

MALAYSIA TRAVEL GUIDE

Malaysia
Truly Asia





Selamat Datang... **Welcome to Malaysia**

Endowed with a diversity of cultures, Malaysia offers a 'truly Asian experience'. Discover a delightful fusion of three of Asia's oldest civilisations – Malay, Chinese and Indian. A potpourri enriched with the indigenous traditions of the KadazanDusuns, Ibans and other ethnic communities of Sabah and Sarawak.

Experience the country's alluring wonders – colourful festivals, breathtaking skyscrapers, charming heritage buildings, enchanting islands and beaches as well as a million-year-old rainforest with fascinating flora and fauna.

Meet the warm and friendly people and enjoy world-class facilities. Marvel at the bewildering range of shopping delights and tempt your palate with mouthwatering delicacies. Bursting with colour, pulsating with life, Malaysia awaits you.





Visit Malaysia and:

- *experience Asia in a nutshell - Malay, Chinese, Indian and ethnic cultures*
- *explore the world's oldest rainforests*
- *meet genuinely warm people of different races and religions*
- *shop for local handicraft or contemporary fashion*
- *see the marine life at some of the world's best dive sites*
- *admire traditional and modern architectural marvels*
- *dine on delicious food at affordable prices*
- *relax on beaches where time appears to stand still*
- *stay in international resort hotels or, 'homestay' with the locals*

Malaysia is a fascinating holiday destination offering something for everyone to enjoy. There are three distinct destinations in the country- Peninsular Malaysia and the states of Sabah and Sarawak in East Malaysia. Visitors are often surprised to discover how developed the country is, yet rich and varied in cultural tradition.

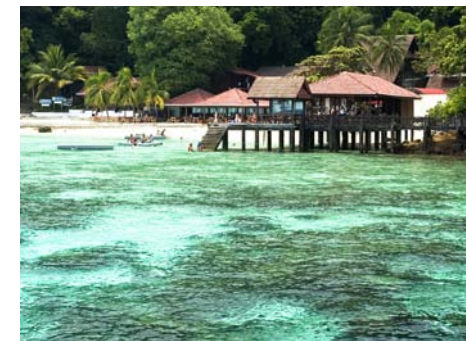
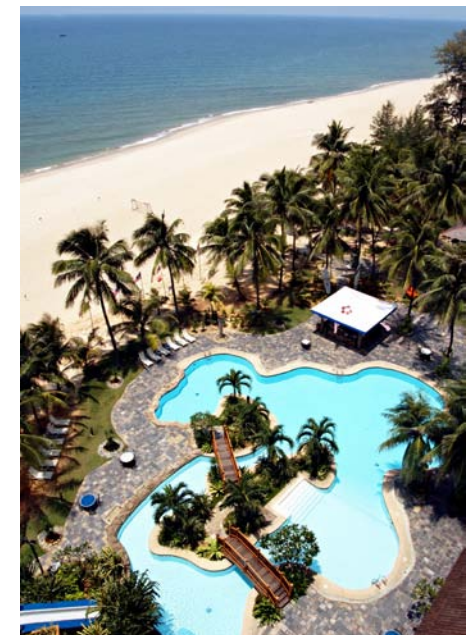
The country's main gateway is the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). Other major international airports are Langkawi, Penang, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching.

Kuala Lumpur or KL is a modern cosmopolitan city boasting the world's tallest twin towers towering at a height of 452m. Its architecture is representative of the country's dominant cultures- the Malay, Chinese and Indian. Combined with the colonial legacy of the British and Moorish influences, KL has one of Asia's most dynamic cityscapes.

Malaysia's long coastline and many coral-fringed islands, with the Straits of Malacca to the west and the South China Sea to the east, give rise to a large number of fabulous beaches. Islands like Langkawi, Tioman and Pangkor are world-renowned resort destinations. Penang is another island famous for its history, relaxing beaches and cultural mix. Further south, Melaka is known for its history, museums and the unique Baba-Nyonya community. The charming east coast of the peninsula with its laid back lifestyle, is the country's cultural heartland.

The states of Sabah and Sarawak await nature lovers and adventurers. Discover the prolific marine life and dense rainforest while exploring the underwater world and wilderness of Borneo.

Malaysia has many exciting places of interest and during a holiday of just two weeks, visitors will get a mere glimpse. One thing's for certain; everyone wants to return to discover more of Malaysia.



KUALA LUMPUR

Rich Past, Visionary Future

Established in 1857 at the confluence of the Klang and Gombak Rivers, Kuala Lumpur (KL) is one of Asia's most dynamic cities. The city began as a mining settlement in the late 1800's with the discovery of tin. Its impressive skyline includes the world's tallest twin towers, the old Moorish styled railway station and numerous mosques, temples and churches.

Rapid infrastructural growth over time has not diminished KL's garden city image. Beautifully landscaped parks and an abundance of greenery have been retained to provide the city's green lungs.

The other essential component of KL is the soul of its people who give the city its distinctive and truly Asian, character. English is widely spoken and locals are typically obliging when approached by tourists looking for directions. Visitors will enjoy a wonderful time in KL and are advised to respect cultural norms and sensitivities.

Kuala Lumpur is a city of contrasts. While Malaysians are justly proud of their new structures, older buildings also appeal. Its architectural heritage includes Moorish styled edifices, stately colonial buildings and old shophouses. Modern offices and condominiums tower overhead.

There are many places of interest in KL which can be accessed easily as distances between them are near. It's possible to discover the capital by foot, by organised tours or public transport. The theatre of the city unfolds on the streets and is best experienced on foot. Alternatively, join a tour or negotiate



with a taxi driver. A series of pamphlets on heritage walking trails produced by the Heritage of Malaysia Trust (Badan Warisan Malaysia) is available from tourist information centres around the city.

Merdeka (Independence) Square is a good starting point to explore KL. Here the national flag flies atop a 100m flagpole, the tallest in the world. Within the square is a field fronting the **Royal Selangor Club** where Malaysians converge every year

to celebrate independence. Formerly known as the Selangor Club Padang (Selangor Club Field), it was extensively used for cricket, hockey, tennis and rugby matches.

Opposite is the ornate **Sultan Abdul Samad Building**, built in 1897 with Moorish features, clock tower and copper domes. Beautifully illuminated at nights this well-known landmark in KL was formerly the Secretariat for the British administration. It is now the venue of the Supreme and High Courts.



KL's museums, memorials and galleries boast of unique and interesting exhibits guaranteed to delight the visitor.

Museums:

- National Museum
- Islamic Arts Museum
- Bank Negara Money Museum, Maybank Numismatic Museum
- Shipping Museum
- Telecommunications Museum
- Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) Museum

Memorials:

- Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Memorial
- Tun Abdul Razak Memorial
- Galeria Sri Perdana

Galleries:

- National Science Centre
- National Planetarium
- National Art Gallery



A much photographed spot is the Moorish styled old railway station. The **National Mosque, Jamek Mosque** and **National Monument**, constructed to honour the country's fallen heroes are other attractions to discover in KL.

The immaculately landscaped **KL Lake Gardens** near the city centre is its premier green lung. Here one can enjoy scenic views of Parliament House and the city's landmark buildings.

Visit the **Butterfly Park** and **Deer Park**, both within the Lake Gardens. Not to be forgotten is the **Bird Park** with over 2,500 birds from hundreds of species flying freely in a natural environment. The park also has a list of regular activities such as Hornbill and Ostrich Feeding. Also in the vicinity is the **Orchid Garden**, with over 800 species of exotic Malaysian orchids including some rare ones. Close by is the **Hibiscus Garden** with more than 500 varieties of colourful blooms.

Within walking distance, **Central Market** is an art deco building and former wet market. It is now a one-stop souvenir, handicraft and restaurant centre. Nearby, along **Petaling Street** or **Chinatown**, shops open all day and sell mostly accessories and clothes.



In the city centre, **Menara Kuala Lumpur** or **KL Tower** at 421m is the best location for a 360° aerial view of the city. There is a revolving restaurant with a highly recommended evening buffet. Another panoramic view is possible from the 41-storey high bridge connecting the **Petronas Twin Towers**. Visitors can opt to visit an interactive gallery known as Petrosains, which focuses on Malaysia's oil and gas industry. It is housed within the **Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC)** next to the towers.



Beyond the City

There are several major attractions in the vicinity of KL and many of these can be visited within a day on organised or self-drive tours.

Putrajaya, 25km to the south, is the nation's new administrative capital. Hailed as an intelligent garden city, it is a model township constructed with detailed planning, innovative urban design and preservation for the environment. Attractions here include the **Botanical Gardens, Putrajaya Lake** and **Putrajaya Wetlands**.

View the **Prime Minister's Office and Residence**, the pink-domed **Putra Mosque** and waterfront promenade. While taking a boat ride on one of the many lakes here, admire the impressive architecture of the bridges around Putrajaya.

Batu Caves in the state of Selangor to the north, is a massive limestone outcrop with huge caves. This famous destination draws people from all over the world during the annual Hindu festival of Thaipusam. Scaling the 272 steps up to the main temple cave is a highlight here. **Selangor** is bounded by the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya which further enhances the touristic appeal of the state. Selangor dazzles with a fascinating variety of attractions. Its flourishing capital, **Shah Alam**, urban centres and the royal town of Klang abound with modern facilities, from excellent healthcare institutions, international colleges to huge shopping malls and recreation centres.

This exciting destination is also the venue of world-class sporting events such as the Petronas F1 Grand Prix.



PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

Peninsular Malaysia offers the visitor a wealth of attractions and holiday options.

Head north from KL up the west coast to explore historic cities, sun-drenched beaches, cool mountain retreats and to experience the local lifestyle. The North-South Expressway makes travel around the peninsula easy and fast.

Adventurous travellers can explore the far north and head through scenic mountainous terrain to the rustic east coast. Interesting sights here include quaint fishing villages, cultural pastimes and numerous islands off the coast.

South of KL, the states of Melaka, Negeri Sembilan and Johor beckon with a wealth of historical and cultural attractions.

Northern Region

Popular holiday destinations in the north of Peninsular Malaysia include the resort islands of Penang, Langkawi and Pangkor.



The **Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque** in Shah Alam is reputedly one of the most stunning structures in the country. Commonly referred to as the 'Blue Mosque', it boasts the tallest minarets in the world.

Nearby **FRIM**, is a forestry research institute ideal for walks, swimming and picnics. The **National Zoo** located in KL's suburbs has over 1,000 animal species from around the world.

The historic spice trade port of **Melaka** has many old buildings like the **Stadthuys**, **Christ Church**, **Porta de Santiago** and antique shops along Jalan Hang Jebat (**Jonker's Street**).

Other day trip possibilities include the cool hill resorts of Genting Highlands, Fraser's Hill and the French-themed Colmar Tropicale at **Bukit Tinggi**. **Genting Highlands**, dubbed the 'City of Entertainment' offers indoor and outdoor theme parks, hotels, an 18-hole golf course and a casino. **Fraser's Hill** is a bird watchers' paradise with more than 265 species of wild montane birds within the resort's boundaries. It is also the venue for the annual International Bird Race.

