

The Wonderer

CURATED TRAVELS FOR INSPIRED LIVING

Issue
06

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The Rainy Day Magic of Krabi

Six stunning island destinations for
rainy season adventures

A Tale of the Two Biggest Cities in Malaysia

Discovering Kuala
Lumpur and Johor Bahru

The Delicious Charms of Lao Delicacies

The many flavours of this
laid-back country

A Break on Paradise Island in the Shade

Where scenery meets
good eats and shade in
Koh Samui

Discovering Colombo Through Local Eyes

A talk with the team at
Amari Colombo

In This Issue



4

Travel Listicle

**A DAY
AROUND NANA**

8

Lifestyle

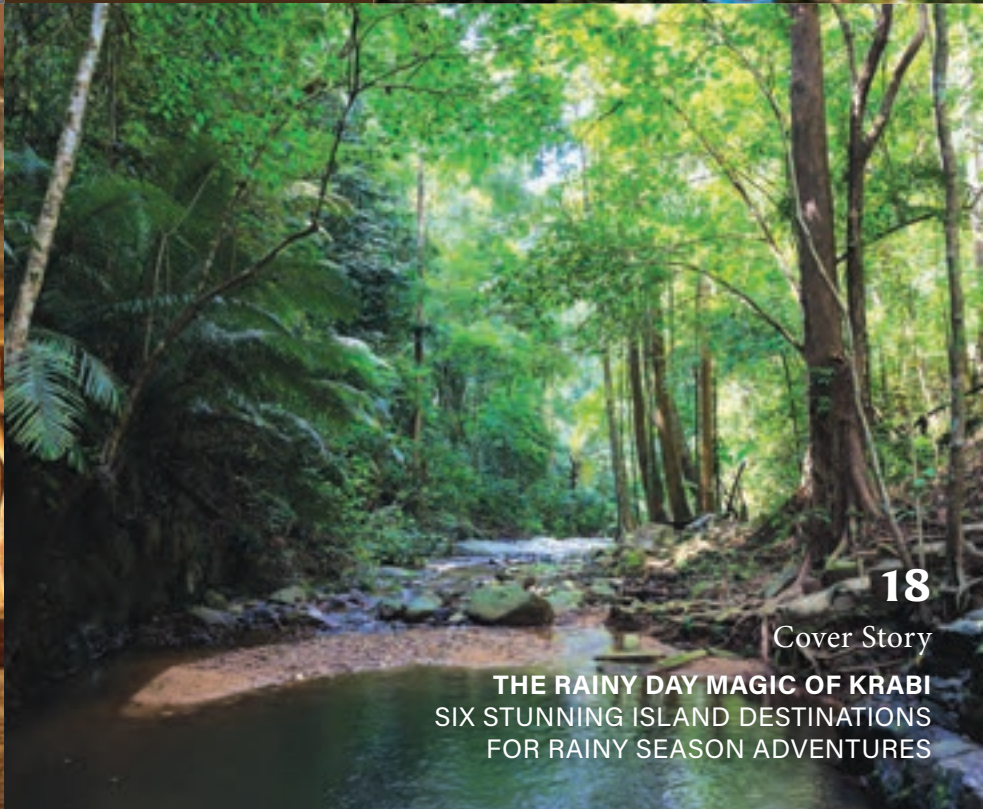
**A TALE OF THE
TWO BIGGEST
CITIES IN
MALAYSIA**



14

Feast & Find

**FRESH AND FUNKY:
THE DELICIOUS
CHARMS OF LAO
DELICACIES**



18

Cover Story

**THE RAINY DAY MAGIC OF KRABI
SIX STUNNING ISLAND DESTINATIONS
FOR RAINY SEASON ADVENTURES**



26

Family First

**THE FAMILY HOLIDAY
WE NEVER HAD TO
LEAVE**



28

Heartmade

**A TASTE OF PENANG,
SERVED WITH AN OZO
SMILE**



30

Heartmade

**DISCOVERING
COLOMBO THROUGH
LOCAL EYES**



32

Heartmade

**THE LUXURY
OF BEING
UNDERSTOOD**

Editor's Letter

Dear Wonderers,

It's the time when the trees in Thailand rejoice and turn green while the crowds dissipate from the cleansing tropical showers. The din of the noisy background is replaced with the sound of raindrops. At first, the rainy season may seem like an obstacle, but it can also be a blessing in disguise, especially for those looking for tranquillity and privacy.

We invite our discerning travellers to explore during the wetter months with our cover story on **Krabi** (p. 18), complete with destinations uniquely tailored to the rainy season and cloudy days. And when you are back in Bangkok, discover more about Sukhumvit's **Nana** area (p. 4), which goes far beyond busy streets.

For those experiencing Malaysia, our feature on **Kuala Lumpur** and **Johor Bahru** (p. 8) dives into the unique charms of the country's two largest cities—why not try both? For foodies, the story on the underappreciated gem of **Lao cuisine** (p. 14) is not to be missed.

Additionally, you can learn more about the rich culture of Colombo from **Amari Colombo's** staff (p. 30), who were proudly born and raised in the dynamic city. Heartfelt moments are also shared by satisfied guests who enjoyed quality family time like nowhere else at **Amari Hua Hin** (p. 26).

Even on days when the weather is not ideal, there are always things we can enjoy and wonderful places we can go. Not every day is going to be sunny, so we might as well embrace the moment. Who knows, travelling while wet may become your new favourite experience.

Warm regards,

The Wonderer Editorial Team

The Wonderer

CURATED TRAVELS FOR INSPIRED LIVING



A DAY AROUND NANA

Discover Bangkok's uniquely cosmopolitan side
in just one neighbourhood and one day

Story: Pakvipa Rimdusit

Photography: Chez LN Homemade, Souky, Sheba Arabic Restaurant,
Baia Bangkok, ONYX Hospitality Group



▲ Chez LN Homemade

Energetic, multicultural, and constantly awake, Bangkok's Nana area is one of the city's most fascinating neighbourhoods to explore. Located along Sukhumvit Road and centred around Nana BTS Skytrain Station, the district has long been known for its lively nightlife, but today Nana and its surrounding areas reveal a far more diverse character, offering a remarkable variety of experiences within a relatively compact neighbourhood.

For those planning to spend a day around the district, here is a simple itinerary to help guide the experience.

MORNING: COSY BREAKFAST AND COFFEE

Like much of Bangkok, mornings around Nana move at a gentler pace before the streets become busier later in the day. It is the perfect time to settle into one of the neighbourhood's cafés for breakfast and coffee.

For a cosy homemade atmosphere, **Chez LN Homemade** is a charming French café serving comforting breakfast plates and homemade pastries, all lovingly crafted with passion in a relaxed setting. Those craving classic brunch favourites can head to **Breakfast Story**, known for its hearty all-day breakfast menu, fluffy pancakes, and quality coffee. Halal-friendly options include **Manna Café Nana**, where you can have international comfort foods, homemade bakes, as well as vegetarian dishes in a laid-back setting.

Tips: When in Bangkok, try not to go too hard on breakfast so you still have room for more Bangkok bites, which is available almost everywhere in the city—and you wouldn't want to miss those.

AFTERNOON: SHOPPING AROUND SUKHUMVIT

Once breakfast is done, Sukhumvit's shopping scene awaits. Conveniently connected by the BTS Skytrain, Nana offers easy access to some of Bangkok's best-known retail destinations.

A good place to begin is **Souky**, a halal supermarket popular among both locals and international visitors. The store carries imported snacks, spices, sauces, frozen foods, and ingredients from across the Middle East, making it an interesting stop even for casual browsing.

For mainstream shopping, **Terminal 21 Asok** (Asok BTS Skytrain Station) remains a favourite thanks to its playful themed design, fashion and souvenir outlets, and extensive restaurants. Those looking for a more upscale retail experience can continue further along Sukhumvit to the **EM District** (Phrom Phong BTS Skytrain Station), comprising **Emporium**, **EmQuartier**, and **Emsphere**. Together, these interconnected lifestyle destinations combine luxury brands, contemporary fashion, gourmet dining, entertainment spaces, and stylish cafés under one district. Even for non-shoppers, the architecture and atmosphere alone make the area worth exploring.

Tips: The dining options in the area are very diverse, ranging from affordable street food in air-conditioned settings to modern Thai eateries and upscale restaurants. It is highly recommended to plan your lunch ahead so you won't miss out.

