

Bukit Tinggi – quaint castle in the hills



Colmar Tropicale Resort at Bukit Tinggi Highlands

One is writing this from the cool confines of one's cosy abode, overlooking the Bukit Tinggi Highlands on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, surrounded by 16000 acres of greenery. The view from one's perch is picturesque. Clouds kissing treetops from one end of the horizon to another, thick tropical rainforest trees line the hills in various shades of green. Colmar Tropicale, one's tree-house, stands at 2600 feet above sea level, inside 80 acres of tropical rainforests, in the state of Pahang in peninsular Malaysia. Pahang is an ideal place to experience the bounties of nature. The tropical rainforest teeming with a wealth of flora and fauna.

The walk through the forest is nothing short of enchanting. The fresh, pine scented breeze, the towering trees, the perennial mountain streams and the ancient rock formations coupled with the chirping birds, the whispering willows and the squeaks, squeals and barks of the

macaques, make every step of this nature walk an exciting adventure. One gets to enjoy the sounds and sights of nature, as one ventures deeper into the forest. As one inches uphill, one gets to view impressive panoramic views of lush green hills and misty mountain peaks. Trekking through the forests that surround Colmar tropical is like exploring nature's own botanical garden.

There is a small open air wildlife reserve inside the forest, where one can observe deer and rabbits at close quarters in a near natural ambience. Over 200 rabbits of 4 different species and several white spotted deer and Timorese deer can be seen lazily grazing under the shade of the giant trees. The rabbits feed on bamboo leaves while the deer prefer grass and graze away lazily, unmindful of human presence.

The pleasures of walking barefooted through the forest floor at noon, while it drizzles, is an unmatched experience. One can feel the primordial elements, fire

the dame time. One takes rest in some secluded caves near a quiet cove, quenching one's thirst at the rapid. Its darkness at noon here as a thick canopy of tress, filter the sunlight from creeping into the forest. This secret place is one's island of peace to communicate in solitude with nature. Meditating at this hidden cove is a calm, serene, quiet and tranquil experience. The trek back is equally eventful. One stops briefly at the Japanese Tea House inside the rainforest for a refreshing cup of Japanese green tea, before returning to the comfort of your hotel room. The traditional Japanese Zen tea ceremony which one attends at

water is one's music for meditation. The value of patience becomes apparent as the hostess moves almost in slow motion, to dip the bamboo container into the kettle and pour small helpings of green tea into one's cup. One seeks forgiveness from one's neighbour before proceeding to sip the tea in three sips. One wipes the cup after sipping and graciously thanks one's host before departing.

How to get there?

Colmar Tropicale is a two hour drive from Kuala Lumpur International Airport depending on the traffic. The other option is to take the Putra LRT from KL Central to Putra Station and drive down from Putra Station which

Lots of small restaurants serving Indian and Chinese cuisine dot Kuala Lumpur. You get good vegetarian South Indian food at Brickfields near Kuala Lumpur Central Station. A few Chinese vegetarian stalls at Petaling street serve delicious and nutritious vegetarian dishes. The food at the high profile hotels is only for the gastronomically adventurous who like greasy food. Fresh fruits including watermelons, papayas, tender coconuts, durians, mangosteens and pineapples are available at the local market. Colmar Tropicale serves a selection of fresh tropical fruits, freshly squeezed fruit juices, Vegans who don't consume dairy, bakery and who avoid all products of animal origin and who don't consume processed foods or alcohol can go for green tea, Chinese tea, rice porridge, mashed potatoes and leafy lettuce salad at the buffet breakfast served at Colmar Tropicale. Strict vegans should also keep away from toxic additives like monosodium glutamate present in generous amounts in soya sauce, chilly sauce tomato sauce. Refrain from consuming these poisons at all costs by sticking to fresh fruits raw vegetables throughout the day. Avoid solids after sunset and drink several cups of lukewarm ginger water before retiring to bed. Colmar Tropicale Resort in Bukit Tinggi Highlands in Malaysia

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A colourful Japanese tea-pot at the Japanese tea garden at the resort

the tea house is an extremely spiritual experience.

One sits on the floor on the *tatami* mat in the simple tea house, which transports one to Kyoto. One patiently watches ones hostess prepare a cup of tea. The silence pervading the ceremony is all encompassing. The sound of the kettle pervades the room. The gurgling, boiling

takes all of 45 minutes. Kuala Lumpur International Airport is connected by air to most international airports. It takes 28 minutes to get to Kuala Lumpur Central Station from Kuala Lumpur International Airport by KLIA Express. This journey costs 35 RM. (One RM is equivalent to Rs.12/- at current exchange rates)

Where to stay?

Colmar Tropicale at Bukit Tinggi Resort offers comfortable rooms at affordable tariffs by Indian standards.

Where to eat?



Pine trees as seen from one's hotel room