



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### We've seen nothing yet...

by Amaru & Suzanne, May 7th 2006

Ok, so we are now in Malaysia, or to be more precise, in Georgetown, Penang.....we've been here for about three days now and actually haven't seen a lot yet. Why you may wonder, well, let's just start from the beginning shall we....

First of all, we forgot to mention that when we were walking the streets of Patong people kept asking me if we were from Australia (and this is before Suz had said anything). I dunno, do I look Aussie now? We thought it was a lot of fun and to be honest, down here where there are so many signs in swedish I rather be taken for an Australian than a Swede.

Anyways, on our day of departure we jumped on a minibus in Patong that took us to the airport, the ride was around an hour so it wasn't to bad this time. Close to the airport we saw a motorcycle accident that must have happened just a minute or two ago. There were two guys on one bike that were on the ground, one sitting in shock and the other unconscious....people were stopping the cars and helping them out by the time we passed them, hopefully they were alright....either way, not the best way to start a day.



**Georgetown, Penang**  
The main streets of colonial Georgetown



**The Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion**  
It would be very nice place to stay at.

Once at the airport we checked in (pretty early, our tickets were in sequence 3 and 4), had a snack or two and eventually got on the airplane. About 10 minutes after departure we managed to see the Phi-Phi islands from the plane, and that was really cool to see, we could see the main area of the island we stayed at and also "the beach". We knew that this day would be a long travel day, the main reason was that there was no direct flight from Phuket to Penang, so we had to land in KL first, wait around 4 hours and then fly to Penang. But, it wasn't too bad, at the airport in KL we had some food and also called ahead to the place we wanted to stay in to book a doubleroom for that night. So all things set we just needed to wait a few more hours for the flight and that would be it....

...or so we thought. First of all the flight to Penang was quite rough, and when you looked out the window you could make out why (we were flying at night), lots of rain and thunder, not the best combination to be flying in. Once in Penang we got our bags quickly and since we arrived so late there was no bus to take us to the city so we had to catch a taxi.

Our first impressions of Penang whilst being driven to our destination was that it was a lot bigger than we had expected it to be. There were a few highrises and big highways, we actually thought it looked like a mini Singapore for a while..... until we hit the center of Georgetown that is. This is more of a colonial town but at night it can easily be mistaken for the slums!!

We were looking at each other in the taxi and thinking; "Did we leave the nice beaches in Thailand for this?!?". Oh well, at least we knew that we had some nice food to look forward to (Penang is famous for it's food).

Eventually we got to our place, got dropped off, walked inside and the man there says that they have no vacancies, we tell him we called and reserved, he says he doesn't know anything about it because he works the nightshift. They talk to another manager and he says "It's full!". Crap.....so much for thinking ahead huh...well, we got our bags back on and just walked down the street into a different lane, Love Lane, sounds a bit dodgy (and reading in the Lonely Planet later it turns out to be true) but we find a cheap place, get a doubleroom and settle in for the night.



Now, this was a backpackers place, so the way it works is that you share the bathroom and shower, you also had to purchase your own toiletpaper, no towels and no sheets. Normally this isn't a problem but after the nice places we've been staying in in Thailand this was shit.

So after sleeping in a hot room sharing one sarong between the two of us we came to the conclusion that we are too old for this dodgy backpackers style place and decided to upgrade that morning. Since it was so hot and the fact that neither of us were feeling too good (stomach problems) we were up early and walked the streets checking out the hotels. We finally found a place that was just a little bit more expensive than the one we were staying at but this one had aircon, tv, bedsheets, towels (well....sort of at least, they were more like teatowel but with less cotton) and more importantly our own bathroom (which we used quite frequently thanks to our stomach problems).

Anyway, we decided to do some sightseeing and went to the Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion which is one of the biggest tourist attractions in Georgetown. It was awesome, the house is beautiful and our guide was really good as well, informative as well as funny. While we were there we also got to see the rooms that people could stay in.....nice!! Too bad they were out of our budget.

After that we wanted to have some lunch since we hadn't eaten for many hours, but since none of us were feeling too great we didn't want to have any of their spicy food, so no Indian, no Malay and no Chinese food.....we ended up in the british pub where I had a burger and Suz had chicken with chips.



