



USEFUL INFORMATION FOR TRIPS TO MALAYSIA





AIRLINES

International: See below under Arrival in Malaysia

Domestic: 3 domestic airlines are currently operating in Malaysia:

- Air Asia (AK), Mas Wings (Malaysia Airlines Low Cost carrier) (MH), Firefly (FY), Malindo Air (OD), Cebu Pacific, Tiger Airways, Jetstar, Lion Air, Lucky Air

ARRIVAL IN MALAYSIA

BY AIR

Consult your local travel agent for routings, fares and availability on flights to Malaysia. Discount websites and flight search engines may offer some good deals. Major airlines flying to Kuala Lumpur include: Malaysian Airlines (MH), British Airways (BA), Air China (CA), Etihad Airways (EY), Emirates (EK), China Southern (CZ), Turkish Airlines (TK), Qatar Airways (QR), Ethiopian Airways (ET), Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines, KLM, Jet Airways.

FLYING INTO SABAH AND SARAWAK FROM KUALA LUMPUR

Flights between Kuala Lumpur and Borneo will take approx. 2hours to Kuching and 2hours 40min to Kota Kinabalu. There are several flights daily making an easy connection between West Malaysia and Borneo Malaysia.

BY LAND

Malaysia shares a border with Thailand in the north. If you want to travel between Malaysia and Thailand using the train, then the Padang Besar Border is the best place to go to if you are heading to or from either Penang, Langkawi or Kuala Lumpur from or to Hat Yai in Thailand. At Padang Besar the train line ends and you will need to change trains and pass through Immigration by foot.

ARRIVAL FORMALITIES AND VISA

The majority of Western countries will receive permission of entry on arrival for 90 days travel (Single Entry). When travelling from Kuala Lumpur to Sabah or Sarawak you will be required to go through immigration for your passport to receive an entry stamp.

AIRPORT TAX

There is no airport Tax on arrival or departure in Malaysia.

ATMs

ATMs for withdrawing Malaysian Ringgit are available in major airports, hotels, towns and capitals of provinces throughout Malaysia. Most ATMs have an English language version. Ask your tour guide for help when you need to locate an ATM. Malaysian ringgit is available in denominations of RM1, RM5, RM10, RM20, RM50, and RM100 notes. ATMs usually only dispense denominations of RM50 and RM100.



CLOTHING

Comfortable lightweight clothing that is breathable and quick drying in natural fabrics is most suitable for travelling in Malaysia as the climate is hot and humid all year around. The dress code is fairly casual as in most parts of the tropics but it is advisable to cover arms and legs in the evenings against biting insects. You will also be passing through several Muslim Communities and may have a visit to a mosque where it is required to cover arms and legs.

A lightweight raincoat is a necessity all year round as daily tropical showers is common throughout the year. An umbrella is also a good idea and can also offer useful shade from the sun. Sturdy shoes that have good soles for walking and are breathable and waterproof or quick drying are recommended.

CLIMATE

Malaysia has a tropical climate 12 months of the year with regular rain showers. Depending on where you are going however, there will be differing monsoon seasons.

Kuala Lumpur is hot throughout the year and maintains a regular temperature of 30-32(Celsius) consistent rainfall. Afternoon thunderstorms are common. Sabah and Sarawak are very similar although the deeper you get to the rainforest the wetter you may find it is. July and August is the driest time of year (however still with potential daily showers).

Langkawi is dry during the months of Dec, Jan and Feb while the East coast of Malaysia Peninsular (Pulau Perhentian, Redang, Tioman and other smaller islands) are hit by the monsoon season from 31Oct through to mid-march and most likely will shut down for travel.

CREDIT CARDS

Most credit cards are accepted in Malaysia. VISA and MASTERCARD are the most widely accepted. Not all hotels, commercial centers, shops and restaurants accept credit cards. Check with the cashier before making any purchases.

Bear in mind that in some places a surcharge usually applies for credit card purchases: this varies depending on which credit card is used but is normally in the range between 2% – 4%.

NOTE: Surcharges can change without prior notice. Check the percentage charged before you pay.

ELECTRICITY

Malaysia mainly uses 220V-240V but in most areas. The 3-pin outlet is used throughout the country (The same plug as the UK).

TIME

Malaysia is GMT +8 and does not operate on a daylight-savings system.

RELIGION

The official religion in Malaysia is Islam. You will also find Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and traditional Chinese religions being practiced. Many other faiths are also practiced such as Animism, Folk Religion, Sikhism, Baha'i Faith and other belief systems.



