

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation in Kuala Lumpur (KL), Melaka and Penang ranges from sky-scraping five-star hotels to grungy backpacker dives that scrape the bottom of the barrel. The good news is that accommodation is refreshingly inexpensive, even at the top end of the market. Outside of public holidays (around major festivals such as Chinese New Year in January/February) most midrange and top-end hotels offer big discounts – always ask about special offers.

For the purposes of this book, we have divided accommodation up into the following categories: budget is for rooms under RM70; midrange from RM71 to RM200 per room and top end at RM201 and above per room.

## BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

Promotional rates can bring rooms at many top-end hotels into the midrange category. A 5% government tax applies to all hotel rooms (including at cheaper hotels) and almost all top-end hotels levy an additional 10% service charge. Credit cards are widely accepted at midrange and top-end hotels; cash payment is expected at cheaper places.

As a rule, budget hotels offer poky boxy rooms, often with thin plywood partition walls and no windows; you normally have a choice of private or shared bathrooms and fan or air-conditioning. At midrange hotels air-con is standard, and rooms typically have TVs, phones, proper wardrobes and other appealing mod cons. Some offer full top-end facilities – restaurants, business centres and swimming pools – at midrange prices.

Top-end hotels in Malaysia pull out all the stops. Rooms have every conceivable amenity, from in-room internet access (typically over a LAN cable), to safes, minibars, slippers and robes, and even prayer mats for Muslim guests. Top-end hotels typically quote prices as ++ (called plus-plus), which means the 10% service charge and 5% government tax haven't been included in the price. We quote net prices for all budget and midrange places.

## Camping

Camping is possible on Pulau Besar near Melaka (see p163) and in Penang National Park (p207), Teluk Bahang Forest Reserve (p206) and Pulau Jerejak (p204) near Penang. The **Forest Research Institute of Malaysia** (FRIM; Map pp72-3; ☎ 6279 7575; [www.frim.gov.my](http://www.frim.gov.my); Selangor Darul Ehsan; admission RM5) also allows camping if you get permission in advance. Most sites are fairly

**PRACTICALITIES**

- The electricity supply (220–240V, 50 cycles) is highly reliable – sockets take a UK-type three-square-pin plug.
- English-language newspapers include the *New Straits Times*, the *Star* and the *Malay Mail*.
- Radio Malaysia has three main radio stations (KL frequencies given): HITZ FM (92.9 FM; top 40), MIX FM (94.5 FM; adult contemporary) and Light & Easy FM (105.7 FM; easy listening). Check locally for frequencies in Melaka and Penang. See [www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice) for details of local frequencies for BBC Radio World Service.
- Malaysia has two terrestrial government television channels, TV1 and TV2, and three commercial stations, TV3, NTV7 and TV9, plus a host of satellite channels on the Astro network.
- Malaysia follows the metric system for weights and measures.

simple – just flat spaces for tents and sometimes a toilet block (usually with non-potable water). Bring your own tent, preferably with a mosquito net; see p132.

**Homestays**

Homestays with Malaysian families are becoming increasingly popular. Options in this book include the cheerful Ben Soo Homestay (p103) in KL, and Desa Paku House & Garden (p165) at Alor Gajah. Penang also has some beautifully converted mansions that offer a homestay-type experience. Contact local offices of Tourism Malaysia (p225) for more information on local homestay programmes.

**Hostels & Guesthouses**

Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Penang all have cheap hostels and guesthouses, ranging from clusters of box rooms in city towers to informal huts on the beach. Most offer dorm beds (from as little as RM9) as well as basic rooms with shared or private bathrooms and a choice of fan or air-con. Seek out the smaller, family-owned places for a more relaxed, homestay-like experience. Many of these places do not provide a top sheet; bring a towel, blanket or sleeping bag–liner to keep the air-con chill at bay.

**Hotels**

All the cities in this book have numerous hotels, ranging from cheap Chinese-run places that target locals to five-star palaces that attract global high-fliers. Rooms almost always have telephones, air-con and private bathrooms, and extras such as TVs and fridges are usually available. In cheaper hotels, 'single' normally means one double bed, and 'double'

means two double beds – so four people can easily share a double room. To aid ventilation, the walls of cheaper rooms may not meet the ceiling, which is terrible for acoustics and privacy – bring earplugs.

In more upmarket hotels, 'superior' rooms are normally standard rooms, while 'deluxe' or 'club' rooms have better facilities. In many midrange hotels only the deluxe rooms have windows. Top-end hotels offer the same luxuries found worldwide – TVs, bathtubs, safes, minibars, hairdryers, tea- and coffee-making facilities and, off course, slippers and monogrammed terry robes.

**Resorts**

Penang Island and several other islands on the west coast have Asian-style beach resorts of varying standards, from simple huts to international-style resort hotels. Posher resorts have restaurants, swimming pools, evening entertainment and family-friendly beach activities.

**BUSINESS HOURS**

Most of Peninsular Malaysia works Monday to Friday, with Saturday a half day. Government offices are usually open from 8am to 4.15pm Monday to Friday. Most close for lunch from 12.45pm to 2pm (12.15pm to 2.45pm on Friday for Muslim prayers). Banks generally open 9.30am to 4.30pm on weekdays and 9.30am to noon on Saturday, though smaller branches may keep shorter hours.

Shop hours are variable – most are open from around 9.30am to 7pm from Monday to Saturday. Major department stores and shopping malls are open from around 10am until 9pm or 10pm, seven days a week.

**CHILDREN Practicalities**

KL, Melaka and Penang are great places to travel with children. Hygiene standards are high and you should be able to steer clear of stomach bugs by sticking to purified water, washing fruit, eating at more upmarket restaurants and making sure children wash their hands regularly (alcohol handwash is available from most pharmacies). Keep children away from animals, even friendly cats and dogs – rabies (p241) is a risk and even pets can carry skin diseases. For more on health issues, see p237.

There are discounts for children at most tourist attractions and for most transport options. Many beach resorts have special family chalets and hotels can often provide an extra bed, either free or for a small charge. However, cots are not widely available. Public transport is comfortable and relatively well organised, but pushing a stroller around can be a hassle with the high kerbs, bumpy pavements and missing drain covers.

Baby formula, baby food and nappies (diapers) are easily available; though it makes sense to stock up on these items before heading to remote destinations or islands. Crèche facilities are available at some large malls. Note that few taxis have car seats or seatbelts in the back seat – if you bring a child seat from home, the only place you can secure it is up front by the driver, although this is generally regarded as the most risky seat in the event of a crash.

Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan and others contains useful advice on how to cope with kids on the road and what to bring along to make things go more smoothly, with special attention paid to travelling in developing countries. Also useful for general advice is [www.travelwithyourkids.com](http://www.travelwithyourkids.com).

**Sights & Activities**

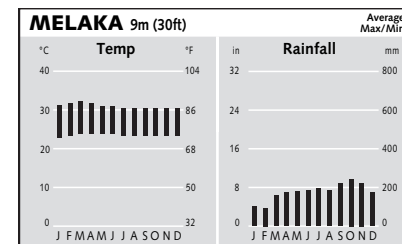
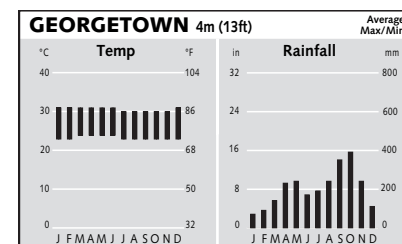
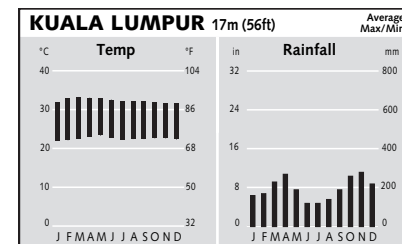
KL is the easiest place to keep small travellers amused. The big shopping malls are awash with kid-friendly entertainments – bowling, ice-skating, cinemas, comic book and toy shops – and there are numerous educational museums and family-focused theme parks and water-parks. KL also has a good zoo and aquarium. Other options include splashing around in jungle pools at forest reserves and some excellent parks and adventure playgrounds in KL, Melaka and Penang. For more

on these options, see the sections on activities for children in KL (p99), Melaka (p151) and Penang (p188).

**CLIMATE**

Lying just 2° to 7° north of the equator, Peninsular Malaysia is as hot and steamy as Tom Jones in a greenhouse. Temperatures and humidity are high year round, with temperatures rarely dropping below 20°C, even at night. In the cities, you can normally find somewhere with air-conditioning to escape to when the heat gets too much. The heat can feel even more oppressive in the jungle because of the increase in humidity.

Although Malaysia is monsoonal, only the east coast of the peninsula has a real rainy season – elsewhere there is just a little more rain than usual. Rain tends to arrive in brief torrential downpours, providing a welcome relief from the heat. During the monsoon



it may rain every day, but it rarely rains all day. Humidity tends to hover around the 90% mark, but you can always escape the clammy heat by retreating to the cooler hills.

For current weather forecasts check the website of the **Malaysian Meteorological Department** ([www.kjc.gov.my/english/weather/weather.html](http://www.kjc.gov.my/english/weather/weather.html)).

For tips on the best times to visit the region, see p17.

## COURSES

Numerous courses are possible in KL, Melaka and Penang, from Malay and Nonya cookery to language and art courses and lessons in traditional music, song and dance. KL has the widest selection of courses (see p98), but there are also some interesting options in Melaka (p150) and Penang (p187).

## CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

The following can be brought into Malaysia duty free: 1L of alcohol, 225g of tobacco (200 cigarettes or 50 cigars) and souvenirs and gifts not exceeding RM200 (RM500 when coming from Labuan or Langkawi). Cameras, portable radios, perfume, cosmetics and watches do not incur duty. Prohibited items include weapons (including imitations), fireworks and 'obscene and prejudicial articles' (pornography, for example, and items that may be considered inflammatory, or religiously offensive) and drugs. Heed this warning – drug smuggling carries the death penalty in Malaysia.

Visitors can carry only RM1000 in and out of Malaysia; there's no limit on foreign currency.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Malaysia is generally a safe country but the usual caveats apply – take care of your belongings, particularly in crowds, and be wary of walking alone late at night down unlit streets. Touting is not as big a problem in Malaysia as in neighbouring nations, but there are a few scams to look out for. Operators mentioned in this book have been checked by the authors and should be reliable. However, you should always check terms and conditions carefully.

## Animal Hazards

Rabies occurs in Malaysia, so any bite from an animal should be treated very seriously. Be cautious around monkeys, dogs and cats. On jungle treks look out for centipedes, scorpions, spiders and snakes. Mosquitoes are

likely to be the biggest menace. The risk of malaria is low and anti-malarial tablets are rarely recommended but dengue fever (p240) is a growing problem, so take precautions to avoid mosquito bites by covering up exposed skin or wearing a strong repellent containing DEET. See p243 for advice on how to deal with bites, including snake bites, and stings.

## Scams

The most common scams involve seemingly friendly locals who invite you to join rigged card games, or shops who trick travellers into buying large amounts of gold jewellery or gems at elevated prices. You can normally identify people who do not have your best interests at heart by their manner. Anyone who accosts you in the street asking 'where you come from' or claiming to have a 'relative studying abroad' may be setting you up for a scam – the best option is not to reply at all. At the Malaysia-Thailand border, don't believe anyone who claims that you are legally required to change sums of money into ringgit or baht before crossing the border – no such regulation exists.

## Theft & Violence

Malaysia is not particularly prone to theft or violence. Nevertheless it pays to keep a close eye on your belongings, especially your travel documents (passport, travellers cheques etc). Muggings do happen, particularly after-hours and in the poorer, run-down areas of cities. Be wary of demonstrations, particularly over religious or ethnic issues, as these can turn violent.

Credit-card fraud is a growing problem in Malaysia. Use your cards only at established businesses and guard your credit-card numbers closely. See p223 for more hassles involving credit cards in Malaysia.

It's worth carrying a small, sturdy padlock for cheap hotel-room doors and hostel lockers and to keep prying fingers out of your bags in left-luggage rooms.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

A Hostelling International (HI) card can be used to waive the small initial membership fee at some hostels, YMCAs and YWCAs. An international student identity card (ISIC) offers some useful discounts, though many student discounts, such as for train travel, are available only for Malaysian students. Seniors qualify for many discounts with proof of age.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

The following countries are among nations with diplomatic representation in Malaysia. Unless mentioned otherwise, all are in Kuala Lumpur (☎ 03).

**Australia** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 2146 5555; [www.australia.org.my](http://www.australia.org.my); 6 Jln Yap Kwan Seng)

**Brunei** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2161 2800; Level 19, Menara Tan & Tan, 207 Jln Tun Razak)

**Canada** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2718 3333; [kualalumpur.gc.ca](http://kualalumpur.gc.ca); Level 17, Menara Tan & Tan, 207 Jln Tun Razak)

**Cambodia** (off Map pp72-3; ☎ 4257 1150; [reclt@tm.net.my](http://reclt@tm.net.my); 83/JKR 2809 Lingkungan U Thant)

**China** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2163 6815; [my.chineseembassy.org](http://my.chineseembassy.org); 229 Jln Ampang)

**France** (Map p92; ☎ 2053 5500; [www.ambafrance-my.org](http://www.ambafrance-my.org); 192-6 Jln Ampang)

**Germany** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2170 9666; [www.kuala-lumpur.diplo.de](http://www.kuala-lumpur.diplo.de); Level 26, Menara Tan & Tan, 207 Jln Tun Razak)

**India** (off Map pp72-3; ☎ 2093 3510; [www.indianhighcommission.com.my](http://www.indianhighcommission.com.my); 2 Jln Taman Duta)

**Indonesia** Kuala Lumpur (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2116 4000; [www.kbrikl.org.my](http://www.kbrikl.org.my); 233 Jln Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur) Georgetown (off Map p176; ☎ 04-227 5141; 467 Jln Burma, Georgetown, Penang)

**Ireland** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2161 2963; [www.ireland-embassy.com.my](http://www.ireland-embassy.com.my); 5th fl, South Blk, Ampang Walk, 218 Jln Ampang)

**Italy** (off Map pp72-3; ☎ 4256 5122; [www.ambkuala-lumpur.esteri.it](http://www.ambkuala-lumpur.esteri.it); 99 Jln U Thant)

**Japan** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2142 7044; [www.my.emb-japan.go.jp](http://www.my.emb-japan.go.jp); 11 Persiaran Stonor)

**Laos** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 4251 1118; 12a Persiaran Madge)

**Myanmar** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2442 4085; 5 Taman U Thant 1)

**Nepal** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 2164 5934; [www.nepalembassy.com.my](http://www.nepalembassy.com.my); 13th fl, Wisma MCA, 163 Jln Ampang)

**Netherlands** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2168 6200; [www.netherlands.org.my](http://www.netherlands.org.my); 7th fl, South Block, Ampang Walk, 218 Jln Ampang)

**New Zealand** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 2078 2533; [www.nzembassy.com/malaysia](http://www.nzembassy.com/malaysia); Level 21 Menara IMC, 8 Jln Sultan Ismail)

## TRAVEL ADVISORIES

For latest travel advisories check the following websites:

**Australia** ([www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au))

**Canada** ([www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca))

**New Zealand** ([www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz))

**UK** ([www.fco.gov.uk/travel](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel))

**US** (<http://travel.state.gov/travel>)

**Philippines** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 2148 9989; [www.philembassykl.org.my](http://www.philembassykl.org.my); 1 Changkat Kia Peng)

**Singapore** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2161 6277; [www.mfa.gov.sg/kl](http://www.mfa.gov.sg/kl); 209 Jln Tun Razak)

**Spain** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2148 4868; [emb.kualalumpur@mae.es](http://emb.kualalumpur@mae.es); 200 Jln Ampang)

**Thailand** Kuala Lumpur (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2148 8222; [thaikul@mfa.go.th](http://thaikul@mfa.go.th); 206 Jln Ampang, Kuala Lumpur)

Georgetown (off Map p176; ☎ 04-226 8029; 1 Jln Tunku Abdul Rahman, Georgetown, Penang)

**UK** (Map p92; ☎ 2170 2200; [www.britain.org.my](http://www.britain.org.my); 185 Jln Ampang)

**USA** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 2168 5000; <http://usembassy.malaysia.org.my>; 376 Jln Tun Razak)

**Vietnam** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 2148 3270; [www.mofa.gov.vn/vnemb.my](http://www.mofa.gov.vn/vnemb.my); 4 Persiaran Stonor)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Malaysia has a huge number of religious holidays and celebrations, as well as sporting spectacles, like the Malaysian Grand Prix, and special events laid on by Tourism Malaysia and the government. Some festivals have a fixed date, but Hindus, Muslims and Chinese all follow a lunar calendar, so the dates for many religious festivals vary each year (Muslim holidays move forward 11 days each year, while Hindu and Chinese festivals change dates but fall roughly within the same months). **Tourism Malaysia** ([www.tourism.gov.my](http://www.tourism.gov.my)) has listings of festivals and events on its website, or pick up a calendar of events pamphlet from any tourist office.

