



## **W**ira: *The Orang Utan*

Wira, the adorable Mascot for Malaysia is a protected animal as the orang utan is an endangered species.

Lovable Wira lives at the National Zoo (Zoo

Putra), which is among the best in Asia. The National Zoo is 13 kms from the city on the Uluwang Road and is open to public from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm daily.

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17 MAY 1993  
Pernustakaan Negara

*Visit* **MALAYSIA**

A GUIDEBOOK  
FOR WOMEN







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# WELCOME TO MALAYSIA

Centuries ago, when the western world first started exploring the east, Malaysia was there to offer travellers wealth and opportunity. The Golden Chersonese, the early travellers called it, this land of calm, sheltered from the storms all around it. Floating between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, Malaysia has remained a land of promise for travellers to the east.

Many centuries ago, the Southwest monsoon winds blew merchant seamen from the west onto the shores of Malaysia, there to wait for the Northeast monsoon winds which brought the travellers from the east.

Today, jet planes bring visitors to Malaysia to experience the rich diversity of cultures and traditions which the country offers, cultures and traditions handed down over those centuries.

Relatively unspoilt by tourism, Malaysia offers quiet, unspoilt beaches, a rustic life-style as well as the bright lights of the cities. There is enough to suit all tastes.

Before we take a quick tour of Malaysia and check out the places worth visiting, here's some travel information.

## Travel Information

### Background

Malaysia comprises two sections, separated by 530 kms. or 330 miles of the South China Sea. Peninsular Malaysia lies south of Thailand, north of Singapore and east of Indonesia. East Malaysia, comprising the states of Sabah and Sarawak, lie on the northwest shores of the island of Borneo.

Malaysia has a total land area of 330, 433 sq. kms. or 125,565 sq. miles. Peninsular Malaysia extends 740 km, or 460 miles, from Perlis in the north to the straits of Johor in the south. Sabah and Sarawak extend about 1120 km, or 700 miles, from Tanjung Datu, Sarawak in the west to Hog Point, Sabah, in the east.

About four-fifths of the country is covered by tropical rain forests. This has given rise to Malaysia's lucrative timber industry.

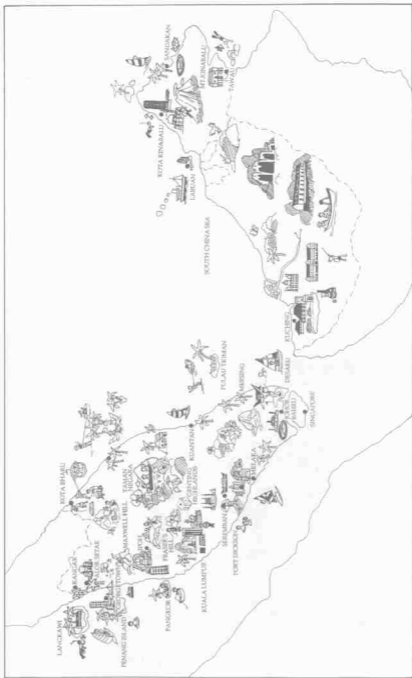




The National Monument stands as a tribute to all the soldiers who died in defence of Malaysia



Parliament House is one of the first pieces of modern architecture in Malaysia



Interesting Places in Malaysia

Since independence, serious attempts have been made for reforestation and timber has to be replanted once it is cut.

Much of the unforested regions is agricultural. Malaysia is currently the world's primary exporter of natural rubber and palm oil. It also exports sawlogs and sawn timber, cocoa, pepper, pineapple and tobacco. The two main minerals exported are tin and petroleum although numerous other minerals are mined on a smaller scale. Natural gas has also contributed greatly to the Malaysian economy.

One of its greatest resources is its people, varied in ethnicity and culture, contributing in diverse ways to a multicultural environment.

Malaysia has a total population of about 17 million. Out of this total, approximately 59% of the population comprises ethnic Malay groups, which may be subdivided into three: the Muslim Malays, forming the majority in Peninsular Malaysia and the minority in Sabah and Sarawak; various Muslim and Christian native groups in Sabah and Sarawak, the major tribes being the Bajau, Bidayuh, Bisayah, Iban, Kadazan, Kayan, Kedayan, Kelabit, Kenyah, Melanau and Murut; and the aborigines in Peninsular Malaysia, the major tribes being the Jakun, the Negrito and the Senoi.

The Chinese form about 32% of the total population. The two major groups among the Chinese are the Hokkien and Cantonese, although there are pockets of Hainanese, Hakka (Khek), Teochew, Hokchia and Hokchew speakers. Indians are about 8% of the total population, comprising speakers of north and south Indian languages. Besides these three major groups, there are the minority groups, classified as 'Others' in census figures. They comprise mainly the Eurasians (those of mixed European and Asian ancestry), Thais, Filipinos and Caucasians.

The national language is Bahasa Malaysia and is the medium of instruction in all public secondary schools. English is taught in all schools as a compulsory language and many urban Malaysians are able to understand English even if they are unable to speak it. One also hears a number of other languages and dialects spoken. The major Chinese dialects are Cantonese and Hokkien, while Mandarin remains the language for Chinese education. The major Indian dialects are Tamil, Telegu, Panjabi and Malayali. Most of those who work in the major hotels speak English and so do travel agents and airlines personnel. Tourists who can speak English will have little trouble in the country.

## Visas

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Many tourists do not require a visa to enter Malaysia. They include tourists from the British Commonwealth countries (except India), The Republic of Ireland, the United States, Lichtenstein, the Netherlands, San Marino and Switzerland.

If you intend staying in Malaysia for a period of less than three months, you do not need a visa if you come from one of these countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, South Korea, Sweden, Tunisia, and West Germany.

Nationals of Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand do not require a visa for stays of less than a month.

Nationals of India require a visa, valid for multiple visits over a period of two months.

Nationals of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, USSR and Yugoslavia do not need a visa for a stay of less than seven days. Stays of less than fourteen days would require obtaining a visa from the relevant Malaysian mission overseas.

Please note, however, that the conditions mentioned above are only for social visits to Malaysia. Business and employment entries have other requirements which the traveller should check with the Malaysian mission in her country.

## Currency

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The Malaysian currency is the ringgit and sen. However, Malaysians, when speaking in English, often refer to the currency as 'dollars' and 'cents'. This should not be confused with the US, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian or Singapore dollars. If someone charges you a sum in dollars, it is most likely Malaysian dollars, so don't pay them in Australian or US currency. This especially applies when you have to pay taxi drivers.

A hundred sen make up one ringgit. Coins come in one sen, five sen, ten sen, twenty sen, fifty sen and one ringgit. The more common notes are of different colours, green for 5 ringgit, red for tens, blue for ones and fifties. The one ringgit notes are being phased out and will eventually be replaced by coins. There are also notes for the one hundred, five hundred and one thousand ringgit denominations but are rarely seen in normal transactions.

When changing money before entering Malaysia, you might want to make sure that you do have small enough denominations.

Many shops and small businesses do not carry enough change for large denominations. Fifty ringgit notes should be the largest denomination you want. Hotels accept most major credit cards, and so do the major restaurants. Those which do not accept credit cards will not be able to change large notes anyway.

Traveller's cheques in the major international currencies are easy to change at your hotel or any bank. The rates at the banks are usually better than the rates the hotels will give you and the rates for travellers' cheques are often better than that for cash. Surprisingly, too, rates of exchange may vary from bank to bank. If you are changing a lot of money, you are advised to check a couple of banks and get their rates of exchange. This is not too difficult as banks are usually very close to one another. Check as well if they charge a commission on certain travellers' cheques. Some do and others don't. If you are buying travellers' cheques, Barclay or Thomas Cook cheques will suit most banks. However, some banks have an agreement with Visa and other banks have agreements with Mastercard. This, again will effect the transaction. If you have American Express travellers' cheques, you must certainly make sure you check regarding the commission.

Banking hours, for the majority of banks, are

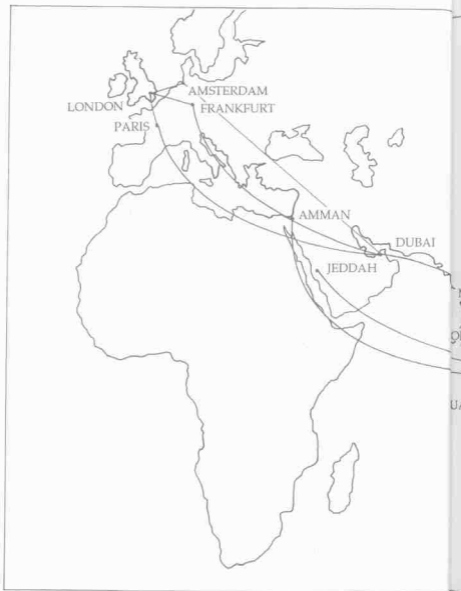
10 am to 3 pm	-	Mondays to Fridays
9.30 am to 11.30 am	-	Saturdays

However, exchange rates are generally unavailable till about 11 am and fluctuate daily.

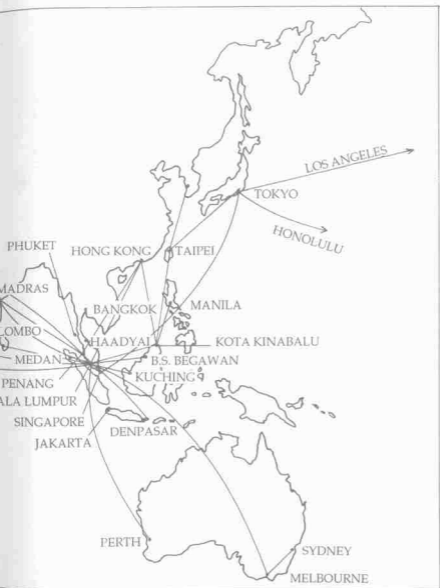
The approximate exchange rates, very susceptible to fluctuations, are:

Singapore dollar (\$100)	-	141.20
British pound	-	4.29
Yen	-	1.82
US dollar	-	2.66
Australian dollar	-	2.07
German mark (100DM)	-	161.58
Baht (100)	-	9.70
Filipino peso (100)	-	9.74
Indian rupee (100)	-	16.43
Hong Kong dollar (100)	-	35.17
New Zealand dollar	-	1.63
Canadian dollar	-	2.36





MALAYSIA AIRLINES (MH) : International Flights



## Getting to Malaysia by air

The national airline is **Malaysia Airlines** or **MAS** which, in Bahasa Malaysia means **gold**. Not only is it an international airline but also the domestic carrier. **MAS** offers considerable discounts on domestic flights to international travellers and you might want to check the possibilities with your travel agent.

Malaysia Airlines flies to and from the following international destinations:

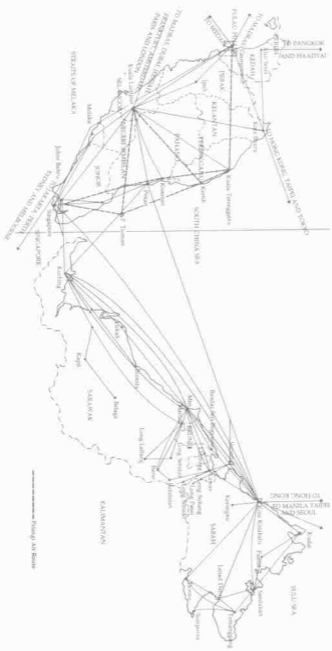
Amsterdam	Bangkok
Bandar Seri Begawan	Colombo
Denpasar	Dubai
Frankfurt	Haadyai
Hong Kong	Jakarta
Jeddah	Kuwait
London	Los Angeles
Madras	Manila
Medan	Melbourne
Paris	Perth
Seoul	Singapore
Sydney	Taipei
Tokyo	

Other airlines which fly to Malaysia, or have agreements regarding connecting flights to Malaysia, are:

Aeroflot, Air Canada, Air India, Air Lanka, Air New Zealand, Alitalia, America West Airlines, American Airlines, Bangladesh Biman Corporation, British Airways, Canadian Airlines International, Cathay Pacific Airways, China Airlines, Czechoslovak Airlines, Delta Airlines, Egypt Air, Flying Tiger Line, Garuda Indonesian Airways, Japan Air Lines, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Korean Airlines, Lufthansa German Airlines, Northwest Orient Airlines, Pakistan International Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Qantas Airways, Royal Brunei Airlines, Royal Jordanian, S A S Scandinavian Airlines, Sabena Belgian World Airlines, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Thai Airways International, Trans World Airlines (TWA), Turkish Airlines, U T A French Airlines, United Airlines, Yemen Airlines, Yugoslav Airlines.

It is quite common to find flights to Malaysia fully booked. To avoid disappointment, you might want to book your flight as

**MALAYSIA AIRLINES (MH): Domestic Flights**





Railway Systems in Peninsular Malaysia

early as possible. At the peak seasons, (November to February, April, June to September), you should try and get confirmed flights, especially for your return journey. Relying on getting on a flight by waiting early at the airport can be a very trying and unrewarding experience.

Onward flights from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore are different, however. You can either get a confirmed seat, or use the 'shuttle' service, run jointly by Malaysia Airlines and Singapore Airlines. The 'shuttle' service costs about 103 ringgit while a confirmed economy seat costs about 130 ringgit, and a first class seat costs 180 ringgit. For the 'shuttle' service, one takes a number at the airport and waits in line for the first flight available. A number of seats on each flight are set aside for the 'shuttle' service. Passengers for the early flights usually have less trouble getting on than do passengers for afternoon and evening flights.

## Arriving in Malaysia

There are a number of authorized points of entry into Malaysia, 20 by land, 27 by air and 55 by sea. The major points of entry are:

### by land

#### **in Peninsular Malaysia**

Johor Bahru in the south (from Singapore),

Padang Besar, Bukit Kayu Hitam, Wang Kelian in the northwest (from Thailand and Indonesia)

Pengkalan Kubur, Rantau Panjang in the northwest (from Thailand)

#### **in Sabah**

Long Pasia, Pensiangan and Sindumin (from Indonesia)

#### **in Sarawak**

Bario, Batu Lintang, Biawak, Bunam Gega, Lubok Antu, Merapok, Pedawan, Sirikin, Sungai Tujuh, Tebedu (from Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam)

## by air

### **in Peninsular Malaysia**

Alor Setar, Ipoh, Johor Bahru (Sultan Ismail Airport Senai), Kemaman, Kerteh, Kota Bharu, Kuala Lumpur (Subang International Airport), Kuala Terengganu, Kuantan, Pulau Pinang (Bayan Lepas Airport), Pulau Tioman.

### **in Sabah**

Kota Kinabalu, Labuan, Sandakan, Tawau.

### **in Sarawak**

Belaga, Bintulu, Kuching, Lawas, Limbang, Lutong, Marudi, Miri, Sematan, Sri Aman (Simanggang).

## by sea

### **in Peninsular Malaysia**

Johor Bahru, Kuala Terengganu, Kuantan Port, Lumut, Malacca (Melaka), Port Klang (Pelabuhan Kelang), Penang (Pulau Pinang), Port Dickson, Pulau Langkawi, Pulau Rawa, Pulau Tioman, Teluk Intan, Tumpat.

### **in Sabah**

Kota Kinabalu, Kudat, Labuan, Lahad Datu, Sandakan, Semporna, Sipitang, Tawau.

### **in Sarawak**

Bintulu, Kuching, Lawas, Limbang, Miri, Sarikei, Sibiu.

Of these, the most major entry points are Johor Bahru by land, Kuala Lumpur (Subang International Airport) and Kota Kinabalu by air and Kota Kinabalu, Port Klang, Johor Bahru, Kuantan and Kuching by sea.

It is also possible to arrange for cruises to Malaysia. If you arrive by air, it is also possible to arrange for tours by land and air or for cruises along the coast. The latter may take a few days or sometimes two weeks, depending how far you want to go.

## **Arriving at an airport**

Taxis are not a luxury in most towns in Malaysia and are the best means of travel from an airport, especially if you are not very

sure of your destination.

At most airports, there is a system of purchasing a coupon at a counter specially set up for such a purpose. If you see such a counter, use it. It is intended to protect tourists from being overcharged by taxi drivers.

At Subang International Airport, Kuala Lumpur's airport, you should obtain a coupon before approaching a taxi. At the counter, you will be charged a fare according to your destination. The closest towns to Subang International Airport are Petaling Jaya, (about \$13), Shah Alam, (about \$15), Kelang (about \$20), and Kuala Lumpur (about \$17). The fares given in brackets are approximate fares which vary according to different places within each town.

There is a bus which leaves Subang Airport for Kuala Lumpur and those on a shoestring budget might consider it.

## Clothes

Malaysia has a warm climate but hotels are air-conditioned and sometimes colder than one expects. Light cotton clothes would be sensible wear, but bring a light cardigan, sweater or jacket for cold hotels or restaurants, or if you intend visiting the hill resorts.

Swimming attire is required for all hotel pools and also the beaches. Nude swimming or sunbathing is not permitted. In fact, a woman travelling on her own is advised not to show too much skin. Unfortunately, skimpy clothes are sometimes taken as an open invitation.

This does not mean that a woman has to be in purdah. Far from it. Although many Muslim ladies wear scarves or a veil, ladies of other religions do not. During the day, Malaysian ladies tend to wear dresses or blouses which cover their shoulders, and skirts which come down to their knees. Pants and shorts are permissible wear but shorts should be well below the buttocks.

Formal attire could be western in nature or one's national dress. Most Malaysians would wear floor-length skirts for formal functions. If royalty is to be present, certain colours may not be permitted, especially yellow.

Tailoring is cheap in Malaysia and so is cloth. Made-to-measure clothes can be sewn in a day or two, depending on the time of the year. Tailors are hard-pressed during the two major festivals, Chinese New Year and Hari Raya, and may not be able

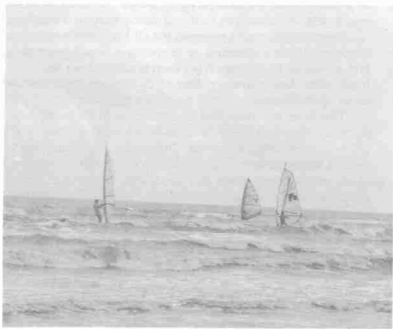




Water sports are common activities at most beach resorts



Pulau Tioman – the island which inspired "Bali Hai" in the musical, *South Pacific*



Windsurfing is popular among water sports enthusiasts

to take your order. At other times, if you want something done in a hurry, tailors are able to oblige.

The problem, however, is that most hotel tailors are male tailors, catering to a male clientele. Although they might agree to sew women's clothes, the range of cloth they have available in their shops is very limited. However, there are numerous tailors in all the major towns and if you ask the receptionist, she will be able to point you in the right direction since most Malaysian women have their clothes tailored. Most tailors also have samples of cloth you could choose from. If you are more adventurous, you might want to visit a cloth shop and choose the material yourself. If so, the salespersons will be able to tell you how much cloth you will need for an approximate pattern you might have in mind. They are usually honest about how much cloth you should buy and do not try to sell you more than you need. Also, in Chapter 6, names of major shops (stores) will be suggested. Any taxi will be able to take you directly to the place.

Where footwear is concerned, sandals and shoes are acceptable footwear, and so are high-heeled slippers which can also be worn for formal occasions. Thongs (flip-flops, Japanese slippers, rubber slippers), may be worn to the beach, pool and market, or on a shopping stroll round town, but are not considered decent enough for business meetings, work or any formal or semi-formal event.

## Choosing a destination

It is rarely the case that any traveller will be able to see the whole of Malaysia. Deciding on a destination, therefore, is an important task. Even if you are going to live in Malaysia for a few years, you will need to make some decisions about the places you will want to visit. This section is intended to help you make up your mind. A word of caution, however. The selection of the places below are based on personal preferences current at the time this book goes to print.

### Best beaches

Langkawi - good all year round, quick access by plane, classy as well as cheap accommodation available, proximity to Penang.

The islands off the west coast of Sabah - good except from

November to February, access through Tanjung Aru outside Kota Kinabalu, more expensive than Langkawi.

The beaches around Kuching, Sarawak - good except from November to February, access through Kuching, a lot to see and do, proximity to Kuching.

The islands off the east coast of Pahang and Johor - good except from November to February, clear water and coral reefs.

Pangkor Laut - good all the year round; beautiful beaches and great for swimming, except at the end of the year when one has to watch out for jelly fish. Very little else to do besides water-related activities.

## Shopping

- General - Kuala Lumpur. Has most things sold in other parts of the country but tends to be more expensive.
- Pottery - Kuching in Sarawak and Air Hitam in Johor.
- Cane furniture and other items - Johor Baru
- Pearls - Kota Kinabalu and Tawau.
- Leather goods - Kota Kinabalu and Tawau.
- Batik - Terengganu and Kelantan.
- Songket (handwoven silk, interwoven with gold/silver thread) - Terengganu and Kelantan.
- Pewter - Available everywhere but the best selection is in the Kuala Lumpur - Selangor areas.

## Cultural activities

- Kuala Lumpur - puts on cultural performances regularly.
- Kuching - The Sarawak Cultural Village offers daily performances as well as the opportunity to participate in the everyday life of the people.
- Melaka - various sorts of cultural events.
- Kelantan - planned cultural activities except during November to February and also during the fasting month of *Ramadhan* (the date changes every year).

## Interesting things to see and do

- Pulau Pinang (Penang) - fair beaches, lots of interesting places, both hill and sea resorts, proximity to great beaches in Langkawi, interesting shopping experiences.
- Melaka - fair beaches, lots of interesting places to visit, interesting cultural experiences, cheap living possible.
- Kuala Lumpur - no nearby beaches, but there a number of interesting buildings to visit, good museum, cheap and easy transportation in the town.
- Kuching - access to great beaches, interesting places to visit, interesting cultural experiences possible.

## Hill places

- Cameron Highlands - besides the pleasant climate, trekking and jungle walks possible, also visits to tea, flower and vegetable plantations are interesting.
- Fraser's Hill - Proximity to Kuala Lumpur; Little to do except relax.
- Genting Highlands - Casino and fun centre with train and boat rides.
- Mt. Kinabalu in Sabah - Southeast Asia's highest mountain; Climbing only for those in shape.

## Major beach resorts

- Damai Beach Resort in Sarawak  
Club Med in Terengganu  
Pansea Pangkor Laut and Pan Pacific Resort in Pangkor, Perak  
Rawa Island in Johor  
Tioman Island Resort  
Pelangi Beach Resort on Langkawi Island

## Inexpensive holidays

- Melaka - interesting; lots to do; fair beaches; low

- cost of living, easy and cheap transportation.
- Penang (Pulau Pinang) - interesting; lots to do; fair beaches; low cost of living but not as cheap as Melaka.
- Kota Bharu, Kelantan - good beaches; interesting life-style; great for shopping; low cost of living; problem: beaches unusable from November to February. It is also the time when large areas in Kelantan can get flooded. From March to October, it's great value for your money.
- Kuala Lumpur - interesting; lots to do; Malaysia in miniature; youth hostels available but on the whole, accommodation is not as cheap as at the other three places.

# THE SIGHTS OF MALAYSIA

Most travellers enter Malaysia through Subang International Airport. It is at Subang International Airport, therefore, that we will begin this adventure through Malaysia.

On leaving the airport, you find yourself enveloped in comforting warmth, a new experience, different from icy mountain peaks and cold winds. It is a sunbather's paradise and suntans are guaranteed!

## Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur has been described as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Its skyline, white and gold and green, stands etched against a brilliant blue backdrop, flecked with soft, white clouds. It sums up the qualities of Malaysia, a modern, alive and vibrant society in a land that is still unspoilt - fresh and green and welcoming, and completely fascinating and charming.

Malaysians like using acronyms and initials and so Kuala Lumpur is usually known as KL.

It is very different from what its name actually means. Kuala means 'mouth of the river'. Lumpur means 'mud'. Kuala Lumpur therefore means 'muddy estuary'. It was founded in 1857 when a Bugis Chief led a mining expedition which landed at the confluence of the Klang and Gombak rivers. Later, the leader of the Chinese tin miners or Kapitan China established the area as a meeting place for miners and the place developed into a town, growing in prosperity as tin mining flourished. In 1896, it was made into the capital of the Federated Malay States and today, it is the capital of Malaysia and the largest city in the country.

## Interesting Buildings

KL is a modern city which has retained elements of the past in its architectural styles and the visitor to Kuala Lumpur may be interested in various buildings, new and old.

The railway station is one of the most charming features of






Map of Kuala Lumpur : Hotels and Interesting Places





Road Map

Road Map of Kuala Lumpur : Hotels and Interesting Places



Kuala Lumpur. Built by the British in a Moorish style, it stands against a backdrop of modern highways and skyscrapers. In front of it is the Majestic Hotel where Somerset Maugham is reputed to have stayed. It is now no longer a hotel but has been converted into the National Art Gallery. Also in the same vicinity are the National Mosque, considered one of best architectural pieces of modern times, the Railway Administration Headquarters built in the same style as the railway station, as is the Sultan Abdul Samad Building all the way down the road where the clock Tower is. Across from the road is the Royal Selangor Club, built in an English Tudor style.

Another interesting building is Parliament House, built soon after independence. Near Parliament House is the National Monument, a tribute to all those who gave their lives in the various wars fought in Malaysia. Those who had relatives here during the Second World War or during the communist insurgency, can try and identify the brigade of their relative from the military badges on the roof of the building around the monument.

Although Islam is the national religion, Malaysians freely follow their own religious inclinations. As a result, there are a number of places of worship, some of which are interesting not only for religious reasons.

The National Mosque has already been mentioned. Another interesting mosque is Masjid Jame which stands at the confluence of the Gombak and Klang rivers, at almost the exact place of the first settlement. Visitors are allowed to enter the mosque but make sure that you are fully clothed (your arms and legs should not show) and that you wear a scarf to cover your head. Please remove your shoes before entering this, or any other mosque.

Christianity is another major religion in Malaysia. Interesting places are St. Mary's Church near the Royal Selangor Club and the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. John's.

There are a number of temples in the city. The Thean Hou Temple is situated at Jalan Klang Lama while the Chan See Shu Yuen Temple is situated in the Chinatown area, at the end of Jalan Petaling (Petaling Street). The International Buddhist Pagoda is situated in Jalan Berhala and has a good collection of books on Buddhism in its library. The Sri Mahamariamman Hindu Temple is situated in Jalan Tun H. S. Lee, in Chinatown. It houses the tallest silver chariot in Malaysia which is taken out during the Hindu festival of Thaipusam.)



Green trees and bushes nestle in the shade of tall buildings in Kuala Lumpur

Make sure you take a few deep breaths before you mount these stairs to Batu Caves in Selangor

Limestone hills are an important feature of the Malaysian scene, not only for beauty, but also for religious worship



## Culture

KL has one of the finest museums in the world. It is known as the National Museum. It has a permanent exhibition drawn from the major Malaysian cultures and from time to time also has special exhibitions on particular themes. There are also smaller museums in the grounds of Karyaneka Handicraft Village in Jalan Raja Chulan and the National Art Gallery in front of the railway station.

There are few places in KL where one could go to watch traditional performances. The Central Market has performances most weekends and sometimes during the week. Besides the Central Market, Restoran Yazmin has daily performances and the restaurants at Lake Titiwangsa support cultural shows at weekends.

## Parks

The best known to locals is the Lake Gardens, situated near Parliament House. Within the area are the Orchid Garden, the ASEAN sculptures, Memorial Tun Razak, where collections by the second Prime Minister are kept, and the Deer Park where little mouse deer frisk about. Lake Titiwangsa is another relaxing place, a park in the centre of the bustling city, as is Taman Tasik Permaisuri in the satellite town of Bandar Tun Razak. Besides nature walks, or jogs, be entertained by a musical fountain at weekends.

## Other places of interest

Chinatown holds a fascination for most people. Its noise and bustle must be experienced to be believed. Fruit and other food is cheaper than in most places in KL, but be careful that you do not get short-changed. Pay special attention to the weighing scales. Bargaining is a norm and people will haggle for a long time to bring prices down. Prices can sometimes go down by as much as half the starting price.

Also in the same vein is Chow Kit Road which comes alive at night and where one can pick up bargains of various sorts, including copies of designer products, including watches.

There are a number of night markets called Pasar Malam

held on different days around the city. The best known are the night markets at Kg. Baru, on Sundays, and the one along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, on Saturdays. The markets usually begin in the late afternoon and go on till about 9.30 pm, depending on the briskness of business and the weather.

On Saturdays, too, off Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, from late morning till the early evening, there is a farmers' market, or Pasar Tani. Farmers sell their produce directly to customers and fresh food is therefore cheaper.

Karyaneka Handicraft Village is another interesting place. It is made up of a number of houses representing the various states. Handicraft from each state is sold in each house. There are also performances at night. In its grounds there is a herb garden with every herb used in Malaysian cookery and traditional medicine.

Hidden among old rubber trees, in Kampong Sungai Penchala, is one of the best batik factories in Kuala Lumpur, Kutangkraf, famous for its printed as well as hand-painted batik. It is open to the public from Monday to Saturday and one may observe the processes involved in batik painting and printing.

Those who would like to have a taste of village life and culture and do not have the time to leave Kuala Lumpur, can take advantage of the Village Home Stay programme (tel.03-2920319) in a village about 20 km from Kuala Lumpur. Bus #195 from Lebu Ampang will take you there for 50 sen. Visitors will participate in the daily life of the villagers who will not interrupt their own work. Each home is able to accommodate two visitors at a cost of \$30 per person for the first night and \$25 for subsequent nights, inclusive of meals. Be prepared to live rough, without the amenities of a five-star hotel.

## Transport

Taxi fares within the city centre cost anything from 1 to 3 ringgit. However, if you are going further afield, taxi fares will become expensive. If you are not in a hurry, there is a bus which goes to all the places mentioned above. Bus times are not too reliable so be prepared to wait. You might want to avoid the rush-hour crowds, however. Try not to have to get on a public bus between seven and ten in the mornings or between four and six in the evenings. There are two types of buses, the regular large buses

Templer's Park is a favourite recreation spot for those in the Kuala Lumpur - Selangor area



Rest Houses offer travellers cheap accomodation. This one stands in Templer Park, Selangor



Recreation parks are common to most Malaysian towns





Subang International Airport is Malaysia's main entry point for visitors



Merdeka Square in Kuala Lumpur boasts of the tallest flag-pole in the world



Taman Tasik in Shah Alam, the newly-built capital of Selangor Darul Ehsan



and the mini-buses which seat around twenty people. The large buses are more pleasant to travel in. Mini buses tend to get overcrowded as the drivers try to pack in as many people as he can. The easiest place to catch a bus is from Bangkok Bank or Pudu Raya, depending on where you want to go.

## Selangor

Within a few hours journey out of the centre of Kuala Lumpur, this state offers visitors a bird's eye view of Malaysia. It gives the visitor some idea of what rural life is like, as well as urban life. If the visitor to Malaysia has only a limited time in the country, various tours to different parts of Selangor, which are available at reasonable prices, will give him some idea of the real Malaysia.

### Interesting towns and buildings

One of the most striking pieces of Malaysian architecture is in Selangor. It is the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque in the capital, **Shah Alam**. Its striking blue dome, reaching up towards an equally blue sky flecked with white clouds, is a breathtaking sight. As with all mosques, you will need to be properly attired before you enter. There are long robes available which you could borrow and put on over a knee-length skirt or pants, but you will need to bring a scarf with you. In the same vicinity are the Bukit Kayangan Palace, residence of the Sultan of Selangor, the Sultan Alam Shah Club, the residence of the menteri besar, or chief minister of the state of Selangor, and the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Building. In fact, the whole town, in the process of being built, designed by urban planners and environmentalists, is an architecture wonder and should not be missed.

Another interesting town is Petaling Jaya, built as a satellite town of Kuala Lumpur. The town is a dream of urban planners and comprises small town centres complete with facilities within five minutes of where one stays.

**Kelang**, on the other hand, is an old town, the former capital of Selangor, and remnants of old colonial buildings compete with modern high-rise buildings. The palace is an impressive sight in this town. The fort and the Kelang museum are two other interesting buildings in the town. **Port Kelang** lies a few minutes

The Sultan Salahuddin  
mosque in Shah Alam  
combines traditional  
Islamic designs with  
modern facilities



from Kelang and from there one could catch a boat to the outer islands, including Pulau Ketam or Crab Island, a fishing village built on stilts.

