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Getting There is Half the Fun:

In 1974, Carol and I took our first ever cruise. It was a 3-day, 2-night odyssey from Jakarta to Singapore. We took our own bread, peanut butter, and water and occupied a portion of the deck, using our packs as pillows and hostel sheets as our beds. The view was included in the price of the ticket. After a day at sea, the accumulated contagion of odours made 'going below deck' to where the restaurant and cabins were was akin to touring a toxic waste facility as the fish-head soup in the galley made its way to the other heads on board. Thankfully, in those days, I could avoid a bathroom for the better part of a day when necessary.



When Singapore appeared on the horizon, the ship anchored in a couple of hundred fathoms of water and a swarm of canoes approached the gangway that hung off of the ship. We physically and commercially negotiated our way from one precarious craft to the next looking forward to the miracle that would be Singapore and the avoidance of drowning.

**A beautiful sunset
beyond the infinity
pool at the resort in
Sepang.**

It's January 8th, 2019 and we are off to Asia, eager to get to the airport for our 12:00 flight so that we can spend some time in the lounge that comes with booking Business Class tickets through Aeroplan. It looked great on paper. A baileys and coffee at YYC, a beer on the flight to YVR and two hours in the lounge there before we board the ANA flight and stretch out for ten hours of gastronomy on the way to Tokyo. A six-hour layover with heated toilets, self-pouring Asahi beer machines and a taste of sushi would lead to seven-hour ANA flight to Kuala Lumpur where we would take an Uber at dawn to our 5-star accommodation. There was no fish-head soup on the menu. Everything went as advertised, all 32 hours of it, and yet, somehow, we arrived exhausted. Apparently, all of that lying back, swallowing and chewing takes its toll on you.

We arrived at KLIA before the sun and transformed into travel mode. Shooing away the taxi scams, we downloaded a GRAB app, the Malaysian version of Uber, bought a local SIM card, remembered and reset a few passwords and presto. While Carol engaged in human contact with an infant and his parents who she had targetted in Tokyo the night before, I got us a ride and a week of phone usage for half the price of a taxi. Let the adventure begin!

Our GRAB driver was a delight as he drove through the palm forests and filled us in on his insights of Malaysia and recommended some of his favourite restaurants. Everyone in Malaysia learns english and it is the second most prevelant language which is a wonderful advantage when

Using something called the Ethnic Fractionalization Index, Malaysia has been determined to be the fifth most ethnically diverse country in the world. Canada is the fourth.



A great spot for dinner at sunset, or a massage on the beach.

trying to connect with people, The big three of travel were all coming together. People, beauty, and food intertwine to create experiences that can last a lifetime. Well, for sure a half of one, until we begin to lose our memories.