Take a drive north to the wetlands of **Kuala Selangor** to see migratory birds, feast on fresh seafood and see a fascinating evening firefly display in Kampung Kuantan.

Penang

Old-world Charm and Beach Retreat

Penang founded in 1786 by Captain Francis Light of the British East India Company is a cultural melting pot and the oldest British Straits Settlement. Its historic heart of **Georgetown** was where ships refuelled and served as a centre for the spice trade as well as tea and cotton from China and India.

The island's alluring beaches and old-world charm has made Penang a popular tourist destination.

Locals swear Penang has Malaysia's best food and will delight in taking visitors to the multitude of open-air stalls along **Gurney Drive**. Nyonya food (a Chinese and Malay culinary blend) is also best sampled in Penang and Melaka.



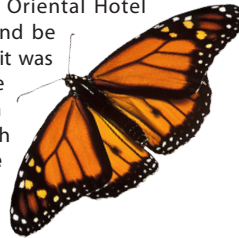


Penang's maze of narrow streets offers an insight into the past where little has changed since the days of the East India Company. This is the place to 'get lost' amongst joss stick shops, fresh noodle makers and other old crafts.

Walking through Georgetown with its eclectic blend of colonial, Moorish, Indian, and Chinese architecture is a sensory journey of fascinating sights, sounds and aromas. Relax and take a trishaw to discover Georgetown's heart and soul. See the clan houses or kongsi established by Chinese settlers the most famous being **Khoo Kongsi** with its elaborate decorations.

Ride past **Kapitan Keling Mosque** established by Penang's Indian Muslims. Nearby is the **Kuan Yin Teng** or Goddess of Mercy Temple, the oldest Chinese temple in Penang. In the Pulau Tikus suburb is a Thai temple, **Wat Chayamangkalaram** with its reclining Buddha; reputed to be one of the world's longest. Many Penangites are Buddhists and Wesak Day is a major festival. Thaipusam is a colourful Hindu festival observed in Penang and a few places worldwide.

The famous Eastern and Oriental Hotel is the place to unwind and be reminded of an era when it was a popular venue for the city's elite. Visitors can stay in the renovated 19th century **Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion**, one of the most well-preserved mansions outside China.



To enjoy cool mountain air and a panoramic view of the city, take the unique funicular train up **Penang Hill**. **Batu Ferringhi** on the northern coastline is a favourite playground for visitors from near and far. Its casuarina-lined beaches from Tanjung Bungah to Teluk Bahang boasts several international deluxe resorts as well as attractions such as the Toy Museum, the first of its kind in Asia and the largest in the World.

The Penang Bridge, one of Asia's longest, links mainland Peninsular Malaysia to the island. Penang is also accessible by ferry from Butterworth, where the state's main rail and bus terminal are located. The Penang International Airport has direct flights from Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Thailand.



Perlis and Kedah

Malaysia's Rice Bowl States

A visit to Perlis and Kedah will reveal a land of serene natural beauty surrounded by the greenery of paddy during the planting season and golden hues at harvest time.

From Ipoh northwards, rounded limestone hills rise above the paddy or rice fields. Caves are found within many of these hills, with several being open to visitors. Caves accessible to the adventurous include **Gua Kerbau** in Kedah, **Gua Kalam** and caves in the **Perlis State Park**.

Bukit Kayu Hitam is the main entry point for vehicles from Thailand. Other entry points are Padang Besar (by train) and Wang Kelian.

Notable landmarks in **Alor Setar**, Kedah's capital are the **Zahir Mosque** with its distinctive black dome and **Balai Nobat**, which houses the instruments of the Royal Orchestra.

Alor Setar can be reached via air and rail from Kuala Lumpur.





Langkawi

Intriguing Legends and Nature's Wonders

The Langkawi archipelago consists of 99 islands situated in the Andaman Sea, south of Thailand. Tourists flock here for the delightful beaches, superb resorts and refreshing nature-based activities. The best beaches include **Pantai Cenang, Burau Bay, Pantai Kok and Pantai Datoi**.

Accommodation ranges from world-class resorts such as the Four Seasons Resort, The Datai and The Andaman to affordable family chalets and facilities for budget travellers.

Pulau Payar Marine Park, 20km south of Langkawi is a popular diving and snorkelling site. Boats from Langkawi take day trippers to the park where there is a viewing platform for relaxation between underwater adventures.

Langkawi is a duty-free island, offering an attractive range of goods. Shops in the main town of Kuah and the Langkawi International Airport offer the island's best shopping.

Ferry services operate during daylight hours from Kuala Perlis and Kuala Kedah on the mainland, to Langkawi and from Penang to Langkawi. Malaysia Airlines, the national carrier, operates daily direct flights to Langkawi from Kuala Lumpur. In addition, the budget carrier AirAsia flies to Langkawi from Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. Other airlines that fly to Langkawi include Firefly (from Kuala Lumpur) and Silk Air (from Singapore).



Most tourists agree that Langkawi's biggest attraction is its natural, undisturbed state. Rice fields with grazing buffaloes give the island its rustic appeal. The landscape of the islands are characterised by limestone outcrops blanketed in an emerald rainforest.

A host of nature-based adventures await the visitor. Go on a fascinating boat ride through the mangroves. The rare experience of feeding eagles to their natural setting is the highlight of the trip. In the vicinity are large caves; roosting grounds for thousands of fruit-eating bats.

Alternatively, discover the rainforest or take the ride of a lifetime, on the thrilling rainforest canopy adventure. Tourists can go on self-guided walks to **Seven Wells (Telaga Tujuh)** and swim in mountain pools. Take the **Langkawi Cable Car** to the summit of **Gunung Mat Cincang** at 700m for a spectacular view of the islands including neighbouring Thailand.

Sailing is a popular activity with first-class marinas providing berths for many international yachts. Yacht charters of varying durations are possible. Explore sea caves, deserted beaches, mangroves and freshwater lakes. Sunset cruises on luxury motorised and bare-boat charter yachts combine to make Langkawi a year-round sailing destination.



Perak

Historic Towns and Resort

Ipoh and Taiping in the state of Perak were two cities that boomed after tin was discovered in the 19th century. Malaya was then the world's largest tin and rubber producer.

Situated at the base of **Bukit Larut** or **Maxwell Hill**, the Taiping **Lake Gardens** is surrounded by old tin mines, a small golf course and a zoo, providing the town with a refreshing ambience. The colonial buildings, church and war cemetery in this charming town are reminiscent of the British era. Maxwell Hill is a perfect retreat for those who appreciate tranquility and accommodation in quaint rest houses.

Visit Ipoh's colonial heart and its historic quarter to appreciate how tin enriched the city—the railway station, HSBC Building and St. Michael's Institution are such examples. The playing field or padang is surrounded by various architectural styles including the **Royal Ipoh Club**, **City Hall** and **Masjid India**. Another interesting feature of the town are Buddhist temples set amongst limestone hills such as **Sam Poh Tong**. Ipoh is reputedly one of the best places to sample local Chinese delicacies.

Just north of Ipoh is the royal town of Kuala Kangsar where **Istana Iskandariah** is home to the Sultan of Perak. Of interest here is the **Ubudiah Mosque** and the **Istana Kenangan**, which houses the Royal Museum.

Lumut, a small coastal port 80km from Ipoh, is the staging point to **Pangkor Island**. Both Pangkor island and the smaller **Pangkor Laut Island** are lined with golden beaches and overhanging trees. Fishing and boat building communities are located on Pangkor Island. Pangkor Laut Resort promotes itself as 'one island, one resort'. It is a private island featuring a spa village and **Emerald Bay**, one of Malaysia's best beaches.



The Scenic Far North



Malaysia's far north is one of the country's most remote regions and best explored as a self-drive adventure. The East-West Highway opened up the area that now connects the states of Kedah and Perak in the west to Kelantan and Terengganu in the east. This is the only means of accessing the north with the journey from **Gerik** (or Grik) to Kota Bharu being 210km.

The road traverses forested mountains of the Titiwangsa Range and deep valleys dissected by rushing rapids. Traffic is minimal and drivers enjoy the sense of being in the wilds of Malaysia. From the west coast there are two access points from **Sungai Petani** north or along Route 76 that heads north from **Kuala Kangsar** to Gerik and **Baling**.

The constructed **Pedu Dam** and lake has two resorts on its remote and forested foreshores. The rustic charm of the accommodation is

complemented by a range of adventurous activities on the water and surrounding forest.

Rural roads near Pedu Lake weave their way east through to Baling and from here the scenic route winds its way to Keroh and the Thai border town of Betong.

Continuing on for 50km, the township of Gerik is the junction for the road from Kuala Kangsar, 108km to the south. The highway from Gerik travels east and passes the settlement of Banding, the huge **Temenggor Dam** and the **Belum** wilderness. Fishing, hiking and extended treks or houseboat journeys into the Lower Belum are possible. 160km from Gerik the highway reaches **Tanah Merah** on the Kelantan River. The train from Singapore to Kota Bharu (Tumpat) also passes here.



The East Coast

Laid-back towns, fishing villages and resort islands are characteristics of the east coast states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang. Here, life stands still and many observe traditional customs.

Kelantan

Cradle of Malay Culture



Being relatively isolated, Kelantan hasn't experienced rapid industrialisation like the west coast.

Attractions in **Kota Bharu**, its capital, include the bustling wet market-Pasar Besar Siti Khatijah, Cultural Centre, Royal Museum, State Museum, State Mosque and Istana Jahar, featuring Kelantan's rich cultural legacy.

Kelantanese are gifted craftsmen with many cottage industries around the state producing silverware, textiles, kites and brass work.

Terengganu

Gem of the East Coast

Kuala Terengganu, the Terengganu capital has an old-world ambience. Explore the town in a trishaw or see traditional fishing boats being built on Duyung Island at the rivermouth. The picturesque fishing villages make driving along the east coast a pleasant experience.

Highlights in Terengganu are the sprawling State Museum, a 'floating mosque', ancient palaces and traditional industries like *silk-weaving*, *batik-painting* (a traditional textile with hand-painted or block motifs) and *songket-weaving* (an intricately woven fabric using gold or silver threads).

One hour's drive inland is the largest man-made lake in Southeast Asia, **Tasik Kenyir**. Resorts, houseboats and campsites cater to eco-tourists wanting to explore forests, waterfalls and caves.

Kite-flying, bird-singing and top-spinning are adult pastimes in the east coast states and competitions are held during festivals or after the rice harvest. Kite



duels were once popular but today, competitors are rewarded for their flying prowess and artistic designs of their kites. Top-making is an art form here and giant top-spinning competitions are a major draw.

Terengganu boasts several idyllic islands in the South China Sea. Perhentian, Redang, Kapas and Tenggol are pristine retreats with a host of exciting water sports and dazzling underwater attractions. Dive centres are located on major islands and accommodation varies from cosy chalets to deluxe resorts.

