

Malaysia

Business Guide

Compiled by:

SBH ASEAN Malaysia

Kuala Lumpur, May 2015

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The main entry points are:

Airports

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

Seaports

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

Roads

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

Rail

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

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

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

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

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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

2015

1 Jan	New Year's Day
3 Jan	Birth of Prophet Muhammad
19 & 20 Feb	Chinese New Year
1 May	Labour Day
3 May	Wesak Day (Birth of Buddha)
6 Jun	King's Birthday
17/18 July*	Hari Raya Puasa (End of Ramadan)
31 Aug	National Day
16 Sep	Malaysia Day
24/25 Sept**	Hari Raya Haji
14 Oct	Awal Muharram (Islamic New Year)
10 Nov*	Deepavali
24 Dec	Nabi Muhammad Birthday
25 Dec	Christmas

*subject to change

HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

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

<http://www.tourismmalaysia.com/health-tips.html>

TIME ZONES

GMT + 8 hours

TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND MALAYSIA

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

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

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

METHODS OF PAYMENT

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

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

TRANSPORTATION

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

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

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

BY AIR

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

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

From KLIA, visitors can take connecting flights to most major cities and towns in Malaysia as well as

to Sabah and Sarawak. The airport is well equipped with the latest facilities and services to cater passengers either arriving into the country or on transit to other destinations.

BY SEA

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

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

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

BY ROAD

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

Taxis in major cities are usually fitted with meters. In Kuala Lumpur, the rate is currently MYR2 for the first two kilometres and 10 sen/cents for every subsequent 200 meters. However, a surcharge of 50% will be levied between midnight and 6am. Interstate and smaller town taxis charge a fixed rate and it's best to settle on a price before getting to the taxi.

BY RAIL

The railway system is state-run and covers a total of 2,262 km and is considered underdeveloped if compared with some European countries. It is possible to travel by rail within and to Peninsular Malaysia via Thailand and from Singapore.

Popular within the city of Kuala Lumpur and nearby towns is the Light Rail Transit (LRT), which reduces the traffic load on other systems, and is considered safe, comfortable and reliable. To further that, the government has since started to expand outwards to join smaller townships and suburbs with allocation of more than USD2.1 billion to be completed in 2016.

HOTELS

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

COMMUNICATION

Malaysia's network service providers, of which Telekom Malaysia is the largest, provide a full range of local, domestic and international services encompassing voice and data facilities. More than 5 million (2011) people subscribe to fixed line services in Malaysia. In addition, three cellular service operators (including Telekom) provide cellular facilities to more than 29 million (2013) customers nation-wide

using various technologies including GSM 900, PCN 1800, 3G and LTE. Malaysia's telecommunication network has seen impressive expansion and upgrading in the past decades. The latest digital and fiber optics technology has provided high quality telecommunication services at competitive prices. International communications have been facilitated by the introduction of state-of-the-art technology in telephone, telex, facsimile, videoconferencing services, as well as other data transmission and networking facilities.

CELL PHONES

There are at least eight mobile operators in Malaysia, the biggest being Telekom Malaysia Bhd. The developmental effort in the telecom sector has been led by a booming mobile market with almost 45 million subscribers and a penetration (population) approaching 150% by late 2013.

BUSINESS HOURS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Embassy of Malaysia, Berne
Address: Jungfraustrasse 1
CH-3005 Berne
Telephone: 41-31 350 4700
Fax: 41-31 350 4702
Email: mwberne@kln.gov.my
http://www.kln.gov.my/web7che_berne/host_country
Word days: Monday – Friday 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.

ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY AND CONSULATES

Embassy of Switzerland, Kuala Lumpur
16 Persiaran Madge
55000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 00603 2148 0622

Fax: 00603 2148 0935
Homepage: www.eda.admin.ch/kualalumpur
Email: vertretung@eda.admin.ch

TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS

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

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

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

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

Title

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

BUSINESS PRACTICES

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

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

SPECIAL FEATURES ON THE MARKET

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

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