



B(U)Y GEORGE!

Commemorate your trip to the multifaceted island of Penang and its historical UNESCO city of George Town with these handcrafted mementoes from notable shopping spots

THE HABITAT

Since colonial days, Penang Hill (Bukit Bendera) has been a refuge for islanders seeking inspiring views and respite from the fierce heat. After the funicular train to its summit re-opened in 2011 with an extended track, the ten-minute ride to the summit reached new peaks of popularity. But original retail opportunities remained in short supply until the opening of The Habitat in 2017, a remarkable nature attraction that combines rambling through rainforest inhabited by langurs, giant squirrels, and (eek!) snakes with spectacular engineering feats like Curtis Crest, a ring-shaped elevated walkway.

Snap up: A pack of 10 leaf-shaped plates (made from actual leaves) at Shop on the Hill, one of Penang's best gift shops, and indeed the most ultra-modern; built on a slope, its angular interiors dazzle while trees sprout from the floor, true to its sylvan surroundings.

thehabitat.my

01





02

CHULIA STREET

One of George Town's oldest roads is Chulia Street, a focal point for throwback thrills in one of Asia's most nostalgic cities. Here's the place to get your fill of local gut-pleasers like beef noodles, *char kway teow*, and assam laksa (Malaysian fish-based rice noodle soup). Chulia Street also features a host of flea markets and antique stores selling handcraft items.

Snap up: An elegant Nyonya vase from Seven Terraces. The hotel's in-house boutique blends seamlessly with the rest of the structure's Peranakan style. The goods inside the store are excess stock and collectables that remained when Seven Terraces was completed in 2012.

📍 georgetownheritage.com

03

CHINAHOUSE

At some point, every visitor to George Town ends up in ChinaHouse, and it's not hard to see why. Not only is this the longest shophouse in the city, occupying an entire block in the historic centre – it takes several minutes to walk from the front (Lebuh Pantai) to back (Lebuh Victoria) – but it's also Penang's most versatile public space. A mixed-concept leisure-time mega-market, it comprises no fewer than 14 cafés, eateries, wineries, contemporary galleries, shops, and multi-purpose creative spaces.

Snap up: One of the stunning cushions at Bon Ton Shop III, an offshoot of the fashionably curated boutique of the same name along Armenian Street. There's also the Reading Room, an airy library of books and magazines on art, design, architecture, and cooking for sale.

📍 chinahouse.com.my



PHOTOGRAPHY BON TON THE SHOP (GIFTS); CHINAHOUSE (VENUE SHOTS), GTTH (GEORGE TOWN HERITAGE HOTELS)



COOL STOREY, BRO!

The 68-storey Komtar Tower has towered over Penang for decades as an inescapable icon of the island. Once the second-tallest building in Asia, it has now been refurbished as a multipurpose complex offering retail outlets, transportation, and government offices. The complex also houses **The Rainbow Skywalk**, declared Malaysia's highest observation deck in 2016, and a network of themed spaces (the "Avenue of Adventures") occupying levels 3 through 6 including Penang State Gallery, a planetarium, and a dinosaur exhibit. thetop.com.my

04

STUDIO HOWARD

George Town is a goldmine for offbeat artisan boutiques, and the Studio Howard gallery epitomises the retro-modernist vibe in this hipper-than-hip enclave that drips with art. The stylised art photography of Howard Tan takes centre stage, depicting the architecture and street life of Penang in glorious technicolour – everything from the façades of houses in George Town to bicycles, trishaws, market vendors and temples. The studio also showcases the work of artists from different disciplines such



DURIAN DURIAN

Indulge yourself with a box of Beryl's milk chocolates with durian filling at Durian: The King of Fruits, a mini-museum that transports visitors through the history, varieties, and many uses of this polarising fruit. There are plenty of comical selfie-ops throughout the museum – a split-open, man-sized papaya greets you at the entrance – and a retail area chock-full (pun intended) of durian confectioneries.



as Fuan Wong's fused-glass sculptures and bowls, and Ch'ng Kiah Kiean's graphite sketches of local street scenes.

Snap up: A magnet or a coaster depicting Penang scenes at Shop Howard, a vividly-coloured outlet that Howard Tan set up when his studio became cluttered. Also find jute-and-batik bags that are made by a local seamstress from recycled gunny sacks, as well as framed photo prints, postcards, photo books, and jewellery here. studiohoward.com

