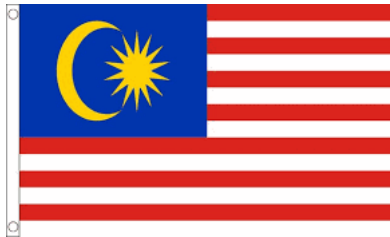


Country Summary - Malaysia



1) Location - Infrastructure

- Malaysia is a Southeast Asian country occupying parts of the Malay Peninsula and the island of Borneo. It's known for its beaches, rainforests and mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and European cultural influences
- Time – Zone – GMT +8
- The capital, Kuala Lumpur, is home to colonial buildings, busy shopping districts such as Bukit Bintang and skyscrapers such as the iconic, 451m-tall Petronas Twin Towers
- It is the largest city in Malaysia and it's the main commercial and financial centre, Putrajaya is the seat of the federal government
- The country consists of 13 states and 3 federal territories. It is bordered by Thailand in the North and Singapore in the South
- Malaysia's road network is one of the most comprehensive in Asia and covers a total of 144,403 kilometres. Rail transport in Malaysia comprises heavy rail (KTM), light rapid transit (LRT) and monorail (Rapid Rail), and a funicular railway line (Penang Hill Railway)
- The official currency is the Malaysian Ringgit (MYR). It is a closed currency that cannot be exchanged outside of the country.

2) Demographics

- In 2020 the official population of Malaysia was 32.7m. Due to the rise in labour-intensive industries
- The country is estimated to have over 3 million migrant workers (2m illegal)
- Malaysia has an average population density of 96 people per km², ranking 116th in the world for population density. People within the 15–64 age group constitute 69.5 percent of the total population; the 0–14 age group corresponds to 24.5 percent; while senior citizens aged 65 years or older make up 6.0 percent
- The country is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. About 50% are Malay
- The official language is Malaysian (Bahasa) with English an active second language.
- Islam is the countries established & recognised religion

3) Culture & Religion

- Islam is the countries established & recognised religion
- Malaysian citizens are divided along local ethnic lines, with 68.8 per cent considered *bumiputera*. The largest group of bumiputera are Malays, who are defined in the constitution as Muslims who practice Malay customs and culture. They play a dominant role politically. 23.2 per cent of the population are Malaysian Chinese, while 7 per cent are Malaysian Indian.

- Approximately 61.3% of the population practice Islam, 19.8% practice Buddhism, 9.2% Christianity, 6.3% Hinduism and 1.3% practice Confucianism, Taoism and other traditional Chinese religions. Sunni Islam of Shafi'i school of jurisprudence is the dominant branch of Islam, while 18% are nondenominational Muslims
- 83.6% of the Chinese population identify as Buddhist, with significant numbers following Taoism (3.4%) and Christianity (11.1%), along with small Muslim populations in areas like Penang
- The majority of the Indian population follow Hinduism (86.2%), with a significant minority identifying as Christians (6.0%) or Muslims (4.1%). Christianity is the predominant religion of the non-Malay *bumiputera* community (46.5%) with an additional 40.4% identifying as Muslims.
- The Chinese make up about one-quarter of the population, but accounts for 70 per cent of the country's market capitalisation. The local Chinese have historically been more dominant in the business community
- Local Indian are majority of Tamil descent
- Muslims are obliged to follow the decisions of Syariah Courts (i.e. Shariah courts) in matters concerning their religion.

4) Citizenship & Visas

- Malaysian citizenship is not automatically granted to those born in Malaysia, but is granted to a child born of two Malaysian parents outside Malaysia. Dual citizenship is not permitted.
- British visitors entering Malaysia do not need a Visa and can stay up to 3 months without one.

5) Political

- In 1957, Malaysia gained independence and remains part of the Commonwealth.
- The head of state is an elected monarch chosen from the nine state sultans every 5 years. The head of government is the prime minister
- Government is based on the Westminster parliamentary system and the legal system is based on common law
- It is a founding member of ASEAN, EAS, OIC and a member of APEC, the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement
- Freedom of the press is limited, with numerous restrictions on publishing rights and information dissemination.

