

## **Cultural Johor Road Trip Tour**

**Wednesday 28 February 2024 – Saturday 2 March 2024**

**Total Cost: S\$700.00 (Member)**

Reviving Johor Cultural Chingay 2024 . Let us find out more about the cultural gems of Johor and experience the Chingay festival in Johor.

Johor was known in its early days as 'Ujong Tanah' meaning Land's End. Its Arabic word 'Jauhar' means precious stone or jewel. Founded in the early 1500s by Sultan Ahmad Shah, the heir of Sultan Mahmud Shah, the last Sultan of Malacca before it fell into Portuguese hands, it was a powerful kingdom controlled by the Bugis of Celebes and the Minangkabaus of Sumatra in the 18th century.

With British intervention, the state fell into the control of one Daeng Ibrahim, who took the title of Sultan.

His son, Sultan Abu Bakar, was responsible for making Johor prosperous, developing its own constitution and efficiently administering the state. Johor was the only state in Malaysia not completely controlled by the British right up till Independence Day. Today Johor has a diverse cultural heritage with economic sectors in manufacturing and industry.

On this tour, first we will enjoy the view of KTM train. Johor Bahru's Old Railway Station was once an intercity railway station that boasts western architecture in a very unique way. The building was launched in 1932 but was closed in 2010.

The next place to visit is the Tan Hiok Nee Heritage Street - JB's heritage quarter, a network of lifestyle cafes and restaurants where the Instagram crowd flocks to for fresh hipster pastures. Landmarked by two street arches and the heritage building known as the Red House, it is filled with pre-World War II shophouses that have been restored.

After our stroll, the Chinese Heritage Museum is where we will learn the history of the Chinese community in Johor Bahru, and focus on Johor Bahru's history. We will learn about the various cultures that were brought here.

We will be mesmerised by Harmony Street of JB featuring an old Chinese temple, a mosque, a Sikh temple, Gurdwara Sahib, where people of different cultures live in harmony with their customs, habits, and mutual differences. Here lies the oldest Indian Temple in the heart of the city, over 100 years old, built in December 1911.

Look out for the Crystal Crown Arch Coronation Arch at the entrance of Istana Bukit Serene, a gift by the Sultan of Johor, to the people of Johor. A crown replica was built to commemorate the coronation of HRH Tuanku Sultan Ibrahim as the Sultan of Johor on 23rd March 2015, fashioned after the crown worn by Sultan Abu Bakar (1833-1895) during his coronation on 29th July 1886.

**Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque** – On top of a hill in downtown Johor Bahru, overlooking the Straits of Johor and neighbouring Singapore, stands the magnificent Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque, one of the most beautiful old mosques in Malaysia. The construction of the mosque marked the start of Johor's modernisation process in 1892, which was commissioned by the "Father of Modern Johor", the late Sultan Abu Bakar. It is in a mix of architectural styles, but is principally Victorian.

**Grand Palace JB** - This architectural wonder built in 1866 and commissioned by the late Sultan Abu Bakar is also known as the Grand Palace. Initially cast in a Renaissance style, the building was constructed by local artisans under the supervision of a European architect. The original furniture of the palace was made in England and ordered by the late Sultan Abu Bakar in 1866.

Overlooking the city centre of JB, [Sultan Ibrahim Building](#) is one of the most majestic buildings in JB that blends well its Malay and colonial architecture.

The construction started in 1936 and was completed in 1940, costing 2 million ringgit overall. In those days, it served as the tallest building in JB. During World War II while Johor was under Japanese rule, the Japanese Army used the building as a fortress, spying on the actions of the British Army around there.

Not to miss Arulmigu Sri RajaKaliyamman Glass Temple. JB has a unique Hindu temple with much of its inside and outside surfaces inlaid with over 300,000 pieces of multicolour glass mosaic. JB's glass Hindu Temple is listed in the Lonely Planet's Secret Marvels of the World. The temple is listed in the Malaysian Book of Records as the only glass temple in Malaysia.

