

Kuala Lumpur

Capital of Malaysia... The Real Asia

**By: Malaysia Tourism
Promotion Board**

Malaysia is characterized by a magnificent cultural heritage that is rooted in its rich ethnic diversity. In this land of many charms, the uninitiated will discover a veritable melting pot of Asia. The indigenous Malays, forming 57% of the 22.7 million population, the Chinese, Indians, Thais, Eurasians, descendants of the Arabs and Portuguese as well as numerous ethnic groups have contributed to form its social fabric. The country's unique plural society is manifested in the colourful diversity of religions, festivals, languages, attire and cuisine, a phenomenon that has given the country its special allure. ➤

منظر عام لناطحات سحاب كوالا لمبور
General View of Kuala Lumpur Skyline

Former colonial powers too have left their legacy, a fact evident in historic Malacca city, renowned in its heydays as the 'Venice of the East' as it was the foremost entreport in the region. Overlooking the Straits of Malacca, it was coveted by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British who ruled it in succession.

The British subsequently administered the whole country until its independence on 31 August 1957. A popularly elected coalition government has been in power since then and the ensuing political stability is a vital key to the nation's impressive achievements. The King of Malaysia, elected every 5 years from a council of rulers, is the Head of State and the Prime Minister

the Head of Government in the country's system of parliamentary democracy. Islam is the official religion but all other religions are freely practised.

Malaysia is made up of Peninsular Malaysia at the southern-most tip of the Asian mainland and the states of Sabah and Sarawak in Borneo. Over half of its 329,758 square kilometres is under green forest cover. The weather in the lowlands is generally warm and balmy while the highland resorts enjoy a perpetual spring-like weather.

More than 40 international airlines fly into Malaysia connecting it with most major cities around the world. The impressive

Kuala Lumpur International Airport at Sepang is the main gateway for most arrivals. Others enter the country by road and rail from Thailand in the north and the island nation of Singapore in the south. Excellent highways and roads in the Peninsula make driving a convenient option to explore the numerous scenic spots and to meet the local people.

A Holiday Paradise

Malaysia is a holiday paradise abounding with Mother Nature's attractions, cultural delights, resorts and architectural wonders. Mosques are ubiquitous in this Islamic nation and some are truly remarkable ➤

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حديقة الغزلان
Deer Park

Despite its modernity, Kuala Lumpur has managed to retain its old world charm. Moorish-styled edifices, pre-war Chinese shop houses and stately colonial mansions of the British era present a striking contrast to the many imposing office towers and high tech buildings of recent times.



المسجد الوطني
National Mosque

masterpieces of contemporary Islamic architecture. The scenic landscape of tropical rainforests, jungle-clad mountains, ancient caves, rushing waterfalls and meandering rivers coupled with the conducive weather has made it a popular eco-destination. 19 national parks in the country provide sanctuaries for various species of wildlife, birds, fishes, insects and rare plants. In these pristine forests, the adventurous can indulge in a host of back-to-nature escapades, be it camping, jungle trekking, white water rafting, bird watching, angling, cave exploration or mountain climbing.

A long coastline and abundance of offshore islands, some gazetted as marine parks, afford a wide choice of settings for a dream vacation by the sea. The resort islands of Langkawi and Penang in Peninsula Malaysia are magnets for honeymooners and families. Famed for its legends and folklore, Langkawi offers beautiful beaches, sightseeing spots, island-hopping cruises and duty free shopping. Penang, the first British trading post in the Far East, is reputed for its fine beach

resorts, exotic local cuisine and fascinating architectural heritage. Quaint colonial buildings of the Victorian era, pre-war mansions, mosques, churches and temples give its port city, Georgetown, a distinct character of its own. The enchanting East Coast states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang mesmerize visitors with their rustic charm, traditional handicrafts and popular pastimes. Their excellent beaches, diving spots and the offshore islands of Redang, Kapas, Perhentian and Tioman in the South China Sea is sheer paradise for worshippers of the sun, sand and sea.

Situated 2000 metres above sea level, the Genting Highlands Resort is a focus for those looking for a fun-filled and relaxing holiday in cool surroundings. This internationally renowned "City of Entertainment in the Clouds" offers a variety of attractions for all ages just an hour away from Kuala Lumpur.