See the destination chapters for details of events specific to particular towns and cities.

### January–February

**Thai Pongal** A Hindu harvest festival marking the beginning of the Hindu month of Thai, considered the luckiest month of the year. Celebrated by Tamils.

**Chinese New Year** Dragon dances and pedestrian parades mark the start of the new year. Celebrations last 15 days; children receive *ang pow* (money in red packets), businesses traditionally clear their debts and everybody wishes you *kong hee fatt choy* (a happy and prosperous New Year).

**Thaipusam** One of the most dramatic Hindu festivals (now banned in India), in which devotees honour Lord Subramaniam with acts of self-mortification; see boxed text, p221.

### March–April

**Malaysian Grand Prix** Formula 1's big outing in Southeast Asia is held at the Sepang International Circuit near KL; see p100.

**Birthdays of the Goddess of Mercy** Offerings are made to the very popular Kuan Yin at temples across the region.

**Birthdays of the Monkey God** The birthday of T'se Tien Tai Seng Yeh is celebrated twice a year. Mediums pierce their cheeks and tongues with skewers and go into trances, writing special charms in blood.

#### April–May

**Chithirai Vishu** The start of the Hindu new year.

**Vesak Day** (Vesak Day) Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death are celebrated with various events, including the release of caged birds to symbolise the setting free of captive souls.

#### June

**Festa de San Pedro** Christian celebration on 29 June in honour of the patron saint of the fishing community, particularly celebrated by the Eurasian-Portuguese community of Melaka.

**Birthdays of the God of War** Kuan Ti, who has the ability to avert war and to protect people during war, is honoured on his birthday.

**Dragon Boat Festival** Commemorates the Malay legend of the fishermen who paddled out to sea to prevent the drowning of a Chinese saint, beating drums to scare away any fish that might attack him. The festival is celebrated from June to August, with boat races in Penang (see p171).

#### July–August

**Birthdays of Kuan Yin** The goddess of mercy has another birthday!

**Sri Krishna Jayanti** A 10-day Hindu festival celebrating popular events in the life of Krishna.

#### August–September

**Festival of the Hungry Ghosts** The souls of the dead are released for one day of feasting and entertainment on earth. Chinese Malaysians perform operas and lay out food for their ancestors. The ghosts eat the spirit of the food, but thoughtfully leave the substance for mortal celebrants. Mainly celebrated in Penang (see p171).

**National Day** (Hari Kebangsaan) Malaysia celebrates its independence on 31 August with parades and events all over the country, but particularly in KL.

**Vinayagar Chaturthi** During the Tamil month of Avani (around August and September), prayers are offered to Vinayagar, another name for the popular elephant-headed god Ganesha.

**Lantern Festival** The overthrow of the Mongol warlords in ancient China is celebrated by eating moon cakes and lighting colourful paper lanterns. Moon cakes are filled with bean paste, lotus seeds and sometimes a duck egg–yolk.

#### September–October

**Navarathri** In the Tamil month of Purattasi, the Hindu festival of 'Nine Nights' is dedicated to the wives of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma. Young girls are dressed as the goddess Kali.

**Festival of the Nine Emperor Gods** Nine days of Chinese operas, processions and other events honour the nine emperor gods.

#### October–November

**Thimithi** (Fire-Walking Ceremony) Hindu devotees prove their faith by walking across glowing coals at temples in Melaka.

**Deepavali** Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana is celebrated with the Festival of Lights, when tiny oil-lamps

### ISLAMIC FESTIVALS

The major Islamic events each year are connected with Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. Fifteen days before the start of Ramadan, on Nisfu Night, it is believed the souls of the dead visit their homes. During Ramadan Lailatul Qadar (Night of Grandeur), Muslims celebrate the arrival of the Quran on earth, before its revelation by the Prophet Mohammed. Hari Raya Puasa (also known as Hari Raya Aidilfitri) marks the end of the month-long fast, with two days of joyful celebration and feasting. Hari Raya Puasa is the major holiday of the Muslim calendar and it can be difficult to find accommodation, particularly on the coast. The start of Ramadan moves forward 11 days every year in line with the Muslim lunar calendar – the fast is set to begin on 2 September 2008 and 22 August 2009, but dates can vary as the exact phases of the lunar cycle are open to interpretation.

Apart from Ramadan, the other major Islamic festival is Hari Raya Haji, a two-day festival marking the successful completion of the hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) and commemorating the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his son. Many shops, offices and tourist attractions close and locals consume large amounts of cakes and sweets. The festival takes place in on 8 December 2008 and 28 November 2009. Malaysian Muslims also celebrate the birth of the prophet Mohammed with the festival of Mawlid al-Nabi, which takes place on 20 March 2008 and 9 March 2009. Awal Muharram (Muslim New Year) falls on 10 January and 29 December 2008, 18 December 2009 and 7 December 2010.

### THAIPUSAM

After Deepavali, the most important event in the Hindu calendar is the festival of Thaipusam, held every year during January or February. Marking the birthday of Murugan (Subramaniam), son of Shiva, the festival takes place when the Pusam constellation is at its highest point during the Hindu month of Thai, hence the name. Thaipusam is celebrated with riotous processions at Batu Caves (p131) near Kuala Lumpur (KL) and the Nattukotai Chettiar Temple and Waterfall Hilltop Temple in Penang (see p184). The Batu Caves celebrations alone attracted 1.3 million devotees in 2007.

The greatest spectacle of Thaipusam is the procession of *kavadi* carriers, devotees who subject themselves to seemingly masochistic acts to give thanks for answered prayers. Many of the devotees carry offerings of milk in *paal kudam* (milk pots), often connected to their skin by hooks. Even more striking are the *vel kavadi* (great cages of spikes that pierce the skin of the carrier and are decorated with peacock feathers, pictures of deities and flowers). Some penitents pierce their tongues and cheeks with hooks, skewers and tridents hung with objects like limes and unripe coconuts. Couples whose prayers for children have been answered carry their babies on their shoulders in saffron cradles made of sugar-cane stalks.

Before engaging in these ritual acts, pilgrims devote a month to prayer, abstaining from sex and following a strict vegetarian diet. The physical piercings are carried out while in a trance and participants claim to feel no pain; later the wounds are treated with lemon juice and holy ash to prevent scarring. A few foreigners join the procession and even participate in acts of self-mortification but, like firewalking, these rituals are best left to the faithful – every year doctors treat dozens of poorly prepared devotees for skin lacerations or exhaustion after the rigours of Thaipusam.

are lit outside Hindu homes to guide Rama back from exile. The lights also attract Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, who will not enter an unlit home. Indian businesses start the new financial year, and families take a predawn oil bath, put on new clothes and share sweets.

**Birthdays of Kuan Yin** This popular goddess of mercy gets to celebrate her birthday for the third time in the year.

**Guru Nanak's Birthday** The birthday of Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion, is celebrated on 22 November.

#### December

**Winter Solstice Festival** A Chinese festival to offer thanks for a good harvest.

### FOOD

Malaysia is foodie heaven, with a breathtaking array of dishes and cuisines, from local Malay, Nonya, Chinese and Indian food to dishes drawn from across the globe. For a complete description, see the eating listings in the regional chapters and browse the Food & Drink chapter (p42).

Many restaurants in Malaysia close between lunch and dinner and few places stay open later than 10.30pm. Standard dining hours in Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Penang are as follows: breakfast from 8am to 11am,

lunch from noon to 2.30pm, and dinner from 6pm to 10.30pm.

### GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Malaysia is a predominantly Muslim country and the level of tolerance for homosexuality is vastly different from its neighbours. Sex between men is illegal at any age and *syariah* Islamic laws (which apply only to Muslims) forbid sodomy and cross-dressing. Fortunately outright persecution of gays and lesbians is rare, the trumped-up case against the former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim (see p28) being a notable exception.

Nonetheless, gay and lesbian travellers should avoid behaviour that attracts unwanted attention. Malaysians are quite conservative about displays of public affection. Although same-sex handholding is quite common for men and women, this is rarely an indication of sexuality; an overtly gay couple doing the same would attract attention, though there is little risk of vocal or aggressive homophobia.

There's actually a fairly active gay scene in KL (see boxed text, p117). The lesbian scene is more discreet, but it exists for those willing to seek it out. Start looking for information on [www.utopia-asia.com](http://www.utopia-asia.com) or [www.fridae.com](http://www.fridae.com),

both of which provide good coverage of gay and lesbian events and activities across Asia.

The **PT Foundation** ([www.ptfmalaysia.org](http://www.ptfmalaysia.org)) is a voluntary nonprofit organisation providing HIV/AIDS and sexuality education, care and support programs for marginalised communities in Malaysia.

## HOLIDAYS

As well as fixed secular holidays, various religious festivals (which change dates annually) are national holidays. These include Chinese New Year (in January/February), the Hindu festival of Deepavali (in October/November), the Buddhist festival of Wesak (April/May) and the Muslim festivals of Hari Raya Haji, Hari Raya Puasa, Mawlid al-Nabi and Awal Muharram (Muslim New Year); see p219 for dates. There are also a number of state holidays, usually associated with the local sultan's birthday or a Muslim celebration.

### Public Holidays

Fixed annual holidays include the following:

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Federal Territory Day** 1 February (in Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya only)

**Labour Day** 1 May

**Wesak Day** Variable

**Yang di-Pertuan Agong's (King's) Birthday** 1st Saturday in June

**National Day** (Hari Kebangsaan) 31 August

**Christmas Day** 25 December

### School Holidays

Schools in Malaysia break for holidays five times a year. The actual dates vary from state to state but are generally in January (one week), March (two weeks), May (three weeks), August (one week) and October (four weeks).

## INSURANCE

We strongly recommend taking out travel insurance – if you can't afford insurance, you definitely can't afford the consequences if anything does go wrong. Check the small print to see if the policy covers potentially dangerous sporting activities, such as diving or trekking. For medical treatment, some policies pay doctors or hospitals directly but most require you to pay on the spot and claim later (keep all receipts and documentation). Check that the policy covers ambulances or an emergency flight home.

For information on health insurance see p237 and for car insurance see p234.

Worldwide travel insurance is available at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services). You can buy, extend and claim online anytime – even if you're already on the road.

## INTERNET ACCESS

Internet cafés (charging RM3 to RM8 per hour) are found everywhere and many hotels offer free (or discounted) access for guests. Some top-end hotels offer in-room internet access over a LAN Ethernet cable. Wi-fi is also becoming increasingly common at hotels (usually in the lobby) and in chain coffeeshops like Starbucks, often for free (registration may be required). The website [www.wi-fihotspotlist.com/browse/intl/2000032](http://www.wi-fihotspotlist.com/browse/intl/2000032) has a good list of hotspots. However, you should be aware of the security risk of sending sensitive information over a wireless connection. Bring a three-pronged, square-pin adaptor (as used in the UK) for your laptop power cable.

If you don't have wi-fi, you can arrange dial-up internet in Malaysia using prepaid cards. Major internet providers include **Jaring** ([www.jaring.my](http://www.jaring.my)) and **Telekom Malaysia** ([www.tm.com.my](http://www.tm.com.my)). Check that your laptop modem is enabled to work outside your home country.

## LEGAL MATTERS

In any dealings with the local police forces it will pay to be deferential. You're most likely to come into contact with them either through reporting a crime (some of the big cities in Malaysia have tourist police stations for this purpose) or while driving. Minor misdemeanours may be overlooked, but don't count on it. Be careful about offering anyone a bribe – you never know how officials will respond and you could make things worse rather than better.

Drug trafficking carries a mandatory death penalty. A number of foreigners have been executed in Malaysia, some of them for possession of amazingly small quantities of heroin.

### COMING OF AGE IN MALAYSIA

- The legal age for voting is 21.
- You can drive legally at 18.
- Heterosexual sex is legal at 16.
- To legally buy alcohol you need to be 21 (this is rarely enforced).

Even possession can bring down a lengthy jail sentence and a beating with the *rotan* (cane). You only get one life – don't blow it by gambling with drugs in Malaysia.

## MAPS

**Periplus** ([www.periplus.com](http://www.periplus.com)) produces useful maps of Malaysia, Peninsular Malaysia and KL, but the free maps available from Tourism Malaysia are also pretty good – particularly the pocket-sized KL and Georgetown city maps.

## MONEY

See the Quick Reference page (inside the front cover) for currency exchange rates.

## ATMs & Credit Cards

International credit and debit cards backed by Visa, Mastercard, Cirrus or Plus are widely accepted in Malaysian shops, hotels and restaurants and you can use them in many ATMs. Make sure you know your PIN number – many shops require you to enter your PIN and provide a signature. And a word of warning: credit-card fraud is so widespread in Malaysia that many banks block foreign cards as soon as they are used in a Malaysian ATM – even if you notify your bank that you are travelling to Malaysia. If this happens, you'll need to call the bank and verify your identity to get the card unlocked.

If you have any questions about whether your cards will be accepted in Malaysia, ask your home bank about its reciprocal relationships with Malaysian banks. Branches of **Maybank** ([www.maybank2u.com.my](http://www.maybank2u.com.my)), and other major banks can arrange credit-card advances over the counter with a passport as ID.

Contact details for credit-card companies in Malaysia:

**American Express** (☎ 2050 0000; [www.americanexpress.com/malaysia](http://www.americanexpress.com/malaysia))

**MasterCard** (☎ 1800 804 594)

**Visa** (☎ 1800 800 159)

## Currency

The Malaysian ringgit (RM) is made up of 100 sen. Coins in use are 1 sen, 5 sen, 10 sen, 20 sen and 50 sen; notes come in RM1, RM5, RM10, RM50 and RM100 (RM2 notes are being phased out). Previously fixed against the US dollar, the ringgit now floats against an undisclosed basket of currencies.

Malaysians sometimes refer to the ringgit as 'dollars', the old name for the country's

currency – if in doubt, ask if people mean US dollars of 'Malaysian dollars' (ie ringgit). Be sure to carry plenty of small bills with you when venturing outside cities – people often cannot change bills larger than RM10.

## Taxes & Refunds

There is no general sales tax but there is a government tax of 5%, plus a service tax of 10% at larger hotels and restaurants.

## Travellers Cheques & Cash

Banks in the region are efficient and there are plenty of private moneychangers, open longer hours and sometimes with better rates. Banks usually charge a commission for cash and cheques (around RM10 per transaction, with a possible extra fee for each cheque), whereas moneychangers offer free transactions. However, moneychangers in rural areas may not accept travellers cheques.

All major brands of travellers cheques are accepted across the region. Cash in major currencies is also readily exchanged, though like everywhere else in the world the US dollar has a slight edge.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Malaysians are generally relaxed about having their picture taken, though it's still polite to ask permission first. To avoid causing offence, always ask before taking pictures in mosques or temples. For advice on taking better photos, Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography: A Guide to Taking Better Pictures* is written by travel photographer Richard T Anson.

Print film is widely available – a 36-exposure roll of Kodak or Fuji print film costs around RM10 for 100 or 200ASA and RM13 for 400ASA. Slide film is much harder to find – where available, a 36-exposure roll of 100ASA Kodak or Fuji slide film costs around RM22. Expect to pay around RM20 to process and print a 36-exposure roll of print film (4in by 6in prints). There are photo-processing shops in all the big malls.

Digital memory cards are available everywhere and at bargain prices – internet cafés and photo-processing centres can burn your digital pictures to CD or DVD for around RM15.

