

# HERITAGE TRADERS *of* GEORGE TOWN

Featuring 23 selected traditional trades



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## THE GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE SITE

On 7 July 2008, Melaka and George Town under serial nomination were awarded the coveted title of World Heritage Site, and were listed under the category of Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

Melaka and George Town's Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs) were described by UNESCO as:

- Exceptional examples of multi-cultural trading towns in East and Southeast Asia, forged from the mercantile and civilizational exchanges of Malay, Chinese, Indian and European cultures.
- A living testimony to the multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia, where the greatest religions, and cultures met and coexisted in harmony.
- A unique architecture, culture and townscape without parallel anywhere in the East and South East Asia, in particular, a range and exceptional architecture of shophouses and townhouses.

## THE CITY'S INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

The intangible heritage of George Town is not only a vital contributing factor to the significance of the World Heritage Site, but it is also what gives the city its richness and vitality.

George Town World Heritage Incorporated's (GTWHI) Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is one of the first steps required to plan measures for the safeguarding of ICH and to ensure its continued sustainability for future generations.

The Inventory project serves to identify and document what constitutes ICH in the particular context of the Historic City of George Town. Beginning in 2012 with a focus on traditional performing arts and artisan skills, and traditional crafts and trades, the project comprised of door-to-door surveys of over 5,000 premises in George Town.

## SIGNBOARD CARVER

Mr Lee Chee Cheng  
SUNG DYNASTY WOOD CARVING  
77 Lebuh Carnarvon,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
018-463 4008  
OPENING HOURS  
10am - 5pm (Mon-Sat)



Many traditional Chinese businesses and homes in George Town still proudly display wooden signboards over their front doors - the former announce company names or auspicious couplets, while the latter depict family surnames.

Aside from signboards, Lee Chee Cheng also carves ancestral tablets and Chinese deities. The process is as much dependent on skill as it is on calligraphy, principles of feng shui and knowledge of Chinese folklore.





**CHINESE SEAL  
CUTTER &  
CALLIGRAPHER**

Mr Ng Chai Tiam  
TIAN HUA ARTS &  
ANTIQUÉ  
85 Lebeh Carnarvon,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
017-478 2878  
OPENING HOURS  
10am - 5pm (daily)

For over four decades, master craftsman Ng Chai Tiam has carved countless traditional Chinese stone seals which are used by businessmen, traders and calligraphy artists as a signature on official documents and works of art.

Customers choose a particular character style from his sample book, type and size of stone. The more ornate stones are decorated with animals or auspicious objects.



**PAPER OBLATION  
CRAFTSMAN**

Mr Loh Ah Ban  
AH BAN PAPER  
OBLATION SHOP  
198A Lebeh Carnarvon,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-261 5292  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 6pm (daily)



According to Chinese custom, miniature paper replicas of houses, servants and worldly possessions (cars, mobile phones, watches etc.) are burnt as offerings to the newly deceased to accompany them on their new life in the afterworld.

Aside from paper houses, the shop also makes giant paper effigies of Chinese gods which are used to commemorate deities' birthdays and religious festivals.







**PASTRY BAKER  
(COCONUT TARTS)**

Mr Leong How Keng  
LEONG CHEE KEE  
C8 People's Court  
Lebuh Cintra,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
016-401 9211  
OPENING HOURS  
8.30am - 6.30pm (Mon-Sat)

Leong How Keng's tiny bakery shop is famous for its coconut tarts. Only 300 tarts are made each day, so customers make a bee-line to the bakery bright and early each morning!

Leong learnt his recipes from his father who established the bakery and he has spent over three decades perfecting his craft. His wife runs the shop counter leaving him to concentrate whole-heartedly on baking coconut tarts and other traditional Chinese pastries.



**PAK TONG KOU &  
HAM CHIM PENG  
MAKER**

Mr Yee Kok Heng  
D2 People's Court  
Lebuh Cintra,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
016-487 6425  
OPENING HOURS  
6.30pm onwards (daily)

*Pak tong kou* (steamed rice flour cakes) and *ham chim peng* (deep fried pancakes) are two traditional Cantonese pastries.

