset Gateway and Novotel, popular tourist spots such as Kuching Waterfront and Cat statues.
- **Simpang Tiga** - Simpang Tiga is famous with its federal government complex, Swinburne University and newly opened "The Spring" shopping mall.

- **Satok** - Satok is the most widely spoken place among tourists for its weekend market. It is also the smallest DUN (State Legislative) area in Sarawak.
- **Petra Jaya** - Petra Jaya is home for majority of Malay population in Kuching, and most probably in Sarawak. It has a lot of Malay kampungs, low-cost housing schemes, housing estates and it is also a headquarters for Sarawak state government, which is an idea later copied by Federal Government for their Putrajaya. Petra Jaya consist of area from Kg. Tupong to Semariang to Demak Laut Industrial Estate.
- Santubong <sup>[5]</sup> - Santubong is located 30 km away from Kuching. It is a tourist spot for beach and annual international events such as the World Rainforest Music Festival. Great place for a weekend getaway.

### **Talk**

Kuching is a very multicultural place, and most locals speak at least Malay <sup>[6]</sup> and their ethnic tongue, with quite a number able to speak a decent level of English as well. This is due to the fact all Kuchingnites take English as a second or third language. The ability to speak either Malay, English or Mandarin is usually enough for someone in Kuching to get by.

## **Speaking Malay in Kuching**

Please notice some basic communication terms in Bahasa Melayu Sarawak.

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**Kamek** - I

•

**Kita** - We

•

**Kitak** - You

•

**Auk** - Yes

•

**Sik** - No

•

**Igek** - Piece

•

**Kamek Mauk Pergi Jamban Dolok**

- I Would Like To Go To The Toilet

•

**Kitak Dari Siney?** - Where Are You From?

•

**Nyaman Juak Makanan Tok** - This Food Is Quite Tasty

•

**Kamek Ngupok/Mupok Dolok** - I'd Like To Make A Move

•

**Nama**-Name

•

**Maok**-Want

•

**Jamban**-Toilet

•

**Duit**-Money

While standard Malay is well understood, the local dialect, known as "**Bahasa Melayu Sarawak**", is different enough to be officially categorized as its own language. Malays from coastal part of Sarawak, especially the one from Sebuyau, Kabong, Saratok, Betong, Sri Aman and the surrounding areas speak different dialect called "**Bahasa Orang Laut**". Malays from Sibu and Miri speak similar language with Kuchingites Malay, but they have some terms unique to their dialect, for example "Pia" in Sibu (in Kuching, they called it "Sia", which means "there"), "Cali" in Miri (in Kuching, they called it "Jenaka", which means "funny"). However, Bahasa Melayu spoken in Limbang and Lawas is a distant difference from Bahasa Melayu Sarawak spoken throughout Kuching-Miri.

Most Chinese in Kuching speak Hokkien <sup>[7]</sup> (Minnan) as their native tongue, but Mandarin <sup>[8]</sup> is the standard language of education and spoken by nearly all Chinese in Kuching.

The Iban language <sup>[9]</sup> is spoken by some Iban people in Kuching, but almost all of them also understand Malay. You may also encounter speakers of other tribal languages like Bidayuh <sup>[10]</sup>, Melanau <sup>[11]</sup> and Orang Ulu.

The lack of homogeneous language used by the peoples is also clearly reflected around the city. Signs such as road names are written in Malay and Chinese. Street signs are in Malay. Shop names and other private signs are usually written in Malay, English or/and Chinese.

### **Get in**

As Kuching is in Sarawak <sup>[1]</sup>, which retains control of its own immigration procedures, some additional complications apply and an ordinary Malaysian visa may not suffice. Most visitors, though, can get visas on arrival at Kuching International Airport. See Sarawak <sup>[12]</sup> for details.

### **By plane**

**Kuching International Airport** (IATA <sup>[13]</sup>: **KCH**) is Sarawak's main gateway. There are near-hourly connections to Kuala Lumpur <sup>[14]</sup> as well as frequent flights to Singapore <sup>[15]</sup>, Johor Bahru <sup>[16]</sup>, Labuan <sup>[17]</sup>, Kota Kinabalu <sup>[18]</sup> and other cities in Sarawak like Sibu <sup>[19]</sup>, Bintulu <sup>[20]</sup> and Miri <sup>[21]</sup>. **MASwings** <sup>[1]</sup> <sup>[22]</sup> links Kuching with Mukah. International connections are rather limited, although there are a few weekly services to Guangzhou <sup>[23]</sup>, Hong Kong <sup>[24]</sup>, and Pontianak <sup>[25]</sup>. Flights to Kuching are

also operated by **Air Asia** <sup>[26]</sup> [2] <sup>[27]</sup>. International airlines operating in Kuching includes SilkAir, Royal Brunei, Tiger Airways, and Batavia Air. **Scoot** <sup>[3]</sup> <sup>[28]</sup> links **Kuching** with Singapore <sup>[15]</sup>

The airport underwent a major facelift in 2005-2006 and is now modern and pleasant. When checking in, note that all flights outside Sarawak are considered "international", even if you're only going elsewhere in Malaysia. A restaurant is on ground floor at the far end at the right, 'OldTown White Coffee' *kopitiam* restaurant at the other far end at the left and a McDonald's outlet beside the escalators. There is also a KFC outlet and a Starbucks outlet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (departure level), left of the departure gates.

**Getting there/away:** Kuching city is about 20 min away by taxi, a fixed RM26 from the taxi coupon stand just outside arrivals. Ignore the touts, even if they show you price lists. From the city you can get a private vehicle for around RM20 or catch a mini bus (RM7.99 for Tune guests); RM10 for others. must be booked at least one day in advance leaving hourly from 8:30AM-evening.

The Sarawak Transport Company (STC) Bus No. 12A no longer serves the 5 daily trips between the airport and the city centre. There is a series of other buses which can drop you off or pick you up next to Kuching Sentral Bus Terminal approximately one km (0.6 mi) west of the Airport (turn left as you exit the airport and walk to the main T intersection, turn left again and walk until you reach the big roundabout and catch a bus heading north to town namely 3A, 6, 8G and 9. The most convenient place to catch these buses back to the airport intersection is at the main bus terminal located in the city.

On a list of available busses in Kuching published by the tourist information one can find Bus No. K13 from / to airport (6:30AM, 9:15AM, 12:15PM, 3PM / 8AM, 10:30AM, 1:30PM, 5:30PM) but also the statement that "public bus service is not reliable or accurate".

### **By boat**

The **Express Bahagia** and **Express Sejahtera** express boats run an alternating once daily service from Kuching to Sibul <sup>[19]</sup>, each boat returning the next day. RM38 (RM45 1st class) one way and the journey takes 5.5 hr, with stops at Sarikei and Tanjung Manis. The boats depart

from the **Pending** wharf to the east of the city at 8.30AM. You can usually buy tickets at the wharf. **Getting there/away:** Chin Lian Long buses No. 1A, 17 and 19 go to the express boat jetty. 60 sen one way. Taxis usually charge RM15.

## **By bus**

Kuching's **regional express bus terminal** is located along Jl. Datuk Tawi Sli, also dubbed as "3 and a half miles", located south of the city, just before the Boulevard shopping mall. All long-distance express buses arrive from and leave for major Sarawak cities like Sibu, Bintulu and Miri, as well as Pontianak <sup>[25]</sup> in Indonesia <sup>[29]</sup>. Regional buses for some towns near Kuching such as Lundu (for the Gunung Gading National Park and Tanjung Datu National Park) and Sri Aman also arrive/depart from here. However, buses for some towns and destinations nearer Kuching, such as the Bako National Park <sup>[30]</sup>, Bau and the Semenggoh Orang Utan Centre, leave from various locations in the **city centre**, depending on the bus company being used. See the individual destinations below for details.

- **To/from Bau:**
- **To/from Bako National Park:** Petra Jaya Transport(red) bus No. 1 departs from the open air market near Electra House in the city centre. RM3.5 one way, journey time 45 min. There are also public mini buses, more expensive and a little bit faster and more regular. The buses bring you to Bako Bazaar where you pay your RM20 park entrance fee and transfer to a boat to reach the national park. Boat costs RM47 one way and can carry up to 5 people. See Bako National Park <sup>[30]</sup> page for details.
- **To/from Lundu:** Sarawak Transport Company (cream and green) express buses depart from the regional bus terminal at 8:15AM, 11AM, 2PM and 4PM. Buses depart Lundu at 8AM, 11AM, 2PM and 4PM. Travel time approximately 2 hr. At Lundu, take a taxi or van or walk approximately 2.5 km (north) to the Gunung Gading National Park. For Tanjung Datu National Park, catch a connecting Sarawak Transport Company bus to Sematan where you will have to charter a boat to the park.
- **To/from Pontianak: Bintang Jaya Express** [4] <sup>[31]</sup> ☎ +6 082 531 133 at the regional bus terminal, ☎ +6 082 531 133 headquarters. Buses depart Kuching regional bus terminal for Pontianak via the Tebedu-

Entikong border crossing daily at 7:45AM. RM45 adult 1 way. From Pontianak, buses depart daily at 9PM. Fare is RM 55. **SJS Super Executive** ☎ +60 82 456999) buses departs the regional bus terminal at 11AM and cost RM70. See the Pontianak to Kuching <sup>[32]</sup> for travel itinerary detail of this route.

- **To/from Semenggoh:** Feeding times for the Orangutans are 9AM and 3PM so catch the 7AM or 1PM bus. Last bus from Semenggoh is 4:05PM, so keep that in mind when going in midday. Sarawak Transport Company buses No. K6 depart from their bus terminal RM3.00, 1 hour, near the open air market in the city centre but are not so frequent (at 1 and a half hour or even rarely). Also there are plenty of mini buses at the open air market that can drive you there, public RM5-10/passenger) and also more expensive mini bus taxis, bargaining starts from RM100 for the whole bus for return journey.
- **To/from Sibiu:** Various express buses depart from the regional bus terminal. Most of them go via Sarikei.

## By car

### From Indonesia <sup>[29]</sup>

To travel by car from Indonesia is pretty straight forward. As a member of Asean, an Indonesian driving license is legal and accepted in Malaysia. Please see the Pontianak to Kuching <sup>[32]</sup> for travel itinerary on this route.