## POST

**Pos Malaysia Berhad** ([www.pos.com.my](http://www.pos.com.my)) runs a fast and efficient postal system with good poste

restante services at major post offices. As a rule, post offices are open from 8am to 5pm from Monday to Saturday, but closed on the first Saturday of the month and on public holidays.

Aerograms and postcards cost 50 sen to send to any destination. Letters weighing 20g or less cost 90 sen to Asia, RM1.40 to Australia or New Zealand, RM1.50 to the UK and Europe, and RM1.80 to North America. A 1kg parcel to most destinations will cost RM30 to RM35 by sea and RM60 to RM70 by air. Registered mail costs an extra RM3.90 (letters and parcels up to 2kg only).

Main post offices in larger cities sell packaging materials and stationery.

## TELEPHONE

Telephone numbers in KL have eight digits; in Penang and Melaka they have seven digits. Mobile phone numbers generally have 10 digits, starting with 012, 013, 016, 017 or 019.

## Area Codes

The telephone area codes for cities covered in this book are KL (☎ 03), Penang (☎ 04) and Melaka (☎ 06). Phone calls to Singapore are STD (long-distance) rather than international calls – the code is ☎ 02.

## Fax

Fax facilities are available at Telekom offices in the cities and at some main post offices. If you can't find one of these try a travel agency or large hotel. As a rough indication, international faxes cost around RM12 to send and RM5 per page to receive.

## International Calls

The easiest and cheapest way to make international calls is to buy a local SIM card for your cellular phone. Calls made from hotel phones are extremely expensive and only certain payphones permit international calls. Most budget hotels provide an international-enabled payphone in the lobby. You can make operator-assisted international calls from local Telekom offices. To save money on landline calls, buy a prepaid international calling card (available from convenience stores).

To call overseas from Malaysia, dial ☎ 00, then the country code. Call ☎ 108 for the international operator and ☎ 103 for directory inquiries. To call Malaysia from overseas dial the international access code, then ☎ 60,

the Malaysian area code (minus the first zero), then the number.

## Local Calls

Making domestic telephone calls in Malaysia is usually a simple matter, provided you can find a working payphone (try train stations, shopping malls and big hotels). Local calls cost 10 sen for three minutes. Payphones take coins or prepaid cards which are available from Telekom offices and convenience stores. Some also take international credit cards. You'll also find a range of discount calling cards at convenience stores and mobile-phone counters.

## Mobile Phones

As long as you have arranged global-roaming with your home provider, your GSM digital phone will automatically tune into one of the region's digital networks. If not, buy a prepaid SIM card for one of the local networks on arrival. The initial SIM card will cost RM10 and you can buy extra credit at mobile-phone desks across the country (in units of RM10, RM20, RM40 and RM60). The rates for a local call is around 40 sen per minute. There are three big cell phone companies, all with similar call rates and prepaid packages – **Celcom** (www.celcom.com.my), **DiGi** (www.digi.com.my), and **Hotlink/Maxis** (www.maxis.com.my).

If your phone is locked into a particular network at home, you must get it unlocked first for this to work. It may be easier to pick up a cheap phone in Malaysia – new and secondhand 'handphones' (as mobile phones are called) are sold everywhere.

## TIME

Peninsular Malaysia is eight hours ahead of GMT/UTC (London). Thus, noon in Kuala Lumpur is 8pm in Los Angeles and 11pm in New York, 4am in London, and 2pm in Sydney and Melbourne. See the World Map (p266) for international time zones.

## TOILETS

Although there are some places with Asian squat-style toilets, Western-style sit-down loos are becoming the norm. Toilet paper is not usually provided; instead, you will find a hose or a spout on the toilet seat which you are supposed to use as a bidet. Or a bucket of water and a tap. Public toilets in malls usually charge an entry fee, but this often includes toilet paper. If you're not comfortable with the

'hand-and-water' technique, carry packets of tissues or toilet paper wherever you go.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

**Tourism Malaysia** (Map pp72-3; ☎ 03-2615 8188; www.tourismmalaysia.gov.my; 17th fl, Putra World Trade Centre, 45 Jln Tun Ismail, Kuala Lumpur) has an efficient network of domestic offices, which tend to be good for brochures and free maps but rather weak on hard factual information. Its overseas offices are useful for predeparture planning – follow the 'Contact Us' link on the website for listings. For regional offices see Kuala Lumpur (p76), Melaka (p141) and Penang (p179).

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Although it's not the worst country in Asia in terms of disability access, Malaysia makes very few concessions for the mobility impaired. Kuala Lumpur is better than most towns, with pavement ramps and lots of lifts, including in malls and at commuter train stations. However, road crossings are few and far between and poorly covered manholes mean wheelchair-users are often better off on the road. The new RapidKL buses usually have a wheelchair ramp, though drivers may be reluctant to use it. On the upside, taxis are cheap and both Malaysia Airlines and KTM (the national rail service) offer 50% discounts on travel for travellers with disabilities.

Before setting off get in touch with your national support organisation (preferably with the travel officer, if there is one). The following organisations offer general travel advice: **Accessible Journeys** (☎ 610-521-0339; www.disabilitytravel.com) In the US.

**Holiday Care Service** (☎ 0845-124 9971; www.holidaycare.org.uk) In the UK.

**Mobility International USA** (☎ 541-343 1284; www.miusa.org)

**Nican** (☎ 02-6241 1220; www.nican.com.au) In Australia

## VISAS

Visitors to Malaysia must have a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry, and travellers are occasionally asked to provide proof of a ticket for onward travel and sufficient funds to cover their stay. The following gives a brief overview of the visa requirements – full details are available on the website www.kln.gov.my.

Citizens of the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and most nations in western Europe (including Scandinavia and

new EU member states) are granted permission to stay for up to three months without a visa. However, extensions of stay are only permissible for citizens of approved nations (generally prosperous nations like Australia, America and the UK). Citizens of most other countries either qualify for a one month visa-free stay or can apply for a one-month visa on arrival at approved international airports and seaports in Malaysia. Citizens of Israel can only enter Malaysia with a visa – which is granted at the discretion of the Malaysian embassy in the country where you apply.

Sabah and Sarawak are treated like separate countries with additional permit conditions; more comprehensive information on Malaysian Borneo can be found in Lonely Planet's *Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei and Borneo*.

## Visa Extensions

Depending on your nationality, it may be possible to extend your visa at an immigration office in Malaysia for an additional one or two months. Extensions tend to be granted only for genuine emergencies. It's normally easier to hop across the border to Thailand, Singapore or Indonesia and re-enter the country – this counts as a new visit, even if you re-enter the same day.

If you do need to extend your visa, head to the immigration offices in KL (p74), Melaka (p141) or Penang (p178) before your existing visa expires, with evidence of a confirmed ticket back to your home country.

## VOLUNTEERING

There are lots of opportunities for volunteers in Malaysia, but these tend to focus on rural areas rather than KL, Melaka and Penang. Most people arrange a placement with a volunteer agency in their home country before they travel, but you can try contacting local organisations – see p100 of the KL chapter, and p189 in Penang for some recommendations in KL and Penang. Melaka Zoo (p163) also accepts volunteers, with advance notice.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

The key to travelling with minimum hassle in Malaysia is to blend in with the locals, which means dressing modestly and being respectful, especially in areas of stronger Muslim religious sensibilities. Regardless

of what local non-Muslim women wear, it's better to be safe than sorry – we've had reports of attacks on women ranging from minor verbal aggravation to physical assault. Hard as it is to say, the truth is that women are much more likely to have problems in Malay-dominated areas, where attitudes are more conservative.

In Malay-dominated areas, you can halve your hassles just by tying a bandanna over your hair (a minimal concession to the headscarf worn by most Muslim women). When visiting mosques, cover your head and limbs with a headscarf and sarong (many mosques lend these out at the entrance). At the beach, most Malaysian women swim fully clothed in T-shirts and shorts, so don't even think about going topless.

Be proactive about your own safety. Treat overly friendly strangers, both male and female, with a good deal of caution. In cheap hotels check for small peepholes in the walls and doors; when you have a choice, stay in a Chinese-operated hotel. On island resorts, stick to crowded beaches, and choose a chalet close to reception and other travelers. Take taxis after dark and avoid walking alone at night in quiet or seedy parts of town.

Tampons and pads are widely available in Malaysia, especially in the big cities, and over-the-counter medications for common gynaecological health problems (like yeast infections) are also fairly easy to find.

## WORK

It is possible to find work in Malaysia, but the company that employs you normally has to help sort out the immigration paperwork. Malaysia is clamping down on illegal workers and this is not the time to get caught working on the sly. Some guesthouses and dive centres in popular resort areas take on foreigners, and international resort chains may have openings for reps and other staff – contact these companies in your home country.

Teaching English is another option if you have the right credentials (a TEFL certificate is the bare minimum). Would-be teachers should check some of the many TEFL and ESL sites: [www.tefl.com](http://www.tefl.com) and [www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com) are good sites.

Depending on the nature of your job, you'll need either an Expatriate Personnel Visa or Temporary Employment Visa. For details and requirements, check the website of the **Immigration Department of Malaysia** ([www.imi.gov.my](http://www.imi.gov.my)).

# Transport

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## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### ENTERING MALAYSIA

The main requirement for entry to Malaysia is a passport that is valid for at least six months after the date of entry and proof of an onward ticket and adequate funds for your stay. In practice, you'll rarely be asked to prove this. There are no restrictions on entering Malaysia by air and leaving by land or sea, or vice versa. For details of visa and other entry requirements, see p225. Note that Sabah and Sarawak are treated as separate entities from Peninsular Malaysia, with additional entry procedures, even if you are arriving from Peninsular Malaysia.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

### AIR Airports & Airlines

The main gateway to Malaysia is **Kuala Lumpur International Airport** (KLIA; off Map pp72-3; [www.klia.com.my](http://www.klia.com.my)), 75km south of KL at Sepang. It shares its runways with the new Low Cost Carrier Terminal (LCC-T), the Malaysian hub for Air Asia. Penang also handles a number of international flights, including a convenient Air Asia hop to Bangkok.

See below for the main airline offices in KL (the websites have listings for offices in other cities).

**Air Asia** (Map pp90; airline code AK; ☎ 8775 4000; [www.airasia.com](http://www.airasia.com); 1st fl, KL Sentral Station; hub Low Cost Carrier Terminal, Sepang, Kuala Lumpur)

**Air China** (Map pp84-5; airline code CA; ☎ 2166 1999; [www.airchina.com.cn](http://www.airchina.com.cn); Level 7, Plaza OSK, Jln Ampang; hub Beijing Capital International Airport)

**Air India** (Map pp84-5; airline code AI; ☎ 2142 0323; [www.airindia.com](http://www.airindia.com); 14th fl, Angkasa Raya Bldg, 123 Jln Ampang; hub New Delhi International Airport)

**Air France** (Map pp84-5; airline code AF; ☎ 7712 4545; [www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com); 1st fl, Grand Plaza Parkroyal, Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Paris Charles de Gaulle International Airport)

**All Nippon Airways** (ANA; Map pp84-5; airline code NH; ☎ 2032 1331; [www.ana.co.jp](http://www.ana.co.jp); 11th fl, Wisma Goldhill, 67 Jln Raja Chulan; hub Narita International Airport, Tokyo)

**Berjaya Air** (Map pp84-5; airline code J8; ☎ 2145 2828; [berjaya-air.com](http://berjaya-air.com); Level 6, Berjaya Times Sq, 1 Jln Imbi; hub Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport, Subang)

**British Airways** (Map pp84-5; airline code BA; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com); Agent: Holiday Tours & Travel, ☎ 7712 4747, Level 5, Wisma UOA II, Jln Pinang; hub Heathrow International Airport, London)

**Cathay Pacific Airways** (Map pp84-5; airline code CX; ☎ 2035 2777; [www.cathaypacific.com](http://www.cathaypacific.com); Suite 22, Level 1, Menara IMC, 8 Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong)

**China Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code CI; ☎ 2142 7458; [www.china-airlines.com](http://www.china-airlines.com); Ground fl, Amoda Bldg, 22 Jln Imbi; hub Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei)

**China Eastern** (Map pp84-5; airline code MU; ☎ 2166 1666; [www.ce-air.com](http://www.ce-air.com); Level 2, Plaza OSK, Jln Ampang; hub Pudong International Airport, Shanghai)

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the current security requirements for international air travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.



## CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon. While air travel is not the only contributing factor, it is the fastest-growing generator of the gases thought to cause climate change. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

### Flying and Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are alarming: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US can produce as much CO<sub>2</sub> as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda. Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel. For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

**Emirates** (Map pp84-5; ☎ 2058 5888; [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com); 1st fl, Shangri-La Hotel Annexe, UBN Tower, Jln P Ramlee; hub Dubai International Airport)

**Ethihad** (Map pp84-5; airline code EY; ☎ 2687 2222; [www.ethihadairways.com](http://www.ethihadairways.com); Level 32, Menara Standard Chartered, Jalan Sultan Ismail; hub Abu Dhabi International Airport)

**EVA Air** (Map pp84-5; airline code BR; ☎ 2163 2978; [www.evaair.com](http://www.evaair.com); 12th fl, Kenanga International Bldg, Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport, Taipei)

**Garuda Indonesian Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code GA; ☎ 2162 2811; [www.garuda-indonesia.com](http://www.garuda-indonesia.com); Level 19, Menara Citibank, 165 Jln Ampang; hub Soekarno-Hatta Jakarta International Airport)

**Indian Airlines** (Map pp78-9; airline code IA; ☎ 2692 5954; [indian-airlines.nic.in](http://indian-airlines.nic.in); 2nd fl, Wisma Paradise, Jln Bunus; hub New Delhi International Airport)

**Jet Airways** (Map pp84-5; airline code 9W; ☎ 2148 9020; [www.jetairways.com](http://www.jetairways.com); 2nd fl, Angkasa Raya Bldg, Jln Ampang; hub New Delhi International Airport)

**Japan Airlines** (JAL; Map pp84-5; airline code JL; ☎ 2161 1740; [www.japanair.com](http://www.japanair.com); Level 20, Menara Citibank, 165 Jln Ampang; hub Narita International Airport, Tokyo)

**KLM Royal Dutch Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code KL; ☎ 7712 4555; [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com); 1st fl, Grand Plaza Parkroyal, Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Amsterdam Schiphol Airport)

**Kuwait Airways** (Map pp84-5; airline code KU; ☎ 2031 6033; [www.kuwait-airways.com](http://www.kuwait-airways.com); 7th fl, UBN Tower, 10 Jln P Ramlee; hub Kuwait International Airport)

**Lufthansa** (Map pp84-5; airline code LH; ☎ 2052 3428; [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com); 18th fl, Kenanga International Bldg, Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Frankfurt International Airport)

**Malaysia Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code MA; ☎ 7843 3000; from outside Malaysia 1300 883 000; [www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com); Bangunan MAS, Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Kuala Lumpur International Airport)

**Myanmar International Airways** (MIA; Map pp84-5; airline code UB; [www.maiair.com](http://www.maiair.com); Agent: Worldwide Aviation Agencies, ☎ 2143 3755, 13th fl, Central Plaza, 34 Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Yangon International Airport)

**Philippine Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code PR; [www.philippineairlines.com](http://www.philippineairlines.com); Agent: Pacific World Travel, ☎ 2141 0767, 2nd fl, Angkasa Raya Bldg, Jln Ampang; hub Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila)

**Qatar Airways** (Map pp84-5; airline code QR; ☎ 2141 8281; [www.qatarairways.com](http://www.qatarairways.com); 18th fl, Central Plaza, 34 Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Doha International Airport)

**Royal Brunei Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code BI; ☎ 2070 7166; [www.bruneiair.com](http://www.bruneiair.com); 2nd fl, Menara UBN, 10 Jln P Ramlee; hub Brunei International Airport, Bandar Seri Begawan)

**Royal Nepal Airlines** (Map pp78-9; airline code RA; ☎ 2692 4858; [www.royalnepal-airlines.com](http://www.royalnepal-airlines.com); 2nd fl, Wisma Paradise, Jln Bunus; hub Tribhuvan International Airport, Kathmandu)

**Singapore Airlines** (Map pp78-9; airline code SQ; ☎ 2692 3122; [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com); 10th fl, Menara Multi-Purpose, Capital Sq, 8 Jln Munshi Abdullah; hub Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore)

**Sri Lankan Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code UL; ☎ 2143 3353; [www.srilankan.aero](http://www.srilankan.aero); 1st fl, Kompleks Antarabangsa, Jln Sultan Ismail; hub Bandaranaik International Airport, Colombo)

**Thai Airways International** (Map pp84-5; airline code TG; ☎ 2034 6900; [www.thaiair.com](http://www.thaiair.com); 30th fl, Wisma Goldhill, 67 Jln Raja Chulan; hub Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Bangkok)

**Vietnam Airlines** (Map pp84-5; airline code VN; ☎ 2141 2416; [www.vietnamairlines.com.vn](http://www.vietnamairlines.com.vn); 1st fl, Wisma MPL, Jln Raja Chulan; hub Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Saigon and Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi)

### Tickets

KL is a busy international hub and there are numerous flights from Europe, Australia and further afield with most large European, Asian and Middle Eastern carriers. Flights to KL are normally cheaper than flights to Penang and KL is a good place to pick up tickets to other destinations in Asia, particularly now that Air Asia offers budget flights across the region.

