

# Malaysia

## Business Guide

Compiled by:

**SBH ASEAN Malaysia**

Kuala Lumpur, Sept 2018

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The main entry points are:

#### Airports

Kuala Lumpur International Airport - <http://www.klia.com.my>  
Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2 - <http://www.klia2.info>  
Penang International Airport - [www.penangairport.com](http://www.penangairport.com)  
Kuching International Airport – Sarawak (Borneo)  
Kota Kinabalu International Airport – Sabah (Borneo)  
Langkawi International Airport – Kedah  
Subang Airport - Selangor  
Senai International Airport – Johor

#### Seaports

Port Klang, Westport, Northport  
Kuala Perlis, Kuah, Langkawi  
Georgetown, Penang  
Pasir Gudang, Johor  
Kuantan, Pahang

#### Roads

Bukit Kayu Hitam-Kedah (from Thailand) <http://www.plus.com.my>  
Johor Bahru-Johore (from Singapore)

#### Rail

Padang Besar -Perlis (from Thailand)  
Johor Bahru- Johore (from Singapore)

Visitors entering Malaysia through the various entry points are required to declare all dutiable or prohibited goods in their possession. Malaysian customs regulations provide stiff penalties for those who are found guilty of making false declarations or for concealing prohibited goods. Travelers are advised that there are severe penalties, including the death penalty, for anyone convicted of drug trafficking in Malaysia.

## LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

The official language is Bahasa Malaysia, while Mandarin and Tamil are also taught in schools catering to the sizeable Chinese and Indian communities. English, the language of the former colonial power, is widely used in business and administrative matters.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Statutory holidays comprise holidays observed throughout Malaysia as national holidays, plus additional holidays that are observed in individual states only.

### 2018

1 Jan	New Year's Day
31 Jan	Thaipusam
16 & 17 Feb	Chinese New Year
1 May	Labour Day
9 May	General Election day (GE 14)
10 May	Special Public Holiday (GE 14)
11 May	Special Public Holiday (GE 14)
29 May	Wesak Day (Birth of Buddha)
2 Jun	Nuzul Al Quran
15 & 16 Jun	Hari Raya Aidilfitri (End of Ramadan)
22 Aug	Hari Raya Haji
31 Aug	National Day
9 & 10 Sep	Agong's Birthday
11 Sep	Awal Muharam (Islamic New Year)
16 & 17 Sep	Malaysia Day
6 Nov	Deepavali
20 Nov	Prophet Muhammad's Birthday
25 Dec	Christmas

### 2019

1 Jan	New Year's Day
21 Jan	Thaipusam
5 & 6 Feb	Chinese New Year
1 May	Labour Day
19 May	Wesak Day (Birth of Buddha)
21 May	Nuzul Al Quran
5 & 6 Jun	Hari Raya Aidilfitri (End of Ramadan)
12 Aug	Hari Raya Haji
31 Aug	National Day
1 Sep	Awal Muharam (Islamic New Year)
9 Sep	Agong's Birthday
16 Sep	Malaysia Day
27 Oct	Deepavali
9 Nov	Prophet Muhammad's Birthday
25 Dec	Christmas

## **HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS**

Although inoculations are not required for entry into Malaysia, the immigration authorities may periodically want to check for yellow-fever vaccination that you may have had within the last 10 years if you arrive from a region that has a long history of the disease. All the same, most visitors want that extra assurance by going for hepatitis A, tetanus, typhoid and polio vaccinations. Generally, Malaysia has a very high standard of hygiene and medical care. The emergency and outpatient departments of Government hospitals will treat foreigners and the charges are very affordable even for a budget traveler. For more details, please refer to Tourism Malaysia:

<https://www.tourism.gov.my>

## **TIME ZONES**

GMT + 8 hours

### **TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND MALAYSIA**

+6 hours (summer) and +7 hours (winter) from Swiss time

## **ELECTRICITY SUPPLY**

Transmission voltages are at 500kV, 275kV and 132kV  
Distribution voltages are 33kV, 22kV, 11 kV, 6.6kV and 415 V three-phase or 240 V single-phase.  
System frequency is 50 Hz1/-1%.