### Within Malaysia and From Brunei Darussalam<sup>[edit]</sup> <sup>[33]</sup>

Sarawak is a huge state. The road networks connecting towns and places in Sarawak including Kuching are somehow quite satisfactorily maintained. However, long and winding roads with sometimes no rest stops in between might bore you or scare you. Here are the distance chart from Kuching to other towns:

### Distance Table from Kuching to other towns in Sarawak

From	To	Distance/Accumulative Distance From Kuching (in Kilometre)	Rest Stops
Kuching	Sri Aman	193/193	Siburan, Tapah, Beratok, Tarat, <b>Serian</b> , Balai Ringin, Lachau
Sri Aman	Sarikei	179/372	Engkilili, <b>Betong</b> , <b>Saratok</b>

Sarikei	Sibu	90/462	Meradong, Julau, Pakan, Jakar
Sibu	Bintulu	202/644	Stapang, <b>Selangau, Tatau</b>
Bintulu	Miri	198/842	Suai, <b>Batu Niah</b> , Sibuti, Bekenu, Bakam
Miri	Limbang	230/1072	Sg. Tujuh, Kuala Belait (Brunei), Seria (Brunei), Tutong (Brunei), <b>Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei)</b>
Limbang	Lawas	128/1200	<b>Bangar, Temburong (Brunei)</b> , Sundar, Trusan

Sabahan people as well as from Brunei can also commute freely to Kuching using Pan Borneo Highway network. However, it is subject to a lot of stopover at immigration checkpoints. Therefore, travelling to Kuching from Sabah is not advisable. Bruneian commuters should produce driving permit which is simply by filling a form at the Malaysian border checkpoint. Bruneian driving license is a valid, legal and accepted form of document in Sarawak/Malaysia.

### **By helicopter**

In case you are in a hurry or desire a bit of luxury, helicopters and other method of air transports are available from **Hornbill Skyways**.

### **By cruises**

There are some cruise liners operating daily between Kuching and Singapore. One of them is **StarCruise**.

### **Get around**

#### **By bus**

The old bus company 'Chin Lian Long' has been taken over by City Public Link [5] [34]. You wouldn't miss it because it is bright green and you notice it frequently plying around Kuching city. The old rickety stage buses has been wiped out by the government in 2009. With these new buses, traveling around Kuching city has become more comfortable now. Perhaps, the only downside would be the waiting time for a bus.

Frequency is about 30 mins and the fare ranges from RM1.80 to RM2.30 depends on the number of stops you are taking and you paid on the bus. Nonetheless, the stage buses between Kuching and its outskirts like Petra Jaya, Serian, Bau and so forth, has not been replaced with new buses.

The main bus terminal in Kuching is located opposite the Old Mosque near the old city center. All the buses listed below leaves from here.

However, there is another bus terminal for inter-state departure which is located at 3rd Mile Bus Terminal. You should take your bus to Sibu, Bintulu and Miri from this terminal. Check BUS ASIA [6] <sup>[35]</sup> for online booking.

Local stage buses are run by 4 companies of colourful assortments, but there's a reasonably logical route numbering system and bus stops usually have some signage indicating bus route numbers.

- **Sarawak Transport Company (STC)** - these green and beige STC buses mainly serve downtown and along the protocol roads leading southbound out of the city centre.
- **Matang Transport Company (MTC)** - these orange and beige MTC buses serve the Kuching-Matang road and suburban settlements along the northern bank of the Sarawak River. This company is the only one not included in the Kuching City Bus Services consortium.
- **Petra Jaya Transport** - these white buses with red, yellow and black striped livery serve the outskirts of Kuching City North (routes ending at Damai and Bako) and also the Kuching-Kota Sentosa-Kota Samarahan route.
- **Bau Transport Company** - these brown and red buses serve the Kuching-Bau route.

Bus drivers and conductors do not actually have Public Relations and Tourist Guiding as part of their training syllabi. Should the bus conductor exist, kindly demand for the ticket because some bus inspectors might just walk inside and do a surprise inspection of passengers' tickets. There are some OMO (One Man Operation) buses that are equipped with a big coin box beside the driver's seat. Ask for the fare first before inserting the exact change into the box. Sit in the front half of the bus so you have easy access to the driver or conductor. Cheating, pickpocketing and sexual harrassment might sometimes occur in public buses, so be

watchful of your surroundings.

Inconsistent passenger load along certain routes can lead to drops in frequency and thus, bus operators cannot comply to a fixed timetable and that results in frustrating delays.

### **By shuttle van**

#### **Caution-Van sapu**

Unlicensed shuttle vans also ply the main roads in Kuching, offering lower (if not the same) fares than their legal counterparts. If you are coaxed to board these vans, please do so at your own risk. Due to its illegal operations, *van sapu* passengers are not covered by insurance should an accident occur.

Yellow roofed *kereta sewa* or shuttle vans fill the void left by stage bus operators, offering somewhat more frequent trips throughout Kuching to as far as Tebedu and Bau. Each shuttle van has their own commuting routes so watch out the routes by reading the destination on the body of the van. Minimum fare for each trip is RM1 and increases with respect to distance. Fares also differ from one shuttle van to another plying the same route by commuting frequency, peak and off-peak periods and passenger load. If in doubt, ask the *passengers*, not the driver.

#### **By taxi**

Taxis are somewhat reasonable in Kuching. Although taxis are metered, the drivers seldom use it and sometimes will slightly overcharge. They may also *hide* the meter behind a rudimentary cover and claim to have no meter. Take your time and appraise the honesty of the driver before proceeding. A reasonable taxi fare from Kuching city centre to Santubong/Damai (45 km/50 mins) is RM60 and from Kuching city to the

airport is RM26. Taxis can also be hired by hourly basis upon request and is normally charged at a rate of RM35 per hour. Some hotels provide their own shuttle vans or buses to designated tourism spots and city centre. Check with your hotel should they provide this kind of service.

## **By car**

All major roads in Kuching city and suburban areas are well tarred and fairly maintained. Driving orientation is on the left and is generally slow-paced. Speed limits on dual-carriageway roads can reach a maximum of 90 km/h and can be reduced to 80km/h or 70 km/h during festival seasons.

Tourists from cosmopolitan cities may not appreciate the driving attitude of local road users. Some drivers tend to make a turn or overtake without using indicators, and others drive beyond the speed limit. You may also find a handful of road hogs (cars, lorries and even motorcycles alike). Honk car horns and flash high beams with careful discretion.

Self-driving in and around Kuching can be challengingly fun. Directional signs in Kuching are so inadequate and it takes a good road map and a good sense of direction to get you around.

## **Car rental**

- Fairuz Car Rental Kuching, online car rental company, visit <http://fairuzcarrental.kitak.org> <sup>[36]</sup>, ☎ +60 13 884 9441 (peruszi at gmail dot com <sup>[37]</sup>), [7] <sup>[38]</sup>. M-Su, 8AM-9PM, Book online at <http://fairuzcarrental.kitak.org> <sup>[36]</sup> or contact by email or SMS. From RM70/day, cash only. edit <sup>[39]</sup>
- "Kuching Car Rental", Jalan Lapangan Terbang, Kuching, Sarawak., ☎ +6016 8507192 / +6014 6888575 (myborneomesra@gmail.com <sup>[40]</sup>). From RM60/day, cash & Credit Card accepted, Tour with driver also provided. edit <sup>[41]</sup>
- TRANZERO, Jalan Kulas, Satok, Kuching, Sarawak., ☎ +60 19 827 7755 / +60 14 589 3433 (keretasewadikuching@gmail.com <sup>[42]</sup>), [8] <sup>[43]</sup>. M-Su, 8AM-11PM, Book online and contact by email or SMS. From RM65/day, cash only. edit <sup>[44]</sup>
- Kuching City Car Rental (Kuching Car Rental), Ground Floor, Terminal Building, Kuching International Airport (Walk up towards the domestic arrival hall exit), ☎ +60128838318 (auto@catscity.com.my <sup>[45]</sup>). edit <sup>[46]</sup>

- Car Rental Kuching (Car Rental Kuching), (Opposite of the domestic hall exit area), ☎ +60 16 8621613 (kelvin@carrentalkuching.com <sup>[47]</sup>), [9] <sup>[48]</sup>. From RM95/day, accept visa/master card.. edit <sup>[49]</sup>
- Sime Darby Rent A Car (Hertz Malaysia Licensee), GL20, Ground Floor, Terminal Building, Kuching International Airport (Booth is after you claim your luggage at the airport), ☎ +60 82 450740 (kch@hertz.simedarby.com <sup>[50]</sup>, fax: +60 82 450741). M-Sa 8AM-6PM, Sun and public holidays meet confirmed reservations. From RM150/day, credit/charge cards only. edit <sup>[51]</sup>
- Kuching Car Rental (Kereta Sewa Kuching), AJ 205, 1st Floor, MJC Batu Kawah New Township, Jl. Batu Kawa, ☎ +60 82 376 030, +60 82 455 022, +60 16 888 4020 (reservation@kuchingcarrental.com <sup>[52]</sup>, fax: +60 82 455 422), [10] <sup>[53]</sup>. M-Su, 8AM-9PM, Call to confirm reservation or book online. From RM98/day, credit/charge cards only. edit <sup>[41]</sup>

### By motorcycle

- **A.H. Rent-a-motorcycle (Teck Hua Motor)**, No. 29 Jalan Tabuan, 93100 Kuching, per day RM30, automatic RM40, half day for half price
- **Three Bikes Rental and Services at airport tel:0198161814** <sup>[54]</sup> **or city 082256729 threebikerental@yahoo.com** <sup>[55]</sup>
- **BoriOttok Guesthouse** 94 Ewe Hai St. Tel 082256729
- **Singgahsana Lodge** No.1 Temple St.

### By bicycle

There is definitely no better way to see the sights of Kuching City than by bicycle. You don't have to be Lance Armstrong to take a full day bicycle tour of the city. Roads in Kuching are adequate for moving around by bicycle. Bicycling is a healthy and budget conscious way to explore the city and it enables you to explore and see things you simply cannot achieve by walking or taking the bus.

- Borneo Bicycle Hire, ☎ +60 19 484 4393 (24 hr contact) (borneobicyclehire@ymail.com <sup>[56]</sup>). 9AM-7PM every day including public holidays. They provide helmets, rain ponchos, repair kit and maps for doing a city tour by bicycles. Rates are very reasonably priced and they have a station in Tun Jugah Mall. If you prefer to start cycling early just after dawn you can rent or hire the bike the night before and

bring the bicycle with you, the rental rates only starts in the morning when you begin your cycle tour. Should the hirer prefer another town as their centre for further exploration, they can be taken there, together with their bicycles, in a mini-bus for an additional charge. Full accident/repatriation insurance available from only RM15. However there are stamp duties as well. edit [57]

### **By river taxi**



*Tambang*s or river taxis provide easy and cheap transport across the Sarawak River in the heart of Kuching.

For a leisurely commute across the Sarawak River, river taxis locally known as *tambang* or *penambang* offers daily services at various points along the Kuching Waterfront, with a one-way fare at RM0.40. The fare hikes up to RM1 from 10PM-6AM the next day. Kindly place the *exact change* on the designated plate instead of giving it to the operator, as you disembark the river taxi at your destination.

### **By boats**

Boats are sometimes available for visitors who wish to travel from one place to another along the Sarawak River.

### **By speedboats**

Speedboats are available for people who wish to go to Taman Negara Bako, Satang Island and Talang-Talang Island from Santubong. Rate differs according to hotels, and in regards to public holidays and peak hours. Check schedule and rates at the respective hotels, such as Damai Lagoon.

### **By helicopter**

In case you are in hurry or in the event to experience luxuriousness, helicopter and other method of air transports are available by using **Hornbill Skyways**.

### **By cruises**

Cruising along the Sarawak River is available. Sarawak River Cruise

provides scenic cruises along the Sarawak River. Tel: +6082240366.