### Australia

Discounted return fares from Melbourne or Sydney to KL start at around A\$700 in the low season, rising to A\$1200 in the high season (December to February). Malaysia Airlines, Singapore Airlines and Qantas Airways all offer good deals; also check some of the Middle Eastern airlines that fly between Europe and Australia. Malaysia Airlines flies to Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, and Cathay Pacific offers connections through Hong Kong to Cairns. You can also connect to Penang with Malaysian Airlines and other carriers.

### Brunei

Royal Brunei Airlines and Malaysia Airlines have direct flights between Bandar Seri Begawan and KL – full-fare tickets cost around RM1500, but promotional fares go as low as RM900 return.

### Canada

There are no direct flights between Canada and Malaysia; the cheapest fares involve con-

### DEPARTURE TAX

There's a RM40 airport tax on international flights out of Malaysia and a RM5 tax on domestic flights, included in the ticket price.

nections through Asia. Eva Air often has good deals via Taiwan. For flights to Malaysia, low-season return fares from Vancouver start at C\$1300; from Toronto C\$1400.

### Continental Europe

There's not much variation in air fares from the main European cities. Lufthansa, Air France and KLM have direct flights to KL from their European hubs and Malaysia Airlines has flights across the region, or you can connect cheaply with one of the big Asian or Middle Eastern carriers. From Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam, Stockholm and other European capitals, expect to pay around €650 return (or equivalent).

### Hong Kong & China

Return flights from KL to Hong Kong with Malaysia Airlines or Cathay Pacific start from RM1500/HK\$4500. There are also direct flights from Hong Kong to Penang. Malaysia Airlines, Air China, China Southeastern and several other airlines offer flights between KL and Beijing, Shanghai and other cities in mainland China from around RM2000.

### Indonesia

Air Asia has direct connections between KL and various Indonesian islands – fares include Jakarta (one-way from RM145), Medan (from RM140), Padang (from RM105), Bandung (from RM165), and Denpasar (Bali) and Surabaya (from RM165). Fares from Indonesia to Malaysia are broadly equivalent in Indonesian rupiahs. Malaysia Airlines and Garuda service similar routes but fares are much higher than Air Asia. Note that Garuda has been added to the European blacklist of unsafe airlines.

### Japan

Malaysia Airlines, ANA and JAL are the main carriers flying between KL and Japan. Return flights to KL start at around ¥47,000. It's usually slightly cheaper to fly to/from Tokyo Narita, rather than Osaka/Kansai International Airport.

### New Zealand

Low-season return tickets start at NZ\$1300 between Auckland and KL on Malaysia Airlines, Emirates and others; add around NZ\$400 for high-season fares.

## Singapore

Malaysia Airlines has hourly flights between KL and Singapore (return from RM800/SG\$400), around half of them code-sharing with Singapore Airlines. Malaysia Airlines connects Singapore to Penang for a similar fare. It's slightly cheaper to buy tickets in Malaysia.

## South Asia

Air India, Jet and Indian Airlines offer regular flights between KL and Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bengaluru – return fares range from RM1200 to RM1400. Royal Nepal Airlines has five flights per week between KL and Kathmandu; fares start at RM1700. Sri Lankan Airlines offers connections to Colombo from around RM1200.

## Thailand

Round-trip flights between Bangkok and KL or Penang with Thai Airways or Malaysia Airlines cost around RM1290/11,000B. It's much cheaper to fly with Air Asia – starting fares from KL: Bangkok RM70, Chiang Mai RM140, Krabi RM60 and Phuket RM70. Berjaya Air flies between KL's Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport and Koh Samui one-way for RM380.

## The Rest of Southeast Asia

Air Asia has direct flights between KL and Phnom Penh (from RM170/US\$55) and Siem Reap (from RM220/US\$60). For the Philippines, Air Asia offers cheap flights from KL to Clark Airport (just north of Manila) from around RM160/P2370, or you can fly with Malaysia Airlines or Philippine Airlines to Manila (around RM900/P11,800) or Cebu (around RM1100/P14,400).

Vietnam Airlines flies daily between KL and Ho Chi Minh City for around RM1100/US\$320, while Myanmar International Airways flies direct between KL and Yangon for around RM1000/US\$290; for both routes, it's much cheaper to connect through Bangkok on Air Asia.

## UK

London has the best deals for flights to Malaysia. The cheapest fares are normally on Middle Eastern carriers like Qatar Airways, Emirates or Eithad, or Sri Lankan Airlines via Colombo. Fares start from UK£400 in the low season and UK£550 in the high season.

## USA

Malaysia Airlines flies to KL from New York (Newark) and Los Angeles, or you can connect through Europe or other hub cities in Southeast Asia. Fares are similar from either the east coast or the west coast – bank on US\$800 upwards.

## LAND

Peninsular Malaysia shares land borders with Thailand and Singapore (via the Singapore-Johor Bahru Causeway). There are also sea crossings from Peninsular Malaysia to Sumatra in Indonesia. Malaysian Borneo shares a land border with Brunei and Indonesia – more detailed information on these crossings are in Lonely Planet's *Indonesia* and *Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei* guidebooks.

## Brunei

The main overland route into Brunei is via bus from Miri in Sarawak; it's also possible to travel overland between Limbang and Lawas in Sarawak and Bangar in the eastern part of Brunei. Many nationalities are permitted to visit Brunei without a visa for tourism – check with Bruneian embassies overseas to confirm details.

## Indonesia

To travel by land between Sarawak in Malaysia and Kalimantan in Indonesia, you can take the daily bus from Pontianak to Kuching in Sarawak, crossing at the Tebedu/Entikong border. This border does not provide visas on arrival so if you need a visa to enter Indonesia, you'll have to obtain one in advance before boarding the bus (Kuching has the nearest embassy to the border).

## Singapore BUS

The Causeway linking Johor Bahru with Singapore handles most traffic between the two countries. Trains and buses run from all over Malaysia straight through to Singapore, or you can take a bus to Johor Bahru and get a taxi or one of the frequent buses from Johor Bahru to Singapore. Direct buses between Singapore and KL cost between S\$30/RM30 and S\$50/RM80 depending on the level of comfort – the journey takes around five hours; for further details see p124. Buses from KL to Johor Bahru cost RM24; you can then take the Singapore-Johor Bahru Express (RM2.40/

S\$2.10) or SBS bus 170 (RM1.70/S\$1.30) across the Causeway to downtown Singapore. There are also direct buses to Singapore and Johor Bahru from Melaka (see p162) and Butterworth, near Penang.

There is a second causeway linking Tuas, in western Singapore, with Geylang Patah in Johor Bahru. This is known as the Second Link, and some bus services to Melaka and up the west coast head this way. If you have a car, tolls on the Second Link are much higher than the charge on the main Causeway. A good website with details of express buses between Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand is the **Express Bus Travel Guide** ([www.myexpressbus.com](http://www.myexpressbus.com)).

## TRAIN

**KTM Komuter** (☎ 2267 1200; [www.ktmb.com.my](http://www.ktmb.com.my)) trains run three times a day between Singapore and KL Sentral station and the journey takes seven to nine hours; seats cost from RM21 and ordinary/deluxe berths cost from RM38/111.80. In the opposite direction fares are the same, but in Singapore dollars – a rip-off considering the difference in the exchange rates. To get around this, either start your journey in Johor Bahru (in which case the train ride counts as a domestic trip) or buy the outbound and return ticket separately, saving money on the return leg from Malaysia. Fares to KL from Johor Bahru start at RM20 for a seat and RM37 for a berth.

Immigration officers at the Malaysia-Singapore border do not always stamp your passport, which can cause problems when you leave Malaysia. Keep your immigration card and train ticket to present to officials on departure.

## Thailand

There are regular trains, buses and boats between Malaysia and Thailand. However, the political situation in the far south of Thailand is highly volatile, particularly in the Yala, Pattani, Songkhla and Narathiwat provinces along the Malaysian border. Muslim separatists have carried out hundreds of murders and bombings in the area – check the security situation carefully before travelling overland through southern Thailand. Note that Malaysia is an hour ahead of Thailand.

## BUS & CAR

The most popular land route between Thailand and Malaysia is the bus or train

from Hat Yai in Thailand to Butterworth in Malaysia (crossing the border at Padang Besar or Bukit Kayu Hitam). You can also cross via the Rantau Panjang-Sungai Golok and Pengkalan Kubor-Tak Bai crossings on the east coast. Direct buses between KL's Puduraya bus station and Hat Yai cost RM40 (seven hours). Coming from Thailand, various travel agencies and guesthouses in Southern Thailand offer minibus transfers across the border to Penang.

## TRAIN

Trains from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur connect with northbound **KTM Komuter** (☎ 03-2267 1200; [www.ktmb.com.my](http://www.ktmb.com.my)) trains to Hat Yai via Butterworth (near Penang). From KL Sentral Station, the *Ekspres Senandung Langkawi* leaves at 9pm daily, reaching Butterworth at 5.50am and Hat Yai at 10.20am (local time). In the opposite direction, the train leaves Hat Yai at 3.50pm, reaching Butterworth at 10pm and KL at 6.45am. For the trip from KL to Hat Yai, seats/berths start from RM44/52.

Another useful train is the daily *International Express* from Butterworth all the way to Bangkok, which connects with trains from KL and Singapore. The train leaves Butterworth at 2.20pm, reaching Bangkok at 10.50am the next day. In the opposite direction, the train leaves Bangkok at 2.45pm, reaching Butterworth at 1.45pm. Upper/lower berths cost RM103.90/111.90. You can also use this train to reach Hat Yai, which has frequent train and bus connections to other parts of Thailand.

The Asian sector of the opulent **Eastern & Oriental Express** ([www.orient-express.com](http://www.orient-express.com)) also connects Singapore, KL and Bangkok. This luxuriously equipped train runs on set dates monthly (check the website for the schedule) and takes 42 hours to complete the 1943km journey from Singapore to Bangkok. From KL to Bangkok, the fare is US\$1740 per person in a double compartment in the Pullman coach; meals, tea and coffee are included, gin and tonics are extra. You can travel in even more unashamed luxury in the 'state' and 'suite' coaches.

## SEA Brunei

Boats connect Brunei to Lawas and Limbang in Sarawak, and to Pulau Labuan, from where boats go to Sabah. With the exception

of speedboats for Limbang, all international boats now depart from Muara, 25km north-east of Bandar Seri Begawan.

## Indonesia

There are numerous ferry routes between Indonesia and Malaysia. From Peninsular Malaysia, all boats go to Sumatra – the most useful routes are from Medan to Penang; from Dumai to Melaka (see p162); and from Tanjung Balai and Dumai to Pelabuhan Klang, the seaport for Kuala Lumpur (see p124).

## Singapore

A number of ferry companies operate across the narrow Straits of Singapore to Malaysia. As well as the popular cruises from Singapore's HarbourFront Ferry Terminal (see [www.singaporecruise.com](http://www.singaporecruise.com)), there are frequent passenger ferries from the Changi Ferry Terminal to the small jetties at Tanjung Belungkor and Pengerang (one-way S\$18, 45 minutes). You'll have to take connecting buses on the far side to reach Johor Bahru and buses north to Melaka, Penang or KL.

## Thailand

For an interesting and little-used back route into Thailand, consider taking the ferry from Penang to Pulau Langkawi (see p173) and a second ferry from Kuah jetty to Satun on the Thai coast (RM25, one hour). From the port you can take a taxi to Satun town or join the ferry to the idyllic Tarutao Islands. Make sure you get your passport stamped going in either direction.

## The Philippines

Several companies run passenger ferries between Sabah and Zamboanga on Mindanao in the Philippines, but security can be an issue on this route – check locally before you travel.

# GETTING AROUND

## AIR

### Domestic Air Services

The national carrier **Malaysia Airlines** (☎ 1300 883 000, from outside Malaysia 7843 3000; [www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com)) has delegated many of its domestic routes to budget carrier **Air Asia** (☎ 8775 4000; [www.airasia.com](http://www.airasia.com)), cutting the cost of domestic travel considerably. Flights on Air Asia should be booked

online and prices are cheaper the earlier you book – the flight from KL to Penang can cost as little as RM60 if you book far enough ahead. Both airlines also offer numerous international routes (see p227).

Tiny **Berjaya Air** (Map pp84-5; airline code J8; ☎ 2145 2828; [berjaya-air.com](http://berjaya-air.com); Level 6, Berjaya Times Sq, 1 Jln Imbi) flies from the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport at Subang to the islands of Pulau Tioman, Pulau Pangkor and Pulau Redang in Peninsular Malaysia, as well as Koh Samui in Thailand. Many domestic flights within Borneo are operated by **Fly Asian Express** ([www.flyasianexpress.com](http://www.flyasianexpress.com)).

There are no ferries between Peninsular Malaysia and Borneo so flying is the only option – Malaysia Airlines and Air Asia serve the regional airports at Kuching, Sibul, Bintulu and Miru in Sarawak and Pulau Labuan, Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan and Tawau in Sabah. Note that local flights in Malaysian Borneo are often cancelled or delayed during the monsoon and flights are often completely booked during school holidays. At other times it's easier to get a seat at a few days' notice, but always book as far in advance as possible.

## Discounts & Special Flights

Discounts of 25% to 50% are available for flights around Malaysia on Malaysia Airlines, including for families and groups of three or more. Student discounts are reserved for students enrolled in institutions in Malaysia. Air Asia flights are heavily discounted if you book well in advance over the internet.

## Air Passes

Malaysia Airlines' Discover Malaysia pass costs US\$199 for five flights anywhere in Malaysia within a 28-day period. You must have flown into Malaysia on a Malaysia Airlines flight to qualify for this pass, and you must apply within 14 days of arriving in the country. Taxes are extra and each sector counts as one flight, including transit flights.

## BICYCLE

Rural Malaysia is well set up for long-distance bicycle touring, but cycling in the cities is more tricky. To get anywhere in KL, you must negotiate busy highways, braving the erratic city traffic. Most cyclist ride on the hard shoulder on major roads – a rear-view mirror is a valuable asset for occasions when you need to pull into the carriageway to avoid

obstacles. Road signs are normally in English, or comprehensible Bahasa Malaysia, and you can get by with a racer in the cities and on major roads in the peninsula (a mountain bike is recommended for trips to backwaters, particularly national parks).

There are good jungle trails for off-roading at Templer Park (p132) and the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM; p132). **KL Bike Hash** ([www.bikehash.freesevers.com](http://www.bikehash.freesevers.com)) runs monthly mountain-bike forays around the capital (visitors are welcome to ride along for an RM10 donation). The website has loads of useful general information on cycling in Malaysia and dozens of links to other cycling sites.

Kuala Lumpur is the best place to buy or find spares for bicycles – elsewhere, motorcycle mechanics can help with minor repairs. International-quality bicycles and components can be bought in bigger cities, but top-spec machines and fittings are hard to find. Bringing your own is the best bet. Bicycles can be transported on most international flights if packed correctly; check with the airline about extra charges and shipment specifications.

## BOAT

There are no services connecting Peninsular Malaysia with Malaysian Borneo, but ferries run from Peninsular Malaysia to Sumatra and local boat services connect the mainland to offshore islands. See the transport sections in the regional chapters for details. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, boat operators take crazy risks: overloading boats and sailing in dangerous conditions. The authorities do little to enforce the safety rules – if a boat looks overloaded or otherwise unsafe, *do not board*. On any boat trip, try to sit near the emergency exits and consider your escape route in an emergency.