In contrast, Kuala Selangor is a more rural town, at the mouth of the Selangor river. There is a small museum and remnants of ancient fortifications which are not as impressive as the view overlooking the river mouth. One of the interesting features of this town is that, if you go at night, you could ask a boatman to take you out to one of the outer islands to watch the trees light up with fireflies.

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## Culture

The Orang Asli (Aborigine) Museum in Gombak is definitely worth a visit. It traces the history and culture of the various aboriginal tribes and has a large collection of native artifacts. A #170 Len Seng bus for Lebu Ampang will get you there. The ride costs about \$1. For those interested in Batik printing, Selangor's leading batik factory is Batik Malaysia Berhad which is at 15, Jalan Cahaya 15, Taman Cahaya Ampang. You can get there easily by taxi from Kuala Lumpur (about 5 ringgit) or Petaling Jaya (about 9 ringgit). You could also catch a bus. The blue Toong Foong bus leaves from Jalan Silang, Jalan Ampang, Taman Cahaya or Taman Dagang and costs about 50 sen.

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## Places of relaxation

A park which is quiet and unspoilt is Tempier's Park, a place to relax on a lazy afternoon or a weekend. It is just 20 km north of Kuala Lumpur and consists of 500 hectares of unspoilt forest. From Puduraya, in Kuala Lumpur, catch bus #83, 95, 66 or 78. It costs about \$1. Mimaland in Gombak, with the largest swimming pool in Southeast Asia is popular among locals who go there on picnics and to enjoy its many outdoor activities. There are chalets for those wishing to stay overnight and good restaurants for those who prefer to eat off a table. It is located about 18 km from Kuala Lumpur. You can get there by the #174 Len Seng bus from Lebu Ampang. The fare is 90 sen. Morib on the coast of Selangor is a quiet town which locals go to for golf. It has a small golf course which is readily available to golf enthusiasts for a small fee. Unlike most other golf courses, no membership is required. The Banting bus, which leaves the Kelang Bus Station

A giant kris guards the approach to the town of Kelang in Selangor Darul Ehsan



The Rest House in Morib Selangor Darul Ehsan is a pleasant place for golfers to rest



at 15 minute intervals, will cost you \$3.20 from KL to Morib, or 60 sen from Banting to Morib.

Two hill resorts should be mentioned here. Although the hill resort-cum-casino of **Genting Highlands** and **Fraser's Hill** are in Pahang, the access to them is through Selangor. The former not only has Malaysia's only casino, but has very good recreational facilities for adults and children. It also has a good theatre with daily performances. You can get to **Genting Highlands** by helicopter (from Subang airport) or by taxi (from Pudu Raya - about \$8) or bus (from Pudu Raya - \$4.50). There are also tours leaving the major hotels to Genting Highlands. **Fraser's Hill** is more difficult to get to but a bus leaves Kuala Kubu Baru (fare:\$1.90) the town at the foot of the hill, and 62 km north of KL, for the summit twice a day. A bus from KL to Kuala Kubu Baru costs \$3. If you drive, be prepared to wait because the hill has a one-way traffic system, allowing vehicles to take turns to go up and down the hill at two-hourly intervals from the Gap, midway up the hill. Traffic up the hill goes up at 7 am, down the hill at 8 am, up the hill again at 9am, and so on. It is a pleasant and relaxing place, no exciting bright lights, just a lot of peace and tranquility.

### Other places of interest

Once a year, Batu Caves changes its usual sombre appearance as the drama of Thaipusam unfolds. In January or February, devotees carry the kavadi, plunge spikes through their mouths and skin in atonement. At other times, Batu Caves is still an attraction, sombre and filled with mystery. Be prepared to climb a really long flight of 272 steps to the cave. Bus #70 from Jalan Ampang or Jalan Raja Laut or, better still the minibus #11 to Batu Caves can be taken outside Bangkok Bank in Kuala Lumpur. The journey takes about half an hour to 45 minutes and costs 50 sen. On Sundays, and at Thaipusam, there is a very slow train from the KL railway station, which will get you there for \$2. If you are visiting the caves at Thaipusam, however, the train (which will be very, very crowded) will get you there, believe it or not, more efficiently than the bus because of severe traffic congestion.

The Zoo is a must for the young at heart of all ages. It is about 12 km from Kuala Lumpur and is one of the best in the region. Visit the aquarium while there. They both open daily from 9 am to 5 pm, including weekends and public holidays. The

#177 bus (Len Chee bus - green and red) goes from the Kelang Bus Station every half an hour and costs 70 sen. It takes about half an hour to get to the zoo.

Selangor Pewter in Setapak has demonstrations of how pewter is crafted. Catch a # 195 bus from Lebu Ampang. The trip costs 50 sen.

## Perak

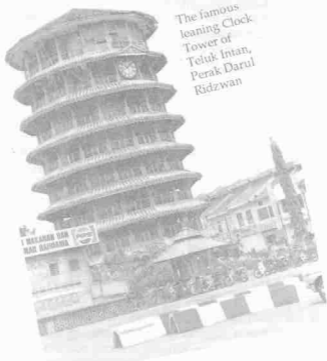
Perak means 'silver' in Bahasa Malaysia. Known as 'the Silver state', Perak is not really known for 'silver' but for 'tin'. The Kinta valley is one of the world's largest producers of tin. In the last few years, Perak has drawn a lot of investment into the state, both local and foreign. Fares from Kuala Lumpur to the main towns in Perak are offered in the chapter on Travelling in Malaysia.

### Interesting towns and buildings

Ipoh is the main town of Perak and the third largest city in Malaysia. It has a mixture of buildings, old and new. An interesting building is the railway station, combining Moorish architecture with modern facilities, and the Station Hotel which offers old-world charm and hospitality to guests. Kellie's Castle, about 30 minutes by car from Ipoh, has fascinated locals and been the subject of much speculation. Built by an English rubber plantation owner in the 19th century, it was never finished. The state government is currently restoring it, amidst rumours of hidden rooms and secret passages.

Kuala Kangsar, the royal town, where the Sultan of Perak has his official residence, lies northwest of Ipoh. Interesting buildings in this town include the Ubudiah Mosque, one of the most beautiful mosques in the country, officially opened in 1917. Istana Iskandariah, the palace of the Sultan is also worth seeing. The Royal Museum, an interesting building in itself, built without the use of a single nail, records the history of the monarchy in Perak. Near Kuala Kangsar is the village of Sayong, best known for its pottery.

Another major town in Perak is Taiping. In contrast to its name, which means 'City of Everlasting Peace', Taiping has seen a great deal of fighting in previous centuries. Today, it is just



The famous  
leaning Clock  
Tower of  
Teluk Intan,  
Perak Darul  
Ridzwan

Kellie's Castle - a mysterious mansion located a few kilometre  
from Ipoh



what its name means and offers visitors a chance for peace and tranquillity. Taiping boasts of the oldest museum in Malaysia, the Perak Museum built in 1883. It also has the oldest Chinese temple in the country, the Ling Nam temple. The Hindu Temple on Station Street is also worth a visit.

Teluk Intan, formerly known as Teluk Anson, is a quiet town, 84 km from Ipoh. Probably the most interesting building in this town is its leaning tower. Near Teluk Intan is the village of Pasir Salak, known for its ancient Malay architecture and the whole village is representative of the style of long-ago. Lumut, on the Perak coast hosts the Malaysian navy and it is from Lumut that one gains access to Pulau Pangkor or Pangkor Island and the other smaller islands around. The ferry ride from Lumut to Pangkor Island costs 1 ringgit and the trip takes about 40 minutes.

## Culture

Of note is the Pasir Salak historical complex, known for its ancient Malay architecture. The Royal Museum at Kuala Kangsar, with illustrations and artifacts of the Perak monarchy, is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm. Then there is the Perak Museum in Taiping, the oldest museum in the country. Visiting hours are from 9.30 am to 5 pm daily.

The Sea Festival or Pesta Laut in Lumut is also worth taking note of. It is held once a year in October or November and does not only promote sea sports but also cultural shows and a massive food and fun fair. The dates change every year and the visitor should check with the Perak Tourist Information Centre (tel. 05-532800 ext. 301) for the actual dates.

## Places of relaxation

It is in this area that Perak comes into its own. Perak has more than its fair share of natural parks and beaches and offers visitors a chance to really relax and commute with nature. In Ipoh there is the D. R. Seenivasagam Park and the Japanese Gardens, the first to have been designed in the country. It is open from 4 pm to 8pm on weekdays and from 9 am to 8 pm on weekends. The Ipoh Swimming Complex, the most modern in Southeast Asia and the Perak Sports Complex which has a stadium and velodrome, are open from 9 am to 9 pm daily. There is an entrance fee of 1 ringgit for adults on weekdays and 2 ringgit on weekends,



and 50 sen for children on weekdays and 1 ringgit on weekends. About 15 minutes away from Ipoh is the town of **Tambun** which offers relaxation of a different sort. Here hot springs promise hot baths - an invigorating experience. The bath is open daily from 3 pm to 12 midnight and an entrance fee of 5 ringgit is charged. The Ulu Kinta waterfalls, 16 km from Ipoh is a popular picnic area.

**Taiping**, too, offers a chance to relax. Its best known park is the Taiping Lake Gardens, one of the most beautiful parks in the country. Within the grounds is the Taiping Zoo, one of the oldest in the country. Admission is 1 ringgit and visiting hours are from 10 am to 6 pm daily. Up a winding and narrow road, through lush tropical jungle, is the Bukit Larut resort, formerly called Maxwell Hill. There is a Land Rover service which takes you to the top as the road is not accessible to cars. Bungalows at the top of the hill offer accommodation to those seeking peace and quiet. A popular picnic area is the Batu Hampar waterfalls.

Cameron Highlands, Malaysia's leading hill resort, is in Pahang but its access is through **Tapah** in Perak. The Highlands boast of lots of jungle walks and pretty towns. There are also vegetable and flower gardens one could visit. Cameron Highlands does not have the glitzy life-style of Genting Highlands, but it does have good hotels where one could listen to music and relax in the evenings. The cool climate makes it very conducive for activity during the day and curling up snugly at night. To get there, you will need to get to Tapah, by road or train, and then either drive up the hill or take a taxi or bus. There are three major towns on Cameron Highlands: **Ringlet** is the lowest, 46km from Tapah. It is not a very interesting town and one really needs to go up higher. **Tanah Rata**, about 60 km from Tapah, is the major town, and here are also the better hotels. About 5km further, is the third large town, **Brinchang**. There are taxis (about \$18) and a MARA bus (\$8) from Kuala Lumpur to Tanah Rata. You can also take a bus or taxi from Tapah to Tanah Rata, Ringlet or Brinchang. On the way up the mountains are places for relaxation favoured by locals. The Lata Iskandar Waterfalls is a picnic area set in jungle surroundings. The Kuala Woh Jungle Park is also a picnic area, with a natural hot water pool.

**Pulau Pangkor** or **Pangkor Island** is Perak's leading beach resort. It is accessible by ferry from the town of Lumut (see section above on towns). There is no MAS flight to Pangkor and the nearest town by air is Sitiawan, (120 ringgit return fare from

Kuala Lumpur), which is about thirty minutes drive from Lumut (about \$3.50 by bus and \$5 by shared taxi). The major areas on the island are the Puteri Dewi Beach, and Pasir Bogak. Accommodation ranges from five-star hotels to attap huts. Women travelling alone would be better off in the better hotels here as they do sometimes get unwanted attention from young men in the cheaper places. The Teluk Nipah beach is accessible by bicycle or motor cycle. However, the better beaches are only accessible by boat, although the beach at the Pan Pacific Resort is great.

Perak's 'Fantasy Island' lies off the coast of Pangkor. It is **Pansea Pangkor Laut** and can be reached by ferry from Lumut as well as by ferry from Pangkor Island. There are chalets on the island and full modern, holiday facilities. You will need to make reservations. Let them know if you need a ride from Pangkor as their boat plies between the two islands.

About 7 km from Lumut is another seaside resort, **Teluk Batik**, a favourite spot for picnics and general relaxation. Rooms and chalets are available at reasonable prices.

The **Banding Resort** 35 km from Grik on the road to Kota Bharu in Kelantan, is a fisherman's haven and freshwater fishing yields large fish which fishing enthusiasts can boast about for years. The picnic grounds along the Temenggor Lake are popular and accommodation is available at the Rest House.

## Other places of interest

Combining the old with the new, there are unique experiences open to the tourist which only Perak can offer. Possibly the greatest experience are the 'cave-temples' a few minutes drive out of Ipoh. The oldest cave temples are the Perak Tong and the Sam Poh Tong. The Perak Tong has a 13 metre high statue of Buddha in the centre of the main cave and smaller statues all round the cave. Cave paintings take on a different meaning in this temple and the Chinese art needs to be seen to be believed. There are more than a hundred works of art on the walls and ceiling of the cave. The Sam Poh Tong, while not boasting of such a large statue of Buddha, has smaller statues set among natural limestone formations. It opens out into a tortoise pond where people have felt free to release their tortoise pets! The result is a pond crawling with tortoises! Both these temples, are places of worship so be prepared for the intense joss-stick smoke



Fishing boats are a common sight on the Island of Langkawi



Water lilies or *bunga teratai* lend colours to many ponds and pools



Visitors to Pulau Pinang can choose to go by ferry or to use the bridge instead



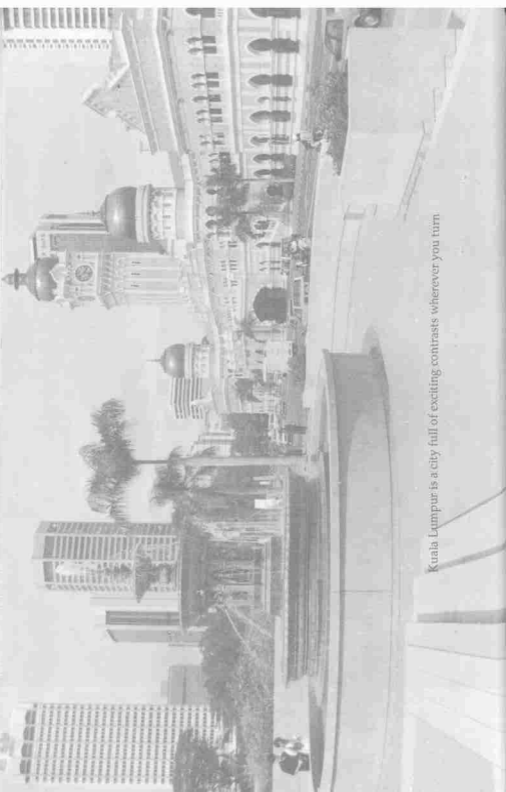
To start a holiday with miles and miles of sand and sea of Batu Ferringhi Beach



Hundreds of species of butterflies fly freely in the Butterfly Farm in Pulau Pinang



Wat Chaya-mangkalaram, one of the many Buddhist temples in the downtown street of Pulau Pinang



Kuala Lumpur is a city full of exciting contrasts wherever you turn

permeating the caves. The local people go there to ask for favours, for thanksgiving, but most often of all, to have their fortunes told, or to find an auspicious time or site for business ventures. For a more pleasant experience, avoid prayer days and weekend visits. A newer cave-temple has recently been discovered and, being relatively unknown, has fewer visitors. Its natural formations are also less touched by human endeavours. The access to this cave is not as easy as the other two. Leaving Ipoh, on the road to KL, look out for petrol stations and a Mercedes Benz symbol on a hill. There is a turning on your left about 200 metres from there. Look for any sign which has the word Tong. It means 'cave' in Chinese. Alternatively, go with a local guide. The Wat Thai is another interesting temple with a reclining Buddha which is about 24 metres across.

The breeding farm for terrapins or tuntung (a type of tortoise) is in **Bota Kanan**, about 40 km from Ipoh. November to March are good months to visit the hatchery. The Kuala Gula Bird Sanctuary is another interesting place for nature lovers. It is about 120 km from Ipoh and is accessible from two directions, via Taiping and Kg. Dew, on to Simpang Empat Selinseng, or from Ipoh to Kuala Kurau and then on to Kuala Gula. The latter requires the visitor to get on a ferry, run by the government (free of charge) from Kuala Kurau to Kuala Gula. The problem is that, on days when the tide is low, the ferry is slow and vehicles have to line up for a long time before making the crossing - interesting for those not in a hurry and who don't mind being at a standstill for an hour or more in rustic surroundings. Not recommended for a lady travelling alone, who would be better advised to take the road from Taiping instead.

The Sungkai Deer Farm is a conservation project site, not only for deer but also for birds and other wildlife. It is located about 82 km from Ipoh.

The Geological Museum in Ipoh offers something different to visitors. There, a collection of over 600 samples of minerals, and an exhibition of tin ore, is the attraction.

## Pulau Pinang

The island is probably Malaysia's best known tourist spot. Located in the calm seas off the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia, its sunny beaches, affordable, luxurious living, great food and warm hospitality make the island unforgettable. Pulau Pinang

or Penang is also well known as a major shopping centre. The island is accessible by a bridge, or, if preferred, a ferry which also takes cars and other vehicles.

### Interesting buildings

Fort Cornwallis records the place where Sir Francis Light, the British captain who established Penang, first landed. The fort is now an interesting combination of the old and the new as the inside of the fort is a modern amphitheatre. Still in history, St George's Church is the oldest Anglican church in the country and is indeed one of the oldest buildings in the country still in use. The Penang Museum and Art Gallery offer more trips into the past. It is open to the public from 9am to 5pm daily, except for Fridays when it closes for the Friday prayers from 12.15 pm to 2.45 pm. The Kek Si Lok Temple, standing seven storeys high, is a magnificent piece of architecture. Combining Chinese, Thai and Burmese architecture, it is Malaysia's largest Buddhist temple. Watch out for the touts, though, and if you want to buy anything, don't buy it at the first stall. Check out the prices. You can always buy something you like on the way down the temple. The Snake Temple is another feature unique to Penang. Snakes are curled round the altar and other parts of the temple. They won't harm you. One of the world's largest reclining Buddha statues may be found in Wat Chayamangkalaram in Lorong Burma, a temple which would be picturesque even without the reclining Buddha. The Khoo Kongsi or Khoo clan meeting place which is part temple and part meeting hall, is resplendent with intricate carvings in splashes of colour. Although it is open from 9 to 5, Mondays to Fridays and from 9 to 1 on Saturdays, permission must be obtained from the office before one enters. The Temple of the Goddess of Mercy, Kuan Yin becomes very active three times a year when her birthday is celebrated. But even other days will find people praying for special favours. The State Mosque is at Jalan Masjid Negeri. Permission to enter the mosque must be obtained from the State religious Department and, as with all mosques, you will need to be fully covered and barefoot before entering. An older mosque is the Kapitan Kling mosque built by an Indian Muslim trader in the nineteenth century. The Penang Buddhist Association, on Anson Road, offers the visitor something different from the other temples. Here the Buddha statues are carved from marble and

glass chandeliers hang from above.

Pulau Pinang blends the old and the new and houses and other buildings are no exception. A trip from or to Bayan Lepas airport itself gives visitors some idea of the traditional wooden homes of the local people, as well as the more modern brick houses more popular these days. Georgetown, too, the capital of the state, but frequently referred to simply as 'Penang', is interesting and fun to stroll through, although crossing a street requires patience and humour!

## Culture

Cultural shows may be staged from time to time in the city so do look out for announcements. There are few regular cultural activities on a daily basis although the more active might favour the lively discotheques. One should especially watch out for the Pulau Pinang festival, held in December, with dragon boat races and processions, and Chingay, held on the 22nd day of the Chinese lunar year, when men balance long poles on their foreheads, thighs, chins, and so on. Thaipusam, held in January-February, with fire-walking and other rituals, may be experienced at the Nattukotai temple on Waterfall road. It is not recommended for the faint-hearted.

## Places of relaxation

Penang is well known for its beaches and, of note, are the beaches at Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bungah and Teluk Bahang. Visitors should be aware, however, that these are no longer the best Malaysian beaches. Those who are going to Penang mainly to swim, should look to other beaches. Penang does, however, offer other attractions which other beach resorts do not. Penang Hill is lots of fun as a funicular train takes you up along the steep slopes. The trip takes about 30 minutes and on getting to the top, one is rewarded with a spectacular view of the island. You will need to take a #1 bus from Pengkalan Weld to Air Hitam, then a #8 to the train station. The first train goes up the hill at 6.30 am, and after that, every half hour till about 9 pm. The return fare is 3 ringgit for adults and 1.50 ringgit for children. The Butterfly Farm and the Forest Recreation Park are within easy distance of each other. The former has about 5000 species of butterflies, live, in their natural setting.



The farm is open from 9 to 5 on weekdays and 9 to 6 on weekends and public holidays. Admission is 2 ringgit for adults and 1 ringgit for children. Trekking through the forest recreation park after a visit to the Butterfly farm is another rich experience as the tropical forest is home to all kinds of flora and fauna. The more adventurous might want to use the jungle tracks and head into the heart of the forest. There are camping sites along the way. A major tourist spot, the Botanical Gardens lie 8 km from the city centre. The monkeys may look cute but are not ready to be cuddled. So, when feeding them, take care. Over on the mainland, which you can get to by crossing the bridge or by taking a ferry ride, the Bukit Mertajam Recreational Park, about 18 km from the Butterworth ferry terminal, has numerous jungle tracks and a profusion of tropical flora and fauna. Mengkuang Dam, north of Bukit Mertajam, offers recreational and water sports facilities. There is a security check and visitors will need to check with security personnel. The Penang Bird Park in Seberang Jaya stretches over five acres and is worth a visit. Admission is 2 ringgit for adults and 1 ringgit for children. The park is open daily from 10 to 6 pm. Golfers may want to visit the Bukit Jambul 18-hole golf course. Green fees are 60 ringgit on weekdays and 100 ringgit on weekends.

## Kedah and Perlis

Little known and unspoilt by tourism, these two small northern states are on Malaysia's border with Thailand and many know them only as gateways to cheap shopping in Thailand. But the two states are interesting in their own way and, for those who would like a taste of rustic peace and charm, excitingly different from the rest of the country.

### Interesting towns and buildings

**Alor Setar** is the major town of Kedah and is a busy, bustling town, serving a largely rural population. Balai Besar built in the 19th century, still stands as an example of Thai architectural influences on Kedah. Opposite it is Masjid Zahir an impressive mosque built in the early twentieth century. Within walking distance of these two buildings is the Balai Nobat in which the musical instruments of the royal orchestra are kept. The Royal Mausoleum is in Langgar, about 9.6 km north of Alor Setar.

Kuala Kedah is a fishing village famous for its seafood.

Langkawi is Kedah's major tourist area. Steeped in legends, the island of Langkawi floats temptingly in a blue sea, its white beaches against limestone hills, still completely unspoilt. Pulau Langkawi, the largest of 99 islands in the Langkawi group, is a must for all those who appreciate a restful holiday at a beach resort. Langkawi was given free port status in 1987, and people from Kedah frequently shop there. The range of goods is restricted, however, and, as a shopping centre, cannot compare with Kuala Lumpur and Penang.

The capital of the state of Perlis is **Kangar** but the royal town is **Arau** where the royal palace or Istana Di-Raja and the State Mosque are located. Kangar is about an hour or so from Alor Setar. **Padang Besar** on the Thai-Malaysian border, is a favourite town for Malaysians, offering shopping experiences very different from other places in the country, except perhaps Kelantan. Imitation name-brand goods are very much in evidence and the prices, at least a tenth of the original should indicate to the purchaser that they are, indeed imitations. **Kuala Perlis**, at the mouth of the Perlis river, is well known for its fresh seafood at totally affordable prices. It also offers access to Langkawi by ferry. The peak of **Gunung Medan** or Medan Hill offers spectacular views of the area.

## Culture

Like many other Malaysian states, tourist-type cultural performances are not available. These would only happen on special occasions so keep an eye out for public announcements, or check with the Tourist Department in Alor Setar (tel. 04-722088/722213/722216) or the Perlis State Economic Planning Unit in Kangar (tel. 04-761088/761957). The Kedah State Museum or Muzium Negeri is worth a visit, as is the Kedah State Art Gallery or Balai Seni Negeri.

## Places of relaxation

The area does not want for places where people can relax and let their problems fade away. In Kedah, there is, of course, Pulau Langkawi, one of Malaysia's island paradises. There is also **Pantai Merdeka**, about 60 km from Alor Setar with about a km of white sands and crystal clear water. Other picnic spots include waterfall

parks like **Air Terjun Puncak Janing** in **Padang Terap**, 25 km from Alor Setar, **Seri Perigi** and **Batu Hampar** in Yan, **Lata Asam Jawa** in **Baling**, 112 km from Alor Setar, **Junjong** in **Kulim**, 104 km from Alor Setar and **Perangin Sik** and **Lata Mengkuang**, 72 km from Alor Setar. For the adventurous, there is **Gunung Jerai**, Kedah's highest peak. Here the **Sungai Teroi Forest Recreation Park** has jungle treks, with waterfalls and camp sites.

In **Perlis**, **Sungai Batu Pahat**, 10 km from Kangar is an indifferent recreation centre with picnic places, a children's park and other facilities. It is closed on Mondays. **Tasik Melati** also offers picnic possibilities beside a man-made lake.

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### Other places of interest

**Lembah Bujang**, in **Kedah**, is a world renown archaeological site, revealing finds which throw light on Southeast Asian history. **Gua Kelam**, about 26 km from Kangar, is a unique, unspoilt cave with an underground river. There is a wooden bridge which visitors could use to cross the cave.

## **Kelantan**

Tucked away in the northeast corner of Peninsular Malaysia, on the border with Thailand, is the state of **Kelantan**. It is the seat of northern Malay culture, and the people are most willing to share it. This is not the state to visit if you want the bright lights of the city. Here the pace of life is calm but dynamic. The people are some of the friendliest and warmest in the country and many a tourist has been taken aback by having drinks bought for them by virtual strangers, with no strings attached. It is very much a Muslim state, so drinking and carousing are not on. The major hotels do have bars where alcoholic drinks are sold, but you will not find the pubs and nightlife of the west coast cities here. Just be prepared to have a relaxing time, enjoying the slow pace of life and being entertained with cultural activities as differently stimulating from any western culture as one could imagine.

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### Interesting towns and buildings

The major town is **Kota Bharu** and it is there that one should stay to see **Kelantan**.

Kelantan is not the state to look for architectural marvels. However, the simple houses are interesting and built to withstand the floods which occur towards the end of the year. The villagers are very co-operative and if a house is in danger of floods, the rest of the village gets together and physically carries the house, contents and all, to higher ground.

There are also a few interesting buildings which are worthy of mention. The new palace or istana in large spacious grounds is where the Sultan lives. Kota Darulnaim, the state government building is a fabulous piece of architecture, built on a pyramid (or rather multi-pyramid) concept. The museum or Istana Jahar is another fine building, different from the other two, and noted for its fine craftsmanship and wood carving. Visiting hours are from 10.30 am till 6 pm. It is closed on Wednesdays. There are also a number of Thai temples which are interesting, especially in the district of Tumpat, on the border with Thailand. The best known is the Wat Phothivihan, in Kampung Jambu, about 12 km from Kota Bharu, with, what is claimed to be, the largest reclining Buddha in Southeast Asia.

## Culture

Kelantan is the state to go to if you want to experience a taste of Malay culture. Major cultural activities take place at the Kelantan Cultural Centre or Gelanggang Seni, next to the Perdana Beach Complex at Pantai Cinta Berahi or Beach of Passionate Love. Cultural activities include kite flying, top spinning (by adults, not children!), silat (the Malay art of self defence), drumming on the rebana ubi, wayang kulit or shadow puppetry, Mak Yong (a dance drama) and congkak (a game played with seeds, stones or marbles in a long wooden trough). The centre is open three times a week - Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, from 2.30 pm to 6 pm. It is closed during the monsoon season, from October to February, and during the fasting month.

Wayang Kulit performances are also staged at Kampung Gerong, 6 km from Kota Bharu, Kedai Lalat, 15 km from Kota Bharu, and at Kampung Tawang, 26 km from Kota Bharu.

Another art is boat building which is done at Tumpat. Kelantan also has its own distinctive form of batik and there are a number of factories where one can watch the cloth being printed. The major centres are at Semasa Batik at Kampung Puteh, about 3 km from town, Kubor Kuda in Kota Bharu itself, Kampung

**Badang**, about 10 km from Kota Bharu, and **Kampung Penambang**, about 3 km from Kota Bharu, on the way to Pantai Cinta Berahi. Also at **Kampung Penambang** one sees a different type of cloth called songket, handwoven in silk and interspersed with gold or silver thread. The fine workmanship makes Kelantan songket a piece of art, not just fabric for clothes. Silver has been mined in Kelantan for centuries, giving rise to fine workmanship in silver. The silver craftsmen may be observed at Jalan Sultan Zainab (more popularly known as **Kampung Sireh**), at **Kampung Morak**, 9 km from Kota Bharu, and at **Kampung Badang**, about 10 km out of Kota Bharu on the way to Pantai Cinta Berahi. All these places are open from 8.30 to 5pm every day except Fridays. So that kites can fly and puppets entertain, they have to be made. This has given rise to more artistic ventures in kite making and puppetry. There are different kinds of kites, called wau. Some sing, some don't. The puppets from the wayang kulit represent various characters from the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, Indian in origin. Visitors can watch kites and puppets being constructed at various places along the road from Kota Bharu town to Pantai Cinta Berahi. You can also order kites to your own specifications.

A major cottage industry in Kelantan is the making of baskets, food covers and trays out of split bamboo. The weavers are village women and you have to go out to the villages to watch them at work.

### Places of Relaxation

Kelantan is well known for its long, wide beaches. One should be aware, however, that during October to February, when the monsoon hits Kelantan, flooding often occurs. Swimming becomes dangerous because of the undertow.

Perhaps the best known beach is the Beach of Passionate Love or Pantai Cinta Berahi, about 10 km north of Kota Bharu. For snorkelling, scuba diving and fishing, as well as swimming, the Beach of the Whispering Breeze or Pantai Bisikan Bayu, sometimes called Pantai Dalam Rhu, in Semarak, about 58 km from Kota Bharu is better. Other well known beaches include Pantai Irama, Pantai Kuda, Pantai Dasar Sabak and the beaches at **Kuala Besar**, a fishing village with the added attraction of fishing activities which you may choose to participate in if you so wish.

For fishing enthusiasts, there is Lake Toban, a freshwater lake and a good picnic spot, 15 km from the town of **Pasir Mas**. Another picnic spot is the Jeram Pasu Waterfalls in **Pasir Puteh**.

## Terengganu

About halfway down the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia is the state of Terengganu. Like Kelantan, it is not the place to go to if you want the bright lights. It follows Muslim codes of behaviour, and like Kelantan, drinking and carousing are not encouraged. Some of the beaches are great although others are no longer that attractive because of the off-shore drilling taking place. The presence of oil personnel has given the towns more activity than was true a few years ago.

### Towns and places of interest

The major town is **Kuala Terengganu**, a small town which promises fast growth over the next few years because of oil. There are few interesting buildings in Kuala Terengganu. It is not the place for historical or architectural monuments. The palace or Istana Maziah and Wisma Darul Iman are worth the trouble. But a more interesting place is the Gelanggang Seni or Cultural Centre where, on Fridays, between 5 and 6.30 pm, traditional dances and games are demonstrated. Another interesting place is the Central market where one could buy anything from brass ware to fruit. The waterfront is a bustling place, where you could hire a boat to take you to the islands off the coast of Terengganu or to Kampung Seberang Takir on the opposite side, where fish is salted and dried and other fish products are processed.

In the same area, is the Tanjung Jara beach resort, with beautiful beaches and an opportunity for all kinds of sea sports. The major hotel on the beach has been built without the use of nails and is an architectural wonder in itself. This is also place to stay if you are going to watch for the turtles to come up.