A Home Away from Home

Malaysia is indeed a home away from home for foreign guests. It enjoys a reputation as one of the safest destinations in the region.

The locals are friendly and are typically obliging when approached by tourists looking for directions or needing information on places of interest. A wide range of accommodation facilities is available from luxurious hotels to well-maintained family-oriented service apartments, economical bed-and-breakfast establishments and lodging houses.

Eating out in Kuala Lumpur or other cities is convenient and an adventure for the taste buds. Many restaurants cater halal food as well as a tempting array of Malaysian western dishes. Relished by all is satay, Malaysia's own version of shishkebab, consumed with a delicious peanut gravy and glutinous rice. Admire food vendors skilfully flinging dough to prepare roti canai, a griddle-fried pancake and others expertly stretching tea to cool it and purportedly improve its taste.

A wide variety of products, competitive prices and favourable exchange rates vis-à-vis the Ringgit make shopping an exciting and worthwhile experience in Malaysia. The annual nation-wide Mega Sales Carnival is the best time to look out for bargains although seasonal sales organized by various shopping establishments also provide attractive deals. Foreign currencies can be exchanged for the Malaysian Ringgit, denoted as RM, at hotels, banks and licensed money changers.

Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur is the federal capital of Malaysia and literally means a muddy confluence of two rivers. It is situated 35 kilometres from Port Klang, the country's principal seaport, midway along the western flank of Peninsular Malaysia. This modern metropolis encompasses 243 square kilometres or 94 square miles and is home to more than one and a half million people. Aptly dubbed as the "Garden City of Lights", the city has a soothing profusion of greenery and its beautiful street lightings are a sight to behold at night.

KL, as Kuala Lumpur is popularly called, was conferred city status on February 1, 1972 and declared as a Federal Territory on 1974. Its unpretentious origins as a trading post for tin in the 1800s followed the discovery of the mineral at the confluence of the Gombak and Klang rivers. Today, it is the dynamic hub of the nation in trade, commerce, tourism, information technology and transportation. The seat ➤

This concrete tower rises to a dizzying height of 421 metres and is situated atop Bukit Nanas, a hillock in the vicinity of the city's hotel district. It is the world's fourth tallest tower providing visitors a panoramic view of the city and its environs from the observation deck and the revolving restaurant. Its mast also serves as a transmission station for telecommunications, radio and television.

of the Federal Government has, however, been relocated south to Putrajaya, the administrative centre of Malaysia for the new millennium. Kuala Lumpur is also well known as a host city for international activities, meetings and exhibitions.

Old World and Modern Landmarks

Despite its modernity, Kuala Lumpur has managed to retain its old world charm. Moorish-styled edifices, pre-war Chinese shop houses and stately colonial mansions of the British era present a striking contrast

to the many imposing office towers and high tech buildings of recent times.

Sultan Abdul Samad Building

This Moorish-inspired structure was built in 1897 to house several important government departments during the British period in Malaya. Topped by a shiny copper dome and a 40 metre high clock tower, it is a major landmark in the city. Overlooking the Independence Square and the Selangor Club, a mock Tudor building, it forms an important backdrop for important celebra-

tions such as the National Day parade and the ushering of the New Year.

Independence Square

Also called the Dataran Merdeka, the Independence Square is of special historical significance to the Malaysian nation. It was here that the Malayan flag was hoisted on August 31, 1957 signifying the independence of the country from British rule.

About 8.2 hectares of the square is immaculately turfed and visitors can relax amidst the soothing, rushing waters of fountains, ➤



حديقة الفراشات
Butterfly Farm



elegant colonnades and colorful beds of zinnia and marigold flowers. Beneath the square is Plaza Putra, an underground food, leisure and entertainment complex.

Kuala Lumpur Railway Station

Built in 1910, this railway station is an outstanding heritage landmark reflecting the extensive influence of Moorish architecture on the Malaysian capital. Prior to the opening of the modern Sentral Station in Brickfields, the railway station served as the main rail terminal for train services in the Peninsular.