## BUS

Bus travel in Malaysia is fast, comfortable and economical. However, drivers are notorious for speeding and risky overtaking and accidents are depressingly common. Some travellers prefer to avoid night buses as accidents are much less common during the day. **Transnasional Express** (☎ 03-4047 7878; [www.nadi.com.my/transportation\\_home.asp](http://www.nadi.com.my/transportation_home.asp)) is Malaysia's largest bus operator, with services all over the country, but there are dozens of other companies offering services around Peninsular Malaysia, and further afield to Singapore and Thailand.

Buses generally leave from big intercity bus stands, which may be some distance from the centre. The buses run by **Plusliner** ([www.plusliner.com](http://www.plusliner.com)) and **Aeroline** ([www.aeroline.com.my](http://www.aeroline.com.my)) tend to stop at convenient locations in town centres. You can reserve seats in advance on most intercity routes.

Air-con and ordinary buses service most major routes, but there isn't a huge difference in fares. If you travel in an air-conditioned bus, always wear sufficient clothing and bring a blanket if you really feel the cold – some buses are virtual ice-boxes on wheels. Ekspres (express) buses cost slightly more but make fewer stops, cutting journey times.

Small towns and *kampung* (villages) all over the country are serviced by public buses, usually rattlers without air-con. These buses are invariably dirt cheap and are great for sampling rural life. In most towns there are no ticket offices, so ask local people where to find the correct bus and buy your ticket from the conductor after you board.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Driving in Malaysia is a breeze compared to most Asian countries. The government has invested heavily in the roads – influenced perhaps by the success of Petronas, the state petroleum and gas company, and the Proton Saga, the first Malaysian-built motorcar. Road surfaces are generally of a high quality and motorway services are very similar to what you would find in the West. Leaded and unleaded petrol are widely available for around RM1.90 per litre and hire companies offer self-drive services at the international airports in KL and Penang. Traffic is fairly light out on the highways, and there's a 110km per hour speed limit, so you can cover long distances quickly. Small motorcycles can be hired in Georgetown for exploring Penang Island, but they are not really up to long-distance touring.

That's the good news. The bad news is that drivers in Malaysia have the same devil-may-care attitude as drivers elsewhere in Asia. This means inconsiderate tailgating, risky overtaking, dangerous speeding and sudden unsignalled turns. Crashes are not uncommon – the mountain highway from KL to Genting Highlands sees minor collisions almost daily. Always drive defensively and be ready for unexpected manoeuvres from drivers around you. A further hassle for drivers is the confusing layout of Malaysian road junctions.

Although well-signposted, exits appear with little notice, giving you a narrow window of time to get into the right lane. Assuming you make the turn, exits spiral off other exits like fettuccine curled around a fork – if you're not careful, you can end up back on the highway driving back the way you came.

To help you orientate yourself, the Lebuhraya (North-South Hwy), is a six-lane expressway that runs for 966km along the length of the peninsula from the Thai border in the north to Johor Bahru in the south, stopping near the Causeway to Singapore. Toll charges for using the expressway vary according to the distance travelled, which keeps the traffic light. Many locals prefer the free, but more crowded, ordinary highways.

### Bring Your Own Vehicle

It is technically possible to bring your vehicle into Malaysia, but there are reams of red tape and the costs are prohibitively expensive – a hire car is a much better proposition.

### Driving Licence

A valid overseas licence is needed to rent a car. An International Driving Permit is usually not required but it is recommended that you bring one, just to be safe. Most rental companies also require that drivers are at least 23 years old (and less than 65), with at least one year of driving experience.

### Hire

Kuala Lumpur is the easiest place to rent a car (see p126), but there are also several car rental companies in Penang (p174). Most of the big international rental companies have airport desks and downtown offices. The big advantage of dealing with the international chains is their countrywide network of offices – you can often pick up in one city and drop off in another for a RM50 surcharge.

Unlimited-distance rates for a 1.3L Proton Saga, the cheapest and most popular car in Malaysia, start per day/week at RM150/900. There's a 5% tax on top of this and you'll pay an extra daily fee of RM15 for insurance against theft and RM30 for a collision-damage waiver, which reduces the excess in the event of accident to RM500. It's worth taking both these options – if you have an accident without this cover, you may be required to pay for both the damage to the other vehicle and any medical bills for the passengers. Rates

drop substantially for longer rentals – it is often possible to get a Proton Saga for as little as RM2000 per month, including unlimited kilometres and insurance.

Reliable car-rental companies include **Avis** ([www.avis.com.my](http://www.avis.com.my)), **Hertz** ([www.hertz.com.my](http://www.hertz.com.my)), **Mayflower** ([www.mayflowercarrental.com.my](http://www.mayflowercarrental.com.my)), and **Orix** ([www.orixcarrentals.com.my](http://www.orixcarrentals.com.my)). Small (100cc to 125cc) motorcycles can be hired in Penang for around RM30 per day. However, you are unlikely to be covered by insurance if you don't have a motorcycle license.

### Insurance

Rental companies will provide insurance when you hire a car, but always check what the extent of your coverage will be, particularly if you're involved in an accident. Make sure you are covered for damage to other vehicles and third-party medical treatment in the event of a crash. You might want to take out your own insurance or pay the rental company an extra premium for an insurance excess reduction.

### Road Rules

Driving in Malaysia broadly follows the same rules as in Britain and Australia – cars are right-hand drive and you drive on the left side of the road. However, locals bend the rules, and sometimes break them completely. Always try to predict problems ahead of time. Be aware of possible road hazards, particularly stray animals, wandering pedestrians and the large number of motorcyclists. The speed limit is 110km per hour on expressways but it can slow to as little as 50km per hour on *kampung* (village) back roads, so take it easy. Wearing safety belts is compulsory and a very sensible idea, though they are only fitted to front seats.

Malaysian drivers show remarkable common sense compared to other countries in the region. However, there are still plenty of drivers who take dangerous risks. Lane-drift is a big problem and signalling, when used at all, is often unclear. A flashing left indicator can mean 'you are safe to overtake', or 'I'm about to turn off', or 'I've forgotten to turn my indicator off', or 'look out, I'm about to do something totally unpredictable'. Giving a quick blast of the horn when you're overtaking a slower vehicle is common practice, and helps alert otherwise sleepy drivers to your presence.

### HITCHING

Keep in mind that hitching is never entirely safe in any country in the world, and we don't recommend it. Travellers who decide to hitch, particularly single women, should understand that they are taking a small but potentially serious risk. People who do choose to hitch will be safer if they travel in pairs and let someone know where they are planning to go. Nevertheless, hitching is comparatively easy in Malaysia, though buses are so cheap that few people bother. Note that hitchers are banned from the Lebuhraya.

### LOCAL TRANSPORT

Local transport varies widely from place to place. Taxis are found in most large cities and most have meters – government-set rates are as follows: flagfall (first 2km) is RM2; 10 sen for each 200m or 45 seconds thereafter; 20 sen for each additional passenger over two passengers; RM1 for each piece of luggage in the boot (trunk); plus 50% between midnight and 6am. Although drivers are legally obliged to use the meter, many prefer to make up a (usually elevated) fare on the spot, particularly in Penang. If a driver refuses to use the meter, either find another cab or bargain hard. Taxis also provide long-distance transport – see below.

Bicycle rickshaws (trishaws) supplement the taxi service in Georgetown, Melaka and some other cities, providing an atmospheric, if bumpy, means of exploring the backstreets. Bigger cities also have cheap and frequent buses and KL has commuter trains (p128), and a Light Rail Transit (LRT; p128) and monorail (p128) system.

### Long-Distance Taxi

Long-distance taxis cover similar routes to the buses, but few people use them to travel from KL to Melaka or Penang as buses are cheaper and much more frequent. Long haul taxi services operate on a shared basis and taxis leave from fixed depots – look for the 'Teksi' signs. There is space for four passengers and you can either charter the whole taxi or just pay for one seat (a quarter of the whole-taxi fare) and share the cost with three other passengers. Taxis leave when there are four passengers, or when one passenger pays the whole taxi fare, which can mean a long wait. Early morning is generally the best time to find people to share a taxi.

Taxi rates to specific destinations are fixed by the government and the whole-taxi fare is usually posted at the taxi stand. Air-con taxis cost a few more ringgit than those without air-con, and fares are generally about twice the comparable bus fares. If you want to charter a taxi to an obscure destination, or by the hour, you'll probably have to do some negotiating. As a rule of thumb, you should pay around 50 sen per kilometre.

### TOURS

Getting around Peninsular Malaysia under your own steam is rarely difficult, but there are numerous tour companies who will make all the arrangements for you. Tour agents in KL offer day tours to Melaka and other attractions around KL, as well as Taman Negara National Park in the north of the peninsula. See Kuala Lumpur (p99), Melaka (p151) and Penang (p188) for listings of local operators and tours.

### TRAIN

Trains in Malaysia are run by the privatised national railway company **KTM** (Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad; ☎ 03-2267 1200; [www.ktmb.com.my](http://www.ktmb.com.my)), which also runs the commuter train service in KL. Although slow, the trains are modern, comfortable and inexpensive and travelling long-distance by train in Asia has a certain charm. There are basically two lines – one up the east coast, and one up the west coast, connecting with Singapore in the south (see p231) and the Thai city of Hat Yai in the north (see p231).

As well as long-haul trips to Thailand and Singapore, you can use the train to get from KL to Butterworth and Penang. The *Ekspress Senandung Langkawi* train leaves KL at 9pm daily, reaching Butterworth at 5.50am the next morning; the return trip leaves Butterworth at 10pm, reaching KL at 6.45am. Seats cost from RM30 and berths from RM38. There's also the *Sinaran Express*, which leaves KL at 8.25am, reaching Butterworth at 4.10pm; the return services leaves Butterworth at 2pm, reaching KL at 9.50pm. Economy/superior seats cost RM19/30.

### Services & Classes

There are two main types of rail services: express and local trains. Express trains are air-conditioned and have a mixture of 'premier' (1st class), 'superior' (2nd class) and

sometimes 'economy' seats (3rd class). On overnight trains you'll find 'premier night deluxe' cabins (upper/lower berth cost RM50/70 on top of the standard fare), 'premier night standard cabins' (upper/lower berths cost RM18/26 on top of the standard fare), and 'standard night' cabins (upper/lower berths cost RM12/17 on top of the

standard fare). Express trains stop only at main stations, while local services stop everywhere, including the middle of the jungle – it's a fascinating if somewhat slow way to explore the country.

Train schedules are reviewed biannually, so check on KTM's website for the latest situation before you make detailed plans.

# Health

Dr Trish Batchelor

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Health issues and the quality of medical facilities vary enormously depending on where and how you travel in Southeast Asia. Many of the major cities are now very well developed, although travel to rural areas can expose you to a variety of health risks and inadequate medical care.

Travellers tend to worry about contracting infectious diseases when in the tropics, but infections are a rare cause of serious illness or death in travellers. Pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease, and accidental injury (especially traffic accidents), account for most life-threatening problems. Becoming ill in some way, however, is relatively common. Fortunately most common illnesses can either be prevented with some common-sense behaviour or be treated easily with a well-stocked traveller's medical kit.

The following advice is a general guide only and does not replace the advice of a doctor trained in travel medicine.

## BEFORE YOU GO

Pack medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including their

## HEALTH ADVISORIES

It's a good idea to consult your government's website on health and travel before departure, if one is available:

**Australia** ([www.dfat.gov.au/travel](http://www.dfat.gov.au/travel))

**Canada** ([www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/index.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/index.html))

**New Zealand** ([www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz))

**South Africa** ([www.dfa.gov.za/consular/travel\\_advice.htm](http://www.dfa.gov.za/consular/travel_advice.htm))

**UK** ([www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Healthadvicefortravellers](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Healthadvicefortravellers))

**US** ([www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel))

generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. If you have a heart condition bring a copy of your ECG taken just prior to travelling.

If you happen to take any regular medication bring a double supply in case of loss or theft. You can buy many medications over the counter without a doctor's prescription, but it can be difficult to find some of the newer drugs, particularly the latest antidepressant drugs, blood pressure medications and contraceptive pills.

## INSURANCE

Even if you are fit and healthy, don't travel without health insurance – accidents do happen. Declare any existing medical conditions you have – the insurance company *will* check if your problem is pre-existing and will not cover you if it is undeclared. You may require extra cover for adventure activities such as rock climbing. If your health insurance doesn't cover you for medical expenses abroad, consider getting extra insurance. If you're uninsured, emergency evacuation is expensive – bills of over US\$100,000 are not uncommon. See p222 for more on travel insurance.

## VACCINATIONS

Specialised travel-medicine clinics are your best source of information; they stock all available vaccines and will be able to give specific recommendations for you and your

trip. The doctors will take into account factors such as your vaccination history, the length of your trip, activities you may be undertaking and underlying medical conditions, such as pregnancy.

Most vaccines don't produce immunity until at least two weeks after they're given, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the yellow booklet), which will list all the vaccinations you've received.

### Recommended Vaccinations

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the following vaccinations for travellers to Malaysia:

**Adult diphtheria and tetanus** Single booster recommended if none in the previous 10 years. Side effects include sore arm and fever.

**Hepatitis A** Provides almost 100% protection for up to a year. A booster after 12 months provides at least another 20 years' protection. Mild side effects such as headaches and a sore arm occur in 5% to 10% of people.

**Hepatitis B** Now considered routine for most travellers. Given as three shots over six months. A rapid schedule is also available, as is a combined vaccination with Hepatitis A. Side effects are mild and uncommon, usually a headache and a sore arm. Lifetime protection occurs in 95% of people.

**Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)** Two doses of MMR are required unless you have had the diseases. Occasionally a rash and flu-like illness can develop a week after receiving the vaccine. Many young adults require a booster.

**Polio** There have been no reported cases of polio in Malaysia in recent years. Only one booster is required as an adult for lifetime protection. Inactivated polio vaccine is safe during pregnancy.

**Typhoid** Recommended unless your trip is less than a week and only to developed cities. The vaccine offers around 70% protection, lasts for two to three years and comes as a single shot. Tablets are also available. However the injection is usually recommended as it has fewer side effects. A sore arm and a fever may occur.

**Varicella** If you haven't had chickenpox, discuss this vaccination with your doctor.

These immunisations are recommended for long-term travellers (more than one month) or those at particular risk:

**Japanese B Encephalitis** Three injections in all. Booster recommended after two years. A sore arm and a headache are the most common side effects, although a rare allergic reaction comprising hives and swelling can occur up to 10 days after any of the three doses.

### SARS

In March 2003 the world's attention was drawn to the outbreak of an apparently new and serious respiratory illness in China and Southeast Asia that became known as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome). Although the disease resulted in 800 deaths, there have been no new reported cases since 2004. However, there are still fundamental questions to be answered about SARS – where did it come from, will it come back and can we develop a rapid test or treatment for it? It is a sensible precaution to check the local press and seek immediate advice from your embassy in the event of any new outbreaks – see p219 for a list of embassies in Kuala Lumpur.

**Meningitis** Single injection. There are two types of vaccination: the quadrivalent vaccine gives two to three years' protection, while the meningitis group C vaccine gives around 10 years' protection. Recommended for long-term backpackers aged under 25.

**Rabies** Three injections in all. A booster after one year will then provide 10 years' protection. Side effects are rare – occasionally a headache and a sore arm.

**Tuberculosis (TB)** A complex issue. Adult long-term travellers are usually recommended to have a TB skin test before and after travel, rather than a vaccination. Only one vaccine is given in a lifetime.

### Required Vaccinations

Proof of yellow fever vaccination will be required if you have visited a country in the yellow-fever zone (ie Africa or South America) within the six days prior to entering Malaysia.

