

Terengganu

Travel along the Terengganu coast and you will surely be awed by the beauty it boasts and the tranquility it offers. From endless stretches of white sandy beaches with swaying coconut trees to superb diving sites, this east coast gem makes for a memorable holiday destination.

A drive along the coast of Terengganu will both awe the visitor and calm his tired spirit. Sandy white beaches – lined with coconut trees that complete the picture – do more than just greet the visitor looking to soak in the sun and sea on its coast and islands, which are surrounded by clear blue waters and exotic marine life. Then there is its spectacular underwater world, lush tropical rainforest, dazzling waterfalls and other natural wonders.

GETTING THERE

There are few ways to reach Kuala Terengganu. It is 491km by road from Kuala Lumpur and about 555km from Singapore. Malaysia Airlines offers regular flights from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Terengganu and Kerteh. Domestic budget airline AirAsia also offers regular flights between Kuala Lumpur and Kuala Terengganu. Express buses and taxis operate to Kuala Terengganu from different major towns like Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang, Kota Bharu and Johor Bahru. Getting around Kuala Terengganu is also easy as there are taxis and buses. Trishaws are also available and offer fun rides.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Beaches

Be amazed by Terengganu's lovely sandy beaches and feel the refreshing sea breeze as you drive along the coastline. The beaches run from Kuala Besut in the north to Kemaman in the south. To begin with, Rantau Abang is a must-visit for fans of turtles. It is situated about 60km south of Kuala Terengganu and is one of only six special beach terrains in the world that the giant leatherback turtles visit to lay eggs. The period to watch these huge turtles swim ashore is between May and September.

Female turtles usually arrive around midnight during this time, and each will dig a deep hole in the sand to lay its eggs. This lasts till about dawn when the turtle then covers the hole and makes its way back to sea.

It is not unusual to see eager locals waiting the whole night to catch a glimpse of these prehistoric creatures. Some chalet operators even offer wake-up calls when turtles come ashore. Torch lights and cameras are prohibited and visitors are not allowed to make too much noise as these turtles get scared easily.

Tanjung Jara is another popular spot for beach lovers. It is about 60km from Kuala Terengganu and just eight kilometres from Rantau Abang. This idyllic beach offers swimming, boating, wind surfing or simply invites you to sit back under the shade of the trees and enjoy the sea breeze.

Other beaches that are equally fascinating in Terengganu are Pantai Air Tawar, Teluk Dalam, Pantai Batu Buruk, Chendering and Pulau Tenggol.

Firefly-watching

After the sun slowly sets, the mangroves on the riverbank come alive with the incandescent glow of thousands of fireflies. For as long as the residents of Kampong Ibok can remember, the fireflies have performed their joyous ritual but no one is certain why. As your sampan gently guides you down Sungai Yakyah, perhaps you will discover the answer to the ancient mystery of nature. Located about 20km from Awana Kijal Golf, Beach & Spa Resort, the best time to see this magnificent display of lights is on a dry evening from 8.00pm to midnight.

ISLANDS AND MARINE PARKS

Exotic and amazing islands like Pulau Redang, Pulau Perhentian and Pulau Kapas are the precious gems of Terengganu. They are rich in magnificent marine life, corals of rainbow hues and aquamarine seawater. These islands are also gazetted as marine parks. Include these precious tropical islands in your itinerary and be assured of a memorable holiday.

Other small wonders are Pulau Tenggol, Pulau Bedong and Pulau Gemia. Pulau Gemia is a privately owned island, which is reserved especially for guests of Gem Island Resort.

Pulau Redang Marine Park

Off the Terengganu coastline on the northeastern coast is the Redang Archipelago. It is made up of nine islands namely Pulau Redang (the largest), Pulau Pinang, Pulau Lima, Pulau Ekor Tebu, Pulau Lang Tengah, Pulau Perhentian Besar, Pulau Perhentian Kecil, Pulau Susu Dara and Pulau Kapas. This area has also been gazetted as a marine park and its brilliant underwater world is one of the best in Malaysia.