The two islands of **Perhentian Besar** and **Perhentian Kecil** offer crystal clear waters and splendid marine life. Turtles, reef sharks and fish

sightings are normal. Access is via boat from Kuala Besut, 20km away on the mainland.

Redang Marine Park consisting of nine islands, lies further south and is accessible from Merang. Marang, another picturesque fishing village south of Kuala Terengganu is the port for **Kapas Island**.

Tenggol, off Dungun, is known for diving. It has comfortable accommodation and good facilities. The islands on the east coast experience occasional torrential showers between November to February. However, selected established resorts continue to operate during this season.

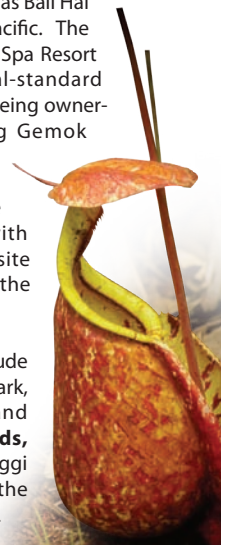
Pahang

A Gift of Nature

Pahang, Peninsular Malaysia's largest state is endowed with a variety of attractions from beautiful beaches, cool highlands retreats to lakes and caves. **Kuantan**, its capital is situated beside the Kuantan River and the South China Sea. There are a few beaches near Kuantan that are popular among locals. Sailing, windsurfing and waterskiing can be enjoyed here while in the fishing village of **Beserah**, water buffaloes haul fresh catch from the beach at certain times of the year.

Tioman Island achieved fame as Bali Hai in the 1950's movie, South Pacific. The Berjaya Tioman Beach, Golf & Spa Resort offers the only international-standard accommodation with others being owner-operated chalets. Tanjung Gemok in Pahang and Mersing in Johor are the staging points. **Cherating** is a seaside destination long popular with budget travellers. It is the site of Asia's first Club Med and the charming Cherating Village.

Other attractions in Pahang include Malaysia's premier national park, **Taman Negara**, the highland resorts of **Genting Highlands**, Cameron Highlands, Bukit Tinggi and Fraser's Hill, as well as the natural lakes of Bera and Chini.



Southern Region

The North-South Expressway heads southwards out of Kuala Lumpur to Johor Bahru and takes about four hours. En route, the states of Negeri Sembilan and Melaka beckon with a host of attractions.



Melaka

Malaysia's Historical City

Melaka is a famous historic port strategically located on the Straits of Malacca. It was founded by a Sumatran Prince named Parameswara and thereafter flourished under the Melaka Sultanate. The state was known as the Venice of the East when it was the centre of spice trade in the region.

Turn down any street in its historic heart to discover something fascinating. Old buildings and traditional trades and crafts make this one of Malaysia's most visited destinations. Buildings reflect Portuguese, Dutch and British influences and the city centre is ideal for walking around.

Historical places include the **Stadthuys**, **Christ Church**, **St. Paul's Church** and the **A' Famosa** fortress built by the Portuguese in 1511. Jalan Hang Jebat (Jonker's Street) is home to antique stores, galleries and souvenir shops.

For something different, take a ride in a colourful trishaw around Melaka. **Ayer Keroh**, 15km from town offers attractions like Zoo Melaka, Melaka Crocodile Park and Mini Malaysia.



Ujong Pasir is a Portuguese settlement, south of town where visitors can enjoy its lively square and eat Portuguese-inspired seafood dishes. Visit during festivals such as San Juan and San Pedro held in June.

Another interesting sight is the **Hang Li Poh Well**, named after a Ming emperor's daughter sent to marry Sultan Mansor Shah to seal relations between the two countries. **Bukit Cina**, a gift from the Sultan was established as their residence. The well was constructed by her followers for her personal use and was also the main source of water for the town. Bukit Cina has two adjoining hills, which form a Chinese graveyard with over 12,000 graves, some dating back to the Ming dynasty.

Melaka is known as a museum town. The **Independence Memorial Museum** houses documents relating to the transition from colonial Malaya to independent Malaysia. The **Maritime Museum** is a replica of the Portuguese galleon, *Flora de la Mar*, which sank off Melaka. It displays exhibits of Melaka's maritime history from the Melaka Sultanate to the colonial era.

Melaka is home to Malaysia's unique Baba and Nyonya community. Known as Peranakan or Straits Chinese, they are descendants of the original Chinese settlers who married Malays. Nyonya cuisine, with its use of different spices and Chinese cooking styles, is a culinary delight here. The **Baba Nyonya Heritage Museum** on Tun Tan Cheng Lock Street is housed in an ancestral home with authentic furniture, ceramics and textiles.



Johor

Beaches, Golf and Fruit Farms

Johor is Peninsular Malaysia's southernmost state and is linked to Singapore by a causeway. Attractions here include golf courses, seafood villages, plantations and nature parks. The east coast of Johor provides access to beaches and islands while the west coast fronts the Straits of Malacca.

Agro tours to rubber and oil palm plantations and fruit farms are popular. In the north, **Gunung Ledang** or Mount Ophir at 1,276m provides a challenging two-day return trek, passing through waterfalls and forests.

Explore the vast wilderness rainforest in **Endau-Rompin National Park** straddled across Pahang and Johor. This 80,000 hectare-park is one of the peninsula's largest virgin lowland forests. It is a remote destination that appeals to adventurous explorers.

Golfers are never far from a championship course in Johor with 30 venues from which to choose. Several are resorts providing accommodation, recreation and spas. Leading courses include **Pulai Springs** (two 18-hole courses) and **Desaru Golf and Country Resort**.

Situated along the popular Lido Beach, **Danga Bay** is a great place to unwind, relax and just watch the city go by. Sample the delicious fare available from the number of restaurants serving both local and international cuisine, shop at the Danga Festive Street Mall and make a stop at the various Rumah Limas, traditional Malay houses unique to the state



of Johor. Visitors can also try the river cruise along the straits up to Kampung Melayu. On this trip, you can see the *kelong* (huge fish trap built on stilts) and visit fish farms.

Desaru near the peninsula's southeastern tip is a 25km beach resort destination for Johor folk and neighbouring Singapore. While there are several resorts, it has a remote and tranquil atmosphere. Further south, **Sebana Golf and Marina Resort** includes a marina, hotel and an 18-hole golf course.

Customs and immigration facilities exist for ferry passengers travelling to and from Singapore.

Tanjung Piai, 90 minutes west of Johor Bahru is the southernmost tip of the Asian continent. Boardwalks and hides offer an opportunity to appreciate the wetlands and there is a small resort and seafood restaurant. The state capital, **Johor Bahru** is a shoppers' paradise especially for Singaporeans who flock here for bargains. The city is known for its colourful nightlife, busy coffee shops, bars, nightclubs and open-air night

markets. It has a border town atmosphere with hawkers, moneychangers, unloading and loading of goods and round-the-clock activity.

In 1866, Sultan Abu Bakar the father of modern Johor built the magnificent **Istana Besar** as his official residence. Today it houses the Sultan Abu Bakar Museum, showcasing rare and beautiful treasures from all over the world. The **Sultan Ibrahim Building**, housing the state secretariat dominates the Johor Bahru skyline.

Johor Bahru is a transport hub for travellers within the region. Trains head south into Singapore and northwards to Kuala Lumpur, Thailand and Kota Bharu in the northeast. Ferries also depart from Johor to destinations off Singapore and various parts of Sumatra.

The state's beautiful offshore islands, **Sibu, Besar, Rawa, Aur, Pemanggil, Hujung** and **Tinggi** are accessible from Mersing and Tanjung Leman. Simple resorts are the order of the day but there's no compromise on comfort or facilities and the rates are competitive.



Negeri Sembilan

Magnificent Minangkabau Architecture

In Negeri Sembilan, **Minangkabau** architecture, with its distinctive horn-shaped roofs dating back to 17th century Sumatra, dominates in **Seremban**, the capital. Observe the magnificent roofs rise into two peaks like buffalo horns.

Sri Menanti is the royal state capital located 40km east of Seremban. Of interest here is the 100 year-old **Istana Lama Sri Menanti** (old palace), now a museum housing weaponry, costumes and a bridal chamber.

Port Dickson or 'PD' is a small town and gateway to beaches extending 16km south to Tanjung Tuan (Cape Rachado). The shaded beachfront, proximity to Kuala Lumpur and delicious seafood here attracts holidaymakers. Casuarina-lined beaches like Bagan Pinang, Teluk Kemang and Blue Lagoon have hotels, apartments, restaurants, souvenir shops and golf courses.

Yachting was introduced to Malaysia in Port Dickson and the calm waters are perfect for sailing with the **Admiral Marina and Leisure Club** offering excellent yachting facilities.

At **Tanjung Tuan**, a pleasant forest trail leads to the historic lighthouse. Bird watchers know the location as one of the best to spot Honey Buzzards and other migratory birds flying from Europe to Australia.



SABAH AND SARAWAK

The states of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo offer visitors an experience unique to the destination. While Borneo is home to thriving rainforests, it's the people that make visiting Sabah and Sarawak so special.

Sabah

Nature's Wonderland

Sabah is known as the **Land Below the Wind** and once out of Kota Kinabalu (KK) the capital, much of the state remains forested. There are over 32 ethnic communities speaking 80 dialects in Sabah. The main festival here is **Ka'amatan** when the **KadazanDusun**, Sabah's largest ethnic group, offer thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest to the spirit of the paddy.

Kota Kinabalu is a vibrant city on Sabah's west coast and the gateway to eco-adventures like mountain climbing, white-water rafting, caving, diving and river cruising.

Located in the South China Sea, it's a bustling city with a mixed population. Once known as Jesselton when Sabah was British North Borneo, it was rebuilt after World War II.

Places of interest are the **State Museum**, the **Sunday Gaya Street Market**, which offers fresh produce, handicrafts, foodstuff and jungle products in the open air. The five islands of the **Tunku Abdul Rahman Park** in the vicinity of Kota Kinabalu offer peaceful solitude in the sun. Enjoy a stay in many superb resorts like **Sutera Harbour** and **Shangri-La Tanjung Aru**. Just out of town, the resorts of **Nexus Karumbunai** and **Shangri-La Rasa Ria** have extensive seaside facilities.

While ascending the 4,095m high **Mount Kinabalu**, Southeast Asia's highest peak, is achievable, descending 600m to the ocean floor off the famed dive site of Sipadan is not humanly possible.



Sabah is a global wildlife sanctuary with the **Kinabalu Park** being Malaysia's first World Heritage Site. The 754km² park has one of the world's richest assemblages of plants and the two-day return walk to the summit of Mount Kinabalu, challenges intrepid climbers. The nearby **Poring Hot Springs** and canopy walkway will rejuvenate your body and mind.

Other eco-treasures in Sabah include the **Turtle Island Park, Sepilok, Tabin** and the **Kinabatangan River**. White-water rafting on the **Padas** and **Kiulu Rivers** offers thrills and spills.