Masjid Jamek

Kuala Lumpur embraces many mosques, in particular the modern ones, which have added to the city a splendid Islamic architectural ambience. The Masjid Jamek is located at the confluence of the Klang and Gombak rivers, the historic birthplace of the city. The mosque was built in 1909, making it the oldest in the city. It features graceful Moorish arches and domes.

National Mosque

The National Mosque serves as the principal mosque for those living in the city. Its unique design embodies a contemporary expression of traditional Islamic art, calligraphy and ornamentation. The most striking feature is its multi-fold umbrella-like roof which symbolises the aspirations of an independent nation. Standing prominently is the sleek and stylish 73 metre high minaret.

Petronas Twin Towers

Rising imposingly to a height of 452 metres and consisting of 88 storeys, they are the two tallest freestanding towers in the world today. These distinctive icons of Malaysia's capital city are the jewels of ➤

“ **The city of Kuala Lumpur ranks as one of the most vibrant capitals of culture and science in the Islamic world. Numerous museums, concert halls, art galleries, memorials, exhibition and science centres can be found in the city.** ”



النصب التذكري الوطني
National Monument

Located along the busy Tun Razak thoroughfare in the north of the city, the National Art Gallery is flanked by the National Theatre, the National Arts Academy and the National Library. Built with aesthetics and functionality in mind, the gallery was designed for the preservation, development, exploration and experimentation of the various facets of art in Malaysia.

the ultra-modern Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC). Set amidst a 20-hectare park of aesthetically landscaped gardens, pools and fountains, the gleaming architectural masterpieces symbolise the Five Pillars of Islam in their design. Situated within the towers are the Petronas Philharmonic Hall

for orchestral performances and home to the Petronas Performing Arts Group.

Menara Kuala Lumpur

This concrete tower rises to a dizzying height of 421 metres and is situated atop Bukit

Nanas, a hillock in the vicinity of the city's hotel district. It is the world's fourth tallest tower providing visitors a panoramic view of the city and its environs from the observation deck and the revolving restaurant. Its mast also serves as a transmission station for telecommunications, radio and television. ➤

Cultural and Scientific Establishments

The city of Kuala Lumpur ranks as one of the most vibrant capitals of culture and science in the Islamic world. Numerous museums, concert halls, art galleries, memorials, exhibition and science centres can be found in the city.

National Museum

It is located just outside the Kuala Lumpur Lake Gardens and is the main museum in the country. The design of this palatial

building is based on classical Malay architecture. Its various galleries provide interesting insights into the history, political development, economy, culture, arts, flora and fauna of the country. Within its grounds are static displays of old locomotives, vintage cars and a replica of an ancient Malay palace.

Islamic Arts Museum

This museum, situated on Lembah Perdana Street, overlooks the National Mosque, just a stone's throw from the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station. Its Islamic Architecture Gallery

showcases miniature replicas of famous buildings such as the Taj Mahal, Imam Ismail Albukhary Mosque, and Museum and the Amir Timur Mausoleum. The Ottoman Room displays objects from the reign of the Ottoman Empire of Turkey and Syria. In the Al-Quran and Manuscript Gallery is a collection of more than 200 rare Islamic manuscripts which include a 30-Judz' Al-Quran dating back to the Ming Dynasty of China.

Petronas Philharmonic Hall

Malaysia's first venue for classical music performances, the hall is designed in the ➤

The official residence of the King of Malaysia, the National Palace sits on a hillock south of the city centre. The extensive grounds is embellished by immaculate lawns and colourful gardens. The palace is the venue for royal events and functions.



المسجد الجامع
Masjid Jamek



خارطة كوالالمبور
Kuala Lumpur Map

traditional shoe-box shape of the great 19th Century European concert halls. Its architecture combines modern and traditional values of Malaysian culture and seats an audience of 885, including box seating and luxury suites. A magnificent Klais pipe organ provides the backdrop for this intimate yet stunning venue.

Petronas Art Gallery

An elegant international fine art gallery located at the Suria KLCC, it is the realization of the national petroleum corporation's aspiration of a world class art venue. The gallery complements the adjacent PETRONAS Philharmonic Hall and science centre, PETROSAINS. Multi-functional and flexible in the use of space, it is divided into a main gallery, an annexe gallery and an experimental gallery which allows a number of art exhibitions to be held simultaneously.