## **METHODS OF PAYMENT**

In line with the global effort to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, effective 1 January 2010, travelers entering or leaving Malaysia with cash and/or negotiable bearer instruments (e.g. traveler's cheques, bearer cheques) exceeding an amount equivalent to USD10,000 must make a declaration in form Customs No.22. The forms will be made available at counters located before the Customs Checkpoints at all entry and exit points of Malaysia.

The Malaysian currency is the Ringgit (RM). Currency comes in notes of RM1, RM5, RM10, RM 20, RM50 and RM100. Coins are issued in the denomination of 5 sen (cent), 10 sen, 20 sen and 50 sen.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Malaysia is served by an excellent transport system, even to remote areas. Traveling by road in peninsular Malaysia is popular as it has well-developed networks of roads.

In Sabah and Sarawak (Borneo States), traveling by four-wheel drive is recommended on unpaved roads, and many remote areas can only be reached by air or river-boats.

Taxis are plentiful and are usually metered in major cities. Local buses are good and inexpensive but crowded. Trains – local and long distance – are available for a variety of destinations. Self-drive cars are very popular for visitors who wish to explore Malaysia by road. There is an extensive network of highways for motorists; Malaysian Railways operate express train service on major routes, and fares are inexpensive.

## **BY AIR**

Malaysia has eight international airports with its main international airport at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) located at Sepang, about 50 km or an hour's drive south of Kuala Lumpur.

The official airline of Malaysia is Malaysia Airlines, providing international and domestic air service alongside other carriers. Malaysia is also well connected among its Asean member countries, including the Asia Pacific region by Air Asia, the local low cost carriers.

From KLIA, visitors can take connecting flights to most major cities and towns in Malaysia as well as to Sabah and Sarawak. The airport is well equipped with the latest facilities and services to cater passengers either arriving into the country or on transit to other destinations.

## **BY SEA**

There are several ports of entry in Malaysia, namely Penang, Port Klang, Johor Bahru, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

Fast boats and small river crafts are a popular way of getting about in Sabah and Sarawak especially to the more isolated settlements.

There are also sea cruises that take holiday passengers to neighbouring countries and river-cruises run by local tour agents.

## **BY ROAD**

Transport in Malaysia started to develop during British colonial rule, and the country's transport network is now diverse and developed. Malaysia's road network is extensive, covering 157,166 km, including 1,821 km of expressways with users having to pay. The main highway of the country extends over 850 km, reaching the Thai border from Singapore.

Taxis in major cities are usually fitted with meters. In Kuala Lumpur, the rate is currently MYR3 for the first kilometre or first 3 minutes and 0.25 sen/cents for every subsequent 200 meters. 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 to the taxi.

## **BY RAIL**

The railway system is state-run, covers a total of 1,833 km, and is considered underdeveloped if compared with some European countries. It is possible to travel by rail within and to Peninsular Malaysia via Thailand and from Singapore.

Popular within the city of Kuala Lumpur and nearby towns are the three Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines, two commuter rail lines, one monorail line, one bus rapid transit line, one mass rapid transit line and an airport rail link which reduce the traffic load on other systems, and is considered safe, comfortable

and reliable. The monorail serves various locations in the city centre. There are several interchange stations that integrate these rail services.

## **HOTELS**

Hotels are plentiful and range from budget to luxury categories. Credit cards are readily accepted at major hotels. Currency exchange services are also available at major hotels.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Malaysia's network service providers, of which Telekom Malaysia is the largest, provide a full range of local, domestic and international services encompassing voice and data facilities. Total fixed telephone subscription is 6.6 million (2017). The latest digital and fiber optics technology has provided high quality telecommunication services at competitive prices. International communications have been facilitated by the introduction of state-of-the-art technology in telephone, telex, facsimile, videoconferencing services, as well as other data transmission and networking facilities.