Carrying on his grandfather's legacy, Yee Kok Heng, his wife and two brothers prepare all the pastries themselves in their bakery at People's Court. The pastries are then loaded on to their stall which is wheeled to its usual spot at the junction of Lebuh Cintra and Lebuh Campbell.





### KAPOK PILLOW & MATTRESS MAKER

Mr Ong Chin Ban  
CHIN HUAT  
78 Lebuh Cintra,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
016-483 9495  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 4.30pm (Mon - Sat)

Kapok is a cotton-like material which comes from the seed pods of the kapok tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) which grows in the wild in Malaysia. This is used as a natural filling for pillows, mattresses and bolsters.

The shop churns out an average of 10 bolsters and 10 pillows a day of varying sizes, including small pillows and bolsters for infants under the age of one! Kapok is also sold in plastic bags so that customers can re-stuff their own pillows.



### COFFEE ROASTER

KUN KEE FOOD  
INDUSTRIES  
20 Jalan Cheong Fatt Tze,  
10100 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-261 2288  
OPENING HOURS  
8am - 5pm (Mon - Sat)



Kun Kee Food Industries is a George Town success story of a small coffee roaster that has expanded and diversified its products for the export market. The company's famous blend of "Kopi O" is sold in coffee-shops throughout Malaysia and consists of coffee beans roasted with sugar, margarine, salt and sesame seeds.

Although the business is now run by the second generation, the founder, Choot Ching Koon still visits the shop every morning to taste the first batch of coffee that has been roasted.





### RATTAN WEAVER

Mr Sim Buck Teik  
SEANG HIN LEONG  
393 Lebuh Pantai,  
10300 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
016-4545 686  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 6pm (Mon - Sat)

Veteran rattan weaver Sim Buck Teik is a “Living Heritage Treasure of Penang”. He is a second generation rattan weaver who inherited his skills from his father in their home district of Teochew, China before the family moved to Malaya.

The shop retails a wide variety of rattan baskets, lampshades, canes, chairs, tables and decorative fittings. Aside from retail, customers also drop off their antique rattan furniture for repair at the shop.



### STONEMASON & TOMBSTONE ENGRAVER

Mr Yeoh Gim Huat  
GIM CHUAN HIN  
34, 34A Gat Lebuh Aceh,  
10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
016-455 7706  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 5pm (daily)



Working from a dusty workshop a stone's throw from the Clan Jetties, Yeoh Gim Huat carves a range of Chinese, Muslim and Christian tombstones seven days a week. With technology and heavy machinery, tasks that previously required a team of seven or eight workers can now be carried out by a single skilled artisan. Modern drills cannot replace an artisan's careful touch and all the finishing and detail work for the tombstones is still done by hand.







**SHOE MAKER  
(NYONYA BEADED SHOES)**

Mr Tan Kok Oo  
HANDMADE NYONYA  
BEADED SHOES  
4 Lebuh Armenian,  
10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
016-454 3075  
OPENING HOURS  
9.30am - 6pm (Mon - Sat)

Tan Kok Oo custom-makes Nyonya beaded shoes and slippers which are traditionally worn with the Nyonya kebaya and sarong. His clients can choose their motifs from his catalogues or bring in their own print outs for him to refer to.

Creating a pair of beaded shoes is an incredibly time-consuming process as the plastic beads are so tiny. It can take up to three months to complete the beading for a single pair of shoes.



**TRADITIONAL  
KITCHENWARE  
SELLER**

Mr Terrence Lim  
TEOW HIN CHAN  
224 Lebuh Pantai,  
10300 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-261 6659  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 5pm (Mon - Sat)



Teow Hin Chan is one of George Town's last purveyors of traditional Chinese kitchenware which is all imported from different regions of China according to the regions' speciality.

Most of the traditional kitchenware in the shop is made entirely or partially by hand. In addition to kitchenware, the shop also stocks a range of porcelain Chinese idols.









### PERFUMER

**S.M. BADJENID & SON**  
184-186 Lebuah Pantai,  
10300 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-2610 766

OPENING HOURS  
8am - 5pm (Mon - Thurs)  
8am - 12pm, 3pm - 5pm  
(Fri - Sat)

S.M. Badjenid & Son established in George Town in 1917 is the country's oldest manufacturer, wholesaler and retailer of perfume compounds, essential oils, *bakhoor* and *oudh*. The shop also sells canvas and custom-made canvas products including tents and canopies.