ETHNIC GROUPS

Malaysia has many different ethnic groups living in the country. These include Malays, Chinese, Indians, and other indigenous Bumiputra groups. The demographic composition in the country are as follows: Over 50 percent are Malay; 23 percent Chinese; 7 percent Indian 11.8 percent Indigenous; 1 percent Other. This multicultural context makes Malaysia a highly rich society, with diverse religions, foods, culture, and customs.

FOOD

Malaysia is a country of diversity, and the food reflects that. Chinese, Indian, and local southeast Asian Malay flavors are the trio blend of ingredients and cooking techniques that have been adopted into Malaysian cuisine. Across the country, in cities like Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Malacca, you'll find authentic Chinese food, Indian food exactly as it is found in India, and home-cooked Malay specialities.

HEALTH

Check the vaccines and medicines list and visit your doctor (ideally, 4-6 weeks) before your trip to get vaccines or medicines you may need. It is always recommended to ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including repatriation.

INTERNET

The Majority of hotels will have access to wifi. Local restaurants and establishments will not have the internet and in remote areas it will be limited so should not be relied upon. It is also reasonable to buy a local sim card on arrival into Malaysia (for unlocked phones) and to buy an internet package. Digi, Maxis or Celcom are recommended.

LANGUAGE

The official language in Malaysia is Bahasa Melayu (simply called 'Malaysian' or informally 'Bahasa'). When compared to some tonal Asian languages such as Thai, Vietnamese, and Mandarin, the Malaysian language is relatively easy for travelers to speak and learn. Bahasa Melayu doesn't use tones, and the rules of pronunciation are very straightforward and predictable. Even more convenient, the English alphabet is used — travellers can read signs and menus a lot easier than when trying to decipher an unfamiliar script. Although the official language is Bahasa Melayu, a majority of the population also speaks English due to the large mix of ethnic backgrounds. Business is often conducted in English with heavy doses of regional slang thrown in. English often serves as the working language at universities and in government offices.



ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT There is plenty of entertainment options in Kuala Lumpur and Penang with many western restaurants and bars and nightclubs open until late at night. In Kota Kinabalu you can frequent the waterfront Area where you will find bars and restaurants open to early hours of the morning and will play sports and have live music. Most other places in Malaysia Bars will be limited. Alcohol will be difficult to find in predominate Muslim areas. Most hotels will serve Alcohol.

A wide variety of restaurants are on offer (Refer to Cuisine).

HOURS OF BUSINESS

Business hours will usually be from 08:00/09:00 – 17:00/18:00. Shopping Malls may open at 10:00. On Fridays some business will shut between 12:15 – 14:45 to allow the Muslims to perform their prayers. Banks operate 5 days a week and most establishments will close for the weekend on Saturday and Sunday.

SHOPPING

There is never a shortage of shopping malls in all cities. Local Markets selling souvenirs and fresh/dry products can be found in most large towns. You can find Batik and local crafts, woodwork, pottery when travelling through Malaysia but they maybe difficult to find so please ask your guide if you have something specific you are looking for and they can recommend to you where to find.

TIPPING

Tipping for good service is not expected but is always appreciated in Malaysia. It is customary, though not compulsory, to tip tour guides and drivers at the end of a tour. Hotel and station porters should also be tipped a small amount for their troubles.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN MALAYSIA & POSSIBLE DISRUPTIONS TO TOUR PROGRAMS

Generally, Malaysia has quite a number of public holidays both at National Level and State Level. During Malaysia's Public Holidays, expect Government Offices to be closed, as well as some shops and restaurants, depending on the ethnicity of the owners of the shops and restaurants. Some privately owned tourist attractions such as museums may also be closed. The religious public holidays are the main holidays that may affect travel plans and tour programs. Ramadan — the Muslim holy month of fasting — is observed throughout Malaysia, as is Chinese New Year and Hari Merdeka, Malaysian independence day on August 31. The Rainforest World Music Festival held each summer in Sarawak, Borneo, is one of the largest music festivals in Asia. The three-day event is a celebration of indigenous culture and daily workshops followed by bands from around the world. Because of the sizable Indian population, some big Indian festivals such as Holi are observed in parts of Malaysia.

Below is a list of the public holidays that may affect the tour program and visits.