### Culture

Although Terengganu is one of the major centres of traditional Malay culture, there are few places which put on shows for

tourists. Terengganu's charm lies in its unspoilt nature. No pseudo-cultural activities for visitors there. Terengganu's culture is so much a part of their way of life that one has to be among the people to experience it. The one place that does have cultural shows is the Cultural Centre or Gelanggang Seni. The visitor is also able to observe batik printing, in a style distinctive to Terengganu. Songket weaving, silk interwoven with silver or gold thread, is also a traditional craft in Terengganu and songket weaving can be observed at **Kampung Pulau Rusa** and at **Kampung Tanjung**. Mat, bag and basket weaving is done at **Rusila**, 13 km south of Kuala Terengganu. In July, the Beach Festival is held, with kite-flying, silat (the Malay art of self defence), top spinning and lots more cultural activities. Check with the local tourist organisation for the exact dates.

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### Places of relaxation

From about February to October, the beaches of Terengganu are the best places for relaxation, and there are a great number of them, not only on the mainland but on the off-shore islands as well. Crystal-clear waters allow snorkelling and scuba diving as well as swimming. The best known beaches are the Dendong Beach Park, Batu Rakit and Kampung Merang. The islands which all sea lovers should visit are **Pulau Redang** and **Pulau Kapas** with their coral reefs, **Pulau Perhentian**, well known for scuba diving and **Pulau Bidong**. Another interesting island is **Pulau Duyung** where Terengganu-style boats are built.

Those who want a change from the sea could go to the Sekayu Recreation Park (entrance fee \$1) and walk among thick tropical rainforests. Nearby, is the Kenyir Lake, popular with fishing enthusiasts and those wanting peaceful picnics.

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### Other places

60 km south of Kuala Terengganu is **Rantau Abang**, one of the few places in the world where, between May and September, giant leatherback turtles come up to lay their eggs. The turtle digs a large hole, lays its eggs, covers them up and then returns to the ocean. There is a Turtle Information Centre, and you will find that the locals know where and when the turtles come up. It is a big beach and you could be watching at the wrong place, the whole night, without the help of the locals. If you stay at

Tanjung Jara beach resort, ask the staff to wake you up when the turtle comes up. It will be in the early hours of the morning and you may choose sleep to turtle-watching. The laying of eggs is an awesome sight, however, although you may not see this happen. There is strict environmental control because, in the past, there used to be strange behaviour from tourists, Malaysian and foreign, who posed for photographs on the turtle while it was laying. The locals used to grab the eggs (which look like table tennis balls of various sizes) hardly before they had fallen into the hole, and sold the eggs in the market. There is now a great move towards conservation of the turtles.

## Pahang

The largest state in Peninsular Malaysia, Pahang, for most Malaysians conjures up visions of lush tropical rain forests and deliciously warm sandy beaches. Most of the hill resorts are in Pahang, even though the access to them leads up from other states, and so is the National Park or Taman Negara. Kuantan, the most major town in Pahang, is also the most accessible from Kuala Lumpur. It has good beaches and is therefore popular with expatriates who want a restful weekend away from the city.

### Interesting towns and buildings

The state capital is Kuantan which is also the largest town. It is a modern town, offering some night life as well as the opportunity to relax on clean beaches and swim in clear waters at the beaches a few kilometres out of town. It is very accessible by land or air from Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. Pekan is the royal town where the Sultan resides. Once a year, on October 24th, the Sultan's birthday, the town comes alive in a blaze of colour and pageantry. At other times, it is a quiet town, pleasant and peaceful. Interesting buildings in the town include the royal palace itself and the state museum. Beserah is a little fishing village which is well known as a centre for 'salted fish'. The interesting thing about the villagers is their means of transportation - they use water buffaloes.





Pasir Bogak Beach

Pasir Bogak Beach in Pangkor is a pleasant place for swimming and sunbathing.



Another of Malaysia's secrets, hidden in blue depths

## Culture

There are few opportunities for cultural pursuits in this town where the main focus is the beaches. However, the major hotels along **Teluk Chempedak** do put on demonstrations of various cultural activities from time to time. **Balai Karyaneka** in **Teluk Chempedak** has a showcase of all handicraft from all over the state. The **Cherating Resort** also allows a peek into traditional handicraft as well as acquainting visitors with traditional performances like **wayang kulit** or shadow puppetry and **silat**, the Malay art of self defence.

## Places of relaxation

There are numerous beaches in Pahang, with yellow sands and clear water. The beaches are less treacherous than the beaches further up the coast during the monsoon season. The best known beach is **Teluk Chempedak**, 5 km out of **Kuantan**. That is where you will find the major beach hotels. **Club Mediteranee** is at **Cherating** but so are other smaller hotels at this beach resort. About 2 km away from **Cherating**, is **Chendor Beach** where the leatherback turtles come up to lay their eggs. These turtles are the smaller relatives of the giant leatherbacks which nest up the coast in **Terengganu**. It is also a good place for swimming. **Batu Hitam** just north of **Beserah**, also has good beaches. For those who enjoy windsurfing, there is **Balok Beach**, about 15 km north of **Kuantan**.

For those who enjoy picnics and camping, there is **Gunung Tapis**, about 60 km from **Kuantan**. If you plan to camp there, you will need prior permission which can be obtained from the local **Outwardbound society** or the **Tourist Information Centre**. The **Sungai Pandan Waterfalls** also offer an opportunity for relaxation. It is about 25 km from **Kuantan** and is accessible by road, but not good road all the way.

Some of the most major Malaysian tourist centres are in Pahang, but their access is through other states. One of the best island resorts is **Pulau Tioman**, still relatively unspoilt, yet with sufficient modern amenities for comfort. It is accessible by air from **Kuala Lumpur** (\$100) and **Singapore** (\$90) - from **Seletar**, not **Changi** airport. If you are driving, then go by road to **Mersing** in north **Johor**, and, from **Mersing** take a boat (about \$25 by hovercraft; about \$15 by boat). The time taken for the boat trip

varies according to the type of boat you take, but allow about an hour and a half.

The three major Malaysian hill resorts are also in Pahang, but their access is through other states. **Genting Highlands**, the Las Vegas of Malaysia, is a resort with a large casino, as well as fun activities for all the family, including train rides, boating, and so on. It also has a good theatre which features international performers. **Fraser's Hill** is at the opposite end of the scale. It is quiet, unspoilt and, by 10pm, everyone's tucked up snugly for the night. It is the place for quiet walks and reading a book in tranquil surroundings. Although it is only a short distance from Kuala Lumpur, it is not that accessible because the road after the Gap is narrow. You will need to get to Kuala Kubu Baru, the town at the foot of the hill, and 62 km north of KL. A bus leaves Kuala Kubu Baru (fare \$1.90), for the summit twice a day. A bus from KL to Kuala Kubu Baru costs \$3. If you drive, be prepared to wait because the hill has a one-way traffic system, allowing vehicles to take turns to go up and down the hill at two-hourly intervals from the gap, midway up the hill. Traffic up the hill goes up at 7 am, down the hill at 8 am, up the hill again at 9am, and so on. **Cameron Highlands** the access to which is Tapah in Perak has lots of jungle walks and pretty towns. It also has vegetable and flower gardens one could visit. It does not have the glitzy life-style of Genting Highlands, but it does have good hotels where one could listen to music and relax in the evenings. The cool climate makes it very conducive for activity during the day and curling up snugly at night. To get there, you will need to get to Tapah, by road or train, and then either drive up the hill or take a taxi or bus. There are three major towns on Cameron Highlands: Ringlet is the lowest, 46km from Tapah. It is not a very interesting town and one really needs to go up higher. Tanah Rata, about 60 km from Tapah, is the major town, and here are also the better hotels. About 5km further, is the third large town, Brinchang. There are taxis (about \$18) and a MARA bus (\$8) from Kuala Lumpur to Tanah Rata. You can also take a bus or taxi from Tapah to Tanah Rata, Ringlet or Brinchang.

### Other places of interest

Taman Negara is probably the best known of Malaysia's National Parks. For those seeking an adventure, there are jungle treks, rowing down rivers and climbing mountains. Prior permission is

needed before entering the national park, and this permission can be obtained from the Department of Wildlife and National parks in Kuala Lumpur (tel: 03-2541271/2541466) or in Kuantan, or **Jerantut** Taman Negara is closed from mid November to mid December. If you are going on your own, without being part of a tour group, you will need to get to Jerantut by taxi or bus, and from there, get a taxi or bus or **Kuala Tembeling**. Next, take a boat to **Kuala Tahan**. This trip is not for the sightseer, or for the squirmish. It is experiencing the tropical jungle in the raw, with no softening features as sips to tourism.

Gua Charah or the Charah Caves, 25 km west of Kuantan, are Buddhist caves where the monks live and where locals go to pray. There is a statue of a reclining Buddha in the cave.

Another interesting place is Tasek Chini or Lake Chini, in which locals claim to have seen a monster. Access to the lake is through **Kampung Belimbing**, 60 km from Kuantan, and then by boat. Alternatively, use the Segamat Highway to get to the town of Chini. From there, you need to go through the plantations to get to the lake.

## Johor

Just across a bridge (called the causeway) from Singapore, is the state of Johor, offering visitors to Singapore as well as Singapore residents a chance to get away from the bustle of the city. Through the airport at Senai, about thirty minutes from Johor Baru, the main town, there is access by air to the major destinations in Malaysia, at much lower rates than flying out from Singapore. Malaysia Airlines operates an express bus from Singapore and Johor Bahru to Senai airport, and the immigration hassles are much less than if you went by car.

### Interesting towns and buildings

The capital is **Johor Bahru** which is also the largest town in the state. It is a haven for Singaporeans who go there, not only to get away from the bustle of city life, but also to purchase fresh produce from the Malaysian hinterland. Petrol, too, is cheaper in Johor Bahru than in Singapore. There are some interesting buildings in Johor Bahru, the most interesting being the two

palaces: the Istana Bukit Serene where the Sultan lives and the Istana Besar, where official functions are held and which houses the treasures of the Johor royal family. Prior permission must be sought to visit the Istana Besar. The grounds of the Istana are open, though, and is beautifully laid out. It houses a zoo (admission \$1). The Abu Bakar mosque is an imposing edifice and so are the Government Offices on Bukit Timbalan in the centre of the city. Rubber and palm oil are two of Malaysia's major commodities. Rubber has to be tapped, then processed for export. Only then is it used on the soles of those shoes you wear. To watch rubber being processed, you can visit the Ulu Tiram Estate, 26 km from Johor Bahru, then go on to watch the estate's palm oil being processed.

About half an hour away from Johor Bahru is the town of Kota Tinggi which is popular among locals as a picnic place because of its waterfalls. It's okay as far as waterfalls go, but not really worth taking the extra trouble if you are pushed for time. If you are going to be in the area for a while, then you will find it a pleasant break from Johor Bahru. Also in the vicinity of Kota Tinggi is a secluded beach called Jason's Bay which is a good picnic area. The road to the bay deters many - a plus point because there is usually no crowd at the beach! From Kota Tinggi, one can also arrange for a boat trip (it can be expensive if you are travelling on your own) down the river to Johor Lama, the centre of the old Johor Empire where the fort of Kota Batu still stands. If you have the time, it is an interesting trip, but not very easy to arrange.

About 90km from Johor Bahru is Desaru, a beach resort which is a popular escape for Singaporeans, mainly because of its accessibility to Singapore.

About 40 km from Johor Bahru is the small fishing village of Kukup well known among Singaporeans for its fresh, inexpensive seafood, especially prawns and crabs.

About midway between Johor Bahru and Melaka, about an hour and a half out of Johor Bahru, are two well known potteries at the small town of Air Hitam (pronounced as ah-ye hitam). Both potteries have different styles of workmanship. The Aw Pottery is able to send your pottery to any part of the world. Air Hitam is a fascinating town, being literally at the crossroads of the major roads of Johor. Stalls line the town selling pottery, vegetables, fruit and other produce of Johor. You will get a selection here that you will not find anywhere else in the state!

and browsing among the stalls is fun. Remember to bargain.

North of Air Hitam, along the coast are the next two major towns of **Batu Pahat** and **Muar**. The nightlife of Johor is, surprisingly, centred in **Batu Pahat** and a woman travelling alone will need to stay in the better hotels, although there aren't too many of those in the town. **Muar** about 40 km north of **Batu Pahat** is a quiet, pleasant town without too much excitement. There is an impressive mosque by the left bank of the **Muar** river and a pleasant park at the river mouth which is called **Tanjung** and which the locals use a lot. The sunset at the river mouth is really beautiful. **Muar** is a fruit-growing district and choice fruit may be found along the roads as each fruit comes in season. **Muar** is also a centre of Malay culture and some of the best Malay food in the country may be found here. From **Muar**, too, **Mt. Ophir** (or **Gunung Ledang** in Malay), famed for its legends dating back to the Malaccan Empire, becomes accessible. Those who enjoy climbing should take the **Muar-Segamat** bus and ask the conductor to tell you where to get off. There are some waterfalls not too high up the mountain which are really rather pretty and a popular picnic place for locals. The road between **Muar** and **Melaka** (not the highway but the old road) is particularly interesting as one passes padi fields, green or gold depending on the time of the year, Malay houses, beautifully carved and tastefully decorated, and old mosques, looking as if they have arisen out of the past. Unfortunately, there aren't too many hotels in **Muar**. There used to be a good rest house but that has been allowed to run to seed. There is one large hotel, but it tends to be noisy. One could easily stay in **Melaka**, however, and go to **Muar** on a day trip.

On the east coast of Johor is the town of **Mersing**, a small, pleasant, fishing town from which one gets to the lovely islands off the coast of Johor and southern **Pahang**. One can take a boat or hydrofoil to the islands for about \$8.

The best known Johor island resort is **Pulau Rawa**, owned by a cousin of the Sultan of Johor. Permission has to be sought for picnicking on the island and day trippers are unlikely to get that permission. This ensures that the island is only used by guests staying on the island. There is therefore a marvellous feeling of peace and tranquility, and privacy if you want it. Bungalows and chalets on the island are inexpensive: Bungalows: \$48 per room - 4 rooms in a bungalow; Chalets: \$44, sleeps two. Hiring a boat costs \$100 a day (for fishing or diving) and rental of diving

gear is \$45 a day. The resort is closed in the months of December and January. For reservations call: 07-791204/205 in Mersing.

The other islands are Pulau Sibul Besar, Pulau Sibul Tengah, Pulau Besar, Pulau Kecil, Pulau Kukus and Pulau Lima. Accommodation is available on Pulau Sibul Besar and Pulau Besar. It is advisable to contact the Tourist Centre in Mersing (tel. 07-791204/205) to check whether the accommodation has been booked out, and times for the boat trips. It is also advisable to let them know if you intend camping on one of the islands without accommodation.

The Endau-Rompin trek is a challenging one, through thick jungle and mud. It is not for the average tourist. If you feel you can cope with leeches and anything else the jungle might throw at you, some have seen tigers there, and just lately sightings of 'Bigfoot' were reported, then you will need to contact the Tourist Information Center in Johor Bahru which can help you to get a permit from the State Security Council.

One of the best known island resorts is Pulau Tioman in Pahang. The access to it, however, is through Mersing in Johor. It is still relatively unspoilt, yet with sufficient modern amenities for comfort. It is accessible by air from Kuala Lumpur (\$100) and Singapore (\$90) - from Seletar, not Changi airport. If you are driving, then go by road to Mersing and, from Mersing take a boat (about \$25 by hovercraft; about \$15 by boat). The time taken for the boat trip varies according to the type of boat you take, but allow about an hour and a half. The smaller islands mentioned previously are not as well known as Tioman, but just as lovely. The advantage that Tioman has over the other islands is that it is accessible by air. If you do have the time to drive to Mersing, however, visiting the islands will be a worthwhile trip.

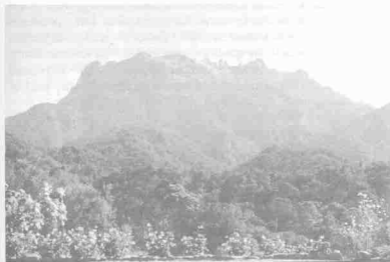
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## Culture

At the fall of the Malaccan Empire, the Sultan fled to Johor and set up his kingdom there. Over the years, Johor has seen the introduction of a number of ethnic groups from Indonesia and many Malays admit to having Javanese or Bugis or Sumatran ancestry. Now, decades later, these rich cultures have contributed towards a rich Malay culture as seen in the way of life of the people of Johor. Weddings are celebrated in fully traditional ways, as is each kenduri or special feast. To fully appreciate Malay culture, therefore, one needs to live among the people of



The sole relic of the A Famosa fort, Melaka



Mount Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Southeast Asia, challenges the adventurous



Johor. Failing that, one can still try to get snippets of their life-style, especially in towns like Muar, where cultural norms are so much a part of daily life.

Although there are few cultural performances in Johor, for special events Malay cultural performances take centre stage. Johor is the home of the ghazal, a Malay musical form, and at weddings and special feasts, ghazal is the form of entertainment. It was also from Johor that the kuda kepong a traditional dance in which the dancers mimic the movements of a horse, was introduced to the rest of the country. At one time, the kuda kepong dances were allowed to go on as long as the dancers wanted it to. But strange phenomena took place. After some time, the dancers went into a trance and behaved like horses, eating grass and sometimes charging at the crowd. It is said that the dancers could perform superhuman feats in their state of trance. Now the dance is rarely performed except at special functions and a time limit is imposed for the termination of the dance.

There are handicraft centres in Johor where one can have a demonstration of batik printing and songket weaving. One such centre is at Sri Ayu Batik Industries. The Kukup traditional village, too, offers demonstrations of cottage industries. However, Johor is not really the batik centre of Malaysia. It will do if you are entering from Singapore and have time only to visit Johor. Malaysia's batik centres are in Kelantan and Terengganu. Johor does some fine work in cane furniture and cane products generally. The best known is JARO (Johor Area Rehabilitation Organization) which has quality furniture. A visit to their centre in Johor Bahru will acquaint you with how the cane is treated and woven. JARO is able to send your furniture to any part of the globe.

## Other places of interest

Johor probably has the best Malay food in the country. This will be dealt with further in the section on *Makan Time* in which places for food are discussed.

## Melaka

The oldest town in Malaysia, and once the centre of a vast and powerful empire, Melaka (or Malacca as it was once spelt) is a

must for all history buffs. But even if you are not too interested in history, Melaka has a charm and appeal which is irresistible. We have to thank Sir Stamford Raffles, the founder of Singapore, for Melaka today, because it was he who persuaded the British not to destroy the city when they took it over from the Dutch. Visitors keep going back again and again to Melaka, unable to free themselves from her call. One of Melaka's greatest assets is that it is very accessible by good roads from both Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. It is about halfway between the two cities. There is a good highway linking Melaka to Kuala Lumpur and the trip takes about an hour and a half. It takes a little longer from Singapore as one has to pass small towns with speed limits, and also clear customs and immigration at Johor Bahru. On a weekday, allow about 3 - 4 hours from Singapore.

### Interesting towns and buildings

The main town of this small state is also called Melaka and is the hive of activity. Melaka is an interesting mixture of the old and the new. There are buildings which date back a few centuries, memoirs of conquests by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, as well as the influences of early visits from China, India and the Muslim world. An example is The Stadthuys, believed to have been completed in 1650 by the Dutch. Christ Church was also built by the Dutch and completed in the 18th century. The Stadthuys and buildings around were built with red stone and still stand today, strikingly different from other buildings in the town, and certainly different from other buildings in Malaysia. There are also other buildings, now in ruins, dating back to the 16th century. They include the fort on St. John's Hill, the gateway to A Famosa, the strong fortress built by the Portuguese and the Church of the Assumption, later renamed 'St Paul's Church' by the Dutch, on St Paul's Hill. Churches of a later period include St Peter's Church, built in 1710 and St Francis Xavier's Church built in 1849. Both are splendid pieces of architecture and St. Peter's Church has life size statues which are taken out in procession on Good Friday.

Melaka also has the oldest mosque in the country at **Kampung Hulu**, built in 1728. In fact, all the mosques in Melaka are unique in style and architecture from the more modern mosques found in other parts of Malaysia. The Tranquerah mosque, for example, has a pagoda-shaped roof instead of a dome. This is also true of

the Kampung Kling mosque which has elements of Sumatran architecture.

The Cheng Hoon temple is the oldest Chinese temple in Malaysia, built in 1646. The artistry that has gone into the structure of the building is humbling. All the materials used to build the temple came from China. Another old temple, of indefinite age, is the Sam Po Kong temple dedicated to the Chinese admiral Cheng Ho. Adjacent to it is the Perigi Hang Li Poh, a well dedicated to the Chinese princess who was sent to Melaka in the fifteenth century to be the bride of the Sultan.

Old towns have old cemeteries and Melaka has an impressive one right in the heart of town. Built on a hill, the area of which is now called Bukit Cina (pronounced "bukit cheena"), the whole hill is filled with Chinese graves which are very different from western graves. Each grave looks more like a shrine in itself, a large shrine. Melaka has heroes from the ancient Malay empire and two of the heroes graves, or mausoleums, can still be seen in Melaka. Hang Kasturi's mausoleum is on Jalan Hang Jebat, and Hang Jebat's mausoleum is off Jalan Hang Kasturi. Tun Teja's mausoleum (wife of the last Sultan of Melaka who was defeated by the Portuguese) is in Merlimau, a town about 24 km from Melaka, on the road to Muar.

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## Culture

The Melaka museum is a good one and gives an accurate picture of the history of the state. Also interesting is a museum of baba and nyonya (peranakan) culture at Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock. For the uninitiated, the Chinese merchants who first came to Melaka, took Malay wives. Their ancestors who are today known as babas (male) and nyonias (female), have blended Chinese and Malay culture over the centuries so that it is today a distinct culture within Malaysian society.

For those interested in houses, there is Mini Malaysia off the Ayer Keroh road. Typical houses of the various states have been built in the grounds. There are coin machines which play the music of various dances and miniatures of scenes of Malaysian life. The place is more alive on weekends than on weekdays.

At weekends, the Portuguese Square in Kampung Portugis comes alive with Portuguese dances of a by-gone era, relived in Melaka.

## Places of relaxation

There are two good beaches in Melaka: Tanjung Bidara and Tanjung Kling. There might be a problem with jellyfish, called the 'Portuguese man-of-war', so keep an eye out for them. A popular place for swimming and picnics is **Pulau Besar**, an island off the coast of Melaka. Locals believe that the 'guardian' of the island does not like pork being brought to the island and reports are told of boats overturning in calm seas because someone on board did not have the good sense to leave a pork product behind! To get to Pulau Besar, you will need to get a boat from **Umbai** or **Telok Mas**, about twenty minutes drive south of Melaka town.

At a different pace is the Ayer Keroh recreational forest, not as demanding as the national parks of Pahang, Sarawak and Sabah, but an interesting trekking experience through tropical rainforests, or simply a place for a peaceful picnic. Huts and cabins are available for rent. The Durian Tunggal Recreation Lake provides sports facilities, both land and sea sports. Those who like saunas might like to try Melaka's natural sauna - the **Gadek Hot Springs** on the road to **Tampin**, about 25km from Melaka town.

## Other interesting aspects

The major interest for locals at present is the Light and Sound Spectacular in which history comes alive in sound, colour and light. You will need to find out from the Melaka Tourist Information Centre (tel. 06-236538) when the shows are held.

Opposite is the Independence Memorial showing the events which led up to Malaysia's winning independence.

There are two major resorts, the Malacca Village Resort in the Ayer Keroh area and the Tanjung Bidara Beach Resort about thirty minutes drive along the coastal road heading north away from Melaka town.

The Melaka zoo is one of the better zoos in the country and if you are staying for a while in Melaka or northern Johor, it's worth a visit. If you are only staying a weekend in Melaka, there are other places in Melaka which are more interesting.

The Malacca Reptile Park in Ayer Keroh (you'll see a crocodile outside it) has had mixed reviews. Some feel it is worth the trouble. You will have to decide for yourself.

Portuguese Square, is in **Kampung Portugis**, formerly known

as the Portuguese Settlement. It is not too inspiring on weekdays, but there are a number of restaurants there which serve great meals, if you like hot food. Vegetarians need to avoid the restaurants because the traditional vegetable dishes usually have as one of the ingredients, a shrimp paste called belacan (pronounced "blachan"). There are cultural shows there on weekends and they are usually worth seeing.

The waterfront area facing the museum and other historical sites has become a tourist trap. However, you can pick up cheap souvenirs there. The area also has its merits, because it is centrally located. The 'Light and Sound Spectacular' is held there, hawker stalls there have food which is reasonably good and inexpensive, and, from time to time, shows and demonstrations can be successfully put on. The area was reclaimed from the sea more than thirty years ago, and turned into a park. There is a rock in the park on which it is said St. Francis Xavier stood before boarding the ship which would take him away from Melaka which he had given up on. That area used to be the sea during the days of the Portuguese.

Melaka still has two means of transportation which are rather fun: the trishaw (pronounced as "bay-cha" in Malay) and the bullock cart (pronounced as "ke-rei-ta lembu" in Malay). The trishaws ply within the city centre and you can hail one, just as you hail a taxi. (A trip from where the major hotels are, to the esplanade costs about \$2). At the esplanade, you can experience a ride in a bullock cart which does not usually ply in the city centre but is more typical now of the rural areas. You might also be lucky to see a horse-drawn carriage and hail it for a ride. They are getting scarce.

## Negeri Sembilan

This small state is probably the least known of Malaysian states, but it does offer culture and scenery which is distinctive and different from the other states. For one, it is the only state in which adat perpatih or perpatih culture is practised. According to the rules of this tradition, inheritance is handed down through the female line of the family, not the male line! Women libbers eat your hearts out! This tradition has been followed for centuries, long before women's rights were ever thought about in the west. The people are chiefly descendants of the Minangkabaus, from Sumatra in Indonesia, and the state is the only one in which

styles of houses have been built along Minangkabau lines, resembling the horns of a bull. The people also speak the Minangkabau dialect and food preparation is also along Minangkabau lines. They are great musicians and Minangkabau-style music composed by the locals is very popular.

### Interesting towns

Seremban is the capital of the state, about 64 km from Kuala Lumpur and about 45 minutes drive along a good highway. It is a pretty town but unless you live there, there is very little to do. The impressive state museum, built in Minangkabau style is certainly worth a visit. The government offices of the colonial state **Sri Menanti**, the royal town is also worth a visit if you live in the area. The old and new palaces, close to each other, are worth looking at.

### Culture

To really have a taste of Minangkabau culture, you will need to get away from the major towns. 10 km out of Seremban, on the Kuala Pilah road, are the distinctive Minangkabau houses. The road to Nilai and Pantai, northeast of Seremban, is picturesque and certainly worth driving through if you are in the vicinity.

If you don't have the time, then, visit the handicraft centre or Taman Seni Budaya 1km from Seremban town, off the Kuala Lumpur-Seremban highway, near the turn off to Sungai Ujong.

### Places of relaxation

Port Dickson is Negeri Sembilan's best known beach. But there are other beaches as well. **Ulu Bendol**, 18 km east of Seremban on the Kuala Pilah road is a good picnic spot. For those who like saunas, try the hot springs at **Pedas**, 12 km south of Seremban. In Seremban town itself, a favourite place is the Taman Bunga, also known as the Lake Gardens. 16 km from Seremban on the Jalan Pantai Lenggeng is a forest reserve which is popular for camping and picnics.

## Sarawak

The Holiday Inn in Damai Beach outside Kuching has a sign which reads "Asia's best kept secret". Actually, the whole of Sarawak is probably the world's best kept secret holiday paradise. Known as the Land of the Hornbills, Sarawak is Malaysia's largest state, and its most romantic. It has everything to offer, from beautiful sandy beaches to vast jungles filled with mystery and the romance of a bygone era. It is felt that Conrad's Lord Jim was set in Sarawak and was inspired by the Brookes, the white Rajahs, who ruled Sarawak for almost a hundred years. The history of Sarawak would put many fictional plots to shame. There is head hunting, piracy, adventure, plots and counter plots and generally lots to satisfy the romantic, the adventurous, as well as those who would like to be adventurous but are not quite so. And all this is possible at very reasonable prices.

### Interesting towns and buildings

The capital of Sarawak is Kuching, a pleasant, peaceful town on the banks of the Sarawak River, and certainly one of the more interesting towns in Malaysia. It is a slow-paced town, no rushing around or crazy city life, but with all the modern amenities of a city. That is part of the charm of a holiday in Sarawak. One can have one's cake and eat it as well! There are all the old landmarks of the white Rajahs in the town. First, there is the palace or Astana, built by Brooke and now occupied by the Governor of Sarawak. A building worth visiting is Fort Margherita, built to stop the pirates from attacking Kuching, it is now the police museum. Both the museum and the fort itself, complete with authentic shrunken heads are impressive. The fort offers a great view of Kuching town. The museum is open from 10 to 6 pm, everyday except Sundays, Mondays and public holidays. Entrance is free but you will need to report to the police duty officer for security reasons. There are two ways to get to Fort Margherita - by road and, for those with a stomach for water transportation, by sampan or boat. You can get a sampan from Pangkalan Batu, near the market. The fare locals pay is 20 sen. If you ask the boatman for the fare, he is likely to overcharge you. The system the locals use is to get on the boat and just hand over a 20 sen coin to the boatman. If you are feeling generous,

you can give him 50 sen.

The Civic Centre is another place worth visiting. It has a *planetarium*, which has daily shows at 3pm and 7.30 pm, and requires an entrance fee of \$2.00 for adults and 50sen for children, an art gallery, a rotating restaurant with a good view of Kuching, a small library and Dewan Suara which has special exhibitions from time to time. One cannot forget the museum. The Sarawak Museum is one of the finest in the region and is likely to only improve with time as Sarawak is proving to be a prominent archaeological treasury. The museum is closed on Fridays. On other days it opens from 9.15 to 5.30, except on Saturdays, when it opens till 6 pm. The Post Office, Courthouse, Round Tower, Square Tower and the Pavillion are reminiscent of the Brooke era. The pink TDC building, near Pangkalan Batu is also worth a visit. Not only does it give you a glimpse into the past, and possibilities for further travel in Sarawak, it has a good shop for souvenirs, at very competitive prices.

About 30 minutes by road from Kuching, between the awesome Gunung Santubong and the south China Sea, is the Damai Beach resort offering value for money, and the Sarawak Cultural Village, Sarawak's living museum. They offer an adventure which no one should miss. The best part of it is that you can have as exciting, or as calm an adventure as you want. Between the two places, visitors have an opportunity to sample the real life-style of seven major ethnic groups in Sarawak, as well as live it up in 5-star comfort, if one so chooses. Five minutes away from this major tourist centre, are the two villages of Santubong, with an okay beach but a great view, and Kg. Buntal, popular among locals for its well-prepared, fresh and cheap seafood. Within this area, too, is Bau, Sarawak's gold centre. Prior permission is needed to visit the gold mine.

Away from Kuching, there is the opportunity to get out into the vast Borneo jungle. There are various local tours to longhouses, trips up the river, into the jungle and to other towns. Of interest are Lundu and Sematan with their beautiful unspoilt beaches. Further north, there is the Bako National Park, where wild life roam freely and monkeys run (or jump?) wild. Bungalows are available, but must be booked well ahead of time from the Forestry Department. Make sure you keep all your things indoors, especially at night. The monkeys will not respect your private possessions! Sibu is the next major town. There is nothing really to recommend it as a tourist spot except that it allows



access to the interior areas through the Rejang river. One gets to Sibü by air or by boat. The boat ride may seem fun, but it is a long trip (24 hours) and from October to March, when the seas are especially rough, it may prove to be too much for many.

