

Malaysia's history starts generally around the establishment of the Melaka sultanate. During the 13th century, it was renowned as a major port for traders from both east and west.

Following this time, events developing in China and the Roman Empire motivated Indian traders to seek a new port for their rich trade. Melaka was chosen, based mainly on its advantageous location -- it was sheltered from strong monsoon winds, thus the port was able to operate year-round.

Melaka 's profitable position was envied by many and resulted in the Portuguese invasion in 1511. Later, in 1641, the Dutch defeated the Portuguese and reigned until 1815 when the British Empire took over. After World War II, there was a resurgence of Malayan nationalism leading to the Declaration of Independence for the Federation of Malaya from the British Empire on August 31, 1957.

Malaysia at the time was comprised 13 states, including Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. In 1963 two federal territories were formed. Singapore later withdrew from the Federation in 1965.

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