### MEDICAL CHECKLIST

Recommended items for a personal medical kit:

- antibacterial cream, eg Muciprocin
- antibiotics for diarrhoea, eg Norfloxacin or Ciprofloxacin; Azithromycin for bacterial diarrhoea; and Tinidazole for giardiasis or amoebic dysentery
- antibiotics for skin infections, eg Amoxicillin/Clavulanate or Cephalexin
- antifungal cream, eg Clotrimazole
- antihistamines for allergies, eg Cetirizine for daytime and Promethazine for night
- anti-inflammatory, eg Ibuprofen

- antinausea medication, eg Prochlorperazine
- antiseptic for cuts and scrapes, eg Beta-dine
- antispasmodic for stomach cramps, eg Buscopan
- contraceptives
- decongestant for colds and flus, eg Pseudoephedrine
- DEET-based insect repellent
- diarrhoea 'stopper', eg Loperamide
- first-aid items such as scissors, plasters, bandages, gauze, thermometer (electronic, not mercury), sterile needles and syringes and tweezers
- indigestion medication, eg Quick Eze or Mylanta
- iodine tablets (unless you are pregnant or have a thyroid problem) to purify water
- laxative, eg Coloxyl
- migraine medication (your personal brand), if a migraine sufferer
- oral-rehydration solution for diarrhoea, eg Gastrolyte
- paracetamol for pain
- permethrin (to impregnate clothing and mosquito nets) for repelling insects
- steroid cream for allergic/itchy rashes, eg 1% to 2% hydrocortisone
- sunscreen and hat
- throat lozenges
- thrush (vaginal yeast infection) treatment, eg Clotrimazole pessaries or Diflucan tablet
- urine alkalisation agent, eg Ural, if you're prone to urinary tract infections.

### INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the internet. For further information, **Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) is a good place to start. The **World Health Organization** (WHO; [www.who.int/ith](http://www.who.int/ith)) publishes a superb book called *International Travel & Health*, which is revised annually and is available free online. Another website of general interest is **MD Travel Health** ([www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com)), which provides complete travel health recommendations for every country and is updated daily. The **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** (CDC; [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) website also has good general information.

### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's *Healthy Travel – Asia & India* is a handy pocket-size book packed with useful

information including pretrip planning, emergency first aid, immunisation and disease information and what to do if you get sick on the road. Other recommended references include *Traveller's Health* by Dr Richard Dawood and *Travelling Well* by Dr Deborah Mills – check out the website [www.travellingwell.com.au](http://www.travellingwell.com.au).

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when blood clots form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. Though most blood clots are reabsorbed uneventfully, some may break off and travel through the blood vessels to the lungs, where they may cause life-threatening complications.

The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain in the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. If a blood clot travels to the lungs it may cause chest pain and difficulty in breathing. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, perform isometric compressions of the leg muscles (ie contract the leg muscles while sitting), drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol.

### JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones. It causes symptoms including insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To help avoid jet lag try drinking plenty of fluids (nonalcoholic) and eating light meals. Upon arrival, seek exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. Their main side effect is drowsiness. A herbal alternative is ginger, which works like a charm for some people.

## IN MALAYSIA

### AVAILABILITY OF HEALTHCARE

Kuala Lumpur and Penang have clinics catering specifically to travellers and expats and there are international-standard hospitals in

Melaka. Private clinics are marginally more expensive than local medical facilities, but they tend to offer a superior standard of care and they can also liaise with insurance companies should you require evacuation. Recommended clinics are listed under Information in the capital city sections of country chapters in this book. Your embassy and insurance company are also good contacts.

Self-treatment may be appropriate if your problem is minor (eg traveller's diarrhoea), you are carrying the appropriate medication and you cannot attend a recommended clinic. If you think you may have a serious disease, do not waste time – travel to the nearest quality facility to receive attention. It is always better to be assessed by a doctor than to rely on self-treatment. Over-the-counter medicines and prescription drugs are widely available from reputable pharmacies across Malaysia.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

### Cutaneous Larva Migrans

This disease, caused by dog hookworm, is common on some beaches. The rash starts as a small lump, then slowly spreads in a linear fashion, and is intensely itchy, especially at night. It is easily treated with medications and should not be cut out or frozen.

### Dengue Fever

This mosquito-borne disease is becoming increasingly common in Malaysia, especially in cities. As there is no vaccine available it can only be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites. The mosquito that carries dengue bites day and night, so use insect avoidance measures at all times. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache and body ache. Some people develop a rash and experience diarrhoea. There is no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol – do not take aspirin as it increases the likelihood of hemorrhaging. See a doctor to be diagnosed and monitored.

### Filariasis

A mosquito-borne disease that is very common in the local population, yet very rare in travellers. Mosquito-avoidance measures are the best way to prevent this disease.

### Hepatitis A

This food- and water-borne virus infects the liver, causing jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), nausea and lethargy. There is no specific treat-

ment for hepatitis A, you just need to allow time for the liver to heal. All travellers to Malaysia should be vaccinated against hepatitis A.

### Hepatitis B

The only sexually transmitted disease (STD) that can be prevented by vaccination, hepatitis B is spread by body fluids, including sexual contact. In Malaysia, 3.5% of the population are carriers of hepatitis B, and usually are unaware of this. The long-term consequences can include liver cancer and cirrhosis.

### Hepatitis E

Hepatitis E is transmitted through contaminated food and water and has similar symptoms to hepatitis A, but is far less common. It is a severe problem in pregnant women and can result in the death of both mother and baby. There is currently no vaccine, and prevention is by following safe eating and drinking guidelines.

### HIV

HIV is a growing problem in Malaysia and unprotected heterosexual sex is the main method of transmission. There is no cure and treatment with antiretroviral drugs just delays the onset of symptoms. Practising safe sex or avoiding sex with untested partners is the only means of prevention.

### Influenza

Present year-round in the tropics, influenza (flu) symptoms include high fever, muscle aches, runny nose, cough and sore throat. It can be very severe in people over the age of 65 or in those with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease or diabetes; vaccination is recommended for these individuals. There is no specific treatment, just rest and paracetamol.

### Japanese B Encephalitis

This viral disease is transmitted by mosquitoes, but most cases occur in rural areas and vaccination is usually only recommended for travellers spending more than one month outside of cities. There is no treatment, and a third of infected people will die while another third will suffer permanent brain damage.

### Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is most commonly contracted after river rafting or canyoning. Early symp-

toms are very similar to the flu and include headache and fever. It can vary from a very mild to a fatal disease. Diagnosis is through blood tests and it is easily treated with Doxycycline.

### Malaria

Malaria is uncommon in Peninsular Malaysia and antimalarial drugs are rarely recommended for travellers. However, there may be a small risk in rural areas. Remember that malaria can be fatal. Before you travel, seek medical advice on the right medication and dosage for you.

Malaria is caused by a parasite transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. The most important symptom of malaria is fever, but general symptoms such as headache, diarrhoea, cough or chills may also occur. Diagnosis can only be made by taking a blood sample.

Two strategies should be combined to prevent malaria – mosquito avoidance, and antimalarial medications. Most people who catch malaria are taking inadequate or no antimalarial medication.

Travellers are advised to prevent mosquito bites by taking these steps:

- Use a DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed skin. Wash this off at night, as long as you are sleeping under a mosquito net. Natural repellents such as Citronella can be effective, but must be applied more frequently than products containing DEET.
- Sleep under a mosquito net impregnated with Permethrin.
- Choose accommodation with screens and fans (if not air-conditioned).
- Impregnate clothing with Permethrin in high-risk areas.
- Wear long sleeves and trousers in light colours.
- Use mosquito coils.
- Spray your room with insect repellent before going out for your evening meal.

There are a variety of medications available:

**Artesunate** Derivatives of Artesunate are not suitable as a preventive medication. They are useful treatments under medical supervision.

**Chloroquine and Paludrine** The effectiveness of this combination is now limited. Common side effects include nausea (40% of people) and mouth ulcers. Generally not recommended.

**Doxycycline** This daily tablet is a broad-spectrum antibiotic that has the added benefit of helping to prevent a variety of tropical diseases, including leptospirosis, tick-borne disease, typhus and melioidosis. The potential side effects include photosensitivity (a tendency to sunburn), thrush in women, indigestion, heartburn, nausea and interference with the contraceptive pill. More serious side effects include ulceration of the oesophagus – you can help prevent this by taking your tablet with a meal and a large glass of water, and never lying down within half an hour of taking it. Must be taken for four weeks after leaving the risk area.

**Lariam (Mefloquine)** This weekly tablet suits some people but serious side effects can include depression, anxiety, psychosis and fits. Anyone with a history of depression, anxiety, other psychological disorder, or epilepsy should not take Lariam. It is considered safe in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. It is around 90% effective but tablets must be taken for four weeks after leaving the risk area.

**Malarone** This new drug is a combination of Atovaquone and Proguanil. Side effects are uncommon and mild, most commonly nausea and headache. It is the best tablet for scuba divers and for those on short trips to high-risk areas. It must be taken for one week after leaving the risk area.

A final option is to take no preventive medication but to have a supply of emergency medication should you develop the symptoms of malaria. This is less than ideal, and you'll need to get to a good medical facility within 24 hours of developing a fever. If you choose this option the most effective and safest treatment is Malarone (four tablets once daily for three days). Other options include Mefloquine and Quinine but the side effects of these drugs at treatment doses make them less desirable. Fansidar is no longer recommended.

### Measles

This highly contagious bacterial infection is spread via coughing and sneezing. Most people born before 1966 are immune as they had the disease in childhood. Measles starts with a high fever and rash and can be complicated by pneumonia and brain disease. There is no specific treatment.

### Rabies

Rabies is a potential risk in Malaysia and the disease is invariably fatal if untreated. Rabies is spread by the bite or lick of an infected animal – most commonly a dog or monkey. You should seek medical advice immediately after any animal bite and commence postexposure treatment. Having pretravel vaccination means the postbite treatment is greatly simplified. If



an animal bites you, gently wash the wound with soap and water, and apply iodine based antiseptic. If you are not prevaccinated you will need to receive rabies immunoglobulin as soon as possible.

### STDs

The most common STDs in Malaysia include herpes, warts, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. People carrying these diseases often have no signs of infection. Condoms will prevent gonorrhoea and chlamydia but not warts or herpes. If after a sexual encounter you develop any rash, lumps, discharge or pain when passing urine seek immediate medical attention. If you have been sexually active during your travels have an STD check on your return home.

### Tuberculosis

While TB is rare in travellers, those who have had significant contact with the local population (such as medical and aid workers and long-term travellers) should take precautions. Vaccination is usually only given to children under the age of five; it's recommended adults at risk are tested both before and after travel. The main symptoms are fever, cough, weight loss, night sweats and tiredness.

### Typhoid

This serious bacterial infection is also spread via food and water. It gives a high and slowly progressive fever, headache and may be accompanied by a dry cough and stomach pain. It is diagnosed by blood tests and treated with antibiotics. Vaccination is recommended for all travellers spending more than a week in Malaysia, or travelling outside of the major cities. Be aware that vaccination is not 100% effective so you must still be careful with what you eat and drink.

### Typhus

Murine typhus is spread by the bite of a flea whereas scrub typhus is spread by mites. These diseases are rare in travellers. Symptoms include fever, muscle pains and a rash. You can avoid these diseases by following general insect-avoidance measures. Doxycycline will also prevent them.

## TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Traveller's diarrhoea is by far the most common problem affecting travellers. In over 80%

of cases, traveller's diarrhoea is caused by a bacteria (there are numerous potential culprits), and therefore responds promptly to treatment with antibiotics. Treatment with antibiotics will depend on your situation – how sick you are, how quickly you need to get better, where you are etc.

Traveller's diarrhoea is defined as the passage of more than three watery bowel actions within 24 hours, plus at least one other symptom such as fever, cramps, nausea, vomiting or feeling generally unwell.

Treatment consists of staying well-hydrated; rehydration solutions such as Gastrolyte are the best for this. Antibiotics such as Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Azithromycin will kill the bacteria quickly.

Loperamide is just a 'stopper' and doesn't get to the cause of the problem, but it can be helpful in certain situations, eg if you have to go on a long bus ride. Don't take Loperamide if you have a fever, or blood in your stools. Seek medical attention quickly if you do not respond to an appropriate antibiotic.

### Amoebic Dysentery

Amoebic dysentery is very rare in travellers but is often misdiagnosed by poor-quality labs. Symptoms are similar to bacterial diarrhoea, ie fever, bloody diarrhoea and generally feeling unwell. You should always seek reliable medical care if you have blood in your

#### DRINKING WATER

- Never drink tap water.
- Bottled water is generally safe – check the seal is intact at purchase.
- Avoid ice unless you are sure it is safe.
- Avoid fresh juices – they may have been watered down.
- Boiling water is the most efficient method of purifying it.
- The best chemical purifier is iodine. It should not be used by pregnant women or those who suffer with thyroid problems.
- Water filters should also clear out viruses. Ensure your filter has a chemical barrier such as iodine and a small pore size, ie less than four microns.

diarrhoea. Treatment involves two drugs: Tinidazole or Metronidazole to kill the parasite in your gut, and then a second drug to kill the cysts. If left untreated complications such as liver or gut abscesses can occur.

### Giardiasis

*Giardia lamblia* is a parasite that is relatively common in travellers. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, excess gas (including 'eggy' burps), fatigue and intermittent diarrhoea. The parasite will eventually go away if left untreated but this can take months. The treatment of choice is Tinidazole, with Metronidazole being a second option.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

### Air Pollution

Air pollution, particularly vehicle pollution, is an increasing problem in most of Southeast Asia's major cities. If you have severe respiratory problems speak with your doctor before travelling to any heavily polluted urban centres. This pollution also causes minor respiratory problems such as sinusitis, dry throat and irritated eyes. If you're troubled by the pollution leave the city for a few days and get some fresh air.

### Diving

Divers and surfers should seek specialised advice before they travel to ensure their medical kit contains treatment for coral cuts and tropical ear infections, as well as the standard problems. Divers should ensure their insurance covers them for decompression illness – get specialised dive insurance through an organisation such as **Divers Alert Network** (DAN; [www.danseap.org](http://www.danseap.org)). Have a dive medical before you leave your home country – there are certain medical conditions that are incompatible with diving and economic considerations may override health considerations for some dive operators.

### Food

Eating in unhygienic restaurants is the biggest risk factor for contracting traveller's diarrhoea. Ways to prevent it include eating only freshly cooked food, avoiding shellfish and food that has been sitting around in buffets. Peel all fruit, cook vegetables, and soak salads in iodine water for at least 20 minutes. Eat in busy restaurants with a high turnover of customers.

## Heat

Malaysia is hot and humid throughout the year. For most people it takes at least two weeks to adapt to the hot climate. Swelling of the feet and ankles is common, as are muscle cramps caused by excessive sweating. Prevent these by avoiding dehydration and excessive activity in the heat. Don't eat salt tablets (they aggravate the gut); drinking rehydration solution or eating salty food helps. Treat cramps by stopping activity, resting, rehydrating with double-strength rehydration solution and gently stretching.

Dehydration is the main contributor to heat exhaustion. Symptoms include feeling weak; headache; irritability; nausea or vomiting; sweaty skin; a fast, weak pulse; and a normal or slightly elevated body temperature. Treatment involves getting out of the heat and/or sun, fanning the victim and applying cool wet cloths to the skin, laying the victim flat with their legs raised and rehydrating with water containing a quarter of a teaspoon of salt per litre. Recovery is usually rapid and it is common to feel weak for some days afterwards.

Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms come on suddenly and include weakness, nausea, a hot dry body with a body temperature of over 41°C, dizziness, confusion, loss of coordination, fits and eventually collapse and loss of consciousness. Seek medical help and commence cooling by getting the person out of the heat, removing their clothes, fanning them and applying cool wet cloths or ice to their body, especially to the groin and armpits.

Prickly heat is a common skin rash in the tropics, caused by sweat being trapped under the skin. The result is an itchy rash of tiny lumps. Treat by moving out of the heat and into an air-conditioned area for a few hours and by having cool showers. Creams and ointments clog the skin so they should be avoided. Locally bought prickly-heat powder can be helpful.

Tropical fatigue is common in long-term expats based in the tropics. It's rarely due to disease and is caused by the climate, inadequate mental rest, excessive alcohol intake and the demands of daily work in a different culture.

### Insect Bites & Stings

Bedbugs don't carry disease but their bites are very itchy. They live in the cracks of furniture

and walls and then migrate to the bed at night to feed on you. You can treat the itch with an antihistamine.