Pulau Redang is indeed one of Malaysia's most idyllic islands. This tropical paradise offers pearly-white sandy beaches, sparkling clear seawater, lovely sunsets and a spectacular marine life. Its marvellous marine fishes, turtles and huge variety of coral reefs make it a wonderful diving spot and its coral species are some of the best in the world. The five famous dive sites in Redang are Tanjung Lang, Tanjung Tokong, Tanjung Gua Kawah, Pasir Panjang and Batu Mak Cantek. Apart from diving, beach lovers can also enjoy other activities like swimming, snorkelling, fishing, boating or sunbathing.

Pulau Perhentian is situated about 21km off the coast of Terengganu and comprises two islands – Pulau Perhentian Besar and Pulau Perhentian Kecil. Surrounded by tropical rainforest, golden sandy beaches, tall swaying palm trees and crystal blue water, it is an ideal swimming, wind surfing, sailing, boating and canoeing destination. It also boasts wonderful underwater treasures.

Coral Bay on Pulau Perhentian Kecil offers a marvellous view of the sunset. It is also a perfect paradise for nature lovers as there are paths available for exploration of the virgin tropical jungle. On the northern shore of Pulau Perhentian Besar lie three coved bays where most tourists visit for some turtle watching. It can be reached easily by speedboat.

Pulau Kapas is situated offshore about 30 minutes by boat from Marang, south of Kuala Terengganu. It is a lovely small island with beautiful, quiet and unspoiled sandy beaches; cool and clear blue waters, swaying coconut trees and caves with swallows's nests. Its waters are home to beautiful marine life such as fish, turtles, corals and others. It is a great place for swimming, snorkelling, diving, wind surfing, kayaking, boating or just pure relaxation.

Other neighbouring splendours are Pulau Ekor Tebu, Pulau Pinang, Pulau Lima and Pulau Lang Tengah. These charming islands are also rich with marine treasures. Diving and snorkelling enthusiasts will not want to miss these little wonders. Two historic shipwrecks, the H.M.S. Prince of Wales and H.M.S. Repulse were also discovered around the waters off Pulau Redang. It is believed that these ships sank during the early days of World War II.

Apart from sea sports and activities, nature lovers can also participate in jungle trekking or hiking, as most of these islands have interesting forestry treasures to offer. Explore the abundance of flora and fauna within these forests. There are over 100 species of plants that have healing values and a few rare orchid species.

Meanwhile, Pulau Pinang has a visitors' centre that houses an exhibition room, an audio-visual room, a research lab, turtle touch pools and chalets.

WATERFALLS

The Sekayu Waterfalls offers a magnificent view of seven cascades surrounded by lush forest. It is a favourite among visitors and locals alike. Facilities like chalets, changing rooms, rest houses and gazebos are available. It is located within the Sekayu Recreation Forest in Kuala Berang and is a 45-minute drive from Kuala Terengganu.

To add some adventure to your holiday, pay a visit to the Sungai Ceralak Waterfalls, which comprises two waterfalls – Jeram Solo and Jeram Padang. The adventure begins as soon as you embark on your journey. It involves a boat ride from Kuala Jengai to Kuala Sungai Ceralak, a jungle hike and crossing Sungai Ceralak itself. Upon arrival at the site, you will be greeted by the scenic view of the waterfalls surrounded by pretty blooms and trees.

RECREATIONAL FORESTS

Sekayu Recreational Forest

Located at Kuala Berang, about 60km southwest of Kuala Terengganu, Sekayu's attractions are the lush jungle-clad hills, a fruit orchard, a mini zoo, a bird park and a flower garden surrounded by a waterfall. There are also facilities like shelters, a rest house and chalets. It is a must-visit for nature fans. Pelagat Forest Reserve

This forest reserve is located in Besut, 70km northwest of Kuala Terengganu. Adventure lovers can indulge in trekking, canoeing and swimming at the Lata Tembakah Waterfalls area.