Souky ▼





▲ Sheba Arabic Restaurant

LATE AFTERNOON: PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY RECHARGE

After navigating Bangkok's heat and shopping crowds, a slower afternoon pace feels well deserved. Fortunately, Nana and its vicinity are also known for plenty of wellness options.

As you stroll along the street, you will find some massage parlours here and there at affordable prices. There are options for a more refined spa experience including **Divana Spa** and others. Those preferring movement and mindfulness may opt for a yoga session at **KriYoga Infinite**.

After getting rejuvenated, now it's time to energise yourself with the dynamism of Nana—and you wouldn't want to miss this.

Tips: Whether you are going for a quick massage at a small parlour or a full spa session, advance booking is recommended, as these are popular Bangkok experiences among both visitors and locals alike.

EVENING: COMFORT FOOD AND INTERNATIONAL FLAVOURS

For Middle Eastern cuisine, halal-certified **Sheba Arabic Restaurant** remains a reliable choice for grilled meats, mezze, and generous sharing platters. The area's strong Arab influence has made it one of Bangkok's best places to explore regional flavours from across the Middle East, or to satisfy the tastebuds of travellers from those parts of the world.

Meanwhile, comfort food seekers can stop by **Bang Bang Burgers** for indulgent comfort food in a casual setting, complemented by a variety of cooling brews and live music. Those craving Indian flavours should check out **Dum Handi Biryani**, known for authentic and aromatic biryanis, as well as other richly spiced dishes.

Tips: Traffic in the area can be especially heavy in the evening, so choosing a restaurant within walking distance of your hotel or the Skytrain station will save you a lot of time and traffic-related stress.



▲ Baia Bangkok

NIGHT: COCKTAILS AND AFTER-HOURS ATMOSPHERE

For a sophisticated nightcap, **Baia Bangkok** combines Italian dining with stylish cocktails in a contemporary setting. Early in the evening, the beautiful restaurant is ideal for a social gathering or romantic dinner, offering a wide array of authentic Italian dishes. However, as the evening goes on, the relaxing venue slowly transforms into a high-spirited party with lively vibes and cool DJ, so yes, it is a nice nightlife destination in the area.

Those looking to continue the night can head to **Havana Social**, one of Bangkok's best-known hidden bars. Styled after 1940s Havana, the venue blends Cuban-inspired interiors, live music, and creative cocktails behind an unassuming entrance, creating a playful speakeasy atmosphere.

Tips: It is helpful to have a ride-hailing application ready on your phone so you can return to your hotel conveniently after a long night, or continue exploring nightlife spots outside the area without communication difficulties. The fares are often not significantly more expensive than regular taxis.

Nana brings together an eclectic mix of international dining experiences, wellness venues, and lively bars within just a few streets, attracting both locals and travellers from around the world. Spending a day in the neighbourhood reveals a distinctly cosmopolitan side of Bangkok, where different cultures, lifestyles, and experiences blend seamlessly together, and where there is always something new to discover beyond the usual city itinerary. ■



➤ Shama Sukhumvit Bangkok ◀

Conveniently located right in the heart of Nana, Shama Sukhumvit Bangkok offers serviced apartments designed for both short and extended stays. Combining contemporary interiors with spacious layouts, the residence caters to business travellers, families, and groups seeking comfort in the heart of the city. Accommodation ranges from one-bedroom units to expansive three-bedroom apartments, each featuring separate living and dining areas, kitchenettes, modern appliances, and city views. With thoughtful amenities including complimentary Wi-Fi, smart TVs, and quality bedding, the property provides a calm and comfortable retreat close to Bangkok's shopping, dining, and healthcare hubs, including Bumrungrad International Hospital.

Explore more: www.shama.com/sukhumvit



Kuala Lumpur ▲



A TALE OF THE TWO BIGGEST CITIES IN MALAYSIA

Discover the distinct charms of Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru,
two cities that continue to captivate travellers

Story: Pakvipa Rimdusit

Malaysia's two biggest cities tell vastly different stories: Kuala Lumpur dazzles with its dynamic energy and a cultural blend, while Johor Bahru moves to a different rhythm, shaped by royal heritage, ancient trading roots, and a strong sense of identity few visitors expect to find. Together, they offer two distinct windows into a country far more layered than you might think.



KL Forest Eco Park ▲

KUALA LUMPUR

THE MODERNISED MELTING POT OF CULTURES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Towering skyscrapers surrounded by busy hawker centres and markets; intricate mosques sitting steps away from peaceful Buddhist temples; skyscrapers neighbouring expansive parks; luxury venues blended into artistic surroundings. This is the capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, a city that keeps people coming back whether for business or relaxation.

LONG HISTORY SHORT

Formerly a tin-mining settlement in the 1850s, the city's name is derived from the meeting of the Klang and Gombak rivers, meaning "muddy confluence". During the tin-mining era, the frontier town was mainly run by Chinese miners and Malay chiefs before the arrival of the British, who formalised the city's administration in 1874 following the establishment of the British Residential system in Selangor. With the tin rush, the region thrived economically, but hardly anyone of that era expected this "muddy confluence" would become a major global city and one of the region's major metropolises.

In 1896, the British formed the Federated Malay States, combining the various states under a single administration, and Kuala Lumpur, with its significant economic activity, was formally declared the federal capital. The decades that followed brought major infrastructure: the **Sultan Abdul Samad Building**, the railway station, and others, most bearing the hallmarks of colonial design. Even after Malaysia's independence in 1957, Kuala Lumpur remained the capital.

THE CULTURAL SIDES

Having been built over decades by people of various races and nationalities, the city is uniquely rich in culture. This relatively young capital embraces the traditions of its early settlers and modern lifestyles. While in the city, visitors can enjoy Chinese-influenced flavours along Petaling Street, hear Tamil conversations around Little India, conduct business in English in state-of-the-art buildings (perhaps at the iconic being the **Petronas Twin Towers**), and photograph beautiful colonial architecture along the streets. For leisure, a shopping spree at **Bukit Bintang**, an unobstructed panorama of the city from **Menara Kuala Lumpur**, a discovery of local dishes along **Jalan Alor**, or a walk through the lush **KL Forest Eco Park** with its famous canopy walk all await.

There are many more experiences available in Kuala Lumpur, most of them accessible via its practical public transportation system. Everyone visits the capital for different reasons, and most leave satisfied.



▲ Sultan Abu Bakar State Mosque

JOHOR BAHRU THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CORNERSTONE

An ordinary day's drive through Johor Bahru looks something like this: historic mosques and grandiose royal residences against a backdrop of towering buildings that signal modern-day economic growth, with Singapore visible just across the strait. Before long, you have reached the only LEGOLAND in Southeast Asia. This, too, is a multidimensional city, but in a different way.

LONG HISTORY SHORT

The Johor Sultanate was, in practical terms, a continuation of the Sultanate of Malacca, a powerful Malay kingdom in the 15th century that controlled the straits connecting the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. In 1511, Malacca fell to the Portuguese, and the last Sultan of Malacca fled south through several locations before establishing a new sultanate along the Johor River, bringing the full weight of Malaccan royal tradition to its new settlement. The territory was not built from nothing; it was the resurrection of past glory. The settlement, formerly known as Tanjung Puteri, grew in significance in 1855 and was officially renamed Johor Bahru in 1866, having endured Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences.

THE CULTURAL SIDES

Deeply rooted in Johorean Malay identity and shaped by royal tradition, the city boasts a unique cultural heritage while welcoming modernisation, a place to revel in history and hope all at once. Javanese and Sumatran immigrant traditions lend the local culture a distinct vibe found nowhere else in the country.

The grand buildings of the royal era, including the **Istana Besar** and the **Sultan Abu Bakar State Mosque**, were built not as monuments to colonialism but as deliberate assertions of Johorean sovereignty and taste, and these heritage structures are preserved with genuine care rather than for tourism's sake. Cultural diversity is further evident in landmarks such as the **Arulmigu Sri Rajakaliamman Glass Temple** (widely recognised as



Danga Bay ▼



the world's first Hindu glass temple), the **Johor Bahru Old Chinese Temple**, and the **Church of the Immaculate Conception**. Recreational destinations including **Danga Bay**, **KOMTAR JBCC**, and **LEGOLAND** make the city an accessible leisure getaway for all. Meanwhile, **Tan Hiok Nee Heritage Street** offers a glimpse of old Johor Bahru through its traditional cafés and restaurants.

