

# China Town ( Petaling Street )

## Geographic Location

Petaling Street or known as Chinatown among tourists is the centre of Kuala Lumpur's original Chinatown. The street is also affectionately known as PS among locals. It is located at the Southeast of Central Market, bounded by Jalan Bandar, Jalan Petaling and Jalan Sultan.

## Unique Features

To experience Petaling Street (Chinatown), you should go at night! It's a place that never sleeps. The jostling crowd and noise are part of the fun of visiting Petaling Street. Without these, it just wouldn't be right.

The street has actually been given a facelift. Gone are the uneven roads and broken pavements and the huge colourful umbrellas that protect the goods sold from wooden pushcarts. Petaling Street is now sheltered, with two large Chinese arches placed at both ends of the street to welcome visitors.

Petaling Street is a bustling market serving as a bargain hunter's paradise and one of the premier shopping areas in the city, which is distinct in oriental atmosphere.

It is famous for its makeshift bazaars or stalls; selling "very reasonably" priced goods like wallets, handbags, t-shirts, watches, shoes as well as dresses, sunglasses, shoes, fabrics and souvenirs. Petaling Street is also known for its jewellery shops with their fascinating variety of fine jewellery items beautifully crafted in gold and set with priceless gemstones.

## Historical Background

The original Chinese Town centred on Market Square. As the population grew, expansion was constrained by swamps, hills and the river. High Street, now known as Jalan Tun HS Lee, became increasingly popular, as it was higher than the rest of the town and therefore less prone to floods.

Kuala Lumpur was a typical "pioneer" town at the turn of the century, filled with a rough and tough population that was largely male. For entertainment, there was Chinese wayang (opera) or bangsawan (Malay theatre).

The Chinese leaders provided for the community through associations, benevolent societies, temples and foundations. The wealthier and more ornate shophouses were built north of Jalan Cheng Lock, closer to the business centre.

## Food

You are in food haven! Chinese food haven to be exact. There are many restaurants with a lot of delicious choices. Some of the restaurants here have been operating for generations! Patrons would normally be given a menu complete with pictures giving them a good indication of how their meal will look like.

The Hokkien Noodles at the corner of Hong Leong Bank is quite popular judging from the long queues of people waiting to place their order. Don't be disheartened. It is really worth the wait. Look out for Yook Woo Hin restaurant on Petaling Street. It is one the longest surviving family-run food places in KL.

Petaling Street is still a worthwhile place to visit for the food. If you wander into the side lanes, you will still be able to glimpse the old Chinatown, from the lane that sells funeral wreaths to the almost hidden wet market selling live poultry, seafood, and fresh vegetables.

#### Travel Advice

Bargaining here is an absolute must. Bargain hard! It's the ideal place to test your bargaining skills. Even in daytime you have great bargains. Petaling Street is not open for the traffic. It is a great place for locals to get some goods at bargain prices and certainly an eye-opening experience for tourists.