Kuala Terengganu

Kuala Terengganu is the state capital, which is located on the banks of the Terengganu River. It has a blend of old and new buildings. The town moves in a relaxing pace and stands as a reminder of old times.

The Waterfront

There is a port here where fishermen go to sea and where fish is also traded at a bazaar. Take a boat ride from here and visit the surrounding islands, or board a passenger boat to Seberang Takir where the most beautiful view of the South China Sea can be enjoyed.

Pulau Duyong

Take a ferry ride from the waterfront to Pulau Duyong, the island that is renowned as the home of Malaysia's best boat builders. Be amazed at the unique craftsmanship these men practice, which, unfortunately, is an art on the verge of extinction. This place is also known for seafood-related products like salted fish and fish crackers.

Bukit Puteri

This 200-metre high historical hill was the state's fortress against enemy attacks between 1831 and 1876. Today, the only remains of the fort are cannons, a flagpole, a large bell and a lighthouse. Witness a breathtaking view of the surrounding areas from the top of the hill.

Istana Maziah

A palace of splendid architecture that is modern and traditional. It was constructed during the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin III. Located near Bukit Puteri, it is the venue for royal weddings, birthdays, conferment of titles and receptions for local and foreign dignitaries.

Terengganu State Museum Complex

Several museums are housed in this complex situated at the end of Jalan Losong and it is said to be the largest in Southeast Asia. It is home to the Main Museum, a Fisheries Museum, a Maritime Museum, four traditional palaces, and a botanical and herbal garden. The Main Museum was built on 16 stilts and has 10 galleries.

Tengku Tengah Zaharah Mosque

This mosque was constructed with stilts on an open sandy area with water flowing underneath, which also makes it known as a floating mosque. A fantastic masterpiece incorporating Moorish architecture with a modern touch to it, the mosque is especially a beautiful sight at night.

LA Hot Springs

Located in Besut, the LA Hot Springs is a famous recreational spot. Its sulphur-rich water has healing properties, which is said to be beneficial for those suffering from skin ailments. Even if you do not suffer from any ailment, get in just to feel relaxed and refreshed.

FISHING VILLAGES

Explore some fishing villages not far from Kuala Terengganu, namely Marang, Kampung Marang, Chendering and Kijal. They are located just about 30 minutes' drive from the town centre. Visitors will be welcomed to the villages by the sight of lovely coconut trees and cool sea breezes.

AGROTOURISM ATTRACTIONS

Setiu Peladang Recreational Area

A tropical rainforest, a river, caves, waterfalls and flora and fauna occupy the natural and serene surroundings here. This is an ideal park to explore nature as the trees and plants are labelled. Juicy fruits such as duku, cempedak, durian, rambai and rambutan can also be found here. The seeds of flowers and fruits can also be bought at affordable prices if you wish to take some home with you. Other activities here are jungle trekking, mountain climbing, bird watching and fishing. Hostels and chalets are also available.

SHOPPING

The Central Market, or Pasar Payang, as it is known locally, is located by the Terengganu River. It is a favourite destination of tourists as this modern building that comprises a wet market and a shopping arcade sells interesting local handicrafts like batik, brassware, brocade and songket, alongside fresh local produce like fruits, vegetables and fish. Grab a packet or two of the local delicacy Keropok Lekor, crackers made from a mixture of fish and sago.

Sutera Semai Centre (Silk Weaving Centre)

Located about six kilometres from the town centre is Malaysia's pioneer silk weaving centre. Beautiful, brightly coloured woven silk cloth, brocades and batik are sold here. They make lovely souvenirs for your friends and family or as a purchase to add to your collection. Apart from shopping, visitors can witness the different stages of silk production and the exquisite art of batik painting.

Malaysian Handicraft Centre

Also located about six kilometres from Kuala Terengganu, this centre offers visitors a wide range of Malaysian handicraft to choose from. Some of the famous and exquisite items are songket, batik, vases, mats, hats, wallets and bags made from Pandanus leaves.