Together, these cities make a compelling case for staying longer, going further, and paying closer attention to a country that rewards careful travel. ■



➤ AMARI KUALA LUMPUR ◀

In a city that never stopped reinventing itself, Amari Kuala Lumpur puts guests at the centre of the momentum. Situated steps from the KL Eco City Mall, The Gardens Mall and Mid Valley Megamall, Amari Kuala Lumpur is right in the capital's most dynamic business and entertainment district, with direct connections to LRT and KTM commuter lines making the rest of this sprawling city immediately accessible. KLIA is 45 minutes away. The rooms and suites offer floor-to-ceiling windows, generous workspaces, and warm contemporary interiors; Club Deluxe and Club One Bedroom Suite guests receive additional privileges including complimentary evening cocktails and meeting room access.

Explore more: www.amari.com/kuala-lumpur



➤ AMARI JOHOR BAHRU ◀

Rooted in the heart of Ibrahim International Business District on Jalan Wong Ah Fook, Amari Johor Bahru reflects the quiet confidence of a city that has always known its worth. Zenith Mall, City Square, and Komtar JBCC are on the doorstep; Persada Convention Centre is within easy reach for business travellers. The interiors draw on Malay design traditions, giving the property a sense of place that feels genuinely local. Johor Premium Outlets rewards dedicated shoppers, while LEGOLAND Malaysia is under 30 minutes away. For a city whose cultural and royal heritage runs four centuries deep, this is a fitting home base.

Explore more: www.amari.com/johor-bahru



➤ SHAMA SUASANA JOHOR BAHRU ◀

Shama Suasana Johor Bahru combines the comfort of a serviced residence with the convenience of a central city address. Surrounded by shopping, local eateries, and attractions including Zenith Mall, the property also offers easy access to JB Sentral, the CIQ crossing, and future RTS link connectivity. Suites range from cosy twin rooms to spacious three-bedroom options, designed with practical living areas and modern amenities suitable for families, business travellers, and longer stays alike.

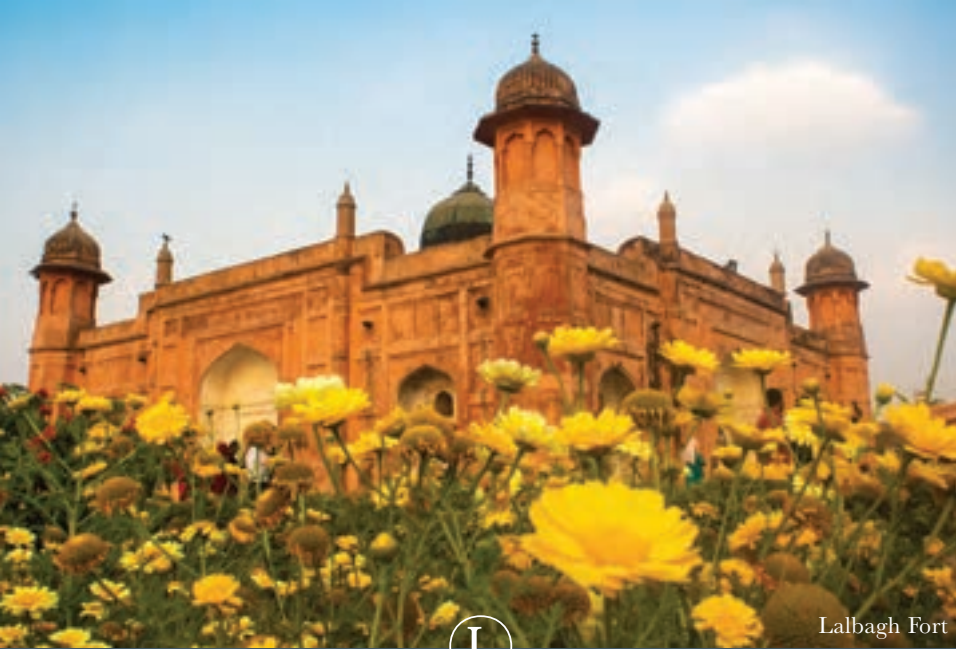
Explore more: www.shama.com/johor-bahru



➤ OZO MEDINI ◀

OZO Medini delivers a lively, uncomplicated stay close to some of Johor's most popular attractions, including LEGOLAND Malaysia, Horizon Hills Golf & Country Club, X Park, and Puteri Harbour. The hotel features contemporary rooms and suites ranging from cosy rooms to larger family-friendly options, all equipped with smart TVs, practical amenities, and modern comforts. Guests can also enjoy facilities such as a swimming pool, gym, restaurant, and social spaces, making it a convenient base for both leisure travellers and families exploring the Medini area.

Explore more: www.ozohotels.com/medini-malaysia



Lalbagh Fort

ARCHITECTURAL MARVELS IN DHAKA

From rose-tinted elegance to clean modernist silhouettes, Dhaka has it all

Story: Pakvipa Rimdusit

Beyond its vibrant river life, Dhaka is home to remarkable landmarks shaped by Mughal heritage and colonial influence. These architectural sites offer a fascinating insight into the Bangladeshi capital's rich history and evolving identity.

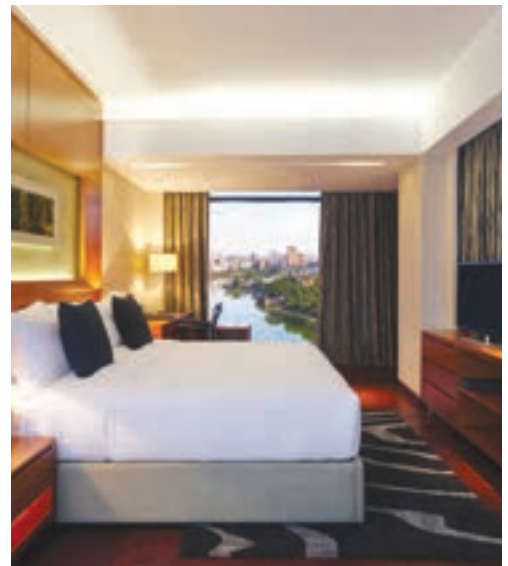
Among the most visit-worthy spots is **Ahsan Manzil**, the striking rose-coloured palace that sits along the Buriganga River in Old Dhaka. The 19th-century mansion blends Indo-Saracenic Revival and colonial architectural styles with grand staircases, elegant arches, and a prominent dome. Not far away from the historic mansion stands **Lalbagh Fort**, an unfinished late-Mughal fort complex commissioned by Prince Muhammad Azam. Despite never being fully completed, the site remains one of Dhaka's most important landmarks, featuring expansive gardens, a mosque, gateways, and the tomb of Pari Bibi, whose death is often associated with the fort's unfinished fate. Another architectural treasure within Old Dhaka is the **Star Mosque**, also known as Tara Masjid. The mosque is renowned for its intricate mosaic decorations adorned with blue-and-white stars alongside the shimmering interiors.

Outside of the Old Dhaka, **Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban**, Bangladesh's National Parliament Building. Designed by legendary American architect Louis Kahn, it is famous for bold geometric forms, together with masterful use of natural light.

For travellers drawn to history, culture, and design, Dhaka invites exploration through its remarkable architecture, making the city well worth a visit for a glimpse into its rich past and evolving identity. ■



Star Mosque Dhaka



➤ Amari Dhaka ◀

Located in Dhaka's business and diplomatic district, Amari Dhaka offers convenient access to embassies, corporate offices, banks, United Nations offices, and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, just a 20-minute drive away. The hotel combines contemporary comfort with subtle Bangladeshi-inspired design. The property delivers a seamless stay experience, complemented by attentive service, modern facilities, and a strong commitment to guest safety and comfort.

Explore more: www.amari.com/dhaka



Lao food



Khao Jee Pâté

Ⓕ

FRESH AND FUNKY: THE DELICIOUS CHARMS OF LAO DELICACIES

The many flavours of the country
where time seems to slow down

Story: Pakvipa Rimdusit

Laos has a deeply communal culinary tradition characterised by fresh herbs, smoky aromas, and rustic preparation shaped by riverside and agricultural life. Sticky rice, grilled meats, herb-heavy salads, fermented ingredients, and charcoal cooking form the backbone of many meals, reflecting the country's close relationship with nature and local produce. Despite the apparent simplicity, Lao cuisine is known for its complex balance of herbs, acidity, chilli heat, smokiness, and savoury fermented flavours. For travellers visiting this famously laid-back country, exploring local food is an essential part of understanding its culture.

