

"Visit Malaysia 2007"

Malaysia celebrates fifty years of independence

> Kuala Lumpur - Motaz Othman

When Malaysia became independent in 1957, one of the conditions of independence set by the British was that the Chinese and Indian residents were given Malaysian nationality. Today Malaysia has a population of 26 million people of different ethnic origins; there are indigenous Malay Muslims (55%), Chinese (25%), Indians (20%) and others.



The multi-ethnic population is characterized by a quiet and peaceful nature, benefiting from each other's experience, acquiring good customs and traditions from each other and coexistence and integration among themselves.

Malaysia has evolved, flourished and became one of the Asian Tigers. Last year it was visited by 17 million tourists. This year it looks forward to receiving 20 million tourists. "Visit Malaysia 2007" is the slogan for the current year: there will be more than 240 sports, cultural and social activities and celebrations.

Numerous new tourist projects have been inaugurated. On 6th January 2007 the "Eye on Malaysia", modelled on the famous "London Eye", was opened under the patronage of the Malaysian Prime Minister Ahmad Badawi and the Minister of Tourism Zulhasnan Rafique in the presence of hundreds of thousands of Malaysians.

Malaysia enjoys moderate tropical weather ▶



with an average temperature throughout the year of between 22-30 degrees Celsius. That's why it is considered a year long tourist destination.

Kuala Lumpur is a modern tourist city, with hundreds of tourist sites, bird parks, aquarium and Kuala Lumpur Tower. There are amusement arcades in Mount Genting.

They can be reached by the Telefrek (Skyway) which provides a unique view of beautiful landscapes and dense trees.

You can also visit "Putrajaya" a modern city, newly-established to alleviate the overcrowding in the capital Kuala Lumpur.

In the northern tourist island of Penang, you will find butterfly parks, forests and

beaches, where you can practice water sports and ride balloons which are dragged by boats.

Ismail, our tour guide in Kuala Lumpur, spent the days of our journey doing his best to ensure we were comfortable. Our guide in Penang Mrs. May Tang was keen on making our visit enjoyable. ■