There are five major national parks for those who would like more adventure. However only three are open to tourists. The most easily accessible is the Bako National Park which can be reached from Kuching. It offers jungle treks through magnificent rain forests and mountain climbing to cascading waterfalls. Be prepared to face monkeys, wild boars and bearded pigs. Go by road to Kg. Bako (30 minutes away from Kuching) then take a boat (\$25 per boat) to the National Park (another 40 minutes ride). The bungalows at the Bako National Park start from about \$45. The Niah National Park is a little different from the Bako National Park because of the cave drawings and other archaeological finds which have been discovered there. The limestone flora is also interesting. Access is through Sarawak's largest town, Miri, or through Bintulu. From Miri, you can either go by bus (\$9.00 -  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours) or taxi (about \$15 - 2 hours) to Batu Niah. From Bintulu you can also take a bus (\$10. Take the Bintulu-Batu Niah bus. It saves walking) or a taxi (about \$18). The trip takes 3 hours. The Gunung Mulu National Park is not very accessible but for those who like caves, a must. It has a number of huge chambers, and is reputed to be the longest cave in the world. Deer Cave is reputed to have the largest cave passage in the world. To get there, you will need to start your journey from Miri, where you will need to get permits and book accommodation. You can either go by air from Miri to Marudi, (\$29 one way -  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour trip), or go by bus and boat to Marudi. The difference in the cost is minimal and you might end up paying more if you go by bus and boat, simply because you are Caucasian. From Marudi, you will need to catch the express boat (\$12) to Long Panai and from there, go by a native longboat to Gunung Mulu. The trip takes about 5 - 6 hours. There are a number of good tour operators who can arrange the trips for you at minimum inconvenience. (See the section on travel agents in Chapter Four) The major hotels in Kuching and Miri can also arrange for these trips for you, allowing you to leave the bulk of your luggage in the hotel while you are away. If you do not have too much time to spare, this is in fact the better way because schedules change and you may find yourself waiting a day at different places because you missed the boat. If you are not in a

hurry, then it would be an adventure to try and get there on your own.

## Culture

For those interested in culture, a visit to the **Sarawak Cultural Village** is a must. The village has been set up to represent the seven major ethnic groups in Sarawak - the Ibans, Chinese, Malays, Bidayuhs, Melanau, Orang Ulu and Penans. The village has been constructed so that the tribes actually live and work there. Visitors can participate in the daily activities of the various tribes, or simply observe them. There are cultural performances 5 times a day and special programmes like making local cakes, weaving baskets and the traditional blanket called the pau kumbu and so on.

The entrance fee to the Village is \$15 for a tour and show, or \$35 for a guided tour, show, and lunch or dinner. Visitors also have the choice of staying in a longhouse (with special modern facilities laid on) or staying next door at the posh (but affordable) Holiday Inn Damai Beach. To get into Kuching town from Damai Beach, it takes 35 minutes by shuttle bus (\$10) from the Holiday Inn. There is also public transport (\$2.50). The Kuching Museum, one of the best in Asia, and the Police Museum at Fort Margherita is also a must.

## Places of relaxation

The Holiday Inn Damai Beach Resort heads this list. Special packages put it into the middle range price bracket. However, without the special packages, it moves into the upper price bracket. When booking, ask about these packages. The current possibilities are indicated on the section on hotels. Food is expensive at the hotel, so bring some fruit and snacks with you. The beaches at Santubong, Sematan, Siar Beaches and Pantai Penyok and Pantai Bandong are worth the effort. Trips out to various islands are also possible from the Holiday Inn at Damai Beach. One needs to be aware, however, that there is what Sarawakians refer to as the Landas season, from about October to March, when heavy rains pour down at not very predictable times. Locals avoid the sea at this time and you won't find many boatmen who would be willing to take you out with the risk of high waves and strong winds and rain. The undertow at the

beaches is also severe and only strong swimmers are advised to ride the waves when the tide is up.

A different kind of relaxation is offered by the Bako National Park with its waterfalls and rustic pleasures. Bungalows are available for rent but the food available is not very exciting. One is advised to bring one's own food.

## Sabah

Locals call Sabah the land below the wind and truly, this land, sheltered from the onslaughts of typhoons and hurricanes which occur so near to it, is one of the most inspiring places in the world. Words cannot adequately describe the beauty of Sabah, from her white sandy beaches and coral reefs to the awesome heights of mountains covered with lush tropical rainforests. The splendour of Sabah is an experience one can't easily forget.

Sabah has over 30 ethnic groups and over 80 different languages and dialects. The various cultures have contributed towards giving Sabah a life-style which is unique and colourful.

### Interesting towns and buildings

Towns are not Sabah's strong point and to really experience Sabah, one needs to get out of the towns and into the countryside. The towns are there only as a stop gap measure for you to see the rest of Sabah. Compared to the rest of Malaysia, the towns of Sabah are also relatively expensive. However, many of the beaches of Sabah are better than the beaches of Hawaii, for swimming and snorkelling, and Sabah is less expensive than Hawaii.

The main town is **Kota Kinabalu** or **KK**. It is a rather ordinary town, lacking the charm of Kuching and the advantages of the Peninsular Malaysia towns. It does have a rather splendid mosque which one can visit with permission. Call the Sabah Tourism Promotion Corporation (tel. 088-218620). The Sabah Foundation Building impresses Sabahans and you can see it from a distance. The other major towns are **Sandakan** and **Tawau**, both rather ordinary towns. Sandakan, however, is the nearest major town to **Sepilok** where the orang utan sanctuary is. You may see travel brochures with pictures of tourists cuddling orang hutan babies at Sepilok. The sanctuary in fact, discourages this as the aim is to return the animals to the wild. Despite not touching the animals, it is still worth a visit to the sanctuary.

Tawau has nothing very much to recommend it except that it has a marvellous hotel, the Marco Polo, which offers 6-star service. More interesting towns are the smaller towns of Kudat, on the northern tip of Sabah, Kota Belud, renowned for its fierce warriors, who are very much in evidence especially at the tamu or open market, on Sundays, Keningau with its wonderful climate and beautiful views, and, of course, Ranau at the foot of the highest mountain in southeast Asia, Mt. Kinabalu, which is, to the Sabahans, what Mt. Fuji is to the Japanese. All kinds of legends are told about Mt. Kinabalu and, when one sees it, its summit shrouded in mist, the legends seem real. Thirty minutes away from Kota Kinabalu is the interesting town of Mengkabong, a village built on stilts.

## Culture

Except for demonstrations at the Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel there are few cultural performances one may witness. There are other aspects of Sabah culture which are interesting, however. The Sabah State Museum in Kota Kinabalu is a definite must for visitors. An aspect of life in Sabah which no visitor should miss are the open markets or tamus in which one could buy all sorts of things, from buffaloes to pearls. A major tamu is in Kota Belud, but there are tamus in almost every town: Tander on Mondays, Kiulu and Topokan on Tuesdays; Tamparuli on Wednesdays; Keningau, Tambunan, Sipitang, Telipok, Manggis, Simpangan, Tenghilan and Nabal on Thursdays; Penampang, Beaufort, Sindumin, Matunggong, Kinarut and Babagon on Saturdays; Toboh, Tambunan, Tenom, Membakut, Kota Belud, Papar, Tuaran, Putatan and Gaya Street, Kota Kinabalu on Sundays. Away from the towns one also sees longhouses where one could watch the people at work, if they are not off harvesting. Bring some gifts with you in return for their hospitality. In May, too, the harvest festival is held, a good time to visit Sabah and experience at first hand the rich cultural heritage that is Sabah's.

## Places of relaxation

Sabah's leading resort is the Tanjung Aru Beach Resort, a few km out of Kota Kinabalu. The Tanjung Aru beach itself is a calm beach, good for swimming. A red bus from Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman will take you to the beach. The beaches at Kudat are

also great.

The beaches of the islands off the coast of Sabah are some of the best in the world. Warm, crystal clear waters reveal a multitude of coral and tropical fish. Off the coast of Sandakan are the turtle islands, breeding grounds for the Green and Hawksbill turtles. They comprise the islands of Pulau Selingan, Pulau Bakungan Kecil and Pulau Gelisan. Chalet accommodation is available on Pulau Selingan.

Off the coast of Tanjung Aru Beach is the Tunku Abdul Rahman Park which comprises five beautiful islands: Pulau Gaya, Pulau Sapi, Pulau Mamutik, Pulau Manukan and Pulau Sulug. Pulau Sapi and Pulau Manukan have picnic facilities and Pulau Mamutik have cabins available. The best one is probably Pulau Sulug, which is also the furthest away. You need permission to camp there although day picnics are okay. You can get a boat to the islands from the Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel, every hour on the hour from 8 to 4 pm. A trip to Pulau Sapi costs \$20 while a trip to the other islands costs \$16.

**Pulau Sipadan** is another delightful island, this time off the coast of Semporna on the east coast of Sabah. It is an excellent diving site and a favourite among Malaysian and foreign divers. It's not as good during the months from November to February when strong seas make diving less pleasurable. A five-day diving trip (including airfare, rental of diving equipment, meals and accommodation) would cost about \$2,500. (This price changes because charges are quoted in American dollars and would change according to exchange rates.) Those who need help with travel arrangements can contact the Malayan Sub-aqua Club, 333 Jalan 2F/149, Sri Petaling, 57000 Kuala Lumpur; tel. 9583449 (Leave a message on the answering machine).

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## Other places of interest

Mount Kinabalu is the major attraction of Sabah. It is the highest mountain in Southeast Asia and has a tremendous variety of flora and fauna. The more active visitor might want to climb up the mountain. Those less active can stay at the Kinabalu Park's chalets or in the small town of **Kundasang**, and explore the less challenging trails at their own pace. About 43 km from the Kinabalu Park are the Poring Hot Springs, between Ranau and Mt. Kinabalu. The open air sulphur baths were developed by the Japanese and are now popular with visitors.

The orang utan sanctuary in Sepilok, about 20 minutes away from Sandakan is certainly worth a visit. Also, 32km from Sandakan, are the Gomantong Caves where the Chinese gather 'birds' nest' for an expensive soup. It is difficult to get to the caves, however, unless you have your own 'four-wheeler' (four wheel drive vehicles favoured in Sabah).

Labuan needs special mention. It is an island off the coast of Sabah. It is part of the Federal Territory but is very Sabahan in culture. It is a free port but shopping there is more expensive than shopping in Peninsular Malaysia. It is a pleasant island with relics of some quaint period buildings. Unless one has business in Labuan, however, it is not a place one would go to for a holiday.

# TRAVELLING IN MALAYSIA

Having come all this way to Malaysia, it would be a shame if you only saw Kuala Lumpur. The previous chapter should have allowed you to make some choices about places you would like to go to. This chapter will give you a brief survey of accommodation which is available and how to get to the different places.

## Hotels

Women executives have no problems travelling in Malaysia. The four and five star hotels are clean, comfortable and safe. Do take the precaution of placing any jewelry or expensive items in the hotel safe, though. Theft does occur to tourists, although rarely has theft been reported in the better hotels. To avoid spoiling your holiday, however, do not carry a lot of cash with you. Hotels can change a traveller's cheque for you as and when you need some ready cash.

If your company is taking care of your expenses, you would be advised to book a hotel ahead of your arrival so that you have a place name to give your taxi driver on your arrival. If you are travelling on your own, and do not have a company expense account, you may be tempted to cut expenses and go to a cheap hotel. Below you will find a list of cheap hotels which are generally reliable. There are very cheap hotels which double as brothels. You are well advised to stay away from such places if you are travelling alone. If there are at least two of you, the danger is less, but you might still get accosted, and not very pleasantly.

In the smaller towns, there are *rest houses* or which the government has contracted out to private entrepreneurs. They are much cheaper than hotels and are usually pleasant places to stay in. Do not be offended if the workers take a personal interest in you. A woman travelling without a male escort is usually an object of curiosity, even more so if you are Caucasian. Talking to the people in the rest house or hotel will also give you a glimpse of the real world outside the hotel or rest house.

## Transport

The chief means of transport between towns is by plane, train (only in Peninsular Malaysia), taxi, bus or rented car.

If you intend flying, Malaysia Airlines has a 24-hour service through which you can get any information you need, or make a reservation. The telephone number is 03-7463000.

A rented car is the most expensive way to travel and, unless you know the roads really well, not at all advisable. Driving in traffic in some of the major towns can be quite a hair-raising experience.

Taxis which ply between towns in Peninsular Malaysia are also cheap but taxi drivers do tend to GP fast as the more times they ply the route the more money they make.

Most buses which ply the routes between the major towns in Peninsular Malaysia are air-conditioned, as are first and second class train cabs. Seats are comfortable and clean and one can always ignore the video cassette player if one does not like the movie playing.

The best way of getting from one town to another in Sabah and Sarawak is by plane. Although there are roads, they are not very good and are travelled infrequently. Hitching is therefore not as easy as in Peninsular Malaysia. Unlike Peninsular Malaysia, too, it won't be easy getting a taxi from one town to another. The fare would make it uneconomical, besides the discomfort involved. Those who do not want to fly can take a boat. There is a boat service which links the major towns on the west coast in Sarawak and Sabah. If you intend going into the interior of Sarawak or Sabah, like visiting the caves, be prepared to change ways of travelling from air, to road, to boat. You might also have to help the boatman steer or carry the boat.

## Tipping

Many hotels in Malaysia do not allow their staff to accept tips as it is already charged in the bill. Look at your bill. If a service charge has been laid on, you do not have to tip.

You may want to tip the bell boy. One or two ringgit would be sufficient. It is not necessary to tip the doorman or the waiter for room service. If you feel you have to, a 50 sen coin would do.



## Hotels and Fares

Below are brief notes of the major and cheaper hotels throughout Malaysia, fares to each place from Kuala Lumpur, and the addresses of registered travel agents in each place who could help you arrange a local tour for yourself.

### Fares in Malaysian \$ from Kuala Lumpur to the major towns

Town (one way econ.)	*Air	**Train	***Taxi	Bus
Alor Setar	94/61 (YN)	57/26/16 64/32/29/19	39	20/16
Butterworth	—	48/22/13 54/28/25/17	30	16
Cameron Highlands	—	—	21	10
Fraser's Hill	—	—	60 (whole cab)	
Genting Highlands	—	—	8	4.50
Ipoh	55	26/12/7 32/18/15/11	17	8.50
Johor Bahru	77/70/58	45/20/13 51/27/24/16	36/31	15.20
Kelang	—	—	3	1.50
Kota Bharu	86/72/61	—	35	25
Kota Kinabalu	380/323/266 (YN)	—	—	—
Kuala Terengganu	86/80	—	35	20
Kuantan	61	—	20	11
Kuching	231/211/197 (via JB)162(YN)	—	—	—

Labuan	380/323	-	-	-
Langkawi	112	-	-	-
Melaka	-	-	15/13	6.50
Mersing	-	-	33	-
Miri (Kuching to Miri)	367 - 136)	-	-	-
Pangkor/Pansea Pangkor Laut (by road to Lumut, or by air to Sitiawan, then by road to Lumut, finally by boat to the islands)				
Pulau Pinang (plus bridge toll)	86/80/61(YN)	-	44	16.20
Rawa Island (by taxi to Mersing: \$33; from Mersing, \$8 by boat).				
Sandakan (Kota Kinabalu to Sandakan - \$69)	449/392/335	-	-	-
Seremban	-	9/4/3 15/11/8/6	8/6	2.90
Shah Alam	-	-	6	1.30
Singapore	130/98 (Shuttle) 55/28/25/17	49/22/14	-	17
Taiping	-	37/17/10 43/23/20/14	24	12
Tioman	100 (taxi to Mersing: \$33; after that by boat)			
* add on \$3 airport tax each way. YN denotes a night flight. ** First, Second and Third class fares are shown, approximate to the nearest dollar. The second row indicates fares for the express trains. ***add 20% to the fare for air-conditioned taxis.				

Fares in Malaysian \$ from Singapore to major tourist centres

Town	*Air	Train	Taxi	Bus
Kota Bharu (Overnight coach)	-	-	-	30
Kota Kinabalu	346	-	-	-
Kuala Lumpur	130/98 (Shuttle)	49/22/14 55/28/25/17	-	17
Kuantan	120	-	-	-
Kuching	170	-	-	-
Langkawi	180	-	-	-
Melaka	**110	-	-	11
Pulau Pinang (to Butterworth)	150	50/47/30	-	-
Rawa Island (road to Mersing; from Mersing, \$8 one way by boat)				
Tioman	90			

\* add on \$3 airport tax each way.  
 \*\* the fare is in Singapore \$ if purchased in Singapore, and in Malaysian ringgit if purchased in Melaka. The service is run by Pelangi Air, tel. 7464555.

Air Fares, in Malaysian \$, from Pulau Pinang to the major towns

Town	*Air (one way econ.)
Ipoh	41
Johor Bahru	148/125/265 (return)
Kota Bharu	72

Kuala Lumpur	86/80/61(YN)
Kuala Terengganu	80
Kuantan	147/141
Kuching	317
Langkawi	42
Singapore	150

\* add on \$3 airport tax each way. YN denotes a night flight.

**Air Fares, in Malaysian \$, from Kuching to major towns in Sarawak**

Miri - \$136

Sibu - \$60.

**Air Fares, in Malaysian \$, from Kota Kinabalu to major towns in Sabah**

Sandakan - \$69

Tawau - \$80

\*Add on \$3 airport tax each way.

### Major Hotels

#### **Alor Setar**

Kedah Merlin Inn - tel.735917; Single: \$80 Double: \$91

Samila Hotel - tel.722344; Single: \$54 Double: \$61

#### **Bintulu**

Royal Hotel - tel. 086 - 32166; Single: \$100 Double: \$115



A boast of the Park Royal Hotel, Kuala Lumpur



Aerial view of Holiday Inn, Kuching



The Pan Pacific Beach Resort, off Lumut in Perak, offers five-star comfort

The Regent - tel. 086 - 35511; Standard:Single: \$58 Double: \$66.

They offer discounts from time to time. They also offer free pick up facilities from the airport.

### **Cameron Highlands (Tanah Rata)**

Merlin Inn Resort - tel. 05-941205; Single: \$150 Double: \$180

Ye Olde Smokehouse - tel. 05-941214; Single: \$120 Double: \$140

Golf Course Inn - tel. 05-941411; Single: Nil Double: \$92

Strawberry Park - tel. 03-2937777; Single: \$160++; 1 bedroom apt.: \$180++; 2 bedroom apt.: \$240++; 3 bedroom apt.: \$310++

### **Cherating**

Cherating Holiday Villa - tel. 09-508900; Single: \$90++ Double: \$98++ 2 bedroom apt.: \$200++

### **Fraser's Hill**

Merlin Inn Resort - tel. 09-382300; Single: \$140 Double: \$160

Ye Olde Smokehouse, Fraser's Hill - tel. 09-382226; Single: \$100 Double: \$120++/\$150++/\$180++

Fraser's Pine Resort - tel. 03-7832810; Different rates for off-season/Peak/Super peak season: Deluxe suite:\$66/\$80/\$100; 1 bedroom apt.: \$132/\$160/\$200; 3 bedroom apt.: \$200/\$264/\$300

Government Bungalows - tel. 09-382201; Call between 9 am - 7 pm. Bungalows: Single: \$45 Double: \$55; Chalets: Single: \$35 Double: \$40

### **Genting Highlands**

Highland Hotel - tel. 03-2112345; Single/Double: \$65 (weekdays); \$74 (weekends); Triple: \$77 (weekdays), \$88 (weekends)

Genting Hotel - tel. 03-2112345; Double: \$125 (weekdays), \$147 (weekends)

### **Ipoh**

The first two hotels are a little distance away from the town centre.

The Royal Casuarina Hotel - 5 star; tel. 05-50 5555 / 03-248

4109/4114; Single: \$160++ Double: \$185++

Tambun Inn; tel. 05-577211; Single: \$67 Double: \$77 p73

Hotel Excelsior - Good hotel in the town centre; tel. 05-536666;  
Double: \$125

Station Hotel - Old world, colonial style hotel, clean and comfortable. Takes you back to a by-gone era. Interesting and worth a stay for the atmosphere. Accessible to the town centre and to eating stalls around; tel. 05-512588; Single: \$58 Double: \$69.

### **Johor Bahru**

Holiday Inn - tel. 07-323800; Single: \$180 Double: \$200

Tropical Inn - tel. 07-247888; Single: \$100 Double: \$120

### **Kelang**

Not a place to look for a good hotel.

### **Kota Bharu**

#### *Town*

Perdana Hotel - tel. 09-785000; Single: \$90/\$120 Double: \$110/  
140

Temenggong Hotel - tel. 09-783-130; Deluxe: Single: \$60. Double: \$70. If you are looking for a hotel in this section, then I assume you do want some comfort. This hotel has a range of rooms, and they really vary in quality. The standard rooms are pretty grotty. If you do want better rooms, ask for the deluxe rooms.

#### *Beach*

Pantai Cinta Berahi Resort - tel. 09-781307; Single: \$60

Perdana Hotel (Beach) - tel. 09-785000; Chalets at about \$90 each.



Okay for a family.

## **Kota Kinabalu**

### *Town*

Hyatt Kinabalu - tel. 088-221234; Single: \$200++ Double: \$220++

Hotel Shangri-la - tel. 088-212800; Single: \$140++ Double: \$165++  
The hotel frequently has special deals for rooms. Single rooms could go down to \$95, and Double rooms to \$125 and might well include breakfast on top of that. There is a no smoking floor. The bathrooms of the rooms on this floor are fitted with hair dryers.

### *Beach*

Tanjung Aru Beach Hotel - tel. 088-58711; Standard Single: \$240++  
Double: \$265++

### *Mt. Kinabalu*

Using a phone, from Peninsular Malaysia or Singapore to book accommodation in this area, is a major achievement. Call during working hours even if the phone rate is higher then.

Hotel Perkasa Kundasang, Kundasang, Sabah - tel. 088-889511;  
Single: \$75++ (weekdays); \$100++ (weekends) Double: \$90++  
(weekdays); \$120++ (weekends).

## **Kuala Lumpur**

### *City*

Kuala Lumpur Hilton - tel. 03-2422222; Single: \$210++ Double:  
\$240++

Shangri-la - tel. 03-2322388; Single: \$260 Double: \$290.

Holiday Inn on the Park - tel. 03-2481066; Single: 130++ Double:  
\$160++

Holiday Inn City Centre - tel. 03-2939233; Single: \$160++ Double:  
\$220++

Merlin - tel. 03-2480033; Single: \$120++ Double: \$140++

Ming Court - tel. 03-2618888; Single: \$220++ Double: \$240++

Pan Pacific Hotel - tel. 03-4425555; Single: \$184++ Double: \$208++  
Park Avenue Hotel - tel. 03-2428333; Single: \$157.50++ Double:  
\$171.50++  
Park Royal - tel. 03-2425588; Single: \$225++ Double: \$250++  
The Regent - tel. 03-2418000; Single/Double: \$300++, \$330++

### *Petaling Jaya*

Petaling Jaya Hilton - tel. 03-7559122; Single: 170++ Double:  
\$190++  
Merlin Subang - tel. 03-7335211; Single: \$130++ Double: \$140++  
Subang Airport Hotel - tel. 03-7462122; Single: \$127 Double: \$144  
Suite: \$310. Small rooms. Conveniently located across the  
road from the check-in counter of the airport.  
Hyatt Saujana - tel. 03-7461188; Single: 160++ Double: \$160++,  
190++, 220++. Near the airport. Good golf course.

### **Kuala Terengganu**

Pantai Primula Hotel - tel. 09-622100; Single: \$101 Double: \$129

### **Kuantan**

Hyatt Kuantan - tel. 09-525211; Single/Double: \$135++  
Merlin Inn Resort - tel. 09-522388; Single: \$115++ Double: \$135++  
Balok Ramada Beach Resort - tel. 09-587544; Single: \$110 Double:  
\$130  
Coral Beach Resort - tel. 09-587544; Single: \$140++ Double:  
\$160++/\$180++  
Hotel Pacific - tel. 09-511980; Single: \$75 Double: \$80.50

### **Kuching**

#### *City*

Kuching Hilton - tel. 082 - 248200/1; Single: \$170++; Double:  
\$190++  
Holiday Inn Kuching - tel. 082 - 423111; Standard:Single: \$135;  
Double: \$155; Superior: Single: \$155; Double: \$175

#### *Damai Beach*

Holiday Inn Damai Beach - tel. 082-411777; Standard:Single: \$135  
Double: \$155; Superior: Single: \$155 Double: \$175. 5-star;

star; holiday surroundings; special packages possible at reasonable rates. Children's play centre, organized beach games, and baby-sitting facilities. The shuttle service from Damai Beach to Holiday Inn Kuching takes 35 minutes. It is therefore possible to commute even for business. Highly recommended for wives accompanying their husbands on business trips. The rooms at Holiday Inn Damai Beach are large and spacious and set up so that a person could bring home her or his brief case and work under a good light, while also having access to resort facilities. There are special rates for the Holiday Inn Damai Beach. A special package deal offers a double room at \$180 for two days and one night plus three meals per person. The weekend rate is \$200. For longer stays, the price could go down to about \$130 a day for two persons in a double room. Group rates for long stays are also possible and a charge of \$85 per room is levied (no food included, that would be another deal), with triple occupancy possible.

Sarawak Cultural Village - 3 star, clean and comfortable accommodation, for those wanting a taste of the rustic life. Tel. 082-422411.

### **Labuan**

Not recommended unless you are there on business. Stay in Kota Kinabalu.

### **Langkawi**

Langkawi Island Resort - tel. 04-788209; Single: \$143 Double: \$165  
Mutiar Beach Hotel - tel. 04-788488; Double: \$77. Good homely atmosphere.

Pelangi Beach Resort - tel. 03-2610393; Single: \$160+/\$108+/\$220+  
Double: \$200+/\$220+/\$260+

### **Melaka**

#### *City*

Ramada Renaissance - tel. 06-248888; Single: \$120++ Double: \$140++

The City Bayview - tel. 06-239888; Single: \$75++ Double: \$85++

Merlin Inn - tel. 06-240777; Single: \$75 Double: \$85

Malacca Village Resort - tel. 06-323600; Single: \$110 Double: \$130++. The hotel is about ten minutes away from the town centre.

Ayer Keroh Country Resort - tel. 06-325211; Motel (2beds): \$70++  
Chalet (2 rooms): \$100++

The hotel is about ten minutes away from the town centre.

### *Beach*

Tanjong Bidara Beach Resort - tel. 06-542990; Single: \$81 Chalet: \$177. The resort is about forty minutes away from the town centre. Good beach except at weekends when it does become crowded.

Shah's Beach Resort - tel. 06-511120; Weekend (Poolside): \$98 (Garden): \$92. Weekdays (Poolside): \$75 (Garden): \$65

### **Mersing**

Merlin Inn - tel. 07-791312; Single: \$70 Double: \$80

### **Miri**

Park Hotel - tel. 085-414555; Rates - Standard: Single: \$70.84; Double: 82.91; Deluxe: Single: 88.55; Double: 100.62

Hotel Regency - tel. 085-413113; Rates - Standard: Single: \$169; Double: \$80.55; Deluxe: Single: \$80.50; Double: \$92

Gloria Hotel - tel. 085-416699; Rates - Standard: Single: \$64; Double: \$74; Deluxe: Single: \$72.45; Double: \$82.80

Apollo Hotel - tel. 085-33077; Rates - Single: \$60; Double: \$65

### **Pangkor Laut**

Pansea Pangkor Laut Resort - Chalet-style accommodation with modern facilities by the beach front; tel. 05-951375 / 03-242 1589

Rate: Varies according to high and low tourist seasons. Double occupancy is about 200 ringgit per night. Single occupancy is about 128 ringgit per night. It includes breakfast and dinner.

### **Pangkor**

Pan Pacific Resort, Pangkor - tel. 05-951091; Single/Double: \$200++

## **Pulau Pinang**

### *Beach Hotels*

Casuarina Beach Hotel - tel. 04-811711; Single: \$160++ Double: \$185++

Ferringhi Beach Hotel - tel. 04-805999; Single/Double: \$135

Golden Sands Hotel - tel. 04-811911; \$230++/\$270++

Holiday Inn - tel.04-811601; Single: \$150/180 Double: \$170/\$200

Lone Pine Hotel -tel.04-811511; \$75

Palm Beach Hotel - tel. 04-811621; Single: \$150++ Double: \$170++

Penang Mutiara Beach Resort - tel. 04-812828; Single: \$280++  
Double: \$300++

Rasa Sayang Hotel - tel. 04-811811; \$240++/\$280++

### *City Hotels*

City Bayview Hotel; tel. 04-363161 - Single: \$125++ Double: \$135++

E & O Hotel - Colonial-style hotel, featured in a number of Somerset Maugham's stories. - tel. 04-375322; Single: \$75++  
Double: \$85++

Garden Inn (Jalan Anson) - tel. 04-363655; \$80.50

Hotel Ambassador - tel. 04-24101; \$69

Hotel Golden City (Jalan Kinta) - tel. 04-27281; Single: \$52; Double: \$58

Hotel Malaysia - tel. 04- 363311; \$80 (single); \$100 (double)

Hotel Oriental - tel. 04-24211; Single: \$59++ Double: \$66++

Ming Court Hotel - tel. 04-368588; Single: \$90++ Double: \$100++

Town House Hotel - tel. 04-368621; Single/Double: \$57.50

### *Other Hotels*

Butterworth Travel Lodge (Butterworth) - tel. 04-348899; Single: \$57.50 Double: \$69

Hotel Kuala Lumpur (Butterworth); tel. 04-345166 - Single: \$46  
Double: \$57.50

Bellevue Hotel (Penang Hill) - tel. 04-699500; Single: \$60++  
Double: \$80++

### **Rawa Island**

Chalets & Bungalows - contact Rawa Safari Tourist Centre - 07-

791204/205; Fax: 09-793848; Chalets: \$44 (sleeps two)  
Bungalow: \$48 per room. 4 rooms per bungalow.

### **Sandakan**

Sabah Hotel - tel. 089-213299; Single: \$160++ Double: \$175++

### **Semporna**

Not advisable to stay here. If you want to get to Pulau Sipadan, stay in Tawau. There is a bus from Tawau to Semporna, from which you can get a boat to the island.

### **Sepilok**

Stay in Sandakan.

### **Seremban**

Hotel Tasik - tel. 06-730994; Single: \$74 Double: \$83

Carlton Hotel - tel. 06-725336; Single: \$29 Double: \$35

### **Shah Alam**

Not a place to stay if you are on holiday. Okay only if you have business in Shah Alam itself.

### **Sibu**

Premier Hotel - tel. 084 - 323222 Standard:Single: \$80 Double: \$100. Discounts sometimes given.

Li Hua Hotel - tel. 084 - 324000; Standard:Single: \$66/\$88 Double: \$105/\$120 Discounts (up to 40% sometimes given)

### **Taiping**

Larut Resthouse (on Bukit Larut/Maxwell) - tel.05-827241; Room (sleeps 2): \$15 Bungalow (sleeps 8): \$100

### **Tawau**

Marco Polo - tel. 089-777988; Single: \$79++ (weekdays) / \$69++

(weekends) / \$109++ Double: \$99++ (weekdays) / \$79++ (weekends) / \$139++. Very good value for money. One of the best hotels in the country.

Hotel Emas - tel. 089-773300; Single: \$63.25 Double: \$74.75 / \$80.20

### **Tioman**

Tioman Island Resort - tel. 09-445445/032305226; Rooms: \$140++ / \$230++ Chalets: \$180++

Tioman Hotel - tel. 09-445445; Single: \$70++/\$90++/\$115++ / \$225++ Double: \$95++/\$126++/\$161++/\$315++

### *Budget Hotels*

#### **Alor Setar**

Regent Hotel - tel. 04-711900; Single: \$35 Double: \$40

Rest House - tel. 04-722422; Single: \$33++

#### **Cameron Highlands**

Garden Hotel - tel. 05-941911; Double: \$60++

Seah Meng Hotel - tel. 05-941618; Single: \$25 Double: \$45

Town House Hotel - tel. 05-941666; Single: \$48 Double: \$68

Cameson Hotel - tel. 05-941160 Double: \$25

#### **Fraser's Hill**

Government Bungalows - tel. 09-382201; Call between 9 am - 7 pm. Bungalows: Single: \$45 Double: \$55; Chalets: Single: \$35 Double: \$40.

Alternatively, stay in Kuala Lumpur and go up for the day.

#### **Genting Highlands**

None available. Stay in Kuala Lumpur and go up for the day.