Lice inhabit various parts of your body but most commonly your head and pubic area. Transmission is via close contact with an infected person. They can be difficult to treat and you may need numerous applications of an antilice shampoo such as Permethrin. Pubic lice are usually contracted from sexual contact.

Ticks are contracted after walking in rural areas. They are commonly found behind the ears, on the belly and in armpits. If you have had a tick bite and experience symptoms such as a rash at the site of the bite or elsewhere, fever, or muscle aches you should see a doctor. Doxycycline prevents tick-borne diseases.

Leeches are found in humid rainforest areas. They do not transmit any disease but their bites are often intensely itchy for weeks afterwards and can easily become infected. Apply an iodine-based antiseptic to any leech bite to help prevent infection.

Bee and wasp stings mainly cause problems for people who are allergic to them. Anyone with a serious bee or wasp allergy should carry an injection of adrenaline (eg an EpiPen) for emergency treatment. For others pain is the main problem – apply ice to the sting and take painkillers.

Most jellyfish in Malaysian waters are not dangerous, just irritating. First-aid for jellyfish stings involves pouring vinegar onto the affected area to neutralise the poison. Do not rub sand or water onto the stings. Take painkillers, and if you feel ill in any way after being stung you should seek medical advice. Take local advice if there are dangerous jellyfish around and keep out of the water.

### Parasites

Numerous parasites are found among locals in Malaysia; however, most are rare in travellers. To avoid parasitic infections, wear shoes and avoid eating raw food, especially fish, pork and vegetables. A number of parasites are transmitted via the skin by walking barefoot including strongyloides, hookworm and cutaneous *Larva migrans*.

### Skin Problems

Fungal rashes are common in humid climates. There are two common fungal rashes that affect travellers. The first occurs in moist areas that get less air such as the groin, armpits and

between the toes. It starts as a red patch that slowly spreads and is usually itchy. Treatment involves keeping the skin dry, avoiding chafing and using an antifungal cream such as Clotrimazole or Lamisil. *Tinea versicolor* is also common – this fungus causes small, light-coloured patches, most commonly on the back, chest and shoulders. Consult a doctor.

Cuts and scratches become easily infected in humid climates. Take meticulous care of any cuts and scratches to prevent complications such as abscesses. Immediately wash all wounds in clean water and apply antiseptic. If you develop signs of infection (increasing pain and redness) see a doctor. Divers and surfers should be particularly careful with coral cuts as they become easily infected.

### Snakes

Poisonous and harmless snakes are found in many rural areas in Malaysia. Assume all snakes are poisonous and never try to catch one. Always wear boots and long pants if walking in an area that may have snakes. First aid in the event of a snakebite involves pressure immobilisation via an elastic bandage firmly wrapped around the affected limb, starting at the bite site and working up towards the chest. The bandage should not be so tight that the circulation is cut off, and the fingers or toes should be kept free so the circulation can be checked. Immobilise the limb with a splint and carry the victim to medical attention. Do not use tourniquets or try to suck the venom out. Antivenin is available for most species.

### Sunburn

Even on a cloudy day sunburn can occur rapidly. Always use a strong sunscreen (at least factor 30), making sure to reapply after a swim, and always wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses outdoors. Avoid lying in the sun during the hottest part of the day (10am to 2pm). If you become sunburnt stay out of the sun until you have recovered, apply cool compresses and take painkillers for the discomfort. One percent hydrocortisone cream applied twice daily is also helpful.

### WOMEN'S HEALTH

Pregnant women should receive specialised advice before travelling. The ideal time to travel is in the second trimester (between 16 and 28 weeks), when the risk of pregnancy-related problems are at their lowest and

pregnant women generally feel at their best. During the first trimester there is a risk of miscarriage and in the third trimester complications such as premature labour and high blood pressure are possible. It's wise to travel with a companion. Always carry a list of quality medical facilities available at your destination and ensure you continue your standard antenatal care at these facilities. Most of all, ensure travel insurance covers all pregnancy-related possibilities, including premature labour.

None of the more effective antimalarial drugs are completely safe in pregnancy. WHO recommends that pregnant women do *not* travel to areas with Chloroquine-resistant malaria.

Traveller's diarrhoea can quickly lead to dehydration and result in inadequate blood flow to the placenta. Many of the drugs used to treat various diarrhoea bugs are not recommended in pregnancy. Azithromycin is considered safe.

In Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Penang, supplies of sanitary products are readily available. Birth control options may be limited so bring adequate supplies of your own form of contraception. Heat, humidity and antibiotics can all contribute to thrush. Treatment is with antifungal creams and pessaries such as Clotrimazole. A practical alternative is a single tablet of fluconazole (Diflucan). Urinary tract infections can be precipitated by dehydra-

tion or long bus journeys without toilet stops; bring suitable antibiotics.

### TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Traditional medical systems are widely practised in Malaysia. There is a big difference between these traditional healing systems and 'folk' medicine. Folk remedies should be avoided, as they often involve rather dubious procedures with potential complications. In comparison, traditional healing systems such as traditional Chinese medicine are well respected, and aspects of them are being increasingly utilised by Western medical practitioners.

All traditional Asian medical systems identify a vital life force, and see blockage or imbalance as causing disease. Techniques such as herbal medicines, massage, and acupuncture are utilised to bring this vital force back into balance, or to maintain balance. These therapies are best used for treating chronic diseases such as chronic fatigue, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome and some chronic skin conditions. Traditional medicines should be avoided for treating serious acute infections.

Be aware that 'natural' doesn't always mean 'safe', and there can be drug interactions between herbal medicines and Western medicines. If you are utilising both systems ensure you inform both practitioners what the other has prescribed.

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# Language

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The official language of Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Penang is Bahasa Malaysia, and it is spoken almost universally, not least because it is compulsory to pass it in order to attain the high school certificate. English is also quite widely understood, but the difference in accent between Westerners and Malays can be a struggle for both parties. If you come across locals who don't understand English there will usually be someone around willing to pitch in and translate.

Along with Malay and English, there are several Indian and Chinese languages spoken in the region, such as Hokkien, Cantonese, Tamil and Malayalam.

## BAHASA MALAYSIA

In its most basic form, Malay is very simple. Verbs aren't conjugated for tense; the notion of time is indicated by the use of adverbs such as 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow'. For example, you can change any sentence into the past tense by simply adding *sudah* (already). Many nouns are pluralised by simply saying them twice – thus *buku* is 'book', *buku-buku* is 'books', *anak* is 'child', *anak-anak* is 'children'. There are no articles (a, an, the). Thus 'a good book' or 'the good book' is simply *buku baik*. There is no verb 'to be', so again it would be *buku baik* rather than 'the book is

good'. Malay is also a very poetic and evocative language – 'the sun', for example, is *matahari*, or 'the eye of the day'.

For a more comprehensive guide to the language, get hold of Lonely Planet's handy pocket-sized *Malay Phrasebook*.

## PRONUNCIATION

Most letters are pronounced the same as their English counterparts, although a few vowels and consonants differ.

### Vowels

<b>a</b>	as the 'u' in 'hut'
<b>e</b>	a neutral vowel like the 'a' in 'ago' when unstressed, eg <i>besar</i> (big); when the stress falls on <b>e</b> it's more like the 'a' in 'may', eg <i>meja</i> (table).
<b>i</b>	as in 'hit'
<b>o</b>	as in 'note'
<b>u</b>	as in 'flute'
<b>ai</b>	as in 'aisle'
<b>au</b>	a drawn out 'ow', as in 'cow'
<b>ua</b>	each vowel is pronounced, as 'oo-a'

### Consonants

<b>c</b>	always as the 'ch' in 'chair'
<b>g</b>	always hard, as in 'go'
<b>ng</b>	as the 'ng' in 'singer'
<b>ngg</b>	as 'ng' + 'g' (as in 'anger')
<b>j</b>	as in 'join'
<b>r</b>	pronounced clearly and distinctly
<b>h</b>	as the English 'h' but slightly stronger (like a sigh); at the end of a word it's almost silent
<b>k</b>	as English 'k', except at the end of the word, when it's more like a glottal stop (ie the 'nonsound' created by the momentary closing of the throat before each syllable in the expression 'oh-oh!')
<b>ny</b>	as in 'canyon'

### Word Stress

In Malay words, most syllables carry equal emphasis, but a good rule of thumb is to put stress on the second-last syllable. The main exception is the unstressed **e** in words such as *besar* (big), pronounced 'be-sar'. Unfortunately, there's no single rule to determine whether **e** is stressed or unstressed.

## ACCOMMODATION

<b>I'm looking for a ...</b>	<i>Saya mencari ...</i>
<b>guesthouse</b>	<i>rumah tetamu</i>
<b>hotel</b>	<i>hotel</i>
<b>youth hostel</b>	<i>asrama belia</i>
<b>bed</b>	<i>katil</i>

### MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone or written inquiries)

<b>To ...</b>	<i>Ke ...</i>
<b>From ...</b>	<i>Daripada ...</i>
<b>I'd like to book ...</b>	<i>Saya nak tempah ... (see the list on this page for bed and room options)</i>
<b>for the nights of ...</b>	<i>untuk malam ...</i>
<b>in the name of ...</b>	<i>atas nama ...</i>
<b>credit card</b>	<i>kad kredit</i>
<b>type</b>	<i>jenis</i>
<b>number</b>	<i>nombor</i>
<b>expiry date</b>	<i>tempoh tamat</i>
<b>Please confirm availability and price.</b>	<i>Tolong sahkan tempahan dan harga.</i>

### Where is a cheap hotel?

*Di mana ada hotel yang murah?*

### What is the address?

*Apakah alamatnya?*

### Could you write the address, please?

*Tolong tuliskan alamat itu?*

### Do you have any rooms available?

*Ada bilik kosong?*

### I'd like to share a dorm.

*Saya nak berkongsi (bilik hostel/asrama).*

<b>I'd like a ...</b>	<i>Saya hendakkan ...</i>
<b>single room</b>	<i>bilik untuk satu orang</i>
<b>double room</b>	<i>bilik untuk dua orang</i>
<b>room with two beds</b>	<i>bilik yang ada dua katil</i>
<b>room with air-con</b>	<i>bilik dengan alat hawa dingin</i>
<b>room with a fan</b>	<i>bilik dengan kipas</i>
<b>room with a bathroom</b>	<i>bilik dengan bilik mandi</i>

<b>How much is it ...?</b>	<i>Berapa harga ...?</i>
<b>per night</b>	<i>satu malam</i>
<b>per week</b>	<i>satu minggu</i>
<b>per person</b>	<i>satu orang</i>

### May I see it?

*Boleh saya lihat bilik/nya?*

### Where is the bathroom?

*Bilik mandi di mana?*

### I (don't) like this room.

*Saya (tidak) suka bilik ini.*

### I'm/We're leaving today.

*Saya/Kami nak mendaftar keluar hari ini.*

## CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

### Addressing people

In Malaysia, *kamu* is an egalitarian second-person pronoun, equivalent to 'you' in English. The polite pronoun for the equivalent of English 'I/we' is *kami*. In polite speech, you wouldn't normally use first-person pronouns, but would refer to yourself by name or form of address, eg *Makcik nak pergi ke pasar* (Auntie wants to go to the market).

When addressing a man or a woman old enough to be your parent, use *pakcik* (uncle) or *makcik* (aunt). For someone only slightly older, use *abang* or *bang* (older brother) and *kakak* or *kak* (older sister). For people old enough to be your grandparents, *datuk* and *nenek* (grandfather and grandmother) are used. For a man or woman you meet on the street you can also use *encik* or *cik* respectively.

<b>Hello.</b>	<i>Helo.</i>
<b>Good morning.</b>	<i>Selamat pagi.</i>
<b>Good day.</b> (said around midday)	<i>Selamat tengah hari.</i>
<b>Good afternoon.</b>	<i>Selamat petang.</i>
<b>Good night.</b>	<i>Selamat malam.</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b> (said by person leaving)	<i>Selamat tinggal.</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b> (said by person staying)	<i>Selamat jalan.</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>Ya.</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>Tidak.</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>Tolong/Silakan.</i>
<b>Thank you (very much).</b>	<i>Terima kasih (banyak).</i>
<b>That's fine/ You're welcome.</b>	<i>Boleh/Sama-sama.</i>
<b>Excuse me, ...</b>	<i>Maaf, ...</i>
<b>Sorry/Pardon.</b>	<i>Maaf.</i>
<b>I'm sorry.</b> (forgive me)	<i>Minta maaf.</i>
<b>How are you?</b>	<i>Apa khabar?</i>
<b>Fine thanks.</b>	<i>Khabar baik.</i>
<b>What's your name?</b>	<i>Siapa nama kamu?</i>
<b>My name is ...</b>	<i>Nama saya ...</i>
<b>Where are you from?</b>	<i>Dari mana asal saudara?</i>
<b>I'm from ...</b>	<i>Saya dari ...</i>
<b>How old are you?</b>	<i>Berapa umur saudara?</i>
<b>I'm (20 years old).</b>	<i>Umur saya (dua puluh tahun).</i>

## SIGNS

Masuk	Entrance
Keluar	Exit
Pertanyaan	Information
Buka	Open
Tutup	Closed
Dilarang	Prohibited
Di Larang Merokok	No Smoking
Bahaya	Danger
Ada Bilik Kosong	Rooms Available
Penuh/Tak Ada Bilik Kosong	Full/No Vacancies
Polis	Police
Balai Polis	Police Station
Tandas	Toilets
Lelaki	Men
Perempuan	Women
Panas	Hot
Sejuk	Cold
Tarik	Pull
Tolak	Push

I like ...	<i>Saya suka ...</i>
I don't like ...	<i>Saya tidak suka ...</i>
Just a minute.	<i>Sebentar/Sekejap.</i>
Good/Very nice.	<i>Bagus.</i>
Good/Fine.	<i>Baik.</i>
No good.	<i>Tidak baik.</i>

## DIRECTIONS

Where is ...?	<i>Di mana ...</i>
Which way?	<i>Ke mana?</i>
Go straight ahead.	<i>Jalan terus.</i>
Turn left.	<i>Belok kiri.</i>
Turn right.	<i>Belok kanan.</i>
at the corner	<i>di simpang</i>
at the traffic lights	<i>di tempat lampu isyarat</i>
at the T-junction	<i>di simpang tiga</i>
behind	<i>di belakang</i>
in front of	<i>di hadapan</i>
next to	<i>di samping/di sebelah</i>
opposite	<i>berhadapan dengan</i>
near	<i>dekat</i>
far	<i>jauh</i>
here	<i>di sini</i>
there	<i>di sana</i>
north	<i>utara</i>
south	<i>selatan</i>
east	<i>timur</i>
west	<i>barat</i>
beach	<i>pantai</i>
bridge	<i>jambatan</i>

## EMERGENCIES

Help!	<i>Tolong!</i>
There's been an accident!	<i>Ada kemalangan!</i>
I'm lost.	<i>Saya sesat.</i>
Go away!	<i>Pergil!</i>
Stop!	<i>Berhenti!</i>
I've been robbed!	<i>Saya dirompak!</i>
Call ...!	<i>Panggil ...!</i>
a doctor	<i>doktor</i>
an ambulance	<i>ambulans</i>

island	<i>pulau</i>
mosque	<i>masjid</i>
museum	<i>muzium</i>
sea	<i>laut</i>
square	<i>dataran</i>

## HEALTH

Where is a ...	<i>Di mana ada ...</i>
chemist/pharmacy	<i>apotik/farmasi</i>
dentist	<i>doktor gigi</i>
doctor	<i>doktor</i>
hospital	<i>hospital</i>

I'm ill.	<i>Saya sakit.</i>
It hurts here.	<i>Sini sakit.</i>

I'm allergic to ...	<i>Saya alergic kepada ...</i>
antibiotics	<i>antibiotik</i>
aspirin	<i>aspirin</i>
bees	<i>lebah</i>
nuts	<i>kacang</i>
penicillin	<i>penisilin</i>
peanuts	<i>kacang putih</i>