6) Economic

- After independence (1957) the Malaysian GDP grew at an average 6.5% per annum for about 50 years. The economy is generally fuelled by the natural resources and is expanding into science, tourism, commerce and medical tourism
- International trade, facilitated by the shipping route in adjacent Strait of Malacca, and manufacturing are the key sectors.
- Malaysia is an exporter of natural and agricultural resources, and petroleum is a major export. Malaysia has once been the largest producer of tin, rubber and palm oil in the world. Manufacturing has a large influence in the country's economy,

although Malaysia's economic structure has been moving away from it. Malaysia remains one of the world's largest producers of palm oil.

- Malaysia has a newly industrialised market economy, ranked third-largest in Southeast Asia and 33rd-largest in the world - Malaysia has all the right ingredients to become a developed nation
- Malaysia's economy in 2014–2015 was one of the most competitive in Asia, ranking 6th in Asia and 20th in the world
- According to an HSBC report, Malaysia will become the world's 21st largest economy by 2050, with a GDP of \$1.2 trillion and a GDP per capita of \$29,247
- The country has developed into a centre of [Islamic banking](#), and is the country with the highest numbers of female workers in that industry.

7) Social

- The tourism sector came under pressure in 2014 when a plane from the national carrier, Malaysia Airlines, disappeared in March, and another was brought down by a missile over Ukraine in July, resulting in the loss of a total 537 passengers and crew.
- In 2016, Malaysia ranked fifth in The World's Best Retirement Havens and No.1 in Asia. A warm climate combined with a British colonial background makes it easy for foreigners to interact with locals
- Every citizen is issued a biometric smart chip identity card known as [MyKad](#) at the age of 12, and must be carried at all times.
- The education system features a non-compulsory kindergarten education followed by six years of compulsory primary education, and five years of optional secondary education. Schools in the primary education system are divided into two categories: national primary schools, which teach in Malay, and vernacular schools, which teach in Chinese or Tamil. Secondary education lasts five years. In the final year of secondary education, students sit the Malaysian Certificate of Education examination. Since the introduction of the [matriculation programme](#) in 1999, students who completed the 12-month programme in matriculation colleges can enrol at local universities. However, in the matriculation system, only 10 per cent of places are open to non-*bumiputera* students.
- Malaysia's cuisine reflects the multi-ethnic makeup of its population. Many cultures from within the country and from surrounding regions have greatly influenced the cuisine. Much of the influence comes from the Malay, Chinese, Indian, Thai, Javanese, and Sumatran cultures, largely due to the country being part of the ancient spice route. The cuisine is very similar to that of Singapore and Brunei, and also bears resemblance to Filipino cuisine. The different states have varied dishes, and often the food in Malaysia is different from the original dishes.
- The most observed national holiday is [Hari Merdeka](#) (Independence Day) on 31 August, commemorating the independence of the Federation of Malaya in 1957. Malaysia Day on 16 September commemorates federation in 1963. Other notable national holidays are Labour Day (1 May) and the King's birthday (first week of June).
- Muslim holidays are prominent; *Hari Raya Puasa* (also called *Hari Raya Aidilfitri*, Malay for Eid al-Fitr), *Hari Raya Haji* (also called *Hari Raya Aidiladha*, Malay for Eid ul-Adha), *Maulidur Rasul* (birthday of the Prophet), and others being observed. Malaysian Chinese celebrate festivals such as Chinese New Year and others relating to traditional Chinese beliefs. Wesak Day is observed and celebrated by Buddhists.

Hindus in Malaysia celebrate *Deepavali*, the festival of lights. Malaysia's Christian community celebrates most of the holidays observed by Christians elsewhere, most notably Christmas and Easter.

- Football is the most popular sport in Malaysia and the country is currently considering bidding as a joint host for 2034 FIFA World Cup. Badminton matches also attract thousands of spectators.

Technology

- The country's telecommunications network is second only to Singapore's in Southeast Asia, with 4.7 million fixed-line subscribers and more than 30 million cellular subscribers. The telecommunication network, although strong in urban areas, is less available to the rural population.

Payments Network

- Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd ([PayNet](#)) is the national payments network and shared central infrastructure for Malaysia's financial markets
- Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is PayNet's single largest shareholder, with eleven Malaysian's financial institutions namely, Malayan Banking Berhad, RHB Bank Berhad, Public Bank Berhad, CIMB Bank Berhad, AmBank (M) Berhad, Hong Leong Bank Berhad, Affin Bank Berhad, Alliance Bank Malaysia Berhad, Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad, Bank Muamalat Malaysia Berhad and Bank Kerjasama Rakyat Malaysia Berhad, as joint shareholders. Their vision is to empower Malaysia's digital economy