

## offshore

**T**humping beats from the gigantic speakers pounded my ribs. The array of bright lights streaming across the buildings induced a haze to my vision. And before we were thousands of busy visitors delighting in the hustle and bustle of a Saturday night at Surabaya Town Square.

At 9:30pm, Surabaya Town Square (Jl. Adijayabaya no. 55, T: +62 31 561 0222, [www.townsquare.co.id](http://www.townsquare.co.id)) – Sutos, as the locals have dubbed it – was in full swing, pumping up thrills for a festive Saturday evening. Although it's a given fact that all shopping malls in Surabaya are constantly flocked with urban denizens seeking entertainment during such hours, nothing compares to Sutos' rambunctious hordes of youngsters. More than a hundred chairs had been set to face the main hall's big, white stage. All eyes were on the pair of funky-clad adolescents boisterously dancing and smacking the drums. The crowds huddled closer to the stage by the minute, and I was awash in the starkly blinding illumination.

Sutos is one of the major commercial playgrounds that successfully captivates young folks sporting whatever is synonymous with the relatively ambiguous term of "cool". Sitting on approximately 300,000 square feet of land and first launched in 2008, the semi-attireless building is known to possess an unrivalled hip atmosphere. Various cafes and coffee shops open till midnight every day. On the weekends, proud Harley Davidson bikers and a group of singing troubadours parade around the mall's blocks. The open-air Big Stage at the epicentre hosts multifarious events ranging from jazz festivals to fashion catwalks. Every single night around 15,000



people – 20,000 on Saturday nights – burst onto the scene. "Try this, they taste really good," my best friend Arini half-shouted from across the table as she cheerfully chewed off a big chunk of tapas called Spudnik, which comprised crispy potato skin with smoked beef and chicken leg. That was one signature dish offered at the cosy and relatively quiet **The Cushy Kitchen** (Sutos, Level 22-24, T: +62 31 5633 688). We were slouched in our chairs, scanning the endless row of cafes when a surge of local Manchester United fans wearing their team's

jerseys suddenly showed up, immediately occupying all the sofas in front of the big screen as they anxiously waited for the match kick off at 10pm. I noticed a vacant spot and a sheet of music in one corner. "We hold a live music performance called Urban Acoustic," said Pandhie Saptana, the assistant operational manager of The Cushy. Weekends are apparently geared towards football devotees who stay up till late. Families meanwhile may spend evening hours at the **XXI Cinema** (Sutos,

2nd floor, T: +62 31 563 302) or **Vista Karaoke** (Sutos, 2nd floor unit 288, T: +62 31 563 2709, [www.vista.co.id](http://www.vista.co.id)). Night crawlers, on the other hand, can head down to **Eclectic Pub & Lounge** (Sutos P-19, T: +62 31 5633 616, [www.eclectic-surabaya.com](http://www.eclectic-surabaya.com)) or **Ferret Club** (Sutos, T: +62 31 563 3939) to get a dose of house beats in the wee hours of the morning.

In perspective, Surabaya is a developing city redolent with a historic past of brave patriots fighting against the colonials. Yet the last decade has brought with it a wind of



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plate of **nasi goreng** or fried rice. It uses the J-word owing to how its super-spiciness might stun one into cursing in the local dialect. The authentic recipe features twenty cayenne peppers as an extra seasoning. Originally created by chef Eko Sugeng Purwanto from **Surabaya Plaza Hotel** (Plaza Boulevard, Jl. Pemuda no. 31-32, T: +62 31 531 6833, [www.sby.pphotels.com](http://www.sby.pphotels.com)), **Nasi Goreng Jancuk** is now a Surabaya culinary icon. If you have an armoured palate, drop by the Kartini Restaurant at the hotel. A package of **Nasi Goreng Jancuk** is not expensive (Rp130,000), since it is enough for four to five persons and comes with a giant pitcher of ice tea (Rp175,000 for 2 pitchers). You can also choose the level of heat, too. Spicy or super-spicy? It's your risk.

**pakuwon food fest**  
**Pakuwon Food Fest** (Pakuwon City, Jl. Kejawen Putih Mutiara, T: +62 31 531 088 ext. 814, [www.pakuwon.com](http://www.pakuwon.com)) is the largest food bazaar in East Surabaya. Located beside the East Coast Mall, Pakuwon Food Fest rounds up more than 60 popular local and international food tenants. You can also try to ride a **becak** tricycle – a traditional means of transport – or a **doker** – a horse carriage – for only Rp10,000 and Rp25,000 per person, respectively. • PRISKA FERINIA

### getting there

There are many flights from Denpasar to Surabaya and vice versa. Alternatively, travelling by land takes ten to 12 hours. You go by either car or bus (Rp 150,000/seat), crossing the island by ferry, and can enjoy Bali and Java's natural and cultural gems along the way.

### when to go

Later April to May is the city's anniversary. You will have the chance to savour the local culture through its street parade, night market, handicraft fair, music and shopping festivals, and much more.

### where to stay

**TS Suites**  
Jl. Royan Wukir no. 6, T: +62 31 863 1222, [www.tsuites.com](http://www.tsuites.com)  
Located at Surabaya Town Square, this accommodation is high-rise style and very much urban. The facilities include free Internet connection and a 24-hour cafe.

### Artotel

Jl. E. Soetomo no. 79-81, T: +62 31 669 9000, [www.artotelindonesia.com](http://www.artotelindonesia.com)  
A blend of art, style and comfort. Each room is decorated with the works of Indonesian contemporary urban artists.

### Hotel Majapahit

Jl. Tunjangan no. 65, T: +62 31 6464 333, [www.hotel-majapahit.com](http://www.hotel-majapahit.com)  
This historical hotel mansion boasts elegant colonial architecture and the monumental landmark where the past patriots transformed the Dutch national flag into Indonesia's red and white one.

### where to eat

**Ayam Penyet Bu Kris**  
Jl. Tenggilis Jono no. 7  
Another spicy delicacy (that shouldn't be missed): powdered fried chicken with homemade chili mix.

### Pecel Bu Kus

Jl. Buntara Raya 1111  
Sample the combination of pecel salad and rice. It's an East Javanese culinary signature.

### Waneng Iboe

Jl. Sura Pening no. 25, T: +62 31 5469 053  
A Javanese buffet that's less than US\$5 per person on average.