## On foot

Kuching is unusually pedestrian-friendly for a Malaysian city, with tree-lined sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, and the city core is compact enough to cover on foot. Good walks include the **Kuching Waterfront** and the pedestrian shopping street of **Jalan India** (Kuching's Little India).



## Jalan India

Kuching is a heaven for tourists. It is one of the main tourist destinations in Sarawak.

In Kuching, you can enjoy various sightseeing activities. Among them are visiting museums, sightseeing of Kuching city and sightseeing for nature lovers.

Kuching is quite the sunset spot, often regarded as "one of the most memorable". Take your shots, and enjoy the sunsets from the Waterfront, Santubong Peninsular or Bako Peninsular.

- **Tua Pek Kong Temple**, Jl. Padungan (*East end of Main Bazaar*). This temple is the oldest Chinese temple in Kuching and located strategically at the heart of Kuching. It was just at the opposite of Chinese Museum. It was built in 1843. Various festivals are held here for example The Wang Kang Festival (to commomerate the dead) and Ghost Festival.
- **Sultan Iskandar Planetarium**. This first planetarium ever built in Malaysia is in the Kuching Civic Centre complex. This planetarium shows videos of astronomic adventures of every planets in the solar system.

One can enjoy sightseeing of Kuching City at various locations. What is unique of Kuching city in sightseers' eyes is how the skyscrapers built in the vicinity of lush green jungles.

- **Kuching Civic Centre**, located at Jl. Taman Budaya. This is a 3-building complex, landmarked by its tower with an umbrella-shaped roof (under renovation as of May 2014. No access). This is the best place to get a 360° aerial view of Kuching City. Take a beautiful snapshot of Kuching concrete buildings in the assembly of lush green

trees. The viewing platform is available for public access only during daytime, served mainly by two bubble lifts. Also at the top you can find a souvenir shop and the highest public toilet in Kuching. Just one level below, there's a restaurant called *Link*. On the ground, there's the Sultan Iskandar Planetarium, some hawker stalls, a sports gym (which used to be a public library) and a multi-function hall.

- **Kuching City Mosque**, located near the open air market. It was previously the main mosque for Kuchingites and known as the Sarawak State Mosque, later it was re-designated as the Kuching Divisional Mosque. It was built in 1968 on a site originally used for a wooden mosque as early as 1852. It has a striking design, featuring a combination of mid-western and Italian architecture. It is still now a perfect place for Muslims visiting Kuching to stop by for prayers.

### **Please observe religious conventions**

Visitors to mosques are requested to dress respectfully and remove their shoes. Non-Muslims should avoid entering during prayer times so as not to disrupt people during periods of religious observance, *especially on Friday afternoons*.

- **Masjid Jamek**, or "Jamek Mosque" is located at Petra Jaya. It was adjacent to the State Library and housed Dewan Hikmah, a multi-purpose hall, usually for Muslim wedding receptions. It has also some quarters for the Hafizs and the Ustazs. It was the most crowded Mosque in Sarawak due to the location nearby and area where majority of Kuching Muslims reside. It is still a most favourite place for Friday prayers due to the mosque being comfortable and air-conditioned.
- **Medan Raya Complex**, located at Petra Jaya. Originally planned as the State Government Administrative Centre with a dual-carriageway boulevard linking the Kuching North City Hall and Wisma Bapa Malaysia, currently just having one building on the site called Baitul

Makmur, which houses four state ministries. This area is perfect for jogging, walking and sightseeing of romantic (sometimes erotic) couples. A man-made lake lies in the centre of the complex, where locals usually race their RC speed boats after office hours, much to the annoyance of anyone living within the radius of a kilometre. At night, the fine stretch of road crossing the lake often becomes an illegal dragstrip. Come at the wrong time and the long arm of the law awaits you. Be warned.

- **Kuching Waterfront.** Any visit to Kuching is incomplete without taking a brisk walk at the RM1 milion per 10 m strip of Kuching Waterfront. It is the most popular meeting (and mating) place in Kuching. It was once a line of old warehouses. During the daytime, the Waterfront is the best place to view the Astana, Fort Margherita, adjacent Malay kampungs of Kampung Sinjan and Kampung Lintang or even the newly constructed DUN complex. At night, it is the best place to see nightlife of lovers, youngsters and love-makers. Some food kiosks are also present here but mind the high charges on food. *My Kampong* have a small kiosk that serve mee mamak. If you do order traditional Malay food such as grilled fish, be sure to ask them to warm it up.
- **Main Bazaar.** A very long row of shophouses for you to shop for Sarawak souvenirs and handicrafts.
- **Kuching Reservoir Park (Taman Budaya),** located at Jl. Reservoir/Jl. Taman Budaya. Literally meaning 'cultural garden' although the cultural aspect of it remains questionable. Once a reservoir for water storage and hence forever named the *Kuching Reservoir*, it is a perfect place for jogging, walking and sightseeing and has a big pond. The Kuching Central Prison is just next to this garden, just so you know. Be aware of the mosquitoes.
- **Sunday Market (Pasar Minggu),** Jl. Matang in Tamang Foong Joon. The Sunday Market comes alive beginning Saturday afternoon and runs until Sunday afternoon. The market is so huge that it might break your legs to walk to every corner of this market. It is divided into many sections such as food, fruits, vegetables, fishes (salted *terubok* fish is sold here), potted plants, jungle produce, including wild honey, pets, bundle clothing, magazines and even toys. The market is like a huge hypermarket, without air-conditioning. Some word of advice, wear

shoes when you are entering fish and chicken areas. Those areas are wet in nature and the traders might not be ashamed to splash some water to your feet. It is open almost every weekend. However, during big celebrations like Gawai, Chinese New Year or Hari Raya, some stalls at *Pasar Minggu* are closed. The *Pasar Tamu* however, which is part of the market with a permanent roofed structure, operates on a daily basis.

- **The Astana.** Or the Palace in English, resides the current *Yang di-Pertua Negeri* or the Head of State of Sarawak. The palace is situated on the north bank of the river, just across the river from Kuching Waterfront. It was built in 1870 by Charles Brooke as a bridal gift to his wife Margaret. Next to it is Orchid Garden and beautifully decorated garden with observation tower. A sampan deck, which is named Pengkalan Sapi is also situated within the Astana vicinity.
- **Friendship Garden**, located at Tabuan Heights. The garden is developed to mark the symbol of friendship between China and Malaysia. The garden is beautifully crafted with small ponds and gardens. Perfect place for sightseeing, feeding the *koi* fishes and trying your luck at the two wishing wells.
- **Sarawak State Library** (*Pustaka Negeri*), Petra Jaya, near to Masjid Jamek. For sightseeing purpose, visitors can opt for aerobic sessions hosted every afternoon at the library compound. The lake in front of the library is the most suitable place for aquatic lovers. A lot of fishes from different species are bred here. They normally get foods from the visitors, so bring your fish food or breads here.

## Museums

Kuching's major sights are its museums. Clustered just south of the centre, a program of refurbishment started in 2002 is shuffling up the exhibits.

- **Sarawak Museum**, The Sarawak State Museum is the oldest museum in Borneo. It was established in 1888 and opened in 1891 in a purpose-built building in Kuching. Sponsored by Charles Brooke, the second White Rajah of Sarawak, the establishment of the museum was strongly encouraged by Alfred Russel Wallace. It was now called *Ethnology Museum* and houses various ethnic displays and historical

items from Sarawak.

- **Dewan Tun Abdul Razak** (*Tun Abdul Razak Hall*), Jl. Tun Abang Haji Openg (*Opposite Sarawak Museum*). Formerly the New Wing of the Sarawak Museum, now houses changing exhibitions, a rather good gift shop and the Sarawak Museum Department office.
- **The Sarawak Islamic Museum**. It is located just behind the Tun Abdul Razak Hall and can be accessed via Jl. P. Ramlee. The museum consists of 7 galleries set around a central courtyard garden, each with a different theme. One of the interesting artefacts shown here is a replica of sword used by Prophet Muhammad pbuh. Open daily from 9AM-6PM (closed on Fridays).
- **Chinese History Museum**, Waterfront (*east end of Main Bazaar*). A small colonial-era museum that used to be the courthouse for the Sarawakian Chinese, then the office of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce It now houses a small permanent exhibition of Kuching's many Chinese groups.
- **Fort Margherita**, Completed in 1879, Fort Margherita resides at a breathtaking and strategic position at the riverside of Sarawak. It was once a defensive structure to protect Kuching from possible attack. At present, Fort Margherita has been converted into a Police Museum and many of it's old cannons, cannon balls, guns, pistols, swords and other vestiges of its armoury and armaments can still be seen. It can be accessed by road from the other side of the river, which is Petra Jaya, or by 'tambang' boat from Kuching Waterfront.
- **The Cat Museum**. This is a large collection of cat memorabilia, since "Kuching" means "Cat" in Malay. The museum is located at Kuching North City Hall at Petra Jaya, on top of Bukit Siol (*Siol Hill*). Cat lovers will find all range of exhibits, photos, feline art and cat souvenirs. Some interesting cat characters like Felix the Cat, and Garfield the Cat are also housed here. Free entry. Open daily 9AM-5PM (closed public holidays).
- **Sarawak Timber Museum**. The museum resides in the building of Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC) Building or Wisma Sumber Alam in Petra Jaya. It houses forestry, traditional wood displays, forest-based products and the exhibition of timber industry development in Sarawak. Open Mondays to Fridays 8.30AM to 4PM, Saturdays 8:30AM-12:30PM (closed Sundays and public holidays). 📞

+60 82 443477

- **Sarawak Textile Museum.** The museum is situated in the Pavillion, yet another historical building on its own right, just opposite of the General Post Office. Open Mon-Fri 8:30AM-4PM, Sat 8:30-12:30PM (closed Sundays and public holidays).
- **Pua Kumbu Museum.** The museum is located at Tun Jugah Complex. However, this museum requires early booking/appointment. Refer to Sarawak Tourism Board for contact.

## Nearby

- **Jong's Crocodile Farm** ☎ +60 82 242790. Located 30 km from Kuching on the Kuching-Serian Rd. The best time to visit is during feeding time. It is open daily from 9AM-5PM, and Sundays from 10AM. Admission Charges are RM16 for adults and RM8 for children under 12. Take a 3A bus at 9:30AM, you'll get there at around 10:30 (keep in mind you have to walk additional 1km from the bus stop). The feeding time is at 11AM.
- **Gunung Gading National Park**, is about 2 hours by bus in Lundu. The park is home to the world's largest flower, the Rafflesia, which can grow up to 1 m in diameter. Visitors can access Gunung Gading Road by taking a road trip down from Kuching to Lundu via Matang Road. For enquiries, visitors can check with the park HQ ☎ +60 82 735714, or the National Parks and Wildlife booking office in Kuching ☎ +60 82 248088. Rafflesia is a seasonal flower so it is best to check with the park office to avoid disappointment.
- Kubah National Park <sup>[60]</sup>, at Matang. This park is famous of its beautiful rocky streams and small waterfall. People from all over Kuching love to gather here especially on hot and sunny days for refreshing and cooling themselves. You can try jungle trekking here where you can see encaged deers and wild boars.
- Matang Wildlife Centre <sup>[61]</sup>

Kuching is a great home-base for jungle trekking and exploring Borneo.