National Art Gallery

Located along the busy Tun Razak thoroughfare in the north of the city, the National Art Gallery is flanked by the National Theatre, the National Arts Academy and the National Library. Built with aesthetics and functionality in mind, the gallery was designed for the preservation, development, exploration and

experimentation of the various facets of art in Malaysia. There are galleries for permanent and temporary exhibitions. Among its amenities are a creative centre, a sculpture garden, a photography and graphics studio, restoration facility, auditorium and library.

National Theatre

The National Theatre Company and National Symphony Orchestra are housed within the Istana Budaya building. Equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, the architecture of the theatre reflects the beauty of form while retaining the national heritage and Malay design. Its annual calendar of activities features both international and local dramas, dance and musical performances.

National Planetarium

This blue-domed structure is located atop a small hill in the Kuala Lumpur Lake Gardens. A popular attraction is the space theatre where movies on space are screened. In the main hall are space science exhibits among which is the Ariane IV rocket which was used to launch MEASAT 1, Malaysia's first satellite. There is an observatory equipped with a 14-inch telescope to sight the heavenly bodies on full moons. A space theme park within the planetarium displays replicas of ancient observatories and astronomical equipment.

National Science Centre

This futuristic-looking building is perched on another hillock amidst the green surroundings of Bukit Kiara in the north-western fringe of Kuala Lumpur. The centre was established in 1996 to promote greater understanding and interest in science and technology. Resembling a truncated cone capped with a geodesic dome the building is located within 80 hectares of beautifully landscaped grounds.

Among the fascinating themes featured in its exhibition galleries are an Environmental Odyssey, Pathways to Discovery, Future World and Thinking Machines.



القبة الفضائية الوطنية (البلانيتيريوم)
National Planetarium



مجمع الحرف اليدوية
Craft Cultural Complex



مبنى بنغولو أبو سمان
Rumah Penghulu Abu Seman

Other Tourist Attractions Istana Negara (National Palace)

The official residence of the King of Malaysia, the National Palace sits on a hillock south of the city centre. The extensive grounds is embellished by immaculate lawns and colourful gardens. The palace is the venue for royal events and functions. The investiture ceremony is an important occasion held in conjunction with the King's birthday when citizens are conferred awards by the King for distinguished service to the country. ➔

National Sports Complex is situated on a 200-acre site at Bukit Jalil, in the southern suburbs of Kuala Lumpur, the massive complex is the country's premier venue for international and local sporting events. A memorable event held here in 1998 was the 16th Commonwealth Games.

Another popular park in the north of the city is the **Titiwangsa Lake Park**. The park has a huge lake for fun boating activities, indoor and outdoor sports, cycling trails, horse riding, model car racing and a lakeside restaurant. From the lake, visitors will be able to enjoy a panoramic view of the magnificent Kuala Lumpur skyline.

Malaysia Tourism Centre

Built in 1935 as the residence of Eu Tong Seng, a wealthy Chinese tin miner, this historical landmark served as the war office of the British Army and the headquarters of the Japanese Army during World War II. It was also the venue for the first sitting of Malaysia's parliament and the installation ceremonies of several kings of the country. Major renovations were carried out in 1988 to convert the building into its present use as a one-stop tourist information complex. Housed within it are a restaurant, souvenir shop, conference hall and theatre.

Rumah Penghulu Abo Seman

This traditional Malay house can be viewed on the grounds of the Heritage Trust of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur.

Made of tropical timber, it was formerly the residence of Abu Saman, a local headman or *penghulu* who lived in the northern state of Kedah.

The original structure was restored and moved to the present site to be preserved as a heritage building. It is beautifully decorated throughout with intricate carvings and furnished to reflect a Malay house in the early Thirties with some wedding accoutrements.

The mock Tudor building where the Trust is housed holds regular exhibitions with a heritage theme and has a gift shop and reference library.

National Sports Complex

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A memorable event held here in 1998 was the 16th Commonwealth Games. The state-of-the-art facilities include 3 stadiums for track events and field games, hockey and gymnastics, the National

Aquatic Centre and the National Squash Centre. A games village was also constructed nearby for the Commonwealth

Games to accommodate the athletes and delegates. The multi-functional design of the facilities allows non-sports events such as exhibitions, conferences and seminars to be held there as well.

