

Overview of Malaysia

Malaysia is home to an enchanting fusion of cultures, whose cuisines, languages and religions have made it the toast of Southeast Asia. Visitors relish the country's lush landscape and variety of festivals, which celebrate its Malay, Chinese and Indian heritage, as well as the mark of its indigenous tribes.

The destination is divided into two distinct parts. Peninsula Malaysia comprises the long fringe of land that extends down from Asia, and borders Thailand and Singapore. The South China Sea separates the mainland from the less-populated East Malaysian provinces of Sabah and Sarawak. Their dense jungles support an abundance of exotic plant and wildlife.

Tourists generally head to the peninsula, largely because of its different peoples, climates and activities. The highland regions offer cool relief from the mainland's clinging humidity, while Langkawi is popular among surfers. Culture lovers enjoy exploring traditional Malay life on the east coast, particularly in the northern Kelantan Province. The city of Kota Bharu and its surrounds may well be the most fascinating part of the peninsula. Travellers who appreciate rich culture and remote beauty should head there.

The capital city, Kuala Lumpur, is on the west coast, and is an icon of Asian prosperity. It's also a wonderful mix of tradition and technology.

Key Facts

Language:

Bahasa Melayu is the national language, but English is widely spoken and is the language of business. Cantonese, Hokkien and Hakka are spoken by the Malaysian Chinese population and Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi among the Indian population.

Passport/Visa:

Foreign passengers to Malaysia are required to hold return/onward tickets, and the necessary travel documentation for their next destination. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required to enter Malaysia if travellers are arriving from or have transited through an infected area. It is highly recommended that visitors' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The official currency is the Malaysian Ringit (MYR), also referred to as the Malaysian Dollar, which is divided into 100 sen. Money changers are generally quicker to deal with than banks and do not charge commission; their rates however are variable. British Pounds or US Dollars are the easiest to exchange. All major credit cards are accepted at upmarket hotels, shops and restaurants. ATMs are widely available.

Electricity:

Electrical current is 240 volts, 50Hz. UK-style three-pin plugs are used.

Travel to Malaysia

Overview

Malaysia offers holidaymakers a textured adventure, in which gleaming skyscrapers stand alongside colonial buildings, and verdant rainforests stretch all the way down to pristine beaches. Visitors come to play, to unwind, to connect with nature, and to ride the energy of a titan among Southeast Asian cities: Kuala Lumpur.

On the cultural side, tourists are exposed to some of the region's most well-known peoples and some of its rarer groups. Every one of them has imprinted on the place, adding new notes to its character. Jungle walks, ancient caves, stunning mosques, isolated villages and the world's most diverse marine ecosystem are part of the experience.

All in all, the destination's attractions celebrate Asia's history, and some of its best features.

Climate in Malaysia

Malaysia's tropical climate is hot and humid all year round, though conditions are cooler in the highland areas. Temperatures in Malaysia average at 86°F (30°C) year-round. The country doesn't have four distinct seasons, but it does have two monsoon seasons.

The monsoons bring heavy downpours on the east coast of Peninsula Malaysia, the northeastern part of Sabah and the western end of Sarawak from November to February. The rainy season between April and October is characterised by thunderstorms and is often less disruptive to travel. Boat trips to the islands do not run during the height of the monsoon.

Malaysia's climate varies hugely from region to region, so the best time to visit the country depends on the traveller's itinerary. That is, a visitor's interest in specific regions and activities will be deciding factors. For dry weather seekers, June and July are the best time to visit on the east coast, January and February on the west coast, April in Sabah, and June to July in Sarawak.

Some people prefer to travel in the rainy season for various reasons, but it is never advisable to travel at the height of monsoon season, as the heavy rains can disrupt travel arrangements and getting around is difficult.

Health Notes when travelling to Malaysia

Some tropical illnesses are prevalent in Malaysia and travellers should seek medical advice regarding any recommended vaccinations before travelling. Hepatitis A and hepatitis B are common, as is dengue fever, which has no vaccination or immunisation.

There has been an increase in cases of dengue fever in recent years. Malaria risks are isolated to the inland regions; the exception is Sabah, where there is a year-round risk. Travellers who are arriving from or have transited through infected areas require a yellow fever vaccination certificate.