Sandakan, 45 minutes by air from Kota Kinabalu, is the gateway to fascinating nature reserves like Turtle Island, Kinabatangan River, Gomantong Caves and Sepilok.

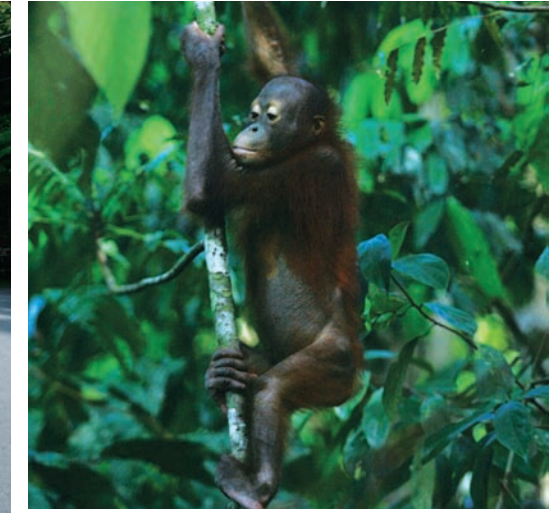
Sepilok is a sanctuary for Orang Utans where 200 primates, rescued from illegal captivity, have being retrained for jungle living. Get close to them in their natural habitat during the twice-daily feedings.

Sukau on the Lower Kinabatangan River has Malaysia's greatest wildlife concentration. It is Sabah's longest river where Orang Utans, macaques, Red and Silver Leaf Monkeys, elephants, crocodiles, otters and Proboscis Monkeys live along the riverine wetlands. Boat trips along the Menanggal River provide guaranteed sightings. On the way to Sukau, visit **Gomantong Caves**, home to millions of swiftlets whose nest are prized for birds' nest soup.

Lahad Datu provides access to the **Danum Valley**, home to Sabah's largest expanse of lowland dipterocarp forest. Walk the canopy bridge for aerial views or trek into the **Maliu Basin** wilderness and **Tabin Wildlife Reserve**.

Take a ride on the antique train from Kota Kinabalu to Tenom through the picturesque **Padas Gorge** or enjoy the North Borneo steam train to Papar.

Many islands are found off Sabah in the Sulu, Celebes and South China Seas. Diving is possible around most with **Sipadan Island** being the jewel; marine biologist Jacques Cousteau rates it one of the world's best. This is the 'must-dive' reef and Malaysia's only deepwater oceanic island.



Layang Layang in the Spratly Islands, some 300km northwest of Kota Kinabalu is East Malaysia's remotest island. Wall diving for hammerhead sharks, rays and barracuda is possible. In the small island resort of **Lankayan**, northwest of Sandakan, diving is perfect.

Mantanani, located north of Kota Belud, is one of Sabah's newest dive islands surrounded by seagrasses and reefs. **Turtle Island Park** is the place to watch turtles nesting between July and October.

Labuan

Pearl of Borneo, Where Business and Leisure Meet

Labuan, one of Malaysia's three federal territories, is an international offshore financial centre. Located 10km off the Sabah coast, it offers duty-free shopping, wreck diving, golfing and **World War II Memorials**. Several resorts and hotels provide a holiday atmosphere and interesting sights include **An'Nur Jamek Mosque, Tao Chinese Temple** and a Sikh Temple inspired

by Amritsar's Golden Temple. Other attractions include the **Labuan Bird Park** and two water villages. Several dive sites are situated in the **Labuan Marine Park** and four sunken ships provide unrivalled wreck diving. Labuan's free port status, numerous international hotels and excellent telecommunications facilities also make it an ideal venue for meetings and incentive events.



Sarawak

A Paradise for Eco-Adventures

Sarawak, the **Land of the Hornbills** is the country's largest state forming part of East Malaysia in Borneo. It is characterised by distinctive ethnic groups, many of whom still live in riverside settlements.

James Brooke, the first 'white rajah' ruled Sarawak from 1841 after resolving a dispute between the Sultan of Brunei and local chieftains. The legacy of the Brooke Dynasty and the British includes many colonial buildings in Kuching.

Fondly known as 'Cat City', **Kuching**, the capital, is located on the Sarawak River. Its tourist belt is the **waterfront** and **Main Bazaar** which features old shophouses selling local pepper, artefacts, antiques, birds' nests and exotic forest products. The **State Mosque** is perched on the riverbank and nearby markets offer a mind-boggling range of produce. At the other end of the Main Bazaar, **Tua Pek Kong Temple** built in 1876 is an important place of worship for Chinese.

Kuching lays claim to nine museums, many within walking distance of each other. Visit the **Sarawak Museum** which has one of the region's best ethnographic collections. The city also has several well-preserved colonial buildings. Other interesting spots include **Fort Margherita**.

Damai Beach, 45 minutes from Kuching, is a pleasant playground of beaches, golf course and resorts. The nearby **Sarawak Cultural Village** is a themed attraction showcasing the diverse lifestyles of the ethnic



groups in the state and is host to the annual Rainforest World Music Festival.

Enjoy the hospitality of Sarawak's indigenous communities who live in longhouses along the **Lemanak, Rejang, Skrang** and **Batang Ai Rivers**. Access is normally via long motorised boats. In the past, paddling meant arduous journeys but today, small outboards make the task easier.

The largest group is the **Ibans**, once headhunters. Other groups include the **Bidayuhs, Melanau** and **Orang Ulu** (upriver people).

Visitors can stay with their hosts and watch the community make jungle products, join in cultural dances, go trekking or relax in jungle streams. Women weave traditional pua cloth on old back-strap looms.





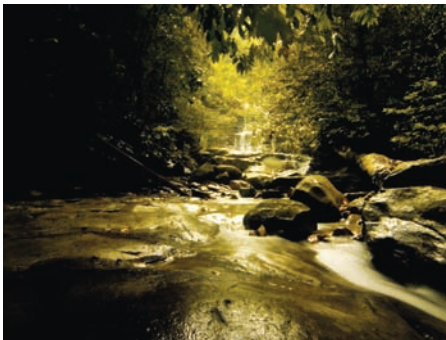
Gawai is a thanksgiving festival held in June at the end of a bountiful rice harvest. Tuak or rice wine and other traditional delicacies are offered at 'open houses' in longhouses around the state.

Sarawak is an eco-adventure destination popular for trekking, caving, mountain climbing, kayaking, biking, rafting and diving. There are many national parks and wildlife reserves such as the **Bako National Park**, close to Kuching, which contains many plant species endemic to Borneo.

Kubah National Park, **Matang Wildlife Centre** and **Semenggoh Orang Utan Rehabilitation Centre** provide rehabilitation for endangered animals like Orang Utans.

Similajau National Park has emerald waters, a tropical rainforest and long, golden beaches where Green Turtles lay their eggs. The 10,736-hectare **Loagan Bunut National Park** contains Sarawak's largest natural lake and is a bird watchers' paradise. The **Niah Caves** is the archaeological site of 40,000 year-old human remains. The **Mulu National Park** is a World Heritage Site and contains the world's largest cave chamber and an intricate network of caves. Challenging treks include the **Pinnacles Trail** to Gunung Api and climbing Gunung Mulu.

Avid divers can try the excellent **Belais Reef** off Miri and **Luconia Shoals** in the South China Sea, both accessible by air and boat.



SPECIAL INTEREST HOLIDAYS

Malaysia offers a wide range of exciting holiday options to cater to the special interests and needs of the traveller. Arrangements can be made with tour operators and agents for customised packages with the services of trained guides. The spectrum of specialised tours include nature adventures, golfing vacations, homestay programmes, deep-sea fishing, health and wellness packages, romantic holidays or whatever the fascination.

Eco-Adventure

Today, Malaysia is known around the world as a destination for a host of nature-based activities and eco-tourism. Be it from challenging rock climbing or cross-jungle trekking to white-water rafting in frothing rivers, diving in calm seas to parasailing in the multi-hued skies - it's all here.

From the primordial rainforest in Taman Negara to the wildlife sanctuaries at Danum Valley and the Kinabatangan floodplains in Sabah, Malaysia's ancient forests offer vast possibilities for trekking and camping.

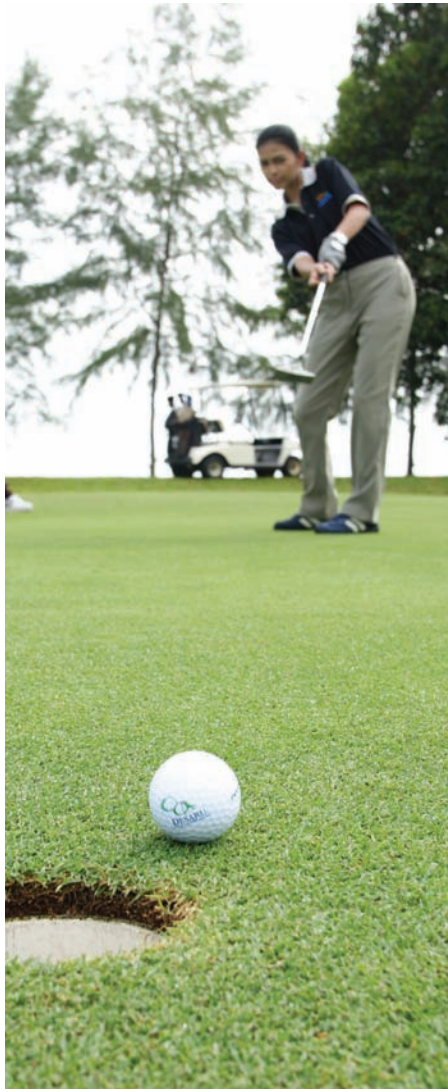
Mountain and rock climbing enthusiasts will enjoy conquering Malaysia's steep mountains, rock faces and cliffs. The most popular rock climbing sites are near or around Kuala Lumpur and Selangor state, namely the famous Batu Caves and Bukit Takun to the city's north.

Caving enjoys a good following in Malaysia. The country is endowed with a vast number of limestone caves including the famous Deer, Lang and Clear Water Caves in Mulu National Park, a World Heritage Site in Sarawak.

Those looking for thrills can try white-water rafting as Malaysia has good rafting sites. These include Sungai Sungkai in Perak and Sungai Selangor in Kuala Kubu Baru. Sungai Endau, Jeram Besu and Sungai Lipis in Pahang, Sungai Tembeling in Taman Negara and Sungai Sedim in Kedah are also popular rafting sites.

Malaysia's rugged undulating terrain and dense rainforests crossed by rapid rivers make it an irresistible destination for four wheel drive (4WD) expeditions. The heat, mud, rolling hills and rainstorms add to the challenge in the grueling yet exhilarating sport of off-road driving.