Or Lam**THE HEART OF LAO DELICACIES**

Rice is the staple carbohydrate across much of Southeast Asia, but at the heart of Lao culinary culture lies a different variety: sticky rice, or 'khao niao.' Traditionally eaten by hand, it is rolled into small balls and used to scoop up salads, dips, and meat dishes, usually as part of a communal style of dining that encourages sharing and lingering at the table.

Fresh herbs play an equally important role, with Lao dishes often piled high with mint, dill, Thai basil, culantro, watercress, and other greens that lend a bright freshness. Like the food cultures of neighbouring countries, Lao cuisine embraces spice but also distinctively bitter—not avoided, but celebrated, particularly in soups and herb-heavy stews. Fermented fish sauce, or 'padek,' underpins much of Lao cooking, adding a deep savoury funk.

There is also a strong connection to fire and river culture. Grilled fish, charcoal-roasted chicken, banana leaf steaming, and smoky chilli dips are staples throughout the country. Rather than relying on heavy sauces, Lao cuisine balances smoke, herbs, acidity, chilli heat, and fermentation with remarkable subtlety.



LESSER-KNOWN LAO DISHES TO TRY

◦ *Nam Khao*

A handful of dishes have become synonymous with Lao cuisine, including 'larb', the minced meat salad flavoured with herbs and toasted rice powder; 'tam mak hoong', the Lao version of green papaya salad made with fermented fish sauce; and 'khao poon', a fragrant rice vermicelli soup, often enjoyed as a casual meal. For travellers willing to venture beyond the familiar, however, Laos offers a wealth of under-the-radar delicacies worth seeking out.

Mok Pa

'Mok pa' is a dish of river fish steamed in banana leaves with dill, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaf, and herbs. The flavours are delicate yet deeply aromatic, while the fish remains firm and silky from the gentle cooking process. Light and herbaceous, it is considered one of the most elegant dishes in Lao cuisine.

Or Lam

Another standout is 'or lam', a northern Lao stew associated with Luang Prabang. Thick, earthy, and intensely herbal, it is typically made with mushrooms, aubergines, lemongrass, and buffalo meat or chicken. A local jungle vine called 'sakhaan' gives the dish its signature peppery numbness. Less rich than a curry, it evokes the flavours of forests and mountain villages.

Nam Khao

Also known in some regions as a crispy rice salad, 'nam khao' comprises fried rice balls broken apart and tossed with fermented pork, peanuts, lime, herbs, and chilli. The result is crunchy, sour, savoury, and addictive all at once. Though beloved by locals, it remains surprisingly overlooked by many tourists.

Jeow Bong

Those who enjoy fiery flavours should seek out 'jeow bong', the smoky chilli paste originating from Luang Prabang. Made with chillies, garlic, galangal, fermented ingredients, and occasionally buffalo skin, it delivers a complex combination of sweetness, smoke, spice, and umami. Eaten with sticky rice and raw vegetables, it captures the essence of Lao flavour in a single bite.

Gaeng Naw Mai

Another revealing dish is 'gaeng naw mai', a bamboo shoot soup widely enjoyed across Laos and closely associated with home cooking and rural food traditions. The soup is known for its earthy, herbal character and subtle bitterness. In many parts of Laos, it is valued not only for its flavour but also for the traditional medicinal properties associated with ingredients such as yanang leaves and fresh forest herbs.

Khao Jee Pâté

Laos' French colonial legacy appears in 'khao jee pâté', the country's answer to bánh mì. Crusty baguettes are filled with pâté, grilled meats, herbs, pickles, and chilli sauce, making them a popular breakfast or roadside snack in cities such as Vientiane.

Gaeng Naw Mai



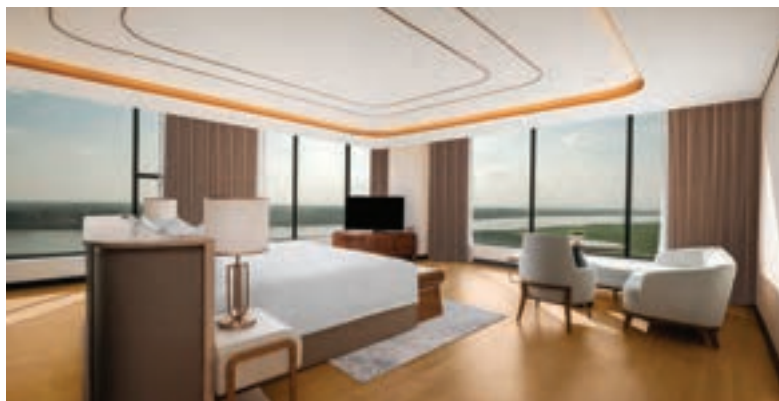
Kaipen

In northern Laos, adventurous eaters may encounter 'kaipen', a crisp riverweed snack harvested from the Mekong and its tributaries. Seasoned with sesame and garlic before being fried, it resembles seaweed crisps, though with a more mineral, river-like flavour.

Seen Savanh

Deserving of far more attention is 'seen savanh', Lao beef jerky. Sweet, chewy, and often flavoured with sesame and garlic, it pairs exceptionally well with beer and sticky rice, particularly during riverside gatherings at sunset along the Mekong.

More than just a way to eat, Lao cuisine offers a glimpse into the country's everyday life and local traditions. Many meals remain closely tied to riverside communities, fresh local ingredients, and communal dining culture. For travellers exploring Laos, trying local dishes beyond the familiar favourites is one of the most rewarding ways to experience the country. ■



➤ Amari Vientiane ◀

Set beside the Mekong River in the heart of the Lao capital, Amari Vientiane offers convenient access to the city's cultural landmarks, riverside atmosphere, and bustling Night Market. Attractions such as Wat Ong Teu and Pha That Luang are just a short drive away, while airport and train transfers make arrivals and departures seamless. Rooms and suites combine contemporary Lao-inspired interiors with calming city or river views, alongside modern comforts designed for both leisure and business travellers. Guests can also enjoy facilities including an infinity pool, Breeze Spa, FIT Centre, and exclusive Club Nava privileges for suite stays.

Explore more: www.amari.com/vientiane



➤ Amari Vang Vieng ◀

Surrounded by Vang Vieng's dramatic limestone mountains, Amari Vang Vieng places guests within easy reach of the town's cafés, riverside restaurants, and natural attractions. Contemporary Lao-inspired rooms feature large windows overlooking lush greenery and mountain scenery, creating a bright and relaxing atmosphere after days spent exploring. The hotel also serves as a convenient base for visiting some of the region's best-known sights, including Kaeng Nyui Waterfall, Blue Lagoon, Tham Phu Kham Cave, and Tham Jang Cave. Located around 1.5 hours by road from Vientiane, the property combines modern comfort with easy access to Vang Vieng's outdoor adventures.

Explore more: www.amari.com/vang-vieng



The Rainy Day Magic of Krabi

Six stunning island destinations for rainy season adventures

Story: Pakvipa Rimdusit

Famed for its limestone karsts and beaches, Krabi is among the most popular destinations in southern Thailand, especially for nature lovers. In summertime, travellers fly in from across the globe to spend days (or even weeks) under the Krabi sun, lounging on the beach, climbing dramatic cliffs, or diving into the blue waters. But summer does not last forever.

As the rainy season arrives in the South, many outdoor activities become less appealing. Naturally, this time brings fewer crowds, cooler weather, and a slower pace of travel, but rest assured that the rain does not wash away Krabi's charm. Many natural attractions remain safe to explore during this season—one that enhances the experiences in different ways.

These are six national parks and attractions that remain well worth visiting even when the skies turn grey.



Blue Pool, Khao Phra Bang Khram Wildlife Sanctuary

Khao Phanom Bencha National Park

This rainforest-clad national park is one of the province's best inland rainy-season escapes, as the forest becomes intensely green and the waterfalls flow powerfully through the jungle, particularly the famous multi-tiered Huay To Waterfall. The trails remain open, but should be explored cautiously due to slippery surfaces, and there are swimmable areas for visitors to immerse themselves in this ancient jungle at its lushest.

Beyond the waterfalls, the park's mist-covered mountains and giant trees create an atmosphere that feels worlds away from Krabi's beaches. Frequent rainfall brings the forest to life with rushing streams, birdsong, and cool jungle air, making this one of the most atmospheric times of year to visit.