#### **Ipoh**

YMCA - tel. 05-540809; Single & Double: \$32 + \$2 (only for first

night - membership); Triple: \$38 + \$2 (only for first night - membership); Family - \$44 + \$2 (only for first night - membership); Dorm - \$8 + \$2 (only for first night - membership). Advance booking possible.

Winner Hotel - tel. 05-515177; Single: \$30 Double: \$35  
Merlin Hotel - tel. 05-541351; Single: \$40 Double: \$46  
Eastern Hotel - tel. 05-543936; Single: \$52 Double: \$58/\$65  
Cathay Hotel - tel. 05-513322; Single: \$20 Double: \$25  
Hotel French - tel. 05-513455; Single: \$54 Double: \$54

### **Johor Bahru**

Merlin Tower Hotel - tel. 225811; Single: \$75 Double: \$85  
Merlin Inn - tel. 07-227400; Single: \$78 Double: \$88  
Rasa Sayang - tel. 07-248600; Single: \$55 Double: \$85/\$95

### **Kelang**

Not recommended. Stay in Kuala Lumpur or Petaling Jaya.

### **Kota Bharu**

Hotel Tokyo Baru - tel. 09-749488; Single: \$35 Double: \$40  
999 Guest House - Rooms: \$10 Dorm: \$4  
Ideal Traveller's House (Jalan Padang Garong) - Rooms: \$10  
Dorm: \$4  
Town Guest House - tel. 09-785192; Rooms: Single: \$8 Double:  
\$10 Dorm: \$4. Will pick up from the bus station if asked.

### **Kota Kinabalu**

Budget hotels are few.

### *City*

Ruby Inn Hotel - tel. 088-213222; Single: \$55 Double: \$65

### *Mt. Kinabalu*

Make your reservations for accommodations at the Sabah Parks Office, Jalan Tun Fuad Stephens, Kota Kinabalu.



Kinabalu National Park - tel. 088-211585 - However, it is very difficult to get through to this number by phone from Peninsular Malaysia; Single story cabin (2 bedrooms - sleeps 5 persons): \$150 weekday), \$200 (weekend); Double story cabin (3 rooms - sleeps 7 persons): \$180 (weekdays), \$250 (weekends); Twin bed cabins (sleeps two): \$50 (weekdays), \$80 (weekends); Duplex 2 bedroom chalets: \$150 (weekdays), \$200 (weekends); Basement rooms (sleeps 2): \$50 (weekdays), \$80 (weekends); Annex rooms (sleeps 4): \$100 (weekdays), \$160 (weekends).

#### Hostels:

Old Fellowship Hostel - \$10 per person per night; \$3 for students with valid identification.

New Fellowship Hostel - \$10 per person; \$4 for students with valid identification.

#### Kuala Lumpur and Selangor

YWCA - tel. 03-2301623; Single: \$18 Double: \$33, \$50

YMCA - tel. 03-2741439; Single: \$41 Double: \$52

Federal Hotel - tel. 03-2489166; Single: \$100++ Double: \$120++

Asia Hotel (formerly, South East Asia Hotel) - tel. 03-2926077; Single: \$55++ Double: \$70, \$95, \$168

Embassy Hotel - tel. 03-9841288; Single: \$33, \$60 Double: \$42.

Pudu Raya Hotel - tel. 03-2321000; Single: \$58++ Double: \$58++ Triple: \$66++ 4 persons: \$80++. Located at the bus and taxi terminal.

Station Hotel - tel. 03-2747433; Single: \$43, \$70 Double: \$55. Old world atmosphere.

Wisma Belia - tel. 03-2746262; Double: \$48, \$56, \$67. (Youth hostel. Transport difficult)

The Lodge - tel. 03-2420122; Single: \$74 Double: \$75, \$86

Coliseum - tel. 03-2926270; Single: \$15 Double: \$20. Quaint, colonial style. One of the oldest hotels in town. Also reputed to serve the best steaks in the country.

#### *Petaling Jaya*

Shah's Village Motel - tel. 03-7569322; Single: \$85 Double: \$85, \$105. Good location.

## Kuala Terengganu

Motel Desa - tel.09-623488; Single: \$66 Double: \$77

Warisan Hotel - tel. 09-622688; Single: \$38 Double: \$50

Sri Terengganu Hotel - tel. 09-634622; Single: \$42 Double: \$48

## Kuantan

Gloria Maris Resort, Kg. Bahru, Beserah - tel. 09-587788; Air conditioned Chalet: \$60 - sleeps three comfortably. The most promising in the area.

Annex Rest House - (Jalan Telok Sisek) - tel. 09-527370; Single: \$24 Double: \$36

Sin Nam Fong Hotel - tel. 09-521561; Single: \$13 Double: \$18.

## Kuching

### *Middle range*

The better of the middle range hotels are Telang Usan and Hua Kuok Inn, in the same vicinity, with easy access to places in town. No nightclub.

Telang Usan Hotel 082-415588. Standard: Single - \$70; Double: \$90; Superior: \$110. Group package and long term rates available. Best value for money in this price range.

Hua Kok Inn - tel. 082-429788; Standard: Single - \$92; Double: \$110

Borneo Hotel - tel. 082-244122. Standard: Single - \$70; Double: \$80. Group package and long term rates available.

Ferritel - tel. 082 - 484799; Standard: Single: \$75; Double: \$95; Deluxe: Single: \$80.50 Double: \$103

### *Low price range*

Only one decent hotel among the really cheap ones, also accommodation at a Church guest house.

Kuching Hotel - Single \$16; Double \$20. No frills. Shared bathroom. Clean.

Diocesan Centre Guest House of St Thomas - tel. 082-414027. No guarantee that space will be available. Call from the airport and take a chance that it is available. Single: \$25; Double (no fan): \$20; (fan) \$25; Flat (with kitchen facilities, fan: \$35 for

two people. Office hours are from 8.30 to 12 and from 1.30 to 4.30. Closed on Sundays and on Saturday afternoons. Call during working hours.

### **Kudat**

Government Rest House - tel. 088-61304; Single: \$12 Double: \$25

Kudat Hotel - tel. 088-61600; Single: \$30 Double: \$30 per person

### **Labuan**

None recommended. Stay in Kota Kinabalu.

### **Langkawi**

You might have a problem booking a room at these budget places if you do not speak Bahasa Malaysia.

Hotel Langkawi - tel. 04-788248; Single: \$38

AB Motel - tel. 911300 Double: \$28/\$30/\$20

Lam Wi Village - tel. 04-788669 Dorm beds: \$6 per person; Rooms: \$30; Chalets: \$40

### **Melaka**

Samudra Inn - 250-B Taman Melaka Raya - No tel. Ask for Ramli or Samu at the (Inter-city) Express Bus Terminal; Single: \$8, \$10; Double: \$10, \$12, \$14; Cooking facilities available; Possible to hire bicycles.

Y Lodge - 354 Lorong Setia 9, Air Keroh Heights; tel. 06-327472 (ask for Doris); \$12 per person per night or \$75 per person per month. Reservations necessary.

Midtown Hotel - tel. 06-240088; Single: \$58 Double: \$65

Palace Hotel - tel. 06-225115; Single: \$43 Double: \$50

Regal Hotel - tel. 06-245500; Double: \$36++

Paradise Hotel - tel. 06-230821; Single: \$12 Double: \$17

### **Mersing**

Rest House - tel. 07-792102; \$33 (non air-con); \$38.50 (air-con).

East Coast Hotel - tel. 07-791337; \$12++

Mersing Hotel - tel. 07-791004; Single: \$27 Double: \$27 per person.

Embassy Hotel - tel. 07-793545; Single: \$25 Double: \$30

## Miri

Thai Foh Lodging House - 18 Jalan China. Bed: \$5; Single: \$16;  
Double: \$20

## Pangkor

Pangkor Anchor - tel. 05-951363; \$21

## Pulau Pinang

YWCA - 8A Green Lane; tel. 04-681855; Ladies only; Single: \$18  
Shared room: \$15 per person; Dorm: \$10 person.  
Membership fee of \$2 for one month.

YMCA - 211 Jalan Macalister; tel. 04-362211; Non-airconditioned  
rooms: \$22 (single), \$27 (double); Airconditioned rooms: \$25  
(single), \$32 (double); Family room (airconditioned, four beds;  
possible to bring in an extra bed at \$10 per night) \$52.  
Membership fee of \$1. No dorms available.

Waldorf Hotel; tel. 04-626141; Single: \$33 Double: \$44

### *Lebuh Chulia Hotels*

Swiss Hotel - tel. 04-620133; Single: \$11.50 Double: \$15

Eastern Hotel - tel. 04-614597; Single: \$16 Double: \$26

Yee Hing Hotel - tel. 04-613506; Single: \$10.50 Double: \$12.50

## Rawa Island

See section on *Major Hotels*

## Semporna

Not recommended. Stay in Tawau.

## Taiping

Rest House (Taman Tasik) - tel. 05-822044; \$37

Lake View Hotel - tel. 06-824911; Double: \$21

## Tawau

Tawau Hotel - tel. 089-771100; \$50  
Hotel Oriental - tel. 089-761601; \$70

## Tioman

Basic accommodation is available in huts but there is no listed telephone for bookings. They can usually find you a bed.  
Rest House - tel. 09-791772;

## Travel Agents

The following are licensed travel agents, as identified by the Tourist Development Corporation of Malaysia. It has not been possible to list all travel agents. Those listed have been recommended by hotels and visitors to Malaysia.

### Alor Setar

Asari Murni Agency - tel. 04-734088/735099  
Cahaya Tours Service (Kedah) - tel. 04-722723/728226  
CT Tours - tel. 04-729744  
Great Asia Travel Tours - tel. 04-738333  
Langka Semarak - tel. 04-712066  
V.I.P. Travel and Tours - tel. 04-726975

### Butterworth

Golden First Travel and Tours - tel. 04-510725/516410; Fax: 04-595800  
Pearl of the Orient Travel and Tours - tel. 04-317569/570  
Solo Tours - tel. 04-511789.  
Yong Huat Hung - tel. 04-318185

### Cameron Highlands

Strawberry Park Travel and Tours - tel. 05-941166; Tlx: MA 44507  
SPMCH  
Titiwangsa Tours and Travel - tel. 05-941338

### **Fraser's Hill**

None available. Check with the information centre during working hours - tel. 09-382201. Call the same number for reservations of government bungalows.

### **Genting Highlands**

None available. Check with your hotel or with a travel agent in the town you are staying in before you go up.

### **Ipoh**

Numerous travel agents available. If you are staying in a major hotel, ask the hotel for the name and number of a reliable taxi driver. They are just as good as tour guides. If you are not staying at a major hotel, the following are some travel agents who organize tours within Malaysia.

Reliance Shipping and Travel Agencies - tel.05-518752/711; Tlx. MA 44130 RSTA IP

Nilam Tours and Travel - tel. 05-517797/514477/516434.

J.D.Marine Enterprise - tel. 05-203154; Tlx. MA 44085 UIW

Dragon Holiday Tour & Travel - tel. 05-516804/538979

Azkawee Tours & Travel Agency - tel. 05-530530/505954

Aidil Enterprise - tel. 05-543244/500303

Azdina Anekasukma - tel. 05-564204/564215; Tlx. MA 44381

AZDINA

### **Johor Bahru**

Giamso Safari (Johor) (Mersing) - tel. 07-792253

Jenshen Tours and Travel - tel. 07-571533/314468; Fax. 07-572633

Johora Comfort TRansport and Tours - tel. 07-320044

Sri Desaru Express - tel. 07-311849/851

Syarikat Masrina Travel - tel. 07-366616/370585

Top Budget Travel - tel. 07-545181/544130; Fax. 07-544271

### **Kota Bharu**

Batuta Travel and Tour Agency - tel. 09-747652/785493

Boustead Travel Services - tel. 09-749952

Pelancongan Bumi Mars (Kelantan) - tel. 09-740591/785248

Super Service Travel Agency - tel. 09-744999/743888; Tlx. MA  
53288 SSTKBR

### **Kota Kinabalu**

Numerous tour operators and travel agents available. Check  
with your hotel.

API Tours (Borneo) - tel. 088-221230/223848; Tlx. MA 80001  
HOSHAN

Borneo Divers and Sea Sports - tel. 088-425080; Tlx. MA 81644  
BDIVER

Borneo Wildlife Adventure - 088-231518

Discovery Tours - tel. 088-53787/57735; Fax. 088-215584

Sabah Adventure Tours and Travel - tel. 088-35733; Fax. 088-  
235359

Tanjung Aru Tours and Travel - tel. 088-214215

Vision Tours and Travel - tel. 088-231048

### **Kuala Lumpur and Selangor**

Many available. Check with your hotel.

Amshield World Travel - (Jalan Ampang) - tel. 03-2383317/5375

Cheery Pop Travel - (Taman Maluri) - tel. 03-9857546/7025

Ecstasy Travel - (Jalan Sentul) - tel. 03-4411069/669

Everise Tours and Travel - (Merlin Hotel) - tel. 03-2415700

Harpers Tours - (Shangri-la Hotel) - tel. 03-2302942

Honey Holidays - (Medan Imbi) - tel. 03-2437373/378

Imarah Jaya - (Jalan Bukit Bintang) - tel. 03-2434922

Innerspace - (Jalan Raja Chulan) - tel. 03-2417339

Jetasia - (Kuala Lumpur Plaza, Jln. Bukit Bintang) - tel. 03-2433286

Kingfisher Tours - (Jalan Bukit Bintang) - tel. 03-2421454

Malaysian Holidays Discovery Tours - (Kuala Lumpur Plaza, Jln.  
Bukit Bintang) - tel. 03-2432997; Fax. 03-2418317

Misriah Amirin - (Jalan Gombak) - tel. 03-4238858/4238801/  
4225759

Nima Travel - (Taman Maluri) - tel. 03-9854763/2357

Red Fury Tours and Travels - (Jalan Bukit Bintang) - 03-2418693

Star Express Travel - (Jalan Imbi) - tel. 03-2439532; Fax. 03-2439534

Summerland Tours and Travel - (Sg. Wang Plaza) - 03-2483140/  
0972; Fax. 03-811889

Tour Fifty One - (Jalan Ampang) - tel. 03-2618830

Airport Tour & Travel Service - (Petaling Jaya) - tel. 03-7033733;

Fax. 037037609.

Camping Holiday - (Petaling Jaya) - tel. 03-7178935; Fax. 03-7173033

Port Klang Tours & Travel - (Port Klang/Pelabuhan Kelang) - tel. 03-3686961

### **Kuala Terengganu**

Agency Pelancongan D & Adik Beradik - tel. 09-626869

Hedaco Travel & Tours - tel. 09-631744/177

Ria Holidays - tel. 09-861546

Rohsani Travel & Tours - tel. 09-976086/971339

### **Kuantan**

Many available. Check with your hotel.

Convenience Travel & Tours - tel. 09-526360

SPKG Tours - tel. 09-262022/369

Taz Ben Travel & Tours - tel. 09-502255

### **Kuching**

Borneo Adventure - tel. 082-245175

Interworld Travel Services - 082-252344; Fax. 082-424515

Sarawak Travel Agencies - tel. 082-243708/242289

### **Langkawi**

Surin Tours Agency (Langkawi Island) - tel. 04-788312

Tomo Express - tel. 04-788628

Vision Tours - tel. 04-789080

Yanjaya Travel & Tours - tel. 04-788516

### **Melaka**

A.R.Travel - tel. 06-231977/237584

Dynasty Tours - tel. 06-241591/247975

Sanlet Agencies - tel. 06-245125/126

### **Mersing**

Giamso Safari (Johor) - tel. 07-792253



## **Pangkor**

None. Contact a travel agent in the town/city you are in or the following travel agent in Sitiawan.  
STO Travel Enterprise - 05-91210

## **Pulau Pinang**

Many available. Check with your hotel.  
Bakar Nordin Rent A Car & Motor Cycles - tel. 04-811959/969  
Cedar Tours and Travel Enterprise - tel. 04-623404/629161  
Cosmos Tours - tel. 04-22492/95  
Harpers Tours - tel. 04-811662/362214  
Holiday Tours & Travel - tel. 04-375852  
Ootomo Travel - tel. 04-8011435  
Star Express Travel - tel. 04-625859  
Sunrise Tours and Travel - tel. 04-811527/811521  
Syarikat Pelancongan Endrocitra - tel. 04-835352/450  
Tina Travel - tel. 04-88155  
Widuri Tours & Travel - 04-811558

## **Rawa Island**

None on the island. Contact travel agents in Johor Bahru, Mersing or Rawa Safari Tourist Centre (Mersing) - tel. 07-791204

## **Sandakan**

Sabah Travel Service (Sandakan) - tel. 089-213506/212825  
Tay Travel Service - tel. 089-218895

## **Semporna**

None available. Contact travel agents in the city you are at, in Kota Kinabalu, or, for Pulau Sipadan, contact:  
Borneo Divers (Randy Davies): tel. 088-425080  
or, Malaysian Sub-aqua Club, 333 Jalan 2F/149, Sri Petaling, 57000 Kuala Lumpur; tel. 9583449

## **Sepilok**

None available. Contact a travel agent in Sandakan.

## Seremban

Deluxe Tours - tel. 06-727971

Loh Tim Kee Travel Service - tel. 06-731918/732033

Public Holidays - tel. 06-727679

## Taiping

Fulham Tours - tel. 05-831330

Poly Travels - tel. 05-825485

Taiping Golden Travelling - tel. 05-838341/824041

## Tioman

None on the island. Contact a travel agent at the city you are at, in Mersing, or in Kuantan.

## Transportation services within each town

### Alor Setar

The best way to get around the town is to walk because the places of interest are within walking distance of one another. 'Outstation' taxis and buses can take you to surrounding areas. There are also trishaws you could take around the town.

### Cameron Highlands

The best way to get around Tanah Rata is to walk. One appreciates the place more. The town itself is too small to catch a cab! However, to get to Ringlet or Brinchang, the other two major towns on the highlands, you can get a bus which plies from Tapah at the foot of the highlands, to the towns above. There are also taxis between the towns. It is not a bad idea, if you can afford it, to rent a car to go up the highlands. You can then go where you want, when you want, especially if you want to visit the farms and tea plantations.

### Fraser's Hill

If you don't drive up, then you will have to walk. There is no

public transport on the hill. You may hitch a ride from residents, but there are not too many of those either! On the plus side, most attractions on the hill, are within walking distance of the bungalows and the Merlin Hotel.

### **Genting Highlands**

If you don't want to drive up all the way, there is a charming cable car which will take you up to the casino, and ample parking where you catch the cable car. The casino and recreation park are all within walking distance of the cable car terminal. Be prepared to walk up fairly steep slopes, however.

### **Ipoh**

Taxis can be flagged down outside the hotel and a ride anywhere in town costs about 1 ringgit. Alternatively the hotel can arrange for a taxi to pick you up and take you wherever you want to go. A sort of chauffeur service at reasonable rates! You can also arrange for these taxi drivers to take you sightseeing. Payment is by the hour, half a day or a full day rate. Negotiations are allowed.

### **Johor Bahru**

Taxis are the most convenient means of getting around and are not expensive. Charges vary according to distances and a ride in town could cost \$1 or \$2. A shared taxi to town costs about 60sen, ie. you are picked up and there is someone else in the taxi. It is approximately \$2 from the town centre to the major shopping centres. There is also a good bus system. Bus fares vary from 30 sen to 70 sen.

### **Kota Bharu**

A slow but cheap and fun way is to use the trishaw or *beca* (pronounced bay-cha). There are also taxis and buses to areas out of town like the beaches. The buses to the beaches are fairly regular.

### **Kota Kinabalu**

Although there are public buses in the town, unless you are

familiar with the area, it would be difficult to use public transportation. Very few bus drivers or conductors are able to communicate in English and this poses a problem. The town is, however, small enough to walk around. There are also taxis. A taxi ride in the town costs about \$4.

If you are going out of Kota Kinabalu, however, taxis would be very expensive. The long distance buses are easy to take and communication is also easier with the bus personnel on these buses. Using the bus is the cheapest way of getting from one town to the next in Sabah. However, not all the roads provide easy driving. Malaysia Airlines has a plane service to most towns in Sabah.

### **Kuala Lumpur**

It is difficult to get a bus to go around the city centre itself, so either walk it, if it does not look too far, or get a cab. Make sure that the cab driver uses the meter if you are not sure how far you are going. You can also bargain with the taxi driver before you get into the taxi, if you are going a fairly long distance. Within the town itself, it will cost about \$1 or \$2 to use the taxi. Air conditioned taxis cost 20% more. If you are going further afield, for example to Batu Caves, using the public buses will be cheaper and not too uncomfortable. It will take longer, however. Try and travel outside of the rush hours - 7am to 10am, 4pm to 7pm. Travelling on the mini buses can become quite unpleasant at those times.

### **Kuala Terengganu**

A trishaw or *beca* (pronounced "bay-cha") will take you anywhere in the town. The town itself is also small enough to walk around. If you are going further afield to Rantau Abang, Dungun and other places, the bus is the cheapest way. Outstation taxis are not prohibitive either.

### **Kuantan**

The easiest way to get around the town is to walk. Transport within the town itself is not too convenient. There are, however, regular buses and taxis to Teluk Cempedak, the beach area. Taxi fares are reasonable.

## Kuching

Taxis are better than the public bus system, but very expensive. A trip anywhere in town costs \$4. A trip of the same distance in Kuala Lumpur, would cost \$1. However, the town is small enough to get around on foot, and that is, in fact, the best way to see the town, except when it rains. During the months of October to March, it can rain really hard and for a long time, making movement difficult. There is little wind, though, so, if you are going at that time, go armed with a large, sturdy umbrella.

## Langkawi

Using a motor bike is probably the best way of getting round the island. There are also cars available but they are much more expensive. Motor bikes may be rented at any of the major hotels. If you can't ride a motorcycle, then opt for a bicycle which can also be rented at any of the hotels.

## Melaka

Melaka is comparatively flat and the only deterrent to walking is the heat. Use a hat if you intend walking. Taxis are easy to get and cost only \$1 anywhere in the town area. Going out to Klebang, Tg. Kling or Tg. Bidara by taxi is also not prohibitive. However, make a deal with the driver first. Bargaining is allowed. You can also get a taxi for a day. That will cost more. \$50 is getting a good deal.

There is a fairly good, regular bus service to the places further afield if you are being careful with expenses. If you do not have children with you, you might also consider renting a bicycle. The hotel can help you do that. Failing that, refer to the list of budget places above. Any of the hostels will be able to rent you a bicycle for about \$2 a day.

Another cheap and fun way of getting around, is to use the trishaw or *beca* (pronounced "bay-cha"). You can bargain for a single trip, or book him for the day. Locals pay about \$7 or \$8 per day, depending how far you want him to go, and about \$2 for a trip within the town. Don't expect to get anywhere quickly, though. The advantage of hiring a trishaw or taxi is that the riders/drivers know the places really well and can even suggest places you might like to see.

## Mersing

You can easily walk around the town. There are public buses and taxis (cheap) which can take you out of Mersing to other towns. To get out to the islands, you will need to take a boat. See the relevant sections in Chapter 2 for more information regarding fares of boat trips.

## Miri

Public buses and taxis. The latter is less of a hassle. The rainy season would require you to have an umbrella.

## Pangkor

It is possible to hire bicycles and motor cycles.

## Pulau Pinang

A way of getting around, is to use the trishaw or *beca* (pronounced "bay-cha"). You can use him for a single trip, or book him for the day. Make sure you bargain for the fare before you get into the trishaw.

Taxis are easy to get and cost \$1 to \$2 anywhere in the town area. When going out to Batu Ferringhi and other places of attraction, there is a good bus service, and taxi fares are not too prohibitive either. However, make a deal with the driver first. Bargaining is allowed. You can also get a taxi for a day. That will cost more. \$50 is getting a good deal.

You might also consider renting a bicycle. The hotel can help you do that.

## Rawa Island

The island is small enough to walk across.

## Sandakan

A bus ride in the town itself costs 20 sen. However, within the town itself, you could walk or take a taxi, which, like all taxis in Sabah, are not cheap. Mini buses are frequent for places a little out of town and currently charge 20 sen for the first mile and 10

sen for subsequent miles. A trip to the orang utan sanctuary in Sepilok would cost less than \$2.

### **Seremban**

Fairly regular public buses, except that one has to wait long intervals between each bus. There are trishaws in certain parts of town, especially the town centre itself. Walking is possible in the town area. Shared taxis to the outlying areas are not prohibitive.

### **Taiping**

Walking is possible. There are also taxis and a fairly regular bus. To get up the hill, however, you will need to use the land rover service. See the relevant section in Chapter Two for the details.

### **Tioman**

Walking is possible.

## MAKAN TIME

*Makan* means 'eat' in the Malaysian language and food is an important aspect of life in the country. Malaysia is a gourmet's paradise and visitors to the country should experience as much of the local cuisine as possible.

You will find five meals being referred to in Malaysia. Breakfast is the first meal of the day (some people have breakfast at five in the morning). Lunch is the midday meal. Tea is served between 4 and 6 pm. Dinner takes place in the evening. Some people have dinner at 6.30 or 7 pm, others eat at 8 or 8.30 pm. When someone talks about having 'supper', that is a meal that is eaten later at night, anytime between 10 pm to 2 am, or even later - or, should I say, earlier? There are a number of stalls and small shops which remain open till the wee hours, hoping to attract late night revellers. Some remain open all night and close only at 6 am.

Malaysians eat out a lot and the restaurant business has grown rapidly to cater to this need. Eating out can be inexpensive or as expensive as one likes. For four people, the price of a meal can range from 10 ringgit to four thousand ringgit, depending where one eats.

Like Malaysia's population, her food, too, is varied. There is the food of the three main ethnic groups: Malay food which is usually hot and spicy, Indian food with its many types of curry, and Chinese food which varies from hot Szechuan-style cooking to the blander Cantonese-style.

Very popular among Malaysians is Nyonya food.

In the fifteenth century, Chinese merchants came to the shores of Melaka. There they married local Malay girls who tried to adapt to their husband's taste in food. The result is a pleasing blend of Chinese and Malay cuisine, combined into 'nyonya' food.

Western-style food is also popular and many of the major towns have seen a proliferation of Macdonalds and Pizza Huts. Restaurants serving excellent western cuisine are also found in all major hotels and leading restaurants in the cities, especially Kuala Lumpur.

When eating out, vegetarians have it easy in most places in



Malaysia and can choose between Indian and Chinese vegetarian cooking. Indian vegetarian cooking makes use of lentils and vegetables in watery and thick curries. Chinese vegetarian cooking is an art. The cook produces chicken, fish, squid, pork and other 'meat' dishes, which look and taste like meat but are made from either flour or soya beans. When invited home by non-vegetarian Chinese and Malay hosts, however, a vegetarian might have problems because vegetables might possibly be cooked with shrimp paste. Most Malaysian hostesses feel quite at a loss when told that a vegetarian will be coming to dinner!

## Popular Malaysian dishes

Certain types of Malaysian food can be found throughout the country. The style of preparation may vary a little but the dish is completely recognizable.

### Savoury dishes

#### Meat

Possibly the most popular type of food is satay, small pieces of chicken, beef, mutton, or sometimes rabbit, skewered and barbecued over hot charcoal. It is eaten with a spicy peanut sauce, raw onions, cucumber and pressed rice or ketupat. All these are optional to the main barbecued meat. At a stall, satay costs about 20 to 30 sen a stick. At a hotel or restaurant, prices vary from 30 sen to 50 sen a stick.

#### Noodles

Noodles should be mentioned next. There are three main types of noodles in Malaysia. Mee is a wheat-flour based noodle, usually yellow in colour and varying in thickness. *Kuih Tiau* (pronounced "kway tee-ow") is made from rice flour. It is white and flat and about 1 cm to 2 cm (quarter to half an inch) thick. Beehoon is also made from rice flour. It is fine and has the thickness of thick thread. It comes in a dried form and has to be soaked in water before it softens and only then is it cooked. All three noodles are served fried in different ways or in a soup or

curry. At the stalls noodles cost about 1.50 to 2 ringgit per plate or bowl, although you will find that prices vary from town to town. In a hotel or restaurant, noodles can cost 5 ringgit or more for a bowl or plate, depending on the hotel or restaurant.

Laksa is a dish of noodles in a curry sauce. Every state has a different laksa, so don't be surprised if you get a different preparation of laksa when you order it in different places. Penang laksa, for example, has a sour soup, with pineapple and mint as condiments. Melaka laksa, on the other hand, is in a thicker curry, with coconut milk and has no sour taste at all. It is eaten with beansprouts and cucumber. Johor laksa gravy is very thick, has lots of flaked fish, is cooked in coconut milk and eaten with raw herbs and other vegetables. Prices vary from \$1.50 to \$2 at stalls, and about \$5 at hotels. There is a specific type of noodle dish which is very popular in Malaysia, and fast to prepare. It is called wantan mee. You can have it in a soup, or dry. The noodles are thin flour noodles, and the dish is served with dumplings called wantan and sweetened pork strips called char siew. If you eat this at the stalls, the filling for the wantan is usually pork. In Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya you can get wantan with shrimp and no pork. If you have a restriction towards pork, make sure you ask if they only serve shrimp wantan. If they serve both shrimp and pork, the soup they boil the wantan in will have pork. In the larger hotels, if you do see the wantan, they are usually chicken or beef wantan. If you have a restriction towards beef, find out what meat they have used.

## Rice

Nasi is rice and various rice dishes have different names. Nasi lemak, rice cooked in coconut milk and eaten with a thick, hot sauce, is a popular breakfast dish. It was traditionally wrapped in a banana leaf before being sold. Many stalls as well as big hotels now do not bother to wrap the rice and it is placed on a plate like any other dish. At a stall, nasi lemak costs 50 sen to a dollar fifty, depending on what is put in it. At a hotel, prices vary from 2 to 5 ringgit a plate. Chicken rice is rice cooked in chicken broth and chicken fat and eaten with boiled or roasted chicken and cucumber. Nasi kunyit, nasi minyak and nasi beriyani are different preparations of rice, cooked with spices and ghee (clarified butter) and eaten with some form of meat. Nasi dagang is a specialty of Kelantan and Terengganu (the two

states prepare the dish differently!). It is rice cooked in coconut milk and spices. Kelantanese use a red glutinous rice for the dish. The Terengganu folk mix the glutinous rice with ordinary rice. Nasi kandar has been made popular by Penangites and Pulau Pinang is the place for good nasi kandar. It is rice, eaten with different kinds of curry preparations. The banana leaf rice has become quite an institution in Malaysia and a good way of filling up if your budget is tight. It is served in southern Indian shops and so called because the meal is served on a banana leaf. The basic meal comprises rice, as much as you want, and vegetables cooked in curry. That is the economy meal and costs about \$2.50. The waiter will then ask you if you want fish or chicken or beef with your rice. If you are on a shoe string budget, refuse the meat. That's what makes the meal expensive. You can ask for as much rice and gravy as you want, as many times as you want, without further charge.

## Bread

*Roti* means 'bread' and besides the loaf of bread which one buys and toasts in the morning, Malaysia has different kinds of bread. Multigrain and wholewheat bread is only available in the larger cities and if you are a heavy bread eater, you will have to make do with white bread which is found in all towns. There are other kinds of bread which you might like to try however. Malaysians have imaginatively come up with stuffed buns, some sweet and some spicy. Great for picnics and long train journeys since you don't have the hassle of making sandwiches. *Roti Canai* is one of Malaysia's most popular breakfast dishes, a very filling meal for less than \$1. A lump of dough is tossed until it becomes a thin sheet. It is folded over and then tossed on an oiled grill. One can choose to add an egg to the bread. One eats it with sugar or with a watery curry. Later in the day, one can get the more sophisticated, and more expensive, version of *roti canai*, called *murtabak*. The dough is the same but the bread has a meat filling. Watching them toss the dough is almost as good as eating it. In south Indian shops, (look for the banana leaf rice announcement) there are three other types of bread which are also cheap and taste great - *Thosai*, *Appam* and *Idili*. *Thosai* (sometimes spelt *dhosai*), is made from either beans or semolina. It is like a pancake and is eaten with a watery curry. There are different kinds of *Thosai*, and it is exciting to try them all. At

night, there is a thosai available called masala thosai which is the same pancake stuffed with curried vegetables. Great and very filling. *Thosai* is usually available for breakfast and dinner. *Appam* (made from rice flour) and *Idili* (made from beans) look like steamed buns. *Idili* is also eaten with curry. It is usually available only for breakfast. The *appam* is usually eaten with coconut milk and sugar or with coconut sugar. All three types of breakfasts would cost less than \$1 each if you do not order any meat dish to go with it.