Another popular sport in Malaysia is mountain biking. Malaysia is also renowned for its popular birding sites. With over 600 species in the peninsula and about 580 species in Malaysian Borneo, Malaysia has emerged as a bird watching haven. Several excellent bird watching sites include Fraser's Hill, the Kuala Selangor Nature Park and Taman Negara. Over in Sabah, visit the Kota Kinabalu City Bird Sanctuary, a feeding ground for many species of resident birds and several migratory species from Northern Asia. Kinabalu Park, a World Heritage Site with its own endemics is just two hours away.

World-Class Events

The Formula One Grand Prix Race held at the Sepang International Circuit adjacent to Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) has put Malaysia on the world stage. At 5.5km, it is the world's second longest circuit with 15 corners and eight straights. The Malaysian Grand Prix is known as the 'world's hottest' because of the track action. Enjoy the festivities during the race season as Kuala Lumpur heats up with a host of entertaining shows. Other significant sporting events include the Le Tour de Langkawi and Malaysian Motorcycle Grand Prix.

Golfing

Malaysia is truly a unique golfing destination and the diversity of the courses is unrivalled in the world. Numbering about 200 throughout the country, they can be found high in the mountains, along the seashore, on tropical islands, amidst verdant rainforests and in the heart of the city. With the best facilities and amenities available right here, your golfing experience is bound to be an unforgettable one. A number of courses have been designed by some of golf's top names such as Jack Niklaus, Arnold Palmer and Greg Norman. For a different and cooler experience, try night golfing. Tourism Malaysia organises the highly successful World Amateur Inter-Team Golf Championship. This annual tournament brings together amateur golfers from around the world to play in some of the best courses in Malaysia as well as to savour the sights and sounds of the country.



Sailing and Cruising

Yachters are always welcome to Malaysian waters, marinas and clubs. Langkawi is a great place to start a sailing holiday as the waters of the Andaman Sea are superb, the sailing infrastructure is excellent and it is a resort island with abundant attractions. Alternatively, there are many east coast islands where safe anchorages are assured and along the busier west coast the main ports of call include Port Dickson, Port Klang, Lumut and Penang. East Malaysia offers more adventurous sailing with excellent marina facilities at Kota Kinabalu's Sutera Harbour.



Angling

Malaysia is a prime tropical paradise that presents the angler with an opportunity to discover one of the world's top game fishing destinations. Endowed with a wide variety of marine and inland angling destinations, Malaysia hosts a plethora of fish species in both environments. The west coast of Peninsular Malaysia bordering the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca, with waters rarely exceeding 100m in depth, produces quality table fish such as groupers, snappers and threadfins, to name a few. In contrast, the east coast of the peninsula is the home of many big game fish, the Black Marlin being the most famous. Other renowned fighting fish include the Giant Trevally, Sailfish, Dolphinfish, Cobia, Barracuda and Narrowbarred Mackerel. The coasts of Sabah and Sarawak bordering the South China Sea are home to some of Malaysia's finest bluewater fishing, with the island of Labuan located close to the prime fishing areas.



Diving

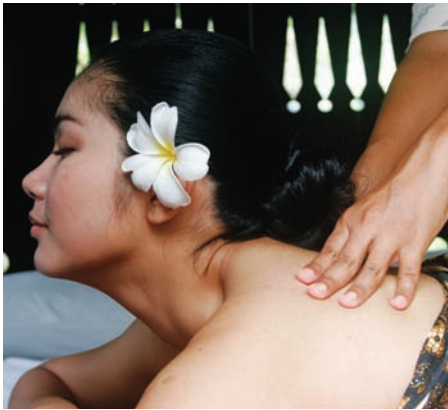
Malaysia is one of the best dive destinations in the world with the richest marine environment in the Indo-Pacific Basin. From schooling hammerhead sharks, huge schools of barracudas and various turtles to the bizarre frogfish or ghost pipefish, there is always something to fascinate the diver. Along the eastern coast of Peninsular Malaysia, the islands of Perhentian, Lang Tengah, Redang, Kapas, Tenggol and Tioman feature good coral growth and abundant fish life. For a spectacular diving experience, head to Sipadan, lying just off the northeast coast of Borneo. Only day trips are allowed to this island and accommodation is available on neighbouring islands. Labuan, an off-shore financial centre in East Malaysia is great for wreck diving.





Homestay

In the Malaysian Homestay programme, you will get to experience life in a kampung or traditional village. With an open mind, you will be exposed to a fascinating culture rarely glimpsed in urban neighbourhoods. You will establish a bond with your friendly foster family and get acquainted with the village elders. Be part of their family and experience traditional hospitality at its best. Homestay villages can be found around the country.



Spas

Malaysia is home to some of the top spas in the world, including the world-famous Spa Village at the Pangkor Laut Resort on Pangkor Laut Island. Most spas are located on beach resorts with a number also sprouting up in city centres. With trained masseuses and a menu of traditional herbs and fragrances, you are assured of being pampered like royalty, while your body and mind, relax and rejuvenate. Besides luxurious bath treatments, scrubs, massages, facials, manicures and pedicures, a whole host of relaxing facilities such as saunas and steam rooms as well as jacuzzis await you!

Medical Tourism

Medical tourism offers competitive medical and hospital charges for top quality medical care. Foreign patients consider Malaysia a wise choice due to the state-of-the-art private medical centres in the country. These establishments are well-equipped and staffed to serve the healthcare needs of people from all over the world. After a surgery or treatment, or during the recuperation period, the patients become tourists, enjoying a spot of sightseeing, playing a round of golf or two, or going for spa treatments.



Incentive Holidays

From the country's unique and fascinating attractions to its warm and friendly people, Malaysia is indeed a dream incentive holiday destination. Theme parties can be arranged in various settings creating a fun and entertaining atmosphere for incentive travellers. Come during one of the many festivals and events in the country to experience colourful Malaysia.



Culinary Tours

Come and be part of the traditional Malay cooking experience! Join a culinary tour where you can be part of a cooking workshop conducted by local chefs in their homes. Brush up on your culinary skills as you learn the fine art of Malay cooking. Enjoy the sumptuous meal prepared afterward with your food expert. Visitors can also go on a market tour to shop for local ingredients upon request. Tours to factories to see how food is processed can also be arranged. Also, food lovers may want to stay on during the country's annual Food and Fruits Fiesta to learn more about Malaysia's glorious fare.



Shopping Sprees

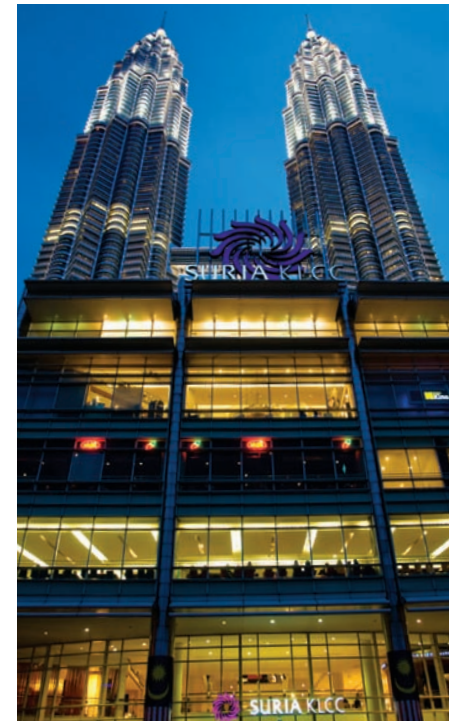
Shopping is an increasingly exciting part of a Malaysian holiday. There are few complaints about prices, range of goods and facilities. Malls usually open from 10am to 10pm but boutiques may operate shorter hours. Prices are fixed in department stores but elsewhere bargaining is worth trying.

Some of the city's main shopping complexes with a wide range of goods are Pavilion Kuala Lumpur, Lot 10, Suria KLCC, Star Hill, Sungai Wang Plaza, Berjaya Times Square, City Square, KL Plaza, The Mall and Sogo. In the suburbs, One Utama, Mid Valley Megamall, Subang Parade and Sunway Pyramid are popular.

Central Market is a good place to scout for souvenirs, handicrafts and antiques. The Cultural Craft Complex in Jalan Conlay sells a comprehensive selection of handicrafts like batik, Songket, pewter, baskets and beadwork.

Chinatown is a shoppers' paradise and bargaining is essential to secure bargains. Popular local shopping experiences include night markets or Pasar Malam where merchants set up temporary stalls to sell farm produce, snacks, clothing and household goods.

Don't miss the once-a-year Malaysia Mega Sale where you can hunt for the best bargains available. Whether it's east coast batik, carved masks from Borneo, Sarawakian cotton or a Kelantanese Wayang Kulit puppet, there's a myriad of uniquely Malaysian products.



Melaka is an antique shoppers' paradise with stores selling old wares from the region. Melaka's shopping focus is in the antique shops along Jalan Hang Jebat (Jonker's Street) and Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock.

Duty-free destinations like Langkawi and Labuan as well as airports nationwide provide excellent bargains.

DISCOVER THE SOUL OF MALAYSIA

Undoubtedly, the soul of Malaysia is reflected in its multiracial population of 27 million living together harmoniously amidst a colourful diversity of cultures and lifestyles. Its three major races, the Malays, Chinese and Indians, along with the ethnic traditions of the KadazanDusun, Iban and many more in Sabah and Sarawak make up the delightful multicultural fabric of Malaysia. The potpourri is enriched further with the influence of the British, Dutch and Thais.

Asia's Finest Cuisine

Food is a popular conversational topic in this country and visitors will discover that Malaysians enjoy eating out. Savour a variety of items at different times of the day. Malaysia offers Asia's best variety of cuisine given the wide array of cooking styles and traditions. Eating out here is a gastronomic adventure ranging from aromatic Malay dishes to piping hot Chinese delicacies and spicy Indian fare. The unique Peranakan, also known as Nyonya, cuisine is a fusion of Chinese and Malay styles.

Natural, home-grown ingredients figure prominently in Malay food. Coconut, chili, lemon grass, lime leaves, spices and turmeric are basic ingredients cooked with fish, meat and vegetables. Try Malaysia's signature dish, Satay, consisting of skewers of thick, succulent marinated meat barbecued over charcoal fire and served with peanut dip.



The Chinese enjoy rice as a staple served with meat or vegetable dishes but noodles feature prominently in great variety and combination. Indian cooking is one of Malaysia's distinctive foods with both southern and northern styles available. A popular Indian Muslim dish is Nasi Kandar. It is a rice meal eaten with chicken, meat or fish in rich, thick gravies and curries.

In Sarawak, rice and meat are placed in hollow bamboo tubes and cooked over a fire while in Sabah pickled dishes are a local specialty.

Popular dishes among locals include Roti Canai, a light crispy pancake made from wheat flour and cooked on a griddle. Try it with a cup of Teh Tarik - tea pulled from one mug to another to give it a smoother flavour.

Malaysia has a great variety of refreshing tropical fruits. Some are seasonal while others are available throughout the year. Mangosteen is loved for its sweet, juicy white flesh while the adventurous should try the durian. Controversial for its smell, the locals call it the 'king of fruits'.