- **Bidayuh Longhouse Adventure** [11] <sup>[62]</sup>. Located at Annah Rais village near to Borneo Highland Resort. They offer overnight packages for you to experience the traditional Bidayuh longhouse communal life.

You get to try out all sort of local dishes, home-brewed rice wine, and also lots of activities to keep you occupied, such as tropical rainforest jungle trekking, bamboo rafting, visit to natural hotspring & etc.

- **Kuching Kayaking** [12] <sup>[63]</sup>. You can choose to kayak in the Sarawak river (in the city) for a leisurely and unique perspective of Kuching; or you can choose to kayak in the sea where you may bump into dolphins; or you may choose to kayak through the rainforest and experience the sights and sounds of the jungles of Borneo. Whichever you choose, its an experience you won't soon forget.
- **Borneo Headhunter Tattoos** [13] <sup>[64]</sup>. Tattoo designs inspired by Sarawak's indigenous tribes [14] <sup>[65]</sup>. There are a handful of parlours in Kuching that specialise in indigenous designs and are very clean and hygenic.
- **Kuching Tattoo** Friendly couple and very professional. Situated same row as Kiosk 2 Cafe. A few doors away from The Junk Cafe. (Upstairs)
- **Bumbu Cooking Class**, 57 Carpenter St., 📞 +60 19 8791050 (bumbucookingclas@hotmail.com <sup>[66]</sup>). In an old traditional shophouse and almost resembles a typical indigenous kitchen but it is more modern and hygienic. The class includes a visit to the market where you will learn to choose and buy the best natural ingredients. Bookings are essential. The price is MYR150 with the market tour or MYR120 without. edit <sup>[67]</sup>
- **Scuba Diving**, [15] <sup>[68]</sup> Dive at Talang-Talang Island to see turtles, or visit the World War II Japaneses ship wreck.
- **Fish Feeding**. If you love feeding fish, try bring those fish food at the lake of Sarawak State Library, also at the Friendship Garden.
- **Pusat Kemahiran Seni, Sarawak Cultural Village**, [16] <sup>[69]</sup>. A traditional Sarawakian dancing class is available at the centre, also lessons in playing traditional musical instruments like Sape and craft lesson for beginners.
- **Traditional Batik-Making**, [17] <sup>[70]</sup>. Located at Jl. Stadium. Hands-on experience with making traditional batik. You can learn how to apply batik motives based on Sarawak culture. The operators of Perbadanan Kraftangan (*Handicrafts body*) are also expert in pua kumbu. Contact them to arrange for a lesson.
- **Bidayuh Spa and Massage**. At Borneo Highlands resort. Traditional spa and massage of Bidayuh.

- **Jogging and brisk walking.** If you love jogging and brisk walking. There are plenty of places to do so. Among the popular places are Kuching Reservoir, Masja and Kampung Haji Baki Garden.
- **Sarawak Layer Cake Making.** At Kampung Lintang and go to any Malay houses there to savour the making of famous Sarawak layer cakes. Among the layer cakes you can choose from are Sabok (or Sampin in standard Malay) Tun Razak cake, Dangdut cake, Retak Seribu cake and Hati Pari cake. Local guides required to look for the housewives who make the layer cakes for sale and provide teaching lesson. Other places include Rabiah Amit's house in Petra Jaya RPR Fasa II (not far from Kampung Lintang) and Dayang Salhah's in Kampung Gersik.
- Tringgus Tribal Experience, (1 hr from Kuching city), ☎ +60 12 8094730,+60 10 5267669. 8 hours. The original 'Tringgus tribe of Borneo' were a feared sub-group of the Bidayuh (*Land Dayaks*), warrior headhunters of the Borneo interior, living a predominantly hunter-gatherers lifestyle. They knew how to utilise the medicinal and poison plants, edible plants and roots. Explore ancient rainforest and its flora and fauna. Nature activities include jungle and river trekking, climbing and exploring the nearby mountains, camping and traditional white water fishing, visiting ancient remnants and relics of Tringgus tribal villages and sites. Overnight in homestays available. The park has many nocturnal sights. from rm100. edit <sup>[71]</sup>
- 71st Skin Slavery Tattoo Studio, 1st floor, No. 75 Jl. Padungan (Opposite Everise Supermarket), ☎ +60 13 8177227, [18] <sup>[72]</sup>. Specialise in custom tattoo, cover up, colour, black and grey work. All needle and material is in single use and well sterilized. Visit for consultation. edit <sup>[73]</sup>
- Qhumang-Balai Ringin Wild Adventure, (Approximately 60 km from Kuching City), ☎ +60 12 809 4730 (email:qhumang@gmail.com <sup>[74]</sup>), [19] <sup>[75]</sup>. River cruising and wild fishing adventure, jungle trekking and natural adventure as well as homestay and wild camping experiences. edit <sup>[76]</sup>
- MG ATV Extreme Park, KM26 Batu Kawa-Bau Road. 2.4 km ATV (all-terrain-vehicle) circuit, and facilities for motocross, pit motorbikes, 4-wheel drive, mountain bikes & camp site including *Night Ride & Camping* with a camp site adjacent to the Sarawak River. Virgin

rainforest surrounds the park. edit [77]

- Mirage Spa, Jalan Padungan Lama, Kuching, ☎ 082-424022. Foot & Body massage , SPA & yoga - Pamper yourself with a massage session in our hideaway for body, mind and soul. edit [78]
- Kuching Caving, KuchingCaving@gmail.com [79] (Call or email), ☎ 0128862347, [20] [80]. 0900-2000. Easy, intermediate and technical day trips through fabulous, deserted caves. The company supplies you with all equipment and protective clothing. From 199. edit [81]
- Semadang Kayaking & Bamboo Rafting, Upper Sarawak River, Borneo Highland, ☎ +6013 804 2118 (info@semadangkayak.com [82]). 0900 - 1500. [21] [83] This is a great experience for nature lovers and the adventurous. You can kayak down the river in the Borneo Highlands, Padawan region and enjoy the breathtaking rainforest scenery. The company provides One-stop adventure trip - Kayaking, Bamboo Rafting, Caving, and Semenggoh Orang Utan tour. Guided by professional kayaking & rafting guide. The tour package includes lunch, return transfer to hotel, safety equipment and photo CD. Suitable for children and beginners. Price from MYR 188. edit [84]
- Beauty Basics, Lot 1273, 1st Floor, Block 17, Jalan Lapangan Terbang Baru (Airport Road), ☎ 082-452121, [22] [85]. 1-3 Hrs. 2 minutes drive to airport. Rejuvenate, relax and pamper yourself to a soothing spa or beauty treatment at Beauty Basics. Beauty Basics offers a selection of professional facial and body treatments as well as pampering service using the best quality products from Cosmocell. Meridien massage is a must try. RM48 & above. edit [86]

### **Buy**[edit [87]][add listing [88]]

There's some interesting shopping in Kuching. For a wide selection of tribal handicrafts and touristy gewgaws, head down to the aptly named **Main Bazaar** street on the Kuching waterfront. It's worth going inside for a look, as many shops have larger and more authentic collections hidden away upstairs or in a back room.

Note that, in this mostly Christian city, some shops close on Sundays.

### **Markets**

 [89]

 [89]

Fancy a banana at the Sunday Market?

- **Sunday Market**, (*Pasar Minggu*), off Jl. Satok, (*between Esso gas station and Wisma Satok*). A Kuching institution, starting every Saturday afternoon and winding down by noontime Sunday. Very much a workaday market, with tourists few and far between, the emphasis is on fresh food of every description. Be sure to try some *apam balik* a pancake with nuts and margarine, very filling, absolutely delicious and RM1 a piece. Bring along suitable footwear plus a tolerance for heat, crowds and powerful odors.
- Two other local markets, more conveniently located and open daily, can be found at the west end of Jl. India.

## Shopping centres

- **Plaza Merdeka**, [23] <sup>[90]</sup>, 88 Pearl Street (*in the City Center, near Chinatown*). Multi storey modern Shopping Mall with Parkson Department Store, lots of international brand shops, supermarket, Food Court, Fast Food Outlets and Starbucks
- **Kuching Sentral**, located at Mile 5, the newly completed bus terminal cum shopping mall is the latest landmark in Kuching.
- **Boulevard Mall**, located at Mile 4 Kuching-Serian Rd, (*not far from Regional Bus Terminal*). Opened in late December 2007. It offers a Boulevard Hypermarket and Department Store plus a variety of shopping outlets like Sony Centre, Popular Book store and fast foods outlets such as Sushi King, Kenny Rogers Roasters and KFC. The management is currently expanding the mall.

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## Interior of The Spring

- **The Spring**, [24] <sup>[92]</sup>, Jl. Simpang Tiga. (*between the city centre and airport*). Opened to the public in January 2008, 'Lifestyle' shopping mall. It offers many international brands like Esprit, Elle, Mango, Charles & Keith, Starbucks, MAC and Quiksilver etc. The mall is spread over 4 stories including a carpark basement. The main tenants are Parkson @ the Spring, Ta Kiong Supermarket, Padini Concept Store, and MBO Cinemas.
- **Green Heights Mall**, Jl. Lapangan Terbang. Kuching's first suburban

neighbourhood small mall, with an international Cold Storage Supermarket as the anchor tenant, over some 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> of leasable space. It opened in mid-2008.

- **Sarawak Plaza**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman (*next to Grand Margherita Hotel*). One of Kuching's older malls. Lea Center is the anchor tenant, selling a wide variety of shoes from sportswear to fashion. Recently, the mall was renovated hoping to provide a better shopping environment for both locals and foreigners.
- **Tun Jugah**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman (*opposite Sarawak Plaza*). Named after the first Sarawakian politician in Malaysian Parliament, the mall stands majestically twelve storeys tall at the commercial and financial hub of Kuching City. It comprises 3 levels of retail space, 9 levels of office space, and 2 levels of basement car park. It also has one of the major local bookstores, Popular, as one of its main tenants.
- **Wisma Saberkas**, located at the junction of Jl. Tun Abang Haji Openg and Jl. Rock, is a older cylindrical building on the outskirts of Kuching (approximately 15 min from the Waterfront) that offers a feast of hi-tech products based around mobile phones and computers.
- **Riverside Shopping Complex**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman (*opposite Sarawak Plaza*). One of the older malls in the city, it is home to the first Parkson in Kuching. Other anchor tenants include LFS Cineplex and Giant Supermarket. It is also home to Riverside Superbowl - one of the 2 bowling centres in Kuching.
- **Kenyalang Park**, Kenyalang Suburb. A very old place that consists of a cluster of shophouses and one enclosed area. It is the place to go if you want to find cheap items like clothes, accessories and especially DVDs/VCDs. When Chinese New Year approaches, many stores are set up here to cater to the event. Kenyalang would usually be crowded with people during these times.
- **Crown Square**, Towards Pending, opposite Hock Lee Centre. A medium-sized, newly refurbished shopping mall. The tenants include Mr. Ho's Fine Foods - which serves authentic fusion cuisine. The largest Mummycare and Kiddycare in the city is located here.
- **Hock Lee Centre**, Jl. Abang Abdul Rahim. The place to find and buy cheap clothes and fashion accessories for the young females. There are electronics and a supermarket in the basement and Home & Living on the ground and 1st floor. One of the major bookstores in Kuching,

Smart Bookshop is under the same roof. A Hock Lee Music Centre is also available on the 3rd floor (previously was on the 2nd floor) which sells a wide variety of musical instruments (be warned that these are not traditional instruments).