Location: Thab Prik Sub-district, Mueang Krabi District

Hours: Daily, 08:00-16:30

Khao Phra Bang Khram Wildlife Sanctuary

Home to the famous Emerald Pool and Blue Pool, this protected area, one of the last remaining stretches of lowland rainforest in Thailand, is among Krabi's most visually striking natural attractions. The rainy season enhances the colours of both the forest and the mineral-rich water and offers a chance to experience the pools with fewer crowds, especially early in the morning. With rain-refreshed forest and quieter surroundings, you may spot rare wild birds thriving in this remarkable habitat.

Even though there are nature trails, it is best to spend time sitting quietly and soaking in the serene surroundings, watching the ecosystem function while relishing the natural beauty. When weather conditions and sanctuary regulations permit, visitors may be allowed to swim in the Emerald Pool without the usual crowds.

Location: Khlong Thom District

Hours: Daily, 08:30-17:30



Than Bok Khorani National Park

Than Bok Khorani National Park

Covering 121 sq km, Than Bok Khorani National Park encompasses various landscapes, from islands, limestone mountains, evergreen and mangrove forests to caves and freshwater pools. In the rainy season, when boating across unpredictable seas is not always guaranteed, visitors can instead enjoy the inland side of this magnificent national park in deeper shades and a more cinematic atmosphere than during sunny days.

During this season, the waterfalls and streams are especially full, while the cooler weather allows for a more comfortable mangrove kayaking experience. However, if you return during sunnier months, do not miss its beautiful nature trails.

Location: Ao Luek District

Hours: Daily, 08:00-16:30

Thapom Klong Song Nam

Not a national park, but this somewhat hidden gem is worth a visit. Located just 30 minutes from Krabi Town, Thapom Klong Song Nam is a beautiful natural attraction where freshwater and seawater meet, surrounded by large trees and mangrove roots. It is especially lush during the rainy season.

The 700-metre wooden walkway takes visitors across the mystic canal that flows towards the Andaman Sea. What makes it special is how the canal changes. During high tide, the water becomes brackish, cloudy, and deep blue, while at low tide, the canal fills with freshwater and turns crystal-clear emerald green. This is where it gets the name, meaning “two-water canal”. Aside from the nature walk, kayaking is also possible. Despite its relatively small size, it is recommended to spend two to three hours here to stroll slowly and observe the surroundings. On a side note, this is not just a tourist attraction; it’s an ecological study area, so visitors should respect the environment and avoid disturbing the natural surroundings.

Location: Khao Khram Sub-district, Mueang Krabi District

Hours: Daily, 08:00-17:30



Klang Cave

Klang Cave

Another lesser-known gem of Krabi, Klang Cave is known for its dramatic rock formations and underground chambers, which remain accessible even on rainy days. The cave features quartz-like stalactites resembling white coral, alongside delicate straw-shaped formations hanging from the ceiling and small stalagmites rising from the ground. Surrounded by dense jungle and mangroves, the predominantly cloudy atmosphere of the rainy season gives the experience a mysterious ambience. Plus, it can be conveniently paired with other nearby attractions such as Ao Thalane or Than Bok Khorani.

For safety reasons, visitors are required to explore the cave either as part of a professionally guided tour or with a local guide hired at the entrance. Proper shoes and adventure-friendly clothing are also recommended for safety and comfort.

Location: Ao Luek Noi Sub-District, Ao Luek District

Hours: Daily, 09:00-17:00

Din Daeng Doi

If you wake up early in Krabi and are greeted by favourable weather, head to this sunrise spot for a breathtaking view of the sky gradually lighting up, with sunlight cutting through the mist and unveiling the dotted limestone karsts below. Even if you miss dawn, Din Daeng Doi remains worth visiting for its memorable panoramic scenery.

Located just 20-30 minutes from both Ao Nang and Krabi Town, the viewpoint does not require any adventurous gear. Simply put on your favourite outfit and take your time soaking in the scenery.

Location: Nong Thale Sub-District, Mueang Krabi District

Hours: Daily, 09:00-17:00



Klang Cave

TRAVELING THE SOUTH SAFELY IN RAINY SEASON

The rainy season in southern Thailand, including Krabi, can be stormy and unpredictable. It is generally still very safe to travel, but visitors should avoid forcing boat trips during severe weather conditions. Weather forecasts should be checked daily, so it is best to keep travel plans flexible. Choosing the right accommodation can also elevate the overall experience, especially on days when the weather is not ideal for outdoor excursions. Lastly, do not forget to bring a rain jacket, umbrella, and insect repellent. ■



➤ Amari Vogue Krabi ◀

Tucked away on the quieter northern end of Tubkaek Beach, Amari Vogue Krabi offers a more tranquil side of the destination, where rain-drenched greenery and misty limestone islands create an especially atmospheric retreat during the monsoon months. Facing the Andaman Sea, the five-star resort feels pleasantly secluded, yet remains within easy reach of Krabi Town's markets and local dining scene. Contemporary Thai-inspired interiors, peaceful gardens and ocean-view spaces encourage slower days shaped by the rhythm of the season, whether unwinding at Chaonang Spa, strolling along the beach after rainfall or simply watching dramatic storm clouds drift across the horizon.

Explore more: www.amari.com/vogue





Prego Koh Samui



Vikasa Life Café

People head to the paradise island of Koh Samui for the sea and sunshine, whether to enjoy its outdoor activities or simply revel in doing nothing at a beautiful beachfront resort. But from time to time, you need a break from the sun. The good news is that escaping the heat does not mean staying indoors and missing out, as Koh Samui offers plenty of shaded spots where you can still soak in the island atmosphere without compromising on the experience.

Whether for daytime indulgence or a sunset session, here are five gorgeous places in Koh Samui ideal for views, food, drinks, or just chilling.

The Cocoon: Viewpoint Restaurant

Thai-European Cuisine in a Cool Setting

Perched high above the coastline—hidden, wooden, and subtly elegant—The Cocoon combines sweeping views of the Gulf of Thailand with a laid-back island atmosphere designed for long lunches and golden-hour dinners. Surrounded by tropical greenery, the open-air restaurant overlooks Koh Samui's rolling treetops and shimmering sea, creating a setting that feels both stylish and unhurried. As daylight softens into sunset, the entire space glows in warm honey tones, making it one of the island's most photogenic dining spots.

The menu brings together Thai and European influences with an emphasis on vibrant flavours and mouth-watering presentation. Perfect for both cocktails at sunset and a leisurely dinner above the sea, The Cocoon captures the slower rhythm of island life.

Website: cocoon-samui.com

Ⓐ

A BREAK ON PARADISE ISLAND IN THE SHADE

Where scenery meets good eats,
drinks, and shade in Koh Samui

Story: Pakvipa Rimdusit

Vikasa Life Café

A Spot for Sound Mind and Sound Body

Perched on a cliffside between Chaweng and Lamai, Vikasa Life Café combines sweeping views of the Gulf of Thailand with a holistic approach to dining and wellbeing. Part of the wider Vikasa wellness community, the open-air café overlooks coconut trees, lush greenery and Koh Samui's eastern coastline, creating a peaceful setting that encourages guests to slow down and reconnect with nature.

The menu focuses on wholesome, ethically sourced ingredients, with an emphasis on organic produce, tropical fruits, and plant-forward dishes. Smoothie bowls, vibrant salads, vegan burgers, and nourishing curries sit alongside fresh coconuts, cold-pressed juices and healthier desserts. Despite its wellness philosophy, the food here feels lively rather than restrictive, making Vikasa Life Café as much about enjoyment as mindful living.

Website: vikasa.com/life-cafe

King of Bread Bangrak

A Breezy Brunch Experience

What began as a small hotel bakery in 2016 has since evolved into one of Koh Samui's most beloved brunch brands. Its second branch, known today as King of Bread Bangrak, is built around a simple philosophy: uncomplicated food made well. Located near Bangrak Beach, the café combines artisan baking with a warm, welcoming atmosphere, being effortless, but subtly refined.

Bread remains at the heart of the experience here, with naturally made loaves, pastries, and baked goods prepared without unnecessary additives. The brunch menu pairs these with hearty breakfasts, quality coffee and comforting café classics inspired by international travels. Despite its popularity, the café retains a relaxed neighbourhood feel, offering a slower and more thoughtful dining experience that suits Koh Samui's laid-back rhythm.