In Indian restaurants, especially north Indian restaurants, you can find a different kind of bread called *naan*, dough baked on a griddle. There is also *puri*, dough fried in hot oil until it puffs up. Both are eaten with whatever dishes one orders, fish or meat.

The Chinese also have a bread they call *pau* and there are different kinds of *pau*, stuffed with pork, chicken or a sweet bean paste. *Pau* can be purchased from many Chinese coffee shops. It also comes as part of the choice for the Chinese Dimsum (Timsun). This is a meal served in a restaurant. Waitresses push carts round the restaurant and one chooses various types of snacks. Sometimes, the waitresses don't ask you what you want, they simply put the little plates on your table. Don't panic. Eat only what you want. But be careful. As long as you take anything from a plate, you are charged for the whole plate. In such restaurants, not making sure that you can finish the contents of a plate before you start it, can mean a big hole in your pocket. Most of the Dimsum dishes have pork so, if you are a Muslim, or require kosher food, check first. In fact, if, at any time you require pork-free food, ask if the food is 'halal'.

## Others

A meal that is very popular with Malaysians is steamboat. A hotpot is put in the centre of the table and raw ingredients are placed around it. When the soup is boiling, those eating place the raw food into the boiling soup, allow the food to cook for a while, and then go for it. Seafood steamboat tends to be good if the food is really fresh. Other meat tends to be too bland. The soup at the end of the meal is great, though.

Malaysia has her own type of salad, called *rojak* which, unfortunately vegetarians cannot try. There are two major kinds of *rojak*, that sold by Chinese hawkers and that sold by Indian

**Top:** A lump of dough is first swung around, the fried for *roti canai*

**Bottom:** The cendol-man with his simple manual wooden ice-scraper under the shade of a tree

**Opposite:** *Teh tarik* or "pulled tea" – a frothy favourite with Malaysians





Muslim hawkers. The Chinese rojak has cucumber, pineapple, beansprouts, a green vegetable called kangkong, a root vegetable called bangkuang (called jikama in the southern United States) and bean curd, mixed in a thick sauce made from shrimp paste. The Indian rojak has cucumber, bangkuang, bean sprouts, bean curd, squid and fried batter, eaten with a thick peanut sauce.

Spring rolls are well known to all those who have eaten Chinese food. In Malaysia, if you want spring rolls, look for popiah. They may be fried or plain. Those in the hawker stalls usually don't have meat and cost about 50 sen to \$1, depending on the size (usually larger than those sold in the United States, Britain and Australia). Those sold in hotels and fancy restaurants usually do put some meat in and the price goes up.

A favourite snack, or dish, depending on the time of day you eat it, is *Yong Tow Foo*, bean curd and vegetables stuffed with fish paste (and often pork). It can be prepared dry or in a soup.

## Desserts

It is not really usual to end a meal with a dessert. With westernization, however, the idea of a 'dessert' has come in and it is very often fresh fruit.

In Chinese restaurants, there are two main types of dessert besides fresh fruit – canned lychees in sweet syrup, with or without almond jelly; fried pancakes, with or without a sweet peanut sauce.

In Nyonya or Malay restaurants, you might find sweet cakes, called *kuih* (pronounced koo-eh). There are different kinds of *kuih*, made from rice, glutinous rices, of tapioca. Bahasa Malaysia distinguishes between local cakes and western-style cakes. Local cakes are *kuih* sold at roadside stalls in the morning, late afternoon, at bananas and root vegetables, in a batter, being fried. These banana fritters are called *goreng pisang* and the root vegetables – mainly two kinds – *goreng keledak* (fried sweet potatoes) and *goreng keladi* (fried taro).

In these same restaurants, you might also be able to try a tapioca pudding (cold), eaten with coconut milk and coconut sugar called sago pudding. You might also have a dessert called *cendol* dough, flavoured with a leaf called *pandan* and eaten with shaved ice, coconut milk and coconut sugar. *Bubur caca*, root vegetables cooked in coconut milk and sugar, is also sometimes served.

If you eat out at the stalls, more desserts are possible. Malaysians enjoy ice kacang or ais kacang, which is fruit and nuts covered with shaved ice and then with syrup or coconut sugar and evaporated milk poured over it. This dessert is sometimes called *air batu campur* (pronounced as "ah-ye batu champo) and shortened to ABC. Another favourite in Peninsular Malaysia is Lin Chee Kang, nuts and seaweed in syrup. It is served hot or cold. A bowl of any of these desserts costs 40 to 60 cents. Most of the major hotels serve these desserts but at much higher prices. The desserts at the stalls also seem to taste better!

## Drinks

There are pubs, or bars, in all the major towns in the country. The majority of Malaysians do not drink alcoholic drinks however, and, if someone asks if you would like a drink, he may not be offering you a glass of wine! Malaysians do consume a lot of soda pop however, and the traveller will have no difficulty getting a coke or 7-up or similar drink.

There are other non-alcoholic drinks which are popular in Malaysia. Possibly the most popular among locals and foreigners is coconut water which can be found at stalls along the roads, or in the major hotels. Also popular, and found along the streets, is sugar cane water. The cane is pressed between rollers and the juice is squeezed out and served on ice. If you see a white milky liquid being sold along the streets, that is soya milk, also popular with Malaysians.

In many hawker centres, you will find freshly squeezed fruit juices. The more popular ones are fresh orange, pineapple juice and watermelon juice. If you want freshly squeezed orange juice, ask for fresh orange. If you just say "orange" or "orange juice", you are likely to get some packet drink without any real juice in it. Also, Malaysia hawkers add salt and sugar to the fresh fruit drinks, and then top it up with water to make the drink cheaper. If you don't want sugar and salt, tell them so. These phrases will be handy:

"Jangan taruh gula." (Don't put any sugar in it).

"Jangan taruh garam." (Don't put any salt in it).

There is another fruit drink which visitors enjoy - lime juice or air limau. Lime is squeezed into a glass and water, ice and



sugar added. Again, if you don't want sugar, tell them so.

Another different drink is barley water. Malaysians boil grains of barley, making a refreshing drink which the Chinese believe is 'cooling' (Some foods are cooling while others are "heaty". 'Cooling' foods cool you down. 'Heaty' foods make you feel hot.) Ask for barley. Some mix lime juice with the barley drink.

There are different kinds of teas which one can drink in 'coffee shops' or small restaurants in Malaysia. The most common is Indian tea which Malaysians drink with sugar and condensed milk. If you don't want the sugar or milk, tell them so. Milk is susu in Bahasa Malaysia. You could ask for *teh o kosong*, but in the smaller towns, repeating: *Jangan taruh gula*, (Don't put any sugar in it) *Jangan taruh susu* (Don't put any milk in it) is more effective and gets the message across that you mean business when you decline sugar and milk in your drink. The same thing works for coffee (*kopi* in Bahasa Malaysia). In bigger towns you can ask for *kopi o* (black coffee with sugar) or *kopi o kosong* (black coffee without sugar). In Chinese restaurants, Chinese tea is served, black, unsweetened. There is a third type of tea which is popular as the Chinese believe it is 'cooling' - chrysanthemum tea, made from steeping dried chrysanthemum flowers in hot water. You'll find them sold in small cartons, too, but those don't taste as good as those sold on street corners and Chinese restaurants. The 'tea picture' will not be complete without mentioning Malaysia's most entertaining tea! It's called *teh tarik* or 'pulled tea'. The man making the tea, pours the tea from one mug to another, sort of stretching it while doing so, and not spilling a drop. You get a sort of bubbly tea at the end of the process. Watching the man making it is even better than drinking it!

## Fruit

Besides the usual, more commercially known tropical fruit like papayas (papaws), pineapple, coconuts, watermelons and bananas, Malaysia has a wide selection of succulent fruit. Most of the fruit is large and is usually shared among a group of people. The lone visitor does not have to be disappointed however. Cut fruit is sold in stalls along the streets and one can try a wide selection of fruit that way. If you cannot immediately see a fruit stall, ask around for the nearest cinema. There will

inevitably be a fruit stall there, especially before the evening and afternoon shows.

There are different types of papaya in Malaysia. The most common is the large papaya, sometimes a foot long (30cm) and 6 inches (15cm) in width. The flesh is either red or yellow. The type with the yellow flesh has a scented flavour which the red one does not have. The third type is a hybrid of the Hawaiian solo. It is small and just right for one or two persons.

There are different types of pineapple, too. In Peninsular Malaysia, there are two good varieties; the small sweet ones or the huge ones, sometimes one-and-a-half feet (45cm) long. The texture of the two is different. Sarawak has even more varieties.

Banana is another fruit with even more varieties. There are cooking bananas and dessert bananas. Some can be cooked or eaten raw, for example pisang raja. (Pisang means 'banana'.) There are small sweet ones called pisang mas, and larger ones called pisang rastali. The large green ones are pisang masak hijau (literally meaning, "bananas which are green when ripe", green referring to the colour but not the taste). The most common variety in the Selangor area appears to be pisang embun. The cooking banana, or plantain is pisang tanduk. They are large and look like the horns of a bull.

There are four main types of watermelon, red and yellow varieties, with seeds and without seeds. The ones without seeds are sweeter but cost more. Malaysia also grows honey dew melon.

One may see a huge fruit, with short, thick stubbles and with lots of yellow, triangular or rectangular-shaped fruit inside it. It is the jackfruit, known as nangka. A smaller version, with round fruit inside it, and with a stronger smell, is the cempedak. Also in this family is the round breadfruit or buah sukun, used for cooking. The soursop or durian belanda is sometimes mistaken for the jackfruit. Its skin is softer than that of the jack fruit, and instead of the stubbly skin, it has soft thorns, widely spaced. It varies in size but a normal sized fruit is a little less than a foot long (about 25cm), and 6 inches (15cm) in diameter. It has juicy, soury-sweet white flesh and black, oval seeds. The flesh looks like that of the custard apple or buah nona, but it tastes quite different. The custard apple is much sweeter, has a lumpy skin and is more messy to eat.

The starfruit or belimbing is grown plentifully in Selangor and Pahang. It is star-shaped when it is cut across. It is a very juicy fruit, especially when it is ripe. Locals prefer it slightly

unripe, eaten with soy sauce or salt. Those sold at street stalls are therefore greenish. When it is ripe, the fruit is a golden yellow. When it is unripe, it also tends to leave an aftertaste in the mouth and on the teeth. Malaysians describe this as *kelat*. You might therefore want to try a ripe one first, before striking out for an unripe one! There are different kinds of mangoes, of different shapes and sizes. Some are smoother in texture than others. The types sold as cut fruit in fruit stalls are usually the cheaper varieties and tend to have more fibre.

If you see a fruit which looks like a kiwi fruit at a fruit stall, look again. One usually finds kiwi fruit only at supermarkets. You are probably looking at a *ciku*, a sweet fruit which smells alcoholic!

Malaysia also has different varieties of mountain apple or *jambu*. The small red variety tends to be tart. The large red and green ones are very juicy and sweet. Guava or *jambu batu* sold in Malaysia is large, larger than a tennis ball. Some of a small core of seeds, others have no seeds at all. The seedless ones are sweeter. There are also different kinds of limes, tangerines and other citrus fruit. The king of them all is the pomelo, a much larger and sweeter version of the grapefruit.

The fruit season brings with it seasonal fruit, unlike the fruit mentioned above which are always in season. The king of Malaysian fruits is the durian. White or gold segments of fruit around a large seed (or very small seed in the hybrid varieties) are enclosed in a thick thorny skin. The fruit has a strong smell when it is ripe, and an even stronger smell if you keep the skins indoors overnight after you have eaten it. Somerset Maugham described it as "eating custard in a toilet"! Visitors who have got past the smell have got hooked on the fruit. Chinese believe that the fruit is 'heaty'. Well, not to worry. The mangosteen is also in season at the same time. The mangosteen is a delicious fruit with a slightly sour tinge. The Chinese believe it is 'cooling'. At about this time, too, one may see red or yellow hairy fruit called rambutan. A pale yellow, small, oval fruit is called *langsat*, while its 'cousin', a round brown fruit with a hard skin is called *duku*. In between the two is the *duku langsat*, sweeter than both the fruit, but with a different flavour from the *duku*.

### Purchasing uncooked food

The markets in the towns in Malaysia are the best places for this.

Food is fresh and cheaper than in shops. You would have to go to supermarkets for imported food, though. There are supermarkets in all the major towns.

The major towns in Peninsular Malaysia also have Farmers' Markets or Pasar Tani and Night Markets or Pasar Malam where one could pick up all kinds of exciting food at reasonable prices. Sabah and Sarawak also have their own versions of open markets.

## Eating Out

Stall food, or hawker food, can be found along streets and in open-air eating places. Small coffee shops may have a stall or two selling roti canai or nasi lemak or noodles. Very rarely is the food terrible as those hawkers would soon go out of business! The hawker food places which will be mentioned below, will be places which have a larger selection of food than most other places and are places which locals frequent.

### **Kuala Lumpur and Selangor**

#### **Western-style cuisine**

Places which serve western-style food, except for American fast food places, are usually expensive. All the major hotels serve very good western-style cuisine. The Coliseum is a must, not just for its good cuisine, but to relive the times of the British colonial era. It is also not as expensive as the hotels. Le Coq d'Or on Jalan Ampang is also known for its very good food. Garden Terrace also on Jalan Ampang, across the street from MACEE (Malaysian-American Commission for Educational Exchange) is not as well known, but serves very good food at reasonable prices. The Ship has several branches in KL and Petaling Jaya. All of them are good. In Damansara Jaya (SS22) in Petaling Jaya are two good western-style restaurants - the Dallas Grill and Eden. The latter also serves Chinese cuisine and seafood prepared in different ways. It also has a sumptuous Sunday buffet lunch.

There are also the American fast food places dotted all over Kuala Lumpur and the larger towns of Selangor - Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, Grandy's, Pizza Hut, Shakey's Pizza, White Castle, and A&W, among others.

To eat like a Malay – the rightful way with hand





A very Malaysian Chinese meal  
with its chop-sticks



## Malay Cuisine

The best restaurants are probably Nelayan Titiwangsa, on Lake Titiwangsa, off Jalan Kuantan in Kuala Lumpur, which has a good buffet lunch and dinner, allowing you to sample different kinds of Malay food, and Yazmin, (tel. 2415655) on Jalan Kia Peng, which also has a daily cultural show. Restoran Nelayan Titiwangsa has a cultural show only at weekends.

Besides these two restaurants, there are stalls along the roads which come alive during the morning and again in the evenings. During the fasting month, these stalls increase their variety of food and tasting Malay food then really becomes a gourmet's delight. Among the better known Malay stall-food areas are Benteng, at the end of Jalan Masjid India in Kuala Lumpur, the 'Hilton Drive-In' (stalls behind the Hilton Hotel), and otusdie McDonald's in Bangsar. In Petaling Jaya, the favourite place for stall food is 'Glutton's Square', near Jaya Supermatket.

Lontong (pressed rice eaten with vegetables cooked in coconut milk) is not easy to find but there are stalls in Bangsar Park which serve very good lontong. It is only served in the morning and by ten, is sold out. Some nyonya restaurants also serve it on special days.

## Chinese Cuisine

Chinese food can be very expensive or very cheap. There are some restaurants which make a name for themselves just by being pensive. A place of noodles, for example, can cost \$50. It will cost about \$3 at the stalls and \$5 of \$6 at a smaller restaurant. Rarely does the quality of cooking justify the high cost. There are some Chinese restaurants which do serve great food at reasonable prices, however. If you are looking for a Chinese dinner, served in courses, then the Chinese Restaurant at the Ground Floor of the Central Market is very popular. The Esquire Restaurants also serve good meals at reasonable prices. Chinatown in Kuala Lumpur has a number of small Chinese restaurants town which serve good food at a fraction of the price of other restaurants. One of the better Chinese restaurants with great value for money is Kampung Nelayan (tel. 9856432) on Jalan Imbi. It is partly open air dan partly covered. One eats beside a boat, under sails and fishing nets. Its sister restaurant is Kampung Ku (tel. 7462651) out by the airport (near Terminal 2),





A "banana leaf" meal uses a banana leaf instead of a plate



A "banana leaf" meal can be cheap or expensive, depending on the number of curries one orders



where the atmosphere is even better. One sits and eats under the stars, beside a cascading waterfall. The steamboat, at \$5 per head, is very good value for money. Beside Kampung Ku is another good restaurant, the Airport Seafood Restaurant. It does not serve steamboat, but the seafood is fresh (you can choose your own fish!) and well prepared. At night, there is a stall selling satay. It sells chicken, beef, mutton and rabbit satay. All three restaurants have the added advantage that they do not serve pork, allowing Muslims to eat there. Few Chinese restaurants do not serve pork. If you are inviting Muslim guests for a meal, it would be best to keep this in mind. (See also the section on seafood restaurants).

Besides the restaurants, there are small shops and stalls along streets and backlanes which serve good Chinese dishes. There is also the cheaper type of stall food, usually noodles or rice with a spoonful of two or three different dishes. Such meals cost about \$1.50 to \$2. The areas in Kuala Lumpur with a great variety of stalls include, the Chow Kit area, Chinatown, Peel Road area, the rooftop of Sungai Wang Plaza, Brickfields (Jalan Tun Sambanthan), outside the Sri Kota Mini Market, and, on a classier note, 10 Jalan Kia Peng.

The best places in Petaling Jaya are at the shopping area of SS2, next to the playground, the Seaview in Paramount Gardens, New Town and the stalls in Damansara Utama.

Dimsum is served for breakfast at most small Chinese coffee shops. Dimsum at lunch time can be got at the Merlin and Federal Hotels. The Holiday Inn City Centre serves 'halal' dimsum, without pork.

A place which locals head for is the village of Serdang, about twenty minutes away from Kuala Lumpur, which sells Chinese food at affordable prices.

For vegetarians, there are a number of good Chinese vegetarian restaurants in Kuala Lumpur, near the police Station, in the Chinatown area. In Petaling Jaya, Chinese vegetarian shops have sprung up in almost every housing estate. Look for a sign which reads: Restoran Sayur-sayuran.

## **Indian Cuisine**

There are quite a few good north Indian as well as south Indian restaurants in the Kuala Lumpur - Selangor area. Bangles is a popular north Indian restaurant, as are the Shiraz, Bilal and Akbar.

A very good Indian Vegetarian restaurant is Devi Annopurna, off Jalan Maarof in Bangsar, staffed by volunteers from the Indian community. Their menu changes daily and they serve north and south Indian food. They have a good daily buffet, a good chance to try different types of Indian cuisine.

For south Indian food, there are the 'banana leaf' restaurants found all over Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The best known are the shops in Brickfields Road (now renamed Jalan Tun Sambanthan). Krishna Curry House in Jalan 222, off the Federal Highway, in Petaling Jaya is reputed to have the best thosai, roti canai and banana leaf lunch in the Petaling Jaya area. There are also banana leaf restaurants in all the housing estates in Petaling Jaya.

## **Nyonya Cuisine**

Nyonya restaurants have sprouted all over Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. The better known ones are Dondang Sayang in Kuala Lumpur, Restoran Nyonya, Shangri-la dan Sri Nyonya Sdn. Bhd. in SS2 in Petaling Jaya. Shangri-la also serves Thai and Malaysia Portugese cuisine.

## **Malaysian Portugese Cuisine**

There are a few good restaurants in the Kuala Lumpur area. One needs to go to Melaka to sample a better selection. Shangri-la in Petaling Jaya has Portugese Baked Fish which is out of this world! Restorante Santa Maria in Jalan P.Ramlee, across the road from the Merlin and Shangri-la, and behind the Equatorial, in Kuala Lumpur is also well known.

## **A Malaysian Buffet**

Some hotels serve buffet lunches and dinners and this is ideal if you want to taste a wide variety of food without going to too many places. Shangri-la in Kuala Lumpur does a good Sunday buffet, but the best Sunday buffet (and daily buffet), especially if you have children, is at the Petaling Jaya Hilton. The Holiday Inn City Centre has a buffet with Malaysian Selections, and the Federal Hotel has a dinner buffet, mainly Malaysian cuisines, which is very reasonably priced. The Equatorial Hotel is better known for its High Tea, a buffet which doubled up as either a

late lunch or an early dinner. The Nelayan Titiwangsa has an almost completely Malay buffet, reasonably priced.

## Seafood Restaurants

Seafood in Malaysia is fresh and affordable and Malaysians are crazy about seafood. There are therefore a number of good seafood places in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

One of the best places for seafood is Pasir Penambang - out of Kuala Selangor, on the way to Teluk Intan. After you cross the bridge, going north from Kuala Selangor, look for a sign for "Pasir Penambang". Turn left into the road, then turn left again after about 50 meters, at a T-junction. Drive on till you come to the end of the road. You will see the restaurants. They serve fresh and inexpensive meals. A meal, with rice, fish, prawns, vegetables and crab for four adults and two adolescents, with soft drinks, could cost about \$50. There are also other 'seafood villages' along the coast, between Kelang and Kuala Selangor which locals drive all the way to, especially at week-ends.

Another area favoured by locals is the village of Pandamaran between Kelang and Port Kelang. Just before reaching Port Kelang, look out for directions to "Pandamaran". Take the side road, follow it to the traffic lights and turn left. You will soon see a number of restaurants. The cuisine here is a mixture of Chinese and Indian cooking.

A strange place to find seafood is the airport area. Yet here we have some of the best seafood restaurants in Selangor. The Airport Seafood Restaurant and Kampung Ku (tel: 7462651) are remain fast. Both the restaurants are near Terminal 2 of the airport. If one goes further down the road, one comes across more restaurants - all small, all popular.

Port View is an interesting restaurant in Port Kelang. It is well placed, overlooking one of the docks. Even at low tide it is interesting watching the movement of ships and people. To the town until you come to the end of the road. You'll see the restaurant in front of you.

A seafood restaurant in Kuala Lumpur which needs to be mentioned is Kampung Nelayan (tel. 9856432), on Imbi Road. The food is very well prepared. The Nelayan Titiwangsa, on Lake Titiwangsa in KL, has Chinese as well as Malay and Thai style seafood.

## Others

Locals claim that the best yong tow foo (bean curd and vegetables stuffed with fish and, sometimes, pork) in the area, is the Ampang Yong Towfoo on Jalan Ampang in Kuala Lumpur. Crowds of people make their way to the shop daily.

There is a shop in Damansara Jaya called Super Ice which sells interesting shaved ice concoctions. The 'ice' itself is frozen coconut milk, milk, fruit juice or a sort of peanut butter. It is served over nuts and fruit.

## Perak

The gourmet centre of Perak is Ipoh which is famous for its Cantonese cuisine, considered better than what Hong Kong offers. But the smaller towns in Perak also offer inexpensive, well prepared meals and the coastal towns like Lumut specialise in seafood meals which would satisfy the most demanding palate.

In Ipoh, any of the restaurants will serve a good meal. With very demanding customers, mediocre restaurants don't survive for too long! An interesting restaurant is, however, Kok Kee which has Cantonese restaurant-style cooking inside an old mansion, and hawker food in the grounds of the mansion. Lee How Fook has traditionally had excellent cuisine and locals recommend it highly.

The more popular hawker stalls are the Railway Station food stalls, the Wooley Food Centre in Ipoh Gardens (often known only as Wooley's), the Old Town Hawker Centre, Glutton Square and Kampung Simee Hawker Centre. Another good place is the Kedai Kopi Heng on Jalan Leech, between Jalan Pasar dan Jalan Panglima. The Royal Casuarina Coffee House, the Excelsior Hotel Coffee House and the Station Hotel Coffee House serve good western cuisine.

Restaurants which locals have recommended in Taiping include the Taiping Government Rest House, Penorama Hotel Coffee House and Comfy Corner.

About twelve miles south of Teluk Intan, there is a Danish bakery which has become popular with the locals. The story goes that Danish people who lived in the area taught the locals how to bake Danish-style bread, and when the Danish left, the locals carried on the tradition. To get to the bakery, take the coast

road heading south from Teluk Intan. You will see some large buildings about twelve miles out of Teluk Intan, and a sign which reads "United Plantations". Turn left into the plantation road and look out for a sign for the "Danish Bakery".

### Food Perak is famous for

Pomelos and seedless guavas, Bidor chicken biscuits, Chinese cakes and biscuits of various sorts, Cantonese cooking, rice noodles called *sahofan*, ground nuts from the town of Menglembu which have a slightly milky taste.

## Pulau Pinang

Residents and ex-residents of Pulau Pinang claim that the island has the best hawker food in the country, even the world! Penangites go miles to buy a particular noodle dish or dessert from a particular stall in some obscure corner of Penang. If you stay there long enough, you will probably discover these 'perfect' places for yourself. For now, we'll just have to make do with the places which have the best selection of food so you can decide what to try!

The common noodle dishes which Penangites crave for are hokkien mee, *char kueh tiow* (fried rice noodles, but the wheat noodles (mee) and the rice noodles (bee-hoon) can also be prepared and even mixed together. If you have restrictions against pork, ask the seller if he is using lard. he will usually tell you the truth. If you are vegetarian, ask the seller to leave out the cockles or prawns, and egg he might use. There are also two types of laksa - Asam (sour) laksa and Siamese laksa (which a number of people I know who have lived in Thailand say is not too much like what they have there! I guess it's a Penang original!) The asam laksa has lots of tamarind in it, the Siamese laksa has lots of coconut milk. Another great Penang hawker dish is lobak, different sorts of meat, fish and prawns, prepared in different ways and served on one platter. You can choose the items you want. Rojak, Malaysia's favourite salad is also good in Pulau Pinang, as is their cendol and ice kacang, both desserts. Nasi kandar is another Pulau Pinang original. It is rice served with a number of curries. Delicious if you like hot food.

## City

There are hawker stalls all over the city, and there are also hawkers which move around from place to place. The following are some of the better known places with a wide selection of food: Gurney Drive hawker stalls, Food Court at Komtar on Penang Road, Swatow Lane in the evenings and Gottlieb Road in the evenings. There are also all-night hawker stalls at New Lane, off Macalister Road, near Penang Road. Some locals go a long way for their favorite ice kacang, and one of the best known places are the ice kacang stalls on Kheng Swee Street, off Penang Road, opposite the police station.

There are also good restaurants all over Penang. The most popular among locals are the Chinese restaurants at Anson Road.

There are some very good Indian eating places, especially in the Indian quarter, in the vicinity of Jalan Pasar (Market Street) between Lebuah Penang and Lebuah Pitt. Both north and south Indian food is served. Indian Muslim food like nasi kandar is also served there. You might also want to try Dawood's on Queen Street, opposite the Sri Mariamman Temple. Opposite from 6 am to 9 am daily. At the corner of Lebuah Chulia and Jalan Penang is the Islamic Restaurant which also has a good selection of well-prepared food. Kassim Restaurant, opposite Gama is popular for its nasi kandar. For a little more class, there's the Kashmiri Restaurant at the basement of the Oriental Hotel on Penang Road. Get there early as it can get crowded, even on week days.

## Batu Feringhi

All the hotels serve western food. There are seafood restaurants along Batu Ferringhi. Eden Seafood Billage is popular but more up-market. For Malay food, Pak Din's Bamboo Restaurant is good and a place for Indian food is the Malaysian Seafood.

## Food Pulau Pinang is famous for

Hawker food, especially asam laksa, Siamese laksa, rojak and ice kacang; nasi kandar.



## Kedah and Perlis

These two states have some of the finest, and most romantic, restaurants. As you eat really great seafood, you watch the sun set over the horizon and listen to the waves lapping under you. This is possible in the restaurants in **Kuala Kedah** and **Kuala Perlis** - an experience not easily forgotten.

Both Kedah and Perlis claim to have the best laksa in the country. But then almost every state has its own type of laksa, each one claiming to be the best in the country. Let's just say they are different. Laksa Kedah gravy tastes more like the sour laksa gravy of Penang than the thicker laksa gravies of Johor or Melaka.

**Alor Setar** has some good eating places too. Near the bus stop are several small shops selling hawker-style food. There is also a large hawker center in Restoran Empire, along Jalan Tunku Ibrahim. Yasmin Restaurant is well known for its nasi briyani and Cafe Siam is also worth a visit. Alor Setar has its fair share of American fast food places for those who prefer western food, and there are also a number of Chinese restaurants, Pekan Rabu and Kompleks MPKS also provide good selections.

The major hotels on **Langkawi** serve good, fresh seafood. If you prefer something cheaper, try the food at the hawker stalls and small shops in **Kuah**. Restoran Sari is well patronized by locals as are the shops in Komplex Market Lama in Kuah. Of course, you can always try your own catch. Fishing enthusiasts claim that the fish are always biting. Cook your catch yourself, or have it cooked for you.

**Food Kedah is famous for**

Laksa Kedah, Seafood.

## Kelantan

In Kota Bharu, the place to eat is really the Central Market and the car park outside it. During the day, a visit to the stalls at the Central Market will thrill and confuse gourmets. There are all kinds of local kuih and sweetmeats. There are also stalls selling hot food - rice with different types of accompanying dishes, noodles, barbecued seafood and chicken, large crabs cooked in

thick, spicy curry, squid stuffed with glutinous rice, and so on. At night, when the a market has shut down, the car park comes alive with numerous stalls serving all kinds of exciting food. To the uninitiated, the stalls might look as if they are serving the same thing, but locals know better! For example, there is nasi kerabu. But some stalls use a special leaf to flavour the rice, turning it a bluish purple colour. Others don't. Locals say that the leaf has medicinal properties. Besides it gives the rice a great flavour. Nasi dagang is made from red glutinous rice, cooked in coconut milk and spices. It is eaten with a special fish, specially prepared as only the Kelantanese know how. Laksam, is also a great dish. It is thick rice noodles served with a fish sauce cooked in coconut milk and spices. But the most famous item of food in Kelantan is probably ayam or ikan percik. Chicken or fish is marinated in a thick spicy sauce, gripped between bamboo slits, and barbecued over a coal fire. Great! There is also ikan pais, fish mixed with spices, placed in a banana leaf and cooked over a charcoal fire. If one is lucky, one may also come across squid stuffed with glutinous rice.

Other places to eat include stalls along Jalan Tok Hakim, Taman Sekebun Bunga, Buluh Kubu Bazaar and the stalls along Jalan Mahmud. Better restaurants include Nelayan and Sate and Spice. If you feel like eating at an air-conditioned restaurant, the best in Kota Bharu is Restoran Syam along Jalan Berek Dua Belas. Try the fried quails and very good seafood. Also interesting is a ginger drink to which quails' eggs are added. Santo, near the market is the next best place if you can't get to Restoran Syam.

#### **Food Kelantan is famous for**

Nasi dagang, nasi kerabut, ayam percik, laksam, durian (seasonal), keropok (fish crackers, thin and crispy, as well as round and long), ayam or ikan percik, fried quails, air halia (ginger drink), various types of kuih.

## **Terengganu**

Terengganu has a great variety of local delicacies which, unfortunately is not available in restaurants or stalls. There are food stalls behind the Emporium which are good. Another place where you can get quite a variety of local food is Taman Selera Marang. Try the nasi dagang, eaten with a special fish called

ikan tongkol. Also good is *nasi minyak* (rice cooked in clarified butter or ghee) and *nasi lauk* (rice with different curries - your choice). The ikan bakar (baked fish) is particularly good. There are two noodle dishes with almost the same name, *laksa* has long, round, white noodles, *laksang* is made with broad, flat, white noodles, rolled into round tubes. Both are great. You might also like to try *ikan pais*, fish mixed with spices, placed in a banana leaf and cooked over a charcoal fire. *Satar* is minced fish mixed with coconut milk and spices, core-wrapped, shaped, in a banana leaf with a stick through it, and baked.

