

Trip to Batam



The Johor Bahru area gives us great opportunities for one day trips. Thanks to Meryn wonderful idea a few of us visited Batam. Batam is one of the many Indonesian island, but it is the closest one to Singapore. Due to its location the island is very popular holiday destination. Not only for leisure, because of the duty free possibility it is also great place for shoppers.

Our group of 15 people met at the Zon ferry terminal in the morning. The ferry goes every hour (we took the one at 9.30), it takes about 1,5-2 hours to reach the destination, a return ticket costs 120 MYR. It is advisable to be at the location 1 hour before departure, you need time to get your ticket and boarding. Your return ticket is without exact time, you choose which time you want to come back. But be aware that the ferry can be very

busy, so you must be at the terminal in time to assure your place on the ferry. If it is already full, you might need to wait an hour for the next one. The last ferry from Batam to JB leaves at 17.45. We enjoyed our long, but comfortable boat trip, we even got water as refreshments. There is no food service on the ferry. I suggest to go to the roof top to experience the fresh breeze and observe the beautiful seaside or the passing boats.



After 2 hours we reached Batam Centre, we still got plenty of time, because the Indonesian time is one hour behind. The first what we needed to do to get our visa. So do not forget to bring your passport. You can check it on the following website if you are allowed to have visa on arrival (<http://www.indo.com/tplan/visa.html>), if not, you must go to the embassy in JB before your journey. The visa costs 50 MYR or 10 USD for seven days. You can choose in which currency you

want to pay, it is also possible in SGD. Everything went very smoothly , we did not loose much time at the immigration. The ones who did not bring Indonesian rupiah, there were plenty of opportunity to change money at both ferry terminal.

It is very easy to travel by taxi on the island. For a group such as ours it was more convenient to book a minivan in advance for the day. So we could travel together.

Our main destination was Nagoya Hill, one of the biggest shopping mall. It was 30 minutes drive while we could admire the charming landscape of Batam, especially the picturesque houses. Batam Centre and Nagoya seemed to be a modern and very well maintained area.



When we arrived at Nagoya Hill we were eager to have a few bites. The food court covered a huge selection of local meal , we had a lovely and delicious lunch.



After lunch the shopping began. The mall has a wide assortment of local delicacy (such as the famous layer cake) , souvenirs, batik, clothes... Everything what you can imagine. If you get tired of shopping, just pop in one of the beauty salons to get your nail done or have a refreshing massage.



The afternoon we visited an other shopping mall which has even wider selection of local style of clothing , especially batik. We bought a few really nice and special dress and skirts.



A few of us left earlier, but the most of us stayed late and we took the last ferry to JB. Before leaving the island, we must pay a tax , it is 110.000 rupiah. If you spend all your local money, luckily you can pay it in MYR or SGD.

We had a wonderful day. Although it is worth to spend a couple of days and discover more of the island, the reviving SPA hotels, the beaches, the see food.... Batam has so many things to offer. Well, next time we stay longer.

