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ADRENALINE and adventure

Weekend outdoor activities that will help you de-stress and explore the outskirts of the city

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When it comes to choosing between frolicking outdoors or meandering in an air-conditioned shopping mall, it's no surprise which activity Malaysians tend to choose. We are more inclined to flock towards shopping centres during the weekends, despite the colossal traffic bottlenecking into the parking lot. Generally, the scorching heat gives plenty of reason for us to stay indoors even if it means having to deal with crowds and traffic.

We tend to forget the multitude of activities that could be enjoyed on the outskirts of our concrete jungle of Kuala Lumpur.

Tourists flock to Malaysia to explore and revel in the tropical heat that we so willingly run away for cover. Instead of roaming the shopping malls with the same retail visuals or while the afternoon away drinking the same drinks at the kopitiam, shake up your routine for the weekend by playing with what Mother Nature has blessed this country with. Explore some nature reserves on foot, or on quad bikes, discover some waterfalls, learn how to waterski or swing from the tops of canopy trees: the myriad of activities are adventure-filled, safe and for everyone to enjoy. It is the perfect way to de-stress and even burn off some calories in the process.

Here are a few ideas for your weekend.

Wake up early, slap on some sunscreen and head for the outdoors. You could do it with a group of friends or turn it into a family outing.

Jungle treks and nature hikes

There are a number of nature reserves surrounding Klang Valley that have waterfalls and views from the top that make it all worth while. You don't have to venture too far as there are easy half-day trips that give you plenty of time to do other things for the rest of the day. The most well-known and easy trails to get you started is at Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM). There are 30 to 60 minute hiking and biking trails and a canopy walk (which will be re-opened in October) to explore one of Malaysia's

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oldest flora and fauna garden. Visit www.frim.gov.my for more information.

For other trails, waterfall discoveries and advanced hiking options, visit www.nature-escapes-kuala-lumpur.com for a comprehensive list of recommendations. The website also provides maps to these spots, what to bring, and a detailed account of the level of difficulty of the hike.

ATV Adventure Park

If you fancy a little bit more of an adrenaline rush, hop onto a quad bike for an adventure trip through the lush forests. A cross between a four-wheel drive and a motorbike, quad bikes, also known as all terrain vehicles (ATV) live up to their namesake as they are lightweight enough to explore any terrain. ATV Adventure Park is located just on the outskirts of the city centre at Kampung Kemensah, Hulu Kelang, about five km from the Zoo Negara junction. They offer five packages ranging from RM50 to RM300, depending on the duration of the quad bike ride and the route. Routes also range from a simple 30-minute ride at the base training track, or longer journeys to waterfalls, or a four-hour ride off the beaten track through steep hills, rough terrains and bumpy muddy hills. Literally the road less taken, the one and a half hour package (Package B — RM100 per person) is known to be favourite by many as it is affordable, within a short distance and tops off the journey with an incredible view of the seven-tier waterfall at the end.

Operating hours are from 9am to 6pm everyday, but closed from 11am to 3pm on Friday. For more information, visit www.atvadventurepark.com or call Mas Faizal at (012) 377 5005 or Meliza at (019)

340 7895.

SkyTrex Adventure Park

A playground within the jungle, the SkyTrex Adventure Park is an activity for the entire family. First of its kind in Malaysia, the outdoor “eco-recreational” and educational activity allows you to go from tree to tree with a series of aerial obstacles suspended at three to 22 metres in the air. The course has a variety of challenges from easy to difficult. It is compulsory that participants complete the “Little Adventure” circuit before they advance in order to learn how to use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The other two challenges, “Big Thrill” and “Extreme Challenge” are more taxing and are reserved for adrenaline junkies that might get a kick out of tumbling and flying through the jungle in mid-air. Don’t worry, these circuits ensure that you are always harnessed and safe.

Skytrex Adventure Park is at Taman Pertanian Malaysia, Bukit Cahaya Seri Alam, Shah Alam. If you are driving, enter Taman Pertanian Malaysia (formerly known as Bukit Cerakah) and from there, an in-house shuttle bus will take you to the park which is three km inside the forest. Call (013) 276 9841 between 9am to 6pm or visit www.skytrex-adventure.com for more information.

Waterski and wakeboarding

That large mass of water in the middle of Putrajaya is more than just for aesthetic purposes as you can also waterski and wakeboard on the lake as well. Regarded more as a sport, wakeboarding and waterskiing is fast garnering a following in

Malaysia. Give your arms and thighs a workout as you get pulled along the lake by a speedboat, riding off the waves it leaves in its wake. If you get bitten by the watersport bug after your first try, you can take lessons from the Malaysian Waterski and Wakeboard Federation where you can learn nifty jumping tricks and participate in national and international events. Perfect for a weekend afternoon out with friends.

For bookings, email Hanifah Yoong at hanifah@waterski.com.my or call (012) 272 1948, or email Nozie Sulaiman at nozie@waterski.com.my or call (012) 387 7115. For more information, visit www.waterski.com.my.

White water rafting

White water rafting is like nature’s own rollercoaster. One minute you could be holding onto the raft for dear life, the next minute, the water is so serene that you’re sitting back quietly to take in your surroundings. Gather a few friends and head to any of the rivers where white water rafting has been deemed Grade 2 to Grade 4. For novices, the higher the number, the more difficult (and exciting) the ride will be. The few nearby rivers that you can raft on are Sungai Slim in Perak and Sungai Selangor at Kuala Kubu Baru. Visit www.thepaddlerz.com for a list of expedition packages that range from one-day trips to three-day trips for rivers that are farther.

For more information and bookings, call (03) 7722 3511 or (03) 7722 3516 or visit the Khersonese Expedition headquarters at 55 Jalan Rahim Kajai, Taman Tun Dr Ismail, KL.