For keropok, (fish crackers), the place to go to is Mengabang Telipot Losong. If you are passing Kuala Ibai, on your way to Rantau Abang and Dungun, you might also want to try the *keropok lekor* (round and long fish crackers) there.

There are few good restaurants in the area. Istiqlal Restaurant is one. You might also like to try the buffet at Hotel Primula, a bit pricely, but there's a lot of variety.

Terengganu is also famous for special Malay kuih. The place to go for this is the Central Market in the heart of the town where you can pander to your sweet tooth as much as you want. The problem is tasting all of them - there are too many types! Ask for *kuih akor* (pronounced "koo-eh ah-kor"). You will find it hard to obtain outside Terengganu.

### Food Terengganu is famous for

Nasi dagang, nasi minyak, ikan bakar, laksa, laksang, ikan pais, satar, keropok ikan, keropok lekor, duku langsung (small, oval, sweet fruit), various kinds of kuih, especially kuih akor.

## Pahang

Compared to Kelantan and Terengganu, Pahang has nothing really special to offer. Although there are Malay dishes special to Pahang, it is not easy to find them along street corners. There are a number of good Chinese restaurants and the hawker stalls at Benteng offer the usual hawker food selection. The major hotels are in Pantai Telok Cempedak and so are the better restaurants. The restaurants at the beach area sometimes put on good buffets and this gives visitors a chance to sample some good cuisine.

## Food Pahang is famous for

Honey starfruit, keropok udang (prawn crackers).

## Johor

Johor is not the place for fancy restaurant food. Malay stall food, however, is excellent. A favourite dish for Johoreans is *lontong*, cubes of pressed rice served in a light curry gravy, with loads of coconut milk, and vegetables and tofu (soya bean curd). Pressed rice can also be put in a soup with chicken and lots of pepper. The dish is called *soto ayam* and Johor excels in it. The satay in Johor is very good and the adventurous might like to try tripe and liver satay, besides the usual, chicken, beef and mutton satay. There are also two great noodle preparations in Johor - *mee bandung* and *mee rebus*. Both are served in a curry sauce but the sauces taste different. Mee rebus has a thicker gravy than mee bandung. Muar has traditionally had the best stalls of these two noodle dishes, so much so that, in some stalls in Johor Bahru, mee bandung is known as mee Muar. Not to be forgotten is laksa Johor, a noodle dish served with a thick hot sauce made out of flaked fish, coconut milk and spices and eaten with raw vegetables and herbs.

A good selection of stall food in **Johor Bahru** can be found at Tepian Tebrau and Lido Beach at the seafront along Jalan Skudai and at the stalls next to the Central Market. There are also hawker centres in the various housing estates. If you want something more fancy, there's Cedar Point, Prawn House in Century Garden with its flashing lit-up prawn, and Jaws 5 on Jalan Skudai, overlooking the Straits. Also for seafood, there is a small village out of Johor Bahru called Kukup, a fishing village on stilts, where the seafood is fresh and inexpensive. Or try the Kong Kong Fishing Village Restaurant in Masai.

There are a number of good Chinese restaurants in Johor Bahru. New Hong Kong is probably the best known, while the Prawn House Seafood Restaurant in Century Garden is interesting. The most established Indian restaurant is Kerala Restaurant on Jalan Ibrahim. Their *masala thosai* is really good.

If you are in **Batu Pahat**, try their murtabak. There are those who drive from Singapore to Batu Pahat for the murtabak. There are others who drive from Singapore to **Muar** for the mee

bandung, mee rebus, lontong (also called ketupat lodeh) and satay. North Johor is also well known for its fruit, and duku from Tanjung Gading in Muar is well known throughout the country.

#### Food Johor is famous for

Lontong, satay, soto ayam, mee rebus, mee bandung, laksa Johor, fruit (is north Johor), especially duku, rambutan, durian and mangosteen, martabak in Batu Pahat.

### Melaka

Like Pulau Pinang, Melaka is better known for its stall food than restaurant cuisine, although the major hotels do serve good food. During the day, there are stalls all over town, and also hawkers who move around touting their wares. There are two hawker places which are a little away from the town centre which have great food. Just about 50 metres from the Tengkerah Road - Heeren Street junction, look towards your left. You will see a petrol station and beside it a very large tree. Under the tree is a station and beside it a very large tree. Under the tree is a shop, partly covered and partly open air, with a great selection of food stalls. It opens from about seven in the morning till about six in the evening. Melaka tofu (called taukwa in Melaka) is considered the best in the country and is airflown to Singapore daily. It has a favour all its own. There is a stall under the tree which sells it. Next to that stall is another famous Melaka delicacy, *hei piah*, an assortment of fish, battered prawns and fish roe, bean curd and cucumber, eaten with a hot sweet sauce. The fish balls (ground fish shape into, in Melaka, oval pieces, in other places in Malaysia, round balls) are special to Melaka. The place also has a good vegetarian stall. Further down Tranquerah Road, near the Tranquerah Mosque, is another collection of food stalls. Here the rojak is great as are the noodles in curry, and laksa.

At night, the stalls at the esplanade, or reclaimed land in front of the museum, and further back behind the souvenir stalls, sell great food. Of note is *o luak*, (known in Cantonese as "o chian") which are oysters fried in a soft egg batter. Melaka also has a steamboat like no other in the country. Food items are pushed through bamboo skewers, like satay, and then cooked by the customer by dipping the skewers of food into a pot of boiling,

watery, mild curry. The dish is known there as *satay celup* (satay dip - pronounced as "sa-tei chelop").

If you want to go to a more up-market place, and if you enjoy hot food, there are two nyonya restaurants in Melaka worth visiting. Nyonya Makko is a good restaurant in Taman Melaka Jaya, the area of reclaimed land to the left of the field in front of the historical buildings. Take the first road on the left, where the police station is, and go down about 100 meters. They prepare a dish there called *curry kluak*, a curry with chicken and nuts (kluak). The nuts have a strong taste and locals love it. It is very difficult to obtain any where else. Another nyonya restaurant is in Klebang, an old mansion which has been turned into a restaurant. It faces the beach. There are also some good Portuguese restaurants at Portuguese Square. Service does tend to be slow, however.

#### **Food Melaka is famous for**

Taukwa (tofu/taufu), nyonya food, hei piah (especially the fish balls), popiah, stay celup, ol luak (o chian), char tow kueh (loh pah kor), laksa.

### **Negeri Sembilan**

Minangkabau food is what to look for in Negeri Sembilan. A special staple is *lemang*, glutinous rice cooked in bamboo and eaten with curry. The *rendang*, a dry curry, is also different from *rendang* in other states. There are hawker stalls all over Seremban. One of the easiest stalls to get to are the stalls near the bus and taxi stands. At night there is a semi-circle at Jalan Templar with a large number of hawker stalls. The night market in town (near Sembilan Supermarket) is cheap and has tasty hawker food. American fast food places are also very much in evidence.

In Port Dickson town there are number of hawker stalls. At the beach area, there are stalls within walking distance of the Ming Court, much cheaper, of course, than hotel food. If you prefer eastern food, however, only the hotels serve it.

#### **Food Negeri Sembilan is famous for**

Lemang (glutinous rice cooked in bamboo), rendang minang ( a dry curry).

## Sarawak

Besides the usual Malay, Chinese and Indian food found all over Malaysia, Sarawak offers the added culinary experience of ethnic food of the various tribes. It is also well known for its fresh and inexpensive seafood, especially prawns. For those with a taste of tropical fruit, Sarawak has two varieties of pineapple which are sweet and juicy and do not have the tartness of many other varieties of pineapple. Sarawak, and the rest of Borneo, also has a fruit called *buah terap* which looks like a breadfruit with sweet, flavourful fruit within a thick skin. Durian lovers should also try the Sarawak durian which has a different flavour from that of the Peninsular Malaysia varieties. If you do get a chance, you should also try Barrio rice and Iban grown rice, both white and black varieties. They have a delightful flavour and texture. Unfortunately, they are not easily available. A place in Kuching which is likely to have the rice is the Dayak Market. There, too, one is likely to come across black and red glutinous rice, and various kinds of exotic 'wild', non-commercial fruit. One which has the flavour of avocado is a round, pink fruit called *buah engkalak*.

When in Kuching town, gourmets need to try Hap Chian Fatt Satay House off Palm Road. Despite its name, it does not serve only satay, although the satay they serve is good. Besides an ala carte menu of various types of Chinese food, there is also a range of set meals, each with five or six courses and rice. A set meal for 4 - 6 persons costs \$40 or \$50. A set meal for 8 - 10 people costs either \$70 or \$80. Helping are generous and the food is really good value for money.

For those with a healthy appetite but a tight budget, there are a number of hawker stalls which sell good, cheap food. The most major ones are Permata Food Centre (in the vicinity of Holiday Inn), Chinatown, a shop with lots of stalls, including Indian food (between Standard Chartered Bank and Holiday Inn), Thimpson Corner, a number of them, the main one being on Palm Road, the VIP Food Centre off Palm Road, and the Batu Lintang open air food stalls at Batu Lintang. The Ho Cafe at the back of the Rex Cinema is reputed to have the best satay in Kuching. For those who like chicken rice, there are two major chicken rice chains in Kuching! The more established one is Suan Chicken Rice. You might also want to try the Singapore

Chicken Rice at Song Thian Cheok Road, Palm Road and Satok Road. For those with a taste for hot food, the Bangkok Thai Seafood Restaurant is the place to go to. There are a number of other more expensive Chinese restaurant in Kuching. One interesting eating place is the Rock Road Cafe, a seafood restaurant which claims to have all their food live until they cook it for you. You even get to choose the catch for your meal.

Western food can be found in all the major hotels but it is nothing to rave about. Compared with local fare, western food, and hotel food generally, does not give value for money. There are the fast food places for those who need it: Kentucky Fried Chicken, Sugar Bun (which sells grilled/roasted chicken) and the Pizza Hut not far from the Holiday Inn and Hilton. Locals claim that the best (and cheapest) pizza is at Permata Food Centre.

Breakfasts at the hotels tend to be expensive and you are better off going out to the street stalls or cafes at the Kuching or Sarawak Plazas where you could have good breakfast for under \$3.

Ethnic Sarawak food is not easily obtainable. The only place in Kuching which serves Iban food appears to be the Longhouse Hotel which does chicken, fish and pork in bamboo. Prices are not listed on the menu, however, so check for the price before you order. Some of the stalls in Permata also have *umai*, a raw fish preparation, but only when fresh fish is available. For a greater variety, the Sarawak Cultural Village in Damai Beach would be a better place.

Locals also favour the restaurants in Kg. Buntal, renown for its fresh, well prepared and inexpensive seafood.

### **Damai Beach**

The Sarawak Cultural Village is by far the most interesting gourmet center in this area, offering varied ethnic dishes. If you are staying at the Holiday Inn, Damai Beach, food will tend to get expensive. Bring some fruit and other snacks with you because even ice cream is expensive! Another way out would be to go next door (5 minutes walk) to the Sarawak Cultural Village. However, the entrance fee to get into the village might be discouraging. Also, if you are up to it, there is Kg. Buntal (50 sen on the public bus) which will introduce you to all the sea-food delights you want at very affordable prices. There is a restaurant about 30 minutes walk uphill from the complex, Taman Bukit



Puteri. Service is slow so be prepared to take a long time over your meal, sipping a drink and watching a glorious sunset. If you are travelling along, and have an average budget, either stay at the Sarawak Cultural Village itself, or stay in Kuching and just go up to the Santubong area for the day.

### Food Sarawak is famous for

Iban cuisine, rice (black and white - Iban and Barrio), pineapple, buah terap, large prawns.

## Sabah

Restaurant food in Sabah can be expensive, compared to Peninsular Malaysia prices. In **Kota Kinabalu**, a good restaurant is the Super Tanker which serves Chinese food. Nam Hin Restaurant and the New Empress Restaurant have also been recommended by locals. The Sri Pinang and Sri Melaka serve reasonably priced food. But like other places in Malaysia, the best value for money is at the stalls. To give you a rough idea of prices, a bowl of noodles costs \$3. There are hawkers stalls all over the town, but the best known is at the Filipino Market. If you want to taste Kadazan, or Dusun or Murut food, however, you won't find it easily in restaurants in KK. The major hotels do serve some native Sabah food as part of a buffet. Some good dishes are *hinava*, (raw fish marinated in lime and spices) and *bambangan* (a fruit pickle). You can also get ethnic food at the *tamus* (open air markets held in all the major towns). For Kadazan food, Pinampang is the place.

Sabah is also good for seafood, although it tends to be more expensive than in Sarawak. But it does have varieties of seafood, like lobsters and scallops which are rare in Sarawak and imported into Peninsular Malaysia. The convenience in the situation is that the frozen seafood is sold at the airport itself. They package it for you and put it in to the hold of your aircraft. It remains frozen for eight to ten hours before starting to thaw. A good place for fresh seafood is **Sandakan**. One of the better seafood places in Sandakan is a restaurant, behind the Community Centre and the long distance Mini bus terminal. You can also get good seafood at Trig Hill which is well known in the town for its steamboat. You will find stall food at the one-and-a-half mile market place. There are stalls above the town market,

When in **Keningau**, there are two good Chinese restaurants, the Mandarin and the Mayflower. If you would like more spicy food, however, try the Jasmine which serves good Indonesian-style food.

Like Sarawak, Sabah also has a number of delicious fruit which is never seen in Peninsular Malaysia. Buah terap is a must if you can get it. It looks like a breadfruit but is eaten raw and is sweet and flavourful.

#### **Food Sabah is famous for**

Buah Terap, hinava (raw fish) and other native food, seafood like lobster and scallops.

## WHEN IN MALAYSIA ...

Malaysians are a very easy-going hospitable people. However, as with all societies, Malaysian culture may be quite different from what you are used to.

### Malaysian English

There are a number of varieties of English spoken in Malaysia which you may need to get used to. Educated Malaysian English is a mixture of British and American English (and Malaysians freely use words and phrases from both without realizing that they are crossing between the two forms) plus a liberal sprinkling of speech patterns from the local languages. In the process, new forms also get developed.

Possibly the most difficult part of Malaysian English for native speakers of English to understand is the stress patterns used by Malaysians. If you have difficulty understanding what a person has said, try substituting the stress pattern for your own.

Malaysians freely use *lah* as a sort of suffix. For example, a person might say, "Don't go there *lah*." There are also odd words which the person might substitute from his or her own language or from Bahasa Malaysia. Besides these, there are forms of English which, on the surface, are comprehensible to a foreigner. Their cultural implications go deep, however.

### Greetings

It is quite common to have a Malaysian greet you with "Have you eaten?" or "Have you had your lunch/dinner?" They are not being nosy. There is usually no real concern as to whether you have actually eaten or not. A reply like "Yes, thank you," or "I'm about to," usually suffices.

Another common greeting is "Where to?" or "Where are you off to?" or "Where are you going to?" or "Where are you from?" Once again, it is not meant to be nosy. You could answer, "Nowhere in particular," and not cause any offense. There is certainly no need, and it is not expected, that you go into the

greater details of your whereabouts.

Most urban Malaysians are familiar with "Hi!" "Hello!" "Good Morning" or any of the other western-style greetings. It is best not to initiate a hug or kiss with a man, although a hello or goodbye hug with another woman you know well is perfectly acceptable. Avoid doing it all the time, however, as it will then appear strange. You can do it on arrival if you haven't seen her for a long time, and on leaving, but the rest of the time, lack of physical contact is best. Some foreigners do see Malaysians of the same sex holding hands and assume that it is permissible. This is not entirely true. Young girls who are close friends do sometimes hold hands and walk along a street, but this becomes rarer in one's thirties and almost never in one's thirties and forties. In modern urban societies, such prolonged hand-holding is, indeed, interpreted in the same way as it is in western societies. Once one becomes a grandmother or has respectable grey hair, one can once again indulge in holding a young girl's hand in a motherly and concerned way, and it will not be misconstrued.

If you are dealing with a man, avoid the physical contact unless you are deliberately inviting some sort of intimacy. It will not endear you to those around the man, even if he enjoys it!

## Personal Questions

Very often Malaysians will ask you questions which you might consider very personal. Many have no compunctions about asking you what salary you are getting, how old you are, or even what your height and weight is. Malaysian ladies who have lived overseas and interacted with westerners would avoid asking you such questions, but they are in the minority. You can avoid an answer by being vague. A trick I have often used is to ask the other person what he thinks the answer to his question is. I then say, "How did you guess? Great!" - whatever his answer is!

## 'Saving face'

The concept of 'saving face' is very real in much of Malaysian society and those who break the norms are considered uncouth and those around him feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. The concept of 'face' means preserving a person's dignity. The Malays have an expression about saving face which is sometimes heard

in Malaysian English as "Don't shame my water face!" Basically it means that one should not embarrass someone or be embarrassed in public. You might also hear someone referring to herself or someone else as being 'thick-skinned' or 'thin-skinned'. A 'thin-skinned' person is easily embarrassed while a 'thick-skinned' person isn't. Referring to someone as 'thick-skinned' is not paying him a compliment.

The result of 'saving face' manifests itself in delays in getting a reply to something when the answer is in the negative, hearing a "yes" reply when you can see from the person's face and body language that the person is not too happy about it, or telling 'white' lies to avoid embarrassing the other persons. This last strategy is considered very polite whereas the embarrassing truth would be considered cold, unsympathetic and uncouth.

Malaysian ladies and even men might giggle or laugh in a face-saving attempt. It is usually not because they are amused but because they are embarrassed. An example that comes to mind was when a foreign lady I know dropped chilly sauce on her skirt. Those with her laughed, not intentionally to poke fun at her. She was taken aback and went off to the bathroom, not very happy. Realizing she had taken offence, I followed her to the bathroom and explained that they were sub-consciously trying to lighten the whole situation so that she would not be embarrassed.

Malaysians would also frequently use Bahasa Malaysia or a Chinese dialect, or Iban, even though there is a foreigner there who doesn't understand the language. Don't be offended. It is often done to save face. They could be discussing the bill, for example, and don't want you to be embarrassed by the whole transaction. Money is always something that one needs to save face over. 'Saving face' also causes the fierce activity over paying bills which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

## Protesting

There is a whole ritual involved when something is offered and 'refused'. Three situations should be mentioned here.

When you give someone a gift, she will possibly decline it while accepting it. For example, even while taking it from you, she would say, "You shouldn't have taken the trouble," or "Why did you bother?" Don't be offended. She is actually pleased that you did take the time and trouble. Then, don't be offended if she

puts the gift on one side and appears to ignore it. She will open it after you leave as she doesn't want to appear too eager, nor does she want you to feel embarrassed about her looking at your gift while you are still there. The more modern Malaysian woman is more likely to say "thank you" and receive your gift without protest, but she is part of a minority.

The same is true for compliments. A Malaysian woman finds it hard to accept compliments so don't be surprised if your compliment about a dress or even a car meets with a quick denial. For example:

"That's a beautiful dress."

"Oh, you think so? It's really cheap." or

"Oh, it's just an old thing."

This does not mean that she is not pleased about receiving the compliment. She is just bound by custom to decline it. Once again, the more western Malaysian woman is likely to say "Thank you", but she is a rarity.

Paying a bill at a restaurant is another situation which many foreigners misunderstand.

If a foreigner were to offer to pay the bill, the Malaysian would immediately protest, saying that she is the hostess and should meet the bill. If it is the first time that you have been entertained by that particular Malaysian lady, then let her pay. 'Going Dutch' is not common in Malaysia. However, if you are regularly entertained by her, you will need to insist on paying the bill. The insistence is an expected norm. Among Chinese men, fierce attempts at fighting to pay the bill go on. This is an expected custom. This attempt at paying the bill is not so marked among women. However, the woman guest in mixed company is in a greater dilemma. There are no established norms as such since the situation is really a recent phenomena. If a man asks a woman out because he wants to woo her, that's easy enough. The man picks up the tab. If it is only a platonic situation, then the woman should expect to pick up the tab sometimes, without damaging that 'delicate' male ego! One way to do it would be to arrange with him, beforehand, that you are going to pick up the tab.

## Forms of address

It is difficult at first to understand forms of address in Malaysia. Because of the multicultural nature of the society, one has to

learn to address different persons from different ethnic groups differently. A good guide is to use the first name, or what you see on paper as the first name.

Here is an example of a Malay name:

Azizah bte Atan or Azizah Atan

*bte* means "daughter of". If the person is married, she is addressed as Puan Azizah. If she is unmarried, she is addressed as Cik (pronounced as "che") Azizah. If you are in doubt as to whether she is married or not, address her as Puan. You would never address the lady as Puan Atan because that is her father's name.

In Sarawak and Sabah, if you are introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Tersan, use the same rule and, if you meet the wife on her own, address her as "Mrs. Christopher" because "Tersan" could be her father-in-law. Don't be surprised if you yourself are addressed by your first name, with Miss or Mrs. before it.

A man is addressed as Encik (pronounced as "inche"). A man whose name is Aziz bin Atan or Aziz Atan is addressed as En. Aziz, not Encik Atan because Atan is the name of his father. A man whose name begins with Syed, for example, Syed Hussein bin Syed Ali, is more appropriately addressed as Tuan rather than Encik. Also those who have made the pilgrimage to Mecca are addressed as Tuan Haji for men and Puan Hajah or Hajah for ladies.

You might also see Tunku in front of a name. This indicates that the person is a member of one of the royal families. Other such hereditary honorifics are Ungku, Wan, Abang, Dayang and so on. It would be appropriate to address the person as Tunku or Ungku or Abang or Dayang, her or his own name being optional.

You might also see a name like this:

Rajeswary Mahalingam, or, M. Rajeswary

This is an Indian name. "M" or Mahalinga is the name of her father. Most Indian ladies do not mind being addressed as Miss Mahalingam or Miss Rajeswary. It is better to address men by their first names rather than by their father's names, however. Munusamy a/l Subramaniam would be better addressed as Mr. Munusamy than Mr. Subramaniam. Once married, most modern Indian ladies use their husband's name as an honorific. So, if Rajeswary married Munusamy Subramaniam, she would become Mrs. Munusamy.

Among the Indians is the sikh community. They may be

recognized by Kaur (ladies) and Singh (men) in their names. A person like Jasbir Kaur is frequently addressed as Miss Kaur, even by Malaysians. This is incorrect because Kaur and Singh are the equivalent of 'Mr.' and 'Miss'. Many sikhs have started using their family names to try and get out from under such address forms. One may therefore see a name like Harjit Singh Dhillon or Pretam Kaur Dhillon. Addressing the former as Mr. Dhillon or Encik Harjit and the latter as Miss Dhillon, Miss Pretam or Cik/Puan Pretam is acceptable.

The Chinese start their names with the family name first: Tan Ling Ling. This person should be addressed as 'Miss Tan' or 'Mrs. Tan' rather than 'Miss Ling' or 'Mrs. Ling'. Traditionally, Chinese ladies retained their maiden names after they were married. Modern ladies tend to use their husband's surnames. When in doubt as to whether they are using their own name or their husband's name, and if you know they are married, use the Malaysian form of address Puan which does not discriminate as to whether that is her name or her husband's name. Men's names also use the same system of having the family name first.

But this isn't all! The traveller or business person in Malaysia might well come across honorifics like Dato or Tan Sri or Tun. These are titles (like 'Sir' or 'Lord' in England) which have been conferred on the person. If you are dealing with a person who has such a title, you are advised to use the honorific as the person with the title, is often proud of it.

After all this formality, forms of address when dealing with Malay stall holders, is refreshing and reflects the warmth of the society itself. Familiarity is more common in these transactions. You might find yourself, or someone with you, addressed as Kak or Kakak, meaning elder sister. The person with you might address a younger person as Dik or Adik, meaning younger brother or sister. In Kelantan, the use of Mik (or 'madam') is quite common.

## Taboos

All societies have certain norms and Malaysian society is no different. There are cultural norms which should be pointed out to the visitor if she wants a pleasant stay in the country.



## Animals

Muslims in Malaysia avoid **dogs** for religious reasons. It is not very polite, therefore, to bring your poodle into a Muslim house, or to expect Muslim guests to your house to like being pawed by your dog. Many hotels will not allow you to keep a dog in your room so be prepared to make other arrangements for your dog. Non-Muslims in both East and West Malaysia do keep dogs, but Malaysians in general do not have the same feelings that many western women have about the place of pets in the home. Do not assume, therefore, that your pet will be as welcome in a Malaysian home as you or your children are.

**Pigs** are another animal which is taboo for Muslims. In Chinese and Iban society, however, the pig is served as a special treat. The Chinese are more used to guests declining pork and will make allowances for it. In Iban society, it is harder to refuse and, if you do not eat pork, it is best to warn the headman beforehand.

## Clothes

A good rule for the foreigner is to be as modestly clad as possible at all times. When travelling in rural areas in Peninsular Malaysia, choose to wear slacks or pants, rather than shorts, for example. When at the beach, a full, one-piece swim suit is more suitable than a skimpy bikini.

You may feel that this goes against your rights as a woman, and I agree with you. But the interpretation of the on-looker may be that you are out for a good time and there might be a male around who feels you should not be disappointed. To avoid unwanted, unpleasant attention, therefore, dress modestly. Many Malaysian men find foreign women attractive and their openness invites easier accessibility.

## Drinking

Very few Malaysian women drink heavily and it is quite common to see, in urban societies, the husband drinking while the wife nurses one drink or orange juice. She will drive home. Muslims are not allowed to drink for religious reasons, so don't take a bottle of wine to a Muslim home as a gift!

Men of other ethnic groups do drink and it is common, especially at Chinese parties and weddings, to hear Yam Seng! which is the equivalent of "Bottoms up!" At Chinese weddings, brandy and whiskey flow like Chinese tea. At Iban and Kadazan festivals, *tapai* also flows freely and inebriation is the name of the game.

Despite that, however, one does not see a woman who is totally inebriated. Women are expected not to get in that state. It is a male prerogative to behave as foolishly as they want to when drunk. If a woman gets drunk, there is general embarrassment all round and everyone 'loses face'.

It is also a rare sight to see a woman alone at a bar and it is an indication that the woman wants to be picked up. If you are on your own in a hotel, therefore, and want a drink, use the bar in your refrigerator or send for room service if you want a drink and prefer not to have unwanted attention. If you do feel like company, however, then by all means head for the bar.

## Gestures

There are some gestures which are taboo to certain ethnic groups and it would be best to avoid them altogether.

Patting someone on the head is not an acceptable gesture in Malay and Indian society, no matter if it is a child or an adult, no matter how cute the child is.

Touching a man should also be avoided as it gives the impression that you are seeking intimacy.

If you are signalling for someone to approach you, avoid using your forefinger to beckon to her or him. Use your full hand in a waving motion.

Most Malaysian women, do not offer to shake hands first, whether to a man or another woman. It will not be taken amiss, however, if you offer your hand first. In urban societies, shaking hands is understood as a western norm and is quite acceptable. In rural areas, however, it would be wiser not to stretch out your hand first. In some Muslim societies, it is not acceptable for a man and woman to touch hands and your outstretched hand might be ignored. When in doubt, wait for the other person to make a move. A smile instead of a handshake is perfectly acceptable.

## Entering a mosque

Women in a mosque is not a usual sight. When entering a mosque, therefore, please obey the instructions they may have. Even if no signs are posted, you should remember to *remove your shoes* before entering the mosque. If you are *menstruating*, you would be defiling the mosque if you enter. Make any excuse you want to, but don't go in. As mentioned in previous sections, you should wear clothes which will *cover up* your arms and legs. Wear a scarf to cover your head. While inside, *avoid touching the Koran*. There is a special ritual for Muslims before they touch the Koran.

## Entering a house

One of the most important things a visitor to Malaysia needs to remember is to remove her shoes before entering a Malaysian house. This rule is not only for ladies but for men as well. Some Malaysians don't really mind your entering their house with your shoes on, but the practice crosses ethnic boundaries and while removing your shoes will not break any taboo, not removing your shoes might. A sensible precaution before going to visit a Malaysian home, therefore, would be to wear shoes or high-heeled slippers which are easy to remove, something you can slip out of easily. In this respect, women have less trouble than men who often wear shoes with laces.

It is also considered very rude to put your feet up on a table or another chair in someone's house or even your office. It makes you appear uncouth and is worse for a woman than a man.

When visiting a Malaysian home, you can offer to wash up, and the offer will be appreciated, but don't insist as the hostess might feel that she has lost face. If you are staying with a working lady, however, and she has no maid, insist on washing up. Your hostess may protest, sometimes vehemently, but you will be welcomed back. If you sit back and expect to be waited on, your hostess will indeed wait on you, but don't expect to be welcomed as warmly the second time. She may offer an invitation for a second visit but her "Come again" will be more for politeness than sincerity.

## Table Etiquette

Depending on the background of each person, Malaysians use their fingers, chopsticks or a spoon and fork to eat with. It is not common to find a Malaysian eating off a fork. The fork is there to push the food into a spoon, which in turn is raised to one's mouth. You will also find that the spoon, chopsticks or fingers are also used to break up a chunk of meat or fish and rarely will knives be placed on the table.

Chopsticks may be held in the right or left hand, depending on whether one is a right- or left-hander. The sticks are held between the thumb and fingers. The forefinger acts and sometimes the third finger act together to control the movement of the upper stick, while the thumb and fourth finger hold the bottom stick firmly. It is considered bad manners to let the chopsticks cross. With a foreigner, however, there is appreciation of the fact that you are trying to use the chopsticks and your attempts will not be considered improper. If you have problems handling chopsticks, don't worry. Ask for a fork and spoon. Many Malaysians cannot handle chopsticks either!

It is normal for Malays and Indians to use their fingers to eat. While it is all right in eating certain Indian dishes to have gravy and rice all over the palm of your hand, Malays usually use only their fingers.

When using your fingers, pick up the food using your fingers and thumb. Bring your hand up to your mouth. Using your thumb as a sort of shovel, push the food into your mouth. Once again, if you find it impossible to handle the food with your hands, ask for cutlery. It won't be taken amiss. In very rural areas, however, they may not have forks, so you might have to manage with a spoon.

## Bumiputera Groups

Whereas most urban Malaysians sit at table, the rural folk might prefer a mat on the floor.

You will usually be served with a number of dishes and the food is usually hot. The hostess will usually urge you to keep on eating. Don't feel that you have to but it will please the hostess if you do eat heartily. If you merely peck at your food, the hostess tends to think that you are not enjoying the food.

The hot thick sambals, reddish in colour, are meant to be

eaten with rice. Just take small portions at a time and mix it with a lot of rice. Don't treat it as if it is gravy. Curry is different, though, and can be poured on the rice more lavishly. When in doubt, take as little as possible, just a spoonful. The hostess will soon tell you if that is too little. It will, however, give you a chance to see how the others at the table cope, and if you don't like the particular dish, it won't be so difficult for you to finish it.

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## Chinese

Don't pile all the food in your plate. Take a little at a time. If there are a number of dishes on the table, don't feel that you have to take all of them at once. Take a spoonful of one or two dishes and finish that before taking a spoonful of another dish. If there are no serving spoons, use your chopsticks to take what you need. But don't use your chopsticks as a shovel to shovel food into your bowl or plate. That is impolite.

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## Indian

When eating in an Indian home, you might find that an Indian wife who has not lived abroad, tends to pile food on your plate. As long as you keep finishing the food, more will be piled on. It is all right, therefore, to leave a small portion of food on your plate.

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## Other cultural considerations

If you stay a while in Malaysia, you might find Malaysians taking a personal interest in your life. For example, a lady living alone is often pitied and attempts might be made by her friends to remedy the situation. Just hold your ground and try to keep on telling them that you like living alone. If you are travelling alone, you might also have a problem with over-eager males offering to show you around. Just decline courteously if you find it distasteful. Malaysian men rarely persist when they find their company rejected.

Finally, the western woman, used to doing and saying exactly what she feels and thinks, might now be of the opinion, that Malaysian society is rather restrictive. This is not so. People are very willing to help a foreign woman along. The important thing to keep in mind is that the customs are different, and are

therefore, exciting and challenging. A foreign wife who is not working might tend to get lonely. There is a lot of voluntary work which can be done and local organizations are ever grateful for any help they can get. (See section on **Things to do**) Foreign wives will not endear themselves to the locals if they are constantly complaining of the better life in their country. Such wives make the locals lose face and they start to avoid them and leave them even more alone.