- **Wisma Satok**, off Jln Satok, just a pedestrian bridge away from the location of the Sunday Market. One of the older malls in Kuching. Cheap items can be found here. There's a departmental store and supermarket. A high concentration of mediocre cyber cafe is at the fourth floor. CIMB Bank is located beside Wisma Satok.
- **Wisma Hopoh**, Jl. P. Ramlee, near Syaria Court. (*just a walk away from Sarawak Museum*). A small and old shopping centre yet still frequented by shoppers. Its tenant includes Lea Sports Centre, Jee Kwong Optics and the fast food restaurant franchise, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC).

## **Eat**

## Coffee, see, and tea, oh!

Coffee and tea in hawker centres and *kopitiam* goes from 60 cents to RM3 per cup/glass, a steep discount on Starbucks prices, but you'll need to learn the lingo to get what you want. If you order just *kopi* (the Malay word for "coffee") or *teh* (Hokkien for "tea") in Kuching, it will definitely be served with a heaped spoonful of sugar, and more often than not with a squirt of sweet condensed milk. *Kopi-C* or *teh-C* substitutes unsweetened evaporated milk, while *kopi-O* or *teh-O* makes sure it's served with no milk. To get rid of the sugar, you need to ask for it *kosong* ("plain"), but if you want a cup of thick black coffee, you need to ask for *kopi-O kaw*! If you want your drink cold, just add a *peng* to the end of the drink name, eg. *kopi-O-peng*, *teh-peng*, *teh-C-peng*, *Milo-peng* etc. and it will be served with ice. There's a special thing about Teh-C. If you request for teh-C-special, you'll get a Teh-C with 'gula apong' (coconut sugar) or sometimes with a little bit of honey. Some eating place come with different portion of drinks, such as *Small*, *Big/Large* and *Jumbo*. Choose based on your appetite. The bigger the portion, the more expensive the drinks.

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 [93]

Kuching Kolo mee

 [94]

## Umei

Eating out is the major pastime, with a huge variety of eateries and food available. Most places are pretty cheap with excellent service but the more "local", the less English spoken. Be sure to sample some Sarawak laksa, but beware - it's considered a breakfast dish here and the popular places sell out fast. For the local Chinese, *kolo mee*, a noodle dish served with slices of roasted pork, is also a daily staple. Although most places are quite clean, there are some which are not. A rule of thumb is if you're not comfortable with it, then walk somewhere else. There are plenty to choose from.

- Kubah Ria Complex, No 1 Jalan Matang (After the Satok Bridge on the Left side heading towards Petra Jaya), ☎ +60168951205, [25] <sup>[95]</sup>. 07:00. This is a very new shopping center located by the Sarawak River very near to the historical Satok Bridge. Built by SEDC to replace the former food and beverages centre. This shopping center now houses 45 shoplots and 45 food and beverage outlets. This is now the most popular eating and shopping spot in Kuching. (1.554997,110.322905) edit <sup>[96]</sup>

## Sarawakian dishes

Unlike fellow Malaysians in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah, the range of food and drinks in Sarawak, particularly Kuching is somewhat different. Here are the food you might never heard of when you browse through the food menu:

- **Sarawak Laksa.** Sarawak laksa is the most noticeably Sarawakian food in Kuching. It was a favourite among Sarawakian from Chinese and Malay decent. It has a base of sambal belacan, sour tamarind, garlic, galangal, lemon grass and coconut milk, topped with omelette strips, chicken strips, prawns, fresh coriander and optionally lime. Ingredients such as bean sprouts, sliced fried tofu or other seafood are not traditional but are sometimes added. Non-Halal Sarawak laksa can be found at most Chinese coffee shops while Halal Sarawak laksa can be found at most Malay coffee shops (and some Mamak too). Halal and non-Halal Sarawak laksa are not that different, except for the usage of

Halal chicken meat and the cooking utensils used by the cook. The Chinese version of Sarawak laksa has a less thick gravy but is rich with condiments and toppings. The Malay version of Sarawak laksa has a thicker gravy but more taugeh (*beansprouts*).

- **Kolok Mee.** Kolok mee is a type of noodle dish commonly found in Sarawak. It is served throughout the day - for breakfast, lunch or even supper though some eateries only serve kolok mee until noon because supplies run out. It is made of egg noodle, blanched in water that looks like instant noodle and served in a light sauce with some condiments like sliced pork, chicken cutlets, minced meat or sometimes shredded beef though this is unusual. The difference between kolok mee and wontan mee, which is popular in the Peninsula, is that kolok mee is not drenched in dark soy sauce and water is not added to the noodles when served. Kolok mee comes in two common flavours, plain or seasoned with red sauce. Cooks tend to season kolok mee with red sauce when they are served with pork. Occasionally, diners may also request their kolok mee to be seasoned with soy sauce, to give the dish a darker appearance with enhanced saltiness.
- **Mee sapi.** Mee sapi (mi sapi) is a gravy-ish version of kolok mee. It is garnished and prepared just like kolok mee with a slight difference in cooking method. The noodle can be somewhat egg noodle been used in kolok mee, or mee pok, mi sanggul - a curly type of noodle similar to angelhair spaghetti).
- **Manok pansoh.** Manok pansoh is the most common dish among Iban. It is a chicken dish which normally be eaten with white rice. Chicken pieces are cut and stuffed into the bamboo together with other ingredients like mushrooms, lemongrass, tapioca leaves etc and cooked over an open fire - similar to the way lemang is cooked. This natural way of cooking seals in the flavours and produces astonishingly tender chicken with a gravy perfumed with lemongrass and bamboo. Manok pansoh cannot be found easily in all restaurants and coffee shops. Some restaurants require advanced booking of manok pansoh dish prior to your arrival.
- **Manok kacangma.** Manok kacangma is a Chinese type of dish which has grown in wider popularity in Sarawak. It is a chicken dish which normally be eaten with white rice. Kacangma is a type of herb which normally being used for medical and healing purposes. It is believed

that woman who eat manok kacangma can enjoy ease menses. As for Malay, they normally cook manok kacangma without wine, while as for Iban and Chinese, they squinch in wine for more delicate taste. You can try manok kacangma when you eat 'nasi campur' during lunch hours in Kuching. However, it is extremely hard to find a coffee shop or restaurant who serves this.

- **Umai.** Umai is a raw fish salad popular among various ethnic groups of Sarawak, especially the Melanaus. In fact, umai is a traditional working lunch for the Melanau fishermen. Umai is prepared raw from freshly caught fish, iced but not frozen. Main species used include mackerel, nawal hitam and umpirang. It is made mainly of thin slivers of raw fish, thinly sliced onions, chilli, salt and the juice of sour fruits like lime or assam. It is usually accompanied by a bowl of toasted sago pearls instead of rice. Its simplicity makes it a cinch for fishermen to prepare it aboard their boats. Umai Jeb, a raw fish salad without other additional spices, is famous among Bintulu Melanaus. However, it is rarely prepared in Kuching. You can try umai when you eat Nasi campur during lunch hours in Kuching. Most Malay/Bumiputera coffee shops, serve umai daily for 'nasi campur'.
- **Midin.** The locals greatly indulge in jungle fern such as the midin (quite similar to pucuk paku that is popular in the Peninsular). Midin is much sought after for its crisp texture and great taste. Midin is usually served in two equally delicious ways - fried with either garlic or belacan. You can try midin when you eat nasi campur during lunch hours in Kuching. Most coffee shops, served midin daily for 'nasi campur'.
- **Bubur pedas.** Unlike many other porridge that we know, bubur pedas is cooked with a specially prepared paste. It is quite spicy thanks to its ingredients, which include spices, turmeric, lemon grass, galangal, chillies, ginger, coconut and shallots. Like the famous bubur lambuk of Kuala Lumpur. Bubur pedas is exclusive dish prepared during the month of Ramadan and served during the breaking of fast. So don't expect to eat bubur pedas at anytime you want.
- **Mi Jawa.** Mi Jawa (mee Jawa) in Kuching or Sarawak in general is somewhat different from the one served in Peninsular Malaysia, or even at its birthplace on Java island. It is a thick egg yellow noodle served with tiny slice of chicken and a sprinkle of 'daun sup' (or bay leaves). Some coffee shops serve a 'special' type of mee Jawa (which

you need to add from 50 cents to RM1.50) with an additional few sticks of satay (chicken and/or beef). Mee Jawa is normally served at Malay/Mamak coffee shops.

- **Roti corned beef.** Roti canai is a widely-known Peninsular-origin of Indian decent food of Malaysia. However, Sarawakian has modified one type of roti canai which you might not find on Peninsular Malaysia even in Mamak stalls or Malay coffee shops. It is a roti canai with a corned beef filling and is widely available at Malay and Mamak coffee shops. It can be bought for as low as RM2 per piece due to cheap canned corned beef. However, since the Gateway-brand corned beef was officially considered non-Halal, roti corned beef has lost its popularity and if it does exist, the price may range from RM4-RM5 per piece.
- **Nasik Aruk.** Nasik Aruk is a traditional Sarawakian Malay fried rice. Unlike nasi goreng, nasik aruk does not use any oil to fry the rice. The ingredients are garlic, onion and anchovies, fried with very little oil and then the cook is added. The rice must be fried for a longer time compared to nasi goreng to allow the smokey/slightly-burnt taste to be absorbed into the rice. It is a common to see nasik aruk in the food menu list at Malay and Mamak coffee shops and stalls.

Kuching has also absorbed Thai favourites such as tom yam, nasi paprik and pattaya. Bakso and soto originally from Indonesia, and nasi ayam Singapura (from Singapore) have moved onto restaurant and other menus. Chinese restaurants have also been daring to try more exquisite cuisine from North China, Korea and Vietnam. Western food has also been widely accepted in Sarawak, especially Kuching. Fast food chains such as KFC, McDonalds, Kenny Roger's Roasters, Secret Recipe and Marrybrown, America's buffet has also taken place in Sarawakian's heart such as Hartz Chicken Buffet are also growing in presence. However, traditional nasi campur and traditional breakfast, high tea and dinner are always part of Sarawakian food ritual. It is however becoming common to see more modernised Kuchingites slowly adapting to Western food culture such as eating pasta or pizza for dinner.

### **Dietary restriction guides**

As a guide to Muslim visitors, some of the restaurants serving Chinese food are non-halal, unless stated halal or appear to handover the food

preparation to Muslim cooks or sellers. Restaurants who clearly stated pork or/and non-halal substances in their food menu (like using wine for cooking, frogs and snakes) are ones you should avoid. The easiest way to look for halal restaurants are by looking at their halal certificate. Ensure that they display halal certificate produced by JAIS Sarawak, JAKIM or HDC Malaysia. Sometimes the restaurant owners choose not to display it, so please demand the certificate if they claimed that they serve halal food.