## **CELL PHONES**

There are at least five licensed cellular operators in Malaysia, the biggest being Celcom. Others are Maxis, Digi, Umobile and Unifi Mobile. The developmental effort in the telecom sector has been led by a booming mobile market with mobile cellular penetration reaching 131.8% while smartphone penetration stood at 70% (2017). Cellular data and mobile broadband provided using various technologies including EDGE, HSPA, DC-HSPA+, 4G LTE, and 4G LTE-A. Total number of fixed broadband subscribers in 2017 is 2.6 million while mobile broadband subscription is 35.3 million.

## **BUSINESS HOURS**

Business offices normally work on an eight-hour a day schedule from Monday-Friday, with a half day on Saturday. Working hours range from 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on weekdays and from 8.30 a.m. to 1.00p.m. on Saturday.

The working hours for the government offices are from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on weekdays and most government departments are closed on Saturdays.

Most banks are open to the public from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on weekdays only.

Government offices in most of the states close from 12.00 to 2.45 p.m. on Fridays to enable staff of Islamic faith to attend Friday prayers.

During the month of fasting (Ramadan) working hours range from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. to enable those of Islamic faith to observe their practices.

## **ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF THE EMBASSY OF THE COUNTRY IN SWITZERLAND**

Embassy of Malaysia, Berne  
Address: Jungfraustrasse 1  
CH-3005 Berne  
Telephone: 41-31 350 4700  
Fax: 41-31 350 4702  
Email: mwberne@kln.gov.my  
[http://www.kln.gov.my/web7che\\_berne/host\\_country](http://www.kln.gov.my/web7che_berne/host_country)  
Workdays: Monday – Friday 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

### **ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY AND CONSULATES**

Embassy of Switzerland, Kuala Lumpur  
16 Persiaran Madge  
55000 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: 00603 2148 0622  
Fax: 00603 2148 0935  
Homepage: [www.eda.admin.ch/kualalumpur](http://www.eda.admin.ch/kualalumpur)  
Email: [vertretung@eda.admin.ch](mailto:vertretung@eda.admin.ch)

### **TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS**

Malaysians are accustomed to doing business with foreigners and readily accommodate foreign business manners. A handshake is the normal greeting. Malaysian names and titles can be confusing. Find out in advance how you should address the person you are to meet.

Chinese are addressed by the first (family) name, e.g. for the men - "Mr. Lim" (full name e.g. "Lim Soon Tong"). For the ladies - same as in the West.

Malays have, strictly speaking, no family names. The first name is individually given, while the second and third name designates the father and grandfather. Optionally the words "bin" or "encik" (male) or "binti" (female) can be added after the personal first name. For example Mohd bin Ali OR Encik Mohamed for a male and Habsah binti Ali for a female. Single ladies are addressed using "cik" (Cik Habsah) and married women are addressed using "puan" (Puan Habsah).

Indians: the abbreviation s/o or d/o in between the first name and last name stands for 'son of' and 'daughter of' respectively. Mr. Samy s/o Muthu addressed as: Mr. Muthu. For the ladies: same as in the West

#### Title

Dato Lim Soon Tong addressed as: Dato (only) and Tan Sri Lim Soon Tong addressed as: Tan Sri (only). As for their spouse, use Datin (for Dato) and Puan Sri (for Tan Sri). Seek advice over the use of titles e.g. Dato, Dato Seri, Tan Sri or Tun which can be confusing.

### **BUSINESS PRACTICES**

Meetings are often held during lunch or dinner. A firm handshake and a "hello" are suitable as greeting and business cards are always exchanged and should be given and received with both hands at all times. Please study the business card for a few seconds before placing it in your pocket or for safe keeping. A suit and tie or long sleeves with tie are suitable business attires for men and a suit or blouse and skirt are best for daytime appointments for the ladies.

The many cultures and religions of Malaysia may make giving a suitable gift a complicated issue. Never give liquor to a Muslim or clocks, knives or white flowers to a Chinese person. Generally, do not say "no" or make a negative remark in front of the person you are speaking to. Let him know that you will revert to him after consultation with the boss or head office. Politeness is the best mechanism to use for avoiding conflict and reducing anxiety.

### **SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET**

To participate in most government procurements or tender exercise, it is preferable to participate through a local company that has Malay or bumiputera's partner or equity ownership.

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