Website: kingofbread.co/find-us/bangrak-beach

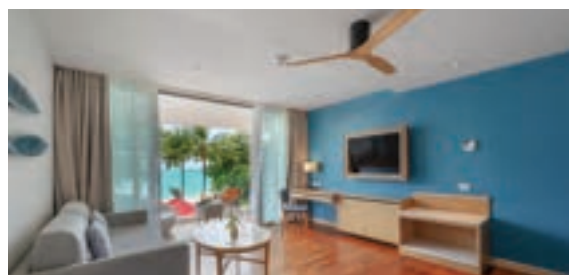
Prego Koh Samui

An Italian Favourite Since 2003

Since opening its doors in 2003, Prego Italian Restaurant has established itself as one of Koh Samui's most enduring dining destinations. Located within Amari Koh Samui on Chaweng Beach, the restaurant has welcomed generations of residents, returning visitors, and travellers seeking authentic Italian cuisine, earning a reputation as a beloved institution on the island's dining scene.

At the heart of Prego is a commitment to traditional Italian cooking, from wood-fired pizzas and homemade pastas to fresh seafood and timeless regional favourites. The restaurant's relaxed yet vibrant atmosphere captures the convivial spirit of an Italian trattoria, inviting guests to gather over good food and good company. More than two decades after opening, Prego continues to be a place where memories are made, bringing together authentic flavours, warm hospitality, and a sense of familiarity that keeps guests returning year after year.

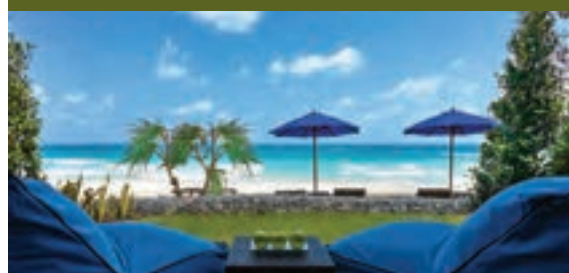
Website: prego-italian.com



➤ Amari Koh Samui ◀

On a quieter stretch of Chaweng Beach, Amari Koh Samui offers a calm beachfront base with easy access to the island's highlights. Samui International Airport is just a short drive away, and landmarks such as Wat Plai Laem and Bophut's Fisherman's Village are within comfortable reach. Inside, the resort draws on contemporary design, with natural textures and soft tones creating warm, welcoming spaces. Spacious rooms, family-friendly facilities and direct beach access make it well suited to travellers who want comfort and convenience alongside a genuinely relaxed atmosphere by the sea.

Explore more: www.amari.com/koh-samui



➤ OZO Chaweng Samui ◀

OZO Chaweng Samui is a bright, modern hotel built for easy, enjoyable holidays. The airport is 15 minutes away, and Chaweng's famous restaurants, shops and nightlife are all within walking distance. The feel is sociable and unfussy—spend the day by the beachfront pool, use the fitness centre, or simply relax in comfortable, well-designed spaces. It suits travellers who want to be close to the best of Koh Samui and who prefer a fun, laid-back stay filled with the island's signature good vibes rather than anything too formal or elaborate.

Explore more: www.ozohotels.com/chaweng-samui



THE FAMILY HOLIDAY WE NEVER HAD TO LEAVE

Story: Sue Rattanamahattana
Photography: Pompeth Siriparanon

For Pompeth Siriparanon, his wife Supicha and their daughter Prin, a stay at **Amari Hua Hin** is proof that the best family holidays do not need packed itineraries. Sometimes, everything you need is already there.

The first place Prin wanted to visit was not the beach.

It was the swimming pool.

Years had passed since her previous stay at Amari Hua Hin, yet she still remembered exactly where she used to play.



"Before we left, she asked if she could visit that spot one more time," recalls Pompeth. "I never mentioned it. She remembered it herself."

For him, that moment perfectly captured what makes a family holiday memorable.

During a recent three day, two night stay, Pompeth, Supicha and their daughter discovered once again why Amari Hua Hin remains one of their favourite family escapes.

Each morning began at Amaya Food Gallery, where breakfast quickly became a family ritual.

For Pompeth, consistency is what stands out most.

"Every hotel has breakfast," he says. "But the quality here has been the same for years. Every time we come back, it is consistently good."

His family's favourite is the noodle station.

"My wife always goes straight to the noodles," he laughs. "My parents do the same. The broth is really good."

Even Prin became a fan.

"At home, she would never ask for noodle soup," he says. "But here she wanted to try it."

What impressed him most was the team's attention to younger guests.

"They ask questions," he says. **"Should we add vegetables? Should we make it less seasoned? They really think about what children can eat."**

The family soon settled into an easy rhythm.

After breakfast came one of the highlights of the trip: a crab release activity by the sea.

While Prin excitedly returned horseshoe crabs and other marine species to the water, Pompeth noticed something unexpected.

"The staff were in the water with us," he says. "Their uniforms were getting wet, but they did not seem to care. They were completely focused on helping the children enjoy the experience."

It was a small detail, but one that left a lasting impression.

"They were not standing on the sidelines. They were creating the experience together with us."

Back at the resort, the family spent the afternoon moving between lunch, afternoon tea and the swimming pool.

For Supicha, afternoon tea quickly became a favourite.

For Prin, it was all about the sweet treats.

For Pompeth, it was the chance to slow down.

"The tea here is excellent," he says. "It is one of those things you remember."

Yet if there is one feature that truly defines Amari Hua Hin for this family, it is the swimming pool.

Years ago, Pompeth first noticed it while staying at another property nearby. Today, he appreciates it for a different reason.

"As a parent, what I like is that children can grow with the pool," he says.

Different areas cater to different ages, from shallow zones for younger children to larger spaces where older children can play more freely.

Most importantly, it creates memories.

"Having come to Amari Hua Hin several times, Prin remembered exactly where it was," he says of Prin's favourite childhood corner of the pool. "That really surprised me."

As evening approached, the family faced a familiar holiday question. Should they head out for dinner?

This time, they stayed. With a variety of dining options available at the resort, there was little reason to leave.

"Honestly, we could spend the whole holiday here," says Pompeth.

That, perhaps, is the greatest compliment he can give.

Rather than spending time planning where to eat, where to go or what to do next, the family simply enjoyed being together.

Breakfast flowed naturally into activities. Activities led to afternoons by the pool. And before they knew it, another day had passed. "It all feels very easy," he says.

For Prin, the memories may be simple.

A favourite swimming pool.

A bowl of noodle soup.

A horseshoe crab returning to the sea.

Yet those are often the moments that matter most.

Not a packed itinerary.

Not a long list of attractions.

Just time together with her parents and grandparents.

The kind that children remember long after the holiday ends. ■



A TASTE OF PENANG, SERVED WITH AN OZO SMILE

For Mohammad Kausar, hospitality is about helping guests discover the flavours and culture that make Penang unforgettable

Story: Sue Rattanamahattana
Photography: Shakeer Ahmad

In Penang, food is part of everyday conversation.

Ask a local where to go and you are just as likely to receive a restaurant recommendation as directions. Mention that it is your first visit and someone will almost certainly tell you what you should eat before you leave.

For Mohammad Kausar, that enthusiasm feels entirely natural.

As Team Leader at **EAT, OZO George Town Penang**'s all day dining restaurant, he spends much of his day introducing guests to the flavours, stories and traditions that have made Penang one of Southeast Asia's most celebrated food destinations.

"Food is one of the first things guests ask about," he says. "Many visitors arrive with a list of dishes they want to try."

Sharing those recommendations has become one of his favourite parts of the job.

That enthusiasm has not gone unnoticed. Recognised as **OZO George Town Penang's 2025 Employee of the Year**, Kausar has become known among colleagues and guests alike for his warm personality and genuine passion for helping visitors experience the best of Penang.

"When someone tells me it is their first time in Penang, I get excited for them," he says with a laugh. **"There is so much food to discover."**

Located in the heart of George Town, a UNESCO World Heritage city, OZO George Town Penang places travellers within easy reach of one of Southeast Asia's most celebrated food destinations. The island's culinary identity has been shaped by Malay, Chinese, Indian and Peranakan influences, creating flavours that are 'uniquely Penang.'

"That is what makes our food special," says Kausar. "Different cultures have contributed different flavours and cooking styles."

Ask him where visitors should begin and the answer comes immediately.

"Nasi kandar," he says.

Then comes another recommendation.

"Char kway teow."

Then another.

"Nyonya Kari Laksa."

And another.

"Chendol."

He laughs.

"There are too many to choose just one."

Among them, **char kway teow** remains his personal favourite.