For vegetarian visitors, always look for the restaurant clearly stating vegetarian food only. Some vegetarian meals served can still contain non-vegetarian substances like anchovies, chicken stock and lard. Please check with the restaurant owners for confirmation on their ingredients.

## Budget

- Tumis, Jl Borneo (opposite Hilton Kuching, same row as Tune Hotel at Waterfront Kuching). Local and Malaysian fare. Standouts include ikan bakar sambal, nasi goreng tumis, meehoon Singapore, ayam bakar Solo and laksa Sarawak. Innovative desserts such as sago gula apong and fried banana fritters with cheese; and refreshing thirst-quenchers, lime lambada, oreo ooh la la and merry markisa. edit <sup>[97]</sup>
- Delicafe Patisseries, 88, Main Bazaar (near Hilton, opposite waterfront and Cat Museum), ☎ +30 82 232788, [26] <sup>[98]</sup>. 9AM-6PM, Tu-Su. Charming staff, good coffee. Also does orange juice and cereal. Good change for anyone wanting a break from fried food. WiFi access. edit <sup>[99]</sup>
- Bäckerei, Tun Jugah Mall, Level 1, 18, Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman, [27] <sup>[100]</sup>. European quality croissants and pain au chocolat, puffs, other pastries and good press coffee is served. Small shop with two tables to sit down and enjoy. edit <sup>[101]</sup>
- **Madam Tang**, Bishop's Gate Rd. Sarawak laksa. Teh C Peng special, beef noodles and nasi lemak rendang.
- Pure Fish Ball Cafe, 214, Jl. Padungan (Kuching), ☎ +30 82 235816. Halal. It is a nice and comfortable A/C cafe selling local food especially pure fish mee noodle with 100% mackerel fish meat. edit <sup>[102]</sup>
- **Finest Cafe**, ☐☐☐☐ Travilion (*Between the "Big White Cat" and HSBC building in the same row as the Great Eastern Insurance Building*). Kolo Mee and ☐☐☐☐ stalls cook assorted hawker food, especially their 'curry

mee' (very spicy) and Cantonese style 'home-cook fast food 菜粉 (literally, "mixed vegetable rice")'. Halal Malay-style chicken rice with juicy tender chicken meat that comes with 3 different sauces; black pepper, butter and salad. Boneless steam chicken with home-made sesame sauce and a range of Halal food. Special laksa is a real treat for adventurous taste buds.

- **Chong Choon**, Jl. Abell (*opposite Maybank*). One of Kuching's two famous laksa joints. Usually sold out by noon.

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 [103]

### Typical Sarawak laksa

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### Tomato Noodles

- **Choon Hui**, Jl. Ban Hock (*Near Grand Continental Hotel*). Another famous laksa joint. Spicy and popular, get here before 10AM.
- **Bishopsgate Coffeeshop**, Carpenter St. Now change the name to "Noodle Descendants" and moved to a bigger surroundings in Padungan Road in the mid-year of 2012. Famous for what may be decades already, the vinegar 'kolo mee' and pork spare-part soup is what people line up for everyday. Also famous is the man who runs the stall, a colorful character who takes your order like a drill sergeant. It opens for breakfast and lunch, but to avoid the crowds, its best to go around mid-morning. When you get a seat, expect to wait awhile for your food. While you wait try their 'Teh-C Peng special a strong iced milk-tea with a dark sweet syrup.
- **Suan Chicken Rice**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman (*next to Pizza Hut*). A popular lunch-time joint where the office-crowd go for Hainanese chicken rice.
- **Open Air Market**, Jl. Market (*'Opposite Electra House Shopping Centre and near 'Padang Merdeka' Police Station*). *Despite the name, the place is actually covered. It has a wide variety of stalls serving Malay and Chinese cuisine. Their most popular stall is the one serving beef noodles and sio bi (pork dumplings). Also popular is the fresh porridge and seafood stalls. But beware, this area is not the cleanest of places so order your food from only the most popular stalls.*

- **Lau Ya Keng Food Court**, Carpenter St. (*just after the Harmony Arch, opposite a Chinese temple*). A simple food court that has been around for decades and is very popular with locals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. You can buy very decent Kolo mee and Sarawak laksa here. But a lot of people come here for the fish-ball soup and famous pork satay that opens in the early afternoon.
- **Hock King Cafeteria** \* Jl. Ban Hock. Basic, but quite generous meals though out the day. Mr Hock is one of the better hosts in Kuching, fluent in multiple languages and will do almost anything to make your stay as comfortable as possible. Many local celebrities stop by for lunch regularly as Hock King is well connected.
- **KY Cafe**, Sekama Rd. (*a corner shop opposite Hollywood KTV Lounge, about 10 min walk from the Kuching City South Council building*). Run by a band of three brothers, they serve what is arguably the best 'Kolo mee' in town. Characterised by being served in an orange plastic bowl, this 'kolo mee' tastes a little bit on the sweet side and has the distinction of tasting much better towards the end. They also have excellent wonton soup.
- **Ceria Cafe**, Satok. This shop served best Halal Sarawak laksa in the city. If you demand for omelette strips in your laksa, ask for special which is a mere RM1 addition to the regular price. You can try their mee Jawa and kopi keras.
- **Bismillah Cafe**, Satok and 7th Mile. If you love Indian and Mamak food, try this one. They serve good nasi beriyani, roti canai and teh tarik.
- **Sepinang Sari Cafe & Restaurant**, Satok next to Carpet Shop sells the best Mi Sapi HjSalleh and usually operates from 6AM-5-30PM daily. You will also find delicious laksa Sarawak and mee Jawa.
- **Singapore Chicken Rice**, Have branches at Padungan, Satok and Kota Samarahan. Serve excellent chicken rice comparable to other established chicken rice shop. Other side dishes are baby kailan in oyster sauce and beansprouts.
- **Benteng Satok**, Satok. There are more than 30 stalls here and it's open until 4AM. A wide variety of food are served, mostly Malay food. Choose the stall wisely because many stalls tend to serve same type of food.
- **Jambatan Satok**, Satok. This is the best place to try Halal grilled

chicken wings and grilled ikan sebelah. A total of 8 stalls make up the area with variety of Malay and Chinese food. All of the stalls serve Halal food.

- **Kubah Ria**, Gita. This area comprises of more than 20 stalls. They serve Halal kolo mee and mee sapi grilled chicken wings and is a location of local pizza chain "Pizza Ria". The pizzas are RM3.50 per quarter slice.
- **Rojak Kuchei Batu Lintang**, Batu Lintang. This place served the best rojak India and chicken rojak in the town. Don't be surprised to see a lot of visitors during morning time because this place is constantly crowded with people from the nearby offices during breakfast time.



A small Kuching eating house

- **The Big Onion**, Taman Sri Sarawak. (*behind the shoplots opposite Hilton*). This is quite a new place, budget but comfortable with wifi available. Chinese food, Malay style food and western cuisine. Pork is not on the menu.
- **Ho Joo Café**, 3rd Mile, The place where you can get the thick Hainanese-style bread, toasted in a small toaster oven before spreading butter and kaya on it. Nice to be taken during breakfast or high tea. Once appeared in a Chinese daily for this specialty.
- **Tracy's Kitchen**, Jl. Abell (*near Wisma Prudential, towards the end of roundabout with Jl. Padungan*) – Serves its original "Pak Lo" duck and chicken, kolo mee, kacangma duck, wine chicken, pork leg, assam fish, rendang, and a variety of other dishes. Not to miss is its fresh cucumber juice. Open Mon, 9:30AM-6PM, Tue-Sun, 9:30AM-9:30PM. Not Halal.


## Mid-range

- **Tribal Stove**, opposite the Hilton Hotel, at the bottom of Tunes Hotel. The restaurant serves Kelabit food such as A'beng (fish flakes fried with wild ginger and herbs) and Labo La'al Senutung (chicken cooked in bamboo). The owners are Kelabit (a native hill tribe from the interior of Borneo). Average price RM25 per head excluding alcohol.
- **Khatulistiwa**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman (*Next to Holiday Inn*). This

distinctive circular hut is modelled on a Bidayuh skull house. Breezy open-air restaurant downstairs with local and Western favorites including a decent Sarawak laksa. At night, the upper floors open up as a bar and club, with DJs spinning the night away, though you can also take your meal up there in the evenings. Open 24 hr

- **Benson Seafood**, No. 112 Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, ☎ +30 82 255262. A riverside restaurant that specializes in fresh Chinese style seafood. It is well-established and don't be surprised to see them catering to groups of tourists.
- **Pinoy Grill Cafe**, No. 143 Jln Pandungan (*Next to Pandungan Police Station*), ☎ +30 12 8965651. A nice cosy place that serves Filipino food. The fried whole pork leg is popular.
- **Hong Kong Noodle House**, Jln Pandungan, (*Opposite Bing Cafe*). Standard HK fare like roast duck on rice or noodles. They also serve local Chinese dishes and is open for lunch and dinner.
- **SideWalk Cafe**, Green Heights (*Towards airport, on the right-hand side of the BDC flyover/roundabout*). Alfresco style western food away from the city near the airport. Its only open in the evenings till late and is popular with locals.
- **Mango Tree**. A/C dining room, or dine alfresco in a traditional Thai garden. Thai cuisine.
- **Selera Asam Payak**, Satok. Traditional Malay food.
- **Oriental Kitchen**, Satok. This restaurant serve variety of Malay and Chinese food. It's halal so Muslim visitors can enjoy this one.
- **Hartz Chicken Buffet**, Satok & Sarawak Plaza. This buffet restaurant is a franchise to the *All-American Chicken Buffet*. You can eat as much as you want for RM17.70 per person. Crispy and spicy fried chicken, wide range of salads, mashed potatoes, cakes, breads, ice-creams and fruits.

## Splurge

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The interior of a Kuching restaurant

- **Dayang Cafe**, Satok. It looks like a budget cafe place, but don't be fooled by its looks. The food is a variety of Nasi Campur and roti canai.

It might drain out your wallet, but if you love to splurge, try this one. The old woman who guards the cash machine might look furious and loves to overcharge you, but sometimes can be helpful if you ask for something.