Visitors may also be advised to get vaccinations for rabies, typhoid and Japanese encephalitis, depending on their travel itineraries in Malaysia. It's best to drink bottled water and avoid uncooked meat, fish and vegetables, unpeeled fruit, ice and salads.

A further health hazard in Malaysia is smoke haze and air pollution, particularly in Kuala Lumpur, which has some of the poorest air quality in Asia. The very high Benzene pollution levels could aggravate cardiac or respiratory problems. Hospitals in Kuala Lumpur and other major Malaysian cities are of a high standard but medical facilities may be lacking in rural areas. Comprehensive medical insurance is recommended.

Safety Notes when travelling to Malaysia

Malaysia is a generally safe travel destination, where visitors should nevertheless practice normal precautions against crime. That is, they should stay alert and avoid displaying conspicuous wealth. They should also be wary of petty crimes such as bag-snatching and pick-pocketing. Tourists should use hotel safes and duplicate travel documents. Remote parts of eastern and northern Sabah carry some threat of kidnappings by militant Filipino groups.

Customs in Malaysia

Malaysia is largely Muslim and therefore Islamic customs should be respected, especially during the month of Ramadan when eating, drinking and smoking in public should be avoided, as it is forbidden by Islamic law. Dress, particularly for women, should be conservative, and arms and legs should be covered when visiting places of worship. It is customary to remove shoes before entering homes and places of worship. When eating or exchanging money, the right hand is used. Homosexuality is illegal.

Travel guide for Malaysia © 2019 by Travel Media Ltd. By its very nature much of the information in this travel guide is subject to change at short notice and travellers are urged to verify information on which they're relying with the relevant authorities. Travel Media cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above. Event details can change. Please check with the organizers that an event is happening before making travel arrangements. We cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above.

Duty Free in Malaysia

Travellers to Malaysia do not have to pay customs duty on 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 225g tobacco; 1 litre wine, spirits or malt liquor; cosmetic products to the value of RM 200; up to three new items of clothing and one pair of footwear; one portable electrical or battery-operated appliance for personal hygiene; food preparations to the value of RM 75; other goods to the value of RM 400 (with the exception of goods from Langkawi and Labuan, to the value of RM 500). Prohibited items include goods from Haiti, counterfeit money and illegal drugs.

Doing Business in Malaysia

Those looking to do business in Malaysia are strongly urged to research some of the cultural complexities of the country, which is home to different ethnic groups. Although the Malaysian business world has largely succeeded in establishing a unified ethos for itself, it is important to understand that visitors might deal with people from different ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian being the most common), and that their expectations and conduct might need to adjust accordingly. The defining characteristic of business culture in Malaysia is respect for, and deference to authority. Authority figures are identified more by skills, wisdom and temperament, than by powerful positions and strict hierarchy.

The Malaysian style of management, it follows, is less goal-driven, and more holistic, than in some Western cultures, with managers taking a personal interest in the well-being of their employees. Business etiquette in Malaysia is marked by sensitivity and diplomacy. The golden rule is never to cause another to 'lose face' in professional company; the wilful, or even careless, humiliation of even a subordinate, is considered anathema in the Malaysian business world. Business meetings in Malaysia usually convene punctually, but can be subject to a lot of 'small talk' and personal digressions. Attendees shouldn't get impatient, as this is seen as an important function of meetings in Malaysia, where the agenda is not always as important as the relationships between people that meetings serve to develop.

Business cards are usually exchanged upon meeting new associates. People give and receive cards with their right hand, supported by the left, and never fold or put away a card without looking at it first. Details are printed in Chinese on the reverse side of cards. The dress code for business is typically Western, with smart, formal clothes being worn. Men generally wear white shirts and ties (jackets to be worn to meetings); while women, since Malaysia is home to a large Muslim population, should dress more conservatively than they might be used to doing at home. English is widely spoken in Malaysia, and commonly used in most businesses. Business hours are generally Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.