Travel along the Terengganu coast and you will surely be awed by the beauty it boasts and the tranquillity it offers. From endless stretches of white sandy beaches with swaying coconut trees to superb diving sites, this east coast gem makes for a memorable holiday destination.

A drive along the coast of Terengganu will both awe the visitor and calm his tired spirit. Sandy white beaches – lined with coconut trees that complete the picture – do more than just greet the visitor looking to soak in the sun and sea on its coast and islands, which are surrounded by clear blue waters and exotic marine life. Then there is its spectacular underwater world, lush tropical rainforest, dazzling waterfalls and other natural wonders.

GETTING THERE

There are few ways to reach Kuala Terengganu. It is 491km by road from Kuala Lumpur and about 555km from Singapore. Malaysia Airlines offers regular flights from Kuala Lumpur to Kuala Terengganu and Kerteh. Domestic budget airline AirAsia also offers regular flights between Kuala Lumpur and Kuala Terengganu. Express buses and taxis operate to Kuala Terengganu from different major towns like Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Penang, Kota Bahru and Johor Bahru. Getting around Kuala Terengganu is also easy as there are taxis and buses. Trishaws are also available and offer fun rides.

MAJOR ATTRACTIONS

Beaches

Be amazed by Terengganu's lovely sandy beaches and feel the refreshing sea breeze as you drive along the coastline. The beaches run from Kuala Besut in the north to Kemaman in the south. To begin with, Rantau Abang is a must-visit for fans of turtles. It is situated about 60km south of Kuala Terengganu and is one of only six special beach terrains in the world that the giant leatherback turtles visit to lay eggs. The period to watch these huge turtles swim ashore is between May and September.

Female turtles usually arrive around midnight during this time, and each will dig a deep hole in the sand to lay its eggs.

This lasts till about dawn when the turtle then covers the hole and makes it way back to sea.

It is not unusual to see eager locals waiting the whole night to catch a glimpse of these prehistoric creatures. Some chalet operators even offer wake-up calls when turtles come ashore. Torch lights and cameras are prohibited and visitors are not allowed to make too much noise as these turtles get scared easily.

Tanjung Jara is another popular spot for beach lovers. It is about 60km from Kuala Terengganu and just eight kilometres from Rantau Abang. This idyllic beach offers swimming, boating, wind surfing or simply invites you to sit back under the shade of the trees and enjoy the sea breeze.

Other beaches that are equally fascinating in Terengganu are Pantai Air Tawar, Teluk Dalam, Pantai Batu Buruk, Chendering and Pulau Tenggol.

Firefly-watching

After the sun slowly sets, the mangroves on the riverbank come alive with the incandescent glow of thousands of fireflies. For as long as the residents of Kampong Ibok can remember, the fireflies have performed their joyous ritual but no one is certain why. As your sampan gently guides you down Sungai Yakyah, perhaps you will discover the answer to the ancient mystery of nature. Located about 20km from Awana Kijal Golf, Beach & Spa Resort, the best time to see this magnificent display of lights is on a dry evening from 8.00pm to midnight.

ISLANDS AND MARINE PARKS

Exotic and amazing islands like Pulau Redang, Pulau Perhentian and Pulau Kapas are the precious gems of Terengganu. They are rich in magnificent marine life, corals of rainbow hues and aquamarine seawater. These islands are also gazetted as marine parks. Include these precious tropical islands in your itinerary and be assured of a memorable holiday.

Other small wonders are Pulau Tenggol, Pulau Bedong and Pulau Gemia. Pulau Gemia is a privately owned island, which is reserved especially for guests of Gem Island Resort.

Pulau Redang Marine Park

Off the Terengganu coastline on the northeastern coast is the Redang Archipelago. It is made up of nine islands namely Pulau Redang (the largest), Pulau Pinang, Pulau Lima, Pulau Ekor Tebu, Pulau Lang Tengah, Pulau Perhentian Besar, Pulau Perhentian Kecil, Pulau Susu Dara and Pulau Kapas. This area has also been gazetted as a marine park and its brilliant underwater world is one of the best in Malaysia.