- **The Junk**, Wayang Street (*opposite Fata Hotel*), ☎ +30 82 259450. Walking distance from the waterfront. Western/Italian menu and popular with locals and expats. Colonial Chinese decoration with lots of antiques. The portions are large and the lamb shanks and fisherman's basket seem to be the most popular. Bookings are advisable if you have a large group.
- **Bla Bla Bla**, Wayang Street (*A few shops down from The Junk*), ☎ +30 82 233944. A Chinese restaurant which was opened by the same restaurateurs as The Junk. It quickly became an institution for fine Chinese cuisine in Kuching shortly after it opened in 2005. The interior is designed with a Balinese theme and some of the dishes they are famous for are the ostrich-rolls, soft-shell crabs, and drunken duck. Bookings are advisable.
- **The Living Room**, Wayang Street (*Beside Bla Bla Bla*). ☎ +30 12 8880827. 6PM-12AM. A third chain by the same restaurateurs as The Junk and Bla Bla Bla. It has a nice courtyard with fountains suitable for people who are just looking for some relaxation in a busy city. It is a must for people who are looking for pure relaxation. Food from The Junk and Bla Bla Bla can be ordered here too. There are some good selections of wines as well and a *living room cocktail*.
- **See Good Food Centre**, (*Off Ban Hock Rd., opposite Hua Kuok Inn*), ☎ +30 82 251397. Casual laid-back restaurant that serves excellent and very fresh seafood, very popular with the locals. It is best to get there early in the evenings to secure a table and minimise the waiting time, as they don't take reservations.
- **Top Spot Food Court**, Jl. Bukit Mata (*Top floor of 'Taman Kereta' Carpark, opposite Tun Jugah Shopping Mall*). Has a wide range of food stalls ranging from the budget to the pricey. Most locals and tourists come here for the fresh seafood stalls which are on the pricey side. Most of the stalls serve good food, but beware; always ask to see a menu with prices - some stalls have been known to 'accidentally' overcharge tourists.
- **Ristorante Beccari**, Jl. Tun Abang Haji (*inside Merdeka Palace Hotel*),

☎ +30 82 270808. A good *authentic style* Italian restaurant. The wood-fired pizzas are excellent.

- **Li Garden Chinese Restaurant**, Jl. Abang Abdul Rahim (*Inside Hock Lee Centre, 1st Floor*), ☎ +30 82 340785. A popular Chinese restaurant that serves a good Peking duck.
- **Waterfront Kiosk**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman. If you want to have a drink or two while sightseeing the Sarawak River, this is a possible venue. Wide range of food and drinks, but the food can be pricey due to the influx of tourists who stay at the nearby luxurious hotels.
- **Serapi Corner**, 7th Mile. Peninsular Malaysia style food. Their specialty is ikan keli bakar bersambal (grilled catfish with sambal). It is a bit hot inside. Check for the price list carefully to avoid charging errors on the bill. If you don't mind waiting for hours they have a view of hilly road to kill your time.
- **Magenta**, Recently relocated to old court house at Waterfront. Beautiful colonial building with a romantic oriental ambience. Good menu with large portions. Speciality is lamb shank with mashed potato which sounds bland but is very tasty.

## Drink

Be sure to try Sarawak coffee - it is delicious and can be found in any local 'Kopi-tiam' (coffee shop). Also, try a drink called "White Lady". It usually consists of evaporated milk and a syrup base with fruit and a slice of lemon within. The colors vary from yellow to pink.

The local favourite of "White Lady" is made by Ah Meng's stall at Hui Sing Hawker Centre at Hui Sing Garden. Another of the stall's signature drink is "Metahorn", made with jellies, syrup and local fruits. There are various knock-offs in Kuching but the taste is different.

There are plenty of good bars and are usually grouped together in areas around Kuching.

•

Kuching has a large number of clubbing districts.

**Padungan Road** is in the city centre, in the Chinatown area. There are a handful of bars along this stretch that mainly cater to the working-class Yuppie crowd.

- **Kilkenny's( ipanema before )**. A nice place for a relaxing drink. The kitchen serves good meals and tapas and they have Kilkenny Irish beer

on tap.

- **Soho.** Loud, packed to the rafters dance club. Be sure to try the special Soho cocktail, the Maui mudslide.
- **MOJO@Denise** [107]. Famous for what is now known as "The De Leon Incident", in which famous Phillipino rugby player Tom De Leon claimed to be 'a man' yet was unable to finish Mojo's favourite cocktail, the lamborgini. Locals still have a laugh about the incident to this day.
- **Grappa**, 58 Padungan Rd. A young and fun club bar with a riveting sound system that literally shakes the dance floor playing all drum and bass, hip hop, R&B etc.
- **Terminal 1 Club** Lot348-352, Jalan Padungan Utara. A place for live music lovers, invited **Live Band** from abroad to perform every night, R&B to rock, trendy resident DVJ with latest video music display on large LED screen. open daily from 3pm till 2.30am.

**Jalan McDougall**, adjacent to Wayang Street, a hotel building away from the Main Bazaar. This is the area where the two relatively new main bars attract a new generation of the Yuppie crowd:

- **Junkbar/Backstage.** Located inside the Junk restaurant, this nightclub offers Junkbar - a quieter, laid-back bar; a karaoke area called the Red Room between the restaurant and the Junkbar; and a noisier club area called Backstage for the younger, active crowd which features another bar and a pool table.
- **Havana.** Right next to Backstage, this club offers a wide selection of alcoholic beverages and promotions nearly everyday. Frequented by the younger patrons of next door's Backstage, this club is famous for its beer towers and 1 liter draft beers.

**Travillion** in Petanak, just after Padungan Rd, is home to many newer bars and mainly caters to the young college crowd. It has bright signage, cheap alcohol, and Techno music. This area used to be infamous for gang-related brawls and other trouble - however the number of incidences have decreased significantly and while its generally considered safe now, it still pays to be a bit careful.

- **Amoeba'r.** Ambient/chillout music, self-proclaimed "retro-modern" decor.
- **BarZing.** Probably nicest place at the Travillion mall. Friendlier than the other establishments.

- **Fire.** One of the newest joints to open here. A good crowd that dances to Chinese pop-techno. Opens from 2:30PM for happy hour everyday.

**Taman Sri Sarawak** is opposite the Hilton Hotel. This area is the closest to the Kuching Waterfront and mainly caters to the Tourist Crowd.

And a few more scattered elsewhere:

- **Link.** Kuching Civic Centre 22F, Jl. Budaya [28] <sup>[108]</sup>. Located 22 stories up the Civic Centre (press Level 2 in the lift). Its very posh, classy, and expensive - but has stunning 360° views of Kuching City. You will need to grab a taxi to get here as it is located outside of the City centre.
- **The Living Room.** Wayang Street (*opposite Fata Hotel, a few shops from Blablaba Restaurant*). A nice and very loungey tapas bar that's decorated with a Iban/Balinese theme. Be sure to sit outside in the 'longhouse' area where you can lie on comfortable cushions and gaze at the night sky while sipping mojitos. The food is also excellent.
- **Senso.** Inside Hilton Hotel. Very modern and chic design with chill-out music and the occasional live band. It is one of the nicest bars in Kuching and they have an extensive cocktail list. Unless you're somebody important, expect a dress-code policy to be enforced.
- **Jackies.** This place is one of the finer establishments in Kuching. It is quite regular to see amazing live performances from local singers and dancers. Be sure to dress stylish as Jackie's enforces strict rules to ensure the trendy, classy, inner urban feel remains.
- **Victoria's Arms.** (*Inside Merdeka Palace Hotel*). The only true 'English Tavern' in Kuching. Its a big place with live bands, English pub food, and expensive wooden interior. They have a cover-charge and dress-code for non-hotel guests. Fridays are 'ladies's nights' and are very popular.
- **B3Two** . Jl. Central Timor. Originally a spot which catered for large house parties, B3Two turned itself into on of the crazier night spots and has drinking games where locals and foreigners come together for wild after dark adventures. For 18-30 yr olds seeking a fun night out.
- **Rentap.** (*3rd Mile area*). One of Kuchings more refined venues, chilled out Rentap is a great place to enjoy a cocktail. The only thing classier than the clientel is the slick decor. However, be sure to dress up - if you're not wearing a collar, don't even bother. Every Sat is Latin Jazz night, so bring your dancing shoes. Free entry, closes at 1AM sharp.

- **Ruai Apai**, Green Hills. Very cultural with Iban and Bidayuh influenced decoration. Probably the only bar that serves locally brewed tuak (rice wine). A definite must go for the experience.

## Cafes

- **Bing!**, Padungan Rd. A laid-back cafe with a Balinese theme that serves excellent lattes and fresh fruit juices. They are also popular for their cakes, deli-style gourmet sandwiches and light meals.
- **Black Bean Coffee&Tea Company**, Jl. Carpenter. Small cafe which serves excellent home-roasted Sarawak liberica, Sumatran arabica and Javanese robusta. If you're a coffee addict, you just cannot miss this one.
- **Cafe 175** [formerly known as Tao], Padungan Rd. A cafe with a funky Buddha theme, and a free fish spa inside. They serve espresso coffees, fruit juices, cakes and sandwiches. They also have a private art gallery upstairs. Before 5PM, you can enjoy lunch promotion with prices as low as RM1.40 for lemonade and lime juice.
- **Jase's Tea Room** 1st Floor, Sublot 18, Premier 101 Commercial Centre Jl. Tun Jugah. (Above a Korean convenient store). A vintage cafe with victorian style. A place known to serve fresh imported tea leaves and lots of varieties of drinks and finger foods.
- **The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf**, *inside Sarawak Plaza Shopping Centre and departure lounge of Kuching International Airport*. That popular franchise.
- **Starbucks**, *Plaza Merdeka (City Center), inside Kuching International Airport, next to KFC; and inside The Spring*. Another popular franchise.
- **Frappe**, *Travillion area*. A small cafe with contemporary furnishings. They have excellent coffee and cakes.
- **Caffe Cino**, *Inside Hilton Hotel*. They serve good coffee, desserts and meals. But the prices are a bit on the high side.
- **Scoops**, *Taman Sri Sarawak (opposite Hilton Hotel)*. A cool joint that opened in 2006. They specialise in a range of Gelatos and change the flavors daily. They also serve coffee and cakes. Very good ambience and nice atmosphere.
- **Kluang Station**, *Inside The Spring*. A franchise offering old-school 'kopitiam' coffee with toast and half-boiled eggs in a relaxing and clean

setting reminiscent of indo-china colonial coffee shops.

- **Kaya & Toast**, Satok. If you love classic but classy 'kopitiam' to enjoy toasted breads with wide range of filling, try this one.