For a truly Malaysian experience dine out in an open-air food court where visitors can enjoy delicious food at affordable prices. Elsewhere, small restaurants televise popular football matches on big screen televisions to pull in the crowd. Kopitiam otherwise known as coffee shops are interesting to dine in. Also look out for vendors selling snacks or drinks on push carts.

The interesting potpourri of local cuisine has been complemented with cosmopolitan influences and Italian, French, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese and Middle Eastern cuisine is available in selected restaurants. Vegetarian restaurants can be found in major cities in the country mainly serving either Chinese or Indian style dishes.

Visitors should be aware that Muslims only consume halal food (permissible by Muslim law) and only dine in restaurants, which are certified halal. Pork and alcohol are not consumed by Muslims.

Visitors are encouraged to check the local dailies and hotel 'what's on guides' for current listings on the best dining spots around the country.



Performing Arts

Malaysian arts and culture are as diverse as the population. Watch shadow puppetry, Chinese opera, classical Indian dances or join in Borneo's bamboo dances.

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, housed in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre features the world's finest musicians while theatre groups regularly stage plays in the National Theatre or Istana Budaya. Away from the city, elderly musicians play their traditional Gamelan and Rebana Ubi instruments while traditional games such as top-spinning and kite-flying are popular village pastimes especially in the East Coast.

Music and dance are integral components of Malaysian culture but vary widely. Many art forms exhibit influences from the Middle East, Indonesia, China, India and Thailand.

The Gamelan music had its origins in Indonesia but is common in traditional Malaysian performances. It is dominated by melodious drum beats and gongs and often accompanies dances.

The Joget is a popular Malay dance performed at cultural festivals and weddings. The bhangra dance is very much a feature of the Sikh community. It is a vibrant and colourful dance accompanied by a medley of folk songs and musical instruments such as a tambourine. The graceful Sumazau dance is the national dance of

the KadazanDusuns of Sabah while Datun Julud is a popular dance of Sarawak. In the latter, the Sape, a musical instrument, renders the dance beats, which are often accompanied by singing and clapping of hands. Popular village pastimes such as Silat, the Malay art of self-defence, are interesting to watch as it is also a dance form.

Catch many of these performances and demonstrations at the Malaysia Tourism Centre (MTC) in Kuala Lumpur or cultural centres in the respective states. In East Malaysia, head to the Sarawak Cultural Village or the Monsopiad Cultural Village in Sabah to witness these events.



Exciting Nightlife

There is plenty of entertainment in virtually all states and Kuala Lumpur takes the lead with the most number of entertainment venues, restaurants, pubs and discotheques. Watch a movie, see a play or enjoy a drink at a nearby pub in upmarket Bangsar.

Catch the latest Hollywood blockbusters in cinemas and cineplexes or enjoy a 3D experience at the IMAX Theatre in Berjaya Times Square in the city. Karaoke is popular as well, generally after dining or in the late evenings.

International productions, ice-skating extravaganzas and musicals are regularly presented in the Genting Highlands Resort, renowned as the 'City of Entertainment', a short drive from Kuala Lumpur. Cultural shows with dinner can be found in restaurants such as Seri Melayu in the city.

In Kuala Lumpur, happening nightspots include Bintang Walk, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Bangsar and Desa Sri Hartamas. Here, the street life is exciting with restaurants, bars, clubs, karaoke lounges and people everywhere. Most entertainment outlets shut at 2 or 3am when revellers retreat to all-night coffee shops for a snack and a chat.

Those in the mood for some shopping, head to the night markets or Pasar Malam in selected locations around the states. Despite the attractive prices, bargaining at these places is acceptable. It can be quite a humorous exercise as traders are generally enthusiastic and friendly. In East Malaysia, these markets are known as Tamu. Check the local dailies for the opening hours and location of these markets.



Festivals and Fiestas!

One of the significant characteristics of Malaysian culture is its celebration of various festivals and events. The year is filled with colourful, exhilarating and exciting activities. Some are religious and solemn but others are vibrant, joyous events. One interesting feature of the main festivals here is the 'open house' custom. This is when Malaysians celebrating the festival invite friends to come by their homes for some traditional delicacies and fellowship.

Festivals such as Hari Raya Aidilfitri are celebrated mostly in the villages or home towns of the urbanites. Every year just before the festival, Muslims nationwide balik kampung or return to their home towns to meet family and friends. These family reunions are also celebrated during other main festivals in the country. With people decked out in their traditional finery, these festivals are an integral feature of Malaysian society. Festival dates may vary from year to year as some are based upon the lunar calendar.



Thaipusam

The sights and sounds of thousands of devotees carrying kavadis, or ornate frames as penance, make this an extraordinary festival to witness at the Batu Caves in Selangor, or in Penang.



Chinese New Year

The Lunar New Year is celebrated by the Chinese throughout the world and here in Malaysia it is just as joyful, with an abundance of food and family gatherings.



Malaysia Water Festival - April to May

All over Malaysia, visitors can enjoy an entire month of water-based activities and have a splashing good time participating in a host of aquatic sports.

Tadau Ka'amatan - 30 - 31 May

Thanksgiving is offered to the spirit of the paddy, Bambaazon, by the KadazanDusun in Sabah. Abundant rice wine or Tuak, delicious food, dancing and other festivities take place as part of the celebrations.

Wesak - May

Religious offerings and rituals such as the 'bathing of the Buddha', chanting of Sutras, lighting of joss sticks and ordination of monks take place in Buddhist temples around the country.

Colours of Malaysia - May to June

This event kicks off with a colourful parade displaying the diversity of Malaysian culture through music and dance.



Gawai - 1 - 2 June

The Ibans, Orang Ulu and Bidayuh in Sarawak celebrate this harvest festival where traditional ceremonies and dances are held in various 'long houses' or communal homes around the state.

Food and Fruits Fiesta - July

This is your chance to sample the best of Malaysia's tempting local delicacies such as Satay and Nasi Lemak, tropical fruits and delectable desserts during this month-long fiesta.

National Day - 31 August

Malaysians everywhere celebrate Merdeka Day or the nation's independence on this day.



Lantern and Mooncake Festival (Mid-Autumn)

This festival has come to symbolise a quiet celebration of peace and shared prosperity. Take delight in the colourful lanterns displayed during this time while enjoying the variety of mooncakes available.

Deepavali

Hindus celebrate this festival of lights by adorning their homes with oil lamps, taking a ritual morning bath and offering ceremonial prayers in temples.



Hari Raya Aidilfitri

The holy month of Ramadan culminates in the celebration of Hari Raya Aidilfitri for Muslims around the world. Special morning prayers are held in mosques and visits are made to homes of friends and relatives.



Christmas - 25 December

Like their brethren around the world, Malaysian Christians attend church services, hold family dinners and exchange gifts on this festive day.



For more information on these annual events and festivals, please log onto our website at www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my

PLANNING HOLIDAY IN MALAYSIA



Stopover Holidays

For stopover holidays, many travellers choose to transit at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) for immediate connections to popular destinations like Langkawi, Penang, Kota Kinabalu and Kuching.

Located at the crossroads of Asia, Malaysia is a convenient place for business meetings or conferences. Adding a few days before or after such activities enables visitors to gain a better appreciation of just what Malaysia offers.

Many travellers on long-haul flights also choose to break their journey here and Malaysia Airlines has a very popular programme that enables such travellers to take a Malaysian side trip with some exceptionally priced packages.

Alternatively, spend a few days in Kuala Lumpur to indulge in shopping, dining, partying and sightseeing.

One of the best things about a Malaysian stopover is that it gives a brief introduction to the country but just enough time for visitors to contemplate when to return.



Holidays in the West Coast

Peninsular Malaysia's west coast is where most people live and work. A fly and drive holiday is the best option to explore the west coast as it is well-served by the North-South Expressway extending from Johor Bahru in the south to the border of Thailand in the north.

The highlights include cities like Kuala Lumpur, Shah Alam, Georgetown, Melaka, Johor Bahru and Ipoh. There are cool hill stations such as Cameron Highlands, Fraser's Hill, Bukit Tinggi and Genting Highlands. The tranquil islands of Langkawi and Pangkor offer relaxing retreats with their scenic beaches, deluxe hotels and water sports.

Kuala Lumpur is unique for its contrasting architectural styles from Moorish, Tudor to contemporary. Other interesting spots are the old Kuala Lumpur Railway Station and National Museum. Visit the Central Market for souvenirs and hunt for bargains in Petaling Street or Chinatown. A half-day tour of Putrajaya with its beautifully landscaped roads and parks as well as innovative modern buildings will delight the senses.

The historic trading ports of Melaka and Georgetown in Penang are eclectic in character having been shaped by settlers from many lands. Penang is known for its balmy beaches, tasty food, colourful festivals and the historic Eastern and Oriental Hotel.



On the overland route to Penang, visit Kellie's Castle, cave temples in Ipoh, the royal town of Kuala Kangsar and colonial Taiping.

The natural attractions here include Kuala Selangor's fireflies, Perlis State Park, eagle feeding in Langkawi, bird watching in Fraser's Hill and diving in the Pulau Payar Marine Park.



Holidays in the East Coast

The east coast of the peninsula includes Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang. It is usually referred to as the heartland of Malay culture where traditions are still preserved amidst a rustic lifestyle.

Visitors will quickly notice how different it is compared to the west coast - less people, smaller settlements, a slower, more relaxed and predominantly agrarian lifestyle.

Take in one of the many pastimes here such as top-spinning and kite-flying, or simply watch craftsmen at work at the cottage industries nearby. The lively markets in Kota Bharu and Kuala Terengganu should not be missed.

There are stretches of beautiful beaches and charming fishing villages along the east coast. The offshore islands are particularly appealing providing simple chalets and upmarket resorts. There are several resorts around Kuantan and village-style chalets in Cherating.

Beserah Beach near Kuantan is where buffaloes pull in the fishing catch at certain times of the year. Diving is excellent off islands like Perhentian, Redang, Kapas and Tioman.

The inland Tasik Kenyir is the largest man-made lake in the region, a popular spot for angling. Taman Negara, the country's premier national park can be accessed from any of the three states on the east coast.

For easy accessibility to these states, visitors can fly directly to Kota Bharu, Kuala Terengganu, Tioman and Kuantan from Kuala Lumpur. To enjoy the coastal scenery one can drive via the East-West Highway in the north or Karak Highway in the central peninsula.



Holidays in Sabah

Sabah in Malaysian Borneo is similar to neighbouring Sarawak as they both highlight eco-adventure holidays amongst various cultural communities. Activities include trekking, rafting, diving, mountain climbing and there are superb coastal resorts to relax in afterwards.

Shop in the Tamu or local markets in Kota Belud, Kota Kinabalu's Gaya Street or near Mount Kinabalu. Kota Kinabalu is a cosmopolitan city with several islands just off the coast.

Kinabalu National Park is Malaysia's first World Heritage Site and its jewel is Mount Kinabalu at 4,095m. The adventurous can attempt a two-day challenging trek to the summit or enjoy leisurely walks at the park headquarters.