#	HOLIDAY	DATE/S	REMARKS
1.	<p>Chinese New Year</p> <p>Note :</p> <p>Traffic conditions heading to most parts of the country would be heavy as Malaysians would take the opportunity to return to their hometowns</p>	16-17 Feb '18 / 05-06 Feb '19	<p>Kuala Lumpur :</p> <p>Some shops in Chinatown / Central Market may be closed.</p> <p>Malacca :</p> <p>Baba & Nyonya Museum and some shops are closed.</p> <p>Penang :</p> <p>Khoo Kongsi will normally be closed together with some shops</p>
2.	<p>Thaipusam</p> <p>Note :</p> <p>Traffic in and around Bt Caves would be extremely heavy</p> <p>Traffic during the processions would be heavy with some road closures</p>	21 Jan '19	<p>Kuala Lumpur :</p> <p>Visit to Bt Caves will be affected as there would be close to million Hindu devotees congregating there. Also the chariot procession would cause some roads to be closed.</p> <p>Penang :</p> <p>Another site where thousands of devotees will be congregating in 02 major temples and also has the chariot procession which involves a few road closures</p>
3.	<p>Hari Raya Aidil Fitri</p> <p>Note :</p> <p>Traffic conditions heading to most parts of the country would be heavy as Malaysians would take the opportunity to return to their hometowns</p> <p>Mosques are opened as usual but the first day of Hari Raya will have a huge crowd for the Hari Raya Prayers (8am-10am)</p>	15-16 Jun '18 / 05-06 Jun '19	<p>Kuala Lumpur :</p> <p>Malay owned shops are closed. Petronas Observation Deck closed Islamic Arts Museum closed National Museum closed</p> <p>Malacca :</p> <p>Main attractions are open</p> <p>Penang :</p> <p>Main attractions are open</p>
4.	<p>Hari Raya Haji</p>	22 Aug '18 / 11-12 Aug '19	<p>Kuala Lumpur :</p>



Note :

Traffic conditions may be higher than usual especially to East Coast

Most of attractions in East Coast (Kota Bharu) would be closed

5. **National Day**

31 Aug '18 / 31 Aug '19

Note :

Access to Independence Square maybe limited /closed few days before, during and after for the National Day Parade

Malay owned shops are closed.
Petronas Observation Deck closed
Islamic Arts Museum closed
National Museum closed

Malacca :

Main attractions are open

Penang :

Main attractions are open

Kuala Lumpur :

No major closure.
Independence Square and surrounding area may not be accessible due to National Day Parade. Vehicles would need to be parked quite a distance as roads leading to the Square would be closed

Malacca :

No major disruptions /closures

Penang :

No major disruptions/closures



ALL PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

DATES	HOLIDAY	STATE
01-Jan-19	New Year's Day	All States EXCEPT Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis & Terengganu
01-Feb-19	Federal Territory Day	Kuala Lumpur, Labuan & Putrajaya
21-Jan-19	Thaipusam *	Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya, Johor, Negeri Sembilan, Perak, Penang & Selangor
05-Feb-19	Chinese New Year	ALL States
06-Feb-19	Chinese New Year 2nd Day	ALL States
19-Apr-19	Easter - Good Friday	Sabah & Sarawak
15-Apr-19	Declaration of Melaka as a Historical City	Melaka
26-Apr-19	Sultan of Terengganu's Birthday	Terengganu
01-May-19	Labour Day	ALL States
19-May-19	Wesak Day	ALL States
30-May-19	Harvest Festival	Sabah & Labuan
31-May-19	Harvest Festival 2nd Day	Sabah & Labuan
01-Jun-19	Hari Gawai	Sarawak
02-Jun-19	Hari Gawai 2nd Day	Sarawak
06-May-19	Awal Ramadan (start of Ramadan) *	Johor, Kedah & Melaka
22-May-19	Nuzul Al-Quran	Kelantan, Kuala Lumpur, Labuan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Penang, Putrajaya, Selangor & Terengganu
07-Jul-19	Georgetown World Heritage City Day	Penang
13-Jul-19	Penang Governor's Birthday	ALL States
05-Jun-19	Hari Raya Aidilfitri (end of Ramadan)	ALL States
06-Jun-19	Hari Raya Aidilfitri 2nd Day (end of Ramadan)	ALL States
31-Aug-19	National Day/Merdeka Day	ALL States
16-Sep-19	Malaysia Day	ALL States
11-Aug-19	Hari Raya Haji	ALL States
12-Aug-19	Hari Raya Haji 2nd Day	Kedah, Kelantan, Perlis & Terengganu
02-Sep-19	Awal Muharram	ALL States
24-Oct-19	Sultan of Pahang's Birthday	Pahang
27-Oct-19	Deepavali	All States (EXCEPT Sarawak)
28-Oct-19	Deepavali (REPLACEMENT)	All States (EXCEPT Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Sarawak & Terengganu)
11-Nov-19	Prophet Muhammad's Birthday	ALL States
25-Dec-19	Christmas	ALL States