

Batu Ferringhi

If there's one place in Penang that has its generous share of foreign visitors, it would have to be Batu Ferringhi. Aside from Georgetown, Batu Ferringhi is arguably the second most visited destination on Penang Island.

It's difficult to put a finger on what it is exactly that draws repeat visitors to Batu Ferringhi each year. Like Georgetown, Batu Ferringhi is a great place for visitors to enjoy the good food and great shopping. But Batu Ferringhi also has some of the nicest beaches on Penang Island. The long stretch of beach on the northern flank of Penang Island, of which Batu Ferringhi beach is part of, is a combination of wide golden-sand beaches and picturesque deep blue-green coves hedged by large granite boulders that seem to have tumbled from the hilly interiors of the island, right into the sea.

Compared to beaches on Malaysia's east coast islands like Lang Tengah, Batu Ferringhi beach may not be as gorgeous. But Batu Ferringhi has all the conveniences a visitor would want for an easy, hassle-free holiday. All along the Batu Ferringhi road, which runs parallel to the beach just a few metres away, you can find a great variety of shops including restaurants, cafes, convenience stores, mobile phone shops and souvenir shops. The combination of great location, ease of access, high number of accommodation choices and ample facilities and conveniences makes Batu Ferringhi a sure-fire choice for an easy holiday destination.

One unique feature of Batu Ferringhi is the exciting sidewalk bazaar that takes place every day from around 6pm until past midnight. This night bazaar is a busy and enjoyable shopping experience for visitors, and plenty of haggling can be heard along the stretch of individual stalls. Traders and buyers negotiating in good humour for the best price for the variety of items on sale – from imitation designer t-shirts to silver jewellery, colourful plastic buoys to fragile exotic curios.

And after you have done all your shopping and find yourself too tired to walk back to your hotel, you can always hail one of the many trishaw that ply the length of Batu Ferringhi's sidewalk bazaar. The Batu Ferringhi road stretches 3km long and the sidewalk bazaar covers more than half this length.

History

The name Batu Ferringhi itself attests historically to Penang's brushes with several different foreign powers, including the British, the Dutch and the Portuguese. Some locals believe that the word Ferringhi was derived from a foreign language (perhaps Portuguese) which refers to 'foreigners'. Batu Ferringhi has long been known for its scenic seaside panorama. Like other seaside destinations such as Cherating, Batu Ferringhi has been frequented by tourists for decades. Over the years, factors such as the industrialisation of Penang island and the presence of the RAAF in Butterworth, further exposed Penang and particularly Batu Ferringhi to even more foreign visitors. But it wasn't until the late 1970's that one of the first international resorts and hotels were built.

People

In contrast to Georgetown, which is predominantly Chinese, Batu Ferringhi is a place where the mixed ethnicity of its residents are more apparent. All along the coast, visitors can see Malay and Chinese fishing villages. The cafes, restaurants, sidewalk stalls and single-story shops that line Batu Ferringhi road, are run by people of different races, all sharing in the wealth that tourism brings in to Batu Ferringhi. And although the sidewalk bazaar in Batu Ferringhi has a noticeably larger number of Chinese entrepreneurs, there are a few stalls selling speciality items that are run by entrepreneurs of different races.

Food

Practically all the variety of food you find in Georgetown, can also be found in the Batu Ferringhi area. All along Batu Ferringhi street, there are a great number of restaurants and cafes offering an incredible range of cuisine, from

popular Western spreads to Mediterranean specialities and hearty German meals. All that, just a few minutes' walk from the string of hotels by the beach. If you drive eastward towards Tanjung Bungah, on the northern end of Batu Ferringhi you'll also find a number of street-side stalls selling a variety of snacks for picnickers the Miami Beach area, which is a popular weekend retreat for local visitors.

Related Events & Festivals

Be sure to visit Batu Ferringhi beach in June so you won't miss out on all the fun during the week-long Penang Beach Carnival. This annual carnival held in Batu Ferringhi features food promotions, various seaside activities and cultural shows, fashion parades, parties and inter-hotel competitions.

Travel Advice

Just like in George Town, Batu Ferringhi is a great place to do some shopping, particularly at the sidewalk bazaar. Always remember to bargain for the best price! Visitors almost never pay the first price quoted by the vendor. The street vendors are usually good-natured when it comes to bargaining. For more information, please contact:

Penang Tourism Action Council

56th Floor, KOMTAR

10000 Penang

Tel : 604-262 0202

Fax : 604-2631020

Email :
enquiry@tourismpenang.gov.my
OR

Penang Tourist Centre

Penang Port Commission Building

(Ground Floor Arcade)

Pesara King Edward

10300 Pulau Pinang

Tel: +604-2616663

Opening Hours: Mondays through Thursdays, from 8.30am to 4.30pm (Lunch break from 1pm to 2pm). Fridays from 8.30am to 4.30pm (Lunch from 12.30pm to 2.30pm)

Getting There By Bus

Express buses ply the route from Penang to / from Kuala Lumpur and major

cities in the country. Please visit (<http://www.plusliner.com/>) for more info. The main bus terminal in Penang is located next to the Ferry Terminal.

By Taxi

To get to Penang Island, long distance taxi service can be hired at Weld Quay, Penang. Tel: +604-2625721.

By Plane

Daily flights via Malaysia Airlines (www.malaysiaairlines.com, tel:1 300 88 3000) and AirAsia (www.airasia.com, tel: 1-300-88 9933) to / from Penang to major cities in Malaysia. Penang's Bayan lepas International Airport is roughly 20km (45-minute drive) from the Georgetown city centre.

By Rail

You can take the train from Kuala Lumpur to Penang, where it stops at the Penang Railway Station, close to the ferry terminal. For more information, visit www.ktmb.com.my or call their call centre at +603-22671200.

By Boat

Ferries can be boarded at Butterworth, in the mainland portion of Penang. Among Ferry Services available are:

Langkawi Ferry Services (Tel: +604-2643088)

Ekspress Bahagia (Tel: +604-2636255)

From the Ferry Terminal you can easily get a taxi ride into Georgetown city centre.

From Georgetown, catch a Hin Bus No 93 at Lebu Chulia. It will take around half an hour to reach Batu Ferringhi. You will need to negotiate for a reasonable rate if you wish to take a taxi.