Orang Utans are one of the state's great icons and the Sepilok Orang Utan Sanctuary outside Sandakan is the best place to see them. Further afield, the Lower Kinabatangan River, Gomantong Caves and Danum Valley are other destinations to explore the state's exotic flora and fauna.

Diving sites such as Mabul, Lankayan, Layang Layang and Mantanani offer superb marine life

and comfortable accommodation. Only day trips are allowed to Sipadan, one of the best diving spots in the world.

Borneo's antique train operates from Kota Kinabalu to Tenom while tourist steam trains operate to Papar and back, offering views of the scenic countryside and lifestyle.

International and domestic flights service Kota Kinabalu and from here, there are flights to other destinations in Sabah. Flying is an economical way of discovering the state although there's a good public bus system. Regular ferries service the duty-free island of Labuan.



Holidays in Sarawak

Also known as the land of the hornbills, intricate rivers and pepper, Sarawak beckons with verdant rainforests and the diverse lifestyles of its indigenous people.

Travellers here need to factor in the remoteness of some locations especially those 'upriver' where boats are still the only form of transportation. This remoteness is what makes Sarawak so appealing. It's unlike Peninsular Malaysia and appeals to the adventurous.

Rivers like the Skrang, Belaga, Batang Ai, Rejang and Baram with their remote tribal longhouses, provide access to the state's magnificent natural and cultural heritage. Explore ancient rainforests by boat or head cross-country for trekking, rafting and climbing adventures.

Many longhouses appear stuck in a time warp. Handicrafts like woodcarvings, beadwork, Pua weavings and basketry are still made along communal verandahs.

Visit natural treasures like the Gunung Mulu National Park and the archaeologically significant Niah Caves. Many of the state's tourist attractions are its national parks protecting natural features like caves, the exotic Rafflesia flower, endangered wildlife, beaches, rivers and various plant communities. Get to know the people of

Sarawak and their lifestyles at the Sarawak Cultural Village. Set within 15 acres of natural jungle, the traditional longhouse dwelling of each ethnic group, arts and crafts demonstrations and dance presentations can be seen here. The state has a coastline that runs 700km along the southwestern side of Borneo. A good place to begin discovering its beauty is Damai Beach in Santubong.

Kuching, the state capital, is the main international gateway and together with Miri to the north, operate as regional hubs for air services to remote parts of the state.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Description	Toll-free Line	Telephone No.	Website
Tourism Malaysia Malaysia Tourism Centre	1 300 88 5050	603-2615 8188 603-9235 4848/ 603-9235 4800	www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my
Immigration Department of Malaysia		603-8880 1000	www.mtc.gov.my www.imi.gov.my
EMERGENCIES			
Kuala Lumpur Tourist Police Ambulance/Police Fire and Rescue Department		603-2163 4422 999 994	
TRAVEL ENQUIRIES			
KL Sentral Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) Information Low Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT)		603-2279 8699 603-8776 2000 603-8777 6988	www.klsentral.com.my www.klia.com.my www.lcct.com.my
AIRLINES			
Malaysia Airlines AirAsia Firefly	1 300 88 3000	603-8776 4321 603-2171 9222 603-7845 4543	www.malaysiaairlines.com www.airasia.com www.fireflyz.com.my
TRANSPORT			
Transnasional Bus Service Hentian Putra Hentian Duta Keretapi Tanah Melayu (Malayan Railway) KLIA Ekspres/KLIA Transit KL Monorail	1300 888 582	603-4043 8984 603-6201 4970 603-2267 1200 603-2267 8000 603-2267 9888	www.transnasional.com.my www.ktmb.com.my www.kliaekspres.com www.monorail.com.my
Hertz Rent-A-Car Avis Rent-A-Car	1800 88 1054	603-8776 4507 603-7682 2307/ 603-7628 2306	www.avis.com.my www.comfortcab.com.my
Comfort Taxi Insas Pacific Rent-A-Car		603-8024 2727 603-2287 4118/ 4119	www.iprac.com
KL Taxi Public Cab Radio Cab Sunlight Radio Taxi		603-9221 4241 603-6259 2020 603-9221 7600 603-9057 5757/ 603-9057 1111	www.publiccab.com
KLIA Airport Limo Booking Centre KLIA Counter		603-9223 8080/ 603-9223 8949 603-8787 3675	
CREDIT CARDS			
American Express Diners Club MasterCard International Visa International	1 800 80 4594 1 800 80 2997	603-2050 0000 603-2730 3388	www.amexmalaysia.com.my www.diners.com.my www.mastercard.com www.visa-asia.com
OTHERS			
Sabah Tourism Board Sarawak Tourism Board Sepang International Circuit Star Cruises Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) Malaysian Nature Society		6088 212121 6082 423600 603-8778 2200 603-4251 8477 603-9287 6881 603-2287 9422	www.sabahtourism.com www.sarawaktourism.com www.sepangcircuit.com.my www.starcruiises.com www.hotels.org.my www.matta.org.my www.mns.my

SAYING IT IN MALAY

Malay is the official language and many words are phonetically similar to English.

English	Malay
One	Satu
Three	Tiga
Five	Lima
Seven	Tujuh
Nine	Sembilan
Welcome	Selamat datang
Good afternoon	Selamat tengah hari
Goodbye	Selamat tinggal
Thank you	Terima kasih
How much is this?	Berapa harga ini?
How are you?	Apa khabar?
Water	Air
Stone, rock or milepost	Batu
Cave	Gua
Jungle or forest	Hutan
Village	Kampung
Town	Bandar
Sea	Laut
State	Negeri
Island	Pulau
Entrance	Masuk
Caution	Awas
Close	Tutup
Food	Makanan
Chicken	Ayam
Meat	Daging
Vegetables	Sayur

English	Malay
Two	Dua
Four	Empat
Six	Enam
Eight	Lapan
Ten	Sepuluh
Good morning	Selamat pagi
Good evening	Selamat petang
See you again	Jumpa lagi
Excuse me	Maafkan saya
Have you eaten?	Sudah makan?
Fine, thank you	Khabar baik
Waterfall	Air terjun
Hill	Bukit
Mountain	Gunung
Road	Jalan
City	Bandaraya
Rivermouth or estuary	Kuala
Expressway or freeway	Lebuhraya
Beach	Pantai
River	Sungai
Exit	Keluar
Open	Buka
Restroom	Tandas
Drink	Minuman
Fish	Ikan
Egg	Telur
White rice	Nasi putih

FAST FACTS

COUNTRY The Federation of Malaysia comprises Peninsular Malaysia made up of 11 states, three Federal Territories and the states of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo. Its capital is Kuala Lumpur.

CLIMATE Tropical climate with warm weather all year round with temperatures ranging from 21°C to 32°C. Annual rainfall varies from 2,000mm to 2,500mm.

RELIGION Islam is the official religion but other religions are practised freely.

LANGUAGES Bahasa Melayu (Malay) is the national language but English is widely spoken. The ethnic groups also speak various languages and dialects including Cantonese, Hokkien, Mandarin, Tamil and Hindi.

CURRENCY The unit of currency is the Malaysian Ringgit indicated as RM. Foreign currencies can be converted at banks and moneychangers.

IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS Visitors to Malaysia must be in possession of a valid passport or travel document with a minimum validity of six months beyond the period of stay. Most nationalities do not require visas for social or business visits. For further information, please check with the nearest Malaysian Mission or Tourism Malaysia office in your country. Alternatively browse www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my or www.imi.gov.my. Trafficking in illegal drugs is a serious offence and importing large amounts of foreign currencies requires a declaration.

GETTING TO MALAYSIA The main gateway to Malaysia is through the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang, located approximately 50km south of Kuala Lumpur. The Low Cost Carrier Terminal (LCCT), which is 20km away from KLIA Main Terminal Building, caters mostly to passengers of the budget airline, AirAsia. Other international airports which serve

as entry points are situated in Penang, Kuching, Kota Kinabalu and Langkawi. Over 40 International airlines fly into the country while the national carrier, Malaysia Airlines, has a global network that spans six continents and a national network that covers more than 36 local destinations.

From KLIA there are several transport options to the city among them being the high-speed KLIA Ekspres train, taxis and buses. A non-stop 28-minute ride on the KLIA Ekspres will connect you from the airport to the KL City Air Terminal (KLCAT) at the KL Sentral Station. This state-of-the-art transportation hub offers flight and baggage check-in services for Malaysia Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Royal Brunei Airlines. KLIA Ekspres departs every 15 minutes during peak hours (5am-9am, 4pm-10pm) and every 20 minutes during off-peak times (9am-4pm, 10pm-12 midnight).

Airport limousine taxis (budget or premier) at KLIA operate using a prepaid coupon system.

The main entry point by sea to KL is Port Klang, about 50km away from KL. Malaysia is also accessible by rail and road from Singapore and Thailand.

GETTING AROUND MALAYSIA

By Air ■ The national carrier, Malaysia Airlines as well as Firefly and the budget airline AirAsia offer domestic air travel to major cities in the peninsula and to the states of Sabah and Sarawak. Points linked to Kuala Lumpur include Ipoh, Penang, Alor Setar, Langkawi, Kota Bharu, Kuala Terengganu, Kuantan, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Lahad Datu, Tawau, Labuan, Kuching, Sibul, Bintulu and Miri. Private carrier Berjaya Air has direct flights to the islands of Pangkor, Redang and Tioman from the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport near Kuala Lumpur. Note that upon your arrival in Sabah or Sarawak, you will need to present your international passport even if you are arriving from Peninsular Malaysia.



By Rail ■ Trains are a comfortable, efficient and economical means of exploring Malaysia. The main line extends from Thailand in the north, southwards to Singapore. Another line radiates from Gemas in Negeri Sembilan to Kota Bharu on the east coast. In Sabah, a line connects from Kota Kinabalu through rainforests to Tenom and is not to be missed by train buffs. You can travel in air-conditioned comfort while sleeping berths are available for overnight journeys. Rail service in Peninsular Malaysia is operated by Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) or Malayan Railway offering privileged passes for easy travel.

The Eastern & Oriental Express is one of the world's great train journeys. The journey links the cities of Singapore and Bangkok passing through Kuala Lumpur and includes a tour of Penang's capital Georgetown.

By Sea ■ Ferry services also operate from Malaysia to Thailand, Singapore and the Indonesian Islands of Batam and Sumatra. Within Malaysia there are regular ferry services to and from main destinations like Penang, Kuala Perlis and Kuala Kedah to Langkawi, Lumut to Pangkor and from various points on the east coast to the offshore islands of Tioman, Perhentian, Redang and the Johor islands.

The principal cruise operator in Malaysian waters is the Malaysian-owned and operated, Star Cruises. Port Klang, the biggest port serving Kuala Lumpur, is one hour's drive away. It is where the Star Cruises Passenger Terminal is located.