Now run by third generation family members, the shop is packed floor to ceiling with thousands of exotic halal perfumes and eau de toilettes (which do not contain any alcohol).



### PRINTING PRESS & BOOK BINDER

**JOTHEE PRESS**  
4 Lebuah Pasar,  
10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-261 2284

OPENING HOURS  
8.30am - 6.20pm (Mon - Fri)  
8.30am - 1pm (Sat)



Jothee is one of Penang's oldest printing presses established in 1935 by S. Letchumanasamy who arrived in Penang as a 10 year old from India. Working at odd jobs from morning till night to support his family, the young man eventually saved enough money to open a printing press at the age of 19.

It was the first press in Penang to produce locally made diaries and handmade accounts ledgers; today it is run by the founder's son Shanmuganathan.







### SPICE MERCHANTS

SYARIKAT S.A.P.  
ABDUL SALAM

25 Lebuh Pasar,

CONTACT NO.

04-262 3944

OPENING HOURS

10am - 6pm (Mon - Sat)

SYARIKAT ABDUL  
GHAFFAR TRADING

29 & 29A Lebuh Pasar,

10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.

04-261 6803

OPENING HOURS

9am - 8pm (Mon - Sat)

George Town's spice merchants which operate from shops along Lebuh Pasar in the Little India enclave are an enduring legacy of Penang's spice trade. These traders play an integral part in Penang's food industry and culinary heritage. The shops are packed to the brim with spices from all over the world, which are then distributed to wholesalers, small grocery stores, restaurants, grinding mills and housewives.



### HINDU RELIGIOUS GOODS & INDIAN KITCHENWARE SELLER

KANGANAM TRADING

32 Lebuh Pasar

(kitchenware),

41 Lebuh Pasar

(religious items),

10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.

016-455 8350

OPENING HOURS

10.30am - 9pm (Mon - Sat)



Kanganam Trading is a retailer of Indian household wares and Hindu religious items established over 60 years ago. Dealing in religious items requires specialist knowledge of Hindu beliefs, and symbolism, and the shop carries a highly diversified range of religious items such as Pancaloha (sacred five-metal alloys) statues, iconography, charms, hanging decorations and items for Hindu worship (Pooja), geomancy (Vastu Shastra), and meditation.







### CHINESE MEDICAL HALL & TRADITIONAL MEDICINE (HEALER)

Mr Chong Yit Leong  
YIN OI TONG CO.  
82-A Lebuah Penang ,  
10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
012-5625 341  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 3pm (Mon - Fri)

The Yin Oi Tong is one of SE Asia's oldest traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) halls, established in George Town in 1796.

The current proprietor, Chong Yit Leong has practised TCM for over 50 years. In a matter of minutes he can diagnose patients by taking their pulse, he then prescribes the correct combination of traditional herbs - either ground into capsules or boiled as tonics.



### SONGKOK MAKER

Mr Haja Mohideen  
KEDAI SONGKOK OSM  
MOHD SHARIFF  
157 Lebuah King,  
10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-263 1290  
OPENING HOURS  
10.30am - 9.30pm  
(Mon - Sat)



A *songkok* is traditional Malay headgear worn by men during important religious and festive occasions such as *Hari Raya*, weddings and the weekly visit to the mosque.

Haja Mohideen who is George Town's last remaining *songkok* maker learnt the skill from his father who established the business in 1933 in an alcove next to the Nagore Shrine where the business still operates today. He also makes *karzi* (northern Indian headgear) and fezs.





### SARONG & TEXTILE TRADERS

**SYARIKAT MEDINA STORE**  
109 Lebu Chulia,  
CONTACT NO.  
04-261 2354  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 7pm (Mon - Sat)

**FAZAL MOHAMMED BROS.**  
111 Lebu Chulia,  
10200 George Town.  
CONTACT NO.  
04-261 2029  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 6pm (Mon - Sat)

These shops stock a range of high quality textiles imported from Japan and Korea as well as imported sarongs from India and Indonesia, and locally-produced batik sarongs. Some retailers have diversified and also sell religious paraphernalia for Hajj pilgrims such as special luggage labels, bags, outfits and prayer mats.