Communication in Malaysia

The international access code for Malaysia is +60. International Direct Dial is available throughout the country, but the service can be erratic. Hotels can add a hefty surcharge to their telephone bills; it is best to check before making international calls. Cafes, hotels and restaurants offer free WiFi in most tourist areas. Buying a local SIM card is a cheaper alternative to using international roaming.

Tipping in Malaysia

Although tipping is not customary in Malaysia, the more expensive hotels and restaurants add a 10 percent service charge to their bills and further gratuity is unnecessary. All hotel rooms are subject to a six percent government tax, though many cheaper hotels quote a price inclusive of this tax.

Passport/Visa Note

Foreign passengers to Malaysia are required to hold return/onward tickets, and the necessary travel documentation for their next destination. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required to enter Malaysia if travellers are arriving from or have transited through an infected area. It is highly recommended that visitors' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Entry Requirements

Entry requirements for Americans:

US citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days.

Entry requirements for Canadians:

Canadian citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days.

Entry requirements for UK nationals:

UK citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days.

Travel guide information is subject to change at short notice and travellers are urged to verify information on which they're relying with the relevant authorities. Travmarket cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above. Event details can change. Please check with the organizers that an event is happening before making travel arrangements. We cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above.

Entry requirements for Australians:

Australian citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days. Note that visa exemptions apply to holders of an APEC business travel card, provided that the back of the card states that it is valid for travel to Malaysia.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals:

Irish citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders:

New Zealand citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days. Note that visa exemptions apply to holders of an APEC business travel card, provided that the back of the card states that it is valid for travel to Malaysia.

Entry requirements for South Africans:

South African citizens must have a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of their arrival in Malaysia. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days.

Tourist Offices

Malaysian Tourist Website: <http://www.tourism.gov.my>

Malaysia Embassies

In the United States:

Malaysian Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 572 9700.

In Canada:

Malaysian High Commission, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 241 5182.

In the United Kingdom:

Malaysian Embassy, London, United Kingdom: +44 20 7235 8033.

In Australia:

Malaysian High commission, Canberra, Australia: +61 2 61 200 300.

In Ireland:

Malaysian Embassy, Dublin, Ireland: +353 1 667 7280.

In New Zealand:

Malaysian High Commission, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 4 385 2439.

In South Africa:

Malaysian High Commission, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 12 342 5990.

Foreign Embassies in Malaysia

American Embassy

United States Embassy, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2168 5000.

Canadian Embassy

Canadian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2718 3333.

British Embassy

British High Commission, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2170 2200.

Australian Embassy

Australian High Commission, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2146 5555.

Irish Embassy

Irish Embassy, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2167 8200.

New Zealand Embassy

New Zealand High Commission, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2078 2533.

South African Embassy

South African High Commission, Kuala Lumpur: +60 3 2170 2400.

Currency

The official currency is the Malaysian Ringgit (MYR), also referred to as the Malaysian Dollar, which is divided into 100 sen. Money changers are generally quicker to deal with than banks and do not charge commission; their rates however are variable. British Pounds or US Dollars are the easiest to exchange. All major credit cards are accepted at upmarket hotels, shops and restaurants. ATMs are widely available.