After our meal we did some more walking and walked to the Eastern Oriental Hotel which is very similar to the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, same style of architecture and owned by the same family. It was funny as well to see the pith-helmeted porters greet you at the door, they had the full colonial outfit, all the way down to their knee high socks.....



After that we just kept walking all the way to Fort Cornwallis, through Little India, Chinatown and back to our hotel again. We were both stinking hot so we had a cold shower and then just chilled on the bed under the a/c watching cartoon on tv (the only thing we found that was on english). We fell asleep for about 3-4 hours and when we eventually made it out to the streets again we just walked to 7/11, purchased some water and yogurt and walked back to the hotel where we just spent the rest of the afternoon and night either in bed or on the toilet. As you can tell we were really enjoying Malaysia by now....

The next day when we woke up Suz was feeling itchy and then noticed hundreds of bites all over her, mostly on her legs and arms, could be a rash, we don't know for sure but they look like they could be from bedbugs (the weirdest thing though is the fact that I don't have a single one, and we slept in the same bed....), after a trip to the chemist and some antibiotics and cream later we made it over to the main shopping centre here in town.

Our first thoughts were....dodgy galore, the place looked like one of those building you see in Eastern Europe, lots of concrete, no design....add to that the fact that most stores were closed and had big steel rollerdoors covering them.... After we made it out of that one we saw another big building next to it and this way more like it, a 5 floor shopping centre with all you might need. Our stomachs were still shit (litterally) so we had to try whatever to stop it.....well, what we needed was some food that really constipates you.....so we went to McDonalds.

After that disgrace we just decided to watch a movie, walked to the top floor and purchased two tickets to M13. The movie was not too bad, but one thing is funny about Malaysia....whenever there is a romantic scene that contains passionate kissing or more, the scene is just cut out.....of couse the blood and guts of the killings remain. And we got more confused when in the middle of the shopping centre we saw a store for condoms, just condoms.....huh, it was quite funny to see a bunch of muslim school girls point to the shop and giggle.



**In Bed most of the time...**  
...the toilet was the other place....nasty!!



**The Shopping Centre**  
Yup, it was big enough...

After purchasing tickets to leave to the Perhentian Islands the next day, had a disgusting McDonalds meal and watched a movie that had some scenes cut out from it....we went back to our hotel, but not before sneaking into another chemist to purchase some rehydrating solution and some coal tablets to help our stomachs. By now we could almost open up a mini chemist of our own, we've got loads of different pills, I've had some for the infection in my ear, iodine for my cuts, plenty of band-aids, paracetamols, seasickness tablets, antihistamine and now these ones....

In the evening we actually felt a bit better, I was starting to get hungry again and we hit the streets. After walking up and down we eventually chose an Indian place and had some naan bread, tandori chicken and dosai.....and it worked, we could finally enjoy some of Penangs food.

Today is our last day here, we have checked out of the hotel but left our big backpacks there. Tonight at 9pm we will catch the nightbus to the Perhentians. We should reach the eastcoast at around 5am. The boat leaves at 8am and we should reach the islands at 9am.

Hopefully this goes well, my stomach has settled but Suz is still having some problems...

So our stay in Penang was not the one we had expected, but what can you do.....we can always come back another time and maybe, just maybe, experience it then.



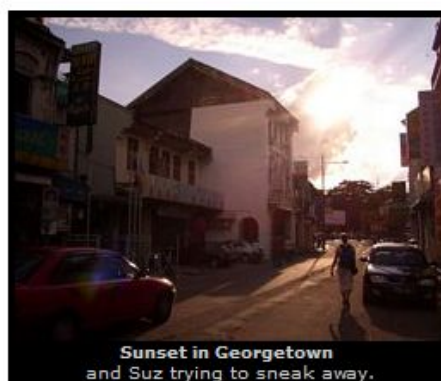
**Our moment of shame...**  
...no more comments needed!



**Suzies "bedbugs"**  
Funnily I didn't get any...



**Suzies "bedbugs"**  
Suz didn't find it funny though.



**Sunset in Georgetown**  
and Suz trying to sneak away.



**Trishaws everywhere**  
Looks quite dangerous.



**Hawker Stall, for a cheap meal**  
Many, many of these across the city.



**There you have it...**  
...we ended up on a trishaw as well.



**Odd one out?**  
The tall building doesn't fit in...

[Back to Top](#)