

Jakarta hangouts, day trips and Ramadan delights

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The holy month of Ramadan has passed the half-way point, and many will find the extreme changes of weather in the capital - from heat to rain and vice versa - not exactly comforting for the body and soul.

Thankfully, those looking for solid shelter are spoiled for choice in Jakarta: the city's array of shopping hubbubs and luxury hotels serve like retail oases brimming with special offerings during the day and after breaking the fast in the evening.

If the past few weeks have rendered you restless with Lebaran preparations yet you're still not sure what you're missing, a gift of hampers for beloved relatives and acquaintances can help take the load off your mind.

Some hotel patisseries, like The Lobby@InterContinental Jakarta MidPlaza, have teamed up with renowned food suppliers - in this case Islamic snack specialist Bateel - in presenting a collection of delectable hampers in various sizes and price range on top of boxed chocolates and dates.

Others, like Café One at The Park Lane Jakarta and the lobby shop of Grand Hyatt Jakarta, offer Idul Fitri hampers alongside a fine array of bakery and pastry delicacies throughout the month.

Avid mall-goers, meanwhile, can find their choice of gifts at many outlets and supermarkets scattered across the capital. With the new Gandaria City opening up recently, hangout spots on Jakarta's southern artery road have only become more numerous for the urbanites' entertainment.

Visitors to the new mall can expect F&B treats on every level (including Sushi Tei's latest outlet), accompanied by spacious lifestyle outlets and the brand-new flagship

store of Lotte Mart in the mall's strategic corner.

Continue treading a little more and Pondok Indah Mall's double compound can already be seen from the artery. For those in the mood for something sweet to breaking the fast, Pancious' pancakes are now available to enjoy at PIM 2.

The pancake house's latest eatery in Jakarta is an exercise of modern baroque interior with a red dominated open-kitchen concept utilizing wood, steel and white bricks to give out a relaxed yet elegant feel. Throughout Ramadan, Pancious is serving free appetizers at all its outlets between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

If you're eager to escape town for a while this weekend, there's a chance to do that with GoWild's trip to the Bogor Botanical Gardens. The nature-loving community is embarking on another excursion into the wild on Sept. 4, complete with bird guides and flora and fauna experts. Contact gowildindo@gmail.com for information.

So, wherever you plan to head to this week, don't miss out on all the delights that the capital has to offer!