**Sleep**[\[edit \[109\]\]](#)[\[add listing \[110\]\]](#)

## Budget

- Beds Guesthouse, 229 Jalan Padungan (About 150m down the road from the big white cat statue), ☎ +60 82 424 229, [29] [\[111\]](#). A very clean guesthouse, with dormitories and private rooms available. This place has an excellent reputation on TripAdvisor, and rightfully so; it has a really relaxed, easy-going feel to it. the staff are extremely friendly, and the common areas are ideal for meeting other travellers. Facilities available include laundry, bar / kitchen, Xbox 360 in common area, and a Wifi connection that is available throughout the guesthouse. The staff know a lot about the area's sights and restaurants. The rates shown on the website are higher than those advertised via hostel booking websites, such as HostelWorld; discounts are available for longer stays. Private rooms from RM40, Dorm RM20. [edit \[112\]](#)
- Berambih Lodge, No.104 Ewe Hai St (behind Main Bazaar), ☎ +60 82 238589, [30] [\[113\]](#). Longhouse style guesthouse, clean and friendly. Breakfast included. [edit \[114\]](#)
- Bidayuh Traditional Chalet and homestay (Funaborneo), Kg Tringgus, Bau (30 km from Kuching city), ☎ +60 10 5267669, +60 10 9876653. A relaxed traditional bidayuh chalet with views of virgin forest and nearby to a fresh water river. From MR38. [edit \[115\]](#)
- Brookes Terrace, 1st Floor, 231 Jl. Abell (above AirAsia ticketing office), ☎ +60 82 427008, [31] [\[116\]](#). Clean and fresh B&B with nice rooms. Friendly and welcoming staff. Large LCD-TV and fridge in room. Double deluxe RM80. (1.556819,110.354895) [edit \[117\]](#)
- Mr D's Bed & Breakfast (aka Mr Drowsy), 26 Jalan Carpenter, ☎ +60 82 248852, [32] [\[118\]](#). [edit \[119\]](#)
- Drop In Guesthouse, 209 Jl. Padungan (near the padungan white cat statue (across memories cafe)), ☎ +60 82 242988, [33] [\[120\]](#). checkin: 2PM; checkout: 12:30PM. Guesthouse in Chinatown. Also sells paintings and operates a souvenir shop. [edit \[121\]](#)

- **The Fairview**, No.6 Jl. Taman Budaya, ☎ +60 82 240017, +60 13 8011561, [34] <sup>[122]</sup>. Colonial House with tropical garden, a nice place that feels like home.
- **Lodge 121**, Lot 121, 1st Floor, Sec.33 KTLD, Tabuan Rd, (*opposite Borneo Hotel and next to Kuching Prison along Tabuan Rd*). ☎ +60 82 428121 [35] <sup>[123]</sup>. New guesthouse. Clean, cozy, comfortable and safe place to stay in the Land of the Hornbills. Friendly staff. Breakfast with Kaya included.
- **Nomad Bed & Breakfast** [36] <sup>[124]</sup> 1st Floor, No.3, Jl. Green Hill. ☎ +60 82 237831, +60 16 856 3855.
- **Panovel Kuching**, 2nd Flr Sr.24 Lot 4370, Jl. Simpang Tiga, ☎ +60 16 866 7000, +60 16 8666 999. Newly established self-service accommodation appealing to nearby University students. 10 min drive from Kuching Airport and short walk to The Spring Mega Mall. A/C, wifi, huge room space. Long-term and daily rates available.
- **Pinnacles Kuching**, Level 1, Lot 21, Block G, Taman Sri Sarawak Mall, Jl. Borneo. ☎ +60 82 419100, [37] <sup>[125]</sup>. In the middle of Kuching's golden triangle which comprises Hilton, Holiday Inn and Crowne Plaza Hotels. Clean.
- **Singgahsana Lodge**, No.1 Temple Street. (*Opposite Harbour View Hotel*). ☎ +60 82 429 277, [38] <sup>[126]</sup>. A hip Back-packers lodge that is centrally located at the Kuching waterfront. Longhouse decor and artifacts. The staff are a bit smug and self-important, but it is clean, safe and very reasonably priced.
- **Threehouse Bed&Breakfast**, 51 Upper China Street. ☎ +60 82 423499, [39] <sup>[127]</sup>. Native Iban and Scandinavian ownership, located in the middle of the city. Approach from the main Post Office in town you have a Chinese arch (gate) on the left of the building which leads to Carpenter St. Walk straight up that street passed a red temple on your right side, in the first junction you turn to your right and you are now on Upper China St. Walk the street up and watch out for the sunflower windmill and the only red facade building on this street.
- **Tracks Bed & Breakfast**, 1st Floor, No. 5, Jl. Green Hill. ☎ +60 19 6407372, [40] <sup>[128]</sup> Modern B&B at the heart of Kuching city centre, in the 'Golden Triangle' area near the Kuching Waterfront. Staff happy to give assistance or advice with travel and local customs.
- Tune Hotel, Jl Borneo, Lot 281, Section 48, KTLD, (opposite Hilton

Kuching and off Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman), [41] [129]. checkout: 10AM. Budget hotel operated by chain linked to AirAsia. Limited and basic services including hot showers. From RM45. edit [130]

- **Wo Jia Lodge**, No.17 Main Bazaar (on the Waterfront), ☎ +60 82 251 776, [42] [131]. One of the newest lodges (May 2011), located right on the Kuching waterfront, with newly renovated Straits Chinese decor and clean, spacious rooms. Free wifi in all rooms. Friendly and helpful staff/owner. Rooms from RM33, private dorm maximum 3 beds at RM20 per bed. Coffee and tea round the clock edit [132]

## Mid-range

- **Basaga Holiday Residences** Lot 69-70 Tabuan Rd. [43] [133]. ☎ +60 82 417 069. Has an outdoor bar with a beautiful courtyard, and a swimming pool. Rainforest feel though in town. 25 minutes walk from riverfront, but free shuttle 3x daily.
- **Damai Beach Resort**, ☎ +60 82 846999, [44] [134]. Beach resort with private beach and 2 swimming pools, tennis courts and restaurant. Can organise trips such as diving and snorkeling. Prices start from RM206. edit [135]
- **Damai Puri Resort & Spa** [45] [136]. Teluk Penyuk Santubong. ☎+ 60 82 846900. Fronts Damai Beach with 207 rooms and a spa village, secluded massage villas, a yoga pavilion, hair spa, and a tea house that serves organic gourmet. 2 outdoor pools, tennis courts, wifi is available, a 600 capacity ballroom, meeting rooms. Can organise jungle treks and water sports.
- **Harbour View Hotel**. Lorong Temple. ☎ +60 82 274 666, [46] [137]. 2-3 star business class hotel that is centrally located in front of the Kuching Waterfront. Standard rooms are quite basic, often occupied by tour groups.
- **Hotel Grand Continental**. Jl. Ban Hock. ☎ +60 82 230 399, [47] [138]. A comfortable 3 star hotel located about 15 min walk from the Kuching waterfront.
- **Kingwood Inn**. Lot 618 Pandungan Rd. ☎ +60 82 330 888, [48] [139]. Another standard hotel that's probably a bit better than Kuching Park Hotel.
- **Kuching Park Hotel**. Lot 606 Pandungan Rd. ☎ +60 82 239 888, [49]

[140]. A standard 2-3 star hotel located a short drive away from the city centre.

- **The LimeTree Hotel**[50] [141], 50 room & suites boutique hotel in city centre adjacent to Chinatown and min away from the Waterfront and malls.
- **De Palma Waterfront Kuching**. Lot 299-303, Section 49 KTLD, Jl Abell. ☎ +60 82 230 008, [51] [142]. 70 rooms, with customised Sarawak floor. Mini library, gallery, lounge and wifi are available. Tour visits can be arranged. Rate start from RM88.

## Splurge

- **360 Hotel**. Hock Lee Centre, Hotel Tower, Jl. Datuk Aband Abdul Rahim. ☎ +60 82 484888, [52] [143]. Located beside Hock Lee Shopping Centre.
- **Four Points Hotel by Sheraton**, Jl. Lapangan Terbang Baru. (*5 min from Kuching International Airport*), ☎ +60 82 280888, [53] [144]. A brand new 4 star business class hotel.
- **Grand Margerita Hotel**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman. ☎ +60 82 423111, [54] [145]. Formerly a Holiday Inn Kuching. Visitors can gain access to the Sarawak Plaza, a shopping complex situated adjacent to it. Convenient to Tun Jugah and Parkson. Franchise outlets such as Starbuck, Kenny Rogers, KFC and McDonald's are nearby.
- **Hilton Kuching**, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman. ☎ +60 82 248200, [55] [146]. Great riverside location. Make sure you get a river view, extra but well worth it.
- **Merdeka Palace Hotel**, Jl. Tun Abang Haji Openg, ☎ +60 82 258000, [56] [147]. Kuching's oldest luxury hotel, its rooms aren't quite as spectacular as the lobby, but the hotel has infinitely more colonial character than others at the riverside. Next to the Sarawak Museum and nearby to the riverfront. The rooftop pool has a great view over Kuching. Rack rates from around RM300, but steep discounts in the off season can chop that in half.
- **Riverside Majestic Kuching**, (*formerly known as Crown Plaza Riverside Kuching*), Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman, ☎ +60 82 247777, [57] [148]. Despite the name, this is the one riverside hotel that isn't actually riverside although it's just across the street.

- **ARIVA Gateway Kuching**, 9 Jl Bukit Mata. ☎ +60 82 250958 [58] <sup>[149]</sup>. Comfortable serviced-apartments in the city centre.
- **Pullman Kuching**, 1A Jalan Mathies, ☎ + 60 82 222888 [59] <sup>[150]</sup>. Pullman Kuching is the newest addition to the 5-stars international brand in the city. Located in the heart of Kuching on top of the hill at Jalan Mathies, Pullman Kuching offers astonishing panoramic view of the city and the Sarawak River. The hotel is adjacent to a two storey city life-style shopping centre “Hills Shopping Mall” and within walking distance to commercial centre and city attractions.

### Stay safe

Kuching is practically safe from natural disasters: no earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes or volcanoes. Aside from the very occasional flood the biggest hazard is **haze** during the dry season, caused by fires in Sarawak and neighboring Indonesia.

### Stay healthy

Kuching has often been declared as one of the cleanest cities in Asia and still can hold the record for the cleanest city in Malaysia. The air pollution is minimum, while the Sarawak River is constantly being cleared from rubbish. Some part of the city might be a little bit dirty and messy. However, tourists spots are always being maintained clean.

Public toilets are easily available throughout Kuching with entrance fee of 20 cents. The public toilets are generally sanitized and clean. However, some public toilets might be lightly vandalized with graffiti and cigarette burns.

Public smoking is still allowed, except for areas like hospitals, government offices, public bus stops and supermarkets. Although the streets are clean and well-maintained, some Kuchingites are prone to litter their cigarette butts and candy wrapping once in a while. However, litter bins are available at most of the places.

### Contact[edit <sup>[151]</sup>]

#### Consulates

- Australian Consulate, Suite 504, 5th Floor, Wisma Bukit Mata Kuching, Jl. Tunku Abdul Rahman, ☎ +60 82 233350, [60] <sup>[152]</sup>. edit <sup>[153]</sup>
- Bruneian Consulate, No. 325, Lorong Seladah 10, Jl. Seladah, ☎ +60

82 456515. edit <sup>[154]</sup>

- General Consulate of the People's Republic of China, Lot 3719, Dogan Garden, Dogan Rd, 📞 +60 82 238344. edit <sup>[155]</sup>
- Consulate General of Indonesia, Lantai 6, Bangunan Binamas, No. 1 Jl. Pandungan, 📞 +60 82 241734. edit <sup>[156]</sup>

## Get out[

- Bako National Park <sup>[30]</sup> — beaches and jungle trekking easily reached by bus from downtown Kuching.
- Miri <sup>[21]</sup> — there are several flights daily to this major gateway to the Gunung Mulu National Park <sup>[157]</sup> and the Kelabit Highlands <sup>[158]</sup>.
- Santubong <sup>[5]</sup> — with the Sarawak Cultural Park and Damai Beach is easily reached by tour bus.

<http://wikitravel.org/en/Kuching> <sup>[159]</sup>

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