"Even when two places use similar ingredients, the taste can be completely different," he explains. "That is what makes food in Penang so interesting."

Guests can start exploring those flavours without leaving the hotel.

At EAT, local dishes sit alongside international favourites, giving travellers an introduction to Malaysian cuisine while catering to a wide range of tastes.

"Nasi lemak is something everyone should try," says Kausar. "You can see people from all backgrounds enjoying it."

While food is often the starting point of a conversation, hospitality remains at the centre of his work.

After joining OZO George Town Penang just over two years ago, Kausar quickly progressed from team member to team leader.

"In the beginning, my biggest challenge was always people," he says with a smile. "Guests have different needs. Team members have different personalities. You need to understand everyone."

That understanding often reveals itself through small moments.

One day, an elderly European couple ordered fish head curry, only to mention that they could not eat steamed fish.

"We worked with the kitchen and changed the preparation," he recalls. "They were very happy."

Another memorable guest experienced a severe allergic reaction while dining at the hotel. Kausar and his colleagues acted quickly, helping arrange medical assistance and ensuring the guest received immediate support.

"When something happens, you need to stay calm and act quickly," he says. "The most important thing is taking care of people."

He particularly enjoys looking after families and elderly guests.

And sometimes, hospitality can be surprisingly simple.

"Sometimes all it takes is a lollipop," he says with a grin, talking about making young guests happy.

Having worked for several hotel brands throughout his career, Kausar believes OZO has a personality all its own.

"In some hotels, everything feels very formal," he says. **"But at OZO, we can be ourselves. We still provide professional service, but we can talk naturally with guests and create a good atmosphere. Good vibes."**

That spirit reflects Penang itself: welcoming, vibrant and full of stories.

By the end of the conversation, it becomes clear that Kausar enjoys recommending Penang's food almost as much as serving it.

Like many Penangites, he believes food is one of the best ways to understand a place.

And from the breakfast tables at EAT to the hawker stalls and family run eateries scattered across George Town, there is always another flavour waiting to be discovered.

If you ask Kausar where to begin, he already has plenty of suggestions. ■



▲ Harshani Mihirani

Lahiru Ekanayake ▲

Many travellers arrive in Colombo with a plan.

The city is often seen as the starting point of a Sri Lankan adventure, a place to spend a night or two before heading towards the island's beaches, tea country or national parks.

Yet those who linger a little longer are often rewarded.

There are oceanfront promenades where families gather at sunset. Bustling markets filled with colour and conversation. Historic buildings that tell stories of centuries of trade and cultural exchange. And perhaps most importantly, there are people who seem genuinely delighted to share their city with visitors.

That spirit can be felt throughout **Amari Colombo**.

Overlooking the Indian Ocean and located within easy reach of many of Colombo's cultural and culinary highlights, the hotel offers guests a gateway to the city's many experiences. Yet ask the team what visitors should remember most about Colombo, and the conversation quickly turns away from landmarks and towards something far more personal.

For Sous Chef Lahiru Ekanayake, the best introduction to Sri Lanka begins at the dining table.

"Food is far more than nourishment," he says. "It is comfort, emotion, care and connection."

Having spent nearly two decades in hospitality, Lahiru believes food offers one of the most authentic windows into a culture. Every recipe carries a story, whether it comes from family traditions, regional ingredients or generations of culinary influence.

Sri Lanka's cuisine reflects exactly that.

The island's location along historic trade routes introduced spices, techniques and flavours from around the world, creating a rich culinary identity that remains uniquely Sri Lankan.

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DISCOVERING COLOMBO THROUGH LOCAL EYES

From vibrant local flavours to heartfelt hospitality, the team at Amari Colombo offer a glimpse into the city they proudly call home

Story: Mahika Chandrasena
Photography: Amari Colombo



At Amari Colombo, Lahiru enjoys sharing those flavours with guests while adding his own creativity.

"What drew me most to ONYX and Amari was the freedom to be creative," he says. **"Food is an art form. Here, we are encouraged to innovate and create experiences that connect emotionally with guests."**

For him, the most memorable moments rarely involve elaborate presentations or complicated techniques.

Instead, they often come from understanding what a guest truly needs.

He recalls one traveller who arrived with strict dietary requirements. Rather than making minor adjustments to existing dishes, Lahiru created an entirely personalised menu that allowed the guest to enjoy the experience without compromise.

"The happiness and gratitude from the guest reminded me why we do what we do," he says.

That memory continues to guide his approach today.

"Sometimes hospitality is not about grand gestures," he explains. "It is about making people feel comfortable without them even needing to ask."

The same philosophy appears throughout Amari Colombo.

While guests may never meet Harshani Mihirani during their stay,

her perspective offers another insight into Sri Lankan hospitality.

As Team Leader, Accounts Payable, she works behind the scenes helping ensure everything runs smoothly. Yet when asked what she enjoys most about her role, she does not mention numbers. Instead, she talks about people.

"I have always loved working with numbers, systems and people," she says. "Finance is about trust, communication and relationships."

Those values, she believes, extend far beyond her department.

Visitors often describe Sri Lanka as welcoming, and Harshani understands exactly why.

"There is something very genuine about the culture here," she says. "It feels welcoming, caring and deeply connected to people."

Her own journey reflects that spirit.

Starting her career at just 21 years old, she steadily built her experience and confidence within hospitality, eventually becoming part of the pre-opening team at Amari Colombo. Along the way, she learnt that integrity and consistency often matter more than quick success.

"Success is measured by the respect you earn through honesty and consistency," she says.

Today, she hopes more women will see hospitality as a profession filled with opportunity.

"Do not let society's misconceptions define your future," she says.

Listening to Lahiru and Harshani, a common theme quickly emerges. Neither talks first about awards, titles or achievements. Instead, they talk about connection.

They talk about making people feel comfortable.

They talk about understanding what guests need before they ask.

And perhaps that is what many travellers remember most about Colombo itself.

The city offers beautiful coastlines, fascinating history and exceptional food, but it is often the warmth of the people that leaves the deepest impression.

At Amari Colombo, guests experience that warmth from the moment they arrive.

Whether through a thoughtfully prepared meal, a friendly recommendation or a quiet gesture behind the scenes, every interaction contributes to a deeper sense of place.

It is a reminder that discovering a destination is not only about where you go.

Sometimes, it is about the people who help you experience it. ■



THE LUXURY OF BEING UNDERSTOOD

At Oriental Residence Bangkok, Chief Concierge Krit Pongsanan believes exceptional service begins long before a guest asks for help

Story: Sue Rattanamahattana
Photography: Poonsawat Sudtama

Luxury is often associated with grand gestures.

A beautiful suite. An exclusive reservation. A coveted destination.

But at **Oriental Residence Bangkok**, a proud recipient of a MICHELIN Key and a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, luxury often reveals itself in quieter ways.

A team member who remembers your preferences.

Someone who notices you seem tired before you say a word.

A thoughtful gesture delivered before you even realise you need it.

At Oriental Residence Bangkok, these moments are not left to chance. They are part of a service philosophy built around anticipating guests' needs before they are voiced.

For Chief Concierge Krit Pongsanan, these moments are what truly define hospitality.

"The secret is observation," he says.

After nearly a decade at Oriental Residence Bangkok and more than two decades in hospitality, Krit has learnt that understanding guests begins with noticing the details others miss.

"Sometimes a guest walks into the lobby and looks around. They do not ask a question, but you can already see they need something," he explains. "We should never let them stand there wondering what to do next."

"Our role is not simply to respond when a guest asks. It is to recognise what they may need and offer assistance before they have to ask at all."



This ability to anticipate needs is part of what makes Oriental Residence Bangkok distinctive.

Set along Wireless Road, the residence is known for its elegant atmosphere, refined privacy and attentive yet discreet service. While many luxury hotels focus on being seen, Oriental Residence Bangkok focuses on making guests feel understood.

The team's approach centres on predictive service, combining careful observation, guest history and genuine attentiveness to create experiences that feel effortless and personalised.

"We do not look at guests as customers," Krit says. "We look at them as friends and family."

If a returning guest seems quieter than usual, he notices.

If someone appears unwell, he asks if they need assistance.

If a guest mentions a preference or special interest, the team remembers.

Over time, these observations help the team anticipate future needs, allowing them to personalise each stay in ways that feel natural rather than scripted.

The gestures may be subtle, but their impact often lasts far longer than a stay.

"Once you understand what a guest needs, everything becomes easier," he says. "Even if something goes wrong, they know you genuinely care."