Pulau Redang is indeed one of Malaysia's most idyllic islands. This tropical paradise offers pearly-white sandy beaches, sparkling clear seawater, lovely sunsets and a spectacular marine life. Its marvellous marine fishes, turtles and huge variety of coral reefs make it a wonderful diving spot and its coral species are some of the best in the world. The five famous dive sites in Redang are Tanjung Lang, Tanjung Tokong, Tanjung Gua Kawah, Pasir Panjang and Batu Mak Cantek. Apart from diving, beach lovers can also enjoy other activities like swimming, snorkelling, fishing, boating or sunbathing.

Pulau Perhentian is situated about 21km off the coast of Terengganu and comprises two islands – Pulau Perhentian Besar and Pulau Perhentian Kecil. Surrounded by tropical rainforest, golden sandy beaches, tall swaying palm trees and crystal blue water, it is an ideal swimming, wind surfing, sailing, boating and canoeing destination. It also boasts wonderful underwater treasures.

Coral Bay on Pulau Perhentian Kecil offers a marvellous view of the sunset. It is also a perfect paradise for nature lovers as there are paths available for exploration of the virgin tropical jungle. On the northern shore of Pulau Perhentian Besar lie three coved bays where most tourists visit for some turtle watching. It can be reached easily by speedboat.

Pulau Kapas is situated offshore about 30 minutes by boat from Marang, south of Kuala Terengganu. It is a lovely small island with beautiful, quiet and unspoiled sandy beaches; cool and clear blue waters, swaying coconut trees and caves with swallows’ nests. Its waters are home to beautiful marine life such as fish, turtles, corals and others. It is a great place for swimming, snorkelling, diving, wind surfing, kayaking, boating or just pure relaxation.

Other neighbouring splendours are Pulau Ekor Tebu, Pulau Pinang, Pulau Lima and Pulau Lang Tengah. These charming islands are also rich with marine treasures. Diving and snorkelling enthusiasts will not want to miss these little wonders. Two historic shipwrecks, the H.M.S. Prince of Wales and H.M.S. Repulse were also discovered around the waters off Pulau Redang. It is believed that these ships sank during the early days of World War II.

Apart from sea sports and activities, nature lovers can also participate in jungle trekking or hiking, as most of these islands have interesting forestry treasures to offer. Explore the abundance of flora and fauna within these forests. There are over 100 species of plants that have healing values and a few rare orchid species.

Meanwhile, Pulau Pinang has a visitors’ centre that houses an exhibition room, an audio-visual room, a research lab, turtle touch pools and chalets.

WATERFALLS

The Sekayu Waterfalls offers a magnificent view of seven cascades surrounded a by lush forest. It is a favourite among visitors and locals alike. Facilities like chalets, changing rooms, rest houses and gazebos are available. It is located within the Sekayu Recreation Forest in Kuala Berang and is a 45-minute drive from Kuala Terengganu.

To add some adventure to your holiday, pay a visit to the Sungai Ceralak Waterfalls, which comprises two waterfalls – Jeram Solo and Jeram Padang. The adventure begins as soon as you embark on your journey. It involves a boat ride from Kuala Jengai to Kuala Sungai Ceralak, a jungle hike and crossing Sungai Ceralak itself. Upon arrival at the site, you will be greeted by the scenic view of the waterfalls surrounded by pretty blooms and trees.

RECREATIONAL FORESTS

Sekayu Recreational Forest

Located at Kuala Berang, about 60km southwest of Kuala Terengganu, Sekayu's attractions are the lush jungle-clad hills, a fruit orchard, a mini zoo, a bird park and a flower garden surrounded by a waterfall. There are also facilities like shelters, a rest house and chalets. It is a must-visit for nature fans.

Pelagat Forest Reserve

This forest reserve is located in Besut, 70km northwest of Kuala Terengganu. Adventure lovers can indulge in trekking, canoeing and swimming at the Lata Tembakah Waterfalls area.

