

3 | LIFE IN MALAYSIA

About Malaysia

Malaysia is located in the Southeast Asia; we are separated into West Malaysia (Peninsular) and East Malaysia. West Malaysia States are Perlis, Penang, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perak, Kedah, Pahang, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, and Johor, and East Malaysia states are Sabah and Sarawak.

Our Races, Languages And Religions

Malaysia is one of the most ethnically and religiously diverse nations in the world today, with all of the world's major religions, as well as major Asian ethnic groups, represented. In this relatively tiny area, peace thrives as the various groups co-exist in harmony and tolerance; complementing one another to enrich the shared character, cultural mosaic and vision of the nation. Malaysia's population mainly consists of Malays, Chinese, and Indians.

Official religion of Malaysia is Islam. Islam is observed by around 60% of Malaysians. There are also numerous Buddhist and Hindu temples and Christian churches. Freedom of religion is constitutionally guaranteed for non-Muslims. In fact, the major religious and/or traditional festivals are gazetted public holidays like Aidil-Fitri and Aidil-Adha, Deepavali, Thaipusam, Wesak, Chinese Lunar New Year and Christmas.

The official language of the country is Bahasa Malaysia (which means the Malay Language) and English; however in some schools Chinese and Tamil are also taught. English language and Bahasa Malaysia is commonly use in major town and in smaller towns only Bahasa Malaysia is commonly. Mandarin and Tamil are taught in schools.

The Climate

The climate in Malaysia is hot and wet. Day temperatures are between 28oC and 35 C. It is a little cooler at night and immediately after rain. An umbrella is a must as rain is intense. There is little seasonal change.



Time Zone

Malaysia's standard time is +8 hours ahead of Universal Coordinated Time or UTC (Greenwich Mean Time – GMT)

Currency

The unit of currency is the Ringgit Malaysia (nearly always abbreviated to RM). There are notes of RM1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and coins of 5, 10, 20, 50 sen. Malaysians sometimes refer to the RM as a dollar. Make sure you know which kind of dollar is being discussed.

The Law

You won't find anything surprising about Malaysian laws. Capital punishment is in force here. Muslims in Malaysia have to adhere to the Syariah Law. This Islamic Law forbids a muslim man and a muslim woman to be alone together in a private place. This is called 'khalwat' (close proximity) and carries a jail sentence. As this is a Muslim country, it is advisable to avoid any form extreme public display of affection such as kissing or 'necking'.

Food

The food in Malaysia is amongst the most varied and interesting in the world. There are three main types of food: Malay, Chinese and Indian, and Muslims only eats 'Halal' food. The cheapest places have individual 'hawker' stalls under one roof. Air-conditioned restaurants are more expensive but have a more pleasant environment as smoking is prohibited in such places. Malaysia's favourite dish is 'nasi lemak' ('nasi' means 'rice'). A close second is 'roti canai' ('roti' means 'bread'). The latter, a kind of fried bread with lentil or fish gravy, is an excellent breakfast. Rice is the local staple although all local food types also use breads of different kinds. Noodles (mee) are very popular. Other than that, there is also a wide selection of food from all over the world ranging from Korean, Thai and European restaurants to fast-food outlets like KFC, McDonalds, Burger King, A&W and Pizza Hut.



5 | LIFE IN MALAYSIA

Getting Around

Road

Buses are an inexpensive way to travel in Malaysia. Buses plying routes within towns and cities typically charge fares according to the distance covered while interstate buses have fixed rates. Taxis in major cities are usually fitted with meters. In KL, the rate is currently RM3 for the first two kilometres and 10 sen for every subsequent 100 metres. However, a surcharge of 50% will be levied between midnight and 6am. Interstate and smaller town taxis charge a fixed rate and it's best to settle on a price before getting into the taxi.