The main ports of call in Malaysia for cruise ships are Melaka, Port Klang, Penang and Langkawi. Occasionally, cruise ships also drop anchor off the East Coast islands, in particular, Tioman Island. In East Malaysia, Kota Kinabalu in Sabah is the main port visited by cruise ships.

By Road ■ *Self-drive Holidays* - Most points in Peninsular Malaysia are accessible via the North-South Expressway, which links up to coastal roads and the rest of the road arteries in the country. The Expressway is an excellent road network, which allows you to drive through Peninsular Malaysia. There are also other tolled highways equipped with amenities such as rest areas, restaurants, souvenir shops and Surau (prayer rooms for Muslims), which connect towns and villages throughout the length and breadth of the country. Malaysians drive on the left side of the road. For foreign tourists an international driving licence is required.

Rental car companies can be found in most cities and airports around the country.

■ *By Bus* - Express air-conditioned buses are available to all states in Peninsular Malaysia. They offer a comfortable ride at reasonable rates. The main terminals in Kuala Lumpur are the Puduraya Bus Station, Hentian Putra, Pekeliling and Hentian Duta. There are set charges for outstation travel. Taxis can also be hired from these stations.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN THE CITY Besides public buses and taxis, the RapidKL Light Rail Transit (LRT) services, KL Monorail and the KTM Komuter inter-city rail services offer hassle-free accessibility to well-known landmarks in KL as well as outlying districts and nearby towns.

PLACES TO STAY There is accommodation to suit every visitor to Malaysia. The capital city of Kuala Lumpur and the main towns in each state have international-class hotels ranging from modest two star to luxury five star properties. International chains like Hyatt, Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Sheraton, Hilton, Le Meridien, Westin, Shangri-La, Renaissance, Nikko, Seri Pacific and Mandarin Oriental have established or managed properties in Kuala Lumpur and other cities. Be pleasantly surprised by some of Asia's most affordable rates. Discerning travellers will find uniquely Malaysian hotels with an authentic Malay ambience and traditional architecture ranking amongst the world's best.

Long-staying guests may appreciate the serviced-apartments situated within the city of Kuala Lumpur.

MEETINGS, INCENTIVES, CONVENTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS (M.I.C.E.) Malaysia is one of the leading destinations in the region for international meetings and exhibitions. Most of the major hotels and exhibitions centres are equipped with state-of-the-art facilities to cater for all types of M.I.C.E. events. In view of the country's easy accessibility from most parts of the world and modern transportation infrastructure, Malaysia has played host to numerous high-profile forums such as the inaugural Commonwealth Tourism Ministers' Meeting and the 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit.

MALAYSIA MY SECOND HOME PROGRAMME This programme is offered to foreign citizens from all over the world along with their spouses and children, to retire and reside in Malaysia. This exciting and unique programme is offered by the Government of Malaysia. For more information visit www.mm2h.gov.my.

TRAVELLING ON A BUDGET Budget accommodation is rated according to the Orchid Classification Scheme and includes hostels, bed and breakfast establishments, inns, boarding houses, rest houses and lodging houses. In Kuala Lumpur's city centre, there are well-managed budget accommodation along Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Chinatown. The Seri Malaysia chain provides excellent value-for-money accommodation throughout Malaysia.

MONEY MATTERS Travellers are advised to bring a combination of traveller's cheques, cash and credit cards. Credit cards are widely used in larger shopping establishments and hotels. Smaller establishments accept transactions in cash only. Those embarking on an island

trip are advised to make prior financial arrangements on the mainland. Foreign currency can be exchanged in banks, airports and money changers around the country.

Banking hours are from 9.30am to 4.00pm on weekdays. Banks in the states of Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu operate from 9.30am-4.00pm from Saturdays to Wednesdays.

WORKING DAYS Government offices in all states, with the exception of Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu, operate on a five-day week from Monday to Friday. Some private establishments are open for half day on Saturday. Government offices in Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu are open from Sunday to Thursday. They are closed on Friday and Saturday.

POST OFFICES Open from 8.00am to 5.00pm daily except on Sunday and public holidays. In Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu, post offices are closed on Friday and public holidays.

HISTORY There is a strong interlink between the country's multiracial and multicultural make-up and its history. Besides the local Malays and the native groups, immigrants from China, India, Indonesia and other parts of the world have all contributed to the multiracial composition of its population. Its interesting cultural diversity can be largely attributed to the country's long and on-going interaction with the outside world and colonial rule by the Portuguese, Dutch and the British. Consequently, the evolution of the country into a cultural melting pot is evident in the unique blend of religions, socio-cultural activities and traditions, dressing, languages and food.

ECONOMIC PROFILE Manufacturing constitutes the largest single component of Malaysia's economy. Tourism and primary commodities such as petroleum, palm oil and natural rubber and timber are major contributors to its economy.

GOVERNMENT Parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislative system. The Head of State is the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the Head of Government is the Prime Minister.

TIME Eight hours ahead of GMT and 16 hours ahead of US Pacific Standard Time.

ELECTRICITY The voltage used throughout Malaysia is 220-240 volts A/C, at 50 cycles per second. Standard 3-pin square plugs and sockets are used.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES Malaysia uses the metric system.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS Malaysia is linked nationally and internationally by telephone, facsimile, telegraph, telex and via the Internet. Most hotels provide International Direct Dial (IDD) telephone services. In cities and towns, public phones are available at high-traffic areas, such as bus stations, shopping complexes and office buildings, using coins or phone cards.

INSURANCE Visitors are strongly advised to obtain adequate insurance cover before travelling to Malaysia.

GREETINGS Although handshakes generally suffice for both men and women, some Muslim ladies may acknowledge an introduction to a gentleman with a nod of her head and smile. A handshake is only to be reciprocated if the lady offers her hand first. The traditional greeting or Salam resembles a handshake with both hands but without the grasp. The man offers both hands, lightly touches his friend's hands, then brings his hands back to his chest to mean, "I greet you from the heart". The visitor should reciprocate the Salam.

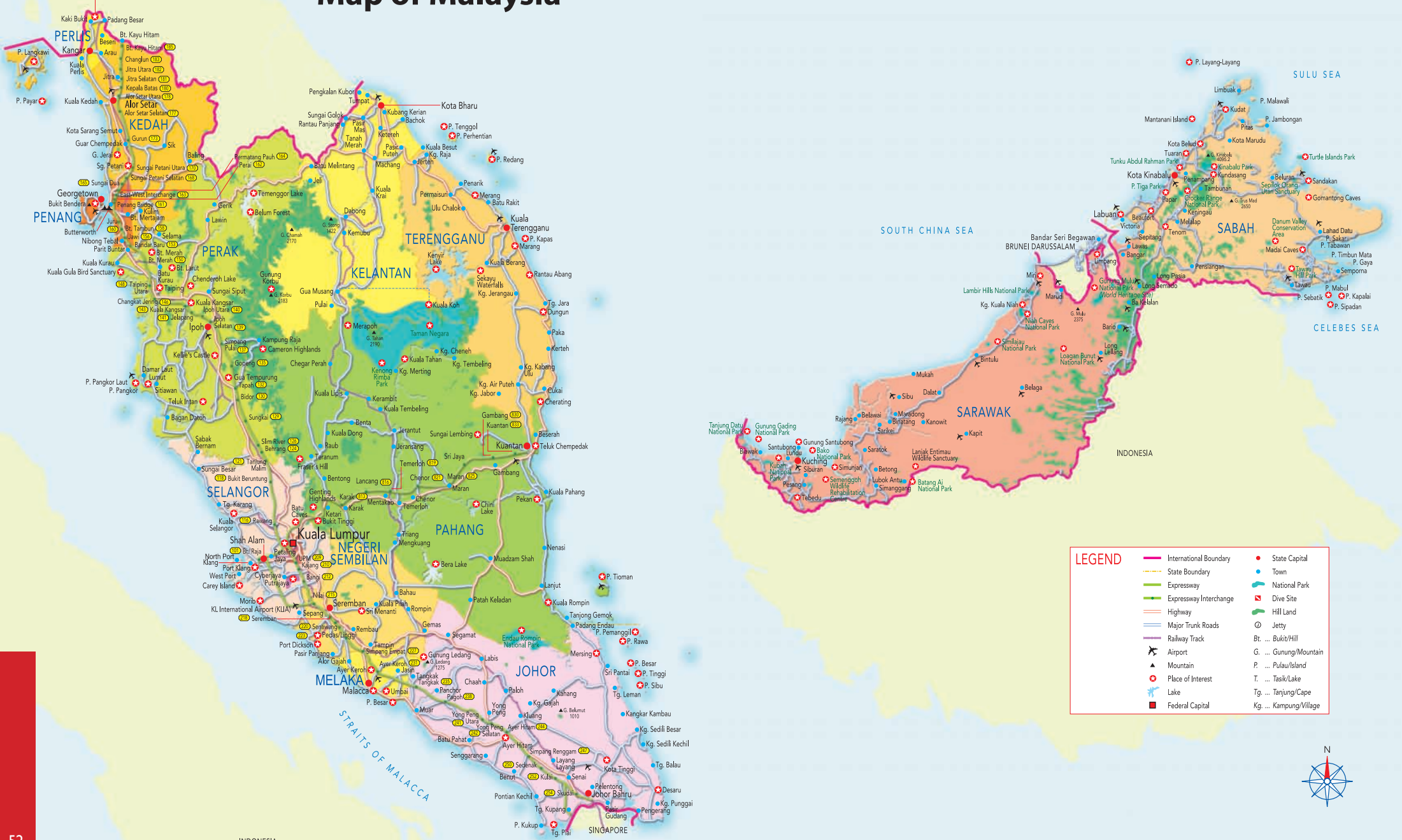
CONDUCT Public behaviour is important in Malaysian culture. Most Malaysians refrain from displaying affection (i.e. embracing or kissing) in public. It would be appropriate for visitors to do the same.

PLACES OF WORSHIP Shoes must be removed when entering places of worship such as mosques and temples. Some mosques provide robes and scarves for female visitors. Taking photographs at places of worship is usually permitted but request for permission first.

TIPPING Most hotels and restaurants levy a 10% service charge and 5% government sales tax on bills. Therefore, tipping is not customary. However, should you want to show your appreciation for good services, a small tip will do.

SOCIAL VISITS Before visiting a home, it is polite to call and inform of one's arrival. Shoes must always be removed when entering a Malaysian home. Drinks are generally offered and it would be polite to accept.

Map of Malaysia



LEGEND	
	International Boundary
	State Boundary
	Expressway
	Expressway Interchange
	Highway
	Major Trunk Roads
	Railway Track
	State Capital
	Town
	National Park
	Dive Site
	Hill Land
	Jetty
	Airport
	Mountain
	Place of Interest
	Lake
	Federal Capital
	Bt. ... Bukit/Hill
	G. ... Gunung/Mountain
	P. ... Pulau/Island
	T. ... Tasik/Lake
	Tg. ... Tanjung/Cape
	Kg. ... Kampung/Village





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(TRAFFICKING IN ILLEGAL DRUGS CARRIES THE DEATH PENALTY)

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