

THE FLAVOUR CAPITAL KUALA LUMPUR

THE MALAYSIAN METROPOLIS IS ON EVERY CITY TRIPPER'S RADAR RIGHT NOW FOR ITS SPEAKEASIES AND ELEVATED STREET FOOD. FUELLING IT ALL IS ONCE-SEEDY JALAN PETALING – THE CENTRE OF CHINATOWN



9.30AM: BREAKFAST

Lim Kee Cafe, 66–68 Jalan Sultan

Malaysian breakfast usually kicks off with *roti kahwin* (toast slathered with coconut jam) and a side of boiled eggs. This chic café on the ground floor of the Tian Jing hotel serves up a sublime version, including *kopi* (traditional Malaysian coffee, served strong, with condensed milk to balance the bitterness).

facebook.com/limkeecafe

1PM: LUNCH

Merchant's Lane, 150 Jalan Petaling

At weekends, this popular hangout with its vintage furniture and neon fixtures is mobbed. But visit on a weekday and you'll be able to nab a spot in the half-indoor, half-outdoor courtyard. Try modern Malaysian dishes such as *kg sg tua*, grilled salmon with creamy coconut sauce. The signature pudding is the boldly named Better Than Sex: *pandan roti jala* pancake served with coconut-jam ice cream and palm-sugar dressing.

facebook.com/merchantslane

4PM: AFTERNOON PICK-ME-UP

Jao Tim, 61 Jalan Sultan

The coffee is excellent at this brick-walled café-gallery on the first floor of a former hotel. The sweet stuff includes authentic pain au chocolat and banana bread, while the oozy, grilled-cheese sandwich (mozzarella, cheddar and paprika) is also a crowd-pleaser.

facebook.com/jaotimkl

8PM: DINNER

Cho Cha Foodstore, 156 Jalan Petaling

Previously an old brothel, Cho Cha has been transformed from a derelict warehouse into a buzzing restaurant. The space is modern, but remnants of its past can be found in the pastel-coloured tiles and rough concrete walls. The menu riffs on regional comfort food: Malabar snapper ceviche, hand-pulled *biang biang*-inspired noodles and *cinca* fried chicken. facebook.com/chocha.foodstore

9.30PM: AFTER-DINNER DRINKS

Botakliquor, 156 Jalan Petaling

Head up the spiral staircase to this smart bar, filled with greenery. With a farm-to-glass approach, cocktails are based on botanicals from the founder's garden and herbs above the counter. Pairings run from sweetpea with whisky to pisco with carrot juice.

facebook.com/botakliquor

11PM: NIGHTCAP

Bar Zhen, 5 Jalan Balai Polis

It's easy to miss the entrance of this oriental-style speakeasy, in an alley just off Jalan Petaling. But look out for the turquoise door opposite some bird graffiti and you're in. Cocktails include a Red Dates Clover Club made with date-infused gin and egg white, while a Ginseng Honey Paloma is created with ginseng-infused cognac, tequila, grapefruit and agave. facebook.com/barzhen CHRIS SCHALKX



Clockwise from top: indoors at Merchant's Lane; and outdoors with floral decoration; much of the greenery at Botakliquor is used in its cocktails; the bar's Limau Purut x Carrot, a local Bloody Mary with a fiery kick

restaurant.com. Cocktails from about £10

ASIA TODAY BANGKOK

This effortlessly cool hidey-hole pursues a admirably local approach to its drinks, raising the standard in Chinatown's booming bar enclave. The vibe is divey-but-deluxe with a mishmash of pop-culture references, a giant shark dangling from the ceiling, and a neon sign that reads 'This bar is better than Teens of Thailand' – a cheeky reference to the owner's award-winning G&T spot across the street. There's an emphasis on foraged ingredients brought back from monthly expeditions around the country. Pickled elephant garlic from Lampang is paired with Isaan rum agricole in a Savoury Martini, wild honey from Khao Yai stars in the refreshing Wild Honey Daiquiri. The menu changes with the seasons, so expect a new discovery each time you visit. +66 9713 44704; facebook.com/asiatodaybar. Cocktails from about £8

SMOKE BAR