Rail

Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) has an impressive railway network across Malaysia – one that travels the breadth and width of the Peninsula, providing the country with regular passenger services. There's also the KTM Komuter, a suburban railway service that runs outside Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. This fully air-conditioned service provides visitors with comfortable and speedy inter-city travel within the country. If you don't fancy driving within KL, try the efficient, comfortable and congestion-free STAR and Putra Light Rail Transit (LRT) services that make getting around KL a breeze. Transits between the KTMB train, Komuter and LRTs can be done at KL Sentral – Malaysia's primary rail transportation hub. Furthermore, there is the KLIA Express – a nonstop service from KLIA to KL Sentral in about 30 minutes! As for Sabah and Sarawak, there's only one railway connecting Kota Kinabalu to Tenom on the west coast of Sabah. There are no rail services in Sarawak.

Air

Malaysia's primary gateway is the state-of-the-art Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). It is located in Sepang, which is about 50km (less than an hour's drive via highway) south of Kuala Lumpur. Visitors can take flights from KLIA to all major cities and towns in the Peninsula as well as Sabah and Sarawak. Domestic airlines like Air Asia, Pelangi Air, Berjaya Air and Mofaz Air ply popular holiday routes such as KL-Pulau Tioman, KL-Pulau Langkawi and so on. However, the country's very own international carrier is Malaysia Airlines (MAS), which flies to over 100 destinations across six continents. From KLIA, visitors are able to get to the heart of KL by bus, limousine taxi, KLIA Express or rent-a-car services available.

Sea

There are several ports of entry in Malaysia, namely Penang, Port Klang, Kuantan, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu. Coastal ferries sail frequently between Penang and Butterworth, carrying both passengers as well as vehicles from the mainland to the island. Apart from that, there are many ferry/ boat services available for mainland-to-island and island-to-island travel around the country. There are also sea cruises and river-cruises run by local tour agents. For sea travel within the country there are services available from Port Klang (Selangor) to Kuantan (Pahang) and to Sabah or Sarawak.

Shopping

Malaysia has always been a shopping heaven. However, there's no urgency to shop everything at once. Take your time to look around. Prices of everything vary a lot according to the place the item is sold. So window-shop first. Prices in department stores, posh shops and supermarkets are fixed, everywhere else haggle a little, ask for 'best price' -

PART TIME EMPLOYMENT

1. International students are allowed to work part-time during the semester break or festive holidays or holidays exceeding 7 days ONLY. The duration allowed is 20 hours a week
2. International students are ONLY allowed to work at the following places:
 - Restaurants
 - Petrol kiosks
 - Mini markets
 - Hotels
3. International students are NOT allowed to work as cashiers at restaurants, petrol stations, mini markets and hotels.
4. In hotels, international students are allowed to work at all departments EXCEPT positions such as:
 - singers
 - masseurs
 - musicians
 - guest relation officers or
 - any jobs that are morally demanding.
5. International students are allowed to work as tourist guides with travel agencies.
6. International students who are permitted to work will have in their passports a stamp which says

“Permitted to work as part-time worker in Restaurant, Petrol Kiosk, Mini Market, Hotel (excluding singer, masseur, musician, GRO and other activities deemed to be immoral) as long as the Student Pass is valid”

 by the Immigration Department.
7. The Malaysian Immigration Director has the right to accept or reject an international student work application according to Section 9(1) Immigration Act 1959/1963 Revised 2002
8. Permission to work-part time is given under the following guidelines:
 - Application will be made, based on offer letter by a potential employer of the student concern by the college.
 - Applications are made through the college with the applicants present at the Immigration Office.
 - The enforcement unit of the immigration department together with college will monitor the international students who work part time.
 - The college will send in a name list of international students together with the progress report and class attendance to the Immigration Department every three months.
 - The college will also send in reports on those students who are solely working without attending classes to the Immigration Department for further action.
 - Extension to work will only be given if the international students have maintained good academic records.
9. Any students caught working without JIM approval. the college will not take any responsibility

“Although an International student on student pass have few opportunities to undertake paid employment, limitations placed upon them by the Malaysian Immigration Department makes it almost not possible to undertake any form of employment whilst studying in Malaysia.”