Exchange rate for 1 MYR - Malaysian Ringgit

0.00 BMD Bermudan Dollar	0.20 EUR Euro	0.21 USD U.S. Dollar	0.17 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	32.28 JPY Japanese Yen	0.29 CAD Canadian Dollar
0.19 CHF Swiss Franc	0.32 AUD Australian Dollar	8.31 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	93.66 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	19,638.19 LBP Lebanese Pound	1.02 LYD Libyan Dinar
1.45 BOB Bolivian Boliviano	0.00 NPR Nepalese Rupee	0.00 OMR Omani Rial	0.00 QAR Qatari Rial	0.29 SGD Singapore Dollar	2.28 SEK Swedish Krona
0.00 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar	0.00 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	12.26 DOP Dominican Peso	0.00 HRK Croatian Kuna	3.58 MXN Mexican Peso	128.82 XOF West African CFA Franc
0.00 PGK Papua New Guinean kina	0.00 BSD Bahamian Dollar	0.00 FJD Fiji Dollar	0.00 HNL Honduran Lempira	28.25 DZD Algerian Dinar	0.00 MMK Myanma Kyat
0.00 BWP Botswana Pula	0.79 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	198.00 CLP Chilean Peso	81.62 AMD Armenia Dram	4.91 CZK Czech Koruna	3.72 MDL Moldova Lei
29.52 ISK Icelandic Krona	2,654.80 UZS Uzbekistan Sum	0.78 ILS Israeli New Sheqel	0.15 JOD Jordanian Dinar	0.00 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	8.05 UYU Uruguayan Peso
0.00 MUR Mauritian Rupee	0.00 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	2.30 NOK Norwegian Krone	0.85 PLN Polish Zloty	0.79 SAR Saudi Riyal	0.00 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee
7.76 THB Thai Baht	0.77 AED U.A.E Dirham	1.07 BRL Brazilian Real	0.98 RON Romanian New Leu	1.65 HKD Hong Kong Dollar	128.82 XAF Central African CFA Franc
5,360.43 VND Vietnamese Dong	185.33 ARS Argentine Peso	0.00 XCD East Caribbean Dollar	0.00 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	2.12 MAD Moroccan Dirham	0.00 BHD Bahrain Dinar
0.21 PAB Panamanian Balboa	0.36 AZN Azerbaijan Manat	827.09 COP Colombian Peso	18.66 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	76.38 HUF Hungarian Forint	2.30 TJS Tajikistan Ruble
3,391.44 IDR Indonesian Rupiah	10.12 EGP Egyptian Pound	286.71 KRW South Korean Won	1,573.27 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	107.25 CRC Costa Rican Colón	0.35 NZD New Zealand Dollar
58.63 PKR Pakistani Rupee	19.28 RUB Russian Rouble	3.91 ZAR South African Rand	0.66 TND Tunisian Dinar	0.00 BBD Barbadian Dollar	0.38 BGN Bulgarian Lev
6.82 TRY Turkish Lira	12.09 PHP Philippine Peso	6.82 TWD New Taiwan Dollar	245.77 NGN Nigerian Naira	0.00 XPF CFP Franc	0.00 GHS Ghanaian Cedi
0.00 JMD Jamaican Dollar	0.00 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	0.00 BND Brunei Dollar	22.98 RSD Serbian Dinar	1.53 CNY Chinese Yuan	1.46 DKK Danish Krone
0.74 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	17.60 INR Indian Rupee				

Overview of the Attractions in Malaysia

Malaysia offers holidaymakers a textured adventure, in which gleaming skyscrapers stand alongside colonial buildings, and verdant rainforests stretch all the way down to pristine beaches. Visitors come to play, to unwind, to connect with nature, and to ride the energy of a titan among Southeast Asian cities: Kuala Lumpur.

On the cultural side, tourists are exposed to some of the region's most well-known peoples and some of its rarer groups. Every one of them has imprinted on the place, adding new notes to its character. Jungle walks, ancient caves, stunning mosques, isolated villages and the world's most diverse marine ecosystem are part of the experience.

All in all, the destination's attractions celebrate Asia's history, and some of its best features.

Public Holidays in Malaysia

	2023	2024
Chinese New Year	Mon. January 22	Wed. January 24
Labour Day	Wed. May 1	Wed. May 1
Independence Day (Merdeka Day)	Sat. August 31	Sat. August 31
Malaysia Day	Mon. September 16	Mon. September 16
Hari Raya Aidil-Fitri (End of Ramadan)	Sun. April 21 to Tue. April 23	Tue. April 9 to Thu. April 11
Deepavali (Except Labuan and Sarawak)	Tue. November 12 to Wed. November 13	Thu. October 31
Hari Raya Haji (Feast of the Sacrifice)	Sat. June 29 to Sun. June 30	Mon. June 17 to Tue. June 18
Awal Muharram (Islamic New Year)	Thu. July 18 to Fri. July 19	Sun. July 7 to Mon. July 8
Christmas Day	Wed. December 25	Wed. December 25
Agong's Birthday	Mon. September 9	Mon. September 9
Wesak Day	Sat. May 4	Wed. May 22
Mawlid al-Nabi (Birth of Prophet Muhammad)	Sat. September 28	Mon. September 16