



## PLACES

## Kuala Selangor and its fireflies

How about a cruise down the river in the evening and seeing the surrounding environment around you light up? Enjoy one of nature's wonder at the Firefly Park Resort Kampung Bukit Belimbing in Kuala Selangor. You will be amazed during your cruise as the fireflies come alive. Fireflies, locally known as kelip-kelip look like tiny wasps with lights at the end of their bodies. The light is chemically produced and emits from the lower abdomen which may be yellow, green, or pale red in colour.

Back in the old days, fireflies were relatively common all over Malaysia but most of the fireflies' habitats are slowly deteriorating due to pollution. Even the fireflies in Kuala Selangor are an endangered species. They inhabit the branches of a certain mangrove plant known as the Berembang tree found along the riverbank and they survive because the site in Kuala Selangor is protected.

The best times to meet the fireflies are about one to four hours after sunset. Usually you will board a small unmotorised boat and taken on a tour. You will



be asked to remain quiet as not to scare these beautiful and rare creatures away. The image resembles a lighted Christmas tree. The bugs produce synchronized and rhythmic flashing which makes the trip even more memorable. Male fireflies flash in unison to attract a mate. But it is a wonder how a female firefly is able to pick a mate from thousands of potential lighted partners.

The park is a short drive from Kuala Selangor town and there are restaurants and toilet facilities. A tip though, bring along insect repellent. More details at [www.fireflypark.com](http://www.fireflypark.com)



## HEALTH

## Aromatherapy and its benefits

The use of aromatic oils has a very long history. But back in 1920 there was a French chemist named Rene-Maurice Gattefosse who was credited with defining modern aromatherapy. The discovery was accidental. His arm was on fire in his perfume laboratory and to save his arm, he immersed it in a vat of lavender oil. Throughout his healing period, he noticed the burn healed quickly with no scars.

Aromatic oils are prevalent today and are in a lot of daily use products especially bath and body care products. Here are some popular oils and their benefits.

Bergamot – acts as insect repellent, helpful for urinary and digestive tract and when combined with eucalyptus oil it can be used for cold sores and chicken pox.

Jasmine – apart from its soothing and relaxing functions, it is also believed to be an aphrodisiac.

Lavender – used as an antiseptic and purportedly has calming properties but should be avoided during early stages of pregnancy.

Neroli – considered a natural antidepressant, it is used to relief panic attacks, nervous tension and even flatulence.

Rose – warm but floral at the same time, it is used to treat insomnia, broken veins, aging skin and headaches.

Sandalwood – this has a strong woody smell and sometimes can be too pungent for some. It can clear blackheads and spots, but should be diluted with a carrier oil.

Tea tree – best used on its own, it has cleansing and refreshing properties. Used widely in cosmetics and body care products, it acts to cure acne, Candidiasis, dandruff, minor wounds and insect bites.

Ylang-ylang – the name is derived from Tagalog, meaning wilderness. It has a strong aroma and is popularly used to aid sexual dysfunctions but useful to relieve high blood pressure as well.

These oils are potent in pure form and should not be used before consulting your dermatologist or licensed aromatherapy practitioner.

## FOOD

### Fusion food, the Malaysian way

Nyonya cuisine is a perfect example of how our culture melted into each other. It is a type of food native to the Peranakan people. Peranakans or also known as Baba Nyonya are descendants of very early Chinese immigrants to the Nusantara region, who have adopted a number of Malay customs to blend into the local communities. Most of them are of Hokkien ancestry but there are some of Cantonese and Teochew descent.

Their food also reflects on their unique ancestry. Mainly it is Chinese cooking but

relies heavily on local spices such as coconut milk, lemongrass, turmeric and chillies.

Nyonya food is prominent in Penang and Malacca where Baba Nyonya communities were most vibrant.

One of most famous Nyonya fare is the Asam Laksa. It comprises of thick white rice noodles served in a tangy fish-based soup. Tamarind, onion, basil, pineapple and cucumber are also added in. Another variation of that is the Laksa Lemak, in which rich coconut milk is added into the soup.

Perut Ikan is another spicy and sour stew of fish bellies preserved with daun kaduk (wild pepper leaf) with vegetables and herbs. Its taste is very distinct and best taken with freshly cooked fragrant rice.

Otak translates to brain in Malay but otak-otak is a delicious and popular fish dish, often wrapped with banana leaf. Most otak-otak are grilled but the Penang otak-otak is steamed together with daun kaduk and coconut milk.

Other popular dishes include Jiew Hu Char and Cencalok. Jiew Hu Char is made of stir-fried turnip, carrot, cabbage and thinly shredded dried cuttlefish while Cencalok is a condiment made of fermented shrimp.

The Klang Valley has a fair number of restaurants that serve decent Nyonya cuisine. Search for them on the Internet. Many of them are well rated by food bloggers.



• Assorted *Kuih*



• Famous Nyonya *Cendol*



• Nyonya *Assam Laksa*

## PRODUCTIVITY

### Staying Focused

No one would say no to becoming more productive at work. Making it happen is the difficult part. One way to achieve more productivity is by staying focussed on a task. Focus can be on different levels such as focussing on a year's or months's goals. The most vital to success however are at the daily and current levels.

#### Daily

At the daily level, set your goals for the day. Ask yourself questions to help you determine them. What are the things that you want to achieve today? From the list you come up with, set your most important tasks.

Your Most Important Task (MIT) should be

the thing that will make the most difference if you accomplish it today. Here is a question that can help you set your MIT:

"If I can only finish one task today, what will that be?"

Then ask yourself, "If I can only finish one more task today, what will that be?"

By asking these questions repeatedly you will get a list of the tasks based on priority.

#### Current Moment

After setting your goals for the day, the next level is the present. This level makes all the difference and where focus is a priority.

To get optimum result, you should be focused in whatever you are doing. Here are

some tips on staying focused.

Do not multitask. It is a fallacy that multitasking makes one productive. Focusing on one task allows you to give it the necessary attention to come up with excellent work in optimum time.

Don't let distractions derail your daily plans, concentration is vital. Take necessary steps to eliminate any possible interruption as much as possible (turning off the mobile phone, telling people around you not to interrupt you, and so on).

There is one thing to remember though: while being focused at all levels is good, we should stay flexible. Be flexible enough to adapt to changes that happen during the day.