I'm ...	<i>Saya ...</i>
asthmatic	<i>sakit lelah</i>
diabetic	<i>sakit kencing manis</i>
epileptic	<i>sakit gila babi</i>
pregnant	<i>hamil</i>

antiseptic	<i>antiseptik</i>
condoms	<i>kondom</i>
contraceptive	<i>kontraseptif or pencegah hamil</i>
diarrhoea	<i>cirit-birit</i>
fever	<i>demam panas</i>
headache	<i>sakit kepala</i>
medicine	<i>ubat</i>
sunblock cream	<i>krim pelindung cahaya matahari</i>
pill/tablet	<i>pil/tablet</i>
quinine	<i>kina/kuinin</i>
sanitary napkins	<i>tuala wanita</i>

sleeping pills	<i>pil tidur</i>
tampons	<i>tampon</i>

## LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES

## Do you speak English?

*Bolehkah anda berbicara Bahasa Inggeris?*

## Does anyone here speak English?

*Ada orang yang berbahasa Inggeris di sini?*

## How do you say ... in Malay?

*Macam mana cakap ... dalam Bahasa Melayu?*

## What does ... mean?

*Apa ertinya ...?*

## I understand.

*Saya faham.*

## I don't understand.

*Saya tidak faham.*

## Please write it down.

*Tolong tuliskan.*

## Please repeat it.

*Tolong ulangi.*

## Can you show me (on the map)?

*Tolong tunjukkan (di peta)?*

## NUMBERS

0	<i>kosong/sifar</i>
1	<i>satu</i>
2	<i>dua</i>
3	<i>tiga</i>
4	<i>empat</i>
5	<i>lima</i>
6	<i>enam</i>
7	<i>tujuh</i>
8	<i>delapan/lapan</i>
9	<i>sembilan</i>
10	<i>sepuluh</i>
11	<i>sebelas</i>
12	<i>dua belas</i>
13	<i>tiga belas</i>
14	<i>empat belas</i>
15	<i>lima belas</i>
16	<i>enam belas</i>
17	<i>tujuh belas</i>
18	<i>lapan belas</i>
19	<i>sembilan belas</i>
20	<i>dua puluh</i>
21	<i>dua puluh satu</i>
22	<i>dua puluh dua</i>
30	<i>tiga puluh</i>
40	<i>empat puluh</i>
50	<i>lima puluh</i>
60	<i>enam puluh</i>
70	<i>tujuh puluh</i>
80	<i>lapan puluh</i>
90	<i>sembilan puluh</i>
100	<i>seratus</i>

200	<i>dua ratus</i>
1000	<i>seribu</i>
2000	<i>dua ribu</i>

## PAPERWORK

name	<i>nama</i>
nationality	<i>bangsa</i>
date of birth	<i>tarikh lahir</i>
place of birth	<i>tempat kelahiran tempat lahir</i>
sex/gender	<i>jantina</i>
passport	<i>pasport</i>
visa	<i>visa</i>

## QUESTION WORDS

Who?	<i>Siapakah?</i>
What?	<i>Apa?</i>
When?	<i>Bilakah?</i>
Where?	<i>Di mana?</i>
How?	<i>Berapa?</i>
Which?	<i>Yang mana?</i>

## SHOPPING &amp; SERVICES

I'd like to buy ...	<i>Saya nak beli ...</i>
How much (is it)?	<i>Berapa (harganya)?</i>
I don't like it.	<i>Saya tak suka ini.</i>
May I look at it?	<i>Boleh saya lihat barang itu?</i>
I'm just looking.	<i>Saya nak tengok saja.</i>
It's cheap.	<i>Murah.</i>
It's too expensive.	<i>Mahalnya.</i>
Can you lower the price?	<i>Boleh kurang sedikit?</i>
No more than ...	<i>Tak lebih daripada ...</i>
That's a good price.	<i>Harganya dah murah.</i>
I'll take it.	<i>Saya nak beli ini.</i>

Do you accept ...?	<i>Boleh bayar dengan ...?</i>
credit cards	<i>kad kredit</i>
travellers cheques	<i>cek kembara</i>

more	<i>lebih banyak</i>
less	<i>kurang</i>
big	<i>besar</i>
bigger	<i>lebih besar</i>
small	<i>kecil</i>
smaller	<i>lebih kecil</i>
this	<i>ini</i>
that	<i>itu</i>

I'm looking for a/the ...	<i>Saya nak cari ...</i>
bank	<i>bank</i>
barber	<i>tukang cukur</i>
bookshop	<i>kedai buku</i>
city centre	<i>pusat bandar</i>
chemist/pharmacy	<i>apotik/farmasi</i>
... embassy	<i>kedutaan besar ...</i>

grocery market	<i>kedai makanan pasar</i>
night market	<i>pasar malam</i>
police station	<i>stesen polis</i>
post office	<i>pejabat pos</i>
public telephone	<i>telepon umum</i>
public toilet	<i>tandas awam</i>
shop	<i>kedai</i>
shopping centre	<i>pusat membeli-belah</i>
telephone centre	<i>pusat telefon</i>
tourist office	<i>pejabat pelancong</i>

I want to change ... money (cash)	<i>Saya nak tukar wang ... wang tunai</i>
travellers cheques	<i>cek kembara</i>

**What time does it open/close?***Pukul berapa buka/tutup?***I want to call ...***Saya mau menelefon ...***TIME & DATES**

What time is it? (It's) 7 o'clock.	<i>Pukul berapa? Pukul tujuh.</i>
When?	<i>Bila?</i>
in the morning	<i>pagi</i>
in the afternoon	<i>tengahari</i>
in the evening	<i>petang</i>
at night	<i>malam</i>
today	<i>hari ini</i>
tomorrow	<i>besok/esok</i>
yesterday	<i>semalam</i>
How long?	<i>Berapa lama?</i>
hour	<i>jam</i>
week	<i>minggu</i>
year	<i>tahun</i>

Monday	<i>hari Isnin</i>
Tuesday	<i>hari Selasa</i>
Wednesday	<i>hari Rabu</i>
Thursday	<i>hari Khamis</i>
Friday	<i>hari Jumaat</i>
Saturday	<i>hari Sabtu</i>
Sunday	<i>hari Minggu</i>

January	<i>Januari</i>
February	<i>Februari</i>
March	<i>Mac</i>
April	<i>April</i>
May	<i>Mei</i>
June	<i>Jun</i>
July	<i>Julai</i>
August	<i>Ogos</i>
September	<i>September</i>

October	<i>Oktober</i>
November	<i>November</i>
December	<i>Disember</i>

**TRANSPORT**  
**Public Transport**

What time does the ... leave?	<i>Pukul berapakah ... berangkat?</i>
boat	<i>bot</i>
bus	<i>bas</i>
plane	<i>kapal terbang</i>
ship	<i>kapal</i>
train	<i>keretapi</i>

I'd like a ... ticket.	<i>Saya nak tiket ...</i>
one-way	<i>sehalu</i>
return	<i>pergi-balik</i>

**I want to go to ...***Saya nak ke ...***How can I get to ...?***Bagaimana saya pergi ke ...?***How many kilometres?***Berapa kilometer?***The (train/bus) has been delayed.***Kereta api/bas itu telah terlambat.***The (train/bus) has been cancelled.***Kereta api/bas itu telah dibatalkan.*

the first (bus)	<i>(bas) pertama</i>
the last (train)	<i>keretapi terakhir</i>
airport	<i>lapangan terbang</i>
bus station	<i>stesen bas</i>
bus stop	<i>perhentian bas</i>
platform number	<i>nombor platform</i>
rickshaw/trishaw	<i>beca</i>
ticket office	<i>pejabat tiket</i>
ticket window	<i>(tempat/kaunter) tiket</i>
timetable	<i>jadual</i>
train station	<i>stesen keretapi</i>

**Private Transport**

I'd like to hire a/an ...	<i>Saya nak menyewa ...</i>
car	<i>kereta</i>
motorbike	<i>motosikal</i>
bicycle	<i>basikal</i>

Is this the road to ...?	<i>Inikah jalan ke ...?</i>
Where's a service station?	<i>Stesen minyak di mana?</i>

Please fill it up.	<i>Tolong penuhkan tangki.</i>
I'd like (30) litres.	<i>Saya nak (30) liter.</i>
diesel	<i>disel</i>
leaded petrol	<i>petrol plumbum</i>
unleaded petrol	<i>petrol tanpa plumbum</i>

**ROAD SIGNS**

Beri Jalan	<i>Give Way</i>
Lencongan	<i>Detour</i>
Dilarang Masuk	<i>No Entry</i>
Tidak Boleh Memotong	<i>No Overtaking</i>
Dilarang Letak Kereta	<i>No Parking</i>
Masuk	<i>Entrance</i>
Kosongkan	<i>Keep Clear</i>
Jalan Tol	<i>Toll Way</i>
Bahaya	<i>Danger</i>
Perlahan-Perlahan	<i>Slow Down</i>
Jalan Sehalu	<i>One Way</i>
Keluar	<i>Exit</i>

**(How long) Can I park here?***(Beberapa lama) Boleh saya letak kereta di sini?***Where do I pay?***Di mana tempat membayar?***I need a mechanic.***Kami memerlukan mekanik.***The car/motorbike has broken down (at ...)***Kereta/motosikal saya telah rosak (di ...)***The car/motorbike won't start.***Kereta/motosikal saya tidak dapat dihidupkan.*Also available from Lonely Planet:  
*Malay Phrasebook***I have a flat tyre.***Tayarnya Kempis.***I've run out of petrol.***Minyak sudah habis.***I've had an accident.***Saya terlibat dalam kemalangan.***TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN****Do you have a/an ...? Ada ...?**

I need a/an ...	<i>Saya perlukan ...</i>
baby change room	<i>bilik salin bayi</i>
car baby seat	<i>tempat duduk bayi</i>
child-minding service	<i>penjagaan anak</i>
children's menu (disposable)	<i>menu kanak-kanak (pakai buang)</i>
nappies/diapers	<i>kain lampin</i>
formula (milk)	<i>(susu) rumusan bayi</i>
(English-speaking) babysitter	<i>penjaga anak (yang tahu bercakap dalam Bahasa Inggeris)</i>

highchair	<i>kerusi tinggi</i>
potty	<i>bekas najis</i>
stroller	<i>kereta tolak bayi</i>

**Are children allowed?***Adakah kanak-kanak dibenarkan masuk?*

# Glossary

See p50 for culinary terms.

**adat** – Malay customary law  
**adat temenggong** – Malay law with Indian modifications, governing the customs and ceremonies of the sultans  
**air** – water  
**air terjun** – waterfall  
**alor** – groove; furrow; main channel of a river  
**ampang** – dam  
**ang pow** – red packets of money used as offerings, payment or gifts  
**APEC** – Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation  
**arak** – Malay local alcohol  
**Asean** – Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
**atap** – roof thatching

**Baba-Nonya** – descendants of Chinese immigrants to Melaka and Penang who intermarried with Malays and adopted many Malay customs; also known as Peranakan, or Straits Chinese; sometimes spelt Nyonya  
**Bahasa Malaysia** – Malay language; also known as Bahasa Melayu  
**bandar** – seaport; town  
**baru** – new; common in placenames  
**batang** – stem; tree trunk; the main branch of a river  
**batik** – technique of imprinting cloth with dye to produce multicoloured patterns  
**batu** – stone; rock; milestone  
**bendahara** – chief minister  
**bomoh** – spiritual healer  
**British Resident** – chief British representative during the colonial era  
**bukit** – hill  
**bumiputra** – literally, sons of the soil; indigenous Malays  
**bunga raya** – hibiscus flower (national flower of Malaysia)

**dadah** – drugs  
**dato'** – see *datuk*  
**datuk** – literally, grandfather; general male nonroyal title of distinction  
**dipterocarp** – family of trees, native to Malaysia, that have two-winged fruits  
**dusun** – small town; orchard; fruit grove  
**Emergency** – the guerrilla war between communist rebels and the Malaysian government

**genting** – mountain pass  
**godown** – river warehouse

**gopuram** – Hindu temple tower  
**gua** – cave  
**gunung** – mountain

**hilir** – lower reaches of a river  
**hutan** – jungle; forest

**imam** – keeper of Islamic knowledge and leader of prayer  
**Islam Hadhari** – policy of progressive Islamic government, promoted by prime minister Abdullah Badawi  
**istana** – palace

**jalan** – road

**kain songket** – traditional Malay handwoven fabric with gold threads  
**kampung** – village; also spelt kampong  
**kangkar** – Chinese village  
**karst** – characteristic scenery of a limestone region, including features such as underground streams and caverns  
**kedai kopi** – coffee shop, often used for rustic restaurants  
**khalwat** – literally, close proximity; exhibition of public affection between the sexes which is prohibited for unmarried Muslim couples  
**kongsi** – Chinese clan organisations, also known as ritual brotherhoods, heaven-man-earth societies, triads or secret societies; meeting house for Chinese of the same clan  
**kopi tiam** – traditional coffee shop  
**kota** – fort; city  
**kramat** – Malay shrine  
**kris** – traditional Malay wavy-bladed dagger  
**KTM** – Keretapi Tanah Melayu; Malaysian railway organisation  
**kuala** – river mouth; place where a tributary joins a larger river

**laksamana** – admiral  
**langur** – slender, dark-faced monkey  
**laut** – sea  
**lebu** – street  
**Lebuhraya** – expressway or freeway; usually refers to the North-South Highway, which runs from Johor Bahru to the Thai border  
**lorong** – narrow street; alley  
**LRT** – Light Rail Transit (Kuala Lumpur)  
**lubuk** – deep pool

**macaque** – stocky monkey, often found at temples  
**mamak** – Indian Muslim  
**mandi** – bathe; Southeast Asian wash basin

**masjid** – mosque  
**MCP** – Malayan Communist Party  
**merdeka** – independence  
**muara** – river mouth  
**muezzin** – mosque official who calls the faithful to prayer

**negara** – country  
**negeri** – state  
**Negrito** – a dark-skinned indigenous tribal people  
**nonya** – see *Baba-Nonya*

**orang asing** – foreigner  
**Orang Asli** – literally, Original People; Malaysian aborigines  
**Orang Laut** – literally, Coastal People  
**Orang Ulu** – literally, Upriver People

**padang** – grassy area; field; also the city square  
**pantai** – beach  
**parang** – long jungle knife  
**PAS** – Parti Islam SeMalaysia  
**pasar** – market  
**pasar malam** – night market  
**pawang** – see *bomoh*  
**Pejabat Residen** – Resident's Office  
**pekan** – market place; town  
**pelabuhan** – port  
**pencaik silat** – see *silat*  
**penghulu** – chief or village head  
**pengkalan** – quay  
**perahu** – Malay-style sampan  
**Peranakan** – refers to the *Baba-Nonya* or Straits Chinese  
**Proto-Malays** – an indigenous tribal group; ancestors of the modern Malays  
**pua kumbu** – traditional finely woven cloth  
**pulau** – island  
**puteri** – princess

**raja** – prince; ruler  
**raja muda** – crown prince; heir apparent  
**rakyat** – common people  
**rama rama** – butterfly  
**rantau** – straight coastline

**rattan** – stems from climbing palms used for wickerwork and canes  
**rimba** – jungle  
**rotan** – cane used to punish miscreants  
**roti** – bread

**sampan** – small boat  
**samsu** – Malay alcohol  
**sarung** – all-purpose cloth, often sewn into a tube, and worn by women, men and children; also spelt sarong  
**seberang** – opposite side of road; far bank of a river  
**selat** – strait  
**semananjung** – peninsula  
**Senoi** – one of Malaysia's indigenous tribal groups  
**silat** – martial-arts dance form  
**simpang** – crossing; junction  
**songkok** – traditional Malay headdress worn by Muslim men  
**Straits Chinese** – see *Baba-Nonya*  
**sultan** – ruler of one of Malaysia's nine states  
**sungai** – river  
**syariah** – Islamic system of law

**tambang** – river ferry; fare  
**tamu** – weekly market  
**tanah** – land  
**tanjung** – headland  
**tasik** – lake  
**teluk** – bay; sometimes spelt *telok*  
**temenggong** – Malay administrator  
**towkang** – Chinese junk  
**tunku** – prince

**ujung** – cape  
**UMNO** – United Malays National Organisation

**warung** – small eating stalls  
**wayang** – Chinese opera  
**wayang kulit** – shadow-puppet theatre  
**wisma** – office block or shopping centre

**yang di-pertuan agong** – Malaysia's head of state, or 'king'  
**yang di-pertuan muda** – under-king  
**yang di-pertuan negeri** – governor

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