Visa

To enter Malaysia, your passport must be valid for at least six months. You do not need a visa to enter Malaysia if you are coming for business or tourism for stays of 90 days or less.

Climate

Malaysia is pampered with a warm tropical climate, with general temperatures ranging from 70° F to 90° F. The weather is strongly influenced by the Northeast and the Southwest Monsoon. The period of May to September is usually a drier period. The East Coast of West Malaysia and the states in East Malaysia normally have their rainy seasons between November and February.

Language

Although Bahasa Malaysia is the official language, English is widely spoken. Other prominent languages spoken are Chinese dialects, Tamil, and Punjabi.

Do's and Don'ts

- Although handshakes are generally acceptable for both men and women, some Muslim ladies may acknowledge introductions to gentlemen by merely nodding and smiling. A handshake should only be initiated by ladies. The traditional greeting or salam resembles a handshake with both hands but without the grasp. The man offers both hands, lightly touches his friends outstretched hands, and then brings his hands to his chest to mean, "I greet you from my heart". The visitor should reciprocate the salam.
- It is polite to call before visiting a home.
- Shoes must always be removed when entering a Malaysian home.
- Drinks are generally offered to guests. It is polite to accept.
- The right hand is always used when eating with one's hand or giving and receiving objects.
- The right forefinger is not used to point at places, objects or persons. Instead, the thumb of the right hand with four fingers folded under is the preferred usage.
- Shoes must be removed when entering places of worship such as mosques and temples. Some mosques provide robes and scarves for female visitors. Taking photographs at places of worship is usually permitted but always ask permission beforehand.
- Toasting is not a common practice in Malaysia. The country's large Muslim population does not drink alcohol.
- Seniority is greatly respected within Malay households. The eldest male of a family should be greeted first and frequently sits in the best or highest seat.
- Pointing with a finger is considered to be extremely rude. Instead, the entire hand should be used to indicate a direction, but not a person.

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- Although no host will insist upon it, it is polite to remove one's shoes at the door of a house upon entering. It is also customary to do so upon entering a mosque or an Indian temple.

- Comfortable and informal clothing is suitable during the day and recommended all year round because of the tropical climate. However, as Malaysia is a predominantly Muslim country, conservative dress is most appropriate. Women should not wear dresses, skirts or shorts that are too short. In cities, towns and villages, shorts are considered highly inappropriate.

- Do not dress in any manner that may give the impression that you are a "hippie," as "hippies" are banned from the country. For formal occasions or evening wear, formal attire is expected. Men should wear a suit and tie or a long-sleeved batik shirt. Evening dresses or cocktail dresses are recommended for women.

Time Zone

Malaysia is eight hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Meridian Time), 16 hours ahead of US Pacific Standard Time and 13 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Daylight Saving Time is not applicable to the country.

Electricity and Voltage

Malaysia's electric supply is on a 220-240-volt 50-cycle system. Visitors from countries using different electricity voltage systems are advised to bring their converters and adapters.

Water

Water is generally safe to be consumed from the tap, though boiling prior to consumption is advisable.

Telephones

Local calls can be made from public phones using coins or pre-paid cards. International calls can be made from public phones with card phone facilities or at any Telekom office.

Safety

It's one of the most peaceful countries in the world, according to the Global Peace Index 2013. It's Ranked 29th, the U.S. is ranked 99th.

Currency

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The Malaysian unit of currency is the Ringgit Malaysia (RM), which is divided into 100 sen. Currency comes in notes of RM1, RM5, RM10, RM50 and RM100. Coins are issued in 1 sen, 5 sen, 10 sen, 20 sen, and 50 sen denominations.

All currencies brought into and out of the country must be declared by a Travelers Declaration Form, which can be obtained at Malaysia's entry and exit points. Due to government regulations, non-residents

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are not allowed to bring in and out of the country more than RM1000.00 at any given time, but foreign currencies are not regulated.

All commercial banks are authorized foreign exchange dealers. Major hotels, however, are only licensed to buy or accept foreign currencies in the form of notes and travelers' checks.

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Source: www.exchange-rates.org

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