At JB Skyscape, we will go on a thrilling adventure in Malaysia and conquer Johor Bahru's first aerial entertainment space, which is Skyscape! We will walk through Skyscape's glass-floored Sky Bridge situated 149m above ground. There will be VR experiences, walking through a LED tunnel, and more!

## **Kota Iskandar Tour** (Gallery and the surrounding buildings) / Puteri Harbour / Legoland

Kota Iskandar is a modern administrative capital of Johor, an integrated development that is planned together with its carefully inspired design. It consists of the offices of the Johor State Government & the Federal Government.

Situated on a 320 acre site of manicured gardens and parks, Kota Iskandar was declared open by the late Sultan of Johor, Sultan Iskandar, in April 2009. It is home to 6,000 civil servants, serving the State and Federal Government offices.

## **Chingay Festival**

The pinnacle of this trip is to enjoy the Chingay festival. Watch the majestic lion dances during the Chingay Night Parade in Johor Bahru, Malaysia. A local Chinese annual tradition is to celebrate the Chinese New Year wishing for peace and prosperity. The deities are carried around the main streets of Johor Bahru joined by a procession including floats, lion and dragon dancers.

Johor Bahru's old Chinese Temple is a place of worship and a symbol of unity among Five Chinese Dialect Groups which are "Teochew", "Hoklo (Hokkien)", "Cantonese", "Hakka" and "Hainan".

The temple was built during the 19th Century, and although there are no actual records regarding the completion of the temple, a plaque and the century-old bronze bell located in the temple shows that the temple is around 130 years old.

The Parade of the 5 Deities consisting of Xuan Tian Shang; Hong Xian Da Di; Gan Tian Da Di; Hua Guang Da Di and Zhao Da Yuan Shuai is organised in the 1st lunar month around the 20-23rd each year. The annual Chingay Parade has attracted more than 300,000 people to march around the major roads of Johor Bahru.

This temple means a lot to the local Chinese known as "Gu Miao" in Mandarin as it represents their history over the past century. If you are able to read Chinese, you may go through why our ancestors came to Malaysia and how they built their clans and this temple to reunite all Chinese in Johor Bahru.

On the 2nd day we will be off to Penggerang where we will visit the local oldest snack cake shop, Sungai Rengit, and 8 Chinese Temples.

We will visit an abandoned jetty in Sungai Rengit. What remains now are giant steel pillars that used to support a jetty to walk out to sea. Thanks to their rusty surfaces, these pillars look like ancient ruins, reminiscent of columns from a Greek archaeological site.

Next we will visit a temple village in Malaysia, comprising 8 temples featuring different deities. Each deity has their own special abilities and characteristics.

The Chinese religious statues are very colourful and look festive. God of Fortune, Chinese Money Tree, Giant Ancient Chinese Coin, Goddess of Mercy, Eight Immortals Across the Sea (Myths and Legends) etc. are placed on altars in every corner. There are some stalls outside the temple selling drinks, ice cream, snacks, fruits and so on.

For nature lovers, we will enjoy the following places :  
Desaru Fruit Farm Tour with Theme Lunch &, Fruits Fiesta.

### **Desaru Fruit Farm**

Discover The Wonders Through Your 5 Senses with a guided farm tour to 180 acres, natural tropical fruit land, visit to agricultural gallery, fish pond and vegetable and herb garden. A petting Zoo with an educational talk on bees and the opportunity to taste local raw honey.

### **Kota Tinggi Firefly Park**

As an evening outing, let's catch the wonderful magic of nature at Kota Tinggi Firefly Park in Johor. At sunset, the banks of Johor River are abuzz with the glow of thousands of fireflies. Embark on a stunning experience and journey under a blanket of stars to this rare firefly breeding ground. Watch as the fireflies flicker over the river and the stars twinkle in response. This must-see Johor attraction includes a romantic sightseeing boat tour.

Deposit: \$500 SGD per person 3N 4D (Hotel double occupancy)

Single occupancy: 300SGD

1 payment \$200 - payment due by January (transfers insurance, guide and tips are included together with a contribution to the FOM general fund.

First Meeting December 15 2023

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