## SHOPPING AND OTHER THINGS TO DO

Malaysians enjoy shopping and "window shopping" is a favourite pastime. Teenagers hang out in department stores and emporiums in the cities, window shopping and people-watching.

The key to shopping in Malaysia is not to be in a hurry and not to be too eager. The foreigner is likely to be approached by touts who will tell her of special deals in certain places. Be cautious. Check with the hotel staff. You can trust them more.

There are actually four types of places you can shop at. There are the large department stores and expensive boutiques. Prices are set and no bargaining occurs. Instead, an experienced Malaysian consumer will ask if there's a "discount". Sometimes, one gets lucky and there is, indeed, a discount which makes everyone happy. If there's no discount, there's no loss of face which an attempt at bargaining would have caused.

Next there are the smaller shops which are found in the cities as well as the smaller towns. Bargaining for lower prices is quite acceptable in these shops. A Malaysian who does not bargain sometimes gets offered a lower price anyway, but a foreigner may not be so fortunate.

Bargaining is a skill and many Malaysian women enjoy haggling for quite a while over an item. At some point, a decision must be made as to when one should walk away. The shopkeeper, if he would still make a profit by selling you the item you want, will then call you back. If he doesn't, you know you have asked for too low a price and will know better at the next shop.

In the larger towns, too, you will see signs of "Sales" in the smaller shops. These are not the type of sales one sees in Europe, the United States and Australia. These "sales" never stop. Many shops cash in on the many festivals and change their signs to suit whichever festival is to occur next. Never buy from the first shop you come to. Check around, get the best price and then decide.

Besides the shops, there are also small stalls you can shop at. These shack-like places usually offer cheaper bargains than shops because their rental costs are lower. Here too, bargaining is the

name of the game. If you don't bargain and pay whatever you are asked, you will soon find touts all round you, sensing your ignorance and eager to cash in on it. Malaysians normally start bargaining at these *gerai* from about 60% of the price offered. A foreigner should start at least at 50% of the price asked. If, however, the stall-holder does offer to sell you the item at the price you asked for, it is not wise to tell him to forget it. Inspect the item carefully, however, and if you find any flaws, you can use that as an excuse to refuse to buy it. Stall-holders can get very upset if you waste their time with all that bargaining and then not buy the item at the price you offered to pay for it.

The last type of shopping areas are the open stalls along the streets. These stalls sometimes form a night market or *Pasar malam*. In some towns, these stalls are up during the day too. Once again, bargaining is expected.

In most places, shopping hours extend till fairly late in the evening and department stores are usually open seven days a week.

## Cookery lessons and handicraft

For those who enjoy making their own pieces of handicraft or learning to prepare Malaysian-style meals, there are also possibilities if you stay longer than three days in the Kuala Lumpur or Kuching areas. In both areas, there are special classes you could attend to "learn the trade". Contact numbers are offered under each area.

Below is a list of places in each state where you could shop for various items. Where applicable, the place which gives good value for money is marked with \*.

### Kuala Lumpur and Selangor

The largest shops are in Kuala Lumpur. However, a lot of goods are imported. There are a number of good boutiques and tailoring or made-to-order clothes are reasonable.

If you are going to places outside Kuala Lumpur and want to take home local souvenirs, it would be best to read what is available in the states you are going to (discussed below) before you buy anything in Kuala Lumpur or Selangor because items like batik and pottery would be cheaper in the states which





Are you in for a piece to take home?

produce them on a larger scale. Selangor pewter, however, is produced in Selangor and has a standard rate in all shops. You do not have to worry about bargaining, or that one shop might charge you more.

### **Clothes**

Ampang Park, Bukit Bintang Plaza, Campbell Complex, Chinatown, Chow Kit Road, \*Globe Silk Store, Hankyu Jaya, Imbi Plaza, Jayajusco, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Masjid India, Mun Loong, Kuala Lumpur Plaza, The Mall, \*Pasar Malam, Pertama Complex, Subang Parade, Sungai Wang Plaza, Yow Chuan Plaza.

### **Fabrics**

Chow Kit Road, \*Globe Silk Store, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Masjid India, Mun Loong, Pasar Malam, Pertama Complex, Subang Parade.

### **Groceries and fresh food**

Ampang Park, Bukit Bintang Plaza, Campbell Complex, Chinatown, Chow Kit Road, Imbi Plaza, Jayajusco, Kuala Lumpur Plaza, The Mall, Parksons, \*Pasar Malam, \*Pasar Tani, Subang Parade, Sungai Wang Plaza, Yow Chuan Plaza.

### **Household items**

Ampang Park, Bukit Bintang Plaza, Campbell Complex, Chinatown, Chow Kit Road, Globe Silk Store, Hankyu Jaya, Imbi Plaza, Jayajusco, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Jalan Masjid India, Kuala Lumpur Plaza, The Mall, \*Pasar Malam, Pertama Complex, Subang Parade, Sungai Wang Plaza, Yow Chuan Plaza.

### **Gifts and Souvenirs**

Selangor pewter, Karyaneka, Museum Negara, \*Central Market, Pasar Minggu, Pasar Malam, 10 Kia Peng, Airport Duty-free shops, Batik Malaysia Berhad (Wisma Kraftangan in Jalan Tun Perak), Barakaff Ele'ganza (hand-painted batik) - Yow Chuan Plaza, Peiping Lace (Jln Tuanku Abdul Rahman), Peking Art Co. (Sungai Wang Plaza).



Top-spinning



Winding the spindles

## Bookstores

There are a number of bookstores in the Kuala Lumpur-Selangor area. If you have not seen one and need to get to one, the following are some of the larger bookstores.

### Kuala Lumpur

Berita Book Centre (Bukit Bintang Plaza), MPH (Yow Chuan Plaza and Bukit Bintang Plaza), Times Book Centre (Yow Chuan Plaza), Minerva (Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman), Anthonian (Jalan Tun Sambanthan/Brickfields), University of Malaya Cooperative Bookstore (in the University of Malaya. You might be stopped at the gate by a guard. Tell him you are going to the bookshop).

### Petaling Jaya

Arenabuku (Taman Tun Dr. Ismail), Lim (SS25 and SS2), Bookazine (SS2).

### Handicraft and Cooking Lessons in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor

It is possible to take lessons in cooking and other types of handicraft while you are in Kuala Lumpur or the area around.

The problem is that many of the cooking instructors who do give private lessons, do not speak fluent English. This is especially so for those who teach Chinese cooking. There are one or two people who do, however. The rate is \$200 for three types of desserts or dishes, for a group of one to five people. So, if there are five people, then each pays \$40. You could negotiate with the teacher as to what you would like to learn to do. A person who could put you in touch with an appropriate teacher is Doris (tel. 7179551. Leave a message.)

If you would like to have lessons in making artificial bread, crystal or paper flowers, or clay baskets and bowls, or just learn the art of flower arrangement, call Stella at 7181628. She charges \$300 for the basic course in which one learns how to make 13 types of flowers. Classes are held once or twice a week, depending on how often you would like to attend. She needs five persons for a class.

B. G. Goh also gives lessons in flower making. Her charges are negotiable, depending on how much you want to learn. She



The very own "Malaysian Bazaar", a great place for souvenir-hunting.



Souvenir stalls in the arcade



Watch Malaysian artists at work



Beautiful hand-made silk items to take away

is also willing to teach even if there is only one person who is interested.

### **Fortune telling**

Many Chinese and Indians are interested in astrology and seeing what the future holds. Some consult temple priests, others mediums. Most of the shopping complexes have a fortune teller off and on. The Central Market also has one. Indians visit the temple priests to have their horoscopes read. These priests do speak some English and would be able to communicate with you.

For something quite different, however, there is a medium off Jalan Tun Sambanthan (the road leading off from the roundabout) who practises from a house which has been turned into a temple. She doesn't charge anything, although it is customary to leave a dollar or two as a donation. She has been known to make accurate diagnoses of medical problems and also acts as an all-round counselor. She speaks fluent English and has no trouble communicating.

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## **Perak**

### **Clothes**

Super Kinta, the shopping centre beside the market, and the market itself. The range of clothes is not as good as in Kuala Lumpur.

### **Fabrics**

Super Kinta, Yik Foong Textiles, Kamdar, Kwong Fatt.

### **Groceries and Fresh Food**

Super Kinta, Parkson, Ipoh Garden Plaza, \*market.

### **Household items**

Super Kinta, \*market.



**Top:** Hand-painted batik needs a steady hand **Bottom:** One process in the printing of batik





## Gifts and Souvenirs

Ribbons Gift shop in Ipoh Gardens, Paramount House.

## Pulau Pinang

The largest shopping centre is the Komtar building on Penang Road, standing clearly above the city. Any taxi or trishaw will be able to take you there.

### Clothes

Komtar, Gama, Chowrasta Market at Penang Road, Pasar Malam (Night markets) held at various places around the island.

### Fabrics

Campbell Street, Super Komtar Departmental Store in Komtar, Gama Departmental Store, Yaohan Departmental Store in Komtar.

### Groceries and Fresh Food

Pulau Tikus market, Jelutong market, Batu Lanchang afternoon market.

### Household items

Super Komtar Departmental Store in Komtar, Gama Departmental Store, Yaohan Departmental store, Pasar Malam (night markets).

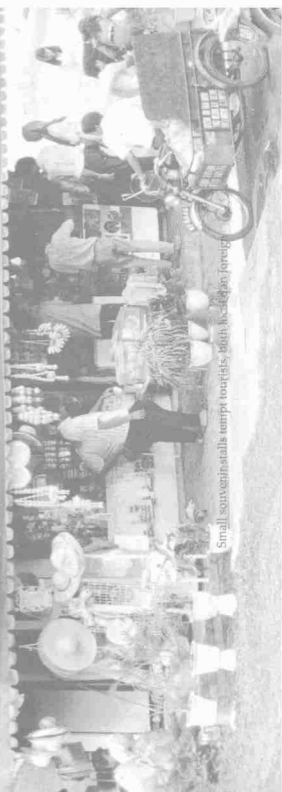
## Gifts and Souvenirs

Kek Lok Si Temple (the way up to the temple is "paved with possible cheap souvenirs), stalls along Batu Ferringhi in front of the beach hotels, Penang Road, Chulia Street.

## Kedah and Perlis

Kedah and Perlis themselves are not really the places to go shopping. Those in Kedah and Perlis either go to the Thai border

SELAMAT DATANG KE TUGU PERINGATAN NEGARA  
VISIT MALAYSIA YEAR 1990  
WELCOME TO NATIONAL MONUMENT



Small souvenir stalls tempt tourists; 50th location for foreign

towns or to Penang if they want to do serious shopping. Shopping at the Thai border is, however, an interesting shopping experience. Don't believe any of the brandname stuff you come across because they are most often very good copies of the originals.

### Clothes

In Alor Setar there are a number of shopping complexes: Kompleks MPKS and Hankyu Jaya are the better known ones.

### Fabrics

In Alor Setar purchase fabric at the shopping complexes or small cloth shops in the town. If you are in Langkawi and want to purchase fabrics, you'll need to go to Kuah or Pokok Asam.

### Groceries and Fresh Food

In Alor Setar, the markets are the best for fresh food. There is the Alor Setar market in Seberang Perak, the Pasar Tani (Farmers' market) on Thursday and Pasar Raya Peladang (also a farmer's market). There are also supermarkets you can go to.

In Langkawi, when you need fresh food, go to the Kuah market or the night market, or the Pekan Malam on Thursday evenings.

### Household items

The supermarkets are the easiest. You can also try the Pekan Rabu or the Wednesday market.

### Gifts and Souvenirs

You can pick up cheap souvenirs at the Pekan Rabu or the Kompleks MPKS in Alor Setar. In Langkawi, the old market complex in Kuah is worth visiting and so is Padang Matsirat.

### Miscellaneous

There is a duty free complex in Langkawi in Bukit Kayu Hitam and a duty free shop at the Langkawi Island Resort. Selections are, however, limited.

If you are crossing the Thai border to shop there, staying in Alor Setar is a more pleasant experience as those border towns can be major red light areas. You can cross over for the day and return to Malaysia after your shopping is done.

## Kelantani

### **Clothes**

One could shop for western-style clothes, or traditional Malay attire. Western-type pseudo-brand name clothes, shoes, bags and even briefcases are also very much in evidence. You'll be surprised how much a 'Bally' or 'Dunhill' bag costs. You can even get Christian Dior look-alikes! The best place for these, without crossing the border into the town of Golok in Thailand, which many locals do, is to go to the main market and the bazaar beside it, in the heart of Kota Bharu.

Other places which might interest you are: Hankyu Jaya, Parkson, Bersatu Shopping Centre, Pantai Timor, Buloh Kubu Bazaar, Pasar Lambak and Pasar Lama.

### **Fabrics**

Kelantan has beautiful batik fabrics in cotton and silk, as well as songket, a locally handwoven material, interwoven with silver or gold thread. Some of the material comes from Terengganu, Thailand or Indonesia. You should make sure where it comes from. The "songket" from Thailand tends to shrink, crush badly and lose its lustre after the first wash. It is also one-tenth the price of local songket.

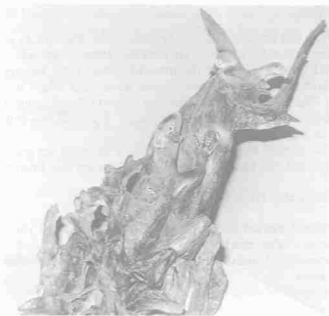
The bazaar is again the best place to go to for materials. Besides that, the shops in Jalan Tok Hakim are also interesting.

### **Groceries and Fresh Food**

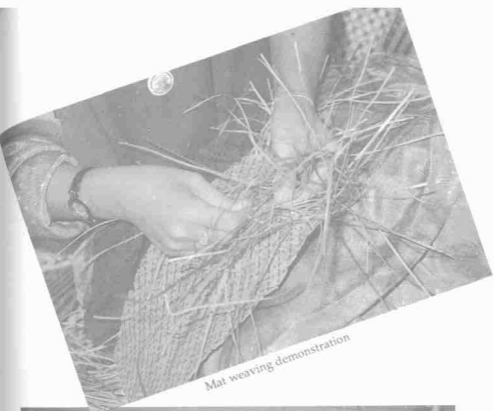
The central market in Kota Bharu is the best place if you are in the area. The market at Buloh Kubu is also good. The supermarkets: Hankyu Jaya, Bersatu and Pantai Timor also have fresh food.



Shells come alive in Malaysian handicraft



A piece of driftwood becomes a work of art



Mat weaving demonstration



Making of the famous "songket"

## Household items

Locals recommend the two markets, the central market and the market at Buloh Kubu as the best places for these items.

## Gifts and Souvenirs

Pantai Cinta Berahi (and the road leading to Pantai Cinta Berahi) have numerous houses which have been converted into showrooms for cottage industry items like kites, items in silver (filigree and repousse) from brooches and tie pins to tea services; brass pieces and, of course, batik. Other places include Kompleks Batik Berhad, Kedai Buloh, Penambang, Pantai Cinta Berahi, the MARA building, and, once again, the central market and bazaar. The rule of thumb is, if its local, then the central market and/or bazaar have it! Beng Huat, a shop near the market, is reputed to have the best selection of *keropok* (fish crackers).

## Terengganu

The state specializes in its own batik, silk and *songket* (handwoven material interwoven with gold or silver thread).

### Clothes

The stalls near the bus station are the best for clothes.

### Fabrics

Again the stalls near the bus station offer a wide variety. For *songket*, you might like to try *Atikah Songket* in Jalan Pulau Musang, and a purchase of silk would take you to *Sutera Semai* on Jalan Kuala Ibai. They are not geared up for massive tourist visits, but if you ask to see how they work, they will show you.

### Groceries and Fresh Food

There are two main markets: Pasar Kedai Payang (or the Jalan Bandar market) which is in the town centre, and Pasar Chabang Tiga (Three), which operates only in the late morning and early afternoon.

### **Household items**

Pasar Kedai Payang.

### **Gifts and Souvenirs**

Besides the places mentioned above for fabrics, you can pick up all kinds of local products and also see interesting items at the central market, Pasar Kedai Payang.

## **Pahang**

The bazaar in Kuantan is the best place for most items, especially clothes, fabrics and household items.

### **Clothes**

Bazaar

### **Fabrics**

Bazaar

### **Groceries and Fresh Food**

The market, Kitasama Supermarket, Parkson.

### **Gifts and Souvenirs**

Karyaneka Pahang, Pantai Teluk Cempedak, Hotel Pahang building.

## **Johor**

### **Clothes**

Holiday Plaza, Kompleks Tunku Abdul Rahman, The Store.

### **Fabrics**

Pasar Baru (the new market), Shopping complexes.

### **Groceries and Fresh Food**

Central market, Pasar Malam (Night market) on Thursdays at



Taman Pelangi, Pasar Malam on Tuesdays at Taman Century.

### Household items

Shopping complexes for more expensive and imported items, the various Pasar Malam for day-to-day things.

### Gifts and Souvenirs

JARO (Johor Area Rehabilitation Centre) for very good cane items.

Pottery at the village of Air Hitam. Aw Pottery can send your pottery anywhere in the world you want it to go. Also at Air Hitam, you can pick up agricultural produce as well as cottage industry products from central Johor.

## Melaka

### Clothes

Designer clothes can be purchased at the major departmental stores. The more popular stores are Fajar Departmental Store in the Soon Seng Plaza, and Madam King's on Jalan Bunga Raya. The latter is well known among locals for having a wide selection of clothes for all ages.

Cheaper clothes can be purchased along Jalan Bunga Raya, and, for more active people, Kampong Jawa has clothes like army fatigues and other camping equipment.

### Fabrics

Fajar Departmental Store; Shops along Jalan Bunga Raya.

### Groceries and Fresh Food

There are three main markets, besides smaller markets at different places in the city. The central market is in Jalan Kilang, opposite the bus terminal. There is another market in Bukit China (pronounced "buket cheena") along Jalan Temenggong. The third market is a wholesale market or "Pasar Borong" in Tengkeria where one can obtain fresh food at dealers prices. The fish is especially worth purchasing there.

Besides the markets, one could also get uncooked food at the supermarkets, especially Fajar and Great Wall Shopping Centre. There are also small sundry shops all over the city and you will be amazed at the variety of items those small shops can store.

### Household items

Fajar.

### Gifts and Souvenirs

There is a row of small stalls at the esplanade, in front of the historical buildings in the centre of Melaka. They have a wide range of souvenirs, mostly key chains, T-shirts and wooden items. It is not the sort of quality stuff produced in some of the other states, but is easy on the budget if you have to take stuff home for the folks in the office or the neighbours or nieces and nephews.

## Negri Sembilan

### Clothes

Hanjo Supermarket, Wisma Punca Emas (various stalls), Parkson, Gold Supermarket, \*Pasar Malam (night market) near Sembilan Supermarket.

### Fabrics

There is a line of shops near the Sembilan Supermarket which are quite good. You will need to bargain.

### Groceries and Fresh Food

The main market near the yellow bus terminal has the best value. You can also go to the supermarkets.

### Household items

The supermarkets are the easiest for these.



The *Kereta Lembu*

Iban Maiden Dance  
in full attire



## Gifts and Souvenirs

A good place is the Pusat Budaya in Seremban which is next to the state museum. Traditional handicraft like mat weaving, basket making and so on, are available there. In Port Dickson, the village folk often have their wares for sale at the beach, especially near the Rasa Sayang.

## Sarawak

Made-in-Sarawak products are usually quality items. If you want to buy imported items, Sarawak is not the place to buy them.

### Clothes

Sarawak is not known for clothes although batik clothes from Indonesia are readily available. There is one store in Kuching, however, which is worthy of mention. **Fabrico** in India Street has clothes, belts, handbags and other accessories - all with a difference - they have used the traditional handwoven Sarawak cloth and blended it with western fabrics. The result is striking, interesting and absolutely tasteful. A visit to this place is a must for anyone interested in clothes.

### Fabrics

While Sarawak is not noted for imported fabric, it does have its own handwoven fabric called "pua". It makes use of traditional dyes and the patterns are distinctively Sarawakian. The material is on the thick side and is locally used for "sarongs", belts and blankets (called "pua kumbu"). The fabric would make a good jacket for spring or autumn. It is not cheap, though. A metre costs about \$35 and a full length blanket can cost about \$650. One can buy the cloth from handicraft centres, **Sarawak Cultural Village**, as well as the **Tourist Centre building** on Market Street. For more ordinary dress fabrics, **India Street** has a good selection of fabrics, including fabric from India.

### Household items

If you need to buy any household item in Kuching, you could go to one of the four major shopping centres: the Kuching Plaza, the



Iban 'Pua Kumbu' weaving



Bidayuh Maiden doing her daily chore of padi pounding

Sarawak Plaza, Wisma Hopoh and Wisma Saberkas in Batu Lintang. But by far the most interesting place in Kuching is **India Street**, with small shops crowded with all kinds of interesting things. Even if one does not want to buy anything, it would be great just to browse in the shops. You might be tempted. Just remember to bargain, however.

### **Gifts and Souvenirs**

Sarawak has a range of excellent handcraft. Of note is her pottery with the distinctive designs of Sarawak. There are two types, glazed and unglazed. Vases are the most popular and very reasonably priced for the quality of the product. A 6 inch vase costs about \$5.50, a 12 inch vase about \$12.00 and a 24 inch vase about \$75. Other items range from money boxes to stools and lamp stands. The best place to buy Sarawak pottery would be in Kuching, from the factories at the 5th mile (Batu Lima) of the old airport road. Unfortunately, not all of them can ship the pottery for you to your destination. Be prepared to spend a while there just browsing from one show room to the next. Each factory has its own distinctive style and prices vary according to the design. To get what you really like, you will need to take your time. If you don't have the time, then the pink Tourist Centre building on Market Street near Pangkalan Batu has a good selection at reasonable prices. The Sarawak Cultural Village also has a good selection at competitive prices.

### **Miscellaneous**

An exciting shopping place is the Sunday market which actually begins on Saturday afternoon and goes on till Sunday evening. Anything goes at the market and villagers come out of the jungles to sell their wares. A really worthwhile experience.

### **Handicraft and cooking lessons**

If you are in Kuching and are interested in learning to make local cakes, weave baskets and the traditional blanket called the "pau kumbu" or in other craft, the place to go to is the Sarawak Cultural Village at Damai Beach. Regular lessons are conducted by members of different ethnic groups, for particular food and handicraft.

## Sabah

### **Clothes and other accessories**

Not the place to buy western-brand clothes. Great for Filipino fabric and clothes. The Filipino market is the place to go for all kinds of things, including clothes.

### **Fabrics**

The Filipino market.

### **Fresh Food and Groceries**

The main market, in the centre of town; the Tamus (or open market) held in all the major towns.

### **Household items**

Tamu.

### **Gifts and Souvenirs**

These are expensive in Sabah. They do, however, have some different things like lobster shells mounted on plywood! There is also a wide selection of shell souvenirs. The best place for these souvenirs is actually in Semporna and Tawau, but, if you are only going to be in Kota Kinabalu, then, once again, it's the Filipino market.

### **Miscellaneous**

The major item of interest in Sabah is the large selection of inexpensive pearls which come in various colours (blue, pink and white) and shapes. You can buy them in a string, or as individual pearls. The best place to buy pearls is at Tawau and Semporna. If you are only going to be in Kota Kinabalu, go to the Filipino market. You don't have to worry about finding the stalls, there are touts who will find you! Remember to bargain. A good pearl costs about \$10.

In the Filipino market, too, if you don't mind taking your

time and checking out the small, dingy stalls, you can also pick up leather goods at really low prices. A leather clutch purse, for example, could cost only \$8, depending on the design. Once again, remember to bargain.

The "tamus" or open markets are also interesting places to wander around in. One could buy all sorts of things, from buffaloes to pearls. A major tamu is in Kota Belud, but there are tamus in almost every town: Tandek on Mondays, Kiulu and Topokan on Tuesdays; Tamparuli on Wednesdays; Keningau, Tambunan, Sipitang, Telipok, Manggis, Simpangan, Tenghilan and Nabalu on Thursdays; Penampang, Beaufort, Sindumin, Matunggong, Kinarut and Babagon on Saturdays; Toboh, Tambunan, Tenom, Membakut, Kota Belud, Papar, Tuaran, Putatan and Gaya Street, Kota Kinabalu on Sundays.



# IMPORTANT WORDS AND PHRASES

## NUMBERS

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> (pronounced: too-jo)
8	<i>lapan</i>
9	<i>sembilan</i>
10	<i>sepuluh</i> (pronounced: se-poo-loh)
11	<i>sebelas</i>
12	<i>dua belas</i>
13	<i>tiga belas</i> etc.
20	<i>dua puluh</i>
21	<i>dua puluh satu</i> etc.
30	<i>tiga puluh</i>
31	<i>tiga puluh satu</i> etc.
40	<i>empat puluh</i>
50	<i>lima puluh</i>
60	<i>enam puluh</i> etc.
100	<i>satu ratus</i>
200	<i>dua ratus</i>
134	<i>satu ratus tiga puluh empat</i> etc.
1000	<i>satu ribu</i>
2000	<i>dua ribu</i>
1,500	<i>satu ribu lima ratus</i>
1324	<i>satu ribu tiga ratus dua puluh empat</i> etc.
$\frac{1}{2}$	<i>setengah</i> (pronounced: stengah)
$\frac{1}{4}$	<i>suku</i>

## DAYS OF THE WEEK

Monday	hari	<i>Isnin</i>
Tuesday	"	<i>Selasa</i>
Wednesday	"	<i>Rabu</i>
Thursday	"	<i>Khamis</i> (pronounce it as: ka-mis)
Friday	"	<i>Jumaat</i> (pronounce it as: joo- ma-āt)
Saturday	"	<i>Sabtu</i> (pronounce it as: sahp-too)
Sunday	"	<i>Ahad</i>

## PLEASANTRIES

Hullo	<i>Hullo</i>
How are you?	<i>Apa khabar?</i> (pronounce it as: kaba)
Good morning	<i>Selamat pagi</i>
Good afternoon	<i>Selamat petang</i>
Good evening	<i>Selamat petang</i>
Goodnight	<i>Selamat malam</i>
Goodbye (to person leaving)	<i>Selamat jalan</i>
Goodbye (to person staying)	<i>Selamat tinggal</i>
Thank you	<i>Terima kasih</i> (pronounce it as: trima-kasi)
Sorry	<i>Minta maaf</i>
Excuse me	<i>Minta maaf</i>

## TRAVEL LANGUAGE

Can you help me?	<i>Boleh tolong saya?</i> (Literally: Can you help me)
Where is ...	<i>Di mana ...</i>
What is this?	<i>Apa ini?</i>
My name is ...	<i>Nama saya ...</i>
Your name is ...?	<i>Nama encik (male)/cik (female)?</i>
How far is ...?	<i>Berapa jauh ...?</i>
How many ...?	<i>Berapa ...?</i>
How much ...?	<i>Berapa ...?</i>

What's the price?  
Could you please  
repeat that?  
I don't understand

*Berapa harga? / Berapa ringgit?  
Boleh ulang sekali lagi?*

*Saya tak (pronounced: ta) faham*

bus	<i>bas</i>
car	<i>kereta</i>
bicycle	<i>basikal (baisikal)</i>
motorbike	<i>motor (pronounced: mo-to)</i>
ship	<i>kapal</i>
boat	<i>bot</i>
plane	<i>kapal terbang</i>
train	<i>kereta api</i>
town	<i>bandar</i>
village	<i>kampung</i>
airport	<i>lapangan terbang</i>
bank	<i>bank</i>
hotel	<i>hotel / rumah tumpangan</i>
rest house	<i>rumah persinggahan</i>
street/road	<i>jalan</i>
One-way-street	<i>Jalan Sehalu</i>
Dead-end	<i>Jalan Mati</i>
post office	<i>pejabat pos</i>
police	<i>polis</i>
police station	<i>balai polis</i>
beach	<i>pantai</i>
sea	<i>laut</i>
river	<i>sungai</i>
lake	<i>tasik</i>
hill	<i>bukit</i>
mountain	<i>gunung</i>
immigration	<i>imigresen</i>
embassy	<i>kedutaan</i>
place	<i>tempat</i>
ticket	<i>tikit</i>
buy	<i>beli</i>
sell	<i>jual</i>
seat	<i>tempat duduk</i>
bed	<i>tempat tidur / katil</i>
sleep	* <i>tidur (pronounce it as: tee-do)</i>
room	<i>bilik</i>

bedroom	<i>bilik</i>
bathroom	<i>bilik mandi</i>
toilet	<i>tandas</i>
bath/shower	<i>mandi</i>
1 person	<i>satu orang</i>
2 persons	<i>dua orang</i>
1 night	<i>satu malam</i>
2 nights	<i>dua malam</i>
soap	<i>sabun</i>
towel	<i>tuala</i>
telephone	<i>telefon</i>
shop	<i>kedai</i>
stall	<i>gerai</i>
this	<i>ini</i>
that	<i>itu</i>
here	<i>sini</i>
there	<i>situ</i>
big	<i>besar</i>
small	<i>kecil</i> (pronounce it as: <i>kechil/kechi</i> )
stop	<i>berhenti</i>
please carry on	<i>sila</i>
open	<i>buka</i>
close	<i>tutup</i>
see	<i>lihat / nampak / pandang</i>
good	<i>bagus / baik</i>
bad	<i>tidak bagus / tidak baik</i>
dirty	<i>kotor</i>
expensive	<i>mahal</i>
cheap	<i>murah</i>
finish	<i>habis</i>
No entry	<i>Dilarang masuk</i>

## FOOD

eat	<i>makan</i>
drink (noun & verb)	<i>minum</i>
food	<i>makan</i>
rice	<i>nasi</i>
boiled rice	<i>nasi putih</i>
fried rice	<i>nasi goreng</i>
noodles	<i>mi / bihun / kuih tiow</i> (see chapter on food)

soup	<i>sup</i>
vegetables	<i>sayur</i>
mixed vegetables	<i>sayur campur</i> (pronounce it as: cham-po)
egg	<i>telur</i>
coffee	<i>kopi</i>
tea	<i>teh</i>
sugar	<i>gula</i>
milk	<i>susu</i>
coffee (black)	<i>kopi o</i>
tea (black)	<i>teh o</i>
coffee (black, no sugar)	<i>kopi o kosong</i>
tea (black, no sugar)	<i>teh o kosong</i>
iced coffee	<i>kopi beng</i>
iced black coffee	<i>kopi o beng</i>
hot chocolate	None available. Closest item is: Milo
lime juice	<i>air limau / sing kam peng</i> (Chinese)
water (for drinking)	<i>air kosong</i> (pronounced: ah-ye ko-song)
hot water	<i>air panas</i>
cold water	<i>air sejuk</i>
orange juice	<i>air oren</i>
fish	<i>ikan</i>
pork	<i>daging babi</i>
beef	<i>daging lembu</i>
chicken	<i>ayam</i>
mutton (goat)	<i>kambing</i>
crab	<i>ketam</i>
prawns	<i>udang</i>
bread	<i>roti</i>
butter	<i>menlega</i>
salt	<i>garam</i>
soy sauce	<i>tauyu</i>
chillies	<i>chilli</i>
ice	<i>air batu</i> (literally: stone water)
sweet	<i>manis</i>
salty	<i>masin</i>
tasteless	<i>tawar</i>
hot (heat)	<i>panas</i>
hot (chillies)	<i>pedas</i>
cold	<i>sejuk</i>
delicious	<i>lazat / enak</i>

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Her very ancestry (Portuguese, Malay, French, Chinese, English, Indian and Thai) is a reflection of Malaysian society. She has travelled widely in Europe, the United States and Canada, Japan and Australia and interacted a great deal with people from all over the world. She has lived and studies in the United States and Britain for a total of more than seven years, obtaining a doctorate from the University of Hawaii in 1985. She combines the understanding of internationalism with an understanding of Malaysian culture, and seeks to share that with the reader.



GLIMPSES INTO  
LIFE IN MALAYAN LANDS