Interestingly, Krit never intended to work in hospitality.

He studied law and hoped to become a public prosecutor before a chance opportunity at a hotel changed his path.

Starting as a doorman, he worked his

way through every level of concierge service before eventually becoming Chief Concierge.

Looking back, he believes the profession taught him one lesson above all others: **empathy.**

"People often say the customer is always right," he says. **"But I think it is more important to put yourself in their shoes."**

The lesson is especially valuable when working with luxury travellers, whose requests can range from sought after restaurant reservations to complex travel arrangements.

Regardless of the situation, Krit's focus remains the same.

"You may not always be able to provide exactly what they ask for," he says. "But you can always try to find the best possible solution."

Outside work, his most important role is father.

His seven-year-old daughter has become one of his greatest teachers.

"Every day she teaches me patience," he says.

Parenthood, he admits, has softened a once hot tempered personality.

"When children make mistakes, you cannot solve everything by getting angry. You need to explain. You need to understand."

The lesson has shaped the way he approaches guests as well.

Whether handling a complaint, an unusual request or a difficult moment, he believes the first step is always the same: listen.

His commitment to guests has also created relationships that extend far

beyond a typical stay.

One memory remains especially meaningful.

After the passing of his father, Krit took time away from work. When he returned, a long staying guest was waiting for him.

The guest offered condolences, shared his own experience of loss and simply wanted to check that Krit was alright.

"He told me that he never felt we were simply providing a service," Krit recalls. "He said we treated him like family."

For Krit, it was a reminder that genuine hospitality is ultimately about human connection.

That same spirit can be felt throughout Oriental Residence Bangkok, where many guests return year after year and often know team members by name.

According to Krit, that sense of care is what transforms a luxury stay into something more meaningful.

"Our goal is not simply to meet expectations," he says. "It is to anticipate them."

"It comes from the heart."

Every morning before work, he follows a simple ritual.

"I tell myself that today will be a good day."

Perhaps that reflects the philosophy behind Oriental Residence Bangkok itself.

Understated refinement. Thoughtful attention.

A belief that the finest luxury is not always what guests see.

Often, it is the quiet confidence that someone has already anticipated what you need before you ever have to ask. ■



MORE THAN A MEAL

The passion, curiosity and hospitality behind two standout restaurants at Amari Bangkok

Story: Sue Rattanamahattana
Photography: Poonsawat Sudtama,
ONYX Hospitality Group

What makes a dining experience memorable?

At **Amari Bangkok**, the answers can be found at two very different restaurants.

At **NILA**, guests discover the vibrant flavours of India's coastline, from chargrilled tiger prawns scented with peri peri spices to rich curries inspired by centuries of Portuguese



Chef Big, Viroon Seesod



Vinod "Vicky" Verma

influence. Just steps away, **ChomSindh** celebrates Thailand's rivers and seas through recipes that balance tradition, nostalgia and creativity.

Behind these distinctive dining experiences are two people united by a shared belief: great food is only part of the story.

For Vinod "Vicky" Verma, Restaurant Manager at NILA, hospitality starts with making people feel welcome.

"Everybody is VIP," he says.

The philosophy sounds simple, but it shapes everything he does.

Growing up in a village in the mountains of northern India, Vicky's favourite food memory is surprisingly humble. On cold winter evenings, his family would sit around a fire while potatoes roasted in the ashes.

"It was so simple, but so good," he recalls.

Today, he helps guests discover a different side of Indian cuisine through NILA's vibrant menu selections. His recommendations for first-time visitors? The Peri Peri Jhinga, featuring chargrilled tiger prawns, and the Malabar Spiced Lamb Chop with truffle mash.

Yet what excites him most is not the food itself, but the experience surrounding it.

Modern diners, he believes, want warmth rather than formality.

"They want to relax, laugh and enjoy themselves," he says.

That mindset recently inspired him

to create a special vegan menu for a guest who quietly mentioned she did not want to inconvenience the restaurant with dietary requests. The gesture surprised her and transformed her dining experience.

For Vicky, hospitality is ultimately very simple.

"If you want to serve someone, serve from the heart."

Across the hotel, Executive Sous Chef Viroon "Chef Big" Seesod expresses that same philosophy through food.

At ChomSindh, he is constantly searching for flavours that guests will remember long after the meal ends.

"What makes people remember a dish?" he asks.

Not photograph it. Not post it online. Remember it.

Often, the answer lies in something deeply personal: a childhood memory, a familiar aroma or a forgotten recipe.

That curiosity drives every corner of the menu.

Whether refining ChomSindh's seafood porridge, perfecting the cooking of tiger prawns or reviving traditional Thai desserts such as som chun, Chef Big is always experimenting, researching and learning.

"I still like testing recipes myself," he says.

His approach blends respect for tradition with an openness to new ideas.

"I think of myself as a borderless

cuisine chef," he explains. "Food from every country connects together."

The result is a dining experience that feels both nostalgic and contemporary. Guests may recognise familiar Thai flavours, but often discover them presented in unexpected ways.

"When you use the proper traditional method, the taste becomes completely different," he says.

Although Vicky and Chef Big work in different worlds, one focused on hospitality and the other on cuisine, they share a common goal: **creating moments that stay with people.**

At NILA, those moments might begin with a perfectly chargrilled prawn and a warm welcome. At ChomSindh, they may start with a recipe inspired by Thailand's culinary heritage.

Different cuisines. Different stories.

But the same passion for making every meal memorable.

Together, NILA and ChomSindh embody the spirit of **ONYX Dining**, offering distinctive experiences for every taste and occasion, all delivered with the quality, service, and hospitality that define ONYX Hospitality Group.

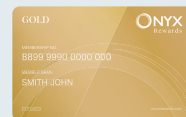
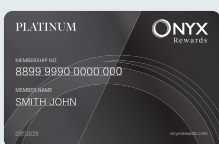
Looking ahead, ONYX Dining will continue to expand across the region, with new Prego restaurants opening in Buriram, Don Mueang, and Krabi, alongside ChomSindh in Colombo and Phuket. NILA will also reach new audiences through a series of pop-up experiences. ■



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Financial Services

Asia-Pacific



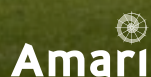
ONYX

HOSPITALITY GROUP

A Tailored Approach to Hospitality

Headquartered in Bangkok with a regional office in Hong Kong, **ONYX Hospitality Group** is a leading hospitality management company in the Asia-Pacific region with over 60 years of industry experience.

The Group manages a diverse portfolio across Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, and Hong Kong, delivering tailored hospitality solutions through its core brands: **Amari, Shama, OZO**, and **Oriental Residence**. In addition, ONYX operates a selection of spa and dining brands, including maai spa, Breeze spa, Prego, Nila, ChomSindh, Café Claire, and La Gritta.





ORIENTAL
RESIDENCE

Oriental Residence Bangkok offers refined, residential-style luxury with elegant suites, peaceful surroundings, and discreet, attentive service. Located on Wireless Road and recognised by Michelin Key and Small Luxury Hotels of the World, every stay is thoughtfully personalised and quietly sophisticated.

Visit: orientalresidence.com



Amari brings warm, reliable hospitality to vibrant city destinations and relaxing seaside escapes across Thailand, Malaysia, Laos, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Inspired by local culture and thoughtful service, every stay is designed to feel uplifting, reassuring, and memorable.

Visit: amari.com



OZO delivers playful, energetic stays through colourful spaces, modern comforts, and uplifting service. With properties across Thailand and Malaysia, OZO creates fun, vibrant experiences designed to keep travellers refreshed and connected.

Visit: ozohotels.com



Shama offers easy, comfortable living in vibrant neighbourhoods across Thailand, China, Hong Kong, and Malaysia. Thoughtful amenities, welcoming service, and a strong sense of belonging make every stay feel simple, flexible, and connected.

Visit: shama.com



More of What You Love

ONYX Hospitality Group: The group behind the brands you love, from Amari to OZO, Shama, Oriental Residence, and beyond.

ONYX
Rewards



ORIENTAL
RESIDENCE

Amari



shama

OZO

ONYX
DINING

La Gritta
ITALIAN RESTAURANT AND BAR

PREGO
ITALIAN RESTAURANT

CAFE CLAIRE
BOUTIQUE HOTEL

STACK
BURGER

ប៊ីស៊ីប៊ុន
CHANGBUN

NILA

EAT

AMAYA
BAR & GALLERY

maai

breeze
spa