Located north of the National Sports Complex is the Commonwealth Hill and Family Park to commemorate the holding of the Games in Kuala Lumpur.

The plaza here highlight the history and information on all the nations which took part in the Games. Scenic Plaza, the highest vantage point, provides a breathtaking view of the National sports complex and the city skyline. Also in the vicinity is a landscaped garden by the banks of the Kuyuh River and a Family Park with fields for various recreational activities and a camping site for scouts.

Markets and Bazaars

In addition to the excellent modern shopping malls in Kuala Lumpur, shoppers should consider browsing at the many markets, bazaars and shops in Kuala Lumpur. A bewildering assortment of wares can be found at these establishments including textiles, fashion wear, traditional art and crafts, gold and silver jewelry, pewter, watches, electronic goods and glassware. The popular open air street markets are along Petaling Street in Chinatown and the Masjid India Street. Petaling Street is endowed with a character of its own.

This colourful area of pre-war shops, restaurants and hawker stalls bustles with vitality. Almost everything is sold here from antiques to Chinese herbal medicines. A number of restaurants serve authentic regional Chinese cuisine. Masjid India is another area of sidewalk artists, street traders and shops.



متحف كوالالمبور
K.L. Museum

The street takes its name from the prominent Indian Muslim mosque located there. Along this stretch are shops selling Indian brass oil lamps, silver tableware, glass bangles, gold jewelry.

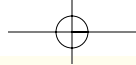
The Central Market and Craft Cultural Complex are among the best places to look for souvenirs.

Central Market

Formerly the main market for the residents in Kuala Lumpur, it was converted into an arts and cultural bazaar in 1986 after undergoing major renovations. This heritage building is extremely popular with tourists as it is easily accessible by public transport and has many shops offering novelty products. These include antique clocks, gems, woodcarvings, batik, pewterware, jade trees and blown glass souvenirs. Visitors will be able to see portrait artists, glass blowers in action, batik painters creating beautiful works of art on cloth. They can also relax at one of the many restaurants in the market and sample local or western cuisine.

Craft Cultural Complex

Located at Conlay Street in a posh residential area of the city, the complex houses top names in local handicrafts. Here one can find chic batik outfit, a range of home décor items and delightful gift items to take back home. On the grounds of the complex is an artists' colony and beautiful art pieces are available for sale. Visitors can watch batik cloth printing and try their hand at creating their own batik ➤



برجا بتروناس التوأمان
The Petronas Twin Towers





الجامعة الإسلامية
Islamic University

pieces. The complex is equipped with a restaurant and other visitor facilities.

Gardens and Parks

Besides its interesting historical and cultural landmarks and markets, Kuala Lumpur exudes a garden-like ambience



المركز العلمي الوطني
National Science Centre



متحف الفن الإسلامي
Islamic Arts Museum

with its gardens and public parks. These 'green lungs' are a draw for the local people and tourists alike.

Kuala Lumpur Lake Gardens

This magnificent tropical garden covers a sprawling 91.6 hectares and is located east of the city centre at Perdana Street. Kuala Lumpur's most popular park, it is a showcase of harmony, beauty and tranquility created by man and nature. Built around two lakes, the garden is a pleasant oasis within the city providing a cool and soothing ambience as one walks through a vista of exotic flowering plants, luxuriant foliage, imposing sculptures, creative theme parks and majestic raintrees.

Other attractions within the park include an orchid and hibiscus garden, deer park, butterfly park, bird park, the National Monument

and Asean Sculpture Garden.

Titivangsa Lake Park

Another popular park in the north of the city is the Titivangsa Lake Park. The park has a huge lake for fun boating activities, indoor and outdoor sports, cycling trails, horse riding, model car racing and a lakeside restaurant. From the lake, visitors will be able to enjoy a panoramic view of the magnificent Kuala Lumpur skyline.

National Zoo and Aquarium

Located 13 kilometres north-east of the capital, the National Zoo houses over 200 species of animals, birds and reptiles while the aquarium has 80 species of marine and freshwater life. Popular with visitors are the sea lion and elephant shows. There are also train rides for children. ■