### NASI KANDAR SELLERS

**RESTORAN TAJUDDIN HUSSAIN**  
45 Lebu Queen,  
CONTACT NO. 04-262 5367

**RESTORAN SULTANIA**  
57 Lebu Queen,  
CONTACT NO. 04-263 6744

**RESTAURANT A. DAWOOD**  
61 Lebu Queen,  
10200 George Town.  
CONTACT NO. 04-263 0078

OPENING HOURS  
Approx. 11am - 10pm (daily)



*Nasi kandar* is a real Penang speciality and takes its name from the Malay word for pole or *kandar*. In the old days, *nasi kandar* vendors would carry their baskets of rice and spicy Indian Muslim curries around town balanced across their shoulder on a long pole. Customers would simply stop them, choose their food and eat along the roadside.

Today's *nasi kandar* restaurants offer diners a mouth-watering array of curries, vegetables, fish and meat dishes.







### INDIAN GOLDSMITH

Ms Thanalaxmi Veerappan  
**M. THANA'S GOLDSMITH**  
 38 Lebuq Queen,  
 10200 Penang.

CONTACT NO.  
 04-263 3541  
 OPENING HOURS  
 11am - 8pm (daily)

M. Thana's Goldsmith is the last remaining traditional Indian goldsmith in George Town which retails only hand-made jewellery. The shop was established in 1923 by Mr Nagumani one of the city's most respected craftsmen. When he passed away his niece Thanalaxmi Veerappan took up the reins with her goldsmith husband, Raju.

Raju comes from a long line of goldsmiths and his family based in Tamil Nadu, India has over 200 years of experience in the trade; he crafts all jewellery in the shop by hand.



### FLOWER GARLAND MAKERS

Jalan Masjid Kapitan  
 Keling (next to the  
 Goddess of Mercy  
 Temple),  
 10200 George Town.

OPENING HOURS  
 Approx. 9am - 9pm (daily)



Traditional garland making is a skill that was brought to Penang by Indian immigrants as an intrinsic part of Hinduism, where garlands and fresh flowers are offered at temple shrines and household altars.

Commonly used flowers include, jasmine, marigolds, dahlias and roses, chosen for their fragrance and colour and sourced from flower farms on Penang Hill and as far afield as the Cameron Highlands.







**MONEY CHANGER  
& NUMISMATIC  
DEALER**

M.S.K.M. MOHAMED  
HANIFFA FOREX  
59 Jalan Masjid  
Kapitan Keling,  
10200 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-261 0876  
OPENING HOURS  
9am - 7.30pm (Mon - Sat)

Money-changing is a highly competitive business and there are about 60-70 licensed money-changers in George Town alone!

George Town's money-changers are a close-knit Indian Muslim community with about a third of them originating from the same village in India. Ameer Hamsa's father started his own business in 1940; apart from money-changing, the shop's speciality is also in dealing in antique coins and notes.



**ISLAMIC BOOKS  
PUBLISHER**

PERCETAKAN ALMUARIF  
16 Leboh Buckingham,  
10300 George Town.

CONTACT NO.  
04-2614 139  
OPENING HOURS  
8.30am - 5pm (Mon - Sat)



The Almuarif Press is the largest publisher of Islamic books in Malaysia with a backlist of 500-600 titles including numerous national best-sellers. The company currently has two printing presses in Penang and Bangkok to cope with thriving market demand.

The Koran remains a best-selling text and the Press publishes a variety of different editions and retails a variety of book stands.



## GEORGE TOWN WORLD HERITAGE INCORPORATED

George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) was established by the Penang State Government as the State heritage agency to spearhead efforts to protect and enhance the city's architectural and cultural assets.

GTWHI is dedicated to protecting, promoting and preserving George Town as a sustainable city, and works in cooperation with the Federal, State, and local governments as well as non-governmental organisations to manage, monitor, promote, and execute heritage-related activities. We identify the problem areas, build a strategy, and call on experts and stakeholders in our vast network to work with us towards the solution.

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