Kuala Terengganu

Kuala Terengganu is the state capital, which is located on the banks of the Terengganu River. It has a blend of old and new buildings. The town moves in a relaxing pace and stands as a reminder of old times.

The Waterfront

There is a port here where fishermen go to sea and where fish is also traded at a bazaar. Take a boat ride from here and visit the surrounding islands, or board a passenger boat to Seberang Takir where the most beautiful view of the South China Sea can be enjoyed.

Pulau Duyong

Take a ferry ride from the waterfront to Pulau Duyong, the island that is renowned as the home of Malaysia's best boat builders. Be amazed at the unique craftsmanship these men practice, which, unfortunately, is an art on the verge of extinction. This place is also known for seafood-related products like salted fish and fish crackers.

Bukit Puteri

This 200-metre high historical hill was the state's fortress against enemy attacks between 1831 and 1876. Today, the only remains of the fort are cannons, a flagpole, a large bell and a lighthouse. Witness a breathtaking view of the surrounding areas from the top of the hill.

Istana Maziah

A palace of splendid architecture that is modern and traditional. It was constructed during the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin III. Located near Bukit Puteri, it is the venue for royal weddings, birthdays, conferment of titles and receptions for local and foreign dignitaries.

Terengganu State Museum Complex

Several museums are housed in this complex situated at the end of Jalan Losong and it is said to be the largest in Southeast Asia. It is home to the Main Museum, a Fisheries Museum, a Maritime Museum, four traditional palaces, and a botanical and herbal garden. The Main Museum was built on 16 stilts and has 10 galleries.

Tengku Tengah Zaharah Mosque

This mosque was constructed with stilts on an open sandy area with water flowing underneath, which also makes it known as a floating mosque. A fantastic masterpiece incorporating Moorish architecture with a modern touch to it, the

mosque is especially a beautiful sight at night.

LA Hot Springs

Located in Besut, the LA Hot Springs is a famous recreational spot. Its sulphur-rich water has healing properties, which is said to be beneficial for those suffering from skin ailments. Even if you do not suffer from any ailment, get in just to feel relaxed and refreshed.

FISHING VILLAGES

Explore some fishing villages not far from Kuala Terengganu, namely Marang, Kampung Marang, Chendering and Kijal. They are located just about 30 minutes' drive from the town centre. Visitors will be welcomed to the villages by the sight of lovely coconut trees and cool sea breezes.

AGROTOURISM ATTRACTIONS

Setiu Peladang Recreational Area

A tropical rainforest, a river, caves, waterfalls and flora and fauna occupy the natural and serene surroundings here. This is an ideal park to explore nature as the trees and plants are labelled. Juicy fruits such as duku, cempedak, durian, rambai and rambutan can also be found here. The seeds of flowers and fruits can also be bought at affordable prices if you wish to take some home with you. Other activities here are jungle trekking, mountain climbing, bird watching and fishing. Hostels and chalets are also available.

SHOPPING

The Central Market, or Pasar Payang, as it is known locally, is located by the Terengganu River. It is a favourite destination of tourists as this modern building that comprises a wet market and a shopping arcade sells interesting local handicrafts like batik, brassware, brocade and songket, alongside fresh local produce like fruits, vegetables and fish. Grab a packet or two of the local delicacy Keropok Lekor, crackers made from a mixture of fish and sago.

Sutera Semai Centre (Silk Weaving Centre)

Located about six kilometres from the town centre is Malaysia's pioneer silk weaving centre. Beautiful, brightly coloured woven silk cloth, brocades and batik are sold here. They make lovely souvenirs for your friends and family or as a purchase to add to your collection. Apart from shopping, visitors can witness the different stages of silk production and the exquisite art of batik painting.

Malaysian Handicraft Centre

Also located about six kilometres from Kuala Terengganu, this centre offers visitors a wide range of Malaysian handicraft to choose from. Some of the famous and exquisite items are songket, batik, vases, mats, hats, wallets and bags made from Pandanus leaves.